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HAL Id: halshs-03440313
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Submitted on 22 Nov 2021

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The kingdom of Sabaʾ in the second century CE — A reassessment

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At the turn of the Christian era, South Arabia went through unprecedented political changes. The kingdom of Maʿīn vanished and its main cities were abandoned. The kingdom of Ḥaḍramawt reinforced its presence along the southern shore (foundation of Qanīʾ; reorganization of Sumhuram). Several tribal federations broke away from the kingdom of Qatabān: to the east the kingdom of Awsān became independent again; to the south, the tribes of Maḍḥā, Radmān-and-Khawlān, and Ḥimyar became autonomous principalities. The latter soon became a major kingdom, probably thanks to the growth of the recent, lucrative maritime trade with Roman Egypt and India. Coinage showing Ḥimyarite kings appeared as soon as the late first century BCE. The city of Ẓafār was the Ḥimyarite capital at the latest in the first century CE. And in the same century, the Ḥimyarite kings — the dynasty of the banū dhū-Raydān — took control of the kingdom of Sabaʾ. This union gave rise to a new royal title: “king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān”.

In the first century CE, the kingdom of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān gathered together:
- The old Sabaeans aristocracy settled in the region of Maʾrib, Ṣirwāḥ, and the Jawf (Nashq, Nashshān).
- Sabaeans tribes from the western highlands: Samʿī (including Ḥāshid, Yarsum, and Ḥumlān); Bakīl (including dhū-Raydat, dhū-ʿAmrān, and dhū-Shibām; Maʾdhin, Tanʿim-and-Tanʿimat, Ghaymān, Dhamārī (fraction of Samhar), and other minor groups);
- Ḥimyarite tribes from the south-western highlands: Dhamārī (fraction of Qasham), Muḥaʾnif, Shaddād, Muḥaqraʾ, Maytam, Maʾāfir, and other minor groups.

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1 Robin, 2010.
2 Pliny the Elder, *Nat. Hist.* vi, 26, 104: “Intus oppidum, regia eius, appellatur Sapphar”; *Periplus Maris Erythraei* § 23: “And after nine days more there is Saphar (Σαφάρ), the metropolis, in which lives Charibael, lawful king of two tribes, the Homerites and those living next to them, called the Sabaites”.
3 Bāfaqīh, 1990.
4 In its very first occurrence in inscription Leiden 26, in the late first century BCE–early first century CE, it was “mukarrib of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān” (*Ydʾl Byn mkrb S¹bʾ w-ḏ Rydn*). The ancient title of “mukarrib”, meaning “federator”, was abandoned and replaced by “king” thereafter.
5 The so-called “old Sabaeans aristocracy” is referred to by the word ’sʾbʾn (litt. “the Sabaeans”) in the Sabaeic inscriptions from the second century CE; on the meaning of ’sʾbʾn, see Bāfaqīh, 1990: 71–77; Robin, 1996: 1104–1105.
Contrasting with this relatively peaceful century, the second century CE was a period of epidemics and endless conflicts between all the South Arabian political entities: the kingdoms of Sabaʾ, Ḫimyar, Qatabān, Awsān, and Ḫaḍramawt, and the principalities of Madhā and Radmān-and-Khawlān (Fig. 1). It was also a time when the tribal aristocracy in the western highlands and the principality of Radmān fought with the dynasty of dhū-Raydān for the control of the Sabaean territory and also claimed the title of “king of Sabaʾ”/“king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān”, leading to the ludicrous situation of three people claiming the Sabaean throne at the same time (c.159 CE). The outcome of this century was the disappearance of both the kingdoms of Awsān and Qatabān, and the revival of a Sabaean kingdom headed by the tribal princes of the western highlands.

![Figure 1](image_url)  
**Figure 1**: Tribal and political map of South Arabia in the second century CE (J. Schiettecatte).

Much has been said concerning the broad outlines of the sequence of rulers and events in this century 6. However, the chronology remains incomplete: the fact that a Ḫimyarite king and a Sabaean king bore the same title at the same time — that is, king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān — has been a source of confusion; the fact that the succession was rarely dynastic

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but rather effected by co-option/adoption among the ruling families of the different tribes also complicates any chronological reconstruction; finally, some chronological gaps are still waiting for new epigraphic material to be filled. In this paper, the recent discovery of three new Sabaic inscriptions sheds new light on three grey areas of this century: 1) the beginning of the reign of the Sabaean king Wahabʾīl Yahūz; 2) the date of the reign of the Sabaean king Rabbshahum Nimrān; and 3) the moment when the Ḥimyarite king Dhamarʾalī Yuhabirr took control of the Sabaean territory.

**Chronology of Sabaʾ in the second century CE**

At the very beginning of the second century CE, the territory of Sabaʾ was under the control of the Ḥimyarite king Ṭigmān Bayyin Yuhāqib (c. 100–120 CE). In the meantime, Ilīsharaḥ Yahḍub prince (qayl) of the tribe of dhū-Shibānum, fraction of Bakīlum, rose up against the kingdoms of Qatabān, Ḥimyar, Ḥaḍramawt, and the principality of Radmān (CIH 140) and claimed the title of “King of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān”. He ruled over a newly independent Sabaean kingdom, with the support of families belonging to the old Sabaean aristocracy of Maʾrib (Ir 3, RES 4150) and tribes from the western highlands: Dhamarī (Ja 568), Maʾdhīnum (Fa 94 + 95, Gar Ḍulaʾ 1), Ḥāšidum (Gr 184), dhū-Hagarum (Ja 413) (Fig. 1).

From then on, a succession of Sabaean tribal leaders from the highlands ascended the throne with the assent both of their peers (the qayls) and of the old Sabaean aristocracy of Maʾrib. The chronological sequence of the Sabaean and Ḥimyarite royal succession during the second century is shown in a synoptic table (Table 1). This table is based on the work of Bāfaqīh and Robin 7, and was completed thanks to the new dated inscriptions published by Khaldūn Nuʿmān 8 and those published below.

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8 Noman, 2012.
Table 1: Chronological sequence of Sabaʾ and Ḥimyar in the second century CE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dynasties</th>
<th>Sabaʾ</th>
<th>Ḥimyar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>c. 120 CE</td>
<td>Banū dhu-Kabīr Aqīn</td>
<td>Ilišharaḥ Yahūdah MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132 CE 242 hirm.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ilišharaḥ Yahūdah MS + Watarʾaš Yuhāʾiʾin (son)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>137 CE 247 hirm.</td>
<td>Banū Gārāt</td>
<td>Saʿdshām Išaʾraš + Marthad Išmahīd (son) MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>146 CE 72 ḫadam.</td>
<td>81 ḫadam.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>157 CE 267 hirm.</td>
<td>Banū Maʿyar-and-dhū-Khawālān</td>
<td>Wahabʾi Yalḥuẓ MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>159 CE 82 ḫadam.</td>
<td>Banū dhu- Ḥayyāmān (?)</td>
<td>Banū dhu-Maʿdīr (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Karībʾi Watarʾ Yuhāʾiʾin MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Karībʾi Watarʾ Yuhāʾiʾin MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yārūm Aymān MS</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. AD 200</td>
<td>Banū Bālt- and- Hambadān</td>
<td>Alḥān Nafḥān MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Alḥān Nafḥān MS + Shaʾrāʾis Ṭawart (son) MS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| | Same person |
| | Filiation is likely |
| | Filiation is unlikely |
| | even if a family tie is claimed by the heir |

- War: Sabaʾ vs Ḥimyar: Attack of Ḥimyar by the tribe of Ḥabība (Kh-Yaḥīʿ ibn Nubayh 12 & 13)
- War: Sabaʾ and Ḥimyar vs Ḥadramawt + Qatabān + Awsān 1) Before 134; fights in Ṭimaʿa (Jb 629, 6r 5)]
2) Sabaʾan expedition against Ḥabība (Jb 629)
3) Sabaʾan raid against Ḥayawʾathaṭr (Jb 629)
4) Ḥimyar raid against Ḥabība and the sons of Ḥimyar (Iṣb 629, CEAS 42, 373; 182 et 85, 51.5=2)
- 146 CE: Repulsed in Ṭimaʿa “after the war” (MAF 12, 374, 4)
- War: Sabaʾ and Ḥimyar vs Ḥadramawt + Qatabān
1) Before 135: Yarūm Aymān quʾil of Ḥabība calls a truce among the belligerents (CHS 313)
2) Mention of Dhammarʾall Yuhābir ordering the defense of the city of Maʿṣura (Zabāh-ar-ʾArab 41)

Conflict in the Sabean capital city Marṣab (after 126 CE)
War: Sabaʾ vs Ḥimyar: Attack on the lands of Ḥabība by the tribe of Ḥabība (CHS 326) (Jabot Kasule 2011: 1, 131; RE 413, 383, 387)

- War: Sabaʾ vs Ḥimyar: Attack on the lands of Ḥimyar by the tribe of Ḥabība (Jabot Kasule 2011: 1, 131; RE 413, 383, 387)
- War: Ḥimyar vs Sabaʾ + Ḥadramawt vs Ḥabība (M. Al-Ayyubī & M. Schmucke: 69-74)
Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz king of Sabaʾ: beginning of his reign and origin
How Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz ascended the Sabaean throne is obscure. It is generally admitted that it happened after the truce called by Yarīm Aymān among the fighting kingdoms of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān, Qatabān, and Ḥaḍramawt (CIH 315) ⁹.

Inscription al-Ḥadāʾ 2017-1
A new inscription, al-Ḥadāʾ 2017-1, provides an accurate terminus ante quem for the enthronement of Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz. Only a copy of this inscription was provided to Muhammad al-Ḥājj in 2007 by the discoverer, ‘Alī Nāṣir Ṣawāl. It is said to come from al-Ḥadāʾ area, north-east of Dhamār. Neither the provenance nor the content could be verified. The transcription is reproduced and a translation is given.

Transcription
1 ḥyrt b-hw hyrw Ḍmrʾly Yhbr ḏ-
2 Ṭydʰ w-s²ʾbʰ Ḥmṛʾmʰ w-ʾs²ʾb-hmwi b-brf
3 [... ... ] b-ywm [... ... b-]
4 ḏʰmʰ b-ly Whbʾl mlk Sʾbʾ w-hms iy w-ʾs²=
5ʾ bʾ mlk Sʾbʾ b-wṛḥn d-ḥbrn d-b-hṛfn [d-l-...]
6 w-sʾty w-tty mʾrʾ bn ḥṛf M=
7 bḥḏ bn ḥḥḏ

Translation
1 Camp where had camped Dhamarʿalī Yuhabirr dhū-
2 Raydān and the tribe of Ḥimyarʾm, and their tribes during the military campaign
3 … … the day when … … in
4 the war against Wahabʾīl king of Sabaʾ and the army and the
5 tribes of the kings of Sabaʾ in the month of dhū-thābatān in the year
6 two-hundred sixty […] of
7 Mabhūḍ ibn Abḥḍ

Philological comment
L1. 1-2, Ḍmrʾly Yhbr ḏ-Rydʰ: Himyarite king Ḍmrʾly Yhbr mlk Sʾbʾ w-d-Rydʰ without the royal title, as in Gl 1228, BynM 3, Zubayrʾal-ʿAwd 1 and Kh-Umayma 1.
L. 4, Whbʾl mlk Sʾbʾ: Sabaean king Whbʾl Yḥz mlk Sʾbʾ. Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz and Dhamarʿalī Yuhabirr are also mentioned together in inscription Gl 1228.
L. 5, b-wṛḥn d-ḥbrn: “in the month of dhū-thābatān”, that is, April in the Ḥimyarite calendar ¹⁰.
L1. 5-7, [d-l-... w-sʾty w-tty mʾrʾ bn ḥṛf Mḥdh bn ḥḥḏ: “in the year two-hundred sixty […] of Mabhūḍ ibn Abḥḍ”. Only the century and the decade are legible; the unit is missing. The year falls between 261 and 269 of the Ḥimyarite era, that is, between 151 and 159 CE. The range might be shortened to 155–159 CE (see below).

**Dating the beginning of the reign of Wahab’ il Yaḥūz king of Saba’**

This text is of major interest in several respects: it mentions a war between two rulers, the Ḥimyarite Dhamar’ālī Yuhabirr and the Sabaeans Wahab’īl Yaḥūz, and provides a calendar date for it.

The inscription was found in the Ḥimyarite area. It is dated according to the Ḥimyarite era, mentioning the eponym Mabḥūd ibn Abḥad (Mḥḥd bn ḏḥḥ) 11 and starting in 110 BCE 12. Its author was therefore on the Ḥimyarite side, although the writer does not explicitly give a royal title to his lord, Dhamar’ālī Yuhabirr. This is frequent in Ḥimyarite inscriptions of the time (see Kh-Umayma 1, Kh-Jarf an-Naʿīmīya 15, Zubayrī-al-ʿAwd 1, BynM 3), either because the title is implicit 13, or because the title was then denied to Dhamar’ālī Yuhabirr and was still held by Saʿdshamsum and his son Marthadum.

Considering the two rulers mentioned in the text, its date would fall between 155 and 159 CE; the sequence can be summarized as follow (Table 1):

1) From 146 CE at the latest (MAFRAY-Sāri’ 6) until 155 CE (MAFRAY-al-Hijla 1), Saba’ and Ḥimyar were apparently united and ruled by Saʿdshamsum Asraʾ and his son Marthadum Yuhāḥmīd. During this decade, they fought against the kingdoms of Ḥaḍramawt, Qatabān, and the principalities of Radmān-and-Khawlān and Awsān (Ja 629, Ir 5, CLAS 47.82/o 2 et 95.11/o 2) 14. The latest confrontation of this long-lasting war is reported in MAFRAY-al-Hijla 1, which mentions:

- The building of a house in the year 85 (Radmān era – 159 CE)
- An epidemic in the town Grw in the year 81 (Radmān era – 155 CE)
- The building of two structures “when there was a war between the king of Saba’ and dhū-Raydān and the king of Ḥaḍramawt and the king of Qatabān and when there was the infection in all the lands”.

The date of the war is not precisely given. Robin believes that the war took place in 159 CE. However, it is likely that the epidemic in the town Grw in 155 CE corresponds to the general infection mentioned during the war, in which case this war would date to 155 CE.

2) This 10-year conflict came to an end when Yaṛīm Aymān qaṭl of Hāshidum called a truce among the belligerents, namely “the kings of Saba’ and dhū-Raydān, Ḥaḍramawt and Qatabān” (CIH 315).

3) Thereafter, the leadership of the banū Gurat (Saʿdshamsum Asraʾ and his son Marthadum Yuhāḥmīd) over Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān was contested by both the banū dhū-Raydān (Dhamar’ālī Yuhabirr) and a coalition gathering the tribes of Humlān, Radmān, Yarsum, Khawlān, and Ghaymān headed by Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz king of Sabaʾ (Gl 1228, Gar AION 1976-II, CIH 220, CIH 203+182+183, Ja 561 bis). Al-Ḥadāʾ 2017-1 is certainly related to these events: it mentions the conflict between two of the three protagonists. According to al-Ḥadāʾ 2017-1, dated to 15[.] CE, the conflict clearly happened before 159 CE but is unlikely to have taken place before 155 CE.

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11 See also Av. Būsān 4, CIH 46, CIH 448, MAFRAY-al-Miʾsāl 2, etc.
13 Cf. the Ḥimyarite inscription Kh-Umayma 8, dated to the early fourth century CE, where S’mr Yhrʾs² ǧl-Rydn son of Yṣʾrm Yhmʾ is the well-known Ḥimyarite king.
Wahabʾil Yaḥūz started to fight with both Dhamarʾalī Yuhabirr and Saʿdshamsʿum Asraʾ and his son Marthadʿum Yuhahmid for the title of king of Sabaʾ during this four-year period. Inscription Ir 9 mentions that he was enthroned in Maʾrib a year after the end of this conflict, in other words he was recognized by the old Sabaean aristocracy as their leader sometime between 156 and 160 CE.

**Origin of Wahabʾil Yaḥūz**

As previously noted, all the Sabean kings of the second century CE originated from the highland tribal aristocracy and Wahabʾil Yaḥūz is to be sought in this area. South Arabian inscriptions mention only two Wahabʾil Yaḥūz: the Sabean king and the prince (qayl) of the tribes Radmān-and-Khawlān, of the lineage of Maʿāhir-and-dhū-Khawlān. The qayl is mentioned in an inscription dated to 146 CE (MAFRAY-Sāriʿ 6), the king in a text dated to 15[. ] (al-Ḥadāʾ 2017-1). The identification is clear from the homonymy and contemporaneity 15.

This identification was questioned on the basis of the following arguments 16:

1) The son of Wahabʾil Yaḥūz (qayl), Luḥayʿathat Yarkham of the banū Maʿāhir-and-dhū-Khawlān, qayl of the tribes Radmān-and-Khawlān does not mention his father with the royal title (MAFRAY-al-Mīʿsal 1, YMN 3, YMN 4, YMN 7).

Counter-argument: Luḥayʿathat Yarkham does not mention his father as a qayl either, while this was the usual habit with the previous qayls of Radmān (BaBa al-Ḥadd 2, Ja 2861, Ja 2862, MAFRAY-Sāriʿ 6). This would fit in with a father being king at that time. All the more so that Robin and Bāfaqīh themselves stated that Luḥayʿathat Yarkham seems to have been qayl while his father was still alive, according to palaeographic observations 17.

2) Two sons of Wahabʾil Yaḥūz (king) ascended the throne after him: Anmarʿum Yuḥaʾim and Karībʾil Watar Yuḥanʾim.

Counter-argument: if both the kings are claiming to be “son of Wahabʾil Yaḥūz king of Sabaʾ”, this is probably a way to legitimate their ascent to the throne rather than a natural family tie. We know other examples of this kind of alleged filiation, for example, king Saʿdshamsʿum Asraʾ who claimed to be the son of Ilisharah Yaḥdub king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān, while it is clear that the first belongs to the lineage of the banū Gurat and the second to that of the banū dhū-Kabīr Aqyān.

It is highly likely that Anmarʿum Yuḥaʾim min comes from the lineage of the banū dhū-Ghaymān, princes of the tribe of Ghaymān 18. This hypothesis is valid if we accept that this king was later demoted to the grade of qayl, a practice echoed in the Arab tradition 19.

The origin of the second “son”, Karībʾil Watar Yuḥanʾim, remains unknown. Ja 564 mentions Karībʾil Watar Yuḥanʾim king of Sabaʾ “and his brother Rathadʿum of Maʾdhin (ʾḥ-hw ṭdʿdm ḍ-M ḡnʿm)”. The word “ḥ” translated by “brother” may also have the meaning of “ally”; there are not necessarily family ties between Karībʾil Watar Yuḥanʾim and

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Rathad\textsuperscript{um}. However, the hypothesis that Karibʾīl Watar Yuhanʿim originated from the lineage of the banū dhū-Maʾdhīn\textsuperscript{um} princes of the tribe of Maʾdhīn\textsuperscript{um} is appealing. This would fit in with the regular change of tribes at the head of the Sabean kingdom during this century (\textsuperscript{Table 1}). Until fresh evidence is available, this remains hypothetical.

3) Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz was hostile to the legitimate Sabean kings. Counter-argument: he was only hostile to a single Sabean ruler, Saʿdshams\textsuperscript{um} Asraʾ and his son/coregent Marthad\textsuperscript{um} Yuhāhmīd. These rulers came from the lineage of the banū Gurat \textit{qayl}s of the tribe Dhamarī (Ja 753), a tribe on the margin of the Sabean historical territory (Fig. 1), whose southern half joined the Ḥimyarite kingdom after these rulers were deposed.

4) The tribe Radmān-and-Khawlān is located on the south-eastern edges of the highlands, outside the historical Sabean territory. Counter-argument: indeed, Radmān-and-Khawlān cannot be considered as part of the historical Sabean tribal federation. However, Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz did not usurp the title of “King of Sabaʾ”; he seized power within the frame of a wide tribal alliance gathering his tribes of Radmān-and-Khawlān and those located in the heartland of the Sabean highlands. This association appears repeatedly in four inscriptions, two of which are explicitly connected to the events of 155–159 CE: Gl 1228 and Gar AION 1976-III; and the other two probably connected to them: \textit{CIH} 220 and \textit{CIH} 203+182+183. The four show the same authors and mention the same sequence of tribes, either by their names or that of the lineage of their princes (\textsuperscript{Table 2}). The sequence is always in the same order: Ḫumlān, Radmān, Yarsum, Khawlān, and Ghaymān. It corresponds to the alliance constituted by Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz, then claiming the title of “king of Sabaʾ”, in order to fight against Saʿdshams\textsuperscript{um} Asraʾ and his son Marthad\textsuperscript{um} Yuhāhmīd “kings of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān” supported by their tribe of Dhamarī, and the Ḥimyarite Dhamarʾalī Yuhābirr “king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān”.

The association of the tribes of Radmān and Khawlān with Ḫumlān and Yarsum in Gl 1228, plus Ghaymān in \textit{CIH} 220, is therefore a strong argument to identify Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz \textit{qayl} of Radmān-and-Khawlān attested in 146 CE (MAFRAY-Sāriʾ 6) with Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz king of Sabaʾ of Gl 1228 and al-Ḥadāʾ 2017-1 \textsuperscript{20}.

\textsuperscript{20} See Bron, 2002: 422 who has already chosen to identify Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz king of Sabaʾ with the Radmanite \textit{qayl} on the basis of the tribal alliance mentioned in Gl 1228.
transcription and the philological comments,

24

23

22

21

it is heavily weathered and not

the stones covering the surface of the ancient temple of Taʾlab Riyām

Inscription

Radbān

Yarsum

Khwālān

Ghāyāmān

Leader

CIH 203+182+183

Sʾdʾltʾb Yḥb

Gl 1228

Sʾdʾltʾb Yḥb + Hwfʾm + Mḥjrn

Wḥḥʾl Yhz mlk Sʾbʾ

CIH 220

... + Hwfʾm Yzl + Mḥtrfm...

Gar AJON 1976-III

Wḥḥʾl Yhz mlk Sʾbʾ

Lineage

CIH 203+182+183

Bʾr

Mʾ[r]m

Sʾh[y]mm

g-H[wln] ...

Gl 1228

... 

...r

Sʾ(h)[y]mm

g-H[wln]

CIH 220

...

...r

Sʾ[hy]mm

g-H[wln] bmw g-Gym/ī

Gar AJON 1976-III

Hmln

Rdmn

Yrsʾm

H[wln] [. . .]

Tribe

CIH 220

...

Rdmn

Yrsʾm

[H[wln] ...]

Gar AJON 1976-III

Table 2: Sequence of allied lineages and tribes during the conflict opposing Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz, Dhamarʾalī Yuhabirr, and Saʾdshamsʾum Asraʾ and his son Marthadʾum Yuhaḥmid (c.155–159 CE).

Origin and reign of Rabbshamsʾum Nimrān king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān

Rabbshamsʾum Nimrān is the only Sabaeans ruler whose reign cannot be precisely placed within the long line of the second-century CE Sabaeans kings. Iwona Gajda 22 worked on the assumption that he originated from the lineage of the banū Bataʾ and that his reign might be placed either between those of Watarʾum Yuhaʾmin and Saʾdshamsʾum Asraʾ (c.140 CE) 23, or even earlier, at the turn of the first–second century CE, after that of Karibʾil Bayyin son of Dhamarʾalī Dharīḥ. The discovery of two new inscriptions — Jabal Riyām 2006-19 and Kanin 2017-1 — confirms the origin from the lineage of the banū Bataʾ, although it has now become clear that his reign happened much later.

Rabbshamsʾum Nimrān the Bataʾ ide, qayl of the tribe of dhū-Ḥumlān

Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-19 24 (Fig. 2)

It is a rectangular limestone stela photographed on the hilltop of the Jabal Riyām, among the stones covering the surface of the ancient temple of Taʾlab Riyām. The final line of the text is heavily weathered and not legible. The inscription reads:

\(^{(1)}\) (Ra)bbsamsʾum Nimrān banū Bataʾ, qayl of the (2) tribe of Samʾī third of dhū-Ḥumlān dedicated to his patron (3) Taʾlab Riyāmʾum master of Rahbān this (4) statue in praise because He gratified him and because (5) He bestowed on him the favours he sought from

\(^{21}\) In Gl 1364, Sʾdʾltʾb and Mḥjrn are mentioned as members of the lineage of the banū Bataʾ.

\(^{22}\) Gajda, 2013.

\(^{23}\) Hypothesis already proposed by Robin 1992: 229.

\(^{24}\) Jabal Riyām 2006-19 was recently published in Arbach and Schiettecatte, 2017: 181–184. For the transcription and the philological comments, refer to this paper.
According to Naʾṣir al-Yāsir, who authored the Facebook group, the inscription Jabal Kanin 2017 was recently discovered and photographed by Mahdi Maqwala, inhabitant of the town of Naḍ, who sent the picture to the Facebook group “Nuqūsh Musnadiyya.” The inscription was found on the southern side of the Jabal Kanin, near the town of Naḍ, c.30 km south-east of Sana’a. The stela is rectangular and broken in two pieces. The lower left corner is missing; the end of the last lines is not preserved.

This is the third inscription mentioning Rabbshams'um Nimrān as a member of the lineage of the bani Bata’, with CIH 164 and RES 4412. For the first time, he explicitly bears the title of prince (qayl) of the tribe of Samʿi third of dhū-Ḥumlān. It is therefore highly likely that Rabbshams'um Nimrān (qayl) is identical to Rabbshams'um Nimrān (king) who ascended the Sabæan throne in the second century CE.

This inscription provides a synchronous occurrence of both Rabbshams'um Nimrān when he was still a qayl and the Ḥimyarite king Dhamarʿ al-Yuhabirr king of Saba` and dhū-Raydān son of Yāsir'um Yuḥaṣiq king of Saba` and dhū-Raydān. The reign of the latter started at the earliest shortly before 137 CE (Kh-Umayma 1) and continued after 157 CE (Zubayrī-al-'Awd 1, al-Ḥadā’ 2017-1).

Interestingly, this text shows that a qayl of the Sabæan tribal aristocracy pledged allegiance to a Ḥimyarite king. It happened during a short period of Ḥimyarite control of the Sabæan territory under the reign of Dhamarʿ al-Yuhabirr. Although several dates can be proposed for this event, it most probably took place in the troubled period of 155–159 CE (see below).

**Inscription Jabal Kanin 2017-1**

Several years after the previous inscription, a second inscription, Jabal Kanin 2017-1, was engraved when Rabbshams'um Nimrān had become king of Saba` and dhū-Raydān. The text was recently discovered and photographed by Mahdi Maqwala, inhabitant of the town of Naḍ, who sent the picture to the Facebook group “Nuqūsh Musnadiyya” (Fig. 3). According to 'Alī ʿAbdallāh al-Shāmī, the inscription was found on the southern side of the Jabal Kanin, near the town of Naḍ, c.30 km south-east of Sana’a. The stela is rectangular and broken in two pieces. The lower left corner is missing; the end of the last lines is not preserved.

**Transcription**

1. `lḥa Nhfr bn Hmdn ḥqny `itr `zz w-dt Zhr b ly `r [Kmn ... ...mr]=
2. `-hmw Rbs¹ms¹ Nmr Ṭml Shb w-d-Ryd b-s`tqhn w-tbr w-dr n `s²[b [d-Ryd¹(...]
3. hmw w-gbd w-ḥd n `s²r-hmw b-dr tns² T`r²[ d-Ryd² w- `s²b-hw (w) ... ...]-
4. t w-[v²]([b [d-R]y]d²[) m r `hmw Rbs¹ms¹[ Ṭml Shb w-d-Ryd b-l`w t[ln b-wf²m]
5. b(n) `rd Ḏmr l-yqhm d-yrdwn w-yt( )wl m r`hmw Rbs¹ms¹ Nmr²[ ...]
6. w-wf²m w-ykb n `s²[b gzwb b-rd [Qs²]m² k-yhbnₙ byt Rym²[ ...]
7. [...]`d-cn ḥms²m w-yhr(g)w [bn-h] [mw] ḏ-hwkbw w-s²[r-hmw (r)] [...]=
8. b( m r) -hmw Rbs¹ms¹ Nmr² m[l]k Shb w-d-Ryd² w-hms¹-hmw w-z[w] ...
9. [...] yr ymn k-l hmw kl `nt² w-yhbrrw ḏ-hdn `yd-hmw[ ...]
10. w-d-Ryd² w-hmd `lḥa ḥyl w-mqm (`)itr `zz w-dt Zhr² [... mr²-h]=
Translation

1. ʿAlhān Nahfān (of the lineage of the) banū Hamdān dedicated to ʿAthtar ʿAzīzum and dhāt Ṣahrān Masters of the mountain [Kanin ... his]
2. lord Rabbshamsum Nimrān king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān, for having triumphed, destroyed and defeated the tribes of [dhū-Raydān ...]
3. and sacked and damaged their valleys during the war Thaʾrān dhū-Raydān and his tribes had caused […]
4. and [the tribes of dhū-Rayd(?)ān, his lord Rabbshamsum king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān for a return [in safety]
5. from the land of Dhamārī; may he order what will satisfy [him]; and his lord Rabbshamsum Nimrān returned in safety […]
6. and safety; and they made contact with the tribes who had taken up their positions in the land of [Qasha]mum in order to storm the house Raymum […]
7. […] and the army and they killed those who they encountered and the rest […]
8. […] his lord Rabbshamsum Nimrān king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān and his army and they besieged…
9. […] they showed that no contingent shall be left and they were fought in open air; and pledged allegiance […]
10. and dhū-Raydān. And ʿAlhān gave praise to the might and the power of ʿAthtar ʿAzīzum et dhāt Ṣahrān […] his
11. lord Rabbshamsum Nimrān king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān and in praise because he granted his servant […]
12. and a successful mission in the town of Naʾḍ and a perfect success in all the fights he carried out [with]
13. his lord Rabbshamsum Nimrān king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān in the land of Dhamār and all […]
14. ʿAthtar ʿAzīzum and dhāt Ṣahrān Masters of the mountain Kanin in giving protection to all […]
Figure 2: Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-19 (J. Schiettecatte).
Philological comment

L. 1: `lh[n]Nhf`n`bn Hmd`: prince of the tribe of Ḥāshid`um and member of the banū Hamdān (CIH 2, Ghul-Ḥūth 2, CIH 326, Ja 561 bis). He later ascended the Sabæan throne, toward the end of the second century CE (CIH 308, CIH 308 bis, CIH 312, Nami NNSQ 19, …).

`tr`z`n`w-d Žhr`b`ly`r`n`[Kn]`: restitution after l. 14, as in Ir 5§7. Variant in Gl 1193/3: b-Knn.

`r`n`Knn`: Jabal Kanin is located near the town of Na`ḍ (Ja 559/19, Ja 568/25–27, Ja 606/22–23, Ja 723/9, etc.).

L. 2: Rbs`m`Nm`mlk S`b`w-d-Ryd`: Rabbshams`um Nimrān king of Saba‘ and dhū-Raydān is mentioned in six other inscriptions: Ja 645, Ry 542, YM 18307, Gl 1193, RES 4138, RES 4713) 25.

b-s`tqhn: verb in the infinitive meaning “to achieve success, triumph” (see Ja 559/8 and Ja 644/19).

w-tbr w-dr`n`s`b`d-Ryd`: for the two verbs in the infinitive tbr w-dr`n`, see other reports of military expeditions from the reign of ʿAlḥān Nahfān (CIH 2; CIH 308; CIH 308 bis) and his son Sha`r`um Awtar (Ja 631). According to l. 3, the defeated tribes were probably those of dhū-Raydān. In other inscriptions of the second century CE (e.g. YM 18307 and

25 On this king, see Gajda, 2013.
Gl 1228), the tribes of dhū-Raydān (ʼs²b ḍ-Ryd⁵n) are similarly mentioned as the opponents of Sabaean expeditions.

L. 3: b-ḍr tns²' ṯṛ' ḍ-Ryd⁵n w-ʼs²' ḍ-hw: “during the war Thaʾrān dhū-Raydān and his tribes had caused”. Thaʾrān dhū-Raydān can be identified as the Himyarite king Thaʾrān Yaʿub Yuhanʾ im king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān, son of Dhamarʾalī Yuhabirr. Thus, in Jabal Riyām 2006-19, Rabbshams⁵m Nimrān (qayl) is contemporary with Dhamarʾalī Yuhabirr king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān; in Jabal Kanin 2017-1, Rabbshams⁵m Nimrān (king) is contemporary with the son, Thaʾrān Yaʿub Yuhanʾ im king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān.

L. 5: ṭrtl Ḍmr: also l. 13; Ḍmr is the defective spelling of Ḍmry, as in Ir 49/1, Ry 614/8 and Ja 631/29. The tribal confederation of Dhamarī comprised two tribes: Samharum and Qashamu⁵m (Fig. 1). Samharum to the north was part of Sabaʾ and headed by the banū Gurat. Qashamu⁵m, to the south, was part of Himyar and headed by the banū Dharāni, not to be mistaken with the town of Dhamār (Ḍmr – Ja 576 + 577/14–18, Ja 584/3, Kh-Sayyah 3/3), 80 km south of Sanaʾa, which belonged to the territory of the tribe of Muḥaqra⁵um.

l-yqhn ḍ-yrdwn: “may he order what will satisfy [him]”, the subject of the verbs ṣgh and ṭdw refers to the king. To be compared with the expression “ṭw yqhn mlkn ḍ-yrdyn” (Ry 507/9), where the troops are standing guard “until the king decided that he was satisfied”. L. 6: w-ykn ʼs²b ḍ zgḥ: “and they made contact with the tribes who had taken up their positions”, with the verb ṣkb, “make contact with, force back (enemy)” (see Ja 576 + 577/8)³¹, and the verb ḍẓv, “acquit oneself (of a task)”, interpreted here as “accomplish a mission, take up one’s position”.

b-ʾrd [Qs²]'m⁵m: “in the land of [Qasha]m⁵mm”, restitution of the name of a tribe belonging to the tribal confederation of Dhamarī (l. 5: Ḍmr) and whose territory was located immediately to the south of the Jabal Kanin. Also mentioned in Ja 576 + 577/4, 7; Ja 586/20; RES 4196/1; Ir 49/2.

byt Rym⁵m: the house Raym⁵m could have been one of the palaces of the banū Dharāniḥ, princes of the tribe Qashamu⁵m. Two other palaces belonging to this family are already known: byt Sn (RES 4708) in the second century CE, and byt ḥrm (Ir 49) in the third century CE.

L. 9: yr ʾynn: the Sabaic verb rʾ means “see”; the imperfect yr ʾyn (inf. rʾy) means “show to s.o. – identify” (Ja 576/7, Ja 570/5, Ja 643/15, CIH 456)³².

yḥbrw: conjugated verb, 3rd person plural in the factitive (ḥfʾl), meaning “make a sally, come into the open (to fight)”.

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²⁶ Both Sabaeans and Himyarites used to shorten the name and title of an enemy; e.g. in al-Hadāʾ 2017-1, Ḩwbʾl refers to Ḩwbʾl Ḥyḏ mlk Sʾb⁵; in Ja 576 + 577, Sʾmr ḍ-Ryd⁵n refers to Sʾmr Ṣḥḥmḏ mlk Sʾb w-ḍ-Ryd⁵n, etc.
³¹ Beeston, Ghul, Müller et al., 1982: 159.
³² Beeston, Ghul, Müller et al., 1982: 112–113.
The military campaign against Himyar in the land of Dhamarī

Inscription Jabal Kanin 2017-1 commemorates the success of a Sabaean military campaign headed by the king Rabbshams\\textsuperscript{um} Nimrān with the support of ‘Alhān Nahfān of the lineage of the banū Hamdān. Both belonged to the same tribal confederation, Samʿī, respectively the third of dhū-Ḥumlān and the third of Ḥāshid\\textsuperscript{um}. They confronted a Ḥimyarite coalition headed by Thaʿrān Yaʿub Yuhanʿim king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān, son of Dhamarʿalī Yuhabirr, which included the tribe of Qasham\\textsuperscript{um}, fraction of Dhamarī. The conflict took place in the territory of the tribe of Dhamarī, at the border of its two components, Samḥar\\textsuperscript{um} and Qasham\\textsuperscript{um}. After repelling a Ḥimyarite offensive in the region of Naʿād, the Sabaean coalition hunted the enemy down in the plain of Dhamār, up to the palace of Raym\\textsuperscript{um}, possibly in Yaklaʾ (actual an-Nakhat al-Ḥamrāʾ), the main location of the tribe of Qasham\\textsuperscript{um}. Soon afterwards, they withdrew to the town of Naʿād.

Three Sabaean inscriptions dated from the reign of Rabbshams\\textsuperscript{um} Nimrān seemingly refer to this same event. Inscription Gl 1193, also left in the temple of Ṭāthtar Ḥāzīz\\textsuperscript{um} and dhāt Zahrān Masters in Kanin, mentions a conflict with the Dhamarītes (\textit{ŋmrₙ}). Inscription RES 4138, in the temple of Almaqah Lord of Ḥirwan\\textsuperscript{um} in Maʿrib, mentions the safe return of the king in the city of Naʿād. Finally, YM 18307 mentions an expedition to the land of Ḥimyar, during “a war between the kings of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān” (\textit{b-dr kwn bynhṭ mlk Sbʾ ṭ])] in the mid-third century CE, the land of Dhamarī was once again the setting of a war between Sabaʾ and Ḥimyar (Ir 49, Ja 576 + 577/4, 7, Ja 586/20).

It is exceptional for a prince of Ḥāshid\\textsuperscript{um} to make a dedication reporting a military success outside the tribal sanctuary of Taʿlab Riyām on the Jabal Riyām, or in the Awam temple in Maʿrib. We may assume that the text was left in the temple of Ṭāthtar Ḥāzīz\\textsuperscript{um} and dhāt Zahrān Masters of the mountain Kanin as the Sabaean army was returning from the battlefield. Since ‘Alhān Nahfān ascended the Sabaean throne after Rabbshams\\textsuperscript{um} Nimrān (see below), it was likely an intentional way to reflect his growing influence on the Sabaean political stage.

Dating the reign of Rabbshams\\textsuperscript{um} Nimrān king of Sabaʾ and dhū-Raydān

Jabal Riyām 2006-19 and Jabal Kanin 2017-1 contain clues for dating the reign of Rabbshams\\textsuperscript{um} Nimrān in the second half of the second century CE.

1) Rabbshams\\textsuperscript{um} Nimrān was still a prince of the tribe of Ḥumlān in the reign of the Ḥimyarite Dhamarʿalī Yuhabirr (Jabal Riyām 2006-19), that is, at the earliest a few years before 137 CE, and at the latest shortly after 157 CE (Table 1).

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33 Beeston, Ghul, Müller et al., 1982: 14, 167.
2) Rabbshams’um Nimrān was king of Saba’ and dhū-Raydān when Tha’rān Ya’ub Yuhanʿim son of Dhamarʿalī Yuhabīr was ruling Ḥīmyar alone (Jabal Kanin 2017-1), in other words, after he reigned alongside his father. Tha’rān Ya’ub Yuhanʿim had a long reign, starting at the earliest shortly after 157 CE, together with his father (Ir 6, CIH 457, RES 4775 + 4776, RES 4708); he was still on the throne when Ilīʿazz Yaluʿ bin ‘Ammīdhakhar became king of Ḥḍramawt (Ja 923), shortly before 218 CE (YMN 10, RES 3958). Rabbshams’um Nimrān preceded ‘Alhān Nahfān on the Sabaean throne since the latter was still a qayl under the reign of the former (Jabal Kanin 2017-1). The first mention of ‘Alhān Nahfān with the title of qayl dates back to the reign of Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz (Ja 561 bis). In this inscription, he is mentioned as a newcomer among the princes of Ḥāshid’um, pushed into the background behind his father Yarīm Aymān and his uncle Barig Yuharīb. He was then not in a position to lead a major military operation such as that described in Jabal Kanin 2017-1. We can therefore assume that the reign of Rabbshams’um Nimrān happened after that of Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz.

To sum up, it is now certain that the reign of Rabbshams’um Nimrān was posterior to that of Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz (c.155/159–165/170? CE) and happened prior to that of ‘Alhān Nahfān (c.190–200 CE).

Between the reign of Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz and that of Yarīm Aymān, inscriptions provide an unbroken succession of kings. Firstly, two putative sons of Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz succeeded him: Anmar’um Yuhaʿim and Karibʾīl Watar Yuhanʿim. Later, Karibʾīl Watar Yuhanʿim brought Yarīm Aymān banū Hamdān, qayl of Ḥāshid’um, together with him to the throne. Although a reign just before/after Anmar’um Yuhaʿim cannot be precluded, it is highly likely that Rabbshams’um Nimrān ascended the throne immediately after the joint reign of Karibʾīl Watar Yuhanʿim and Yarīm Aymān, c.180 CE, and before ‘Alhān Nahfān. A body of evidence supports this hypothesis:

1) If Rabbshams’um Nimrān had reigned before Yarīm Aymān, ‘Alhān Nahfān would have mentioned his father, Yarīm Aymān, in Jabal Kanin 2017-1, in accordance with custom. ‘Alhān Nahfān does not mention the name of his father probably because he wrote the text after Yarīm’s reign. The only royal name he could display was that of the reigning monarch, Rabbshams’um Nimrān.

2) The Sabaean king Yarīm Aymān was originally a prince of the tribe of Ḥāshid’um, from the lineage of Hamdān. His successor Rabbshams’um Nimrān — according to our chronology — was originally a prince of the tribe of Humlān, from the lineage of Bataʿ. ‘Alhān Nahfān, who was the son of Yarīm Aymān from the lineage of Hamdān (CIH 312, CIH 326, Ja 561 bis), claimed at one point to belong to the two lineages of Bataʿ and Hamdān (CIH 2, Ghul-Hūth 2). If, as we think, he succeeded Rabbshams’um Nimrān on the Sabaean throne, his integration within the banū Bataʿ would make perfect sense: it was a way to make him the heir of both Yarīm Aymān and Rabbshams’um Nimrān and to prepare the succession. His integration within the dynasty of the banū Bataʿ could have been a reward for his involvement alongside Rabbshams’um, especially on the battlefield.
3) Finally, the successive reigns of Rabbshamsum Nimrān, ‘Alhān Nahfān alone and in association with his son Sha’rūm Awtar illustrate a continuous war opposing the Sabaeans kings to the Ḥimyarite king Tha’rān Ya’ub Yuhan’im:
- Rabbshamsum Nimrān vs Tha’rān Ya’ub Yuhan’im (explicitly in Jabal Kanin 2017-1; probably in Gl 1193, RES 4138, YM 18307);

Discussion
We propose the following Sabean royal sequence in the second half of the second century CE:
1. Wahab ’īl Yaḥūz king of Saba’ [banū Maʾāhir and dhū-Khawlān]
2. Anmarum Yuhā min king of Saba’ [banū dhū-Ghaymān]
3. Karīb ’īl Watar Yuhan’im king of Saba’ [banū dhū-Maʾdhīnum (?)]
4. Karīb ’īl Watar Yuhan’im + Yarīm Aymān kings of Saba’ [banū Hamdān]
5. Rabbshamsum Nimrān king of Saba’ and dhū-Raydān [banū Bata’]
6. ‘Alhān Nahfān king of Saba’ [banū Bata’ and Hamdān]
7. ‘Alhān Nahfān and his son Sha’rūm Awtar kings of Saba’ [banū Hamdān]
8. Sha’rūm Awtar king of Saba’ and dhū-Raydān [banū Hamdān]

This reconstruction clearly shows that the succession on the throne was primarily the result of a common agreement between the tribes from the highlands to choose (or elect?) one of their qayls to ascend the throne, with the agreement of the old Sabaeans aristocracy (s’b n). The association of a qayl as viceroy (Yarīm Aymān) or the choice of an heir by a king thanks to his integration within the royal lineage (‘Alhān Nahfān) was probably a king’s reward for alliances and for the great deeds performed by these qayls.

A real dynastic succession, from father to son, rather than the election of a primus inter pares, was only established by the end of the second century CE, with the banū Hamdān, from the reign of ‘Alhān Nahfān onwards. It lasted only two generations: ‘Alhān Nahfān, ‘Alhān Nahfān and his son Sha’rūm Awtar, Sha’rūm Awtar alone, then Sha’rūm Awtar with his brother Ḥayūth athtar Yada’. Power then shifted to Luḥay athat Yarkhum, whose origin is unknown, and to the new dynasty of Fāriʿum Yanhub, his sons Ilsharaḥ Yaḥdūb and Yaʾzil Bayyin, and his grandson Nasha’karib Yuḥmin Yuharḥib, the last Sabean king.

Our historical reconstruction of the second century CE leaves a few unresolved issues. Firstly, why did Rabbshamsum Nimrān adopt the long title of “king of Saba’ and dhū-Raydān” when all the other kings before and after him held the short title of “king of Saba’”? We can only speculate on this.

Secondly, at a certain point in their reigns, the Ḥimyarite kings Dhamarʾalī Yuḥabirr and his son Tha’rān Ya’ub Yuhan’im controlled the Sabean territory. This period is not precisely dated. Inscription RES 4775 + 4776 mentions hydraulic works in the oasis of Maʿrib taken in charge by these kings. Four more inscriptions show members of the highland Sabean aristocracy and of the old Sabean aristocracy pledging allegiance

34 The banū Bata’ (Jabal Riyām 2006-19); the banū Saʿran (Ir 6).
35 The banū Ḥazfarum (CIH 365); the banū dhū-Sahhr (CIH 457).

to the Ḥimyarite king Dhamaʿr ʿalī Yuhabirr alone (Jabal Riyām 2006-19; CIH 365), or together with his son Thaʿrān (Ir 6; CIH 457). It cannot be determined whether this corresponds to one or two different periods of Sabaean control by Ḥimyar. Inscription Ir 6 shows that Dhamar ʿalī Yuhabi ʿrr and his son Thaʿrān controlled Sabaʿ at a time when a conflict pitted the qayls and the old Sabaean aristocracy (ʿs¹bʾn) against a plausible qayl of the tribe of Bakīlum (fraction of dhū-Shibāmum), Luḥay athat of the banū dhū-Kabīr Aqyān. In the second century CE, the sharing of the Sabaean throne by the main Sabaean tribes of the northern highlands had clearly stirred up tension between them. A reversal of alliances including temporary allegiance to the Ḥimyarite kings did happen, going so far as to allow temporary control of part of the Sabaean territory by Ḥimyar. This/these episode(s) did not appear to last. Two periods were particularly favourable for such a reversal:

1) The end of the reign of Saʿdshams ʿum Asraʿ and his son Marthad ʿum Yuhaḥmid (c. 155 CE), assuming that the Sabaeans resolved to join Dhamar ʿalī Yuhabirr before they finally sided with Wahabʾīl Yaḥūz, qayl of Radmān. In both cases, the leadership is sought outside the Sabaean area.

2) The interregn between Wahabʾʾl Yaḥūz, Anmarʿ ʿum Yuhaʾmin, and Karibʾʾl Watar Yuhanʿim, a period during which Maʾrib was often the setting of conflicts (al-Jawf 04.15, Ja 564).

**Conclusion**

With numerous conflicts involving most of the South Arabian kingdoms and tribal confederations, many reversals of alliances, and only a limited number of inscriptions to write its history, the second century CE is both exciting and frustrating. In this paper, three Sabaic inscriptions — Jabal Riyām 2006-19, Jabal Kanin 2017-1 and al-Ḥadāʾ 2017-1 — shed new light on specific moments of this century. The new dated inscription al-Ḥadāʾ 2017-1 allows us to date the beginning of the reign of Wahabʾʾl Yaḥūz between 155 and 159 CE. A reassessment of this king convinced us of his Radmānite origin. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-19 definitively proves the Bataʿide origin of Rabbshams ʿum Nimrān. And inscription Jabal Kanin 2017-1 provides enough clues to date the reign of Rabbshams ʿum Nimrān sometime between c. 165 CE and c. 190 CE, very likely after the joint reign of Karibʾʾl Watar Yuhanʿim and Yarīm Aymān, and before that of ʿAlhān Nahfān. In this way, it is clear that the adhesion of the Hamdānide ʿAlhān Nahfān to the lineage of Bataʾ was a political move by Rabbshams ʿum Nimrān to make ʿAlhān Nahfān his natural heir and prepare his succession. It is only at this time that the second-century CE Sabaean royal succession shifted from the recognition of a primus inter pares chosen among the qayls to a real dynastic one, from father to son.

**Bibliography**

**Sources**


Details regarding most of the inscriptions can be found in the Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions of the Digital Archive for the Study of pre-Islamic Arabian Inscriptions (DASI) developed by the University of Pisa (http://dasi.cnr.it/):

al-Jawf 04.15  Ir 3  Ja 2861
Av. Būsān 4  Ir 5  Ja 2862
Av. Naʿd 9  Ir 6  MAFRAY-al-Ḥijla 1
BaBa al-Ḥadd 2  Ir 9  MAFRAY-al-Miʿsāl 1 =
BynM 3  Ir 19  Ja 2867
CIAS 47.82/o 2  Ir 49 [= Ir 40 in Robin, MAFRAY-al-Miʿsāl 2
CIAS 95.11/o 2  1987]  MAFRAY-Sāriʿ 6
CIH 2  Ja 413  Nami NNSQ 19
CIH 46  Ja 559  RES 3958
CIH 140  Ja 561 bis  RES 4138
CIH 164  Ja 564  RES 4150
CIH 203+182+183  Ja 567  RES 4196
CIH 220  Ja 568  RES 4412
CIH 308  Ja 570  RES 4708
CIH 308bis  Ja 576 + 577  RES 4713
CIH 312  Ja 584  RES 4775 + 4776
CIH 315  Ja 586  Ry 507
CIH 326  Ja 606  Ry 542
CIH 365  Ja 629  Ry 614
CIH 448  Ja 631  YMN 3
CIH 456  Ja 643  YMN 4
CIH 457  Ja 644  YMN 7
Fa 94 + 95  Ja 645  YMN 10
Gar Ḍulaʿ 1  Ja 723  YM 18307
Ghul-Ḥūth 2  Ja 753  Zubayrī-al-ʿAwd 1
Gl 1364  Ja 923

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