

We consider it advisable that you settle [here]. ... Thus you will be surrounded by palms and be close to water. If, then, one of the districts should suffer from drought, or its cultivation be delayed, another would relieve the situation. Moreover, you are on the banks of al Sarat so that supplies can come to you by the vessels plying the Euphrates; the caravans from Egypt and Syria will come across the desert, goods of all different kinds from China will reach you by sea, and from the Byzantines and al Mosul by the Tigris.

-Abu Abbas al Yaquibi, "Book of Countries" (9th Century) excerpt