

Yosef Dhu Nuwas, a Sadducean King with Sidelocks

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Abstract:

This paper traces the history and fortunes of the Hellenizing Jewish family of the Tobiads from their Persian roots, to their founding of a petty kingdom at 'Iraq al-Amir, to the Nabatean wars, to the Tubba kings of Himyar. It explores 3rd to 6th century Arabia as an extension of the Second Commonwealth, and a direct descendant of the Tobiad petty kingdom. It also covers the loss of a replica of the Ark of the Covenant adorned even today with the Tobiad/Himyar dove, now buried under a church in Axum, Ethiopia; and discusses the linguistic derivations of Saracen, *mushreqoon* and "Dhu Nuwas".

The Tobiads

The history of the Tobiads dynasty has both fascinated and challenged historians and archeologists. It spans over a thousand years, covering what might be called the entire "Biblical Period". We first learn of this dynasty through the mention of the Levitical judge Tobiyah sent by the Judean king Yehoshaphat around 849 BCE.¹ Next we learn of the Tobiad tax-collectors in the Lachish ostraca, often dated immediately prior to the Babylonian captivity around 586 BCE.² Much of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah concern Tobias the Ammonite, covering the years 538-413 BCE. There is mention of the governors of the Trans-Euphrates in the Elephantine papyri, a generation later, 495-399 BCE. In the Zenon papyri, the Tobiads are influential Jewish landowners in Trans-Jordan, before 260 BCE.³ Josephus documents the Hellenizing activities of the Tobiads immediately prior to the Maccabean revolt 205-167 BCE,⁴ information echoed by the author of 2 Maccabees.⁵ Josephus leaves open a possible connection between the Tobiads and the Herodians.⁶ Lastly we read of the Jewish prince "Tobiyah" described by Moses of Khorene who is said to have introduced Thaddæus, and thus Christianity, to Edessa (in modern day Şanlıurfa, Turkey). This Tobiyah is said to be the ancestor of the Armenian-Georgian royal family of Bagratuni and by some accounts the basis of their claim to "descent from King David".⁷



Tobiad Palace 'Iraq al-Amir

There has been significant research concerning the Tobiads Dynasty on the basis of textual evidence and archaeological excavations at their palace in 'Iraq al-Amir, Jordan.⁸ We know that the Tobiads played a prominent part in the process of Hellenization of the Jewish people. They supported first the Ptolemaic and later the Seleucid regimes in their control over the Land of Israel. Most research has focused on the Hellenistic period, but since the discovery of the Lachish ostraca and the Elephantine papyri, a great deal of attention has also been made on the post-exilic period of the Jewish people. However with the successful Maccabean revolt against Hellenism, almost all mention of the Tobiads ceases, and likewise the attention of scholars.

Moses of Khorene, however, traces a glorious continuation of the dynasty in the form of the royal family of Bagratuni, kings of Armenia. This is not the only royal family which claimed a connection to the Tobiads, however. We wish to explore the proposed relationship between the Tobiads and the Tubba' kings of

¹ 2 Chronicles 17:3-8, 19:4-8

² Lachish Ostraca 3 and 5

³ Zenon papyri (C. P. Jud. 1; C. P. Jud. 4-5)

⁴ Antiquities of the Jews 7:4

⁵ 2 Maccabees 3:11.

⁶ In an obscure quote, both Josephus' Antiquities Chapter 13.5.8 and 1 Maccabees 12:16 refer to an "Antipater son of Jason". We will explore below the possibility of a tradition connecting the Tobiads with what would become the House of Herod. Clearer evidence, however, can be evinced archeologically at the Tobiad palace at 'Iraq al-Amir, which itself is a masterpiece of Herodian architecture and masonry.

⁷ *History of Armenia*, attributed to Moses of Khorene, chapter 7

⁸ *A New Look at the Tobiads in Iraq al-Amir*, by C. C. Ji, SBF Liber Annuus, 1998

Himyar, a dynasty which controlled much of Arabia during late antiquity. The purpose of this paper is to understand who the Tobiads were, what was the extent of their kingdom, and the nature of their religion. By documenting the transition of Tobiads of Syria to the Tubba's of southern Arabia, we hope to provide a key to understanding the context, identity and religious system of the residents of Medina on the eve of Islam.

Tobiyah the Levite under King Yehoshaphat 873-849 BCE

In the book of 2 Chronicles, Yehoshaphat, the king of Judah, is recorded as having an official from the tribe of Levi, whose name was Tobiyah. Of course modern scholarship has no way to determine the genealogical relationship, if any, between this Tobiyah and the Tobiad dynasty, but traditional rabbinic literature views this official as the first dignitary of the Tobiad dynasty.⁹ It has been noted that Tobiah (or Tobiyah) is a name comprised of the word *Tov* meaning "good" and *Y-H* which is derived from the name of God unique to Judaism. This seems to indicate a thoroughly Jewish name, and for a Levite, the name is not at all unusual. This point will be important we consider below whether the Tobiads were "Jewish" or not.

According to biblical law, within the tribal system of Israel, the Levites performed a primarily supportive role to the priesthood. Levites naturally required a certain amount of education and training to perform their duties. In the course of time this evolved into a semi-governmental position where they were teachers, the transcribers and interpreters of the law, and chroniclers of the times in which they lived. In the period that followed the Babylonian exile, the Levites contributed to the formation of the *Knesset Hagedolah* (Great Synagogue) and together with the priests, formed the majority of the proto-Sanhedrin. In this way they had a large share in the administration of justice even in capital cases.¹⁰

A function closely related to the interpretation of the law was that of prophecy. Both prophecy and jurisprudence shared the common goal of elucidating and applying the law. Even today, the *Shulchan Aruch*, the classical work of Jewish law, is called by the names of the *Urim ve'Tumim*, the gemstones of the High Priests breastplate used by kings and prophets for divining matters of law, government policy, and military campaigns. It is not unexpected that the vast majority of Judaic prophets were priests or Levites, and the Levitical families maintained a connection, more or less intimate, with the schools of the prophets.

From the narrative in 2 Chronicles 17:3, it can be seen that Yehoshaphat, king of Judah, pursued a policy of intensive religious and judicial reform to counter the effects of the revolt of the ten tribes and the policy pursued by Yeroboam, king of Israel. He sent his officials Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah to teach in the cities of Judah, accompanied by the Levites Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Yehonathan, Adoniyah, Tobiyah, and Tov-Adoniyah, and by the priests Elishama and Yehoram. For the first time we hear of significant tax revenues being collected. The later Tobiads were sometimes referred to as the governors of Amman. They were also known as far-reaching and great tax-collectors for whatever government was ruling in the Land of Israel, the Persians, Ptolemies, Seleucids or Romans. It is possible that Yehoshaphat's official "Tobiyah" was the first of the dynasty to engage in tax farming for the ruling powers.

Other than tax-farming however, this Tobiyah seemed to be limited to "judge on behalf of the Lord and to settle disputes among the residents of Jerusalem"¹¹ and "The Levites will serve as officials before you."¹² The division between religious and sovereign authority was clearly made even at this early date. Amariah, the chief priest, would be responsible for all matters pertaining to the Lord's law, and Zevadiah, of the royal house, would be responsible in all matters pertaining to the king. Zevadiah son of Ishmael was a leader of the family of Judah, and of mixed Edomite-Judahite ancestry. From this we also see that the royal house of Judah had intermarried with the house of Edom.

Tobiads in the Lachish ostraca

The Lachish ostraca are a collection of approximately twenty inscribed potsherds, discovered in 1935 and 1938 in *Tell ed-Duweir*, located in the coastal plain of Israel, in an area identified with the ancient city of Lachish. At one time Lachish was the second most important city of the kingdom of Judah. In 586 BCE, Lachish was devastated by the Assyrians. It remained unoccupied until the time of Nehemiah when he says

⁹ Mazar reviews the more definitive and proposed references to the Tobiad dynasty over several centuries in "The Tobiads", 137-45, 229-38.

¹⁰ Smith's Bible Dictionary, "Levite".

¹¹ 2 Chronicles 19:4

¹² Ibid.

it had a "remnant of Israel."¹³ Excavation at Lachish revealed a set of ostraca written in the oldest examples known of Hebrew script.¹⁴ They were found in a burnt layer (level II) immediately beneath the mid-fifth century Persian layer and thus seem to have been written very shortly before the Babylonian sack of Jerusalem in 586 BCE, perhaps ranging up to three or four years before that event.^{15 16}

The following are some quotes from these letters:

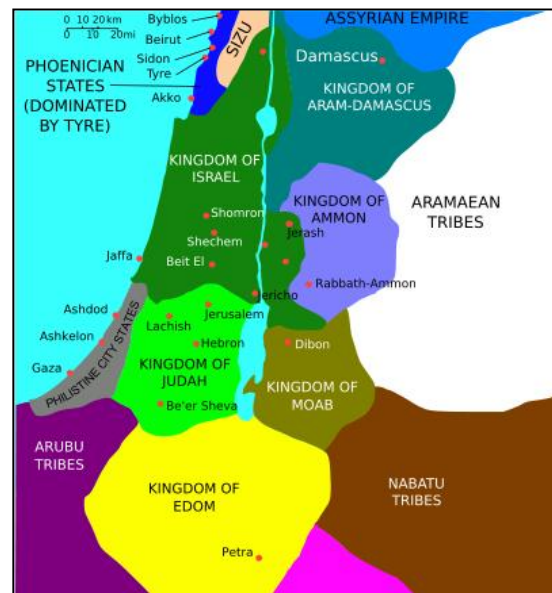
Your servant Hoshayahu has sent (this letter) to report to my lord Yaush: May the LORD let my lord hear a report of well being and a report of goodness. And now, please open the eyes) of your servant as to (the purpose of) the letter that he sent to your servant last night, for the heart of your servant has been sick since you sent (it) to your servant. For my lord said: "You don't know how to read it!" As The LORD lives, nobody has ever attempted to read for me a letter! And moreover, every letter that comes to me, when I have read it, afterwards I can repeat it (in) detail! Now your servant has received (a report) saying (that) the military general Koniyah son of 'El-Natan has gone down to enter Egypt. Concerning Hodavyahu son of 'Ahiyahu and his men, he has sent (word) to take them from here. And (as for) the letter of Tobiyahu, servant of the king (that) came to Shallum son of Yada' from the prophet¹⁷ saying "Beware," your servant is sending it to my lord. (Ostrakon 3)¹⁸

May The LORD allow my lord to witness a good harvest today. Is Tobiyahu going to send royal grain to your servant? (Ostrakon 5)¹⁹

The letters appear to be the communications between a military commander Yaush and someone of lower rank called Hoshayahu. They testify to literacy well beyond the government and scribes, even among the soldiers. The ostraca mention prominently a keeper of royal grain called Tobiyahu. B. Mazar traces the genealogy of the Tobiads to the Tobiyahu of the Lachish ostraca²⁰, though not all scholars agree.²¹ The ostraca combined with the Zenon papyri and Josephus make a strong case for Mazar's proposition of a Tobiad dynasty of Trans-Jordanian tax-collectors.

It is difficult to reconstruct a single historical context for the letters based on such a limited sample. But it is apparent that the Babylonian invasion of Judah had not yet begun since one could travel in some safety from Lachish to Jerusalem, and harvesting crops in the Lachish's environs was still possible. It is in this context that another letter informs us of an Israelite military commander who was sent to Egypt, probably to obtain military support from Pharaoh Apries (589-570 BCE) in the imminent war against Babylon.

One distinctive feature found in the ostraca, but not found in Yehoshaphat's Tobiyah is the title "Tobiah servant (or slave) of the king" in ostrakon 3:19. It is possible that the term servant/slave simply means a royal official. However, several generations later²²



Israelite kingdom immediately prior to the Babylonian Exile

¹³ Nehemiah 11:30

¹⁴ Persia & Creation of Judaism, Book 6., Dating Ancient Near Eastern History (Part II), by Peter James; CAIS The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies, 1998

¹⁵ Mazar 1957, 229-238

¹⁶ Some scholars, identifying the Tobiad in the Lachish ostraca as the identical to that of Ezra-Nehemiah, date the ostraca to the post-exilic period. Cf. Persia & Creation of Judaism, Book 6., Dating Ancient Near Eastern History (Part II), by Peter James; CAIS The Circle of Ancient Iranian Studies, 1998.

¹⁷ Often assumed to be Jeremiah, however on circumstantial and uncertain grounds. "The Prophet" in the Lachish Ostraca D. Winton Thomas, M.A. Regius Professor of Hebrew and Fellow of St. Catharine's College, Cambridge.; The Tyndale Old Testament Lecture, 1945

¹⁸ "The Lachish Ostraca." by Prof. Scott B. Noegel Chair, Dept. of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization University of Washington; First Published in: Mark W Chavalas, ed. *The Ancient Near East: Historical Sources in Translation* London: Blackwell (2006), 400-403.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Mazar 1957, 229-238

²¹ Eskenazi 1992, 585.

²² If B. Mazar's reconstruction is correct, the name Tobiah alternates over at least nine generations of *Tobiads*. This is supported by newly published Ammonite inscriptions.

Nehemiah would use the term "Tobiah, the Ammonite slave."²³

Ammonite "Slaves"

Ammon or Ammonites, known as the "children of Ammon," were referred to in the Bible, Assyrian and other records as a people living east of the Jordan river. The biblical tradition traces their origin to an illegitimate son of Lot, the nephew of the patriarch Abraham, as with the Moabites. The Ammonites were regarded by Jewish tradition as close relatives of the Israelites and Edomites. Attacks by the Ammonites on Israelite communities east of the Jordan were the primary reason behind the unification of the tribes under Saul, who defeated them.

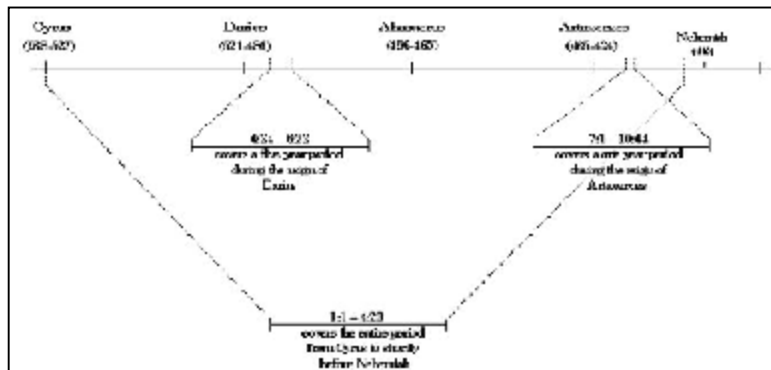
In 2 Samuel 12:31, King David is described enslaving the Ammonites: "put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon". David's treatment of the captives is generally interpreted to mean that he employed them as laborers in various public works. At this time the Ammonites and other neighboring peoples in the Trans-Jordan, received the definition of "slave" according to Jewish law. The class system of "slave" would persist through the matrilineal line, even if the sovereign no longer exercised authority over them.

In the time of Nebuchadnezzar, the Ammonites seem to have been fickle in their political attitude. They assisted the Babylonian army against the Jews; encroached upon the territory of the Gad; and occupied Heshbon and Yazer; but the prophetic threatening in Jeremiah 9:26, 25:21, 27:3, and Ezra, 21:20, point to rebellion by them against Babylonian supremacy. They received Jews fleeing before the Babylonians (Jeremiah 40:11), and their king Baalis, instigated the murder of Gedaliah, the Babylonians' Jewish governor of Jerusalem and its environs by the Edomite-Judahite prince Ishmael.

It is possible that the Tobiad governors of Ammon, after intermarrying with the Ammonite royal family inherited the epithet "the Ammonite slave". Since this servitude derives from the conquest of royalty, and his affairs were not regulated day to day by his "master", the Trans-Jordanian "slave" would have several advantages. He would be considered a Jew and partake of the Temple sacrifices. But he would only be bound by the laws "which are not time-bound", releasing him from the performance of most ritual. In this way the Tobiad tax-collectors, through their marriage alignments with the Ammonite royal family, would become "slaves" to the king, fully Jews but released from most ritual, free to pursue prophetic or philosophical interests according to their tastes. The Tobiads appear to have done both.

Declaration of Cyrus, 538BCE

One of the most well known events involving the Tobiads was Tobiah's interaction with Ezra and Nehemiah during the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple. In order to understand the political tensions and the internal situation within the Trans-Euphrates, including Judea, Samaria and elsewhere following the return in 539BCE from the Babylonian captivity, we need to understand the context and mechanism of that return.



The historian Ben Sasson proposes that upon conquering the Babylon Empire, Cyrus, embarked on a policy of reconciliation with his new subjects. This policy stood in marked contrast with the bitter rule of Nabonidus the last Babylonian king, who had heavily taxed his subjects and ordered all the temples of his empire closed and their idols removed and brought to protect the capital city. Perhaps wishing to present himself as a restorer of religion and order in Babylon and benefactor of all his subjects, Cyrus issued decrees allowing the rebuilding of temples, and the return of their idols, throughout his empire.²⁴

²³ Nehemiah 4:1

²⁴ "A History of the Jewish People" edited by H.H. Ben-Sasson, 1976, p 166.

The proclamation by Cyrus to the exiles of Judah in Babylon permitting them to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem appears to be one of several examples of Cyrus policy of restoration and rebuilding of temples.²⁵ The proclamation was made during his first year of rule after conquering the Babylonian Empire. Most historians date this event to 538 BCE.²⁶ This was followed by several attempts, eventually successful, over several generations, to restart the Jewish sacrificial system, rebuild the Temple, and enclose the Temple area with a wall.

The books of Ezra and Nehemiah describe these events. The main characters in these books are Zerubavel (later Nehemiah), Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite and Geshmu the Arab.²⁷ It is generally assumed that Zerubavel was "Jewish" and Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshmu were native non-Jewish "adversaries of Judah and Benjamin" (Ezra 4:1). The books of Ezra and Nehemiah lend themselves to the simplistic explanation that once the Temple was destroyed, the "Jews" were exiled to Babylon. Afterwards non-Jewish colonists were moved into the Land of Israel in their place. When the "Jews" returned in 549BCE, they started to rebuild the Temple. The local (non-Jewish) population wanted to participate in the construction of the Temple, but was denied. This led to strife and conflict between non-Jew and Jew led by Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshmu against the governors of Judah.

However, upon closer examination the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, and in light of archaeological findings, this simplistic explanation does not stand up to critical review. Modern scholarship suggests that Zerubavel, Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshmu were governors appointed by the Persia government for military, religious, taxation and general administration purposes. It also appears that they were each from leading families among the Jews in Babylon and returning exiles. The local population was an admixture of colonists, poorer Jewish families that had remained, and neighboring ethnic groups that had expanded into what was once the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.²⁸

David Hughes goes further and suggests that these "leading families" were related to the Jewish royal family and the previous governors of each respective area.²⁹ Sanballat believed himself to be related to the royal line through the kings of Israel. Tobias was on his paternal side a Levite, and on his maternal side believed himself to be a descendant of the princes of Manasseh. These princes were governors of Ammon, Moab and Edom and through them he claimed to be related to the royal line. Geshmu was a descendant of the Jewish governors over Nabatu and Sheba, and through them to royal line. According to this theory, when Cyrus sent governors to rule over what had once been Israel and Judah, he sent men from the royal family, descendants of the former rulers of those areas. These men functioned as tax farmers for the Persian government. In order to gain acceptance with the local population and facilitate the collection of taxes they heavily intermarried with the local population, except for those associated with the "tribes of Judah and Benjamin".

Critical analysis of the text of Ezra and Nehemiah reveals that sets of four occur throughout the text: four governors, four regional districts, four high priests, four scribes, etc. Yet we find that "Jerusalem ruled throughout the entire Trans-Euphrates" (Ezra 4:20). This would imply that the Temple and religious hierarchy in Jerusalem was to function for "all of Israel" throughout the Trans-Euphrates, from Egypt to southern Syria. Thus political tension in the Land of Israel would not necessarily be centered on ethnic and religious strife, but rather on the fact that the governors, Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshmu were put in a position where they had to pay for a religious system over which they had no control, "From the taxes of Trans-Euphrates the complete costs are to be given to these men" (Ezra 6:8) This would explain the two-fold resistance to the Temple in Jerusalem, first when it has decreed that there would be a single Temple and priesthood throughout the Trans-Euphrates, and secondly when it was allowed that the Judeans could build a wall around the Temple restricting control to a single political group.

By following the "sets of four" that occur throughout the text, it can be seen that the Persian governors paralleled each other in many ways, with the exception that the religious prerogative had been specially endowed on the governor of Judea, as detailed in the following table:

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Secular historians identify 538 BCE as the year Cyrus conquered the Babylonian empire and issued his proclamations. Traditional Jewish sources identify the year as 371 BCE. This is calculated by the 18 years between the proclamation and the rebuilding of the second Temple, and the 420 years it stood before being destroyed in 70 CE. Thus Jewish tradition assigns only 52 years to Persian rule (370-318 BCE), whereas secular history dates it at 208 years (538-330 BCE) – History of the Jewish People, The Second Temple Era, The Artscroll History Series, by Rabbis Nosson Sherman and Meir Zlotowitz, Mesorah Publications, Jerusalem, 1979.

²⁷ Nehemiah 2:10,19

²⁸ *The Political Tensions Reflected in Ezra-Nehemiah* by Carl Schultz, Ph.D., Houghton College, Houghton, Pickwick Publications 1980.

²⁹ This material is taken from David Hughes unpublished manuscript, "Davidic Dynasty"

**Persian Governance of Trans-Euphrates
(as described in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah)**

	Judah	Samaria	Trans-jordan	Arabia
<i>Ezra 1:11</i>	Sheshbazzar governor			
Prince <i>Ezra 2:60</i>	Zerubavel son of Shealtiel	descendants of Delaiah	descendants of Tobiah	descendants of Nekoda
High Priest <i>Ezra 2:60</i>	Yeshua son of Yehozadak	descendants of Hobaiah	descendants of Hakkoz	descendants of Barzillai (the Gileadite)
<i>Ezra 3:1</i>	the Israelites were living in their towns, the people assembled in Jerusalem			
<i>Ezra 4:1</i>	Judah and Benjamin	the enemies of Judah and Benjamin		
Wrote to the King <i>Ezra 4:7</i>		Bishlam	Mithredath	Tabeel
<i>Ezra 4:8</i>		Rehum the commander	Shimshai the scribe	colleagues
<i>Ezra 4:9</i>	<i>Judea was deserted</i>	Babylonians	Erechites	People of Susa (Elamites)
<i>Ezra 4:10-11</i>	Jerusalem	Samaria	other places in Trans-Euphrates	
<i>Ezra 4:20</i>	Jerusalem ruled throughout the entire Trans-Euphrates			
The officials <i>Ezra 5:3,6 6:12</i>	Zerubavel governor of the Jews	Tattenai governor of Trans-Euphrates	Shethar-Bozenai	colleagues
Temple Tax <i>Ezra 6:8</i>	From the taxes of Trans-Euphrates the complete costs are to be given to these men			
<i>Ezra 8:35</i>	They presented the decrees of the king to the king's satraps and to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, who gave help to the people and to the temple of God.			
<i>Zechariah 6:9</i>	Zechariah's symbolic crowning of Yehoshua as high priest. "This will all come to pass if you completely obey the voice of the Lord your God."			
<i>Zechariah 6:10</i>	Yehosiah son of Zephaniah	Heldai	Tobiyah	Yedaiah
<i>Zechariah 6:14</i>	Hen son of Zephaniah	Helem	Tobiyah	Yedaiah
Completion of the Temple <i>Ezra 6:16</i>	The people of Israel the priests, the Levites, and the rest of the exiles observed the dedication of this temple of God with joy. For the dedication of this temple of God they offered one hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs, and twelve male goats for the sin of all Israel, according to the number of the tribes of Israel.			
The Passover <i>Ezra 6:21</i>	The Israelites who were returning from the exile ate it, along with all those who had joined them in separating themselves from the uncleanness of the nations of the land to seek the Lord God of Israel.			
High Priest <i>Ezra 7:1</i>	Ezra			
<i>Ezra 7:21,27</i>	I, King Artaxerxes, hereby issue orders to all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates, that you precisely execute all that Ezra the priestly scribe of the law of the God of heaven may request of you ... [Ezra will] appoint judges and court officials who can arbitrate cases on behalf of all the people who are in Trans-Euphrates who know the laws of your God. Those who do not know this law should be taught.			

The Proclamation <i>Ezra 10:7-8</i>	A proclamation was circulated throughout Judah and Jerusalem that all the exiles were to be assembled in Jerusalem. Everyone who did not come within three days would thereby forfeit all his property, in keeping with the counsel of the officials and the elders. Furthermore, he himself would be excluded from the assembly of the exiles.			
<i>Ezra 10:9</i>	Went up	Did not go up		
Prince <i>Neh 2:7</i>	Nehemiah governor of Judea			
<i>Neh 2:10,19</i>		Sanballat the Horonite	Tobiah the Ammonite	Geshem the Arab
Building Wall <i>Neh 4:1-7</i>		Army of Samaria people of Ashdod	Ammonites	Arabs
Prophets <i>Neh 6:10</i>	Haggai, Zechariah, Zephaniah (father of Yehosiah)	Shemaiah son of Delaiah son of Mehetabel	Noadiah the prophetess	other prophets
<i>Neh 12:47</i>	All Israel was contributing the portions for the singers and gatekeepers, according to the daily need. They also set aside the portion for the Levites, and the Levites set aside the portion for the descendants of Aaron.			
Intermarriage <i>Neh 13:23</i>		Women from Ashdod	Women from Ammon	Women from Moab

The Return, Unity and Division

Nine years before Cyrus died, Zerubavel brought the exiles from Babylon to Jerusalem along with huge sums of gold and silver from the royal treasury and voluntary gifts from the local Jewish community and Temple sympathizers.³⁰ Jewish families came from all over Iraq in a great procession of families to resettle the former Israelite kingdom. Include among these were the noble families of: descendants of Delaiah [Sanballat], the descendants of Tobiah, and the descendants of Nekoda [Geshmu].

These last families are immediately qualified with the note "although they were unable to certify their family connection or their ancestry, as to whether they really were from Israel"³¹ and "They searched for their records in the genealogical materials, but did not find them."³² It is normally assumed these families had assimilated in Babylon. But considering that these were some of the noblest families, families who helped repair the walls of the city, intermarried with the Prophets and had their own Priests and Levites, this is hard to understand. Some of the priests listed, for example the descendants of Hakkoz, even served in the Second Temple under Herod. On closer examination another explanation can be seen. It appears that the fact that they were "unable to certify their family" may have been deliberate – due to their refusal to come to the convocation at Jerusalem:



**Building an altar for all of Israel
(all the people in the Trans-Euphrates)**

And they made proclamation throughout Judah and Jerusalem unto all the children of the captivity, that they should gather themselves together unto Jerusalem; and that whosoever came not within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, *all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of the captivity.* (Ezra 10:6)

This it appears that these noble families were originally accepted as "Jewish", and appointed by Persia as leaders of the Jewish people throughout the Trans-Euphrates. This is confirmed by the Aramaic papyri of Elephantine, which directly address Sanballat and others in Jerusalem concerning matters of Jewish law and support of the sacrificial altar in Yeb. It is also confirmed by Josephus, when members of the Tobiad

³⁰ Ezra 1:11

³¹ Ezra 2:59

³² Ezra 2:62

dynasty became high priests in Jerusalem at that time. Their lineage was not in question, but rather their commitment to Jewish tradition was in doubt.

But for the moment, these questions of lineage had not arisen. Seven months after the return of the exiles from Babylon, they assembled in Jerusalem to build an altar. The interplay between the usage of the word "Israel" and the word "Jews" in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah is instructive. At this assembly, it is one of the last times the word "Israel" is used in its inclusive sense. They established the altar. The priesthood of Yehoshua the son of Yehozadak was inaugurated. They resumed the daily sacrifices as required by Law of Moses, morning and evening. They observed the holiday of Succoth, and offerings for new moons and other holidays. All of Israel offered sacrifices and they enjoyed some kind of unity, however no walls had been erected, and the Temple had not yet been built.

There was fear from the local non-Jewish population, but this fear was not rooted in competition from a local priesthood. Zerubabel had not yet declined local participation in the building of the Temple nor had they suggested building any walls. Apparently the fear was rooted in the fact that the local population resented the fact that the Persian governors came as tax-collectors and representatives of a vast distant empire.³³ Some tax-collectors were ruthless, collecting exorbitant amounts and enjoying the profits of their labors.

Building a Temple and Establishing a Priesthood in Jerusalem

Cyrus' proclamation recognized the former influence of Jerusalem as the spiritual capital of the Trans-Euphrates. Cyrus knew that "powerful kings" had reigned in Jerusalem who ruled throughout the entire Trans-Euphrates.³⁴ This appeared to be his model to collect "tribute, custom, and toll".³⁵ There would be four governors who would oversee tax-collection, and a single Temple and judicial system to unite the people and quell rebellious tendencies. These governors would restore the ancient glory of Solomon's kingdom, but as a vassal to the Persian Empire. The tax-collectors could indulge themselves as long as the proper tribute was relayed to the Persian treasuries.³⁶

Cyrus' and later Darius' insistence on a single, central religious center was explicit. They gave orders that the complete costs for the construction of the Temple would be taken from the royal taxes of Trans-Euphrates. This included oxen, rams, lambs for burnt offerings, wheat, salt, wine and oil, whatever required by the priests in Jerusalem. These provisions were to be given daily. The Temple was to be in the service of the royal family, providing prayers for the good fortune of the king and his family. Furthermore, if anyone disobeyed these directives, "a beam is to be pulled out from his house and he is to be raised up and impaled on it, and his house is to be reduced to a rubbish heap for this indiscretion."

The single Temple was to be the centerpiece of a unified legal system as well. Years later, King Artaxerxes would solidify this authority by decrees to "all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates", that they should precisely execute all the legislation of Jerusalem. Jerusalem would appoint judges and court officials who would arbitrate cases on behalf of *all the people* of the Trans-Euphrates.³⁷

The leadership in Jerusalem was invested by Persian ruler with tremendous power, and both the local population and the governors wanted part of this.

Setting up a sacrificial altar seemed to be a right recognized both by the local population and the Persians. Cooperation resulted in sacrifices being brought from all areas of the Trans-Euphrates, and it is reasonable to assume that each area was represented by its own local priesthood and prophets. In addition to non-Israelite priesthoods, and Jerusalem's Yehoshua son of Yehozadak, there were the Samaritan descendants of Hobaiah, the Trans-Jordanian descendants of Hakkoz, and the Arabian descendants of Barzillai, all returning exiles from Babylon, and all claiming descent from the legitimate priesthood of Israel.³⁸ Prophets too abounded. Jerusalem had Haggai, Zechariah and Zephaniah. Samaria had Shemaiah, Trans-Jordan had Noadiah the prophetess, and Arabia had "other prophets".³⁹

³³ Nehemiah 5:15

³⁴ Ezra 4:20

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Nehemiah 5:14

³⁷ Ezra 7:21,27

³⁸ Ezra 2:60

³⁹ Neh 6:10

The first problem appears to have occurred when there was a desire on the part of the leaders in Jerusalem to build a Temple. Unlike an altar, which is an open space open to all, a Temple is enclosed and implies a priesthood in attendance. The "local population" wished to have a share in the building of the Temple, and an implicit share in the priesthood. A share in the actual building of the Temple, or its costs, cannot have been the main objection, because in Solomon's day Hiram donated materials to the construction of the First Temple, and in Ezra's day, supplies and "complete expenses" were to be supplied by the royal treasury, from the taxes collected from this same "local population": The main objection lay in the "right" and "commandment" to build the temple, i.e. the divine selection of particular descendants of Aaron, as confirmed by Jerusalem alone, to serve in the Temple for the benefit of the entire Trans-Euphrates. The rejection of the local priesthods brought the wrath of the local population on the vastly outnumbered Jewish leadership, and brought the construction of the Temple to a halt.

Although the names of the other governors, Sanballat, Tobias and Gashmu are not yet mentioned, it can be assumed that they supported the local population, as they lent the use of their scribes and officials to address the Persian Kings.

What began as an attempt to restore the form of the great Solomonic Empire in the Trans-Euphrates, and the "rebuilding the temple which was previously built many years ago", ended with religious fragmentation and the building of multiple altars throughout the area. Altars and priesthods sprung up in Egypt (Elephantine), Samaria, Trans-Jordan (Iraq Al-Amir) and probably also in Arabia (Mecca?). All of these altars faded in comparison to Jerusalem, partly because none had royal sanction, and partly because the prophets in Jerusalem tried to prevent a religious split. They foresaw a glorious future when the whole Trans-Euphrates would worship as one.

Tobiah crowns Yehoshua as High Priest, 520 BCE

The prophet Zechariah began his career in the second year of Darius Hystaspes, king of Persia (522-486 BCE), about sixteen years after the return of the first wave of immigrants from Babylonia. He was contemporary with the Prophet Haggai.⁴⁰ Like Ezekiel and most of the Israelite prophets, he was of priestly extraction. He describes himself as "the son of Berechiah."⁴¹ Zechariah's niece, the daughter of Meshullam married the Yonathan, the son of Tobiah. Tobiah himself married the sister of Shemaiah, one of the priestly families who repaired the wall of Jerusalem. So the Tobiah dynasty had not only intermarried with the royal family of Ammon, but also with the priests and prophets of Israel. It could be asserted that the Tobiah family was being opportunistic in their choice of marriage partners, but the prophet Zechariah apparently felt that Tobiah was sincere, important and crucial to the reuniting of the twelve tribes of Israel.

In the book Zechariah, describing events that occurred a year later, Zechariah presents Tobiah with a special role in the symbolic crowning of Yehoshua as high priest among the noble families of the returning exiles.⁴² While the leadership in Jerusalem was battling opposition to building an exclusive sacrificial institution, facing difficulties from the other governors, Zechariah sought to unite the parties in the dispute by calling them to the house of Yehosiah son of Zephaniah. In this narrative, the Hebrew names of Sanballat and Gashmu are used, Heldai and Yedaiah respectively. Tobiah is called by the name Tobiyah, with an extra "y", one of the four letters of the Divine Name. Zechariah had previously received a vision about these four "carpenters".⁴³

Zechariah gathered these three nobles in the house of Yehosiah to call them to unite behind his selection for high priest, Yehoshua son of Yehozadak. Yehoshua had been Zerubavel's selection for high priest, but Sanballat, Tobiah and Gashmu had their own priestly families who also claimed authentic descent from the priestly families of Israel. We know that later Sanballat authorized his own altar in Samaria and in Elephantine, Egypt, and perhaps elsewhere. It could be that even at this early date the threat of separatism was already apparent. It may be that Zechariah's attempt at unification was to avert the risk of a multiplicity of altars and priesthods.

⁴⁰ Ezra 5:1

⁴¹ Zechariah 1:1. In Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 he is called "the son of Iddo," who was properly his grandfather.

⁴² Zechariah 6:9-15

⁴³ The four carpenters there spoken of are discussed in the Talmud (Sukk. 52 b), and in the Midrash (Bemidbar R. 14). But both agree that one of them refers to the Messiah.

Zechariah fashioned a crown out of silver and gold and set it on the head of Yehoshua. By this he proclaimed Yehoshua as the head of a unified priesthood for all of Israel. Recognizing Tobiah's role as chief tax collector for all the Trans-Euphrates, his noble lineage, and perhaps his claim to being a descendant of Joseph son of Jacob, Zechariah announced before the nobles assembled the special role of Tobiah:

The Lord who rules over all says, Look here is the man whose name is Branch, who will sprout up from his place and build the temple of the Lord. Indeed, he will build the temple of the Lord, and he will be clothed in splendor, sitting as king on his throne. Moreover, there will be a priest with him on his throne and they will see eye to eye on everything. (Zechariah 6:12-13)

The word "branch" here is significant.⁴⁵ The Hebrew word *tzemach* is related to *netzer* which means "to make grow", but also has the sense of "preserve" as in watchman.⁴⁶ This referred to the role of Israelite tribes who settled in the Trans-Jordan as watchman.⁴⁷ They would build watchtowers as a kind of early warning system for all of Israel against attack. In another verse, the people of Sanballat would be called *shomer*, which means the guardians.⁴⁸ When, in spite of Zechariah's attempts at unification, sectarianism did set in, the people of Sanballat would be called "Shomerim" or Samaritans as we know them today, and the Tobiads would be called "Notzrim", which is the word used to describe early Christians. The sense of the *notzrim* being an ethnic group is supported by Josephus when he quotes a Roman guard referring to the "tribe of Christians".⁴⁹ There would be no reason to refer to the Christians as a "tribe" without some kind of ethnic commonality.

We will explore the relationship between the Tobiads and the Herodians below, but one point is important to note here: Everything that was said about Tobiah, Herod appeared to have applied to himself. He spent great efforts at re-building and glorifying the Temple in Jerusalem. Herod was known for his splendor. For generations, the Herodians claimed the right to keep, protect and give out the vestments of the High Priest, as the only authorized person for "installing" the High Priest into office.

Lastly Zechariah says "Then those who are far away will come and build the temple of the Lord so that you may know that the Lord who rules over all has sent me to you. This will all come to pass if you completely obey the voice of the Lord your God." This seems to reflect the opposite tendency of Nehemiah, who tried to restrict and minimize the effect of the nations on the Jewish people, insisting on

Quick facts:

The traditionally accepted timeline as given by Leen & Kathleen Ritmeyer⁴⁴ describing these events:

586 Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple

538 Edit of Cyrus II the Great (539-530BCE) permits the return to Jerusalem of Jewish exiles. The first group returns under Zerubavel. The altar is active for sacrifices and Holyday observance for nine years.

529 A letter is sent to the Persian king by the Samaritans opposing the attempt to set up a single authorized priesthood and Temple (Ezra 4:1,6-7)

522 The building of the Temple/priesthood is ceased by order of King Cambyses (529-522BCE, Ezra 4:23-24), the son of Cyrus. He had disposed of his brother Smerdis in order to gain unchallenged rule.

521 While Cambyses is in Egypt, a Median imposter, Gaumata, claims to be the true Smerdis, raises revolt and rules for seven months. Darius the son of Hystaspes, the satrap of Parthia kills Gaumata and assumes the throne.

520 The original edict of Cyrus is found by King Darius (522-486) and is reaffirmed by him. Zechariah succeeds in united all the Trans-Euphrates under one priesthood. Tobiah crowns Yehoshua as High Priest.

519 The feast of Ahasuerus (Esther 1-3) Ahasuerus can be identified with Darius Hystaspes. Note the fully developed Persian postal system described in Esther and Herodotus.

515 The completion and dedication of the Jerusalem Temple with authorized priesthood.

514. The marriage of Esther to King Darius
509. Plot of Haman the Agagite to kill Jews throughout the Persian Empire

485-465 Reign of Xerxes I, the son of Darius the Great and Atossa, daughter of Cyrus the Great. Egypt rebels against Persia, followed by the death of Darius. More complaints against the Jews building walls. Xerxes swiftly conquers Egypt. For the next forty years, the southern border of the Persian Empire in Egypt is protected by Jewish soldiers at Elephantine (Yeb). Their settlement predates King Cambyses.

465-425 Reign of Artaxerxes I Longimanus.

458 Artaxerxes commission Ezra to set up a judicial system for the entire Trans-Euphrates in Jerusalem. Ezra institutes a series of reforms.

444. Nehemiah obtains permission to build walls and set up police in Jerusalem. Nehemiah calls an assembly to prevent the exploitation and over taxing of the other governors. Nehemiah appoints gatekeepers (police force).

432 Nehemiah leaves Jerusalem after twelve years (Neh 5:14, 13:6). Later returns to Jerusalem and calls an assembly expelling intermarried Jews from the community of Israel sometime before the end of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus 425BCE.

⁴⁴ Jerusalem in the Time of Nehemiah, by Leen & Kathleen Ritmeyer, pg. 11-16

⁴⁵ In Zechariah 3: 8, the designation 'Branch' is expressly applied to King Messiah in the Targum. Given the Tobiad claim of descendancy from the "tribe of Joseph", this may be historical source of the Messiah of Joseph.

⁴⁶ The Ramban presents two interpretations of the word *notzer*. He first defines it as synonymous with *shomer* ("keep" or "preserve"), and then suggests that it means "growth," as in the phrase, "*ve-neitzer mi-sharashav yifreh*" ("and a sprout shall blossom from its roots" – Yeshayahu 11:1). According to the Ramban's second interpretation, *notzer* means not "preserve," but rather "makes grow." (from Yeshivat Har Etzion) See also *Moshiach the Netzer, Tzemach*, Isa 11:1; Jer 23:5; Zech 3:8; Isa 53:2; Zech 6:11-12

⁴⁷ 2 Kings 17:9,18:8, Isaiah 21:11, Jeremiah 4:16, 31:6, Hosea 9:8

⁴⁸ Exodus 34:11, Deuteronomy 11:22, 27:1

⁴⁹ Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews - 18, 3:8-10

the divorce of foreign wives, the exclusive learning of Hebrew, and the study of Torah. Here Zechariah, in words echoed by Jeremiah, Isaiah and Zephaniah, saw a future where Jerusalem will once again be the spiritual center of all the surrounding nations, with great pilgrimages of Jews and Temple sympathizers from far off nations. This was a dream, for the most part realized, under the Herodians.

Perhaps Zechariah at the time thought he succeeded in uniting the nation of Israel. When the Temple was completed in 515 BCE, before the proclamation and assembly of Nehemiah, it must have appeared that all twelve tribes Israel were united because "twelve male goats for the sin of all Israel, according to the number of the tribes of Israel."⁵⁰ It describes the "Israelites" (not just "Jews"), along with "all those who joined them", observed Passover for seven days with joy.⁵¹

Appearance of Ezra, 458 BCE

All this was possible in part because Tobiah and his son married into among the Priests and Prophets of Jerusalem. Unlike the separatist policies of Sanballat and Gashmu, Tobiah allied with Eliashiv the priest and perhaps was on close terms with other priests as well. The nobles of Judah often sent letters to Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came to them.⁵²



Site described in Islamic tradition as the tomb of Ezra at *Al Uzayr* near Basra.

For over sixty years before the arrival of Ezra, there had been an unsteady balance of power between the Persian governors. Yet the leadership in Jerusalem had no control over the use of the altar in Jerusalem. Sacrifices were brought by priests of unknown and unconfirmed lineage. Rights, traditions, and customs did not necessarily adhere to ancient Israelite custom, and may have included even hints of pagan elements. This state of affairs was unacceptable to the leadership in Jerusalem, and they requested Ezra to obtain leave of the king, Artaxerxes I Longimanus, to establish a centralized rule of religious authority that would decide all matters concerning lineage, custom and tribute. Artaxerxes agreed, and commissioned Ezra, a Jewish priest-scribe, by means of a letter of decree, to take charge of the ecclesiastical and civil affairs of the Jewish nation. A copy of this decree may be found in Ezra 7:13-28.

In an effort to suppress the seeds of rebellion, (which would eventually erupt into full scale revolt by Egypt) Artaxerxes' decree left no doubt that the four districts of Trans-Euphrates were under the absolute religious authority of Jerusalem:

I, King Artaxerxes, hereby issue orders to all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates that you precisely execute all that Ezra the priestly scribe of the law of the God of heaven may request of you ... Everything that the God of heaven has required should be precisely done for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should there be wrath against the empire of the king and his sons? (*Ezra 7:21,23*)

Artaxerxes' affirmed the prior exemption from taxation of the religious establishment. This placed the leadership in Jerusalem out of the reach of retaliation from the governors:

Furthermore, be aware of the fact that you have no authority to impose tax, tribute, or toll on any of the priests, the Levites, the musicians, the doorkeepers, the temple servants, or the attendants at the temple of this God. (*Ezra 7:24*)

Lastly, to seal the authority of Jerusalem, as if a kind of punishment for previous abuses, Artaxerxes' decreed that Jerusalem alone would appoint judges and court officials who would arbitrate both religious and civil cases on behalf of *all the people* of the Trans-Euphrates:

Now you, Ezra, in keeping with the wisdom of your God which you possess, appoint judges and court officials who can arbitrate cases on behalf of all the people who are in Trans-Euphrates who

⁵⁰ Ezra 6:17

⁵¹ Ezra 6:21

⁵² Neh 6:17-19; 13:4-7 Hence, there seems to be reasonable reasons to assume that there was a communication route between Tobiah and his proponents in Jerusalem. This account is interesting because it may help us understand the nature of the ancient route along the Wadi es-Seer and the Wadi Kafrein.

know the laws of your God. Those who do not know this law should be taught. Everyone who does not observe both the law of your God and the law of the king will be completely liable to the appropriate penalty, whether it is death or banishment or confiscation of property or detainment in prison. (*Ezra 7:25-26*)

Apparently these decrees, although resented, were effective. Once the decrees of Artaxerxes were presented to the “satraps and to the governors of Trans-Euphrates”, they “gave help to the people and to the temple of God.” What is interesting is that this law not only covered the Children of Israel (those who know the laws of your God), but also the local mixed population “who do not know the law”. The additional commandment that “they should be taught” hints at a policy of missionizing and forced conversion, a policy that would be followed centuries later by the Hasmoneans.

This new found authority, the establishment of a supreme religious and secular court, was the forerunner of the Sanhedrin. The first item on the agenda appears to be the over taxation of local residents.⁵³ This was followed by deliberation on the actions of three of the four Persian governors to intermarry with the nobility of the local population. Because the main reason for these intermarriages at the governmental level was to ease the collection of taxes, the commitment of these “foreign wives” to the culture, religion and language of Israel was minimal at best. The “the leaders and the officials have been at the forefront” of intermarriage, and diluting the Israelite culture which had been so carefully guarded in Babylon, customs “similar to those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Yebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites” began to be practiced at the highest levels in government.⁵⁴

Ezra pronounced rulings against these practices. He and the other priests were protected from reprisals from the governors of the Trans-Euphrates by royal decree. But the Persian detachment of military had been entrusted to Sanballat, and without means of enforcement, Ezra’s decrees became nothing more than sermons. Ezra attempted to build set of walls to prevent all unauthorized priests from officiating in the sacrificial system. Seeing their loss of religious authority increasing with each brick laid, the governors sought to prevent construction of these walls. Opposition took the form of direct appeals to the king, and later through their own methods. Sanballat summoned troops from Ashdod, Gashmu hired assassins⁵⁵, and Tobiad sought to mobilize his connections in Jerusalem.⁵⁶

What Ezra needed was royal support. However the Persian king found himself dealing with increased restlessness in his empire. Also there were possible adverse effects on tax revenues should the request to have the governors divorce their local wives be enforced. So Ezra appealed to an acknowledged leading descendant of the Davidic dynasty, Nehemiah son of Hachaliah.

The proclamation and assembly, 444 BCE

Nehemiah lived during the period when Judah was a province of the Persian Empire. He was appointed royal cup-bearer at the palace of Shushan. The king, Artaxerxes Longimanus, appears to have been on good terms with Nehemiah, since he was willing to grant extended leave of absence granted to see to the restoration of Jerusalem. Nehemiah heard of condition of Jerusalem mostly from his brother Hanani.⁵⁷

Due to the grievous reports coming from Jerusalem, Nehemiah he fasted, mourned and prayed at the tombs of his ancestors, the Exilarchs, for many days. According to the book of Nehemiah, the king observed his sadness. Nehemiah explained to the king, and obtained his permission to go to Jerusalem and act as *tirshatha*, or governor of Judea. He arrived in Jerusalem fourteen years after Ezra, in the 20th year of Artaxerxes I, (445/444 BC) with a strong escort supplied by the king, and with letters to all the *pashas* of the provinces through which he had to pass, as also to *Asaph*, keeper of the royal forests, directing him to assist Nehemiah. When Sanballat and Tobiah heard of the arrival of Nehemiah, they were quite upset because he came to strengthen the spiritual and judicial authority of Jerusalem, as it says “it grieved them exceedingly, for that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.”⁵⁸

⁵³ Nehemiah 5:1, We are assuming for the sake of this paper that the overtaxation was one of the reasons for the urgency of Ezra and Nehemiah’s assembly and proclamation, and not that it was some kind of retaliatory attack for being excluded from the “community of Israel”.

⁵⁴ Ezra 9:1-2

⁵⁵ Nehemiah 6:1

⁵⁶ Nehemiah 4:7

⁵⁷ Nehemiah 1:2; 2:3

⁵⁸ Nehemiah 2:10

With the arrival of Nehemiah, Shecaniah son of Yehiel expressed the main issue at hand: “We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the local peoples”, he suggested to Ezra that the faithful should take an oath to “send away all these women and their offspring” according to the wishes of Ezra and the leadership in Jerusalem. After taking a vote in the proto-Sanhedrin the majority concurred. However there were those who dissented including Yehonathan son of Asahel, Yahzeiah son of Tikvah, Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite. Ezra went to the priestly residence of Yehohanan son of Eliashiv, the treasurer and representative of Tobiah within the Temple grounds, ostensibly with the intent of obtaining the agreement of Tobiah.⁵⁹

The tide of assimilation seemed unstoppable. “Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab” and their children spoke in the language of those living in Ashdod and could not speak the language of the Jews.⁶⁰ They performed customs “similar to those of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Yebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.”⁶¹ A voluntary oath being insufficient, Ezra and Nehemiah, with the backing of the leadership in Jerusalem announced an assembly and proclamation:

A proclamation was circulated throughout Judah and Jerusalem that all the exiles were to be assembled in Jerusalem. 10:8 Everyone who did not come within three days would thereby forfeit all his property, in keeping with the counsel of the officials and the elders. Furthermore, he himself would be excluded from the assembly of the exiles. (Ezra 10:7)

Afterwards, the books of genealogies (family groups) were reviewed and adjusted.⁶² This determined which families had intermarried and which priests were to be declared unfit for duty. Tobiah having some support both within the Priesthood and the leadership in Jerusalem, apparently declared that his wives were proper converts and was not required to divorce them. Nehemiah was required to find additional reason to invalidate Tobiah from the “community of Israel”, due to the fact “no Ammonite or Moabite may ever enter the assembly of God”.⁶³ This decree, relying on single opinion of Nehemiah, and not the vote of the leadership in Jerusalem, left the Tobiads in a somewhat indeterminate state as to whether they were to be considered “Jews” or not. The Priesthood, in particular Eliashiv, supported Tobiah, yet Nehemiah personally came to the Temple grounds to eject all of Tobiah’s belongings from the Temple treasury and as a token of rebuke had those areas “purified” from ritual impurity.⁶⁴

Davidic rulers and ethnic constituency

	Zerubavel	Sanballat (Bagohi)	Tobias	Geshmu
Region	Judea	Samaria, Ashdod and later Egypt	Trans Jordan	Arabia
Israelite Component	“Tribes of Judah and Benjamin”	“Northern Tribes” (The name “Samaritan” is derived from “Shamir” a tribe of Issachar ⁶⁵)	“Tribes of Joseph”	“Southern Tribes”
Assyrian Component	-	Babylonians	Erechites	People of Susa (Elamites)
Native Component	-	Ashod Egyptians	Ammon Edom	Moab Nabatu tribes Arabu tribes “Sheba”
Roman name	Judeans	Samaritians	Idumeans	Nabateans Arabians
Religion	Judaism	Shomerim	Notzerim	Sabianism

⁵⁹ Ezra 10:6

⁶⁰ Nehemiah 13:23

⁶¹ Ezra 9:1-2

⁶² Ezra 10:16, Nehemiah 6:17

⁶³ Nehemiah 13:1

⁶⁴ Nehemiah 13:4

⁶⁵ Genesis Rabbah Sect. 94: R. Meir asks the Samaritan: What tribe are you from? The Samaritan answers: From Joseph. R. Meir : No! The Samaritan: From which one then? R. Meir : From Issachar. The Samaritan: How do you know? R. Meir: For it is written (Gen 46:13): The sons of Issachar: Tola, Puvah, Iob, and Shimron. These are the Samaritans (shamray)

Another son of Eliashiv, Yoiada who had married a daughter of Sanballat, left for his father in law's protection⁶⁶, and may have been promised a priesthood of his own in Samaria. This was the beginning of the High Priesthood of the Samaritans and the religion of the *shomrim*, although it did not receive royal sanction until Alexander the Great.

The minor tractate *Kuthim* 2:7 [61b] says "Why are Samaritans forbidden to enter the community of Israel? Because they have become mixed up with the Cohens of the high places (idolatrous priests). R. Ishmael said: They were originally genuine proselytes. Why, then are they forbidden? Because of the illegitimate females [since they are a mixed people, they include females who may not have been born to Israelite mothers and in turn their offspring are no-Israelite since their status in this respect depends upon that of the mother] and because they do not perform the levirate duty to a married woman (but perform *halitzah* instead)."

It can be seen that the exclusion of Sanballat, Tobiah and Gashmu's people were of a judicial and not genealogical nature because the tractate concludes "When may they be received [into Israel]? When they have renounced Mount Gerizim and acknowledged Jerusalem and the resurrection of the dead. From then onward a Samaritan is considered an Israelite before the law". In other words the at that time full conversion of a proselyte was not required, only a political renunciation of Mount Gerizim and acceptance of the authority of the leadership in Jerusalem. This situation did not last however, to the point that by the first century CE, intermarriage increased to the point that Samaritans were considered distinct from "Israel".⁶⁷ *Abu I-Fath ibn Abi al-Hasan al-Samiri al-Danafi*, a fourteen century Samaritan chronicler wrote "At this time the Children of Israel split into three factions. A loyal faction on Mount Gerizim (=Shomrim); a heretical faction that followed false Gods (=Notzrim); and the faction that followed Eli son of Yafni on Shiloh (=Yehudim)."

So after the "purge" and exclusion of powerful, noble and intermarried families, a new "Israel" was defined in the genealogical records. Thus "in the days of Zerubavel and in the days of Nehemiah, all Israel was contributing the portions for the singers and gatekeepers, according to the daily need."⁶⁸ But this new "Israel" would be referred to by the Samaritans, Notzrim and Sabians not as "Israel" but as "Jews".

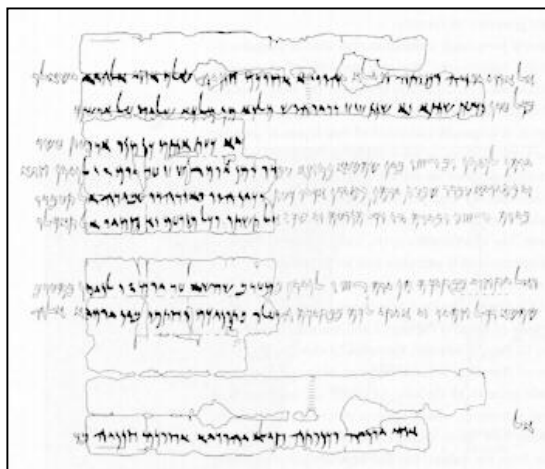
An interesting side note in this episode is the well developed postal system⁶⁹, developed by the Persians, used by Tobiah that included the use of horses and carrier pigeons. These pigeons and doves would become the symbol of the Tobiad dynasty.

Sanballat of Samaria

Sanballat I, Military commander of Samaria and of the Coast

Sanballat I envisioned himself a descendant of the kings of the Northern Tribes of Israel. From the very beginning the Northern Tribes had a relationship with Egypt.⁷⁰ This relationship included both political and military ties. The Jewish community at Elephantine was probably founded as one of many military installations circa 650 BCE during Manasseh's reign, to assist Pharaoh Psammetichus I in his Nubian campaign. When the Persian King Cambyses extended his empire into Egypt in 525BCE, he destroyed many of the local temples but left the Jewish places of worship intact.

While Cambyses was in Egypt, a Median imposter, Gaumata, claimed to be the true heir the throne, revolted and ruled for seven months. Darius the son of Hystaspes, the satrap of Parthia killed Gaumata and assumed the throne. (Under Darius there was the completion of the Jerusalem Temple with an authorized priesthood). But Egypt rebelled again under Xerxes, the son of Darius. For the next forty years, the



Passover Papyrus from Elephantine

⁶⁶ Nehemiah 13:28

⁶⁷ Matthew 10:5-6

⁶⁸ Nehemiah 12:47

⁶⁹ Nehemiah 6:17

⁷⁰ Kings 12:2-3

southern border of the Persian Empire in Egypt was protected by Jewish soldiers at Elephantine (Yeb). They maintained their own temple, but at times the Jewish community suffered riots from the bitter local population. It is within this context that we find the "Elephantine papyri", letters from the garrison to Sanballat and Tobiah.

The Elephantine papyri are caches of legal documents and letters written in Aramaic, which document a community of Jewish soldiers, with perhaps an admixture of Samaritans, stationed during the Persian occupation of Egypt. The documents cover the period 495 to 399 BCE. One letter contains replies from the leadership in Jerusalem concerning the laws of Passover. Known as "*The Passover Papyrus*", it was written in the 5th year of Darius (Nothus), i.e. 419 BCE.

[To] my [brethren Yedo]niah and his colleagues the [J]ewish gar[rison], your brother Hanan[ia]h. The welfare of my brothers may God [seek at all times]. Now, this year, the fifth year of King Darius, word was sent from the king to Arsa[m]es saying, "*Authorise a festival of unleavened bread for the [Jew]ish [garrison]*". So do you count fou[rteen days of the month of Nisan and] obs[erve the *passover*], and from the 15th to the 21st day of [Nisan observe the festival of unleavened bread]. Be (ritually) clean and take heed. [Do n]o work [on the 15th or the 21st day, no]r drink [beer, nor eat] anything [in] which the[re is] leaven [from the 14th at] sundown until the 21st of Nis[an]. For seven days it shall not be seen among you. Do not br[ing] it into your dwellings but seal (it) up between these date[s]. *By order of King Darius.* To] my brethren Yedoniah and the Jewish garrison, your brother Hanani[ah]. (*A very defective strip of papyrus with writing on both sides. Text: Sachau, 6; Ungnad, 6; Cowley, 21*)

Another letter, the "Petition to Bagohi" (Sayce-Cowley collection), was written some time before the 17th year of Darius (Nothus), i.e. 408-407 BCE when Sanballat (or one of the dynasty) was governor (pachath) of Samaria, and Bagohi was governor of Judah (after Zerubbavel and before Nehemiah). Sanballat's two sons, Delaiah and Shelemiah, received a letter from Yedoniah and his companions the priests who were in Yeb (Elephantine). The letter appealed for assistance in rebuilding the Jewish Temple, which had recently been badly damaged by an anti-Semitic riot on the part of a segment of the Elephantine community. The address of this letter reads as follows:

To our lord Bagohi, the governor of Judea, his servants Yedoniah and his companions, the priests in the fortress of Yeb (Elephantine). May the God of Heaven inquire much at every time after the peace of our lord and put thee in favor before Darius the king,

In the course of this appeal, the Jewish inhabitants of Elephantine speak of the antiquity of the damaged temple:

Now our forefathers built this temple in the fortress of Elephantine back in the days of the kingdom of Egypt, and when Cambyses came to Egypt he found it built. They (the Persians) knocked down all the temples of the gods of Egypt, but no one did any damage to this temple.

The conclusion of the letter reads thus:

Now, thy servants, Yedoniah and his companions and the Jews, all citizens of Yeb, say thus: If it seems good to our lord, mayest thou think on the rebuilding of that temple (which had been destroyed by the Egyptians). Since it has not been permitted us to rebuild it, do thou look on the receivers of thy benefactions and favors here in Egypt. Let a letter with regard to the rebuilding of the temple of the God Ya-Ho in the fortress of Yeb, as it was formerly built, be sent from thee. In thy name will they offer the meal offerings, the incense, and the burnt offerings upon the altar of the God Ya-Ho; and we shall always pray for thee, we and our wives and our children and all the Jews found here, until the temple has been rebuilt. And it will be to thee a meritorious work (*tsedaqah*) in the sight of Ya-Ho, the God of Heaven, greater than the meritorious work of a man who offers to him a burnt offering and a sacrifice of a value equal to the value of 1,000 talents of silver. And as to the gold we have sent word and given knowledge. Also, we have in our name communicated in a letter all (these) matters unto Delaiah and Shelemiah, the sons of Sanballat, governor of Samaria. Also, from all that has been done to us, Arsham (the satrap of Egypt) has learned nothing.

The 20th of Marcheshvan in the 17th year of Darius the king.

What can clearly be seen from these letters is that community at Yeb considered themselves Jews and used the name "Jews" in describing themselves. They appealed to both Jerusalem and Sanballat. They received instruction in Jewish law from the scholars in Jerusalem. Yet they maintained an altar outside of Jerusalem

and saw no inconsistencies with the Judaism as practiced by the Children of Israel before the coming of Ezra (458BCE) and Nehemiah (444BCE). This independent altar at Yeb and perhaps elsewhere was a convenience for the local Jewish community, but soon it would become a matter of supreme political importance.

Sanballat Bagohi, Governor of Judea

The Bagohi mentioned in the Elephantine papyri as the "governor of Judea" is also mentioned in Josephus.⁷¹ There he is called "the general of the army". For the purposes of this paper we assume that Bagohi is identical with Sanballat I, and that Yedoniah is the same as Yoiada of Nehemiah and the "Jesus" of Josephus.

This implies that when Zerubavel left, Bagohi took control of Judea and was addressed as such by the Elephantine Papyri. As General of the Army, his interest would have been more in building wealth to maintain his troops than completing the Temple in Jerusalem. He imposed a tax, not on the priests or the Temple itself, but on the general public. They were required to pay fifty shekels for every lamb before they offered the daily sacrifices. This taxation was opposed by the High Priest Yehohanan, but supported by his brother Yehoshua II. The quarrel led to a confrontation and Yehoshua II was killed by Yehohanan in a fit of rage. Bagohi punished the residents of Judea for seven years for the murder of Yehoshua II. The great distress of the residents of Judea was one of the major reasons that Nehemiah was brought from Persia, and in the end of the book of Nehemiah, the excesses of the "previous governor of Judea" is recounted.

Moses of Khorene (5th Century) traces the origin of the Smbat Bagratuni royal family of Armenia to Tobiah of Edessa (1st Century), to Sanballat Bagohi, and through him to Jewish royalty. Sanballat, like all the governors of the Trans-Euphrates, we propose were related to the royal family. These families were all intermarried with the High Priesthood, and conceivably with each other. This claim would later be adopted by the Georgian Bagratids royal family. Their Coat of Arms displays a harp in a mention of that ancestry.

It is possible that in the end, the noble Sanballat dynasty would be remembered in the royal pedigrees of Armenia, and the legends of Sinbad the sailor, "Sinbad" being a form of "Sanballat".

Sanballat II and Darius Codomannus 336-330BCE

According to Josephus, an event took place one hundred years later that would have far reaching consequences. The brother of the High Priest Manasseh married the daughter of the Samaritan ruler at that time. This Samaritan ruler also bore the dynastic title, Sanballat II.

Josephus relates the following incident:

Yaddua the son of Yehohanan (371-320) was a High Priest in Jerusalem who had a brother named Manasseh. (Yaddua in Rabbinic tradition is often identified with Shimon HaTzaddik the first). In an attempt to secure a claim to rulership Judea in addition to his own lands⁷², Sanballat II offered his daughter Nicaso in marriage to Manasseh in an attempt to obtain the good will of the Jewish people, which Manasseh accepted. But rather than appease the leadership in Jerusalem, it created unease. The proto-Sanhedrin heard the claim that Nicaso was part of the community of Israel and permitted in marriage. They ruled however that it was forbidden because of the ruling of Ezra and Nehemiah concerning the family of Sanballat. No alteration of this ruling could be made because it would be interpreted by the general public as general permission to marry foreign wives, and that in turn would lead to "mutual society with foreigners" and assimilation.⁷³

The proto-Sanhedrin ruled that Manasseh had to either divorce his wife, or resign his position as priest. Manasseh was unwilling to resign his position as priest, something that would affect his progeny. So he appealed to his father in law Sanballat II. Sanballat II promised him not only to preserve to him the honor of his priesthood, but "to procure for him the power and dignity of a high priest, and would make him governor of all the places he himself now ruled, if he would keep his daughter for his wife. He also told him further,

⁷¹ Josephus, 11.7.1

⁷² Josephus. This is apparent both in wording used to describe the nature of Sanballat's offer of marriage as well as the petition of Sanballat before Alexander.

⁷³ Josephus. The wording there is they did not outright forbid the marriage, but rather claimed it would set a bad example to those "desirous of transgressing about the marriage of [strange] wives".

that he would build him a temple like that at Jerusalem, upon Mount Gerizzin; and he promised that he would do this with the approval of Darius the king". Manasseh accepted this proposal. Josephus relates that "there was now a great disturbance among the people of Jerusalem, because many of those priests and Levites were entangled in such matches; for they all revolted to Manasseh, and Sanballat afforded them money, and divided among them land for tillage, and habitations also."

Sanballat III and Alexander the Great

About this time, Alexander the Great, crossed over the river Euphrates, and came over Taurus Mountains, to do battle with Darius. Even though many expected the Macedonians to flee in the face of the Persians, the Persians were routed in battle, the king fled, and his family taken captive. Alexander came into Syria, and took Damascus; captured Sidon and set siege to Tyre. Alexander requested allegiance, troops and provisions from Jerusalem, which they refused to give. Sanballat II saw this as his chance to obtain favor from Alexander and he sent troops to aid Alexander, and requested in return permission to build a Temple at Mount Gerizzin. Alexander granted this. He, at length, captured Tyre, Gaza and made his way to devastate Jerusalem.

Recorded in many sources, from Josephus, the Talmud, to Ben Sirach, is the account of Alexander's meeting with the High Priest. How Alexander expected to be met with troops and armed resistance, but was instead was met with a venerable religious procession. Alexander reaction is legendary, he alone met the High Priest and pledged allegiance to the God of the Jews. Josephus goes on to say "And when [Alexander] went up into the temple, he offered sacrifice to God, according to the high priest's direction, and magnificently treated both the high priest and the priests. And when the Book of Daniel was showed him wherein Daniel declared that one of the Greeks should destroy the empire of the Persians, he supposed that himself was the person intended. And as he was then glad, he dismissed the multitude for the present; but the next day he called them to him, and bid them ask what favors they pleased of him; whereupon the high priest desired that they might enjoy the laws of their forefathers, and might pay no tribute on the seventh year. He granted all they desired. And when they entreated him that he would permit the Jews in Babylon and Media to enjoy their own laws also, he willingly promised to do hereafter what they desired."

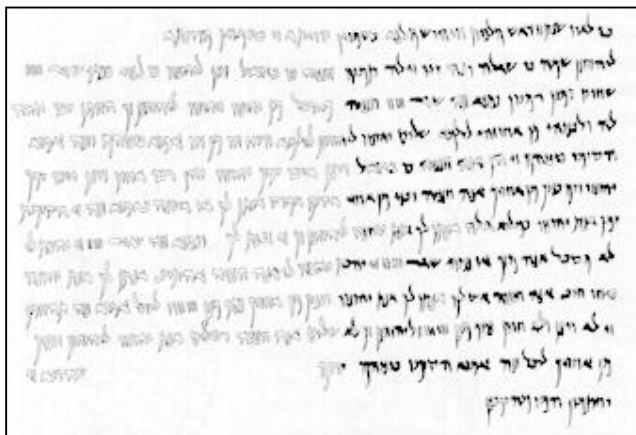


Alexander being shown the Book of Daniel

Sanballat III seeing that Alexander had "so greatly honored the Jews", he attempt to obtain further favor from Alexander, which Alexander deferred until his return from battle in Persia. Alexander, however, never returned.

Josephus at this point interrupts his description of these events to describe the "disposition of the Samaritans" and his view apparently being the result of intermarriage. He describes a people with questionable loyalty. First, they quickly change sides from Darius to Alexander, as the condition requires. Secondly, at times they deny their kinship to their Jewish brethren claiming to be Sidonians, and at other times embrace it, claiming to be the posterity of Joseph, Ephraim, and Manasseh. Being, in his view, the product of intermarriage, both views were true.

Sanballat III requested and received permission from Alexander the Great to build a Temple on mount Gerizim. Sandballat did not, however, receive the recognition or tax exemptions that



The Wadi Daliyeh papyri, Crushing of the Revolt

Shimon HaTzaddik had received. Perhaps due to disenchantment with the favors he had received from Alexander, or perhaps during the vicissitudes of battle, Sanballat perceived that the Persians temporarily had the upper hand, Sanballat II rebelled against the local governor installed by Alexander.⁷⁴

The revolt was crushed. Sanballat III's troops were conscripted to Alexander's armies. His territory was annexed to Syria and Samaria was converted to a military colony. Sanballat III and his immediate family were probably killed.⁷⁵ Samaria never again achieved self rule. Apollonius is described as the ruler of Colesyria and Philistina around 160BCE.

Religion of the Samaritans

The ruling of Ezra and Nehemiah disallowed the claim of being part of the "Children of Israel" based on genealogical grounds. But even so, a secondary claim was made on the basis of conversion to the faith of the "Children of Israel". Intermarriage is, of course, permitted if the non-Jewish partner converts before marriage. Apparently there were claims that the non-Israelitish element in Samaria did have some form of conversion, because the Talmud, tractate Kuthim, discusses whether their conversion was valid or not. In the final analysis their status as "converts" is rejected on legal grounds, because they did not accept jurisdiction of Jerusalem. Josephus expands on this point, claiming that the separation of jurisdiction was absolute. Any priest accused of having eaten things *chullin* (common or profane food) or of having broken the Sabbath, or of any other crime of a religious nature, fled away to the Samaritans and claimed that he was accused unjustly. However this is in the nature of a rabbinical decree and it appears that in certain cases *de-facto* Samaritans were at one time still treated as Jews.



The orthodoxy of the Samaritans⁷⁶ is praised with regard to their strictness in observing the commandments (Chullin 4a) and the rules relating to the slaughtering of meat "*shechitah*" (ib.), family relations "*niddah*" (Niddah 56b et seq.), contact with the dead (ib.), and purification "*taharah*". There are cases where Samaritans can be counted in the quorum for the *Birchat HaMazon* prayer. Their meat and bread were at times permitted, unlike other foreigners. However, they were-considered lax in observing the law of the levirate and of marriage generally, so that marriage with them was forbidden (Kid. 76a). This unfavorable view of them seems to have prevailed toward the end of R. Meir's life and to have then become *halacha*. In the tractate Kutim the general principle is that they are to be trusted in so far as their own practise agrees with that of the Jews: in other respects they count as non-Jews.

Dogmas

According to their own account in letters to Scaliger, Huntington, and others, they never postpone circumcision, even if the eighth day be a Sabbath; they allow no fire on the Sabbath; they recognize no system of "techum"; they force even children to observe the Yom Kippur fast; they make their "*sukkot*" of the trees mentioned in Lev. 23:40, and do not follow the Jewish customs with regard to the *lulav* and *etrog*.

With regard to Samaritan dogma, the tractate Kuthim sums differences with Judaism by their veneration of Mt. Gerizim as against Jerusalem, and their disbelief in the resurrection of the dead. The Christian Fathers claim they did not believe angels or the immortality of the soul. Their earliest liturgies appear to confirm these statements. The essential articles of faith refer to:

- The unity of God; is the constant refrain of their liturgy. Consequent on this is the careful avoidance of anthropomorphic expressions, which has often been pointed out in the Targum. God created

⁷⁴ This episode is probably connected with the Wadi Daliyeh papyri. The Old Testament world By John William Rogerson, Philip R. Davies

⁷⁵ The disappearance of the Sanballat dynasty is all the more pronounced because we find a Joseph Tobiah receiving "a loan of about 20,000 drachma in Samaria" without resistance. This loan helped him obtain the rights to tax Syria and Phoenicia. Afterwards, Joseph Tobiah made himself feared through all the cities of Syria and Phoenicia, lands that were formerly been under the governance of Sanballat

⁷⁶ The following information is based on the Jewish Encyclopedia "Samaritans"

without hands; He rested, but not from weariness. He made man in the image of the angels; and it was an angel who delivered the Law on Sinai. Prayers are offered to Him through the merits of the Patriarchs and Moses.

- Moses as the only prophet. None can arise like unto Moses, according to Deut. 34:10; They reject the Biblical Writings and Prophet except for the Torah. The Torah is perfect, having been created before the world and brought forth by the hand of God from the depth of the very good.
- Mt. Gerizim, which is the House of God, the place in which He chose to put His name. On it the twelve stones (Deut. 27:4) are still shown; there the temple was erected; and there in the last days will the *Shekinah* reappear.
- The *Tahev*. The Messiah, which, though of less importance, is clearly defined. The term used has been variously explained as "the restorer" or "he who returns." During all the time that has elapsed since the schism of Eli and the disappearance of the Tabernacle, the world (i.e., Israel) has been suffering under the divine displeasure. It will be terminated by the coming of the "*Tahev*," who will restore the period of favor, establish the true religion, and destroy the followers of Ezra. He will live 110 years on earth, and then die.
- The resurrection, which will take place after the death of the *Tahev*, will not be to physical bodies, but will be accompanied by the final judgment, when the righteous will go into the garden of Eden, and the wicked be burned with fire. The Samaritans dwell at length on this doctrine in the funeral service. Some kind of forgiveness seems, however, to be possible after death for the faithful who die in their sins; for prayers are offered on their behalf.

In several instances, the practice of the Samaritans approximates Karaites and Islamic tradition⁷⁷. This agreement has often been noted. It could be coincidental, both being based on a literal and rational interpretation of the Law, and both, therefore, rejecting all rabbinic developments. However we will endeavor to show a more direct connection. One connection may indeed be the effect of the Samaritan religion on Arabia through commercial and religious connections with Egypt.⁷⁸ But perhaps a far greater effect on Arabia may be seen from the Tobiad "*Notzrim*" religion of the Trans-Jordan.

In Islam, these Tobiad Jews would be known by the name "*nasaara*" and "*ansar*".

The Tobiad/Tubba kings of Arabia also tell of their ancestor Herod I (*Harith al-Raish* or *al-Filsuf*), who like Sanballat II and Shimon HaTzaddik, had the honor of meeting – and receiving approval from – Alexander the Great.⁷⁹

Tobiads of Trans-Jordania

The Jews made their capital in Jerusalem. Sanballat made his capital in Shomron, later renamed to Sebastia. Gashmu made his capital in Arabia. The Zenon Papyri call the trans-Jordan "the land of Tobiah". The Tobiad's ancestral seat was in 'Iraq al-Amir.⁸⁰

'Iraq al-Amir is situated on the west bank of the Wadi es-Seer, about halfway between Amman and Jericho.⁸¹ According to Mazar, the Tobiad estate bordered to the west on the Jordan River, between the Wadi Nimrin and the Dead Sea; in the east it extended as far as the vicinity of Rabbath-Ammon.⁸²

C. C. Ji in "*A New Look At The Tobiads In 'Iraq Al-Amir*", (see the map on below), explains that this trade route and was heavily defended including a fortress at the mouth of the Wadi Kafrein. Persian and later Hellenistic settlements are noticeably centered in the narrow areas located along the Wadi es-Seer and the Wadi Kafrein, and in the immediate vicinity of 'Iraq al-Amir. They were situated at high points lined up along the Wadi es-Seer and the Wadi Kafrein. They are all fortified settlements and visible to each other. The

⁷⁷ Haggarism: The Making of the Islamic World. Crone and Cook.

⁷⁸ This is explored further in the author's book "The Prophet Muhammed as a descendant of Onias III" by Ben Abrahamson and Joseph Katz

⁷⁹ Tabari

⁸⁰ Most of the information in these three chapters are based on C. C. Ji in "*A New Look At The Tobiads In 'Iraq Al-Amir*"

⁸¹ Lapp 1989, 280.

⁸² Mazar 1957, 142.

inhabitants must have expended tremendous labor on the city walls and towers, which implies security was one of their major concerns.⁸³

This area contains a large number of early Persian settlements. It apparently contained a system of roads connecting the Jordan Valley with 'Iraq al-Amir and the Trans-Jordan plateau. The Book of Nehemiah implies the existence of some sort of communication route between Tobiah and the Judean aristocracy facilitating Tobiah's regular communication with the nobles in Jerusalem. It appears that Tobiah ruled the entire Trans-Jordan plateau under Persian rule.⁸⁴

During the Hellenistic period, several new fortresses and public buildings were incorporated into the already-existing Persian trade route and defense system. However, when the Tobaid family was more involved in Jerusalem, the plateau region underwent a decline. Tobiah's territory appears to have decreased in the Hellenistic period in comparison to its size under Persian rule.

The 'Iraq al-Amir region includes a monumental Hellenistic building (Qasr al-'Abd), rebuilt by the Herodians in Herodian style masonry. Josephus mentions the location of the Tobiad's estate, and his account of Hyrcanus' magnificent building seems to refer to Qasr al-'Abd.⁸⁵ In addition, the Zenon papyri mention a fortress in the land of Tobiah.⁸⁶ There is an ancient village, and scattered ancient structures. There are two rows of man-made and natural caves. The name "Tobiah" is deeply engraved near their entrances. According to Mazar, these inscriptions date to the period of Nehemiah or even earlier, and are some of the earliest examples of the official Aramaic square script that became popular in Palestine at the beginning of the Second Temple period.⁸⁷

In Samaria, the population began to call themselves *shomrim*, probably due as much to the city of Shomron as to the predictions of the prophets. In 'Iraq al-Amir, the name *notzrim*, which literally means watchman, would also take on additional the meaning due to the numerous fortifications *tzurim*, no less than the prophetic vision of Zechariah that the Tobiads applied to themselves. The name *notzrim* may be preserved Arabic *Wadi es-Tzeer* and *Khirbat es-Tzur* near 'Iraq al-Amir.⁸⁸ Mazar suggests that *tsur* was used to name the Tobiad's fortress in the days of the First Temple and the Hellenistic period.

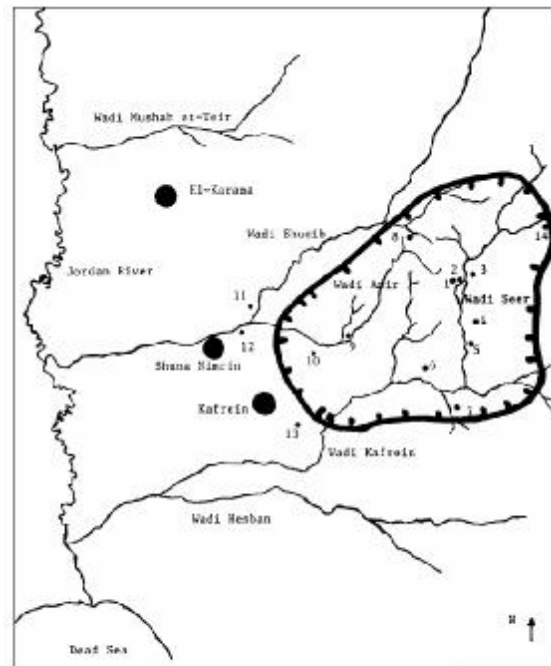


Fig. 1 Major Archaeological Sites in the Region of the Wadi es-Seer and the Wadi el-Kafreih.

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. 'Iraq al-Amir | 8. Kh. Thagra |
| 2. Site 81 | 9. Kh. Hassan |
| 3. Kh. Muweino | 10. Tell Hilioli |
| 4. Site 25 | 11. Tell Bletbil |
| 5. Kh. Umm Bad | 12. Tell Nimeive |
| 6. Kh. Faravut | 13. Tell Kafreih |
| 7. Tell Abu-Umeir | 14. Mu'ayyeh ad-Deir. |

⁸³ C. C. Ji--A New Look at the Tobiads in Iraq al-Amir

⁸⁴ On the basis of recent archaeological works, it seems preferable to see that in Trans-Jordan there were separate provinces from Samaria and Arabia in the late Iron II and Persian periods. The principal support for this suggestion lies in the findings at Tell el-'Umeiri in the Madaba Plains. In 1989, the excavations at Tell el-'Umeiri produced two Aramaic seals dated to the late 6th and early 5th centuries B.C.E. (Herr 1992) The impressions of these seals are reminiscent of a class of Judean seals found in the Jerusalem region, which contain the name yhud. It is often assumed that the names on the yhud seals were associated with the governor of the Persian province or the treasurer in charge of tax collection. (Herr 1995; Stern 1982, 202-206) [The significance of this find is that the two seal impressions indicate the presence of Persian provinces in Trans-Jordan. (Herr 1995, 124-125)]

⁸⁵ Eskenazi 1992; Mazar 1957

⁸⁶ Gera 1990, 24-25; Lapp 1993, 646-647; cf. Mittmann 1970, 208

⁸⁷ Cross 1961, 191; Gera 1990, 25; Naveh 1971, 62-64; Albright, 1974, 222; Mazar 1957, 141-142

⁸⁸ Mazar 1957, 140-141; Ji 1997a; 1997b; Villeneuve 1988; Waheeb 1997; Zayadine 1997, 178

The Zenon papyri

Probably one of the most important sources for this period is the Zenon papyri. Six of the papyri directly relate to Jewish affairs and the role of Tobiah. In the papyri, the Tobiads are influential Jewish landowners in Trans-Jordan during the Hellenistic period who enjoyed an autonomous status as rulers and commanded a garrison of cavalry. Tobiah (#1,4) and Yeddiah (#6) seem to have exercised considerable power and autonomy. The papyri can be fitted with other sources to see that the Tobiads were a Jewish family dynasty that wielded their power from generation to generation. The importance of Greek language and the need to work in Greek is indicated by these letters. Tobiah clearly had a Greek secretary, if he did not already possess a Hellenistic education, the pressure to educate his sons in the Greek way would have been very strong.⁸⁹ There is no indication that Tobiah was anything but a strict Jew, in spite of his acceptance of polytheistic greetings to the king. The papyri preserves Tobiah's letter to the Egyptian finance minister, Apollonius, which starts with the formula of Greek greeting, "many thanks to the gods" perhaps written by his secretary. Even so plural form is surprising in a letter of a strict Jew. (#4). We learned that Apollonius visited Palestine and "the Land of Tobiah", as well as a vineyard owned by Apollonius himself in the Galilee. The content of the papyri show the clearly pro-Ptolemaic attitude of the Tobiad dynasty.⁹⁰



Zenon Papyri

According to Josephus, the family of Tobiah was connected to the priesthood and wielded great power in Jerusalem.⁹¹ The great man of this family was Joseph, the son of Tobiah. Joseph stood as the highest civil functionary of the Jews under Ptolemy III Euergetes. He succeeded in obtaining from the king the tax farming rights for the whole of the Ptolemaic province.

The Tax Collectors

The administrators at Tell el-'Umeiri appear to have organized wine production at farmsteads in the vicinity. They would have sent wine to the Babylonians and the Persians as tribute and tax. Hence, there are compelling reasons for concluding that Persian provinces existed in the Trans-Jordan including the regions of the Wadi es-Seer, 'Iraq al-Amir, Rabath-Ammon and the Madaba Plains.

In addition, archaeological findings seem to indicate the administration of grape plantations at the farmsteads near 'Iraq al-Amir. The regional surveys reveal that a large number of wine presses were cut into rock along the Wadi es-Seer, and in many cases they were associated with late Iron II and Persian settlements.⁹² Thus, the vicinity of Iraq al-Amir may have constituted a sort of agricultural heartland of this area. In addition, Survey Site 25, a Hellenistic site with sporadic late Iron II pottery shards, also appears to have been a rich farmstead site associated with 'Iraq al-Amir and Qasr al-'Abd. It is situated across the wadi south of the 'Iraq al-Amir village and east of Qasr al-'Abd. This site contains a number of foundation walls most of which appears to have belonged to a large rectangular structure. There are also a couple of cisterns and terraces in the vicinity.

This pattern of settlement is typical along the Wadi es-Seer and includes a prominent central site with a number of peripheral small farmsteads and villages associated with it. This land use pattern is similar to the wine production at the farmsteads in the Tell el-'Umeiri region, and hence may point to the presence of a similar provincial, economic system in the Wadi es-Seer to one in the Madaba Plains. A distinctive feature of the 'Iraq al-Amir region is, when compared with the Tell el-'Umeiri region, the continuation of this grape plantation pattern through the Hellenistic period. Bardbun, el-Muweina, and Survey Site 81 were continuously used in the Hellenistic period, and at the same time, a couple of new fortresses and public buildings were added to this socio-economic system. That the Tobiads inhabited this region may help

⁸⁹ Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice From the Exile to Yavneh, by Lester L Grabbe, 2000

⁹⁰ The Old Testament world By John William Rogerson, Philip R. Davies

⁹¹ Josephus Antiquities 12.4

⁹² e.g., Bardbun, el-Muweina, Survey Site 1, and Survey Site 81

explain why many settlements and farmsteads were in continuous use from Persian to the Hellenistic period in the Wadi es-Seer region.

As we will see below when discussion the Religion of the Tobiads, many of the traits of this dynasty bear remarkable, if not purposeful, similarities to the stories of Joseph son of Jacob. Tax collection is another area for which the Biblical Joseph was renowned. As viceroy to Pharaoh, Joseph was invested with sole responsibility for the collection of taxes to prepare for a future famine, due to his unique divinely guided insight and skill in management of the Kings revenue.

Religion of the Tobiads

Unlike the Samaritans, the religion of the Tobiads is not fully understood. An important indication may be derived from four rock-cut a dovecote or pigeon houses called "columbarium". A common thread that unites these columbaria is that they are each a detached block of rock, and the niches were carved facing approximately east. These columbariums were at the west end of the Tobiah's cave complex. We propose that the columbaria at 'Iraq al-Amir were used for diplomatic communications and religious purposes.



In the Israel's *shfelah* region, hundreds of columbarium caves with thousands of small niches hewn in their walls were examined.⁹³ These caves were cut in the 3rd century B.C.E. and were used until the 4th century C.E. Scholars have suggested that the caves were designed for raising sacred doves for the cult of Aphrodite-Atargatis.⁹⁴ Especially noteworthy is the fact that doves and pillars were the symbols of this goddess as shown in Cypriot coins and clay models. Maresha was a major Edomite city and with the conquest of the region by Alexander the Great the city was settled by retired Greek soldiers as customary. Maresha developed as a Hellenistic city encompassing a multitude of Greek and oriental cultures including Sidonians and Nabateans. Maresha was reportedly served as a center for the cult of the sacred doves of Aphrodite during the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE.⁹⁵ Significant in this context is the fact that the Nabataeans also erected many columbaria at Petra.⁹⁶ From this fact, we see some possible relationship between the Edomites, Nabateans and the Tobiads.

It is interesting that the people of Maresha were later forced by Yochanan Hyrcanus I to embrace Judaism, but the columbaria caves at Maresha continued to be used even after their conversion. Herod appears to have been born in Maresha and adopted dove-breeding for divination purposes. Herod built small columbarium towers around the pools in his palace (Josephus J. W. 5.4.4). At Masada small niches were found hewn in long rows in the walls of a round structure dated to the time of Herod.⁹⁷

Mu'llagah ed-Deir is a cave consisting of two parallel chambers with windows and doors all cut in the rock of the cliff, and Conder characterized this cave as a religious hermitage.⁹⁸ In the Byzantine period also *Mu'llagah ed-Deir* served a religious purpose, as attested to by the wooden floors and local oral traditions. A further support for the Tobiah's connection with divination by doves comes from a small quarry site which includes a dove carved into a rock, measuring 15 x 15 cm. This rock-carving seems to be a religious expression in light of the pains taken to make it symmetrical and artful.

Of related interest is the discovery of several idol niches situated along the Wadi es-Seer. These niches primarily found in the vicinity and the Sidonian commercial colony in the *shfelah*, which might suggest political and cultural cooperation between the Tobiads and the Nabatean in Trans-Jordan during the early Hellenistic period. They are each rectangular niches hewn in large detached rocks. Although they are without any traces of idols or idol blocks in the 'Iraq al-Amir region, there are hints of pagan influences. This finds support in the Zenon papyri (#4). The papyri preserves Tobiah's letter to Apollonius, which starts with the formula of Greek greeting, "many thanks to the gods." This plural is surprising in a letter of a strict Jew. Therefore, it is clear that the first steps toward the Hellenization in the Tobiad family took place no later than

⁹³ Oren 1965, 221

⁹⁴ Oren 1968, 61; cf. Kloner 1997, 33

⁹⁵ Bliss - Macalister 1902, 52-61; Oren 1968, 58-59; Peters - Thiersch 1905.

⁹⁶ See Belloni 1996, 67.

⁹⁷ Yadin 1966, 138

⁹⁸ Conder 1889, 94-96

the 3rd century BCE. This seems to indicate that non-Jewish religious influence came together with the Hellenization of the Tobiads. It is widely known that during the Hellenistic period, Tobiah's influence was not in the political and economic sphere alone, but in the social and religious as well.⁹⁹

The Tobiads were interested in the management of the Temple in Jerusalem. We propose this is due to the prophetic tidings of Zechariah during the time of Nehemiah (Neh 13:49). The closing chapter of the Book of Nehemiah pays special attention to Nehemiah's action against Tobiah. Eliashiv put one of the temple rooms at Tobiah's disposal and allowed him temple precincts. Nehemiah interpreted this development as a danger to Jewish religion and took immediate action.¹⁰⁰

So in summary we can say that the historically the Tobiads used doves and carrier pigeons for communications purposes. In keeping with their proposed ancestor Joseph son of Jacob, they could discern stars, dreams and receive visions from heaven. The dove, we propose, became associated with these "messages from heaven" and in time became a symbol of the Messenger from Heaven. The angels in general would be important to the Tobiads, but one angel in particular was the protector of Joseph: the angel Gabriel.¹⁰¹ There seems to be a monastic content to their religion as seen by *Mu'llagah ed-Deir*. Meditating in caves, going into the desert, awaiting divine revelations from angels, would become a common theme by the time of John the Baptist.

Tobiad symbolism abounds in the New Testament: when Jesus is seen receiving the Holy Spirit after his baptism in the form of a dove, or when the angel Gabriel announces a special birth to Mary and Elizabeth. The name Jesus (Yeshua') is closely related with the name of the High Priest Yehoshua'. Zachariah, the husband of Elizabeth, is reminiscent of the Prophet Zachariah. Lastly Jesus' connection with "tax collectors" and the use of "upon this rock" metaphor in connection with Peter, may hint at elements of a proto-Christian, Tobiad faith. It is interesting that the founding of the religion of the *Notzrim*, a word used even today for Christianity, may not have been in Bethlehem, but in 'Iraq al-Amir.¹⁰²

The Maccabean period

Alexander the Great died without obvious or legitimate heir

Alexander the Great died in battle in 323 BCE and there was no clear indication who would rule the newly-conquered and barely-pacified Empire. Perdicas had assumed provisional leadership. He divided Alexander's empire between the Macedonian generals of Alexander's army. However the satrapies handed out by Perdicas became power bases for each general to launch his own bid for power. After Perdicas was assassinated, all semblance of Macedonian unity collapsed. Forty years of war between former generals ensued, before the Hellenistic world settled into four stable power blocks:

- The Ptolemaic kingdom of Egypt,
- The Seleucid Empire in the east,
- The kingdom of Pergamon in Asia Minor, and
- Macedon.

Before Alexander, the Persians had tried to recreate the form of the great Solomonic Kingdom in the Trans-Euphrates as a vassal to the Persian Empire. By the time he had defeated Persia, Alexander had not yet confirmed the rights of the satrapies of Sanballat, Tobiah and Gashmu. The Land of Israel became hotly contested between the Ptolemy dynasty in Egypt and the Seleucid dynasty in Syria, changing hands several times. Ptolemy I Soter was Alexander's the Great's childhood friend and possibly his half-brother. Seleucus I Nicator was a general who had proved himself in a campaign in India. In 300 B.C. Seleucus I opened Antioch up to the Jews and gave them equal status with Greeks while under Ptolemy I many other Jews settled in Alexandria, Egypt.

⁹⁹ Tcherikover 1961, 154

¹⁰⁰ Fensham 1993, 261

¹⁰¹ Gabriel knows seventy languages, all of which he taught to Joseph (Soṭah, 36b; compare Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah fragment in Wertheimer, "Bate Midrashot," iv. 25, where Zagzagael is mentioned as instructor in the seventy languages, the other angels understand only Hebrew (Hag. 16a; Soṭah, 33a)). The

the highest of these intelligences being the active intellect of the Tenth Sphere, identified by the Islamic sources (according to "Cuzari," i. 87) with the angel Gabriel and the Holy Ghost,

¹⁰² Backgrounds of early Christianity, by Everett Ferguson, 2003

The Ptolemies and their love for the Temple

The Ptolemaic kingdom was founded when Ptolemy I Soter declared himself Pharaoh of Egypt, creating a powerful Hellenistic state stretching from southern Syria to Cyrene and south to Nubia, including the Trans-Euphrates and Arabia. Alexandria became the capital city and a center of Greek culture and trade. To gain recognition by the native Egyptian populace, they named themselves as the successors to the Pharaohs and took on their customs.

There was a long history of Jewish settlement in Egypt: The Persians had used Jewish and Samaritan troops in Egypt under Sanballat to protect their southern border. Alexander the ordered that the Samaritan troops of Sanballat should follow him into Egypt, promising to give them lands, ordering them to guard that country. Ptolemy I Soter captured Jerusalem by coming on the Sabbath day bringing sacrifices. The unsuspecting residents were unprepared when Ptolemy's troops seized control of the city. Ptolemy then forcibly settled many Jews and Samaritans in Egypt. He distributed many of them into garrisons, and at Alexandria gave them equal privileges of citizens with the Macedonians themselves; and required of them to take oaths of fidelity. Eventually other Jews went of their own accord into Egypt, because of the "goodness of the soil, and the liberality of Ptolemy".¹⁰³



Hellenized Coins of High Priests Onias I and Onias II

Ptolemy II Philadelphus (283 BCE to 246 BCE) then took over the kingdom of Egypt. As part of his effort to assemble a universal library at Alexandria, he enjoined seventy [seventy-two] Jewish scholars to translate the Torah from Hebrew into Greek under the supervision of the High Priest in Jerusalem. The High Priest Eleazar was a brother of Onias II.¹⁰⁴ This work is known as the Septuagint (LXX). Philadelphus also set free a hundred and twenty thousand Jewish and Samaritan slaves, at the advice of Aristeus, a Temple sympathizer.¹⁰⁵ At the advice of Andreas, the captain of the guard, and Aristeus, Philadelphus also sent first fruits, sacrifices, "a multitude of vessels", precious stones, gold items, including the table of shewbread, as gifts to Jerusalem"¹⁰⁶

The Jews also obtained honors from the "kings of Asia": Seleucus I Nicator made them citizens in those cities which he built in Asia, and in the lower Syria, and in the metropolis itself, Antioch. He granted them privileges equal to those of the Macedonians and Greeks, honors that lasted well into Roman times.

Ptolemy loses the Trans-Euphrates to Syria, but retains tax rights

The Seleucid Empire had designs on Syria, Phoenicia and Judea. Antiochus III the Great (222–187 BCE) made war against Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-205 BCE). Antiochus attacked the Ptolemaic province of southern Syria and Phoenicia, and by 199 BCE he seems to have had possession of it. Scopas briefly recovered it for Ptolemy Philopater. But in 198 BCE Antiochus defeated Scopas at the Battle of Panium, near the sources of the Jordan, a battle which marks the end of Ptolemaic rule in Judea. Most of the general population of Jews and Samaritans who had suffered taxation supported the Seleucids, but the High Priest and Jerusalem supported Ptolemy.

After devastating Jerusalem, Antiochus sent gifts to the temple. He declared a pension for sacrifices, wine, oil and frankincense. He declared all materials to be used to "repair the work about the Temple", after the devastation of war, to be tax free. He reaffirmed the Persian tax exemption on the priesthood: "Let the senate, and the priests, and the scribes of the temple, and the sacred singers, be discharged from poll-money and the crown tax and other taxes also". He granted a general tax exemption to the entire city for three years. He reaffirmed Jerusalem's role as a single judiciary for the entire Trans-Euphrates (limited to

¹⁰³ Josephus, Antiquities 12.2.2

¹⁰⁴ Further books were translated over the next two centuries in Alexandria.

¹⁰⁵ In modern terms Aristeus would be called a "Noahide". He said "that though I be not of kin to them by birth, nor one of the same country with them, yet do I desire these favors to be done them, since all men are the workmanship of God" and "I have learned by particular inquiry; for both these people, and we also, worship the same God the framer of all things."

¹⁰⁶ Josephus, Antiquities 12.2.4

religion, and excepting Greeks). He declared "let all of that nation live according to the laws of their own country" and "and he that transgresses any of these orders, let him pay to the priests three thousand drachmae of silver."

After this Antiochus tried to pacify Ptolemy V Epiphanes (204–181 BCE), and create a treaty of friendship. Antiochus gave Ptolemy his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, and yielded up to him the tax-rights of Coele Syria, and Samaria, and Judea, and Phoenicia, by way of dowry. This allowed Ptolemy to continue to farm taxes in the Trans-Euphrates, but did not allow him to retain garrisons there.

Joseph Tobiah wins "tax-rulership" of the Trans-Euphrates

Ptolemy VI Philometor (180 to 145 BCE), son of Cleopatra, began to tax the High Priest Onias II. However, either due to the prior exemption of Antiochus or some other reason, he refused to pay it. Ptolemy threatened invasion. When pressed by the nobles, Onias II threatened to resign. Joseph Tobiah, a nephew of Onias II, requested permission to petition Ptolemy to forgo the tribute-money, or at least a part of it. Onias II permitted Joseph, to go to Ptolemy and gave him the authority to speak to the people in his name. Instead Joseph won tax farming rights for himself.

Joseph received the Egyptian envoy and gave them presents. Joseph first raised a loan of about 20,000 drachma in Samaria to make his bid to become the main tax collector for Ptolemy throughout the Trans-Euphrates. There were other Syrian and Phoenician nobles who came to Alexandria in order to bid for the same position, and who derided Joseph on account of his insignificant appearance. Joseph, based on his family's position for many generations as tax collectors for the Trans-Euphrates for the Persians was able to win for him the Egyptian king's friendship. In addition, according to Josephus, he offered twice the bid of his opponents and secured the contract for farming the taxes. He was given initial funds and 2,000 cavalry. Joseph Tobiah's domains, as promised by Ptolemy, included the entire Trans-Euphrates: Syria, Phoenicia, Judea, Trans-Jordan and Arabia. Josephus says that Joseph Tobiah made himself feared through all the cities of Syria and Phoenicia. When a city would refuse to pay taxes, he would kill the principle men and send the sum of their estates to Ptolemy.

Joseph left Alexandria as "ruler" προστάτης of the Trans-Euphrates. Joseph retained his office of tax-farmer until his death, twenty-two years later.

Heliodorus and plundering the Temple Treasury

According to 2 Maccabees, Onias III quarreled with the Temple superintendent, Simon the "Benjamite". Simon was his half brother and nephew to Joseph Tobiah. (The appellation "Benjamite" in Hebrew is *benyamini* but should be read *bar yonai*, referring to the Tobiad "dove" which is *yonah* in Hebrew and Aramaic.¹⁰⁷ It is also a play on words, in the bible *benjamin* was originally *ben oni*, similar to *ben choni* (Onias). Simon and his brother Menelaus are both given this appellation.¹⁰⁸ Incidentally, *bar yonai* is specifically used by Jesus to describe Peter in the New Testament. Mathew is also called a "tax collector" and a Levite, and Jesus stayed at the house of Zacchaeus the "tax collector". These appear to be indications of Tobiad religion *notzrut* in the New Testament)

The quarrel was about the taxation of the market place next to the Temple. Simon Tobiah went to the governor of Tarsus and described to him the treasury in the temple, indicating that the king could take it if he was made high priest. The governor then told the king, Seleucus IV Philopator (187-175 BCE), who sent his minister Heliodorus to Jerusalem. Heliodorus tried to enter the temple to take some of the treasure, but was seized with terror and beaten. Heliodorus was carried away on a stretcher and Onias III offered a sacrifice for the man's recovery, worried that the king would think the Jews had done this to him. It is said, however, that Simon Tobiah brought a false accusation to the king that it was Onias III who had threatened Heliodorus and began to exact revenge with the help of Apollonius, the governor of Coele Syria and Phoenicia (who held the position Sanballat once did), Onias began to appeal to the king. He died and his brother, Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BCE) took the throne. The new king did not forgive the high priest's failed attempt to take the Temple treasuries. When Antiochus IV Epiphanes became king, Onias was obliged to yield to his own half brother Simon Tobiah, who took on the name Jason after attaining High Priesthood.

¹⁰⁷ In the Samaritan Torah, the name is *benjamin* consistently written as *ben yamim*. It is interesting to note that in Arabic *al-yamamah* means "dove."

¹⁰⁸ Simon, who took the name Jason upon his ascension to High Priesthood, was buried in a magnificent Tomb in the Kidron valley across from the Temple. On that tomb, the name of Jason's father has been deliberately defaced, in an effort to distance Jason from the legitimate priesthood.

Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the Maccabee Rebellion

During the three years of his priesthood Jason had given many proofs of his loyalty to the Hellenistic party by building a gymnasium in Jerusalem and by introducing many Greek customs. However Antiochus IV Epiphanes wanted more money than Jason was prepared to take from the Temple treasury. Menelaus, having been sent to Antiochus to pay the annual tribute, took the opportunity to promise more revenue than Jason if the king would grant him the office of high priest. Antiochus granted Menelaus' request. Antiochus sent an officer and a troop of Cyprian soldiers to subdue any opposition that might be attempted by the followers of the deposed high priest Jason and to collect at the same time the sum Menelaus had promised. Onias III made a public protest of this and escaped to "the inviolable sanctuary of Daphne, near Antioch." Menelaus and Andronicus lured Onias out of the garden sanctuary with sworn pledges of nonviolence but then put Onias to death.

Meanwhile Jason had not abandoned his claims to the high-priesthood, and while (170 BCE) Antiochus was waging war against Egypt, Jason made himself master of Jerusalem and forced Menelaus to seek refuge in the citadel. Antiochus regarded this as an act of rebellion, and, having been compelled by the Romans to leave Egypt, he marched against Jerusalem, massacred the inhabitants, and plundered the Temple; in this he is said to have been assisted by Menelaus. According to 2 Maccabees, it was Menelaus who persuaded Antiochus to Hellenize the Jewish worship, and thereby brought about the uprising of the Judeans under the guidance of the Maccabees. Antiochus IV Epiphanes failed to put down the Maccabean rebellion, and his successor, Antiochus Eupator, executed Menelaus as a concession to the Jews.

Demetrius I Soter overthrew Antiochus Eupator, and Alcimus traveled to Antioch to secure the assistance of the Seleucid king to put down the rebellion. Demetrius sent an army under Bacchides to establish Alcimus in the high priesthood at Jerusalem. When Bacchides and his army returned to Antioch, the Hasmonean Judah Maccabee attacked and overcame Alcimus, and drove him also to Syria. There he secured from Demetrius another army, led by Nicanor, who, failing to overcome Judah by treachery, attacked him directly, but was defeated and killed. A third and greater army, under Bacchides again, was dispatched to reinstall Alcimus. Judah was defeated and killed. Alcimus established as high priest and a strong garrison was left in Jerusalem to maintain him. But he did not long enjoy his triumph, since he died soon after. One of the major changes he made in the Temple was to pull down the low wall of the temple that divided the court of the Gentiles from that of the Israelites, symbolically undoing the work of Ezra over a hundred years before.

Later this low wall was rebuilt with twelve gates, one for each tribe, at which worshipers would gather for prayer. The symbolism was clear, different paths to the Almighty were recognized, but the distinction between the role of Jew and non-Jew remained. Later the prayers at these twelve gates became the basis for public prayer, and when six more prayers were added after the destruction of the Temple, the prayer became known as the eighteen benedictions, or Shemoneh Esrei prayer, prayed three times a day by Jews until today.

Various early theories concern the identity of the Wicked Priest in the Dead Sea scrolls. The Wicked Priest "ruled over Israel" (1QpHab 8.10) and was able to partake in "plundering" (9.7) has persuaded most scholars to exclude from consideration the predecessors of the Hasmonean High Priests, who did not share their ability to attack other nations militarily, having been militarily subjugated to Egypt or Syria, and their successors, who were dominated by the Romans. The Wicked Priest was once called "by the name of the truth" (8.8-9), but later turned to evil. The Wicked Priest probably refers to either Menelaus or Alcimus. The Moreh Tzedek probably refers then to Onias IV who fled to Egypt.

Joseph's other son, Hyrcanus – A Split in the Tobiad dynasty

Before the Maccabean revolt, Joseph had seven sons and a daughter by his first wife, descended from Seleucid nobility. These first sons were sympathetic to Seleucids. His grandsons of this marriage included Jason, Menelaus and Alcimus.

However Joseph had another son by a second marriage. He married the daughter of his brother who lived in Egypt. His only son from this marriage was Hyrcanus Tobiah, who's sympathies lay with the Ptolemies.

On the birth of a prince, (who would become Ptolemy VI Philometor, in 181 BCE), Joseph felt too old to visit Alexandria. Because his older brothers were not sympathetic to Ptolemy, he sent Hyrcanus to bear his congratulations to the court. Joseph's representative in Alexandria, Arion, was sympathetic to newly enthroned Seleucus IV Philopator. Arion refused to recognize Hyrcanus. Hyrcanus, emboldened, put Arion

in chains, and in this way won both the favor of Ptolemy V Epiphanes and his courtiers. Ptolemy decided that Hyrcanus would inherit his father's office of ruler and tax-farmer of the Trans-Euphrates.

The older sons of Joseph supported the Seleucids and met Hyrcanus Tobiah with armed resistance. Hyrcanus defeated them, and killed two of them. Hyrcanus Tobiah was supported in battle by troops loyal to Onias IV, son of the deposed priest Onias III. Seleucus IV Philopator was busy raiding the Temple treasuries, so Hyrcanus Tobiah retreated from Jerusalem and created a fortified estate in Iraq al-Amir and continued to pursue his claim, granted by Persia and confirmed by Ptolemy, to be ruler of what was left of Ptolemaic Trans-Euphrates. Hyrcanus Tobiah carried on war with the Arabs in the name of Ptolemy, and ruled the district east of the Jordan.

Both for his own comfort, and also as a safeguard against attacks by his brothers, Hyrcanus Tobiah built the castle of Tyre and various other strongholds, ruling there until the death of Seleucus IV Philopator (175 BCE). Ptolemy V Epiphanes also died (181 BCE), leaving two young sons; but when Hyrcanus Tobiah saw that Antiochus Epiphanes, the new king of Syria, possessed great power, and when he realized that he would be unable to vindicate himself for his war upon the Arabs, he committed suicide (175 BCE), and his property was seized by Antiochus. His claims to all of Trans-Jordan and Nabatea would be taken on by his grandson Antipatris, where Antipatris was not only the name of one of Alexander the Great's generals, but also a play on words "against Petra". His son would marry an Arabian princess, Cypros, daughter of Aretas III Philhellen King of Nabatea. Their son would be named after Aretas, and Latinized to Herod.

Perhaps felt the need to emphasize the lines of continuity between himself and his predecessors at 'Iraq al-Amir. Hyrcanus may have tried to regain his leadership inside his family by underlining his inheritance to the ancestral estate at 'Iraq al-Amir by building a royal residence comparable with or superior to those of his ancestors at the site. Many years later Herod the Great would rebuild 'Iraq al-Amir in magnificent Herodian style.

There was a close link between the Oniads and the Tobiads. During Antiochus IV Epiphanes second campaign against Egypt, 2 Maccabees says a false rumor was spread that Antiochus had been killed. Jason tried to reclaim the High Priesthood with the support of Tobiad cavalry, but failed in the attempt. Jason was ultimately forced to move from country to country in exile until he finally died in Sparta.

Onias IV, like Jason before him, sought refuge among the Tobiads. Onias IV would escape to Egypt in 159 BCE, when the Maccabees came to power. Onias would request from Ptolemy VI Philometor, whom Hyrcanus had honored at his birth, with permission to build a Temple in Egypt, him in the Nomus of Heliopolis. His ancestors would include the Boethusians as well as the Quraish of Mecca. This is further discussed in the authors work "The Prophet Muhammed as a descendant of Onias III"

The Temple of Onias IV

Josephus in the *The Wars of the Jews*¹⁰⁹, refers to the Onias who built the Temple at Leontopolis as "the son of Simon", which was the name of Onias III as well as his father.. Onias III was murdered at Antioch in 171 BCE. A mere youth at the time of his father's death, he had fled to the court of Alexandria in consequence of the Syrian persecutions, perhaps because he thought that salvation would come to his people from Egypt. Ptolemy VI was King of Egypt at that time. He had not yet given up his claims to Coele-Syria, Judea and Arabia. He w and gladly gave refuge to such a prominent personage of the neighboring country. Onias requested the king and his sister-wife, Cleopatra, to allow him to build a sanctuary in Egypt similar to the one at Jerusalem, where he would employ Levites and priests for the use of Jews and non-Jewish Temple sympathizers. He referred to the prediction of the prophet Isaiah that a Jewish temple would be erected in Egypt and Arabia.

In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt (Heliopolis), and a monument at the border thereof (Mecca) to the Lord. (Isaiah 19:19)

According to Josephus, the temple of Leontopolis existed for 343 years, though modern historians correct that number to 243. He relates that the Roman emperor Vespasian feared that through this temple Egypt might become a new center for Jewish rebellion and therefore ordered the governor of Egypt, Lupus, to demolish it. Lupus died in the process of carrying out the order; and the task of stripping the temple of its treasures, barring access to it, and removing all traces of divine worship at the site was completed by his successor, Paulinus, which dates the event to c. March - August 73.

¹⁰⁹ War i. 1, § 1; vii. 10, § 2.

The Onias temple was not exactly similar to the Temple at Jerusalem, being more in the form of a high tower; and as regards the interior arrangement, it had not a candelabrum, but a hanging lamp. The building had a court (τέμενος) which was surrounded by a brick wall with stone gates. The king endowed the temple with large revenues—a fact that may have suggested to the writer of the letters mentioned above the wealth of wood and sacrificial animals.¹¹⁰

Many of the Jewish settlers in the Land of Onias were military colonists who served in the army of the Ptolemaic kings. Ananias (Onias V) and Chelkias (Chalcis), the sons of Onias IV, both served as generals in the army of Cleopatra III (r.117-81 BCE).

The Maccabees

Judas the Maccabee led a revolt against Syria. He used guerrilla warfare to win victories against the Syrians despite commanding a numerically inferior army. Judas the Maccabee took the first steps to rebuild the Kingdom of Solomon as a Judeo-Arab confederation. He fought Samaritan and Arab tribes and conquered Edom, and forced the population to convert to Judaism. He made an alliance with the Nabataeans, an ancient people who lived in southern Jordan, Canaan, and northern Arabia. Jehuda the Maccabee (r. 167-160 BCE) also “turned aside to the land of the Philistines; he tore down their altars, and the graven images of their gods he burned with fire; he plundered the cities and returned to the land of Judah. Although the Maccabees claimed the entire Trans-Jordan as their domain, their benefactor was neither the Seleucids in Syria, nor the Ptolemies in Egypt, but rather a new rising power, that of Rome.

The success of the Maccabees inspired fear and respect in Egypt and Arabia. When Alexander Balas brought his army against Ptolemy and lost, he fled to the Nabataeans in northern Arabia. There he was assassinated and Zabdiel, the Arabian king of Saba', sent his head to Ptolemy, whose grandfather had established the altar at Mecca under the supervision of Onias IV. At one point in the battle against the Seleucids, Jonathan the Maccabee (r. 161 to 143 BCE) “turned aside against the Arabs who are called Zabadeans, and he crushed them and plundered them.” This was not simply the conquest of the victor; the Maccabees felt they were the inheritors to the kingdom of the Trans-Jordan, the shadow of the former Kingdom of Israel. Their conquests among the Arabs were their way of reuniting the "Jews", the lost tribes of Israel, into one kingdom.

The Zabadi family were originally members of the tribe of Judah. Zabadi means "He has given" or "gift." 1 Chron. 2:36-37. Yet his descendant was one of three men ordered to divorce their foreign-born wives. The tribe of Zabadeans was apparently the result of their intermarriage. The Zabadeans seem to have some connection to the Tobiads and their Notzrim religion. It is interesting to note that there was a "Zebedee" who was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee. He knew many of Jesus' disciples because his sons were James and John. Also, he had several hired servants, including Simon Peter and Andrew.

The next generation, who were not descendants of Judah the Maccabee, who called themselves the Hasmoneans, continued to push into Arabia, Alexander Yannai conquering them along with the Gileadites and Moabites. However, he lost his entire army after being ambushed by Obodias (Abdullah), king of the Arabians, and escaped to Jerusalem only to find more insurrections. He put these rebels down as well, although Josephus says in War of the Jews that he had “no reason to rejoice in these victories”. Alexander Yannai was hated for his heavy taxation and cruelties. But as hated as he was, this was offset of the love of the people for their queen, Salome Alexandra.

The Hasmoneans

The Pharisees had opposed the conquests of Alexander Yannai, and of his policy of the forced conversion of his subjects to Judaism. They saw this as a means of grabbing power and a detriment to true religion. In response to this mutiny, Alexander Yannai is said to have crucified 800 Pharisees, sparing none except the brother of the queen, Shimon ben Shetach. As side note, Josephus – who claimed to be a Pharisee himself – betrays his sympathies when he describes these events. After coldly describing the death of 800 Pharisees, he mentions that the queen permitted a few of their murderers to be executed but "when the men called on the ghost of Alexander Yannai to console the slain [those who had crucified the Pharisees], the bystanders were said to have broken out into tears."

¹¹⁰ Archeologist Flinders Petrie, in his dig of *Tell al-Yahudi* in 1905/6 identified remains of this temple.

According to an article written by Prof. Louis Ginzberg, the 8,000 Pharisees who fled Jerusalem emigrated to Egypt and Syria, with Judah ben Tabbai leading one group to Ptolemy in Egypt. The other group went to Syria were said to have met with intense violence and that most of them were massacred near Chalcis, leaving only a small remnant who took refuge in Beit Zabdai (see Zabadeans above).

With Alexander Alexander Yannai crucifying hundreds of his own people as his victims watched their family members get tortured to death before them, it is hard to think of a less likely ally to the Essenes, yet that is what is implied by a copied letter referred to as the Prayer for King Jonathan, one of the Dead Sea Scrolls:



Execution of the Pharisees by Alexander Jannaeus, showing the King and his Court feasting during the executions. Engraving by Willem Swidde, 17th century.

[Column B] "A song of holiness unto king Jonathan and all the congregation of your people, Israel, who are in the four winds of heaven, peace be [for] all, and upon your kingdom, your name be blessed.

[Column A] "Praise the Lord, a Psalm... of You loved as a fa[ther]; you ruled over... vacat... and your foes were [will be] afraid... the heaven... and to the depths of the sea... and upon those who glorify him... the humble from the hand of adversaries... Zion for his habitation, ch[oo]ses]...

[Column C] "...because you love Isr[ael]... in the day and until evening... to approach, to be Remember them for blessing on your name, which is called... kingdom to be blessed... for the day of war... to King Jonathan..."

We have Josephus' uncorroborated report that the wife of Aristobulus fulfilled Judas the Essene's prophecy, which could mean that Salome Alexandra was an Essene sympathizer who was able to convince her second husband Jonathan to make concessions towards them. Antiquities says that Alexander Yannai had crucified the 800 men on the advice of Diogenes of Judea and that after Alexander Yannai died, Alexandra had that advisor put to death. Other, less likely possibilities are that the scroll has been misinterpreted due to the missing fragments or that another, otherwise unknown contender to the throne had the same name. Another more presumptuous supposition has been made that the letter was brought in by a Sadducee convert and so did not reflect the opinion of the Dead Sea community. A more likely possibility, assuming there even was a conflict between the Dead Sea community and Alexander Yannai, is that the praises were diplomatic in nature. The sons of Onias IV had convinced Cleopatra III to make an alliance with Alexander Yannai against Lathyros despite the fact that they were Judean dissidents, so it would not be too surprising if the Essenes were a part of this alliance or a similar one.

The Seucids and the Ptolemies fought the Nabateans as part of what they understood to be their right to Arabia as granted by Alexander the Great. They fought battles through their proxies: the Oniads, the Tobiads, the Maccabees, the Hasmoneans and the Herodians. In spite of being vassals and proxies to Persia, Syria, Egypt and eventually Rome, these local rulers did not forget the Tobaid claim to the Trans-Jordan and Arabia, secretly harboring intentions of their own Judeo-Arab kingdom.

The Roman Historian, Cornelius Tacitus (56-117CE) described it this way: "While the Assyrian, Median, and Persian Empires dominated the East, the Jews were slaves regarded as the lowest of the low. In the Hellenistic period, King Antiochus made an effort to get rid of their primitive cult and Hellenize them, but this would-be reform of this degraded nation was foiled by the outbreak of war with Parthia, for this was the moment of Arsaces' insurrection. Then, since the Hellenistic rulers were weak and the Parthians had not yet developed into a great power (Rome, too, was still far away), the Jews established a dynasty of their own. These kings were expelled by the fickle mob, but regained control by force, setting up a reign of terror which embraced, among other typical acts of despotism, the banishment of fellow-citizens, the destruction of cities, and the murder of brothers, wives, and parents. The kings encouraged the superstitious Jewish religion, for they assumed the office of High Priest in order to buttress their regime."¹¹¹

¹¹¹ Tacitus, Histories, Book 5, Ch. 8

The rise of the Sadducees and retreat of the Pharisees

It is difficult to state at what time the Pharisees, as a party, arose. Josephus first mentions them in connection with Jonathan, the successor of Judas Maccabeus ("Ant." xiii. 5, § 9). One of the factors that distinguished the Pharisees from other groups prior to the destruction of the Temple was their belief that all Jews had to observe the purity laws (which applied to the Temple service) outside the Temple. The major difference, however, was the continued adherence of the Pharisees to the laws and traditions of the Jewish people in the face of assimilation. As Josephus noted, the Pharisees were considered the most expert and accurate expositors of Jewish law.

During the Hasmonean period, the Sadducees and Pharisees functioned primarily as political parties. Although the Pharisees had opposed the wars of expansion of the Hasmoneans and the forced conversions of the Idumeans, the political rift between them became wider when Pharisees demanded that the Hasmonean king Alexander Jannaeus choose between being king and being High Priest. In response, the king openly sided with the Sadducees by adopting their rites in the Temple. His actions caused a riot in the Temple and led to a brief civil war that ended with a bloody repression of the Pharisees, although at his deathbed the king called for reconciliation between the two parties. Alexander was succeeded by his widow, Salome Alexandra, whose brother was Shimon ben Shetach, a leading Pharisee. Upon her death her elder son, Hyrcanus, sought Pharisee support, and her younger son, Aristobulus, sought the support of the Sadducees. The conflict between Hyrcanus and Aristobulus culminated in a civil war that ended when the Roman general Pompey captured Jerusalem in 63 BC and inaugurated the Roman period of Jewish history.

Summary of Disputes among the Parties

Sect:	Sadducees	Pharisees	Essenes
Social Class:	Priests, aristocrats	Common people	Both
Figures of Authority:	Priests	"Disciples of the Wise"	"Teacher of Righteousness"
Attitude to Hellenism:	For	Selective	Against
Attitude to Hasmoneans:	Opposed usurpation of priesthood by non-Sadducees	Varied? Opposed usurpation of monarchy?	Varied? Personally opposed to Jonathan ("Wicked Priest")
Theology:			1. No
Free will	Yes	Mostly	2. Highly
Angels	No	Yes	3. Spiritual
Afterlife	None	Resurrection	Survival
Attitude to Bible:	Literalism	Sophisticated scholarly interpretations	"Inspired Exegesis"
Attitude to Oral Torah:	No such thing	Equal to Written Torah	"Inspired Exegesis"
Practices:	Emphasis on priestly obligations (for priests)	Application of priestly laws to non-priests (<i>tithes</i> and <i>purity</i> rules)	"Inspired Exegesis"
Calendar:	Luni-solar (perhaps only under popular pressure?)	Luni-solar	Solar: 364-day year

Theo-Phyl

Josephus attests that Salome Alexandra was very favorably inclined toward the Pharisees and that their political influence grew tremendously under her reign, especially in the institution known as the Sanhedrin. Later texts such as the Mishnah and the Talmud record a host of rulings ascribed to the Pharisees concerning sacrifices and other ritual practices in the Temple, torts, criminal law, and governance. The influence of the Pharisees over the lives of the common people remained strong, and their rulings on Jewish law were deemed authoritative by many. Although these texts were written long after these periods, many scholars believe that they are a fairly reliable account of history during the Second Temple era.

Upon Hyrcanus' death, however, Aristobulus jailed his mother and three brothers, including Alexander Jannaeus, and allowed her to starve there. By this means he came into possession of the throne, but died one year later after a painful illness in 103 BC. Aristobulus' brothers were freed from prison by his widow; Alexander reigned from 103–76 BC, and died during the siege of the fortress Ragaba. Alexander was followed by his wife, Salome Alexandra, who reigned from 76–67 BC. She was the only regnant Jewish Queen. During her reign, her son Hyrcanus II held the office of High Priest and was named her successor.

Josephus mentions the three main parties of this time were the Sadducees, the Pharisees and the Essenes. One way of looking at these groups is in terms of their ideology: Rationalists, Mystics and Monastics.

Another way to look at these groups is according to historical context during the Second Commonwealth and the centuries afterwards:

- The “The Northern Tribes”
 - The "Sanbalat" Jews, who followed Helenism and intermarried with the Phoenicians, controlled the shipping along the coast of Israel and Egypt. One branch of these families was immortalized in the tales of Smbalat (Sinbad). They assimilated into the Tobiad *Notzrim*.
 - The "Sanbalat" Jews faithful to their sacrificial religion on Mount Gerizim. Always Known as Shomrim (Samaritans), they were repressed during the Second Commonwealth. They did not attain a "Golden age" until after the the Bar Kochba revolt was crushed and the resulting sanctions against "the Jews". They rallied under the king of Palmyra “Ben Netzer”.
- The “Tribes of Joseph”
 - The "Tobiad" Jews, who followed Helenism and intermarried with the Greeks. Many of the “Greeks” mentioned by the New Testament were actually Tobaiads.
 - The "Tobiad" Jews faithful to their monastic religion became the Essenes, and they were later retroactively identified by Constantine as *Notzrim* and thought by him to be the early Christians.
 - The "Tobiad" Jews who followed Helenism, Paganism and intermarried with the Arabs carried on the role of Tax Collectors. Odenathus, the husband of Zenobia and ruler of Palmyra was their king. He called himself "Ben Netzer" and claimed to be ruler of all Jews and Samaritans. His kingdom was destroyed in 270CE. His people were called the Adzites (Aus and Kazraj) when they invaded Medina. They were also called Ansar. The rulers however escaped to Edessa (Sanliurfa) in Asia Minor.
 - The Hyrcanus branch of the "Tobiads" became the Herodians, which escaped to Himyar.
- The “Tzadokite Priesthood”
 - All of the Tobiads kept to some degree the *Notzrim* religion and they were faithful to the Oniad priesthood, so they were all Sadducees, but of different flavors. The Herodians and other Sadducees, originally assimilationists and favoring Helenism, became the core of the zealots when their sovereignty was threatened.¹¹² The New Testament calls them, "the lost sheep of Israel".
- The “Tribes of Judah”
 - The Pharisees, mostly a popular movement, represented the Jews as well as fully converted Arabs (Idumeans, Moabites and Ammonites) under Persian influence.
- The “Kingdom of Sheba”
 - The Idumeans, Moabites and Ammonites had been brought under the control of the Hasmoneans and as such were referred to as “the Jews” or “Herodians”. The Nabateans, the peoples of Sheba and Himyar retained their independence through constant battle with the Hasmoneans/Herodians. It is ironic when the kingdom Herod was finally destroyed by Rome, the last Herodians sought refuge with Himyar bringing great wealth and revitalizing that kingdom.
 - The Adzites (Aus and Kazraj) invaded Medina after 270CE, displacing “the Jews” and causing constant warfare. Peace was only achieved under king Abu Karib Tubba’, a descendant of Tobiah, and Qusai of the Quraish, a descendant of Onias IV in 412 CE.
 - The descendants of “Ben Netzer” finally joined the Quraish when they left Edessa and traveled to declare allegiance to the Prophet at the first declaration of Aqaba in 621CE.

¹¹² Rashi on this point claims that Bar Kochba was a descendant of Herod.

Fall of the Hasmonean Kingdom

The Maccabee Revolt (167 BCE) began a twenty-five-year period of Jewish independence made possible by the steady collapse of the Seleucid Empire under attacks from the rising powers of the Roman Republic and the Parthian Empire. However, the same power vacuum that enabled the Jewish state to be recognized by the Roman Senate c. 139 BC was later exploited by the Romans themselves. Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, Simon's great-grandsons, became pawns in a proxy war between Julius Caesar and Pompey the Great that ended with the kingdom under the supervision of the Roman governor of Syria (64 BC). The deaths of Pompey (48 BC), Caesar (44 BC), and the related Roman civil wars relaxed Rome's grip on Israel, allowing a brief Hasmonean resurgence backed by the Parthian Empire. This short independence was rapidly crushed by the Romans under Mark Antony and Octavian. The installation of Herod the Great as king in 37 BC made Israel a Roman client state, ending the Hasmonean dynasty. In 44 AD, Rome installed the rule of a Roman procurator side by side with the rule of the Herodian kings (specifically Agrippa I 41-44 and Agrippa II 50-100, see also Iudaea province).

The inheritors of the Hasmonean & Herodian tradition: the Catholic Church

It is interesting that the first two Maccabee books were accepted into the Roman Catholic canon through the Council of Trent in 1566, being accepted already by Greek and Russian Orthodox churches. The fact that the author gives unabashed compliments towards Rome for its faithfulness gives a sure standing for dating 1 Maccabees before Pompey's desecration of the Jerusalem Temple in 63 B.C. It is perhaps ironic that books dedicated towards Jewish nationalism, something Judaism had always strived for but Christianity surrendered, would be admitted into the Roman Catholic canon yet left out of the Jewish one. By accepting Maccabees, it implicitly endorses the Hasmonian Dynasty, and in effect canonizes the Sadducee party of which Jesus was in conflict with in the gospels. The installation of a Hasmonean kingdom also in some ways helped produce the Herodian kings who killed John the Baptist and supposedly committed the "Slaughter of Innocents" in the Gospel of Matthew. Every gospel portrays Jesus as speaking out against the Herodians and the Temple priesthood it was associated with. A closer look at 1 Maccabees, which is generally believed to have originally been written in Hebrew, has shown that despite its seemingly positive attitude towards the Onias priesthood, it ultimately endorses Jonathan and Simon's appropriation of their priestly office. These books appear to be the lasting legacy of the Tobiad *notzrim*, the proto-Christians.

Antipatris and Herod

Hyrcanus had an Idumean friend named Antipater, an important official in the Hasmonean kingdom, who according to Josephus was "in his nature an active and seditious man; who was at enmity with Aristobulus, and had differences with him on account of his good-will to Hyrcanus." His name was originally Antipas, the same name as his father, who had been the general in charge of Idumea after Alexander Yannai had conquered it and had also "made a league of friendship with those Arabians, and Gazites, and Ascalonites, that were of his own party, and had, by many and large presents, made them his fast friends." Antipater was married to a woman named Cypros, a daughter of one of the "eminent men" or Idumea, who bore him four sons and a daughter, the second son being the future Herod the Great, who was born in 73 B.C. This friend of Hyrcanus began to secretly rile many powerful Jews against Aristobulus, reminding them that Hyrcanus was the older brother. He also tried to convince Hyrcanus that Aristobulus was getting constant advice to have him killed, but Hyrcanus "gave no credit to these words of his, as being of a gentle disposition, and one that does not easily admit of calumnies against other men," although Josephus said that these attributes caused accusations that he was "unmanly."

But eventually Antipater convinced Hyrcanus II to flee with him to King Aretas of Arabia, after which the two of them promised that if Aretas would help Hyrcanus take control of Judea, the twelve Arabian cities that Alexander Yannai had conquered would be restored to his kingdom. Aretas invaded Judea with 50,000 men and defeated Aristobulus, and the younger brother was forced to flee to Jerusalem. Josephus reports that after this defeat, most of the public support went over to Hyrcanus while the priests remained loyal to Aristobulus. Josephus describes how Aristobulus was forced to take refuge in the Jerusalem temple:

Scaurus went on to invade Arabia, laid Pella to waste, but became affected by a famine in Petra. Hyrcanus II sent Antipater with a supply line, and Scaurus in turn sent him to negotiate a tribute of 300 talents out of King Aretas. One of Aristobulus' sons, Alexander, who had escaped Pompey, was able to raise an army and overrun Judea and rebuild the wall around Jerusalem and the other cities. Scaurus' successor, Gabinius,

and Marcus Antonius defeated Alexander in Jerusalem and then followed him to Alexandria, where he ultimately surrendered. At the request of Alexander's mother, Gabinius had the remaining fortresses in Hyrcanium, Macherus, and Alexandria demolished so that they would not be used in another war. Gabinius then put Hyrcanus in control of the Temple in Jerusalem in 57 B.C., but handed the government over to an aristocracy and divided the nation into five portions: Jerusalem, Gadara, a portion for Amathus, Jericho, and Sepphoris.

Herod's claim to royalty was based on his descent from the Kings of Menashe, descent from the Prophets and the High Priests Zadok, and a vague claim to be a descendant of David. He felt he was the rightful ruler of the entire Trans-Euphrates, heir to the Persian governors Tobias and Geshamu and installed by Rome. He continuously waged wars against the Arabs and continued the Maccabees policy of territorial expansion. The name Herod is a form of Harith, as is its Latinized form "Aretas".

In 36 CE, Pontius Pilate is ordered to Rome by Vitellius to stand trial for cruelty and oppression, including the execution of Samaritans without proper trial (some). Vitellius returns the high priest's vestments to control of the Herodians, and replaces the High Priest. Jonathan (son of Annas) became High Priest. Marcellus becomes governor of Judea.

Herod's Judeo-Arab Kingdom

For three hundred years Israel was a vassal state to Babylon, Ptolemy and then to the Seleucid monarchy. In 175 BCE Antiochus Epiphanes came to throne in Syria and within ten years the Maccabees revolted and routed Syrian domination in Israel. Judah the Maccabee did not claim the title "king", only Nasi – prince, but in 141 BCE, his brother Simon accepted the dignity of high-priest and king. A large assembly "of the priests and the people and of the elders of the land, [declared] to the effect that Simon should be their king and high priest forever, until there should arise a faithful prophet".¹¹³ Recognition of the Hasmonean dynasty by the Roman Senate soon followed and for the first time, Israel was ruled by a priest-monarch of the tribe of Levi. The Hasmoneans ruled by force, and several of the royal family were murdered by its own members to prevent rival claimants. This situation was unfavorable to the Davidic house, and a notice in al-Makrizi, seems to indicate the exodus of Davidic descendants from Israel to Babylonia at the beginning of Hasmonean rule.¹¹⁴

The rivalry between Hasmoneans, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, brought about a civil war in 68-63 BCE. The war ended with the invasion of the Roman general Pompey and the forfeiture of the freedom of the Jewish people. Israel was forced to pay tribute to Rome and placed under the supervision of the Roman governor of Syria. From 63-40 BCE the government officially was in the hands of Hyrcanus, but in actuality the power rested with his Roman-Arab advisor Antipatris and his son Herod.

In an attempt to rid Israel of the house of Herod and claim the throne, Aristobulus' son Antigonus, through the mediation of the Babylonian Exilarch, obtained Parthian troops and aid. The Parthians troops defeated the Roman army and Herod fled to Rome. Hyrcanus was captured by the Parthians and held in the Exilarch's quarters in Nehardea, but not before Aristobulus cut off his ears to render him unfit for High Priesthood.¹¹⁵ Hyrcanus lived for a time under house arrest. The Exilarch, it seems, had the intention of founding a high-priesthood for Babylonia through marriage to the exiled Hyrcanus.¹¹⁶ (As late as the third century certain inhabitants of Nehardea claimed their descent back to the Hasmoneans). After three years Herod returned with Roman troops to siege Jerusalem. Antigonus' supporters were slaughtered, and he was beheaded. Herod assumed supreme and total power. Herod proceeded to eliminate all his rivals, the aged Hyrcanus, his daughter Alexandra, and her two children, Miriam (whom Herod married) and Aristobulus (whom Herod drowned). This ended the Hasmonean house, with the exception of Herod's children.¹¹⁷

¹¹³ I Macc. xiv. 41

¹¹⁴ The chronicle of Ahmad ibn Ali De Sacy as cited in "Chrestomathie Arabe," i. 100; Herzfeld, "Gesch. des Volkes Yisrael," ii. 396

¹¹⁵ Josephus, Antiquities 15, Paragraphs 1, 2

¹¹⁶ Josephus, Antiquities 15, Paragraphs 2, 4

¹¹⁷ Herod left three children: Archelaus, Phillippe and Antipater (also called Herod). Archelaus, which was the most evil of the three, inherited Jerusalem and the main portion of the Judea from his father. Antipater and Phillippe were given other areas like Trans-Jordan with minor Jewish populations (neither of the latter two played a great role in the Jewish nation, Phillippe ruled until his death and Antipater was eventually exiled by the Romans). When Archelaus became king, the people revolted against him and after a ten-year struggle succeeded in ousting him. When that happened, the Romans exiled him and confiscated his property; Judea was annexed to the Syrian territories of the Roman Empire and was put under the rule of Roman procurators

All the Hasmonean kings adopted a policy of territorial expansion. This led to the problem of what to do with the non-Jewish population in the newly annexed territories. Although opposed by the Pharisaic-Rabbinic leadership and without any historical precedent, an early Hasmonean king, Yochanan Hyrcanus, began a policy of forced conversion to a limited form of Judaism.¹¹⁸ Sadduceean leadership, under Alexander Yannai began an active program of seeking and encouraging converts that was especially successful among other Semitic peoples.

According to Josephus, Herod – his mother an Arab princess¹¹⁹ – actively sought to combine Jewish Israel with Arab Trans-Jordan in one large Judeo-Arabic kingdom. Although he never succeeded territorially, his building enterprises in Jerusalem and elsewhere made a lasting impression on the entire region. Josephus says that just as Athens was the center of all things Greek, the Temple in Jerusalem had become the focal point for a vast Judaic nation consisting of Jews and Arabs, Parthians and Babylonians, Jews beyond the Euphrates and the Adiabeni or Assyrians.¹²⁰ Temple sympathizers arrived en masse for the Pentecost – Succot holiday. They included Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Babylonians, Egyptians, Cretes and Arabs.¹²¹ Six hundred years before the Prophet, the Arabs and Jews were one nation with one common religion. A vast Judaic nation from the 'Nile to the Euphrates' that performed the Festival – Hagg pilgrimage and shared in the Korban Shlamim temple offering of which they were allowed to eat. They were called alternatively Gerrim, Kenites, Nethinim, and Salamai (=muslim).¹²²

The Talmud sheds an interesting light on the relationship of "Jews" in this Judaic Nation after the destruction of the Temple. Rabbi Akiva told this parable, "A fox [Herod, Idumean Arabs] was once walking alongside a river. He saw fish [Pharisaic Jews] swimming in groups from one place to another. The fox said to them, "From what are you fleeing?" They replied, "From the nets that fishermen [Romans] cast (to catch us)." He said to them, "Would you like to come up on the dry land so that you and I can live together in the way that our ancestors did? [When Jews and Arabs lived together]" They replied, "Aren't you the one that is called the cleverest of animals? You are not clever, but foolish. If we are afraid in the water where we live, how much more afraid we would be on the land where we would surely die!"¹²³

Alexander, the son of Herod, who was slain by his father, had two sons Alexander and Tigranes, by the daughter of Archelaus, king of Cappadocia. The king of Armenia at the time, Tigranes, was accused at Rome and died childless; Alexander and his sons were sent to take possession of the kingdom of Armenia by Nero; Vespasian made one son, Alexander, king of an island in Cilicia after he married Jotape, the daughter of Antiochus, the king of Commagena. But these descendants of Alexander, soon after their birth, deserted the Jewish religion, and went over to that of the Greeks. Only the descendants of Herod's other son, Aristobulus IV, retained any sense of Jewish identity.

Herod of Chalcis (d. 48 AD)

Herod of Chalcis (d. 48 AD), was a son of Aristobulus IV, and the grandson of Herod the Great, Roman client king of Judaea. He was the brother of Herod Agrippa I and Herodias. He was vested the rulership of

¹¹⁸ This is explained more thoroughly in the Authors essay "From Bar Kochba to the Prophet Muhammed". Forced conversion is prohibited in Judaism. But as the Hasmonean king declared his conquered subjects to be his property, technically as "slaves" *Avedim* (c.f. *Abdullah*) they could be forced to convert to a limited form of Judaism that did not include most of the ritual requirements.

¹¹⁹ Seder HaDoros and Josephus state that she was from the royal family of Edom and her name was Kapidon the Edomite). As mentioned above, Yochanan Hyrcanus forcibly converted the Edomites to Judaism and made them slaves to the House of the Hasmoneans. Thus, since Herod's mother was an Edomite, she was considered a slave and passed on that status to her son.

¹²⁰ Josephus, Wars. Preface, Section 2.

¹²¹ Acts 2:9

¹²² Targum Onkolos on Exodus 2:25 and elsewhere renders Kenites (descendants of Yethro, the first convert) as *Shlamai*, probably related to the *Korban Shlamim*. Syed Abu-Ala' Maududi's "The Meaning of the Qur'an" basing himself on Qur'an 2.131-133 says "[Though the Jews] were originally Muslims, they had swerved from the real Islam ... So much so that they had even given up their original name "Muslim" and adopted the name "Jew" instead, and made religion the sole monopoly of the children of Israel". The word "Islam" represents the infinitive, the noun of action, of the factitive stem of the Arabic root "salam," and is rightly compared (Zunz, "Literaturgesch." p. 641; comp. Steinschneider, "Polemische und Apologetische Literatur," p. 266, note 56) with the use of the "hif'il" of "shalam" in later Hebrew; e.g., Pesik. 125a ("mushlam"); Tan., ed. Buber, Gen. p. 46 ib. (where "hishlim" is used of proselytes). (J.E. Islam)

¹²³ Berachot 61. It is interesting to note that Rabbi Akiva himself was descended from Arab converts to Judaism.

Chalcis, a kingdom north of Judaea, as tetrarch. After the death of his brother, he was also given responsibility for the Temple in Jerusalem, as well as the appointment of the Temple's High Priest. He appointed Ananias, who is mentioned in Acts, was appointed by him. His first wife was his cousin, Mariamne. She bore him a son, who was also named Aristobulus, and who eventually became ruler of Chalcis. After Mariamne's death, he married his niece Berenice, with whom he had two sons, Berenicianus and Hyrcanus. After his death the kingdom was given to Herod Agrippa II. In 75 CE, Agrippa receives Arca from the Romans, east of present-day Tripoli to his realm. The last "king of the Jews" has few Jews to rule from Syria.

Tobiad Revolt & Annexation of Nabatea, 106 CE

Aristobulus, anxious to regroup and form a base from which he could operate, sparked a revolt against the king of Nabatea. During this revolt Rabel II Soter, the last Nabtean king, was killed in 106 CE. In return, the Romans invaded and created the province of Arabia Petraea in 107 CE. It was placed under direct Roman rule. The Herodians fled south to old kingdom of Himyar.

The details of Rome's annexation of Nabatea are not known. Some epigraphic evidence suggests that it was a military operation of conquest, with forces from Syria and Egypt. What is clear, however, is that by 107 CE, Roman legions were stationed in the area around Petra and Bostra, as is shown by a papyrus found in Egypt. The Empire gained what became the province of Arabia Petraea (modern southern Jordan and north west Saudi Arabia). But even though Nabatea was under direct rule, Rome placed it under the supervision of a general, Vaballathus Nator, who was himself descended from the elder branch of the Tobiads. Vaballathus made his base in Palmyra boldly brandishing the Tobiad name "Netzer" granted by the Prophet Zechariah. Vaballathus Nator began a dynasty of Hellenized "Sadducean" Arabs.¹²⁴

In spite of Rome's direct control of Nabatea, it was a hotbed of resistance during the first revolt under Trajan (115-117CE) and under the second revolt led by Bar Kochba revolt against Hadrian (132-135 CE). The Bar Kochba revolt was heavily supported by Adiabene, whose king and queen were Temple Sympathizers as well as Parthia. When Rome invaded Parthia, it was the Jewish border colonies that bore the brunt of the attack, and earned them the respect of the Parthians. The Jews were rewarded with the official recognition of a king in exile, the Jewish Exilarch.

During this period the Tobiad, helenized Jews were adopting Christianity in great numbers. Many of the "Greeks" mentioned in the New Testament were helenized Jews who had abandoned religion, or children of intermarriage between Greek and Jew. The Rabbis in Israel tried to directly combat the effect of helenization by forbidding Jewish fathers to teach their sons Greek, the international language of the time. The Septuagint was abandoned and Rabbi Akiva commissioned Aquilla to produce a new Greek translation. And when Julius the Apostate, in an effort to revive the old Roman empire and values, promised to allow the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple, it was thwarted by Helenists cum Christians due to accusations they brought before the emperor. This resulted in the Sanhedrin formulating a prayer against heretics and slanders to be recited in the daily prayers.

The Pharisees worked from a position of power because they were the only legal form of Judaism recognized by the Roman empire: Sadducean, Samaritan, Essene and Christianity all being labeled as dangerous and illegal innovations. This was largely due to the fact that Pharisaism had popular support and in addition the Sadducees and Herodians had played a major part in the revolts while the Pharisees generally sued for compromise. The tension was great. In 234 CE, the Roman favoritism towards the Pharisees (now more properly termed Rabbinic Jews) resulted in a fierce struggle spring between the Jews and Samaritans, the former under the guidance of a certain Caudius. This contest lasted so long that Alexander was at length induced to interfere, and restored peace in the country by the execution of many of both parties. It is also from this period that Christians retain a memory of being "fed to the lions" by the Romans ostensibly blaming it on the [Rabbinic] Jews.

Many of the Rabbinic Jews found their way to Babylon, where academies were founded. The Jews found favor with the rulers of Parthia. This close relationship with the ruling powers meant that many Jews were

¹²⁴ The use of the term Netzer/Notzrim must be distinguished. Many of Jesus' followers came from this group, so he was called Yeshuah HaNotzri. Later the followers of Jesus were called Notzrim, or Nasaara in Aramaic/Arabic. However the group in Palmyra was related to another branch of Notzrim, unrelated related to the followers of Jesus. The king of Palmyra styled himself "Ben Netzer" not to associate himself with Christianity, but rather to claim the divine right of rule of the Tobiad family over the entire Trans-Jordan.

involved in taxation or other government functions. This provided a living for many Jewish communities and provided a modicum of stability resulting in the development and flowering of Rabbinic literature, rivaling and eventually surpassing that of the land of Israel.

The Sadducees and Herodians, often families of enormous wealth, were not so lucky. They, in turn headed towards Alexandria in Egypt, the Trans-Jordan and Arabia. One of the greatest achievements of these wealthy refugees was the construction of the Marib dam in southern Arabia, allowing for the cultivation of crops in a formerly arid wasteland. The other achievement was the development and regulation of commerce along the "Silk Road".

The "Jewish" Silk Road

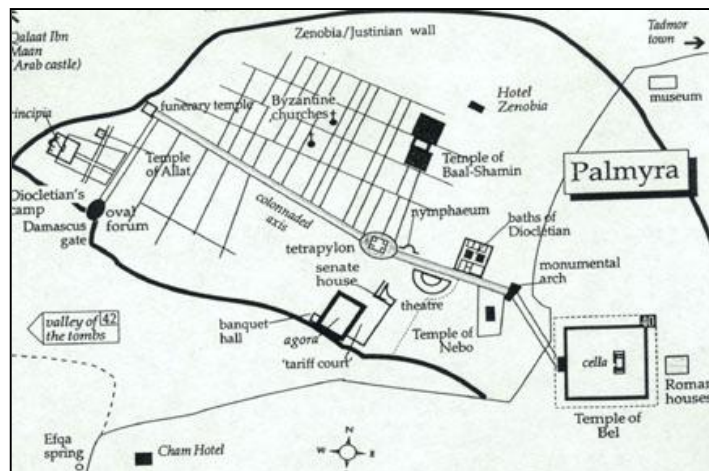
The trade followed two routes: one by the Red Sea, Egypt and Alexandria, the other from the Persian Gulf through the Syro-Arabian desert under the control of Palmyra. The caravans travelled right across the desert to the great merchant centers on the Euphrates, Vologesias, about 55 m. southeast of Babylon, or Forath or Charax close to the Persian Gulf. The trade was enormously profitable, not only to the merchants but to the town, which levied a rigorous duty on all exports and imports; at the same time formidable risks had to be faced both from the desert-tribes and from the Parthians, and successfully to plan or convoy a great caravan came to be looked upon as a distinguished service to the state, often recognized by public monuments erected by "council and people" or by the merchants interested in the venture.

These monuments, a conspicuous feature in Palmyra, took the form of statues placed on brackets projecting from the upper part of the pillars which lined the principal thoroughfares. Thus arose, beside minor streets, the imposing central avenue which, starting from a triumphal arch near the great temple of the Sun, formed the main axis of the city from south-east to north-west for a length of 1240 yards, and at one time consisted of not less than 750 columns of rosy-white limestone, each 55 ft. high. The capable performance of these functions, which often involved considerable pecuniary sacrifices, ensured public esteem, honorary inscriptions and statues; and to these honors the head of a great house was careful to add the glory of a splendid tomb, consecrated as the "house of eternity," (cf. Eccles. xii. 5) of himself, his sons and his sons' sons for ever. These tombs, which lie outside the city and overlook it from the surrounding hills, a feature characteristically Arabic, remain the most interesting monuments of Palmyra. Some are lofty towers containing sepulchral chambers in stories; others are house-like buildings with a single chamber and a richly ornamented portico; the sides of these chambers within are adorned with the names and sculptured portraits of the dead. As a rule the buildings of Palmyra do not possess any architectural individuality, but these tombs are an exception. The style of all the ruins is late classic and highly ornate, but without refinement.

Palmyra was a truly cosmopolitan Arab city. Merchants from all countries converged there. In this desert oasis the Jews formed part of a mixed population that included Arameans, Arabs and even Persians. It celebrated the religions of Judaism, Temple Sympathisers, Notzrim (unrelated to Christianity), primitive Christianity, various Greek gods, and the worship of Baal.

Crisis of the Third Century and Palmyra

Despite a number of crises, the Roman Empire had stood firm since its inception under Augustus. But after Emperor Alexander Severus was murdered by soldiers in 235 CE, Roman legions were defeated in a campaign against Sassanid Persia, and the empire fell apart. General after general squabbled over control of the empire; the frontiers were neglected and subjected to frequent raids by Carpians, Goths, Vandals and Alamanni, and outright attacks from aggressive Sassanids in the east. Finally, by 258, the attacks were coming from within, when the Empire broke up into three separate competing states. The Roman provinces of Gaul, Britain and Hispania broke off to form the Gallic Empire. The end of the Severan dynasty (235-284 ce) and the reign of Diocletian were a period of Roman crisis,



confusion and deterioration. There were Invasion of Teutonic people to west and Parthians to the east. Diocletian started the first major persecutions of Christians, caused by the requirement for a sacrifice/oath of loyalty.

The situation of the Jews in Israel became desperate due to the constant despoiling of Israel by the weakened Roman army and the heavy taxation of the inhabitants, reducing them to poverty. The instigators of this heavy taxation were the governors of Palmyra, who also claimed the rights and honors of the Tobiads. This directly affected support for schools of learning, which soon migrated to away from Israel to Babylon.

The wars between the Jews and the Ansar (Samaritans with Tobiad king)

Rome's hold on Palmyra was weakened by the first attack of Ardashir (Persia) in 230-232 CE. A year later a fierce struggle sprang up in Palestine between the Jews, led by a certain Cadius, and the Samaritans led by the governor of Palmyra. These confrontations lasted so long that Roman Emperor Alexander was induced to interfere and restore peace in the country by the execution of many of both parties.

The governing dynasty of Palmyra: Vaballathus, Lucius Septimius Herod (Hairān) and Lucius Septimius Odainath claimed the Tobiad title of Ben Netzer. Islamic historians mention a Jew in Palmyra, Abu Ya'qub, who provided genealogies of the lineage of Ben Netzer from Tobiah, and before that to Joseph son of Jacob.¹²⁵

The Abarbinel comments on the verse in Daniel: "I considered the horns; and behold, there came up among them another little horn"¹²⁶, This is Ben Nezer. "There came up among them another little horn" This is the kingdom of the Kuthites (Samaritans). "The winter is past"¹²⁷ This is the kingdom of the Kuthites...the time is coming when the kingdom of Kuth (the sectarians) shall be destroyed, and the kingdom of heaven shall be revealed.

The confrontations between the Jews and the Samaritans reached a climax, when in 259 CE Odenathus destroyed the Jewish community and academy in Nehardea, Babylon.

The destruction of Nehardea — twelve years after the leading Rabbinic scholar Rav's death, and five years after that of Shmuel — led to its place being taken by a neighboring town, Pumbedita, where Yehudah ben Ezekiel, a pupil of both Rav and Shmuel, founded a new school. During the life of its founder, and still more under his successors, this school acquired a reputation for intellectual keenness and discrimination. Pumbedita became focus of the intellectual life of Babylonian Israel, and retained that position until the end of the gaonic period.¹²⁸

While the Exilarch in Babylon regarded the entire Judaic nation from the 'Nile to the Euphrates' as his dominion, the Rabbis passed negative judgment on his subjects. They questioned the Jewish descent of most of them. They said "Babylonia is healthy [in Jewish culture and descent]; Mesene [southern Iraq] is dead [intermarried with the Arab bedouins]; Media [northwest Iran and southern Azerbaijan] is sick; and Elam [Kurzistan, the Iranian province on the Persian Gulf] is dying."¹²⁹

Odenathus

Odenathus' full name was Lucius Septimius Odainath.¹³⁰ His gentilicium Septimius shows that his family received the Roman citizenship under an emperor of the Severan dynasty, and thus it was the leading family in Palmyra since the 190s. He was the son of Lucius Septimius Herod (Hairān), the "senator and chief of Tadmor", the son of Vaballathus (Wahballath), the son of Nasor. His Arabic name was أَدْنَيْثَة (Othayna) which means "hairy one" and is a translation of the name Esav. In the Talmud he was called Papa ben Netzer.

¹²⁵ Goldziher, "Muhammedanische Studien," i. 178

¹²⁶ Daniel 7:8

¹²⁷ Song of Songs 2:11

¹²⁸ Papa ben Nasr (Odenathus) destroys Nehardea in 259 (Seleucid era), in Kahana, ed., *Seder Tanna'im ve-'Amora'im* 4

¹²⁹ Kiddushin 71b

¹³⁰ Vogüé, *Syrie centrale*, Nos. 23, 28; Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*. Nos. 126, 530

The year when Odenathus became chief of Palmyra is not known, but already in an inscription dated 258 he is styled "the illustrious consul our lord" (N.S.I. No. 126). In his wife, the renowned Zenobia, he found an able supporter of his policy.

The defeat and captivity of the emperor Valerian in 260 left the eastern provinces largely at the mercy of the Persians; the prospect of Persian supremacy was not one which Palmyra or its ruler had any reason to desire. At first, it seems, Odenathus attempted to propitiate the Persian monarch Shapur I; but when his gifts were contemptuously rejected (Petr. Patricius, 10) he decided to throw in his lot with the cause of Rome. The neutrality which had made Palmyra's fortune was abandoned for an active military policy which, while it added to Odenathus's fame, in a short time brought his native city to its ruin. He fell upon the victorious Persians returning home after the sack of Antioch, and before they could cross the Euphrates inflicted upon them a considerable defeat.

Then, when two usurping emperors were proclaimed in the East (261), Odenathus took the side of Gallienus the son and successor of Valerian, attacked and put to death the usurper Quietus at Emesa (modern Homs) and was rewarded for his loyalty by the grant of an exceptional position (262). He may have assumed the title of king before; but he now became *totius Orientis imperator*, not indeed joint-ruler, nor Augustus, but independent lieutenant of the emperor for the East (Mommson, Provinces, ii. p. 103).

In a series of rapid and successful campaigns, during which he left Palmyra under the charge of Septimius Wrood his deputy (N.S.I. Nos. 127-129), he crossed the Euphrates and relieved Edessa, recovered Nisibis and Carrhae (modern Harran). He even took the offensive against the power of Persia, and twice invaded the Persian capital Ctesiphon itself; probably also he brought back Armenia into the Empire. These successes restored the Roman rule in the East; and Gallienus did not disdain to hold a triumph with the captives and trophies which Odenathus had won (264). Odenathus celebrated his victories in the East sharing with his eldest son Hairan (Herodes) the eastern title "king of kings".

While observing all due formalities towards his overlord, there is considerable evidence that Odenathus aimed at becoming emperor; but during his lifetime there was no conflict with Rome. He was about to start for Cappadocia against the Goths when he was assassinated, together with Hairan, by his nephew Maeonius. There have been suggestions that this deed of violence was instigated by Rome, but there is no evidence in the historical records to corroborate the charge.

According to *Historia Augusta*, Maeonius killed Odenathus and his son Hairan during a celebration, because of a conspiracy organized by Zenobia, second wife of Odenathus, who wanted their son Vaballathus to succeed Odenathus instead of Hairan (who was the son of Odenathus by another woman). According to Gibbon, the murder was revenge for a short confinement imposed by Odenathus to Maeonius for being disrespectful. After his death (266-267), Zenobia succeeded to his position and practically governed Palmyra on behalf of the young Vaballathus.

The animosity between the Samaritan Jews living in Palmyra and the academies of Babylon is not only apparent from Odenathus' destruction of the rabbinic academy in Nehardea in 259CE, but also in a quote from the Jerusalem Talmud. The Talmud explains that after the murder of Odenathus and his son, Zenobia first assumption was that the crime had been committed by a rabbinic scholar:

Zeira ben Chanina was kidnapped in the town Safsufa (a villiage in the Upper Galilee). R' Ammi and R' Shmuel went to appease [the Palmyrenes] on his account. They came before Queen Zenavya. "He is accustomed to receiving [God's] blessing, He should make miracles for you", she mocked them. A Saracene¹³¹ came in holding a sword. "This is the sword that killed Ben Netzer [Odenathus]¹³² and his brother [son, Hairan]." Ze'era bar Chanina was released.¹³³

¹³¹ Saracen. The earliest date-able reference to Saracens is found in Ptolemy's Geography, "Sarakene" is a region in the Northern Sinai named after the town Saraka located between Egypt and Palestine. The difference between the two accounts of Saracens is that Malalas saw Palmyrans and all inhabitants of the Syrian desert as Saracens and not Arabs, while the *Historia Augusta* saw the Saracens as not being subjects of Zenobia and distinct from Palmyrans and Arabs.

¹³² The murder of Odaenathus and his son Hairan was attributed to Odenathus' nephew Maeonius. However many suspected Zenobia, because her son Vaballath now became heir in her stepson's stead.

¹³³ Yerushalmi, Trumos 8:6 46a

Zenobia

Zenobia's near ancestry is not known for certain. According to *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*¹³⁴, a collection of biographies attributed to the fourth century, Zenobia claimed to be a descendant of the Queen of Carthage, the King of Emesa, and Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt. According to that source, Zenobia sent an imperial declaration in 269CE to the citizens of Alexandria, Egypt, describing the city as "my ancestral city". A historian in Zenobia's court, Callinicus Dutorius, dedicated a ten-book history on Alexandria's history to a 'Cleopatra,' who can only be Zenobia.

That Zenobia believed she was descended from Cleopatra, is not doubted. After revolting against Rome and before her capture, Zenobia sent Emperor Aurelian the following message "From Zenobia, Queen of the East, to Aurelian Augustus. None save yourself has ever demanded by letter what you now demand. Whatever must be accomplished in matters of war must be done by valour alone. You demand my surrender as though you were not aware that Cleopatra preferred to die a Queen rather than remain alive, however high her rank....If [the forces] we are expecting from every side, shall arrive, you will, of a surety, lay aside that arrogance with which you now command my surrender."¹³⁵

The author(s) of *Historia Augusta* however dismiss Zenobia's claim to be a descendant of Cleopatra as "wild fantasy". Her father, Julius Aurelius Zenobius¹³⁶ ancestry is traceable up to six generations and includes Sampsiceramus, the first King of Emesa (modern Homs, Syria) as Zenobia claimed. Yet none of Zenobia's paternal ancestors had previously claimed descent from Cleopatra or the Queen of Carthage. So descent from these famous historical figures would seem to have to come from her maternal side.

Very little is known about Zenobia's mother. She is often said to be Egyptian.¹³⁷ Reconstructions from Islamic histories would have her be Zabbai of Arabia, a descendant of Rabbel II "Soter", King of Nabataea [71-106CE], and lotape the daughter of Sohaemus, King of Emena, and Drusilla the granddaughter of Cleopatra VII of Egypt. However, Zenobia was the first to ever mention this claim.

Fourth-century Christian writers had a different explanation for Zenobia's ancestry. Athanasius of Alexandria [c.293-373CE] writes, "Zenobia was a Jew and a patron of Paul of Samosata." Philastrius Bishop of Brescia [died before 397] mentions "a certain Zenobia, Queen in the East, [who] at that time seemed to Judaize" According to the *Ecclesiastical Chronical* of Gregory Bar-Hebraeus, Paul of Samosata fled to "a certain Jewish woman by the name of Zenobia, who had set out from the Persian regions of Syria against Rome". These quotes must be take with caution, because Christian writers wanting to slander someone's name would often say they were Jews or accuse them of being crypto-Jews or of having Jewish sympathies.

In royal burial grounds of Beth She'arim, Israel there is the tomb of Karteria, "the mother of Zenobia".¹³⁸ The Greek inscription is incised on a white marble slab of catacomb 18 and is preceded by the formula in "Praise be to the pious". Various Jewish symbols accompany the inscription. However, it expresses the not-so-Jewish idea that Zenobia, daughter of Karteria is "pious" because she "always does actions praiseworthy in the eyes of mortals" (rather than the sight of God, etc). The phrase "built this monument, so that...you may enjoy...new and indestructible riches" has been interpreted to be a denial of the resurrection. Unlike other bombastic titles used by Queen Zenobia, this "Zenobia" uses no title.

Perhaps a solution to this problem may be found with Marcus Antonius Felix, procurator of Judea under Claudius. Tacitus says Felix's wife Drusilla was the "granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra".¹³⁹ Yet Josephus describes the marriage of Felix to Drusilla, sister of Herod Agrippa and former wife of Azizus, King of Emesa.¹⁴⁰ We might suppose that Felix was married twice. In fact historian Suetonius says that Felix

¹³⁴ Trebellius Pollio, *Historia Augusta: Tyranni Triginta* 27.1, 30.2

¹³⁵ According to Flavius Vopiscus one of the authors of the *Historia Augusta*, Zenobia's response was written by Nicomachus in Aramaic as dictated by Zenobia, then translated into Greek; however, the authorship of this letter has been the subject of great controversy. Some scholars propose that it was actually written by Longinus, others scholars propose that Longinus tried to dissuade the queen from sending it.

¹³⁶ Her father, Zabaii ben Selim or Iulius (or Julius) Aurelius Zenobius, was a chieftain of Syria in 229CE. Inscriptions found at Palmyra show that Zenobia's father had a Greek name: Antiochus. However, according to *Augustan History* (Aurel. 31.2), his name was Achilleus and his usurper was named Antiochus (Zos. 1.60.2).

¹³⁷ The theory that her mother was Egyptian is based on the fact that Zenobia knew the ancient Egyptian language very well and had a strong predisposition toward the ancient culture of Egypt.

¹³⁸ BS II 183

¹³⁹ PIR2 A 828, Tacitus, *Histories* 5.9

¹⁴⁰ *Antiquities of the Jews* 20.7.2. Note this King Azizus was the brother of Sohaemus, the proposed ancestor of Zenobia.

became, in consequence of several marriages, "husband of three queens".¹⁴¹ So scholars have concluded that first two were named Drusilla and the third is unknown.

The first Drusilla was a daughter of King Ptolemy of Mauretania and Queen Julia Urania of Mauretania. Drusilla's paternal grandmother Queen of Mauretania Cleopatra Selene II, was a daughter of Ptolemaic Greek Queen Cleopatra VII of Egypt and Roman Triumvir Mark Antony. Drusilla's paternal grandfather African King Juba II of Mauretania claimed to be a descendant of the sister to the General of Carthage, Hannibal. Hannibal's family, the Barcids, claimed to be descended from Dido's younger brother. At first sight, since there is no suggestion that Alexander Helios or Ptolemy Philadelphus had any children, one would conclude that Drusilla, granddaughter of Cleopatra, would be the only person to fit all of Zenobia's claims.

However, Felix and this Drusilla divorced between 54-56CE had no known issue. Felix and the Judean Drusilla, had a son, Marcus Antonius Agrippa who he died along with his wife in the eruption of Mount Vesuvius on 24 August 79CE, and a daughter, Antonia Clementiana. Antonia Agrippina could be a daughter from their son's marriage (this name was graffiti in a Royal Tomb in Egypt). Clementiana became a grandmother to a Lucius Anneius Domitius Proculus. Two possible descendants from this marriage are Marcus Antonius Fronto Salvianus (a quaestor) and his son Marcus Antonius Felix Magnus a high priest in 225CE.

So we are left with the possibility that either Drusilla remarried after her divorce from Felix (scholars have suggested that she married Sohaemus, King of Emesa – the brother of the first husband of the Judean Drusilla), or that Zenobia believed herself to be descended from Felix's first wife, when in fact she was descended from his second Jewish wife.

Zenobia's relationship with Jews is not known for certain. In Egypt for example, where she restored the ancient rights of protection (refuge) to a Synagogue in Lower Egypt, her actions can be explained in terms of sympathy to Jews or imitation of her claimed ancestor Cleopatra. The declaration reads:

"By order of the Queen and King, in place of the previous tablet of the dedication of the house of prayer, let there be written above what had been written below: 'King Ptolemy Euergetes [proclaimed] the house of prayer as a refuge'" At the bottom of the inscription appears in Latin - "The King and Queen have ordered (this)."¹⁴²

One could speculate that Zenobia and her son Wahaballat had some connection with the Samaritan flavor of Judaism due to the similarity of this proclamation and the request of the Elephantine community to Sanballat for protection four hundred years earlier, but lacking further evidence nothing can be said.

Tobias of Edessa

Moses of Chorene (circa 410 – 490s) calls Tobias, *Prince Juif*, and says: "After the ascension of our Saviour, the Apostle Thomas, one of the twelve, sent one of the seventy-six disciples, Thaddæus, to the city of Edessa to heal Abgar and to preach the Gospel, according to the word of the Lord. Thaddæus came to the house of Tobias, a Jewish prince, who is said to have been descended from Pacradouni (perhaps Bagratuni the Persian Governor of Judea). Tobias, having left Archam (=Iraq al-Amir), did not abjure Judaism with the rest of his relatives, but followed its laws up to the moment when he believed in Christ."

Eusebius (263–339 CE) in his *Ecclesiastical History* mentions the figure of Tobias who lived in Edessa and mediates the contact between Thaddæus and Abgar.¹⁴³ From this, one could deduce that Christianity in Edessa had ties to Judaism.

The historian A. von Gutschmid proposes that it was not Abgar V, the contemporary of Jesus who accepted Christianity, but in fact a later prince by the same name -- Abgar IX (179-214 CE) "who first turned Christian and thereby helped this religion to erupt." Nevertheless without exception the ancient authors who speak of a Christian King Abgar of Edessa mean that one with whom Jesus is supposed to have been in correspondence.

¹⁴¹ Suetonius, Claudius 28

¹⁴² From an inscription found in Cairo, assumed to be from an unidentified community in Lower Egypt (CIJ, II, 1449=CPJ, III, 1449)

¹⁴³ Eusebius, Church History I.13.11 and 13: The Legendary Correspondence of Jesus and Abgar

In either case, the Jewish Exilarch is also referred to in the apocalyptic literature as the “Messiah” and “Son of David” so it is possible that the a king Abgar was in fact in touch with the Exilarch, by means of a descendant of Tobiah, but that is pure conjecture.

Narrative Concerning the Prince of the Edessences.

10 To these epistles there was added the following account in the Syriac language. "After the ascension of Jesus, Judas, who was also called Thomas, sent to him Thaddeus, an apostle, one of the Seventy. When he was come he lodged with Tobias, the son of Tobias. When the report of him got abroad, it was told Abgarus that an apostle of Jesus was come, as he had written him.

11 Thaddeus began then in the power of God to heal every disease and infirmity, insomuch that all wondered. And when Abgarus heard of the great and wonderful things which he did and of the cures which he performed, he began to suspect that he was the one of whom Jesus had written him, saying, 'After I have been taken up I will send to thee one of my disciples who will heal thee.'

12 Therefore, summoning Tobias, with whom Thaddeus lodged, he said, I have heard that a certain man of power has come and is lodging in thy house. Bring him to me. And Tobias coming to Thaddeus said to him, The ruler Abgarus summoned me and told me to bring thee to him that thou mightest heal him. And Thaddeus said, I will go, for I have been sent to him with power.

13 Tobias therefore arose early on the following day, and taking Thaddeus came to Abgarus. And when he came, the nobles were present and stood about Abgarus. And immediately upon his entrance a great vision appeared to Abgarus in the countenance of the apostle Thaddeus. When Abgarus saw it he prostrated himself before Thaddeus, while all those who stood about were astonished; for they did not see the vision, which appeared to Abgarus alone.

Palmyra the Robber Kingdom

Palmyra was allegedly founded by Solomon, based on II Chron 8:4. Hostility to Palmyra (called Tadmor) is expressed in the Talmud. Jewish tradition records 80,000 Palmyrenes assisted the destruction of the first temple, and 8000 at the destruction of the second.¹⁴⁴ Jews served in the Roman military units raised in the 3rd cent., and converts from Tadmor are recorded in Palestine. Many Palmyrene Jews are buried in the catacombs of Beit Shearim. Benjamin of Tudela found 2000 Jews there in the 12th cent.

There is literary and epigraphic evidence, from the Second Temple era until the third century CE, of Jews from Palmyra coming to the Land of Israel and being buried there. The Jews exerted considerable social and religious influence on the ruling class, which at that time was Arab. For a while, during the rule of King Odenathus, Palmyra's influence increased under Roman protection.

While the two great empires of Rome and Persia were thus competing against each other, Palmyra succeeded in gaining its independence, even attaining an influential position in the East in the years 260-272. During this short span of time, its conquests and influence also extended to Palestine and Egypt.

Jewish traditions describe Odenathus, as a robber baron and refer to him disapprovingly as the 'brother' of 'Esav':

Our Rabbis taught: Royal captives have the status of ordinary captives but those that are kidnapped by highwaymen are not regarded as ordinary captives. Was not, the reverse, however, taught? — There is no contradiction between the rulings concerning royal captives since the former refers [for example] to the kingdom of Ahasuerus while the latter refers to the kingdom of [one like] Ben Nezer. There is also no contradiction between the two rulings concerning captives of highwaymen since the former refers to [a highwayman like] Ben Nezer while the latter refers to an ordinary highwayman.

As to Ben Nezer, could he be called there 'king' and here 'highwayman'? — Yes; in comparison with Ahasuerus he was a highwayman but in comparison with an ordinary robber he was a king. (Kethuboth 51b)

¹⁴⁴ Jerusalem Talmud Taanit, 68a, Midrash Eicha 2:2

R. Johanan, the spokesman of the Jews of that generation, declared: "Hail unto him who witnesses the fall of Tadmor."¹⁴⁵

Odenathus was assassinated and his son Vabalathus was made king (*rex consul imperator dux Romanorum*, "illustrious King of Kings" and *corrector totius orientis*) of the Palmyrene Empire. The real power behind the throne was his mother Zenobia. With the legions at her disposal, and aided by the continuing struggle for Rome, Zenobia conquered Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Asia Minor and Lebanon. She even adopted the title of Augustus for her son and herself. The wide support she found in the East testifies to the strong desire for independence that prevailed in the Trans-Jordan in those days. Others, however, were not prepared to join Zenobia, and she did not succeed in rallying the East to her standard when the Roman emperor set out to subject Palmyra.

The conflict between the Jews and the Notzrim of Palmyra did not end when that city was crushed by Rome in 270 CE, but continued even in Medina.

Reconquest by Aurelian, migration of the Azdites

In 270 CE, Aurelian had become Roman Emperor, perhaps the first capable emperor in 30 years. After defeating the Alamanni, who were threatening to invade Italy, Aurelian turned his attention to the lost eastern provinces - the Palmyrene Empire.

Asia Minor was recovered easily; every city but Byzantium and Tyana surrendered to him with little resistance. The fall of Tyana lent itself to a legend; Aurelian to that point had destroyed every city that resisted him, but he spared Tyana after having a vision of the great philosopher Apollonius of Tyana, whom he respected greatly, in a dream. Apollonius implored him, stating: "Aurelian, if you desire to rule, abstain from the blood of the innocent! Aurelian, if you will conquer, be merciful!" Whatever the reason, Aurelian spared Tyana. It paid off; many more cities submitted to him upon seeing that the emperor would not exact revenge upon them. Aurelian defeated Queen Zenobia in the Battle of Immae and again, decisively, in the Battle of Emesa. Within six months, his armies stood at the gates of Palmyra, which surrendered when Zenobia tried to flee to the Sassanid Empire. The "Palmyrene Empire" was no more.

After a brief clash with the Persians and another in Egypt against usurper Firmus, Aurelian was forced to return to Palmyra in 273 when that city rebelled once more. This time, Aurelian allowed his soldiers to sack the city, and Palmyra never recovered from this. More honors came his way; he was now known as Parthicus Maximus and Restitutor Orientis ("Restorer of the East").

The Palmyrenes fled south at the approach of the Romans. There they would be known to Islamic historians as the Adzites (Aus and Kazraj) when they invaded Medina. There they overpowered the Jewish population and took control. The rulers however escaped to Edessa (Sanliurfa) in Asia Minor.

The Palmyrenes brought with them Judaism, primitive Christianity and paganism, the worship of Baal. The priests among them settled in Khaybar. The pagans among them decorated the Ka'aba with idols, making the idol of Hubal (Baal) the largest. When referring to their loyalty to the Tobiad dynasty they were referred to as Al-Nasara (later as the Ansar). When referring to their current idolatry, they were referred to as Al-Mushriqun.

Their new king was Shamir Yuhar'esh II (c. 275 CE). He styled himself King of Saba, Dhu Raydan, Hadramawt and Yamnit. Although he was a good deal poorer than Odenathus, his lineage was finer. His mother was the Queen of Bilqis (Chalqis), the sole heir of the line of Aristobulus, king of Chalqis, the last of the Herodians. In order to endear himself to his new subjects, and aware of the connection between the Herodians and the Tobiads, Shamir Yuhar'esh was the first to style himself Tubba', staking his own claim to the rights and honors of the Tobiads.

Bilqis the "Queen of Sheba"

Bilqis is the Arabic term used for the "Queen of Sheba", the seeker of the wisdom of King Solomon. It is quite possible that Solomon had some diplomatic contacts with some Arabian queen, though whether these

¹⁴⁵ Jerusalem Talmud, Taanit 4

really were with a monarch in South Arabia, or Ethiopia or other details are impossible to say from historical evidence.

Bilqis was the name given in Islamic literature Queen of Sheba (not actually given a personal name) in Qur'an, 27:15-45, to whom the hoopoe (hudhud) is said to have brought a letter from King Solomon. Bilqis is mentioned by Ibn Hisham, *Sirat al-nabi* including the text of the whole poem. Guillaume wondered how Ibn Ishaq came to insert a literary poem into a serious historical work, and speculated that the poem had evidence of relatively recent history.

The historian Jacqueline Pirenne worked out from genealogical information based on al-Hamdani's *Ikli'l* that there indeed was another Bilqis. This Bilqis was the husband of a *qayl* or local prince of Yemen called Baril or Barig Dhu Bata', known from South Arabian inscriptions and to be placed in the mid-third century C.E. According to the genealogy worked out by Dr. Javad Ali in "The history of Arab nations before Islam", the name of the local prince was Yasir Yuhannem II, the last king of Old Himyarite dynasty. In this case, it was a Jewish queen who went to seek the advice of an Arab king.

This Queen of Bilqis (Chalqis) was the sole heir of the line of Aristobulus, king of Chalqis, the last of the Herodians and Hasmoneans, and the mother of the first Tubba', the rulers of the Jewish kingdom of Arabia.

The Himyarites, Tubbas and Kindah

The earliest mention of "Himyar" comes from Pliny the Elder in the late first century CE, but it is unclear whether he intended an ethnic group or some kind of kingdom. In the next century, in the *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* mentions Charibael (perhaps derived from Makriv-EI, offering to God) "king of the two nations (*ethne*), the Homeritae and the Sabaeans." In the first centuries CE, the Himyarites seem to have been led by princes, *qayls*, and chiefs, rather than kings. In the sixth century there is mention of kings of Himyar.¹⁴⁶

Tubba', with the plural Tababi'ah, was used a dynastic title (comparable to Fir'awn for the Pharaohs of Egypt, and Kisra for the Sasanid kings, etc.) This line of Himyarite rulers controlled the south-western part of Arabia from the late third century CE to the early sixth century. For the purposes of this paper, Tubba' was a title derived from Tobiah, to indicate the rights and honors of that dynasty going back to their role as Persian governors responsible for the entire Trans-Jordan.



Coin of the Himyarite Kingdom. This is an imitation of a coin of Augustus. 1st Century CE.

In approximately 275 CE, Shamir Yur'ish Tubba' overthrew the Sabaeans in Yemen, together with the independent rulers in Hadramawt, and constituted himself "king of Saba and Dhu Raydan and of Hadramawt and *Ymnt*". We propose that this resurgence of the ancient kingdom of Himyar was due to the influx of migrants from Palmyra, who were later referred to as the Azd (Aus and Kazraj).

Almost all the Tubba' rulers mentioned by Islamic authors, most notably by al-Hasan b. Ahmad al-Hamdani (d. 334/945) in his *Ikli'l*, can be validated from South Arabian inscriptions, but a definitive dynastic list is difficult to work out.¹⁴⁷ In the appendix of this work is a proposed genealogy based on Dr. Javad Ali in "The history of Arab nations before Islam", and supplemented by Tabari.

There were close links between the kings of Himyar and the Kindah, 'Amr b. Tubba's patronage of 'Amr b. Hujr al-Kindi illustrates the closeness of these links, as does his giving in marriage his own niece to 'Amr b. Hujr.

The Kindah was the great Arabian tribe which, according to Islamic historians, migrated from Hadramawt to central Arabia, although as in many cases this may be an inversion of what actually happened. In the third century CE, Kindah was established in southwestern Najd with their center at Qaryat al-Faw, an important settlement on the main caravan route from Yemen and Najran northward to Najd. They appear as auxiliaries of the kings of Saba, and then, after ca. 275 CE, of the Himyarite kings. In the second half of the fifth

¹⁴⁶ The Hism al-Ghurab inscription (CIH 621) speaks of their being killed by the Abyssinians. See Beeston, "The Himyarite Problem," 1-7.

¹⁴⁷ See Beeston, "Hamdani and the Tabibi'ah," 5-15; EI2, s.v. Tubba' (A. F. L. Beeston).

century, Kindah are found further to the north. It seems that, as part of the general policy of extending Himyarite power into central Arabia at this time, the chief of Kindah was placed in power as a king over the local Arab tribes there of Ma'add. The Islamic historians make the Himyarite ruler involved here either Abu Karib As'ad Tubba'or his son Hassan Yuha'min, whose reigns should be placed, according to the inscriptions, in the second quarter of the fifth century. The fortunes of Kindah were thus for long connected with the rulers of South Arabia, until the fall of the Hiriyarites under the Abyssinians.

Hujr's son 'Amr, used the name al-Maqtur, apparently because he was "limited, confined" to his father's sphere of power and unable to expand it. He succeeded Hujr in the main center of Kindah authority, Najd, with another branch of the family under his brother Mu'awiyah al-Jawn controlling the eastern Najd regions of @@@ Hadrhamaut Hajar and Bahrayn.¹⁴⁸

Overview of the Jewish Kingdom of Himyar

The influx of Palmyrenes to Himyar revitalized the aging Himyar dynasty. During this period, the Kingdom of Himyar conquered the kingdom of Sheba and took Redan for its capital instead of Ma'rib. Later on, Redan was called "Zifar". They developed the trade routes from the Red Sea through Medinah to Petra and along the Silk Road to east. The Tubba' kings boast of a string of Minarets, acting as fire beacons, along the entire silk road that could relay messages of religious or political nature to the east within a day. The Tubba' kings also supported the priesthood of the Quraish in their maintenance of the Ka'aba at Mecca. The sacrifices, holidays and even pagan customs at the Ka'aba attracted pilgrimage from all across Arabia. In addition the Tubba' kings oversaw the pilgrimage from Arabia to Jerusalem on the 9th of Av to mourn the destruction of the Temple. At least one Tubba' prince was buried in Beit Shearim in Israel with all the great princes and rabbinic scholars of Israel, along with the mother of Zenobia.

Beginning in the fourth century CE, local trade began to fail. The Nabateans had were in revolt in north of Hijaz. The Roman had gained superiority over the naval trade routes after the Roman conquest of Egypt, Syria and the north of Hijaz; and lastly, because of inter-tribal warfare. Most of their income came from taxes on caravans on the Silk Road and not to local traffic. The families of Qahtan were disunited and scattered about all over Arabia.

This period witnessed a lot of disorder and turmoil. The great many foreign and civil wars cost the people of Yemen their independence. During this era, the Aksumites invaded Tihama & Najran for the first time in 340 CE, making use of the constant intra-tribal conflict of Hamdan and Himyar. The Aksumite occupation of Tihama and Najran lasted until 378 CE, whereafter Yemen expelled the Aksumites. After the Ma'rib Dam last Great Flood (450 or 451 CE) weakened Himyar further and led to its near collapse. The later Tubba' kings were left with mostly a title, and functioned not much more than wealthy businessman

For the most part the kings of Tubba' were interested in commerce. They jealously guarded the routes and left day-to-day management of the kingdom to their counselors, who came from the tribe of Lakhmids. While the Tubba' kings embraced their form Judaism that they had brought from Palmyra, with its Sadducean, Samaritan and Tobiad influences, the Lakhmids had gradually allowed the introduction of Byzantine Christianity into Arabia.

In the fifth century, Himyar found itself between the competing empires of Christian Byzantium and Zoroastrian Persia. Neutrality, and good trade relations with both empires, was essential to the prosperity of the Arabian trade routes, both of which had allies and even established colonies in Arabia. But this policy of tolerance was leading to the disintegration of the kingdom.

About the year 500 AD, the King of Himyar, Abu-Kariba Assad Tubba', undertook a military expedition into northern Arabia in an effort to eliminate Byzantine influence. The Byzantine emperors looked to the Arabian Peninsula as a region in which to extend their influence, thereby to control the lucrative spice trade and the route to India. Without actually staging a conquest of the region, the Byzantines hoped to establish a protectorate over the pagan Arabs by converting them to Christianity. The cross would then bear commercial advantages as it did in Ethiopia. The Byzantines had made some progress in northern Arabia but had met with little success in "Jewish" Himyar.

During this time in Persia, the Mazdakites religion had greatly increased. They persecuted the Jews and Christians, and rioted in various Jewish towns in villages, kidnapping children to convert to their religion. The Jewish Exilarch Huna VI had a daughter who married Mar Hanina (the head of the academy) and they

¹⁴⁸ The above overview is based on C.E. Bosworth's notes in his translation of This History of al-Tabari, Volume V, pp. 122-123.

had a son, Mar Zutra II. But when Huna VI died without a son, a rival claimant Pachda was appointed to the Exilarchate. A power struggle ensued. When Pachda had no male heir, Mar Zutra II became the next Exilarch. In the interval seems the conflict between the Mazdakites and the Jews took on the nature of an armed conflict.

The new exilarch, Mar Zutra II, did not obtain the right to autonomous self defense from King Kovad (r488-531 CE). He raised an army including an elite group of four hundred soldiers for the defense of Jewish community. Being denied autonomy, he declared independence. He succeeded in maintaining an independent state for seven years (513-520 CE), collecting revenue even from the non-Jewish population of Iraq. Active measures by the king Kovad put an end, at length, to the Exilarch's state: Mar Zutra, only twenty-two years of age, and Mar Hanina were crucified (520 CE) on the bridge of Machoza,[2] his capital; and his infant son, Mar Zutra III., was carried to Israel, where founded a new line of Nasiim, Patriarchs. The charge against the Exilarch: misuse of tax money for his person use.

Abu-Kariba's grandson Shamir al-Janah, who had been sent to China, married the daughter of the Jewish Exilarch Huna V (r 465-470) and from this union Dhu Nuwas was born. Upon the failure of his "uncle" Mar Zutra II to create a Jewish state in Persia, Dhu Nuwas returned to Arabia, killed the Lakhmid usurper and sacked the Byzantine colony of Najran, and attempt to rally all Arabia to his cause. He was the first to adopt Persian, Rabbinic Jewish customs and introduced them to Arabia. By adopting the more conventional version of Judaism, he hoped to claim the rights and honors of a Tobiad ruler of the Trans-Jordan, from the "Nile to the Euphrates". He styled himself "The King of all the [Twelve] Tribes".

The Byzantines pressured the Jews in Tiberias to make Dhu Nuwas stop. Eventually Byzantium provided ships for Himyar to be invaded in by Abyssian troops. Dhu Nuwas was killed in ensuing battle, and this brought to the end the last remnants of the Second Commonwealth, 450 years after the destruction of the Temple. The dreams of the Tobiad, would be king of the Trans-Jordan, who traced his lineage and rights to Joseph the interpreter of dreams, for the moment were left unfulfilled.

In the following chapters we will discuss the individual rulers of Himyar.

Shamir Yuhar'esh II Tubba', 275 CE

Shamir Yuhar'esh II Tubba' began his rule sometime before 275 CE. He was the first ruler of the revived Himyarite Kingdom. We propose that his newfound position of power was due to two factors: first, marriage to a noble family widely respected in the region and second, the influx of wealthy merchant from Palmyra.

The line of Herod / Hasmoneans had all but disappeared by the end of the 3rd century. Aristobolus had tried to revolt in Nabatea, only to be pursued by Rome and flee to Himyar. His descendant, a daughter who claimed the title "princes of Chalcis" married Shamir Yuhar'esh II. This would give Shamir's descendants claim to the House of Herod, Hasmonean, Tobiad and through Toviaah on the maternal line to King David. Some of this history became conflated with the story of the Queen on Sheba, who was given the name Bilqis, perhaps derived from the name "Chalcis". The Himyar kings were fond of titles, but this title carried little substance. One thing that stuck however, was the sense that the Himyar kings were now the defender of the faith, the faith of Judaism as they understood it.

Shortly after or perhaps concurrent with, this marriage was another fortuitous event. In 270 CE, the Roman legion crushed the independent state of Palmyra. The numerous refugees flooded Medina and Mecca. They brought with them numerous skills in trading, taxation, and the logistics of transporting merchandise. With these newfound skills, Himyar began to prosper. Five years later, Shamir Tubba' led his troops to victory over Nadjran, Mareb and Hadhramaut. He succeeded in uniting much of Yemen, assuming the new title "King of Saba and Dhu Raydan and Hadhramaut and Yamnat" Yamnat is generally understood to be the Southern part of Yemen.

His marriage to nobility, brought him the title "Tubba' " claiming the rights and privileges of the renowned Tobiad dynasty. This title would have been quickly recognized by the Palmyrenes refugees. It was used by all the Himyarite kings after him.

The Tubba' kings were amply praised for their courage and leadership in Yemeni prophecy/poetry. Shamir Tubba's was able to gain decisive control of the sea routes for trade and commerce. According to Tabari, Shamir Tubba' was important enough to negotiate on equal terms with the king of the Parthian empire. Shamir Tubba' founded a second Himyarite dynasty that within a hundred years would completely conquer and absorb it's the old Sabean state. The rival kingdom with Mareb as the capital would cease to exist. The

Axumites, who had become a strong power and had occupied the Tihama and part of the highlands more than once, would be driven back to Ethiopia.

The refugees from Palmyra brought with them other things as well: idolatry and the worship of Baal, which they called Hubal. According to Islamic historians the first person to erect idols inside and round the Holy Ka'bah was Amer Ibn Luhay Al-Khuzai, who brought Hubal from Ardh Al-Jezira in Al-Sham (Syria), and put it over the pit which was used as the coffer of the Ka'bah, where the remains of the Temple treasures were buried). He was the first to call for the worship of idols in grounds kept holy by the descendants of Onias for hundreds of years.

Requests to Shamir Tubba' to remove this abomination went unheeded. The "Jews" of Palmyra argued, apparently successfully, that Oniad sanctuaries, including Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem never had gates or guards to prevent all those who wished to come and worship at the holy place. Alcimus, the Tobiad high priest had pulled down the low wall of Ezra that divided the court of the Gentiles from that of the Israelites. The powerful king liked this vision of cosmopolitanism. He liked the riches it brought. The old Oniad priesthood retreated to Khaybar. Even the monotheists who had lived for generations in Medina, found themselves outnumbered by the polytheistic "nasaara" Jews. Tension between the Nasaara Polytheists and the Yahud Monotheists was strong. Memories of Odenathus' taxation were not yet forgotten and the usurpation of the altar of Onias in Mecca only added insanity to the conflict.

Yasir Yuhanim III

In 73CE, the Temple of Onias in Heliopolis has been sealed. Even by that time it had fallen into disrepair, but as it was upon a large mound of sand which had been enclosed by a wall. It is perhaps with reference to the Temple of Onias that the New Testament gives the parable of the foolish man "who built his house on the sand", while the Solomon was the wise man "who built his house upon a rock" in Jerusalem.

Abyssinia (Ethiopia) had remained faithful to the religion of Onias. Abyssinian kings would often bury themselves with a monument that was intended to look like the tall tower of Onias' Temple. These stele would have doors and windows carved out of stone to imitate the detail of that tower. However, several decades before Constantine would declare Christianity the official religion of Rome, Abyssinia embraced Christianity as its official religion. Religious differences, however, did not deter Abyssinia claim on Arabia, based on Ptolemy's claim and the ethnic relations on both sides of the red sea. This claim had great economic importance because taxation was more effective if the same country controlled both sides of the red sea.

In order to achieve more effective taxation Ezana king of Abyssinia sent emissaries and Christian bishops in 300 CE to the kings of Himyar to negotiate a trade agreement, as well as to try and establish greater diplomatic and religious ties. The Christian bishops, being informed that a large portion of Himyar were Nasaara (Notzrim), reported back to king Ezana that they had found great sympathy and common religion among the kings of Himyar. Narjan, a pilgrimage spot in a fertile valley on the trade route was allowed to become an Abyssinian Christian colony. Medina remained a centre of Jewish influence. The old conflict between the Tobiad Notzrim and the Edomite "Jews" gradually began to take on elements of a conflict between Christianity and Judaism, as both Rome and Persia tried to attract adherents to their side during their almost continual warfare..

Christianity at that time was expressed in a wide variety of heterodox and even heretical beliefs. This is the reason that the Nasaara of Medina could be mistaken for Christians. Just a few years later, in 325 CE, the Council of Nicaea, a Christian emulation of the ancient Jewish "Sanhedrin", discussed these heresies and attempted to settle upon universally agreed doctrine. Uniformity of belief was of great religious significance and at the same time of great political importance for Byzantium who was trying to strengthen its hold over its conquered territories.

After their migration from Palmyra, the Nasaara were called by Islamic historians "Adzites" and split into the two great tribes of the Aus and the Kazraj. At least one historian calls the Palmyrians ethnic "Jews", however their mix of pagan ritual also gave them the name "polytheists". Byzantine considered them Christians due to the name Nasaara. But in the end, since none of these names fit, they were given the name "ansar".

Tharin Yuhan'im

The religion of the kings of Himyar was, at its base, the remnants of the Oniad missionizing religion, which provided altars for non-Jewish "Temple Sympathizers" with the intention of bringing them close to monotheism. Waves of Sadducean Levites and Priests had come of Arabia to participate in the missionizing effort. Even Paul the Apostle, after his conversion to Christianity, went to Arabia first before all other places to bring the Good News to the nations. Even though Paul was unsuccessful, and had to escape Arabia with his life, the more traditional Oniad missionaries gained great respect. These communities of priests and levites would attach themselves to great Arabian tribes as their clients. The ancient priests believed they could predict the future. They were employed as poets and acted as "early warning" for imminent attack.

The kings of Himyar, for their part, attached great importance to Judaism as known during the Second Commonwealth. Herods' mix of Hellenism, Tobiadism, strict observance of tradition combined with cosmopolitanism, and romantic dreams of reuniting the Children of Israel, was the role model for these kings.

Tharin Yuhan'im Tubba', also known as Zayd Tubba' al-Aqran (the later Tubba'), with magnanimity and in keeping with his toleration of all religious expression, received a mission sent by the Byzantine Emperor Constantius in 343 CE. The Christian historian Baronius writes that mission was able to convince Tharin Yuhan'im to embrace orthodox Christianity and abandon his heretodox views. Later historians were able to tell that this change had little permanent effect.

Meanwhile Byzantium, fearing sympathy with Persia, worked to extricate the Jews from the Christians. In 341 CE, the Council of Antioch (Canon 1) in Syria tried to regulate and limit the relationship between Christians and Jews. So widely prevalent was the joint feasting of Christians with Jews on the Passover that they passed legislation forbidding it on threat of excommunication.

In 350 CE, after successfully uniting Abyssinian kingdom under Christianity, they received the right from Byzantine to claim Arabia for their own. Even though several military forays into Himyar yielded uncertain results, from the middle of the fourth century the sovereign of Axum (between the Red Sea and the Nile) joined to his other titles that of King of the Himyarites.¹⁴⁹

In 360-363 CE, Julian the Hellene, briefly tried to bring back pagan Rome. He even promised the Jews that he would allow the Temple to be rebuilt. This was mostly motivated by a desire by Julian to win Jewish support in his campaigns against the Persians. He was largely successful with Syrian Jews and some Christians, who were sympathetic to the Jews, but with his untimely death his projects came to nothing, and a backlash of unheard of proportions began to be inflicted upon the Jews.

Persecutions under an increasingly Christianized Rome led to disturbances. In 351 CE, the Jews of Sepphoris rose against Gallus, with the result that Sepphoris was destroyed. The Tobiad leadership which had fled Palmyra, set up a "council of the Righteous" in Edessa (Sanliurfa, in modern day Turkey). The Jewish community, as well as the remaining Christians, began to follow the calendar as announced by the Edessian council.

By 359 CE, Byzantine persecution of the Rabbinic Jews in Tiberias had grown to such an extent that the Sanhedrin was forbidden from meeting. The inability to call witnesses created a growing disunity over fixing of the Jewish calendar between the Jews of Syrian Antioch and of Tiberias. In an attempt to keep the Jewish communities unified, Patriarch Hillel II publishes the astronomical (calculations) principles for regulation of the Jewish calendar. However many Jews, particularly with Sadducean/literalist tendencies, did not accept this change, and demanded that witnesses come before a court declare the new moons and intercalations. Without this biblical institution, the calendar would necessarily begin to float, being eleven days shorter each year and no extra month inserted to synchronize with the solar year.

¹⁴⁹ M. C. de Perceval, vol. i. p. 114. The Greek Inscription at Axum, discovered by Salt, gives these titles as appertaining to the Axumite monarch Aezannas. See the description of Axum, between Meroe and the sea-port Adule, in Heeren's Res. Africa, vol. i. p.460, &c.

The attempt at forming a Sanhedrin in Edessa quickly met with Byzantine resistance. An old Edessan chronicle mentions at least two synagogues, one of which was the nascent Sanhedrin, was turned by Bishop Rabbula into the chapel of Mar Stephen in 412CE.¹⁵⁰

Serving the Kings of Himyar 275CE-525CE

WORK IN PROGRESS

@@@The growth of the Jewish kingdom of Himyar: the sons of the nobles of Himyar and others from the Arab tribes used to serve the kings of Himyar during their period of royal power.

Ibn Humayd-Salamah-Ibn Ishaq, to whom someone had transmitted from Sa'id b. Jubayr-Ibn 'Abbiis-others of the scholars of Yemen who relate traditions. Some of them transmitted part of the story, but all of that is gathered together in this present story, that there was a king from the Lakhm in Yemen among the Tubba's of Himyar, called Rabi'ah b. Nasr. Before his period of royal power in Yemen there had reigned Tubba' I, who was Zayd b. 'Amr Dhl al-Adh'dr b. Abrahah Dhi al-Mandr b. al-Rd'ish b. Qays b. Sayf! b. Saba' the Younger b. Kahf al-Zulm b. Zayd b. Sahl b. 'Amr b. Qays b. Mu'dwiyah b. Jusharn b. Wd'il b. al-Ghawth b. Qatan b. 'Arib b. Zuhayr b. Ayman b. Hamaysa' b. al-'Aranjaj Ijimyar b. Saba' the Elder b. Ya'rub b. Yashjub b. Qabtdn. 448 [The genealogy is here taken back to Qahtan, regarded as the progenitor of the South Arabs as 'Adnan was of the North ones, Himyar being accounted, with Kahlan, as one of the two main subdivisions of Qahtan. The name Qahtan was connected by the Arab genealogists with the Old Testament name Yoqin/Joktan (cf. Gen. x. 28; 1 Chron. i. 20), but this seems phonologically hazardous. See Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel-Strenziok, *famharat al-nasab*, 1, Table 176, H, 31-33, 455; EIZ, s.v. I-tdn (A. Fischer-A. K. Irvine).] Saba's name was (really) 'Abd Shams, and he was only called Saba', as they assert, because [910] he was the first to take captives (sabd) among the Arabs .449 [The Sabaeans were reckoned by the Arab genealogists as stemming from Saba', called personally 'Amir b. Yashjub. See Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel-Strenziok, *famharat al-nasab*, I, Table 176, 11, 491. In the Old Testament, Sabd figures in Gen. x. 7, as the son of Cush, son of Ham, and Shaba in I Chron. i. 9, as a son of Joktan. Briend notes that Sobd (with initial samekh, occurring five times in the Old Testament) seems to have a different geographical connotation from Shaba (with initial shin, occurring twenty-three times in the Old Testament), which seems definitely to be placed in southwestern part of Arabia. See Suppldment au dictionnaire de la Bible, s.v. Sheba. I, col. 1046.] This is the ruling house of the kingdom of Himyar, among whom were the Tubba's.

Malki Karab Yuha'min, c. 378CE

Abu Karib As'ad [I] Tubba', r.390-420CE

Abi Karib As'ad himself was, however, a fully historical person, leaving aside the legendary accretions, the 'bkrb 's'd of the Himyaritic inscriptions. In the first half of the fourth century he expanded his territories from southwestern and southern Arabia into central Arabia. He inflated the royal title of the founder Shamir Yur'ish from that of "Lord of Saba' Dhid Raydim, Hadramawt and Ymnt" to include "and of their Arabs (i.e., Bedouins) in 7'wd- and Tihdmah, " and succeeding Tubba' kings also used this fuller title (in Classical Arabic, tawd means "mountain"; for al-Haniddril, *Sifat jazirat al-'Arab*, 371, al-Tawd denoted the mountain range of the Sardt, which divided Yemen between its coastland, tihimah, and its inland plateau, naid). His fame ensured the later growth around him of a fantastic romance and epic similar to that of, and, as noted above, conceivably inspired by, that of Alexander the Great. See E12, s.v. Tubba' (A. F. L. Beeston).

Sanhedrin moves from Edessa to Yathrib

c.410 Synagogue confiscated in Edessa, Syria. Alchemy beginning to be practised. (K)

410 Rome Was sacked by Alaric, king of the Visigoths. The treasures of the Second Temple fell into his hands. What remained was taken to Carthage by the Vandals (455). (JH)

412 Synagogue destroyed in Illyricum. Visigoths occupy southern Gaul. (K)

412 Theodosius II reigned in 412* (412); he was cruel and inimical to the Jews. In the eighth year of his reign (4180?) he ordered all the Jews to be driven out of Alexandria in Egypt, and commanded that all the

¹⁵⁰ The notice is repeated in pseudo-Dionysius of Tellmahre and by Bar Hebraeus. The latter relates also ("Eccl. Chron." i. 359) that the Moslem Mohammed ibn Tahir built a mosque in 825 where formerly there had been a synagogue

contributions and donations which were collected for the Nahssi** of Palestine, for the purpose of defraying the general benevolent objects among the Jews, and the promotion of the study of the law and similar purposes, should be delivered into the imperial treasury.

* Too late by four years.--TRANSLATOR.

** He nevertheless did not reside "any more in Palestine, but in Babylon, although he bore the name "The Prince of the Land." (S)

415 Emperor THEODOSIUS II publically reprimands the Jewish Patriarch GAMALIEL II and strips him of the rank of 'praefectus praetorio'. (see 200 AD/CE) December 26: After the discovery of three Jewish tombs at Kfar Gamala on the coastal plain of Palestine from a dream by presbyter LUCIAN, identifying them as NICODEMUS, STEPHEN (the first martyr) and GAMALIEL (the teacher of Saul of Tarsus), Bishop JOHN of Jerusalem reinters "Stephen's" remains in the Basilica of Mount Sion which he had built around the Upper Room of the Last Supper. (L)

415 St. Cyril, Bishop Of Alexandria (Egypt) Incited the Greeks to kill or expel the Jews. He forced his way into the synagogue at the head of a mob, expelled the Jews and gave their property to the crowd. The Prefect Orestes, who refused to condone this behavior, was set upon and almost stoned to death. Only one Jew, Adamanlius, agreed to be baptized. Within a few years Jews were allowed to return, but a majority of them returned only after the Mohammedans conquered Egypt. (JH)

415 The Visigoths under pressure of the Romans invade the Iberian peninsula, and the Jews find protection under them from the Christians; Ataulf is assassinated in Barcelona; he is succeeded by Sigeric, then Wallia (d. 418) as king of the Visigoths, who move their capital to Toledo. Attalus is cut loose by the Visigoths, captured by Honorius' general Constantius, paraded, mutilated (forefinger and thumb cut off so he couldn't draw a bow) and exiled. Emperor Theodosius II expels the Jews from Alexandria under his sister Pulcheria's influence; Hypatia, the Neoplatonist librarian of Alexandria is murdered in Mar. by a mob of monks led by archbishop Cyril, again under her influence. Roman consuls: Flavius Honorius and Flavius Theodosius II. (T)

415. Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria, drives the Jews from Alexandria. (JE)

416 Roman consuls: Flavius Theodosius II and Junius Quartus Palladius. (T)

417 Imperial decree degrades civil status of Jewish subjects of Roman Empire. (K)

417 Constantius defeats the Saxons in the Hallelujah Battle. Pope Innocent I dies on Mar. 12, and on Mar. 18 Pope Zosimus (d. 418), a Greek is elected. Roman consuls: Flavius Honorius and Flavius Constantius. (T)

418 Synagogue destroyed, forced baptism of Jewish residents of island of Minorca, by direction of Severus, bishop of Majorca. Franks capture Gaul. (K)

418 Minorca (Balearic Islands Off Spain'S Eastern Coast) Severus, the bishop of Minorca, claimed to have forced 540 Jews to accept Christianity upon conquering the island. This is the first record of Jews on Minorca, as well as the first case of Jews being forced to convert or face expulsion. Although in general forced conversions were officially frowned upon (as laid down by Pope Gregory I), they were considered valid - and backsliding was usually considered heresy. Even harsher forced conversions with no "choice" involved at all began in the 9th century. (JH)

418 The Romans strip England of its hoards of gold. The preaching of Pelagianism is outlawed in Rome. Pope Zosimus dies on Dec. 27, and on Dec. 28 Pope Boniface I (d. 422) is elected on Dec. 28; Eulalius (d. 423) is also elected, and the two popes begin a power struggle. Roman consuls: Flavius Honorius and Flavius Theodosius II. (T)

418. (March 10) Jews excluded from all public offices and dignities in the Roman empire. (JE)

c.419 Barsauma, Christian monk, leads rampage in Palestine, several synagogues destroyed. (K)

419 Barsauma Of Nisbis (Eretz Israel) A monk gathered a group of followers and for the next three years tried to destroy synagogues throughout the country. (JH)

420 We know but little of the learned men of Palestine after the decease of Rabbi Hillel. But in the year 4280 (420) there was a slight difference between the Nahssi and the Resh Gelutha (chief of the captivity), who

was next in rank after the Nahssi, for which reason he left Babel and went to Palestine, where he was received as chief by the learned men of that country. (S)

423 Civil status of Jewish subjects of the Roman Empire degraded by Theodosius. Synagogue confiscated in Antioch. (K)

425 On the death of the Jewish Patriarch GAMALIEL II, the patriarchate and the Jewish council associated with it is ended. (L)

425 Gamliel Vi (Eretz Israel) With his death (see 370) the Patriarchate (Nesi'ut) in Eretz Israel ended. Its independent fund donated by Jews in the Diaspora was confiscated. This also marked the end of any political autonomy in Eretz Israel. All Jewish leadership passed to the Diaspora. (JH)

425 St. Augustine And St. Jerome Branded Judaism a corruption and called for the enslavement and severe persecution of Jews until they agreed to convert. (JH)

429 Vandals invade northern Africa. Theodosius orders Sanhedrin to turn over money collected for the Jewish Patriarch, effectively abolishing patriarchate, this in accordance with the Church's desire to eliminate Davidic patriarch of Jewish people, which appeared to contradict Christian claims. (K)

429 The Roman empire abolishes the Jewish Patriarchate and diverts the Jewish tax to the imperial treasury. THEODOSIUS II orders the compilation of laws known as the Theodosian Code. (L)

439 January 31, Code Of Theodosius II (Byzantine Empire) The first imperial compilation of anti-Jewish laws since Constantine. Jews were prohibited from holding important positions involving money, including judicial and executive offices. The ban against building new synagogues was reinstated. Theodosius was the Roman emperor of the East (408–450). The Code was also readily accepted by Western Roman Emperor Valentinian III (425-455). (JH)

During the latter Harran was ruled by the Umayyads, Abbasids, Seljuks, Zengids and Eyyubids. Harran Ulu Mosque (al-Jamiu' al-Firdaws) is the oldest mosque in Turkey, built by the Umayyad king Mervan II between 744 and 750. The oldest Islamic university was also situated here. The fascinating artefacts excavated at Harran can be seen at Urfa Museum.

Harran is also important in early Islamic history, since it was conquered by Omar in 640 AD. Under Arab rule Harran was a celebrated centre of learning, home to such famous scholars as the 9th century mathematician Sabit Bin Kurra, the physicist Cabir ibn-i Hayyan and astronomer Battani. Under the last Umayyad caliph Mervan II Harran became a capital city for the second time. Its golden age was under Eyyubid rule, when architecture, art and technology reached a zenith.

After the city was razed by the Mongols in 1260, however, it never recovered its former importance. The ruins of ancient Harran attest to its former splendour. Among the monumental structures dating from various periods of history are the city walls, which are nearly four kilometres in length and five metres in height, city gates, and the keep, which is in a good state of preservation and consists of four structural layers, the earliest dating from the Hittite. On the north side of the settlement mound is the magnificent mediaeval Ulu Mosque, whose minaret is over 33 metres in height. There are six gates in the walls: the North Anatolia Gate, Lion Gate, Baghdad Gate, Mosul Gate, Rakka Gate and Aleppo Gate.

Harran was a centre of [Christianity](#) from early on, the first place where purpose-built churches were constructed openly. However although a bishop resided in the city, many people of Harran retained their ancient pagan faith during the Christian period, and thus the [Sabian](#) culture was born here in Harran.

Under the Tulunids (863-905) the Karaite community in Egypt enjoyed robust growth. In 905, the Tulunids were unable to resist an invasion by the Abbasid troops, who restored direct caliphal rule in Syria and Egypt. The land for the "Ben Ezra" synagogue in Fustat was purchased in 882 [CE](#) for 20,000 dinars by Abraham ibn Ezra of Jerusalem.

About the year 500 AD, the King of Himyar, Abu-Kariba Assad Tubba', undertook a military expedition into northern Arabia in an effort to eliminate Byzantine influence. The Byzantine emperors had long eyed the Arabian Peninsula as a region in which to extend their influence, thereby to control the lucrative spice trade and the route to India. Without actually staging a conquest of the region, the Byzantines hoped to establish a protectorate over the pagan Arabs by converting them to Christianity. The cross would then bear commercial

advantages as it did in Ethiopia. The Byzantines had made some progress in northern Arabia but had met with little success in "Jewish" Himyar.

Abu-Kariba's forces reached [Yathrib](#) and, meeting no resistance and not expecting any treachery from the inhabitants, they passed through the city, leaving a son of the king behind as governor. Scarcely had Abu-Kariba proceeded farther, when he received news that the people of Yathrib had killed his son. Smitten with grief, he turned back in order to wreak bloody vengeance on the city. After cutting down the palm trees from which the inhabitants derived their main income, Abu-Kariba laid siege to the city. The Jews of Yathrib fought side by side with pagan fellow inhabitants to defend their town and harried the besiegers with sudden sallies. During the siege Abu-Kariba fell severely ill. Two Jewish scholars in Yathrib, Kaab and Assad by name, hearing of their enemy's misfortune, called on the king in his camp, and used their knowledge of medicine to restore him to health. While attending the king, they pleaded with him to lift the siege and make peace. The sages' appeal is said to have persuaded Abu-Kariba; he called off his attack and also embraced Judaism along with his entire army. At his insistence, the two Jewish savants accompanied the Himyarite king back to his capital, where he demanded that all his people convert to Judaism. Initially, there was great resistance, but after an ordeal had justified the king's demand and confirmed the "truth" of the Jewish faith, many Himyarites embraced Judaism. The conversions, however, were not total, and there remained as many pagans as Jews in the land. Such conversions, by ordeal, were not uncommon in Arabia. Some historians argue that the conversions occurred, not due to political motivations, but because Judaism, by its philosophical, simplistic and austere nature, was attractive to the nature of the Semitic people. In any case, it is known that by the 6th and 7th centuries, Judaism flourished in Himyar; and in inscriptions dating from those centuries Jewish religious terms such as "*Rahman*" ("*the merciful*," a divine epithet), "*the god of Israel*", and the "*Lord of Judah*" bears testament to this fact.^[5]

Abu-Kariba's reign did not last long after his conversion to Judaism. His warlike nature prevented him from maintaining peace and prompted him to engage in bold enterprises. It is uncertain how Abu-Kariba met his death, although some scholars believe that his own soldiers, worn out by constant campaigning, killed him. He left three sons, Hasan, Amru, and Zorah, all of whom were minors at the time. After Abu-Kariba's demise, a pagan named Dhu-Shanatir seized the throne.^[6]

Jews in Kyrgyz

Archeological evidence discovered by the Kyrgyz Academy of Science suggests that Jewish traders from Khazaria started visiting the Kyrgyz territory about the end of the 6th century CE.

In Kyrgyz tradition, the term *dzeet* (Jew) is found for the first time in the Kyrgyz national epic poem *Manas*, which dates back to the 10th century CE and probably incorporates earlier traditions. *Manas*, the name of a town and oasis in central Xinjiang Province in the modern Uighur Autonomous Region of China, is also the name of the legendary epic hero of the Kyrgyz people, described as a son of Jakup - Yaacov. *Manas* mentions several cities with sizeable Jewish communities, among them Samarkand, Bukhara and Baghdad, as well as various places in the Middle East, including Jerusalem which is described as a "Holy City for Jews". An entire section of the poem is dedicated to "King Solomon's times" (Sulaimandyn Tushunda)¹. It should be pointed out that the cult of King Solomon remains very popular in Kyrgyzstan even today. Several popular Kyrgyz legends refer to a 130 meters high mountain near the city of Osh by the name of 'King Solomon's throne' (Takht-i-Sulaiman). According to a Kyrgyz legend, one night God took King Solomon to that mountain, which local Jews with time came to revere and compare with Mount Zion. Since the 8th century CE, the Star of David symbol has been used frequently as an ornamental element in Kyrgyz architecture and crafts. Incidentally, according to the Kyrgyz tradition, Adam is considered the father of sewing and weaving, Noah - of architecture and carpentry, David - of metallurgy and tinwork, and Abraham - of barbers. In the Suzak region of Kyrgyzstan there is a village named Safar, a name thought to be a variant of 'Sephard', i.e. the place inhabited by Jews of Sephardic origin.

During all years of its history in Kyrgyzstan, the Jewish population never reached more than 2% of the region's population: according to the population census held by the Tsarist authorities in 1896 Jews represented 2% of the total population of the region; and that figure was also the result of the census organized by the Soviet authorities in 1926. During the years of WW2 the number of Jews was higher but it included also many temporary residents, after WW2 the percentage of the Jewish population began to decline and in the early 2001 the Jews represented only 0.03 percent of the total population.

Medieval Period

Jews began to settle in the cities located along the Great Silk Road since the 4th century CE. For the most part, they were traders who spoke and wrote in Aramaic. In his memoirs Marco Polo, who passed through the territory of Kyrgyzstan during his voyage to China, mentioned numerous Jewish communities along the Silk Road and in China, where Jews were called the "people with colored eyes" and were allowed to build synagogues. According to the Russian researcher Vladimir Bartold, during the 10th century the Jewish population in the eastern regions of Iran was larger than that of the Christians. Khorezm, Osh, Kokand and Samarqand hosted famous communities of Jewish scholars who called themselves *khabr*, an Uzbek word derived from the Hebrew *haber* ("friend, colleague") which they used to distinguish themselves from the "commoners"². The famous Arab geographer Al-Maqdisi (946-1000), who traveled extensively in the lands of Islam, mentioned the cities of Osh, Balasagun, Uzgen, Taraz and others as having communities of *akh-laz-zimma* (non-Moslems, mostly medieval Jewish traders). These Jews were of Middle Eastern origin and habitually were active as traders, moneychangers and bankers. Some geographical information about the Silk Road, particularly names of towns, reached even Spain: the famous atlas compiled by Abraham Crescas in Palma de Majorca, Catalonia, in 1375-77 contains a map of Kyrgyzstan with the lake Issyk-Kul and the cities of Talas and Jerusalem as a holy city for Jews.

But there are only three archeological sites that prove that Jews were in the country as early as that. The earliest archeological evidence dates back to about 750 CE, when three Jewish traders on the Silk Road carved their names on stone in Hebrew and left them in Tangiazab, in West Afghanistan.

A Jewish gravestone dated to about 1320 CE was found near Kandahar in the south of the country. The deceased's name is written in Hebrew. It reads: "The gravestone of Minister Moshe Bezalel."

The earliest extant site is in Badhis province, where 80 Jewish graves were uncovered, all with Hebrew inscriptions. Some date as early as 1012 CE. One dated to 1189 CE reads: "President Avi Suleiman David Ben Shlomo." Kashani thinks he was the president of the community. Another, dated 1249 CE, reads: "Old David, head of the synagogue, helper of the community, David Shah."

If properly excavated, the site might reveal much more about the Jewish community of the time.

Conversion to [Rabbinic] Judaism

He related: It is said that Tubba' had become a convert to Judaism because of the rabbis (*al-ahbdr*), a large group of whom had gone from Yathrib to Mecca with him. 370 [We certainly know of the presence of Judaism in pre-Islamic Yathrib, the Islamic Medina, notably from the story of the Prophet Muhammad's relations with the local Jewish tribes there after he had made the hijrah from Mecca to Medina. These Jews must have emigrated from Palestine to settlements along the Wdd! al-Qurd in western Arabia, Yathrib being the farthest south of these colonies; the stimulus for this migration may well have been the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 or the aftermath of Bar Kokhba's revolt. i.e., after A.D. 135. The term used for "rabbi" in early Arabic, *habibibr*, given the Arabic broken plural *ahbar* stems directly from Hebrew *haber*, and was already known in pre-Islamic Arabia. See C. C. Torrey, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam*, 34; A. Jeffery, *The Foreign Vocabulary of the Qur'dn*, 49-50. Al-Khwarazmi, *Mafdtfb al-'ulizm*, 35, equates *al-habr* with the Muslim *al-'alim*. How the town which became the Islamic Medina/al-Madinah had acquired its earlier name of Yathrib (still appearing in *Qur'n*, XXXIII, 13) is uncertain, but the name is undoubtedly ancient. A cuneiform inscription from Harran mentions *ya-at-ri-bu* as one of the towns in Arabia to which Nabfi-nd'id or Nabonidus of Babylon (r. 556-539 B.C.) penetrated; in the Greek geographer Ptolemy we have *Iathrippa*; and in Minaean inscriptions we find *Ytrb*. See Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammads*, 201 n. i; F. Rosenthal, *introd. to Torrey-*, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam*, repr. p. xi; EI2, s.v. *al-Madina*. i. *History to 1926* (W. M. Watt).] He related: They say that Ka'b al-Ahbdr's lore came from the surviving material those rabbis had bequeathed; Ka'b al-Ahbdr came from the Himyar. 371 [Abu Ishaq Ka'b al-Ahbdr ("Ka'b of the rabbis") was a Yemeni convert from Judaism to Islam, probably in 17/638 (thus in *al-Taban*, 1, 25 14), dying in 32/652-53 or shortly afterward. He was considered the greatest authority of his time on Judaeo-Islamic traditions, the *Isralliydt*, and also on South Arabian lore. See EI2, s.vv. *Isralliyat* (G. Vajda) and *Ka'b al-Ahbdr* (M. Schwitz).]

Seige of Yatrib

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There related to us ibn Humayd-Salamah-Muhammad b. Ishaq, who said: When Tubba' II (al-Akhar), that is, Tuban As'ad Abu Karib, came back from the East, he traveled via Medina .417 When he had passed by it at the beginning of his expedition (i.e., on his outward journey), he had not aroused any feelings of dis quiet among its people, but had left behind there in their midst one of his sons, who had [subsequently] been treacherously slain. [The following section, up to 1, 9 17 L 17, depends on the parallel account of fbn Isha-q, in essence only moderately different from that of Ibn al-Kalbi, but it must be taken as a later growth of legendary history of a type similar to that in the Alexander Romance, which may have influenced it. The section is reproduced substantially by Ibn Ishaq in the Sirat al-nabi of Ibn Hishim, ed. Wiistenfeld, 12ff. = ed. al-Saqqii et al. 1, 19ff., trans., 6ff.; cf. Ibn Hishdm, Kitdb al-tYffin, 297-300, and F. Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore," 227-28.]

Hence he now came to the town with the intention of reducing it to ruins, extirpating its people and cutting down its date palms. When they heard of his plans, this tribe (bayy) of the Ansar banded together against him in order to defend themselves. Their chief at that time was 'Amr b. al-Tallah, one of the Banu al-Najjar, and then of the Banfj'Amr b. Mabdihil.418 [This is an anachronism, in that the designation of Ansd r "Helpers" was only given to his supporters in Medina by the Prophet after his hijrah of 622, and an inaccuracy in that it was not, of course, a tribal name. The Arabs inhabiting Yathrib, as it was mainly called in pre-Islamic times (see n. 3 7o above), were from the Banfi Qaylah bt. Hiflik, with its two branches of the Aws and the Khazraj. Al-Najidr were a clan of the Khazraj, and the 'Amr b. Mabdihil part of their subclan Mazin. The'Adi mentioned below were another subelana. See Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel- Strenziok, Jamharat al-nasab, I, Tables 176-77, is 5, H, 3 1, 34-3 5, 347: Robertson Smith, Kinship and Marriage in Early Arabia, 2 5 6; Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina, genealogical table at 154.] They sallied forth to attack Tubba'. When Tubba'had encamped [with his troops] by the Medinans, one of the latter from the Banfi 'Adi b. al-Najidr, called Abmar, had killed one of Tubba"s followers whom he had found cutting down the date clusters of a tree that belonged to him. He had therefore struck him with his reaping hook and killed him, saying, "The fruit belongs to the one who nurtures it and makes it grow!" After killing him, he had thrown the corpse into a well-known local well called Dhdt Tfimdn (?); this naturally increased Tubba"s rage against them, and the two sides became engaged in making war and fighting other. He related: The Ansar assert that they used to fight Tubba' by day but treat him as a guest each night. Tubba'was amazed at this and used to say, "By God, these people of ours are generous of heart!"

While he was engaged thus, there came to him two rabbis from [902] the Jews of the Banfi Qurayzah, learned scholars with firmly grounded knowledge, who had heard about Tubba"s intention of destroying the town and its people .419 [Qurayzah were one of the three main Jewish tribes in Medina, confederates of the Aws; they nevertheless suffered the massacre of their menfolk and the enslavement of their women and children by Muhammad in 6/627 after the siege of Medina by Quraysh and their allies. See Buhl, Das Leben Muhammeds, 273-77; Watt, Muhammad at Medina, 193ff.; EI2, s.v. Kuray;;a (W. M. Watt).] They told him, "O King, don't do it, for if you persist in carrying out your plan, something will intervene to prevent you, and we fear that you will bring down on yourself speedy retribution." He said to them, "How can that be?" They replied, "it is the place to which a prophet, who will arise out of the tribe of Quraysh at the end of time, will migrate, and it will be his home and resting place." After having heard these words, Tubba' desisted from what he had intended to

do regarding Medina, perceiving that the two rabbis had special knowledge and being amazed at what he had heard from them. He departed from Medina, took them with him to Yemen, and embraced their religion. The names of the two rabbis were Ka'b and Asad, both from the Ban-a Qurayzah and paternal cousins of each other .420 [The names of the two rabbis as given here come from the Ibn Ishaq version of this story, from an uncertain source; but Michael Lecker has recentl~ pointed out that the late-period historian of Medina Nfir al-Din 'Ali b. Ahmad al-Samhfid (d. 9 11/1 So6) cites an alternative tradition from the second/eighth-century historian of Medina Ibn Zabalah that the names of the two men were Suhayt/Sukhayt and Munabbih, from the Medinan Jewish tribe of Hadl, who were actually clients of the more powerful Quray7eah. See al-Samhfid-1, Wafd' a]-wafd, 1, 190; Lecker, "The Conversion of Ijmyar to Judaism and the Jewish Banu Hadl of Medina," 134-3 5.] They were the most knowledgeable persons of their age, as Ibn Humayd has mentioned to me-Salamah-fbn Isha-q-Yazld b. 'Amr-Abdn b. Abi 'Ayydsh-Anas b. Mdlik-shaykhs from his people (sc., of Medina) who went back to the jahiliyyah.

A certain poet of the Ansd r, one Khdlid49-' b. 'Abd al-Uzdd b. Ghaziyyah b.'Amr b.'Abd b.'Awf b. Ghamn b. Malik b. al-Najidr, recited these verses about the warfare between the Medinans and Tubba', vaunting'Amr b. al-Tallah and mentioning his merits and his resolute defense:

Has he relinquished youthful folly, or has its remembrance
 ceased? Or has he obtained his fill of pleasure?
 or have you remembered youth? And what a memory of youth
 or of its times you have ! 42,91

For indeed, it was a young man's war (literally, the war of a beast which sheds its two teeth next to the incisors at its fourth or later year, rubiff, or of a young man similarly shedding teeth, rabai), whose like brings to a youth experience and esteem."

So ask 'Imrdn or ask Asd, then, at the time when [the army] came, when the morning star was still visible '424

An army headed by Abfi Karib, with their bodies clad in long coats of mail and with pungent reek.

Then they said, Who is coming along with them, the Banfi'Awf or al-Najarah?

O Banfi al-Najdr, indeed we have a burden of taking vengeance on them from long ago!425

Then there went forth to encounter them in battle a body of lofty warriors ('ashannaqah),426 whose extent was like that of a sheet of falling rain drops .427

A chief who is on a level of prestige with kings; whoever would make war on 'Amr does not realize his eminence.

A man of the Ansar, mentioning their fierce resistance to Tubba', has said:

You impose upon me, among other duties in regard to it,
[defense of I the date palm groves of al-Asdwif and al-Mansa'ah,

Date palm groves the Bana Mdlik have protected from the terrifying cavalry hosts of Abfi Karib.

He related: Tubba' and his people were devotees of idols and worshiped them. He set out toward Mecca, this being on his route back to Yemen, until when he was at al-Duff in the district of Jumddn, between'Usfdn and Amaj, a point along his way between Mecca and Medina, 429 a group of men from Hudhayl430 met him and said, "O king, allow us to lead you to an ancient, largely obliterated treasury which previous monarchs have overlooked and which contains pearls, chrysoliths, rubies, gold, and silver." He replied, "Yes, indeed, " and they went on to say, " [It is] a temple in Mecca which its people worship and pray by. "43 1 The Hudhalis, [904]however, intended by that Tubba's destruction, because they knew full well that if any king had any bad intentions concerning, the Ka'bah or acted deceitfully in regard to it, he would perish. When he had agreed to their proposal, he sent for the two rabbis and asked them about it. They told him: "The sole intention of these people is to bring about your destruction and the destruction of your army. If you do what they are urging you to do, you and everyone with you will assuredly perish en bloc." Tubba' said, "What then do you advise me to do when I get to the temple?" They replied, "When you get there, do as its devotees do: circumambulate it, venerate and honor it, shave your head in its presence and behave with humility until you leave its precincts." He asked them, "What is preventing you yourselves from doing that?" They retorted, "By God, it is indeed the temple of our forefather Abraham, and it is just as we have informed you; but the local people have interposed as obstacles, between us and the temple, various idols they have set up around it, and blood they shed there. They are unclean polytheists," or words to that effect. 432

Tubba' recognized the soundness of their advice and the veraciousness of their words. He had the group of Hudhalis brought in, and cut off their hands and feet. Then he proceeded onwards till he reached Mecca. It was revealed to him in a dream that he should cover over the temple, so he covered it with sheets of woven palm leaves. Then in a second dream it was revealed to him that he should cover it with something better than that, so he covered it with Yemeni cloth (al-ma'dfir). Then in a third dream, that he should cover it with something even better than that, so he covered it with women's robes and pieces of finely woven Yemeni cloth joined together (al-muld'ah wa-al-wasd'il). According to what they assert, Tubba' was the first person to put a covering over the Ka'bah .433 [For the kiswah or covering, see Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Le p6lerinage a la Mekke*, 3 3; idem, "Le voile de la Ka'ba, " 5 -2 1; E12, s.v. Ka'ba. i. (A.J. Wensinck and J. Jomier).] He also ordered its guardians, from Jurhum, 434 [Jurham were an ancient tribe, accounted Yemeni in genealogy, who were said to have migrated northward to Hijaz and to have taken over Mecca and its shrine from the Amelekites before being themselves displaced by the local Uijdzi tribe of Khuza'ah. Individuals with the nisbah of al-Jurhumi were still known in the time of Moammad. See E12,s.v. Djurhum or Djurham (W. M. Watt).] to look after it and to keep it in a state of ritual purity, not letting any blood, dead bodies, or milath, that is, [cloth used for] menstruation, come near it, and he provided it with a door and a key. Then he set out for Yemen accompanied by his troops and the two rabbis. When he reached Yemen he summoned its people to enter into the same religion as he had done, but they refused until they were able to test it by means of ordeal by fire, which they had in Yemen. [This story is also in Ibn Hisham-,ed.

WiisterAeld,14-15=ed.al-Saqqdetal., 1, 237, trans. 8-9; idem, Kiti5b a]-Tijin, 294-96; al-Azraqi-, Akhbar Makkah, 1, 84-86.]

Ibn Humayd related to us-Salamah-Ibn Ishdq-Abfi Mdlik b. Tha'labah b. Abi Mdlik al-Qurazi, 436 [Some male members of the Jewish tribe of Qurayzah apparently survived the massacre mentioned in n. 419 above.] who said: I heard Ibrahim b. Muhammad b. Talhah b. 'Ubaydallidh relate that, when Tubba' drew near to Yemen in order to enter it, the Himyarites blocked his way to it, telling him that he could not enter it because he had abandoned their religion. He invited them to accept his (new) faith, saying, "It is a better religion than yours." They retorted, "In that case, come and settle the matter with us by the ordeal of fire, " and he agreed. He related: According to what the Yemenis assert, there was in Yemen a fire, by means of which they would settle matters in dispute among themselves; the fire would devour the wrongdoer but leave the one who had suffered injury unscathed. When they told this to Tubba', he replied, "You have made a fair proposition." So his people (i.e., the Himyarites) went forth with their idols and with other sacred objects they were accustomed to utilize in their religion, while the two rabbis went forth with their sacred codices (masahifhimii) 437 hanging round their necks until they halted in front of the fire by the place where it blazed forth. The fire leapt out toward them, and when it neared them they withdrew from it in great fear. But those people present urged them onward and instructed them to stand firm. So they stood their ground until the fire covered them and consumed the idols and the sacred objects they had brought along, together with the men of Himyar who were bearing them. The two rabbis then went forth with their sacred codices round their necks, with their foreheads dripping with sweat but the fire did not harm them at all. At this, the Himyarites agreed to accept Tubba's religion; from this time onward, and because of this episode, was the origin of Judaism in Yemen.

Ibn Humayd related to us-Salamah-Ibn Ishdq-one of his colleagues, that the two rabbis and the Himyarites who went out with them at that same time only followed the track of the fire in order to repel it, for they said that whoever was able to drive it back was the most worthy of credence. When some of the Himyarites came with their idols near to it in order to drive it back, the fire came on at them in order to consume them, hence they retreated and were unable to drive it back. But when the two rabbis drew near to it after that, and began to recite the Torah, the fire began to recede until they had driven it back to its place of origin. Thereupon, the Himyarites adopted the two rabbis' [906] religion.

Now Ri'am was one of the temples they used to venerate and where they offered up slaughtered beasts and from which they used to speak under inspiration, this during the time when they were polytheists.438 [Al-Hamddni, Sifatiazirat al-'Arab, 268,365, describes Riydm/Ri'dm as one of the fortresses and castles (mahdfid, quq&, for the first term, sing. mabfad, mabfid, see C. Landberg, Glossaire datfnois, 1, 442-30) of Yemen and as one of the shrines of the Arabs (mawddi'al2ibidah), located in the territory of the Hamd5n (i.e., in that part of northern Yemen between SanWand Sa'dah). Ibn al-Kalbi, Kitdb al-asnam, ed. Ahmad Zak! Pasha, in Klinke-kosenberger, Das G&zenbuch, text, 7-8, Ger. trans. 35, comm. 87, Eng. trans. Faris, io-ii, states that it was a sanctu- =7 of the Mmyarites at SanWand that there was an oracle there. The existence of both the place and the shrine at Rymum where the god Ta'lab was venerated, is confirmed by South Arabian inscriptions. See Fahd, Le panth6on de l'Arabie centrale a la veille de Ph6gire, 141-43; W. W. Mfiller, "Ancient Castles Mentioned in the Eighth Volume of al-Hamddiii's Wil," IS 4.] The two rabbis told Tubba' that it was only a demon (shaytdn) that lured them into evil ways and made them its sport ' and they asked him to let them deal with it how they would. He replied, "Just go ahead with it!" The Yemenis assert that the two rabbis drew out from it a black dog, which they slaughtered. They also tore down that temple; its remains, according to what has been mentioned to me, can still be seen today in Yemen at Ri'am, with traces of the blood that used to be poured over it.439 [This story is also in Ibn Hishdm, Sirat al-nabi, ed. Wiistenfeld, 17-18 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 24-28, trans. io-ii, idem, Kitab al-didn, 37-38.]

Tubba'composed the following verses about that journey of his; what he had intended to do at Medina and the Ka'bah; how he dealt with the men of Hudhayl when they told him what they in fact told him; what he did regarding the Holy House when he came to Mecca, that is, putting a cover over it and purifying it; and what the two rabbis told him about the Messenger of God's future role:

Why [O my soul] is your sleep troubled, like that of one with
bleary, diseased eyes, suffering from sleeplessness, as if kept
awake incessantly?
Feeling rage against two Jewish tribes who settled at Yathrib,
who richly deserve the punishment of a day of violence!440
When I made my dwelling place at Medina, my slumber there
was sweet and refreshing.
I made space for a dwelling place on a hill between al-'Aqiq and
Baqi' al-Gharqad .441

We left behind its tract of dark-colored rocks and its plateaux,
 and its salt flats extending on a bare plain,
 And we descended to Yathrib, with our breasts raging with
 anger at the killing of a slaughtered one (i.e., Tubba's son).
 I have sworn a deliberate, binding vow, an oath which is, by
 your life, not to be rescinded,
 "If I come to Yathrib, I will not suffer to remain in its central
 parts a single date cluster or any ripe dates."
 Until there came to me a learned scholar of Qurayzah, a rabbi
 to whom, by your life, the Jews accorded primacy.
 He said, "Remove yourself from a settlement which is
 preserved [by God] for the prophet of Mecca from Quraysh,
 a divinely guided one."
 So I forgave them without any reproach, and left them to the
 requital of an everlasting day (sc., the Day of judgment).
 And I left them to God, for whose forgiveness I hope on the Day
 of Reckoning, [escaping] from the stoked-up flames of Hell.
 I left behind at Yathrib for him a group of men from our people,
 men of personal achievement and valor, whose deeds are
 praised,
 A group of men who will bring victory in their train; I hope
 thereby a reward from the lord of one worthy of praise 442.
 I did not realize that there was a pure house, consecrated to God
 in the hollow of Mecca, where He is worshiped,
 Until there came to me servile wretches from Hudhayl, at al- [908]
 Duff of Jumud5n above the ascent of the hill (al-musnad).
 They said, "[There is] at Mecca a house of ancient, forgotten
 wealth, with treasures of pearls and chrysoliths."
 I wanted to get at them, but my Lord interposed between me
 and them, for God repels [profane ones] who would destroy
 the house of worship.
 Hence I renounced my intentions against it and against the
 people of Yathrib, and left them as an example to the
 discerning.
 Dhfi al-Qarnayn before me submitted himself [to God], a king to
 whom the other kings became humble and thronged [his
 court].443
 He reigned over the Eastern and Western lands, yet sought the
 means of knowledge from a wise, rightly guided scholar.
 He witnessed the setting of the sun in its resting place into a
 pool of black and foetid slime.
 Before his time, Bilq-1s was my paternal forebear (literally,
 flaunt") and ruled over them until the hoopoe came to
 her. 444

442. rabbi muhammadi, which could be taken as presaging the coming of the Prophet Muhammad.

443 "The man with the two horns" of Qur'dn, XVIII, 82-97/83-97, generally identified in Muslim lore with Alexander the Great, regarded by some authorities as a proto-Muslim because he spoke to the people of the West about God's punishment for the wicked and His reward for the righteous, though it was disputed whether he was a prophet. See EI2, s.v. al-Iskandar (W. M. Watt). Tubba's citation here of Dhufi al-Qarnayn as a predecessor no doubt reflects the elaboration in early Islamic times of South Arabian legends and folktales, which assigned to Alexander a place in the glorious past of Yemen, as a counterbalance to the North Arabs' glorying in the fact that it was from them that the Prophet Muhammad had arisen. See Tilman Nagel, Alexander der Grosse in der friihislamischen Volks literatur, 60ff.

There related to us Ibn Humayd-Salamah-Ibn Ishaq, who said: They assert that, in regard to this tribe (bayy) of Ansa-r, Tubba' was only enraged at them because of the Jews who lived among them. Tubba' intended to destroy them when he came to them at Medina, but the Ansar restrained him from them until he then departed. This was the reason for his saying in his poem,

Feeling rage against two Jewish tribes who settled at Yathrib,

who richly deserve the punishment of a day of violence! 19091

There related to us Ibn Humayd-Salamah-Ibn Ishdq, who said: Before this, there had come to Tubba' Shafi, b. Kulayb al-Sadafi, who was a soothsayer (kahin). He stayed with Tubba', and when he signified his intention to say goodbye, Tubba' said, "What does there remain of your learning?" Shafi' replied, "An eloquent piece of historical lore-and a veracious item of knowledge." 445 [The kahin's utterance here is, as usual with such gnomic pronouncements, in assonantal, rhymed prose (safl. See Fahd, *La divination arabe. Etudes religieuses, sociologiques et folkloriques sur le milieu natif de l'Islam*, 15 1-5 3; EJ2, s.v. Sadj'. i. As Magical Utterances in Pre-Islamic Arabian Usage (T. Fahd).] He said, "Can you find a people with a kingdom equal in status to mine?" Shafi' replied, "No, except that the king of Ghassdn has numerous offspring (nail)." Tubba' said, "Can you find any king superior to him in status?" He replied, "Yes." He said, "Who has such a kingdom?" He replied, "I find it belonging to a pious and God-fearing man-who has been made strong by conquests-and who has been described in the Scriptures (al-zabfzr, literally "the Psalms of David")446 -his community is given a superior status in the sacred books (al-suf5r)-and he will dispel darkness with light-Ahmad the prophet-blessed be his community until he comes! -[He is] one of the Banfi Lu'ayy-and then of the Banfi Qusayy." 447 [Qusayy was the semilegendary hero of the Banfi Lu'ayy of Fihr or Quraysh who was an ancestor, separated by five generations, of Muhammad/Abmad. He is said to have restored the Ka'bah to the primitive monotheistic worship of the millat Ibrahmi after the cult there had lapsed into pantheism under jurburn (on whom see n. 434 above). See E12, s.v. Ku~ayy (G. Levi Della Vida).] Tubba' sent for a copy of the scriptures and perused them; and lo and behold, he found there the Prophet's description!

The first person to set up a door that could be locked in the Holy Ka'bah was Tubba' As'ad Al-Himiari. Anush Ibn Seth (peace be upon him) and Jurhum were believed to have also done the same. (I I).

The first person to cover the Holy Ka'bah with full Kiswah was Tubba As'ad Al Himairi, who believed in the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace be upon him) four centuries prior to his mission. (I I, 12, 13, 14)

Satih and Shiqq

He related: Then there came after Shamir Yur'ish the son of Yasir Yun'im, Tubba' the Lesser; namely, Tuban As'ad Abu Karib b. Malki Karibb.Zaydb.Tubba'lb.'AmrDhial-Adh'dr. It was he who came to Medina and who took back the two Jewish rabbis to Yemen, who venerated the Holy House and put a covering on it and who recited the poetry which is well known .456 [This tale is given in Ibn Hisham, *Sirat al-nabi*, ed. Wdstenfeld, 12 = ed. al-Saqd et al., 1, 20, trans. 7; idem, *Kitib al-tijan*, 294-96; cf. Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore," 227.] All these reigned before the royal power of Rabi'ah b. Nasr al-Lakhmi, and when the latter died, the whole of the royal authority in Yemen reverted to Hassdn b. Tuban (or Tibdn) As'ad Abi Karib b. Malki Karib b. Zayd. b. 'Amr Dh! al-Adh,dr.

There related to us Ibn Humayd-Salamah-ibn Ish5q, from a [911]certain scholar, that Rabfai b. Nasr had a dream that alarmed him and that continued to disquiet him. 457 [What we have here is a story from the South Arabian tradition, meant to explain the presence of the (genealogically) South Arabian Lakhmids in Iraq and al-Hirah. The story is traced back to the time of a generation after Shamir Yur'ish/Yuhar'ish, i.e., the first part of the fourth century, and Rabi'ah b. Nasr al-Lakhmi is made the father of 'Ad-1, who in the Lakhmid king lists dependent upon Ibn al-Kalbi (see n. 414 above) is regarded as the progenitor of the line, the first figure in the royal genealogy, father of 'Amr 1, the father of Imru' al-Qays I. At the end of the story of the dream, the Lakhmids are made to migrate from Yemen to al-Hirah in order to escape the prophesied invasion of the Abyssinians, being allowed to settle at al-I-Firah by the Persian king ShApfir I (see al-Taban, 1, 9 13-14, P. 18.2 below, and Rothstein, *Lahmiden*, 39-40, who states that we know, concerning the origins of the kingdom based on al-Hirah, "so gut wie nichts").] When he had this dream, he sent out enquiries among the people of his kingdom and gathered together in his presence every soothsayer, magician, drawer of omens from the flight of birds, 458 [See for this person, the Wif, al-Tabarl, 1, 1058, P. 395 and n. 970 above. Concerning this series of persons skilled in various types of prognostication, cf. the series of "magicians, enchanters, sorcerers, and the Chaldaeans" whom Nebuchadnezzar summoned to interpret his dreams in Daniel ii. 2. For the practice of the interpretation of dreams, oneiromancy, a pseudo-science whose literature goes back through Classical Antiquity to Assyrian times and which in the Islamic period produced a considerable number of works on ta'bTr al-ru'yd, dream interpretation books, see Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 247-367, and EI2, sx. Ru'yd (H. Daiber).] and astrologer. Then he informed them, "I have had a dream which has alarmed me and caused me disquiet, so tell me its interpretation." They replied, "Recount it to us, so that we might inform you of its meaning." He replied, however, "If I recount it to you, I shall have no confidence that you will be able to tell me its correct interpretation; the only person who will know its correct interpretation is the one who already knows about the dream without my telling him." When

Rabi'ah had said all this to them, one of the assembled group of experts on dreams said, "If the king requires this, then he should send for Satih and Shiqq, for there is no one more knowledgeable than these two, and they will certainly be able to tell you what you ask." Satih's (real) name was RabFb. Rabi'ah b. Mas'-ud b. Mdzin b. Dhi'b b. 'Adl b. Mdzin b. Ghassdn, and because of his genealogical connections with Dhi'b he was called al-Dhi'bi. Shiqq was the son of Sa'b b. Yashkur b. Ruhm. b. Afrak b. Nadhir b. Qays b. 'Abqar b. Anmiir. 459 [Satih and Shiqq appear in Arabic lore as legendary personages, often described as barely human monsters, and they have roles in pre-Islamic history as diviners: here for the Lakhmid Rabi'ah but also (anachronistically) for al-Nu'man (M) b. al-Mundhir (IV) and Khusraw An-asharwdn in predicting the fall of the Persian kingdom and the triumph of the Arabs (al-Tabar-1, 1, 981-84, pp. 285-89 below). See Rothstein, Lahmiden, 39; E12, s.vv. Satib b. Rabi'a (T. Fahd) and Shik-(B. Carra. de Vaux and T. Fahd).]

When they told Rabi'ah that, he sent for the two men. Satih came to him before Shiqq; there were no soothsayers (kuhhan) like them in their time. So when Sa0h arrived, the king summoned him and said, "O Satih, I have had a dream which has alarmed me and disquieted me, so tell me about it, for if you comprehend the dream correctly, you will know correctly its interpretation." Satih replied, "I will do this. You saw in your dream a skull (jumiumah) (Abfi ja'far [al-Tabaril says: I have found the rendering of it in other places as ' . . . I saw blazing coals, humamah')-which came forth from the darkness-and fell upon the lowlands descending to the sea-and devoured there everything with a skull!" The king said, "O Satih, you have got it exactly right; so what, in your opinion, is the interpretation of it? Satih answered, "I swear by the serpent which is between the two harras 460 [The geographers enumerate large numbers of harras, basaltic lava fields, in the region between the Hawran in southern Syria and Medina. See the long section in Ydqfit, Bulddn, 11, 245-50 (paraphrased and discussed by O. Loth, "Die Vulkanregionen von Arabien nach Ydkut," 365-82); E12, s.v. Harra (ed.). Here the reference, if at all specific, is probably to two of the harras in the vicinity of Medina, which included the HarratWiiqim, site of a famous battle in 63/683 when the Umayyad army under Muslim b.'Uqbah al-Murn defeated the Medinans there; see Loth, op. cit., 380.] -the Abyssinians (al-Habash)461 [This designates here the people of al-Habashah, hbS2t of the later Sabaeen inscriptions. See E12, s.v. Habashat (A. K. Irvine). As observed by Irvine, there is no evidence for the statement in earlier authorities like Glaser and Rossini there that the HbS2t may have been a South Arabian tribe in origin.] will certainly swoop down on your land -and will then rule over all the land from [912] Abyan to Jurash."462 [Abyan was a mikhlijf of the southernmost tip of Arabia, comprising Aden and its eastward-stretching hinterland; see E12, s.v. Abyan (O. L6fgren). Jurash, frequently mentioned by al-Hamdani, was an important town and a mikhlijf in mediaeval Islamic times, situated in northern Yemen to the northwest of Najrdn. See al-Bakri, MuJam mi ista'jam, R, 376; Ydqfit, Bulddn, 111, 126. Mikhlaf, used in the early Islamic sources on Yemen in particular (although no longer used as an administrative term in modern Yemen), is said by the geographers to be the equivalent of kfzrah. It may have a tenuous relationship to Sabaeen hlf "vicinity of a town," but a form mhlf has not so far been attested in the inscriptions. See Beeston et alii, Sabaic Dictionary, 60; E12, s.v. Mikhlaf (C. E. Bosworth).]

The king said to Satih, "By your father! O Satih, this is indeed distressing and painful for us; but when will this take place-in my own time, or subsequently?" Satih replied, "Nay, indeed, a good while after it-more than sixty or seventy years will elapse." The king said, "Will that dominion of theirs endure, or will it be cut short?" he answered, "Nay, it will be cut short after seventy-odd years have gone by-and then all of them there will be slain or will be expelled from it as fugitives." The king said, "Who, then, will assume that task of killing and expelling them?" Satih replied, "Iram of Dhu Yazan 463 [Muslim lore identified Iram with the Biblical Aram, son of Shem (Gen. x. 22-23; 1 Chron, 1. 17), and made various peoples of Arabia his descendants. When the Qur'dn, LXXXIX, 6, speaks of Iram dh5t'imdd, it is probably referring to a tribe or people, here linked with the legendary giant race of 'Ad. See al-Hamdani, al- IklY1. al-fuz' al-thamin, 33, trans. Faris, The Antiquities of South Arabia, 29-30; Nashwan al-HimyaYi, Die auf Siidarabien beziiglichen Angaben Nagwims im gams al-'ulum, 2; E12, s.v. Iram (W. M. Watt).]-who will come forth against them from Aden-and not leave a single one of them in Yemen." The king enquired, "Will Iram's dominion there endure, or will it be cut short?" He replied, "It will indeed be cut short." The king said, "And who will cut it short?" He replied, "A prophet-a pure one-to whom the inspired revelation (al-wahy) will come-from on high." The king asked, "Who will this prophet spring from?" He replied, "[He will be] a man from the progeny of Ghdlb b. Fih-son of Malik b. al-Nadr 464 [That is, from Quraysh, these being persons figuring in the genealogy of the tribe back to Ma'add b. 'Adndn. See Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel-Strenziok, famharat al-nasab, I, Table 4; E12, s.v. Quraysh (W. M. Watt).]-his dominion over his people shall last until the end of time." The king said, "O Satih, will time (al-dahr) have an end?" He replied, "Yes, a day on which the first generations and the last generations will be assembled-the righteous will be joyful on it-but the evildoers shall be made wretched." The king said, "Is what you are informing us true, O Satih?" the latter replied, "Yes, by the redness of the dying sun at evening-and the beginning of the darkness of night-and the dawn when it is complete-what I have told you is undoubtedly true."

When Satih had finished, Shiqq arrived, so the king summoned him. He said, "O Shiqq, I have had a dream

that has alarmed and disquieted me, so tell me about it, for if you comprehend the dream correctly, you will know correctly its interpretation," just as he had said to Satib. But he concealed from him what Satib had said in order that he might see whether the two interpretations agreed or differed. Shiqq said, "Yes, you saw a skull-which came forth from the darkness-and fell upon all the, land, meadows, and [913] thickets-and devoured everything there with living breath." When that king perceived that the words of the two soothsayers agreed with each other totally, he said to Shiqq, "O Shiqq, you have got it exactly right, so what, in your opinion, is the interpretation of it?" Shiqq replied, "I swear by the men living between the two harrahs-the blacks will certainly come down on your land-and will seize custody of every tender one from your hands-and will then rule over all the land from Abyan to Nair-an." 465 [Again implying the whole length of Yemen, since Najrdn lay on its north-eastern fringes. See al-Bakri, Mu'jam md ista'jam, IV, 1298-99; Ydqft, Buldiin, V, 266-71; EI2, s.v. Nadjr5n (Irfan Shahid).]

The king exclaimed, "By your father! O Shiqq, this is indeed distressing and painful for us; but when will this take place-in my own time, or subsequently?" Shiqq answered, "Nay indeed, a stretch of time after you-then a mighty one, lofty of status, shall rescue you from it-and will make them taste the deepest abasement. " The king said, "Who is this person mighty of status?"

Shiqq retorted, "A youth neither base nor inadequate for what he attempts-he will issue forth from the house of Dhu Yazan. " The king said, "Will his dominion endure, or will it be cut short?" He replied, "Indeed, it will be ended by a prophet who will be sent-who will come with right and justice-among the people of religion and virtue-the dominion will remain among his people until the Day of Separation. One may ask, 'What is the Day of Separation? " -The reply is, the day on which those near to God will be recompensed-invocations from the heavens will be made-which both the quick and the dead shall hear-and on which the people will be gathered together at the appointed place 467 -on which there will be salvation and blessings for those who fear God." The king said, "Is what you say true, O Shiqq? " The latter replied, "Yes, by the lord of heaven and earth-and the highlands and the lowlands which lie between them-what I have communicated to you is indeed the truth, in which there is no dissimulation. "

When the king had finished questioning the two men, there came into his mind that what the two of them had told him regarding the invasion of the Ethiopians was really going to take place, so he fitted out his sons and other members of his house for the journey to Iraq, together with what they needed, and wrote on their behalf to one of the kings of Persia called Shiibfir, son of Khurrazdd, 468 [Presumably the reference is to Shdbur I, since his father Ardashir I's mother was Khurrazad. See Justi, Namenbuch, 96-97.] who allowed them to settle at al-Hirah. Al-Nu'man b. al-Mundhir, the king of al-Hirah, was a descendant of Rabi'ah b. [914] Nasr; he is al-Nu'mdn b. al-Mundhir- b. al-Nu'mdn b. al-Mundhir b. 'Amr b. 'Adi b. Rabi'ah b. Nasr, that same king in the genealogy and the lore of the scholars (ahl) of Yemen .469 [This story is in Ibn Hishdm, Sirat al-nabY, ed. Wiistenfeld, 9-12 = ed. al-Saqd etal., 1, is-ig, trans. 4-6, andIbn al-Athir, Karnil, I, 418-2o, and cf. Fahd, La divination arabe, 25o-52. As noted in n. 457 above, the dream described thus becomes an explanation for the movement of a South Arabian group like the Lakhmid family from Yemen to Iraq.]

There related to us Ibn Humayd-Salamah-Ibn Ishdq, who said: When Sa0h and Shiqq told that to Rabi'ah b. Nasr, and Rabi'ah did with regard to his sons and other members of his house what he in fact did, the mention of all this spread among the Arabs, and they talked about it extensively until his fame and his reputation for knowledge became widely disseminated among them. Hence when the Ethiopians occupied Yemen, and the events which they had previously been talking about, including the interpretations of the two soothsayers, came to pass, al-Alshd-that is, al-A'shd of the Ban-li Qays b. Tha'labah al-Bakri 470 [The celebrated poet al-A'shd Maymfin b. Qays, often ranked for his poetic genius with the authors of the Seven Mu'allaqat, came from the Qays b. Tha'labah of Bakr b. Wd'il (d. after 3/625), grew up in the Christian environment of al-Hirah and eulogized inter alios Iyas b. Qabisah, the appointee of the Persians to the governorship of al-Hirah after the deposition and death of al-Nu'man V b. al-Mundhir 11 (see alj~abari, 1, 1029-30, P. 3 5 9 below). His life was much bound up with political and military events along the desert frontiers of Iraq. The verse is from his qasidah beginning with the formulaic hemistich Binat Su'dd wa-amsd hablulia inqata'a, in Dfwan, ed. Geyer, Gedichte von 'Abfi Basir Maiman ibn Qais a]-A'96, 74, no. 13, v. 16. See on the poet Blach~_re, Histoire de Ja littgrature arabe, H, 321-25; EI2, s.v. al-A'shd, Mayinfin b. Kays (W. Caskel).] -said in some of the poetry he recited, mentioning the events involving those two soothsayers Satih and Shiqq:

A woman with her eyelids never looked forth like with a look
full of penetration, as when al-Dhi'bi made
pronouncements when he spoke in saj'.

Qusai ibn Kilab ibn Murrah (Qusayy), c. 400–480

Qusai ibn Kilab ibn Murrah (Qusayy) (Arabic: قصى بن كلاب بن مرة) (c. 400–480) was the great-grandfather of Shaiba ibn Hashim (Abdul-Mutallib). He was fifth in the line of descent to Muhammad, and attained supreme power at Mecca. Qusai is amongst the ancestors of Sahaba and the progenitor of the Quraish.

He was born into the famous Quraysh tribe. When Qusai came of age, a man from the tribe of Khuza'a named Hulail (Hillel) was the trustee of the Kaaba. Qusai married his daughter and, according to Hulail's will, got the trusteeship of the Kaaba after him. He is reputed to have brought great honor and illustriousness to his tribe, due to his wisdom. He reconstructed the Kaaba from a state of decay, and made the Arab people build their houses around it. He is known to have built the first "town hall" (Sanhedrin) in the Arabian Peninsula. Leaders of different clans met in this hall to discuss their social, commercial, cultural and political problems. A provident leader, Qusai created laws so that pilgrims who went to Mecca were supplied with food and water, which was paid for by a tax that he persuaded his people to pay.

Qusai had many sons, some of them are Abd Manaf ibn Qusai, Abd al-Dar ibn Qusai and Abd al-Uzza ibn Qusai

The first person to roof-over the Holy Ka'bah was Qusai Ibn Kilab. Then it was roofed over again by Quraish five years before the mission of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him). (1 1)

Quraish were the first to alter the building of the Holy Ka'bah area-wise. This took place five years before the mission of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him). Abdullah Ibn Al-Zubair (may Allah be pleased with them) restored it to its original area in 65 H., but Al-Hajjaj Ibn Yusuf Al-Thaqafi brought it back to its status during the Quraishi era. (14)

The first person who built houses around the Holy Ka'bah was Qusai Ibn Kilab, about one hundred and thirty years before Hijrah. People did not use to build houses in the vicinity of the Holy Ka'bah, but on the outskirts of Makkah Al-Mukarramah. Those who built their houses around the Holy Ka'bah were known as Quraish Al-Bawatin.

Hassan [I] Yuha'min Tubba', r.420-450CE

Among those who served Hassdn b. [881] Tubba' was 'Amr b. Huir al-Kindi, the chief of Kindah during his time. When Hassan b. Tubba' led an expedition against the Jadis, he appointed 'Amr as his deputy over certain affairs

Expedition to Iraq

Satih used only to be called al-Dhi'bi by the Arabs because he came from the progeny of Dhi'b b.'Adi. When Rabi'ah b. Nasr died and the royal power in Yemen became concentrated into the hands of Hassdn b. Tubdn As'ad Ab! Karib b. Malki Karib b. Zayd b.'Amr Dh! al-Adh'dr 471 [Nashwan al-Himyari, Die auf Ridarabien bezüglichenAngaben Nagwans, 3 8, has a fanciful explanation for the princely name Dhfi al-Adh'dr.] one of the factors involving the eruption of the Ethiopians, the transfer of the royal power from Himyar, and the ending of their period of dominion-and there is a cause for everything-was that Hassdn b. Tubdn As'ad Abi Karib led an expedition with the army of Yemen, aiming at overrunning the land of the Arabs and the land of the Persians, just as the Tubba's had been wont to do previously. But when the expedition reached a certain spot in the land of Iraq, Himyar and the tribes of Yemen refused to go on further with him and wanted to return to their own homeland and families. Hence they approached and spoke with one of Hassan's brothers, who was with him in the army, called'Amr, saying, "Kill your brother Hassan, and we will make you king over us in his stead and you can lead us back to our homeland." He agreed to their plan, and Hassan's brother and his followers from Himyar and the tribes oi Yemen agreed to kill [915] Hassan, except for Dhfi Ru'ayn al-Himyari, who forbade 'Amr to do this and told him, "You are the ruling house of our kingdom; do not kill your brother and thereby dissolve the uniting bonds of our house," or something like that. But 'Amr rejected his words, al-though Dhfi Ru'ayn was a leading noble of Himyar .472 [That Mid Ru'ayn were a noble family of Wmyar is confirmed by NashwAn al-Uirnyar!, Die auf Ridarabien beziüglichen Angaben Nagwans, 46, cf. 41, apparently claiming a connection for them with the previous ruling house of Saba'.] Hence Mid Ru'ayn obtained a leaf of writing material and inscribed on it:

O who would buy sleeplessness for sleep? The one who passes
his nights in a calm and peaceful state is indeed fortunate.
And although Himyar has acted treacherously and faithlessly,
God will hold Dhu Ru'ayn blameless.

Then he sealed the piece of writing and gave it to 'Amr, telling him, "Keep this document by you on my behalf, for there is in it something which I desire earnestly and have need of " (i.e., for his eventual exculpation), so 'Amr did that. When Hassan got news of what his brother 'Amr, Himyar, and the tribes of Yemen had resolved upon, that is, his death, he recited to 'Amr:

O 'Amr, do not hasten my deathly fate, but take the royal
power without using armed force.

But 'Amr was set on killing him, and in fact did the deed. He then returned to Yemen with his accompanying army. A certain poet of Himyar recited:

When, [I pray] to God, has anyone ever seen, in previous long
spans of years, the like of Hassan, as a slain one?
The princelets (aqydl) slew him out of fear lest they be kept at
military service, while assuring him, "No harm, no harm!" 473
(*lababi lababi*).
Your dead one was the best of us and your living one is lord
over us, while all of you are chiefs.

473 Nashwdn b. Sa'Id, Die auf S0darabien beziiglichen Angaben Nagwins, 89, defines qayl as meaning "king" among the Ijmyarites. It seems to have a fairly late usage in South Arabia in the explicit form qyl, mainly in the fifth and sixth centuries, and to bear the meaning "prince," a potentate subordinate to a malik or king, as well as the meaning of "tribal chief." See G. Ryckmans, "Le Qayl en Arabic mdrionale pr6islamique," 144-55; Biella, Dictionary of Old South Ara- bic, Sabaeen Dialect, 453-54; E12, s.v. Kayl (A. F. L. Beeston). The word lababillabbin is said by fbn Ishdq, in Ibn Hishdm, Sirat al-nabi, ed. Wiistenfeld, ig = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, .29, trans. 13, to mean in the Himyarite language Id ba's.

'Amr Tubba', Regent of Himyar, 450CE

From 880 line 17 to 882 line 4, Noldeke did not bother to translate, considering the events narrated there as too "fabelhafte" (but see regarding such omissions, Translator's Foreword, p. xvi above).

When 'Amr b. Tubba' killed his brother Hassan b. Tubba' and assumed the royal power in his stead, he took 'Amr b. Hujr al-Kindi into his personal service. 'Amr b. Hujr was a man of sound judgment and sagacity. 'Amr b. Tubba' intended to honor him and at the same time to diminish the status of his brother Hassan's sons, and as part of this policy he gave Hassan b. Tubba's daughter in marriage to 'Amr b. Hujr. The Himyarites grumbled at this, and among them were some young men who were concerned about her, because none of the Arabs had previously been bold enough to desire a marriage alliance with that house (sc., the Himyarites). Hassan b. Tubba's daughter bore al-Harith b. 'Amr to 'Amr b. Hujr.

When 'Amr b. Tubdn As'ad Abi Karib established himself in Yemen, he was unable to sleep and suffered permanent insomnia, according to what they assert. He found it impossible to sleep. It reduced him to a state of exhaustion, so he set about asking the physicians, and the soothsayers and diviners who work by examining physiognomy, what was the matter with him, saying, "I am deprived of sleep, and can get no rest, and insomnia has reduced me to a state of exhaustion." one of them told him, "By God, no [916] man has ever killed his brother or a blood relation wrongfully, as you killed your brother, without losing his sleep and incurring sleeplessness." On being told this, 'Amr set about killing all those members of the nobles of Himyar and tribes of Yemen who had urged him to kill his brother Hassan, until finally he came to Dhu Ru'ayn. When 'Amr expressed his intention of killing him, Dhu Ru'ayn said, "You have in your possession a document exonerating me from what you propose to do with me." 'Amr said, "What is this exculpating document in my possession?" He replied, "Fetch out the paper which I entrusted to you and left with you." The king fetched out the paper, and lo and behold, there was written on it those two verses of poetry:

O who would buy sleeplessness for sleep? The one who passes
his nights in a calm and peaceful state is indeed fortunate.
And although Ijmyar has acted treacherously and faithlessly,
God will hold Dhfi Ru'ayn blameless.

When 'Amr read these two verses, Dhu Ru'ayn told him, "I forbade you to kill your brother, but you would not listen to me; So when you refused thus to listen to me, I left this paper with you as proof of my innocence in regard to you and as exoneration of me vis4-vis you. I feared that, if you killed him, you would be afflicted as you have in fact been afflicted; and if you intend to inflict on me what I see you have inflicted on those who urged you to kill your brother, this paper will serve as a means of preserving me from your intentions." Hence 'Amr b. TuNin As'ad left him alone and did not include him among the nobles of Himyar whom he executed; he recognized that Dhfi Ru'ayn had given him wise counsel, if only he had followed it. 'Amr b. Tubdn As'ad recited, when he executed those guilty men of Himyar and the people of Yemen who had urged him to kill his brother Hassdn:

We purchased sleep, when tendons in the neck were drawn
tight with what causes sleeplessness and knotting of sinews
which will not go away.

They called out together at the time of their treacherous action,
"No harm!" when the exculpation of Dhfi Ru'ayn had [917]
already been expressed.

We have now executed those responsible for this betrayal, as an
act of retaliation for ibn Ruhm, which does not entail
responsibility for a blood feud.

We have executed them in requital for Hassdn b. Ruhm, for
Hassan was the one murdered by th-e ones who stirred up
trouble.

We have executed them, so that none of them now remains,
and every eye feels refreshed at their fate.

The eyes of the lamenting women are weeping with grief for the
noble women, women of the two armies.

Gentle maidens at nightfall, who are dark eyed when the upper
parts of Sirius and Procyon rise.

Hence we are known by our fidelity when our lineage is traced
back, and we disassociate ourselves strongly from the one
who acts treacherously.

We surpass in eminence all other people, just as pure gold is
superior to silver.

We exercise royal power over all other peoples; we have the
connections of nobility and power, after the two Tubba's.

**We assumed royal power after Diwfid (David) for a lengthy
period, and we made the kings of East and West our
slaves. 474**

We wrote down in Zafar the ancient writings of glory, so that
the chiefs of the two towns (al-qaryatan, sc., Mecca and al-
Ta'if) 475 might read them.

We are the ones who pursue every burden of revenge when the
eloquent ones cry out, "Where, O where [is vengeance to be
taken]? /I

I shall quench my thirst of [the blood of I the treacherous ones,
for treachery has entailed perdition for them and for me
(i.e., through his brother's murder).

I obeyed them (i.e., in their evil counsels) and was not well
guided; they were seducers into evil ways, who have
destroyed my noble reputation and handsome qualities.

474. The king and prophet Ddwfid/David (whose reign over the Children of Israelis givenhy al-Tabarlinl, 554-72 above, trans. W. M. Brinner, Theffistoryof al-Tabarl. III. The Children of Israel, 135-511 is presumably adduced here to connect the Tubba's with early prophetic history. For David in Islamic lore, see E12, s.v. Ddwfid (R. Paret).

475. The royal city and capital of the Himyarites appears in South Arabian inscriptions as 4:fr, but was known as such to classical authors from the time of Pliny the Elder (his regia Sapphar) onward. Its ruinous site now lies to the south-west of Yarim in southern Yemen. It remained of some significance into early Islamic times, and al-Hamdard describes it both in his Iklil, 25-29, trans. Faris, 20-26, and in his Sifatiaziratal-'Arab, 365, as one of the great fortresses of Yemen. See Ydqlat, Buldim, IV, 60; Shahid, "Byzantium and South Arabia," 29, 43-47; EII, s.v. Zafar (J. Tkatsch). Mecca and al-Ta'if are usually taken as the referents of

"the two towns" in the Qur'dnic passage that this echoes, XLII, 30/3 1, speaking of a rajul min al-qaryatayn, . lazim, "a man of the two towns, a respected one," but the context is somewhat obscure and the identification by no means certain. See for this question of the "two towns," Buhl, *Das Leben Muhammads*, 114- 15.

He related: Not long afterward, 'Amr b. Tuban died. [This story appears in *al-Hishdm*, *Sirat al-nabi*!, ed. Wiistenfeld, 26-28 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 28-30, trans. 12-13. Cf. also idem, *Kitab al-didn*, 297-98.]

Hisharn b. Muhammad related: This 'Amr b. Tubba' was called Mawthabdn because he sprang upon (wathaba) his brother Hassan at the gap of Nu'm and killed him .477 [Other Arabic sources give an alternative etymology for the cognomen Mawthaban: that rulers were thus called in the language of Himyar because they "sat down" and did not engage in raiding and warfare. See *al-Hishdm*, *Kitab al-ti5n*, 298-99 (with a brief version of the preceding story), and *Nashwdn al-Hiniyar*, *Die auf Sidarabien beziighchen Angaben Nagwans*, I 13. The confusion stems from the fact that in South Arabian, the prime signification of wtb was, as in Hebrew, "to sit down," with mwbt(n) thus meaning "seat, shrine (;f a god," as opposed to Classical Arabic wath-ba "to rise, spring up," although another range of meanings for South Arabian wtb does exist, "to attack, assault," to which the cognomen given here by al-Tabar! of Mawthabin could be attached. See Beeston et al., *Sabaic Dictionary*, 16S-66; Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic, Sabaean Dialect*, 153-54. The confusion that could arise out of the two opposing senses of the root forms the basis of favorite anecdotes in the sources in which a man dies or is killed through misunderstanding the South Arabian sense of the word. See *al-Hamddrii*, *Ikliil*, 32, trans. Faris, 28; *Nashwan al-Himyar*, loc. cit.; Robin, in *L'Ara-bie antique de Karib'11 d Mahomet. Nouvelles -onnges sur Phistoire des Arabes grace aux inscriptions*, i o8.] He related: The "slope of Nu'm (furdad Nu'm) " was the desert tract of Tawq b. Mdlik; Nu'm 478 [According to the geographers, the furdat Nu'm lay in Jazirah, in the tract of land along the Euphrates, where, so Ydqfit says, Hassdn b. Tubba' had built a palace for this umm walad of his. See *al-Bakri*, *Mu'jam md istajam*, IV, 1211; Ydqfit, *Bulddn*, IV, 2 5 1] was the concubine of the Tubba' Hassan b. As'ad.

'Abd Kulal, Chief of Himyar, r.~460-467

After 'Amr b. Tubba', 'Abd Kulal b. Muthawwib succeeded to the royal power. This was because the sons of Hassan were only small, except for Tubba'b. Hassan, whom the jinn had rendered mentally unbalanced. Hence Ab-d Kulal b. Muthawwib assumed the royal power [temporarily], fearing lest someone outside the royal house of the kingdom might covet it. He was qualified to exercise this power through his mature years, his experience, and his excellent powers of governing. According to what has been mentioned, he was an adherent of the original form of Christianity (*'ala din al-Nasraniyyah al-ula*), but used to conceal this from his people. He had been converted to that faith by a man of Ghassdn who had come from Syria, but whom the Himyarites had then attacked and killed. [That is, by al-Nu'mdn I b. Imri' al-Qays II (r. ca. 400-18). See Rothstein, *Lahmidn*, 53, 68, 70.]

[As'ad II] Tubba' ~440-r.450-518

At that point, Tubba' b. Hassan recovered his sanity and was restored to health. He was highly knowledgeable about the stars, the most intelligent among those who had learned [the sciences] in his time, and the one with the most information and lore concerning both the past and what was to come after him in the future. Hence Tubba' b. Hassan b. Tubba' b. Malikay Karib b. Tubba' al-Aqran was raised to the kingship. Himyar and the Arabs stood in intense awe of him. He then sent his sister's son al-Harith b. 'Amr b. Huir al-Kindi at the head of a powerful army against the [882] lands of Ma'add [Ma'add is a general designation for the North Arab tribes in Islamic times, as is also that of his father'Adnan and his son Nizar. Ma'add was originally, in pre-Islamic times, a tribal group in central Arabia, presumably the Nizar of the Namarah inscription Of A.D. 328, and then in the early sixth century the Ma'add are mentioned in South Arabian inscriptions as the North Arab subjects of Kindah. See *Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel-Strenziok*, *Jamharat al-nasab*, I, Table I, II, 1-2, 379; EI2, s.v. Ma'add (W. M. Watt)] al-Hirah, and the districts adjacent to them both.

Al-Harith, General of [As'ad II] Tubba'

Al-Harith marched against al-Nu'man b. Imri'al-Qays b. al-Shaqi-qah and fought with him; al-Nu'man and a number of his family were killed, and his companions were routed. only al-Mundhir b. al-Nu'mdn al-Akbar, whose mother was Md' al-Sama', a woman of the Banu al-Namir managed to escape from al-Harith. In this way the royal power of the house of al-Nu'man passed away, and al-Harith b. 'Amr al-Kindi succeeded to their former power and possessions . [Al-Harith b. 'Amr al-Maqsur (*fl.* in the first thirty years or so of the sixth century) was a dominating personality on the political and military scene of Arabia and the adjacent fringes of the

Byzantine and Persian lands. The Lakhmids and the chiefs of Kindah had had connections, despite being rivals for the control of north-ern and eastern Arabia; already in the later fifth century al-Aswad b. al-Mundhir I had married a daughter, Umm al-Malik, of the Kindi'Amr b. Huir Akil al-Murar. The campaign against the Lakhmids mentioned here was preceded by an attack on the Byzantine frontiers in Syria led by two of al-Harith's sons, Hujr and Ma'di Karib, in ca. 500, forcing the Greeks to agree to a peace treaty in 502. According to the South Arabian tradition of Ibn al-Kalbi and the Bakri tribal one set forth in Abu Muhammad al-Qasim b. Muhammad al-Anbari's commentary on the *Mufad-daliyyat* poetical anthology, al-Harith and the Rabi'ah attacked al-Nu'man al-Akbar, al-Mundhir's father, and then al-Harith became head of the Arabs of Iraq. This accords *grosso modo* with the South Arabian tradition of Ibn al-Kalbi also given here by al-Tabari, that al-Nu'man was killed but his son al-Mundhir III b. al-Nu'man II b. Ma al-Sama' managed to escape. All other Arabic traditions are concerned only with al-Mundhir, variously described as the son of Imru'al-Qays, of al-Nu'mdn, and of Ma' al-Sama', and not with his father. Concerning the date of the event, the Ps.-Joshua the Stylite, Chronicle, trans. 45-46, states that the Arab (i.e., Kindi) invasion of the Lakhmid lands took place when al-Nu'man was away with the Persian army combatting the Greeks, which would place an attack by al-Harith on al-Hirah in 503. It is probable that the Kindi ruler was then able to control the greater part of the Lakhmid dominions from 503 till 506, the years when the Byzantine-Persian war was at its most intense, and Kawad was unable to afford the Lakhmids any assistance. According to the Bakri tradition again, al-Mundhir, bereft of Persian help, had to agree to marry al-Harith's daughter Hind, who, as a Christian, was subsequently held in great honor at al-Hirah and was the founder of a monastery in the region of al-Hirah, the Dayr Hind (al-Sughra); see al-Shabushti, *Kitab al-diyarat*, 244-46, and n. 914 below. See for these events, Rothstein, *Lahmidien*, 69-71, 87ff.; Olinde, *The Kings of Kinda*, 57-63; S. Smith, "Events in Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," 445-46; EI2, s.v. Kinda. (Irfan Shahid). For the general background of relations between Byzantium and Kindah, Shahid, "Byzantium and Kinda," 57-63.]

Hisham related: After al-Nu'man, his son al-Mundhir b. al-Nu'man succeeded to the royal power, al-Mundhir's mother being Hind bt. Zayd Mandt b. Zayd Allah b. 'Amr al-Ghassani, for forty-four years, of which eight years and nine months fell within the time of Bahram (V) Jur, son of Yazdajird (I), eighteen years fell within the time of Yazdajird (II), son of Bahram, and seventeen years within the time of Fayruz b. Yazdajird (II). After him there reigned his son al-Aswad b. al-Mundhir, whose mother was Hirr bt. al-Nu'man from the descendants of al-Hayjumanah bt. 'Amr b. Abu Rabl'ah b. Dhuhl b. Shaybdn .321 It was he whom the Persians imprisoned. [He reigned for] twenty years, of which ten years fell within the time of Fayruz, son of Yazdajird (II), four years in the time of Baldsh, son of Yazdajird (II), and six years in the time of Qubadh, son of Fayruz.

There was related to me a narrative going back to Hisham b. Muhammad, who said: Al-Harith b. 'Amr b. Hujr b. 'Ad! al-Kindi met al-Nu'man b. al-Mundb b. Imri' al-Qa y*s b. al-Shaqi-qah in battle and killed him, with al-Mundhir b. al-Nu'man al-Akbar escaping from al-Harith. Al-Harith b. 'Amr al-Kindi then assumed power over the lands al-Nu'mdn had ruled. At this point, Qubadh, son of Fayrfiz, the ruler of Persia, sent a message to al-Harith b. 'Amr, informing him that there had been formerly an agreement between him and his predecessor as king [among the Arabs] and that he would welcome a meeting with al-Hdrith .358 [This is a repetition *grosso modo* of the events treated by al-Tabari at 1, 881-82, Pp. 124-25 above, but bringing in Kawdd at the end causes chronological difficulties, since Kawiid only acceded to power in 488, and the events involving al-Nu'man I's death and the succession of his son al-Mundhir I are probably to be placed in the second decade of the century, hence some seventy years earlier; see nn. 315, 3 19 above.]

Qubadh was a Zindiqli who did only good deeds, who abhorred shedding blood and who, in his dislike for shedding blood, treated his enemies with leniency. In his time, heretical opinions (al-ahwa') became rife, and the people came to regard Qubadh as a weak ruler. Al-Harith b. 'Amr al-Kindi, however, set out with a numerous and well-equipped army, until the two forces met at the bridge of al-Fayyam. 360 [According to Ydqfit, Buldin, IV, 286, this was in central Iraq, near Hit on the Euphrates; cf. Musil, *The Middle Euphrates*, 350. As a bridge, it would be regarded as neutral ground, hence suitable for a meeting between the two opposing sides. Cf. N61deke, trans. 149 n. i.] Qubddh ordered a dish of dates and extracted their stones. Then he ordered another dish and placed in it dates in which the stones had been left. These two dishes were placed before them (sc., Qubadh and al-Harith). The dish of dates [889] with stones by al-Harith b. 'Amr, and the one with no date stones in it was placed by Qubddh. Al-Hdrith began to eat the dates and to spit out the stones. Qubadh set about eating [everything in] the dish in front of him, and said to al-Harith, "What's the matter with you? Why aren't you eating exactly what I'm eating?" Al-Harith replied, "Among us, only camels and sheep eat date stones," and he realized that Qubadh was deriding him. After this, the two of them made peace on the basis that al-Harith b. 'Amr and those he wished of his followers should bring their horses to drink from the Tigris up to their saddle girths but not pass any further beyond that point .361 [According to Noldeke, trans. 149 n. 3, citing the Talmud, this occurs as a formulaic legal expression.] But when al-Hdrith saw Qubddh's weakness, he began to covet the Sawad, and ordered the men in his garrison posts (masdlihihi) to cross the Euphrates and carry out raids into the Sawad.

The cries for help [of the local people] reached Qubadh when he was at al-Madd'in, and he exclaimed: "This has occurred under the protection of their king," and he then sent a message to al-Harith b. 'Amr that some robbers of the Arabs had mounted raids and that he wanted a meeting with him. When al-Harith came, Qubadh said to him, "You have done something which no one before you has ever done," but al-Harith

replied, "I haven't done anything, and don't know anything about it; it was some Arab robbers, and I myself cannot keep a firm hand over the Arabs except by financial subsidies and regular troops." Qubadh said to him, "What do you want, then?" and he replied, "I want you to make over to me a grant of part of the Sawdd so that I can get weapons ready by means of it." So Qubadh made over to him the side of the lower Euphrates bordering on the Arabs, comprising six tassfiis. Al-Harith b. 'Amr al-Kindi at that point sent a messenger to Tubba' in Yemen, saying, "I covet strongly the kingdom of the Persians, and have already acquired six tassugs of it. So gather your troops together and advance, for there is nothing between you and their kingdom, since the king does not eat meat and does not consider the shedding of blood lawful, for he is a Zindiq."

[362 These garrison posts must in reality have been part of the Sasanid defenses along the desert fringes against Arabs from the interior of the peninsula like those of Kindah. From this point onward, al-Tabari's account slides into legend, as recognized by Noldeke, trans. i5o nn. 1-2, and Rothstein, Lahmiden, 88-89. What is, nevertheless, firmly historical is that between approximately 525 and 528 al-Harith was indeed able to expel the Lakhmids from al-Hirah, having taken over parts of the Iraqi borderlands some twentyyears before (see al-Tabari, 1, 881-82, pp. 124-25 and n. 3 ig above). From 528 till his death in 531, Kawad was preoccupied with warfare with the Byzantines, with the emperor Justin I at the outset and then with the great Justinian I, this warfare being centered on Georgia and Transcaucasia on one front and on the Upper Mesopotamian frontier on another one (see Bury, A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene, I, 372-80; idem, History of the Later Roman Empire from the Death of Theodosius I to the Death of Justinian, 1, 79-89; Stein, Histoire du Bas-Empire, 11, 267-71, 283-84, 297-94; Greatrex, Rome and Persia at War, 502-532, 139-2121. It seems, however, to have been a withdrawal of support from al-Mundhir III by Kawdd that allowed al-Harith to take over al-Hirah. Al-Mundhir had apparently been negotiating with the Persians' enemy, Byzantium. Hence credence should not be placed in the information retailed in some Arabic sources (e.g., Abd al-Faraj al-Isfiahani, Aghdnfl, VIII, 63 = Aghani3, 78-79; Ibn al-Athir, Kamil, 1, 434) that Kawad tried first to impose Mazdakism on al-Mundhir but failed, whereupon al-Harith b. 'Amr agreed to accept Mazdakism, and was rewarded by a grant of the former Lakhmid lands. See Christensen, Le r-gne du roi Kawddh I et le communisme mazdakite, and (regarding the tale with skepticism), Olinder, The Kings of Kinda, 63-64. In any case, Kawdd had broken decisively with the Mazdakites on his restoration in 498 or 499, and it seems highly unlikely that he would make adherence to the heresy an instrument of diplomacy nearly thirty years later. Abu al-Baqd', al-Mandqib al-mazydiyyah, 12 1, simply states that Kawad was unable to answer al-Mundhir's appeal for help because his kingdom was disturbed by the Mazdakites. Al-Mundhir regained control of al-Hirah in 528. The sources all state that it was Khusraw A-misharw5n who restored liint, but Khusraw did not come to the throne until 531; it thus seems that al-Mundhir had somehow regained possession of his capital and that Khusraw merely confirmed this. At all events, Lakhmid power was now firmly reestablished on the Iraq fringes, backed by the might of their traditional patrons and supporters, the Sasanids. At some unspecified point, al-Mundhir managed to get hold of al-Hdrith b. 'Amr, who had had to retreat into the interior of northern Arabia after clas-ing with the Byzantines and Ghassnids on the Syrian frontiers. Al-Mundhir seized the Kind! leader's camels, killed al-HArith himself, and massacred forty-eight members of the ruling house of Kindah, an event alluded to in the Di'wdn of al-Harith's grandson Imru'al-Qays (DiwCm, ed. Muhammad Abfi al-Fadl Ibrdhim, 200, no. 37 w. 1-2). other traditions make al-Harith's death at the hands of the Kalb. See Rothstein, Lahmiden, 89-90; Olinder, The Kings of Kinda, 63-68.]

The Royal House: Hassan [III], Shamir al-Janah, and Ya'fur

So Tubba' assembled his troops and advanced until he encamped at al-Hirah. He drew near [890] to the Euphrates, where the midges plagued him. Al-Harith b. 'Amr ordered a canal to be dug for him as far as al-Najaf, and this was done: this is the Canal of al-Hirah. He encamped against there and sent his nephew Shamir Dhu al-Janah ("Shamir of the Wing") against Qubadh .363 [See on Shamir Yur'ish or Yuhar'ish, n. 314 above and n. 364 below, and al-Tabari, I, 910, pp. 176-77 and n. 451 below. For the king's name, Sh.m.r, the vocalization is of course speculative, there being no indication of vowels in the South Arabian script with the probable exception of w and y used both consonantly and vocally (see Beeston, Sabaic Grammar, 6-7). But Shamir or Shimr seem to have better claims that Shammar for the vocalization of the first component of the king's full name, despite the fact that the rather late author Nashwim b. Sa'ld al-Himyari (d. 573/1178) expressly gives Shammar in his Shams al-'ulum (see 'Azimuddin Ahmad, Die auf SOdarabien bez0glichen Angaben Nagwdns im gams al-'ulflm, 56-57). The choice of this latter form by such later writers as Nashwin was probably influenced by the rise of the North Arabian tribe of Shammar and their home, the Jabal Shammar, since there is no orthographic sign in the South Arabian script to indicate gemination (Beeston, ibid., 7-8). G. Ryckmans, Les noms propres sud-s6mitiques, 1, 2io, has ~imr, comparing this with Classical Arabic shimr, "energetic, capable"; G. Lankester Harding, An Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Names and Inscriptions, 357, has gamir; and Robin, Suppl6ment ek la dictionnaire du Bible, s.v. Sheba. 2., writes Shammir. In the line of verse (apocryphal, naturally) placed in Shamir's mouth in al-Tabari, I, n. gio, p. 177 below, the wd'ir metre does require ShVmVr- or Sh-mr-] He fought with Qubadh and routed him, compelling him to flee as far as al-Rayy. He then caught up with Qubadh there and killed him. 364 [364. All this is pure fantasy. As implied by al-Tabari in 1, 888, pp. 138-39 above, Kawid died a natural death, doubtless at an advanced age after such a long reign. Ibn al-Athir, Kdmil, 1, 411, criticizes al-Tabafi for his confusion here and lack of critical acumen, such defects of an absense of discrimination and discernment being common, he says, to all writers dealing with the ancient Arabs; Noldeke in his translation omitted this passage on the legendary exploits of the Tubba' kings, that from I, 890 1. 4 to 892 1. 14. The only genuine feature in at-Tabari's account is that the Tubba'prince Shamir Yur'ish mentioned in al-Tabari, 1, n. gio, pp. 176-77 below, the first recorded Tubba' king (on this dynasty, see n. 3 14 above), really did exist.]

Tubba' now sent Shamir Dhu al-Janah to Khurasan and his son Hassan to Sogdia (al-Sughd), telling him, "Whichever of you reaches China first shall become ruler over it." Each one headed a mighty army, said to be of 640,000 men.

Ya'fur

He further sent his nephew Ya'fur against the Romans; it was he who recited:

O my companion, you may well be full of wonder at Himyar,
when they encamped at al-Jabiyah!³⁶⁵
Eighty thousand is the number of their chiefs, 366 and for each
group of eight men there is a chief!

365. This settlement in the jawlan or Golan region south of Damascus was a main residence of the Byzantines' allies, the chiefs of the jafnid family of Ghassin, probably their summer encampment, and it was further important in the periods of the Arab conquest of Syria and of the early Umayyads as a military encampment and concentration point for troops. See Yiqfit, *Buldin*, 11, 91-92; Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems*, 460-61; Noldeke, *Die Ghassilnischen Fiksten*, 47-49; H. Lammens, 'VeOnement des Marwanides et le califat de Marwan Jer "' 77-79; Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests*, 44.; E12, s.v. Pjdbiya (H. Lammens-j. Sourdell-Thomine).

366. Thus interpreting rawayahum, pl. of rjwiyah, "a camel used for drawing water," such a camel being likened to the chief who bears the burden of blood money, to be paid in camels by his tribe. See Lane, *Lexicon*, 1196c; *Glossarium*, p. CCLXXIII: rawiyah = dux.

Ya'fur proceeded until he reached Constantinople (al-Qustantiniyyah), whose people then gave him their obedience and promised to pay tribute, and then went on to Rome (Rfimiyyah), a journey of four months, and besieged it. The troops accompanying him suffered great hunger, were afflicted by plague, and became weakened. The Romans perceived what had hit them, so fell upon them and killed them, with not a single man escaping.

Mazdakite pesecution

When Kisro had gained firm control of power, he took measures to extirpate the religious beliefs of a hypocritical person from the people of Fasa, called Zaradhusht, son of Khurrahkn [Fasa was an important town and district of southeastern Fars. See Yiqfit, *Buld5n*, IV, 260-61; Le Strange, *Lands*, 290; Schwarz, 97-100; Barthold, *Historical Geography*, 152-53; E12, s.v. Fasd (L. Lockhart). ThatZarddhusht came from. Fasd is stated in the Di~nkard. See Nbldeke, trans. 456; Crowe, "Kavad's Heresy and Mazdak's Revolt," 24.] a new faith which he had brought into existence within the Mazdaean religion. A considerable number of people followed him in that heretical innovation, and his movement became prominent on account of this. Among those who carried out missionary work for him among the masses was a certain man from M.dh.riyyah (?) called Mazdaq, son of Bamdadh .381 [The sources variously attribute Mazdak to this mysterious M.dh.riyya (which N61deke, trans. 154 n. 3, compared with Manddhir in Susiana and which Christensen, *Le ri-gne du roi Kawddh ler, ioo*, sought to interpret as Midbarayyd in Lower Iraq), to Istakhr in Fdrs (al-Dinawan, al-Akhbdr a]-tiwil, 65), and to Nasd in Khurdsiin (al-Blifini, al-Athdr al-bLiqiyah, 20g). See N61deke, trans. 457 and n. 3; Crone, "Kawad's Heresy and Mazdak's Revolt," 24.] 'Among the things he ordained for people, made attractive to them, and urged them to adopt, was holding their possessions and their families in common. He proclaimed that all this was part of the piety that is pleasing to God, and that He will reward with the most handsome of recompenses, and that, if that religious faith he commanded them to observe and urged them to adopt were not to exist, the truly good way of behavior, the one which is pleasing to God, would lie in the common sharing or property. With those doctrines, he incited the lower classes against the upper classes. Through him, all sorts of vile persons became mixed up with the best elements of society, criminals seeking to despoil them of their possessions found easy ways to do this, tyrannical persons had their paths to tyranny facilitated, and fornicators were able to indulge their lusts and get their hands on high-born women to whom they would never have [894] been able to aspire. Universal calamity overwhelmed the people to an extent they had never before experienced .382 [The question of whether there were two Mazdakite revolts, one toward the end of Kawdd's reign and another one at Khusraw's accession or shortly after it, and the exact timing of the revolt(s) anyway, has been much discussed. Most recently, Crone has suggested that it is simplest to assume that a single revolt broke out on Khusraw's accession in 531, at a time when he was combating the rival succession claims of his elder brother Kdwds and military control over the realm was obviously relaxed. Khusraw may have bought time by offering the Maites some degree of toleration, and he certainly brought the protracted, but by now rather desultory war with

Justinian to an end. Once firmly in command of affairs, I amma 1 . stahkama lahu al-mulk, as al-Tabari, 1, 893, puts it, he turned on the Mazdakites, massacred them and gradually restored order in the land. A terminus ad quem for this would be 540, when Khusraw resumed the war with Byzantium. See Crone, 30-33.]

Hence Kisra forbade the people 383 to act in accordance with any of the heretical innovations of Zariidusht, son of Kharrakdn, and Mazdaq, son of Bamdadh. He extirpated all their heresy, and he killed a great number of their fervid adherents and did not allow himself to be deflected from any of what he had forbidden the people. [He further killed] a group of the Manichaeans, and made firm for the Magians the religion they had always held.

Shamir Dhu al-Janah, ~495-517

After Tubba' there came Zayd b.'Amr and 450 [Supplying the "and" from the Cairo text] Shamir Yur'ish b. Yasir Yun'irn b. 'Amr Dhi al-AdMir his paternal cousin .451 [More correctly, Sh.m.r Yuhar'ish (on the form of the first element in the name, see n. 364 above), as the name appears in South Arabian inscriptions. He and his father YAsir--Yuhan'irn were ruling jointly in 385 Ijimyrite era/A.D. 285 -86 as founders of the Himyarite line, since a decade or so before this Sh.m.r Yuhar'ish had taken over Yemen from the kings of Saba'and Hadramawt in order to consolidate the new united kingdom in South Arabia (see n. 314 above). See G. Ryckmans, L'institution monarchique en Arabie m6ridionale avant l'islam. Ma'fn et Saba, 2io-i2; Robin, in Suppl6ment au dictionnaire de la Bible, s.v. Sheba. II, cols. i io2, 1139-40.] It was Shamir Yur'ish who raided China, built Samarqand and laid out as an encampment (bayyara) al-Hirah, 453 [Virtually nothing is known of the history of al-Hirah before the Lakhmids built it up into their capital (see nn. 76-79 above), but this story of its foundation by the Tubba's is pure invention, conceivably influenced, however, by the fact that Lakhm were considered genealogically to be a South Arab tribe (see al-Tabari, I, 834, P. 44 and n. 132 above).] and it was he who recited the verses,

I am Shamir Abfi Karib al-Yamdni; I urged on the horses from
Yemen and Syria,
In order that I might attack the slaves who had rebelled against
us, [when we were] in the lands beyond China, in 'Athm
and Yam,454
And then we shall inflict judgment in their lands with a just
decision, which not a single youth shall survive.

...and so on to the end of the ode.

454. The Yam b. Asba were a component tribe of the South Arabian Hamdan living in the Najrdn area and several times mentioned by al-Hamddni in his geographical work. The Banfi Ydm gave their name to one of the districts (mikhliif, pl. makhalf, see n. 462 below) of Yemen, that around their home. See IIm al-Kalbi Caskel-Strenziok, farnharat al-nasab, I, Table 229,11, 47, 59o; EJ2, s.v. Ydm (G. R. Smith). The reading 'Athm is uncertain, but al-Maqdisi, Ahsan al-taqsim, 88, registers a place 'Asham in the mikhldf of the Tihdmah; al-fiamddni, \$ifat jazirat al-'Arab, 259, mentions this also as a mine (ma'din) in the TihAmah of Yemen, while Ydqfit, Bulddn, IV, 126, has an 'Ashm in the northern Tihdmah.

Shamir Dhu al-Janah traveled on until he reached Samarqand .367 [Presumably to Transoxania via Khurasan, Hassan having, as it later appears, preceded him to Sogdia and then China.] He besieged it but was unable to capture any part of it. When he realized that, he went round to the city guard, captured one man of it, and interrogated him about the city and its ruler. The man told him that, regarding its ruler, he was the most stupid of mankind, with no interest except in drinking and eating, but that he had a daughter and it was she who decided the affairs of the populace.

As for Ibn Ishaq's account, he has mentioned that the member of the Tubba' dynasty who went to the Orient was Tubba' the Second (al-iikhar); namely, Tubba' Tuban As'ad Abu Karib b. Malki Karib b. Zayd b. 'Amr Dhi al-Adh'dr, who was the father of Hassan.372 [This genealogy in Ibn Hisham, Sirat al-nabi, ed. Wiistenfeld, 12 = ed. al-Saqqd et alii, 1, 20, tr. A. Guillaume, 6. As'ad Abfi Karib is attested in the inscriptions as reigning ca. A.D. 425.] Ibn Humayd transmitted that information to us, say ing that he had it from Salamah. 373 [Abfi'Abdaldh Muhammad b. Humayd al-Rdzi (d. 248/862) was one of al-Taban's most important transmitters, in both his History and his TafsYr, especially as a second-generation rjwf for Ibn Ishaq, and it is very often Abfi Abdaldh Salamah b. al-Fadl al-Ans5xi (d. igi/8o6) who provides the link between the two scholars. See Sezgin, GAS, 1, 242; Rosenthal, The History of al-Tabari, an Annotated Translation, 1, General Introduction and From the Creation to the Flood, 17-19, 172 n. 26, 174 n. 49.]

Shamir's marriage to the daughter of Huna V, 27th Exilarch

Hence Shamir sent the man back to her with a present, telling him, "Inform her that I have only come from the land of the Arabs because of what I have heard about her intelligence, and in order [891] that she might marry me and I might acquire through her a boy who will rule over both the Persians and the Arabs. [Tell her also] that I have not come seeking wealth but that I have here with me four thousand chests of gold and silver and that I will hand it over to her and proceed onward to China. If I succeed in gaining the land, she will become my wife; but if I perish, all that wealth will be hers."

When his message was brought to her, she said, "I have fallen in with his wishes, so let him send what he has mentioned." Hence he sent to her four thousand chests, with two men inside each chest. Now Samarqand had four gates, with four thousand men by each gate. He fixed as a sign of recognition between himself and them the striking of camel bells, and gave orders regarding that to the envoys he sent with them. When they got inside the city, he had the camel bells struck; they sprang out [from the chests] and seized control of the gates. Shamir led a frontal attack with his troops and entered the city, killing its populace and seizing as plunder everything within it. 368 [A Persian popular etymology derived the city's name ~presumably after its supposed rebuilding~ from this legendary episode, Shamir kand "Shamir destroyed, uprooted (it)," according to Hamzah al-Isfaham, 108]. He then marched onward to China. He encountered the hosts of the Turks, put them to flight, and went on to China, but found that Hassan b. Tubba' had preceeded him by three years. According to what certain people have mentioned, the two of them remained in China until they died, their stay there extending to twenty-one years.

He related: Those who have asserted that they both remained in China until they died have said that Tubba' built [a chain of lighthouses (*al-manar*) spanning the expanse between him and them, and when any affair of moment occurred, they lit fire beacons at night, and the news was thereby conveyed in a single night. He laid down as a sign between him and them that, "If I light two fires at my end, this signifies the death of Ya'fur, and if I light three fires, that means the death of Tubba'; whereas, if a single fire is kindled at their end, it means the death of Hassan, and if two fires, the death of both of them." They kept to this arrangement, until he lit two fires, and that signified the death of Ya'fur, and then he lit three fires, and that signified the death of Tubba'.

He related: According to the story generally agreed upon, [892] Shamir and Hassdn returned via the road they had previously taken when they had originally started out, until they came into Tubba's presence with the wealth they had obtained in China plus various kinds of jewels, perfumes, and slave captives. Then they all went back together to their own land, Tubba' traveled onward till he reached Mecca, where he lodged in the ravine of the cook shops (*al-matabikh*).³⁶⁹ [369. Tubbas coming to Mecca and his designs against the Ka'bah are treated in more detail by al-Tabari at I, 901ff., pp. 164ff. below. In giving this story, also from Ibn Ishaq, the historian of Mecca al-Azraqi specifies that al-shi'b min al-matabikh got its name because Tubba' set up his own kitchens in the ravine of Mecca later called that of the early Umayyad governor of the city, 'Abdallah b. Amir b. Kurayz (Kitab akhbar Makkah, 1, 85)] Tubba' died in Yemen. None of the kings of Yemen after him ever sallied forth from Yemen on raids to any other land. His reign lasted for one hundred and twenty-one years.

Qu'ran: Has the story of Moses come to thee? When he saw the fire and said to his family, 'Tarry ye; verily, I perceive a fire! [10] Haply I may bring you therefrom a brand, or may find guidance by the fire 1.' And when he came to it he was called to, 'O Moses! verily, I am thy Lord, so take off thy sandals; verily, thou art in the holy valley Tuvâ, and I have chosen thee. So listen to what is inspired thee; verily, I am God, there is no god but Me! then serve Me, and be steadfast in prayer to remember Me.

Signal Fires: 35:1The Arabs used to light fires to guide travelers to shelter and entertainment. These fires, 'the fire of hospitality,' 'the fire of war,' &c. are constantly referred to in the ancient Arabic poetry. No less than thirteen fires are enumerated by them.

When Rosh Chodesh was declared, the Sanhedrin would light fires on mountaintops to let everyone know that it was the new month. As each town saw a fire lit, they would light a fire on its mountaintop so that the news of the new month would spread. Toward the end of the Second Temple period, this system was changed because the Samaritans were deliberately lighting fires on the wrong day in order to confuse the Jewish community. In the new system of notification, the Sanhedrin sent messengers who would run from Jerusalem to the outlying towns and villages informing everyone that Rosh Chodesh had been declared.

This new system lasted until the end of the Sanhedrin in the 4th century CE. The last head of the Sanhedrin, Hillel II, instituted a fixed calendar based on astronomical calculations of the molad. This fixed calendar also provides the additional leap months that are necessary to ensure the holidays fall out in their proper time. Hillel II's calendar allowed Jewish life to continue despite the disbanding of the Sanhedrin.

Marthid-ilan Yanuf Aslam, d.~516

Ma'di Karib, probably the last of the Tubba's (al-Tabarī's "the royal house of Ijīmyar") is attested in inscriptions as ruling in 63 1 Himyarite era/A.D. 521-2.2. We have therefore only a year or so for Lakh'athah's inscription and the accession of Dhīd Nuwas. One suggestion for resolving this tight chronology was put forward by Altheim and Stiehl, *Die Araber in der Alten Welt*, V/ 1, 3 77-7 8: that the title Ma'di Karib Ya'fur was the throne-name assumed by the usurping Lakh'athah, just as his successor Dhu Nuwas was to assume the throne-name of Ydsuf As'ar Yath'ar (see n. 488 below). But this suggestion does not seem to have found much favor. At all events, one can only treat the tale of Lakh'athah's sodomitical proclivities as a pretext for his murder with caution.

Lakhi'athah Yanuf Dhu Shandtir, d.518

The narrative returns to that of Ibn Ishaq. 479 [Noldeke's translation resumes here. He regarded the following material as still essentially legendary and fabulous, but considered that it was connected with such historical events as the persecution of the Christians of Yemen, the resultant Abyssinian occupation, and the eventual Persian conquest, hence as such worthy of translation; see his trans. 172 n. 4.] He related: The affairs of Himyar fell into disorder at this point, and the people became split up. A man of Himyar who did not stem from the royal house of Himyar, called Lakh'athah (?) Yanuf Dhī Shandtir, rose up against them, seized power over them, [918] killed the choicest men of Himyar, and treated with scorn the ruling families of the kingdom. 480 [The episode of Lakh'athah or Lakhn-l'athah is somewhat mysterious. The name is variously written in the Arabic sources, e.g., Lakhni'ah in Ibn Hisham, *Sirat al-nabī*, ed. Wasterifeld, ig = ed. al-Saqd et al., I, 30), but N61deke, trans. 173 n. i, suggested the form Lakh'athah on the basis of its form in the South Arabian inscriptions known at that time, in which Ynf is likewise attested. Professor Christian Robin has suggested (personal communication) that it is a corruption of a very common personal name Lhy'tt, often shortened to Lhy't, which would mean "Atht[ar] illuminates" (after Ge'ez lahaya "to be shining, to gleam"); it would seem that h was only feebly aspirated in Himyaritic speech, since the name passed into Classical Arabic as Lahi'ah. Concerning Lakh-l'athah's nickname or cognomen, Nashwdn al-Himyari, *Die auf Stidarabien bezüglichen Angaben Nagwīns*, 5 8, says that shuntur means "finger" in the Himyarī language. But when linked with dhu, one would more naturally expect a place-name; none like Shanatir is, however, so far attested.] Hence a certain man of Himyar mentioned what was destroying the fabric of Himyar, rending apart its unity and getting rid of its choicest men:

Himyar is massacring its own sons and expelling its own
princes, and creating humiliation for itself with its own
hands.

Destroying its own worldly prosperity with light-headed
fantasies of its own, but what it destroyed of its religion
was even greater.

In the same way, earlier generations brought down evil on
themselves, through their oppression and profligacy, and 481
then perished.

481. As noted by N61deke, trans. 174 n. i, the wording of the poem, with such words in it as *dayya'at*, *4:ulm*, *israf*, *takhsaru*, etc., is very reminiscent of Qur'dnic phraseology and concepts.

Lakh'athah Yanuf Dh-u Shanatir brought about all that for them. He was an evildoer, being allegedly a practitioner of sodomy. In addition to the killing and oppression he inflicted upon them, when he heard that a youth from the royal family had reached the age of puberty, he sent for him and ravished him in an upper chamber he had had constructed for this purpose, so that the youth could never rule after him (i.e., because of the dishonor). He would then go out from that upper chamber to his guards and those of his army who were present-these people being at a lower level-with a toothpick (*siwdk*) he had placed in his mouth, 482 [That is, a piece of wood with the end incised for use as a toothbrush. It has been suggested that the use by the Arabs of such a primitive toothbrush or tooth pick was influenced by the similar Persian religious custom,

and that the Arabic term may stem from MP *sawdk, "scraper," from the verb siMan, "to scrape, rub." See Shaked, "Some Iranian Themes in Islamic Literature," 149 and n. 35, citing Goldziher; E12, s.v. Miswdk (A. J. Wensinck).] that is, in order to let them know that he had accomplished his purpose with the youth. Then he would release the youth and go forth and appear before the guards and the people, having completely disgraced the youth.

Yosef Asher Dhu Nuwas (King with beautiful Sidelocks) r. 518-525 CE

Abdul Muttalib Ibn Hashim, the grandfather of the Prophet (blessings and peace be upon him) was the first to beautify the Holy Ka'bah. He put in it two golden gazelles, which he had found in the well of Zamzam. He also decorated the door of the Holy Ka'bah with the weapons he had found with the two gazelles. (12, 14)

The mists of legend and folklore veil the time when Jews first set foot on the Arabian Peninsula. According to rabbinic sources, the first links to Arabia go back to the time of Joshua, when a contingent of Israelites were sent to battle the treacherous Amalekites and ended up settling in Yathrib (Medina). Subsequently, a group of King Saul's warriors, repudiated for their disobedience in sparing the young son of the Amalekite king, settled in northern Arabia in the vicinity of Yathrib. A more formal Israelite colony is said to have settled in the same region during the reign of King David. Similarly, the legendary encounter between the Queen of Sheba and King Solomon attests to the antiquity of the stories relating to Israelite-Arabian contacts. Indeed, the queen's visit to Jerusalem is supposed to have culminated in the conversion to Judaism of many of her Sabean subjects. In addition, it is believed that under King Solomon, seafaring Israelites who navigated the Red Sea on their way to the "land of gold" (Ophir) established trading stations along the coast, and in the more important towns of southern Arabia. In time, these trading stations became colonies.¹⁵¹



During the prophet Jeremiah's time (6th century BCE), a large migration of Jews is said to have gone to southern Arabia, and tradition has it that when, years later, the Hebrew priest and scribe Ezra (5th century BCE) commanded the descendants to return to Jerusalem, they refused; whereupon, Ezra pronounced an everlasting ban upon them. As a result of this legend, which is devoid of historicity, no Jew of Yemen gives the name of Ezra to a child.

The destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (586 BCE) led many Judeans, it is believed, to seek safety in the Arabian Peninsula. The Jews of San'a in Yemen have a legend that their forefathers settled there 42 years before the destruction of the First Temple. A far more extensive migration of Jews to Arabia, and one that takes us out of the realm of legend and into history, followed the destruction of the Second Temple (70 CE) by the Roman legions of Titus.

After the Romans had laid waste to Jerusalem, a number of Jews managed to escape the city and fled in part to Egypt and northern Arabia. That Jews were present during this period in northern Arabia is proved by the existence of tombstones on ancient sites halfway between Medina and Eretz Israel. These grave markers date to years before and after the destruction of the Second Temple. From these fugitives from Roman persecution sprang three important tribes: the Banu Karnuka; the Banu Nadir; and the Banu Kuraisa. These tribes had their center in Yathrib. To the north of Yathrib was situated the oasis and district of Khaibar, which was inhabited by a large Jewish colony.

Legend has it that the Jews of Khaibar were descendants of the Biblical Rechabites, who, according to the command of their progenitor, the redoubtable Jonadab, abstained from drinking wine and, opposed to the materialism of city life, dwelt only in tents. Their asceticism was supposedly commended by the prophet Jeremiah. Barely a day's journey from Khaibar, many smaller Jewish communities stretched in a long line by the side of a fruitful wadi—the so-called Valley of Villages. To protect themselves against marauding Bedouins, the Jews built a line of fortresses (castles) on sites overlooking their communities. Although the region they inhabited was not so culturally felicitous as the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula, the Jews

¹⁵¹ JOSEPH ADLER, an historian, is a longtime contributor to Midstream. His latest book is *Restoring the Jews to Their Homeland: Nineteen Centuries in the Quest for Zion* (Jason Aronson, 1997)

nevertheless flourished. Quite a few led a nomadic life; others occupied themselves with agriculture (date-growing), cattle breeding, caravan commerce, arms traffic, and the crafts.

The Jews became especially numerous and powerful in the southern part of Arabia (notably in Yemen), a rich and fertile land of incense and spices and a way station on the routes to Africa, India, and the Orient. This was the Arabia Felix ("happy land") of the classical geographers, a region, its inhabitants boasted, "the very dust of which was gold, and whose men were the healthiest, and whose women gave birth without pain." Unlike their brethren in the Hejaz, the Jews of Arabia Felix lived without racial or political cohesion, scattered among the Arabs. Many families wandered about as nomads or were engaged in growing spices. Others had settled as merchants in the ports of the area, at the time centers of world trade, from which goods from India and Persia were Trans-shipped to Egypt and Byzantium.

The Jews of southern Arabia differed from the native tribes in one respect only - their religion. They clung unswervingly to it, observing the dietary laws, honoring the Sabbath, and celebrating the holidays of their people. They communicated with the Jews of Palestine and, even after the end of the Patriarchate in 429 CE, willingly subordinated themselves to the sages in Tiberias, whence they received, as well as from the Babylonian academies, religious instruction in interpretations of the Bible.

Although living among a pagan population, the Jews of Yemen enjoyed great prestige among their Arab neighbors. A somewhat similar situation existed in the Hejaz where Arab tales have preserved the memory of many Jewish heroes and poets. The common Arab phrase, "Faithful as Samuel," for example, is a reference to a Jew, Samuel ibn Adiya, who won proverbial renown for his honesty, high principles, and courage. Some of the principal tribes of the Arabian Peninsula proudly traced to statements in the Bible their origins and kinship to the Jews. The northern tribes of the Hejaz regarded Ishmael, son of Abraham and half-brother to Isaac, as their ancestor; the southern tribes of the peninsula considered themselves the descendants of Joktan, younger son of Eber, and a great grandson of Shem. (Gen. 10:26-29, and Chron. 1:19,20) Living in such congenial surroundings, the Jews enjoyed complete freedom and, being subjected to no restraints, were thus able to defend their religious opinions without fear and to communicate them with impunity to their pagan neighbors. Under these circumstances, it was scarcely surprising that many sheikhs developed an interest in Judaism and became converts. When a sheikh became a Jew, his whole clan usually followed him.

Especially remarkable in the history of Arab-Jewish relations is the story of the conversion to Judaism of several kings of Himyar. The Himyarites, a powerful tribe, gradually expanded their territory by defeating the inhabitants of neighboring entities (Sabea, Raidan, Hadramut, and Yamnat) to form a viable independent kingdom approximating in its boundaries to present-day Yemen. At the height of its power, the Himyarite kingdom dominated the entire Arabian Peninsula.

About the year 500 CE, the King of Himyar, Abu-Kariba Assad, undertook a military expedition into northern Arabia in an effort to eliminate Byzantine influence. The Byzantine emperors had long eyed the Arabian Peninsula as a region in which to extend their influence, thereby to control the lucrative spice trade and the route to India. Without actually staging a conquest of the region, the Byzantines hoped to establish a protectorate over the pagan Arabs by converting them to Christianity. The cross would then bear commercial advantages as it did in Ethiopia. The Byzantines had made some progress in northern Arabia but had met with little success in Himyar.

Abu-Kariba's forces reached Yathrib and, meeting no resistance and not expecting any treachery from the inhabitants, they passed through the city, leaving a son of the king behind as governor. Scarcely had Abu-Kariba proceeded farther, when he received news that the people of Yathrib had killed his son. Smitten with grief, he turned back in order to wreak bloody vengeance on the perfidious city. After cutting down the palm trees from which the inhabitants derived their main income, Abu-Kariba laid siege to the city. The Jews of Yathrib fought side by side with Arab friends and fellow inhabitants to defend their town and harried the besiegers with sudden sallies. The siege was about to drag on when Abu-Kariba suddenly fell severely ill. Two Jewish scholars in Yathrib, Kaab and Assad by name, hearing of their enemy's misfortune, called on the king in his camp, and used their knowledge of medicine to restore him to health. While attending the king, they pleaded with him to lift the siege and make peace. The sages' appeal persuaded Abu-Kariba; he called off his attack and also embraced Judaism along with his entire army. At his insistence, the Two Jewish savants accompanied the Himyarite king back to his capital and there converted many of his subjects. The conversions, however, were not total, and there remained as many pagans as Jews in the land.

Abu-Kariba's reign did not last long after his conversion to Judaism. His warlike nature prevented him from maintaining peace and prompted him to engage in bold enterprises. It is uncertain how Abu-Kariba met his

death, although some scholars believe that his own soldiers, worn out by constant campaigning, killed him. He left three sons, Hasan, Amru, and Zorah, all of whom were minors at the time.

After Abu-Kariba's demise, a pagan usurper named Dhu-Shenstir seized the throne. He was a depraved creature who lured young men into his palace, abused them, and, according to Sir Richard Burton's *The Book of One Thousand and One Nights*, had them thrown out of a high tower window. Dhu-Shenstir's successor, (and according to some versions) the slayer of the tyrant, was Yussuf 'As Ar Yath'ar Dhu-Nuwas (517?-525 CE).

There is considerable disagreement among scholars as to Dhu-Nuwas's relationship to Abu-Kariba. The eminent 19th-century historian, Heinrich Graetz, believed that he was Zorah, the youngest son of Abu-Kariba. However, the majority of scholars today are convinced that Dhu-Nuwas was either the grandson, or a close relative of Abu-Kariba. It is also believed that he was formally converted to Judaism by rabbinical emissaries from Tiberias before he acceded to the throne. He is known in Arabic literature by the descriptive nickname Dhu-Nuwas (Lord Sidelocks) because of the long curly locks he wore in accordance with Biblical law, which forbids removal of hair from the corners of the head. The Yemenites who arrived in the modern state of Israel were still wearing their hair ("peot," or "sideburns") in this style. Following his conversion to Judaism, Dhu-Nuwas assumed an additional Hebrew name - Yussuf (Joseph), but Christian sources, notably the Syrian Book of the Himyarites and *The History of the Nestorians*, give his name as Masrug.

It seems the conversion of Dhu-Nuwas did not go uncontested. Hints of this resistance can be found in a fantastic story related by the ninth-century Muslim historian al-Tabari. He writes that when the Himyarite king returned to his capital after becoming a Jew, some of the townspeople shut the gates, would not let him in, and prepared to rebel against him for having abandoned the faith of his ancestors. However, Dhu-Nuwas was able to prove to them that the religion of the Jews was the true faith.

It appears that in the capital, there was a cave in which a person who did not speak the truth would die immediately upon entering. His body would burst into flames and be totally consumed. According to al-Tabari, idols and their priests, as well as Jewish sages with scrolls of the Torah were then brought into the cave; the fire destroyed the idols and the priests, but did not touch the Jews at all.

With its elements of magic removed, al-Tabari's tale touched on a real incident. In 517, the enthronement of a Jewish king led Christians to seize a major town of the Himyarite kingdom. After mustering an army, Dhu-Nuwas inflicted a costly defeat on the rebels, taking many prisoners, and destroying their church.

As a zealous advocate of Judaism, Dhu-Nuwas carried out some rash acts that eventually involved him in difficulties and brought misfortune to him, his kingdom, and the Jews of Himyar.

Thus, on learning of the sad plight of Jewish communities in the Byzantine Empire, he resolved to force the Christian emperor to stop persecuting his Jewish subjects and to treat them justly. To accomplish this objective, Dhu-Nuwas ordered several Christian merchants who had come to his capital on business to be seized and executed.

News of this high-handed deed soon reached Byzantium, a challenge of this sort could not go unpunished, but the Byzantine emperor, Justin I, was embroiled in a war with the Persians and a Samaritan revolt in Palestine. He decided, therefore, to write to the Christian king of Ethiopia, who was a good deal closer to Himyar, to act as Christendom's avenger. The Ethiopian king was more than anxious to oblige the emperor's request.

In 518, when Ethiopian troops landed in Himyar, Dhu-Nuwas's forces soundly defeated the invaders. Flushed with success, he now saw himself as the champion of Arabian Jewry. It has been suggested by some scholars that Dhu-Nuwas's ultimate objective was the creation of a Jewish empire stretching from Eretz Israel to Himyar.

Indeed, these historians connect the Himyar king's ambitions with the immigration of Mar Zutra III from Babylonia to Tiberias (his father, the Exilarch of the Babylonian Jewish community, had been executed after rebelling against the Persian authorities). Mar Zutra III's appointment as head of the Tiberias Academy put him in the seat of authority for Jews of other countries. His appointment - these same scholars believe - was closely related to the activity of the Jewish sages in Himyar, and their conversion of Dhu-Nuwas. They, also feel it might point to a political alliance devised by Mar Zutra, and the Jewish population of Palestine, in conjunction with the kingdom of Himyar, with its numerous Jews and proselytes led by a Jewish king, to restore a Jewish state in Eretz Israel.

However, Dhu-Nuwas soon recovered from this humiliating defeat and rebuilt his forces. In the meantime, a revolt in the northern Himyarite center of Najran (c. 523), which was inhabited chiefly by Christians, led to many Jewish casualties. The town's governor, a Christian named Harith (Aretas) ibn-Kaleb, although a feudatory of Dhu-Nuwas, resented his status as a vassal to the Jewish king (he may also have not performed his feudal duties in the war against Aidug). In any case, the governor's feelings were paralleled by the town's Christian population, which also refused to obey the king's orders.

When the Najran rebels spurned Dhu-Nuwas's peace terms, he besieged the town and reduced its inhabitants to such straits as they were forced to capitulate. Harith and several hundred of the rebels were executed. A heavy tribute was also levied on the remaining Christians in the kingdom in reprisal for the persecution of Jews in Christian countries.

The news of the suppression of the Christians of Najran spread like wildfire and became more exaggerated with each telling. The number of victims was inflated in Christian sources and influenced Arabic accounts. The first number for those executed was 200; then 400; 1,706; 4,252; 10,200; 12, 100; 20,000; and finally, 70,000. In another version even more horrendous - and completely unsubstantiated in fact - was a story that Dhu-Nuwas had offered peace terms to the defeated rebels and then invited them to a great banquet to celebrate the occasion. The Christian guests had just settled in to feast when the ground gave way, and they collapsed into a huge trench, which had been dug beforehand and filled with soaked flammables by the king's men. Torches were then thrown into the trench, and the victims perished in smoke and flames.

Incredibly, echoes of these supposed atrocities at Najran found their way into the literature of Eastern Christianity; some scholars believe that there is even an allusion to a "burning" of Christians in the Koran. (Sura 85:4-5) The distinguished historian Salo W. Baron has pointed out that these atrocity stories should not be taken literally, and that in reality they served as an excuse for Christian intervention in Himyar. Preparations for such an enterprise had been observed in the Ethiopian capital at the beginning of the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian (the son and successor of Justin I). The horror tales may also have helped to cover up treaty-breaking by the Ethiopians, still smarting from their earlier defeat, as well as to serve the Christians on a par with other martyrologies. Baron also notes that much of the martyrology of the Eastern churches dealing with the Najran affair are written in a traditional and almost stereotypic vein, as when a 9-year-old Christian girl is reputed to have spat in Dhu-Nuwas's face, exclaiming, "May thy mouth be closed, Jew—killer of the Lord."

A Christian campaign against the Jewish king was initially instigated by a Syrian bishop named Simeon. He traveled through northern Arabia trying to stir up the pagan tribes against Dhu-Nuwas. The pagan tribesmen wanted no part of a campaign against the Himyarites. Simeon then turned to the Byzantines to wage war against Dhu-Nuwas, and urged the emperor to imprison the teachers of Judaism in Tiberias and compel them to appeal to Dhu-Nuwas to stop his persecution of Christians. The Byzantine emperor, although anxious to eliminate the Jewish king, was still engaged in a conflict with Persia and preferred that his Ethiopian ally undertake the task. The Ethiopian Negus (ruler), Kaled Ella Asbaha, required little persuasion to go to war, for the Jewish kingdom had long been a thorn in his side. Asbaha, however, was shrewd as well as being a fanatic Christian. He was aware that the importance of the Arabian Peninsula had increased along with Byzantine-Persian tensions. During periods of peace, the Byzantines tended to use caravan routes through Persia to trade with India. With embittered relations between the powers, the Byzantines sought trade routes that bypassed Persia. The only viable alternative was the sea route contested by the two Red Sea rivals, Ethiopia and Himyar. Asbaha hoped to monopolize trade route by wresting the strategic Straits of Bab-al-Mandeb from Himyarite control.

While his enemies were preparing to invade his territory, Dhu-Nuwas did not remain idle. He endeavored unsuccessfully to secure allies from among the pagan Arab tribes, and from the Sassanid king of Persia. By the year 525 CE, the Ethiopians and the Byzantines were ready to strike. The Negus of Ethiopia had put together and equipped a powerful army, and the Byzantine emperor had provided his ally with the necessary fleet to transport the troops to Himyar. Dhu-Nuwas took measures to prevent the landing of the Ethiopian army by barring the most likely invasion points with chains. His efforts, however, proved fruitless, and the Ethiopian troops were able to disembark near Tafara on the Red Sea coast. Asbaha had taken steps to inform the Christian Arabs of the region of his plans, and they attacked the Himyarites as Dhu-Nuwas deployed his army to meet the invasion force of the Ethiopians. In the ensuing battle, the Jewish king fell back on his faithful, courageous cavalry to repel the invaders, but they were overwhelmed by the larger army of the enemy. The capital of Dhu-Nuwas fell into the hands of the enemy, along with his wife, and all the treasures of his kingdom. Realizing that all was lost, and unwilling to be taken alive, the impetuous king charged his steed over a great rock jutting over the sea. The waves swept his body out to sea. So died the last Jewish king of Himyar.

The victorious Ethiopians overran Himyar. With fire and sword they raged through the land, plundering and massacring its inhabitants. They especially singled out the Jews for their killing spree; they considered it an atoning sacrifice for the Christian martyrs of Najran.

The Ethiopian occupation stimulated new resistance, as the Jews fought on from the mountains of eastern Himyar. Although the invaders were able to hold on to Tafara and the coastal area along the Red Sea, Hadramut, and the ports along the Arabia Sea held out and remained in Jewish hands. With the help of the Persians, the Jews gradually drove out the Ethiopians from everywhere except their Red Sea base. In the decades preceding the rise of Islam, the struggle for control of southern Arabia seesawed between Persia, the Byzantine Empire, and Ethiopia.

[483 Unlike LakhFathah, Dhfi Nuwas is a fully historical figure, mentioned in Byzantine sources, e.g., in the Greek of the Martyrium Arethae as Dounaas. An Arabic etymology for his name is given in the Arabic sources, e.g., Abfi al-Faraj al- Isfahani, Aghjnl3, XXII, 318, and Nashw5n al-Himyarl, Die auf Siidarabien bezilglichen Angaben Nagw4ins, io6, as "the man with the dangling forelock, long hair," but again is more likely to relate to a place name, or possibly to a deity. See on him further, nn. 486, 488, 5o6 below, and N61deke, trans. 174 n. 3, who also notes that Zur'ah is likewise a historically-attested name, since one of the local princes of Yemen who sent to the Prophet in autumn of the year 9/630 offering their acceptance of Islam, was Zur'ah Dhfi Yazan, quite possibly a descendant of Dhu Nuw5s; it was to him that Muhammad sent a group of sadaqah collectors headed by Muldh b. Jabal. See Ibnffl-bam, Sirat al-nabi, ed. Wiistenfeld, 955-57 ed. al-Saqqd et al., IV, 235-36, tr. 642-44.]

[The questions of the date of the appearance of Judaism in Yemen, the extent of that faith's spread from the ruler and nobles downward to the generality of the population, and the nature and quality of that Judaism, have excited much discussion. I There seems no reason to doubt the reports Jal-Tabad, 1, 892, go.2, 9o5, pp. 145, 165-66, 170-71 above: one of Ibn Ishdq's informants for these seems to have been Abfi Malik b. Tha,labah b. Abi Malik al-Qurazi, whose grandfather had been a Jewish client of Kindah and who had migrated from Yemen to Yathrib; see M. Lecker, "AbfiMidik'Abdallahb. Samof Kinda, ajewish convert to Islam," 280-82) that Abfi Karib As'ad accepted the Jewish faith in some form or other when he was at Yathrib in the first half of the fifth century and that the faith was already known at the Himyarite court in the time of his father Malki Karib, i.e., the end of the fourth century, when paganism was abandoned for monotheism. The implantation of a genuine Judaism there around that time would be parallel to the contemporaneous consolidation of the Christian community at Najrdn, for which see n. 487 below. See Smith, "Events in South Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," 462-6 3; J. Ryckmans, "Le Christianisme en Arabic du Sud prdislmique," 417-19. 426-28, 447; Lecker, "The Conversion of Himyar to Judaism and the Jewish Banfi Hadl of Medina," 129-36. There is epigraphic evidence for the existence of adherents of Judaism in Yemen proper during the later fifth century, in that the Bayt al-Ashwal I inscription was erected at Zafax by a man called Yhwd' Ykf/Yehfidd Yakkuf (for Yankuf), clearly a native South Arabian, who invokes "the Lord of Heaven and Earth" and "His people (S2'b) Israel" and who mentions the king Dhara"amar Ayman (H), who ruled in the later fourth century. See Miffier, "Eine hebraeisch-sabaeische Bilinguis aus Bait al-Agwal," 117-23; Robin, in LArabie antique de Karib'fl a Mahomet, 145- 46. Judaism seems to have made rapid advances at the Himyarite court, with three of the leading noble families, those of Harridan, Yaz'an, and Hasbah, becoming converts. There was in the later fifth and early sixth centuries an important Jewish trading community on the island of Yotab6 (not yet specifically located, but some- where near the mouth of the Gulf of 'Aqabah; see Smith, "Events in South Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," 4.28-29; Z. Rubin, "Byzantium and Southern Arabia- the Policy of Anastasius," 388-89), which was controlled by a local chief called Amorcesos and which probably served as a base for mercantile activities down the Red Sea as far as the shores of Yemen.

We cannot judge how far below the level of the royal family and that of the great nobles this adherence to Judaism may have penetrated; but more controversial is the nature and quality of the faith as implanted in South Arabia-was it recogniz- ably Rabbinical Judaism or was it an aspect of the monotheistic faith "Ralund- nism," another aspect of which may have been the ascetic monotheism oi the hanifs during the period just before Muhammad's call to prophethood? After ca. A.D. 45o-6o the South Arabian inscriptions begin to give the "Lord of Heaven and Earth" the proper name of Rahindridn, one equally used by the Christian monotheists and, in the early seventii century, by Muhammad's rival among the Banui Hanifah of al-Yamdma, Musaylimab. It does seem that, sixty or so years later, a ruler like Yfisuf As'ar Dhfi Nuwds was an enthusiastic Jewish believer. Jacques Ryckmans stressed that the name Rahmdndn in South Arabia must have come originally from a Jewish milieu, almost certainly the Jewish communities of Medina and the settlements of the Wadi al-Qurd, since the term stems from the Aramaic Rahrildna, frequent in the Babylonian Talmud and sporadically found in the Jerusalem one, while rare in Christian texts of the time. But he went on to suggest that Rahm-ndn became generalized in South Arabian monotheistic usage, not least among Christians, via the Christian community in Najrdn, by the end of the fifth century, since it appears in

an inscription of the Christian king Sumu-yafa'A wa', installed by the Ethiopians after the death of Dhfi Nuwas (see n. 5 18 below), for the first person of the Trinity. See Ryckmans, "Le Christianisme en Arabie du Sud préislamique," 436-40; Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fourth Century*, 100-06; Beeston, "Judaism and Christianity in Pre-Islamic Yemen," 271-78; idem, "Himyarite Monotheism," 149-54; Rubin, *OP. cit.*, 387-88; Robin, in *op. cit.*, 145- 47; idem, in *Supplément au dictionnaire de la Bible*, s.v. Sheba. H, cols. 1115-16, 1190-92.

Concerning the length of Dhfi Nuwas's reign, tradition gives him one of thirty- eight years, a vastly exaggerated number; see n. 488 below.]

[488. The actual name of Dhfi Nuwas (this being a nickname or cognomen, see n. 483 above), of the family of Yaz'an, emerges from an inscription dating from the month of Dhfi Madhra'an 633 of the Himyarite era/June-July 523. His name is given in the inscription as Yusuf/Yusui (replacing Yanuf ?) As'ar Yath'ar, with the title "king of all the tribes, 'S0bn," a much more modest one than the usual grandiloquent ones of the Himyarite kings, such as "king of Saba', Dh-a Raydan, Hadramawt, and Yamanat, together with the Arabs of the Tawd and the Tihamat" (see no. 3 14, 417 above) and one which seems to reflect the fact that, as an usurper, his rule was illegitimate.

Dhu Nuwas replaced the last Tubbal ruler Ma'di Karib Ya'fur between June 5 2 1 and June 5 2.2, and was defeated by the Abyssinians soon after Pentecost 5 25, killing himself shortly afterward,(see al-Taban, 1, 927-28, P. 207 below~. Whatever the nature of his commitment to Judaism (see n. 486 above)-and Shahid has suggested that he may well have started off as a Christian and as the designated successor of Ma'di Karib (but see above)-he embarked in S 2 3 on his campaign to eliminate the Abyssinians and the indigenous Christians of southwestern Arabia. The eight hundred-strong Abyssinian community in Zafdr was put to death and the Abyssinian-held fortresses in Shamir taken. Tihamah was conquered, and Najran compelled to give hostages and to endure a blockade. Then in November of that same year 5 2 3, Nairdn was attacked and occupied, its Christian population massacred, the churches burned down, and Greek and Abyssinian traders there killed. See R. Bell, *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment*, 33-63; Smith, "Events in South Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," 459-60; G. Ryckmans, "Le Christianisme en Arabie du Sud préislamique," 413-53; Altheim and Stiehl, *Die Araber in der Alten Welt*, V/1, 373-85; idem, *Christentum am Roten Meer*, I, 442-43; Shahid, *The Martyrs of Nairdn*. New Documents, 266-68; Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, 297-99; MULLER, "Survey of the History of the Arabian Peninsula," 129; Robin, in *op. cit.*, 15 1 - 5 2; EI2, s.vv. Dhu Nuwas (M. R. Al-Assouad), Mathimina (Chr. Robin); n. So6 below.

The chronology adopted here for these events, including the actual martyrdoms at Najrdn and the happenings following on from them, is that put forward, after a very thorough sifting of the evidence (from Byzantine Greek and Syriac sources and from contemporary South Arabian inscriptions) by Francois de Blois, that the martyrdoms took place at the traditional date of 5 2 3 and not in 5 18, as argued by, e.g., Rubin and Shahid. See de Blois, "The Date of the "Martyrs of Nagrdn," i i o- 27.]

Dhu Nuwas: Hamza states that having visited Medina, one half of the inhabitants of which were then Jew's,

Dzu Nowas was so well pleased with their religion, that he embraced it. But, as M. C. de Perceval shows (vol. i. p.122), it is much more likely that he became a Jew through the influence of the powerful and long established party in Yemen; and that he visited Medina in order to succour the Jews against the oppressive attacks of the Aws and Khazraj. This agrees with the history of Medina, and is in excellent keeping with the sectarian bias which led Dzu Nowas to the attack of Najran.

At last it was the turn of the last of the youths from that line of kings, Zur'ah Dhu Nuwas b. Tuban As'ad Abu Karib b. Malki Karib b. Zayd b.'Amr Dhi al-AdMir the brother of Hassan.483 Zur'ah had been only a small boy when his brother was killed, and had grown up into a fine and handsome youth, with an attractive appearance and intelligence. Lakhi'athah Yanfif Dhfi Shandtir sent for him in order to do with him as was his wont with the princes of the royal house before him. When the messenger came to Zur'ah, he realized what LakhVathah intended to do, so he took a slim-bladed, sharp knife and placed it between his sandal and the sole of his [919] foot. Then he set out to LakhFathah with the latter's envoy. When LakhFathah was alone with Zur'ah in that upper chamber of his, he locked the door on the two of them and pounced upon Zur'ah. But Dhu Nuwas leaped on him first with the knife and stabbed him with it until he had killed him. Then he cut off his head and stuck it in the window niche of that upper chamber of LakhFathah's, from where he was accustomed to show himself to his guards and troops. He took that toothpick of LakhFathah's and stuck it in the latter's mouth, and went forth to the people. They said to him, "Dhfi Nuwas-was it wetness or dryness?" He answered, "Ask n.kh.mdS484-[According to fbn Hisham's gloss, *Sirat al-nab!*, ed. Wilstenfeld, 2o = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 3 1, tr. 14, n.khmas was a Himyaft word for "head." The rest of this puzzling saying

clearly has an obscene reference, as the word seemingly figuring in it-ist, "anus" -implies, explicit in Abfi al-Faraj al-Isfabarn, Aghani3, xxii, 319.], s.t.r.Oiin Dhfi Nuwds-'s.t.r.t.ban Dhfi Nuwds-[he is] unharmed (lj ba's). They went off to look when he called to them in these terms, and lo, there was the severed head of LakhFathah Yan-af Dha Shandtir in the window niche, with his toothpick in his mouth, which Dh-d Nuwds had jammed there! Himyar and the guards went off after Dhfi Nuwds until they caught up with him and told him, "The only fitting person to rule over us is yourself, since you have rid us of this abominable fellow." They therefore made him king, and Himyar and the tribes of Yemen rallied round him .485 [This story comes also in IbnHisbam, Sirat al-nabi, ed. Wi!stenfeld19-20= ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 30-31, tr. 13-14; idem, Kitab al-tibin, 300-301; Abfi al-Faraj al-Isfabarill, Aghdni3, xxii, 3 18 - 19.] He was the last of the kings of Himyar. He became a convert to Judaism (tahaw- wada), and the Himyarites followed him in this path. He adopted the name of Yfisuf (i.e., Joseph) and reigned for a considerable time.486 There were in Najran remnants of people who adhered to the religion of 'Isu (Jesus), followers of the Gospel, virtuous and upright .487 They had a head, of this same faith, called'Abdalldh b. al-Thamir. The place where that faith originally took root was Najran, which at that time was in the center of the land of the Arabs; its people, like all the rest of the Arabs, were (originally) idol worshipers. At that point, a man called Faymiyan, from the remnants of the adherents of that faith had come among them; he summoned them to his religion and they adopted it. Hishiim related: [He was] Zur'ah Dhfi Nuwds, but when he be [920] came a convert to Judaism, he assumed the name of Yusuf.488 It was he who had the trench (al-ukhdii-d) dug out at Najrdn and killed the Christians. 489

[489. Traditional Qur'dnic exegesis regarded the ashdb al-ukhdi-d, "companions of the trench, " of LXXXV, 4-8, as being the Christian martyrs of Najrdn, praised for their steadfastness in the face of immolation or, occasionally, connected with the three men in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace of Daniel, iii. 13ff - Joseph Hal6vy, on his pioneer expedition into Yemen in 1869-70 sponsored by the Acad6mie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, found that the Najrdn of that time was called Madinat al-Khudfid (< Ukhdfid); see his "Rapport sur une mission arch6ologique dans le Y6men, " 37-40. The connection with the martyrs of Najrdn was upheld by older generations of Western scholars, e.g., N61deke, in his Geschichte des QoMns, 1, 97 n. 3, and (originally) Richard Bell in his The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment, 3 8, 68. But it is now generally recognized as being not a specifically historical reference but, rather, an eschatological one, the "companions of the trench" being unbelievers destined for Hell Fire because of what they had done to the believers (v. 7). See Bell, ed. Bosworth and M. E. J. Richardson, A Commentary on the Qur'dn, 11, 517; E12, s.v. Ashab al-ukhdfid (R. Paret).]

529 Status of Jewish subjects of Roman Empire degraded. Athens 1,000 year old school of philosophy closed by Emperor Justinian, declared pagan. Samaritans revolt in Palestine. (K)

The commoners as well as the royal family adopted Judaism, and one writer ports that "Jewish priests (presumably rabbis) from Tiberias ... formed part the suite of King Du Noas and served as his envoys in negotiations with Christian cities." S. Safrai, "From the Abolition of the Patriarchate to the Arab Conquest (425-W)," in History of the Jewish People, Ben-Sasson, ed., pp. 358-359.

Najran

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Najran>

529 The Codex Justinianus (Codex vetus) is issued on Apr. 7; children of mixed marriages (free/unfree) follow the mother's condition; uncultivated land is subject to confiscation. Under Justinian I, pagans are now treated like demon worshippers, and arrested, tortured, killed or impoverished. The Council of Orange blasts the doctrines of the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians. The Second Council of Vaison first uses the kyrie eleison ("Lord, have mercy") in its third canon. Emperor Justinian I passes a law ordering the synagogues of the Samaritans centered in Neapolis, Palestine destroyed and taking away their rights to bequeath property to the non-orthodox; the Samaritans revolt in the summer and are crushed; their leader Julian's head is sent to the emperor, and the 20,000 remaining Samaritans are sold into slavery. (T)

547 Caesarea (Eretz Israel) Massacre of Jews and Samaritans by local Christians. (JH)

551 Justinian I makes Gen. Narses his new commander-in-chief and send him to defeat the Ostrogoths in Italy. Justinian I restores to Samaritans the right to bequeath property to Samaritan heirs. An earthquake levels what is left of the ancient city of Petra. (K)

560 Samaritans and Jewish residents of Palestine ally against Roman oppression. (K)

572 Emperor Justin II renews Justinian's anti-Samaritan policies; the latter revolt and are effectively exterminated. The Lombards conquer south-central Italy, creating the duchies of Spoleto and Benevento; the Byzantines retain control of a corridor between Ravenna and Rome, splitting the northern Lombard kingdom from its southern duchies. The European clergy find themselves battling a resurgence of pagan beliefs, often skilfully combined with orthodox Christianity. Bidatsu (538-585) becomes emperor of Japan. (T)

Christianity in Arabia

[In Muslim eyes, Christianity had in general degenerated by the time of the Prophet's coming, leaving only "remnants" such as those mentioned here. Cf. N61deke, trans. 177 n. 2. Shahid has propounded that Najrdn at this time came definitely within the Arabic cultural and linguistic sector of the Arabian Peninsula rather than the Sabaean-Himyarite one, on the basis of the Arabic names of the Martyrs of Najrdn and the existence there in the sixth century of a school of Arabic poets; but this suggestion is rejected by such experts on South Arabian languages as W. W. Miiller. The advent of Christianity to Najrdn was part of a general percolation of monotheistic religions, specifically Judaism and Christianity, into the Arabian Peninsula (for Judaism in western and southern Arabia, see n. 486 above, and for Judaism at Najran specifically, where the community seems to have been an old, established one, see Lecker, "Judaism among Kinda and the Ridda of Kinda," 635-36). Already in the mid-fourth century, the king of Himyar had received a diplomatic mission sent by the Byzantine emperor Constantius II (r. 337-61) under Theophilus "the Indian" (who was actually from the island of Socotra, the whole region of South Arabia and the Gulf of Aden shores being often referred to vaguely in Byzantine sources as "India"), an Arian in faith like his master, and the king had undertaken to build three churches within his dominions. Later in that same century, Abd Karib As'ad and others of his family adopted a monotheism that involved some form of Judaism (see n. 486 above). There may well have been some political factors at work here, since the Abyssinian kingdom of Axum was at this time adopting Christianity and the faith was also spreading among the Arabs of the northern and eastern fringes of the Peninsula. The Himyarite rulers may have wished to counter a possible threat of intervention on religious grounds from outside-intervention which was, indeed, to materialize when the power of the Himyarite monarchy went into decline in the early sixth century. J. Ryckmans opined that both Nestorianism and Monophysitism were represented within the Najrdn Christian community, but that the former was likely to have been more favorably regarded by the Jewish or Judaizing Himyarite kings of the eighty years or so before the Abyssinian intervention in favor of Monophysitism, and that the celebrated persecutions at Nairan were essentially of the Monophysites there, with the Nestorians merely looking on, if not actively encouraging the Himyarite rulers; see his "Le Christianisme en Arabie du Sud préislamique," 448, 450-52. Through Abyssinian enthusiasm for Monophysitism, and a distinct Byzantine preference for it over Nestorianism (see n. 511 below), Najrdn itself became the focus in the sixth century for something like an Arabian national church, Monophysite in theology. From the time of the Byzantine emperor Anastasius I (r. 491-518), the Himyarites had a bishop of their own, probably a Syrian and Monophysite in theology, called Silvanus, and we know the names of two Monophysite bishops, both named Paul, consecrated for Najrdn itself around this time (see below). During the early Islamic period, despite the deportations of Christians from Najran to Iraq by the second caliph 'Umar b. al-Khattab, the faith was to survive there (as also in the island of Socotra, in the Gulf of Aden) into mediaeval Islamic times. The Nestorian Church in Iraq had contacts with Christians in southwestern Arabia for some three centuries after the advent of Islam: the Patriarch Timothy ordained a bishop for Yemen and San'd in ca. 800, and John IV answered questions from a priest "of the people of Yemen" in ca. 900. See Fiey, *Assyrie chrétienne*, III, 230; Beaucamp, and Robin, "Le Christianisme dans la péninsule arabique d'après l'épigraphie et l'archéologie," 56-57; EI2, s.v. *Najrdn* (Irfan Shahid). But before the consolidation of Christianity in Najrdn under Byzantine and Abyssinian influence came about, the desire of the Himyarite ruling strata to preserve their national identity and culture between the two powerful Christian realms of Byzantium and Abyssinia, had inevitably entailed a growing hostility toward the indigenous Monophysite Christian community, even if for political rather than strictly religious reasons. There was persecution under Sharabi'il Yakuf (known to have been reigning in 472), when we know from an Ethiopic hagiographical work that the missionary Azqir (whose name Ryckmans linked, through deformed transcriptions, with the Yazdgerd of a Persian romance centered round one of the Persian Christian martyrs; Beeston suggested a possible connection with Arabic al-Dhakir "the famed, reputed one") was killed, possibly for proselytizing but certainly with some sort of Jewish involvement in the deed (see Ryckmans, *OP. Cit.*, 441-43; Beeston, "The Martyrdom of Azqir," 5-10; Rubin, "Byzantium, and Southern Arabia-the Policy of Anastasius," 387-88); and Paul, the first bishop of Najrdn, was martyred at the Himyarite capital Zafdr, stoned by the Jews there, at an unknown date before 521 but possibly before 504, as is known from the Syriac martyrological literature. Intervention by Abyssinia was not long in coming, and it seems that Ydsuf As'ar Dhfi Nuwas's predecessor Ma'di Karib Ya'fur was placed on the

throne of Himyar by the Abyssinians in late 518 or early 519, as part of a direct extension of Abyssinian influence into Yemen, involving even a permanent mission in Zafar, where –judging from their names) Abyssinian representatives built a palace for themselves during the reign of Ma'di Karib Ya'fur's predecessor Marthad 'ilin Yanfif. The stage was thus set for the culmination of what had probably been a series of persecutions of the Christians of Najrān, the most notorious being that in the proto-nationalist, pro-Jewish reaction, which intensified under Yfisuf As'ar Dhfi Nuwds; see the following note. On the vestiges Arabian Christianity has left in the epigraphy and archaeology of the peninsula, see Beaucamp and Robin, *OP. Cit.*, 45–61; on the position of Christianity in the politics and diplomacy of southwestern Arabia at this time, Robin, "Le royaume hujride," 699–702; and on the faith there in general, the references in the following note. Noldeke, trans. 177 n. 3, thought that Faymiyfin was most likely a shortened form of Euphernion, so that this Greek name would point to a man coming from the Byzantine lands. But since his time there has been further investigation of the origins of this story of the introduction of Christianity to Najrān, in particular, by A. Moberg. Moberg traced the story of the Arabic sources, with its theme of the wandering ascetic from Syria, to Persian Christian romantic legends of Yazdin-Pethion, involving the martyrdom in Persia in 447 of Pethion, whose name yielded the Arabic form Faymiy-dn. See the discussion of his views in J. Ryckmans, *op. cit.*, 441–42.

The story of 'Abdallah b. al-Th5mir is given in *al-Tabarl*, 1, 923–25, PP. 200–202 below.]

There related to us Ibn Humayd-Salamah-Muhammad b. Ishdq-al-mughirah b. Ab! Labid, a freedman of al-Akhnas-Wahb b. Munabbih al-Yamdni, 490 [490. The Ubfur Successor A~U--'AbdafUH Wahb b. Munabbih (b. ca. 34/654–55, d. 110/728 or 114/732) was one of the most knowledgeable of Umayyad period historians, especially regarding the "Stories of the Prophets" and regarding South Arabian lore, having been himself born, of Persian stock, at Dhimiir to the north of SanW. He seems to have been able to draw on both Jewish and Christian traditions (in the latter case, notably for the story of the events here at Najrān); it is regrettable that his *Kitab al-mulilk al-mutawwaiah min Himyar wa-akhbdrihim wa- qiqasih wa-qubfirihiim wa-ash'arihiim* is only known through later citations, including extensively in the first part of rbn Hishdrn's *Kitab al-tai*, which depends heavily on Wahb. See Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore," 56ff.; Sezgin, *GAS*, 1, 305–307; E12, s.v. Wahb b. Munabbih (R. G. Khoury).] who related to them that the implantation of that religion (sc., Christianity) in Najrān arose from the fact that there was a man from the remnants of the followers of the faith of 'Isd b. Maryam called Faymiyfin, –a pious man, a zealous fighter for the faith and an ascetic, one whose prayers were answered by God .

[Noldeke, trans. 177 n. 3, regarded the following tale of Faymiyfin and Salih and its sequel, the tale of 'Abdalldh b. al-Thimir, as nothing but pious legend, but Trimmingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, 294–95, thought that they should not be discounted as complete inventions but should be considered as reflections of later Islamic attempts to illuminate the background of the Prophet's life and to elucidate supposed Qur'dnic references to events in Najrān (but see on these references, n. 489 above).]

This was the origin of Christianity at Najriin .505

Such is the report of Muhammad b. Ka'b al-Qurazi and another scholar of Najrān knowledgeable about that event; but God is the most knowledgeable [about all this].

He (i.e., Ibn Ishdq) related: Dh-a Nuwds marched against them with his forces of the Himyarites and the tribes of Yemen. He gathered the people of Najrān together, and summoned them to the Jewish faith, offering them the choice between that and being killed. They chose being killed, so he dug out for them the trench (al-ukhdiad). He burnt some of them with fire, slew some violently with the sword, and mutilated them savagely until he had 506 killed nearly twenty thousand of them.

[506. Ibn Ishaq has more detail here than Ibn al-Kalb! on the actual martyrdom of the Christians, Although the Syriac Book of the Himyarites, composed in the second quarter of the sixth century and therefore very close to the time in question, i.e., 523, mentions nothing about the Christians being put in a pit, the recently discovered Syriac "new" letter of Simeon of 116th Arshdm specifically says that two thousand Christians were immolated when their church was burned. See Shahid's edition, translation, and study, *The Martyrs of Najrān.. New Documents*.

Dhfi Nuwds's policy here may not have been one that he conceived and pursued entirely of his own accord, in isolation from outside considerations, given the possible background of his conversion to some form of Judaism (see n. 486 above). That it was aimed at countering an extension of Christian Abyssinian influence in Yemen is clear, but Dhfi Nuwds may have looked for support in another quarter of Arabia. M. J. Kister has suggested, with impressive documentation, that the Lakhmid king of al-Hirahal-Mundhir III (on whom see nn. 362,40g above) exerted a measure of control across Najd as far as Medina, with the backing of his

suzerains the Sasanids, for whom an'jmil collected taxes in Medina at this time; see his "Al- Hira. Some Notes on Its Relations with Arabia," 144-49. From this possibility of an alliance between the pagan Lakhmid rulers with the Jewish tribes in Medina, who were still dominant over the local Arabs of the Yathrib oasis during the first half of the sixth century, Shahid and Altheim. and Stiehl have gone on to suggest that Dhfi NuwAs, in his anti-Abyssinian and anti-Christian policies at Najr5n and in Yemen, looked to al-Mundhir for at least moral and perhaps diplomatic backing, given the apparent connection of the later Himyarite kings' Jewish tendencies or sympathies with Medina (cf. the tale, in al4abar1, I, go i -go5, pp. i 64-7o above, of Tubdn As'ad Abd Karib's espousal of Judaism when passing through Medina, and also n. 486 above). Furthermore, Hamza al-Isfahdni, TaWkh, 113, states that "Dhfi Nuwds halted at Yathrib when once he was passing through, and was favorably impressed by the Jewish faith. Hence he adopted it for himself, and the Jews of Yathrib incited him to attack Najrdn and to inflict trials and tribulations on the Christians there." Al-Mundhir, for his part, would have welcomed an opportunity to counteract Abyssinian power over southwestern Arabia. See N61deke, trans. 18 3 n. i; Bell, The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment, 36-39; Altheim and Stiehl, Die Araber in der Alten Welt, V/I, 3sq-6i; eidem, Christentum am Roten Meer, 1, 440-41; Shahid, The Martyrs of Nairdn, 266-68; Trimmingham, Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times, 297; Rubin, "Byzantium and Southern Arabia-the Policy of Anastasius," 401-402.

However, by the time the Abyssinians appeared in Yemen in 525 in order to avenge the Martyrs of Najran and the Abyssinians slain in southwestern Arabia, al- Mundhir was in no position to offer any military help, being hard pressed by his rivals of Kindah and being shortly afterward ejected, albeit temporarily, from his own capital al-Hirah by the Kindi al-Hdrith b. 'Amr (see n. 362 above.)]

Out of them there escaped only one man, called Daws Dhfi Tha'labdn, on one of his horses, who traveled through the sands until he threw his pursuers off.507 [Dhu Tha'laban was the name of one of the eight great noble families of Himyar, influential either during the period of independent Himyarite royal power or during that of Abyssinian and then Persian domination over southwestern Arabia that followed the extinction of the Himyarite ruling dynasty, Tha'lab being apparently a tribal name. Epigraphic evidence does support the fact that the Dhu Tha'laban came from the Najran area. See N61deke, trans. 186 n. i; EI2, s.v. al-Mathamina (Chr. Robinj.)]

He related: I have heard a certain man from the people of Yemen say that the man who escaped from them was a man of Najrdn called Jabbar (var. Hayydn) b. Fayq. He related: In my view, the more authentic of the two reports is that of the man who narrated to me that it was Daws Dhfi Tha'labdn.

Dhfi Nuwds returned with his forces to San'd' in the land of Yemen .508 [San'a' emerges into prominence only in the inscriptions of the third cen tury A.D., although it doubtless had a history before that time. It was a hgrlhaier or town in what was at that time the petty kingdom of Samay, which was seemingly linked in some sort of federal arrangement with Saba'. It was a military center, as the probable connection of its name with the Sabaeen root s.n.', "to fortify [a place]," indicates (al-Haniddiii, Sifat jazirat al-'Arab, 81, states however that the town's ancient name was Azdl). \$an'd'seems to have reached a peak of importance within the wider Sabaeen state at this time, with one of its kings, Ilisharah Yahdab, named in Islamic sources (e.g., Ydqfit, Bulddn, IV, 2io). As builder of the famous castle of Ghumddn (see al-Taban, 1, 928, p. 2og and n. 52o below). After this, San'd, suffered a temporary eclipse when power shifted to the Himyarite dynasty of the Tubba's, with their capital at Zafdr (see n. 47 5 above). Neither San'a'nor Ghumddn figure in inscriptions dating f-om the fourth to the sixth centuries. The town does nevertheless seem to have had within it during pre-Islamic times a mhrmlmahram, a place to which access was prohibited or restricted, usually for religious or ~ultic reasons, and R. B. Serjeant suggested that the pre-Islamic hiirah or sacred area of San'd' may have existed in parallel with the Haram of Mecca. One can therefore easily comprehend that the profanation of the Christian church built at San'd'by Abrahah (see al-Tabari, 1, 934, 943, PP. 217, 232-33 below) was a particu- iarly heinous action if, as seems possible, the church was situated in the inahram area. See Shahid, "Byzantium and South Arabia," 81-83; Beeston, "Pre-Islamic San'd'," 36-38; Serjeant, "San'd' the 'Protected', Hijrah," 39-40; EI2, s.v. San'd' (G. R. Smith).]

Concerning Dhu Nuwas and his troops, there narrated to us Ibn Humayd-Salamah b. al-Fadl-Muhammad b. Isha-q, who said: God sent down to His Messenger the words "Slain were the Men of the Trench, with the fire abounding in fuel," to His words ". . . and God, the Mighty, the Praiseworthy.509 [See n. 489 above.] It is said that 'Abdaldh b. al-Thdmir, their leader and imdm, was among those whom Dhfi Nuwds killed, but it is also said that 'Abdallah b. al-Thdmir was killed before that event, killed by a previous ruler. He was the founder of that faith [at Najrdn], and Dhfi Nuwds only slew adherents of 'Abdaldh's religion who came after him.

Relations between Himyar and Abyssia

As for Hisharn b. Muhammad, he says that the royal power in [926] Yemen was handed down continuously, with no one venturing to contest it until the Abyssinians (al-Habashah) seized control of their land in the time of Anfisharwdn. He related: The reason for their conquest was that Dhfi Nuwds the Himyarite exercised royal power in Yemen at that time, and he was an adherent of the Jewish faith. There came to him a Jew called Daws from the people of Najrdn, who told him that the people of Najrdn had unjustly slain his two sons;⁵¹⁰ [Noldeke thought that, given the deeply rooted hostility of Eastern Christians toward Jews, this incident was perfectly possible.] he now sought Dhfi Nuwds's help against them. The people of Najrdn were Christians. Dhfi Nuwds was a fervent partisan of the Jewish faith, so he led an expedition against the people of Najrdn, killing large numbers of them. A man from the people of Najrdn fled and in due course came to the King of Abyssinia. He informed the king of what the Yemenis had committed and gave him a copy of the Gospels partly burned by the fire. The King of Abyssinia said to him: "I have plenty of men, but no ships [to transport them]; but I will write to Qay~ar (i.e., the Byzantine Emperor) asking him to send me ships for transporting the soldiers." Hence he wrote to Qay~ar about this matter, enclosing the [partly] burned copy of the Gospels, and Qay~ar dispatched a large number of ships.⁵¹¹

[Refugees from Najrdn and the other places in Yemen and Hadramawt where there had been persecutions (the Syriac Book of the Himyarites mentions that these occurred in five towns, Zafdr, Najrdn, "the town of Hadramawt," Marib, and [Ha]jjarEn, see Shahid, "Byzantium in South Arabia," 38) probably managed to escape to Abyssinia and possibly to Byzantine territory at the head of the Red Sea. At all events, the news speedily reached the Christian kingdoms of Axum and Byzantium, and the sufferings of the Najrdnites entered their martyrologies (the Ethiopian Church adopted into its calendar the commemoration of the sama'tata Negrdrn, "witnesses of Najrdn," on 26 November; see H. M. Hyatt, *The Church of Abyssinia*, 32~. The martyrdoms at Najr5n involved essentially, as noted in n. 487 above, the local Monophysites, and the Church of Abyssinia was also Monophysite. Byzantium was Melkite, and persecuted Monophysites within the empire's boundaries, but southwestern Arabia was sufficiently far from the imperial heartlands for theological niceties not to count in the face of a Judaizing ruler and his persecution of Christians. Justin halted his own persecution of the Monophysites within his dominions, and utilized the Monophysite Patriarch of Alexandria as his intermediary with the Abyssinian Najdsh! or Negus in Axum. Eventually, a fleet of some sixty merchant ships commandeered by the Byzantine authorities set out from Adulis, the port of Axum on what is now the Eritrean coast under the leadership of the king in Axum, K516, who had the regnal name of t1la Asb6ha (rendered by Procopius, *The Persian War*, I.xx. 1 - 13, as Helh~sthaios for Heilesbaiois; in a South Arabian inscription Tsbh). This was probably in the spring or summer of 5.2 5. Uh-3b's activities as the restorer of Christianity in South a la were o earn im great renown wit n t e . ter isposing 0 f, Nuwiis, tlla Asb6ha seems to have erected a victory inscription in Ge'ez, one which is unfortunately only fragmentarily legible, at Marib. He very probably engaged in a campaign of revenge, slaughtering great numbers of Himyarites and destroying their idols and temples. He certainly embarked upon an extensive program of church building in southwestern Arabia, details of which are given in the Greek-possibly with a Syriac Vorlage-hagiographical *Vita Sancti Gregentii*, whose extensive information here has been made the subject of a close study by Irfan Shahid. See N61deke, trans. 18 8 n. i; Smith, "Events in South Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," 454-55; Murad Kamil, "An Ethiopian Inscription found at Mareb," 56-57; Altheim. and Stiehl, *Die Araber in der Alten Welt*, V/1, 385-91; eidem, *Christentum am Roten Meer*, 1, 445-57; Shahid, "Byzantium in South Arabia," 23-94.]

The narrative returns to that of Ibn Ishaq. There related to us Ibn Ijumayd-Salamah-Muhammad b. Ishdq-'Abdallah b. Abi Bakr b. Muhammad b.'Amr b. Hazm, who related that there was a man from the people of Najrdn in the time of 'Umar b. al-Khattdb⁵¹² [That is, in the later 630s or early 640s.] who dug up one of the ruined sites of Najran intending to utilize it, and found [the body of I 'Abdahlh b. al-Thiimir inside a hollow there that had become filled with sand (dafn, difn). He was in a sitting position, with his hand covering the wound from the blow to his head, holding it firmly with that hand. When his hand was lifted off, the wound began to flow with blood, but when his hand was released, he placed it back on the wound and the flow of blood ceased. On [the finger of I his hand was a seal ring, with the inscription "My lord is God." A report was sent to 'Umar telling him the story, and he wrote back to them: "Leave him [927] alone, and replace the grave that was over him," so they did ⁵¹³ [This same story of the discovery of 'Abdaldh b. al-Thamir's corpse is found in al-Hamdani, *Ikfl*, 134-35, tr. 80-8i.] that.

When Daws Dhfi Tha'labdn threw off his pursuers in this manner, he pressed onward until he came to Qay~ar, the ruler of al-Rfim.^{5 14} [Here the narrative returns to the account of Ibn al-Kalb! broken off by this parenthesis from Ibn Isha-q.] He requested his help against Dhfi Nuwds and his troops, and told him what his people had suffered from them. QayW replied, however, "Your land is distant from our own and too remote for us to be able to reach it with our own armies, but I will write on your behalf to the king of Abyssinia, for he is a Christian also. He is nearer than us to your land, hence can give you aid, protect you, and exact vengeance on your behalf from those who oppressed you and who violently shed the blood of you and your coreligionists. "

Qay~ar sent back Daws with a letter to the king of Abyssinia in which was mentioned Daws's moral entitlement to help and what he and his coreligionists had endured, and Qay~ar commanded the king of

Abyssinia to provide Daws with succor and the means for him to exact vengeance for these who had treated him and his fellow Christians wrongfully.

When Daws Dh-a Tha'labdn presented Qayar's letter to the Najdshi '515 [An accurate rendering of Ethiopic Niigiisi, "ruler, king," used also as a regnal title (and Anglicized as Negus). The Najdsh! figures extensively in the Sirah of the Prophet, in the first place in connection with the two hijrahs of the first Muslims from Mecca to Abyssinia. See E12, s.v. al-Nadjash! (E. van Donzel).] ruler of Abyssinia, the latter sent a force with Daws of seventy thousand Abyssinian troops, appointing as commander over them one of their number, an Abyssinian called Arydt (? Arethas).⁵¹⁶ [The reading of this name is uncertain; the manuscripts have Aryat and Arbat, but other renderings are possible. See the detailed discussion of the evidence from parallel Greek sources in N61deke, trans. i go n. 3.] He laid upon him the following charge: "If you secure the victory over (i.e., Dhfi Nuwds and the Yemenis), kill a third of their menfolk, lay waste a third of their land, and capture and enslave a third of their women and children." Arydt set out with his troops. Among these last was Abrahah al-Ashram ("the man with a cut-off nose tip, l).⁵¹⁷ [Abrahah is the Arabic form of Ethiopic Abr6ha.] He crossed the sea with Daws Dhfi Tha'labdn until they landed on the coast of Yemen. Dhfi Nuwds heard of their approach, and he collected together at his side Himyar and those tribes of Yemen owing him obedience, but there were many dissensions and divisions in their ranks on account of the approaching end of the period [appointed by God], the suffering of hardships, and the coming down of punishment. There ensued no real battle and Dhfi Nuwds was only able to engage in a certain amount of skirmishing, and then his troops were put to flight and Arydt overran the land with his forces. Hence when Dhfi Nuwds saw what had befallen him and his supporters, he headed his horse toward the sea; he whipped it onward and it went into the sea, bearing him through the shallows until it carried him into the deep water. He urged it onward into the open sea, and that was the last ever seen of him. ⁵¹⁸ [Dhu Nuwas seems in reality to have been killed by the Abyssinians in battle; this final touch about the mode of his death must be a romanticizing, South Arabian one, as remarked by N61deke, trans. 19 1 n. 2. The events of the years immediately after Mid Nuwds's death are somewhat obscure. De Blois has suggested that the Abyssinian invaders, having disposed of Dhfi Nuwds, set up a puppet Christian king called Abraham (not to be confused with the subsequent Abrahah) and then withdrew the bulk of their troops back across the Bab al-Mandab. But the Ethiopian hold in Yemen was clearly a precarious one, for within a short time, the anti-Abyssinian party in Yemen apparently got the upper hand once more, necessitating a second Abyssinian invasion at the end Of 5 3 0 or the beginning Of 5 3 1 on the pretext of Jewish persecution of the Christians there. This was once more successful. Procopius records the expedition, and his information is confirmed by the Hisn al-Ghurab inscription (CIH 62 1) of 640 Ijimyrite era/A.D. 5 30-3 1, in which a local potentate, the Christian Sumuyafa' Agwa', records the killing of a local king of the Ijimyrites and his own subordination to the Hbst: This local potentate is Procopius's Esimiphaos, now appointed king of Yemen under Abyssian suzerainty. In any event, Sumu-yafa' Aswa' cannot long have reigned before the usurpation of the former slave Abrahah (see al-Tabari, I, 930ff, pp. 212ff. below). All this implies that there were in fact three Abyssinian invasions of South Arabia within two decades: one ca. 518; a second one between 525 and 527, resulting in the overthrow of Dhu Nuwas and the setting-up of Abraham; and a third one at the end of 530 or beginning of 531 after Abraham's death and the temporary resurgence of the anti-Abyssinian party, resulting in the establishment of Esimiphaos. See de Blois, "The Date of the 'Martyrs of Nagran,'" 119-20. For other reconstructions of the events at this time, see Smith, "Events in South Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," 455-56; Altheim and Stiehl, Christentum am Rotem Meer, I, 446-47; Robin, in Supplement au dictionnaire de la Bible, s.v. Sheba. II, col. 1143; E12, s.v. Abrahah (A. F. L. Beeston). The story of the persecutions of Najrdn and the Abyssinian invasion appears also in Ibn Hishdm, Sirat al-nabi, ed. Wustenfeld, 24-26 = ed. al-Saaqqd et al., 1, 37-39, tr. 17-18; idem, Kitab al-tijan, 301-02; Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani, Aghani3, XVII, 303-305.]

Aryat marched across Yemen with the Abyssinian army, killing a third of its menfolk, devastating a third of the countryside, and sending back to the Najash! (the Negus) a third of the captured women and children. He remained there, imposing firm control over the land and reducing it to submission. A certain poet of the Yemenis has said, recalling how Daws Dhft Tha'labdn had imposed upon them the yoke of the Abyssinians: [Do not let anyone act] like Daws, and not like what he has fastened on his saddlebag [for us] (i.e., the yoke of the Abyssinians), that is, what he brought down on them in the shape of the Abyssinians; this has remained a proverbial saying in Yemen up to this day ⁵¹⁹ [This poet, much cited by al-Haraddri-i in his Iklil, appears in Nashwan al-Uirnyari, passim, as 'Alqamah Dha Yazan and'Alqamah b. Dhi Jadan. This name would connect him with Dhfi Jadan, one of the eight leading noble families of Ijimyari (see n. 5 07 above and n. 5 8 5 below), specifically from the Marib region. See al-Hamddni, Wil, index s.v. (usually cited simply as "Alqamah"); O. L6fgren, qama b. Di Cadan und seine Dichtung nach der Iklil-Auswahl in der Bibliotheca Ambrosiana, igg-2og; E12, s.v. al-Mathdmina (Chr. Robin).]

Dhfi jadan al-Himyari recorded the following lines, mentioning Himyar and the humiliations it now suffered after its former glory, and [recalling] the fortresses of Yemen Arydt had destroyed, in addition to his devastation of the countryside, that is, Silhin, Baynfin, and Ghumddn, castles without parallel among mankind:⁵²⁰

Gently, [0 woman!]. Tears cannot bring back what has gone by,
and do not destroy yourself out of grief, recalling those who
are dead.

After Bayrifin, of which there is no visible trace and vestige, and

after Silhin, shall men ever construct [such] buildings
again?

Dhfi jadan al-Himyari further said in this connection:

Leave me alone [O woman], may you be deprived of your father!
You will not be able to deflect me from my resolve-may
God heap shame on you, you have dried up my spittle!
When, to the music of singing girls, we became exhilarated by
wine, and when we were given to drink the finest vintage,
[that was indeed good].
Consuming wine is no shame for me, since my drinking
companion does not reproach me at all for it.
No one can hold back the onslaught of death, even though he
were to drink a healing remedy together with sniffing a
perfumed medicament.
Nor can any monk in a cell (*ustuwan*, literally, doorway,
portico) 521 whose walls [are so lofty that they] abut on to
[929] the nests (literally, "eggs") of the vulture.
Ghumdan, of which you have been told, and which they
constructed with a high roof 522 on a mountain top,
With skilled carpenter's (or smith's) work, and its lower part of
hewn stone and choicest damp and smooth clay.
Lamps filled with oil shine forth within it at eventide, like the
gleaming of lightning flashes,
Its date palms are planted up against it, and the fresh dates
almost bend the branches down to earth with their clusters.
Yet this once-new fortress has now become a pile of ashes, and
the consuming flames have transformed its former beauty.
Dhu Nuwas gave himself over to impending death, and he
warned his people of the afflictions that were to come upon
them. 523

520 These were former castles of pre-Islamic Yemen, and are mentioned as such by authors like al-Hamddni in the eighth book of his *Ikhl* devoted to the castles and fortresses of South Arabia, and Nashwan al-Virayari. Silhin or Salhin, in South Arabian inscriptions s1hm, was the royal palace of the kings of Saba' at Mdrib, the minting center for Sabaeen coins and the building in South Arabia most frequently mentioned in the inscriptions. Ghumddn (gndn, gmdn) was originally the royal residence at San'd of the Dhfi Gurat family, and is particularly frequently cited by the post-Islamic poets as an example of the transience of human achievement; in fact, although allegedly destroyed by the Abyssinian viceroy Abrahah or the Islamic caliph 'Uthmnd, it was several times refortified in the early Islamic centuries. Baynim is located by al-Hamani in the eastern part of the lands of the Bana'Ans. See al-Hamdani, *Wil*, 3-5, 12-2 1, 48-5 1, S 4-5 7, tr. 8-9, 14-19, 36-38, 40, *Nashwdn al-Himyari*, Die auf Siidarabien bezdglichen Angaben Nagwdns, io, So, 81; Ydqfit, *Buldn*, 1, 535-36, 111, 235, IV, 215-16; MULLER, "Ancient Castles Mentioned in the Eighth Volume of Al-Hamdiini's *Ikhl* and Evidence of Them in Pre-Islamic Inscription," 141-43, 145-47; Serjeant and R. Lewcock, "The Church (al-Qalis) of San'Xand Ghumdan Castle," 44; H2, s.v. Ghumdan (O. L6fgren).

521 For this word (< Greek st5a), see Dozy, *Suppl6ment*, I, 2z.

522. Reading, with al-AzraqI-, *Akhbdr Makkah*, 1, 87, *musmakan* (= text, n. 4).

523. As N61deke observed, trans. 194 n. i, the poet seems to echo the implication of the prose accounts by Ibn al-Kalb! and Ibn Ishdq, that Dhfi Nuwas was inadequately supported by his own followers, hence willingly sought his own death.

Ibn Dhi'bah al-Thaqafi 524 [Ibn Hisham's gloss in his *Sirat al-nabi*, ed. Wiistenfeld, 27 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 41, tr. 695, says that Dhi'bah was this poet's mother's name and that his own name was Rabi'ah b.'Abd Yiilil b. Salim ... Nothing seems to be known about this poet of al-Td'if.] recited, remembering Ijimyari when the black troops swept down on it and what the Himyarite people suffered from them:

By your life, there is no escape for a man when death and old
age overtake him!
By your life, a man has no open space to which he can flee, nor
indeed, any refuge!
What moralizing example can there be, after what came upon
Himyar's tribes one morning, 525

Namely, a swift-moving gathering of warriorS526 and spearmen,
 [gleaming in the sun] like the heavens just after rain,
 With battle cries deafening the charging horses, and with their
 putting to flight the warriors with their stink, 527
 Witches, -528 like the very grains of sand in number, who make
 the tender branches of trees dry up [at their approach].

525. One could alternatively translate, "Can there be anything after there came upon Himyar's tribes one morning a cause for bitter tears,," reading, with the Cairo edition, H, 127, dhat al-'abar for the text's dhat al-'ibar.

As for Hishdm b. Muhammad, he asserts that when the ships sent by Qaysar reached the Naidshi, the latter transported his army by means of them, and the troops landed on the coast of al-Mandab. 529 [That is, in the neighborhood of the Bdb al-Mandab, the straits connecting the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. South Arabian inscriptions speak of mdbn and its s1s1lt or s1s3lt = silsilah (a chain across an inlet or harbor?) in connection with the events of this period. Al-Hamddni mentions only the Bdb al-Mandab as a headland dangerous for seamen but locates a town of al-Mandab on or near the Tihamah coast at an unidentified spot between Farasan and the territory of the Banfi Majid b. Haydan, see his Sifat jazirat al-'Arab, 67, 72, 205, 258, and cf. EI2, s.v. Bab al-Mandab (G. Rentz). Beeston, "The Chain of al-Mandab," 1-6, discussed the passages of the Arabic historians and al-Hamdarii, and the mentions in the Byzantine Greek Martyrion Aretha, regarding the chain of al-Mandab and the landing(s) of the Abyssinians (since the latter source speaks of two landings, at spots widely apart). He concluded that the reports of an actual chain are fully historical, and thought that its location was at the Khar Ghurayrah, the inlet immediately behind the Cape of al-Mandab; see his map at P. 4.] He related: When Dhfi Nuwds heard of their approach, he wrote to the local princes (maqdwil)530 [Sing. miqwal, reflecting the mqwl of South Arabian inscriptions, with the sense "prince, minor ruler," or the residence of such a ruler, and cognate with qayl (on which see n. 473 above). See Beeston et al., Sabaic Dictionary, iio; Biella, Dictionary of Old South Arabic, Sabaean Dialect, 449.] summoning them to [930] provide him with military support and to unite in combating the invading army to repel it from their land. But they refused, saying, "Let each man fight for his own principedom (maqwalah) and region. " When Dhfi Nuwds saw that, he had a large number of keys made, and then loaded them on to a troop of camels and set out until he came up with the [Abyssinian] host. He said: "These are the keys to the treasuries of Yemen, which I have brought to you. You can have the money and the land, but spare the menfolk and the women and children." The army's leader said, "I will write to the king, " so he wrote to the Najdshi. The latter wrote back to the leader ordering him to take possession from the Yemenis of the treasuries. Dhfi Nuwas accompanied them until, when he brought them into San'd', he told the leader, "Dispatch trusted members of your troops to take possession of these treasuries." The leader divided up his trusted followers into detachments to go and take possession of the treasuries, handing over the keys to them. [Meanwhilej Dhfi Nuwds's letters had been sent to every region, containing the message "Slaughter every black bull within your land." Hence they massacred the Abyssinians so that none were left alive except for those who managed to escape.

The Najdshi heard what Dhfi Nuwds had done and sent against him seventy thousand men under the command of two leaders, one of them being Abrahah al-Ashram. When they reached Saril' and Dhfi Nuwds realized that he had not the strength to withstand them, he rode off on his horse, came to the edge of the sea and rushed headlong into it; this was the last ever seen of Dhfi Nuwis.

Abrahah set himself up as ruler over San'd' and its dependent districts (makhdlif),531 [For mikhlaf, see n. 462 above.] but did not send any tribute or captured plunder back to the Najdshi. The latter was informed that Abrahah had thrown off his obedience and now considered himself an independent potentate. Hence the Najiish! sent against him an army commanded by one of his retainers called Arydt. When Ary5t reached his camping place, Abrahah sent a message to him in these terms: "We are linked together by both the same homeland and the same faith, so we ought to look to the interests of our fellow countrymen and coreligionists who make up the troops who are with us respectively. So if you are agreeable, engage me in single combat, and whichever of us overcomes his opponent shall have the kingship, and the Abyssinians will not be killed because of our quarrel." Arydt agreed to this, but Abrahah planned to act deceitfully with him. They appointed a place where the two of them were to meet [for the fight], but Abrahah placed in an ambush for Aryat one of his slaves called '.r.n.j. d.h (?), in a depression [931] in the ground, near the spot where they were to fight. When they met together, Aryat moved forward first and lunged at Abrahah with his spear; but the spear slipped from off Abrahah's head and sliced off the end of his nose, hence his nickname of al-Ashram. Then '.r.n.j.d.h rose out from the depression and lunged with his spear at Arydt, piercing his body and killing him. Abrahah said to '.r.n.j.d.h, "Name your own reward!" The latter said, "I claim the right to sexual intercourse with every woman of Yemen before her marriage with her husband." Abrahah replied, "I concede that to you." '.r.n.j.d.h continued to enforce this right532 [Reading, with Addenda et emendanda, P. DXCI, fa-ghabara for the text's fa-'abara.] for a long period, until the people of Yemen rose up against him and killed him. Abrahah said, "The time has at last come for you to act as free men."533 [That is, for them no longer to support the dishonoring of their womenfolk. On the military struggle between Aryiit and Abrahah, see al-Tabari, 1, 943, P. 232 and n. 571 below.]

News of the killing of Arydt reached the Najdshi, and he therefore swore that he would not rest in his mind until he had shed Abraham's blood and overrun his land. News of the Najdshi's oath reached Abraham, and he accordingly wrote back to him, "O king, Arydt was merely your slave, and I am your slave also, He advanced against me with the intention of weakening your royal power and of slaughtering your troops. I asked him to stop fighting me until I might send an envoy to you; if, then, you should order him to desist from attacking me, [all right] but if not, I would hand over to him all my power and possessions. However, he refused to accept anything except to make war on me. I thus attacked him and gained the upper hand over him. Any power that I possess is yours, but I have heard that you have sworn not to stop until you shed my blood and overrun my land. Hence I have now forwarded to you a phial of my blood and a leather bag of soil from my territory. By means of these, you will be able to secure release from your oath. I ask for the completion of your favor upon me, O king, for I am merely your slave; any power and splendor which I have is your power and splendor." The Najdshi regarded him [once more] with favor, and confirmed him in his office. 534 [As described in n. 518 above, the invading Abyssinians set up in Yemen a ruler, Sumu-yafa'Agwa', Procopius's Esimphaios, who was now subordinate to the Abyssinian king Ella Asb6ha, Procopius's Hellesthaios. Abraham, originally the slave of a Greek merchant in Adulis, led a revolt of discontented Abyssinian troops against Sumu-yafa' in ca. 533, and replaced him as ruler in Yemen; subsequent expeditions sent in the next year or so by t1la Asb6ha, which must be the ones led by Aryat in al-Tabari's account here, were unable to dislodge Abraham. After the Abyssinian king's death in ca. 546, the fait accompli of Abraham's dominion in South Arabia was recognized by Ella Asbi%a's successors in Axum, but Abraham would only agree to pay tribute to the Byzantine emperor Justinian I, as a remote suzerain unlikely to interfere in Yemeni affairs and trouble his untrammelled power there, rather than to the much closer Abyssinian king. In 657 I-jimyarite era/A.D. 547-48, the celebrated inscription of Abraham recording repairs to the Marib dam mentions that he quelled a rebellion by a son of Sumu-yafa'. See Smith, "Events in South Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," 459; Altheim. and Stiehl, *Christentum am Roten Meer*, 1, 449-51; Rimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic Times*, 300-301; EI2, s.v. Abrahah (A. F. L. Beeston). The circumstantial detail in the accounts both of Ibn Ishdq and Ibn al-Kalbi regarding Abraham's dealings with Aryat and 'Atwadah/'Atfi6h must be legendary additions to the basic fact of Abraham's assumption of power in Yemen. Al-Azraq-1, *Akhbar Makkah*, 88, in his account of these events, has some additional touches, such as the fact that the Najdshi's residence was in arid Akscim in the land of the Uabash. Even by early Islamic times, the name of Axum had virtually disappeared from Arab consciousness. It is mentioned in poetry written about Abraham's "Expedition of the Elephant" against Mecca, with Abraham called Abui Yakslam, and 'Adi b. Zayd speaks of the C71 Barbar wa-al-Yaks5m = the Abyssinians, but when al-Hamididni and Nashwan b. Sald mentioned it, it must have been a term from the remote past. See 'Ad-1 b., *Zayd, Dfwdn*, 47 no., 5, Ibn Hishdm, *Sirat al-nabf*, ed. Wiistenfeld, 39-40, 45 = ed. al-Saqqa et al., 1, 61, 70, tr. 29, 33. N61deke, trans. 198 n. 2, took Barbar as a place name, the ancient form of modern Berbera = the coasts of Somaliland and Eritrea in general, and the name Barbaria for this is certainly found in the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.]

The narrative returns to that of Ibn Ishdq. He related: Arydt remained in Yemen for several years in the course of that period of his rule. Then Abraham the Abyssinian, who was one of his troops, [932] fought with him over the Abyssinian dominion in Yemen until the Abyssinians became split into two groups, with one faction joining up with each contender. Then one of them marched against the other. When the troops drew near and approached each other, Abraham sent a message to Arydt: "You will not wish to cause the Abyssinians to encounter each other in battle to the point that you destroy part of them, so come out against me and fight, and I will come out against you and fight, and whichever of us is able to smite his opponent, the latter's troops will come over and join the victor." Arydt sent a reply: "You have proposed a just procedure, so come forth [against me].", Abraham went forth; he was short, fleshy, and with a stout body, and held fast to the Christian faith. Arydt marched out against him; he was a powerful, tall, and handsome man, and bore a spear in his hand. Behind Abraham was a hillock that protected his rear, and concealed behind it was one of his slaves called 'Atwadah ('Atfidah). When the two contestants drew near to each other, Arydt raised his spear and struck Abraham's head with it, aiming at the top of his skull. But the spear-blow fell across Abraham's forehead and split his eyebrow, eye, nose, and lip; for this reason, Abraham was called al-Ashram. Abraham's slave boy 'Atwadah sprang upon Arydt from behind Abraham and killed him. Arydt's troops then went over to Abraham, so that all the Abyssinians in Yemen rallied to his side. 'Atwadah said concerning the killing of Arydt: "I am 'Atwadah- from a base stock-without a noble father or mother," meaning, "Abraham's slave has killed you."

He related: Al-Ashram at this point said to 'Atwadah, "Choose what you wish, O 'Atwadah ... 535 [According to the editor of the Cairo text, 11, 129 n. 4, something has dropped out here.] even though you have killed him; we have only now the responsibility for paying Arydt's blood money." 'Atwadah replied, "My choice is that I should live the [93 3] first opportunity for sexual intercourse with every bride from the people of Yemen before she enters the possession of her husband," and Abraham granted him this. He then handed over the blood money for Arydt. Everything Abraham did was without the knowledge of the Najdshi, king of the

Abyssinians.

When news of all that reached the latter, he became filled with rage and said, "He has attacked my own commander and killed him without any instruction from me!" He swore an oath that he would not leave Abrahah in power until he had overrun his land and cut off his forelock. When Abraham heard this, he shaved his head and filled a leather sack with the soil of Yemen, and then sent it to the Najdshi with the message: "O King, AryAt was only your slave, and I am your slave too. We disputed about your command; both of us owed you obedience, but I was stronger in directing the affairs of the Abyssinians, firmer and more skillful in statesmanship regarding them. When I heard about the king's oath, I shaved my head completely, and I have dispatched to him a sack of the earth of Yemen in order that the king may put it under his feet and thus fulfill his oath." When this message reached the Najdshi, he showed Abrahah his favor [once more] and wrote back to him: "I confirm you in your office in the land of Yemen until such time as a further command of mine reaches you."

When Abrahah perceived that the Najdshi had shown him favor and had appointed him viceroy over the Abyssinian troops and the land of Yemen, he sent to Abu Murrah b. Dhi Yazan and took from him his wife Rayhanah bt. 'Alqamah b. Malik b. Zayd b. Kahlan. The father of Rayhanah was Dhu Jadan. Abfi Murrah had a son by her, Ma'di Karib b. Abi Murrah. She now had a son by Abrahah, after Abu Murrah, Masruq b. Abrahah and a daughter by him, Basbasah. Abfi Murrah fled from him. Abrahah remained in Yemen, while his slave 'Atwadah was for a long time exercising there the right Abrahah had conceded to him as 'Atwadah's chosen reward; but then a man of Himyar or of Khath'am 536 attacked 'Atwadah and killed him. When Abrahah received the news of his death-and Abrahah was a magnanimous, noble leader, piously [934] attached to his Christian religion 537 -he exclaimed, "The time is nigh for you, O people of Yemen, to have over you a man of solid judgment who is able to exercise the self-control appropriate to men of character. By God, if I had known, when I let 'Atwadah choose his own reward, that he would ask what he did, I would

536. Khath'am b. Anmar were an Arab tribe of the Sardt mountain region between al-Td'if and Najrdn, i.e., the hinterland of the modern province of 'Asir, although the tribe is not mentioned as such in the South Arabian inscriptions personal communication from Professor Chr. Robin). As al-Tabarī relates, 1, 936-37, PP. 221-23 below, Abrahah is said to have marched into t-eir territory en route for Mecca at the time of the "Expedition of the Elephant," defeated the Khath'am, and compelled their chief to guide him along the road to Mecca as far as al-T'if. See Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel-Strenziok, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 1, Table 234, 1, 45, 345; E12, s.v. Khath'arn (G. Levi Della Vida).

537 Ks- N61deke remarked, trans. 200 n. 3, such an encomium hardly squares with Abrahah's long tolerance of 'Atwadah's behavior or with his own appropriation of Abfi Murrah b. Dhi Yazan's wife.

never have allowed him the choice and would never have heaped favors on him in any way. I swear by God, there shall be no blood price exacted from you for his death, and you will not receive any untoward retribution from me for his death. ,538 He (Ibn Ishdq) related: Abrahah now built the cathedral church (qalis, qullays) at San'd'-such a church as had never been constructed on earth in its time. He then wrote to the Najdshi, king of the Abyssinians: "O king, I have constructed for you a church whose like has never been built for any monarch before you. I shall not give up until I have diverted the Arab pilgrims to it.,,539 When

538. Al-Tabari has thus given two versions of Abrahah's rise to power and fame, those of Ibn al-Kalb! and of Ibn Ishaq, the two accounts being substantially in agreement. But in *Abla al-Faraj al-Isfahani*, Aghdm3, XVII, 304-307, a fuller form of what was, given by al-Dinawari in his *al-Akhbdr al-tiwil*, 62, there is a third account, in which Abrahah is a subordinate commander of 'Aryit's, of low birth (Id bayta lahu), who kills Ary5t with a poisoned dagger. Abrahah's lowly birth may be the origin of Procopius's tale that Abrahah was originally a slave in Adulis. See N61deke, trans. .200 n. 4.

539. qalfs, qullays, via Syriac qalesa, from Greek ekklsia. The site of this famous church is still shown in San'd' as a large, shallow pit lined with courses of rubble masonry and called Ghurqat al-Qalis/al-Qullays, and Serjeant and Lewcock saw no reason to doubt that this site, near the citadel, is indeed that of Abrahah's building, which had a west-east orientation like that of the Axumite churches of Abyssinia. Al-Azraqi, *Akhbdr Makkah*, 88-go, citing information from "trustworthy Yemeni shaykhs at Sanl", " provides a highly detailed and plausible account of the structure, stating that building stone for it was taken from the "palace of Bilqis" at Mdrib, and giving copious measurements of its various features. He further mentions a dome at what would have been the east end of the church, and in this last were two ornamented beams of teak (sij) called Ku'ayb al-Ah.w.z! (this latter component of the name said to mean al-Hurr, "the free one,;" Itin their language") and his wife, respectively, which were considered as objects of superstitious reverence. Shahid has plausibly suggested that the dome covered a martyrion or shrine and that the images of Ku'ayb, and his wife were originally those of saints and martyrs, very probably those of Najrdn: Ku'ayb's name might be a reminiscence of the Najrin martyr al-Hdrith b. Ka'b and his wife could be the most celebrated women martyr of Najrdn, kuhaymah. Around the church was a large, open area to accommodate pilgrims and visitors, and corresponding to the Haram around the Meccan Ka'bah. Al-Azraqi, op. cit., gi-92, further describes how the church continued in use by the Christian community of San'd' (which may have persisted up to the fourth/tenth century or beyond) until the 'Abb5sid caliph al- Mansfir ordered his governor in Yemen al-'Abb5s b. al-Rabi'al-Hdrithi to demolish it, a process that was accomplished but resented by the San'ams, both Christian and Muslim, because of their reverence for Ku'ayb and his wife. Hence Nbldeke's comment, trans. 2oi n. i, that Christianity put down only weak roots in Yemen and at the time of the coming of

Islam to the province had left hardly any trace, is clearly wrong. See Bell, *The Origin of Islam in Its Christian Environment*, 39-41;

the Arabs fell to talking about Abrahah's letter to the Najjishi, one of the men charged with intercalating the calendar (a]-nasa'ah) flew into a rage. He was one of the Banfi Fuqaym, part of the larger tribal group of the Banfi Mdlk .540 He set out until he came to the cathedral church and then defecated (qa'ada) in it, and then departed and reached his own land. Abrahah was informed about the incident and demanded, "Who perpetrated this deed?" They told him, "A man from that House at Mecca, to which the Arabs make pilgrimage, did it, because he had heard your words I shall divert the Arab pilgrims to it (i.e., the new cathedral). He became enraged, came here, and defecated in it, aiming to show that it was not worthy of that purpose." Abrahah himself became full of ire and swore that he would march against the House and demolish it. 541

Now Abrahah had in his retinue some men of the Arabs who had come to him seeking his bounty, including Muhammad b Khuzd'! b. Huz5bah of the Banfi Dhakwdn and then of the larger tribal group of the Banu Sulaym, 542 together with a group of his

Trimingham, *Christianity among the Arabs in Pre-Islamic times*, 304; Shahid, "Byzantium in South Arabia," 81-83; Serjeant and Lewcock, "The Church (al-Qafis) of SanWand Ghumdiin Castle," 44-48; Robin, in *Suppl6ment au dictionnaire de Ja Bible*, s.v. Sheba. II, cols. 1192-93.

540. The Fuqaym b. 'Ad-1 were a branch of Mdlk of Kininah, a Hijizi tribe who dwelt in the vicinity of Mecca and from whom sprang Qu-ayy, founder of Quraysh's fortunes in Mecca. They were said to have been entrusted, in pre-Islamic times, with the periodic intercalation of an extra month in the lunar calendar in order to make the Hajj or Pilgrimage coincide with the fairs and markets that accompanied it. If it had been true that Abrahah had planned to build up \$anW into a pilgrimage center rivaling Mecca, the Band Fuqaym's function as nasa'ah or intercalators would have become otiose. See Ibn Hishbu, *Sirat al-nabf*, ed. Wiistenfeld, 30 = ed. Saqq5 et al., 1, 44-47, tr. 21-22; Muhammad b. Habib, *Kitab al-muhabbar*, 156-57; Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel-Strenziok, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 1., Table 47, 11, 6,247; al-Azraqi, *Akhbi!rMakkah*, 125; EI2, s.v. Kindna (W. M. Watt), NasF (A. Moberg).

541. The Arabic sources have differing information on the location of Abrahah's church (\$an'd', Najrdn, or a place on the seashore) and on the person(s) desecrating it (Nufayl b. Habib al-Khath'arni~ a man or men from Kindnah, etc.), but all of them point to Quraysh of Mecca being the real instigators of the desecration or burning of the church, Kindnah being of course closely connected with Quraysh. See Kister, "Some Reports Concerning Mecca. From Jdhiliyya to Islam," 63-65 (utilizing in-formation from Ps.-al-Asma'!, *Nihdyat al-arab ft akhbdr al-Furs wa-al-Arab*; see on this work n. 624 below).

542. Dhakwan b. Tha'labah were one of the three great subdivisions of the

fellow tribesmen, including his brother, Qays b. Khuzd'!. While they were at Abrahah's court, there came round unexpectedly for them one of Abrahah's festivals. He sent along to them on that [93 51 feast day some of his morning meal. Abrahah used to eat [animals] testicles. When Abrahah's food was brought to them, they protested, "By God, if we eat this the Arabs will never stop blaming us for it as long as we live! `3 Muhammad b. Khuzd'i arose and went to Abrahah, saying, "O king, today is our festival when we eat only the flank and forelegs [of beasts]." Abrahah replied, "We will send you what you like; I was only showing honor to you with food from my morning meal because of your high status in my eyes." He then crowned Muhammad b. KbuzX1 and appointed him governor over Mudar. He further commanded him to go out among the [Arab] people and summon them to make pilgrimage to the cathedral, the church he had built. So Muhammad b. Khuzd'l went off until he reached a spot in the territory of the Banfi Kindnah. Meanwhile, the people of Tihdrnah" had received information about Muhammad's mission and what he was aiming to do, so they dispatched against him a man of Hudhayl called powerful North Arab tribe of Sulaym b. Mansur, whose territories in Hijdz lay between Mecca and Medina, but bordered closely on Mecca; in both & pre-Islamic and the post-Islamic periods, Dhakwin were the closest Sulami allies of the Meccans, intermarrying with some of the leading clans of Quraysh, including Umayya. Muhammad b. Khuzii'i b. 'Alqama b. Huzabah, who is said here to have been appointed chief over the tribes of Mudar for Abrahah and who, according to Ibn Sa'd, was actually crowned by Abrahah, has a certain fame through being one of the few people who bore the name Muhammad in the Jahiliyyah. See Ibn al-Kalbi- Caskel-Strenziok, *famharat al-nasab*, 1, Table 125, II, 18-19, 235, 517; Muham-mad b. al-Habib, *Kitdb al-muhabbar*, 130; idem, *Kitib al-munammaq*, 68-72; M.J. Kister, "ome Reports Concerning Mecca. From Jdhiliyya to Islam," 72; Lecker, *The Bam~ Sulaym. A Contribution to the Studyof Early1slam*, gi-98, io8-ig; EI2, s.v. Sulaym (Lecker).

543. The Arabs are reported to have been repelled by certain of the customs and food1practices of the Abyssinians; cf. the poet of Hudhayl's revulsion from his Abyssinian wife cited by Nbldeke, trans. .203 n. 2. But it seems strange that the Arabs of that time should have objected to eating animals' testicles when, at the present day, they are eaten as a delicacy all over the Middle East.

544. That is, the lowland strip along the Red Sea shores, running the length of what was in later times the provinces of Hijdz, 'Asir and Yemen. See Ydqfit, Buldin, 11, 63-64; E12, s.v. Tih5ma (G. R. Smith; and for its pre-Islamic history, Robin, "La Tihdma y6mdnite avant l'Islarn: Notes d'histoire et de g6ographie historique," 222-33.

Iurwah b. Hayy5d al-MildS1545 who shot Muhammad with an arrow and killed him. Muhammad's brother Qays was with him, and when Muhammad was killed, he fled and went to Abrahah, informing him of Muhammad's death. This sent Abrahah into an even greater rage and fury, and he swore that he would lead an expedition against the Banfi Kindnah and tear down the House [at Mecca] .546

Hislidin b. Muhammad related, however, as follows: After the Najashi had restored Abrahah to favor and had confirmed him in his charge, the latter built the church at San'd'. He made it a marvelous building, whose like had never been seen before, using gold and remarkable dyestuffs and stains. He wrote to Qay~ar

545. The Milds b. Sdhilah were a subdivision of Hudhayl. See Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel-Strenziok, jan~harat al-nasab, I, Table 58, 11, 407.

546. Abrahah's appointment of Muhammad b. Khuzd'i and then his invasion of Ijjidz, which later Meccan lore may have transformed into the "Expedition of the Elephant," seems to have been part of a far-reaching policy of extending Abrahah's dominion into central and even northern Arabia, confronting there Persia and its allies, through alliances with and favors to the Bedouin tribes of those regions. This was clearly the case with the expedition which he led into central Arabia in ca. 552, which included contingents from Kindah and Ma'add and which defeated the Lakhmid al-Mundhir III at Hulubdn or Halaban (see n. 409 above). The poet of al-Td'if, Umayyah b. Abi al-Salt, an older contemporary of the Prophet Muham-maii, speaks of "kings of Kinaah, heroic warriors, fierce in battle, falcons" around Abrahah's elephant in the expedition of that name (Sharh dfwdn Umayyah, ed. Sayf al-Din al-Kdtib and Ahmad 'Isdm al-Katib, 65; Bahjah 'Abd al-Ghafar al- Ijadithi, Umayyah b. Abi al-Salt, hayjtuahu wa-shi'ruhu, 337-38 no. 154; Ibn Hishdrn, Sirat al-nabi, ed. WiAstenfeid, 40 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 6.2, tr. 30). Pro copius states that the Byzantine emperor tried to bring together in an alliance

"Qays," specified in a parallel source as "the prince of Kindah and Ma'add," with the viceroy of the Abyssinians (cited by N61deke, trans. 204 n. 2).

It is clear that Abrahah's expedition to Mecca, whatever its place in the history and chronology of events at that time (see regarding this, n. 563 below), contained substantial bodies of Arab tribesmen as well as a core of Abyssinian troops, even though the account of Ibn Ishdq, in al-Tabari, 1, 936, p. 222 below, speaks for obvious reasons of Arab-Islamic national pride-of the attackers as being wholly Abyssinians and of the Arabs as solidly united against them in defense of the Holy House in Mecca. Abrahah received a welcome in al-Td'if and assistance to find his way to Mecca (al-Tabari, 1, 937, P. 223 below), and varying traditions on the expedition speak of participation in Abrahah's army by South Arab tribes like 'Akk, Ash'ar, Khath'am, Balhdrith, and Khawldn, and by North Arab tribes like Sulayrn of Mudar. Muhamma(fb. Habib in his Munammaq, 70, refers to the incident of the Mudaxii troops recoiling from eating animals' testicles and implies that the food habits of North and South Arabs were different. See Kister, "Some Reports Concerning Mecca. From Jdhiliya to Islam," 67-73.

telling him that he intended to build a church at San'd' whose traces and whose fame would last forever and asked for the emperor's aid in this. Qay~ar accordingly sent back to him skilled artisans, mosaic cubes, and marble.⁷ When the building was completed, Abrahah wrote to the Najdsh! that he planned to divert to it the pilgrims of the Arabs. When the Arabs heard that, they [936] regarded it with perturbation and it assumed momentous proportions in their eyes. A man from the Banfi Mdlik b. Kindnah went off until he reached Yemen, entered the temple, and defecated in it. Abrahah's wrath was aroused, and he resolved to lead an expedition against Mecca and to raze the House to the ground. He set off with the Abyssinian army, including the elephant .548 Dhfi Nafar al-Himyar! encountered him in battle. Abrahah fought with him and captured him. Dhfi Nafar pleaded, "O king, I am nothing but your slave, so spare me, for keeping me alive will be more useful to you than killing me"; so he spared him. Abrahah marched onward. Nufayl b. Habib al-Khath'ami opposed him, but Abrahah engaged him in battle, putting his supporters to flight and capturing him. Nufayl asked Abrahah to spare him; Abrahah agreed, and made him his guide in the land of the Arabs.

547. This seems perfectly feasible, given that, in early Islamic times, the Umayyad caliph al-Walid I asked the Byzantine emperor (presumably Justinian II) to send skilled artisans and mosaic cubes (al-fusayfisX, from Greek psiphos, the word used here in al-Tabari's text) for the decoration of the Umayyad Mosque at Damascus and the Prophet's Mosque at Medina. See H. A. R. Gibb, "Arab-Byzantine Relations under the Umayyad Caliphate," 51-56. As mentioned in n.539 above, we have highly detailed descriptions of the interior decoration of Abrahah's church, which included a lavish use of tropical hardwoods, gold, silver, mosaic cubes, jewels, etc., in both the portico (aywan) of the church and the part of the basilica beneath the dome (qubbah). It is improbable that all this could have been achieved without outside assistance. The completed building must indeed have seemed like a wonder of the world, and explains the attachment of the local people, both Christian and Muslim, to it (see n. 539 above). As well as the account by al-Azraq-1 referred to in the above-mentioned note, see also the account of the church by the thirteenth-century Egyptian Coptic author Aba Salih al-

Armani (one which may possibly have been influenced by the author's knowledge of Egyptian church interiors), *The Churches and Monasteries of Egypt*, trans. B. J. A. Evetts, 300-302; Serjeant and Lewcock, "The Church (al-Qalis) of San'a' and Ghumddn Castle," 47.

548. N61deke, trans. 206 n. i, cites the Byzantine historian John Malalas that the Abyssinian king rode one of the four elephants pulling the royal coach or cart. Whether Abrahah actually rode on the elephant here is not explicit.

The narrative returns to the account of Ibn Ishdq. He said: When Abrahah decided on an expedition against the House [at Mecca], he ordered the Abyssinians to prepare for the campaign and put themselves in a state of readiness, and he set out with the army and with the elephant. He related: The Arabs heard about this; they found the news alarming and were filled with fear at it. They regarded fighting in defense of the Ka'bah, God's Holy House, as a duty laid upon them when they heard of Abrahah's intention to tear it down. A man who was one of the nobles of the Yemenis called Dhia Nafar rose up against him and summoned his people, and those of the Arabs who responded to his call, to make war on Abrahah and oppose him strenuously in defense of God's House and in the face of Abrahah's intention of demolishing and reducing it to a pile of ruins. A certain number rallied to his side. He confronted Abrahah, but Abrahah attacked him, and Dhfi Nafar and his followers were put to flight. He himself was taken prisoner and brought before Abrahah. The latter was on the point of killing him when Dh-d Nafar said to him: "O king, don't put me to death, for it may be that my presence at your side could be more advantageous for you than killing me." Abrahah therefore desisted from killing him, but kept him in captivity by him, loaded with fetters; Abrahah was a magnanimous man. After this, Abrahah continued onward in accordance with his plan, intending to do what he had set out to do, until when he reached the territory of the Khath'am, he was opposed by Nufayl [9371b. Habib al-Khath'ami with a force from the two component tribes of Khath'am, Shahriin, and'NahiS ' 549 and others from the tribes of the Arabs who followed him. He attacked Abrahah, but the latter routed him. He was taken prisoner and brought before Abrahah. Abrahah intended to put Nufayl to death, but he pleaded with him: "O king, don't kill me, for I will act as your guide through the land of the Arabs; these two hands of mine are your sureties for the obedience and good behavior of the two tribes of Khath'am, Shahrhn, and Ndhis." Hence Abrahah spared him and released

549. in the genealogy of Khath'am, these two subdivisions were the descendants of two of the great-grandsons of Khath'arn b. Arimar; the name of Shahrn survives today. See Ibn al-Kalbi-Caskel-Strenziok, *Jamharat al-nasab*, 1, Tables 124-25, H,345-

him. Abrahah went, forth with Nufayl, the latter acting as his guide along the road until they reached al-Ti,if.550 Mas'fid b. Mu'attib came out with the men of Thaq if,51 ' and addressed Abrahah: "O king, we are your servants, obedient and submissive to you, and you will not find us offering any resistance to you. This house of ours (they meant [the house of] Allat) is not the House which you seek. You want the House which is at Mecca (they meant the Ka'bah), and we will send a man with you who will guide you." He therefore passed them over and did not molest them.

They sent with him Abfi Righal [as guide], and Abrahah departed, accompanied by Abfi Righdl, until the latter brought him as far as al-Mughammis. As soon as he had conducted Abrahah thither, Abfi Righdl died at that very place. The Arabs subsequently hurled stones at his grave; it is this grave at which people hurl stones at al-Mughammis [today] .552 When Abrahah en

550. MOammad b. Habib, *Munammaq*, 68, says that Abrahah gathered to-gether a force, "a motley crew of the evildoers of the Arabs" (*fussijq al-'Arab wa-takharirihim*), mainly from Khath'arn and the Banfi Munabbih b. Ka'b b. al-H5rith b. Ka'b, said to have been traditionally hostile to the Ka'bah, and all under Niifayl's leadership. This author, at least, does concede that, pace Ibn Ishdq (see n. 546 above) Arabs were included in Abrahah's army.

551. As Mas'ad b. Mu'attib says here, the shrine of the pre-Islamic goddess Alldt was located at al-Til'if, and the popularity of its cult made it a considerable rival to that of Aldh in the Ka'bah of Mecca during pre-Islamic times, until the shrine was despoiled and destroyed at the surrender of al-T5'if in 8/630. 'Urwah b. Mas'fid was one of the leaders of t-e Ahldf group of Thaqif during the time of the Prophet's career; Abldf were more inclm:ed toward conciliation with the Prophet than the other group of Thaqif, the Banfi Mdlik. 'Urwah was in fact assassinated on his return from the Prophet's side in Medina, allegedly having become a secret Muslim working for the surrender of his town to the Muslims; he thereby earned the Islamic designations of shahid, "martyr," and of sahijbi, Companion of the Prophet. See Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, 102-04; EI2, s.v.'Urwa b. MasTid (C. E. Bosworth).

552. Abui Righ5l is at best a semilegendary figure, the story of whose guiding Abrahah to Mecca may have been elaborated as part of the anti-Thaqafi bias of pietistic Muslim circles hostile to the role of prominent men of al-Td'if within the Umayyad caliphate like'Ubaydalldh b. Ziyad b. Abihi and al-Hajjdb. Yfisuf. How-ever, the practice of stoning Abfi Righ5l's alleged burial place must have developed early, as attested to by mention of it in a verse of the Umayyad poet Jarir (d. 110/728-29 or shortly thereafter) cited by al-Azraqi, *Akhbdr Makkah*, 93. Al-Mughammis or al-Mughammis was a valley just off the Mecca to al-Td'if road on the edge of the Haram of Mecca. See al-Bakri, *MuJam md istaJam*, 111, 1248; Ydqt, *Buldiin*, V, 161-62; EP, s.vv. Abfi Righ5l (S. A. Bonebakker) and al-Mughammis

camped at al-Mughammis, he sent forward one of the Abyssinians called al-Aswad b. Maqqid (or Mafsfld) with a troop of cavalry until al-Aswad reached Mecca, from where he sent back to Abrahah captured beasts taken from the people of Mecca, Quraysh, and others. Among these, Abrahah acquired two hundred camels belonging to 'Abd al-Muttalib b. Hashim, at that time the para- 553 mount chief and lord of Quraysh. Quraysh, Kindnah, Hudhayl, and all the rest of the people who dwelled in the Holy Enclosure (al-Haram) contemplated giving fight to Abrahah's forces, but then realized that they lacked the power to resist him, so renounced the idea.

[938] Abrahah sent Hunatah al-Himyari to Mecca and instructed him: "Ask who is the lord and noble leader of this territory, and then inform him that the king tells them, 'I have not come to make war on you, but have merely come to destroy the House. If you do not wish to defend it by force of arms, then there will be no need for us to shed your blood; and if he (i.e., 'Abd al-Muttalib) does not intend to oppose us by fighting, then bring him back to me.'" Now when Hundtah entered Mecca, he asked who was the lord and noble leader of Quraysh, and was told that this was 'Abd al-Muttalib b. Hdshim b.'Abd Mandf b. Qusayy; so he went to him and delivered the message Abrahah had commanded him to communicate. 'Abd al-Muttalib replied, "By God, we don't want to fight with him, for we have no power to do so. But this is the Holy House of God and the House of His friend Ibrahim (Abraham), " or words to that effect, "and if He defends it against him, well, it is

(ed.). The custom of stoning Abfi Righ5l's grave bears an obvious resemblance to the ritual stoning of Satan at Mind in the course of the Pilgrimage ceremonies. See EF, s.v. Djamra (F. Buhl-J. Jornier).N61deke-, trans. 2o8 n. i, citing the anthology al-Kamil of al-Mubarrad, noted that in post-Islamic times Hudhayl were still reviled for having guided the Abyssinians against the Ka'bah, but he considered this to be really an echo of the alleged role of Hudhalis in guiding Tubba'Tuban As'ad Abfi Karib against the Ka'bah, see al-Tabafl, 1, 903-904, PP. 168-69 above.

553. The importance of the figure of 'Abd al-Muttalib, great-grandson of Qusayy and grandfather of the Prophet, has doubtless been inflated by Islamic tradition. At the time of Abrahah, he was clan chief of Hashim and probably the de facto leader of a group of Meccan clans who tried to negotiate with Abrahah if only to gain some advantage over their rivals within Mecca, but we have no solid information about his role here, and N61deke, 2og n. i, was justly skeptical. See Buhl, Das LebenMuhammeds, 113-16; Watt, Muhammad atMecca, 30-33; EI2, s.v.'Abd al- Muttalib (W. M. Watt).

His House and His sanctuary; whereas if He allows Abrahah to get possession of it, then, by God, we have no one who can defend it from him," or words to that effect. Hun#ah told him, "You must come back [with us] to the king, for he has ordered me to bring you to him." Ijundtah accordingly set off with 'Abd al-Muttalib, the latter accompanied by one of his sons, until they reached the army camp. 'Abd al-Muttalib enquired after Dh-d Nafar, who was a friend of his, and was directed to him, Dhfi Nafar being however in confinement. 'Abd al-Muttalib said, " O Dhfi Nafar, have you any means of relief for the trouble which has come upon us?" The latter replied, "What relief is possible from a man held captive at the king's hand, one who expects to be killed at any moment (literally, "in the morning or evening")? I can't avail at all in regard to your misfortune, except that Unays, the keeper of the elephant, is a friend of mine. I will send a message to him and will commend you to him, put the case to him for helping you as strongly as possible, and ask him to try to arrange an audience for you with the king. So make your request to him, and Unays will intercede with him on your behalf as skillfully as possible for him." 'Abd al- Muttalib responded, "That's as much as I can hope." Dhfi Nafar accordingly sent a message to Unays, and came to hiM554 saying, " O Unays, 'Abd al-Muttalib is the chief of Quraysh and master of the Meccan caravan (fr);555 he feeds the people on the plains and the wild beasts on the mountain peaks.556 The king has seized two [9391 hundred of his camels, so I ask permission for him to come before

554. Following the suggested emendation of text, n. e, fa-ffahu. 555. Thus in text, in Ibn Hishim, Sirat al-nab!, ed. al-Saqq5 et al., 1, 5 1, and in al- Azraq-1, AkhbC7r Makkah, 94, but Ibn Hisham, op. cit., ed. Wastenfeld, 3 3, trans. 25,has 'ayn, "well," i.e., the well of Zamzam in Mecca.

556. An allusion to the rifadah, the supplying of provisions to pilgrims and traders coming to Mecca for the l-ajj and its attendant fairs. it was linked to another service, that of sijyah, the supplying of water, nabidh or date wine, and the semiliquid foodstuff sawiq to the pilgrims also. Both of these were said to have been established in Mecca by Qusayy for the 'Abd al-Dar clan but usurped by the 'Abd Manif clan, of whom Hashim were a component. These rights are adduced by later Islamic authors as showing the nobility of the Prophet's clan in pre-Islamic times, but in reality must have been not so much philanthropic or social services as much as lucrative sources of revenue for the holders Hashim. See Gaudefroy- Demombynes, Le p6lerinage a la Mekke, 89-ioi; Bosworth, "The Terminology of the History of the Arabs in the j5hiliyya According to Khwdrazm-i's 'Keys of the Sciences,'" 31-33.

the king, and be as useful as possible on his behalf." Unays replied, "I'll do that." Unays spoke to Abrahah, saying, "O king, this is the chief of Quraysh, now in your court, who is seeking an audience of you. He is

master of the Meccan caravan, and feeds the people on the plain and the wild beasts on the mountain peaks. So grant him permission to come before you, so that he may tell you his request, and treat him kindly!" He related: Abrahah granted 'Abd al-Muttalib an audience. Now * 4some, and well-built 'Abd al-Muttalib was an impressive, han man. When Abrahah beheld him, he treated him with too great a respect and kindness to allow 'Abd al-Muttalib to sit below him. Abrahah did not, however, want the Abyssinians to see him let-ting'Abd al-Muttalib sit at his side on his royal throne, so he came down from his throne and then sat on his carpet, bidding'Abd al- Muttalib sit on it also by his side. He then told his interpreter to ask him what was his request of the king. The interpreter passed these words on to 'Abd al-Muttalib, and the latter said, "My request of the king is that he should give me back the two hundred camels of mine which he has seized." When the interpreter informed Abrahah of this, Abrahah told him through the interpreter, "You impressed me favorably when I saw you, but I went off you (zahidtu ffka) when you spoke to me. Do you speak to me about the two hundred camels which I seized, and brush aside a House that enshrines your religion and the religion of your forefathers, and which I have come to destroy, and say nothing to me about it?" 'Abd al-Muttalib replied: "I am the owner of the camels; the House has a lor~ o*f its own who will defend it." Abrahah said, "He won't be able to defend it against me!" But 'Abd al-Muttalib re- torted, "That's your own affair; just give me back my camels!" A certain learned scholar has asserted that 'Abd al-Muttalib had gone to Abrahah, when the latter sent Hundtah to him, accompanied by Ya'mar557 b. Nufdthah b. 'Ad-1 & al-Du'il b. Bakr b. 'Abd Mandt b. Kindnah, who was at that time chief of the Bania Kindnah, and Khuwaylid b. Wdthilah al-Hudhali, chief of Hudhayl at the time. They offered Abrahah a third of the wealth (amwal) of [9401 Tihimah if he would go back home and not destroy the House, but

557. Following the correct reading for this name in Ibn Hisham, *Sira t al-Na bl*, ed. WUstenfeld, 34 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 52, trans. 25, and in *al-Azraq-l*, *Akhbar Makkah*, 9 5, against the 'Amr of the text.

he refused. But God is more knowing [about the truth of this]. At any rate, Abrahah had meanwhile restored to 'Abd al-Muttalib the camels he had seized. When they left him, 'Abd al-Muttalib went back to Quraysh and told them the news. He ordered them to go forth from Mecca and seek refuge on the mountain tops and in the defiles, fearing violent behavior from the [Abyssinian] army. 'Abd al-Muttalib then arose and took hold of the door-ring, that of the door o of & Ka'bah, and a group of Quraysh stood with him praying to God and implor- ing His help against Abrahah and his troops. 'Abd al-Muttalib recited at the time when he took hold of the door-ring 4 the Ka'bah:

Lord, I don't hope for any one but you against them!
 Lord, defend your sacred area (bimd) from them!558
 Indeed, the enemy of the House is the one who is attacking you!
 Repel them lest they lay waste Your settlements!

I Then he further recited:

O God, a servant [of God] defends his dwelling, so protect Your dwelling places and their people (bilCVak) !559
 Let not their cross and their cunning craft (mihdl) prevail over your cunning craft on the morrow!560
 But if You do that (i.e., abandon them), then it may be something which seems most appropriate [for You] and an affair which appears best to you.

558. In pre-Islamic Arabia, bimd, "protected area," denoted a stretch of pasture or hunting or. other desirable land set aside for the use of a particular group and protected by that group. Many himis gradually acquired taboos and a religious aura from tribal deities, hence by the time of the coming of Islam, the Haram of Mecca had become the protected area par excellence. See Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen HeidentUMS2*, 105-og; Lammens, *Le berceau de 17slarn*, 60-64; EJ2, s.v. Himij (J. Chelhod).

559. Reading thus for the text's halilak (bilal = pl. of hillah), following Addenda et emendanda, P. Dxcu, and Glossarium, p. excix, but with more or less the same meaning anyway.

560. Reading ghadwan for the text's 'adw-, following Addenda et emendanda, P. DXCIL The verse echoes the Qur'dnic use of mihal "the cunning craft and force [of God]" in *suirah*. XIII, 14/13, God being depicted elsewhere in the Qur'an (II, 47/54. VIII, 30) as "the best of those who use craft and guile, makr."

And if You do that, well, it is an affair which will complete your [divine] plan of action.
 When some person comes to you seeking peace, we hope that [941]
 You will act toward us in a like manner.
 Then they turned back, having gained nothing but humiliation; perdition was coming upon them
 there.

I never heard of the most reprobate of men who desired glory and who then violated the sanctity of Your sacred enclosure

(tardm).

They brought into action the assembled host of their land and the elephant, in order to capture and enslave members of your families.

They attacked your sacred area (timd) with their cunning, out of sheer savagery (jahlan), and paid no heed to Your exaltedness .561

Then 'Abd al-Muttalib let go of the ring of the door, the door of the Ka'bah, and set off with his companions of Quraysh to the mountain tops and sought refuge there, in expectation of what Abrahah was going to do in Mecca when he entered it. Next morning, Abrahah prepared to enter Mecca, got ready his elephant (whose name was Mahmad), and drew up his army. Abrahah was determined upon destroying the House and then returning to Yemen. When they drove the elephant forward, Nufayl b. Habib al-Khath'ami came up and stood by its flank. He then got hold of its ear and said, "Kneel, O Mahmud, and go [then] straight back whence you came, for you are in God's sacred territory!" Then he let go its ear; the elephant knelt down,⁵⁶² while Nufayl b. Habib made off at top speed and clambered up the mountain. The soldiers beat the elephant to make it get up, but it refused. They beat its head with a battle axe to make it get up, but it still refused. They stuck hooks into its soft underbelly and scarified it to make it rise, and yet again it refused. But then they turned it round to face back to Yemen (i.e., southward); it got up and trotted off. They

561. N61deke notes in text, n. d, that the last three verses of this poem are in a different meter (wdfir) from the rest of it (kimil) and that some manuscripts have rearranged the wording of these three verses to make them fit the kinnil meter of the whole poem. Otherwise, one must assume that we have here verses from two separate poems, even though they share the same rhyme in -akl-ik.

562. As pointed out by Nbldeke, trans. 213 n. i, elephants do not kneel down like camels, a fact already recognized by one of the scholiasts of Ibn Hisham.

pointed it in the direction of Syria (i.e., northwards), and it behaved exactly the same. They pointed it in the direction of the east, and it again did likewise; but when they made it face Mecca, it knelt down. God now sent down on them a flock of birds, like swallows, each bird bearing three stones like chick peas and lentils, one [942] stone in its beak and two in its claws. Everyone whom the birds hit [with the stones] perished, although not all of them were in fact hit. -163 They retreated in haste along the road they had come,

563. The description of the divine visitation on Abrahah's impious forces is connected, as here, by the compilers of the Sirah of the Prophet and subsequent commentators with Qur'dn, CV, Sfirat al-Fil. But as both Gordon Newby and Irfan Shahid have noted, the connection is by no means explicit in the Qur'dn. There is no mention in the sirah of place or time, the object of the attack or the identity of the attackers themselves. Moreover, Shahid adds that the agents of the destruction of the asbib al-fil are by no means clearly the birds of vv. 3-4, described there as sweeping down in flocks (abdbil) bearing sijjil. These last have been traditionally interpreted as "stones of baked clay," and this meaning fits the context here and in the other two Qur'dnic attestations of the word, cf. E12, s.v. Sidjdjil (V. Vacca-Ed.); but F. de Blois now suggests that sijjil stems ultimately from the pre-Islamic religious tradition of North Arabia and may even have been in origin the name of a local deity, see his forthcoming "I-jjdratun min sijjil." The birds may have been scavengers after the work of destruction wrought by God Himself, if one follows the variant reading yarmihim, "[He] pelted them," for the accepted text tarmihim, "[they, i.e., the birds] pelted them." Shahid doubts whether Muhammad's Meccan audience could have been misled by assumptions about an event that had taken place only two generations previously. Instead, we must regard the later Islamic tradition as supplying a specific reference for what was, at the time of its revelation in Mecca, rather, an eschatological description of the imminence of punishment for unbelieving peoples. See G. H. Newby, "Abraha and Sermacherib: A Talmudic Parallel to the Tafsir on Sfirat al-Fil," 43 3-3 4; 1. Shahid, "Two Qur'dnic Sfiras: al-Fil and QuraYg," 4311, 433-44; and cf. R. Paret, Der Koran. Kommentar und Konkordanz, 522 *

Whatever the original significance and message of Sdrat al-Fil, rationalizing interpretations of the story of Abrahah's abortive expedition against Mecca arose early, mainly involving the explanation that the attacking forces were struck down by mass disease or by an epidemic, such as measles or smallpox mentioned by al-Tabari, 1, 945, P. 2 3 5 below, reducing Abrahah's combatant power and compelling a withdrawal. An explanation from smallpox was put forward in hadiths going back to the Successor 'Ikrimah (d. 105/723-24), and in one line of poetry cited by Ibn Ishaq from the verse written on the "Expedition of the Elephant" by Muhammad's opponent in Mecca, 'Abdallah b. al-Ziba'ra al-Sahm! (onwhom, see AbfI al-Faraj al-I-fahini, Aghdni3, XV, 139-84), "Sixty thousand men (i.e., Abrahah's forces) did not return to their land, and their sick ones did not survive after the return home." See Ibn Hishim, Sirat al-nab!, ed. Wiistenfeld, 39 = ed. al-Saqq5 et al., 1, 59, tr. 28; E12, s.v. al-Fil (A. F. L. Beeston).

The historicity of some move by Abrahah against Mecca seems likely, given the undoubted fact that his sphere of military activity extended as far as central Ara-

asking Nufayl b. Habib to guide them along the way to Yemen. When Nufayl b. Habib saw what God had sent down on them as punishment, he said:

Where can a man flee, when God is pursuing [him]? Al-Ashram
(i.e., Abrahah) is the conquered one, not the conqueror!

Ho, Rudaynah, 564 may greetings be upon you! When we went forth this morning, our eyes rejoiced at you!

A seeker after fire from among you came to us yesterday evening, but he was unable to get anything from us.

if you had been able to see, O Rudaynah-but you were not able to see it-what we saw in the vicinity of al-Muhassab '565

bia, where he aimed at countering an extension of Lakhmid power and, behind that, Persian influence, on the evidence of the well of Murayghdn inscription dating from 662 Himyarite era/A.D. S 52-53 ~a terminus ad quem for dating this campaign being, in any case, Abrahah's opponent al-Mundhir III of al-H-irah's death in 554; see further on this episode, n. 409 above). How much later than this date Abrahah could have mounted the "Expedition of the Elephant" is uncertain, but must have been very soon afterward. The inscription commemorating Abrahah's repair of the Dam of Marib has the date 658 Himyarite era/A.D. 548-49 ~Smith, "Events in South Arabia in the 6th Century A.D.," 437-4fl, but Abrahah had to die and be succeeded in South Arabia by his two sons Yaksfir and Masfiq before the appearance of the Persians in Yemen in 570 see al-Tabari, 1, 945-46, PP. 235-36 below). It has been suggested that the campaign of Abrahah, with its victories over Ma'add and other tribes at Hulubdn/lialabdn, and the victory of his Kindah and Sa'd-Murdd confederates over the Amir b. Sa'sa'ah at Turabah, were either a preparation for an expedition against Mecca sl-ort'ly afterward or the basis for a later tradition growing out of an Abyssinian expedition against Mecca. Going a step further, Altheim and Stiehl have very plausibly suggested that the Meccan expedition was actually part of the general operations of Abrahah in central Arabia during the course of 552. The chronological differences arising out of the fact that the Islamic tradition generally placed the Prophet's birth in the "Year of the Elephant," conventionally taken as A.D. 570, may not be unresolvable, since M. J. Kister, following H. Lammens, has pointed out the existence of traditions giving a different birth date for Muhammad, including one in Ibn al-Kalbi that he was born twenty-three years after the "Expedition of the Elephant" and one going back to al-Zuhri which, by a computation involving the dates of various events mentioned in the hadith, would fix the "Year of the Elephant" in 552, i.e., precisely the year the Ry 506 inscription records for Abrahah's military operations. See Lammens, "L'ige de Mahomet et la chronologie de la Sira," 2 11- 12, and the full discussion in Kister, "The Campaign of Hulubdn," 426-28.

564. That is, the poet is, in accordance with poetic convention, addressing a real or imaginary beloved, Rudaynah.

565. Literally, "ground strewn with pebbles," a valley near Mind through which the pilgrims pass on the return from Mind to Mecca at the end of the Hajj. On halting there, tahsib, the act of throwing pebbles, is a recommended (mustahabb)

You would have exonerated me and praised my good judgment, and not have grieved over what has passed and gone between US.566

I praised God when I saw with my own eyes the birds, but feared that the stones might be rained upon us.

All the people are asking for Nufayl, as though I owed the Abyssinians a debt.567

As they retreated, the Abyssinian troops were continually falling by the wayside and perishing at every watering place (or halt- ng place, manhal). Abrahah was smitten in his body; they carried him with them, with his fingers dropping off one by one. As each finger dropped off, there followed a purulent sore in its place, which exuded pus and blood, until they brought him to San'd', with him looking like a newly born chick (i.e., plucked and emaciated). They allege that, as he died, his heart burst out from his breast.568

Al-Hdrith related to me, saying: There related to us Muhammad Sa'd-Muhammad b. 'Umar 569 -'Abd al-hih b. Uthmdn b. AbiSulaymdn-his father. There also related to us from Muhammad

action, and this may be a reminiscence of a pre-Islamic rite, perhaps one of lapidation. See al-Bakri, Mu'jam mi ista'jam, IV, i 192; Yaquit, Buldan, V, 62; Gaudefroy-Demombynes, Le p6lerinage ~ la Mekke, 303-304.

566. Taking bayna as standing for baynana.

567. Nbldeke, trans. 214 n. 2, commented that these verses are ostensibly part of a longer poem but contain many details and features have no connection with the supposed circumstances of their composition. In fact, they correspond in verse form, rhyme, and, to some extent, in wording, to an old poem in the Hamisah anthology of the'Abbsid poet Abfi Tammdm, demonstrating that the verses have been modeled on this latter poem.

568. This tale of the manner of Abrahah's death is perhaps a transference to him of the army's being afflicted by disease, see n. s 63 above. It is also given in Ibn Hishdm, Sirat al-nabl, ed. Wiistenfeld, 36 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 55 - 56, tr. 27, and al-Azraqi, AkhbJr Makkah, 97-98, the latter author adding that some stragglers and deserters from the Abyssinian army, and other elements had been attached to it, came into Mecca and stayed there, working as laborers and camel herders. This seems quite feasible, but less so the khabar going back to Wishah (born ca. 614~ quoted by al-Azraqi, op. cit., 98, 103, according to which she saw the elephant's conductor and its groom as blind beggars for food in the center of Mecca. See N61deke, trans. 2 19 n. i; also Muhammad b. Habib, Munammaq, 73 -76.

569. That is, the khabar here goes back to Muhammad b. 'Umar al-Wdqidi (d. 207/823), a member of the Medinan historical school who worked in Baghdad, and to his secretary and transmitter, Ibn Sa'd (d. 230/845). See Sezgin, GAS,

1, 294-97, 300-301; EI2, s.vv. Ibn Sa'd (J.W. Rick) and al-Wdkidi (S. Lederl).

b. 'Abd al-Rahmdn b. al-Salmdni-his father. There also related to [9431 us 'Abdaldh b. Umar b. Zuhayr al-Ka,bi-Abf, milik al- Himyar1-'Atd'b. Yasdr. There also related to us Muhammad b. Abi Sa'ld al-Thaqafi-Ya'ld b.'Atd'-WakVb.'Udus-his paternal uncle Abfi Bazin al-'Uqayli. There also related to us Sald b. Muslim-'Abdallih b. Kathir-Muj~hid-Ibn 'Abbds. Parts of some narratives are combined with others. They say: Al-Najdsh! had dispatched Arydt Abfj SahaM570 with a force of four thousand men to Yemen. He subjugated and conquered it. He gave rewards to the local kings but treated the poor with contempt. There arose a man from among the Abyssinians called Abrahah al-Ashram Abfi Yaksfim. He invited the people to give him allegiance, and they responded, so he then killed Arydt and seized control of Yemen. 571 He observed the local people getting ready, at the time of the festival, for pilgrimage to the Holy House [in Mecca], and asked, "Where are the people going?" They told him that they were making pilgrimage to God's House at Mecca. He enquired, "What is it made of?" They replied, "Of stone." He said, "What is its covering (kiswah)?" They responded, "The striped Yemeni cloth (al-wasii'il), which comes from here. ,572 Abrahah swore, "By the Messiah! I will certainly build for you something better than that!" So he built for them a house constructed from white,

570. Thus in the text; the Addenda et emendanda, P. DXC11, prefer the reading Asham (which would mean "dust-colored, yellowish, tinged with black"). However, N61deke, trans. 2iS and n. 2, states that Daham or Saham is the correct reading, as in the name of the Ethiopian king till- Saham.

571. What Ibn Sa'd says here of Arydt's discriminatory policy as a cause of his ownfall is confirmed by extra details in the Nihdyat al-irab (see for this n. 624 below): that Atydt ' a noble and nephew of the Najdshl, appropriated captured booty and other wealth for himself, the nobility, and chiefs of the Abyssinians. Abrahah, himself of servile origin, was thus able to champion the cause of the excluded rank and file and the lower classes, and was able to lead an uprising against Arydt in the name of equality of treatment. See von Gutschmid, "Bemerkungen zu Tabari's Sasanidengeschichte, Ubersetzt von Th. Nbldeke," 738-40; Kister, "Some Reports Concerning Mecca. From Jdhiliyya to Islam, " 6 1 -6 3 n. 5.

572. For the kiswah, see al-Tabaid, 1, 904, P. 169 and n. 433 above, where the Tubba' As'ad Abfi Karib is saiii first to have covered the Ka'bah with Yemeni ma'dfir cloth, Yemen being traditionally famed for its textiles. There seems to have been an ancient tradition in Arabia of covering qubbahs, i.e., tents and similar structures housing sacred objects, with materials like skins and cloth, according to H. Larmens, "Le culte des b6tyles et les processions religieuses chez les Arabes prdislamiques," 130-32, 138-42.

red, yellow, and black marble, and adorned it with gold and silver, and encompassed it with jewels. He provided it with doors made with sheets of gold and with golden nails, and set the space between them with jewels, which included an enormous ruby. He provided it with a covered sanctuary (bijdb), in which sweetsmelling aloes wood was continually burnt, and its walls were smeared with musk, thereby darkening the walls until the jewels [encrusted on them] appeared sunken. He gave orders to the people, and they made pilgrimage to it, as did a large number of the tribes of the Arabs over a period of years. There lived permanently within this temple men who made perpetual adoration and service to God there, and who devoted themselves to worshipping Him in it.

Nufayl al-Khath'ami was planning to do by stealth something unpleasant to it.571 One night, when he saw no one moving around, he got up and took some excrement and smeared the apse of the high altar (qiblah)74 of the temple with it, and he gathered together some putrefying animal carcasses and threw them into it.

Abrahah was told about this; he became extremely angry and exclaimed, "The Arabs have only done this out of vexation on ac- [944] count of their own House; I shall certainly destroy it stone by stone!" He wrote to the Najdshi informing him of that and asking the NajAshi to send him his elephant Mahmud-this being an elephant unparalleled in the whole earth for its size, stout body, and strength. The Najdsh! accordingly dispatched it to him.

Once the elephant had arrived, Abrahah set out with his army, accompanied by the king of Himyar 575 and Nufayl b. Habib al- Khath'ami. When he reached the Sacred Enclosure (al-haram), he commanded his troops to raid the beasts of the local people. They captured some camels belonging to 'Abd al-Muttalib. It happened

573. kdna yu'arridu lahu; for arrada, see Glossarium, p. cxi. Here we have a variation from the man of the Banfi Fuqaym who is responsible for the desecration of the church in Ibn Ishdq's account given by al-Tabari, 1, 934, p. 218 above, and, since Nufayl is said at 1, 937, P. 223 above, to have guided Abrahah to al-Td'if, a confusion also. Al-Dinawari, al-Akhbar al-tiwdl, 62-63, has "a man from the people of al-Thiimah" as the perpetrator of the deed.

5 74. The use here of the technical term qiblah, literally, "direction to be faced [in the Muslim worship], " is an anachronism.

575. The malik Himyar must be Dhfi Nafar, called at 1, 936, p. 2.2.2 above, "one of the nobles of Uimyar."

that Nufayl was a friend of 'Abd al-Muttalib's, so the latter spoke to Nufayl about his camels. Nufayl, therefore, spoke to Abrahah, saying, "O king, there has come to you the lord of the Arabs, the most distinguished of them in status and the foremost of them in nobility-he gives people swift horses as mounts, bestows largesse, and feeds whatever the wind blows along." He brought him into Abrahah's presence, and the latter said [to 'Abd al-Muttalib], "What's your request?" 'Abd al-Muttalib replied, "That you should give me back my camels." Abrahah retorted, "I consider what I have just heard from you nothing but fraud. I had expected that you would speak to me about your House, which is your source of nobility and pride." But 'Abd al-Muttalib merely Said, "Give me back my camels and do what you like with the House, for it has a lord who will protect it." So Abrahah ordered the camels to be returned to him.

When 'Abd al-Muttalib took possession of them, he draped the soles of sandals round their necks, marked them as intended sacrifices, offered them as gifts [to the Sacred Enclosure], and let them scatter throughout the sacred enclosure. [He did that] so that if anyone of them should be seized [by the Abyssinians], the lord of the Sacred Enclosure would thereby become angered .576 'Abd al-Muttalib, accompanied by 'Amr b. 'A'idh b. 'Imran b. Makhzfm, Mu'orn b. 'Ad! and Aba Mas'fid al-Thaqafi, went up to Mount Ijird 577 and recited:

O God, a man defends his dwelling, so protect your dwelling places and their people (bililak).
Let not their cross and their cunning craft overcome Your cunning craft on the morrow.

576. Qur'dn, V, 2, refers to the qa'xid, necklets hung round the necks of animals destined for sacrifice, budn, part of the sha'vir Alldh mentioned in XXII, 3 7/3 6. There is also reference in V, 102/103, to various types of camel, including the SiTibah, the waslah and the hdmi, left to roam freely after dedication to God. See Wellhausen, Reste arabischen Heidentums, ii2ff.; EI2, s.v. Bahira (A. J. Wensinck). Seizure by the Abyssinians of the camels released by 'J-bd al-Muttalib would thus incur Alldh's wrath.

577. Hird' or Hard' was a mountain outside Mecca mentioned later in the Sirah as a place where Muhammad, in the period before his public ministry, would spend time in tahannuth, pious and ascetic exercises. See Buhl, Das Leben Muhammads, 1132; Watt, Muhammad at Mecca, 40, 44; EI2, s.v. Hird'(T. H. Weir-W. M. Watt).

But if You do abandon them and our qiblah, then it may well be something which seems best to You.

He related: The birds flew in from the sea successively. Each bird had three stones, two in its claws and one in its beak. They hurled down the stones upon the Abyssinian troops, and everyone who was hit suffered either a severe wound or else that spot erupted into blisters and pustules. (That was the first time that smallpox and measles and bitter shrubs appeared [in the land].) Thus the stones snuffed them out completely, and God sent a torrential flow of water, which swept them all away and hurled them into the sea 578 He related: Abrahah and the survivors who were with him took to flight. Abrahah's limbs began to drop off one by one. As for Mahmfid, the Najdshi's elephant, it lay down and would not venture 579 into the Sacred Enclosure and was thus preserved in safety; but regarding the other elephant, it ventured into the Sacred Enclosure and it suffered a hail of stones . 580 It is also said that there were thirteen elephants. 'Abd al-Muttalib went down from Mount Hird'and two of the Abyssinians came up to him, kissed his hand and said, "You were more knowledgeable [than us]." There related to us Ibn Humayd-Salamah-Ibn Ishdq-Ya'qlab b. 'Utbah b. al-Mughirah b. al-Akmas, who said that the first time measles and smallpox were seen in the land of the Arabs was in that year, as also the first time for bitter shrubs like rue, colocynth, and gigantic swallow-wort 581 to be seen. Ibn Ishaq says: On Abrahah's death, there succeeded to power in Yemen over the Abyssinians his son Yakslarn b. Abrahah. Abrahah's patronymic 582 was from him. Himyar and the tribes of the Arabs submitted, and the Abyssinians treated them oppressively,

578. That is, a sayl, the torrent from a sudden rainstorm, typical of the erratic weather conditions in the mountains in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula. In Arabic lore, the sweeping away of peoples by such inundations is not infrequent; cf. the sayl al-'arim, "bursting of the dam by a torrent," in Qur'dn, XXXIV, 15/16. See Lammens, Le berceau de l'Islam, 23-25.

579. wa-lam yashia'ald ... ; for this verb, see Glossarium, p. ccvii.

580. Following the text's fa-busiba; one might also read fa-basaba "and it suffered blisters and pustules," as taken by N61deke in his trans. 2og.

581. That is, Asclepias gigantea L.

582. That is, Aba Yaksam. According to N61deke, trans. 2ig n. 3, there exists a coin minted by Yaks-am.

[945]

taking their women as sexual partners, killing their menfolk, and employing their sons as interpreters between themselves and the Arabs .583 He related: After God hurled back the Abyssinians from Mecca, and the latter received the punishment described above, the Arabs treated Quraysh with great honor, saying, "[They are] the people of God; God fought on their behalf and relieved them of the burden of their enemies. He related: On Yaksfim b. Abraham's death, there succeeded to power in Yemen his brother Masrfiq b. Abraham. The burden of oppression on the people of Yemen became protracted. The Abyssinian dominion in Yemen extending from the time when 946]Arydt came to Yemen until the Persians killed Masruq and expelled the Abyssinians from the land, was seventy-two years. During that period, four kings ruled there successively: Arydt, then Abraham, then Yaksfim b. Abraham, and finally, Masrfiq b. Abraham .584 Sayf b. Dh! Yazan al-Himyari, whose patronymic was Abfi Murah, went forth until he reached the court of QayW, king of al-Rfirin .585 He complained to Qay~ar about what they were suffer-

583. According to al-Dinawari, al-Akhbdr al-tiwal, 63, Yaksfim was worse and more malevolent than his father, and his brother Masruq yet more so. Yaksfim's tenure of power is very summarily treated in Ibn Hishdrn, Sfrat al-nabi, ed. Wdstenfeld, 41 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., L 63, tr. 30; see also idem, Kitab al-djan, 303, cf. Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore," 229.

584. The seventy-two years given here for the Abyssinian domination must be a considerable exaggeration, since this rule extended in reality only from 525 to ca. 570, i.e., forty-five years. In Abfi al-Faraj al-Isfahani, AghanV, XVII, 3 11, the respective reigns of the Abyssinian governors are given: Aryat, twenty years; Abraham, twenty-three years; Yaksum, nineteen years (thus also in al-Dinawari); Masi dq, twelve years; total, seventy-four years. Of these, that of Aryst is much exaggerated; Abraham was certainly still alive in 552, the date of the well of Murayghdn inscription, itself five years after his Dam of Mdrub inscription. This would leave eighteen years at most for the combined reigns of Yaksum and Masi aq. Cf. Nbldeke, trans. .22o n. 3.

585. Yazan was one of the great families of South Arabia, accounted one of the Mathaminah, influential in Hadramawt and known (as Yz'nl in inscriptions from the mid-fifth century A.D. onward. It appears that their original center was in the Wddi'Amdqm area near al-Hawtah in what became in modern times the hinterland of al-Mukalla. The family or clan appears in early times in association with the ancient Sabaeen family or clan of Gadan or Dhfi Gadan. By the early sixth century, the Yazan probably dominated all the Hadramawt and the Zufar coastlands as well as the island of Socotra, whence their title of Dh5 implying lordship. Members of the family served the last Tubba'Ma'di Karib and then Dhfi Nuwds as

ing, and asked brn to expel the Abyssinians and take over the rule there personally. 5116 [He asked him to] send what forces he pleased of the Byzantines, and then the rule over Yemen would be his; but Qay ar would not satisfy his plea, and he got none of the satisfaction he sought from Qay~ar. So he set out again until he arrived at al-Nu'mdn b. al-Mundhir's court at al-Hirah. Al-Nu'mdn was KisrA's governor over al-Hirah and adjacent parts of Iraq in the land of the Arabs.5'7 Sayf b. Dhi Yazan now complained to al-Nu'mdn about the oppression and humiliation the people of Yemen were suffering. Al-Nu'mdn replied, "I have the obligation of paying a formal visit to Kisrd every year, so stay with me until the time for it comes round, and I will take you with me." He related: So he remained with al-Nu'mdn until the latter set off on his visit to Kisrd, accompanied by Sayf b. Dh! Yazan. When al-Nu'mdn came into Kisrd's presence and had completed his own business with the king, he mentioned to him Sayf b. Dh! Yazan and the reason for his coming to him, requesting an audience for him; Kisrd granted this. Kisrd was in his throne chamber (aywdn mailisihi), where his crown was kept. This crown was like a huge grain measure (qanqa1),5118 and set with rubies, emeralds, pearls, gold, and silver, and was suspended by a military commanders, and it was perhaps the connection with the latter that led to a tradition, given by al-Dinawar-1, al-Akhbir al-tiWil, 63, that Sayf b. Dhi Yazan was a descendant of Dhu Nuwds. Little is in fact known about Sayf, whose activities as leader of the "patriotic" reaction against the Abyssinians in 570 fall outside the period for which we have epigraphic evidence; his role in later Arabic popular epic literature has no known historical basis. See M. A. Bafaqih, "New Light on the Yazanite Dynasty," 5-6; EP, s.vv. Mathdmina (Chr. Robin), Sayf b. Dhi Yazan (J. P. Guillaume: entirely on the romance Tand Yazan (A. F. L. Beeston).

586. The Byzantine emperor at this time was Justin H (r. 565-78). There is no record in Byzantine sources of this alleged embassy from South Arabia.

587. This is a patent confusion with the last Lakhmid, al-Nu'mdn III b. al-Mundhir IV (r. ca. 580-602); the ruler in al-H-1rah at this time must have been Amr II b. al-Mundhir III (b. Hind) or his brother and successor Qdbids b. al-Mundhir III. See Rothstein, Lahmiden, 96-105. In Ibn al-Kalbi's version of these events (al-Taban, 1, 950, P. 24, cf. n. 596 below), the conjecture is expressed that it was Amr b. Hind.

588. In al-Khwdrazmi's Mafjtm al-'uldm, 67, the qanqal is a large measure of capacity used in Iraq and equalling three thousand rat1s, i.e., two "equalised" kurrs, but the latter measure itself varied considerably even within the Sawdd of

Iraq. See Bosworth, "Abfi'Abdaldh al-Khwarazmi on the Technical Terms of the Secretary's Art," 148-49.

golden chain from the top of the dome of that chamber. The crown was too heavy for his neck to bear, so he concealed himself in robes until he sat down on that throne; his head was inserted into the crown, and when he had settled down comfortably on his throne, the robes were whisked away from him. Everyone who saw him for the first time fell down on his knees out of awe for [947] him, hence Sayf b. Dhī Yazan sank down on his knees when he entered his presence.

Then he addressed Kisra, "O king, ravens have seized control over our land," and when Kisra asked him, "Which ravens, those from Abyssinia or those from Sind?"¹⁵⁸⁹ he replied: "The Abyssinians, and I have come to you imploring help against them and for you to expel them from our midst. You can then assume the royal power in my land, for you are more loved by us than them." Kisra retorted, "Your land is far away from our own one, and your land is poor in resources: nothing there but sheep and camels, which are no use to us. I am not prepared to commit a Persian army to the land of the Arabs; there is no good reason why I should do this." However, he ordered Sayf b. Dhī Yazan to be given ten thousand dirhams of full weight, and gave him a fine robe of honor. Sayf b. Dhī Yazan took the money, went forth, and began distributing it wholesale among the people, so that boys, slave boys, and slave girls seized it avidly. Very soon, this was reported to Kisra, who was told, "The Arab to whom you gave a sum of money is scattering the dirhams among the people, and slave boys, boys, and slave girls are scrambling for them." Kisra said, "There is something strange about this man, bring him back to me!" When Sayf b. Dhī Yazan came into his presence, Kisra said, "This is what you do with a royal gift! You distribute it among the people?" Sayf b. Dhī Yazan responded, "And what exactly should I do with the king's gift, when the mountains of the land from which I have come are composed wholly of gold and silver?"⁵⁹⁰ [He said this] in order to excite the emperor's cupidity, when the latter saw how little Sayf

589. Since the ancient Persians tended to classify all blacks as "Indians," a usage taken over by Greek and Syriac writers, there arose uncertainty over the geographical extent of "India," which could cover South Arabia and the Horn of Africa. Cf. N61deke, trans. 222 n. 2.

590. Sayf b. Dhī Yazan's boast reflects the ancients' belief that South Arabia was a land of famed wealth, with its precious metals, perfumes and aromatic substances, etc.

was concerned about the money. [He continued] "I have only made my way to the king that he might preserve me from tyranny and relieve me of humiliation." Kisra said to him, "Remain here with me while I consider your case;" so he remained at Kisra's court.

Kisra assembled his Marzbāns and the sagacious advisers he was wont to consult, and said, "What do you think about this man and the proposition he has made?" One of them said, "O king, you have in your prisons various men whom you have incarcerated in preparation for killing them. Why don't you send them back with Sayf? If they perish, well, that is the fate you ordained for them, and if they gain control of his land it will be an additional kingdom to your own." Kisra exclaimed, "That's a good idea. Count for me how many men there are in my prisons." These men were counted up, and they found a total of eight hundred men in the prisons. Kisra then ordered, "Find out the man among them with the best achievements and lineage, and make him the commander over them." They found that the best person qualified in these respects was Wahriz, who was a man of mature years.⁵⁹¹ Kisra accordingly sent him with Sayf and appointed him commander of his troops.

591. In the Arabic sources, noble birth from various origins is attributed to Wahriz, e.g., in Ibn Hishām, *Sirat al-nabi*, ed. Wdstenfeld, 43 = ed. al-Saqqi et al., 1, 65, trans. 31, that he was of advanced age and of good, unspecified, family; in al-Dinawari, *al-Akhbar al-tiwāl*, 63-64, that he was a centenarian (!) and the son of Kīn*, of noble stock but imprisoned because he had taken to highway robbery; in al-Mas'ūdi, *Murūj*, 111, 163 = 1016, that he was the Isfahānī of Daylam; and in Ijāmzah al-Isfahānī, *Tarīkh*, 52, that he was from the progeny of Bihfarīdīn, son of Risdri, son of Bahman, son of Isfahānī. It would be usual for the commander of an expedition to be of high rank and birth, but unlikely that his troops, if they had been rescued from incarceration and the threat of death, to have been of good stock also, as is asserted by a poet of Hadramawt cited by al-Mas'ūdi, *op. cit.*, III, 164 = 1017 ("... from the clan of Sāsīn and the clan of Mahrasān") and by Ijāmzah al-Isfahānī, *loc. cit.* Such claims to exalted origins were doubtless fabricated by or for the descendants of the Persians in Yemen, the so-called AbnY, the children of unions between Persians and Arabs in Yemen. Cf. N61deke, trans. 223 n. 2. But in any case, these reports from Ibn Isḥāq and Ibn al-Kalb! (for the latter report, see al-Tabarī, 1, 952-53, pp. 244-45 below) that Yemen was conquered by a force of gaolbirds and desperadoes must be regarded as romantic accretions to the real story of the Persian expeditionary force to Yemen as mentioned at 1, 899, p. 160 above: that Wahriz's force was composed of tough Daylamī mountaineers, recruited as mercenaries for the specific task, see n. 405 above. Wahriz/Wahriz is presumably MP Weh-r6z, "having a good abundance," see justī, *Namenbuch*, 340. It seems, however, to have been in origin a title rather than a personal name; Procopius, describing an expedition sent by the emperor Kawdd I into Georgia and Lazica, calls its commander a "Persian" named BoEs, who had the

He provided them with eight ships, each one carrying a hundred men plus equipment and supplies for the sea voyage. However, when they got out into the open sea, two of the ships foundered with everyone and everything in them. But six ships safely reached the coast of Yemen in the region of Aden, and these contained six hundred men, including Wahriz and Sayf b. Dhl Yazan. When they were safely on dry land in the land of Yemen, Wahriz said to Sayf, "What resources do you have?" Sayf replied, "As many Arab soldiers and Arab horses as you wish; I will put my leg on your leg [over this], so that we either die together or conquer together." Wahriz said, "You have spoken fairly and eloquently." Sayf now brought to Wahriz's standard those of his people who were in his obedience. Masrfiq b. Abrahah heard about their arrival. He assembled round himself the Abyssinian army and marched against them. The two armies moved close to each other and encamped in close proximity to each other. Wahriz now sent one of his sons called Nawziidh 592 with a cavalry detachment and instructed him, "Engage in skirmishing with the enemy army, so that we may get to know their mode of fighting." Nawzddh sallied forth and engaged in some skirmishing with them, but then got himself into a spot from which extrication was impossible, and the enemy killed him. This aroused Wahriz to a frenzy of rage and made him more determined to fight them. When the opposing troops were drawn [949] up in ranks against each other, Wahriz said, "Point out their king for me." They replied, "Do you see a man on an elephant, with a crown on his head and a red ruby on his forehead?" He said, "Yes," and they retorted, "That's their king!" He said, "Leave him alone for the present," and they waited a long time. Then he said, "What's he riding?" They replied, "He has mounted a horse now." He said, "Leave him alone," and again they waited a long time. He said, "What's he riding now?" They replied, "He has mounted a mule now." Wahriz said, "A wild ass's filly! He is a weak individual, and so is his kingdom! Are you listening to me properly? I am going to shoot at him. If you observe his guards still standing

title Ourazes, which would appear to be *Wahriz. See EJ2, s.vv. Daylam (V. Minor- skyl, and Wahriz (C. E. Bosworth).

592. That is, "the newborn." See just, Namenbuch,

around and not moving, then stand fast until I give you the command [to advance], for I shall have missed him. But if you see the enemy troops crowding round him and sticking close to him, I shall have hit the man, so launch an attack on them!" Then he strung his bow (according to what has been asserted, none but Wahriz himself could bend it because of its strength). He ordered his eyelids to be fastened Up,593 placed an arrow in his bow, braced the bow as widely as possible until, when it was fully extended, he released it. The arrow struck the ruby on Masr-aq's forehead, and penetrated through his head, coming out at the nape of the neck. Masrfiq was thrown backward from his mount, and the Abyssinians crowded round him closely. The Persians charged at them, and the Abyssinians were defeated. The Persians made great slaughter, and groups of the Abyssinians fled in all directions.591 Wahriz advanced against San'd' with the intention of entering it, but when he reached the city gate, he said, "My banner shall never enter [a town] lowered! Break down the gateway!" The gateway of San'd'was accordingly demolished, and he then entered it with his banner raised high and home in front of him. Once he had secured dominion over Yemen and had expelled the Abyssinians from it, Wahriz wrote to Kisrd, "I have subdued Yemen for you and have driven out those Abyssinians who occupied it," and he forwarded to him wealth. Kisra wrote back ordering him to set up Sayf b. Dhl Yazan as ruler of Yemen and its territories, and he imposed on Sayf the responsibility for the poll

593. Ahat is, because the muscles of his eyelids were relaxed with old age and drooped over his eyes. A similar explanation is given for the name of a Persian commander in the fighting with the Arabs during the caliph 'Umar I's reign, one Dhft al-Hajib ("the man with the eyelid") Mardīnsh5h; see al-Baladburī, Futuh 2 5 1. This seems to have been something of a topos in early Arabic, since a leader of the Banfi'Amir b. Sa'sa'ah at the late sixth-century "Day of jabalah" (see E12, s.v. Djabala [F. Buhl-R. H. Headley]) is likewise said to have had his eyelids falling in-to his eyes. See Naqd'id jarīlir wa-al-Farazdaq, H, 65 7, iō62, and cf. Caskel, Ajjlīm al-'arab. Studien zur altarabischen Epik, 36.

594. As noted by N61deke, trans. 226 n. 2, the story of Wahriz's battle with Masidqis also given by Ibn Qutaybah, 'Uyun al-akhbdr, 1, 149, from "thebooks of the Persians." In his account, Wahriz has drawn from his quiver an arrow of good omen with his wife's name inscribed on it, which he interprets as Persian zandn, "women," and then as the exhortation zan dn, "strike that [person]," hence he launches the arrow at Masrfiq and kills him, as al-Tabarī relates. Cf. also Siddiqi, Studien fiber die persischen Fremdwdrter, 81.

[950] tax and the land tax, which he was to send to Kisrd annually as fixed sums. He also ordered Wahriz to return to him, and Wahriz did this. Sayf b. Dhl Yazan was thus appointed as ruler over Yemen as his father Dhfi Yazan, one of the kings of Yemen, had been [before him]. This is what Ibn Humayd transmitted to us-Salamah-Ibn Isha-q concerning the affairs of Himyar, the Abyssinians and their rule, and Kisrd's dispatch of an expedition to attack the Abyssinians in Yemen.195

As for Hishdm b. Muhammad, he relates as follows. After Abrahah, there reigned Yaksfirn and then Masrfiq. He related: It was this last whom Wahriz killed in the reign of Kisrd, son of Qubddh, and then expelled the Abyssinians from Yemen. He related: Among what he related is that Abfi Murrāh al-Fayyidd Dhfi Yazan was one of the nobles of Yemen. He had a wife Ray-dnah bt. Dh! Jadan, and she presented him with a boy,

whom he called Ma'd! Karib. She was beautiful, hence al-Ashram took her away from Abfi Murrah and forced her to marry him. Abfi Murrah departed from Yemen and came to one of the kings of the house of al-Mundhir-I think it was 'Amr b. Hind⁹⁶ -and asked him to write on his behalf to Kisrd, asking him to tell Kisra about his high worth, his nobility, and his aid and support for Kisrd in any affair in which he could help the emperor. [The ruler in question from the house of al-Mundhir] replied, "Don't act rashly; I am obliged to visit Kisrd each year, and the time for this is so-and-so." Hence Abfi Murrah remained at his court until he accompanied the ruler on his visit to Kisrd. 'Amr b. Hind went into Kisrd's presence; he mentioned to him Dhfi Yazan's nobility and lofty estate, and sought permission for him to have an audience of the emperor. Dhfi Yazan went in, and 'Amr made space for Dhfi Yazan to go before him. When Kisrd observed that, he realized that 'Amr could have treated Dhfi Yazan thus in his presence only out of regard for his nobility. When Dhfi Yazan went up to the emperor, the latter treated him kindly and questioned him in a friendly way, saying to

595. The story of Sayf b. Dhi Yazan's appeal to Kisrd and the Persian conquest of Yemen by Wahriz and his force is given by Ibn Hishdm, *Sirat al-nabi*, ed. Wdsten-feld, 41-45 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 64-70, tr. 30-33; idem, *Kitdb al-tj*, -n, 306-309, cf. Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore," 229.

596. As noted in n. 587 above, Ibn al-Kalbi's conjecture here is probably correct.

him, "What has brought you here?" Dhfi Yazan replied, "O king, the blacks have seized from us power over our own land, and have committed things so frightful that my respect for the king makes [951] me shrink from mentioning them. If the king were to offer us help without our having to ask for it [formally], that would be appropriate for him because of his excellence, nobility, and preeminence over the rest of monarchs; why should this not be so, when we have made our way toward him, full of expectations regarding him, hoping that God will smash our enemies, aid us against them, and procure for us revenge over them? If the king sees fit to make our speculations come true, fulfill our hopes and send back with me an army that will eject this enemy from our land so that he may add it to his own kingdom-for it is one of the most fertile of lands and most amply endowed with resources, not like the region of the Arabian peninsula bordering on his empire [at present]-he may do all this."

Kisrd replied. "I know well that your land is as you describe it; but which blacks are they who have conquered it, the Abyssinians or the Sindis?" Dhfi Yazan said, "The Abyssinians." Anfisharwan said, "I would certainly like to make your speculations come true, and would like to enable you to go back home with your request fulfilled; but the way to your land is difficult for the army, and I would not like rashly to commit my troops. But let me think about your request. Meanwhile, you can stay here with whatever you like." He ordered Dhfi Yazan to be given suitable lodging and to be treated hospitably. He remained at Kisrd's court until he died. Abfi Murrah had composed an ode in the Himyaritic language in which he eulogised Kisrd. When it was translated for him, he was delighted with it.⁵⁹⁷

597. The South Arabian language had, in fact, been in steep decline long before this time, and the story of Abfi Murrah being able to compose a poem in the "Himyaritic language" must be apocryphal. Chi. Robin, basing himself on such indications as a perceptible decline in the quality and correctness of the Sabaean language in the later inscriptions, believes that it had yielded place, as a spoken tongue, to early (North) Arabic by the fourth century A.D. Hence after ca. 400 it was only a learned language, increasingly poorly known, although still used epigraphically for a further century and a half. The latest dated inscription so far discovered, CIH 325, comes from 669 of the Himyarite era, hence A.D. 559-60, although some graffiti found in northern Yemen at Umm Layla north of Sa'dah, in North Arabic language and South Arabian script, probably date from the beginning

Raybdnah bt. Dhi Jadan gave birth to a son of Abrahah al-Ashram's, whom he called MasrCiq. Ma'd! Karib b. Dhfi Yazan grew up with his mother Raybdnah in Abrahah's house. One of Abrahah's sons satirized him, and said to him, "May God curse you! And may God curse your father!" Ma'di Karib had never realized that al-Ashram was anyone but his own father. He went along to his mother and said to her, "Who is my father?" She replied, "Al-Ashram." He retorted, "No, by God, he is not my father; if he were really my father, so-and-so would not have satirized me." So she told him that his father was in reality] Abfi Murrah al-Fayyid, and communicated to him the whole story. All this had a profound [9521 effect on the lad's mind, but he bided his time for a long period.

Then al-Ashram died, followed by the death of his son Yaksfim. Dhfi Yazan's son set out, making for the king of the Byzantines' (al-Rfim) court, avoiding Kisrd because he had delayed so long in helping his father. But he did not get what he wanted from the king of the Byzantines, and found him taking the side of the Abyssinians because they shared a common religious allegiance. Hence he turned away from the Byzantine court and made for the court of Kisri. He presented himself before Kisrd one day, when he was on

horseback, and called out to him, "O kin & my future heritage lies in your hands!" Kisrd summoned him when he had dismounted and asked him, "Who are you, and what is this heritage of yours?" Dhfi Yazan's son replied, "I am the son of the senior chief (shaykh) of the Yemenis, Dha Yazan, whom you promised to aid, but then in the end] he died at your court and in your entourage. That promise is my rightful due, and a heritage which you have an obligation to fulfill for me." Kisrd relented toward him and ordered him to be given a sum of money. The lad went out and began to scatter the dirhams about, and the people scrambled for them. Kisrd sent a message to him, "What has led you to do what you have done?" The lad replied, "I didn't come to

of Islam. See Robin, "R6sultats 6pigraphiques et arch6ologiques de deux brefs s6jours en R6publique arabe du Wmenl 188-93. hi the fourth/tenth century, al-Hasan al-Hamdarn was able in his W11, Book VIII, 122-23, tr. 72-73, to give the values of the letters of the South Arabian script (musnad), but was only able with difficulty to read a few names of the inscriptions' See Robin, L'Arabie antique de Karib'11 il Mahomet, 15, ig-2o, Y34-35; idem, in Suppl6ment au dictionnaire de la Bible, s.v. Sheba. U, cols. lz16-17.

you seeking money, but rather, I came to you seeking men and that you should preserve me from humiliation." Kisrd was pleased with this rejoinder and sent back a message to him, "Stay here while I look into your case."

Kisrd then sought counsel from his ministers concerning sending an army back with him. The [Chief] M6badh said to him, "This lad has a just claim upon us, through his journey here and the death of his father at the king's court and in his entourage, and because of the promises made by the king to him previously. Now in the king's prisons are men of valor and martial strength. Let the king send these men with Dhfi Yazan's son; if they secure a victory, it will be a triumph for the king; if they all perish, he will have secured his own peace of mind [from the threat of them] and will have relieved the citizens of the kingdom of them. That would not be far from the correct line of action." Kisrd said, "This is a sound piece of advice," and he gave orders for the men of this description in the prisons to be counted. They extended to eight hundred men. He appointed as commander over them a com- 19531 mander from among his cavalymen (asdwirathi) called Wahriz, whom Kisrd accounted the equal of a thousand cavalymen. He supplied them with weapons and equipment and ordered them to be transported in eight ships, each one containing a hundred men.

They set forth on the seas, but two ships out of the eight foundered, leaving six safe and sound. They landed on the coast of Hadramawt .598 Masrfiq marched out against them with an army of one hundred thousand men, including Abyssinians, Ijimyrites, and Bedouins. [However,] a considerable number of people joined the son of Dhfi Yazan. Wahriz encamped on the sea coast, placing the sea at his back. When Masrfiq saw how few were their numbers, he became eager to engage them. He sent a mes-

598. It seems likely that the ships, buffeted by storms, would come up on the Ijadramawt coast, and apparently the landing was in the vicinity of al-Shihr. The Ija(~rami poet cited by at-Mas'fidi, Mur5j, 111, 164 = 1017, says that the ships were washed up at M. th.w. b, read by Pellat as Mathwab but read by N61deke, trans..230 n. 2, as Mandb. A Manfib certainly existed in Hadramawt in Islamic times, and it is mentioned by al-Hamddn-1, Sifat jazirat a]-'Arab, 172 and n. 2, 2 15, but described by him as a wadi with villages in the territory of Kindah and in the Shibiim/al- Qdrah region, i.e., well inland and away from the coast. Al-Bakrili's listing of Man-db, in his Mu'jam md ista'jam, 1, 3 16-17, M 127 3, is vague and unhelpful.

sage to Wahriz, "What has brought you here? You have only the [few] men whom I can see, while I have [the large number] whom you can see. You have recklessly put yourself and your followers at risk, but if you like, I will allow you to return to your homeland;

I shall not hurl satires at you, nor will there be inflicted upon you any unpleasant action on my part or on that of my troops. Or if you wish, I will march out against you immediately. Or yet again, if you wish, I will allow you a period of respite (aijal) so that you may consider your position and take counsel with your followers." Wahriz realized how strong they were and perceived that he could not match their strength. So he sent to Masrfiq the message, "All right, grant a period of respite for us both; give me an engagement and compact, and receive in return the same promises from me, that neither side should fight with the other until the period of truce is up and until we can see our [correct] course of action." Masrfiq agreed to that. Each side remained within its encampment. Then, when ten days had elapsed of the standstill in hostilities, Wahriz's son set off on one of his horses and went forward until he drew near to the enemy's encampment. But his horse carried him onward into the midst of their encampment, and they killed him, Wahriz being unaware of all this. When the news of the killing of his son reached him, he sent a message to Masr5q, "There has been, as you well know, a compact between us, so why did you kill my son?" Masrfiq sent a message back, "Your son charged into the [954] midst of our encampment, and some irresponsible elements of our army sprang up and killed him. I myself strongly disapprove of his killing." Wahriz said to the messenger, "Tell him that he was not MY son, but only the son of a whore (zdnayah); if he had been my son, he would have

patiently waited and not broken the truce between us until it had come to an end. 11599 Then he ordered the corpse to be thrown down on to the ground, where his body could be seen, and he swore an oath that he would not drink wine nor

599. N61deke, trans. 2 3 2 n. i, explained that Wahriz disowns his son and refuses any responsibility for him because he does not wish to have to accept blood money for him from the Abyssinians; the blood money will be their own blood. Also, the killing of the Persian, though half-justified, will incur divine retribution for the breach of the oath-protected truce.

rub his head with any scented oil until the truce should come to its end.

When there was just one day left of the truce, Wahriz gave orders for the ships in which they had sailed to be set on fire, and likewise with regard to all superfluous clothing they had with them, leaving his men only with what they had on their backs. Next, he ordered all their provisions to be brought out and instructed his men, "Eat up this food!" So they ate up [as much as they could]. When they had finished, he ordered what remained to be thrown in the sea. At that point, he stood up in their midst and made a speech, saying to them, "Regarding the ships of yours which I caused to be burned, I wanted you to realize that there is no way for you ever to return home. Concerning your clothing which I had burned, it was arousing my ire that, should the Abyssinians gain the victory over you, it should fall into their hands. As for your food which I caused to be thrown into the sea, I would not wish any of you to have food for himself to exist on for a single day [if we should be defeated]. If you are people who will fight alongside me and endure the heat of battle, let me know this now; but if you will not do this, I shall fall upon this sword of mine until it comes out of my back, for I have no mind ever to let the Abyssinians gain power over me alive. So consider your own position now, since I, your commander, have chosen this course for myself." They responded, "Indeed, we will fight alongside you, until either we are dead to the last man or we are victorious!" On the mom of the day when the truce ended, Wahriz arranged his troops for the fight, with the sea at their rear. He went up to [95 51 them and exhorted them forcefully to remain steadfast in battle, and told them that they had two possible ways forward: either to be victorious over their enemy or to die gloriously. He ordered them to have their bows bent and strung, and said, "When I give you the order to shoot, let fly at them swiftly with a five-arrow volley (bi-al-banjakdn). ,60(The people of Yemen had never seen

600. This seems to be the meaning here, since Persian pani, "five," is clearly an element of the word, presumably paniagin, "five-fold," in origin. It is presumably related to the banjakiyyah of al-jawaliql-, al-Mu larrab, 71: a volley of five arrows, mentioned in a context which speaks of the Khurisanians. Siddiqi, Studien 11ber diepersischen Fremdw(5rter, 8 1 n. 7, less plausibly interprets banjakan as referring to five-pointed or five-barbed arrows ("fiinfzackige [Pfeile]").

war arrows before this occasion. Masrfiq advanced with a host that appeared limitless, on an elephant, wearing a crown on his head and with a ruby the size of an egg on his forehead; he could not conceive the possibility of anything except victory. Wahriz's sight had become poor through old age, and he said, "Show me their leader." He was informed, "It's the man on the elephant," but then very soon afterward Masrfiq got down from the elephant and mounted a horse. So they exclaimed, "He's now mounted a horse." Wahriz said, "Prop open my eyelids"-they had fallen down over his eyes on account of his age 601-So they held them up with a bandage. He then took out an arrow, placed it in the center (kabid)602 of his bow and said, "Point out for me Masiliq." They did that for him, until Wahriz was sure of him, and then he gave the order "Shoot!" He himself pulled on his bow until, when he had drawn it to its utmost, he released the arrow. It sped forward as if it were a tightly stretched rope, and struck Masrfiq's forehead. He fell from his mount. A great number of men were killed by that rain of arrows. When they saw their commander felled to the ground, their front rank crumbled, and there was nothing for it but flight.

Wahriz immediately gave orders for the burial of his son's corpse, and ordered that Masrfiq's corpse be thrown down in its place. Booty was found in the defeated army's encampment in quantities beyond measure and beyond enumeration. Each individual Persian cavalryman got fifty or sixty Abyssinians, Ijimyrites, or Bedouin as captives, and drove them along, unre- sisting, before him in bonds. Wahriz said, "Leave the Himyarites and Bedouin alone, just hunt down the blacks and don't leave a single one alive." The Abyssinians were massacred on that day 9S6]until not a single one of their host remained. A Bedouin managed to flee on his camel and galloped onward day and night. Then he happened to turn round and saw an arrow stuck in his provision bag behind the saddle. He exclaimed, "The devil take it! (literally, "Woe to your mother!") -has it traversed such a wide distance or

601. See al-Tabarl, 1, 949, P. 241 above.

602. For the technical term kabid a]-qaws (kabid, literally "liver" "center, heart of a thing"), see J. D. Latham andW. F. Paterson, Saracen Archery, 161, 184: exactly, "the point the arrow passes when shot," i.e., the arrow pass.

traveled so far!" He thought that the arrow had caught up with him!

Wahriz advanced until he entered SanWand reduced to submission the whole land of Yemen. He sent out

governors to the provincial districts (makhalff). Abfi al-Salt, the father of Umayyah b. Abi al-Salt al-Thaqafi, 603 says concerning the son of Dhfi Yazan, his adventures, and those of Wahriz and the Persians, the following verses:

Let those who are like the son of Dhfi Yazan seek vengeance, a man who spent several years traveling across the seas on account of his enemies.

He came to Herachus, at a time when his enemies were already falling into discord and perturbation, but he did not secure from him any part of what he sought.

Then after seven years he turned toward Kisrd; how far away did you have to travel! Until at last he brought with him the Free Ones (Banfi al-Ahrar, i.e., the Persians), 604 whom he bore along; by my life, you spent long in strenuous activity!

603. Ibn Hislidin's scholion to Ibn Ishdq's text here, *Sirat al-nabl*, ed. Wdstenfeld, 44 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 67-68, tr. 698, states that some authorities ascribe the poetry to the son Umayyah, who was a contemporary of the Prophet but, on account of the links between al-Tii'if and Quraysh, was a supporter of Muham- mad's opponents; he seems to have been dead by the time of the fatb, the conquest of Mecca, in 8/630. See Sharh diwdn Umayyah, 65; al-Hadithi, Umayyah b. Abi al-Salt, *haydtuhu wa-shi'ruhu*, 344 n. 158; Blachi, *re*, *Histoire de la littgrature arabe*, II, 304-306; Sezgin, *GAS*, 11, 298-300, IX, 277; E12, s.v. Umayyab. Abi'l-Salt (J. E. Montgomery).

Ibn Hishdm's text has for the name Hiraql in v. 2 the more general Qay~ar, „emperor, " and if this is the older and better reading, it would point to the poem's being either contemporaneous with the events described or at least written not long afterward, by Abfi al-Salt rather than by his son Umayyah. If the reading Hiraql should be correct, then the poem would date from at least one or two generations after the events, since Herachus reigned 610-41, The reading Hiraql would certainly appear to predate al-Taban, since it is the one found in the *Kitib al-shi'r wa-al-shu'ara'* 281, of Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889), repeated also in al- Azraqi, *Akhbdr Makkah*, 99.

604. Banu al-ahrar is a frequent designation in early Arabic usage for the Per- sians encountered by them along the borders of Iraq and during the conquest of Iraq and Persia, e.g., at the engagements of Dhfi Qdr (see al-Taban, L 103 6, P. 3 67 below) and al-Qadisiyyah. We find the equivalent eleutheroi used by Josephus for the Parthians as the equivalent of the social-military Persian term underlying the Arabic expression, i.e., azadhagan (in origin, Avestan Cizata-"agnate, bom into a clan" "freeman (as opposed to a slave)" and, in a narrower sense, "noble," i'free"), 250 Holders of Power after Ardashir b. Bdbak

Who is like Kisra, the supreme king (shahanshdh) over the dependent kings, or like Wahriz on the day of the army, when he attacked furiously!

What a remarkable band went forth! You will never see among men their likes again!

Outstanding warriors, noble chiefs, gleaming ones, marzbdns, [957] lions who train their cubs in the thickets,

Who shoot from highly bent bows, as if they were camel saddles, with long, slim arrows which bring the one who is hit to a speedy death.

You loosed lions against black dogs, and their scattered fugitives have spread through the land in full flight.

So drink with full peace of mind, wearing your crown andreclining high on Ghumddn in a house which you have made [once more] frequented.

Indulge freely in the use of musk, for they (i.e., your enemies) are in complete disarray, and on this day let your two luxurious robes trail freely!

These are noble deeds! Not two wooden bowls of milk mingled with water, which subsequently turned to urine .605

i.e., noble ones," the class of great and lesser landowners, i.e., aristocrats and gentry, who supplied the military commanders and the 61ite cavalymen of the army and upon whom the Persian kings had depended since Achaemenid times. De Blois has suggested that the expression Banu al-ahrd, with its apparently otiose use of the component bamJ, reflects Aramaic usage and that the Arabs may have adopted it from Aramaic-speaking population of the Sdsdnid empire in Mesopotamia. See N61 deke, trans. 2 3 5 n. 2; De Blois, "Freemen'and'Nobles'in Iranian and Semitic Languages," 5-15; Elr, s.v. Ahrdr or Banu 'l-Ahrlir (C. E. Bosworth); and cf. n. 258 above.

605. This last verse has the ring of a proverbial saying. According to the scholion of Ibn Hisham, *Skat al-nabi*, ed. WUstenfeld, 44 = ed. al-Saqqd et al., 1, 68-69, tr. 698, the poem was correctly transmitted by fbn Ish5q except for the last verse, actually by the mukhadram poet and Companion oi the Prophet al-Niihighah. al-ja'di (died toward the end of the seventh century?), on whom see Blachb_re, *Histoire de la littgrature arabe*, 111, 477-79; Sezgin, *GAS*, 11, 245-47, IX, 274; E12, s.v al- Ndbigha al-Dja'di (A. Arazi). Foi-other -sources on Sayf b. Dhl Yazan's appeal for help and Khusrav Anushar- wan's despatch of Wahriz and his army, see al-Ya'qdhi, *Tdrikh*, I, 187, 226-27; al- Dinawarl, *al-Akhbdr al-tiwdl*, 64; Ijamzah al-Isfahdru-, *Tdrikh*, 52-53, 14-15; Abf, *al-Faraj al-isfahdni*, *Aghdni3*, XVII, 308-13;* al-Azraqi-, *AkhbCzr Makkah*, 98- 99. See also Christensen, *Sassimides*, 368-69, 373; Frye, "The Political History of Iran under the Sasanians," 158; Bosworth, "Iran and the Arabs before Islam," 606- 607. Two further verses of the poem are given by al- Azraqi- and Nashwin al-

The story returns to the narrative of Ibn Ishaq. He related: Wahriz went back to Kisrd, having appointed Sayf asking of Yemen. The latter now fell upon the Abyssinians and began to kill them, ripping open the pregnant womenfolk to tear out the fetuses, until he had exterminated the Abyssinians, apart from an insignificant, wretched few whom he took into his service as slaves. Some of these he employed as runners to go before him with their spears. Sayf carried on thus only for a short while before he went forth one day, with the Abyssinians running before him with their spears, until suddenly he found himself surrounded by them, and they attacked him with their spears, killing him. One of the Abyssinians assumed power over them, and carried out a policy of killing the Yemenis, creating havoc and wreaking all manner of evil. When news of this reached Kisrd, he dispatched Wahriz against them with four thousand Persian troops and ordered him not to leave alive in Yemen a single black, nor the child of an Arab woman by a black, whether young or old, nor to leave alive a single man with crisp and curly hair in whose generation the blacks had been involved. Wahriz advanced until he entered [958 Yemen, and did all that, killing every Abyssinian he could find. Then he wrote to Kisrd informing him of what he had done. Kisrd appointed him as viceroy over Yemen. He ruled over it, and levied taxation on it for Kisrd until he died .606

After him, Kisrd made his son al-Marzubdn, son of Wahriz, vice-roy, who governed the land until he died. Then Kisrd appointed al-Himyari; see N61deke, trans. 235 nn. 4-5.

Prye, loc. cit., makes the point that, by the time of the invasion, the pro-Byzantine attitude of the Monophysite Christians in South Arabia, so decisive at the time of the Najrdn persecutions and the first Abyssinian intervention in Yemen, changed (i.e., by 570). But in fact, Justin continued his predecessors' policy of tolerance toward religious dissidents during the first five or six years of his reign, and only in 572, i.e., after the Persians had appeared in Yemen, did he start to persecute the Samaritans and Christian Monophysite dissidents under the influence of the Chalcedonian Patriarch of Constantinople, John Sirimis. See Bury, *A History of the Later Roman Empire from Arcadius to Irene*, 11, 76.

606. According to al-Dinawari, al-Akhbar al-tiwdl, 64, Wahriz governed Yemen for five years. on his deathbed, he shot an arrow, which fell at the spot where his tomb was to be; "to this day," says the historian, "the place is called the maqbarat Wahriz." This same tale is given later by al-Tabafi, 1, 988, p. 294 below, as part of Ibn al-Kalbi's narrative. Holders of Power after Ardashir b. Babak

Binajdn (?), son of al-Marzuban 617 son of Wahriz, until he also died. Then Kisrd 608 appointed after him Khurrakhusrah, son of al-Binajdn, son of al-Marzubdn, son of Wahriz. The latter governed Yemen, but then Kisra grew angry with him and swore that the Yemenis should bring Khurrakhusrah to him at his court borne on their shoulders. This they did. When Khurrakhusrah came before Kisrd, one of the Persian great men went right up to him and laid across him a sword that belonged to Kisrd's father. Kisrd therefore granted him security from being killed, but dismissed him from his post and sent Bddh5n609 to Yemen [as governor] instead. Bddhan remained in that office until the time when God sent His 610 Messenger Muhammad.

[Resumption of the History of Kisrd An-dsharwiin]

It is related that there was a peace accord and a truce between Kisrd Anfisharwiin and Yakhtiydnfis (Justinian), king Byzantines. Discord and enmity arose between a man of the Arabs called Khdlid b. Jabalah 611 whom Yakhtiydnfis had appointed over the

607. In Ibn al-Kalbi's version of these events, i.e., in al-Tabari, 1, 988, p. 294, and cf. n. 693 below, al-Marzub5n appears as al-M.r.wzin, a better reading, probably to be vocalized as al-Maifizdn. Likewise, al-Binajdn appears as Zyn, perhaps for Wy.n, according to the suggestion of Marquart in *Addenda et emendanda*, P. DXCII, whereas N61deke thought it more likely that this consonant ductus contained the names of two persons, Wy.n and Wy.n.jdn. But in the version of Ibn Ishaq at 1, 958 n. d, N61deke adduced the name of a commander mentioned by the contemporary Byzantine historian Menander Protector, one BinganEs.

608. The Kisrd in question must be, of course, Khusraw 11 Abarw-z (r. 591-628).

609. Perhaps originally Badh5m, in which case the etymology would be presumably from biddm, "almond." The name is in fact attested in Middle Persian as Wd'm. See Justi, *Namenbuch*, 56, connecting it with NP bid, Avestan vita-, the spirit of the wind; Gignoux, *Noms propres sassanides*, no. 914; EI2 Suppl., s.v. Bddhdm, Bddhiin (C. E. Bosworth).

610. This marks the end of this extended section on the history of Yemen, and the narrative now resumes from Persian sources as a parallel to that already given by al-Tabad at 1, 898-99, pp. IS 7-59 above.

611. That is, the Jafnid/Ghassanid ruler, the greatest of his line, correctly, al-Udrith b. Jabalah or Arethas (r. 529-69). (N61deke, trans. 238 lm. 2-3, pointed out that al-Tabari's form Khdlid arises from the ambiguities of the Pahlavi script, as does the kh for st in Yakhtiydnfis = Justinian, showing that al-Tabari's ultimate source here must have been a Persian one.) Al-Harith was a redoubtable foederatus or ally of the Byzantines, stemming as he did from a fervently Christian, albeit Monophysite, Arab family. He fought at the side of the Greeks in two major wars,

Arabs of Syria, and a man from Lakhm called al-Mundhir b. al-Nu'mdn, 619 whom Kisrii had appointed over

the lands extending from 'Umdn, al-Bahrayn and al-Yamdma to al-Td'if and the rest of Hijaz and all the Arabs of the intervening lands. Khdlid b. jab- alah raided al-Mundhir's territory and wrought great slaughter among his subjects and seized as plunder extensive lands of his. Al-Mundhir laid a complaint about this before Kisrd, and asked him to write to the king of the Byzantines requesting the latter to secure justice for him against Khdlid. Kisrd therefore wrote to [9591 YakhOyanfis mentioning the agreement regarding the truce and peace between the two sides and informing him of what al- Mundhir, his governor over the Arabs [within the Persian sphere of influence], had suffered at the hands of Khdlid b. Jabalah, whom Yakhtiydnfis had appointed governor over the Arabs within his dominions. He further asked him to command Khdlid to return all the plunder he had driven off from al-Mundhir's territory and lands and [to command Khdlid] to hand over the blood price for the Arabs whom he had killed and who were in al-Mundhir's jurisdiction and to furnish justice to al-Mundhir against Khdlid. Yakhtiydnfis was not to treat what Kisrd had written lightly and contemptuously; [if he were to do so, I then this would be the cause of the rupturing of the agreement and truce between them. Kisrd sent a stream of letters to Yakhtiydnfis urging him to furnish justice to al-Mundhir, but Yakhtiydnfis paid no heed.

Hence Kisrd got ready his forces and led an expedition of some ninety thousand warriors against Yakhtiydnfis's lands.⁶¹³ He cap-

including at the battle of Callinicorn (the Arabic al-Raqqah) in 531, and himself defeated and in 554 killed the Lakhmid al-Mundhir 111 at the battle of al-Hiyir at Chalcis (the Arabic Qinnasrin) (possibly the yawn Hallmah-Hallimah being al-Hdrith's daughter-of the Arabic ayyJm al-'Arab literature), a decisive victory not merely as an intra-Arab clash but an event which gave the Ghassdnids the preponderance over the Lakhmids for a long time to come. See on al-Harith and the battle of Chalcis, N61deke, *Die Ghassilnidische Fiirsten*, 17-ig; Rothstein, *Lahmiden*, 83-87; Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century*, 1/1, 63-82, 134ff 236-66; EI2, s.v. Ghassdn and al-Hdrith b. Pjabala (I. Shahid).

612. That is, al-ATundhir III, who played this leading role in the extension of Persian power into eastern and central Arabia and, indeed, as far as Hijaz. See nn. 409, 563 above.

613. This is the renewed, second war of the Persian emperor with Justinian, spanning 540-45, with the campaign against Antioch already described at 1, 898, p. 157 and nn. 398-99 above. The events in question form the very detailed narrative

Israel Yaakov (Sharah'il Yaq'ub) Dhu Yaz'an

Dhfi Yaz'an or Yazan was one of the Himyarite kings of the first half of the sixth century, and father of Sayf b. Dhi Yazan who secured the help of Khusraw Anfishar- wdn to expel the Abyssinians from Yemen; see al-Tabarl, 1, 946ff., pp. 236ff. and n. 585 below. The component dhj in his name is the ~outh Arabian relative pronoun d, often used to indicate clan or group affiliation, thence "the chief [of such a group]," as here. See Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic, Sabaean Dialect*, 89- 90; Beeston, *Sabaic Grammar*, 27:2. The Muslim Arabs regarded names thus compounded as so characteristic of South Arabian monarchical terminology that they used dhu, pl. adhwa', as a generic term for South Arabian rulers. See Nashwan al-Himyarl, *Die auf Ridarabien bezüglichen Angaben Nagwdns*, 39. 116; EP, s.v. Adhw5'(O. L6fgren).

This manuscript is still in preparation, comments are invited. The following points will be addressed by the manuscript.

1. Tobias, Sanballat, Nehemiah and Gashmu represent Jewish governors of equal rank (possible all of royal "Davidic" descent) to govern different regions of the Trans-Euphrates.
2. Nehemiah was given charge of the single Temple, and allowed to collect taxes from the other three governor's regions. (Implying that the Temple in some way served their native population)
3. Each of the three other regions tried to establish sacrificial altars to rival Jerusalem (Mt. Gezerim, Iraq al-Amir. etc)
4. To assist in tax farming for the Persians, each governor (with the exception of Nehemiah) intermarried with the leadership of the local non-Jewish population.
5. The Tobiads intermarried with the Prophets, and claimed a place as Levites in the Temple.
6. The Tobiads lived as if Biblical Joseph were their ancestor. They were viceroys (governors), tax collectors, interpreters of dreams, predictors of the future (built columbaria, raised doves as a prophetic device)
7. Some of the Tobiads supported the Ptolemies, whereas the other sons went over to the Seleucid Antiochus III who had conquered Coele-Syria and Judea from the Ptolemies.
8. The Tobiads laid claim to Petra, but governorship of that area had been granted by the Romans to the Nabateans, so they began to use the title Antipatris (against Petra).
9. Herod was a Tobiad. He continuously warred with the Nabateans to put forward his claim to Trans-Jordan and Northern Arabia.
10. Tobias was called a "slave" for the same reason Herod was called a "slave".
11. The descendants of Herod ruled in Chalqis and eventually Armenia
12. The ancient Tubba king called Africus was really Agripas (transposition of letters).
13. The tradition of Bilqis bint Shurahil (Israel), the Arabic Queen of Sheba, is not about a Yemenite queen who comes to marry King Solomon, but rather a Jewish queen, descendant of the Hasmoneans, heir to Chalqis, who marries a Yemenite king (Shamir Yuhar'esh II Tubba', 275 CE) and reinvigorates the house of Himyar, to the point that it can negotiate a treaty on equal footing with Persia.
14. Odenathus was a Tobiad, and was known by the title "Ben Netzer" in reference to the title claimed by Tobias in Zechariah 6:12
15. Zenobia was Jewish, and sought to give precedence to monotheism in her kingdom
16. With the destruction of Palmyra in 273, there was a major migration of refugees to Egypt and Arabia.
17. The mixture of monotheism and semitic idolatry was imported to Arabia and became known as shirk
18. Linguistic derivation of Saracen
19. With the influx of people, militia, and money from Palmyra - and marriage to the royal family - the waning kingdom of Himyar was reinvigorated in 275CE.
20. The Kings of Himyar began using the title Tubba, in reference to Tobiads.
21. Tubban kings named "Shamir" were in reference to Samaritans
22. Based on either a Tobiad or Herodian geneological relationship, The Tubbas viewed themselves as the continuation of the Davidic Dynasty, as Tabari has 'Amr b. Tubdn As'ad reciting "We exercise

royal power over all other peoples; we have the connections of nobility and power, after the two Tubba's. We assumed royal power after Dawid (David) for a lengthy period, and we made the kings of East and West ourslaves."

23. The al-Azd were confused to be of Yemenite origin because their king was of Yemenite
24. The Asd took control of the Ka'aba and displaced the negro populace who had served the Temple for the past three centuries (the Jurham).
25. The Jurham fled to Habash (Abyssia) and complained to the king there. This angered the Abyssian rulers and from 350 CE the sovereign of Axum (between the Red Sea and the Nile) joined to his other titles that of King of the Himyarites.
26. The Oniad (Tzaddokite) priesthood remained at the Ka'aba (the ancestors of the Quraish), but their sympathies during times of trouble would remain with the Abyssinian rulers. (This is perhaps why the Prophet, when his followers were suffering their greatest persecution, sent them to Abyssinia).
27. The reforms of the "two Rabbis from Yatrib" taken by Tubba to Yemen, were another name for the reforms by Qussai in Mecca. (Covering the Ka'aba, preventing impurities from reaching the Ka'aba, etc)
28. The Jews of Medina say the altar as a "kosher" place of worship.
29. The Talmud (Menuchos) discusses the Temple of Onias in Egypt. Immediately afterward it discusses Jewish priests who serve an alter in the trans-Jordan. This other altar, they claim was idolatrous. I propose they were referring the Ka'aba when the idol Hubal was still placed there.
30. Qussai's "town hall" in Medina, where public matters were decided and new months were declared was a Sanhedrin.
31. The Quraish were a priestly clan descended from Onais
32. The Haddith referring to "Jews declaring their times of prayer by fire" refers to declaring the new month
33. Abu Karib's grandson As'ad Tubba, had control of the "silk road" to Yemen, set up a string of synagogues between Mecca and China (India?) to spread his religion and communicate with his representatives in the far east.
34. After the failed attempt at creating a independent Jewish State in Babylon by Mar Zutra in 470CE, the Persian King began to wipe out the exilarch's family.
35. One daughter escaped to Samarqand, where she met Yasir Tubba (grandson of the still living king), on one of his business trips to the east.
36. Dhu Nuwas was the son of this daughter and Yasir Tubba.
37. When Hassan Yuha'min Tubba passed away, Dhu Nuwas returned to Yemen to claim the throne
38. Dhu Nuwas refers to "beautiful sidelocks" in the Persian style, a custom unheard of in Arabia, and implies his adoption of Persian Judaism
39. Dhu Nuwas' family symbol of a dove was derived from the Tobiad custom of raising doves
40. While the approach of the Jewish of Ezra, and later the Babylonian academies was to be restrictive in the usage of the term "Jew" to those who followed their traditions. The approach of the Exilarch was to be inclusive, declaring Samaritans, Helenists, Sadducees, and even Jews who had adopted some proto-Christian ideas (Nasaara) - to be his subjects.
41. Dhu Nuwas adopted title of "King of all the Tribes", refers to all the tribes of Israel.

42. Dhu Nuwas' attack on Najran was to create a "Jewish State" and was in direct imitation of the attempt by Mar Zutra, and led to similar attempts in the years before and after by the Samaritans.
43. Dhu Nuwas brought out a replica of the Ark of the Covenant to rally troops against Abyssinia. Abyssinia won the war and captured the Ark which is still on display in Axum adorned even today with the Tobiad/Himyar dove
44. Dhu Nuwas returned to Yemen to claim the throne and eject the "evil" (Christian) Chief Luhay'ath Yanuf who had assumed power during the later years of the kings rule.
45. The line of Tubba kings as reconstructed from epigraphic evidence is displayed here [# The Tobiad / Tubba' Dynasty, \(cont'\)](#)
46. The term Ansar, although later meaning the helpers of the prophet, was chosen because the Aws and Khazraj were previously referred to as the nasaara. This leads Tabari and others to refer to the "ansar" even before the rise of Islam.
47. The Nasaara were Jews who had adopted some Christian teachings. As such both Jews and Nasaara continued to keep Ashura (Yom Kippur) albeit with different calendars.
48. The Nasaara and the Aliahudi were both "People of the Book" because they were both Jews (i.e. descended of those who had practiced Judaism during the second temple period).

In 1962, a Hebrew inscription found in Caesarea, dating to the late 3rd or early 4th century, mentions Nazareth as one of the places in which the priestly (kohanim) family of Hapizzez was residing after Bar Kokhba's revolt (132-135 AD).[35] From the three fragments that have been found, it is possible to show that the inscription was a complete list of the twenty-four priestly courses (cf. 1 Chronicles 24:7-19; Nehemiah 11:12), with each course (or family) assigned its proper order and the name of each town or village in Galilee where it settled. An interesting aspect of this inscription is that the name for Nazareth is not spelled with the "z" sound (as one would expect from the Greek gospels) but with the Hebrew tsade (thus "Nasareth" or "Natsareth").[36] Eleazar Kalir (a Hebrew Galilean poet variously dated from the sixth to tenth century A.D.) also mentions a locality clearly in the Nazareth region bearing the name Nazareth נצרַת (in this case vocalized "Nitzrat"), which was home to the descendants of the 18th Kohen clan or 'priestly course', Hapitzetz הפיצץ, for at least several centuries following the Bar Kochva revolt.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazereth#Etymology>

List of High Priest during pre-Hasmonean Temple period

Seraiah (Sareas) (2 Ki 25:18), son, last H-P in 1st Temple, exec 587/586BC, issue: Jozadak, Jachin, father of Joarib, father of Idaiah, followed by five generations, names unknown, to [H]Asmoneaus, ancestor of the Hasmoneans, a.k.a. the Maccabees and Eniachin, ancestor of several high-priests, among whom were Alcimus, 47th H-P, father of Theophilus, father of Matthias I, 61st H-P

Yehozadak, carried captive to Babylonia, officiated in the "first" synagogue, father of Jeshua II, 32nd H-P (below)

Yehoshua II (Hag 1:1), son of Yehozadak (above), who returned from the "Babylonian Captivity" with Zerubavel, the royal heir; was 1st High-Priest of the "Second Temple", 538/7-c500BC

Joiakim, 33rd H-P (Neh 12:10)

Eliashiv (470-433 BCE or 445-430BC) (Neh 13:4)

Yehohanan (432-372BCE) during reign of Artaxerxes II Mnemon, Persian Shah 404-359/358BC

Yaddua (371-320 BCE) Jaddua (Jaddus) [Ant. XI,7, # 2], who met with Alexander "The Great" of Greece in 332BC (Neh 12:11) also called Shimon HaTzadik? Talmud

Onias I, (320-280 BCE) Maccabees regards Onias as a contemporary of the Spartan king Areus I (309-265 BCE).

Simon I (280-240 BCE), son of Onias I, and grandson of Jaddua, also called Shimon HaTzadik? to in Ecclus. 50:1-21

Elazar, brother of Simon I, contemporary of Ptolemy II Philadelphus 283-246 BCE

Onias II, Tax rights given to Ptolemy V Epiphanes on wedding of with Antiochus III the Great's 222–187 BC daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy V Epiphanes 204–181 BCE (wedding at 204BCE?) Uncle of Joseph Tobiah. [Hughes: d 226BC, contemporary of Ptolemy Euergetes 246-222 BCE.]

Simon II (219-199 BCE), son of Onias II, also called Shimon HaTzadik? Simon II, (d198BC) (Ecclus. 50:1-21)

Onias III, (185-175BCE) deposed 175BC, murdered 171BC,

contemporary of King Seleucus IV Philopator of Syria and Ptolemy VI Philometor (180 to 145 BCE) of Egypt

Onias IV. deprived by Lysias, went to Egypt 159BC, built a temple at Heliopolis in return for "help in wars", in Egypt, in reign of King Ptolemy VI Philometor

Ananias, son of Onias IV, in exile in Egypt, meantime a secondary-line, the Hasmoneans, filled the vacant office of the high-priest

Ananelus, son of Ananias, [Hananeel "The Egyptian"], son, returned to Jerusalem, Israel, upon the overthrow of the Maccabee high-priests 37BC issue: (a) Boethus, 56th H-P (b) Camyodus (c) [name] (dau)

Jason (175-172 BCE), brother to Onias III, was a High Priest in the Temple in Jerusalem. (Tomb has a pyramid on top) asked Menelaus to deliver money to Antiochus, also called Simon the Benjaminite. [took an Hellenized name; original name was Joshua or Jesus], induced King Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria (175-163BCE) to depose Onias III and make him H-P; and, after holding office for three years, was himself supplanted by

Menelaus (171-161 BCE), the brother of Simon the Benjaminite (II Macc. iv. 23). styled self Onias IV, 172-165, executed 162BC. Lysimachus, co-priest.

Alcimus was a High Priest of Israel for three years, (162-159 BC or 162-153BCE), put in office by the Syrian King Demetrius 161-159BC

Interim, 7 years

Jonathan I, H-P 153-142, bro of Judas Maccabee

Simon III, H-P 142-135, bro

Hyrcanus I [John], 135-105, usurped the throne 129BC & became King-Priest

Aristobulus I, 105-104/3BC

Alexander Alexander Yannai, 104/3-76BC

The Rulers of Sheba and Himyar

The list presented here for the Saba'ian rulers, is derived and processed from their inscriptions. Beginning of their kingdom is unknown, but may be c. 900 B.C. Yusif Asar, the last of the kings of Saba' is known as "Zinavas" in the local folklore of Arabia & in the Islamic literature. You can use the unabridged book of Dr. Javad Ali about the history of Arab nations before Islam. this book is translated to persian & I have benefited from it. The main work is in arabic itself.

Mukribs of Saba'

- 1) Yatha' Amar Bayin I
- 2) Yada' II Bayin I
- 3) Samah Ali Yanuf I
- 4) Yatha' Amar Watar I
- 5) Yakrib Malek Zarih
- 6) Yakrib Malek Watar I
- 7) Samah Ali Yanuf II
- 8) Yada' II Bayin II
- 9) Yatha' Amar Watar II
- 10) Yada' Ab I
- 11) Yada' II Bayin III
- 12) Yakrib Malek Watar II
- 13) Yatha' Amar Bayin II
- 14) Karab II Watar I
- 15) Yada' Ab II
- 16) Akh Karab
- 17) Samah Ali Watar
- 18) Yada' II Zarih son of 17
- 19) Samah Ali Yanuf III son of 18
- 20) Yatha' Amar Watar III son of 18
- 21) Yada' II Bayin IV son of 20
- 22) Yada' II Watar I son of 20
- 23) Zamir Ali Zarih I son of 21
- 24) Yatha' Amar Watar IV son of Samah Ali Yanuf son of 20 – contemporary of Sargon II of Assyria
- 25) Karab II Bayin I son of 24 – contemporary of Sennacherib
- 26) Samah Ali Yanuf IV son of 24
- 27) Zamir Ali Watar son of 26?
- 28) Samah Ali Yanuf V son of 27
- 29) Yatha' Amar Bayin III son of 28
- 30) Yakrib Malek Watar III
- 31) Zamir Ali Yanuf son of 30

Kings of Saba'

- 32) Karab II Watar II son of 31
- 33) Samah Ali Zarih son of 32
- 34) Karab II Watar III son of 33
- 35) II Sharih I son of 33
- 36) Yada' II Bayin V son of 34
- 37) Yakrib Malek Watar IV son of 36
- 38) Yatha' Amar Bayin IV son of 37
- 39) Karab II Watar IV son of 38
- 40) Yada' II Bayin VI son of 39
- 41) Samah Ali Yanuf VI son of 39?
- 42) Yatha' Amar Watar V son of 39?
- 43) II Sharih II son of 41
- 44) Zamir Ali Bayin I son of 41
- 45) Yada' II Watar II son of 44
- 46) Zamir Ali Bayin II son of 45
- 47) Samah Ali Yanuf VII son of 46
- 48) Karab II Watar V son of 46?
- 49) Karab Yuhan'em son of Ham Athat
- 50) Karab II Watar VI son of 49
- 51) Wahab Shamsam son of Halik Amar
- 52) Wahab II Yahiz I son of Saraw
- 53) Anmar Yuha'man I son of 52
- 54) Zamir Ali Zarih II son of 53
- 55) Nasha Karab Yuha'man son of 54
- 56) Wahab II Yahiz II
- 57) Zamir Ali Bayin III – beginning of Hemyarite callender(109 B.C.)
- 58) Anmar Yuha'man II son of 56

- 59) Yasir Yuhan'em I
- 60) Shamir Yuhar'esh I son of 59 – contemporary of Gedrut & Biget kings of Ethiopia
- 61) Yarim Aymin son of Awsalat Rafshan
- 62) Karab II Watar Yuhan'em I son of 56
- 63) Alhan Nahfan son of 61
- 64) Far'am Yanhab

Kings of Saba' & Ziridan

- 65) Sha'ram Awtar son of 63
- 66) II Sharih Yahzib son of 64
- 67) Yazil Bayin son of 64 – contemporary of Azbet & Germet kings of Ethiopia
- 68) Hayu Athtar Yazil' son of 65?
- 69) Karab II Watar Yuhan'em II son of 57 – contemporary of Zuskales king of Ethiopia. Had coinage
- 70) Watar Yuha'min son of 66
- 71) Zamir Ali Zarih III son of 69
- 72) Nasha Karab Yuha'min Yuharhib son of 66
- 73) Karab II Bayin II son of 71
- 74) Yasir Yuhasdiq
- 75) Sa'd Shams Asri' son of 66
- 76) Murthid Yuhahmid son of 75
- 77) Zamir Ali Yahbir I son of 74 – had coinage
- 78) Tharin Ya'ib Yuhan'im son of 77
- 79) Zamir Ali Yahbir II son of 78
- 80) ?Shamdar Yuhan'im – had coinage
- 81) ?Amdan Bayin Yuhaqbiz – had coinage
- 82) ?Hutar Athat Yafish
- 83) ?Karab Athat Yuhaqbiz
- 84) ?Shahar Aymin
- 85) ?Rab Shams Namran
- 86) ?Sa'd Um Namran
- 87) ?II Ez Nawfan Yuhasdiq
- 88) Yasir Yuhan'em II

Kings of Saba' & Ziridan & Hazarmut & Yamnit

- 89) Shamir Yuhar'esh II son of 88
- 90) Yarim Yuharhib son of 89?
- 91) Yasir Yuhan'im III son of 89? – contemporary of Ezana king of Ethiopia
- 92) Tharin Ayfi' son of 91
- 93) Zari' Amar Aymin I son of 91
- 94) Karab II Watar Yuhan'em III
- 95) Tharin Yakrib son of 89?
- 96) Zamir Ali Yahbir III son of 95
- 97) Tharin Yuhan'im son of 96 – 1st Christian Ruler
- 98) Malki Karab Yuha'min son of 97 – c. 378/84 A.D.
- 99) Zari' Amar Aymin II son of 98
- 100) Ab Karab As'id son of 98 – c. 433/439
- 101) Hasan Yuha'min son of 100
- 102) Sharhib II Ya'fir son of 100 – c. 450/456
- 103) Sharhib II Yakif – c. 460/466
- 104) Mu'di Karab Yan'im son of 103 – c. 467/473
- 105) Luhay'ath Yanuf son of 103
- 106) Nawfim son of 103
- 107) Murthid Alan Yanuf
- 108) Mu'di Karab Ya'fir – c. 516/522
- 109) Yusif Asar – 518/524 to 525/531 A.D.

And then Ethiopians

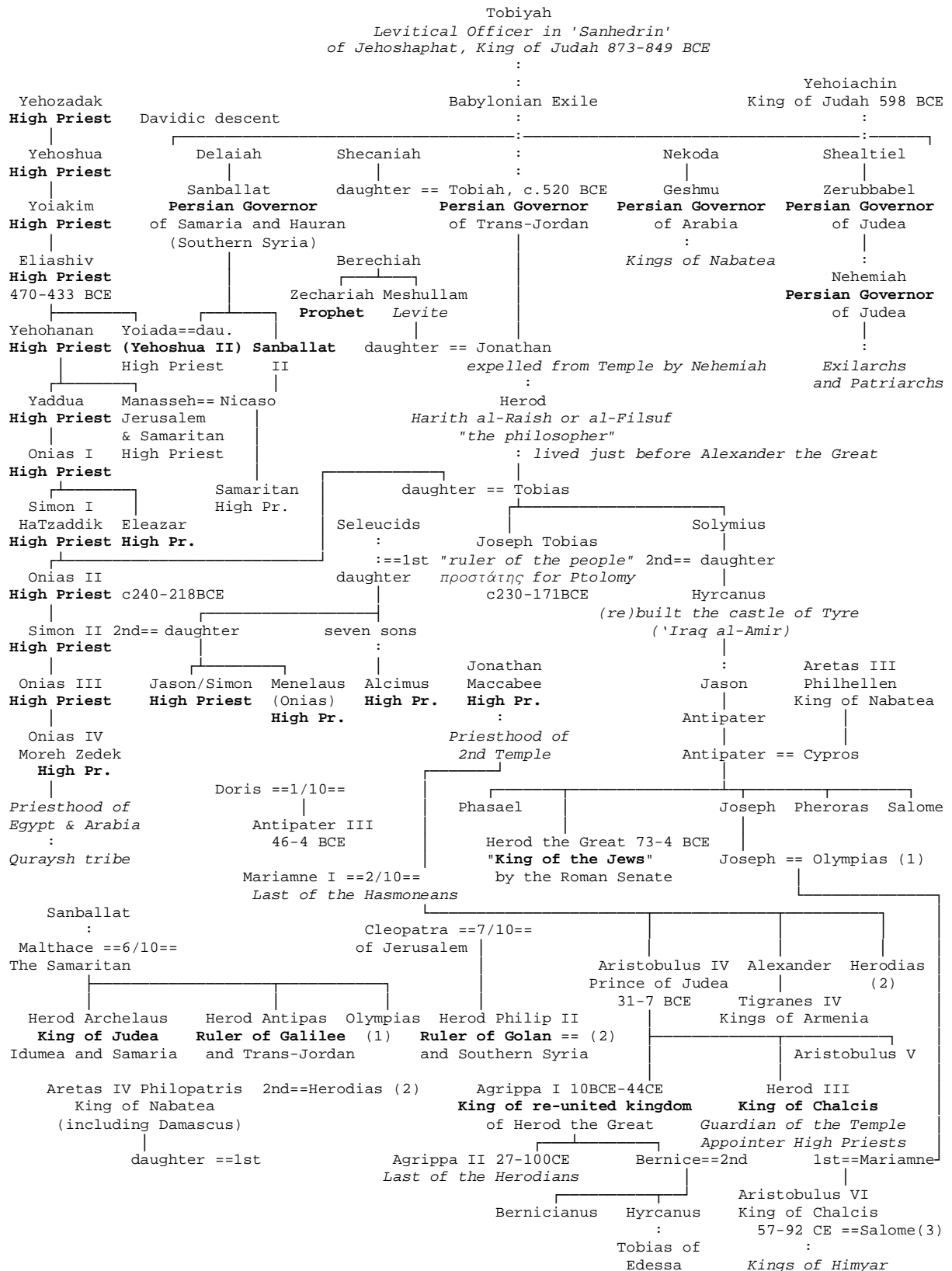
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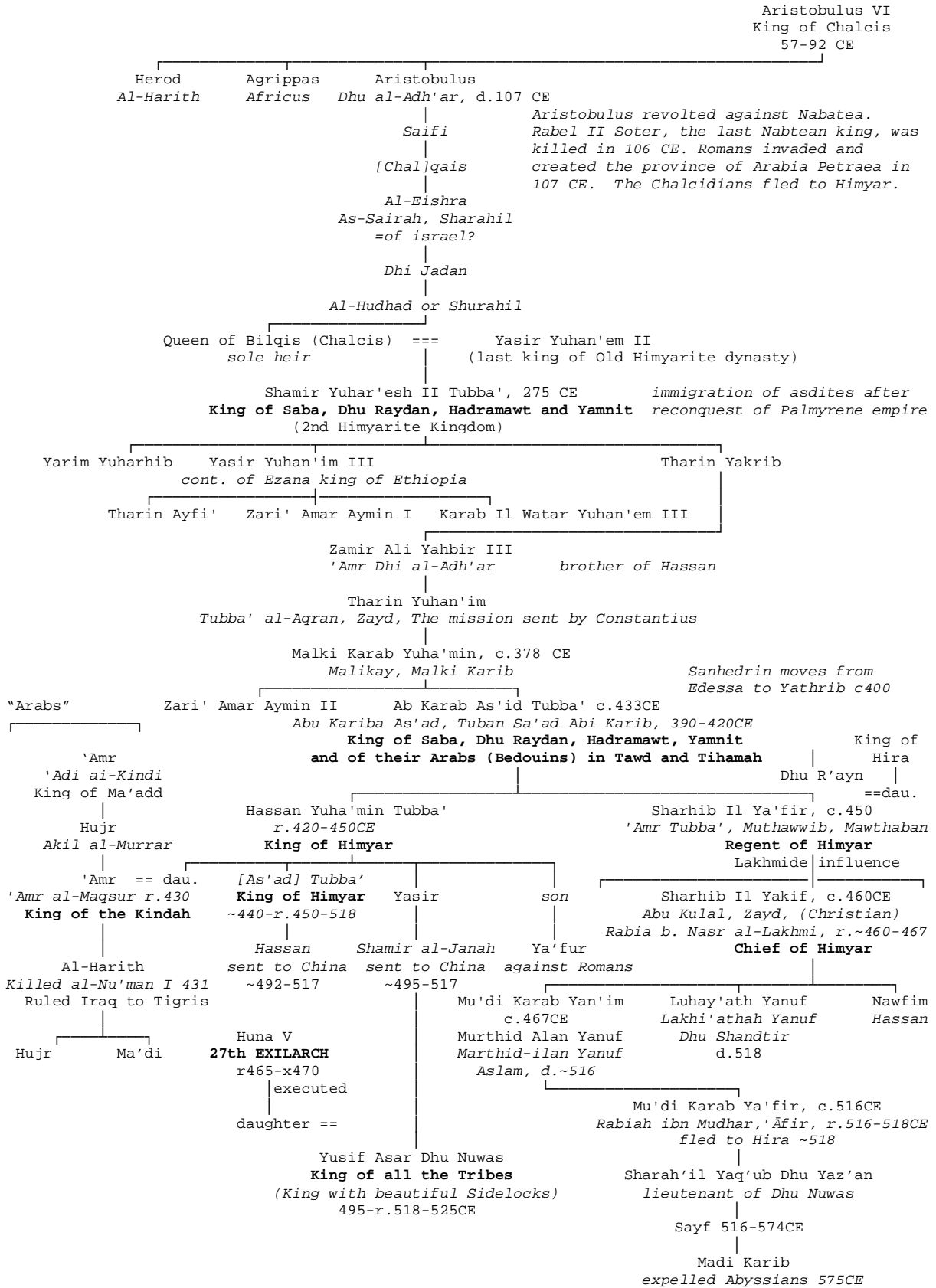
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The Tobiad / Tubba Dynasty



The Tobiad / Tubba Dynasty (cont')



<i>The Tobiads</i> _____	1
Tobiyah the Levite under King Yehoshaphat 873-849 BCE _____	2
Tobiads in the Lachish ostraca _____	2
<i>Declaration of Cyrus, 538BCE</i> _____	4
<i>The Return, Unity and Division</i> _____	7
Building a Temple and Establishing a Priesthood in Jerusalem _____	8
Tobiah crowns Yehoshua as High Priest, 520 BCE _____	9
Appearance of Ezra, 458 BCE _____	11
The proclamation and assembly, 444 BCE _____	12
<i>Sanballat of Samaria</i> _____	14
Sanballat I, Military commander of Samaria and of the Coast _____	14
Sanballat Bagothi, Govenor of Judea _____	16
Sanballat II and Darius Codomannus 336-330BCE _____	16
Religion of the Samaritans _____	18
<i>Tobiads of Trans-Jordania</i> _____	19
<i>The Zenon papyri</i> _____	21
The Tax Collectors _____	21
Religion of the Tobiads _____	22
<i>The Maccabean period</i> _____	23
<i>Antipatris and Herod</i> _____	32
Herod's Judeo-Arab Kingdom _____	33
Herod of Chalcis (d. 48 AD) _____	34
Tobiad Revolt & Annexation of Nabatea, 106 CE _____	35
<i>Crisis of the Third Century and Palmyra</i> _____	36
Odenathus _____	37
Zenobia _____	39
Tobias of Edessa _____	40
Tadmor (Palmyra) gained its independence _____	41
Reconquest by Aurelian, migration of the Azdites _____	42
Bilqis the "Queen of Sheba" _____	42
<i>The Himyarites, Tubbas and Kindah</i> _____	43
Shamir Yuhar'esh II Tubba', 275 CE _____	45
Yasir Yuhan'im III _____	46
Tharin Yuhan'im _____	47
Serving the Kings of Himyar 275CE-525CE _____	48
Malki Karab Yuha'min, c. 378CE _____	48
Abu Karib As'ad [I] Tubba', r.390-420CE _____	48
Jews in Kyrgyz _____	51
Conversion to [Rabbinic] Judaism _____	52

Seige of Yatrib	52
Satih and Shiqq	57
Qusai ibn Kilab ibn Murrah (Qusayy), c. 400–480	60
Hassan [I] Yuha'min Tubba', r.420-450CE	60
Expedition to Iraq	60
'Amr Tubba', Regent of Himyar, 450CE	61
'Abd Kulal, Chief of Himyar, r.~460-467	63
[As'ad II] Tubba' ~440-r.450-518	63
Al-Harith, General of [As'ad II] Tubba'	63
The Royal House: Hassan [II], Shamir al-Janah, and Ya'fur	65
Ya'fur	66
Mazdakite pesecution	66
Shamir Dhu al-Janah, ~495-517	67
Shamir's marriage to the daughter of Huna V, 27th Exilarch	68
Marthid-ilan Yanuf Aslam, d.~516	69
Lakhi'athah Yanuf Dhu Shandtir, d.518	69
Yosef Asher Dhu Nuwas (King with beautiful Sidelocks) r. 518-525 CE	70
Najran	76
Christianity in Arabia	77
Relations between Himyar and Abyssia	80
Israel Yaakov (Sharah'il Yaq'ub) Dhu Yaz'an	103
<i>List of High Priest during pre-Hasmonean Temple period</i>	107
<i>The Rulers of Sheba and Himyar</i>	109
<i>Bibliography</i>	110
<i>The Tobiad / Tubba Dynasty</i>	113
<i>The Tobiad / Tubba Dynasty</i>	113