

NEW PILOTING DIRECTIONS

E. S. H. 1832

FOR THE

MEDITERRANEAN SEA,

THE

Adriatic, or Gulf of Venice,

THE BLACK SEA, GRECIAN ARCHIPELAGO, AND THE
SEAS OF MARMARA AND AZOF:

CONTAINING

*INSTRUCTIONS FOR NAVIGATING THE VARIOUS COASTS, ISLANDS,
BAYS, PORTS, AND HARBOURS,*

AND FOR AVOIDING THE NUMEROUS ROCKS, SHOALS, AND OTHER DANGERS, IN THOSE SEAS:

TO WHICH ARE OCCASIONALLY ADDED

*Concise Accounts of the Customs, Manners, and Commerce of the Inhabitants; with the
Produce, Imports, Exports, and geographical Positions, of the principal Places.*

COMPILED FROM THE CELEBRATED

Scientific & modern Surveys, Voyages, & Travels,

OF

CAPTAINS SMYTH, BEAUFORT, LYON, FRANKLAND, IRBY, MANGLES, WILSON,
TOFINO, GAUTTIER, AND ZANNONI;

MESSRS. KENDRICK, HOLLAND, TURNER, CARNE, GALT, AND OTHER
DISTINGUISHED NAVIGATORS AND TRAVELLERS.

WRITTEN TO ACCOMPANY AND ILLUSTRATE

THE NEW LARGE CHART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA, &c.

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AUTHOR OF A NEW AND COMPLETE EPITOME OF NAVIGATION, AND SEVERAL OTHER
NAUTICAL WORKS.

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537.



3. THE COAST OF TUNIS, FROM RAS AL ZARGISS TO LA CALA.

Variation, One Point and a Half West.

The State of Tunis is considered the finest of all the Barbary States, and extends along shore from the *Ras al Zargiss*, in latitude 33° 29' 30" N., longitude 11° 10' 30" E., to *La Cala*, in latitude 36° 52' 0" N., longitude 8° 24' 0" E. There are few countries more highly favoured as to beauty, fertility, or salubriousness; its climate is excellent, and admirably adapted to the production of almost every thing, while the soil is remarkably productive, and yields, with little cultivation, a most abundant return. Its principal river is the *Mejerdah*, formerly called *Bagrada*, which takes its rise in the *Kingdom of Algiers*, and empties itself into the *Mediterranean*, near *Port Farina*. On the banks of this river are numerous towns and villages, containing nearly 15,000 inhabitants. It is difficult to ascertain the exact population of this district, but it is generally estimated at two millions and a half; these are composed of Turks, Jews, Christians, Moors, Arabs, and renegades. The cultivated part of the country extends from 200 to 250 miles into the interior, terminating with the Atlas chain of mountains, and the vast dry plains of *Blaid al Jerid*, or the country of dates: these tracts, though not presenting the same rich and verdant aspect as those of the sea-coast, yet produce grain in abundance, and contain a great number of populous villages; while the mountains near *Tunis* have mines of silver, copper, and lead; and near *Port Farina* there is said to be one of quicksilver: but these are much neglected, and not now taken any notice of.

The territory of *Tunis*, from the manner in which it projects into the sea, and its proximity to *Sicily* and the adjacent *European Continent*, is particularly favourable for carrying on an extensive commerce, which a regular and enlightened Government would not fail to secure to the natives; but under the arbitrary and despotic dominion of the Turks, no such thing was to be expected. It is now tributary to the French nation, in whose hands, if this State should remain, its resources will no doubt be turned to much better account.

During the summer and autumn seasons it very seldom rains in the *Tunisian* districts. Rain is generally expected about October: should it not fall until the latter end of the-year, the crops in the ensuing spring become unproductive and scanty; but when the rains commence in October, and continue until April, the country teems with the greatest abundance. In the eastern districts the husbandman reaps his hundredfold about the end of April; but in the western parts the crops are never so luxuriant, and they arrive at perfection full two months later. In dry seasons the soil becomes arid

and sterile; the seed when sown produces little, the olives become withered, and the flocks frequently perish for want of food.

Tunis has several ports, but, excepting the capital, these are very little frequented. Public offices were formerly all occupied by Turks, but the present Bey prefers and employs renegades and slaves. Latterly the manners of these people have become more civilized, friendly, and honest in their dealings than either their neighbours of *Tripoli* or *Algiers*, which their extended commerce, improvement of manufactures, and intercourse with Europeans have most probably contributed to occasion.

Their naval strength is inconsiderable, for there are seldom more than three or four ships of war belonging to the Bey, and the largest only carries 40 guns, being generally badly equipped, and indifferently manned: these, with about 30 galliots of inferior force, commanded by renegades, compose their whole naval force; but there are numerous other vessels fitted out by private adventurers, from all of which the Bey exacts his tributary perquisite.

From *Ras al Zargiss*, the south-eastern extremity of the *Kingdom of Tunis*, a N. by W. (N. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.) course for 7 leagues will carry you to *Ras Trígamas*, the N. E. point of the Island of *Jerba*, or *Djerbah*; this is a square-formed island, its length from east to west being about 20 miles, and its breadth from north to south 16. It is separated from the main by a narrow strait which communicates with the *Gulf of Kabes*: the channel runs in from the eastward between the *Castle of Buchal*, on the north side, and the *Kaliat Islets* on the south. Between the *Castle of Buchal* and *Point Menax* there is good anchorage in 4 fathoms, opposite to a fortress; and a little to the northward of *Menax* is *Port Saggia*, fit only for small vessels. From *Point Menax* to *Ras Trígamas* there are several shoals of $2\frac{1}{2}$ and $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms, which must be carefully avoided.

THE GULF OF KABES, OR THE LESSER SYRTIS, is bounded on the south by the *Island of Jerba*, and on the north by *Cape Burdj Kadija*. On the northern *Coast of Jerba* stands the little *Town* and *Castle of Zug*, in latitude $33^{\circ} 33' 0''$ N., longitude $10^{\circ} 53' 20''$ E. This island is populous, well-cultivated, and rich, being much esteemed on account of its woollen manufactures, which are exported to *Tunis*, and worn by all classes in that City: they are of a thin texture, and very similar to a soft kind of serge, being well woven, and made of the finest wool.

W. by S. (W. $\frac{1}{2}$ N.) from the *Castle of Zug*, distant 8 miles, is Fort Galis, standing on the north-westernmost point of the island. From *Gama Ashon Point* a sandy flat extends to the westward, round the *Point of Port Galis*, and continues southward along the western side of the island so far as

the entrance of the *Strait* which separates the *Island Jerba* from the main: this *reef*, or *sandy flat*, reaches out 5 miles from the land, especially about the environs of *Port Galis*, and has shallow water all over it. The southern shores of the *Gulf of Kabes* are generally low, but encompassed with high land behind. Here, situated on the coast, you will see the little *Villages of Catana, Zarra, and Biboo*; a little to the northward of the last is the *Town of Kabes*.

KABES stands at the foot of the mountains called *Jibbel Hamarra*; its situation is low, and on the south bank of a river of fresh water, having the *Village of Jarea* to the northward. The streets are regular, but dirty: it has a *castle*, or *square fortress*, tolerably built, and with nine guns, in latitude $33^{\circ} 52' 40''$ N., longitude $10^{\circ} 4' 15''$ E. When Captain Smyth was at *Kabes* in 1823, the natives were at war with each other, obliging him to fire on whatever party attempted to approach his vessel. *Kabes* has a small port, from whence dates, and henna for dying are commonly exported. This is supposed to have been the ancient *Tacasse*, of which, at the distance of about half-a-mile, there are still considerable vestiges, particularly several granitic columns, remarkable for their size and beauty. The little *River of Kabes* is divided in the interior into a number of channels, for the purpose of giving water to the henna plant, which the natives mostly cultivate, and which requires a moist situation.

From *Kabes* the coast winds N. N. W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W. (N. by W.) to the *Village of Tafalamah*, before which vessels bound for *Kabes* usually anchor. N. E. by N. (N.E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.) from this anchorage, distant 14 miles, are the *Surkenis Islands* [Kneiss]. All the coast between *Jerba* and the *Surkenis Islands* is safe, having 7 and 8 fathoms at the distance of three-quarters of a mile off, until you get within the vicinity of these islands, where it becomes shoal. In the interior are the *Mountains of Fozath, Tasherah, Zarat, Lacal, Leah, and Masmata*. On the largest of the *Surkenis Islands* are several *ruins*; but from hence towards the *Town of Sfakus* there is nothing remarkable. The coast runs N. E. (E. N. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N.), and has the *Villages of Ungha, Mahara, and Niektah* situated near the sea, the land rising up considerably towards a *chain of mountains*, called *Jibbel Telth*.

SFAKUS, or SFAX, is a large town, enclosed within high walls, and said to have been named from *Sfakous*, a cucumber, great quantities of which are produced in the neighbourhood. The environs are extremely fertile, and there is a considerable commerce in grain, oil, wool, dates, soap, &c. Before the town is a *mole*, in latitude $34^{\circ} 43' 56''$ N., longitude $10^{\circ} 39' 50''$ E. Off this part, and between the *Town of Sfakus* and the *Karkenna Islands*, the anchorage is very good. From *Sfakus* the coast runs $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles N. E. by E. (E. N. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ E.) to the *Tower of Seedy Meseur*, and then N. N. E. (N. E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N.) and E. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. (E. by S.) to *Burdj Kadija*, called also *Cape Vada*, upon which stands a lofty *tower*, visible 15 or 16 miles off, and therefore serving for a beacon, shewing the mariner's approach to the shoals

adjacent. This tower is in latitude 35° 9' 30" N., longitude 11° 10' 0" E., and forms the northern point of the *Channel of Karkenna*. The land between *Sfakus* and *Cape Vada* is of considerable height, and constitutes the western side of the passage; its eastern side is enclosed by the *Karkenna Islands*. From its appearance it would seem to be a channel of great breadth; but it is, in reality, very narrow, being filled up with extensive *rocky banks*, and *shoals of shallow water*. Small coasting vessels commonly pass along very near the western shore; but the midway passage is crooked and circuitous, requiring at all times a pilot: the tides also contribute to make it more dangerous, for within this strait they run with the velocity of 2½ miles an hour, and rise 5 feet. The time of high water is 30 minutes after 3, full and change.

The *Karkennas* are a cluster of low islands; the south-westernmost is called *Zara Lakalia*, having a *tower* erected upon its western end. The middle island is large, and irregularly formed, with seven *villages* on its western division, and three on its eastern side: the principal of these is called *Shagra*, which frequently gives its name to the whole island. The others are smaller islands, but they are all inhabited. That towards the north-east is named *Kusha*, and is in latitude 34° 49' 0" N., longitude 11° 18' 40" E. To the eastward of *Shagra* are several *rocks* above water, which almost join the island, but have no passage between. From thence a long *point of sand* stretches out full 14 miles; this is *rocky* and dangerous: other *spits* extend to the southward, so that no vessel can with safety approach these islands, but must always keep off to a considerable distance. Captain Smyth states the inhabitants of these islands to be of a livid appearance, poor, and miserable, their principal nutriment being dates and fish. These articles are in abundance, and all the islands are covered with date-trees.

From *Cape Vada*, or *Burdj Kadija* to *Cape Africa*, the course is N. ½ W. (N. by E.), and the distance 21 miles: here stands the *City of Mahedia*, built on the ruins of the ancient *Adrumetum*. It is situated upon a fine plain, which rises gradually inland, and is surrounded with orchards and vineyards; being built on a neck of land which projects into the sea, in latitude 35° 31' 15" N., longitude 11° 7' 15" E., and within a wall of circumvallation, strengthened by *towers* and *bastions*, and commanded by a *citadel* on an eminence. The *Port*, formerly called *Cothon*, was once spacious, commodious, and safe, the strongest, finest, and richest place for maritime purposes in all this part of *Africa*; but in 1551 it was destroyed by order of Charles the Fifth. Its massive remains still testify its former strength and magnitude: the ancient *citadel*, and one or two of the *towers* of the *fortifications* have escaped the total ruin; and even at this time it must be considered one of the strongest towns in *Barbary*. To the southward, between it and *Cape Burdj Kadija*, the land is well cultivated, and produces, at *Salacta* and *Ackdesha*, among various other articles, a great quantity of indigo.

From *Cape Africa* the course and distance to *Cape Demos* will be N. N. W. (N. $\frac{1}{2}$ W.) $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles; between is a low *sandy shore*, with gradual soundings up to the very beach. Off the northern part of the *Cape* are the *Balta Islands*, from which a *sandy reef* runs out to the northward full 10 miles, having at its extremity the *Kuriat Islands*: these are three in number, and form the southern extremity of the extensive *Gulf of Hammamet*, its northern point being *Cape Tusihan*.

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