

There can indeed be no doubt that elephants from the countries on the west of the Red Sea were caught and tamed and used for war, systematically and on a great scale, by the second and third Ptolemies, and the latter (Euergetes) has commemorated this, and his own use of *Troglodytic* and *Ethiopic* elephants, and the fact of their encountering the elephants of India, in the Adulitic Inscription recorded by Cosmas.

This author however, who wrote about A.D. 545, and had been at the Court of Axum, then in its greatest prosperity, says distinctly: "The Ethiopians do not understand the art of taming elephants; but if their King should want one or two for show they catch them young, and bring them up in captivity." Hence, when we find a few years later (A.D. 570) that there was one great elephant, and some say *thirteen* elephants,* employed in the army which Abraha, the Abyssinian Ruler of Yemen led against Mecca, an expedition famous in Arabian history as the War of the Elephant, we are disposed to believe that these must have been elephants imported from India. There is indeed a notable statement quoted by Ritter, which if trustworthy would lead to another conclusion: "Already in the 20th year of the Hijra (A.D. 641) had the *Nubas* and *Bejas* hastened to the help of the Greek Christians of Oxyrhynchus (*Bahnasa* of the Arabs) . . . against the first invasion of the Mahomedans, and according to the exaggerated representations of the Arabian Annalists, the army which they brought consisted of 50,000 men and 1300 *war-elephants*."† The Nubians certainly must have tamed elephants *on some scale* down to a late period in the Middle Ages, for elephants,—in one case three annually,—formed a frequent part of the tribute paid by Nubia to the Mahomedan sovereigns of Egypt at least to the end of the 13th century; but the passage quoted is too isolated to be accepted without corroboration. The only approach to such a corroboration that I know of is a statement by Poggio in the matter appended to his account of Conti's Travels. He there repeats some information derived from the Abyssinian envoys who visited Pope Eugenius IV. about 1440, and one of his notes is: "They have elephants very large and in great numbers; some kept for ostentation or pleasure, some as useful in war. They are hunted; the old ones killed, the young ones taken and tamed." But the facts on which this was founded probably amounted to no more than what Cosmas had stated. I believe no trustworthy authority since the Portuguese discoveries confirms the use of the elephant in Abyssinia;‡ and Ludolf, whose information was excellent, distinctly says that the Abyssinians did not tame them. (*Cathay*, p. clxxxii.; *Quat., Mém., sur l'Égypte*, II. 98, 113; *India in xvth Century*, 37; *Ludolf*, I. 10, 32; *Armandi, H. Militaire des Éléphants*, p. 548.)

NOTE 5.—To the 10th century at least the whole coast country of the Red Sea, from near Berbera probably to Suákin, was still subject to Abyssinia. At this time we hear only of "Musalman families" residing in Zaila' and the other ports, and tributary to the Christians (see *Mas'udi*, III. 34).

According to Bruce's abstract of the Abyssinian chronicles, the royal line was superseded in the 10th century by Falasha Jews, then by other Christian families, and three centuries of weakness and disorder succeeded. In 1268, according to Bruce's chronology, Icon Amlac of the House of Solomon, which had continued to rule in Shoa, regained the empire, and was followed by seven other princes whose reigns come down to 1312. The history of this period is very obscure, but Bruce gathers that it was marked by civil wars, during which the Mahomedan communities

* *Muir's Life of Mahomet*, I. cclxiii.

† *Ritter, Africa*, p. 605. The statement appears to be taken from Burckhardt's *Nubia*, but the reference is not quite clear. There is nothing about this army in Quatremère's *Mém. sur la Nubie*. (*Mém. sur l'Égypte*, vol. ii.)

‡ Armandi indeed quotes a statement in support of such use from a Spaniard, *Marmol*, who travelled (he says) in Abyssinia in the beginning of the 16th century. But the author in question, already quoted at pp. 368 and 407, was no traveller, only a compiler; and the passage cited by Armandi is evidently made up from the statement in Poggio and from what our traveller has said about Zanjibar. (*Supra*, p. 422. See *Marmol, Desc. de Affrica*, I. f. 27, v.)