

TRAVELS;
OR
OBSERVATIONS,
RELATING TO
SEVERAL PARTS
OF
B A R B A R Y
AND
The Levant.

ILLUSTRATED WITH COPPERPLATES.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

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should be the tower, or Rus Urbanum, as Justin calls it, of Hannibal; from whence he is said to have embarked after his flight from Carthage.

Elalia, a large extent of ruins, is situated upon the borders of a fertile plain, which reaches from Salecto to within a few miles of Sbe-ah. Besides such ruins as it has in common with other places, we have here several cisterns with large paved areas built over them, in order to receive the rain water that, in the rainy season, was to fill and replenish them. Several conveniences of the like nature are dispersed all over this dry country, which, according to tradition, were made by Sultan Ben Eglib, a prince who, for his public spirit and warlike exploits, is very justly had in the greatest veneration and remembrance. Elalia seems to be the Acola or Acilla of the ancients, which Ptolemy has accordingly fixed in this situation; *i. e.* betwixt Thapsus and Ruspæ. In Peutinger's *Tables* likewise we see Anolla, corruptly no doubt for Achola, placed to the S. of Sullecti, and VI M. to the N. of Ruspæ. As Sbe-ah, therefore, from the name and situation of it, appears to be the ancient Ruspæ, Achola, by lying at VI M. distance to the N. of it, may, with the greatest exactness, be fixed at this place.

A little way from Sbe-ah is Ca-poudia, the Caput Vada of Procopius, the Ammonis Promontorium

venit; ibi cum parata instructaque remigio excepit navis. Eo die in Circinam insulam trajecit. Liv. l. xxxiii. § 34. Vide Justin. Hist. l. xxxi.

rium of Strabo, and the Promontorium Brachodes of Ptolemy, a low narrow strip of land, which stretches itself a great way into the sea. Upon the very point of it we have the ruins of the city that was built there by Justinian*, where there is likewise a high round watch tower. We meet with two more of the like kind betwixt this place and Sfax; all of them very proper and necessary guides to mariners, who cannot be too cautious in approaching this low and dangerous coast.

The two flat and contiguous islands of the Querkiness are situated to the S. E. of Ca-poudia, at the distance of five leagues. These are the Cercina and Circinitis of the old geography, though inaccurately placed by Agathemer†, over against Thena; from whence they lie at nearly ten leagues distance, towards the N. E.

Agathemer, Strabo, and other ancient geographers, fix the beginning of the Lesser Syrtis at these islands; though, from the following circumstances, it should rather commence at Ca-poudia. For from this cape to the island Jerba, we have a succession of small flat islands, banks of sand, oozy bottoms, and small depths of water, which redound to the no small advantage of the neighbouring inhabitants, who, by wading a mile or two into the sea, and fixing several hurdles of reeds in various windings and directions all the way

* Vid. Procop. de *Ædificiis* Dn. Justiniani, c. vi.

† Agath. Geogr. l. i. c. 5.

way as they go along, they thereby enclose a number of fishes. Something like this has been taken notice of by Strabo*.

The easterly winds were too violent whilst I travelled along the coast of the Lesser Syrtis, to observe the flux and re-flux of it †, from whence some authors have derived the name †. However, I was informed, agreeably to the account which Agathemer ‡ has left us, that, at Jerba particularly, the sea rises twice in twenty-four hours a fathom or more above its usual height. The like has been observed in the Gulf of Venice, which ranges along with it in the same meridian, and therefore is equally subject to the like pressure or attraction.

Sfax, Asfax, or El Sfakuss, is a neat thriving city, about xx M. to the S.W. of the Querki-ness. It is walled round like Susa and Monaster; where likewise, by the same extraordinary indulgence of their Kaide, the inhabitants enjoy the fruits of their industry, carry on a good trade in oil and linen, and know little of that oppression which is severely practised in many other places of Barbary. Buno§ makes Sfax to be the Taphræ of Cluver; but it is more probably of modern extraction, taking its name from the quantity

* Strab. l. xiii. p. 1188. † Plin. l. v. c. 4.

‡ Solin. c. vi. Dion. Perieg. l. 198.

|| Viz. a *συσω*, *τραῖο*, quod in accessu et recessu arenam et cœnum ad se trahit et congerit. Vid. Eustath. Comm.

§ *Μογυλλαι δ' ασις περι αυτων* (S. Meninx. S. Jerba.) *παλλήρηαι*. Geogr. l. i. c. 5.

quantity of fakouse or cucumbers that grow in the neighbourhood.

Thainee, the Thena, Θηνα, Θηνα, or Thenæ of the ancients, is x M. to the S. W. of Sfax. It has been built upon a low and rocky piece of ground near two miles in circuit; but as the ancient materials have been all of them employed in the building of Sfax, there is scarce one piece of marble or hewn stone to be met with. This maritime city, so famous in the old geography, is not only badly situated, but seems never to have had either port or Cothon*. The adjacent country likewise is dry and barren, with neither fountain nor rivulet to refresh it, nearer than at five M. distance to the S. W. Here we cross a pretty large brook, called Wed el Thainee, or *the River of Thainee*; which indeed, provided Marius, in his expedition against Capsa, continued his marches not through the inland country, but along the sea coast of Bizacium, this, or the Tarff, a few leagues further to the S. should be the Tanais, where, as Sallust† informs us, the Romans took in their provision of water.

Maha-ress, with the ruins of an old castle, is four leagues to the S. W. of Thainea. This was probably the ancient Macodama, or Macomadibus.

* Cluv. Geogr. cum notis Bun. &c. p. 394.

† Cum ad flumen [Tanam al. Tanaim] ventum est, maxima vis utrius effecta, Ibi---jubet, omnibus sarcinis abjectis, aqua modo seque et jumenta onerare. Dein-----noctem totam itinere facto, consedit; idem proxima facit. Dein tertia, multo ante lucis adventum pervenit in locum tumulosum, ab Capsa non amplius duum millium intervallo. Sall. Bell. Jug. § 96.

bus, as it is called in the Itinerary; and a little way from it is the river Tarff, which has its fountains near the ruins of Tarfowah, probably the ancient Taphrura or Taparura, four leagues to the westward. The castle of Ungha, surrounded with morasses, and without any anchoring ground before it, is two leagues from Maharess. It does not appear for what intent the founder, Sultan Ben Eglib, made choice of this situation, unless it was to secure some wells of good water that are dug near it. At Ellamaite, four leagues further, we meet with a number of sepulchres, without either beauty or inscriptions; and then passing by Seedy Meddub, a Moorish sanctuary, and crossing the dry channel of Auronde, we come to Woodriff, and other date villages of lesser note; each of them watered by rivulets.

Gabs lies three leagues from Woodriff, and twelve from Ellamaite. This was the Epichus of Scylax*, and the Tacape of other ancient geographers†, where we have a heap of ruins, with some beautiful granate pillars still standing. These are all of them square, and about twelve feet long, and such as I have not met with in any other part of Africa. The old city, where we see these ruins, was built upon a rising ground at half a mile's distance from the new, having been formerly washed by the sea, which formed itself here into a bay of near half a mile in diameter.

* Scyl. Perip. p. 46.

† Ptol. l. iv. c. 3. Plin. l. v. cap. 4.

But at present, the greatest part of this bay is filled up, and gained from the sea; which, from the great shallowness of it, and the daily reception of mud and roots from the river, will easily submit to such alterations and encroachments.

At Gabs, there are several large plantations of palm trees, though the dates are much inferior, both in size and taste, to those of the Jireed. But the chief branch of trade, for which this emporium, as Strabo* calls it, is famous at present, arises from the Al-hennah, which is plentifully cultivated in all their gardens. This beautiful odoriferous plant, if it is not annually cut, and kept low, as it is usually in other places, grows ten or twelve feet high, putting out its little flowers in clusters, which yield a most grateful smell like camphor; and may therefore be alluded to, Cant. i. 14. where it is said, "My
" beloved is to me as a cluster (הַכְּנֶפֶר) of Cypres
" (or *Al-hennah*) in the vineyards (or *gardens*) of
" Engedi." The leaves of this plant, after they are dried and powdered, are disposed of to good advantage in all the markets of this kingdom. For with this, all the African ladies that can purchase it, tinge their lips, hair, hands and feet, rendering them thereby of a tawny saffron colour, which, with them, is reckoncd a great beauty. The alhennah, no less than the palm, requires to be frequently watered; for which purpose, the river that runs through these plantations is can-
toned

* Strab. l. xvii. p. 1188.

toned out, as it seems to have been in the time of Pliny*, into a number of channels.

This river, the Triton of the ancients, falls into the sea to the northward of the old city, and forms the ground upon which it was situated into a peninsula. Its sources lie no farther than three or four leagues to the southward of Gabs, though it becomes at once like many other rivers of these southern and hotter climates, a considerable stream. And may not the refreshing abundance of water in these rivers, which are more constantly as well as more commonly so, than in the northern climates, account in some measure for Psalm cxxvi. 4. where the return of the captives from Babylon, is desired to be as copious and numerous as their rivers were copious and redundant? Two long chains of mountains, called the Jibbelleah, which reach from El Hammah to Maggs, and are continued from thence to the sea coast over against the island Jerba, will neither admit of the length, nor of that succession of lakes which have been attributed to this river by ancient as well as modern geographers. It is impossible likewise, that it should have its origin in the mountain of Vasaletus, according to Ptolemy. For if this be the same, as the name seems to insinuate, with the present Use-let, it will lie at far too great a distance. And indeed, if we except that

* Tacape, felici super omne miraculum riguo solo: ternis fere mill. pass. in omnem partem fons abundat, largus quidem, sed certis horarum spatiis dispensatur inter incolas. Plin. lib. xviii. cap. 22. Tacape a *באב*, locus humidus et irriguus. Boch. Chan. lib. i. cap. 25.

that small piece of ground which is refreshed by the springs of El Hammah, all the rest of the country, in this direction, is parched up for want of water. If then the river of Gabs is the river Triton, as cannot, I presume, be disputed, geographers have hitherto been greatly mistaken in their descriptions of it.

The little village To-bulba is three miles from Gabs; and ten leagues further, is the island Gerba, or Jerba, as the Tuniseens pronounce it, the most southern territory of this kingdom. Jerba appears to be the Brachion of Scylax, and the Meninx* of Strabo and others; though Ptolemy makes Meninx to be a city only of Lotophagitis, as he calls this island. The fruit of the Lotus, which will be hereafter described, grows plentifully all along this coast.

CHAP.

* Fallor an *meninx* Punicè scribebatur מ'נין *me-nin*, quasi dixeris aquas defectus, i. e. deficientes, vel מ'נין *me-nin*, quasi dixeris aquas recessus, i. e. recedentes. Boch. Chan. lib. i. cap. 25.