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AVEC

**LES ARABES DE L'AFRIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE
AU MOYEN AGE**

RECUEILLIS PAR ORDRE DE L'EMPEREUR

ET PUBLIÉS

AVEC UNE INTRODUCTION HISTORIQUE

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The prosperity of Africa in the 10th and 11th centuries.

[1040-1052]

Historical Introduction

The north of Africa, thriving, still rich and industrial, as we gather in passing from a significant testimony, offered quite a worthy field to tempt the European commercial companies. The writings of the geographers and the Arab historians of these times are interesting to consult on this subject, and we could do no better than to reproduce the scholarly table assembled by Mr. Amari from the scattered information that they contain.

“The works of Ibn-Haukal, Ibn-Adhari and Bekri,” says Mr. Amari, “show us the ingenious distribution of water throughout Africa proper, the vast irrigation of the fields, the general culture of the olive-trees and many other fruit trees; the sugar cane cultivated in Kairouan, cotton at Msila, indigo at Sebab, mulberry trees and silk worms in Cabès. Then manufactures of fine fabrics and wool at Sousa; the art to press and to gloss cloths, following the use in Alexandria, in Sfax; cotton fabrics manufactured in the Sudan, the fine pottery in Tunis; wools and cloths in black and azure blue in Tripoli; cloths with Agdabia; the usual fishing of the coral at Tenès, Ceuta and Mersa-Kharès. They speak to us of the opulence of the merchants of Kairouan, opulence such that in 976 these traders paid to the Ziride government a subsidy of 400,000 dinars, and that one of them was taxed with 10,000 dinars, that is to say 130,000 francs³. We see there the constant importation of the invaluable wood from India, of ebony and of gold nuggets from Sudan; the Spanish merchants established at Bone; Africa proper usually trading with the east, where it sent especially mulatto slaves, black slaves, Latin, Greek and Slavic slaves (prisoners). With regard particularly to the Italian trade, there is no doubt that also sold in Africa were the fabrics of Naples, better quality than all those of the east or the west, that Venetian ships brought wooden utensils to El-Mehadia and Tripoli, that our ships came to exchange various goods for the oil of Tripoli, and that they often bought oil from Sfax for cash. What the chroniclers say of the wealth and ostentation of the court of the Fatimids of Egypt and of the Zirides, initially prefects, but then usurping Africa, would appear

(p12 footnotes)

¹ Tafel et Thomas, *Fontes rer. Austriac.* Doc. de Venise, t. I^{er}, p. 25, 28; cf. Dandolo, *Chron. Venet.* ap. Muratori. t.XII, p.167, 171.

² «Omnes oltam Saracenorum principes suis legationibus sibi benevolos et amicos fecit.» Dandolo, ap. Muratori, t.XII, col. 323; Sanudo le jeuue, *Vite*, ap. Murat., t.XXII. col. 467.

³ Ibn-Khaldoun parle aussi de la richesse du royaume de Kairouan et d'El-Mehadia. Les cercueils des grands personnages du pays étaient faits de bois précieux des Indes à clous d'or. La dime payée au gouvernement par quelques cantons maritimes voisins de Sfax s'élevait à quatre-vingt mille boisseaux de grain. El-Moëzz, le Ziride, dépensa, en 1019-1020, pour le trousseau et les frais de noces de sa soeur, un million de pièces d'or. Les funérailles de sa mère montèrent à cent mille pièces d'or. *Hist. des Berb.* t. II, p.19-20.

to be an Eastern imagination, if all these testimonies from various sources did not agree on this point; if the monuments of Cairo, comparable with our most beautiful palaces and churches of the Middle Ages, weren't still there to attest to the splendour and culture of these times, and if one could not finally announce the cause of all this splendour. Baghdad having been swiftly deposed in the tenth century, the trade of the Indies and China, that it had attracted in the Persian gulf, returned to the Red Sea, to Cairo and Alexandria, where the Fatimids endeavoured to retain it. The Maghreb benefitted from its intermediate situation, and its ports would become the points of navigation between Egypt and Spain. Trade with Italy and the Sudan was still a source of great wealth for the Magreb ¹.

1048-1052. – The Zirides, governors of the Maghreb in the name of the caliphs of Egypt, declare themselves independent. Invasion of the Arabs from upper Egypt to the Magreb.

There occurred around that time a significant event which deeply affected the relationships and the composition of the tribes of north Africa, and of which we must speak, although its effects on the policy of the kings of Africa with the Christians of their States or the Christians of the outside are not very appreciable.

El-Moëzz, the Ziride, governor of Eastern Africa in the name of the Fatimides of Egypt, having declared independence in El-Mehadia in 1048, the caliph El-Mostancer solved to punish his revolt by launching against him the rapacious and loathsome Arab tribes, known as the Hilaliens Arabs, who wandered in upper Egypt. He made them assemble and said to them: "I make you a gift of the Maghreb and the kingdom of El-Moëzz, son of Badis, a slave who has withdrawn himself from the authority of his Master. Thus, henceforth, you will not be any more in need ²." At various times, a million nomads ³, authorized by this easy concession, invaded Cyrenaica, which they devastated, and a little later in the year 443 of the Hegira, 1051-1052 of the Christian era, penetrated Africa itself, where they literally put it to fire and blood.

A great ethnographic importance is associated with this second Arab immigration into northern Africa.

Descendants of the former conquerors were dispersed and had been almost entirely absorbed in the masses of the Berber population, infinitely higher in number. The invasion of 1052 brought a new element to the Ismaeli blood that was ready to die out, and one that holds all that remains of purely Arab today in the north of Africa as regards the origin of the

¹ Amari, *Diplomi arabi*, prefaz., p. xvi.

² Ibn-Khaldoun, *Hist. des Berbères*, trad. de l'arabe par M. le baron de Slane, t. I^{er}, p. 33.

³ Carette, *Recherches sur l'origine et les migrations des tribus de l'Afrique septentr.* p. 396, 397.

Hilalian tribes that the resentment of the caliph Egypt threw like a wound on the country, to avenge the defection of its vizier ¹. These facts of the internal history of Maghreb did not have any appreciable influence on the relations of Africa with foreign sovereigns. The Hilaliens upset the eastern and central Maghreb; for three years, after their irruption, the most complete anarchy and continual wars disturbed the country; and during this disorder, which enabled them to make the law, they did not manage to establish a dynasty. "This race of invaders, says Ibn-Khaldoun, never had a chief able to direct and contain it ²." Masters one moment of the strongest places, Kairouan, El-Mehedia, Constantine, they could not preserve any of it. Almost everywhere they ended by seeking alliances and accepting the sovereignty of the Berber emirs that they had dispossessed. Driven out of all the big cities, they were settled in the countryside, where they were always dreaded for their insolence and their armed robberies. El-Moëzz returned to El-Mehedia, and his children, though weakened by the revolt and the loss of the Western provinces, including Tunis, still reigned nearly one century on the eastern part of the Maghreb, from Byzacene to Tripolitaine.

1134-1152. - Roger II, king of Sicily, made conquests on the coast of Africa, and destroyed the Ziride kingdom of El-Mehadia.

Since the Normans had achieved the submission of Sicily, a result which appears to have been reached between the years 1075 and 1087, the invading instinct of the nation as well as external circumstances moved them to push their conquests further and to take a foothold on the coast of Africa. Their treaties with the Ziride kings kept them out of the Great War of El-Mehadia in 1087, but they could not contain indefinitely their projects which elsewhere added to the weakness of the government of the emirs and the disorder which remained in all of Eastern Maghreb. Under the reign of Ali, grandson of Temim, the emir of the town of Gabes, at the bottom of the gulf of this name, a descendant of the Arab chiefs that came from upper Egypt in the previous century, sought to withdraw himself from obedience to the princes of El-Mehadia and to establish intelligences with Roger of Sicily, who did not reject them. Ali, having few troops and an extremely restricted State, because the town of Kairouan, like Gabes occupied by Hilalian tribes, was completely independent, called to his assistance the Almoravid sultan Ali-Ibn-Yousouf. It was the beginning of declared hostilities which caused reprisals from the Sicilians and did not cease until the fall of the Ziride throne.

In 1122, a Moroccan fleet threatened the coasts of Sicily, plundered a village and took part of the population into slavery ¹. George of Antioche, a Byzantine who passed into the service of king Roger after having left that of the Ziride kings ², appeared the following year in front of El-Mehadia, disembarked to the south of the city, but withdrew without having been able to force entry ³. Happier in 1134, he seized the island of Djerba, a great and fertile region, facing Gabes, of which the populations, still attached to the old schism of the Kharejites, satisfied their political resentments while being given over to piracy against Moslems and Christians ⁴. The islands of Kerkenah, opposite Sfax, at another end of the gulf of Cabès, fell then into the power of the Sicilians ⁵, while the Almoravids, frightened at the progress of Abd-el-Moumen, were retained in the west, where they had difficulty defending their last positions. The admiral Georges, concerning himself only with the emirs of the country, envious of each other, triumphed everywhere he presented himself. Tripoli, besieged in 1143, was conquered in 1146, and was given to an indigenous chief who recognized the sovereignty of the king de Sicily ⁶; Djidjelli, to the east of Bougie, "close to abundant mountains of copper ore and lapis lazuli of excellent quality," was taken and ransacked same year ¹.

The Franks burned in this place a beautiful pleasure castle that Yahya, father of Ali, had had built. A little later the lieutenant of the emir de Gabes, having seized power, was placed openly under the protection of Roger and accepted from him, as did the governor of Tripoli, a diploma of nomination with the fur-lined coats of investiture ². Satisfied with these results, which ensured him the possession of all the gulf of Gabes firmly established him close to El-Mehadia, Roger II granted a treaty to El-Hassan, son of Ali, and made his fleet return to Sicily.

But peace was of short duration. El-Hassan not being long in driving out the governor installed by the Franks, Roger suspended his attacks against the Morée, where he had already taken or plundered Corfu, Cephalonia, Negrepoint, Corinth and Athens, and sent a fleet of one hundred fifty galleys to the coasts of Africa. The admiral Georges would have made use of a trick in facing El-Hassan, according to Ibn-Al-Athir, to surprise his capital, which he did not hope to take through blunt force. "You have nothing to fear from us," he would have written to him, "given that our peace treaty is not yet close to expiring. We only came to restore Mohammed, in the government of Gabes. It is however necessary to provide us a body of troops for this expedition ³." The emir could not accede to the request of the Sicilians. He found himself deprived of means of defense; he evacuated the city of El-Mehadia precipitately, and the Franks, having entered without difficulty, found the rooms of the palace of the Ziride kings still full of magnificence, and rare and invaluable objects. This event arrived at the end of June 1148 ⁴. Zouïla was immediately occupied, Sousse taken on July 2, Gabes a little later and Sfax, the only one that resisted, was taken by assault, but granted an amnesty and relieved at once, on July 13, ⁵.

After an interruption of a few years, during which the Sicilian fleet had to defend Corfu, which it could not save, and advanced as far as the walls of Constantinople, where the Franks in derision launched their arrows through the windows of the imperial palace, Roger returned his galleys to Africa, under the orders of admiral Philippe de Mehadia, a Muslim converted to Christianity, that the king had the weakness later to allow to be imprisoned and burned as a false Christian ⁶. Bone and some other towns of less importance accepted governors and garrisons in the name of the king of Sicily ⁷; this was towards the year 1152, at the time when Abd-el-Moumen, continuing his progress and his conquests, came to seize the city and the

(p42 footnotes)

¹ Ibn-Khaldoun, t. II, p. 26. Cf. El-Tidjani, p. 245.

² Voyez El-Tidjani, p. 242; Ibn-Khaldoun.

³ El-Tidjani, p. 246-247.

⁴ Ibn-al-Athir, . appendice à Ibn-Khaldoun, t. II, p. 578.

⁵ Ibn-al-Aihîr, *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 578.

⁶ Ibn-al-Athir, *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 579, 581..

kingdom of Bougie⁸.

The authority of Roger, without getting away from the coast, then extended beyond the limits of the Zirides and the Hammadites. With the exception of Tunis and Kairouan, all the seaboard towns of the eastern Magreb, from Tripolitaine to Numidie, paid him tax and were controlled by his agents. These doings authorized him to add to his qualification of king of Sicily and of Italy, the title of king of Africa, that are said to be found on some of his diplomas¹.

1134-1154. - Government lights and equitable of Roger with regard to the Arabs.

The Arabs had responded to justice with the spirit of benevolence and equity which regulated the relationships of king Roger and his father with their Moslem subjects. At the end of his reign, one could reproach Roger II with some acts of weakness and cruelty, such as the hard repression of the sedition of Sfax² and the abandonment of admiral Philippe to the fanaticism of his accusers; but in general, and with the example of his father, he was the defender of the Muslim population and the mediator of the Christian requirements. His son Guillaume compromised his authority by abandoning this wise policy.

In Sicily, the Arabs who could not decide to leave the country, as those of the valley of Mazzara³, took the place of the former vanquished Muslims. Subjected to tribute, they entirely preserved their personal freedom and religious liberty. In the cities, where they occupied industrial arts and liberal studies, they were the object of a particular favour. Many took employment in the palace, several were called to high positions in government. The kings liked to bring together their well-read men around them. It is known that Roger II provides for Edrisi, a descendant of the former kings of Malaga, whom he had made his friend, the means of manufacturing a globe of silver with a weight of eight hundred marks, on which all the known countries were illustrated, from the Indies and China as far as the strait of Morocco. This is at the request of the king of Sicily, who accepted the legitimates dedication, and to explain this invaluable globe, the *schérif* (honorable?) scientist composed his treaty of geography which was for a long time known under the false title of *Treatise of a*

(p43 footnotes)

¹ Edrisi, t. I, p. 245, 246; El-Bekri, p. 193.

² Ibn-al-Athîr., *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 579.

³ Ibn-al-Athîr, *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 581; Ibn-Khaldoun, t. II, p. 36.

⁴ Ibn-al-Athîr, *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 582.

⁵ Ibn-Khaldoun, t. II, p. 27; Ibn-al-Athîr, *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 581 et suiv. ; El-Tidjani, p. 250 et suiv.

⁶ Ibn-al-Athîr, *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 584.

⁷ Romuald de Salerne, *Chron.*, ap. Muratori, *Script, ital.*, t. VII, col. 195 ; Ibn-al-Athîr, *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 587.

⁸ Ibn-al-Athîr, *loc. cit.*, t. II, p. 586.

Nubian Geographer.

The government that he had in Africa while he had been in Sicily, had been carried with leniency and the desirous of all means that could enable the two people to live in concord, under equal protection. The taxes were moderate, the chiefs usually taken from among the natives; the people, goods, and religion of the countries respected everywhere. A city being taken, safety and discipline were promptly restored. Generous measures brought back the inhabitants, constructions of public utilities were undertaken. The Arab authors themselves provide these testimonies.

“At the time of the taking of El-Mehadia,” says Ibn-Khaldoun, “the admiral of king Roger seeing the high consideration that the inhabitants had for Omar-Ibn-Abil, granted him the position of governor. When setting out again for Sicily, he took along with him the father of this man of quality as a hostage. Such was the system followed by Roger with regard to his African conquests: he authorized defeated to remain there; he gave them fellow-citizens for chiefs, and in his relationship with them he always acted according to the rules of justice ¹. ” What Ibn-Al-Athir says on occasion of the taking of Tripoli and the repair of the ramparts, a project on which the Franks were employed for six consecutive months, shows that their conquests, far from bringing disorder to the invaded countries, sometimes developed more marketing activity there. “A general amnesty proclaimed by the victors of Tripoli had had as a result the return of the escapees to the city. Order was restored there. The Sicilians and Roum (Italians) went there on frequent journeys; the population increased quickly and developed a great prosperity ². ” It was perhaps thus with El-Mehadia. But nevertheless the Norman domination of Africa was always precarious; it was never fully accepted by the natives, who on the first favorable occasion rose against them and helped in their expulsion.

1159-1163. - Abd-el-Moumen, continuing its conquests, drives the Franks from El-Mehadia, and extends the Almohade Empire through all the north of Africa.

Possession of the African littoral by the Sicilians was only possible with two conditions: the continuation of anarchy, which prevented the establishment of a dominant dynasty in the eastern Maghreb, and the maintenance in Sicily of great ground and sea forces ready to act without delay on the coast of Africa to repress revolts and to support the part of the governors named by the Christians. These conditions were absent for the success of the enterprise of king Roger. Unceasingly occupied in southern Italy in extending or defending

¹ Gregorio, *Considerazioni*, t. I^{er}, p. 600, 610.

² Ibn-Khaldoun, t. II, p. 39; Ibn-al-Athir, p. 587.

³ Gregorio, *Considerazioni*, t. I^{er}, p. 249.

his conquests against the republic of Pisa, the prince de Capua, the Pope and the emperor of Constantinople, in Sicily he could not maintain the fleets which were essential for him. His authority, compromised by the end of his reign, could not be regained by his son Guillaume the Bad (1154), for whom even Sicily was disputed. It was maintained nevertheless as long as Africa was divided; he could not resist Abd-el-Moumen, who approached, with forces of a crushing superiority and the prestige of a sovereignty recognized by the most powerful tribes of western and central Maghreb.

After having granted peace under severe conditions to the inhabitants of Tunis, Abd-el-Moumen without wasting time directed himself towards El-Mehadia, the only point from which he could fear serious resistance. He arrived under the walls of the city in the month of August 1159³. His approach had raised confusion and disorder in the country to fever pitch. Sfax and some other cities occupied by the Franks drove out their governors. Some tribes were disposed to acclaim the new sultan; others, and among them the Rihides of Kairouan, tried to ally themselves with the Franks to drive him out, repelling his envoys. Abd-el-Moumen neglected everything to concentrate its efforts against El-Mehadia. El-Hassan, the former Ziride king, fought in his armies.

The suburb of Xouïla, abandoned by the Christian population, was occupied by the Almohades; their fleet established itself in the port, and the principal place was surrounded by all sides. The seige was completed by crossing the isthmus which attached the citadel to the mainland with a broad ditch. El-Mehadia contained a rather large garrison then, where one counted, says a Moslem writer, "several Frank princes and a great number of knights with proven bravery¹." The height of the fortifications increased their confidence and rendered attack impossible for the attackers; but six months of seige exhausted their supplies and their means of defense. They still resisted, and had even made some advantageous sorties, when the supply squadron admiral Pierre, eunuch of the palace², suspected of some treason, was driven under the walls El-Mehadia, in the face of head winds which opposed his approach. The besieged decided to bargain for capitulation then. According to Ibn-Al-Athir³, the sultan, consistent with itself, would have liked to require of them that before leaving the city they abjured Christianity. Any projected evacuation having been abandoned on this condition, Abd-el-Moumen did not persist therein, and a few days later the Franks returned the city, guaranteed by a new convention which allowed them to take with them to Sicily their weapons and their goods⁴. The victors took possession of El-Mehadia on January 22 1160⁵.

¹ *Hist. des Berbères*. trans. from M. de Slane, t. II, p. 39.

² Appendix to *l'Hist. des Berbères d'Ibn-Khaldoun*, t. II, p. 580.

³ Le 12 de redjeb 554. El-Tidjani, p. 262. Cf. Roudh-el-Kartas, p. 281.

Sfax, Tripoli, Gafsa, and Sousse having made their submission during the siege of El-Mehadia; Gabes, which resisted, was carried by assault; Kairouan and the remainder of the country were subjected a little later as far as with the desert of Barca ⁶. Without having to leave his State, Abd-el-Moumen took again the road to Morocco and arrived at Tangier in December 1160 ⁷. He then reorganized the administration of the conquered countries; he restored the cities and the ports, and carried out a general land register of his possessions in Africa. The surveyed countries were divided into squares, which were allocated, with deduction made for the surface of the rivers and the mountains, a proportional and fixed quota of contributions to be paid in money and wheat ⁸. The following year, to supplement the defense and the facility of the communications from Africa to Spain, he founded the town of Gibraltar. He made immense preparations to concentrate all his efforts against the Christians of Spain ⁹, when he fell sick and died in Sale in May or June, 1163.

(p46 footnotes)

¹ El-Tidjani, p.263.

² Hugues Falcand, *Hist. sic.*; ap. Muratori, *Scrip.*, t. VII, col. 271, 272.

³ Appendix to Ibn.Khaldoun, t. II, p. 590.

⁴ « Facta pace cum Massemutis, relicta eis Africa; civitate, ipsi cum rebus suis in Siciliam sunt reversi. » Romuald de Salerne, *Chron.*, ap. Muratori, *Script, ital.*, t. VI, col. 199. Cf. Ibn-al-Athir, appendix à Ibn-Khaldoun, t. II, p.592; El-Tidjani, p. 265.

⁵ El-Tidjani, p.266; Ibn-al-Ahir, *loc. cit.*, p. 593.

⁶ Ibn-Khaldoun, t. II, p. 193; Ibn-al-Athir, p. 591.

⁷ Cf. Roudh-el-Kartas, p. 283.

⁸ Roudh-el-Kartas, p. 281.

⁹ Ibn-Khaldoun, t. II, p. 195.

Under the reign of El-Lihyani, the republic of Pisa sent two ambassadors to Tunis, Jean Fagoli and Renier del Bagno. They negotiated the new treaty on September 14, 1313¹, where there is particular mention of the fondouks that the Pisans then had in Tunis, Bone, Gabes, Sfax and Tripoli². This instrument, written from the start in Arabic access, following normal practice, when the negotiation took place in Africa, had to be translated then into Latin or Italian, by the official interpreters, and the original copy of the Arab text, still preserved today in the files of the republic of Pisa in Florence, had to be brought back to Italy by the ambassadors themselves with the Latin original lost for a long time.

The treaty concluded for ten years expired in 1323; however, we do not find a general and complete pact between Pisa and Tunis until thirty years later, in 1353, under the reign of Abou-Ishac II, son of Abou-Yahya Abou-Bekr, the former king of Bougie, who took over the throne of Tunis in 1318, from his cousin Abou-Derba, son of El-Libyani, and who had died in 1346, after a long and prosperous reign of twenty-eight years.

¹ Our *Documents*, p.49.

² Art. 20, Our *Documents*, p. 52.

³ Ibn-Khaldoun, vol. III, p. 29, 41.

⁴ Treaty of 16 May, 1353. Our *Documents*, p. 55.

⁵ Our *Documents*, p. 65. See below, p. 150.

It is probable that the island of *Tabarca*, rich in corals, which we find marked in the portulans after Bone, belonged formerly as today to the kingdom of Tunis or *Ifrikiah*. Lomellini, of Genoa, had considerable establishments there. Progressing towards the east, one found next *Tunis*, the great African center of commerce and trade with Europeans; next, *Hamamet*, *Souza*, the strong city of *El-Mehadia* or *Africa*, facing Malta; the islands of *Kerkeni*, *Sfax*, facing onto the coast, where the Pisans had trading posts for a long time, as in *Gabes*, at the bottom of the gulf; then the beautiful island of *Gerba*, and finally *Tripoli*.

The Christian ships could freely approach all the ports and harbours of the coast of the Maghreb which we have just named, and on all the other points of the shore, sure to find there to find warm welcome and protection; the treaties gave them at least the right there to count on and to call on royal officers and population. At any time, it was permissible for them to provide their needs, of water and of the tackle necessary for navigation. In the case of storm or force majeure ('absolute necessity'), they could even seek shelter there and remain there in safety. But they were not permitted to indulge themselves everywhere indifferently in commerce. The stay for purpose of trade and for all operations of buying and selling was not possible, as we have seen ¹, except in the ports where Arab customs offices existed.

Nowhere do we find the precise designation of the places equipped with these offices of receipt, and by this alone open to Christian trade. There could have been in this respect several changes brought about by the opening or closing of some tax offices. But we can regard the following cities as having almost always had an administration or at least a customs office and consequently some Christian trading posts: Tangier, Ceuta, Badis and Arcudia, one and other communicating with Fez; Oran, Bone, Bougie, Tunis, Sfax, El-Mehadia, island of Djerba, Gabes and Tripoli.

In the Middle Ages this is where the principal centers of the Christian establishments were, the fondouks and the chapels, in a word Christian districts and agents. Special factors [managers] guarded the provisions deposited in the fondouks, laid out the markets in advance, received the imported goods and prepared the accounts for customs, so that ships had to remain in port for the least possible time and to proceed to the next ports of call.

¹ See below, p. 101.

The treaty concluded in Tripoli, on June 9, 1356, by Bernabo Giraldo, envoy of the doge de Venise, and prince Ahmed ¹, stipulates that the Venetian consul residing at Tripoli, in the fondouk of the nation, had the right to name vice-consuls in the expanse of the seigniory of Ahmed ², which expressly included, in addition to the town of Tripoli, the towns of Gabes and Sfax and the islands of Djerba and Kerkeneh ³, that is to say Tripolitania and *Petite Syrte* (Gulf of Gabes), or country of Lotophages. The exchange of the currencies was regulated; the uses and the rights of the port and the customs were specified, so as to avoid occasions of conflict. It was declared that the Venetian owners, while remaining subject to the obligation to give guarantee for anchoring and harborage, would not be seen any more taking upon their arrival the tiller and the sails of the ship, the use of which always brought difficulties at the time of the departure of the navires ⁴. The exchange of the *double d'or* ['gold doubloon'] of Venice for six Arab besants was fixed, the besant being worth ten *miliaresi* of gold ⁵. The rights of importation were left at the ordinary rate of 10 per 100 ⁶, plus some coins in kind to be taken on the loadings of boards, processed wood and iron ⁷. The precious metals had entry in franchise ⁸, and the Venetians could, under not very considerable duty, strike in Tripoli, on gold that they brought, Arab besants in the coin of the emir ⁹. The duties on exports, somewhat difficult to determine, but relatively low, were enumerated in detail. Salt, wools, fleeces, leathers, loil, groceries from Egypt, dates, carpets and some fabrics formed the Venetian purchases ¹⁰. The export of these last objects, all manufactured in the country, was exempt from duty ¹¹.

(p226 footnotes)

1 Published in our *Documents*, p222 [appendix]

2. Art. 3.

3. Art. 1.

4. Art. 20. Cf below, p. 201, *Droits d'ancrage, d'arborage, etc.*

5. Art. 10.

6. Art. 5.

7. Art. 6, 7, 8, 9.

8. Art. 11.

9. Art. 12.

10. Art. 22-28, 30-33.

11. Art. 30.

12. Art. 4.

13. Art. 4. Cf. art. 16, 21.

We have seen that Venetian ambassador came to Tunis in 1437 to renew the old alliance of the republic, having to satisfy at the same time the repeated complaints of the sultan against a Venetian ship-owner ¹. In 1446 and 1449, the government of king Abou-Omar Othman still harboured resentments against the Florentins for some quite serious acts committed against the kingdom of Tunis or its subjects by Thaddeus and Philippe Caleffi, citizens of Florence, under the reign of Abou-Farès, his grandfather ². These prolonged and late recriminations, because the accused facts went back to nearly thirty-two years ³, attest at least that the Tuscans did not often give cause for similar complaints. The republic of Florence had elsewhere done all that was possible for him in this circumstance to reach and chastise the culprits. By condemning them to banishment like traitors to the country, it had announced everywhere for their person and their goods to be seized.

Perhaps the republic of Genoa also put all its care into satisfyng the complaints enumerated in a note from the chancellery of the king of Tunis, Abou-Omar, dated February 6, 1452, which to him appeared well founded ⁴. The note lists a series of many and very serious objections of which the Arab subjects would have been victims on the part of the Genoans. A ship-owner, a subject of the republic, who was charged with Arab goods to sell them on common account in Europe with the owners, had outrageously surprised their good faith in the rendering of his accounts. - A Genoan captain, Luc Balaram, had chartered his ship to Arabs from Tunis to carry corn to Tripoli. Once loaded on board, the captain directed himself without further ceremony towards Genoa and there had sold all the grain, offering, it is true, to pay the value to the owners. - A small ship that started from Gaëte with a load of iron and wood bound for Tunis had been stopped and held by the Genoans. The shipper and the recipient were Arabs; they complained for a long time and no one replied to their letters. The consul even, who was then (about 1445) Cyprien de Mari, had refused to give them satisfaction. - Two Arab merchants from Sfax had been maltreated. - A Genoan corsair had taken an Arab *fuste* [vessel] of Bone. - Several Moors had been removed, beaten and held as slaves by some Genoans helped by Catalans; there had been difficulties in repurchasing them. The republic of Genoa had not punished the culprits. Lastly, the sultan complained that several associates or factors of a well-known commercial firm of Genoa had recently introduced counterfeit Arab money in Sfax and Tripoli. Such a crime was punished, in Africa, with the loss of the hand; the king of Tunis asked that the doge condemn his delinquent subjects to undergo the same penalty.

(p312 footnotes)

1. Below, p267.

2. Amari, Arab diplomacy. Appendix, p. 19, 20, 22, no. 7-9.

3. Pièce de 1449. (Appendix, p. 23.) The misdeeds of the Caleffi were therefore in around 1417.

4. Note and letter from Abou-Omar to the doge of Genoa, in February 1452. Our Documents, p. 145.

Documents from the Republic of Pisa

XI.

1264, August 11. Tunis.

Treaty of peace and trade concluded for twenty years between the republic of Pisa and Abou-Abd-Allah El-Mostancer, king of Tunis, by Parent Visconti, Pisan ambassador.

Tronci, Memorie istoriche della città di Pisa, p. 217; Dal Borgo, Raccolta di scelti diplomi Pisani, p. 213;

Rousset, Supplém.. au Corps diplomatique de Dumont, t. I, p.115; Brunetti, Codice diplom. Toscano,

t. I, 2^{em} part., p. 140, Florence, 1833; **Amari, Diplomi Arabi, p. 295.**

(to be translated from the Italian)

Sancti Spiritus adsit nobis gratia. Ave, Maria, gratia plena; Domimis tecum.

Questa este la pace facta inter dominum elmiram Mommini, regem de Tunithi, et dominum Parentem Vesconte, ambasciadore de lo comuno di Pisa, per lo comuno di Pisa.

1. *Prologus pacis.* In nomine Domini. Per lo comandamento de lo signore califfo grande et alto, per la gratia di Dîo, elmirè Momini Buabidelle, filio de lo alto et de lo potente et gentile, cui Dio mantegna, et diali la sua buona voluntade, et rimagna a li Saracini la sua benedictione ! in de la presentia de li testimoni di questo scripto, che questo testimonio di rinovamento di questa pace, la quale este fermata per lo comandamento altissimo, che Dio guardi, cum domino Parente Vesconte, filio quondam domini Galgani Grossi Vesconte, imbasciadore mandato da la podestade di Pisa, in de la indictione sub scripta, da domino Guillelmo da Cornassano, podestade di Pisa, et da li scecha² et da lo comuno di Pisa, dimandando et fermando da la loro parte. Unde giungendo lo soprascritto imbasciadore et dimandando da la parte di euloro che l'aveano mandato carta di pace, de la quale elli avea imbasciata, a li pacti che elli dimandove et pregove et piaqueli. Et comandolo l'altissimo et lo magno, cui Dio mantegna! che li fusse date lo suo dimandamento a la sua voluntade.

Note: Page 44 (containing articles 1 through 20) is omitted here, since the only material relating to Sfax, is in article 21.

(p43 footnotes)

⁽¹⁾ There is an error in the number of the indictment.)

² The Chiefs or Elders of the Republic of Pisa.

21. *De lo uso come in Tunithi.* Et che a Buona si debbia tenere et fare a voi quello uso che este in Tunithi, et in quello medesimo modo. Et similiatamente si debbia fare ad voi in Affricha⁴, et in Cappisi⁵, et in Isfacchixi⁶, et in Tripuli, et in tucte l'altre terre, secondo che in Tunithi.

22. *De lo diricto de le nave.* Et che non si debbia tollere ad voi alchuno diricto de alchuna nave la quale voi vendeste ad homini che avesseno con noi⁷ pace.

(p45 footnotes)

⁽¹⁾ The articles of the treaty of 1230 are confirmed, art. 11.)

⁽²⁾ Tronci, Dal Borgo, etc. La Goulette, the actual port of Tunis.)

⁽³⁾ Brunelli & Amari. Tronci, Dal Borgo et Roussot: *L'eccliesie*. It refers to church constructed or to be constructed in the interior of the Fondouks. Cf. art. 6 & 15 of the present treaty.)

⁽⁴⁾ The town of Al-Mehadia.

⁽⁵⁾ Cabès [Gabès], in the gulf of this name.

⁽⁶⁾ Sfax.

⁽⁷⁾ The editions, with the exception of Amari, have the incorrect reading: *voi* . Cf. art. 16 of the treaty of 1230.

IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

XVIII

1452, February 6. Tunis.

Letter from Abou Omar Othman, king of Tunis, to the doge of Genoa, followed by a note enumerating the objections of the emir and his subjects against various Genoan merchants.

Turin. Royal archives. *Genoa. Treaties and political matters.* Orig. of the Genoan translation on paper.

(to be translated from the Italian)

A lo nome di Dio, e servo di Dio, e chi a speranza in Dio, quello chi regie con posanza di Dio che a fama e serve per amor di Dio, signor di cathalochi¹, Othomem, figliolo di nostro signor Boabdile Macomet, figliolo di nostro signor Bofers Adbalazize, figlolo di Bolabez Amet, figlolo di nostri signori grandi trapazati, Dio lo mantegna e li dia victoria ! a lo alto grande duxe di Zenoa e la soa natione e a lo comune grande, e a quelli chi ano la signoria e quelli chi ano a vedeire la soa signoria, Ydio li acresci e li mete in bona via ! e Dio la dato più che non a impromezo. Dapoy di questo, avemo scripto questa lettera aprezo de la nostra presentia alta, de la casa nostra antiqua othomeme, in Tunici, la guardata, Ydio la goarda e la aza in la fede alzata, che li dia la lucc in lo moresmo e in tuto lo suo paize, e la bandera de la Victoria li copre, e la impromeza de la victoria verra ! E questo facemo per mantegneire la bona voluntade che e infra noy, e fede promisa nom se rompa, e la promiza intra noi se de mantagneire ; e quello chi la mantiene sia di Dio; e avemo impromiso di mantegneire le carte che voi e noy debiamo compire.

Ano facto li vostri chi sono in la paxe, senza vostra voluntade, ne voi lo aveti inteizo, quello che sono li capitoli, li quali ve mandamo inclusi, che voy li compiti, quello che avemo scripto; e voi li guardati con lo ochio de la justicia como speramo che fareti; allora sapiremo che la amicitia dura averra vogla e la verità avéra logo. Et nostro ambasiatore vi portera questa letera, e sera a la vostra presentia e vi demanderà quello con viritade.

Mandiamo e mandemo a lo duce, che Dio lo meta in bona via ! duo cavali uno con cola e freno di quelli che cavalco, e uno gamelo corradore di terra di Nigri, per avizarve de bona amicitia chè intra noy, per la vostra grandeza che è infra li vostri. Requeriamo che lo duxe sia in aiuto e favore a lo nostro ambasiatore, a lo quale amo comizo che compera astori² e altre cose. E faciatì che lo nostro ambasiatore vignia contento. Laudato sia Idio sempre !

A di XIII de la luna de Maaram DCCCLVI, zoè a di VI de Febuario 1452.

(p145 footnotes)

¹ *Cathalochi, catholici*, the faithful, believers.

² Hawks for hunting in the air.

TRAITÉS ENTRE CHRÉTIENS ET ARABES

II.

Al nome di Dio, quello chi dimanda la riposta da lo duxe de Zenoa e la comunitade, che Dio lo converta in la via de la veritade ! Questi sono capitoli, li quali ve diro di zota.

1. E primo, de la nave que acata Lucheize Spinula, in la quale e partecipavo per lo quarto; e quando la ano acatada e stato in presentia de lo consolo chi era a quel tempo, mese Cipriam, et li merchadanti e, insimo me regorda che con ello non mo impagiave era per pacto che lo quarto de lo guadagno aveze; e lo dicto Lucheize ne a tradito in la nave e in la roba de Mori, e a fato tanto che a facto supra la ¹ con la quale li Mori stavam sicuri; si che questo è grande tradimento.

2. El segundo capitolo. Mandamo per lo consolo e tuti li mercadanti zenovexi e tuti inzema andano a Lucheize, e parlano con seigo de lo tradimento che fava, e restano contenti in zonze nolo a la roba de Tripoli, la quale roba deveria portare a Tripoli, e la porta a Tunixe, e contrafece; e fece che li Mori erano contenti de pagare piu nolo solamenti per avere le loro robe e perche se spagiezem con bone da loro ² lo quale comenzia a discarrigar, lo primo jorno in pocho a discarrigare, e post stava monti jorni a discarrigare, degandone parole. E cosi vidando lo consolo con li mercadanti ge torna e si ge portant li noli che volze lo dicto Lucheize; e questo chi li portavan per nolo nom era in carta de nolizamento, e resta cotento con lo consulo e mercadanti de discarrigar presto la roba, e non ne fcze niente. E quando li mercadanti ge scrivevan, non voleva risponder. E perlongo, per infin che vino corzari e ge intrevene quello che glie intervenuto. E questo è tradimento chiaro. E si vende la nave a Redalagona ³, come amo inteizo, e si preize la parte de la mercadantia.

3. El terzo, del facto de Luca Balaram, el genoize, lo qua noriza la so naue a li Mori, per porta grani a Tripoli, e lo carrigano ; e tradi, che porta li dicti grani a Zenoa, e se li a vendui a Zenoa, e si dice : « Pagero lo che valevan li grani. » Questa è traditoria clara, e si semo advizati che non è stato punito per questo, ni repreizo, e questi suni quelli chi rompono la pace.

4. El quarto, de Juliam de Virdura, lo qua amo inteizo che a preizo Mori e si li a tegnui per schiavi; e fo iu compagnia de fuste de Catalani, e sono partimento de lo aveire e de li Mori a li Catalani. E questo è de lo vostro paize, e ge non è stato punito; e questo ancora è quello che rompe la pace.

5. El quinto. El caito Amet Bensait se lamenta che per lo pasao ge slato preizo una naveta, partiendo de Gaita, per Francesco zoè Jacobo⁴ Calvo, carrigao de legnami e ferro, in la varzua de dicto D. E si fo scripto monte vote de questa cosa, e non ne a avuto, salvo d° m. e ge non na mai avuo la risposta. E

(p146 footnotes)

¹ An unreadable word.

² Uncertain words.

³ To the king of Aragon.

⁴ The words "zoè Jacobo" are written between the lines.

questo fo per mano de lo consolo, chi era mese Cipriam. E cosi lo mercadante, chi se chiama Macomet Bencelim e Sade, tripolino, e altri li quali ano aveire da Lucheize; e non a voluto pagare quello che de dare.

6. El sexto, de uno corzaro zinoeze, lo quale preize una fusta de quelli de Bona, e tene li Morì per sforza e si averno ricaptato parte de Mori da Johanne de Nave, cattalano, e questo è stato Giuliano Verdura predicto zoè Lucho Negro. E voi sapeti che tuto questo distruge la pace seando tradimenti chiari. E noi ve dimandemo riposta de questi, capitolo in capitolo.

7. El septimo, de lo facto de Mondino e Franchino, che amo tenuti; li quali eram mercadanti a Sfax, Sono fuei da Sfax, e sono vegnuti a trovar Lucheize, e sono preizi, e si ne aveivan parlato lo consolo e li mercadanti chi li dovezemo retegnire loro e li soi beni; e questo no amo facto salvo quando semo restato con li mercadanti de acordio. E de questo facto, Jacobo de Piroli, lo banche, ve ne a mandato scriptura; e noi ve demandemo raxom de le nostre cosse, cosi como voi fe de le vostre.

8. El octavo. Como ne ¹ ... emo, como è stato a Tripoli, e a Sfax li compagni de Constatino de Marino, con moneta de stampa nova, stampata al modo de questa terra, zoè nazari ². Se questo fazam li nostri, incorrono in pena de aveire taglato la mano; e così credemo che voi altri ne fazati.

Yo, Bartomu Ferades, fasu testimoni, come quista letera es traletata de moriscu in latinu.

Yo, Jachomo Dapetori, torsimano de Jenouese, straletai questa letera de morischo in latino.

Questa è la letera e li capitoli, zoè la copia, che ve manda lo signor re de Tunice, a la illustrissima Signoria vostra, in morischo, tranlatata in latino ³.

¹ The paper is corroded here and further.

² *Nazari*, Christian. It claims that false Arabic coins made in Europe have been introduced by the Genoese in Tunis.

³ On the back is written : « A lo illustro, exelso duxe de Zenoa e la communitade e li antiani e li grandi in la soa generatione e apreciatu in la fede loro in la justicia. » Lower : « Tunetîs. »