



## The Events of the Year

[2799]

24

(NOVEMBER 7, 644—OCTOBER 27, 645)



In (this year) the oath of allegiance was rendered to 'Uthmān b. 'Affān as Caliph. There is disagreement as to when the oath was rendered to him. Some authorities (*ba'ḍuhum*) follow the account related to me by al-Hārith—Ibn Sa'd—Muḥammad b. 'Umar (al-Wāqidi)—Abū Bakr b. Ismā'il b. Muḥammad b. Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ—'Uthmān b. Muḥammad al-Akhnasī. He [Ibn Sa'd] says: according to Muḥammad b. 'Umar—Abū Bakr b. 'Abdallāh b. Abī Sabrah—Ya'qūb b. Zayd—his father: The oath of allegiance was rendered to 'Uthmān b. 'Affān on Monday, the next to last day of Dhū al-Ḥijjah of the year 23 (November 5, 644).<sup>1</sup> He accepted the Caliphate in al-Muḥarram of the year 24 (November 7—December 6, 644).

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1. This implies that al-Muḥarram would begin on Tuesday at sunset. There is a discrepancy between the day of the week and the date of the month here. According to Caetani's tables (*Annali*, VII, 2), Muḥarram 1, 24 should have fallen on Sunday (= November 7); hence the oath of allegiance to 'Uthmān would have taken place on Friday rather than Monday. In this case, I have followed the Julian-Hijri equivalents for the day of the month, disregarding the day of the week. However confused these dates may seem, Ṭabarī appears to have transcribed his

Others follow the account related to me by Aḥmad b. Thābit al-Rāzī—someone who mentioned it<sup>2</sup>—Ishāq b. ‘Īsā—Abū Ma‘shar: The oath of allegiance was rendered to ‘Uthmān in the Year of Nosebleeds, the year 24. It is said [by certain authorities]: This year was called the Year of Nosebleeds only because nosebleeds were a common occurrence among the people during this time.<sup>3</sup>

Others follow the account transmitted to me in writing by al-Sarī—Shu‘ayb—Sayf—Khulayd b. Dhafarah and Mujālid: ‘Uthmān was named Caliph on al-Muḥarram 3 of the year 24 (November 9, 644); then he went out and led the people in the afternoon prayer. He increased [their stipends] and permitted delegations to be sent [to him from the provinces];<sup>4</sup> this was established as a precedent.

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source (al-Wāqidi) accurately, for Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, V, 23, who also follows al-Wāqidi, gives the same ones. The dates of ‘Uthmān’s election and assumption of office are subjects of considerable confusion, as will become evident below; on this issue see Caetani, *Annali*, VII, 7–8.

2. *‘amman dhakarahu*. The phrase could also be rendered, “on the authority of someone whom he has mentioned.” But cf. the *isnād* of Aḥmad b. Thābit below, p. 25. *Dhakara* normally indicates a written, not an oral, source: “he mentioned in a book.”

3. I have consistently rendered *al-nās* as “the people” in this translation. Unfortunately there are other terms (e.g., *qawm*, *ahl*) that appear to be near-synonyms and which for the sake of English idiom sometimes must be translated as “people,” though I have tried to find other equivalents wherever possible. In this section of Ṭabarī, *al-nās* is consistently used to refer collectively to the Muslims, either as a whole or (more commonly) to those involved in a particular incident. The term has strongly positive connotations; normally it is applied to a group that is morally upright and devoted to the ideals of the Community. *Qawm* in contrast is usually negative in tone, implying a group acting in opposition to Islam or (if made up of Muslims) subverting the unity and integrity of the Community. *Qawm* is commonly used in the Qur’ān and elsewhere to mean “a people, nation,” and its root meaning is “the fighting men of a tribe.” In this section of Ṭabarī, however, *qawm* almost always refers to a small, voluntary association. I have normally translated it as “group” or “band.” *Ahl* is a morally neutral term that refers simply to the populace of a certain locality or to the partisans of a given religio-political tendency. Hence, an expression like *ahl al-Baṣrah* can appropriately be translated as “the Baṣrans,” though occasionally “the inhabitants/people of Baṣrah” seems better.

4. Presumably in order to swear the oath of allegiance to him on behalf of the officials and troops of the frontiers, and to receive accession donatives from the new Caliph. This and the succeeding text repeat (with identical *isnāds*) reports already cited in connection with the account of ‘Umar’s death above: I, 2727, 2728. The latter reads “*wa-waffada ahla al-amṣāri wa-ṣani’a fihim*”—“He permitted the inhabitants of the garrison towns to send delegations, and treated them generously.”

It was transmitted to me in writing by al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—Sayf—'Amr—al-Sha'bi: The men of the *shūrā*<sup>5</sup> agreed on 'Uthmān on al-Muḥarram 3 (November 9). It was now midafternoon, and the muezzin of Ṣuhayb<sup>6</sup> had called the prayer. They reached agreement between the call to prayer and its actual inception. Then ('Uthmān) went out and led the people in prayer. He increased [the stipends of] the people by 100 [dirhams] and permitted the inhabitants of the garrison towns (*ahl al-amṣār*) to send delegations; he was the first to do these things. [2800]

Others follow the account of Ibn Sa'd—al-Wāqidi—Ibn Jurayj—Ibn Abī Mulaykah: The oath of allegiance was rendered to 'Uthmān on al-Muḥarram 10, three nights after the murder of 'Umar.

*The Sermon of 'Uthmān and the Slaying of al-Hurmuzān by 'Ubaydallāh b. 'Umar*

It was transmitted to me in writing by al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—Sayf—Badr b. 'Uthmān—his paternal uncle: When the men of the *shūrā* had rendered the oath of allegiance to 'Uthmān, he went out more distressed than any of them. He came to the pulpit of the Messenger of God and preached to the people, praising and extolling God and asking His blessing upon the Prophet. He said: "Verily you are in a transitory abode and in the flower of life, so set forth until the time appointed for your death and aim for the best which you can attain, for you may be met [by your end] morning or evening. Surely this world harbors deceit, 'so let not the present life delude you,' and 'let not the deceitful one delude you

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5. The *shūrā* was the electoral council of six men ('Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf, Ṭalhah, Zubayr, Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ—who was not actually present—'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, and 'Uthmān b. 'Affān) named by 'Umar on his deathbed in order to choose his successor from among their own number. The *shūrā*'s deliberations and choice of the aged 'Uthmān were matters of intense controversy. See Vol. 14 of the present translation (text, I, 2776–2797).

6. Ṣuhayb al-Rūmī was a freedman, presumably of Greek Christian origin, whom the stricken 'Umar had appointed to lead the prayers while the *shūrā* met *in camera* to determine his successor. The text reads "*mu'adhdhin Ṣuhayb*," so it is clear that Ṣuhayb himself was not the muezzin.

[2801]

concerning God.<sup>7</sup> Consider those who have gone before you, then be in earnest and do not be neglectful, for you will surely not be overlooked. Where are the sons and brothers of this world who tilled it, dwelt in it, and were long granted enjoyment therein? Did it not spit them out? Cast aside this world as God has cast it aside and seek the hereafter, for verily God has coined a parable for it and for that which is better. The Almighty has said: 'And strike for them the similitude of the present life: it is as water that We send down out of heaven, [and the plants of the earth mingle with it; and in the morning it is straw the winds scatter; and God is omnipotent over everything. Wealth and sons are the adornment of the present world; but the abiding things, the deeds of righteousness, are better with God in reward, and better in] hope.'<sup>8</sup> Then the people came forward to render the oath of allegiance to him.

It was transmitted to me in writing by al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—Sayf—Abū Maṣṣūr: I heard al-Qumādhbān speaking about the murder of his father. He said: The Persians (*al-'Ajam*) in Medina were taking their ease with one another when Fayrūz<sup>9</sup> passed by my father with a two-bladed dagger. (My father) took it from him and said, "What are you doing with this around here?" Fayrūz said, "I like having it."<sup>10</sup> Now a man saw him, and when 'Umar was struck down, he said, "I saw this (dagger) with al-Hurmuzān; he gave it to Fayrūz." Then 'Ubaydallāh came up and killed (al-Hurmuzān). When 'Uthmān took office, he summoned me and put ('Ubaydallāh) in my hands. Then he said, "My son, this man is the murderer of your father; it is your duty rather than ours to take vengeance upon him, so go and kill him." I went out with him, and there was no one in the land who did not support me and demand that [I take action] against him. I said to them, "Is it up to me to kill ('Ubaydallāh)?" They answered, "Yes." And they reviled 'Ubaydallāh. Then I said, "Is it your place to protect him?"

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7. Qur'ān 31:33; 35:5.

8. Qur'ān 18:42–44. The words in brackets are supplied to complete the passage, cited here (as is usual in medieval Arabic texts) in abridged form.

9. Fayrūz Abū Lu'lu'ah, the murderer of 'Umar.

10. Reading "*ānasū bihi*" in accordance with Ibrāhīm's text and the mss (Oxford Marsh 394, Köprülü 1043), rather than "*abussu bihi*," a conjectural restoration by the editor (E. Prym) of the Leiden text.

They answered, "No," and they reviled him. Then I left [ʿUbaydallāh] to God's hands and theirs, and they bore me away. By God, I only reached my home carried upon the heads and hands of these men.<sup>11</sup>

*The Governorship of Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ in Kūfah*

In this year, ʿUthmān removed al-Mughīrah b. Shuʿbah from Kūfah and appointed Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ as governor there, according to the account transmitted to me in writing by al-Sarī—Shuʿayb—Sayf—al-Mujālid—al-Shaʿbī. He says: ʿUmar had said, "I enjoin the Caliph after me to name Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ as governor, for I did not remove him on account of any evil action, and I fear that something of that kind may be attributed to him." The first governor (ʿāmil) whom ʿUthmān appointed was Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ in Kūfah. He removed al-Mughīrah b. Shuʿbah from office, al-Mughīrah being in Medina at that time. Sa'd acted as governor in (Kūfah) for one year and part of another. (ʿUthmān) retained Abū Mūsā (al-Ashʿarī) in office for a number of years.<sup>12</sup>

[2802]

According to al-Wāqidī—Usāmah b. Zayd b. Aslam—his father: ʿUmar enjoined that his governors (ʿummāl) should be maintained in office for a year. When ʿUthmān came to power, he kept al-Mughīrah b. Shuʿbah in Kūfah for a year and then removed him, naming Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ as his governor [there]. Then he removed him and appointed al-Walid b. ʿUqbah. If al-Wāqidī is correct about that, then Sa'd's governorship in Kūfah on behalf of ʿUthmān fell in the year 25.

*The Letters of ʿUthmān to His Officials (ʿummāl)  
and Governors (wulāt) and to the Common People  
(al-āmmah)*

It was transmitted to me in writing by al-Sarī—Shuʿayb—Sayf—Muḥammad and Ṭalḥah—their usual chain of authorities (*bi-*

11. Other versions of this story portray ʿUbaydallāh and ʿUthmān in a far more hostile light: see Vol. 14 of the present translation (I, 2795–2797); Yaʿqūbī, *Taʾriḫ*, II, 188; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil* (Beirut), III, 75–76.

12. As governor of Baṣrah; see below, p. 34.

*isnādihimā*): When 'Uthmān took office, he dispatched 'Abdallāh b. 'Āmir to Kābul—that is, the province of Sijistān. He stayed in Kābul until he had captured all of it. Now the province of Sijistān was larger than Khurāsān until Mu'āwiyah died; then the inhabitants of Kābul resisted stubbornly.

[2803] According to some authorities (*qālū*), the first letter which 'Uthmān wrote to his officials was [as follows]: "To proceed: God has commanded the imāms to be shepherds; He did not direct them to be tax collectors. Indeed at the inception of this Community they were made shepherds and not tax collectors. But your imāms are surely on the verge of becoming tax collectors rather than shepherds. If they turn out thus, then modesty of manners, integrity, and good faith will be at an end. Verily, the most just conduct is for you to examine the affairs and obligations of the Muslims, so that you may give them what is properly theirs and take from them what they owe. Do likewise as regards the Pact of Protection;<sup>13</sup> give to them what is theirs and take from them what they owe. As to the enemy whom you encounter, faithfully seek God's aid against them."

According to some authorities, the first letter that he wrote to the commanders of the armies in the frontier passes was [as follows]: "To proceed: Verily you are the guardians and protectors of the Muslims, and 'Umar laid down for you [instructions] that were not hidden from us; on the contrary, they were in accordance with our counsel. Let me hear of no change or alteration on the part of any one of you, lest God change your situation and replace you with others. So examine your conduct, for I shall examine what God has required me to examine and watch over."

According to some authorities, the first letter that he wrote to the tax officials (*'ummāl al-kharāj*) was [as follows]: "To proceed: Verily God created mankind in truth, and he accepts naught but

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13. *al-dhimmah*. The treaty made with non-Muslims at the time of the Conquest, guaranteeing them security of life and property and limited freedom of worship in return for submission to Muslim rule. Some of the vast literature on this complex subject is surveyed in the translator's *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (Minneapolis: 1988), 233–39. A recent general reference is C. E. Bosworth, "The Concept of Dhimma in Early Islam," in B. Braude and B. Lewis, eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* (2 vols., New York: 1982), I, 37–51.

the truth. Take what is right and give for it what is right. Strive for integrity! Uphold it and be not the first to violate it, so that you may share what you have acquired with those who come after you. Keep faith, keep faith! Do not wrong the orphan nor one with whom you have made a pact, for God is the opponent of him who wrongs them."

According to some authorities, his letter to the common people was [as follows]: "To proceed: You have attained so much only by strict adherence to sound models [of conduct]. Let not this world turn you away from your proper concerns (*amrikum*), for this Community will become involved in innovation after three things occur together among you: complete prosperity, the attainment of adulthood by the children of captive women, and the recitation of the Qur'ān by both Arabs and non-Arabs (*al-a'ājim*). The Messenger of God has said, 'Unbelief stems from speaking Arabic badly; if something seems foreign to them, they will do it awkwardly and [thereby] bring about innovation.'" [2804]

It was transmitted to me in writing by al-Sarī—Shu'ayb—Sayf—'Aṣim b. Sulaymān—'Āmir al-Sha'bī: 'Uthmān was the first Caliph to increase the stipends paid to the people by a hundred [dirhams]; this became the usual practice. 'Umar used to pay to every living person among the authorized recipients of stipends (*ahl al-fay'*)<sup>14</sup> one dirham per day during Ramaḍān, and stipulated for the wives of the Messenger of God two dirhams each. He was told, "You should have prepared food for them and brought them to one place to get it." He replied, "Feed the people in their homes." 'Uthmān confirmed what 'Umar had done, but increased [the amount]. He established the [grants of] food for Ramaḍān, saying, "[This is] for the devout worshiper who lingers in the mosque, for the wayfarer, and for the destitute among the people during Ramaḍān."

In this year—that is, the year 24—al-Walīd b. 'Uqbah raided

14. *Ahl al-fay'*, literally "the people of booty." In the context of the Conquest years, it means those Muslims who were entitled to a regular stipend from the public treasury, whose revenues came from taxes and tribute levied against the "immovable booty" (*fay'*) constituted by the conquered territories and their inhabitants. These stipends were paid to Muslims who had joined the new religion in the time of Muḥammad and to the Arab soldiers who had accepted Islam and participated in the wars of conquest. See F. Løkkegaard, "Fay'," *EP*, II, 869–70.

Ādharbayjān and Armenia, because their inhabitants had repudiated the terms to which they had agreed with the Muslims during 'Umar's reign. [That is] according to the account of Abū Mikhnaf, but other authorities relate that this took place in the year 26.

[2805]

*The Campaign of [al-Walīd b. 'Uqbah in  
Ādharbayjān and Armenia]*

According to Hishām b. Muḥammad—Abū Mikhnaf—Farwah b. Laqīṭ, of the clan of Ghāmid in the tribe of Azd:<sup>15</sup> The campaigns of the Kūfans took place in Rayy and Ādharbayjān; in the two frontier zones there were 10,000 Kūfan warriors, 6,000 in Ādharbayjān and 4,000 at Rayy. In Kūfah itself, there were at that time 40,000 warriors, and every year 10,000 of them would go on campaign to these two frontier zones, so that a man would be subject to one campaign every four years. During his governorship in Kūfah during the reign (*sultān*) of 'Uthmān, al-Walīd b. 'Uqbah campaigned in Ādharbayjān and Armenia. (Al-Walīd) summoned Salmān b. Rabī'ah al-Bāhili, sending him ahead as his vanguard, while al-Walīd set out with the body of the people, with the intention of devoting every effort to [the conquest of] the land of Armenia. He proceeded with the people until he entered Ādharbayjān. He sent 'Abdallāh b. Shubayl b. 'Awf al-Aḥmasī with 4,000 (troops), and he attacked the inhabitants of Mūqān, al-Babar, and al-Ṭaylasān. He seized some of their wealth and cattle, but these people (*qawm*) were on guard, and he took only a few captives from among them before turning back to meet al-Walīd b. 'Uqbah.

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Then al-Walīd made peace with the inhabitants of Ādharbayjān, in return for [a tribute] of 800,000 dirhams, these being the terms which Ḥudhayfah b. al-Yamān had negotiated in the year 22, one year after the battle of Nihāwand.<sup>16</sup> With the death of 'Umar, they had stopped payment. When 'Uthmān took office and

15. Text: *al-Azdī thumma 'l-Ghāmidī*. See Wright, *Arabic Grammar*, I, 293C.

16. The battle of Nihāwand (21/642) was the Arab victory in the mountain passes leading from Iraq to Hamadhān over Sasanian forces commanded by the king Yazdagird III. This victory opened the Iranian plateau to Arab attack, and brought an end to centrally controlled Iranian resistance to the Arab invaders. It was not the end of the fighting in Iran, which stretched on for more than a decade



al-Walid b. 'Uqbah became governor of Kufah, (the latter) campaigned until he had trampled them underfoot with (his) army. When they saw that, they submitted to him, beseeching him to maintain for them [the terms of the original] treaty. He did so, taking from them the sums due. He also dispatched a series of expeditions against the enemies of the Muslims roundabout (those who had just submitted). When 'Abdallāh b. Shubayl al-Aḥmasī returned unharmed and bearing plunder from his raid, (al-Walid) dispatched, in the year 24, Salmān b. Rabī'ah al-Bāhili against Armenia with 12,000 (troops). He went into the land of Armenia killing and taking prisoners and booty. Then, his hands laden [with plunder], he left and returned to al-Walid. Al-Walid now departed, having triumphantly achieved his aims.

*The Gathering of Byzantine Forces against the  
Muslims and the Muslims' Call for Aid from the  
Kūfans*

In this year, according to Abū Mikhnaf, the Byzantines mobilized their forces to such a level that the Muslim armies in Syria sought reinforcements from 'Uthmān.

*The Account of That Event*

According to Hishām—Abū Mikhnaf—Farwah b. Laqīṭ al-Azdī: When—during the year 24 according to (Abū Mikhnaf's) chronology—al-Walid achieved his aims in Armenia in the campaign discussed above, and then entered Mosul, making camp at al-Ḥadīthah, he received a letter from 'Uthmān, [as follows]: "To proceed: Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān<sup>17</sup> has written to inform me that the Byzantines have mobilized vast forces against the Mus-

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and was often very bitter, but this was henceforth a matter of local sieges, regional campaigns, guerilla resistance, and the like.

17. At this time governor of Syria, having succeeded his elder brother Yazīd in 639 when the latter had perished during an outbreak of the plague. Mu'āwiyah was the son of the Prophet's most obdurate opponent and had accepted Islam only with the occupation of Mecca in 8/630. In spite of this taint, however, his great talents were recognized by Muḥammad himself and—somewhat reluctantly—by the Caliph 'Umar.

lims; therefore, I have thought it fit that their Kūfan brothers should assist them. When my letter reaches you, send to them, [directly] from the place where my emissary shall find you, a man whose courage, steadfastness, valor, and [devotion to] Islam satisfies you, along with eight or nine or ten thousand (troops). Peace!"

Then al-Walīd stood up amidst the people. He praised and extolled God, then he said: "To proceed: O People, God has in this manner conferred a great blessing upon the Muslims. He has restored to them lands of theirs that had reverted to unbelief and has opened up lands that had not been conquered [before], sending them back safe and sound and fully compensated [for their struggles]. Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds! The Commander of the Faithful has written, commanding me to dispatch between eight and ten thousand of you to reinforce your brothers in Syria, for the Byzantines have gathered their forces against them. In that there will be a mighty recompense and manifest bounty.<sup>18</sup> Go forward then—may God be merciful to you—with Salmān b. Rabī'ah al-Bāhili."

[2808] (Abū Mikhnaf) says: So the people pressed forward, and a third day had not elapsed before 8,000 men from among the Kūfans departed, marching until they entered Byzantine territory together with the Syrians. Commanding the Syrian army was Ḥabīb b. Maslamah b. Khālīd al-Fihri, while the Kūfan army was under Salmān b. Rabī'ah al-Bāhili. They launched attacks against the Byzantine territory; the people seized as many captives as they desired, filled their hands with plunder, and captured numerous fortresses there.

Al-Wāqidi claims that Sa'īd b. al-ʿĀṣ was the one who sent Salmān b. Rabī'ah to the aid of Ḥabīb b. Maslamah. He says: the reason is that ʿUthmān had written to Mu'āwiyah, ordering him to send Ḥabīb b. Maslamah with the Syrians to attack Armenia, and he did so. Then Ḥabīb learned that al-Mawriyān al-Rūmī had set out to meet him with 80,000 Byzantines and Turks.<sup>19</sup> Ḥabīb

18. Qur'ānic allusions to the rewards (both now and hereafter) given by God to those who serve Him faithfully. Cf. Qur'ān 27:16.

19. Al-Mawriyān al-Rūmī: probably the strategos Maurianos or Mavrianos, a Byzantine general in Armenia. Other sources (Sebeos, Theophanes, and Balādhu-rī's *Futūḥ al-Buldān*) state that he was defeated (and perhaps killed) by Ḥabīb b. Maslamah at the Armenian city of Dvin in 653–655—that is, about a decade later

wrote to Mu'āwiyah about this, and Mu'āwiyah [in turn] wrote to 'Uthmān. Thus, 'Uthmān wrote to Sa'īd b. al-'Āṣ, ordering him to support Ḥabīb b. Maslamah. (Sa'īd) then sent Salmān b. Rabī'ah with 6,000 [troops] to aid him. Ḥabīb was a master of military ruses, and he decided on a night attack against al-Mawriyān. His wife—[known as] Umm 'Abdallāh bt. Yazīd al-Kalbiyyah—heard him mentioning this, and she said to him, "Where is your rendezvous?" He answered, "At the pavilion of al-Mawriyān or in Paradise." Then he attacked them by night, killing whoever came within his sight. He reached (al-Mawriyān's) pavilion and discovered that his wife had preceded him; she was the first woman among the Arabs to whom a pavilion was assigned [as her share of the booty]. Ḥabīb died and she survived him; al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays al-Fihri took his place as her husband, and she was the mother of his child.

[2809]

There is disagreement as to who led the pilgrimage in this year. According to some authorities, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf led the pilgrimage this year by order of 'Uthmān; Abū Ma'shar and al-Wāqidi follow this opinion. According to others, however, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān made the pilgrimage this year.

As regards disagreement concerning those conquests, which some people ascribe to the time of 'Umar and others to the reign of 'Uthmān, I have previously mentioned in this book such differences of opinion under the date of each conquest at issue.

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than Abū Mikhnaf's dating. See Andreas N. Stratos, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century* (Amsterdam: 1975), III, 30, 269. I am indebted to my colleague John M. Barker for these references. Here and elsewhere, "Byzantine" translates *Rūm/Rūmī*—that is, "Roman," which is of course what the Byzantines called themselves—in Greek, *Rhomaioi*.