



Events in Arabia in the 6th Century A. D.

Sidney Smith

Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. 16, No. 3. (1954), pp. 425-468.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0041-977X%281954%2916%3A3%3C425%3AEIAIT6%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G>

Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London is currently published by School of Oriental and African Studies.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/soas.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

EVENTS IN ARABIA IN THE 6TH CENTURY A.D.

By SIDNEY SMITH

The following abbreviations are used for the texts and reference books cited :—

- BH.* = *The Book of the Himyarites*, edited by Axel Moberg.
CIH. = *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, Pars Quarta.
CMH. = *The Cambridge Mediæval History*, vol. i.
LRE. = J. B. Bury, *History of the Later Roman Empire*. 2 vols.
RES. = *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique*, tomes V–VII redigés par G. Ryckmans.
Arabische Frage = M. Hartmann, *Der islamische Orient*, vol. ii.
Budge, *Ethiopia.* = Sir E. A. W. Budge, *A History of Ethiopia, Nubia and Abyssinia*.
Chrestomathia = C. Conti Rossini, *Chrestomathia arabica meridionalis epigraphica*.
Cosmas = *The Christian Topography of Cosmas*, ed. by E. O. Winstedt.
Dittenberger = W. Dittenberger, *Orientalis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*.
Fakhry = Ahmed Fakhry, *An Archaeological Journey to Yemen*. 3 vols. II : Epigraphical Texts, by G. Ryckmans.
Glaser = *Zwei Inschriften über den Dambruch von Marib*. Mitteilungen der vorderasiatischen-ägyptischen Gesellschaft, vi, 370–488.
Institution = J. Ryckmans, *L'Institution monarchique en Arabie méridionale avant l'Islam*.
Malalas = *Johannis Malalae Chronographia* ex recensione L. Dindorfii.
Mas'ūdi = *Maṣūdi, Les prairies d'or* : texte et traduction par Barbier de Meynard et Pavet de Courteille.
Mordtmann—Mittwoch = *Rathjens—von Wissmannsche Südarabien-Reise I. Sabäische Inschriften* : bearbeitet von J. H. Mordtmann und Eugen Mittwoch.
Muir—Weir = *The Life of Mohammad*, by Sir William Muir : a new and revised edition by T. H. Weir.
Nöldeke = Th. Nöldeke, *Geschichte der Perser und Araber zur Zeit der Sasaniden*, aus der arabischen Chronik des Tabari übersetzt.
Periplus = Hjalmar Frisk, *Le Périphe de la Mer Érythrée*.
Procopius = *Opera*, ed. J. Haury. 3 vols.
Theophanes = *Theophanis Chronologia* ex recensione Joannis Classeni.
von Wissmann—Höfner = H. von Wissmann und Dr. Maria Höfner, *Beiträge zur historischen Geographie des vorislamischen Südarabien*.

I. ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

TWO accounts of trade conditions in the 6th century show that there had been a great change since the 'Periplus Maris Erythraei' was written, about A.D. 50. The writer of that manual for merchant skippers was precise as to the location of the incense-bearing lands.

After Kanē, as the land continues on, there opens out another, very broad, gulf, stretching a considerable distance in depth. It is called Sakhalitēs, and the 'libanos-bearing land'. It is mountainous and bad for landing. The air is thick, dust-laden with the *libanos* blown down from the trees. These trees that bear *libanos* are of no great diameter, and are not tall. They produce the *libanos* in a solid form on the bark, just as some of our trees in Egypt weep gum. The *libanos* is handled by the royal slaves and by those sent for punishment. These places are dreadfully infectious and plague-ridden, even for those just sailing along the coast, but for those working there death is in the air, and they are downright destructive because of the insufficiency of food.¹

While Ḥaḍramawt remained an independent kingdom, as it was in A.D. 50, it is reasonable to suppose that the kings maintained this industry by slave

¹ *Periplus*, 29, p. 9.

labour. The first king 'of Saba' and Dhu Raydan and Ḥaḍramawt and Yamanat' was Šammar Yuhar'īš, whose date cannot be considered fixed.¹ By the 6th century the 'libanos-bearing land' was the African coast of the Gulf of Aden. In one of his calculations of distance by stages, backed by a reference to Scripture, Cosmas Indicopleustes stated the facts incidentally.

From Aksum to the ends of Ethiopia Barbary, called the 'libanos-bearing land', which lies before, but is not beside, the Ocean, including the extensive land Sasū, the last territory of the Ethiopians, is 40 halts, more or less.² . . . The libanos-bearing land is at the ends of Ethiopia, inland, the Ocean lying on the further side. From there the inhabitants of Barbary, since they are nearest, go up inland and by way of business transport from there most of the incenses, *libanos*, cassia, calamus, and many other sorts. They then transport it further by sea to Adulis, to Homēritēs, to inner India, and to Persia.³

He adds that 'Homēritēs is not two days' journey from Barbary, the sea intervening: the rest of Barbary is Ocean on the far side, called Zingion'. The southern Arabian coast trade was with Taprobanē, Ceylon, that island 'receiving the products of Sind, where there is musk, *castoris*, and *androstachys*, and bartering with Persia and the Homēritēs and Adulis, and in turn receiving from each locality named, and bartering with the Indians of the interior, exporting its own produce to each market at the same time'.⁴ The main staple brought from Taprobanē was *metaxion*, silk, most of it bought up by Persian merchants.⁵

In the Byzantine Empire silk was bought by the public fisc for the state factories, *gynoikia*, and only sold to private traders if there was a surplus. The great sums which had to be paid to Persia were largely spent on the army. Justinian I tried to reduce these sums by fixing the price at 15 gold pieces a pound. The Persians retaliated by limiting sales. The Emperor then further reduced the market price for silk stuffs to 8 gold pieces. Private traders were ruined; manufacture became a strictly controlled state monopoly. At some date not long after 552 the eggs of *bombyx mori* were brought to Byzantium.⁶ By the 7th century sericulture was established in Asia Minor. The collapse of the Empire after Justinian meant new borders, new taxes. Khusrau I in the treaty of 562 tried to stop smuggling by restricting trading to fewer places on the border. Later Persia lost control of many routes. But before 570 the silk trade was important.

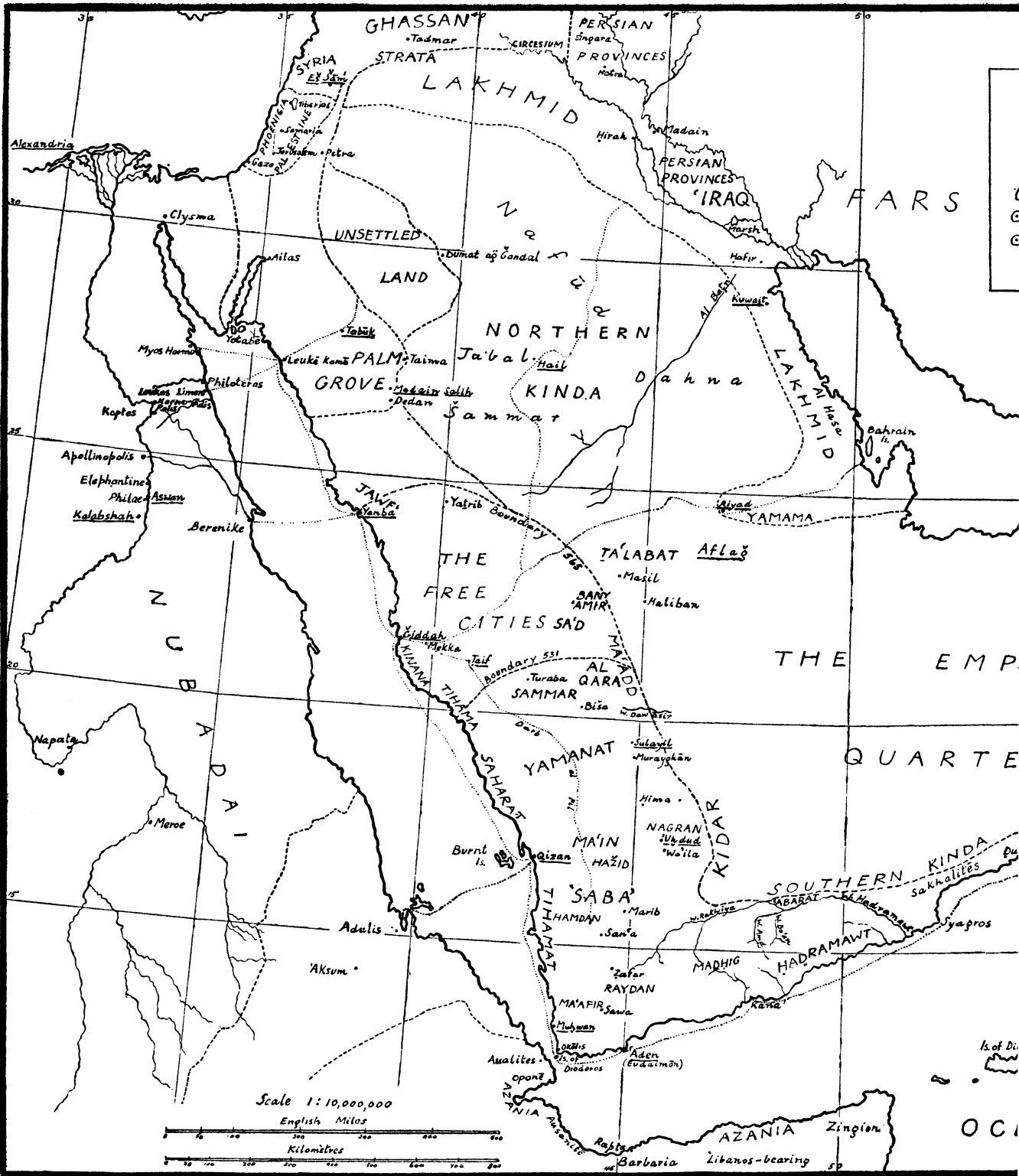
¹ Two slightly different proposals, that in *Institution*, 311, the beginning of the 4th century, and that of Dr. A. F. L. Beeston in *BSOAS.*, xvi, 41, about A.D. 280-300, both depend on the mention of Naḡran in the 'Imru 'l-Qais inscription from Namara as 'town of Šammar'. It is not clear that Šammar Yuhar'īš is meant. M. J. Ryckmans has rightly preferred to consider Šammar in the inscription Ry 508/4 a known geographical name, see *Muséon* lxvi, 334. The 'Imru 'l-Qais inscription may indicate the relation of Naḡran to an important region north of it in the years before 328.

² A typical example of the use of this expression by Cosmas, see p. 454.

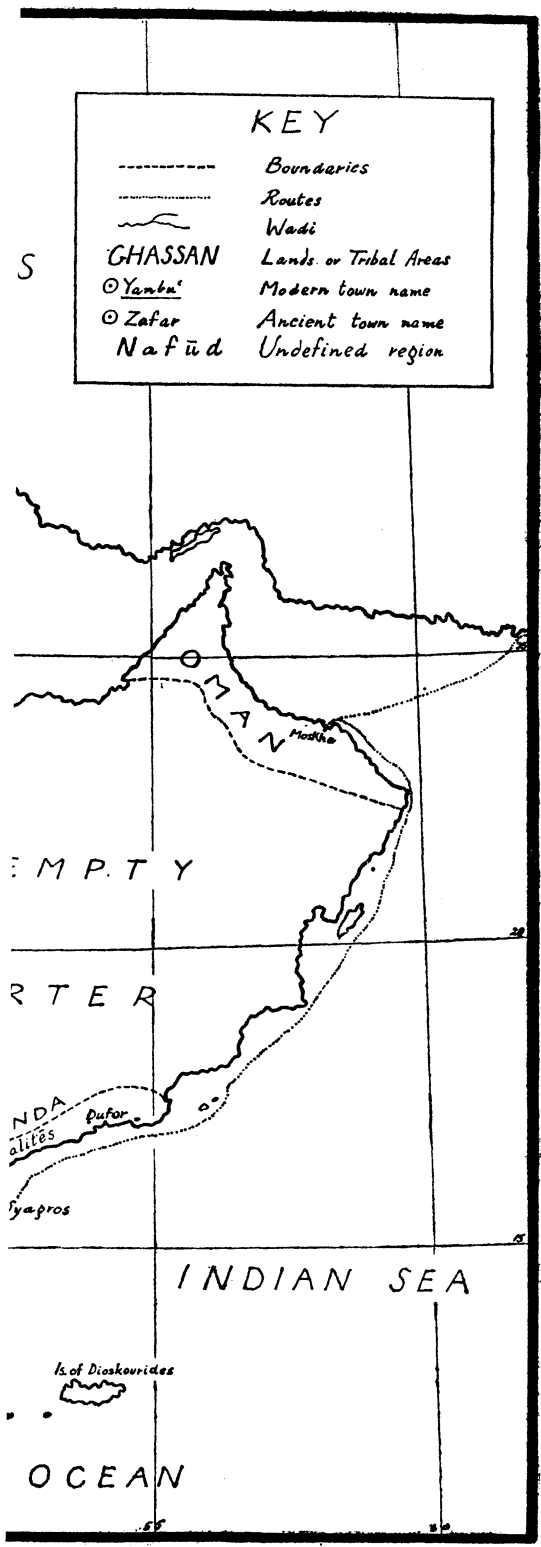
³ Cosmas, II, 27 C-D: pp. 69-70. ⁴ *ibid.*, XI, 447 D-448 A: p. 322.

⁵ *ibid.*, II, 27 A: p. 89.

⁶ Procopius, *Anekdotai*, 25, 13: see *LRE*, ii, 330-2.



ARABIA IN THE SIXTH CENTURY.



M. W. Smith : 1954.

Procopius, who acted as secretary of Belisarius till 540, became a critic of Justinian. In his 'History of the Wars' there are innuendoes; in the *Anekdotai*, or 'Secret History', published after the Emperor's death, the attack is bitter, often scandalous. To Christianity he adopted an indifferent pose, claiming Attic culture. His account of the policy of Justinian in negotiations with Ethiopia and Ḥimyar is partial, and superficial, but correct as to intention.

At that time, when Hellēstheaios¹ was reigning over the Ethiopians and Esimphaios² over the Homēritai, the Emperor Justinian sent an ambassador, Julianus, asking³ that both should combine with the Romans, by reason of their common faith, in making war on the Persians, the object being that the Ethiopians, by buying silk, *metaxa*, from the Indians and re-selling it to the Romans, should possess themselves of great wealth, while profiting the Romans only in that they would no longer be forced to part with their own wealth to the enemy. (This *metaxa* is the stuff commonly used for making dresses, which the Hellenes of old called Medic, but is now termed *sērikē*, Chinese.) Further it was proposed that the Homēritai should set up the fugitive Kaïsos as phylarch over the Maddēnoi, and should invade Persian territory with a large army of the Homēritai themselves and of the Maddēnoi Saracens. (This Kaïsos belonged by birth to a family of phylarchs, and was eminently successful in war; but after killing some relative of Esimphaios, he fled to a land completely destitute of men.) Each king accepted the request³ and undertook to carry it out, and then dismissed the ambassador; but neither of them carried out the promises. For it was impossible for the Ethiopians to buy the *metaxa* direct from the Indians, since the Persian merchants commonly purchased all the cargoes, being always at the very ports where the Indians' ships first put in, seeing that they dwell in the adjoining land. And the Homēritai too considered it a hard bargain, if they were to get, in exchange for marching against men much better at fighting than themselves, a desert, and at that one extending over a distance of many days' journey. Even Abramos, later, when he was most securely established as ruler, though he frequently promised the Emperor Justinian to invade Persian territory, only started out on that expedition on one occasion, and retired immediately. Such was the course of events concerning the Ethiopians and Homēritai for the Romans.⁴

The tone of the passage is unmistakable. Justinian's policy was a failure, doomed from the start, both by practical conditions and the unreliability of barbarians. 'Medic' is dragged in to suggest the decline from classical standards, the days of *Persicos odi puer apparatus* and earlier. The double appeal of Justinian to religion and greed is hinted. There may be a sly reference, in the words 'common faith', to the opposition between Monophysite and Orthodox parties at the court, for Procopius elsewhere told of the struggle.

¹ *θ* for *δ*, as in *Ἀνάσαρθον* for Anazarbus, Malalas, p. 444, corrected by Theophanes, i, p. 263. Professor Guillaume has proved the alternation of *f* and *t* in some early roots, *BSOAS.*, xvi, 1-12.

² Haury did not admit the variant Esimphaios; it seems a secondary error. The form, which occurs only in Procopius, shows how such names were treated.

³ *ἀξιῶν* might be translated 'demanding', but Justinian was not in a position to demand, and *αἰτήσων* subsequently shows the correct nuance.

⁴ 'Wars', I, xx, 9-13.

Justinian's policy implies that Ethiopia and the Homēritai were already purveyors of luxury goods, partly dependent on consumption in the Empire. Some effects in the Red Sea lands are to be found in a passage which is an example of the real knowledge Procopius had of current affairs and of his fundamental ignorance of matters long known to Roman merchants.

The boundaries of Palestine stretch eastward to the sea called Red. This sea begins from the Indian parts and ends at that point of the Roman Empire. And a city lies on its shore called Ailas, where, I am told, the sea ends, becoming a very narrow strait. As you sail into the sea from there the Egyptian mountains on the right turn south; on the other side a country deserted by men stretches northward for a great distance. As you sail on, the land on either side is visible as far as the island Yotabē, not less than a thousand stades distant from Ailas; Hebrews have long dwelt there in independence, but under the rule of this Justinian they have become Roman subjects. From there on comes a great open sea, and those sailing on here no longer see the land on the right; they put into anchorage on the left shore when night falls, for it is impossible to navigate in this sea in the dark, since it is everywhere full of shoals. But there are harbours there, and great numbers of them, not made by the hands of man, but by the natural contours of the lands, and for this reason it is not difficult for sailors to harbour at any point. This coast immediately beyond the boundaries of Palestine is held by Saracens who have been settled in the Palm Grove since long ago. The Palm Grove is in the interior, and stretches across a deal of country, where absolutely nothing is produced except palms. Abochorabos presented this Palm Grove to the Emperor Justinian; he was the ruler of the Saracens there and the Emperor appointed him phylarch of the Saracens in Palestine. He continually guarded the land from plundering, for Abochorabos always seemed a man to be feared, and exceptionally energetic, both to the barbarians over whom he ruled and to the enemy no less so. Formally, therefore, the Emperor holds the Palm Grove, but it is impossible for him to control it in the slightest, for a land completely destitute of human beings, and extremely parched, lies between, extending for a distance of ten days' journey. Moreover the Palm Grove is not worth consideration at all. The gift Abochorabos presented was purely nominal, and the Emperor accepted it with full knowledge. The position about the Palm Grove was, then, something like that. Other Saracens, adjoining these, held the coast-land; they are called Maddēnoi, subjects of the Homēritai. These Homēritai inhabit the land further on, by the sea-shore. Beyond them there are many other stocks, *ethnē*, settled, they say, as far as the cannibal Saracens. After them are the races, *genē*, of the Indians, but of these let each man talk as he may wish.¹

Procopius was writing as he wished, more inaccurately than some who wrote about the Indians. The gulf of 'Aqaba is not east of Palestine. The Palm Grove, Phoinikōn, must be the Tabūk-Taima-Madain Salih region; Saracens there may have been in the kingdom which held the coast, but they were not the same people as those of the coast. The statement that the Maddēnoi held the coast from the latitude of Madain Salih to Ḥimyar is contrary to all that

¹ 'Wars', I, xix, 2-16.

is known, and quite untrustworthy. Procopius was obviously ignorant of events in which Yotabē played a part shortly before his time. The nonsense about cannibal Saracens is some vague recollection of the Ichthyophagoi mentioned in histories of Alexander the Great's campaign along the Persian coast.

Though this account of the Red Sea compares badly with that of the *Periplus*, the statement that ships hugged the Arabian shore is correct, for it is confirmed indirectly by the account of the route from Alexandria to Aksum in Cosmas. In the *Periplus*, the Arab shore from Leukē Kōmē to the Burnt Island is said to be in the hands of Ichthyophagoi and of the Kanraītai, dangerous pirates; ships avoided putting in there.¹ The complete change of conditions must be due to the introduction of settled rule; the consequent trade developments were presumably the reason for the invasion of an unknown king of Aksum in the 2nd or 3rd century. Political borders and the taxes at different ports had their effect on the choice of disembarkation points by traders. Economic conditions changed too; minted issues, at one time used only for marginal values in barter, came to be the regular means of exchange. By A.D. 500 Arabia was prosperous, by comparison with earlier and later periods; the economy presented some of the features found in peripheral regions supplying a populous centre. Such prosperity is always unstable.

II. CHRONOLOGY

Of the three chief Greek sources, Procopius is the most reliable as to the order of the events he mentions. John Malalas of Antioch is not reliable as to the order of events, but mentions incidents of interest to his readers in Syria. The indication of date by regnal year is exceptional in either. Theophanes only undertook his work at the request of his dying friend George the Synkellos; he arranged his material under dates, but in a haphazard way, partly no doubt as a result of errors in converting dates in one system into another. In his scheme, the 1st year of Diocletian was 5777 *anno mundi*, 277 *anno Christi*, the 15th year of Varachius king of Persia; in our reckoning, this was A.D. 285, and the 10th year of Bahram II. Many dates in the 6th century depend on the sequence of events.

The regnal years of the Persian kings were established by Nöldeke, from the figures given by Jacob of Edessa, more often correct than Agathias.² These are years according to the Seleucid calendar, but without intercalation after A.D. 226. The Persian religious festivals were shifted to a month later in the calendar every 120 years, but this did not affect regnal years, which in A.D. 500 began with our 19th July, in 600 with the 15th June. The first regnal year was that of the accession, the second began with the next New Year day.

Hišam b. Muḥammad al Kalbi gave the reigns of the kings of Ḥirah by Persian regnal years; his text is preserved by Ṭabari. The source must be a

¹ *Periplus*, 20. The Kanraītai are otherwise unknown.

² Nöldeke, 400-34.

Sassanian register of years, used with remarkable fidelity. Byzantine sources confirm Hišam. Mundir III was killed in battle near Qinnesrin, fighting Ḥarīṭ b. Gabala the Ghassanid, in the 27th year of Justinian I,¹ 554. His son 'Amr was still alive in Indiction XII.² The Indictions were cycles of 15 years, named so from a system of taxation introduced by Diocletian, by kind; they began either with A.D. 297 or A.D. 312, so that the indiction meant in this case began in January 553, the 12th year in January 564. In October of that year Arethas the phylarch, that is Ḥarīṭ, reported at Byzantium an attack of Abaros, that is 'Amr, on his settlements. Hišam assigned a reign of 16 years to 'Amr. These dates are as well assured as any in Byzantine history.

The Syriac texts used the Seleucid era and the Syrian calendar of Antioch, reformed to agree with the Julian year in the time of Augustus. Dates in them

TABLE A.—THE ḤIRAH DYNASTY

Yrs. ³	Sassanid contemporary	Sel.	A.D.	Yrs. ⁴	Sel.	A.D.	Lakhmid
4	Ardašir II	691-694	379-382	3	692-716	380-404	'Imru ʿl Qais.
5	Šapūr III	695-699	383-387	5			
11	Bahram IV	700-710	388-398	11			
21	Yazdagird I	711-731	399-419	6			
				15	717-745	405-433 ⁵	Nu'man I, b. 'Imru ʿl Qais
19	Bahram V	732-750	420-438	14			
				8½	742 ³ -785	430-473	Mundir I, b. Nu'man
18	Yazdagird II	751-768	439-456	18			
27	Peroz	769-795	457-483	17			
				10	786-805	474-493	'Aswad b. Mundir
4	Balaš	796-799	484-487	4			
43	Kavad	800-842	488-530	6			
				7	806-812	494-500	Mundir II, b. Mundir
				4 ⁶	812-815	500-503	Nu'man II, b. 'Aswad
				3 ⁶	815-817	503-505	'Abu Ya'fur b. 'Alqama
				25 ⁶	817-865	505-553	Mundir III, b. Nu'man
47	Khusrau I	843-889	531-577	23			
				16	866-881	554-569	'Amr b. Mundir
				2⅔	888 ⁷ -892	577-580	Qabūs b. Mundir
12	Hormizd IV	890-901	578-589	3⅓			
				4	892-895	580-583	Suhrab Mundir IV, b. Mundir
				7⅔	894 ⁵ -916	592-604	Nu'man III, b. Mundir
37	Khusrau II	902-938	590-626	14½			
				22	917-938	604-626 -631	Persian governors Mundir b. Nu'man k. at Bahrain
5	Rival claimants	939-942	627-631				

¹ Nöldeke, 170, note 1, cites the references.² Theophanes, i, p. 371.³ Figures from Jacob of Edessa; Agathias generally wrong if varying.⁴ Synchronisms: Nöldeke, Ṭabari, 78-9: 85: 132-3: 169-72: 345-8.⁵ The figures presuppose coregencies.⁶ Broken years counted with each reign.⁷ 7 years' interval not accounted for; possibly Suhrab is in wrong order.

can be converted with certainty into our reckoning. The only question involved is the reliability of the writer.

Late Sabaeen inscriptions are dated by an era which was introduced into Ḥimyar not later than the year 493.¹ The year the *nagaṣi* invaded and defeated Dhu Nuwās is known from Syriac texts, 525. An inscription at Ḥuṣn al Ghurāb, dated 640, has been interpreted as referring to the death of Dhu Nuwās in battle with the Abyssinians, so that era year 1 was approximately 115 B.C.² A new view has been proposed by Dr. A. F. L. Beeston,³ who thinks that the inscription refers to the attack of 'Abraha on Ṣumu-yafa', Esimphaios, and that era year 640 is approximately A.D. 530. The introduction of an era dating in southern Arabia may have been connected with the use of the month names found in the late inscriptions, which differ from those in the earlier periods. There was intercalation, and the system must have been fairly accurate, to judge from the correspondence of the era years with the Julian. There may have been two alternative intercalary months, and the first month was probably, in theory, that of the spring or autumn equinox. Though the month names are connected with the seasonal year, it is not necessarily correct to infer that they did in fact correspond; in correctly intercalated calendars such month names are sometimes not the exact season described, as they were in use prior to the introduction of intercalation.

III. THE CAREER OF 'ABRAHA

The accounts of this man in sources of disparate origin and character provide a fair test of the reliability of the evidence. Procopius began his with the return of Hellēstheaios to Ethiopia after appointing Esimphaios, a native Christian prince, king.

Of the Ethiopian army, many slaves and all who had a disposition to lawless behaviour were unwilling to follow the king at all. Left behind, they stayed there, out of a desire to acquire the land of the Homēritai, for it is extremely rich. Not long after this mob, with some others, revolted against Esimphaios and put him in prison⁴ in one of the fortresses in that land, appointing another king for the Homēritai, by name Abramōs. This Abramōs was indeed a Christian, but the slave of a Roman citizen in an Ethiopian city, Adulis, staying there for his commercial undertakings by sea. On hearing of these events Hellēstheaios, seriously desiring to requite Abramōs and the rebels for their treatment of Esimphaios, sent an army of 3,000 men against them, and one of his relatives as ruler. This army, men no longer willing to perform their task and return home, but disposed to stay there in a rich land, opened negotiations with Abramōs without the knowledge of the ruler, and came to terms with the opponents. When they

¹ *RES* 3383, unpublished.

² This was proposed almost as soon as the inscription was known, and the date is given in all the standard reference books, e.g. by J. H. Mordtmann, art. *Ḥimyar*, in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

³ *BSOAS*, xvi, 37-40.

⁴ *καθειρῆσαν*: Procopius wrote Attic Greek modelled on Thucydides and Polybius, so the natural meaning is not doubtful. There is no reference to a siege.

were in action, they killed the ruler, joined the enemies' army, and stayed there. Very angry, Hellēstheaios sent another army too against them, which actually fought an action with the followers of Abramos, but after suffering a severe defeat in the battle returned home immediately. Thereafter the Ethiopian king, out of fear, sent no other expedition against Abramos. When Hellēstheaios was dead, Abramos agreed to pay tribute to the successor to the kingship over the Ethiopians after him. In this way he secured legitimate rule.¹ But this happened later.²

There is African evidence as to the date of the death of the *nagaši* Hellēstheaios, 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa. Silko, king of the Noubadai, was converted to Christianity, and two missions, one Monophysite, from Theodora, one Orthodox, from Justinian, were sent to him not long after 540. An inscription of Silko on a temple wall at Kalabshah, in debased Greek, dates from his pagan years; his title was 'βασιλικος of the Noubadai and all the Ethiopians'.³ Even if this was a boast, it shows that the power of Aksum had declined; the death of 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa must be earlier than 540 by about 5 years. If Procopius is trustworthy the recognition of 'Abraha must be earlier than 540, but later than 535.

The earliest Syriac sources do not mention 'Abraha; the 'Book of the Himyarites' states that the *nagaši* Kaleb, ('Ella 'Aṣbeḥa), conducted the expedition himself, stayed 7 months, appointed a native Christian king, and left Kushite administrators, 'amo *yidi'o*, 'to guard the king against enemies'. The two primary Arabic accounts are in agreement in not mentioning a native king. According to Hiṣam, the *nagaši* sent two generals against Dhu Nuwās; after the victory one of them, 'Abraha, stayed at Ṣan'a, refused tribute and rid himself of the other, 'Ariaṭ, in a duel by a trick. The only important difference in the account of Ibn Ishāq is that 'Abraha was in the army under 'Ariaṭ. The duel occurred after 'Ariaṭ had been in command for either two or 'some' years. The sources are reconcilable; if there were three armies, the divergencies are explicable.

A Sabaeen inscription at Constantinople, badly broken at both ends, but complete as to the number of lines, dates from the reign of Ṣumu-yafa' 'Aṣwa'.⁴ It began with an invocation of the Trinity, followed by the king's name and titlature. In the next line are the names Martad-'ilan 'Aḥṣan and Ṣumu-yafa' 'Aṣwa', sons of Ṣaraḥ-b-'il, that is Ṣaraḥ-b-'il Yakmul, the king's brother.⁵ The third line recorded the founding of some building, probably in obedience to 'their lords the *nagaṣat* (plural) of Aksum'. The remainder of the inscription

¹ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἐκρατύνατο: the translation in the Loeb edition, 'he strengthened his rule', does not adequately render the nuance, see Thucydides iii, 82, 12.

² 'Wars', I, xx, 2-8.

³ The sources are John of Asia, 'Ecclesiastical History', iii, iv, 6-7, Dittenberger I, no. 201, and Procopius, 'Wars', I, xix, 37, the account of the destruction of the temples at Philae by command of Justinian.

⁴ Published partially in *RES* 3904, fully in *Muséon*, lix, 165-72, by Professor G. Ryckmans. The restoration of the royal titlature after the names of the sons by M. J. Ryckmans in *Insitution*, 242, quoted in *Muséon*, lxxvi, 338, and *BSOAS.*, xvi, 38, is not indicated in the preserved text or in any source. Restoration is not evidence.

⁵ See p. 458.

must have taken the common form of a series of 'when' clauses, recounting previous events. There is a reference to 'their armies, the royal one and that of the *qayl*, as to which Dhu . . . gave orders, *tqh*', and then probably to an expedition undertaken for 'that king with a mounted force, *hylm*, and with their army with the king'. A broken clause in which there is a mason's error seems to mention the assumption of kingship by 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa,¹ followed by the statement that he appointed 'kings for Ḥimyar and deputies, '*qbtm*, for the *nagašat* of Aksum', so that the Himyarites 'might serve the Aksumite kings'. The wording distinguishes these Aksumite kings from the *nagašat*.² The next clause dealt with the time when they, presumably Šumu-yafa' and his supporters, followed, *kstḥw*, someone, presumably 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa, when he attacked an enemy and 'overcame them at the surge of the sea'.³ After the prayer, 'Now may (The God) render Ḥimyar prosperous', there is a string of names, of interest for re-constituting the genealogy of the Yaz'an family, and a final invocation of the Trinity.

If Šumu-yafa' was the native, Christian king Esimphaios, the deputies for the *nagašat* correspond to 'Ariaṣ and 'Abraha in Arab sources. If, as the inscription indicates, these deputies were called 'Aksumite kings', Procopius called a sub-king 'ruler', archōn. The account in Procopius postpones till after the revolt of Abramos the mention of Abyssinian rulers, who existed, according to the 'Book of the Himyarites', from the time of the departure of the *nagaši*. But the 'Book' did not carry the narrative on to the time when the deputies were called kings, and applies a description implying subordination. The Arab writers do not mention the native king; their sources, on this point, were of northern origin, the territory in contact with the parts ruled directly by the deputies. The plurality of kings in the nominally united kingdom was no novelty; previous rulers associated one or more sons with themselves as co-regents. The inscription uses the plural *nagašat* where other sources mention only one *nagaši*. The Ethiopic chronicles, and some king-lists, omit the name of Bēta 'Ezre'el, though a coinage of his is known; it has always been a possible explanation of an apparent lack of information in the chronicles about a known period that Bēta 'Ezre'el was co-regent with 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa.

The divergencies between the sources prove no more than that none gives a full, correct account, but all are partially true, as might be expected in contemporary accounts. The consistent undervaluation of the Arab sources is partly due to their inclusion of stories, but also partly, I think, to the Arab historians' standpoint. Apart from Ibn Khaldūn, they had no general theories, and admitted only contingent causes. After an event, there were, for them, only

¹ (*k*)*m šmlkn ṽḥḥ mlk ḥbšt*: *mlk* is *mulk*, *šmlkn*, which Professor Ryckmans emends to the plural *šmlkn*, is clear in a well-cut inscription. As the mason omitted the *ṣad* in the name, he more probably omitted the infix *t* in *štmlkn* than mistook *alif* for *sin*.

² The assumption that they are identical has obscured the relation of the inscription to the Arab sources; the deputies for the *nagašat* are known to those sources, not the grant of kingship to them by the *nagaši*. The only co-regents with Šumu-yafa' were Abyssinians.

³ *ihlmw wḥrn*: Arabic علف 'to flow', root *ty*'.

statements, a final decision as to exact truth was beyond human power. For modern Europeans, always willing to make positive decisions and state causes, however variously, the citation of different accounts through a catena has no appeal. But the jig-saw puzzle of the material about the 6th century requires the method of the law-courts. The reliability of each source on each detail must be tested. For this purpose the method of a Ṭabari has advantages over that of Ibn Khaldūn—or Procopius.

The duration of Abyssinian rule from the seizure of power by 'Abraha to the death of his son by the wife of Abu Murra Faiyaḍ Dhu Yazan, Masrūq, is given by the two sources in Ṭabari as 72 years, clearly an over-estimate. As often, another account fits. The *vahriz* went to the Ḥaḍramawt twice, once when he installed Ma'adi-karib b. Saif (Abu Murra) Dhu Yazan, once when he went to avenge him. The return of the *vahriz* was approved by Khusrau I, not later than 578. Ma'adi-karib ruled for 4 years before he was assassinated by Abyssinians, 575–8. The battle of the *vahriz* and Ma'adi-karib is correctly dated in the 45th year of Anuṣirwan. Masrūq ruled 3 years, his half-brother and predecessor Yaksum, 2; the combined reigns fix the date of the death of 'Abraha in 569/70.¹ By then he controlled Ṭaif and Mecca; only the tribe Khaṭ'am, south-east of Ṭaif, attempted to resist him.

The expression of doubt about this date continually recurs. The Year of the Elephant is regarded as part of an extensive fiction. On this basis the battle of Mons could be treated as unhistorical because of the angels. There is contrary evidence, but it is instructive. Hiṣam stated that the Prophet was born in the reign of 'Amr b. Muḍir (III) of Ḥirah, after he had ruled 8 years 8 months, that is in 561/2.² The date must be wrong, possibly owing to corruption, the association of the birth with the reign of 'Amr is not likely to be fiction, for there is no motive. 'Amr died in 569.³

Some limits will have to be imposed on modern criticism and reconstruction. Conti Rossini reduced the story of 'Abraha's advance against the Ka'ba, and the elephant, to some recollection of an Ethiopian king Aphilas of the pagan period before 'Ēzānā.⁴ There is no evidence to prove that the Meccans had any recollection of such a time, or that Aphilas ruled so far north as the Meccan border. As Nöldeke saw, there are various Arab traditions, not a single 'Mohammedan' account. A tribe like Huḍail can never have had any contact with Aphilas, and would not have preserved a tradition about him.

On one point the narrative of Ibn Ishāq can be connected with other sources. He states that when 'Abraha was imposing Christianity on the northern Arabs, he appointed Muḥammad b. Khuza'i emir of Muḍar, and adds incidentally that Qais, who went with his brother to the territory of the Kinana, fled to 'Abraha

¹ Mas'ūdi, iii, 172, 167, 162.

² Nöldeke, 172.

³ Table A shows that over 7 Seleucid years in the Persian reckoning were not accounted for in Hiṣam's synchronisms. The record may have been deficient at this point.

⁴ He first proposed this theory in *Journal Asiatique*, 11 Série, Tome xviii, 29–32; it was repeated in *Storia d'Etiopia*, 189, 197.

when Muḥammad was murdered.¹ According to Procopius this Qais, a prince of Ma'add, had to flee from Šumu-yafa'. Justinian requested that king to restore Qais at the same time that he asked for an invasion of Persian territory ; he would renew that request to 'Abraha. The father of Nonnosos twice went to Qais before he became a fugitive in Ḥimyar, that is before 530. Nonnosos himself went to Qais when he ruled some northern region ; he must then have been restored. Later Qais sent his son Mu'awiyah to Justinian, then gave his emirate to his brother and followed his son ; Justinian made him phylarch of Palestine.² The Arab sources show that throughout Qais was in friendly relations with 'Abraha.

Professor G. Ryckmans has published an inscription³ which shows why Qais fled to Ḥimyar, and how he had an opportunity to return.

By the might of the Merciful and His Messiah : the king, 'Abraha Za Yabman, king of Saba' and Dhu Raydan and Ḥadramawt and Yamanat⁴ and of 'their'⁵ Arabs on the plateau and in Tihamat. They⁶ have written this document, stating that⁷ they raided Ma'add in the raid in springtime, in the month of Dhu Ṭabtan. Further, that they subjected⁸ all the bany 'Āmir. Now the king appointed 'Abi-gabar to the battle force with Kiddat Wa'il, and Bašir b. Ḥuṣn with Ša'd. And they fought and battled at the head of the army,⁹ Kiddat against Bany 'Āmir, Murād and Ša'd against Wad . . . (and) Murran, in a wadi on the route to Turaban. And everyone who applied himself and fought for the king in Ḥaliban slew and took prisoners.¹⁰ And as Ma'add continued (in retreat) they drew closer, *dnw kzl m'dm*, and took hostages. And thereafter 'Amr b. Muḍdir gave much and pledged for them (the hostages) from him (the king), and accepted his rule over Ma'add.¹¹ And they returned from Ma'add. By the might of the Merciful. Its month of . . . ,¹² in year 662.

¹ Nöldeke, 203-4, with note.

² Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, iv, 179.

³ *Muséon*, lxvi, 275-84, Ry no. 506.

⁴ Location uncertain ; I take it to be the region north of early Saba'.

⁵ The plural suffixed pronoun is regarded by some as a plural of majesty, though *mlkn* takes a singular verb. The singular suffix in 'Its month of' so-and-so is deictic. Arabs who were in personal subjection to the king could hardly be put on a level with the kingdoms. The title is a claim to rule over Arabs dwelling on the plateau and in Tihama as opposed to other Arabs.

⁶ Indefinite for passive. Again sometimes taken as royal plural. The formula is common, and occurs in other than royal inscriptions.

⁷ *k* : clauses containing dependent statements not infrequently begin thus, instead of with *q*, in the late Sabaean inscriptions.

⁸ *qšdw* : the translation 'rebelled' is not justified by *CIH* 541/9-10. For the social classes *qšd*-*šd* see Rhodokanakis, *Altsabäische Texte*, i, 49-50. On *šd* as 'soldier', Mordtmann-Mittwoch, 232-4, to my mind convincing proof that both classes were men of military age liable to the levy. The distinction is between the ruling people and the subject provinces. The verb is both active and static, 'to subject' and 'to be subject'.

⁹ This preliminary to the main battle was a custom of the period ; the wording distinguishes the tribes from the main army.

¹⁰ *whrgw w'srw wmmmw q'sm wmbd mlkn* : Professor Ryckmans takes the last *w* as introducing the principal clause after a subordinate beginning with *wmmmw*. If *q'sm* has its normal Arabic sense, *wmmmw* is the subject of *whrgw w'srw*, the *w* before it emphatic or an error.

¹¹ *ws'hmw 'mrm bn mdrn wrhnhmw bnhw wšhlfhw 'ly m'dm* : 'Amr is the subject throughout, the 3rd person suffix refers to 'Abraha. The *-ta-* infix forms in the South Arabian inscriptions commonly mean acceptance of the action expressed without the infix ; compare *ntsr*, to accept protection, *štrdw*, to accept as pleasing, *ʔmm*, to accept guidance.

¹² The month name is omitted by error.

The inscription was found by the Belgian expedition led by Professor Ryckmans on the face of a granite rock near the well Murayghan. M. J. Ryckmans has pointed out that the well is not on the route from Ḥima to 'Aflağ and Yamama. About 276 miles north of the well is a small town, Ḥaliban, probably the place mentioned in the text. Turaban will then be Turaba, about 80 miles south-east of Ṭaif. Ma'add was defending the approach to some route from 'Aflağ to western centres. The inscription celebrates the deeds of auxiliaries of the main army of 'Abraha, presumably near their habitat.

Of these auxiliaries, Kiddat are the Kinda of the northern border of Ḥaḍramawt. Murād, mentioned in the 7th century, for instance in connexion with the chief conspirator in the assassination of 'Ali, may have occupied the area round Murayghan. Sa'd may well be the sept of Quraiš,¹ though fighting against the Murra, also Quraiš.² The other certain constituent element of Ma'add, bany 'Āmir, were bany Hawāzin. It is tempting to restore the broken name Wada', but the preserved traces do not favour that, and the section of Kiddat called Kiddat Wada' belong to western Ḥaḍramawt. The enemy confederation stretched northwards from eastern Ḥaḍramawt, well away from western urban centres, as far as the latitude of 'Aflağ.

Though described as a *ghazzia*, the intervention of 'Amr b. Munḍir proves that this was a major war. Ma'add had previously recognized the suzerainty of Ḥirah, so it was an invasion of Persian territory. M. J. Ryckmans has seen that it corresponds to the expedition mentioned by Procopius. Accepting the view that era year 640 was A.D. 525, he dates the inscription 547, and believes that inexact equivalence of Julian and era years would still permit a connexion with the war between Khusrau and Justinian from 540 on.³ The active operations of that war in Syria and Mesopotamia ended with the Persian retreat from Edessa late in 544, the truce was signed early in 545.⁴ The continuation of hostilities in Lazica, the Crimea, would not justify a breach of the peace in a year beginning not more than four months earlier than January 547. Justinian sought peace in 544; the attack of 'Abraha cannot be dated later with any probability.⁵

Munḍir III did not die till 554; 'Amr must have been acting for him in the south owing to the absence of his father. The part played by Munḍir in these

¹ Of the *aḍ ḡawāhir*: Mas'ūdi, iv, 122; for present location, H. StJ. B. Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 25.

² Mas'ūdi, iii, 119, iv, 121. The arrangement of Quṣaiy by which such tribes at Mecca were *al biṭāḥ* may correspond to the territories originally held; if so, there was a long-standing division of the whole confederation.

³ *Muséon*, lxvi, 342.

⁴ The dates are fixed by Procopius, 'Wars', II: from v, 540; from xiv, 8, 541; from xx, 542; from xxiv, 543; from xxvi, 544; xxviii, 11, 545.

⁵ Justinian did not know that the war of the Lakhmid against the Ghassanid would continue. In 545-6 Munḍir killed a son of Ḥariṭ, and later suffered a severe reverse. 'Wars', II, xxviii, 12-14. The 'sacrifice to Aphrodite' is an 'embroidery' like those found in Arab stories, and is on a level with another by Procopius, the cannibal Saracens. It is surprising that it has been accepted as historical evidence that Munḍir was a savage pagan by some who reject historical statements in the Arab sources because of the very human stories.

Persian wars was active and constant ; his forces could face Roman armies in the field, and were such a threat to Syria that the garrisons could not be taken on campaign. During 544 he was always in the Euphrates region ; 'Abraha probably timed his attack on that basis. The Abyssinian achieved his own purpose, but not Justinian's ; the cession of the suzerainty over Ma'add by 'Amr was preferred to the withdrawal of Mundir's army from the north. Once Ma'add was subject to 'Abraha, it is probable that he would install the former emir, Qais b. Khuza'i, on whom he could rely ; it is equally probable that he appointed Muḥammad b. Khuza'i to impose Christianity in the Mecca region, since Qais could support him from his adjoining territory. The evidence interlocks, though from quite unconnected sources.

Procopius stated that the expedition was undertaken after Abramōs was firmly established. The dam inscription of 'Abraha at Marib,¹ constantly referred to but rarely used in considering the sequence of events, records how 'Abraha secured rule over a united kingdom in a year when he was already recognized as the legitimate king by great powers.

The Dam Inscription of 'Abraha

(Face A, 1-8 : CIH 1-8.) By the might and aid and mercy of the Merciful and of His Messiah and of the Holy Spirit. They² have written this inscription : Behold 'Abraha who has been exalted, the king, the descendant of men of Ge'ez, the *ramaihis*,³ Za Bayman,⁴ king of Saba' and Dhu Raydan and Ḥaḍramawt and Yamanat and of 'their' Arabs on the plateau and in Tihamat.

(Face A, 9-24 : CIH, 9-24.) Now they have written this inscription, stating that :—He subjected and recognized as ruler by decree Yazid b. Kabṣat in their province, whom they accepted over Kiddat Wada'.⁵ He was established as deputy for him and was subject ; and with him were the *qayl*-princes of Saba', the men of experience, 'šhrn, Murrat and Tamimat and Ḥaniš and Martad and Ḥanif Dhu Khalil, and the men of Za'an,⁶ *qayl*-princes, Ma'adi-karib b. Šumu-yafa' and Ha'an and their 'brethren', bany 'Ašlam.⁷ And further, that :—They sent in peace⁸ Garrah Dhu ZBNR,⁹

¹ Glaser, transliterated into Hebrew : CIH 541, re-transliterated : *Chrestomathia* no. 64 : Fakhry I, pp. 79-83, no. 4 bis. M. Fakhry's copy has been extensively used for this translation.

² See p. 435, note 4. This instance might be thought decisive.

³ Unexplained. Abramōs, slave of a Roman, may have claimed Roman citizenship when he revolted from Aksum. The hard breathing might represent the diaeresis in Greek 'Ρωμαίους. X is the Greek *s* in *krsts*.

⁴ Za Yabman at Murayghan ; the official inscription at Marib is likely to be correct. For Ge'ez names with *Za* compare the king list printed in Budge, *Ethiopia*, i, 206-7.

⁵ Generally translated 'Kiddat and Da'. Compare Kiddat Wa'il. The Yazid family of Za'an held the Wadi Rukhailah, north of 'Azzan, Ry 340 in *Muséon*, lii, 312-6.

⁶ 'z'nn, plural, posits this form ; the region yz'n, in Arabic Yazān, has a not uncommon prefix, see p. 443, n. 3.

⁷ This may be a tribal name in the plural ; if so, Sulaim.

⁸ 'šyw : *RES* 4193/8 requires this meaning : *RES* 4084/7-8, 'because the god replied in an oracle that he would send them away in peace'.

⁹ Ry 520/1, *dbnnr* might be connected, *Muséon*, lxxvii, pl. 1.

that he might be supreme¹ in the east. And the garrisons of Kidar killed him and plundered.² And Yazīd collected those put under his command, *dht'hw*, from Kiddat, and made war on Ḥaḍramawt, and seized Mazin, the runaway,³ the descendant of men of the Ḍammar sept, and returned to 'Abran.

(Face A, 24–Face B, 18 : CIH 24–46.) Then the report reached them, and the Ḥabaṣat and Ḥimyar called up⁴ and collected their armies by thousands⁵ in the month Dhu Qayṣan of 657. And the generals⁶ of Saba' set out and penetrated from Ṣirwaḥ to Nabaṭ in 'Abran. And when they reached Nabaṭ, Kidar had appointed their battle force (to posts). And Ḥimyar delayed and collected information,⁷ and their commanders were Wāṭih and 'Awdah, both Dhu Ḡadan.⁸ Then Yazīd reached them,⁹ in Nabaṭ, and held back his hand from them (the enemy) before appointing the battle force. And then, *wk*, a report reached them concerning Saba', that the ramp and the dyke and the catchment basin and the frontal work¹⁰ were broken in the month Dhu Maḍra'an of (year) 7.

(Face B, 18–27 : CIH 46–55.) Then after this mandate reached them, the runners presented a covenant¹¹ which the Arab (collective), sept of Wada', who were under orders¹² with Yazīd, judged good, (to the effect) that all of them should hold their hands back, and give them¹³ pledges by the runner, and as to the battle force Kidar had appointed, the *qayl*-princes should join (it) to those who were subject.

¹ *y'fqn* : Arabic *'afaqa* : the glossary entry, *Chrestomathia*, incorrect.

² *šhtw*, as in Arabic, Akkadian *šaḥatu*, see *Revue d'Assyriologie*, xxi, 68–9, common in the Ma'per archive, often wrongly transliterated with *t*.

³ *hgn* : root *hwg*. A northerner : an ancestor of Ghassān was so named.

⁴ *šp* : the preliminary to a campaign, *RES* 4193/8–9, causative in *CIH* 308/19, of calling up the levy for labour, *CIH* 541/94.

⁵ Armies formerly were levied by fifties, *'hmś* : not verbiage.

⁶ *mql* : plural construct of *maqāwil*, (Kamūs) : not a preposition.

⁷ *'lw ulmd* : hendiadys. In *CIH* 540/78 read *klmdw*.

⁸ A section of Za'an, as noted by M. J. Ryckmans in *Muséon*, lxvi, 337. On the location see von Wissmann—Höfner, 92–3.

⁹ This seems decisive ; Yazīd had not rebelled at this time.

¹⁰ *'rnm w'wdn whbšm wmdrft q'fn* : construction of *'arīm*. *CIH* 540/6–22, of *'wd*, *ibid.* 22–8. Combined they correspond to Akkadian *arammu*, see F. Thureau-Dangin, *Textes mathématiques babyloniens*, 21, no. 45. *hbšm* corresponds to *mḍ'bn* in *CIH* 540/10–11, the reservoir. All had a facing of quarried stone, *grb*, and brick, *lbt*, here called *mḍrft*, root *dfr*, used of lining wells, *RES* 2817/1, and of facing a *mswd*, *RES* 4198/2. In spite of the lack of mimation in *mḍrft*, *q'fn* is the periphrasis for the genitive : *'f*, in the form *'nf*, 'façade,' in the Mineaeon *RES* 3535/1 and 3029/1.

¹¹ *brī* : the meaning is settled by *RES* 3689/12 and Glaser 1399 in N. Rhodokanakis, *Die Inschriften an der Mauer von Kohlan-Timna'*, *brīm wm'brm qyr brīm*, covenanted or agreed without covenant. Both are texts from Qataban. The word is Hebrew, not cognate with the *brī* which represents Arabic *burūz(un)*.

¹² *gb'w 'm yzd* : causative in Fakhry I, p. 117, fig. 66, II, no. 121, 'to command by law', and in the broken context *CIH* 398/8 ; either the causative or the simple form in the Qatabanian text *RES* 3858/1 ; the simple form in *RES* 3908/5, 'because (the god) protected him in what he ordered him'. For the passive compare *CIH* 621/8. In Ry 3/4, *Muséon*, xl, 165, the causative has the specific sense 'to have goods ordered in advance'. Not related in sense to the Arabic *ḡaba'a*, 'to turn back in a cowardly manner'. Compare Akkadian *g/qabū*, 'to say', frequently 'to order'. Aramaic *gb'*, 'to impose a tax' is cognate.

¹³ The other party.

(Face B, 27–Face C, 4 : CIH 55–63.) And the king appointed a time¹ incumbent on the tribes (for the return) to ditches and plastering and cut terraces and *bar'a*-land² and pitch-pit, *dflm*, and workmen's shops, *nhmt*, and mud-bank, *ṣayhurim*, for to repair the ramp and the dyke and the breaches that were in Marib, and imposed a promise on them, in the month Dhu Ṣarban of (year) 7.

(Face C, 4–16 : CIH 63–75.) Now after they had appointed the time and the Arab judged (it) good, they made for the city Marib, and they prayed³ at the church, *b't*, of Marib, for therein (in the city) were a priest, father of a mission (?)⁴ and his 'son'. They lifted the ramp away and dug till they reached the rent,⁵ and at a point above the rent, to base the dyke.⁶ And when they had let (the water) flow away, in order to base the dyke, there was anxiety and care⁷ for the tribes and the city. And all who saw how this anxiety had come nigh upon the tribes made praises heard for them, *'dnw lhmw*,⁸ for the *'ahabiš* of (among) them and the Himyarites of (among) them.

(Face C, 17–21 : CIH 76–80.) And after that they had made praises heard for the tribes, the *qayl*-princes who had fortified themselves in Kidar went down and when they reached the king⁹ with the battle force which they had appointed to join them,¹⁰ then the king and his son held back their hands (from war with them).

(Face C, 21–28 : CIH 80–87.) The king decreed, *gb'*, in the city Marib : 'The builders of the ramp and the *qayl*-princes who were there are *illu-trāssimi*'.¹¹ Then he had brought before him¹² their 'sons' : Aksum Dhu Ma'afir, the king's son, and Mar-gazzaf Dhu DRNḤ, and 'Adug¹³ Dhu Fayiš,¹⁴ and SYWLMN,¹⁵ and Dhu Ša'ban and Dhu Ru'ain¹⁶ and Dhu Hamdan and Dhu Kula'an and Dhu Mahadd and others (entitled) Dhu, and

¹ *'ztm* : possibly related to the adverbial لا عوض, 'never'.

² The source of the material *mbr'*, CIH 540/, 11, 24–5, 63, fictile clay.

³ *qdšw* : specifically Christian, contrast *dll* for *šll*, line 92.

⁴ Glaser, *ḡbmštlh* : Fakhry *'b mštlh* : meaning guessed.

⁵ *'rn*, defective for *'urn*, *'iwārun*, 'defect'.

⁶ The necessity of clearing a length of the dyke to repair damage there caused by the breach in the ramp would increase risks in Marib.

⁷ Glaser, *dllm w'wšm*, a common phrase which does not mean *perniciēs et pestilentia*, as CIH renders : CIH 540/68–9, *dllm wmwtm*, 'anxiety, even death,' Fakhry, clearly *blm* : if this is correct, compare Arabic *balla*, 'to moisten', then 'to exercise benevolence', the metaphor explained in Freytag I, 147 a.

⁸ *أَدْنَى*, 'admirationē affectus fuit', Freytag, i, 23 a. CIH : *dimiserunt eos*, but the sense 'to permit' would require an addition with *b*.

⁹ Glaser, *wkwšhw .mlkn* : Fakhry, *wkwšhw hmlkn* : CIH, *lmlkn*, conjecture. The preposition *h* for *l* occurs only in inscriptions from Ḥadramawt, with the infinitive. At present, emendation seems out of place.

¹⁰ Note the use of the military force on labour for the state.

¹¹ Glaser, *lmtm* : CIH *šlmtm* : Fakhry, *'ḡlṭm* : *g* and *l* are indistinguishable, *ṭ* and *y* sometimes confused in the copy. I guess *'ḡlym*.

¹² *mt* : i.e. *matta*, to ask for access to a person : 'when' makes no sense.

¹³ *'dl*, an appellative, would normally have *-m* in a personal name.

¹⁴ Fayiš was not a normal tribe, but a body of courtiers. 'Adug was possibly an Abyssinian.

¹⁵ So Fakhry. Glaser, Dhu ŠWLMN.

¹⁶ On southern Ru'ain see von Wissmann-Höfner, index. Originally perhaps the stock from which the dynasty of Himyar sprang, Mas'ūdi, iii, 203.

a strong one, 'lsm, Dhu Yaz'an and Dhu Dūbyan, and the kabir-officers of Ḥaḍramawt and of qmnt.¹

(Face C, 28–33 : CIH 87–92.) And it was then, wk, that there reached them the embassy² of the nagašī, and there reached them an embassy of the Roman king, and a delegation, tnbllt, of the king of Fars, and an envoy, rsl, of Muddiran (al Mundir), and an envoy of Ḥarīṭ b. Gabalat, and an envoy of 'Ābi-karib b. Gabalat.

(Face C, 33–Face D, 3 : CIH 92–101.) And then after those who wished had prayed³ in praise of the Merciful, the tribes went according to the previous (fixed) time that he (the king) should call them up, according to their promise⁴ for later. And when the tribes arrived at the term of the later Dhu Da'awn,⁵ and when they sent them, the tribes, to their duties, k'sywhmw 'š'bn brhmv, they repaired what was broken from the dyke, about which Ya'fur⁶ had given orders, tqh, obligatory on Saba' and the qayl-princes who were 'm tnkn.⁷ And he gave them instructions.⁸

(Face D, 4–15 : CIH 102–114.) [Describes the repair of a measured section of the dyke, the ditching to reconstruct the ramp and its plaster facing, and the improvement of the area irrigated from the catchment basin so that the outflow could run straight on, lyr 'qdmn, with two channels from the point of divergence.⁹

(Face D, 15–27 : CIH 114–137.) And so they completed¹⁰ the work within the period for which they were under obligation at their sections, bn ywmn dbhw yq'w lgzwhmw. And Yada'-il and a butcher¹¹ gave a blessing

¹ Either a region, not included in Ḥaḍramawt, or a description, 'foreigners (literally, opponents),' settled in the land.

² mhškt: in inscriptions of this period hškt is used of a wife. The occurrences have been discussed by Dr. Beeston and Professor Ryckmans in *Muséon*, lxxv, 279, lxxvi, 109–11, lxxvii, 103. The combination bhšk urd' whrg implies that hšk does not mean 'help' or 'instigation' but something similar, perhaps 'instruction'. In the damaged text RES 4194/2, 'nsm hškm ks' bbythmw must mean an employee of some sort, not one in command; ks' is construct before a prepositional phrase, and accusative, 'the man looking after the household quarters'. In Ry 520/5 it is permissible to doubt whether a worshipper of rhmnn would proclaim his polygamy. In the 6th century women at Nagran engaged in business. hšktm may describe the wife who looks after a man's affairs, and need not be applicable only to a wife. wld in the same texts is not necessarily confined to the literal meaning. On the whole there is no reason to doubt that mhškt, not mentioned in these discussions, is cognate and means something like 'those conducting negotiations for' a king. Some significance must be attached to the distinction from tnbllt.

³ Glaser, *dln bhmd* : Fakhry, *dln bhmd*, with no space for n, which is not required. dln here for sll, which occurs in the simple form in CIH 540/79. Form: like قَمَس for قَصَا.

⁴ In the pact; the previous work was voluntary.

⁵ Either an intercalary month or two months had the same name.

⁶ Šarah-b-īl Ya'fur; his decree, CIH 540/64–74, included Ḥimyar and Ḥaḍramawt, and was issued as a result of a breach immediately after his own reconstruction.

⁷ Unexplained. Possibly there was a rota of duty for princes to take charge of annual plastering. If so, tnkn is a suffixed form from ṭn.

⁸ Not 'to alter'. The Arabic nakira means 'to be ignorant of' something, but the adjective nakir(un) seems to retain the sense required here, 'intelligent'. The form is presumably intensive.

⁹ nmry mfggm : nmry dissimilation, dual construct of mamarr(un), Freytag, iv, 165 a. mfggm root faġġa, to diverge.

¹⁰ Glaser and Fakhry, rz'w, which would mean 'assigned': CIH 540/82, rz'w hršm . . . wnsk, 'they distributed gold and electrum'. This does not fit the present context. I read rz'w.

¹¹ ṭbhm, though the beasts are called ḡbyhm. Note the intentional restriction of the blessing. The rest was not a sacrifice, but a feast.

at the church and the dyke and the ramp over 5,806 of flour and 26,000 of dates of the *bqnt* kind. There were 3,000 slaughtered beasts, both cows and small cattle, and 300 camels, fast, darkish and with cut ears (she-camels) ¹ and 11,000 turtle doves, *'ghlb*, . . . ² And they perfected ³ their building work ⁴ on the 58th day (that they were responsible for their sections ⁵) in the 11th hour, in the month Dhu Ma'an of 658.

This narrative establishes a sequence of events. 'Abraha originally held only the west, Ḥimyar and Saba'. Before era year 657 he reduced Kiddat Wada', western Ḥaḍramawt; by then Ḥumu-yafa' had been removed, since his son was with Yazīd, the deputy 'Abraha appointed. The next step was to control eastern Ḥaḍramawt and tribes north of it. Resistance was not expected, but arose in a region that can be located if 'Abran is al 'Abr. ⁶ Kidar, the enemy, is otherwise unknown ⁷; it was obviously a considerable confederation from the measures taken. Some of the Arabs must have been closely related to Kiddat Wada', Yazīd's force. As a preliminary measure Yazīd led his own men to deal with a rebel, of a family associated with the old kingdom of Ma'in. When 'Abraha's main army arrived, the enemy position caused delay. Then news of the disaster at Marib produced one of those rare occasions when Arabs forget minor issues and unite. The initiative came from Yazīd's own men. A covenant fixed a date for all to work at Marib, but the united forces voluntarily undertook the preliminary steps. Thus 'Abraha was, in the words of Procopius, firmly established, but by consent, not through general acceptance of the Abyssinian or of Christianity.

According to one view, era years 657-8 should be 547-8, according to another 542-3. If era year 662 is not later than 544, 'Abraha received the embassies not later than 539. There should be a check on this in the political situation further north.

IV. ḤIRAH, PHOINIKŌN, KINDA

In the Lakhmid genealogy a reign of incredible length is assigned to an historical figure, 'Imru 'l-Qais, called al Bad' as founder of a dynasty. This 'king of the Arabs' ruled the desert border up to Syria, and as far south as

¹ Reading *'blm šfym wjrbm wqsym*. The first and the last adjectives are common, but I do not know the significance of the dark colour.

² *šqym ḍtmrm*: if this applies to the doves, I can make nothing of it.

³ Adopting the restoration in *CIH*, *k(ml)w*.

⁴ There are two nouns *mgh*, see Mordtmann-Mittwoch, 178-9. 'Booty' is surely from *lgh*, as Conti Rossini gave it. The meaning 'building work' I would associate with the Arabic participle *هوّجّ* Freytag, iv, 941a 'expertus'.

⁵ Restoring *bṭmnyṭ whmšy ymtm wq'w lgzwhmw*.

⁶ von Wissmann—Höfner, 123-4. The eastern end of the incense route, *Periplus*, 24: 'The exports from there (Mouza, Mūkha) are either local goods, myrrh, both the choice and the virgin, from Abeira and Minaea, (or) limestone, and all the cargoes already mentioned from Adulis'.

⁷ Not to be confused with the *kdr* mentioned in the inscription of Karib-'il Watar, which von Wissmann—Höfner, 38, locate near 'Imna', unless that was a tribe and had moved. The narrative of 'Abraha's dam inscription proves that 'Abran was a considerable distance east, perhaps a little north, of Ṣirwaḥ.

Nağran, more or less the old Nabataean kingdom of the first centuries B.C. and A.D.¹ The extension southwards points to the early importance of Nağran as the western base of a route to the Persian Gulf. The founder died in A.D. 328, 19 years after the accession of Shapūr II who, at the beginning of his active career, perhaps after 325, dealt severely with the Arabs in southern 'Irāq, and conquered Baḥrain and Yamama almost up to Yaṭrib.² The problem of controlling the Arabs in this area was neatly solved; a second 'Imru 'l-Qais, also a founder and called al Bad', was the first king at Ḥirah of a dynasty which accepted loyalty to Persia as a condition of existence. The arrangement endured for two centuries. Though Shapūr's campaign in Arabia was attributed by Hišam to the desire to punish poverty-stricken raiders into 'Irāq, it is clear that a major Persian interest could be served. By the 4th century the western shore of the Gulf provided disembarkation points from which goods could be transported to Mesopotamia and Syria without incurring Persian taxes. Shapūr stopped that. The change between 328 and 380 was such that a Lakhmid was willing to move from west to east.

Ibn Ishāq stated that Khusrau I made Mundir III of Ḥirah ruler of Oman, Baḥrain, and Yamama as far as Ṭaif in or shortly after 531.³ This was apparently a re-assertion of the rule of the Persian client in that region. There is sound reason to accept the statement. A coherent set of grave-stones has been found within an area reaching from Warka in the north-east to the mainland opposite Baḥrain.⁴ Professor Ryckmans has suggested that the language is Safaïtic; it is in any case North Arabic. The script is not that of Safa, but, with a slight deviation, Sabaeen. Unified terms for burials and similar customs are, in these regions, before the rise of Islam, a symptom of political unity. When the Lakhmid dynasty was finally driven out of Ḥirah by the Persians in 604/5, it maintained a hold on Baḥrain; Mundir b. Nu'man (III) b. Mundir (III) was king there in the year of the embassies to the Prophet, 631.

The north-western border of Ḥirah, to use the name of the city for the kingdom, is known from the dispute about the region called Strata, which Ḥarit the Ghassanid claimed on philological grounds, while Mundir adduced the customary taxes.⁵ It lay about the middle of the route from Palmyra to Damascus.⁶ From there southwards the western boundary can be deduced,

¹ Two bronzes in a classical style, of the 1st century A.D., from 'Ukhūd, with a South Arabian inscription, show clearly Nabataean influence: *British Museum Quarterly*, xi, 153-6; G. Ryckmans in *Muséon*, lii, 62-4; M. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World*, ii, 855 and III, 1537 (not quite accurate); Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 85. The inscription: 'X has dedicated at the canal these recipients to the god Dhu Šamawi': is significant in the future Christian centre; consideration of the character of this 'lord of heavenly ones' must take local developments into account.

² Nöldeke, 56.

³ *ibid.*, 238.

⁴ W. K. Loftus, *Travels and Researches*, 233: Capt. Shakespeare in *JRGS*, 1932, 59, plate at p. 325; Col. A. P. Dickson in *Iraq*, x, 1-8; G. Ryckmans in *Muséon*, l, 239-40 (correct Thay to Thağ): F. V. Winnett in *BASOR* no. 102 (April, 1946), 4-5.

⁵ Procopius, 'Wars', II, i, 798.

⁶ René Dussaud, *Topographie Historique de la Syrie*, 255, 286.

partly from the accounts of other kingdoms, partly from the uninhabitable character of the volcanic stone desert.

'Abi-karib, who sent an envoy to 'Abraha in era year 657 as a ruler equal in rank with Mundir of Ḥirah and Ḥariṭ the Ghassanid, must be the Abochorabos who made a nominal gift of Phoinikōn, the Palm Grove, to Justinian, obviously early in the Emperor's reign. The northern territory of this Roman phylarch must have been along the border of the province called Palestine III by the Roman administration as he was appointed phylarch of the Saracens in Palestine. The date of this appointment should be about the same as that known for the similar appointment of Ḥariṭ or Arethas; Justinian decided to follow the Persian example¹ of creating client kingdoms among the Arabs in or shortly after 527. It is possible that 'Abi-karib and Ḥariṭ were brothers,² and that Justinian's policy was to use a family opposed to the Lakhmids. The kingdom of Abochorabos included Yotabē,³ besides the Palm Grove, that is the Tabūk region; the father of 'Abi-karib, Gabalat, had also ruled there. In the time of Anastasius, though Persia and Byzantium were at peace, Skenite Arabs belonging to the phyle of Naaman, that is Nu'man (II) b. 'Aswad of Ḥirah, 500/1-503/4, made an incursion into Euphratesia; they had to be met by a Roman army and were severely defeated by the strategos Eugenius. Theophanes⁴ dated this event *anno mundi* 5990, that is 498, certainly wrongly, as the mention of Naaman shows. The earliest possible date is 500, the affair was probably a preliminary step instigated by Kavadh, who began a war in Armenia in August, 502. In the same year as the victory of Eugenius, Romanus, archōn of the forces in Palestine, undertook a war against Agar the son of Arethas, of the Thalaban tribe, and took a large number of prisoners; again, the date is not earlier than 500. Before the war with Agar, Romanus had defeated and put to flight another Skenite, Gamalos, who had invaded Palestine before the appointment of Romanus. Theophanes added: 'Then the Romans freed Yotabē, the island lying in the gulf of the Red Sea ('Aqaba) and subject to no light taxes to the Roman Emperor, but held in the interval by the Skenite Arabs. In great battles Romanus gave Roman merchants once again the opportunity to inhabit the island and to fetch cargoes from the Indians, and to bring in the tribute appointed by the Roman Emperor.' The Roman aim is clearly defined, direct access to the Indian trade by state-supported merchants. Direct rule of Yotabē, restored before 500, lasted till about 527, when 'Abi-karib was appointed, doubtless under special conditions. The incursion of Agar after

¹ Perhaps following Leo's introduction of it, p. 444.

² If there has been discussion of this point since that of Glaser, it is unknown to me.

³ Not infrequently spelt Jotabē in English reference works. *Yo-* is connected with the prefix *ya-* in regional names already noted (see p. 437, n. 6). For examples in ancient and modern southern Arabia see von Wissmann—Höfner, 113, Anm. 3, and 140. It is ancient, for Amorite districts of the 18th century B.C. have such names, given in the Ma'ar archive. One instance, Yamutbal, also called Emutbal, proves that *ya-* is a separable element, since it is also called Mutiabab.

⁴ i, 217-8.

the defeat of Gamalos, that is Gabalat, shows that his kingdom lay immediately to the east.

The interval in direct Roman rule mentioned by Theophanes, before the reconquest, began with the intrusion of Amor-kēsos, who is described as a Persian adventurer, that is an Arab prince from Persian territory, Ḥīrah. He chose to move into Roman lands, and lived on raiding other Saracens, without at first attacking Romans. Finally he was strong enough to take possession of Yotabē, turn out the Greek customs officer, and thus gain considerable wealth. He then opened negotiations with Byzantium, with a view to being appointed phylarch of Arabia Petraea. As he sent an ecclesiastic, Amor-kēsos was certainly sympathetic to Christianity; at that period he may have been a Christian. The Emperor Leo accepted the proposal, and in his last year, 473, entertained Amor-kēsos at his capital in a manner that gave offence to some Byzantines.¹ In the peace treaty between Theodosius II and Bahram V in 422 this region had been reserved to the Romans, with the right to exclude Persian Arabs, but Leo now recognized Amor-kēsos as ruler of Yotabē and several Arab tribes, with the title phylarch.

If Amor-kēsos represents ‘Imru-’l Qais’, as is generally assumed,² the ‘adventurer’ was probably a descendant of the first king of that name; the kingdom, which for lack of a better name must be called Phoinikōn,³ following Procopius, is practically the same. In that case he was related to the Lakhmids. If Gamalos-Gabala was the father of Ḥariṭ the Ghassanid, the move from Ḥīrah looks like the beginning of the Lakhmid—Ghassanid feud. Like the Nabataeans, the kings of Phoinikōn depended on control of transit from Yotabē, the principal port, where the merchants, though doubtless Roman citizens, were mainly Jews according to Procopius, to Palestine. Both Amor-kēsos and Abochorabos were pro-Roman in policy and disposition. From the accession of Zeno onwards there were intermittent revolts by the Samaritans, sometimes in combination with orthodox Jews, sometimes not; those in 476 and 529 took a serious form. They are sometimes attributed to religious persecution, but the sources are not explicit on this point; destruction of the synagogues may be a symptom accompanying, rather than the cause of, the revolts. The Samaritans must have expected assistance; the mass flight of 529 shows they looked to Persia, only likely to act through Ḥīrah. In the period between Amor-kēsos and Abochorabos, Gamalos tried an anti-Roman policy; his attack was not that of a desert shaikh, an explanation no more than facile, but one that required a considerable administrative change. The situation is obscure, but instructive.

The succession is sufficient to cover the years from before 470 to about 540. The end of the reign of Abochorabos must be dated as early as possible, because

¹ *CMH* 472. The source is Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum*, iv, fr. 1 of Malchus, *De legibus gentium*.

² *CMH*, *ibid.* (E. W. Brooks).

³ Many places were so called; one in Egypt, see D. Meredith in *BSOAS*, xvi, 1954, p. 237.

Justinian appointed Qais phylarch of Palestine, obviously in succession to Abochorabos.¹ One date proposed for the dam inscription, 547, is too late for 'Abi-karib.

The Agar driven from the Palestinian border by Romanus is called the 'son' of Arethas, the Ḥuḡr b. 'Amr b. Mu'awiya b. al Ḥariṭ al 'aṣḡar of the genealogies.² This early Ḥariṭ b. 'Amr was, according to the 'saga', sent by Ḥassan Tubba' into Ma'add to attack Ḥirah, and Hiṣam quoted a story that he killed Nu'man b. 'Imru 'l-Qais³; Nu'man I died in 433. Ḥaṣṣan Yuha'min was, with his brother Šarah-b-'il Ya'fur, co-regent with his father 'Abi-karib 'As'ad, whom he accompanied on a hunt, when they rested in the Wadi Māsīl; his province therefore bordered on Ma'add. Šarah-b-'il Ya'fur was sole king in Šaba', Ḥaḍramawt and Ḥimyar by era year 564, probably A.D. 448.⁴ The chronology seems to confirm the 'saga'. Ḥassan Tubba' is said to have conducted an expedition into Yamama, appointed his step-brother Ḥuḡr to rule there, and kept 'Amr b. Ḥuḡr at his court; he was subsequently murdered by his 'brother' 'Amr and his sister was given by 'Amr to Ḥuḡr in marriage. 'Amr does not occur as a royal name in Ḥimyar, the assassin was probably the hostage. The inscriptions suggest⁵ that as co-regents Šarah-b-'il and Ḥaṣṣan ruled distinct parts of the kingdom, the latter in the north-east. The 'saga' is probably not fiction, but in essentials correct about the origin of the Kinda dynasty and its relationship with the Ḥimyar dynasty.

Ḥuḡr 'akīl al murār,⁶ about 500, had a son 'Amr, barely mentioned outside genealogies; he seems to have been succeeded by Ḥariṭ b. 'Amr. The family was closely linked with Ḥirah in their time. 'Aswad b. Muṇḍir, 474-493, married 'Umm al Malik bint 'Amr b. Ḥuḡr; Muṇḍir (III) b. Nu'man married Hind bint Ḥariṭ b. 'Amr, and her son was 'Amr b. Muṇḍir, 554-569. 'Amr acted for Muṇḍir in era year 662. Muṇḍir married Hind as part of some alliance with Ḥariṭ, an independent ruler; the probability would seem to be that Ḥariṭ succeeded Ḥuḡr at some date later than 505. One date in his career can be fixed, if an

¹ See pp. 428, 435.

² References in F. Krenkow, *Kinda*, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.

³ Nöldeke, 148. Extracts relating to two distinct men are put side by side. The confusion caused by like names is constant.

⁴ The texts are: Fakhry, i, p. 105, fig. 48, ii, no. 60; Ry 509 in *Muséon*, lxvi, 304, where *sb* is used of a peaceful expedition as in Ry 3 in *Muséon*, xl, 165, line 5; *CIH* 540/52-4. This 'Abi-karib 'As'ad cannot be identified unhesitatingly with the co-regent of Maliki-karib Yuha'min who was an older brother of Dara'-Amar 'Ayman in era year 493; the interval is too long. Otherwise *Institution*, 318.

⁵ So, if *RES* 4105 is to be restored as suggested in *Institution*, 222, and 'Abi-karib 'As'ad and Šarah-b-'il were co-regent without Ḥassan being mentioned. Šarah-b-'il, named first in Fakhry no. 60, must be the older brother, and subsequently ruled alone. Ry 509 by its nature does not prove that Šarah-b-'il was co-regent, disappeared and restored.

⁶ The bitter herbs meant must be the Akkadian *irru*, 'the bitter plant', *ša(m)mu marru*, see Campbell Thompson, *Assyrian Botany*, 223-9, used to alleviate internal pains, identified by him with the opium poppy, by B. Landsberger with cucumbers. Ibn Ishāq stated that bitter herbs were introduced among the Arabs during the smallpox plague of 569-70; the allusion must be to a drug, not to vegetables; Nöldeke 219, Anm. 2, saw this. Perhaps the drug still used in Yaman is meant.

explanation of a confused passage in John Malalas,¹ who wrote his *Chronologia* about 565, is accepted.

At the same time (immediately after the victory of 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa) it happened that there was enmity between the *dux* of Palestine, Diomedos the *silentarius*, and the phylarch Arethas. Arethas in fear entered the inner border towards the Indian parts, and on hearing this Alamoundaros, the Saracen of the Persians, falling on the very phylarch of the Romans, slew him, for he had 3,000 with him. And on hearing these things, the Emperor Justinian writes to the *duces* of Phoenicia and Arabia and Mesopotamia, and to the phylarchs of the eparchies to march against him and pursue him and his crowd. And immediately Arethas the phylarch and Naaman and Gnouphas² and Dionysius the *dux* of Euphratesia and Sebastian the chiliarch were marching off with the support army; and Alamoundaros the Saracen on learning of it fled to the Indian parts with what Saracen troops he had.³ And the *duces* of the Romans and the phylarchs with the support army went into (his land) and as they could not catch him anywhere, they attacked the Persian parts and seized his tents and took prisoner a multitude of men and women and children and as many dromedary camels as they found, and various chattels. They also burned four Persian camps,⁴ after seizing them and the Persians and Saracens in them, and returned to the Roman parts after victory.

L. Dindorf, editing the text in 1831, naturally asked about Arethas, 'an a mortuis revixit?'. The Ghassanid Ḥarīṭ was certainly not slain by Mundir; his son was, but in 545-6. The Ghassanid family would not be at enmity with a *dux* of Palestine, no member of it would flee south to 'Indian parts' and then receive orders from Justinian. von Gutschmid proposed⁵ to see in the enemy of Diomedos Ḥarīṭ b. 'Amr al Kindi. This is convincing. Though the statement that Mundir slew a Roman phylarch at this time must be an error, the immediate reaction of Ḥirah to the attack on Ḥarīṭ can be combined with other indications of the true position about 525.

Qais was a refugee at the court of Šumu-yafa' 'Aṣwa' by 530. He had been prince of Ma'add. The reason why he became a refugee is apparent from the later cession of Ma'add to 'Abraha by 'Amr b. Mundir, just as the reason why he fled to Ḥimyar is to be found in the earlier war of Ma'adi-karib Ya'fur with Ta'labat and Mundir.⁶ The Roman Emperor desired the restoration of Qais because that would stop the activities of Ḥarīṭ b. 'Amr, an adherent of Persia. Arab sources mention a period when Mundir was driven out of Ḥirah by Ḥarīṭ b. 'Amr, and a story narrated by Hišam implies that Kavadh approved.⁷ But according to the Byzantine authors, Mundir played a considerable part in the

¹ Malalas, pp. 434-5; the end of this work was mauled by an epitomist.

² Obviously Arabs, Nu'man and Ġafna; presumably sons of Ḥarīṭ, whose wife counted a Ġafnah in her pedigree. Nu'man is strange, since it belonged to the Tunūkh family, displaced by that of Salih.

³ He avoided entering acknowledged Persian territory because Persia was at peace with the Roman Empire.

⁴ The kings of Ḥirah had Persian troops: Nöldeke, 83.

⁵ Nöldeke, 171, Anm.

⁶ See p. 461.

⁷ Nöldeke, 148-50.

policy and wars of the Persian king; throughout the years 527–32 he was fighting in Mesopotamia or Syria. The restoration of Mundir to Ḥirah in the Arab accounts was due to Khusrau I; that was in 531–2, when the truce was being negotiated. The Arab accounts can be explained. In era year 662 'Amr acted for Mundir. In the absence of Mundir from Ḥirah before the winter of 531–2 Ḥariṭ, his father-in-law, acted for him. Before Kavadh started the war with Rome in 527, Ḥariṭ was attacking the Palestinian border, while Mundir attacked Syria. The gift of the territory of Ḥariṭ to Mundir by Khusrau¹ indicates the time when Ḥariṭ and his family ceased to play any part in events.

The description of Agar as 'of the tribe Thalaban' has been regarded as a reference to Taghlib.² By 600 that tribe, like Bakr, held territory far to the north, on the border of 'Irāq and Mesopotamia; there is no indication that in the first quarter of the century these tribes were in central Arabia. The bany Ta'labā who acknowledged the Prophet in A.H. 8 occupied territory east of the Quraiṣ. That corresponds to the region where Ma'adi-karib Ya'fur fought Ta'labat. From that area men might move into Ḥimyar; Ḥariṭ and Martad of Ta'laban are mentioned among the supporters of Ṣumu-yafa' 'Aṣwa'.³ Daus Dhu Ta'laban fled from Naḡran in 523 when the martyrdoms began. It is the proximity of the territory of Ḥuḡr and Ḥariṭ to the region of Mecca which explains their prominence in the Arab sources; actually they seem always to have been subordinate to, and dependent on, the king of Ḥirah.⁴ Their western border marched with Palestine, southwards past Phoinikon and the independent cities to about Wadi Māsīl. North and east lay the provinces directly ruled from Ḥirah. To the south was the fluctuating border of Ḥimyar. Dūmat aj Jandal, never mentioned and obviously unimportant, may have been a base in the north. The main centre lay round Hail and Riyadh.⁵

In era year 657 both the king of Fars and Mundir sent representatives to 'Abraha. If that year was 547,⁶ there had been peace between Persia and Byzantium for two years; no political intention can be deduced. If the year was 542, the Persian delegates were sent in the middle of a strenuous campaign, but a political purpose can be divined; the meeting with their enemies cannot have been pleasant. If the year is 539, Kavadh and Mundir were planning war. Justinian, 'Abi-karib, and Ḥariṭ b. Gabala had a reason for seeking an alliance; five years later, era year 662, 'Abraha attacked Mundir's territory, at one time ruled by Ḥuḡr and Ḥariṭ b. 'Amr, in response to several requests of Justinian, while Mundir was engaged in the north. All these envoys condoled while at Marib; it is doubtful whether they were sent simply for that purpose, and

¹ *ibid.*, 168.

² *CMH*, 481.

³ *Muséon* lix, 167, line 13.

⁴ Neither Ḥuḡr nor Ḥariṭ is named in Ry 510, as a recognized king would normally be.

⁵ There is no phonetic objection to the identification of *t'ibt* with the Thalaban of Theophanes. In Arabic the tribal name is spelt as often with fatha as with dhumma in the first syllable.

⁶ This view would incidentally involve the denial of any connexion between the campaign of era year 662 and the attack of Abramōs on Persian territory described by Procopius. 'Wars', I-II, xxviii, 11, contains no reference to any event later than 545; see *LRE*, ii, 420, note 2.

whether, when they were sent, the kings knew anything about the breach of the dam.

V. THE EMBASSY OF JULIANUS

In 530 Justinian sent Rufinus to Kavadh to negotiate a peace, but the Persian king, bent on further gains, gave no definite answer. In 531 Hermogenes went on the same errand, but only arrived in Mesopotamia in time to take part in the battle of Kallinikon.¹ Procopius attributed the desire of Belisarius to avoid the action to the advice of the Emperor and Hermogenes. Immediately after the Persian victory Hermogenes went on to Kavadh. The hope of peace may have been due to knowledge of the attitude of Khusrau, who accepted the terms offered shortly after his accession ; a treaty was signed in the spring of 532. But in 531 Kavadh was still alive, and Hermogenes had no success. Procopius introduced his excursus on the policy of Justinian in negotiations with Ethiopia and Ḥimyar, that is the attempt to cause a diversion of Persian and Skenite forces to the south, between the account of Kallinikon and the immediate sequel, the refusal of Kavadh to make peace.² At that time the chief concern of Justinian, aware of military inferiority, was to end the war at almost any price ; an administrator of his calibre would not, at that crisis, have dispatched an embassy to produce results that might interfere with his immediate aim. Procopius wrote a history ; it is the more necessary to recognize his bias. The excursus distracts attention from the results of the defeat of Belisarius. Justinian was left in a weak position in securing terms.

The excursus is increased in length by the description of the southern lands already quoted, and by an irrelevant discussion of the dealings of Diocletian and Justinian with the Blemmyes and Nobatai, which calls attention to wasteful expenditure on untrustworthy barbarians. The historical narrative falls into three parts. The first does not begin with a precise date. ' Then, τότε, the idea occurred to the Emperor Justinian to use the Ethiopians and the Homēritai as allies to the detriment of the Persians.' After the additions, the second section begins with an account of the political conditions existing at the time of the dispatch of the embassy ; that required an account of the victory of Hellēstheaios, introduced by the phrase ὑπὸ τοῦς χρόνοις τοῦ πολέμου τοῦδε. Since the victory is dated on other grounds in 525, the words in this connexion can only mean ' near ³ the time of this war ' of 527-532, and are misleading, not absolutely erroneous. Then later events, after the removal of Esimphaios by Abramos, are narrated to demonstrate the failure of the policy. In the last section Procopius returned to the step taken by Justinian when he conceived the idea, ' τότε δέ, at that time he sent an ambassador, Julianus '.

Procopius mentions only one embassy to Esimphaios, not several.⁴ Nonnosos went on such an embassy, but no precise information emerges from the preserved

¹ Procopius, ' Wars ', I, xviii, 16.

² *ibid.*, I, xxi, 1.

³ ὑπὸ generally means ' just after ', but also ' just before ', ὑπὸ νύκτα.

⁴ The statement in *BSOAS.*, xvi, 38, may be based on ' Wars ', i, xx, 13, which deals with Abramos.

fragments, and there is no mention of him in the chronographers. Nonnosos, his father Abram (a name which implies Semitic descent) and his grandfather were used as envoys to Arabs, obviously because they spoke the language; they did not belong to the aristocratic class of officials. Julianus did, and finally rose to important posts; in 540 he was sent as being a *secretis* with the son of Rufinus on an embassy to Khusrau. His brother Summus was commander of the troops in Palestine about 539, when an attempt was made to arbitrate between Ghassanid and Lakhmid claims to Strata. There is nothing to show that Procopius knew more than that, from the point of view of Belisarius, Julianus was sent on a fruitless mission. Malalas copied from an ambassador's account.¹ If Nonnosos accompanied Julianus as interpreter it may be his, otherwise Julianus wrote it. It is not altogether credible.

The Roman Emperor, on hearing from Rufinus (in 530) of the evasions of Koad, sent the *sacra* (rescript) to the king of the Auxumitai. That king of the Indians, after making an attack on the king of the Ameritai Indians and winning a great victory, took his kingdom and his entire land. And he appointed instead of him as king one of his own race, Anganes, since the kingdom of the Ameritai Indians was also now subject to him. The Roman ambassador, after sailing to Alexandria, reached the Indian parts by the Nile and the Red Sea.² And when he came into the king's presence, the king of the Indians³ was carried away with joy, because he had long thought it right that he should secure an alliance with the Roman Emperor. According to the account given by the ambassador himself, when the king of the Indians received him, he set down in writing the appearance of the royal audience. The king was naked, round his body at the loins a cloth of linen and gold, and he was wearing, on belly and shoulders, straps with pearls, and more than five armlets, and gold rings on his hands. A gold and linen fasciola⁴ was bound on his head, with four ribbons hanging on either side,⁵ and there was a golden collar on his neck. He stood above four elephants, which bore a platform with four wheels, and above as it were a high car bound round with golden leaves, as are the cars of the archōns of the eparchies,⁶ and he stood thereon holding a small shield, gilded, two little lances, also gilded, in his hands. And all his notables were there in arms and flutes making music for chanting.

And the Roman ambassador, on being presented, made obeisance by bending the knee. 'And the king of the Indians ordered that I should rise and be led to him.'⁷ And on accepting the *sacra* of the Roman Emperor he kissed the seal. On further accepting the presents sent by the Emperor, he

¹ Malalas, pp. 457-9.

² Then by ship to Adulis along the Arab shore, the regular route.

³ Either Ameritai or Auxumitai; the later reference to Elesboas is suspect.

⁴ φακιόλιν: presumably metal with openwork ribs like rods.

⁵ Part of the Sassanian insignia, with an earlier prototype in Assyrian reliefs. Such ribbons adorn a *baitulion* in the relief published by Professor W. B. Henning in *Asia Major*, New Series, ii, plate x. The inscription, p. 174, no. 3, states that the relief was cut by 'townsmen of (the settlement named after) 'Am-wafa', son of Bod-'Aqi, of the Bany Kuzai'. In the Aramaic of southern 'Irāq the name is equivalent to southern Arabian 'Am-wafay or 'Am-wafa'.

⁶ That is, the Arab phylarchs of the Empire.

⁷ The first person indicates direct copying of the original text.

admired them. After breaking the seal and listening to the letter in translation, he found that it included proposals that he should arm against Koad, the Persian king, and ravage the land bordering on his, and, in future, should have no further commerce with him, but conduct business with Egypt in Alexandria, through the land of the Ameritai Indians he ruled, by way of the Nile. And immediately the king of the Indians, Elesboas, under the inspection of the Roman ambassador, set war in motion against the Persians. After sending in advance even the Saracens, Indians subject to him, he marched into Persian territory on behalf of the Romans, sending word to the Persian king that he should expect the attack of the king of the Indians, at war with him, and that he would pillage all the land over which the Persians ruled. And while these events were in progress, the king of the Indians, after ordering the presence of the Roman ambassador and giving him the kiss of peace, dismissed him with every consideration. For he also sent *sacra* by an Indian ambassador, and presents for the Emperor.

A king in Aksum could not take the immediate steps against Persian territory described; his deputy in Ḥimyar could. An ambassador in Aksum could not inspect preparations in Ḥimyar. An Aksumite king, above all a Christian king there, would not appear naked; an Abyssinian or an Arab at a Red Sea port might. The insignia are not those of a *nagaši* as known from later pictures; they are Asiatic in type. There are then legitimate reasons for doubting the account in the text as it stands. On the other hand the attempt to prove that Malalas concocted the story from Procopius and Nonnosos is unconvincing. The original suggestion that Procopius himself erred in giving the name Julianus, whereas the embassy was that of Nonnosos, had to be withdrawn.¹ The use of the word translated 'fasciola' is found in Nonnosos; but the word describes a thing, and may have been commonly used for that rarity. The form Ameritai for the otherwise usual Homēritai is also found in Nonnosos; that proves that Malalas was using a Syrian form, not using Procopius. The account cannot be dismissed as fiction; the inconsistencies would be removed if the name of Elesboas were eliminated as a gloss. Malalas, who wrote to entertain, seems to have reduced a longer narrative, and confused an interview with 'Anganes' by introducing 'Elesboas'. There is no adequate reason to doubt that Julianus delivered his rescript, was satisfied that steps were being taken² and saw a ruler in some Himyarite city. The date cannot be later than early 531.

At the time of the embassy, 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa was still the acknowledged suzerain of Ḥimyar, Šumu-yafa' still the native king. One inconvenient result of equating era year 640 with 530 A.D. is that the proposed interpretation of the Ḥuṣn al Ghurāb inscription would prove that 'Abraha was already in that year the acknowledged leader of the Abyssinian troops, and therefore in revolt against 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa. The account in Procopius is then not historical.

In the dam inscription of 'Abraha, a 'year 7' is twice mentioned. The

¹ J. H. Mordtmann in *ZDMG.*, xxxv, 694.

² The statement of Procopius that the promise was not carried out will also be correct. When negotiations for peace began, the Himyarite campaign was abandoned.

narrative deals with era years 657 and 658, and the wording requires the equation of year 7 with era year 657. M. J. Ryckmans has suggested that 'year 7' is not an unusual abbreviation but a regnal year.¹ There is no other occurrence of a reckoning by regnal years in Sabaeen inscriptions. If the proposal is correct, era year 651, that of 'Abraha's assumption of kingship, is more likely to be 533 than 536. According to Procopius 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa lived some time after the revolt of 'Abraha; he died before 540 by a few years.² It would seem that 533 is a fair approximation for the revolt.

An Arab source, Waqīdi, gave the cause of 'Abraha's rebellion³: Ariat, who corresponds in description though not in name to the Anganes of Malalas, 'rewarded the *qayl*-princes and humbled the poor'. That probably means that he allowed the Abyssinian troops no licence, for the 'Book of the Himyarites' gives an account of the terror they inflicted before 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa left.⁴ The opposition 'Abraha met before he appointed Yazīd in Ḥaḍramawt was doubtless inspired by the *qayl*-princes said to be 'with Yazid' when he was deputy.

VI. THE INVASION OF 'ELLA 'AṢBEḤA

Martyrologies vary considerably in character. However strong the prejudice they rouse, they are not, as a class, unhistorical, though particular cases may be. The *Martyrium Arethae*, the account of the martyrdoms at Naḡran, contains two distinct elements, one ostensibly historical, the other religious edification along ordinary lines. The text is obviously much later than the recorded events, but it contains factual information of a kind that can only be from a source nearly contemporary with the events, a detailed list of the ships collected by the Abyssinians at Adulis; as Nöldeke saw,⁵ this must be a Roman merchants' list, drawn up when Justin I gave his consent to the impounding of vessels, and sent Daus Dhu Ta'laban, the fugitive from Naḡran, to 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa. Arab sources state the difficulty the *nagaṣi* found in securing ships, and Procopius, in his excursus, describes the boats customarily used in the Red Sea in a way that proves them unsuitable for heavy transport. This matter has been scantily treated; it is generally assumed that 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa only decided to invade Ḥimyar after hearing of the martyrdoms. The reason why Daus was sent from Byzantium to Aksum may be that it was known that the *nagaṣi* intended to invade, and was only prevented by lack of shipping. The *Martyrium* gives two dates, October 523 for the march of Dounaas,⁶ that is Dhu Nuwās, against Naḡran when the martyrdoms took place, and May, 525, for the arrival of the *nagaṣi*. Extreme critics, who distinguish a 'profane' and a 'church' tradition and regard the latter as a serious exaggeration of the actual importance of the events at Naḡran, have, paradoxically, accepted the dates.

¹ *Institution*, 323.

² p. 432.

³ Nöldeke, 215.

⁴ *BH*, Syriac text, 49, a, b.

⁵ Nöldeke, 188, Anm. : a remarkable example of critical acumen.

⁶ The attribution of this form (in the Greek text in the accusative) to Procopius in *BSOAS.*, xvi, 38, must be an accident.

No better example of the fallibility of some critical methods and of the need for constant revision of opinion could be cited than the change introduced by Professor Axel Moberg's discovery and study of the Syriac 'Book of the Himyarites'. Moberg proved that this text was written by someone present at the court of Muḍīr III in Ramlah, a member of the Monophysite mission. The writer baptized converted pagans who fled to Ḥirah because they were relatives of martyrs. He also showed that there is no essential conflict of fact between the 'Book' and the *Martyrium*, but a difference of statement which proves independence. The 'Book' begins the narrative at an earlier date than the *Martyrium*. The writer of the *Martyrium* had access to information unknown to the author of the 'Book'.

The third, much disputed, Syriac source is the work of John of Ephesus or Asia, who was born at Amid and driven thence, probably, by the repression of Monophysites in the time of Ephraem, patriarch of Antioch. He was in Palestine in 534 and reached Byzantium in 535, where Justinian gave him important tasks. When severe measures were taken against the Monophysites by Justin II, from 572 on, he was one of the principal victims, and it was then he wrote the third and last part of the 'Ecclesiastical History'. In it he reproduced the text of a letter from Simeon of Beth 'Aršam to Simeon the archimandrite of Gabūla, dated 20th January, 524. It became a famous document, copied in many later books, with the slight differences transmission causes. In every case, including the text attributed to Dionysius of Tall Maḥrē, the source was John of Ephesus.¹ He had known the bishop of Beth 'Aršam personally. The assumption that the document is a forgery has always been an aspersion on a remarkable character.

The letter, which is certainly not a literary exercise to display powers of composition, begins with facts. On his way to Ramlah Simeon was mocked by pagan Ṭaiyāyē and Ma'addāyē who knew of the repression of Monophysites in Syria, Persia, and Ḥimyar. Then envoys arrived at Muḍīr's court from the king of Ḥimyar with a letter. Of this Simeon gave what he believed to be the substance in direct form. No writer of the 6th century would have done otherwise, or have expected a reader to believe that he knew the *ipsissima verba*; in Semitic languages, as in Greek literary tradition, this was the common style.² The 'letter' gives what Yusuf was at the time thought to have said; it begins with facts that were known. The Kushite king was dead. The king of Ḥimyar had seized the opportunity to make himself king before a Christian could be installed. The main part consists of an account of the extermination of Chris-

¹ See the Abbé Nau in *JA.*, 9 Serie, viii, 346 ff., ix, 529. Nöldeke's review in *WZKM.*, 1896, 160-1.

² Mordtmann in *ZDMG.*, xxxv, 700, criticizing Nöldeke, invoked the name of Richard Bentley. Bentley proved, by cumulative evidence, that *Phalaris* was a late school exercise, and not a particularly good one; he was contradicting those who stated that it was one of the most ancient and admirable works of Greek literature. He did not claim to have proved that every letter preserved in an ancient book is a 'forgery'. He would have distinguished between the reproduction of Simeon's dated letter, and the 'letter' in it.

tians and the story of the martyrdom of a woman, Rōmē, and her 'daughters'. It closes with the suggestion that Mundir should follow this example. The object of Simeon's letter is clear. He aimed at reporting the story in such a way as to rouse indignation, so that no Christians could claim that the Monophysites were indifferent to the sufferings of other Christians.

The opposition between a 'profane' and a 'church' tradition is only justified by the absence of any mention of Justinian and political motives in the three Syriac or Syrian sources. The 'profane' writers dealing with political events do not fail to mention the massacres; Procopius did, though with an aside to show how little his contemporaries knew of Greek culture when they called barbarian paganism Hellenic. The similar treatment of the Arab sources as a single 'Mohammedan' tradition implies a unity in them which does not exist. One agrees with the *Martyrium* that 'Abraha or Abram was with the first Abyssinian army; another agrees as to his mildness of temper. The common point in the Arab writers as against others is their silence about the appointment of a native Christian king, and that is to be explained as due to the limited extent of that king's control. The slight, not essential, differences, increase the value as evidence. The 'Ariat episodes in the narratives repeated by Ṭabari are not unhistorical; he corresponds to the relative of Hellēstheaios mentioned by Procopius and the Anganes of Malalas, possibly also to the Aidog of Pseudo-Dionysius and the Anzug of Michael the Syrian.¹ The reign of Šumu-yafa', the rule of 'Ariat as deputy for the *nagaši*, posit an interval between the victory of 'Ella 'Ašbeḥa and the revolt of 'Abraha which must cover the years 525 to about 533.

Only the chapter headings of the 'Book of the Himyarites' are preserved for sections i-vii. The original text told, in chapter ii, of 'whence they (the Himyarites) first received Judaism'; in iii-iv an account of Christianity in Ḥimyar ended with a mission of Bishop Thomas to the Kushites to inform them of persecution. This was followed, in v, by the first coming of *ḥywn*' and the Kushites, then in vii by the departure of the Kushites from Ḥimyar. The preserved text begins at that point and continues with the account of the 'first persecution by Masrūq'. The only natural interpretation is that there was an Abyssinian invasion immediately before Masrūq became king, and two distinct persecutions by him. The *ḥywn*' who first invaded Ḥimyar was an Abyssinian leader earlier than 'Ella 'Ašbeḥa; Bishop Thomas reported a persecution which was not the first persecution by Masrūq. Professor Moberg considered the possibility that *ḥywn*' is simply *ḥaywān*, 'the wild beast', and rejected it.² In discussing the date of Bishop Thomas, he pointed out that the Christian sources are agreed that Bishop Paul died two years before the persecution of Masrūq, when his bones were disinterred and dishonoured; Moberg therefore left two alternatives, either Thomas was not bishop of Naḡran, or he was earlier than the reign of Dhu Nuwās.³

¹ J.-B. Chabot, *Chronique de Michel le Syrien*, tome ii, 184.

² *BH*, xc.

³ *ibid.*, li.

Ever since the time Ludolf's work was published it has been known that there was an Ethiopian legend about the way 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa rid his country of a king who ruled for 9 years, called 'Arwē, 'the beast,'¹ probably a *laqab* which gave rise to the legend. Cosmas Indicopleustes, who was trading at Adulis before the accession of Justin I in 518, mentions in the introduction to his 'Christian Topography' the instruction he received in his early years from Patricius, later the Nestorian patriarch in Persia. Patricius was accompanied everywhere by the teacher of divinity Thomas of Edessa.² The appellation *episkopos* is not necessarily decisive against the correlation of the sources.

At the beginning of the 'letter' of the Jewish king of Ḥimyar to Mundir of Ḥirah, in which Simeon of Beth 'Aršam reported the substance the original document was thought to contain, there is a statement that the Kūshite king was dead and that this opportunity to seize the throne was taken. It might seem natural to infer from this that the accession of the Jewish king was not long before 524. But that is an inference, not necessarily correct. If the Jewish king opened negotiations then, he would naturally, in this literary style, give some account of his reign; the 'letters' between the Emperors and the Persian kings in Procopius can be compared. It is admissible to connect the Kūshite king who died immediately before the accession of Dhu Nuwās with the *hywn'* who invaded Ḥimyar.

In the second book of the 'Christian Topography', written before 547 by a few years,³ Cosmas told how he and another Egyptian Greek made copies of inscriptions on two fallen stone monuments 'at the beginning of the reign of Justin (I) the Roman Emperor, while I was present in those parts, 25 years more or less before these (present) years, Ellatzbaas, the king then, intending to march to war against the Homēritai of the opposite coast'.⁴ Cosmas was, apart from his conviction that deductions from Scripture required rejection of the reasoning of pagan philosophers, a pragmatist, especially about figures. When he said 'the beginning of the reign of Justin' he meant 518, not 525 or even 523. His doubt, which led to the 'more or less', concerned the interval between the writing and the reading of the book, 'these years.' Had he known of the martyrdoms as the cause of the projected invasion, he would have mentioned them. 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa was *nagaši* by 518.

Cosmas thought that the inscriptions were continuous, but the two are distinct. One was the broken triumphal inscription of a king of Aksum now called the 'Monumentum Adulitanum'.⁵ The reason why Ellatzbaas wanted

¹ Budge, *Ethiopia*, i, 261.

² Cosmas, *Logos B*, 73 : p. 52.

³ The first five books were published separately, books VI–XII later in reply to adverse criticism. The eclipses dated by modern calculation to 547 are described at the beginning of book VI in an argument meant to refute attacks; book II must be earlier.

⁴ Cosmas, II, 101 C : p. 72.

⁵ Dittenberger, II, no. 198, pp. 292–4. The date of this inscription is still uncertain. Conti Rossini connected it with Aphilas. The Kinaidokolpiti, 'men of Rogues' Gulf', correspond to the Kanraītai.

this text can be discerned. The unknown earlier king said: 'I sent a naval and land force across the Red Sea against the Arrhabitai and Kinaidokolpitai dwelling there, and imposed taxes on their kings. I ordered 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.' The region conquered was the pirate coast of the *Periplus*. Ellatzbaas wanted a document proving ancient right to lost territory.

The long interval between 518 and 525 is explicable as due to the shipping difficulty. The opposite coast could be defended against open boats; Roman merchant vessels were equipped for defence. The Abyssinians did not dare, or were unable, to impound such ships till Justin gave permission in 525.

The Ḥuṣn al Ghurāb inscription¹ begins with a list of names, headed by that of Šumu-yafa', not called king, many of them tribal. Miss Höfner's valuable study² shows that they belong to Ḥaḍramawt. Former translations and interpretations require revision.

Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa' and his sons Šaraḥ-b-'il Yakmul and Ma'adi-karib Ya'fur,³ bany Laḥay'at Yarḥum,⁴ sept Kula'an, and Dhu Yaz'an and Gadanum (followed by 19 names)⁵ and bany Milḥ and their tribes (3 names) and Dhu Yaqtan (5 names) and the *kabir*-officers and executive officials, *mḥrg*, of Šayiban Dhu Naṣf.

They wrote this inscription on the fortress-rock, 'r, Mawiyat, stating that:—He restored it, its surrounding wall and the gate and its watch-towers and its paved stone ways.

And that:—He accepted the order to fortify, *štšn'*, therein when they were commanded, *kgb'w*, from the land of Ḥabaṣat. And the 'ahabiš⁶ sent the fast detachment in the land of Ḥimyar⁷ when the king of Ḥimyar and his *qayl*-princes had caused men of Ḥimyar and the men of Raḥab to be slain.⁸ Its month Dhu Ḥiggatin of year 640.

Were the interpretation of this inscription as the record of an unknown siege

¹ *CIH* 621: *Chrestomathia* no. 65: K. Mlaker in *WZKM.*, xxxiv, 54–75: *RES* no. 2633.

² von Wissmann—Höfner, 92–3.

³ The first son named after an uncle; the second after the predecessor of Yusuf, and associated with Yazid, the deputy of 'Abraha.

⁴ *bany* is not used literally here; this Laḥay'at Yarḥum should be the traditional founder of the family, not the brother of the *qayl* Šaraḥ-'il Yaqbul, and not the son of Šaraḥ-b-'il Yakmul.

⁵ Including *ksrn*. Mlaker suggested that this tribe inhabited the Wadi Kasr, described in von Wissmann—Höfner, 125 ff. The writer of the *Periplus* heard that Eudaimon, Aden, was taken by Kaiser after the time of Chariba-el, i.e. Karibi-'il Watar Yuhan'ım. Frisk, *Periplus*, 110–1, rightly joined others in rejecting emendation of Kaiser into Ilasar or anything else. Could a Dhu Kaisaran be meant?

⁶ Abyssinians resident in Arabia, as opposed to Ḥabaṣat.

⁷ *w'syww ḥbšn zrftn b'rđ ḥmyrm*: the Syriac *zrīphūthā* is an abstract, and could not be the object of a verb meaning 'to send'. *zrft* is the Arabic *zarāfatun*, a small troop, here messengers.

⁸ *khrgw mlk ḥmyrm w'qwlhw ḥmrm w'rḥbn*: usually translated 'when they (the Abyssinians) slew the king of Ḥimyar and his princes, men of Ḥimyar and Raḥab'. If 'ḥmrm were in apposition to 'qwlhw, nunation would be required; the tautology after *mlk ḥmyrm* is improbable. The distinctions '(some) Himyarites', 'the men of Raḥab', is due to the peculiar, but undefinable, importance of Raḥab, cf. *CIH* 540/79–80, where the reading seems to be *slwhmw w'r'shmw w'ḥby rḥbm*. von Wissmann—Höfner, 23, connect the name with Khuraibat Raḥaba near Širwaḥ.

of Šumu-yafa' in Kanē in A.D. 530 correct, 'Abraha had already revolted from 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa in that year. The position when Julianus was sent from Byzantium was not that described by Procopius. Šumu-yafa' who certainly took the title king abandoned it when 'Abraha revolted, while still able to resist. Over 17 years elapsed between the revolt of 'Abraha and his first attempt to impose rule on eastern Ḥaḍramawt. Procopius, whose work was published at latest in 551,¹ referred to an expedition of 'Abraha in 552.

The equation of era year 640 with A.D. 525 arose because it was generally assumed that there is a reference to the death of Dhu Nuwās in battle with the Abyssinians at the end of the inscription. The inscription thus became the record of an act of treason by Šumu-yafa' and his party, and of the defeat and slaughter of his kinsmen. The narrative of Hišam² provides a different and better explanation. After the massacre of Christians, when Dhu Nuwās heard of the Abyssinian expedition and summoned the 'aqwāl to defend the land, they refused. According to Ibn Ishāq, the Himyarites and subject tribes of Yaman assembled but were disunited. The Ḥuṣn al Ghurāb inscription confirms and supplements the sources; in it Šumu-yafa' gave the reason for his acceptance of orders from the Abyssinians and dissociated himself from the 'king of Ḥimyar', denying the full title otherwise always found in this period. The year 640 should be prior to, not later than, the death of Dhu Nuwās. The last, most violent phase of the massacres culminated at Naḡran in 523. Šumu-yafa' must have dissociated himself at an earlier stage, openly, from Yusuf. The situation points to the equation of era year 640 with 522.

VII. DHU NUWĀS

The 'Book of the Himyarites' did not introduce the name of the 'crucifier' till after the account of the first Abyssinian withdrawal. It calls him Masrūq; the accursed name is written upside down.³ In the *Martyrium* he is given his original title, Dhu Nuwās, not his name. The reliability of the Arab sources, for all the divergence in detail, has now been partially demonstrated. A king Laḥay'at Yanūf called Dhu Šanatir,⁴ murdered members of the royal family till one, the boy Zur'ah, murdered him. A *qayl* of the time of Šumu-yafa' was named Zur'at Dhu Marḥabum⁵; it is then a possible name for a member of the royal family. The boy took the name Yusuf; there was a king Yuṣuf 'As'ar at

¹ K. Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Litteratur*, 42.

² Nöldeke, 191, Ibn Ishāq: 194-5, Hišam.

³ The word is naturally to be connected with Syriac *serīqo*, 'worthless'. The name of 'Abraha's second son, also Masrūq, is probably a pure Arabic *laqab* not the royal name.

⁴ This seems to be a play on the regional name Saṭīran, Fakhry II, no. 63, or the tribal Bany Saṭīran; in the pagan period a *kabīr* of the Fayṣān was named Laḥay'at Saṭīran, *RES* 3913/1 and Fakhry II, no. 61. It cannot be connected with Sanatruces, the Parthian prince of Hatra who met Trajan: that name was discussed by Nöldeke, 500, and has been found at Hatrah by Sayid Fuad Safar, *Sumer*, VIII, 191-2, nos. 36 and 37, and IX, 19. Otherwise *Arabische Frage*, 490. Šanatir is not a place name, and none of the traditional explanations seems likely; could it be a *laqab* based on a combination of *šana'* and *šatīr*, 'infamous scoundrel'?

⁵ *Muséon*, lix, 167, line 12. Marḥabum is presumably collective, Raḥab.

this time. Laḥay'at Yanūf was, with his brothers Nawf and Ma'adi-karib Yan'um, co-regent with his father Šarah-b-'il Yakūf in era year 582¹; if he lived till era year 595 or 600, Yusuf was a youth by his death. Only one element of fact in the stories is demonstrably incorrect; Zur'ah cannot have been proclaimed king immediately on the death of Laḥay'at Yanūf, his predecessor was Ma'adi-karib Ya'fur, called in the 'Book of the Himyarites' Ma'adi-karim.²

Two slightly different accounts of the same campaign, one of them originally found by Mr. H. St.J. B. Philby, both of them now admirably published, come from sites on the western side of the great desert. One is on a rock near the well of Ḥima, the other on the rock Kawkab, some 50 miles to the north-east, on the route from Naḡran to al 'Aqīq, west of Sulayil. By the side of the main inscription at Kawkab men with the principal *qayl* added their own names. One Tamim, *muqtawi*, that is an officer of the household, of Laḥay'at Yarḥum Dhu Gadanum, ended with a prayer: 'Now may the Merciful have mercy on the Bany Malik,' a sept of Quraiš³ from which he obviously sprang. Two others, Mu'awiyat b. Wali'at, and Na'amat b. Malik, similar officers, *mqtt*, of the principal *qayl*, ended: 'By the Merciful, Lord of Jewry'; in spite of all critical doubts in the past, the sources are confirmed as to the king's faith. The longest adscript reads: 'The *qayl* Šarah-b-'il Yakmul has passed through the wide areas of conflict, *ḥaqay 'ayhar ḥarḡin*,⁴ when he joined with his brother and lord, the *qayl* Šarah-'il Yaqbul Dhu Yaz'an'.

To the confusion caused by the repetition of *nomina* and *cognomina* in different generations there is added the doubt inspired by the use of *bany*. When Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa' and his two sons are called '*bany* Laḥay'at Yarḥum, sept Kula'an', Laḥay'at Yarḥum, in normal Arab usage, is an ancestor. If he were the father of Šumu-yafa', he would not be the Laḥay'at Yarḥum who was Dhu Gadanum, a sub-section, on campaign in era year 633. An undated inscription⁵ at the junction of Wadi Ḍurra and Wadi 'Abadan records repair of an irrigation system by:—

Šarah-b-'il Yakmul and Šarah-'il Yaqbul and Martad-'ilan 'Aḥṣan and Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa', and the sons of Šarah-b-'il, Laḥay'at Yarḥum and Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa', sept Yaz'an and Gadanum and . . . and Yašbur and . . . of their tribe Dayafatan and Raṭiḥum and the *mahirat*⁶ and *kabir*-officers of the tribe Šayiban.

This document established proprietary rights in water. Four heads of all

¹ *Institution*, 341–6.

² *BH*, Syriac Text, 43 b. In Akkadian as in Sabaeen the root is *karabu*, in Arabic *karama*. Lidzbarski's assertion, *Ephemeris*, I, 263, that *m* is 'original', paid little attention to the phenomena. Alternation from *b* to *m* not only characterizes different languages of the Semitic family, but can occur within one and the same language.

³ One of the *ad dawāhir*: Mas'ūdi, iv, 122.

⁴ Root *hyg*.

⁵ Ry 63, *RES* 4069, discussed with different results by M. J. Ryckmans in *Institution*, 245–50 and *Muséon* lxvi, 337.

⁶ The word *mahir* was used in ancient Egyptian of an official scribe, and in texts from Ras aš Šamra of a household official of the goddess, 'Anat, ii, 15, 21.

Yaz'an agreed to the work. Šaraḥ-b-'il is named first as the land concerned was his. The unusual order, 'the sons of Šaraḥ-b-'il' before the next proper names, is a matter of emphasis¹; these juniors were mentioned because they were heirs to the land, superior to the district officers, not because their consent was necessary. One of the sons was named after his uncle; the recurrence of the two names together in the Constantinople inscription proves that it was the older man who became king.² When he did, there was another son of Šaraḥ-b-'il named after an uncle, Martad-'ilan 'Aḥṣan. The undated text should be earlier than era year 633, when Šaraḥ-'il was the acknowledged 'lord'. Lost names at the beginning of the Ḥima inscription are followed by:—'their sons, Šaraḥ-b-'il Yakmul and Ha'an, men of Naša'an, and Laḥay'at Yarḥum and Martad-'il Yaml(?)ad.' At the end is the statement that the *gayl* Šaraḥ-'il Dhu Yaz'an had the inscription cut. The proof that Yaz'an was united in support of Yuṣuf in era year 633 is to be found in the text at Kawkab.³

The *gayl* Šaraḥ-'il Yaqbul b. Šaraḥ-b-'il Yakmul, banu Yaz'an and Gadanum and Naša'an and Ḥabum and Ġaba'. In this inscription are written down, *tštrw*,⁴ the things they accomplished in a campaign by wadi beds and a river valley⁵ for their lord the king Yuṣuf 'Aš'ar against the 'ahabiš in Zafar. Now they overthrew the church, *qlšn*. Then the king marched to 'Aš'aran and appointed him over an army. And he laid waste Muḥwan (Mūkha) 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 'Aš'aran. And all that the troops of the king slew and took as booty was collected, *tgm'*, 13,000 slain and 9,500 prisoners⁶ and 280,000 camels and oxen and goats. And thereupon⁷ the king appointed him to join against Naḡran amongst the heads of families of bani 'Az'an, *grm bn 'z'n*, and among the tribes of Hamdan and their city, and their Arabs, and the Arabs of Kiddat and Murād and Madḥig. And the king ordered that *ššlt mḏbn* (or *mḏbn*: chains of servitude?) should be fastened, *hrzy*, on files of the Ḥabašat, *bmqrnt hbšt*, and to the 'man' of Šan'a, *wlšn'n*. In his armies and with him were Laḥay'at Yarḥum and Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa' and Šaraḥ-b-'il 'Aš'ad, sept Yaz'an, with their tribe the men of Za'an. Its month, Dhu Qayzan of 633. Now may The God to whom the heaven and the earth belong protect the king Yuṣuf 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 Emendations proposed neglect the nature of the document.

² See pp. 432-3. ³ *Muséon*, lxvi, 295-303: Ry no. 508.

⁴ This passive construction is parallel to the indefinite

⁵ *'wdh khm rg'm*: the *h* must represent an adverbial ending in *ā*; *khm* is an unusual orthography for *km*, representing the long vowel; *rg'm* is the Arabic *raj'un*, a place through which water runs.

⁶ These figures may mitigate criticism of the credibility of the Syriac sources; they obviously derived their figures from accounts current in the Himyarite kingdom. There is no reliable criterion for any estimate of the population.

⁷ *wbn ḏkyhw mlkn*: this temporal adverb corresponds to the Phœnician locative adverb *bn*, Eshmunazar 5, 'therein'. This use of deictic *n* is comparable to that in the compound preposition *ln*, 'from', where it anticipates a noun in apposition, and in the conjunction *b'dn*, where it introduces a subordinate clause. Dr. S. Y. Bakr has proved to me that this corresponds to the *-mā mukaffah* of the Arab grammarians.

If era year 633 was A.D. 523, Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa', who was appointed king in 525 as a Christian, was among those responsible for the martyrdoms at Nağran in what the 'Book of the Himyarites' seems to have described as the second persecution. It seems an unlikely qualification for the man whose name in the 'Book', 'Aswar (?), is an easy corruption of 'Aswa'.¹ If era year 640 was 525, the Abyssinians still held Zafar, Muza, and Nağran in 518, though the statement is Cosmas proves that the *nagaši* was planning an invasion then. Were there reason to distrust the sources, these points could be evaded; it has yet to be proved that they merit distrust. If era year 633 was 515, the Abyssinian withdrawal, after the 'first coming' of which the 'Book' gave an account, took place three years before the *nagaši*'s preparations for invasion.

The preserved text of the 'Book' tells of the protest made to Yušuf by *rišonē d'ammeh*, that is *qayl*-princes, when he ordered that even the bodies of the rich woman Ruhm, of her daughter and of her grand-daughter should be dishonoured.² Ruhm had done much good to high and low, princes and common folk. On one occasion Ma'adi-karim, the king, had been in need of money, and she had lent him 12,000 dinars on interest. On hearing later that he was unable to pay, she remitted the debt. The princes demanded that she should be decently buried, and Masrūq had to give way. If some were disgusted during the second persecution, others, particularly Christians, may have become so earlier. The logical sequence should be that the Šumu-yafa' who fought for Yušuf in era year 633 to drive out foreigners and overthrow their churches, was in era year 640 opposed to the king of Ḥimyar because native Christians had been massacred; he therefore accepted orders from the *nagaši*. Later, in A.D. 525, after the success of the Abyssinians, he was appointed as the Christian king, but was not completely independent. The Constantinople inscription gives his version of the events.³

The leaders of the 'Az'an in era year 633 were Šaraḥ-'il Yaqbul Dhu Yaz'an, Laḥay'at Yarḥum, Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa', Šaraḥ-b-'il 'Aš'ad, Šaraḥ-b-'il Yakmul, all Yaz'an, Ha'an of Naša'an and Martad-'il Yaml(?)ad, with others whose names are lost. In the Constantinople inscription, Martad-'ilan 'Aḥṣan and Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa', sons of Šaraḥ-b-'il (Yakmul), are associated with the king Šumu-yafa' 'Ašwa'; they must have joined the Christian party before era year 640. In the dam inscription of 'Abraha, Ha'an is named as a *qayl* with Yazid; he too must have joined the Šumu-yafa' who became king, or he would have lost his principedom. On the other hand the 'Book of the Himyarites' often mentions 'the crucifier Dhu Yazan' as the principal officer of Masrūq in the second persecution; he must be Šaraḥ-'il Yaqbul. There was a division within the Yaz'an family between era years 633 and 640.

The expedition of era year 633 was directed by a king whose main force

¹ Moberg's discussion of the reading in *BH*, clxvii-clxix. The corruption has been recognized by M. J. Ryckmans.

² *BH*, Syriac text, 43b.

³ See pp. 432-3.

consisted of Arabs and Ḥaḍramawt princes against Abyssinians. The first attack was on the Abyssinian capital, Zafar, the church is called *qlśn*, ecclesia, not *b't*, as in the dam inscription of 'Abraha; it was apparently treated as the symbol of foreign domination. The massacres of Abyssinians were savage, but not such as to shock national feeling. At Naḡran the inscription mentions only enslavement, a fate shared by some of the people of Ṣan'a. In the 'Book of the Himyarites', the account of the first persecution begins with the burning of Abyssinians left in Zafar who had taken refuge in the church; it then states that Masrūq sent orders to the provinces that all Christians who would not deny their faith should be killed.¹ There were two phases. Men who consented to the massacre of Abyssinians and the overthrow of their churches might not approve the extension to all Christians in the kingdom.

Some obviously did approve, Dhu Yaz'an for example. There must have been some reason. Perhaps the story of Ruhm will explain this transference of hate from foreigners to fellow-countrymen. If she lent money to the king, she did so to others, though she gave to the poor. If the household of the leading Christian, the martyr Arethas, engaged in money-lending, other Christians would. The same cause has led to the same result so often that the inference hardly needs support.

The inscription at Kawkab is dated in Dhu Qayzan, earlier in the year than that at Ḥima, dated in Dhu Maḍra'an. Since both record the expedition it was over, and no inference can legitimately be drawn as to its course. But it is significant that after the campaign these princes stayed in this remote region. The fact is to be coupled with the description of the force which advanced against Naḡran. All 'Az'an, that is roughly western Ḥaḍramawt, and Hamdan, the high plateau near Ṣan'a, some of whose inhabitants were treated like Abyssinians, were united with Arabs of the north-east of the kingdom. The princes retired to the north-east presumably because their strength lay there.

Two years earlier there had been a campaign in the reverse direction, recorded in the Wadi Māsil, halfway from Mecca to Riyadh.²

Ma'adi-karib Ya'fur, king of Saba' and Dhu Raydan and Ḥaḍramawt, *ḥdrmt*, and Yamanat and of 'their' Arabs on the plateau and in Tihamat. This inscription is displayed, *hwrv*, and made lasting³ in Ma'sil Gumḥan concerning a campaign⁴ on the heights⁵ of Kat'a, because the Arab (collective), a subject, *qśdm*, excluded them,⁶ and Muḍdir made war with them. Now they went on campaign with their tribes, Saba' and Ḥimyar and

¹ *BH*, Syriac text, 7 b.

² Ry 446, now 510, *Muséon*, lxvi, 307-10.

³ *wf*: land charters were called *wf* as being grants for ever.

⁴ *ʿly mhn šb'tm*: *mhn* is surely an indefinite pronoun, *ma* and *'hn*.

⁵ *'rq*: 'cliff'. If the tribal name Ṣubai' is correctly read, more probably the ranges of Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 109-10, than the hillocks mentioned *ibid.*, 95, though they are called 'Arq al Subai'.

⁶ *lhm qndynhmw ʿrbn*: *lhm* surely consists of the preposition with a pronoun, combined demonstratives, followed by the relative. The *-n* form of the verb cannot here be an infinitive, the usual explanation.

the Raḥabat and Ḥaḍramaut and Yamanat, and began to rage.¹ And with 'their' Arabs were Kiddat and Madḥig. And with bany Ṭa'labat and Muḍdir were Šubai' (?). In the month Dhu Qayẓan of 631.

The Abyssinians were in this year in control of Zafar. The Emperor Anastasius, a friend of the Monophysites, sent a bishop to Ḥimyar,² and the Abyssinians were Monophysites. Ma'adi-karib Ya'fur attacked an alliance of Ṭa'labat and Muḍdir of Ḥirah; Ṭa'labat must be the southern end of the kingdom of Ḥuḡr and Ḥariṭ b. 'Amr. Abram, father of Nonnosos, twice went on missions to Qais, the prince of Kinda and Ma'add, so Byzantium had some connexion with southern Arabia in the time of Anastasius. There is a partial similarity between the political position in era year 631 and that of 662, when 'Abraha al 'Ašram, after repeated requests from Justinian, attacked Ma'add and 'Amr b. Muḍdir intervened. The reason why neither Ḥuḡr nor Ḥariṭ is mentioned does not appear; there is no information about these kings to fill the gap between 500 and 525.³ So far from there being any difficulty about dating the total extrusion of the Abyssinians from Ḥimyar over a decade before the second coming of the Kushites under Kaleb, scattered notices confirm the probability that the reign of Ma'adi-karib coincided with an Abyssinian domination.

Since the invasion of 'Ella 'Ašbeḥa was delayed for lack of shipping, the possibility of an earlier invasion might be questioned. Only the inscriptions at Ḥima and Kawkab mention 'Aš'aran. M. J. Ryckmans has cited Hamdani to prove that 'Aš'aran is the Tihama from south of Zabid to Mūkha.⁴ Much earlier, 'Ēzānā, in both his pagan and his Christian years, was entitled 'king of Aksum and Ḥimyar and Raydan and Ḥabašat⁵ and Saba' and Salḥen' and other African lands. As his inscriptions are triumphal, conquests in Arabia in his time would be mentioned. Professor Enno Littmann must be correct in concluding that the title was inherited.⁶ Perhaps by his time actual control in Arabia had been lost; but there is no proof that the Abyssinians lost all the ports. The route of ships from Adulis by the Arab coast to an Egyptian port at the beginning of the 6th century indicates that they did not.

The king of Ḥimyar in era year 614 was Martad-'ilan Yanūf. An inscription of that year,⁷ about the building of a house at Marib on an irrigated terrace, under the protection of the king, and with the aid and by the authority of Laḥay'at Yanūf Dhu Ḥašbaḥ⁸ and Raḥab-'il 'Aš'ad Dhu Ma'afir, ends with the

¹ *wyhn*: I take this form to be for *yauhinu*, root *whn*, singular for pl. An unknown tribe could not be joined to the nations preceding.

² Theodoros Anagnostes (Lector), ii, 58, quoted *LRE*, ii, 322.

³ See p. 446.

⁴ *Muséon*, lxvi, 333.

⁵ Invariably either Abyssinia, or Abyssinians in their own land. The order is therefore significant. Part of Arabia was included with the African territory, as it is named between Raydan and Saba'.

⁶ *Miscellanea Academiae Berolinensis*, 97-127, especially 107-8. The counter-argument, *Institution*, 309-11, takes no account of the character of the inscriptions.

⁷ Fakhry i, p. 109, fig. 55, ii, pp. 46-9, no. 74.

⁸ Ḥašbaḥ was associated by M. Hartmann with the name of the father of 'Abraha b. aš Šabbah, the grandson of 'Abraha al 'Ašram. On the 'Ašbaḥ and modern Šubaiḥi see Dr. R. B. Serjeant in *Muséon*, lxvi, 126-9.

broken words: 'May the Merciful be favourable. (Thou art L)ord'. This corresponds to the formula of Šarah-'il Yaqbul, and attests Jewish faith; it could not be used by an officer of a Christian king or his princes. A strong case can be made out for believing that from 'Abi-karib 'As'ad to Martad-'ilan the dynasty was Jewish in faith, and connected with Yaṭrib.¹ The reaction against Ma'adi-karib Ya'fur was led by a man who took a Jewish name, but avoided a royal nomen or cognomen of the earlier Jewish kings.

At the beginning of the 6th century the struggles of inter-related royal families were combined with pressure from foreign powers, and the need to maintain trade. Adherents of the Christian and Jewish faiths became associated with political parties.

VIII. THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLE

At a time when an unfounded scepticism as to the existence of any sort of Christianity, and as to the Jewish faith of Dhu Nuwās, was being expressed in England, Dr. Tor Andrae published an essay which included a careful examination of the evidence.² He rightly held in balance the references to, or implications about, both Nestorian and Monophysite influences in the introduction of Christianity into southern Arabia. Though Nestorians were active missionaries, for instance in India and China, the available sources give much less than a reasonable account of their activities in the south owing to their nature. There was a close connexion between Ḥirah and Naḡran and Christian communities at Ḥirah would, as elsewhere in Persian territory, be mainly Nestorian. Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Abyssinia were Monophysite and it is difficult to decide whether some of the 'monotheistic' Sabæan texts were professions of the Jewish or the Christian faith,³ since the Monophysite faith could be expressed in a simple formula. The notable point is the introduction of a Trinitarian formula by Šumu-yafa' 'As'wa', and the continued use of it by 'Abraha.⁴ Both had close political connexions with Byzantium.

Side by side with the Christian missions there was active proselytizing by the Jews, of which the inscriptions provide evidence beginning from the late 4th century. There is no reason to distrust Arab traditions that 'As'ad 'Abu-karib, the 'Abi-karib 'As'ad of the inscriptions, who lived in the first half of the 5th century, accepted the Jewish faith at Yaṭrib; kings of the second half of that century in Ḥimyar professed it. The Talmudic and other Jewish evidence has been collected and carefully discussed.⁵ The rise of the Jewish community to power in Yaṭrib cannot be precisely dated; it was obviously

¹ Clearly put in H. StJ. B. Philby, *The Background of Islam*, 116-9.

² D. Tor Andrae, *Der Ursprung des Islams und das Christentum*, 7-24. Contrast D. S. Margoliouth, *Relations between Arabs and Israelites* (Schweich Lectures), 59-83.

³ Texts published before 1945 were catalogued and discussed by G. Ryckmans in *Miscellanea Historica Alberti De Meyer*, 194-205.

⁴ See pp. 432, 437.

⁵ I owe this information to the kindness of Professor B. Lewis who referred me to Ḥayyim Ze'eb Hirschberg, *Yisra'el ba-'Arab: the Jews in Arabia from the fall of the Second Temple until the Crusaders*. (Modern Hebrew.) Unfortunately I have not had access to this book.

parallel to the rise of the Christian community at Nağran. From before 500 to about 530 the important Jewish trading community was at Yotabē. Abochorabos the phylarch ruled there till 540; after that nothing more is said about Yotabē. Ma'adi-karib Ya'fur, whose reign corresponded to the 'first coming' of the Kushites, was supported by Christians in Nağran, Yusuf, of Jewish faith, decimated that community, 'Abraha, who ultimately gained control of Ṭaif and Mecca, not previously included in any of the Arab kingdoms, is favourably mentioned by Christian writers. The relations of the Jews at Yaṭrib with Samaria and Tiberias is unquestionable, an inclination to look to Persia among some Palestinians is shown by events. Late in 523, or at the beginning of January, 524, Yusuf had to face the opposition of Christian princes in his kingdom and the prospect of an Abyssinian invasion. He wrote to Mundir of Ḥirah. He may have advocated extirpation of Christianity; what he must have wanted to know was whether he could get help. In 525 he was killed, shortly before Justinian appointed Abochorabos; during the war with Persia, the Samaritans rebelled. There is some underlying interconnexion.

There is no reason to believe that the faiths professed were not sincerely held; a reduction of motives in this period to a single interest, religious, political, or economic, is as naïve as in any other century. It would be easy to misinterpret the economic motive of the individual states. Abyssinia was not interested in the Indian trade, as is clear from Procopius; control of ports on the Arab shore of the Red Sea was a vital interest. From the time kings of Ḥimyar added 'of "their" Arabs in Tihamat' to their title, that is from the sole reign of 'Abi-karib 'As'ad, about 440, the political aims of a Christian in Aksum and of a Jewish king in Ḥimyar conflicted. According to Arab historians both Šammar Yuhar'is and 'Abi-karib 'As'ad fought the Persians in India; the details are incredible, the possibility of a conflict over Indian trade undeniable. But it was Justinian's policy, partly economic, partly military, which brought to an end the isolation of Saba' and Ḥimyar, and their independence.

IX. THE ARAB SOURCES

The purpose here has been to interrelate as simply as possible isolated references to events in Arabia during the 6th century. If, as I think, a logical order is imposed by the events,¹ the inscriptions, which supply indubitable evidence, but only as to isolated facts, can now be used to assess the reliability of the sources. In the case of the Greek authors, there will be no need for a revision of opinion. The chronographers' weaknesses have long been known; not many under- or over-estimate Procopius. Not enough attention has sometimes been paid to the Syriac sources owing to their character; rationalist dislike has induced neglect of incidental evidence of value in them. But the first need is a critical appreciation of the Arab sources and their relative value. The impatient method which swept them into a single class, 'the Muhammadan

¹ See Table B. The effect of reckoning the era from 115 B.C. or 110 B.C. can be judged by shifting years marked E.

TABLE B.—DATE LIST

(— before : + after : * approximate)

- E 464 Šarah-b-'il Yakūf king of Ḥimyar : Laḥay'at Yanūf, Nawf and Ma'adikarib Yan'um co-regent.
- 473 Amor-kēsos appointed phylarch by Leo II : Yotabē abandoned.
- 474 'Aswad succeeded Mundir I at Ḥirah : married d. of 'Amr b. Ḥuḡr.
- 476 The Samaritans revolted, set up Justasa as king, and attacked Cæsarea. The revolt was suppressed.
- 488 Accession of Kavadh.
- ? Himyarite saga : Hassan Tubba' sent his sister's son Ḥariṭ b. 'Amr against Ma'add, with Ḥirah as objective.
- 491 Accession of Anastasius I.
- 494 Mundir b. Mundir succeeded 'Aswad at Ḥirah.
- E 496 Martad-'ilan Yanūf king of Ḥimyar.
- 500 Romanus attacked Gamalos (Gabalat) : direct rule at Yotabē.
- 500 Nu'man II b. 'Aswad succeeded at Ḥirah. Skenite Arabs of Nu'man defeated by Eugenios in Euphratesia. Agar son of Arethas (Ḥuḡr b. 'Amr b. Mu'awiya b. Ḥariṭ) driven from border of Palestine by Romanus.
- 502 Kavadh began war with Anastasius.
- 503 Nu'man II of Ḥirah died of a wound fighting for the Persians ; 'Abu Ya'fur b. 'Alqama ruled 2 years at Ḥirah. A Jewish plot to surrender Constantia to Kavadh failed.
- 505 Seven year truce concluded between Persia and Byzantium. Mundir (III) b. Nu'man, also called b. 'Imru 'l-Qais, king of Ḥirah ; married Hind, d. of Ḥariṭ b. 'Amr b. Ḥuḡr.
- 513 First coming of Kushites to Ḥimyar.
- ? Anastasius sent a bishop to Ḥimyar.
- E 513 Ma'adikarib Ya'fur fought for transit through Kat'a against alliance of bany Ta'labat and Mundir III.
- E 515 Campaign of Yusuf 'As'ar, king of Ḥimyar, against Abyssinians in Zafar, Mūkha and Naḡran.
- 518 Justin I Emperor.
- 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa, already *nagaši*, planned invasion of Ḥimyar.
- E 522 Šumu-yafa' 'Aṣwa' fortified Kanē on instructions from Abyssinia, when the king and princes killed Ḥimyarites.
- 523 Yusuf advanced against Naḡran : second persecution. Martyrdoms. Simeon of Beth Aršam informed by Ṭaiyayē and Ma'addayē. Envoy of Yusuf arrived at court of Mundir.
- 524 Simeon wrote to Syria. Daus Dhu Ta'laban appealed to Justin. Daus sent to Aksum. Roman ships impounded.
- 525 Qais (b. Khuza'i) of Ma'add, the refugee, fled from court of Šumu-yafa'.
- 525 Yusuf, unsupported, killed by the Abyssinians in battle by the sea.
- 526 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa appointed Šumu-yafa' king and Abyssinian deputies. Flight of Ḥariṭ b. 'Amr from Diomedos, *dux* of Palestine. Mundir attacked Ghassān ; driven into desert by a Roman army.
- 527 Kavadh began war with Justin.
- Accession of Justinian.
- Ḥariṭ b. Gabalat and 'Abi-karib b. Gabalat appointed Roman phylarchs.

- 529 Julianus, a brigand, king of the Samaritans: Christians murdered. Revolt suppressed. Mass flight of Samaritans.
- 529 Ḥarīṭ b. 'Amr at Ḥirah (Arab sources).
- 531 Embassy of Julianus to 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa and Ṣumu-yafa'. Justinian opened negotiations for peace: refused by Kavadh. Accession of Khusrau I.
- 532 Truce between Justinian and Khusrau. Mundir returned to Ḥirah: responsible for Baḥrain and Yamama.
- 533* Abraha seized sole rule in Ḥimyar: refused tribute to *nagaṣi*.
- 534* 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa sent expeditions against 'Abraha. (Procopius).
- 536* Death of 'Ella 'Aṣbeḥa: recognition of 'Abraha by his successor.
- 540 Silko 'basilikos' of the Noubadai and of all the Ethiopians.
- E 539 Roman attempt to arbitrate between Ḥarīṭ b. Gabala and Mundir. Yazid deputy for 'Abraha in Ḥaḍramawt; opposition by Kidar.
- E Breach of the dam at Marib: the covenant in Ḥimyar.
- E Embassies from Aksum, Rūm and Fars: envoys of Roman phylarchs and Mundir.
- 540 Khusrau began war with Justinian.
- 544 One or more further embassies sent to 'Abraha. (Procopius.)
- E 544 'Abraha's expedition against Ma'add.
- 544–6 Cosmas Indicopleustes published books I–V of the 'Topography'.
- 545 Truce between Justinian and Khusrau.
- 546 Mundir defeated, after killing son of Ḥarīṭ b. Gabala.
- 551 Procopius published the 'Wars'. Samaritans and Jews at Cæsarea revolted and killed the pro-consul Stephanus. Revolt suppressed.
- 554 Mundir killed in battle with Ḥarīṭ b. Gabala. 'Amr succeeded.
- ? 'Abraha appointed Muhammad b. Khuza'i to enforce Christianity.
- ? 'Abu Murrah appealed to Khusrau against 'Abraha.
- 565 Justin II Emperor; repression of Monophysites.
- 568 John Malalas of Antioch published his *Chronography*.
- 569/70 Year of the Elephant. Death of 'Abraha. Plague of small-pox. Death of 'Abdallah b. 'Abd al Muṭṭalib. Birth of the Prophet.
- 570 Interregnum at Ḥirah. Yaksum b. 'Abraha king in Ḥimyar.
- 572 Masrūq b. 'Abraha king in Ḥimyar. Flight of Ma'adi-karib b. Saif 'Abu Murrah from his half-brother Masrūq to Khusrau. War began between Khusrau and Justin II.
- 575 The *vahriz* sent by sea to the Ḥaḍramawt; Masrūq killed in battle. Ma'adi-karib installed king. The *vahriz* departed.
- 577 Qabūs appointed king of Ḥirah. Ma'adi-karib murdered by 'ahabiš; return of the *vahriz*.
- 578 Hormizd IV succeeded Khusrau. Justin II abdicated; Tiberius began attempt at restoration.
- 580 Mundir IV b. Mundir succeeded at Ḥirah.
- 582 Maurice Emperor. Nu'man III b. Mundir at Ḥirah.
- 590 Disorder in Persia.
- 604 Death of Nu'man III; Persian governors appointed.

tradition', supposed to derive entirely from Byzantine literature,¹ is clearly inadequate. They are disparate and difficult to classify. The attempts at continuous historical accounts, compiled in much later periods, are generally negligible. Scattered in them there is material of the first order. The chronology of Hišam, much of the narrative in Hišam and Ibn Ishāq as quoted in Ṭabari, some entries in Mas'ūdi, are demonstrably reliable. Fragments of early verse quoted, so far from being the product of an age later than the Prophet, must be nearly contemporary with events to which they refer. Passages about tribal history² provide the means of understanding the events recorded in inscriptions. Some, for instance, the roll-call of honour after Nihawand, or the ribald rhymes of the girl of the sept 'Āmir b. Ṣa'ṣa'ah,³ illustrate the tribal movement from the south, and define a historical factor often treated too broadly. The most difficult evidence of all is to be found in the 'saga'; as von Kremer said, quoting Franz Rückert, the seed must be sifted from the chaff,⁴ and there is much more seed than some have thought. Hamdani is now generally accepted as reliable. Some of the 'saga' must derive from earlier sources, unknown to, or not mentioned by, him.

Correct appraisal of events in the 6th century will add to or alter a paragraph or so in dealing with the 7th. In 630-1 the Prophet delivered instructions to the envoy of Ḥimyarite princes, worded like a diplomatic ultimatum,⁵ showing full knowledge of the Christian and Jewish parties, and of the survival of paganism. Dr. R. B. Serjeant has collected Sabaeen *graffiti* near the reputed tomb of the prophet Hūd which are not likely to be later than the 6th century⁶; with whom did the Prophet count these adherents of another prophet, whose existence can no longer be regarded as a convenient fiction?⁷ Events of the time of Qais, the Kinda and Muḍir were known; what was the reason for the appointment of a Persian governor, which provoked the resistance of Qais b. Makšūh and 'Amr b. Ma'adi-karib?

Details may require consideration. Social conditions in Arabia demand a

¹ The last re-statement of this view known to me is in *BH*, xlv-xlviii. Detailed arguments, e.g. that of Moberg about the reference in the Koran to the Naḡran martyrdoms, frequently break down. ṬUkhduḍ explains itself.

² e.g. Mas'ūdi, iii, 122: 'there are many accounts about Quraiš, Ġurhum, Khuza'a and the others of Ma'add': iii, 391-2, the wars of Ghassān and Ma'add.

³ Mas'ūdi, iv, 236-241: vi, 137-55. Contrast the many cases cited in von Wissmann-Höfner which prove that tribes still occupy territory they held in pre-Islamic centuries.

⁴ von Kremer, *Ueber die sudarabische Saga*, vi. von Kremer himself frequently anticipated points subsequently proved. So far as I can judge the references in the traditionalists are, by comparison, worthless.

⁵ Ibn Hišam, 963, quoted in Muir-Weir, 456, as 'curious'. The pagan sticks are figured in A. Grohmann, *Göttersymbole und Symboltiere*.

⁶ Published by Professor G. Ryckmans in *Muséon*, lxvii, 181-5. The monogram in nos. 2 and 10, read *hb*, should I think be regarded as that of the tribe Ḥabum, and compared with the monogram *yz* for Yaz'an. The interpretation as a statement, 'he loved', cannot be considered natural in this case; the occurrence of *hb* in *graffiti* not in holy places is another matter. Ḥabum was a section of Yaz'an. There were adherents of Hūd among the Jews and Christians there.

⁷ This seems to be the view taken in Muir-Weir, 51-2, and in D. S. Margoliouth, *Mohammed*, 131.

new treatment. The land was not, before the appearance of the Prophet, a closed box, in which there were a few Jews and Christians, isolated from the great states. Lop-sided views have been induced from quaint stories of the *jahiliyah*, and the abiding Arab predilection for nomad ways. Only the accidental literary emphasis seems to justify conclusions that would not apply to Syria or 'Irāq. Paganism, suppressed and illiterate, survived in Syria till the time of the Abbasids. Some inkling of the extent of pagan survivals in 'Iraq can be formed from Lady Drower's work on the Mandæans. There were thriving cities in Arabia, old foundations, as civilized as any in Syria or 'Iraq, and perhaps as large, apart from Antioch and Madain. The Christian and Jewish communities were large, and not mainly foreigners. Arabs had faced the formidable Abyssinians. Military leaders had fought men trained in Persian armies on equal terms. Princes had dealt with international affairs.

Mecca remained pagan, in a small region where each city remained independent. But the rise of the Quraiš to wealth and importance was sudden. 'Abraha's attack on the Ka'ba was the first known recognition of the fact. There must be many unknown causes to account for the phenomenon. A later event shows the importance attached to Jiddah. An expedition, sent by the Prophet against that town and the 'ahabiš, pursued the enemy to an unnamed island¹; it should be Yotabē. The decline in the commercial importance of that place may have been due to the diversion of trading vessels to Jiddah, attracted by lower charges and through transit to the Damascus region offered by Quraiš. The attraction of the annual fair at a pagan centre is sufficient explanation of the stubborn maintenance of the old religion.

By the third quarter of the 6th century the economic system began to break down. Governments collapsed. In Persia this took the form of a disputed succession, as often before and since. The last of the Arab kings died at Ḥirah in 604; the direct government by Persians produced the conditions of 634-5. At the end of the reign of Justinian the industrial and financial conditions were calamitous²; the Empire never recovered fully. The peripheral regions were affected. The kingdom of Aksum passed away. In spite of the *a priori* doubts that have been expressed, the weakness in Abyssinia shown during the negotiations with the Prophet accords with the lack of information from Ethiopic sources. In southern Arabia, Persian rule, probably never extending far, petered out to an unknown end; the old kingdom split up. Colonel van der Meulen and Mr. Ingrams have shown that Ḥaḍramawt cannot be maintained by a closed economy; in modern times it has exported men, in the 7th century the men went north. Saba' disappeared, absorbed by Yamanat, not a part of

¹ Ibn Sa'ad, 117-8, quoted in Muir-Weir, 436. The attack implies that Jiddah belonged to Quraiš. The Abyssinians were not subjects of the *nagasi*, but settlers there, who frequently served as professional soldiers and the like; see Father H. Lammens, *L'Arabie occidentale avant l'Hégire*, 244-57.

² G. Ostrogorsky, *Geschichte des byzantinischen Staates*, 48: 'wirtschaftlich und finanziell völlig zerrüttet'.

the earlier kingdom. The final breach of the dam at Marib was not the cause of more than a local, temporary, breakdown, but it was the symptom of decay in a state comparatively prosperous for over a thousand years. When Arab kings and princes in Ḥimyar, Oman, Bahrain accepted Islam, their action was a tacit admission that Mecca and Yatrib had become the leading cities in their world.

The Arab sources are not explicit about the main trends. When it is recognized that much in their accounts is not incompatible with the known facts, modern judgments on what is probable and improbable will have to be modified.

30th June, 1954.