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The rise of a capital: on the development of al-Fuṣṭāṭ's relationship with its hinterland, 18/639-132/750

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Citation

Bruning, J. (2014, April 2). *The rise of a capital: on the development of al-Fuṣṭāṭ's relationship with its hinterland, 18/639-132/750*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/25008>

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Issue Date: 2014-04-02

PART 1

AL-FUṢṬĀṬ AND ALEXANDRIA

CHAPTER 1

THE ADMINISTRATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ALEXANDRIA AND AL-FUṢṬĀṬ

When the Arab armies entered Egyptian territory in 18/639, Alexandria was the capital of the eparchy of Aegyptus, which approximately covered the area of the western Nile delta.¹ Although the eparchal capitals enjoyed in theory equal hierarchical status, Alexandria was in practice a *primus inter pares*. Besides the fact that Alexandria was Egypt's main economic centre, the city housed Egypt's most powerful administrative and religious official: the Melkite patriarch. The patriarch's authority had drastically increased since the reign of the Byzantine emperor Justinian (r. A.D. 527-65).² After the end of the Sasanid occupation in 7/629, Egypt's Melkite patriarch Cyrus (al-Muḡawqis; in office 10/631-c. 21/641) held exceptionally much power and is recorded to have had civil and military authority over all eparchies.³ Being located in Alexandria, the administration of the patriarch placed the city at the centre of the administration of Egypt's four eparchies.

¹ Palme, "The imperial presence", pp. 248-9.

² G. Rouillard, *L'administration civile de l'Égypte byzantine*, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1928, esp. pp. 229-39.

³ On Cyrus, see especially A. Butler, *The Arab conquest of Egypt and the last thirty years of Roman dominion*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. lxx-lxxvii and 508-26 [appendix C]; K. Öhrnberg, "al-Muḡawqis", *EI*², VII, pp. 511a-13a; and also Palme, "The imperial presence", p. 265. The first/seventh-century *Khuzistan Chronicle*, composed in the second half of the first/seventh century (C.F. Robinson, "The conquest of Khūzistān: a historiographical reassessment", *BSOAS* 67/1 (2004), pp. 14-5), writes that the Arabs had difficulty entering Egyptian territory because, in Nöldeke's translation, 'die Grenze durch den Patriarchen von Alexandria mit einen Heer und grosser Macht behütet wurde' (T. Nöldeke, "Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik", *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historischen Classe der kaiserliche Akademie der Wissenschaften* 128 (1893), IX, p. 45). In *P.Lond.* I 113/10 (Fayyūm; 18-9/639-40), the only document known to refer to Cyrus, the patriarch (line 14: πᾶσα) demands goods from Theodorakios, pagarch of the Fayyūm, destined for Byzantine or Arab soldiers. On this document, see p. 95 below.

Modern scholarship almost unanimously agrees that Alexandria kept much of its importance after the establishment of Arab rule.⁴ Mostly on the basis of the archaeological source material from Kawm ad-Dikka, a site located at the heart of the late-Antique city and excavated since the early-1960s (see map 2),⁵ studies have predominantly pointed at a continuation of the city's economic life or of urban developments that already started in Byzantine times. We will turn to this in chapter 2. In the present chapter, we will study a particularly interesting aspect of Alexandria's history that received little attention: its administrative relationship with the central Arab authorities in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. It is not yet fully understood how the Arab administration approached Egypt's dominant city. Some scholars hold that Alexandria had an administration semi-independent from al-Fuṣṭāṭ,⁶ whereas others stress the city's immediate dependence on the Arab administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ.⁷ A careful examination of the available sources, literary and documentary, allows for an adjustment of the current views on the relationship between the central authorities in al-Fuṣṭāṭ and the Alexandria.

The sources explored in this chapter show that the establishment of Arab rule over Alexandria in the early-20s/640s brought along significant changes in the city's social and administrative structures. The new rulers created strong social and administrative ties between the administrations in Alexandria and in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. This chapter uncovers a chronology along which the administrative relationship between these two cities developed. Three stages come to the fore: (1)

⁴ See especially P.E. Kahle, "Zur Geschichte des mittelalterlichen Alexandria", *Der Islam* 12 (1922), pp. 29-41; A. Grohmann, *Studien zur historischen Geographie und Verwaltung des frühmittelalterlichen Ägypten*, Vienna: Rudolf M. Rohrer, 1959, p. 30-1; S. Labib, "Al-Iskandariyya", *El²*, IV, p. 134a; C. Haas, *Alexandria in late Antiquity: topography and social conflict*, Baltimore/London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997, pp. 337-51; P.M. Sijpesteijn, "Travel and trade on the river", in P.M. Sijpesteijn & L. Sundelin (eds.), *Papyrology and the history of early Islamic Egypt*, Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 121-3; Z. Kiss, "Alexandria in the fourth to seventh centuries", in R.S. Bagnall (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine world, 300-700*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, p. 203-4. P.M. Fraser, "Alexandria, Christian and medieval", *CE*, I, p. 89 argues for less continuity.

⁵ For a short overview of the archaeological excavations at Kōm ad-Dikka, see Z. Kiss, "Alexandria: past research", in E. Laskowska-Kuztal (ed.), *Seventy years of Polish archaeology in Egypt*, Warsaw: Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, 2007, pp. 116-24.

⁶ E.g. P. Kahle, "Zur Geschichte des mittelalterlichen Alexandria", pp. 30-1; Labib, "Al-Iskandariyya", p. 134a; Sijpesteijn, "Travel and trade", p. 122.

⁷ E.g. Haas, *Alexandria in late Antiquity*, p. 345; Fraser, "Alexandria", p. 89.

the establishment of social and administrative ties between Alexandria and al-Fuṣṭāṭ, especially on a military level, in the wake of the conquest, (2) the active strengthening of the city's ties with the top of the province's administration under the early-Sufyanids, and (3) al-Fuṣṭāṭ's gradual attainment of natural dominion over Alexandria in the course of the second/eighth century. This chronology is not particular to the early-Arab history of Alexandria; we will encounter it again when discussing al-Fuṣṭāṭ's relationship with other areas, especially in chapters 3 and 4. As we will see on the following pages, the basis for the initial stage was laid before the Arabs had conquered Alexandria.

1. *The establishment of Arab rule over Alexandria and the foundation of al-Fuṣṭāṭ*

According to Arabic historical tradition, al-Fuṣṭāṭ was founded after the Arabs had conquered Alexandria. Allegedly, the caliph 'Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb ordered the Arabs to return to their camp near Qaṣr aš-Šam' after their successful conquest of the city and that, contrary to 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ's wish, they should not make Alexandria Egypt's Arab capital. The caliph is said to have disliked a situation in which the Nile separates the Arabs from al-Madīna.⁸ A. Noth has convincingly argued that this tradition largely consists of literary motifs.⁹ It is, for this reason, a dubious source for the foundation of al-Fuṣṭāṭ and, hence, for the origins of the early relationship between al-Fuṣṭāṭ and Alexandria. The following reappraisal of the conquest of Alexandria shows that the Arabs' conquest administration at Qaṣr aš-Šam' (that is, prior to the surrender of Alexandria) greatly influenced the future relationship between al-Fuṣṭāṭ and Alexandria.

⁸ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 222; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 91 (copied in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, II, pp. 30-1; al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, p. 359).

⁹ A. Noth (with L.J. Conrad), *The early Arabic historical tradition: a source-critical study*, tr. M. Bonner, Princeton, N.J.: The Darwin Press, 1994, pp. 19-20. Nonetheless, that the caliph wanted close contact between the provincial and imperial capital is perhaps visible in the importance of the *ḥaliḡ amīr al-mu'minīn* (Gr. *Potamos Traianos*), which connected Qaṣr aš-Šam' via the Red Sea with the Arabian Peninsula, for the Arabs' choice to maintain their centre near Qaṣr aš-Šam'. See P. Sheehan, *Babylon of Egypt: the archaeology of old Cairo and the origins of the city*, Cairo: American University of Cairo Press, 2010, pp. 51-2.

Arab armies conquered Alexandria in late-20/641 or 21/642. The conquest was not a sudden event. Doubtlessly with knowledge of Alexandria's position in Egypt,¹⁰ the Arabs engaged in occasional raids on Egyptian territory and the conclusion of agreements (involving the Arab leaders and the Byzantine authorities in Alexandria) a little less than a decade prior to their siege of the city in 20/641. The first small campaigns directed against 'Egypt and Alexandria' mentioned in our source material were launched during Abū Bakr's caliphate (11/632-13/634),¹¹ probably in 12/633.¹² Military successes are not reported. An Arabic tradition on the final authority of 'Ulayy b. Rabāḥ al-Laḥmī (d. 114/732-3 or 115/733-4) states that Abū Bakr sent one Ḥāṭib b. Abī Balta'a to Cyrus (al-Muqawqis) and that this Ḥāṭib concluded treaties with various towns in the (eastern) Nile delta.¹³ It is well possible that the conclusion of such treaties was these campaigns' main aim.¹⁴ But the treaties may as well be related to a temporary defensive policy adopted by the emperor Heraclius, after the Arabs'

¹⁰ Arabs inhabiting the Arabian Peninsula and Syro-Palestine were familiar with Alexandria prior to the start of the conquest. The *vita* of John the Almsgiver tells us that 'Saracens' fled to Alexandria at the arrival of the Sasanid armies in A.D. 618-9. See W.E. Kaegi, "Egypt on the eve of the Muslim conquest", *CHE*, I, p. 56. The *Khuzistan Chronicle* mentions someone from north-east Arabia who witnessed (and helped) the Sasanids conquer Alexandria in A.D. 619. See Nöldeke, "Die von Guidi herausgegebene syrische Chronik", p. 25 (with Robinson, "The conquest of Khūzistān", p. 32). For the date of the Sasanid conquest of Alexandria, see R. Altheim-Stiehl, "Würde Alexandria im Juni 619 n. Chr. durch die Perser erobert?", *Tyche* 6 (1994), pp. 14-5. An anecdote that has 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ visit the city prior to the Arab conquest, preserved in some Arabic sources, also refers to such contact between Alexandria and the Arabian Peninsula. See Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 54 (copied in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, I, p. 82). Some medieval Muslim scholars claim that the Qur'ānic verse 'Iram with columns, of which no equal has been created in the lands' (Q. 89:7-8) refers to Alexandria. See the overview in Yāqūt ar-Rūmī, *Muḡam al-buldān*, 6 vols, Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1866-73, I, pp. 155-7.

¹¹ Theophanes Confessor, *The chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern history, AD 284-813*, trs. C. Mango & R. Scott, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, p. 467; Dionysios of Tell-Maḥrē (A. Palmer, *The seventh century in the West-Syrian chronicles*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993, p. 146 [§ 48]); *Chronicum ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, I, tr. I.-B. Chabot, Louvain: Imprimerie orientale L. Durbecq, 1952, pp. 188-9; Agapius of Manbiḡ, *Historia universalis*, ed. L. Cheikho, Beirut: E typographeo catholico, 1912 [CSCO, *Scriptores Arabici*, 3rd ser., V], p. 340; Michael the Syrian *Chronique de Michel le Syrien, patriarche jakobite d'Antioche (1166-1199)*, 4 vols, ed. & tr. J.-P. Chabot, Paris: Ernest Laroux, 1899-1910, II, p. 413. Theophanes Confessor (*Chronicle*, p. 466) writes that Muḥammad already appointed the relevant army leaders.

¹² Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 584-5. Cf. F.M. Donner, *The Islamic conquests*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981, pp. 113 and 124-6.

¹³ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 53. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 579.

¹⁴ Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 579.

numerous military successes, meant to to save part of the tax revenues of the besieged areas and allowing the emperor to send reinforcements.¹⁵

A number of medieval Arab historians claim that the Arabs conquered Alexandria in 16/637-8.¹⁶ Instead of an actual conquest, this date refers to the conclusion of a treaty between Cyrus and 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ to which we find references in a Byzantine source tradition. This treaty reportedly stipulated that the Arabs would not invade Egypt in return for the payment of a tribute. Non-compliance to the agreement from the side of the Byzantines after three years is said to have caused the Arabs to invade Egypt.¹⁷ There is no unanimity among the Byzantine sources on the date of this agreement.¹⁸ The three-year interval between the conclusion of the agreement and the Arab invasion matches the years 16/637-8 and late-18/639, the latter being the traditional date of the start of the Arabs' conquest of Egypt in the Arabic source tradition and in John of Nikiu's *Chronicle*, composed in the second half of the first/seventh century.¹⁹ "The conquest of 16/637-8" represents some medieval historians' interpretation of the treaty as proof for the subjugation of Egypt and, subsequently, as a conquest.

The Byzantines' refusal to pay tribute, at last, led the Arabs to try to forcefully subdue the country to their rule. They took the eastern Nile delta and the fortress Qaṣr aš-Šam' (Babylon) at the apex of the Nile delta between the end of

¹⁵ Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, pp. 424-5; ps.-Sebeos, *The Armenian history attributed to Sebeos*, 2 vols, tr. R.W. Thomson, comm. J. Howard-Johnston, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999, I, p. 97; Nicephorus, *Nikephoros, patriarch of Constantinople: short history*, ed., tr., & comm. C. Mango, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1990, pp. 71 [§ 23]. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 585-7.

¹⁶ Sayf b. 'Umar in aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ ar-rusul wa-l-mulūk*, 16 vols, ed. M.J. de Goeje et al., Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1879-1901, I, p. 2580; al-Quḍā'ī in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, I, 294. Cf. al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'riḥ al-Ya'qūbī*, 2 vols, ed. M.Th. Houtsma, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1883, II, pp. 169-70, who gives no date but places the advance on, and conquest of, Alexandria before the founding of al-Kūfa in 17/638.

¹⁷ Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 574-90. Nicephorus (*Nikephoros*, pp. 71-3 [§ 23]) adds that Cyrus had the plan to offer one of the Byzantine emperor's daughters to 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ in marriage so that he would have himself baptised and to create a tight relationship between the Byzantine royal family and the Arabs. Sayf b. 'Umar (in aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ta'riḥ*, I, p. 2594) reports that Egypt was actually in Arab hands (cf. Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḥ*, XVI, p. 265).

¹⁸ Theophanes Confessor (*Chronicle*, p. 470; but cf. Donner, *Islamic conquests*, pp. 124-6) connects it to the campaigns during Abū Bakr's caliphate and dates it to as early as 12/633. His account confuses the early campaigns with the treaty between Cyrus and 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ.

¹⁹ Cf. Beihammer, *Quellenkritische Untersuchungen*, pp. 27-8; A.N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the seventh century*, 5 vols, Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1968-80, II, pp. 88-9.

18/639 and the spring of 19/640 before they proceeded to Alexandria via Naqyūs (Nikiou) and al-Kiryawn (Chaireou) in the western Nile delta. The conquest of Alexandria itself took place in the course of 20/641 and, as we shall see below, 21/642. There is no unanimity on the length of the siege of Alexandria; we hear of three, six, or fourteen months.²⁰ Medieval historiographical sources do not give an exact date for the city's surrender. The dates they propose range between the years 20/640-1 and 23/643-4.²¹ Based on al-Maqrīzī's claim that the city surrendered nine months and five days after the death of Heraclius, A. Butler argued in 1902 that Alexandria surrendered on *Ḍū al-Qa'da* 28, 20/November 8, 641.²² On the basis of a careful reading of John of Nikiu's *Chronicle*, J. Howard-Johnston recently proposed to date the surrender of Alexandria to *Ḍū al-Ḥiḡḡa* 21/November 642.²³ The following examination of documentary sources shows that, in support of Howard-Johnston's dating, Alexandria's surrender is most likely to have occurred in the course of 21/642.

The Greek document *CPR* XXIII 35, sent from Alexandria and dated to *Ṣawwāl* 28/October 10 or *Ḍū al-Qa'da* 29/November 9, 20/641, presents a *terminus post quem* for Alexandria's surrender to the Arabs. The consular formula at the beginning of this document gives the latest known reference to the Byzantine

²⁰ Three months: al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 220; al-Kindī, *Al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 9; al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīḥ*, II, p. 169; and Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 72. Six months: al-Quḍā'ī in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, I, p. 448; Ibn Zuhayra, *al-Faḍā'il al-bāhira fī maḥāsīn Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, eds. M. as-Saqqā & K. al-Muhandis, 2nd ed., Cairo: Dār al-kutub wa-l-waṭā'i'iq al-qawmiyya, 1420/2009, p. 99. Fourteen months: Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 80; Sa'īd b. Baṭrīq, *Annales*, 2 vols, ed. L. Cheikho, Beirut: E typographeo catholico, 1906-9 [CSCO, Scriptori Arabici, 3rd ser., VI-VII], II, p. 24.

²¹ The year 20/640-1: aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḥ*, I, 2580 (on the authority of al-Wāqidī and Abū Ma'shar); al-Ya'qūbī, *Ta'rīḥ*, II, 176-7; Sa'īd b. Baṭrīq, *Annales*, II, p. 26; Yāqūt ar-Rūmī, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, I, p. 264. The year 21/641-2: aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḥ*, I, p. 2581; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 178; al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 220; al-Kindī, *Al-wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 9. The year 22/642-3: aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīḥ*, I, p. 2581; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 178. The year 23/643-4: al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 221; al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. T.G.J. Juynboll, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1861, p. 119. Cf. John of Nikiu, *The chronicle of John, bishop of Nikiu: translated from Zotenberg's Ethiopic text*, tr. R.H. Charles, London/Oxford: Williams & Norgate, 1916, pp. 183 [CXV.2] and 200 [CXXI.4], who places the Arab take-over of the city between the fifteenth indiction year (*i.e.* 20-1/641-2) and the following second indiction year (*i.e.* 22-3/643-4).

²² Butler, *The Arab conquest*, p. 541. For the date of Heraclius' death, see Butler, *The Arab conquest*, p. 300.

²³ J. Howard-Johnston, *Witnesses to a world crisis: historians and histories of the Middle East in the seventh century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, esp. p. 469, but cf. p. 188 where he has the eleven-month armistice end in *Ṣawwāl* 22/September 643.

royal family as the ruling authorities in the city.²⁴ There is, further, reference to the arrival of the Arabs near Alexandria in two funerary inscriptions from al-Munā (Kellia), a monastic site located west of the Nile delta between Wādī an-Naṭrūn and lake Maryūṭ (Mareotis) at a distance of 50 to 60 kilometers from Alexandria. These inscriptions are dated Tybi 19, A.M. 381 (Šawwāl 20, 44/January 14, 665) and add with much precision that this date corresponds to the twenty-fourth year and third month of Arab rule over the site.²⁵ In other words, the inscriptions tell us that the Arabs established their rule over al-Munā in c. Dū al-Ḥiġġa 20/November 641.²⁶

The inscriptions give valuable insight in the time and locale of Arab military activity during the conquest of Lower Egypt, especially because the conquest of Egyptian territory south of lake Maryūṭ hardly finds discussion in our source material. That of al-Munā itself goes unmentioned. Medieval chronicles report that, after the surrender of Alexandria, the Arab armies withdrew to Qaṣr aš-Šam‘ or proceeded east to towns in the Nile delta that had not yet been taken. Al-Maqrīzī claims that a large group of monks from Wādī an-Naṭrūn met ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ in aṭ-Ṭarrāna, also known as Tarnūṭ (Therenoutis), in the western Nile delta, on his way back from Alexandria.²⁷ Medieval historiography shows considerably more interest in the conquest of what lies to the west of Alexandria, Barqa (Cyrenaica) and Anṭābulus (Pentapolis), unanimously dated after Alexandria’s surrender. Dates for the conquest of these areas range between mid-21/642 and mid-22/643,²⁸ suggesting a possible connection with the conquest of al-Munā. For

²⁴ For a discussion of the consular formula of CPR XXIII 35, see R.S. Bagnall & K.A. Worp, *Chronological systems of Byzantine Egypt*, 2nd ed., Leiden: Brill, 2004, pp. 95-8 and C. Zuckerman, “On the titles and office of the Byzantine βασιλεύς”, *Travaux et mémoires* 16 (2010), pp. 875-6.

²⁵ P. Bridel et al. (eds.), *Explorations aux Qouçouîr el-Izeila lors des campagnes 1981, 1982, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1989 et 1990*, Leuven: Peeters, 1999, nos 131 (pp. 302-3) and 132.bis (pp. 304-5); see also P. Luisier, “Les années de l’indiction dans les inscriptions de Kellia”, *ZPE* 159 (2007), pp. 217-22.

²⁶ Pace Luisier, “Les années”, pp. 221-2, who sees the inscriptions as confirmations of Butler’s date for the surrender of Alexandria.

²⁷ Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, I, p. 507. For the identification of aṭ-Ṭarrāna with Tarnūṭ, see M. Ramzī, *al-Qāmūs al-ġuġrāfi li-l-bilād al-miṣriyya min ‘ahd qudamā’ al-miṣriyyīn ilā sanat 1945*, 3 vols, Cairo: al-Hay’a al-miṣriyya al-‘amma li-l-kitāb, 1994, II/2, pp. 331-2.

²⁸ For medieval source material, see the overview in L. Caetani, *Annali dell’Islām*, 6 vols, Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1905-26, IV, pp. 532-6. This material is interpreted in Butler, *The Arab conquest*, esp. p. 428, n. 1.

the following reason, however, the establishment of Arab rule over al-Munā is best understood as not having occurred while Arab armies travelled to Barqa but as part of the events that led to the siege of Alexandria.

Whereas most traditions on the conquest of Alexandria focus on the Arabs' camping to the east of the city,²⁹ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam preserves an interesting account on the transference of Arab armies 'from the direction of the lake' (Ar. *min nāḥiyat al-buḥayra*) to a town named al-Maqs located west of the city.³⁰ Such Arab military activity at the city's west is supported by an account that states that the Arabs entered the city after its surrender near the so-called 'Church of Gold'. This church most likely stood on mount Serapeion in the city's south-west corner.³¹ Since Alexandria's defence system reportedly forced the Arab armies to camp at a considerable distance from the city,³² it is unlikely that the transference of part of the Arab army to the west of Alexandria took place north of lake Maryūṭ. By travelling south of the lake, the Arab army virtually passed through al-Munā. The fact that the Arabs were able to cross the area south of the lake most likely indicates that they already controlled that area or that they established their rule there while traversing it. Therefore, the funerary inscriptions from al-Munā may well refer to a situation prior to the Arab victory over the Byzantine army in Alexandria. As such, they would postulate Ḍū al-Ḥiḡḡa 20/November 641 as another *terminus post quem* for the surrender of Alexandria.

That the conquest of Alexandria had not yet come to an end in Ḍū al-Ḥiḡḡa 20/November 641 or even in early-21/642 finds confirmation in a number of documentary sources from Upper Egypt. Al-Balāḍurī and Qudāma b. Ḡa'far report

See also E.W. Brooks, "On the chronology of the conquest of Egypt by the Saracens", *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 4 (1895), p. 444.

²⁹ Butler, *The Arab conquest*, pp. 293-5.

³⁰ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, pp. 75-6. Butler, *The Arab conquest*, p. 294, n. 1.

³¹ D. Behrens-Abouseif, "Topographie d'Alexandrie médiévale", in C. Décobert (ed.), *Alexandrie médiévale* 2, Cairo: IFAO, 2002, p. 114.

³² John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, p. 189 [CXIX.4]. A rare tradition on the authority of 'Uṭmān b. Ṣāliḥ (d. 219/834) also refers to the Byzantines' efforts to keep the Arabs away from Alexandria. It reports that Byzantine soldiers left the city each day to fight the Arab armies camped in the city's hinterland. See M. Breydy, "La conquête arabe de l'Égypte: un fragment du traditionniste Uthman ibn Salih (144-219 A.H. = 761-834 A.D.) identifié dans les Annales d'Eutychios d'Alexandrie", *Parole de l'orient* 8 (1977-8), p. 392

that ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ appointed Ḥārīḡa b. Ḥudāfa as his deputy in Qaṣr aš-Šam‘ when he campaigned in the direction of Alexandria.³³ This Ḥārīḡa b. Ḥudāfa had the authority to establish the tax quota according to the tax receipt SB VIII 9749 (Ihnās), datable between Ṣafar 18/January 26 and Rabī I 18/February 24, 21/642.³⁴ Indeed, this normally was a task falling under the responsibility of the governor.³⁵ Other documents record ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ in Ḥārīḡa b. Ḥudāfa’s place from about a year later.³⁶ Together with that of the funerary inscriptions from al-Munā, our interpretation of these documentary sources disagrees with the date Butler proposed for Alexandria’s surrender. A firm date for the conquest cannot be given, but the possibility that the surrender took place in the course of 21/642 cannot not be excluded.

The date of the conquest of Alexandria adds considerably to our understanding of the foundation of al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The discussion above shows that the Arabs’ conquest administration at Qaṣr aš-Šam‘ had developed close (fiscal) connections with the conquered territories even before the surrender of Alexandria. In contrast to the medieval explanation of why the Arabs maintained their camp and why the camp came to be the Arab capital, the existence of close fiscal-administrative ties between Qaṣr aš-Šam‘ and its hinterland during the conquest of Alexandria, clearly visible in the just-discussed documents from Upper Egypt, must have been an important reason for the Arabs to leave Alexandria for Qaṣr aš-Šam‘.

³³ Al-Balāḡurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 220; Qudāma b. Ġa‘far, *Kitāb al-ḥarāġ wa-šinā‘at al-kitāba*, ed. M.Ḥ. az-Zubaydī, [Baghdad:] Dār ar-rašīd li-n-našr, 1981, p. 340.

³⁴ In another, but undated, document (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 [Ihnās; mid-first/seventh c.]), Ḥārīḡa b. Ḥudāfa orders the delivery of wheat to a group of soldiers stationed in the pagarchy of Ihnās.

³⁵ Morimoto, *The fiscal administration*, pp. 93-4. See also *P.Lond.* IV, p. xxvii.

³⁶ SB XX 14443 (Ihnās; 11.2.22/9.1.643); CPR XXX 16 (al-Ušmūn; early-20s/640s). See also *P.Lond.Copt.* 1079 (al-Ušmūn; 21/641-25/645 or 38/658-43/664) with the discussion on p. 104 below.

2. Connecting Alexandria to al-Fuṣṭāṭ 1: the settlement of Arab notables

Although not all of Egypt had been brought under Arab rule by the time the Arabs succeeded in conquering Alexandria (beside areas in the Nile delta, the southernmost part of the Thebaid awaited the establishment of Arab control in the following months or even years), the Arab authorities took measures to firmly establish their hegemony. They addressed this most directly by transforming to a permanent settlement the camp that they had set up during the conquest near Qaṣr aš-Šam', from then on known as al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The settlement was not formed *ad hoc* but rather in accordance with the main urban form prevalent among the Arabs outside the Arabian Peninsula at that time: the *miṣr*.³⁷ The early townscape of al-Fuṣṭāṭ, therefore, shared elements with other early-Arab *miṣrs* such as al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa.³⁸ Medieval sources refer, indeed, to a carefully thought-out planning of al-Fuṣṭāṭ and to a relation between the residence areas of the various tribes and the central administration.³⁹ A corpus of administrative documents from the pagarchy of al-Uṣmūn (Hermopolis), dating from the first half of the 20s/640s, contains official orders for the dispatchment of building materials to Qaṣr aš-Šam' which were probably intended for the building of urban structures in the new town adjacent to the fortress.⁴⁰ As such, these documents confirm the role of the authorities in the actual building of al-Fuṣṭāṭ.

Central to the new settlement was a congregational mosque which 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ erected approximately 230 meters north of the Byzantine fortress.⁴¹ Entirely in accordance with prevalent ideas on the morphology of a *miṣr*, 'Amr's mosque was surrounded by a single plot of land (Ar. *ḥiṭṭa*), belonging to 'the people of the banner' (Ar. *ahl ar-rāya*), where members of the nobility of various tribes had their

³⁷ P. Wheatley, *The places where men pray together: cities in Islamic lands, seventh through the tenth centuries*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001, p. 266.

³⁸ D. Whitcomb, "The *miṣr* of Ayla: settlement at al-'Aqaba in the early Islamic period", in G.R.D. King & A. Cameron, *The Byzantine and early Islamic Near East, II: Land use and settlement patterns*, Princeton, N.J.: The Darwin Press, 1994, pp. 150-77.

³⁹ K. Morimoto, "The *dīwāns* as registers of the Arab stipendiaries in early Islamic Egypt", in R. Curiel & R. Gyselen (eds), *Itinéraires d'orient: hommages à Claude Cahen*, Bures-sur-Yvette: Groupe pour l'étude de la civilisation du Moyen-Orient, 1994, pp. 354-6.

⁴⁰ CPR XXX (see esp. the discussion on pp. 75-8).

⁴¹ Kubiak, *Al-Fustat*, pp. 58, 96.

residences.⁴² In this part of al-Fuṣṭāṭ, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ owned his residence (Ar. *dār*), located to the east of the mosque.⁴³ Al-Fuṣṭāṭ further consisted of plots of land mostly allotted to individual tribes. These *ḥiṭṭas* were directly related to the administration of al-Fuṣṭāṭ’s Arab populace. One’s residence on a particular *ḥiṭṭa* defined, for example, one’s place in the military pay registers. During ‘Amr’s governorate and that of his two successors ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ (in office 25/645-35/655) and Muḥammad b. Abī Ḥudayfa (in office 35/655-36/656), al-Fuṣṭāṭ had no special office for Egypt’s governor (Ar. *dār al-imāra*). It is highly likely that these first three governors held office in their own houses,⁴⁴ located in the just-mentioned *ḥiṭṭa* of ‘the people of the banner’.⁴⁵ A centrally-located mosque founded near an existing town or fortress and an élite quarter around the mosque including the residences and offices of the provincial governors are some of the features of al-Fuṣṭāṭ’s townscape which it shared with such *miṣrs* as al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa.⁴⁶

Although medieval references to Arab settlement in Alexandria are few and far between, the information that can be found, primarily in Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam’s *Futūḥ Miṣr wa-aḥbāruhā*, indicates that early-Arab settlement in Alexandria compares well with that in *miṣrs* such as al-Fuṣṭāṭ. As we shall see shortly, the Arabs set up a religious and administrative infrastructure in Alexandria that facilitated the establishment and maintenance of Arab hegemony over the city soon, if not immediately, after they conquered the city. By erecting a mosque and locating the residences of the provincial governor and Arab notables in its vicinity, they gave Alexandria a new, Arab administrative, religious, and social centre.

⁴² On the *ḥiṭṭa* of the *ahl ar-rāya*, see Kubiak, *Al-Fustat*, pp. 95-7 and Wheatley, *Places where men pray together*, p. 265.

⁴³ Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭṭaṭ*, IV/1, p. 12; Ibn Duqmāq, *Intiṣār*, IV, p. 62; Ibn Taḡrī Birdī, *an-Nuḡūm az-zāhira*, I, p. 67.

⁴⁴ Bouderbala, *Čund Miṣr*, esp. pp. 110-3.

⁴⁵ For ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa’d b. Abī Sarḥ’s *dār*, located near Qaṣr aš-Šamī, see Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 110.

⁴⁶ For (recent ideas on) other elements typical of a *miṣr*, see D. Whitcomb, “An urban structure for the early Islamic city: an archaeological hypothesis”, in A.K. Bennison & A.L. Gascoigne (eds), *Cities in the pre-modern Islamic world*, London/New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 15-16.

The Arab authorities chose to locate this centre in the heart of the city. Despite the archaeologically attested presence of vacant areas within the city walls at the time of the Arab conquest,⁴⁷ medieval sources do not report any interest from the side of the Arabs in these parts of Alexandria. On the contrary: the sources make most explicit that plots of land (Ar. sg. *ḥiṭṭa*) were not allotted to Arab individuals or tribes (allegedly with the sole exception of a plot of land given to az-Zubayr b. al-ʿAwwām⁴⁸) but that Arabs wishing to settle in Alexandria were directed to take residence in houses or on urban estates abandoned in the course of the conquest (units our sources designate by the term *aḥāʾid*).⁴⁹ One medieval tradition reports that ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ allowed Arab tribesmen to claim a dwelling by planting a spear in it – a practice that is said to have resulted in the cohabitation of members of various tribes in one compound, contrasting the mostly uni-tribal *ḥiṭṭas* of al-Fuṣṭāṭ.⁵⁰ Another report tells that the Arab authorities distributed (Ar. *ashama*) immovable property that had been deserted during the conquest among Arab warriors as a form of booty,⁵¹ but reports claiming that this was not the case also exist.⁵² It is nonetheless clear that, similar to Arab settlement in other existing cities captured during the conquest,⁵³ the Arab authorities were mostly interested in the inhabited and, in Alexandria’s case, the western part of the city.⁵⁴

⁴⁷ M. Rodziewicz, “Transformation of ancient Alexandria into a medieval city”, in R.-P. Gayraud (ed.), *Colloque international d’archéologie islamique: IFAO, le Caire, 3-7 février 1993*, Cairo: IFAO, 1998, p. 372.

⁴⁸ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 130; Abū ʿUbayd, *al-Amwāl*, pp. 152-3 [no. 225]; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Muṣākalā*, p. 13.

⁴⁹ In the glossary to Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ*, p. 29*), C.C. Torrey writes that *aḥāʾid* is the plural of *iḥāda*, which could mean ‘waste land brought into a state of cultivation’, ‘confiscated land’, or ‘an ownerless land grant’ (Lane, *Lexicon*, I/1, p. 30c). Modern research has not been able to interpret this term adequately; cf. Wheatly, *Places where men pray together*, p. 298: ‘it is not at all clear precisely how an *ikhādḥah* differed from a *khiṭṭah*’. Pace ʿU.ʿA. Tadmurī, “Tuḡūr bilād aš-Šām”, in M.ʿA. al-Baḥīt (ed.), *The Fourth International Conference on the History of Bilād al-Shām during the Umayyad Period: proceedings of the third symposium, 2-7 Rabīʿ I 1408 A.H./24-29 October 1987, Arabic section*, I, Amman: University of Jordan, 1989, p. 316.

⁵⁰ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, pp. 130-1 (copied in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, I, p. 451).

⁵¹ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 178.

⁵² Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, pp. 82 and 84.

⁵³ H. Kennedy, “Inherited cities”, in S.K. Jayyusi et al. (eds), *The city in the Islamic world*, 2 vols, Leiden: Brill, 2008, I, p. 99.

⁵⁴ For the inhabited part of Alexandria in late-Antiquity and the early-Middle Ages, see Behrens-Abouseif, “Topographie d’Alexandrie”, p. 124.

In this part of Alexandria, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ built a mosque (Ar. *masǧid*), subsequently named after him, soon after the Arab army had taken control over the city.⁵⁵ This mosque was located on a hill, called Kawm Wa‘la or Kawm an-Naḏūra by late-medieval and early-modern sources,⁵⁶ in the north-west corner of the city (see map 2).⁵⁷ The environs of the hill are known to have housed buildings associated with the city’s Byzantine nobility and administration: the Melkite church of St Theonas (a former patriarchal see) and a building said to have been built by Cyrus (al-Muqawqis) prior to the Arab conquest.⁵⁸ The possibility that the hill’s surrounding morphology influenced the Arabs’ choice of the location of their mosque cannot be excluded. The site itself – the top of a hill and looking out over the western as well as eastern harbour, (what remained visible of) the Heptastadium,⁵⁹ and the western part of the city – certainly was a prominent one. There is no doubt that ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ’s mosque became Alexandria’s congregational

⁵⁵ The date of the building of the mosque is not known. It occurred prior to the Byzantine reconquest of the city in 25/645-6, at the end of which ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ is said to have built a second mosque, the so-called ‘Mosque of Mercy’ (Ar. *masǧid ar-raḥma*; see Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 176).

⁵⁶ For Kawm Wa‘la/Kawm an-Naḏūra, see S. Sauneron, *Villes et légendes d’Égypte*, 2nd ed., Cairo: IFAO, 1983, pp. 215-20 with the remarks and bibliography in J. McKenzie, *The architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, 300 BC – AD 700*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, p. 15.

⁵⁷ Behrens-Abouseif, “Topographie d’Alexandrie”, pp. 114-6; see also W.B. Kubiak, “Mosque of Amr ibn al-As in Alexandria: an unexisting monument of Islamic architecture”, *Roznik orientalistyczny* 50/2 (1995), p. 127. É. Combe (“Notes sur les forts d’Alexandrie et des environs”, *BSAA* 34 (1941), p. 99) and, apparently independent of him, W. Kubiak (“Mosque of Amr ibn al-As”, p. 129) argue that the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ stood where the medieval Western Mosque (Ar. *al-ǧāmi‘ al-ǧarbi*) was located; cf. now Behrens-Abouseif, “Topographie d’Alexandrie”, pp. 114 and 117 and the counter arguments given in Kubiak, “Mosque of Amr ibn al-As”, p. 130. Cf. Kennedy, “Inherited cities”, pp. 98-9.

⁵⁸ For the Church of St Theonas, see e.g. Haas, *Topography and conflict*, p. 269 and Tkaczow, *Topography*, pp. 58-9 [no. 7]. The Mamluk historian Ḥalīl b. Šāḥīn az-Zāhirī (d. 872/1468) writes that patriarch Cyrus ordered the building of what was called in az-Zāhirī’s time the *dār as-sultān*. This building remained in continuous use until az-Zāhirī’s days (*Kitāb zubdat Kašf al-mamālik wa-bayān at-ṭuruq wa-l-masālik*, ed. P. Ravaisse, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1894, p. 40). Other sources indicate that the Mamluk *dār as-sultān* was located near the Western Mosque, which stood in the north-western part of the city (on the site of the Church of St Theonas), close to the western harbour and Kawm Wa‘la on which the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ was located (Behrens-Abouseif, “Topographie d’Alexandrie”, p. 119). Indeed, the *dār as-sultān* stood close to the shore (az-Zāhirī, *Zubdat Kašf*, p. 40), just as houses in the vicinity of the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 130).

⁵⁹ On the accumulation of sediment on both sides, but especially the eastern side, of the Heptastadium, see A. Hesse *et al.*, “L’Heptastade d’Alexandrie”, in J.-Y. Empereur, *Alexandrina* 2, Cairo: IFAO, 2002, pp. 233-5.

mosque (Ar. *ǧāmi*)⁶⁰ and, therefore, formed the religious heart of the Muslim community there. Clearly resembling the townscape of the *miṣr*, the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ in Alexandria occupied a central position in respect of the settlement of Arab notables in the city. Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam gives the following, telling information on the occupation of urban property in the mosque’s vicinity:

‘After its conquest, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ went to Alexandria together with ‘Ubāda b. aṣ-Ṣāmit until they reached the top of the hill [Ar. *al-kawm*] on which the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ is located. Then Mu‘āwiya b. Ḥudayḡ said: “We should take up a residence”. So, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ occupied the fortress [Ar. *qaṣr*] that was to become ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘d b. Abī Sarḡ’s property. He donated it to him when the latter was appointed governor over the country. Abū Ḍarr al-Ġifārī took a house that stood west of the prayer court [Ar. *muṣallā*] near to the Mosque of ‘Amr, near the coast line; it has been destroyed. And Mu‘āwiya b. Ḥudayḡ occupied the area of his house which is on this hill [Ar. *fawqa hādā at-tall*]. ‘Ubāda b. aṣ-Ṣāmit built a house which he did not leave until he departed from Alexandria.’⁶¹

The hill on which ‘Amr’s mosque is mentioned to be located is doubtlessly that which later sources call Kawm Wa‘la or Kawm an-Naḍūra. The passage directly connects three buildings to this location of the mosque: a fortress owned by ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ which later became property of ‘Abd Allāh b. Sa‘d b. Abī Sarḡ and two houses, one owned by Abū Ḍarr al-Ġifārī and the other by Mu‘āwiya b. Ḥudayḡ. All these persons belonged to Egypt’s new Arab nobility and are known to have also owned a plot of land in al-Fuṣṭāṭ or to have been closely related to the Arab

⁶⁰ Kubiak, “Mosque of Amr ibn al-As”, p. 126. There is no certain documentary evidence for the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, or any mosque at all, in first/seventh- and second/eighth-century Alexandria. The reading of the expression ‘the mosque of Alexandria’ (Ar. *masjīd Iskandariyya*), found in a document dating from 205/821, is not only odd (it would imply one mosque in the city) but also cannot be confirmed by a re-reading of the document. The supposed word *masjīd* is almost fully broken off. See C.C. Torrey, “An Arabic papyrus dated 205 A.H.”, *JAOS* 56/2 (1936), pp. 289 and 291 with the commentary in N. Abbott, “An Arabic papyrus dated A.H. 205”, *JAOS* 57/3 (1937), p. 315.

⁶¹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 130; copied in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, I, p. 451.

administration there.⁶² All buildings mentioned in the passage stood in close proximity to Alexandria's main mosque. Of the two houses, the location vis-à-vis the mosque is most explicitly given. The house of Mu'āwiya b. Ḥudayḡ stood atop the same hill, *i.e.* close to the mosque. That of Abū Ḍarr al-Ġifārī was located near a prayer court which, in its turn, stood close to the mosque. The passage implies that also 'Ubāda b. aṣ-Ṣāmit owned urban property in the mosque's vicinity, but a location is not given. In the same area, 'Amr b. al-Āṣ occupied a fortress. That 'Amr donated the fortress to his successor as governor over Egypt gives the strong impression that governors on visit in Alexandria used the fortress as a residence and office.⁶³ It further shows the existence of a direct connection between the area and the top of Egypt's administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The situation which Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam describes – a mosque with the settlement of Arab notables around it – is strikingly reminiscent of the urban morphology of the *miṣrs* founded in the same period. Indeed, our medieval sources' statement that Alexandria differed from al-Fuṣṭāṭ because it had so-called *aḥā'id* instead of *ḥiṭṭas* implies that Arab settlement in the city actually resembled settlements as al-Fuṣṭāṭ on other points. This is not entirely surprising; the Arabs are known to have implemented a *miṣr*-like morphology on existing townscapes elsewhere.⁶⁴

As for Alexandria, an important effect of such settlement of Arab notables in close proximity to the city's main mosque doubtlessly was that it gave the city a strong religious, administrative as well as social centre that was directly related to the Arab authorities, also those in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The site's centrality is, indeed, hinted at in an appendix to a tradition transmitted on the final authority of Ṣufayy b. Mātī' al-Aṣbaḥī (d. 105/723-4). He states that '[the tribe of] al-Ma'āfir's point of

⁶² For Abū Ḍarr al-Ġifārī's *ḥiṭṭa* in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, see Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 109; for that of 'Ubāda b. aṣ-Ṣāmit, see Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 104. Mu'āwiya b. Ḥudayḡ is only known to have owned urban property in Alexandria (*cf.* al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, pp. 18-9), but his connections, as well as that of his offspring, with the central administration are well known (see H. Kennedy, "Central government and provincial élites in the early 'Abbāsīd caliphate", *BSOAS* 44/1 (1981), p. 36).

⁶³ Kubiak, "Mosque of Amr ibn al-As", p. 127; Behrens-Abouseif, "Topographie d'Alexandrie", p. 116.

⁶⁴ For the 10s/630s and 20s/640s, this is especially known for Ḥimṣ; see al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 131 and D. Whitcomb, "Amṣār in Syria? Syrian cities after the conquest", *Aram* 6 (1994), esp. p. 16. For the succeeding period, see Wheatly, *Places where men pray together*, p. 266.

assembly [Ar. *mawqif*] was located at the foot of the hill'. A later traditionist adds that Ṣufayy 'means [the hill] in Alexandria'.⁶⁵ Although neither traditionist specifies which of Alexandria's two hills is meant,⁶⁶ that tribes such as al-Ma'āfir chose to assemble close to the Arab heart of the city certainly is most probable. With the Arabs being the central authorities in the city, such a social, administrative, and religious centre gave the Arabs a visible place in Alexandria's society. It may well have added to their local prestige and, hence, contributed to their power there.⁶⁷ As such, the creation of a centre of Arab presence was part of a series of changes instituted by the Arabs to establish their control over the city. Among the more prominent changes in the city were also the establishment of an Arab garrison and the demilitarization of the local administration. As I shall point out in what follows, these changes in Alexandria's existing military and administrative apparatus also closely tied the city to the authorities in al-Fuṣṭāṭ.

3. Connecting Alexandria to al-Fuṣṭāṭ 2: the creation of a military loyalty network

It were members of Alexandria's Byzantine nobility as well as soldiers who left behind those houses which Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam mentions, in the passage translated above, to have been inhabited by Arabs around 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ's mosque. Whereas these notables (Ar. *ahl al-quwwa*) chose to leave the city because of their strong identification with the Byzantine empire,⁶⁸ Alexandria's Byzantine garrison was

⁶⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 127.

⁶⁶ See the references given in note 56 above.

⁶⁷ Cf. D. Whitcomb, "An Umayyad legacy for the early Islamic city: Fuṣṭāṭ and the experience of Egypt", in A. Borrut & P.M. Cobb (eds), *Umayyad legacies: medieval memories from Syria to Spain*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, p. 411.

⁶⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 82; al-Qalqaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'šā*, ed. M.Q. al-Baqlī, 14 vols, Cairo: al-Maṭba'a al-amīriyya, 1913-1919, III, p. 323. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's source estimates the number of Byzantine notables that left the city to 30,000. Al-Qalqaṣandī writes that all Byzantine notables in Alexandria before some departed numbered 100,000. For nuns fleeing from Alexandria to North Africa, see H. Ditten, *Ethnische Verschiebungen zwischen der Balkanhalbinsel und Kleinasien vom Ende des 6. bis zur zweiten Hälfte des 9. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1993, p. 64, n. 126. Research on developments among the nobility in Syria in the mid-first/seventh century shows that not only the Arab conquest caused some of them to leave their hometowns. See C. Foss, "Syria in transition, A.D. 550-750: an archaeological approach", *Dumbarton Oaks papers* 51 (1997), p. 224 and H. Kennedy, "Syrian elites from Byzantium to Islam: survival or extinction?", in J.F. Haldon (ed.), *Money, power and politics in early Islamic*

forced to leave after the Arabs conquered Alexandria.⁶⁹ In its stead, the Arab authorities appointed a garrison that entirely consisted of Arab soldiers. This garrison was organized in tribal groups each headed by an *ʿarif*. Whereas the actual soldiery found accommodation in houses or on estates abandoned during the conquest,⁷⁰ these *ʿarifs* took residence in towers of the city wall (which the Arabs had not destroyed during their siege of the city⁷¹) or fortresses in Alexandria's vicinity.⁷² The so-called garrison is, therefore, likely to have been located at several places throughout the city. Although of uncertain historicity, anecdotes circulating in Alexandria in the eighth/fourteenth century confirm the scattered nature of early-Arab settlement in the city.⁷³ The administration of this newly-appointed garrison was headed by the garrison commander, the *amīr*.⁷⁴ As we shall

Syria: a review of current debates, Farnham: Ashgate, 2010, esp. pp. 189-93. The source material on Alexandria only points at coming of the Arabs.

⁶⁹ John of Nikiu (*Chronicle*, pp. 193-4 [CXX.17-21]) presents the forced departure of the Byzantine garrison as one of the stipulations of the Alexandrian peace treaty. According to Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam (*Futūḥ*, p. 72) and al-Balāḍurī (*Futūḥ*, p. 221), ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ ousted the Byzantine soldiers.

⁷⁰ Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, pp. 130-1; cf. al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 222.

⁷¹ Although some sources claim their destruction during the conquest (e.g. Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, pp. 175-6; al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 221; *History of the patriarchs*, II, p. 494 [229]; Agapius, *Historia universalis*, p. 345), the city wall and nearby fortresses are mentioned in the itinerary of the pilgrim Arculf who visited the city around 50/670 (Adomnan, *Arculf's Bericht über die heiligen Stätten*, tr. P. Mickleby, *Arculf eines Pilgers Reise nach dem heiligen Lande (um 670)*, 2 vols, Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, 1917 [Das Land der Bibel 2/2], II, 42). The *History of the patriarchs* (III, p. 159 [413]) mentions the city wall for the year 133/750. See also Labib, "Al-Iskandariyya", p. 132b.

⁷² Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 130; J. Maspero, *Organisation militaire de l'Égypte byzantine*, Paris: Champion, 1912, p. 38.

⁷³ An-Nuwayrī, *Kitāb al-ilmām bi-l-i'lām bi-mā ǧarat bihi al-aḥkām wa-l-umūr al-maqḍiyya fī waqʿat al-Iskandariyya*, eds. É. Combe & A.S. Aṭṭiyya, 7 vols, Ḥaydarabād: Maṭbaʿat Maǧlis dāʿirat al-maʿārif al-ʿuṭmāniyya, 1968-76, II, p. 135. An-Nuwayrī writes that ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ settled the tribes of Laḥm, Ġuḍām, Kinda, al-Azd, and Ḥadramawt at various places within the city for the protection of the city's harbours. As an-Nuwayrī bases his information on anecdotes that circulated in his time among the inhabitants of the relevant Alexandrian quarters (II, pp. 135-6: 'the progeny of these tribes are still today, in the year 775 [1373-4], known as "the tribes"; there are anecdotes [Ar. *aḥbār*] about them'), its historicity remains uncertain. Indeed, Ibn Yūnus does not mention a single person belonging to the tribes listed by an-Nuwayrī among the early settlers in Alexandria (he mentions people from Ġuhayna (*Taʿrīḥ*, I, pp. 141 [no. 364], 131 [no. 336], 200 [no. 529], and 521 [no. 1433]), Qurayš (I, pp. 275 [no. 749], 383 [no. 1047]), Ḥawlān (I, p. 317 [no. 849]), Mahra (I, p. 160 [no. 434]), and al-Maʿāfir (I, p. 305 [no. 822])). Nonetheless, an-Nuwayrī may be right in locating the various tribes throughout the city.

⁷⁴ With the source material available, it is yet uncertain whether intermediate hierarchical levels existed between the *ʿarifs* and the garrison commander. That intermediate levels existed in the early-Umayyad period may be inferred from Muʿāwiya b. Abī Sufyān's answer to the complaint of a garrison commander concerning the low number of soldiers stationed in the city: 'I gave you ʿAbd Allāh b. Muṭīʿ,

see in more detail below, the office of the *amīr* took over the military responsibilities of the existing administration. The creation of an Arab garrison, headed by an Arab *amīr*, was part of the Arabs' initial efforts at maintaining their control over the city. In order to understand the effects, and extent, of the introduction of an Arab military element in the city, we begin with a study of the garrison itself before we turn to the top of its administration.

3.1. Alexandria's Arab garrison and the Byzantine capture of 24/645-25/646

Initially, 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ allegedly appointed a garrison of 1,000 men, headed by one 'Abd Allāh b. Ḥuḍāfa b. Qays, when he returned to the Arab camp near Qaṣr aš-Šam' or pursued Byzantine troops seeking refuge in the Nile delta.⁷⁵ Among this initial garrison's soldiers are likely to have been groups of the tribes of al-Azd and Fahm. Al-Maqrīzī writes that these groups returned from Alexandria to the Arab camp near Qaṣr aš-Šam' after the land surrounding the latter fortress had been allotted among the tribes already present.⁷⁶ That 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ immediately stationed a garrison in the city may well have been more a matter of early-Arab policy than one of tactics. There are clear similarities with policies concerning the conquered territories in Syro-Palestine where, in al-Balāḍurī's words, 'each time the Muslims conquered a city on or near the coast they stationed [Ar. *rattabū*] there as many Muslims as was needed'.⁷⁷ By the end of the caliphate of 'Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb (r. 13/634-23/644), the Palestinian coastline had a sound system of fortifications.⁷⁸ But Alexandria's garrison initially was of limited defensive quality, even though it was considerably enlarged after the conquest turmoil had settled. Two almost identical reports, on the authority of Yazīd b. Abī Ḥabīb (d. 128/745-6) and 'Abd Allāh b. Hubayra (d. 126/743-4), are preserved in our source material and inform

with 4,000 Medinese, as a reinforcement' (Ar. *qad amdadtuka bi-'Abd Allāh b. Muṭī fī arba'at ālāf min ahl al-Madīna*). See Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192.

⁷⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 80; al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 221; al-Quḍā'ī in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, I p. 448.

⁷⁶ Al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, II, p. 35. Cf. note 73 above.

⁷⁷ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 128.

⁷⁸ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 128 (esp. lines 12-5); H.S. Khalilieh, "The *ribāt* of Arsūf and the coastal defence system in early Islamic Palestine", *Journal of Islamic studies* 19/2 (2008), p. 169; A.M. al-'Abbādī & 'A. Sālim, *Ta'rīḥ al-baḥriyya al-islāmiyya fī Miṣr wa-š-Šām*, Beirut: Dār al-aḥad, 1972, p. 45.

us about the size of the garrison. One has it that ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ selected a fourth of his companions in al-Fuṣṭāṭ for the garrison in Alexandria and had them replaced after six months by a winter army (Ar. *šāṭiya*) that was stationed near the coast.⁷⁹ The other tells that ‘Amr stationed a fourth of the Arab army in Alexandria, another fourth on the littoral, and the remaining half with him in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. Only the garrison stationed in Alexandria was replaced by another group of soldiers after six months.⁸⁰ With the Egyptian army said to have numbered approximately 15,000 men at the end of the conquest,⁸¹ ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ’s garrison in Alexandria must have counted c. 3,750 soldiers and possibly a similar number of soldiers were stationed on the Mediterranean shore. The caliph is said to have sent each year a group of Medinese warriors to reinforce the Alexandrian garrison.⁸² The actual number of soldiers stationed in Alexandria in the first years after 21/642 must, when we accept these numbers, have been a bit higher. Compared to even the lowest estimates of the size of Alexandria’s population at that time (100,000 inhabitants),⁸³ the Alexandrian garrison was a small one. Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam records that the Arab authorities were reluctant to station a large number of soldiers in the city and preserves caliphal orders to keep the city’s garrison small.⁸⁴

The death of ‘Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb in 23/644 not only resulted in empire-wide unclarity as to caliphal succession, it stopped the Medinese troops being sent to Alexandria and made the city more vulnerable than it already was. One source writes that information about the city’s poor defense reached the Byzantine emperor.⁸⁵ Taking advantage of the situation, the emperor dispatched a fleet under the command of a general named Manuel and captured the city in 24/645.⁸⁶

⁷⁹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, pp. 191-2.

⁸⁰ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 130.

⁸¹ See the discussion and references in Stratos, *Byzantium*, II, pp. 107 and 213-4.

⁸² Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192 (copied in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭat*, I, p. 452).

⁸³ C. Morriison & J.-P. Sodini, “The sixth-century economy”, *EHB*, I, p. 174. See also Haas, *Alexandria in late Antiquity*, p. 340, who gives 200,000 as the number of the city’s inhabitants, and Labib, “Al-Iskandariyya”, pp. 133-4 for (historically uncertain) material found in medieval sources.

⁸⁴ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192 (copied in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭat*, I, p. 452).

⁸⁵ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 221.

⁸⁶ Theophanes Confessor, *Chronicle*, p. 470; Agapius, *Historia universalis*, pp. 342 and 345; Dionysios of Tell-Maḥrē (Palmer, *The seventh century*, pp. 158-9 [§§ 69-70]). Cf. H. Heinen, “Das spätantike Ägypten

With the limited size of the Alexandrian garrison in mind, it is little surprising that Manuel was able to take the city and kill most of the Arab soldiers.⁸⁷ But the Byzantines not only took advantage of Alexandria's poor military state. As we will see shortly in more detail, the city still housed a considerable group of Byzantine notables who continued to hold influential posts after the Arab conquest. Medieval historiographical sources write that these notables, together with (chief) inhabitants of a number of surrounding villages, sided with the Byzantine forces during the fighting.⁸⁸ The Arab authorities not only set up an inadequate defense system, they also had failed to gain the loyalty of a powerful group in Alexandria's society.

The Byzantine authorities may well have tried to influence this loyalty. Copper coins from the reign of, and depicting, Constans II (r. 20-1/641-48/668) widely circulated in Egypt and possibly continued to be struck in Alexandria after the Arab take-over of 21/642.⁸⁹ Some numismatists argue that the Byzantine authorities considered Arab rule temporary and used such coins to propagandize their rule.⁹⁰ Others hold that these coins were struck when the Byzantines controlled the city.⁹¹

Whatever the case, a number of medieval sources confirm that not everyone shared the conviction of main-stream Arab historiography that the Arabs ruled Alexandria between 21/642 and 24/645. Some even give the impression that within the Byzantine empire Alexandria was not seen as lost to

(284-646 n.Chr.)", in M. Krause (ed.), *Ägypten in spätantik-christlicher Zeit: Einführung in die koptische Kultur*, Wiesbaden: Dr Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1998, p. 55.

⁸⁷ Al-Balāḍuri, *Futūḥ*, p. 221. Cf. Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 80.

⁸⁸ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 175; Ibn Duqmāq, *Intiṣār*, V, p. 118; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, I, p. 264.

⁸⁹ J.R. Phillips, "The Byzantine bronze coins of Alexandria in the seventh century", *The numismatic chronicle and journal of the Royal Numismatic Society*, 7th ser., 2 (1962), pp. 235 and 241, no. 11; L. Domaszewicz & M.L. Bates, "Copper coinage of Egypt in the seventh century", in J.L. Bacharach (ed.), *Fustat finds: beads, coins, medical instruments, textiles, and other artifacts from the Awad collection*, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2002, pp. 94-5.

⁹⁰ T. Goodwin, *Arab-Byzantine coinage*, London: The Nour Foundation, 2005, p. 14; C. Foss, *Arab-Byzantine coins: an introduction, with a catalogue of the Dumbarton Oaks collection*, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks research library and collection, 2009, p. 20. See also Heidemann, "The evolving representation", pp. 153-4.

⁹¹ Domaszewicz & Bates, "Copper coinage of Egypt", pp. 94-5.

the Arabs. Sources from the Byzantine realm that draw on Theophiles of Edessa's history neglect the Arab conquest of Alexandria of 21/642 and mention neither fighting nor the conclusion of treaties between 16/637-8 and 24/645. They end Byzantine rule over the city with 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ's ousting of Manuel in the first year of 'Uṭmān b. 'Affān's caliphate (23/644-35/655).⁹² Similar information can be found outside the Byzantine historical tradition.⁹³ The *History of the patriarchs*, in a passage ultimately going back to a Coptic source composed seventy years after the conquest,⁹⁴ places the capture of Qaṣr aṣ-Ṣam' in A.M. 357 (19-20/640-1) but dates the fall of Alexandria to three years later, to A.M. 360 (22-3/643-4).⁹⁵ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam preserves an account, transmitted on the final authority of the renowned historian al-Layṭ b. Sa'd (d. 175/791), which presents the period 21/642-25/645 as one of uninterrupted struggle for power over the city. Reacting upon this account, 'Abd Allāh b. Lahī'a (d. 174/790) identified its latter part as the conquest of 25/645.⁹⁶ In a similar vein, al-Ya'qūbī writes that 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ 'continued to fight its [*i.e.* Alexandria's] inhabitants for three years and conquered the city in the year 23 [644-5].'⁹⁷ Whereas the historicity of such reports remains uncertain, recent scholarship confirms that in the early-20s/640s neither the Arabs nor the Byzantines held full control over the province and argues for a joint Arab-Byzantine government on the basis of a hypothetical restauration of a lacuna in a Greek document from the Fayyūm.⁹⁸ All in all, the Byzantine authorities seem not to have fully lost their influence over the city after the Arab conquest of 21/642.

⁹² E.g. Theophanes Confessor, *Chronicle*, p. 470; Agapius, *Historia universalis*, p. 345; *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234*, I, p. 197; Dionysios of Tell-Mahrē (Palmer, *The seventh century*, pp. 159-60 [§ 71]); Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, pp. 424-5. See also Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, p. 641.

⁹³ In addition to what follows, see John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, p. 183 [CXV.1], who writes that 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ 'spent twelve years [but corrected by R.H. Charles into 'months'] in warring against the Christians of Northern Egypt'. H. Zotenberg suggests to read 'two years' instead of twelve (see John of Nikiu, *Chronique de Jean, évêque de Nikiou*, ed. & tr. H. Zotenberg, Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1883, p. 441, n. 2).

⁹⁴ J. den Heijer, *Mawhūb Ibn Maṣṣūr Ibn Mufarriḡ et l'historiographie copto-arabe: étude sur la composition de "l'Histoire des Patriarches d'Alexandrie"*, Leuven: Peeters, 1989, p. 143.

⁹⁵ *History of the patriarchs*, II, pp. 493-4 [229-30].

⁹⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 80 (lines 10-7).

⁹⁷ Al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. T.G.J. Juynboll, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1861, p. 119.

⁹⁸ F. Morelli, "'Amr e Martina: la reggenza di un'imperatrice o l'amministrazione arabe d'Egitto", *ZPE* 173 (2010), p. 155, n. 65.

That local loyalty could easily shift to, or stay with, the Byzantines is little surprising.⁹⁹

But despite much loyalty towards them, the Byzantines were not able to maintain power over Alexandria. Interestingly, a modern interpretation of book XIV of the *Oracula Sibyllina*, dated to c. 50/670 at the latest,¹⁰⁰ argues that by the mid-20s/640s there also was considerable support for the Arab cause among the city's population.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Arabic historical tradition mentions an Arab named Ibn Bassāma who allegedly helped 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ's army entering the city,¹⁰² but this may be a *topos* of *futūḥ* literature.¹⁰³ With heavy military machinery at his disposal¹⁰⁴ and with possibly more violence than three years before,¹⁰⁵ 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ succeeded to drive away Manuel and to reconquer Alexandria in 25/646.

Probably a result of the Byzantines' successful, albeit temporary, capture of Alexandria and the help they received from local notables, the city witnessed changes in its military organisation that furthered the Arabs' grip over the city. Increased concern for Alexandria's protection is visible in the caliph 'Uṭmān b.

⁹⁹ See also P.M. Sijpesteijn, "New rule over old structures: Egypt after the Muslim conquest", in H. Crawford (ed.), *Regime change in the ancient Near East and Egypt*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, p. 186.

¹⁰⁰ On the *Oracula Sibyllina* in general, see J.J. Collins, "The development of the Sibylline tradition", in H. Temporini & G.G.W. Haase (eds), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, vols I/1-4 and II/1-37, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1972-96, II/20.1, esp. pp. 452-4; D.S. Potter, *Prophecy and history in the crisis of the Roman empire: a historical commentary on the Thirteenth Sibylline oracle*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 95-140. H. Ewald dates book XIV to c. 50/670 ("Entstehung Inhalt und Werth der Sibyllischen Bücher", *Abhandlungen der königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* 8 (1858-9), pp. 139-152); most recently (in 1915!), W. Scott has argued for a composition in two instalments: one from the early-00s/620s and the other from the late-20s/640s ("The last Sibylline oracle (*Oracula Sibyllina* XIV.284-361)", I, *The classical quarterly* 9/3 (1915), pp. 155 and 161 and III, *The classical quarterly* 10/1 (1916), p. 11). See also the references in A. Rzach, "Sibyllinische Orakel", *RE*, II/A, p. 2163.

¹⁰¹ W. Scott, "The last Sibylline oracle (*Oracula Sibyllina* XIV.284-361)", II, *The classical quarterly* 9/4 (1915), pp. 220-3.

¹⁰² Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 80; Ibn Yūnus, *Ta'rīḥ*, I, p. 517 [no. 1423].

¹⁰³ Noth, *The early Arabic historical tradition*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 221; *History of the patriarchs*, II, p. 494 [230]; Agapius, *Historia universalis*, p. 345.

¹⁰⁵ The *History of the patriarchs* (II, p. 494 [230]) records that the Arabs burnt churches in the city. See also P.M. Sijpesteijn, "Landholding patterns in early Islamic Egypt", *Journal of agrarian change* 9/1 (2009), p. 125. Another recension of the *History of the patriarchs*, however, ascribes this burning to the Byzantines, see J. den Heijer, "La conquête arabe vue par les historiens coptes", in C. Décobert (ed.), *Valeur et distance: identités et sociétés en Égypte*, Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2000, p. 231 (incorrectly regarding the events as part of the conquest of 20/641-21/642).

‘Affān’s imperial policy to make garrisons permanent (not necessarily stopping the rotation of groups of soldiers) and their stipends to be distributed on a regular basis. This policy was implemented in Alexandria after the reconquest of 25/646.¹⁰⁶ Further, the Arab authorities increased the number of soldiers stationed in the city. The actual size of the garrison in the first years after 25/646 is unknown. But the garrison had drastically increased twenty years later. One report has it that during the governorate of ‘Utba b. Abī Sufyān (in office 43/664-44/665) the total number of soldiers stationed in the city was approximately 27,000.¹⁰⁷ Another tells that they numbered 16,000 and that they could rely on a garrison of 4,000 stationed at ar-Ramla (Nikopolis), similar to what had been the case in Antiquity.¹⁰⁸ That the first Sufyanid garrison commander is said to have complained that, despite these high numbers of soldiers, the city was still inadequately protected¹⁰⁹ surely illustrates the Arab authorities’ awareness of the measure of military presence that was needed to protect Alexandria. This garrison not only served to protect Alexandria itself, but other places in the Nile delta as well.¹¹⁰ Alexandria’s important role in the creation of a war fleet in the late-20s/640s at the initiative of Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān, then governor of Syria, further militarized the city.¹¹¹ Governors in al-Fuṣṭāṭ appointed a special official to direct the navy in Alexandria (the so-called *ṣāhib al-baḥr*).¹¹² Many documents from the first/seventh and early-second/eighth century record the considerable effort that went in the

¹⁰⁶ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 223; Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192. For this policy in other parts of the empire, see e.g. al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, pp. 126-7, 128, 142-3 (?), 147.

¹⁰⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192. See also al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192. Nikopolis was located at a distance of 20 to 30 stadia (4 to 6 kms) from Alexandria in Antiquity (H. Kees, “Nikopolis: in Ägypten”, *RE*, XVII, pp. 538-9). H. Heinen, “Das spätantike Alexandrien”, p. 62; S. Timm, *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit: eine Sammlung christlicher Stätten in Ägypten in arabischer Zeit, unter Ausschluß von Alexandria, Kairo, des Apa-Mena-Klosters (Dēr Abū Mīna), der Skētis (Wādi n-Naṭrūn) und der Sinai-Region*, 6 vols, Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 1984-92, VI, pp. 2857-9.

¹⁰⁹ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192.

¹¹⁰ Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīḥ*, LXII, pp. 433-4.

¹¹¹ Nicephorus, *Nikephoros*, p. 117 [§ 50]; Dionysios of Tell-Maḥrē (Palmer, *The seventh century*, pp. 173-6 [§§ 93-7]); *Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234*, I, p. 209; Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, II, pp. 441-2. See also ps.-Sebeos, *The Armenian history*, II, p. 259.

¹¹² Bouderbala, *Ġund Miṣr*, pp. 277-91.

maintenance of Alexandria's docks and garrison.¹¹³ Even though part of the Alexandria's fleet was transferred to al-Ġazīra, opposite al-Fuṣṭāṭ, in 54/673-4 after a severe Byzantine attack on the coastal town of al-Burullus (Parallos),¹¹⁴ Alexandria remained an important naval centre until the mid-second/eighth century.¹¹⁵

Through the abolishment of the Byzantine garrison and the appointment of an Arab garrison after the conquest of 21/642, the Arabs established military precedence over the city. The changes in Alexandria's military organisation after 25/646 meant to remove, or at best annihilate, a Byzantine power base that remained among the city's populace after the departure of the Byzantine soldiers and to protect the city against future attacks. Thus, the Arabs deliberately altered existing social, administrative, and military structures in order to promote their position in the city. This is even more visible at the top of Alexandria's military administration, to which we turn in the following section. We will see that the Arabs created a thoroughly Arab military network with direct ties to the authorities in al-Fuṣṭāṭ.

3.2. *Changes at the top of Alexandria's civil and military administration*

Prior to the Arab conquest, Alexandria's administration was headed by a *dux et augustalis* who enjoyed the highest civil as well as military authority.¹¹⁶ The last such administrator, one Theodore, left the city for Cyprus at the end of the eleven-month armistice in 21/642 together with the Byzantine garrison.¹¹⁷ Unlike many aspects of the existing Egyptian administration, the Arabs did not keep this office unchanged. In a demilitarized form, they left it in the hands of the Alexandrian nobility. Military powers went to an Arab. In this way they Arabized the city's

¹¹³ Kahle, "Zur Geschichte", p. 35; C. Foss, "Egypt under Mu'āwiya. Part I: flavius Papas and Upper Egypt", *BSOAS* 72/1 (2009), pp. 18-22.

¹¹⁴ Al-Kindī cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭāṭ*, II, p. 570 and al-Qalqaṣandī, *Ṣubḥ al-a'šā*, III, p. 339.

¹¹⁵ For Alexandria as a naval centre, see Kahle, "Zur Geschichte", esp. pp. 32-7; Fahmy, *Naval organisation*, pp. 27-30.

¹¹⁶ Palme, "Imperial presence", pp. 245-9; J.-M. Carrié, "Le gouverneur romain à l'époque tardive: les directions possible de l'enquête", *Antiquité tardive* 6 (1998), pp. 19-20.

¹¹⁷ John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, p. 200 [CXX.72].

military apparatus. As a result, two administrators simultaneously headed Alexandria's administration.

The first of these two high administrators in Alexandria was the *augustalis* (Gr. ἀγούσταλιος),¹¹⁸ the remainder of the Byzantine office of *dux et augustalis*. Beside references to a civil governor of the city in medieval literary sources, the *augustalis* is mentioned in at least two documents: SB XX 15101 (prob. Iṣqūh; 88/707) and P.Lond. IV 1392 (Iṣqūh; 92/711).¹¹⁹ In the latter document we read his name: Theodore, apparently a Christian and possibly an offspring of the Byzantine Alexandrian nobility as his epithet 'the Chalcedonian' in literary sources reveals.¹²⁰ Despite our limited source material on the *augustalis* (collected in appendix 1), it is safe to hypothesize that the office existed from the end of the Arab conquest until the first two decades of the second/eighth century. After having gained power over the city in 21/642, the Arabs kept (from c. 21/642-3 onwards) one John of Damietta as 'prefect of the city of Alexandria'.¹²¹ He had already been appointed by the last Byzantine *dux et augustalis*.¹²² There are no indications that John of Damietta had military powers. The *augustalis*' office remained in existence until at least the 90s/710s, when it appears for the last time in our sources. In subsequent years, the office gradually Arabized. Still in the mid-second/eighth century

¹¹⁸ Pace J.-M. Carrié, "Séparation ou cumul? Pouvoir civil et autorité militaire dans les provinces d'Égypte de Gallien à la conquête arabe", *Antiquité tardive* 6 (1998), p. 121.

¹¹⁹ Possible other but uncertain documentary references to the Alexandrian *augustalis* are found in O.Crum 320 (Theban area; poss. first/seventh c. [both before and after the Arab conquest]), O.CrumVC 86 (Theban area; first/seventh or second/eighth century) and SB Kopt. I 25 (Theban area; date unknown). In O.CrumVC 86, *augustalis* may also be a personal name; see O.CrumVC 86, note 2.

¹²⁰ A Theodore appears a number of times at the head of the Alexandrian administration in literary sources; see appendix 1. A Theodore the Chalcedonian is found for the years 40/661-57/677 and 85/704-96/714. During the papacy of Simon I (in office 67/686-81/700), a Theodore also headed Alexandria's civic administration. Whether they are the same person remains unclear. For studies of these Theodores, see Kahle, "Zur Geschichte", p. 30, n. 5; Grohmann, *Studien*, p. 31a, n. 3; A. Grohmann, "Der Beamtenstab der arabischen Finanzverwaltung in Ägypten in frühislamischer Zeit", in H. Braunert (ed.), *Studien zur Papyrologie und antiken Wirtschaftsgeschichte: Friedrich Oertel zum 80. Geburtstag gewidmet*, Bonn: Habelt, 1964, p. 122.

¹²¹ John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, p. 200 [CXXI.4-5].

¹²² John of Nikiu, *Chronicle*, p. 200 [CXXI.5]; John of Nikiu, *Chronique*, pp. 464-5. Before John of Damietta and after the last *dux et augustalis* Theodore, an army officer named Menas conducted the city's fiscal affairs. He was disposed by 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ soon after John took up his position in Alexandria. See also PLRE, III/A, 705 [s.v. 'Ioannes 251'], III/B, 881-2 [s.v. 'Menas 41'], and 1280-2 [s.v. 'Theodorus 166'].

Alexandria's civil administration is found separate from its military administration.¹²³ But at that time, it was no longer in the hands of the city's old Byzantine nobility. We will treat this in more detail below.

The *augustalis* stood in direct contact with the Egyptian governor seated in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The *vita* of patriarch Isaac (in office 67/686-70/689), composed only a generation after the events it describes,¹²⁴ writes that the governor 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān (in office 65/685-86/705) ordered the Alexandrian *augustalis* to send him the patriarch so that he could have the latter executed for contacting an enemy of the empire.¹²⁵ Furthermore, the two above-mentioned documents mention goods to be sent to the *augustalis*. As the governor in al-Fuṣṭāṭ gave orders for writing the documents, he clearly was involved in the *augustalis*' affairs.¹²⁶ The *augustalis* is once recorded to have been directly responsible to the caliph. As something of an anomaly, a passage in the *History of the patriarchs* and a Coptic synaxary relates that one *augustalis* paid the caliph Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya (r. 60/680-64/683) much money for a document stating that 'the governor of Egypt had no jurisdiction over him' in Alexandria and surrounding districts. This enabled him to keep for himself as much tax money as he wanted.¹²⁷ The passage illustrates the governor's otherwise direct control over the *augustalis*' office.

In the above-mentioned documents SB XX 15101 and *P.Lond.* IV 1392, the *augustalis* appears as the central official in the organisation of the yearly naval expedition against the Byzantine empire (Gr. sg. κοῦρσον). The documents report about torches (Gr. φακλίων) and butter (Gr. βούτυρον), destined for the warships, to be sent to the *augustalis*.¹²⁸ The involvement of a non-Arab official in the upper levels of the military administration in Alexandria was not strange. Literary

¹²³ See appendix 1.

¹²⁴ Den Heijer, *Mawhūb Ibn Mansūr*, pp. 142-5.

¹²⁵ *Vie d'Isaac, patriarche d'Alexandrie de 686 à 689*, ed. & tr. E. Porcher, *Patrologia orientalis* 11 (1913), pp. 378-81 [80-3]. See also Grohmann, *Studien*, pp. 30b-31a.

¹²⁶ SB XX 15101 does not mention its sender but the editors think, in light of the letter's contents, that its sender must also be the governor (see also F. Morelli, "P.Berol. inv. 25041 e le fiaccole dell'emiro dei credenti", *ZPE* 115 (1997), p. 199).

¹²⁷ See the *History of the patriarchs* (ed. Evetts), III, pp. 5 [259] and 9 [263]; *Le synaxaire arabe-jacobite (rédaction copte)*, I, ed. R. Basset, *Patrologia orientalis* 1 (1907), p. 341.

¹²⁸ See also the commentary in Morelli, "P.Berol. inv. 25041", pp. 198-9.

sources mention such involvement as early as the papacy of Agathon (in office 40/661-57/677).¹²⁹ Despite his involvement in the organisation of a military expedition, the *augustalis* had no military powers as the *dux et augustalis* had had before the Arab conquests. Military powers in Alexandria lay in the hands of a second high administrative official.

This second official was the *amīr*, 'commander', of Alexandria.¹³⁰ He stood at the head of the Arab garrison of the city and at times headed the Egyptian fleet participating in the naval expeditions against the Byzantine empire.¹³¹ He always was an Arab (see appendix 1). While Alexandria's *augustalis* lost military authority right after the Arab conquest of 21/642, an Arab *amīr* was appointed to Alexandria immediately following the conquest. As already mentioned, 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ appointed 'Abd Allāh b. Ḥuḍāfa b. Qays as his deputy over the Arab garrison of the city after the first conquest of Alexandria in 21/642.¹³² Historiographical sources report that the Arab governor seated in al-Fuṣṭāṭ usually appointed the *amīr* as his deputy in Alexandria.¹³³ The *amīr* of Alexandria was, therefore, directly subordinate to the highest administrative official in the country. Only in exceptional situations (such as the Byzantine siege of Alexandria in 24/645¹³⁴ or the turbulent last years of the Umayyad caliphate¹³⁵), caliphs themselves appointed the *amīr*. The ties that were thus created between the provincial rulers and the top of the military in Alexandria were at times strengthened through personal relationships between both parties. 'Abd Allāh b. Ḥuḍāfa b. Qays was a Sahnī just as 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ;¹³⁶ the *amīr* Ḡanāb b. Martād reportedly was a close

¹²⁹ *History of the patriarchs*, III, p. 5 [259].

¹³⁰ For documentary evidence of the title, see J. David-Weill *et al.*, "Papyrus arabes du Louvre III", *JESHO* 21/2 (1978), no. 25 (unknown provenance; second/eighth c.), lines 2-3: *amīr al-Iskandariyya*.

¹³¹ Bouderbala, *Ḡund Miṣr*, pp. 277-90.

¹³² Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 221.

¹³³ *E.g.* al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, pp. 36, 58, 81, 153, 157-8; Ibn Yūnus, *Ta'riḥ*, I, p. 409 [1103]; al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 222.

¹³⁴ Al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 11; al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, II, p. 41; al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 223.

¹³⁵ Ibn Yūnus, *Ta'riḥ*, I, p. 385 [1051]; see also *History of the patriarchs*, III, pp. 67 [321], 70-1 [324-5].

¹³⁶ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 221 (for 'Abd Allāh's lineage); al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 6 (for 'Amr's lineage). Probably not a coincidence, Alexandria's 'chief of the fleet' (Ar. *wālī al-baḥr*) in 23/643, *i.e.* during 'Amr b. al-ʿĀṣ's first governorate, also was a relative of his. See Bouderbala, *Ḡund Miṣr*, pp. 279-80.

friend of the governor ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān.¹³⁷ Reminiscent of the above-mentioned *augustalis* who paid the caliph for independence from the governor in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, close relationships are recorded to have existed between the *amīr* and the caliph Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān (r. 41/660-60/680). Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam gives the alleged text of a private correspondence between the *amīr* ‘Alqama b. Yazīd (who headed the garrison in the period 43/664-44/665) and Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān in which ‘Alqama writes that the caliph appointed him as his deputy.¹³⁸ Dionysios of Tell-Mahrē records that Mu‘āwiya b. Abī Sufyān gave orders to an Alexandrian *amīr* without the involvement of Egypt’s governor.¹³⁹ It is evident and of minor importance for the present discussion that the *amīr* enjoyed considerable social status.¹⁴⁰ His close relationship with the provincial government or even the caliphate stood at the centre of his office.

The creation of the office of the Alexandrian *amīr* and the demilitarization of the old office of *dux et augustalis* aimed at securing the loyalty of those who were able to enforce power, *i.e.* the military. In order to do so, the Arab authorities divided the top of Alexandria’s administration in two.¹⁴¹ Leaving civil affairs in the hands of local non-Arab notables, the Arabs deprived the old office of *dux et augustalis* of all military powers, making it just *augustalis*, as soon as they conquered the city. Indeed, the caliph ‘Umar b. al-Ḥaṭṭāb is reported to have ordered the Alexandrian commanders not to trust a Byzantine over the garrison.¹⁴² In place of a *dux*, the Arabs created the office of *amīr* who headed an Arab garrison. Via the *amīrs*’ close relationship with the governors seating in al-Fuṣṭāṭ or sometimes even the caliphs, the Arab rulers secured the loyalty of the military in

¹³⁷ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 236.

¹³⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192.

¹³⁹ Dionysios of Tell-Mahrē (Palmer, *The seventh century*, p. 173 [§ 93]).

¹⁴⁰ See also David-Weill *et al.*, “Papyrus arabes”, no. 25 (unknown provenance; second/eighth c.) for people seeking justice from the Alexandrian *amīr* in case a *qāḍī* pronounced unjust justice.

¹⁴¹ Pace Kahle, “Zur Geschichte”, p. 30; Grohmann, *Studien*, p. 30-1; Labib, “Al-Iskandariyya”, p. 134a; Fraser, “Alexandria, Christian and medieval”, p. 89; Haas, *Alexandria in late Antiquity*, p. 345; Sijpesteijn, “Travel and trade”, p. 122; Z. Kiss, “Alexandria in the fourth to seventh centuries”, p. 204. Foss, *Arab-Byzantine coins*, p. 272 calls the *augustalis* ‘governor’ (implying a combined administration) but correctly notes that he had no military powers.

¹⁴² Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 192.

Alexandria. In Upper Egypt, similar changes occurred in the administration. In the decades before the Arab conquest, documents still refer to the office of *dux et augustalis*.¹⁴³ The use of terminology differed in Upper Egypt from that in Alexandria. After the Arab conquest, the title *augustalis* disappears from our source material on the administration of Upper Egypt. Instead of a *dux et augustalis*, documents related to the administration of Upper Egypt show a new office: that of the *dux*. Similar to the *augustalis* in Alexandria, the Upper Egyptian *dux* no longer held military authority after the Arab conquest.¹⁴⁴ As we will see in more detail in chapter 3, *amīrs* were appointed beside the local civil administrations. Irrespective of terminology, then, changes in Alexandria's administration were not characteristic of the Arabs' treatment of the city. They were province-wide.

4. Strengthening al-Fuṣṭāṭ's control over Alexandria around 40/660: gubernatorial presence

We saw above that the creation of an Arab centre and the appointment of an Arab over the city's military administration created direct ties between Alexandria and the top of the administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. The early-Umayyad period saw a strengthening of these ties. This is most clearly visible in the building of a *dār al-imāra* in Alexandria during the governorate of 'Utba b. Abī Sufyān (in office 43/664-44/665), i.e. the early years of Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān's caliphate (41/661-60/680),¹⁴⁵ in order to house governors on a visit in the city.

As I noted above, the first three Arab governors over Egypt, seated in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, held office in their own residences. The location of the gubernatorial seat in al-Fuṣṭāṭ, as well as that in other cities, changed soon after Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān became caliph. Despite earlier attempts to create one office for future Egyptian governors during the governorate of Qays b. Sa'd (in office for about five months in 37/657),¹⁴⁶ Mu'āwiya designated a building called *dār ar-raml*, located in

¹⁴³ E.g. *P.Prag* I 64 (Fayyūm; 15/636), line 6-7: a *dux et augustalis* of the eparchy of Arcadia; *P.Amh.* II 151 (al-Uṣmūn; A.D. 610-19 or, less likely, 7/629-20/641 [see N. Gonis, "Two Hermopolite leases of the reign of Heraclius", *ZPE* 145 (2003), p. 205]); a *dux et augustalis* of 'the two Thebais'.

¹⁴⁴ Grohmann, "Der Beamtestab", p. 123.

¹⁴⁵ Al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 36.

¹⁴⁶ Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 98.

the *ḥiṭṭa* of ‘the people of the banner’,¹⁴⁷ to serve as al-Fuṣṭāṭ’s *dār al-imāra*.¹⁴⁸ Changes in the official seat of the top of the provincial government were empire-wide. Mu‘āwīya himself had an office of the former Byzantine governor in Damascus converted to a *dār al-imāra*. This office was located on the *qibla* side of the court in front of the Church of St John, which the local Muslim community at that time used as their congregational mosque.¹⁴⁹ The location of this seat of provincial government mirrored the position of Muḥammad’s house in al-Madīna vis-à-vis al-Madīna’s mosque.¹⁵⁰ As such, locating the caliph’s residence in line with prophetic precedence aimed at establishing a link between Mu‘āwīya’s caliphate and an early-Islamic ideal and, thus, aimed at legitimizing Mu‘āwīya’s rule.¹⁵¹ In 45/665, Mu‘āwīya’s governor in al-Baṣra, Ziyād b. Abīhi, relocated the town’s *dār al-imāra* to the *qibla* side of al-Baṣra’s congregational mosque.¹⁵² In the early-50s/670s, the same Ziyād b. Abīhi, now also governor of al-Kūfa, rebuilt this town’s mosque and attached to it the local *dār al-imāra* (which seems to have faced the *qibla* from the start).¹⁵³ The *dār al-imāra* in Alexandria was built in the same empire-wide wave of architectural reforms that occurred soon after Mu‘āwīya b. Abī Sufyān came to power.¹⁵⁴ We will see in what follows that it was directly related to his coming to power.

¹⁴⁷ See Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam’s ‘Account of who was given land [Ar. *ihṭaṭṭa*] around the Mosque of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ’ in his *Futūḥ*, pp. 100-1.

¹⁴⁸ Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, pp. 100-1. Cf. Kubiak, *Al-Fustat*, p. 129; Bouderbala, *Ĝund Miṣr*, pp. 112-3.

¹⁴⁹ On the *dār al-imāra* in Damascus, see F.B. Flood, *The great mosque of Damascus: studies on the making of an Umayyad visual culture*, Leiden: Brill, 2000, pp. 147-59.

¹⁵⁰ H. Djāit, *Al-Kūfa: naissance de la ville islamique*, Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1986, esp. p. 201; Wheatley, *Places where men pray together*, p. 229. See also J. Johns, “The ‘House of the Prophet’ and the concept of the mosque”, in J. Johns (ed.), *Bayt al-Maqdis: Jerusalem and early Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 86-8.

¹⁵¹ Wheatley, *Places where men pray together*, p. 229.

¹⁵² Whitcomb, “The *miṣr* of Ayla”, p. 162.

¹⁵³ K.A.C. Creswell, *A short account of early Muslim architecture*, rev. ed., Cairo: AUC Press, 1989, p. 10; Djāit, *Al-Kūfa*, pp. 96-103.

¹⁵⁴ Although the building of a *dār al-imāra* in Jerusalem to the *qibla* side of the Temple Mount during Mu‘āwīya’s reign has been suggested (Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 222-3), archaeology has not yet confirmed this (see J. Johns, “Archaeology and the history of early Islam: the first seventy years”, *JESHO* 46/4 (2003), p. 423, n. 20).

The accession of Mu'āwiya to the caliphal throne in 41/661 gave impetus to a renewed relationship between the top of Egypt's administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ and the military and civil administration of Alexandria. From approximately that date onwards, Egyptian governors are found to have visited Alexandria on a regular basis. One possible, if historical, precedent for this practice may be found in a (late) report telling that the patriarch and governor Cyrus (al-Muqawqis), prior to the Arab conquest, 'spent some parts of the year in Alexandria, some parts in the city of Manf [Memphis], and some in Qaṣr aš-Šam'.¹⁵⁵ Another possible precedent we have already encountered in Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's passage, translated above, telling that 'Amr b. al-Āṣ and, after him, 'Abd Allāh b. Sa'd b. Abī Sarḥ possessed urban property in Alexandria. A passage preserved by al-Balāḍurī confirms, albeit implicitly, that 'Amr b. al-Āṣ visited Alexandria during his first governorate.¹⁵⁶ But all in all, there is an almost total lack of evidence for governors spending time in Alexandria in the period between the end of the conquest in 21/642 and the Umayyads' coming to power in 41/661. With the exception of 'Amr b. al-Āṣ's visit implied in al-Balāḍurī, the first governor said to have visited Alexandria in our present source material is 'Utba b. Abī Sufyān (in 44/665).¹⁵⁷ Not a coincidence, this very 'Utba b. Abī Sufyān, brother of the new caliph,¹⁵⁸ built Alexandria's *dār al-imāra*. As we will see shortly, the construction of the building and the first visit of a governor went hand in hand. An overview of references to governors visiting the city in medieval sources (appendix 1) shows that we are dealing with an Umayyad practice. Only one governor, Maṣṣūr b. Yazīd (in office 162/779), is known to have visited the city after the Abbasid revolution.¹⁵⁹ This practice came and went with the Umayyad dynasty.

¹⁵⁵ Al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, II, p. 412. Cyrus is called 'king of Egypt' (Ar. *malik Miṣr*), thus setting the anecdote before the Arab conquest. See also Ibn Taḡrī Birdī, *an-Nuḡūm az-zāhira*, I, p. 60. Cf. al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, II, p. 4.

¹⁵⁶ Al-Balāḍurī, *Futūḥ*, p. 222. See also appendix 1.

¹⁵⁷ Al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 36; Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'rīḥ*, XXXVIII, p. 268.

¹⁵⁸ Interestingly, Ziyād b. Abīhi, who rebuilt the *dār al-imāra* in al-Baṣra and al-Kūfa, was also closely related to Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān. He was adopted by the Sufyanid family. See I. Hasson, "Ziyād b. Abīhi", *EP*, XI, p. 520.

¹⁵⁹ Al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 121.

Reasons why governors visited Alexandria are hard to come by. Governors certainly kept all governmental powers.¹⁶⁰ ‘Utba b. Abī Sufyān is said to have wished to participate in, or head, the Alexandrian garrison.¹⁶¹ The third/ninth-century historian Ḥalīfa b. Ḥayyāṭ gives an interesting list on the basis of which there is room to develop some thoughts about the relationship between the governor and the top of the military administration in Alexandria. He writes that in the year 73/692-3 ‘Kurayb b. Abraha descended [Ar. *habaṭa*] to Alexandria’, that in the year 74/693-4 ‘‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān descended to Alexandria’, and that in the year 75/694-5 ‘Ġanāb b. Marṭad descended to Alexandria’.¹⁶² The historian gives no other information on governors visiting Alexandria or other persons travelling to Alexandria. The phrasing of these passages is strikingly similar. And as the three years are consecutive, the list gives the impression that the three persons succeeded each other, that is to say, that the well-known governor ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān (in office 65/685-86/705) took Kurayb b. Abraha’s place and that Ġanāb b. Marṭad took ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s place. We have no information on Ġanāb b. Marṭad’s role in Alexandria. But one medieval historian reports that Kurayb b. Abraha was appointed head of the garrison.¹⁶³ If we are right to conclude that these men replaced their predecessor, the logical conclusion is that the governor ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān took from Kurayb b. Abraha his role as garrison commander. In that case, governors visiting Alexandria temporarily took over the duties of the top of the city’s military administration. This, however, was not the only reason for governors to visit Alexandria.

¹⁶⁰ Many of the governors mentioned to have visited Alexandria are explicitly said to have left a deputy in al-Fuṣṭāṭ while important administrators and soldiers moved along with them. See *History of the patriarchs*, III, p. 95 [349]. (For the retinue of a governor who traveled to Manf, see *History of the patriarchs*, III, p. 75 [329].) See Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ*, p. 234 and al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 39 for the governor Maslama b. Muḥallad (in office 47/667-62/682) exercising his authority over al-Fuṣṭāṭ’s nobility while visiting Alexandria (cf. Wakī, *Aḥbār al-quḍā wa-ta’rīḥihim*, ed. ‘A. al-Marāḡī, 3 vols, Cairo: al-Maktaba at-tiġāriyya al-kubrā, 1366/1947-1369/1952, III, pp. 223-4).

¹⁶¹ Al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 36; Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīḥ*, XXXVIII, p. 268.

¹⁶² Ḥalīfa b. Ḥayyāṭ, *Ta’rīḥ*, I, pp. 343, 345, 347.

¹⁶³ Ibn Yūnus, *Ta’rīḥ*, I, p. 409 [no. 1103] (copied in Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīḥ*, L, p. 116 [no. 5807]).

A highly interesting passage in the *History of the patriarchs*, based on a Coptic source from the mid-Umayyad period,¹⁶⁴ tells us that governors customarily visited the city at the beginning of their governorate: ‘in the first year of ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Marwān’s governorate, he went to Alexandria, according to the custom of those who were appointed governors, to receive its taxes.’¹⁶⁵ Indeed, many governors known to have visited Alexandria did so at the beginning of their governorate, although some visited the city more than once.¹⁶⁶ The passage continues with a description of the governor’s arrival at the city and gives the impression that the arrival was one of ceremony. It tells that the governor was publicly entertained by the city’s non-Arab notables, including the Coptic patriarch.¹⁶⁷ As such, the ceremony publicly displayed his authority over the city’s notables and, hence, the entire city of Alexandria. A display of power over the patriarch may even have aimed at proclaiming authority over all of Egypt.

The passage from the *History of the patriarchs* indicates how the governor publicly displayed his power over the civic administration of the city: he publicly collected the city’s taxes. By doing so, he demanded the loyalty of the local Byzantine nobility that headed this administration. The governor’s visit also entailed his taking control over Alexandria’s military administration. His heading the city’s garrison demanded the loyalty of a body of government that was thoroughly Arab. A governor’s visit to Alexandria seems, therefore, simultaneously to have aimed at establishing, maintaining, or reasserting his power over the Byzantine as well as Arab segments of Alexandria’s administration. The visits’ symbolism indicates that, regardless of the foundation of al-Fuṣṭāṭ, Alexandria continued to enjoy a powerful and central position in Egypt well into the Umayyad period.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁴ Den Heijer, *Mawhūb Ibn Maṣṣūr*, pp. 142-5.

¹⁶⁵ *History of the patriarchs*, III, p. 13 [267].

¹⁶⁶ See appendix 1.

¹⁶⁷ *History of the patriarchs*, III, pp. 13-5 [267-9].

¹⁶⁸ See also Sijpesteijn, “Travel and trade”, pp. 122-3 and A. Papaconstantinou, “Confrontation, interaction, and the formation of the early Islamic *oikoumene*: review article”, *Revue des études byzantines* 63 (2005), p. 173.

The gubernatorial visits were introduced by the Sufyanids. They must, therefore, be counted among those early-Umayyad innovations that tried to establish and legitimize Umayyad rule such as their taking firm control of the *qaṣaṣ*,¹⁶⁹ their introduction of new coinages and administrative structures,¹⁷⁰ or the proclamation and legitimization of their rule in papyrus protocols and monumental inscriptions.¹⁷¹ As such, it is an early example of the itinerancy of rulers, best known from Marwanid Syro-Palestine but also practiced by Mu'āwiya b. Abī Sufyān and meant to establish authority in relatively remote areas.¹⁷² The (re)building of gubernatorial offices served the same purpose. In Alexandria's case, the city's *dār al-imāra* was located in an 'old' (Ar. *qadīm*) and presumably Byzantine fortress (Ar. *ḥiṣn*).¹⁷³ Thus, the *dār al-imāra* not only facilitated a governor's visit but even visualized his power over the city's ruling nobility: it was now an Arab governor who resided in a building that used to be associated with Byzantine rule over the city. In short, by not residing in al-Fuṣṭāṭ but in Alexandria a governor aimed to subdue the powerful city of Alexandria to his administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ.¹⁷⁴

5. Concluding remarks

Socio-political changes in the course of the first half of the second/eighth century altered this administrative relationship between al-Fuṣṭāṭ and Alexandria and reduced the need for governors to visit the city. With the arrival of the Marwanids

¹⁶⁹ K. 'Athamina, "Al-Qasas: its emergence, religious origin and its socio-political impact on early Muslim society", *Studia islamica* 76 (1992), pp. 53-75.

¹⁷⁰ C. Foss, "A Syrian coinage of Mu'āwiya?", *Revue numismatique* 158 (2002), pp. 353-65; S. Sears, "The legitimation of al-Hakam b. al-'As: Umayyad government in seventh-century Kirman", *Iranian studies* 36/1 (2003), pp. 5-25; P. Crone, *Slaves on horses: the evolution of the Islamic polity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, pp. 30-1; F.M. Donner, "The growth of military institutions in the early caliphate and their relation to civilian authority", *Al-Qantara* 14/2 (1993), p. 323.

¹⁷¹ R. Hoyland, "New documentary texts and the early Islamic state", *BSOAS* 69/3 (2006), p. 399.

¹⁷² A. Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir: l'espace syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides* (v. 72-193/692-809), Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2011, pp. 396-443 (for Mu'āwiya, see pp. 404-5).

¹⁷³ Al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-qudā*, p. 36. See also Kubiak, "Mosque of Amr ibn al-As", pp. 127-8 and Behrens-Abouseif, "Topographie d'Alexandrie", p. 116.

¹⁷⁴ Pace Sijpesteijn, "Travel and trade", p. 122 (who writes that governors visited Alexandria 'out of personal preference') and C. Foss, "Egypt under Mu'āwiya. Part II: Middle Egypt, Fuṣṭāṭ and Alexandria", *BSOAS* 72/2 (2009), pp. 269-70.

in mid-65/late-684 and their centralization programmes,¹⁷⁵ al-Fuṣṭāṭ increased its control over the civic administration of Alexandria. This is particularly visible in the gradual Arabization of Egypt's administration, affecting Alexandria from around 80/700 at the latest, and the creation of administrative offices in Alexandria that were directly connected with the central administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. As such, the first half of the second/eighth century formed a last stage in the relationship between al-Fuṣṭāṭ and Alexandria before 132/750.

Traces of the Arabization of Alexandria's civic administration are first seen around the turn of the second/eighth century. *P.Lond.* IV 1412 (Iṣqūh; 80/699-86/705) lists part of the pagarchy of Iṣqūh's taxes of the fourteenth indiction year 81-2/700-1. Although we saw above that the *augustalis's* office is still attested in documents from the 90s/710s, line 279 of *P.Lond.* IV 1412 states that the pagarchy transferred tax money to an Arab named al-Ḥārīt b. 'Abs who at that time headed the treasury in Alexandria and, therefore, was involved in the city's civil administration. By the time of the Abbasid revolution, one Ibrāhīm al-Māḥikī/al-Mawṣilī is mentioned to have been Alexandria's civil administrator.¹⁷⁶ His name and *nisba* suggest that he was an Arab or a convert to Islam. His title *arḥun*, designating in his time an elevated social status,¹⁷⁷ shows that in the mid-second/eighth century the top of the city's administration was taken over by members of the local Arab or Muslim nobility and was no longer in the hands of non-Arab notables.¹⁷⁸ After him, indeed, members of other influential local Arab families are recorded to have headed Alexandria's administration.¹⁷⁹ The reduction of the authority of the city's non-Arab nobility in the first half of the

¹⁷⁵ There is much literature on the Marwanid innovations. For overviews, see C.F. Robinson, *'Abd al-Malik*, Oxford: OneWorld, 2005, pp. 66-80; Sijpesteijn, "New rule", pp. 195-7; *idem.*, *Shaping a Muslim state*, pp. 91-111.

¹⁷⁶ *History of the patriarchs*, III, p. 130 [384]. See also appendix 1, n. 34.

¹⁷⁷ L.S.B. MacCull, "Patronage and the social order in Coptic Egypt", in L. Criscuolo & G. Geraci (eds), *Egitto e storia antica dall'ellenismo all'età araba*, Bologna: LCUEB, 1989, pp. 500-2.

¹⁷⁸ Non-Arabs are still attested as working in Alexandria's fiscal administration in the third/ninth century, see *History of the patriarchs*, IV, p. 449 [563].

¹⁷⁹ Our sources give no information on the head of the civil or military administration for the period 132/750-195/811. But in 195/811 and 198/813, Alexandria was administered by Bahlūl al-Laḥmī and Ḥudayḡ b. 'Abd al-Wāḥid respectively. See al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, pp. 153.

second/eighth century compares well with the contemporary increase of the central administration's power over the Coptic patriarchate¹⁸⁰ and with the Arabization of pagarchs and *duces* in Upper Egypt.¹⁸¹

These changes in the identity of Alexandria's administrative personnel coincided with the appearance of administrative offices in Alexandria that were closely connected to the administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ. Around the turn of the second/eighth century appears Alexandria's first known *qāḍī*, Marṭad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Yazanī (d. 90/708-9), holding office during the governorate of 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān. We will revisit him in chapter 4. At approximately the same time mention medieval historiographical sources for the first time a *qāṣṣ* in Alexandria: al-Ġulāḥ al-Quraṣī (d. 120/737-8), a Byzantine client of 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān or one of his sons and appointed over Alexandria's *qaṣaṣ* during the caliphate of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz (99/717-101/720).¹⁸² Further, Egypt's first *ṣāḥib al-ḥarāġ*, Usāma b. Zayd (in office 96/714-99/717 and 102/720-104/722-3), is recorded to have held office in Alexandria during both his tenures.¹⁸³

The close connections between these officials and the central administration in al-Fuṣṭāṭ together with the officials' Arab ethnicity must greatly have reduced the *raison d'être* of the gubernatorial visits discussed above. The visits were no longer needed to publicly display Arab rule over the city. Indeed, when the Abbasids came to power in 132/750 and neglected Alexandria as a naval base,¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Décobert, *Le mendiant et le combattant*, pp. 86-7; Sijpesteijn, "New rule", p. 196.

¹⁸¹ Sijpesteijn, "Landholding patterns", pp. 126-7.

¹⁸² Ibn Yūnus, *Ta'riḥ*, I, p. 97 [no. 257]; as-Suyūṭī, *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara fī ta'riḥ Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*, 2 vols, ed. M.A.F. Ibrāhīm, Cairo: Dār iḥyā' al-kutub al-'arabiyya, 1387/1967, I, p. 265 [no. 75]; Ibn Ḥaġar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahḍīb at-tahḍīb*, 2 vols, eds I. az-Zaybaq & 'A. Muṣṣid, Beirut: Mu'assasat ar-risāla, 1416/1995, I, p. 321.

¹⁸³ *History of the patriarchs*, III, pp. 67 [321], 70-1 [324-5] writes that Usāma b. Zayd held office in Alexandria before he died on a forced journey to al-Fuṣṭāṭ, *i.e.* during his second tenure. For the identity of the 'governor' (Ar. *wālī*) Usāma mentioned there, see Grohmann, *Geographie und Verwaltung*, p. 31. Ibn Yūnus (cited in al-Maqrīzī, *Ḥiṭaṭ*, I, pp. 290-1; *idem.*, *al-Muqaffā*, II, p. 38 [no. 710]; and Ibn 'Asākir, *Ta'riḥ*, VIII, p. 84 [no. 597]) implies that Usāma b. Zayd held office in Alexandria during the caliphate of al-Walīd b. 'Abd al-Malik (86/105-96/115), *i.e.* during his first tenure as *ṣāḥib al-ḥarāġ*.

¹⁸⁴ The participation of an Alexandrian fleet in assaults on Byzantine territory is not recorded after a planned but failed attempt to raid Cyprus in 127-8/745-6 (Theophanes Confessor, *Chronicle*, p. 466 [*anno mundi* 6238]; Nicephorus, *Nikephoros*, p. 141 [§ 68]). It is in 136/754 that we hear for the last time in the second/eighth century of a fleet being prepared in Alexandria. But this time it was destined for

the custom was entirely abolished.¹⁸⁵ Administratively speaking, al-Fuṣṭāṭ now dominated Alexandria. These changes in the administrative relationship between al-Fuṣṭāṭ and Alexandria in the course of the first half of the second/eighth century were part of a larger development. They mark al-Fuṣṭāṭ's maturation as Egypt's capital. In the chapters that follow, we will see that al-Fuṣṭāṭ's position in Egypt on other levels developed along the same chronology.

Ṭarābulus in North Africa and not Byzantine territory (al-Kindī, *al-Wulā wa-l-quḍā*, p. 103). The city had to wait almost a century for renewed interest among the authorities in Egypt's coastal defence. Only after the Byzantine sack of Dimyāṭ in 238/853 did al-Mutawakkil order the governor 'Anbasa b. Ishāq to fortify the Egyptian littoral, including the erection of a city wall around Alexandria's much shrunken urban core and the rebuilding of the Egyptian fleet. See G. Levi della Vida, "A papyrus reference to the Damietta raid of 853 A.D.", *Byzantion* 17 (1944-5), pp. 212-21 and Kahle, "Zur Geschichte", p. 39.

¹⁸⁵ See p. 53 above.

