

down. They related further, that when the inhabitants had carried up their goods to the hill tops, the ground rocked so by the mighty earthquake that their chattels came rolling down again to the level earth below."

"Outside the city (of Antákiyyah) is a river called Al Maklúb<sup>1</sup> (meaning the Overturned, because) it takes its course from south to north. It is of the size of the Nahr 'Isá (in Babylonia). There are, along its bank, mills, and it waters the gardens and grounds (of the city)."

(Saith Yákút), so ends what we have transcribed from the work of Ibn Butlân.

GUY LE STRANGE.

### THE MUSLIM LEGEND OF THE CAVE OF THE SLEEPERS.

THE story of the Companions of the Cave is one that from earliest times has proved a favourite with the Muslims. This probably was in the beginning due to the fact that the Prophet had set the incidents connected with the legend of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus to illustrate one of the didactic chapters of the Koran. The Christian legend will be found related at length in the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists, under date of July 27th. (Tomus vi, p. 375. *de SS. Septem Dormientibus*.)

Briefly the account given is that in the year 250 A.D., during the reign of the Emperor Decius, there lived at Ephesus seven young men, brothers, and ardent Evangelists, whose names, as given in the Roman martyrology, were: Maximilianus, Marcus, Martinianus, Dionysius, John Serapion and Constantinus. In order to escape the persecution then being directed against the Christians, they hid themselves in a cave in Mount Cælian. On being discovered by their persecutors they were walled up in the Cave, and there took sleep in the Lord. In the year 470, under the Emperor Theodosius, their bodies were discovered and ultimately were brought to the Church of St. Victor, in Marseilles, where they now lie.

The legend was apparently of Syrian origin. It has given its name to the 18th chapter of the Kuran, of which the following verses are the most important:—

Verse 8.<sup>2</sup>—Hast thou reflected that the Inmates of the Cave and of Ar Rakím were one of our wondrous signs?

Verse 9.—When the youths betook them to the Cave they said "O, our Lord! grant us mercy from before Thee, and order for us our affair aright."

Verse 10.—Then struck we upon their ears (with deafness) in the Cave for many a year.

<sup>1</sup> The Orontes.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted from Rev. J. M. Rodwell's translation.

Verse 16.—And thou mightest have seen the sun when it rose pass on the right of their Cave, and when it set leave them on the left, while they were in its spacious chamber.

Verse 17.—And thou wouldst have deemed them awake though they were sleeping ; and we turned them to the right and to the left. And in the entry lay their dog with paws outstretched. Had'st thou come suddenly upon them thou wouldst surely have turned thy back on them in flight, and have been filled with fear at them.

Verse 18.—Then we waked them that they might question one another. Said one of them, “How long have ye tarried here ?” They said, “Your Lord knowest best how long ye have tarried ; send now one of you with this your coin into the city, and let him mark who therein hath purest food, and from him let him bring you a supply ; and let him be courteous and not discover you to any one.

Verse 19.—For they if they find you out will stone you, or turn you back to their faith, and in that case it will fare ill with you for ever.”

Verse 20.—And thus we made their adventure known to (their fellow-citizens), that they might learn that the promise of God is true.

Verse 21.—Some say they were three, their dog the fourth ; others say five, their dog the sixth guessing at the secret, others say seven, their dog the eighth.

Verse 24.—And they tarried in their cave three hundred years and nine years over.<sup>1</sup>

During the course of the last twelve months, while getting together the materials for a book which, it is hoped, will contain all the important notices of Palestine and Syria that occur in the works of the mediæval Arab geographers, I have had occasion to devote much of my attention to the pages of Yâkût's great “Geographical Encyclopædia.” Of Yâkût, his life, and his works, I have given some short account in a recent paper in this journal.<sup>2</sup> The prodigious extent of Yâkût's labours, however—for the book gives a detailed account of all the countries and towns in Muslim lands (as matters stood in the 13th century) from Spain in the west to beyond Transoxiana and India in the east—is but little known beyond the narrow circle of Semitic scholars, for the work has never been translated. Some idea of the mass of information, both geographical and historical, therein contained may perhaps be gathered from the statement that the Arabic text, as printed at the cost of the German Oriental Society, covers close on *four thousand* pages, large 8vo.; an English translation, with the needful notes, would therefore occupy from double to treble that space.

<sup>1</sup> They entered the cave under Decius, and awoke in the time of Theodosius, according to the Christian tradition, *i.e.*, about 220 years, which does not agree with the 309 years of the Kurân. See Gibbon, “Decline and Fall,” at the end of chapter xxxiii.

<sup>2</sup> *Quarterly Statement* for January, 1888.

Scattered up and down the volumes of *Yâkût*, under various headings, are many curious details relating to the legend of the Seven Sleepers, and these I have now brought together for purposes of comparison with accounts derived from other early Muslim writers.

Starting with the verses of *Kurân*, before quoted, where "The Cave and *Ar Rakîm*" are mentioned, the Muslims were much exercised in their minds as to what signification should be attached to the word *Ar Rakîm*. According to one account ("*Yâkût*," ii, p. 805), *Ar Rakîm* was said to be "a tablet of lead on which were inscribed the names of the men of the Cave, and their history and the date of their flight." The authority of the great traditionist *Ibn 'Abbas*, is, on the same page, given in support of the view that *Ar Rakîm* was the name of the Cave, which, it is further stated, "lay between 'Ammuriyah (Amorium) and Nikiyah (Niccæa), being ten or eleven days' journey from Tarsus." Other authorities, however (says *Yâkût*), hold *Ar Rakîm* to be either the name of the village where the youths lived, or of the mountain in which the cave was to be found. Or, says *Yâkût*, at another place (ii, 175), "*Jairam*, is said to be the name of the Cave of the Sleepers."

The same *Ibn Abbas* ("*Yâkût*," ii, 805) further states that the names of the Seven Sleepers were these:—*Yamlikhâ* (*Jamblichus*), *Maksimilînâ* (*Maximilianus*), *Mashilînâ* (*Marcellus*?), *Martûnûs* (*Martianus*), *Dabriyûs* (*Dionysius*? or *Demetrius*?), *Sirabiyyûn* (*Serapion*), and *Afastatiyûs* (*Exustadianus*?). The name of their dog being *Kitmir*, and of the king from whom they fled *Dakiyânûs* (*Decianus*, a mistake for *Decius*). The name of their city is given, very correctly ("*Yâkût*," ii, 806), as *Afastûs* (*Ephesus*); *Ar Rakîm* being here the name of the cave, and *Ar Rass* the name of the village where the youths dwelt. In a previous article, however ("*Yâkût*," i, 91), we find another spelling:—"Abasûs, a ruined city of the country of the Greeks, from which the Companions of the Cave came. It is said to be the City of *Dakiyânûs*, and it lies near *Abulustain*." Two pages further on (*op. cit.*, i, p. 93) *Abulustain* is given as "a celebrated city in the Greek country, near to which is *Ar Rakîm*." *Abulustaiu*, near *Ephesus*, is the place at the present day called *Al Bustân*. In the last volume of "*Yâkût*" (vol. iv, p. 1040), "*Yanjâlûs*" (evidently a Greek name) is stated to be the name of the mountain in which lay the Cave of the Sleepers, but some doubt is expressed as to where the mountain was situated.

Besides the neighbourhood of *Ephesus*, *Yâkût* localises the legend in two other places, namely, in the trans-Jordanic province of the *Balkâ*, and in Spain. In the latter country, says "*Yâkût*" (vol. ii, p. 125, and also p. 806), "some say the Cave and *Ar Rakîm* are to be found at *Jindân al Ward* (the Gardens of the Rose), in *Andalusia*, and that *Tulaitalah* (*Toledo*) is the City of *Dakiyânûs*—but God knows best." Of *Ar Rakîm*, in the *Ba'kâ*, a curious story relating to a cave will be found given in "*Mukaddasi*" (p. 56 of my translation, *Pal. Pil. Text Soc.*), which, however, is not of sufficient importance to be quoted over again in this place.

Dating from the early days of Islam, we have two separate and very

circumstantial accounts of visits to certain caves in Asia Minor, said in each case to have been the particular Cave of the Sleepers. They are both quoted by Yâkût. One dates from the days of Abu Bakr, the successor of Muhammad; the other visit is related as having taken place about two centuries later under the Abbaside Khalif of Baghdad, Al Wâthik, grandson of Harun ar Rashid.

Of the first account the following is a translation :—

(“Yâkût,” vol. ii, pp. 806, 807.)

Ubâdah ibn as Sâmit relates as follows:—“Abu Bakr as Siddîk despatched me, the year he became Khalif (A.H. 11, A.D. 632) to the King of Rûm to exhort him to receive Islâm, or else to declare him war.”

‘Ubâdah continues :—“We journeyed until we entered the country of the Greeks, and when we were approaching Constantinople, there appeared before us a red mountain in which they said were the Companions of the Cave, and Ar Rakîm. So we turned aside to a monastery and enquired of the people thereof concerning them; and they pointed out a passage in the mountain. Then we told them that we wished to see the (Companions of the Cave). They said ‘give us somewhat,’ and we gave them Dînârs. Then they entered the passage, and we entered after them, and there was herein a door of iron which they opened, and they brought us to a mighty chamber (*bait*), hollowed in the mountain in which were thirteen men, lying on their backs, as though they were asleep. They all were covered from head to foot with dust-grey cloaks and shirts. We could not discover whether their clothes were of wool or of hair, or of what other material, but the texture was harder than brocade, and crackled from their thickness and the excellence of the stuff. We saw that most of them had on boots (*khufâf*), reaching up to the middle of the leg, but some were shod with sandals (*ni’âl*) sewn together. Both the boots and the sandals were of excellent sewing, and the leather was such as the like I have not seen elsewhere. We uncovered their faces, one after the other, and lo! in all was the complexion of healthful bloom, and of red blood (in the cheeks) as is the appearance of a living man. Of some (the hair) was turning grey, and some were in their youth with black hair, some had flowing locks and some were shaven. Their stature was that of ordinary Muslims. When we came to the last of them we beheld that his head had been cut off with a sword-stroke, and it was as though it had been struck off that very day. We enquired of those who had conducted us hither, what they did with these men. They replied, it was their wont to come in here on the festival day of (the Companions of the Cave), when the people of all the country would assemble at the gate of the cave, coming in from all the towns and villages around; and that then, during some days, they would stand the dead men upright in order to clean them, and shake the dust from their cloaks and shirts, also they pared their nails, and cut their moustaches; and after this they laid them down once more in the position in which we now saw them.

“Then we enquired of our guides as to who these men had been, and

what had been their office, and how long they had lain in this place. The guides answered us they had found in their books that these men had lain in this place since 400 years before the Coming of the Messiah—peace be upon Him—and that they had been Prophets, sent at a certain time, and that they knew naught more of their condition but this.”

Says 'Abd Allah (Yâkût), the poor servant (of God) :—“ All this have I copied from the work of a man of trust, but Allah alone knows if it be true.”

A similar account to the one just quoted (of 'Ubâdah's visit) is given in almost identical terms by Mukaddasi (*see* p. 6 of my translation, published in the “ Palestine Pilgrims Texts ”), with, however, the following variants :—Mukaddasi, writing in A.H. 375, A.D. 985, states that his account is from a certain *Mujâhid ibn Yazîd*, who accompanied Khâlid al Barîdî to Constantinople, in A.H. 102, A.D. 720, that is about ninety years later than the above-mentioned expedition by 'Ubâdah. The details of what was seen are, however, in the main identical with the first account—as regards the appearance of the men, their clothes, the nail-paring, &c., and the feast-day when the country people came to visit them. The cave, on the other hand, is stated to have been situated in the mountains at Al Hawiyyah, not far from Laodicea Combusta, between Armorium and Iconium, and the guardians further gave the following account of “ the Prophet ” whose head had been cut off.

(Translation of Mukaddasi, p. 7).

They answered, saying, “ When the Arabs came down on us and took possession of Al Hawiyyah, we gave them this information concerning these dead men, but they would not believe us, and one of the Arabs struck the head off this body.”

With these two accounts of visits in A.H. 11, and in A.H. 102, may be compared the account of the Astrologer Musa, whose visit took place more than a century later than that of Mujâhid.

(“ Yâkût,” vol. ii, pp. 805, 806).

It was (the Khalif) Al Wâthik (A.H. 227–232, A.D. 842–847), who sent Muhammad Ibn Mûsâ al Munajjim (the Astrologer) to the countries of the Greeks to discover the Companions of the Cave and Ar Rakîm. This (Muhammad, the Astrologer) reports (of his journey as follows) :—“ And we reached the country of the Greeks, and lo ! before us was a small mountain, the base of which was not more than a thousand ells (round). In its side is a passage, and you enter by this passage and pass through a tunnel in the ground for the distance of three hundred paces, when you arrive at a portico (*Riwâk*). This is in the mountain ; it is supported by columns cut out (of the rock). In the rock are numerous chambers (*bait*), and among them one with a tall door-way, of man's height, closed by a stone gate. It is here the dead men lie. There was one in attendance who guarded them, and with him were eunuchs. The guardian would have turned us aside from seeking to see the dead men, for he said, that of a surety he who went down to seek them would

receive some bodily injury. But by this dissimulation he sought to keep the advantage thereof to himself (and his people).”

“Then said I to him, ‘Give me but a sight of them, and thou shalt be free (of all blame in the matter).’ So I ascended, with great pain, a rough way, accompanied by one of my young men, and I beheld these (dead men). And lo ! (their bodies) had been rubbed with unguents, the hair being soft to the hand, and their limbs anointed with aloes and myrrh, and camphor to preserve them. Their skin clave to the bones, for I passed my hand over the breast of one of them, and I found the hair thereof rough. The garments were strong (of texture).”

“After that (we had returned) the guardian presented us with food, and besought us to eat ; but when we took thereof and tasted it, our stomachs revolted from it, and vomited it up again. It was as though a vilany had been attempted and that (the guardian) had sought to kill us, or certain of us at least, in order to justify the words of dissimulation used in the presence of the king, when saying that the companions of Ar Rakīm would surely work us evil. Then said we to the (guardian), ‘We had imagined they would have been living men, but with the semblance of those who are dead ; but behold these (men) are not of this sort !’ And we left him and went our ways.”

Speaking of this and other accounts of the Cave of the Seven Sleepers, Al Birūnī (who wrote in A.H. 390, A.D. 1000) has some pertinent remarks. I quote from Prof. Sachau’s excellent translation of the text,<sup>1</sup> where, in the chapter on the Festivals of the Syrian calendar, under the date of the “5th of Tishrin I.” (October), we find the following :—

“Commemoration of the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus, who are mentioned in the Coran. The Khalif Al Mu’tasim had sent along with his ambassador another person who saw the place of the Seven Sleepers with his own eyes and touched them with his own hands. This report is known to everybody. We must, however, observe that he who touched them, *i.e.*, Muhammad ibn Mūsā ibn Shākir, himself makes the reader rather doubt whether they are really the corpses of those seven youths or other people—in fact, some sort of deception. ‘Ali ibn Yahyā, the Astronomer, relates that on returning from his expedition he entered that identical place, a small mountain, the diameter of which at the bottom is a little less than 1,000 yards. At the outside you see a subterranean channel, which goes into the interior of the mountain, and passes through a deep cave in the earth for a distance of 300 paces. Then the channel runs out into a sort of half-open hall in the mountain, the roof being supported by perforated columns ; and in this hall there is a number of separate compartments. There, he says, he saw thirteen people, among them a beardless youth, dressed in woollen coats and other woollen garments, in boots and shoes. He touched some hairs on the forehead of one of them and tried to flatten them, but they did not yield. That their number is more than seven—which is the Muhammadan—and

<sup>1</sup> Sachau’s translation of Al Birūnī’s *Athār ul Bākiya*, 1879, p. 285.

more than eight—which is the Christian tradition—is perhaps to be explained in this way, that some monks have been added who died there in the same spot. . . .”

A few words may be added in conclusion regarding the names of the Seven Sleepers, as given in the authorities quoted in the “Acta Sanctorum” of the Bollandists (Julii, Tomus VI, p. 375, *et seq.*), and in the “Bibliotheca Orientalia” of Assemani (Vol. I, p. 335, *et seq.*).

The legend of the Seven Sleepers is first referred to in Western literature by Gregory of Tours (“De Gloria Martyrum,” Vol. I, 9, caput 95), according to whom they were seven in number, their names being Clemens, Primus, Lætus, Theodorus, Gaudens, Quiriacus (or Cyriacus) and Innocentius. In the official list of the Roman “Acta Sanctorum” the names appear in Latin, as :—Maximianus, Constantinus, Malchus, Serapion, Martinianus, Dionysius, Johannes; in Greek the first two figure as Maximilianus and Constantinianus respectively, while Exacustodianus replaces Malchus, and Jamblichus, Serapion.

In Assemani (“Bibl. Or.,” Tom. I, p. 336) we find a list taken from the writings of Dionysius, the Jacobite patriarch, who gives the number as *eight*, their names being : Maximilianus, Jamblichus, Serapion, Martinianus, Johannes, Exustadianus, Dionysius, and Antoninus.

The following are the names, *seven* in number, from other Martyrologies, as given in the “Acta Sanctorum” (*loc. cit.*, p. 376) :—

*Russian.*—Maximilianus, Dionysius, Amulichus, Martinus, Antoninus, Johannes, Marcellus.

*Ethiopian* (as given by Jobus Ludolfus, “Calendarium Æthiopicum,” p. 436) :—Arshaledes, Diomedes, Eugenius, Dimatheus, Bronatheus, Stephus, Cyriacus.

The list given by the Arab traditionist, Ibn ‘Abbas (cited above, p. 273), is doubtless somewhat corrupt. In “Eutychius” (edited by Pocock, Vol. I, p. 390 of the text) the names appear as : Maksim’yânûs, Amlíkhus, Diyânûs, Martímûs, Diyûnisiyûs, Antûniyûs, Yuhannâ.

This variety in the names would appear to have struck the Martyrologists as requiring some sort of explanation. In the “Acta Sanctorum” (*loc. cit.*, p. 376) the opinion of an anonymous Greek author of a MS. in the Medicean Library is quoted, as also that of Boninus Membricitius. These are both of the opinion that the variants were due to the fact that the individuals are cited in one account under their original Pagan names, in another under the names they received in baptism. Thus, according to the anonymous Greek author :—

Μαξιμιλιανός	was baptised	Ἀχιλλίος.
Δεμετριος	”	Ἰαμβλιχος.
Ἐξακουστουδιανος	”	Διομηδης.
Ἄντωνιος	”	Κυριακος.
Μαρτινος	”	Ἐυγενιος.
Διονυσιος	”	Στεφανος.

Boninus Membritius, however, has the list as follows :—

Achiledus	was baptised	Maximus.
Diomedus	„	Malchus.
Eugenius	„	Martinianus.
Stephanus	„	Constantius.
Probatius	„	Dionysius.
Sambatus	„	Johannes.
Cyriacus	„	Serapion.

The story of the Sleepers, though probably at first merely a local legend of Syrian origin, has been carried far and wide, over the West and the East. One version is found in Scandinavia, and the account localised in Muslim Spain has already been alluded to. Finally, are not the numerous popular beliefs, according to which Arthur, Barbarossa, Roderic the Goth, and, at a later period, Don Sebastian of Portugal (not to mention various other renowned monarchs), are now asleep in caverns, but will awake and return to reign in the fulness of time—are not all these but variations of the old legend of which the Cave of the Sleepers of Ephesus is the first Christian example?

GUY LE STRANGE.

### AN INSCRIPTION IN THE AKSÂ MOSQUE.

In my translation of Nâsir-i-Khusrau's account of Jerusalem and Palestine, recently published by the Palestine Pilgrim's Text Society, there is a mistake in a note which I should wish to correct. The first note on p. 37 of the translation reads as follows :—

“In 425 A.H. (1033) the dome of the Aksâ Mosque had been seriously damaged by a shock of earthquake. It was restored next year by order of the Fatimite Khalif of Egypt, Ad Dhâhir, the work, *according to the extant inscription in the dome*, having been terminated in the month Dhû l Kaâdah, 426 A.H. (September, 1035), that is less than eleven years prior to our Pilgrim's visit.”

The words printed in *italics* should be altered as follows :—

“*According to the inscription quoted (A.D. 1173) by Ali of Herat, and probably still extant,*” &c.

The mistake arose from my having confounded an inscription mentioned by M. de Vogüé as still existing in the Dome of the Rock, with the one mentioned by Ali of Herat as read by him in the Dome of the Aksâ Mosque.

The earthquake of the year 407 A.H. (1016 A.D.) had greatly damaged the framework of the Dome of the Rock, and this was restored by order of the Fatimite Khalif Ad Dhâhir, as shown in the inscription, in ancient Karmatic characters, still to be seen on the framework in that dome,