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***Between Admiration and Contempt – Annalistic Descriptions of Egyptians  
from the Time of Conquest***

When, around the year 19 hijri (640 AD), Arab troops commanded by ‘Amr Ibn al-‘Āṣ entered Egyptian territories, they came across the peoples of that country. The contact made between the Arabs and people from different religious, ethnic and language groups can only be studied using the earliest existing texts, and these offer accounts of conquests that took place two centuries prior to their transcription.

Arabic chronicles written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. hijri (9<sup>th</sup> c. CE), e.g. *Ta’rīḥ ar-rusul wa-al-mulūk* (“History of Prophets and Kings”) by Aṭ-Ṭabarī, *Kitāb futūḥ al-buldān* (“Book of the Conquests of the Lands”) by Al-Balāḍurī and *Kitāb futūḥ Miṣr* (“Book of the Conquest of Egypt”) by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, mainly focus on descriptions of Muslim victories, whilst in the meantime mentioning the conquered peoples and the relations between them and the conquerors. An analysis and interpretation of the literary records is the basis for an attempt to create an image of Egyptians and their characteristics, both physical and psychological. A study of the discourse in Arabic historiographical texts forms a part of wider research concerning the perception of non-Arabs around the early Middle Ages.