A Call to Arms: An Account of Ayyubid or Early Mamluk Alexandria*

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Abstract

This article offers an edition, translation, and study of a hitherto unknown text about Ayyubid or early Mamluk Alexandria. The author, one Abū Khuzayma Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, gives a short yet rich description of the city based as much on Alexandria's real cityscape as on legends. The text treats famous monuments, such as the city's lighthouse and the Column of the Pillars, as well as less well-known buildings, such as mosques, colleges, watchtowers, and gates. An analysis of the account leads to the conclusion that its author wrote the account in order to mobilize Muslims for the defense of the city against Frankish or Byzantine attacks on Alexandria or Egypt's Mediterranean coast in general.

Introduction

When he arrived in Alexandria on Dhū al-Qaʿda 29, 578/March 26, 1183, and had passed through the city's chaotic customs, the well-known traveler Ibn Jubayr gazed at the city's architecture. Never had he seen, he notes in his travelogue, "a city with broader streets and higher buildings, more ancient and more densely populated" than Alexandria.[1] He also marveled at ancient monuments and well-known characteristics of the city's architecture, such as the famous lighthouse, the presence of cisterns, and the abundant use of marble. But what struck him most were "the colleges and watchtowers" built for those who traveled to Alexandria in pursuit of knowledge or a pious lifestyle. Each of these visitors, he writes, "will find a house to live in, a college to learn the art he wishes to learn, and an allowance

* I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their useful comments on an earlier version of this article. Remaining mistakes are, of course, my own.

1. Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlat Ibn Jubayr* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 13–14.

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that enables him to sustain himself."[2] He credits Egypt's sultan, Saladin (r. 567–89/1171–93), with this concern for the wellbeing of "those foreigners who have come from remote places"[3] and thus illustrates Saladin's great interest in the city's defensive and religious architecture.[4]

One foreigner who claims to have had first-hand experience with this system is an otherwise unknown man from Khurāsān named Abū Khuzayma Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. He reports having visited Alexandria in the second half of the sixth/twelfth century in order to practice *ribāṭ*, pious defensive warfare.[5] A short account of his stay in Alexandria has been preserved in a number of manuscripts, in which it appears after a late fourth/tenth-century book on the city's religious virtues, Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh's *Faḍāʾil al-Iskandariyya*.[6] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's account offers a rich description of Alexandria and often complements information found in Ayyubid or early Mamluk descriptions of the city, such as those by Benjamin of Tudela (wr. ca. 565/1170), Ibn Jumayʿ (d. 594/1198), al-ʿAbdarī (fl. late seventh/thirteenth century), and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 770/1368–69 or 779/1377), or in documents preserved in the Cairo Genizah.[7] As we shall see, it also offers a unique window onto localized reactions to foreign attacks on Egypt's Mediterranean coast in this period. This article presents an edition and translation of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's account together with an analysis of its contents.

The account is not a straightforward text about Alexandria. Some toponyms or names of buildings are garbled; the name and patronymic of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's son, who transmitted the text (see para. 2), have been reversed;[8] the order of the paragraphs is not

2. Ibid., 15.

3. Ibid., 15–17.

4. See Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Topographie d'Alexandrie médiévale," in *Alexandrie médiévale 2*, ed. Christian Décobert, 113–26 (Cairo: IFAO, 2002), 116–18.

5. Admittedly, this is a very loose rendering of the term *ribāṭ*. In the period under consideration, *ribāṭ* referred to a form of religious activism that usually involved asceticism and defending the frontiers of the Realm of Islam. At the same time, the term referred to a place (not a specific type of edifice) where those who practiced *ribāṭ* (*murābiṭūn*) lived. Good discussions of the term, taking into account historical developments and geographical diversity, are Christophe Picard and Antoine Borrut, "*Râbata*, *ribât*, *râbita*: Une institution à reconsidérer," in *Chrétiens et musulmans en Méditerranée médiévale (VIIIe–XIIIe siècle): Échanges et contacts*, ed. Nicolas Prouteau and Philippe Sénac, 33–65 (Poitiers: Université de Poitiers, Centre d'Études Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale, 2003), and *EI*[2], s.v. "Ribāṭ."

6. I am currently preparing an edition of this book.

7. Benjamin of Tudela, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, ed. and trans. Marcus N. Adler (London: Henry Frowde/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1907), 74–77; Ibn Jumayʿ, *Ṭabʿ al-Iskandariyya*, ed. Murayzin S. ʿAsīrī and Saʿd ʿA. al-Bushrī (Mecca: Markaz al-Buḥūth wa-Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-Islāmī, 1997), passim; al-ʿAbdarī, *al-Riḥla al-maghribiyya*, ed. Saʿd Bū Falāqa (Bona [ʿAnāba], Algeria: Manshūrāt Būna li-l-Buḥūth wa-l-Dirāsāt, 1428/2007), 139–48; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār fī gharāʾib al-amṣār wa-ʿajāʾib al-asfār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Hādī al-Tāzī (Rabat: Akādīmiyyat al-Mamlaka al-Maghribiyya, 1417/1997), 1:179–92. See Miriam Frenkel, "Medieval Alexandria: Life in a Port City," *Al-Masāq* 26, no. 1 (2014): 5–35 for a good overview of the information some of these authors and Genizah documents present.

8. The account calls the son "Muḥammad b. Khuzayma" (para. 2) instead of Khuzayma b. Muḥammad. Perhaps a copyist confused the son with Muḥammad (b. Isḥāq) Ibn Khuzayma (d. 311/924), a prominent traditionist from Khurāsān known to have visited Egypt. For the traditionist, see *EI*[3], s.v. "Ibn Khuzayma."

entirely logical; and at times, the text is vague, cryptic, or even self-contradictory. What is more, whereas the author presents the text as an eyewitness account of Ayyubid Alexandria, using his alleged rounds through the city with Alexandria's garrison as a literary frame in order to give the text authority,[9] some passages are clearly based on legends surrounding the city's ancient monuments.

An analysis of the account's contents, offered below, shows that the text should be read not as a personal history but rather as a highly stylized call for the defense of Alexandria against non-Muslim attacks. After a short opening paragraph that refers to one of the merits of *ribāṭ* performance in general, the account starts by praising Alexandria's defenses and Islamic virtues (paras. 2–5). The text then describes the recent destruction of part of this praiseworthy city's architecture at the hands of one Uhrayqil (paras. 6–9), whom I identify as representing Islam's apocalyptic archenemy. Paragraph 8 combines these themes: it includes information about the malicious activity of Uhrayqil but also mentions some of the city's noteworthy Islamic institutions. Together, these themes emphasize the present need to defend Alexandria. At the end of the account (para. 10), the author brings his text's two themes together and reminds the reader of the ease and spiritual benefits of *ribāṭ* performance in Alexandria.

Text and Translation

At present, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's account is known to exist in the following three manuscripts, here preceded with the sigla used throughout this article:

A1 = Maktabat al-Azhar (Cairo), inv. Khuṣūṣa 1374/ʿUmūma 42050 Ādāb wa-faḍāʾil, Jawharī. The text is found on folios 21r–25v. The date and place of the manuscript's production and the name of the copyist are unknown. Folio 1r contains a *waqf* statement written in a different hand and dated Dhū al-Qaʿda 17, 1176/May 30, 1763.

A2 = Maktabat al-Azhar, inv. Khuṣūṣa 1923/ʿUmūma 54924 Ādāb wa-faḍāʾil. This is a modern copy of manuscript A1 dated Rabīʿ I 1367/January 1948. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's text appears on folios 29r–36r. In a few instances, the text of this manuscript differs from that of manuscript A1. A transcription of this manuscript (with misread passages) circulates on the internet and has been entered into the online text database *al-Maktaba al-shāmila al-ḥadītha*.[10]

St = Staatsbibliothek (Berlin), inv. Sprenger 197, folios 17r–20v. This is an almost fully vocalized manuscript. The date and place of its production as well as the name of its copyist are unknown. A transcription of this manuscript with some differences in the text and its vocalization has been entered into *al-Maktaba al-shāmila al-ḥadītha*.[11]

9. For this literary strategy, see Zayde Antrim, *Routes and Realms: The Power of Place in the Early Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 2–3, 62–70.

10. See https://al-maktaba.org/book/11797; the account starts at the bottom of page 22 of the transcription.

11. See https://al-maktaba.org/book/30242; the account starts on page 66 of the transcription.

In all three manuscripts, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's account follows Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh's *Faḍāʾil al-Iskandariyya*. A fourth manuscript originally also contained the text after Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh's work: Dār al-Kutub wa-l-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyya (Cairo), inv. 1485 Taʾrīkh Taymūr. Some time after 1974, pages 23 to 38 of this manuscript got detached from the codex and were subsequently lost.[12] Today, this manuscript ends halfway through Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh's text. Fortunately, traces of the writing on page 38 can still be seen on the manuscript's very last page (39), which has been glued to a new flyleaf and, for that reason, stuck to the cover when the other pages broke off. On that last page, traces of the following words are legible:

المعروفة با[ه]ر [يقل	(lines 2–3)
دَوِّر المر[را]ة	(line 5, with vocalization)
ا]لمد[ينة اعلم الخا[ز]ند[ار	(lines 5–6)
وكذ[ا] نتفرج على	(lines 7–8)
لل]خير [ف]اعلين	(line 9).

These words belong unmistakably to the end of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's text; compare with paragraphs 9 and 10 of the edition below.

The copies of the text preserved in manuscripts A1, A2, and St regularly exhibit features of Middle Arabic. For example, the rules of Classical Arabic regarding the concord between numerals and counted nouns are not always followed:

خمسة وعشرين صلاة	(para. 1, only in manuscripts A1 and St, corrected in A2)
اثني عشر ألف محراب	(para. 5)
سبع محارس	(para. 8)
سبع عقود	(para. 9)
سبع وعشرون ذراعًا	(para. 9).[13]

The manuscripts also frequently exhibit a lack of concord between a noun and a resumptive pronoun:

عامودان مربعان ... مصور عليها أرهاط ... طول كل عامود منها سبعون ذراعًا	(para. 5, only in manuscripts A1 and A2)[14]
حوض ... منقوش عليها شخوص	(para. 6)
والباب الغربي ... ذكر أن بها ... ألف وأربعمائة شهيد	(para. 8)
الزلط الأسود ... يرصدها	(para. 8)
مركب ... بها مائة صبط	(para. 8).[15]

12. An unpublished typescript catalog entitled *Qāʾima bi-ḥaṣr al-makhṭūṭāt al-ʿarabiyya bi-Dār al-Kutub wa-l-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyya*, dated March 1974 and available in the Dār al-Kutub, still states (20:1744) that the manuscript has thirty-eight written pages.

13. Joshua Blau, *A Grammar of Christian Arabic Based Mainly on South-Palestinian Texts from the First Millennium* (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusSCO, 1966–67), 2:366 and 369.

14. For *-hā* referring to duals, see ibid., 1:214.

15. See also the unclear reference in لكل باب منهم ثلاثة لوالب (para. 9).

Once, *-humā* denotes the plural: رماة ... يرمي أحدهما على سبعة أميال (para. 8).[16] Plurals designating humans sometimes accompany a verb in the feminine singular:

تشيله البوابين	(para. 1)
فحملتني الخدام	(para. 3)
حطابون تكتب على الفتاوى	(para. 8)
رماة ترمي بالقسي	(para. 8).[17]

The *nūn* of the plural ending of the imperfect indicative is dropped twice: وفي كل يوم يفعلوا بأمير كذا (para. 4, only in manuscript St) and ويكثروا الصراخ (para. 6).[18] In the first paragraph, the *nūn* is preserved in the construct state of the dual: بألفين صلاة.[19] In manuscript A1, the ending *-īna* of the sound masculine plural once replaces *-ūna* in the nominative: تشيله البوابين (para. 1).[20] The use of participles is frequently unidiomatic: *bi-* instead of *fī* in بالمحرم (para. 2, only in manuscripts A1 and A2) and إن بالحوض ذخيرة (para. 5);[21] *li-* instead of *ilā* in تأتي مركب ... للمدينة (para. 8);[22] *bi-* and *fī* instead of *li-* in قلة الملك ... بها باب (both para. 5); *min* used to express possession instead of annexation via the construct state in الباب الشرقي منها, "its eastern gate" (para. 2).[23] In paragraph 4, *wa-lā* continues a positive sentence and negates a verb in the perfect: خرجنا ولا زلنا بالمدينة دائرين.[24] Once a definite word is written without an article: باب الأخضر الكبير (para. 8; cf. manuscript St).[25] In what is perhaps more a stylistic feature,[26] the text also regularly isolates the natural subject, especially after the word *kull*; e.g., وكل خراج يأتي إلى الملك يأمر بصرف ثلثه (para. 5).

Interestingly, manuscript St sometimes exhibits features of Middle Arabic where manuscripts A1 and A2 do not. Especially noteworthy is the spelling of the following two words, which disagrees with the rules of Classical Arabic and suggests that colloquial Arabic influenced this copy of the text in the course of its transmission: فرديت instead of فرددت (para. 3) and وتنضيفه instead of وتنظيفه (para. 8).[27] Manuscript St also has الصور instead of السور in paragraph 5. The spelling of this word is possibly corrected in manuscripts A1 and A2 because all manuscripts spell *al-sūr* with a *ṣād* in paragraph 8.[28] Further, manuscript St writes فنظنوا in scriptio plena (para. 8) instead of فنظن . In manuscript St, too, a *tanwīn*

16. Blau, *Grammar*, 1:134–35.

17. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, s.v. "Middle Arabic" (pp. 221–22).

18. Blau, *Grammar*, 2:259–60, 268–69.

19. Ibid., 1:222–23.

20. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, s.v. "Middle Arabic" (p. 220).

21. Blau, *Grammar*, 1:242.

22. Ibid., 1:251.

23. Ibid., 2:423.

24. Ibid., 2:302–3.

25. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, s.v. "Middle Arabic" (p. 220).

26. For isolation of the natural subject in Classical Arabic, see the references in Blau, *Grammar*, 3:471, n. 5.

27. Ibid., 1:113–14.

28. Ibid., 1:111–12.

alif twice marks a circumstantial clause: فإذا أنا بخندق ملآنًا بالماء and بابه صغير مصفحًا (both in para. 2).[29] In disagreement with Classical Arabic, manuscript St has the tendency to privilege indefinite singular nouns in the accusative after numerals: مائة دينارًا (para. 3) and ثمانية آلاف ميلًا (para. 9).[30] Once, manuscript St preserves the *nūn* of the plural ending in the construct state: لبوابين المدينة (para. 3).[31]

In deference to the manuscript copies of the text, such features of Middle Arabic have been left unchanged in the edition below. Manuscript A1 forms the base text of the edition. In case of an evident copyist mistake (such as the accidental omission of a word, a spelling mistake, or a dittography), I have privileged manuscripts A2 and/or St. The apparatus indicates variant readings in the manuscripts and when a manuscript other than A1 has been given preference in the edition. I have divided the text into paragraphs in order to facilitate referencing and added some punctuation for ease of reading.

Edition

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد[32]

A1 21r / A2 29r / St 17r | Fol.

[¶1] دل الحديث الصحيح بمفهومه[33] أن صلاة المرابط ببلد الرباط بألفين صلاة وخمسة[34] وعشرين صلاة.

[¶2] وعن محمد بن خزيمة عن أبيه أنه قال: سمعت ذلك فقصدتُ المرابطة بالمحرم بالإسكندرية[35] من شهور سنة ستين وخمسمائة في زمن | A2 29v ولاية السيد أيوب الكردي رحمه الله[36]، فأتيت إليها فنظرت بياضها لامعًا رأيته من أربعة وعشرين[37] ميلًا عند الصباح، فلما وصلت المدينة وجدت الباب الشرقي منها مفتوحًا بابه صغير مصفح[38] بالحديد يصعد المدينة[39] منه بقنطرة من خشب وعند آخر النهار تشيله البوابين[40] بالآلات[41]،

29. Ibid., 2:332–33.
30. Ibid., 2:377.
31. *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, s.v. "Middle Arabic" (p. 220).
32. Instead of وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد, St has وصلى الله على سيدنا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه وسلم .
33. St: بمفهوم
34. A2: وخمس
35. Instead of بالإسكندرية بالمحرم, St has بالإسكندرية في محرم الحرام .
36. Om. St: رحمه الله
37. St: عشر
38. St: مصفحًا
39. St: للمدينة
40. A2 and St: البوابون
41. St: بالآلة

فطلبت الدخول للمدينة فمنعت | St 17v من ذلك إلى ثلاثة أيام، فإذا أنا[42] بخندق ملآن[43] بالماء محيط بالمدينة عرضه عشرة أذرع وبه صيادون يصطادون | A1 21v السمك.

[¶3] فقلت للبوابين بالمدينة[44]: أريد الدخول، فقال كبيرهم: ألا[45] نستشير الملك؟ فاستشاروا وقالوا لي: ما تريد بالدخول؟ فقلت: أريد المرابطة بها، فحملوني إلى الملك[46] وأوقفت[47] بين يديه فإذا هو رجل كبير السن | A2 30r فسلمت عليه فرد علي السلام وقال لي: ما اسمك؟ فقلت: محمد بن عبد الوهاب، فقال: وما كنيتك؟ فقلت: أبو خزيمة، فقال[48]: وما هي بلدك؟ فقلت: خراسان، فقال: في أي شيء جئت؟ فقلت: أيها الملك المهاب سمعت أن كل من رابط بالإسكندرية له من الأجر كذا وكذا فطلبت المرابطة بها، فتركني واقفًا وبيده قرطاس وسألني ثانيًا فرددت[49] عليه ذلك وسألني[50] ثالثًا فرددت[51] عليه ذلك فناداني رابعًا أزعجني بصوته وقال لي: تريد المرابطة؟ قلت[52]: نعم، فحملتني الخدام إلى محل فيه فرش[53] ورتب لي طعامًا وشرابًا مثل العسكر[54] ولا زالوا | A2 30v يمثلوني بين يدي الملك ثلاثة[55] أيام ويسألوني[56] كل[57] يوم أربع مرات فنرد عليه مقالتي الأولى ثم بعد ذلك قال | A1 22r لي: أتريد[58] المرابطة؟ | St 18r فقلت له: نعم، فقال لي[59]: إن بالمدينة ثلاثمائة وستون[60] أميرًا تحت يد كل أمير ثلاثمائة وستون نفرًا

42. Om. St.

43. St: ملآنًا

44. Instead of للبوابين بالمدينة, St has لبوابين المدينة.

45. St: إلى أن

46. A1 and A2 lack the words: فاستشاروا وقالوا لي: ما تريد بالدخول؟ فقلت: أريد المرابطة بها، فحملوني إلى الملك . This is possibly a homoioteleuton: the last word before the omission, الملك, is the last of the omitted words, too. The words have been copied from St.

47. The copyist of manuscript St left this word unvocalized.

48. St: فقال لي

49. St: فرديت

50. St: فتركني وسألني

51. St: فرديت

52. St: فقلت

53. St: فراش

54. St: عساكر الملك

55. St: ثلاث

56. St: ويسألني

57. St: في كل

58. St: تريد

59. Om. St.

60. St: وستين

وكل أمير له يوم وليلة يحرس حول المدينة، فسأل عن أمير النوبة فأحضر بين يديه فسلمني إليه فكتبني في دفتر[61] وسلمني فرسًا[62] تساوي في ثمنها مائة دينار[63] وسيفًا هنديًا ورمحًا خطيًا.

[¶4] فلما أن صلى الأمير العصر جهز[64] الخيل وشد[65] الرحال[66] وسلاحاتها وأسنتها وخرجنا من عند باب الملك لابسين الزرد والخوذ وآلة الحرب | [A2 31r] وكتبة يكتبون في العساكر[67] كل أحد باسمه إلى أن[68] كتبوا ثلاثمائة وستين رجلًا كلهم راكبون الخيول، فخرجنا ولا زلنا بالمدينة دائرين إلى الصباح، فضُرِبَتْ طشطخانة الملك فدخلنا فنقدونا[69] وكتبونا ثانيًا، وفي كل يوم يفعلون بكل أمير[70] كذا على عدد أيام السنة، فكان يخص كل أمير في السنة نوبة واحدة.

[¶5] وكنا نزور الأولياء ونتعاهد المساجد[71] فرأيت بها ثمانمائة مسجدًا[72] محرابًا، وذكر لنا أنه كان | [A1 22v] بالمدينة اثني عشر ألف محراب وبها مائة وتسعون خطبة وفي كل ولي وظيفة في يوم معين، وأزقة المدينة مفروشة بالرخام الهيصمي عالية البناء || [A2 31v / St 18v] شديدة البياض لا تبطل العمارة من أسوارها على الدوام، وكل خراج يأتي إلى الملك يأمر بصرف ثلثه في عمارة السور[73]، بها ثلاثمائة وستون قلة مبيضة مرسومة بماء الذهب باسم الملك وكل وزير للملك قلته مبيضة بالزلط الهيصمي[74]، وكانت قلة الملك في الجانب البحري وبها باب[75] يفتح شرقيًا وآخر قبليًا وعلى الباب القبلي عامودان مربعان[76] من الزلط الأحمر مصور عليها[77] أرهاط وشخوص

61. St: دفتره
62. A2: ترسا
63. St: دينارًا
64. St: جهزت
65. St: شدت
66. St: الرجال
67. St: العسكر
68. Om. St.
69. A2: فتقدونا
70. Instead of يفعلون بكل أمير, St has يفعلوا بأمير .
71. St: المساجد بها
72. Om. St.
73. St: الصور
74. Instead of قلته مبيضة بالزلط الهيصمي, St has قلة مبنية بالزلط الهيصم .
75. Instead of وبها باب, St has وبابها .
76. The words عامودان مربعان appear in St. A1 and A2 have عامر وإن مربعان.
77. St: عليهما

ملوك[78] طول[79] كل عامود منها[80] سبعون ذراعًا وهما متساويان في طولهما بينهما فسحة طولها[81] سبعة عشر ذراعًا وعليها شبكة من نحاس.

[¶6] وذكر لنا بعض الإخوان | [A1 23r] أنه كان في سابق | [A2 32r] الزمان استخدام الصور المنقوشة[82] على العامودين[83]، إذا أتى عدو على[84] المدينة يرى[85] كل صورة يصعد إليها من البحر صورتها ويكثروا[86] الصراخ في جانب البحر فتعرف الناس بذلك، وبين العامودين حوض من الزلط الأسود منقوش عليها[87] شخوص وأرهاط ومراكب ودواب وأشكال على صفات مختلفة وهو مغطًا[88] مسبوك عليه بالرصاص، وكان إذا أتى المدينة[89] عدو يفور من الحوض ماء وينظر[90] إلى الحوض فترى كل صورة في الحوض صفتها طالعة | [St 19r] إلى البحر، وذكروا[91] أن الحوض كان به مدفونًا | [A2 32v] حكيمه الذي احتكمه فلما[92] أخذت المدينة من أهريقل أرسل جاسوسًا في صفة راهب بأموال كثيرة[93] ودخل إلى المدينة وتوصل[94] إلى ملكها فقال له: إن بالحوض ذخيرة من ذخائر الحكماء، وحسن له فتحه[95] ففتحه الملك[96] فبطل استخدامه.

78. Om. St.
79. So in St. A1 and A2: ملوك
80. St: منهما
81. After this word, the copyist of A1 mistakenly rewrote the words:
سبعون ذراعًا وهما متساويان في طولهما بينهم فسحة طولها
Manuscript A2's copyist copied this dittography. These extra words are not found in St.
82. St: المنعوشة
83. St: العامودين المذكورين
84. St: إلى
85. So in A1 and A2. St: يرا
86. St: يكثر
87. St: عليه
88. A2: مغطى
89. St: إلى المدينة
90. A2: وتنظر
91. St: وذكر
92. St: فلما أن
93. Instead of في صفة راهب بأموال كثيرة , St has بأموال .
94. St: فتوصل
95. Instead of له فتحه , St has فتحه للملك .
96. Instead of ففتحه الملك , St has فأمر بفتحه ففُتِحَ ; cf. the end of paragraph 7.

[¶7] وذكروا[97] أيضًا أن[98] بقرب كوم إيماس | A1 23v وجامع السلسلة[99] بحري طرف الكوم قصر مغلق[100] وعليه غلق كبير[101] فلم أزل أسأل عن ذلك، قال بعضهم[102] إنه كان به رصد الأتربة[103]، كل من رمى على بابه[104] كناسة يصبح يراها على كوم إيماس، فلا يزال[105] الملعون جاسوس أهريقل يحسن للملك فتح ذلك المكان فأمر بفتحه ففتح فوجد به مكنسة من نحاس | A2 33r على زلطة سوداء، فلما أن فتح بطلت حركة[106] ذلك.

[¶8] وباب المدينة الشرقي الذي يسمى باب محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم كان سكنًا[107] للوزير الكبير فنام ليلة فرأى في منامه أن بالباب شهداء استشهدوا بالوقعة[108] ودفنوا به فشكوا من دوس النعال فلما أصبح الصباح[109] ذكر ذلك للملك[110] فأمر بسده وبفتح باب الأخضر[111] الكبير وكان الملك يعمل به مولدًا[112] في كل ليلة جمعة، والباب الغربي الذي قتل فيه ابن الملك أهريقل | St 19v ذكر أن بها[113] من المسلمين | A1 24r ألف وأربعمائة شهيد، وأما الباب الثاني[114] فهو لوزيره الثاني[115] | A2 33v فكنا ليلة تكون نوبتنا نسمع مجالس الذكر كضجيج الحج فنظن[116] أن الوقعة بالمدينة، وبها مائة وثمانون مدرسة لطلب العلم حتى كان بالمدينة حطابون تكتب على الفتاوى ولا ترى في المدينة[117] ترابًا ولا حصوة[118] ولا يعلوها دخان، وفي كل عام تأتي مركب من أهريقل للمدينة بها مائة صبط[119]

97. St: وذكر
98. St: أنه كان
99. St: العسلية
100. Instead of قصر مغلق, St has قصرًا معلقًا .
101. St: كثير
102. Instead of قال بعضهم, St has فقال لي بعض الناس .
103. St: لنقل الأتربة
104. St: باب داره
105. St: زال
106. A2: هركة
107. Instead of كان سكنًا, A2 has كا سكنى .
108. St: في الوقعة
109. Instead of فلما أصبح الصباح, St has فلما أن أصبح .
110. St: للملك يوسف
111. St: الخضر
112. St: موالد
113. St: به
114. St lacks the words وأما الباب الثاني.
115. Instead of لوزيره الثاني, St has لوزير ثاني .
116. St: فنظنوا
117. St: أزقة المدينة
118. St: حصوًا
119. St: صنداد . See also note 208 below.

حاملين الزلط الأسود منكسين الروس يرصدونها[120] بداخل الصور[121] ومعهم هدايا وذلك كله لأجل زيارتهم كنيسة ولد أهريقل التي قتل بها وهي بوسط البلد ولها شهرة بعمارتها[122] وبنائها بقرب مسجد يقال له قَيْلُولاَ[123] في الصف[124] القبلي يصعد إليه بسلم من [A2 34r] هيصم وهو مشهور بكثرة العلماء، وبها مسجد يعرف[125] بابن عوف به ستون شهيدًا دفنوا به، وبها[126] مسجد في الجانب الغربي يسمى بالعمري وآخر لابن عوف وآخر بالباب الشرقي يسمى بالفخرية[127] به ستون من طلبة العلم، [A1 24v] وبالمدينة من الجانب البحري سبع محارس عالية البناء بها رماة ترمي بالقسي يرمي أحدهما على سبعة أميال، وفي الجانب الغربي باب يسمى باب البركة وباب الخضر عليه السلام يزوره الملك كل[128] يوم جمعة [St 20r] ويتصدق فيه بخير كثير، والجامع الكبير يسمى[129] بجامع الغرباء به ثلاث مائة[130] مجاور لطلب العلم وفي ركنه البحري منزل عمرو بن العاص لما [A2 34v] رمى بالمنجنيق حين أخذت المدينة، وبظاهر المدينة مسجد يعرف بجامع السارية بجانبه عامود كبير وآخر صغير، وذكروا[131] أن العامود إشارة كنز، وكان الملك في زمن الشتاء وزمن الزهورات يأمر بنصب الصيوان تحت العامود الكبير[132] ويخرج الملك وينصب[133] البيارق على الأسوار خضر وبيض وحمر ومفترجات ويأمر الملك في ذلك الوقت بفتح الخليج وتنظيفه[134] حتى يبان قاعه لأنه مرخم بالهيصم، وفي زمن النيل تجيء المراكب فيه وتطلع الناس للمفترجات [A1 25r] والبيع والشراء والتنزه إلى أيام عديدة، وبأبواب مساجدها قناديل معلقة [A2 35r] حتى إذا كان الليل[135] يحتاج أحد إلى شيء وقع منه يراه.

120. St: يرصونها
121. So in all manuscripts; lege السور.
122. St: بعمادها
123. St: قيليلا
124. Om. St.
125. Om. A1 and A2.
126. St: به
127. St: بالفخر
128. St: في كل
129. St: يعرف
130. Instead of ثلاث مائة, St has ثلاثمائة .
131. St: وذكر
132. Om. St.
133. St: وتنصب
134. St: وتنضيفه
135. St: باليل

[¶9] وظاهر[136] المدينة من الجانب البحري على خمسة أميال[137] منارة في البحر[138] خراب بها سبع عقود أسفلها تعلوها خمسة عقود تعلوها ثلاثة عقود يعلوها عقد واحد، طول كل عقد من العقود[139] الأولى سبع[140] وعشرون ذراعًا بذراع العمل وعرضه كذلك، وفي وسطه منارة مربعة الأركان | St 20v يصعد إليها بتسعة وتسعين[141] سلمًا طول[142] كل سلم أربعون ذراعًا وعرضه كذلك من النحاس الأصفر، منقوش عليه شخوص وأرهاط[143]، لكل باب منهم ثلاثة لوالب إذا فُرِك[144] يسمع[145] لها دوي[146] كالرعد، وخلف الأبواب الأربعة مرآة من | A2 35v هانبذان[147] مزينة بالذهب وفوقها علم من فضة يدور معها أينما[148] دارت، فإذا كانت الشمس شرقًا أو غربًا تدور بالآلات[149] إلى ناحيتها، فيرى من فيها من قابلها من مسيرة[150] ثمانية آلاف ميل[151] | A1 25v مكتوب عليها ذلك، ولكن وجدناها معطلة باقية على تلك الصورة[152]، وذكروا[153] أن سبب تعطيلها أن ولد أهريقل[154] لما[155] أتى إلى[156] الثغر عند الوقعة المعروفة بأهريقل وكان لما تحول المرآة إلى ناحيته فيرى ما يجري في المدينة وكان أهريقل أوصى لولده[157] وقال له إذا كان القتال دور المرآة نحوي لأرى ما أنت فيه، فلما[158] وصل المدينة أعلم الخازندار[159] بذلك

136. St: وبظاهر
137. St: أميال من المدينة
138. St omits the words في البحر.
139. St: ذلك العقود
140. St: سبعة
141. St: وتسعون
142. So in St. Om. A1 and A2.
143. Instead of شخوص وأرهاط, St has أرهاط وشخوص.
144. St: فركت
145. St: تسمع
146. St: دويًا
147. St: هانيدان
148. St: أين
149. St: بالآلة
150. St: مسير
151. St: ميلًا
152. St: الصفة
153. St: وذكر
154. So in St. A1 and A2: هرقيل
155. St: لما أن
156. Om. St.
157. St: ولده
158. St: فلما أن
159. St: الخازن

فلما[160] وقع الحرب قتل ابن أهريقل | وأسر[161] A2 36r قومه فبطل الخازندار[162] حركتها وفر هاربًا وكنا نتفرج على ذلك.

[¶10] وأقمت بها أربعين سنة[163] كأنها أربعين[164] يومًا، فيا لها من مدينة، بها حدائق وماء رائق وأهلها للخير فاعلين، لا تبطل القراءة منها ولا طلب العلم لا ليلًا ولا نهارًا إيمانًا ساطعًا ونورًا لامعًا، بها أولياء أسرارهم واضحة وكراماتهم باهرة وأقوالهم صحيحة، أعاد الله علينا من بركاتهم[165] ونفعنا بمددهم أجمعين[166].[167]

Translation

In name of God, the Merciful and Compassionate.
May God bless our lord Muḥammad.[168]

[¶1] In the sense in which it is [commonly] understood, a sound tradition indicates that a *murābiṭ*'s prayer in a town in which *ribāṭ* is practiced equals two thousand and twenty-five prayers.[169]

[¶2] On the authority of Muḥammad b. Khuzayma,[170] who cited his father, who said: I heard that [tradition] and so [decided to] pursue *ribāṭ* in Alexandria in Muḥarram[171] of the year five hundred sixty[172] during the governorship of the lord Ayyūb al-Kurdī, may God have mercy upon him. I went there, and in the morning I saw the city's brilliant whiteness from a distance of twenty-four[173] miles. When I reached the city I found its eastern gate opened. It has a small gate plated with iron. From it, one enters the city via a wooden bridge. At the end of the day, the gatekeepers raise

160. St: فلما أن

161. St: وأسرت

162. St: الخازن

163. Instead of وأقمت بها أربعين سنة, St has وأقمت بالمدينة أربعون عامًا.

164. St: أربعون

165. St: بركات الجميع

166. Om. St.

167. Ad. St.: أمين والحمد لله رب العالمين

168. St: "May God bless our lord Muḥammad, his family, and his companions, and grant him peace."

169. I have been unable to find this tradition in *ḥadīth* works. Similar traditions do exist. See, e.g., two traditions in al-Mundhirī, *al-Targhīb wa-l-tarhīb min al-ḥadīth al-sharīf*, ed. Muṣṭafā M. ʿImāra (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1388/1968), 2:246 (nos. 16 and 17): "A *murābiṭ*'s prayer equals five hundred prayers" (*inna ṣalāt al-murābiṭ taʿdil khamasmiʾa ṣalāt*) and "A prayer in *ribāṭ* territory equals two million prayers" (*al-ṣalāt bi-arḍ al-ribāṭ bi-alfay alf ṣalāt*).

170. See note 8 above.

171. St: "in Alexandria in the sacred [month of] Muḥarram"

172. November–December 1164

173. St: "fourteen"

it with the help of machines.[174] I sought to enter the city but for three days I was refused. There I was, at a moat, filled with water, that surrounded the city. It was ten cubits wide, and fishermen were catching fish in it.

[¶3] I said to the city's gatekeepers, "I wish to enter." Their headman said, "Shouldn't we seek council from the king?" After seeking council, they asked me, "Why do you want to enter?" I said, "I wish to engage in *ribāṭ* in the city." They then took me to the king. Standing[175] before him, I was surprised to see that he was an old man. I greeted him, and he returned the greeting and asked, "What is your name?" I replied, "Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb." He asked, "What is your *kunya*?" "Abū Khuzayma," I answered. Then he asked,[176] "What is your country?" I said, "Khurāsān." He asked, "Why have you come?" I said, "O revered king! I have heard that such-and-such will be the wage of anyone who performs *ribāṭ* in Alexandria. For that reason I have come to pursue *ribāṭ* here." He left me, holding a piece of paper in his hand and leaving me standing [there]. He then interrogated me a second time and I gave him the same answers. He interrogated me[177] a third time and I gave him the same answers. The fourth time he shouted at me, his voice leaving me shaken. He asked me, "You wish to perform *ribāṭ*?" I answered, "Indeed." Then the servants brought me to a place with furniture and assigned to me food and drink like the soldiery.[178] For three days they did not cease to bring me before the king, and they interrogated me four times each day. I gave him my initial answers. After that, he asked me, "Do you wish to engage in *ribāṭ*?" I answered, "I do." He then said, "There are three hundred and sixty commanders in the city, each of whom commands three hundred and sixty individuals. Each commander patrols the city one day and night [of the year]." Then he asked after the commander whose turn it was and summoned him. He assigned me to him and registered me in an account book.[179] He gave me a horse, the price of which equaled one hundred dinars, an Indian sword, and a spear from al-Khaṭṭ.[180]

[¶4] After the commander had performed the afternoon prayer, he fitted out the horsemen, saddled the riding beasts, and fixed their weapons and spearheads.[181]

174. St: "a machine"

175. I interpret the Arabic not as a passive of form IV, *ūqiftu* ("I was made to stand"), but as a form IV with the meaning of form I. This is a frequently attested feature of Middle Arabic; see Blau, *Grammar*, 1:157–63, and *Encyclopedia of Arabic Language and Linguistics*, s.v. "Middle Arabic" (page 221). See also note 47 above.

176. St: "Then he asked me"

177. St: "He left me and interrogated me"

178. St: "the king's soldiery"

179. St: "his account book"

180. For the meaning of *khaṭṭī* here, see Edward W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon Derived from the Best and Most Copious Eastern Sources* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1863–93), 2:760. According to Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1397/1977), 2:378, al-Khaṭṭ denotes the coasts of ʿUmān and al-Baḥrayn.

181. It is unclear to what the possessive *-hā* in *silāḥātahā* (*sic*) and *asinnatahā* refers. In the current translation, I have understood it to be a general reference to the horsemen. If it refers to the riding beasts, it is also possible to translate "the weapons and spearheads they were carrying."

We departed from the king's gate, wearing a coat of mail, a helmet, and fighting equipment, while scribes registered the troops,[182] each individual by name, until they had registered three hundred and sixty men, each riding a horse. We departed and patrolled the city until morning. We [finally] reached the king's *ṭishṭakhāna*.[183] We entered, and they paid and registered us again. This they did each day of the year for each commander. Each commander was assigned one rotation per year.

[¶5] We regularly visited the saints and frequented mosques. I saw eight hundred mosques, places of worship,[184] in the city. We were informed that there are [in fact] twelve thousand places of worship in the city and [that each Friday] one hundred and ninety sermons [are delivered] there. Each saint is charged [with giving a sermon] on a specific day. The city's lanes are paved with hard, white marble;[185] they are [lined with] tall buildings and are bright white. The construction of its [i.e., the city's] walls is never impaired. The king orders a third of all the taxes that he collects to be spent on repairing the city walls. There are three hundred and sixty towers that are whitewashed and decorated with the king's name written in gold ink. The tower of each of the king's viziers has been whitened[186] with white stones. The king's tower stood in the northern part. It had a gate that opened toward the east and one that opened toward the south. Two rectangular columns, made of red stone,[187] stood in front of the southern gate. They were decorated with images of groups of kings[188] and individuals. The height of each of the columns was seventy cubits;[189] they were equal in height.[190] Between them was a court, seventeen cubits long, roofed over with a copper lattice.

182. Ar. *al-ʿasākir*; St: "the army" (*al-ʿaskar*).

183. A *ṭishṭakhāna*, more commonly spelled *ṭishtakhānāh* (طشتخاناه), was a room or building where the sultan's cloths, cushions, and carpets were washed and stored. See Reinhart Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*, 2nd ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill/Paris: Maisonneuve, 1927), 2:44. Al-Qalqashandī writes that in addition to textiles, the sultan's swords, too, were kept there; *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā fī ṣināʿat al-inshāʾ*, ed. Muḥammad Q. al-Baqlī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1331–38/1913–19), 4:10.

184. Ar. *masjidan miḥrāban* (in A1 and A2); manuscript St only has *miḥrāban*, "places of worship." I have translated the asyndetic apposition of *miḥrāban* to *masjidan* in A1 and A2 as a permutative (*badal*; see William Wright, *Arabic Grammar*, 3rd ed. [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896–1898], 2:284–85), interpreting the two words as near synonyms.

185. Ar. *al-rukhām al-hayṣamī*. Dictionaries point at the smoothness and solidity of the type of stone called *hayṣam*. See, e.g., Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿarab* (Bulaq: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Amīriyya, 1300–1308/1883–91), 16:96. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifat jazīrat al-ʿarab*, ed. David H. Müller (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1884–91), 1:202, gives the following definition: "a stone that resembles marble but is whiter."

186. St: "built"

187. Ar. *zalaṭ*, lit. "pebbles" or "little pieces of stone."

188. Ar. *shukhūṣ mulūk*; St: "people" (*shukhūṣ*).

189. Seventy cubits equals 37.83 meters.

190. The columns are most probably Cleopatra's Needles.

[¶6] Some of our brothers mentioned to us that in the past, people made use of the images engraved on the columns.[191] When an enemy arrived at the city, he would see the likeness of each image he approached from the sea. There would be much shouting at the shore, and thus the people would come to know of that [i.e., the enemy's arrival]. Between the two columns is a basin made of black stones engraved with individuals, groups of people, ships, animals, and different shapes. It is covered with a sheath of lead.[192] Water would gush forth from the basin when an enemy arrived at the city. He would look at the basin and then see the likeness of each of the basin's images rising upon the sea.[193] They stated that a wise man who was in charge of the basin was buried in it. When Uhrayqil[194] lost the city, he sent a spy in the guise of a monk with a large sum of money. He entered the city, gained access to the king and said to him, "One of the wise men's treasures lies in the basin." He tempted him[195] to open it. The king opened it[196] and thereby made it unusable.

[¶7] They also reported that near Kawm Īmās and the Mosque of the Chain,[197] to the north of the hill, there is a fortress locked[198] with a large lock.[199] I kept asking about it. Some of them said[200] that it possessed a talisman used against dust.[201] Anyone who threw sweepings against its gate[202] would find them the following morning on Kawm Īmās. The accursed spy of Uhrayqil ceaselessly tempted the king to open that place. He [i.e., the king] ordered it to be opened and found there a copper broom on a black stone. Once it was opened it ceased to operate.

[¶8] The city's eastern gate, called the Gate of Muḥammad, God bless him and grant him peace, is the residence of the chief vizier. One night, in his sleep, he dreamt that there were martyrs at the gate who had fallen during the Battle[203] and been buried there. They complained about [being humiliated by] being trodden on. The

191. St: "the mentioned columns"

192. Lit. "with melted lead"

193. I read *yarā* instead of *tarā* on the basis of the text's similar wording and syntax a few lines earlier. The copyists grappled with the words *yanẓur* and *tarā*. The copyist of A2 chose not to follow manuscript A1 and read *tanẓur* instead of *yanẓur*, interpreting the text as "You would look at the basin and then see the likeness of …" The copyist of manuscript St changed his initial vocalization of *yanẓur* into *yunẓar* and seems to have interpreted the text as "The basin would be looked at, and you would then see the likeness of …"

194. For the identity of Uhrayqil, see below at notes 267–68.

195. St: "the king"

196. St: "he ordered it to be opened and it was opened"

197. St: "ʿAsaliyya Mosque"

198. St: "a hanging fortress"

199. St: "many locks"

200. St: "So some people said to me"

201. St: "a talisman for the transfer of dust"

202. St: "the gate of his house"

203. For this apocalyptic battle, see below at note 270.

next morning he reported this to the king,[204] who ordered it [i.e., the gate] to be closed[205] and the great Green Gate[206] to be opened. Each Friday evening, the king organized a festival there. It is said that at the western gate, where the son of King Uhrayqil was killed, there are [buried] fourteen hundred Muslim martyrs. As to [this] second gate, it belongs to his [i.e., the king's] second vizier. One night, when it was our turn [to patrol], we heard *dhikr* sessions as loud as [festivities celebrating] the Hajj such that we thought that the Battle was taking place in the city. There are one hundred and eighty colleges for the pursuit of knowledge in the city, to the point that there were firewood vendors in the city writing on [sheets of paper used for] fatwas. One never saw any dust or pebbles in the city[207] nor smoke in the air. Each year, Uhrayqil sends a ship to the city with a hundred silent men[208] carrying black stones, their heads bowed. They lay them on the ground within the circuit of the city wall. They [also] bring gifts. [They do] all of that in order to visit the church of Uhrayqil's son, which is where he was killed. It stands in the center of the city and is famous for its architecture.[209] It was built just south of a mosque called Qaylūlā,[210] which can be reached by way of a staircase of white stone. It is famous for its many scholars. There is a mosque known as Ibn ʿAwf. Sixty martyrs are buried there. In the western part of the city, there is a mosque called al-ʿAmrī[211] and another one belonging to Ibn ʿAwf.[212] Another [mosque] stands at the eastern gate. It is called al-Fakhriyya[213] and houses sixty students. In the north of the city, there are seven tall

204. St: "the king Yūsuf"

205. Note that the Ayyubid Ibn Jumayʿ (*Ṭabʿ al-Iskandariyya*, 55) writes that the Rosetta Gate is closed.

206. St: "al-Khiḍr's Gate"

207. St: "the city's lanes"

208. Manuscripts A1 and A2 have *ṣ.b.ṭ*, whose meaning I have been unable to determine. Here, I interpret it as *sabt*; see Lane, *Lexicon*, 4:1288. Manuscript St has *ṣ.n.d.ʾ.d*, which may be related to *ṣindīd*, "chief" or "brave man."

209. St: "for its columns"

210. St: "Qaylīlā"

211. I prefer to interpret the name of this mosque as "al-ʿAmrī," referring to the mosque ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ built after conquering Alexandria in 21/642. See the similar use of this *nisba* in, e.g., al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Aḥmad Zakī Bāshā et al. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya/al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1342–1418/1923–97), 19:319 in reference to the Mosque of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ in Fusṭāṭ. Considering the explicit western location of the mosque mentioned here, it seems less likely that the text refers to the mosque known as al-Jāmiʿ al-ʿImarī, located on today's Shāriʿ Abī Dardāʾ. The text would probably have considered this to have lain in the southern part of the city.

212. See al-Nuwayrī, *Kitāb al-Ilmām bi-l-iʿlām fī-mā jarat bihi al-aḥkām wa-l-umūr al-maqḍiyya fī waqʿat al-Iskandariyya*, ed. Étienne Combe and ʿAzīz S. ʿAṭiyya (Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUthmāniyya, 1968–76), 4:45, who writes that it was customary to appoint a descendant of the Companion ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf as the Western Mosque's overseer.

213. St: "al-Fakhr." This is the Fakhr or Fakhriyya college. Al-Nuwayrī writes that during Pierre de Lusignan's sack of Alexandria in 767/1365, European raiders "set fire to the gate of the Fakhr college, located near the Rosetta Gate" (*al-Ilmām*, 2:166). See also ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sālim, *Taʾrīkh al-Iskandariyya wa-ḥaḍāratihā fī al-ʿaṣr al-islāmī* (Alexandria: Muʾassasat Shabāb al-Jāmiʿa, 1982), 477.

watchtowers where archers are stationed, each of whom can shoot up to seven miles. In the western part of the city is a gate called the Gate of Blessing and al-Khiḍr's Gate, peace be upon him. The king visits it each Friday and spends much charity on it. The large congregational mosque is called[214] the Strangers' Mosque. It has three hundred resident students. In its northern corner is where ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ stayed when he fired mangonels when the city was taken. Outside the city is a mosque known as the Mosque of the Pillar. Next to it stand two columns, one large and one small.[215] They say that the column marks [the location of] a treasure. In the winter and spring,[216] the king orders a large tent to be set up at the base of the large column. The king goes out and has green, white, and red banners hung on the walls and places [built] for amusement. This is also the time when the king orders the opening of the canal and has it cleaned until its bottom is clearly visible because it is paved with white marble. Ships come [to the city] via the canal during the period of the Nile flood. Over many days, people visit the places for amusement and engage in buying and selling or stroll. At the gates of the city's mosques are hung so many lamps that someone who has dropped something at night will easily find it.

[¶9] Five miles north of the city stands a ruined lighthouse in the sea. There are seven vaults, on top of which stand five vaults, on top of which three vaults, on top of which one vault. The height and width of each of the first [i.e., lowest] vaults[217] is twenty-seven practical cubits.[218] At its center stands a rectangular lighthouse, which one ascends via ninety-nine stairs. The height and width of each stair is forty cubits. It is made of yellow copper and engraved with individuals and groups of people. Each of their [sic] doors has three pipes, which make a thunderous sound when they are turned.[219] Behind the four doors is a mirror made of ...[220] and decorated with gold. On top of it stands a silver banner, which turns in whatever direction the mirror turns. When the sun is in the east or the west, it is turned in that direction with the help of devices. Whoever is inside can see someone opposite at a distance of up to eight thousand miles. That is what is written about it. We found it inoperative [but] still matching that description. It is said that the reason that it no longer operated is that

214. St: "is known as"

215. The large pillar is the so-called Column of the Pillars (*ʿamūd al-sawārī*; Diocletian's Column/Pompey's Pillar), which appears in nearly all descriptions of the city. Like our text, al-Harawī, *Kitāb al-Ishārāt ilā maʿrifat al-ziyārāt*, ed. Janine Sourdel-Thomine, *Guide des lieux de pèlerinage* (Damascus: Institut Français de Damas, 1953), 47, locates a Mosque of the Pillar near the Column of the Pillars.

216. Lit. "when the flowers bloom"; cf. Persian *bahār*.

217. St: "those first vaults"

218. A practical cubit (*dhirāʿ al-ʿamal*) equals 66.5 centimeters; see Walther Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte umgerechnet ins metrische System* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1955), 55. Twenty-seven practical cubits equals 17.955 meters.

219. Or "rubbed"

220. Manuscripts A1 and A2 have *h.ʾ.n.b.dh.ʾ.n* here and manuscript St has *h.ʾ.n.y.d.ʾ.n.*

the son of Uhrayqil, when he came to the fortified city[221] during the battle known as Uhrayqil, saw what was happening in the city when the mirror was turned in his direction. Uhrayqil had enjoined his son, saying, "When the fighting starts, turn the mirror in my direction so that I see what you are doing." So, when he reached the city, he informed the treasurer about this. When the battle ensued, Uhrayqil's son was killed and his people made captive. The treasurer destroyed its [i.e., the mirror's] ability to move and fled. We witnessed that.

[¶10] I stayed there[222] for forty years, [which felt] like forty days. Oh, what a city! There one finds gardens and pure water. Its inhabitants do only what is good. They unceasingly recite the Qurʾān and pursue knowledge, day or night. Their faith illuminates and an inner light shines forth. There one finds saints whose secrets are clear, whose miracles are overwhelming, and whose sayings are correct. May God renew to us their blessings[223] and make us benefit by the support of them all![224]

The Account's Date

Having established the text, we are now in a position to analyze the account's contents. Before we do so, some words on the date of its composition are in order. At the beginning of the text, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb writes that he arrived in Alexandria in the month of Muḥarram in the year 560 (November–December 1164), during the governorship of one Ayyūb al-Kurdī (para. 2). This governor is not mentioned among the city's governors in accounts by Muslim historians of the turbulent last years of the Fatimid caliphate.[225] Perhaps the

221. Ar. *thaghr*, a word that can mean "fortified city" as well as "frontier" and is often associated with *jihād*. For discussions of this term, see Ralph W. Brauer, *Boundaries and Frontiers in Medieval Muslim Geography* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1995), 14, and Asa Eger, "Ḥiṣn, Ribāṭ, Thaghr or Qaṣr? Semantics and Systems of Frontier Fortifications in the Early Islamic Period," in *The Lineaments of Islam: Studies in Honor of Fred McGraw Donner*, ed. Paul M. Cobb, 427–55 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 437–40. Medieval Muslim authors frequently called Alexandria a *thaghr*. See *EI*[2], s.v. "al-Thughūr," and *EI*[3], s.v. "Alexandria."

222. St: "in the city"

223. St: "the blessings of all people"

224. St adds: "Amen! Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!"

225. If the text refers to a historical person, he may have been a successor of the popular *amīr* Murtafiʿ b. Faḥl (or Mujallā), better known as al-Khalwāṣ, whom the Fatimid grand vizier Ḍirghām appointed over Alexandria in an attempt to strengthen his own power base in Cairo and who was killed on Rabīʿ II 8, 559/March 5, 1164. See Claude Cahen, "Un récit inédit du vizirat de Dirghām," *Annales islamologiques* 8 (1969): 27–46, at 41–42; al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ al-ḥunafāʾ bi-akhbār al-aʾimma al-fāṭimiyyīn al-khulafāʾ*, ed. Jamāl al-Dīn al-Shayyāl (Cairo: al-Majlis al-Aʿlā li-l-Shuʾūn al-Islāmiyya, 1416/1996), 3:262, 264; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 28:332; ʿUmāra al-Yamanī, *al-Nukat al-ʿaṣriyya fī akhbār al-wuzarāʾ al-miṣriyya*, ed. Hartwig Derenbourg in *ʿOumara du Yémen: Sa vie et son oeuvre*, vol. 1: *Autobiographie et récits sur les vizirs d'Égypte* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1897), 140–44; cf. the dating in ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī (attr.), *al-Bustān al-jāmiʿ li-jamīʿ tawārīkh ahl al-zamān*, ed. ʿUmar ʿA. Tadmurī (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 1423/2002), 385. In mid-562/early 1167, historians report, Najm al-Dīn Ibn Maṣāl (d. 574/1178), son of a well-known and homonymous vizier (on whom see *EI*[2], s.v. "Ibn Maṣāl"), was governor of Alexandria. See Ibn Abī Ṭayy, cited in Abū Shāma, *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn al-nūriyya wa-l-ṣalāḥiyya*, ed. Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1418/1997), 2:96; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 28:336–37; al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭaṭ wa-l-āthār*, ed. Ayman F. Sayyid

date is corrupted and should be read as 562/1167, when Saladin (Yūsuf b. Ayyūb al-Kurdī) briefly controlled Alexandria on behalf of his uncle, the Zengid commander Shīrkūh,[226] or as 565/1169, when Saladin's father, Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb al-Kurdī, received Alexandria as an *iqṭāʿ*.[227] At the end of the text, our author writes that he stayed in Alexandria for forty years (para. 10). This suggests that he composed the text around 600/1203–4. However, these words cannot be accepted uncritically. The number forty is often used in a symbolic way, usually to indicate a great multitude or divine presence.[228] Here, the author seems to address the reader's religio-activist sentiments. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's claim to have conducted *ribāṭ* in Alexandria "for forty years, [which felt] like forty days" evokes the many traditions on the virtues of performing *ribāṭ* in Alexandria for forty days or nights. One such tradition, recorded in Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh's *Faḍāʾil al-Iskandariyya*, for example, has the Meccan scholar ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Abī Rawwād (d. 159/775–76) say:

> "For sixty years, I resided near God's sacred House [i.e., the Kaʿba], living a pious and ascetic life. But would God have granted me the possibility to depart for Alexandria in order to engage in *ribāṭ* there for forty nights, I would have preferred that over the sixty years of pious life near God's House."[229]

Other traditions state that performing *ribāṭ* in Alexandria for the duration of forty days or nights is better than sixty pilgrimages in addition to the Hajj and frees the *murābiṭ* from punishment after death.[230] Many traditions recommend a forty-day period of *ribāṭ* in other coastal regions.[231] Like the reports on Alexandria, they agree with a reportedly Prophetic tradition saying that "a full period of *ribāṭ* consists of forty days,"[232] which many

(London: Al-Furqān Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2002–3), 1:472; ʿImād al-Dīn al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Bustān*, 393. Ayyūb al-Kurdī, then, may have governed the city between 559/1164 and 562/1167.

226. Abū Shāma, *al-Rawḍatayn*, 2:13, 98; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 28:336–37. Note that manuscript St identifies Alexandria's governor elsewhere as a certain Yūsuf; see note 110 of the edition.

227. Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Muqaffā al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammad al-Yaʿlāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1411/1991), 2:380 (no. 896).

228. Lawrence I. Conrad, "Abraha and Muḥammad: Some Observations Apropos of Chronology and Literary *Topoi* in the Early Arabic Historical Tradition," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 50, no. 2 (1987): 225–40, at 230–32.

229. Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *Faḍāʾil al-Iskandariyya*, ed. Jelle Bruning (in preparation), no. 9.

230. Ibid., nos. 4, 5, 7, 27, and 38.

231. See Suliman Bashear, "Apocalyptic and Other Materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine Wars: A Review of Arabic Sources," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 3rd ser., 1, no. 2 (1991): 173–207, at 194–95, for such traditions concerning *ribāṭ* on the Syrian coast.

232. Most sources refer to Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Kitāb al-muṣannaf fī al-aḥādīth wa-l-āthār*, ed. ʿAbd al-Khāliq al-Afghānī, Sayyid Yūsuf ʿAlī, and Mukhtār Aḥmad al-Nadwī (Hyderabad: n.p./Mumbai: al-Dār al-Salafiyya, 1386–1403/1966–83), 5:328 = ed. Muḥammad ʿA. Shāhīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1416/1995), 4:225 (nos. 19449–50), and al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Muʿjam al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥamdī ʿA. al-Salafī (Beirut: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, 1344/2001–2), 8:133 (no. 7606). See also al-Suyūṭī, *Jāmiʿ al-aḥādīth: Al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr wa-zawāʾiduhu wa-l-Jāmiʿ al-kabīr*, ed. ʿAbbās A. Ṣaqr and Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Jawwād (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1414/1994), 4:127 (no. 10604), and

scholars knew, although not all accepted its historicity.[233] Our author's claim to a forty-year residence in Alexandria is, most likely, part of his rhetoric to convince the reader of the virtues of *ribāṭ* in Alexandria and cannot be taken at face value.

In fact, circumstantial evidence from Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's description of the city makes it very likely that the text dates to the late Ayyubid or early Mamluk period. First, the account clearly postdates the foundation of Alexandria's ʿAwfiyya college by the Fatimid vizier Riḍwān b. Walakhshī in 532/1137–38 on the city's main east-west street, the *maḥajja*.[234] Although he calls it a mosque,[235] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb refers to this college in paragraph 8. References to this college in historical sources decline after the death of its first professor and eponym, Abū Ṭāhir Ibn ʿAwf, in 581/1185. Importantly, it is highly unlikely, as Gary Leiser has noted, that the college's initial fame, if not its existence, endured into the Mamluk period.[236]

Second, the author's identification of the city's main congregational mosque as "the Strangers' Mosque" (*jāmiʿ al-ghurabāʾ*, para. 8) supports a date of composition between the mid-sixth/twelfth and early eighth/fourteenth century. Without doubt, what is meant here is the Western Mosque (*al-jāmiʿ al-gharbī*), one of the city's two main mosques after the Fatimid caliph al-Ḥākim built the Mosque of al-ʿAṭṭārīn in 404/1013 in the center of the city.[237] (In the course of the text's transmission, the word *al-ghurabāʾ* must have replaced its near homograph *al-gharbī*.) The Western Mosque stood in the northwestern part of the city in the immediate vicinity of the city's oldest mosque, built by the conqueror ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ in the early 20s/640s.[238] The text's association of the Strangers' Mosque with ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ (its northern corner being described as "where ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ stayed when he fired mangonels when the city was taken") further supports its identification with the Western Mosque. What is relevant for the dating of our text is that Muslim historians report that Saladin (re)built the Western Mosque and made it the city's sole congregational mosque by prohibiting delivery of Friday sermons in the Fatimid Mosque of al-ʿAṭṭārīn.[239] The text

al-Muttaqī al-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl fī sunan al-aqwāl wa-l-afʿāl*, ed. Ṣafwat al-Saqqā and Bakrī al-Ḥayyānī (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Risāla, 1405–7/1985–86), 8:531 (no. 24014).

233. The Mālikī Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī, in *al-Nawādir wa-l-ziyādāt ʿalā mā fī al-Mudawwana min ghayrihā min al-ummahāt*, ed. Muḥammad Amīn Būkhubza (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1999), 3:15, and the Ḥanbalī Ibn Qudāma, in *al-Mughnī*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī and ʿAbd al-Fattāḥ M. al-Ḥilw (Riyadh: Dār ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1417/1997), 13:18–25, include the tradition in their discussions on *ribāṭ*. Al-Sakhāwī, *al-Ajwiba al-murḍiya*, ed. Muḥammad I. M. Ibrāhīm (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāya, 1418/1997–98), 1:126, notes that the *isnād* includes a rejected transmitter.

234. Paul E. Walker, "Fāṭimid Alexandria as an Entrepôt in the East-West Exchange of Islamic Scholarship," *Al-Masāq* 26, no. 1 (2014): 36–48, at 38–39. For the college's location on the *maḥajja*, see al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā*, 10:458.

235. See Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥla*, 17, for the multifunctional nature of some of Alexandria's mosques.

236. Gary Leiser, "The Restoration of Sunnism in Egypt: Madrasas and Mudarrisūn, 495–647/1101–1249" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1976), 148–51, esp. 150–51. See also Walker, "Fāṭimid Alexandria," 47–48.

237. Behrens-Abouseif, "Topographie d'Alexandrie," 116–18 and 121–23.

238. Ibid., 114 and 117.

239. Al-Nuwayrī, *al-Ilmām*, 4:40; al-Maqrīzī, *Ittiʿāẓ*, 2:321.

seems to refer to this situation. It is unaware of the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's reintroduction of the (now Sunni) Friday sermon in the Mosque of al-ʿAṭṭārīn in 731/1330,[240] after which Alexandria had two congregational mosques.

Third and last, our author's description of Alexandria's famous lighthouse narrows down the possible date of text's composition considerably. He writes about "a rectangular lighthouse" that is no longer fully functional (para. 9). For centuries the lighthouse had a three-level composition, but by the late seventh/thirteenth century it is known to have lost its two upper structures; only its first, rectangular tier still stood.[241] The latest known author to describe the lighthouse as a three-story building is Yāqūt al-Rūmī, who wrote ca. 622/1225. Later authors mention only a rectangular single-story tower.[242] The lighthouse did not survive into the second half of the eighth/fourteenth century. When Ibn Baṭṭūṭa visited Alexandria in 750/1349–50, he saw the lighthouse fully in ruins.[243] Taken together, these three features of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's description of Alexandria leave little room for doubt that we are dealing with a text written between 622/1225 and 731/1330. The account's reference to the ʿAwfiyya college makes a date of composition before the eighth/fourteenth century most likely.

Analysis: A Call for the Defense of Alexandria

Alexandria's Defenses and Islamic Virtues

As noted earlier, this Ayyubid or early Mamluk text ascribes to Alexandria a special place in the Realm of Islam and calls for its defense. In order to mobilize Muslims to perform *ribāṭ* in Alexandria, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb first argues that the city stands out for its defenses and Islamic virtues (paras. 2–5, 8). He starts with a hyperbolic description of Alexandria's fortifications and garrison, combining fact and fiction. An account of his difficult entry into the city allows our author to describe in detail the city's eastern gate, which he calls the Gate of Muḥammad.[244] He describes it as "a small gate plated with iron" reached by crossing a heavy drawbridge over a moat that protected the city. The gatekeepers, he writes, refused to let him enter the city without official permission to do so (para. 2). This account agrees with contemporary descriptions of Alexandria. Writing in 688/1289, the North African pilgrim al-ʿAbdarī, for example, describes the doors of the city's gates as "most precisely and perfectly plated with iron, on both the inside and the outside."[245] The Mamluk historian Ibn Shāhīn al-Ẓāhirī, writing ca. 857/1453, similarly notes that "each gate [in Alexandria's

240. Al-Nuwayrī, *al-Ilmām*, 4:40.

241. Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "The Islamic History of the Lighthouse of Alexandria," *Muqarnas* 23 (2006): 1–14, at 8.

242. Ibid., 7–8.

243. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār*, 1:181.

244. See paragraph 8. This name for the city's eastern gate, which was more commonly known as Rosetta Gate, is also found in works on Alexandria's religious virtues: Ibn al-Ṣabbāgh, *Faḍāʾil al-Iskandariyya*, no. 9, and *al-Risāla al-ʿAwfiyya fī faḍl al-Iskandariyya*, cited in Ibn Duqmāq, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār li-wāsiṭat ʿiqd al-amṣār*, ed. Karl Vollers (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿa al-Amīriyya, 1309–14/1893–96), 5:117–18.

245. Al-ʿAbdarī, *al-Riḥla al-maghribiyya*, 140.

city walls] has three iron doors." Like our author, he also writes that a moat surrounds the city, and that the moat was filled with water from the Mediterranean in the event of an attack.[246] Al-Nuwayrī (d. 775/1372) confirms this moat's existence in Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's time.[247] Some references to the city's defenses elsewhere in the text, such as the "seven tall watchtowers" our author locates in the north of the city (para. 8), also agree with what is known about Alexandria's seventh/thirteenth- or eighth/fourteenth-century cityscape.[248] But his emphatic description of the city's inaccessibility—not only the fortifications and the steadfast gatekeepers, but also the repeated interrogations to which the city's governor allegedly subjected him (para. 3)—serves to highlight the exclusiveness of Alexandria as a location of *ribāṭ* performance.

In fact, the text's opening paragraphs describe Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's enlisting in Alexandria's garrison as an initiation into a brotherhood of companions-in-arms. The governor's severe interrogations form a liminal stage our author had to pass through in order to join the garrison. Once he had successfully endured these interrogations, the governor is said to have assigned him to an army unit and to have given him expensive weapons and a horse (para. 3). Here, our author evidently weaves fictional elements into his text. In reality, voluntary warriors were not registered into army units but supported Ayyubid and early Mamluk armies as auxiliary forces.[249] They were not on a military payroll but were paid from the alms tax (*ṣadaqa*) and may have received a part of the war booty.[250] In Alexandria, volunteer warriors are known to have joined religious (often Sufi) communities, many of which preferred not to receive financial support from the state and lived in *ribāṭ*s located on the coast, in the city wall's towers, or in religiously meaningful locations, such as in or near the lighthouse.[251]

246. Al-Ẓāhirī, *Zubdat Kashf al-mamālik wa-bayān al-ṭuruq wa-l-masālik*, ed. Paul Ravaisse (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1894), 39.

247. Al-Nuwayrī, *al-Ilmām*, 3:212–14, esp. 213.

248. For these or similar watchtowers, called *ribāṭ*s, see Ibn Rusta, *Kitāb al-Aʿlāq al-nafīsa*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1892), 118; Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ākām al-marjān fī dhikr al-madāʾin al-mashhūra fī kull makān*, ed. Fahmī Saʿd (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1408/1988), 86; and al-Nuwayrī, *al-Ilmām*, 2:131–32, 152. As noted above, Ibn Jubayr, too, saw watchtowers in the city, but he does not specify their location. See Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥla*, 15.

249. Hamilton A. R. Gibb, *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. Stanford J. Shaw and William R. Polk (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 83–85; Reuven Amitai, "Foot Soldiers, Militiamen and Volunteers in the Early Mamluk Army," in *Texts, Documents and Artefacts: Islamic Studies in Honour of D. S. Richards*, ed. Chase F. Robinson, 233–49 (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

250. Abbès Zouache, *Armées et combats en Syrie (491/1098–569/1174): Analyse comparée des chroniques médiévales latines et arabes* (Damascus: IFPO, 2008), 305, 308.

251. Al-Bakrī, *Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, ed. Adriaan P. van Leeuwen and André Ferré (Tunis: al-Dār al-ʿArabiyya li-l-Kitāb/al-Muʾassasa al-Waṭaniyya li-l-Tarjama wa-l-Taḥqīq wa-l-Dirāsāt "Bayt al-Ḥikma," 1992), 2:634 (§ 1058). See also the preceding notes and Éric Geoffroy, "Les milieux de la mystique musulmane à Alexandrie aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles," in *Alexandrie médiévale 2*, ed. Christian Décobert, 169–80 (Cairo: IFAO, 2002), 170–71; Nathan Hofer, *The Popularisation of Sufism in Ayyubid and Mamluk Egypt, 1173–1325* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 52.

Part of the initiation, too, was that the governor reportedly explained to Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb the garrison's organization. The governor informed him that "[t]here are three hundred and sixty commanders in the city, each of whom commands three hundred and sixty individuals" (para. 3). Again, these words do not reflect Alexandria's military organization around the turn of the eighth/fourteenth century. The city's governor himself, for example, held the rank of "*amīr* of forty"; that is, he was entitled to the service of forty horsemen (the city probably also housed auxiliary forces who fell under the governor's command).[252] The governor's statement that "[e]ach commander patrols the city one day and night [of the year]" (see also para. 4) reveals the numerical symbolism in these words. Using the number 360, these passages convey the image of a city enjoying the year-round protection of a large garrison.[253] Paragraph 5, which emphasizes the governor's concern for the city's protection, drives the text's symbolism home when it states that the city walls have "three hundred and sixty towers that are … decorated with the king's name written in gold ink."

These passages concerning Alexandria's defenses serve more than one purpose. They describe Alexandria as a well-fortified city and its garrison as a military organization whose spiritual benefits (see para. 1) are restricted to those Muslims who are sincerely devoted to the city's protection. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ascribes the state of the city's fortifications and the size of its garrison to the local governor's commitment to protecting the city. It is perhaps not a coincidence that he identifies this governor as "Ayyūb al-Kurdī" (para. 2). Thus, he evokes the legacy of Ayyubid rule over Alexandria, especially that of Saladin, whose patronage of the city's defenses and especially his restoration of Alexandria's walls is well known.[254]

In addition to praising the city's defenses, the account also portrays Alexandria as a thoroughly Islamic city. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb again combines fact and fiction and uses his rounds as a literary frame. He stresses, for example, the city's large number of mosques and writes that he "saw in the city eight hundred mosques" (para. 5). That he includes this observation in his account is understandable: Alexandria was famous for its many mosques.[255] When he visited Alexandria in 578/1183, Ibn Jubayr noted that there could be as many as four or five mosques in one place. He also writes that because of their omnipresence, various estimates of the total number of mosques in the city circulated.[256] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb himself writes, for instance, that people told him that the city counted 12,000 mosques (para. 5). Al-Harawī (d. 611/1215) also mentions various estimates. Whereas

252. Martina Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte Alexandrias von 564/1169 bis in die Mitte des 9./15. Jahrhunderts: Verwaltung und innerstädtische Organisationsformen* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1992), 97.

253. Annemarie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 276.

254. Doris Behrens-Abouseif, "Notes sur l'architecture musulmane d'Alexandrie," in *Alexandrie médiévale 1*, ed. Christian Décobert and Jean-Yves Empereur, 101–14 (Cairo: IFAO, 1998), 102–3; Müller-Wiener, *Eine Stadtgeschichte*, 14, 16.

255. See also Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-akhbāruhā*, ed. Charles C. Torrey (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1922), 41–42, partially copied in al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī taʾrīkh Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, ed. Muḥammad A. Ibrāhīm (Cairo: Dār Iḥyāʾ al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyya, 1387/1967–68), 1:85.

256. Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥla*, 17.

one of his sources maintained that there are 20,000 mosques in Alexandria, Ibn Munqidh told him that their number is 12,000.[257] Likewise, Ibn Jubayr says he heard people claim the city houses 12,000 mosques but also notes that others maintained that there are 8,000 mosques in Alexandria.[258] No doubt, these are not real estimates but rather express reverence for Alexandria's Islamic character. Stressing the large number of mosques in a city was quite a common literary strategy that can be found in discussions concerning other cities as well.[259]

In addition to showcasing Alexandria's many mosques, the account emphasizes the city's many and esteemed religious authorities. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb writes in detail about Alexandria's scholars and their colleges, of which he mentions some by name and notes the number of students they attract (para. 8).[260] He is even more interested in Sufism, which flourished in Alexandria at the time when he composed the account and often involved (temporary) *ribāṭ* performance.[261] Indeed, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb claims to have heard "*dhikr* sessions as loud as [festivities celebrating] the Hajj, such that we thought that the [apocalyptic] Battle was taking place in the city" (para. 8). He also highlights the presence of many Sufi masters and writes that it is only these Sufi masters who deliver Friday sermons in Alexandria's congregational mosques (para. 5). Throughout the year, then, the city's Muslim community enjoys not only the alleged protection of 360 commanders and their troops but also the year-round religious guidance of those who have access to esoteric knowledge or "secrets" (para. 10) of their religion.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb also points to religiously significant sites in Alexandria and highlights noteworthy features of its real cityscape. For example, he refers to veneration of the city's western gate, called the Green Gate (*al-bāb al-akhḍar*), and the nearby graves of "fourteen hundred Muslim martyrs" who gave their lives for the cause of Islam (para. 8). Although this number of graves must probably be taken with a grain of salt, our author clearly refers to the cemetery of Waʿla, which was, in Ibn Khallikān's (d. 681/1282) words, "a graveyard within the circuit of the walls at the Green Gate where a good number of pious Muslims... are buried."[262] Our author writes that each Friday evening Alexandria's ruler used to organize a religious festival at the Green Gate (para. 8). Other sources confirm that the Green Gate was a site of religious significance. Al-Harawī notes, for instance, that people visit the gate for religious purposes.[263] Abū al-Fidāʾ (d. 732/1331) and Ibn Baṭṭūṭa write that the Green Gate is opened only on Fridays.[264] Other authors provide an etymology for the gate's

257. Al-Harawī, *al-Ishārāt*, 47–48, paraphrased in al-Ẓāhirī, *Zubda*, 40.

258. Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥla*, 17.

259. Antrim, *Routes and Realms*, 74–75, with notes 64–65.

260. For the ʿAwfiyya college, see above. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb also mentions a Fakhriyya or Fakhr college, located near Alexandria's eastern gate and housing sixty students (para. 8); see note 213 above.

261. Geoffroy, "Les milieux."

262. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān wa-anbāʾ abnāʾ al-zamān*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1397–98/1977–78), 1:106.

263. Al-Harawī, *al-Ishārāt*, 50.

264. Abū al-Fidāʾ, *Taqwīm al-buldān*, ed. Joseph T. Reinaud and William Mac Guckin de Slane, *Géographie d'Aboulféda: Texte arabe* (Paris: L'Imprimerie Royale, 1840), 105; Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Tuḥfat al-nuẓẓār*, 1:179.

name that connects it with the age of prophets. The probably eighth/fourteenth-century or later *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-l-Iskandariyya* derives the gate's name from al-Khiḍr, the name of a Qurʾānic servant of God with which the name of the gate shares its grammatical root (*kh-ḍ-r*).[265] Possibly attesting to the antiquity of the Green Gate's association with al-Khiḍr, the third/ninth-century historian Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (d. 257/871) locates a "mosque of Dhū al-Qarnayn or al-Khiḍr at the city gate when you exit through the gate."[266] In light of the religious meaning placed upon the Green Gate and its venerated surroundings, it is not surprising that Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb writes that in the west of the city stands "a gate called the Gate of Blessing and al-Khiḍr's Gate," which Alexandria's ruler visits each Friday and to which he devotes considerable charity (para. 8). Most likely, these are alternative names for the Green Gate.

By describing Alexandria as possessing sturdy city walls and gates, a large and committed garrison, numerous mosques, colleges, and religious authorities, and venerated architecture in the first part of the account, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb depicts the city as a true bastion of Islam worthy of being defended.

Fulfillment of Apocalyptic Prophecies

From paragraph 6 onward, however, the text becomes grim. It describes the destruction of ancient monuments that once had supernatural qualities and protected Alexandria against enemy attacks. In contrast to earlier passages, which extoll the qualities of Alexandria's fortifications, those concerning these monuments highlight breaches in the city's defenses. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb does not fail to identify the source of this destruction and ascribes it to the activity of one Uhrayqil and his son. Uhrayqil is a diminutive form of Hiraql, that is, a pejorative reference to the Byzantine emperor Heraclius (r. 610–41) and his offspring. Although Muslim historical tradition generally offers a favorable view of this emperor,[267] in religious and especially apocalyptic literature the Heraclian dynasty represents Islam's archenemy who will initiate battles heralding the end of time.[268] Muslim apocalyptic literature holds that in one or two such battles, Muslims will fight this enemy in Alexandria, but the battles will nonetheless lead to the city's total destruction.[269] Our author

265. Pseudo-al-Wāqidī, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-l-Iskandariyya*, ed. Hendrik A. Hamaker (Leiden: S. and J. Luchtmans, 1825), 117–18. For the date of this text, see Christian Décobert, "La prise de Maryût par les Arabes: Conquête et conversion religieuse," in *Alexandrie médiévale 3*, ed. Jean-Yves Empereur and Christian Décobert, 145–70 (Cairo: IFAO, 2008), 146–50.

266. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 41, copied in al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 1:85.

267. Lawrence I. Conrad, "Heraclius in Early Islamic Kerygma," in *The Reign of Heraclius (610–641): Crisis and Confrontation*, ed. Gerrit J. Reinink and Bernard H. Stolte, 113–56 (Leuven: Peeters, 2002); Nadia El-Cheikh, "Muḥammad and Heraclius: A Study in Legitimacy," *Studia Islamica* 89 (1999): 5–21; and Walter E. Kaegi, *Byzantium and the Early Islamic Conquests* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 14–17.

268. Michael Cook, "The Heraclian Dynasty in Muslim Eschatology," *Al-Qanṭara* 13 (1992): 3–23, and idem, *Princeton Papers in Near Eastern Studies* 1 (1992): 23–47, at 30–32.

269. Jelle Bruning, "The Destruction of Alexandria: Religious Imagery and Local Identity in Early Islamic Egypt," in *Egypt and the Eastern Mediterranean World: From Constantinople to Baghdad, 500-1000 CE*, ed. Jelle Bruning, Janneke H. M. de Jong, and Petra M. Sijpesteijn (forthcoming).

believes that these eschatological prophecies are now unfolding and presents the activity of Uhrayqil and his son as direct evidence. He writes about people who died for the cause of Islam during "the Battle" (*al-waqʿa*, para. 8), a clear reference to the so-called Battle of Alexandria (*waqʿat* or *malḥamat al-Iskandariyya*) frequently mentioned in apocalyptic lore.[270] Later in the account, he claims to have witnessed "the battle known as Uhrayqil," which caused severe damage to the city's lighthouse (para. 9). Although Uhrayqil's son died during this battle, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb describes the apocalyptic threat as real and permanent: "Each year," he writes, "Uhrayqil sends … a hundred silent men" who are able to reach the city's central quarters and show reverence for Uhrayqil's deceased son (para. 8). Thus, the author stresses the contemporary urgency of defending Islam in Alexandria.

Our author locates this destruction at meaningful sites and uses literary themes known from other literature about Alexandria when describing the sites' destruction. For example, he mentions the existence of "a fortress locked with a large lock [or, many locks]" that had protected a wondrous copper broom (para. 7). He locates this fortress in the northeast of the city: it stands to the north of a hill called Kawm Īmās and near an otherwise unknown Mosque of the Chain.[271] The hill he refers to is probably Kawm al-Dīmās. Muslim authors from the sixth/twelfth century and later know this hill, which they call simply al-Dīmās,[272] as a graveyard in which a number of prominent scholars were interred.[273] Al-Dīmās was a site of some religious significance. The graveyard facilitated performance of burial rituals for those who were buried elsewhere. In his *Muʿjam al-safar*, al-Silafī writes that during the burial of the Alexandrian *qāḍī* Aḥmad b. ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Kinānī in 529/1135, a large crowd

270. E.g., Nuʿaym b. Ḥammād, *Kitāb al-Fitan wa-l-malāḥim*, ed. Majdī b. M. b. S. al-Shawrī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1423/2002), 351–53 (nos. 1310-12); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, ed. ʿUmar b. Gh. al-ʿAmrawī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1415–21/1995–2000), 12:444–45 (no. 1269), 68:227–28 (no. 9234); *al-Risāla al-ʿAwfiyya fī faḍl al-Iskandariyya* in Ibn Duqmāq, *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*, 5:116–17.

271. This mosque's name, Mosque of the Chain (*jāmiʿ al-silsila*), recalls a name given to the Western Harbor, "Harbor of the Chain" (*baḥr al-silsila* in al-Nuwayrī, *al-Ilmām*, e.g., 1:112; *marsā al-silsila* in Leo Africanus, *Description de l'Afrique*, trans. Alexis Épaulard [Paris: Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, 1956], 2:496). Étienne Combe, in a review of *The Crusades in the Later Middle Ages*, by ʿAzīz S. ʿAṭiyya, in *Bulletin de la Société Royale d'Archéologie d'Alexandrie* 32 (1938): 205–8, at 207–8 (referring to al-Nuwayrī, *al-Ilmām*, 3:214), rightly notes that this toponym dates to the mid-eighth/fourteenth century. Hence, it is unlikely to be related to our author's Mosque of the Chain. Today, al-Silsila is the name of the promontory east of the city's Eastern Harbor (ancient Akra Lochias). But although tenth/sixteenth-century sources refer, in addition to the Harbor of the Chain, also to a Gate of the Chain (Étienne Combe, "Notes de topographie et d'histoire alexandrine," *Bulletin de la Société Royale d'Archéologie d'Alexandrie* 36 [1946]: 120–45, at 121–22), I found no information that verifies the existence of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's Mosque of the Chain. Note that manuscript St calls this mosque the ʿAsaliyya Mosque, also unknown.

272. For the identification of al-Dīmās with one of Alexandria's two hills, see notes 275 and 276 below.

273. Al-ʿAynī, *ʿIqd al-jumān fī taʾrīkh ahl al-zamān*, vol. 2: *ʿAṣr salāṭīn al-Mamālīk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Amīn (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kutub wa-l-Wathāʾiq al-Qawmiyya, 1431/2010), 2/2:108; al-Fāsī, *al-ʿIqd al-thamīn fī taʾrīkh al-balad al-amīn*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥ. al-Fiqqī, Fuʾād Sayyid, and Maḥmūd M. al-Ṭanāḥī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1381–1406/1962–86), 2:241; Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1929–72), 11:194; al-Silafī, *Muʿjam al-safar*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh ʿU. al-Bārūdī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1414/1993), 259, 260, 315, 464.

"prayed over him in the graveyard of al-Dīmās" although the *qāḍī* himself was laid to rest in a private garden neighboring the graveyard.[274] Al-Dīmās also housed venerated religious architecture. In his book on pilgrimage sites, al-Harawī writes about the existence of a tomb of the prophet Jeremiah at al-Dīmās.[275] The Coptic synaxarium locates a church with relics of St. John the Baptist and the prophet Elisha on one of the city's two hills and reports that the church was known as al-Dīmās.[276] Without hard evidence, modern scholars often identify (Kawm) al-Dīmās with the northern or western slope of Kawm al-Dikka, where a Muslim graveyard has indeed been excavated.[277]

Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb reports that people told him about a miracle associated with the locked fortress north of Kawm Īmās: rubbish placed at the gate would miraculously be transferred to the top of the hill. Although this precise story is not known from other sources, he is drawing here on existing themes in literature about Alexandria.[278] The late Mamluk and early Ottoman historian Ibn Iyās (d. ca. 903/1524) provides the closest parallel to Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's story. In his discussion of the Muslim conquest of Alexandria, he includes an anecdote about "an ever-locked gate with twenty-four locks," whose location goes unmentioned. Egypt's Byzantine ruler at that time, al-Muqawqis, wished to open the gate but was strongly advised not to do so. When he eventually did open it, he found not the treasures he expected but instead images and inscriptions on the walls foretelling the establishment of Muslim rule in the year in which the gate was opened. In that same year, according to the anecdote, Muslims conquered Alexandria.[279] Using a similar motif, our

274. Al-Silafī, *Muʿjam al-safar*, 54.

275. Al-Harawī, *al-Ishārāt*, 47. When he visited the city in 987/1579, Alexandrians pointed Hans Jacob Breüning to a site at which the house of Jeremiah was believed to have stood and which had been turned into a mosque. He confirms that it stood on "a mountain"; see Hans Jacob Breüning, *Orientalische Reiß des edlen unnd besten Hans Jacob Breüning* [...] (Strasbourg: Carolus, 1612), 122.

276. *Le synaxaire arabe-jacobite (rédaction copte)*, ed. and trans. René Basset (in *Patrologia Orientalis* 1, 3, 11, 16, 17, 20), 1:346–47 [132–33], which also connects the church with one of the city's hills (*akwām*).

277. E.g., Combe, "Notes," 143–44; Mieczyslaw Rodziewicz, "Remarks on Kom el Demas in Alexandria," *Graeco-Arabica* 5 (1993): 315–19. For the graveyard, see Barbara Tkaczow, "The Historical Topography of Kom el-Dikka: Notes on Plans XII–XV," in *Fouilles polonaises à Kôm el-Dikka (1986–1987)*, ed. Zsolt Kiss et al., 131–43 (Warsaw: Centre d'Archéologie Méditerrannéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences, 2000), 139–43, and recent archaeological reports in Emanuela Kulicka, "Islamic Necropolis at Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria: Research in the 2010–2013 Seasons," *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 24, no. 1 (2015): 62–72; Grzegorz Majcherek and Emanuela Kulicka, "Alexandria, Kom el-Dikka: Season 2014–2015," *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 25 (2016): 33–63, at 53–62; Grzegorz Majcherek and Renata Kucharczyk, "Alexandria, Kom el-Dikka: Season 2016," *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 26, no. 1 (2017): 37–58, at 38–45. See Ibn Jumayʿ, *Ṭabʿ al-Iskandariyya*, 54 for the location of Alexandria's (main) graveyards.

278. In addition to what follows, see also Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam's anecdote about ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ's clever entry into and escape from "the fortress in the bath (*dīmās*)" during the conquest of Alexandria. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr*, 77–78, copied in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:445–46, and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 19:304–5. Al-Ẓāhirī's description of the city's Dār al-Sulṭān as "always locked" (*Zubda*, 40) is not relevant in this context. He means that this building was reserved strictly for the sultan's use.

279. Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr fī waqāʾiʿ al-duhūr*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1974–92), 1/1:106. Ibn Iyās's anecdote has its roots in a very similar story connected with the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, which can already be found in the third/ninth- and early fourth/tenth-century works

text claims that a spy sent by Uhrayqil opened the locked fortress and thus destroyed the monument's talisman.

The cessation of the miraculous activity associated with the locked fortress occurred together with that of another monument. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb writes about a basin decorated with a large variety of images in which a sage lay buried (para. 6). He locates the basin on the coast between Cleopatra's Needles. Before a Muslim king opened up the basin, it used to warn the city of approaching enemies and, in the event of their arrival, to scare them off. Benjamin of Tudela, who visited Alexandria around 565/1170, records a very similar monument in the same location. At the coast, he writes, stands

> a sepulchre of marble on which are engraved all manner of beasts and birds; an effigy is in the midst thereof, and all the writing is in ancient characters, which no one knows now. Men suppose that it is the sepulchre of a king who lived in early times before the Deluge.[280]

Describing why this basin/tomb and the locked fortress stopped performing their miracles, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb uses a literary theme commonly found in anecdotes about the destruction of the miraculous mirror on top of the city's lighthouse, to which we will return shortly. Like these anecdotes, our author ascribes the destruction of the city's marvels to a Byzantine emperor (Uhrayqil). As in some of these anecdotes, the Byzantine emperor had sent a spy who convinced the city's Muslim ruler of the presence of treasures in these monuments.[281] It is the Muslim ruler who eventually caused the monuments' destruction through his attempt to retrieve the treasures.[282]

But of all the city's monuments that Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb discusses, the Pharos, Alexandria's famous lighthouse, receives most attention—and understandably so. The lighthouse played a central role in Muslim collective memory of Alexandria's past. Tellingly, authors such as the fourth/tenth-century al-Masʿūdī and Ibn al-Kindī, but also the early seventh/thirteenth-century al-Harawī, record the popular idea that the Pharos had once stood literally in the center of the city,[283] possibly reflecting the idea that the lighthouse

of Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ Miṣr*, 206) and Ibn Khurdādhbih (*Kitāb al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1889], 156–57). In later sources the anecdote exhibits a more elaborate narrative that is closer to Ibn Iyās's version; e.g., al-Masʿūdī (attr.), *Akhbār al-zamān*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṣāwī (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd A. Ḥanafī, 1357/1938), 73; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*, 5:327–28; Ibn al-Wardī, *Jazīrat al-ʿajāʾib wa-farīdat al-gharāʾib*, ed. Anwar M. Zannātī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfa al-Dīniyya, 1428/2008), 74. For the territorialized articulation of Muslim power in this anecdote, see Travis Zadeh, *Mapping Frontiers across Medieval Islam: Geography, Translation and the ʿAbbasid Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 46.

280. Benjamin of Tudela, *Itinerary*, 76–77 (English).

281. For such anecdotes involving a spy, see al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-bilād wa-akhbār al-ʿibād* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), 145–46, and al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb fī al-muḍāf wa-l-mansūb*, ed. Muḥammad A. Ibrāhīm (Beirut: al-Maktaba al-ʿAṣriyya, 1424/2003), 422.

282. See the references in notes 298–300 below.

283. Al-Masʿūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa-l-ishrāf*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1894), 48; Ibn al-Kindī, *Faḍāʾil Miṣr*, ed. Ibrāhīm A. al-ʿAdawī and ʿAlī M. ʿUmar (Cairo: Maktabat Wahba, 1391/1971), 51; al-Harawī, *al-Ishārāt*, 48; pseudo-Ibn Ẓuhayra, *al-Faḍāʾil al-bāhira fī maḥāsin Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, ed. Muṣṭafā al-Saqqā and Kāmil al-Muhandis (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1969), 57. See also Bruning, "Destruction of Alexandria."

stood at the center of the universe.[284] Other authors identified the Pharos as one of the buildings built by the Qurʾānic semi-prophet Dhū al-Qarnayn and, as such, considered it a precious remnant of the age of prophets and other God-sent messengers.[285] As we shall see, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's description of the Pharos shares many elements with descriptions of the lighthouse by other Muslim authors, including its partial destruction. But what sets the text apart from these other descriptions is that our author uses his description of the Pharos to bring home his argument about the urgency of pursuing *ribāṭ* in Alexandria.

The beginning of his description of the lighthouse is remarkable for its degree of detail. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb claims that the lighthouse stands in the center of four stories of vaults (*ʿuqūd*), for which he gives very precise measures. What he means here is not entirely clear. Perhaps this is a somewhat cryptic description of a cistern,[286] but it also recalls the idea that the lighthouse once stood on bridges or columns.[287] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb continues with a detailed description, including measurements, of the ninety-nine stairs that allegedly lead up to the lighthouse. That no other source confirms this description is not important.[288] The details are a rhetorical device that is meant to give the impression that the author is intimately familiar with the monument he describes.[289]

According to our author, the lighthouse has many noteworthy features. These features resemble aspects of the Pharos's architecture as described by other authors, but our text is never identical to other descriptions of the lighthouse. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb writes, for

284. François de Polignac, "*Al-Iskandariyya*: Œil du monde et frontière de l'inconnu," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École Française de Rome* 96 (1984): 425–39.

285. Faustina C. W. Doufikar-Aerts, "Alexander the Great and the Pharos of Alexandria in Arabic Literature," in *The Problematics of Power: Eastern and Western Representations of Alexander the Great*, ed. M. Bridges and J. Ch. Bürgel, 191–202 (Bern: Peter Lang, 1996).

286. Most authors do not hold, however, that the lighthouse stood on a cistern. If they do not give a (somewhat) realistic impression of its foundation (see the discussion in Behrens-Abouseif, "Islamic History"), they mostly write that it stood on one or more crabs made of glass or marble; e.g., Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar kitāb al-Buldān*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1885), 70, 118; Ibn Khurdādhbih, *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, 160; Ibn Rusta, *al-Aʿlāq al-nafīsa*, 80; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa-maʿādin al-jawhar*, ed. Charles Barbier de Meynard and Abel Pavet de Courteille, rev. Charles Pellat (Beirut: Publications de l'Université Libanaise, 1966–79), 2:105 (§ 837), cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:423; cf. al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb*, 422. For possible interpretations of these crabs' symbolism, see de Polignac, "*Al-Iskandariyya*," 431–34. The idea that the lighthouse stood on a cistern finds a parallel in stories about a Muslim ruler who tore down the lighthouse in search of treasures that were said to lay hidden in storage rooms underneath it. See Aḥmad b. Muṭarrif, *al-Tartīb fī al-lugha*, ed. ʿAbd Allāh b. Fuhayd b. Rashūd al-Baqamī (MA thesis, Jāmiʿat Umm al-Qurā, Mecca, 1412/1993), 2:19–20, (copied in Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār: L'Égypte, la Syrie, le Ḥiǧāz et le Yémen*, ed. Ayman F. Sayyid [Cairo: IFAO, 1985], 90–92); al-Dimashqī, *Nukhbat al-dahr fī ʿajāʾib al-barr wa-l-baḥr*, ed. Christian M. J. Fraehn and A. F. Mehren, *Cosmographie de Chems-ed-Din Abou Abdallah Mohammed ed-Dimichqui* (St Petersburg: M. M. Eggers/H. Schmitzdorff, 1866), 37; al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Rawḍ al-miʿṭār fī khabar al-aqṭār*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1975), 54–55; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2:105–6 (§ 838), cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:423–24, and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 1:396–97; al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār al-bilād*, 145–46.

287. Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ākām al-marjān*, 85; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:425; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 1:89.

288. For an overview of descriptions of the lighthouse in Muslim sources, see Behrens-Abouseif, "Islamic History."

289. Antrim, *Routes and Realms*, 62–70.

example, that the lighthouse possesses four doors equipped with pipes "which make a thunderous sound when they are turned [or rubbed]." Other sources, al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) being the earliest currently known, speak of a statue standing on top of the lighthouse that makes a horrible sound when an enemy approaches the city so that Alexandria's inhabitants can prepare for battle.[290] Our author also describes a banner on top of the Pharos which turns with the mirror inside the lighthouse and claims that this mirror always points at the sun. Other sources do not speak of banners but do mention a second statue that always points at the sun, whatever its position in the sky.[291]

But the lighthouse's most noteworthy feature was its miraculous mirror, which, according to Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, allowed one to see over a distance of 8,000 miles. It is not surprising that he discusses the mirror (and its destruction) in detail. The mirror that supposedly stood on or, according to others, hung in Alexandria's lighthouse was widely considered (to have been) one of the wonders of the world.[292] Like the Pharos itself, the mirror was part and parcel of the collective memory of Alexandria in medieval Islam, and it features in many descriptions of the city. From the fourth/tenth century on, Muslim historians generally dated the mirror to one of two distinct periods in Egypt's history. Some ascribed the building of the mirror to an ancient Egyptian king.[293] A popular fourth/tenth- or fifth/eleventh-century text, mostly known as *Kitāb al-ʿAjāʾib* or *Akhbār al-zamān* and regularly cited by Ayyubid and Mamluk authors,[294] dates it to the reign of King Miṣrāyim, a great-grandson of Nūḥ and the first to rule Egypt after the Flood. His sons are said to have built in the center of Raqūda (to be understood as a predecessor of Alexandria[295]) a copula of gilded

290. Al-Dimashqī, *Nukhbat al-dahr*, 36–37; al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Rawḍ al-miʿṭār*, 54; Ibn Waṣīf Shāh, *Mukhtaṣar ʿajāʾib al-dunyā*, ed. Sayyid K. Ḥasan (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1421/2001), 185; al-Ibshīhī, *al-Mustaṭraf fī kull fann mustaẓraf*, ed. Mufīd M. Qumayḥa (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1406/1987), 2:306–7; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2:105 (§ 837), cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:423; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 1:396.

291. Al-Dimashqī, *Nukhbat al-dahr*, 36–37; Ibn Waṣīf Shāh, *Mukhtaṣar*, 185; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2:105 (§ 837), cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:423; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 1:396; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 1:89.

292. See, e.g., a popular tradition going back to ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ (d. 65/684) on the four wonders of the world in Ibn al-Faqīh, *Mukhtaṣar*, 72; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī taʾrīkh al-mulūk wa-l-umam*, ed. Muḥammad ʿA. ʿAṭā and Muṣṭafā ʿA. ʿAṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1415/1995), 1:164 and 165; Ibn Khurdādhbih, *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, 115; Ibn Rusta, *al-Aʿlāq al-nafīsa*, 78; al-Suyūṭī, *al-Durr al-manthūr fī al-tafsīr al-maʾthūr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1432–33/2011), 3:488; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb*, 422; see also Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, 92. Not everyone believed that this miraculous mirror had existed. Doubters included the author of the *Kitāb al-Baḥth*, ascribed to the second/eighth-century alchemist Jābir b. Ḥayyān (cited in Paul Kraus, *Jābir ibn Ḥayyān: Contribution à l'histoire des idées scientifiques dans l'Islam* [Cairo: IFAO, 1942–43], 1:296–97). Al-Harawī (*al-Ishārāt*, 48–49) argues that because the mirror no longer exists, the lighthouse cannot be considered a wonder.

293. In addition to what follows, Ibn Ḥawqal (writing between 331/942 and 378/988) ascribes the building of the lighthouse and its mirror to a mighty king in *Kitāb Ṣūrat al-arḍ*, ed. J. H. Kramers (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1938), 1:151. The fourth/tenth-century Isḥāq b. Ḥusayn ascribes it to ancient "sages" in *Ākām al-marjān*, 86.

294. The text is explicitly copied in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:425. See also al-Bakrī, *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, 2:533 and 594 (§§ 881 and 988); Murtaḍā b. al-ʿAfīf, *L'Égypte de Murtadi fils du Gaphiphe*, trans. Pierre Vattier, introd. and annot. Gaston Wiet (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1953), 119; and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 15:44.

295. Bruning, "Destruction of Alexandria."

brass on which they placed a mirror. But the text also credits other ancient Egyptian kings with building Alexandria's famous mirror.[296] Like Archimedes's mirror, it allowed those who controlled it to shoot beams of sunlight at approaching enemy ships.[297] However, the idea that Alexander the Great, in this context often identified as Dhū al-Qarnayn, built the city's lighthouse and its mirror enjoyed greater popularity and can be found in many sources. Like Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's mirror, the mirror Alexander the Great built was believed to have been a powerful instrument to identify approaching enemy ships from afar—especially those from Constantinople, the seat of Islam's Byzantine archenemy—and, like King Miṣrāyim's mirror, to burn these ships with sunlight.[298] In short, Alexandria's miraculous mirror was thought to have formed the city's most important defense mechanism.

In contrast to these sources, which describe the mirror as an artifact of the ancient past, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb claims that the mirror existed until very recently. He writes that he witnessed a Byzantine attack on the city, led by the son of Uhrayqil, during which the city's treasurer sided with the Byzantines and destroyed the mirror's ability to move. Having done this, the treasurer fled the city. Stories of the mirror's destruction circulated in various forms.[299] Our text's version is not known from other sources. Nonetheless, it shows its author's familiarity with more popular versions. A version al-Masʿūdī recorded in Egypt became widespread and has frequently been cited.[300] It involves an unnamed Byzantine emperor who sent a servant to make the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik (r. 86–96/705–15) believe that much wealth lay hidden underneath the Pharos. Only after the caliph had torn down the lighthouse's upper half in search of these treasures, and thus had destroyed the mirror, did Alexandrians realize that the caliph was being misled. By that time, the Byzantine emperor's servant had fled.[301] By and large, this version's plot is identical to that of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb: the Byzantine emperor sends someone (a servant or his son) to destroy the mirror; this person convinces a Muslim (the caliph or the city's treasurer) to cooperate; and after the successful destruction of the mirror someone flees

296. Al-Masʿūdī, *Akhbār al-zamān*, 131.

297. Ibn Waṣīf Shāh, *Mukhtaṣar*, 114 = al-Masʿūdī, *Akhbār al-zamān*, 154.

298. Aḥmad b. Muṭarrif, *al-Tartīb fī al-lugha*, 2:18–19 (copied in Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, 91); al-Gharnāṭī, *Tuḥfat al-albāb* (*wa-nukhbat al-aʿjāb*), ed. Gabriel Ferrand in *Journal asiatique* 207 (1925): 1–148 and 193–303, at 70–71; al-Ḥimyarī, *al-Rawḍ al-miʿṭār*, 54; Ibn Waṣīf Shāh, *Mukhtaṣar*, 114 = al-Masʿūdī, *Akhbār al-zamān*, 154; al-Ibshīhī, *al-Mustaṭraf*, 2:306–7; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2:105–6 (§ 838), cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:423–24; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 1:396; and al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 1:89); Murtaḍā b. al-ʿAfīf, *L'Égypte*, 119; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 1:90–91; Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 1:186.

299. E.g., Benjamin of Tudela, *Itinerary*, 75 (English); Yāqūt al-Rūmī, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, 1:186–87. For short references to the mirror's destruction on the orders of a Byzantine emperor, see Isḥāq b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ākām al-marjān*, 86; al-Masʿūdī, *Akhbār al-zamān*, 154 (partially cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:425, but ascribed to Ibn Waṣīf Shāh); al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm*, ed. Michael Jan de Goeje (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1877), 211; Murtaḍā b. al-ʿAfīf, *L'Égypte*, 119–20; Nāṣir-i Khusraw, *Book of Travels (Safarnāma)*, trans. W. M. Thackston Jr. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 42.

300. E.g., in al-Bakrī, *al-Masālik wa-l-mamālik*, 2:635 (§ 1059); al-Dimashqī, *Nukhbat al-dahr*, 37; al-Ibshīhī, *al-Mustaṭraf*, 2:307; al-Maqrīzī, *Khiṭaṭ*, 1:423–24; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab*, 1:396–97; and al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 1:89–90. Al-Qazwīnī, in *Āthār al-bilād*, 145–46, presents a very similar version.

301. Al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab*, 2:105–6 (§ 838).

the city. Our text's description of Alexandria's lighthouse, with its various noteworthy features, is firmly rooted in ideas circulating about Alexandria's past.

However, our text differs from these other descriptions of the Pharos in one significant way. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb uses the story about the mirror's destruction at the hands of the city's treasurer not to highlight the lighthouse's fantastic past but rather to mobilize contemporary Muslims for the defense of Alexandria against enemy attacks. Whereas, he writes, the preceding part of his description of the lighthouse was based on texts, he emphasizes that he himself found the lighthouse "inoperative [but] still matching that description." Indeed, the text implies that some of the Pharos's noteworthy features, such as the doors that make a sound or the banner that follows the course of the sun, still function. But perhaps more significantly, his story about the mirror's destruction stresses that now is the time to engage in *ribāṭ* in Alexandria. Other sources date the mirror's destruction to the first Islamic century. In addition to al-Walīd b. ʿAbd al-Malik, also the Egyptian governor ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ (in office 19–25/640–45 and 38–43/658–64) and the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik b. Marwān (r. 65–86/685–705) appear as the Muslim ruler who ordered the Pharos's destruction.[302] By contrast, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb writes that he himself witnessed the city lose its most famous and important defense. Thus, he not only points out that the city is partially unprotected but also adds urgency to his message.

Conclusion

Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's account of Ayyubid or early Mamluk Alexandria is a rich and complex literary creation. The author exhibits some familiarity with the city itself (e.g., its gates, cemeteries, city walls, mosques, and colleges) and with stories about the city's ancient monuments and its place in eschatological schemes. This feature of the text makes it an interesting source on (ideas about) Alexandria and its cityscape in a rather tumultuous period of Egypt's history. At the same time, the author seems uninterested in or incapable of accurately describing the city's defenses and exaggerates the strength of its garrison. Indeed, accuracy seems not to be of prime importance for our author. He uses literary motifs and amplifies the role of religious authorities, notably Sufi masters, in his praise of Islam in Alexandria. Similarly, his description of the Pharos may share features with legends surrounding it but is far removed from the building's real sixth/twelfth- through eighth/fourteenth-century architecture. Despite being framed as an insider's description of the city, the account is evidently highly stylized.

In fact, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb wrote the account with the aim of mobilizing Muslims for *ribāṭ* performance in Alexandria. I have argued that he first praises the city's military and religious character in order to make the city an attractive destination for volunteer warriors before focusing on weaknesses in the city's defenses. The text reaches its dramatic climax with the destruction of part of the city's most famous monument, the Pharos, at

302. Al-Gharnāṭī, *Tuḥfat al-albāb*, 70–71; Ibn Iyās, *Badāʾiʿ al-zuhūr*, 1/1:106–7; Ibn Waṣīf Shāh, *Mukhtaṣar*, 185; al-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara*, 1:91. In al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb*, 422, the Muslim ruler is not identified. Aḥmad b. Muṭarrif, *al-Tartīb fī al-lugha*, 2:18–20 (copied in Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *Masālik al-abṣār*, 90–92) refers to an unnamed Alexandrian ruler.

the hands of non-Muslim aggressors coming from outside Egypt. That Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ascribes the lighthouse's partial destruction to a recent attack on the city reveals that his concern for Alexandria's protection rests on heightened fears of a real attack. Such fears were certainly not groundless. Sicilians besieged Alexandria in 569–70/1174, and awareness among Crusaders of the strategic benefit that control over Egypt offered for their conquest of the Holy Land led to attacks on Egypt's Mediterranean coast, culminating in the Frankish occupation of Damietta in 615/1219 and 647/1249.[303] Because Alexandria itself hardly suffered attacks after 569–70/1174 until Pierre de Lusignan's sack of the city in 767/1365,[304] the account may voice fear of an assault on Alexandria as well as a general sense of anxiety about Frankish or Byzantine attacks on the Egyptian coast. Indeed, studies of prose and poetry written in this period show that the Frankish threat was sometimes understood in eschatological terms and gave impetus to the composition of a variety of literature, exhorting Muslims to defend the Realm of Islam against non-Muslim aggressors, regularly including fictitious elements and possessing a strong spatial character (such as local histories and *faḍāʾil* works).[305] Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb's account seems to belong to this wave of literary composition. It calls for a highly localized reaction against what its author perceived as an eschatological threat to Islam.

303. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-taʾrīkh*, ed. Abū al-Fidāʾ ʿA. al-Qāḍī et al. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyya, 1407/1987), 10:375–80; al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-maʿrifat duwal al-mulūk*, ed. Muḥammad M. Ziyāda (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 1934–73), 1/2:333–36.

304. Niall Christie, "Cosmopolitan Trade Centre or Bone of Contention? Alexandria and the Crusades, 487–857/1095–1453," *Al-Masāq* 26, no. 1 (2014): 49–61. Franks are said to have attacked the city's harbor in 658/1260; see Ibn Taghrī Birdī, *al-Nujūm al-zāhira*, 7:148–49.

305. E.g., Abbès Zouache, "Les croisades en Orient: Histoire, mémoires," *Tabularia* 15 (2015): 75–119, at 80–87; Osman Latiff, *The Cutting Edge of the Poet's Sword: Muslim Poetic Responses to the Crusades* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 30–39, 172–83; Kenneth A. Goudie, *Reinventing* Jihād*:* Jihād *Ideology from the Conquest of Jerusalem to the End of the Ayyūbids (c. 492/1099–647/1249)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 83–116.

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