The handle http://hdl.handle.net/1887/25008 holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

**Author:** Bruning, Jelle

**Title:** The rise of a capital: on the development of al-Fusṭāṭ’s relationship with its hinterland, 18/639-132/750

**Issue Date:** 2014-04-02
PART 2

AL-FUSTĀṬ AND UPPER EGYPT
CHAPTER 3

CHANGES IN THE MILITARY ADMINISTRATION OF UPPER EGYPT AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH AL-FUSṬĀṬ

‘[A]t the beginning of the dynasty, so long as its people are occupied in establishing power, the need for “the sword” is greater than that for “the pen”.”

In this and the next chapter, we turn our attention to Upper Egypt, whose administrative relationship with al-Fusṭāṭ developed along lines similar to what we have seen for Alexandria. The following pages will concentrate on al-Fusṭāṭ’s involvement in the administration of the Arabs’ military apparatus in the Nile valley. The few studies on Egypt’s early-Arab military organization focus on the nuclei of Arab military settlement and predominantly on al-Fusṭāṭ. Source material, both literary and documentary, for the Arab army outside al-Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria is extremely rare. Especially for the period after the 30s/650s source material is hard to come by. Medieval historiographical sources present post-conquest Upper Egypt as virtually without Arab military activity. They report that,

in the first years after the conquest, Arabs were forbidden to settle outside the main garrison towns except for temporary visits to villages in the Nile delta or the northern part of Upper Egypt for the grazing of horses during the spring (the so-called *murtabaʿ al-ġund*). However, historians of early-Arab Egypt long know of the existence of a small corpus of documents that give explicit information of the organization of garrisons stationed in the Egyptian countryside. These documents date from the 20s/640s and early-30s/650s and are mostly related to the pagarchy of Ihnās. Despite their relevance to the present subject, they have largely been excluded from studies into the early-Arab military administration. As we will see below, these and a few similar documents from the Umayyad period are highly informative on the relationships between the central Arab authorities in al-Fustṭāṭ, Upper Egyptian civil administrations and groups of soldiers stationed outside the capital.

It will be argued below that these relationships largely developed along a chronology similar to the development of the relationship between al-Fustṭāṭ and Alexandria. The chronology established in chapter 1 is applicable to at least Arcadia, the northern eparchy of Upper Egypt, and especially to the pagarchies of the Fayyūm, Ihnās, and al-Ušmūn from which comes much of our source material. In this chapter, we will see that a demilitarization of the local non-Arab administrations and the stationing of Arab garrisons on these administrations’ territory characterized an initial phase of Arab rule over northern Upper Egypt. As in Alexandria, changes are visible early during the Umayyad caliphate. This second phase saw an increase of the involvement of the central authorities in the administration of the military stationed in Upper Egypt and, additionally, a systematization of the provisioning of local soldiers.

The Thebaid, Upper Egypt’s southern eparchy, needs a discussion separate from its northern neighbour. Especially for Egypt’s southern fringes, the

---

same chronology cannot be established. This is not only due to the lack of source material, but also because this part of Egypt remained outside Arab-ruled territory for almost a decade after the conquest of northern Upper Egypt. We will see, nonetheless, that the political situation in the southern Thebaid in the 20s/640s and 30s/650s, especially the establishment of a frontier zone\(^4\) around Aswan in 31/652, had considerable impact on the Arabs’ military presence in the rest of Upper Egypt and how the Arab authorities ruled this region from al-Fusṭāṭ. It explains in part the invisibility of the Arab army of Arcadia and the northern Thebaid in sources for the period after the 30s/650s. In order to better understand Arab polity more to the north, we must study the form of their rule in the southern Thebaid and this region’s relationship with al-Fusṭāṭ. We begin, therefore, with determining the southern reach of Arab rule in the Thebaid prior to 31/652.

1. The Thebaid: determining the reach of Arab rule before 31/652 and the establishment of the southern frontier near Aswan

Whereas the Nile delta and much of the Nile valley north of Aswan came under Arab rule in the early-20s/640s, the new rulers did not establish Egypt’s southern frontier around Aswan before 31/652. The scarcity of relevant source material makes it difficult to understand how far south the political influence of al-Fusṭāṭ reached prior to 31/652. After the Sasanids retreated from Egypt in 7/629, the Byzantines regained power over Egypt. The *History of the patriarchs* tells us that the emperor Heraclius ‘assembled all his troops from Egypt as far as the borders of Aswan’ at the arrival of the Arabs,\(^5\) suggesting Byzantine military presence throughout the whole of Egypt.\(^6\) Elsewhere, the same source tells that ‘Heraclius


\(^5\) *History of the patriarchs*, II, p. 493 [229]. This part of the *History of the patriarchs* is based on a work of one George the Archdeacon who served patriarch Simon (d. 81/700); see Den Heijer, *aw ūb bn anṣūr*, pp. 7-8, 142-5. Cf. Butler, *The Arab conquest*, p. 208, n. 1.

\(^6\) For the frontier in pre-Sasanid Egypt, see Grohmann, *Geographie und Verwaltung*, pp. 12-4.
appointed bishops throughout the land of Egypt as far as Anṣinā’,\(^7\) possibly referring to the end of the reach of Byzantine control over ecclesiastical matters. As the southernmost military confrontation between the Byzantines and the Arabs reported in narrative sources is located around Anṣinā’,\(^8\) some modern scholars have seen the description of Heraclius’ involvement in the appointment of bishops as indicating that Byzantine control reached no further south.\(^9\) There is little veracity in this argument. Documents attest to Byzantine rule to the south of Anṣinā in the period between the end of the Sasanid occupation and the Arab conquest.\(^10\) The latest document known to me bearing undebated testimony to Byzantine control over the southern Thebaid is SB VI 8986, a document from Udfū that should be dated between Šawwāl 19/October 640 and the beginning of Ğumādā II 20/the end of May 641,\(^11\) i.e. during the Arab conquest. The consular formula at the beginning of this document mentions the Byzantine family as the ruling authorities and, therefore, indicates that the Arabs did not control that area at that time but that it was under Byzantine control.

Narrative sources report that ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ divided his army and sent troops to different parts of Egypt after the fall of Qaṣr aš-Šam’ in the spring of 20/641. The general Ḥāriğa b. Ḥuḍāfa allegedly conquered ‘the Fayyūm, al-Uṣmnayn, Iḥmīm, al-Buṣrūdāt, and the villages of Upper Egypt’.\(^12\) Our sources may have considered the military confrontation at Anṣinā, mentioned in the previous paragraph, as part of this expedition.\(^13\) John of Nikiu nuances the course of the conquest and writes that the Arab army took Upper Egypt during the eleven-month armistice that followed the siege of Alexandria at the end of 20/641

\(^{7}\) History of the patriarchs, II, p. 492 [228].  
\(^{8}\) John of Nikiu, Chronicle, p. 184.  
\(^{10}\) For an overview of these documents, see Bagnall & Worp, Chronological systems, pp. 215-6, 267-71.  
or in early-21/642. Although of uncertain interpretation, documents on the establishment of Arab rule over Upper Egypt exist. As for the eparchy of Arcadia, for example, effects of the arrival of the Arabs to Egypt on the pagarchy of the Fayyūm are first seen in P.Lond. I 113/10 (Fayyūm), dated indiction year 13 (18-9/639-40). Modern scholars, however, disagree about this document’s interpretation. They see it as evidence for either local resistance against, or cooperation with, Arab army units. Similarly, a recent interpretation of an unusual regnal formula in another document, P.Paramone 18 (al-Ušmūn; Ramaḍān-Šawwāl 20/August-September 641), sees this formula as proof of a short-lived interregnum in which there was uncertainty about the effective rulers (possibly due to a pact between the Arabs and the Byzantines). Others, however, understand this document to indicate Byzantine hegemony over al-Ušmūn.

Leaving these troublesome documents aside, the first unequivocal reference to Arab authority over northern Upper Egypt comes from SB VIII 9749 (Ihnās; 18.2-3.21/26.1-2.642), an official quittance for the delivery of taxes in kind to an Arab official in Qaṣr aš-Šam. Such information on the conquest of the Thebaid, however, is more difficult to come by. Possibly the oldest document from the southern half of Upper Egypt that refers to Arab control is P.Apoll. 2. This document belongs to the archive of Flavius Papas, pagarch of Udfū, and is dated to Rabī’ II 3, 27/January 6, 648. It reports that an Arab will bring a package containing gold and bearing the seal of the governor ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ (in office 25/645-35/656) to Liberios, Papas’s father and predecessor. SB Kopt. I 242 (Udfū), related to the same Liberios

---

and dated Ṣafar 11, 29/October 24, 649, confirms Arab hegemony over the pagarchy of Udfū. It contains an oath ‘by God Almighty and the salvation of the all-praiseworthy Abdelas [i.e. ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ], the great governor’; we will revisit this and related oath formulae in chapter 4. P.Apoll. 2 gives us a terminus ante quem for the Arab conquest of Udfū. We find a terminus post quem in a Coptic inscription dated Phaophi 13, A.M. 414 (11th ind.; Raǧab 19, 78/October 11, 697) and commemorating the renovation of a monastery dedicated to St Abraham in the pagarchy of Qifṭ (Koptos), about 150 kilometers north of Udfū. In lines 14 and 15 of the inscription it is written that A.M. 414 equals fifty-five years after ‘the gentile nation of the Saracens’ became rulers over the region. In other words, the inscription tells us that the Arabs conquered the region of Qifṭ in A.M. 359, i.e. 21-2/642-3. So, on the basis of our present source material we can date the beginning of Arab rule over Udfū to some time between 21-2/642-3 (the Coptic inscription) and early-27/648 (P.Apoll. 2) after it had been under Byzantine control (as indicated by SB VI 8986). Still, Udfū is located about 105 kms north of the frontier near Aswan.

When reviewing the information on Egypt’s southern frontier, one notices that after the end of the Sasanid occupation of Upper Egypt the area around Aswan plays no role in our sources. There are no indications that Arabs who came with the conquest lived there. Although the oldest known Arabic

21 Pace J.-C. Garcin, “Uswān”, EI², X, p. 938. I find no sources for his claim that the Arabs set up a camp near Aswan during the conquest of Upper Egypt. The sole reference to an Arab presence there, a passage in al-Maqrīzī’s Ḥiṣāṭ (I, p. 151) which states that ‘Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ built a nilometer near Aswan during the conquest of Egypt, most probably is non-historical. This nilometer was most likely the one on the island of Elephantine which already existed in Strabo’s time (see M. al-Ḥuwayrī, Uswān fī al-ʿuṣūr al-wuṣṭā, al-Haram: ʿAyān li-d-dirāsāt wa-l-buḥūṭ al-insāniyya wa-l-ḥīṣṭāmaʿiyya, 1996, p. 17; Timm, Das christlich-koptische Ägypten, III, p. 1044) and remained in use in late-Antiquity (see J.H.F. Dijkstra, “Late Antique inscriptions from the first cataract area discovered and rediscovered”, JJP 33 (2003), pp. 63-6).
22 Pace S. Māhir (“Muḥāfīẓat al-Ǧumhūriyya al-ʿArabiyya al-Muttaḥida fī al-ʿaṣr al-islāmi”, Maḡallat kullīyyat al-ʿādāb, 21/1 (1959), pp. 71-2), a source for many other scholars, who holds that the
epitaph, dated Ǧumādā II 31/January-February 652, is sometimes thought to come from Aswan, its place of origin may as well be al-Fuṣṭāṭ.23 Because of this lack of clarity, the epitaph cannot be used as proof for Arab presence in Aswan in the early-30s/650s. The oldest documentary source that securely indicates that Arabs lived in Aswan is another Arabic epitaph, found at the city’s cemetery and dated Դū al-Qa’da 15, 71/April 20, 691.24 In addition, the oldest references to Arab presence in Aswan in literary sources go back to Umayyad times (i.e., from 40/661 onwards).25 Our current documentary and narrative source material, therefore, does not allow for conclusions on the reach of Arab rule south of Udfū in the 20s/640s. Fortunately, there is some valuable information on Arab activity in that area in the early-30s/650s that helps us understand the nature of the area north of the first cataract.

Medieval Arabic historiography reports that after the conquest of Egypt ‘Amr b. al-ʿĂṣ continuously fought Egypt’s southern neighbour, the Christian kingdom(s) of Nubia,26 in the form of summer campaigns (Ar. ʂawāʿif).27 These campaigns utterly failed to subdue the Nubians to Arab control; the high number of Egyptian casualties and the military qualities of the Nubians are expounded upon in Arabic literature.28 Without much precision, medieval historians write that the Arabs attacked ‘Nubian territory’ (Ar. ʔarḍ an-Nūba).29 Some modern gravestones from the cemetery of Aswan indicate that ansārīs lived in the city. Her source, Monneret de Villard’s La necropoli musulmana di Aswan (Cairo: IFAO, 1930) was not available to me.

23 The publisher of the epitaph, H.M. el-Hawary (“The most ancient Islamic monument known dated A.H. 31 (A.D. 652) from the time of the third calif ʿUthman”, JRAS (1930), pp. 321-33), writes that he found the epitaph in the Egyptian Museum and that its place of origin is not recorded (p. 321). El-Hawary assumes that the epitaph comes from al-Qarāfā cemetery near al-Fuṣṭāṭ (p. 333).


scholars take for granted that this means that the attacks aimed at Nubian territory south of the frontier zone near Aswan. Yet, al-Ṭabarī writes on the basis of a relatively early source that ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ did not fight the Nubians south of the cataract, but rather on Egyptian soil: ‘when the Muslims conquered Egypt they raided (Ar. ḡazaw) the Nubians of Egypt (Ar. Nūbat Miṣr)’. Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam gives similar information on the same authority. During ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ’s term as governor over Egypt and the first half of that of his successor ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ, Nubia and Egypt remained in a state of war. It was ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ’s advance on Nubia of 31/652 that resulted in a peace agreement between both countries (the famous baqt). Ibn Ḥawqal (writing between 331/942 and 378/988) describes the effects of this advance on the political control over the region of Aswan as follows:

‘Abū al-Manī‘ Kuṭayyir b. Aḥmad al-Ǧa’dī al-Uswānī transmitted to me that ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ conquered [Ar. ḫtata] Aswan in the year thirty-one [652]. He also conquered Elephantine [Ar. Hīf> C. eih], which is a town that faces Aswan on the western shore of the Nile and was called “Village of the potsherds”. He also conquered Philae, a town located on a solid rock rising out of the water in the middle of the Nile six miles from Aswan. This town, being an island, is of difficult access.’

A late-Umayyad source tells that ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ was able to enter Nubian territory as far as Dunqula (Dongola). The comparatively meagre results of his advance are striking and may, in fact, reveal that on this point


31 Aḥmad al-Ǧa’dī al-Uswānī, Taʾrīḫ, I/5, p. 2593, on the final authority of Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (d. 128/745-6).

32 Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ, p. 188: ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ was [the caliph] ’Uṯmān’s administrator of Egypt in the year 31 [652] when the Nubians attacked him [fa-qātalathu an-Nūba], similarly suggesting fighting on Egyptian territory.


historiography is corrupted.\textsuperscript{36} It appears that the Egyptian governor was merely able to restore the old frontier by making, or being driven back on, a peace agreement.\textsuperscript{37} This agreement formed the basis for diplomatic gift exchanges through which a peaceful relationship between the two countries was maintained.\textsuperscript{38} That the source of at-Ṭabarī and Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam tells us that the Arabs needed to fight the Nubians north of the cataract and that Ibn Ḥawqal relates that the area came under Arab control only after ʿAbd Allâh b. Saʿd b. Abî Sarḥ’s attack on Nubia allows us to conclude that at least the northern part of the cataract area, including Aswan, was a zone of contested control, dominated by Nubians, throughout the 20s/640s.\textsuperscript{39}

ʿAbd Allâh b. Saʿd b. Abî Sarḥ’s advance on the southern fringes of Egypt, with Arab armies probably also coming from ‘Ayḏāb on the Red Sea littoral,\textsuperscript{40} not only resulted in a peace agreement with the Nubians but may as well have ended

\textsuperscript{36} Cf. the apocalyptic Fourteenth vision of Daniel, verses 30-2, which writes, according to one modern interpretation, that ʿAbd Allâh b. Saʿd b. Abî Sarḥ’s armies fought the Nubians ‘until they entered the capital of the [Nubian] kingdom, that is Aswan’. These verses imply that there was little fighting south of the cataract. For these verses in the Arabic text of the apocalyps and the interpretation in question, see C.H. Becker, ‘Das Reich der Ismaeliten im koptischen Danielbuch’, Nachrichten von der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, phil.-hist. Klasse (1916), pp. 13, 37. For other interpretations, see L. Ditommaso, The book of Daniel and the apocryphal Daniel literature, Leiden: Brill, 2005, pp. 179-84.


\textsuperscript{39} This may be corroborated by the remains of a culturally Nubian fortress that have been found 20 kms south of Udfū (see P. Grossmann & H. Jaritz, “Ein Besuch in der Festung von Qalʿat al-babēn in Oberägypten”, MDAI Kairo 30/2 (1974), pp. 199-214). The pottery found at the fortress and, hence, its occupation have recently been dated primarily to the A.D. sixth and first/seventh centuries (see L. Op de Beeck, “Pottery from the fortified town site of Qalʿat al-Babēn”, CRIPEL 24 (2004), pp. 143-69; but cf. A.L. Gascoigne & P.J. Rose, “Fortification, settlement and ethnicity in southern Egypt”, in P. Matthiae et al., Proceedings of the 6th International Congress of the Archaeology of the ancient Near-East, 3 vols, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2010, III, p. 47, n. 8). See note 36 above for the reference to Aswan as ‘the capital of the [Nubian] kingdom’ in the Fourteenth vision of Daniel.

\textsuperscript{40} T. Power, ‘The origin and development of the Sudanese ports (ʿAydhāb, Bâdiʿ, Sawâkin) in the early Islamic period’, Chroniques yéménites 15 (2008), pp. 92-110 [esp. § 18 in the online edition (<http://cy.revues.org/1685>; March 2013)].
hostilities from the side of nomadic Buğa tribes (Blemmyes) inhabiting the eastern desert. The conclusion of a real treaty is not reported. Medieval Arabic historical tradition reports that ʿUbayd Allāh b. al-Ḥabḥāb (ṣāḥib al-ḥarāq in 105/724-116/734) was the first to conclude a treaty with the Buğa. But of importance here is that the advance of 31/652 removed, at least in theory (cf. below), major threats of large-scale hostility on southern Upper Egypt. It established a frontier zone around the first cataract, the nature of which we will explore in what follows, on which the Arab authorities concentrated their Upper Egyptian military activity.

2. The Thebaid: Arab authority and the southern frontier

The southern frontier was an area of fortresses and fortified towns where Egyptian and Nubian rule met. Where the Arab and Nubian authorities thought of importance here is that the advance of 31/652 removed, at least in theory, major threats of large-scale hostility on southern Upper Egypt.

---

41 Ibn Hawqal, Kitāb ṣūrat al-ard, I, pp. 50-1.
42 The exact date of the treaty is not known. But in the preceding period, the Buغا ‘had no agreement nor peace treaty’ (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ, p. 189). Cf. Christides, “Sudanese at the time of the Arab conquest”, esp. pp. 10-3, who argues that the ‘treaty of Miṣr’, preserved by ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ, was the first to conclude a treaty with the Buغا. Indeed, ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ reportedly met a group of Buغا on the shore of the Nile when he returned from his campaign. No hostility is mentioned. ʿAbd Allāh is said to have found them to be too insignificant to deal with (Ar. hānaʿ alayhi amruhum; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ, p. 189). That there was an understanding between groups of Buğa living near Udfū and the Arab administration is visible in P.Apoll. 15 (Udfū), dating from 39-40/660-1 or 55-6/675-6 (Gascou & Worp, “Problèmes”, p. 88). In this document, the secretary of the dux, seated in Anṣīnā, orders the pagarch of Udfū to prepare a ship for the collection of ‘the gold of the territories of the Buğa and of the value of [their] cattle’ (lines 4-5: τὸ χρύσιον τῶν γηδίων τῶν Βλεμμύων καὶ τὴν τιμὴν τῶν προβάτων).
43 The military aspect of the frontier for the period under discussion is most directly referred to in the History of the patriarchs, III, p. 145 [399], according to which a Nubian messenger discouraged the Nubian king to approach Egypt’s fortresses in 130-1/747-8. In addition to this, al-Maqrīzī (Ḥiṭat, I, p. 539) writes that Aswan housed a large number of Arab soldiers and implies that this was so until the Fatimid period (after R. Seignobos, “La frontière entre le bilād al-islām et le bilād al-Nūba: enjeux et ambiguïtés d’une frontière immobile (VIIe-XIIe siècle)”, Afriques 2 (2010), <http://afriques.revues.org/880> [November 2013], § 22). Further, a large wall, constructed in previous times, protected the road from Aswan to Philae (see map 3). The wall has been excavated in two sessions, see H. Jaritz, “The investigation of the ancient wall extending from Aswan to Philae”, MDAI Kairo 43 (1987), pp. 67-74 and H. Jaritz & M. Rodziewicz, “The investigation of the ancient wall extending from Aswan to Philae”, MDAI Kairo 49 (1993), pp. 107-31. Cf. Locher, Nilkatarakt, pp. 115-9. The excavators estimate the wall to have been 5 m wide and 10 m high. For the date of the wall, see the discussions in Maspero, Organisation, pp. 21, 25-7; Jaritz & Rodziewicz, “The investigation”, pp. 112-4; and Locher, Nilkatarakt, pp. 118-9. The Khuzistan chronicle (Nöldeke, “Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik”, p. 45) writes about lofty walls along the Nile that greatly hindered the Arabs in their conquest of ‘Egypt, the Thebaid, and Africa’. One of Yāqūt ar-Rūmī’s informants has it that a wall in the south of Egypt protected Upper Egypt from
the frontier zone started and ended is not known, but it certainly included the entire area of the first cataract, which treacherous rocks and unpredictable currents formed natural obstacles (see map 3).\(^{46}\) As we shall see shortly, the frontier probably also included the Nile valley south of the town of Umbū (Ombos), located c. thirty kilometers north of Aswan. It is unlikely, however, that the frontier zone under Arab rule included the town of Armant (Hermouthis), located more than 150 kilometers more to the north, as it had done in the Byzantine period prior to the Sasanid occupation.\(^{47}\) By the time the Arabs conquered the territory around Armant, it had long been demilitarized.\(^{48}\) Although sources for the administrative division of this part of Upper Egypt are rare, Armant most likely fell within the administrative jurisdiction of the dux of the Thebaid and, hence, seems not to have fallen within the territory of frontier zone.\(^{49}\) As we will see below, the frontier was administratively distinct from the Thebaid. As to the

---

\(^{45}\) Medieval Arabic geographies describe the frontier as consisting of an Egyptian and Nubian part. Ibn Ḥawqal, for example, writes about ‘the end of the border [Ar. ḥadd] of Islam and the beginning of the border of Nubia’ (Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ, I, p. 51). Al-Maqrīzī writes of Aswan as located at ‘the southern end of the border [Ar. ḥadd]’ (Ḫīṭāt, I, pp. 349, 531) and, similar to Ibn Ḥawqal, implies that Egypt held authority over part of the frontier. See also Yāqūt, Muʿṣam, I, pp. 710-1 and Ḥudūd al-ʿālam, p. 68. The frontier must not be seen as consisting of two well-defined zones (R.W. Brauer, Boundaries and frontiers in medieval Muslim geography, Philadelphia: The American philosophical society, 1995, pp. 12-14).

Certainly at the heart of the frontier, the reach of Egyptian or Nubian control remained contested. For example, medieval Arabic geographers do not agree as to who held authority over Philae. Al-Maqrīzī (Ḫīṭāt, I, pp. 517, 540) writes that Philae belongs to Egypt, al-ʿidrisī (Nuzhat al-muštāq, I, p. 38) claims the island to be part of Nubia, and Yāqūt (Muʿṣam, I, pp. 710-1) has it that Philae is ‘a village in the most southern part of Upper Egypt and the beginning of the land of Nubia as if it is a border between both [countries]’ (Ar. balad fī ʿāḥarʾ amal aṣ-Ṣaʿīd wa-awwal biḥād an-Nūba kā-l-ḥadd bayna-humā). For the possible existence of a no-man’s land at the heart of the frontier, cf. A.L. Gascoigne & P.J. Rose, “The forts of Hisn al-Bab and the first cataract frontier from the 5th to 12th centuries AD”, Sudan & Nubia bulletin 16 (2012), pp. 88-95; see also Seignobos, “La frontière”, esp. §§ 44-7.

Only with the help of local fishermen, smaller boats may have been able to sail through the cataract. See Ibn Sulaym al-Uswānī (fl. fourth/tenth c.) in al-Maqrīzī, Ḫīṭāt, I, p. 518; Locher, Nīkatāratk, p. 100. See also the discussion in Seignobos, “La frontière”, §§ 24-34.

\(^{46}\) Withong, Women of Jeme, p. 8.

\(^{47}\) P.KRU 10 (Šīma; 104/722) testifies to the involvement of the dux in Anšinā in legal disputes in Šīma, just north of Armant. O.CramVC 9 (Theban area; 78/698 or 109/728) is a legal document drawn up by two village heads as well as in the name of the dux.
beginning of Nubian territory, medieval sources report that a fortress called al-Qaṣr (possibly ‘the fortress of the Blacks’ of an A.D. sixth- or seventh-century document\(^{50}\)), located on the east bank of the Nile about seven kilometers south of Aswan, was the first fortress under Nubian control.\(^{51}\) However, the same sources also report that this fortress was at times in Arab hands and, thereby, bear testimony to the fact that the area occupied by the frontier was not fixed and that control over it depended much on military dominance.\(^{52}\)

Evidence for the presence of Arab authority in Aswan and its environs prior to the coming of the Abbasids is extremely rare. Documentary sources from the late-first/seventh and early-second/eighth century may well attest to this frontier zone or, perhaps better, that part of it controlled by Egyptian authorities. As we shall see in what follows, the area’s important role in the defence of the Nile valley north of it and the maintenance of Arab rule there, as well as the constant threat of Nubian invasions, demanded the direct involvement of the authorities in al-Fustāṭ in matters pertaining to the southern frontier.

Secure testimony of Arab rule over the area comes first from a Coptic inscription, found about thirty kilometers north of Aswan, near Umbū, and dating from the end of the first/seventh century.\(^{53}\) As it tells that the all-praiseworthy (Gr. πανεύφημος) amīr Apoulase (C. Απούλας) carried out the repair of roads (line 5: άλειψεν οἰόνυε) in the area,\(^{54}\) the inscription shows the Arab authorities’ care for the accessibility of the area (presumably in the first place for officials and

\(^{50}\) A. Łajtar, “Τὸ κάστρον τῶν Μαύρων τὸ πλησίου Φίλων: der dritte Adam über P.Haun. II 26”, JJP 27 (1997), pp. 47-51. As to the date of this document, see also CPR XXII 56, comm. at line 2.


soldiers and their retinue; the inscription has ‘men and animals’ in lines 5-6). Modern scholarly disagreement on the date of the inscription has obscured the inscription’s relevance to the present discussion. Therefore, we have to study the inscription in considerable detail.

At the end of the nineteenth century, U. Bouriant read the date of the inscription as Pharmouti 1, A.M. 409 (lines 13-4: ΧΡΟ ΛΙΟΚΑ[ΝΤΙ]Α [...] ΓΘ ΠΛΒΠ Σ), which equals Ḫū al-Qa’dā 14, 73/March 27, 693. Approximately twenty years later, however, A. Mallon abandoned this date in a reedition of the inscription. He opined that an Arabic inscription, carved just below the Coptic one and clearly dated to 737/1336-7, mentions the same amīr and repair of roads. Following Bouriant’s earlier attempts to decipher the Arabic inscription, he read the name in that inscription as ‘Sayf Abū Lazz Baktamur’ al-Badrī. He identified the Arabic Abū Lazz with the Coptic Apoulase and then changed the earlier editors’ reading of the name into Apoulass. On the basis of this identification, Mallon argued that the Coptic inscription must have a date similar, if not identical, to that of the Arabic inscription and that the reading of the year 409 is wrong. Subsequently, however, the Arabic inscription has been reinterpreted. G. Wiet’s edition of the text, published in 1956, correctly reads the name as ‘sayf ad-dīn Baktamur al-Badrī’. Although a valuable corrective to our understanding of the Arabic inscription, its implications for the relationship between the Arabic and Coptic inscriptions have not been discussed. As the inscriptions do not refer to the same person, it can now safely be concluded that the Coptic inscription is unrelated to the Arabic one. Hence, the date of the latter bears no implications on the date of the Coptic

56 Mallon vocalised the name as Boktomir. For the correct vocalisation of the name, see J. Sauvaget, “Noms et surnoms de Mamelouks”, Journal asiatique 238 (1950), p. 43 [no. 59].
58 RCEA XV 5705 (without explanatory notes).
59 Already in 1908, L. Massignon pled for a reassessment of the relationship between the two inscriptions (“Note sur l’état d’avancement des études archéologiques en Égypte hors du Caire”, BIFAO 6 (1908), pp. 3-4).
inscription. As we shall see in more detail shortly, the use of the honorific title ‘all-praiseworthy’ in the Coptic strongly places the date of the inscription in the first/seventh or early-second/eighth century. Reading the date of the Coptic inscription as A.M. 409 (Διο λιοκα[ιτι]α[ιου] γ[υ]) makes perfect sense.61

Dating from the period under discussion in this thesis, the Coptic inscription is a welcome source for the Arab administration of southern Upper Egypt. Although Apoulase’s name (an Arabic kunya possibly to be understood as Abū al-ʿĀṣi62) and title suggest that he was an Arab or an Arabized Egyptian closely related to the Arab administration, the identity of this amīr remains unknown. The honorific title attached to his title amīr, referred to in the preceding paragraph, gives us some information on his place in the province’s administrative hierarchy. The inscription calls Apoulase πανεύφημος, ‘all-praiseworthy’. This honorific occurs in dated Greek and Coptic documents throughout the first/seventh century and in the first decades of the second/eighth century. In these documents, paneupēmos is mostly reserved for the highest officials in the province: the governor seated in al-Fustāṭ and the Upper Egyptian dux/amīr.63 From the early-

---

60 Cf. note 55 above.
61 I thank A. Delattre and J. van der Vliet for discussing this with me. Bouriant saw the inscription in situ (De Morgan, Catalogue, pp. xi-xiii) but his two editions (cf. note 55) differ on details (in lines 6, 10-1, 13-4). It is therefore valuable to note that the editions agree on the reading of γ[υ]. Pace Kosack, Lehrbuch, p. 398 [no. 191] (who suggests to read Διο λιοκα[ιτι]α[ιου] γ[υ], i.e. A.M. 1055 (738-9/1338-9, not corresponding to 737/1336-7)) and Bagnall & Worp, Chronological systems, p. 81 with n. 95.
63 For a similar use of paneupēmos in the Byzantine and Persian period, see (the references in) F. Morelli, “Consiglieri e comandanti: i titoli del governatore arabo d’Egitto symboulos e amīr?”, ZPE 173 (2010), p. 159. For the value of honorifics in the first/seventh and second/eighth century, see A. Papaconstantinou, ‘‘What remains behind’: Hellenism and Romanitas in Christian Egypt after the Arab
second/eighth century, the honorific title is not found anymore but for the
governor.\textsuperscript{64} Apoułase was not a governor. Beside the fact that those governors’
kunyas which medieval literary sources record do not resemble the name
Apoułase,\textsuperscript{65} texts publicly displayed (such as inscriptions,\textsuperscript{66} papyrus protocols,\textsuperscript{67}
and exagia\textsuperscript{68}) normally give a governor’s name and patronymic whereas his kunya
is always lacking. What is more, Coptic (as well as Greek) documents never use the
title \textit{a.mi.r}, but rather \textit{symbloi}, when referring to Egypt’s governor. In the period
under discussion, a.o. administrators such as \textit{duces} and pagarchs could bear the
title \textit{a.mi.r}.\textsuperscript{69} That Apoułase is a governor is therefore very unlikely. Taking into

---

\textsuperscript{64} Most second/eighth-century documents that use \textit{paneuphēmos} come from the archive of Basileios, see
the index of \textit{P.Lond.} IV, p. 634. Add to the documents listed there, in chronological order, \textit{P.Sjpp.} 25
(Anṣinā; 79/698 or 94/713), \textit{P.HermitageCopt.} 21 and 27 (Iṣqūh; 90/709-
96/714), \textit{CPR XXII} 54 (Iṣqūh; 101/719 or 85/704). All these documents use
\textit{paneuphēmos} for the governor. The last dated document giving the honorific title to the \textit{dux}
\textit{P.Apoll.} 9 (prov. unknown; 56-7/676-7 or 40-1/660-1). The same document is also the latest dated document attaching \textit{paneuphēmos} to the title
\textit{amīr}. But, many documents from the archive of \textit{flavius} Papas that can only approximately be dated to
the end of the third or beginning of the fourth quarter of the first/seventh century (\textit{P.Apoll.} 10, 26-9, 33,
37-8, and 40 (all from Udfū)) also use the honorific in combination with the title \textit{amīr}. Note that none of
the documents mentioning the \textit{dux} or the \textit{amīr} date from after the turn of the second/eighth century.
An inscription from northern Nubia dated 88/707 similarly uses the honorific title for the country’s
second to highest administrative official, the eparch (\textit{I.KhartoumCopt.} 1 (Faras); I thank J. van der Vliet
for referring me to this inscription). Only in two instances do we \textit{find paneuphēmos} (possibly) used in
the second/eighth century for the pagarch: \textit{O.CrumST} 183 (Armant; second half of the first/seventh or
second/eighth c.) and \textit{P.CLT} 3 (Theban area; 110-1/728-9 or 125-6/743-4).

\textsuperscript{65} Medieval literature records only few kunyas of governors relevant to the present discussion. Ibn
Yūnūs gives the following for the governors under the Rightly-Guided and Umayyad caliphs: Abū ʿAbd
(idem., I, p. 269 [no. 737]); Abū al-Qāsim for Muḥammad b. Abī Ḥuḍayfa (idem., I, p. 441 [no. 1186]);
Abū al-Qāsim for Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr (idem., II, p. 194 [no. 501]); Abū ʿAbs and/or Abū Ḥammad for
129 [no. 338]).

\textsuperscript{66} E.g. \textit{RCEA} 8 (al-Fuṣṭāt; 69/688), \textit{RCEA} 12 (Qaṣr Burqa, Jordan; 81/700-1); \textit{RCEA} 13 (prov. unknown;
85/704-5); \textit{RCEA} 19 (al-Fuṣṭāt; 92/711). Except \textit{RCEA} 12, these inscriptions are known from literary
sources.

\textsuperscript{67} \textit{CPR} III/2, pp. xxvii-xlvi, lv-lvi, lxxiii, and lxxvii.

\textsuperscript{68} See, e.g., Morton, “A glass \textit{dīnār} weight”, p. 179 [no. 2]; A.H. Morton, \textit{A catalogue of early Islamic glass
stamps in the British Museum}, London: British Museum Publications, 1985, pp. 45-6, 67, 75-81 [nos 1-2, 91,
129-34, 141, 144-58]; Balog, \textit{Umayyad, Abbāsid and Tūlūnīd glass weights and vessel stamps}, pp. 43-5, 72-5
[nos 1-13, 124-34].

\textsuperscript{69} Morelli, “Consiglieri e comandanti”, p. 161; A. Grohmann, “Beamtenstab”, p. 121.
consideration his honorific title, his title amīr, and the use of a kunya only, Apoulase must have been an Upper Egyptian dux.

The identity of Apoulase shows the direct involvement of the top of Egypt's first/seventh-century administration in the maintenance of the infrastructure of the southern frontier. The inscription has clear connections with Byzantine inscriptions from the area. The dux Apoulase’s repair of roads is in line with the many architectural improvements or innovations, especially those of the fortifications of Aswan and Philae, executed at the order of Byzantine duces of the Thebaid or their lieutenants. Similar to Apoulase’s repair of roads, these improvements and innovations are recorded in inscriptions. And like Apoulase, these duces and lieutenants held the highest authority over the frontier zone in Byzantine times. As such, the inscription illustrates, with respect to the area’s infrastructure, the continuity of the region’s administrative-military dynamics in the first forty years of Arab rule.

Two Greek documents dated 90/708 provide further information on the administration of the frontier zone and its relation to al-Fusṭāṭ. They mention a certain ʿAbd Allāh b. Šurayḥ, an official (Gr. ἐπίκειμενος) appointed by the central authorities in al-Fusṭāṭ to search for fiscal fugitives in what is called the λίμιτον. A number of scholars have discussed the location and character of the limiton and to date it is generally thought to stand for the frontier zone between Egypt and

---

70 Esp. LPhilae II 216-26 (Philae; mostly datable to the A.D. sixth c.); LThèbes-Syène 235-7 (Aswan; A.D. sixth c.). See also note 53 above.
73 P.Lond. IV 1332-3 (Išqūh). See also P.Lond. IV 1518 (Išqūh; 90/708) and 1542 (Išqūh; 91/709) and H. Cadell, “Nouveaux fragments de la correspondance de Ḳurrah ben Sharik”, Recherches de papyrologie 4 (1967), pp. 133-7.
Nubia proper. As Ḥabd Allāh b. Šurayḥ was explicitly sent to ‘the frontier’, it has been argued that the limīton was distinct from the rest of Upper Egypt and was probably even administered separately. The documents in question indicate that the limīton was an area that required special attention in the eyes of the Arab government at the beginning of the second/eighth century. As political authority in the area may not always have been clear and Egyptians as well as Nubians are found to live on neighbouring territory, the frontier was a natural haven for fiscal fugitives. The appointment of Ḥabd Allāh b. Šurayḥ over the comparatively small area of the limīton further indicates that this area was relatively more problematic than the much larger Thebaid and Arcadia over either of which one official was similarly appointed. Although the documents in question do not present evidence of de facto Arab control over (part of) the southern frontier, the...
limiton’s administrative separation from the Thebaid shows us the central Egyptian authorities’ great concern for controlling this area and indicates that they actively sought to exercise their authority there in the second half of the Umayyad caliphate.

Whereas ‘Abd Allāh b. Šurayḥ visited the frontier at the orders of Egypt’s central authorities in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, the region’s general administrative and military administration must have concentrated in Aswan, at the northern end of the cataract.⁸⁰ A Greek-Coptic epitaph from 48/668 or 50/670 evidences that Aswan was the capital of a pagarchy in the decades following the Arab conquest and testifies to the town’s administrative centrality.⁸¹ Similar information exists for the period between the 90s/710s and the early-120s/740s when Aswan reportedly saw the visit of two high administrative officials who had their sees in al-Fuṣṭāṭ and came to establish the pagarchy’s tax quota or collected tax money in person.⁸² There is little information on the size of Aswan’s pagarchy. Arabic papyri from the third/ninth century indicate that the territory of Aswan’s kūra included Udfū.⁸³ For the period under discussion, however, our sources are silent.

---


⁸³ Grohmann, *Geographie und Verwaltung*, p. 41; P.Hamb.ʿArab. I 10 with comm. to line 3. Much later, al-Maqrízī (ṣfiṭāt, I, p. 194) and al-Bakrī (Muʿjam, II, p. 619) write about seven unnamed villages belonging to a district (Ar. kūra, ‘amal) of the town and that this district reached as far as the mosque of ar-Rudaynī, located near the fortress al-Qaṣr.
material available, it also remains uncertain who controlled the fortress al-Qaṣr in the period under consideration.\textsuperscript{84}

The earliest evidence for the role of the town of Aswan itself in the frontier comes from the mid-second/eighth century. In a letter dated 141/758 appears an administrator (Ar. ‘āmil) of Aswan, named Salm b. Sulaymān, who was directly subordinate to the governor in al-Fusṭāṭ. This letter, together with a number of related documents that have not yet been published,\textsuperscript{85} shows that this administrator was the highest authority in the province, below the governor in al-Fusṭāṭ, to deal with matters pertaining to the relationship between Egypt and Nubia.\textsuperscript{86} At this time, duces such as Apoulase formed no longer part of the administration.\textsuperscript{87} The document shows that in the mid-second/eighth century high Arab officials seated at the northern end of the first cataract. This situation differed from that in Byzantine times when the highest authority over the southern frontier, the ‘lieutenant of the limiton’ (Gr. τοποτηρητής τοῦ λιμίτου), seated in Armant.\textsuperscript{88}

Diplomatic relations between Egypt and Nubia were at times strained after 31/652. Literary sources attest to both Nubian and Egyptian attacks on neighbouring territory during the Umayyad caliphate.\textsuperscript{89} Two eighth/fourteenth-century authors write that the Arabs attempted, but failed, to conquer Nubia for a

\textsuperscript{84} See p. 102 above.
\textsuperscript{85} For a short description of Coptic documents related to the document from 141/758 (which refer to the ‘āmil with the term amīr), see J.M. Plumley, “An eighth-century Arabic letter to the king of Nubia”, \textit{jEA} 61 (1975), p. 245, comm. to line 38. J. Hagen currently works on an edition of these documents; they will be published in his Ph.D. dissertation entitled \textit{Multilingualism and cultural change in medieval Nubia: the evidence of Coptic texts from Qasr Ibrim}.
\textsuperscript{88} C. Kunderewicz, “Les topotérètes dans les Novelles de Justinien et dans l’Égypte byzantine”, \textit{JJP} 14 (1962), p. 44.
second time during the caliphate of Hišām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (105/724-125/743). On the basis of a source dating from around 152/770, the History of the patriarchs records that the Nubian king Kyriakos twice invaded Egypt in the mid-second/eighth century. The same source also tells us that the Arabs ‘were in the habit of stealing Nubians and sold them as slaves in Egypt [or, al-Fusṭāṭ]. It is beyond doubt, then, that one of Aswan’s primary functions was to protect Egyptian territory north of it from the peoples that lived beyond dār al-islām – an obvious reason for the existence of direct connections between Aswan and the authorities in al-Fusṭāṭ.

3. Arcadia
The establishment of Arab rule over Aswan in 31/652 and, subsequently, the Arab authorities’ strong efforts to maintain their control there greatly affected the form of Arab rule in Arcadia, Upper Egypt’s northern eparchy. There, the Arabs initially removed military authority from local non-Arab administrators and stationed Arab soldiers under the command of Arab amīrs who were closely related to the administration in al-Fusṭāṭ – as was the case with Alexandria. As we will see shortly, the establishment of the southern frontier in 31/652, amongst others, made possible the implementation of large-scale administrative reforms in the early-40s/660s which altered the administration of the military. These reforms predominantly concerned the provisioning of Arab soldiers stationed in al-Fusṭāṭ as well as in the Egyptian countryside and may be related to a decline of the Arabs’ military presence in Upper Egypt north of the frontier zone.

92 History of the patriarchs, III, pp. 144-5 [398-9]; see also Abū Ṣāliḥ, The churches and monasteries of Egypt, p. 123 [Arabic; fol. 97a]. In Becker’s interpretation, verse 37 of the Fourteenth vision of Daniel also refers to a Nubian attack at the end of the Umayyad period, penetrating Egypt as far north as al-Ušmūn (Becker, “Dar Reich der Ismaeliten”, p. 34-7).
93 History of the patriarchs, III, p. 145 [399].
95 Cf. CPR XXX, p. 16.
3.1. The initial period: 21/641-40/661

We begin our survey of al-Fuṣṭāṭ’s relationship with the Arab military apparatus in Arcadia with mid-first/seventh-century documents from Ihnās. These documents emanate from the administrations of Apa Kyros and his sons and successors Christophoros and Theodorakios, pagarchs of Ihnās in the 20s/640s. In contrast to contemporary documents from the Fayyūm and al-Ušmūn, which we will briefly discuss below, those from Ihnās are very explicit about the identity of the Arabs stationed on the pagarchy’s territory and mention, for instance, Arab soldiers of various types as well as personnel serving them. The Arabic part of P.World, pp. 113-5 (Ihnās; 28.6.22/25.4.643) mentions a battalion (Ar. katāʾib), heavily-armed soldiers (Ar. ṣuqalāʾ), and shipmen serving the amīr (Ar. aṣḥāb sufunihi). Two Greek documents, SB VIII 9753 (Ihnās; 11.1.23/29.11.643) and SB VI 9577 (Ihnās; mid-first/seventh c.), mention attendants (Gr. παιλικάρια) and so-called ‘companions-in-arms’ (Gr. σύμμαχοι); the military character of the latters’ duties remain uncertain. Overlap between the Arabic and Greek terminology is possible. The documents further tell us that these soldiery were (administratively) organized along tribal lines and were stationed at ‘a reserved place’ (Gr. χῶρον πεποιημένον).

---

96 For an overview of the documents from Ihnās and documents related to them, see CPR XXII, p. 48. Add SPP III 79 (Ihnās; mid-first/seventh c.) to the documents listed there. Apa Kyros and his son Christophoros may have headed the northern skelos of the pagarchy together for some while; see PLRE III/A, p. 312 [s.v. ‘Fl. Christophorus 4’].


98 Symmachoi attached to the office of local administrative officials were armed but had no military powers, see A. Jördens, “Die ägyptische Symmachoi”, ZPE 66 (1986), esp. pp. 106-7. In P.World, pp. 113-5, however, they are under the command of an Arab general, a fact which may have altered their duties.

99 SB VI 9578, line 2, and A. Grohmann, “The value of Arabic papyri for the study of the history of mediaeval Egypt”, Proceedings of the Royal Society of Historical Studies 1 (1952), pp. 52-3, line 4, (both from Ihnās and dated 22/642) are orders for the delivery of provisions for the tribe of Quḍā’a (Gr. Κουτα). It is not known whether soldiers belonging to other tribes were stationed in/near Ihnās. Cf. Donner, The early Islamic conquests, pp. 223-4. See also SB VIII 9753, line 2. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (Fuṭūḥ, p. 142) writes that the tribes of Himyar and Ḥawlān visited ‘the villages of [the district of] Ihnās’ as part of the yearly mutabaʿ al-ġund. It is uncertain whether Quḍā’a belonged to Ḥimyar or not (M.J. Kister, “Quḍā’a”, EF, V, p. 315);
Beside the soldiers, two garrison commanders (Gr. sg. ἀμιρᾶς; Ar. sg. ʿamīr) appear expressis verbis in these documents: SB VIII 9755 (15.8.21/19.7.642) mentions an ʿamīr named Ǧabala and the well-known ʿamīr ʿAbd Allāh b. Ġābir appears nine months later in the just-mentioned P.World, pp. 113–5. Although not explicitly called an ʿamīr, one ʿĀmir b. Aslaʿ headed local troops in the winter of 21–2/642–3; that is to say, he is attested chronologically between Ǧabala and ʿAbd Allāh b. Ġābir. It is unknown whether Ǧabala, ʿĀmir b. Aslaʿ, and ʿAbd Allāh b. Ġābir successively held the post of garrison commander, headed troops simultaneously, or were of different hierarchical ranks. The mentioning of ‘the ʿamīr of Ihnās’, one Qays, in a document dated 32/653 suggests a more or less permanent presence of an Arab military element on the territory of the civil administration of the pagarchy and strongly reminds us of the situation in Alexandria.

These commanders were the main persons through whom the pagarch’s administration stood in contact with the local Arab garrison. In fact, the documents show that, at times, the Arab authorities in al-Ǧusṭaṭ gave orders that were meant to keep the local civil administration and garrison as much separated as possible. The most illuminating document in this regard is SB XX 14443, dated Ṣafar 11, 22/January 9, 643. In this document, the governor ‘ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ orders ‘the pagarch of Ihnās’ to hand over to ‘ʿĀmir b. Aslaʿ four bundles of fodder (at the Ḥawlān may, indeed, have been a subtribe of Quḍāʿa (A. Grohmann & A.K. Irvine, “Khawlān”, EP, IV, p. 1134).

100 SB XX 14443 (Ihnās; 11.2.22/9.1.643), line 4.
101 Other ʿamīrs named ʿAbd Allāh (without patronymic) appear, in a chronological order, in SB VI 9578 (Ihnās; 27.1.22/26.12.642), SB VIII 9751 (Ihnās; 7.7.22/1.6.643), SB VIII 9753 (Ihnās; 11.1.23/29.11.643), SPP VIII 741 (Fayyūm; 11.2.25/7.12.645), P.Lond. I 116/a (Fayyūm; 18.2.25/14.12.645), BGU II 681 (prov. unknown; 5.3.25/30.12.645), P.Vindob. G 56038 (al-Ušmūn; mid-first/seventh c.; see CPR XXX, p. 17), and SB VI 9577 (Ihnās; mid-first/seventh c.). With no further information, we cannot identify one or more of these ʿAbd Allāhs with ʿAbd Allāh b. Ġābir or, as some have suggested, with ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ. The latter is said to have ruled (a part of) Upper Egypt from the Fayyūm during the caliphate of ʿUmar b. al-Ḫaṭṭāb (see Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, Futūḥ, pp. 173–4; al-Kindī, al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā, p. 11). Cf. note 123 below.

102 SB XX 14443 mentions soldiers under ʿʾАmir’s command (line 3: ἀνθρώπων αὑτοῦ). He also appears in SB VI 9578 (Ihnās; 27.1.22/26.12.642).
value of 2 solidi). The pagarch should also provide an irdabb of bread (line 3: ψωμίων(ν)) for each of ‘Āmir’s men and assign them a suitable place to reside. A note on the back tells that the village of Kephalē delivered the requested fodder. This village lay on the eastern shore of the Nile and is associated with the region around Būṣir, to the north of the city of Ihnās. The Arab garrison may well have been stationed in the village’s vicinity. Strikingly, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ orders the pagarch only to contact the garrison through ‘Āmir b. Asla and writes that the pagarch ‘should not trouble this place by (billetting) others (but ‘Āmir)’. SB XX 14443 illustrates the separation between the Arab military apparatus and the local civil administration. At times, however, this separation was less strict. The above-mentioned SB VIII 9755, addressed to the administration of Apa Kyros, records the witnessing of a number of Arabs, probably regular soldiers, to the sound delivery of horses. Nonetheless, the administrative distinction between civil and military matters was real and is strongly reminiscent of the situation in Alexandria (see chapter 1). It is in this respect that we must turn to the documents from the pagarchies of the Fayyūm and al-Ušmūn.

The documents from the Fayyūm are part of the archive of Theodorakios, who is attested as pagarch of the Fayyūm in documents dating from 18-9/639-40 to 30/651. Those from the pagarchy of al-Ušmūn emanate from the administration of the pagarch Athanasios (early-20s/640s) and probably come from an archive of an administrator of the northern skelos, administrative division, of that pagarchy. In contrast to the documents from Ihnās, those from the Fayyūm and al-Ušmūn give no explicit information on an Arab military presence on these

106 For the interpretation of the text (line 4: μὴ βαρέσ(ης) χῶρον ὑπὲρ ἄλλου), see P.World, p. 116.
107 See also CPR XXX, pp. 16-7.
109 CPR XXIV, pp. 197-200.
110 On the date and exact provenance of the archive, see CPR XXX, pp. 15-6 and 21-7.
pagarchies’ territories. They do show, however, that Arabs in the Fayyūm and al-Uṣmūn in the first years after the conquest were not attached to the local administrations but were subjected to Arab amīrs of various hierarchical positions. Similar to the administrative situation in the pagarchy of Ihnās and in Alexandria, a yet unedited Greek document tells us that an ‘amīr of al-Uṣmūn’ existed beside the pagarch of that district. As such, these documents confirm the continuation of the local civil administrations and the different organization of the newly-arrived Arab military units.

The documents related to locally stationed soldiers generally belong to two kinds: orders for the delivery of provisions and receipts of delivery. The authorities who order provisions are the top of the Arab administration in al-Fustāṭ (ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ and his deputy Ḥāriġa b. Ḥuḍāfa) and Arab garrison commanders stationed with their soldiers on the pagarchies’ territory (found in documents from Ihnās as well as from the Fayyūm and probably also from al-Uṣmūn). The local authorities addressed in the documents vary. They mostly are the pagarchs or their staff, but demands directly addressed to heads of villages also exist. Some documents make it clear that the Arab authorities regarded the requisitions as advance payments of tax money in the form of provisions valued at

---

111 But cf. the interpretation of CPR VIII 85 (al-Uṣmūn; mid-first/seventh c.) in CPR XXX, pp. 16-7.
112 P.Vindob. G 14447 (al-Uṣmūn; mid-first/seventh c.); see CPR XXX, p. 16.
113 For his role in the administration, see pp. 30-1 above.
115 SB VIII 9753 is addressed to the dioikētēs Kosmas. This Kosmas probably also appears in BGU I 304 (Ihnās; 16.2.27/21.11.647), in which he is a secretary (line 5: χαρ(του)λ(αρίου)) of the pagarch Christophoros. For the dioikētēs, see Steinwenter, Studien, pp. 19-25 and Schmelz, Kirchliche Amtsträger, pp. 305-7.
116 E.g., SB VI 9578 (Ihnās; 27.1.22/26.12.642) and CPR VIII 85 (al-Uṣmūn; mid-first/seventh c. [cf. note 111 above]). BGU II 681 (Fayyūm; 25/645) and P.Lond. I 116/a (Fayyūm; 25/645) are quittances of the payment of a part of the diagraphon tax by two quarters (Gr. sg. λαύρα) in Madīnāt al-Fayyūm (Arsinoitōn Polīs) at the order of an amīr ‘Abd Allāh.
their market prices, resembling the Byzantine system of *coemptio*. Other documents, however, show that the soldiery also had to provide for themselves by buying supplies on the local markets. The documents record how the central Arab authorities ordered the local administrations to prepare goods for selling to the Arab soldiers or to buy supplies on their behalf which were then deducted from the tax quota. Only the authorities in al-Fustat issued demands that state that the provisions should be reckoned as an advance payment of taxes. The orders of garrison commanders to deliver provisions never contain such information. The fact that, at times, these commanders do appear as supervising the collection of taxes and are recorded to have issued tax receipts shows that they, like their colleagues in al-Fustat, had the power to exercise authority in fiscal matters. It is important to note that, in contrast to what we will see below for a slightly later period, the authorities who demanded provisions from the local administrations (the highest administrators in al-Fustat or local *amīrs*) differed, according to circumstances unknown to us, and did not form one body of government demanding taxes. The goods or money requisitioned by the *amīrs* in Iḥnās, the Fayyūm, or al-Uṣmūn doubtlessly were part of the larger fiscal administration headed by the central administration in al-Fustat. But the *amīrs’* authority to

---


118 Orders to prepare the selling of supplies: SB VI 9578 and SB VIII 9753. An order to buy: Grohmann, “The value”, pp. 52-3. See also BGU II 366 (Fayyūm; 24/645 or 40/660), a document in which one Ioannēs son of Mēnas agrees to prepare a *gonachion* and three matrasses ‘on account of the Saracens’ (line 12-3: εἰς λόγον τῶν Σαρκηνῶν) and SPP XX 238 (Fayyūm; second half first/seventh c.), a list of payments or deliveries including the phrase ‘on account of the camels of the *magaritai*’ (recto, line 4: εἰς(ς) λ(όγον) τῶ(ν) καμήλ(ων) μαγαρί(ται)). (For the meaning of *gonachia*, see Morelli, “Gonachia e kaunakai”, esp. pp. 55-6.) See also H. Kennedy, “Military pay and the economy of the early Islamic state”, *Historical research* 75 (2002), pp. 165 and 168.

119 Grohmann, “The value”, pp. 52-3 explicitly states that the *irdabb* of wheat, requisitioned by ‘Amr b. al-ʾĀṣ’s deputy, should be paid ‘out of the money tax’ (recto line 3 and verso: ἐκ τοῦ δημοσίου χρημάτου). As a fiscal term, *dēmosion* designates the broad fiscal category of the money tax (P.Lond. IV, p. xxv; see also Hicky & Worp, “The dossier of Patermouthios *sidērousourgos*”, pp. 84-6). But *dēmosion* could equally mean ‘municipal treasury’ (see Gascou, “De Byzance à l’Islam”, p. 101).

120 P.World, pp. 113-5, issued by the *amīr* ʿAbd Allāh b. Ǧābir, explicitity states that the delivery of provisions was ‘on account of the money tax’ (verso: εἰς(ς) τῆ(ν) ἡξάνυσιν τῶ(ν) δημοσίω(ν)). See also SB VIII 9755, 9756 and SB XX 14443.

121 Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim state*, p. 74.
demand provisions and to issue tax receipts, seemingly at an \textit{ad hoc} basis,\footnote{Dennett, \textit{Conversion}, p. 75; Sijpesteijn, "Landholding patterns", p. 122. See also Morimoto, \textit{The fiscal administration of Egypt}, pp. 40-1. For the continued levying of existing taxes beside the requisitions meant for locally-stationed soldiers, see Gascou, "De Byzance à l'Islam", p. 101. For the operational decentrality of the Arab military during the conquests and early thereafter, see F.M. Donner, "Centralized authority and military autonomy in the early Islamic conquests", in A. Cameron (ed.) \textit{The Byzantine early Islamic Near East, III: States, resources and armies}, Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1995, pp. 358-9. It is in this context that we probably must see ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ’s alleged independence from ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ in the early-20s/640s. Arabic historical tradition has it that ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ ruled Upper Egypt from the Fayyūm (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, \textit{Futūḥ}, pp. 173-4; al-Kindī, \textit{al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā}, p. 11). The just-discussed documents that mentions ʿAmr’s authority disprove ʿAbd Allāh’s administrative independence. \textit{Cf.} note 101 above.} shows that local garrisons were to some extent economically independent from the central authorities in al-Fusṭāṭ.\footnote{Al-Kindī (\textit{al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā}, p. 21) mentions a large contingent of soldiers stationed near Ḥarībṭā (Andropolis) during the first civil war (36/656-41/661). Ar-Ramla, near Alexandria, possibly housed a military unit under the Umayyads (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, \textit{Futūḥ}, p. 192), as did Dimyāṭ and Tinnīs (al-Kindī, \textit{al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā}, pp. 70 and 74). Soldiers were also found, of course, opposite al-Fusṭāṭ at al-Ǧīza (Ibn Duqmāq, \textit{al-Intīṣār}, IV, pp. 125-6; Yāqūt ar-Rūmī, \textit{Muʿjam}, II, p. 177). Most of the Nile valley, however, goes unmentioned. We do not know until when the \textit{murtaba’ al-ğund} remained practiced.}  

\textbf{3.2. Developments after c. 40/660}

\textit{SB} VIII 9756 (Ihnāš), dated Čumādā II 8, 32/January 14, 653, is the latest dated document that attests to local Arab garrison commanders being involved in requisitioning provisions and issuing receipts. After the 30s/650s, documents no longer refer to Arab garrisons as frequently as do those from the pagarchies of Ihnāš, the Fayyūm, and al-Uṣmūn of the 20s/640s. Literary sources too are rather reserved with their information on Arab military presence outside the main garrison towns of al-Fusṭāṭ and Alexandria.\footnote{\textit{CPR} VIII 72 (poss. Fayyūm; poss. late-first/seventh or early-second/eighth c.) mentions the \textit{amīr} Yahyā b. Adīn (\textit{lege} Adīn?)}. We discussed the probability of Aswan’s military importance above. Garrisons are not anymore found demanding provisions from local civil administrations or to issue tax receipts.\footnote{Grohmann, "Der Beamtestab", p. 123.} The use of the title \textit{amīr} underwent telling changes.\footnote{\textit{Grohmann}, "Der Beamtestab", p. 123.} This title is only once attested for presumably a military commander after the 30s/650s, but got more regularly attached to the office of the \textit{dux}, who had no military responsibilities,\footnote{\textit{Dennett}, \textit{Conversion}, p. 75; Sijpesteijn, “Landholding patterns”, p. 122. See also Morimoto, \textit{The fiscal administration of Egypt}, pp. 40-1. For the continued levying of existing taxes beside the requisitions meant for locally-stationed soldiers, see Gascou, "De Byzance à l'Islam", p. 101. For the operational decentrality of the Arab military during the conquests and early thereafter, see F.M. Donner, "Centralized authority and military autonomy in the early Islamic conquests", in A. Cameron (ed.) \textit{The Byzantine early Islamic Near East, III: States, resources and armies}, Princeton, NJ: The Darwin Press, 1995, pp. 358-9. It is in this context that we probably must see ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ’s alleged independence from ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ in the early-20s/640s. Arabic historical tradition has it that ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿd b. Abī Sarḥ ruled Upper Egypt from the Fayyūm (Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, \textit{Futūḥ}, pp. 173-4; al-Kindī, \textit{al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā}, p. 11). The just-discussed documents that mentions ʿAmr’s authority disprove ʿAbd Allāh’s administrative independence. \textit{Cf.} note 101 above.}
CHANGES IN THE MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

early-40s/660s at the earliest. The novel use of the title amīr in the Umayyad period has recently been explained as being part of a development in which ties between the dux and the central administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ increased and in which duces increasingly identified themselves with that central administration. From approximately the Sufyanid period on, then, most of the amīrs we encounter in our sources are civil administrators and not part of the military.

Only very rarely do we find documents that evidence Arab military presence in Arcadia and the northern Thebaid after the 30s/650s. The few documents that we presently possess show remarkable divergencies from the situation of the 20s/640s and early-30s/650s. These are central to the following discussion. They help us understand the local garrisons’ relationship with the central authorities in al-Fuṣṭāṭ and the local civil administrations and point at a centralization of military authority in the early-Umayyad period.

This relationship is, albeit almost cryptically, visible in the early-second/eighth-century document P.Cair.Arab. III 150 (Išqūh; 90/709). This administrative document tells us that soldiers (Ar. ahl al-ḡund) claimed forty years of military duty in the pagarchy of Išqūh before the governor Qurra b. Šarīk (in office 90/709-96/714). The governor seems to have found no record of this in his archives in al-Fuṣṭāṭ and asked Basileios, head of the said pagarchy, to search for information in the local archives. The relationship between the pagarch and these ahl al-ḡund remains unarticulated. Other documents allow us to develop some thoughts on this relationship. Three documents from after 40/661 and all from the Fayyūm are particularly informative on Arab military presence outside al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The relationship between the local civil administrations and the garrisons, as visible in these documents, clearly differs from that of the 20s/640s and early-30s/650s. They show a much more centralized and systematized requisitioning of provisions for the soldiery.

---

127 The title amīr for the dux is first attested in P.Apoll. 9 (prov. unknown, prob. Udfū; 40-1/660-1 or 56-7/676-7).
128 Legendre, Pouvoir et territoire, esp. pp. 119-93.
129 For possible implicit references to soldiers in the Fayyūm, see Sijpesteijn, Shaping a Muslim state, pp. 130-1.
SPP VIII 1085 (Fayyūm) is one of the three post-40/660 documents known at present to refer to an Arab regiment (line 2: γούρ[μης]). The document stems from the archive of Pettērios, pagarch of the Fayyūm. Pettērios was in office some time between the years 47/667 and 54/674. As SPP VIII 1085 mentions Pettērios to be pagarch, the document stems from this period. Pettērios belonged to the local nobility. Flavius Mēnas, who might well be Pettērios’s father-in-law, headed the same pagarchy before the Arab conquest. Pettērios himself, as well as his son and wife, owned and leased out agricultural land in the Fayyūm. Considering Pettērios’s origin, he had no military authority. In SPP VIII 1085, Pettērios orders a village to deliver to ‘the men of ʿUṯmān b. Yazīd’ 332 irdabbs of wheat. The document mentions that the requisitions were in accordance with an official communication of a fiscal assessment (line 2: δ(ί) ἐπιστ[άλματος]). The identity of the authority who made the assessment cannot be identified, but on the basis of other documents from Pettēri̊os’ archive we may assume that he was a high administrative official, subordinate to the governor. SPP VIII 1085 shows that the

---

130 The editio princeps presents this word as entirely lost in a lacuna. F. Morelli informs me (personal correspondence, February 2013) that the first three letters can be read to some extent. The ρ is least certain and may in fact be a ζ. But close parallels between SPP VIII 1085 and CPR VIII 74 and 75, which will be discussed below (see also note 135 below), make the reading γούρ[μης] preferable.

131 CPR X, p. 154. From 54/674 comes the first dated document that mentions Pettērios’s successor (P.Ross.Georg. III 52 [Fayyūm]). The latest dated document from Pettēri̊os’s archive dates from 49/669 (P.Mert. II 100 [Fayyūm]); Pettērios is mentioned deceased in SPP III 324 (Fayyūm), datable to 52/672 or 67/687.

132 The succession of pagarchs in the Fayyūm in the first fifty years after the conquest is well established; see CPR X, pp. 154-5 and CPR XXIV, pp. 197-200.

133 CPR XXIV, p. 179.

134 SPP VIII 869, 1079, and 1188 (all from the Fayyūm and dating from the c. mid-first/seventh c.). See also Banaji, Agrarian change, pp. 157-8.

135 Line 2, lege ἀπὸ σι(του) ἀρτ(αβὼν) Γ ¯φι(του) [ἀρτ]ι(άβας) ταβ τριακο( ) τρ(μάκουντα δύο] instead of ἀπὸ στρ( ) Γ ¯φι(του) [στρ( ) τ]αβ τριακο( ) τρ(μάκουντα δύο] of the editio princeps. The closest parallels are found in the other two documents that mention a regiment: CPR VIII 74, lines 3-4: ἀπὸ σι(του) ἀρτ(αβὼν) Λοξδσ σι(του) [Ἀρτ(αβάς) Ρν έκατον πεντήκ(ον)μ(όνας) καὶ οἰκε(τυκον)σι(α) μ(όνας] and in CPR VIII 75, line 3: ἀπὸ σι(του) ἀρτ(αβὼν) ΨΦ σι(του) ἀρτ(αβάς) ν πεντήκ(ον)τι(α) μ(όνας). I thank F. Morelli for checking the original for me.


138 In SPP III 254 (Fayyūm; 3.9.47/27.10.667) and P.Mert. II 100 (Fayyūm; 18.9.49/20.10.669), both part of the archive of Pettērios, the authorities are respectively the unidentified Saʿīd and the dux Iordanēs.
delivery of provisions to locally-stationed Arab soldiers formed part of an official assessment, contrasting the *ad hoc* demands of the 20s/640s and early-30s/650s.

A similar situation is visible in the other two documents that refer to an Arab regiment, *CPR* VIII 74 and 75. They belong to the archive of *flavius Atias*/ʿAṭiyya b. Ǧuʿayd who is attested as pagarch of the Fayyūm in 75/694, *dux* of the Thebaid between 76/696 and 78/698, and finally as *dux* of the combined eparchies of Arcadia and the Thebaid between 80-1/699-700 and 84/703. Like Pettērios, ʿAṭiyya is not known to have enjoyed military authority. In *CPR* VIII 74 (Fayyūm), dated Ġumādā II 6, 79/August 20, 698, the *dux* ʿAṭiyya orders the inhabitants of the village Dikaion, in the Fayyūm, to deliver 150 *irdabbs* of wheat ‘to those of the third division of Muṣar, [that is?] the regiment of Lefīf of the Banū Taym b. al-Ḥāriṭ’. The troops are perhaps to be identified with the Banū Taym b. al-Ḥāriṭ of Quraṣ. The document’s verso informs us that the wheat was meant as the troops’ *roga*. Similar to the requisitions mentioned in *SPP* VIII 1085, the amount of *roga* of *CPR* VIII 74 is in accordance with an official communication of a fiscal assessment, this time made by the administration of the governor ʿAbd al-

---

*Cf. P.Apoll. 96, comm. at line 4. The governor appears as the issuing authority in documents from c. 80/700 onwards: SB XXVI 16797 (Iḥnās; 67-8/687-8 or 83-4/702-3), *P.Lond.* IV 1416/f (Iṣqūh; 116/734), 1434-5 (Iṣqūh; 98/716) 1436 (Iṣqūh; 100/719), and 1447 (Iṣqūh; 65/685-86/705).

141 *CPR* VIII 74, line 2: τοίς τοῖς γ μέρους Μωδρ τούρμ υ Μωδρ τούρμ(ης) καὶ λέον τῶν ν(ών) θέσθε νίο(ό) Ατλεθ.  
142 Caskel & Stranziok, *Gamharat an-nasab*, I, plate 30. See M.ʿA. ar-Rāʾī, *Dawr al-qabīl il-arabīyya fi Ṣaʿīd Miṣr*, Cairo: Maktabat Madbūli [n.d.], p. 80 for the presence of the Banū Luʾayy b. Ǧaʿlib, to whom belonged the Banū Taym b. al-Ḥāriṭ, in the Fayyūm. Other Banū Taym b. al-Ḥāriṭ descended not from Muṣar but from Rabīʿa b. Nizār (Caskel & Stranziok, *Gamharat*, I, plate 165) and, therefore, do not fit *CPR* VIII 74. Note that the so-called al-Lafīf, a conglomerate of various tribal groups living on one ḥiṭta in al-Fustāṭ with which one may want to identify the document’s Lefīf (but cf. Sijpesteijn, *Shaping a Muslim state*, ch. 2), did not include groups of Muṣar according to al-Maqrīzī (*Ḥitaṭ*, II, pp. 34-5) and Ibn Duqmāq (*al-Intiṣār*, IV, pp. 3-4). An identification of Lefīf with al-Lafīf is not probable. The tribal groups that together formed this conglomerate were administered separately (*mutafaqqāq in ad-dīwān*; al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥitaṭ*, II, p. 34; Ibn Duqmāq, *al-Intiṣār*, IV, p. 3). Therefore, that al-Lafīf is used in *CPR* VIII 74 (and 75) as an administrative unit is unlikely. Perhaps the Greek corresponds to al-ʿAffī?

‘Azīz b. Marwān in al-Fusṭāt (line 4). The fragmentary CPR VIII 75 (Fayyūm), dated to c. 79/698, contains a similar order addressed to a different village in the Fayyūm. Like SPP VIII 1085 and CPR VIII 74, the delivery of provisions in CPR VIII 75 is part of an official assessment.

The explicit references to an official assessment in these three documents points at a more centralized system of requisitioning provisions for local troops than that of the first decade after the conquest. In contrast to the garrisons of the 20s/640s, it were not Arab soldiers who demanded provisions from local civil administrations or from villages after c. 40/661. Instead, more central levels of the administration directed their provisioning. In contrast to the restricted provenance of the just-discussed three documents, evidence for this comes from a larger area. For example, two documents emanating from the civil administration of Udfū of the 50s/670s deal with blankets (Gr. γονάχια) that are said to be part of rouzikon (i.e., rizq) demanded by the authorities. These two documents, together with a group of documents from Naṣṭān (Nessana, Palestine), are the first to use rizq in an administrative context and may be taken to support the idea of a recent change in the administration of the military. A document dating from the governorate of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Marwān, P.Ness. III 92 (Naṣṭān; c. 65/685), lists payments of rouzikon and roga to soldiers stationed in Palestine. Some of the soldiers belong administratively to Egypt. An official called ‘rizq guard’ (Gr. φύλαξ ῥουζικοῦ), appointed directly by the Egyptian governor, supervises the distribution of these soldiers’ maintenance and pay. The direct and seemingly exceptional involvement of the governor may be explained by the fact that the Egyptian soldiers of P.Ness. III 92 are stationed outside the province. But other

144 See note 138 above.
145 Cf. Simonsen, Studies, p. 83.
146 P.Apoll. 49 and 50 (both from Udfū; both dated 55-6/675-6). For the meaning of gonachia, see note 118 above. From the same pagarchy but with no precise date, P.Apoll. 94 and 95 (both from the second half of the first/seventh c.) mention hides (Gr. ἰππάρχα) requisitioned as rouzikon. For rouzikon and rizq, see the references in note 143 and Simonsen, Studies, pp. 109-12; Morelli, Olio e retribuzioni, pp. 92-3; Kennedy, The armies of the caliphs, pp. 73-4.
147 P.Ness. III 60-6 (Naṣṭān; dates range between 54/674 and 57/676).
documents, particularly documents related to the administration of Qurra b. Šarīk, confirm such involvement of the governor.\footnote{In addition to the documents that will be mentioned in what follows, see e.g. also C.H. Becker, “Neue arabische Papyri des Aphroditofundes”, \textit{Der Islam} 2 (1911), no. 1, Chrest.Khoury I 90, \textit{P.Cair.Arab.} I 148, \textit{P.Heid.Arab.} I 13, \textit{P.Lond.} IV 1404, 1407, 1434, and 1435. All documents are from Išqūh and date from the period 90/709-96/714.}

In \textit{P.Lond.} IV 1335 (Išqūh; 90/709), for instance, Qurra b. Šarīk demands wheat from the pagarchy of Išqūh ‘on account of the rizq of the muhāǧirūn of al-Fusṭāṭ’. In another letter, Qurra demands the quick delivery of bread for Arab soldiers (Ar. muqāṭila) who partake in the \textit{cursus}.\footnote{Y. Rāġib, “Lettres nouvelles de Qurra b. Šarīk”, \textit{JNES} 40/3 (1981), no. 1 (Išqūh; 90/709-96/714).} Of special interest are \textit{P.Lond.} IV 1435 (Išqūh; 96/716) and \textit{CPR} XXII 44 (prov. unknown; late-first/early eighth c.). Emanating from the archive of an Upper Egypt pagarchy, these two documents register fiscal levies for the maintenance costs of soldiers (Gr. µάχοι)\footnote{Cf. V. Christides, “Continuation and change in early Arab Egypt as reflected in the terms and titles of the Greek papyri”, \textit{BSAA} 45 (1993), p. 72.} stationed with their animals on the Mediterranean shore at the mouths of the Nile.\footnote{\textit{P.Lond.} IV 1435, line 87 and \textit{CPR} XXII 44, line 8.} They illustrate how Arab soldiers outside al-Fusṭāṭ at the turn of the second/eighth century depended for their needs on a central body of government and not directly on the civil administrations on whose territory they were stationed.\footnote{See also Sijpesteijn, “Army economics”, esp. pp. 253-7. Documents concerning the provisioning of Arab soldiers in Palestine present a similar situation there (pace Kennedy, \textit{The armies of the caliphs}, p. 67). \textit{P.Ness.} III 60 to 66 (Naṣṭān), dated between 54/674 and 57/677, are bilingual \textit{entagia} issued by the Palestinian governor seating in Gazza and addressed to the village of Naṣṭān. (For the possible identification of two of the mentioned tribes, see Kennedy, \textit{The armies of the caliphs}, p. 66.) These documents demand the delivery of rizq (wheat and oil) to tribally organized Arab troops stationed in the area. But \textit{cf. P.Lond.} IV 1441 (Išqūh; 87/706), intr., according to which the travelling costs of Arab or mawlā messengers were borne by the administrative district to which they were sent.}

In sum, the administration of the military in Upper Egypt under the Umayyads differed from that of the first decade of Arab rule. The economic independence of Arab garrisons during this period, discussed in section 3.1, is no longer visible in our documentation of the Umayyad period. Rather, the increased role of the Arabs’ central administration in al-Fusṭāṭ which our Umayyad sources do show meant, in reality, an increase of these garrisons’ economic dependence on, and hence an increase of the power of, the administration in al-Fusṭāṭ. At the
beginning of the present section, I referred to *P.Cair.Arab. III* 150, a document from the archive of Basileios that mentions soldiers who contacted the governor, Qurra b. Šarīk, because of a problem concerning their pay. The centrality of the governor’s administration in al-Fustāṭ in military matters under the Umayyads may well be the reason why these soldiers stationed in the pagarchy of Išqūh turned to the governor instead of the pagarch.\(^\text{153}\)

4. Concluding remarks

Although it might be thought that the Arabs’ decreased military presence in Arcadia and the northern part of the Thebaid after the 40s/660s, of which we just reviewed the rare source material available, paralleled a weakening of Arab rule over the area, this was not the case. Papyri from the first/seventh and early-second/eighth century amply attest to the way the Arab administration tried to subject the local population to its regime. Whereas in al-Fustāṭ the šurṭa, a semimilitary police and security force attached to the upper levels of the central administration, defended the governor’s rule against dissidents,\(^\text{154}\) outside al-Fustāṭ much of the system that once enforced compliance to the Byzantine rulers remained in place and now enforced obedience to the Arab administration through an elaborate hierarchy of command. This is particularly visible in how the pagarchal administrations dealt with persons who refused to pay the taxes imposed upon them. As in Byzantine times,\(^\text{155}\) local administrators had the authority and personnel to detain those who resisted payment of taxes. Documents show that these administrators employed this authority in order to secure the generation of tax income for which they were responsible to the Arab

---

CHANGES IN THE MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

Although not belonging to Egypt’s military apparatus and mostly appearing in documents as letter carriers, tax collectors, and escorts, the continued attachment of armed “soldiers” (Gr. sg. stratiōtēs; C. ἤτοι) and symmachoi to local administrative offices illustrates the means of (fiscal) enforcement that were in the hands of non-Arab administrative officials. Occasionally do we find evidence of stratiōtai imprisoning fiscal fugitives. Especially in an urban context, the ekdikos (defensor civitatis) and his riparioi continued to have similar authority. It is clear, then, that the non-Arab civil administration, disconnected from....

---

156 See CPR XXII 1 (al-Ušmūn; early-20s/640s) and P.Apoll. 9 (Udfū; 55-6/675-6 or, less likely, 39-40/660-1 [Gascou & Worp, “Problèmes”, p. 88]) for respectively a pagarch and a dux ordering lower officials to detain fiscal fugitives. P.Apoll. 18 (Udfū; from the same year(s) as P.Apoll. 9) probably presents a similar situation. See also P.Apoll. 42 and 44 (Udfū; late-first/seventh c. [Gascou & Worp, “Problèmes”, p. 89]); CPR XXII 35 (Fayyūm; mid-second/eighth c.); P.Horak 64 and 65 (Fayyūm; second/eighth c.). For imprisonment as a method to exact payment among the Arabs themselves, see I. Scheider, “Imprisonment in pre-classical and classical Islamic law”, Islamic law and society 2/2 (1995), pp. 158-61.

157 For the duties of a stratiōtēs/ἡτοι, see CPR XXII 56, comm. at line 2; for those of a symmachos, see the reference in note 98 above.


159 P.Horak 65 (Fayyūm; second/eighth c.), lines 9-16, mentions men and women detained by a stratiōtēs named Panistos in the prison of a village called Aninou. Two of the men are said to have been imprisoned because they were fiscal fugitives.

160 See especially SPP X 252 (Fayyūm; second/eighth c.), lines 19-21, which records that a riparioi, most likely subordinate to the ekdikos mentioned in the same document, arrested a woman whose son had refused to pay (tax) money to a symmachos. (Village riparioi, not subordinate to the ekdikos, disappear from the sources at the beginning of the early-first/seventh century, see S. Torallas Tovar, “The police in Byzantine Egypt: the hierarchy in the papyri from the fourth to the seventh centuries”, in C. Riggs & A. McDonald (eds), Current research in Egyptology 2000, Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000, pp. 119-20.) CPR XXII 56 (Isqūh; early-second/eighth c.) mentions a riparioi together with a stratiōtēs and a hypourgos.

161 Preserved safe conducts (Ar. sg. sīġill; Gr. sg. οὐγέλλιν/οὐγίλλιον) date from the late-first/seventh or early-second/eighth century. However, references to safe conducts already appear in documents soon after the Arab conquest: e.g. in CPR XXII 1 (al-Ušmūn; early 20s/640s), CPR XXX 16 (al-Ušmūn; early-20s/640s), and SB VI 9577 (Ihnās; 15.8.21/19.7.642). On the safe conduct, see the discussions in CPR XXII 1, comm. to line 4; S. Schaten, “Reiseformalitäten im frühislamischen Ägypten”, BSAC 37 (1998), pp. 91-100; Y. Rāġib, “Sauf conduits d’Égypte omeyyade et abbasside”, Annales islamologiques 31 (1997), esp. pp. 143-9; and CPR XXI, pp. 106-7 (for especially modern terminology describing the type of document under consideration). For the formulaic and typological continuities of, and differences between,
from the Arab military in order to secure the latter’s loyalty to the Arab rulers, had enough means and authority to enforce its rule and, hence, the regime of the Arab administration.\footnote{Cf. Donner, “The growth of military institutions”, pp. 323–5, where it is argued that, although early-Islamic society had a strong military character, it was ruled by a civil administration.} The absence of revolts among the local population in the first fifty or so years of Arab dominion shows that this polity successfully maintained Arab rule and that the central Arab authorities controlled the local administrations.\footnote{For large-scale and fiscally motivated revolts against Arab policies, which started according to the literary sources in 107/725, see Y. Lev, “Coptic rebellions and the Islamization of medieval Egypt (8th-10th century): medieval and modern perceptions”, \textit{JSAl} 39 (2012), esp. pp. 308–12. For other, and mostly smaller, uprisings against the Arab authorities recorded in documentary sources from 78/697, see Sijpesteijn, \textit{Shaping a Muslim state}, pp. 100-1 and 105.}

In fact, the decrease of Arab military presence in Arcadia the northern part of the Thebaid may well be related to the changing geo-political situation in at the southern end of Upper Egypt. We saw above that the Arab authorities had much and continuous military concern for the area around Aswan throughout the period under discussion. If any, threats of hostility against southern Upper Egypt came from Egypt’s southern neighbour, Nubia, and the Buğa tribes in the eastern desert. The agreements between Egypt on the one hand and Nubia and the Buğa tribes on the other, combined with the Arabs’ intense military presence at the southern frontier, greatly reduced the threat of foreign hostility north of the frontier zone. As I have indicated in chapter 1, the coastal area of the Nile delta, Egypt’s northern frontier, saw a similar militarization in the 20s/640s and especially in the period between 25/646 and 40/661. And in between the northern and southern frontiers, Arab soldiers concentrated, of course, in al-Fusṭāt, whence they could be sent to both the Nile delta and the Nile valley. In other words, by the time our source material shows less soldiers in much of Upper Egypt, the Arabs had implemented heavy military defence systems in those areas where foreign hostility was most expected. Because the non-Arab civil administrations maintained Arab rule over the Egyptian population, the need for much military

The presence outside the frontier regions was greatly reduced by the 40s/660s.\textsuperscript{164} The establishment of the southern frontier near Aswan doubtlessly contributed to the reduction of the number of soldiers stationed outside the main garrison towns.

This is, of course, not to say that changes in Egypt’s military organization fully and passively depended on local military achievements. This chapter revealed differences in the administration of Egypt’s military apparatus of before and after the 40s/660s. The \textit{ad hoc} and decentralized requisitioning of provisions from the local administrations characterized the initial period, that of the first decade after the conquest. A changed situation appears in our sources at the end of the 40s/660s.\textsuperscript{165} The sources for this second period abundantly show a much more centralized and systematized provisioning of soldiers. The date of this change, early in the Sufyanid period, is not a coincidence. Other and contemporary military-administrative changes may well be related to the one revealed above. Historiographical sources record, for example, the increased inspection of the central Egyptian \textit{dīwān} under Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 41/661-60/680).\textsuperscript{166} The same caliph is also said to have established in Egypt a connection between the payment of bloodmoney and the distribution of military pay\textsuperscript{167} – something we will return to in the following chapter. Furthermore, an early-Sufyanid reorganization of the military administration of the \textit{amṣār} divided those enrolled on the provincial \textit{dīwāns} into ‘quarters’ (Ar. sg. \textit{rubʿ}) or ‘fifths’ (Ar. sg. \textit{hums}).\textsuperscript{168} A recently edited document, confirming literary sources, shows that al-Fustāṭ, indeed, was divided into quarters.\textsuperscript{169} Related to these changes in the administration of military pay, the ‘\textit{irāfa}, a tribal institution that directed the distribution of pay among the tribesmen, became an administrative institution

\textsuperscript{164} In the A.D. sixth century, the Nile valley, except the \textit{limiton}, saw a demilitarization for similar reasons. See R. Rémondon, “Soldats de Byzance d’après un papyrus trouvé à Edfou”, \textit{Recherches de papyrologie} 1 (1961), pp. 80-3; Zuckerman, \textit{Du village à l’empire}, pp. 170-6.

\textsuperscript{165} Cf. Simonsen, \textit{Studies}, pp. 83-4, who argues for a systematization a decade after the conquest.


\textsuperscript{168} Crone, \textit{Slaves on horses}, pp. 30-1.

\textsuperscript{169} Sijpesteijn, “Army economics”, p. 247, line 5 and the comm. on pp. 253-4.
early under the Sufyanids. Finally, one could see the documentary appearance of the title *amīr al-muʾminīn*, ‘commander of the believers’, early during the reign of Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān as an unprecedented articulation of the new caliph’s assumption of central, religio-military authority. These early-Sufyanid changes in Egypt’s military administration correspond to the chronology presented in chapter 1: first, a demilitarization of the existing administrations and the implementation of an Arab military element following the conquest and, second, the increase of central control over the military related to the Sufyanids’ coming to power.

---

172 This is, admittedly, almost an argument *ex nihilo*. The single documentary source referring to a caliph before Muʿāwiya, a recently edited inscription that refers to the death of ʿUmar b. al- Ḥattāb and is dated 24/644-5, gives the latter caliph no title. See A.I. Ghabban & R.G. Hoyland, “The inscription of Zuhayr, the oldest Islamic inscription (24 AH/AD 644-645), the rise of the Arabic script and the nature of the early Islamic state”, *Arabian archaeology and epigraphy* 19 (2008), pp. 212 and 235. P. Crone and M. Hinds (God’s caliph: religious authority in the first centuries of Islam, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 5-6) confirm that titles for the caliph were a relatively new phenomenon by the time of Muʿāwiya’s ascension to the caliphal throne; they argue that the title *ḥalīfah Allāh* is first securely attested to (in literary sources) for the caliph ʿUṭmān b. ʿAffān (r. 23/644-35/655).