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THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS OF ALEXANDRIA
ACCORDING TO ACCOUNTS BY MEDIEVAL ARAB
AUTHORS (IX—XV CENTURY)

a) General information concerning the ancient monuments of Alexandria.

All Arab authors give an identical, though fairly general description of the structure of the town, all agree in emphasizing the existence of a regular network of streets. This common observation may be the result of surprise, as previously the Arabs had known only towns with narrow winding streets. With great admiration mention is made of the numerous columns and white walls, from which an extraordinary brightness is reflected.

The earliest mentions of Alexandria in the works of Arab Moslems can be found in the accounts of Ibn Ḥurdābih (820—913)¹. More details are contained in the writings of Ibn al-Ḥakam, who lived in Egypt (died 870? 871)². He states that Alexandria consisted of three towns (that is, three districts), of which the richest and most developed was the part where Pharos was situated³. Each district possessed its own walls; in addition to these the town as a whole was surrounded by a common wall⁴. The traveller and geographer Ibn Ḥawqal (active during the

¹ Ibn Ḥurdābih, *Al-Masālik wal-Mamālik*, ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden 1889, p. 115.

² Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr* ed. C. Torrey, New Haven 1922, pp. 28—45.

³⁻⁴ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *op. cit.* p. 37.

years 944—977) restricts himself to the statement that „Alexandria is a great town, which possessed many columns and much marble“⁵.

Al-Mas'ūdī (died 958), describing his sojourn in Alexandria, became the first to give a greater number of details⁶. He writes that „Alexander, in the place which he chose for building the city, found there the remains of former buildings and many columns“⁷. This statement is important in that it occurs five centuries prior to the opinion of al-Makrīzī, who maintains that Alexandria was founded on the site of ancient Rhacotis (see below). Al Mas'ūdī also drew attention to the fact that the „city is composed of tiers, beneath which there are vaults“. The buildings were erected on archlike constructions, supported on columns, sometimes forming more than three levels⁸. The purpose of such constructions was the creation of subterranean wells to collect water seeping through from the Nile, and from rainfall⁹. Al-Mas'ūdī, like many others, also writes that „in Alexandria there was so much marble, that during the night no light was necessary, because the marble shone so brightly“¹⁰. According to this author the town was surrounded by seven walls (of multicoloured stone), between which there were moats¹¹. In addition Al-Mas'ūdī mentions the ships which came to Alexandria from Rhodes, and maintains that the marble was brought here from this very island, also from Sicily, Ifrikiya and Ikrītis (Crete)¹². Nor did the ancient inscriptions escape his notice; he mentions the finding of inscriptions, whose translation he gives and which he calls „Himyaritic“¹³. This, of course, is impossible; as is known from other sources, the Arabs often considered unknown and incomprehensible writing to be „himyaritic“¹⁴. Presumably al-Mas'ūdī had come across Greek inscriptions. Or perhaps they were Egyptian hieroglyphs?

In the XII century Alexandria was visited by Ibn-Ḡubayr (1145—1217). He gives a very detailed description of everyday life in the XII and XIII century. In his account he draws at-

⁵ Ibn Hawkal, *Ṣūrat al-Ard* ed. J. K. Kramers, Leyden 1938—39, pp. 150—151.

⁶ al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūǧ ad-Dahab*, ed. C. B. de Meynard and P. de Courteille, Paris 1861—1877. t. II, pp. 420—441.

⁷⁻¹⁴ *Ibid.* t. II, pp. 420—430.

tention to the constructions under the ground, that is, to the wells for collecting Nile water. In those days the town possessed many rooms for guests arriving there, also numerous baths, hospitals and schools¹⁵. This author also tells of the strange luminosity reflected from the marble, so bright, that people could work at night without artificial light¹⁶.

Abū'l-Fidā' (1279—1332) writes clearly, that „Alexandria is a most beautiful city, that it was built in the form of a chessboard and that such a structure of the streets made it impossible for a stranger to be lost in the town“¹⁷. The symmetrical lay-out of the town is mentioned by Yāḳūt (1179—1229). According to him Alexandria had eight intersecting streets¹⁸.

Al-Makrīzī (1364—1442), who knew Alexandria well, states that the city was built by Alexander on the place where ancient Rhacotis once stood¹⁹. He repeats many details given earlier, for example, about the different levels of the buildings. He writes that there were 12,000 baths (dīmās)²⁰ in Alexandria, and also many statues (200 made from gold). The buildings of Alexandria extended as far as Ar-Rashīd (Rosetta). Among the inhabitants there were about 40,000 Jews. Of special interest is Al-Makrīzī's remark, that all brick buildings throughout Egypt originated from Persian times, whereas those made of stone date from the times of Rūm (Byzantium)²¹.

b) Descriptions of the ancient buildings of Alexandria

The Arab authors devote much attention to the individual ancient buildings whose remains they visited, or whose descrip-

¹⁵ Ibn Ḡubayr, *Rihla*, ed. W. Wright, Leyden 1907, pp. 38—40.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* pp. 42—43.

¹⁷ Abū'l-Fidā', *Takwīm al-Buldān* ed. J. T. Reinaud and de Slane, Paris, 1840, p. 230.

¹⁸ Yāḳūt, *Muḡam al-Buldān* Leipzig 1866—1873, ed. F. Wüstenfeld, t. I. pp. 254—265.

¹⁹ al-Makrīzī, *Al-Mawā'iz wal-Itibār fī Dīkr al-Ḥiṭaṭ wa'l-Ātār*, (al-Ḥiṭaṭ) Cairo-Bulāḳ, 1270 h. (1853—54) t. I, pp. 232—233.

²⁰ Domas, Damas, Daymus, Dimas. Etymology from the Greek *demosion*, etymology and the meaning given by R. Dozy, *Supplement aux dictionnaires arabes*, Leiden 1927, t. I, p. 460.

²¹ al-Makrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 232.

tions they found in the works quoted by them. Part of these monuments can be identified with the buildings already known to us, however some still remain enigmatic, and it is impossible to establish their character. Among the ancient edifices, whose identification does not cause particular difficulty, one may mention above all the lighthouse on the Island of Pharos, also the ruins of the Serapeum (called by the Arabs *ṣawārī Sulaymān*), the so-called pillar of Pompey (*ʿamūd aṣ-ṣawārī*), the Caesareum (al-Kayṣariya), the two obelisks (*al-misallātān*) and the Museum (*ar-Riwāk*). Moreover, reference is made to the theatre (*dār al-malʿab*), the Green Cupola *al-Kubbat al-Ḥadrāʾ* and the great bronze statue (*ṣarāḥīl*). In the unpublished part of al-Himyarī's work a description of a magnificent palace (al-Ḳaṣr al-Aʿzam) can be found; however, it is difficult to identify this. Perhaps it is yet another description of the Serapeum, or an account, unique until this day, of the ruins of the Ptolemy Palace (see below).

Let us now consider in turn the available data relating to each individual monument.

1. The Museum

The Museum appears in medieval Arab sources under the names of Ar-Riwāk, Riwāk Aristuṭālis or Maḡlis al-ʿulamāʾ; there is, however, no detailed description of its remains.

Ibn Ḡubayr (1145—1217) tells of a place for philosophers where there was a multitude of marble pillars, some of them very high²².

Yāḳūt (1179—1229) names it a place „where scholars and alchemists sit. The place of their sessions was like stairs, where they sit divided into classes. On the lowest level sat the alchemists, making gold from silver by chemical means. Next to these stairs there was a spring of water able to cure leprosy“²³.

An-Nūwayrī (died 1332) writes clearly, that „of the ruins of the Academy only a few columns remain“²⁴.

²² Ibn Ḡubayr, *op. cit.* pp. 40—44.

²³ Yāḳūt, *op. cit.* t. I, pp. 254—265.

²⁴ an-Nūwayrī, *Nihayat alʿArab*, Cairo, 1923—33, t. I. p. 398.

Thus it can be seen, that on the subject of one of the most famous buildings of Alexandria, having particular significance for world learning and art, only a few general remarks have survived in the texts of Arab writers.

2. The Caesareum

It is mentioned once as Al-Kajṣāriya (Ibn al-Hakam, died 871). Presumably it was converted by the Christians into a church, which can be identified with the Kanīsat ʿaṣfal al-ʿarḍ (church beneath the ground) mentioned by al-Maḳrīzī. On the other hand, there are many descriptions of the obelisks which stood in front of this building; they were very well preserved and always roused the admiration of visitors to the city. They were known as „Cleopatra's needles“, or *al-misallātān*.

Al-Idrīsī (110—1166) writes of two obelisks consisting of square-based stone monoliths. Their height was 5 *kiyām* (5 times the height of a man) and one side of the base was 10 *ṣibr* (2,25 m.). They were covered with inscriptions, which al-Idrīsī calls *suryānī* (Syrian). The author adds that the obelisks were hewn out of the Bedim mountain in Western Egypt. He gives a translation — of course, hypothetical — of the writing: „I, Yaʿmur the son of Shaddād, built this city“²⁵.

The two obelisks are mentioned also by Yāḳūt (1179—1229). They were situated near to the „Mosque of Mercy“ (*Ar-Rahma*), and were covered with Himyaritic writing²⁶.

Al-Maḳrīzī (1364—1422) informs us that the height of each obelisk was 80 *ḍirāʿ* (43,20 m.), that they were decorated with figures and covered with inscriptions. He adds that they were built by the Coptic Kings or by the Pharaohs²⁷.

Ibn al-Hakam (IX century) comments that there were 5 mosques in Alexandria:

²⁵ al-Idrīsī, *Nuzhat al-Mushtak*... ed. J. de Goeje, Leyden 1864, pp. 137—141.

²⁶ Yāḳūt, *op. cit.* t. I. pp. 254—265.

²⁷ al-Maḳrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 242.

- 1 — The mosque of Mūsā, situated near the Minaret and even closer to the church,
- 2 — The mosque of Sulaymān,
- 3—4 — The mosque of Dū l-Karnāyn (i.e. of Alexander) or al-Ḥaḍīr; it stood close to the swamps of al-Kayṣāriya, that is the Caesareum,
- 5 — The 'Amar mosque of unknown situation ²⁸.

3. Serapeum

This is known in Arab sources *aṣ-ṣawārī*, sometimes *ṣawārī Sulaymān*, and — in comparison with other buildings — a great deal of detailed descriptions have been devoted to it. It owes its Arabic name *ṣawārī* (columns) to the large number of pillars characteristic of this place.

Ibn Rūsta (c. 903) states clearly, that in this place there once stood a palace, now in ruins, and of which only the columns without the roof have survived. The building once had doors entirely hewn out of stone, as smooth and clear as a mirror ²⁹.

On the other hand Al-Idrīsī (1100—1166) maintains that here was a „meeting place“, which was situated in the Southern part of the city, called by the name of Solomon, son of David, and built by Ya'mur, son of Shaddād. Al-Idrīsī gives the following account of this building: „... the columns form a rectangle of 16 × 67 columns, and in the Northern corner there is a large column with a capital and resting on a marble base, whose circumference is 80 *ṣibr* (18,00 m.), while the circumference of the column is 40 *ṣibr* (9,00 m.), and the height of the column from the base to the head is 9 *qiyām* (9 times the height of a man). The capital is beautifully sculptured. Although it is slightly leaning, it stands firm“ ³⁰. So the description of the Serapeum is accompanied here by an account of the so-called Pompey's pillar, 'amūd aṣ-ṣawārī, which is mentioned many times in the sources.

²⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *op. cit.* p. 41.

²⁹ Ibn Rūsta (Rosteh), *Kitāb al-Bulḍān* ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leyden 1892, p. 117.

³⁰ al-Idrīsī, *op. cit.* pp. 140—141.

The traveller Al-Ġarnāṭī (1080/81—1169/70) also defined the Serapeum as a „place of meetings“ built by the Djinn for Solomon. The columns were made from red marble, shining like a mirror and able to reflect the human figure. The author estimates the number of columns at approximately 300, and the height of each was about 30 *dirā'* (over 16 metres). The marble bases and the capitals were beautifully decorated. According to this author, in the centre stood another very high marble pillar of the same colour (111 *dirā'* i.e. 60 metres high) ³¹.

Yākūt (1179—1229) writes the following about Pompey's pillar: „... I visited the whole of Alexandria, and most of all I admired one column, which is close by one of the city gates, the gate of Šağara“. After a detailed description, which I shall not quote here as it resembles other accounts, Yākūt adds: „... I was told that there is a pillar similar to this one in Aswan, hewn on the spot out of stone and then smoothed down“. The author continues to mention that the 'Amūd aṣ-Ṣawārī of Alexandria was brought from Aswān down the Nile by raft ³².

Al-Kazwīnī (1203—1283) writes that the column was situated near the gate *aṣ-ṣağara* („Gate of the Tree“), and compares its size to that of a minaret; he also draws attention to the fact that it was made from a single block ³³.

Abū l-Fidā' (1273—1332) estimates its height at 43 *dirā'* (23,22 metres) ³⁴.

Ibn-Baṭṭūṭa (1304—1377) considers this pillar to be one of the wonders of Alexandria. He also emphasizes the fact that it was made from a single block, and placed on a base made from square stones. It is not known, however, how the column was put into position ³⁵.

Al-Makrīzī (1364—1422) describes it as a large column of shining red speckled stone. Nearby there stood 400 columns

³¹ al-Ġarnāṭī, *Tuhfat al-Albāb* ed. G. Ferrand, Paris, 1925, p. 73.

³² Yākūt, *op. cit.* pp. 254—265.

³³ al-Kazwīnī, *'Ağā'ib al-Maḥlūkāt* ed. F. Wüstenfeld, Göttingen, 1849, pp. 97—98.

³⁴ Abū l-Fidā', *op. cit.* p. 230.

³⁵ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *Tuhfat an-Nuẓẓār* ed. C. Defremery and R. Sanguinette, Paris, 1879—1893. pp. 10—11.

(he means the columns still surviving from the Serapeum). The height of the pillar is estimated at 70 *dirā'* (37,80 m.), and its radius — 5 *dirā'* (2,70 m.). He adds that a similar column can be found in Aswān³⁶. Furthermore he writes that „Amūd aṣ-Ṣāwārī is one of many pillars, which mark the place of Aristotle, where the study of philosophy took place“³⁷.

The so-called Pompey's pillar is a characteristic feature of the Serapeum, distinguishing it clearly, for example, from the museum, inspite of other indications to the contrary.

Finally, an-Nūwayrī (died 1332) describes a building which could be taken for the theatre, but for the fact that he mentions the remains of pillars, and above all „one standing within the whole called Sawārī, very straight and high, of red stone from Aswān“³⁸. This shows that the account must refer to the Serapeum. It appears that scholars used to gather in this place. Here is its description: „All have a similar view and can see one another, although they occupy different places. If someone does something, all see it, if someone says something, all hear it, whether from nearby or from afar“³⁹. Perhaps an-Nuwayrī, writing about a building which he had not seen himself, confuses here facts drawn earlier accounts.

4. The Theatre

The two accounts cited below undoubtedly refer to the Alexandria theatre. In the unpublished (apart from fragments) work of al-Himyārī (XIII—XIV centuries), mention is made of a „House of Games“ (*Dār al-mal'ab*), which in the times of the author was already lying mostly in ruins. „It was built in a very wise manner: people went there to settle their affairs and to exchange views. Each man who sits there is face to face with another, and all is visible both for those sitting nearby and afar“. On certain festive days the rulers, nobles and common folk used to gather there,

³⁶ al-Maḳrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 257.

³⁷ al-Maḳrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 257.

³⁸ an-Nūwayrī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 398.

³⁹ an-Nūwayrī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 398.

while the young played ball by means of a stick. There was a soothsaying, that a ball falling into the sleeve of a person sitting among the audience predicted that he would rule over Egypt. It is said that 'Amr Ibn al-'Ās, before conquering Egypt, lived in Alexandria as a merchant, and that just such an event happened to him“ (see below).

Similar information is given by al-Maḳrīzī (1364—1442). He relates that a thousand people come to this building. Each man can see the face of the others. If someone reads a book, all hear him. If a game is played, all see it. People are spaced out according to their social standing⁴⁰. Elsewhere al-Maḳrīzī writes: „In the city, which lies in ruins, there is a theatre (*al-mal'ab*) in the shape of a circle, surrounded by seven columns; at their head stand small figures made of bronze“⁴¹.

5. The Lighthouse (Manāra)

In an account dating from the IX century, Ibn-Ḥurdādbih (846) tells of a building containing 366 rooms all around it, and a mosque at its top. The building is ringed by a spiral approach without steps, just as the Surra-man-ra'a mosque in Iraq⁴².

Ibn-Rūsta (903) estimates the height of the Alexandria minaret at 300 ells. It was approached by 300 steps. Each step had an opening, through which it was possible to look at the sea⁴³.

Ibn-Ḥawḳal (943—977) is the first Arab writer to attempt to describe the purpose of this astonishing edifice. He holds the view that the lighthouse was used to study the stars, and so stresses its scholarly application. He denies the existence of a „mirror“⁴⁴.

Al-Maṣ'ūdī (died 956) writes of the covetous Caliph al-Walīd (VII century), who damaged the building and destroyed the mirror for the treasures they contained. After this event the minaret still stands today (332 H = 943 A. D.)⁴⁵.

⁴⁰ al-Maḳrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. pp. 255—256.

⁴¹ al-Maḳrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 235.

⁴² Ibn Ḥurdādbih, *op. cit.* p. 114.

⁴³ Ibn Rūsta, *op. cit.* p. 118.

⁴⁴ Ibn Ḥawḳal, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 151.

⁴⁵ al-Maṣ'ūdī, *op. cit.* t. II. pp. 433—436.

Al-Ġarnāṭī (1080—1169) in his description of this building clearly mentions three tiers, of which one is square and built of limestone, the second is octagonal, made of brick, while the third, which is round, consists of hewn limestone. He also mentions the destruction wrought by al-Walīd; he adds, that after the damage a new mirror was built in the tower, but subsequently it was eroded by rust. To the lowest part, built by Alexander the Great, there leads a gate which is about 200 ells higher than ground level; it is entered via an archway built from hewn stone.

To the right there are doors leading to the place of assembly. This chamber has an area of 20 square ells (to the right and left there are further rooms, reached by light from the outside). On the higher floors it is the same; and there were four such floors. The author visited these chambers in 511 H = 1117 A. D. Al-Ġarnāṭī appends a very interesting sketch of the building and its entrance (see fig. 1) ⁴⁶.

The real purpose of this impressive edifice is described by Ibn-Ġubayr (1145—1217): „it guides the ships, which without it would not find their way into the port of Alexandria“. Ibn-Ġubayr measured one of the four sides of this building — its length was over 50 *bā* (100 m.), while its height was estimated at 150 *kāma* (150 times the height of a man). „Inside the edifice there were gigantic stairs and passages, also so many chambers, that one could become lost in them. On the top there was a mosque, in which I prayed and was enthralled by its construction“ ⁴⁷.

Ad-Dimašqī (1256—1327) mentions the ancient sculptures adorning the Alexandria lighthouse: „On the Manāra (lighthouse) there were many figures of copper. One of them is a copper monument, pointing with its right hand at the sun, and turning around with it. Another monument had its face directed towards the sea, and as soon as the hour of the night passed, a melodious voice was heard“ ⁴⁸. The minaret was built of polished stone and strengthened with lead.

Also al-Idrīsī (1100—1166) defines the purpose of the building,

⁴⁶ al-Ġarnāṭī, *op. cit.* pp. 71—72.

⁴⁷ Ibn Ġubayr, *op. cit.* pp. 40—44.

⁴⁸ ad-Dimašqī, *Nuḥbat ad-Dahr* ed. A. Mehren, Leipzig 1923, pp. 36—37.

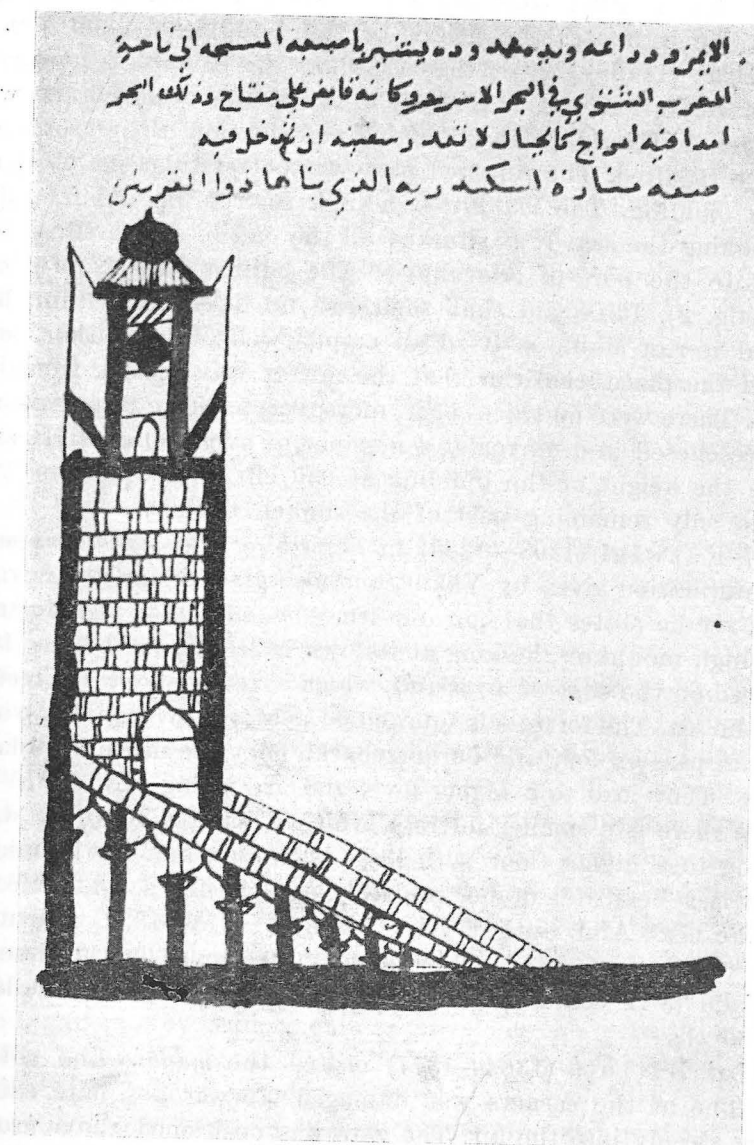


Fig. 1. The Lighthouse (as given by Al-Ġarnāṭī)

saying that „... day and night fires burned upon it to guide ships“. He estimates the height of the building at 300 ells⁴⁹.

Yāḳūt (1179—1229) writes that „... the *manāra* is a square edifice, reminiscent of a fortress or a cloister. One corner was damaged, but king Ṣalāh (Saladin) and certain viziers ordered it to be repaired. The repaired part was better than the old part of the building. The *manāra* is a high fortress on a lofty cliff, overlooking the sea. It is situated on the end of an island, which cuts into the port of Alexandria. The edifice consists of three tiers (fig. 2). It is said that there are no dwellings within, but around it run stairs as if to an empty well“. The author, who visited the place, confirms that the mirror was missing from the tower. There were no traces of it, moreover, as he adds — how can one see oneself in a mirror at a distance of over 100 ells? He estimates the height of the building at 230 ells, and considers it to be the only remaining part of the sunken town⁵⁰.

Al-Ḳazwīnī (1203—1283) in describing the *manāra* repeats the information given by Yāḳūt, and also gives a similar drawing. Moreover he states that „in our times *manāra* is a high fortress on a high mountain, looking at its own reflection in the sea. It is situated on the edge of an island, which extends about 100 metres into the sea. The fortress is square and possesses wide stairs, which one can pass on foot and on horseback. They are made from large stones. They lead to a higher level and are facing the sea. In the centre there is a smaller fortress, which is entered by other stairs leading to a higher floor with little balconies, and in the middle there is a beautiful dome, probably a place for a sentry“⁵¹.

The next Arab author Abū'l-Fidā' (1273—1332) also mentions a mirror made of „Chinese iron“, destroyed in the times of al-Walid (VII century). He assesses the height of the building at 180 ells⁵².

Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1304—1377) visited the *manāra* and noticed that one of the corners was damaged. It was a square edifice, rising steeply into the air. The gate was positioned above ground

⁴⁹ al-Idrīsī, *op. cit.* pp. 137—141.

⁵⁰ Yāḳūt, *op. cit.* t. I. pp. 254—265.

⁵¹ al-Ḳazwīnī, *op. cit.* pp. 97—99.

⁵² Abū'l-Fidā', *op. cit.* p. 105.

level, and beside it there were other buildings. A wooden bridge lead to the gate. Behind the door sat a guard. There were many chambers. The width of the entrance (corridor) was 9 *šibr* (2,025 m.), the thickness of the walls 10 *šibr* (2,25 m.). The width of the minaret on each side was 140 *šibr* (31,5 m.). The *manāra* was situated on a small hill (*tell*) at a distance of 1 *farsaḥ* (1 F = approx. 6 km.) from the town by overland route. The land on which it stands is rectangular, surrounded on three sides by the sea. On the area joining the *manāraz* with the bank there is a burial ground. In 750 H (1349/50 A. D.) on returning from a journey Ibn Baṭṭūṭa went to the *manāraz* which had unfortunately been ruined, and so it was not possible to proceed to the top. An-Nāṣir, sultan of the Mamelukes, who ruled until 1340, intended to erect a similar edifice. He began work on the building, but death interrupted him⁵³.

Al-Maḳrīzī (1364—1442) repeats many facts given by previous authors. He mentions the date when the *manāra* was destroyed by an earthquake: 777 H (1377—78 A. D.), adding that „the *manāra* was built from smooth stone, hewn and then bound together by lead. It possessed glass vaults (he uses the past tense). There were 300 chambre situated one upon the other, in the Eastern part there was an inscription, which translated into Arabic reads: „This mirror was built not long ago by a Greek, the daughter of Marinos, in order to observe the planets“. The *manāra* was erected by one of the Ptolemy family — the Greek kings after the death of Alexander. The *manāra* is 230 ells high (once 400 ells). It consisted of three levels. The lowest was square and made of white stone, about 110 ells high, while above it there towered the part having eight sides, made of stones held by mortar, less than 60 ells high. Around the octagonal part there was an open spiral gallery, by which one approached the round building.

Ibn Ṭūlūn (IX century) wanted to renovate the *manāra*, and therefore he built a wooden dome on the top, which is entered from the inside. The cupola was open, round and without stairs. On the northern side of the *manāra* there was an inscription in Greek in letters made from lead. The length of the letters was one

⁵³ Ibn Baṭṭūṭa, *op. cit.* pp. 8—9.

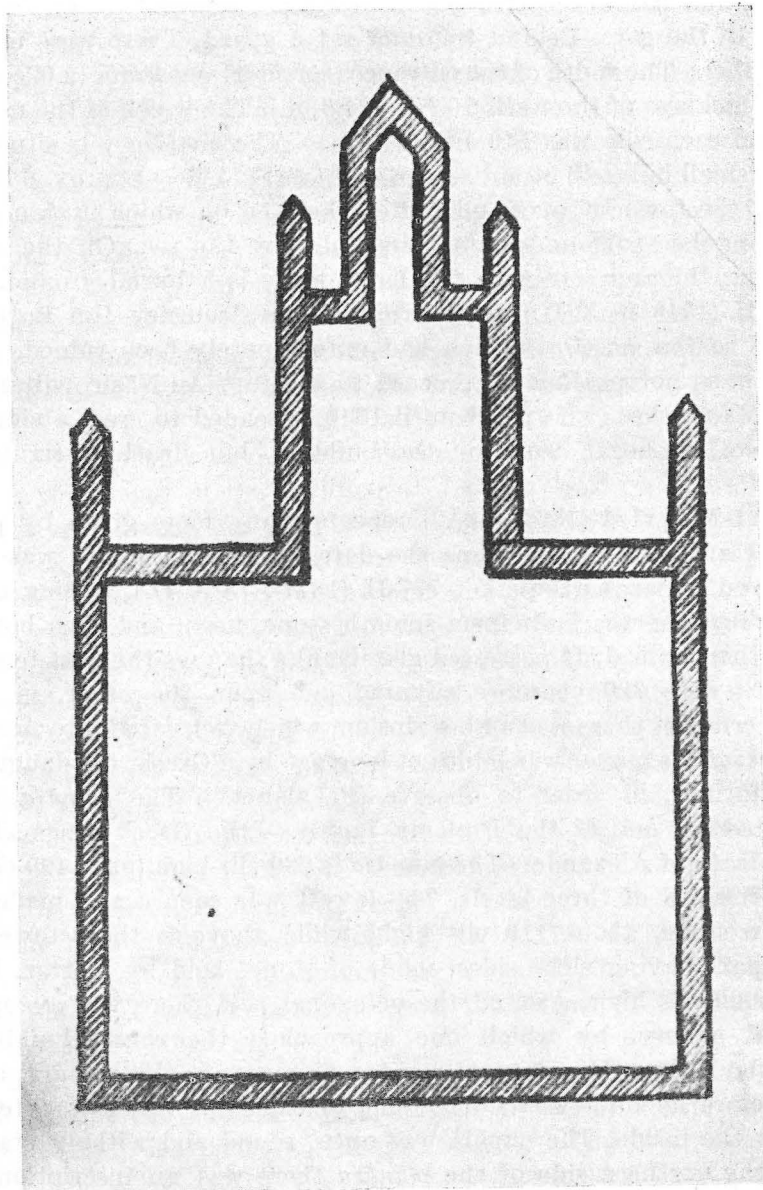


Fig. 2. The Lighthouse (as given by Jākūt)

ell, and their width one span. The western corner of the building facing the sea was damaged. It was rebuilt by general Ḥumārayh, son of Ibn Ṭūlūn. At this time the distance between the minaret and the town was one league. In 344 H (955 A. D.) about 300 ells of the upper part of the building was destroyed during an earthquake.

At the *manāra* there was a mosque, in which the people prayed. In 673 H (1274 A. D.) Baybars ordered the destruction to be repaired and a mosque to be built in place of the dome. This mosque was also destroyed as a result of an earthquake in 702 H (1302—3 A. D.); it was rebuilt in 703 and stands till today ⁵⁴.

Many of the earlier facts are repeated by an-Nuwayrī (died 1332 A. D.). He considers the Ptolemy kings to be the builders of the *manāra*. He distinguishes three tiers of various shapes, built from different materials. The lowest part was made of stone, while the middle (octagonal) part was built not of stone, but of bricks and mortar; its height was 60 ells. The highest part of the building was round in shape. In this place Ibn Ṭūlūn (IX century) erected a wooden cupola, but it was destroyed by winds. In its place Baybars built a mosque, later destroyed by an earthquake. In 703 H (1303 A. D.) this mosque was rebuilt by An-Nāṣir (sultan of the Mamelukes in the XIV century) ⁵⁵. A very interesting account is contained in the manuscript of al-Ḥimyarī.

6. Other buildings

Apart from the above named buildings, which are relatively easy to identify, the Arab authors refer to other monuments, which cannot be defined so exactly.

One of them is the so-called green cupola Al-Kubbat al-Ḥaḍrā'. Ibn Rūsta (903) states that „a dome known as the green cupola could be seen there, of which it was said that it was the cupola of the Pharaoh. The dome is suspended on 16 pillars cut out of the rock. In the cupola there are statues and ornaments mostly destroyed, however, some still exist. This place is called 'Place

⁵⁴ al-Maḥrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. pp. 251—255.

⁵⁵ an-Nūwayrī, *op. cit.* t. I, p. 395.

of the Pharaoh' (*Bāb Fir'awn*). Near to the pillars there is something resembling two square minarets, which are shaped like the hand (of a sundial), made of copper or brass. On them there is an incomprehensible inscription — presumably they are wise proverbs". Beneath the monument which stands against the minaret fires were burned. Once the monument caught fire and melted, destroying both minarets. „The green cupola is situated at the 'Eastern Gate', and above it there stand 16 marble columns. It is in the centre of the city. To the right of the cupola is the sea, and to the left — sycamore trees and vineyards. Opposite is the market" ⁵⁶.

Al-Maḥrīzī writes: „One of the marvels of Alexandria is the green cupola, wondrous, faced with copper — like pure gold, which nothing can destroy". In the centre of the town Rhacotis (arab. Raḥūda — where Alexandria stands today) a cupola was constructed on pillars of gilded copper. Above it a mirror, made of various metal alloys, was suspended. It had a diameter of 5 *šibr* (11,25 m.) and a height of 100 *dirā'* (54,04 m.). When a stranger approaches, or when something emerged from the sea, the mirror focussed accordingly sets the approaching man afire. It now lies under the sea. Alexander built the Alexandria lighthouse after the fashion of this cupola ⁵⁷.

These accounts are presumably references to the devices with which the lighthouse was equipped — clockwork mechanisms, the entrance ramp fulfilling the role of a gnomon, and the „lenses". Among this same group of monumets we may class the description of the colossal bronze statue called *šarahīl* by the Arabs. Al-Maḥrīzī, quoting Sa'īd ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Ibn Yūnis, writes: „In Alexandria on a coastal cliff there is a statue pointing to Constantinople. We know not, whether this is the work of Solomon or Alexander. Al-Walid melted it down, as he was in need of money. The eyes of the statue were made of semi-precious stones" ⁵⁸.

Of special interest is the full description of Alexandria — so far unpublished — given by Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Himyārī in his work *Ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār* (VII cen-

tury A. H. — XIII century A. D.) ⁵⁹. The Arabic text with an English translation are presented below. For this paper I have used a microfilm of the Istanbul manuscript of Bayram Nur Osmannah, Istanbul No. 44. (referred to by the abbreviation Is.).

اسكندرية

اسكندرية مدينة عظيمة من ديار مصر بناها الاسكندر بن فيلبس¹ فنسبت اليه وهى على ساحل بحر² الملح وذلك ان الاسكندر لما استقام له الملك فى بلاده وهى رومة وما والاها من بلاد الروم وكان روميا فيما يقال خرج فاختر³ ارضا صحيحة الهواء⁴ والتربة والماء لينى فيها مدينة ليسكنها فاتى موضع الاسكندرية فاصاب فيها اثر بنيان وعمد رخام منها عمود عظيم عليه مكتوب بالقلم المسند وهو القلم الاول من اقلام حمير وملوك عاد انا شداد بن عاد شددت بساعدى الواد وقطعت عظيم العماد وشوامخ الجبال والاطواد وبنيت ارم ذات العماد التى لم يخلق مثلها فى البلاد واردت ان ابنى هنا مدينة كارم وانتقل اليها كل ذى قدم من القبائل⁵ والامم فاصابنى ما اعجلنى وعمما ذهبت اليه قطعنى فارتحلت عن هذه الدار لا تقهر ملك جبار⁶ ولا لخوف جيش⁷ جرار⁸ ولكن لتنام المقدار وانقطاع الآثار وسلطان العزيز الجبار فمن رأى اثرى وعرف خبرى وطول عمرى فلا يغتر بالدنيا بعدى. فلما رأى⁹

⁵⁹ Saleh K. Hamarneh, *An unpublished Description of Jerusalem in the Middle Ages, as found in the ar-Rawḍ al-Mi'tār*, „Folia Orientalia“, tome XI, Cracow 1970. pp. 145—146.

¹ IS. قش. ² IS. بحر. ³ IS. كثر. ⁴ IS. اهورا. ⁵ IS. القبائى. ⁶ IS. صهوايه. ⁷ IS. جى. ⁸ IS. مرار. ⁹ IS. راي.

⁵⁶ Ibn Rūsta, *op. cit.* pp. 117—118.

⁵⁷ al-Maḥrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 233.

⁵⁸ al-Maḥrīzī, *op. cit.* t. I. p. 174.

البلد عملت اخلاط بادهان يعرفونها وطلبت بها المرأة وعكس شعاعها على تلك المراكب فاحرقها وجعل في المنار تماثيل من نحاس وطلاسم كثيرة تمنع وتدفع ولها خواص منها تمثال مشير¹ بيده نحو العدو فاذا صار منه على مقدار ليلة فان دنى² وامكن ان يرى³ بالبصر سمع لذلك التمثال صوت هائل⁴ على ميلين⁵ وثلاثة⁶ وتمثال اخر كل ما مضى من الليل او من النهار ساعة سمع له صوت فطرب بخلاف الصوت الذى كان منه قبل ذلك فمن الناس من يرى^{6a} ان هذه المنارة من بناء الاسكندر ومنهم من يرى ان دلوكة الملكة بنتها ومنهم من يرى ان جبرون^{6a} الملك بناها وقيل ان الذى بنى⁷ الاهرام بمصر بناها وقيل الذى بنى⁸ رومة بناها وبنى الاسكندرية قال وانما اضيفت الى الاسكندر لسكنائه بها وغلبته على ممالك الارض منها وقيل ان الاسكندر كان لا يخاف ان يطرقه عدو في البحر ولا يهاب ملكا فيجعل لذلك مرقبا وحراسا وقيل ان اول من ملك الاسكندرية فرعون واتخذ فيها مصانع ومجالس وهو اول من عمرها ثم تداولتها الملوك بعده وان سليمان عليه السلام اتخذها مسكنا وبنى⁹ فيها قصورا ومصانع عجبية من بناء الجن له وبنى¹⁰ في المنار مسجدا متقنا هوباق الى الان. والاصح ان الاسكندر بناها من اولها واختط اساسها وبنى¹¹ المنار

١. بلين. IS. ٢. صايل. IS. ٣. يري. IS. ٤. دنا. IS. ٥. شبر. IS. ٦. وبنى. IS. ٧. بنا. IS. ٨. جرون. IS. ٩. يري. IS. ١٠. وبنى. IS. ١١. وبنى. IS.

الاسكندر طيب ارض ذلك المكان وصحة هوائه¹ ومائه² عزم على بناء مدينة في ذلك الموضع فبعث الى البلاد فحشد الصناع واختط³ الاساس واستجلب العمد الرخام وانواع المرمر الملون والاحجار في البحر من جزيرة صقلية وبلاد افريقية واقريطش فبناها على ازاج وطبقات قد عمل لها مخاريق ومتنفسات⁴ للضوء يسير الفارس ويده رمح فيه فلا يضيق عليه منها طريق من تلك الازاج حتى يدور جميع بلد الاسكندرية وكانت اسوقها مقنطرة كلها فلا يصيب اهلها المطر وبناء⁵ اسوارها من انواع الرخام الابيض والملون وكذلك جميع قصورها ودورها فكانت تضيء بالليل بغير⁶ مصباح لشدة بياض الرخام وربما علق⁷ على اسوارها وقصورها شقق الحرير الاخضر لاختطاف بياضها ابصار الناس وبنى عليها سبعة اسوار امام كل سور خندق وسور... فيقال انها كانت اعظم مدينة بنيت في معمور الارض واغربها بنيانا وبنى المنار الذى ليس على قرار الارض مثله على⁹ طرف اللسان الداخل في البحر من البر وجعله على كرسي من زجاج على هيئة^{9a} السرطان في جوف البحر وجعل طوله في الهواء الف¹⁰ ذراع وجعل في اعلاه المرأة¹¹ وكانت المرأة¹² قد ركبت من اخلاط عجيبة غريبة فيبصر فيها ما ياتي من مراكب العدو على مسيرة ايام فيتاهب لهم فان قربت المراكب من

١. تض. IS. ٢. وبنى. IS. ٣. متنفسات. IS. ٤. وامتط. IS. ٥. ومايه. IS. ٦. الهوي. IS. ٧. علي. IS. ٨. غلق. IS. ٩. بغير. IS. ١٠. مة. IS. ١١. الحرة. IS. ١٢. الحرة. IS.

المنار فزال المرأة التي كانت غرضه² واراد هدم الكل ففج² اهل الاسكندرية وعلموا انها مكيدة³ وحيلة فلما استفاض ذلك خشى الرومي فهرب في الليل في مركب كان قد اعدده لذلك الوقت وبقيت المنارة على ذلك المقدار وارتفاع هذا المنار ثلثمائة⁴ ذراع بالرشاشي وهو ثلاثة اشبار وامر الاسكندرية ومنارها اشهر من ان يطال الكتاب بذكره وبين الاسكندرية والمنارة في البحر ميل وفي البر ثلاثة اميال والاسكندرية من عمالة مصر قاعدة من قواعدها وارض مصر تتصل حدودها من جهة الجنوب ببلاد النوبة ومن جهة الشمال بالبحر الشامي ومن جهة الشام بفحص التيه ومن جهة الشرق ببحر القلزم ومن جهة الغرب ببلاد الواحات فاما المنار اليوم فهو ثلاثة احزم الاول مربع البناء⁵ قد عمل احسن عمل بمجارة مربعة قد اخفى الصاقها حتى صارت كالبحر الواحد⁶ لم يغيره الزمان وارتفاعه ثلثمائة⁷ ذراع وعشرون ذراعا ثم ترك في اعلاه قدر غلط الحائط⁸ وهو ثمانية اشبار ونحو عشر اذرع سوى الخط ما بقي من البناء⁹ مثنى الشكل طوله ثمانون ذراعا ثم ترك غلط حائطه¹⁰ وهو اقل من غلط الاسفل وهو ثمان اذرع سوى ذلك ثم اقيم عليه بناء مربع الشكل ارتفاعه خمسون ذراعا او نحوها

البناء IS. 5. ثلثاه IS. 4. مكيدة IS. 3. فصح IS. 2. عرضته IS. 1. حائطه IS. 10. البناء IS. 9. الحائط IS. 8. ثلثاية IS. 7. الواجد IS. 6.

فيها وعمل المرأة في اعلاها فيقال انه ما ظهر العدو في البحر الا بعد زوال تلك المرأة وكان ملك الروم اعلم الحيلة في زوال المرأة من المنار فبعث خادما من خواص خدمه ذا دهاء¹ ومعرفة فجاء مستامنا الى بعض الثغور فحمل الى الوليد فاعلمه انه كان من خواص ملك الروم وانه اراد قتله لموجدة لم يكن لها حقيقة وانه هرب منه ورغب في الاسلام فاسلم بين يدي الوليد واطهر له النصيح في اشياء² صرفه فيها ثم انه استخرج له دفائن³ في دمشق وغيرها من بلاد الشام بكتب كانت عنده فلما رأى ذلك الوليد شرهت نفسه وتمكن طمعه وباحته عما عنده من هذا الفن فقال ان الاسكندر استولى⁵ على ممالك العالم واحتوى⁶ على الاموال والذخائر⁷ التي كانت لشداد بن عاد وغيره من ملوك العرب والعجم فبنى لها الازاج والسرادب والاقباء⁸ وادعها تلك الذخائر⁹ والاموال والجواهر ثم بنى¹⁰ فوقها تلك المنارة التي بالاسكندرية فلو هدم ذلك المنار لاستخرج من تحته من الاموال والذخائر¹¹ التي كانت لشداد بن عاد فصدق ذلك الوليد وطمع فيه وبعث من خواصه من يقف معه على هدم المنار وامر صاحب الاسكندرية ان يعينه على جميع ما يريد فهدم ذلك الرومي قدر نصف

استولى IS. 5. راي IS. 4. دفائن IS. 3. اشيا IS. 2. دصا IS. 1. بنا IS. 10. الرفاير IS. 9. والاقبا IS. 8. الرفاير IS. 7. واصتوي IS. 6. الرفاير IS. 11.

منهم عدد كثير وكان البحر اثر في اسفل المنارة من غربيها كالكهف العظيم فسد بعض اصراء مصر ذلك الثلم باساطين الرخام بعضها فوق بعض فالبحر يضرب اليوم في تلك الاساطين فلا يؤثر فيها شيئا¹ وفي جهة الشمال من المنار بناء عظيم عريض قد ارتفع من فم البحر حتى ظهر على وجه الماء² يدل على انه كانت عليه مصانع قد ذهبت ويسمى ذلك البنيان الفاروس وتحت مرسى السفن لانه يكف عنها الريح والموج وقد زعم قوم ان ذلك الظاهر ليس ببناء وانما هو هدم من حجارة المنار الذي ذكرنا ولهذه المنارة بالاسكندرية مجمع في العام يسمونه بخميس العدس وهو اول خميس³ من شهر نيسان لا يتخلف⁴ في الاسكندرية عن الخروج الى المنارة ذلك اليوم احد وقد اعدوا لذلك الاطعمة والاشربة ولا بد في ذلك الطعام من العدس فيفتح بابها للناس ويدخلون فيها فمن ذاكر لله تعالى ومصلى ومن لاه متفرغ فيقيمون الى نصف النهار ثم ينصرفون ومن ذلك اليوم يحترس البحر وفي المنارة قوم مزينين يوقدون النار بالليل كله في الخزام الاول فيؤم اهل السفن سمت تلك النار من جميع البلاد ويوقد صاحب السفينة النار في سفينته فاذا راي المحترسون النار في البحر زادوا في وقود النار واوقدوها من جهة المدينة فاذا راي⁵ ذلك محرسوا⁶ المدينة ضربوا الابواق

راي. IS. ⁵ تتخلف. IS. ⁴ فمين. IS. ³ الحما. IS. ² ثا. IS. ¹

خرسو. IS. ⁶

وفي اعلاه مسجد ينسب لسليمن عليه السلام وفي الناحية الشمالية من البناء¹ كتابة بالنحاس لم يقدر احد على فكها ولا معرفة ما هي وباب المنار من حديد لا يعلم له عهد ويرق² الى الباب من اسفل المنار في علوة ولا يتبين وكذلك الى اعلى الخزام الاول في طريق تمشى فيه فارسان متواكبان في ارض سهلة لا يعلم الراقي فيه هل هو راق او ماش وفي كل عطف من هذا العقد باب دار في داخلها بيوت مربعة سعة كل بيت منها من عشرين ذراع الى عشر اذرع قد فتح لها مضاو ومنافس للهواء³ لثلا⁴ تهدمها الرياح وعدد ما في المنار من البيوت ثلثمائة⁵ واربعة وستون بيتا وعطف مطالعها من اسفلها الى اعلاها اثنان وسبعون عطف في كل عطف اثنا عشرة درجة وبيوبها كلها اذاج معقودة وبناء⁶ المنار كله معقود بنحشب الساج وعدد ابوابه الظاهرة اثنان وعشرون بابا فتحت لتخترقه الرياح ولولا ذلك لهدمته وهذا المنار من دخله ولم يعرف مسالكه تاه فيه وضل لان طرقا توؤل الى اسفله والى البحر ويقال ان جيش صاحب المغرب حين وصل الاسكندرية وذلك في خلافة المقتدر⁷ دخل جماعة منهم المنار على خيولهم ليروا ما فيه من الغرائب⁸ فتاهوا وتهوروا هم ودوابهم⁹ وقد

ثلثمائة. IS. ⁵ لثلا. IS. ⁴ للهوا. IS. ³ ويرقا. IS. ² ابنا. IS. ¹ وروانم. IS. ⁹ الغرائب. IS. ⁸ الحقير. IS. ⁷ وبنا. IS.

فاذا اشتدت الرياح رايتها تتحرك وربما جعلت تحتها الحجارة فتحنها
 لشدة حركتها وهذه الاسطوانة من عجائب¹ العالم ويقال ان الجن
 صنعتها لسليمان عليه السلام وكانت في وسط قبة وحوها اساطين وعلى
 الكل قبة شبه الصفحة من حجر واحد رخام ابيض باحسن صنعة
 واغرب اتقان فلما مات سليمان رفعت الجن تلك القبة ورمت بها في
 البحر فانها كانت من اغرب ما عملت الجن لسليمان عليه الصلاة والسلام.
 ودخل بعض ملوك مصر الاسكندرية وراى قصرها فراه عجيب
 الشأن غريب البنيان فدعا الصناع وسأله ان يبينوا له مثله فقالوا
 لا يقدر على ذلك فعزم عليهم فقام شيخ فقال انا ابني لك مثله واحسن
 منه ان فعلت لى ما اريد قال بلى قال ايتونى بثورين² مطبقين وعجلة
 فامر له بذلك فدخل مقابر الاولين فيها واحتفر قبرا منها واستخرج
 جمجمة عظيمة فوضعها في العجلة فما جرها الثوران الا بعد مشقة وجهد
 فجاء بها فقال اصلح الله الملك ان اعطيتنى من يكون³ رؤوسهم مثل
 هذا الراس بنيت لك مثل هذا القصر، فعلم⁴ انه لا يقدر على ذلك،
 وراى بالاسكندرية قصاب عنده ضرس انسان ينزن به اللحم زننه
 ثمانية ارطال وكان بالاسكندرية دار ملعب قد تهدم اكثرها وكانت

١. معلم. IS. ٢. يكون. IS. ٣. بتورين. IS. ٤. حجاب. IS.

والاجراس حذرا من العدو وكان حول المنارة مغائص¹ يستخرج منها
 انواع الاحجار يتخذ منها فصوص الخواتم وكان حول المنارة من تلك
 الجواهر كثير فيقال ان الاسكندر غرق² ذلك حول المنارة ليوجد
 هناك اذا طلب فيكون ذلك الموضع ابقى لها وليرى الناس على مر
 الدهر عظم ملكه وما قدر عليه من وجود ما عز عند غيره وقيل انها
 كانت الات شراب الاسكندر فلما مات كسرتها امه ورمت بها في تلك
 المواضع غير ان لا تصير لاحد بعده، والقصر الاعظم الذى
 بالاسكندرية الذى لانظير له في معمور الارض اليوم خراب وهو
 على ربوة عظيمة بازاء باب الموسم طوله خمسمائة³ ذراع وعرضه على
 النصف من ذلك ولم يبق منه الا بعض سواريه وبابه من اعظم
 بناء واتقنه كل عضادة منه حجر واحد وعتبته حجر واحد فيه نحو
 مائة⁴ اسطوانة⁵ ... عظيمة لم يسمع بمثلها غلظها ستة وثلاثون شبرا
 وهى في العلو بحيث لا يدرك اعلاها قاذف حجر وعليها راس محكم
 الصناعة يدل على ان بناء كان عليها وتحتها قاعدة حجر احمر بديع
 الشكل محكم عرض كل ضلع من اضلاعه عشرون شبرا في ارتفاع
 ثمانية اشبار والاسطوانة منزلة في عمود من حديد قد خرقت به الارض

١. اسطراه. IS. ٢. مايه. IS. ٣. فسمياه. IS. ٤. عرق. IS. ٥. صفايص. IS.

وقال عوف بن مالك حين دخل الاسكندرية لاهلها ما احسن
مدينتكم فقالوا له ان الاسكندر حين بناها قال ابني مدينة الى الله
فقيرة وعن الناس غنية فبقيت بهجتها على الدهور، وكان الفرما
اخوه قال ابني مدينة غنية عن الله فقيرة الى الناس فذهبت بهجتها
ولا يزال ينهدم كل يوم فيها شيء وامر ملك الروم مرة باحصاء
ملوك الاسكندرية ورؤسائها¹ خاصة فوجدهم ستمائة² الف ملك
واخبار هذا الصقع كثيرة مستفصله³ في الصولات فلنقتصر على هذا
القدر.

متفصله. IS. 3. ستاياه. IS. 2. ورؤسائها. IS. 1

TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT

Alexandria is a great city in the land of Egypt, built by Alexander the son of Philip, and the city is called after him. It lies on the bank of the Salt Sea. When Alexander had established his reign in his country, that is, Rome and all the countries of Rūm (Greek and Roman) — Alexander himself was said to be a Roman (Greek) — he searched for a healthy place with good air, soil and water to build a city to live in. Then he came across the place where Alexandria (now stands). There he found the traces of buildings and columns of marble; one of these was very great, and on it were inscriptions written in Musnad⁶⁰, that is, the first

⁶⁰ By early Himyaritic writing we understand, Sabaean writing, *Ḥaṭṭ Musnad* or „engraved writing“, probably refers to its appearance, reminiscent of specific kind of construction set upon columns. (see, Hans Jensen, *Die Schrift in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*, Berlin, 1958, p. 321.).

قد بنيت بضروب¹ من الحكمة وكانوا يجلسون فيها لقضاء² حوائجهم³
واخذ ارائهم⁴ فكان كل جالس فيها انما جلوسه تلقاء⁵ صاحبه لا يخفى
على احد منهم شيء من حال غيره يساوي قريبيهم وبعييدهم في ذلك وكان
لهم يوم مهرجان يجتمعون فيه في هذا الملعب ويحضره رؤسائهم⁷
وابناء ملوكهم وعامتهم ويلعب فيها الفتيان بالصوالج وبينهم كرة فان
دخلت تلك الكرة كم رجل ممن حضر ذلك اليوم فلا بد له من ولاية
مصر كان هذا عندهم معروفا لا ينكره احد وكان عمرو بن العاص
رض الله عنه قد سافر الى الاسكندرية في الجاهلية تاجرا بالقطن والادم
فحضر ذلك الملعب في ذلك اليوم فلعبوا فيه بالكرة فدخلت⁸ كم عمرو
بن العاص رضى الله عنه فعجبوا من ذلك وقالوا ما كذبتنا⁹ هذه الكرة
قط الا اليوم، فكان ما قدر الله تعالى من محبي¹⁰ الاسلام وولاية عمرو
بن العاص رضى الله عنه مصر ثلاث مرات.

والاسكندرية تعجب كل من راها لبهجتها وحسن منظرها وارتفاع
مبانيها واتقانها وسعة شوارعها وطرقاتها وهي بركة بحرية وفيها من
النعم والارزاق والفواكه ما ليس ببلد مع طيب هوائها¹¹ وتربتها ومن
المفسرين من قال انها ارم ذات العماد.

تلقا. IS. 5. ارايهم. IS. 4. حوايهم. IS. 3. لتضا. IS. 2. بفروب. IS. 1.
محبي. IS. 10. ركذبنا. IS. 9. هملكم. IS. 8. روسايهم. IS. 7. ريجزه. IS. 6.
هوايها. IS. 11.

language of the Himyarites and the Kings of 'Ād. (The inscription reads): „I am Šaddād Ibn 'Ād. I shook the valleys and cut the great columns, mountains and hills, and I built Iram Dāt al-'Imād, which has no equal to it in all countries. In this place I wished to build a city like Iram and to bring here every walking man from the different tribes and nations, but something happened to me which caused me to be in great haste, leading me far from what I desired. Then I had to leave this home, not because a tyrannical king forced me, nor was I afraid of a great army, but because I fulfilled what is written, because my trail was broken and because of the power of the Great and Almighty. Whoever sees my trail and knows the story of my long life on earth, let him not be tempted by this world after me“.

When Alexander saw how good was the place and how healthy was the air and the water, he decided to build a city there. So he sent to all countries for skilled craftsmen and marked out the foundations, bringing the pillars of marble and the coloured marble and stone by sea from the island of Sicily, from the land of Ifrīkiya and from Crete. He built the city upon vaults and in tiers, making passages and openings for light. Through these passages a warrior can walk bearing a spear in his hand, and it is not too narrow for him. From these passages a way leads through the whole city of Alexandria. The bazaars of the town were situated one upon the other, so that the people are not exposed to the rain. Its walls are built from different kinds of marble, white and coloured, so are the palaces and buildings; at night the city was bright without lamps because of the great whiteness of the marble. Sometimes green silk was hung over the walls and palaces, so that the whiteness would not hurt the eyes of the people.

Around Alexandria seven walls were built. Before each there was a moat, then another wall... (one word illegible). It is said that this was the most magnificent city ever built on earth, having the most wondrous buildings. He (Alexander) built the Manāra (Lighthouse), which has no equal to it in all the world. He built it on the tip of the tongue of land, which extends from the bank out into the sea. He erected it on a base of glass made of flat plates, placed in the sea. Its height above the earth was 1000 *dirā'*, and at its peak he put a mirror. This mirror was made from various

strange substances mixed together, so that the ships of the enemy could be seen in it at a distance of several days' voyage. Thus he was prepared for them. And when these ships approached the city, the people made ready various paints known to them; then they covered the mirror with paint in such a way, that the light from it was directed at the oncoming ships, burning them. On the Manāra monuments of copper were erected, and also different talismans which protect and guard. The monuments had various properties. One of them points towards the enemy if he approaches at a distance of one night's journey; if he comes nearer and can be seen with the eye, then a horrible voice is heard from this monument as far as two or three leagues away. From another monument, when the hour of the night or day has passed, a melodious voice, differing from the other, can be heard. Some people believe that this lighthouse was built by Alexander, while others think that it is the work of Queen Dalūkah. Still others say that King Ġibrūn built it. And still others claim that it was built by the man who built the pyramid in Egypt. And still others say that the builder of Rome built Alexandria. Alexandria bears the name of Alexander because he lived there and from this place he conquered the other countries of the earth.

It is said that Alexander was never afraid to attack an enemy from the sea and he was never afraid of other kings, because he had guards and sentries.

It is said that the first ruler of Alexandria was Far'awn (Pharaoh), who built there workshops and places of assembly, and that he was the first to make the city prosper. After him the King ruled in the city, and Solomon, peace be with him, lived there. Beautiful palaces and workshops were built for him by the Djinns. And he erected on the Manāra a strongly made mosque, which is still there today.

The truth is that Alexander built it from the beginning, planning its foundations and erecting the Manāra, at the top of which he put a mirror; it is said that no enemy ever appeared on the sea until the mirror was removed.

The King of Rūm (Byzantium) devised a cunning plot to be rid of the mirror from the lighthouse. He sent one of his close servants, a shrewd and knowledgeable man. He travelled to one of

the ports (of Syria) asking for shelter, and was taken to (Caliph) Walid (I). He told Walid that he was one of the close servants of the King of Rūm, and that the King wanted to put him to death because of unjustified hatred; and therefore he had fled. He said he wished to proclaim Islam, and so became a Moslem in the presence of Walid. He showed Walid that he was sincere and advised him in what he had to do. He uncovered from the earth some buried treasure in Damascus and in other cities of Al-Šām. He unearthed them with the help of a book which he had with him. When Walid saw this he became covetous, and his greed took possession of him, so he began to discuss with the man about his art. He told Walid that Alexander, when he ruled the countries, of the world had gathered much riches and treasures, which belonged to Šaddād Ibn 'Ād and to other kings of the Arabs and the 'adjams (Persians and non-Arabs in general). He built for them vaults and underground passages and put there these treasures, riches and jewels. Then he built upon them the lighthouse of Alexandria. So if this Manāra is destroyed, we can take from beneath it the treasures and riches which belonged to Šaddād Ibn 'Ād.

Walid believed this and was possessed by greed, so he sent one of his servants with this man in order to destroy the lighthouse. He ordered the ruler of Alexandria to help him and to give him that he needs. Then this Rūmī (Byzantine) destroyed the minaret until it was half and removed the mirror which was his goal. The people of Alexandria heard of this and were indignant at such a cunning act. When the news was spread around, the Rūmī became afraid and fled during the night on a ship prepared for this purpose at the proper time. The Manāra remained at this level, and its height is 300 *dirā'* Rašāšī, that is, 3 *šibr*. The question of Alexandria and its Manāra is more famous than can be recounted in this book. (The distance) between Alexandria and the Manāra is one league by sea, and three by land.

Alexandria is one of the cities of Egypt and one of its centres. The land of Egypt joins its Southern border with the land of an-Nūbah, from the North it borders with the Mediterranean Sea, and in the direction of Aš-Šām (Syria) there is the Faḥṣ al-Tih (Sinai desert). From the Eastern side it borders with the Kalzam

sea (Red Sea), while from the West it joins the lands of the oases. Concerning the Manāra, today it consists of three levels. The first is a well constructed square edifice built of square stones. They fit so closely that they appear as one stone, and time never changes them. Its height is 320 *dirā'*. On the top. The thickness of the wall is 8 *šibr*, and the height is 10 *dirā'*.

The rest of the building is octagonal in shape, and its height is 80 *dirā'*. The thickness of its wall is less than the wall below, namely, 8 *dirā'*. On it another square building was erected, its height about 50 *dirā'*. At its top there is a mosque, which once belonged to Solomon, peace be with him! On the Northern side of the Manāra there was an inscription made of copper. Nobody can read it, nor knows what it is. The gate of the Manāra is of iron, nobody knows from which time it is. The door is entered from below the Manāra at the height of its first level and is approached by a road, which can be passed by two warriors walking over easy ground. You do not know whether you are ascending or going straight. At every bend the door of a building is encountered. Inside dwellings can be found. Each of them is 20 × 10 *dirā'* in dimension, and possesses an opening for light and air; so it is not blown over by the wind. The number of such chambers in the Manāra is 364. One enters them from below upwards. There are 72 spirals, each of which is approached by 12 steps. All its chambers are vaults, and the entire building of the Manāra is strengthened with [oak wood]. The number of its visible doors is 22, opened to let the wind pass through. Without this the Manāra would collapse. Whoever enters the Manāra not knowing his way is lost, because there are paths leading down to its lowest level, to the sea. It is said that some soldiers of the governor of al-Maghreb, when his army came to Alexandria during the rule of Caliph al-Muqtadir (908—932 A. D.), entered the Manāra on their horses to see the wonders within. They were lost, and fell with their animals, and many of them perished. On the Western side the sea has eroded the lower part of the building, creating a great cave there. One of the Egyptian Emirs covered it with marble plates, placed one upon the other. Today one can see how the water comes and strikes the plates, leaving them intact. On the Northern side of the Manāra there is a building, very high

and very wide. It rises up from the jaws of the sea, until it appears on the surface of the water; this shows that once there were workshops in this place, which are now lost. This building is called al-Fārūs (Pharos) and beneath it there is a harbour for ships, since it shelters them from the waves and the winds. Some think that it is not a building, but part of the fallen stones of the Manāra, which has already been mentioned.

In the Alexandria Manāra once a year there is an assembly called the „Thursday of Lentils“ — the first Thursday in April — when all the people of Alexandria gather together. All of them without exception come to the Manāra, having prepared food and drink, and among the food there must be lentils. The gate of the Manāra is open for the people; they enter, some pray to God on high, others amuse themselves until midday, and then they all return. On that day a sentry is stationed by the sea and within the Manāra. Inside people make fires throughout the night on the lowest level. So the sailors on the ships direct their course towards the fire from all the countries, and the owners of the ships burn fires in their ships. If these sentries notice the fire out at sea, they begin to add more fire, and also fire is made in the direction of the city. When the sentries in the city see these fires, they begin to call on the trumpet and with bells to warn against the enemy.

Around the Manāra there are places where precious stones are obtained for rings. It is said that many jewels could be found here and that Alexander sunk them in the water around the Manāra, so that he could take them when in need. They were safe in this place. Thus he showed the people for all times how magnificent was his kingdom, what deeds he can perform and what riches he possesses, as no other man. It is said that the precious stones came from the drinking vessels of Alexander, and that when he died his mother broke them and threw them in that place, because she was jealous lest some other man should use them after him.

The great palace al-Kaṣr al-ʿAzam, which is in Alexandria, has no equal to it in all the world. Today it lies in ruins. It was situated on a high mound by the Mawsam gate. Its height was 500 *dirāʿ* (270 m.) and its breadth one half of the height. Of this

building only a few columns remain. Its gate is a great edifice and is magnificently built. Each part of the double doors closing the gate is of a single stone. The cross-beam is also of a single stone (perhaps the architrave?). At the doors (by the entrance) there are 100 columns, among which there is one so great, that none like it has ever been heard of; its thickness is 36 *šibr* (8,10 m.). It is so high, that one cannot throw a stone over it. At its peak there is a beautifully adorned base of red stone. The width of each side is 20 *šibr* (4,5 m.) and its height is 8 *šibr* (1,80 m.). This pillar is set in the ground and embedded in an iron framework, and when a very strong wind blows it moves, and when one throws a stone beneath it (presumably into the loosely fitting framework), it is crushed. This pillar belongs to the wonders of the world. It is said that the Djinns built it for Solomon, peace be with him! In the middle of the cupola of the palace and all around it there were pillars, and at its head there was a dome like a great shade, made from a single block of white marble, magnificently constructed. When Solomon died the Djinns removed the dome and threw it into the sea. It was one of the marvels performed by the Djinns for Solomon, peace be with him!

One of the kings of Egypt entered Alexandria and saw how wonderful were its palaces, and how beautifully built they were. So he called upon the craftsmen to build for him a palace like it. They answered that they could not do it, but he insisted. Then an old man stood up among them and said: „I will build for you one like it or even better, if you do for me what I desire“. He said: „Verily“. So the first said: „Bring me two oxen yoked together and a cart“. He ordered it to be done. Then he (the old man) entered the burial ground of our forbears. There he dug up a grave and removed from it a great skull. He put it on the cart, and with much difficulty the oxen pulled it along. He came with it to the king and said: „May God help you, if you give me men with heads like this one, then I will build you a palace like that one“. Then he understood that it cannot be done. Someone saw in Alexandria a butcher, who uses the teeth of a man as a balance. Its weight is 8 *raṭl*.

There was in Alexandria a theatre (Dāru'l-ma'ab — „House of Games“), most of which now lies in ruins. It was built in a very

wise manner. People went there to settle their affairs and to exchange views. Each man who sits there is face to face with another, and all is visible both for those sitting nearby and afar. On certain festive days the rulers, nobles and common folk used to gather there, while the young played ball by means of a stick. There was a soothsaying, that a ball falling into the sleeve of a person sitting among the spectators predicted that he would rule over Egypt. This fact was well known to the people and they did not doubt it. 'Amr Ibn al-Ās travelled to Alexandria in *ḡāhiliyya* as a merchant with cotton and oil. He was present in the theatre on that day. They were playing with the ball, which fell into his sleeve. They were astonished and said: „Never does this ball lie, only today“. Then it happened what God had ordained: Islam came, and 'Amr Ibn al-Ās thrice became the governor of Alexandria.

Alexandria rouses the admiration of all who see it because of its magnificence and beauty, because of its high, well constructed buildings and because of the broadness of its roads and streets. It is a city of the land and of the sea. It is full of riches and fruits, which cannot be found elsewhere, besides its fresh air and rich soil. One of the Mufesirin (commentators) said that Alexandria is Iram Dāt al-Īmād.

'Awaf Ibn Mālīk, on entering Alexandria, said to its people: „How beautiful your city is“. They answered him saying that Alexander, when he built it, declared: „I shall build a city which will always be in need of God and not of the people“. And because of that it still retains its beauty in spite of time. Al-Farmā, his brother, said: „I shall build a city, which does not need God, but needs the people“. And so it was destroyed, day by day, until it was finished.

Once the King of Rūm wished to count the kings and nobles of Alexandria, and he found them to be 600 000.

Much is known about this land, but for us it is enough what we have said.

JANUSZ KAMOCKI

LA RELIGION DE LA POPULATION DE PALUE ET SES ÉLÉMENTS PROTO-MALAIISIENS

Parmi les petites îles de l'archipel de la Sonde, à 121°43 de longitude est et 48°21 de latitude sud se trouve une petite île volcanique-Palue. L'origine de son nom jusqu'à présent n'est pas élucidée et les habitants de cette île l'appellent „Nua lua“, ce qui veut dire „île de feu“. Plus de 10.000 personnes vivent sur une étendue de 70 km² environ, sous la menace constante de l'éruption du volcan Roka Tenda formé de 5 cratères. Ça et là s'élève de la terre une vapeur et dans quelques campagnes, on peut cuire les aliments en les enfouissant pendant un certain temps dans le sol.

Les versants des vallées érosives sont couverts de bois de cocotiers, de champs de maïs et de „ubi“ bulbeux; le sommet est composé d'une dense forêt tropicale. L'île ne possède pas de source d'eau douce et les boissons des habitants, sauf à la saison des pluies, sont le jus du palmier *tuak* (*Arenga Saccharifera*), le jus des bananiers et le lait des noix de coco.

Le peuple Palue base en grande mesure son économie sur le piochage dont sont chargés les femmes et les enfants. Les hommes s'occupent de la pêche, font du petit commerce et du transport maritime; cependant ils ne dédaignent pas la contrebande. Parfois ils quittent l'île pendant quelques mois et n'y reviennent que pour la saison des pluies. C'est ainsi que Palue est connue comme l'île des femmes. Dans la structure sociale de la population, les laki mosas se distinguent nettement. Ils constituent un genre d'aristocratie indigène. Les chefs spirituels qui exercent en même temps le pouvoir juridique traditionnel se recrutent parmi eux.