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George F. Moore

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**GEORGE F. MOORE**

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OF THE

AMERICAN ORIENTAL SOCIETY.

EDITED BY

GEORGE F. MOORE,

Professor in Andover Theological Seminary.

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*The Egyptian prototype of "King John and the Abbot."*—  
By CHARLES C. TORREY, Professor in Andover Theological Seminary, Andover, Mass.

ONE of the oldest Arabic historical works is Ibn 'Abd el-Hakem's *فتوح مصر*, or *Conquest of Egypt*, composed near the middle of the ninth century A. D. Its author, 'Abd er-Rahmān ibn 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd el-Hakem, a native of Egypt and the son of a man of high rank, died in the year 257 A. H. (871 A. D.). He was thus a contemporary of Ibn Sa'd (d. 230), Belādhori (d. 279), and Ṭabari (d. 310). His book, which is of about the same extent as Belādhori's *Futūḥ el-Buldān*, is a collection of the traditions relating to the Mohammedan conquest of Egypt, Africa, and Spain. It thus furnishes a welcome supplement to the other early Muslim histories and tradition collections, which give comparatively little space to these countries. Though containing a great deal that is worthless, and written by one who possessed few of the qualities of a good historian, it is, nevertheless, a work of great importance. I hope soon to publish an edition of it based on the three manuscripts in London and Paris, which I have already copied and collated.

Although this *Conquest of Egypt* has been extensively used by the later Mohammedan historians, yet it contains some very interesting material which has apparently not been used by other writers. An example of the kind is the accompanying anecdote, which has never been published, and, if I am not mistaken, has never been brought to the attention of occidental scholars.

In one of the introductory chapters of his book, Ibn 'Abd el-Hakem gives a list of the Egyptian kings who reigned in Mem-

phis, beginning with the grandson of Noah, and extending down to the time when the country came under foreign rule. Most of these kings are mentioned only by name; a few, however, are the subjects of more or less extended tradition or anecdote. One of these latter is the king whom the historian identifies with Pharaoh Necho, of Old Testament fame (2 Kings xxiii. 29-35). The spelling of the name of this king, in its Arabic form, varies considerably; the variation being plainly due to the fact that in the oldest sources the diacritical points were usually omitted. In the manuscripts of the *Futūḥ Miṣr* the name is generally unpointed. Where points are given, the form is Baulah, بولاه (attested by all three manuscripts). Mas'ūdī (ed. Meynard, ii. 410) has بولونه; Abu 'l-Mahāsīn (ed. Juynboll, i. 87) has بولونه, بولونه, and other (unpointed) forms; Maqrīzī (Balāq, 1854, i. 143) and Ya'qūbī (ed. Houtsma, i. 211) read بولاه, Naulah; and so on. The tradition relating to this king which is given by all these historians—who derive it, apparently, from Ibn 'Abd el-Hakem—is the following (quoted from the *Futūḥ Miṣr*):

ثم تروقي  
 [مناكيل] فاستخلف ابنه بولاه بن مناكيل فملكهم مائة  
 سنة وعشرين سنة وهو الاعرج الذي سبى ملك بيت المقدس  
 وقدم به الى مصر وكان بولاه قد تمكن في البلاد وبلغ مبلغا لم  
 يبلغه احد ممن كان قبله بعد فرعون وطعا فقتله الله صرعه  
 دابته فذقت عنقه فمات.

That is, though 'Baulah' was the most powerful ruler since Rameses II., yet he was so wicked that God at length put a sudden end to his life; or, more exactly, his horse threw him, and the fall broke his neck. This is given by Ibn 'Abd el-Hakem as the 'standard' tradition as to the end of his reign. But he adds another tradition, "derived, it is said, from a native sheikh learned in such matters," according to which the king was deposed by his own people. The story which then follows is a most interesting one. Besides being an excellent example of that

<sup>1</sup> Thus vocalized in the old and carefully written manuscript of the British Museum.

class of popular tales in which the interest centers in the shrewd answers given to a series of hard questions, it is plainly a genuine bit of Coptic folk-lore, which had been current in the land long before the Arab invasion. It has, moreover, as we shall see, some striking parallels in the European folk-lore of the middle ages. The Arabic text here given, which is now published for the first time, is based on the excellent London manuscript of the *Futūḥ Miṣr* (MS. Brit. Mus. *Stowe Or. 6*; No. 520 in Rien's *Supplement*).

قال واخبرنى شيخ من اهل مصر من اهل العلم ان  
 الخلع الذى خلعه اهل مصر انما هو بركه وذلك انه دعا  
 الوراء ومن كانت الملوك قبله تجرى عليهم الارزاق والجوايز فكانت  
 استكثر ذلك فقال لهم انى اريد ان اسالكم عن مسائل فان  
 اخبرتمونى بها ردت في ارزاقكم ورفعت من اقداركم وان انتم لم  
 تخبرونى بها ضربت (fol. 11a) اعناقكم فقالوا له سلنا عم شئت  
 فقال لهم اخبرونى ما يفعل الله تبارك وتعالى في كل يوم وكم  
 عدد نجوم السماء وكم مقدار ما تستحق الشمس في كل يوم على  
 ابن آدم فاستأجلوه فأجلهم في ذلك شهرا فكانوا يخرجون في كل  
 يوم الى خارج مدينة منف فيقفون في ظل قرموس يتباثون ما  
 هم فيه ثم يرجعون وصاحب القرموس ينظر اليهم فاتاهم ذات  
 يوم فسألهم عن امرهم فاخبروه فقال لهم عندي علم ما  
 تريدون الا ان لي قرموسا لا استطيع ان اعطيه فليتعذ رجل  
 منكم مكانى يعمل فيه واعطونى دابة كدوايتكم والبسوني ثيابا  
 كثيابكم ففعلوا وكان في المدينة ابن لبعض ملوكهم قد ساءت  
 حالته فاناه القرموس فسأله القيام بملك ابية وطلبه فقال ليس  
 يخرج هذا يريد الملك من مدينة منف فقال أنا اخرجك لك