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### D'EXTRAITS ET DE NOTICES

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ET A LA LITTÉRATURE DES PEUPLES ORIENTAUX

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**VOYAGE  
DU SHEIKH ET-TIDJÂNI**

**DANS LA RÉGENCE DE TUNIS,**

**PENDANT LES ANNÉES 706, 707 ET 708 DÉ theHEGIRA (1306-1309);**

**TRADUIT DE theARABE**

**PAR M. ALPHONSE ROUSSEAU.**

The author of the Arab manuscript that is translated here, sheikh El-Tidjani, wrote at the beginning of the 8th century of the Hegira. His work, both geographical and historical, is specific to the kingdom of Béni Hafs, whose authority extended from Tripoli to Bougie.

Ez-Zerkeschi, Tunisian chronicler of the dynasty of Béni Hafs, from whom we published an extract in the Journal Asiatique of May 1849, informs us that sultan Abou Yehia Zakaria el-Lehiani, proclaimed in Redjeb 711, took alongside him, in the capacity of secretary, the wise legal scholar Abou Mohamed Abdallah Mohamed Ben Ibrahim El-Tidjani. This is without any doubt the same one as the author of the manuscript which we translate. Our traveller is also designated under the names of Abou Mohamed Abdallah el Tidjani, in *Farésiade*, by of El-Khalib Ben Konfoud, which Mr. Gherbonneau, professor of Arabic in the chair of Constantine, published several interesting extracts in the Journal Asiatique. (See the January 1861 issue, p. 64.)

The work of El-Tidjani is the relation of a voyage undertaken in the States of Tunis, by Abou Yehia Zakaria Ebn Ahmed el-Lehiani, then sheikh of Mouahedin, under the reign of the emir Abou Abdallah Mohamed el-Hafsi el-Motlancer billah. - As we have said, this same Abou Yehia Zakaria was proclaimed sultan a little later, in the month of Redjeb 711. The historian Ebn Khaldoun says it formally. - El-Tidjani belonged to this voyage as attaché to the person of the prince. His scholarship and its vast knowledge enabled him

to profit from this circumstance, to report in his interesting *Rahla* <sup>1</sup> رحلة all the historical, geographical, archaeological, and ethnographic facts, etc., being connected with the cities, villages and countries through which the expedition passed.

This information given by our author on the state of the country of Tunis in the 13th century, are more interesting, in that they are not recorded, in general, by any other Arab historian. To get them, sheikh El-Tidjani had to draw on sources unknown today, and to extract them from Arab historians, whose works are lost.

We believe that all confidence can be granted to our author. Indeed, the high position that he occupied, his scholarship shown by the elegance of its style and by the difficult questions with which he occupies himself, allow us to think that anything he advances has been written with perfect knowledge of the facts. We believed that in a work of the nature of this the first condition which is imposed on the translator is a scrupulous exactitude. Therefore we often have preferred to sacrifice the elegance of the French sentence, to grasp the Arab text more closely. We translated the most correct of the three manuscripts which we have of this work, and as the work is not present in the National library we have offered one to them.

We hope that the readers of this text will grant us their indulgence. Only the desire to be useful made us undertake this project, and it is with the aim of adding to this usefulness that we haven't spared any research to clear up our text by means of notes drawn from different sources.

Alphonse ROUSSEAU

IN THE NAME OF GOD, KIND AND MERCIFUL. THAT HE WILL BE FAVOURABLE TOWARDS OUR LORD AND MASTER MOHAMED AND WITH HIS FAMILY!

**AUTHOR'S PREFACE.**

After having praised God, who gave man the ability to appreciate the excellence of his blessings and who has covered them with his immense shade, he who, by his preexistent decrees, leads his creatures, in the voyage of life, towards a goal planned in advance by him; after having thus praised him, we express this wish: the Almighty being, be favourable to our lord Mohamed! whose deliverance has been used to raise the Islamic religion above other beliefs, and who, in this memorable circumstance, protected him through divine blessings. How much these blessings have raised the clarity of the faith and weakened unfaithfulness! May the supreme being also be favourable to the family of Mohamed, and with all his companions, who, giving up country and fortune, followed in his deliverance! They obtained, by their brilliant qualities, so glorious fame, that the widest praise could not raise the least part of it.

This work covers the names of the cities that I visited in the course of this voyage, along with their description, the account of the remarkable things seen there, information on the roads which lead to it and the distances which separate them. It contains historical details on the conquerors who seized these cities or who founded them, the biography of the important characters who lived there, and finally description of the ruins and the vestiges of old monuments that are always visited with eagerness.

This work moreover includes rich ornaments of poetry and rhymed prose, ornaments suitable to decorate the speech, and which are extracts of letters written or received by throughout the course of this voyage.

God willing, may the goal of utility that I proposed in this work be fortunately reached!

We left El-Djem Wednesday. From this point, we left the grounds of Hakim and Theroud to enter those of Hocen **حصن**. Since the time when we departed from El Djem, we walked in the middle of vast ancient plantations of olive-trees, known under the name of *Zeitoun es-Sahel* “olive-trees of the coast”. Arabs (at the time of the invasion of Ifrikia under the Zirite [Zirid] prince El Moez), had devastated these trees and had spoilt the symmetry of their plantation. The most considerable incomes of Ifrikia came from these olive-trees. It is reported that Abdallah Ben Abi Serh was filled with wonder, when he penetrated into Ifrikia, with the large amounts of gold and silver that he found there. This wealth was so considerable, that each soldier could fill his hands with them. Having asked the populations what the source of so great a public fortune was, one of the people of the country bent down, and having collected some olives from the ground, presented them to Abdallah, saying to him: “Here is the origin of this immense wealth.”

In his book entitled *Iktibass el Enouar* **الرشاحي في كتابه المسمى بافتباس الانوار**, Er-Reschati knew that this country was called *Es-Sahel* **الساحل**, not in the meaning of coast or sea shore, but because of the dark colour produced by the extraordinary quantity of olive-trees, fruit trees and of vines of the region. He adds that this country is covered with villages brought in close proximity to each other <sup>1</sup>.

We stopped in the middle of this forest that continues as far as the station called *Om el-Assabe* **ام الاصابع**, at the foot of a castle which, in old times, was even taller; its foundations are strong and solid, and in the corners are fortified turrets. One of these, having fallen from its base by the passage of time, was rebuilt by the inhabitants of this place; but the solidity of this later construction is not comparable with that which was destroyed. It is because of these fortifications, round in form, that this building has been named *Om el-Assabe* “the mother of

1 (p.125) Ebn Schebath reports that he had intended to say that the number of the cities and fortified towns, which were in the power of the Christians in Ifrikia was as many as a hundred and thousand, and that when the Greek chief needed to make war with a common enemy, it was enough for him to take, from each one of these cities or fortified towns, a tax of one dinar of gold and the quota of only one rider, to have at once at its disposal a powerful army and considerable financial resources. I remove here the translation of twelve lines of the text of the manuscript; in it are mentioned the people originating in this place or who named it.

the fingers”, because that what still remains upright resembles the fingers of a hand raised in the air.

The people (following our column) collected in these plantations a provision of wood for the following day’s stage, aware that there may not be another opportunity to find any.

We started from this place, and we walked on throughout the night. In the morning, we passed a small village, where several scattered forts are seen. It is named *Berschana* **برشانه**. We had in front of us, in the distance beside the sea, the citadel known by the name of *Kassr Ziad* **قصر زياد**. This is a strong castle, whose inhabitants are famous for the intrepidity of their courage. El-Lebidi **البيدي**, in his biography of sheikh Abou Ish'akel-Djebeniani, said that Kassr Ziad was called (formerly) the *house of Malek* (the legal scholar and chief of the orthodox sect of this name), because of the great number of legal scholars (of the school of Malek) that he found assembled there.

After having passed this castle, there was, in the direction we faced, but some distance away, the island of Kerkena **جزيرة فرنة**, which could not however be seen from where we were. This island is between the point where we were and the town of Sfak’s **صفاقس**, precisely in the middle. Kerkena is a well populated island, famous in old times, and today in the power of the Christians, who order and control it as lords. The island has neither cities, nor villages surrounded by walls, nor constructed dwellings. The inhabitants live in huts, and each one of them does on his land whatever he wants, and disposes it to his liking. Rocks, which are used as natural defense for the inhabitants, are found in the western part of the island. Its length is sixteen miles by three <sup>1</sup>.

1 (p.127) The Islands of Kerkeni, ancient Cercines, belong to the current regency of Tunis. They are approximately eight leagues to the east of Sfaks, from where they can be seen when weather is good and the horizon clear. There are two of them, the largest is eight leagues around. They are relatively low above the sea, and produce olive huile and cereals, and offer to the inhabitants an abundant fishing of octopus and sponges. It is from this population that the major part of the men of the navy of the bey de Tunis are recruited. The islands of Kerkeni, which come under the military authority of Sfaks, are used as place of deportation for loose women, Moslem or Jews, Tunisian subjects. At the time about which our traveller speaks, these islands were under the control of the Sicilians, who had seized them in the year 1284, like the island of Djerba. (See page 63, note 1.)

We arrived at Sfak's <sup>2</sup> towards midday. Sfak's is a town of the first order, surrounded by two ramparts (distinct), in the middle of which a rider can pass. The sea bathes its walls, as far as where a forest of olive-trees formerly reached; but the Arabs (who invaded Africa under the Zirid prince El-Moez) entirely devastated it, and no more remain today except one single tree

1 (p.128) Only one olive-tree remains upright, close to the said door, Bab Djebeli, and the inhabitants say that it is nearly a thousand years of age..

upright outside of the city <sup>1</sup>. The fruit that they eat in Sfak's comes from Gabès. The water of its wells is not good, and the inhabitants drink only the rain water that they are obtain. A great of number of

species of fish are caught there. One finds in the seas the navy wool (lit: *'laine marine'*), with which fine fabrics intended to be worn by princes manufactured, and we are assured that sometimes oysters containing pearls are caught there. Its port is good; because the sea is (constantly) calm there, and each day the tide is felt there, the ebb and flow regularly observed. At low tide, the ships touch the bottom, and, when it rises, they float <sup>2</sup>. One sees in Sfak's a beautiful mosque which, according to El Lobeïdi, in biography of sheik Abou Ishak el-Djebeniani, was built by Ali Ben Salem,

2 City on the coast E. of Tunis, fifteen leagues E. of Mahdia, and at 35 degrees N. and 8 degrees 9 minutes E. approximately. Its population can be estimated at eight to ten thousand people. Its rather active exporttrade consists of oils, wools, dates, waxes, sponges and esparto manufacture. It is the residence of a cayed, who exerts administrative authority there, and a colonel for military authority. Its garrison consists of eight hundred men approximately. The city is surrounded by ramparts; it has four doors of which three give onto the suburb which skirts the beach, on the open land. The city itself only has a single door called Bab Djebeli, also giving onto the countryside, and one which opens onto the suburb. Its fortifications are in good enough state and its mooring very sure; it is sheltered from the winds by the islands of Kerkenah. According to Mannert, Sfaks appears to occupy the place of the ancient Taphrura de Ptolémée and the Table of Peutinger.

2 Omission of fifteen lines of text of the manuscript A. Insignificant details on the ebb and flow of the tide in general.

grandfather of sheikh Abou Ishak. Sahnoun <sup>3</sup> had named him cadi of Sfak's; he was the foster brother of Mohamed, son of Sahnoun. The same chronicler adds that this is the same one who built out of beaten earth the ramparts of Sfak's and Mahress <sup>1</sup>, known formerly under the name of *Mahress el-Djedid*. It was noted that Sfak's had been formerly called by the name of *La'net Allah لعنة الله* "curse of

3 Celebrate legal scholar of Ifrikiya. His names are, from the Kitab el-Tabakat, Sahnoun, Ben Said, Ben Habib, Ben Abd es-Selam Ben Abd el-Kadous el-Tanoukhi, of Syrian origin. He was placed in the service of the kadi in the year 234, at the age of 74 years. He died in redjeb in 240. Born in in the year 160, it was not only in 191 that he passed through Ifrikiya.

1 (p.129) محرس indicates guarded place, caravanserai, etc. Here it must be taken in the sense of ربة.

God". It is reported on this subject that certain princes, addressing various

people, said to them: “Go to La’net Allah”, and that they went at once to Sfak’s.

Formerly *oualis* or governors of Sfak’s were named by the princes (dynasty of) Sanhadjas. This situation lasted until El-Moez Ben Badis named Mançour el-Berrouthi there **البرغوثي**. Mançour, who was a man of courage and action, conceived the idea of revolting (against his Master). He brought together around him for this purpose many Arab partisans; but he was prevented by his cousin Hamou ebn Melil, who killed him by treachery, in a bath, in the year 451. Immediately after the death of Mançour, the Arabs, his supporters, ran to Sfak’s, and besieged Hamou there. He sent a message to them to ask whether, in coming to attack, they wanted to avenge death for their cousin, or if their goal was to seize his wealth. “We have nothing to say, they answered, in the question of the *price of blood*; we claim only the money [Fr. *argent*, or ‘silver’]”. At once Hamou promised to pay them a sum with which they were satisfied, and as that had fulfilled this obligation, those besieging him ceased their attack and left Sfak’s.

(Later), Hamou himself rebelled in Sfak’s, and publicly expressed its rebellion against Béni Menad <sup>1</sup>. In 454, on the death of El-Moez Ben Badis, who was succeeded by his son Temim, Hamou resolved to complete his revolt by taking control of other fortified towns. For this purpose, joining together many mercenaries taken from the tribes of the Adi, the Latih’ and others, he went, uniting these forces with his troops, against several small towns (nearby) which he seized; then he made his way towards Mahdia, which he wanted to make his capital. But Temim rushed to the attack, and Hamou and his troops were defeated and obliged to return to Sfak’s. Hamou remained inactive in Sfak’s until Temim sent his son Yehia against him, with the goal of besieging Hamou in his refuge. The siege lasted only a few days, after which Yehia lifted it and withdrew.

1 (p.130) This name is sometimes given to the Zirid or Sanhadjite dynasty in Ifrikia, because the founder of this dynasty was a certain Balkin Youssef Ben Ziri Ben Menad as-Senhadji. The ben Ziri, Sanhadjias and ben Menad are thus three names for the same dynasty, which reigned from 361 to 555 of the Hégira approximately. Eight princes of this dynasty are counted.

It is reported on this subject that Yehia, wanting to keep Hamou in his power, had not directed the operations of the siege with energy and courage. Hamou wrote: "What a surprising thing! Yesterday, It was I who spared Yehia (and it is he who spares me today)". Here are some details of this episode reported by Aboul-Celt and other chroniclers. It is told that a certain Turk came to Temim from the Levant, accompanied by a great number of his friends. Temim accomodated him with distinction, and assigned rations of food to him; but this treatment did not satisfy the Turk, to whom various remarks were brought which made him dissatisfied with Temim. This Turk was perfidious and lazy. One day, having gone with hunting accompanied by his people, with Yehia, son of Temim, he suddenly attacked him, and his followers, and having seized him, he flees with its prisoners. A man who witnessed this treason was able to escape, and ran to inform Temim, who, seized with anger, sent at once many riders in pursuit of these traitors; but they could not be caught, and managed to reach Sfak's, where they were accomodated with benevolence by Hamou ebn Melil. This one took and hid Yehia at his place; but, a little later, fearing that people of Sfak's would not revolt in favour of his prisoner, it was determined to allow him to leave the city. For this purpose he wrote Temim a letter, in which he proposed to return his son to him in exchange for sending all that belonged to the runaway Turks, and their families. When the prince had authorized and sent all that Hamou had asked, his son was restored to him in exchange. But as soon as Yehia, returned to freedom, was turned over to his father, he was charged to immediately go and besiege Sfak's, as we mentioned above. Yehia obeys; but raised the siege shortly after, having been unable to capture it. (Later, in the year 493), Temim came in person to Sfak's and made conquered it. Hamou had to give up the city and was put under the protection of Meken Ben Kamel er-Riahi **كامل الرياحي مكن بن** in Gabès <sup>1</sup>.

1 (p.132) Omission of a page and nine lines of text of manuscript A. Insignificant details.

From the time when Temim was made master of Sfak's, the oualis, governors of this city, were named by him, and it was thus until with its death, which happened in the year 501. His son Yehia<sup>2</sup>, having succeeded him, named as the governor of Sfak's his own son Aboul-Fetouh', but the population revolted against its new chief, plundered his palace and even wanted to massacre it. Yehia, full with anger against the inhabitants of Sfak's, punished them of a terrible manner, dispersed their forces, and did not cease weighing them down with troubles and filling the state prisons, until his revenge was satisfied. Then (only) did he grant them his forgiveness<sup>3</sup>.

2 Sixth prince of the Zirid or Sanhadjite dynasty; he was forty-three years old when he succeeded his father. captured the Christians of Kelibia, a seaboard town of the Tunisian province, in the face of which all his father's efforts had failed. After a quite peaceful reign of eight and a half years, Yehia at the age of fifty-two years, the 1st day of dzilk'ada 509, leaving thirty sons and twenty-six daughters.

3 Omission of nineteen lines of manuscript A. About d'Aboul-Celte on the punishment inflicted by Yehia on the inhabitants of Sfak's.

Yehia, after these events, named to this government its other son Ali,

1 (p.133) Seventh prince of his dynasty. Envisaging the next aggressions of king de Sicile against his states, 'Ali sought an alliance with the émir Youssef Ben Taschefin, who reigned in Morocco. But hostilities of the Sicilians didn't erupt until later, under the reign of his El-Hassan. 'Ali died into 515.

whom he had indicated in advance would succeed him. When Yehia died, in the year 609, Ali was in Sfak's. As soon as he learned this news, he took the reins of power<sup>1</sup>, and continued to name to the government of Sfak's people who were close to him. He continued

2 Eighth and last prince of the Zirid dynasty. He succeeded his father in 515. It was under his reign that the successes of the Sicilians in Africa took place.

in this way until with his death. His son Hassan succeeded him<sup>2</sup>. At that time, a disagreement having erupted between this prince and Roger روجر (king de Sicile), who then sent a fleet to besiege the town of Mahdia<sup>3</sup>. We will further see by which means he became master of it and how El-Hassan had to give it up.

3 King Roger for the first time brought his armies to Africa under the reign of El-Hassan. A strong fleet of three hundred ships came to attack Mahdia and had, soon afterwards, to move away from the coast because of a violent storm, leaving onshore a detachment of troops that had been disembarked to begin the siege of the place. (Our traveller speaks more far of this circumstance.) This detachment was attacked and defeated by the Arabs, and the fleet returned to the ports of Sicily. The peace, requested by Hassan, granted by Roger and sworn by both, was not to be long in being broken by the Sicilians. A few years later, without any reason, and although a short time before he had helped El-Hassan who was besieged in Mahdia by Yehia Ben El-Aziz El-Hamadi prince de Bougie, Roger put a new fleet to sea which seized the island of Djerba, where the authority of the king of Sicily was accepted and recognized by the inhabitants, and where it placed a garrison. In 1141, Roger taking for a pretext the non-payment of a sum of money lent by him to the Moslem prince, sent vessels against the place of Mahdia. This expedition had as a result the recognition of El-Hassan as a vassal and tributary of king of Sicily. In 1147, El-Hassan having attacked Hakem Youssef, governor of Gabès, vassal and tributary of Roger, the latter sent his admiral Georges with a considerable fleet against Mahdia. El-Hassan did not wait for the enemy, he fled to Tunis and surrendered the place, which the Sicilians seized. The capture of Mahdia would precede and cause naturally the occupation of Soussa, Sfak's, Zouila, etc., etc., by the sicilian troops. Approximately thirteen years later, under the reign of William, son and successor of Roger, the Sicilians lost all their conquests in Barbarie. (Extracted from the historical and geographical Memories of Mr. E. Pellissier, Vol. VI of the work of the scientific Commission of Algeria, page 179 to 186).

When Roger, in 543, had become Master of Mahdia, and had established a governor for him there, he dispatched vessels against Sfak's, which had to open its doors, and was occupied by the Christians, who had helped him seize it. Before leaving Sfak's, he chose from among the inhabitants two hostages that he took with him; one of them was the sheikh el-beled, or prefect of police, Aboul-Hassan el-Feriani. The responsibility of managing the country was entrusted by Roger to the son of this same sheikh, Omar Ben el-Hassan. This one, a courageous man with a severe and thoughtful spirit, received from his father, at the time of his departure, the following recommendation: "I am well aged and approaching the tomb. I give my life in favour of the Moslems; so, if the occasion presents itself, rise yourself up against the Christians, with whom you will live; shake their yoke and massacre them". This exhortation of the father was punctually followed by the son in the year 551. He revolted in Sfak's against the Christians of the place, and made a dreadful massacre of them. At the news of this event, the king of Sicily, Guillaume [William], son of Roger **نجار علي بن**, at once threw sheikh Aboul Hassan in irons, had him held in a prison, and sent a messenger to his son Omar, threatening to kill his father if he did not return to obedience. This messenger, on his return, told what follows: "I could not go ashore (the very same day as my arrival in Sfak's). The following day I heard a great noise in the city, and at once the door of the sea [lit: *porte marine*] opened. A numerous crowd exited through it, shouting these words: *Allahou akebar!* "God is great!" and exalting and praising the name of the Lord. A coffin was carried, amongst them, on the heads of some individuals. Shortly afterwards they deposited this coffin on the ground, and Omar came forward, raised his voice and pronounced some prayers over it. The coffin was put in the ground, and then Omar withdrew himself after having received the condolences of the assistants. Having then asked for an answer to the message (that I had forwarded), he answered me: "The sheikh is occupied in receiving the condolences on the occasion of the death of his father, who is in Sicily: this coffin that you saw is a symbol of his: what you saw is the answer to your message". At once that the king was informed of

these details, he ordered that sheikh Aboul-Hassan be taken from his prison and conducted to the gallows of Ouadi el-Abbas **واحي العباس**, where he was hung. (The unfortunate sheikh) recited the holy book until the moment when he breathed his last breath.

The revolt of Sfak's against the Christians involved all the cities of the littoral, which it freed (thus) from foreign domination.

Omar continued to manage the region until with the arrival in Ifrikia of the khalife Abd el-Moumen, who beseiged Mahdia <sup>1</sup>.

At once Omar approached him with a great number of sheikhs from Sfak's, and all gave him their allegiance. Abd el-Moumen gave them a supervisor **حافظ**, selected from amongst his Mouahedin, and invited Omar to return to Sfak's, charging him with the higher administration of the country. He preserved this responsibility until his death, and his son Abd er-Rahman Ben Omar succeeded him in this high position.

When later El-Mayorki arrived at Sfak's and was made master, Abd er-Rahman begged him to allow him to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, and (having obtained the favour that he solicited), he left (for the east) with his family, and never returned. Some of his children however remained in Sfak's, and their descendants still live there nowadays <sup>2</sup>.

We remained in Sfak's the whole of Thursday, which, as we already said, was the day of our arrival. The next morning, Friday, we left this city.

We passed by Thina **ثينة** and by Naktha **نقطة**. They are two inhabited forts. One recalls that a number of companions of Ma'rouf el-Kerkhi had retired to Naketha to defend it and live in the state of ribath (lit. closed community?), and that they died there and their tombs can be found there <sup>1</sup>.

1 (p.136) 'Abd el-Moumen el-Koumi ez-Zenati. The Arab authors place the capture of Mahdia in the year 555, by the troops of 'Abd el-Moumen against the Sicilians.

2 Omission of seven pages and seven lines of manuscript A. Biographical details of various persons native to Sfak's and Lebida., a little village dependant on this town.

1 (p.137) These localities still exist nowadays [Jaubert, 1852]. They were visited and explored by several travellers, and amongst them Mr. Pellissier, general consul from France to Tripoli, who spoke about them in his letters to Mr. Hase, published in the Archaeological Review. They are indicated on the chart drawn up for the War Depository of in 1842, the first point under the designation of *Oued Theny*, river of Theny. As for Ma'rouf Ben Firouz el-Kerkhi, according to the *Tabak'ats* of El-Scher'ani, a famous and venerated sheikh. They would pray on his tomb to request rain from God, and the Moslems are assured that these prayers never fail to be answered. He was born in Baghdad and died there in the year 200. Its tomb is found there and is venerated and visited.

Our stage finished in El-Mahress **المحرس**, an old strong castle, very high. Construction of it is attributed to Ibn el-Arleb. The inhabitants of the various nearby castles come to take refuge in this fortified town, upon the approach of their enemies, and when they are constrained to take weapons <sup>2</sup>. When El-Mayorki came to Ifrikia, he passed close to Mahress., and wanted to besiege of it; but the inhabitants having opened the doors, and placed themselves outside to fight and defend themselves, El-Mayorki recognized at once that he could not achieve his proposed goal, and he passed on to attack other forts. The inhabitants of El Mahress. are people of the Houara (**هوارة**<sup>1</sup>), who, previously, lived the forts known by the name of *Kossour Beni Khiar* **فصور بني خيار**. The Arabs (who invaded Ifrikia under the Zirid prince El Moez) drove out some of them, and they were then transported here. This was at the time when a mesdjed **مسجد** “prayer room” [Zouaia, or Marabout], which was more involved in the religious practices. They built them all around the houses, and surrounded the whole of a city’s ramparts. I passed by the forts of Béni Khiar, I visited these places, and I assured myself that they are deserted and ruined. These forts are in the mountain of Messelata **مسلاتة جبل**, to the east of Tripoli.

2 M. Pellissier also talked of this in his letters to M. Hase, already cited. This point is marked on the map of the War Depot, 1842, under the heading of Sidi Maharess.

1 (p.138) The Houaras are one of the principal branches of the Béranis, who, themselves, form one of the large divisions of the Berber nation. The Béranis who, according to Ibn Khaldoun, descend from Ber, which descend from Mazir', son of Chanaan, are divided into seven branches : the Azdadja, the Masmoud, the Houaria, the Adjissa, the Ketama, the Sanhadja and the Orir'a.