The Arab Occupation of Crete

THE period of the Amorian dynasty (820-87) is, in consequence of the scantiness of our sources and the paucity of dates and absence of chronological order which we find in them, perhaps the most obscure in the annals of the eastern empire; and in this period not the least obscure event is the Arab conquest of Crete. That the conquerors were adventurers from Spain, who, having been banished from that country after a sedition in 814, sailed to Egypt and seized Alexandria, from which they were expelled by 'Abd Allah ibn Tahir, is well known; but the whole story is told by Arabic writers only, the Greek authors saying nothing of Egypt, and seeming to think that the conquerors came direct from Spain. On the other hand, for the facts of the conquest itself, with the exception of three lines of Al Baladhuri (c. 870), in which it is merely stated that the Arab leader, Abu Hafs, took a fortress and settled in it, and then conquered the rest of the island, one place after another, and destroyed the fortresses,¹ we depend entirely on Greek sources. Al Baladhuri, according to a citation in Yaqut's *Geographical Dictionary*,² placed the conquest of the island in A.H. 210 (24 April 825—12 April 826); but, as the date is not in either of the existing manuscripts, its originality must be doubtful. According to Al Ya'qubi, who wrote about 880, the capture of Alexandria took place in 212 (2 April 827—21 March 828);³ but Al Tabari (d. 923) places it in 210, though he mentions another account which placed it in 211 (13 April 826—1 April 827);⁴ while of the Greek authors George the Monk only states that the Arabs conquered Crete during the reign of Theophilus (829-42),⁵ the Logothete says that Crete and Sicily were occupied at the time of the rebellion of Thomas (821-3),⁶ though the Arab landing in Sicily is definitely fixed to 827, and Genesis that during this rebellion the adventurers plundered Crete and in the next year came back and occupied it.⁷ Accordingly modern scholars have

¹ p. 236 (Vasilyev, *Византизм : Арабы*, i, app. p. 4). For another alleged Arabic account see below, p. 438.

² l. 237.

³ iii. 1091.

⁴ Georg. Mon., ed. Bonn, p. 786.

⁵ ii. 361.

⁶ Ed. De Boor, p. 728.

⁷ Ed. Bonn, p. 46.

generally followed Al Tabari and dated the conquest in 825 or 826.⁸ The Syriac chronicler Michael, however, agreeing with Al Ya'qubi, tells us that 'Abd Allah laid siege to Alexandria in March 827 and took it after nine months,⁹ i.e. in December 827; and, as he follows the patriarch Dionysius, who was in Egypt with the caliph in 832,¹⁰ his authority would seem to be decisive, in spite of the fact that he did not know where the adventurers went when they left Alexandria, but represents them as returning to Spain. If, however, any confirmation is required, it is provided, as far as the year is concerned, by the Egyptian historian Al Kindi (d. 961), recently published by Mr. R. Guest, who places the fall of Alexandria in Rabi' I, 212 (31 May—29 June 827).¹¹ The second date given by Al Tabari is correct for the arrival of 'Abd Allah in Egypt, but he has omitted to allow for the fact that his campaigns in that country lasted two years. As regards the month, it seems best to give the preference to Michael, and place the expulsion of the Spanish refugees from Alexandria in December 827, and consequently their invasion of Crete in 828.¹²

This date being accepted, it remains to see how it can be fitted in with the narratives of the Greek writers. Of these George and the Logothete merely mention the fact of the conquest, while the Continuator of Theophanes for the most part paraphrases Genesis; and to Genesis, therefore, the first place must be given. This writer tells us that in the year before the conquest the adventurers had ravaged the island: but they can hardly have come during the siege of Alexandria, and the statement cannot be reconciled with his assertion, corroborated by the Logothete, that the attack took place during the rebellion of Thomas. If this is to be taken literally, the raid must be dated not later than 823, though, if we take the civil war caused by the rebellion to be meant, we may postpone it to 824. It is, of course, possible that more than one raid was made; but the phrase τῷ ἐπιόντι καιρῷ is probably merely a formula of transition and not dependent on any authority. He then goes on to tell the story of how the Arab leader Abu Hafs, on landing in Crete, burned the ships in order to prevent his men from returning, and on their protesting that it would separate them from their wives, answered that they could find wives in the country; but this story can hardly be reconciled either with the fact that they had been expelled from Alexandria (of which Genesis

⁸ Weil, *Gesch. der Chalifen*, II. 233; Hirsch, *Byzant. Studien*, p. 136; Geizer ap. Krumpholtz, *Gesch. der byzant. Litt.*, p. 267; Vasiljev, *op. cit.*, I. 47; Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire*, p. 238.

⁹ Ed. Chabot, p. 515.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 522. Dionysius was personally acquainted with 'Abd Allah (p. 508) and recorded his campaigns in Syria and Egypt with exact dates.

¹¹ p. 184.

¹² On the dates given by the Arabic biographers see below, pp. 438 ff.

was ignorant) and must therefore be presumed to have brought their wives with them, or at any rate could not return, or with the fact that immediately afterwards we find them ravaging the Aegean.¹³ Genesius then states that Craterus, *στρατηγός* of the Cibyrrhaeots, was sent against the invaders and won a victory, but, as he neglected to keep a guard during the night, his force was annihilated by an unexpected attack, and he alone escaped in a merchant-ship, but the enemy pursued him in two *δελφίνες*, caught him, and crucified him in Cos, after which Ooryphas collected a naval force and expelled the marauders from the other islands which they were ravaging.¹⁴ He then records the death of Michael II (October 829).

Within the space of twenty-two months, therefore, we must, if this narrative is accepted, compress the voyage from Alexandria to Crete, the first successes of the invaders, the conveyance of the news to Constantinople, the transmission of orders to the Cibyrrhaeots on the south coast of Asia Minor,¹⁵ the voyage of the fleet to Crete, the defeat and death of Craterus, the ravaging of the islands, the collection of a fleet by Ooryphas, and the expulsion of the Arabs from the other islands. This is difficult enough; but the difficulty is further increased by a notice of the Continuator under the reign of Theophilus, in which he tells us that at the time of the accession of Theophilus, in October of the 8th indiction (829), the Roman fleet was annihilated by the Arabs off Thasos.¹⁶ This exact date must clearly be accepted, and it leaves no room for the activity of Ooryphas: for the ravaging of the Aegean cannot have seriously begun before 829, and it is absurd to tell us that a new force was collected and the islands cleared, if the fleet was destroyed in October.¹⁷ Obviously the measures of Ooryphas were taken when there was no fleet in the Aegean, for otherwise it would not have been necessary to make a special levy, and the men would not have embarked on *δελφίνες*; and his action therefore followed the battle of Thasos. This date does not involve any real departure from the narrative of Genesius, for he does not mention the battle; and, though he should strictly have recorded the successes of Ooryphas under the reign of Theophilus, it is natural that he should relate them where he does in order to avoid interrupting the narrative. The course

¹³ On an alleged Arabic confirmation of the story see below, p. 439.

¹⁴ This seems to be the meaning of *τῶν ἀνδρῶν ῥηλαίρ [ῥηλαίρ?] ἐξουφρυνῶν*.

¹⁵ The summoning of the Cibyrrhaeots may be explained by the fact that a fleet had gone to Sicily this year (Nuwairi ap. Amari, *Bibl. arabico-sicula*, p. 429; Ibn al Athir, ed. Tornberg, vi. 237 = Amari, p. 223).

¹⁶ Theoph. Cont. III. 39.

¹⁷ Even if we take Al Kindī's date for the capture of Alexandria, the landing cannot be placed before the late summer of 827, or the expedition of Craterus before spring 828, so that the difficulty is not materially lessened.

of events is then quite clear. The Arabs landed in Crete early in 828, during the summer or early autumn Craterus attacked them and was defeated, his fleet probably being captured or destroyed,¹⁸ in 829 they set out to attack the other islands, and in October annihilated the Aegean squadron off Thasos. After this the islands for a time lay at their mercy ;¹⁹ but Ooryphas collected a new force and eventually succeeded in protecting the Aegean from their ravages ; but how long they carried on their raids unchecked, or how long he was able to hold them at bay, we do not know.²⁰ In 841, as we shall see, they were raiding Asia Minor. It is not necessary to suppose that they had completed the conquest of Crete before beginning the raids in the Aegean. It appears both from Al Baladhuri and from Genesis that the process took some time,²¹ and George the Monk places the conquest in the reign of Theophilus ; but on the details of it we have no information.

As far, then, as Genesis is concerned, no serious difficulty arises from the later date for the landing : but the Continuator, while otherwise repeating his narrative, inserts before the expedition of Craterus a story to the effect that Photinus, general of the Anatolics, great-grandfather of the Empress Zoe, the mother of Constantine VII, was sent to Crete as governor, and, on his asking for assistance, Damian the constable was sent with a considerable force, but the Arabs won a great victory, Damian being killed and Photinus escaping alone in a boat ; in spite of his ill-success, however, he was appointed *στρατηγός* of Sicily.²² This Photinus, Amari (following a suggestion of Caussin de Perceval²³) identified with the Sicilian *στρατηγός* who was captured and put to death by the rebel Euphemius, whom the Arabic writers call Constantine, pointing out that in Al Nuwairi the name is incorrectly transliterated and appears in a form that does not greatly differ from 'Photinus'.²⁴ As, however, the Arab invasion of Sicily was certainly in 827, and the death of the general cannot therefore be placed later than 826, now that

¹⁸ This seems to follow from the facts that he did not board one of his own ships and that the Arabs pursued him to Cos in two *Δακίβες*. The exact facts, however, cannot be recovered, and the commander's escape alone in a boat, which is related also of Photinus, can hardly be taken seriously.

¹⁹ Georgius Monachus places the ravaging of the islands in the time of Theophilus. The Logothete, on the other hand, states that the Cyclades, like Crete and Sicily, were occupied during the rebellion of Thomas.

²⁰ Symeon Magister (p. 624) says that Ooryphas suffered a severe defeat in an attack on Crete ; but, as he seems to have no source except Genesis, and no other writer mentions this, there is perhaps some misunderstanding.

²¹ The supposition of Vasiljev (p. 48) and Bury (p. 238) that hardly any resistance was offered seems at variance with both these authors.

²² Theoph. Cont., II. 22.

²³ *Hist. de Sicile* ap. Riedesel, *Voyages*, p. 404.

²⁴ *Storia dei Musulmani di Sicilia*, I. 245, 246, 250. Al Nuwairi adds the name 'Soda', which reminds us of the Sodales of Theoph. Cont. IV. 16, who may have been his son.

we have established the true date of the invasion of Crete, it follows that the identification can only be maintained if we suppose that Photinus was sent to Crete at the time of the raid which preceded the Arab occupation. But it is difficult to think that the Anatolic general would be transferred to the petty command of Crete for so trumpery a purpose, which would naturally fall within the sphere of one of the naval *στρατηγοί*, nor, indeed, would there have been time to bring him so far.

Amari's identification, indeed, though it has been generally accepted,²⁵ was never very convincing,²⁶ and there are several reasons against it. In the first place, the Continuator was specially interested in Photinus on account of his relationship to his imperial patron, and therefore, if Photinus played so important a part in connexion with the rebellion of Euphemius, which this author relates from the contemporary work of Theognostus,²⁷ it is strange that he should omit all mention of him. Secondly, it must be assumed that a man who had held the high office of Anatolic general would be a man of middle age; and it must equally be assumed that Zoe was at the time of her son's birth in 908 a young woman. Hence it follows that the distance of time between the Cretan expedition of Photinus and the birth of Constantine VII is not three generations, but little, if anything, more than two; and, as in that time and country people married earlier than with us, eighty years is a most unlikely time to allow. Professor Bury believes that the narrative of the Cretan expedition is also taken from Theognostus; but the relationship of Photinus to Zoe must in any case be a family tradition derived from the emperor, and it seems most obvious to suppose that the whole story comes from this source.²⁸ In this case no date would be mentioned in the tradition, and the author inserted it at this point because, as Photinus was sent to expel the Arabs, he supposed that the expedition took place immediately after the landing of the invaders, though, if it really happened at this time, Genesis would not have been likely to omit it. The identification of Photinus with 'Constantine Suda' must therefore be abandoned, and we must look for another date at which to place the expedition of Photinus to Crete and his government of Sicily.

The relationship of Photinus to Zoe would seem to fix the date

²⁵ Vasiliyev, p. 58; Bury, p. 479. In Finlay's *Hist. of the Byzantine and Greek Empires* (I. 164), which appeared a year before Amari's work, the identification is assumed without discussion or reference.

²⁶ Ibn al Athir and Ibn Khaldun have clearly 'Constantine', and in all manuscripts of *Al-Nuwairi* the *s* is preserved, while the best reading differs from 'Constantine' only by the easy omission of the first *t* (the difference between *f* and *g*, which is one of pointing only, is negligible).

²⁷ R. 27.

²⁸ So Hirsch, *Byzant. Studien*, p. 196.

of the Cretan episode to some time between 840 and 860; and of these years 840 and 841 may be ruled out by the eastern complications, which make it most unlikely that the Anatolic general would be then transferred to Crete, even if such an expedition were undertaken at all, and 843 by the expedition of Theoctistus:²⁰ the fact that Theoctistus was sent to Crete in 843 also makes the years 842 and 844 improbable. Again, in the autumn of 859 Constantine Contomytes came to Sicily as *στρατηγός*,²¹ and the appointment of Photinus to the same post can therefore hardly have been later than 858 or his Cretan expedition than 857. Further, Photinus can scarcely have gone to Crete in the capacity of Anatolic general, and we must therefore assume that he was appointed *στρατηγός* of Crete, as in fact the Continuator seems to imply,²² and, since Crete had before the Arab occupation been ruled by an *ἀρχων*,²³ the *στρατηγός* would seem to have been created for the benefit of Photinus,²⁴ who, having been *στρατηγός* of the Anatolics, could not be degraded to a lower rank. But a *στρατηγός* of Crete appears in the *Taktikon* of Uspensky,²⁵ which was composed under Michael and Theodora, and therefore not later than March 856. Hence it follows that the expedition to Crete was not later than 855; and, as it seems improbable that Bardas would have sent an unsuccessful nominee of Theodora to command in Sicily, I think we must place it not later than 854. Of the ten years which remain 845 is not an unlikely date, for at that time there was an armistice in the east, and the fact that reinforcements were sent to Sicily that year²⁶ is not a very serious objection, for the Romans may well have seized the opportunity to make attempts to recover both islands: but in fact, with the exception of the operations undertaken at the time of the Armenian revolt in 851, no serious fighting went on in the east till 855, and there is another date during this period at which there is much to be said for placing the expedition of Photinus. We learn from Al Tabari²⁷ that in 853 three squadrons were sent out, one of which, under a commander whose name appears in the text as Ibn Q(a)tuna, sacked Damietta (22 May)

²⁰ Georg. Mon., ed. Bonn, p. 814.

²¹ Cambridge Chronicle, A.M. 6368; cf. Theoph. Cont., iv. 22.

²² Il. 22 "τὴν τῆς Κρήτης ἐκστῆσαν ἐκστῆσαν ἀποβλέποντα"; "τὴν τῆς Σικελίας στρατηγίδα αἰῶνα τῆς Κρήτης ἀλλήσαντα": so Bury, p. 289.

²³ Bury, *Imperial Administrative System*, p. 14.

²⁴ Bury (l. c.) believes it to have been created for Theoctistus in 843; but Theoctistus seems to have been *κατάλοχος* after as well as before the expedition (Georg. Mon., ed. Bonn, pp. 811, 821), and, if Damian went as constable, Theoctistus may have gone as *κατάλοχος*, and there was no more need for him to assume a special office than on his expedition of the following year. It was not uncommon to send a high official from the capital on such an expedition without change of post.

²⁵ Bury, p. 13.

²⁶ Cambridge Chronicle, A.M. 6354.

²⁷ Ill. 1417 (Vasiliev, l. app., p. 51).

and carried off a store of arms intended for the Cretan Arabs, while the destination of the other two, the names of the commanders of which may be read as 'Urif (Ooryphas)³⁷ and Amardinaqah (Martinacius)³⁸ is not stated. Now it seems unlikely that three squadrons would be sent out merely to loot; and we are perhaps therefore entitled to infer that the seizure of the arms was not an incident of the expedition but its object, and that the other squadrons sailed to Syrian ports from which it was known that arms were likely to be shipped to Crete. In this case we can hardly but assume that an attack upon the coasts was being prepared: and, if so, this attack, if carried out, must have taken place in 853 or 854; indeed, as the name transliterated Qatuna may by the omission of a point be read Futuna or Fituna, and 'Ibn' is omitted in one of the two manuscripts which contain this passage and in Al Ya'qubi, who records the expedition from another source,³⁹ it is tempting to see in the mysterious 'Ibn Qatuna' the very Photinus whose history we are seeking to unravel, and to suppose that the descent upon Crete was made on his return from Egypt,⁴⁰ and therefore in 853. This, however, is conjectural, and all that can be affirmed on any solid ground is that the Cretan expedition of Photinus took place during the years 845-54. The name Michael given by the Continuator to the emperor under whom he was sent may then have been part of the tradition, and his error have arisen from supposing that Michael II was intended instead of Michael III.

It has been usual to place at the beginning of the reign of Theophilus⁴¹ a raid upon Asia Minor mentioned by the continuator, in which the raiders were cut to pieces by Constantine Contomytes, the Thracian general.⁴² The reason for this is apparently that the author narrates it immediately before the battle of Thasos: but he is not writing in chronological order, and places no note of connexion between the two events, while, on the other hand, he states that it occurred about the same time as the events last recorded, which are the deaths of Theophobus and Theophilus (January 842); and I see no reason to

³⁷ Rosen ad Tab.

³⁸ For this family see Geosius, p. 70.

³⁹ E. 597 (Vasiljev, app., p. 10). There are here no points over the first letter, which may therefore be either *q* or *f*. At the end are the letters *r s r*, which may represent a surname.

⁴⁰ Tabari says of the three leaders, 'These were the three commanders on the sea,' by which an office seems to be meant. If the statement is trustworthy, they might be the *επάρχης* of the Cibyntheots and the *δραγερὶς* of the Aegean and of the imperial squadron; or, if Photinus was one of them, we might infer that the Cretan *επάρχη* was intended to be a naval theme. It might, however, be difficult to find a parallel for the appointment of a military officer to a naval command.

⁴¹ Lebeau, *Hist. du Bas-Empire*, xii. 92; Muralt, *Essai de Chron. byzant.*, p. 431; Vasiljev, p. 76; Bury, *Eastern Roman Empire*, p. 291.

⁴² Theoph. Cont., iii. 39.

reject this date, which agrees better with the fact that Constantine Contomytes was appointed *στρατηγός* of Sicily in 859.⁴² It was, however, unusual to make expeditions in the winter; and therefore, if any confidence is to be placed in the note of time, the event must be dated in 841.

I have stated above that for the details of the Arab conquest of Crete we have, with the exception of three lines of Al Baladhuri, Greek authorities only. Conde, however, cites a narrative in which the burning of the ships is described as from the biographical dictionary of the Spanish Arab Al Humaidi (d. 1095);⁴³ and on the strength of this citation this author has been accepted as corroborating the story of Genesius.⁴⁴ Now only one manuscript of Al Humaidi's work is known to exist, and that is at Oxford; and Professor Margoliouth, who has most kindly examined the manuscript for me, assures me that in the passage which Conde cites this contains nothing that is not in the work of Al Humaidi's copyist and continuator, Al Dhabbi (d. 1203), which was published by Codera and Ribera in 1886 from an Escorial MS., the only one known to exist in Europe;⁴⁵ and he also points out that it appears from Conde's own preface that he knew Al Humaidi only through Al Dhabbi.⁴⁶ We may therefore be quite confident that in the extract from Al Dhabbi, of which I give a translation below,⁴⁷ we have all the information that was at Conde's disposal.

Umar the son of Shu'aib Abu Hafs who was called 'Al Ghaliz',⁴⁸ Al Balluti, from the districts of Fals al Ballut near Cordova. He is mentioned by Abu Muhammad the son of Hazm,⁴⁹ and he says that he came from Qull al Rabadhiyin,⁵⁰ and that it was he who made the expedition to Crete and conquered it after the year 230 [18 September 844—7 September 845], and his descendants ruled it in succession after him until 'Abd al 'Azis the son of Shu'aib was the last of them, in whose days Romanns the son of Constantine, king of the Romans, took possession of it, in the year 350 [30 February 961—8 February 962], and most of those who joined him in the conquest were men of Spain. This is what he says. And he is men-

⁴² Cambridge Chronicle, A.M. 6366. There is no need with Vasiljev (p. 176) to postulate two men of this name.

⁴³ *Los Arabes en España* (ed. 1844), I. 206.

⁴⁴ Hirsch, p. 135; Vasiljev, p. 48; Bury, p. 228, 229.

⁴⁵ *Bibliotheca Arabo-Hispanica*, tom. III.

⁴⁶ p. xxvii.

⁴⁷ p. 294 (no 1164). I am indebted to Professor Margoliouth for the reference and to Mr. Amedros for assistance with the translation.

⁴⁸ I.e. 'the rough'.

⁴⁹ Al Humaidi's master; d. 1064 (Brockelmann, *Gesch. d. arab. Lit.*, p. 400).

⁵⁰ From information supplied by Professor Margoliouth I make a slight correction from the Oxford MS. Qull al Rabadhiyin seems to be a place-name (Margoliouth), but an allusion to the insurrection of the *rabadā* (suburb) in 814 (Ibn al Aikiz, vi. 209), which led to the expulsion of the future conquerors of Crete, appears obvious. Abu Hafs's native place is elsewhere called Butrah; see below p. 443, and P. de Gayangos, *Hist. of the Mohammedan Dynasties in Spain*, II. 103.

tioned by Abu Sa'id the son of Yunus,²² and he says: 'Shu'aib the son of 'Umar the son of 'Isa Abu 'Umar, lord of the island of Crete, carried out the conquest of it after the year 220 [5 January—26 December 835]; and this Shu'aib used to write in Al Iraq, and he wrote under my grandfather Yunus the son of 'Abd al A'la²³ and others also in Egypt.' This is the end of the words of Ibn Yunus. Now these men differ as to his name, one saying 'Umar the son of Shu'aib', and the other saying 'Shu'aib the son of 'Umar', and both describe him as the conqueror; if that were not so, we should have said that one of them was the son of the other: and it may be that both were present at the conquest: if it is not so, there has been a transposition in the case of one of them. God knows.

Conde correctly introduces this notice with the words 'cuenta Edobi', but he then gives as part of the citation the statement that the insurgents after their expulsion chose Abu Hafs as their leader, which is not in the text; instead of 'Abu Muhammad ibn Haxm' he writes 'Said ben Jonas', omitting the real citation from Ibn Yunus, and at the end he writes 'Así lo refiere Homeidi citando á Muhamad ben Huzam', though he has just given 'Said ben Jonas' as the authority ('Abu' he seems to consider a superfluous prefix). These are only instances of his habitual inaccuracy: but he then goes on to repeat on the authority of Al Humaidi the story of the conquest almost as it appears in the Greek writers, the only statements of fact not contained in these being the mention of Suda instead of Charax as the landing-place and the localization of Candia at the east end of the island; and both these, as well as certain literary embellishments, are also to be found in Gibbon, while no detail of the Greek that is preserved by Conde is absent from Gibbon, and both writers, while otherwise following Genesius, insert the allusion to future children from the Continuator. To make the matter quite clear, I place the passages of Gibbon and Conde in parallel columns, printing in *italics* expressions absent in the Greek texts which are common to both writers.

GIBBON, ed. Bury, vi. 37.

A band of Andalusian volunteers . . . explored the adventures of the sea; but, as they sailed in no more than 10 or 20 galleys, their warfare must be branded with the name of piracy. . . . From the mouth of the Nile to the Hellespont, the islands and sea-coasts, both of the *Greeks* and Moslems, were exposed to their

CONDE (ed. 1844), i. 205.

Así lo refiere Homeidi citando á Muhamad ben Huzam, y cuenta asimismo que estos andaluces con veinte navas corman y robaban en el mar *griego* y en sus islas:

²² Native of Egypt; d. 968 (Ibn Khalkikan, transl. De Slane, ii. 94).

²³ Said to have been born in 787 and to have died in 878 (*op. cit.* iv. 596).

depredations. . . . The Andalusians wandered over the land fearless and unmolested; but, when they descended with their plunder to the sea-shore, their vessels were in flames, and their chief, Abu Caab, confessed himself the author of the mischief. Their clamours accused his madness or treachery. 'Of what do you complain?' replied the crafty emir. 'I have brought you to a land flowing with milk and honey. Here is your true country; . . . forget the barren place of your nativity.' 'And our wives and children?' 'Your beautiful captives will supply the place of your wives, and in their embraces you will soon become the fathers of a new progeny.' Their first habitation was their camp . . . in the bay of Suda:⁵⁴ but an apostate monk led them to a . . . position in the eastern ports; and the name of Candax, their . . . colony, had [has?] been extended to the whole island.

dice que deseando ellos por el natural amor á su patria tornar á ella con las muchas riquezas que habian allegado, que su caudillo les quemó la flota, y como se quejasen de él y de su constante determinacion, lamentándose de su destierro, que el caudillo les dijo:

'Cuanto mejor y mas amena es esta isla que corre miel y leche, que vuestros desiertos "!"

entre estas bellas cautivas olvidareis vuestras amadas; hallareis aqui todos los placeres de la vida y una nueva jeneracion, que será vuestro solas en la vejez': que moraban en Suda, y fundaron Candax al oriente de la isla.

The authority cited by Conde therefore turns out to be no ancient Arab writer, but an Englishman of the eighteenth century, and the figure of Al Humaidi as an authority for anything beyond the fact of the conquest and the personality of the conqueror must disappear from history. At first sight it seems impossible to acquit Conde of fraud; but such a charge should not be made if any other explanation is possible: and, when we consider the difficulties under which his work was produced,⁵⁵ I think we may believe that, when compiling material for his history, unable to find any Arabic account of the conquest, he wrote the paraphrase of Gibbon under the citation from Al Dhabbi, and, when putting his work into shape, forgot the source of it and imagined it to be part of the citation. But, though all direct Arabic authority for the story of the burning of the ships disappears, it still seems likely that Genesius obtained it directly or indirectly from Arab tradition. The same thing was done in this very year 828 by the Arab commander in Sicily in order to save his ships

⁵⁴ I do not know where Gibbon found the identification of Charax with Suda. The two words have the same meaning (Doeange, s.v. *Ιεσσα*).

⁵⁵ See P. de Gayangos, *Hist. of the Mohammed. Dyn. in Spain*, i, p. xi.

from falling into the hands of the Romans,⁵⁶ and the Cretan Arabs may well have transferred the story to their own leader. That Genesisius had some Cretan informant⁵⁷ seems certain from the fact that he makes special mention of the preservation of the blood of the martyr Cyril of Gortyna and the miracles wrought by it, and of the tombs of other local martyrs,⁵⁸ which would not interest any one but a native of the island.

Al Humaidi is clearly right in his surmise that 'Umar ibn Shu'aib and Shu'aib ibn 'Umar are father and son; and Shu'aib is obviously the *Σαίβης* of Genesisius (p. 47),⁵⁹ the second Arab ruler of Crete. That Ibn Yunus calls Abu Hafs not Ibn Shu'aib but Ibn 'Isa need not trouble us, for, as Ibn Yunus himself was by his own statement not son but grandson of Yunus, so either Shu'aib or 'Isa may have been grandfather of Abu Hafs. The picture which Ibn Yunus presents to us of the pirate *amir* as a travelling collector of traditions is a strange one; but, as he is said to have studied under the writer's own grandfather, the authority is good, and it is in fact only to his literary distinction that we owe the notice of him, for the biographers took no account of any but literary men, Abu Hafs being perhaps included because he was confused with his son. Shu'aib's literary travels were no doubt undertaken during his father's lifetime, as we may in fact gather from another version of the extract from Ibn Yunus preserved by Al Sam'ani, to which I shall again refer, where the sentence in question runs: 'And he used to write before in Al 'Iraq, and he wrote under Yunus the son of 'Abd al A'la and others in Egypt.' Of the two dates given, 220 and 230, we may assume one to be a corruption of the other, and whichever was the original probably preserved the date of the death of Abu Hafs and succession of Shu'aib, which, as the two were believed to be the same person, was supposed to be the date of the conquest. Of the two dates the later would seem the more probable in order to allow time for Shu'aib's literary career; for, as he studied under a man who lived till 878 and was himself alive in 875,⁶⁰ it is hard to think that his studies began before the conquest, though, as both Al Humaidi and Al Sam'ani give 220 in the citation from Ibn Yunus, this date must have been given by that author.

⁵⁶ Ibn al Athir, vi. 237 = Amari, *Bibl. arabo-sicula*, p. 223; Nuwairi ap. Amari p. 422.

⁵⁷ So Bury, p. 289, n. 1.

⁵⁸ p. 48. The Continuator (ii. 23) has by a misunderstanding taken the allusion to Cyril as a record of a martyrdom at the hands of the Arabs; see De Boor in *Bys. Zeitschr.* xiii. 433.

⁵⁹ Theoph. Cont. (v. 60) calls him *Σαίβης*.

⁶⁰ Theoph. Cont., v. 60. For the date see Vasiljev, ii. 49; but the restoration of the true date for the landing necessitates substituting 875 for 872.

An interesting point arises from the form which the notice of Shu'aib takes in Al Sam'ani. This writer, a native of Merv who died in 1167⁶¹ and is independent of the Spanish authors, composed a biographical dictionary known as *Kitab al Ansab* or *Book of Surnames*, in which the subjects of the notices were arranged, not as in other dictionaries in the alphabetical order of the names given to them in infancy, but in the order of the *ansab* or descriptive designations which were borne by many eminent Moslems, and especially by literary men. In this work the *nisba* under which the notice of Shu'aib is given is Al Iqritishi (the Cretan), and it begins: 'Crete. That is an island in the western district from which many learned men came; and the most famous of them is Abu 'Amr Shu'aib the son of 'Umar the son of 'Isa Al Iqritishi,'⁶² the rest being as in Al Humaidi down to the citation given above. Ibn Yunus is not mentioned, but the notice clearly comes from him, and we must assume that he gave Shu'aib the *nisba* Al Iqritishi, though Al Humaidi has not preserved it.⁶³ The same *nisba* is also assigned by Al Baladhuri to Abu Hafs,⁶⁴ and it would therefore appear to have been used as a hereditary surname by the amirs of Crete. Now Al Nuwairi tells us that in the year 244 (19 April 858—7 April 859) 'Ali brother of the *amir* of Sicily made an expedition by sea, during which Al Iqritishi met him with forty ships, but 'Ali put him to flight and took ten of his ships,⁶⁵ while Ibn 'Adhari, though following the same source, says that 'Ali went to Crete and plundered it, but fortune then turned against the Moslems, and twelve of their ships were taken.⁶⁶ The Al Iqritishi here mentioned is supposed by Amari⁶⁷ to have been a Roman general, and he suggests John Creticus, *στρατηγός* of Peloponnesus under Basil;⁶⁸ but the passages from Al Baladhuri and Ibn Yunus are striking confirmation of the opinion of the older writers whom he cites that he was the *amir* of Crete: he can hardly, however, have been Abu Hafs, as Caussin de Perceval⁶⁹ and Martorana⁷⁰ supposed, still less the unknown Ahmad of Rampoldi,⁷¹ but he

⁶¹ I take this information from Professor Margolouth's preface to the facsimile edition recently published by the Gibb Trustees.

⁶² fo. 47^r, l. 3. I owe the reference to Mr. Amedroz.

⁶³ Yaquṭ (l. 337) gives the extract from Ibn Yunus in a shorter form, omitting the *nisba*. This is followed without obvious break by a long account of the recovery of Crete in 961; but this cannot be the work of Ibn Yunus, who died in 968. It ends with the statement that Crete was then in the hands of the Franks, which must have been written after 1204 and is probably Yaquṭ's own addition.

⁶⁴ p. 236 (Vasilyev, l. app., p. 4).

⁶⁵ Amari, *Bibl. arabe-sicula*, p. 432.

⁶⁶ Ed. Dory, l. 106 = Amari, p. 358.

⁶⁷ *Storia dei Musulm. di Sicilia*, l. 320; followed by Vasilyev, p. 175.

⁶⁸ *Theoph. Cont.*, v. 62.

⁶⁹ *Hist. de Sicile*, ap. Biedessel, *Voyages*, p. 413.

⁷⁰ *Notizie Storiche*, l. 43.

⁷¹ *Annali Musulmani*, iv. 315.

was in all probability Shu'aib. It only remains to consider how 'Ali came into collision with the Cretan Arabs. It is very likely that the statement of Ibn 'Adhari that he raided Crete is a mere blunder,⁷² such as from the indistinctness of the writing often occurs in Arabic writers; and in that case we may suppose that he was raiding the mainland of Greece or the islands, and that the *amir* of Crete, considering this as poaching on his preserves, attacked him. The account of Ibn 'Adhari is not, however, impossible. It is certainly most unlikely that 'Ali set out with the intention of attacking Crete: the fact that the *amir* had a fleet at hand would be sufficient to prevent this, and, while there was plenty of imperial territory to raid, it is not probable that he would deliberately attack an island under Moslem rule. He may, however, have been driven by the weather to put in at Crete; and, with men out for plunder and short of provisions and among a population which was mainly Christian, looting would naturally follow. Unfortunately Ibn al Athir, who used the same source as Al Nuwairi and Ibn 'Adhari for Sicilian affairs, is here silent, and, as our only Greek source, the Cambridge Chronicle, merely says ἐνέδωθησαν τὰ καράβια τοῦ. 'Αλή,⁷³ we have no means of determining the question.

I conclude with another short notice of Abu Hafs which follows the extract from Al Baladhuri in Yaqt (i. 337):

And others besides Al Baladhuri say: 'Crete was conquered in the early days of Al Mamun' [813-33], and it is said 'It was conquered after the year 260 [13 February 864—1 February 865] through the instrumentality of 'Amr the son of Shu'aib who was called Ibn al Ghalis; and he was one of the men of the village of Butruh in the district of Fals al Ballut in Spain, and his issue inherited it for many years.'

This closely resembles the notice quoted from Ibn Hazzm by Al Humaidi.

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⁷² Vasiljev, p. 178, n. 4.

⁷³ A.N. 6366. This confirms Al Nuwairi's account of the result. The version of Ibn 'Adhari is a misunderstanding, and the two narratives cannot be combined as is attempted by Amari and Vasiljev.