

**SOUTH ARABIA IN THE 5TH AND 6TH CENTURIES
C.E. WITH REFERENCE TO RELATIONS WITH
CENTRAL ARABIA**

Khālid Sālih Al- ‘Asālī

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SOUTH ARABIA IN THE 5TH AND 6TH
CENTURIES C.E.

with reference to relations with Central Arabia

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

RESEARCH REPORT

In 5587

These results were presented by [Name] at the [Conference] at [Location] in [Year].
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The author wishes to thank [Name] for his assistance in the preparation of this report.

Submitted by [Name]

1955

C E R T I F I C A T E

I certify that Khalid Ṣalīḥ Al-ʿAsalī has spent 9 terms at Research Work in St.Andrews, that he has fulfilled the conditions of Ordinance 16 (St.Andrews) to submit the accompanying Thesis in application for the degree of Ph.D.

Dr. M. A. Ghul.

D E C L A R A T I O N

I hereby declare that the following Thesis is based on my own readings and research, that the Thesis is my own composition, and that it has not previously been presented for a Higher Degree.

Khalid Ş. Al-Asalî.

CAREER

In 1958 I obtained the Degree of Bachelor of Arts (with Honours) in History, at the College of Arts, University of Baghdad, Iraq.

From 1958 to 1961, I worked in the service of the Iraqi Government.

In 1961, I was appointed Assistant Lecturer in Islamic History at the College of Arts, University of Baghdad.

In 1964, at the same University, I obtained the Degree of Master of Arts, for a Thesis entitled "Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān, and His Place in Islamic Thought", (published in 1965 in Baghdad).

In 1965, I was granted leave of absence, to study for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

In addition to the publication of my M.A. Thesis, I have had published two articles in the Bulletin of the College of Arts, University of Baghdad.

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My thanks are due also to the University of Baghdad, and to the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation for their generous financial assistance.

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Last, but not least, to my wife I must here offer my sincere thanks for her patience and understanding while I was preparing this work.

ABBREVIATIONS

AOF	=	Altorientalische Forschungen.
b	=	Ibn (son).
BASOR	=	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research.
BiO	=	Bibliotheca Orientalis.
BM	=	British Museum.
BSOAS	=	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies.
BZ	=	Byzantinische Zeitschrift.
CIH	=	Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, Inscriptiones. Himyariticas et Sabaeas. 3 Vols., Parisiis, 1889-1929.
CRAIBL	=	Comptes Rendus des Séances (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres.).
EI	=	The Encyclopaedia of Islam, first and second ed.
GJ	=	Geographical Journal.
GM	=	Geographical Magazine.
IC	=	Islamic Culture.
JA	=	Journal Asiatique.
JAOS	=	Journal of the American Oriental Society.
JESHO	=	Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient.
JNES	=	Journal of Near Eastern Studies.
JRAS	=	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.
JRCAS	=	Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society.
JSS	=	Journal of Semitic Studies.
MS	=	Manuscript.

- MUSJ = Mélanges de la Faculté Oriental de
l'Université Saint-Joseph Beyrouth (Syrie).
- MVAG = Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen
[Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen] Gesellschaft.
- MW = The Moslim World.
- NGM = The National Geographic Magazine.
- PW = Pauly-Wissowa.
- RB = Revue Biblique
- REJ = Revue des Études Juives.
- RES = Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique, 7 vols.
Paris, 1900-1950.
- RNP = G. Ryckmans, Les Noms Propres Sud-Sémitiques.
Louvain, (Bibliothèque du Musée 2) 3 vols.
1934-1935.
- RO = Rocznik Orientalistyczny.
- RS = Revue Sémitique.
- RSO = Rivista degli Studi Orientali.
- WZKM = Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes.
- ZDMG = Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen
Gesellschaft.

SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION OF THE INSCRIPTIONS

𐎠	ا	o	𐎡	ط	t	𐎢	ع	g
𐎣	ب	b	𐎤	ظ	z	𐎥	ف	f
𐎦	ج	g	𐎧	ي	y	𐎨	س	s
𐎩	د	d	𐎪	ك	k	𐎫	ق	q
𐎬	ذ	d	𐎭	ل	l	𐎮	ر	r
𐎰	ه	h	𐎱	م	m	𐎲	ش	s
𐎴	و	w	𐎵	ن	n	𐎶	س	s
𐎸	ز	z	𐎹	(س)	s	𐎺	ت	t
𐎼	ح	h	𐎽	ع	e	𐎾	ث	t
𐎿	ح	h						

A B S T R A C T

Although the history of South Arabia in the fifth and sixth centuries has not been studied to any great extent, the events of this period were of marked importance in the history of South Arabia in particular and of Central Arabia in general. Within this period we find the enlargement of the South Arabian kings' title, and the extension of their sovereignty over the highland of West and Central Arabia; the Abyssinian invasion of South Arabia and the semi-independent government of Abraha and his sons; and, finally, the abolition of South Arabian independence after the Persian invasion. South Arabia lost its position as the leading power in the Arabian peninsula and became a vassal province of the Persian empire. Moreover, the decline of Kinda and its migration to South Arabia created instability in Central Arabia, and indeed most of ayyam al-ʿarab [Days of the Arab] which we know, belongs to the period after the decline of Kinda, the vassal of South Arabia.

The aim of the present work is to study this period of the history of South Arabia from the time of Abū Karib Asʿad, who had the title "King of sbʾ/wdrydn/wḥḍrmwt/wymnt/wʾrb/twd/wthmt."

1. Chapter I deals with the relations of South and Central Arabia before the reign of Abū Karib As'ad; the extension of South Arabia towards the north; the eventual conquest of Kinda; the expedition of Sharafddīn's inscription towards the land of Tanūkh and Persia, at the time of Shammar Yuhar'ish; and finally the counter-attack of Shāpūr II, King of Persia, and Imru'l-Ḳais.
2. Chapter II treats of the reign of Abū Karib As'ad; the enlarged title, ʿrb, ṭwd and thwt; Abū Karib in Central Arabia; the legends of Abū Karib's invasion of ʿIrāq and Central Asia, the siege of Madīna, and finally his worshipping at the Ka'ba in Mecca.
3. Chapter III deals with the traditional kings after Abū Karib who have been mentioned in the inscriptions, with special reference to Ḥassān's expedition against Djadīs, ʿAbd Kulāl in Arab tradition, and Ma'dikarib Ya'fur in Central Arabia.
4. Chapter IV covers the reign of the famous king Yūsuf ʿAs'ar, his origin, and the massacre of the Christians in South Arabia.
5. Chapter V is concerned with the Abyssinian invasion of South Arabia, the battlefield, the period of the puppet

king Sumyafa' Ashwa', and his end at the hand of the famous King Abraha.

6. Chapter VI deals with the most significant achievements of Abraha; the events of CIH 541; the events of Ry 506; the expedition of Ry 506 and its relation to the expedition of the elephant; the reign of Abraha's sons, Yaksūm and Masrūk; and finally the end of the Abyssinian domination of South Arabia.

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

INTRODUCTION

The history of South Arabia is very complicated, and even today our knowledge of it is far from complete. However, before the discovery of the ancient inscriptions of South Arabia by Arnaud, Halévy, Glaser and several other explorers, knowledge of the pre-Islamic people of the area, now called Yaman, and the Ḥaḍramawt was incomplete and imprecise, being derived from the Old Testament, the annals of the Assyrian kings, and from the Classical and Arab historians and geographers.

Our knowledge of South Arabia derives mainly from the inscriptions which the people of South Arabia left on slabs of stone, on the walls of public buildings and temples, on rock faces, on a variety of cult objects and also on plaques of bronze meant to be set up or hung in temples or public places. We now possess a considerable number of these inscriptions which scholars have been studying for the past century. The vast majority of these inscriptions have been found or located without proper archaeological excavations or surveys, mostly lying on the surface of the earth where they probably had been ever since the temples or buildings which had housed them had fallen into ruins. The interest shown in these antiquities by scholars, archaeologists and antique dealers over the last century or

so has encouraged indiscriminate dismantling and removal of many inscriptions and other archaeological remains from wherever they were found or indiscriminately unearthed by ignorant and unscrupulous local people, thus increasing the number of inscriptions made available to the outside world but irrevocably destroying valuable archaeological and historical evidence. This sorry state of affairs has resulted from the very strict isolation of the region in modern times so that organised archaeological expeditions working to a regular schedule and continuing their diggings one season after another, as has been done on many other sites of ancient civilizations in the East, have been almost totally unknown there. The few and inconclusive excavations in South Arabia that were made in the last two decades have yielded useful information of great importance and therefore serve as an indication of the rich archaeological possibilities that the land holds. Our knowledge therefore of the history of that region, as derived mainly from the inscriptions, is probably adequate to give a correct outline of what happened in the region from the 7th or 8th century B.C.E. down to the rise of Islam. The fact that a near complete picture cannot yet be painted need not deter us from evaluating the importance of the history and culture of that region to the then contemporary world and down to the present day through Islamic channels.

After the discovery of thousands of inscriptions, written in South Arabic dialects, many scholars have been able to re-create the political, cultural and religious history of the various states of South Arabia. But very little light has been thrown on the period between Abū Karib Asʿad and the Persian invasion of South Arabia about 575 C.E., i.e. except what has been written about the massacre of Nadjirān, and the subsequent Abyssinian invasion.

Since the discovery of Ry 506 - 510 and other inscriptions belonging to this period, our knowledge of the political history has been increased - not, however, sufficiently to illuminate the whole period. We now know about Abū Karib Asʿad in Central Arabia, Maʿdikaṛib Yaʿfur fighting ʿaʿrāb in Maʿsil, Yūsuf ʿAsʿar fighting the Abyssinians in Zifār, the Nadjirānites and Ashāʿira, and Abraha's expedition against Banū ʿĀmir and Maʿadd in Central Arabia.

The nations of South Arabia, which were characterised in antiquity by the same restlessness as today, migrated at various periods, (which at present it is impossible to fix accurately), through North Arabia as far as the South of Syria, at first perhaps as traders and later for political reasons.

The excavation by Nelson Glueck at Tell el-Kheleifeh,⁽¹⁾ the ancient Ezion Geber, [Elath] not far from Akaba, the base of Solomon's fleet, brought to light two fragments of jars with South Arabic characters [RES 4918 bis]. The first fragment belongs to an archaeological stratum which Glueck thinks cannot be later than the eighth century B.C.E. He attributes this pottery to the people of Madiān, who would in that case have used South Arabian writing at this time. G. Ryckmans points out that it is more likely that the people of North Arabia used a North Arabic script, such as that of Liḥyān or Thamūd.⁽²⁾ The discovery at Tell el-Kheleifeh is preferably to be connected with the large Minaean colony at al-ʿUla and Tabūk; its best and most practicable sea outlet must have been the port at Ezion Geber.⁽³⁾

What lies beyond any doubt is that the political power of South Arabia spread towards the North. The most important inscriptions were found in Dedan (which

1. Glueck, N. "The first campaign at Tell el-Kheleifeh," BASOR, LXXI (1938), p.3-17;
Idem. "On the Trail of King Solomon's Mines", NGM, LXXXV (1944), p.245.

2. G. Ryckmans, "On Some Problems...", BSOAS, XIV (1952), p.3

3. Glueck, N., "Gateway to Arabia: Ezion-Geber", Asia, XXXIX (1939), pp. 528-32.

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is mentioned in the Bible) and in the location of modern al-°Ulain (Northern Ḥidjāz),⁽¹⁾ and several Minaean inscriptions have been found there.⁽²⁾

The Dedan and Tabūk area served as a warehouse and relay post for the caravan leaders who went backwards and forwards between the countries of the Levant. The South Arabians were the producers and conveyers of frankincense and spices to the whole of the ancient world. Their caravans carried the national and foreign products across the Arabian Peninsula to the ports of South Syria. They had commercial agents in the Eastern Mediterranean and in Egypt, as is proved by the finding of the Minaean dedicatory inscription at Delos in the Aegean Sea and of a burial inscription on a coffin found near Cairo.⁽³⁾

A group of inscriptions from the interior of Arabia comes from Ḳaryat al-Fa°w, قرية الفاو,⁽⁴⁾ south of wādī Dawāsir. It is located at 19° 47N - 45° 09E and is,

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1. cf. Musil, Northern Hegās, pp. 274-275.
 2. A. Jaussen et R. Savignac, "Nouvelle inscription minéene d'El-°Ela-Dedan" RB, X (1910), pp. 521-531.
 3. Levi Della Vida, "Pre-Islamic Arabia", in The Arab Heritage, pp.32-33.
 4. P. Lippens, Expédition en Arabie Centrale, pp. 160-66.

therefore, about 95 miles in a straight line north-northeast of Djabal al-Kawkab,⁽¹⁾ at the northern end of the ridge called Djibāl al-Ḳārat, in the south eastern part of which lies Bi'r Ḥimā. Ḳaryat al-Fa'w lies at the southern corner of a southwest - northeastern depression, Wādī al-Fa'w in Djabal Ṭuwaik. Situated about one mile from the foot of Djabal Ḳaryat, al-Fa'w faces in the west Ramlat al-'Ubaiyla, which belonged to Nafūd aḡ-Ḍaḡa.⁽²⁾

Al-Fa'w, almost at the entrance of a depression, explains why a rather important settlement was established there in ancient times. A route once ran from Nadīrān to the Persian Gulf via Wādī al-Dawāsir, which was the main medium of contact in ancient times between the Yaman and the Persian Gulf, and the civilisations of Assyria and Babylon.

In this region important inscriptions were discovered by some geologists of the Arabian-American Oil Company and by Philby.⁽³⁾ Several inscriptions are also known

1. A. Jamme, "Inscriptions photographed at Qaryat al-Fa'w", RSO, XLI (1966), p. 290.

2. Ibid.

3. Philby, "Two notes from Central Arabia", GJ, CXIII (1949), p. 86-93.

from Ḳaryat al-Fa'w.⁽¹⁾ P. Lippens⁽²⁾ states that the Philby expedition in 1952 saw there five panels of inscriptions. D. F. Brown discovered at Bi'r Ḥima many inscriptions which were published by A. Jamme.⁽³⁾ Mr. Parker T. Hart, U.S. Ambassador to Saūcī Arabia, visited Ḳaryat al-Fa'w and took kodachromes of several inscriptions which have been published by A. Jamme.⁽⁴⁾

It is important to mention that most of these inscriptions are fragments. Some of the inscriptions belong to the time of Sabaean domination; these were discovered in Wādī Ma'sil and published by G. Ryckmans.⁽⁵⁾ One inscription records the building of a well called Tan'am.⁽⁶⁾

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1. Philby, "Motor tracks and Sabaean Inscriptions in Najd", GJ, CXVI (1950), p.211. These inscriptions have been published by G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions sud Arabes...", Le Muséon, LXII (1949), pp. 87-124.
 2. P. Lippens, Expédition en Arabie Centrale, p. 163.
 3. A. Jamme, Sabaean and Ḥasaeen Inscriptions from Saudi Arabia, Rome, (1966), pp. 39-59.
 4. Idem, "Inscriptions Photographed...", RSO, XLI (1966), pp. 289-301.
 5. G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), pp. 319-342.
 6. Idem, "On some Problems...", BSOAS, XIV (1952), p. 32.

There are a number of documents, also, known to us from East Arabia. The first was discovered by Loftus⁽¹⁾ at Warka [ancient Uruk] in Southern Iraq; it appears in the Corpus as CIH 699.

Three inscriptions in South Arabian script had already been found in Ḥasa. Two were discovered by Captain W.H.I. Shakespeare in 1911 at Thādī and Ḥinna.⁽²⁾ These places lie some 56 kilometers inland from the eastern coast of Arabia, 150 kilometers west-northwest of Dhahrān.⁽³⁾ The third inscription is said to have come also from Thādī. This inscription from Thādī was presented to H.R.P. Dickson, by a bedouin who reported that he found the stone at Thādī.⁽⁴⁾ This inscription was published by G. Ryckmans⁽⁵⁾ Ry 155 [RES 4685] it is a burial inscription of a member of the Šawdhab tribe.

1. Loftus, W.K. Travels and Researches in Chaldaea and Susiana in 1849-52, London, 1857, p. 233.
2. Carruthers, D. "^{Captain}Shakespeare's Last Journey", GJ, LIX (1922), pp. 321-23. They appear as CIH 984, 985.
3. Mandaville, James P. "Thāj: A pre-Islamic Site in North-eastern Arabia", BASOR, No. 172 (1963), p. 10.
4. cf. H.R.P. and V.P.D. Dickson, "Thāj and Other Sites", Iraq, X, (1948), p. 4.
5. G. Ryckmans, "Inscription sud arabes", Le Muséon, L (1937), pp. 239-40.

These inscriptions show no concrete relation with South Arabia beyond the use of the monumental South Arabian script, and therefore will not be included in the material discussed here.

In October 1945, some workmen of the Arabian-American Oil Company, working in a quarry near 'Ain Djawan, on the Arabian mainland opposite Bahrain Island, unearthed an inscribed block of cut stone. It was published by F.V. Winnett.⁽¹⁾

Another inscription had been found by P. B. Cornwall, in Hasa also.⁽²⁾ It is very difficult to ascertain the dating of the texts but their presence along with the palaeographic characteristics of these texts clearly indicate, as A. Jamme points out, a date about the 4th century C.E.,⁽³⁾ or from the fifth or sixth century C.E. as P.B. Cornwall points out.⁽⁴⁾ On the other hand, it

1. F. V. Winnett, "A Himyaritic Inscription from the Persian Gulf region", BASOR, No. 102 (1946), pp.4-6.

2. P. B. Cornwall, "Ancient Arabian Explorations in Hasa", 1940-41", GJ, CVII (1946), p. 44.

3. A. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions..., p. 267.

4. P. B. Cornwall, op. cit., p. 44.

is difficult to evaluate the historical relations between South Arabia and the region of the Persian Gulf.

To study the inscriptions which belong to this period would be very unenlightening without connecting the events of the inscriptions with the Christian and Arab literary sources. Thus in this work, we have tried to study the political history of South Arabia and its relations with Central Arabia.

It is superfluous to repeat here our criticism of the Christian sources which deal almost exclusively with the persecution of Christianity in South Arabia, and give very little information on Byzantine-South Arabian relations.

Arab historians have written the history of South Arabia, but up to the time of Abū Karib As'ad, these traditions are legends and one cannot use them as historical evidence. However, from the time of Abū Karib As'ad one can find some genuine historical facts mixed with legend. But from the Arab traditions alone, it is difficult to interpret South Arabian history or its relations with Central Arabia.

The main reason for such lack of correct information is that Arabic traditions commonly consider history from

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the standpoint of the nomadic tribes of Central Arabia and are not concerned with general subjects. The records which were collected by Islamic scholars refer mainly to the narrow horizon of certain tribes. They ignore wider implications and have no chronology of their own. They offer even less than tribal chronicles; their stories cluster around some outstanding personalities, or follow the outbreak and main episodes of some tribal wars and neglect all the rest.

Consequently, our knowledge of Arabia in pre-Islamic times is derived mainly from two sources. First, there has been preserved a certain amount of pre-Islamic poetry.⁽¹⁾ Secondly, there are commentaries on this poetry and old Arab proverbs compiled by Muslim scholars of the second century A.H. and later, containing much traditional material about events in pre-Islamic times.⁽²⁾

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1. See Lyall, C.J. "Ancient Arabian poetry as a source of historical information", JRAS (1914), pp. 61-73. The authenticity of pre-Islamic poetry has been denied by some modern scholars, notably by D.S. Morgoliouth, "The Origins of Arabic Poetry", JRAS, (1925), pp. 417-449; Ṭaha Husaīn, Fī al-Shi'r al-Djahilī. Their theories have not been accepted by the majority of scholars.
 2. cf. ʿIḳāḍ, V, pp. 113-268; Kāmil, I, pp. 310 ff.

Most important in the history of the tribes are the so-called "Days of the Arab" - "ayyām al-‘arab". Here the narrators speak of a past in which lawlessness and violence had reigned supreme, and they tend to speak of the achievements of one or other of the tribes to the exclusion of everything else. They tell of incessant blood-feuds and tribal wars, of perpetual deadly struggles between brother tribes, related clans, and close neighbours. In verse, too, the past is spoken of exclusively in its sanguinary, warlike, fratricidal aspect. Here, however, the events of the past are recorded in order to enhance the glory of the poet's own clan and tribe - to show the superiority of its status over that of some other group or of its code of values. The pagan poet magnifies the past record of his kin by dwelling on the nobility and prestige of its ancestors, nobility and prestige not only such as were inherited by descent but particularly such as were acquired by heroic prowess on the field of battle. Nearly every tradition of a Day is interwoven with fragments of verse bearing on this or that detail or incident that marked its course. Again, of nearly every major Day, it is said - whether by the original storyteller or by its Muslim transmitter - (it is often impossible to

ascertain which) - that a great mass of poetry had been composed on that occasion. And in many cases, much of this poetry has actually been preserved and has come down to us independent of the storyteller's account, often including the fragments cited ad hoc in his account.⁽¹⁾

In the first century of Hidjra, this oral tradition was imaginatively expanded into a vast body of legendary lore which professed to relate the ancient history of Arabia.⁽²⁾ As a matter of fact we know very little about the struggle between Central and South Arabia. The Days of the Arab often speaks about the enmity amongst northern tribes. But it is very difficult to date these wars.

The rise of Islam, and the claims of the Ma'addis that the Prophet Muhammad was from Ma'add, made the Southern Arabian tribes counter-claim that they had been masters of Arabia before Muhammad, and had had many prophets.

1. See W. Caskel, "Aijam al-'Arab..", Islamica, IV (1931), pp. 59 ff.

2. cf. Dūri, p. 15.

The best example of South Arabian fabrications is furnished by ʿUbaīd b. Shariya al-Djurhumī [d.67/686], who wrote the book Akhbār ʿUbaīd ibn Shariya al-Djurhumī fī Akhbār al-Yaman waʾashʿāriha waʾansābiha,⁽¹⁾ which contains many legends.

Another famous South Arabian storyteller⁽²⁾ is Wahb b. Munabbih [d.114/732], a South Arabian, of Persian descent. In a separate work, the Kitāb al-Mulūk al-mutawadja min Ḥimyar wa Akhbārihim wa-Ḳiṣaṣihim wa Kubūrihim wa-Ashʿārihim, Wahb dealt with the early legendary history of his native land.⁽³⁾ This work has not survived but it was presumably from it that Ibn Hishām mentions Wahb in the introduction for his Kitāb al-Tidjān. Ibn Hishām does not mention the name of the book which continues Wahb's story down from the time of his grandson,⁽⁴⁾ ʿAbd al-Munʿim b. Idrīs [d. 228/833] who also produced his Kitāb al-Mubtadaʾ.⁽⁵⁾

1. Published with Kitāb al-Tidjān.

2. About Wahb, see Horowitz, "Earliest biographies of the Prophet...", IC, I (1927), pp. 553-59; EI⁽¹⁾, "Wahb ibn Munabbih".

3. cf. Al-Dūrī, Baḥṡh fī nashʾat ʿilm al-Taʾriḡh ʿind al-ʿArab. Beirut (1960), pp. 103-113.

4. Wahb, p.1.

5. cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, p. 94.

Yazīd b. Rabī'a b. al-Muffarrigh [ob. c. 130/747], who was on bad terms with the Umayyads and claimed that he was from Himyar, put together, waqa'a, a biography of Tubba' and verses attributed to the Tubba'.⁽¹⁾ Thus, it is very probable that most of Tubba''s verses, biography, and the ancient Himyarite legend were invented during the struggle between the Northern tribes, who had real power in the Umayyad period, as the Caliphate was drawn from them, and the South Arabian tribes.

Indeed, under the 'Abbasids the literary battle in general tended to be more concerned with the ancient past than with events of the Islamic periods. This may be explained by a desire to disguise the tribal strife of Islām by making it appear as a heathen custom which had been annulled by the new religion.

For example, the poet al-Kumāit b. Zaīd Al-Asadī [d. 126/743] gave the most vivid expression to this national poetic competitiveness and he himself was only one of the many representatives of Northern Arab anger against Southern Arab. In his time, the poets of Muḍar were involved in poetic quarrels with a poetic protagonist

1. Aghanī, XVIII, p. 182 [Beirut edition].

advocate of Southern Arabia, Ḥakīm b. ʿAiyāsh al-Kalbī.⁽¹⁾

But the southerners were hardest hit by the "golden poem" al-Mudhahhaba of al-Kumāit, a work of 300 lines,⁽²⁾ the gist of which is contained in the following line:

"I have found men with the exception of two sons of Nizār [Muḍar and Rabīʿa, the ancestors of the Northern Arab] - I do not wish to slight them - low and common."⁽³⁾

The Southern Arabs also had their poetic defenders. In the year 205/820 [the poem itself gives an exact date in verse IV], ʿAmr b. Zaʿbal had to repel a famous Ḳaṣīda which the Baḡra poet Ibn Abī ʿUyayna had published to ridicule the Nizarists and to glorify the Ḳaṭṭānists.⁽⁴⁾ How long Kumāit's satire was effective amongst his adversaries is shown by the fact that a century after him the Southern Arabians found a defender in ʿIrāq in the bold satirist Diʿbil [d. 246/860] of the tribe of Ḳhuzaʿa.⁽⁵⁾

1. Aghānī, XVI, p.334 [Beirut ed.].

2. cf. Masʿūdī, I, p.300.

3. Ibn al-Sikkīt, Kitāb al-Alfāz. ed. by Cheikho, p.195.

وَجَدْتُ النَّاسَ غَيْرَ ابْنِي نَزَارٍ
وَمَا أَذْ مُنْهَمُّ شَرِّهَا وَدُونَا

4. Aghānī, XX, p.46 [Beirut ed.].

5. Ibid, XX, p.68 [Beirut ed.].

This poet set himself the task of moderating the arrogance of the northerners by recording the glorious historical position of the South Arabian people, and strengthening the self-confidence of the Yamanites by describing their historical tradition, the invention of which had reached its height in those days.⁽¹⁾ This effort so stung the northern Arabs that the contemporary prefect of Baḡra commissioned the poet Abū al-Dalfa' to counter the poem of Di'bil with a north Arab satire which he circulated under the name of "the Shatterer".⁽²⁾

By the time of al-Hamdānī [d. 334/945] the rivalry between Southern and Northern tribes was no longer an effective political force and so its literary manifestation was more imaginative and fictitious than factual and historical.

Al-Hamdānī is well known as the greatest authority on the antiquities of Southern Arabia. His famous book Al-Iklīl, is described by Yāqūt⁽³⁾ as a work about the

1. Mas'ūdī, I, p.302; see also Djāhīz, Al-Bayān, II, pp.7, 72, 129-131. This poem of six hundred verses was in existence till 4th c. A.H., 10th c. C.E. See al-Taḥūkhī, Nishwar..., I, pp.176-77.

2. cf. Aghānī, VIII, p.252.

3. Yāqūt, Irshād..., III, p.9.

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glory of Ḳaḥṭān "مفاخر قطان". The work originally existed in ten volumes, of which only the first, second, eighth and tenth have so far been discovered and published. He drew his themes from the poetic sections of Kitāb al-Tidjān and Akhbār ʿUbaīd b. Shariya. He himself was a poet and he composed a poem called "Ḳaṣīda" about the superiority of Ḳaḥṭān.

Another important South Arabian historian was Nashwān b. Saʿīd al-Ḥimyarī [d. 573/1117]. His book of philology, "Shams al-ʿulūm",⁽¹⁾ contains many poems of the apocryphal type quoted on the authority of Wahb b. Munabbih and ʿUbaīd b. Shariya. But being an expert in the art of poetry, Nashwān had carefully re-fashioned the crude and barbarous verses of Kitāb al-Tidjān. He was also acquainted with the work of his predecessor, al-Ḥamdānī. His other famous book, Al-Ḳaṣīda al-Ḥimyarīya,⁽²⁾ based on such traditions of the Ḥimyarite rulers, celebrates their deeds and the splendour of their ancient kingdom. In the commentary on this poem the annotator

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1. South Arabian information from Shams al-ʿulūm, published, see Mukhtārāt. The original text has not been completely published.
 2. Published with English translation, see The Lay.

gives very full notes, in which he narrates legends of South Arabia, princes and their history. Von Kremer⁽¹⁾ supposes, relying on internal evidence, that the author of the Ḳaṣīda and the commentator are the same person, i.e. that Nashwān himself wrote the commentary on his Ḳaṣīda, but it is clear from the published text that the commentator was not Nashwān, but someone else.⁽²⁾

The Ḳurʿān mentions the people of Tubbaʿ: "Are they better, or the folk of Tubbaʿ and those before them? We destroyed them, for surely they were guilty" [44/37].. "And the dwellers in the wood, and the folk of Tubbaʿ: everyone denied their messengers therefore my threat took effect." [50/14].

It should be pointed out here that the verses of the Ḳurʿān do not indicate that "Tubbaʿ" was a virtuous man or a prophet, because in both verses "Ḳaūm Tubbaʿ" are mentioned and the reference is to their sinful ways and the deserved punishment and destruction vented on them by God.

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1. Quoted from E.I.⁽¹⁾, s.v. "Nashwān b. Saʿīd Al Ḥimyārī".
 2. See Mulūk.

As the name "Tubba'" according to Arab traditions was applied to every South Arabian king, we cannot determine to which particular one of them it referred. Arab historians and the Qur'anic commentators showed particular interest in the meaning of the name "Tubba'".⁽¹⁾ This meaning is not given in the Qur'an, nor does it tell us when or where he lived, or if Tubba' was the name of a king or prophet. With the problem and confusion, the Qur'anic commentators felt free to interpret as they wished.

At first the Prophet himself did not know anything about Tubba', but later he told his followers that Tubba' was a Muslim. But a tradition supposedly belonging to a

1. Tubba' means a king of South Arabia, whose sovereignty extended over Ḥaḍramawt, Saba' and Himyar; see Lisān, s.v. "TB'"; al-Fairūzābādī, al-Ḳamūs, III, p.8; according to al-Mas'ūdī, Tubba' was sovereign over al-Yaman, al-Shaḥar, and Ḥaḍramawt, see Mas'ūdī, I, p.208; see also al-Suhailī, I, p.22; Ḳurṭubī, XVI, p.144-146; Ibn Khaldūn, II, pp.93-94; see also •Ikd, III, p.371; Mukhtārāt, p.12; Ibn Rasūl, p.51; Al-Ḳalkashandī, Ṣubah, I, p.480.

later time says the following: (1)

”لا تلعنوا تبعاً فإنه قد راسم

"Curse not Tubba• as he believed in Islām".

In another version Muḍar is inserted in the place of Tubba•. (2)

Such traditions indicate how much cursing of ancestors was going on on both sides. At any rate the traditions of

Muḥammad did not say whether Tubba• was a king or a prophet. (3)

Ibn •Abbās [d. 68/687] himself says on the authority of

Ka•b [d. 32/652] that Tubba• was a king. (4) Other

1. Ibn Ḥanbal, V, 340; Tafsīr, XXVI, p.115 citing Suhāil b. Sa•d al-Sa•īdī; Mas•ūdī, I, p.208; Mukhtārāt, p.12; Ibn •Asākīr, X, pp.407-410, citing Suhāil b. Sa•d al-Sa•īdī; Samhūdī, I, p.189 citing also Suhāil; Ḳurṭubī, XVI, pp.144-46, without authority; Azraqī, p.173, citing Abū Hurāira. Ibn Al-Athīr Nihāya..., I, p.180.
2. •Alā•ud-Dīn, Kanz al•Ummāl, V, p.316.
3. Ḳurṭubī, XVI, p.146; Mulūk, pp.12, 132, mentions also that Tubba• was a prophet.
4. Tafsīr, XXV, pp.128-29; XXVI, p.115, Ibn •Asākīr, X, p.412. According to Azraqī, I, p.84, citing Ibn Ishāq, there were three Tubba•s who had tried to destroy the Ka•ba. •Ubaīd p.435 said there were seven Tubba•s, but the famous one was As•ad.

commentators say that Tubba' was a good man.⁽¹⁾

The empire and dominance of the Quraysh in Islām is represented by South Arabian traditions as insignificant compared with the power of the kings of Southern Arabia. The Yamanites said: The Ma'addis have been raised to fame by their relationship with Muḥammad, but we were the kings of the people before His Prophet.⁽²⁾ They tell of the exploits of their pre-Islamic kings as a counterbalance to the supremacy of the Ma'add in Islām.

The traditions and legends of these kings are for the historian to assess; for our purposes we are concerned with the poetry which was circulated in their name. Ibn Ḥazm⁽³⁾ maintains that most of the material about "Tabābi'a" is incorrect and should be ignored. However, one Tubba' stands out as the greatest of all and the one to whom most of the verses are attributed.

1. Tafsīr, XXV, p.129; Kurṭubī, XVI, p.146, Ibn 'Asākir, X, p.410.

2. 'Ubaīd, p.428;

”نحن ملوك الناس قبل نبيه“

3. Ibn Ḥazm, p.439.

The South Arabians were very proud that the *Qur'an* mentioned Tubba° and used this to increase their prestige, because the verse which mentions the people of Tubba° implies that the *Quraysh* who had the real power during the first period of Islamic history and from whom Muḥammad came have no claim to be better than the people of Tubba°. Because of this the South Arabians claimed not only that they had had a prophet before the appearance of Muḥammad and that they were not inferior to the *Quraysh*, but that their Tubba° had also embraced Islām,⁽¹⁾ and left a letter to Muḥammad.⁽²⁾ The story is celebrated in the following verses:⁽³⁾

I profess that Aḥmad is a Messenger from
God, the Lord of Mankind.

If my life is prolonged until his day, I
will be adviser and a cousin to him.

And I will force all those on earth, Arabs
or non-Arabs, to obey him.

1. °Ubaīd, p.455; A. Guillaume, p.7; *Ma°arif*, p.631.

2. *Qurṭubī*, XVI, p.146, citing al-Fārābī who wrote a book called "شرح العشرينات النبوية" in which he gave full details.

3. °Ubaīd, p.456.

From the offspring of my people he will have helpers to give him refuge and then he will not be oppressed.

Woe to Ḳuraish when he comes to them and their sea becomes tumultuous and violent for them.

Their (Ḳuraish) Prophet is the best of their predecessors, and an ally of the religious and not of his relatives.

On the other hand, one can assume that some people were ready to denigrate Tubba', especially the tribe of Tamīm, ⁽¹⁾ which had a long-standing quarrel with the South Arabian tribes; and thus South Arabian propaganda aided by al-Anṣār had made Tubba' out to be a great man and some-time prophet. ⁽²⁾

The traditions attributed to the Prophet are quoted to support the South Arabians' claim of a glorious past. It is to be assumed that the Ma'ddis were sceptical about the historical value of the claim which had thus to be supported by traditions.

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1. 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ [d. 114/732] had told Tamīm not to insult Tubba' because the Prophet had forbidden it. Ibn 'Asākir, X, p.409.
 2. See the traditions which support the South Arabians, Ibid, X, pp.409-412.

Saba' is mentioned twice in the Qur'an. "But he [the bird] was not long in coming, and he said: I have found out [a thing] that thou apprehendest not, and I came unto thee from Saba' [Sheba] with sure tidings" [Qur'an XXVII, 22]. "There was indeed a sign for Saba' in their dwellingplace: two gardens on the right hand and the left..." [Qur'an XXXIV, 15].

It is clear from the Qur'anic verses that the word Saba' refers not to a person but to a land or a people.

Saba' is generally considered by the Arabs to be the name of the founder of the South Arabian kingdom, and it was a subject of great controversy. According to one tradition, a man asked the Prophet "What is Saba', a man, a woman, or a land?" The Prophet replied "It is a man from the Arab, who was a father of ten sons of whom six dwelt in al-Yaman, and four had their dwelling in al-Sham. The Yamanites are Kinda, Himyar, al-Azd, al-Ash'ariyūq, Madhhidj and Anmar [Khath'am and Budjaila]. The Shamites are 'Amila, Lakhm, Djudham and Ghassan."⁽¹⁾ Wahb, quoting from Ahl-al-Kitab, states that Saba' is the son of Kahtan

1. Tafsir, XXII, pp.76-7.

[Joktan] son of Hūd [•Eber].⁽¹⁾ However, this tradition is intended to supply a genealogical theory of the dispersal of the South Arabians based on the sanctions of the Prophet.⁽²⁾

We may safely assume, therefore, that the South Arabians' interest in Hūd⁽³⁾ was meant to act as a counter-balance to the Ma'addī boast of Muḥammad. The allusions to Hūd in poetry point to this fact, though in a very subtle and indirect way.

1. Wahb, p.31.

2. cf. Mūluk, p.2.

3. Hūd's shrine is in Ḥaḍramawt and it is still venerated by the South Arabians even today, see Serjeant, "Hūd and Other Pre-Islamic Prophets of Ḥaḍramawt", Le Muséon, LXVII (1954), pp.121-179.

CHAPTER ONE

RELATIONS BETWEEN SOUTH AND CENTRAL ARABIA
IN THE 4TH CENTURY C.E.

CHAPTER ONE

Background

The relations between South and Central Arabia in the fourth century of the Christian era are relatively obscure, despite the discovery of a number of early documents, from East, North and Central Arabia.

From Arab tradition, it is not easy to trace the relation between South and Central Arabia in the 4th century of the Christian era. These traditions are legends and one cannot use them as historical evidence.

The earliest South Arabian epigraphic evidence relating to the time prior to our period refers to a war between South Arabia and the tribes living to the north of Nadīran.

The inscription Ja 635 mentions Kinda as an enemy of š^orm/°wtr/mlk/sb°/wdrydn. °bkrb/°hrs/bn/°blm, a commander of š^orm/°wtr, had fought against the Kinda. The beginning of Ja 635 alludes to attacks against the king š^orm/°wtr from the south and from the north and from sea and land; such an expression is a summary of all the preceding events and therefore suggests that the campaign

northwest of Ma'rib was the last one. In this latter campaign, the Saba' king came back westward against the city of "qrytm" of khl^m,⁽¹⁾ and fought against rb't/d'ltwrm king of kdt/wqh^{tn}, and also against the masters of the city of "qrytm".⁽²⁾

The king of Kinda, rb't/d'ltwrm, is mentioned in this inscription as king of kdt/wqh^{tn} (Kinda and Ḳaḥṭān). qh^{tn} is the name of a tribe and a city in northern Nadjran which still exists at the present time.⁽³⁾ Kinda apparently were living somewhere near Ḳaḥṭān at that time, as we shall discuss when we come to Ry 535.

It seems also from Ja 635 that the suzerainty of š'rm/•wtr had extended rather to western Arabia mainly to •rḡ'1'•sd [Ja 635 lines 36-37] which is to be identified with Azd •Uman as we shall see in the Sharafaddin

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1. khl^m might have survived in Kahal the name of one of the two peaks of the Diabalain ridge, west of the two •Akwat cones, located about 15 km. northwest of Ṣabyā, Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions..., p.304.
 2. The city of Ḳaryatum, located somewhere in South Arabia, was plundered by Sabaeans, since it is stated that a statue was offered to •Ilumḳuh from the booty from that city [Ja 634 and Ja 641] see also Yāḳūt, II, p.76.
 3. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions, p.138.

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inscription.

Ry 535 (= Ja 576), mentions fighting between •lšrh/
yḥḏb/w•hyhw/y•zl/byn/mlky/sb•/wḏrydn on one side and mlkm,
king of Kinda, and mr•lqs/bn/•wfm/mlk/hṣṣtn.

This inscription tells of the defeat of all enemies,
north and south, on land and on sea. mlkm, king of Kinda,
had given assistance to mr•lqs/bn/•wfm/mlk/hṣṣtn. •lšrh/
yḥḏb captured the former, who, together with the leader of
Kinda, was detained in the city of Ma•rib until mr•lqs
and the sons of mlkm were given over to the Sabaeans.
Tribute also was paid.

G. Ryckmans and J. Pirenne identify hṣṣtn with Ḥira
on linguistic, or rather semantic grounds, arguing that a
word from the same root means an enclosure.⁽¹⁾ They
could have found more direct support for their point of
view by comparing Khuṣūṣ, the name of a place in Ḥira
mentioned in Tādī⁽²⁾ where it is quoted in a verse by

1. G. Ryckmans, "Inscription sud-arabes", Le Muséon, LXIX
(1956), p.153; J. Pirenne, "L'inscription Ryckmans 535",
idem, LXIX (1956), p.167. cf. Von Wissmann, "Zur Kenntnis
Ostarabien," idem, LXXX (1967), p.408. Footnote, 40.

2. Tādī, IV, p.388.

*Adiyy b. Zaīd of al-Ḥīra. But, HSTN, could have referred to "al-Khaṣāṣa", a small town, according to Yāqūt⁽¹⁾ in the land of Banū Zubaīd and Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b, between al-Ḥidjāz and Tihāma. It must have commanded a considerable area, for Yāqūt says that it was conquered in the days of the Caliph Abū Bakr, during the Ridda wars, in the year 12/633 by *Ikrima b. Abī Djahl. It is also mentioned by Hamdānī,⁽²⁾ by the names al-Khaṣāṣa and Khaṣāṣat al-ʿUrfuṭ, the latter being the one in Urdjūzat al-ḥadīd⁽³⁾ of al-Radāʿī and is a poetic one on account of the ʿUrfuṭ trees, a species of mimosa, which grew there. Judging from the itinerary given in the urdjūza, as Dr. M.A. Ghūl⁽⁴⁾ points out, it is to be located not far from Bīsha, slightly to the southwest of it.⁽⁵⁾ This location of al-Khaṣāṣa sets the scene of the events and actions in Ry 535 neatly in one part of Arabia, especially since the land of Kinda in those days was around Wādī Bīsha in the vicinity of the modern town of Khamīs Mushait.

1. Yāqūt, II, p.448.

2. Djazīrat, p.258.

3. Djazīrat, pp.236-282, gives the full "urdjūza".

4. In a letter written to Professor H. von Wissmann, 10th February, 1968.

5. cf. Jamme Sabaeen Inscriptions, p.318, puts Khaṣāṣa in *Aden.

At the time of the invasion by Aelius Gallus, the land north of Nadjirān was not effectively dominated by the Sabaeans. This invasion took place in the reign of the Sabaean king Masaros, who, according to a well-established view, is to be identified with Ilsharah Yaḥḏub.⁽¹⁾

Glaser⁽²⁾ suggests that the capital of the extensive Kindite kingdom must have been Maokosmos Metropolis which Ptolemy mentions.⁽³⁾ Sprenger identifies it with Djaww al-Khaḏarim, the old capital of Yamāma, but Glaser maintains that according to Ptolemy it must have been north-east of Nadjirān but not as far as Yamāma and therefore it must have been in the middle part of Wādī al-Dawāsir or near one of its bigger tributary Wādīs, perhaps near Karya Tamra or Sulayyil.⁽⁴⁾ And since Hḡḡtn lies north of Nadjirān, as we have already mentioned, the land of Kinda at this time must have been north of Nadjirān. Thus Glaser's identification of Maokosmos Metropolis with the capital of the Kindite kingdom in the second century of the Christian era might well be correct, as also his

1. Jamme, Ibid, p.389.

2. Glaser, Skizze, 11, p.234.

3. Sprenger, Die alte Geographie Arabiens, p.351.

4. cf. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions, pp.67-68.

location of it. In Hamdānī's time a place called al-
 'Aḳīḳ, four stages from Nadīran on the route to al-Yamāma,
 was the homeland of Djarm and Kinda. The Kindites there
 were a branch called al-Kanādira⁽¹⁾ "الكنندرة بن كندة"

Later in the time of yṣm/yhn•m [Ja 665], Kinda
 appears under the control of South Arabia. The Kindites,
 in Ja 665, were under the command of "s•dt•lb/ytlf/bn/
 gdnm/kbr/••rb/mlk/sb•/wkdt/wmdhgm/wḥrnm/wbhlm/wzyd•l/wkl/
 ••rb/sb•/wḥmyrm/wḥdrmt/wymnt." [lines 1-8]. The commander
 Sa•adta•lab Yatlaf first fought against •brn, which is
 mentioned by al-Hamdānī⁽²⁾ as a place with wells; the city
 of Ḥuṣn al-•Abr is located about 2.5 km west of wādī al-
 •Abr which flows northwest-southeast, about 85 km northwest
 of Shabwa and about 145 km. west-northwest of Shibām.⁽³⁾

Kinda, it seems, was still under the control of South
 Arabia at the time of šmr/yhr•s/mlk/sb•/wdrydn/wḥdrmt/
 wymnt. The dedicatory inscription, Ja 660, deals with a
 case of desertion.

1. Djazīrat, p.166.

2. Djazīrat, p.188.

3. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions..., p.373; see also A.
 Sprenger, Die alte Geographie Arabiens, p.189 and 306.

A high official, whb°wm°, of the king šmr/yhr°s offered a statue in connection with a mission given to him by his king, which he successfully conducted. Kinda appears in this inscription as providing a major part of the troops. But we do not know whether Kinda at this time had migrated to South Arabia, or whether part of Kinda had migrated, or whether Kinda was still in its original place, north of Nadjran, and only in time of war could they be summoned to join the South Arabian troops, especially in case of any trouble in South Arabia, particularly in the northern part.

The important events of Ja 660 run as follows

[lines 11-17]:

- 11) t/ltrd/whwkbn/b°tr/prtn/bn/k°
- 12) bm/wswdm/bn/°mrm/grynhn/w°sdhmw
- 13) nh°n/wgrm/bkn/tfrqw/bn/dhzn/bh
- 14) grn/mrb/wb°nhmw/y°mr/wz°/s°bn/sb°
- 15) w°hdhmw/hmt/°sdn/prtn/bn/k°bm/w
- 16) s(w)dm/bn/°mrm/w°sdhwy/dbn/grm/wnh°n
- 17) bfrtn/w°wlhmw/b°qrnm/b°br/mr°hm

which I render as follows:-

- 11) to chase and to follow on the track (pursue) al-Ḥarīth b.
- 12) Ka°b and Sawd b. °Amir the two deserters (or, escapees) and their men
- 13) al-Nakh° and Djarm when they dispersed [deserted] from dhū Khazfan in

- 14) the city of Ma'rib and with them (i.e. the chasers) Ya'mur, the chief of the tribe Saba'
- 15) and he captured them, these men, al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b and
- 16) Sa(w)d b. 'Āmir and their men those from Djarm and al-Nakh' at
- 17) al-Farṭ and he brought them bound for their lord.

The events of this inscription seem to have started in the city of Ma'rib. The commander, whb'wm, defeated the tribes of al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b, Sawd b. 'Āmir and the two tribes, al-Nakh' and Djarm. It seems that all the above tribes had been in Ma'rib before they deserted (or escaped) from Ma'rib, so it is most probable that they had been under government control before they deserted.

The site of the battle was Farṭ. Farṭ, according to Abū Ziyād, quoted by Yāqūt, was a place on the edge of al-Yamāma. But according to Abū 'Amr, quoted in Tādī, Farṭ was a place in Tihāma near al-Ḥidjāz.

1. Yāqūt, III, p.877.

2. Tādī, V, p.197. Bakrī, p.393, states that Farṭ is a name of a place but he does not mention where it was. He also adds that Farṭ means "small mountain".

Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b are said to have been living in the district of Nadīrān and were neighbours of Hamdān.⁽¹⁾ Banū al-Ḥārith, according to the Arab genealogists, is said to be a clan of Madhhidj.⁽²⁾

Sawd b. 'Amīr is probably identical with the southern Arabian tribe, Aswadān b. 'Amr, brothers of the tribe Djarm.⁽³⁾

Al-Nakh⁽⁴⁾ b. 'Amr b. 'Ula b. Djald are said to have come from Madhhidj and to be brothers of Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b b. 'Amr b. 'Ula b. Djald. Their territory is said to be Bīsha.⁽⁵⁾

The tribe Djarm is said to be brother of the tribe Aswadān.⁽⁶⁾ It is said their territories were Nadīrān and Tathlīth.⁽⁷⁾ They were in alliance with Banū al-Ḥārith

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1. Bakrī, p.603. For other places where they were found, see B.I.⁽²⁾ s.v. "Banū'l-Ḥārith b. Ka'b".
 2. Ibn Ḥazm, p.416; Ḳalkaṣhandī, Nihāyat, p.47.
 3. Ibn Ḥazm, p.400. There were many tribes called Sawd, see Ḳalkaṣhandī, Nihāyat, p.299; Idem, Ḳalā'id, p.58; Nuwairī, 11, p.312.
 4. Ḳalkaṣhandī, Nihāyat, p.76, calls him Djisar b. 'Amr b. 'Ula b. Djald.
 5. Bakrī, p.63.
 6. Ibn Ḥazm, p.400.
 7. Bakrī, p.40.

b. Ka•b.⁽¹⁾ Al-Ḳalkaṣhandī,⁽²⁾ states that Djarm was from Badjīla, the south Arabian tribe.

It is interesting to see that, according to the Arab genealogists, both the tribes of Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka•b and al-Nakh• are said to be brothers; and both of them branches of the great tribe Madhḥidj. The tribes Aswadān b. •Amr and Djarm as we have already mentioned are brothers. Thus the question arising is whether Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka•b and al-Nakh• were in fact from Madhḥidj or had been merely in alliance with Madhḥidj, and later on, as Madhḥidj was a strong tribe, so these small tribes claimed that they were from Madhḥidj, a relationship which Islamic genealogists later either translated or accepted as one of equal partnership or common kinship. We can say the same about the other two tribes, Aswadān b. •Amr [in the inscription s(w)dm/bn/•mrm], and the tribe Djarm, which have been accepted by the Islamic genealogists as brothers and as originating from South Arabia.

1. Ibid, p.42.

2. Al-Ḳalkaṣhandī, Nihāyat, p.209; see also Tādī, I, p.261. Badjīla is said to be a northern Arabian tribe, see Ibn Ḥazm, p.10; Bakrī, p.58; E.I.⁽²⁾ s.v. "Badjīla".

It seems from Ja 660, that these four tribes had been under the control of the South Arabian kingdom. When they had revolted the commander, of Shammar Yuhar'ish, whb'wm, defeated them. Thus it would be reasonable to assume that all the territories around and north of Nadīrān came under the sovereignty of South Arabia, in particular the town of Nadīrān, which is called in the al-Namāra inscription "Nadīrān the city of šmr".

Sharafaddīn Inscription

It seems that after the events of Ja 660, Shammar Yuhar'ish had extended his dominion rather to the west and north of Central Arabia. This extension of South Arabia is known from the Sharafaddīn inscription.⁽¹⁾ The inscription records an expedition of one of Shammar Yuhar'ish's commanders to east and northeast Arabia. The expedition was directed, as it mentions in the inscription, first to mlk'isd [line 9] which should be rendered "the king of al-'Asd", that is the tribe more commonly known as al-Azd.

1. H. Von Wissmann, "Ostarabien in Altertum", Le Muséon, LXXX (1967), pp.508-509. [Appendice, Le texte Sharafaddin, Yemen, by J. Ryckmans].

In Ja 635, 34-39, ard'as seems, as M.A. Ghul, (1) points out, to refer to a place in western Arabia, and one would therefore consider it as referring to Azd al-Sarāh or Azd Shanū'a. "But in view of the context of Sharafaddin 44 Lower Right, 7-11, it would be necessary to consider it the Azd 'Umān." In this sense the succession of events in lines 7-11 makes clear the order and continuity of direction: (1) The dedicant was sent against the king of al-Asd, in 'Umān; (2) then he went right on to qtw'f (Ḳaṭīf) and swk (present day Umm al-Sāhik, a village of about 3000 population, with a number of smaller villages or tribal settlements around it, 14 kms. northwest of the town of Ḳaṭīf) the two dependencies, malkty, offers then (3) "the land of Tanūkh, whose place, in spite of "the late time" of the inscription need not be in this case outside "al-Baḥrain", for either the land was still inhabited by some Tanūkh or they still retained some authority over it and thus the relation with Tanūkh was still maintained and was not only a historical memory. (2)

Thus the sovereignty of South Arabia extended towards east and north-east Arabia. This extension means that

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1. In a letter written to Professor H. Von Wissmann, 10th February, 1968.
 2. cf. Ṭabarī, I, p.746.

South Arabia, mainly under Shammar Yuhar'ish had got the two dependencies of Persia. Moreover Shammar's troops had reached the land of Tanūkh, which means in effect that they had reached some place in South 'Irāq.

Shammar Yuhar'ish is credited also, in Arab traditions, ⁽¹⁾ with the conquest of Persia, India and China. These conquests again need not be wholly dismissed as unacceptable and impossible. These Arab traditions find support in the Sharafaddin inscription. Thus, it is possible to interpret an episode in the history of Persia during the childhood days of Shāpūr II so that it will give a semblance of truth; if not full support, to the claim of the Arab traditions that Shammar Yuhar'ish carried on his conquests into Persia.

Ṭabarī says that the early days of Shāpūr II were days of weakness. The neighbouring nations availed themselves of the opportunity and invaded the land of the Persians. The Arab were nearest and most hard-pressed to seek subsistence outside their own lands.⁽²⁾ A great crowd of them embarked on the sea from the lands of 'Abd alḲais, i.e.

1. See Wahb, pp.222-239; 'Uba'id, pp.428-433.
2. cf. Ibid, p.517, who adds Tamims also.

south of Al-Aḥṣāʾ, and from al-Baḥrain and Kāzima, modern Kuwait, and landed in Irānshahr (ʿIrāq), Ardashīr Khurra (the district including Shīrāz and Sīrāf) and the coastland of Fārs. They overwhelmed the population of those parts, robbed them of their cattle, lands and livelihood and spread destruction far and wide. They remained like that for some time unchallenged by the Persians. (1)

Shāpūr II's reign started in 309, when he was born to his father posthumously. The Arab incursion or invasion must have taken place not later than the first half of the second decade of that century, some time about 315.

As for the conquest of Persia, India and China, we may still be relatively on firm ground. One might see in the conquest of these lands the conquest or annexation of the ports and emporia of East Arabia and the Persian Gulf, where Indian and Chinese merchandise used to be disembarked to be carried northwards by the caravans. We find such an interpretation in Hamdānī, where he says that al-Hind, India, in a verse he quotes means the district of al-Baḥra for the Arab used, in former days to call the Baḥra region al-Hind. (2)

1. Ṭabarī, I, pp.836-837. Thaʿālibī, Taʾrīkh Ghurar, p.514 omits the invasion across the Persian Gulf.

2. Djazīrat, p.204.

Thus it is a reasonable assumption that the invasion recorded in al-Ṭabarī and al-Tha'alibī, and the South Arabian expedition were in fact one and the same. The time and place of the events of the Sharafaddīn inscription and the Ṭabarī tradition are in fact in the childhood of Shāpūr II in Persia.

However, one can infer from the inscription that the power of South Arabia had been extended not only to South •Irāk, but also to encouraging East Arabian tribes to cross the Persian Gulf. Therefore, Shammar Yuhr'ish held sway over most of East and Central Arabia, but this domination seems to have ended with the invasion of Shāpūr II to Bahraīn, Haḍjar, and al-Yamāma. We also know from the al-Namāra inscription that Imru'l-Ḳais b. •Amr had reached the town of Shammar, Maḍjirān, as we see below.

Shāpūr invasion

After the South Arabian invasions in the region of the Persian Gulf, Shāpūr II started his active life, at the age of sixteen, by leading a campaign against the Arab who had, in the days of his minority, encroached on lands within his kingdom. He dealt severely with the Arab in southern •Irāk and conquered Bahraīn and al-Yamāma almost

up to Yathrib.⁽¹⁾ He took many of them prisoners and settled them in Persia [Ahwāz and Kirman], probably in order to be better able to control them. There is no mention, however, in Arabic sources of any attack by Shāpūr against South Arabian troops.

It is evident that the campaign against east Central Arabia by Shāpūr II must have taken place between 325, the year when Shāpūr II started his active career, and 328, the date of the Namāra inscription.

Shāpūr's expedition with Imru'1-Ḳais, as recorded in the Namāra inscription which we shall discuss below, drove back the South Arabian dominion from East and Central Arabia.

Al-Namāra Inscription

The invasion of Central Arabia by Imru'1-Ḳais took place before 328 C.E. This inscription, RES 483, is rendered as follows:

1. This is the tomb of Imru'1-Ḳais the King of the whole Arab [(al-'arab kullihā)] who bound (on him) the crown

1. Ṭabari, I, p.839.

2. and gained rule over al-Asadayn and Nizār and their kings and drove away (routed) Ma(dj)hidi⁽¹⁾ by (his) force and levied
3. taxes in the vicinity (or district) of Nadirān, the city (or, the dependency) of Šmr, and gained rule of Ma'add and stationed his sons over
4. the tribes and Persia and the Romans recognised them (tribes) as dependents [or, entrusted them (to him)]...

An approximate date of that event must have been after 325 C.E.⁽²⁾ The conquest attributed to Imru'l-Kāis in the above mentioned inscription is simply the same conquest that Ṭabarī attributes to Šhāpūr II. After all, he says squarely and plainly that the same 'Imru'l-Kāis b. 'Amr was only the vassal of Šhāpūr II and his governor over the

1. MHJW of the inscription corrected as M[D]HJW; cf. R. Dussaud, La pénétration..., p.64, n.1, Djauharī, al-Šiḥāḥ, I, p.340 considers the mim in Mudhḥidi a radical, on the authority of Sībawaihi; Liṣān, s.v. dhā says that Djauharī mistook د.ه in Sibawaihi, [cf. Sibawaihi, al-Kitāb, II, p.344] for د.ه. Could د.ه have been a copying mistake for د.ه ?
2. Smith, p.442. According to J. Ryckmans L'Institution..., p.365, it took place about 327 C.E.

Arabs, (1) and probably attributes to him the conquests of the king which are attributed to him in the Namāra inscription. In the light of this time-sequence we can say that the conquests of Shāpūr II in Arabia took place perhaps after 325 and definitely before 328 C.E.

1. .Ṭabarī, I, p.838, p.845; Mas'ūdī, I, p.258. cf. Muḥabbar, p.358. Ḥamza, p.100, correctly states that Imru'l-Ḳais reigned for twenty years, and five months during the reign of Shāpūr II, but Ḥamza follows the other Arab sources and assigns to Imru'l-Ḳais a total reign of 114 years. The legendary length assigned to the reign of both Imru'l-Ḳais and his father 'Amr b. 'Adiyy may not be difficult to explain. Muḥabbar, p.361 says that Ḥīra was a seat of power for five hundred and thirty odd years until the time of the building of al-Kūfa in the days of 'Umar I. It seems that the beginning of Ḥīra was confused with the beginning of the Bostra era, the era which Ḥīra itself used combined with the duration of the reign of 'Amr b. 'Adiyy and his son, which according to the Arab sources, makes a total of 232 years. Imru'l-Ḳais died in the year 223 of the Bostra era. The difference is only a matter of nine or more probably ten years. One of the four kings got ten years too many! Ya'qūbī, I, p.238, gives 55 years and 35 years for the reigns of each of 'Amr b. 'Adiyy and Imru'l-Ḳais b. 'Amr respectively.

It is also likely that Shāpūr II conquered East Arabia, but Imru'1-Ḳais conquered Central Arabia as far as Nadīrān. Another possibility is that Imru'1-Ḳais had been with Shāpūr II's troops. The former took the direction of Nadīrān and after Shāpūr had finished his military activity in Arabia, he appointed Imru'1-Ḳais as a king of the whole Arab. This appointment of Imru'1-Ḳais is more likely to have been approved by the Roman Empire.

Asad

Imru'1-Ḳais, the king of the whole Arabs had first subdued the Asadāin (the two Asads),⁽¹⁾ the Nizār, Madhhidj and Ma'add. Here, as Caskel⁽²⁾ points out, the dual a potiori may well have been chosen in order to erase, together with the name the memory of the Tanūkh rule, whose kings had preceded the Lakhm in Hīra. It is not clear what this term is based on - possibly some relationship. But the Arab genealogists say that the core of the Tanūkh arose from the Asad.⁽³⁾

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1. cf. M. Höfner, "Die Beduinen...", L'Antica società Beduina, Rome (1959), p.59, who makes the two Asads, Asad and Tanūkh.
 2. E.I.⁽²⁾ s.v. "Asad".
 3. Ibn Ḥazm, p.453.

Ibn Ḥazm⁽¹⁾ mentions that Asad b. Wabra, from Ḳuḏā'a, was Tanūkh. So it would appear that one of the Asads mentioned in the al-Namāra inscription was Tanūkh. The other Asad could be Banū Asad of Khuzaīma, the north Arabian tribes⁽²⁾ which had been dwelling in Nedjd near the two mountains, Salmā and Adjā, before this country became the home of the Ṭai'.⁽³⁾

Nizār

It is difficult to limit the tribe Nizār. According to the Arab genealogical system, Nizār b. Ma'add was the common ancestor of a great many Arab tribes of the north.⁽⁴⁾

The tradition has more to say about his four sons Muḏar, Rabī'a, Iyād and Anmār.⁽⁵⁾ As Robertson Smith showed about eighty years ago,⁽⁶⁾ and as Goldziher has confirmed by numerous quotations,⁽⁷⁾ the name Nizār only

1. Ibn Ḥazm, p.453.

2. cf. Ibid, p.11.

3. Ḳalkaḡhandī, Nihāyat, p.37.

4. cf. Caskel, Ġamharat, I, plate 1.

5. Ibn Ḥazm, p.10.

6. Smith, Kinship and Marriage, p.5.

7. Goldziher, Muslim Studies, I, p.78 ff.

appears late in Arab poetry.⁽¹⁾ But in the al-Namāra inscription both of them are mentioned. The main question presenting itself here is why Nizār was mentioned with Ma'add in the same inscription while the Arabs had made Nizār son of Ma'add. It seems that the Nizār tribe had no relative connection at that time but later on Nizār entered into an alliance with Ma'add or vice-versa and the genealogists have made Nizār son of Ma'add whilst it appears in the rise of Islām that Ma'add had been a large confederation, as we shall see below.

However, the application of the term Nizār continued to remain vague, more so than those of Kaīs, Muḍar and Rabī'a which represent very large groups but more precise than that of Ma'add of which it tends to take the place.

We are also in the midst of an important tradition in Ibn Ḥazm⁽²⁾ which says that Tanūkh had been three groups; Asad b. Wabra, Nizār and al-Aḥlāf⁽³⁾ [the alliance]

1. Ibn Sallām, Ṭabaqāt, p.5, points out that Nizār's name was almost unknown in ancient poetry. cf. Ibn 'Abd al-Bar, al-Inbāh 'ala Ḳabā'il al-Ruwāt, p.48.

2. Ibn Ḥazm, p.453.

3. Ḳalkashandī, Nihāyat, p.189 makes al-Aḥlāf: Asad and 'Affān.

Asad b. Wabra is most probably the Asad mentioned in the al-Namara inscription. Nizār in Ibn Hazm's tradition would be the same Nizār as in the above-mentioned inscription. This Nizār according to Ibn Ḥazm was called also Lawṭh "لَوْثٌ", and they were not descended from Nizār, but were branches from Ḥudā'a, and from Banū al-Tha'lab.⁽¹⁾ However if we accept that Nizār was from Tanūkh and the two Asads also were from Tanūkh, it is most probable that they were living in east Arabia, or that their territories lay from south 'Irāq to al-Bahraīn, which Ibn al-Kalbī makes the homeland of Tanūkh.⁽²⁾

Ma'add

Imru'l-Ḳais had also taken Ma'add under his control, but it is not clear whether Nizarites and Asad here are part of Ma'add or whether they have their individual identities. It has already been mentioned that according to the Arab tradition Nizār and Asad b. Khuzaima were descended from Ma'add.⁽³⁾ However it is not easy to trace what tribes Ma'add consisted of.

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1. Ibid.
 2. Ṭabarī, I, p.746.
 3. See Ibn Ḥazm, p.9.

Ma•add is mentioned in South Arabian inscriptions and the region of Ma•add had been under the sovereignty of the Himyarite kings.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, one should give some account of it.

Ma•add b. •Adnān occurs as father of the North Arabian tribes in the genealogies. Ma•add occurs also in many places in pre-Islamic poetry, to mean "a group of tribes". •Amr b. Kulthūm [d. about 584] speaks of tribes from the Ma•add group "القبايل من معدّ"⁽²⁾ and a clan from Ma•add⁽³⁾ "هي من معدّ". The words "قبائل" and "هي" are indications that the term Ma•add was applied to more than one tribe. It is used as a collective noun in the words of al-A•shā [183/702] about the battle of Dhū Kār between the tribe Bakr and the Persians.⁽⁴⁾

لو أن كل معدّ كان شاركنا
فيا يوم ذي قارى ما خطأ لهم الشرفا

Had the whole Ma•add shared with us
the battle of Dhū Kār, honour would
not have missed them.

1. See Ry 509, 506.

2. Tibrīzī, p.121; Al-Anbārī, p.417.

3. Aghānī, XI, p.58 (Cairo ed.); Sharh Dīwān Zuhair, p.106.

4. Dīwān al-A•shā, London, 1928, p.21; •Ikd, IV, p.27.

The name is used in so many places in pre-Islamic and Islamic poetry,⁽¹⁾ but is never mentioned in the Traditions.

ʿAdnān figures only rarely in ancient tradition, at least as far as the available records indicate. His immediate offspring, the patriarchs of the Northern Arabs, are well accounted for in pre-Islamic poetry: his son Maʿadd, his grandson Nizār,⁽²⁾ the latter's two sons Muḍar and Rabīʿa,⁽³⁾ Muḍar's son Ḳais ʿAilān,⁽⁴⁾ and so forth. Again, at the time of Muḥammad and long before his time, reference to the great Arab tribes of the North - Bakr, Taghlib, Tamīm, Hawāzin, Ḡhaṭafān, Asad Kināna and many others - is exceedingly common, although at that time those tribes no longer actually existed as units. Instead each of them had long since been separated into numerous

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1. Sharḥ Dīwān Zuhair b. Abī Sulmā, pp.108-109; Al-Aṣmaʿī, Al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt, p.158; Labīd, p.257; Dīwān ʿAmir b. Tufail al-Ṭufail, p.130. See also, I. Goldziher, Muslim Studies, I, p.8, No.2. For the use of Maʿadd in Islamic poetry see Ibn al-Muʿtaz, Ṭabaqāt..., p.222; 224; 298; Dīwān Ḥassān, p.1; 47; 89.
 2. Caskel, W., Ḡamharat..., I. Plate I; Ibn Ḥazm, p.10.
 3. Ibn Ḥazm, p.10.
 4. Ḳalkashandī, Ḳalāʿid..., p.110.

sub-tribes, each sub-tribe into many branches, each branch into a variety of clans, with all these divisions bearing names of their own. Yet in their songs and traditions, the Arab of the 6th and 7th centuries of the Christian era, cling to their tribal genealogical nomenclature, and names such as Banū Bakr, Banū Tamīm, Banū Asad, always in reference to the same combination of respective groups, prevail throughout the peninsula. What is more, the same unanimity prevails, in song and tradition, with regard to the sons of Wā'il Asad and Kināna sons of Khuzaima,⁽¹⁾ Hawāzin and Ghaṭafān as the offspring of Ḳaīs • Aīlān,⁽²⁾ and so forth. A few examples may here suffice to illustrate the terms of reference as regards tribal and inter-tribal genealogy that prevailed during the century preceding the rise of Islām.

Tradition relates how at a contest of Arab chieftains held at the court of the renowned king of Ḥīra, al-Mundhir b. Ma'ad al-Samā', the latter opened the debate by bringing forth two pieces of precious cloth, saying that he would give them to the chieftain who could prove that his clan was of more noble status than that of anyone present.

1. Ibn Ḥazm, p.11.

2. Ibid, p.468; 482.

The contest is said to have been won by a Tamīmite of the branch of Bahdala named ʿĀmir b. Uḡāimīr. To prove the greater nobility of his group, it is said, he offered the following succession of ancestors down to his own generation: Maʿadd, Nizār, Muḡar, Khindif, Tamīm, Saʿd, Kaʿb, ʿĀuf, Bahdala. By the silence that followed this recital, the king realized that indeed none of the Arab chieftains present could boast of equally glorious achievements of his ancestors on the field of battle.⁽¹⁾

Labīd lends expression to the overall division of the northern Arab into two genealogical twins of Muḡar and Rabīʿa, and to their being the two offspring of Nizār.⁽²⁾ On another occasion he refers to the belief that no other descendants were left of the northern Arabs except those of ʿAdnān and Maʿadd;⁽³⁾ while his cousin ʿĀmir b. al-Ṭufāil even refers to Kaḡṭān as the eponymous hero of the Southern Arab.⁽⁴⁾

The term Maʿadd on the other hand is not a geographical term but an epithet applied in a general way to Nomadic tribes in Tihāma and Nedj. It appears, therefore,

1. Al-Marzūkī, Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsa, IV, p.1668.

2. Labīd, p.213.

3. Ibid, p.255.

4. Dīwān ʿĀmir b. aṭ-Ṭufāil, p.159.

that the genealogical theory was conceived on the basis of the old distinction between Himyarites and Ma'addis.⁽¹⁾ As such it may be taken as a legitimate continuation of a pre-Islamic concept. But to connect the entire Arabs with this regional concept can hardly be taken as anything but the work of imagination of Muslim genealogists. This seems to be the reason why we meet with a great difference of opinion as regards the tribes whose homelands were outside the geographical division. If such tribes were already connected with one side or the other at the advent of Islām, it would have been difficult for one section to claim any member of the other section. The main controversy is about Ghassān, Lakhm and Qudā'a.⁽²⁾

Thus, it is clear that there is no indication that in old times Ma'add was a genealogical term; it became so because tribes were organised on the principle of blood, to seek to establish real or fictitious bonds of blood, to cement every political alliance; and thus all the traditions of political alliance were ultimately translated into the language of kinship. However, we do not

1. cf. Ishtikāq, p.151; Ḥamza, p.140, mentions "أمة معدة".
Ṭabarī, I, p.881, mentions "بنو معدة" see also Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.105; 551.

2. Hajj, p.12.

know which tribes came under Ma'add⁽¹⁾ nor can we define the nature of the association from the study of pre-Islamic poetry alone.

The term Ma'add appears to have been applied in a general way to the bedouin⁽²⁾ tribes of Central Arabia as distinct from the relatively more sophisticated people of al-Yaman and Al-Shām.⁽³⁾ The word is said to be etymologically derived from the root تَعَدَد⁽⁴⁾ meaning "seeking more space and pasture", i.e. in the adjacent lands of al-Yamāma and Masharif al-Shām. Some proceeded as far as al-Bahraīn.⁽⁵⁾ The branch who moved to

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1. Kudā'a is said to be from Ma'add, see Ibn Ḥazm, p.8. Balī and Bahra are of Ma'add, Bakrī, p.19. Kalb is called Ma'addite in verses quoted by Bakrī, p.56 and Yāqūt, IV, p.129. When however one finds that Ghassan is also reckoned to be from Ma'add in Yāqūt's form of these verses, see also Ibn Ḥazm, p.10; And that Sakūn and Sakasik and indeed the Kinda generally, were sometimes called sons of Ma'add, see, W.R. Smith, Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia. p.284. Khath'am and Badjila is mentioned from Nizar b. Ma'add, cf. Ibn Ḥazm, p.10.
 2. See Ishtikāq, p.30; Tādj, II, p.503; Lisān, IV, p.44.
 3. Hajj, p.13.
 4. Ishtikāq, p.30.
 5. Ṭabarī, I, p.745.

التعدد: تمام الندة والقبيلة

Maghārif al-Shām were, according to most of the authorities, Ḳuḍā'a,⁽¹⁾ whom Ibn al-Kalbī here includes in Ma'add. The other branches of Ma'add must then have been among those who moved to the adjacent lands of al-Yaman. If their movement brought them in the end to al-Baḥraīn then it is reasonable to suppose that they moved as far as that place by crossing the intervening land of al-Ḥidjāz and Nedjd. According to a tradition on the authority of Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī from his father, the tribes of Ma'add, even when still in Tihāma, extended into parts of Nedjd and Ḥidjāz, to become their respective homelands.⁽²⁾

It is significant that the Ma'add in the Namāra inscription have not their own king while Nizār and the two Asads have. The reason for this is probably that Ma'add were groups of small tribes and it was difficult for them to appoint a king from themselves, or it is also likely that they lived as Bedouin and as it has been said the Bedouin never used the title of king in pre-Islamic times.

1. About the homelands of Ḳuḍā'a and the dispute over its genealogy see al-Hamdānī, Iklīl, I, pp.180-90. E.I.⁽¹⁾ s.v. "Ḳuḍā'a".
2. Bakrī, pp.17-18; 45; see also, Djazīrat, p.46.

Madhḥidj

Imru'1-Ḳais is said to have put Madhḥidj to flight and to have drawn near Madjirān. Madhḥidj is said to be an Arab tribe of South Arabia, descended in the fourth generation from Ḳaḥṭān. It is also said that Sa'd al-ʿAshīra, Djald, Yuḥābir [Murād b. Madhḥidj] and Zaid [ʿAns b. Madhḥidj], were sons of Madhḥidj.⁽¹⁾ Their land is said to be Tathlīth,⁽²⁾ Nadīrān,⁽³⁾ Bainūn,⁽⁴⁾ [in the east of ʿAns.] and Tardjā.⁽⁵⁾

The first mention of Madhḥidj, in the available inscriptions, is in the time of ysrm/yhnʿm/wbnyhw/drʿm/ymn/mlky/sbʿ/wdrydn/wḥḍrmwt/wymnt, [Ja 665]. Madhḥidj is mentioned with Kinda and other South Arabian tribes fighting in Ḥaḍramawt. Madhḥidj is also mentioned in the time of šmr/yhrʿs/mlk/sbʿ/wdrydn/wḥḍrmwt/wymnt [Ja 660]. Here also Madhḥidj is mentioned with Kinda, both of them were with the king's troops, while the tribes Banū al-Ḥarīth b. Kaʿb and al-Nakhʿ are supposed according to the

1. Ibn Ḥazm, p.405.

2. Bakrī, p.305.

3. Ibid, p.40.

4. Ibid, p.298.

5. Ibid, p.309. For the other places see Ibid, p.421; 921.

Arab geneologists, to be from Madhhidj, were against Madhhidj.

However, it is more probable that Madhhidj in the time of Shammar Yuhr'ish had been in North Nadīrān if not in Central Arabia, after the events of the Sharafaddin inscription. But the invasion by Imru'l-Ḳais of Central Arabia had made Madhhidj flee to South Arabia. And it is also probable that they returned to their own land after the recapture or renewal of South Arabian sovereignty over Central Arabia.

It must be pointed out here that we do not know how long this invasion had taken. Unfortunately we have no materials either from the south or the north Arabian inscriptions nor from the Arab tradition about the sovereignty of South Arabia over Central Arabia between the invasion of Imru'l-Ḳais and the time of Abū Karib As'ad. And as we shall see in the next chapter Abū Karib As'ad had extended his power over most of Central Arabia and subsequently Kinda governed the Central Arabian tribes as a vassal of South Arabia.

CHAPTER TWO
THE REIGN OF ABŪ KARIB ASʿAD

CHAPTER TWO

Malkikarib Yuha'min

Before the publication of the book Sabaeen Inscriptions from Maḥram Bilqis (Mārib) by A. Jamme, we did not know the name of Malkikarib Yuha'min's father. We now know the names of the kings who preceded him since the reign of Shammar Yuhar'ish. Many scholars had thought that the period between 340-375 had been one of Abyssinian domination, but now it is difficult to accept this hypothesis,⁽¹⁾ since this period is now known to be covered probably by the reigns of four kings.⁽²⁾

Malkikarib's name is mentioned with his father in Ja 669/28 as mlkkrb, in Ja 671/22 as mlkkrb/y'mn, and in Ja 670/23 as mlkkrb/yh'mn. We also find the last form

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1. cf. Philby, Background..., pp.112-15. H. von Wissmann, "Ḥimyar...", Le Muséon, LXXVII (1964), p.490, who suggests: "Anyhow, it is probable that at least parts of South Arabia were occupied by 'Ēzānā...". For the Abyssinians in South Arabia, see A.K. Irvine, "On the Identity...", JSS, X (1965), pp.178-196.
 2. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions... p.386. See Ja 656-671.

mentioned with his son ʿbkrb/ʿsʿd in Fakhry 60 (= Ja 856). His name is mentioned in Ry 509/3 as h̄sn/mlkkrb/yhʿmn. Unfortunately, his name is not clear in Gl 389 (= RES 3383). J.M. Solá Solé reconstructed it as m(l)kk[r](b)/(y)h[ʿ]mn⁽¹⁾

Gl 389 is the only inscription we have which specifically mentions Malkikarib Yuhaʿmin, obviously as the senior king or as a sovereign king. His two sons ʿbkrb/ʿsʿd and rʿ(d)mr/ʿymn are also mentioned in this inscription.

Glaser,⁽²⁾ who first published the translation of the inscription, unfortunately did not publish the original text. RES 3383 also gives Glaser's translation without the original text. Recently, J.M. Solá Solé⁽³⁾ published the original text, which runs as follows:

1. m(l)kk[r](b)/(y)h[ʿ]mn/wbnyhw/ʿbkrb/ʿsʿd/wrʿ(d)mr/ʿymn/ʿmlk/sbʿ/w
2. drydn/wḥḍrḥwt/wymnt/br ʿw/whwtrn/whqwh/whsq

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1. J. M. Solá Solé, "La Inscripción Gl 389...", Le Muséon, LXXII (1959), p.198.
 2. E. Glaser, Skizze der Geschichte und Geographie Arabiens, I, p.12.
 3. J. M. Solá Solé, Ibid, p.197-206.

3. rn/bythmw/swḥṭn/bn/mw trhw/•dy/tfr•hw/bmqm/m
4. r•hmw/mr•sm̄y/wrḥhw/(d)d•w[n/](b)hryfn/(ḥd̄)tl̄t(t)/
wts•y/w•rb•m•[tm]

"M(L)KK[R](B) (Y)H[•]MN and his two sons •BKRB •S•D and R•(D)MR •YMN kings of SB and DRYDN and HDRMWT and YMNT, built and founded and established and provided with a roof their house ŠWḤṬN from its foundation to its high part with the power of the lord MR•SMY, in the month (D)D•W[N] in the year 493."

G1 823 mentions Malkikarib, but the actual contents of this inscription are still unknown.⁽¹⁾

G1 389 is important in the study of the later Sabaeen history. Firstly, because it mentions the date of the inscription; secondly, the inscription mentions only one god mr•/sm̄y; "the lord of heaven";⁽²⁾ and that indicates the step from polytheism to monotheism.⁽³⁾

Solá Solé thinks that mr•/sm̄y, which is mentioned in G1 389, was dsm̄y, the god of the pagan period, and this

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1. For a discussion of G1 823, see Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions..., p.386.
 2. cf. G. Ryckmans, "Heaven and Earth in South Arabian inscriptions", JSS, III (1958), pp.225-36.
 3. Idem, "Chronologie sabéenne", CRAIBL, (1943), pp.236-46.

means that the worship of mr°/sm̄y here marks the step from polytheism to monotheism.⁽¹⁾ Jamme, however,⁽²⁾ wonders why the kings called that place šwh̄ṭn, an appellation so close to šwh̄ṭn, which is the name of a temple dedicated to ʾIlumkuh and mentioned during the reigns of the last three kings of Fari°um Yanhub's dynasty (in Ja 618/33, Ja 627/28-29, and Ja 628/28).

We have to bear in mind, however, that Malkikarib Yuha°min is attested, along with his father ṭ°rn/yhn°m in Ja 669, 670 and 671 - three inscriptions dedicated to ʾlmqhb°l°wm by officers of the king.

MR°/SMY here does not mean that King Malkikarib had adopted a pure monotheism nor that he had adopted Judaism,⁽³⁾ because the god DSMWY is described as ʾlh/°mrm in no less than seven inscriptions, and for a long time it was accepted that °mrm here referred to a tribe or group of people.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Solá Solé, "La Inscripción...", Le Muséon, LXXII (1959), pp.203-204.
 2. A. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions..., p.386.
 3. cf. Philby, Background, p.117.
 4. M. A. Ghul, "New Qalabānī inscriptions-II" BSOAS, XXII (1959), p.434.

ḥrm as Dr. Ghul points out "might have been camel owners engaged in caravan transport, exactly as their fellow-worshippers of DSMWY further north might have been".⁽¹⁾ However, it could well be that from the time of Malkikarib the worship of mr³/smv was adopted by the Himyarite kings.

According to Ibn Ishāq⁽²⁾ and Hishām b. Muḥammad al-Kalbī,⁽³⁾ one of the kings of Himyar had become a convert to Judaism through the influence of two Rabbis of Madīna. These accounts contain a number of purely legendary elements, but possibly the story of the king's conversion to Judaism may be based on the fact that there were Himyarite rulers who seem to have been neither Jews nor Christians.

We do not learn much more about Malkikarib from the inscription Gl 389, and the inscriptions which mention him with his father do not mention his political or military activities. Arabic literary sources are no more enlightening. They are, indeed, confused when they speak about him, so it is difficult to accept Arab accounts as historical evidence.



- 1. Ibid, p.436.
- 2. Guillaume, p.7.
- 3. Ṭabarī, I, p.901.

Some Arab sources⁽¹⁾ mention him as a weak king who did not want to extend his dominion; while other Arab sources⁽²⁾ make him a great king whose troops reached India and China, but we have absolutely no historical evidence about such enterprises.

It is reasonably certain that his dominion was only that which he had inherited from his ancestors,⁽³⁾ and that he did not succeed in expanding it. The evidence which we have about an expansion in the dominions of the South Arabian kings is first associated with the name of his son, Abū Karib As'ad.

Abū Karib As'ad:

Abū Karib As'ad's name is mentioned in RES 3383, (Gl 389) together with his father and his brother r'(d)mr/ymn, in the year 493 of the Sabaean era. He is mentioned again in Ry 534, obviously as the senior king or sole sovereign, with his two sons, ḥs[n]yh'mn and srḥb'l/y'fr, in the year 543 of the same era. He must have been a fairly young man in the year 493. Even if

1. 'Uba'id, p.439; Ma'arīf, p.631; Mulūk, pp.117-18; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.98; Nuwa'irī, XV, p.297.

2. Dīnawarī, pp.30-31; Mas'ūdī, I, p.194.

3. Mulūk, p.118.

he had died on octogenarian, it is safe to put his date of birth at somewhere near 470 of the Sabaeen era. His reign lasted, as Von Wissmann points out, more than 55 years, probably 60 years or more.⁽¹⁾

According to the inscriptions, his name is °bkrb/°s°d.⁽²⁾ In Gl 389 (= RES 3383), he and his brother are mentioned together with their father mlkkrb/y°hmn, who is styled mlk/sb°/w°drydn/w°h°rmwt/wymnt; whereas Abū Karib As°ad in Ry 509 is given additional titles, namely, king of sb°/w°drydn/w°h°rmwt/wymnt/w°°rb/twd/wthmt.

In Ry 509, Abū Karib As°ad is shown in joint occupation of the throne with his son, h°sn/yh°mn. In yet another inscription [RES 4105], which is defective, and is restored by J. Ryckmans,⁽³⁾ Abū Karib As°ad [wbn]hw šrhb°l/y°fr are mentioned without Ḥassān. In Ry 534, šrhb°l/y°fr is mentioned after h°s[n/yh°mn], but in Fakhr̄y 60 šrhb°l/y°fr is mentioned before h°sn/yh°mn.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Von Wissmann, "Ḥimyar...", Le Muséon, LXXVII (1964), p.492.
 2. See RES 3383; Fakhr̄y 60; Ry 509; Ry 534.
 3. cf. Institution, pp.222.
 4. For another interpretation of Fakhr̄y 60, see Jamme, "Later Sabaeen inscription Ja 856", B10, XVII (1960), pp.3-5.

We have no historical information about the number or powers of the co-regents, so what has been said of them is purely hypothetical. As J. Ryckmans⁽¹⁾ points out, the South Arabian Kingdom was centralized, so it is unlikely that three, or sometimes even seven sons shared the sovereignty with their father. We have to bear in mind, however, that mention of the king's son [or sons] in the inscriptions does not mean that his son [or sons] was co-regent or shared his father's power, but, as Dr. Ghul points out, one can infer from the lack of clarity about this in the inscriptions that the title "King" in such a case meant primarily that the person thus designated was of princely descent, the title being used publicly to apply to those members of the ruling family circle, or the reigning family, who, on the strength of either certain hereditary rights within the family circle, or the force of their own abilities, had some public duties delegated to them.⁽²⁾ The relationship of these kings to the sovereign would be a family matter; the sons would decide whether they were prepared to accept their father as a superior or monarch, or merely give him nominal

1. J. Ryckmans, "Les Corégents du roi himyarite Abūkarib As'ad" RSO, XXXVII (1962), p.249.

2. M. A. Ghul, "New Qatabāni inscriptions-I", BSOAS, XXII (1959), p.10.

collaboration only,⁽¹⁾ because it is unlikely that three or seven sons would share in their father's sovereignty.⁽²⁾

The enlarged title:

(a) ʿrb:

According to Ry 509, Abū Karib Asʿad's enlargement of title reads: ʿrb/ṭwd/wthmt.⁽³⁾ ʿrb here belongs to ṭwd and thmt. As we shall see below, the ʿrb existed in South Arabia long before the time of Abū Karib Asʿad.

For the origin and early development of the term ʿrb or ʿrb we should first study the ancient inscriptions and classical sources. The first unmistakable reference

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1. J. Ryckmans, Ibid., p.250.
 2. cf. Institution, p.213. H. Von Wissmann, "Himyar...", Le Muséon, LXXVII (1964), p.492 who accepted the reading of J. Ryckmans in Ry 534 and Rossi 24, that Abū Karib reigned with six or seven sons. See J. Ryckmans, Ibid, pp.244-46. But from Rossi 20 (= Ja 521), one is not able to reconstruct the inscription as J. Ryckmans does in his above article: see A.Jamme, "Inscriptions sud-arabes de la collection Ettore Rossi", RSO, XXX (1955), p.118.
 3. Ry 506 mentions ʿrb/ṭwd/wthmt. ʿrb here belongs to ṭwd and thmt, while the word ʿrbhmw in both Fakhry 60 and Ry 534 is a reconstruction, so it should read ʿrb. Later on we find wʿrbhmw in the king's title; see RY 510, 506, CIH 540, 541.

to the Arab as such occurs in an inscription of the Assyrian⁽¹⁾ Shalmaneser III which reads:

"Karbar, his royal city, I destroyed, I devastated, I burned with fire. 1,200 cavalry, 20,000 soldiers of Hadad-esser, of Aram (? Damascus)...1,000 camels of Gindibu', the Arabian..."

It seems very appropriate, incidentally, that the name of the first Arab in recorded history should be associated with camels.

Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.E.), in the third year of his reign, exacted tribute from Zabibi, queen of the "Aribi" land. In the ninth year he conquered another queen of Aribia, Sami by name. The Mas'ai tribe of the city of Temai [Taymā'] and the Sab'ai [Sabaeans] sent him tribute of gold, camels and spices.⁽²⁾

Sargon II⁽³⁾ [722-705 B.C.E.] received objects of gold from Samsi, queen of Arabia, It'amora [Yith'i-amara), the Sabaeen chief, and other kings of Egypt and the desert.

1. D. D. Luckenbill, Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia, I, p.223, No.611.

2. D. Nielsen, Handbuch der altarabischen Altertumskunde. I, Die altarabische Kultur, (Copenhagen, 1927), p.65.

3. See Hitti, History..., p.39.

It should be noted here that the word "Arab" in the Assyrian records refers to the inhabitants of North Arabia, whereas those of South Arabia are usually referred to as Sabaeans. Secondly, there is justification for the view—that "Arab" here means not only the bedouin, but also the settled population.

The Ancient Greeks and Romans, of course, were familiar with Arabia and the Arabians. The classical writers divided the land into Arabia Petraea, Arabia Deserta and Arabia Felix, corresponding to the tripartite political divisions of the land in the first century of the Christian era. Arabia Petraea ["the rocky"] centred on Sinai and the Nabataean kingdom, having Petra for its capital, came under the power of Rome. The second area, Arabia Deserta [or Arabia Eremos, in Greek]⁽¹⁾ included the Syro-Mesopotamian desert [the Bādiya]; whilst Arabia Felix, comprising the rest of the Arabian peninsula, was independent.⁽²⁾

The first mention of the Arabians in Greek literature was made by Aeschylus [525-456 B.C.E.], the reference

1. Musil, Arabia Deserta. p.497.

2. E.I.⁽¹⁾ s.v. "Yemen", cf. Musil, Arabia Deserta. pp.497-98.

being to a distinguished Arabian officer in the army of Xerxes. Herodotus [ca. 484-455 B.C.E.] followed with a reference to the Arabians in Xerxes' army, who were evidently from eastern Egypt.⁽¹⁾

Marcian of Heraclea (ca. C.E. 400) used the term "Saraceni". Before Marcian, Ptolemy, who flourished in the middle of the second century of our era, refers to the Saracens. Ammianus Marcellinus, a native of Antioch, who wrote in the latter half of the fourth century of the Christian era, identifies the Saracens with the Scenite Arabs.⁽²⁾

The Şafaitic and Thamūdic inscriptions and drawings are proof which mainly originates from the bedouin themselves.⁽³⁾ It is worthy of note that, although the Şafa and Thamūd inscriptions mainly stem from the bedouin, there is no mention in them of the word "ʿarab".

Among the Arabic texts, we are, above all, concerned with the al-Namāra inscription, or the inscription⁽⁴⁾ on

1. Hitti, History, p.44.

2. Ibid, p.44.

3. Musil, Northern Negd, p.313; A. Van Den Branden, Les Inscriptions Thamoudéennes, p.7.

4. RES 483.

the tomb of Imru'el-Ḳaīs, who is called "King of the whole 'arabs" and about whom we are told that he subdued the two Asads, Nizār and Ma'add, and defeated Madhḥidj. This inscription is dated circa 328 C.E. Here 'arab meant either the tribes of Bādiyāt al-Shām and the north (= "Arabi" of the Assyrian records) together with the tribes claimed to have been conquered, or, only the latter, i.e. the tribes conquered.

One can also find the name Arrhabitai (A'rab) in the Monumentum Adulitanum, erected by the great Abyssinian [Aksūm] king. In the Greek version of the text there is an account of the submission of the Ḥidjāz and 'Asīr, north of the Sabaean and south of the Roman frontiers.⁽¹⁾ According to Ptolemy, the Arrhabitai Kinaidokolpitai apparently lived on the coast of the Ḥidjāz and 'Asīr.⁽²⁾

This inscription belongs to an unknown king of Aksum, who left^a fragmentary triumphal inscription now called the "Monumentum Adulitanum". The unknown king says: "I sent a naval and land force across the Red Sea against the Arrhabitai and Kinaidokolpitai dwelling there, and imposed

1. E.I.⁽²⁾ s.v. "Badw".

2. Ibid.

taxes on their kings. I order them to be tributary for their land and to go by road or to sail peacefully. I made war from Leukē Kōmē to the Sabaeans' country."⁽¹⁾

Sidney Smith comments on this statement by saying that the region conquered was the pirate coast of ^{the} 'Periplus'.⁽²⁾ In the footnote no.5 on page 454 he says, "The Kinaidokolpital, men of Rogues' Gulf, correspond to the Kanraitai", the name given to the people of the region of ^{the} 'Periplus'. Conti Rossini⁽³⁾ connected this inscription with Aphilas, about the end of the third century. Glaser insists in more than one place that the kings of Aksum were always acting in close collaboration with the Romans and therefore interprets the Aksumite invasion as something to do with the interest of the Romans in the security of Arabia, either against the growing power of native central Arabian powers like the tribe of Kinda, or more precisely, the Kinaidokolpital,⁽⁴⁾ or in order to counterbalance the influence of the friendship between South Arabia and the Persians, the enemies of the Romans. He therefore suggests that the non-interference of this king with the Roman boundaries, since he did not proceed further north than Leukē Kōmē, shows that the campaign must have been made with the connivance of the Romans.⁽⁵⁾

1. Smith, p.455.

2. Ibid.

3. Rossini, Storia d'Etiopia, p.129.

4. Glaser, Skizze, II, p.234. 5. Idem, Die Abessener, p.150

He also maintains that the inscription belongs to the end (1) of the third century, during the reign of Shammar Yuhar'ish; It is clear from this inscription that the campaign was against the western coastland of Central Arabia and not South Arabia proper, the kingdom of the Sabaeans. It is not possible therefore to link it with the illegal Abyssinian occupation of South Arabia in the fourth century, or, at least, that cannot be inferred from it. It seems from the wording of the inscription in this connection that the safety of the land and sea routes was the main preoccupation of the king. If the campaign was in any way undertaken with the connivance or the encouragement of the Romans, then one should look for a time when the safety of such routes was endangered and the Romans were not able to defend them adequately. Such an epoch would fit with the period during the first half of the 3rd century which culminated with the disastrous situation in the East under Valerian and his son Gallienus, who reigned from 253 to 268. An Aksumite king might have acted then on the western coastland of Arabia, but only before Palmyra was able to build her caravan empire. It is even possible to suggest that the close relations between Palmyra and the

1. Ibid.

central Arabian states or communities might have been given a stimulus through the desire of those communities to get rid of any Aksumite domination or interference. But if the inscription is definitely to be placed around the end of the 3rd century, one can only suggest that the campaign might have been undertaken, on the instance of the Romans, to forestall any recurrence of political trouble on the trade-routes and to control those lands which had been controlled through the Palmyrene presence but which were too far away for the Romans themselves to control. In that case the restlessness which the Abyssinian campaign might have caused in Central Arabia might have been the reason why the South Arabian kings conquered those lands, although the campaign itself seems to have been carried out without conflict with South Arabia.⁽¹⁾ Other scholars suggest a time in the first half of the second century C.E. as the time of this Aksumite invasion.⁽²⁾

The Ḳurʿān mentions ʿaʿrāb ten times, but never ʿarab; however the genitilic form ʿarabī is used twelve times as an epithet of the Ḳurʿān or the language of the Ḳurʿān.

1. Institution, p.310; cf. also, Glaser, Skizze, II, p.234.

2. cf. Von Wissmann, De Mari Erythraes, p.317, and n.92; E.I.⁽²⁾ "Badw".

ʿaʿrāb in the Ḳurʿān has always been taken to mean the Bedouin, as is obvious from the Ḳurʿānic commentators. According to al-Ṭabarī, in the verse: "And those among the ʿaʿrāb, who had an excuse came in order that permission might be granted them." [Ḳurʿān IX, 90], the word ʿaʿrāb refers to the tribe Banū Ghifār.⁽¹⁾ In the verse: "The ʿaʿrāb say: We believe. Say (unto them, O Muḥammad): Ye believe not, but rather say 'We submit', for the faith hath not yet entered into your hearts...." [Ḳurʿān XLIX, 14], Ṭabarī says that the word ʿaʿrāb refers to the tribe Banū Asad b. Khuzaīma.⁽²⁾ And in the verse: "Those of the ʿaʿrāb who were left behind will tell thee: Our possessions and our households occupied us, so ask forgiveness for us! They speak with their tongues that which is not in their hearts..." [Ḳurʿān, XLVIII, II], ʿaʿrāb refers to the tribes Djuhina and Muzina.⁽³⁾ Ṭabarī also points out that the word ʿaʿrāb means Bedouin (أهل البویر),⁽⁴⁾ while the word ʿarab refers to the settled population [أهل المصر];⁽⁵⁾ so

1. Tafsīr, X, p.209, citing Mudjahid. 2. Ibid, XXV, p.141.

3. Ibid, XXVI, pp.76-77, see also Wahidī, Asbāb, p.225.

4. Tafsīr, I, pp.293-294; Ibid, XXI, p.143 "أهل البادية"

5. Ibid, XXI, p.142.

that it is clear from the Qur^ānic commentators that the word ʿa^ḥrāb means "bedouin".

It is significant to see that, on the whole, all the verses of the Qur^ān describe the ʿa^ḥrāb as an unfaithful people who have always created trouble for Muḥammad.

The early classical-Arab dictionaries give us the two forms: ʿarab and ʿa^ḥrāb and tell us that the latter meant Bedouin, while the former was used for the settled population, or the Arab nation. This distinction, if it is authentic - and there is much in the early dictionaries that has a purely lexicographical validity - must date from the period of the compilation of the lexica.⁽¹⁾

In all the cases where ʿa^ḥrāb occurs in the concordance, a check with the fuller texts of the original works reveals that ʿa^ḥrāb as used there in ḥadīth always referred to the bedouin.

In Muḥammad's time, Muslims used to ask God to save them from becoming Bedouin (ta^ḥrrūb). This attitude

1. Ibn Sīda, al-Muḥkam, II, p.90; al Zandjānī, Tahdhīb, I, p.75 "والرؤاي اذا قيل له يا عربي فخرج بذلك وهشأ له والعربي اذا قيل له يا عربي عفا له" see, Lisān, XI, pp.75-76; Tadī, I, p.371; al-Djauharī, al-Ṣiḥāh, I, pp.178-79.

probably arose at the beginning of the Islāmic period, when Muḥammad's government was anxious to have every Muslim convert come and settle in Madīna and fight in the Muslim army. Muḥammad, therefore, stipulated that every Muslim should live in Madīna.

Until the conquest of Mecca, it was clear that only residence at Yathrib [Madīna] could qualify one for full acceptance as a Muslim into the Islamic community,⁽¹⁾ but afterwards the situation changed. However, even in the period before the conquest of Mecca, the word hidjra had been broadly interpreted. When the tribes 'Ukl and 'Uraīna said to the prophet: "We are people used to the udders of our camels, we are not people of the clod, and Madīna is uncomfortable for us, and life here does not become us", the Prophet then gave them a herd, placed a herder at their disposal and permitted them to leave Madīna and return in peace to their accustomed form of life.⁽²⁾

1. Ibn Ḥanbal, Misnad, II, p.522. Iklīl, I, pp.166-67

mentions:

” عن عقبة بن عامر الجهني قال: بلغني قدوم رسول الله ﷺ، فقدمت عليه، فقلت له: يا رسول الله! يا يعني فقال: ابيعة أمرا بية أم ببيعة هجرية؟ فقلت له: بل ببيعة هجرية يا يعني “

2. Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, Kitāb al-Diyāt, I, p.12, citing Anas b. Mālik; Ibid, VII, Kitāb al-Ṭibb, citing Anas b. Mālik, p.168, see also Al-Wahidī, Asbāb..., p.111.

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Some of the Bedouin around Madīna accepted Islam and wanted to move there so that they could qualify as full members of the community, but the native population, who were apparently feeling swamped by the presence of the muhadjirūn from Mecca, complained to the Prophet about the proposed move. So the Prophet ruled that they could consider their original domicile as dar hidjra, and thus they were not considered as ʿaʿrāb.⁽¹⁾ This seems to have implied that they accepted the administrative jurisdiction of the Prophet and the Muslim community of Madīna over their affairs. The main outcome of this acceptance was the fact that they were ready to fight on the side of the Muslims whenever they were required to do so, and not merely when their defence required it. It is said in a tradition that ʿĀʾiṣḥa, the Prophet's favourite wife, referred to these people as ʿaʿrāb in front of the Prophet, who replied: "They are not ʿaʿrāb; they are the people of our countryside, ʿahl bādiyatina, and we are of their town, ʿahl ḥādiratihim, and if they are summoned (to fight on our side) they obey, so they are not ʿaʿrāb."⁽²⁾

1. Ibn Saʿd, I, p.297.

2. Abū ʿUbaīd, al-Amwāl, p.219; cf. Al-Wahīdī, Asbāb, p.148.

After the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet is related to have ruled "la hidjrata ba'd al-fath": There is (no need) for settling (apparently in Yathrib) after the conquest.⁽¹⁾ The apparent sense of this tradition (or ruling) is that once a place was conquered by Muslims, annexed to their administration and brought under their jurisdiction and sovereignty, it became a legal dār hidjra.⁽²⁾ For unless this explanation alone is accepted, it is hard to show why such a ruling was still in force long after the death of the Prophet.

It must be pointed out here that it is clear from Muslim sources that being an a'rābiyya⁽³⁾ was not equivalent

1. Abū 'Uba'id, p.217.

2. It is of interest to mention that the Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb in his will asked his successor to take care of the a'rāb, because they were the origin of the 'arab and the source of Islām, see Ibn Sa'd, III, p.239.

"أوصيه بالزعراب خيراً فانهم أصل العرب ومادة الإسلام"
see also Ṭabarī, I, p.2775

"والزعراب الذين هم أصل العرب ومادة الإسلام"

3. Notice the word a'rābiyya 'bedouin behaviour' in connection with djafa' - coarseness in al-Balādhurī, Futūḥ, p.425. The Caliph 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz finds at least the spartan way of life of the Bedouin praiseworthy. "Nobody would be more similar to pious ancients than the Bedouins, were they not different from them in their coarse behaviour (djafa')", says al-Djāḥiḡ, Kitāb al-Bayān, II, p.164.

to being an inhabitant of the countryside or the desert alone. It was a legal matter. A term, ta'arraba, infinitive ta'arrub, was used for people who, after having been muhadjirun, went back to the state of 'a'rab. This act amounted to the renunciation of the Muslim authority or jurisdiction, and was thus considered a kabira.⁽¹⁾ Salama b. al-Akwa⁽²⁾ [d. 74/693] was accused of ta'arrub, because after the murder of the Caliph 'Uthman, he moved out of Madīna to Al-Rabdhā. He had to explain that the Prophet had told them that they could consider themselves muhadjirun wherever they were, because when he urged them to stay in the open country, they stated that they were afraid that this might compromise their right to be considered muhadjirin.⁽³⁾

Of special interest in this connection is the wording of a document allegedly given by Muḥammad to Kaīs b. Mālik, al-Hamdānī [d. 25/645], which runs, according to the text given in Ibn Sa'd.⁽⁴⁾

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1. Abū 'Ubaīd, al-Anwāl, p.217; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nihāya..., III, p.202; Tādj, s.v. "arb".
 2. Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ, II, p.66, Kitāb al-Fitan, Book 14; Ibn al-Athīr, al-Nihāya..., III, p.202; Abū 'Ubaīd, al-Anwāl, p.217.
 3. Abū 'Ubaīd, al-Anwāl. p.200.
 4. Ibn Sa'd, I, p.341; Ḥamidullāh, Madjmu'at..., p.153; J. Wellhausen, Skizze und Vorarbeiten, Berlin, IV (1889) =

" فكتب عمدة على قومه همدان احمورها [يعني قبائل قدام] ، وآل زي
 مزان وآل ذي لعوة ، وازواد همدان [وغربا] يعني قبائل ارحب
 منهم ، وشاكر ، ووادعة وياض ومريهة ، ودالان ، وخارفا ،
 وعذر وحمور [وخدمتها وموابيها ان يسموا له ويلطيعوا وان
 هم ذمة رسوله ... "

But there is enough reason to believe that it should
 have read *arabiha [عربا] instead of gharabiha [غربا].
 It is edited so in Nihayat al-arab.⁽¹⁾ A variation of
 the text in Ibn Hadjar⁽²⁾ gives " وهمدان عربا وموابيها وخدمتها ",
 thus leaving out واحمورها. Ibn al-Athir⁽³⁾ enters under
 this part of tradition " ملكه على عربهم وحمورهم ".⁽⁴⁾

It is clear from the names of the clans or groups of
 people classified under " عربا " and " احمورها " that there were
 two great tribal groups within the Hamdan Confederation in
 particular or within South Arabia. Himyar tribes, as we

1. (contd.) p.179 "die Ahmur und die Gharb und die Mischlinge
 und Schutzgentzgenossen".

1. Nuwairi, XVIII, p.9.

2. Ibn Hadjar, Iṣāba, V, p.264.

3. Ibn al-Athir, al-Nihaya, s.v. "Khmr".

4. For further discussion of this point see M.A. Ghul,
 "New Qatabani inscriptions", BSOAS, XXII (1959), p.14;
 cf. also Landberg, Glossaire Datinois. I, p.493, who
 also adopts the form arabiha.

have seen before, all in general had the title "الذى" (except the tribe تميم), while the tribes which belonged to the arab did not have this title. Thus, it is more than probable that the tribes with the title "الذى" had been powerful politically and their title might have been a survival, in name if not in effect, of their involvement in government and political power in independent South Arabia whose last five centuries of sovereignty under the Himyarites give all its independent past the generalised appellation of

Right from the very beginning the term arab appears in many South Arabian inscriptions.

Inscription Ja 560, which was dedicated by a certain d[ay]nwm, records the military campaign sent by ns'krb/yh'mn/mlk/sb'bn/[dmr']ly/drh, to the country of arbn; dy'rd/arbn, in order to bring back and rescue the friends who accompanied the men from the land round the city of Ma'rib.

Inscription Ja 561 bis, of the time of whb'l/yhz/mlk/sb' refers to wars between: mlk/sb'/wbny/drydn/wbkl'brt'/dyhmw/hwslw/ldrm/b'ly/dbn/arbn/b'wtn/s'bn/hsdm/wbdbn'rdt'/arbn/arb/h't'w/b'mr'hmw/mlk/sb'/wbdbn'rdt'/s'b/mlk/sb' [lines 9-14]. A. Jamme renders it: "the kings of Saba"

and the descendants of Rydān, and from all the military campaigns in which they intervened for the war against some of the Arabs on the borders of the tribe Ḥāsidum and against some of the lands of the Arabs, Arabs [who] had acted wrongfully toward their lords, the kings, and against some of the lands of the tribe of the king of Saba^o." (1)

One question, however, has to be dealt with here; the first mention of the ʿrb in the above inscriptions records that the ʿrb were involved in a struggle with the central government of South Arabia. It seems that the ʿrb had been under the government control, but revolted against it. It is also clear from Ja 560 that ʿrdt/ʿrbn (2) "the country of the Arab" is mentioned, but it is not clear where it was. Ja 561 bis also mentions ʿrdt/ʿrbn as being on the borders of ḥsdm. This would seem to imply that the ʿrb were in Northern South Arabia from that time.

The inscriptions Namī 71; 73 mention ʿrb of the King of Saba^o, ʿlhn.

” عليه / عليهن / ملك سبا / وحميبي / واغريب ملك سبا

1. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions, p.37.

2. CIH 343 also mentions ʿrd/ḥmyrn/wʿrbn.

The beginning of the inscription Ja 635 alludes to attacks on the king s^hrm/°wtr/mlk/sb°/wdrydn/bn/°lhn/nhfn/mlk/sb°, "from the south and from the north, and from the sea and the land" (bn/dymnt/wbn/ds°mt/wbn/dbh^hrm/wybsm). [lines 12-13].

This campaign is divided into four phases; ⁽¹⁾ in the first three s^hrm/°wtr is the leader and is accompanied by the author of the text, °bkrb/°hrs/bn/°blm [line 1]. In the last one, the latter is in command, with the king apparently absent. The author of the text was put in command of some of hwln/hd^hlm/wqbn/ngrn/wqbn/°°r^hbn [lines 33-34], in order to fight groups in yw[n]m and qrytm; °bkrb/°hrs fought them at the border of the country of °l°sd/mgzt/mwnhn of tml. ⁽²⁾

The inscription Ja 739 does not mention the royal name: "s°dsmsm, high official of [n^hrn/°wkn], and his brother gh^hdm/[°h^hsn], fought and made raids against the °°r^hbn in the land of m^hym/wrdm/wqtbn". [lines 9-10].

1. A. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions..., p.304.

2. The Thimala range and its well are located about 350 km. north west of °Ukh^hdud; see Philby, Arabian Highlands. pp.26; 31; 109.

Ja 758 also omits the royal name. "shmn/whm/bn/krbn/
mqtwy/nmrn/wkn/w'hyhw/ghdm/hgn/... raid the 'rbn who
were in the land rdmn/wmghym and in the warn/hr/dqtn,
"[in] the wādī-side valley [of] Qataban". [lines 9-10].

It seems that both Ja 739 and Ja 758 refer to the
same person, shmn/whm, the commander of the mqtwy, "high
official" of nmrn/wkn and his brother ghdm/hgn. The
latter two were under the command of lshh/yhdb/w'hyhw/
y'zl/byn/mlky/sb/wdrydn, as is mentioned in Ja 591/4.

Most important is the fact that the 'rbn were in
South Arabia at the time of the king lshh/yhdb. But it
must be pointed out here that of all the inscriptions
belonging to lshh/yhdb not one mentions the 'rb specifi-
cally. As we know from the inscriptions, lshh/yhdb had
been at war with hzb/hbt and dshrtm and smr/drydn and the
tribes of Himyar, s'b/hmyrm [Ja 576]. He also had led
an expedition against krb'l/drydn [Ja 578/6] and against
Nadīrān [Ja 577/8-14 and 599/2] and Ḥaḍramawt [Ja 115].⁽¹⁾
But the most important expedition was the expedition
involving mlkm/mlk/kdt/ws'bn/kdt and mr'lqs/bn/wfm/mlk/

1. Ja 115 (= RES 3884), see Jamme, "Pièces épigraphiques
sud-arabes...", Le Muséon, LXV (1952), pp.131-135.

ḥṣṣtn [Ja 576].⁽¹⁾ Although ʿlšrh/yḥḏb had been fighting tribes of Northern Nadīrān, there is no reference in these inscriptions to the ʿʿrb.

Inscription Ja 629 is one of the historical texts⁽²⁾ known to belong to the time of the king sʿdšsm/ʿsrʿ/wbnhw/mrṭdm/y[ḥḥmd]mlky/sbʿ/wdrydn/bny/ʿlšrh/yḥḏb/mlk/sbʿ/[wdry]dn. This inscription recorded the expedition of sʿdšsm/ʿsrʿ.

6. .../ʿdy/ʿrd/sʿbn/rdmn/bḏr/hštʿ/whbʿl/bn/mʿhr
7. [wd]ḥwln/whḏrmwt/wqtbn/wrdmn/wmḏḥym/wkl/ʿns/wʿʿr
8. b/kwn/kwnhmw/bʿbr/ʿmrʿhmw/ʿmlk/stʿ...

This may be rendered as follows:-

6. "...in the land of the tribe Radmān during the war brought about by Wahabʿil, descendant of Maʿāhir
7. [and of] Khawlān, and Ḥaḏramawt and Ḳatabān and Radmān and Muḏḥayum and all people and ʿʿrb
8. whoever they were against their lords the King of Saba..."

1. For ʿlšrh/yḥḏb's wars see Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions, pp.315-325; J. Pirenne, "L'Inscription Ryckmans 535....," Le Muséon, LXIX (1956), pp.165-81.

2. cf. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions..., p.341: "Ja 629 is the only historical text known to belong to the time of the coregents sʿdšsm/ʿsrʿ and his son mrṭdm/yḥḥmd". And Jamme himself published Ja 627; 628; 630, which mentioned the two of them, as in Ja 629.

The ʿrb are mentioned here unspecifically after the tribes of South Arabia, and after the unspecific mention of "all people", which seems to indicate that ʿrb were loosely organised, if at all. And in line 33 of the same inscription we read: bn/ʿnt/hʿnw/whdrkn/bʿd/ʿhḍr/wʿrb/mḡʿw/ʿdy(34)ḥlf/tmnʿ, which may be rendered: "from the help they gave and the chasing after the ʿhḍr and ʿrb who had proceeded to the town of tmnʿ". It is obvious that these ʿhḍr and ʿrb were on the opposing side, and the dedicants begin the clause by expressing thanksgiving at the safe outcome of this operation. ʿhḍr here could mean one of two things: (1) settled people, cf. Arabic ḥaḍar "settled people (collective), settled area" and ḥaḍarī: "a resident of a settled area". In this case ʿrb would mean "nomads, bedouins" collectively [a sense which is not attested for it so clearly elsewhere]. (2) Ḥaḍramīs, the plural being limited to the root of the first component element of ḥḍrmwt. ʿhḍr seems to have this meaning more clearly in Ja 665,23 where it is said, after an account of an encounter between the vanguard of the dedicant's forces and that of the king of ḥḍrmt, whrghmw/wʿrhmw/klhmw/wmtʿ/bn/hmt/ʿhḍrn/ʿsm/rkbn/wḥlḥt/rglm, which may be rendered: "and they killed them and held them captive and there escaped from among these Ḥaḍramīs one camel-mounted man,

and three foot soldiers." In this sense ḥḍr in Ja 629, next to ʿrb would make better sense. Ja 629 begins with the account of an operation against ydʿʿl/mlk/hḍrmwt/ and others (lines 14-19). The contrast between ḥḍr = Ḥaḍramīs, and ʿrb = Arabs in this context is most instructive, particularly in that we have here ʿrb used to signify an ethnic or national group, and not individuals, ʿrb, whether nomads or not.

The inscriptions CIH 79, 343 and 350 contain reports apparently about events in the fierce and prolonged struggle between Sabaʿ and Himyar for the supremacy of South Arabia.

In CIH 79 rbbm/yʿzm of the tribe ḥrf led an expedition against the ʿrb, bʿm/ʿrbn [lines 9-10], in the neighbourhood of mnhtm, bḥlf/mnhtm. [line 10].

In the inscription CIH 343, h]ʿn/yʿzm and his sons, yḥmd and yḡbr of the banū smʿm, dedicated to their patron tʿlb/rymm lord of qdmn of ddmhn, the bull of gold and a stone table. It is mentioned in line 7 that the dedicators were in shrtm and the land of hwzn, but it is not definitely stated whether they had been engaged in wars there. In the same inscription the dedicators praised tʿlb because he brought them safe from the land of hmyrm and the ʿrbn, wbḡt/hwfyhw/bn/ʿrd/hmyrm/wʿrbn [lines 13-14].

It appears from this inscription that the dedicators had been in the land of hwzn in Northern Nadjran. But they fought in ʿrd/hmyrm/wʿrbn, which seems that ʿrd/ʿrbn bordered on that of Himyar.

The inscription CIH 350, also mentions wars against the land of Himyar, ʿrd/hmyrm [line 3] and against ʿrbn, wbʿt/tqdm/ʿrht/... ʿrbn, [lines 8-9]. Thus it is not clear whether the land of Himyar was in the same area as that of the ʿrbn or somewhere else. It is also not clear whether ʿrbn in this inscription refers to the land of ʿrbn or to troops of ʿrbn who were supporting Himyar.

These inscriptions were simply an expression of thanks to God for his kindness, especially for his kindness in bringing about a favourable conclusion to the war. That is why we do not learn anything from them about the composition of the Hamdanite troops.

The tribe sbʿ and ʿʿrb [ʿrbn], as indicated by CIH 397, went into the battle led by ʿlrm/yhmd, a vassal of the king. This admits of the conclusion that a group of ʿʿrb belonged to the tribe Sabaʿ, ʿʿbn/sbʿ/wʿrbn. They were probably the ʿʿrb/mrb, ʿaʿrāb of Maʿrib, mentioned in previous inscriptions, Maʿrib being the centre of the Sabaʿ tribe.

Ja 665 belongs to the time of yarm/yhn^cm/wbnyhw/dr^omr/
^oymn/mlky/sb^o/wdrydn/wḥḏrmwt/wymnt; the author of the text,
s^cdt^olb/ytlf/bn/gdnm, styles himself as kbr/^orb/mlk/sb^o/
 wkdt/wmḏhgm/wḥrmm/wbḥlm/wzyd^ol/wkl/^orb/sb^o/wḥmyrm/wḥḏrmt/
 wymnt [lines 1-4].

Jamme⁽¹⁾ raises the question of whether the ^orb
 and kl/^orb - all ^oa^crab - are followed by only one
 definitive, mlk/sb^o and sb^o respectively, or by six and four
 respectively. According to the second hypothesis there
 would be an almost impossible administrative situation,
 because each of the following eight tribal groups [kdt,
mḏhgm, ḥrmm, bḥlm, zyd^ol, ḥmyrm, ḥḏrmt and ymnt] would be
 split into two parts, namely the ^orb and non-^orb, while
 "the first hypothesis avoids the splitting of every tribal
 group into two parts and indicates that the whole south,
 south-west, and south-east of Saba^o were under the command
 of only one man". He then adds: "Furthermore, the
 opposition between ^orb/mlk/sb^o and ^orb/sb^o plainly
 indicates the division between crown property, or at least,
 privileges, and that of the Saba^o state itself."

1. Jamme, Sabaeen Inscriptions, p.374.

In the inscription Ja 671, belonging to the time of t^orn/yhn^om/wbnhw/mlkkrb/y^omn/mlky/sb^o/wdrydn/wpdrmt/wymnt, the rb [rb] were the only group who were employed in repairing the dam which was damaged in hbbd and rbbm. It is highly probable that the rb became a very important group in South Arabia at this time, i.e. shortly before the reign of Abū Karib As'ad.

The use of the word rb in South Arabian inscriptions is, as we have seen, very confused. We do not know exactly from where, or when, the rb came to South Arabia. The first Arabian use of the word occurs in the ancient South Arabian inscriptions dating from the later pre-Christian and early Christian centuries. The rb were found in South Arabia during the second century B.C.E., when ns^okrb/yh^omn/mlk/sb^o/bn/[dmr^o]ly/drh [Ja 560] led his punitive expedition against the rd/rbn. From Ja 560 we do not know the location of rd/rbn. Ja 561 bis mentions the rdt/rbn on the borders of the tribe Ḥashdim, thus it seems that rdt/rbn was in the north of South Arabia. Later on, in the time of lsrh/yhdb, king of sb^o/wdrydn, the rbn were in the land of mdhym/wrdmn/wqtb [Ja 739, 9-10; Ja 758, 9]. Here apparently the rbn were in Central South Arabia. CIH 79 mentions rbn in the neighbourhood of mnhtm. CIH 343, 350 mention rd/hmyrm/

w^orbn, which seems to indicate that the land of o^orbn was on the borders of the land of Himyar, in Central South Arabia.

However, the first mention of o^orb in the inscriptions is connected with their rebellion against the central government. This is shown in Ja 560, which belongs to the time of ns^okrb/yh^omn/mlk/sb^o and of whb^ol/yhz/mlk/sb^o. But we do not know what the relation was between o^orb and the kings of Saba^o if they had been under the king's sovereignty.

In the time of 'Alhān Nahfān, mlk/sb^o, we find o^orb/mlk/sb^o mentioned with hmys [Namī 72, 73]. So it appears that the o^orb were used above all in connection with military service. This is shown by the inscription Namī 72, 73, belonging to 'Alhān Nahfān and Ja 635, belonging to s^orm/^owtr/mlk/sb^o/wdrydn and Ja 665 belonging to the time /ysrm/yhn^om/wbnyhw/dr^omr/^oymn/mlky/sb^o/wdrydn/wḥḍrmwt/wymnt, and onward to the time of Abraha [Ry 509, 510, 507, 508 and Ja 1028].

However a passage in Na 72, 73 shows expressly that the troops listed in the inscriptions as taking part in a military expedition are hmys and o^orb/mlk/sb^o, عليهروا عليهم "The tribes represented by Saba^o" مدى سبأ / وحمير / واثرياب / مدى سبأ

and Himyar were still distinguished from various groups of the ʿrb, but in the same way as the state and society in general. Now, however, the inscriptions refer to hms⁽¹⁾ which are mentioned as well as the tribes. This points to a standardising and levelling process within the military organisation which in any case made it easier to use the bedouins for military purposes. The number of soldiers required in those turbulent times was probably very great.⁽²⁾

The main question is whether those ʿrb were native bedouin or immigrants. From Arab sources we learn that several Arab tribes,⁽³⁾ and even the Kinda had their origin in South Arabia,⁽⁴⁾ and that at the end of the 6th century C.E. the Kinda returned to South Arabia. From the

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1. hms in the inscriptions denotes the non-tribal element of the population as opposed to both the tribal element designated as s̄b and to the purely bedouin ʿrb; see Beeston, "Notes on Old South Arabian lexicography", Le Muséon, LXV (1952), p.141.
 2. cf. Höfner, op.cit., p.61.
 3. For the origin of Al-Aws and Khazradj, see Ibn Ḥazm, pp.339-366; and for the Ghassanids (said to be from South Arabia), see Khalidī, "The Arab Kingdom of Ghassan" MW, LXI (1956), pp.193-206. For the Origin of Lakham, see Ṭabarī, I, pp.744-752.
 4. Olinder, The Kings..., pp.20 ff.

inscriptions there is nothing to support the hypothesis that the ʿrb came from the North. So it seems quite reasonable to suggest that there were two groups in South Arabia: settled tribes and their ʿrb. Thus, these ʿrb were probably native bedouin living in southern and central South Arabia.⁽¹⁾ A useful comparison can be drawn between the ʿarāb in South Arabia and the situation as it was in Mecca and Ḥīra. In Mecca there were the Ḥuraish al-Biṭāḥ, who resided on a permanent basis in the city, while the Ḥuraish al-Ḥawāhir lived there outside Mecca as bedouin.⁽²⁾ The same was true in al-Ḥīra, where we find the ʿArab al-Ḍāhya⁽³⁾ lived outside Ḥīra.

sbʿ, kdt, mḏhg, bhlm, zydʿl, ḥmyrm/ḥḏrmt and ymnt had their own ʿrb [Ja 665]. mlk/sbʿ also mentions, in Ja 665, Nami 72, 73, his own ʿrb. mlk/Ḥḏrmwt, also mentions his own ʿrb [Nami 71].

So one could conclude that every important permanent settlement has its own ʿarab.⁽⁴⁾

1. J. Halévy, "Les Arabes...", Revue sémitique d'épigraphie et d'histoire ancienne, VII (1899), pp.146-159.

2. cf. Muḥabbar, pp.167-168.

3. cf. Ṭabari, I, p.749.

4. cf. J. Halévy, "Les Arabes...", Revue sémitique d'épigraphie et d'histoire ancienne, VII (1899), p.150.

One question that arises here is the mention of hgrn before °rb in Ry 508.

Ry 508 [the wording is not definitely clear] says: wb°s°b/dhmdn/whgrhmw/w°rbhmw, [line 7] which should not be translated: "And with the tribes of dhmdn, their town people and their °rb." I think hgr here is not "town" but a plural of the type fu°ul and means "their town-resident clients", i.e. people not originally Hamdānī, but "emigrés" who were domiciled in Hamdānī land (cf. hudjr as explained in Ḥabshūsh⁽¹⁾), and they are therefore equivalent to the muḥājirūn of Muḥammad's time.

« وهؤلاء الناس المحيين ترار هم غير الناس المحيين لجزيرة
البحر له ميزة وناموسا عند القبائل ويتخذوا منهم قضاة يحكموا بينهم
ويناسبوهم ، وهم الناس الذين يأتون ويكنوا في البهرد ويملكوا في
فان لم يرغبو ليدخلوا مداهيل القبائل كحرب أو لمغازيا أولصائبة
ما يصوبوه القبائل فاهم ذلك ، ويسمونهم لجر ولا لأحد يعترضهم
ابدا ، واذا اعترضهم بخطأ أو بشهيب أو قتل أو غير فان
القبائل كلها تقوم وتشور على هجرتهم كما يشور الجار على جارة »

1. Ḥabshūsh, Hayyim. Travels in Yemen, p.31.

Ja 1028, relating to the same events as Ry 508, says (6)... kqrn/b^oly/ngrn (7) bs^ob/dhmdn/hgrn/w^orbn/wnqrm/bn/ z^onn/w^orb/kdt/wmrdm/wmdhgm/. In this text hgrn/w^orbn/ seem to stand in opposition to s^ob/dhmdn, although it is possible to have here an asyndetic form of connection in the series closely related, so that we could render it: "the tribe of Dhū Hamdān, the hujūr and the rb." This type of connection is well-attested in the Ḥaḍramī texts from al-^oUgla, cf. Ja 919, 925,⁽¹⁾ Another point of difference from Ry 508 is that there it says whgrhmw/ w^orbhm/ while here we have hgrn/w^orbn, and one wonders whether rbn,ⁱⁿ Ja 1028 should be taken as equivalent to rb in Ry 508.

Ry 507 which shows a close relation and similarity to Ja 1028, has in line 2 [w]rbnhmw/. The first lines of the text, including this one, are mutilated and of uncertain reading so that the context is far from clear. But if the reading rbnhmw is to be accepted and rbn here to be taken in some sense of "Arabs" then we seem to be here confronted with a plural of the type fu^olan, attested in Epigraphy of South Arabia, although rare. The form urban, collective

1. Published by Jamme, Al-^oUgla texts. Washington, 1963.
cf. also, Höfner, Altsüdarabische Grammatik, p.180.

for Arabs, is well attested in Arabic usage and would normally refer to clans or groups of bedouin rather than individual bedouins.

The Kinda first appear in the available inscriptions as opponents of the kings of South Arabia. Ja 576 mentions Kinda, š•bn/kdt in the time of šlsrh/yhdb/w•hyhw/y•zl/byn/mlky/sb•/wdrydn. In the time of yerm/yhn•m/wbnyhw/dr••mr/•ymn/mlky/sb•/wdrydn/whqrmwt/wymnt, ••rb/mlk/sb•/wkdt [Ja 665]. They are again mentioned in the time of šmr/yhr•š/mlk/sb•/wdrydn/whqrmwt/wymnt, Kinda is mentioned as one of the groups who were with šmr/yhr•š [Ja 660]. From the time of šmr/yhr•š onward Kinda is often mentioned in connection with ••rb, and mdhg and mrđm [Murād] [Ry 509, 510, 508, Ja 1028]. So we do not know if the term ••rb here is used to describe kdt or whether ••rb are alluded to as a separate group under the command of kdt.

In Ry 509 and 510 a contrast is drawn between the groups of the long title and the groups actually mentioned later in each text as being present with a king. Also worthy of notice is the fact that we have in both cases ••rb mentioned in close association with kdt etc., or kdt/mdhg. The only group in the royal title which it is difficult to identify or associate with the š•b mentioned later is ymnt. Is ymnt to be identified with the obscure

š^ob, i.e. bny/mrb/w^os-grt/ in Ry 509, or rḥbtn and yḥn in Ry 510, or is ymnt to be identified or associated with kdt, mdḥg etc., who in this case would be integral members of the kingdom right back from the time of š^orm/^owtr/mlk/ sb^o/wdrydn (cf. J. 635) and they were responsible for the control of the š^orb in a capacity similar to that of the Lakhmids of Ḥīra in relation to the Persians or the Ghassānids, and the Saliḥ in relation to the Byzantines.

In the early 5th century, when a great part of Central Arabia was populated by nomadic tribes, the royal title was enlarged in the reign of Abū Karib As‘ad and worded as follows: "King of Saba^o and Dhū Raydān and Ḥaḍramawt and Yamanat and the š^orb in the high lands (Central Arabia) and Tihama [the lowlands of Ḥidjāz and ‘Asīr]." Here only the inhabitants of the desert part of Arabia are meant by the designation š^orb in Ṭwd and Ṭhmt. Kinda were appeared as a vassal of South Arabia over the tribes of Ṭwd as we shall mention.

(b) Ṭawd:

As we know from the inscriptions, the region of Ṭawd was added to the South Arabian kings' title from the time of Abū Karib As‘ad. The question now arising is what is the Ṭawd? The Arab geographers gave many descriptions to

the Ṭawd. Linguistically, the Ṭawd means mountain "الطَّوْدُ الْجَبَلُ الْعَظِيمُ" (1) or plateau "الطَّوْدُ السَّهْبَةُ" (2). The geographical region of Ṭawd is said to be the mountainous area stretching between 'Arafa [near Mecca] and Ṣan'a', which is also called al-Sarā. (3) It is also said that the region of 'Asīr (4) and Djurash (5) were part of the Ṭawd. Al-Bakrī has this description of the Ṭawd:-

« الطَّوْدُ الْجَبَلُ الْمَشْرِفُ عَلَى تَحْرِيفَةِ اَيْنَقَادِ اِلَى صَنْعَاءَ ، وَيُقَالُ لَهُ لِسْرَاةٍ ،
 وَأَوَّلُهُ سَرَاةٌ تُقِيفُ ، وَسَرَاةٌ فَهْمٌ وَعَدْوَانٌ ، ثُمَّ سَرَاةٌ الْاَزْدُ ، ثُمَّ
 الْحَرَّةُ آخِرُ ذَلِكَ كُلِّهِ ؛ فَمَا انْحَدَرَ اِلَى الْبَحْرِ فَهُوَ سَرَاهِمٌ وَسُرْدُدٌ وَزَبِيدٌ
 وَرُوحٌ ، وَهِيَ اَرْضٌ تَلْتَمِسُ ، وَمَا كَانَ اِلَى الْمَشْرِقِ فَهُوَ نَجْدٌ ، وَالْجَلْسُ
 مَاوِي بَرْدٌ هُنْدِيٌّ ، وَسَرَاهِمٌ وَسُرْدُدٌ وَاْدِيَانٌ يَصْبَانُ فِي جَارِي ،
 وَهُوَ وَاْدٌ عَظِيمٌ »

"al-Ṭawd, the mountain which overlooks 'Arafa, extends towards Ṣan'a', and is called al-Sarāt. It starts at Sarāt Thaḳīf, [then includes] Sarāt, Fahm and 'Adwān, Sarāt al-Azd and al-Ḥarra, which is the end. Its slopes towards the sea are Saḥām, Surdud, Zabīd and Ruma', which are the lands of 'Akk, and what lies to the

1. Lisān, IV, p.209.

2. Ibid, citing Ibn al-A'rābī [d. 231/845].

3. Djazīrat, p.70; Yāqūt, III, p.65 citing al-'Aṣma'ī; Tādīj, II, p.404.

4. Djazīrat, p.118.

5. Bakrī, p.376.

the east of it is Nedjd; Djalas is what is next to the lands of Hudhayl; Saham and Surdud are two wādīs which run into Djazā, which is a great wādī." (1)

But the extent of Nedjd as referred to here is very difficult to define, since other authorities obviously seem to limit Ṭawd to the Sarā mountains and its approaches on both sides. In the narrowest sense the reference might mean that its eastern part touches on Nedjd or merges with it, and this would be in line with the situation up till the present day where wādī Bīsha, the Bīsha Oasis and wādī Tathlīth are administratively part of Nedjd. In its widest sense Nedjd could mean the central plateau of Arabia from al-Yamāma, even including it, to Madīna. It is hard to accept that Ṭawd in Bakrī's statement included the whole of that area, but the mention of al-Djals, the eastern approach of Madīna here might indicate that Ṭawd could have extended that far to the east and north.

(c) Tihama:

The name Tihama is found in the South Arabian inscriptions in the form thmt, which appears in the king's title after the reign of Abū Karib As'ad. It is always mentioned with Ṭawd.

1. Bakrī, p.15.

According to the Arab geographers, Tihāma is the name of the narrow strip of coastal lowland which runs from the Sinai peninsula southwards along the west side of Arabia.⁽¹⁾ The greatest width of Tihāma is found in the hinterland of Djidda, towards Mecca, which is also normally considered part of Tihāma. Arab geographers differ as to the extent of Tihāma in this particular direction. Al-Aṣma'ī [d.213/828] makes Tihāma begin at Dhāt 'Irq.⁽²⁾ Ibn al Kuṭāmī [d.115/772] as quoted by Yāqūt put its borders at Dhāt 'Irq and al-Djuḥfa. According to 'Umāra b. 'Aḳīl [d.239/853], it stretches to Ḥarrat Sulāim and Ḥarrat Laīlā. Al-Mada'ini⁽³⁾ [d.225/839] says that anyone who passes through Wadjra Ghamra and al-Ṭa'if in the direction of Mecca is already in Tihāma. 'Arrām takes Raḍwa and part of al-Madīna to be at the northern end of Tihāma.⁽⁴⁾

It is not easy to determine whether Tihāma in the inscriptions means the entire coastal lowland between the Sinai Peninsula and Aden, or only a part of this lowland, called "Tahā'im al-Yaman". But according to the Arab

1. al-Idrīsī, Nuzhat al-Mushtāq, p.145.

2. Yāqūt, I, p.902.

3. See Djazīrat, p.53; 119-121; Yāqūt, I, p.902. For the etymology of the name see E.I.⁽¹⁾ "Tihāma".

4. 'Arrām, p.396.

traditions, however, Abū Karib was in Mecca and al-Madīna. The former is mentioned as part of Tihāma by some Arab geographers, while some other geographers place al-Madīna outside Tihāma. 'Arram puts only the southern half of al-Madīna in Tihāma.

The question of whether Madīna, or part of it, was in Tihama should be understood as either referring to the town of Madīna itself or to its administrative district. It is in the latter sense that 'Arram's statement is to be understood, as Madīna itself is in al-Djals, as already mentioned before. Thus if we accept what can be inferred from the Arab sources, we find that Abū Karib's sovereignty could have extended to the northern part of Tihāma. From this point of view it is more likely that thmt in the inscriptions indicates the Tihāma of the Arab sources probably as far north as al-Madīna, whether the administrative district or the town.

Abū Karib As'ad in Central Arabia:

The inscription Ry 509, bearing on Abū Karib As'ad's relations with Central Arabia, may be rendered as follows:-

1. Abū Karib As'ad and his son Ḥassan Yuba'min, the two kings of Saba'

2. and Dhū Raydān and Ḥaḍramawt and ymnt and the °°rb of Ṭawḍ and Tihama,
3. the sons of Ḥassān Malkīkarīb Yuha°min mlk Saba° and Dhū
4. Raydān and Ḥaḍramawt and ymnt marched⁽¹⁾ through this path at
5. Wādī Ma°sil Djamḥ when they were on a campaign and occupied the land
6. of Ma°add⁽²⁾ when⁽³⁾ coming down from their tribes (or, as a place of settlement (or rest) with their tribes) and with their tribe.
7. Ḥaḍramawt and Saba° and the Banī Ma°rib and °ggrt (The Juniors) of
8. their qayls and workmen (or, officials)⁽⁴⁾ stewards and their
9. clients (or, followers) and hunters and catchers and with their °°rb
10. Kinda and swd⁽⁵⁾ and °lh⁽⁶⁾

1. cf. M.A. Ghul, Early South Arabian, p.293-4.

2. m°dm is definite in M.A. Ghul's photograph.

3. The text should read: lmw or l(h)mw in the sense of when, while.

4. Compare semantically °amil = worker, also technically, official and shaghil = °amil.

5. Most probably the tribe Sawd, a main branch of the °Azd. cf. Ibn Ḥazm, p.443; Kalkashandī, Nihayat, p.299; Nuwaīrī, II, p.312.

6. Most probably °Illah, a main tribe of Madhḥidj and one of whose most important clans, al-Nakh° were in Pre- =

It is mentioned that Abū Karib wrote this inscription, bwdyn/m'sl/gmḥn/keb'w/wḥllw/'rd/mwdm/dmw/nzlm/bn/'š'bhmw/... Ry 509, lines 4-6. G. Ryckmans rendered it as "dans la vallée Ma'sil Gumḥān, Lorsqu'ils se mirent en campagne et demeurèrent dans le territoire de Mawdum Damū, en descendant d'accord avec leurs tribus..."⁽¹⁾ Caskel rendered it "sind hinaufgestiegen über die Steige in dem wādī Ma'sal Gumḥān, als sie Kriege führten und sich niederliessen im Gebiet der Mwdm, welche Reisende bedrückt hatten,..." It is clear from the photograph of Ry 509, which belongs to Dr. M.A. Ghul that the word m'dm should be read instead of mwdm.⁽³⁾

Moreover, Ma'add territory was in Ma'sil al-Djamḥ; a place in which we also find the Kinda [cf. Ry 509].

6. (contd.) Islamic times resident in Bīsha and its surroundings (cf. Bakrī, p.63). The reading is definite in M.A. Ghul's photograph. They are probably the same as 1 mentioned in Ry 506.

1. G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions sud-arabes", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.304.

2. Caskel, Entdeckungen in Arabien. p.9.

3. G. Ryckmans, Ibid, p.306 renders mwdm/dmw = Duwadmi. cf. Philby, "Motor tracks...", GJ, CXVII (1950), p.213, who agrees with G. Ryckmans and says "This may well have been the original name of Duwadami." But as far as we know this name was not mentioned by any Arab geographer and al-Dawādīmī is a new city.

However, it appears from the inscriptions and Arab tradition that the real sovereignty of South Arabia over Ma'add was in the reign of Abū Karib As'ad. It has been mentioned that Abū Karib conquered 'Irāq, Madīna and Mecca. He was in al-Mushakkar^k (1) before he went to Madīna. This means that all or most of the Arabian peninsula, including the Ma'addi tribes, was under his dominion.

In a poem, Tubba' boasts of his campaigns against the Ma'addi tribes and mentions how he reduced them all to servitude. (2) In another poem Tubba' says that he sent his troops to Ma'add and Kināna; Thaḳīf, Ḳāis, Banū Nizār and Naḍar's alliance. (3)

It is clear that this type of poetry is based on Islamic events rather than on historical pre-Islamic tradition. Traditions about the expedition of Tubba' against Ma'add may have existed since pre-Islamic times, and the whole episode may have been true. (4) But Ma'add,

1. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.596.

2. 'Uba'id, p.473; Mas'ūdī, I, p.209, mentions Rabi'a in another poem.

3. 'Uba'id, pp.442-443; Mulūk, pp.124-125.

4. Nuwairī.

Rabī'a, Muḡar, Iyād, and Anmār themselves had another story to tell. They claim that they drove away Abū Karib Tubba°. (1) Abū Mas'ūd al-Iyādī says:

<p>جبال البرود وخرج الذهب وكان جباناً كثير الرهب وكان العزيز بلا من غلب</p>	<p>ضربنا على تبع حربيه ووى أبو كرب هارباً واتبعته نهول الجين</p>
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"We turned Tubba°'s war against him (we robbed him) the cords of rich garments and saddle bag of gold

Abū Karib turned away taking to his heels, for he was a coward and a frightened one.

And I chased him, for he showed cowardice, and the mighty then was he who won."

In point of fact, if historical fidelity even mattered in this type of poetry and in these event, it was only regarded as a means to an end. On the whole, this poetry and these events are allegorical in one sense, viz., that it explains Islamic events in terms of pre-Islamic assumptions in a very crude and flat way designed to appeal to the populace.

It is more likely that the Ma'add should be included with Ma'arab Ṭawd of the time of Abū Karib As'ad. They were living in lands, which as we have seen, must have been within Ṭawd at that time. Their own traditions say that

1. Mas'ūdī, I, p.209.

they had been at that time under South Arabia. The Ma'add could have existed among ʿaʿrāb Ṭawd in the days of Abū Karib Asʿad, possibly in one capacity as the bedouin elements within the land of Ṭawd.

It seems that Central Arabia, or more specifically Ma'add, had been governed by Kinda, the vassal of South Arabia. The South Arabian tradition of Ibn al-Kalbī,⁽¹⁾ says that al-Ḥārith was sent by his uncle Tubbaʿ b. Ḥassān b. Tubbaʿ b. Malkikarib b. Tubbaʿ al-Aḡran with a great army to the country of Ma'add. (This is obviously repugnant to the South Arabian tradition, where it is considered as something unheard of when a daughter of the said Ḥassān is given in marriage to ʿAmr, the son of Ḥudjir). Equally compatible with later tradition is a statement in Aghānī,⁽²⁾ that the mother of the son of Ḥudjir, ʿAmr b. Muʿāwiya, was Shuʿba daughter of Abū Maʿāhir b. Ḥassān b. ʿAmr b. Tubbaʿ, in whom, in spite of the confusion in his nasab, we may possibly recognise Dhū Maʿāhir, that is to say Ḥassān b. Tubbaʿ Asʿad Abū Karib.⁽³⁾

1. Ṭabarī, I, p.881.

2. Aghānī, V, p.79 [Cairo ed.], citing all the information.

3. cf. Ṭabarī, I, p.881, citing Ibn al-Kalbī.

As has already been seen from the account of Ibn al-Kalbī, al-Ḥārith was sent by his uncle Tubba' b. Ḥassān with a large army to Ma'add. Somewhat different from this, al-Ḥaitham b. 'Adī⁽¹⁾ [d.206/821] relates that when Bakr and Taghlib were exhausted by the war of al-Basūs, al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr b. Mu'āwiya al-Kindī, the king of Kinda, tried to act as an intermediary. The chieftains of Bakr and Taghlib had suggested that they should make al-Ḥārith their king. He accepted their proposal, and came; a reconciliation was made between them.⁽²⁾

It is very important to notice the mention of Kinda in the inscriptions. Kinda obviously played an important role. It is already in the inscription Ry 535, which in any case dates back to an early period, that Mlkm king of

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1. Aghānī, IX, p.81 [Cairo ed.]; Ibn Badroun, pp.119-120; Kāmil, I, p.305; 'Iqd, V, p.222, citing Abū 'Ubaida, says that they asked Tubba', who appointed Al-Ḥārith; see also Kāmil, I, p.304.
 2. Dīnwarī, p.54, says that Ṣuhbān b. Dhī-Ḍarb who killed 'Amr b. Tubba' had been asked by Ma'add to send them a king, so he sent al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr al-Kindī. Ibn Ḥazm, p.434, mentions Saḥb b. Dhī Ḥārith, who fought Ma'add b. 'Adnan in the Day of al-Shurā.

Kinda and the tribe of Kinda are both mentioned.⁽¹⁾ As we can see from this, the Kinda are recorded not as we find them later as ʿaʿrāb, but as ṣʿb. The Arabic tradition tells of Kinda who emigrated from their previous dwelling place in Ḥaḍramawt to Central Arabia.⁽²⁾ After a number of kings had ruled there for a certain period, a Himyarite king called Ḥassan installed his half-brother Ḥudjr as ruler, and thus founded a new dynasty. This tradition now seems to be surprisingly confirmed by the inscription Ry 509, which gives some information about an expedition undertaken by ʿbkrb/ʿṣd/wbnwhw/ḥsn/yḥmn. They were on an expedition into Central Arabia [Wādī Maʿsil] in the territory of Maʿadd. Those who took part in this expedition were among the tribes, the tribe of Ḥaḍramawt and among the ʿaʿrāb, the Kinda. This expedition seems to be another - certainly not the first - colonization which, this time, was carried out by the Himyarite kings in connection with the installation of the new sovereignty of the Kinda.

1. cf. infra, Chapter One.

2. Al-Muḥabbar, p.368, says:

” وكان تبع ابوكرب لما قبل يريد العراق ترك بارض معد فاستعمل عليهم حمران عمرو وهو آكل المرار، فكان بين السيرة فيهم، فاجمع رأيهم ان هلك حمران يملكو عليهم ابنه سه بعده ...”

See also Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.576.

In fact, at another place an inscription has been found which speaks of hgr/bn/°mrm/mlk/kdt, "Ḥudir son of °Amr, King of Kinda".⁽¹⁾ It is easy to understand that the South Arabian rulers were eager to bring the Kinda kingdom in their neighbourhood under their control.⁽²⁾

Abū Karib in °Irāq:

The Arab legends claim that Abū Karib As°ad went to °Irāq, going first to al-Ḥīra via Djabal Ṭai°. Arriving in al-Ḥīra, Abū Karib left a part of his army there with al-Azd, Lakhm, Djudham, °Amilā and Ḳuḍā°a. After that, people from Ṭai°, Kalb, al-Sakūn, Balḥarith b. Ka°b, and Iyād came and settled there.⁽³⁾ Another tradition says that Abū Karib left some of his family's troops behind including the sick and weak soldiers, and with them 12,000 of his own troops.⁽⁴⁾ According to al-Hamdānī, as quoted by Bakrī, Abū Karib As°ad chose Nālik b. Fahm b. Ghanam

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1. G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions...", Le Muséon, LXIX (1956) p.152; J. Pirenne, "L'inscription °Ryckmans 535", Le Muséon, LXIX (1956), p.173.
 2. Ibn Khaldūn, I, p.102, states that "Abū Karib had fought Kinda until they submitted to him". This event probably took place before the expedition of Ry 509.
 3. Ṭabarī, I, p.684, citing Ibn al-Kalbī.
 4. °Ubaid, p.472; Ṭabarī, I, p.685, citing Mūsā b. Ṭalḥa; Maskawāla, I, p.59.

b. Daūs to stay as their leader, so that the latter became the first king of al-Ḥīra, and his sovereignty extended over al-Ḥīra, and al-Anbār and Hīt, and their outskirts.⁽¹⁾ From the Arab traditions, it is very difficult to ascertain the real date of Abū Karib's expedition to ʿIrāq.⁽²⁾

According to some legends, when Abū Karib arrived in ʿIrāq, he sent his nephew, Shammar Dhū al-Djanāḥ, to fight Ḳobād. The latter was killed near al-Rai by Shammar, who then moved on to Khurasān. He reached Samarḳand, which he entered by a trick. From there he went on to China, where he found Ḥassān b. Abū Karib Asʿad who had travelled there via al-Ṣughd. Both of them stayed there till they died, 21 years later.⁽³⁾ Another tradition mentions that Abū Karib Asʿad himself went to Persia and India, whose king he killed.⁽⁴⁾ In the meantime Abū Karib sent his other nephew Yaʿfur to Constantinople, from whose people he received submission and tribute. After that,

1. Bakrī, p.479.

2. cf. Ṭabarī, I, p.684; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.496; ʿUbaīd, p.473; Masʿūdī, I, p.208; see also Mulūk, p.132; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.101.

3. Ṭabarī, pp.890-9, citing Ibn al-Kalbī; Mulūk, p.132; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.599.

4. Maʿārif, p.631; Dīnawarī, p.48; Maskawia, I, p.59; Ḳalkashandī, Ṣubuḥ, V, p.23, Nuwairī, XV, pp.293-98.

he went to Rome. Having laid seige to Rome, his army was attacked by plague, and was subsequently wiped out by the Romans.⁽¹⁾ At the very least, these statements are unreliable. We have no information from Byzantine and Persian historians about such wars. All we can say is that the legends were fabricated by the South Arabian tribes in the first and second centuries of the Hidjra.

In this connection one should trust Ibn Khaldūn's rejection of the legends of Tubba's conquests of the East. Ibn Khaldūn is most probably right when he suggests that these conquests should be limited to nearby 'Irāq. The account of Ibn Khaldūn runs as follows:

"With regard to the (alleged) raid of the Tubba's against the countries of the East and the land of the Turks, it must be admitted that the line of march in this case is wider than the (narrow) passage at Suez. The distance, however, is greater, and the Persian and Byzantine nations are interposed on the way to the Turks. There is no report that the Tubba's ever took possession of the countries of the Persians and Byzantines. They merely fought the Persians on the borders of 'Irāq and the Arab countries between al-Bahraīn and al-Ḥīra, which were border regions common to both nations."⁽²⁾

1. Ṭabarī, I, p.890, citing Ibn al Kalbī; Nuwairī, XV, p.298.
 2. Ibn Khaldūn, The Muqaddimah, pp.24-25 [English trans.].

In an attempt to belittle the achievements of conquests, the South Arabian tribes credited almost every ancient king of theirs with expeditions to as far away as China. The conquest of Samarqand [710-713 C.E.], a landmark in the Umayyad achievements, is claimed for almost every South Arabian king.

In one narrative we are told that, when the king Shammar Yur'ish had conquered Samarqand, he engraved on a rock at the town of al-Ṣughd the following words: "This is a king of Arab and Adjam, Shammar Yur'ish, the exalted; he who reaches this place is like me and he who goes further is better than me".⁽¹⁾ Another narrative goes on to say that when Ḳutaiba b. Muslim⁽²⁾ had conquered Samarqand, he found this inscription and was disturbed to learn that in this respect he was preceded by somebody else. As Ḳutaiba was a Ma'addite, the conquest was considered a source of triumph for Ma'add, though the South Arabians also took part in the expedition. It was the leadership that counted and that explains why the South Arabians underrated achievements to which they themselves had contributed.

1. Uba'id, p.429.

2. Wahb, p.237.

Abū Karib in Madīna:

The legend of Abū Karib's expedition says:

"When he came from the east he passed by Medīna without harming its people; but he left behind there one of his sons who was treacherously slain. Thereupon he returned with the intention of destroying the town and exterminating its people and cutting down its palms. So this tribe of the Anṣār gathered together under the leadership of ʿAmr b. Talla, the brother of b. al-Nadīdjār and one of B. ʿAmr b. Maḥdhūl. Maḥdhūl's name was ʿAmir b. Mālik b. al-Nadīdjār, ⁽¹⁾ and al-Nadīdjār's name was Taym Allah b. Thaʿlaba b. ʿAmr b. al-Khazradj b. Ḥāritha b. Thaʿlaba b. ʿAmr b. ʿAmir.

Now a man of B. ʿAdīy b. al-Nadīdjār called Aḥmar had fallen upon one of the followers of Tubbaʿ when he brought them to Medīna and killed him, ⁽²⁾ because he caught him among his palms cutting the date clusters; he struck him with his sickle and killed him, saying 'The fruit belongs to the man who cultivates it.' This enraged Tubbaʿ against them and fighting broke out. Indeed the Anṣār assert that they used to fight them by day and treat them as guests by night. ⁽³⁾ Tubbaʿ

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1. Al-Ḥārith b. al-Ṣamma b. ʿAmr b. ʿAtik b. Maḥdhūl was killed in the battle of Biʿr Maʿūna [8/629]: see Ibn Ḥazm p.349.
 2. Ṭabarī, I, p.902, adds "and threw him into a well called Dhat Tūmān.
 3. According to Bakkar, I, p.387, Al-Mundhir b. al-Zubair and ʿUḥmān b. ʿAbdallāh b. Ḥakīm used to fight the

was amazed at this and used to say "By God our people are generous!"

While Tubba^o was occupied in this fighting there came two Jewish rabbis from B. Qurayza... They had heard about the king's intention to destroy the town and its people and they said to him: 'O, King, do not do it, for if you persist in your intention something will happen to prevent your carrying it out and we fear that you will incur speedy retribution. When the king asked the reason for this they told him that Yathrib was the place to which a prophet of the Quraysh would migrate in time to come, and it would be his home and resting-place. Seeing that these men had hidden knowledge of the king took their words in good part and gave up his design, departed from Madīna and embraced the rabbis' religion."⁽¹⁾

According to the Anṣār tribes, Tubba^o was enraged only against the Jewish tribes which were living among them and it was his intention to destroy only them, but they [Anṣār] protected them [Jews] until he went his way.⁽²⁾ Another

3. (contd.) Umayyad's troops by day and treat them as guests by night, that was during the fighting between Yazīd b. Mu^oawiya and ^oAbdallāh b. al-Zubair in Mecca.

1. A. Guillaume, p.7; Ṭabarī, I, p.910; 908, citing Ibn Ishāq.

2. Guillaume, p.8; Ṭabarī, I, p.908, citing Ibn Ishāq. Mulūk, pp.145-46, mentions that the name of the king was ^oAmr b. Tubba^o al-Akhīr b. Ḥassān b. As^oad.

tradition⁽¹⁾ mentions that the Anṣār tribes had received ill-treatment from the Jews, so they sent Mālik b. al-ʿAdjlān al-Khazradjī⁽²⁾ to Abū Karib asking his help against the Jews.⁽³⁾

These traditions clearly claim that Tubbaʿ specified by some as Abū Karib Asʿad, had come to al-Madīna, where he probably made a treaty with them, according to which

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1. Ibn Kathīr, Bidayā..., II, pp.162-167. According to Ṭabarī, I, p.901, the leader of the Anṣār was ʿAmr b. Ṭalla. Aghānī, XV, p.39, mentions that the Anṣār sent Zaid b. Khubaitha, and Uḥaiḥa b. al-Djulāḥ, see also Ibn ʿAsākir, X, p.416. We have nothing about Zaid. We know the Uḥaiḥa was contemporary with Hāshim, the forefather of Muḥammad. Uḥaiḥa's wife married Hāshim, her son was ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, see Ibn Ḥazm, p.15; Ishtikāk, p.441; Ibn Saʿd, I, pp.78-79; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.696. Al-Mundhir b. Muḥammad b. ʿUḫba b. Uḥaiḥa b. al-Djulāḥ was killed in the battle of Biʿr Maʿūna, see Ibn Ḥazm, p.335. So it is unlikely that Uḥaiḥa was living in the time of Abū Karib.
 2. Al-ʿAbbās b. ʿUbāda b. Naḍala b. Mālik b. al-ʿAdjlān was with Muḥammad in the battle of Uḥud [3/624]; see Ibn Ḥazm, p.353.
 3. Taʾrīkh, I, p.223; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.101, citing Suhailī; see also Suhailī, I, p.23; Samhūdī, I, p.181. The number slain was 350, Ṭabarī, I, p.908, citing Ibn Ishāq; According to Nashwān's Mulūk..., p.145, it was 300. Wahb, p.299, mentions that Tubbaʿ killed 330 Jews.

they paid tribute to him, but al-Anṣār denied this and claimed that they had never paid any tribute.⁽¹⁾

It is, however, not easy to accept the Anṣār legend, which was obviously created by them after the death of Muḥammad when they were neglected, so that they claimed that they were independent⁽²⁾ in the pre-Islamic period, and had not paid tribute to anyone.⁽³⁾

It is more likely that Abū Karib Asʿad extended his power to Madīna, because he was already in Maʿsil al Djamh, not too far from Madīna, as we know from Ry 509. On the other hand, Abū Karib Asʿad's long royal title included "the ʿaʿrāb" of Ṭawd and Tihāma". Madīna, as we have seen, could have been included in both Ṭawd and Tihāma.⁽⁴⁾

1. ʿIqd, II, pp.192-193; III, p.334.

2. cf. Dīnawarī, p.43.

3. cf. Guillaume, p.454. When Muḥammad sent to the leaders of Ghaṭafān and offered them a third of the dates of Madīna on condition that they would go back and leave him in the battle of al-Khandaq, [5/626] Saʿd b. ʿUbad, the Anṣār leader, did not agree and said to Muḥammad: "We and these people were polytheist and idolaters, not serving God, not knowing him, and they never hoped to eat a single date except as guests or by purchase."

4. cf. Supra p. 114.

At any rate, we do not know what sovereignty South Arabia had over al-Madīna, i.e. whether the South Arabians sent a governor to al-Madīna, or only had some loose kind of suzerainty or dominance over it.

Abū Karib in Mecca:

Ibn Ishāq says,

"He [Tubba'] set out for Mecca on his way to the Yaman, and when he was between 'Usfan and Amad] some men of the Hudhayl b. Hudrika b. Ilyās b. Muḍar b. Nizar b. Ma'add came to him saying, 'O King, may we not lead you to an ancient treasury which former kings have overlooked? It contains pearls, topaz, rubies, gold, and silver.' 'Certainly', said he, and they added that it was a temple in Mecca where the people worshipped and prayed. But the real intention of the Hudhaylis was to encompass his destruction, for they knew that any king that treated it with disrespect was sure to die. Having agreed to their proposal, he sent to the two rabbis and asked their opinion. They told him that the sole object of the tribe was to destroy him and his army. 'We know of no other temple in the land which God has chosen for Himself, said they, and if you do what they suggest you and all your men will perish.' The king asked them what he should do when he got there, and they told him to do what the people of Mecca did: to circumambulate the temple, to venerate and honour it, to shave his head, and to behave with all humility until he had left its precincts.

The king asked why they too should not do likewise. They replied that it was indeed the temple of their father Abraham..

Recognising the soundness and truth of their words, the king summoned the men from the Hudhayl and cut off their hands and feet, and continued his journey to Mecca. He went round the Ka'ba, sacrificed and shaved his head, staying there six days (so they say) sacrificing animals, which he distributed to the people, and gave them honey to drink.

It was revealed to him in a dream that he should cover the temple, so he covered it with woven palm branches; a later vision showed him that he must do better so he covered it with Yamani cloth; a third vision induced him to clothe it with fine striped cloth. People say that Tubba' was the first man to cover the temple in this way. He ordered its Djurhumī guardians to keep it clean and not to allow blood, dead bodies, or menstruous cloths to come near it, and he made a door and a key for it."⁽¹⁾

This statement of Ibn Ishāq obviously looks as if it were invented by South Arabian tribes in support of their claim that their former king had known that Muḥammad would appear in Mecca, and that Mecca was a city of God. Thus, the South Arabian tribes would be better than Quraysh, who

1. A. Guillaume, pp.8-9; Ṭabarī, I, pp.903-904, citing Ibn Ishāq; Aghānī, XV, pp.45-46.

at first did not follow Muḥammad. Moreover it claims that the king of the South Arabian tribes had covered Allāh's sanctuary and temple of Ibrāhīm, and also that their king had put a door into the temple.

The South Arabian tribes also claimed that their king had given pilgrims honey to drink,⁽¹⁾ while the Ḳuraish used to give grape juice.⁽²⁾

We find that many tribes have claimed that their leader had clothed the Ka'ba.⁽³⁾ According to al-Balādhurī⁽⁴⁾ [d.279/892], 'Adnān, the ancestor of the northern tribes, was the first to cover the Ka'ba with pell. Al-Māwardī⁽⁵⁾ [d.450/1058], in a statement quoted by al-Suhailī [d.581/1185] mentions that Khālid b. Dja'far b. Kilāb, the famous leader of Banū 'Āmir b. Ṣ'ṣa'a, was the first to cover the Ka'ba

1. Abū Umaiya b. Muḡhira al-Makhzūmī and Abū Wadā'a al-Sahmī gave the pilgrims honey, see Muḡhabbar, p.177.
2. Azrakī, I, p.70. Suwaīd b. Harmī is said to have been the first who gave the pilgrims milk to drink, see Muṣ'ab, pp.32; pp.197-198.
3. About the clothing of Ka'ba, see Gaudefroy Demombynes, "Notes sur la Makke et Médine", Revue de l'Histoire de Religions, LXXVII (1918), pp.318-321.
4. Ansāb, I, p.15. Ta'rikh, I, p.289 mentions that 'Abdal-Muṭṭalib was the first who clothed the Ka'ba. Yāqūt, IV, p.283, mentions also that Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya was the first to clothe the Ka'ba with silk.
5. Suhailī, I, p.77.

with silk garments. Muṣ'ab al-Zubairī⁽¹⁾ mentions that Ibn Ḥamāla b. 'Auf b. Ḡhanam from the Azd covered the Ka'ba.

At any rate, as we have already seen, this account is no more than a piece of propaganda by the South Arabian tribes. It also seems to imply that the sanctuary of Mecca had been venerated by all kinds of the tribes of Arabia. But as far as we know, the Ka'ba was venerated only by Ḳuraish and its allies.⁽²⁾

The Death of Abū Karib:

According to some Arab authors,⁽³⁾ Abū Karib As'ad

1. Muṣ'ab, p.14.

2. There was a Ka'ba in Nadjirān, see Ibn al-Kalbī, The Book of Idols, pp.38-39; Aghānī, II, p.380-81; Tha'alibī, Thimar al-Ḳulūb, pp.412-13; Ibn al-Athīr, Asd al-ghāb, III, p.327. There was a Ka'ba in al-Ṭa'if; Goldziher, Die Zahiriten..., p.132, n.2. There was also a Ka'ba in Tabāla "Dhū al-Khalaṣa, see Ibn al-Kalbī, Ibid, p.29; Ibn Ḥishām, I, p.91; Azraqī, I, p.73. The tribes Khath'am and Tai' had never respected the Ka'ba, see Al-Anbarī, Sharḥ al-Ḳaṣā'id al-Sab'..., p.257; Iyād b. Nizar had their own Ka'ba in Sindān in the region of Kūfa, al-Anbarī, Ibid, pp.482-83. There was also Dhū al-Ka'bat, which had been favoured by Bakr, Taghlib and Iyād, see Ibn Ḥazm, p.494; Al-Ḍabbī, al-Mufaḍḍaliyat, p.44; Djazīrat, p.171, 230.

3. Mulūk, p.137-138; Iklīl, VIII, p.221.

died a natural death in Ghaimān and was buried there; whereas others state that As'ad was killed by his own people on his return to South Arabia after his long expeditions and devastating wars.⁽¹⁾

1. Iklīl, VIII, p.72; Ibn Sa'īd, p.44 A,MS; Mulūk, p.138. Ḥamza, p.129; Al-Makḍisī, al-Bid'..., III, p.177; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.102.

CHAPTER THREE

SOUTH ARABIA UP TO YŪSUF ʾASʾAR

CHAPTER THREE

Hassan

The story of Ḥassān, which is frequently⁽¹⁾ found in the Arabic traditions, says in outline that when Abū Karib's son, Ḥassān, came to the throne, he sent the Yamanites to conquer the lands of the Arabs and Persians. However, when they reached a place in 'Irāq, the Himyarite and other South Arabian tribes were unwilling to go any farther and wanted to return home, so they approached one of Ḥassān's brothers, called 'Amr, who was with him in the army, and said that, if he would kill his brother, they would make him king, so that he might lead them home again. He was agreeable to this, so they all pledged to join the plot except Dhū Ru'cāin⁽²⁾ a Himyarite, who admonished 'Amr against acting in such a way, but 'Amr took no notice.

However, Ḥassān Yuha'min is mentioned in the inscriptions, along with his father, Abū Karib As'ad. His

1. Guillaume, p.12, see also Ṭabarī, I, p.914-15; Ibn Ḥabīb, Asmā' al-Muḡhtālin, p.115; Ma'arif, p.632; Dīnawarī, p.48; Mas'ūdī, I, p.194; Aghānī, XXII, p.343 [Beirut ed.]; Nashwān, Mulūk, p.143; al-Maḡdisī, al-Bid'..., III, p.178; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.103.

2. Dhū Ru'cāin was one of the Himyarite governors, see al-Murzaḡānī, p.505; Iklīl, VIII, p.59 Nashwān, Mulūk, p.143 made him 'Amr's uncle.

name is mentioned after his father's in Ry 534 and Ry 509, but in Fakhry 60 (= Ja 856) Ḥassān is mentioned after his brother šrḥb'īl/y'fr, who erected the famous dam inscription [CIH 540]. We do not know the real reason why Ḥassān was mentioned after his brother here while his name appears before that of his brother in Ry 534. Anyhow, one cannot hesitate to suggest that Ry 534 and Ry 509 were written before Fakhry 60 (= Ja 856). Ry 534 is dated 543 of the Sabaean era, thus Fakhry 60 must be later than that. Shurḥb'īl seems to be mentioned immediately after his father, by himself, in RES 4105, probably a badly damaged text. šrḥb'īl/y'fr was reigning alone in about 564 of the Sabaean era according to CIH 540 and there is no epigraphic evidence that Ḥassān⁽¹⁾ became king after his father's death.

Ḥassān's Expedition against the Dīadīs:

The Arab legends say that Ḥassān exterminated Dīadīs, who had been living with Ṭaam in al-Yamāma.

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1. The identification of the Ḥassān of the tradition with Shurḥb'īl Ya'fur by Hartmann, Der Islamische Orient, Die Arabische Frage, II, p.491, is outdated by the publication of Ry 509, Ry 534 and Fakhry 60.

It is useful to give some details about these two ancient Arabian tribes, about which little is known from the Arab traditions; we have nothing about them in the Qur'an or in Muhammad's Tradition.

Ṭasm and Djadīs were said to have been the two sons of Laūdh [Lūd], son of Aram, son of Shem, son of Noah; ⁽¹⁾ but according to another account, on the authority of Ibn al Kalbī, both Ṭasm and Djadīs were the brothers of Thamūd b. Kāthir; ⁽²⁾ and another tradition mentions Djadīs as being the brother of Thamūd and son of Djāthir, son of Aram, while Ṭasm was the brother of ʿImlāk and son of Laūdh, son of Iram, son of Sām [Shem]. ⁽³⁾

Thus Ṭasm and Djadīs are classed among the so-called "al-ʿarab al-bāʿida" = "the perished Arabs", a term used in Arab traditions to indicate ancient tribes or people of Arabia, who did not survive under their tribal or ethnic names until the century preceding Islām.

1. Wahb, p.175; Maʿarīf, p.632, Ṭabarī, I, p.771; Aghānī X, p.48; Masʿūdī, I, p.219; Iklīl, I, p.77; Kāmil, I, p.139; Ibn Badroun, pp.52-54; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.43.

2. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.43.

3. Ibn Ḥazm, p.462.

Ṭasm's territories lay between al-Yaman and al-Yamāma, but Djadīs' lands lay in al-Yamāma, in an area called Djaww.⁽¹⁾ Al-Mas'ūdī⁽²⁾ says that Ṭasm were living in al-Baḥraīn. Ibn al-Kalbī⁽³⁾ and Yāqūt⁽⁴⁾ mention that both Ṭasm and Djadīs were living in that area of al-Yamāma called Djaww before the invasion of Ḥassān. Djaww, according to Yāqūt⁽⁵⁾ extended to al-Baḥraīn. According to Ḥamza,⁽⁶⁾ their country was 'Umān, al-Baḥraīn and al-Yamāma.

Their territories are said to have been invaded by Dhū Djīshān b. al-Kran, but their extinction is ascribed to Tubba' Ḥassān.⁽⁷⁾ The reason for Ḥassān's invasion is said to be that Djadīs had risen against the oppression of the Ṭasm. The basic story, frequently told in Arabic

1. Ansab, I, p.7.

2. Mas'ūdī, I, p.219.

3. Ṭabarī, I, p.771.

4. Yāqūt, IV, p.1027; cf. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.43.

5. Yāqūt, IV, p.1027.

6. Ḥamza, p.128.

7. Ibid, p.128.

literature, ⁽¹⁾ of the fall of the two sister-tribes, says that they were at one time under the tyranny of a Ṭasmī named ʿAmlūk (or ʿAmlīk). When ʿAmlūk was called upon to judge a matrimonial dispute concerning a Djadīsī woman named Huzāila, he gave an arbitrary verdict. Enraged by her refusal to accept it, he claimed the jus primae noctis ⁽²⁾ over all the brides of Djadīs. After Djadīs had suffered this tyranny for 40 years, a highborn Djadīsī woman ʿUfaira bint Ghifār, who had herself been a victim, roused her tribe to vengeance and open rebellion. Her brother al-Aswad, however, advised cunning and carried his plan through, overruling her. He invited ʿAmlūk and his tribe to his sister's wedding. During the feast Djadīs fell upon the Ṭasm and killed them with weapons which had been hidden in the sand. Only one escaped, Rihāb b. Murra, who fled to the Himyarite prince, Ḥassān b. Tubbaʿ, and persuaded him to undertake a retaliatory

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1. ʿUbaīd, pp.318-322; Wahb, p.175; Ibn Ḥabīb, ʿAsmāʿ al-Muḡhtalīn, pp.117-20; Maʿārif, p.632; Ṭabarī, I, p.771; Aḡḡānī, II, pp.164-168; Ibn Saʿīd, p.10 A; Ibn Badroun, pp.52-58; Khizāna, II, pp.235-239; Abū al-Fidāʿ, al-Mukhtaṣar..., I, p.99; Samḡūdī, I, pp. 183-86.
 2. ʿAmr b. Abraha Dhū al-Adhʿār used to do the same thing with the highborn Yamanite princesses, see Wahb, p.133.

campaign against the Djadīs.⁽¹⁾ Ḥassān's troops exterminated Djadīs.⁽²⁾ Thus, according to the tradition,⁽³⁾ both tribes were destroyed.

Ḥammād al-Rāwīya [d. 155/772] says that Djadīs had refused to pay their tribute to Ḥimyar, and consequently Ṭasm were destroyed for the offence of Djadīs.⁽⁴⁾

It appears from the former traditions that either Ṭasm had full suzerainty over Djadīs, and, according to one of the traditions,⁽⁵⁾ were vassals of Ḥassān and the rulers of the Yaman, or else both Ṭasm and Djadīs were

1. There is a tradition which says that Abū Karib As'ad exterminated the Djadīs, Ṭabarī, I, p.775; Yāqūt, IV, p.1031; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.46.
2. Yāqūt, IV, p.1031, mentions that Al-Aswad b. Ghifār escaped with his sister and some of his tribe - the Djadīs - to Djabal Tai'; Ḥunīn al Ḥirī [d. about 110/728] has been said to have been the only Djadīs survivor, cf. Aghānī, II, p.341; 352. See also Kāmil, I, p.204.
3. There is a proverb "بواركهم بغيرهم", see al-Mīdānī, Arabum Proverbia, II, p.690, Aghānī, II, p.164; Lisān VII, p.334 "يا قوم ما لا وقت منكم بغيرهم" see Ansāb, I, p.7, al-Mīdānī, Al-Anthāl, I, p.114 (Cairo ed.).
4. See al-Māidānī, Ibid. I, p.304 (Cairo ed.).
5. Ibn Sa'īd, p.10. A Ms. on the authority of al-Baiḥaqī [d. 470/1077]; Yāqūt, IV, p.1031.

vassals of the Yaman,⁽¹⁾ but the king of Ṭasm had been appointed king over the two tribes by the Yamanite king.⁽²⁾

However, it is more probable that the suzerainty of South Arabia had been further extended, since the time of Abū Karib As'ad, to include the central and eastern parts of the Arabian peninsula.

As we have said before, As'ad and his son Ḥassān Yuha'min were in Central Arabia not far from the Yamāma. Thus, it is easier to accept the Arab traditions about the suzerainty of South Arabia over Al-Yamāma, but it is not clear whether this situation arose during Ḥassān's reign - if he ever ruled - or during his father's reign. Ḥassān was mentioned in the inscriptions as joint sovereign with his father. [Fakhry 60; Ry 509, Ry 534]. Ḥassān's general, who is said to have been in the vanguard of the troops which fought the Djadīs, was 'Abd Kulāl.⁽³⁾

It is also said that Djadhīma al-Abrash or al Waḍḍah, an Arab king who founded an important kingdom on the lower

1. cf. Ibn Badroun, p. 57.

2. cf. Mulūk, p. 138.

3. See infra p. 154.

Euphrates which included the towns of al-Ḥīra, al-Anbār etc., before the Lakhmid dynasty^{was} appeared there⁽¹⁾ and invaded the territories of Ṭasm and Djadīs, but found that Ḥassān b. Tubba' As'ad had also invaded them,⁽²⁾ and thus was forced to retreat, after one of his squadrons was defeated by Ḥassān's troops.⁽³⁾ At any rate, it is, of course, impossible to sift the historical truth from this mass of legend, but one can assume that the influence of al-Ḥīra on the Persian Gulf would explain the existence of groups of people like Ṭasm and Djadīs of al-Yamāma, who, according to the Arab traditions, were numbered amongst the dead. It may also be possible to see from this an indication of the struggle between the South Arabians and al-Ḥīra for the suzerainty over al-Yamāma. On the other hand, it is evident that South Arabian power over the central and eastern parts of the Arabian peninsula was

1. E.I.⁽¹⁾ "Djadhīma, Al-Abrash."

2. Caussin de Perceval, Essai..., II, p.26, is not correct when he mentions that Djadhīma had attacked the Ṭasm and the Djadīs before Ḥassān's expedition.

3. Ṭabarī, I, p.750; see also, Aghānī, vol.14, p.73 Ibn Saḷām, Ṭabaḳāt, p.32-33; al-Amidī, Al-Mu'tatīf, p.34; Khizāna, IV, p.567, all with slight differences amongst them.

growing in the early part of the fifth century⁽¹⁾ of the Christian era.

As already mentioned, the Arab authors counted Ṭasm and Djadīs among the Arabs who perished. We find in the Greek sources the name "Jodisitae" referring to a tribe in Eastern Arabia,⁽²⁾ which would imply that Djadīs were in existence about the years 125-130 C.E. But according to the traditions, both these tribes also existed in the time of Ḥassān b. As'ad. According to the inscriptions, he was with his father Abū Karib As'ad at the beginning of the fifth century; thus Ṭasm and Djadīs should have been in al-Yamāma during the first quarter of the fifth century.⁽³⁾ It is likely that both Ṭasm and Djadīs later broke into small groups, each of which merged with other larger tribes, so that the names of their tribes have disappeared.

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1. Caussin de Perceval's suggestion, [Essai, I, p.100] that these events took place about the year 250 C.E. is not correct.
 2. Zaidān, Ibid, p.79.
 3. Ibn al Kalbī, Aḡnam p.110 mentions Kathra' as an idol of the Ṭasm and the Djadīs, which was worshipped until the rise of Islām. It was broken by Nahshal b. al-Rabis. See Tādī, II, p.125. There are many cities and places which were described by the Arab Geographers as belonging to Ṭasm and Djadīs, see Zaidān, Djurdjī, al-ʿArab Kabal-Islām, pp.79-80.

At any rate, the Banū Ḥanīfa occupied the Yamāma after Ṭasm and Djadīs, and remained there until the rise of Islām. (1)

The memory of Ṭasm and Djadīs lingered amongst the Arabs in many proverbs (2) as well as in the famous story, frequently found in Arabic literature, about Zarḳā', who could see anyone approaching even at a distance of three days' journey. (3)

ʿAmr b. Abū Karib Asʿad:

Arab historians mention that ʿAmr b. Abū Karib Asʿad governed South Arabia after he killed his brother Ḥassān. The statement runs as follows: "When ʿAmr b. Tibbān returned to the Yaman he could not sleep and became a prey to insomnia. Being much concerned at this, he asked the physicians and those of the soothsayers and diviners who were wise men, about his trouble. One of

1. cf. E.I. (2) "Ḥanīfa".

2. al-Mīdanī, Arabum Proverbia, II, 690; Aghānī, II, p.164; Lisān, VII, p.334.

3. Ṭabari, I, p.774; Thaʿalibī, Thimar al-Ḳulūb, p.300; Sharḥ Diwān al-Mutanabbi, IV, p.171; Diwān al-Nābigha, p.34; Diwān al-Aʿsha, p.72-74; see also Maʿarif, p.632; Mulūk, p.17; Ibn Saʿid, p.10 A.MS; Ibn Badroun, p.68.

them said: 'No man has ever killed his brother or his kinsman as treacherously as you killed your brother without losing his sleep and becoming a prey to insomnia'. At this he began to kill all the nobles who had urged him to murder his brother Ḥassān."⁽¹⁾

South Arabian inscriptions have nothing to say about ʿAmr. He is not mentioned with his father in the inscriptions we have. In his reconstruction of Ry 534 J. Ryckmans suggests that ʿamr is mentioned with his father Abū Karib Asʿad,⁽²⁾ but this is only a hypothesis.

According to Ibn Ishāq: "When ʿAmr died, the Himyarite Kingdom fell apart and the people split up into separate parties."⁽³⁾ But Naḡhwān and other Arab historians mention many kings who succeeded him. The verses of the Lay⁽⁴⁾ speak of the Kings after ʿAmr as follows:

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1. A. Guillaume, p.13; see also, Mulūk, pp.30-31. This story was accepted by all the Arab historians.
 2. J. Ryckmans, "Le corégent du roi himyarite....," RSO, XXXVII (1962), p.242; 247.
 3. A. Guillaume, p.13.
 4. The Lay, p.33.

"Or Tubba', 'Amr the son of Ḥassān, who poured out gore with his blood-shedding sword?

He slew the Jews in Yathrib, and showed them the fangs of Death's open jaws,

Or where is 'Abd-Kulāl, who passed over to the faith of the Messiah, the pure, the fasting one?"

From the Arab historians we have different lists of the kings who reigned after 'Amr b. As'ad.⁽¹⁾ Their chronology is obscure and cannot be accepted as a historical tradition, because we have no confirmation from the inscriptions; Consequently, we accept the evidence to be found in the inscriptions.

Šuraḥb'īl Ya'fur

Šuraḥb'īl Ya'fur is mentioned in the defective inscription RES 4105, and also in Fakhry 60 Ry 534 along with his father Abū-Karib, styled with the full title, while in CIH 540 he appears alone as king. srḥb'īl/y'fr probably ruled as sole sovereign after his father. Be that as it may, the only noteworthy events of his reign were the destruction or serious damage of the Ma'rib Dam

1. For this list see M. Hartmann, Der Islamische Orient... II, p.481 ff.

in successive years and its subsequent repair in 565 of the Sabaean era. When this dam broke for the third and fourth⁽¹⁾ time under šrḥb•l/y•fr, the king ordered its repair. In CIH 540, the rebuilding of the dam after both ruptures is described in detail. The king was present personally: 20,000 men worked there. In his full title we authentically see for the first time the form w••rbhmw/ḫwdm/wthmt in place of the form in Ry 509 from his father's time w••rb/ḫwd/wthmt.

•Abd Kulāl:

In the inscription CIH 6 we have a dedicant by the name of •BDKLLM.

The inscription runs as follows:

1. •bdkllm/ws•thw/•b•ly/dt/•lh...
2. l•n/wbnyhmy/hn•m/wh•ll/•lht/qwlm/b...
3. r•w/whsqrn/bthmw/yrt/brd•/rhmnn/wbr•
4. w/bwrh/dhrf/dlḫlḫt/wsb•y/whms/m•tm/ḫyw

It is rendered by Professor Beeston as follows:⁽²⁾

1. "•BDKLLM and his wife •B•ly daughter of •LH [N
2. and their children HN•m and H•ll of the tribe QWLM...

1. H. Von Wissmann, "Himyar...", Le Muséon, LXXVII (1964), pp.493-94.

2. A.F.L. Beeston, Sabaean Inscriptions, p.4.

3. constructed and roofed their house YRT by the assistance of the Merciful God, and constructed..
4. in the month dHRF(?) of (the Year) five hundred and seventy three...?"

•BDKLLM here is not styled in any manner, and the end of line 2, where only 3 spaces are damaged, would not have allowed for any special or significant styling. Thus the only case in the inscriptions where a name near enough to •Abd Kulāl of the Arabic fails to corroborate the claim that he was king, in any narrow or wide application of the term.

Yet some scholars⁽¹⁾ have proposed, from the similarity of the names which are mentioned by both the Arab historians and CIH 6, that he was a Himyarite king, that he came to the throne after Šrḥb•l/Y•fr, and ruled about five years, era years 555-560.

The era year 573, by which CIH 6 is dated falls near the era year 565 by which CIH 541 (from Shurahb•il Ya•fur's time) is dated, and the proximity of time as well as the later date of CIH 6 must have tempted Philby

1. M. Martmann, Der Islamische Orient, Die Arabische Frage. II, p.486, 492; Wellhausen, Skizzen und Vorarbeiten, II, p.191; Institution, p.217.

into putting forward the view about the kingship of *Abd Kulāl and assigning to him a reign of five years, from 455-460 = (570-575 according to 115 B.C.E.).

According to Philby, in his book, "The Background of Islam",⁽¹⁾ *Abd Kulāl was a Christian king, who came to power with Abyssinian help, but he quotes no evidence to prove this claim. He has also suggested that *Abd Kulāl was the leader of a Christian counter-revolution against the Jewish régime. He also suggests that he was "perhaps a tribal chief who had staged a successful rebellion, perhaps with Aksumite help, against his liege lord". His other suggestion that "he may have been (in view of his name) a priest of the gods", seems hardly plausible in view of the fact that in CIH 6 RHMNN, the monotheistic God,⁽²⁾ is mentioned alone.

In any case, there is no evidence from the inscriptions to suggest that there was an Abyssinian invasion at that time. If *BDKLLM of CIH 6 was a king, he would surely have mentioned the royal title in his inscription.

1. Op. cit., pp.117-118.

2. Philby, Arabian Highlands, p.260. I have not seen a god called Kulāl amongst the pre-Islamic deities.

Abraha did this after coming to power in South Arabia, or at least called himself mlk, as did Sumyafa°, the Abyssinian vassal.

We know from CIH 540 that šrḥb°l y°fr was a king in 565 of the Sabaean era, and had the royal title, but we have no epigraphic evidence of a son or sons of his, whether they ruled as kings or not.

According to Arab traditions which know nothing clear, if at all, about Shurāḥb°il Ya°fur, °Amr b. Abū Karib As°ad left children, the eldest son being Tubba° Ḥassān who was possessed by an evil spirit (the Djinn), so that °Abd Kulāl b. Maḥwab was afraid that somebody outwith the royal house would try to make himself king. °Abd Kulāl who was the stepbrother of °Amr⁽¹⁾ made himself king over Himyar and ruled it well. He was converted to Christianity by a man from Ghassān in Syria. The Himyarites, however, later killed °Abd Kulāl and then Tubba° recovered from his illness and became king.⁽²⁾

1. Ibn Sa°id, p.46A, MS.

2. Ṭabarī, I, p.881; Ḳalkaḥandī, Ṣubḥ,..., V, p.23. Other historians only say that he was a Christian king.

From the above tradition we have no means of knowing whether 'Abd Kulāl was a real king or merely a regent for Tubba'. Some sources say that 'Abd Kulāl followed 'Amr b. As'ad Abū Karib, but the South Arabian inscriptions make no mention of 'Amr, as we said before.

'Abd Kulāl is mentioned as one of the commanders of the Army led against Tasa and Djadīs by Ḥassān Tubba'. (1)

In any case, even if he was a commander of the Himyarite army, a member of the royal family or connected with the royal House, (2) he was probably not a real king, but at least acted as a regent at some time during his life. But we have no firm evidence as to when the regency took place, but if we suppose that it was after Shurahb'il Ya'fur's reign it would have been sometime after 565 of the era year in which Shurahb'il Ya'fur is mentioned as the ruling king in CIH 540.

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1. Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab..., p.145, MS; Ansāb, I, p.7; Ibn Ḥazm, p.434; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.42, says he was one of the Himyarite rulers; Iḥtikāk, p.526; Iklīl, II, p.357.
 2. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr al-Kaḥd wa'l-Amam. p.120, mentions that 'Abd Kulāl was from the tribe of Banū Ghidān, and the latter from Himyar. Ansāb, I, pp.10-11, mentions 'Abd Kulāl as a forefather of the Himyari tribe which was later called "Shu'ban".

Most of the Arab traditions state that ʿAbd Kulāl was a Himyarite king and a Christian. Ibn Khaldūn says: "he held the religion of ʿIsāb. Marīam, a virtuous and upright religion"⁽¹⁾ but he hid his faith from his people. Ibn Saʿīd explains why ʿAbd Kulāl had hidden his faith: "In his region the Arabs raided بلاد الأرياف and ʿIrāq so that Shāpūr Dhū Al-Aktāf sent a punitive raid against them and they suffered badly at his hand." According to the author of Al-Kamāim quoted in Ibn Saʿīd ʿAbd Kulāl decided to force all the Yamanites to embrace Christianity because he saw how prevalent Judaism was amongst the native population. But, he heard that Shāpūr had threatened to annihilate the Christians and to break up the Crosses, so he made preparations to lay siege to their greatest city, Constantinople. ʿAbd Kulāl was afraid that Shāpūr would raid South Arabia if he declared his faith, so he let it be known only to his close friends. A cross was found in his house when he died.⁽²⁾ Shāpūr himself lived at the beginning of the 4th century C.E.

1. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.570; see also Maʿārif, p.309; Hamza, p.87.

2. Ibn Saʿīd, p.46A, MS.

According to Arab sources, Tubba' b. Ḥassān succeeded 'Abd Kulāl. After Tubba', Marthad b. 'Abd Kulāl, a stepbrother of Tubba', came to the throne. Marthad was strong, good, and highly intelligent.⁽¹⁾ Al-Ya'qūbī⁽²⁾ says that Marthad became king after his father's death, while al-Mas'ūdī⁽³⁾ says that Marthad governed after 'Amr b. Tubba'.

After Marthad, his son Walī'a became king, and showed himself to be a wise man and good governor.⁽⁴⁾ But Wahb says that Marthad became king after Tubba' b. Ḥassān.

Naghwan considers Fahd al-Mulk b. 'Abd Kulāl was a great king and says that dues were collected for him from Djazīrat Zailā' and Djazīrat Barbar, and all the territories of the Yaman.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Ma'arif, p.635; Ḥamza, p.131; Ibn Sa'id, p.47A, MS; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.106 calls him Mudathir.
 2. Ta'riḫ, I, p.220.
 3. Mas'ūdī, I, p.194.
 4. Ma'arif, p.636; Ḥamza, p.131; Ibn Sa'id, p.47A. al-Mas'ūdī, I, p.194 calls him Wakī'a; Wahb, p.300 calls him Rabi'a b. Marthad and states that he became king after Tubba'.
 5. Mulūk, pp.180-81.

According to al-Murzabbānī,⁽¹⁾ there were other sons of ʿAbd Kulāl, one called Ḥassān and the other Shurāḥbʿil, who both led an unsuccessful raid against Kinanā and Muḍar. In this battle Shurāḥbʿil b. ʿAbd Kulāl was captured. It is likely that both ʿAbd Kulāl's sons were the leaders of the Himyarite army, and thus held these important positions as an inheritance from their father who, as previously indicated, was a commander of the army.

It is interesting to mention that Muḥammad, on his return from Tabūk [8/629], received a letter from the kings of the Himyarites, accepting Islām. Among these people were al-Ḥārith b. ʿAbd Kulāl, and Naʿīm b. ʿAbd Kulāl and others⁽²⁾ whom Muḥammad himself held in high esteem. This tradition means that ʿAbd Kulāl's family enjoyed an important position prior to the rise of Islām.

Shurāḥbʿil Yakuf:

The next king we hear of in the records is

1. Murzabbānī, Muʿdjam..., p.190; See also, Iklīl, II, p.35W
2. A. Guillaume, pp.642-43; Taʿrīkh, II, p.86. Mulūk, p.93 says that al-Ḥārith was a king of the Himyarites; Muḥʿab, p.93, says that the mother of Muḥammad b. ʿUbaīdallāh b. ʿAbbās was ʿUmrāt bint ʿArif b. Kulāl b. Ḥimyar.

Shuraḥb'īl Yakuf, who is known from CIH 644 as an absolute ruler. CIH 644, as reconstructed by A. Jamme,⁽¹⁾ reads as follows:-

1.]/bythmw/yré/br[d°/rḥmnn/wbnhw/krstś]
2. [gln/wbmqm/mr°hmw/šrh] [b°l/ykf/mlk/sb°/wd
[rydn/wḥḍrmwt/wyant]
3. [w°°rbhmw/ḥwḍm/wthmt/bw] rḥn/dḥgtn/dlḥast/w
[sb°y/wḥms/m°tm]

The defective inscription, CIH 537, gives Shuraḥb'īl Yakuf a date of which only the unit 5 survives. It would be reasonable to assume from Jamme's reconstruction of this inscription, that the date must be 575, because the only other dated inscription referring to him and his sons is dated 583, thus it is reasonable to assume that he was sole king in the era year 575. Jamme points out that RES 4919 and CIH 537 are in fact one inscription.⁽²⁾ So if we accepted Jamme's reconstruction of RES 4919 and CIH 537 it means that Shuraḥb'īl Yakuf here is mentioned with three of his sons:

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1. A. Jamme, La Dynastie de Šarāḥbi'īl Yakūf..., p.4.
 2. Ibid, p.8.

°mlkn/°rhh

[°l/ykf/wbnyhw]/nwfm/wlhy°t/ynwf/w

m°dkrb/yn°m/°mlk/sb°/w [drydn etc.]

J 876 also mentioned Shurahb°il Yakuf with [w/lhy°]
t/ynf/wm°dkrb/yn [°m/°mk/wdrydn/w] etc.

We have other inscriptions referring to this king and his sons, namely CIH 620 and RES 4969. He is also mentioned in RES 4298, which is very badly mutilated, but which almost certainly refers to this king. His father's name has unfortunately been obliterated.

Ma°dika^rib Yun°um:

Ma°dika^rib Yun°um is mentioned with his father as we have just seen. His name appears as a sole king in CIH 620 which is badly damaged. His brother lhy°t/ynf is also mentioned with him.

If we assume that Shurahb°il Yakuf's reign ended in the era year 585, we would be justified in assigning the remaining 30 years to his sons, or to someone else.

We only know from CIH 620 that Ma°dika^rib Yun°um was a sole king, so there is no evidence to suggest that Shurahb°il Yakuf's sons, nwfm, and lhy°t/ynwf, were each in turn sole ruler after their brother, unless we find

inscriptions mentioning them as sole king in the same way as with Ma'dikarib Yun'um.

Ma'dikarib Ya'fur:

The last Himyarite king, who had that official title, whose name and dates are known to us, is Ma'dikarib Ya'fur, who appears in Ry 510.

Interesting points about Ry 510 are that it is precisely dated to the year 631 of the Sabaean era, and records a hitherto unknown king named Ma'dikarib Ya'fur, who must have been the immediate predecessor of Dhū Nuwās, whose reign ended in C.E.525 with the Abyssinian conquest of South Arabia.

There is no indication from Ry 510 to assume, as Philby⁽¹⁾ suggests, that Ma'dikarib Ya'fur was the real name of Dhū Nuwās who appears to have been known by several different names as we shall see later.

Ma'dikarib Ya'fur is mentioned in the Book of the Himyarites⁽²⁾ as "Ma'dikarim", who preceded Masrūq. His

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1. Philby "Motor tracks and Sabaean inscriptions in Najd", GJ, CXVII (1950), p.214.
 2. Op.cit., p.CXXXIII.

régime must have been in financial difficulties, with the result that he was compelled to seek a large credit from Ruhm, the daughter of Azma° and an important figure at the time. The king asked her for a loan of 12,000 dinars, which, when he wanted to return it, she offered him as a gift of honour.

Ma°dikaṛib Ya°fur is mentioned only once in epigraphic texts and that is in Ry 510, which runs as follows:

Ma°dikaṛib Ya°fur, King of Saba° and Dhū Rayḍān and Ḥaḍramawt and Yamanat and their Arabs on the plateau and in Tihamat. They displayed inscription, hwrw, and made public and executed this inscription at Maḥil Djamb, above the camp of the expedition at the cliff Kata°, when the Arabs had rebelled against them in sedition and Mundhir had fought them (i.e. the Arabs) and they went out on the expedition with their tribes Saba°, Himyar, Rḥbt, Ḥadramawt, and Yḥn, and with their Arab tribes Kinda and Madhhidj and with bany Th°laba mdr and sb°. In the month ḡayzn⁽¹⁾ of 631.

The most important thing, as we can see from Ry 510, is that Ma°dikaṛib Ya°fur must have had great power to go

1. ḡayzn = May or June, see Beeston, Epigraphic South Arabian..., p.24.

with his troops to fight the Tha'laba, Muḍar and Sab'.⁽¹⁾
 It appears from Ry 510 that Ma'adikarib did not meet al-Munḍhir's troops.⁽²⁾ But the question arises as to why Munḍhir was mentioned in the inscription. As far as we know, Central Arabia came under the sovereignty of Munḍhir after 530.

This inscription does not mention the leader of the Kinda. As far as we know from the Arab traditions, Harith was a king of the Kinda at that time, but he is not mentioned here as a leader of the Kinda. It is not easy to trace the events of Ry 510 from the Arab traditions or from other literary sources. But, as we shall see, it seems that this expedition was intended to restore the sovereignty of the Kinda over the tribes of Ma'add.

The most important question is where the Tha'laba were living at this time, and what tribe of the Tha'laba

1. Sab' is said to have been a branch of the Hamdan, Ibn Ḥazm, p.475; Iṣṭiḳāḳ, p.254; Iklīl, X, p.53, but it is more reasonable to suggest that sb' in the inscription means Subaī', the Northern Arabian tribe [Caekel, Gamharat, p.5]. It is feasible, therefore, to find Tha'laba, Muḍar and Subaī' in one confederation.
2. J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions historiques...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), pp.328-30.

is referred to here.

Tha'laba, as far as we know, is a widely-used name in Arabic and the eponym of a number of subdivisions of the larger tribal divisions of Ancient Arabia.⁽¹⁾ So it is very difficult to identify the Tha'laba to which Ry 510 alludes.

According to the chronicle of Joshua Stylites, we find that "the Arabs of Greek territory also, who are called the Tha'labites, went to Hiratâ (the capital) of Na'mân, and found a caravan which was going up to him, [Na'mân] and camels that were carrying up to him".⁽²⁾ That happened in the year 503. Rothstein recorded a disagreement with Nöldeke⁽³⁾ on the interpretation of the term "Tha'labites" in the matter already mentioned, and

1. Coussin de Perceval, Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes, II, p.691; E.I.⁽¹⁾ "Tha'laba". It is more likely that Harith and Marthad of Tha'laba which are mentioned among the supporters of Sunyafa' al-A'wa' [J. Ryckmans, "Une inscription chrétienne...", Le Muséon, LIX (1946), p.167 Istanbul 7608 bis], belong to South Arabian tribes like Azdî and Kinānî.

2. Wright, The Chronicle of Joshua the Stylite, pp.45-46.

3. See Nöldeke, Ghassāniden, p.6.

maintained that the term referred not to the Ghassanids but to the tribe of Tha'labā, a subdivision of Bakr, which at the time was allied with the Kinda.⁽¹⁾ In this he followed W. Wright, the translator of Joshua Stylites, who put forward a similar argument in a footnote.⁽²⁾ Olinder⁽³⁾ followed Rothstein and tried to reconcile the accounts of Joshua Stylites with the Arabic tradition and in particular the Bakrite one, and moreover related it to the dynasty of Kinda; but his attempt to reconcile these sources is attended with serious difficulties which he himself admits.⁽⁴⁾

A word may be said here about the tribe Tha'labā mentioned by Joshua Stylites; the phrase "house of Tha'labā" could very well have been used by an author - Joshua Stylites - who was not acquainted with the new-comers

1. G. Rothstein, Die Dynastie der Lahmiden in al-Hira, pp. 90-92. See also W. Caskel in E.I.⁽²⁾ "Bakr B. Wā'il."

2. Wright, The Chronicle..., p.45, No.1.

3. Olinder, The Kings....., pp.52-53.

4. Ibid, p.61; see also Smith, p.446.

as were the Ghassanids but knew them as Arabs allied to Rome and at that time ruled over by a chief called Tha'labā;⁽¹⁾ thus, the use of the term "house of Tha'labā" by Joshua Stylites will be seen to reflect the fact of Tha'labā's chieftainship at the time and to distinguish the Roman Arabs who were Ghassanids from other Roman Arabs who were not.⁽²⁾ Thus, if the Tha'labites of Joshua Stylites were Ghassanids, then they could not possibly have been mentioned as a small group in central Arabia under the control of Ma'dikarib Ya'fur. So it is not possible to connect the Tha'labā in Ry 510 with the Tha'labā of the Ghassanids.

Agar, the son of Arethas, whom Romanus fought and took prisoner, was also described by Byzantine sources as being of the Tha'labā tribe.⁽³⁾ If one seeks to identify the Tha'labite tribe in some way with the Hudjr, one

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1. Tha'labā b. 'Amr b. al-Mudjalid is mentioned as the first phylarch of the Ghassanid dynasty, see Ibn Hazm, p.374. cf. also E.I.⁽¹⁾ "Tha'labā".
 2. Shahid, "Ghassan and Byzantium...", Der Islam, XXXIII (1958), p.252.
 3. Smith, p.447, says "The description of Agar as of the tribe of Tha'labān has been regarded as a reference to Taghlib", and tends to accept this view.

would most probably link them with the Tha'laba of Asad, ⁽¹⁾ after whom the town ath-Tha'labiyya ⁽²⁾ was called. They were the leaders of the Banū Asad, and the Kindite Ḥudjir is said to have dominated all the major tribes or confederations of Ma'add and central Arabia before Islām.

Most of the Tha'labites, if not all, seem to have been important in their tribes. ⁽³⁾ One wonders whether a Tha'laba clan stood second in rank to the ruling Kindites and acted as their close associates in the tribes under their rule. It is said that they became the allies of the Persians. ⁽⁴⁾ It is also said that the Banū Darān from the Tha'laba killed Ḥudjir B. 'Amr. ⁽⁵⁾ So one could surmise that the Tha'laba of Asad had rebelled against the Kinda, but it is hard to be sure when they rebelled and if the events of Ry 510 allude to this revolt or to another

1. Bakrī, p.341; Yāqūt, I, p.953 citing Ibn al-Kalbī. See also A. Musil, Norther Negāz, p.219.

2. Ath-Tha'labiyya is on the southern edge of the sandy desert of the Nefūd, see A.Musil, Arabia Deserta, p.521.

3. Tādī, s.v. t'lb; cf. Smith, p.461; M. Hartmann, Der Islamische Orient, Die Arabische Frage, II, p.335.

4. Bakrī, p.341.

5. Ibn Ḥazm, p.193; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.623.

Tha'labā. Furthermore, the events of Ry 510 took place in Ma'sil al-Djamḥ in Central Arabia, while the Tha'labā of Asad were living far to the west, but not too far from Ma'sil al-Djamḥ. The tradition says that Ḥudjir b. al-Ḥārith ruled over the Asad and Kināna, who lived in the territory south of the mountains of Shammar on both sides of the Wādī Rumma. (1)

From another Tha'labā, a branch of Bakr b. Wā'il, came Ḥārith the king of Kinda, on his mother's side. (2)

Tha'labā was allied with the Kinda; the former occupied a large portion of the Syrian desert between the kingdom of al-Ḥīra on the east and the Ghassānids on the west. (3)

They also lived in the Tihāma of al-Yaman, Yamāma and Baḥrain as far as the borders of Mesopotamia. (4) They were ruled over by the kings of Kinda, of the house of Ākil al-Murār. (5)

The Tha'labā were themselves sub-divided into the Banū Shaībān, Dhuhl Taīm and Ḳāīs. (6)

1. Olinder, The Kings..., p.74.

2. Ibid, p.52.

3. Caussin de Perceval, Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes, II, p.691.

4. E.I. (1) "Bakr".

5. Olinder, op.cit., p.52; 60. For the meaning of al-Murār see Smith, p.445, no.6.

6. W. Caskel, Ġamharat..., I, p.242.

As has already been said, the Tha'laba of Bakr b. Wā'il were under the sovereignty of the Kinda.⁽¹⁾ Mu'āwiya al-Djawn, the son of Ḥudjir Ākil al-Murār, was ruler over al-Yamāma. The family of al-Djawn had political connections with al-Ḥīra, and asked the help of al-Ḥīra in their unsuccessful battle of Djabala,⁽²⁾ dated by Olinder at the beginning of the eighth decade of the sixth century.⁽³⁾ Unfortunately, we do not know the real date of the beginning of good relations between the al-Djawn and al-Ḥīra governments. But, as far as we know, the tribes of al-Yamāma and al-Baḥraīn were on good terms with Persia and its vassals, the Lakhmids. Thus, one may suggest that in Ry 510 the Tha'laba might be seen as a branch of Bakr, who used to live there, or it might be that Tha'laba in Ry 510 refers to Tha'laba of Asad.

The Tha'laba were under the sovereignty of the Kinda, who were vassals of the South Arabian kings. Thus it seems that, when some Arabs had rebelled, Mundhir saw this

1. Aghānī, VIII, p.63.

2. Naḳā'id, p.556 (Leiden ed.); Aghānī, X, p.35.

3. Olinder, "Al Ġaun of the family of Ākil al-Murār", Le Monde Oriental, XXV (1931), p.220. Lyall, in the introduction to the Diwān of 'Amir b. aṭ-Ṭufāil, p.78, has decided on the year of the Prophet's birth as the year of the battle of Djabala. It is also dated by al-Yazīdī in Naḳā'id, p.672 (Leiden ed.) to 57 years before Islām.

as an opportunity to dominate the tribes of Central Arabia, but the presence of Ma'dīkarib and his troops made him revise his plans. It is also possible that Mundhir and Ma'dīkarib made an agreement with each other, by which Mundhir recognised the sovereignty of Ma'dīkarib over the Central Arabian tribes.

From Ry 510 one can see the struggle of South Arabia and Ḥīra for the suzerainty over Central and North Arabia. It is also possible that North Arabia was under the control of Mundhir at this time, but Central Arabia was still under the control of Kinda, the vassal of South Arabia.

The inscription Ry 510 records that Ma'dīkarib Ya'fur went to Central Arabia to fight the 'a'rāb who had rebelled there. The territory of Ma'sil belonged to Ma'add tribes, so it is highly probable that this expedition was an attempt to resume the sovereignty of Kinda with the help of their master, the King of South Arabia.

Rabī'a and Muḍar themselves had a story to tell. They alone drove away the Yamanis and freed their land and tribes from them. And this was at the battle of Khazāz, on one of the 'Ayyām al-'Arab, which took place a long

time before the days of Kulaib wā'il, ⁽¹⁾ who had had to fight the Madh̄idj ⁽²⁾ and their Yamanī confederates.

It was a battle against the authority of the king of Himyar. This is the account of the battle and its causes, according to Abū 'Ubaīda:

"A man from al-Yaman would come accompanied by a clerk and furnished with a carpet on which he would seat himself. He would take away from the ḥanwāl of the Nizār [here possibly animal and cattle] whatever he liked, exactly as the collectors of their Zakāt [alms] do nowadays. It [the battle of Khazāz] was the first occasion on which Ma'add asserted their independence from, [or, revolted against], the kings of Himyar. The Nizār were then still few in number, so they lit beacons on the top of Khazāz for three nights and raised smoke for three days. On that day the Nizār revolted against the people of al-Yaman and stopped them from collecting taxes from them. The battlefield in Khazāz, is a mountain in the region of al-Bahrāin. ⁽³⁾ Other accounts of the battle of Khazāz claim

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1. Abū 'Amr b. al-'Alā' insists that Kulaib was dead before the battle, cf. 'Ikd, V, p.246.
 2. Madh̄idj is mentioned in Ry 510.
 3. 'Ikd, V, pp.245-247.

that it was the Madhhidj, to whose aid the rest of the Yamanis rallied, who were the main belligerents on the Yamanī side."⁽¹⁾ Indeed it seems that it was the Madhhidj, or more especially Banū al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b, who bore the main brunt of the fight against the Ma'addis until Islamic times. ⁽²⁾

One can presume from the above account that Ma'addite tribes had rebelled against the sovereignty of the South Arabians, or that, in another sense, they rebelled against Kinda the viceroy of the South Arabian kings. Ma'dikarib Ya'fur in Ry 510 recorded his expedition in which he resumed the power of Kinda over the Central Arabian tribes.

1. Yāqūt, II, p.432.

2. al-Farazdaq, in Naḳā'id, II, p.600 ff (Leiden), boasting of the victories of his tribe against al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b, says in a verse: "we came within sight of Nadīrān and its people, Nadīrān, the land whose Ḳayls were never subdued." Iklīl, I, p.149, quoting the verse, comments that al-Farazdaq only said, "we came within sight," but not "we entered".

CHAPTER FOUR

THE REIGN OF YŪSUF ʿAS ʿAR

CHAPTER FOUR

Lakhnī'a Yanūf Dhū Shanātir

Ibn Ishāk mentions that: "A certain Himyari, called Lakhnī'a⁽¹⁾ Yanūf Dhū Shanātir,⁽²⁾ who had no connection with the royal house, arose and killed off their leading men and put the royal family to open shame..."

Lakhnī'a was a most evil man - a sodomite. He used to summon a young man of the royal family and assault him in a room which he had constructed for this very purpose, so that he could not reign after him. Then he used to go from this upper chamber of his to his guards and soldiers (who were below), having put a toothpick in his mouth to let them know that he had accomplished his purpose.⁽³⁾ One

1. Tādī, V, p.499, reads Lakhi'a, and in Ibid, III, p.317 reads it Lakhti'a.

2. Shanātir means fingers, or ear-ring in the South Arabian dialect, see Lisān, VI, p.99; Tādī, III, p.317; Ibn al-Fakīh, p.40; Mukhtārāt, p.58; Ibn Rasūl, p.47.

3. cf. Ṭabarī, I, p.918, who adds: "Then he would release him and he would appear before the guards and the people utterly disgraced."

day he sent for Zur'a Dhū Nuwās, son of Tibbān As'ad, brother of Ḥassān.⁽¹⁾

Al-Dīnawarī⁽²⁾ mentions that Lakhnī'a was from 'Anis and Yuḥābir, and that he had a large army. His real authority extended over 'Uman, al-Yaman, and along the coast. Al-Tha'alibī⁽³⁾ points out that he was one of a noble family which means that Lakhnī'a was at least a petty king or governor in some part of the country, probably southeast South Arabia, as al-Dīnawarī mentions.

However, this Lakhnī'a cannot be identified with lhy't/ynwf, who is mentioned in RES 4919 and the reconstructed inscription Ja 876, because the period between the dating of the above inscriptions and the time of Yūsuf 'As'ar is too long. Even so, there is no epigraphic evidence that Lakhnī'a was a sole ruler over the Himyarites,

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1. A. Guillaume, p.13; Ta'riḫ, p.225; Ma'ārif, p.636; Ṭabarī, I, p.918, Mas'ūdī, I, p.194; Ibn Sa'id, p.47A.
 2. Dīnawarī, p.42.
 3. al-Tha'alibī, Thimār al-Ḳulūb..., p.222.

and as we shall see, he was probably a rebellious nobleman who ruled for a short time after Ma'dikarib Ya'fur, the owner of Ry 510. And it is also probable that Yūsuf (Dhū Nuwās) revolted against him and put an end to his rule.

Yūsuf 'As'ar

The name of Yūsuf 'As'ar's father is not mentioned in Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028. In fact it does not appear in any inscription. The only thing we know from Ry 510 (dated 631, Sabaean era, two years before Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028), is that the name of the king (who preceded Yūsuf 'As'ar) was Ma'dikarib Ya'fur. But this inscription (Ry 510) does not mention any son of Ma'dikarib Ya'fur.

According to the Book of the Himyarites, ^{Yūsuf predecessor} his father's name was Ma'dikarim.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, from the similarity of the names mentioned in Ry 510 (Ma'dikarib Ya'fur) and in the Book of the Himyarites (Ma'dikarim), it is reasonable to assume that the names belong to the same king.

The Arabic sources give different names to his father. Ibn Hishām⁽²⁾ calls him Tibbān As'ad, brother of Ḥassān.

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1. The Book, p.cxxxiii.
 2. A. Guillaume, pp.13-14; see also Wahb, p.301, Iklīl, VIII, p.227, citing Wahb; Ṭabarī, I, p.918, adds after Tibbān As'ad the name of his ancestors; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.107.

Al-Ya'qūbī⁽¹⁾ calls him As'ad. It seems likely that Ibn Hishām and al-Ya'qūbī have simply omitted the genealogical link between Dhū Nuwās and As'ad. Al-Dīnawarī⁽²⁾ says that Dhū Nuwās' father was Zur'a b. Zaid b. Ka'b, Kahf' b. Zaid. Naḡhwān al-Ḥimyarī⁽³⁾ calls his father 'Amr b. Zur'a al-Awṣaṭ b. Ḥassān al-Aṣghar b. 'Amr b. Zur'a al-Akbar b. 'Amr b. Tubba' b. Ḥassān b. As'ad Tubba'. Ṭabarsī⁽⁴⁾ calls him Shuraḥb'il b. Tubba'.⁽⁵⁾

In short, it is very difficult to establish the real name of Yūsuf's father from the Arab sources.

Primary Arab sources do not mention his mother's name, her origin, or her religion. Al-Hamdānī, however, says that his mother's name was Salma' or Maskīna from the tribe of al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b, but al-Hamdānī does not mention her religion.⁽⁶⁾ But one of the Christian sources⁽⁷⁾ states:

1. Ta'rikh, I, p.220.

2. Op. cit., p.63.

3. Mulūk, pp.147-48.

4. Ṭabarsī, X, p.466.

5. Shuraḥb'il Yakuf was a king in the era 582 of the Sabaean era, see Institutions, pp.341-46. RES 4919 mentions Lahay'a Yanuf, Nawī and Ma'dikarib Yan'um, as sons of Shuraḥb'il Yakuf.

6. Iklīl, II, p.63.

7. Histoire Nestorienne, in Patrologia Orientalis, V(1950)

"In later times there reigned over this country, a Jewish king whose name was Masrūq. His mother was a Jewess of the inhabitants of Nisibis, who had been made captive. Then one of the kings of Yaman had bought her and she had given birth to Mesrūq and instructed him in Judaism.⁽¹⁾ He reigned after his father and killed a number of the Christians. Bar Sahde also related this story in his Chronicle."⁽²⁾

The Arab tradition mentions that Dhū Nuwās killed the previous king and governed the country himself. The statement runs as follows:

"A Himyari who had no connection with the royal house called Lakhnī'a Yanūf Dhū Shanātir arose...⁽³⁾

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1. Nöldeke points out that Muslim tradition openly favours Dhū Nuwās, though he was a Jew and in spite of the words of the Qur'an which might be construed as directed against him, Geschichte der Persen und Araber..., p.174.
 2. The same narrative is found also, though much abridged, in the Chronicle of Mari, and a short notice in the Chronicle of Amr, see Maris Amri et Slibae, De Patriarchis Nestorianum Commentaria. ed. H. Grisoni, I, p.33, II, 28.
 3. Ibn Ḥabīb, Asmā' al-Muhtalīn..., p.117, says that Lakhnī'a Yanūf had come to the throne after a revolt against 'Amr.

One day he sent for Zur'a Dhū Nuwās son of Tibān As'ad brother of Ḥassān. He was a little boy when Ḥassān was murdered and had become a fine handsome young man of character and intelligence. When the messenger came he perceived what was intended and took a fine sharp knife and hid it under the sole of his foot and went to Lakhnī'a. As soon as they were alone he attacked him and Dhū Nuwās rushed upon him and stabbed him to death. He then cut off his head and put it in the window which overlooked the men below. He stuck the toothpick in his mouth and went out to the guards, who in coarse language inquired what had happened. 'Ask that head', he replied. They looked at the window and there was Lakhnī'a's head cut off. So they went in pursuit of Dhū Nuwās and said: 'You must be our king, and no one else, seeing that you have rid us of this disgusting fellow.'⁽¹⁾

Dhū Nuwās, according to this account, was from the royal family, and there had been a rebellion which brought Lakhnī'a Dhū Shanātir to power after killing the royalists' leading men.

At any rate, whether this account is authentic or not, it accurately reflects the reign of Lakhnī'a, which was very short, probably less than a year.

1. A. Guillaume, pp.13-14.

Either Yūsuf became king after he had killed Lakhnī'a, and that probably with the help of the Yamānī nobles, or else he became king after the death of Ma'dikarib Ya'fur, and Lakhnī'a rebelled against him, so that Yūsuf killed Lakhnī'a.

We know from Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028, that Yūsuf 'As'ar was busy, fighting against the rebels in the northern part of South Arabia just two years after the events of Ry 510. Arab sources say nothing about this rebellion, they mention only his fighting with the Nadjirānites, which will be discussed in due course. So that, if Lakhnī'a had rebelled, Yūsuf would have recaptured the throne of his royal family from the former.⁽¹⁾ In this case, it is more likely that Yūsuf was a son of Ma'dikarib Ya'fur.

One question that should be asked here is: why is Yūsuf 'As'ar not given the long official title of his predecessors? Ma'dikarib Ya'fur has the long title, but Yūsuf 'As'ar Yathar was only recorded as mlkn/ywf/'s'r (Ry 507, 508), and in Ja 1028 recorded as mlkn/ywsf/'s'r/yf'r/mlk/kl/'s'bn. It seems that the new king would have some kind of coronation, but in the case of Yūsuf, it

1. cf. al-Aṣm'ī, Ta'rīkh al-'Arab Kabl al-Islām, p.43.

is more likely that he had been too busy suppressing the rebels in his country to have time to attend this ceremony. Or, it is probable that Tubba^o refers to a South Arabian king, the traditional ruler of Ḥaḍramawt, Saba^o and Himyar according to the Arab tradition, or else the ruler of al-Yaman, Shahar and Ḥaḍramawt, according to al-Mas^oūdī.⁽¹⁾ But Yūsuf had not yet ruled these regions when the inscriptions were probably written.

Yūsuf's Name

The name of Dhū Nuwās is known to us in different forms from different sources. Various forms of his name are found in the Christian traditions which mention the massacre in Nadīrān. But we find very few variants in the Arabic traditions, which first called him Dhū Nuwās, and, after embracing Judaism, Yūsuf. This latter name is mentioned in three inscriptions dating from his reign. The inscriptions call him ysf/ʿsʿr/ytʿr.⁽²⁾

The early Arab traditions give no great number of variants, whereas a number of different forms are found in Greek and Syriac writings, due probably to inaccurate

1. Mas^oūdī, I, p.208.

2. Ry 507, 508, and Ja 1028. The latter mentions ywsf.

Yūsuf's third name ytʿr is found only in Ja 1028.

transliteration. Ibn Ishāq⁽¹⁾ calls the Himyarite king Zur'ā Dhū Nuwās, and after the king embraced Judaism, he called himself Yūsuf. Other Arab traditions state that the king's name is Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās.⁽²⁾

Zur'ā⁽³⁾ is claimed to be a Lakab,⁽⁴⁾ or his nickname. And Dhū Nuwās appears to be his family name. n'sn is attested as a Sabaean clan name⁽⁵⁾ in CIH 68, Ry 508 and

1. Ibn Hishām, I, p.29; Ṭabarī, I, pp.918-20; see also, Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.510; Ta'rikh, I, p.220, calls him Dhū Nuwās b. As'ad. His other name was Zur'ā, see also, Muḥabbar, p.368.
2. Ma'ārif, p.637; Mas'ūdī, I, p.194; Tha'labī, p.436, says that his reign was seventy years before the birth of Muḥammed; Ṭabarsī, X, p.466.
3. A Qiyāl of the time of Sumyafa' was named zr't dmrhbm, see G. Ryckmans, "Une Inscription...", Le Muséon, LIX (1946), p.167.
4. Mulūk, p.148: "وتين سي دانواسي لذوا بين كاتاتوسان على راسه"
The name Dhū Nuwās strikes one, especially in the interpretation of M. Hartmann, Der Islamische Orient, Arabische Frage, II, p.292, as Sabaean Dhū Nu'asum, as being too genuine to be rejected. See also H. Winckler, "Zur Geschichte des Judentums in Jemen", AOF, I (1895), p.329, cf. C. Conti Rossini, "Expeditions et possessions", JA, Ser 11, T.XVII (1921), p.32 and for an instance, CIH 68.
5. cf. Beeston, "J. Ryckmans, La persécution...", B10, XV (1958), p.64.

Ja 626. There is no reason to accept J. Ryckman's⁽¹⁾ proposal that the Islamic Dhū Nuwās and the Greek Dounaan or Dounaas, is a corruption of the Syriac Dhū Yazan who appears in the Book of the Himyarites⁽²⁾ as a subordinate of the Himyarite king. Dhū Yazan in the Book should be one of the leaders of the tribe of yz'n which is mentioned in Ja 1028. yz'n is the tribe of lby't/yrhm/wsmf'/'sw'/wšrh'1/'sw'/wšrh'1/'s'd/bny/šrh'1/ykml/'lht/yz'n. These leaders went hand in hand with their king ywsf/'s'r/yt'r when they conquered qlsn [church] and killed the hbsn in zfr ..., and after that they went to 's'rn and then to ngrn (Nadīran).⁽³⁾ It is also mentioned in Ry 508 qyln/šrh'1/yqbl/bn/šrh'1/ykml/bnw/yz'n. In a word, in both Ry 508 and Ja 1028 the leaders were from the tribe yz'n. Moreover the tribe ns'n is attested in Ry 508.

In the older Christian sources we find no mention of the Himyarite king's name. Jacob (James) of Sarug,⁽⁴⁾ the Syriac writer who wrote a letter of consolation to the Himyarite Christians, did not mention the name of the Himyarite king.

1. Persécution, p.15.

2. cf. Op.cit., p.cxviii.

3. Jamme, Sabaeen and Hasaeen Inscriptions..., p.40.

4. Published by Dr. R. Schröter, "Trostschriften Jacobs von Sarug an die himjaritischen Christen", ZDMG, XXXI (1897), pp.360-405.

Simeon of Beth-Arsham,⁽¹⁾ bishop of the Persian Christians, was at one time despatched as an ambassador by Justin I to negotiate peace with Mundhir, C.E. 524.⁽²⁾ He wrote a letter to the Christians giving an account of the Himyarite martyrs, but does not mention the name of the Himyarite king.⁽³⁾ Cosmas Indicopleustes,⁽⁴⁾ who once

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1. The best text of Simeon is Guidi's, accompanied by an Italian translation; I. Guidi, "La lettera di Dimeone Vescovo di Bêth Arsâm Sopra i matiri Omeriti", in Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei, Memorie della classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, VII (Rome, 1881), pp.471-515. More accessible is an English translation by the late Prof. Arthur Jeffery in The Muslim World, XXXVI (1946), pp.204-16. It is also translated into Arabic by Yuḥana'zzū in al-Mashriq, XXXI (1933), pp.321-328; pp. 401-417.
 2. Bury, II, p.324: Shahid, makes him the representative of the Monophysites at the conference, see Shahid, "Byzantino...", JNES, XXIII (1964), p.116. See also Halévy, "Examen critique...", REJ, XVIII (1881), p.21.
 3. J.H. Hardtmann, "Die himjarisch - äthiopischen Kriege noch Einmal", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), p.699, believes that the letter is counterfeit because it does not mention the name of the Himyarite king; also Halévy, Ibid., p.21. But Guidi, Ibid., pp.476-499, considers the letter as the authentic work of the Bishop.
 4. Cosmas was writing his book not earlier than 547, at the beginning of the sixth book Cosmas refers to the eclipses in 547, p.244. cf. Beeston, "Problems...", BSOAS, XVI (1954), p.38.

stayed in Adulis and while there saw the preparations for an Abyssinian expedition to the land of the Himyarites, does not mention the name of the Himyarite king, either. Procopius⁽¹⁾ also gives a short account of the Abyssinian-Himyarite war and, although both Cosmas and Procopius mention the name of the Abyssinia king, they unfortunately omit the name of the Himyarite king.

The name of the Himyarite king is not mentioned in the old sources. This was probably due to the fact that these sources were interested only in the massacre and the war, and the outcome of the conflict between the Abyssinian Christians and the Himyarite king, so that they did not attach any great importance to the latter's name.

Procopius did not mention the massacre nor the religious war, but he was interested in its economic aspects. So also, Cosmas Indicopleustes did not mention the name of the Himyarite king. However, we cannot say that both of them did not know the king's name.

The other historians were only interested in the religious quarrel and all they wanted to do was to champion

1. Procopius, I, xx, 2-8.

the religion of those who were living in Najran and other cities of South Arabia; consequently, they did not attach great importance to the name of the king. Jacob of Sarug does not consider it worth while to mention the king's name. We can say the same thing about the author of The Letter, who asked for blood vengeance from the Jews of Palestine.⁽¹⁾ It is also important to note that these authors wrote their letters far away from the battlefield in South Arabia.⁽²⁾

In Martyrium Arethae,⁽³⁾ occurs the first mention of the Himyarite king. There he is called Dunaan. This

1. Simeon, after suggesting, "If the Bishops are Christian and desire to see Christianity flourishing, and are not partners with Jews, let them urge the king and his grandees to take revenge on the chief priests of Tiberias and other cities, so that they be shut up in prison", then says, "But I know that Jewish gold is flowing and covering up the truth and the vanity of Jews and pagans is exceedingly great." Letter, p.215.
2. For a critical analysis of the sources see Fell, "Die Christenverfolgung in Sudarabien...", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), pp.3 ff; Hardtmann, "Die himjarisch-äthiopischen...", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), pp.693-710; Hirschberg, "The Name of the last...", Tarbiz, XV (1943), pp.129-149.
3. Acta Sanctorum, Octobris, X, pp.727-56.

form is slightly different from the Arabic name. Another writer of first-rate importance as a historian is John, bishop of Asia (or Ephesus).⁽¹⁾ He gives the name of the Himyarite king as Dimiun.⁽²⁾ Malalas (John),⁽³⁾ the Greek chronographer who lived at Antioch in the first half of the sixth century, calls the Himyarite king Dimnos. Theophanes⁽⁴⁾ the Confessor, (758-817), the Byzantine chronographer, who died in Samothrace, uses the form king 'Damianum'. Nicephorus⁽⁵⁾ calls him Damuns.

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1. cf. Fell, "Die Christenverfolgung...", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), p.18; see about John W. Wright, Short History of Syriac Literature, London, 1894.
 2. Published by D.J.H. Mordtmann, "Die himjarisch...", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), pp.703-6; see also Mordtmann, "Miscellen zur himyarischen Atlerthumskunde", ZDMG, XXI (1877), p.67.
 3. Malalas, p.433, 3ff. see also Mordtmann, "Die himjarisch-äthiopischen...", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), pp.703-706 Mordtmann, "Miscellen zur himjarischen...", ZDMG, XXI (1877), p.67.
 4. cf. Acta Sanctorum, Octobris X, p.712, see also Mordtmann, Ibid, ZDMG, XXV (1881), p.703.
 5. Quoted from Kh.Z. Hirschberg "The Name...", Tarbiz, XV (1943), p.129.

As we have already pointed out there is a great similarity between the transliteration of the name of the Himyarite king, mentioned by different Christian authors, and the Arab traditions which called him Dhū Nuwas.

We find the name of the Himyarite king in The Book of the Himyarites, which, according to Axel Moberg,⁽¹⁾ was written by Sergius⁽²⁾ the Bishop of Sergiopolis, who, together with Abraham, son of Euphrasius, had been despatched by the Emperor Justin the First to negotiate peace with the Lakhamid king, Mundhir. The Book did not introduce the name of the crucifier till he conquered Zifār and

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1. Op.cit., p.lxvii. J.W. Hirschberg in his article, "Nestorian Sources...", RO, XV (1949), p.338 discusses the authorship of the Book and says, "In our opinion, it was written on the basis of oral accounts of Christians coming to Hīra, and especially of Nestorians expelled from Nagrān in Omar ibn al-Haṭṭāb's reign and settling in the new founded "Nagrān of Kūfa".' But I. Shahid, "The Book of the Himyarites Authorship and Authenticity", Le Muséon, LXXVI (1963), p.361, suggests, 'The author of the Book of the Himyarites was a contemporary not of the Caliph 'Umar but of the Negus Kāleb ... and that its author was possibly Simeon, the Bishop of Beth Arisham near Seleucia-Ctesiphon.'
 2. Sergius is mentioned once in the Letter. He is accurately described as a Bishop of Bēth Rūṣafa (Sergiopolis) who accompanied Abraham on his peace mission. Letter, p.209.

Nadīrān. He calls him Masrūq, ⁽¹⁾ the accursed name being written upside down. It afterwards received a noteworthy confirmation from a very interesting notice in the "Histoire Nestorienne", which also calls him Masrūq, ⁽²⁾ and is also mentioned by John Psattes. ⁽³⁾

Probably Masrūq was a pejorative nickname, substituted for his real name by the Nadīrānites for obvious reasons. ⁽⁴⁾

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1. cf. the name of Abraha's second son was also Masrūq, according to the Arab tradition. Masrūq is also known as the name of many persons, see Tha'ālibī, Laṭā'if..., p.107; Ibn Ḥadjar, Tahdhīb..., X, p.159.
 2. Histoire Nestorienne, in Patrologia Orientalis, V p.331, published by Msgr. Addai Scher.
 3. Published by Schröter, "Trostschriften...", ZDMG, XXXI (1877), pp.403 ff., and also published by A.W. Brugys in Patrologia Orientalis VII, pp.613 ff.
 4. Kh.Z. Hirschberg, "The Name of the last Judaizing king in Hamir", Tarbiz, XV (1943) pp.129-142, [in Hebrew]; Shahid, "The Book of the Himyarites...", Le Muséon, LXXVI (1963), pp.342-362; R. Schröten, "Trostschriften Jacobs von...", ZDMG, XXXI (1877), p.361 note 1, interpreted the name Masruq as a rendering of the North Arabian Dhū Nuwās viz, 'the name with locks'. The same interpretation of Dhū Nuwās is given also in Mukhtārāt, p.106.

Reasons for the Massacre

South Arabia was very important to the Byzantine Empire. Byzantine and Abyssinian ships monopolised trade in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. But the brisk commercial activities of the Abyssinians primarily affected the African mainland and the sea-route from India to Abyssinian, and it remains to be shown how this affected the land route within the Arabian peninsula.⁽¹⁾ At the beginning of the sixth century C.E., trading between the Abyssinians and the Himyarites ceased,⁽²⁾ and the former sought to obtain political control over South-Western Arabia. This, undoubtedly, was one of the causes of the conflict between those two countries during the reign of Justin the First.⁽³⁾

It must be pointed out here that South Arabia was strategically important to the Byzantine Empire⁽⁴⁾ at the beginning of the sixth century C.E., for four main reasons:

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1. Shahid, "The Arabs in the peace...", Arabica, III (1956), p.186.
 2. Bury, II, p.322.
 3. A.A. Vasiliev, Justin the First. p.290.
 4. In 25 B.C.E. the Roman Empire sent an unsuccessful military expedition to capture South Arabia.

- (i) to guarantee the import of agricultural products⁽¹⁾ from South Arabia to the markets of the Byzantine Empire;
- (ii) to safeguard the maritime route to India, and to render Byzantine sailing more safe;⁽²⁾
- (iii) to strengthen Byzantine authority in the Red Sea in order to secure the maritime route between the two ends of the Red Sea;
- (iv) finally, the Byzantine Empire wanted to control South Arabia in order to attack its real enemy, Persia, from South Iraq, and to ally itself with the nomad tribes in Central Arabia,⁽³⁾ so that in this case the war against Persia would be from three sides - north, west and south.⁽⁴⁾

In 518 C.E. the dispute between the Byzantine Empire and Persia was renewed.⁽⁵⁾ Justinian had been the real governor of the Byzantine Empire during his uncle's reign

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- 1. For the products of South Arabia see G.W. Van Beek, "Ancient frankincense-producing area", in Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia. pp.139-142.
 - 2. cf. Procopius, I.xix, 1-7.
 - 3. cf. Procopius, I.xx, 9-12.
 - 4. Wolfenson, Ta'rikh al-Yahūd..., pp.46-47.
 - 5. Procopius, I.xviii, 52-56.

(518-527 C.E.) and in his reign he decided to invade Persia. The Emperor allied himself with the Ghassānids who governed Southern Syria.⁽¹⁾ At the same time he entered into an alliance with Abyssinia,⁽²⁾ the other Christian kingdom, with the object of his conquering South Arabia and then provoking the nomad tribes in Central Arabia to attack Southern Persia.

On the one hand, Persia had no interest in South Arabia because it did not need South Arabian products, nor its strategic position on the route to India. On the other hand, it wanted to deprive the Byzantine Empire of any advantages in South Arabia. Thus, Persia wanted to destroy the Byzantine plan in South Arabia and ruin Byzantine trade.

In actual fact, we have no evidence that Persia rendered any kind of support to South Arabia. Had there been any support, the Christian accounts would have mentioned it.⁽³⁾

1. cf. Nöldeke, Die Ghassanischen Fürsten..., p.8; Shahid, "Ghassān and Byzantium...", Der Islam, XXXIII (1958), pp.232-255.

2. The Queen of Sheba, p.225.

3. H.Z. Hirschberg, Israel in Arabia. in Hebrew (1946), pp.69-70.

At that time the Byzantine Emperor regarded himself as the protector of Christians everywhere.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, Byzantium considered Abyssinia a vassal state, and thus a historian of the fifth century C.E. Theodore of Cyrus, names the Abyssinians⁽²⁾ amongst those who "gladly accept the Roman power". According to Vasiliev, in adopting Christianity, the king of Abyssinia was guided not only by his religious sympathies, but also by political motives, because he realised how essential for his Empire was the friendship and help of Byzantium.⁽³⁾

It was Justin I who left his stamp upon later Abyssinian traditions, and who was considered as the supporter and ally of the most brilliant emperor of Abyssinia, Elesbaas (Kāleb), of the Axum period.

It might seem surprising at first to find that the orthodox Justin I, who adhered to the Chalcedonian doctrine and oppressed Monophysites within his own Empire, should support the Monophysite Abyssinian king. But outside the

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1. Hitti, History of the Arabs, p.62; Vasiliev, Justin I, p.77.
 2. I. Guidi, "Bizanzio ed il regno d'Aksum", Studi bizantini, I (Rome, 1925), pp.135-139.
 3. Vasiliev, "Justin I (518-527) and Abyssinia", BZ, XXXIII (1933), p.63.

official boundaries of the Empire, the Byzantine Emperor protected Christianity in general, whether it was in accord with his own religious dogmas or not.

At this point, it is of interest to quote the most important passage of the Kabra Nagast, which refers to the reign of Justin I:-

"And the King of ROME and the King of ETHIOPIA, and the Archbishop of ALEXANDRIA - now the men of ROME were orthodox - were informed that they were to destroy them (the Jews). And they were to rise up to fight, to make war upon the enemies of God, the JEWS, and to destroy them, the King of ROME 'ENYA, and the King of ETHIOPIA PINḤAS (PHINEHAS); and they were to lay waste their lands, and build churches there, and they were to cut to pieces JEWS at the end of this Cycle in twelve cycles of the moon. Then the Kingdom of the JEWS shall be made an end of and the kingdom of CHRIST shall be constituted until the advent of the False Messiah. And those two kings, JUSTINUS the King of ROME and KALĒB the King of ETHIOPIA, met together in JERUSALEM. And their Archbishop was to make ready offerings and they were to make offerings, and they were to establish the Faith in love, and they were to give each other gifts and the salutation of Peace, and they were to divide between them the earth from the half of JERUSALEM, even as we have already said at the beginning of this book. And for love's sake they were to have jointly the royal title [of King of ETHIOPIA]. They were to be mingled with DAVID and SOLOMON their fathers. The one whom in faith they chose by lot to be named from the Kings of ROME was to be called "King o'

that the tribes who were living in Tihāma were in contact with the Abyssinians. So Yūsuf 'As'ar led an expedition against them as we know from Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028.

Nad̄jirān is situated on a plateau crossed by a valley, known as Wādī Nad̄jirān, and stretches from its upper to its lower reaches, where it disappears in the sands of Rub' al-Khālī.⁽¹⁾

The northern part of the incense route may well have been a single road, passing through Ned̄j. There is a northern route from Ḥaḍramawt to Nad̄jirān running just south of the Rub' al-Khālī.⁽²⁾ Thus, Nad̄jirān was important as the last station in South Arabia, on a caravan route from South Arabia to al-Yamāma and thence to Baḥraīn and 'Irāq.⁽³⁾

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1. Ḥamza, Fuad, "Najran", JRAS.XXII (1935), p.631; Halévy, "Rapport sur une mission...", JA, 6e série, t. xix (1972), p.90; 40, thought he had found the ruins of the old town in Madīnat al-Ukh̄dūd.
 2. R. Le Baron Bowen, "Ancient trade routes in South Arabia", in Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia, p.39; see also, Philby, Sheba's Daughters. pp.42-55; F. Stark, The Southern Gate of Arabia. p.303; R.A.B. Hamilton, "Six Weeks in Shabwa", GJ, c (1942), pp.110.
 3. E.I.⁽¹⁾ 'Nad̄jirān'; Beek, G.W. "Frankincense and myrrh in ancient South Arabia", JAOS, LXXVII (1958), pp.141-152, Iṣṭakh̄rī, p.28.

The distance from Ṣan'ā' is put at 6-7 days' journey.⁽¹⁾ According to Philby's investigations, it is about seven days' caravan journey south of Sulaiyil,⁽²⁾ and from there it was another seven days' journey to Mecca.⁽³⁾

So Nadjirān was a nodal point for many routes running across the Peninsula in various directions.

Nadjirān was also wealthy. In the Islamic writers, it is a miracle of fertility and wealth, even more so than the Yaman. In general, its cereals, vegetables and fruits were unrivalled.⁽⁴⁾ There were also mines there,⁽⁵⁾ and the staple products of the Yaman, leather and cloth, were also made there.

The Christians of Nadjirān must have posed the greatest threat, because their community was well organized.⁽⁶⁾

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1. E. Glaser, Skizze der Geschiet und Geographie Arabiens.., II, p.50.
 2. Philby, The Heart of Arabia. II, p.166; idem, Arabian Highlands, pp.212-226.
 3. Ibn al-Mudjāwir, p.214.
 4. Djazīrat, p.199; Maḳdisī, p.87; Iṣṭakhri, p.24; Ibn Ḥawḳal, p.36; Abū al-Fidā, al-Buldān, p.93.
 5. Balādhuri, Kitāb Futūḥ al-Buldān, p.14.
 6. cf. N. Pigulevskaja, "Les rapports sociaux a Nadjirān...", JESHO, III (1960), pp.113-130; IV (1961), pp.1-14.

Nadīrān was also important to South Arabia because it separated Yūsuf, the Jewish King, from Yathrib [al-Madīna] the important centre of Judaism in Ḥijāz.⁽¹⁾

In addition to pagans and Jews, it contained many Christians who formed, it seems, an autonomous community. And it also seems that they had strong connections with the Abyssinian Christians. This, therefore, partly explains why Yūsuf 'As'ar tried to capture Nadīrān before the Abyssinian expedition. It also seems that the ruler of the Nadīranites did not help Yūsuf in his war with ḏifār, but in the meantime rebelled against him.⁽²⁾

It is quite possible to see a connection between the massacre in Nadīrān and the plight of the Jews in Byzantine territory. The Book of the Himyarites contains some evidence which makes it possible to detect a non-personal motive behind Yūsuf's action and which endows these massacres with great significance. The Book testifies to the presence of Jewish rabbis from Tiberias in South Arabia,⁽³⁾ who were associated with Yūsuf. Although their

1. Ibid.

2. The Book, p.cvi, Yūsuf wrote to the Nadīranites, "why have ye rebelled against me? Ye must know, that I am your king..."

3. The Book, p.cv.

presence may be accepted as historical, the interpretation of the role they played in these events is not easy to determine.

Also, a statement in the history of Malalas⁽¹⁾ that Dimn [Yūsuf] executed Byzantine merchants in his realm because Byzantium had oppressed its Jews, affords a clue to the connection of the rabbis of Tiberias with the massacres. Such information on the state of the Jews in the Byzantine Empire could have come from these rabbis who were familiar with the difficult conditions under which the Jews of the Empire were living.⁽²⁾ Consequently, it could be argued that Yūsuf's action against the Christians might have been taken in the shadow of the plight of Jews who were living in Byzantine territory, and that these massacres were both retaliatory and deterrent.

Yūsuf 'As'ar's killing of the Byzantine merchants prevented all Christian merchants from going to South Arabia, and as a result of this the trade of South Arabia suffered. The Himyarites were not able to export their agricultural and industrial products, nor were they able

1. Malalas, pp.433 ff.

2. Shahid, "Byzantino-Arabica...", JNES, XXIII (1964), p.124.

to import from East Africa or India. Wolfenson points out that this commercial crisis caused complaint amongst the Himyarites and some of them may well have entered secretly into an alliance with Abyssinia, which helped the latter to win the battle.⁽¹⁾

The Book of the Himyarites states:

"Masrūq had learned secretly, that subjects of foreign countries were amongst the blessed ones. He sat and enquired about each of them, and asked what was his name, and who he was, and whence was the origin of his family. So he learned of the presbyters Moses and Eliya, that they were from Hīrthadhe Na'mān, of the presbyter Sergios and the deacon Ḥananya, that they were Romans, of presbyter Abraham, that he was a Persian and of the deacon Jonan, that he was an Abyssinian."⁽²⁾

It must be pointed out here that these foreigners must have been considered by Masrūq (Yūsuf) as potentially dangerous, and he probably thought that they were working for the benefit of their own countries. Probably the presbyters Moses and Eliya were working for the benefit of the Abyssinians, as they both had the same religion.

1. Wolfenson, p.47.

2. The Book, pp.cix-cx. See also, Letter, p.205.

Abyssinia and Byzantium were both natural enemies of Yūsuf 'As'ar.

In this respect, it is important to deal with the reason for the presence of Abyssinians in Ḥifār. The Book as well as The Letter and the inscriptions⁽¹⁾ mention that there were Abyssinians in Ḥifār. As we have already stated, The Book identifies some of them as presbyters.⁽²⁾ The Letter reports "280 men, both clerics and laymen". This number would be "all the Cushites who were left in our country"⁽³⁾ (South Arabia). The inscriptions do not mention how many Abyssinians there were, and there is no doubt that not all the number of killed and captured recorded in the inscriptions, are in fact Abyssinians. It is also apparent from the inscriptions that the Abyssinians were in Ḥifār only. We have no evidence, as we shall see later, that the Abyssinians had invaded South Arabia before the reign of Yūsuf. How then can we explain the reason for the presence of Abyssinians in Ḥifār, or probably in

1. Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028.

2. cf. The Book, p.cii. Chapter seven mentions "The first departure of the Abyssinians from the land of the Himyarites" before the beginning of the persecution by Masrūq.

3. Letter, p.205.

other cities of South Arabia? To answer this question one would suppose that there had been some kind of link between the Church of South Arabia and the Abyssinian Church. If so, it would be quite feasible to assume that the South Arabian Church was under the guardianship of the Abyssinians, and the South Arabian priests were appointed by the Abyssinian government. Thus, it is probable that there was an agreement between the Abyssinian and South Arabian kings, but we have no evidence as to when, if at all, this took place. It is probable that this kind of agreement had been in force during the reign of Ma'dikarib Ya'fur. When Yūsuf became king and embraced Judaism, he started to persecute the Christians and killed all the Abyssinians in South Arabia.

The Arab historians have also preserved two reasons for the massacre of Nadjran. According to Ibn al-Kalbī:

"The cause of this was that Dhū Nuwās was king of the Yaman in those days, and he was a Jew. Another Jew, named Daūs and hailing from Nadjran came to him, told him that the people of Nadjran had wantonly killed two of his sons and asked his help against them. Now the people of Nadjran were Christians. So Dhū Nuwās' zeal for Judaism was aroused and he attacked the people of Nadjran and killed many of them." (1)

1. Ṭabarī, I, pp.925-26; 929-930; Ibn Khaldūn, II, pp.113-114.

According to the second tradition from Wahb b. Munabbih, Yūsuf had been informed that a man⁽¹⁾ from al-Djifna in the land of the Ghassānids was converting people to Christianity and Yūsuf then went to Nadjirān and massacred the people, by digging a trench⁽²⁾ and burning them in it.

The Arab account contains two fairly important reasons for the massacre: firstly, it expressly says that the persecution of the Christians of Nadjirān was sparked off by their murdering a number of the Jewish inhabitants of their town. The Book of the Himyarites⁽³⁾ actually confirms the hostile attitude taken up by the Christians of Nadjirān: one of the Christian martyrs boasts that her father once set the Jewish synagogue on fire. Thus, there is a measure of agreement between the narrative of Ibn al-Kalbī and The Book on one reason for the massacre. Secondly, the presence of a man from the Ghassānids indicates either Ghassānid political influence on the one hand or Byzantine on the other; the latter, together with the Abyssinians were the natural enemies of Yūsuf.

1. Probably the man was apriest or minister.

2. Wahb, p.301; Ḥanẓa, p.133; Ibn Rashīq, al-ʿUmda..., II, p.227.

3. op. cit., p.XLIV.

Finally, we know from Abyssinian tradition that the Nadjirānites used to pay tribute to the Abyssinian king.⁽¹⁾ If this tradition is right, it means that the Abyssinians had great influence in South Arabia. Yūsuf represented the national independence of his country against Abyssinian dominance but since the Abyssinians were Christians it may be supposed that the Christians of South Arabia, or at least a group of them, favoured Abyssinian rule. Yūsuf tried to break the power of Christianity in South Arabia.

Yūsuf's Hostile Activities in South Arabia

The Arab sources do not state that Yūsuf was in Zifār or al-Ashā'ira, as is mentioned in the inscriptions. They only say that he fought the Nadjirānites in Nadjirān and killed a great number of them. We also lack evidence about his relationship with the Central Arabian tribesmen, who were defeated by Ma'dikarib Ya'fur in 631 of the Sabaean era. We find more evidence relating to the ywsf/'a'r/yṭ'r war in Ja 1028, Ry 508 and 507. All these inscriptions are dated 633 of the Sabaean era. They actually give the

1. Fell, "Die Christenverfolgung in Südarabien...", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), pp.48-50; E.I.⁽²⁾ "Dhū Nuwās". cf. Acta Sanctorum, X (Octobris), sec.1, p.722.

same evidence, but differ in the dating of the months. Both Ry 507 and Ja 1028 were written in the month dmdr°n,⁽¹⁾ while Ry 508 was written in the month dqyzn.⁽²⁾

These inscriptions speak of the expedition against the Abyssinians in Zifār, [°hbšn/bzfr]. šrh°l/yqbl/bn/šrh°l/ykml was with the king when they attacked Zifār and Ashā'ira and after that they went to Nadjran [Ry 508].

It seems that both Ry 507 and Ja 1028 belong to šrh°l/dyz°n, but were obviously written by different writers since they contain slightly different details, but were written in the same month, dmdr°n.

Ry 508 speaks of the expedition of the king to °hbšn/bzfr and to °s°rn and then to ngrn. The inscription runs as follows, as rendered by Smith.

"The qayl Šarah°il Yaqbul b. Šarah-b-°il Yakmul, banū Yaz°an and Gadanum and Naša°an and Ḥabum and Ġaba°. In this inscription are written down, tšjrw,

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1. J. Ryckmans, La Persécution viz. p.5, suggests that month dmdr°n is August-September, while Beeston, Epigraphic South Arabian..., p.24, suggests July to September.
 2. J. Ryckmans, Ibid, p.5, suggests that dqyzn is March-April, while Beeston, Ibid, p.24, suggests May or June.

the things they accomplished in a campaign by wadi beds and a river valley for their lord the king Yusuf 'As'ar against the 'ahabiš in Zafar. Now they overthrew the church qlén. Then the king marched to 'As'aran and appointed him over an army. And he laid waste Muhwan (Mukha) and killed all its inhabitants and overthrew the church. And he laid waste all the forts of Šammar and its plain. And the king made a surprise attack on 'As'aran. And all that the troops of the king slew and took as booty was collected, tg^m, 13,000 slain and 9,500 prisoners and 280,000 camels and oxen and goats. And thereupon the king appointed him to join against Naḡran amongst the heads of families of bani 'Az'an, qrm bn'z'n, and among the tribes of Hamdan and their city, and their Arabs, and the Arabs of Kiddat and Murād and Madhig. And the king ordered that ššlt mdbn (or mdn: chains of servitude?) should be fastened, hrzy, on files of the Ḥabašat, bmqrnt hbšt, and to the 'man' of San'a, wlšn'n. In his armies and with him were Laḡy'at Yarhum and Sumu-yafa' 'Aswa' and Šarah-b-'il 'As'ad, sept Yaz'an, with their tribe the men of Za'an. Its month, Dhū Qayzan of 633. Now may the God to whom the heaven and the earth belong protect the king Yusuf against his enemies, and may this inscription be under the ban of the Merciful against any who would erase or deface it. O, Merciful, show Thy mercy for ever. Thou art Lord."⁽¹⁾

The events in Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028 are more or less similar to what is said in The Book of the Himyarites.

1. Smith, p.458.

Both the inscriptions and The Book mention the siege of the town of Zifār and destruction of the Church, where, according to The Book, the Abyssinians had taken refuge.

However, one question remains to be dealt with, namely, what kind of Abyssinian presence can we suppose there was in Zifār, on the basis of what we find in Ry 507, 508, Ja 1028 and The Book? The Letter only alludes to the Abyssinian king being in Nadjran and the priests in the Church of Zifār.⁽¹⁾ We do not know when they were there, or from where they came. It is quite probable that ḥbān/bḡfr were priests and not soldiers. And it is more than probable that they actively aided the Abyssinians and encouraged the Christians of South Arabia too.

It is even more probable that there was a secret alliance between the Abyssinian and Ashā'ira, who lived near the Eastern Coast. Consequently, it appears that Yūsuf already knew about this alliance and decided to act first in order to maintain his country's independence in the face of a threatened invasion from abroad.

1. Letter, p.205, mentions that Yūsuf said: "...first, all the Cushites who were left in our country to guard the Church which they hoped they had built for themselves in our land."

The Date of the Persecution

The martyrdom of the Christians of Nadjran is celebrated in various Christian calendars on different dates; on October 24th⁽¹⁾ in the Roman calendar as the day of "Arethas et socii"; on the same date in the calendar of the Syriac Maronites; on December 31st in the calendar of the Jacobite Menologies;⁽²⁾ on 20th October (Sahmi 11th) in the Armenian Synaxarium;⁽³⁾ on the 4th October in the old calendar of Jerusalem;⁽⁴⁾ and in the Abyssinian Synaxaria⁽⁵⁾ the martyrdom of the Nadjranite Christians is ascribed to Hed̄ar 24th (22nd November). Thus it was obviously an event of great importance and made a tremendous impression on the Christians of other countries.⁽⁶⁾

1. Acta Sanctorum, October X (Paris 1869), pp.721-761.
2. Martyrologes et Ménologies Orientaux, in Patrologia Orientalis, X (1912-13), p.31.
3. "Le Synaxaire Arménien de Ter Israel", ed. Le D.G. Bayan, in Patrologia Orientalis, XV (1920-27), p.343.
4. Heinr. Goussen, Über gorg. Drucke und Handschriften, etc., München-Gladbach, 1923, p.34, quoted from The Book, p.lix.
5. "The Acta of Azqir", tr. by A. Jeffery in MW, XXXVI (1946), p.204. Noberg gives the date as Hed̄ar 26th; he also suggests that the date was 22nd November, The Book, p.lix.
6. A thousand years later a Russian source of the sixteenth century, the so-called Stepennaya Kniga, tells the story-

The Syriac writer, Jacob of Sarug⁽¹⁾ (died 521 C.E.), wrote a letter of consolation to the Himyarite Christians which, though very general in its terms, indicates that they were being persecuted by the king of the Himyarites. Since Jacob of Sarug died in 521 C.E.,⁽²⁾ the massacre, according to him, must have taken place before his death.⁽³⁾ But we have further evidence from Ry 507, 508, and Ja 1028. These inscriptions mention an extensive conflict between the king Ywsf/ʿsʿr and the hb̄st, in ʒifār.⁽⁴⁾ The king

6. (contd.) of the treacherous capture of the city of Nadīran by 'Dunas the Zhidovin' (the Jew) and the massacre of Arethas and his companions, and compares 'Dunas' with impious Tartar Khān Tokhtmysh who took the glorious city of Moscow by cunning. See A. Vasiliev, Justin the First. p.293.

1. R. Schröter, "Trostschriften Jacob's...", ZDMG, XXXI (1877), pp.360-405.
2. Acta Sanctorum, X, sec. 5, p.724.
3. Jacob suggests that the persecution had in fact already started before Yūsuf, during the reign of his predecessor Maʿdikarib Yaʿfur. But all other sources mention that the real persecution had taken place during Yūsuf's reign.
4. Jamme, Sabaeen and Hasaeen..., pp.40, reconstructed, Ja 1028, 8, (b)bh̄rn/bn/hb̄st. But it is clear from Fig. 13 that the words should read bh̄rn/bn̄hb̄st which means 'when they returned from Ḥabasha', and not, as Jamme renders it, "an attack by sea from Habast."

also attacked the town Nadīrān (ngrn) and the tribe ṣ'rn. Originally J. Ryckmans maintained that both Ry 507 and 508 dated from the summer month of the Sabaean era 633 (= 518 C.E.).⁽¹⁾

But later he came to equate 633 with 523/524,⁽²⁾ the date of the capture of Ẓifār, and on July-September of 524 C.E. the massacre of Nadīrān took place. This hypothesis is not very different from Moberg's⁽³⁾ and Beeston's, in which the latter suggests that the beginning of the Himyarite era would have to be circa 110 B.C.E.⁽⁴⁾ According to Beeston's suggestion, the date of the above-mentioned inscriptions should be 523 C.E.

In the Letter of Simeon, written in 835 Seleucid era⁽⁵⁾ (524 C.E.), the king of Hīra received a Himyarite embassy, who informed him about the persecution which had taken

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1. J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions hist...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.331.
 2. Persécution, pp.16-17; J. Ryckmans, "Le début de l'ère himyarite...", BIO, XVII (1961), pp.219-221, maintains that 109 B.C. was the beginning of the Himyarite era.
 3. The Book, p.lviii.
 4. Beeston, "Problems...", BSOAS, XVI (1954), p.40.
 5. Letter, p.204.

place during the previous winter (i.e. 523 C.E.).⁽¹⁾

A. Moberg deduces that the incident took place in the year 523 C.E. and gives the 26th November as the corrected date of the martyrdom of Hārith.⁽²⁾ Moberg's conclusion is acceptable because the year 523 is identical with the one mentioned in the inscriptions (if the beginning of the Himyarite era was 110). Thus, this date must have been that of the massacre and we would expect the inscriptions to mention it, so there is no reason to accept the proposal which says that there were two persecutions.⁽³⁾

The Number of the Massacred

Arab historians give different figures for the massacre of Nadjran. Ibn Ishāq,⁽⁴⁾ quoting from Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Karadī [d. about 108/726], says that Yūsuf killed about

1. cf. Persécution, p.18, says "Mais l'auteur de la lettre pourrait se référer à un mode de datation syrien, suivant lequel l'ère séleucide se commence un an plus tard, ce qui placerait la persécution en 524."

2. The Book, pp.lviii-lix.

3. cf. Smith, p.454.

4. Ibn Hishām, I, p.33; Ṭabarī, I, p.925, 929.

20,000 Najranites. Ṭabarsī,⁽¹⁾ on the ultimate authority of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalīb (d. 40/660), gives the number as only ten. Ṭhālabī⁽²⁾ quotes three statements; the first is that, according to Wahb b. Munabbih, Yūsuf burnt twelve thousand;⁽³⁾ the second is that, according to Muḳātil b. Sulīmān, Yūsuf cast seven people into the fires;⁽⁴⁾ and the third is that, according to Ibn al-Kalbī,⁽⁵⁾ the number was seventy thousand. According to al-Ḍaḥḥāk,⁽⁶⁾ (d. 180/796), eight men were killed in this way.

Christian sources too give different numbers. The Acts of Azqīr says, "In the territory of Najran there received the crown of martyrdom metropolitans, priests, deacons, monks, men and women and many people together, and were judged. The number of those who were killed was thirty-eight."⁽⁷⁾ According to The Letter of Simeon, the

1. Ṭabarsī, X, p.366.

2. Ṭhālabī, p.436.

3. See also, Ḳurṭubī, XIX, p.290.

4. In another statement, according to Muḳātil b. Sulīmān, the number was 87 men and women, Ḳurṭubī, XIX, p.287.

5. Ibid., XIX, p.290.

6. Ṭhālabī, p.436.

7. Tr. by A. Jeffery in MW, XIXVI (1946), pp.200-204.

Himyarite king killed all the Cushites who were left in the Church at ẓifār⁽¹⁾ "in all, 280 men, both clerics and laymen".⁽²⁾ The latter figure obviously relates only to the massacre at ẓifār. Simeon also states that the number of the leaders of the city of Nadīrān, who were killed when they were ordered to come out under promise of protection, was three hundred and forty.⁽³⁾ This number does not seem to include those mentioned in The Letter as killed during the siege and the capture of the town, and it is more probable that it includes only the nobles and clerics of the city.

The Martyrium Arethae mentions that 340⁽⁴⁾ were killed and 427⁽⁵⁾ who were thrown into the fire. After that it mentions the number of 4252 killed by Yūsuf.⁽⁶⁾

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1. In the Letter, p.205, the Jewish king declares that he had made the Church in ẓifār a synagogue; in The Book, p.xxxviii, p.cv, the Church was burnt down.
 2. Letter, p.205.
 3. Ibid, p.212.
 4. Acta Sanctorum, sec.15, X, p.734.
 5. Ibid., sec.6, X, p.728.
 6. Ibid., p.729.

The Book of the Himyarites mentions that Yūsuf killed two hundred and eighty men who were left by the Abyssinians in the Church at ẓifār. (1) The Book does not mention who else was killed during the war, or how many of the citizens of ẓifār lost their lives.

The Book also mentions that Dhū Yazan, commander, killed many men in Nadīrān, but does not give the number of those killed. (2) After that, it refers to a number of 177 women and children who were victims of Dhū Yazan, and then merely states that many women were killed by Yūsuf, without giving any figures. A Syriac source gives the number as 250 martyrs in Nadīrān. (3)

Thus, we are not sure of the exact numbers involved in the massacre of Nadīrān. At the same time, both the Arab and Christian sources are silent about the war of the Himyarite king with the tribe al-Ashā'ira. Arab sources especially make no reference to the Aḥbāsh in ẓifār

1. The Book, p.CV.

2. Ibid., p.cxvii.

3. Martyrologes et Ménologes Orientaux, in Patrologia Orientalis, x (1912-13), p.49.

or Nadjirān, or to "the burning of the holy church and of the martyrdom of those who suffered in the town of Ḥaḍramawt" or "in the town of Ma'rib".⁽¹⁾

The evidence from Ry 508, 507 and Ja 1028 indicates that Yūsuf 'As'ar and his commanders fought in Ḥifār, Nadjirān and al-Aḥā'ira. The three inscriptions already mentioned record the same events but vary slightly in detail and in the number of those killed. The numbers of the killed and captives are given as follows:-

	<u>Ry 508</u>	<u>Ry 507</u>	<u>Ja 1028</u>
Killed	13,000	14,000	12,000
Captives	9,500	11,000	11,000
Camels, cattle and sheep ⁽²⁾	280,000	609,000	290,000

At any rate, we do not know how many of the dead mentioned in the inscriptions were Christians or pagan rebels in Ḥifār, Nadjirān and Tihāma. It seems more likely that the number includes both Christians and pagan tribesmen, since we have no evidence to assume that al-Aḥā'ira was Christian at that time, and not all the Christians were

1. cf. The Book, p.ciii, chapters XXIX, XXX and XXI.

2. Ry 508 mentions 'blm/wbqrm/w'nzm, but Ry 507 mentions gmlm/wbqrm/w'nzm, and Ja 1028 mentions 'blm/wbqrm/wq'nzm.

killed during Yūsuf's reign, as Hannan points out.⁽¹⁾

The Qur'an and the Massacre

The persecution of the Christians in Nadjran is alluded to in the Qur'an, Sūra LXXXV, Verses 4-8 run:

4. '(Self) destroyed were the owners of the ditch
5. Of the fMed-fed fire,
6. When they sat about it,
7. And were themselves the witnesses of what they did to the believers.
8. They had naught against them save that they believed in Allah, the Mighty, the Owner of Praise.'⁽²⁾

The Qur'anic commentators and Arab historians associate the reference in this passage with the persecution

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1. There was bitter enmity between the Monophysites and Nestorians. The Monophysite records of Yūsuf's persecutions accuse their Christian enemies of treason and collaboration with Yūsuf. They call them 'Christians only in name' and claim that they incited the king against the Monophysites; see Schröter, "Trostschriften Jacob's...", ZDMG, XXXI (1877), pp.371, 377; Pereira, Historia dos Martyres de Nagran..., trans. pp. 148-152; The Book, pp.cv, cix.
 2. Pickthall, The Meaning of the Glorious Koran, New York (1954), p.435.

of the Christians in Nad̄jran under the Jewish king of South Arabia, Yūsuf.⁽¹⁾ Some, however, think that it was not to Yūsuf and his victims that the Qur'an refers, and give alternative explanations⁽²⁾ for this passage.

Ṭabarī gives five or six possible explanations without mentioning the massacre of Nad̄jran, viz:-

- A. On the ultimate authority of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb [d. 40/660],⁽³⁾ the verses refer to Mad̄jūs (the Magians).
- B. From Ḳatāda [d.118/736], on the ultimate authority of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭalīb, they were people from Mad̄harīḡ al-Yaman.⁽⁴⁾ The believers and unbelievers fought

1. Tha'labī, pp.434-36; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.113; Kurṭubī, XIX, pp.287, citing Ibn al-Kalbī and al-Ḍaḥḥaḡ.
2. cf. Loth, "Ṭabarī's Korancommentar, ZDMG, XXXV (1881), pp.610-622.
3. See also, Tha'labī, p.436; Zamakhsarī, al-Kashshāf..., III, p.326; Ḳurṭubī, XIX, pp.287 ff. Ṭabarsī, X, p.465, Ḳurṭubī, XIX, p.287 also quotes another tradition on the ultimate authority of 'Alī, that 'God sent an Abyssinian Prophet to the Abyssinians who then lied to him, so that he declared war on the pagans. The latter killed many of his followers and captured him with his few followers, and threw them in the fire.'
4. Mad̄harḡ here should be read Mad̄harī', which means:
المذارع من الأرض النواحي ومن الواري اضراجه .. المذارع والمزالف والبراني
وهي القرى والبلاد التي بين الريف والبر.
See Tād̄j, V, p.335.

together. Having triumphed, the unbelievers burnt the faithful. This tradition does not specify Jews and Christians.

- C. Ibn 'Abbās [3/617-68/687] and al-Ḍaḥḥāk [d.105/723] say that the verses allude to a massacre of the Jews, and that according to an unnamed authority these verses in fact refer to Dānyāl⁽¹⁾ (Daniel), and his followers.
- D. Mudjahid [d.104/722]⁽²⁾ says that there were trenches in Nadīrānite ground, and people were tortured there, but Mudjahid does not specify any particular party.
- E. Suhaib⁽³⁾ [d. about 38/659] says that Muḥammad the Prophet informed his followers that these verses alluded to a certain king who burned the believers. In the tradition mentioned above, the Prophet did not give the name of the king or his realm.
- F. Al-Rabī b. Anas⁽⁴⁾ [d. 139/756] says that the battle of Ashāb al-Ukhdūd was between the believers and a tyrant king who was a pagan. The king asked them to embrace paganism. They refused his demand, so he threw them in the fire.

There is another tradition according to 'Ikrima⁽⁵⁾ [d. 105/728] that the event of Ashāb al-Ukhdūd happened in

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1. See also, Tha'labī, p.436, Zamakhsharī, ibid, III, p.325. Kurṭubī, XIX, p.287, citing al-Tha'alibī and al-Mawardī.
 2. See also, Ibn Kathā'ir, al-Bidāya..., II, p.132, citing Ibn Djubīr.
 3. See also, Tha'labī, p.436.
 4. Tafsīr, XXX, pp.134 ff.
 5. Kurṭubī, XIX, pp.287 ff.

Sijjistan in Persia. Muḳatīl b. Sukīmān⁽¹⁾ mentions three massacres: one in Nadjirān at the time of Yūsuf Dhū Nuwās, who massacred the Christians in Tihāma and Nadjirān;⁽²⁾ the second in Syria at the time of Antiochus^o; and the third in Persia at the time of Nebuchadnezzar.

It is interesting to note that popular legend connects the massacre with a grave found at the time of the Caliph 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb [d.23/644] by a man of Nadjirān who was digging in one of the ruins of Nadjirān, with the intention of making use of the land. He came upon the corpse of 'Abdallāh b. al-Thāmīr sitting with its hand covering a wound in its head. A report was sent to 'Umar and he replied, "Cover up the grave and leave him alone" and his orders were duly carried out.⁽³⁾ Because of this the

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1. Ṭabarsī, I, p.466; see also Tha'labī, pp.434-36, citing Muḳatīl; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya..., II, p.132, citing al-Saddī, and another statement, citing Ibn Djubīr, mentions Constantinian instead of Antiochus.
 2. See also, Ibn Kathīr, ibid., II, p.132, citing Ibn Djubīr.
 3. Guillaume, p.18, citing 'Abdallāh b. Abū Bakr; Tha'labī, p.370.

Nadīrānite Muslims built a Mosque over his grave.⁽¹⁾

It is sometimes thought that it refers to Nebuchadnezzar's casting three youths into the fiery furnace. Thus Nöldeke, noting the disagreement of the Arab commentators about these verses of the Qur'ān, says that this reference does not allude to the Nadīrān,⁽²⁾ but Nöldeke finally adopts the version which says that the verses of the Qur'ān do allude to the Nadīrān massacre.⁽³⁾ Halévy⁽⁴⁾ tried to prove that the persecutions in South Arabia were not carried out at the hands of the Jews, but

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1. J. Halévy, "Rapport sur une mission...", JA, 6e série, t. XIX (1872), p.4, saw the Mosque of Abdallah during his visit to Nadīrān. Philby, Arabian Highlands.pp.238-9. was shown the tomb and shrine of a saint, 'Abdallah b. Thāmir, and mentions the well of Ibn Thāmir. The police compound near the well, on the edge of the city of Nadīrān, is now generally called Ibn Thāmir, cf. ibid.p77
 2. Nöldeke, Geschichte de Qorāns, Gottingen (1860), p.77.
 3. Idem, Geschichte de Perser und Araber..., pp.177, 185.
 4. J. Halévy, "Examen critique des sources relatives à la persécution des Chrétiens du Nedīrān par le roi juif des Himyarites", REJ, XVIII (1889), pp.16-42; pp.161-172.

by the Arians.⁽¹⁾ Horovitz thinks that the Qur'anic verses do not allude to past events but rather to the fate in store for those who will be punished in Hell. His argument is that 'Ḳutilā' need not necessarily mean 'they ^{were} killed', but, as in other passages in the Qur'an, e.g. Sūra 80.16, Sūra 74.1, it may have the meaning "may death befall". Furthermore, the three Sūras preceding Sūra 85 consist of an adjuration such as usually serves as an introduction to the description of the divine judgment of the Fate, but hardly ever as an introduction to narrative verses; besides, if these verses were meant to allude to the deeds of an evil-doer of the past, we should expect to hear of the kind of punishment that was meted out to him, as we do in almost all other similar passages of the Qur'an.⁽²⁾

It is important to note that there is no account in either The Letter or the Book of the Himyarites⁽³⁾ about a

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1. cf. Yāqūt, IV, p.755, who tries to prove that the persecutor was a pagan king, not a Jewish one, because Yūsuf was a pious Jew, and it is unlikely that he would carry out such a persecution.
 2. cf. Horovitz, "Judaico-Arabic...", IC, III (1929), pp.195-96. Cf. also E.I.⁽²⁾ "Aḡḡāb al-Uḡḡūd".
 3. cf. W.G. Greenslade, "The Martyrs of Negran", MW, XXII (1932), p.269.

trench filled with fire into which the Christians were cast. Although the church in Nadīrān was burned, and many of the people with it, there is no mention of a fire in a ditch.⁽¹⁾

Even though the Qur'ān does not mention the place or time of the burning of 'the people of the ditch', it is still not possible to exclude a reference to the plight of the people of Nadīrān.⁽²⁾ The Christian sources already mentioned tell nothing of a pit in which Yūsuf's victims were burnt. According to them, they were killed when their houses and churches were set on fire. Yūsuf commanded these victims to be brought to the valley and ordered their heads to be cut off, and their corpses cast into the valley.⁽³⁾

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1. cf. E.I.,⁽²⁾ "Dhū Nuwās", in which a suggestion is made that the story of the pit refers to the Qurīshites at Badr, whose bodies were thrown into a well.
 2. Chapter XVI of the Book, p.cii, tells of the freedborn Hadyah, daughter of the martyr Tahnah, who also suffered martyrdom by fire in her house; paragraph 23 of the Acta Sanctorum, X, p.739 tells of a prodigious, mighty fiery glow, that was seen in the sky when the Jewish king was about to leave Nadīrān.
 3. Letter, p.212.

According to the Arabic Lexicon, we see that Ukhdūd does not exactly mean "trench" in our sense of the word, but rather a long, narrow field, or a watercourse carved out by floods, or a field in a series, irrigated by a flood channel.⁽¹⁾ Thus, there may be no great difference between the Ukhdūd of the Arab traditions and the "wādī"⁽²⁾ of the Christian writers.⁽³⁾

Finally, it would not be amiss to deal with the place of the fire in the massacre. Arabic tradition associated the fire⁽⁴⁾ with the massacre. At any rate, Yūsuf probably killed the Christians and threw their bodies into the fire, because it was difficult to bury a large number of corpses,⁽⁵⁾ or he was afraid of an epidemic.

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1. Serjeant, "Ukhdūd", BSOAS, XXII (1959), p.573; cf. Zamksharī, Kashshaf..., III, p.326, mentions that the length of al-Ukhdūd was 40 arms and the width 12 arms. cf. also Ibn Hishām, I, p.35.
 2. Acta Sanctorum, sec.20, X, p.736; Letter, p.212.
 3. cf. Greenslade, "The Martyrs of Nejrān", MW, XXII (1932), pp.269-70.
 4. Letter, p.210, mentions only that Yūsuf burned the bones of the Bishop with fire, and burned the church with the monks and the people and all that was found in it.
 5. According to the Book, p.cxv, "Abdallāh in the fervour of zeal of his faith encouraged himself and approached the crucifier Masrūq and asked him that he might go and =

It has also been suggested that fire walking was part of old religious beliefs of South Arabia.⁽¹⁾ There is an ancient legend of a fire in South Arabia, which the heretics and heathen were burnt⁽²⁾ during the persecutions of Abū Karib As'ad, though the rabbis were spared.⁽³⁾

The Nadjranite Ambassador in Ḥīra

The Letter refers to an ambassador despatched to Ḥīra by the "king whom the Cushites set up",⁽⁴⁾ just before Yūsuf gained the upper hand, and who definitely was at Ḥīra in 523-24 C.E. This reference raises speculation as to what was behind this embassy, and as to who sent it. The Letter does not mention whether the king who sent the ambassador was king of all South Arabia or only king of Nadjran or Zifār. On the other hand, we do not know

5. (contd.) collect and bury them." Masrūq [Yūsuf] indicated that he could do so.

1. Serjeant, "Ukhdūd" BSOAS, XXII (1959), p.572. Prof. Serjeant saw the fire-walkers of Şufya near Lahidj in 1954.

2. Ibn Hishām, I, p.25; Ṭabari, I, pp.905-906; Dīnawarī, p.62, al-Maḳḳdisī, al-Bad'..., III, p.180.

3. Cf. for the worship of the fire in Pre-Islamic time, Ḳalkaşhandī, Nihāyat, pp.462-63.

4. Letter, p.205.

whether this king was a native Christian, or a Himyarite king who had been a vassal of the Abyssinian king or an Abyssinian who was sent to South Arabia. But it seems from The Letter that the king was a Christian or at least a protector of the Christians of South Arabia or Nadīrān. Thus, it is possible that the object of the mission was to solve the Monophysite problem in Mundhir's realm, and the reference in The Letter to certain Himyarite believers as having accompanied the Christian ambassador from South Arabia is certainly significant.⁽¹⁾ The Monophysites of Persia were living under difficult conditions, as is clear from Simeon's Letter.⁽²⁾ Also, we might expect the king to send an ambassador to intercede on behalf of the Monophysites in Persia, particularly since relations between Ḥīra and South Arabia had always centred on the struggle over the sovereignty of Central Arabia. If this was the object of his mission, then the South Arabian ambassador could have taken part in the negotiations at Ḥīra in which Simeon and Abraham were involved.⁽³⁾

1. Shahid, "Byzantino...", JNES. XXIII (1964), p.120.

2. Letter, pp.309-310.

3. cf. Shahid, *ibid.*

Yūsuf's Ambassador to Hīra

The Martyrium states briefly that Yūsuf despatched letters to Kōbād and to his vassal, Mundhir, announcing the massacre of the Christians in South Arabia, and reminding the Persian king that his god, 'the father of the sun', was also the God of the Hebrews, and offering the Lakhmid king three thousand denarii as an inducement to persecute Christians. (1)

The Martyrologist adds piously that Divine Providence intervened very opportunely by inspiring Justin I to send Abraham at this juncture, and that his timely despatch to negotiate with Mundhir saved the Persian Christians from a fate similar to that which their brethren in South Arabia had suffered.

Yūsuf was probably concerned more about Judaism and the safety of the Jewish communities in Persia than about exterminating Christians. During the reign of Kōbād [488-531 C.E.], the Jews in Persia were living under a cloud, especially when Kōbād embraced the Zandiks. (2) As

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1. Acta Sanctorum, X, sec.37, pp.755-56. See also, Letter, p.205; The Book, p.ciii, Chapter 25.
 2. cf. The Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, VIII, p.463.

recently as 520 C.E., Mar Zuṭra II was executed and his body was crucified on the bridge of Mahoza after he had led an unsuccessful armed rising. Yūsuf would have known that after the execution of Mar Zuṭra his family fled to Palestine with his infant son, who later became the head of the Sanhedrin.⁽¹⁾ Hence Yūsuf's concern for the Jews of Mesopotamia, which is clearly attested in The Letter; he calls upon Mundhir to help the Jews in his domain and promises him rewards.⁽²⁾ Furthermore, the Christian king of Nadīrān sent an ambassador to Mundhir, and it is likely that he asked for Mundhir's support against the Jews. Yūsuf's proposal was intended to stop such action on the part of Mundhir and to go further by turning the tables on the Christians in Mundhir's realm.⁽³⁾

Yūsuf's letter must have contained other proposals besides the massacre of Christians. Perhaps the real object of his embassy was to obtain the assistance of the

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1. O. Klima, "Mazdak und die Juden", Archiv Orientalni, (1956), pp.420-31; Geo-Widengren, "The Status of the Jews in the Sassanian Empire", Iranica Antiqua, I (1961), pp.143-146.
 2. Letter, p.209.
 3. Shahid, "Byzantino-Arabica...", JNES, XXII (1964), p.125.

Persians in resisting any attempt at reprisal which the Abyssinians would inevitably make.⁽¹⁾ In spite of his victory in South Arabia, as recorded in the inscriptions, Yūsuf was politically isolated, and surrounded by enemies. In addition to his two traditional enemies, Christian Abyssinia and Byzantium, there was Mundhir the Lakhmid who had just received a Christian embassy from both Byzantium and Najrān. Thus, Yūsuf wanted to prevent any alliance being made between the Christians and Mundhir. Mundhir had no religious quarrel⁽²⁾ with Yūsuf, and their hostility to both Byzantium and Christianity presented a common ground on which they could meet. From Yūsuf's point of view, an alliance with Mundhir and Ḳobād would not only offer protection to his co-religionists in Mesopotamia, but would eliminate the danger of possible missionary activity from that region if its Christian communities were suppressed, and would consolidate his position militarily in the Arabian Peninsula. The proposed alliance would have benefitted both Mundhir and Ḳobād.

1. cf. The Book, p.lxx.

2. Mundhir's sacrifice of captured Christians to the goddess al-Uzza (Venus) is attested in the sources, although they took place later than 524 A.D. See J. Henninger, "Meschenopfer bei den Arabern, Anthropos", (1958), pp.734-738; E.I. (1). "Al-ʿUzza".

Yūsuf could hold Abyssinia and its Byzantine ally, at bay, and, what is more important, he could frustrate the continual Byzantine and Abyssinian attempts to establish direct trade links with India without the interference of South Arabia and Persia. (1)

Although Yūsuf's proposals could easily commend themselves to Mundhir, the latter was in no position to respond. His initial reaction was favourable but it soon became clear to him that an alliance which entailed the persecution of Christians was impractical and could compromise his own position. Part of Mundhir's army was Christian and Ḥīra, his capital, had a large Christian community, the 'Ibād. (2) A taste of what could happen if he acceded to Yūsuf's request was provided by the rebellion of a Christian chief in his army after Yūsuf's letter had been read. (3)

The reaction of Ḳobād to Yūsuf's offer can only be guessed. It is possible that Yūsuf's diplomatic offer

1. Shahid, ibid, p.127.

2. See al-'Alī, Muḥadrāt fī Ta'rīkh al-'Arab, I, p.28.

3. Letter, p.210.

took place during the period of close Byzantine-Persian relations which followed the affair of the Hunnic chief Ziby. At this time, Kōbād established friendly relations with Byzantium, so much so that he suggested that Justin I should adopt his son Chosroes. (1)

1. Vasiliev, Justin the First, pp.264-268.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ABYSSINIAN INVOLVEMENT

CHAPTER FIVE

Daūs Dhū Tha'labān

After the massacre of Nadīrān, according to Arab sources, Daūs Dhū Tha'labān⁽¹⁾ fled on horseback across the sandy desert and escaped. He went straight to the Byzantine Emperor (Kaīṣar) and asked him for help against Yūsuf and his armies, after having told him what had happened.⁽²⁾ But the Emperor said:

"Your country is too far away from ours for us to reach it with troops, but I shall write on your behalf to the king of Abyssinia who confesses the same religion as I do and is nearer to your country than we are: he will help you, defend you and wreak vengeance upon the one who has wronged you and ventured to do such things to you and your co-religionists."⁽³⁾

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1. Ṭabarī, I, p.925. According to Ibn al-Kalbī, Daūs is the fugitive from Nadīrān who tells Dhū Nūwās of the Nadīrānite Christians' deeds, Ṭabarī, I, p.226. In the Abyssinian tale, Dhū Tha'labān is one of the notables, apparently Jewish, fighting Azkīr; see J.W. Hirschberg, "Nestorian...", RO, XV (1949), p.324.
 2. cf. Ṭabarī, I, p.925, who says that there was a Yamānī report, according to Muḥammad b. Ka'b al-Ḳaraḏī, that it was a man of Nadīrān, called Djabbār b. Faīḏ, who escaped.
 3. Ṭabarī, I, p.924.

There is another account related by Ibn al-Kalbī: (1)

"One of the people of Nadīran thereupon went to the king of Abyssinia, informed him of what had happened to them, and showed him a copy of the Gospel, part of which had been burned. The king said: 'I have plenty of men, but no ships, but I shall write to the Emperor and ask him to send me ships on which to carry the men.' So he wrote to the Emperor, sending along with his letter the burned copy of the Gospel, whereupon the Emperor sent him many ships."

The reason why Dāūs was sent from Byzantium to Abyssinia may be either that it was known that the Abyssinian king intended to invade, but was only prevented by the lack of ships, (2) or that the Emperor remembered the unsuccessful expedition of Aelius Gallus against the king of the Himyarites in 25 B.C.E. (3)

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1. Ṭabarī, I, pp.925-26. See also Wahb, p.301; Ḥamza, p.133; Ibn Rasūl, p.48.
 2. Smith, p.451.
 3. With reference to Aelius Galus' expedition see Robert Fary, "Autour d'une expedition romaine en Arabie Heureuse sous Auguste", Bulletin de la Société Suisse des Études Asiatiques, V (Bern 1943), pp.3-31.

It must be admitted that we do not know who Daūs was, or what was his political position in Nadīrān before the massacre. Ibn Rasūl⁽¹⁾ (d. 961/1296) says he was a king of Nadīrān. But according to Simeon's Letter:⁽²⁾ "that king whom the Cushites set up in our land [probably Nadīrān] is dead." The Book of the Himyarites⁽³⁾ mentions that the governor of Nadīrān, Ḥārith, was killed by Masrūq (Yūsuf) when the latter entered Nadīrān. In the meantime, the Book agrees with the Arab tradition that a man from Nadīrān called "Umayyah" fled to Abyssinia out of zeal for God, and informed the holy Bishop, Euprepios, and Kāleb, King of Abyssinia.⁽⁴⁾

So it is quite possible that Daūs (or Umayyah) was an important figure in Nadīrān, and was well received by both Byzantium and the Abyssinians.

In any case, the Abyssinians later conquered South Arabia and set up a puppet Christian king. But nothing

1. Ibn Rasūl, p.48. Mulūk, p.148, mentions that he was Dhū Tha'labān al-Aṣghar b. Dhū Tha'labān al-Akbar b. Shuraḥbil b. al-Ḥārith, from Ḥimyar.

2. Letter, p.205.

3. The Book, p.cii.

4. ibid., p.civ.

is known about Daūs after the conquest, although one Arab tradition says that the Roman Emperor had asked the Abyssinian king to appoint Daūs as governor of South Arabia.⁽¹⁾ The Abyssinian king appointed Esimiphaïos as his vassal over South Arabia,⁽²⁾ and it is quite possible that he also appointed Daūs as ruler of the city of Maḡjirān, while Esimiphaïos was king over all South Arabia.

The Name of the Abyssinian King

It must be pointed out here, before we deal with the war, that there were various forms of the king's name. This name is transliterated in various ways even in the same sources. In the original Abyssinian, his name was Ela Aṭsbeha (Ela Aṭsbeha, or Ello Aṭsbeha).⁽³⁾ Of the Greeks, Cosmas approaches nearest to it with his Elesbaan.⁽⁴⁾ Procopius has Hellestheacus,⁽⁵⁾ Malalas, Elesbaas;⁽⁶⁾ and Theophanes, Elesboas;⁽⁷⁾ and Martyrium Arethas, Elesbaas

1. Wahb, p.30; Ḥanẓa, p.137.

2. Procopius, I, xx, 9-13.

3. Jones, A History of Abyssinia (Oxford, 1935), p.30.

4. Cosmas, p.55.

5. Procopius, I, xx, 9-13.

6. Malalas, p.558.

7. Quoted from Vasiliew, Justin The First, p.291.

and Elestaan.⁽¹⁾ This form is similar to the name mentioned in RES 3904 (= Istanbul 7608 bis, 11 A(ş)baḥah)⁽²⁾

In some sources he is called Kāleb, a name also given in the Abyssinian translation of the Martyrium Arethae, and one which belongs to a very old tradition.⁽³⁾ The Queen of Sheba calls him Pinḥas (Phinehas).⁽⁴⁾ He is also called Constantine and Daniel.⁽⁵⁾ Arab sources called him Nadjāshī.⁽⁶⁾ The latter name is used by the Arabs as a title for the kings of Abyssinia.⁽⁷⁾

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1. Acta Sanctorum, X, pp.721-722; see also Steindorff, "Elesbaas", in PW, V (1965), col.2327.
 2. G. Ryckmans, "Une Inscription Chrétienne Sabéenne", Le Muséon, LIX (1946), pp.167-172.
 3. F.M. Pereira, Historia dos Martyres de Nagran, versao ethiopica, (Lisbon, 1899) pp.xli-lvii; (Kāleb rei de Aksum), pp.33-76; The Book, p.xlii; p.lxxii; see also, Glaser, Die Abessinier..., pp.176-177; Fell, "Die Christenverfolgung...", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), p.19. It is interesting that, according to Mulūk, p.148, Kāleb was the leader of the Abyssinian army which was sent to Nadjāshī.
 4. Op.cit., p.225.
 5. Budge, History of Ethiopia. I, p.261.
 6. Ibn Hishām, I, p.37; Ṭabarī, I, p.926, citing Ibn Ishāq.
 7. The name of the Abyssinian king at the time of Muḥammad was Aḥama, see al-Zadīdjādī Amālī..., p.151. Ibn Sa'ad, p.341, calls him al-Aḥmaḥ, which is probably a corruption of his real name 'Armaḥ, see Budge, The History, I, p.271.

The Supply of Ships

It is a fact that the traditions mention that relations between Byzantium under Justin I and the Abyssinians were carried on through Egypt, particularly through the Patriarch of Alexandria, Timotheus II (520-537 C.E.).⁽¹⁾

Justin I decided to support the Abyssinian king, Elesbaas, in his expedition to South Arabia and to subdue the turbulent Belemyes and Nubians on his borders, because these lands were exceedingly important. The original plan was to send troops to Abyssinia from Egypt, not only by sea but also by land; in other words, through the territory of the Belemyes and Nubians.⁽²⁾ Justin I acted through the agency of the Patriarch of Alexandria, Timotheus, who, after receiving the imperial instructions, sent a letter to Elesbaas to inform him that it was planned to equip special Belemyan and Nubian troops to take part in the South Arabian expedition.⁽³⁾

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1. See about the life of Timotheos, William Smith and Henry Wace, A Dictionary of Christian Biography, (London 1887), IV, p.1034.
 2. Acta Sanctorum, X, sec. 29, p.747.
 3. Ibid. X, sec. 28, p.743.

The promised Byzantine troops apparently made no appearance in either Abyssinia or South Arabia. At any rate, there is no record of such an expedition. But it is certainly true that Justin I supplied Elesbaas with a considerable number of ships for the transportation of Abyssinian troops to South Arabia.⁽¹⁾ Of course, these were not warships, but only commercial vessels which Byzantium had in great numbers for her commercial transactions in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.⁽²⁾

A list of the vast numbers of such vessels, drawn from various places, is given in the Martyrium Arethae:⁽³⁾ from the city of Ayla (Aela) 15 vessels; from Clysmate (now Suez) 20; from the island of Iotabe (Yolabe), close to the Sinai peninsula, 7; from Berenice on the Red Sea, 2; from the island of Pharsan (Farsan) in the Red Sea, 7; from India, 9.

Bury⁽⁴⁾ hesitates to accept the use of Byzantine ships. He says, 'Huart⁽⁵⁾ suggests that the Abyssinians had no

1. Tabarī, I, p.925.

2. Nöldeke, Geschichte der Perser und Araber..., p.188.

3. Acta Sanctorum, X, Sec.29, p.747.

4. Bury, History..., II, p.323.

5. cf. Huart, Hist. des Arabes..., p.53.

ships and that the Romans must have supplied them with transport for their expeditions to South Arabia.'

Possibly Elesbaas had enough merchant ships, but the opposite coast could be defended against open boats. Roman merchant vessels were equipped for defence, so that the Abyssinians were obliged to ask Justin I for the supply of Roman vessels.⁽¹⁾ The Abyssinians did not dare (or were not able) to impound such ships, till Justin I gave permission.

The assembly centre for the troops and vessels was Gabazan,⁽²⁾ a port in the vicinity of Elesbaas', chief city of Adulis.⁽³⁾

In the winter of 525 E.C., seventy vessels were ready for transporting the troops to South Arabia.⁽⁴⁾ Cosmas Indicopleustes saw the Abyssinian preparations for the expedition. His statement runs:

1. Smith, p.455.

2. Acta Sanctorum, X, sec. 29, p.747.

3. Adulis was called in Arabic 'Adaūlī; see Fr. Praetorius, "Der Name Adulis", ZDMG, XLVII (1893), p.396. Cf. Yāqūt III, p.633, who mentions 'Adaūlī as a village in Baḥraīn.

4. Actually, sixty Roman vessels and ten Abyssinian, see Acta Sanctorum, ibid.

"Now when I was in this part of the country some five and twenty years ago, more or less, at the beginning of the reign of the Roman Emperor Justinus, Elesbaan; who was then king of the Axnōmites, and was preparing to start on an expedition against the Homerites on the opposite side of the Gulf wrote to the governor of Adulê directing him to take copies of the inscriptions on the Chair of Ptolemy and on the tablet, and send them to him."⁽¹⁾

The Date of the Invasion

From our sources we cannot say that there was an invasion immediately before Yūsuf's massacre, and this implies that there was only one invasion, as is shown below.

Cosmas mentions only one invasion. He only describes Elesbaan's preparations for invading South Arabia.⁽²⁾

Procopius also, mentions only one war. But Simeon says: "The king whom the Cushites set up in our land is dead, and the winter season having arrived, the Cushites were not able to come across to our land."⁽³⁾ Simeon does not mention when the Abyssinians came, or whether the king was

1. Cosmas, pp.55-56.

2. ibid.

3. Letter, p.205.

an Abyssinian or a Christian native from South Arabia with a leaning towards the Abyssinians, because he was a Christian. The latter is probably the more likely.

The Book of the Himyarites alludes to an Abyssinian invasion which happened many years before the expedition against Masrūq (Yūsuf). Chapter four tells how "Bishop Thomas went to the Abyssinians and informed them that the Himyarites were persecuting the Christians." Chapter five mentions "Account telling of the first coming of HYWN and the Abyssinians." Chapter six mentions "Account telling of the amazing sign which the Lord showed the Himyarites in the ranks of the Abyssinians." Chapter seven mentions, "Account telling of the first departure of the Abyssinians from the land of the Himyarites."⁽¹⁾ As already mentioned above, the Book tells of the first Abyssinian invasion, but it is difficult to fix the time when it took place and we do not know who HYWN was. Moberg considered the possibility that HYWN was an Abyssinian king or general. The name, according to Moberg, is probably corrupted, the Arabic "حيوان" being out of the question in this case.⁽²⁾

1. The Book, pp.ci-cii.

2. cf. Ibid., p.xc.

Smith⁽¹⁾ believes, according to the Book, that "there was an Abyssinian invasion immediately before Masrūq became king, and two distinct persecutions by him." It is difficult to accept Smith's proposal, however, because we do not know which see was under Bishop Thomas's jurisdiction. From both the Book,⁽²⁾ and from the Letter of Simeon,⁽³⁾ we know that the Abyssinian expedition was sent as a result of a report of persecution in South Arabia, which was made to the king of Abyssinia. Moberg suggests that either Thomas was not bishop of Nadīran but of somewhere else, or that the persecution and the Abyssinian expedition alluded to must be attributed to a considerably earlier period.⁽⁴⁾

Arab sources only mention one invasion, but on the other hand they refer to two expeditions which both took place in Yūsuf's reign after the persecution as we shall see.

The Martyrium Arethae and the Queen of Sheba refer only to one invasion, but the latter does not mention why

1. Smith, p.454. Smith accepts an Abyssinian legend about Arwe who preceded 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa, and he says that Arwe, meaning the beast, was probably a Lakab.

2. See The Book, p.cii.

3. Letter, p.210.

4. The Book, p.li.

the Abyssinian king went to fight Yūsuf or how the Abyssinians arrived in South Arabia, and what is more, it does not give us the details of the war.

At any rate, there is no reason to say that there had been an invasion before Yūsuf came to power. Furthermore, we know from Ry 510, dated 631 of the Sabaean era - just two years before Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028, of Yūsuf 'As'ar - that Ma'dikarib Ya'fur led an expedition to Central Arabia. Thus, he must have had a firm hold over South Arabia, and there is reason to believe that he was on good terms with the people of Nadjran.⁽¹⁾ So it would be impossible for him to invade Central Arabia, if the Abyssinians were already in his lands.

Finally, we know that the Abyssinian king did not dare, or was unable, to invade South Arabia until Justin I gave his permission in 525 C.E.⁽²⁾ to provide him with merchant vessels. How could the Abyssinians attempt to cross over into South Arabia and occupy it, unless they had a sufficient naval backing for their forces?

1. cf. The Book, p.cxxxiii.

2. Persécution, p.6 fixes the date of the invasion as 18th May, 525 C.E.

The Battlefield

To begin with, we know nothing about Himyaritic preparations on the eastern coast of the Red Sea. We only know from Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028 that Yūsuf 'As'ar, in 633, Himyarite era, was in Aḡhā'ira land near the Red Sea, to the north of Bāb al-Mandab.

Ibn al-Mudjāwir mentions that: "One of the Arab built on the mountain of Mandab a fortress named [بجدة] and stretched a chain (silsila) from the land of the Arab towards the land of the Ḥabasha crosswise (mu'ariḍ); and every vessel arriving used to pass under the chain until it came out from there and then sailed in whatsoever direction it desired."⁽¹⁾ According to the above statement, J. Ryckmans⁽²⁾ supposes that this chain was prepared by Yūsuf as a military defence. A.F.L. Beeston⁽³⁾ does not agree with J. Ryckmans and states "this strongly suggests to me that the chain was originally not intended for military or defensive purposes, but was rather some sort of navigational aid designed to mark a deep-water channel for ships sailing

1. Ibn al-Mudjāwir, pp.95-96.

2. Persécution, p.17.

3. Beeston, "J. Ryckmans, La persécution...", B10, XW (1958), pp.63-64.

from the Red Sea into the Gulf of Aden." Therefore, it is quite right to suppose that this chain was not made for military or defensive purposes, and, in addition, there is the statement of Ibn al-Mudjāwir, which makes it clear that this chain was built in the Islamic period.⁽¹⁾ We do not know who built it, but the chain remained intact, as Ibn al-Mudjāwir says, until *تباينة ملوك اليمن* or *بنو زريع ملوك عدن*. Ibn al-Mudjāwir also believed that it remained until *الغشة ملوك زبيد*.

The tradition based on Ibn al-Kalbī⁽²⁾ states that the Abyssinian troops landed on the coast of Bab al-Mandab.⁽³⁾ It is not clear from Ibn al-Kalbī's statement where the actual landing took place. As we know, the coast is a long one. According to al-Mas'ūdī, the Abyssinian troops crossed from the land of Naṣṣ and al-Zaila on the Abyssinian coast over to the land of Zabīd.⁽⁴⁾ Al-Nuwaīrī agrees with al-Mas'ūdī that the Abyssinians landed on the

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1. Ibn al-Mudjāwir mentions some Arab and not Tubba' or Himyar which alluded to pre-Islamic time.
 2. Ṭabarī, I, p.929; Yāqūt, IV, p.660, without an informant.
 3. According to Yāqūt, IV, p.660, al-Mandab was called Dhū al-Mandab, but when the Abyssinians had crossed over they called it Dandmadind *دندمدند* which means 'this hungry' *هذا الجائع*. The Yamanites said it was not Dhāt Muṭrib but Mandab. Thus, from that time it has been called Mandab.
 4. Mas'ūdī, I, p.194; see also, Azraqī, I, p.89.

coast of Zabīd, and he gives the location as Ghalāfiqa,⁽¹⁾ a town on the coast of Zabīd.⁽²⁾ It is reasonable to assume that the Abyssinians landed in Ghalāfiqa where the Ashā'ira used to live. And it is more probable that the Abyssinians got their support from the Ashā'ira.

It is possible, according to the heading in chapter XLI and XLII of the Book of the Himyarites,⁽³⁾ that the Abyssinian troops landed at two different places on the coast, just as is stated in the Martyrium Arethae.⁽⁴⁾ But this, of course, is uncertain.

After due preparation, the Abyssinians crossed the Red Sea, but we have no account from the Christian sources about the details of the war with the Himyarites. All we know is that the Christian king Kāleb performed all that he set out to do in South Arabia; he built many churches there, appointed priests in them from those who were with him, and also set up a king named Esimiphaios.⁽⁵⁾

1. Ghalāfiqa is the port of Zabīd, the distance between them is 4 Arabic miles, (according to al-ʿAzīzī 15 Arabic miles); see Abū al-Fidā, Takwīm..., p.89.

2. Nuwairī, xv, p.290.

3. op. cit., p.viv.

4. Acta Sanctorum, X sec. 34, p.754.

5. The Book, p.cxlīi. See also Procopius, I, xx. 10-11.

We have two accounts in the Arab traditions, describing the particulars of the war. According to Ibn al-Kalbī:

"When the ships sent by Kaīsar [Caesar] reached the Nadjāshī he embarked his troops and they landed on the coast of Mandab. When Dhū Nuwās heard of this he wrote to the princes of al-Yaman asking them for their support in fighting the Abyssinians and in driving them out of the country. But they refused, saying: Let everyone fight for his own principality and country! When he heard this, he ordered a large quantity of keys which he loaded on a number of camels, and when he met the army of the Abyssinians he said: These are the keys to the treasures of al-Yaman, which I have brought for you; take the money from the land, but spare the lives of the men and the children. Their leader said, I shall write to the king about this, whereupon he informed the Nadjāshī who wrote back, ordering him to accept the proposal. Thereupon Dhū Nuwās proceeded with them to Ṣan'ā' and said to their leader: send the most reliable of your people in order that they may take possession of the treasures. But when his men, having received the keys, had dispersed in order to take possession of them, letters from Dhū Nuwās reached the various parts of the country containing the words: Kill all the black bulls in your country. So the Abyssinians were killed and only those escaped who fled. When the Nadjāshī heard what Dhū Nuwās had done, he sent 70,000 men under two leaders, one of whom was Abraha. When they reached Ṣan'ā' and Dhū Nuwās saw that he had no power to resist them, he mounted

his horse, rode towards the sea and plunged into it."⁽¹⁾

Another account, according to Ibn Ishāk, runs as follows:

"The Nadjāshī despatched an army of 70,000 men under the leadership of an Abyssinian called Aryāṭ, and ordered him to defeat them, to kill one third of their men, lay waste one third of their country and take one third of their women and children prisoner. Aryāṭ, in whose army there was also Abraha al-Ashram, went by sea, accompanied by Daūs and they disembarked on the coast of al-Yaman. When Dhū Nuwās heard of them he collected the Himyarites and those tribes of al-Yaman, who obeyed him, whereupon they assembled. But they were disunited and divided amongst themselves, for their time was over and their misfortune and punishment was ahead. So there was no war, apart from Dhū Nuwās just skirmishing a little; his people fled and Aryāṭ with his army proceeded. When Dhū Nuwās saw what had befallen him and his people, he turned his horse towards the sea, spurred it on, went into the shallows, plunged himself into the depths and nothing more was heard of him."⁽²⁾

1. Ṭabarī, I, p.930.

2. Ibn Hishām, I, p.37; Ṭabarī, I, p.925. The anonymous account quoted in Aghānī, XVI, p.69, agrees with this in the main.

The Size of the Army:

The Martyrium Arethae⁽¹⁾ mentions that 120,000 soldiers⁽²⁾ went with King Elesbaas. Another 15,000 went by land, but no more was heard of them.

According to Ibn Ishāq,⁽³⁾ the Abyssinian king sent 70,000 soldiers, but these numbers mentioned above are certainly an over-estimation because it was impossible for such a large number of soldiers to cross the Red Sea in only seventy merchant ships and it is highly unlikely that the Abyssinian troops were ferried over in relays, since in this case it would have been easy for Yūsuf 'As'ar to harass them. Nashwan⁽⁴⁾ says that the Abyssinians first sent 30,000 men, and when they were defeated by Yūsuf's troops, they sent another great army. This figure is acceptable as it was quite possible to transfer 30,000 men in 70 vessels.

1. Acta Sanctorum, X, sec. 29, p.747.

2. This number is given by Simeon's Letter, p.205, as the number of Yūsuf's troops which marched into the city of Nadīrān.

3. Ṭabarī, I, p.927.

4. Mulūk, p.147.

It should be noted that 30,000 men were not enough to fight Yūsuf's troops, who just two years previously had won a victory in which they killed 13,000 men and took 9,500 prisoners.⁽¹⁾ But it is extremely likely that some of Yūsuf's troops and tribesmen had rebelled against him after his victory over Zifār, Nadīrān and al-Ashār'ira, and were now helping the Abyssinian army. It is also probable that al-Ashār'ira and the Christians of South Arabia joined forces with the Abyssinian army, in order to take vengeance on their enemy, Yūsuf 'As'ar. In this case, one would think that the figure of the Martyrium is correct, as this number included both Elesbaas' own troops and the tribes who joined him.⁽²⁾

Yūsuf's Fate

According to Ibn Ishāq's tradition, when "Dhū Nuwās saw the fate that had befallen himself and his people, he turned and set his spurs to his horse and rode through the shallows until he reached the deep water. Then he plunged under the waves and nothing more was seen of him."⁽³⁾

1. cf. Ry 507, 508, Ja 1028.

2. cf. Acta Sanctorum, X, sec. 29, p.747.

3. Ṭabari, I, pp.927-928.

The Lay of the Himyarites attributes the same fate to Yūsuf:

Then Dhū Nuwās plunged into the deep sea, himself and weapons, and his swift courser.

And after his exalted power he served as food for fishes, for the shark and the crocodile.⁽¹⁾

Nashwān himself, in his commentary on the lay, quotes two verses of 'lḳama Dhū Dḳadan to the effect that Yūsuf had been eaten by foxes.⁽²⁾

أكل الثعالب لحمه لم يقبر
من أن يدين للأسود، وأهر

أوما سمعت بقيل حمير يوسف
ورأى بأن الموت خير عنده

"Have not you heard of Yusuf, the Ḳayl of Himyar, whose flesh the whales ate and who was never interred; He thought death preferable to submission to one black or brown.

Basing this argument on the verses of 'lḳama, Von Kremer⁽³⁾ suggested that Yūsuf had been killed on the battlefield as the Abyssinian tradition says. But al-Hamdānī points out that the verse should read "أكل الثعالف" instead of "أكل الثعالب"

1. The Lay, p.33, no.92-93.

2. Mulūk, p.149.

3. Von Kramer, Sudarabische Sage. (Leipzig, 1866), pp.92-127.

The 'alif according to al-Hamdānī, means 'whales'.⁽¹⁾

According to Christian sources⁽²⁾ the Himyarite king was killed by the Abyssinian king. The Martyrium Arethae records that he was made a prisoner and afterwards cut down by the Abyssinian king.⁽³⁾ But the Book of the Himyarites⁽⁴⁾ mentions that he was slain on the battlefield by an Abyssinian warrior, and fell into the sea. Simeon's statement does not differ greatly from the Book: he says, "The Cushites came upon that Jewish king, bound to his neck earthenware vessels of great weight, and cast him from a boat into the midst of the sea."⁽⁵⁾ Therefore, Yūsuf's body had no grave.

The Christian sources do not speak of the details of the war between the Abyssinians and Himyarites, nor do they say either how many Himyarites were killed, or whether the Abyssinians destroyed their towns and property. Unfortunately, neither do we know the details of the Abyssinian attitude towards the Jews. The Martyrium Arethae⁽⁶⁾ and

1. Iklīl, II, p.63,

2. Fell, "Die Christenverfolgung...", ZDMG, XXXV (1881), p.16.

3. Acta Sanctorum, X; sec.39, pp.758-59.

4. op. cit., p.cxxxiv.

5. Letter, p.215.

6. Acta Sanctorum, X, sec. 30, p.747.

the Book⁽¹⁾ record how King Kāleb killed many Jews. The Book states that Kāleb "made the land pay tribute, and left notables of the Abyssinians to guard the king against enemies, and also the churches that he had built, and he brought with him many captives from the erring Himyarites and fifty princes of the royal family."⁽¹⁾ After that the Book alludes to the 'sudden punishment upon the murderous Himyarites', and how King Kāleb and his army "(began) to roam in other towns (namely) the capital, and all the other towns in the provinces of the Himyarites (wasting) and plundering (them) as they liked..."⁽²⁾

We have no information as to the exact number of captives or the number of the Himyarites killed during the battles. Kāleb, after his victory over Yūsuf, sent two high officials and two hundred other men to Alexandria, and through the Augustalis of Alexandria, Licinius, informed Justin I of the result of his campaign in South Arabia.⁽³⁾ But there is no way to tell exactly whether these two hundred men sent to the Byzantine emperor were Himyarite captives or Abyssinian envoys. It seems that they must

1. The Book, p.cxlii.

2. Ibid., p.cxxxvii.

3. A. Vasiliev, Justin the First. p.299.

have been prisoners sent to Justin I, because we find two high officials with them, and it is not likely that such a large number would have been sent as an embassy. In the meantime, as has already been said, Kāleb took with him many captives and fifty princes of the royal family.⁽¹⁾

According to Ibn Iṣḥāq, Nadjāshī (Kāleb) sent Aryāṭ⁽²⁾ and ordered him to kill a third of the men, lay waste a third of the country, and seize a third of the women and children, when his campaign was successful. Aryāṭ entered South Arabia and took possession of it. He carried out the Nadjāshī's orders and sent a third of the women and the children to him.⁽³⁾ He remained in the country and subjugated it.⁽⁴⁾ The Book⁽⁵⁾ and al-Dīnawarī⁽⁶⁾ point out that many Jews were killed, but they do not mention how many lost their lives.

Al-Hamdānī⁽⁷⁾ states that the Abyssinians destroyed

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1. The Book, p.cxlii.
 2. A. Guillaume, p.18.
 3. Ṭabarī, I, p.925.
 4. A. Guillaume, p.18; see also, Ṭabarī, I, p.926; Ma'ārif, p.637; Iklīl, X, pp.59-60; Yāqūt, II, pp.721-22.
 5. op. cit., p.cxxvii.
 6. Dīnwarī, p.63. See also Nuwairī, XV, p.305.
 7. Iklīl, X, pp.59-60.

three castles between Ṣan'ā and Dh̄mār, and Ṭabarī⁽¹⁾ points out that Aryaṭ destroyed the castles of Salḥīn, Baīnūn and Ghumdān.

Dh̄u Djadan

The Christian and Abyssinian sources are silent about any real resistance which might have been put up by the Himyarites or the local governors after the death of Yūsuf. Ibn Ishāḳ does not mention any resistance or say whether the cities of South Arabia submitted peacefully to the Abyssinian army, and if so, what the peace terms were, or what treatment was meted out to them, or whether the governors of the cities remained in possession of them or not, and if they remained, what kind of relations prevailed between them and the invaders.

According to Ibn Ḳutaība,⁽²⁾ Dh̄u Djadan, when he found that the Himyarite king Yūsuf had been killed by the Abyssinian army, became king and fought the Abyssinians, but was not successful in his enterprise, so that he threw himself into the sea as Yūsuf had done before him.

1. Ṭabarī, I, p.928, citing Ibn Ishāḳ. See also A. Guillaume, p.19.

2. Ma'ārif, p.637. cf. Ibn Rashīḳ, al-'Umda, II, p.227.

According to Aghānī, he was a Jew, and the reason for his failure was the separation of Hamdān from his troops.⁽¹⁾

Dhū Djadan may have been the governor of a state, or a tribal chief. Nashwān says that he was one of "الثامنة"⁽²⁾ and according to the author of Nashwat al-ṭarab,⁽³⁾ Dhū Djadan was from the "المقاول", who governed a large district including Bāinūn, and Salḥīn, both of which had been destroyed by the Abyssinians during their invasion. So he became the leader of the resistance, and spared no efforts to win success.

Nashwān states, also, that the leader who fought the Abyssinians after the death of Yūsuf was al-Nu'mān b. 'Ufīr,⁽⁴⁾ who had gathered together an army and fought the Abyssinians at al-Suḥūl, but then was forced to retreat to Ḥaḳīl Shar'ā, where he was killed.⁽⁵⁾ Ibn Khaldūn⁽⁶⁾ says that Dhū Yazan from Zaīd al-Djamhūr became king of South Arabia after Yūsuf, and when the Abyssinians became a strong power there, they demanded from him the ransom

1. Aghānī, XVIII, p.225 (Beirut ed.).

2. Mulūk, p.149. cf. Ibn Rasūl, p.48.

3. Ibn Sa'īd, p.47B.

4. al-Nu'mān was known as Dhū Yazan al-Aḡghar. See Iklīl, II, p.508.

5. Mulūk, p.149.

6. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.115.

for the Christians who had been killed in Nadīran. When he refused to pay it, Aryāṣ set out to fight him and defeated his army, so Dhū Yazan threw himself in the sea.

As we know from the Book of the Himyarites,⁽¹⁾ Dhū Yazan was the commander whom Yūsuf sent to Nadīran, but as has been mentioned before, Dhū Yazan could be the name of any one of the leading persons of the tribe Yazan who are mentioned, both in the inscriptions of that period and the Arabic sources.⁽²⁾ Thus, the Dhū Yazan mentioned in both Ibn Khaldūn and the Book could have been any one of the leaders of the tribe of the Yazan. On the other hand, it is possible that one of Yūsuf's commanders began negotiations with the Abyssinians after they had killed Yūsuf. This commander would be Sumyafa', who, as we shall see, became king Kāleb's deputy.

The Reign of Sumyafa'

According to the Book of the Himyarites,⁽³⁾ the Abyssinian king Kāleb stayed in South Arabia for seven

1. op. cit., p.cxviii.

2. cf. Iklīl, II, p.270.

3. The Book, p.cxlii.

months, but, according to the Life of St. Gergentius,⁽¹⁾ he was there for three years. But before Kaleb left there, he appointed a Himyarite king.⁽²⁾

The primary Arab accounts do not mention that Kaleb appointed a native king.

The Book states that:

"Kaleb took a [man], one of the notables of the Himyarites, who was also of the royal family there, whose name was [WR]. And because he had seen in him a goodwill towards faith and that he had greatly desired for a long time to be baptized and to be Christian, he commanded the [priests who were with him] and they baptized him, and he acted as sponsor at his baptism and made him his spiritual son, and appointed him as king over all the land of the Himyarites."⁽³⁾

The name of the Himyarite from the Royal family, whom Kaleb made his tributary king in South Arabia, has, unfortunately, been obliterated from an otherwise legible text.

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1. Vasiliev, "The life of St. Gergentius", Vizantiisky Vetemennik, XXIV (1907), pp.65-66.
 2. For the various traditions of the first depute's name, see supra, p.275.
 3. The Book, p.cxl.

Procopius's statement⁽¹⁾ agrees with the Book and adds that his name was "Esimiphalos". The name given by Procopius is mentioned in Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028 as that of one of Yūsuf 'As'ar commanders. It is also mentioned in Istanbul 7608 bis where it bears the royal title mlk s(b'..., but there were also associated with him two other members of his family who bore the same royal title as Sumyafa', i.e. themselves, and all of them acknowledged the Abyssinian king as their overlord.⁽³⁾

The Book of the Himyarites mentions that Kāleb left an army with the Himyarite king.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, if Sumyafa' was Esimiphalos, the native Christian king, the Nadjāshī deputies would correspond to Aryaṭ and Abraha in the Arabic sources, and Istanbul 7608 bis might indicate that these deputies were called the Aksumite kings, 'mlk/'ksmn.⁽⁵⁾

1. Procopius, I, xx, 9-13.

2. Partly published in RES 3904. It is published by Conti Rossini, Storia..., p.180; G. Ryckmans, "Une inscription chrétienne sabiënne", Le Muséon, LIX (1946), pp.165-172.

3. cf. Institution, p.243, "Résumons donc le résultat de cet examen: dans RES 3904, Sumyafa' règne en corégence avec ses deux petits-fils. Il porte la titulature longue qui est répétée au duel pour ses deux corégents, Les trois rois sont dits contrôleurs pour les Négus de 'Aksûm." See also G. Ryckmans, Ibid., p.167.

4. The Book, xlii.

5. G. Ryckmans, Ibid., p.167.

Procopius postpones, till after the revolt of Abramas (Abraha), all mention of a native king who reigned, according to the Book, after Kāleb's departure. But the Book does not continue up to the time when the Abyssinian deputies themselves became kings.

The Istanbul 7608 bis uses the plural form of Nadjāshī, 'm]r·hmw ngšt 'ksmn, where other sources mention only one nadjāshī.⁽¹⁾ The Abyssinian chronicles, and some king-lists, omit the name Béta 'Esra'ēl, Kāleb's successor, though coins of his are known.

It has been already suggested that Béta 'Esra'ēl was co-regent with 'Ella Aṣbeḥa (Kāleb). The reference in the inscription is possibly to more than one Nadjāshī of 'Aksum and might indicate the existence of such a situation of two monarchs at that time.

In CIH 621, which was found in Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb, Sumyafa' Aṣhwa' is mentioned without a royal title, together with two of his sons and a number of tribal chieftains. This inscription was written at the fortress Mwyt when they restored its walls, gates, watch-towers and approach-roads. There they fortified themselves, after

1. G. Ryckmans, Ibid., p.167.

they had ^{returned} received gb'w from the land of hbšt,⁽¹⁾ and aḥbsn had made a zrftn in the land of Himyar. The date concerned is the month d Hgtn in the year 640 (of the Sabaean era).

According to Winckler, in CIH 621 Sumyafa' Aḥwa', his sons and his company were with Yūsuf during the war with the Abyssinians. When Yūsuf was defeated and killed, Sumyafa' with his companions retreated to Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb and there he rebuilt the town's fortress. After that Sumyafa' negotiated with Kaleb and the latter appointed him as governor of South Arabia.⁽³⁾

Winckler's suggestion that Sumyafa' was with Yūsuf finds support in Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028, which mention smyf'/'sw among the commanders. But his presence in Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb would be after the rebellion of Abraha, as we shall see.

Concerning CIH 621, Mlaker says, "I would like to

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1. hbšt here should be a territory in South Arabia where the Abyssinian deserters had settled, see Beeston, "Problems.." BSOAS, XVI (1954), p.40.
 2. Ry 507.
 3. Winckler, "Zur alten Geschichte Yemens und Abessiniens", AOF, I (1895), pp.327 ff.

suppose that he (Esimiphaïos) had been in exile before in Abyssinia. At the time of the military expedition of Ellatzbaas, he was sent from there (Abyssinia) to the coast, in order to raise a rebellion there with his retainers and to keep the king and the Himyarites occupied until the Abyssinian main troops were brought over from Africa."⁽¹⁾

According to this interpretation of the text, Esimiphaïos' behaviour appears rather puzzling. It is alleged that he had been in Abyssinia, where he had gained the confidence of the Abyssinian king, so that he was sent to the Ḥaḍramī coast to secure the fortress of Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb, while the main Abyssinian forces were crossing over to South Arabia. The Abyssinians then invaded and secured a total victory, killing the Himyarite king (Yūsuf) and making themselves masters of South Arabia.

It is difficult to explain his presence in Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb (CIH 621), at a moment when the events alleged to be described in CIH 621 had already taken place.⁽²⁾ It

1. Mlaker, "Die Inschrift von Ḥuṣn al-Ḡurāb", *WZDM*, XXXIV p. 61.

2. Beeston, "Problems", *BSOAS*, XVI (1954), p.40.

is also known from Ry 507, 508 and Ja 1028 that Sumyafa^c was with Yūsuf, and the Book⁽¹⁾ mentions that he was converted to Christianity by the Abyssinian king, Kāleb. All this evidence must be weighed against Mlaker's hypothesis.

Sumyafa^c and Kaīs

Olinder gives a full synopsis of the information and discussions about the Kaisos in the classical sources and among modern scholars.⁽²⁾ His objections to the identification suggested by Glaser, of Kaisos with Kaīs b. Ma^cdīkarib b. Mu^cāwiya b. Djabala are sound and obvious. This Kaīs was not a descendent of al-Ḥārith, while Kaisos was.⁽³⁾ The identification of Kaisos with Imru^cl-Kaīs, the poet, son of Ḥudjir does not seem to stand up to thorough examination. Olinder finally settles for Kaīs b. Salama b. al-Ḥārith, who seems to have distinguished himself in a battle against al-Mundhir before 530 C.E.⁽⁴⁾ This Kaīs is also mentioned twice in Ibn Ḥabīb's al-Muḥabbar,⁽⁵⁾

1. The Book, p.cxl.

2. Olinder, The Kings..., pp.114-18.

3. Ibid., p.116.

4. Ibid., p.117.

5. Muḥabbar, p.252.

published only after Olinder had written his work. The first time is when he was said to have been captured by Khālid b. Dja'far al-Kilābī in the battle of al-Ḥawām; the second time his name appears is in the genealogy of a grandson of his, who is said by Ibn Ḥabīb⁽¹⁾ to have arranged for and promoted the evacuation of Kinda to South Arabia after the ebb of their fortunes in the north.

Olinder⁽²⁾ asserts that the Arab sources mention no descendent of al-Ḥārith called Ḳāis, except the name of Ḳāis b. Salama which he found in a passage in Yāqūt.⁽³⁾ Although it is clear from Olinder's work that he must have combed the Arabic sources thoroughly and failed to find any information about Kinda, he must have overlooked Ibn Khaldūn's information on a son of al-Ḥārith called Ḳāis, (mentioned twice, in fact, by Ibn Khaldūn).

Although the work is examined on this very same question, Olinder missed the relevant information by only one line.⁽⁴⁾ This tradition which Ibn Khaldūn introduces,

1. Muḥabbar, p.370.

2. Olinder, The Kings..., p.117.

3. Yāqūt, II, p.648.

4. cf. Olinder, The Kings..., p.72.

on the authority of someone other than Hishām b. Muḥammad, mentions, after enumeration of the different parts or tribes which al-Ḥārith allotted to his sons, that Ḳaīs b. al-Ḥārith used to move about all the tribes over which he was recognised as king.⁽¹⁾ This ambiguous statement may lead one to deduce too much out of it or perhaps too little. Was Ḳaīs a kind of senior viceroy keeping an eye on his brother's affairs or was he simply a younger brother honoured for his princely status wherever he happened to be but otherwise not entrusted with public responsibilities? Ibn Khaldūn again gives him a place in the genealogical table of the kings of Kinda.⁽²⁾ If it is merely a question of the search for a descendent of al-Ḥārith called Ḳaīs, this Ḳaīs answers the description best. But it is hardly necessary to decide for him or for Ḳaīs b. Salama.

The person in Arabic sources whose life seems to bear a resemblance, however inconsistent, to the life of Kaisos, as known in the Byzantine sources, is Imru'ī Ḳaīs b. Ḥudīr, the poet. This resemblance, however, does not stand the

1. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.571.

2. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.574.

test of a close and full examination. It is clear that the account of the life of Imru' al Ḳais b. Ḥudir is confused with that of Kaisos, whether he is Ḳais b. Salama or Ḳais b. al-Ḥarith. The prince seeking the help of the Himyarite king must have been Ḳais. The name of the king, given in Arabic sources as Marthad al-Khair b. Dhū Djadan,⁽¹⁾ might have been a corruption of the name Marthad'ilan Aḥsān, the brother of the king Sumyafa'.⁽²⁾

Justinian asked the Abyssinians to help Byzantium against the Persians, by controlling the silk trade with India, and the South Arabian king (Esimiphaios) was asked to set up Ḳais at the head of the tribes of Central Arabia and march against the Persians.⁽³⁾

The date of Justinian's embassy is important for determining the effects, whether causal or temporal, of Byzantine diplomatic activity in South Arabia on their activities in North Arabia. The date of the embassy was near the end of 529 C.E.⁽⁴⁾

1. cf. Olinder, The Kings..., p.105.

2. Mar[tha] d ['i]lān[A]ḥsān is mentioned with his brother Sumyafa' in RES 4069.

3. Procopius, I, p.xx, 9-12.

4. cf. Shahid, "Byzantium and Kinda", BZ, LIII (1960), p.62.

Actually, mention of the embassy lead by Julianus to the Abyssinians and Homérita comes after the account of the battle of Callinicus.⁽¹⁾ The defeat forced the Emperor to go to the Abyssinians and Sumyafa^a but he failed⁽²⁾ in his designs.

Procopius demonstrates the Emperor's request in asking Esimiphaios not only to forgive Kaïs, the murderer of one of his fellow countrymen, but to reinstate him at the head of the Ma^aadd, who had rebelled against him, and then to lead Kinda and Himyar in a joint expedition against Persia, and to stop the military activities of the Persian vassal Harith b. ^aAmr.⁽³⁾

As to the subsequent efforts of Julianus, Procopius has this to say: "and it seemed to the Homérita^e a difficult thing to cross a country which was a desert and which extended so far that a long time was required to cross it, and then to go against a people much more warlike than themselves."⁽⁴⁾

1, cf. Procopius, I, xviii, 7-15.

2. cf. Ibid., I, xx, 9-12.

3. cf. Smith, p.446.

4. Procopius, I.xx.12.

The account concerning a homicide was probably true, but it is quite unlikely that this made Kaīs a fugitive and a helpless figure "in a land which is utterly destitute of human habitation."⁽¹⁾ It is also possible that the man killed by Kaīs may not have been related to Esimiphaios, or if he was, the relation might have been a distant one.⁽²⁾

Sumyafa° did not pay any attention to Justinian's request. The reason of that is more probable that Sumyafa° had already helped Kaīs, and the latter had been defeated as we shall mention below. And one can also deduce from the statement of Procopius that Sumyafa° had no authority over Ma°add, and that from now onwards Ma°add tribes had been under the sovereignty of the Lakhamid of Hira.

There is a narrative which tells how Imru'1 Kaīs marched from South Arabia with a small force joined on his way by a number of outcasts and outlaws.⁽³⁾ Having been defeated by the forces of al-Mundhir and deserted by his men, he sought refuge among petty local chiefs in Central

1. Ibid., I.xx.12.

2. cf. Shahid, "Byzantium and Kinda...", BZ, LIII (1960), pp.57-73.

3. Kamil, I, p.308; cf. Olinder, Ibid, p.109.

Arabia, but they could not offer him effective protection against al-Mundhir. In despair he prevailed on al-Samaw'al b. 'Adiya, a Jew who had a fortress near Taīma,⁽¹⁾ and he stayed there for some time until arrangements for his departure to the land of the Byzantines were made. This narrative is more likely to apply to Ḳaīs than to Imru'ī Ḳaīs. The story goes on to say that when he had departed for Byzantium, Imru'ī Ḳaīs left with al-Samaw'al his five coats of mail, his other property, his daughter Hind, and, as caretaker, his cousin Yazīd b. Ḥārith.⁽²⁾

When al-Samaw'al is eliminated from the picture, this part of the story is pushed far into the background and we find that we are left with a number of statements which might partially be true. It is possible to suggest that Ḳaīs, when visited by Nonnosus in a northern region, might have been ruling in or near Taīma. Ḳaīs or Kaisos might have found staunch supporters in Taīma but it is hardly possible that he was there simply as a humble fugitive. Thus his presence in or near Taīma, although dependent on the loyalty of the local population, must have, for all outward appearances, looked like that of a ruler among his

1. Kāmil, I, p.308.

2. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.576.

subjects. Furthermore, according to the Byzantine sources, when Kaisos left for Justinian, he left his brother Yazīd to whom he gave his emirate in Taīma.⁽¹⁾

According to the Arab accounts, Imru'1 Kaīs left, as caretaker, his cousin Yazīd b. al-Ḥārith. A son of al-Ḥārith would have been the uncle of Imru'1 Kaīs b. Ḥudjr and also of Kaīs b. Salama. But he would be a brother of Kaīs b. al-Ḥārith. So if we decide for Kaīs b. al-Ḥārith as Kaisos of Nonnosus, then the relation of this Yazīd to Kaīs would be in complete conformity with Byzantine sources. Unfortunately, we have nothing about the end of Kaīs' reign.

The End of Sumyafa' Reign

We have no knowledge about the year of Sumyafa''s death. We do not know whether he died a natural death or was deposed by his patrons, but we know that he was still a native Himyarite king in South Arabia in 529 C.E., when Justinian sent several embassies to Esimiphaios. Beeston suggests that CIH 621 had been written in 530 C.E., and the inscription recorded the revolt of Abraha against

1. Müller, Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, IV, p.179.

Esimiphaios.⁽¹⁾ At the same time Beeston allotted Esimiphaios a reign of ten years, to 535 C.E.,⁽²⁾ but he does not document this last suggestion.

Philby suggests that the reign of Sumyafa⁶ was in the interval between the victory of Kaleb and the revolt of Abraha, and thus must have covered the years 525 to about 535 C.E.⁽³⁾ J. Ryckmans⁽⁴⁾ proposed that the year 7 in CIH 541 is not an unusual abbreviation but denotes a reign of one year. Thus, Abraha's revolt must have been in 536 C.E. (if 640 = 525). J. Ryckmans further suggests that the year 109 B.C.E. was the beginning of the Himyarite era,⁽⁵⁾ so that, according to his former proposal, the year 7 in CIH 541 denotes a reign of one year, and the beginning of Abraha's reign would be in the year 541 C.E. From this point of view, there is no reason to accept J. Ryckmans' proposal, because the interval between 541 C.E. and 531 C.E. is too great (531 is the date of CIH 621 as J. Ryckmans suggests). The latter date was the year when Abraha revolted against Sumyafa⁶.

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1. Beeston, "Problems...", BSOAS, XVI (1954), p.40.
 2. Beeston, "J. Ryckmans, 'La Persécution...'," B10, XV (1958) p:63.
 3. Philby, The Background..., p.121.
 4. Institution, p.323.
 5. Persécution, p.23; J. Ryckmans, "Le début de l'ère himyarite...", B10, XVIII (1961), p.219.

Smith (1) connects the death of ʿElla ʿAṣbeḥa and the revolt of Abraha. He says that ʿElla ʿAṣbeḥa lived some time after the revolt of Abraha, (2) and died a few years before 540 C.E. (3) It would seem to Smith that 533 is a fair approximation for the date of the revolt.

It is more likely that the death of Sumyafaʿ was not very long after 530 C.E., the year given in CIH 621 - or probably one or two years after, if not in this same year. The inscription is actually a record of Abraha's revolt. (4)

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1. Smith, p.451.
 2. cf. Procopius, 1.xx.2-8.
 3. cf. Noldeke, Geschichte der Perser..., p.215.
 4. As early as 1873, Halévy had suggested an approximate identification of the starting-point of Sabaeen era, on the basis of the Ḥiṣn al-Ghurâb text, CIH 621, dated 640 of the Sabaeen era. Halévy, basing his argument on the Martyrium Arethae, places this invasion about C.E.525, and the beginning of the era 115 B.E.C. See Halévy, "Études sabéennes...", JA, 7e série, t.I (1973), p.519. Since Halévy this date has been generally accepted. A.F.L. Beeston in his article, "Problems of Sabaeen chronology", BSOAS, XVI (1954), p.40, suggests that 110 B.C.E. was the beginning of the Sabaeen era. J. Ryckmans, La Persécution..., p.23, suggested that 109 B.C.E. was the beginning of the Sabaeen era. Smith's Event, p.451, suggests that Sumyafaʿ must have dissociated himself openly from Yūsuf ʿAsʿar at an earlier stage. The situation points =

In any case, it is clear that Sumyafa^c was no more than a puppet monarch under the control of the Abyssinian viceroy, who evidently had instructions from his master to introduce the experiment of indirect rule.⁽¹⁾ We do not know exactly how long this lasted, although we have certain vague indications that things did not work out as smoothly as might have been desired by the Abyssinian authorities.

It is apparent from CIH 621 that Sumyafa^c was at Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb at the end of his life. Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb is a hill in South Arabia with a fortress upon it and stands near the harbour of Bi'r 'Alī Maḍjahia in 30° 5'20" N. 45° 24'30" E.⁽²⁾ From the inscriptions it seems that Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb, in ancient times known as Urr

4. (contd.) to the equation of era year 640 with 522 E.C. W. Caskel, Entdeckungen in Arabien, p.30 also suggests that 118 B.C.E. was the beginning of the Sabaeen era. For other suggestions see J. Ryckmans, "Le début de l'ère himyarite...", BIO, XVIII (1961), pp.219, No. 1.

1. cf. The Book, p.cxlii.

2. E.I.⁽¹⁾ "Ḥiṣn al-Ghurāb".

Māwiyat,⁽¹⁾ was a very important centre for the frankincense trade of the neighbourhood and a port of call for the trade route between Egypt and India.

1. The name of Māwiyat is found in the smaller of the two inscriptions, CIH 728 and in CIH 621. See D.B.Doe, "Ḥuṣn al-Ghurāb and the site of Qana", Le Muséon, LXXIV (1961), pp.191-198. This article was reprinted in Antiquities, (Aden) III (1964), pp.9-15.

CHAPTER SIX

ABRAHA AS SOVEREIGN

CHAPTER SIX

Abraha's Independence

As we have already mentioned, Blesbaas (Kaleb) appointed a new Himyarite Christian named Esimiphaios. But the Martyrium Arethae⁽¹⁾ wrongly calls the new Christian king Abraam; Johon of Ephesus⁽²⁾ also calls him Abramios. The life of Saint Gregentius,⁽³⁾ following the Martyrium, also calls the new king Abramios. The earliest Syriac sources do not mention Abraha.⁽⁴⁾

According to the inscriptions of King Abraha, the official title, is given in three forms as follows:

CIH 541: •brh/•zly/mlkn/•g•zyn/rmhš/zbymn/mlk/sb•/wdrydn/
wḡaḡrmwt/wymnt/w••rbhmw/ṭwḡdm/wthmt

Ja 546: mr•hmw/mlkn/•brh/mlk/sb•/wḡrdn /wḡḡrmt /wymnt/
w••rbhmw/ṭdm/wthmt/rmhš

Ry 506: mlkn/•brh/zybmn/mlk/sb•/wdrydn/wḡḡrmwt/wymnt/
wr••rbhmw/ṭwḡdm/wthmt

1. Acta Sanctorum, x sec. 38, p.758.

2. Glaser "Zwei Inschriften...", MVAG, VI (1897), p.428.

3. Vasiliev, "The Life of St. Gregentius", Vizantiisky Vermennik, XIV (1907), pp.65-66.

4. Smith, p.432.

The title in CIH 541 is very important in seeing the relationship between Abraha and the Abyssinians. This title has brought forth many diverging hypotheses, but the meaning and even the reading of this formula are not finally fixed, and the real meaning of this puzzling expression, as Beeston points out, must be regarded as a problem yet unsolved.⁽¹⁾

Glaser starts with the idea that Abraha represented the Abyssinian authority in South Arabia. He translated the title: "Abraha, der Machthaber des ge'ezitischen (axumitischen) Königs Ramḥis Zubaimân, der König von Saba...etc."⁽²⁾ Glaser's hypothesis was accepted⁽³⁾ until C. Conti Rossini⁽⁴⁾ and later J. Ryckmans⁽⁵⁾ objected to this interpretation. They pointed out that in the inscription the "Negus" is never referred to by the words mlkn/°g°zyn, "the king of Abyssinia". The translation offered by J. Ryckmans was: "°Abraha, le roi vaillant de la tribu °Ag°azî, Ramḥis Zubaymân, roi de Saba et dâ-

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1. A.F. Beeston, "J. Ryckmans, L'institution...", BiO, IX (1952), p.216.
 2. Glaser, "Zwãt Inschriften...", MVAG, VI (1897), p.401.
 3. G. Ryckmans, "Chronologie sabéenne", CRAIBL, XLIII (1943), p.245; Philby, The Background..., p.136.
 4. C. Conti Rossini, Storia d'Etiofia, p. 186.
 5. Institution, p.244.

Raydān...etc."(1)

Drewes accepts the reading of Mordtmann and Mittwoch,⁽²⁾ J. Ryckmans,⁽³⁾ and A.G. Lindine of Abraha's title.⁽⁴⁾ Drewes thinks that the word •zly⁽⁵⁾ or •tly means something like viceroy; so he accepts Glaser's hypothesis.⁽⁶⁾ He also assumes that rmḥs/zbymn might be a second title of Abraha, as Abraha had been head of the Abyssinian troops in the year 657 of the Sabaean era, when Ella •zyn⁽⁷⁾ was King of Abyssinia and Abraha, according to Procopius,⁽⁸⁾ information, accepted the Abyssinian king's authority.

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1. Institution, p.244; See also C. Conti Rossini, Ibid., p.188.
 2. cf. H. Mordtmann - E. Mittwoch, Himjarische Inschriften, p.66. "•ly •zyn, •Ela •Azjan".
 3. cf. Persécution, p.6, not no.26 mlkn •l•zyn.
 4. cf. A.G. Lindine, p.65. عزري / ملكني / العزيزين / رحمتي / زبيمن / وذريرين / وحضرت / وبعثت / ادعبرها / طودم / ودرمت
 5. In A. Fakhry, it is •tly. The last form is accepted by J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions hist...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.340. cf. Beeston "Notes on the Mureighan Inscription", BSOAS, XVI (1954), p.390; Smith, p.437. While J.M. Solá Solé, Las dos grandes inscripciones..., p.28, mentions that it should be •zly.
 6. A.J. Drewes, Inscriptions de l'Ethiopie Antique, Leiden (1962), p.109.
 7. Drewes, Ibid., p.110.
 8. Procopius, I.xx.2-8.

It is quite right to accept Drewes' interpretation of *zly,⁽¹⁾ which means 'client', but it would be better to translate rmhs with the Arabic word (رماحى) "brave".⁽²⁾ Thus his title must read as:

"Abraha the client of the king *g*zyn, the ruler (strongman) who [Abraha] is in zbynn, king of Saba'..."

The absence of rmhs in Ry 506 and of zbynn in Ja 546⁽³⁾ are also major obstacles in the interpretation described above of the formula of CIH 541. It seems that too strict a study of these three inscriptions excludes any acceptable interpretation. It is therefore risky to admit that the formulae of Ry 506 and Ja 546 are only vague echoes of the old title of CIH 541. Perhaps, as Drewes⁽⁴⁾ points out, this lack of precision is due to the fact that Ry 506 and Ja 546 are written on rock and not engraved in stone. It can perhaps also be ascribed to the fact that Abraha had become less dependent on the Abyssinian king in both Ry 506 and Ja 546.

1. Institution, p.24, reads *zly mlkn "the king's highness".

2. Tadj, IV, p.163.

« الرماحى... الشجاع البحرى المقدم... والرماحى الأسد للاقدمه ومجراوته »

See also Lisān, s.v. 'RHS'

3. cf. A. Jamme, "Inscriptions des alentours de Māreb (Yemen)", Cahiers de Byrsa, V (1955), pp.277.

4. Drewes, Ibid., p.111.

Procopius gives the following account:

"In this Aethiopian army many slaves and all who were readily disposed to crime⁽¹⁾ were quite unwilling to follow the king back, but were left behind and remained there because of their desire for the land of Homeritae; for it is an extremely goodly land.

These fellows at a time not long after this, in company with certain others, rose against the king Esimiphaeus and put him in confinement in one of the fortresses there, and established another king over the Homeritae, Abramus⁽²⁾ by name. Now this Abramus was a Christian, but a slave of a Roman citizen who was engaged in the business of shipping in the city of Adulis⁽³⁾ in Aethiopia. When Hellesthaeus learned this, he was eager to punish Abramus, together with those who had revolted with him, for their injustice to Esimiphaeus, and he sent

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1. Aghani, xviii, p.225 (Beirut ed.) mentions that the poor Abyssinians in the Yaman had taken up arms in sympathy with Abraha's rebellion.
 2. Abraha means 'white face' in Abyssinian, ^{K.S.} see al-Suhaili, I, p.36. There were many who were called Abraha, but they were Arab. See Aghani, VI, p.211 (Cairo ed.). ^{Ethiopic according to} ~~Abraha~~ does not mean white face in Ethiopic. It is a verb meaning He illumined.
 3. According to Arab sources Abraha was Abyssinian, see Ibn Sa'd, I, p.91.

against them an army of three thousand men with one of his relatives⁽¹⁾ as commander. This army, once there, was no longer willing to return home, but they wished to remain where they were in a goodly land, and so without the knowledge of their commander, they opened negotiations with Abramus; then when they came to an engagement with their opponents, just as the fighting began, they killed their commander and joined the ranks of the enemy, and so remained there. But Hellestheaeus was greatly moved with anger and sent still another army against them; this force engaged with Abramus and his men, and, after suffering a severe defeat in the battle, straightway returned home. Thereafter the king of the Aethiopians became afraid, and sent no further expeditions against Abramus. After the death⁽²⁾ of Hellestheaeus, Abramus agreed to pay tribute to the king of the Aethiopians who succeeded him, and in this way he strengthened his rule. But this happened at a later time."⁽³⁾

According to Ibn Ishāq:

1. According to W. Fell, "Die Christenverfolgung...", ZDMG, XXXI (1881), p.43, this commander should be Aryaṭ. Nuwairī XV, pp.304-305, says that Aryaṭ was an Abyssinian king's cousin, cf. also Procopius, I, XX.2-8.
2. The death of Hellestheaeus must be about five years earlier than 540. See Smith, p.432.
3. Procopius, I.xx.2-8.

"Aryāṭ held sway in the Yaman for some years, and then Abraha the Abyssinian (according to al-Ṭabarī, a general in his army)⁽¹⁾ disputed his authority and the Abyssinians split into parties each claiming supporters. When war was about to begin, Abraha sent to Aryāṭ, asking him to avert the danger of internecine war and inviting him to settle the dispute by personal combat, the winner to be sole commander of the army. Aryāṭ agreed and Abraha went forth to meet him. He was a short, fat man holding the Christian faith; and Aryāṭ advanced against him spear in hand; he was a big, tall, handsome man. Abraha had a young man called 'Atawda at his back to defend him against attack from the rear. Aryāṭ raised his spear striking at Abraha's skull, hit him on the forehead splitting his eyebrow, nose, eye, and mouth. It was for this reason that he was called al-Aghram (split-face). Thereupon 'Atawda, coming out from behind Abraha attacked Aryāṭ, and killed him, and Aryāṭ's army joined Abraha, and the Abyssinians in the Yaman accepted him as their chief. Abraha paid blood-money for killing Aryāṭ. (In Ṭabarī all this happened without the knowledge of the Nadjāshī).⁽²⁾

1. Ṭabarī, I, p.932.

2. According to Ṭabarī, I, p.933; 'Atawda asked blood-money and obtained from Abraha the right of primae noctis in the Yaman. Later a man of Himyar or of Khath'am attacked and killed him. Abraha would not take any action against them for killing 'Atawda. According to Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.117; Abraha had a servant [نسر] called 'Amdata [عمدة] who held great power-

When news of this affair reached the Nadjāshī, he was filled with rage and said: 'Has he attacked my amir and killed him without any order from me?' Then he swore an oath that he would not leave Abraha alone until he had trodden his land and cut off his forelock. So Abraha shaved his head and filled a leather bag with the earth of the Yaman and sent it to the Negus with the following letter: 'O king, Aryāṭ was only thy slave and I too am thy slave. We disputed about orders; everyone must obey you; but I was stronger, firmer, and more skilful in managing the affairs of the Abyssinians. Now when I was told of the King's oath I shaved the whole of my head and I sent it to you with a bag of the dust of my land that you may put it beneath your feet and thus keep your oath concerning me.' When this message reached the Negus (Nadjāshī) he was reconciled to him and wrote to him that he was to stay in the Yaman until further orders; so Abraha remained in the Yaman."⁽¹⁾

From this statement it is clear that the Nadjāshī sent a general called Aryāṭ. Abraha was in his army, and not a general according to Ibn Ishāq's statement quoted in al-Ṭabarī; while the statement of Ibn Ishāq quoted in Ibn Hishām does not mention whether Abraha was a general

2. (contd.) and بفضل الأمايل until a man of Himyar or of Khath'am killed him.

1. Guillaume, pp.20-21.

or one of the soldiers. According to Ibn al-Kalbī⁽¹⁾ Abraha was one of two commanders⁽²⁾ who had been sent to South Arabia. When Abraha reached Ṣanʿā; he did not send any tribute to Najjāshī. So the latter sent an army commanded by Aryāṭ, one of his commanders. The further part of Ibn al-Kalbī's statement agrees with that of Ibn Isḥāq's statement which has already been mentioned above.

Procopius' statement and the Arab traditions agree that Abraha rebelled against the Najjāshī, and they also agree that the Abyssinian king was filled with rage. Procopius and Ibn al-Kalbī agree that the Abyssinian king sent an army against Abraha, but Procopius mentions that two expeditions were sent to Abraha, whilst Ibn al-Kalbī mentions only one expedition.

They all agree that Abraha finally consented to pay tribute to the Abyssinian king, but Procopius mentions that "After the death of Hellestheaeus, Abramus agreed to pay tribute...",⁽³⁾ while the Arab sources are not aware

1. Ṭabarī, I, p.930.

2. The statement does not mention the name of the other commander who was sent with Abraha, and it is silent about his attitude towards Abraha, or any activities against him.

3. Procopius, I.xx.2-8.

of the change in the person of the Abyssinian monarch and attribute all that happened to the reign of the same Nadjāshī.

The events of CIH 541

Most of the details of Abraha's life are given by the Arab historians: these largely originate in folk-lore and mythical tradition and have been attached arbitrarily to the name of a famous personage. Our other sources are Christian and epigraphic and in particular the three long inscriptions, CIH 541, Ry 506 and Ja 546.

CIH 541 records that:

"when he [Abraha] marched and appointed by order (or definitively) yzd son of kbēt, their deputy, whom they had appointed as deputy over kdt (who had no deputy), and he marched, and with him (were) the °qwl princes of Saba°, of the open land (i.e. desert, badiya). wḥmṯ/wḥnsm/wḥrtḏm/wḥnfm/dhl, and of the °z°nn ssept °qwlṅ/m°dkrb/bn/smyf°/wh°n and his brother bny/°slm sent (despatched) grh/dzbnr to be in control by the order of the king in the Mashrik.⁽¹⁾ And

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1. See about the meaning of Mashrik, Eva Gerlach, Sand über den Tempeln Arabiens, p.359, who says: Mashrik: "the east of the Yemen; thinly populated mountain country 1,000-3,000 metres high, east of the chain of barren uplands stretching as far as the desert steppe at the edge of the great Arabian desert."

hrghw/wshwtw, the garrison of kdr destroyed and killed, and yzd mustered those under his command from among Kinda and fought Ḥaḍramawt, and captured maznm the •dmry rebel, and returned to •brn. And the cry for help reached them and they hastened and mustered their forces, Abyssinians, and Himyarites, in thousands, in the month dqy(z)n of (the era year) six hundred and fifty seven; and there hastened and went down the qayl princes of Saba³ and proceeded from grwh towards (against) NBTM to •BRN and when they reached NBTM they appointed (arranged) their expeditionary forces. (As for) kdr they waited and lay down. As for Himyar and deputies over them, there came (proceeded, came down) and rejoined them the two qayl-princes of gdnm, and there reached them Yazīd at nbīm, and gave his hand (in pledge, or "gave them his support") before the appointment of the expeditionary forces. And that there reached them a cry for help from Saba³ that there were destroyed •rnn (dam) w'wdn/whbsm/wmḍrft/d'fn in the month dmdr'n in the (year) seven. And after there reached them, when this intimation (information) they, the messengers, carried forward an open order (message) governing the •Arabs who did not proceed with Yazīd and that they all pledged their hands (gave their pledge?) and their hostages (through) with the messenger. As for the expeditionary forces which they appointed against kdr, they joined the qayl princes who had marched and the king appointed a truce (or (?) a given period of time) on the tribes to clear and smooth any rough stonework and, tracing, and bitumen lightening, and smooth facing and embankment plastering, to repair the ramp, the dyke, and breaches at Ma[•]rib and he gave them an appointment at the month dgrbn in

(the year) seven, and after they had arranged a truce and the Arabs had yielded (submitted, agreed) they crossed (to) the town of Ma'rib and worshipped at the chapel of Ma'rib for there was a pious (godly?) priest there, and thence they went up to the dam and dug up till they reached the rent and the level of the rent to lay the foundation for the dyke. And when they had built the foundation of the dyke there was a flood and pestilance in the tribes and in the town. And when they saw that the flood (distress) was heavy over the tribes they gave permission (they sent them away) to them, their Abyssinians and their Himyarites.

And after they had given permission to (sent away) the tribes, there came down the qayl princes who had fortified themselves at kdr and that the royal princes arrived with the expeditionary forces which they had arranged to join them (to engage them) and pledged their hands to the king. And thence the king proceeded to the town of Ma'rib from the dam and (so also) the qayl princes who were assembled (or in the company) of whom were dt/bnhmw/ksm/dm•hr/bn/mlkn/wmrgzf/ddrn•h/w•dl/dfys/wdswlmn/wds•bn/wdr•n/wdhmdn/wdkl•n/wdmhdm/wdtt/w•lsm/dyz•n/wddbyn/wkbr/hqrmwt...etc." [lines 10-87].

The Embassies

CIH 541 mentions also that Abraha received the Embassies of Abyssinia, Byzantium, Persia, Mundhir of al-

.Ḥīra, al-Ḥārith b. Ḍiabalā, and Abū Karib b. Ḍiabalā,
in Ma'rib.

The reception of the embassies was very important and, of course, it means that Abraha increased his reputation, although not in South Arabia. His position was very important in the political balance of international affairs. Unfortunately we have no information about the real purpose of the embassies, and what the reason was for their presence in Abraha's court. The most plausible deduction is that they came to South Arabia to discuss their political affairs and at the same time they took the opportunity of the celebrations for the completion of the Dam, to come to Abraha to congratulate him, and to exchange views on political matters.

It is important to note that Abraha mentioned the Abyssinians' embassy first. It is likely that he preferred the Abyssinians' embassy, because they had some influence over him, and, as is mentioned in the same inscription, Abraha was the client of the king 'g'zyn. At the same time, this embassy reflected the high position of Abraha and showed that he had great power which enabled him to receive embassies from all the great powers of his time.

CIH 541 used mhskt/ngsya when referring to both Abyssinian and Byzantian embassies. The word mhskt means "embassy" (جاء مندوبكشكسمة اي جيامسهم).⁽¹⁾ It also used tnblt/mlk/frs, the representatives of the king of Persia, while it used rsl to mdrn, lrrm/bn/gblt and *bkrb/bn/gblt.

The name of the Abyssinian king at that time was Bēta *Esra*ēl, the eldest son of Kaleb, and he seems to have been the governor of Adow (Adowa) during his father's lifetime. Probably he was one who was compelled to acknowledge Abraha al-Ashram as king of South Arabia, and to admit his arrogant claims to sovereignty on all occasions. The Abyssinian chronicles know nothing about him, and in some of the lists of kings his name is omitted altogether. Coins of Bēta *Esra*ēl were found by Parabenī.⁽²⁾

Both the king of Persia and his vassal al-Mundhir sent representatives to Abraha. If the year 657 of the Sabaean era, (= 547 C.E.) there had been peace between Persia and Byzantium for two years and, as Sidney Smith⁽³⁾ points out, no political intention could be deduced between

1. Tadj s.v. "Hshk"

2. Budge, The History of Ethiopia..., I, p.264.

3. Smith, p.447.

Persia and Byzantium from this. The embassies of Persia and Mundhir could refer to their affairs with Abraha on the sovereignty over Central Arabia; on the other hand, they could have asked Abraha to be neutral in their future struggle with Byzantium and its vassal Ghassān.

Harith b. Djabala, the phylarch of Arabia, is well known as a Ghassānid king.⁽¹⁾ Abū Karib is mentioned as having sent his envoy to Abraha. Procopius, at one point in his digression includes a chapter on Abū Karib, in spite of the fact that the information is not very detailed. This solitary reference in the Byzantine sources to Abū Karib helped to establish the identity of the Arab chief whose embassy was sent to Abraha. Abū Karib here would be a Kindite king.

The year 531 C.E. marks the end of the Kindite rule in Central Arabia and "the gift of the territory of Harit to Mundir by Khusrāu indicates the time when Harit and his family ceased to play any part in events".⁽²⁾ But west-central and north-west Arabia seem not to have been completely lost to Kinda.

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1. cf. Nöldeke, Die Ghassanischen..., p.14; Shahid, "Arathas, son of Jabalah", JAOS, LXXV (1955), pp.205-216.
 2. Smith, p.447.

When Nonnosus⁽¹⁾ visited Kinda, they were ruling some northern region. This region might well have been somewhere near Taīma, if not the region of Taīma itself. This would then make Kinda domains at least touch upon the lands of Phoinikon, if not actually include some of them. This need not have been an act of encroachment on the domains of Abū Karib b. Djabala, but might well have been with his agreement if not support as well, seeing that both were Kindites and both were well-disposed to the Romans.

Nöldeke⁽²⁾ suggested that Abū Karib was possibly a Kindite prince. But when Nöldeke wrote his monograph on the Ghassanids in 1887, the Dam inscription had not yet been discovered. After the publication of the inscription, he tended to accept Glaser's view that Abū Karib was the brother of Ghassanid al-Ḥārith b. Djabla.

1. Müller, Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, IV, p.179.
2. Nöldeke, Die Ghassanischen..., p.17. Later, in a note attached to his own copy of the work (which has been reproduced as an addendum to the Arabic translation of the same work by P. Jousé and Zurayk, Beirut, 1933), Nöldeke refers to the appearance of the name of ʿbkrb/bn/gblt in the Dam inscription next to the name hrtm/bn/gblt, and suggests that they could have been brothers, but remarks that Glaser's views should be taken with caution.

Glaser's preoccupation with the Dam inscription [CIH 541] holds that Abū Karib Ibn Djabala and al-Ḥārith b. Djabala were of equal rank.⁽¹⁾ The similarity of the names of the father of al-Ḥārith, the Ghassānids and Abū-Karib, the Phoinikian, should in itself carry no great weight in deciding that Abū Karib, or even his father, was a Ghassānid. And it is in the light of the circumstances of Abū-Karib as a prince of Kinda that the explanation of his close identification of himself with the Romans should be sought. At the time when he made the gift of his land, he must have been motivated by circumstances and reasons which had not been existent in the days of his father. The landmark to these changed circumstances was the Abyssinian conquest and occupation of South Arabia around 525 C.E. That conquest weakened the position of Kinda, who after 525 C.E. began to suffer one defeat after another, and withdrew to South Arabia.

In April of 528 C.E., according to John Malalas,⁽²⁾ al-Ḥārith [the son of Djabala, the Ghassānid] fought against

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1. Glaser, "Zwie Inschriften...", MVAG, VI (1897), p.441. Shahid, "Procopius and the Ghassanids", JAOS, LXXVII (1957), p.87, maintains that Abū Karib was of lower rank than his brother al-Ḥārith [Arethas].
 2. Malalas, pp.434-435; cf. Nöldeke, Die Ghassanischen..., p.11.

al-Mundhir and defeated him. According to Malalas himself, this took place after al-Mundhir had killed the "Phylarch Arethas", now acceptably identified with al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr of Kinda. Al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr was killed, according to Malalas, at the beginning of the year 528 C.E.⁽¹⁾ The Byzantines, especially after the affair of al-Ḥārith b. 'Amr, might have decided to strengthen the new relationship between themselves and Abū-Karib, then the king of Phoinikon and thus appointed him phylarch of the Saracens in Palestine. Yotabe, too, was put under his rule, "doubtless under special conditions".⁽²⁾ From the narrative of Procopius,⁽³⁾ it is certain that Palestina Tertia was under Abū-Karib for the fourth decade of the sixth century. The Dam inscription [CIH 541] makes it certain that Abū-Karib was still Phylarch of Palestina Tertia when the embassies reached Abraha. The earliest of the dates suggested for the embassy cannot be earlier than C.E.539,⁽⁴⁾ and thus it is certain that Abū-Karib was still phylarch in that year. We have another argument supporting the

1. Malalas, pp.434-435.

2. Smith, p.443.

3. Procopius, I, xix. 7-16.

4. Smith, p.441, cf. Glaser, "Zwei Inschriften...", MVAG, VI (1897), p.436.

belief that Kindite rule over Palestina Tertia was continued after Abū-Karib b. Djabala, with the appointment of Ḳaīs, the former prince of Ma'add to succeed Abū-Karib.⁽¹⁾

It should be pointed out that the Abū-Karib base was deep in Ḥidjāz in the Arabian Peninsula, at both al-Djawf and Djabal Shammar, a geographical position which brought him nearer to Abraha than to Ḥariṭh.

His assignment was specifically related to the wars and politics of the Arabian peninsula. Finally Abū-Karib's phylarchate over Palestina Tertia gave him a strategic position for controlling the termini of the spice-routes. Thus his commercial connections with South Arabia were also quite close. All these facts explain his envoy to Abraha.

It is clear that the Kindite rule over Phoinikon continued after Abū Karib b. Djabala with the appointment of Ḳaīs, the former prince of Ma'add to succeed Abū-Karib. This Ḳaīs cannot be identified with Ḳaīs b. Ḳhuza'ī, the brother of Muḥammad b. Ḳhuza'ī, whom Abraha appointed amīr of Ma'add,⁽²⁾ and who was later murdered by the Kināna,

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1. cf. Müller, Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum, IV, p.179.
 2. In the tradition of Ṭabari's Ta'riḫ (I, p.551, ed. Cairo 1939) he was appointed over Muḍar.

whereupon his brother Kaīs b. Khuzā'ī fled to Abraha, ⁽¹⁾ as we shall see later in this chapter.

The Events of Ry 506

A further text, Ry 506, records the deeds of auxiliaries of the main army of Abraha. The inscription was found on the face of a rock ⁽²⁾ at Murighān Well, ninety miles south-east of Bisha and 150 miles north of Nadjran.

This inscription was published by G. Ryckmans with a French translation and comments. ⁽³⁾ It was published with a German translation by W. Caskel, ⁽⁴⁾ and then rendered into English with notes and remarks by Sidney Smith, ⁽⁵⁾ and by Beeston, ⁽⁶⁾ both of whom gave a penetrating analysis of

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1. cf. Smith, p.434.
 2. G. Ryckmans, "Trois mois de prospection épigraphique et archéologique en Arabie", CRAIBL, (1952), pp.501-510. Idem, "Through Shaba's Kingdom", GM, XXVII (1954), p.137;
 3. Idem, "Inscriptions sud-arabes...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), pp.275-284. See also Idem, "Graffites Sabéens relevés en Arabie Sa'udite", RSO, XXXII (1954), pp.557-63.
 4. W. Caskel, Entdeckungen in Arabien, pp.27-32.
 5. Smith, pp.435-437.
 6. A.F.L. Beeston, "Notes on the Mureighan Inscription", BSOAS, XVI (1954), pp.389-392.

the text. Of importance are the remarks and studies of J. Ryckmans.⁽¹⁾ A comprehensive study of the inscription was given in Russian by A.G. Lundine.⁽²⁾

The inscription, as rendered by Professor Beeston, runs as follows:

"By the power of the Merciful One and His Messiah, the king Abraha (etc.) wrote this inscription when he had raided Ma'add in the spring razzia in the month dtbtn, (and) when all the Beni 'Amir had revolted.⁽³⁾ Now the king sent 'BGBR with the Kindites and 'Alites, and B̄SR son of ḤṢN with the Sa'dites, and these two commanders of the army did battle and fought, (namely) the Kindite column against the Beni 'Amir and the Muradite and Sa'dite against ... in the valley on the TRBN route,⁽⁴⁾ and

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1. J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions historiques sabéennes...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), pp.339-42; Idem, "Caskel, W., Entdeckungen in Arabien", BiO, XIV (1957), pp.91-95.
 2. Lundine, pp.73-84.
 3. Beeston later accepts Caskel's reading fsdw instead of qsdw, but this change does not alter the sense of the passage. See Beeston, "Wenner Caskel, Entdeckungen in Arabien...", Orientalia, XXV (1956), p.302.
 4. Beeston refers to Philby's proposals that mnhg 'route' should read mnhl 'well' (cf. Arabic.) Philby points out, TRBN is in fact a watering-place, see Ibid.

they slew and made captive (the enemy) and took satisfactory booty. The king, on the other hand, did battle at Ḥaliban and the (troops?) of Ma'add were defeated and forced to give hostages. After all this, 'Amr son of al-Mundhir negotiated with Abraha and agreed to give hostages to Abraha from al-Mundhir, for al-Mundhir had invested him ('Amr) with the governorship over Ma'add. So Abraha returned from Haliban by the power of the Merciful One (etc.)." (1)

Beeston's commentary shows clearly that the inscription deals with two campaigns, the campaign of king Abraha at Ḥalabān and the campaign of Kinda, Sa'd and Murād at

TRBN Beeston's deduction is quite consistent with Ibn Ḥabīb's Munammak statement which shows that Abraha decided to raid Nedjd and Mecca. Ṭarafa b. al-'Abd was at that time in Naḡjirān. (2) He cited: (3)

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1. Beeston, "Notes on the Mureighan Inscription", BSOAS, XVI (1954), pp.391-392.
 2. Ṭarafa went to South Arabia accompanied by 'Amr b. Umama to obtain help from the Yamanite princes against 'Amr b. al-Mundhir, see I.E. (1) "Ṭarafa b. 'Abd al-Bekrī."
 3. Munammak, p.68. سجران instead of سجران occurs in Dīwān Ṭarfa, p.146-147.

مِنْ مُبَلِّغِ عَمْرٍو إِلَيْهِ رِسَالَةٌ
 فَلْيَتَّخِذْ غُرَابًا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُودًا
 فَرِيقَانِ مِنْهُمْ لِكَبَةِ اللَّهِ زَائِرِ
 وَأَهْمِرَانِ لَمْ يَقْطِعِ الْبَحْرَ رَيْدًا
 يُنْجِرَانِ مَا مَضَى الْمُلُوكُ أُمُورَهُمْ
 فَلا تَسْمَعَنَّ مَا أَنتَ بِتُورِدُهَا

O that someone would deliver a message to •Amr
 b. Hind, and O that a raven in the sky should
 call to you!

Two groups they are, one paying a visit to
 Allah's Ka'ba, and another, if they should
 not cross the sea, will come to you.

It was at Nadīran that the kings made their deci-
 sions, so let me not hear as long as you
 remain in your lowland.

It is necessary to study from the beginning the events as recorded in Ry 506, of which the first to be considered here is Abraha's expedition against Ma'add in Ḥalabān and Banū 'Āmir in Turaba.

Ḥalabān

Ḥalabān (ḤLBN)⁽¹⁾ is mentioned by both Yāqūt and Bakrī. According to Yāqūt⁽²⁾ it is a place near Nadīrān. He also quotes another tradition indicating that it was a watering-place of the Banū Kuṣhaīr. Thilo⁽³⁾ locates the place according to Yāqūt and states that it is a wādī starting in the mountain-chain of 'Arwā and flowing into Rikā Sirra. It is located in the vicinity of Yakhbul. Bakrī⁽⁴⁾ says that it is a city in al-Yaman in northern Ḥaḍūr, which, according to G. Ryckmans, is now a colony of Ikhwan (brothers, veterans of the king Ibn Sa'ūd's campaigns), not far from the motor track between Mecca and

1. hln is mentioned in the territory of Yasrain, see RES 4793.

2. Yāqūt, II, p.304. It is mentioned by Djarīr, see Naka'id, No.93. 33.

3. Thilo, Ortsnamen, s.v. Halab. Quoted by Kister, p.426.

4. Bakrī, p.461.

Riyāḡ, ⁽¹⁾ and 100 Km south-west of Ma'sil ⁽²⁾ which still has the same name. ⁽³⁾

As we shall see below Ḥalabān was, in fact, in Ma'add territory.

Turaba

The battlefield of Kinda and Sa'd against Banū 'Āmir is TRBN which is to be identified with Turaba, according to Arab geographers, ⁽⁴⁾ a valley near Mecca, ⁽⁵⁾ two days'

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1. G. Ryckmans, "Through Sheba's Kingdom", GM, XXVII (1954), p.137.
 2. cf. J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions historiques...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.339.
 3. Ibn Bulīhid, Ṣaḥīḡ..., IV, p.15.
 4. There is a Turban south of Madīna on the route to Mecca but it is not likely to be TRBN which is mentioned in the inscription. cf. Caskel, Entdeckungen..., p.29. Turaba is said to have been the place of Banū 'Āmir. On the other hand Turaba was an important military fortress till recently. See luma' al-Shihāb fī Ṣīrat Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Waḥḥāb, p.118; Philby, Arabian Highlands, p.57. For the other places called Turaban see Musil, Arabia Deserta, p.522, Idem, The Northern Hegāz, p.133; Kaḥḥāla, Djuḡrafiat..., p.26, 41, 67, 185, 241, 298. cf. Yāḡūt, al-Muḡtarik, p.8.
 5. Yāḡūt, I, p.838, citing 'Arrām; cf. 'Arrām, p.419.

journey away, or about 130 Km south-east of Mecca.⁽¹⁾
 This valley is three days' journey in length.⁽²⁾ Bakrī⁽³⁾
 mentions it as a sub-district of Mecca in the territory of
 Banū ʿĀmir. Turaba was an important halt on the route
 between Ṣanʿā and Mecca.⁽⁴⁾ It lies about 3,800 feet
 above the sea.⁽⁵⁾

Turaba, in both Arabic sources and Ry 506, was
 inhabited by bn̄yʿmrm. Ry 506 mentions that when all
bn̄yʿmrm had revolted, Abraha sent two commanders of his
 army against them. The battle took place in the valley
 on mn̄hg/trbn route.

Banū ʿĀmir

It is said that Banū ʿĀmir was a large confederation
 of tribes belonging to the great Hawāzin group.⁽⁶⁾ The

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1. G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions sud-arabes...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.282; Lippens, Philippe, Expédition en Arabie Central. (Paris, 1956), p.21.
 2. Zamakhsharī, al-Djibāl wa' lamkina, p.24; Yāqūt, I, p.834, citing al-Aṣmaʿī.
 3. Bakrī, p.309, cf. ʿArrām, p.416.
 4. Ibn Khurdādhbih, p.133.
 5. Philby, Arabian Highlands, p.57.
 6. For the division of the tribe of ʿĀmir b. Ṣaʿṣaʿa, cf. Caskel, Ḥamharat..., plat.114; al-Nuwairi, II, p.336.

original territory of 'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a began to the west of Turaba on the lower part, and extended towards the east.⁽¹⁾ To the north of the 'Āmirites were the neighbours of other Hawāzin and Sulāim.⁽²⁾ The relationships with Sulāim and especially with Hawāzin were amicable. In the south as far as the district of Taḥlīth, even as far as Nadīrān, the 'Āmirites had the South Arabian tribes as their neighbours. There was a latent state of war with all these South Arabian tribes. In the west, 'Āmirites were settled as far as the Red Sea coast.⁽³⁾

As has already been mentioned, the 'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a was not a single tribe, neither had it settled in a certain place. Here also, we must take into consideration the fact that Arabic sources often speak of the 'Āmirites, where only one portion of a tribe is meant. But it is said that Banū Hilāl from Banū 'Āmir were settled in Turaba; al-Aṣma'ī [d. 2131/828] states that al-Ḍabāb, Hilāl and 'Āmir b. Rabī'a were settled there.⁽⁴⁾ Al-

1. For the places of the 'Āmirites' territories cf. Bakrī, 134, 234, 244 and the index, Yāqūt, index, 'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a; see also E.I.⁽²⁾ "'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'a".

2. Bakrī, p.1245.

3. Naḩa'id, 11, p.2 (Cairo ed.), Labīd, pp.132-33, Bakrī, p.365, 287, 1255.

4. 'Arrām, p.416; Yāqūt, I, p.834.

Hamdānī mentions that ʿAmir b. Mālik b. Dīʿfar b. Kilāb was born there.⁽¹⁾

We have no evidence from the Arabic sources whether or not Banū ʿAmir had been under the sovereignty of Abraha. From Ry 506 it is not clear that all Banū ʿAmir were under his sovereignty. It points out that all Banū ʿAmir had fsdw.⁽²⁾ It is not clear whether the word fsdw means (فسدوا) 'spoiling' or 'revolting' (ثاروا). It is more likely that Abraha wanted to have some kind of authority over all the tribes who were settled on the commercial trade route to ʿIrāq, in order to make his way more safe, and he took the opportunity to subjugate the Banū ʿAmir who had been attacking his northern borders. It is also highly likely that Abraha wanted to capture the gold mines which were to the north of Mecca. According to Ry 506, Abraha's troops succeeded in conquering Banū ʿAmir; and according to Ibn Ḥabīb⁽³⁾ Abraha took Kalthūm b. ʿUmāis from Banū ʿAmir when the former had made his expedition against Mecca.

1. Yāqūt, I, pp.834-35; Bakrī, p.309.

2. G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.281, reads it kqsdw and translates it 'se soulever'. Caskel, Entdeckungen..., p.27, reads it fsdw, and translates "unter nahmen". Smith, p.435, translates qsdw 'to subject' and 'to be subject'.

3. Munammaq, p.68.

Abū Djabr

Abū Djabr was one of the two commanders of Abraha who were sent to Banū ʿĀmir. G. Ryckmans⁽¹⁾ states that "Abgabar est mis à la tête de kindat contre les banū ʿĀmirim." W. Caskel,⁽²⁾ who also published Ry 506, did not try to identify the personality of Abū Djabr. The same can be said about J. Ryckmans,⁽³⁾ who studied the inscription. Lundine⁽⁴⁾ stresses that in the case of Abū Djabr only his kunya⁽⁵⁾ is known; his name is missing. Kister⁽⁶⁾ later tried to identify Abū Djabr according to the verse in 'Maḳṣūra' of Ibn Durāid.⁽⁷⁾ The verse refers

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1. G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.281.
 2. W. Caskel, Entdeckungen..., p.28.
 3. J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions historiques...", Le Muséon LXVI (1953), pp.339-342.
 4. Lundine, p.76.
 5. cf. al-Murzaḳānī, Muʿdjam al-Shuʿarāʾ, p.507, mentions a poet called Abū Djabr al-Kindī, among the poets who were famous by their kunya but says nothing about his biography.
 6. Kister, pp.434-35.
 7. Ibn Durāid, Sharḥ Maḳṣurat ibn Durāid, p.58.

to Abū al-Djābr.

وَضَارَتْ نَفْسًا أَبِي الْجَبْرِ الْجَوِي
 حَتَّى صَوَاهُ الْخَيْفَ فِيمَا تَدْرَحُوهُ

And sadness mingled with the soul of Abū Djābr, till death joined him to the number of those whom it had already seized.

The commentary of the verse mentioned above runs:

"The surname Abū'l-Jabr was his real name; some say that his name was Yazīd and that he was the son of Shurahbīl the Kindite; others state that Abū 'l-Jabr was really his name and that he was the son of 'Amr. Having been dethroned by his subjects he went to Persia for the purpose of obtaining from Kisra (Chosroes) the assistance of a body of troops. The Persian king sent with him a band of his Asāwira (cavalry). When they reached Kaẓīma¹ and saw the sterility and unproductiveness of Arabia, they said: "Where is this man taking us to?" and then delivered some poison to his cook, promising him, at the same time, an ample recompense, if he put it into the meat which was to be served before the king. This was done, and the food had no sooner settled in his stomach than he felt intense pain. When the Asāwira were informed of this, they went in to where he was and said to him, "Since you are reduced to such a state, give us a letter for king Chosroes, in which you declare that you have authorized us to return." He wrote a letter for them to that effect and, feeling some alleviation, he proceeded to Ta'if, the town situated in the vicinity of Mekka, and put himself

1. Kaẓīma at the bank of the Persian Gulf between Baḡra and Baḡraīn, two stages from Baḡra, Yaḡūt, IV, p.228.

under the care of al-Ḥārith Ibn Kalada the Thaqifite, who was the great physician of the Arabs and who resided there. Ibn Kalada treated and cured him, for which service he received from his patient a rich present in which were included (a slave-girl named) Sumaiya and a (slave named) Obaïd. Kisra had given them to Abū 'l-Jabr. The latter then set out for Yemen but, having had a relapse, he died on the way."⁽¹⁾

Ibn Duraïd in his Ishtikāk⁽²⁾ mentions that Kisrā gave Abū al-Djabr, one of the Kindite kings, as a gift, Sumaiya, a girl from Zardaward. Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi in his 'Ikd⁽³⁾ stresses only that Abū al-Khair b. 'Amr al-Kindī⁽⁴⁾ gave Sumaiya to al-Ḥārith b. Kalada.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt al-A'yan..., trs. M.G. De Slane, IV, p.246.
 2. Ishtikāk, p.306.
 3. 'Ikd, V, p.4.
 4. According to Ibn Khallikān, Ibid, IV, p.246, his name was Abū Djabr or Abū Djabr b. 'Amr.
 5. According to Ibn al-Kalbī, Djamharat..., p.36B, quoted also by Yāqūt, s.v. 'Zandaward', it was al-Nushdjānī who was cured from leprosy by al-Ḥārith b. Kalada and the former gave him as a gift Sumaiya, the mother of Ziyād b. Abih. For other traditions about the origin of Sumaiya, see al-Balādhurī, Ansāb..., I, p.481, Ibn Ḥadjar al-Isāba..., VIII, p.119 (no.611 women), Ibn Mus'ida, al-Rad'ala ibn Gharsiya, p.267.

From the verse of Ibn Duraid and the commentary on it in Ibn Khallikan which has already been mentioned, one can assume that this Abū Djabr was the leader of Kinda mentioned in Ry 506. Traditionally, Abū al Djabr was a fugitive at the Persian Court after his tribe had revolted against him, so it is incorrect to deduce that he was a leader without his own tribe. But as has been said, Kinda were a royal family and its membership in Central Arabia was not enough to keep the tribes under its sovereignty without the support of the South Arabian government. So it is more likely that the revolt of 'his subjects', which is mentioned in Ibn Khallikan, does not mean his own tribe, Kinda - it would mean the tribes who had been under his sovereignty. But the main questions which should be asked are: where was his sovereignty? when had he been king? and what were the names of the tribes who had been under his control?

If Abū Djabr was traditionally 'bgbr, from the inscription, it seems that he started his sovereignty over the Central Arabian tribes after the events of Ry 506, and his kingdom would be somewhere south of Ḥalabān where Abraha's troops arrived.

One must also ask the question why Abū Djabr went to the Persian Court to ask for help while he was the vassal

of Abraha. The reason would be that his plea for help came after South Arabia had been invaded by Persian troops some time after 575 C.E. If this was the case, Abū Djabr had recognized the decline of the government of South Arabia; so that he submitted to the new master of South Arabia, Persia.

It is also likely that Abū al-Djabr, as traditionally recorded, was from al-Djawn of the family of Ākil al-Murār, whose dominion was al-Bahraīn and al-Yamāma under a king from this family, supported by a small number of his tribesmen.⁽¹⁾ Al-Djawn's family were on friendly terms with the kings of al-Ḥīra, who were vassals of Persia.⁽²⁾ It is also more probable that Abū al-Djabr had gone to Persia after the troops of al-Djawn had been defeated at the battle of the gorge of Djabala, and the power of al-Djawn in Bahraīn had been broken, so that Abū al-Djabr went to Persia in order to obtain help to regain his power.

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1. cf. Olinder, "Āl-Ḥawn of the family of Ākil al-Murār", Le Monde Oriental, XXV (1931), pp.208-229.
 2. cf. Naḳā'id, III, p.50 (Cairo ed.); G. Rothstein, Die Dynastie der Lahmidien in al-Ḥīra, Berlin (1899), pp.107 ff; and Olinder, Ibid, p.219.

Or it is possible that Abū al-Djābr revolted against his family and went to Persia, or that he was the king and one of his own family revolted against him.⁽¹⁾ After his failure he settled in Ḥaḍramawt.⁽²⁾

Kinda are said to have sought refuge in Ḥaḍramawt about 570 C.E., according to Glaser⁽³⁾ Glaser's date is apparently based upon the tradition which says that Kinda migrated to Ḥaḍramawt after Ibn al-Djawn had been killed in the battle of Shi'b Djabala.⁽⁴⁾ Abū 'Ubaīda dates this battle in the year of the birth of the Prophet.⁽⁵⁾ From this branch of Kinda were descended the kings of Ḥudjar in Bahraīn.⁽⁶⁾ Their ancestor, Nu'āwiya al-Djawn⁽⁷⁾ b. Ḥudjir Ākil al-Murār, ruled over al-Yamāma in his father's lifetime.⁽⁸⁾ In the Arab tradition the battle was one

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1. Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab..., p.28A MS., says that Abū al-Djābr went to Chosroes to get help against Banū Nu'āwiya al-Djawn.
 2. Iklīl, II, p.18.
 3. E. Glaser, Skizze, 11, p.234.
 4. Djazīrat, p.85.
 5. 'Ikd, V, p.141.
 6. Kāmil, I, p.304.
 7. Djazīrat, p.255 " الحون الحمار الذي أنتت عليه القانص " cf. Olinder, Ibid., p.209.
 8. cf. Olinder, The Kings..., p.47.

between Tamīm on one side, and Banū ʿĀmir b. Ṣaʿṣʿa and ʿAbs on the other.⁽¹⁾ Ibn Khaldūn states that the leaders of the two warring parties were Kindites on both sides. On the side of Tamīm the leader was Ḥassān b. ʿAmr b. al-Djawn, on the side of ʿĀmir and ʿAbs the leader was Muʿāwiya b. Shuraḥbīl b. Ḥuṣn.⁽²⁾ The battle seems to have been fought under the auspices of the king of Ḥīra, who sent troops to the Kindite kings of Hudjar, who by then must have been the vassals of Ḥīra, and who were not in a position to choose whether to fight or not. The campaign seems to have had for its target the restoration of the jurisdiction of Ḥīra over Banū ʿĀmir, a tribe which Ḥīra had conceded to South Arabia in the year 662 of the Sabaean era, according to the information in Ry 506. The immediate consequences of this move must have been the retreat of Abraha from his march on Mecca. On the battlefield of Shiʿb Djabala the Tamīm side, including the Kindites of Hudjar, sustained a heavy defeat and one of the Djawn branch was killed.⁽⁴⁾ After the battle, which seems

1. ʿIqd, V, pp.141-46; Kāmil, I, p.355-58.

2. Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.574. cf. ʿIqd, V, p.141.

3. ʿIqd, V, pp.141-142.

4. ʿIqd, V, p.143; Kāmil, I, p.356.

to have upset the balance of power in Central Arabia, the Kindites of al-Djawn felt no longer able to hold their own, and sensing the danger of being set upon by the Arabs, decided to migrate to Ḥaḍramawt for safety.

Sa'd

Ry 506 mentions s'dm with Abraha's expedition against Banū 'Āmir in Turaba. G. Ryckmans⁽¹⁾ suggests that the Sa'd were a branch of Banū Mālik. He refers to Philby⁽²⁾ without giving any reason for his theory. J. Ryckmans⁽³⁾ does not identify s'dm in his work on Ry 506. W. Caskel⁽⁴⁾ identifies s'dm with "Sa'd al-'Asīra der späteren Genealogie, in dieser zu Maḥḥig gerechnet". Caskel's assumption was accepted by Lundine.⁽⁵⁾ It is more reasonable to accept Caskel's assumption, as discussed below. Sidney Smith⁽⁶⁾ identifies s'dm with Sa'd

1. G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953) p.281.
2. Philby, Arabian Highlands. p.537. The statement runs as follows: "Banī Mālik section, Khalidi and Sa'idi". Philby here means Sa'idi and not Sa'd.
3. J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions Historiques...", Le Muséon LXVI (1953), p.340.
4. W. Caskel, Entdeckungen in Arabien. p.29.
5. Lundine, p.76.
6. Smith, p.436.

Qurāish of al-Ẓawāhir without giving any reason for this. Kister⁽¹⁾ suggests "that these Sa'd are in fact Sa'd of Timīm". Kister's suggestion is based on verses of al-Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī which run as follows:⁽²⁾

ضربوا الأبرهة الامور محلاً هلبان فانطلقوا مع الرقوال
ومحرق والحارثان كلاًهما شركاؤنا في الصهر والرقوال

"They decided for Abraha the actions (of war); the place of it was Hulubān, and they rushed with the "qayls".

Muḥarriḳ⁽³⁾ and the two al-Hārith both of them were our partners in kinship and possessions."

Al-Mukhabbal also says:⁽⁴⁾

ويوم أبي يكوم والناس حُضِر على هلبان إذ تقضى صحابه
تحناله باب الحضير وربيه غريب تثنى بالسيوف أراهم

"And on the day of Abū Yaksum when the people were present at Hulubān after its products were consumed.

We closed against them the gate of the fortress in front of which was a prince whose chiefs fought with the javelins."

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1. Kister, p.431.
 2. Bakrī, p.461. The first verse is quoted in Lisān, s.v. "h̄lb", and in Tad̄j, s.v. "h̄lb". Iklīl, II. p.157, mentions the two verses.
 3. For the meaning of Muḥarriḳ, see Nöldeke, Die Ghassanischen, p.5 No.11 (Arabic trans.).
 4. Iklīl, II, p.158.

The commentary in the Iklīl does not elucidate the situation. It is plausible to suggest that Abraha started his expedition against Banū Sa'd of Tamīm when the latter found that they had no ability to fight him; they opened the gate of the fortress for the king, Abraha. But there is no reason to accept Kister's proposal that Sa'd in the inscription is Sa'd Tamīm. Kister himself agrees with Beeston's translation of Ry 506 which makes it clear that there were two expeditions.

From the inscription it is clear that Sa'dites and Murādites were sent to Turaba. The king, on the other hand, fought at Ḥalabān, so that the battle of Turaba was before that of Ḥalabān or perhaps at the same time. Sa'd Tamīm were in Ḥalabān, as we know from al-Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī; thus it is unlikely that Abraha sent Sa'd Tamīm whom he had just conquered. From this one can conclude that Sa'd of the inscription is not Sa'd Tamīm. Ibn al-Kalbī makes it clear when he mentions that Ḥuwīṣ b. Abiy b. Muwīlk from Sa'd al-ʿAshīra was with Abraha's expedition against Mecca.⁽¹⁾ What can be deduced from Ibn al-Kalbī's statement is that Sa'd al-ʿAshīra were with Abraha's expedition.

1. Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab, 40B. MS.

Kister in his article on "Mecca and Tamīm" discussed how the clans of Tamīm became linked with Mecca "some of them by organisation of the Hums, some of them by the pacts of Ilaf, some of them by gaining authority of the markets and in the performing of the rites of the hajj, some of them by participating in the militia to guard Mecca."⁽¹⁾ Some groups of Tamīm were even included in the body of Mecca, and, as Kister points out, were given a share in the Meccan dominance and contributed to increase the influence and prestige of Mecca in the tribal society. Thus it is unlikely that Tamīm was linked with Abraha against Mecca.

It is also plausible that the verses mentioned before had been uttered by one of Sa'd al-Ashīra's poets and only later were said to belong to al-Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī of Tamīm.

Murād

Ry 506 mentions that the tribe mrđ⁽³⁾ helped Abraha in his expedition. Here Murād is mentioned together with

1. Kister, "Mecca and Tamīm, JESHO, VIII (1965), p.153.
2. Ibid, pp.131-132.
3. MRD is mentioned in many inscriptions, see RES 2761 byn/mrd, see also RNP. I, p.132.

Sa'd. As we have identified Sa'd with Sa'd al-ʿAshīra, it is understandable that Ry 506 mentions Murād and Sa'd under one commander, because Murād's own name is said to have been Yuḥābir b. Madḥḥidj who were, according to the Arab traditions, brothers of ʿAns and Sa'd al-ʿAshīra.⁽¹⁾ Murād therefore belonged to the great southern group of Madḥḥidj.⁽²⁾

According to the Arab tradition Murād were settled in many territories. Yāqūt mentions many places where Murād used to live, but their main territory was Tathlīth, a place near Mecca.⁽³⁾ Tathlīth was more probably the territory of Murād before the eve of the rise of Islām, but their original territories were in al-Yaman, Zabīd⁽⁴⁾ and Baiḥān.⁽⁵⁾

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1. Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab..., p.114b-117b; Ibn al-Kalbī's traditions quoted in Ibn Ḥazm, p.405. See also, Ishtīḳaḳ, pp.397-403; Lisān, IV, p.409; Nuwairī, II, p.301.
 2. E.I.⁽¹⁾ "Murād".
 3. Yāqūt, I, p.826 and other pages, see also Bakrī, p.237; 504; 917; 1080; 1244.
 4. Al-Ḳalkaḥandī, Ḳalā'id..., p.91. See also Labīd, p.285.
 5. Djazīrat, p.80.

Bashīr b. Ḥiṣn

Bashīr b. Ḥiṣn was the commander of the troops of Sa'd. G. Ryckmans says "b̄sr̄m/bnḥṣnm est mis à la tête des s'adm". Caskel,⁽¹⁾ who published Ry 506, does not identify Bashīr b. Ḥiṣn. Lundine⁽²⁾ suggests that he might have been a prince of Kinda, because he also points out that Sa'd of the inscription were a southern tribe. Thus, according to Lundine, the appointment as chief of Kinda would be plausible enough. Kister suggests that he was a commander of Khindif troops and Khindif, as he deduces, were the supporters of Abraha; he claims that the names Bashīr and Ḥiṣn frequently occur in North Arabian genealogies.⁽³⁾

There is no reason to accept either Lundine's or Kister's proposals. The inscription is clear that Bashīr b. Ḥiṣn was a commander of Sa'd, wb̄sr̄/bnḥṣnm/b'm/s'd; thus, it is a fair assumption that he was a commander of Sa'd, the Southern Arabian tribe, already identified with Sa'd al-ʿAshīra. Moreover, ḥṣn occurs in many South Arabian

1. G. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.281; W. Caskel, Entdeckungen in Arabien, p.28.

2. Lundine, p.76.

3. Kister, p.424.

inscriptions, in CIH 40/1 ḥḡn, CIH 106/1 ḥḡn, and in Ja 594/5; 684/(2-3), 9; 711/9; 739/2-3, 14; 758/2, 16-7, ḥḡn, ḡn in Ry 429.

Mecca Expedition

The Arab historians mention an expedition of Abraha against Mecca. They call it the "Expedition of the Elephant". Ry 506 is more important and revealing in connection with this expedition.

J. Ryckmans states "Cette expédition aurait partiellement servi de base à la tradition d'une campagne de 'Abraha contre la Mecque".⁽¹⁾ He adds that it corresponds to the expedition mentioned by Procopius. Caskel remarks that this expedition might be considered as "eine Vorübung" for Abraha set out towards the north of the Arabian Peninsula, which ended near Mecca.⁽²⁾ Altheim and Stiehl⁽³⁾ are of the opinion that this expedition of Abraha recorded in the inscription Ry 506 is in fact the Expedition of the Elephant mentioned in the Qur'an. Lundine⁽⁴⁾ devoted a comprehensive discussion to the pro-

1. J. Ryckmans, "Inscriptions historiques...", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), p.342.

2. Caskel, Entdeckung in Arabien, p.30.

3. F. Altheim - R. Stiehl, pp.145-148, 209, 203.

4. Lundine, pp.82-84.

position of Altheim-Stiehl and rejected their assumption that the Expedition of the Elephant is connected with the events recorded in the inscription Ry 506. He assumed that the Expedition of the Elephant took place about 563 C.E.

Conti Rossini⁽¹⁾ reduced the importance of the story of Abraha's advance against Mecca, and the narrative of the elephant to some recollections of an Abyssinian king, Aphilas, of the pagan period before 'Ēsānā. Conti Rossini held this assumption before the discovery of Ry 506; at the same time, there is no evidence, as Sidney Smith points out, to prove that the Meccans had any recollection of such a time, or that Aphilas ruled as far north as the Mecca border.⁽²⁾

Kister⁽³⁾ accepts the Altheim-Stiehl proposal that the expedition of Abraha recorded in Ry 506 is the Expedition of the Elephant mentioned in the Qur'ān, but does not agree with their identification of Era year 662 of Ry 506 with 547 C.E. He agrees with Beeston's hypothesis that the

1. Conti Rossini, "Expédition et possessions des Ḥabašāt en Arabie", JA, 11e serie, t.XVIII (1921), pp.29-32. It was repeated in Idem, Storia d'Etiopia, p.189.

2. Smith, p.434.

3. Kister, pp.427-28.

beginning of the Sabaean era was circa 110 B.C.E., thus the date of Ry 506 (662 Sabaean era) is 552 C.E. Kister connects this date, 552 C.E., with a statement of Ibn Shihāb al Zuhri (d. 124/741). The statement reads as follows:⁽¹⁾

"Kuraish counted, before the chronology of the Prophet, from the time of the 'Elephant'. Between the Elephant and the (battle of the) Fidjār they counted 40 years. Between the Fidjār and the death of Hishām b. al-Mughira they counted 6 years. Between the death of Hishām and the building of the Ka'ba they counted 9 years. Between the building of the Ka'ba and the departure of the Prophet for al-Madīna, they counted 15 years; he stayed 5 years (of these 15) not receiving the revelation. Then the counting was as follows..."

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1. Bakkar, Al-Zubair, f.129 b.MS. quoted from Kister, p.427. See also Ibn 'Asakir, Ta'rikh Dimashk. I, p.28, citing Ibn Shihāb; al-Dhahabi, Ta'rikh al-Islām. I, p.22; Ibn Kathir quoted according to the tradition on the authority of Ibn Shihāb and Musa b. 'Ukba (d. 141/758) that the Prophet's date of birth was 30 years after the expedition, see Ibn Kathir, al-Bidaya..., II, p.262; Idem, al-Sira..., I, p.203. See also Khayyāṭ, p.10. Al-Mubarrad, al-Kamil, p.313, mentions that Ḳuraish counted from the death of Hishām. Before his death they used to count from the Expedition of the Elephant.

This tradition fixes the date of the Expedition of the Elephant 70 years before the Hidjra (622 C.E.). Thus, according to this tradition of Ibn Shihāb, Muḥammad's date of birth was 17-18 years after the Expedition of the Elephant: on the other hand, this gave the expedition a date of 552 C.E.

It is assumed, from Ibn Shihāb's tradition, that Muḥammad's date of birth was 570 C.E., that he lived to the age of 61 and that he died in 631 C.E.

It is not important that there is no conclusive evidence from the Arab traditions about Muḥammad's date of birth. In fact Muḥammad's date of birth and the length of his life are far from certain.⁽¹⁾ Most of the Arab traditions agree that his date of birth was in the year of the Elephant.⁽²⁾ But according to Ibn al-Kalbī,⁽³⁾

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1. cf. H. Lammens, "L'âge de Mohomet et la chronologie de la Sīra", JA, 10 ser.t.xvii (1911), pp.209-250.
 2. Ibn Hishām, I, p.149; Ibn Sa'ad, I, p.224; 132; Tha'labī p.444; Ṭabarsī, X, p.542; Ibn Saiyid al-Nās, Uyūn al-Athar..., I, pp.26-27. of. Lammens, Ibid.
 3. Tha'labī, p.444; Ṭabarsī, X, p.542; Kurṭubī, XX, p.194; Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya..., II, p.262, citing Shu'aib on the authority of his father, see also, Ibn Kathīr, al-Sīra I, p.203; Khaliyaṭ, p.10.

Muhammad's date of birth was 23 years after the year of the Elephant. This tradition would fix the date of the Expedition of the Elephant at 547 C.E.⁽¹⁾ The latter date is also the date of Ry 506 if the beginning of the Sabaean era is circa 115 B.C.E. According to the tradition of Muqātil b. Sulīmān⁽²⁾ (d. 150/767) Muhammad's date of birth was 40 years after the year of the Elephant. Ibn 'Abbās says that it was 15 years before the Expedition of the Elephant,⁽³⁾ others say 10 years.⁽⁴⁾

At any rate, it is difficult to fix Muhammad's date of birth, especially as we do not know his exact age when he died.⁽⁵⁾ We are not primarily concerned here with the

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1. cf. F. Altheim - R. Stiehl, pp.145-148.
 2. Tha'labī, p.444; Ṭabarsī, X, p.542, see also Nuwa'irī, I, p.22, citing al-Ḥakam Abū Aḥmad; Ibn Kathīr, Bidāya..., II, p.260, citing Ibrāhīm b. al-Munḍhir al-Khuzamī; Khāiyāṭ, p.10; Ibn Kathīr, al-Sīra, I, p.203, citing Abū Zakariyā al-'Adjlani.
 3. Khāiyāṭ, p.11; Ibn Kathīr, al-Sīra..., I, p.203.
 4. Ibn Kathīr, Ibid, I, p.203, citing Ibn Abzaī.
 5. Ṭabarī, I, p.835, quotes three traditions about Muhammad's age. 1. According to Ibn 'Abbās, Hammād b. al-Musayab, and 'Urwa b. al-Zubair, Muhammad died at the age of 63. 2. According to Ibn 'Abbās also, and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, his age was 65. 3. According to Ibn 'Abbās and 'Urwa b. al-Zubair his age was 60. See also, Ibn Sa'd, I, p.308; Muḥabbar, p.9; Mas'ūdī, I, p.405.

age of Muḥammad but with a connection between his date of birth and the expedition.

It is very likely that he was not born at the time of the expedition. Not one of Muḥammad's contemporaries nor the men who were older than he, mentioned any details of the expedition. We have also some traditions which are not directly connected with the prophet's date of birth. Ghiyāth b. Aslam mentioned that he was older than Muḥammad, and that he saw the dung of the elephant.⁽¹⁾ Hakīm b. Ḥizām b. Khuwāilid was 13 years old before the year of the Expedition of the Elephant,⁽²⁾ according to another tradition 12 years old.⁽³⁾ He died in 54/673 at an age of 120 years.⁽⁴⁾ Khadīdja, Muḥammad's first wife, was born 15 years before the year of the Elephant.⁽⁵⁾ ʿĀʿisha, Muḥammad's favourite wife, said that she had seen the two who led the elephant.⁽⁶⁾

1. Ṭabarī, I, p.367; Thaʿlabī, p.444.

2. Ṭabarī, III, 2324; Bakkār, I, p.376.

3. Ibn al-Athīr, Asd al-Ghāb..., II, pp.41-42.

4. Bakkār, I, p.377.

5. Ibn Saʿd, I, p.132.

6. Thaʿlabī, p.444.

These traditions, whose authenticity can hardly be established, must have reflected an interest in the event much later than its time and can be safely said to be involved with the particular interests of narrators or storytellers of later times. It is, however, highly improbable that any conclusions concerning the incident of the elephant could be drawn from these narratives,

One can deduce from the Arab traditions that the troops of Abraha reached some place near Mecca. But as it has been mentioned in Ry 506 that Abraha's troops were in Turaba and they had won a victory, and we know from Procopius that Abraha had only one expedition towards the north, it is more probable that the events of Ry 506 had been written down before Abraha's march against Mecca. And it is also more likely that these troops had reached some place near Mecca, where they had caught measles or smallpox.

The reasons of Abraha's expedition

In dealing with Abraha's expedition, the importance of Mecca and the reasons for the expedition will be outlined first.

It is important to point out that the probability of

independent socio-political development increased beyond a certain distance from the dominant centre. In this connection, it is significant that Meccan power rose after the Kindite and South Arabian powers had disintegrated, and that Mecca was able to maintain its independence from Abyssinia, Byzantium and Persia. Qhassānid's expansion reached as far south as al-Ela, Khaibar and Hādijel,⁽¹⁾ but never reached Mecca.

The fall of South Arabia gave Mecca a new opportunity to flourish. As long as that country remained sovereign and powerful and was exercising control over the trade route, Mecca could not prosper. With the elimination of South Arabia as an independent and powerful trading community which had actively participated in shaping and controlling the destinies of the spice route, suitable conditions were created for the development of Mecca as the great metropolis of West Arabia. The various opportunities which presented themselves through this political and commercial vacuum were fully exploited by the

1. of. Musil, Alois, The Northern Hegāz, p.259.

Meccans,⁽¹⁾ who were fully sensitive and alert to new situations and developments which they could use for their own benefit.

Mecca was a meeting-place of great commercial routes. The geographical structure of the Arabian peninsula had already determined the fact that three routes, one from the east of the peninsula, the other from the south, were to meet at Mecca. The route running from the eastern part of the peninsula was the Wādī al-Rumma and Wādī al-Dawāsir route, which the Arab of Bahraīn and ʿUmān used to follow, going as far as they could on the Mesopotamian route, which proved prohibitively expensive in view of the tariff-barriers imposed by the two empires, and on which the Arab traders stumbled. The emergence of a vigorous trading community in Mecca, actively working to attract trade in its direction, would also have facilitated the flow of merchandise over that route. The second route approached Mecca from the south, the historical route of the ancient Sabaeans.⁽²⁾ The third of these trade-routes of which

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1. cf. Lammens, H., "La Mecque à la veille de L'Hégire", MUSJ, IX (1924), pp.99-439; Ḥamīdullāh, M., "Al-Īlāf ou Les Repporte économique-diplomatiques de la Mecque pre-islamique", in Mélanges Massignon, II (1957), pp.293-311.
 2. Philby, The Background..., p.123. This route is called "Elephant Road".

Mecca was the terminus, was the sea route from the African mainland; this carried part of the produce of the Abyssinians and what they conveyed from the East. Evidence of the brisk commercial intercourse between Mecca and Abyssinia is plentiful.⁽¹⁾

At an early date the Meccans opened negotiations with the states adjoining Arabia.⁽²⁾ They obtained from them safe conducts and capitulations permitting the free passage of their caravans. This is what their chronicles call the 'guarantee of Caesar and Chosroes'.⁽³⁾ They also concluded

1. cf. Ṭabarī, I, p.1089, citing Hishām b. Muḥammad. For the Meccans' trade activities see Wolf, Eric R., "The social Organization of Mecca and the origins of Islam", South Western Journal of Anthropology, vol.7 (1951), pp.330-337.
2. Sūra, CVI, 1-2 alludes to this activity "For the taming of Ḳuraish. For their taming (we cause) the caravans to set forth in winter and summer".
3. Ibn Sa'd, I, p.78, says that Ḥaḡḡim took the guarantee from Caesar. The latter wrote a letter to Nadīshāhī to let Ḳuraish into Abyssinia. According to Ibn Ḥabīb's al-Munammak, p.32, Ḥaḡḡim obtained permission from Caesar and his brother, al-Muṭṭalib, received the ʿĪlāf from the kings of the Yaman and the Arab leaders from the Yaman to Mecca. ʿAbd-Shams b. ʿAbd Manāf took the ʿĪlāf from the Abyssinian kings. Nawfal b. ʿAbd Manāf took the ʿĪlāf from Chosroes and the tribesmen's leaders between ʿIrāq and Mecca. See also Muḥabbar, pp.162-163; Ibn Hishām, I, p.57; Ṭabarī, I, p.1089, citing Hishām b. Muḥammad Al-Kalbī.

agreements with Nadīshī of Abyssinia, with the principal Shaikhs of Nedjd,⁽¹⁾ the Kayls of al-Yaman, and with the Phylarchs of Ghassānids and the kings of Hīra.⁽²⁾

The Ḳuraishites had a very important position in Central Arabia, and they had great influence not only in Central Arabia, but also with the Yamanite merchants who used to trade with North Arabia. In this connection, it is interesting to quote a paragraph from Ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/859 C.E.). The statement says that "Every trader who set out from al-Yaman or Hidjāz, required the services of a Ḳuraishite escort as long as he travelled in the country inhabited by Muḍarite tribes, since no Muḍarite nor ally of Muḍarites harassed the Ḳuraishite traders. So the Kalbites never troubled them as they were allied to the Banū Tamīm, and the Ḥa'ifites also never interfered with them on account of their alliance with the Banū Asad".⁽³⁾

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1. See Kister, "Mecca and Tamim", JESHO, VIII (1965), pp.113 ff.
 2. cf. Hamidullah, M. "Al-Ilāf ou les rapports economico-diplomatiques de la Mecque pre-islamique", Mélanges Massignon, II (1957), pp.293-311.
 3. Muḥabbar, p.264.

All the Roman emperors cherished the desire of extending their influence over the important station of Mecca, and made tentative efforts in this direction.⁽¹⁾ According to Ibn Ḳutaiba,⁽²⁾ the Byzantine Emperor helped Ḳuḡaiy in his attempt to capture the city of Mecca. But later, Ḳuḡaiy seems to have become independent and neglected the Byzantine interest.

It is interesting to notice that Ḳuḡaiy lived, according to Ḥanẓa,⁽³⁾ at the time of Feroz (457-483). And he drove his tribe from al-Ḥam to Mecca.⁽⁴⁾ This happened, according to the narrative of Ibn Ḳutaiba, just mentioned above, with the help of the Byzantine Emperor.

We know from the Byzantine sources that, in the reign of Leo (C.E. 457-74), Imru'1-Ḳais, before he became a Roman phylarch, had been in the service of the Great King of Persia, and for some unknown reason had decided to sever

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1. cf. Lammens "La Mecque à la veille...", MUSJ, IX (1924), p.239.
 2. Ma'arif, p.640. According to Azrakī, p.92, the tribe Ḳudā'a helped Ḳuḡaiy in his attempt to capture the city of Mecca. Probably Ḳudā'a was a vassal of the Byzantine Empire at that time, cf. Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, p.5.
 3. Ḥanẓa, p.120. Ibn Sa'īd, p.95a.
 4. cf. al-Nuwaīrī, XVI, p.20.

his Persian connections. After an adventurous military career in North Arabia he was able to draw the attention of the Romans to his military worth and political importance and with unusual diplomatic finesse he finally succeeded in having himself invited to Constantinople in C.E. 473.⁽¹⁾ Leo made him phylarch in the same year, but the termination of his phylarchate is unknown.

This Imru'1-Ḳais would be Ḳuṣaiy of the Islamic tradition. He lived in the same era, and he had been in the north of the Arabian Peninsula, in the neighbourhood of Sargh,⁽²⁾ a place near Tabūk,⁽³⁾ or right into Syrian territory near Yarmūk.⁽⁴⁾ The Arab sources make Ḳuṣaiy like the usual legendary type of hero who founds a city, i.e. Mecca. He became master of Mecca by the help of the Byzantines, so there is a similarity between Imru'1-Ḳais and Ḳuṣaiy events, and it is probable that Imru'1-Ḳais in the Byzantine sources is a corruption of Amīr Ḳuṣaiy.

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1. Shahid, "On the Particiate of Imru-al-Qays", in The Word of Islam, ed. James Kritzeck and R. Bayly Winder, p.74.
 2. Ibn Sa'd, I, p.67.
 3. Yāqūt, III, p.77.
 4. Bakrī, p.773.

Some generations later when a Meccan, 'Uthmān b. al-Ḥuwairith b. Asad b. 'Abd al-'Uzzā, of the clan Asad, embraced Christianity,⁽¹⁾ the Emperor put a crown on his head and sent him to Mecca ordering the Meccans to accept him as their king. 'Uthmān was in a very favourable position, since the Meccans, who were largely dependent upon the Byzantines of Palestine and Syria for their victuals and for their trade, could not disregard the Imperial order. But at the last moment, a kinsman of 'Uthmān himself, al-Aswad b. al-Muṭṭalib,⁽²⁾ harangued the mass meeting of Meccans and protested against and ridiculed the impossible innovation of aristocracy and kingship for the free citizens of Mecca.⁽³⁾ 'Uthmān was disgusted and returned to Syria.⁽⁴⁾ The Emperor retaliated by closing the routes of his dominions to the Meccans and imprisoning

1. Munammak, p.178; Ibn Ḥazm, p.491.

2. Ibn Ḥazm, p.118.

3. cf. Hamidullāh, M., "Two Christians of Pre-Islamic Mecca, 'Uthmān ibn al-Ḥuwairith and Waraqah ibn Naufal", Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society, VI (1958), pp.97-103.

4. 'Amr b. Dīfna al-Ghassānī poisoned 'Uthmān on the request of Ḥurayth, see Ibn Ḥazm, p.118.

those who sojourned there at that time.⁽¹⁾ This happened probably after the Emperor had given the charter of permission to Ḥaṣḥim to come to Syria and had given a letter to Nadjāghī recommending him to open his country to Meccan caravans.⁽²⁾

If we were to accept that the Emperor was directly involved in this struggle for power in Mecca, then it would be possible to say that the Emperor could not push his designs further as the war with Persia had begun. Later as Al-Wahidī, in his Asbābunnuzūl,⁽³⁾ records that the Medinite Abū 'Āmir al-Rāhib also threatened that he would bring in the armies of the Emperor against Muḥammad.

After the invasion of South Arabia, the Emperor had the opportunity to ask his ally to control Arabia and its routes. The request⁽⁴⁾ indicates that the Byzantines were

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1. Muṣ'ab, p.209; Bakrī, I, p.425; Fāsī, (ed. Wustenfeld) II, p.114; Suhailī, al-Raud..., I, p.146. According to Ibn Ḥabīb's al-Muḥabbar, p.307, Uthmān's mother was an Abyssinian, but both Muṣ'ab, p.209 and Bakkar, p.425, mention that she was an Arab.
 2. Ibn Sa'd, I, p.78; Tar'ikh, I, p.280; Ṭabarī, I, p.1089.
 3. Op.cit., p.149.
 4. Halalaa, pp.456-59; Shahid, "The Arab in the Peace...", Arabica, III (1956), p.181.

keen that part of the transit trade should be carried through the land route of western Arabia, and not only by the sea route. It is possible that the usual difficulties for navigation in the Red Sea might have influenced the Romans to encourage the land route, which, moreover, was not very safe in most parts since Arabia Felix was now a Christian country and the north part was guarded by a Byzantine Phylarch.

To secure the trade route and to invoke Central Arabia against Persia, the Emperor requested Sumyafa^o and, after that Abraha, to control Arabia.

The Arab historians have preserved statements in which they give the reasons for Abraha's expeditions to Mecca. According to Ibn Ishāq:

"Then Abraha built the cathedral in Ṣan'ā^o [al-Ḳulīis]⁽¹⁾ such a church as could not be seen

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1. The Arab commentators derive this word from an Arabic root, but it is simply the Greek 'ecclesia'. For the description of the church see Yaḳūt, IV, p.170; Nuwaīrī I, pp.382-83. The church was destroyed by al-'Abbās b. al-Rabī^o b. 'Abdallāh al-'Amirī, the governor of the Yaman in the lifetime of the 'Abbasides Caliphate al-Manṣūr. Mukhtārāt, p.88, mentions that al-Ḳulīis was a Himyarite king's palace where Abraha resided. For its locality, see Scott, "The Yemen in 1937-38", JRCAS, XXVII (1940), pp.21-44; Robertson, "San'ā^o Past...", MW, XXXIII (1943), pp.56-57.

elsewhere in any part of the world at that time. He wrote to the Negus saying: "I have built a church for you, O king, such as has not been built for any king before you. I shall not rest until I have diverted the Arabs' pilgrimage to it." When the Arabs were talking about this letter of his, one of the calendar intercalators was enraged. He was of Banū Fuqaym b. 'Adīy b. 'Āmir b. Tha'labā b. al-Ḥārith b. Mālik b. Kināna b. Khusayma b. Mudrika b. Ilyās b. Muḍar... The Kinanite went forth until he came to the cathedral and defiled it. Then he returned to his own country. Hearing of the matter Abraha made inquiries and learned that the outrage had been committed by an Arab who came from the temple in Mecca where the Arabs went on pilgrimage, and he had done this in anger at his threat to divert the Arabs' pilgrimage to the cathedral, showing thereby that it was unworthy of reverence.

Abraha was enraged and swore that he would go to this temple and destroy it."⁽¹⁾

Whether this account is authentic or not, it reflects that the main reason for Abraha's expedition against Mecca was his rage when he learned that the Kinanite had come to al-Ḥulīs, and had defiled it. As the account puts it, this is not an important enough reason for Abraha to attack many tribes. The reason for this assertion can be given: a brisk trade with South Arabia; the Yamanite pagans, as

1. A. Guillaume, pp.21-22; Ṭabarī, I, p.934.

far as we know, had no connection with the pre-Islamic pilgrimage. Even if there were pilgrims from the Yaman, the only statement we have is from Ibn Ḥabīb;⁽¹⁾ it should be accepted that tribes, who had been living in Tihāma and the Yamanite tribes, who were settled in southern Mecca, used to go on pilgrimages to Mecca.

Muḳātil b. Sulīmān [d. 150/767], says that the reason for Abraha's expedition against Mecca was that there was a group of Ḳuraīshites in the land of al-Nad̲jāshī who, when they reached the sea coast, stopped near a church which the Ḳuraīshites called al-Haikal. The Abyssinians called it Masrkhaḡān. Then the Ḳuraīshites lit a fire to cook meat which they had bought. When they left, they did not put out the fire. The wind carried off the fire to the church. Thus al-Nad̲jāshī became angry and ordered Abraha to destroy al-Ka'ba.⁽²⁾ The tradition mentioned above states that the Abyssinian king ordered Abraha to attack Mecca, when the Meccan merchant had burned the church. It should be remembered that the merchants did not intend to burn the church; that happened by chance. In view of this

1. Muḡabbar, p.179. See also, A.S. Tritton, "Notes on religion in early Arabia", Le Muséon, LXXII (1959), pp.191-195.

2. Tha'labī, p.442; Ṭabarsī, X, p.540.

there was no substantial reason for the king to declare war against Mecca. During this time, the Meccans had good relations with the Abyssinians, before and after the expedition. Abraha's expedition did not affect the trade relations between Mecca and Abyssinian, and the Abyssinian market remained a good one to Meccans.⁽¹⁾ One can conclude that the Abyssinians had no connection with Abraha's expedition against Mecca.

Another account is given by Ibn Ishāq; When Abraha was imposing Christianity on the northern Arabs, he appointed Muḥammad b. Khuza'ī amīr of Muḍar and ordered him to invade Kināna. Ḳais went with his brother to the territory of Kināna, where a man from Hudhail, called 'Urwata b. Ḥiaḍ al-Malasī killed Muḥammad.⁽²⁾ When Muḥammad was murdered Ḳais fled to Abraha. Thus Abraha swore to invade Kinana and to destroy their Sanctuary.⁽³⁾

1. cf. Ṭabarī, I, p.1089.

2. cf. A contradictory tradition, recorded in Muḥabbar, p.130, states that Muḥammad b. Khuza'ī was with the army of Abraha during the Elephant's expedition. See also Munammaḳ, p.70.

3. Ṭabarī, I, p.935; Khizāna, III, p.330. According to Ibn Ḥabīb's al-Munammaḳ, p.71, Muḥammad was killed by a thunderbolt.

The Kindite rule over Phoinikon must have continued after Abū karib b. Djabala when Ḳais, the former prince of Ma'add, succeeded Abū karib.⁽¹⁾ This Ḳais cannot be identified with Ḳais b. Khuzā'ī, the brother of Muḥammad b. Khuzā'ī whom Abraha appointed amīr of Muḡar. Muḥammad was murdered later, whereupon his brother Ḳais fled to Abraha.

The tradition of Ibn Ishāḳ is clear, when it mentions that Muḥammad was from the Dhikwān branch of Sulāim. As far as we know, the Sulāim's lands were along the frontiers of Medīd and the Hidjāz and were bordered on the north by the territory of Madīna⁽²⁾ and on the south by that of Mecca. On the east the neighbours were the related tribes of Ḡhaṭafān, Hawāsin and Hilāl.⁽³⁾ They were on good terms with Ḳuraish. In the meantime many Meccan families had joined them as "Ḥalīf"⁽⁴⁾ and together with Sulāimis

1. Smith, p.445.

2. Yāqūt, III, p.865.

3. E.I.⁽¹⁾ "Sulāim b. Maḡūr".

4. For example, Sulāim b. 'Abbad was ḥalīf with Abū Ṭalib. Ishṭīḳāḳ, p.311; Banū Shāibān from Sulāim were with al-Zubair b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, see Mu'riḍī al-Sadūsī, p.4; see also Muṣ'ab, p.229.

they exploited the agriculture and mineral wealth of the country. Thus probably the story of Muḥammad b. Khusa'ī was not true. Abraha did not make him a chief without a tribe behind him, but his tribe were on good terms with Kura'ih, and with other tribes. It is more reasonable to accept Ibn Ḥabīb's⁽¹⁾ statement, which mentions that Muḥammad and his brother Ḳais were dissociates from Banū Sulaim. Abraha used Muḥammad and some others as spies. When they had arrived at a mountain, a thunderbolt killed off all of them. Ḳais later, according to Ibn Ḥabīb,⁽²⁾ died near Mecca.

Another statement says, "The grandson of Abraha (the son of his daughter), Aksūm b. al-ṣabbāḥ al-Ḥimyarī, went to Mecca on a pilgrimage. On his way back from Mecca he stayed in a church in Nadīrān, where he was attacked by Meccans who robbed him of his luggage and looted the church. Aksūm went to his grandfather and complained about the behaviour of the men from Mecca. Abraha vowed to destroy the sanctuary of Mecca."⁽³⁾

1. Munammaq, pp.70-71.

2. Ibid, p.76.

3. al-Iṣbahānī, Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa, pp.100-101; al-Suyūṭī, al-Durr al-Manthūr, VI, p.394.

This statement is very confused: it implies that the grandson of Abraha was a pagan, and that he went to do pilgrimage, but there is no reason to accept this, because he and his family were Christians. One point we can deduce from this statement: that the Meccans had great influence over trade. It can also be assumed that the Yamanite merchants had received ill-treatment from the Meccans, and that there was great commercial competition between the Meccans and the Yamanites.⁽¹⁾ As far as trading was concerned, the Meccans were more active, so that Abraha took hostages from Ḳuraish, as is apparent from the following statement:

"From them (i.e. the Banū Abd al-Dār) al-Ḥārith b. 'Iḳama b. Kalada b. 'bd Manāf b. 'Abd al-Dār, the hostage of Ḳuraish handed over to Abū Yaksūm, the Abyssinian. (It happened) when a group of their merchants entered Mecca in a barren year. Some young men attacked and robbed them of their merchandise. Then discord broke out among them. They were later reconciled, after a group of nobles of Ḳuraish went to Abū Yaksūm and requested him not to cut off the merchants of his kingdom from (coming to) them.

1. Probably these commercial competitions were in Arab Markets; see Khizāna..., IV, p.308; al-Marzūqī, al-Azmina..., I, pp.161-170; concerning the commercial activities of the Meccans, see Iakkār, I, p.371. cf. W.M. Watt, Muhammad Prophet and Statesman, p.9.

Al-Ḥarīth and others were handed over as hostages to him (i.e. to Abraha). He honoured them and showed them friendship and they sent merchandise for themselves to Mecca."⁽¹⁾

Whether this account is reliable or not, it might, nevertheless, reflect the actual situation on the advance of Abraha's expedition.

Abraha in Al-Ṭā'if

An Arab statement mentions that Abraha, having arrived in Ṭā'if, met there Mas'ūd b. Mu'attib b. Mālīk b. Ka'b b. 'Āmir b. Sa'd b. 'Auf b. Thaḳīf, with other men of Thaḳīf. They said to him: "O king we are thy servants, attentive and obedient to you. We have no quarrel with you and our temple [meaning that of al-Lāt] is not the one you seek. You want only the temple in Mecca, and we will send with you a man to guide you there." He, therefore, passed on leaving them unmolested. So they sent with him Abū Rihāl⁽²⁾ to guide him on the way to Mecca, and when he had

1. Anṣab, Ms. f. 811a. quoted from Kister, p.431. Ibn al-Kalbī mentions that al-Ḥarīth was a hostage, but he does not mention the reason for this: cf. Ibn al-Kalbī's Djamhara, p.23A.

2. cf. Ṭabarsī, X, p.540, says "they sent with him (Abraha) a man from Hudhāil".

brought him as far as al-Mughammis, ⁽¹⁾ Abū Righāl died there and the Arab stoned his grave. ⁽²⁾

As we shall see, there were good relations between Mecca and Ṭāʾif; moreover, the main local centre of the cults of Al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā seem to have been at al-Ṭāʾif and Naḥla, ⁽³⁾ although both of them were practised also at Mecca. ⁽⁴⁾

It is interesting to note that Ṭhaḳīf had surrendered a hostage to Abraha. Al-Balādhurī records that ʿUtbān b. Mālik b. Kaʿb b. ʿAm was the hostage of Abū Yaksūm, the Abyssinian. ⁽⁵⁾ This tradition confirms the North Arabian story about some contacts between Abraha and Ṭāʾif.

The tradition quoted here, points to the activity of Abraha: Ṭhaḳīf (Ṭāʾif), Fahm, Kināna, and Hudhāil - all

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1. Two miles from Mecca, Yāqūt, IV, p.583.
 2. A. Guillaume, pp.23-24, Ṭabarī, I, p.937, citing Ibn Ishāq.
 3. Ibn al-Kalbī, The Book of Idols, pp.14-29.
 4. Ḳurʿān, LIII.19 "Have ye thought upon al-Lāt and al-ʿUzzā". These must have been small transportable idols, since Abū Sufyān was carrying them at the battle of Uhud. See Ṭabarī, I, p.1395; Aḡḡanī, XIV, (Cairo ed.) p.15.
 5. Ansāb, Ms. f. 1139a. quoted by Kister, p.431; see also Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.640.

these tribes were staying in the vicinity of Mecca. One is inclined to trust to some degree the North Arabian tradition stating that the expedition was directed against Mecca and her allies.

Abraha or his troops having arrived at al-Ṭā'if, Ṭhaqīf probably felt that they were unable to fight them, therefore they wanted to conclude a peace treaty. This treaty does not mean that Ṭhaqīf wanted to destroy Mecca.

It is relevant to point out here some details about Abū Righāl, in order to prove that his story was written with the purpose of showing the hostility of Ṭhaqīf's enemies.

Abū Righāl is connected with the expedition of Abraha against Mecca. Many entirely different traditions exist about this mythical person.

According to one tradition,⁽¹⁾ he was from Ṭhaqīb of Ṭā'if, who guided Abraha⁽²⁾ on his way to Mecca. He died

1. Ibn Hishām, I, p.48; Ṭabari, I, p.937; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, I, p.171.

2. Ṭabarsī, X, p.540, calls him Hufiāl; al-Diyārbakrī, al-Khamīs, Cairo (1283), I, p.188, calls him Abū Righāl, Zaid b. Muḥlīf.. See also Yāqūt, II, p.794.

on al-Mughammis, and was buried there. It was the custom to stone his tomb.

According to a second tradition, Abū Righāl was the only survivor of Thamūd.⁽¹⁾ At the time of the disaster of Thamūd, he was staying in Mecca and was saved by the sanctity of the place. He died, however, as soon as he left Mecca.⁽²⁾ Al-Balādhurī says that Abū Righāl was from al-ʿArab al-bāʿida and that he had power over al-Ṭāʿif and its surrounding area. He was a tyrant and he killed a child as a result of which he became ill; this was as a punishment sent on him by Allāh.

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1. According to al-Balādhurī, Anṣab, I, p.25, he was a servant of Shuʿaib b. Dhū Muḥdam al-Ḥimyarī. Al-Ṭaʿālibī, Thimār al-Kulūb, p.136, says that he was a collector of alms and he was killed by Thakīf. wāḳidī, p.93, quoted a tradition that Muḥammad had said that Abū Righāl was the father of Thakīf, and he was the tax collector of the Prophet Ṣālih.
 2. Ṭabarī, I, p.250; Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, I, p.137; al-Balādhurī, Anṣab, I, p.25, says that he was killed by the order of Shuʿaib b. Dhū Muḥdam al-Ḥimyarī; according to al-Djāhiz, al-Ḥayawān, VI, p.156, he was killed by Thakīf; see also Maʿārif, p.91; Masʿūdī, II, p.195.
 3. Anṣab, I, p.25, Yāqūt, II, p.793.

The earliest reference would be a verse by Ḥassān b. Thābit [d. 54/574],⁽¹⁾ if it is not an anti-Thaqifite falsification.⁽²⁾ The early date of the custom of stoning⁽³⁾ Abū Righāl's tomb is proved by a verse by Djarīr.⁽⁴⁾

At any rate, we can hardly know the real connection of Abū Righāl with Abraha. The Arab traditions, as we have just seen, were obscure,⁽⁵⁾ and it is difficult to accept the tradition which mentions the help of Thaqif to Abraha. Anyhow, there was a kind of 'entente cordiale' between Mecca and Ṭā'if, an 'entente' cemented by matrimonial alliances between Quraysh and Ahlāf.⁽⁶⁾ Many Meccans

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1. Dīwān Ḥassān, p.36; see also Djāhiz, al-Ḥayawān, VI, p.156-57; Tha'alibī, Thimar, p.136.
 2. E.I.⁽²⁾ s.v. "Abū Righāl".
 3. For the custom of stoning, see E.I.⁽¹⁾ s.v. "al-Djamra". Stoning is still the custom not only in Mecca but also in Ḥaḍramawt to the "Ḥaḡat al-Kāfirah". See Serjeant, "Pre-Islamic Prophets...", Le Muséon, LXII (1954), p.146.
 4. Dīwān Djarīr, p.426, 'If al-Parazdaq dies, stone him as you stone the Tomb of Abū Righāl.' Al-Darīmī also mentions Abū Righāl's tomb in a verse, Mas'ūdī, I, p.195 (Cairo ed.).
 5. Ibn Kathīr, al-Bidāya, I, p.171, suggests that probably there were two persons called Abū Righāl, one at the time of Thamūd, the other at the time of Abraha.
 6. H. Lammens, "La cité arabe de Ṭāif à la veille de l'Hégire", MUSJ, VIII (1922), pp.229-247.

lived in Ṭā'if and had estates there. Hardly less numerous were the Ṭā'ifis in Mecca, ḥalīf of the great families among whom were, notably, the Umayyads, almost all of the latter being landlords in the region of Ṭā'if.⁽¹⁾ During their wars with Muḥammad, the Ḳuraish had the military support of the Aḥlāf of Ṭā'if.⁽²⁾

The reason for falsifying the traditions against Thaḳīf is that Thaḳīfis played an important role under the Umayyad Caliphs, and that they succeeded in pushing themselves into the highest offices⁽³⁾ and displayed the most varied talents.

The 'Abbāsids and 'Alids took care not to forget this. Tradition records their hatred of them and associates the Thaḳīfis with the disfavour that surrounded the Umayyads. As a result of the battle of Karbalā' and the consequent failure of the 'Alids to grasp power from the Umayyads, the Thaḳīfis are represented as having been cursed by the Prophet. Combining the hatred of the Shi'ites with the political feuds of 'Irāq, the 'Abbāsids' reaction vented itself with particular bitterness in the Umayyad period.

1. Munammaq, pp.280-283.

2. Ibid.

3. cf. E.I. ⁽¹⁾, "Ṭā'if".

The plot was a marvellous success and from that day the name of Thaḳīf was treated with scorn.⁽¹⁾

The Terminus of the Expedition

We must remember that, according to Ry 506, Abraha's expedition was against Banū ʿĀmir in TRBN and not far from Mecca. According to some Arab sources, the army of Abraha was destroyed near al-Mughammis,⁽²⁾ near the Haram. Al-Masʿūdī says that Abraha reached the boundary marks of the sanctuary, where he stopped at the place called Djanb al-Muḥaṣṣab, and where he received ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib.⁽³⁾ Ibn al-Mudjāwir⁽⁴⁾ says that Katana was the place where God destroyed Abraha's army. Al-Hamdānī⁽⁵⁾ says that Abraha died in Dhāt ʿUsh after he had returned from his expedition

1. cf. Lammens, "La cité Arabe de Ṭāif à la veille de l'Hégire", MUSJ, VIII (1922), pp.285 ff.
2. Ibn Hishām, I, p.48; Ṭabarī, I, p.963, citing Ibn Ishāq; Bakrī, pp.1248-49; Ṭabarsī, X, p.542. According to al-Hamdānī's Iklīl, I, p.372, Abū Righāl's grave is near al-Zīma which lies 85 Km east of Mecca on the way to al-Ṭāʿif.
3. al-Masʿūdī, I, p.310. According to Yāqūt, IV, p.426, al-Muḥaṣṣab is the name of a place in Munā.
4. Ibn al-Mudjāwir, I, pp.41-42; Djazīrat, p.186, mentions Katana in the southern border of Ḥidjāz. Yāqūt does not mention Katana.
5. Bakrī, p.944.

against Mecca. According to al-Hamdānī, Dhāt 'Ugh is also in the territory of Katana. Katana, according to al-Bakrī,⁽¹⁾ is on the outskirts of Mecca, beside the sea.

It seems more probable that Abraha did not die after this expedition. It would be more reasonable to suppose that his troops came near to Mecca but that on account of the outbreak of disease they never reached Mecca itself. And the delegation of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib to Abraha is no more than legend.⁽²⁾

Southern Arabian Tribes with Abraha's Expedition

In Ry 506, Kinda, Sa'd Murād, and 'Alites⁽³⁾ are mentioned as having been with Abraha's expedition. Arab sources also allude to the tribes who were with Abraha on the Expedition of the Elephant.

Dhū Nafr, who came from one of the ruling families among the South Arabian tribes, fought against Abraha. After the battle, Dhū Nafr and his followers were put to flight and he himself was taken prisoner. Abraha then

1. Ibid, p.944.

2. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib was not a very important figure politically in Mecca, see Munammaḡ, p.411.

3. Most probably '1 in Ry 506, a main tribe of Madhḡidj, see *supra*, p. 117 No.6.

spared his life on condition that Dhū Nafr should help him.⁽¹⁾

After that Nufaīl b. Ḥabīb and his tribe Khath'am⁽²⁾ are said to have encountered Abraha, and Nufaīl was defeated and taken prisoner.⁽³⁾ Abraha spared his life on condition that Nufaīl and his two tribes of Khath'am, namely, Shahrān and Nāhis, would obey him and join his expedition. The account, after that, says that Nufaīl remained with Abraha, when the latter arrived near Mecca; but when Abraha's troops were attacked, he withdrew, according to the Islamic tradition, and turned against Abraha.⁽⁴⁾

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1. A. Guillaume, p.23; Ṭabarī, I, p.937, citing Ibn Ishāq.
 2. Khath'am inhabited Sarawāt al-Yaman, and Hidjāz to Tibāla, on the eve of Islām; see al-Ḳalkashandī, Kalā'id p.104. According to Yāqūt, I, p.834, they were between Bīḡha and Turaba. The latter is mentioned in Ry 506; see also Arrām, p.416. Khath'am is also claimed to be a northern Arabian tribe, see E.I.⁽¹⁾ s.v. "Khath'am".
 3. They inhabited (at least from the sixth century C.E.) the mountainous territory between al-Ṭā'if and Nadīrān, along the caravan route from Mecca to South Arabia, see E.I.⁽¹⁾ 'Khath'am'.
 4. Guillaume, pp.23-27; Munammak, p.68. All mention that Khath'am never respected al-Ḥaram. Ṭabarsī, X, p.540.

Other Southern tribes - 'Ik, Aghā'ira, according to al-Ṭabarsī,⁽¹⁾ and Sa'd al-'Ashīra according to Ibn al-Kalbī⁽²⁾ - had been with Abraha's expedition. Ibn Ḥabīb⁽³⁾ mentions that Banū Munabbih b. al-Ka'b al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b were with Abraha's expedition. The Arabian traditions, however, do not give any details of their military activities.

Northern Tribes with Abraha.

There are two verses of al-Mukhabbal al-Sa'dī which mention Abraha's expedition in Ḥalabān.⁽⁴⁾ The commentator says that "it was, in fact, Khindif who were his (Abraha's) followers." This statement is a general one. As we know, Khindif consisted of several groups, among them Ḳuraīsh, Banū Asad b. Ḳhuzaīma, al-Karat, and Muzāina.⁽⁵⁾ Thus it is difficult to accept this statement at all. Ibn al-Kalbī⁽⁶⁾ mentions that the tribe Ḥumaīs b. Udd were with

1. Ṭabarsī, X, p.540.

2. Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab..., p.181.

3. Munammaḳ, p.98.

4. Bakrī, p.461; Lisān, s.v. "Ḥlb"; Tādī, s.v. "Ḥlb".

5. Ibn Ḥazm, pp.479-80.

6. Ibn al-Kalbī, Dīamharat, p.115b.; Ibn Ḥazm, p.198. Tādī, s.v. "NHY" mentions that Hudhīl was with Abraha.

Abraha's expedition. Ibn al-Kalbī⁽¹⁾ also mentions that 'Umar, Tamīm, Muzāina and Ḥumais, from Banū Ḥumais, were with Abraha, and that most of their men were killed. Only sixty survived.⁽²⁾ At any rate, probably only Ḥumais b. Udd or 'Umar, Tamīm, Muzāina and Ḥumais were with Abraha's expedition, and not all of Khindif as Kister suggested.⁽³⁾

It is also probable that other tribes assisted Abraha in his expedition, but the traditions do not mention them. This silence can be explained by assuming that nobody of the tribes was interested enough to recall the deeds of the ancestors, who had served the cause of Abraha and participated in the attacks led against Mecca, the Holy city, especially when the Qur'an seemed to denounce the Expedition.

Zuhair b. Djanab

Zuhair b. Djanab b. Hubal al-Kalbī, a pre-Islamic poet, is reckoned among the long lived ones⁽⁴⁾ and he was

1. Ibn al-Kalbī, Djamharat, p.60A.MS.

2. Ibn al-Kalbī, Djamharat, p.60A, 115B; Ibn Ḥazm, p.480. al-Amidī, al-Mu'talif, p.42.

3. cf. M.J. Kister, p.431.

4. al-Sidjistani, pp.24-29.

brought into contact with Kulaib Wā'il and Muhahlil. He must have lived in the sixth century of the common era. The accounts concerning his life are, however, so legendary⁽¹⁾ that no reliance can be placed upon them.

The most important point of Zuhair's life was his political relationship with Abraha when the latter had led his military expedition in Nedjd.⁽²⁾

According to Abū 'Amr al-Shaibānī⁽³⁾ when Abraha had arrived in the Nedjd, Zuhair b. Djanāb came to him and was given a warm reception. Abraha favoured him more than any other tribal chief.⁽⁴⁾ Abraha appointed Zuhair as a ruler over Wā'il, Taghlib and Bakr.⁽⁵⁾ Zuhair had ruled them

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1. According to Lammens, the legend of Zuhair was created in the Umayyad Period. Lammens, Berceau..., p.390, Idem, al-Naṣārā' fī Mecca ʔubail al-Hidjra, al-Maṣhriq, XXXV (1937), p.266-67.
 2. al-Murzabbanī, Mu'djam, p.300.
 3. Aghānī, XVIII, p.303 (Beirut ed.); see also Kāmil, I, p.300; Abū al-Fidā, Al-Mukhtaṣar, I, p.79.
 4. cf. Cheikho, Shu'arā' al-Naṣrāniya, I, pp.205-7, claims that Zuhair had embraced Christianity, and after that Abraha appointed him. But we have no historical evidence about that.
 5. al-Sidjistani, p.29, quotes a verse to the effect that Zuhair was appointed over the two tribes of Ma'add.

until a year of drought, when Wā'il was unable to pay the tribute but Zuhair forced them to pay. While Zuhair was collecting the tribute, a man from Banū Taim Allāh b. Thā'laba stabbed him. After recovering, Zuhair raided Wā'il.

The question which is worth asking here is what authority had Zuhair over Wā'il after the arrival of Abraha? According to Ibn Ḳutaiba,⁽¹⁾ Abraha had sent Zuhair in the direction of 'Irāq to the territory of Bakr b. Wā'il. If these traditions were true this would allude to the extent of Abraha's dominion.

The Elephant Expedition in the Ḳur'an

We find in the Ḳur'an [Sūra CV] the following verses:

1. Hast thou not seen how thy Lord dealt with the owners of the Elephant?
2. Did He not bring their strategem to naught,
3. And sent against them with swarms of flying creatures,
4. Which pelted them with stones of baked clay,
5. Which made them like green crops devoured (by cattle)? (2)

1. Ibn Ḳutaiba, al-Shi'r..., p.294.

2. Pickthall, The meaning of the Glorious Koran, p.451.

It must be noted here that there is no indication of Abraha in this sūra, or whether this happened in Mecca or in some other place. The Ḳur'ān does not mention the expedition, but Arab tradition and the commentators of the Ḳur'ān have associated this sūra with an expedition by Abraha against Mecca. Finally, one does not find any indication as to the date of the expedition.

According to this sūra, the owners of the Elephant failed to reach Mecca, and Allāh sent against them swarms of flying creatures and destroyed them. The commentators say: "God sent upon them birds from the sea like swallows and starlings; each bird carried three stones, like peas and lentils, one in its beak and two between its claws. Everyone who was hit died, but not all were hit. They withdrew in flight by the way they came".⁽¹⁾

The details of this tradition are clearly unreliable and cannot be accepted. It may be that the Ḳur'ān alludes to a disease which befell them⁽²⁾ and that these verses

1. A. Guillaume, p.26; Ibn Sa'd, I, p.92, Ṭabarī, I, p.945; Azrakī, I, p.91.

2. Yaḳūt, II, p.304, says that Ḥalabān had a shortage of water, and that the water stank. Probably the disease which hampered Abraha's army in Ḥalabān, when they were going towards Mecca, was connected with this lack of fresh water.

describe this disease as "swarms of flying creatures which pelted them with stones of baked clay".

To support this assumption, Ibn Ishāq and others say that Abraha was smitten in his body and when they took him away, his fingers fell off one by one. Where the fingers had been, evil sores exuding puss and blood appeared, so that when they brought him to Ṣan'ā' he was like a young fledgeling. When he died his heart burst from his body.⁽¹⁾ It is quite possible to suppose that part of Abraha's troops suffered an attack of measles or smallpox.⁽²⁾ There is an account by Ya'qūb b. 'Utba, quoted by Ibn Ishāq, which says, "that year was the first time that measles and smallpox had been seen in Arabia and also it was the first

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1. A. Guillaume, p.27; see also Ma'arīf, p.312; Ibn al-Shahna, I, p.88; al-Makdisī, al-Bid', III, p.187, says that Abraha was caught by leprosy, cf. Ibn Rushaik, al-'Umda..., pII, p.227, says Abraha's army were caught by leprosy. But this is not an instantaneous epidemic disease.
 2. Philby, "The Land of Sheba", GJ, XXII (1938), p.3, found in his journey that "the people of Khurma and Ranya, near Turaba, were suffering grievously from a local fever that generally comes, they say, in the train of exceptionally high floods in these great valleys."

time bitter herbs like rue, colocynth, and *Asclepias gigantea* were seen.⁽¹⁾

The *Qur'an* mentions the 'owners' of the elephant, but it does not mention the number of the elephants. It is clear, however, that the word fīl [elephant] is in the singular. ~~Subs.~~ Later on we find different legends about the number of the elephants which Abraha had in his expedition. According to many historians and commentators on the *Qur'an*, there was only one elephant.⁽²⁾ Al-Dahhāk [d. 105/723] says that there were eight elephants.⁽³⁾ Ibn Sa'd mentions two elephants. He himself also gives another statement that there were thirteen elephants.⁽⁴⁾ According to others there were twelve,⁽⁵⁾ or thirteen

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1. A. Guillaume, p.27; *Ṭabarī*, I, p.944; al-Maḥḍisī, al-Bid' III, p.183, say that someone said that the army caught measles and smallpox, but al-Maḥḍisī does not agree with them.
 2. *Ḳurṭubī*, XX, pp.192-93; *Ṭabarsī*, p.542, citing Muḳātil; *Tha'labī*, Ḳiṣaṣ, p.440. According to Ibn al-Kalbī, al-Balādhurī, Ansab, I, p.67 without authority.
 3. *Ṭabarsī*, X, p.542, *Ḳurṭubī*, XX, p.192, *Tha'labī*, p.440. According to al-Dahhāk there were many elephants.
 4. Ibn Sa'd, I, p.93. According to all informants. See also Ibn al-Shihna, I, pp.86-89, without authority.
 5. *Ṭabarsī*, X, p.542, citing Waḳidī; *Tha'labī*, p.440, without authority; *Ḳaswīnī*, Aḥḥār al-Bilād, p.21, without authority.

elephants.⁽¹⁾

The influence of the Expedition in Mecca:

Lammens⁽²⁾ says that Abraha captured Mecca. He further states that it probably took a period of time, but he does not fix that period. This hypothesis has no historical evidence to support it. All that we have is that "Deserters from the army, labourers, and camp followers remained in Mecca and became workers and shepherds for the population."⁽³⁾ We cannot attach great importance to those soldiers who stayed in Mecca. They had no influence on the life of the Meccans, because those soldiers were not very well educated. Probably they were the persons who had joined the army,⁽⁴⁾ but after the failure of the

1. Kāmil, I, p.26.

2. Lammens, "al-Aḥābiḥ...", al-Maḡhriḳ, (1936), pp.78-79.

3. Azrakī, p.91. About their crafts see Ibn al-Athīr, Isd al-Ghāb, V, p.475,488,584, IV, p.32; A.Guillaume, p.28, '...A'īḡha said: "I saw the leader of the elephant and its groom walking about Mecca blind and crippled looking for food."

4. Muḥabbar, p.306, mentions that many maiden slaves had married famous men in Mecca. These maiden slaves were probably brought from Abyssinia through merchant activities rather than from Abraha's army.

expedition had preferred to stay in Mecca to do some domestic craft, because that was considered to be better than going back to South Arabia. It is also possible that they had no families or relations in South Arabia. This explains part of the Abyssinian influence on the Ḳuraish language. Even Muḥammad and some of his followers learned a few Abyssinian terms.⁽¹⁾ There are also some words of Abyssinian vocabulary in the Ḳur'ān, such as "scrolls", "disciples", "idol" and "Satan",⁽²⁾ but it is more likely that this influence had come through the trade activities, as it is known that Mecca had good commercial relations with Abyssinia.⁽³⁾

It is of interest that Abraha's expedition against Mecca did not affect to any great extent the trade relations between Mecca and Abyssinia, and South Arabia. Abyssinia was a very good market for the Meccans,⁽⁴⁾ and the latter had been going to Abyssinia from al-Djār, the

1. Muslim, Ṣaḥīḥ, II, p.189; Ibn al-Athīr, Isd al-Ghāb, V, p.579.

2. Al-Suyūṭī, The Mutawkkilī, pp.17-22, mentions a list of the words; Jeffery, The foreign vocabulary of the Qur'an, Barada, 1938.

3. ^{cf.} Ḥamīdullāh, "Al-Īlāf ou les Rapports...", Mélanges Massignon, II (1957); pp.293-311.

4. cf. Tabarī, I, p.1089.

harbour of al-Madina,⁽¹⁾ and al-Shi'aiba, the harbour of Mecca.⁽²⁾

The Meccans' fear of the Abyssinian designs against their city seems to be echoed in the legend of Muḥammad, predicting that an Abyssinian would one day destroy the Ka'ba.⁽³⁾

Abraha b. Al-Ṣabāḥ.

Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi⁽⁴⁾ in his section on tribal genealogies,⁽⁵⁾ speaks of the eponymous ancestor of the tribe Dhū Aṣḥab,⁽⁶⁾ Ḥārith b. Mālik. One of his descendants

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1. Yāqūt, II, p.5; Bakrī, p.335; Ibn Ḥawqal, I, p.31.
 2. Ṭabarī, I, p.1181.
 3. Azraqī, p.141, 193-195.
 4. 'Iqd, III, p.370; Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab..., p.367 MS; Ibn Ḥazm, p.435, citing Ibn al-Kalbī. But Ibn Ḥazm does not mention the name of Abraha's mother. See, for contradictory tradition; Wahb, p.300; Ma'arif, p.636; al-Nuwa'irī, XV, pp.301-2; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.106.
 5. For Dhū Aṣḥab see Iklīl, II, pp.143-160.
 6. For the recent territory of the tribe see, R.B. Serjeant, "Notes on Subaihi territory", Le Muséon, LXVI (1953), pp.123-131.

was Abraha b. al-Şabbāḥ, who was king of Tihāma. It is perhaps necessary to draw attention to the fact that Ibn ʿAbd Rabbiḥī gives as Abraha b. al-Şabbāḥ's mother, Raiḥāna⁽¹⁾ daughter of Abraha al-Aḥram, the king of al-Ḥabaḡha in South Arabia.

According to the statement mentioned above, Abraha b. al-Şabbāḥ was king of Tihāma only.⁽²⁾ Naḡwān mentions that Abraha b. al-Şabbāḥ was a governor of one of the fortresses in the Yaman.⁽³⁾ Mulūk⁽⁴⁾ mentions that he was a governor of the territory of Bilād ʿAnis and he was a great king, so that Ḳas b. Saʿida al-Iyādī mentioned him:

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1. It is interesting to mention that Ibn al-Kalbī says that when the Nadjāshī had recognized Abraha-al-Aḥram as a king of Abyssinia in Yaman, the former sent to the house of Abū Murra, the son of Dhū Yazan, and seized his wife Raiḥāna, the daughter of ʿIkama, and she bore him a son called Masrūḳ and a daughter called Basāsa; Ṭabarī, I, p.933.
 2. Al-Djurdjānī does not agree that he was a king of Tihāma only; see Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.106.
 3. Mukhtārāt, p.115.
 4. Mulūk, p.170.

وعلى الذي لم انت بموكل داره
يعطي القيان وكل امرئ شالي

And against him whose abode was at Mawkil,
who gave singing girls and every smooth coaled
desirable (horse).

Labīd⁽¹⁾ also mentions Abraha b. al-Ṣabbāh in a verse.⁽²⁾

ونلبن أبرهة الذي الفينه
كان المخذ فوق عرفة موكل

And they overcame Abraha, whom they found
firmly established over the high chamber of Mawkil.

Ḳāis b. al-Ḳhatīm also mentions him.⁽³⁾

فإن تلقا أبرهة اليماني
ونحنان يوجهنا وعمرو

Should we join Abraha of Yaman when Nu'man is
directing, and 'Amr.

These statements do not give us any clear historical
evidence about Abraha's epoch. However, Ḥamza⁽⁴⁾ mentions
that Abraha was contemporary with Shāpūr and Harmiz. We

1. Labīd b. Rabī'a Abū 'Aḳil; his birth can only be approximately fixed as before 600 C.E., he died in 40H (660/661 C.E.) or 41 or 42H, see E.I.⁽¹⁾, s.v. "Labīd b. Rabī'a".
2. Labīd, p.275, see also Mukhtārāt, p.115; Iklīl, II, p.157. Iklīl, VIII, p.88.
3. Dīwan Ḳāis b. al-Ḳhatīm, p.133.
4. Ḥamza, p.132.

know that Harmiz IV reigned from 578 to 589 C.E., and that his successor was Khusraū II [590-626].⁽¹⁾ But according to al-Nuwaīrī,⁽²⁾ Abraha was contemporary with Shāpūr Dhū al-Aktāf. Ibn al-Kalbī⁽³⁾ says that Abraha's son, Abū Shamir, was killed with •Alī b. Abī Ṭālib at Ṣiffīn. [36/656 - 37/657].⁽⁴⁾ His other son, Yarim (Ma•dikarib), was married to Abiya bint Ma•bad b. al-•Abbās b. •Abd al-Muṭṭalib; her son was al-Nadhīr b. Yarim, who was one of the masters in Syria in his time.⁽⁵⁾ Abraha's brother, Ḥimyar b. al-Ṣabbāḥ, was killed by Djarīr b. •Abdallāh in the battle of Dhū al-Khalaṣa.⁽⁶⁾ [10/631].

1. cf. Smith, p.430.

2. Nuwaīrī, XV, pp.301-2. Shāpūr II had been a king at the beginning of the fourth century C.E.

3. Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab, p.367 MS; •Ikd, III, p.370; Ibn Ḥazm, p.435. According to Nashwan, Abū al-Ṣabbāḥ was Abū Shamir b. Abraha al-Aṣghar b. Shurāḥbīl b. Abraha al-Ṣabbāḥ, see Mulūk, p.170.

4. See Naṣīr b. Muzāḥim, Wak• at Ṣiffīn, pp.249-420; his brother Abū Ruṣhdāin b. Abraha, was with Mu•āwiy in Ṣiffīn; see Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab, p.367 MS; Ibn Ḥazm, p.435.

5. Muṣ•ab, p.37. According to Ibn Ḥazm, p.435, Yarim b. Ma•dī Yakrib b. Abraha b. alṢabbāḥ.

6. Ibn Ḥazm, p.435.

From these statements, one can conclude that Abraha b. al-Şabbāh ruled a short time on the eve of Islām,⁽¹⁾ and that he had no connection with Muḥammad; but that his brother fought unsuccessfully against Muḥammad's troops.⁽²⁾

The most important point here is the connection between Abraha b. al-Şabbāh, and Abraha al-Aḡram, the Abyssinian king in South Arabia. From the statement of Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, which is in fact quoted from Ibn al-Kalbī, the tribe Aşbah were powerful in the southern Tihāma before the rise of Islām, and had close connections with the Abyssinians of South Arabia.⁽³⁾ It is possible and likely that Abraha b. al-Şabbāh or his father, was a ruler of Tihāma and a vassal of Abraha al-Aḡram. After the Persian occupation of South Arabia, Abraha b. al-Şabbāh remained as ruler of Tihāma over his tribe, Aşbah. His brother was killed in the Islamic period; other members of the tribe went to Muḥammad in al-Madīna to accept Islām and the suzerainty of Muḥammad.

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1. Iklīl, II, p.156, says that Abraha had met the Prophet, see also Munammaḡ, 313, Ibn Ḥadjar, al-Iḡāba..., I, p.17.
 2. Mulūk, p.170.
 3. 'Iḡd, III, p.370; Ibn al-Kalbī, Nasab, p.367.

Yaksūm

When Abraha died, his son Yaksūm became ruler of South Arabia.⁽¹⁾ Unfortunately, we know nothing about him. The inscriptions and Arab traditions are silent on him, except for a brief statement in Ṭabarī, that "Himyar and the tribes of the Yaman were brought under the heel of the Abyssinians. They took their women, killed their men, and seized their young men to act as interpreters."⁽²⁾

Glaser suggests that Abraha had put his son Yaksūm over Ma'ahir when he first expropriated this territory from its owner.⁽³⁾ Glaser's suggestion is probably based on the mentioning of ksm/dm'hr in CIH 541,82. But there is still lack of any historical evidence about Yaksūm.⁽⁴⁾

Masruk

When Yaksūm b. Abraha died, his brother, Masruk b. Abraha, reigned over the Abyssinians in South Arabia.⁽⁵⁾

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1. A. Guillaume, p.30.
 2. Ṭabarī, I, p.945, citing Ibn Ishāq; Ibn Khaldūn, I, p.945; II, p.119.
 3. Glaser, 'Zwei Inschriften...', MVAG, VI (1897), p.461.
 4. Munammaq, p.76, mentions that al-Nadjāshī, Abraha's son was the leader of the expedition against Mecca. He died after the failure of the expedition.
 5. A. Guillaume, p.30; Ṭabarī, I, p.945, citing Ibn Ishāq.

Masrūk was the last Abyssinian king in South Arabia, and his name was always mentioned with Saif b. Dhū Yazan who liberated South Arabia from Abyssinian domination.

Unfortunately, we know very little about his reign. Glaser suggests that "Sanaturkes" mentioned by Theopanes, as a Himyarite king who was captured by a Persian king about 570, was Abraha's son. Glaser sees a similarity between "Sanaturkes" of Theopanes and Dhū Shanatīr of the Arab tradition, and consequently he suggests that "Sanaturkes" was Abraha's son and a governor during the reign "Sanaurk".⁽¹⁾

The duration of Abyssinian rule from the seizure of power by the Aryāṭ to the death of Abraha's son by the wife of Abū Murra Faiyaḍ Dhū Yazan, Masrūk, is given by Ṭabarī, (citing Ibn Isḥāq), as seventy two years, but this is clearly an over-estimation. There was a Persian commander named Wahriz, who went to the Ḥaḍramawt twice, once when he

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1. Glaser, "Zwei Inschriften...", MVAG, VI (1897), pp.486-7.
 2. Ṭabarī, I, p.945; Ibn Khaldūn, II, p.119; Aghānī, XVIII, p.228-31, says that the duration of the Abyssinian reign was seventy-four years. Al-Azraqī, p.98, says that the duration of Abyssinian rule was thirty years. Kāmil, I, p.265, mentions a statement that the duration was thirty two years.

installed⁽¹⁾ Ma•adīkarib b. Saīf (Abū Murra) Dhū Yazan, and a second time when he went to avenge him. The return of Wahriz was approved by Khusrū, not later than 578. Ma•adīkarib ruled for four years before he was assassinated by the Abyssinians, circa 575-8. The battle between Wahriz and Ma•adīkarib is correctly dated in the 45th year of Anushurwān.⁽²⁾ Masrūk ruled three years, his half-brother and predecessor, Yaksūm, two years.⁽³⁾ According to this calculation, the combined reign fixed the date of the death of Abraha in 569/70,⁽⁴⁾ and the end of the Abyssinians in South Arabia would be about 575.

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1. Ḥamza, p.136, and Aghānī, XVIII, p.229-31 (Beirut ed.) said that Wahriz went to South Arabia when Muḥammad was thirty years old. But this is certainly an over-estimation for the first journey; probably it was the second journey.
 2. al-Mas•ūdī, I, pp.194-96.
 3. Ibid, II, pp.194-96; Aghānī, XVIII, pp.228-31 [Beirut ed.] says that Yaksūm ruled nineteen years and Masrūk twelve years. These are obviously over-estimations. See also Ḥamza, p.135.
 4. Smith, p.465.

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