Conception of "Egypt" in the Pre-Modern Period: Preliminary Essay

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Introduction

Being engaged for many years in scrutinizing historical materials concerning the Egyptian "City of the Dead" and its *ziyarā* (visits to the tombs) which flourished during the Middle Ages, I have come to believe that the discourses in the *ziyāra* guidebooks (*kutub al-ziyarā*) tended to converge into "Egypt", and there was depicted therein an "Egyptian history" that the Egyptian people invented for themselves, even though unconsciously, rather than an official history as examplified by Arab chronicles[1]. Yet, it has not been analyzed fully by using these texts concerning the existence of "Egypt" in the pre-modern period, the only exception being arguments concerning Egyptian regional sentiments and the position of the pyramids in Islamic history[2].

Here, this paper will undertake to verify this conception of "Egypt" from various facets, hoping to raise an argument about Egyptian ethnic situations during the pre-modern period. The period to be discussed in this paper covers the era from the beginning of the Arab conquest

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1 Ohtoshi, T., "Visits to the Holy Tombs in the Egyptian City of the Dead", *Historical Review* (*Shigaku Zasshi*),1993 (in Japanese), *idem*, "The Manners, Customs, and Mentality of Pilgrims to the Egyptian City of the Dead: 1100-1500 A.D.", *Orient*, vol. 29, 1993, *idem*, "City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the12th to the 15th Century: Phases of Its Development and Social Function", *Toyo Gakuho*, vol. 75, 1-2,1994 (in Japanese), *idem*, *Egyptian City of the Dead and Visit to Holy Graves: The Case Study from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, Ph. D. thesis submitted to the University of Tokyo, 1994 (in Japanese), *idem*, "The Egyptian "Book of the Visit" as Historical Material: An Elucidation of the Text, and Its Implication on the City of the Dead from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries", *Orient* vol. 38-2, 1995, pp.143-161 (in Japanese), *idem*, "The City of the Dead and the Conception of "Egypt": The Visits to the Holy Tombs in the Muslim Society", in *Chiikinosekaishi 7: The World of Beliefs*, eds. N. Matsumoto and K. Yamada, Tokyo, 1998 (in Japanese), *idem*, "A Note on the Disregarded Ottoman Cairene Ziyāra Book", *Mediterranean World*, vol. 15, 1998.

2 cf.) Haarmann, U., "Regional Sentiment in Medieval Islamic Egypt", *BSOAS*, vol. 43, 1980, Cook, M., "Pharaonic History in medieval Egypt", *Studia Islamica*, vol. 57, 1983.

(641 A.D.) until the Ottoman era, with most emphasis being placed on the period from the Tulunids (868-905) to the Mamluks (1250-1517).

I. The "Egypt (Miṣr)" as Reflected by the Early Islamic Geographical Sources

The concept of "Egypt" that we shall examine later corresponds with the Arabic term "Miṣr" (both in quotation) in many aspects. It is believed that Miṣr is the eponym of the land Egypt, and that he was the ancestor of the Berbers and the Copts. Early Islamic sources reiterated the genealogy indicating Miṣr as the son of Hām, the grandson of Nūḥ. At the same time, after the Arab conquest of Egypt, the term "Miṣr" began to be associated with the country (Egypt) and its capital, al-Fusṭāṭ[3].

Early Islamic geographers like al-Iṣṭakhrī, Ibn Khurdādhabah, al-Ya'qūbī, al-Muqaddasī, Ibn al-Faqīh, Ibn Rustah and Ibn Ḥawqal almost unanimously set the geographic range of Egypt, creating its borders based on its four of frontiers: from the southern Aswān to the northern Mediterranean coast, and also the eastern 'Arīsh or Ayla to the western Cyrenaica. Al-Muqaddasī, in addition, refers to the life style and mentality peculiar to the Egyptians as being dirty, full of dogs, fleas and bedbugs, having immoral women, and also as having Islamic religious leaders who were addicted to drink. Of course, he never forgot to add their amiableness and generosity[4].

We find definite geographical and cultural boundaries of Egypt as stated above. Yet it is clear that this definition also reflected non-Egyptian thinking in that this definition was recorded by geographers who were from outside Egypt and possibly had been biased by the descriptions of Greco-Roman historians. Some writers, as we have seen, then went further to note Egyptian manners and mentality, which was based on its own climate and history.

Starting in the tenth century, *faḍā'il* literature mentioning the virtues and features of Egypt began to be written by authors such as Ibn al-Kindī, Ibn Zūlāq, Ibn Ẓahīra and al-Suyūṭī[5]. Even as early as in the ninth century, Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam's *Futūḥ Miṣr* (The Conquest of Egypt) had already included a portion describing the *faḍā'il* of Miṣr[6]. These *faḍā'il*s are of

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3 *EI*[2], (MIṢR) pp. 146, cf.) *Ibn Riḍwān* 2, *Khiṭaṭ* 2/480~481, *Akhbār al-Zamān* 180~183.

4 *Iṣṭakhrī* 39, *Ibn Khurdādhabah* 83, *Ya'qūbī* 90~99, *Ibn Rustah* 330~331, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm* 193~200, *Ibn al-Faqīh* 57, *Ibn Ḥawqal* 126~127.

5 See *Faḍā'il Miṣr, Ibn Zūlāq, Ibn Ẓahīra* and *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*. cf.) U. Haarmann ("Regional Sentiment in Medieval Islamic Egypt", pp. 56~58) states that "the faḍā'il Miṣr prove an important source for the constituents of Egyptian national pride and sentiment in medieval Islam". In this article, Prof. Haarmann dared to use the expression of "national identity" for the medieval Egyptian situation. However this expression needs a caution in using when we consider arguments about modern nationalism, even though his intention can be comprehended well. See also Ohtoshi, T., "Copts and Muslims as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfa*s", in *Islam in the Middle Eastern Studies: Muslims and Minorities*, eds. A. Usuki & H. Kato, JCAS Symposium Series 7, International Area Studies Conference 4, Osaka, 2001.

6 *Futūḥ Miṣr* 4 ff.

great significance in their ability to reflect a self-portrait of "Egypt" at that point of time.

These *faḍā'il* texts are alike in their contents: they include statements concerning Miṣr's excellency over other countries, Prophets who were related to Miṣr, and persons whom al-Qur'ān had mentioned. They also contained rulers, *ṣaḥāba* (the Companions of the Prophet Muḥammad), 'ulamā' (persons of knowledge), legal specialists, ascetics, caliphs, and poets, essentially all those who resided in or had arrived in Egypt. Finally, Egypt's districts, revenue, topography, the Nile river, al-Muqaṭṭam mountain with *al-Qarāfa* graveyard beneath it, and its other features are praised.

These texts illuminate consistently Miṣr's own history from the age prior to the Pharaonic age all the way though to the Islamic age. This Miṣr world was rather a self-completed image, and perfection of Semitic monotheist history, in which even Jesus and Moses were included as if they had been born in Egypt. As long as the Egyptians were to live in this praiseworthy country, travel to outside Egypt is not required unless the pilgrimage is to Mecca, as this land seems to be better than Baghdād or any other cities in the world, according to the *faḍā'ils*[7]. It is here that native specialties and prominent persons were combined with this local history along with natural symbols such as Mt. Muqaṭṭam and the Nile river.

This Miṣr can be seen much closer to the conception of "Egypt" in later periods, and whose range may possibly have had some relationship with the region from which the Coptic Popes were selected, for the majority of its country folk still remained the Coptic Christians in the time prior to the Fatimids[8]. On the importance of this period, I will write later.

II. "Egypt" as Portrayed by Ibn Riḍwān

Fatimid Egypt is still a disregarded period among scholars of Egyptian history, and I will not discuss the reasons for it here. But as for the conception of "Egypt", this era is extremely significant, as denoted by the fact that al-Quḍā'ī wrote the "first national geography of Egypt (H. Halm)" during this period[9].

Ibn Riḍwān, a Fatimid Egyptian physician (d. 460/1067-8), wrote a treatise entitled "On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt (*Kitāb Daf' Madārr al-Abdān bi-Arḍ Miṣr*)". Although the tract has been treated only as a medical work, from my point of view, it can be interpreted as also describing the climate of both its nature and its people, who were deeply influenced by its natural environment. In this chapter, I aim to depict the "Egypt" which Ibn Riḍwān has

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7 *Ibn Zūlāq* fols. 33a~37a, *Faḍā'il Miṣr* 22~23, 44~47.

8 I will detail on this topic in another article which will appear in the journal *Rekishigaku Kenkyu*, 2001.

9 H. Halm's expression in *EI*^{II} (MIṢR) p. 164.

portrayed, and which has to date never been attempted[10].

For starters, we should confirm his position as an Egyptian: he was born in the village of Giza which was opposite al-Fusṭāṭ. Later, at the age of ten, he moved to al-Fusṭāṭ where he spent the rest of his life. M. Dols states that he "never appears to have left Egypt or even the neighborhood of Cairo." We can consider him, therefore, as an Egyptian al-Fusṭāṭ native[11].

Ibn Riḍwān clearly defined Miṣr as an entity that "designates the land (arḍ) that the Nile inundates", by his recreation of four physical borders by accurately utilizing astronomical knowledge[12]. When he depicts Egypt, he lists its origin by name, boundaries, peculiarities and climate, Mt. Muqaṭṭam, the wind, its districts and their native specialties, and the Nile, etc.[13] This style of description is nearly in accordance with earlier geographers. It is also worth noticing that his boundary restriction seems to have been influenced to some extent by the Greco-Roman scholars Hippocrates, Ptolemy and Galen[14]. Therefore, Egypt itself is not self-existent in its creation; there was certainly a reflection of non-Egyptian perspective. Thus, he imaged Egypt as the land along the Nile, which was much narrower than the territory of the contemporary Fatimid dynasty, which governed from Libya to al-Ḥijāz and Greater Syria. The symbolism of the Nile river and al-Muqaṭṭam mountain was also crucial in his conception of Egypt.

In Ibn Riḍwān's view, because the climate decisively influences the mentality of its residents, a peculiar temperament was molded among the constituents of "Egypt". He presumed that the predominant climate of Egypt is excessive heat and moisture, with a tendency to lose balance (in his words, "the air is changeable"). The character of Egyptians is therefore described as having "inconsistency and changeableness that dominate their natures, as do timidity and cowardice, discouragement and doubt, impatience, lack of desire for knowledge and decisiveness, envy and calumny,... , vile evils that spring from the baseness of the soul. These evils are not common to all Egyptians but are found in most of them."[15] Then his argument leads to the existence of Egyptian endemic disease and also its prevention and treatment[16].

Regarding another feature of Egypt, he states that residents shared their own culinary culture as shown in its edible materials, such as fermented fish, dates, colocasia and rumbling

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10 Regarding the life and works of Ibn Riḍwān, see *Ibn al-Qifṭī* 294, 298~300, 443~445, *Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a* 2/99~105, *Shadharāt* 3/291, and *Khamsa Rasā'il li-Ibn Buṭlān al-Baghdādī wa-li-Ibn Riḍwān al-Miṣrī*, eds. Schacht, J., & Meyerhof, M., Miṣr, 1937, introductory chapter. Also, Dols, M., *Medieval Islamic Medicine: Ibn Ridwan's Treatise "On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt"*, Berkeley, 1984, pp. 54~66.

11 Dols, M., *Medieval Islamic Medicine: Ibn Ridwan's Treatise "On the Prevention of Bodily Ills in Egypt"*, p. 58.

12 *Ibn Riḍwān* 2.

13 *Ibn Riḍwān* 2~4.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibn Riḍwān* 8. cf.) *Ibn Riḍwān* 16.

16 *Ibn Riḍwān* 12ff.

vetch, as well as the way in which food was prepared. Their staple food, Egyptian bread, is different from the products of other countries. Even goods imported from outside Egypt changed their character owing to the Egyptian climate. Their drinking culture is fairly intricate, for various kinds of wine and fruit juices were recorded[17].

Many Fatimid Egyptian populations probably shared the illusion that their genealogy traced back to the same ancestor Miṣr, regardless of whether they were Muslims or Copts. Thus, Ibn Riḍwān's "Egypt" has no relationship to the religion or language, and he never distinguished Egyptians by religion in this treatise. Although men such as Abū al-Ṣalt pointed out that most of the brilliant doctors of the age were Copts or Jews, in Ibn Riḍwān's own personal life, he had a Jewish physician pupil and friend[18]. He denoted many kinds of Egyptian wine, even recommending some of them for medical purposes[19]. Moreover, he dissuade people from excessive fasting and thirst[20]. It is worth remembering likewise that in this Fatimid period, Coptic superiority to Muslims in population numbers may have been reversed[21].

The next point of importance is that his "Egypt" itself also has subdivisions, being constituted by integrating diversity based on geographical and temperamental differences. That is, "it is evident that Egypt possesses many regions; each one is distinguished by special characteristics... . The cause of the diversity is the country's (length and) narrowness."[22] Then he goes on to divide Egypt into an Upper Egypt and a Lower Egypt, with al-Fayyūm being added as well. Upper Egypt produced date palms, acacia, papyrus, sugar cane, while in Lower Egypt there was colocasia, bananas, rumbling vetch and so forth. al-Fayyūm yielded reeds, rice, and flax. In Upper Egypt, heat and dryness are dominant over the temperament and inhabitants, therefore leaving their skin black, and hair kinky. Their circulatory system is more delicate and weak, he states. As Lower Egypt is much closer to the Mediterranean Sea, it is characterized by milder weather, humid, but neither hot or cold. It is therefore that their color is a lighter brown; their manners are mild and their hair is lank. While this subdivision of Egypt also depends on each districts' specialties, difference in climate, temperament, and culinary tradition, it never is dependent on religions or races[23].

Among all these provinces, the pivotal position of a "capital big city" which was almost identical with modern greater Cairo is evident, and he detailed the environment of it, which consists of four regions: al-Fusṭāṭ, al-Qarāfa, Cairo, Giza. After strictly comparing many conditions of their living environments, places like al-Qarāfa were recommended for

17 *Ibn Riḍwān* 7ff.
18 *al-Risāla al-Miṣrīya* 34, Dols, M., *op. cit.*, p. 62.
19 *Ibn Riḍwān* 27, 28, 29, 32.
20 *Ibn Riḍwān* 31.
21 For example, see Ohtoshi, T., "Copts and Muslims as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*".
22 *Ibn Riḍwān* 3.
23 *Ibn Riḍwān* 2~19.

habitation[24]. However, residents in polluted environment as al-Fusṭāṭ, are so afflicted that it has been said "cowardice and a lack of generosity characterize its inhabitants; rarely does one of them help another or afford shelter for the stranger. Envy (ḥasad) predominates among them... ."[25]

Notwithstanding the diversity that comprised "Egypt", there was something to distinguish "Egypt" from the outside. According to Ibn Riḍwān, foreigners (*ghurabā'*) who had no real living experience in Egypt, could never comprehend its climate, temperament, and illness. This lack of understanding upon entering Egypt would therefore make him easy prey[26].

So far we have outlined the "Egypt" that Ibn Riḍwān has designed. His treatise can be read, from my point of view, as one of the earliest tracts arguing 'the Egyptian character (*al-shakhṣīya al-Miṣrīya*)' by a native Egyptian, evidenced by such statements that Egyptians acquiesce to whoever governs them, and their resistance is weak[27]. Ibn Riḍwān had attempted the integration of Greek medical tradition with Egyptian historical geography, keenly detailing the environmental problems of the age and compound causes of it. The fact that this tract has been reproducted in Egypt until modern times shows its practicality and applicability for the Egyptians.

III. al-Muqaṭṭam, the Holy Mountain, and the City of the Dead[28]

Although al-Muqaṭṭam, which stands eastwards of the Cairo=al-Fusṭāṭ area, is so low that is more appropriate to call it a hill, it could be seen from any point in Cairo's surroundings during the pre-modern period. The massive rock named al-Muqaṭṭam mountain was vitally important for both Copts and Muslims throughout the ages, and historically its foot was used interchangeably with *al-Qarafā*.

First, when we reexamine the historical relationship of the people with this mountain, the written history relating to Mt. Muqaṭṭam can be dated back to the Pharaonic period. Many Islamic records asserted that there were constructions and dugout homes where people resided, although without archeological proof[29]. In the Greco-Roman period, we find the Christian

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24 *Ibn Riḍwān* 14~16.

25 *Ibn Riḍwān* 16.

26 *Ibn Riḍwān* 1, 12.

27 *Ibn Riḍwān* 35.

28 Concerning this chapter, I have already detailed in other occasions. Please see historical materials indicated in following articles. Ohtoshi, T., "Visits to the Holy Tombs in the Egyptian City of the Dead", pp. 5~6, *idem*, "The City of the Dead and the Conception of "Egypt": The Visits to the Holy Tombs in the Muslim. The latest study concerning al-Muqaṭṭam is conducted by the virtuoso of this subject; Rāġib, Y., "La site du Muqaṭṭam", *Annales islamologiques* 33, 1999, pp. 159~184. Also, the latest trustworthy work concerning the City of the Dead is C.S. Taylor, *In the Vicinity of the Righteous: Ziyara & the Veneration of Muslim Saints in Later Medieval Egypt*, Leiden, 1999.

29 *Futūḥ Miṣr* 158, *Ibn Ḥawqal* 150, *Iṣṭakhrī* 42, *Bakrī* 77~81, *Kawākib* 7,13, *Tuḥfa* 13.

legacy, such as al-Quṣayr Monastery at the southern part of al-Muqaṭṭam, *Ṭurā*, which commemorates St. Arsenius, who passed on there in 449 A.D. Al-Quṣayr Monastery thrived even during the Islamic period with ten churches and a graveyard, and a population of six thousand monks inside its mighty wall. Accordingly, monks and other inhabitants lived in al-Muqaṭṭam and the place formed a sanctuary[30].

At the stage when the rulers of Egypt changed from Byzantines to Arab Muslims, there is an important anecdote for Egyptians which, throughout the Islamic period afterward, was reiterated in most Egyptian historical materials of both Muslims and Copts. That is, *Muqawqas* (Cyrus), the Byzantine patriarch of Alexandria and civil viceroy of Egypt, proposed purchasing the area at the foot of al-Muqaṭṭam mountain to the Arab-Islamic general 'Amrū for an extraordinary high price, for the reason that the "sprouts of heaven are buried there", i.e. the spot was their graveyard. The proposal was at first rejected, and the area was confiscated as a Muslim graveyard. Then, however, after furious protest from Copts, the southern part along Ḥabash lake was ceded to the Copts as their cemetery. The reason for the reiteration of sources seems to be based on Egyptians' mental need to reconfirm their process of adopting the Islamic faith and the whereabouts of their identity from Christianity to Islam, in a way that they could find a satisfactory explanation[31].

From the Tulunids to the Fatimids in particular, Muslim rulers had built mosques at al-Muqaṭṭam mountain and enjoyed visiting its Coptic monasteries, as expressed by such as Ibn Ṭūlūn, Khumārawayh and al-Ḥākim[32]. In addition, common people inhabited that area. During the period from the twelfth to the fifteenth century, numerous ṣūfī men and women secluded themselves and trained in ascetic practices in the Muqaṭṭam area or the City of the Dead. Mt. Muqaṭṭam provided a refuge if pestilence widespread. People of all social levels also went there to perform mass prayer (*du'ā'*) for abating pestilence or for the rising of the Nile. About this we will discuss later.

Three other features of the rest of the Muqaṭṭam legends can be concluded as follows. First, al-Muqaṭṭam was recognized as a part of a huge holy rocky range which includes the mountains of the Sinai Peninsula and Jerusalem. It is needless to say that this precinct was considered sacred by both Copts and Muslims. Second, legends depicted al-Muqaṭṭam through personification, normally as a pious monotheist. Or the mountain was illustrated as having moved by his own will. For Coptic history, al-Muqaṭṭam is famed for having saved the Coptic community by moving itself. The story has two major versions, both dating from the

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30 *Shābushtī* 397, *Abū Ṣāliḥ* 62~63, *Ṣubḥ* 3/393~394, Meinaldus, O., *Christian Egypt Ancient and Modern*, Cairo, 1977, pp. 58, 352, *The Coptic Encyclopedia*, vol. 3, p. 853, Timm, S., *Das christlich-koptische Ägypten in arabischer Zeit*, Wiesbaden, 1984, vol. 2, pp. 779~789.

31 *Futūḥ Miṣr* 156~157, *Faḍā'il Miṣr* 64~65, *Murshid* fols. 2b~3a, *Kawākib* 13, 151, *Ibn Zūlāq* fols. 31b~32a, *Qazwīnī* 270, *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara* 1/137, *Ibn Ẓahīra* 108~109, *Madkhal* 1/252~253, *Ṣubḥ* 3/375, *Khiṭaṭ* 2/443.

32 *Abū Ṣāliḥ* 146, *Ibn al-Muqaffa'* 2/2/205.

Fatimid period[33]. In Muslim legends, the mountain moved himself and helped people making the pilgrimage to Mecca[34]. Third, all the prominent people related to Egypt through all ages, such as Moses, Jesus, Maria, 'Amrū, the Pharaoh's daughter, were believed to have connections with al-Muqaṭṭam and the City of the Dead. Without doubt, "al-Muqaṭṭam is *al-muqaddas* (sacred)" as Abū al-Makārim (thirteenth century Christian) stated[35]. There is further evidence to suggest that this Egyptian mentality has survived, and successfully transformed itself into a modern nationalistic symbol, evidenced by the Egyptian based newspaper issued under the British occupation named "*al-Muqaṭṭam*"[36].

On the other hand, the City of the Dead forms a huge cemetery area, to which, in this paper, I will include the Greater and Smaller *Qarāfas* and *al-Ṣaḥrā'* area under its definition. These two al-Qarāfas extend from south of al-Fusṭāṭ towards the foot of al-Muqaṭṭam mountain, whereas al-Ṣaḥrā' spreads out northward from the Citadel. In solemn examples of architecture, descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad, *saḥāba*, caliphs, sultans, Muslim saints and famous 'ulamā' have all been buried there. Therefore, it was primarily the Muslim sanctuary that masses of people visited, aiming to solve their difficulties through prayer; however, it also created "the most famous pleasure resort among them (al-Maqrīzī)" in the Middle Ages of Islamic Egypt[37].

Since I have already examined the City of the Dead in more detail from a Muslim perspective, I would rather gather historical materials from the Coptic standpoint here. First, it is attested by both Christian and Muslim sources that the Qarāfa area was a sacred place for Copts before the Arab conquest, it being quoted that "there (al-Qarāfa) were many hermitages (ṣawāmi'), monasteries and churches comprising a lot of monks. Nevertheless, when Arab Muslims arrived with 'Amrū Ibn al-'Āṣ, they demolished these structures and diverted their remains into mosques (Abū al-Makārim)"[38]. Al-Qarāfa, however, continued to contain Coptic graveyards in the southern part even after the conquest. Also if we combine the *Ṭurā* area with al-Qarāfa, as did al-Shu'aybī, one of the *ziyāra* book writers, al-Qarāfa can be seen to have embraced more Coptic monasteries and churches[39]. In addition, Coptic

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33 *Abū Ṣāliḥ* 45~46, *Ibn al-Muqaffa'* 2/2/140, Amīn, A., *Qāmūs al-'Ādāt wa-al-Taqālīd wa-al-Ta'bīr al-Miṣrīya*, al-Qāhira, 1953, p. 74, El-Shamy, H.M., *Folktales of Egypt*, Chicago, 1980, pp. 167~169, Kanīsa al-Qaddīs Sam'ān al-Dabbāgh, *Sīra al-Qaddīs Sam'ān al-Kharrāz al-Dabbāgh*, al-Qāhira, 1996.

34 *Kawākib* 14.

35 *Abū Ṣāliḥ* 62. cf.) *Ibn Mammātī* 82~83, Louca, A., "Lecture sémiotique d'un texte d'Ibn Mammātī", in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, eds. Vermeulen, U., and De Smet, D., Leuven, 1995, pp. 229~238.

36 See the latest work regarding this newspaper, Abū 'Araja, T., *al-Muqaṭṭam: Jarīda al-Iḥtilāl al-Briṭānī fī Miṣr*, al-Qāhira, 1997. The real author of the composition which has been attributed to Abū Ṣāliḥ al-Armanī is now identified with Abū al-Makārim. On this, see Ayman Fu'ād Sayyid, *al-Dawla al-Fāṭimīya fī Miṣr: Tafsīr Jadīd*, al-Qāhira, 2000, pp. 72~73.

37 *Sulūk* 2/444.

38 *Abū Ṣāliḥ* 53~54.

39 *Shu'aybī* fols. 146b~147a.

historical fragments in the form of oral traditions were left traces in al-Qarāfas, such as anecdotes of Muqawqas' relatives.

As a further example in scrutinizing the definition of "Egypt", let us consider the dynasty rituals held at the City of the Dead=al-Muqaṭṭam mountain. Successive Islamic rulers mobilized bands of people led by government influentials to perform group prayers there for the swelling of the Nile river and for the abatement of the plague. On these occasions, not only Muslims, but also Copts and Jews attended with their own sacred books, and prayed as well as ate there together.

We will not detail examples of these mass prayers here, but to mention that the same mass prayers were reiterated all at the City of the Dead or its surroundings, as in 749/1349, 775/1373, 806/1403, 818/1416, 822/1419, 823/1420, 833/1430, 854/1450[40]. Focusing on the role the Copts played, the following analysis is brought forward. Since the event itself was a dynasty ritual and not a popular festival, although both had common characteristics, many Coptic officials, therefore, must have attended. Yet the Coptic populace, non-officials, are also thought to have participated in it. Besides, in order to escape from natural disaster to the land of Egypt, the combined presence of Muslims, Copts and Jews was necessary. If one of them was lacking, the ritual itself would not have been effective and the total image of "Egypt" would not have been embodied[41].

Historically considered, although we can trace back prayer customs concerning the Nile river to the Pharaonic period, Copts also performed mass prayer and fasting for the Nile's increase every year at churches. Further, they practiced several Coptic festivals along the Nile shore, and ritual prayers for the rising of the water by floating a box containing fingers of the martyr. Thus they were thought to have special knowledge and a relationship with the Nile river[42]. In addition to this, what has to be noticed here is that it was reported that Muslim dynasties' mass marches and prayers accompanied by *dhimmī*s at al-Muqaṭṭam range had already been established in the Tulunid period (9th century)[43].

As another easily attracted holy place situated around the Cairo=al-Fusṭāṭ area other than the City of the Dead, the significance of the pyramids may be added. Various social classes of the Fatimid people had relished outings to ancient remains in Abū Shīr or Giza, and as noted in the Mamluk period, "tourism" to the Giza pyramids enjoyed popularity[44]. More so, evidence shows visits to the Sphinx in spring as a custom, making prayers with

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40 *Badā'i'* 1/1/531, 2/128, 282~283, *Inbā' al-Ghumr* 5/134~135, 7/385~386, *Sulūk* 2/3/780~781, 3/1/219, 4/2/822~823, *Ḥawādith* 1/90, *Tibr* 311~312, *Nujūm* 10/204~205, 14/97~98, 15/424~425, *'Iqd* 1/244,383, *Nuzha* 3/184.

41 See Ohtoshi, T., "City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the12th to the 15th Century: Phases of Its Development and Social Function", pp. 185~187.

42 *Abū Ṣāliḥ* 75~76, 220, *Sulūk* 1/941~943, *Khiṭaṭ* 1/68~70.

43 *Balawī* 330~331, *Wulāt* 231, *Sa'īd b. Biṭrīq*, 70. cf.) *Murshid* f. 225.

44 *Abū al-Fidā* 4/97, *Idrīsī* 55 ff., *Itti'āẓ* 2/144~146, *Ibn Wāṣil* 3/82, *Sulūk* 1/523, 712, 788, 2/43, 50~51, 271, 240, *Ṣāliḥ*, M.A., *Ta'rīkh al-Jīza fī al-'Aṣr al-Islāmī*, al-Qāhira, 1991, pp. 145~155.

vows and offerings of special incenses and incarnations under the Ayyubid and Mamluk rule[45]. During the same period, one Muslim ṣūfī, Muḥammad Ṣa'im al-Dahr, was known to have smashed the Sphinx's face, which the people deemed as the cause of the heavy sand storm which assailed Cairo afterwards, ultimately resulting in his being attacked[46]. Furthermore, after the Ayyubids, several tracts, including the shortened versions of the original work of al-Idrīsī, were composed concerning the pyramids[47].

Not only, however, does the reverence toward the pyramids face sharp confrontation with the Islamic faith, which denies idolatry, but it also is difficult to be conjunctive logically to Islamic history, despite strenuous attempts to make the correlation. In addition, although the pyramids won the reverence of the common people, as shown in the fact that some Muslim tombs were built in pyramid form, the pyramids possessed nothing to connect them to their relatives, masters, and famous historical heroes[48]. Moreover, the pyramids did not provide nor create a grand leisure space as did the City of the Dead. Possibly rather to compensate for this lack of Islamic character and expansive leisure space, visiting the pyramids was set jointly with that of the City of the Dead[49]. The visits to the pyramids, therefore, never surpassed the visits to the City of the Dead. Nevertheless, the pyramids were revived as a unique symbol of Egyptian unification after the Modern age.

IV. The Society of Cairo=al-Fusṭāṭ in the Period from the Fatimid to the Mamluks

In this chapter, I will attempt to shed light on the coexistence of Muslims and Copts, primarily in the Cairo=al-Fusṭāṭ region of this relevant period[50]. First, in the course of changing dynasties from the Tulunids to the Mamluks, the attitudes of the ruling government towards the *dhimmī*s such as Copts and Jews, shifted. During the Mamluk period, in particular, as the predominant religion of the Egyptian population had already turned from Christianity to Islam, there occurred collisions that until the end of the Fatimids the dynastic government could repress. Among other examples, the Muslim riot towards the *dhimmī*s in 755/1354 is marked as "a turning-point in Egyptian religious history" in D.P. Little's phrase[51]. Additionally, in the riot of 721/1321 alone, sixty of the one hundred and twenty churches in Egypt reported

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45 *Wāfī* 2/133, *Ibn al-Furāt* 8/60, *Idrīsī* 150–151, cf.) Haarmann, U., "Regional Sentiment in Medieval Islamic Egypt", p. 62.

46 *Khiṭaṭ* 1/123, Haarmann, U., *op. cit.*, p. 62.

47 *Idrīsī*, al-Suyūṭī, *Tuḥfa al-Kirām bi-Khabar al-Ahrām*, al-Qāhira, 1992, Cook, M., "Pharaonic History in Medieaval Egypt", *Studia Islamica* vol. 57, 1983, Haarmann, U., *op. cit.*, Sezgin, U., "Introduction", in his facsimile edition of *Kitāb Anwār 'Uluw(sic) al-Ajrām fī al-Kashf 'an Asrār al-Ahrām*, Frankfurt, 1988.

48 *Tuḥfa* 186.

49 *Idrīsī* 55 ff.

50 For more details of historical materials on which this chapter is based, see Ohtoshi, T., "Copts and Muslims as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfa*s".

51 *Sulūk* 2/921, Little, D.P., "Coptic Conversion to Islam under the Baḥrī Mamlūks, 692-755/1293-1354", *BSOAS*, vol. 39, 1976, p. 569, Wiet, G., "ḲIBṬ", *EI*^{1}.

to have been raided and destroyed by the Muslim populace, the event occurred simultaneously in many different places[52].

We cannot, however, assume this situation as having continued throughout Egyptian history, proven by the fact that the Coptic community still constitutes around ten percent of the current Egyptian population. And it would have to be concluded that the cause and course of these previously mentioned riots bear close resemblance to recent religious assaults; in breaking out by rumors, driven principally by mobs or common people, led and instigated by lesser religious leaders, motivated by the idea that Copts are economically superior and socially superior in occupying positions in governmental financial and taxation offices[53].

I turn now to focus on the the intercourse and similarity among Muslims and Copts, by utilizing primarily the *ziyāra* books which offer us an access to evidences of common life that are not available in the chronicles. First, regarding the everyday intercourse of Muslims and Copts, the Book of *ziyāra* contains large numbers of biographies of Muslim saints and their *karāma/-āt* (virtue, miracle) stories[54]. One of the categories by my classification is "Conversion Stories", in which saints were told to perform many *karāmāt*, and lead many *dhimmī*s to conversion, or in which the main character of the story himself/herself converted to Islam[55]. Among the saints, the prominent among them, such as Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī and al-Sayyida Nafīsa, were described as causing many Copts and Jews to convert at once. The anecdote may sound absurd, yet given that we recall the case of Qalyūb's mass conversion in 755/1354, the story coincides with the chronicles to some extent and shows daily intercourse between Copts and Muslims[56]. Also the *karāma* stories might represent wishes of Muslims that Copts should convert or had already converted by this intercourse or *karāmāt*.

Then we may ask, how did Copts and Muslims recognize each other in everyday life? In the settings of the Conversion Stories, Muslim saints were often said to have lived as neighbors of Copts and to have had intimate relationships with them. This circumstance is proved by the medieval documents, and even Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīya's *Regulations for the People of Dhimma* says that Muslims could visit *dhimmī*s on occasions of condolences, funerals, congratulations and medical treatments[57]. Consequently, Muslim saints portrayed in the *ziyāra* tracts frequently succeeded in making their neighbors convert through their daily contacts or

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52 *Sulūk* 2/1/216~228, *Khiṭaṭ* 2/425~433, *Nuwayrī* 30/3, Little, D.P., *op. cit.*, pp. 562 ff.

53 See, Ohtoshi, T., "Copts and Muslims as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*".

54 The term Muslim "saints" is used in this paper not in a narrower meaning that accords exclusively with the Arabic term *awliyā'*, but in a wider sense including such as *ṣāliḥūn*. Here, the author does not assert that only this usage of a wider meaning is correct, yet the wider concept is chosen for the aim of this paper.

55 For more detail, see Ohtoshi, T., *Egyptian City of the Dead and Visit to Holy Graves: The Case Study from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries*, Chapter 2.

56 *Sulūk* 2/921 ff., *Murshid* f. 56a, *Miṣbāḥ* f. 210, cf.) *Kawākib* 32, *Miṣbāḥ* f. 18, *Tuḥfa* 132.

57 *Wathā'iq Sānt Kātrīn* no. 286 quoted in Qāsim, 'A.Q., *Ahl al-Dhimma fī Miṣr al-'Uṣūr al-Usṭā*, al-Qāhira, 1979, p. 153, *Aḥkām Ahl al-Dhimma* 1/200, 206, 244~245.

karāma/āt and the noble character they had revealed[58].

The Christians' disguise or assimilation to the Muslims is another feature of Coptic and Muslim intercourse portrayed in the *ziyāra* tracts. In these anecdotes, Christians used to pretend to be Muslims and have friendship with them: they costumed themselves the same as Muslims and even prayed in mosques. All these Christians that appeared in these contexts of *ziyāra* tracts were finally led to conversion through the hands of Muslim shaykhs[59].

I would like to note that these settings, in which Christians disguised themselves, to some extent represent the actual social atmosphere of the era in which the *ziyāra* treatises were written. In this period, the Coptic community was suffering harsh blows, and some Copts were compelled to behave like Muslims for self-protection or to live more freely. Besides, the *ziyāra* tracts themselves had highly ideological, propagandizing, and of Islamic adherent character[60].

Turning now our perspective to a different side, there occurred assimilation of living manners and customs among Muslims and *dhimmīs*. Ibn al-Ḥājj, *'ālim* of fourteenth century, criticized Muslim women for renouncing work altogether on Sunday nights. Or, when the sun descended into Aries, the Muslim populace would go on outings that morning. Then, they would cut and gather the herb termed *al-karkīs*, and arrange it chanting strange spells to gain more subsistence. These customs were all denounced as Coptic influences. Similarly, Muslim women trended not to buy fish, take baths, or wash clothes on Saturdays owing to Jewish influences[61]. Copts, on their side, attested to influences from Muslim society, that some of them tried to divorce or become polygamous, which was surely never permitted in the Coptic faith[62].

Moreover, *ziyāra* tracts depict married couples of Muslim men with Christian women in some cases, and, on the other hand, Muslim chronicles also recorded adultery occurring among Copts and Muslims. These are more obvious proofs in explaining the circumstances of intercorse[63].

Secondly, let us focus on the customs shown in the *ziyāra* texts concerning the City of the Dead. The assimilation of Muslim grave visiting customs with those of the Christians was reproached by *shaykhs* of *ziyāra*. The seventh account of Muslim visit regulations clearly states: do not try to get the blessing of Allah by touching the tombs and kissing them or wiping them off. These are Christian habits, and no Muslim 'ulamā' will imitate

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58 cf.) *Kawākib* 252.

59 *Ibid.* 285, 224~225, 259, *Tuḥfa* 357. cf.) Ohtoshi, T., "Copts and Muslims as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*".

60 See Ohtoshi, T., "The Egyptian "Book of the Visit" as Historical Material: An Elucidation of the Text, and Its Implication on the City of the Dead from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries", pp. 143-161, *idem*, "Muslims and Copts as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*".

61 *Madkhal* 1/278~281.

62 These are Ottoman cases. cf.) 'Afīfī, M., *al-Aqbāṭ fī Miṣr fī al-'Aṣr al-'Uthmānī*, al-Qāhira, 1992.

63 *Miṣbāḥ* f. 18, *Tuḥfa* 132, *Shu'aybī* f.17b, *Nuwayrī* 30/296~299, cf.) Qāsim, 'A.Q., *op. cit.*, p. 152.

it[64]. Besides, the persistence among Muslims for the holy water which came from washing some saint's body was supposed to have been influenced habits exercised by the Copts[65]. Further, Muslim ṣūfīs' ascetic practices may also bear similarities to Coptic monastic life. This secluded life can be counted as, in my categorization, one of the virtues of the Muslim saints[66].

Now let us go on to analyze the situation in the Egyptian city society of Cairo=al-Fusṭāṭ. According to Abū al-Ṣalt, the Andalusian physician who visited Fatimid Egypt, we see the coexistence of different ethnic groups, such as "Copts, Greeks, Arabs, Berbers, Kurds, Daylams, Ethiopians, and Armenians", as well as Turks and Jews. Even Islam itself contained various sects such as Ismā'īlīs, Twelver Shī'īs, and Sunnīs just to name a few[67]. Al-Fusṭāṭ and Cairo themselves were home to Coptic and other Christian sects' churches and Jewish synagogues. The Fatimid caliphs, in some cases, dared to allow them or financially supported the construction of new churches and the restoration of old ones[68].

There can be no doubt that Coptic festivals embraced Muslim attendance. They shared Easter, *'Īd al-Ghiṭās* (Epiphany), Palm Sunday and many other Christian festivals, so that the very crowded festival of *'Īd al-Shahīd* at the Nile shore was eventually banned by the Mamluk government[69]. In Muslim weddings, Christians also attended with recitations in Coptic and walked in front of the bride through the sūqs and the streets. Also, every year on Christmas Eve, both Muslims and Christians lit candles, lamps and burned a great deal of firewood (13th century)[70]. Likewise, at times of Coptic festivals, people were told to cook special meals. Some Muslim schools were closed and lessons canceled. Teachers dared to collect coins or presents from the students and distribute them during those celebrations[71]. Incidentally, Christians in Egypt, from their point of view, were afraid that their customs were being affected by Jewish ones[72].

The Copts were a part and a people that shared Egyptian society. As in 658/1261, 693/1293-4, 791/1389, 794/1391, 880/1476, they celebrated in the city of Cairo in precisely the

64 *Murshid* f.11b, cf.) *Kawākib* 16.

65 *Murshid* f.127b, *Kawākib* 32, 207, 244~245.

66 *Kawākib* 116, *Miṣbāḥ* f.120, *Tuḥfa* 247. cf.) Ohtoshi, T., "The Egyptian "Book of the Visit" as Historical Material: An Elucidation of the Text, and Its Implication on the City of the Dead from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries", p. 152.

67 *Risāla Miṣrīya* 23, *Ibn al-Muqaffa'* 2/2/100, Halm, H., *The Fatimids and their Tradition of Learning*, London, 1997, p. 34, *EI*[2] (MIṢR).

68 Lev, Y., *States and Society in Fatimid Egypt*, Leiden, 1991, pp. 185 ff.

69 *Ibn al-Muqaffa'* 2/3/179~180, *Sulūk* 1/941~943, *Khiṭaṭ* 2/26~27, 31~32, 392, *Musabbiḥī* 70~71, *Anṭākī* 196, *Itti'āẓ* 2/132, *Madkhal* 2/46~60, Sanders, P., *Ritual, Politics, and the City in Fatimid Cairo*, New York, 1994, p. 103, Langner, B., *Untersuchungen zur historischen Volkskunde Ägyptens nach mamlukischen Quellen*, Berlin, 1983, pp.51~62, Shoshan, B., *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, Cambridge, 1993, pp. 40~51, 67~78.

70 *Abū Ṣāliḥ* 129. The case of Esna in Upper Egypt.

71 *Madkhal* 2/322.

72 *Abū Ṣāliḥ* 12~13, 20.

same manners as Muslims[73]. Both Copts and Jews were mobilized in and towards public enterprises such as dredging canals and constructing irrigation dikes. They also participated in the dynastic ritual parade in Mamluk Cairo[74]. We can recall when the Maghribī wazīr visited Egypt and censured the freedom the Copts had enjoyed, that they acted almost identical to Muslims[75]. Most of the assaults on Egyptian coexistence were originally provoked from aliens to Egyptian society, as done by Ibn al-Ḥājj and Ibn Taymīya.

Conclusion

Although being based on the background of Islamic interpretation, the existence of the City of the Dead and the rituals there, as well as the *ziyāra* texts, can be considered to represent and embody an "Egyptian" history from the Pharaonic to the Islamic period, including individuals and symbols. Whether true or false, people such as the following were thought to have been buried in the City of the Dead: brothers of Joseph (Yūsuf), Āsiya the wife of Pharaoh, the son of al-Muqawqas (Cyrus, the last Byzantine viceroy of Egypt), descendants of the Prophet Muḥammad such as Sayyida Nafīsa, 'Amrū who was the leader of the Arab conquest, sovereigns such as Ibn Ṭūlūn, Kāfūr al-Ikhshīdī, Fatimid and 'Abbasid caliphs, sultans of the Ayyubids and the Mamluks, scholars such as al-Shāfi'ī, and prominent ṣūfīs like Dhū al-Nūn and Ibn al-Fāriḍ. This Egyptian history was acquired not only as book knowledge, but also through deep impressive anecdotes intimately narrated in, done face to face by the visiting leader (*shaykh al-ziyāra*), prayers performed with rubbing the body of the visitor directly on the holy tombs, and also by being filled up with fragrances. Accordingly, this experience was memorized through five senses.

In addition, the common people themselves had participated in creating the discourses of the *ziyāra* by vigorously rewriting epitaphs and building holy tombs as a result of vision dreams or skulls, resulting in the projection of their own views of Egyptian history towards the City of the Dead.

The visitors to the City of the Dead, consequently, were allowed to gaze at "the panorama of total Egyptian history" created by Egyptian natives; while listening to the edifying anecdotes and precepts, they were moved as if in their own performance. At this point in time, each tomb most eloquently told the anecdotes and history concerning those who were buried there, along with deep emotions that accompanied them to their death, which prompted visitors to behave more passionately. In this sense, it can be said that the graves revealed and functioned as a text of Egyptian history in a third dimensional form, complemented by and alongside the *ziyāra* books. The visitors were able to reconfirm zealously their Islamic faith,

73 The difference was that *dhimmī*s of Copts and Jews raised their own holy books respectively; Gospel and Torah. *Nujūm* 7/109, 8/52, 12/13, *Ibn al-Furāt* 9/1/95, 199, 235, 9/2/295, *Badā'i'* 1/2/430, 3/112~113.

74 *Sulūk* 1/2/449, 4/1/302~304, 313~314, 317~318, *Nujūm* 14/26~30, *Ibn Abī al-Faḍā'il* 424.

75 *Nuwayrī* 31/416~417, *Sulūk* 1/3/911~912, *Nujūm* 8/124, *Zetterstéen* 84~87, *Kharīda* 2/398~400.

the continuation of Egypt from the past, and its pivotal position, and also the sprouting of feelings of solidarity[76].

We shall now look more in detail at the conception of Egypt. This "Egypt" reflected, to a certain extent, a geographic notion whose range has been almost stable from ancient times; this is a rare case in the world that ancient geographical borders still survive in locating those of the modern nation state. Yet in my opinion, it was an Egypt that the people living inside and also outside had conceived in a multivalent way, by exercising their various gazes in shaping it. That is to say, based on the sharing of certain life space inundated by the Nile, it was a sense felt as long as its constituents were sharing the same historical image, kinship myths, the Arabic language, which surpassed the Coptic language in every aspect by the tenth century, natural setting and the life style characterized by it, public properties, such as streets, cemeteries, baths, mosques and churches, and also symbols and cultural representations of the world they lived in. The coexistence of revealed religions in "Egypt" was assured within the predominant Islamic framework, while its constituents shared an emerging feeling of solidarity against the outside, as we have seen in the medical treatise on the Egyptian climate written by Ibn Riḍwān, a native Egyptian doctor of the eleventh century. Those outside, for their part, felt a sense of peculiarity and incongruity toward the Egyptians, as shown in travelers' accounts which reiterated their discomfort with Egyptian customs[77].

The conception was pictured more straightforwardly in the *faḍā'il* tracts as stated above. In these tracts, "Egypt" is illustrated as having persisted continuously since ancient times and involved discourses concerning other monotheistic religions. It is the homeland's image woven by its native figures, and varieties of monuments, including Pharaonic examples such as pyramids and 'Ayn Shams, specialty products, historical events and topography (al-Muqaṭṭam mountain, The Nile river), etc. Not only in *faḍā'il* literature, this Egyptian notion frequently occupies places also in both Muslim and Christian historical sources of various kinds. Moreover, this conception is presumed to be conscious and maintained in al-Muqaṭṭam = City of the Dead, in the customs and the discourses which prevailed there.

In defining this "Egypt", the following arguments appear to be suggestive, although we need to create the final concept inductively from inquiry into the Egyptian case. Namely, after distinguishing "Egypt" rigidly from "the nation states" (since these were "imagined" after the later part of the eighteenth century with strong correlation), this conception of "Egypt" seems closer to Benedict Anderson's definition of "the embryo of the nationally

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76 See, Ohtoshi, T., *Egyptian City of the Dead and Visit to Holy Graves: The Case Study from the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries.*

77 See *Ibn Riḍwān, al-Risāla al-Miṣrīya, Muṣṭafā 'Ālī* and *Muqaddasī.* Ibn Jubayr, while he was passing through Egypt, grew furious about his treatment by Egyptian officials, so that he declared in the end that there is not a single Muslim outside of al-Maghrib. cf.) *Ibn Jubayr* 13, 38, 55~56. I had already argued these issues in Ohtoshi, T., "Copts and Muslims as Reflected in the *Ziyāra* Books and *Qarāfas*".

imagined community"[78]. A more proximate exposition, however, can be found in A.D. Smith, who employs the notion of *ethnie* (ethnic community), which provided the ethnic basis for the construction of modern nations. Its chief features are reflected in a collective name, a common myth of descent, a shared history, a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity[79]. Yet a more systematic analysis is needed on this issue, particularly through a comparison with the ingredients of the modern Egyptian state.

Would it be then, effective to compare "Egypt" with "dynasty", which is in accordance with B. Anderson's notion of "the kingdom". Along with "the religious community", he presumed it to be a cultural system prior to nationalism. Although, under some historical circumstances, Egypt was included in a larger union, it never suffered the threat of being split, at least in the Islamic ages, and it continued to constitute a core of the territorial state (dynasty) after the Tulunids. This historical circumstance is, as mentioned above, extremely rare when compared with other countries. Succesive dynasties generally boast of a wider domain than that of Egypt, as shown in cases of Tulunids, Ikhshids, Fatimids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, and Ottomans.

Dynasties were the entities which covered and reigned over "Egypt", and then preserved the multiplicity of "Egypt" when necessary. The ruling elites of dynasties were mostly non-Egyptians coming from outside "Egypt", such as Tunisians, Kurds, Arabs, Turks, and Circassians, occasionally feeling that they were mentally isolated from Egypt, and *vice versa*. Further, dynasties were usually even more "secular" than "Egypt", as examplified well in the Fatimid case, the exception being the intolerant years in some parts of the Mamluk period in which they stressed the Islamic framework rather than "Egypt", preferring Islamic elements, whether Egyptian or not. "Egypt" in itself was also secular, in the connotation that it stressed regional sentiments rather than religious differences, so that there was rarely the occurrence of religious persecution. Sometimes the dynasties did not agree with and even opposed to Islamic creed, as in examples such as the public drinking of alcohol, frequent visits to Coptic churches and monasteries and making prayers there, the slighting of the Arabic language, and in the introduction of the style combining mosques with tombs. This was so, even though the dynasties defined themselves as Islamic, and their rulers were Muslim. Dynasties went on to restrain intolerant activities toward individuals or groups in Egypt based upon religion. Hence, dynasties occasionally were confronted by Muslims of the common people, when they protected the minorities there.

As we have discussed so far, the importance of the Tulunids should be underlined. In this period, Egypt had escaped from the wide 'Abbasid yoke, and had started to establish itself once again. After the Tulunids, the above mentioned *faḍā'il*s began to be written; this gives

78 Anderson, B., *Imagined Communities*, revised edition, London, 1991, p. 44. E.J. Hobsbawm's notion "proto-nationalism" is also important in relation to this point. See, Hobsbawm, E.J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, Cambridge, 1990, Chapter 2.

79 Smith, A.D., *The Ethnic Origins of Nations*, Oxford, 1986, pp. 21~46.

evidence that there emerged a certain group that needed to possess a history of "Egypt", and the re-creation of "Egypt". Rulers of the Tulunids and the Ikhshids increased mosques and monuments in the Mt. Muqaṭṭam area, and enjoyed visiting monasteries there. Ibn Ṭūlūn, the founder of the Tulunid dynasty, is the first to have reported a visit to the City of the Dead in public, and laid an aqueduct, which resulted in habitation there[80]. Moreover, as stated above, the ritual of the joint march to the foot of al-Muqaṭṭam by Muslims, Copts, and Jews can be traced back to the Tulunid period. Indeed, al-Shu'aybī of the seventeenth century, mentioned significantly, "it was Ibn Ṭūlūn that first governed Egypt independently"[81].

Furthermore, even the "Egypt" represented in this paper changed subtly over the course of time. In the Mamluk period, "Egypt" assumed a more Islamic aspect, as exemplified in the non-Christian, non-Jewish, and non-Shī'a self-images increasingly reflected in the *ziyāra* texts of the relevant period. Yet principles and elements which can be judged to be beyond the Islamic creed from today's viewpoint continued to be reiterated within the Islamic framework in that period.

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80 *Balawī* 342, 350, 352~353, *Murshid* fols. 91b~92a, 163a, *Tuḥfa* 180, *Intiṣār* 4/57~58. cf.) Ohtoshi, T., "City of the Dead and Egyptian Society from the12th to the 15th Century: Phases of Its Development and Social Function", p. 164.

81 *Shu'aybī* f. 152a.

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