

Yāqūt's Quotations From The Book of Ibn Faḍlān

In the following passages I have relied on Wüstenfeld's edition of Yāqūt's *Muʿjam al-buldān*, which I have emended on occasion, to fit with the readings favored in my published edition of the text. In order to facilitate comparison with my edition of the Mashhad recension, I have included in the translation the paragraph numbers from my edition to which Yāqūt's quotations correspond.

إتـل

... قرأت في كتاب أحمد بن فضلان بن العباس بن راشد بن حماد رسول المقتدر ١٠١
إلى بلاد الصقالة وهم أهل البلغار .

بلغني أنّ فيها رجلا عظيم الخلق جدا فلما سرت إلى الملك سألته عنه فقال نعم قد
كان في بلدنا ومات ولم يكن من أهل البلد ولا من الناس أيضا وكان من خبره أنّ
قوما من التجار خرجوا إلى نهر إتـل وهو نهر بيننا وبينه يوم واحد كما يخرجون وكان
هذا النهر قد مدّ وطغى ماؤه فلم أشعر إلّا وقد وافاني جماعة فقالوا أيها الملك قد قفا
على الماء رجل إن كان من أمة تقرب منا فلا مقام لنا في هذه الديار وليس لنا غير
التحويل فكتب معهم حتى سرت إلى النهر ووقفت عليه فإذا برجل طوله اثنا عشر
ذراعا بذراعي وإذا رأسه كأكبر ما يكون من القدور وأنفه أكبر من شبر وعيناه
عظمتان وأصابه كلّ واحدة شبر فراعني أمره وداخلي ما داخل القوم من الفزع
فأقبلنا نكلّمه وهولا يتكلّم ولا يزيد على النظر فجلته إلى مكاني وكتب إلى أهل ويسو
وهم منا على ثلاثة أشهر أسألهم عنه فعرفوني أنّ هذا رجل من يأجوج ومأجوج وهم
منا على ثلاثة أشهر يحول بيننا وبينهم البحر وإنهم قوم كالبهائم الهاملة عراة حفاة ينح
بعضهم بعضا يخرج الله تعالى لهم في كلّ يوم سمكة من البحر فيجيء الواحد بمدية فيجترّ
منها بقدر كهائته وكهاية عياله فإن أخذ فوق ذلك اشتكى بطنه هو وعياله وربما مات
وماتوا بأسرهم فإذا أخذوا منها حاجتهم انقلبت وعادت إلى البحر وهم على ذلك وبيننا
وبينهم البحر وجبال محيطة فإذا أراد الله إخراجهم انقطع السمك عنهم ونضب البحر
وانفتح السد الذي بيننا وبينهم ثم قال الملك وأقام الرجل عندي مدة ثم عقلت به علّة
في تحفه فأت بها وخرجت فرأيت عظامه فكانت هائلة جدا .

. . . I read the following in the written account of Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn Rāshid ibn Ḥammād, the envoy of al-Muqtadir to the realm of the Ṣaḡalibah (i.e., the people of Bulghār): 1.1

[68] I learned that a giant lived there. When I arrived, I asked the king about this, and he replied, “Yes, he used to live among us, but he died. He was not one of the local inhabitants—in fact, he was not really human. This is his story. A group of merchants went to the Itil, one day away, as is their custom. Now, this river was in spate and had burst its banks. Barely a day later a group of merchants came back and said, ‘Your Majesty, there is a man who has followed the course of the river. If he is from a community close by, then we cannot remain in our homes. We will have to migrate.’ So I rode to the river with them. I was surprised by what I found when I got there—a man twelve cubits tall, using my forearm as a measure, with a head the size of a huge cooking-pot, a nose more than a span in length, two great eyes, and fingers longer than a span. He unnerved me, and I was gripped by the very terror that had gripped the others. We tried to speak to him, but he did not answer. He just looked at us. So I had him brought to my residence and wrote to the inhabitants of Wisū, three months distant, asking them for information. They wrote back: ‘He is one of the Gog and Magog, who live three months away from us in a state of absolute nakedness. The sea separates us. They live on the far side of the sea, on its shore. They mate with one another, like the beasts of the field. Every day the great and glorious God provides them with a fish from the sea. They come one by one with their knives and cut as much as they need to feed them and their dependents. If they take more than they need, they develop a pain in their stomach. Their dependents also develop a pain in their stomachs. Should he die, then they all die, too. When they have what they need from the fish, it flips over and is taken back into the sea. This is how they live day by day. On one side we are separated from them by the sea. They are hemmed in by mountains on all other sides. A wall separates them from the gate from which they will swarm forth. When almighty God intends them to swarm forth into the inhabited lands, He will cause the wall to be breached, the sea will dry up, and the fish will no longer be provided.’” The king said, “He stayed with me for a while, but he developed an illness in his chest that proved terminal.” I went to see his bones. They filled me with great fear. 1.2

باشگرد

٢٠١ قال المؤلف رحمه الله تعالى هذا وأمثاله هو الذي قدّمت البراءة منه ولم أضمن صحته وقصة ابن فضلان وإنفاذ المقتدر له إلى بلغار مدونة معروفة مشهورة بأيدي الناس رأيت بها عدة نسخ.

باشگرد

١٠٢ . . . وكان المقتدر بالله قد أرسل أحمد بن فضلان بن العباس بن راشد بن حماد مولى أمير المؤمنين ثم مولى محمد بن سليمان إلى ملك الصقالة وكان قد أسلم وهو وأهل بلاده ليفيض عليهم الخلع ويعلمهم الشرائع الإسلامية فحكي جميع ما شاهد منذ خرج من بغداد إلى أن عاد وكان انفصاله في صفر سنة ٣٠٩ فقال عند ذكره بالبشرد.

٢٠٢ ووقعنا في بلاد قوم من الأتراك يقال لهم بالبشرد فحذرناهم أشد الحذر وذاك لأنهم شرّ الأتراك وأقدرهم وأشدّهم إقداما على القتل يلقي الرجل الرجل فيفرز هامته فيأخذها ويتركه وهم يحلقون لحاهم ويأكلون القمل يتبع الواحد منهم دروز قرطقه فيقرص القمل بأسنانه ولقد كان معنا رجل منهم قد أسلم وكان يخدمنا فرائته يوما وقد أخذ قملة من ثوبه فقصعها بظفره ثم لحسها وقال لما رأيي جيّدًا وكلّ واحد منهم قد نحت خشبة على قدر الإكليل ويعلقها عليه فإذا أراد سفرا أولقاء عدوّ قبلها وسجد لها وقال يا ربّ افعل بي كذا وكذا فقلت للترجمان سل بعضهم ما حجتهم في هذا ولم جعله ربّه فقال لأيّ خرجت من مثله فلست أعرف لنفسي موجدًا غيره ومنهم من يزعم أنّ له اثني عشر ربًّا للشتاء ربّ وللصيف ربّ وللمطر ربّ وللريح ربّ وللشجر ربّ وللناس ربّ وللدواب ربّ وللماء ربّ وللليل ربّ وللنهار ربّ وللموت ربّ وللحياة ربّ وللأرض ربّ والربّ الذي في السماء هو أكبرهم إلّا أنّه يجتمع مع هؤلاء باتفاق ويرضى كلّ واحد منهم ما يعمل شريكه جلّ ربنا عما يقول الظالمون والجاحدون ﴿عُلُوًّا كَبِيرًا﴾ قال ورأينا طائفة منهم تعبد الحيات وطائفة تعبد السمك وطائفة تعبد

١ معجم البلدان: الباشقرد. ٢ معجم البلدان: حيد.

May Almighty God have mercy on the author. I take no responsibility for this and similar statements he makes. I give no guarantee of their accuracy. Ibn Faḍlān's tale of how al-Muqtadir sent him to Bulghār is still preserved. It is well known and popular with people. I saw many copies of it. 1.3

Bāshghird²

. . . The king of the Ṣaqālibah and the people of his realm had converted to Islam. The Commander of the Faithful, al-Muqtadir bi-llāh, sent Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān ibn al-'Abbās ibn Rāshid ibn Ḥammād as his envoy to bestow on the king a robe of honor and teach him the rules of Islam, according to the sharia. Al-Muqtadir was Ibn Faḍlān's patron. Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān was also Ibn Faḍlān's patron. Ibn Faḍlān left a description of all his experiences from the time of his departure from Baghdad, in the month of Safar, 309 [June, 921], until the time of his return. He wrote the following as part of his account of the Bāshghird: 2.1

[37] We stopped in the territory of a tribe of Turks called the Bāshghird. We were on high alert, for they are the wickedest, most powerful, and most ferocious of the Turks. When they attack they take no prisoners. In single combat they chop off your head and make off with it. They shave their beards. They eat lice by carefully picking over the hems of their tunics and cracking the lice with their teeth. Our group was joined by a Bāshghird who had converted to Islam. He used to wait on us. I saw him take a louse he found in his clothing, crack it with his fingernail and then lick it. "Yum!" he said when he saw I was watching him. [38] Each carves a piece of wood into an object the size and shape of a diadem and hangs it round his neck. When they want to travel or take the field against the enemy, they kiss it and bow down before it, saying, "My lord, do such and such with me." I said to the interpreter, "Ask one of them to explain this. Why does he worship it as his lord?" "Because I came from something like it. I acknowledge this alone as the giver of life," he replied. Some of them claim that they have twelve lords: a lord for winter, a lord for summer, a lord for rain, a lord for wind, a lord for trees, a lord for people, a lord for horses, a lord for water, a lord for night, a lord for day, a lord for death, a lord for life, and a lord for the earth.³ The lord in the sky is the greatest, but he acts consensually, and each lord approves 2.2

بلغار

الكرائي فعرفوني أنهم كانوا يحاربون قوما من أعدائهم فهزموهم وأن الكراي صاحت وراءهم فانهزموا بعدما هزموا فعدوا الكراي لذلك وقالوا هذه ربنا لأنها هزمت أعداءنا فعدوها لذلك.

٣٠٢

هذا ما حكاه عن هؤلاء.

بلغار

... وكان ملك بلغار وأهلها قد أسلموا في أيام المقتدر بالله وأرسلوا إلى بغداد ١٠٣ رسولا يعرفون المقتدر ذلك ويسألونه إنفاذ من يعلمهم الصلوات والشرائع لكن لم أقف على السبب في إسلامهم وقرأت رسالة عملها أحمد بن فضلان بن العباس بن راشد بن حماد مولى محمد بن سليمان رسول المقتدر بالله إلى ملك الصقالبة ذكر فيها ما شاهده منذ انفصل من بغداد إلى أن عاد إليها قال فيها.

لما وصل كتاب المس بن شليكي بطوار^٢ ملك الصقالبة إلى أمير المؤمنين المقتدر ٢٠٣ بالله يسأله فيه أن يبعث إليه من يفقه في الدين ويعرفه شرائع الإسلام ويبيّن له مسجدا وينصب له منبرا ليقم عليه الدعوة في جميع بلده وأقطار مملكته ويسأله بناء حصن يتحصن فيه من الملوك المخالفين له فأجيب إلى ذلك وكان السفير له نذير الحرمي^٣ فبدأت أنا بقراءة الكتاب عليه وتسليم ما أهدي إليه والإشراف من الفقهاء والمعلمين وكان الرسول من جهة السلطان سوسن الرستي مولى نذير الحرمي^٤ قال فرحلنا من مدينة السلام لإحدى عشرة ليلة خلت من صفر سنة ٣٠٩.

١ معجم البلدان: أسد. ٢ معجم البلدان: بطوار. ٣ معجم البلدان: الحزبي. ٤ معجم البلدان: الحزبي.

of the actions of his partners. God is exalted above what the wrongdoers and the repudiators say!⁴ Ibn Faḍlān said: We noticed that one clan worships snakes, another fish, and another cranes. They told me that they had once been routed in battle. Then the cranes cried out behind them, and the enemy took fright, turned tail, and fled, even though they had routed the Bāshghird. They said, “These are our lord, because they have routed our enemies.” This is why they worship cranes.

This is what he says they said.

2.3

Bulghār⁵

... The king of Bulghār and his subjects had converted to Islam during the reign of al-Muqtadir bi-llāh. They sent an envoy to Baghdad to inform al-Muqtadir of this and to petition him to send them people to teach them how to perform their prayers correctly and acquaint them with the rules of Islam, according to the sharia. I have not been able to discover the cause of their conversion. I read an epistle that Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān ibn al-‘Abbās ibn Rāshid⁶ ibn Ḥammād wrote. He was the envoy of al-Muqtadir bi-llāh to the king of the Ṣaqālibah, and his patron was Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān. In the epistle he gave an account of all his experiences, from his departure from Baghdad until his return. He said:

3.1

[2] When the letter of Almis, son of Shilkī Biltawār the king of the Ṣaqālibah, was delivered to al-Muqtadir bi-llāh, the Commander of the Faithful, the king petitioned the caliph to send people to instruct him in law and acquaint him with the rules of Islam according to the sharia, to construct a mosque and build a *minbar* from which he could proclaim al-Muqtadir’s name throughout his kingdom. He also beseeched him to build a fort to protect him against the kings who opposed him. His requests were granted. [3] The representative of the king of the Ṣaqālibah at court was Nadhīr al-Ḥaramī. I, Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān, began by reading al-Muqtadir’s letter to the king, presenting him with the official gifts designated, and supervising the jurists and instructors. The caliph’s envoy was Sawsan al-Rassī. Sawsan’s patron was Nadhīr al-Ḥaramī. We traveled from Baghdad, City of Peace, on Thursday the twelfth of Safar, 309 [June 21, 921].

3.2

ثم ذكر ما مرّ له في الطريق إلى خوارزم ثم منها إلى بلاد الصقالبة ما يطول شرحه ٢٠٢
ثم قال

٤٠٣ فلما كان من ملك الصقالبة وهو الذي قصدنا له على مسيرة يوم وليلة وجهه
لاستقبالنا الملوك الأربعة الذين تحت يديه وإخوته وأولاده فاستقبلونا ومعهم الخبز
واللحم والجوارس وساروا معنا فلما صرنا منه على فرسخين تلقانا هو بنفسه فلما رأنا
نزل فخر ساجدا شكرا لله وكان في كمه دراهم فنثرها علينا ونصب لنا قبابا فنزلناها
وكان وصولنا إليه يوم الأحد لاثنتي عشرة ليلة خلت من المحرم سنة ٣١٠ وكانت
المسافة من الجرجانية وهي مدينة خوارزم سبعين يوما فأقنا إلى يوم الأربعاء في
القباب التي ضربت لنا حتى اجتمع ملوك أرضه وخواصه لسمعوا قراءة الكتاب فلما
كان يوم الخميس نشرنا المطردين الذين كانوا معنا وأسرجنا الدابة بالسرج الموجه إليه
وألبسناه السواد وعمّمناه وأخرجت كتاب الخليفة فقرأته وهو قائم على قدميه ثم قرأت
كتاب الوزير حامد بن العباس وهو قائم أيضا وكان بديننا فنثر أصحابه علينا الدراهم
وأخرجنا الهدايا وعرضناها عليه ثم خلعنا على امرأته وكانت جالسة إلى جانبه وهذه
سنتهم ودأبهم ثم وجه إلينا فحضرنا قبة وعنده الملوك عن يمينه وأمرنا أن نجلس عن
يساره وأولاده جلوس بين يديه وهو وحده على سرير مغشى بالديباج الرومي فدعا
بالمائدة فقّدت إليه وعليها لحم مشوي فابتدأ الملك فأخذ سكينًا وقطع لقمة فأكلها
وثانية وثالثة ثم قطع قطعة فدفعها إلى سوسن الرسول فلما تناولها جاءته مائدة صغيرة
فجعلت بين يديه وكذلك رسمهم لا يمدّ أحد يده إلى أكل حتى يناوله الملك فإذا تناولها
جاءته مائدة ثم قطع قطعة وتناولها الملك الذي عن يمينه فجاءته مائدة ثم ناول الملك
الثاني فجاءته مائدة وكذلك حتى قدم إلى كل واحد من الذين بين يديه مائدة وأكل كل
واحد منّا من مائدة لا يشاركه فيها أحد ولا يتناول من مائدة غيره شيئا فإذا فرغ من
الأكل حمل كل واحد منّا ما بقي على مائدته إلى منزله فلما فرغنا دعا بشارب العسل وهم
يسمونه السجوف شرب وشربنا.

١ معجم البلدان: المطردين الذين كانوا معنا.

Ibn Faḍlān proceeds to record everything that occurred on the road to 3.3
Khawārazm and then on the road from Khawārazm to the realm of the Ṣaqālibah.
It would take too long to quote it and comment on it. Ibn Faḍlān said:

[39] We were a day and night's march from our goal. The king of the 3.4
Ṣaqālibah dispatched his brothers, his sons, and the four kings under his control to welcome us with bread, meat, and millet. They formed our escort. When we were two *farsakhs* away, he came to meet us in person. On seeing us, he got down from his horse and prostrated himself abjectly, expressing thanks to God! He had some dirhams in his sleeve and showered them over us. He had yurts pitched for us, and we were lodged in them. We arrived on Sunday the twelfth of Muharram, 310 [May 12, 922]. We had been on the road for seventy days since leaving al-Jurjāniyyah, the main city of Khawārazm. We remained in our yurts through Wednesday, while the kings and the elite of the realm gathered to listen to the reading of the letter. [40] On Thursday we unfurled the two standards we had brought with us, saddled the horse with the saddle meant for the king, dressed him in black, and placed a turban on his head. I brought out the letter of the caliph and read it while he stood. [41] I next read the letter of the vizier Ḥāmid ibn al-ʿAbbās. The king continued to stand. He was a big man. His companions showered him with many dirhams. Then we produced the gifts and presented them and then presented a robe of honor to his wife, who was seated by his side. This is their customary practice. [42] Later he sent for us, and we attended him in his tent. The kings were on his right. He ordered us to sit on his left. His sons were seated in front of him. He sat alone, on a throne draped in Byzantine silk. He called for the table. It was carried in, laden with roasted meat. He picked up a knife, cut off a piece of meat, and ate it, then a second piece and a third, before anyone else. Then he cut off a piece and handed it to Sawsan, the envoy, who had a small table placed in front of him in order to receive it. Such is their custom. No one reaches for the food before the king hands him a portion and a table is provided for him to receive it—the moment he receives it, he gets a table. He cut off a piece and handed it to the king on his right and he was given a table. He handed some meat to the second king and he was given a table. This continued until everyone present was given a table. Each of us ate from the table intended for his sole use. No one took anything from any other table. When the meal was finished, everyone took what remained on his own table back to his lodging. [43] When we had finished, he called for the honey drink they call *sujū* and drank, as did we.

وقد كان يُخَظَب له قبل قدومنا اللهم أصلح الملك يلطوار^١ ملك بلغار فقلت له ٥.٣
 إن الله هو الملك ولا يجوز أن يخَظَب بهذا أحد سِما على المنابر وهذا مولاك أمير
 المؤمنين قد وصى نفسه أن يقال على منابر في الشرق والغرب اللهم أصلح عبدك
 وخليفتك جعفر الإمام المقتدر بالله أمير المؤمنين فقال كيف يجوز أن يقال فقلت
 يذكر اسمك واسم أبيك فقال إن أبي كان كافرا وأنا أيضا ما أحب أن يذكر اسمي إذا
 كان الذي سَماني به كافرا ولكن ما اسم مولاي أمير المؤمنين فقلت جعفر قال فيجوز
 أن أَسَمي باسمه قلت نعم فقال قد جعلت اسمي جعفرا واسم أبي عبد الله وتقدم إلى
 الخطيب بذلك فكان يخَظَب اللهم أصلح عبدك جعفر بن عبد الله أمير بلغار مولى
 أمير المؤمنين.

قال ورأيت في بلده من العجائب ما لا أحصيتها كثرة من ذلك أن أول ليلة بتناها في ٦.٣
 بلده رأيت قبل مغيب الشمس بساعة أفق السماء وقد احمر احمرارا شديدا وسمعت في
 الجو أصواتا عالية وهمهمة فرفعت رأسي فإذا غيم أحمر مثل النار قريب مني فإذا تلك
 الهمهمة والأصوات منه وإذا فيه أمثال الناس والدواب وإذا في أيدي الأشباح
 التي فيه قسي ورماح وسيوف وأتيناها وأتيناها وإذا قطعة أخرى مثلها أرى فيها
 رجلا أيضا وسلاحا ودوابا فأقبلت هذه القطعة على هذه كما تحمل الكتبة على الكتبة
 ففرعنا من هذه وأقبلنا على التضرع والدعاء وأهل البلد يضحكون منا ويتعجبون من
 فعلنا قال وكنا ننظر إلى القطعة تحمل على القطعة فتختلطان جميعا ساعة ثم تفرقان فما
 زال الأمر كذلك إلى قطعة من الليل ثم غابتا فسألنا الملك عن ذلك فرغم أن أجداده
 كانوا يقولون هؤلاء من مؤمني الجن وكهّارهم يقتتلون كل عشية وإنهم ما عدمو
 هذا منذ كانوا في كل ليلة.

قال ودخلت أنا وخياط كان للملك من أهل بغداد قتي لتحدث فتحدثنا بمقدار ٧.٣
 ما يقر الإنسان نصف ساعة ونحن ننظر أذان العشاء فإذا بالأذان فخرجنا من القبة

١ معجم البلدان: يلطوار.

[44] Before we turned up, the phrase “Lord God, keep in piety the king 3.5
 Yilṭawār, king of the Bulghārs!” was proclaimed from the *minbar* during the Friday oration. I told the king, “God is the king, and He alone is to be accorded this title, especially from the *minbar*. Take your patron, the Commander of the Faithful. He has given instructions that the phrase, ‘Lord God, keep in piety the imam Ja‘far al-Muqtadir bi-llāh, your humble servant, caliph and Commander of the Faithful!’ be proclaimed from his *minbars* east and west.” He asked me, “What proclamation can I rightly use for the Friday oration?” and I said, “Your name and that of your father.” “But my father was an unbeliever,” he said, “and I do not wish to have his name mentioned from the *minbar*. Indeed I do not wish to have even my own name mentioned, because it was given me by an unbeliever. What is the name of my patron, the Commander of the Faithful?” “Ja‘far,” I replied. “Am I permitted to take his name?” “Yes.” “Then I take Ja‘far as my name, and ‘Abdallāh as the name of my father.” This was conveyed to the preacher. The proclamation during the Friday oration became, “Lord God, keep in piety Your bondsman Ja‘far ibn ‘Abd Allāh, the emir of Bulghārs, whose patron is the Commander of the Faithful!”

Ibn Faḍlān said: [48] I lost count of the number of marvels I witnessed 3.6
 in his realm. For example, on our first night in his territory, an hour before sunset, I saw the horizon turn a bright red. The air was filled with an uproar and loud voices. I looked up and was surprised to see fiery-red clouds nearby. The voices and the uproar came from the clouds, where there were shapes that looked like soldiers and horses. These shapes brandished bows, spears, and swords. I could form a clear image of them in my mind. Then another group, similar to the first, appeared. I could make out men, animals, and weapons. This second group charged the first, as one squadron attacks another. We were scared and began to pray to God and entreat Him. The locals were astonished at our reaction and laughed at us. Ibn Faḍlān said: We watched as one unit charged the other, engaged in combat for an hour, and then separated. This lasted for a part of the night, then they disappeared. We asked the king about this, and he told us that his forebears used to say, “These are two groups of jinn, believers and unbelievers, who do battle every evening.” This spectacle had occurred every night for as long as they could remember.

[49] Ibn Faḍlān said: I went into my yurt with the king’s tailor, a man from 3.7
 Baghdad. We were chatting but did not chat for long—less than half an hour, I reckon. We were waiting for the call to prayer at nightfall. When we heard it,

وقد طلع الفجر فقلت للمؤذن أي شيء أذنت قال الفجر قلت فعشاء الأخيرة قال نصليها مع المغرب قلت فالليل؟ قال كما ترى وقد كان أقصر من هذا وقد أخذ الآن في الطول وذكر أنه منذ شهر ما نام الليل خوفاً أن يفوته صلاة الصبح وذلك أن الإنسان يجعل القدر على النار وقت المغرب ثم يصلي الغداة وما أن لها أن تنضج قال ورأيت النهار عندهم طويلاً جداً وإذا أنه يطول عندهم مدة من السنة ويقصر الليل ثم يطول الليل ويقصر النهار فلما كانت الليلة الثانية جلست فلم أرفيها من الكواكب إلا عدداً يسيراً ظننت أنها فوق الخمسة عشر كوكباً متفرقة وإذا الشفق الأحمر الذي قبل المغرب لا يغيب بته وإذا الليل قليل الظلمة يعرف الرجل الرجل فيه من أكثر من غلوة سهم قال والقمر إنما يطلع في أرجاء السماء ساعة ثم يطلع الفجر فيغيب القمر قال وحديثي الملك أن وراء بلده بمسيرة ثلاثة أشهر قوم يقال لهم ويسو الليل عندهم أقل من ساعة قال ورأيت البلد عند طلوع الشمس يحمر كل شيء فيه من الأرض والجبال وكل شيء ينظر الإنسان إليه حين تطلع الشمس كأنها غمامة كبرى فلا تزال الحمرة كذلك حتى تتكبد السماء وعرفني أهل البلد أنه إذا كان الشتاء عاد الليل في طول النهار وعاد النهار في قصر الليل حتى أن الرجل مثلاً يخرج إلى نهر يقال له إتل بيننا وبينه أقل من مسافة فرسخ وقت الفجر فلا يبلغه إلى العتمة إلى وقت طلوع الكواكب كلها حتى تطبق السماء.

ورأيتهم يتبركون بعواء الكلب جداً ويقولون تأتي عليهم سنة خصب وبركة ٨٠٣ وسلامة ورأيت الحيات عندهم كثيرة حتى أن الغصن من الشجر ليلتف عليه عشرة منها وأكثر ولا يقتلونها ولا تؤذيهم ولهم تقاح أخضر شديد الحموضة جداً تأكله الجوارى فيسمن وليس في بلدهم أكثر من شجر البندق ورأيت منه غياضاً تكون أربعين فرسخاً في مثلها قال ورأيت لهم شجراً لا أدري ما هو مفطر الطول وساقه أجرد من الورق ورؤوسه كرؤوس النخل له خوص دقاق إلا أنه مجتمع يعمدون إلى موضع من ساق هذه الشجرة يعرفونه فيثقبونه ويجعلون تحته إناء يجري إليه من ذلك الثقب ماء أطيب من العسل وإن أكثر الإنسان من شربه أسكره كما تسكر الخمر وأكثر أكلهم

we went outside the yurt, and noticed that the morning sun had already risen. So I said to the muezzin, “Which prayer did you call?” “The daybreak prayer.” “And what about the last call, the night call?” “We perform that along with the sunset prayer.” So I said, “And what of the night?” “The nights are as short as you have observed. They have been even shorter but now they have started to grow long.” He said that he had not slept for a month, afraid he would miss the morning prayer. You can put a cooking pot on the fire at the time of the sunset prayer, and by the time you have performed the morning prayer, the pot will not have started to boil. Ibn Faḍlān said: Daylight was very long. I observed that, for part of the year, the days were long and the nights short. Later on I observed the nights grow long and the days short. [50] On our second night, I sat down outside and could make out only a few constellations, I think maybe no more than fifteen. I noticed that the red glow that precedes sunset did not disappear—night was hardly dark at all. In fact you could identify another person at more than a bow-shot away. Ibn Faḍlān said: The moon would rise in one part of the sky for an hour, then dawn would break, and the moon would set. The king told me that a tribe called the Wisū lived three months from his territory, where night lasted less than an hour. Ibn Faḍlān said: I noticed that at sunrise the whole country, the ground, the mountains, anything you cared to look at, grew red. The sun rose like a giant cloud. The red persisted until the sun was at its zenith. The inhabitants of Bulghār informed me, “In winter, night is as long as day is now and day is as short as night. If we set out at sunrise for a place called Itil less than a *farsakh* away, we will not get there before nightfall, when all the constellations have risen and cover the sky.”

[51] They consider the howling of a dog to be very auspicious, I observed. 3.8 They say that a year of fertility, auspiciousness, and peace approaches. Snakes, I noticed, are so numerous that ten, maybe even more, could be coiled around just one branch of a tree. The Bulghārs do not kill them, and the snakes do them no harm. [53] The apples are dark. In fact, they are extremely dark and more acidic than wine vinegar. The female slaves eat them and get fat. Hazel trees grow in abundance. I saw hazel woods everywhere. One wood can measure forty by forty *farsakhs*. There is another tree that grows there, but I don’t know what it is. It is extremely tall, has a leafless trunk, and tops like the tops of palm trees, with slender fronds, but bunched together. The locals know where to make a hole in the trunk. They place a container underneath it. Sap, sweeter than honey, flows from the hole. If someone drinks too much sap, he gets as

بلغار

الجاورس ولحم الخيل على أن الحطة والشعير كثير في بلادهم وكل من زرع شيئاً أخذه لنفسه ليس للملك فيه حق غير أنهم يؤدون إليه من كل بيت جلد ثور وإذا أمر سرية على بعض البلدان بالغارة فغنت كان له معهم حصّة وليس عندهم شيء من الأدهان غير دهن السمك فإنهم يقيمونه مقام الزيت والشيرج فهم كانوا لذلك زفرين وكلهم يلبسون القلائس فإذا ركب الملك ركب وحده بغير غلام ولا أحد معه فإذا اجتاز في السوق لم يبق أحد إلا قام وأخذ قلنسوته عن رأسه وجعلها تحت إبطه فإذا جاوزهم ردّوا قلائسهم فوق رؤوسهم وكذلك كل من يدخل على الملك من صغير وكبير حتى أولاده وإخوته ساعة يقع نظرهم عليه يأخذون قلائسهم فيجعلونها تحت آباطهم ثم يؤمّن إليه برؤوسهم ويجلسون ثم يقومون حتى يأمرهم بالجلوس وكل من جلس بين يديه فإنما يجلس باركا ولا يخرج قلنسوته ولا يظهرها حتى يخرج من بين يديه فيلبسها عند ذلك.

والصواعق في بلادهم كثيرة جداً وإذا وقعت الصاعقة في دار أحدهم لم يقربوه ١٠٣ ويتركونه حتى يتلفه الزمان ويقولون هذا موضع مغضوب عليه وإذا رأوا رجلاً له حركة ومعرفة بالأشياء قالوا هذا حقه أن يخدم ربنا فأخذوه وجعلوا في عنقه حبلاً وعلقوه في شجرة حتى يتقطع وإذا كانوا يسيرون في طريق وأراد أحدهم البول فبال وعليه سلاحه انتهبوه وأخذوا سلاحه وجميع ما معه ومن حظ عنه سلاحه وجعله ناحية لم يتعرضوا له وهذه سنتهم وينزل الرجال والنساء النهر فيغتسلون جميعاً عرا لا يستتر بعضهم من بعض ولا يزنون بوجه ولا سبب ومن زنا منهم كائناً من كان ضربوا له أربع سكك وشدّوا يديه ورجليه إليها وقطعوا بالفأس من رقبتة إلى فخذه وكذلك يفعلون بالمرأة ثم يعلق كل قطعة منه ومنها على شجرة قال ولقد اجتهدت أن تستتر النساء من الرجال في السباحة فما استوى إلى ذلك ويقتلون السارق كما يقتلون الزاني.

ولهم أخبار أقتصرنا على هذا.

intoxicated as he would from drinking wine. [54] Their diet consists chiefly of millet and horse meat, though wheat and barley are plentiful. Crop-growers keep what they grow for themselves. The king has no right over the crops, but every year they pay him one ox skin per household. When he orders a raid on a given territory he takes a share of the booty they bring back. [55] They do not use olive oil, sesame oil, or any other vegetable oil. They use fish oil instead. This is why they are so greasy. [56] They wear peaked caps. The king rides out alone, unaccompanied by his men or anyone else. If he passes through the market, everyone stands, removes his cap from his head and places it under his arm. When the king has passed, they put their caps back on. The same is true of those who are given an audience with the king, the great and the lowly—even his sons and his brothers. The moment they are in his presence, they remove their caps and place them under their arms. Then they bow their heads, sit down, and stand up again until he commands them to be seated. Those who sit in his presence, do so in a kneeling position. They keep their hats under their arms until they have left. Then they put them back on again.

[59] I observed more lightning there than anywhere else. They do not 3.9
 approach a household struck by lightning but let it be with all of its contents, people, and possessions—everything in fact—until time destroys it. They say, “This household has incurred divine wrath.” [61] If they notice that someone is clever and able, they say, “This man is fit for the service of our lord.” They take hold of him, place a rope around his neck, and hang him from a tree until he decomposes. [62] If one of them urinates on a march while still in full armor, everything he has with him, including his weapons, is removed as plunder. But they leave him alone if he undoes his weapons and puts them aside while urinating. This is one of their customs. [63] Men and women wash naked together in the river without covering themselves, and yet under no circumstance do they commit adultery. When they catch an adulterer, they set four rods in the ground and tie his hands and his feet to them, no matter who he may be. Then they take an axe, and cut him up, from neck to thigh. They treat the woman in the same manner. They hang the pieces from a tree. Ibn Faḍlān said: I spared no effort to exhort the women to cover themselves when swimming in the presence of men, but that proved impossible. They kill a thief in the same way they do an adulterer.

Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān gives many more items of information about the Bulghār 3.10
 but we have confined ourselves to this.

خزمر

... وقال أحمد بن فضلان رسول المقتدر إلى الصقالبة في رسالة له ذكر فيها ما ١٠٤
شاهده بتلك البلاد فقال

٢٠٤ الخزر اسم إقليم من قسبة تسمى إتل وإتل اسم النهر الذي يجري إلى الخزر من
الروس وبلغار وإتل مدينة والخزر اسم المملكة لا اسم مدينة وإتل قطعتان قطعة على
غربي هذا النهر المسمى إتل وهي أكبرهما وقطعة على شرقيّه والملك يسكن الغربيّ منهما
ويسمى الملك بلسانهم يلك ويسمى أيضا باك وهذه القطعة الغربية مقدارها في الطول
نحو فرسخ ويحيط بها سور إلا أنه مفترش البناء وأبنيتهم خركاهات لبود إلا شيء
يسير بني من طين ولهم أسواق وحمامات وفيها خلق كثير من المسلمين يقال إنهم
يزيدون على عشرة آلاف مسلم ولهم نحو ثلاثين مسجدا وقصر الملك بعيد من شط النهر
وقصره من أجر وليس لأحد بناء من أجر غيره ولا يمكن الملك أن يبني بالآجر غيره
ولهذا السور أربعة أبواب أحدها يلي النهر وآخرها يلي الصحراء على ظهر هذه المدينة
وملكهم يهودي ويقال إن له من الحاشية نحو أربعة آلاف رجل والخزر مسلمون
ونصارى وفيهم عبدة الأوثان وأقل الفرق هناك اليهود على أن الملك منهم وأكثرهم
المسلمون والنصارى إلا أن الملك وخاصته يهود والغالب على أخلاقهم أخلاق أهل
الأوثان يسجد بعضهم لبعض عند التعظيم وأحكام مصرهم على رسوم مخالفة للمسلمين
واليهود والنصارى وجريدة جيش الملك اثنا عشر ألف رجل فإذا مات منهم رجل أقيم
غيره مقامه فلا ينقص هذه العدة أبدا وليست لهم جناية دائرة إلا شيء نزر يسير
يصل إليهم في المدة البعيدة إذا كان لهم حرب أو حزبهم أمر عظيم يجمعون له وأما
أبواب أموال صلات الخزر فمن الأرصاد وعشور التجارات على رسوم لهم من كل
طريق وبحر ونهر ولهم وظائف على أهل المحالّ والنواحي من كل صنف مما يحتاج
إليه من طعام وشراب وغير ذلك وللملك تسعة من الحكام من اليهود والنصارى
والمسلمين وأهل الأوثان إذا عرض للناس حكومة قضى فيها هؤلاء ولا يصل أهل

... Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān was the envoy of al-Muqtadir bi-llāh to the king of the 4.1
 Ṣaḡālibah. In an epistle in which he gave an account of all his experiences in
 these regions he said:

Khazar is the name of a clime containing a fortified town called Itil. Itil is 4.2
 the name of the river that flows to Khazar from al-Rūs and Bulghār. Itil is a
 city. Khazar is the name of the kingdom, not the name of a city. Itil has two
 parts. One part, the bigger of the two, is on the west bank of the Itil. The other
 is on the east. The king, called *yilik* and also *bāk* in their tongue, lives on the
 west bank. The western part of the city stretches for about a *farsakh* and is
 surrounded by a wall. The wall has a flat top for patrols. They use felt tents for
 buildings, apart from a few clay structures. They have markets and baths. Many
 Muslims live there—more than ten thousand, it is said—and there are around
 thirty mosques. The king's palace, made of brick, is far from the river bank.
 This is their only brick building as the king will permit no one else to build
 with brick. The wall has four gates, one by the river, another by the steppe
 behind the city. The king is a Jew and, it is said, boasts a retinue of four thou-
 sand men. The Khazar population is Muslim and Christian with a number of
 idolaters. The Jews are the minority sect, though the king is a Jew. Muslims and
 Christians are the majority. The king and his elite are Jews. In their customs
 and practices, they live predominantly as the idolaters do—each bows down
 before the other in order to demonstrate reverence. The various customs of
 the Muslims, Jews, and Christians determine the rules that govern their town-
 ship. The king's army is made up of twelve thousand men. This number never
 decreases: a dead man is replaced immediately. They have no regular stipend,
 apart from a pittance that they receive, to cover long periods when they go to
 war or are mustered to deal with an emergency. The various kinds of wealth
 acquired by the Khazars derive from tolls and their custom of tithing the goods
 that arrive by road, river, and sea. They also impose a duty on the inhabit-
 ants of the neighboring trading emporia and surrounding areas. This duty can
 take any form, including food and drink and other requirements. The king
 has nine judges: Jews, Christians, Muslims, and idolaters. They rule on cases
 that need deciding, and they, not the litigants, communicate with the king.
 When the court is in session, the judges send their inquiries to the king via a

الحوائج إلى الملك نفسه وإنما يصل إليه هؤلاء الحكام وبين هؤلاء الحكام وبين الملك يوم القضاء سفيرٌ يرأسونه فيما يجري من الأمور ينهون إليه ويردّ عليهم أمره ويمضونه.

٣٠٤ وليس لهذه المدينة قرى إلا أن مزارعهم مفتشة يخرجون في الصيف إلى المزارع نحوًا من عشرين فرسخًا فيزرعون ويجمعونه إذا أدرك بعضه إلى النهر وبعضه إلى الصحارى فيملونه على الجبل والنهر والغالب على قوتهم الأرض والسمك وما عدا ذلك مما يوجد عندهم يحل إليهم من الروس وبلغار وكوباب والنصف الشرقي من مدينة الخزر فيه معظم التجار والمسلمون والمتاجر ولسان الخزر غير لسان الترك والفارسية ولا يشاركه لسان فريق من الأمم والخزر لا يشبهون الأتراك وهم سود الشعور وهم صنفان صنف يستمن قراخزر وهم سمر يضربون لشدة السمة إلى السواد كأنهم صنف من الهند وصنف بيض ظاهر والجمال والحسن والذي يقع من رقيق الخزر وهم أهل الأوثان الذين يستجيزون بيع أولادهم واسترقاق بعضهم لبعض فأما اليهود والنصارى فإنهم يدينون بتحريم استرقاق بعضهم بعضًا مثل المسلمين وبلد الخزر لا يجلب منه إلى البلاد شيء وكل ما يرتفع منه إنما هو مجلوب إليه مثل الدقيق والعسل والشمع والخز والأوبار.

٤٠٤ فأما ملك الخزر فاسمه خاقان وإنه لا يظهر إلا في كل أربعة أشهر متنزهًا ويقال له خاقان الكبير ويقال لخليفته خاقان به وهو الذي يقود الجيش ويسوسها ويدبر أمر المملكة ويقوم بها ويظهر ويفزو وله تدعى الملوك الذين يصاقبونه ويدخل في كل يوم إلى خاقان الأكبر متواضعًا يظهر الإخبات والسكينة ولا يدخل عليه إلا حافيا وبيده حطب فإذا سلم عليه أوقد بين يديه ذلك الحطب فإذا فرغ من الوقود جلس مع الملك على سريرته عن يمينه ويخلفه رجل يقال له كُدر خاقان ويخلف هذا أيضا رجل يقال له جاوشيعر ورسم الملك الأكبر أن لا يجلس للناس ولا يكلمهم ولا يدخل عليه أحد غير من ذكرنا والولايات في الحل والعقد والعقوبات وتدبير المملكة على خليفته خاقان

representative. This is how they make contact with him. He delivers his verdict and they implement it.

There are no villages in the countryside around the city. The fields produce their crops without being regularly tended. In the summer they travel about twenty *farsakhs* out into the fields and work the land. They harvest the crops when the crops reach the river and the steppes and transport them by cart and boat. Their staples are rice and fish and other foodstuffs exported to them from al-Rūs, Bulghār, and Kūyābah. The eastern half of the Khazar city is inhabited largely by merchants and Muslims. This is where trading takes place. The language of the Khazars is not similar to Turkic and Persian. It is unique among spoken languages. The Khazars do not resemble the Turks. They have black hair and are of two kinds. One kind, called the Qarākhazar,⁹ is brown. They get their name from their deep brown, almost black, coloration and look like Indians. The other kind is fair-skinned, beautiful, and comely. Slavery is practiced among the Khazars, but only the idolaters engage in it, as they permit the buying and selling of their children and enslaving one another. It is contrary to the religious beliefs of the Jews and the Christians, as it is of the Muslims, to enslave a co-religionist. No product is exported from the Khazar realm. Anything acquired there (flour, honey, wax, silk, or skins, for example) is imported. 4.3

[90A] The title of the king of the Khazars is *khāqān*. He only appears in public once every four months, at a distance. He is called the Great Khāqān. His deputy is called Khāqān Bih, who leads and commands the army, manages and conducts the affairs of the kingdom, appears in public and leads the raids. The neighboring kings obey him. He enters the presence of the Great Khāqān every day, abasing himself in a show of humility and meekness. He must enter his presence barefoot, with a piece of firewood in his hand. When he greets him, he lights the firewood in front of him, and then sits on the couch with the king at his right hand. He is represented by a man called Kundur Khāqān, who in turn is represented by a man called Jāwashīghar. According to custom, the Great Khāqān does not sit before the people or speak to them. Only those functionaries we have mentioned are admitted into his presence. Executive power, the meting out of punishment, and the general management of the kingdom are the responsibility of the deputy, Khāqān Bih. [91] It is the custom that, when the Great Khāqān dies, a large dwelling is constructed for him. It houses twenty tents, in each of which a grave is dug. Stones are pound to a 4.4

به ورسم الملك الأكبر إذا مات أن يبنى له دار كبيرة فيها عشرون بيتا ويحفر له في كل بيت منها قبر وتكسر الحجارة حتى تصير مثل الحلل وتقرش فيهن وتطرح النورة فوق ذلك وتحت الدار والنهر نهر كبير يجري ويجعلون القبر فوق ذلك النهر ويقولون حتى لا يصل إليه شيطان ولا إنسان ولا دود ولا هوام وإذا دفن ضربت أعناق الذين يدفونه حتى لا يدرى أين قبره من تلك البيوت ويسمى قبره الجنة ويقولون قد دخل الجنة وتقرش البيوت كلها بالديباج المنسوج بالذهب ورسم ملك الخزر أن يكون له خمس وعشرون امرأة كل امرأة منهم ابنة ملك من الملوك الذين يحاذونه يأخذها طوعا أو كرها وله من الجواري السراري لفراسه ستون ما منهم إلا فائقة الجال وكل واحدة من الحرائر والسراري في قصر مفرد لها قبة مغطاة بالساج وحول كل قبة مضرب ولكل واحدة منهم خادم مجبها فإذا أراد أن يطأ بعضهن بعث إلى الخادم الذي يجبها فيوافي بها في أسرع من لح الصرحتى يجعلها في فراشه ويقف الخادم على باب قبة الملك فإذا وطئها أخذ بيدها وانصرف ولم يتركها بعد ذلك لحظة واحدة وإذا ركب هذا الملك الكبير ركب سائر الجيوش لركوبه ويكون بينه وبين المواكب ميل فلا يراه أحد من رعيته إلا خزل وجهه ساجدا له لا يرفع رأسه حتى يجوزه ومدة ملكهم أربعون سنة إذا جاوزها يوما واحدا قتله الرعية وخاصته وقالوا هذا قد نقص عقله واضطرب رأيه وإذا بعث سرية لم تول الدبر بوجهه ولا بسبب فإن انهزمت قتل كل من ينصرف إليه منها فأما القواد وخليفته فمتى انهزموا أحضرهم وأحضر نساءهم وأولادهم فوهمهم بحضرتهم لغيرهم وهم ينظرون وكذلك دوابهم ومتاعهم وسلاحهم ودورهم وربما قطع كل واحد منهم قطعتين وصلبهم وربما علقهم بأعناقهم في الشجر وربما جعلهم إذا أحسن إليهم ساسة.

وملك الخزر مدينة عظيمة على نهر إتل وهي جانبان في أحد الجانبين المسلمون ٥٤
وفي الجانب الآخر الملك وأصحابه وعلى المسلمين رجل من غلمان الملك يقال له خزر وهو مسلم وأحكام المسلمين المقيمين في بلد الخزر والمختلفين إليهم في التجارات مردودة إلى ذلك الغلام المسلم لا ينظر في أمورهم ولا يقضي بينهم غيره وللمسلمين في هذه

kohl-like powder and spread on the ground. Lime is thrown on top. A second river flows under both the dwelling and the river—a fast, powerful river. They construct the grave above the river, saying, “This way no devil, man, worm, or vermin can reach him!” Those who bury him in his grave are beheaded, so no one knows which tent houses his grave. His grave is called the Garden, and they say, “He has entered the Garden.” All of the tents are carpeted with silk woven with gold. [92] It is the custom of the king of the Khazars to possess twenty-five women, daughters of the neighboring kings, taken either with their compliance or by force. He has sixty concubines, slaves beautiful beyond compare. The freeborn women and the concubines live in a separate palace. Each has a chamber with a vault of teak paneling and surrounded by a pavilion. Each concubine is served by a eunuch as her chamberlain. When the king wants to have intercourse, he sends for the eunuch who places the woman in the king’s bed in the blink of an eye. The eunuch stands by the door of the king’s yurt. When the king is done with her, the eunuch takes her by the hand and departs. He does not leave her there for one minute longer. [93] When this great king goes out riding, the entire army rides with him. There is a mile between him and his retinue. When his subjects see him, they lie down on their faces and remain prostrate before him. They do not lift their heads until he has passed. [94] His kingship lasts forty years. When it is just one day past forty he is put to death by his subjects, including the elite, who say, “His mind is defective and his judgment is impaired.” [95] No squadron he dispatches will turn back or retreat, no matter what. Those who come back after a defeat are killed. If his generals and the deputy are defeated, he has them brought into his presence, along with their women and children, and gives the women and children to another man before their very eyes. He does the same with their horses, belongings, weapons, and residences. Sometimes he cuts them in two and gibbets them. Sometimes he hangs them by the neck from a tree. Sometimes he makes them stable-hands—if he means to be kind to them, that is.

[96] The king of the Khazars has a mighty city on both banks of the Itil. 4.5 The Muslims are on one bank, the king and his retinue on the other. One of the king’s men, a Muslim whose title is Khaz, is in charge of the Muslims. The legal rulings of all the Muslims, both those who reside in the realm of the Khazars and those who go there regularly to trade, are referred to this Muslim retainer. No one else looks into their affairs or judges among them. [97] The Muslims

خوارزم

المدينة مسجد جامع يصلون فيه الصلاة ويحضرون فيه أيام الجمع وفيه منارة عالية وعدة مؤذنين فلما اتصل بملك الخزر في سنة ٣١٠ أن المسلمين هدموا الكنيسة التي كانت في دار البابونج أمر بالمنارة فهدمت وقتل المؤذنون وقال لولا أنني أخاف أن لا يبقى في بلاد الإسلام كنيسة إلا هدمت لهدمت المسجد والخزر وملكهم كلهم يهود وكان الصقالة وكل من يجاورهم في طاعته ويخاطبهم بالعبودية ويدينون له بالطاعة وقد ذهب بعضهم إلى أن ياجوج وماجوج هم الخزر.

خوارزم

- ١٠٥ . . . وقرأت في الرسالة التي كتبها أحمد بن فضلان بن العباس بن راشد بن حماد مولى محمد بن سليمان رسول المقتدر بالله إلى ملك الصقالة ذكر فيها ما شاهده منذ خرج من بغداد إلى أن عاد إليها فقال بعد وصوله إلى بخارى.
- ٢٠٥ قال وانفصلنا من بخارى إلى خوارزم وانحدرنا من خوارزم إلى الجرجانية وبينها وبين خوارزم في الماء خمسون فرسخا.
- ٣٠٥ قلت هكذا قال ولا أدري أي شيء عنى بخوارزم لأن خوارزم هو اسم الإقليم بلا شك.
- ٤٠٥ رأيت دراهم بخوارزم مزينة ورصاصا وزيوفا وصفرا ويسمون الدرهم طازجة ووزنه أربعة دوانق ونصف والصير في منهم يبيع الكعاب والدوامات والدراهم وهم أوحش الناس كلاما وطبعاً كلامهم أشبه شيء بنقيق الضفادع وهم يتبرءون من أمير المؤمنين علي بن أبي طالب رضي الله عنه في دبر كل صلاة فأقننا بالجرجانية أياما وحمد جيمون من أوله إلى آخره وكان سُمك الحمد تسعة عشر شبرا.
- ٥٠٥ قال عبد الله الفقير وهذا كذب منه فإن أكثر ما يجمد خمسة أشبار وهذا يكون نادرا فأما العادة فهو شبران أو ثلاثة شاهدهته وسألت عنه أهل تلك البلاد ولعله ظن

have a congregational mosque in this city. This is where they perform the prayer and gather on Friday, the day of congregation. It has a tall minaret and a number of muezzins. In the year 310 [922–23], the king of the Khazars was informed that the Muslims had razed the synagogue in Dār al-Bābūnj. He gave orders for the minaret to be razed and for the muezzins to be killed. He said: “I would not have razed the mosque, were I not afraid that every synagogue in the territory of Islam would be razed!” The Khazars and their king are Jews. The Ṣaqālibah and those who live on the Khazar border are under his rule. He addresses them as slaves and they owe him their obedience. Some claim that the Khazars are the tribes of Gog and Magog.

Khwārazm¹⁰

I read the following in the epistle that Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān ibn al-‘Abbās ibn Rāshid ibn Ḥammād wrote. He was the envoy of al-Muqtadir bi-llāh to the king of the Ṣaqālibah, and his patron was Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān. In this work he gives an account of all his experiences from his departure from Baghdad until his return. After his arrival in Bukhārā, he said:

We arrived in Bukhārā and then left for Khwārazm. We travelled down-river from Khwārazm to al-Jurjāniyyah. The distance, by water, is fifty *farsakhs*.

I say: These are his very words but I do not know what exactly he means by Khwārazm, because Khwārazm is incontrovertibly the name of the region.

Ibn Faḍlān said: [9] I noticed that, in Khwārazm, the dirhams are adulterated and should not be accepted, because they are made of lead and brass. They call their dirham a *ṭāzījah*. It weighs four and a half *dānaqs*. The money changers trade in sheep bones, spinning tops, and dirhams. They are the strangest of people in the way they talk and behave. When they talk, they sound just like frogs croaking. At the end of the prayer they disavow the Commander of the Faithful, ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, God be pleased with him. [10] We stayed several days in al-Jurjāniyyah. The River Jayḥūn froze over completely, from beginning to end. The ice was nineteen spans thick.

God’s poor servant ‘Abdallāh¹¹ said: This is false. The river freezes to an extent of five spans, no more—and even this is a rare occurrence. Normally it is two or three spans thick. I speak from first hand experience. I quizzed the locals about it too. Maybe Ibn Faḍlān thinks that the whole river freezes over,

خوارزم

أنَّ النهر يجمد كله وليس الأمر كذلك إنما يجمد أعلاه وأسفله جارٍ وبحفر أهل خوارزم في الجليد ويستخرجون منه الماء لشربهم لا يتعدى الثلاثة أشبار إلا نادرا.

٦٠٥ قال وكانت الخيل والبغال والحمير والعجل تجتاز عليه كما تجتاز على الطريق وهو ثابت لا يتخلل فأقام على ذلك ثلاثة أشهر فرأينا بلدا ما ظننا إلا أن بابا من الزمهرير فتح علينا منه ولا يسقط فيه الثلج إلا ومعه ريح عاصف شديدة.

٧٠٥ قلت وهذا أيضا كذب فإنه لولا ركود الهواء في الشتاء في بلادهم لما عاش فيها أحد.

٨٠٥ قال وإذا اتحف الرجل من أهله صاحبه وأراد به قال تعالى إليّ حتى نتحدث فإنّ عندي نارا طيبة هذا إذا بلغ في به وصلته إلا أن الله عز وجل قد لطف بهم في الحطب وأرخسه عليهم حمل عجلة من حطب الطاغ وهو الغضا بدرهمين يكون وزنها ثلاثة آلاف رطل.

٩٠٥ قلت وهذا أيضا كذب لأن العجلة أكثر ما تجر على ما اختبرته وحملت قماش لي عليه ألف رطل لأن عجلتهم جميعها لا تجرها إلا رأس واحد إما بقرا أو حمار أو فرس وأما رخص الحطب فيتمل أن كان في زمانه بذلك الرخص فأما وقت كوني بها فإنّ مائة من كان بثلاثة دینار ركني.

١٠٠٥ قال ورسم سؤالهم أن لا يقف السائل على الباب بل يدخل إلى دار الواحد منهم فيقع ساعة عند ناره يصطلي ثم يقول يكند وهو الخبز فإن أعطوه شيئا وإلا خرج.

١١٠٥ قلت أنا وهذا من رسمهم صحيح إلا أنه في الرستاق دون المدينة شاهدت ذلك ثم وصف شدة بردهم الذي أنا شاهدته من بردها أن طرقها تجد في الوحول ثم يمشي عليها فيطير الغبار منها فإن تقيت الدنيا ودفت قليلا عادت وحولا تعوض فيها الدواب إلى ركبها وقد كنت اجتهدت أن أكتب شيئا فإني لم أكني لجمود الدواة حتى أقربها من النار وأذيتها وكنت إذا وضعت الشربة على شفتي التصقت بها لجمودها على شفتي

but this is not so. The surface freezes over while the water flows underneath. The people of Khwārazm make a hole in the ice and draw their drinking water from it. This hole is very rarely more than three spans deep.

Ibn Faḍlān said: [10] Horses, mules, donkeys, and carts used the river like a road and it did not move—it did not even budge. It stayed like this for three months. We thought the country we were visiting was an «infernally cold»¹² portal to the depths of Hell. When snow fell, it was accompanied by a wild, howling blizzard. 5.6

I said: This is also false. If the winter winds did not abate, people could not live there. 5.7

[11] When people here want to honor each other and be generous they say, “Come to my house so we can talk, for I have a good fire burning.” This is when they want to express genuine generosity and affability. However, God the exalted has been kind to them by making firewood plentiful and very cheap: a cart load of *tāgh* wood (which is the tamarisk) costs only two local dirhams, and their carts can hold about three thousand *raṭls*. 5.8

I said: Once again this is false. From my experience of transporting some cotton bales, the maximum load their carts can carry is one thousand *raṭls*. The carts they use are drawn by a single animal, be it an ox, a donkey, or a horse. Of course, it is possible that firewood was this cheap during the author’s lifetime, but, when I was there, one hundred *mann* cost three *rukni* dinars. 5.9

[11] Normally, their beggars do not stand outside at the door but go into the house, sit for a while and get warm by the fire. Then they say, “Pakand” meaning “bread”. They leave, whether they are given some or not. 5.10

I said: I actually observed this custom, though it occurs in the countryside and not the town. Then Ibn Faḍlān describes the severe cold, which I too experienced. The mud on the roads would freeze, and the dust would rise into the air when the roads were used. When the rains came and the temperature rose a little, the roads would revert to mud and the animals would sink into it up to their knees. I once tried to write something down but was unable to because the ink in the pot was frozen, and I had to hold it close to the fire and thaw it. Cups would stick to my lips because they were frozen. Blowing on them to warm them up would do no good. And yet for all this, Khwārazm is a pleasant region. Its people are scholars and legal experts, clever men, and wealthy. It is 5.11

ولم يقاوم حرارة النفس الجداد ومع هذا فهي لعمري بلاد طيبة وأهلها علماء فقهاء أذكياء أغنياء والمعيشة بينهم موجودة وأسباب الرزق عندهم غير مفقودة.

١٠٦ . . . وقرأت في رسالة أحمد بن فضلان بن العباس بن راشد بن حماد مولى محمد بن سليمان رسول المقتدر إلى ملك الصقالبة حكى فيها ما عاينه منذ انفصل عن بغداد إلى أن عاد إليها فحكيت ما ذكره على وجهه استجابا به.

٢٠٦ قال ورأيت الروسية وقد وافوا بتجاراتهم فنزلوا على نهر إتل فلم أر أتم أبدانا منهم كأنهم الخلل شُقرحمر لا يلبسون القراطق ولا الخفاتين ولكن يلبس الرجل منهم كساء يشتمل به على أحد شقيه ويُخرج إحدى يديه منه ومع كل واحد منهم سيف وسكين وفأس لا يفارقه وسيوفهم صفائح مشطبة إفريقية ومن حد ظفر الواحد منهم إلى عنقه مخضر شجر وصور وغير ذلك وكل امرأة منهم على ثديها حقة مشدودة إما من حديد وإما من نحاس وإما من فضة وإما من ذهب على قدر مال زوجها ومقداره وفي كل حقة حلقة فيها سكين مشدودة على الثدي أيضا وفي أعناقهن أطواق ذهب وفضة لأن الرجل إذا ملك عشرة آلاف درهم صاغ لامرأته طوقا وإن ملك عشرين ألفا صاغ لها طوقين وكلما زاد عشرة آلاف درهم يزيد لها طوقا آخر فبما كان في عنق الواحدة منهن أطواق كثيرة وأجل الحلي عندهم الحُرْز الأَخضر من الحُرْف الذي يكون على السفن يبالغون فيه ويشتررون الحُرْزة منه بدرهم وينظمونه عقدا لنسائهم.

٣٠٦ وهم أقدر خلق الله لا يستنجون من غائط ولا يغتسلون من جنابة كأنهم الحجير الضالّة يجميئون من بلدهم فيرسون سفنهم بإتل وهو نهر كبير وينون على شاطئه بيوتا بكارا من الخشب ويجمع في البيت الواحد العشرة والعشرون والأقل والأكثر ولكل واحد منهم سرير يجلس عليه ومعه جواريه الروقة للتجار فينكح الواحد جاريته ورفيقه

possible to make a living there, and it is possible for them to cultivate the soil and grow crops.

Rūs¹³

I read the following in the epistle of Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn Rāshid ibn Ḥammād. He was the envoy of al-Muqtadir to the king of the Ṣaḡālibah, and his patron was Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān. In the work, he gave an account of everything he witnessed, from his departure from Baghdad until his return. I find his account so astonishing that I quote it as I found it. Ibn Faḍlān said:

[74] I also saw the Rūsiyyah. They had come to trade and had disembarked at the Itil River. I have never seen bodies as nearly perfect as theirs. As tall as palm trees, fair, and reddish, they wear neither tunics nor caftans. Every man wears a cloak with which he covers half of his body and leaves one arm uncovered. They carry swords, daggers, and axes and always have them to hand. They use Frankish swords with broad, ridged blades. They are dark, from the tips of their toes right up to their necks—trees, pictures, and the like. [75] Every woman wears a small box made of iron, brass, silver, or gold, depending on her husband's financial worth and social standing, tied at her breasts. The box has a ring to which a knife is attached, also tied at her breasts. The women wear neck rings of gold and silver. When a man has amassed ten thousand dirhams, he has a neck ring made for his wife. When he has amassed twenty thousand dirhams, he has two neck rings made. For every subsequent ten thousand, he gives a neck ring to his wife. This means a woman can wear many neck rings. The jewelry they prize the most is the dark ceramic beads they have aboard their boats and which they value very highly. They purchase beads for one dirham each and string them together as necklaces for their wives.

[76] They are the filthiest of all God's creatures. They have no modesty when it comes to defecating or urinating and do not wash themselves when intercourse puts them in a state of ritual impurity. They do not even wash their hands after eating. Indeed they are like roaming asses.¹⁴ They arrive, moor their boats by the Itil, and build large wooden houses on its banks. They share a house, in groups of ten and twenty, sometimes more, sometimes fewer. Each reclines on a couch. They are accompanied by beautiful female slaves for trade

ينظر إليه وربما اجتمعت الجماعة منهم على هذه الحالة بعضهم بحذاء بعض وربما يدخل التاجر عليهم ليشترى من بعضهم جارية فيصادفه ينكحها فلا يزول عنها حتى يقضي أربه ولا بد لهم في كل يوم بالغداة أن تأتي الجارية ومعها قصعة كبيرة فيها ماء فقدمها إلى مولاها فيغسل فيها وجهه ويديه وشعر رأسه فيغسله ويسرحه بالمشط في القصعة ثم يمتخط ويبصق فيها ولا يدع شيئاً من القدر إلا فعله في ذلك الماء فإذا فرغ مما يحتاج إليه حملت الجارية القصعة إلى الذي يليه فيفعل مثل ما فعل صاحبه ولا تزال ترفعها من واحد إلى واحد حتى تديرها على جميع من في البيت وكل واحد منهم يمتخط ويبصق ويغسل وجهه وشعره فيها.

وساعة موافاة سفنهم إلى هذا المرسى يخرج كل واحد منهم ومعه خبز ولحم ٤٠٦ ولبن وبصل ونبذ حتى يوافي خشبة طويلة منصوبة لها وجه يشبه وجه الإنسان وحولها صور صغار وخلف تلك الصور خشب طوال قد نصبت في الأرض فيوافي إلى الصورة الكبيرة ويسجد لها ثم يقول يا رب قد جئت من بعدٍ ومعى من الجواري كذا وكذا رأساً ومن السمور كذا وكذا جلداً حتى يذكر جميع ما قدم معه من تجارته ثم يقول وجئت بك بهذه الهدية ثم يترك ما معه بين يدي الخشبة ويقول أريد أن ترزقني تاجراً معه دنائير ودراهم كثيرة فيشتري مني كلما أريد ولا يخالفني في جميع ما أقول ثم ينصرف فإن تعسر عليه بيعه وطالت أيامه عاد بهدية أخرى ثانية وثالثة فإن تعذر ما يريد حمل إلى صورة من تلك الصور الصغار هدية وسألها الشفاعة وقال هؤلاء نساء ربنا وبناته ولا يزال إلى صورة صورة ويسألها ويستشفع بها ويتضرع بين يديها فربما تسهل له البيع فباع فيقول قد قضى ربي حاجتي وأحتاج أن أكافيه فيعمد إلى عدة من البقر والغنم على ذلك ويقتلها ويتصدق ببعض اللحم ويحمل الباقي فيطرحه بين يدي تلك الخشبة الكبيرة والصغار التي حولها ويلتق رؤوس البقر والغنم على ذلك الخشب المنسوب في الأرض فإذا كان الليل وافت الكلاب فأكلت ذلك فيقول الذي فعله قد رضي عني ربي وأكل هديتي.

with the merchants. They have intercourse with their female slaves in full view of their companions. Sometimes they gather in a group and do this in front of each other. A merchant may come in to buy a female slave and stumble upon the owner having intercourse. The Rūs does not leave her alone until he has satisfied his urge. They must wash their faces and their heads every day with the filthiest and most polluted water you can imagine. Let me explain. Every morning a female slave brings a large basin full of water and hands it to her master. He washes his face, hands, and hair in the water. Then he dips the comb in the water and combs his hair. Then he blows his nose and spits in the basin. He is prepared to do any filthy, impure act in the water. When he has finished, the female slave carries the basin to the man next to him who performs the same routine as his comrade. She carries it from one man to the next and goes around to everyone in the house. Every man blows his nose and spits in the basin, and then washes his face and hair.

[77] They disembark as soon as their boats dock. Each carries bread, meat, 6.4 milk, onions, and alcohol to a large block of wood set in the ground. The piece of wood has a face on it, like the face of a man. It is surrounded by small figurines placed in front of large blocks of wood set in the ground. He prostrates himself before the large figure and says, "Lord, I have come from a distant land, with such and such a number of female slaves and such and such a number of sable pelts." He lists all his merchandise. Then he says, "And I have brought this offering." He leaves his offering in front of the piece of wood, saying, "I want you to bless me with a rich merchant with many dinars and dirhams who will buy from me whatever I wish and not haggle over any price I set." Then he leaves. If he finds it hard to sell his goods and has to stay there too many days, he comes back with a second and a third offering. If his wishes are not fulfilled, he brings an offering to every single figurine and seeks its intercession, saying, "These are the wives and daughters of our lord." He goes up to each figurine in turn and petitions it, begging for its intercession and groveling before it. Sometimes business is good, and he makes a quick sale. In that case he says, "My lord has satisfied my request, so I need to compensate him." He acquires some sheep and cows and kills them, gives a portion of the meat as alms, and places the rest before the large block of wood and the small ones around it. He ties the heads of the cows and the sheep to the piece of wood set up in the ground. When night falls, the dogs come and eat it all up, and the man who has gone to all this trouble says, "My lord is pleased with me and has eaten my offering."

وإذا مرض منهم الواحد ضربوا له خيمة ناحية عنهم وطرحوه فيها وجعلوا معه ٥٠٦ شيئاً من الخبز والماء ولا يقربونه ولا يكلمونه بل لا يتعاهدونه في كل أيام لا سيما إن كان ضعيفاً أو كان مملوكاً فإن برئ وقام رجع إليهم وإن مات أحرقوه وإن كان مملوكاً تركوه على حاله تأكله الكلاب وجوارح الطير وإذا أصابوا سارقاً أولصاً جاءوا به إلى شجرة غليظة وشدوا في عنقه حبلاً وثيقاً وعلقوه فيها ويبقى معلقاً حتى ينقطع من المكث إما بالرياح أو الأمطار.

وكان يقال لي إنهم يفعلون برؤسائهم عند الموت أموراً أقلها الحرق فكنْتُ أحبُّ ٦٠٦ أن أُنْفى على ذلك حتى بلغني موت رجل منهم جليل فجعلوه في قبره وسقّوا عليه عشرة أيام حتى فرغوا من قطع ثيابه وخياطتها وذلك أن الرجل الفقير منهم يعملون له سفينة صغيرة ويجعلونه فيها ويحرقونها والغني يجمعون ماله ويجعلونه ثلاثة أثلاث فثلث لأهله وثلث يقطعون له ثياباً وثلث يشترون به نبيذا يشربونه يوم تقتل جاريته نفسها وتُحرق مع مولايها وهم مستهترون بالخمير يشربونها ليلاً ونهاراً وربما مات الواحد منهم والقدرح في يده وإذا مات الرئيس منهم قال أهله لجواريه وعلمانه من منكم يموت معه فيقول بعضهم أنا فإذا قال ذلك فقد وجب لا يستوي له أن يرجع أبداً ولو أراد ذلك ما تُرك وأكثر ما يفعل هذا الجوّاري فلما مات ذلك الرجل الذي قدّمت ذكره قالوا لجواريه من يموت معه فقالت إحداهنّ أنا فوكلوا بها جارتين تحفظانها وتكونان معها حيث ما سلكت حتى أنّهما ربّما غسلتا رجليها بأيديهما وأخذوا في شأنه وقطع الثياب له وإصلاح ما يحتاج إليه والجارية في كلّ يوم تشرب وتغني فارحة مستبشرة.

ولما كان اليوم الذي يُحرق فيه هو والجارية حضرتُ إلى النهر الذي فيه سفينته ٧٠٦ فإذا هي قد أخرجت وجعل لها أربعة أركان من خشب الخلنج وغيره وجعل حولها أيضاً مثل الأنابير البكار^٢ من الخشب ثمّ مدّت حتى جعلت على ذلك الخشب

١ معجم البلدان: الخليج. ٢ معجم البلدان: الأناس والبكار.

[78] When one of them falls ill, they pitch a tent far away and lay him down 6.5
inside, with some bread and water. They do not approach him or speak to him.
Indeed, they have no contact with him for as long as he is ill, especially if he
is a social inferior or a slave. If he recovers and gets back to his feet, he rejoins
them. If he dies, they set fire to him. They do not bury dead slaves but leave
them as food for the dogs and the birds. [79] When they catch a thief or a
bandit, they take him to a solid tree and put a sturdy rope around his neck.
They tie him to the tree, and he hangs there until he eventually decomposes
through exposure to the rain and the winds.

[80] I was told that they set fire to their chieftains when they die. Some- 6.6
times they do more, so I was very keen to verify this. Then I learned of the
death of an important man. They had placed him in his grave with a roof raised
over him, for ten days while they finished cutting and sewing his garments.
When the deceased is poor, they build a small boat for him, place him inside,
and burn it. When he is rich, they collect his possessions and divide them
into three portions. One-third goes to his household, one-third is spent on his
funeral garments, and one-third is spent on the alcohol they drink the day his
female slave kills herself and is cremated with her master. They are addicted
to alcohol. They drink it night and day. Sometimes one of them dies cup in
hand. When the chieftain dies, the members of his household ask his female
and male slaves, "Who will die with him?" One answers, "I will." At this point
the words become binding. There is no turning back. It is not even an option.
It is usually female slaves who offer. [81] When the man I just mentioned died,
they said to his female slaves, "Who will die with him?" One said, "I will."
So they put two other female slaves in charge of her, caring for her and accom-
panying her wherever she went, even to the point of washing her feet with
their hands. Then they attended to the chieftain, cutting his garments and set-
ting in order what was required him. The female slave drank alcohol every day
and sang merrily and cheerfully.

[82] I arrived at the river where his boat was moored on the day when the 6.7
chief and the female slave were set on fire. I noticed that the boat had been
beached and that it was supported by four props of *khalanj* and other wood.
These props were surrounded by what looked like huge structures of wood.
The boat had been hauled on top of the wood. The Rūsiyyah approached,
going to and fro around the boat, uttering words I did not understand.
The chief was still in his grave and had not been exhumed. They produced

وأقبلوا يذهبون ويحيئون ويتكلمون بكلام لا أفهم وهو بعد في قبره لم يخرجوه ثم جاءوا بسير فجعلوه على السفينة وغشوه بالمضربات الديباج الرومي والمساند الديباج الرومي ثم جاءت امرأة عجوز يقولون لها ملك الموت ففرشت على السير الذي ذكرناه وهي وليت خياطته وإصلاحه وهي تقتل الجواري ورأيتها جَوَان ييرة^١ ضخمة مكهفزة فلما وافوا قبره نحووا التراب عن الخشب ونحووا الخشب واستخرجوه في الإزار الذي مات فيه فرأته قد اسودت لبرد البلد وقد كانوا جعلوا معه في قبره نبذا وفاكهة وطنبورا فأخرجوا جميع ذلك وإذا هو لم يتغير منه شيء غير لونه فألبسوه سراويلًا وراثًا وخفًا وقرطًا وخفتان ديباج له أزرار ذهب وجعلوا على رأسه قلنسوة من ديباج سمور وحملوه حتى أدخلوه القبة التي على السفينة وأجلسوه على المضربة وأسندوه بالمساند وجاءوا بالنبيذ والفواكه والريحان فجعلوه معه وجاءوا بمخبز ولحم وبصل فطرحوه بين يديه وجاءوا بكلب فقطعوه نصفين وألقوه في السفينة ثم جاءوا بجميع سلاحه فجعلوه إلى جانبه ثم أخذوا دابتين فأجروهما حتى عرقتا ثم قطعوهما بالسيوف وألقوا لهما في السفينة ثم جاءوا بقرتين فقطعوهما أيضا وألقوهما في السفينة ثم أحضروا ديكًا ودجاجة فقتلوهما وطرحوهما فيها والجارية التي نُقِلَ ذاهبةً وجائيةً تدخل قبة قبة من قباهم فيجاءونها واحد واحد وكل واحد يقول لها قولي لمولايك إنما فعلت هذا من محبتك فلما كان وقت العصر من يوم الجمعة جاءوا بالجارية إلى شيء عملوه مثل ملبن الباب فوضعت رجلها على أكتف الرجال وأشرفت على ذلك الملبن وتكلمت بكلام لها فأنزلوها ثم أصعدوها ثانية ففعلت كعملها في المرة الأولى ثم أنزلوها وأصعدوها ثلاثة ففعلت فعلها في المرتين ثم دفعوا إليها دجاجة فقطعت رأسها ورمت به وأخذوا الدجاجة فألقوها في السفينة فسألت الترجمان عن فعلها فقال قالت في المرة الأولى أصعدوها هوذا أرى أبي وأمي وقالت في المرة الثانية هوذا أرى جميع قرابتي الموتى قعودا وقالت في المرة الثالثة هوذا أرى مولاي قاعدا في الجنة والجنة حسنة خضراء ومعه الرجال والغلمان وهو يدعوني فاذهبوا بي إليه فمروا بها نحو السفينة

١ معجم البلدان: حواء ييرة.

a couch and placed it on the boat, covering it with quilts and cushions made of Byzantine silk brocade. An aged woman whom they called the Angel of Death turned up. She spread the coverings on the couch. It is her responsibility to sew the chieftain's garments and prepare him properly, and it is she who kills the female slaves. I saw her myself: she was gloomy and corpulent, but neither young nor old. [83] When they arrived at his grave, they removed the soil from the wood. Then they removed the wood and exhumed him, dressed in the garment he was wearing when he died. I saw that the coldness of the climate had turned him black. They had placed alcohol, fruit, and a *ṭanbūr* in his grave. They removed all of this. Surprisingly, only his color had deteriorated. They dressed him in trousers, leggings, boots, a tunic, and a silk caftan with gold buttons. They placed a peaked silk cap fringed with sable on his head. They carried him inside the yurt which was on the boat and rested him on a quilt, propping him up with the cushions. They placed the alcohol, fruit, and basil beside him. Then they placed bread, meat, and onions in front of him. They cut a dog in two and threw it onto the boat. They placed all his weaponry beside him. They made two horses gallop into a sweat, cut them into pieces with their swords, and threw the meat onto the boat. They cut two cows into pieces and threw them on board. Then they produced a cock and a hen, killed them and put them on board too. [84] Meanwhile, the female slave who was to be killed came and went, entering one yurt after another. One by one the owner of the yurt had intercourse with her and said, "Tell your master that I have done this out of love for you." At the time of the Friday late afternoon prayer they brought the female slave to an object they had built that resembled a door-frame. She stood on the hands of the men and she was lifted above the door-frame. She uttered some words, and they brought her down. They lifted her up a second time, and she did what she had done before. They lowered her and lifted her a third time, and she did what she had done the last two times. Then they handed her a hen. She cut off the head and cast it aside. They picked the hen up and threw it onto the boat. I quizzed the interpreter about her actions and he said, "The first time they lifted her up, she said, 'Look, I see my father and mother.' The second time she said, 'Look, I see all my dead kindred, seated.' The third time she said, 'Look, I see my master, seated in the Garden. The Garden is beautiful and dark-green. He is with his men and his retainers. He summons me. Bring me to him.'" They took her to the boat, and she removed both of her bracelets, handing them to

فنزعت سوارين كانتا معها فدفعتهما إلى المرأة العجوز التي تسمى ملك الموت وهي التي تقتلها ونزعت خلالين كانتا عليها ودفعتهما إلى الجاريتين اللتين كانتا تخدمانها وهما ابنتا المعروفة بملك الموت ثم أصدعوهما إلى السفينة ولم يدخلوها إلى القبة وجاءوا الرجال ومعهم التراس والخشب ودفعوا إليها قدحا من نبيذ فغنت عليه وشربته فقال لي الترجمان إنها تودع صواحباتها بذلك ثم دفع إليها قدح آخر فأخذته وطولت الغناء والعجوز تستحقها على شربه والدخول إلى القبة التي فيها مولاهما فرأيتها وقد تبدلت وأرادت الدخول إلى القبة فأدخلت رأسها بين القبة والسفينة فأخذت العجوز رأسها وأدخلتها القبة ودخلت معها العجوز وأخذوا الرجال يضربون بالخشب على التراس لئلا يسمع صوت صياحها فيخرج غيرها من الجواري فلا يطلبن الموت مع مواليهن ثم دخل القبة ستة رجال فجاءوا بأسرهم الجارية ثم أضجعوها إلى جنب مولاهما الميت وأمسك اثنان رجليها واثنان يديها وجعلت العجوز التي تسمى ملك الموت في عنقها حبلا مخالفا ودفعته إلى اثنين ليجذباها وأقبلت ومعها خنجر عظيم عريض النصل فأقبلت تدخله بين أضلاعها وتخرجه والرجلان يخنقانها بالحبل حتى ماتت.

ثم وافى أقرب الناس إلى ذلك الميت فأخذ خشبة فأشعلها بالنار ثم مشى القهقري نحو قفاه إلى السفينة والخشبة في يده الواحدة ويده الأخرى على استه وهو عريان حتى أحرق ذلك الخشب الذي قد عبّوه تحت السفينة من بعدما وضعوا الجارية التي قتلوها في جنب مولاهما ثم وافى الناس بالخشب والحطب ومع كل واحد خشبة وقد ألهب رأسها فليقيها في ذلك الخشب فتأخذ النار في الحطب ثم في السفينة ثم في القبة والرجل والجارية وجميع ما فيها ثم هبت ريح عظيمة هائلة فاشتد لهب النار واضطرم تسعرها وكان إلى جانبي رجل من الروسية فسمعت يكل الترجمان الذي معه فسأله عما قال له فقال إنه يقول أنتم معاشر العرب حمقى لأنكم تتمدنون إلى أحب الناس إليكم وأكرمهم عليكم فطرهونه في التراب فتأكله الهوام والدود ونحن نحرقه بالنار في لحظة فيدخل الجنة من وقته وساعته ثم ضحك ضحكا مفرطا وقال من محبة ربه له قد بعث الريح حتى تأخذه في ساعة فما مضت على الحقيقة ساعة حتى صارت

the woman called the Angel of Death, the one who would kill her. She also removed two anklets she was wearing, handing them to the two female slaves who had waited upon her, the daughters of the woman known as the Angel of Death. [85] They lifted her onto the boat but did not take her into the yurt. The men approached with shields and sticks and handed her a cup of alcohol. Before drinking it she chanted over it. The interpreter said to me, "Now she bids her female companions farewell." She was handed another cup which she took and chanted for a long time. The crone urged her to drink it and to enter the yurt where her master was lying. I could see she was befuddled. She went to enter the yurt but missed it, placing her head to one side of the yurt, between it and the boat. The crone took hold of her head and entered the yurt with her. The men began to bang their shields with the sticks so that the sound of her screaming would be drowned out. Otherwise it would terrify the other female slaves, and they would not seek to die with their masters. [86] Six men entered the yurt. They all had intercourse with the female slave and then laid her beside her master. Two held her feet, two her hands. The crone called the Angel of Death placed a rope around her neck with the ends crossing one another and handed it to two of the men to pull on. She advanced with a large, broad-bladed dagger and began to thrust it in between her ribs, here and there, while the two men strangled her with the rope until she died.

[87] The deceased's nearest male relative came forward. He picked up a 6.8
piece of wood and set it alight. He was completely naked. He walked backwards, the nape of his neck towards the boat. He had the ignited piece of wood in one hand and had his other hand on his anus. He set fire to the wooden structure under the boat after they had placed the female slave they had killed next to her master. The people came forward with sticks and firewood. They each carried an lighted stick that they threw on top of the wood. The wood caught fire. Then the boat, the yurt, the dead man, the female slave, and everything else on board caught fire. A fearsome wind picked up. The flames grew higher and higher and blazed fiercely. [88] One of the Rūsiyyah was standing beside me. I heard him speaking to the interpreter who was with him. I asked him what he had said, and he replied, "He said, 'You Arabs, you are a lot of fools! You purposefully take your nearest and dearest and those whom you hold in the highest esteem and put them in the ground, where they are eaten by vermin and worms. We, on the other hand, cremate them there and then, so that they enter the Garden on the spot.'" Then he laughed loud and long and

السفينة والخطب والرجل الميت والجارية رمادا رَمَدًا ثم بنوا على موضع السفينة وكانوا أخرجوها من النهر شبيها بالتل المدور ونصبوا في وسطه خشبة كبيرة خذنج وكتبوا عليها اسم الرجل واسم ملك الروس وانصرفوا.

قال ومن رسم ملوك الروس أن يكون معه في قصره أربعائة رجل من صناديد أصحابه وأهل الثقة عنده فهم يموتون بموته ويُقتلون دونه ومع كل واحد منهم جارية تخدمه وتغسل رأسه وتصنع له ما يأكل ويشرب وجارية أخرى يطأها وهؤلاء الأربعائة يجلسون تحت سريره وسريه عظيم مرصع بنفيس الجواهر ويجلس معه على السرير أربعون جارية لفراشه وربما وطئ الواحدة منهن بحضرة أصحابه الذين ذكرنا ولا ينزل عن سريره فإذا أراد قضاء حاجة قضاها في طشت وإذا أراد الركوب قَدَمُوا دابته إلى السرير فركبها منه وإذا أراد النزول قَدَم دابته حتى يكون نزوله عليه وله خليفة يسوس الجيوش ويواقع الأعداء ويخلفه في رعيته.

هذا ما نقلته من رسالة ابن فضلان حرفا وحرفا وعليه عهدة ما حكاه والله أعلم ١٠٠٦ بصحته وأما الآن فالمشهور من دينهم دين النصرانية.

said, “My lord feels such great love for him that he has sent the wind to take him away within an hour.” In fact, it took scarcely an hour for the boat, the firewood, the female slave, and her master to be burnt to ash and then very fine ash. The Rūsiyyah then built a structure like a round hillock over the beached boat and placed a large piece of *khadhanj*¹⁵ in the middle. They wrote the man’s name and the name of the king of the Rūsiyyah on it. Then they left.

[89] Ibn Faḍlān said: it is one of the customs of the kings of the Rūsiyyah to 6.9
keep in their palaces four hundred of their bravest comrades and most trusted companions beside them. They die when the kings die and sacrifice themselves to protect them. Each companion has a female slave to wait on him, wash his head, and provide him with food and drink, and a second to have intercourse with. These four hundred companions sit below the huge couch of the king, studded with precious stones. Forty concubines who belong to the king also sit on his couch. Sometimes he has intercourse with one of them in the presence of his comrades. He never steps off his throne. When he wants to satisfy an urge, he does so in a salver. When he wants to ride, they bring his horse to the throne, and he mounts it from there. When he wants to dismount, he rides the horse to the throne so he can dismount there. He has a deputy who leads the armies, fights against the enemy, and represents him among his subjects.

I have taken this word for word from Ibn Faḍlān’s epistle. He is the one 6.10
responsible for this account. Only God knows whether it is authentic. Nowadays, everyone knows that the Rūs practice Christianity.

Notes

- 1 Wüstenfeld 1.112.16–113.15 = §68.
- 2 Wüstenfeld 1.468.17–469.15 = §§37–38.
- 3 Yāqūt lists thirteen deities—fourteen, if we include the sky god.
- 4 An echo of Q Isrā’ 17:43.
- 5 Wüstenfeld 1.723.19–727.21 = §§2–4, 39–44, 48–50, 51, 53–56, 59, 61–63.
- 6 The scribe writes “Asad,” clearly an error for Rāshid.
- 7 Wüstenfeld 2.436.20–440.6 = §§90A–98.
- 8 This passage is, in fact, a quotation from al-Iṣṭakhri’s *Kitāb Masālik*, 220.1–222.3. See Dunlop, *The History of the Jewish Khazars*, 89–115, especially 91–95 and 96–97.
- 9 The name means “Black Khazars.”
- 10 Wüstenfeld 2.484.10–485.23 = §§8–11.
- 11 ‘Abdallāh is Yāqūt.
- 12 See Q Insān 76:13.
- 13 Wüstenfeld 2.834.18–840.12 = §§74–89.
- 14 See Q Muddaththir 74:50–51.
- 15 This is how the word is written in the edition. It seems to be a hybrid of *khadhank* and *khalanj*.