

FASTES CHRONOLOGIQUES
CHRONOLOGICAL RECORDS
DE LA
OF THE
VILLE DE SFAKS
TOWN OF SFAKS

PAR

BY

Le Comte A. du PATY de CLAM

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MEMBRE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DE GÉOGRAPHIE DE PARIS

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CHRONOLOGICAL RECORDS OF THE TOWN OF SFAKS

An Arab tradition suggests that at the current site of the town of Sfaks there existed formerly an small fort (the Kasbah) surmounted by a tower, like those that one meets along the coast. Around this fort, this *mahres* (1), lived the poor fisherfolk. In the interior of the country, at a short distance, were many villages or cities. Their inhabitants were accustomed to meet around the fort, one day per week; there, they bartered or sold the products of their work, and bought what was necessary for them. Little by little this market increased in importance; fondouks were built, houses erected alongside, the population increased and the city was born. If one accepts Ptolemy, this tradition would be true. All the authors, indeed, are in agreement in recognizing Sfaks as the point mentioned by the Alexandrian geographer, between Ousilla (current Inchilla) and Thenae (Henchir Thina). He gives it the name of **Ἱαφρούρα** (Taphroura) or **Ἱαφρούραι** (Taphrourai) or **τὰ Φρούρια** (Phrouria).

This name is found on several occasions in Ptolemy's work. The qualifier **φρούριον** (phourion) is given to a town in Egypt, in Clysma (1. IV, chap. v). The ancient author also mentions a **τάφρος** (taphros) in Chersonèse Taurique (1. III, chap. VI). Whatever the etymology that one seeks for this name, one arrives at **τάφρος** (taphros) "cutting off" or **φρούρα** (phoura) "guardroom". Taphros in Chersonèse Taurique [the Crimean Peninsula] is another example of this term. It currently bears the name of Perecop. However this name means in Russian "ditch". That is the almost literal translation of another Greek word **περιχοπή** (péricopê) which indicates "cut, cutting off". We know moreover that in the fifteenth century Mengli Ghirei made repairs to the cut that the years had filled (1). I will discuss this transformation of the word "Taphros" into that of "Perecop". It will be useful for me to show the similarity which exists between the names of "Taphrura" and of "Sfaks".

Another tradition suggests that at the time of the fall of Carthage, the victor, Scipion Emilien, wanting to separate Numidia from the new Roman possessions, had a ditch dug which, coming from the Tusca river (close to Galle), would have ended at Thenae. The area located to the south of this point still bears the name d' El-Hadd, "the border". It would have been natural that, at head of this trench on the gulf of Gabès, this city would have been defended by a series of detached forts, of which Taphrura would have formed part. In the eleventh century, on the site of Thina, which had been ruined by the Arab invaders, a monitoring station was erected the ruins of which ruins still exist and which El Bekri places among the detached forts around Sfaks, under the name of Mahres-er-Riliana "guardpost of the myrtle".

From what precedes springs the truth of the Arab tradition. At the current site of Sfaks a simple guardroom was erected, connecting Thenae to Ousilla, also serving as a means of defense, "Mahres" to the first of these cities.

An author, Mannert, had believed he had been able to identify Taphrura in Kidiphtha of Stadiasme (Hédaphtha of Ptolemy). This is in contradiction with this last geographer, who differentiates formally Taphrura from Hedaphtha and places this last city between the two Syrtes. As for Stadiasme, he assigns Kidiphtha to a site in the south and opposite Meninx (Jerba), at a point that Tissot calls "Henchir Roumia", equidistant from Gabes and Ras-el-Djeurf.

Morcelli, on its part, believed himself able to relate Taphrura to the Taphra of Pline. But the Latin historian assign to Taphra a location similar to the Hedaphtha identified by the Alexandrian astronomer.

At most could one propose l' assimilation of Taphrura with Kidiphtha which the author from Stadiasme places opposite Cercinna (Kerkena). But the distance indicated in this Péryple, separating Tacape (Gabès) from this Kidiphtha, only applies to the Hedaplitha of Ptolemy; we must therefore reject the comparison.

In short, Scylax, Stadiasme and Mela (before Christ) do not refer to Taphrura. At the time of Strabon (50 years B.C.), the city clearly returned to the category of the many small villages of which this author mentions the presence at the edge of the sea, but of which he does not mention the name. Pliny (70 A.D.) remains silent about this city. It is only 70 years later (140 A.D.) that Ptolemy speaks about it.

The tables known as "Peutinger" report Taphrura in the form "Taparura".

In the fifth century, "Taphrura" is in the list of bishoprics of Africa, to disappear completely from history after the seventh century. For this time, only the name of "Sfaks" is met with in the writers.

How could the transformation of this name occur?

This is what we will study.

Until now there has not yet been agreement on the etymology of the word "Sfaks". Some see in it a variation of the word fakouss "cucumber", the gardens bordering the city producing many. Others call upon their historical memories and find in this name a slightly disfigured form of "Syphax", the king de Numidia.

Certain authors, finally, give "Sfaks" an origin identical to that of Carthage. They would have it that a foreign queen one day disembarked here and obtained the grant of an amount of land around which she could wrap an ox skin. Then calling one of her slaves, called Sfa, she would have said to him: "Sfa, Kess Sfa, cut."

He would have been able to include a large extend of land in this skin if it were cut in fine thin straps.

But until now nobody has considered that the Sfaksienne population is not Arab, but Libyan-Phoenician-Berber. This etymology should have been sought not in the "Arab" language, but in the "Berber" language. It would have then been seen that "Sfaks" and "Taphrura" are the same name in two different languages. This is a similar transformation as that which made "Pérécop" from "Taphros".

In effect, what does "Sfaks" mean in Berber?

Two almost identical answers can be made to this request.

"Sfaks" is likely d' to be broken up into:

1. Sthat which (factitive of the first form),
Fit extended, it extends,

ekesseparation, cut.

2. Sthat which,
Fit extended, it extends,
ekezmonitoring, guard.

Of these two etymologies, the first (that which extended a separation, a cut) corresponds well with the idea of the ditch suggested by Scipion Emilien. But as the existence of this ditch is extremely problematic, we cannot seek there a proof in favor of our assumption. Let us say only, as curiosity, that the 21st form of “ekes” is the Berber word “ksar... strong castle”.

The second, on the contrary, corroborates it from all angles. Let us place it, then, alongside the word “Taphrouria” and compare these two etymologies.

Τα	φρουρία	S	Fa	ekez
Stations of monitoring.				That which extends the monitoring.

We obtain a perfect correspondence between these two names; the first is only the Greek translation of the second. There is nothing here to surprise us. We have already seen that “Taphros” was a Greek form of the word “Perecop”. On the gulf of Gabes, to the south of Thenae, there was a city that the ancients call variously **Νεα πολις** (Néapolis) or **Μακομαδες** (Macomades). However it is currently known that Macomades, written in the Assyrian language and being read consequently from right to left, therefore SDH-MKM-, which means “new city” **Νεαπολις**.

It is thus very natural that writing in Greek, and eager that the meaning of the name of the cities that he quoted was understood, Ptolemy reported a town of “Taphrura”, to which the inhabitants gave the corresponding Berber name of “Sfaks”.

When the Greeks had disappeared from the African territory, the Arab invaders naturally preserved at the city only the name that the natives gave him.

Having confirmed the complete similarity between “Taphrura” and “Sfaks”, let us proceed to the chronological records.

After what we saw above, it is only from the tables of “Peutinger” that the name of the city appears a continuous manner in history. It is therefore from this century that we will begin this list.

4th CENTURY.

393. – The tables of Peutinger (Itinerarium Pictum) (1) represent Taphrura by a castle very similar to those of Adrumète (Sousse), Tacape (Gabès), etc... It was thus already an important city.

5th CENTURY.

411. - Conferences take place in Carthage, on the 1st, 3rd, and 8th June, in the presence of count Marcellin, by the order of the emperor Honorius, between the

Catholics and the Donatists, who were condemned there. Limienianus, bishop of Taphrura, voted for the judgment.

430. - Invasion of the Vandals. The count Boniface is defeated and sees himself besieged in Hippone by king Giseric at the end of May.

431. - Death of count Boniface.

435. - Peace treaty, in spite of which the war continues.

440-442. - Giseric seizes one by one the cities of Proconsulaire and Byzacium. He reconciles the populations by decreasing the crushing taxes established by the emperor of the west.

442. - Peace treaty between emperor Valentinien and king Giseric. The latter obtains the land between the sea and small Syrte and the towns of Théveste (Tébessa), Sicca-Vénéria (El-Kef), Vacca (close to Béja). Sfaks is under the control of a Vandal general, a governor residing at Culula, close to Gabès. According to Victor de Vita, Byzacène remained in the hands of the king, forming his own domain.

448. – As with all the the cities of Africa, except Carthage, Sfaks had its walls demolished to avoid any attempt to revolt on the part of the inhabitants. From this time, Sfaksiens exported oil, and the lotus from the shore of Little Syrte was used to make musical wind instruments.

6th CENTURY.

533. - Belisarius, general of the emperor Justinien, disembarks at Caput-Vadum (Ras-Capoudiah), to the north of Sfax, and captures the possessions of the vandals in two years. Sfax was taken early in the campaign.

7th CENTURY.

647-648. – The first Arab invasion under the command of Abd-Allah-Ibn-Saad. Sbeitla is taken and all the cities of Roman Africa offer a ransom to the conquerors so that they would leave Ifrikia. Ibn-Saad accepts these proposals. The ransom is fixed at 300 quintals of gold. Sfaks pays 300 pounds of gold for its part. The Greeks came to buy olives there.

655. - Okba-Ben-Nafé brings the Arabs back to Ifrikia. They occupy Sfaks definitively at that time.

668. - The Arabs rebuild the walls of Sfaks. It is in this century that the celebrated Berber queen Kahina lived.

8th CENTURY.

This century passed in wars between the Arabs and the native tribes. It is at this time that the kingdom of Kairouan was created. The whole of Tunisia, and consequently, Sfaks, was ruled from this city. But the primitive Sfaksienne population was of nefzaouiënne origin, enemies of the Arabs. It also benefitted from the appearance of the kharedjites sects (1) to embrace the doctrines which permitted insurrection. This was only extinguished with the advent of the Aghlabite dynasty.

753-761. - Sfaks is in the power of Aboul-Kettab-Abdel-Ala-Ibn-es-Samh-el-Maféri, who takes the government of Ifrikia to the tribe of Ourfedjouma. He was a Kharedjite.

772. - The city passes into the power of the enemy in the person of Yezid-Ibn-Hateur.

9th CENTURY.

859. - Ahmed-Ben-Mohammed-el-Aghlab gives the order to rebuild the wall around Sfaks. The new walls must be built with bricks dried in the sun. It is one named Ali-Ben-Salem who carries out this work. Later to become Caid of Sfaks and of the Sahel, Ali-Ben-Salem was a friend of the wise commentator on the Coran, Schanoun-Ben-Said. The wife of the latter had even nursed him. Her son, Ahmed-ben-Ali, became the collector of taxes for all Ifrikia.

It is about this same time that the large mosque of Sfaks was built, which, originally small, was successively restored, embellished and was increased in size. The marbles of Thenae (Tina), Macomades-Minores (Ounga), Bennefense (Henchir Koubbache), Ad-Oleastrum (Ksar-el-Allamait), Ousilla (Inchilla), etc... were used for this purpose.

10th CENTURY.

912. - A sicilian fleet lands in Sfaks and plunders the city.

969. - El-Moëz-Li-Din-Illah, the last Tunisian Fatimid khalife, was obliged to withdraw to Egypt, where he would found Cairo, left as governor of Ifrikia one of his faithful companions, Bologguin-Ibn-Ziri-Ibn-Ménad, who, three years later, was declared independent and founded the Zirid dynasty. El Moëz and Bologguin separated in Sfaks. The city is famous at that time for its tiles, its cloths pressed and glossed in the Alexandrian manner, and by its oils, that the Venetians come to buy with cash.

It is from this century that piracy dates. The populations of the Gulf of Gabès do not scruple to seize and sell as slaves, not only Christians, but the Sunni Moslems.

11th CENTURY.

1016. - The great-grandson of Bologguin, El-Moez-ben-Badis, becomes sovereign of Ifrikia, under the suzerainty of the khalife of Egypt, El-Hakeur. He was eight years and a half then.

1045. - El-Moez revolts against his suzerain and declares himself independent, while remaining under the nominal, fictitious dependence of the Abassid khalife of Baghdad, El-Kaiem-Bassir-Allah.

1051. - Benefitting from the many disorders sparked by the revolt of El-Moez, the khalife of Egypt wants to recapture Ifrikia. To this end, he launches on this country bands of plunderers, the Hillal, which had afflicted Egypt. Among these Hillal, are Beni-Ali who establish themselves between El-Djem and Gabès: they currently bear the name of Métalits.

1059. - Revolt of Sfaks whose governor, Mansour-el-Berghouati, is declared independent. He is killed shortly after in a bath by his cousin Hamou-Ibn-Melil. Arabs belonging to the clan of Mansour then come to besiege Sfaks.

Hamou manages to remove them at the price of money. He appears to want to approach the Zirid dynasty by sending a gift to En-Nacer-Ibn-Bologguin who resides at El-Câla (province of Constantine) as Hammadite sovereign, an independent branch connected with the Zirids.

Certain coastal centers in the area of Sfaks pay, as a tithe, as much as eighty thousand bushels of grain.

1063. - With the death of El-Moez, counting on the support of En-Nacer, Hamou tries to seize Mahedia. The new sovereign, Temyn-Ben-Moez, marches against him, defeats him and sends his son Yahya-Ibn-Temyn to take Sfaks. This prince is repelled twice.

1077-1078. - Caid-Ibn-Memoun-Es-Sanhadji, governor of Kairouan, having revolted ten years previously against Temyn-Ben-Moez, had to flee this city. He begins negotiations with Yabki-Ben-Ali, emir of Zoghba (of Kairouan) and decides it to sell this city to Hamoulbn-Mélil. This governor of Sfaks accepts the gift and puts [the] Caïd at the head of Kairouan. This last manages to return there and to strengthen it.

1099-1100. - Temyn takes control of the city of Sfaks; thanks to the famine and plague which reigns in the country, he seizes it. Hamou flees to the emir of Gabès, Meken-Ben-Kamel-Ed-Dehmani-er-Riahi.

From this time until the conquest of Sfaks by the Christians, the governors of the city are always chosen from among the princes of the family of Hu-Badis.

Under the reign of Temyn, the customs receipts of Sfaks are one of most profitable of Tunisia. "The port is well attended," wrote Abou-Obéid-el-Bekri in 1068, "foreign traders arrive there from all sides with large sums of money that they employ to buy pressed cloths better than those of Alexandria, and especially of oil. They are exported to Egypt, the Maghreb, Sicily and Europe. The suburbs of Sfaks are very extensive; it contains a mass of country houses, several strong castles and some ribats located at the seaside. Most famous is *Mahres-Botouia*, guardpost of Botouia. There is a minaret there of a great height, the top of which one reaches by a staircase of 166 steps. The other ribats are the *mahrès-Habela*, *mahrès-Abil-Ghosn*, *mahrès-Macdeman*, *mahrès-el-Louza* (guardpost of the Almond tree), and the *mahrès-er-Rihâna* (guardpost of the Myrtle), about which we spoke earlier. The city contains many bazaars, several mosques, Djamé, baths, caravanserais, etc... It is surrounded by a wall built of brick and stones; its inhabitants send their herds to feed in the Island of Kerkena."

The famous men of this century who were born in Sfaks or lived there are: Abou-Ishac-Brahim-Ben-Ahmed-ben-Ali-Ed-Djebeniani, Messera-Ben-Messelam, El-Aacem, Tsa, bet-ben-Sliman, Sidi-Mérouane, Sheik-aïssa-Ben-Tsabet-Amor-Ben-Metsoua, Aïssa-Ben-Meskine, Moussa-el-Maalem, Ali-Ben-Mohammed-er-Riai-el-Lekhmi, Bou-Abd-Allah-el-Mazri, Bou-Fedhel-er-Nehoui, Abd-el-Hamid, Bou-Ali-el-Kelaai, Abd-el-Djelil-Ben-Fouz, Abd-el-Djebbar-el-Feryani, Zakaria, Bou-Bekr-bou-Ali-Ben-Mohammed-el-Feryani, Abou-Médin-Chaïb.

12th CENTURY.

1109. - Revolt of the Sfaksiens against Aboul-Fotouck Ali-Ibn-Yahya-Ibn-Temyn-Ben-Moez.

1110. – Even though he counts on help from Rafa, caïd of Gabes, who calls the Sicilians to his aid, Ali-Ben-Yahya makes the Sfaksiens return in obedience.

1116. - Death of the sultan Yaliya. Ali, who is in Sfaks, will be proclaimed king at Mahedia under the escort of Abou-Bekr-Ibn-Djaber-Ibn-Askar and other Arab emirs.

1134. - Sfaks loses its pastures in Kerkena, the Christians having taken this island.

1148. - Under the rule of Hassein-Ben-Ali, a squadron, ordered by Georges of Antioche (son of Michel), is sent by Roger, king of Sicily, to take Sfaks. Having a strong garrison, the city does not succumb without combat. When the Christians approached with the intention of seizing it, the inhabitants came out to bring the battle to them. The enemy simulated a retreat; when the Sfaksiens were far from the place, the Christians were turned against the Arabs and repelled them in full rout. Some of the Moslems succeeded in returning to Sfaks, the remainder escaped into the interior of the country.

On July 16, after an attack which cost them many people, the Sicilians seized the city. The winner proclaimed an amnesty, brought back the runaways, returned their wives and their children to them and named Omard-Ben-Abil-Hassein-el-Ghariani governor (or el-Feryani), and sent his father as a hostage to Sicily. The inhabitants were subjected to the poll tax.

1154. - Abou-Abd-Allah-Mohammed-Ben-Mohammed-el-Edrisi wrote what follows: "Sfaks is an old and well populated city; its markets are numerous, its buildings extensive. One notices there a bazaar built of stone whose doors are covered with thick iron panels. Above its walls are towers intended for housing the troops. Spring water is drunk there. Excellent fish are caught there. The principal production of the country consists of olives. *It is impossible to find oil superior to that of Sfaks.* The port is very good and all in all the country offers many resources; the inhabitants like ostentation and spending. King Roger maintains a governor there. "

1156. - The Moslems having been oppressed by the Christians, Abil-Hassein-el-Ghariani sends to his son Omar the order to revolt. The governor of Sfaks himself indeed raises a rebellion and massacres the Christians. To be avenged for not having been able to retake the city, Guillaume, king of Sicily, puts Abil-Hassein to death. Omar then marches against Mahedia. Helped by the Sfaksiens and other Arabs, the inhabitants of Zouila (suburb of Mahedia) can hope to free this city. But, allured by the money of the Christians, the Arabs give up soon their positions. The troops come from Sfaks then flee by sea and only the people of Zouila remain to oppose the Christians. Some are killed. The others will join Abd-el-Moumen, Almohade sovereign, who reigns in Morocco. Moved by their misfortunes, this prince himself prepares to drive the Christians out of Ifrikia.

1159. - In March, Abd-el-Moumen starts. On July 14, he takes Tunis. Then, assisted by the fleet (70 vessels) which skirts the coast, he comes to besiege Mahedia. It is during this siege that Omar, governor of Sfaks, renders his submission.

This prince maintains him in his functions (in August). During the 12th century, various treaties had passed between the sovereigns of Tunis and the Pisans, Florentins or Genoese. In them, signed between the Pisans and Yacoub-el-Mansour-Ben-Abd-el-Moumen (November 15, 1186), the entry into Sfaks is prohibited to the first. But the policy soon cancelled this treaty and and reverted to those of 1157 and 1181, which gave the Pisans the right to have a commercial fondouk in Sfaks, by means of a royalty of 10 per 100 on imported goods. By the same treaties, the Florentins were to pay 11.50 per 100, but only 5.25 per 100 for metals. As for the Génois, the tariff was initially 8 per 100 (in 1160), and then shortly afterwards 10 per 100.

13th CENTURY.

1203. - Yahia-Ibn-Ghania-el-Mayorki removes Sfaks from Abd-el-Nahman-Ben-Omar and there establishes himself in the name of the Almoravide khalife of Spain, Ali-Ben-Yshak-el-Mayorki. He has as an ally and accessory Cherf-ed-Din-Karakech-el-Arméni-el-Gliouzzi, who is guilty of many crimes in Sfaks.

1206. - The city is taken for Yahia-Ibn-Ghagnia by Cid Abou-Zeid-Ed-Aboul-Ola-Idris-Ben-Yousef-ben-Abd-el-Moumen, representative of Ibrahim-Ben-Ismaïl-el-Hafsi, temporary governor of Ifrikia in the place of Mohammed-in-Nacer-Ben Yacoub-el-Mansouk. It was the latter sovereign who had the cisterns built called "Nassria".

1228. - Abou-Zakaria-Yahia-Ben-Abou-Mohammed-Abd-el-Ouaed-Ben-Abou-Hafs declares himself independent and founds the dynasty of Hafside.

1277. - Yahia-el-Ouathec-el-Makhloué, son of El-Mostancer-Ben-Abou-Zakaria-el-Hafsi, ascends to the throne on the death of his brother. His uncle, Abou-Ishac, then in Tlemcen, tries to seize power. He goes against its nephew.

1279. - On July 13, thanks to the support of a fleet of ten Sicilian galleys sent to its help for Sfaks by Pierre III of Aragon and Sicily, Abou-Ishac is able to force his nephew to abdicate.

1280. - Fearing a reversal of will, he puts him to death, in June, along with his sons Et-Taher, Et-Taiebet El-Fadel.

1283. - In January, Sfaks is occupied by an adventurer, named Hamed-Ibn-Merzouk-Ibn-Ali-Omara (of Msila), who passes for [pretends to be] for El-Fadel, son of Yahia. He is supported by one freedman of El-Ouathec named El-Feta-Nacer-el-Noubi, who is eager to avenge death for its princes.

1284. - Abou-Hafs, who since June 1283, had succeeded his Abou-Ishac brother, seizes the impostor, puts him to death and thus becomes Master of all Ifrikia.

The same year, Roger de Loria takes Kerkena and Jerba. On August 11, to strengthen its power there, it dedicates it to pope Boniface. The pope ensures the possession of these strongholds, with the help of a yearly rental of 50 livres of gold. Sfaks is thus again deprived of its pastures by the presence of the Christians in Jerba.

During the 13th century, a customs duty of 10 per 100 was imposed on the goods entering Sfaks by various treaties passed with the Florentins, Pisans (1234-1264), Génois (1236-1250-1272), and Venetians (1231-1251-1271) amongst others (1271-1285).

The famous men who were born in Sfaks or lived there in this century are: Abd-el-Ouaed-Ben-et-Til; Sidi Djebba, whose tomb is outside the city, close to the Kasbah; Ali-Ben-Abd-el-Hafsi, Sidi-bou-Yahia-el-Guergouri, Mohammed-er-Rkik-bou-Akkazine; Brahim Ben-Yacoub, founder of the tribe of Aguerba.

14th CENTURY.

1306. - The Arab traveller Abou-Mohammed-Abdallah-Mohauimed-Ben-Brahim-and-Tidjani, secretary of the Abou-Yahia-Zakaria-el-Lihyani sultan, traverses the country from Tunis to Tripoli. In the account of its voyage (er-Kalila), he teaches us that Sfaks, at the time of its passage, was a town of the first order, with two distinct ramparts, in the middle

of which a rider could pass. One could find, it appears, pearl-bearing oysters in its sea lanes.

1311. - The governor of Kerkena for Frederic III, king of Sicile, is Raymond Muntaner.

1313. - A treaty was passed for 10 years with Pisa through the aristocrats Jean Fagoli and Renier del-Ragno. This includes the right for Pisans to have a fondouk in Sfaks. This treaty was renewed in 1353.

1317. The sultan Abou-Yahia-el-Lihyani collects tax from Sfaks "by the intermediary of his lieutenant, the governor of Gabes.

1318. – Having revolted against him, his brother Abou-Yahia-Abou-Bekr, king of Bougie, takes possession of Sfaks.

1334. - Kerkena is taken again from the Christians by the Moslems.

1348. - Abd-el-Ouaed-Ben-el-Lihyani is governor of Sfaks.

1356. - The governor of Gabes, Ahmed-Ben-Mekki, takes the city [of Sfax].

1356, June 9. - A treaty is made with Bernabo Girolodo, envoy of the doge of Venise. The Venetian consul in Tripoli has the right to name vice-consuls of his nationality in Sfaks.

1364. - Frederic III of Sicily wants to take again Kerkena. He names in advance Jean de Clermont as governor with rights of justice. The bad weather prevents him from succeeding in his enterprise.

1369. - Kerkena belongs to the son of Ibn-Thabet, a noble Sfaksien exiled by Ibn-Mekki.

1370. - Ibn-Mekki submits to sultan Aboul-Abbas II el Hafsi.

1380. - The family of ibn-Mekki, which had occupied the country between Tripoli and Sfaks, starts to lose its possessions.

1383. - The populations of the gulf of Gabes being primarily pirates, the Genoese and Sicilians benefit from it by plundering the Islands of the gulf. The Genoese admiral, Raphael Adorno, comes with twelve galleys to hold Kerkena to ransom.

1393. - The family of Ibn-Mekki is replaced in the government of Sfaks, Jerba and Gabes, by Abou-Hafs-Omar, uncle of the sultan.

1394. - Under Abou-Faress, the governor of Sfaks is the brother of the king of Tunis, Amor. He seeks to revolt, but does not succeed.

Repair of the walls of Sfaks. The treaties of 1313, 1314, 1317, 1356, 1358 and 1392, that are passed with the Pisans, Genoese, etc, show us that Sfaks had a customs house with the right to charge 10 per 100 on imports.

Famous Sfaksiens in the 16th century are: Sidi-Maklouf-ech-Chariani, Nacer-Ben-Ahmed-Ben-Brahim, Abou-Bekr-el-Guergouri, Sheik-el-Berzeli, Mohammed-Ben-bou-Bekr-el-Fassi, Yacoub-ez-Zaïla, Ahmed-Ben-Moussa-el-Menari, Brahim-Ben-Mohammed-es-Sfaksi.

15th CENTURY. [HERE]

1424. - The brother of king Alphonse of Aragon, Pedro, duke of Noto, lands in Kerkena where he takes three thousand prisoners. But he withdraws, after having obtained from king of Tunis, Abou-Faress, the freedom of all the Christians held in his states.

1431. - Under the reign of Abou-Faress, the walls of Sfaks are repaired, as an inscription placed above the door called "Bab Djebli" testifies.

1488. - A revolt takes place following the ascension to the throne of sultan Abou-Zakaria-Yahya. He was even rumored to have died. But it is soon learned that this rumor was not founded, and the revolt, in which Sfaks took part, diminish.

By various treaties, Pisans and Florentins (1421), along with the Venetians (1498), see the right of 10 per 100 on their goods increased to 10 and half. As for the Genoese, the treaties of 1433, 1445 and 1465 maintained in their favor the original right of 10 per 100. It should be said that these people at that time had long discussions with the king of Tunis. Among the reasons for dissension, one notices the following. Two Arab merchants of Sfaks were maltreated by some Genoese, and several well-known associates or factors of a commercial firm from Genoa introduced counterfeit money in Sfaks.

In this century, Sfaks owes its increased fame to the presence of the wise men and saints, Ali-en-Nouri, Ali el-Kerai-Ben-Mimoun-bou-Beghla.

16th CENTURY.

1525. - Mohammed-el-Mekni, a simple fisherman, becomes governor of Sfaks.

1535. - Moulai-Hassein, sovereign of Tunis, being at war against the famous Keir-Eddin, calls the Spaniards to his help. A revolt erupts in Tunisia. Sfaks takes part in it.

1539. - This city is placed under the authority of Moulai Hassein by Andre Doria, the Spanish admiral in the service of Charles-Quint.

Shortly afterwards, the king of Tunis suffers a defeat near Kairouan, in spite of the support of the Spaniards.

1549. - Revolt of many towns of Tunisia, including Sfaks. To escape the Spanish domination, they are handed over to the famous corsair Dragut, who takes Sfaks from Mohammed-el-Mekni.

1550. - Doria reconquers this city, thanks to the twenty galleys that he has under his command.

1556. - Leon the African writes that Sfaks is a large and old city containing 300 to 400 fires ['homes?'].

1574. - The Hafsids are dethroned and replaced by the Osmanli Turks.

Under a ministry whose chief was El-Hadif, Sfaks had to pay the emir of Tunis the sum of 5,000 dinars.

Famous Sfaksiens of the 16th century: Ali-Ben-Bel-Kacem, Ali-el-Mahdjoub-Ben-Ali-Ben-Abdallah, Amor-Ben Ali-el-Kerrai, Mohammed-Ben-Amor-el-Kerrai, Sidi-Mohammed Sghir, Cheikh-Sassi-el-Lebidi, Ali-Chaïb-el-Adzraa-el-Kerraï, Aboul-Hassin-Ben-Abou-Bekr; and a woman, Oum-Yahia Meriem.

In this century, "Asfachus," is used, rather than "Sfaks".

17th CENTURY.

1663. - Hamouda-Bey, the Turkish pasha of Tunis, resigns his functions in favor of his three sons who each take the title of "bey". Mohammed-el-Hafsi, the second, had in his portion the Sendjak (subdivision) of Kairouan, Sousse, Monastir and Sfaks.

1663-1675. - Under the reign of Mourad-Bey, son of Hamouda, Sfaks had Ben-Athia as governor, who built a palace in the gardens. The road which led to it took the name of "Teniet Athia". He was a violent and debauched man.

1675. - Death of Mourad-Bey. He leaves three sons, Mohamed-Bey, Ali-Bey and Ramdam. In order to avoid rivalry, the divan [council] of Tunis, chaired by Mami-Dey, hands power to their uncle, Mohammed-el-Hafsi. This prince was in Constantinople. Ali was initiated this idea because of jealousy of his older brother, Mohammed, who, a little before death of his father, had become governor of Sfaks in place of the disgraced Ben-Athia. Mohammed pretends to subject to the orders of the divan; but soon he enters into open rebellion. Frightened and not having the forces necessary to repress this rebellion, after two unfruitful attempts, Mohammed-el-Hafsi decides to remain in Constantinople. His nephew Mohammed exchanges the title of "bey" for that of "pasha". During this time, Ben-Athia had tried to make himself independent in Sfaks. He leaves the city on the coming of Mohammed-Pasha.

Under this reign, the nassrias were repaired and surrounded by a wall. Sfaks played a great part in the war which was continued between Mohammed-Pasha and his brother Ali-Bey. The two parties were represented in this city by Ben-Athia, for Ali, and Ben-el-Aukchari, for Mohammed. This last made Sfaks a center for pirates. With Ben-Athia, Ali-Bey associated, as caid of Sfaks, one of his trusty servants, Mohammed-Sebah. He wanted to go to take possession of his post, but on its arrival he found Ben-Athia in retreat and the city in the power of Ben-el-Aukchari and a new caid, El-Keffaf, who hastened to have him put to death, even though he had taken refuge in the Zouaia of a holy man, Cheikh Ali-el-Kerrai. The murderers, having learned of the approach of Ali-bey, ran away themselves to Tripoli. But, thanks to the civil war which continued between Mohammed and Ali, Ben-el-Aukchari returned to Sfaks and maintained himself there until the end of the war which was occasioned by the death of Ali-bey.

1685. - Mohammed and Ali made peace temporarily, with the help of the Algerians, to reverse the power the dey Ahmed Chelebi, the Agha of the janissaries, who rules as master in Tunis. The beys seize the city for themselves and name as dey one of their allies, Mohammed Baktache. They then share the command of the regency. Mohammed-Beya Kairouan, Bèjà, Monastir and the territories which depend on it; Ali-bey receives Kef, Sousse, the mountainous territories of Hamadas, the Sahel and Sfaks.

1686. - Peace did not last. An uprising erupted at Tunis at the instigation of Mohammed-Bey, and Ali-Bey had his head cut off.

1693. - Revolt of Mohammed-Ben-Cheker, a former lieutenant of Mohammed-Bey, against this prince. Thanks to the help of the Algerians, he is able to besiege Tunis, from where Mohammed-Bey flees.

1694. - The city goes over to Chaban Khodja, dey of Algiers.

1695. - Revolt of the towns of Sfaks, Sousse, Kairouan, against Mohammed-Ben-Cheker. Mohammed-bey is put at the head of the revolt and drives his rival out of Tunisia.

Famous Sfaksiens of the 17th century are the following: Mansour-Ben-Abd-Allah-el-Guergouri, Mansour-el-Ghoulam, Ali-Ben-Saïd-el-Ouhichi, Saïd-Ben-Ali-el-Ouhichi, Saïd-Ben-Mansour-Ben-Ali-el-Ouhichi, Sidi-Abid-el-Aouni, Mohammed-Ben-Abd-es-Selam, Ahmed-Ben-Ali-el-Kekmouni, Mohammed-Ben-Ahmed.

The name of "Sfaks" is now written as "Esfaque".

18th CENTURY.

1704. - Ibrahim-ech-Sherif-Bey, passes Sfaks on his way to fight the Tripolitains, commanded by Khelil-Bey.

1705. - Hussein-Ben-Ali ascends the throne.

1706. - He assassinated Ibrahim-ech-Sherif. Not having a child, he designates as his successor his nephew Ali-Bey. But at the end of a few years he had successively three sons. To satisfy Ali, Hussein confers on him the title of pasha.

He accepts; but soon he revolts and, having been defeated, runs away to Algiers. The dey of this city provides him with troops, which enable him to return to take Tunis. He drives out his uncle Hussein, who dies shortly after.

1742. - Ali-Pasha ascends to the throne; his cousins, sons of Hussein, took refuge with the dey of Algiers.

Ali-pasha has three sons: Mahmed, Younes and Ali-Bey. This last quarrels with his brothers and ends up remaining the only heir apparent.

At the instigation of the son of Hussein, the Algerians enter Tunisia under the command of Hassan-bey, dey of Constantine, and of Ali-Ben-Hussein.

1756. - Ali-Pasha is killed. Ali-Ben-Hussein having dissatisfied the Algerians, these turn against him and his older brother Mohammed-Ali runs away to Sfaks, recruits troops there and returns to deliver his brother whom the Algerians block in Tunis. This prince then ascends the throne.

1759. - Death of Mohammed and coming of Ali-pasha, who eliminates from the throne his nephews, sons of Mohammed.

1772. - In spite of the Nassrias, the population of Sfaks has increased so much in this century that its 365 cisterns have become insufficient. It was necessary to have recourse to the water of the wells, which introduced many diseases among the population of. There existed however, very close to the city, small brooks which ran in full spate after violent rains and, meeting, formed a river of which the water was going to be lost unnecessarily in the sea.

The bey Ali sent to the caid of Sfaks, Beker-el-Djellouli, instructions to assemble a commission of qualified people in the art of construction and installation of water. This commission was charged to indicate the place where a tank should be built to receive the water of the above mentioned brook. Meticulous study was made of the ground and the commission chose the site where feskias currently are. This place is located 1,500 meters from the wall of the town in the bed of the watercourse from which one water was to be collected.

The sovereign approved this choice and work of digging was started immediately. A few days had scarcely past since the beginning of the work, when, although this was the driest season, an abundant rain started to fall. The brooks ran and the water met in the hole that had been dug. The work was actively pursued under the direction of skilful men. Among them was the wise Mohammed-Ben-Ahmed-ech-Chabouni, who, at this time, had already sunk the wells of fresh water located to the west of the city and whose current flow is 400 cubic meters a day.

Some time later, some rich and well-meaning people collaborated and had a second tank dug beside the first. The bey Mustapha Khodja refused to accept this gift, refunded them and paid the expenses of construction from his own fortune.

A little later the current of water demolished one of the walls of the feskia and required serious repairs.

1774. - Work on the feskias is completed, having cost around 14,180 réaux.

1776. - Construction of the southern suburb of the city, the current European quarter. It was built so that, being better ventilated than the Arab district, it provided shelter from the epidemics. The foreigners no longer had to fear coming to live in Sfaks. Hamouda-es-Sellami had the djema (mosque) which bears its name erected there.

1778. - The bey orders the construction of a caravanserai of which the incomes would be used to pay the maintenance of the feskias. It is located in the suburb of which we speak.

1783. - The Venetians break their relations with the Tunisians. Traders from Sfaks, being in Alexandria, chartered a Venetian ship to return to their country. As the plague prevailed in Egypt, it declared itself on board; upon arriving at Sfaks, the caid refused to let this ship enter the port and advised the passengers to go to Goulette. Without preventing the latter, the Venetian captain took them to Malta, which in its turn wanted to return them. After many talks, the Sfaksiens and the crew were unloaded. On their complaint, Ali-Pasha claimed an indemnity from Venice, which refused. This prince having died suddenly (1782), his son Hamouda again claimed from the doge, and with no more success. To try to calm the bey, the Venetians sent a small fleet of three ships, commanded by the Chevalier Querini. He was to give from as a present to the bey. He refused them, and, at the time of the departure of the fleet, he informed Chevalier Querini that, if in six months he had not paid an allowance of 14,000 sequins to his subjects in Sfaks, he would consequently be under obligation to take measures (September 1783).

January 17, 1784. The bey Hamouda declares the war on Venice, He placed all the ports of the Regency in a state of defense.

August 21, 1785. – The Venetian squadron appears in front of Sfaks and bombards the city.

September 18, 1785. - End of the bombardment, which was not very deadly. Only 150 bombs were launched. The Arabs indicate 40 dead and as many casualties.

November 20, 1785. -. Negotiations are begun. The bey having wanted to be paid 60,000 sequins in advance as a war indemnity for the bombardments of Goulette, Sousse and Sfaks, the war starts again.

1785. - The plague devastates Sfaks, which loses 15,000 inhabitants.

March 18, 1786. - New bombardment of Sfaks.

March 27, 1786. – A 14-day laying down of arms, because of new peace proposals that the knight Scarmici, ambassador plenipotentiary, had just made.

The Sfaksiens benefit from this to raise new fortifications in the town, to gather ammunition and to prepare for all the eventualities.

April 8, 1786. - It is learned that the negotiations have failed. The squadron however does not carry the attack and during this month is satisfied to launch some flights of balls on the city.

April 30, 1786. - Having advanced during the night his two bomb vessels, eight gunboats and ten batteries, admiral Emo gives the order to open fire. It is four o'clock in the morning. The combat lasted four hours, during which 120 bombs and 400 balls were launched on the place.

May 4, 1786. – The attack starts again sharper and keener, 200 bombs, 400 shells and 300 balls fired on the city, which is badly battered and whose suburb is, in the main part, ruined. The bombardment lasted approximately four hours.

May 5, 1786. - Small resumption of the bombardment.

May 8, 1786. - Departure of the Venetian fleet.

May 1792. - Peace treaty between the republic of Venice and the regency of Tunis.

The new works built during the siege of Sfaks were, amongst others, the bordj, today demolished, which was close to Bab Bahr (southern end of the *rue Centrale*), and the battery where the military Circle is currently located. It had its construction through the generosity of Hamouda-be-Sellami.

The famous men who resided in Sfaks in the 18th century are: Ali-el-Ouhichi-Ben-Saïd-Ben-Mansour, Ali-el-Kerraï, Ali-en-Nouri, Ahmed-Ben-Ali-Houri, Mohammed-el-Ghourab, Ali-el-Moukher, Mohammed-el-Mekki, Ramdan-ben-Assida, Brahim-el-Mezghani, Ali-Ben-Khelif, Mohammed-el-Fourati-Ben-Ali, Mohammed-Kammoun, Ahmed-Loulou, Mohammed-Ben-Ahmed, Abd-el-Aziz-el-Fourati, Ahmed-el-Fourati, Mohammed-ech-Cheurfi-el-Moueddek, Ahmed-hen-Mohammed-ech-Cheurfi, Taïeb-ech-Cheurfi, Ahmed-Ben-Ahmed-ech-Cheurfi, Mohammed-el-Migherbi, Ali-ez-Zouari, Mohammed-el-Masmoudi, Brahim-el-Kherriath, Ahmed-el-Masmoudi, Ali-el-Beklouti, Mohammed-ben-Aachour, Abd-el-Baki, Mohammed-ed-Dernaoui, Aliel-Aouni, Abd-er-Rahman-Baker, Ali-CI-Gherab-el-Baria, Brahim-el-Djemni, Ahmed-Ben-Ali-Ben-abd-be-Sadok-et-Trabelsi, Ali-Ben-ech-Chaed-el-Minis, Mohammed-Abbas, Mohammed-el-Mersedi, Saïd-Ben-Saïd-Heriz, Chaban-zin-ed-Din, Hamouda-are-Sellami, Mohammed-Ben-Ahmedech-Chabouni, etc

19th CENTURY.[HERE]

April 30, 1816. - Revolt of Delibachi. in which the governor of Sfaks is killed by a conspiracy.

About 1830. - The European district is surrounded by a wall.

1860. - Establishment of the post and telegraph at Sfaks.

1864. - The crushing amount of the taxes causes an insurrection. The beylical officials are driven out of all the cities. But the chief of the insurrection, Ali-ben-Ghdaoun, having been killed in the Sahel by Mohammed-Zarronc, the revolt is repressed.

1880. - The steamers of the Transatlantique Company come to Sfaks.

May 12, 1881. - Treaty of Ksar-Saïd which places Tunisia under French protectorate.

June 1881. - Insurrection of Sfaks.

July 15, 1881. - Bombardment and taking of Sfaks by the French.

1883. - The wall enclosing the European district is demolished.

The creation of a police station and a district court. Mohammed-Djellouli, governor of Sfaks, becomes Minister of the Interior ('de la plume'), and Mohammed-el-Aziz-bou-Atour-el-Sfaksi becomes Prime Minister.

1884. - The Creation of a municipality.

1886. - Construction of the slaughter-house (abbatoir).

1887. - Construction of the customs, built on land reclaimed from the sea. The commencement of dredging a channel which starts two kilometers out at sea will allow large sailing ships to approach the quay. This channel is 60 meters wide, 3.50 meters deep at low tide and 5.50 meters at high tide.

Tests of artesian wells. Construction is begun of a conduit which should bring water from the wells of Chabouni in the camp of the troops.

July 1888. - Completion of the conduit of water mentioned above.

Count DU PATY DE CLAM