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ABSTRACT

Mohammed A. Rashed al-Thenayian. Ph.D. thesis, University of Durham, 1993.

An Archaeological Study of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route between Ṣan'ā' and Mecca

This thesis centres on the study of the ancient Yemeni highland pilgrim route which connects Ṣan'ā' in the Yemen Arab Republic with Mecca in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The two composite sections of this route, which are currently situated in the Yemen and Saudi Arabia respectively, are examined thoroughly in this work. The research conducted combines reference to the range of literary sources dealing with our subject and with the results of our specialized fieldwork applied along the length of the route. The work is composed of six chapters which may be summarized as follows.

Chapter I deals with the geographical outlines of Arabia in general and its south and south-western region in particular. It contains an analysis of the geographical data provided by the early Arab geographers concerning the areas of Tihāmah, al-Ḥijāz, and al-Sarawāt. This is followed immediately by an identical treatment of the geographical boundaries and topographical features of the Yemen.

Chapter II provides a literary review of two subject areas: ancient Arabian trade and the routes facilitating it. The major and minor overland routes of South Arabia are also brought to our attention in this connection.

Chapter III is divided into two parts. The first part constitutes an attempt to supply a topographical sketch of the ancient pilgrim routes of Arabia, including their 'offshoots' from details recorded by the early Arab geographers. In the second part the courses of the major Yemeni pilgrim routes, with special reference to the highland one, are similarly examined.

Chapter IV represents the results of our fieldwork executed along the length of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, connecting Ṣan'ā' with Mecca. This chapter is split into two parts, the first being wholly devoted to the Yemeni section of the pilgrim route, linking Ṣan'ā' with Ṣa'dah, and the second to the Saudi section.

Chapter V provides an analytical study of the two surveyed sections of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. In two parts this chapter deals first with the Yemeni section, shedding some light on the construction and design of the water resources discovered along its course. Our subsequent treatment of the Saudi section concentrates on the engineering methods employed in the construction and design of the track of the route.

Chapter VI is an analysis, in two parts, of forty-five Arabic rock and two milestone inscriptions discovered during the survey of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.

The study is supplied with three appendixes. The first includes four indexes relating to the collection of the Arabic rock-inscriptions. The second and third are respectively a glossary of the Arabic words and terms, and an index of the geographical place names occurring in the text of the thesis.

This thesis is composed of two complementary volumes. The present volume (i.e. no. 1) constitutes the theoretical element of our research and the second one presents the relevant visual aids.

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE YEMENI HIGHLAND PILGRIM
ROUTE BETWEEN ṢAN'Ā' AND MECCA**

A thesis presented to the University of Durham

by

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Volume 1

School of Oriental Studies

Faculty of Arts

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22 FEB 1994

DEDICATION

To my Mother and my Father (عَفَرَ اللهُ لَهُ)

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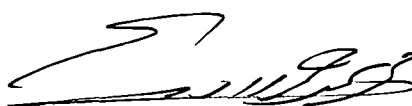
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DECLARATION

No part of the work composing this thesis has previously been submitted by the candidate for a degree in this or in any other university.

Signed: 

Date: 5th. iv. 1993

SCHEME OF transliteration OF ARABIC

The following transliteration system of the Arabic alphabet, which is employed throughout this study, is based on that of *Arabian Studies*, published by the Middle East Centre of the University of Cambridge. Certain Anglicized place names or words, such as Mecca, Damascus, khan, and wadi, are not transliterated.

Consonants

ء '	ز z	ق q
ب b	س s	ك k
ت t	ش sh	ل l
ث th	ص ṣ	م m
ج j	ض ḍ	ن n
ح ḥ	ط ṭ	ه h
خ kh	ظ ḏ	و w
د d	ع ʿ	ي y
ذ dh	غ gh	
ر r	ف f	

Short vowels

َ a
ُ u
ِ i

Long vowels

َا ā
ِى ā
ُو ū
ِى ī

Diphthongs

َو aw
ِى ay

Notes:

ة ah final, at in construct form.

The following alternative scheme of transliteration has exceptionally been employed in the course of studying the pre-Islamic graffiti: g = j, ḍ = dh, ṣ = sh.

KEY TO ABBREVIATED TITLES OF PUBLICATIONS USED IN THIS STUDY

<i>AARP</i>	<i>Art and Architectural Research Papers</i>
<i>ADSA</i>	<i>Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia</i>
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
<i>BIA</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology</i>
<i>BSOAS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i>
<i>EI</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
<i>GJ</i>	<i>The Geographical Journal</i>
<i>GR</i>	<i>The Geographical Review</i>
<i>IC</i>	<i>Islamic Culture</i>
<i>ICHBSH</i>	<i>International Conference on the History of Bilād al-Shām</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JIA</i>	<i>Journal of the Iraqi Academy</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JRGS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Geographical Society</i>
<i>NH</i>	<i>Natural History</i>
<i>PEF</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Fund</i>
<i>PSAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies</i>
<i>SHA</i>	<i>Studies in the History of Arabia</i>
<i>SHAJ</i>	<i>Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan</i>

KEY TO GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS STUDY

A.D. or AD	<i>Anno Domini</i>
A.H.	<i>Anno Hegirae</i>
anon.	anonymous
<i>art. cit.</i>	article cited
B.	<i>Banū, Banī</i> (Arabic: people, folk [of...])
b.	<i>ibn</i> (Arabic: son [of...])
B.C.	before Christ
bk.	book
<i>c. or ca.</i>	<i>circa</i> (approximately, about)
cent.	century
cents.	centuries
cf.	<i>confer</i> , compare
ch. or chap.	chapter
cm.	centimetre
contd.	continued
d.	died
E	east
ed.	edited by, editor
edit.	edition
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> , for example
<i>et al.</i>	<i>et alii</i> , and others
etc.	<i>et cetera</i> , and so forth, and the rest, and others
<i>et seq.</i>	<i>et sequens</i> , and what follows, and the following

F.	Final (used in the palaeographic tables)
f.	following (page[s]), folio (in MS.)
fig.	figure
<i>flor.</i>	<i>floruit</i> , he (or she) flourished
I	Initial (used in the palaeographic tables)
<i>ibid.</i>	<i>ibidem</i> , in the same place, previously cited
i.e.	<i>id. est</i> , that is, in other words
Insc.	Inscription (used in the palaeographic tables)
J.	<i>Jabal</i> (Arabic: mountain)
JS.	A. Jaussen and R. Savignac
km.	kilometre
l.	line
lat.	latitude
ll.	lines
<i>loc. cit.</i>	<i>loco citato</i> , in the place of passage quoted or cited
long.	longitude
M.	Medial (used in the palaeographic tables)
m.	metre
MS.	manuscript
MSS.	manuscripts
n.	note
N.	north
N/A	not applicable
n.d.	no date
NE.	north-east

n. ed.	no editor
no.	number
nos.	numbers
NW.	north-west
<i>ob.</i>	<i>obiit</i> , he or she died
<i>op. cit.</i>	<i>opere citato</i> , in the work cited
p.	page
pl.	plate, plural
pls.	plates
pp.	pages
pt.	part
<i>q.v.</i>	<i>quod vide</i> , which see
S.	south
SE.	south-east
sing.	singular
SSYHPR	the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route (used only in vol. II)
s.th.	something
suppl.	supplement
<i>s.v.</i>	<i>sub verbo</i> , or <i>voce</i> , under the word
SW.	south-west
tab.	table
tabs.	tables
trans.	translation
<i>Urj.</i>	<i>Urjūzah</i> (Arabic: see the glossary at the end of this study)

<i>v. inf.</i>	<i>vide infra</i> , see below
<i>viz</i>	<i>videlicet</i> , namely, it is
vol.	volume
vols.	volumes
<i>v. sup.</i>	<i>vide supra</i> , see above
W.	Wadi, <i>wādī</i> (Arabic: see the glossary at the end of this study)
Y.A.R.	Yemen Arab Republic
YSYHPR	the Yemeni section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route (used only in vol. II)

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INTRODUCTION

To date, extensive research has been carried out on three of the principal northern pilgrim routes of the Arabian Peninsula (i.e. Kufa–Mecca, Egypt–Mecca, and Syria–Mecca),¹ whereas fieldwork aimed specifically at examining the southern ones in their entirety has hitherto been outstanding. It was with this situation in mind that the most significant of the southern routes – the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route – was selected to form the theme of this research. Our original intention was to survey as well the coastal Tihāmah pilgrim route – the second most popular route when in use, linking the (south–)south–western corner of the Yemen with Mecca,² but unfortunately it proved ultimately impossible to execute this plan owing to constraints of time.

The significance of studying the Yemeni highland pilgrim route stems from the fact that it enjoyed continual popularity in the pre- and post-Islamic eras. Prior to the emergence of Islam, the commercial caravans of Southern Arabia favoured this route in travelling to and from the Mediterranean coasts. This pattern of commercial activity was ultimately superseded by a period during

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1. Cf. ch. III pt. i of this study.
 2. Cf. ch. III, pt. ii of this study.

which the Meccan community (Quraysh) played the dominant role pursuing their mercantile interests in the form of two seasonal journeys to Syria and the Yemen.¹ Their commercial prosperity was eventually curtailed by the advent of Islam.² At the point where, by a process of gradual assimilation, most of the population of the Yemen had converted to Islam, caravans were introduced to guide the pilgrims between the Yemen and Mecca. A number of routes were available to these caravans, but the one leading *via* the Highland came to be the main corridor connecting Ṣanʿāʾ with Mecca.

Throughout this study distinction is made between the section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route occurring in the Yemen Arab Republic (15° 25' – 16° 55' latitude – 43° 50' – 44° 10' E longitude) and that in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (17° 30' – 21° 30' latitude – 43° 30' – 40° 00' E longitude). This division is recognized according to the contemporary international boundary. It has been the aim of this research to survey the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route, leading from Ṣanʿāʾ in the Yemen Arab Republic³ to Mecca in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, principally from combined geographical and archaeological perspectives; hence the title of this study: "An Archaeological Study of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route between Ṣanʿāʾ and Mecca".

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1. Cf. Ibn Ḥabīb, *al-Munammaq*, 262 f.; Serjeant, "Misconceptions", *JAOS*, CX, 474 f.
 2. Cf. ch. II of this study.
 3. Notwithstanding the recent unification of the two former Yemeni states under the title of 'the Republic of Yemen', this name has been employed throughout this study owing to its currency during the greater part of our period of research.

The Yemeni highland pilgrim route is identified variously in the available Yemeni sources:¹ ‘the Road of Najd’ (*ṭarīq Najd*), ‘the Road of Ṣan‘ā’ (*maḥajjat Ṣan‘ā*), ‘the Mountain Road’ (*al-jāddah al-jabaliyyah*), ‘the Upper Road’ (*al-ṭarīq al-‘ulyā*), and ‘the Road of al-Sarāt’ (*ṭarīq al-Sarāt*). Elsewhere, still further appellations are used:² ‘the Road of Ṣan‘ā’ (*ṭarīq Ṣan‘ā*), ‘the Road of al-Ṣudūr’ (*ṭarīq al-Ṣudūr*), and ambiguously ‘the Road of the Sea’ (*ṭarīq al-baḥr* – طريق البحر). It seems plausible that the last may have been a scribal error for ‘the Road of Najd’ (*ṭarīq Najd* – طريق نجد).

Nowadays, the route is known locally as ‘the Road of As‘ad al-Kāmil’ (*ṭarīq As‘ad al-Kāmil*), ‘the Road of the Elephant’ (*darb al-fīl*), and ‘the Army Route’ (*ṭarīq al-jaysh*). The first of these names is clearly a reference to the Sabaean ruler (*tubbaʿ*) who held sway between *ca.* A.D. 378 and 415. It is believed that he followed this route to reach Medina on adopting the Jewish faith.³ Ibn al-Mujāwir,⁴ on the other hand, attributes the construction of the pass of Ghūlat ‘Ajīb to that ruler. The second appellation doubtless relates to the unsuccessful military expedition of the Abyssinian viceroy of the Yemen, Abrahah, in *ca.* A.D. 570.⁵ This historical event is documented in the Qurʾān,⁶

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1. Cf. e.g. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 338; Kay, Yaman, 7; ‘Umārah, *al-Mufīd*, 67; Yaḥyā, *Ghāyah*, 248.
 2. Cf. e.g. al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 643; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 22.
 3. Al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murūj*, II, 76 f.; Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 259.
 4. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 202 f.
 5. Cf. Beeston, “Abrahah”, *ET*, I, 102 f.; Bonebakker, “Abū Righāl”, *ET*, I, 144 f.
 6. CV: 1–5; cf. al-Ṭabarī, *al-Bayān*, XXIX, 296; al-Jawzī, *al-Masīr*, IX, 231 f.

and entered in the chronicles of the early Arab historians under ‘the Year of the Elephant’ (*‘ām al-fīl*). The third sobriquet, current only in Saudi Arabia, is a reference to the military conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Yemen in 1934; during the course of this the Saudi forces advanced along certain sections of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.

Our geographical data, which facilitate the identification of the course and stations of the Yemeni highland route, are largely derived from the literature composed by the following early and medieval Yemeni and non-Yemeni geographers whose works may collectively be placed between 250/864 and 626/1228–9.¹ In order to supplement the knowledge derived from these writings, where possible relevant historical texts have been consulted. It should be stated that the references to the Yemeni highland pilgrim route in these geographical and historical sources are consistently scant.

i. Yemeni sources

Al-Radā’ī (*ob.* late 3rd/9th century), a Yemeni poet and the composer of the *Pilgrimage Urjūzah*, or *al-Radā’iyyah* as Yāqūt² names it, performed the *ḥajj*, from his home town Radā’, by following the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. This *Urjūzah* is the earliest published piece of writing, as far as we are

1. Cf. Sprenger, *Reiserouten*, 125 f. See vol. 2, tabs. 1–4.

2. *Al-Buldān*, III, 39–40, s.v. “Radā’”.

aware, which focuses wholly on describing the entire length of the course of the route. In his *Pilgrimage Urjūzah*, which contains one hundred and twenty-seven sets of four-to-five-line poems and is appended at the end of al-Hamdānī's book *Ṣifat Jazīrat al-ʿArab*,¹ al-Radāʿī demonstrates an extensive geographical knowledge of those areas negotiated by the route, including references to the series of stopping-places and the prominent topographical landmarks. He further records the marching-stages along the route by using the term *barīd*.²

The credibility of al-Radāʿī's *Pilgrimage Urjūzah* is supported by the fact that al-Hamdānī³ himself made frequent references to it. It is worth noting here that, compared with the gamut of documentary material available in our sources, this piece of work proved to be the most consistent with our findings in the course of conducting the fieldwork.

Al-Hamdānī⁴ (*ob.* between 350/961–2 and 360/970–1), in addition to his inclusion of the *Pilgrimage Urjūzah* of al-Radāʿī at the end of his work, provides us with a valuable account in which the following aspects of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route are all recorded: total length; course; and stopping-places, with the distance between them and their latitude degrees respectively. The itinerary commences with the total distance between Ṣanʿāʾ and Mecca given in three

1. (1974) 401–458.

2. Cf. ch. VI, pt. i and tab. 12.

3. *Al-Iklīl*, I, 295; VIII, 46 f.; *idem*, *al-Jawharatayn*, 60.

4. *Ṣifah* (1974) 338–341.

separate systems of measurement, viz: 22 stages (sing. *marḥalah*), 35 postal-stages (sing. *barīd*), and 420 miles (sing. *mīl*). This is immediately followed by a description of the orientation of the route itself in accordance with the appearance and disappearance of the constellation of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor. The general direction of the entire length of the route, from the south to the north-north-west, is divided into five compass-stages, viz: Ṣan‘ā’ – Ṣa’dah – Kutnah – Bīshah – al-Manāqib, i.e. the pass of al-Bayḍā’, – Mecca. His account concludes with the identification of the series of wayside stopping-places, both in terms of their separate names, latitude positions, and the distance between them. In this connection it is noted that the calculated length of the separate legs does not concur with the total of miles supplied by al-Hamdānī in the opening of his itinerary. Nevertheless, al-Hamdānī is the only geographer who consistently points out the distance between the stations in miles. Al-Manāqib, which is situated near the meeting-place (*mīqāt*) of al-Sayl al-Kabīr, is identified as the place where the route terminates.

‘Umārah (*ob.* 569/1173–4), in the course of describing the network of the Yemeni pilgrim routes, points out that the Aden-Ṣan‘ā’ road is the main domestic feeder for the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.¹ He continues, ‘...from Ṣan‘ā’ to Ṣa’dah is ten days’ journey and from Ṣa’dah to al-Ṭā’if seven days. At each interval of a day’s journey (*marḥalah*) there are a mosque and water tanks (sing.

1. ‘Umārah, *al-Mufīd*, 67 f.; Kay, *Yaman*, 7 f.

maṣna'ah). In this way the traveller will reach the pass of al-Ṭā'if.¹ If we consider the first part of 'Umārah's statement, it can be concluded that the total distance from Ṣan'ā' to al-Ṭā'if is 17 stages (sing. *marḥalah*) with each one equal to one day's journey. We may deduce further that the second part of the same statement, i.e. 'at each interval of a day's journey there are a mosque and water tanks,' is a reference to actual unnamed pilgrim stations staggered at intervals of one day's marching. If we recognize that the two stations, i.e. Ṣa'dah and al-Ṭā'if, commented upon by 'Umārah are common to both the Yemeni highland and Sarawāt pilgrim routes, and further take into account the paucity of his account, the idea is an attractive one that 'Umārah is in fact referring to the Sarawāt route in this work.²

ii. Non-Yemeni sources

The itinerary of al-Ḥarbī³ (ob. 285/898) positively complements the *Pilgrimage Urjūzah* of al-Radā'ī and *vice versa*. Notwithstanding the presence of orthographical errors in some of al-Ḥarbī's place names, his account distinguishes itself in that it lists all of the major wayside rest-stations and certain of the water resources, four of which are unnamed. No attempt is made to describe the stations or to calculate the distances between them.

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1. 'Umārah, *al-Mufīd*, 69 f.
 2. Cf. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, I, 37 f.
 3. *Al-Manāsik* (1981) 643 f.

Ibn Khurradādhbah¹ (*ob.* after 272/885) identifies twenty-one pilgrim stations and describes each of these briefly. The station of Raydah, including the intervening distances between the route stages, are absent in this account.

Qudāmah² (*ob.* between 310/908 and 337/948) furnishes us with two itineraries of the route. Neither account contains any mention of the intervening distances between the stages. The first version names twenty-one stations with a brief description of each, whereas the second, which focuses exclusively on the major stopping-places (pl. *manāzil*), is merely a bare list of seventeen of them. Three points in Qudāmah's first itinerary merit our attention here. There is unique documentation, firstly, of the station of al-Ghamrah³ serving as the official starting point of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route and, secondly, of the three specific stations being used as residential quarters by the post-master (*ṣāhib al-barīd*). The route under observation is, finally, distinguished as the one provided with milestones and used by officials and merchants.

The terse statement of Ibn Ḥawqal⁴ (*ob.* late 4th/10th century) maintains that the route passes through Ṣan'ā', Ṣa'dah, Jurash, Bīshah, and Tabālah respectively.

1. *Al-Mamālik* (1889) 134 f.

2. *Al-Kharāj* (1967) 188 f.

3. This station is the terminus of the Zubaydah route. It is identified with the present station of al-Birkah. Cf. al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 132.

4. *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ* (1872) 22.

The account of al-Maqdisī¹ (*ob. ca.* 390/1000) is confined to a list of place names, some of which are corrupted. Whilst the lengths of two of the intervals are given in stages (*sing. marḥalah*) here, we find that this list throws no new light on our subject. It is interesting to note that al-Maqdisī's itinerary accords with Qudāmah's second one. This, however, begs the question as to whether al-Maqdisī based his account on that of his predecessor. Ambiguously, al-Maqdisī tells us that he 'has never followed *that* route which passes by al-Ṭā'if.'

Al-Idrīsī² (*ob.* 556/1160) supplies thumb-nail sketches of seventeen stopping-places in his itinerary, although certain of the place names given are corrupted. In a fashion similar to that of many of the early Arab geographers who dealt with the route, he makes no mention of the distances between the stopping-places; however, the length of the route, taken as a whole, is alleged to be 20 stages, or 480 miles.

Ibn al-Mujāwir³ (*ob.* after 626/1228–9) registers two routes linking Ṣan'ā' with Ṣa'dah and discriminates between them by referring to them as 'old' and 'new' respectively. He points out that the old route was pre-Islamic in origin whilst the new one was created after the emergence of Islam and used by the pilgrims. He inconsistently employs the measurement unit of the parasang (*farsakh*) in his account. As far as the present Saudi section of the Yemeni

1. *Al-Taḳāṣīm* (1906) 111 f.

2. *Al-Muṣṭāq* (1970) 145 f.; cf. Shawkat, "Diyār al-'Arab", *JIA*, XXI, 60.

3. *Al-Mustabṣir*, I, 37 f.; II, 202 f., 232.

highland pilgrim route is concerned, he does not include it in his work but instead lists the itinerary of the Sarawāt route which connects Ṣa'dah with Mecca *via* al-Ṭā'if.¹

iii. Travellers and others

Let it be said at the outset that the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, as far as we are aware, has never been subjected to a systematic exploration in its entirety, i.e. from Ṣan'ā' to Mecca or *vice versa*, by any Western traveller or scholar.

H. St. J. Philby,² in the wake of his travels between 1932 and 1936–7 in the south-western area of Saudi Arabia, provides sporadic glimpses of certain parts of the Saudi section. In accord with local Arab tradition, he refers consistently to this route as 'the Road of the Elephant' (*ṭarīq al-fīl*). In 1932 he recorded that he journeyed along the northern Saudi part of the pilgrim route which connects Bīshah with Mecca. A painstaking comparison between Philby's itinerary and the results of our fieldwork on this part of the route reveals that Philby did not actually follow 'the Elephant road' as he terms it, but in fact a course lying to the west of this.

1. Cf. ch. III, pt. ii of this study.

2. *Arabian Highlands*, 41–71; cf. Burckhardt, *Travels*, II, 382–5.

In 1936, the same traveller followed certain separate portions of the central Saudi section of the route on his trek south between Bīshah and Khamīs Mushayṭ. The course which he followed is confirmed by his documented references to the places and water resources he encountered *en route*, such as Wadis Tarj and Ranūm and Ibn Sarār well.¹ In the process of formally demarcating the international frontier between Saudi Arabia and the Yemen, Philby frequently observed those stretches of the route located to the south and south-east of the town of Zahrān al-Janūb.²

In accordance with the project with which he was commissioned by the Saudi Arabian government in 1940, Twitchell³ drew up a plan for a motorway which would connect the cities of Abhā' and Najrān. This plan largely observed the course of the southern part of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, or, as he referred to it, 'the Road of the Elephant'. Twitchell ultimately found, however, that 'there are many remains of good stone-paving like Roman roads. The alignment is well done, but many of the grades are too steep and the curves too sharp to be incorporated into a motor road.'⁴ Furthermore, he attributed the date of construction of this route to the Abyssinian invasion of Mecca in the 6th century A.D.

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1. Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 119 f.; cf. Ḥamzah, *Bilād 'Asīr*, 64 f.
 2. Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 397-9, 407, 425-8.
 3. *Saudi Arabia*, 80.
 4. *Ibid.*, 85.

In 1986 the southern stretch of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, between the Saudi-Yemeni boundary and the town of Ṣahrān al-Janūb, was reconnoitred by the Saudi Antiquities Directorate. According to the initial findings of this authority, this area formerly hosted a community which thrived on agriculture and the route itself may have been laid originally in the 4th century A.D.¹

iv. Cartography

This study is provided with twenty-three maps (see vol. 2), which are categorized as follows:

- i. General maps: nos. 1-3.
- ii. Yemeni section maps: nos. 4-12.
- iii. Saudi section maps: nos. 13 (13.1-13.6)-17.

Having no recourse to small-scale maps throughout the duration of the fieldwork, larger ones (with a scale of 500,000) were consulted.² Full access was subsequently gained to the Yemeni Arab Republic maps collection (scale 50,000) of Cambridge University Library and these constitute the basis for the maps included in this study.³ For the purpose of drawing maps of the relevant areas of Saudi Arabia, we referred to two collections conserved in the Saudi Ministry of Petroleum and Mineral Resources. The first collection (nos. 13.1-13.6) is drawn

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- 1. Al-Nasser *et al.*, "Preliminary", *Aṭlāl*, XI, (English section) 87-90, (Arabic section) 103-7, pls. 85-93.
 - 2. Cf. Bibliography, pt. IV, A: 1-3; B: 12-14.
 - 3. Cf. Bibliography, pt. IV, A: 4-11.

on a scale of 500,000 and the second collection (nos. 14-17) on a scale of 50,000.¹ It was unfortunate that access to the latter collection (scaled 50,000) was limited. All the source maps (i.e. with scale of 50,000 and 500,000) have been an indispensable source of guidance and information. Those with a scale of 50,000 were particularly useful in that their plotting of locations relevant to our research proved consistent with our own findings through fieldwork.

The maps thus compiled for inclusion in this work have all been specifically drawn to the specifications dictated by the results of our fieldwork. Relevant place names missing from the source maps have been added and, furthermore, certain features which, to the best of our belief, have not been treated cartographically before, i.e. passes, wadis, milestones, inscriptions, etc.

Finally, although it is clear that a great deal remains to be discovered in the area embraced by this thesis, it is, nonetheless, hoped that the results of this study will represent a contribution to the field of research in respect of the antiquities of the Arabian Peninsula in general and its network of pilgrim routes in particular.

1. Cf. Bibliography, pt. IV, B: 15-19.

CHAPTER I

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE SOUTHERN ḤIJĀZ

I. The Divisions of Arabia

II. The Yemen

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to sketch a brief historico-geographical outline of the western side of Arabia according to the available sources.

According to classical writers, the Arabian Peninsula is divided into three major areas: Arabia Felix, Arabia Petraea, and Arabia Deserta,¹ a nomenclature which no doubt arose on account of the distinct generalized character of the topography of each of these regions. By contrast, however, the early Arab and Muslim geographers' view of the shape of the Arabian Peninsula differed from the above concept, as we shall note below.

Strabo (64 B.C.–A.D. 25) located Arabia along and on the banks of the Euphrates,² while on another occasion he added that it commences on the side of Babylonia.³ He demarcated the land as follows:

...the northern side of this tract is formed by a great desert, the eastern by the Persian [Gulf], the western by the Arabian Gulf [Red Sea], and the southern by the great sea lying outside of both the Gulfs, the whole of which is called the Erythraean Sea.⁴

On the other hand, Pliny (c. A.D. 23–79) placed Arabia between the Red Sea and

1. Hitti, *History*, 44.

2. *Geography*, III, book xvi, chap. iv, 185.

3. *Ibid.*, 189.

4. *Ibid.*, 185f.

the Persian Gulf.¹

On the whole, there is a lack of specific information in the classical writings with regard to the Arabian Peninsula generally, and particularly with regard to its interior territories. Accordingly, it became a mysterious land for Western geographers until the first quarter of the 1st/7th century during which Islam emerged and the Muslim and Arab geographers started to write more copiously on the boundaries of Arabia and its topography.

I. The Divisions of Arabia

According to the sources at our disposal, almost all the Arab geographers agree on their division of Arabia. Most of them rely on Ibn al-Kalbī's statement, 'The Arabian land, from this peninsula in which the Arabs lived and bred, became five sections in the poems and history of the Arabs: Tihāmah, Ḥijāz, Najd, al-'Arūd, and al-Yaman.'² Al-Bakrī,³ however, attributes the above quotation to both Ibn Shaybah and al-Jayhānī, and includes al-Ghawr in place of Najd. Furthermore, Ibn Ḥawqal⁴ may be in error when he includes Iraq, al-Jazīrah, and the Syrian steppes within his description of the extent of Arabia.

As our archaeological study will concentrate on the south-western part of Arabia, we will omit from our consideration below the regions of al-'Arūd and

1. *Natural History*, VI, 447.

2. Ibn al-Anbārī, *Sharḥ*, 533. Cf. also al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 531; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 219; al-Firūzābādī, *Ma'ālīm*, 103; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, IV, 245; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā'*, II, 286; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Marāṣid*, f.145; al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 47f.

3. *Al-Mamālik*, 22. Cf. also Ibn al-Subāhī (who ascribes it to al-Madā'inī), *Awḍaḥ al-Masālik*, f.42.

4. *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 19.

Najd.

i. *Tihāmah (al-Ghawr)*¹

Tihāmah is defined by Ibn Manẓūr as meaning 'calm of the air and excessive heat.'² In explanation of the name, he makes two suggestions:

Tihāmah has been taken either from Tihāmah, which is another name for Mecca, thus, an inhabitant is Muthim, 'being in Tihāmah'; or because it is lower than the land of Najd, a fact which has virtually corrupted its air.³

Further, al-Aṣma'ī, who approaches closer to accuracy in his linguistic definition of Tihāmah, maintains that '*al-tahamah* [i.e. an infinitive of Tihāmah⁴] means the land towards [or, in the direction of] the sea.'⁵

It should be noted that the word Tihāmah is written on the pattern *th m / thmt* in the South Arabian inscriptions.⁶ At a later date, al-Hamdānī, for example, refers to *ahl Tihāmah wa-ṭawdim*, i.e. 'the people of Tihāmah [coastland] and of the mountains'.⁷ As for the etymology of the name, moreover, Tihāmah is, as Moritz claims, taken from the Hebrew-Babylonian *tiāmtu*, 'sea'.⁸

There is no complete agreement about the limits of Tihāmah in the

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1. Tihāmah is identical with al-Ghawr. See al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 7; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Sharḥ*, 534; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 218. It is also called al-Sāflah; see 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, I, 170.
 2. *Lisān*, XII, 72.
 3. *Ibid.*
 4. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 64.
 5. Ibn Manẓūr, *loc. cit.* Cf. also the introduction by the editor of 'Arrām's valuable book, *Jibāl Tihāmah*, 34.
 6. Grohmann, "Tihāma", *ET*¹, VIII, 764. Cf. also 'Alī, *loc. cit.*
 7. *Şifah*, 371; Grohmann, "Tihāma", *ET*¹, VIII, 764.
 8. Grohmann, "Tihāma", *ET*¹, VIII, 764.

writings of the Arab and Muslim geographers. In the absence of a consensus, we may note some of the opinions expressed, bearing in mind that we are dealing with Ḥijāzī Tihāmāh, in order to gain a clearer picture of the region.

Al-Aṣma'ī, whose statement represents the most common view and is reliable, reports that 'you are in Tihāmāh when you have descended from the Dhāt 'Irq pass.' However, he points out that Tihāmāh begins at Dhāt 'Irq, which, according to him, is a frontier point between Tihāmāh and Najd, as well as the pass of al-'Arj between it and the Ḥijāz.¹ On the other hand, 'Arrām places Tihāmāh between the Raḍwā mountains in the north and al-Ṭā'if and Tabālah in the south.²

In fact, Ḥijāzī Tihāmāh is apparently much longer and wider than has been mentioned. So Yāqūt, for example, explicitly bases his discussion of Tihāmāh on the views of many earlier geographers, such as Ibn al-Quṭāmī³ who makes Yemen and its highlands the southern frontiers of Tihāmāh. He adds that the extent of Tihāmāh reaches as far to the west as the coast and as far to the north as Dhāt 'Irq and al-Juḥfah. Unfortunately, he overlooks the eastern bounds of Tihāmāh, which should be the chain of al-Sarāt mountains, and he fails to clarify the extremities of the northern borders of Yemen. However, 'Umārah b. 'Aqīl⁴ places it between the sea and the two lava-fields of Sulaym and Laylā.⁵ Al-Madā'inī believes that 'everyone who passes through Wajrah, al-Ghamrah, and

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1. Ibn al-Faqīh, *al-Buldān*, 26f. Cf. also Ibn Khurdādhbah, *al-Masālik*, 125; al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 336-8; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 63; Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥaqq, *Marāṣid*, f.107.
 2. *Jibāl Tihāmāh*, 396, 421. For the Raḍwā mountains' location, see Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 51.
 3. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 63.
 4. *Ibid.*, 63.
 5. For further information about the lava-fields on the western side of Arabia, see al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 4, n.14f.

al-Ṭā'if in the direction of Mecca is already in Tihāmah.¹

It can be said that the early available sources do not tell us what we would like to know about Ḥijāzī Tihāmah. It seems that none of the writers, according to the sources at our disposal,² has a sufficient knowledge of it. It can, however, be concluded from modern writings that it is the narrow strip of lowland, including both plains and elevated lands, running from the Sinai Peninsula along the south-west littoral of Arabia.³ It can be combined with the area into which it runs, i.e. Tihāmat al-Shām, extending northwards from al-Birk as far as al-Lith, Tihāmat 'Asīr, and Tihāmat al-Yaman.⁴ The breadth of this sandy coastal plain extends to 50 miles in some places, but is reduced to between 12 and 20 miles in other parts. Its widest part is in the hinterland of Jeddah,⁵ while its narrowest range is in the north where the Madyan mountains are situated.⁶ Tihāmah as a whole is bordered on the east by the Ḥijāz al-Sarāt mountains which stretch from the Yemen in the south as far north as Aylah (or al-'Aqabah).

The Tihāmah zone contains within its extent a number of ports, such as Ḥardah in the south, al-Sirrayn, Jeddah, and al-Jār in the central area, and al-Ḥawrā' and Aylah (or al-'Aqabah) in the north.⁷ Thanks to these harbours, it became prosperous and flourished; consequently, the ancient pilgrimage caravans from Syria, Egypt, and the Yemen traversed this plain on their way to Mecca.⁸

1. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, 63.

2. More disagreements can be discovered in Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, 73; al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 12f., 322; *idem*, *al-Mamālik*, 22. Cf. also Ibn al-Subāhī, *Awḍaḥ al-Masālik*, f.39, 42; Kaḥḥālāh, *Jughrāfiyyah*, 48.

3. 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, I, 170; Grohmann, "Tihāma", *El*¹, VIII, 763. Cf. Shākīr, *Shibh*, 13.

4. Kaḥḥālāh, *Jughrāfiyyah*, 12. See also Thesiger, "Journey", *G.J.*, CX, 190f.; Cornwallis, *Asir*, 7.

5. Kaḥḥālāh, *Jughrāfiyyah*, 57.

6. Al-Bakrī, *al-Mamālik*, 109f.

7. *Ibid.*, 110.

8. *Ibid.*

ii. *Al-Ḥijāz*

The word Ḥijāz is derived from the root *ḥjz*, meaning ‘to separate two things’ and consequently ‘hindrance’.¹ Al-Azharī adds that *ḥajaz* means ‘to prevent warriors from fighting’ and that its noun is *ḥijāz* or *ḥājiz*. Like al-Mas‘ūdī,² he supports his explanation by citing a Qur’anic verse in which God says, ‘Who made a barrier [an isthmus] between the two seas.’³ Another example of this usage occurred when the Prophet Muḥammad was asked by one of his Companions about making the Dahnā’ sands a barrier (*ḥijāz*) between themselves and B. Tamīm.⁴

Why is the Ḥijāz called by this name? The *early* Arab and Muslim geographers differ radically on this, as we shall see below. Strangely, they manage to produce at least eleven answers to the above question. Firstly, we shall deal with the three most common explanations. Ibn al-Anbārī states,

Because of al-Sarāt mountain, which is the highest mountain in the Arabian land and stretches from the bottom of the Yemen to al-Shām’s desert territories, the Arabs called it the Ḥijāz, as it separates al-Ghawr [Tihāmah], which is lowland, from Najd, which is highland.⁵

It seems, however, that this view must be rejected, ^{that} the Ḥijāz denotes al-Sarāt mountain and not the land surrounding it, despite five geographers who followed

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1. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, V, 331.
 2. *Murūj*, III, 139f.
 3. Ibn Manẓūr, *loc. cit.*; Qur’ān XXVII: 61; cf. XXV: 53.
 4. Ibn Manẓūr, *loc. cit.*
 5. *Sharḥ*, 533. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, I, 48.

him,¹ the majority of whom attributed the information to Ibn al-Kalbī, except al-Fīrūzābādī² who credits it to Saʿīd b. al-Musayyib.

Secondly, according to Yāqūt, al-Aṣmaʿī maintained that it was given this name (al-Ḥijāz) because it sunders Tihāmah from Najd.³ This piece of information is generally cited by his successors,⁴ some of whom ascribed it to other informants, such as Ibn ʿAyyāsh and al-Jawharī, although it is likely that al-Aṣmaʿī actually had in mind al-Sarāt mountains.

The third account, which is transmitted by Yāqūt and attributed to Ibn al-Anbārī, is that 'it might have been called Ḥijāz because it is surrounded by the mountains.'⁵ Both al-Iṣfahānī⁶ and al-Samhūdī⁷ attribute this report to al-Aṣmaʿī, but al-Ḥarbī⁸ ascribes it to Quṭrub. Al-Bakrī⁹ sets it down without the informant's name, while al-Qalqashandī¹⁰ refers it to Ibn al-Kalbī. It is obvious that this statement by Ibn al-Anbārī conflicts with his previous one, but it appears that he is moving in the right direction.

According to Yāqūt, al-Khalīl said that 'the Ḥijāz was given this name because it separates al-Ghawr [Tihāmah], al-Shām [Syria], and the steppe.'¹¹ It is

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1. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 219; al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 532f.; al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ*, 285; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *Marāṣid*, f.145.
 2. *Maʿālim*, 103.
 3. *Al-Buldān*, II, 219.
 4. *Ibid.*; al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, I, 11f.; al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-ʿArab*, 14; Ibn al-Faḳīh, *al-Buldān*, 26; al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ*, II, 285f.; Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, I, 39; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, V, 331; Ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, *Marāṣid*, f.107; Ibn al-Subāhī *Awḍaḥ al-Masālik*, f.42.
 5. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 218.
 6. *Bilād al-ʿArab*, 16.
 7. *Wafāʾ*, II, 285.
 8. *Al-Manāsik*, 538.
 9. *Muʿjam*, I, 11.
 10. *Ṣubḥ*, IV, 246.
 11. *Al-Buldān*, II, 218.

noteworthy that Ibn Manẓūr¹ quotes this in support of al-Khalīl, while al-Qalqashandī² criticizes it. A similar report is cited by Yāqūt³ and al-Samhūdī,⁴ both of them dropping ‘the steppe’; the former adds al-Sarāt and Najd, whereas the latter has Tihāmah and Najd. The second part of this report, i.e. Yāqūt’s addition, is, according to al-Bakrī,⁵ confirmed by Ibn Durayd and is quoted by al-Samhūdī, but the latter ascribes it to Ibn al-Mundhir.⁶

Finally, al-Aṣma‘ī claims that the Ḥijāz was given this name because it is surrounded by the five lava-fields, two of which are B. Sulaym and Wāqim.⁷ Al-Dumayrī, on the other hand, mentions the rest of the names of the lava-fields.⁸ To al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, the word *ḥijāz* denoted ‘the land of rivers and plants and signifies Paradise.’⁹ Al-Mas‘ūdī suggested that the Ḥijāz earned the name because it is a barrier between the Yemen and Syria.¹⁰ Al-Azharī explains that it was so-called ‘because the lava-fields (*ḥarrāt*) come between it and the upper Najd.’¹¹

It is most likely that the geographers’ disagreement is due to the fact that every one of them based his definition on his personal knowledge of the geography of the Ḥijāz. Thus, they differ in their demarcation of the Ḥijāz and, indeed, some of them misquote or are confused between al-Sarāt mountains and the land of the Ḥijāz.

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1. *Lisān*, V, 331.
 2. *Ṣubḥ*, IV, 246. Cf. also Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, I, 39.
 3. *Al-Buldān*, II, 219.
 4. *Wafāʾ*, II, 286.
 5. *Muʿjam*, I, 11.
 6. Al-Samhūdī, *loc. cit.* See also Ibn Manẓūr, *loc. cit.*
 7. Ibn Manẓūr, *loc. cit.*; Ibn al-Mujāwir, *loc. cit.*
 8. Al-Samhūdī, *Wafāʾ*, II, 285f. Cf. also al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, I, 205.
 9. Al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, I, 11; al-Wohaibi, *Northern Ḥijāz*, 18.
 10. *Murūj*, III, 139.
 11. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, V, 331.

It seems to be an arduous, if not impossible, task to define precisely the exact geographic confines of the Ḥijāz province as it is understood in the Arab and Muslim geographers' writings. This judgment is made as a result of a general review of the sources at our disposal. Nevertheless, in this part of the present chapter, we shall try to deduce from our sources what were in fact the outlines of the territories of the Ḥijāz.

It is believed that Ibn 'Abbās was the first one to define the Ḥijāz.¹ According to him, Ibn al-Kalbī demarcates the Ḥijāz as the mountains which are located to the east of al-Sarāt mountains and which stretch as far as Fayḍ, the two mountains of Ṭayy, Medina, and Tathlīth.² Ibn al-Anbārī summarizes by saying that the Ḥijāz is situated between Tathlīth and the two mountains of Ṭayy.³ This report is also transmitted by al-Ḥarbī who attributes it to Ibn Faḍl Allāh.⁴ 'Arrām, on the other hand, delineates it between Ma'dīn al-Niqrah and Medina, which is described by him as being half-Ḥijāzī and half-Tihāmī.⁵

According to Yāqūt, al-Aṣma'ī gives three descriptions of the Ḥijāz, each of which are different. He defines it as the land surrounded by the *four* lava-fields of Shawrān, Laylā, Wāqim, al-Nār, and B. Sulaym's encampments as far as Medina.⁶ On another occasion, he enumerates twelve villages (sing. *dār*), seven of which are called by tribal names, and Shaghb and Badā in the direction of Syria.⁷

1. Al-Wohaibi, *loc. cit.*

2. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, I, 48. See also al-Bakrī, *al-Mamālik*, 22; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, 219.

3. *Sharḥ*, 533.

4. *Al-Manāsik*, 533.

5. *Jibāl Tihāmāh*, 424. See also Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 219; al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 10; al-Fīrūzābādī, *Ma'ālim*, 103.

6. *Al-Buldān*, II, 219. See also Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, V, 331 (where the definition is ascribed to Ibn al-Sukkayt); al-Samhūdī, *Wafā'*, II, 285.

7. *Loc. cit.* See also al-Samhūdī, *loc. cit.*; al-Fīrūzābādī, *Ma'ālim*, 102.

Al-Asadī does the same, but he includes Dār B. Bakr b. Mu'āwiyah and deletes the lava-field of Laylā, as well as Shaghb and Badā.¹ The third statement of al-Aṣma'ī, which seems clearer and more accurate, is that 'al-Ḥijāz is the land stretching from the borders of Ṣan'ā' at al-'Ablā' and Tabālah to the Syrian boundaries.² Ṣan'ā' here may mean the Yemen, because Ṣan'ā' is in fact too distant from al-'Ablā'³ and Tabālah to be situated on one line with them. In addition, Ibn al-Kalbī recounts again two more reports. He sets the Ḥijāz between the two mountains of Ṭayy and the road from Iraq to Mecca.⁴ In his second account he states that 'al-Ḥijāz is the area enclosed by al-Yamāmah, al-'Arūḍ, Najd, and the Yemen.⁵ It is possible that in his first statement, Ibn al-Kalbī had in mind the plateau of the Ḥijāz, Najd al-Ḥijāz, because this statement is identical with that of al-Maqdisī.⁶

Al-Iṣṭakhrī⁷ and Ibn Ḥawqal⁸ have their own map on which the southern Ḥijāz frontier is drawn as a horizontal line linking al-Sirrayn and the Persian Gulf. They further limit it by Madyan, al-Ḥijr, the two mountains of Ṭayy, and al-Yamāmah. Ibn Ḥawqal clarifies his definition by adding that the Ḥijāz includes Mecca, Medina, and the Yamāmah dependencies.⁹

1. Al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 10. Cf. also al-Maqdisī, *al-Taqāsīm*, 69.

2. Yāqūt, *loc. cit.* See also al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 14; al-Samhūdī, *loc. cit.*; al-Fīrūzābādī, *loc. cit.* Cf. al-Wohaibi, *Northern Ḥijāz*, 21, 27.

3. For the location of al-'Ablā', see Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 80. Further information about the borders of the Ḥijāz in the direction of the Yemen can be found in al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, I, 51. Cf. also Qudāmah, *al-Kharāj*, 189.

4. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 219; al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 11; al-Samhūdī, *Wafā'*, II, 286; al-Fīrūzābādī, *Ma'ālim*, 103.

5. Ibn al-Faqīh, *al-Buldān*, 27; al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 537.

6. *Al-Taqāsīm*, 94.

7. *Al-Masālik*, 14.

8. *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, 19.

9. *Ibid.* See also Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, I, 39.

Nevertheless, al-Bakrī's controversial account of the bounds of the Ḥijāz conflicts with the previous description. His exact words are:

The first [eastern border] of the Ḥijāz is Baṭn Nakhl, the upper Rummah [wadi] and the rear side of the Laylā lava-field [now known as Rahaṭ lava-field]; the second [northern boundary] in the direction of al-Shām is Shaghb and Badā; the third [western border], which is in the direction of Tihāmah, is Badr, al-Suqayā, Ruhāt, and 'Ukāz; the fourth [southern frontier] is adjacent to Sāyah and Waddān; then it [the southern border] curves toward the first boundary.¹

The chief point to notice is that, according to this description, the Ḥijāz appears to be a small region. Even so, al-Bakrī does not mention the four main directions and he misplaces some sites which are recorded along the third and fourth boundaries. He locates 'Ukāz, the pre-Islamic market, in the west where are situated Badr, al-Suqayā, and Ruhāt, which are rest-stations on the pilgrim route between Mecca and Medina, although 'Ukāz is actually situated to the south-east of al-Ṭā'if, beyond Qarn al-Manāzil, a *marḥalah* [day's journey] distant from the Ṣan'ā' pilgrim road.² He regards Sāyah and Waddān as the southern frontier of the Ḥijāz although, according to Yāqūt,³ Waddān is a village on the road between Mecca and Medina. It is located in the west, not far from al-Jār, the famous Islamic port on the eastern side of the Red Sea.

According to Yāqūt⁴ also, al-Ḥarbī included Tabūk and Palestine within the bounds of the Ḥijāz. This is difficult to accept, as it is now well known that Palestine borders the Ḥijāz on the north, but it is possible that al-Ḥarbī might have

1. *Mu'jam*, I, 11.

2. For the location of 'Ukāz, see al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, III, 959; 'Arrām, *Jibāl Tihāmah*, 440; al-Azraqī, *Akhhār*, 131. For further discussion, see al-Wohaibi, *Northern Ḥijāz*, 21.

3. *Al-Buldān*, V, 365. Cf. also al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 38, 107, 248; II, 356; III, 850, 954; IV, 1351, 1374.

4. *Al-Buldān*, II, 219. See also al-Samhūdī, *Wafā'*, II, 286.

intended the territory now known as Jordan. Our assumption is based on the fact that 'Ammān is a town neighbouring the land of Ḥijāz, as Yāqūt¹ puts it, while, on the other hand, al-Maqdisī² defines Udhruh, which is located on the southern border of al-Shām, as a Ḥijāzī Shāmī town. He also refers to Aylah (or the port of al-'Aqabah) as the *entrepôt* of the Ḥijāz.

Al-Hamdānī,³ cites three collections of poems attributed to three poets from Najd, Tihāmah, and the Ḥijāz. According to the Ḥijāzī poet, who mentions over forty Ḥijāzī localities, the Ḥijāz stretches south as far as Mecca and its villages, and as far north as Yanbu', Raḍwā mountains, and Khaybar. He limits the Ḥijāz on the west by the coastline and on the east by a lava-field, Wadi al-'Aqīq, and the city of Medina. This definition leads us to assume that the southern boundary of the Ḥijaz stops at Mecca, a view which might not have been approved by the Arab geographers. Furthermore, he ignores a vast part of Tihāmah, that is the tract of land between Jeddah and Yanbu', and he includes it as part of the Ḥijāz.

Among modern writers also, there is no substantial agreement in defining the geographical limits of the Ḥijāz.⁴ At the present time, it corresponds in general with the western province of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

1. *Al-Buldān*, I, 129. Cf. Kaḥḥālāh, *Jughrāfiyyah*, 48.

2. *Al-Taḡāsīm*, 178.

3. *Ṣifāh*, I, 214-9, 227f.

4. Kaḥḥālāh, *Jughrāfiyyah*, 110f.; Shākir, *Shibh*, 11f. Cf. also Rentz, "al-Ḥijāz" *El*², III, 362; Rutter, "The Hejaz", *G.J.*, CX, 97.

iii. *The Sarawāt*

Sarawāt (pl. of *sarāt*) is also called Ṭawd,¹ particularly that part which is located to the south of Mecca. The northern part of al-Sarāt mountains, namely between ‘Asfān and Medina, is called al-Sharāh.² Al-Sarāt mountain was given this name because of its height; moreover, *sarāt* means ‘back’.³ As has been seen, most of the ancient geographers apply the term al-Ḥijāz to this chain of mountains, because al-Sarāt stands as a barrier between Tihāmah and Najd.

Al-Aṣma‘ī calls it al-Ṭawd and defines it as ‘a mountain overlooking ‘Arafah and stretching as far as Ṣan‘ā’.⁴ Ibn al-Faqīh mentions it as stretching from al-Ṭā‘if to Ṣan‘ā’.⁵ Al-Hamdānī, whose statement is accurate, says, ‘The mountain of al-Sarāt, which links the furthest point of the Yemen with al-Shām, is not just one mountain, but a chain of mountains.’⁶ This is true, because al-Sarāt mountain itself has been divided by the geographers into three sections, each part of which is referred to after the name of the tribe living in or around it. Ibn al-Faqīh enumerates three al-Sarāts, but locates only two of them, i.e. Sarāt B. Thaḳīf near to Mecca and al-Ṭā‘if, and Sarāt Ma‘din al-Barām in ‘Adwān territory.⁷ According to Yāqūt, al-Aṣma‘ī mentions three al-Sarāts: Thaḳīf, Fahīm and ‘Adwān, and al-Azd.⁸

There are many wadis along the foothills of al-Sarāt mountains. These

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1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, I, 208. See also Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 46.
 2. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 331.
 3. *Ibid.*, IV, 47.
 4. *Ibid.*, III, 204.
 5. *Al-Buldān*, 31.
 6. *Ṣifāh*, 99. See also Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 205; al-Bakrī, *al-Mamālik*, 23.
 7. *Al-Buldān*, 31f.
 8. *Al-Buldān*, III, 204.

wadis, such as al-Līth, Ḍankān, ‘Ashm, and ‘Ulayb,¹ start in the mountains and run across the plain of Tihāmah, beyond which they flow into the Red Sea. Ibn Bulayhid thought that a part of al-Sarāt mountains stretching between al-Ṭā’if and Aden was well known by the name al-Sarāt among the inhabitants of Najd and the Ḥijāz, while on the other hand, the chain of mountains located between al-Ṭā’if and al-Shām was known by the name of the Ḥijāz mountains.²

II. The Yemen

i. *Boundaries*

As mentioned above, the classical geographers used to apply the term Arabia Felix to the south-western corner of the Arabian Peninsula, an area which in practical terms nowadays consists of the Yemen Arab Republic. In comparison with Arabia Deserta and Arabia Petraea, however, the ancient Greek and Roman geographers did not explain in so great detail the topographical bounds of Arabia Felix.

Once again, the early Arab and Muslim geographers vary in their definitions of the limits of the Yemen, in spite of the fact that they almost agree as to the divisions of the Yemen. According to Yāqūt, al-Aṣma’ī stated,

Its boundary runs from Oman across to Najrān. Then [the boundary] follows the Arabian Sea as far as Aden and al-Shiḥr, and even extends beyond Oman,

1. *Ibid.*, 205.

2. *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV, 99. For modern studies of the Sarawāt mountains, see Kaḥḥālah, *Jughrāfiyyah*, 9-11; Shākir, *Shibh*, 11-16; al-Bakrī, *al-Mamālik*, 111f.

and it terminates at Baynūnah which is situated between Oman and al-Baḥrayn.¹

Al-Ya'qūbī, who mentions its provinces, islands, and ports, extends the northern border of the Yemen as far north as Jeddah and Tabālah. He also includes Ḥaḍramawt and its port, Aden, but does not count Oman as a part of the Yemen.²

Al-Iṣṭakhri, followed by Ibn Hawqal,³ maintains that 'the Yemen border runs from al-Sirrayn until it reaches the region of Yalamlam. Then it goes across the rear side of al-Ṭā'if, Najd al-Yaman as far as the Persian Sea in the east, so that it [the Yemen] holds two thirds of the land of the Arabs.'⁴ The Yemen, according to al-Mas'ūdī's demarcation⁵ in which he uses the *marḥalah* as a measuring unit for the Yemeni borders, is bounded in the north by Ṭalḥat al-Malik and in the east by Wadi Waḥā,⁶ the remote desert of Ḥaḍramawt and Oman, and in the south and in the west by the seas of Qulzum, China, and India. Therefore, the circumference of the Yemen is 20 *marḥalahs* by 16. Al-Bakrī makes a similar statement. He reports that

the Yemen is limited in the east by the sand of B. Sa'd which is called Yabrīn. This sandy tract stretches from al-Yamāmah until it approaches the sea in Ḥaḍramawt, in the west by the Jeddah Sea as far as Aden, in the north by Ṭalḥat al-Malik and Sharūn which is a dependency of Mecca, and in the south by al-Jawf and Ma'rib, which are two cities.⁷

Moreover, Ibn 'Abbās, according to a report transmitted by Ibn al-Kalbī,

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1. *Al-Buldān*, V, 447.
 2. *Al-Buldān*, 317-9.
 3. *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 19.
 4. *Al-Masālik*, 14. Cf. also al-'Umarī, *al-Abṣār*, 149.
 5. *Murūj*, III, 179.
 6. For its location, see Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 363; IV, 145.
 7. *Mu'jam*, I, 16.

states that

It happens that [the boundaries of the Yemen] are located beyond Tathlith down to Ṣan'ā' and the areas parallel to it down to Ḥaḍramawt, al-Shiḥr, and Oman, as well as the adjoining areas, including the lowlands and the highlands. The Yemen includes all of that.¹

At the same time, although al-Hamdānī includes this account in his valuable book, he also includes another version which conflicts slightly with Ibn 'Abbās' statement. He writes,

The Yemen is bounded by the sea on the east, the south, and west. A line, which separates it [the Yemen] from the rest of Arabia, runs from the territories of Oman and Yabrīn to the border [which separates] al-Yaman from al-Yamāmah; then it [the line] goes to the territories of al-Hujayrah, Tathlith, the rivers [sic] of Jurash and Kutnah. It descends steeply from al-Sarāt across Sha'f 'Anz,² thence it reaches Tihāmah towards Umm Jaḥdam,³ approaching the sea near a mountain called Kudmul which is not far from Ḥamḍah. So, this line separates the Yemen and Kinānah from Tihāmah inland.⁴

However, Ibn 'Abbās' statement is quoted by other geographers, such as al-Bakrī,⁵ without naming the informant. In addition, Yāqūt⁶ follows in the same way, but adds al-Hamdānī's account in his explanation. Finally, we should mention Nāṣirī Khusraw's version in which he says, 'The traveller can reach the province of al-Yaman, which extends from Mecca to Aden on the coast, when he walks one *marḥalah* southwards from Mecca.'⁷

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, I, 48.

2. Possibly Sha'f 'Aththar is intended. See Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 349.

3. Further information can be found in *ibid.*, I, 250.

4. *Ibid.*, I, 51.

5. *Mu'jam*, I, 9; *idem*, *al-Mamālik*, 23.

6. *Al-Buldān*, V, 447. See also Kaḥḥālah, *Jughrāfiyyah*, 287; 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, I, 170f.

7. *Nāmāh*, 124f. For another description, see al-Fākihī, *al-Muntaqā*, 50.

To sum up, the above data point to the conclusion that the boundaries of the Yemen, at least the northern and eastern ones, depended on the actual strength or weakness of the ruling authority in the Yemen. Consequently, it may be assumed that the extension or contraction of the borders of the Yemen are something of a political barometer reflecting the governmental situation in the country.

ii. Divisions

From the point of view of the Arab geographers, who are generally agreed on this matter, the Yemen may be geographically divided into two or more regions, basically the lowlands (i.e. the coastal plain of the Tihāmah) and the highlands (i.e. the Najd mountains).¹

I. The lowland area, which is known among geographers as Tihāmat al-Yaman or Ghawr al-Yaman, with its capital in Zabīd,² is, of course, an extension of Tihāmat al-Ḥijāz. It stretches from al-Sirrayn³ on the borders of the Ḥijāz, alongside the Red Sea, to the extremity of the province of Aden on the Indian Ocean. The southern coastal plain is very narrow, with a width ranging from 8 to 17 km., and joins with the sands of the Empty Quarter (al-Rub' al-Khālī) in the east. As has been seen, the name Tihāmah denotes the low

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1. See al-Ya'qūbī (*al-Buldān*, 317-9), who numbers eighty-four Yemeni provinces. See also Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣurāt al-Ard*, 19; al-Maqdisī, *al-Taqāsīm*, 69; Khusraw, *Nāmāh*, 125; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 265; Ibn Khaldūn (cited in Kay, *Yaman*, 121).
 2. More information about the Tihāmah cities and hamlets can be found in al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, I, 53f., 119f. Cf. al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, I, 156-162. See also al-Maqdisī, *al-Taqāsīm*, 69f.
 3. Al-Idrīsī makes al-Shirjah the starting-point of Tihāmat al-Yaman. See his *al-Mushāq*, fasc.ii, 148.

country of the Yemen adjoining the coast. Some geographers confusedly applied the name Tihāmah to the range of al-Sarāt mountains. This report, in which they say that "Tihāmah, as a part of the Yemen, is a range of mountains," is quoted by three geographers.¹

II. The highland area, also called Najd al-Yaman,² is located on the eastern side of Tihāmat al-Yaman. A part of the Yemeni Sarāt separates these two areas. The southern border of Najd al-Ḥijāz adjoins the northern border of Najd al-Yaman. There is a desert area between these two Najds and Oman. Najd al-Yaman is a flat area and not mountainous.³ Al-Hamdānī, furthermore, calls it 'Upper Najd', in which he includes the district of Jurash and the town of Yabambam.⁴ Finally, the Jawf area can be regarded as a part of the Yemeni Najd or as an independent province.

Western Arabia in general was covered with a network of commercial routes which played a prominent role for a very long period of time. These routes, via which goods were transferred and distributed to international markets, were the backbone of Arabian trade. This matter as a whole will be the subject of the following chapter.

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1. Al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik*, 23; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 36; al-Idrīsī, *al-Mushtāq*, 148.
 2. For its etymology, see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, III, 413; Ibn al-Subāhī, *Awḍaḥ al-Masālik*, f.93.
 3. For the Yemeni Najdi cities, see al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, I, 54-67. Cf. also al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, II, 733f. For further data dealing with Najd al-Yaman, see Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 39; Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, I, 38; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 265.
 4. *Ṣifāh*, I, 177. See also Grohmann, "Nedjd", *EI*¹, VI, 893.

CHAPTER II

ANCIENT ARABIAN TRADE

I. Ancient Arabian Trade

II. Ancient Trade Routes

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the ancient trade routes. First, a brief overview is given of Arabian trade and this is followed by a consideration of the ancient roadways over which most goods were transported for distribution to different centres within the Peninsula.

The Arabian Peninsula was once covered by a network of caravan routes, the importance of which stemmed from their function as links between towns and the urban centres of the ancient Arabian kingdoms. These tracks played a prominent role in the efflorescence of commerce within the Arabian Peninsula and in other adjacent urban centres (see map 1). The land routes were generally less dangerous than the sea routes and they passed through urban centres providing rest and refreshment for the traveller. A number of Arabian kingdoms emerged along the course of the caravan routes as expressions of Arab political power. These kingdoms contributed to the maintenance of travel security and helped to ensure the flow of trade commodities by caravans.

One of the most famous and longest Arabian roads was that which began at the shores of the Arabian Sea and terminated at the shores of the Mediterranean in the north. Another route linked Southern Arabia with the Arabian Gulf in the east. In addition to these, there were other tracks traversing the Arabian Peninsula. After the advent of Islam, the pilgrimage (*hajj*) was declared one of the basic principles of the new faith. Therefore it became essential for the pilgrims to use

the ancient routes and the pilgrim caravans replaced the old trading ones.

I.i. Ancient Arabian Trade

It can be said that the Arabian Peninsula used to be the "bread-basket" of the ancient world. Its prosperity was due to many factors, in particular its geographical position, connected as it is by land with Sinai, Syro-Palestine, and Mesopotamia, and surrounded by navigable waters on the west, south, and east.¹ Moreover, it is situated among the ancient civilizations of India, Persia, and states of the eastern Mediterranean and Egypt.² In addition, there was a great demand for frankincense and myrrh which were highly esteemed in antiquity because of the many uses to which they were put³ by the peoples of the Fertile Crescent and the Mediterranean world.⁴ All of these elements together apparently contributed to the Arabian Peninsula becoming an important centre of trade and commerce.⁵

It has generally been accepted that the inhabitants of Southern Arabia were the only people in the Peninsula who took advantage of gathering, transferring, and controlling the trade in incense. In the wake of their agricultural

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1. Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 75.
 2. For more historical information concerning the commercial relationship between Southern Arabia and the rest of the ancient world, see Hitti, *History*, 32-37; Schoff, *Periplus*, 51 f.
 3. Frankincense was burnt in honour of the gods at religious centres. It was also used as a medicine and as an ingredient in the manufacture of perfume and other products. Myrrh was used in embalming and for producing ointments. See Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 12 f., 51-54.
 4. Van Beek, *loc. cit.*
 5. The domestication of the camel was a turning-point facilitating many important economic developments. It thus seems appropriate that a chronology of Arabian trade should begin by identifying the time of this domestication. For details see al-Hāshimī, *Tijārat*, 8-16; Groom, *Frankincense*, 33-37; Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 37-39. Groom (*Frankincense*, 230) suggests the sixth century B.C. as the time when trade began, while Crone (*Meccan Trade*, 14-17) dates the beginning of trade in the seventh century B.C.

activities and with some help from their associates in playing the role of broker in the east-west transit of goods, they managed to establish a monopoly and hence a very strong economic base for their distinct political and social system.¹ Pliny noted that the Minaeans were 'the people who originated the trade and who chiefly practise it; and from them the perfume takes the name of Minaean.'²

Arabian trade was undoubtedly based on frankincense, myrrh,³ and many other kinds of plants and herbs grown principally in Southern Arabia. According to Pliny, 'no country beside Arabia produces frankincense.'⁴ Herodotus similarly stated, 'The whole of Arabia exhales a most delicious fragrance...the only country which produces frankincense, myrrh, cassia, cinnamon, and ladanum...'⁵ Strabo characterized Southern Arabia as 'the aromatic country',⁶ while Diodorus Siculus, speaking of the products of Southern Arabia, stated that 'myrrh and frankincense, which is most dear to the gods and is exported throughout the entire inhabited world, are produced in the farthest parts of this land [Arabia]...in great abundance.'⁷

Contemporary scholars are in no doubt that frankincense and myrrh trees were native to only two or three parts of the world: Southern Arabia, Somalia, and parts of Ethiopia.⁸ Pliny indicated that the frankincense-producing district was eight

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1. For full details of the political structure of the ancient Southern Arabian kingdoms, see Albright, "The Chronology of Ancient South Arabia", *BASOR*, CXIX, 5-15; *idem*, "The Chronology of the Minaean Kings of Arabia", *BASOR*, CXXIX, 20-24; Jamme, "A New Chronology of the Qatabanian Kingdom", *BASOR*, CXX, 26 f.
 2. *Natural History*, bk. XII, ch. xxx, 52.
 3. It is believed that the earliest reference to frankincense and myrrh is in the inscriptions in Queen Hatshepsut's temple dating from 1500 B.C. For details regarding incense and references to it in the holy books, see Groom, *Frankincense*, 46 f., 230 f., 240 f.
 4. *Natural History*, bk. XVI, ch. iv, 25.
 5. Hitti, *History*, 46.
 6. *Geography*, bk. III, ch. cvii, 19.
 7. *Diodorus of Sicily*, bk. II, ch. xlix, 47.
 8. See Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 72; Groom, *Frankincense*, 9; Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 183; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 13. The island of Socotra may also be included

days' journey from the capital of the Sabaeans. In addition to this information, he listed several kinds of myrrh, each of which was named after the region in which it grew: Minaean in ancient Ma'in, Astramitic in Ḥaḍramawt, Gebbanitic in Qatabān, Ausaritic in Awsān, Sambracene in Southern Tihāmah, and two other varieties from areas as yet unidentified.¹ The anonymous author of the *Periplus* refers to Qanā, now known as Ḥuṣn al-Ghurāb, as the frankincense country and in another paragraph the author mentions Muza, generally thought to be al-Mukhā' (Mocha) as the port from which myrrh was exported.² In his sixth map of Asia, Ptolemy placed the myrrh-producing regions to the north and north-west of the Arabian Emporium, or Aden.³ Moreover, Strabo asserted that 'Cattabania produces frankincense; and Chatrametitis myrrh,'⁴ whereas Van Beek believes the opposite to be the case.⁵

According to the view of modern explorers, the frankincense-tree was grown in the province of Ḍafār between longitudes 53° 00' and 55° 21', and in the eastern half of Northern Somalia, while myrrh was found in the hills and mountains throughout South-West Arabia and West-Central Somalia.⁶ In the course of his study of the ancient irrigation installations in Wādī Bayḥān, Bowen confirmed that Qatabān was the area in which myrrh was grown. He discovered a series of discoloured circles laid out to form straight rows on the ancient flat

among the sources of incense.

1. *Natural History*, bk. XII, ch. xxx, 52; bk. XII, ch. xxxv, 69. See also Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 74.
2. ¶¶ 27, 24. See also Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 75. It is tempting to equate Muza with Mawza', though the latter is not on the coast.
3. *Loc. cit.*
4. *Geography*, bk. XVI, ch. iv, 4.
5. "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 73.
6. For full details concerning the geographical distribution of the incense areas, see *ibid.*, 72; *idem*, "Frankincense and Myrrh in Ancient South Arabia", *JAOS*, LXXVIII, 142-4; Bowen, "Trade Routes", *ADSA*, 41; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 14; Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 183; Müller, "Arabian Frankincense", *SHA*, I, pt.i, 79 f.; Stark, *Southern Gates*, 306.

silt-field surfaces and he also located a myrrh-tree in a rocky ravine in Bayhān.¹ Furthermore, during her penetration into the Ḥajr province of Ḥaḍramawt in 1939, Doreen Ingrams was informed that there were still many incense trees further up to the north.²

There are several archaeological discoveries which betoken the Southern Arabs' activities and their engagement in trade with the centres of ancient civilization. During the course of his campaign at Beitin (Biblical Bethel) in 1957, James L. Kelso unearthed a large fragment of a Southern Arabian clay stamp which had originally contained three lines of text. This stamp was identified as South Arabian on the basis of the inscription, the material, and the palaeography. According to the conclusion reached by Van Beek and Jamme,³ this stamp must have been connected with the incense trade and can be dated at some time between the last quarter of the tenth and the third quarter of the eighth centuries B.C. Also, sherds of jars, found in Aylah, al-'Aqabah, with South Arabian lettering on them, have been dated back to the fifth or sixth centuries B.C.⁴ With respect to Mesopotamia, a tripod has been found in Iraq and dated at some time between the sixth and the fourth centuries B.C.⁵ These finds are clearly very good indicators of the magnitude of the commercial relationship between the south and the north of the Arabian Peninsula. There are, in addition, two South Arabian

1. *Loc. cit.*

2. "Excursion", *GJ*, XCVIII, no.3, 126. See also Bent, "Exploration", *GJ*, VI, no.2, 119. For growing areas of frankincense-trees in Oman, see Ingrams, "From Cana, to Sabbatha", *JRAS* (1945) 176-9. Ingrams saw many incense trees during his journey along the famous incense route from Qanā to Shabwah.

3. "Clay Stamp", *BASOR*, CLI, 9-16. See also *idem*, "Authenticity", *BASOR*, CXCIX, 59-65; cf. Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 81; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 16; Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 180, 198 f.

4. Groom, *Frankincense*, 61; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 16 f.

5. Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 17. See also Albright, "Chaldaean Inscription", *BASOR*, CXXVIII, 39-45.

inscriptions that have been located in Egypt and Delos in Greece. According to Van Beek,¹ both of these inscriptions belong to the third century B.C. Thus, it can be said that all the above-mentioned finds bear witness to the geographical extent and time-span of South Arabian trade during the first millennium B.C.

Broadly speaking, the decline of the Arabian trade was probably due to two main causes. Firstly, it is believed that the most crucial cause of decline was the discovery of the monsoon trade winds. In the first half of the first century A.D.,² a Greek navigator called Hippalus contrived, by observing the location of the ports and the periodic changes of the Indian Ocean, how to use the strong monsoon winds on the outward voyage to India.³ His theory can be summarized as follows. As a sophisticated captain, he noticed that the north-east winter winds blew steadily and provided good sailing conditions for a westward voyage. Similarly, on his return sailing to India, he also took advantage of the summer winds that blew south-westerly. Consequently, the sailors were able to follow a straight course in their navigation and to reach their final destination in a relatively short time by setting sail in the proper season.⁴

Although it seems probable that Arab and Indian craft had frequented the Indian Ocean and that the monsoons were understood before the time of Hippalus,⁵ it was nevertheless his discovery, as well as the rapid progress in the

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1. "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 81 f. Furthermore, D. Ingrams ("Excursion" 124) found four large stones, some of which resembled ancient Egyptian symbols, but unfortunately her find has not yet been confirmed by other travellers who came after her.
 2. Cf. Groom, *Frankincense*, 78 f., 150; Hourani, *Seafaring*, 24-28 who both refer this discovery to the first century B.C. See also Hamilton, "Archaeological Sites", *GJ*, CI, 111.
 3. Schoff, *Periplus*, II 57. See also Pliny, *Natural History*, bk. VI, 99-106.
 4. For more details, see Schoff, *Periplus*, 6, 53 f., 227; O'Leary, *Arabia*, 79-81. Cf. Ibn Jubayr (*Rihlah*, 311) who stayed on deck of the ship in the port of 'Akā for twelve days, awaiting the eastern wind.
 5. See Schoff, *Periplus*, 227; cf. Hourani, *Seafaring*, 24-28.

shipping industry which were the two elements that enabled Roman ships to sail down the Red Sea and into the Indian Ocean, and to return with precious merchandise for which Rome paid so generously. Accordingly, the Roman sea-borne trade began on a huge scale and, henceforth, the demand for the Arabian commodities diminished and the balance of the east-west transit trade started to decrease to the detriment of the Arabs and their neighbours, causing a severe blow to their investments and the caravan trade.

Secondly, it appears likely that Arabian commerce was affected by the exceedingly rapid spread of Christianity.¹ It is a well-known fact that most of the incense, as well as frankincense and myrrh, that was purchased from the eastern market, was utilized mainly in pagan religious rites. Making offerings, for instance, to the household gods and funeral ceremonies might have been a common procedure and required a large quantity of incense, specifically perfumes. According to Pliny, perfumes were 'piled up in heaps to the honour of dead bodies.'² Thus, the ingredients of Arabian perfume must have been burnt on funeral pyres in order to overcome the offensive smells of corpses. Furthermore, we can hardly imagine the amount of perfumes that were burnt on the corpse of Nero's consort which, as Pliny informs us,³ were greater in quantity than the annual output of Arabian perfume. But eventually these practices were forbidden at some time between the third and the fourth centuries A.D., by the Emperor Theodosius.⁴

To sum up, Arabian overland trade must have been damaged by the entry

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1. See Groom, *Frankincense*, 162; Hāshimī, *Tijārat*, 25; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 27.
 2. *Natural History*, bk. XII, 8-83.
 3. *Ibid.*
 4. Groom, *Frankincense*, 162.

of Roman ships into the Indian Ocean, an event that diverted the flow of trade from the land to the sea. The spread of Christianity by the Romans was also instrumental in the market collapse of incense, frankincense, and myrrh.

ii. Mecca as a Commercial Centre

Generally speaking, merchants are usually very keen to seek a secure, stable, and appropriate market in which to invest and conduct negotiations with other commercial agents in a peaceful atmosphere. In the sixth century A.D. therefore, Mecca was a centre to which laden caravans travelled and to which dealers from neighbouring places came. It was a cosmopolitan market within which profitable transactions were made. It was just before the emergence of Islam, after many years of trade stagnation, that Arabian trade started to revive and resume its former shape. But now the control of trade shifted from the southern Arabs to the hands of the prestigious tribe of Quraysh, to which the Prophet Muḥammad belonged and whose homeland was in and around Mecca city which is situated in an almost barren wadi,¹ with brackish water from the well of Zamzam.

Without doubt, Mecca's importance gradually increased as a trading nucleus because, according to Watt,² of 'the existence there of a *ḥaram* or sanctuary area, to which men [and women] could come without fear of molestation.' In other words, it was (and still is) an inviolable city, where no bloodshed was permitted within its sacred precincts and it was the focus of an

1. Qur'ān, XIV.37.

2. *Muhammad at Mecca*, 3; cf. Crone; *Meccan Trade*, 168.

annual pilgrimage. Mecca was also important because of its geographical position at the crossroads of all the major trade routes in Arabia, in particular the incense route from Southern Arabia to Syria, so that it became a natural midway halt for the caravaneers, who might have come either from the Yemen to Syria and *vice versa*, or perhaps from Mesopotamia and Eastern Arabia.¹ Additionally, the existence of pre-Islamic fairs near to Mecca, such as those at 'Ukāz, Dhū al-Majāz, and Majannah,² served the Quraysh community and supplied them in the long run with enough experience to organize and develop their own trade.

It would appear that Meccan society was very disciplined and law-abiding. The Meccans devoted themselves entirely to a lucrative commerce and were not inclined to spend their time in military raids. Their organization is illustrated by the existence of Dār al-Nadwah, an assembly room or club, similar to a present-day parliament. According to Ya'qūbī, it was built by Quṣayy and had many objectives, so that, for example, the planning of raids, the discussion of commercial affairs, and even promises of engagement were made in this tribal council.³

With regard to the Meccans' local and international trade relationships, they succeeded in gaining secure agreements, especially with the tribes through

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1. See Watt, *loc. cit.*; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 6; 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, IV, 6. Cf. O'Leary (*Arabia*, 182 f.), who believes that Mecca was chosen by the Arab carriers as their headquarters because of its well positioned along the main route, a view which seems to emphasize the importance of Mecca's commercial interests and not its religious status. While O'Leary apparently discounts the significance of Mecca as a holy place, his view is not however shared by modern writers.
 2. For full details of pre-Islamic fairs, see Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, I, 313; Azraqī, *Akhhār*, 129-132, 495; Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, III, 600; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 704 f., s.v. "'Ukāz"; 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, VIII, 285-7.
 3. Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, I, 277; 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, VII, 290; O'Leary, *Arabia*, 182.

whose lands caravans passed. These treaties (e.g. the *ḥilf al-fuḍūl* or *ḥilf al-īlāf*)¹ were primarily struck in order to protect the trade of Mecca against attackers or plunderers and also to guarantee the distribution of Meccan merchandise.² Moreover, it can be said that these accords were aimed at safeguarding the economy of Mecca as a whole, because Quraysh, including its clans, all took part in such a way as to form a confederacy for the purpose of gathering the stock and carrying on trade. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that every citizen joined and participated in the despatch of merchandise.³ Accordingly, 'by the end of the sixth century A.D., they had gained control of most of the trade from the Yemen to Syria – an important route by which the West got Indian luxury goods as well as South Arabian frankincense,' as Watt informs us.⁴

It is believed that Hāshim b. 'Abd Manāf, the founder of the international trade of Mecca, was the first person to introduce the two seasonal journeys, one to Syria in the summer and one to the Yemen in the winter, or perhaps the other way round. These journeys took place after Hāshim had obtained treaties (*īlāfāt*) from Syria, Iraq, and the Yemen.⁵ As a result of these agreements to operate two regular trips, the trade of Mecca reached its heyday and involved the Meccans in full-time business without their paying much attention to religious duties.⁶ But the striking point to be noticed is that, in spite of the celebrated extensive trade of

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1. More details are given in Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, II, 16 f.; Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, 30; 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, VII, 302.
 2. Such as leather goods, clothing, and raisins. See 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, VII, 30, 293; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 87–108. On the silver and gold mines, see al-Hamdānī, *al-Jawharatayn*, 137, 145; al-Ya'qūbī, *al-Buldān*, 80.
 3. See al-Wāqidī, *al-Maghāzī*, I (*Badr*), 19–21, 27 f., 48, 102.
 4. *Muhammad at Mecca*, 3; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 7; 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, IV, 21.
 5. Ya'qūbī, *Tārīkh*, I, 280, 282.
 6. See Qur'ān, CVI (S. Quraysh), where God refers to the two journeys and urges believers to 'worship the Lord of the Ka'bah, who fed them against a hunger; and gave them security from a fear.' Cf. Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*, 63; 'Alī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, VII, 290; Crone, *Meccan Trade*, 204–9.

Mecca, it appears that they did not involve themselves in maritime trade, which means that they owned no commercial shipping. Whenever they needed to go to Africa, they would travel by Ethiopian craft, either from al-Jār, the port of Medina, or from al-Shu'aybah, that of Mecca later replaced by Jeddah during the caliphate of 'Uthmān.¹ These two main harbours were located on the eastern shore of the Red Sea, but neither of them receives much attention in the early sources with regard to their construction, continuity, or their commercial role in the pre- or post-Islamic eras. Therefore, we are left with scanty information that may attract a good deal of conjecture. One must wait until systematic archaeological excavations are undertaken which may bring to light further data and reveal the enigma of these ancient Arabian ports.

As a result of the severe opposition that was shown towards the Prophet and his Companions by the Meccan community, Muḥammad emigrated (the *hijrah*) in A.D. 622 from Mecca to Yathrib, where he succeeded, with full support from its inhabitants, the *Anṣār*, in establishing the principal base for the new Islamic state. It is probably fair to consider the Prophet's emigration as a critical turning-point in the history of Meccan trade and the autocracy of the Quraysh tribe. With his practical knowledge of Meccan trade, Muḥammad realized that there was no more effective solution to adopt with Meccans than to apply a policy of economic blockade, in order to persuade them to accept Islam and to free Mecca for worshippers.² This new strategy was implemented by despatching military detachments (sing. *sariyyah*) with the general aim of either cutting off the trade routes or engaging in skirmishes with the caravaneers.

1. Nahrawālī, *al-I'lām*, 79. For more details, see al-Wāqidī, *al-Maghāzī*, III, 983; Azraqī, *Akhhbār*, I, 107; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 92 f., s.v. "al-Jār"; III, 350 f., s.v. "al-Shu'aybah"; Hawting, "Origin", *Arabica*, XXXI, 318-326.

2. Cf. Watt, *Muhammad at Medina*, 4.

These routes, together with other trade routes in the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, were the main targets of the Prophet's tactics and are summarized below.

II. Ancient Trade Routes

i. *Southern Arabian Incense Routes*

Before describing the main inland caravan routes in Arabia as a whole, by which goods were transported which were later used by pilgrims, there are several topographical facts which should be noted. These points¹ may be viewed as features which controlled and demarcated the direction of the trade and pilgrimage routes.

a. The Direction of the Main or Minor Wadis

Caravans in general might have followed the wadi courses, because these sources provided the travellers with water and pasture, and at the same time it must have been easier for the beasts of burden to follow the wadi beds.

b. Water Supply

Wells in ancient times, as well as at present, were the main sources of drinkable water in the Arabian desert. In a vast and barren tract like Arabia, water must, of course, be the main consideration of the traveller caring for himself and for his animals. So the wells must have been places where caravans rested

1. See Hāshimī, *Tijārat*, 19 f.

before pressing on to the next stage (*marḥalah*) of their journey. It is believed that most of the areas around wells became, through frequent dwellings, oases or caravan-stations, such as al-‘Ulā in North-Western Arabia and Taymā’ in Northern Arabia.

c. *The Avoidance of Travelling through Rocky Terrain*

Although mountainous areas are considered to be the second source of water, caravans in general avoided going through them. In some cases, passes (sing. *naqab*) were constructed and paved, e.g. Mablāqah, in order to enable laden camels and other animals to pass easily through. Also these passes might have been constructed to funnel caravans through in file, so that they could be counted and taxed.¹

The function of collecting the frankincense from the incense forests and packing it appears to have been a tedious task. It was carried out by the lower classes of society, for example by the ‘king’s slaves’ and prisoners who were sentenced to hard labour.²

It is generally agreed that there was not just one incense road in Southern Arabia, but rather several such routes. It is clear that most of the explorers of Arabia have been obsessed with the idea, first expressed by Pliny,³ that there was only one single narrow road or highway. However, there was in fact more than one track in existence, with feeders leading to the main cities of Southern Arabia,

1. Groom, *Frankincense*, 181.

2. Schoff, *Periplus*, ¶ 29.

3. *Natural History*, bk. XII, ch. xxx, 54.

Shabwah for example. These feeder routes must have varied in their importance in accordance with political and economic circumstances and must also have shifted geographically as a result of the rise and fall of the South Arabian states. According to Van Beek, 'heavy taxation by tribes through whose territory caravans passed might force merchants to use seagoing vessels.'¹ In addition, the situation changed in the other direction, because of piracy on the high seas, as Pliny informs us.²

It can be understood from the description of Strabo that, on the one hand, a group of southern Arabs, especially those living near to each other, participated in receiving and delivering the loads of perfumes and conveying them as far north as Syria and Mesopotamia, while on the other hand, another group of people were engaged in the trading of foreign goods, often of Ethiopian origin, and, he wrote, 'in order to procure them [i.e. the aromatics] they sail through the straits [Bāb al-Mandab] in vessels covered with skins.'³ The anonymous author of the *Periplus* gives us a very valuable and interesting picture. He points out that the whole harvest of the frankincense was either brought by camels to Shabwah to be stored, or by rafts supported on inflated skins, or by boats, to Qanā,⁴ i.e. modern-day Ḥuṣn al-Ghurāb. Furthermore, Pliny elaborates on the whole operation of transferring the frankincense to Shabwah and gives us a full account.⁵

It is clear from these statements that the portion of crops, which might have been intended to be exported along the main overland route/incense road to

1. "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 76.

2. *Natural History*, bk. VI, ch. xxvi, 101.

3. *Geography*, bk.XVI, ch.iv, 19. See also Pliny, *Natural History*, bk.XII, ch.xxxiii, 66.

4. ¶ 27.

5. *Natural History*, bk.XII, ch.xxxii, 63f. Cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 60, s.v. "Zafār"; Müller, "Arabian Frankincense", *SHA*, I, pt. i, 82.

the consumer regions, was conveyed over short feeder routes from the groves and collecting stations of Southern Arabia, Zafār, and Somalia, to be stored in Shabwah where the laden camels were weighed or measured and eminent figures obtained their quotas.¹ It seems that the major portion of Zafār frankincense must always have come through Qanā.² As is well known, Eudaemon Arabia, Qanā, and Muza were the ancient ports on the shores of Southern Arabia, through which frankincense and myrrh might well have been either received or shipped.³

The following feeder routes have been suggested by some scholars and explorers.⁴

1. Zafār – Ḥaḍramawt

Besides shipping the frankincense in coaster vessels from ports on the bay of Sachalies to Qanā, the remainder was transported by overland caravans. There are a number of proposed routes that should be considered. According to Phillips,⁵ frankincense caravans followed Wādī Mitān and Wādī Fasad, where another route crossed the Empty Quarter heading north-west. A second route, which looks practical, skirted the southern edge of the sand to Ḥaḍramawt until it reached the main road that commenced from Timna'. Groom,⁶ on the other hand, proposes two other possible inland tracks between Zafār and Ḥaḍramawt. The first one,

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1. Cf. Hamilton ("Six Weeks in Shabwa" *GJ*, C, 117), who discards the importance of Shabwah as a halting-place for incense caravans and attributes its fame to its being a holy place and burial ground.
 2. Groom, *Frankincense*, 166.
 3. Bowen, "Trade Routes", *ADSA*, 36; Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh in Ancient South Arabia" *JAOS*, LXXVIII, 144f.
 4. For distances and durations, see Groom, *Frankincense*, 213.
 5. *Unknown Oman*, 179.
 6. *Frankincense*, 165.

according to him, 'exists along the northern edge of the mountains past the wells of Sanan and Thamūd,' while the second track went due south of the main mountain range, from Ḥabarūt through Mahrah country. Moreover, during his trip, W.H. Ingrams¹ found the ruins of Ḥuṣn al-'Urr in Wādī Masīlah and concluded that this wadi was one of the high roads to the interior. Bowen² agrees on the existence of the Wādī Masīlah route and adds that 'the Zafār's incense may at times have passed via Bayḥān, Ḥarīb, Ma'rib, and al-Jawf.'

2. Qanā - Shabwah

As already mentioned, frankincense was conveyed to the port of Qanā, whence it must have been carried by camels on short inland feeder routes to Shabwah or Ma'rib. These possible tracks to Shabwah are, firstly, the one which follows the course of Wādī Mayfa'ah and, crossing a narrow band of the mountains at the head of its tributary, goes through Wādī 'Amāqīn heading north to Wādī Jirdān, crossing sandy tracts until it reaches Shabwah; and secondly, the proposed track³ which ran due north of Qanā to Wādī al-Ḥajr through two passes.

The latter route was covered by Ingrams,⁴ but he suggests different places through which the track passed. Bowen⁵ proposed the shortest and straightest track from Qanā to Ma'rib without passing via Shabwah. His road went across Wādī Mayfa'ah, down Wādī Jirdān, and then proceeded to Wādī Bayḥān until it

1. "Hadhramaut", *GJ*, LXXXVIII, 544.

2. "Trade Routes", *ADSA*, 41f. For more details, see Stark, *Southern Gates*, 309f. She believes that this route through Wādī Masīlah is identical with Ibn al-Mujāwir's road from Shibām to Zafār (*al-Mustabṣir*, II, 256-8).

3. Groom, *Frankincense*, 168.

4. "From Cana to Sabbathath", *JRAS* (1945) 171-183.

5. "Trade Routes", *ADSA*, 37. For other suggested routes, see Stark, *Southern Gates*, 304f.

approached ancient Timna', whence it continued to Ma'rib via Najd Marqad pass.

3. *Shabwah-Timna': the Markhah Route*

There is general agreement that Wādī Bayḥān was the highway between Shabwah and Timna'. Freya Stark¹ believed that the wadi must have been a prosperous and populous region. To reach Bayḥān, caravans would take the Markhah road via Wādī Jirdān and from there they would go perhaps south-west across the gravel plain until approaching Wādī Markhah. The caravans would then march along its course heading towards Timna'. An alternative track has been suggested by Groom.² This runs from Wādī Ḥammām to Niṣāb, from where the caravans would proceed to Markhah by way of a gap in the hills. Then they would come through Hajar al-Nāb. From there they would have headed northwards via a pass, now called Rahwat al-Rib'ah; and finally, they would have reached Wādī Bayḥān, about one day's journey south of Timna'.

4. *Timna'-Ma'rib-Najrān*

The distance as the crow flies between Timna' and Ma'rib is approximately 90 miles. According to Groom,³ the caravans would have skirted the northern edge of the mountain, heading for Wādī Ḥarīb, where there were good wells, by means of a low gap called Najd Marqad which is a paved way 500 yards long with stone walls on either side. There is also another pass, called Mablaqah, which is skilfully constructed so that by it caravans could approach Wādī Ḥarīb,

1. *Southern Gates*, 300.

2. *Frankincense*, 176; *idem*, "Northern Passes", *PSAS*, 72.

3. *Frankincense*, 180f., 183, 185, 187f.; *idem*, "Northern Passes", *PSAS*, 73. Cf. Bowen, "Trade Routes", *ADSA*, 37.

and this gap could also be reached from Bayhān via a side wadi. Then they would have proceeded due north in the direction of Ma'rib. On reaching it caravans would then have travelled across al-Khabt *en route* for Kharibat Sa'ūd. Here they would prepare for the next stage to Qarnaw, whence they would march for six days or more heading for Najrān.

Two alternative routes¹ are believed to have existed north of this Shabwah-Timna'-Ma'rib-Najrān road, but both of these suggested routes would have cut out Timna' and Ma'rib. They might well have been created as a short cut or for economic purposes to avoid passing across the western kingdoms and paying tax. The first of these alternative tracks headed north-west from Shabwah via the Ramlat al-Sab'atayn, or Ṣayhad, then went into Wādī al-Jawf or to Ma'rib. This route was covered by Philby by car. It seems that it was a waterless and difficult road. The second track went further north by way of al-'Abr, after having crossed the Ramlat al-Sab'atayn, whence it continued to Wādī al-Aqābiḥ and proceeded to a well at Mushayniqah. Then it would have joined the main road to Najrān. This road is called the Darb al-Amīr pilgrim route. It appears to have been used for trading because of the graffiti on the rocks in Wādī al-Aqābiḥ.²

ii. *The Main Incense Route*

The development of the overland route, from Southern Arabia through the Ḥijāz to the Mediterranean coast, can be dated back to around 1000 B.C.,³ or more precisely to c. 900 B.C., at which time the famous visit of the Queen of

1. See Bowen, "Trade Routes", *ADSA*, 42; Groom, *Frankincense*, 175.

2. Groom, *Frankincense*, 175; *idem*, "Northern Passes", *PSAS*, 71.

3. Coon, *Caravan*, 50; Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 77. Cf. Hamilton, "Six Weeks in Shabwa", *GJ*, C, 110.

Sheba to King Solomon is suggested to have taken place.¹ This event, in which the queen travelled to the north with a huge caravan of laden camels, might be considered a very important turning-point in the development of the overland routes and the organization of caravans. The visit also proves that the road was in use at that early time. This inland route from the Yemen to Syria ran parallel to the Red Sea and was evidently in use by the southern Arabs, as well as by the Meccans of Muḥammad's time² and later. Its survival would seem to have been due to the Arab merchants who avoided sailing up and down the Red Sea. It is believed that by the first century A.D., when Saba' threw off the hegemony of the Minaeans, the whole of the trade along that route to the north fell within the control of the Sabaeans.³

Some writers suggest that a number of different tracks could have been used. Groom,⁴ however, suggests that, because of the system of tax payment, for the major portion of the pilgrim track, there would probably have been a single roadway for the main stream of commercial and pilgrim traffic, according to the dictates of the topographical features of the country. However, the main incense road might have become altered at various times on account of fluctuations in the stability of areas through which it passed.

It is a curious matter that the main incense road, by which most of the South Arabian indigenous and foreign merchandise was conveyed to the Mediterranean market, is reported only once in the classical sources and then only

1. 1 Kings 10.1-13; 2 Chron.9.1-12.

2. Hourani, *Seafaring*, 9.

3. Müller, "Survey of the History of the Arabian Peninsula", *SHA*, II, 125.

4. *Frankincense*, 193.

briefly. It can be inferred from Pliny's account¹ that caravaneers might have begun their long northern journey either from Shabwah or Timna' (Pliny's Thomna), which was the capital of the Qatabanians (Gebbanitae)² and whose site has been identified. It was 1,487.5 miles distant from Gaza on the Mediterranean coast and the journey between these two points was divided into 65 stages with halts for camels. But these stages are, unfortunately, not named and have not yet been identified. In short, Pliny mentions the distance between Timna' and Gaza in miles and the number of stages, without actually naming them, and he emphasizes the caravaneers' expenditure along the incense road. Strabo,³ *hinted at the distance and* related, 'Merchants arrive in seventy days at Minae from Aelana.' It can, moreover, be understood from his account of the expedition of Aelius Gallus against the Sabaeans⁴ (c. 25 B.C.) that, on his return march, Gallus followed the incense route through Najrān (Negrana) and that from there he reached the 'seven wells' in eleven days, whence he proceeded through desert country until he approached the village of Chaalla, then passed on to Malothas and al-Hijr (Egra), from where he and his defeated army departed via its port, Negra. In spite of unidentified place names, it seems likely that Gallus, after the perfidy of Syllaues, the minister of the Nabataeans, was cautiously looking for the main track and the nearest port. He obviously succeeded in that he traversed the stretch of road in sixty days, in contrast to the six months he spent on his first march. A statement, cited by Diodorus Siculus,⁵ indicates that some of the Nabataeans acted as middle-men, bringing down to the Mediterranean Sea frankincense, myrrh, and

1. *Natural History*, bk.XII, ch.xxxii, 63-65; cf. bk.XII, ch.xxx, 54.

2. See Beeston, "Pliny's Gebbanitae", *PSAS*, 4-8; Groom, "Northern Passes", *PSAS*, 69.

3. *Geography*, bk.XVI, ch.iv, 4.

4. Bk.XVI, ch.iv, 24. For more information about this expedition, see Pliny, *Natural History*, bk.VI, ch.xxxii, 160-2; Groom, *Frankincense*, 74-76; O'Leary, *Arabia*, 75, 78f.; Hitti, *History*, 46.

5. *Diodorus of Sicily*, bk.XIX, ch.xciv, 5f.

valuable kinds of spices, which, he wrote, 'they procure from those who convey them from what is called Arabia Eudaemon.' This account suggests that the Nabataean community had now become partners in distributing South Arabian incense and that they might have prevented any southern Arabs from coming further than Leuke Kome ('White Village'), or al-Ḥijr, on the frontier. It may also be concluded that the northern part of the main incense road had now fallen under the rule of the Nabataeans.

The southern part of the principal overland incense road appears to have begun at Shabwah and included stops at Timna', Ma'rib, and Ma'in,¹ whence it proceeded north through Najrān or al-Ukhdūd,² and then went across the area of Jabal Qāra to Tathlith,³ and from there to Tabālah⁴ in the region nowadays known as Bishah. From Tabālah it was about 350 miles direct to Yathrib, but before reaching Yathrib, the route must have passed through Mecca, probably via Turabah, although most modern writers⁵ have omitted Mecca from the main incense road. This southern section of the incense route is believed to have passed closer to the western edge of the central desert.⁶ The northern section of this road is believed to have continued from Yathrib through Marwah and continued north-west as far as the Liḥyanite capital, now known as al-'Ulā.⁷ It seems likely that the Islamic pilgrim route, the Syrian route from Damascus to Yathrib and thence to Mecca, might have followed the same course as the incense trade route. From al-'Ulā, the route should have run due north via Madā'in Ṣāliḥ, Mu'azzam,

1. Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 76; *idem*, "Frankincense and Myrrh in Ancient South Arabia", *JAOS*, LXXVIII, 145.

2. Doe, "WD'B Formula", *PSAS*, 41.

3. Groom, *Frankincense*, 193, 234.

4. Stark, *Southern Gates*, 243.

5. See e.g. *ibid.*; Groom, *loc. cit.*

6. Groom, *Frankincense*, 193.

7. *Ibid.*, 194. For its history and antiquities, see Naṣīf, *al-'Ulā'* (1988) *passim*.

Tabūk, Qurayyah, and al-Mudawwarah,¹ then on to Petra. From there, short routes branched off, heading to the Mediterranean coast by way of the Syrian desert. An alternative track has been suggested² which would have branched off either from al-‘Ulā or Tabūk, heading north-west and linking these places with Ḥaql and al-‘Aqabah. From al-‘Aqabah, it would have gone to Gaza from where goods were conveyed to Egypt or to Rome. The latter route, al-‘Ulā-Gaza, ran parallel to the eastern shore of the Red Sea and it is believed that the Egyptian pilgrim route might have followed the same track with slight differences.

Moreover, Leuke Kome, which was situated on the eastern shore of the Red Sea and is placed at al-Ḥawrā’,³ was on the regular caravan route from South Arabia to the Mediterranean coast. The classical sources indicate that the commodities were conveyed from Leuke Kome to Petra,⁴ which was the great trading centre of the northern Arabs and the junction of many caravan routes. In his justification of the defeat of the Roman general, Gallus, Strabo describes Leuke Kome as ‘a large mart in the territory of the Nabataeans’ and refers to a route linking it with Petra when he writes of ‘Leuke Kome to which and from which place the camel traders travel with ease and in safety from Petra and back to Petra with so large a body of men and camels.’⁵ The writer of the *Periplus*⁶ also confirms the existence of a route between these two stations and describes the port as a fortified place and subject to the Nabataeans. We can conclude from these accounts that an excellent road was in existence and in use during the first

1. See Parr *et al.*, "Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968", *BIA*, nos.VIII, IX, 197f.

2. *Ibid.*, 198; Groom, *Frankincense*, 235. See also Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh in Ancient South Arabia", *JAOS*, LXXVIII, 145.

3. Schoff, *Periplus*, 101.

4. Strabo, *Geography*, bk.XVI, ch.iv, 24.

5. *Ibid.*, 23.

6. ¶ 19.

centuries B.C. and A.D. They also suggest that Leuke Kome was the port which served Petra in addition to Ailah and the Gulf of al-‘Aqabah.

iii. *The Gerrhaean Route*

The Gerrhaean overland route, which ran diagonally across the Arabian Peninsula and was, according to Strabo,¹ traversed by the Gerrhaean merchants in forty days, can be considered either an independent track that might have run directly from a place somewhere on the shores of the Arabian Gulf to Ḥaḍramawt,² or a branch, as some modern writers suggest, that would have forked from the main incense road to Najrān³ or Tathlīth.⁴ After its emergence, it seems likely that it would have passed through Wādī al-Dawāsir where lie the ruins of Qaryat Dhāt Kāhil (now Qaryat al-Fāw near Sulayyil), and then proceeded due east as far as Thāj⁵ or Ptolemy’s Phigea, in the Eastern Arabian province of al-Aḥsā’. From there, it would have continued through al-Hufūf, the most likely site for the city of Gerrha,⁶ until approaching its port, which is probably situated somewhere near al-‘Uqayr.

It can be concluded from information reported by Strabo⁷ that there were

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1. *Geography*, bk.XVI, ch.iv, 4.
 2. Phillips, *Unknown Oman*, 179; Van Beek, "Frankincense and Myrrh", *BA*, XXIII, 77; *idem*, "Frankincense and Myrrh in Ancient South Arabia", *JAOS*, LXXVIII, 148. Cf. Groom, *Frankincense*, 234.
 3. Doe, "WD'B Formula", *PSAS*, 41.
 4. Groom, *loc. cit.*
 5. Because of its monumental South Arabian script, it can be assumed that it was situated at the intersection of caravan roads which linked South Arabia with the eastern provinces and Mesopotamia. For more details about these inscriptions and also the history of this town, see Dickson, "Thāj and other Sites", *Iraq*, X, 1, 3f.; Carruthers, "Captain Shakespear's Last Journey", *GJ*, LIX, no.5, 322; Mandaville, "A Pre-Islamic Site", *BASOR*, CLXXII, 9-20; Potts, "Thāj in the Light of Recent Research", *Aṭlāl*, VII, 86-101; Lorimer, *Gazeteer*, IIB, 1234; Raikes, "Field Archaeology", *East and West*, XVII, 29f.
 6. Groom, "Gerrha", *Aṭlāl*, VI, 107.
 7. *Geography*, bk.XVI, ch.iii, 3; ch.iv, 18.

two places with the name Gerrha: a city and its port. The city's harbour was situated in a deep gulf on the shores of the Persian Gulf and was inhabited by a Chaldaean community exiled from Babylon c. the 3rd century B.C.¹ The members of this colony appear to have engaged in trading, for, as Strabo reported, they 'carry the Arabian merchandise and aromatics by land...to all parts of the country' and 'they frequently travel into Babylonia on rafts, and thence sail up the Euphrates.' At any rate, Gerrha, the chief *entrepôt* centre on the shores of the Arabian Gulf, was the mart through which Arabian goods and also probably Indian commodities, were distributed up to Mesopotamia by both the sea and presumably an overland route via Thāj,² and to the Mediterranean markets by another inland route. This road, Gerrha-Syria, would have headed due west through the fertile oasis of al-Aḥsā' and proceeded in a northerly direction until reaching the great oasis of al-Jawf, via the oasis of Taymā³ in the heart of Arabia. From al-Jawf,⁴ it would have joined the route that followed the course of Wādī al-Sirḥān, heading toward Syria via Petra.⁵ It is obvious that Wādī al-Sirḥān provided an efficient route for conveying merchandise from the ports of Eastern Arabia, as well as from the south.⁶ However, the latter part of this route, al-Jawf-Syria, is believed to have been an alternative track to Darb al-Ḥajj, the Syrian pilgrim route,⁷ which has already been mentioned.

1. See Hourani, *Seafaring*, 13f.

2. For the probable stages of this route, see Groom, "Gerrha", *Aṭlāl*, VI, 105.

3. Rostovtzeff, *Caravan Cities*, 13.

4. The oasis of al-Jawf appears to have been a midway station on the proposed ancient road which linked Mesopotamia with Egypt. See Leachman, "A Journey through Central Arabia" *GJ*, XLIII, no.5, 503f.; Carruthers, "A Journey in North-Western Arabia", *GJ*, XXXV, no.3, 243.

5. On the suggested stations along this route from al-Jawf to Petra, see Carruthers, "A Journey", *GJ*, XXXV, no.3, 243f.

6. See Bowersock, "Nabataeans and Romans in the Wādī Sirḥān", *SHA*, II, 133f.

7. Parr *et al.*, "Preliminary Survey", *BIA*, 198.

To sum up, although there is a lack of any firm archaeological evidence or of historical information in the sources at our disposal relating to the decline of the Gerrhaean route, it may be suggested that its wane was possibly connected to, or a result of, the collapse as a whole of Arabian trade. With the subjugation of the Nabataean nation in A.D. 106, the centre of commerce was transferred from Petra to Palmyra, so that most of the trade routes, including the Gerrhaean road, might have weakened and at last lost their importance.

In order to cover the most important trade roads in Arabia, we should finally mention a route which was known as Ṭarīq al-Raḍrāḍ, 'the Route of Pebbles', or 'the Silver Road'. This track has not yet been the subject of a discrete study by any modern scholar, probably because of the meagre information available. Ibn al-Mujāwir may be regarded as the only writer to have given an elaborate description of it.

According to al-Hamdānī,¹ a cluster of wadis, which are situated in the territory of Hamdān, were called al-Raḍrāḍ. However, an ancient silver mine located on the border between the tribe of Nihm and the province (*mikhlaḥ*) of Yām in the territory of Hamdān, was also known as the mine of al-Raḍrāḍ. This silver mine, which had four-hundred smelting furnaces producing silver ingots, was operated by Persians who inhabited a village near to the mine, known as Qaryat al-Ma'dīn ('the Village of the Mine'). The mine and its village were ultimately plundered and destroyed in 270/883, after the killing of Muḥammad b. Yu'fir.

Ṭarīq al-Raḍrāḍ was opened up by the Persians for the transport of silver

1. *Al-Jawharatayn*, 13, 89-92. See also *idem*, *Ṣifah*, 151f.

from South and Central Arabia to Iraq, as Crone suggests.¹ Her suggestion is, however, based on an account in which there is no mention whatsoever of the name of the road or of its construction.² Ibn al-Mujāwir³ (ob. ~~after~~ 626/1228-9) dates all the facilities along the road, such as wells and other installations, within the pre-Islamic era. According to him, cairns constructed in limestone and stucco were built along the road at each *farsakh*. He also suggests that these stones were erected by nomadic Arabs in the pre-Islamic period. Moreover, he describes the route between the Yemen and Iraq as a string of high palaces surmounted by beacons. This route appears to have been in use during the time of al-Hamdānī himself,⁴ even though he does not fully describe it as he usually does with the other routes. He utters a plea for mercy and forgiveness for his dead friends who used to follow this track to Iraq. Al-Bakrī⁵ describes al-Raḍrāḍ as a land of Nihm within the territory of Hamdān and adds, '...in which there is a silver mine.' Ibn al-Mujāwir,⁶ on the other hand, makes the year 520/1142 the point from which the route might have declined. Nevertheless, his explanation for its devastation seems to be no more than a fairy tale. Furthermore, the historian al-Khazraǵī,⁷ in dealing with the Yemeni events of 641/1271, alluded to a route, which was taken by the mission of al-Muẓaffar on their way to Baghdad; it was called Ṭarīq al-Raml, 'the Road of the Sands', or the route of Barāqish. The mission, with the assistance of nomadic guides, reached Baghdad with camels in fourteen days, so that it seems reasonable to suggest they might have followed the same track known as Ṭarīq al-Raḍrāḍ. Some support for this belief is found in Ibn al-Mujāwir's statement⁸ in

1. *Meccan Trade*, 48f.

2. See al-Isfahānī, *al-Aghānī*, XVII, 319f.

3. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 214f.

4. *Al-Jawharatayn*, 90.

5. *Mu'jam*, II, 655. See also al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, II, 366.

6. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 215, 217.

7. *Al-Uqūd*, I, 136.

8. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 216.

which he locates Ṭarīq al-Raḍrād on the western edge of Raml 'Ālij, now the Empty Quarter. It is clear, moreover, that the route, during the time of that mission, was not marked by stones, as Ibn al-Mujāwir says. It can be concluded that this road might have been in use since the beginning of the sixth century A.D. and survived until the seventh/thirteenth century.

It connected Najrān with the two cities of Basra and Kufa.¹ The distance between Najrān and these two cities was traversed by laden asses in seven to ten days.² The Yemeni merchants used to trade with Iraq by taking this route twice a year and their commodities consisted in the main of tanned hides.³ Al-Hamdānī commences the route at the Village of the Mine,⁴ and he adds that it went towards al-'Aqīq, which is a wadi in al-Yamāmah.⁵ From there it headed toward al-Aflāj,⁶ reaching Basra via al-Yamāmah⁷ and al-Baḥrayn. By contrast, Ibn al-Mujāwir⁸ mentions Najrān as the place where the track began and he adds that it headed due north-east of the Yemen to al-Yamāmah, as far as Basra by way of al-Aḥsā'.

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1. *Ibid.*, 214; al-Hamdānī, *al-Jawharatayn*, 90.
 2. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, II, 216f.
 3. *Ibid.*
 4. *Loc. cit.*
 5. See Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 138-141, s.v. "al-'Aqīq".
 6. *Ibid.*, 271f., s.v. "Falaḡ".
 7. *Ibid.*, V, 441f., s.v. "al-Yamāmah".
 8. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 217.

CHAPTER III

THE EARLY PILGRIM ROUTES OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AS DOCUMENTED BY THE ARAB GEOGRAPHERS AND TRAVELLERS

Part One: The Ancient Pilgrim Routes in Arabia

**Part Two: The Yemeni Pilgrim Routes, with Special Reference to the
Highland Pilgrim Route**

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is two-fold. The first part constitutes an attempt to provide a topographical sketch of the principal pilgrim routes, including the ancillary ones which stem from these. The second part represents an assessment of the courses of the major Yemeni pilgrim routes with special reference to the highland pilgrim route.

The ritual of performing a pilgrimage to Mecca had already been established before the advent of Islam, dating from the foundation of the House of God (*al-Ka'bah*) by Ibrāhīm and his son Ismā'īl.¹ With the emergence of Islam, the undertaking of a pilgrimage (*hajj*) to the city of Mecca became constituted as one of the five essential 'pillars' of this faith, a divinely ordained obligation for all Muslims, to be performed at least once during a lifetime. In order for a pilgrimage to be valid, it has to be performed within prescribed dates (during the first ten days of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijjah).² If the journey is performed at any other time of the year, it is still creditable to the Muslim, although to a lesser extent than during the *hajj*, and it is termed '*umrah*'.³

The pilgrims made use of the ancient trade-routes, their caravans now replacing what had formerly been commercial caravans. In addition to the existing

1. Cf. Qur'ān II: 125-127.

2. Cf. Qur'ān III: 97; XXX: 27.

3. Cf. Qur'ān II: 196.

trade-routes, which, where possible, were modified to adapt them to their new role, new routes were built, linking the Islamic territories with the two Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. The largest caravans started out from Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and the Yemen. The steady increase in the volume of pilgrims passing along the separate routes made it necessary for the caliphs to implement certain measures, aimed at accommodating their needs *en route*. To promote the safety of the pilgrims, fortresses and watch-towers were erected at strategic vantage points. The condition of the routes themselves was improved with the paving, levelling, and shouldering of their surfaces. Progress along the routes was monitored by a succession of milestones and various types of route-marker. Adequate supplies of drinking-water were determined by the presence of reservoirs, and the construction of water-cisterns and wells. Supervised rest-stations were established in designated areas. The communities in the immediately neighbouring localities of these stations prospered greatly from trading with the pilgrims, as for example at Fayd on the Zubaydah route and at al-'Ulā on the Egyptian route.

It was naturally the case that geographers, historians, diarists, and even poets were sometimes present in the annual pilgrim caravans. Their writings relied on personal observations, oral traditions, and official records, and, considered collectively, this gamut of documentary literature serves as a premise for contemporary research about the pilgrim routes.¹

1. Cf. al-Jāsir, "Kutub", *SHA*, 229-44; *idem*, "al-Shi'r", *al-'Arab*, III, 304-43; Abū Dāhish, "al-Ḥajj", *al-Dārah*, II, 8-32.

Part One: the Ancient Pilgrim Routes in Arabia

I. The Iraqi Pilgrim Routes (see map 2)

Except the ancient inland trade route of Darb al-Salmān,¹ which connected Iraq with the Hejaz region in the pre-Islamic era, there were five major pilgrim routes leading from Iraq to Mecca and Medina, and these were followed by pilgrims coming from Iraq and elsewhere.

1. The Route between Kufa and Mecca (Darb Zubaydah)

It is now generally accepted that the course of this route was already in existence in the pre-Islamic era and was then known as either 'the route of al-Hīrah', or 'the route of Mithqab'.² When al-Maqdisī mentions 'the route of al-Qādisiyyah',³ it seems quite plausible that he is in fact referring to Darb Zubaydah.⁴

It became the first pilgrim route in the Arabian Peninsula to have major construction work and substantial improvements carried out on it by a central government for the comfort and convenience of the travellers. The most substantial measures were effected under the auspices of Queen Zubaydah (ca. 145–216/763–831), the consort of the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (170–193/786–809), and it was from her that the route thereafter derived its name.

1. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 239.

2. Al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 300; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 54.

3. *Al-Taqāsīm*, 250 f.

4. This pilgrim route has recently been studied by Dr. Sa'd A. al-Rāshid for the degree of Ph.D. See *Darb Zubaydah* (1980) *passim*.

In the wake of the fall of the Abbasid capital, Baghdad, in 656/1258, safety and security along the Zubaydah pilgrim route deteriorated to such an extent that the pilgrims began to use the Syrian pilgrim route in order to evade the menacing tribesmen.¹

The Zubaydah route is described in detail by most of the early Arab geographers and notably by Abū Ishāq al-Ḥarbī.² From the city of Kufa, which was the starting point of this route and also the main rendezvous for the pilgrims coming from Iraq, Persia, and Khurāsān, the route heads south-south-west as far as the main station of Fayd. The following is a selection³ of the main stations, in consecutive order, erected along this route: al-Qādisiyyah, al-‘Udhayb, al-Mughaythah, al-Qar‘ā, Wāqīṣah, al-Qā’, Zubālah, al-Tha‘labiyyah, and al-Ajfur. From Fayd, the Zubaydah route continues in a westerly direction, now passing by the stations of Samīrah, al-Ḥājir, and Ma’din al-Niqrah (al-Nuqrah). At the last station, the route splits into two separate sub-routes. The first heads directly to Medina (see route 1b below), whereas the second leads to Mecca, through the following selected main stations: Mughīthah al-Māwān, al-Rabadhah, Ma’din B. Sulaym, al-Mislah, al-Ghamrah, and Dhāt ‘Irq. The last station was designated as the meeting-point (*mīqāt*) for the Iraqi pilgrims.⁴

After al-Rāshid’s survey of the Zubaydah route, a further one was conducted between 1977 and 1984 by the Saudi Antiquities Directorate.⁵ To date,

1. Al-Wohaibi, *Northern Hijāz*, 395; Ankawī, "Pilgrimage", *Arabian Studies*, I, 148 f.

2. *Al-Manāsik*, 281 f.

3. Owing to the great number of rest-stations which are situated along all the pilgrim routes, the author cites here a limited number of them along each route as representative of the whole series.

4. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 107 f.

5. See *Aṭlāl*, I-VI (1977-82); VIII (1984).

fresh archaeological excavations are being carried out on the site of the pilgrim station of al-Rabadhah, under the auspices of the Department of Archaeology and Museology of the University of King Saud.¹ A preliminary reconnaissance of the Iraqi section of the Zubaydah route was undertaken by the Iraqi Antiquities Directorate in 1984.²

There are three minor routes which branched off from the main route of Zubaydah at the sites of three rest-stations, and these all lead to Medina.

1a. The Route between Fayd and Medina

This minor route, identified by al-Ḥarbī as Ṭarīq al-Akhrijah, diverges from the parent Zubaydah route at Fayd. It merges with the Ma'din al-Niqrah-Medina route (see below) at the well of Sulaymān, i.e. about 20 km. to the north-east of Medina, whence the combined route leads towards Medina, terminating at the mosque of al-Mughīrah, which is also the terminus of the Rabadhah-Medina route (see route 1c below).

Both the major and secondary stopping-places situated on this ramification, the distances in miles between these stages, and the topographical features of the route are all meticulously described by al-Ḥarbī.³ The following is a selection of the main stations, in consecutive order, situated alongside this route: al-Akhrijah, al-'Unābah, al-Thalmā', al-Sa'd, al-Nukhayl, al-Shuqrah, and al-Sā'ib.⁴

1. Al-Rāshid, *al-Rabadhah* (1986).

2. Al-'Azzāwī, "Ṭarīq", *Sumer*, XLIV, 199-213; *idem*, "A Commentary", *Sumer*, XXXVI, 368.

3. *Al-Manāsik*, 515-25, 564.

4. For the identification of the place names, cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, I, 120, 154; III, 221, 355; IV, 159 f.

1b. The Route between Ma'din al-Niqrah and Medina

This sub-route connects the rendezvous of Ma'din al-Niqrah with Medina. With the exception of al-Ya'qūbī,¹ the distance between each of the stages of this route is recorded in miles by the early Arab geographers; however, there are discrepancies between all the sets of figures thus produced.² The main stations of this route are precisely defined by Ibn Khurradādhbah³ and Ibn Rustah.⁴ The latter geographer substantiates his itinerary with reference to the secondary stations.

From the station of Ma'din al-Niqrah, this offshoot passes, in due course, through the following selected main stations: al-'Usaylah, Baṭn Nakhl, and Ṭaraf. In the course of their separate journeys from Medina to Iraq, Ibn Jubayr⁵ (in 579/1183) and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah⁶ (in 726/1325) succeeded in reaching Ma'din al-Niqrah, *via* Wādī al-'Arūs and the watering-place of al-'Usaylah, after five days of marching.

1c. The Routes between al-Rabadhah and Medina

Al-Ḥarbī⁷ is the only geographer to have registered these two routes and, in so doing, he not only depicts all the stations, but also records their intervening distances in miles. Consistent with his findings are two offshoots of the Zubaydah route, beginning in the vicinity of al-Rabadhah and heading towards Medina. These two routes are equal in length, each one being 102 miles (i.e. *ca.* 204 km.).

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1. *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 312.
 2. Qudāmah, *al-Kharāj*, 187; al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 337.
 3. *Al-Masālik*, 128.
 4. *Al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 176 f.
 5. *Riḥlah*, 181.
 6. *Tuḥfah*, 191.
 7. *Al-Manāsik*, 329–31, 525.

The first of these sub-routes, preferred by the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd on his sacred journeys to the Hejaz, commences in al-Rabadhah and heads westwards towards Medina, bypassing the following selected stations: Abraq al-‘Azzāf, al-Sitār, Dhū al-Qaṣṣah, and the watering-place of al-Sā’ib. The second one, generally used by the same caliph on his return journey to Iraq, commences from Medina and heads eastwards to al-Rabadhah, traversing the following selected stations: Sadd Mu‘āwiyah, al-Rihḍiyyah, al-Māliḥah, and finally Ma’din B. Sulaym.¹

2. The Route between Basra and Mecca

This main pilgrim route linking Basra with Mecca may well be ranked second, in terms of its sphere of influence, after the Zubaydah route. It seems quite likely that it was constructed exclusively to aid the passage of the pilgrims and that it was in use during al-Ḥarbī’s lifetime (3rd/4th century).²

The route and its stations are recorded by most of the early Arab geographers. Ibn Khurradādhbah’s account³ is confined to listing the names of twenty-six stations, without any attempt being made to identify any of the separate stations or to calculate the distance between them. Al-Ḥarbī sets down exhaustive information relating to forty-five stations.⁴ In conjunction with his combined observation of topographical detail and tribal territories through which this route

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1. For the identification of the place names, cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, I, 68; III, 187 f., 237; IV, 366; Fīrūzābādī, *Ma’ālim*, 154.
 2. Al-Wohaibi, *Northern Hijāz*, 385.
 3. *Al-Masālik*, 14-17; cf. Qudāmah, *al-Kharāj*, 190.
 4. *Al-Manāsik*, 572-615, 622-642.

passes, he comments upon the nature of each station and estimates the varying distances between them in miles. Furthermore, al-Ḥarbī recognizes those prominent persons to whom the installation of new facilities and the renovation or development of existent ones have been attributed. Al-Maqdisī treats only of the main stations of the northern stretch of this route and the distances between them in miles in his itinerary, asserting that the station of al-Nabāj is its terminus.¹

This route merges with the Zubaydah route at the station of Umm Khurmān or Awṭās.² It runs past approximately forty pilgrim stations, including those minor stopping-places, before approaching Mecca *via* the meeting-station (*mīqāt*) of Wajrah. The first half of this major route, as far as the mid-way point of al-Qaṣīm, accommodates the following selected main stations: al-Ḥufayr, al-Manjashāniyyah, al-Ruḥayl, al-Ruqay'ī, Ḥafar Abī Mūsā al-Ash'arī, Māwiyyah, Yansū'ah, al-Sumaynah, al-Nabāj, and al-Qaryatān. From the last station, where the Yamāmah-Mecca route terminates (see route II.1 below), the Basra-Mecca route bears to the west towards Mecca with the following selected main stations staggered progressively alongside it: Ḍariyyah, Jadīlah, Faljah, al-Dathīnah, Qubā', Marrān, Wajrah, and Dhāt 'Irq.

2a. The Route between Basra and Mecca *via* al-Yamāmah

This route, entered in some sources as the route of al-Munkadir or al-Yamāmah,³ spans the region from Basra to al-Yamāmah where it joins the Yamāmah-Mecca route (see below).

1. *Al-Taḳāṣīm*, 251.

2. Al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 375; al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 602.

3. Al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 285 f., 338; cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 216.

Ibn Khurradādhbah¹ and Qudāmah,² whose itineraries both recognize the minor stopping-places alongside this route, accord entirely with one another in their findings. Al-Bakrī³ is the only geographer to record the distance between the stations in stages (sing. *marḥalah*). Between Basra and al-Yamāmah the route is demarcated by the following selected main stations: Kāzimah, al-Qar'ā', Ṭakhfah, the plain of al-Ṣummān, Sulaymah, and al-Nubāk.

2b. The Route between Basra and Medina via al-Nabāj

This minor route links the two main stations: al-Nabāj on the Basra-Mecca route (see above) and Ma'dīn al-Niqrah on the Zubaydah route (see above). From the latter pilgrim station, the pilgrims were able to join the Ma'dīn al-Niqrah-Medina route (see route I.1b above). The existence of this route is confirmed by Ibn Khurradādhbah,⁴ al-Ḥarbī,⁵ and Qudāmah,⁶ who are unanimous in establishing the station of al-Nabāj as its starting point.

Beyond al-Nabāj, situated in the present province of al-Qaṣīm, this sub-route is endowed with the following selected main stations: Baṭn Qaw, Uthāl, Nājjyah, al-Fawārah, Qaṭan desert, and Baṭn al-Rummah. Al-Ḥarbī⁷ provides an alternative route for those travellers who inadvertently stray from the course of the above-mentioned route. His directions concerning the general course of this

1. *Al-Masālik*, 151.

2. *Al-Kharāj*, 193.

3. *Al-Mamālik*, 50; cf. al-Idrīsī, *al-Mushtāq*, 161 f.

4. *Al-Mamālik*, 146 f.

5. *Al-Manāsik*, 587, 605 f.

6. *Al-Kharāj*, 190.

7. *Al-Manāsik*, 608 f.

alternative route are founded on the topographical details of the land through or near which it passes. The following are selected major places situated on the route: Jabal Dhī Ṭulūḥ, Jabal Ḍabu', Jabal Ṭamiyyah, Jabal al-Mujaymir, and the watering-place of Muwayh.

3. The Route between Basra and Medina/Mecca via Ma'din al-Niqrah

This is an independent route which connects Basra with Medina and Mecca via Ma'din al-Niqrah.¹ It is reported that at one time the route became abandoned owing to deficient security measures and inadequate supplies of water.²

At the station of Ma'din al-Niqrah, this route merges with the Zubaydah route. The following selected stations are sited progressively alongside this route: al-Waqabā, al-Qayṣūmah, al-Qunnaḥ, and Ḥawmānat al-Darāj.

4. The Route between Wāsiṭ and Mecca via al-Tha'labiyyah

Al-Maqdisī's testimony to the existence of this route³ is unique and suggests that its course is southbound as far as the station of al-Tha'labiyyah where it converges with the Zubaydah route.

5. The Route between al-Raqqah and Medina via the two Jabals of Ṭayy

This route, uniquely documented by Ibn Ḥawqal,⁴ is the fifth major pilgrim route connecting Iraq with the Hejaz. It runs from al-Raqqah⁵ to Medina by way of the oasis of Ḥā'il. This route was not officially in use during

1. Qudāmah, *al-Kharāj*, 40; cf. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, 40.

2. Al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 604 f.; al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 285.

3. *Al-Taqāsīm*, 251.

4. *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, 40 f.

5. Cf. Yāqūt, *al-Bulḍān*, III, 58-60.

the lifetime of Ibn Ḥawqal (4th/10th century).

II. The Yamāmah Pilgrim Routes (see map 2)

The travellers using the following two routes linking the province of al-Yamāmah with the Hejaz were not only the inhabitants of al-Yamāmah and its environs but also of Iraq and al-Baḥrayn (Hajr).

1. The Route between al-Yamāmah and Mecca via al-Qaryatān

Ibn Khurradādhbah,¹ Qudāmah,² and Ibn Rustah³ concur in naming the area of al-Qaryatān, beyond the eighth station, as the point where the Yamāmah pilgrim route converges with the Basra-Mecca route (see route I.2 above). However, they all fail to comment either on the stations or the intervening distances between them. Although the names of the stations are distorted in his itinerary, al-Idrīsī does state the distances between them in stages (sing. *marḥalah*).⁴

From the province of al-Yamāmah, the route continues north-westbound towards the rendezvous of al-Qaryatān, which is situated in the present province of al-Qaṣīm. Located along this route are the following selected main stations: Wādī al-ʿIrḍ, the plantation of al-Ḥadīqah, and the watering-place of al-Sayḥ.

2. The Route between al-Yamāmah and Mecca via al-Dathīnah

This is the second route connecting al-Yamāmah with the Hejaz.

1. *Al-Masālik*, 147.

2. *Al-Kharāj*, 191.

3. *Al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 184.

4. *Al-Mushūʿāq*, 160.

Al-Ḥarbī¹ and al-İsfahānī² both report that the route merges with the Basra-Mecca route at the station of al-Dathīnah.

III. The Baḥraynī (Hajr) Pilgrim Route (see map 2)

The Baḥrayn-Mecca route, followed by those pilgrims coming from and through the eastern region of the Arabian Peninsula, commences from the western coast of the Arabian Gulf and then strikes westward, *via* the vast sandy belt of al-Dahnā', towards the province of al-Yamāmah, at which point the pilgrims would probably have joined the Yamāmah-Mecca routes (see routes II.1, 2 above).

With the exception of al-Maqdisī's account,³ there is no mention of any stations being situated on the first part of this route, linking al-Baḥrayn with al-Yamāmah, in the early authorities.⁴ On his journey from al-Baḥrayn to Jeddah, by way of al-Yamāmah, Ibn Baṭṭūṭah⁵ (in 732/1331) passed through al-Qaṭīf and al-Aḥsā'.

IV. The Egyptian and Syrian Pilgrim Routes (see map 2)

A primary consideration in assessing the Egyptian and Syrian (Levantine) pilgrim routes⁶ is that, in addition to the network of inland routes at their disposal, the Egyptian and North African pilgrims had recourse to two maritime routes.

1. *Al-Manāsik*, 615-20.

2. *Bilād al-'Arab*, 361 f.

3. He only records one station, i.e. al-Aḥsā'; cf. *al-Taqāsīm*, 111.

4. Cf. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Arḍ*, 40; Ibn Rustah, *al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 182.

5. *Tuḥfah*, I, 305 f.

6. These two pilgrim routes have recently been studied by Dr. 'Alī I. Ghabbān for the degree of Ph.D. See *Introduction* (1988), *passim*.

The first of these, followed by the traveller Nāṣirī Khusraw¹ in 439/1047, connected al-Qulzum (Suez) with al-Jār, while the second, followed by the traveller Ibn Jubayr² in 579/1183, linked 'Aydhāb with Jeddah.

As noted earlier,³ with the advent of Islam it is believed that the Egyptian, North African, and Syrian pilgrims made use of the northern branches of the pre-Islamic main incense road. It is written that the coastal route, al-Mu'riqah, was followed by the commercial caravans of the Quraysh. As well as these, there existed a further inland route, al-Munaqqā. These last two routes led from the Hejaz to Syria.⁴

The two pilgrim routes linking Egypt with Medina and Mecca are represented in the writing of most of the early Arab geographers. Ibn Khurradādhbah,⁵ and later Qudāmah,⁶ register the stations in the desert region, taking al-Fustāt as the starting point and ending at Medina. Qudāmah includes the coastal stations in his work, choosing the station of Sharaf al-Ba'l as his starting-point, whilst al-Ḥarbī⁷ prefers Aylah. Details about the stations or their intervening distances are omitted in the works of all these geographers. Al-Ya'qūbī, who records the stations of the two routes, designates the station of Madyan (i.e. Maghā'ir Shu'ayb) as the junction from where the two routes branch off independently.⁸ Taken together, the observations of the North African

1. *Nāmāh*, 110. Cf. al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, I, 399 f.

2. *Rihlah*, 72 f. Cf. al-'Udhri, *Manāzil al-Ḥijāz*, f.16-17.

3. Cf. ch. II of this study.

4. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 154, 250.

5. *Al-Mamālik*, 149 f.

6. *Al-Kharāj*, 190 f.

7. *Al-Manāsik*, 649-52.

8. *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 340 f.; cf. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 40; Ibn Rustah, *al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 183 f.

travellers¹ al-‘Umarī² and later al-Jazīrī³ represent a comprehensive contribution to what is known of the Egyptian and Syrian pilgrim routes.

The official starting point for pilgrims intending to travel along the main Egyptian route was the city of al-Fustāt, so that most of them would assemble here prior to departure. From al-Fustāt the route proceeds eastwards, served by seven rest-stations, including al-Buwayb and ‘Ajrūd, and reaches as far as Aylah (now renamed al-‘Aqabah). It was here that some of the Syrian and Palestinian pilgrims joined the Egyptian route⁴ which now forks into the two branches reviewed earlier, viz the coastal and desert routes.

1. The Egyptian Coastal Route

This route, which has pronounced topographical similarities with the Yemeni coastal route (see below), follows the eastern coastal line of the Red Sea southwards to the harbour of al-Jār. Thence, the pilgrims would have been able to either continue their journey directly to Mecca or, alternatively, change course eastwards towards Medina. The following selected main stations are situated between Aylah and al-Jār: Ḥaql, Madyan (Maghā’ir Shu‘ayb), al-Nabk, al-Wajh, and al-Ḥawrā’.⁵

1. Cf. e.g. al-Jāsir, *Raḥalāt*, I, II, *passim*.

2. *Al-Abṣār*, bk. II, 331-8.

3. *Durar*, II, 1231 f.

4. Al-Ya’qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 329 f.

5. For these place names, cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 278 f., 316; V, 77 f.; al-Bilādī, *Ma’ālim*, IX, 21 f., 129 f.

2. The Egyptian Desert Route

After the station of Sharaf al-Ba‘l, which is situated to the south of Aylah, the Egyptian desert route diverges from the coastal one, advancing south-south-west towards Medina. Al-Ḥarbī informs us further that it joins with the Syrian route at the station of al-Suqyā.¹ Between Aylah and Medina, the route is provided with fifteen rest-stations, the following being the selected main ones: al-Kilābah, al-Sarḥatayn, al-Bayḍā’, al-Marwah, and Suwaydā’.

3. The Syrian Routes

The main Syrian pilgrim route, widely known as al-Tabūkiyyah,² unites Damascus with Medina. It gains mention in the works of the early Arab geographers, such as Ibn Khurradādhbah,³ al-Ḥarbī,⁴ Qudāmah,⁵ and Ibn Rustah.⁶ However, the treatment of the rest-stations by these four geographers is inconsistent, for their total number between Syria and Medina and their individual names are represented variously and without elaboration; there are no descriptions of the separate stations or estimations of their intervening distances. The following selected main stations are situated on this route linking Damascus with Medina: al-Kuswah, Sargh (now called al-Mudawwarah), Tabūk, al-Ḥijr (now called Madā’in Ṣāliḥ), and Qurḥ (now called al-‘Ulā).

As well as reviewing the main Syrian pilgrim route (Ṭarīq Tabūk),

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1. *Al-Manāsik*, 650.
 2. Cf. Musil, *Heğâz*, 321.
 3. *Al-Mamālik*, 150.
 4. *Al-Manāsik*, 653.
 5. *Al-Kharāj*, 191.
 6. *Al-A‘lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 183.

al-Maqdisī directs his attention to its two sub-routes which connect ‘Ammān with Medina *via* Taymā’, and he identifies these according to the most prominent region through which each passes.¹ With personal experience of having followed these routes more than once, al-Maqdisī gives us to understand that these particular ones originally served to transport the Islamic armies and, later, the Umayyad postal service (*barīd*).

3a. The First Route between ‘Ammān and Medina *via* Taymā’

This route, recognized by al-Maqdisī as Ṭarīq \w/bayr, connects ‘Ammān with Medina and, taking a south-easterly course, extends *via* Taymā’ and later Khaybar. The following selected stations are situated between ‘Ammān and Taymā’: \w/bayr, al-Ajwalā, and Thajr.

3b. The Second Route between ‘Ammān and Medina *via* Taymā’

This route, which has been registered as Ṭarīq al-Sirr (now called Wādī al-Sirḥān), commences from ‘Ammān and, in due course, merges with the above-mentioned route at the ancient oasis of Taymā’. The following selected stations are situated between ‘Ammān and Taymā’: al-‘Awnīd, al-Muḥdathah, al-Nabk, al-Jarbā, and ‘Arfajā.

The Saudi sections of the Egyptian and Syrian pilgrim routes leading to Medina and Mecca have recently been studied by Dr. A. al-Wohaibi, who has

1. *Al-Taḳāsim*, 249 f.; cf. King, "Distribution", *PSAS*, XVII, 91 f.

based his appraisal of these routes on the primary literary sources available.¹ Between 1982 and 1983, the Saudi Antiquities Directorate undertook a general survey of the two routes and, as a result of this, the general courses of the routes and the sites of their rest-stations have been identified and documented.² Further, those sections extending to the north of the Hejaz have recently been treated by contemporary scholars.³

V. The Pilgrim Routes of the Hejaz (see map 2)

There are essentially three routes which link the Holy City of Mecca with its principal neighbouring towns.

1. The Route between Mecca and Medina

Quite apart from its continuous use by the pilgrims, this route served to co-ordinate the extensive military activities of the Prophet and his successors during the early stages of establishing the Islamic state in Medina.⁴

Cognizant of the integral pivotal status of this route, the early Arab geographers and travellers tended to be discriminating in their treatment of it. In spite of the fact that just ten pilgrim stations are reviewed in the account by Ibn Khurradādhbah,⁵ his account is compendious and includes the distances between

1. *The Northern Hijāz* (1973) *passim*.

2. Al-Mughannam, "Catalogue", *Aṭlāl*, VII, 42-75; Gilmors, "Documentation", *Aṭlāl*, VIII, 143-161.

3. Cf. e.g. Bakr, *al-Malāmiḥ*, 75 f.; Daradakah, "Conference", forthcoming; King, "Distribution", *PSAS*, XVII, 91-105.

4. Cf. e.g. al-Wāqidī, *al-Maghāzī*, II, 797-814.

5. *Al-Mamālik*, 30 f.

them in miles. It appears most likely that Qudāmah,¹ with the exception of two insignificant changes, heeded Ibn Khurradādhbah's itinerary in describing this route. In a style resembling that of Ibn Khurradādhbah, al-Ya'qūbī enumerates thirteen stations along this route, although his attention is directed towards identifying the inhabitants of these places rather than describing the stations themselves. He furnishes us with the length of this route in two systems of measurement, viz: stages and miles.² Among the early Arab geographers,³ al-Ḥarbī is the only one to incline towards expatiation in his treatment of this route as a whole and of its main and secondary stations in particular.⁴ Al-Hamdānī lists the names of ten stations, calculating the distances between them in miles.⁵

The main and secondary stations are described exhaustively in the writings of the early travellers such as Ibn Jubayr⁶ (in 579–80/1183–4) and Ibn Baṭṭūṭah⁷ (in 726/1325–6). Research undertaken recently to establish the sites of the main stations along this route was carried out by al-Bilādī.⁸

The significance of three of the pilgrim-stations located along this route renders it worthwhile to list them here. The station of Dhū al-Ḥulayfah is the meeting-point (*mīqāt*) of those pilgrims who would have come to Mecca *via* Medina. Badr is the station at which the Egyptian coastal pilgrim route terminates and it is also an intersection-point. From here the pilgrims could

1. *Al-Kharāj*, 187.

2. *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 313 f.

3. Cf. e.g. Ibn Rustah, *al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 177 f.; al-Maqdisī, *al-Taqāsīm*, 106; al-Idrīsī, *al-Mushṭaq*, I, 141–3.

4. *Al-Manāsik*, 420 f., 564 f.; cf. al-Samhūdī, *Wafā'*, III, 1001 f.

5. *Ṣifāh*, 337 f.

6. *Rihlah*, 182–9; cf. Khusraw, *Nāmāh*, 111.

7. *Tuḥfah*, 147–9, 190 f.

8. *Al-Hijrah*, *passim*; *idem*, *Qalb*, *passim*.

either follow a deviant route to Medina, or they could persist onwards to Mecca. In both cases they would follow this route. The station of al-Juhfah is the meeting-point (*mīqāt*) of these Egyptian and Syrian pilgrims who would have approached Mecca without passing through Medina.¹

2. The Route between Mecca and Jeddah

Since the emergence of Islam, Jeddah has achieved an enduring status as an influential port and littoral pilgrim station.

Of the stations located along this route, al-Ḥarbī considers three² and, later, Ibn al-Mujāwir considers fifteen.³ In both accounts attention to detail is observed and the distance between the stations is calculated – al-Ḥarbī preferring miles and Ibn al-Mujāwir parasangs.⁴ The following selected main stations are sited between Mecca and Jeddah: al-Raghāmah and al-Qurayn.⁵

3. The Routes between Mecca and al-Ṭā'if

There are two main routes linking the cities of al-Ṭā'if and Mecca. The first one traverses the meeting-point (*mīqāt*) for the Yemeni pilgrims, Qarn al-Manāzil, or al-Sayl al-Kabīr as it is now known, and, in due course, the station of Zaymah and the watering-station of Ibn al-Murtafa', before terminating at the Holy City of Mecca.⁶ This route, which used to take three days of marching to

1. For these pilgrim stations, cf. al-Bilādī, *Ma'ālim*, I, 190 f.; II, 122 f.; III, 48 f.

2. *Al-Manāsik*, 655.

3. *Al-Mustabṣir*, I, 40 f.

4. For more details regarding this route, cf. Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlah*, 79 f.; Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Tuḥfah*, I, 266; Burckhardt, *Travels*, I, 101–8.

5. For the identification of these place names, cf. al-Bilādī, *Ma'ālim*, IV, 61; VII, 126.

6. Ibn Khurradādhbah, *al-Mamālik*, 134.

complete,¹ is recorded by most of the early Arab geographers.²

The second route, formerly known as the 'route of the pass' (*ṭarīq al-'aqabah*), negotiates its course through mountainous terrain. This route bypasses both the pass of Karā and Wādī Na'mān, before terminating in Mecca via 'Arafāt.³ This one required two days of marching.⁴ As with the one mentioned previously this route is registered in the writings of most of the early Arab geographers.⁵

VI. The Omani Pilgrim Routes (see map 3)

Some of the Omani pilgrims shared the preference of the Yemenis to journey to Mecca by sea rather than by following the inland routes.⁶ Thus they followed the maritime routes linking the southern coast of Oman with Aden, from which point they could either continue their course towards the Red Sea via Bāb al-Mandab,⁷ or divert to the Yemeni coastal route. The voyage along the Red Sea could be interrupted by a visit to one or more of the following selected ports: al-Shirjah, 'Aththar, Ḥaly, al-Sirrayn, and al-Shu'aybah.

An alternative maritime route linking Oman with Mecca is proposed by al-Bakrī⁸ and this embraces the western coasts of the Bahrayn region, whence the

1. Al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 654.

2. Cf. e.g. Qudāmah, *al-Kharāj*, 187; Ibn Rustah, *al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 183; al-Maqdisī, *al-Taqāsīm*, 113.

3. Ibn Khurradādhbah, *al-Mamālik*, 134.

4. Al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 653.

5. See above, n. 2; cf. also al-Idrīsī, *al-Mushūq*, 144; Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, I, 38.

6. Cf. al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik*, 28; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 41.

7. Al-Idrīsī, *al-Mushūq*, 159.

8. *Al-Mamālik wa-l-Masālik*, 46.

pilgrims would have joined the Baḥrayn–Mecca pilgrim route (see route no.III above).

1. The First Coastal Route between Oman and Mecca via Aden

This route traces the northern littoral strip of the Arabian Sea, linking Oman with Aden, and ultimately the pilgrims would have joined either the Aden–Mecca coastal route or the Aden–Mecca inland route *via* Ṣan‘ā’ (see below). The stations are recorded scantily by Ibn Khurradādhbah¹ and Qudāmah.² Seven stations, including al-Shiḥr and Mikhlāf Laḥj, are situated between Oman and Aden.

2. The Second Coastal Route between Oman and Mecca via al-Baḥrayn

This second littoral route, connecting Oman with Mecca, advances northwards from Oman following the western coast of the Arabian Gulf and joining the inland route linking al-Baḥrayn with Mecca *via* al-Yamāmah. Ibn Ḥawqal³ and al-Bakrī⁴ attribute the ultimate rejection of this route to insufficient measures and the concealment of its course by encroaching sand.

3. The First Overland Route between Oman and Mecca via Yabrīn

This route commences in Oman and extends northwards *via* the sandy desert of Yabrīn, i.e. the *eastern* fringe of the Dahnā’ desert.⁵ The combination of aridity, insufficient water supplies, and sparse population ultimately deterred the pilgrims from following this route.⁶

1. *Al-Mamālik*, 147 f.

2. *Al-Kharāj*, 192 f.; cf. also al-Maqdisī, *al-Taqāsīm*, 110 f.

3. *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 35.

4. *Al-Mamālik wa-l-Masālik*, 46.

5. Cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 493 f.

6. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 294 f.

4. The Second Overland Route between Oman and Mecca via Ṣanʿāʾ

This route, which is mentioned briefly by al-Bakrī,¹ passes through Ṣanʿāʾ and Najrān, respectively, before reaching Mecca.

Part Two: VII. The Yemeni Pilgrim Routes, with Special Reference to the Highland Pilgrim Route (see map 3)

Complementing the network of maritime routes linking the Yemeni harbours, such as Aden, Ḥardah, and al-Ahwāb, with Mecca *via* al-Sirrayn, al-Līth, or Jeddah,² are a number of inland pilgrim routes leading from South Arabia to Mecca. These routes were utilized by natives of South Arabia and those pilgrims who would have entered the Hejaz by way of the Yemeni or Omani ports.

It has been asserted that there are two main coastal pilgrim routes which commence from the south and south-west coasts of the Yemen and proceed along a northerly course through the sandy coastal strip of Tihāmah, which runs parallel to the eastern littoral of the Red Sea,³ towards Mecca.

1. The Yemeni Coastal Route

This route, the main feeder-route ~~for which~~^{for which} is the Oman-Aden-Mecca coastal route (see route VI.1 above), is recorded by most of the early Arab geographers.⁴ Connecting the south and south-west of the Yemen with the Hejaz, in terms of its sphere of influence, this main pilgrim route may be classified as the second major

1. *Al-Mamālik wa-l-Masālik*, 47.

2. Cf. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Tuhfah*, I, 268 f.

3. Cf. ch. I of this study.

4. Cf. e.g. Ibn Khurradādhbah, *al-Mamālik*, 147 f.; Qudāmah, *al-Kharāj*, 192 f.

Yemeni pilgrim route after the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. It follows the eastern coastline of the Red Sea, advancing northwards to Mecca, either *via* al-Līth or the port of Jeddah. The following, selected, main stations are situated along this route: Aden, Mocha, al-Ahwāb, Ḥardah, al-Shirjah, ‘Aththar, Ḥaly, and al-Sirrayn. At the station of al-Sirrayn, where the Yemeni middle route diverges to the north-north-west towards Mecca, the coastal route continues its course towards Jeddah, traversing Wādī A’yār (or Aghyār), Wādī al-Hirjāb, and the port of al-Shu‘aybah.

Al-Ya‘qūbī,¹ al-Ḥarbī,² and al-Hamdānī³ all identify the coastal stations although they do not concur in their naming of them. The sub-route linking Ṣan‘ā’ to the coastal route features uniquely in the work of these geographers and their comments include references to the stations on this route. The greatest of these stations has been identified as the port of ‘Aththar and this is the point of intersection of the coastal route, the sub-route of Ṣan‘ā’, and the royal route (see below). The following, selected, main stations are situated on the south-westbound route between Ṣan‘ā’ and ‘Aththar: Ṣilīt, Wādī Akhraf, Ḥaraḍ, and al-Khaṣūf.

A number of the stations on the Saudi section of the coastal route have been studied recently by al-Zayla‘ī.⁴

2. The Royal / Tihāmah Route

It is reported that it was on this pilgrim route, at the station of

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1. *Kitāb al-Buldān*, 317.
 2. *Al-Manāsik*, 646 f.
 3. *Ṣifāh*, 341.
 4. *Southern Area* (1983) *passim*.

al-Mahjam, that the assassination of *Dā'ī* 'Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ṣulayhī took place in 459/1066 or 473/1080, by Sa'īd b. Najāh, who is well known as al-Aḥwal.¹

Ibn Khurradādhbah,² Qudāmah,³ and al-Idrīsī⁴ (the last two appear to have been influenced by Ibn Khurradādhbah in their writing) provide an itinerary of the stations on this route which connects the south and south-western regions of the Yemen with Mecca, but they all fail either to comment on the stations or their intervening distances. The general orientation of their route is consistent with that of the royal pilgrim route (*al-jāddah al-sulṭāniyyah*) as recorded by 'Umārah.⁵ The latter points out that the royal pilgrim route runs parallel to both the coastal and the highland pilgrim routes. He adds that the middle route commences from the vicinity of Mawza' and proceeds, on a northerly course, to 'Aththar by way of the following, selected, main stations: Ḥays, Zabīd, al-Qaḥmah, al-Kadrā', and al-Mahjam. It joins with the coastal route at the station of 'Aththar only to fork off again at the station of al-Sirrayn whence it diverges north-north-west towards Mecca, by passing the following, selected, main stations: al-Lith, Wādī Yalamlam (i.e. the meeting-point, *mīqāt*), and Wādī Malkān.

3. The Old Pilgrim Route between Ṣan'ā' and Mecca via Upper Ḥaly

This route is recorded exclusively by al-Hamdānī⁶ who informs us that it is an old pilgrim route linking Ṣan'ā' with Mecca. It extends from Ṣan'ā' and passes through Raydah, Ra's al-Shurwah, and al-Baṭanah in the region of Hamdān.⁷

1. Kay, *Yaman*, 61 f.; 'Umārah, *al-Mufīd*, 104 f.

2. *Al-Mamālik*, 148 f.

3. *Al-Kharāj*, 192.

4. *Al-Mushṭaq*, 147.

5. *Op. cit.*, 70 f.; cf. Kay, *Yaman*, 8 f.; al-Zayla'ī, "al-Mawāqī", *Annals*, VII, 12 f.

6. *Ṣifah*, 341.

7. Cf. Wilson, *Gazetteer*, 102, 202 f.

From here it advances in a north-western direction through Upper Ḥaly to ‘Ashm and al-Lith where it merges with the main middle pilgrim route.

4. The Routes between Aden and Mecca via Ṣan‘ā’

As well as the maritime and coastal routes between Aden and Mecca, there are, according to certain early Arab geographers,¹ three main inland routes linking Aden and Mecca and these all lead *via* Ṣan‘ā’.

4a. The First Route between Aden and Mecca via Ṣan‘ā’

Compared with their predecessors, the Yemeni geographers and historians are more concise in their identification of the stations along this route linking Aden with Ṣan‘ā’. Whilst al-Ḥamdānī,² who names this route ‘The Upper Pilgrim Route of Aden’ (*maḥajjat ‘Adan al-‘ulyā*), only enumerates nine stations, ‘Umārah³ refers to just six, and neither of them attempts to calculate the distances between these stages.

This route passes, in due course, through mountainous terrain. From Aden, it proceeds northwards *via* the following, selected, main stations: Laḥj, al-Juwah, al-Janad, Ibb, Naqīl Ṣayd (Sumārah), Dhamār, and Khidār respectively.⁴

1. Cf. e.g. al-Iṣṭakhrī, *a-Masālik*, 28; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 41; Abū al-Fidā’, *Taqwīm*, 83.

2. *Op. cit.*, 344.

3. *Al-Mufīd*, 67–69; Kay, *Yaman*, 7 f.

4. For the identification of these place names, see al-Akwa’, *al-Yamāniyyah*, 15, 28, 75, 77, 102, 113, 235, 280.

4b. The Second Route between Aden and Mecca via Ṣan‘ā’

Al-Hamdānī,¹ who terms the above-mentioned route between Aden and Ṣan‘ā’ (route 4a above) ‘The Route of the Left-Hand Side’ (*al-ṭarīq al-yusrā*), proposes a further complementary one, and contrasts it with the above-mentioned route accordingly in naming it ‘The Route of the Right-Hand Side’ (*al-ṭarīq al-yumnā*). His treatment of this alternative route is confined to identifying the mountainous passes, such as Yaslaḥ and Nakhlān,² which it negotiates.

4c. The Third Route between Aden and Mecca via Ṣan‘ā’

This route is registered by al-Hamdānī³ who tells us that it approaches Ṣan‘ā’ via Mikhlāf Ru‘ayn and Yaklā (Bilād Sanḥān). It seems likely that it was the northern part of this route which was followed by the poet Aḥmad al-Radā’ī⁴ on departing from his home-town Radā’ heading towards Mecca via Ṣan‘ā’.

5. The Routes between Ḥaḍramawt and Mecca

Though description of the stations and calculation of the distance between them is absent from their accounts, al-Ḥarbī and al-Hamdānī are the only geographers who comment on the pilgrim routes of Ḥaḍramawt at length.

1. *Sifah*, 344.

2. Cf. al-Akwa‘, *op. cit.*, 279.

3. *Op. cit.*, 343 f.

4. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 405 f. For more information about routes 4a and 4c, cf. al-Bakrī, *al-Mamālik*, 29.

5a. The Route between Ḥaḍramawt and Mecca via Najrān

We learn from al-Ḥarbī¹ that the southern part of this route, which connects Ḥaḍramawt with Najrān, proceeds north–north–west from Shabwah, passing, in due course, through Bayḥān and Ḥarīb, before reaching Ma'rib, from where it continues on to Najrān, this latter leg being served by seven stations. Al-Hamdānī,² on the other hand, locates the course of this part of the route further north by way of al-‘Abr and Ramlat Ṣayhad. He names it ‘The Lower Pilgrim Route of Ḥaḍramawt’ (*maḥajjat Ḥaḍramawt al-suflā*).

From Najrān, so al-Ḥarbī³ tells us, the route veers north–north–west, passing through eleven stations to reach Wādī Karā', at which point it merges with the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. Al-Hamdānī⁴ records the same number of stations on this route as al-Ḥarbī, although the names he attributes to them are not entirely consistent with those provided by the latter. Furthermore, al-Hamdānī pin-points the station of Tabālah as the area where the Ḥaḍramawt pilgrim route converges with the Yemeni one.

5b. The Route between Ḥaḍramawt and Mecca via Ṣa'dah

Al-Hamdānī,⁵ who registers this alternative route and terms it ‘The Upper Pilgrim Route of Ḥaḍramawt’ (*maḥajjat Ḥaḍramawt al-‘ulyā*), states that it connects Ḥaḍramawt with the Yemeni highland pilgrim route at the city of Ṣa'dah.

1. *Al-Manāsik*, 647 f.

2. *Ṣifāh*, 343.

3. *Al-Manāsik*, 648 f.; cf. ch. II of this study.

4. *Op. cit.*, 343; cf. Stark, *Southern Gates*, 302 f.

5. *Op. cit.*, 167, 342.

He further points out that the route links al-‘Abr with Ṣa’dah by way of al-Jawf, explaining that those pilgrims who would come through Ma’rib, Bayḥān, and Markhah invariably joined the Ḥaḍramī pilgrim caravan, which follows this route.¹

5c. The Route between Ḥaḍramawt and Mecca via Aden

In the course of writing about Ḥusayn b. Salāmah, ‘Umārah² discloses the existence of a further pilgrim route which commences from the heart of Ḥaḍramawt and proceeds through the neighbouring cities of Tarīm and Shibām where it veers south-south-west *via* Mikhlāf Abyan towards Aden. In the vicinity of Aden, the route would either have joined with the main pilgrim routes connecting Aden with Ṣan‘ā’ *via* Mikhlāf Laḥj, or merged with the Aden-Mecca coastal route.³

6. The Route between Ṣan‘ā’ and Mecca via the Port of al-Ḥudaydah

The itinerary of this pilgrim route is recorded in a limited number of unedited manuscripts written by Yemeni travellers between the 12th/18th and 14th/20th centuries.⁴

The opening stretch of this route, which is inland, links Ṣan‘ā’ and the port of al-Ḥudaydah on the Red Sea, passing through some seventeen pilgrim stations; these include: Matnah, Ṣayḥān, al-Shijjah, al-Biḥayḥ / al-Buḥayḥ, and

1. Cf. Yaḥyā, *Ghāyah*, 293 f.

2. *Al-Mufīd*, 67; Kay, *Yaman*, 7; cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 318, s.v. "Shibām".

3. For the identification of these place names, cf. al-Akwa‘, *al-Yamāniyyah*, 16, 55, 150, 235 f.

4. Yaḥyā, *al-Marāmm*, f. 68 f.; Ismā‘īl, *al-Waṭar*, f. 4 f.; al-Ānisī, *al-In‘ām*, f. B f.; al-Ḥibshī, *al-Raḥḥalah*, 83 f., 132 f., 151 f., 192 f.

Bājil.¹ From al-Ḥudaydah the pilgrims would either take the sea-route to Jeddah, pausing *en route* at the following selected stations: Kamarān island, al-Qunfudhah, and al-Līth, or another option presenting itself was to join the pilgrim caravan route at al-Qunfudhah, whence they would proceed along the course of the coastal pilgrim route.

7. The Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route

This pilgrim route, linking Ṣan'ā' with Mecca, is the theme of the present study. Its two composite sections, which are now situated in the Yemen and Saudi Arabia respectively, will be examined in the following chapters.

Our sources combine in finding that the Yemeni highland pilgrim route (between Ṣan'ā' and Mecca) is fed by at least four short pilgrim routes in the Yemen, and has only one sub-route, in Saudi Arabia. Three of the feeder-routes lead from Aden to Ṣan'ā' whereas the fourth one is from Ḥaḍramawt to Ṣa'dah.²

The sub-route, which diverges from the Yemeni highland pilgrim route where it approaches the extreme north-western boundary of the area of Zahrān al-Janūb in Saudi Arabia, will be briefly assessed below.

7a. The Route between Ṣa'dah and al-Tā'if / Mecca via the Mountain Range of the Sarawāt

As far as the sources at our disposal are concerned, there is no record of

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1. For the identification of these place names, cf. al-Maḡhafī, *Mu'jam*, 55 f., 346, 390, 557, 630 f.
 2. These feeder-routes have already been reviewed. See routes VII, 4: 4a, 4b, and 4c; 5: 5b above.

the course of this pilgrim sub-route in the work of the early Arab geographers, or in the medieval geographers. Ibn al-Mujāwir¹ (early 7th/13th century) is the only one to have registered it, defining it as connecting the city of Ṣa'dah with al-Ṭā'if *via* the mountain range of the Sarawāt.² Notwithstanding the course of the route is consumed entirely in rocky terrain, Ibn al-Mujāwir points out that the land is well populated, rich in water sources, both at surface and subterranean levels, extremely fertile, and boasts flourishing vegetation. He further observes that the local people dwell in clusters of thriving towns and villages where vast stores of animal fodder abound.

Though Ibn al-Mujāwir's itinerary contains sixteen stations, certain of the place names ascribed to them occur in a distorted style, thus rendering absolute identification of these impossible. He comments on some of these stations, and the distances between them in parasangs. From the city of Ṣa'dah this route proceeds northwards to the mountainous region of 'Asīr by way of the territory of Qaḥṭān. Thence it continues north-north-westwards, now traversing the territory of the B. Qarn (Balqarn) tribe, in the direction of al-Ṭā'if and Mecca. The following, selected, main stations are situated between Ṣa'dah and al-Ṭā'if: Wādī Rāḥah B. Shurayf, al-Baṣrah, Dhahbān, al-'Arīn, the market of Midr, al-Kibisah, and al-Ma'din.³

Burckhardt,⁴ of Swiss nationality, is the only one of the modern European

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1. *Al-Mustabṣir*, I, 37 f.; cf. 'Umārah, *al-Mufīd*, 69 f.
 2. Cf. ch. I, iii of this study.
 3. For the identification of these place names, see al-Jāsir, *al-Mu'jam*, I, 162, 479; II, 812, 1119; al-Zahrānī, *al-Mu'jam*, 207; al-Bilādī, *Ma'ālim*, I, 71 f.; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, II, 351.
 4. *Travels*, II, 373 f. Burckhardt's map, in which the course and itinerary of the Sarawāt pilgrim route are shown, was initially used by Wavell (*Pilgrimage*, facing p.345). More recently, W. Brice based his map of the pilgrim routes on these two maps. See Brice, "Pilgrim Roads", *PSAS*, VIII, 8-11; *idem*, *Atlas*, 22.

travellers in Arabia to have charted and described, in fact in 1814, the stations of the Sarawāt pilgrim route. He sets out two valid itineraries which rely heavily on details dictated by Yemeni pilgrims. Despite incongruities among the place names, a painstaking comparison of these two itineraries allows that they plot one and the same course, and where disparate detail occurs each complementing the other. Of further interest in this connection is the earlier recording of certain stations, such as Wādī Rāḥah B. Shurayf, the territory of Qaḥṭān, Dhahbān, and the territory of the B. Qarn – or Balqarn as they are now known – by Ibn al-Mujāwir in the 7th/13th century, which are identical with those occurring in Burckhardt's itineraries. It appears that the currency of this sub-route of the Sarawāt continued from 1814 until as recently as the end of the first half of this century.¹

7b. The Usage of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route by some of the Early Islamic Military Expeditions

It should be noted at the outset that the city of Najrān, and so the early Arab geographers report, was not actually located on the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, but on the pilgrim routes of Ḥaḍramawt and Oman. Nevertheless, it was the proximity of this city to the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, i.e. approximately 90 km. to the south-south-east, and its strategic location which recommended its usage as a main northern gateway to the Yemeni plateau. Consequently, the city of Najrān served as a terminus and preferred assembly point for the early Islamic forces. The northern city of Ṣa'dah, boasting an equally convenient site, served the same purpose as Najrān. It is well known that following the arrival of (later) Imam al-Hādī Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn in the town in 284/897, it was chosen as the

1. Zabārah, *al-Anbā'*, 74 f.; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, III, 604; Brice, "Pilgrim Roads", *PSAS*, VIII, 10; Cornwallis, *Asir*, 112-115, 120-125.

capital of Zaydī Islam and thus its status was greatly enhanced. The Yemeni section of the highland pilgrim route, connecting Ṣa'dah with Ṣan'ā', was used extensively by the imam and his forces.

From a historical perspective we know that the Yemeni highland pilgrim route was popular along its entire length with early Islamic armies heading to areas either south-south-east of Mecca or in the northern territory of the Yemen.

It will be the principal aim of the following paragraphs to outline such historical events that will admit of the identifying of the regions, including tribal territories, traversed by some early Islamic military expeditions. Such a review, it is believed, will ultimately point to the general course of the route followed by these forces.

I. The Era of the Prophet

i. The Military Detachment (*Sariyyah*) of 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb (in 9/630)

At the order of the Prophet this thirty-strong detachment, guided by an unnamed member of the B. Hilāl tribe, set out to launch an attack against the Hawāzin tribe,¹ settled in the vicinity of Turabah. The detachment headed southwards, taking the Najdiyyah route which advances *via* Sahl Rukbah and the lava-field of al-Jadir, i.e. that known now as Ḥarrat al-Buqūm.²

1. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 437; al-Bilādī, *Bayn Makkah*, 68.

2. Al-Wāqidī, *al-Maghāzī*, II, 722.

Ibn Sa'd¹ who records this event in the year 7/628, identifies the location of Turabah more precisely by stating, '...it [Turabah] is situated near al-'Ablā'; the latter place is four days' marching from Mecca.' He further points out that this area is traversed by the route which links Mecca with Najrān and Ṣan'ā'. According to Yāqūt,² al-'Ablā' is a small town belonging to the Khath'am tribe, situated in the vicinity of Tabālah.

ii. The Military Detachment (*Sariyyah*) of Qutbah b. 'Āmir (in 9/630)

Ibn Sa'd³ registers another expedition dispatched by the Prophet against the Khath'am tribe. He lists Bishah, Turabah, and Tabālah as the essential territorial areas of this tribe. It seems most likely that this expedition would have followed the same route as that taken by the expedition of 'Umar.

iii. The Military Detachment (*Sariyyah*) of Khālīd b. al-Walīd (in 10/631)

The Prophet ordered the commander Khālīd b. al-Walīd, with a four-hundred-strong force, to march against B. al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b of Madhḥij⁴ in Najrān. In the same year another army of three hundred men led by 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib was dispatched to Madhḥij. The available sources contain no details of the itinerary observed by these two armies.⁵

1. *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 117.

2. *Al-Buldān*, IV, 80.

3. *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 162.

4. Cf. al-Bilādī, *Bayn Makkah*, 57 f.

5. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, 339 f.; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 1724 f.

II. The Caliphate of Abū Bakr

i. The Military Expedition of al-Muhājir b. Abī Umayyah (in 11/632-3)

This army, levied by the Caliph Abū Bakr to fight the supporters of the 'false prophet' 'Abhalah, entered the Yemen through Najrān. In the course of advancing southwards towards the Yemen, al-Muhājir was joined by Jarīr b. 'Abd Allāh al-Bajalī who had been successful in suppressing the recalcitrant element of the Khath'am tribe¹ in the areas of Bīshah, Tabālah, and Jurash.²

III. The Era of the Umayyads

i. The Military Expedition of Busr b. Abī Artāh al-'Āmirī (in 40/660)

This army of three thousand men was levied by the Caliph Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān to reinforce his followers in the Hejaz and the Yemen. The commander of this army received the instruction to pursue and kill the supporters of 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib as they were detected and particularly those in Medina, Mecca, the mountain range of al-Sarāt, and Najrān.³

ii. The Military Expedition of 'Abd al-Malik b. Muḥammad b. 'Atiyyah al-Sa'dī (in 130/748)

According to Ibn al-Dayba',⁴ and Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn,⁵ the first military conflict between the supporters of 'Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā al-Kindī (the Ibāḍiyyah)

1. Cf. al-Bilādī, *Bayn Makkah*, 16 f.

2. Ibn Samurah, *Ṭabaqāt*, 35; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-Mustafīd*, 22; cf. al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 90.

3. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, VI, 3450 f.; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 383 f.; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-Mustafīd*, 24.

4. *Al-Mustafīd*, 27.

5. *Ghāyah*, 125.

and the Umayyad military forces took place in Wādī al-Qurā, where the city of al-‘Ulā is now situated. The Umayyad commander, appointed by Caliph Marwān b. Muḥammad (125–132/743–750), was ultimately victorious and pursued the remnants of the defeated army as far as the Yemen *via* Mecca, Bishah, and Ṣa’dah.

Al-Mas‘ūdī¹ sheds some light on this event by telling us that ‘Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā al-Kindī, on learning of his army’s defeat, set off from Ṣan‘ā’ at once and, with fresh troops, advanced northwards towards Ṣa’dah. From there he proceeded north-north-west until the two armies confronted each other in the area lying between Jurash and al-Ṭā’if.

IV. The Abbasid Era

i. The Conflict between Ma’n al-Shaybānī and ‘Umar al-Ghālibī (in 142/760)

Al-Manḍaj, now called al-Maṣlūlah, an area through which the Yemeni highland pilgrim route cuts, was the battle-area of the confrontation between the Abbasid governor Ma’n b. Zā’idah al-Shaybānī, appointed by the Caliph Abū Ja’far al-Manṣūr (136–58/753–75), and ‘Umar b. Zayd al-Ghālibī. After killing al-Ghālibī, Muḥammad b. Abān, a Khawlānī chief, opposed Ma’n and fought against him in Ṣa’dah.²

ii. The Conflict between Ibrāhīm al-‘Alawī and Ishāq al-‘Abbāsī (in 200/815)

During the Alid revolts Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā b. Ja’far al-Ṣādiq al-‘Alawī,

1. *Murūj*, III, 257.

2. Al-Hamdānī, *al-Iklīl*, II, 140, n. 515; cf. al-Mad‘aj, *Yaman*, 181, 184, 199, n.40.

otherwise known as al-Jazzār, commenced his advance from Mecca towards the Yemen *via* Ṣa'dah, his objective being to capture the city of Ṣan'ā'. As soon as news of this development reached Ṣan'ā', its Abbasid governor, Ishāq b. Mūsā al-'Abbāsī, started out from Ṣan'ā' northwards towards Mecca following the Najdiyyah route, i.e. the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, and, arriving in Mecca, he set up his camp near the watering-place of al-Mushshāsh.¹

iii. The Journey of the Zaydī Imam Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (in 284/897)

The year 284/897 saw the second 'open declaration' (*khurūj*) of the prominent Zaydī Imam Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn, otherwise known as al-Hādī ilā 'l-Ḥaqq. At the head of his followers he left the Hejaz and marched south-south-east, heading for the Yemen. The author of the biographical work on al-Hādī refers to this journey with the terse observation: '...we made arrangements to travel [from the Hejaz to the Yemen] along that route which would eventually bring us to Turabah and Bīshah.'² In the event, however, this plan was altered and, shortly after setting out along this track, al-Hādī diverted his course to the littoral route.³

7c. The Yemeni Pilgrim Caravans

The Yemeni pilgrims departed annually from their country to Mecca in more than one pilgrimage caravan. It seems plausible that the absence of political unity which prevailed throughout the early and medieval periods of Yemeni

1. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, II, 987 f.; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, VI, 310 f.; cf. al-Hamdānī, *al-Iklīl*, II, 141 f.

2. Al-'Abbāsī, *Sīrah*, 37-40.

3. Reference to this journey is justified here by virtue of its itinerary.

history would have given rise to the assembling of separate Yemeni pilgrim caravans, the successful preparation of which would have relied entirely on personal initiative. Between 184/800 and 194/810 the pilgrims from Ṣan‘ā’ travelled to Mecca in a convoy organized and led by their Abbasid governor Ḥammād al-Barbarī.¹ Aḥmad b. ‘Īsā al-Radā‘ī, who recorded the earliest Yemeni pilgrimage from Radā‘ to Mecca in the 3rd/9th century, collaborated in its organization and leadership. The formation of this convoy, which did not form an adjunct of a formal pilgrimage caravan, depended on individual effort.² The geographer al-Ḥamdānī³ (*ob.* 4th/10th century) was himself a long-standing participant in the activities of a family-owned and family-organized caravan, available in Ṣa’dah for hire to and from Mecca, either by a group of pilgrims or merchants. Widely renowned for his beneficence, Shujā‘ al-Dīn ‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Jalīl b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Taghlibī (*ob.* 664/1265) was particularly noted in his local community for his generous pecuniary donations to the poor. Other areas of interest attracting his financial support included the provision of useful items to local poor pilgrims on their departure to Mecca and again on their return home.⁴

These pilgrim routes proceeding along the southern and western Yemeni coastal strips were used by the inhabitants of the lowland (Tihāmah), whereas the Yemeni highland route, including its feeder-routes and sub-route (see routes VII, 4-4c, 7-7a) served essentially the highland populace (Najd al-Yaman).⁵ It is important to note that owing to the dearth of relevant reference material it is not possible to determine precisely the route taken by certain of the caravans to be

1. Al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh*, 108.

2. Al-Ḥamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 401 f.

3. *Ṣifah*, 356.

4. Al-Khazrajī, *al-Uqūd*, I, 153.

5. Cf. ch. I of this study.

discussed; however, there are indications in the scant data available which lend credibility to the idea that the following caravans used the Yemeni highland pilgrim route: al-Şulayhī, Queen ‘Alam, al-Ḥimyarī, al-Sarw, and al-Kibsi.

i) The Pilgrim Caravan of the Ismā‘īlī Dā‘ī ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī (ob. 473/1080)

‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Şulayhī, an exponent of Ismā‘īlī doctrine and politically aligned with the Fatimids of Egypt, founded the local Sulayhid dynasty (439–532/1047–1138).¹

A talented leader, he acted as the supreme guide for the Yemeni pilgrim caravans following the Sarawāt route and remained active in this position for fifteen years.²

ii) The Pilgrim Caravan of Queen ‘Alam (ob. 545/1150)

‘Alam started out in life as an Abyssinian slave in the court of Anīs al-Fātik, but following the assassination of Anīs by Maṣṣūr b. Fātik, the latter took ‘Alam as his queen, and this union produced a son, Fātik. At one time ‘Alam ruled on behalf of the local Najahid dynasty (412–551/1021–1156).³

As a result of her commitment to charitable causes, Queen ‘Alam was highly esteemed by her subjects. Whilst taking part in the annual pilgrimage, she arranged for the various Yemeni pilgrim caravans, whether they would be

1. Cf. Smith, "History", *Yemen*, 132 f.; *idem*, "Early History", *Şan‘ā’*, 58 f.

2. Kay, *Yaman*, 20 f.; ‘Umārah, *al-Mufīd*, 84 f., 87; Ibn al-Dayba‘, *al-Uyūn*, I, 243; Yaḥyā, *Ghāyah*, 248.

3. Cf. Smith, "History", *Yemen*, 131 f.

advancing to Mecca overland or by sea, to receive vital provisions and an armed escort.¹ By so doing, it was hoped that the pilgrims would be able to withstand all perilous eventualities and to exempt themselves from paying tax dues (*mukūs*) *en route*.²

iii. The Pilgrim Caravan of 'Alī b. Maḥdī b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimyarī (ob. 554/1159)

'Alī b. Maḥdī b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimyarī established the local Maḥdid dynasty (554-569/1159-1173).³ Although he ultimately chose Zabīd in the Tihāmah region as his seat, it was to the extremely arduous mountainous terrain, occupying most of the area of the Yemen, that he had looked for refuge and military support when conducting his campaign for the rulership. From 531-6/1136-1141, he headed one of the Yemeni pilgrim caravans on its annual journey to Mecca.⁴

iv. The Yemeni Pilgrim Caravan of al-Sarw (flor. 6th/12th century)

Al-Sarw is the name applied to the group of people consisting collectively of members of various Yemeni tribes and sub-tribes who travelled annually between Mecca and the mountain chains of al-Sarw or al-Sarawāt, their homeland and whence they took their name.⁵ Notwithstanding elements from the Azd and Khath'am tribes, the Bajīlah tribe is the one which, according to our sources, constitutes the bulk of this group. The group leader was invariably a prominent figure (*shaykh*) elected from one of these tribes. Commercial as well as pious

1. 'Umārah, *al-Nukat*, I, 24 f.

2. 'Umārah, *al-Mufīd*, 168; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, II, 508; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-Mustafīd*, 57 f.

3. Cf. Smith, "History", *Yemen*, 134 f.

4. 'Umārah, *al-Mufīd*, 185 f.; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-Uyūn*, I, 360.

5. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 217; al-Akwa', *al-Yamāniyyah*, 136, 138.

interests were gratified at their destination, the cities of Mecca and Medina. We understand that the greatest commodity which they supplied to the markets of these two cities was grain.¹

In the pilgrimage season of 579/1183 the traveller Ibn Jubayr² witnessed the arrival of this caravan in Mecca and Medina and the nature of the activities which they conducted thereafter. He estimates their number in thousands and the date of the formation of this Yemeni pilgrim group to the epoch of the Prophet. Although the available sources are silent about the itinerary observed by this caravan, it is, nevertheless, tempting to suggest that it followed the Yemeni highland pilgrim route and/or its main sub-route (see route VII, 7a above).

v. The Pilgrim Caravan of Ibn 'Ujayl (608–90/1211–91)

Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad b. Mūsā b. 'Alī b. 'Umar b. 'Ujayl, identified as a jurist (*faqīh*) and imam,³ was a prominent figure as the supreme leader of a Yemeni pilgrim caravan. The adequate defensive measures employed by Ibn 'Ujayl in organizing his caravan induced a great number of the Yemeni pilgrims to join it⁴ and, not least, projected a respectable image. This, in turn, effected that its arrival in Mecca is reported in some of the non-Yemeni sources.⁵

1. Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, I, 26 f.; al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, I, 619, 664, 676, 766; II, 1037.

2. *Rihlah*, 110–3, 140, 142, 153.

3. For his biography, see Redhouse, *al-'Uqūd*, III, 134, n. 861.

4. Al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 481–8; al-Khazrajī, *al-'Uqūd*, I, 257–60.

5. Al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, I, 611; cf. Ibn Baṭṭūṭah, *Tuhfah*, I, 273 f.

vi. The Pilgrim Caravan of al-Farasānī (ob. ca. 750/1349)

Bakr b. 'Umar b. Yaḥyā al-Farasānī al-Taghlibī, noted for his piety, led the Yemeni pilgrim caravan which in due course took his name for an unspecified number of years. According to al-Janadī,¹ this man committed himself voluntarily to the leadership and guidance of this Yemeni pilgrim caravan at a time when the track of the pilgrim route began to be obscured due to waning pilgrim numbers.

vii. The Pilgrim Caravan of Ibn al-Aksa' (flor. 8th/14th century)

It is reported that 'Umar b. 'Umar al-Aksa' was influenced by the above-mentioned leaders of the pilgrim caravans. Performing the *ḥajj* every year, he eventually accepted the responsibility of organizing as well as leading a Yemeni pilgrim caravan and likewise lending it his name thereafter.²

viii. The Pilgrim Caravan of al-Kibsi (from the 12th/18th century)

This pilgrim caravan took its name from the noble family (*sādah*) of B. al-Kibsi which originally inhabited a hamlet called al-Kibs, situated to the south-south-east of Ṣan'ā' in the area of Upper Khawlān.³

The earliest available record of the activities of B. al-Kibsi in organizing and leading the Yemeni pilgrim caravan dates from the 12th/18th century. It is assumed that the person who introduced the idea of assembling these Yemeni

1. *Al-Sulūk*, II, 387-9.

2. Al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, II, 371 f.

3. For more information, see al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, IV, 661; al-Maḥḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 532; Zabārah, *al-Anbā'*, 116, 211-4.

pilgrims to allow them to travel in a recognized convoy was al-Ḥusayn b. Maḥdī al-Kibṣī.¹

In 1814, Burckhardt² observed the arrival of the Kibṣī caravan in Mecca and went on to trace its itinerary (see route VII, 7a above). Some eleven years after Burckhardt was in Arabia, we have another account, dating from 1241/1825–6 in which a traveller,³ who had reached Mecca *via* a sea-route, reports on his meeting with a party of Yemeni pilgrims who had reached Mecca *via* the Hejaz; they were in the Kibṣī caravan and led by Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-Kibṣī. The author states that the former leader of the caravan was Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥusayn al-Marājil of the family of al-Kibṣī.

ix. The Yemeni Palanquin (*Maḥmal*)

From the 7th/13th century onwards the practice was established in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and the Yemen (whence the four largest pilgrim caravans departed on the pilgrimage)⁴ of dispatching a splendidly decorated litter (*maḥmal*),⁵ mounted on a camel, at the head of the caravan; this betokened collectively prestige, political independence, and alliance. Whereas some early works assert that it was the Umayyad general, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī (*ob.* 96/714), who first began including a palanquin in his pilgrim caravan bound for Mecca,⁶ the view that the

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1. Abū Dāhish, "Shi'r", *al-Dārah*, II, 26. The writer of this article relies for his information on an unedited, Yemeni MS entitled *Durar Nuḥūr al-'Ayn bi-Sīrat al-Imām al-Manṣūr wa-A'yān Dawlatuh al-Mayāmīn* by Luṭf Allāh Jaḥāf, and conserved in the Main Library of King Saud University, Riyadh.
 2. *Travels*, II, 373 f.
 3. Ismā'īl, *Kitāb Nayl al-Waṭar*, f. 24, 29.
 4. Al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, I, 412.
 5. This word might also be vocalized either *maḥmil* or *miḥmal*. Cf. Jomier, "Maḥmal", *Et*², VI, 44.
 6. Cf. e.g. Ibn Rustah, *al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 192.

Mamluk Sultan Baybars initiated the practice in 664/1266 enjoys wider currency.¹

The consistent annual arrival of the Yemeni *maḥmal*, at the head of the desert pilgrim caravan (*rakb al-barr*), in Mecca is noted from the first quarter of the 7th/13th century. The earliest reference to this occurs in the year 696/1296 when the Rasulid Sultan al-Mu'ayyad Dā'ūd b. al-Muẓaffar Yūsuf b. 'Umar b. Rasūl provided a *maḥmal*, reputedly for the Yemeni pilgrim caravan intended for the littoral route and appointed al-'Ābid b. Zankī as its leader. In 780/1378, after a space of eighty years during which it was replaced by a standard (*sanjaq*), the Yemeni *maḥmal* was reintroduced at the bidding of Sultan al-Ashraf Ismā'il b. al-Afḍal 'Abbās b. al-Mujāhid only to disappear again for some further twenty years. It re-emerged in 800/1397 in the reign of the same Rasulid sultan.²

The official ceremony of the departure of the *maḥmal* from Zabīd to Mecca is briefly depicted by al-Khazrajī³ who informs us that it had been the practice in Zabīd to celebrate publicly the inauguration of this emblem of the pilgrim caravan on the 26th Ramaḍān. The 27th saw the *maḥmal*, escorted by a party of religious and political representatives, transported to the Rasulid resort of al-Nakhl.⁴ Presently the *maḥmal* was returned to Zabīd in the company of the Rasulid sultan and here the pilgrim caravan was bound to observe certain preparatory measures (the armed guards took up their positions, the treasure was loaded, the hanging of the Ka'bah (*kiswah*), and the storing of provisions were effected) before departing on the official date of the 26th Shawwāl to Mecca.

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1. For full information about the creation and usage of the palanquin, see Jomier, "Maḥmal", *El²*, VI, 44-46; Hitti, *History*, 135 f.
 2. Al-'Umarī, *al-Abṣār*, II, 331; al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, I, 612 f., 667 f., 684.
 3. *Al-Uqūd*, II, 298.
 4. Cf. Redhouse, *al-Uqūd*, III, 186, n. 1307.

It is stated that from 930/1523–4 the Yemeni pilgrim caravan was led, from the Yemen to Mecca, by one member of the noble family (*sādah*) of B. Marzūq.¹ In 963/1555–6, the Ottoman governor of the Yemen, Muṣṭafā Pāshā, otherwise known as al-Nashshār (*ob.* 967/1559), organized for the *maḥmal* to be escorted by an independent body attached to the annual Yemeni pilgrim caravan. Al-Nashshār had formerly acted as leader of the Egyptian pilgrim caravan and was thus able to draw on his experience gained in the field in putting together the arrangements for the organization of the Yemeni caravan and its palanquin; these preparatory measures included the appointing of a leader (*amīr al-ḥajj*) and a judge (*qāḍī al-maḥmal*).² He further requested the governor of Mecca to invest his reception of the Yemeni *maḥmal* with the same level of formality that he had hitherto accorded the arrival of the Egyptian and Syrian palanquins. He finally set up a fund, largely sustained by contributions from the Yemeni people, to meet the expenses incurred in connection with the *maḥmal*.³

In the reign of al-Mu'ayyad bi-Allāh Muḥammad b. al-Qāsim (990–1054/1582–1644), no official leader (*amīr al-ḥajj*) was appointed to escort the Yemeni pilgrim caravan. For those caravans which followed the coastal route, a temporary escort was provided by the governor of the towns of Jāzān and Abū 'Arīsh, Muḥammad b. Ṣalāḥ, as far north as Ḥaly. This situation changed, however, under Abū Ṭālib Aḥmad b. al-Imām al-Qāsim (1007–1066/1598–1655) who, not only assigned a leader to the pilgrim caravan, but also implemented

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1. Al-Nahrawālī, *al-Barq*, 122; al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, II, 823; cf. Bā Makhramah, *Thaghr*, 29 f.
 2. For information about the rules of administration and leadership of the pilgrimage caravan, see al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām*, 103 f.; al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, I, 217–376; cf. Ankawi, "Pilgrimage", *Arabian Studies*, I, 151 f.
 3. Al-Nahrawālī, *al-Barq*, 121 f.; al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, II, 1247.

security measures by providing it with armed guards.¹

We learn that in 1045/1635, which marks the breaking free of the Yemen from the first Ottoman occupation and its thus becoming an independent state under the Zaydī imamate, the practice of sending a *maḥmal* to Mecca was discontinued.²

7d. Contributors to the Development of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route

It will be the aim in the following brief accounts to review the measures introduced by those authorities who are credited, in the Islamic history of the Yemen, with the successful development of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.

With one exception relating to the nature of al-Ḥusayn b. Salāmah's reform, our sources do not recount the achievements of the contributors in detail, referring rather to these incidentally. We have no entries at all for activities in this connection during the Umayyad period (41–132/661–756), possibly owing to the Yemen's relative isolation from the central Islamic political arena during this period.³

i) The Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī b. al-Manṣūr (158–169/774–785)

Of all the caliphs, al-Mahdī b. al-Manṣūr was the only one to contribute to the improvement of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. He is credited with

1. Al-Wazīr, *al-Ḥalwā*, 121 f.; cf. al-Wāsi'i, *Tārīkh*, 224.

2. Jomier, "Maḥmal", *El*², VI, 45; Rāfiq, "Qāfilah", *Dirāsāt*, IV, 5.

3. Cf. al-Mad'aj, *Yemen*, 156 f.

establishing the postal service (*barīd*) operational between the Hejaz and the Yemen.¹ It is believed that the execution of this project was inspired by the political unrest in the Yemen.² It is quite likely that the inauguration of this service in 166/782 compelled the installation of certain facilities along the route, such as accommodation for the post official (*ṣāhib al-barīd*) between the various stretches, watch-towers, and milestones.

ii) The Abbasid Governor of Ṣan'ā', Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barmakī (183-4/799-800)

Under the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd (170-93/786-90), Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barmakī was appointed to the governorship in Ṣan'ā'. Despite the brevity of his term in office, he introduced a range of significant reforms in and beyond the city of Ṣan'ā'. His commitment to improving the services operated in connection with the Yemeni highland pilgrim route was confirmed by the measures taken to promote security along the route and to upgrade its track and facilities.³ Unhappily, our sources are silent on the precise nature of al-Barmakī's achievements concerning the Ṣan'ā'-Mecca route; notwithstanding, the historian al-Rāzī hints at the scale of Muḥammad al-Barmakī's spending of alms (*ṣadaqah*) in stating, '...it was a charitable act which he [al-Barmakī] performed for them [the Yemeni people] and through which he made good their drinking places (*subul*, [sing. *sabīl*]) right up to Mecca.'⁴

The word *sabīl* in al-Rāzī's short statement is capable of various

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1. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 517; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, V, 73; Abū al-Fidā', *Tārīkh*, II, 10.
 2. Cf. al-Mad'aj, *Yemen*, 186.
 3. Al-Janādī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 213 f.
 4. Al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh*, 106 f.; Serjeant, "Ghayls", *Ṣan'ā'*, 20, 22; Smith "Early History", *Ṣan'ā'*, 52; cf. al-Amrī, "A Document", *Arabian and Islamic Studies*, 29 f.

interpretations; we may deduce that al-Barmakī paid out a great deal of his own money to implement the measures designed to aid development of the Yemeni pilgrim route as far as Mecca. Perhaps, however, we are to understand that he invested *ṣadaqah* in maintaining and improving permanent drinking places along this route; or another interpretation allows that both of the above considerations are to be attributed to al-Barmakī. A further interesting point, which is possibly inherent in this statement, is that al-Barmakī may have been led to expend *ṣadaqah* on this cause owing to deficient funds from the central Islamic government in Baghdad.

iii) The Ziyadid Prince Husayn b. Salāmah (ob. 402/1011)

Once having reinstituted the former political limits of the dynasty of B. Ziyād (203–407/818–1016), al-Ḥusayn b. Salāmah, who thereafter held sway for some thirty years, directed his attention towards the building of the infrastructure of his territory. The completion of the foundations of the two cities of al-Kadrā' and al-Ma'qar, as well as of a fortified wall around his capital Zabīd, saw his efforts shift towards the improvement of the Yemeni pilgrim routes, which were provided consequently with a wide range of facilities. The majority of the Yemeni historians¹ refer to 'Umārah's account,² according to which al-Ḥusayn b. Salāmah initiated a comprehensive scheme of development concerning amenities along the Yemeni pilgrim routes. The measures taken included: the construction of great mosques with lofty minarets; lined, as well as unlined, wells; and water-cisterns at all stations on these routes. Milestones were positioned along all the Yemeni

1. See e.g. al-Ashraf, *Fākihah*, f. 55 f.; Bā Makhramah, *Thaghr*, 59 f.; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-Mustafīd*, 40 f.; Yahyā, *Ghāyah*, 232–5.

2. *Al-Mufīd*, 72 f.; Kay, *Yaman*, 8f.; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, II, 479 f.

routes recording the distance in miles, parasangs (*farāsikh*, sing. *farsakh*), and postal-stages.

We learn further that al-Ḥusayn b. Salāmah ordered the digging of four wells: al-Riyāḍah, Yalamlam, al-Adamah, and al-Bayḍā', situated on the Sirrayn-Mecca stretch of the pilgrim route. A well and a mosque were constructed in 'Arafāt, Mecca. In due course the pass of al-Ṭā'if was created, served by a conveniently situated well. A number of mosques, designed to accommodate limited or large congregations, were variously constructed or renovated in the Yemeni towns of Shibām, Tarīm, Aden, al-Janad, Zabīd, and Ḥaly.¹

iv) The Queen Arwā bint Aḥmad al-Ṣulayhī (ob. 532/1138)

We are persuaded that it was Queen Arwā bint Aḥmad b. Ja'far b. Mūsā al-Ṣulayhī, a member of the local Sulayhid dynasty (439–532/1047–1138),² who ordered the construction of the caravanserai of Ḍīn, or Marmal, on the Ṣan'ā'-Ṣa'dah pilgrim route.³

v) The Imam Aḥmad, Son of the Zaydī Imam al-Manṣūr (ob. 1066/1655)

Aḥmad, son of the Zaydī Imam al-Manṣūr bi-Allāh al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad,⁴ was a pious man with many charitable deeds to his credit. It is reported that the building of the mosque of al-Rawḍah in Ṣan'ā' and the two

1. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 169 s.v. "al-Janad"; *ibid.*, III, 318 s.v. "Shibām"; *ibid.*, IV, 8 f. s.v. "al-Ṭā'if".

2. Cf. Smith, "History", *Yemen*, 132 f.; *idem*, "Early History", *Ṣan'ā'*, 58 f.

3. Lewcock, "Building", *Ṣan'ā'*, 277 f.

4. Cf. al-Wāsi'ī, *Tārīkh*, 224 f.

caravanserais in al-Azraqayn and Raydah on the Ṣan'ā'-Ṣa'dah pilgrim route number amongst his projects.¹

7e. Security along the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route

There were essentially three factors, excluding natural disasters, which were conducive to the ^{destruction} of Arabian pilgrim routes and to the interruption of their traffic bound for Mecca, throughout the early and medieval periods of Islamic history: the fluctuating economic situation of the tribal communities whose territories were traversed by the pilgrim routes, the emergence of powerful political or religious movements in the Islamic world, and insurrection against the central or local governments.² As mentioned earlier, certain pilgrim routes in Arabia, such as Oman-Mecca *via* al-Baḥrayn, and Basra-Medina-Mecca *via* Ma'din al-Niqrah, were completely abandoned by travellers owing to inadequate security measures. This reason was also inherent in the rejection of the Zubaydah route in 656/1258.

It is concluded in the sources that the majority of the Yemeni and a number of the Omani pilgrims preferred to travel to Mecca by sea rather than overland owing to the extortive practices of those tribes and rulers controlling local access to the routes and the relentless forays executed by nomadic tribesmen on the caravans³.

In spite of the paucity of information relating to this theme, it is proposed

1. Al-Wazīr, *al-Ḥalwā*, 144.

2. For full information, see al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 47-58; al-Zayla'ī, *Makkah*, 104-114.

3. Al-'Umarī, *al-Abṣār*, II, 330 f.; al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, II, 1246; cf. al-Iṣṭakhrī, *al-Masālik*, 28; Ibn Ḥawqal, *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 41.

that the following examples will aptly demonstrate how the Yemeni highland pilgrim route and its users were an easy target for incursive elements from the 2nd/8th century onwards.

Following Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barmakī's removal from office, Hammād al-Barbarī was appointed as his successor to the governorship of Ṣan'ā', a position which he held between 184/800 and 194/810. During his ten-year rule, Hammād al-Barbarī introduced security measures along the northern pilgrim and trade routes connecting Ṣan'ā' with Mecca and the province of the Yamāmah and, in executing these, he took particular care to deter the recalcitrant nomads (*al-a'rāb*) who preyed on passing caravans. According to our sources, the success of his endeavours in this respect led to the economical burgeoning of the whole of the Yemen.¹ If we consider this view, it may be concluded that a state of total hostility existed along the northern routes prior to al-Barbarī's accession to power and further that the Yemeni nomads encamped with convenient access to the routes constituted the obstacle to the successful passage of the Yemeni pilgrim and commercial caravans.²

The founder of the B. Ziyād dynasty (in 203/818), Muḥammad b. Ziyād (*ob.* 245/859), was also successful in subjugating the rebellious Yemeni tribes who profited from raids on the various caravans and a contributory factor to this success was the forming of an alliance with the local rulers of the Yemen. By such means, according to Bā Makhramah,³ the Yemeni routes were rendered safe for all caravans to use.

1. Al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh*, 110; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 214; al-Ahdal, *al-Zaman*, 146; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-Mustafīd*, 30; Yaḥyā, *Ghāyah*, 143.

2. Cf. al-Mad'aj, *Yemen*, 188.

3. *Thaghr*, 9.

Yemeni historians are largely unanimous in finding that the Ismā'īlī *Dā'ī* 'Alī b. al-Faḍl, the initiator of a powerful movement (268–303/881–915),¹ actively prevented Yemeni Muslims from performing the annual pilgrimage by barring access to all of the pilgrim routes, recommending them instead to congregate at two places in the vicinity of al-Mudhaykhirah.² Desirous of extending sovereignty over Ṣan'ā', in 294/906–7 the same *dā'ī* entered this city and gave orders for its populace to be massacred and a number of its mosques and houses to be destroyed.³

The level of security observed along the course of the Ṣan'ā'–Ṣa'dah route had declined to a state of chaos by the last quarter of the 3rd/9th century with the result that Yemeni travellers were subject to pillaging by the tribal groups settling within the vast plain of al-'Amashiyyah which extends from Ḥarf Sufyān in the south to Ṣa'dah in the north. If we consider that the territory of Sufyān of Bakīl formed part of this area,⁴ it would seem plausible that its tribal members participated in such raids. Peace was largely restored to this turbulent tribal area by the Zaydī Imam Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn, who had the culprits seized (in 288/901) near the rest-station of al-Ḥā'irah.⁵

Between the 6th/12th and 7th/13th century, the B. Shu'bah tribe, with its territories situated to the south of Mecca, relentlessly attacked the Yemeni pilgrims. These tribesmen continually increased the scale of their brigandage and in the

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1. For information about his activities in the Yemen, see al-Mad'aj, "al-Faḍl", *al-'Uṣūr*, III, 83 f.; Geddes, "Apostasy", *Arabian and Islamic Studies*, 80–85.
 2. See e.g. Ibn Samurah, *Ṭabaqāt*, 75–77; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 240; al-Ahdal, *al-Zaman*, 159.
 3. Yahyā, *Ghāyah*, I, 144, 199.
 4. Al-Akwa', *al-Yamāniyyah*, 164.
 5. Al-'Abbāsī, *Sīrah*, 202 f.; Yahyā, *Ghāyah*, I, 176 f.

pilgrimage season of 579/1183 they even commanded a great deal of influence within the Holy City of Mecca. Here their activity was not confined to confiscating the pilgrims' possessions, but also included cutting off the water supplies of Mecca and disturbing the pilgrims in the course of performing their religious rituals.¹

Not even their arrival at the Holy City of Mecca guaranteed the safety of the Yemeni pilgrims, for in 606/1210 the governor of this city, Qatādah b. Idrīs, pursued a policy of plundering and looting, encouraged, we are led to believe, by the widespread turmoil in the Yemen under the rule of al-Nāṣir Ayyūb b. Ṭughtakīn (609–611/1212–1214),² and in 793/1390–1 vicious attacks were mounted on Yemeni pilgrims heading to the area of Munā in Mecca.³

In his entries for the years 930/1523–4 and 931/1524–5, al-Nahrawālī⁴ refers to the spiraling strife and lawlessness throughout the Yemen, evinced in the transfer of authority over the pilgrim routes into the hands of the rebellious tribes. We learn further that, whilst access to certain of the routes was prohibited, use was only made of others in instances where a military escort was present. It is regrettable that no names of tribes or routes are mentioned in this source.

According to the sources at our disposal, from the beginning of the 11th/17th century and onwards, the central part of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route was rendered impassable owing to the frequent raids on the

1. Ibn Jubayr, *Riḥlah*, 102, 137, 150; Ibn al-Mujāwir, *al-Mustabṣir*, I, 52 f.

2. Cf. Mortel, *al-Aḥwāl*, 38.

3. Al-Jazīrī, *Durar*, I, 678.

4. *Al-Barq*, 36, 40.

travellers launched by members of the Khath'am tribe and its sub-tribes.¹

In the last quarter of the same century, relentless forays on the Yemeni pilgrims were launched by tribes operating on the fringes of the 'Amashiyyah area, their territories including the areas of Jabal Baraṭ and Ghurbān.² The successive Zaydī imams holding sway in Ṣan'ā' attempted to preserve a degree of security along the stretch of the route between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah by aligning themselves with the leaders of the Sufyān tribe.³

During this same period, the Ḥaḍramawt-Mecca pilgrim route came under attack from marauding tribes and in particular from members of the Ma'dḍah tribe,⁴ whilst the Yemeni coastal route was patrolled by members of the B. Ḥarām.⁵

Jahāf records a particularly callous assault carried out by the Khath'am tribe in 1195/1780 in which fifty Yemeni pilgrims were slaughtered and a further two hundred stripped of all their possessions.⁶

1. Al-Wazīr, *al-Ḥalwā*, 53.

2. For their identification, see al-Maqḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 69 f., 480 f.

3. Al-Wazīr, *al-Ḥalwā*, 179, 223, 230, 236, 242, 244, 246, 288, 320, 355.

4. For its identification, see al-Maqḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 611.

5. Al-Wazīr, *al-Ḥalwā*, 185 f.; 202, 205, 225.

6. Abū Dāhish, "al-Ḥajj", *al-Dārah*, II, 15.

CHAPTER IV

FIELD STUDY OF THE YEMENI HIGHLAND PILGRIM ROUTE, YEMENI SECTION, ŞAN'Ā' – ŞA'DAH

Part One: Archaeological Sites visited by the Writer

Part Two: Gazetteer

Introduction

In the summer of 1989, the present writer was fortunate in being able to conduct an archaeological and geographical survey in the Yemen Arab Republic (Y.A.R.). Because of the shortage of time, our intention was to focus mainly on the area lying between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah. The total distance between these two positions is approximately 244 km., situated between latitudes 15° 25' – 16° 55' and longitudes 43° 50' – 44° 10' E (see map 4).

The principal purpose of this field-work in the Y.A.R. was to establish the course of the old pilgrim road and to identify as many as possible of its standing stations. A second purpose which, it was hoped, could be fulfilled, was to build up a coherent framework for the route with its northern extension within the territory of Saudi Arabia.

This section is devoted entirely to the Yemeni part of the ancient pilgrim road and it is divided into two parts. The first part deals with sites that have material remains and monuments associated with the pilgrim road. The second part discusses some of the identified place names. In both cases, the geographical order from south to north is followed.

Compared with any printed works, the *Urjūzah* of al-Radā'ī is the most reliable text in studying the Yemeni upland route in general. As will be realized throughout this study, whether in dealing with the Yemeni or the Saudi section ,

the *Urjūzah* was the writer's constant vade-mecum. Bearing in mind the fact that some of the sites mentioned in the *Urjūzah* have not yet been located, it is hoped nevertheless that this preliminary survey can be regarded as the first step towards much deeper and more concentrated research.

Finally, tables based mainly on the *Urjūzah* of al-Radā'ī (see tab. 1) and the texts of the early Arab geographers (see tab. 2) are provided in this study. These tables show the main pilgrim stations, stopping-places, and also the topographical features of this Yemeni section of the highland pilgrim route.

Part One: Archaeological Sites visited by the Writer

1. *Birkat Ḥawwān / Khawwān; al-Azraqayn* (see pl. LA, fig. 1, map 5)

This name, written with *khā'*, is mentioned in the *Urjūzah*¹ as a palace (*qaṣr*) or fort. According to al-Hamdānī's interpretation, Khawwān is a black mountain beside the mountain of A'rām. The same name appears with *ḥā'* in Müller's edition.² Al-Akwa', in his edition of al-Hamdānī's work,³ says that Qaṣr Khawwān is situated between al-Ma'mar and al-Ḥawārī to the east of the old pilgrim road (*maḥajjah*). He adds that there is a very nicely designed water-tank (*mā'jil*) near to this ruined *qaṣr*. In dealing with the celebrated palaces of the Yemen, al-Hamdānī⁴ mentions Qaṣr Khawwān and places it in Ruḥābah, while in al-Karmalī's edition,⁵ the name appears in full as Qaṣr Khawwān b. Ḥārithah. In

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 409; *Urj*, 20, l.5.

2. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 231.

3. *Ṣifah*, 409, n.2.

4. *Al-Iktīl*, ed. al-Akwa', VIII, 163, n.30.

5. *Al-Iktīl*, 114, n.4.

either case, there is clearly either a misreading, misprint, or some differences in the MSS. Al-Ḥarbī¹ does not mention the name of the station. Instead, he mentions the name *al-Ruḥābah* which is, in fact, a very wide *mikhḷāf* of Hamdān where the *birkah* is located. He notes two unnamed cisterns between Ruḥābah and Raydah. Consequently, one of these water-tanks might be considered as the *birkah* of Khawwān or al-Azraqayn as it is known locally. Although Wilson² does not provide enough substantiation for his argument, he proposes that Ḥwān al-Bawn, which it has not yet been possible to locate, is the Ḥawwān of the *Urjūzah*. Al-Rāshid³ includes this *birkah* in his classification of the rectangular basins in South Arabia. He records that it is divided into two parts, whereas it is in fact divided into three.

The Birkah

The station consists of one water-tank and a restored building. This building, which appears to be a caravanserai, khan or *qaṣr*, adjoins the *birkah* on its southern side. Unfortunately, we were unable to enter it or at least to take the measurements of its external walls. According to verbal information received from the local people, however, the *birkah* has two names, either Khawwān or al-Azraqayn. The site is located approximately 15 km. to the north of Ṣan'ā'. Jabal Khawwān borders it on the north-west side. It is a volcanic mountain and forms a continuous extension of the huge mountainous range of A'rām. The entire site is located on the north-eastern foot of Jabal Khawwān, from which flash floods of rain-water can be collected by the *birkah*. Nowadays, the modern

1. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.

2. *Mapping*, 249f.

3. *Darb Zubaydah*, 205. Cf. Rathjens and Wissman, *Vorislamische Altertümer*, 149, photo. 96.

motorway between Şan'ā' and Şa'dah via 'Amrān passes just to the eastern limit of the *birkah*, a development which may threaten its survival. It was empty of water, but its cemented ground was covered by a thin layer of alluvial deposit and greenish moss. This is possibly an indication of its use during the rainy seasons. There is no sign of archaeological remains in the immediate surroundings.

In general, the cistern is well executed and in a relatively good condition. It is rectangular in shape and measures about 19 x 17 m. and nearly 3.8 m. in depth from ground level. Its outer wall, ranging from 0.7 m. to 0.6 m. in thickness, is built of locally obtained unshaped volcanic stones. Its internal façade is coated with a mixture of materials of weathered plaster and cement. The *birkah* as a whole is divided into three unequal parallel basins, all of which are extended from the east to the west. These basins have been separated from each other by two short walls. Their measurements are approximately 0.4 m. to 0.5 m. in height and c. 0.5 m. in thickness. In order to strengthen these barriers, a buttress has been constructed at the end of each wall.

The first basin is the northern part of the *birkah*. It measures c. 4 m. in width. It has a flight of four steps which is located on the western edge of the basin. The second trough is the central one. It is the largest and measures c. 10 m. in width. It has two sluice gates. One staircase of about six steps is located on the south-eastern corner and seems to be the main entrance to the *birkah*. The other flight of about four steps is sited on the north-western angle. The third basin, which forms the southern section of the *birkah*, measures c. 4 m. in width. It is identical with the northern basin, except that it has no staircase and its south-western corner is occupied by a completely demolished inlet. The remains of this inlet lead us to believe that the southern part of the cistern is likely to have

served as a filtering-container (*miṣfār*) through which the filtered surplus of rain-water would have seeped into the other sections of the *birkah*.

2. *Birkat al-Ḥusayn, Raydah* (see pl. I.B, fig. 2, map 6)

Generally speaking, the town of Raydah and its vicinity have always played a prominent part in the history of the Yemen. The area has experienced the two eras of pre- and post-Islam.¹

Raydah acted as a pilgrim station on the Yemeni highland route. It is noted in the writings of some of the Arab geographers. Al-Ḥarbī² refers to it without much elaboration and al-Radā'ī³ made a halt at its *manhal* during his trek to Mecca. According to al-Hamdānī's explanation,⁴ the *manhal* at which al-Radā'ī halted was the famous cistern of Raydah. Al-Radā'ī⁵ passed once again through Raydah on his return from Mecca. Qudāmāh⁶ includes it among the places that are located on the pilgrim track between al-Ṭā'if and the Yemen. He provides us with a picturesque account of the settlement, saying, 'Raydah is a large village with a *minbar*. It has many gardens and water-springs. It is very well populated and sited in the course of a wadi.' Al-Hamdānī⁷ puts the distance between Ṣan'ā' and Raydah at 20 miles, while al-Maqdisī⁸ assesses the interval as one *marḥalah*. Meanwhile, the latter distorts its name by attaching the definite article, thus al-Raydah, which is an uncommon addition. Al-Idrīsī⁹ includes it in his list of the

1. Cf. e.g. Smith, *Simt*, II, 194; Wilson, *Mapping*, 290f.; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, II, 374.

2. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.

3. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 410; *Urj*, 21, 1.3f.

4. *Ṣifah*, 410.

5. *Ṣifah*, 457; *Urj*, 123, 1.3.

6. *Al-Kharāj*, 189f.

7. *Ṣifah*, 338.

8. *Al-Taqāsīm*, 111.

9. *Al-Mushṭaq*, 147; Shawkat, "Diyār al-'Arab", *JIA*, XXI, 60.

pilgrimage stations and he describes it as 'a small town which looks like a fort. It is,' he says, 'surrounded by many gardens and natural running springs. Its inhabitants have livestock and cattle. It has the disused well and the lofty pavilion which are both mentioned in the books [*sic*].'¹

The Birkah

Unfortunately, the giant water-tank of Raydah has been completely destroyed. Its ancient site, which has been razed to the ground, is located below the south-eastern spur of the mountain of Talfum (or Tulfum).²

It is likely that the destruction of the *birkah* occurred recently, since some of the local inhabitants can still remember it. According to al-Hamdānī's account, the *birkah* of Raydah was the biggest cistern in the whole of the Yemen. Its circumference is vividly illustrated by his statement that 'one-thousand camels are able to circle around it, in order to drink simultaneously directly from it.'³

Below the north-western spur of the above-mentioned mountain, there is a nicely executed circular *birkah*. It is known by the local people as Birkat al-Ḥusayn. It must have been named after al-Ḥusayn b. al-Qāsim who was killed by the Āl al-Ḍaḥḥāk of Hamdān in 404/1013, after he had claimed to be the

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1. Alluding to Qur'ān XXII: 45. The same idea is presented by al-Hamdānī (*al-Iklīl*, VIII, 16) and Yāqūt (*al-Buldān*, III, 112).
 2. For detailed information about this landmark, cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 96f., n.3; *idem*, *al-Iklīl*, ed. al-Akwa', II, 112; VIII, 67f., 82f., 165, n.46; 166, 171; *ibid.*, ed. al-Karmalī, 123; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 43; Wilson, *Mapping*, 199.
 3. *Ṣifāh*, 410.

promised Zaydī messiah (*mahdī*).¹ His tomb is built inside a fine mausoleum which is located at the south-western edge of the *birkah*.

The *birkah* of al-Ḥusayn is situated c. 1.5 km. to the north-west of Raydah. Because of its convenient location on the way to Naqīl ‘Ajīb and its proximity, it might have replaced the function of the disappeared *birkah* of Raydah. It is in perfect condition, but its sluice-gate is filled up with sand. During our visit, it had some water in its bottom. It is c. 12 m. in diameter and c. 1.5 m. in depth from ground level. Shaped blocks of limestone with cement as mortar have been used in its construction. It has completely stepped sides, lined with about six to seven layers of limestones. A flight of six steps is constructed on its north-east side. These steps descend gradually to the floor. The gate of the staircase is attached by a small oblong trough which measures c. 2 x 1 m. This basin appears to have served either as a filtering container or as a drinking cistern for animals, or indeed for both. There is no trace of coating material on its internal wall. The perpendicular method of building has been practised in its structure. In other words, the vertical joints between the masonry are run in alternative straight lines.

3. *Birkat Athāfit, al-Maṣna‘ah* (see pl. II.A-B, fig. 3, map 7)

The ancient town of Athāfit is repeatedly referred to by the early Arab geographers and historians. It was a principal station on the pilgrim road north of

1. Cf. al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū‘*, II, 375f., n.2. The editor of the *Majmū‘* says that the area where the tomb has been erected is called Dhū ‘Urār; cf. Wilson, *Mapping*, 363.

Ṣan‘ā’ and, in addition, it was a fortified position figuring in Yemeni local history.¹

Its name appears in various spellings, such as Athāfit, Athāfah, Uthāfit, and Thāfit, whilst its archaic name, according to al-Hamdānī² and Yāqūt,³ was Durnā. Ibn Khurdādhbah⁴ states that it is a city with vineyards, vegetation, and springs. Both al-Ḥarbi⁵ and al-Maḡdisī⁶ record it but without giving any details. Qudāmah says that ‘it is a very large village with a *minbar*...and its market takes place on Friday. It has plantations and vineyards.’⁷ He adds that its drinking water comes from a *birkah*. Al-Idrīsī confirms the magnitude of the cistern, speaking of ‘a large *birkah* within which there are water-springs.’⁸

It appears that the majority of early Arab geographers were content only to state its name as a stopping-place, without elaboration. According to al-Hamdānī,⁹ the distance between Raydah and Athāfit is 16 miles. He seems to be the sole geographer who mentions the distance in miles, whereas Yāqūt¹⁰ assesses the distance as two days’ march from Ṣan‘ā’. Al-Radā‘ī¹¹ refers to it as a post-stage (*barīd*) and additionally portrays it with vineyards in full bloom.

The location of Athāfit¹² is approximately 12 km. to the south-east of

1. Cf. al-‘Abbāsī, *Sīrah*, 93–95, & *passim*.

2. *Ṣifāh*, 97.

3. *Al-Buldān*, I, 89.

4. *Al-Masālik*, 136.

5. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.

6. *Al-Taḡāsīm*, 111.

7. *Al-Kharāj*, 189.

8. *Al-Mushū‘āq*, 147; Shawkat, “Diyār al-‘Arab”, *JIA*, XXI, 60.

9. *Ṣifāh*, 339.

10. *Al-Buldān*, I, 89.

11. *Ṣifāh*, 411; *Urj*, 25, 12.

12. For more detailed information regarding its history and its decline, cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 97, n.2, 159, 246, 278, 371; al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh*, 192, 241, 245, 260f.; Yahyā, *Ghāyah*, I, 170f., 173–5, 204, 207, & *passim*; Smith, *Simt*, II, 136, 180; Wilson, *Mapping*, 171, 453;

al-Şan'ānī, which is a small village sited just off the modern motorway between Şan'a' and Şa'dah. However, Athāfit, including its cistern, can be reached by taking a rough, dusty track commencing at the aforementioned hamlet. The entire archaeological site is widely characterized, namely amongst the inhabitants of the area, by al-Maşna'ah.¹ A ravine called Dammāj, named after a village which bears the same name, borders Athāfit on the north-east. This wadi stretches towards the north-west till it joins the main broad wadi of al-Mājilayn. At the present time, both of these wadis, including the remains of the site and its water-tank, belong, in tribal understanding, to the B. Qays of Ḥāshid.² In a south-easterly direction, it is bounded by the mountain of Samā', whilst on the south-west it is bordered by the mountain of Kayd.³

The *birkah* of Athāfit, or al-Maşna'ah as it is known locally, is constructed on the north-western limit of the ruined settlement. It was half-full of drinkable water when inspected. Despite its devastated condition, it is still in use and it seems likely that, from the restoration point of view, it is intact. The town is in a state of complete ruin and it is no wonder, therefore, that the *birkah* is in this very poor state. Due to this fact, it does not actually betoken any obvious geometrical structure. However, it is roughly rectangular in shape and measures c. 60 x 40 m. horizontally and c. 6 m. in depth from ground level. It has two inlets, the first of which is cut on its south-eastern corner. It is c. 12 m. in length, 3 m. in width, and 3 m. deep. Its ground and vertical walls are covered with

al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, I, 56f.; al-Akwa', *al-Yamāniyyah*, 17, n.2; al-Maqḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 13.

1. It is interesting to note that this descriptive name, al-Maşna'ah, is very common. The Sirrayn site, on the southern coastal route of the Red Sea in Saudi Arabia, is called by the same name. For the meaning of this word, cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 136, s.v. "al-Maşānī"; cf. Beeston *et al.*, *Dictionary*, 143..
2. Cf. al-Hamdānī (*Şifah*, 246), who relates it to al-Kibāriyyūn of al-Sabī'.
3. This name corresponds with the name of a battle which took place near Athāfit in 285/898. Cf. al-'Abbāsī, *Sīrah*, 102; Wilson, *Mapping*, 422.

various flagstones in different sizes and shapes. Its mouth seems to have been slightly directed into the adjoining wadi for receiving flood-water. The second passage is built on the south-west corner of the *birkah*. It is completely covered by stones of local provenance. It has dual inlets and two openings. It measures c. 7 m. in width and 8 m. in length. The *birkah* has no staircase, nor does it have any buttress. Generally, it is built using unshaped granite stones obtained locally. Cement is used as a binding material. There are no traces of coating plaster on its internal walls. The ground immediately around it is unlevelled and seems to have been firmly compacted as a result of frequent use. Masses of stones are scattered around.

4. *Birkat al-Maşra'* (see pl. III.A, map 8)

Al-Maşra' is considered to be the very next stopping-place for the pilgrim caravan after leaving Athāfit. It is only attested in the *Urjūzah*.¹ There is another place called Bāb al-Maşra', where seventy-two men of the Abnā' were killed, as is testified by al-Hamdānī.²

Though the distance between Athāfit and al-Maşra' is not counted in tens of miles, the harsh terrain makes the journey quite difficult. In order to approach it from Athāfit, it is necessary to make multiple turns and wadi-crossings. Presumably, the same conditions might be applied if one started the journey by following the rugged track from the region of Khaywān. At any rate, al-Maşra' is situated c. 8 km. as the crow flies to the north of Athāfit. The name is still kept by a modern hamlet in Bilād Ḥāshid. The village consists of about ten one-storey

1. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Şifah*, 411; *Urj*, 25, l.4.

2. *Al-Iklīl*, ed. al-Karmalī, VIII, 123; X, 66.

houses. The area as a whole, including the village of al-Maşra' and its pond, belongs to the tribe of Khiyār of the B. Şuraym. The two tribes of Qur'ān and Dhū 'Anāsh border it on the north, while the tribe of Qays bounds it on the south. The mountain of al-Maşra' marks the eastern border, whereas the western boundary is demarcated by the mountain and village of al-Ḥablah.

The site itself is situated c. 800 m. to the north-west of the village of al-Maşra'. It consists of a natural pool and a khan. The station is set on a cliff, whilst the pool is at its foot. It seems reasonably certain that this natural pond is permanently full of water. It is roughly circular in shape and measures c. 20 m. in diameter and c. 2.5 m. in depth. It was half-full of rain-water and in use at the time of our visit to the site. The position of this perennial basin enables it, especially in the rainy seasons, to receive a good quantity of water.

Here and for the first time on our journey, we could discern an intact part of the pilgrim road. It is very clear and marked by two short walls or shoulders. It passes the southern side of the village of al-Maşra', heading in a north-westerly direction to the pass of al-Faq' or al-Ḥamūdī, via the pond of al-Maşra', Kadādah, and al-Maqīq. The path itself is not paved in this area, but it is relatively well levelled and cleared.¹

5. *Naqīl al-Faq', al-Ḥamūdī* (see pl. III.B, map 4)

In geographical order, the exact position of the pass of al-Faq' is probably identical with 'Aqabat al-Ḥamūdī. Accordingly, it should not be confused with the

1. For more information relating to al-Maşra', cf. al-Hamdānī, *Şifah*, 159, n.5; Smith, *Simt*, II, 143; Wilson, *Mapping*, 452; al-Maḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 600.

defile and village of Ḥamūdah of the *Ghāyah*¹ and the *Sīrat*.²

The pass of al-Faq' is mentioned twice in the *Urjūzah*.³ Al-Ḥarbī⁴ records it immediately after Athāfit. Al-Hamdānī,⁵ on the other hand, identifies it as a *naqīl*. In addition, he mentions it on two different occasions. Firstly, he defines it as Wādī'ī; and secondly, he makes it, in conjunction with other places, a contributory source of the rain-water of Wadi Khabash.⁶

This col is situated c. 2 km. to the north-west of Birkat Kadādah. Its demarcations are roughly as follows. It is bordered on the north by Ḥūth, whilst on the south it is bounded by the region of al-Maqīq. The Khaywān area limits it on the east, whereas on the west it is confined by the mountain of 'Ujmīr and the village of Bayt al-Aqra' or al-Qur'ān. There are few sections surviving of the pilgrim road which can be seen below the pass. These paved parts are located in Wadi al-'Aqabah. They are perfectly levelled and built with locally obtained blocks of granite. They do not extend over any great distance, but are broken up into small unequal portions. Their widths average between 3.5 m. and 5 m. The rest of its extension, where it leads to the pass of al-Ḥuwāriyān via the area of al-Mismān, Qarn al-Aḥrash, the passage of al-Mijbābah, and Wadi al-'Awsaj, and ultimately reaching Birkat al-Bayḍa', is completely destroyed. According to the local people, its demolition took place during the intervention of the Egyptian troops in the 1960s.

1. I, 171f., 211, 238, 368.

2. 96f. Cf. Wilson, *Mapping*, 243, 246. For the description and identification of the defile and village of Ḥamūdah, cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 244, 246, n.1; Wilson, "Early Sites", *Arabian Studies*, IV, 72.

3. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 411; *Urj.*, 25, 1.5 (456); 123, 1.1.

4. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.

5. *Ṣifāh*, 159, 246, 411f.

6. For more information, see Wilson, *Mapping*, 395; al-Maḥfāfī, *Mu'jam*, 496.

There is a khan in good condition. It is perhaps named after the pass of al-Ḥamūdī, or *vice versa*. It is well built and is erected on level ground c. 35 m. away from the north-eastern bank of Wadi al-ʿAqabah.

6. *Birkat Būbān* (see pl. IV.A, fig. 4, map 9)

The name Būbān is attested by al-Radāʿī.¹ Al-Ḥamdānī² states that it is a tributary wadi of the main Wadi Khabash. The poet ʿAlqamah b. Zayd, during his march from Ṣaʿdah to Ṣanʿāʾ, confirmed its location on the ancient road.³ According to the contemporary Yemeni geographers,⁴ the name is held by a small village to the north of Khaywān.

The *birkah* of Būbān is situated c. 4.5 km. to the north of Khaywān and c. 90 km. to the south of Ṣaʿdah. It is located in Wadi Būbān. Oddly, it is known under three different names by the local people, viz Būbān, al-Jabal al-Aswad, and al-Shaykhayn. The *birkah* is entirely cemented and well built. It is in perfect condition and is circular in shape, measuring c. 10 m. in diameter and c. 1.5 m. in depth from ground level. Two similar sluice-ways are provided on its eastern and north-western rims. They are almost opposite to each other. Their average measurements are c. 0.4–0.55 m. in width and c. 0.75–0.85 m. in length. The northern internal wall of the *birkah* has been provided with two diagonal rows of individual steps. These steps are located in the centre of the wall and each has four steps. The two rows of stones are skilfully arranged. They descend gradually

1. Al-Ḥamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 412; *Urj.*, 26, l.5.

2. *Ṣifah*, 159.

3. *Ṣifah*, 386, l.22.

4. Al-Ḥajarī, *Majmūʿ*, I, 129; al-Akwaʿ in *Ṣifah*, 159, n.3. Cf. Wilson, *Mapping*, 193.

into the bottom of the *birkah*. This type of flight of stones is a new technique which might have been used to replace the function of the ordinary staircase. To the north-east of its edge, traces of a diversion wall are to be seen. This wall might have been built in order to divert the flood-water into the two inlets. There were no signs of any other constructions near the *birkah*. It contained no water when we examined it. It is surrounded by a few scattered acacias (*ṭalh*) and the wadi also in which the *birkah* is built is rich in *ṭalh* trees. The modern motorway between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah passes along its western boundary.

7. *Ma'jil 'Iyān, al-Majza'ah* (see pl. IV.B, map 10)

'Iyān is the name both of a wadi and of a ruined village, the latter destroyed in 1026/1617, in the territory of Āl Sufyān. Another wadi, in the area of Jabal Milhān, is also called by the same name. The hamlet in question is mentioned frequently in the internal turmoil of Yemeni history. 'Ayyān, however, is a small village to the west of Naqīl Ḥajjah.¹

Wadi 'Iyān is referred to only in the *Urjūzah*.² It has a rain-water pond known locally as al-Majza'ah. It is located c. 10 km. to the north of Birkat Būbān and c. 6 km. to the south of Mājil al-Ḥirah in Wadi Barkān. It is situated in a depression in the territory known as Bilād (or Ḥarf) Āl Sufyān. It is roughly circular in shape, measuring c. 35 m. in diameter and c. 1.5 m. in depth from ground level. It was full of rain-water when we inspected it. According to our

1. For full details regarding both names, see al-'Abbāsī, *Sīrah*, 127; al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 110–112, n.3; 118, 123, 145, n.1; 160f., n.4; 241, 248; Yahyā, *Ghāyah*, I, 228–231, 233f., 242, 268, 301, 313, 470; II, 751, 753, 808; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 171; al-Akwa', *al-Yamāniyyah*, 202, n.1; Wilson, *Mapping*, 385; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, III, 618; al-Maḥfāfī, *Mu'jam*, 475.

2. *Al-Hamdānī*, *Ṣifah*, 412; *Urj*, 27, l.5.

informant, it is still in use. Some *ṭalḥ* trees surround it. There are no notable signs of construction in its proximity. The modern motorway between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah passes c. 300 m. to the east of it.

8. *Mājil Barkān, al-Ḥā'irah / al-Ḥīrah* (see pl. V.A, map 10)

Wadi Barkān is referred to only in the *Urjūzah*.¹ *Mājil al-Ḥīrah*, as it is known by the local people, is situated c. 6 km. to the north of *Mājil al-Majza'ah* in Wadi 'Iyān, in a depression of Wadi Barkān, c. 200 m. to the west of the modern highway from Ṣan'ā' to Ṣa'dah.

Dealing with the events of 288/900, the historian al-'Abbāsī² documents the journey of al-Hādī from Ṣa'dah towards Khaywān, naming the places through which al-Hādī passed. Thus, in order, he refers to al-'Amashiyyah and al-Ḥā'irah, at the latter of which al-Hādī arrested some brigands who had attacked the pilgrim caravans. However, the name in question might have been recently changed.

The pond is circular in shape, measuring c. 35 m. in diameter, with a depth of c. 1.5 m. from ground level. It is in a poor state and there are no visible features of its construction, such as walls, staircases, or buttresses, which can be mentioned. Heaps of local unshaped rubble encircle it and some loose blocks of granite are scattered inside it. These masses of debris must have been moved away from its structure. It was full of rain-water when we examined it. There is no trace of construction in its neighbourhood.

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1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 412; *Urj.*, 27, 1.5. For more information about this wadi, cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 161, n.4; 241. For other occurrences of identical names, see al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, I, 116f.; al-Maqḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 76.
 2. *Sīrah*, 202f. Cf. Yaḥyā, *Ghāyah*, I, 176f.

9. *Birkat al-Gharānīq / al-Miṣḥāt* (see pl. V.B, fig. 5, map 11)

The *birkah* is known as Birkat al-Miṣḥāt by the local people. Hence its location is on the southern fringe of the 'Amashiyyah desert. It is probably identical with al-Gharānīq of the *Urjūzah*.¹ Al-Hamdānī identifies the name of al-Gharānīq as a watering-place somewhere in al-'Amashiyyah.

The water-tank is located c. 10 km. to the north of Wadi Sanām, c. 20 km. to the south of al-'Uqlah. The modern highway from Ṣan'ā' to Ṣa'dah passes c. 800 m. to its west. It is square in plan, measuring c. 30 x 30 m. and 3 m. in depth. Its exterior wall rises c. 0.8 m. above ground level. It is built using well-cut volcanic stones. Cement is used in coating the inside wall and as a binding material. It has three stepped sides and has been provided with two flights of stairs. One staircase, with four steps descending into the bottom of the *birkah*, is located on the north-western corner. It measures c. 2 x 2 m. The width of each step ranges from 0.25 to 0.35 m. The entire staircase is set on the third interior rim. The second stairway is built in the north-eastern corner. It has been located in this position in order to serve both as a stairway and as a sluice-gate. It is in good condition and consists of six steps. It measures c. 2.5 x 2 m., whereas the measurements of its steps are rather similar to those of the first one. A small square settling tank, measuring c. 5 x 5 m. and c. 2 m. in depth, is annexed to the *birkah*. It is attached to the northern end of the western wall. It has an inlet passage, c. 1 m. in width, located in the north-western corner.

Generally speaking, the *birkah* is in perfect condition and skilfully built. It was half-full of rain-water at the time we inspected it. To the south of the

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 413; *Urj*, 28, l.3.

birkah, c. 200 m. away, a small inhabited khan has been erected. There is no other sign of construction around the *birkah*.

In the western edge of the northern wall of the *birkah*, a small Arabic graffito of two lines is incised into the façade of the second interior rim. Although the letters of the second half of the first line are damaged, the date is still intact. It is dated 1158/1745, which is perhaps the time at which the *birkah* was restored.

10. *Birkat al-A'yun, al-Uqlah* (see pl. VI.A, fig. 6, map 12)

The station of al-A'yun has been recorded by al-Ḥarbī,¹ but he gives no details. Al-Radā'ī² describes it as a place with abundant sweet water. According to al-Hamdānī, it is a natural spring (*ayn*) and a pass. He also states that the flow (*sayl*) of Wadi Abdhar passes into al-A'yun and thence to al-Uqlah.³ His identification of al-Uqlah,⁴ an area in which the station is situated, is a locality in a small pass, also called al-Khuṭwah. On the other hand, Ibn al-Mujāwir⁵ does not locate it on the old highway, but places it rather on the new road. He gives its name as al-Ayn and states its distance from al-Amashiyyah as 4 *farāsikh*, i.e. c. 12 miles. Moreover, he makes the gap between it and al-Khiyām 1 *farsakh*, i.e. c. 3 miles.

As has been indicated above, the station of al-A'yun is located within the

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1. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.
 2. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 414; *Urj*, 30, 1.2-4.
 3. *Ṣifah*, 160f., n.1.
 4. Cf. al-Maqḥafī (*Mu'jam*, 454), who numbers up to four places with the name al-Uqlah.
 5. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 202, 232. We should note that some of Ibn al-Mujāwir's distances, mainly when he relates them in terms of parasangs (*farāsikh*), are not necessarily actual arithmetic measurements, but are rather time measurements. In other words, one parasang (*farsakh*), i.e. c. 3 miles, on the ground means, according to his understanding, approximately a stretch of one hour's continuous march. Cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, I, 35f., s.v. "al-Farsakh"; Smith, "Ibn al-Mujāwir on Dhofar and Socotra", *PSAS*, xv, 82f.

area of al-‘Uqlah. It is situated c. 25 km. to the south of Şa’dah and c. 65 km. to the north of Khaywān. It is bordered on the north by al-Qubbah and the daily market (*sūq*) of Āl ‘Ammār, while the area of al-‘Uqlah and the mountain of Khaṭārīr border it on the south. The pass (*‘aqabah*) of al-‘Urkūb borders it on the east, whereas on the west it is demarcated by the mountains of B. ‘Uwayr.¹ The two regions of al-Qubbah and al-‘Uqlah, including the location of the station in between, are considered as an allotment (*‘uzlah*) of the Āl ‘Ammār. However, their local market is located on the motorway running north, c. 1.5 km. to the north of the place in question.

The station consists of a permanent water flow, *ghayl*, and a circular *birkah*, linked to each other by an aqueduct (*qanāh*), as well as a roofless stone-built mosque. Opposite the mountain range of B. ‘Uwayr, the entire site is located at the southern foot of a mountain. The motorway from Şan‘ā’ to Şa’dah runs only c. 50 m. to the south-east.

The *ghayl*

The *ghayl* is located in the extreme north of the site. It is dug in a stony area and is presently in a very bad state of preservation. Its shape is roughly square, measuring c. 4 x 4 m., with a depth of c. 1.8 m. It was dry when we inspected it. There is no trace of construction or renovation. Its position, being at the slope of a mountain and beside a plain, is sufficient to make one believe that the level of the subterranean water in this zone is high. To the south-west of the station, c. 400 m. away, a small modern cemented dam is built across the bed of a

1. This is a well-known topographical feature in that district, named after a local tribe. Cf. al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū’*, III, 618; al-Maqḥafī, *Mu’jam*, 474.

small gully.

The *qanāh*

The *qanāh* connects the cavity with the *birkah*. Its general condition is very poor. It starts from the southern edge of the *ghayl* and runs downwards into the *birkah*. Its total length, from its starting-point down to its lateral entry into the *birkah*, is c. 29 m. Its breadth averages between c. 0.8 and 1 m. The flow of water from the spring to the *birkah* by means of the *qanāh* probably relied on gravity. In other words, the upper section and a short extension of the middle part of the *qanāh* have a steeper slope than the extreme southern section. The result is that the slope is steeper at the southern (c. 1.8 m.) than at the northern end (c. 1.5 m.). The canal, as it now exists, is neither roofed, nor lined, nor renovated with any kind of material. It seems to have been an open aqueduct, since no visible signs of pipes or tubed masonry can be seen at the bottom or around it. It has a sloping end, as it enters the *birkah*.

The *birkah*

It was in this reservoir that water was collected and stored from the *ghayl* for consumption either by human beings or beasts, mainly during the rainless periods. At the present time, the *birkah* has a cracked rim and is in a generally very bad condition. It is approximately circular in plan, measuring c. 7 m. in diameter and c. 2 m. in depth from ground level. It is not lined or cemented and it has no facilities such as a clarifying basin or a staircase. Its north-eastern side is attached to the southern mouth of the *qanāh*.

The mosque

The mosque is situated *c.* 5.5 m. to the north-west of the *birkah*. It is in perfect condition and has been well built according to a rectangular plan, using local cut granite stones. An aggregate of small pebbles and mud has been used in filling the gaps. It is roofless. Internally, it measures 4.5 m. from east to west and 3 m. from south to north. The height and the thickness of its outer walls are respectively 1.2 m. and 0.4 m. It has a levelled sanctuary, but it is not concealed. A hollowed square *miḥrāb*, measuring *c.* 1 x 1 m., is set in the middle of the north-west wall. The entrance, *c.* 1 m. in breadth, is cut in the centre of the southern wall. There is no sign of *minbar* or minaret.

Part Two: Gazetteer

1. *Sha'ūb* / *Shu'ūb*

According to our geographical sources, this place name, *Sha'ūb* or *Shu'ūb*, applies to a wadi situated in the northern limit of the capital city of *Ṣan'a'*. Yāqūt¹ mentions a high castle in the Yemen by the name of *Sha'ūb* and he adds that *Sha'ūb* is a plantation area located in *Ṣan'a'*. Al-Akwa'² says that the northern gate of *Ṣan'a'* is named after this wadi. Nowadays, the whole northern district of *Ṣan'a'*, including this wadi and excluding al-Rawḍah, is called *Sha'ūb*.³

1. *Al-Buldān*, III, 350.

2. In *al-Hamdānī*, *Ṣifah*, 155, n.3.

3. For complete information in respect of this place name, cf. *ibid.*, 154f., 409; *Urj.*, 20, 1.2; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, III, 454; Smith, *Simt*, II, 303; al-Akwa', *al-Yamāniyyah*, 157, n.2. There are other places in the Yemen which bear the same name; cf. e.g. al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, III, 455; al-Maḥḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 358.

2. *Al-Ḥaṣabah / al-Ḥaṣabāt*

Al-Radā'ī¹ calls the place in question al-Ḥaṣabāt, the plural form of al-Ḥaṣabah. Wilson² deduces from al-Hamdānī's and al-Rāzī's texts that al-Ḥaṣabah must have been a small village.

The latest modern building developments are encroaching upon this area.³ It is still called by its ancient name and is regarded as an independent modern quarter of Ṣan'ā'. It is situated just off the road which leads to Ṣan'ā' airport.

3. *Al-Jirāf*

According to al-Ḥajarī,⁴ there appears to have been more than one place with this name. Thus, al-Jirāf (A) is a small village of the B. al-Ḥārith, which is located approximately one hour to the north of Ṣan'ā'. It was formerly the seat of the Imam Sharaf al-Dīn Yaḥyā between 911/1505 and 965/1557. Al-Jirāf (B) is a little town in Bilād Ḥāshid near to Khamir where there are many pre-Islamic monuments.

It is tempting to suggest that the Jirāf of the *Urjūzah*⁵ is (A), whereas (B) is likely to be Jurrafah and not al-Jirāf, as it appears in al-Ḥajarī's *Majmū'*.⁶

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 409; *Urj.*, 20, l.3.

2. *Mapping*, 235.

3. For full detailed information, cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 170, n.4; 409, n.1; al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh*, 44, 322, 625; Smith, *Simt*, II, 158f.; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, II, 262, n.2; al-Maḥḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 175.

4. *Majmū'*, I, 182f.

5. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 409; *Urj.*, 20, l.3.

6. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 411; *Urj.*, 24, l.1; Wilson, *Mapping*, 212. For more details, cf. Smith, *Simt*, II, 167; Wilson, *Mapping*, 209; al-Maḥḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 118.

4. (Al-)Ruḥābah

Yāqūt¹ attaches the definite article to Ruḥābah and says that it is a *mikhlāf* in the Yemen, whilst al-Akwa² comments upon Yāqūt's statement by saying that Ruḥābah is a ruined town near to al-Ma'mar of Hamdān and the *mikhlāf* was named after this settlement. Wilson³ suggests that Ruḥābah was named after Ruḥābah b. Wahb b. Kawkabān.

Although al-Hamdānī⁴ suggests a number of places throughout the Yemen by this name, he finally clarifies the issue by stating that Ruḥābah, without indicating whether it is a *mikhlāf* or a village, is the first part of the Ḥāshid territory.⁵ Al-Radā'ī⁶ gives us the plural form of Ruḥābah. Qudāmah,⁷ on the one hand, puts it as the first halting-place (*manzil*) for the pilgrims after leaving Ṣan'ā'. Meanwhile, he does not include it in the Ṭā'if-Yemen road. On the other hand, al-Ḥarbī⁸ places it as Qudāmah does, but the former furnishes us with the information that there are two water-tanks between Ruḥābah and Raydah, without however naming them.

Both Qudāmah and al-Ḥarbī have the name al-Ruḥābah with the definite article. Therefore, Yāqūt might have followed them in this error.

1. *Al-Buldān*, III, 32.

2. *Al-Yamāniyyah*, 117, n.5.

3. *Mapping*, 280. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *al-Iklīl*, II, 120f.

4. *Ṣifāh*, 150, n.1, 156, 221.

5. *Ṣifāh*, 242f., n.2. Cf. Smith, *Simt*, II, 195.

6. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 409; *Urj*, 20, 1.4.

7. *Al-Kharāj*, 191.

8. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.

5. 'Amad [Qaṣr?]

It would appear from the sources at our disposal that there is more than one place with the name 'Amad.¹

According to al-Hamdānī,² Qaṣr 'Amad was a post-stage (*barīd*). In spite of this, al-Akwa's identification of the 'Amad in the *Urjūzah* equates it with the village of 'Amad in 'Iyāl Surayḥ. We should, however, agree with Wilson's argument³ that it is quite puzzling to imagine that the pilgrim route should pass from 'Amad in the north-west, then turn back north-east to Dīn. However, Wilson identifies Qaṣr 'Amad of the *Urjūzah* with Qaṣr 'Amad Mayfa'ah, a place which has not yet been located.

To sum up, two observations may be made, as follows. (A) If we omit all the conjectural possibilities which have been proposed by modern scholars, the Qaṣr 'Amad of the *Urjūzah* would be somewhere before or near the mountain of Dīn, but not beyond it. If this possibility is accepted, some mistake in the order of the *Urjūzah* has occurred. (B) There is still doubt as to whether Qaṣr 'Amad was a village, a caravanserai, or a palace. The available Yemeni sources are rather ambiguous concerning this place name.

1. Cf. e.g. al-Hamdānī, *al-Iklīl*, ed. al-Karmalī, VIII, n.6 ("Amad Mayfa'ah"); *ibid.*, ed. al-Akwa', VIII, 163f., n.3 ("Qaṣr 'Amad"); al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 229f., n.6; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, III, 611.

2. *Ṣifāḥ*, 410; *Urj*, 21, l.1, n.3.

3. *Mapping*, 381.

6. Marmal / Dīn

This topographical feature has been identified with the mountain of Dīn.¹ Al-Radā'ī,² in his pilgrimage *Urjūzah*, states that it is the next place on the *maḥajjah* after 'Amad. Ibn al-Mujāwir³ places it on the high road between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah. He assesses the distance between the former and Marmal at three *farāsikh*, i.e. c. 9 miles. Furthermore, he defines it as the local capital of the district of al-Khashab.

It is believed that the fame of this mountain derives from the fact that when the Prophet Muḥammad ordered his messenger to go to the Yemen and build a mosque in Ṣan'ā', the Prophet recommended that the *mihrāb* of the mosque should be orientated straight ahead towards Jabal Dīn. Al-Hamdānī⁴ includes it among his long list of the famous mountains on the top of which a mosque is constructed.

Jabal Dīn, or Marmal, is a huge pyramidical volcanic mountain. It is situated approximately 30 km. to the north-west of Ṣan'ā' and its summit is now occupied by the Yemeni television transmitter. The region in which it is situated is known as the country of 'Iyāl Surayḥ. The local public market of Ḍurwān borders it on the south, while on the west it is bounded by the village of B. Maymūn. This hamlet is built on a sloping foothill area and inhabited by folk of the B. Surayḥ. A stony chamber-khan of one storey is located at the northern foot

1. Cf. al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh*, 80f., 500.

2. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 410; *Urj*, 21, 1.1, n.3.

3. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 202.

4. *Ṣifāh*, 265-7.

of Dīn.¹

7. *A'rām al-Bawn*

Since this fertile plain of Qā' al-Bawn is well known, there is obviously no necessity to reiterate what has been stated by geographers.²

Suffice it to say that at the present time, the northern part of the Bawn, where the village of Raydah is located, is called the upper Bawn, whilst the southern part, where 'Amrān is situated, is named the lower Bawn. The whole basin of the plain is densely covered by numerous plantations. Large numbers of recently dug wells are to be seen here and there. Although there are no visible signs of ancient constructions associated with the pilgrim route in the course of the plain, it is clear that the old pilgrim track must have run along its bed towards Raydah. This possibility is supported, firstly, by the mention of the vanished village of A'rām,³ and, secondly, by the existence of a khan, which is sited on the western bank of the plain. Thus, A'rām al-Bawn of the *Urjūzah*, a halting-place on the pilgrim road, should be located somewhere to the south of Raydah.

8. *Naqīl Ghūlat 'Ajīb* (see pl. VI.B)

Al-Hamdānī⁴ informs us that the word *ghūl* denotes 'deepness'. Thus

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1. For further details, see Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 465, (*mikhlāf*); Ibn Samurah, *Tabaqāt*, 310 (*jabal*); Smith, *Simt*, II, 149; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, III, 555 (*jabal*); Wilson, *Mapping*, 444f., 342; al-Akwa', *al-Yamāniyyah*, 176, n.4 ('ruined village'); al-Maqḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 399 ('ruined village').
 2. See e.g. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 96, 156, n.7; 243, n.3; 244, 278, 299; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, I, 511f. ('a city'); Smith, *Simt*, II, 139 ('a town and an area'), map I; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, I, 130; Wilson, *Mapping*, 194f. ('a plain'); al-Akwa', *al-Yamāniyyah*, 44, n.2 ('a wide plain').
 3. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 410; *Urj.*, 21, 1.2; Wilson, *Mapping*, 177.
 4. *Ṣifah*, 387, 410.

ghūlah is a very deep gully situated at the foot of Naqīl ‘Ajīb. The writer of the *Urjūzah*¹ passed through it on his two journeys to and from Mecca. He also describes this pass as a post-stage. It is worth remarking that some traces of the old track can be discerned at the southern foot of the mountain of al-Ghūlah. According to Ibn al-Mujāwir,² in his description of the ancient road between Ṣan‘ā’ and Ṣa’dah, As‘ad al-Kāmīl was the person who eased the natural difficulties of the pass by constructing a stepped path. Ibn al-Mujāwir, moreover, makes the distance from Ṣan‘ā’ to the top of the pass 9 *farāsikh*, i.e. c. 27 miles.

As I was informed, the whole mountain, including its pass, which is situated at the northern end of al-Bawn and through which the modern road between Ṣan‘ā’ and Ṣa’dah passes, is now called Ghūlat ‘Ajīb.³ Our informant had no knowledge of a village near this landmark which bears the name of ‘Ajīb.

9. *Dhū Qīn*

Dhū Qīn, a place belonging to Ḥāshid and Khawlān, is situated somewhere between al-Khārif and Wādī‘ah. It used to be the seat of power of a Hamdānī king who built for himself a palace there and named it after the place. Al-Akwa’ informs us that Dhū Qīn is now a deserted site, except its reservoir. He

1. *Ṣifāh*, 410; *Urj.*, 22, 1.2–5 (411); 23, 1.1–4 (456); 123, 1.2.

2. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 202f. Cf. Smith, *Simṭ*, II, 131.

3. For full details, see Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 88 (“Ajīb is a place”); Yaḥyā, *Ghāyah*, I, 228, 232, 247, 338; II, 641; Smith, *Simṭ*, II, 131 (“Naqīl ‘Ajīb/‘Ujayb is a pass”); al-Akwa’, *al-Yamāniyyah*, 190, n.2. (“Ajīb is a village 75 km. to the north of Ṣan‘ā’”); al-Ḥajari, *Majmū’*, III, 581 (“Ajīb is a pass between al-Bawn and Zāhir Ḥāshid”; ‘Ghūlat ‘Ajīb is a village of ‘Iyāl Surayḥ’); Wilson, *Mapping*, 358 (“Ajīb is a village and mountain”); al-Maḥḥafī, *Mu’jam*, 486 (‘Ghūlat ‘Ajīb is a mountain in al-Bawn’).

locates it to the north of Hūth.¹ According to the editor of al-Harbī's work,² the place name in question is recorded by the original scribe as Dhū Fanan. Al-Harbī places it somewhere between Raydah and Khaywān.

10. *Al-Jabjab*

Clearly, there are many places bearing this name.³ The Jabjab of the *Urjūzah*⁴ is still known by its classical name. It is located approximately 800 m. to the north-east of al-Maşra' area and may be described as a deep bowl-shaped depression (*ghawr*). According to our informant, it is now called the Jabjab of al-Sabī' of Hāshid⁵ and is widely known for its Sunday market.

The point to be noted here is that al-Jabjab, according to the order of places in the *Urjūzah*, comes before al-Maşra', whereas the location of the former, as has been stated above, is to the north-east of the latter. Conjecturally, there is an explanation. The Maşra' area might have been known as al-Jabjab and the former name might just have been a name applied to the pool. With the passage of time, the name of the latter might have become applied only to the basin-hollow referred to above. Al-Jabjab⁶ must be included in the vicinity of al-Maşra'.

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1. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Şifah*, 246, n.4., 386, 411; *Urj.*, 24, l.1 (456); 123, l.2; *idem*, *al-Iklīl*, ed. al-Akwa', VIII, 231, n.213; *ibid.*, ed. al-Karmalī, VIII, 109.
 2. *Al-Manāsik*, 543, n.1. Cf. Wilson, *Mapping*, 414.
 3. Cf. e.g. al-Hamdānī, *Şifah*, 106, n.5; 213, n.2; 226; Smith, *Simt*, II, 164f.; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, I, 177, n.1.
 4. Al-Hamdānī, *Şifah*, 411; *Urj.*, 25, l.3.
 5. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Şifah*, 246, 412.
 6. Cf. Wilson, *Mapping*, 205.

11. *The Two Passes of al-Ḥuwāriyān*

The two defiles of al-Ḥuwāriyān have been mentioned only once by al-Radā'ī.¹ According to al-Hamdānī's commentary,² they are two small passes located between Wādī'ah, Bakīl, and Ahl Khaywān. Moreover, he includes them among the water sources of Wadi Khabash.

According to our observations, both are situated in the mountain of al-Ḥuwārī, as it is known by the local people. The name is used because of the natural formations of the two peaks of the mountain, from which slopes descend into Wadi Khaywān. At the present time, these landmarks are regarded tribally as indicating the local border between Khaywān and B. 'Anāsh. There are no notable archaeological remains in their vicinity, except a circular pond and a roofless khan. They are situated at the south-west foot of the mountain. This station, if it was so, is now called al-Baydā'. As far as we are aware, it is not attested in the authorities which deal with the pilgrim route.

12. *Khaywān*

Apart from its history and fame in the pre-Islamic period, Khaywān was a main pilgrim station on the north-bound highway from Ṣan'ā'. According to al-Radā'ī,³ the pass of al-Ṣalūl⁴ was the last col to be passed through before

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 411; *Urj*, 25, 1.5.

2. *Ṣifah*, 412, 246, 159. Cf. Wilson, *Mapping*, 249; al-Maḡhafī, *Mu'jam*, 197.

3. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 412; *Urj*, 26, 1.1.

4. Although this pass has not yet been precisely identified, its name still survives, but unfortunately, our informant could not tell exactly whereabouts. There is more than one village and a tribal territory (*uzlah*) with this name. Cf. al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, III, 481; al-Maḡhafī, *Mu'jam*, 384.

arriving at Khaywān. Khaywān is a well-known town, situated c. 140 km. north of Ṣan'ā'. The name is applied to both the town and its famous wadi.

It has been recorded and described by most of the early Arab geographers, including Ibn Khurdādhbah¹ and Qudāmah.² They describe it as a large village with productive vineyards, a large mosque, and two water-tanks. Al-Ḥarbī³ lists it without giving any details. Al-Radā'ī⁴ passed through it on his two journeys. In describing its area and people, he praised its watering-place (*manhal*), gardens, and even the beauty of its women! Al-Hamdānī⁵ makes it the border marker between Bakīl and Ḥāshid. He therefore states that it is watered by Wadi Khabash and that its distance from Athāfit is 15 miles. Al-Idrīsī⁶ and al-Maqdisī⁷ include it in their lists, but give no details. On the authority of Ibn al-Kalbī, Yāqūt⁸ notes that the pre-Islamic idol of the deity Ya'ūq was erected in Khaywān. He adds that it is a village two nights' march distant from Ṣan'ā'. Ibn al-Mujāwir⁹ places it on the new main route from Ṣa'dah to Ṣan'ā', but he obviously exaggerates in its description.¹⁰

13. *Al-'Amashiyyah*

The name al-'Amashiyyah appears clearly to have been corrupted in the

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1. *Al-Masālik*, 130.
 2. *Al-Kharāj*, 182, 192.
 3. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.
 4. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 412; *Uṣṣ*, 26, 1.1-4 (456); 122, 1.4.
 5. *Ṣifah*, 97, 159, 328, 412.
 6. Shawkat, "Diyār al-'Arab", *JIA*, XXI, 60.
 7. *Al-Taqāsīm*, 111.
 8. *Al-Buldān*, II, 415.
 9. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 232.
 10. For more information about Khaywān, see al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, II, 323, s.v. "Ḥāshid", 213ff.; Smith, *Simṭ*, II, 171; Wilson, *Mapping*, 262f.; al-Akwa', *al-Yamāniyyah*, 105, n.3.; al-Maḥfāfī, *Mu'jam*, 227.

writings of some of the early Arab geographers.¹ It is repeatedly mentioned in local Yemeni historiography. It seems likely to have been an important midway rest-station within the interval between Khaywān and Ṣa'dah. Imam al-Hādī ilā al-Ḥaqq stopped here twice in the course of his march from Khaywān to Ṣa'dah in 286/899 and on the return route in 288/900.²

According to al-Hamdānī,³ al-'Amashiyyah is situated at a distance of 17 miles to the north of Khaywān and 22 miles to the south of Ṣa'dah. Ibn al-Mujāwir⁴ has two variant spellings: al-'Amayshah on the old route, and al-'Amshah on the new highway. He gives the distance between the former and al-Darb as 2 parasangs, i.e. c. 6 miles, whilst he assesses the interval between the latter and al-'Ayn (or al-A'yun) as 4 parasangs, i.e. c. 12 miles. Al-Radā'ī⁵ calls it al-'Amashiyyāt and mentions a watering-place called 'Umaysh within it.

Nowadays, the name al-'Amashiyyah⁶ is applied to a vast, arid, open plain. It is situated c. 33 km. to the south of Ṣa'dah and c. 45 km. to the north of Khaywān. A wadi called al-Quḍayḍā' runs across this desert. The whole area is now included in the territory of Āl 'Ammār of Bakīl.

14. The Mountain of Khaṭārīr

This mountain's name is pronounced locally as Khaṭārīn. It is a very high

1. See tabs. 1 and 2.

2. See al-'Abbāsī, *Sīrah*, 127, 202. Cf. Yaḥyā, *Ghāyah*, I, 176, 353.

3. *Ṣifah*, 339.

4. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 202, 232.

5. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 413; *Urj*, 28, l.3.

6. For detailed information, cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 161, n.3 (241); Smith, *Simt*, II, 133; Wilson, *Mapping*, 383; al-Maḡhafī, *Mu'jam*, 466.

conical volcanic mountain and is noted in the *Urjūzah*¹ as a landmark on the old pilgrim route. The region in which it is located is named after it: 'Uqlat Khaṭārīr.² It is a well-known topographical feature in the neighbourhood. The modern motorway from Ṣan'ā' to Ṣa'dah runs c. 900 m. to its east. It is situated c. 1.5 km. to the south-west of al-'Uqlah area.

15. *Wadi Asal*

According to the *Urjūzah*,³ Wadi Asal is the place immediately to the north of al-A'yun. Al-Hamdānī gives us the following places within its stretch, viz: Tabār, al-Maṭrad, the village of al-Khiyām, and al-Ḥanājīr.⁴ Moreover, he makes it a branch emerging from Wadi Abdhar. On another occasion, he identifies it as Ḍāhir Khawlān, saying it is full of villages, plantations, and vineyards.⁵

Asal is a wide fertile wadi. It is situated c. 15 km. to the south of Ṣa'dah and c. 6 km. to the north of the daily market of Āl 'Ammār. The village of al-Khiyām is located on its western bank. It is a small, inhabited hamlet built on the slope of a hill. The nearest place, to the north of Wadi Asal, is the village of al-Qamā', which is situated on the eastern bank of Wadi al-Jirfiyan. The closest place to the south of Wadi Asal is the area of al-Kuddād. There are no signs of constructions relating to the pilgrim road to be seen, whether in the wadi itself, or near the village of al-Khiyām.

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 414; *Urj.*, 30, l.2.

2. See al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 160f.

3. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 414; *Urj.*, 31, l.1.

4. For its identification, see Smith, *Simṭ*, II, 157.

5. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 249. For detailed information about it, cf. al-'Abbāsī, *Sīrah*, 127f., 245; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, I, 78; al-Maqḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 30.

16. *Wadi al-Khāniq*

Wadi al-Khāniq was celebrated for its pre-Islamic dam, which was built in about the sixth century A.D. The local Yemeni sources agree on the fact that its destruction took place in the period 199–201/815–817 during the Alid revolts. Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā b. Ja'far al-Šādiq al-'Alawī, known as al-Jazzār, destroyed the dam.¹

The wadi in question was mentioned by al-Ḥarbī,² who misread the name as al-Ḥāfiq, instead of al-Khāniq. In the *Urjūzah*,³ al-Radā'ī calls it a *barīd*. The wadi is situated c. 3 km. to the south of Ṣa'dah. It springs from the area of al-Qubbah and pours into the region of Najrān. Nowadays, it is populated and cultivated by the tribe of Wādī'ah. It is very rich in underground water resources. No signs of ancient constructions associated with the pilgrim route can be seen there.⁴

1. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *al-Iklīl*, ed. al-Akwa', VIII, 186f., n.4,7; *ibid.*, ed. al-Karmalī, VIII, 135; *idem*, *Ṣifah*, 416; al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh*, 235f., 628; Yaḥyā, *Ghāyah*, 149. Cf. al-Mad'aj, *The Yemen*, 205–7.

2. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.

3. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 416; *Urj.*, 34, l.3.

4. For more information about this wadi, cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 163, n.5; 249; Smith, *Simt*, II, 170; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, II, 303.

SAUDI SECTION

Yemeni/Saudi Border – Mecca

Part One: Certain Features of the Route

Part Two: Facilities alongside the Route

Introduction

The present work was fully supported by King Saud University of Riyadh which provided financial and all other facilities enabling the present writer to engage in field-work during the early part of 1989. As a result, the following important information regarding the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, which is dealt with in the following pages, has been brought to light.

The primary purpose of carrying out this field-study was to identify, document, and investigate on the ground the Saudi section of the pilgrim route. Secondly, an endeavour was made to collect as much data as possible concerning the presently surviving remains. Thirdly, it is our ultimate target to link together in a comprehensive fashion, regardless of current political boundaries, a study of the entire stretch of the pilgrim road including the Yemeni section.

In order to fulfil these aims, a geographical and archaeological survey was undertaken in the southern region of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. In the course of our field-work, we were fortunate in being able to follow and cover in practical terms the entire length of the Saudi section, which is the longer part of the road. It passes through various topographical terrains. The most difficult and rugged areas over which it passes are the mountainous ridges of al-Sarāt and the lava-field of al-Buqūm. By contrast, the route also traverses plains, in particular the desert of Zahr and the plain of Rukbah.

As has already been mentioned, this part of our study is wholly centred on the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim road. It lies roughly between longitude 43° 30' and 40° 00' E, and latitude 17° 30' and 21° 30' N. The total length of this surveyed section is approximately 800 km. in a straight line. We began our survey within the Saudi territory from Wadi al-Muḥīsharah. This wadi, which is situated not far from the Saudi-Yemeni border, was the extreme southern place of our investigations, beyond which we were not allowed to go. The terminus of our survey was the pilgrimage meeting-point (*mīqāt*) of Qarn al-Manāzil, or al-Sayl al-Kabīr as it is now known (see map 13).

An attempt is made in this part of our study to cover the most important features of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. The principal of these features are passes, paved and levelled portions, water resources, prayer-places, and finally some of the ancient pilgrimage settlements. In addition, detailed tables, focusing collectively and individually on the mountainous cols, are provided; they include information as accurate as they are comprehensive. Similarly, we have also made use of the pilgrimage *Urjūzah* of the poet al-Radā'ī, as we did also with the Yemeni section, since it is a reliable aid in surveying this section of the road. Meanwhile, the general orientation in undertaking this study is based on a south to north-north-westerly progression.

Finally, tables based mainly on the *Urjūzah* of al-Radā'ī (see tab. 3) and the texts of the early Arab geographers (see tab. 4) are provided in this study. These tables show the main pilgrim *stations*, stopping places, and also the topographical features of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim road.

Part One: Certain Features of the Route

I. The Passes of the Saudi Section of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route

This part of our study will be concerned with the passes through which the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim road passes. Since most of the defiles in focus are almost similar in design and construction, we have catalogued them in geographical order progressing from the south to the north. The table provided (see tab. 5) covers nearly all the important cols through which the road goes. It contains the most important information at the time of our inspection. It should be noted that some of the names of the passes, as they are listed in the first column, are recent ones; in some cases, the ancient name is added. In addition, selected passages are described below. Our selection of these passes is mainly based on three facts, *viz* the geographical location, the design and construction of the route which passes through them, and the facilities which have been constructed for each one.

It is worth mentioning that in the light of our field-work survey, it is evident that most, if not all, of the mountain passes of the Yemeni route were originally paved. It seems safe to assume that there have been two main destructive elements, *viz* natural erosion and man, and these must be held responsible for the great damage which has occurred to the paved sections and the watch-towers. Over the passage of time, these two factors seem to have collaborated in order to remove the original structure of the stone-paving and to dismantle the erected watch-towers, causing ultimately large-scale devastation and permanent loss.

1. *The Pass of Miḥdhā' al-Ni'āl* (see pls. VII.A-B, VIII.A-B, tab. 6, map 13.1)

The place in question is still known to the local people by its ancient name. The name of the pass has only been recorded by al-Radā'ī in his *Urjūzah*.¹ Al-Hamdānī, in his interpretation of al-Radā'ī's verses, says no more than that it is a place (*mawḍi'*) relating to B. Ḥayf of Wādī'ah.

The pass of Miḥdhā' al-Ni'āl is an easily traversed, short mountain col through which the pilgrim route passes heading north-west bound via Wadi Jawāl to the great pass of al-Maṣṣaj (or al-Maṣlūlah). The approximate distance between these two passes is 3 km. Immediately to the south of the col of Miḥdhā' al-Ni'āl is Wadi al-Ḍuḥḍāḥ where the road winds down from the watershed by a circuitous and rugged path. To the east, the track including the pass is limited by a mountainous ridge locally called Qahrāt al-Ḥurr. The route itself from the northern start is only levelled and shouldered. At a distance of c. 118 m. from the point where it starts, there are the scattered remains of a circular watch-tower c. 6 m. in diameter. To the south of this cairn, there are the remains of another circular watch-tower. The paving begins at the point where the route descends from the pass towards Wadi al-Ḍuḥḍāḥ; and thence it goes steadily until it turns sharply into the wadi through its western bank. In some places, fallen rocks encumber the path. The route, along its stretch, is shouldered and provided, at some spots, with ramps. The mean average of its width fluctuates from 6 m. to 8 m.

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 419; *Urj*, 42, 1.4.

2. *The Pass of al-Maḍaj / al-Maṣlūlah [I]* (see pls. IX.A-B, X.A-B, XI.A-B, tab. 7, map 13.1)

The pass of al-Maḍaj, or al-Maṣlūlah as it is locally known at the present time, is recorded by some of the early Arab geographers. Despite the fact that the genuine name of the col appears slightly corrupted in the work of al-Ḥarbī,¹ he places it within the tract lying between Maḥjarah and Uraynib. The place name in question, moreover, is mentioned by Qudāmah,² but in a corrupt form. According to information provided in the *Urjūzah*, al-Maḍaj is a permanent water flow (*ghayl*). In his commentary on al-Radā'ī's verses, al-Hamdānī³ clarifies the whole matter by stating that al-Maḍaj is a *ghayl* of Wādī'ah. He tells us also that it is a great pass (*naqīl*). In the context of al-Hamdānī's discussion of the geographical territories of Ṣa'dah,⁴ he states that it is bordered on the north by Maḥjarah which is located on the summit of al-Maḍaj. He adds that the latter place is considered to be part of the territory of B. Ḥayf of Wādī'ah. Historically, on the other hand, al-Hamdānī records that 'Muḥammad b. Abān, a Khawlānī chief, opposed Ma'n b. Zā'idah [142-151/760-769] in Ṣa'dah and fought against him, taking revenge for the murder of 'Umar b. Zayd al-Ghālībī, whom Ma'n had killed in al-Maḍaj, an area north of Ṣa'dah.⁵ As has already been noted above, the classical name of the pass, as it appears in the available sources, has been recently altered. The area as a whole in which the col under

1. *Al-Manāsik*, 643, ns.12, 13.

2. *Al-Kharāj*, 192.

3. *Ṣifāh*, 420; *Urj*, 44, ll.1, 2.

4. *Ṣifāh*, 99, 250; cf. *idem*, *al-Iklīl*, VIII, ed. al-Karmalī, 34f.; ed. Akwa', 70.

5. *Al-Iklīl*, II, 140, n.515. Cf. al-Maḍ'aj, *The Yemen*, 181, 184, 199, n.40. For more information about this pass, see Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 385, 425. It is true to say that Philby, during his travels in the vicinity of Zahrān al-Janūb, does not provide much detail concerning the defile under study. He himself did not follow this part of the route. Nevertheless, he mentions the way of al-Maṣlūlah in the course of his description of that area.

discussion is situated, is known at the present time as al-Maṣlūlah by the local natives. However, it should be noted concerning this name that, according to the understanding of the inhabitants of this part of Southern Arabia, there are two popular descriptive terms, i.e. al-Maṣlūlah¹ and al-Mudarajah, which have been widely applied to denote a stepped or paved path situated in mountainous terrain. Thus, these two names, as we shall realize in the description of the next defile, should not be deemed to have any sort of connection with the recorded ancient place names.

The defile of al-Mandaj is the longest and the best preserved paved segment of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route situated within the present southern geographical territories of Saudi Arabia. The modern town of Zahrān al-Janūb, which is inhabited by Wādī'ah of Hamdān, is situated approximately 10 km. to the north-west of al-Maṣlūlah ridge where the route is built across it. The total length of this section of the road is roughly 2 km. in a straight line, whereas the mean of its width fluctuates from 5 m. to 8 m. The track of the road starts and ends with a single path, but it occasionally branches off into dual pathways wherever it meets impassable spots such as immovable obstacles and rocky terrain. This situation in which the main road bifurcates can be noticed, for instance, in our own measurement-taking stages of 21-22 (see tab. 7). This stretch of the route is tortuous and has in some parts been orientated to form a zig-zag way in order to circumvent its steepness and also to enable its users, including loaded animals, to negotiate it in a comfortable way.

In the process of building this segment of the road, the engineers provided it with many ingenious features. The entire course of the road is

1. Cf. Beeston, *et al.*, *Dictionary*, 142.

shouldered on both sides with both sizeable and also smaller blocks of local masonry. In some cases, the natural precipice edges and the vertical cliffs of the mountains provide a solid wall to the route, whereas in other areas, especially when the track goes through sharp curves, huge boulders are heaped up on certain angles. The other engineering method, which was carried out in similar circumstances, was for a lined wall of five to seven courses to be constructed on both margins of the main path to form eventually a sort of corridor. This method of building hard shoulders was intended to strengthen the weak points and to ease the dangerous parts of the route. It is applied extensively in some sections along the road, particularly when the path either ascends or descends over precipitous rocky slopes, especially those which look over deep ravines and hollows. In this connection, besides this corridor being used in ancient times by loaded caravans in order to organize the financial procedure for tax collection, it may be assumed that this kind of construction also provided a second function in diverting the violent gushes of torrential rain from the main track.

As has already been indicated above, the sole building materials of the road were the local masonry which was obviously hewn out from the adjacent mountains. Untrimmed flagstones, taking various sizes and shapes, have been laid down on the ground of the track in a systematic and neat way forming ultimately a complete structure of an even stone-paving without applying any kind of binding substances. Unpaved portions, on the other hand, are simply cleared out from natural obstacles and outcrops, then evened out. Raised ramps or steps, being built in a horizontal position across the main path, are distributed in irregular intervals over the stretch of the paved section of the track. Some narrow hollow spots, being located on the main track of the road, seem to have been dumped and then razed to the ground with earth and broken stones.

Along both sides of the stretch of this section of the road, we have managed to document about ten small Arabic inscriptions including graffiti,¹ also about four rock-drawings of human and animal figures. These inscriptions and primitive rock-drawings are carved on the rock-faces which immediately overlook the main path. Furthermore, many ruined and half-ruined circular watch-towers, constructed of untrimmed local stones, are to be seen on both sides of the road. One circular watch-tower, for instance, is built on the edge of the road. Its walls are badly damaged and scattered around, resulting in the loss of its genuine structure. Its present circular base measures about 6 m. in diameter. Before the route approaches the area of the tower, i.e. *c.* 57 m. away, it forks into two parallel ways which become reunited in the area of the tower. Once again, the route, after leaving the tower's area, branches off into two paths which merge into a single track after a certain distance. In other words, the main track, whether it comes from the north or from the south, divides in two as it approaches the area of the tower.

Finally, it seems most likely that the most crucial factor which has facilitated keeping this portion of the road in a very good condition in terms of its shape and genuine structure, is the immediately surrounding harsh terrain which provides a natural protective belt against any kind of danger. The mountainous area through which the road passes is relatively high and overlooks different topographical features of deep ravines and depressions. Consequently, the route of this pass preserves a unique character which shows many specific details of its architecture and the manner by which the engineering of the road was executed.

1. See inscriptions nos. 13-15 below.

3. The Passes of al-Shafshaf

According to the *Urjūzah*, al-Radā'ī passed twice during his trek through a number of defiles. Although he obviously failed to single out their individual names, he called them by the collective name of al-Shafshaf. Al-Hamdānī¹ alludes to these cols by indicating that al-Shafshaf are passes in the territory of 'Abīdah of Janb. Nowadays, this ancient name for the passes is no longer known by the local people of that area. Instead, they have their own names for these defiles. However, it should be noted in this connection that most of the names by which the passes are known to the native inhabitants must be accepted with caution, as they often appear to be merely descriptive terms rather than genuine appellations.

According to the geographical order of the place names, as they have been recorded by al-Radā'ī whether on his journey to Mecca or on his way back from it, it is tempting to assume that al-Shafshaf defiles are those which are situated within the mountainous interval lying between Sarūm al-'Ayn or al-Fayḍ² as it is known, and the two landmark mountains of al-Jumaylān. At the present time, this area including its immediate surroundings is inhabited by various ^{branches} of the tribe of Qaḥṭān. Across its mountainous tract, the pilgrim road negotiates many cols with different names. From the south to the north, the route goes via the following main defiles:³ Ibn Jalḥad – al-Mudarajah – al-Marjūmah – al-Muḍābiyyah – al-Marāgh – al-'Arjah – al-Shuqbān – Khaḍār – and finally al-Maṣlūlah (II).

1. *Ṣifāh*, 422; *Urj.*, 48, 1.5 (454f.); 118, 1.5.

2. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 252.

3. For more information about them, see tab. 5.

Below we will attempt to shed some light on one pass from the above-mentioned group in order to present a clear picture of their engineering and the design which was involved in their construction. Our selection of the pass of al-Mudarajah in particular is based on the fact that the section of the pilgrim road which goes through this col is virtually intact; in contrast with the rest of the other parts of the road which pass over the rest of the defiles of this group.

The Pass of al-Mudarajah (see pls. XII.A-B, XIII.A-B, tab. 8, map 13.1)

According to Ibn Manẓūr,¹ the term *al-madārij* (sing. *al-madrajah*) denotes difficult passes located in a mountainous region. He also adds that *al-mad rajah* is the path. Locally, the name is vocalized with *ḍammah* on the *mīm*, thus al-Mudarajah.²

Today, the entire mountainous area in which al-Mudarajah is situated includes the immediately neighbouring tract inhabited by the clan called Āl Salmān from 'Abīdah of Qaḥṭān. Consequently, the area as a whole is known to the local people by the name Khabt Āl Salmān. The defile of al-Mudarajah is situated approximately 22 km. to the north-west of Wadi Sarūm al-Fayḍ where there is a modern village named after this wadi. Directly north-north-west from the pass under discussion are the two mountains of al-Jumaylān, a local watering-place called the well of al-Ju'rān, and the col of al-Marjūmah. The latter place is the very next defile through which the pilgrim route passes after it leaves the area of al-Mudarajah. The place bordering the pass immediately to the north-north-west is Wadi Namlān, whereas it is limited on the south by Wadi al-Ju'rān and Ray'

1. *Lisān*, II, 266f.

2. This place is transliterated throughout this study in accordance with its local pronunciation.

Ibn Jalḥad. On the west, it is bounded by Wadi Sufyān, whilst it is limited on the east by Wadi Lashq.

The pilgrim route itself traverses undulating mountainous ridges which are furrowed by narrow ravines. Some spots along the route are covered by wild self-sown short bushes and acacia trees (*ṭalḥ*). The track of the road is very well preserved and there is no sign of dismantling. It is perfectly paved and walled up with local unshaped flagstones; thus it is apparently very practicable for human travellers and laden animals. The total length of this segment of the road is roughly 750 m. as the crow flies; its width averaging between 4 m. and 6 m. From its commencement point and throughout its stretch through the pass until it emerges into Wadi Namlān, the route is constructed with only one single path. The southern entrance of the route is commanded by a rectangular chamber or a watch-tower, being about 2 m. x 1 m. located on the edge of the right-hand side of the route. In many sections of the road, raised ramps or steps in a horizontal position are built in irregular intervals with local blocks of stone. The road is generally shouldered with short walls on both sides. Wherever it happens that the route traverses arduous areas, a lined wall, constructed of four to five courses, is erected forming a solid border to the path of the road. At the point where the route descends towards Wadi Namlān, it flares out to 7-8 m. at the ends.

4. *The Pass of al-Ghaḍār* (see pls. XIV.A-B, XV.A, map 13.3)

The pass of al-Ghaḍār is named after the wadi in which it is situated and which forms its northern end. At the present time, the wadi including its main col is known to the local people by its ancient name. It has been recorded by

al-Radā'ī in his *Urjūzah*. Al-Hamdānī¹ comments on al-Radā'ī's verses by stating that al-Ghaḍār is a very narrow pass situated within the area of Ya'rā which belongs to the tribe of Khath'am. According to al-Hajrī,² al-Ghaḍār is one of the tributary channels of Wadi Bīshah.

The stretch of Wadi al-Ghaḍār, from south to north, reaches approximately 20 km. It is bordered on the north by Wadi Ranūm, whilst it is limited on the south by the area of Ṣuhī and Wadi al-Maythā'. It is demarcated on the east by Wadi Qufaylah, whereas it is bounded on the west by Ray' al-Sirb. Today, the wadi is regarded, in tribal understanding, as part of the territory of the tribe of Shahrān. On both eastern and western sides of the wadi's area, there are two parallel ranges of mountains which are also named after the wadi. The surrounding tract, including the wadi and its pass, is quite fertile with greenish bushes and acacia trees (*ṭalh*). The importance of this wadi lies in the fact that it has two check-points or custom-stations which have been constructed on the main course of the pilgrim route. The first station is situated on the southern part of the wadi, whilst the other is located exactly at the extreme northern end of the wadi where it meets Wadi Ranūm. The approximate distance between these two stations in a direct line is 3 km. In this area the pilgrim route passes along the water course of Wadi al-Ghaḍār; thence it turns in a north-westerly direction heading toward Wadi Ranūm via the mountainous col of al-Ghaḍār. Before the route reaches the pass at about 300 m., distinct remains of the walled track can be seen more clearly than elsewhere around. Here, the main path of the road is only evened out and walled up, left without any sign of stone-paving. With regard to its section, where it traverses the col into Wadi Ranūm, it seems likely that a

1. *Ṣifāh*, 428f.; *Urj*, 60, l.5.

2. *Tahdīd al-Mawāḍi'*, 388; cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 205.

portion of it may have been paved, although its present poor condition, on account of dismantling, renders judgment quite difficult.

The first custom station, situated on the southern part of the wadi, consists mainly of a partial wall, which forms an artificial barrier, running across the main track of the road from west to east. The extreme western section of this lined wall measures c. 60 m. in length, whereas its eastern portion is c. 40 m. in length. Between these two barriers, the main entrance is constructed. From west to east, it is composed principally of a gate being c. 1 m. in width, a lined wall measuring c. 6.2 m. in length, a second gate measuring c. 1.2 m. in breadth, a circular watch-tower measuring c. 8 m. in diameter, then a third gate being c. 2 m. in width. 3 km. to the north-west of this check-point, the second station is situated. It has similarity to the first in terms of its general construction and the system by which the main entrance has been arranged. It consists of a lined wall lying along the pass itself and cut-gates being commanded by circular watch-towers. However, the extreme western part of the wall measures c. 20 m. in length, whilst the eastern segment is about 30 m. in length. Both of these two walls descend towards the main gate from the hillsides which border the col. From west to east, the main entrance is composed of a circular watch-tower measuring c. 3.4 m. in diameter, a cut-gate being c. 3.2 m. in width, a second circular watch-tower measuring c. 4.5 m. in diameter, a second cut-gate measuring c. 3.5 m. in breadth, and lastly a third circular watch-tower measuring c. 3.5 m. in diameter. At the point where the main route approaches the area of the pass, it bifurcates into narrow tracks; thence each path passes through a gate which is built in the centre of the lying wall. As may be noticed, each gate is controlled by a circular watch-tower built in a commanding position in order to organize and ease the volume of the traffic.

5. *The Pass of al-Bayḏā'* (see pls. XV.B, XVI.A-B, XVII.A, tab. 9, maps 13.5, 13.6)

According to 'Arrām,¹ the road which links Bustān Ibn 'Āmir with Mecca goes through a pass leading into Qarn al-Manāzil. Al-Ḥarbī's statement² indicates that the place in question is situated between al-Fatuq and Qarn al-Manāzil. Al-Iṣfahānī,³ who is followed by al-Zamakhsharī⁴ and Yāqūt⁵ who cite his account in their works, states that al-Manāqib, which is a transverse mountain, has many routes leading to Yemen, Yamāmah, Upper Najd, and al-Ṭā'if. He continues by stating that the mountain of al-Manāqib has three passes, viz al-Zalālah, Qibrayn, and al-Bayḏā'. Al-Zamakhsharī⁶ and Yāqūt⁷ confirm that al-Bayḏā' is a defile situated in the mountain of al-Manāqib. Al-Hamdānī⁸ makes the distance from al-Fatuq to al-Manāqib 12 miles, i.e. c. 24 km.; from the latter to Qarn al-Manāzil, he puts it at 6 miles, i.e. c. 12 km. Furthermore, he states that al-Manāqib is the point where the pilgrim route ends at its northern terminus. He tells us that the pilgrim station (*manzil*) is Qarn al-Manāzil and it is not al-Manāqib. In his commentary on the verses of al-Radā'ī, al-Hamdānī says that al-Manāqib is situated in the mountainous chain of al-Sarāt and it has five passes.

Before describing the defile in question, we should mention that the Yemeni pilgrims have two meeting-points (sing. *mīqāt*) at which they must make a short halt in order to prepare themselves before proceeding to the holy city of

1. *Jibāl Tihāmah*, 317f.; cf. also al-Bakrī (*Mu'jam*, III, 788) who has an identical account.

2. *Al-Manāsik*, 645. The place name is corrupted in his work.

3. *Bilād al-'Arab*, 28.

4. *Al-Jibāl*, 211.

5. *Al-Buldān*, V, 203.

6. *Al-Jibāl*, 22.

7. *Al-Buldān*, I, 529.

8. *Ṣifāh*, 340f., 438; cf. *Urj*, 76, 1.2.

Mecca. The people of the Yemen make their journey to Mecca by following either the middle pilgrim route (*al-jāddah al-sultāniyyah*) or the coastal pilgrim road (*ṭarīq al-ḥajj al-sāhilī*); their rendezvous is Yalamlam¹ which is a wadi situated to the south of Mecca. Those who travel to Mecca via the High or the Najdī pilgrim road (*ṭarīq al-ḥajj al-Najdī*), have as their meeting-point Qarn al-Manāzil,² or al-Sayl al-Kabīr as it is known.

Today, the col of al-Bayḍā' preserves its ancient name whilst the classical name of the mountainous ridges, al-Manāqib, where the pass under discussion is situated, has been recently changed to al-Ray'ān.³ This pass should be regarded as the last mountainous col through which the Yemeni pilgrims have to pass in order to reach their rendezvous (*mīqāt*) which is situated in Wadi Qarn al-Manāzil, or al-Sayl al-Kabīr. After leaving a small wadi behind, the pilgrim route goes up steeply via the defile of al-Bayḍā'. Thence, it descends steadily from the pass, till it winds upwards in a westerly direction through successive small ravines full of green acacia trees (*ṭalḥ*). From here, it meanders across the mountainside by a circuitous and rugged path for about 4 km. via another small col called al-'Irqah. Then, it heads downwards to the *mīqāt* in the way of the water courses of Wadi al-Sayl al-Ṣaghīr, Wadi Ṭalḥ, and finally Wadi Jalīl. The course of the track between the pass of al-Bayḍā' and the meeting-point is not paved; it is levelled. It appears that large sections of the stretch of the route have been destroyed by motorists. Because of the harsh nature of the ground over which the route passes, many parts of its course are blocked by fallen rocks.

1. Cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 375; al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 368; IV, 1398f.; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 441.

2. Al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 79, 309; III, 788, 959, 1067; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 332f.

3. For more information, see Ibn Bulayhid, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, II, 150; al-Bilādī, *Ma'ālim*, I, 268; IV, 118; VIII, 271f.

Regarding the archaeological remains, we were able to document a circular watch-tower. It is situated a few metres to the west of the pass. Two Arabic inscriptions are also recorded. They are engraved on the rock faces between Wadi al-Sayl al-Ṣaghīr and Wadi Jalīl.¹

II. The Paved Portions of the Saudi Section of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route

In addition to those paved segments of the route which are constructed in the mountainous cols, the track of the Yemeni pilgrim route is well paved and cleared as soon as it reaches the territory of the lava-field of al-Buqūm. Below, we will briefly illustrate some selected portions which are constructed within the boundaries of this lava-tract. It is hoped that these sections will exemplify the design and construction of the pilgrim road.

The Lava-Field of al-Buqūm (see tab. 10, maps 13.3, 13.4)

The lava-field of al-Buqūm is situated approximately between latitude 20° 00' – 22° 00' N and longitude 41° 00' – 43° 00' E. The recent name of this lava-tract appears as Ḥarrat al-Buqūm on the official geographical and geological maps of Saudi Arabia,² whilst the ancient appellation, according to the available authorities,³ is Ḥarrat Hilāl b. 'Āmir, or Ḥarrat Najd.⁴ Moreover, it is now known

1. Cf. inscription no. 43 below.

2. Cf. *Geographical Map of Southern Hijāz Quadrangle* I-210 B; *Geographical Map of the Southern Najd Quadrangle* GM-211 B. Both of these maps, along with others, were prepared and published in 1962 by the Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey.

3. See al-Hajrī, *Tahdīd al-Mawāḍi'*, 230-3; al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 14f. n.4; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 250. See also Ibn Bulayhid, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, IV, 170f.; al-Bilādī, *Ma'ālim*, II, 266, 283.

4. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 433f.

as Ḥarrat al-Jadir by the local people. Historically, in 9/630, the Prophet Muḥammad despatched a military detachment of thirty warriors against the tribe of Hawāzin in the Turabah¹ area. According to al-Wāqidī,² this *sariyyah*, which was commanded by 'Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and guided on the road by somebody from the tribe of B. Hilāl, followed on its homeward march the inland route of al-Najdiyyah via the lava-field of al-Jadir. It is demarcated on the north by Wadis Ṭhār and Turabah respectively, whereas it is bordered on the south by Wadis Ujrub and Ranyah. From the east, it is bounded by a landmark mountain called locally Rāfah, while it is limited on the west by the oasis of al-'Aqīq and another landmark mountain called Sha'ir.

Ḥarrat al-Buqūm is a vast lava-field situated approximately 10 km. to the north-west of a small modern hamlet called Ujrub. It occupies the whole area lying between the two wadis of Ranyah and Turabah. In addition to Wadi Karā', the whole area of the lava-tract is furrowed by many small valleys and streams such as Dhurā', al-Rufḍah, and Karkar. Its surface is entirely covered by an immense black desolation, scattered volcanic cones, and shapeless lumps, whereas its fringes and some spots within its territory are full of scoriaceous lava and volcanic dust and grit. It has naturally a very harsh and rugged surface, so that it is difficult, if not impossible, to traverse this *ḥarrah* without the provision of an evened or paved path. Even with the existence of a very well-levelled and paved track for the convenience of travellers in general including their animals, the journey across such a tract would undoubtedly be found to be a very exhausting and dangerous task. It is completely deserted of inhabitants, with the exception of

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1. This place name is transliterated throughout this study as it appears in the early Arab geographers' works.
 2. *Al-Maghāzī*, II, 722.

Wadi Karā' and the extreme northern side of it. As far as we are concerned, this lava-field has not yet been visited or crossed by any modern scholar or explorer. Philby,¹ in the course of his travels, avoided going through the main body of this *ḥarrah*.

The Yemeni highland pilgrim road approaches the great lava-field of al-Buqūm via its south-western fringe where the wadi of Dhurā' is situated. The main track of the pilgrim route passes steadily through the main body of this lava-tract towards the north-west until in due course it joins a deep wadi called ṭhār in which the actual path of the route fades. Due to the harsh nature of the *ḥarrah*, the main course of the route is perfectly paved, evened out, ramped, and shouldered. In various places, it also diverges into dual pathways and is provided with short margins. In general terms, the present structural condition of the route within this great lava-field is comparatively excellent. The total length of the pilgrim route within Ḥarrat al-Buqūm is approximately 85 km. as the crow flies.

1. The Southern Kurā' (see pls. XVII.B, XVIII.A)

In the course of describing his march within the territory of the lava-field to and from Mecca, al-Radā'ī mentions the name Kurā' more than twice. According to al-Hamdānī's interpretation,² Kurā' al-Ḥarrah is literally an entrance which has been dismantled and evened out from rocks and other natural obstacles in order to ease a passage for users. Al-Hamdānī's identification matches the two

1. *Arabian Highlands*, 51.

2. *Sifah*, 433; *Urj.*, 67, 11.4f. (434); 69, 1.1 (452); 110, 1.2.

statements of Ibn Manẓūr¹ and Yāqūt,² who concur in the view that Kurā' is the name of the extreme fringe of any lava-field. Accordingly, it seems safe to equate the above-mentioned term with the main entry and exit gates of a lava-tract.

Wadi Ujrub is a pilgrim rest-station situated between Tabālah and Karā'. It was formerly a *manhal* having only one well.³ This area is presently occupied by a small modern hamlet named after the watering-place.⁴ The southern Kurā' of Ḥarrat al-Buqūm is situated approximately 10 km. to the north-west of the above-mentioned village. The area in which the southern entrance of the lava-tract is situated, is presently called Wadi Dhurā'. It is at this point that the *ḥarrah* section of the Yemeni pilgrim road commences, heading at approximately 325° towards the main body of the lava-field of al-Buqūm. Here, the route runs steadily for a distance of about 200 m. and averages c. 8 m. in width. Its two sides are continuously marked out with loose volcanic stones, forming ultimately two parallel shoulders for the main track of the road. The ground of the main path itself is unpaved; it is entirely evened out from huge rocks, outcrops, and other obstacles. As soon as the route enters the southern side of the actual lava-tract, its structure and orientation alter. The route narrows to c. 6 m. in width. It is at this spot that the path of the pilgrim route is perfectly paved with carefully selected slabs of volcanic stones. These flat pieces of volcanic rock have been systematically and evenly laid down to form the ground of the road. As far as one can tell, no binding materials were applied in the process of paving. The paved track is provided with ramps which have been placed in a horizontal row

1. *Lisān*, VIII, 307.

2. *Al-Buldān*, IV, 443.

3. Cf. al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 644, n.10; al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 432f.; *Urj.*, 67, 1.2 (452); 110, 1.4. According to the editor, the place name has been distorted by a scribal error transforming the letter *jīm* into *khā*.

4. For more information, see al-Jāsir, *al-Mu'jam al-Jughrāfī*, I, 176.

across the main path of the road. This system of stone steps appears at irregular intervals. The two sides of the route are marked out with blocks of volcanic stones.

2. *The Northern Kurā'* (see pls. XIX.B, XX.A)

Wadi Ḥhār is to all intents and purposes regarded as the extreme northerly boundary of the main body of Ḥarrat al-Buqūm. The wadi itself is demarcated on the north by Wadi Turabah, while it is bounded on the east, south, and west by the main body of the lava-field. The nearest place situated immediately to the south of Wadi ḥār is the region of Sāsīd and its wadi.

Before it reaches the southern bank of Wadi Ḥhār, the course of the Yemeni pilgrim route traverses the region of Sāsīd. Through this area, the road consists of a single track, which in some parts is shouldered and paved. As soon as it approaches the area near Wadi Ḥhār, it becomes well-paved and shouldered in its entirety, with one pathway. At the end of this paved track near the southern bank of Wadi Ḥhār (which forms, as has been mentioned, the northern limit of the lava-tract), the course of the pilgrim route continues towards Mecca via the courses of wadis and ultimately across the vast plain of Rukbah. It finally approaches the extreme north-eastern territory of Mecca through the pass of al-Bayḏā'. It should be noted that this extension of the pilgrim route, connecting the lava-field of al-Buqūm with Mecca, is neither properly paved nor shouldered, but it is occasionally dotted with the typical circular watch-towers at irregular intervals.

3. *The Station of Karā'* (see pls. XVIII.B, XIX.A, map 17)

There seems to be general agreement among the early Arab geographers

and travellers that Karā' is the only rest-station situated midway along the Yemeni pilgrim route passing through this lava-field. Exceptionally, however, the geographer al-Ḥarbī and the poet al-Radā'ī both indicate other places in addition to Karā' as being located within the territory of al-Ḥarrah. Most of these place names, particularly those recorded by al-Radā'ī, are actually wadi names which have preserved to the present day their ancient appellations, such as al-Rufḍah and Karkar.¹

Al-Ḥarbī² mistakenly considers Karā' to be the lava-tract of B. Sulaym, whereas it is now evident that it is a wadi situated in a lava-field which was anciently called Ḥarrat B. Hilāl. Furthermore, in his treatment of the Ḥaḍramī pilgrim route, he locates Karā' along that track and indeed the place name appears corrupted in his account. Ibn Khurdādhbah's statement³ shows only that Karā' is a place with palm-trees and a spring. The place name is also scribally misrepresented in his version. He clearly does not identify the nature of the place under discussion, whether it is a wadi or a pilgrim station. Al-Hajrī,⁴ who is followed by al-Bakrī,⁵ provides a picturesque statement. He states that Karā', identified as a fertile wadi situated in the upper territory of B. Hilāl, traverses a lava-tract. The wadi, he states, is usually crossed by the Yemeni pilgrims on their way towards Mecca. Al-Hajrī adds that the distance between the wadi and al-Ṭā'if is two nights' march. The wadi is situated five stages, i.e. c. 120 km., distant from Mecca, whereas it is three stages, i.e. c. 72 km., from Tabālah. He concludes by observing that the wadi is demarcated all around by a lava-field which stretches 4

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 433; *Urj.*, 68, 11.4f. (452); 110, 1.2.

2. *Al-Manāsik*, 644, n.11; 648, n.14.

3. *Al-Masālik*, 134.

4. *Al-Mawāḍi'*, 273.

5. *Mu'jam*, III, 875; IV, 1120f.

miles, i.e. c. 8 km., forward and 4 miles backward from the area in which the wadi is situated. However, the most valuable and practical description of the place in question is provided by Qudāmah.¹ He states that Karā' is a stopping-place (*manzil*) with palms and a sweet spring. He adds that it is merely a place to accommodate the postmaster (*ṣāhib al-barīd*) and the caravaneers. It is, he says, situated in the main course of a wadi which is rich in palm-trees. According to al-Hamdānī's commentary on al-Radā'ī's verses,² Karā' is a deep wadi situated in al-Ḥarrah. It has palm-trees and water. He adds that there are two small passes through which, whether in the course of ascending or descending, the main course of the wadi can be reached. In his description of the Yemeni pilgrim route, al-Hamdānī³ estimates the distance between al-Qurayḥā' and Karā' at 16 miles, i.e. c. 32 km., and he assesses the distance between the latter place and Turabah at 15 miles, i.e. c. 30 km.⁴

Wadi Karā' is a main tributary of Wadi Turabah. It emanates from a high mountainous area called 'Aysān, which is situated to the east of Wadi Turabah. It runs in a westerly direction until it pours into Wadi Turabah at their confluence which is known as al-Ghurayf.⁵ The two presently existing paved passes by which the pilgrim road traverses Wadi Karā', confirm the information provided by al-Hamdānī. Here, the width of the wadi is about 100 m. and its two banks are in the form of regular walls resulting from the lava-field spilling over them. The immediate stretch of the actual torrent-bed of the wadi is to a large

1. *Al-Kharāj*, 188.

2. *Ṣifāh*, 434; *Urj*, 68, 1.4 (452); 110, 1.2.

3. *Ṣifāh*, 340.

4. For more information concerning the pilgrim station of Karā', see al-Maqdisī, *al-Taqāsīm*, 112; al-Idrīsī, *al-Mushṭaq*, 145; Shawkat, "Diyār al-'Arab", *JIA*, XXI, 60; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, XVI, 442; Samhūdī, *Wafā'*, II, 236.

5. For more detailed information about Wadi Karā', see Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 52, 55; Ibn Bulayhid, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, III, 89; al-Bilādī, *Ma'ālim*, VI, 199; VII, 208f.

extent covered over with bushes, palm-trees, and acacias. The quantity of the drinkable water in this area is abundant and can be easily obtained by means of dug wells. The nearest village to the area in which the pilgrim route is situated is al-Hā'it.

The main course of the Yemeni pilgrim route approaches the southern bank of Wadi Karā' via an area called al-Rufḍah in which the track of the road is generally paved, levelled, and shouldered. Along its course in this area, the route is also provided with a number of circular watch-towers. Reaching in due course the southern bank of the wadi, the route descends towards the main channel of Wadi Karā'. As soon as the route approaches the bank, it turns sharply in an azimuth of about 200° for a distance of *c.* 15 m.; it curves again in an azimuth of about 340° for a distance of *c.* 70 m. In this spot, the stone-paving of the route is excellent, except that when the route actually meets the main course of the wadi, its paving and shouldering become haphazard. It is, further, provided with shoulders on both sides. Across the main torrent-bed of Wadi Karā', there is no visible trace of the pilgrim route. The route again appears clearly in the northern bank of the wadi. Here, it is well paved, shouldered, and provided with ramps across its width at unequal intervals. After about 370 m. from the point where it starts in the northern bank, the route bifurcates into dual pathways. Then it heads north-north-east via small valleys and streams such as Qufayl and al-Qurayrah. Regarding archaeological remains, during our investigation in and around the area in which the pilgrim route passes, we could not find any visible trace of foundations or constructions which were directly associated with the route.

III. Levelled Segments of the Saudi Section of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route

Clearing the actual main track of the road from natural obstacles is an engineering method of road-building which is frequently and extensively applied along the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. It is particularly used wherever the course of the route goes over plains or moderately rough terrain. It is also noticeable that this method of construction is usually combined with the practice of providing parallel shoulders on both edges of the main track.

Wadi al-Muḥīsharah, which is the farthest southerly point at which we started our field-work, forms a natural rendezvous for the meeting of many wadis such as al-Qaṭār, Shaḡ, and al-Jadliyyah. The name al-Muḥīsharah is also applied to the area immediately to the north of this wadi. From this wadi, the Yemeni pilgrim route passes in a north-westerly direction through various topographical terrains like moderately rough ground, flat areas, and small valleys and streams. The most important places in this area through which the route passes are Qahrat al-‘Anz, Munaqqir, al-Rākibah, Karīf al-‘Ilab, al-Surqah, and al-Thuwaylah. It is observable that the track of the route across these places consists of a single path which is well levelled with the removal of any dangerous obstacles. The mean width of the road fluctuates from 6 m. to 9 m.; it becomes wider in the flat areas while it narrows to c. 4 m. in some rocky places (see pls. XX.B, XXI.A-B, map 13.1).

Among structural remains within the area of the track, the most interesting and best preserved is the continuous parallel stretch of the shoulders. They are loosely built but in a relatively straight line with various sizes and shapes of local stones. It seems reasonable to assume that these blocks of stone were

either brought from the neighbouring area or were piled up on both margins of the track as a result of clearing the path of the route itself. The whole structure of the sides of the route, especially in this area, still remains standing to a height of c. 0.3 m.

The next plain through which the course of the Yemeni pilgrim route passes is a blackish tract called al-Qā'ah (see pl. XXII.A, map 13.2). It lies between longitude 42° 00' – 42° 30' E and latitude 18° 30' – 19° 00' N. Within its geographical boundaries, this desert contains some identified places and landmarks associated with the Yemeni highland pilgrim road, the most important of which are Umm al-Qaṣaṣ mountain, U'aybil mountain, al-Ḥafā'ir wells, Kutnah well, and the settlement of Banāt Ḥarb. This desert, along with some of the above-mentioned places, are reported by some of the Arab geographers.¹ In what concerns our investigation, *there are not many monuments relating to the structure of the pilgrim route itself in this wide tract.* The main course of the route, as in the plain of Rukbah, can be traced by following the watch-towers or cairns (sing. 'alam) which have been erected alongside the course of the pilgrim route.

The third levelled part of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route is that stretch which links the area of Tabālah with the lava-field of Ḥarrat al-Buqūm (see pls. XXII.B, XXIII.A, map 13.3). This segment of the route is situated within the geographical region of a vast plain called the desert of Ṣahr. According to al-Bakrī,² the desert of Ṣahr Tabālah is virtually traversed by the Yemeni pilgrim route (*maḥajjat al-Yaman*). The desert of Ṣahr lies to the north-west of the area of Tabālah, between longitude 42° 00' – 42° 30' E and

1. For details, see below, p.168-173, 188-191

2. *Mu'jam*, I, 90.

latitude 20° 00' – 20° 30' N. In other words, it occupies the whole tract lying between Tabālah and the lava-tract of al-Buqūm. Here the route traverses this plain heading north-north-west until it reaches the southern skirt of al-Buqūm's lava-field. In the course of this stretch, the track of the pilgrim route passes through or near many topographical features and places, most of which are reported only by al-Ḥarbī¹ and the poet al-Radā'ī in his pilgrimage *Urjūzah*.² These places, including Shu'bat (or Riyāḍ) al-Khayl, Khalāfah, Ranyah, and Qurayḥā', remain to this day with their ancient appellations. The continuous stretch of the route in this area is very clear, except whenever it goes across wadis. It is also noticeable that the general orientation of the course of the route has gradually shifted in some places in order to avoid going over rocky and risky terrain. The entire construction and design of this northern part of the pilgrim route is exactly identical, as far as it is extant, with the southern levelled part in the area of al-Muḥīsharah. Here, the width of the route appears to have been adapted to the nature of the land through which it passes. Thus, we find that wherever it traverses flat areas, its width exceeds c. 20 m., whereas it narrows to c. 8 m. in harsh and rugged terrain.

In addition to the above-mentioned flat areas through which the Saudi levelled part of the Yemeni highland pilgrim road passes, the route also traverses another sandy plain called Sahl Rukbah, or al-Jird as it is presently known by the locals (see pl. XXIII.B, map 13.5). It is situated to the west of the lava-tract of al-Buqūm and lies between longitude 40° 30' – 41° 30' E and latitude 21° 30' – 22° 30' N.

1. *Al-Manāsik*, 644.

2. *Al-Hamdānī*, *Ṣifāh*, 431; *Urj.*, 64, 1.5; 65, 1.3.

Sahl Rukbah is a large tract containing within its bounds a large number of identified landmarks and places associated with the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. The most prominent places situated in this desert are the mountains of Khuluq, al-Ghurāb, al-Ḥiṭāwah, and Jildhān; the watering-places of al-Baydā' and Awqaḥ; and the wadis of Dhū Ghazāl, Awqaḥ wa-'l-Nayyir, and Kalākh. Furthermore, it also has other unidentified settlements such as al-Futuq (or al-Funuq). As has already been mentioned in dealing with the plain of al-Qā'ah, the main course of the pilgrim route in this tract is unclear. Nevertheless, it can be traced by following the locations of the typical circular watch-towers which are constructed on both sides of the course of the road.

Part Two: Facilities alongside the Route

I. The Water Resources along the Saudi Section of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route

During the course of our field-work, particularly along the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, we were unfortunately unable to discover any water-tank. Unlike the Yemeni part, one does not know the exact reasons for this lack of water-containers. Nevertheless, keeping in mind the fact that none of the early Arab geographers included references to water resources, especially over that portion of the road, the exceptional point is that some of the geographers, including al-Radā'ī the poet, recorded watering-places, i.e. generally either a permanent water flow (*ghayl*) or a dug well (*bi'r*). In their writings, they also use the word *manhal* which covers a wide variety of water resources including, of course, constructed water-cisterns (*birak*) or natural pools (*mawājil*).

We are left to conjecture what might have been the reasons for this

complete absence of water cisterns. Firstly, it may be noted that in his description of the pilgrim route connecting Mecca with Ṣan‘ā’ via Najrān, al-Bakrī¹ states that the road passes through a desert region which is moderate in climate. He adds that along this route water could be easily obtained from the ground, even by simply using the hand to dig for it.² At the end of his passage, he also tells us that although the road is a long one, in comparison with the coastal route, it has a better climate and suffers less from epidemic diseases. Al-Bakrī followed al-‘Udhri³ in quoting this statement. The latter geographer adds that the route goes over a fertile tract in which there are abundant dug wells and shallow ones.

Apart from the geological and morphological structure of the Arabian Peninsula, it is sufficient to indicate that the south-south-western landscape of Saudi Arabia is geologically akin to certain parts of the Yemen. This region of Arabia, like its other regions, *has no perpetual rivers. Broadly speaking, the Arabian Peninsula as a whole is almost uniform in terms of climatic pattern, although with the existence of many fluctuations in elevation, wide divergence in climate is to be expected. In other words, the continental type of climate prevails with scanty rain in winter, yet the south-south-western region enjoys a mild climate and receives a copious quantity of rain in summer. Thus, the rainfall of that region of Saudi Arabia attains an annual amount of 10 to 12 inches, compared with the 4-inch average of most of Saudi Arabia, as judged, in 1942, by the first American Agricultural Mission, from the condition of vegetation.*⁴ As a corollary to this, the south-south-western region, in general, is endowed with abundant

1. *Al-Mamālik*, 47.

2. Cf. ‘Arrām (*Jibāl Tihāmah*, 421), who holds a similar theory concerning the bringing of water.

3. *Manāzil al-Ḥijāz*, f.14.

4. Cf. Twitchell, *Saudi Arabia*, 5, 18, 58. For more information concerning the annual average rainfall, see Bandaqajī, *The Atlas of Saudi Arabia*, 19f.

subterranean water, a resource which is reflected on the surface of the ground in artesian wells, dug wells with a large quantity of permanent water, natural ponds, and perpetual springs.

The second possibility proposed for the lack of attention to the provision of water-tanks on the pilgrim road is the general tendency of the southern pilgrims themselves to prefer making their journey to Mecca by sea rather than following the inland routes. In accordance with similar statements made by al-Iṣṭakhrī,¹ Ibn Ḥawqal,² and al-Idrīsī,³ the Yemeni pilgrims, mainly those people who came from Oman, were in favour of making their journey to Mecca by sea.

Below, we shall now describe some selected sites which exemplify the water resources. These examples have been attested on the ground along the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.

1. The Ghayl of al-Baradān (see pl. XXIV.A-B, map 13.1)

According to the available authorities, the name al-Baradān is held by a variety of geographical sites and watering-places throughout the Arabian Peninsula in general, and in the vicinities of Mecca and Tabālah in particular.⁴ The place name in question is only attested by al-Radā'ī in his *Urjūzah*.⁵ In the wake of our survey, this permanent spring under discussion, together with another dormant spring situated at the wadi of al-Mabraḥ, are to be tentatively considered the sole

1. *Masālik al-Mamālik*, 28.

2. *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 41.

3. *Al-Mushūq*, 159.

4. Cf., for example, al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 354; al-Hajrī, *Taḥdīd al-Mawāḍi'*, 221, 264, 348; al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 96; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, I, 375f.; al-Bilādī, *Ma'ālim*, I, 201.

5. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 253, 419; *Urj.*, 41, 1.5.

natural springs located on the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.

The spring of al-Baradān is itself situated on the western bank of a major wadi called Shaḡ.¹ This wadi traverses a wild tract of al-Ḥamād from the south towards the north. The main pilgrim track is approximately 4 km. as the crow flies to the north-west of the *ghayl*. The entire site consists of a rocky pool within which there is a natural spring. The spring flows sluggishly. The centre of the water's gush is to be found near the eastern rocky edge of the pond. Naturally, the pool is circled by smoothed-face outcrops of granite boulders. The water is stagnant and its level is not considerably deep. Wild self-sown bushes and trees such as tamarisks surround the site. The pond is currently in use and its output is relatively steady over the year, as we were told by our local informant.

Finally, there are no visible remains of any foundations or constructions in the immediate neighbourhood.

2. *The Well of al-Thujjah / al-'Arjah* (see pl. XXV.A, map 13.1)

Al-Ḥarbi² seems to be more accurate in his identification; hence he places the pilgrim station of al-Thujjah to the north of a mountain called al-Jumaylān. This mountain, with two peaks, is situated within the territory of B. 'Abīdah. It is a well-known landmark amongst the local people of that area. Ibn Khurdādhbah³ locates the pilgrim station in question between Sarūm Rāh, or al-Fīḍ as it is now known, and Kutnah. He says that it is a place with only one well. According to

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1. The name of this wadi is reported by al-Radā'ī (*Urj*, 41, 1.3) and al-Hamdānī (*Ṣifah*, 419). The initial letter of the wadi's name is *sīn* and not *shīn*, as it is now known.
 2. *Al-Manāsik*, 643.
 3. *Al-Masālik*, 135.

Qudāmah,¹ the station of al-Thujjah is recorded twice in his description of the Yemeni pilgrim route. He states that it is a postal-station with only one well and adds that the caravans often make a halt at its *manhal*. He believes that this place is situated within the territory (*bilād*) of the tribe of Zabīd. Al-Radā'ī describes al-Thujjah as an abundant watering-place, and this is confirmed by al-Hamdānī's statement² that it is a *manhal*. In his dealing with the pilgrim route, al-Hamdānī³ asserts that the pilgrim station of al-Thujjah is situated within the interval between Sarūm al-Fayḍ and Kutnah. From Sarūm al-Fayḍ to al-Thujjah, he gives the distance as 16 miles, i.e. about 32 km., and from the latter place to Kutnah he puts it at 20 miles, i.e. c. 40 km. Furthermore, in the course of his speaking of the geographical territories of the tribe of Janb, he includes the place name under discussion amongst those places which belong to that tribe. Both the geographers al-Maqdisī⁴ and al-Idrīsī⁵ concur that al-Thujjah is situated between Sarūm al-Fayḍ and Kutnah. Although the place name appears corrupted in the work of the latter geographer, nevertheless he tells us that it is an inhabited village with only one well.

The two main facts which may be inferred from the above-mentioned geographical statements are that the pilgrim station of al-Thujjah is situated within the tract lying between Sarūm al-Fayḍ and Kutnah, and that the station itself is merely a watering-place (*manhal*) with only one well. In the course of our field-work along this portion of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route that connects the area of Sarūm al-Fayḍ with Kutnah, we were unfortunately unable to discover

1. *Al-Kharāj*, 189, 192.

2. *Şifah*, 423; *Urj*, 50, 15 (454f.); 118, 11.

3. *Şifah*, 339, 252, 306.

4. *Al-Taqāsīm*, 111.

5. *Al-Mushūāq*, 146; cf. Shawkat, "Diyār al-'Arab", *JIA*, XXI, 60.

any traces of the archaic name of the pilgrim station. According to information provided by al-Ḥarbī and al-Radā'ī, however, we may assume that the most appropriate watering-place, being situated exactly on the side of the pilgrim route and matching almost completely the available geographers' descriptions, is the well of al-'Arjah. Even so, in the absence of material or literary evidence to prove or disprove our assumption, it should remain conjectural till relevant data are found.

The well of al-'Arjah is named after the wadi in which it is dug. This wadi is bordered on the north by Wadi Itqārah and its col, whereas it is limited on the south by a harsh mountainous area called al-Marāgh. The wadi of al-Rimrām, which is recorded by al-Radā'ī,¹ borders it on the east. According to our native informant, Wadi al-'Arjah emanates from the southern area of Jabal al-Ashhal and pours into Wadi Raghd in the north-east.

The well itself is located on the southern bank of that wadi and below a pass through which the pilgrim road passes. It has been vertically excavated into the solid ground of the wadi side. Its circular opening is sizeable, being in measurements of c. 4 m. inside diameter and c. 6.3 m. outside diameter. The mouth of the well is circled by a raised parapet which is constructed of locally obtained undressed stones. It measures c. 1.15 m. in breadth and c. 0.3 m. in height above ground level. The present depth of the wall is only 5 m. and at the time we inspected it, it contained drinkable water of c. 1 m. in depth. The cylindrical shaft of the well has been lined with untrimmed local masonry from the very top of the well downwards to the bottom. There are no signs of binding or plastering materials having been applied in the process of building the shaft. To the west side of the well, about 2 m. away, there are four small isolated

1. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 423; *Urj*, 50, 1.3.

drinking-basins. They have been hewn out of solid rock. These four rocky drinking-troughs are placed in an arc. The neighbouring area around this well has no visible trace of constructions that associate it with the pilgrim route.

3. *The Wells of al-Qā'ah / al-Ḥafā'ir* (see pls. XXV.B, XXVI.A, maps 13.2, 14)

The name al-Qā'ah is applied to a vast and blackish plain situated within what is today the so-called territory of Shahrān. The toponym is now preserved in its archaic form as it was recorded by al-Radā'ī and al-Hamdānī.¹ After it descends from the mountainous region of Bilād B. 'Abidah of Qaḥṭān, the Yemeni highland pilgrim road approaches this tract in the course of its southern limit. Within the geographical boundaries of the plain, there are famous landmark mountains such as Umm al-Qaṣaṣ and U'aybil which are also recorded in the authorities² and are still today called by their ancient names. As far as concerns us here, none of the early Arab geographers has mentioned this tract, especially in connection with the pilgrim route, except the above-mentioned authors.

At the watering-station of al-Qā'ah, or al-Ḥafā'ir as it is known by the local people, there is a cluster of eight ancient wells. The majority of these wells are still functioning and are used daily by the local inhabitants. They occupy levelled ground, that is about 500 m. x 500 m., of the south-western fringe of a fairly level plain of al-Qā'ah. The demarcations of the area, in which the wells are situated, are as follows. It is bordered on the south by the famous flat-topped mountain of Umm (or Dhāt) al-Qaṣaṣ and other solitary hillocks such as Sin and U'aybil. The sharp-topped mountain of Qarn al-Qā'ah is the nearest feature

1. *Ṣifah*, 425f.; *Urj.*, 55, 1.2. Cf. Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 180.

2. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 424; *Urj.*, 52, 1.1 (425); 55, 1.1; Philby, *Arabian Highlands*, 123.

bounding it on the north-west. According to a popular local tradition, these wells were dug during Abraha's advance on Mecca in 'Ām al-Fīl.

Two ancient wells have been selected from this group and will be briefly described below in the hope of clarifying our understanding of their design and construction. Both of these wells are excavated into soft ground.

The first well is to be respected as the largest one among this group of wells. Its round mouth measures c. 3.2 m. in diameter, with a rim at c. 0.9 m. in height from the immediate ground level. The opening has a stony collar c. 1.8 m. wide. This protective rocky parapet appears to have been recently constructed. The shaft of the well has a very neat casing. It consists of roughly rectangular local stones laid in well-coursed masonry from the very top of the well downwards to the bottom. There is *neither plastering nor binding material used on the inner wall or between the courses*; small broken stones are used as fillings. The total depth from the upper opening downwards to the surface of the water is c. 8.5 m. During our investigation, it contained drinkable water to a depth of c. 1 m.

The second well is also circular in plan. It is placed approximately 20 m. to the north-west of the former. The opening of the well measures c. 2 m. in diameter. The northern half of it is badly damaged and falling down, whilst the southern curve of it is roughly fully intact. The upper reserved stony layer of the mouth is built of relatively big oblong masonry. There is no man-made parapet. The immediate ground surrounding the well-head is a little higher than the level of the plain. When we inspected the well, it was more than half choked with sand. Therefore, the surviving depth of its shaft, from the opening downwards to

the upper surface of the sand, is c. 3 m. The visible part of its inner wall has been completely lined, from the very top downwards to the bottom, with dressed stones laid in regular courses. The upper eight courses of its eastern wall, that is c. 1.5 m., is entirely devastated. In general terms, the method of its construction is quite similar to that of the first well. This well has been deserted by the local consumers because of its dryness.

4. *The Well of Kutnah* (see pls. XXVI.B, XXVII.A, maps 13.2, 14)

According to Ibn Khurdādhbah,¹ Kutnah is a big village with many dug wells. In speaking of a place called al-Madrā' in the territory of Khath'am, al-Hajrī² informs us that Kutnah al-Qā' is a watering-place (*manhal*) of the pilgrim route (*maḥajjah*). Qudāmāh³ gives its name as Kuthbah and he also states that it is a big village, located in the desert, with houses, palaces, and wells. He adds that it is 8 miles, i.e. c. 16 km., from Jurash and, in another passage, he includes Kutnah as a part of the province of Najd. According to al-Radā'ī's verses,⁴ there are a number of informative points which he elaborates in his *Urjūzah*. Firstly, the station of Kutnah is situated in the plain of al-Qā'ah and the nearest geographical feature which borders the site on the south is the mountain of Dhāt al-Qaṣaṣ. Secondly, the place in question is the homeland of the tribe of Shahrān and some tribesmen of the Azd. Thirdly, in addition to his mentioning that the station is a watering-place, he adds that there are some levelled traces of the pilgrim road which one finds before approaching Kutnah. Finally, he tells us that the station itself is surrounded by some isolated outcrops and that it is a *barīd*, i.e. a

1. *Al-Masālik*, 135. Cf. al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 644.

2. *Tahdīd al-Mawāḍi'*, 37.

3. *Al-Kharāj*, 188, 192, 248.

4. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 424f.; *Urj*., 52, 1.5; 53, 11.2, 3, 5 (454); 116, 1.5.

post-stage. Al-Hamdānī¹ locates it on the imaginary borderline dividing the Yemen from the Arabian Peninsula. On two different occasions, he demarcates the land of B. Nahd as lying between Jurash and Kutnah. Furthermore, in his dealing with the *maḥajjat Ṣan'ā'*, he notes that Kutnah is situated in Ḥijāzī territory and that it is on the same longitude as Jurash; further, that the distance between them is less than one day's journey. From Ṣan'ā' to Kutnah he gives the distance as fifteen post-stages (sing. *barīd*) and 180 miles, i.e. c. 720 km. The name Kutnah appears to be corrupted in the works of al-Maqdisī² and al-Idrīsī,³ but in the latter's *al-Mushtāq*,⁴ the name of the station appears again without distortion. He states that it is a big village with springs, vineyards, and fruitful palm-trees.⁵

The location of the station is the south-eastern fringe of the blackish plain of al-Qā'ah. Approximately 290° NW, at a distance of c. 30 km., the modern village of Ya'rā is situated, whilst approximately 160° SE, at a distance of c. 4 km., there is the modern highway between Riyadh and Khamīs Mushayṭ. From the wells of al-Qā'ah, or al-Ḥafā'ir as they are locally known, to Kutnah the distance is c. 8 km. in the direction 30° NE. The famous archaeological site of Jurash is situated c. 60 km. to the west of Kutnah. In tribal understanding, the station of Kutnah is placed on the borderline which divides the land of Qaḥṭān in the south from the tract of Nāhis of Shahrān in the north. The pilgrim station of Kutnah is itself located on the south-western bank of Wadi Ray' al-Khalīj. An extensive number of acacias (*ṭalh*), tamarisks (*athl*), and palm-trees (*nakhīl*) surround the

1. *Ṣifāh*, 65, 253, 258, 338f., 356; cf. al-Bakrī, *Mu'jam*, I, 309; II, 359; III, 944, 1004; IV, 115.

2. *Al-Taḳāṣīm*, 111.

3. Shawkat, "Diyār al-'Arab", *JIA*, XXI, 60.

4. 146.

5. There are, in fact, four places in the southern region of Saudi Arabia bearing the name Kutnah. For a detailed discussion of their identification, see al-Masradī, "Kutnah wa-'l-Hujayrah", *al-'Arab*, I-II, 89-94; al-Na'amī, "Tathlīth, Ṭarīb, Kutnah", *al-'Arab*, XI-XII, 834-7; Ibn 'Ayyāsh, "Kutnah Arba", *al-'Arab*, XI-XII, 1017-21.

station. To the west of the pilgrim station at a distance of c. 50 m., there are some scattered outcrops of reddish sandstone. These rocky boulders have about nine illegible Arabic graffiti inscribed on their faces.

Some of the old local people informed us that the Yemeni pilgrims, or the '*uṣbah*'¹ as they were called by the informants, used to make a halt at this watering-place on their way to and from Mecca. Moreover, they asserted that the area of Kutnah has recently become reinhabited after a long period of abandonment. The water of the *manhal* used to be abundant and in use.

On account of the recent resettlement near the station, noted above, the topographical surface of the immediately neighbouring area has become changed. We may assume that one immediate result of this occupation is the complete disappearance of the major monumental features of the ancient pilgrim station. The name of the ancient pilgrim station of Kutnah is preserved at the present time in the name of the ancient well of Kutnah. The well has been sunk vertically below the topsoil. Internally, the circular opening of the well measures c. 3.3 m., whereas externally at the very top of the brim it is c. 4 m. in diameter. The mouth of the well has no solid parapet, but a heap of earth has been accumulated around the well in order to protect it against any kind of danger. The southern half of its rim, including also about eight courses of its shaft lining, has been badly damaged. The present depth of the well is 5.5 m., whilst the depth of its water, when we examined it, was 2 m. The upper part of the circular shaft of the well, measuring c. 2.7 m. in depth, has been lined with about 17 courses of unshaped locally obtained stones varying in size and shape, while the lower part of the well

1. This sobriquet was also used in 1241/1825-6 by a Yemeni traveller. See Ismā'īl, *Kitāb Nayl al-Waṭar*, f.4.

is cut into the solid rock. The stony casing of the shaft of the well is relatively well dressed and the style in which it is executed seems ancient. No binding or plastering materials are used in the construction of the shaft. There are no traces of any facilities such as drinking-basins to be seen near the well. We did not notice any sign of restoration. This well is not now in use and it is deserted by the locals.

5. *The Well of Ranūm / Ibn Sarār* (see pl. XXVII.B, map 13.3)

It is obvious that the well of Ranūm was named after the wadi in which it is situated. Al-Hajrī¹ identifies Ranūm by stating that it is a wadi where the two wadis of Tarj and Bīshah become united. Al-Radā'ī² links both the wadi and the well with the name Ranūm. Al-Hamdānī³ on the other hand, comments on this by saying that Ranūm is a well (*manhal*) of great depth. Yāqūt⁴ refers to it merely as a place. The name of the well under discussion seems to have been recently changed to Bi'r Ibn Sarār, whereas the archaic name is nowadays preserved only in the wadi. Accordingly, the recent name can be noted in the accounts of some of the modern explorers. Ḥamzah,⁵ during his journey from Bīshah to Khamīs Mushayṭ in 1934, stopped at this well. He assessed its depth at 7 m. The well, in his time, had an abundance of water. Furthermore, he mentions that there are some ancient graffiti and tribal marks to be seen in the vicinity of the well. Further, Philby,⁶ in the course of his trek in 1936, made a short halt near the well. He tells us that there are two wells; one of them was dry although

1. *Taḥdīd al-Mawāḍiʿ*, 316f.

2. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 429; *Urj.*, 16, 1.1.

3. *Loc. cit.*

4. *Al-Buldān*, III, 47.

5. *Bilād 'Asīr*, 65.

6. *Arabian Highlands*, 119; cf. also *idem*, "The Land of Sheba", *GJ*, XCII, 5.

it had an imposing mouth, i.e. c. 15 feet in diameter, whilst the other well was in use and had a narrow shaft and plenty of drinkable water. He puts the depth of its shaft at 4 feet. With respect to its dating, he makes it about 1366 years old. Al-Bilādī,¹ in his discussion of the Yemeni road, alludes to this well by its present name, but gives very few details.

The former well, mentioned by Philby, has vanished virtually without trace, while the latter must have been the one in question. Moreover, it is clear that his assessment of the well is based on local tradition, according to which, we are informed, as Philby in 1936 had himself been told, it was dug by the army in ‘Ām al-Fīl. Consequently, referring to it as the Well of the Elephant is as current in that area as reference to it under the name of Ibn Sarār, about whom we have not yet been able to obtain any information, even from the native people. The well itself is dug in a torrent-bed of the well-wooded wadi of Ranūm, or Wadi al-Bi’r as it is also known by the locals. This wadi is bordered on the east and the west by two parallel extensive ridges. The opening of the well measures c. 1.5 m. in diameter. Its rim, which is c. 0.5 m. in height from ground level, is circular and built with unshaped blocks of local granite. A round concrete protective parapet is constructed around its mouth. The shaft of the well, which is c. 9 m. in depth, is very solidly lined with well-cut local masonry all the way down to the bottom. During our inspection, the well contained drinkable water to a depth of c. 1 m. The well is provided with three small rectangular drinking-troughs. The design and construction of these drinking troughs are neither artistic nor accurate. They are very simply erected near to the well. They are all built at ground level with short raised walls. The first one is isolated and placed to the south of the well, whilst the other two are attached to the northern edge of the well. Their average

1. *Bayn Makkah*, 188.

measurements are 1 m. x 0.5 m. x 0.2 m. in depth. It is likely that these facilities, including the parapet of the well head, must have been lately annexed to the well, since there is no hint in the available authorities concerning their building. Approximately 300 m. to the north-west of the well's area, we were able to document a number of Arabic inscriptions which are engraved on the rock-faces.¹ The immediately neighbouring area to the well, has no visible trace of foundations or constructions associating it with the pilgrim route.

6. *The Wells of Şufan / al-Bayḍā'* (see pls. XXVIII.A-B, XXIX.A-B, map 13.5)

According to al-Ḥarbī,² the pilgrim station of Şufan is situated on the Yemeni-Ḥaḍramī pilgrim route. He locates it within the interval between Wadi Turabah and the *manhal* of Awqaḥ. According to Ibn Khurdādhbah,³ it is situated to the west of Wadi Turabah and he tells us that it has two wells. Qudāmah⁴ refers to it as Şuffur and he locates this station between the two wadis of Turabah and Karā'. He also states that it is a station (*manzil*) in the desert with two rooms to accommodate the person who was in charge of the postal service (*şāḥib al-barīd*). He continues by saying that the water at the station is obtained from two wells. The compiler of the *Urjūzah* and al-Hamdānī⁵ on the other hand, describe the place in question as an abundant watering-place (*manhal*). The latter, in enumerating the stations of the road, locates al-Şufan, as he calls it, at a distance of 22 miles, i.e. c. 44 km., to the west of Wadi Turabah. In addition to mentioning this distance, he further records the degrees and minutes of its

1. See inscriptions nos. 26-32 below.

2. *Al-Manāsik*, 645, n.1; 649, n.1.

3. *Al-Masālik*, 134.

4. *Al-Kharāj*, 188, 192.

5. *Şifah*, 340, 435; *Urj.*, 71, 1.3 (451); 109, 1.3.

geographical latitude.

It appears most likely that the statement of Qudāmah is not precisely accurate, since he locates the pilgrim station between the two wadis of Karā' and Turabah.¹ The most misleading point in his statement is that the entire area lying between Wadi Karā' and Wadi Turabah is virtually a lava-field (*ḥarrah*), while in fact it is not desert as he indicates. The rest of the above-mentioned geographical statements indicate that the geographers themselves are almost all in agreement that the pilgrim station of Şufan is situated somewhere between the wadi of Turabah and the watering-place of Awqaḥ. Within that stretch of land, there are, of course, many geographical features through or near which the course of the pilgrim route passes. These features are not mentioned by any geographer under examination, except by the writer of the *Urjūzah*. According to his geographical order in the *Urjūzah*, it seems probable that the most appropriate watering-place, being located between Wadi Turabah and the *manhal* of Awqaḥ and nearly matching the location of the place name in question, is the wells of al-Bayḏā'.

As far as we were able to discover, the classical names applied to the station, whether they be Şufan, Dufan, or Şufur as appears in the available authorities, are no longer known to the local people or to contemporary local geographers.² The four dug wells of al-Bayḏā' are situated along the course of a wadi known locally as al-'Ūlah. Wadi al-'Ūlah, which is extensively dotted with acacias (*ṭalh*), emanates from another wadi in the south known as Qayā' and pours

1. Cf. al-Maqdisī, *Al-Taḳāsim*, 111; al-Idrīsī, *al-Mushtāq*, 145; Shawkat, "Diyār al-'Arab", *JIA*, XXI, 60. Both of these geographers followed Qudāmah in locating the station within the interval between the two wadis of Karā' and Turabah. The place name appears in their writings as Şufur. Al-Idrīsī adds that it is a small village with two wells and that its water is fresh and drinkable.

2. Cf. e.g. al-Bilādi, *Ma'ālim*, V, 154.

into the area of 'Ann in the north-west. The location of the wells is situated approximately 25 km. to the north of the mountain of Khuluq¹ with approximate azimuth of 330°. The isolated volcanic mountain of al-Qurayn² is situated approximately 340° to their north at a distance of c. 10 km. To their east lies the mountain range of Ḥaḍan.

The wells have been excavated into solid ground. They are close to each other, the approximate distance from one well to another being c. 50 m. The general condition of their structure is satisfactory. Each well has been provided with a recently constructed parapet, built of stones coated with cement, their approximate height above the surrounding area being c. 0.2–0.3 m. The dominant shape of their openings is circular, with average measurements of 1–5 m. in diameter at the very top, whilst the average measurements of their vertical shafts fluctuate between 12 m. and 18 m. in depth. The shaft is *completely lined* with local masonry downwards to the bottom. The casing is relatively well dressed, but no materials have been used for mortaring or coating. At the time of our examination, their water-level was between 1.5 m. and 2 m. in depth. They are not provided with any kind of facilities such as drinking-basins. In the immediately surrounding area of the wells, there are no visible signs of constructions associated with the pilgrim route except that some scattered remains of circular watch-towers are to be seen midway towards the mountain of al-Qurayn.

7. *The Well of Awqaḥ* (see pl. XXX.A, map 13.5)

In dealing with the Yemeni and the Ḥaḍramī pilgrim routes respectively,

1. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 435; *Urj.*, 70, 1.4.

2. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 435; *Urj.*, 71, 1.2.

al-Ḥarbī¹ locates the station of Awqaḥ on both of them. Although he provides no details whatsoever about the station itself, his accounts concerning the two above-mentioned pilgrim roads show that the pilgrim route of Ḥaḍramawt joins the Yemeni one at Wadi Karā'. Their union in one main track occurs before it approaches the site in question. The station as a watering-place (*manhal*) is reported twice by al-Radā'ī² in the course of his march towards Mecca and again on his way home. In addition to al-Hamdānī's concurring in what information is provided in the *Urjūzah*, he states in his commentary that the *manhal* is situated in a wadi and has sweet water. Further, it is said that the fame of its freshness and pleasant water was admired to such an extent that when an ill person from Ṣan'ā' had been asked about his desire, he replied by saying that it was for a draught obtained from the water of Awqaḥ! On the other hand, an identical statement, recorded by al-Iṣfahānī,³ al-Iskandarī,⁴ and Yāqūt⁵ indicates that Awqaḥ is a watering-place (*manhal*) situated in a wadi belonging to the tribe named after Ibn Judhaymah b. 'Awf b. Naṣr b. Mu'āwiyah. In the writings of the modern geographers⁶ and travellers, the place name in question is often combined with the name of another wadi called al-Nayyir which is close to the former one. However, the geographical formula of the place name appears in their works thus: Awqaḥ wa-l-Nayyir.

The two wadis of Awqaḥ and al-Nayyir, where there is a cluster of ancient and recently dug wells, are located approximately 6 km. to the west of a

1. *Al-Manāsik*, 645, n.2.; 649.

2. *Al-Hamdānī*, *Ṣifah*, 436; *Urj.*, 72, 1.2 (451); 108, 1.5.

3. *Bilād al-'Arab*, 9.

4. *Kitāb al-Amkinah wa'l-Miyāh*, f.19.

5. *Al-Buldān*, I, 281f. Cf. also al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Jibāl*, 220.

6. For more information, see e.g. Ibn Bulayhid, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, III, 68f.; al-Bilādī, *Ma'ālim*, X, suppl. no.ii, 69f.; al-Jāsir, *al-Mu'jam al-Jughrāfī*, pt.i, 128.

volcanic landmark mountain called al-Ghurbān¹ at an approximate azimuth of 240° from the mountain. The famous plain of Rukbah, or al-Jird as it is locally called, borders the two wadis on the north-west, the north, and the north-east, whilst the wadi of Kalākh,² which is the next area through which the pilgrim route passes, borders them on the south-west at a mean distance of c. 34 km. The wadi of Awqaḥ, in contrast to the immediate ground that surrounds its channel, is much deeper and is richly covered, particularly along its sandy banks, with short, greenish bushes. The main bed of the wadi is also interposed with numerous self-sown acacias (*ṭalh*). The entire area under discussion, in conjunction with its neighbouring tract, i.e. the plain of Rukbah, is the sphere of continuous rapid movements by native nomads in quest of grazing lands for their livestock.

The wadi of Awqaḥ, after which the watering-place under discussion was named, is a tributary of the main wadi of al-Nayyir. As has been mentioned above, they both have several ancient and recently dug wells along their main courses. The wadi of al-Nayyir has two significant dug wells. The first is situated in the extreme northern section of the wadi. It has a circular opening, measuring c. 1.5 m. in diameter, whereas its circular shaft measures c. 12 m. in depth. The main building material used in constructing its opening and shaft is local dressed stones. When we inspected it, it contained water to c. 2 m. in depth. The second well is located to the south of the former well. It has a circular mouth c. 1.9 m. in diameter and its circular shaft measures c. 15.3 m. in depth. At the time we investigated it, it contained water to c. 1 m. in depth. The manner in which this well is constructed is similar to that of the first well. According to our informant, both these wells are in use and their waters are drinkable.

1. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 435; *Urj.*, 71, 1.2.

2. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 436; *Urj.*, 72, 1.5.

The local people, a sept of the tribe of 'Utaybah, told us verbally that the most famous and ancient dug wells are the two which are situated in the main course of Wadi Awqaḥ. The inhabitants of the area call them alternatively either al-Ḥafā'ir or the wells of Awqaḥ. In this context, it should be pointed out that the former term, whenever it is used by local people, usually refers to any ancient dug well (*bi'r*). We had experienced a similar case when the inspection was carried out at the wells of al-Qā'ah in the territory of Shahrān. The two ancient wells of Wadi Awqaḥ are relatively close together. The first dug well has a concentric stony parapet with a height of c. 1 m. above the immediate level of the main course of the wadi. It has a circular opening c. 2 m. in diameter and its cylindrical shaft measures c. 6.5 m. in depth. When we inspected it, the well contained water to an approximate depth of c. 1 m. The second dug well is located c. 50 m. to the south of the former. *This well has a recently cemented parapet with a height of c. 0.8 m. from the immediate surface of the wadi bed.* Its round opening measures c. 1.9 m. in diameter. It has a cylindrical shaft with a depth of c. 15.3 m. At the time of our inspection, the well was dry.

Each of these dug wells is almost analogous in its construction. They have been lined, from the very top downwards to their bottoms, with trimmed local granite stones. As has been mentioned, because of their location in the main course of the wadi, their heads have been protected against any kind of danger by constructing stony parapets. There are no facilities such as troughs provided with them. There are no signs of ancient buildings in the immediate vicinity associated with the pilgrim route.

II. Small Mosques (Prayer Places) on the Saudi Section of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim

Route

During the period of our field-work along the Saudi section of the Yemeni upland pilgrim route, we managed to register a number of small and simply designed prayer places. It is noticeable that most of these small mosques are constructed just to the side of the main course of the pilgrim track. Furthermore, the majority of them are situated in plains and levelled areas. With regard to their general design and architecture, they have been simply marked out using primitive methods. In the face of a lack of information concerning their foundation and construction, we may suggest that most of these prayer places may have been recently executed either by private philanthropists, charity administrators, or by ordinary wayfarers themselves for the benefit of their fellow men and women. Since, according to Islamic teaching, a traveller is not obliged to make a halt in his journey in order to perform his prayers, the preliminary conclusion may be reached that, as the locations of the prayer places indicate, these prayer places severally were probably erected at each stage (*marḥalah*), i.e. at about one day's march distant from each other.

The Mosque of Khālīd (see pl. XXX.B, fig. 7, map 13.1)

The Mosque of Khālīd is only mentioned by the poet al-Radā'ī in his pilgrimage *Urjūzah*. Al-Hamdānī, in his turn, clarifies al-Radā'ī's verses by adding that 'the Mosque of Khālīd is situated at the foot of al-Thuwaylah. It has short

walls. It is roofless.¹ Nowadays, this small mosque is still known to the local inhabitants by its ancient appellation. It presently demonstrates exactly the same design and construction as that described by al-Hamdānī.

Although, as far as we are aware, there are no data given by either Arab geographers or historians regarding the actual inland road over which the commander, Khālīd b. al-Walīd, and his troops marched when they were despatched by the Prophet Muḥammad in 10/631 against Ibn al-Ḥārith b. Ka'b of Madhḥij into Najrān,² we may tentatively propose that Khālīd b. al-Walīd, along with his warriors, might have taken the highland route, which is the theme of this study, on his march from Mecca to Najrān. Hence, since the mosque under discussion is situated approximately 90 km. to the south-west of Najrān, it might indeed have been marked out by the Muslim commander Khālīd b. al-Walīd in order to commemorate this event. However, the present circumference of the mosque seems small to accommodate the men of Khālīd's army who numbered four hundred.

The piece of land on which the Mosque of Khālīd is constructed is bordered on the north-north-east by Wadi 'Amdān, whereas it is bounded on the west-north-west by the chain of the mountainous ridge which is referred to locally as Qahrāt al-Dhi'āb and the main track of the Yemeni pilgrim route. On the south-south-east, it is demarcated by a vast plain known locally as al-'Aṣīdah.

The structure of the mosque is a simple rectangle in plan and it is roofless. The *qiblah* wall measures c. 15.6 m. in length from the east to the west,

1. *Ṣifāh*, 419; *Urj.*, 42, 1.3.

2. Cf. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, 339f.; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 1724f.

in the centre of which a *miḥrāb* is inset. The *miḥrāb*, which measures c. 2 m. in width and c. 1 m. in depth, is pointed in shape and projects beyond the front wall of the sanctuary. The western wall of the mosque measures c. 21 m. in length and c. 0.5 m. in thickness. The main entrance to the mosque, which measures c. 2 m. in width, is located in the south-western corner of the mosque. The courtyard of the mosque is enclosed with short loosely constructed walls. They now survive to a height of c. 0.25 m. Its ground is neither paved nor evened out; it is strewn with local pebbles. The main building materials used in its construction are volcanic stones varying in shapes and in sizes. These blocks of stone have been piled up in straight rows forming ultimately the borders of the mosque itself. The absence of binding and plastering materials in the structure of the mosque leads us to believe that these rows of boulders were not in fact intended as foundation layers for the mosque's walls. They were originally moved away from the two circular watch-towers which adjoin the southern limit of the mosque. The area immediately surrounding the mosque has no visible traces of any foundation or construction associated with the mosque.

In addition to the above-mentioned mosque, it seems appropriate to illustrate here, if only briefly, two other prayer places. Regarding the foundation and construction of the two mosques of al-Qūḍayf and Shamrān, there is, as far as we are aware, no historical or geographical information to be found in the available Arabic sources. The first mosque is located in a remote desert devoid of any dwellings round about, so that we were practically unable to gain its local name. Accordingly, it is perhaps permissible to label this mosque by the name of the wadi near which it is built. It is in fact situated near the western bank of Wadi al-Qūḍayf (see pl. XXXI.A, map 13.3). Its location is just to the side of the main course of the Yemeni pilgrim route where it crosses the above-named wadi

heading towards another wadi called al-Khāyī'. Wadi al-Khāyī' runs roughly parallel to Wadi al-Quḍayf. The confluence of these two wadis is approximately 13 km. to the north-east of the village of Tabālah.

The area immediately surrounding the mosque, which is completely evened out and cleared of natural obstacles, has no visible signs whatsoever of either foundations or constructions relating to the Yemeni pilgrim route. The structure of this mosque is simply oblong in plan and it is roofless like the Mosque of Khālid. Its floor is flattened and may have been pressed down. The open-air enclosure is only bounded on three of its sides, forming finally the extension of the sanctuary, whilst the south-western side is invisible. These three short walls are mainly built of varied sizes and shapes of local stones. The wall of the *qiblah* measures c. 11.5 m. in length. Its height is in the range of c. 0.3 m., while the thickness is c. 0.5 m. In the centre of this, a *mihrāb*, measuring c. 2 m. in width and c. 1.5 m. in depth, is set in a semicircular shape. A small, irregularly shaped piece of sandstone, measuring c. 0.7 m. x 0.3 m., is placed vertically at the apex of the *mihrāb*-niche. It bears illegible Arabic graffiti. There are a few scattered stones deriving from the north-eastern and north-western limits of the mosque. These two short walls, measuring roughly c. 4 m. each in length, are built in a haphazard manner. They are constructed in the main with sizeable blocks of stone.

The second of the other mosques to be mentioned here is the Mosque of Shamrān, as it is commonly referred to by the local people (see pl. XXXI.B, map 13.3). It is a small, roofless prayer place located in a vast arid plain now called Ray' al-Qurayhā'. This plain is situated approximately 15 km. to the south of the modern village of Ujrub. In spite of the fact that there is no mention of the

mosque in the authorities, al-Qurayḥā', as a village and watering-place situated on the Yemeni pilgrim route, is reported by some geographers.¹ The prayer place in question is built on the eastern foot of a huge volcanic mountain with two peaks called locally Kabāthah. On the north-east, the mosque is bordered by three other mountains which are together known as al-Ray', whilst on the western limit, it is bounded by the course of the main track of the Yemeni pilgrim route. Here, the route passes towards the north-west via a small accessible pass named after the mountain of Kabāthah. Although there are clear traces of the pilgrim track, especially in the region of the mosque, many portions of its stone-paving and shouldering have unluckily been completely destroyed by unheeding motorists.

The area immediately adjacent to the mosque is entirely covered by rocky slabs, in the midst of which there are two circular watch-towers or cairns which are today in a state of delapidation. They were erected about 8 m. away from the front of the wall of the *qiblah*. It appears most likely that the genuine structure of the mosque itself might have been recently disturbed, since its short walls, except for the front wall of the sanctuary, have totally vanished. The wall of the *qiblah*, which measures c. 18.6 m. in length and c. 0.5 m. in thickness, is constructed of more than two courses of locally obtained volcanic stones. These pumice layers are aligned in a systematic way. The remaining height of this wall fluctuates between 0.2 m. and 0.7 m. The *miḥrāb*, which is set in the middle of the wall and measures c. 1.5 m. in width and c. 1 m. in depth, is built in a semicircular shape and projects beyond the wall of the *qiblah*.

1. For further details, v. *inf.* p.198 f.

III. Ancient Settlements

1. *The Town of Jurash* (see pl. XXXII.A, fig. 8, map 13.2)

According to al-Bakrī,¹ Jurash is a Najdī province (*mikhlāf*) belonging to Mecca. He adds that it is the most extreme southerly limit of the plateau of Najd. Yāqūt makes it politically a Yemeni province.² Al-Iṣṭakhrī's statement³ includes the observation that the two cities of Jurash and Najrān, which are both fertile with palms, are almost identical in size. In conjunction with al-Ṭā'if and Ṣa'dah, they have tanneries. In addition to this industry, Jurash was a military town offering training and maybe also producing some defensive and offensive weapons. It is reported⁴ that the people of al-Ṭā'if sent 'Urwah b. Mas'ūd and Ghaylān b. Salamah, during the seige of their town in 8/628, to Jurash in order to be trained in the operating of certain equipment, including the mangonel (*manjanīq*) or catapult (*arrādah*) and some form of armoured vehicle (*dabbābah*).

Jurash, which was a fortified town, was conquered peacefully after a month of siege during the lifetime of the Prophet Muḥammad, in 10/631. Ṣurad b. 'Abd Allāh al-Azdī, the conqueror, was appointed as governor of this town. After introducing the teachings of Islam to its inhabitants, it became the home-town of many prominent scholars, especially in the field of Prophetic Tradition (*Ḥadīth*).⁵ It has also been stated⁶ that Lady al-Khayzurān, the mother of the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, lived in Jurash before she moved to Mecca.

1. *Mu'jam*, I, 13, 309.

2. *Al-Buldān*, II, 126f.

3. *Al-Masālik*, 24. Cf. also al-Maqdisī, *Al-Taqāsīm*, 87; al-Idrīsī, *al-Mushṭaq*, 146.

4. Cf. al-Wāqidī, *al-Maghāzī*, II, 805; III, 924; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, 312; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 1669.

5. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, 337f.; al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 59; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 127.

6. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 412.

The town of Jurash is situated on the western bank of Wadi Bishah, approximately 15 km. south-east of Khamīs Mushayṭ and c. 44 km. from the city of Abhā. The latest development in house building encroaches on the archaeological site. As concerns our particular study here, it should be stressed that the town of Jurash itself is not included in the Arab geographers' lists of the way-stations of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route; it was evidently a main pilgrim station situated on its southern branch as it comes up from Ḥaḍramawt via Najrān. According to al-Iṣṭakhri,¹ Aden is linked by two roads with Mecca: the coastal route, which is the longest, and the inland route that passes through Ṣan'ā', Ṣa'dah, Najrān, and Jurash, after which it goes directly via al-Ṭā'if until it terminates at its destination in Mecca. Ibn Ḥawqal has a similar version.² He omits Najrān and al-Ṭā'if and instead includes Jurash, Bishah, and Tabālah. In addition to this route, al-Hamdānī states that Jurash is connected via a short cut with Ṣa'dah.³ This route joins the main Yemeni pilgrim route near the area of Sarūm, i.e. Sarūm al-Fayḍ as it is now known.

At all events, it seems safe to deduce that Jurash was a pilgrim station located along the Aden-Mecca inland pilgrim route. Geographically, because of the town's proximity to the main course of the Yemeni highland route, i.e. c. 60 km. away, the Ḥaḍramī pilgrims might have followed this route as soon as they left Jurash.

With regard to modern explorations and excavations, it may be noted that in 1936 Philby paid a short visit to the area, namely the mountain of Ḥamūmah

1. *Al-Masālik*, 28.

2. *Ṣūrat al-Ard*, 41. Cf. Abū al-Fidā', *Taqwīm al-Buldān*, 83.

3. *Ṣifāh*, 262f.

which is situated approximately 1000 m. to the east of the site of Jurash.¹ Nevertheless, he clearly failed to identify or mention either the archaeological site by its name or those ancient inscriptions and drawings engraved on the rock faces of the summit of the above-mentioned mountain. Between January and April of 1980, the Saudi Department of Antiquities carried out the second preliminary mission as a part of their comprehensive archaeological survey programme, in the course of which the archaeological site of Jurash was included. The result of this survey, which included excavating a sounding in Jurash followed by scientific analyses of its findings consisting of pottery and bones, indicates that the site of Jurash was initially occupied during the early centuries A.D., whereas the latest phase of habitation terminated in the first quarter of the eleventh century A.D.²

2. *The Settlement of Banāt Ḥarb / Qaryat al-Ma'din* (see pls. XXXII.B, XXXIII.A-B, XXXIV.A, fig. 9, maps 13.2, 15)

The great majority of the early Arab geographers locate the pilgrim station of Banāt Ḥarb in the interval between the two stations of Yabanbam (or Yabambam) and al-Jasdā' which have not yet been precisely identified. The spelling of this pilgrim station's name is variously reported from one geographer to another in the sources at our disposal. Al-Ḥarbī³ places Banāt Ḥarb between Yabambam and Bīshah. He adds that there are two watering-places, viz Najr and Hirjāb, situated within the tract lying between these two pilgrim stations, while al-Jasdā' and al-Maythā' he respectively locates in the land lying between Banāt

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1. *Arabian Highlands*, 135. Cf. Twitchell, *Saudi Arabia*, 134; Ḥamzah, *Bilād 'Asīr*, 54.
 2. Cf. Zarins, "The Comprehensive Archaeological Survey Program", *Aṭlāl*, V (English section), 25; (Arabic section), 25f.; plate no.X. For more information regarding the town of Jurash, see al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 255-8, 339; Minorsky, *Ḥudūd al-'Ālam*, 146; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, I, 184; al-Jāsir, "Jurash", *al-'Arab*, VII, 593-9.
 3. *Al-Manāsik*, 644.

Ḥarb and Bīshah. Ibn Khurdādhbah¹ describes Banāt Ḥarb as a great village with a water-spring and only one well. According to Qudāmah,² it is a large village containing many houses and plantations. He adds that the water there is drawn from a spring and a dug well with sweet water. In his description of the Yemeni pilgrim road, al-Hamdānī³ estimates the distance between Yabambam and Banāt Ḥarb at 20 miles, i.e. c. 40 km. and he assesses the distance between the latter station and al-Jasdā' at 22 miles, i.e. c. 44 km. The poet al-Radā'ī, during his journeys to and from Mecca, passed near or through this station. He hints at the existence of a watering-place (*manhal*) situated in the main course of that wadi, on the bank of which the pilgrim station in question is located. In his commentary on al-Radā'ī's verses, al-Hamdānī⁴ tells us that the name of Banāt Ḥarb is applied to both the village and its wadi which abounds in palm-trees and dug wells. He finally states that gold might be found in the village of Banāt Ḥarb. On another occasion, al-Hamdānī⁵ locates it on the north-western fringe of the plain of al-Qā'ah. When speaking of Wadi Ṣanān, he alludes to the fact that this wadi is situated in the proximity of the settlement of Banāt Ḥarb.⁶ Regarding its tribal identity, he states that Banāt Ḥarb belongs to a sept called Julayḥah of the tribe of Khath'am.⁷ Al-Maqdisī⁸ says no more than that the distance is one day's journey (*marḥalah*) between Banāt Ḥarb and al-Jasdā'. According to al-Idrīsī,⁹ the pilgrim station in question is a sizeable village inhabited by a large population. He adds that it has abundant palm-trees and that its water is obtained from a sweet spring.

1. *Al-Masālik*, 135.

2. *Al-Kharāj*, 188, 192.

3. *Ṣifāh*, 340.

4. *Ṣifāh*, 427; *Urj.*, 57, 1.5 (453); 115, 1.3.

5. *Ṣifāh*, 426.

6. *Ṣifāh*, 427.

7. *Ṣifāh*, 257.

8. *Al-Taqāsīm*, 111f.

9. *Al-Mushūʿ*, 146. Cf also Shawkat, "Diyār al-ʿArab", *JIA*, XXI, 60.

As can be seen, we have only sparse information provided by the Arab geographers concerning this pilgrim station. In the course of the present writer's field-work, an archaeological site was discovered which seems to correspond remarkably well with the geographical descriptions reviewed above. In connection with the particular detail that gold might be found there, it should be noted that the present appellation of the site, which is widely used by the local people, is Qaryat al-Ma'din (i.e. 'the Village of the Mine'). As our survey demonstrated, it is also evident that Wadi Şanān, including its pass, is situated approximately 4 km. as the crow flies to the north of this pilgrim station. These facts confirm the information provided by al-Hamdānī.

The ancient pilgrimage settlement of Banāt Ḥarb, or Qaryat al-Ma'din as it is now locally known, lies roughly between longitude 43° - 00' and latitude 19° - 45' N. It is situated approximately 40 km. at the azimuth of 225° to the south-west of the small modern village of Şamkh. This village is located on the modern motorway linking the city of Khamīs Mushayṭ with the town of Bīshah. The most convenient track to be followed, in order to reach this site, is the dirt road which commences at Şamkh. From this village, the metalled route goes on in a south-westerly direction through or near the following places in the order given: Wadi Kutnah, Maksar al-Finjāl mountain, al-Qawz village, al-Marfaq village, then Wadi al-Khaḍrā'.

The settlement of Qaryat al-Ma'din is flanked by mountains on three sides. It is demarcated on the north-north-east by the mountain-ridge chain called

al-Ḥaṣāṣah,¹ whereas on the south-south-east it is bounded by Wadi Qahrān and the extreme eastern end of the mountains of al-Ḥaṣāṣah. It is bordered on the west by Wadi Hirjāb,² on the bank of which a small village called al-Khaḍrā' is situated. According to verbal information provided by old local people, this site was once covered by many and various fragments of grindstones, sherds of pottery, and oxidized pieces of metal-work. Presently, however, there is nothing to be seen of this, with the exception of some pieces of greenish slag scattered in and around the site itself. The activity of looting the site is now clearly recognizable in the bad state of the houses' foundations which are buried beneath the rubble. It is evident from our preliminary survey of this site that the ancient pilgrim station of Banāt Ḥarb, or Qaryat al-Ma'din, was a large village containing at least twenty-two building units varying in size and in design. It should be noted that certain houses are now buried beneath the rubble. The main building materials used in constructing these houses were local shaped stones. We were unable to discover the cemetery of this ancient settlement. Approximately 500 m. to the north-west of this station, we discovered a legible Arabic inscription.³

3. *The Settlement of Bīshah* (see pls. XXXIV.B, XXXV.A, map 13.3)

Al-Ḥarbī⁴ provides no information regarding the pilgrim station of Bīshah. He merely locates it between al-Maythā' and Tabālah. 'Arrām⁵ sets this locality within the geographical bounds of the village of Tabālah. He adds that it belongs

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1. This place name is reported in the *Urjūzah* with initial *khā'*. See al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 428; *Urj*, 59, 1.2.
 2. This wadi is reported in the *Urjūzah*. See al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 426f.; *Urj*, 57, 1.5 (453f.); 115, 1.4.
 3. See inscription no. 25 below.
 4. *Al-Manāsik*, 644.
 5. *Jibāl Tihāmah*, 421. Cf. al-Iṣfahānī, *Bilād al-'Arab*, 5f.

to B. 'Uqayl and that water is obtainable there. According to Ibn Khurdādhbah,¹ Bishat Bu'tān, as he calls it, is situated between the two pilgrim stations of Jasdā' and Tabālah. He describes it as a large village with abundant water. Qudāmah² includes the pilgrim station of Bīshah twice in his pilgrimage itinerary. His statement indicates that it is a great and populous village situated in the main course of the wadi. Al-Hamdānī³ calls it Bīshat Ba'tān and locates it between al-Jasdā' and Tabālah. From the former place to Bīshah, he gives the distance as 21 miles, i.e. c. 42 km. He also assesses the distance from Bīshah to the latter place as 11 miles, i.e. c. 22 km. Ambiguously, Yāqūt⁴ gives the distance between Bīshah and Tabālah as 24 miles, i.e. c. 48 km. He tells us, moreover, that the distance between Bīshah and Mecca is 5 postal-stages, i.e. c. 120 km. With the exception of these two geographers, none of the remaining Arab geographers give the distances between the pilgrim station under discussion and its neighbouring ones. Al-Maqdisī⁵ says nothing about Bīshah as a pilgrim station; he simply locates it between Jasdā' and Tabālah. Al-Bakrī,⁶ on the other hand, identifies Bīshah as a wadi of Tihāmah, which, he states, emanates from the mountains of Tihāmah and pours into the eastern limit of Najd. Al-Idrīsī⁷ wrongly calls it Bīshat Yaqzān instead of Bīshat Ba'tān. He reports that it is a small, civilized town with convenient accommodation. According to him, it is a fertile area containing flowing water and a few palm-trees.

It would appear that the ancient pilgrim station of Bīshah is known by

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1. *Al-Masālik*, 134.
 2. *Al-Kharāj*, 188, 192. Cf. al-Hajrī, *Tahdīd al-Mawāḍi'*, 263.
 3. *Šifāh*, 340, 430; *Urj.*, 62, 1.1 (453); 113, 1.2.
 4. *Al-Buldān*, IV, 529.
 5. *Al-Taqāsīm*, 112.
 6. *Mu'jam*, I, 293f.
 7. *Al-Mushūq*, 146.

two names, viz Bīshat Bu'tān (or Ba'tān) and Bīshat al-Nakhīl. The former appellation is used by the two geographers Ibn Khurdādhbah and al-Hamdānī, while the latter name is employed by the poet al-Radā'ī in his *Urjūzah*. According to al-Hamdānī, Ba'tān¹ is a main wadi situated within the territory of the tribe of Khath'am. Needless to say, the ancient name of this pilgrim station is currently preserved in the large modern city of Bīshah, which lies roughly on longitude 42° - 30' E and latitude 20° - 00' N.²

In the vicinity of Bīshah, there are a number of places through or across which the Yemeni highland pilgrim route passes, viz Wadi Bu'tān (or Ba'tān) and its pass, Wadi Tarj, the pass of al-Nahqah, and Wadi Dhī Sumār, which are presently known to the local people by their ancient appellations. They are only reported by our poet al-Radā'ī in his pilgrimage *Urjūzah*.³ The archaeological remnants of the pilgrim route can be easily identified now in the form of the circular watch-towers constructed near and along the banks of the above-mentioned wadis, and some broken segments of stone-paving and shouldering built in the passes of Bu'tān and al-Nahqah. These two passes are situated in a mountainous ridge, approximately 15 km. to the south of the city of Bīshah itself. Together they could be regarded as the southern gates of Bīshah and its wadi. At the present time, large sections of the structure of the route have been badly damaged by modern motorists.

1. See *Ṣifah*, 430.

2. For detailed information about the city of Bīshah, see Ibn Bulayhid, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 176; al-Jāsir, *al-Mu'jam al-Jughrāfī*, I, 186.

3. See al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 430; *Urj.*, 62, 1.1,3,4 (452); 112, 1.3 (453); 113, 1.2.

4. *The Settlement of Tabālah* (see pls. XXXV.B, XXXVI.A, fig. 10, maps 13.3, 16)

Since the advent of Islam, as al-Bakrī tells us,¹ the town of Tabālah, including the area immediately neighbouring, such as the desert of Ḍahr, has been the homeland of the tribe of Khath'am. Geographically, he regards Tabālah as a part of Najd province,² whereas Yāqūt³ makes it part of the Tihāmah territories. 'Arrām,⁴ on the other hand, states that the village of Tabālah has a *minbar*. It has been reported that this was the place in which the famous idol known as Dhū 'l-Khalaṣah was erected.⁵ In the year 9/630, the town of Tabālah, along with neighbouring territory, was conquered without any military struggle by the Muslim commander Quṭbah b. 'Āmir.⁶ In the time of the Umayyad caliphate (41–132/661–750), its name is associated with the Umayyad general, al-Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf al-Thaqafī, who was appointed as governor over it by the fifth Umayyad caliph, 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (73–86/692–705).⁷ During the course of insurrections of the Ibāḍiyyah in the Yemen which occurred during the reign of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwān b. Muḥammad (125–132/743–750), the town of Tabālah itself, along with the area of Jurash, witnessed fighting between the Umayyad forces, under the command of 'Abd al-Malik b. 'Aṭiyyah al-Sa'dī, and the Ibāḍiyyah rebels led by 'Abd Allāh b. Yaḥyā al-Kindī, otherwise known as Ṭālib al-Ḥaqq.⁸

1. *Mu'jam*, I, 90, 301. Cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 9.

2. *Mu'jam*, I, 9.

3. *Al-Buldān*, V, 10. Cf. al-Iṣfahānī (*Bilād al-'Arab*, 14), who includes it within the territory of Ḥijāz.

4. *Jibāl Tihāmah*, 420f.

5. Ibn al-Kalbī, *al-Aṣnām*, 34–36; al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 268.

6. Al-Wāqidī, *al-Maghāzī*, II, 754; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 162; III, 578f.; al-Balādhurī, *Fuūḥ*, 59.

7. Cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 10.

8. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 2012f.; al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūj*, IV, 82f.

In his interpretation of al-Radāʾī's verses, al-Hamdānī¹ clearly states that Tabālah, which used to be a trading village with palms and a *ghayl*, was mainly inhabited by clans of the tribe of Quraysh, although the town was latterly completely destroyed by nomads (*al-bādiyah*). According to al-Idrīsī,² Tabālah was a province relating to Mecca and was situated at the foot of a mound of earth. It was, he says, a small town containing flowing springs, plantations, and palm-trees. As a main pilgrim station situated on the course of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, Tabālah is recorded by most of the early Arab geographers,³ the majority of whom locate it between Bīshah, or Bīshat Baʿṭān, and Ranyah. None of these geographers relate the mileage between the pilgrim stations, with the exception of al-Hamdānī who does include both the distances between stations in miles and the degrees of their latitude. Ibn Khurdādhbah⁴ states that it is a large town with many springs. Qudāmah⁵ includes it in both of his lists of the Yemeni pilgrim way-stations, in addition to which he describes it as a great village with a large population and containing a *minbar*, springs, and dug wells. According to al-Hamdānī,⁶ Tabālah is a main pilgrim station located between Bīshat Baʿṭān and al-Quraḥyāʾ on the course of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. He assesses the distance between the former station and Tabālah as 11 miles, i.e. c. 22 km., whereas he gives the distance between the latter station and Tabālah as 22 miles, i.e. c. 44 km. Al-Hamdānī, moreover, indicates that Tabālah is situated at 23 postal-stages, or 276 miles, i.e. c. 552 km., in distance from Ṣanʿāʾ. In his description of the Ḥaḍramī lower pilgrim route, al-Hamdānī⁷ makes Tabālah the

1. *Ṣifāh*, 431.

2. *Al-Mushūʿ*, 145, 151.

3. See e.g. al-Ḥarbī, *al-Manāsik*, 644; al-Maqdisī, *al-Taqāsīm*, 112; Shawkat, "Diyār al-ʿArab", *JIA*, XXI, 60.

4. *Al-Masālik*, 134.

5. *Al-Kharāj*, 188, 192.

6. *Ṣifāh*, 340, 430; *Urj*, 63, 15. See also Ṣafī al-Dīn, *Marāṣid*, f.98.

7. *Ṣifāh*, 342f.

rendezvous-station for the two pilgrim roads of Ḥaḍramawt and Ṣanʿā'. Regarding the location of Tabālah in relation to surrounding cities, al-Idrīsī¹ says that it is situated at a distance of 4 stages, i.e. c. 96 km., from Mecca; 3 stages away from the pre-Islamic fair of 'Ukāz; 4 stages away from Jurash; and 50 miles (*sic*), i.e. c. 100 km. from Bīshah. Yāqūt,² on the other hand, locates Tabālah at 52 parasangs (*farāsikh*), i.e. c. 156 miles, from Mecca, which, he says, is equal to eight days' march. He goes on to state that it is also six days' march from al-Ṭā'if and that it is only one day's march from Bīshah.

The ancient name of the pilgrim station of Tabālah is currently preserved in a small modern village and its wadi which pours into Wadi Bīshah. The village is situated approximately 35 km. to the north of the city of Bīshah.³ Approximately 30 km. to the north of the area of Tabālah, there is the ancient track of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.⁴

Roughly 14 km. from the city of Bīshah on the modern motorway heading towards the village of Tabālah, there are two archaeological sites consisting mainly of the visible remains of what are believed to have been two fortresses. They are situated approximately 2 km. at roughly 80° to the north-east of the motorway in grazing land now called the region of al-Daylamī, or al-Ṣubayḥī. Locally, the first fortress is known as the lower fortress of al-Khabrā', whereas the second is known as the upper fortress of al-Khabrā'. In dealing with the territory of the tribe of Khath'am, al-Hamdānī⁵ indicates that the tribesmen settle in Bīshah,

1. *Al-Mushtāq*, 152.

2. *Al-Buldān*, V, 10.

3. For detailed information concerning the present village of Tabālah, see al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, I, 137; Ibn Bulayhid, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, I, 67f.

4. For more information on the construction and the current condition of the pilgrim route itself and also the area through which it passes, v. *sup.*, p.160 f.

5. *Ṣifah*, 258.

Tarj, Tabālah, and al-Marāghah. He adds that al-Marāghah is *mostly* inhabited by people of the tribe of Quraysh, and it contains, he says, two fortresses. The first fortress, which belongs to B. Makhzūm, is called al-Qarn, whilst the second citadel, which relates to B. Sahm, is known as al-Burqah. Apart from the account of al-Hamdānī, we do not unfortunately have any other solid literary evidence to support our argument. Nevertheless, we may tentatively assume that because of their location in the tract lying between the city of Bīshah and the village of Tabālah, they have in one way or another a close connection with the Yemeni highland pilgrim route which passes over this area. Accordingly, al-Hamdānī's statement seems likely to correspond well with these two fortresses. Below, we shall attempt briefly to shed some light on their construction and general design.

The lower fortress is roughly rectangular in plan, measuring about 57 x 54 m. The general structure of the fortress is now in ruins. The remains of its outer short walls enclose an area which is completely covered with fallen debris and scattered heaps of shifting sand. The main gate of this building measures c. 2 m. in width and has been built in the centre of the eastern wall. The inner doorway of this gate is extensively blocked by earthen heaps on both sides. Approximately 3 m. away from the south-western inner corner of the building, there is also another earthen heap which rises above ground level to a maximum height of 3 m. Apart from the above-mentioned features, there are no visible traces of construction to be seen in its inner courtyard.

The upper fortress, which measures about 77 x 64 m., is erected some 700 metres to the north of the lower fortress. The area immediately surrounding this building is covered by shifting sand-dunes. This establishment has more facilities

than the former building. The total extent of its facilities consists of nine rooms, viz A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and K. The presently surviving remains of these are their foundations and the bases of the walls. Room A, which is rectangular in plan and measures c. 9 x 7 m., is firmly attached into the centre of the northern wall. In the north-western corner of the fortress, room B is built and measures approximately 52 x 3.5 m. Adjoining room B on the western side, there is a small chamber, C, measuring about 8 x 3.5 m. In the south-western corner of the fortress, there is a complex consisting mainly of four small rooms: D, E, F, and G. Their mean measurement is 3 x 8.8 m., with the exception of chamber D which measures about 6 x 8.8 m. The south-eastern corner of the fortress is occupied by two chambers, i.e. H and K. The former room measures about 12 x 8 m., while the latter is about 12 x 10 m. Each of these rooms has a door opening onto the courtyard. The main gate of this citadel is built in the centre of its western wall and measures about 5 m. in width. The courtyard of this fortress is covered by fallen mud-bricks and shifting sand-dunes. The main building material used in the construction of both fortresses is dried mud-bricks, with the application of adobe mortar between the courses.

5. *The Settlement of al-Qurayḥā'* (see pl. XXXVI.B, map 13.3)

Al-Qurayḥā' is a pilgrim station. In addition to al-Ḥarbī's providing no details about this station, he actually locates it between Ujrub and the lava-field of Wadi Karā'.¹ Al-Hamdānī² includes it among those villages that belong to the tribe of B. Hilāl. On two separate occasions, he reports that this pilgrim station used to be a village which was later destroyed. The verses of al-Radā'ī indicate

1. *Al-Manāsik*, 644, n.13.

2. *Ṣifāh*, 258.

that the pilgrim station in question is a watering-place with abundant water resources. The poet himself seems to have stopped at this place on his journeys both to and from Mecca. In addition to al-Hamdānī's confirmation of what is said by the poet,¹ he adds that this station is an animal feeding-place (*mi'laf*).² In referring to the Yemeni way-stations, al-Hamdānī³ locates al-Qurayḥā' between Tabālah and Karā'. He estimates the distance at 22 miles between the former place and this station, whilst he sets it at 16 miles between the latter place and al-Qurayḥā'. There is no mention of al-Qurayḥā' as a pilgrim station in the rest of the available geographical sources, its absence from which may perhaps indicate its being a minor station without importance.

The ancient name of this pilgrim station is currently preserved in a wadi called Ray' al-Qurayḥā'. It is situated c. 146 km. to the north of the village of Tabālah and c. 15 km. to the south of a small modern village called Ujrub. The course of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route traverses the main torrent-bed of this *wadi*, heading north-north-west towards Ujrub. On the northern side of the wadi, there remain some disintegrating structures of the route such as stone-paving and shouldering. There are also some monuments, including two circular watch-towers built beside a small praying-place known locally as the Mosque of Shamrān. They are situated near a small pass called Kabāthah through which the pilgrim route passes in a north-westerly direction.

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1. *Şifah*, 379, 432; *Urj.*, 66, 1.2 (452); 111, 1.2.
 2. Cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, IX, 256.
 3. *Şifah*, 341.

CHAPTER V

ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE YEMENI HIGHLAND PILGRIM ROUTE

Part One: Yemeni Section

Part Two: Saudi Section

The main purpose of this chapter is to identify and classify the major construction and design features of road engineering. In order to achieve a comprehensive and detailed analysis of building the road itself and its facilities, this chapter is divided into two main parts. The first part deals with the Yemeni section, whilst the second is devoted to the Saudi section.

Part One: Yemeni Section

I. Construction and Design of the Water Resources in the Yemeni Section of the Pilgrim Route between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah

As can be seen from our descriptive accounts of the Yemeni section, most of the early Arab geographers confined themselves to indicating the water resources of the main populated settlements such as Raydah and Athāfit; others, like al-Ḥarbī (when he does so), only mention the water resources without stating their names. Consequently, the data, relating mainly to the construction and design of the water-tanks and which have remained accessible to us, are neither adequate nor specific. Keeping in mind the fact that the Yemeni water-tanks and rain-water pools, which have been discovered during our survey of the Yemeni section of the ancient pilgrim route between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah, are comparatively few in number, it is undoubtedly true to say that their variety in shape, their building technique, and also the facilities with which they have been provided, present adequate details relating to the nature of their construction and, furthermore, substantiate their value. Accordingly, on the ground of style and construction, they can be divided into four main types, viz:

- i. A circular water-tank linked with a *ghayl*;
- ii. A divided, rectangular water-tank;
- iii. A circular water-tank with narrow, stepped sides; and
- iv. A square water-tank with broad, stepped sides.

As a result of a thorough examination of the available literature regarding the pilgrim routes, particularly the Zubaydah road and the Egyptian and Syrian routes, we find that many features, mainly in the building of the reservoirs, correspond reasonably well with those of the Yemeni route. Thus, whenever it is appropriate, we may refer to the above-mentioned studies of pilgrim routes for analogous examples. We shall now discuss briefly the above-mentioned categories, and this will be followed by a description of their general characteristics, including designs and principal features. Then we shall shed light on the water-pools (*ma'jils*) and, finally, there will be a short account of the khans.

I.1 *The water-tanks*

i. A circular water-tank linked with a *ghayl*

According to two statements made by Ibn Manẓūr¹ and Yāqūt,² the term *ghayl* denotes permanent water which flows along the surface of the ground. The former, moreover, adds that any place holding water, especially when its water is derived from a wadi, is called a *ghayl*. Hence it may mean an artificial

1. *Lisān*, XI, 511 f.; cf. Beeston *et al.*, *Dictionary*, 54 f.

2. *Al-Buldān*, IV, 222.

subterranean water-channel.¹ Today, the term in question is broadly used in the Yemen to denote the meaning given by Ibn Manẓūr and Yāqūt.² In this connection, it is worth citing a short passage from Wilkinson's article on the water-supply system in Oman. He states that

the term *falaj* covers two types of water supply to be found in Oman. The first...is simply the traditional *qanāt* which taps underground water and leads it along a gently sloping tunnel until it is close to the surface...The second...performs the same function, but collects its water from semi-permanent pools in mountain wadis and then leads the water along a plastered open channel to the required settlements and fields.³

According to Yāqūt,⁴ the word *falaj* denotes the running water which comes out from a spring (*ʿayn*). Therefore, this term *falaj* can be regarded in some aspects as synonymous with the word *ghayl*.⁵

The above description by Wilkinson clearly approximates to the water-supply system exemplified by the Yemeni water-tank of al-A'yun. At this station, the circular *birkah* is adjoined on its north-eastern side by an open *qanāt* which links the water-cistern with a dormant spring (*ghayl*). The essential function of the open ditch is to convey the water along into the *birkah*. The aqueduct slopes gently down towards the cistern in order to facilitate the flow of the water. This method of water supply, which has been used in Southern Arabia either for irrigation purposes or for other general uses, consists simply of a resource or catchment area, a canal, and a collecting basin. It should be noted that

1. Serjeant, "The *Ghayls* of Ṣan'ā", *Ṣan'ā*, 19.

2. See also Smith, *Simt*, II, 126.

3. "Water Mills", *PSAS*, X (1979) 127.

4. *Al-Buldān*, IV, 271; cf. Beeston *et al.*, *Dictionary*, 44.

5. For more detailed information regarding the *qanāt* and its parallels in other countries, see Cressey, "Qanats, Karez, and Foggaras", *GR*, XLVIII, 27-44.

this style of design in water supply at al-A'yun tallies in many ways with those in Ṣan'ā'.¹ It is less likely that this technical system of water supply has any exact parallel, particularly on the northern inland routes of Arabia.

ii. A divided water-tank

At the station of al-Azraqayn, the rectangular water cistern, measuring c. 19 x 17 m. with a depth of c. 3.8 m. from ground level, is divided into three unequal basins. These interior troughs have been separated from each other by two short partition walls with approximate measurements of c. 0.4 m. to 0.5 m. in height and c. 0.5 m. in thickness. At the western end of the northern partition wall, a small, deep gap is cut in order to allow the water to flow. It should be noted that the heights of the partition walls do not reach the same level as the enclosure wall of the *birkah*.

This constructional method of separating the main water-tank into small interior basins by means of short walls is virtually replicated in the structure of the water-cistern of Darb Zubaydah; the main difference is the way in which it was carried out. At the pilgrim station of al-'Aqabah,² which lies c. 50 km. to the north-east of the city of Rafḥā in Saudi Arabia, the water-tank is divided by a central partition wall into two halves that are further subdivided into small troughs. All of its partition walls reach the same level as the main enclosure wall. On the same pilgrim route, another different method of dividing the main *birkah* into only

1. Cf. Serjeant, "Ghayls", Ṣan'ā', 19-31.

2. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 75 f., 162; *idem*, "Water-Tanks", *Aṭlāl*, III, 57 f.

two basins can be found at the pilgrim stations of al-Bid¹ and al-Mislah.² The height of the partition walls of the water-cisterns in both of these two stations reaches the same level as the outer wall of the *birkah* and each wall has a small gap to permit the flow of water.

iii. A circular water-tank with narrow, stepped sides

The circular water-cistern of al-Ḥusayn, measuring c. 12 m. in diameter at the very top, is dressed with well-cut reddish limestones along its walls. It has been entirely stepped with about six interior circular steps. The neat arrangement of its terraced steps shows the great skill that must have been practised in the type of construction. A similar example of terraced sides involving a square water-tank is to be found near al-Masājid in the Yemen.³

Outside of the Yemen, there is a *parallel* example of a circular water-cistern with narrow, stepped sides at the old pilgrim station of al-Kharābah.⁴ This station, located c. 11 km. north-east of al-‘Aqīq near al-Ṭā’if, is situated on the Basra-Mecca pilgrim road. Its *birkah*, measuring c. 54 m. in diameter at a mean depth of c. 4.84 m. below ground level, is stepped from the top down to the bottom with about twelve interior circular stairs. Apart from its magnificent engineering, the *birkah* represents an analogous style of applying terraced steps along its walls.

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1. *Idem*, *Darb Zubaydah*, 86, 163; Craig, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, V, 97-100.
 2. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 101, 163; al-Dayel, "Preliminary Report on the Third Season", *Aṭlāl*, III, 43-45.
 3. Rathjens & Wissmann, *Vorislamische Altertümer*, 147, photo. 94.
 4. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 104 f., 133; *idem*, "Water Tanks", *Aṭlāl*, III, 57. Cf. al-Dayel, "Preliminary Report on the Second Phase", *Aṭlāl*, II, 62 f.

iv. A square water-tank with broad, stepped sides

The square water-cistern of al-Gharānīq, measuring c. 30 x 30 m. at a mean depth of c. 3 m., has its sides stepped with three broad platforms. Each stair, measuring c. 0.8 to 1 m. in width, is built gradually against the next. An identical method of using gradual, broad-stepped sides is involved in the building of a rectangular water-tank which is situated to the west of Ṣan'ā'.¹

This style of broad steps arranged along the cistern walls appears unlikely to be found in the water-tanks of Darb Zubaydah or in those of the Egyptian and Syrian pilgrim routes. According to al-Rāshid,² there is only one rectangular *birkah*, called al-Shīḥiyyāt, which has some traces of broad steps in its northern and southern sides.

1.2 The Main Features

i. Flood-diversion walls

The diversion walls system, which is involved in the construction of a water-cistern, may be defined as constructions or barriers which impede and control the flow along the flood-bed of a wadi. Therefore, their essential function is mainly to augment, regulate, and ultimately direct the water course either towards a settling-tank or directly into a *birkah* via the sluice-gates. In some cases, short earthen dams or dykes have superseded the constructed walls. In order to make such dams strong enough to resist the force of a flood rush, masses

1. Rathjens & Wissmann, *Vorislamische Altertümer*, 148, fig. 94, photo. 95.

2. *Darb Zubaydah*, 83 f., 112, 207.

of boulders might have been accumulated around them. This method of directing rain-water into water-tanks is widely applied in reservoir building. According to al-Ḥarbī,¹ in his description of the pilgrim road between Kufa and Mecca, there is a square *birkah* at the interval station of Baṭn al-Agharr² which was built and provided with a filtering-tank (*miṣfār*) by ‘Abd Allāh b. Mālik. The author alludes to the diversion wall of this *birkah* as a *madfa’*.³

At the station of Būbān, c. 4.5 km. to the north of Khaywān, the *birkah* has been provided with such a diversion barrier. The diversion wall is built to the north-east of the side of the water-tank. Its eastern part measures roughly 3.5 m., while the northern part is c. 6 m. As the wall is badly damaged, it is quite difficult to assess the precise measurements of its thickness and height, yet some signs of its structure are to be seen. The structural remains of this wall indicate that it was built mainly of unshaped local granite masonry, using gypsum as a binding material. The stones are placed vertically in rows. When the flood water descends, this deflecting wall would direct the flow of the rain-water to pass into the *birkah* through two sluice-gates on its north-western and north-eastern sides.

This style of deflecting wall has many parallels in the stations of the northern pilgrim routes of Arabia, particularly those on the Darb Zubaydah route. According to al-Rāshid,⁴ some water-tanks, such as that at al-Thūlaymah, have been provided with a series of flood-diversion walls. The second example⁵ can be found in the circular water-cistern of al-Rabadhah, or Birkat Abū Salīm as it is

1. *Al-Manāsik*, 301.

2. For information about this site, see al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 172.

3. Cf. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, VIII, 89, s.v. "al-madfa’".

4. *Darb Zubaydah*, 172-4.

5. Cf. al-Rāshid, *al-Rabadhah*, 42. See also al-Dayel, "Preliminary Report on the Third Season", *Aṭlāl*, III, 50.

known locally. This *birkah* has until now been regarded as the largest reservoir on the pilgrim road of Zubaydah, measuring c. 65.8 m. in diameter with an extant depth of c. 4 m. It has been supplied with two earthen dams which are erected across the bed of the wadi to deflect the flood water into its rectangular settling-tank from the north-eastern and south-western directions.

ii. Filtering-tanks

The principal function of a clearing basin is to collect the flood water by means of its inlet and, when the rain-water has settled down in the *miṣfāt* and the filter becomes full, to permit the excess clean water to flow smoothly and gradually into the main reservoir through its sluice-gate. In addition, the settling-tank minimizes the accumulation of sediment in the *birkah* and it also serves as a drinking-basin for animals. It can be assumed that it may further provide a secondary function as a resistant front line in protecting the whole structure of the main *birkah* against erosion which might result from the violent in-rush of torrential rain.

The three dimensions of such a filtering-tank usually vary from one to another. Presumably, there are two main norms, viz the size of the main water-tank and its frequent use, according to which the building of the *miṣfāt* was designed. The location is normally adjacent to the outer side of the reservoir and was chosen carefully in order to orientate the flow of the flood water. According to the evidence of recent archaeological discoveries, the clearing-basin has three major shapes in plans, viz the rectangular, the square, and the circular. The first two forms of settling-tank are considered to be the most common ones and have been attested in the architecture of Arabian water-cisterns. For instance, the

water-tanks of al-Shīhiyyāt,¹ al-Tha‘labiyyah,² and Abū Salīm,³ which are all situated on the main pilgrim road between Kufa and Mecca, have been provided with clearing-tanks varying in shapes and sizes. Furthermore, some water-basins, such as Tarim and ‘Antar⁴ which are located on the Egyptian pilgrim route, have an identical design and method of filtering their water.

At the station of Raydah on the Yemeni pilgrim route, the circular water-tank of al-Ḥusayn has attached to it on its north-eastern side a small oblong basin, measuring c. 2 x 0.75 m. Although when I inspected the *birkah* its trough was choked up with sand, some traces of its enclosure walls could be observed. It is not possible either to identify or confirm its design with accuracy until the basin is entirely cleaned out. Regarding its function, it is possible to draw only a tentative conclusion based mainly on its present visible size and remains. It seems probable that this small cistern was intended to act as a trough (*ḥawḍ*) and a clearing-basin (*miṣfāt*) too. It could have been made to function as a drinking-basin by blocking its other end which leads into the *birkah*. Another typical example of clearing-basin to be illustrated here is the *miṣfāt* of Birkat al-Miṣḥāt. This is a square settling-tank, measuring c. 5 x 5 m. with an extant depth of c. 2 m. from ground level. It adjoins the main water-tank at its north-eastern corner. It has been provided with only one inlet, measuring c. 1 m. in width, cut in the north-western angle of the basin. It derives its flood water from the nearby wadi. It was built of the same materials used in building the *birkah* itself, i.e. local shaped volcanic stones. Its internal and external wall faces

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1. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 112; al-Helwah, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, VI, 46-50.
 2. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 85 f., 114; Craig, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, V, 97-100.
 3. Al-Rāshid, *al-Rabadhah*, 42 f.; al-Dayel, "Preliminary Report on the Third Season", *Aṭlāl*, III, 50.
 4. Al-Mughannam *et al.*, "Catalogue", *Aṭlāl*, VII, 43 f.

are not covered.

iii. Buttresses

A buttress¹ is a projecting masonry or brick support, constructed onto a wall face, either internally or externally, in order to strengthen it and to absorb the thrust exerted by the pressure of soil and flood water. This type of architectural technique has a wide range of applications, mainly in the construction of defensive buildings and partly in civil establishments. There are many types of buttress, viz the semi-circular, the half-square, and the flying buttress. The first two types are believed, so far, to be the typical buttresses of Arabian architecture; they were used particularly in the building of water-tanks. Therefore, it can be noticed that the half-round and the half-square buttresses could be employed in one building unit alternately. As far as the methods of Arabian architecture are concerned, it is observable in many cases that water-cisterns, whether they are constructed above or below ground level, have been buttressed.

The best example of buttress building in water-tanks of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route is the *birkah* of al-Azraqayn. At this station, the water-cistern, which is c. 3.8 m. in depth below ground level, has been provided internally with three semi-square buttresses, two of which are adjacent to the eastern wall and face the western wall which is supported by one buttress. The bases of the two buttresses which are located in the northern section of the *birkah* are built facing each other and joined by a short barrier that divides the northern basin from the central one. The third buttress, which is placed at the eastern end of the southern barrier, seems to have been built in this position in

1. Cf. Haggar, *Dictionary*, 58.

order to function as a buttress and a podium from which a staircase with about six steps goes down to the bottom of the *birkah*. Their average dimensions are c. 1 x 0.5 x 3.1 m. They are all coated with gypsum, so that there is no visible sign to determine their structures. They must have been built of local volcanic stones brought from the neighbouring mountains.

iv. Sluice-gates and entrances

Broadly speaking, an inlet is, of course, the sole means through which rain and flood water pass into the collecting container. An inlet may, however, take a variety of forms, such as buried water-channels (*qanāts*) and aqueducts, by which a reservoir is able to obtain its flood water from a nearby distributary or tributary channel. According to the constructions and designs of the water inlets in the Yemeni water-cisterns, they can be divided into three main categories, viz

- a. Stepped inlets;
- b. Roofed dual inlets; and
- c. *Simple* inlets.

a. Stepped inlets

In the environs of the town of Raydah where the water-tank of al-Husayn is situated, the *birkah* has been supplied with only one sluice-gate which functions, at the same time, as an entrance into the *birkah*. The waterway, measuring c. 0.8 m. in width, is constructed on the north-eastern side of the reservoir. It is attached on the east to a ruined basin, while on the west it is joined by a staircase of about six steps. The flight of steps, measuring c. 1.2 x 0.5 m., is set into the inner façade of the northern wall of the *birkah*. The second

example is the two sluice-gates of Birkat al-Miṣḥāṭ. At this station, the square reservoir has been provided with two stepped waterways. The first one, measuring c. 2 m. in width, is located at the north-western corner of the *birkah*. It consists of about four steps descending into the bottom of the water-cistern. Its first two steps have been badly damaged. This sluice-gate could have served also as an entrance for people using the *birkah* and for its occasional cleaning. The second waterway, measuring c. 2 m. in width, composed of about six steps, is built at the north-eastern angle of the reservoir and facing the first one. Its inside surface is coated with gypsum. To the south of Dhamār in the Yemen, there is an example of a circular water-tank which is built by involving in its structure an analogous method of a flight of about six steps connected with an inlet.¹ As mentioned above, it is a combined system in that it uses the sluice-gate to act simultaneously as an entrance. Thus, in considering the planning and construction of reservoirs, we can observe that most of the flights are internally built and connected architecturally with the waterways.

In addition to the types of staircases already described, there are two other patterns to be mentioned. At Būbān, the *birkah* has been provided with two parallel rows of projecting stones. They are constructed in the centre of its northern inner façade. The steps are individual and each row has four. These two lines of steps descend diagonally towards the floor of the *birkah*. This way of building a flight of projecting stones corresponds with what has been found in the water-cistern of al-As'ad. According to Scott,² it is a big rectangular water-tank situated to the south-east of Ṣan'ā'. It has been furnished with a flight of projecting stones. The second kind of staircase is exemplified by the water-tank of

1. Cf. Scott, "Journey", *GJ*, XCIII, photo. facing p.107.

2. "Journey", *GJ*, XCIII, 119.

al-Azraqayn. At this station, the *birkah* has been supplied with a flight of six steps. The staircase is built internally on the south-eastern corner of the central basin of the main *birkah*. It is firmly attached along the inside surface of the eastern side of the reservoir. It measures c. 2 m. in length, 1 m. in width, and has approximate measurements of 0.9 x 0.2 m. for each individual step. A flat platform, which serves also as a buttress and measures c. 1 x 0.9 m., is joined to the southern end of that staircase. Although the flight is coated, the visible constructional materials indicate that the steps are built of rectangular and squared volcanic masonry.

b. Roofed dual inlets and cut-inlets

At the station of Athāfit, the *birkah* has been supplied with two different designs of water inlets. These sluice-gates face each other and are situated in the southern half of the reservoir. The first waterway, measuring c. 8 m. in length with an approximate width of c. 7 m., is constructed on the south-western corner of the *birkah*. It consists of dual inlets with two roundish openings. It has been completely roofed in with local undressed blocks of stone. It obtains its flood water for the cistern from a nearby tributary which descends from a hillside called Kayd. It seems likely that this type of roofed inlet is novel in its structure and has as yet no parallel. The second inlet is comparatively sizeable, measuring c. 12 m. in length with a width of c. 3 m. and an extant depth of c. 3 m. It is vertically cut near the southern end of the eastern side of the reservoir. The surfaces of its ground and vertical walls have been perfectly concealed with local flagstones varying in size and shape. In order to enable the inlet to admit as much flood water as possible, its eastern end has been slightly turned towards the adjoining channel.

c. Simple inlet

What is meant by a *simple inlet* is a deep vertical passage which has *merely* been cut or built on the upper edge of a water-tank. Because the deflecting wall is normally erected at a strategic point in order to direct the flow of flood water, such a passage is the means through which the deflected rain-water would pass directly into the reservoir. It appears most likely that this type of sluice-gate became very common, especially in the building of water-cisterns, because of its simplicity and great benefit.

At Būbān, the water-tank of al-Shaykhayn, as the locals call it, is provided with two identical sluice-gates. Both of these inlets have been cut on the northern side of the *birkah*. These two waterways, measuring on average *c.* 0.4–0.55 m. in width with a length fluctuating between 0.75 and 0.85 m., are almost opposite to each other. In addition, their inner surfaces are slightly sunk and sloped gradually into the *birkah*, and they are sealed with a very solid coating of cement. The flood water is directed towards them by a diversion wall which is built to the north-east of the *birkah*.

I.3 Construction materials

Needless to say, people have always sought to benefit from the natural advantages of their immediate environment. The Yemen, with its mountainous regions, has offered to its inhabitants lasting material for their different architectural activities. However, it is evident that hewn stone is the main constructional material of the water-tanks that are situated along the course of the ancient pilgrim route. Quarried volcanic boulders and dressed limestone are the

major types of material used in building these reservoirs. The water-cistern of al-Ḥusayn constitutes the finest example of the use of dressed limestones. It may be deduced from the type of stone used in constructing this *birkah* that the limestones were looted from the neighbouring pre-Islamic castle which is built on the summit of Talfum mountain. At the station of Athāfit, the reservoir is constructed of undressed local volcanic stones. It is also probable that its building materials were hewn from the adjacent mountains. Because stone is the dominant building material, it was used for constructing the *birkah*'s staircases, settling-tanks, inlets, and buttresses. Therefore, neither mud bricks nor baked bricks were applied in the process of construction. With regard to bindings and plasterings, we find that a mixture of cement and gypsum was used either in sealing the floors or covering the inner façade of the sides. The same combination of substances was also employed as a mortar. The water-tanks of al-Azraqayn and al-Shaykhayn have had their walls and grounds sealed with hard, coarse layers of gypsum and cement which make them impermeable. At the station of al-Miṣhāt, the *birkah* is well built of dressed volcanic stones mortared with gypsum. Its inner and outer wall faces are uncoated, but a thin, fine layer of gypsum was laid between its courses.

1.4 The Rain-Water Ponds (*Ma'jil*)

The word *ma'jil* is a technical term commonly used by the Yemeni people. It has been applied to any catchment basin, whether a man-made or a natural depression, being located in a suitable area for collecting rain-water. The

term *ma'jil* is not a recent coinage, since it was used by al-Hamdānī¹ in some of his descriptions. According to Yāqūt,² *ma'jil*, or *al-ma'jil* as he puts it, means originally the giant *birkah* in which flood water is collected, specifically that situated in al-Qayrawān in Tunisia with which, he tells us, many poets were fascinated and composed famous verses celebrating its glory.³ The same term, on the other hand, might be used more generally to designate dug wells.⁴ Niebuhr,⁵ in the course of his famous travels in the Yemen, came across a great number of pools. He applies to these the term *ma'jil* and praises their excellent fresh water. He informs us that a vase was always provided beside each reservoir for drawing water. Finally, he states two interesting points: firstly, reservoirs are mainly situated throughout the fertile parts of the Yemen; and secondly, they are always located by the sides of the highways.

Despite the fact that most, if not all, of the reservoirs under discussion have suffered badly, they are still functioning and apparently capable of holding sufficient quantities of rain-water for the users. It should be noted that owing to their location on the main course of wadis, the density of alluvial deposits is relatively high. We may assume that this was a crucial operating factor which must have affected them considerably. The predominant shape of these rain-water pools is almost roundish or, more precisely, kidney-shaped. The form of their designs appears to have been based on the natural contours of the depression rather than on geometric grounds. In other words, the marginal delineations seem to have been orientated in such a way that they follow the outlines and curves of the

1. *Al-Iklil*, VIII, 56, n.141; 67, n.24; cf. Beeston *et al.*, *Dictionary*, 3.

2. *Al-Buldān*, V, 32, s.v. "*al-ma'jil*".

3. For a detailed account of its architecture, cf. Creswell, *Architecture*, 291f.

4. Cf. Smith, *Simt*, II, 119.

5. *Travels*, I, 302. For other rain-water reservoirs located on his way, see 333, 351f.

hollow. These reservoirs are destitute of many necessary constructional features such as settling-tanks, steps, and buttresses. At the time of our investigations, all of the puddles were full of rain-water, a matter which prevented us from examining the nature of their floors. Hence, the average of their depths fluctuates from 0.7 m. to 1.1 m. from the immediate ground level. Considering their capacity to maintain a water-level rendering the installation usable over a long period, *ma'jils* should have been surface coated with locally available insulating substances such as lime to preclude water from seeping into the earth. Since reservoirs were constructed in various topographical spots, they had in consequence to be built in accordance with the strength or softness of the site's terrain. Accordingly, at Ma'jil Barkān, for instance, there are some signs of such strengthening. The margins of this reservoir are lined with about two courses of undressed local volcanic stones. This ingenious method of placing a stony belt around the *ma'jil* is supposed to have been employed mainly as a safeguard to protect the structure of the pool from any kind of danger. At the same time, it could be used as a podium or pavement on which the user of the *ma'jil* could stand in order to draw water.

II. *The Yemeni Khans situated on the Course of the Ancient Pilgrim Route between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah*

The term *khan* is a Persian loanword in Arabic,¹ strictly denoting a roofed building in which storing, buying, selling, and exchanging of different commercial commodities can take place. In its extended sense it denotes any lodging-house, whether situated in or out of urban centres, which provides a temporary accommodation for the wayfarer and his goods. The term *khan*, which was exclusively used by the Arab geographers and historians, is today seldom used

1. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, XIII, 146. Cf. also Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 341.

by the Yemeni inhabitants. Thus, locally in the Y.A.R., the two terms *samsarah* and *saqīf* are used in lieu of *khan*. The former term is also an Arabicized commercial word,¹ whilst the latter² is a descriptive term with a wider meaning, so that it can be applied to every kind of individual roofed chamber or building, or indeed part of it. Niebuhr,³ on his trek from Mukhā' to Ṣan'ā', made a short halt at some large inns which are situated at approximately 10 miles' distance from Mukhā'. In accordance with what he had been told by the locals, he calls them *maṭraḥ*. In addition, he mentions large numbers of khans and edifices wherever he stayed during the course of his travels in the highland regions in general and on his way from Ta'izz to Ṣan'ā' in particular. During the course of his journey in 1241/1825 towards Mecca, the author of *Kitāb Nayl al-Waṭar*⁴ stated repeatedly the names of the khans at which he, together with his companies, stayed. The writer consistently uses the antenames *maṭraḥ* and *samsarah*. According to Smith,⁵ who was informed personally by al-Akwa', the term *maṭraḥ* is a name which is attached to any travellers' halting-place in the Yemen.

Taking into account the fact that material advantage is a lucrative element which has always been associated with the pilgrimage seasons⁶ whether before the advent of Islam or after, the finding of such mercantile or rest-chambers, especially alongside most of the ancient overland routes,⁷ is not, of course, a recent architectural innovation in the history of road-building. In conjunction with this

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1. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, IV, 380, s.v. "samsar". *This term is Persian in origin.*
 2. Cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 228. Cf. the word *al-ṣuffah*. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, IX, 155; Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, III, 229, 414.
 3. *Travels*, I, 333. He also uses the word *samsarah* for vaulted houses, etc. See 302, 304, 317, 351f.
 4. Ismā'īl, f.5. This MS is preserved in the western library of the Great Mosque in Ṣan'ā'.
 5. *Simṭ*, II, 181. Cf. Lewcock, "The Building", *Ṣan'ā'*, 277.
 6. Qur'ān, XXII: 27f.
 7. See e.g. Blunt, *A Pilgrimage to Najd*, II, 71.

kind of establishment, other constructions, such as fortified castles, palaces, and mosques, were extensively provided on the overland roads. Therefore, many way-stations which are situated on the main pilgrim road from Kufa to Mecca, bear even now various lively examples of this achievement.¹ In respect of the mentioning of khans in the works of most of the early Arab geographers, suffice it to say that such references are relatively meagre and only occasionally crop up in their writing about the inland tracks or in connection with their descriptions of the main towns. Ibn Rustah,² for instance, in his treating of the inland roads that connected the region of Iran with Mesopotamia and over which pilgrims and other travellers passed, mentions numerous constructed khans that are situated on the fringes of those routes. On another occasion,³ he alludes to a great number of khans which were in use in Ṣan'ā'.⁴

Hence, the khans were evidently in existence in Ṣan'ā' as early as the time of Ibn Rustah, i.e. the third/ninth century. Their existence was later even reflected in law, since, as they played a part in the daily life of Yemeni trade and traders, specific legal articles concerning the *samāsir* are embodied in the legislation of Ṣan'ā' (*Qānūn Ṣan'ā'*)⁵ of about the twelfth/eighteenth century. According to Lewcock,⁶ the *samāsir* constructions of al-Azraqayn, Raydah, and other places were among the pious benefactions of Aḥmad, son of Imām al-Manṣūr, who died in 1006/1597 at Ṣa'dah. Samsarat Ma'jil al-Qubbatayn, on the Ṣan'ā'-Ta'izz route,

1. For detailed information, see al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 222-7; *idem*, *al-Rabadhah*, 22-39; al-'Azzāwī, "Ṭarīq al-Ḥajj al-Qadīm, *Darb Zubaydah*", *Sumer*, XLIV, 199-213.

2. *Al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 163 & *passim*. Cf. Stein, *Old Routes of Western Iran*, *passim*.

3. *Al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 112.

4. For a valuable detailed study of the khans in Ṣan'ā', see Lewcock, "The Building", *Ṣan'ā'*, 276-302. For information about khans in other Yemeni cities, cf. Harris, *A Journey*, 248f., 288, 291, 325, 331.

5. Serjeant, "The Statute of Ṣan'ā'", *Ṣan'ā'*, 184, § 4.x; 191, § 26.v.

6. "The Building", *Ṣan'ā'*, 277f.

was renovated in accordance with the instructions of Imām al-Mu'ayyad (d. 1053/1643-4). On the other hand, it is suggested that the khan of Ḍīn, or Marmal, was built by Queen Arwā. As far as we know, there was no serious attempt made by the early geographers and historians to research the foundation and construction of the Yemeni khans that are situated on the inland pilgrim route and indeed it seems even now to be too early, especially in the absence of firm evidence, either to shed light on their history or to offer a precise period for their establishment. Nevertheless, we may tentatively suggest that this architectural achievement in constructing such buildings along the course of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route was probably undertaken at some time during the medieval and post-medieval periods of Yemeni history.

During our survey in the Y.A.R., we came across numerous khans which are situated, in general terms, alongside the course of the ancient pilgrim road between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah. It appears that the area of al-Miṣhāt, approximately 45 km. as the crow flies to the north of Khaywān, is the farthest point on that track to which the khan string extends (see tab. 11).

Below, we shall now point out some general architectural characteristics and the main features of design that are shared in their constructions. They deserve to be briefly illustrated as they may serve to give a good idea of their inner and outer appearance and of the manner in which they are constructed.

(i) Most of the main pilgrim stations have been provided with a khan, the location of which is usually chosen near to a water resource, and in a slightly elevated position in contrast to the neighbouring ground level. The sites of al-Maṣra' and al-Ḥamūdī clearly exemplify these features (see pl. XXXVII.B).

(ii) Khans, in general, are comparatively small buildings. They consist of only one storey. The common shape of their plans is roughly rectangular. The majority of khans have been supplied with small appurtenances, such as an alcove for cooking and a chamber for storing personal effects and other foodstuffs. These utilities open into the central hall. Other khans are simply composed of one rectangular hall.

(iii) Various shapes and sizes of locally hewn blackish stones form the main construction materials. Binding and plastering substances, such as cement and gypsum, are not used; instead, small unshaped broken shingle and pebbles are applied in the fillings. The height of their walls does not exceed more than 3 m. Decorative motifs are not shown in the procedure of their building.

(iv) Arches (*uqūd*) are widely used in the construction of Yemeni khans. There are two main types of arch occurring in these buildings, viz the round and the pointed.¹ It is apparent that the round arch is the chief form which is applied in their structures. The arch structure is formed with roughly oblong-shaped voussoirs, which have strength to sustain the weight of the superimposed structures. In some cases, a pointed arch is used instead of a lintel or it is constructed above it. It is more likely that relieving-arches have been implemented in order to diminish the weight of the superimposed structure (see pls. XXXVIII.A-B and XXXIX.A).

There is inadequate data to establish exactly when arches were introduced

1. For information regarding the origin and wide spread of such arches, see Creswell, *Architecture*, 102f.

in Yemeni architecture, but the earliest hint touching on this issue is a scant allusion made by the Yemeni historian al-Rāzī¹ (d. 460/1068). In the context of a narrative dealing with events of the second/eighth century, he tells us about the arrival of Muḥammad b. Khālīd al-Barmakī² as the new Abbasid governor in Ṣan'ā' in 183/799. In the course of his short stay of about one year, al-Barmakī accomplished many benefactions in Ṣan'ā', among which was his construction of the Barāmīkah House (*Dār al-Barāmīkah*), later known as the Mint (*Dār al-Ḍarb*). The historian describes this establishment by saying that it is situated in a place called the Straw-sellers' Market (*Sūq al-Ṭabbānīn*) and that it has numerous large arched gates. Furthermore, al-Rāzī points out that the year 407/1016 was the time in which, except for two arches, there were no more visible signs of those arches and all had vanished.

As can be understood from his slender account, our historian does not provide much detailed description of their shapes and constructions, so that we have no knowledge of the specific form in which they were executed, whether they were round, pointed, or horse-shoe arches. However, in view of what al-Rāzī says, two interesting hypotheses could be deduced from his statement. Firstly, it may be tentatively suggested that the year 183/799 might be considered the earliest period in the Islamic era during which arch-building was known and introduced into the Yemeni Islamic architecture. Secondly, apart from two centuries over which some of these arches have survived, this architectural technique of involving arches in Yemeni buildings was possibly introduced by the Barmakid family. Having a Persian origin, they might have been culturally

1. *Tārīkh Ṣan'ā'*, 106.

2. He was celebrated (among other things) for his project of constructing a *ghayl* in Ṣan'ā'. For details, see Serjeant, "Ghayls of Ṣan'ā'", *Ṣan'ā'*, 20, 22-26.

influenced by the architectural context of their homeland, i.e. Iran, or Mesopotamia.

(v) Roofs are mainly built with large irregular boulders, the length of which fluctuates between 0.9 m. and 1.1 m., whilst the average width is between 0.4 m. and 0.7 m. They are composed of locally obtained blocks systematically arranged in a horizontal position to form eventually a complete flat roof. The ceiling is supported from the inside by round arches which are based on buttresses jutting out from the wall on either side.

(vi) Each khan has been provided with only one entrance, roughly measuring 1.7 m. in height and c. 0.6 m. in breadth. There is no trace whatsoever to indicate that the gates might have been equipped with moving doors. Gate-steps are built across each entrance. The khans are not supplied with openings either in their walls or ceilings. Thus, their interiors are shrouded in darkness. Finally, the inner grounds are neither paved nor cemented; some of them, however, have been levelled and partially sealed with fine soils (see pl. XXXVII.A).

Due to the fact that the *samāsir* that have been visited during the course of our survey can be categorized under only one identical type of style and design, a paradigmatic description of them may be briefly attempted below.

The Khan of al-Bawn (see fig. 11)

This one-storey khan is situated about 5 km. to the north of 'Amrān and approximately 15 km. to the south of the town of Raydah. It has been locally named after Qā' al-Bawn, because of its location on its western fringe. The

modern motorway between Şan'ā' and Şa'dah passes approximately 100 m. to its east. When we inspected it, the *samsarah* was in a relatively satisfactory condition, but deserted. It is nearly rectangular in plan and measures roughly 10.5 x 11 m. It is entirely constructed of volcanic masonry. Although the construction materials were unshaped and unequal in sizes, they have been carefully chosen and skilfully dressed. The average measurements of its hewn stones are c. 0.5–1 m. in length with a mean thickness of c. 0.5–0.7 m. No plastering or binding material has been used, but small unshaped pebbles are fitted into the gaps. It has no windows, but only one entrance with a lintel forming a roundish arch. The gate is built in the centre of the southern wall and measures c. 2.8 m. in height and c. 2.5 m. in width. The khan is composed of a central hall, measuring c. 11 x 5.5 m. from the north to the south. At the eastern and western sides of the main hall, there are small ruined rooms. *The roof is flat and built of stone slabs. The ceiling rests on about six round arches which are constructed of local trimmed stones. The arches run from the eastern wall to the western one. They are supported on either side by stone buttresses built into the wall. The floor is not sealed with any material, but partially levelled.*

Part Two: Saudi Section

I. Construction and Design of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Road

This part of the chapter is wholly devoted to the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim road. Similar to our treatment of the Yemeni section above, we shall now endeavour to make a brief comparative study in which analogous examples are included. The general frame of our discussion of the construction and design of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route shall be based on five main points, *viz*:

- i. Paving
 - a. Paved Passes
 - b. Paved Segments
- ii. Levelling
- iii. Shouldering
 - a. Low Shouldering
 - b. High Shouldering
- iv. Ramping
- v. Walling and Cairns.

Due to the fact that most of the early Arab geographers and historians were not sufficiently enthusiastic in their treatment of the Arabian inland pilgrim routes to include in detail the construction and design of such routes, we have been left with inadequate allusions made within the context of their descriptions of the inland routes. Consequently, the extent of our knowledge concerning the methods of engineering employed in road-building, e.g. the existence or absence of paving, levelling, shouldering, and similar features, is unfortunately so limited that often

we are forced to resort to conjecture.

i. Paving

a. Paved passes (see fig. 12)

Ibn Manẓūr¹ defines *manqal* as either a mountain road or a short-cut route. He adds that the road itself is also called a *naqīl*. Besides the '*aqabah*', it denotes an ascent or a mountain pass. He says further that it denotes a difficult route constructed in a mountainous area. Finally he concludes that '*aqabah* is a high mountain or a hillock which forms an obstacle to the road and which has been cut in order to construct a road through it.

At the present time, the term *naqīl*, which is synonymous with '*aqabah*', is widely used by the inhabitants of South Arabia, including those who live in the central highlands of the Yemen, to denote a mountain road or a track,² whereas the term *maghrabah* which, as Wilson³ informs us, occurs frequently in connection with place names in the western mountainous region of the Yemen, means a small pass. Therefore, *maghrabah* can be understood as an equivalent of *naqīl* or '*aqabah*. Furthermore, it has been reported that the word *darb* often refers to a high-road, causeway, or a pass over/between mountains.⁴

The whole area of Wadi Bayḥān was once an important centre in and around which the South Arabian kingdom of Qatabān, with Timna' as its capital,

1. *Lisān*, XI, 674, 676; I, 621.

2. Smith, *Simt*, II, 128; cf. Redhouse, *al-'Uqūd*, III, 88, n.532.

3. *Mapping*, 160.

4. Smith, *Simt*, II, 122; cf. Redhouse, *al-'Uqūd*, III, 73 f., n.427.

grew up and flourished. As a result of the recent archaeological survey of that region, it has become evident that the ancient incense road passed through this wadi heading westward to the territory of the kingdom of Saba' and its capital Mārib, which is situated approximately 65 km. from the kingdom of Qatabān. Two mountain passes, viz 'Aqabah Najd Marqad and 'Aqabah Mablaqah, were constructed in the vicinity of the kingdom of Qatabān in order to facilitate the progress of the trade caravans.¹

For the purposes of this analytical study, we shall briefly examine these two cols, along with others, in terms of their engineering works.

The pass of Najd Marqad is built between the mouths of the Wadi Bayhān and the Wadi Ḥarīb. The path through this defile is paved and flanked on both sides with parallel walls. It is evident that the roadway of this pass was originally paved. As a result of natural erosion however, with the exception of two small segments, most of the stone-paving structure has now disappeared. From these two remaining sections of stone-paving, it is clear that irregular blocks were used.² According to Groom,³ the length of this paved roadway is five-hundred yards.

It is believed that this pass featured a custom-post in ancient times for levying taxes on merchants and their laden caravans. Bowen suggests that the roadway of Najd Marqad 'would not necessarily act as a funnel to herd a caravan through the pass, it would serve as a device to keep a caravan in line once it

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1. See Doe, *Southern Arabia*, 215, plate nos.112-113.
 2. Bowen, "Archaeological Survey", *ADSA*, 12.
 3. "The Northern Passes", *PSAS*, 37.

started.¹

The pass of Mablaqah, which leads into Wadi Ḥarīb, is named after the wadi in which it is situated. It has been assumed that the Mablaqah pass replaced the function of the Najd Marqad pass sometime between the fourth and first centuries B.C.² The Qatabanians improved this pass and then built a long narrow roadway through it. The length of this path is approximately three miles and its width fluctuates between 12 and 15 feet. The highest part of the pass is paved and stepped. Bowen reports that there are two dedications inscribed in the rock walls at the top of the pass.³

There are two other passes that should be mentioned here. The first of these is the Naqīl of Ghūlat 'Ajīb which is situated on the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.⁴ According to Ibn al-Mujāwir,⁵ in the course of his description of the ancient road linking the city of Ṣan'ā' with Ṣa'dah, this pass-route was hewn and also provided with a stepped path by the *tubba'* As'ad al-Kāmil in pre-Islamic times.

The second is the pass of al-Ṭā'if. It is reported that during the dynasty of B. Ziyād (Tihāmah and most of the Yemen were under its rule during the period 203-407/818-1016) a slave named Ḥusayn b. Salāmah (d. 402/1011) succeeded in gaining control over the Ziyadid state. This pious man in the course of his reign provided the Yemeni pilgrim route with many and various

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1. "Archaeological Survey", *ADSA*, 12. For other possibilities proposed for the roadway's function, see *ibid.*, 13; Groom, "The Northern Passes", *PSAS*, 73.
 2. See Groom, "The Northern Passes", *PSAS*, 75.
 3. *Ibid.*, 12.
 4. For further information about this pass, see above p.127 f.
 5. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 202 f.

architectural facilities among which was his engineering work of 'Aqabat al-Ṭā'if. According to the available authorities,¹ this pass was perfectly constructed by Ḥusayn b. Salāmah, but Yāqūt² informs us that it was later completely blocked by his son. It connected the holy city of Mecca with the city of al-Ṭā'if. It seems to have been a long pass, since it takes at least one day's journey to traverse it from Mecca heading towards al-Ṭā'if and a half-day's march in the opposite direction. Regarding its width, it has been reported that three laden camels could have passed through it simultaneously.³

In order to cover and assess the engineering similarities in the construction of the northern mountain passes and their pathways, particularly those that are situated on the pilgrim routes, whether inside or outside the Arabian Peninsula, we shall now describe some of them briefly.

In 1961, Shalom Kotzer discovered in Palestine a dated inscription consisting of eight legible lines, which had been incised on a grey basalt stone in simple Kufic script. The importance of this inscription lies in the fact that it was cut and erected in the time of the fifth Umayyad caliph, 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (73-86/692-705) in order to commemorate the achievement of levelling a certain difficult ascent or mountain pass ('*aqabah*'), situated on the Damascus-Jerusalem road. The text of this inscription indicates that this project was accomplished under the supervision and management of Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥakam in the year 73/692.⁴

1. See e.g. 'Umārah, *Tārīkh*, 10 f.; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, II, 479; Bā Makhramah, *Thaghr*, 60.

2. *Al-Buldān*, IV, 8 f., s.v. "al-Ṭā'if".

3. It is tempting to suggest that the pass here in question might be that which is today the so-called 'Aqabah of Karā', or al-Hadā' as it is now known. It has been recently opened up to motor traffic.

4. Sharon, "Notes and Communications", *BSOAS*, XXIX, 366 f.

According to Ibn Khallikān,¹ the pass (*'aqabah*) of al-Bustān, which is situated on the pilgrim route between Mecca and Baghdad, was constructed by Queen Zubaydah (c. 145–216/763–831). Her determination to execute this costly work was so great that she issued an order to her authorized representative to carry out this task, even if every hatchet-stroke dealt during the course of the work were to cost her a *dīnār*. Ibn Rustah,² in his description of the pilgrim station of al-'Aqabah, informs us that this station (*manzil*) was originally a steep slope or an obstacle and that it was ultimately graded and smoothed.

In conjunction with the valuable study of the pilgrim route of Zubaydah conducted by al-Rāshid, the comprehensive archaeological survey carried out by the Saudi Antiquities Directorate has also revealed

three paved

mountainous segments relating directly to the above-mentioned pilgrim track. These three sections of the Zubaydah road have been constructed at varying intervals along this road which resembles, in terms of engineering, certain features of the Yemeni highland pilgrim road.

The first paved pass, or Mudarraǰ no.I,³ lies approximately at 21° 35' N. by 40° 5' E., c. 7 km. to the south-west of the modern village of Zaymah. This village is in Wadi al-Yamāniyyah, 35 km. north-east of Mecca. The preserved segment of the pilgrim route is built in hilly terrain and crosses a low ridge between sizeable hills to the north and the south. In other words, the ridge at Mudarraǰ I is a rocky saddle separating two conveniently aligned wadis, offering

1. *Wafāyāt al-A'yān*, II, 314.

2. *Al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 175. For more recent studies about this station, see Musil, *Northern Nejd*, V, 192, 209; al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 75 f.

3. Knudstad, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, I, 44, 59, pl. 26, photo. A.

moderate gradients in both directions. The construction of this section of the pilgrim route shows clearly the substantial efforts that have been made to improve passage over low ridges by means of cutting broad notches through the ridges and improving the roadway on the steeper gradient to each side. The notches were effected by quarrying bedrock to an average depth of 2.5 m. in order to produce a depressed and smooth roadway *c.* 6 m. wide and over 50 m. long. The technique of clearing the loose rock and cutting the bedrock at the higher approach is applied in order to improve a sloping roadbed. To increase the reliability of stone-paving, the main path of the route itself and some spots where there are irregularities in the roadbed are filled with flat stone slabs. As a result of subsequent clearing and maintenance carried out on the roadway, heaps of rubble, varying in size and in shape, are piled up to form rough stone walls or shoulders on both margins of the road. This path is also provided with stone-edged or stepped ramps. It has further been noticed that the steeper slopes of the route were originally stepped and paved.

The second segment of paved roadway of the Zubaydah pilgrim route is Mudarraġ no.II.¹ It lies approximately at 21° 37' N. by 40° 5' E. in Wadi al-Yamāniyyah and opposite the pilgrim station of Umm al-Ḍamīrān. From a topographical point of view, it is similar to Mudarraġ no.I, i.e. it is constructed in mountainous terrain. Here the ridge was cut down to a depth ranging from *c.* 2 to 4 m. over a distance of *c.* 75 m. in order to create a roadbed *c.* 10 m. wide. The path of the road is shouldered by means of rubble piled on both sides of the track. It has also been reported that some fragments of kerb-stones are to be found on both edges of the route and that its steps consist of rows of cut stone set in stone and mortar foundations. The path itself is paved and ramped over a certain distance. The remains of this ramping are still in good condition.

1. *Ibid.*, I, 59 f., pl. 26, B.C. and 42b.

The third section of the paved roadway is termed Mudarraġ no.III.¹ It is located at 21° 51' N. and 40° 21.5' E. The road is cut through the mountains. Its width varies between 15 and 20 m. It is paved and stepped with well-cut stone slabs. It is also, in some places, shouldered by lined walls. At its narrowest, the width of the walled route is c. 10 m.

On closer analysis of the structural design of the Egyptian pilgrim road, it has been reported that the pass of al-‘Urqūb was cut and levelled during the Fatimid dynasty for the convenience of the pilgrims and other users.² There is another tortuous defile called Aylah, or al-‘Aqabah as it is now known, which is also situated on the Egyptian pilgrim route. According to al-Bakrī,³ it would take the traveller at least one day’s march to cross the Aylah pass because of the difficulty of its underdeveloped state compounded with its extreme length. According to al-Jazīrī,⁴ the Aylah pass was significantly levelled and smoothed twice during the Mamlūk period, once at the request of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (reg. 693-4/1293-4, 698-708/1298-1308, and 709-741/1309-40) and later on under the supervision of *Amīr* Khā’ir Bey in the reign of al-Sultān al-Malik al-Ashraf Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī.⁵ In 940/1533, during the Ottoman Empire, this pass received much attention from Sultan Sulaymān. He ordered his representative in Egypt to despatch a mission, consisting of surveyors and engineers, to the Aylah pass to undertake a comprehensive survey of its structural design and assess the costs that would be incurred for its development.

1. Al-Dayel, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, II, 58 f., pl. 62B, photo. 5.

2. For further information, see Tamari and Hashimshoni, "The Cut", *Eretz-Israel*, XI, English summary, 32; Jennings-Bramley, "The Bedouin", *P.E.F.*, 36.

3. *Al-Mamālik wa-l-Masālik*, 100.

4. *Durar*, II, 1333-7.

5. See Holt, "Qānṣawh al-Ghawrī", *El²*, IV, 552 f.

In the wake of this project, the pass of Aylah was greatly improved for the benefit of its users. Al-Jazīrī mentions further that it was more than one year before the task was completed and at this juncture the pass had been rendered more accessible.¹

b. Paved segments (see pl. XXXIX.B, fig. 13)

In addition to laying pathways of stone-paving along the mountain passes and carrying out other constructional work, some other rugged areas through which the inland routes pass are also treated by the engineers in a similar manner.

Niebuhr,² in the course of his travels throughout the Yemen, followed in due course a number of paved routes which are not at all incommodious to the traveller. Harris³ also, in his trek in the Yemen, noticed some paved and levelled sections of ancient tracks. He was once attracted by a remarkable section of stone-paving which forms part of an ancient route near Yarīm in the Yemen and he described its polished surface as shining like glass.

In the course of his description of the pilgrim road of Zubaydah, al-Ḥarbī⁴ tells us that Khālīṣah, the maid of Khayzurān, the mother of the Abbasid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd, ordered that the pilgrim road near the pilgrim station of Baṭn al-Agharr and the well of al-‘Abbāsiyyah should be paved. Because of the muddy ground near this station, stone-paving was involved in the process of construction of this part of the pilgrim route. The same lady, according to our geographer, also

1. For more details about this col, see Zayadine, "Caravan Routes", *SHAJ*, ii, 159 f.

2. *Travels*, I, 301, 305, 351 f.

3. *A Journey*, 200, 242 f.; cf. Bowen, "Archaeological Survey" *ADSA*, 33, pl. 32.

4. *Al-Manāsik*, 301, 305.

purchased a hundred slaves and ordered them to build a certain section of the pilgrim route near the pilgrim station of al-Ajfur in the form of a double-pavement in order to secure their freedom upon the completion of their job. The main purpose in carrying out this work at this place in particular, as al-Ḥarbī informs us, was that the wayfarers, including the pilgrims themselves, had been suffering, especially in the rainy seasons, from the very muddy ground.

According to al-Rāshid,¹ there is a paved segment of the pilgrim road of Zubaydah situated between the pilgrim stations of Buraykat al-‘Ashshār and Birkat al-‘Arā’ish. It must be stressed that this section of stone-paving is laid through sand-dunes of the desert of Nafūd al-Dahnā’ in Saudi Arabia. At this place, the path of the pilgrim route is paved with slabs of stone laid over the undulating sand-hills. It is shouldered by two parallel rows of stones on both sides of the route. The approximate width of this paved road ranges from 2 to 4 m.

Regarding the stone-paving of the pilgrim route between Basra and Mecca, al-Isfahānī² reports that Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, the governor of the city of Basra during the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd, ordered the road near Qā’ al-Janūb to be paved with slabs of stone because this plain becomes very muddy during rainfall. According to the editors of al-Isfahānī’s work, there are still now some visible remains of stone-paving at this place.

On the other hand, Ibn Rustah,³ in the course of his treatment of the pilgrim route between Iran and Baghdad, states that it was levelled and paved for

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1. *Darb al-Zubaydah*, 144, 376; see pl. xiv, photo. 2.
 2. *Bilād al-‘Arab*, 371, n.3-4.
 3. *Al-A’lāq al-Nafisah*, 167.

the convenience of the travellers. Additionally, it appears most likely that the practice of providing the inland routes either with stone- or even stucco-paving was not necessarily confined to the pilgrim routes. According to Ibn al-Mujāwir,¹ the inland road between the port of Raysūt in Oman and Baghdad was paved and plastered with stucco and quicklime.

There are very close similarities between the engineering methods that have been applied in the construction *and design of the above-mentioned* pass-pathways and paved segments and those implemented when laying the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. The most striking feature, as borne out in the earlier descriptive account of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, is the provision of stone-paving for some parts of the route, particularly those that go through rough terrain. These segments of stone-paving have been observed to be a common feature in both mountainous and volcanic areas, such as the pass of al-Manḍaj/al-Maṣlūlah [I] and the lavafield of al-Buqūm. Wherever this method of engineering, laying down trimmed slabs of stone, is used on the Yemeni pilgrim route, stepped ramps and short walls are also arranged on both sides of the road in order to shoulder the orientation of the road.

An examination of the instances where the original structure of the stone-paving is dismantled, for various reasons, revealed that the paving consists of local blocks of stone of various shapes and sizes. They have been laid directly on to prepared surfaces in a symmetrical arrangement. There is no evidence of mortar having been used between the gaps of these flagstones. Broadly speaking, although these stones do not conform to any fixed standard in terms of shape and

1. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 268.

size, they have been shaped in such a way that they coalesce with the next row of stones. It is important to note that the strength of stone-paving appears to stem mainly from their formation, and further from the firm shoulder-stones or kerb-stones on each side of the route which lend a significant element of stability to the whole structure of the paving. There is only ever one layer and this lies directly on top of cleared ground. It seems likely that the top-soil, occurring along the route destined to become a pathway, was removed in such measure that it was afterwards possible to insert the stone-paving pathway in the gap created; the surface of the eventual pathway would thus coincide with the unpaved sides and borders of the road.

ii. Levelling

It is noticeable that this method of construction in road-building, involving levelling, clearing, cutting, and smoothing the actual main track of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, is usually combined with the practice of providing low parallel shoulders on both edges of the main track. The section of the Yemeni route which crosses the area of al-Muḥaysharah is a single path. In this area, the route is level and clear and this ultimate state will have been brought about by the removal of any large obstacles such as rocks and outcrops. The mean width of the road fluctuates from 6 m. to 9 m.; it becomes wider in the flat areas whilst it narrows to c. 4 m. in some rugged spots. A long levelled part of the Yemeni pilgrim route is situated within the geographical territory of the desert of Ṣāḥr. In this vast flat plain, the continuous stretch of the route is clear, except wherever it passes across wadis. Its width, in some places, exceeds c. 20 m., whereas it narrows to c. 8 m. over rough ground. It has been provided with short walls on

both edges along its length.

There are a number of examples which are worth mentioning regarding the practice of levelling and clearing the pilgrim routes.

Due to the roughness of areas through which a certain section of the pilgrim road of Zubaydah passes, namely that part which links the pilgrim stations of al-Shīhiyyāt, Birkat al-Ḥamrā', and Birkat Ḥamad in that sequence, the path here has been perfectly cleared and smoothed by means of removing the major obstacles such as big stones and outcrops. The removed rocks have been piled on both sides of the route, forming low walls or shoulders. This part of the Zubaydah road measures c. 18 m. in width.¹ A similar technique of road-engineering, mainly involving clearing, cutting, and removing the natural obstacles, is skilfully applied on another segment of the Zubaydah road. This section of the pilgrim route is situated approximately 2 km. to the south-west of the pilgrim station of Fayd. At this place, the pilgrim road is cleared from volcanic stones and rocks, in consequence of which two parallel short walls are constructed on either margin of the route. The mean width of this section of the road is 18 m.²

There is also a levelled section of the pilgrim route of Zubaydah situated near the gold-mine of Maḥd al-Dhahab. It seems most likely that Twitchell was the first Western person in modern times to discover this part of the pilgrim road.³ This part of the route, which links Ṣufaynah and Ḥādhah, goes through the lava-field of Ḥarrat Rahaṭ. Along the stretch of this section of the pilgrim road,

1. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 145, 375, pl. xiii, photo. 2.

2. *Ibid.*, 145, 385, pl. xiii, photo. 1.

3. See Miles, "Alī b. 'Īsā's Pilgrim Road", *Bulletin*, 483.

the volcanic rocks and big stones were removed from the main path of the route and heaped on either side of the road. In some dangerous places, the route has been either diverted or divided into two lanes by immovable boulders. The width of this section of the road varies accordingly from two to twenty metres, and it becomes wide in flat areas.¹

iii. Shouldering

Shouldering the Yemeni pilgrim route on both of its edges is a remarkable feature that has been observed in the course of our survey along the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim road. It is evident that, in accordance with the engineering methods used in constructing such shoulders, shouldering can be classified into two main categories, *viz*:

- a. low shouldering.
- b. high shouldering.

a. Low shouldering (see fig. 14)

These short walls were clearly intended to demarcate and maintain the main path of the pilgrim route. They exist in some parts of the route in the form of pairs of parallel short walls, running in some places, such as the area of al-Muḥaysharah and the desert of Zahr, for a long distance. These short walls are principally built of only one or two courses of local stones. As far as is evident, no

1. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 145 f., 395, pl. xxxiii, photo. 1 & 2; 397, pl. xxxv, photo. 1; 401, pl. xxxix, photo. 1; *idem*, *al-Rabadhah*, 14 f., photo. 14 & 15.

mortar material has been used in the interstices between the stones. The blocks of stones seem to have been chosen carefully; they are not skilfully trimmed. The walls measure approximately between 0.5 and 0.6 m. in thickness and 0.5 to 0.8 m. in height.

As has already been mentioned above, the two areas of al-Muḥaysharah and the plain of Ṣaḥr exemplify excellent examples of the way in which the Yemeni highland pilgrim route has been provided with low walls on both of its sides. The pilgrim route passes through these regions, which are relatively flat in topographical terms. With two continuous parallel short walls, in some places within the geographical delineations of these regions, the road is intermittently well defined.

Along the pilgrim route of Zubaydah, namely those levelled sections, shouldering has been found. At the pilgrim station of al-Ajfur on the same pilgrim route, the road is provided with two parallel short walls which run for approximately 4.5 km. in a south-south-westerly direction. The walls here are c. 22 m. across from each other, each measuring c. 0.55 m. in thickness.¹

There are other segments of the pilgrim route of Zubaydah near the pilgrim stations of al-Ḥamrā' and Ḥamad² where certain parts of the road are marked out by two parallel walls. At the former station the main route passes c. 100 m. west of the station, marked by two low walls c. 26 m. apart and running downhill in a southerly direction, while at the latter station the route similarly

1. Morgan, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, V, 85 f., pls. 99, 110, photo. B.

2. On both of these stations, see al-Helwah, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, VI, 41 f. For other analogous examples on the same pilgrim route, see Morgan, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, V, 89, 91, 100, 105, pls. 101, 104, 105, 108a.

defined by two parallel shoulders on both sides, runs c. 35 m. east of the station.

b. High shouldering

In a contrary pattern to the low shouldering which is often constructed and widely associated with the levelled parts of the Yemeni pilgrim route, high shouldering has been provided mainly to the paved sections of the pilgrim route, namely those segments that have been constructed through rugged terrain and mountainous defiles. In general terms, these high walls have been erected in a parallel fashion on both sides of the route with two and seven courses, forming eventually a sort of corridor for the caravans.

The pass of al-Mandaj/al-Maṣlūlah [I], which is situated on the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, exemplifies this method of engineering by means of providing the road with two parallel lined walls of five to seven courses built on either side of the main path of the pilgrim road. In addition, the defiles of al-Mudarajah and al-Nahqah, situated on the same pilgrim route, illustrate clearly this technique of shouldering by providing the paved segments with high walls. At the pass of al-Mudarajah, the route is perfectly paved and walled up with local unshaped flagstones. The road is generally shouldered with lined walls on either margin of the route. They are constructed of four to five courses without applying mortar substances.

The pass of Najd Marqad, which is constructed between the two wadis of Bayḥān and Ḥarīb, resembles an identical example of the pass of al-Maṣlūlah [I].

According to Bowen,¹ the paved pathway of the defile of Najd Marqad is shouldered with lined walls along both of its sides. The walls are parallel in the centre section, varying from 9.8 to 10.6 m. apart. At the ends of the roadway, the walls flare out to 18–22 m. In spite of the fact that the structure of the roadway takes almost funnel-shaped proportions, Bowen tells us that 'they actually are not, but appear this way only because at each end the walls are low and rise in height towards the middle. As the grade increases, the walls become higher and hence tend to seem closer together.'² The average thickness of these walls is about a metre. They have been provided with a modest buttress in some places. The sole building material of the walls is quarried blocks of stone which have been laid in courses. Wherever the wall goes up a slope, an additional course is laid on its top. The general orientation of the course of the walls is not straight, but rather based on the course of the two small wadis.

Apart from low shouldering which is simply intended to mark out and maintain the general orientation of the path of the pilgrim route, it would seem that there could be a number of possible purposes for constructing a high shouldering. In addition to their forming a solid border to the path of the road, lined walls might also be built in order to strengthen the weak points and, at the same time, to ease the dangerous spots of the route. Hence, the general shape in designing these parallel lined walls matches almost a corridor. It is believed that they might have been used in ancient times in order to organize the financial procedure for tax-collecting. It may be assumed, further, that this kind of engineering, since it has been implemented in the mountainous terrains, might have provided another function in diverting the violent gushes of torrential rain away

1. "Archaeological Survey", *ADSA*, 12, 32, pl. 30.

2. *Ibid.*, 12.

from the main track of the road.

iv. Ramping (see fig. 15)

Stony stepped ramps or raised steps, which have been observed during our survey, are considered to be among the remarkable engineering features that have been involved in the process of construction of the paved segments of the Yemeni pilgrim route. As far as we are aware, this type of technique in road-building is almost unique in its design. Nevertheless, a similar method, although slightly different in size and position, has been reported by Bowen¹ during his archaeological survey of Wadi Bayḥān and also by the Saudi Archaeological Mission in the course of its comprehensive survey of the pilgrim road of Zubaydah.

The lava-field of al-Buqūm, for instance, and also some mountainous terrains, including those passes through which the Yemeni highland pilgrim route passes, are evidently the places where stepped ramps are extensively constructed. The volcanic tract of Ḥarrat al-Buqūm in particular witnesses excellent examples of such raised steps being provided along the course of the route. The general method of constructing these stepped ramps may be briefly described as follows. Various oblong stone slabs, measuring roughly between 0.1 and 0.25 m. in length and c. 0.1 x 0.15 m. in width, are built horizontally together in a straight row as long as the breadth of the main path of the road is required. The lower parts of their edges, being c. 0.05 – 0.08 m., are firmly sunk into the ground, whereas their upper parts or edges, which seem to have been smoothed, are left to stand in a vertical position. At the same time, the lower half of their upper parts are

1. *Ibid.*, 31, pl. 29.

skilfully attached directly on both sides to the extension of the road's stone-paving. It seems to be rather difficult to discern accurate measuring standards for the actual distance of the intervals between each single set of stepped ramps and the next one. However, it has been noticed that raised steps have been erected across the paved sections of the pilgrim road wherever it happens that either the nature of the ground becomes rough or the road itself goes over elevated areas.

To sum up, we may conclude that it appears most likely there are two main practical purposes behind building stepped ramps in various spots along the course of the Yemeni pilgrim route. Firstly, they have been provided in order to comfort the users of the route in general including laden animals. This direct aim would have been practicable and fruitful over the years, particularly during torrential rainfall that would cause havoc and produce slippery surfaces, especially in the volcanic and mountainous regions. Secondly, it may be intended as an engineering objective to strengthen thereby the whole structure of the paved segments. In other words, the existence of stepped ramps, having been built across the path of the route in a straight line and linked directly with two solid shoulders on each side of the route, undoubtedly forms a practical firm collar or sort of ring enclosing and protecting the paved sections against natural erosion and heavy usage by traffic.

As mentioned above, this prominent method of erecting raised steps in the process of constructing inland routes, is replicated in building some of the

southern and northern routes of Arabia. According to Groom,¹ the paved roadway of the pass of Mablaqah has been stepped particularly at its steepest sections and formed on terraces with hairpin bends. On the other hand, the two passes of Mudarraġ (nos. I and II), which are situated on the pilgrim road of Zubaydah, are provided with stepped ramps, especially on the steeper slopes. The paved pathway of the latter defile is supported by a 40 m. length of stepped ramps. The ramp is c. 17 m. wide at its base and tapers to c. 12.06 m. wide above. Fragments of kerb-stone are found on both sides and its steps consist of rows of cut stone set in stone and mortar foundations. Loose stone now covers the surface of the ramp.²

v. *Walling and Cairns*

a. Walling

As far as our analytical study is concerned, this technique of providing the inland routes with a solid barrier has not yet been reported either on the Zubaydah or the Egyptian and Syrian pilgrim routes. Along the stretch of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, it has been observed that a number of mountain passes have been supplied with a wall blocking the pass. It descends from the hillsides towards the main gates which are built roughly in the centre of the wall. Circular cairns or watch-towers are also erected on commanding positions such as the two ends of the wall or near to the main gates. These kind of defensive walls are erected of roughly hewn local slabs of stone to a total height of two to four or five courses of unshaped blocks. The narrow

1. "The Northern Passes", *PSAS*, 75.

2. Knudstad, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, I, 59 f.

interstices between the blocks are filled with small broken stones. There is no evidence of mortar having been used between the gaps of these slabs of stone. It seems likely that the practice in walling the mountain passes was to erect the walls without foundations, laying them on the rocky floor of the pass. It is noticeable that weak points in the walling are supported by means of gravel and rocks being piled up around the two sides of the wall. The mean height of walling fluctuates from 0.2–0.8 to 0.8–1.5 m., whilst the length is in accordance with the breadth of the pass itself.

At the first custom-station of al-Ghaḍār, it has been observed that a lined wall, running across the main track of the pilgrim road, is constructed in order to form an artificial barrier for the purpose of keeping the flow of the caravans in line. The extreme western part of this lined wall measures *c.* 60 m. in length, whilst its eastern portion is *c.* 40 m. in length. The second custom-station, which is built *c.* 3 km. to the north-west of the first one, is also provided with a lined wall lying across the pass of al-Ghaḍār itself. The extreme western part of the wall measures *c.* 20 m. in length, whereas the eastern segment is approximately 30 m. in length.

In addition to the above-mentioned example, there are further mountain passes, which are situated on the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, provided with lined walls running along their widths. These passes are, for instance, Karīf al-ʿIlab (or Munaqqir) and Buʿtān (or Baʿtān). The general constructional design of these two defiles is almost identical with that of the pass of al-Ghaḍār. The latter pass is, for example, completely blocked, with the exception of a small gate measuring *c.* 2 m. in width, with a lined wall measuring *c.* 80 m. in length. This wall descends towards the main gate from the hillsides which border the pass.

This engineering method in walling the important mountain passes has been implemented along some sections of the ancient routes of South Arabia. According to Bowen,¹ there are two long walls, which might have served as fortifications, preserved in Wadi Bayḥān. The walls run across a corridor which passes between the mountain mass and offers an alternate route for approaching the Mablaqah pass from the desert. The southern wall nearer the Mablaqah pass runs across the valley floor. The east end, which measures *c.* 1.9 m. in thickness, runs up the mountain. At the bottom of the mountain, the wall narrowed to *c.* 1.5 m. It was from 1.2 to 1.4 m. high with a modest buttress and had no foundation. The wall ran all the way to the mountain on the west end.

In the course of her travels in Ḥaḍramawt, Mrs. Ingrams discovered a massive stone wall barring the way. It is constructed near a hillside overlooking Wadi Banā. This wall, measuring 16 feet high and 6 feet thick, descends from a steep hill on the west, leading down to the wadi. The thickness of the wall widens to 17 feet on each side of the opening. Thus, it might perhaps ~~have had~~ a guard-chamber on top of the wall. Mrs. Ingrams continued by stating that 'wherever there was a possible route up from the wadi heading in another direction than the wall, it had been blocked by high stone walls. Thus, the only route for caravans was through the passage-way in the wall.'²

1. "Archaeological Survey", *ADSA*, 11 f. See also Rathjens, *Sabaeica I*, 141, photo. 32.

2. "Excursion", *GJ*, XCVIII, 13 f. For other analogous examples concerning this method, see Rathjens, *Sabaeica I*, 141, photo. 32; Jarvis, "Petra", *Antiquity*, XIV, 145 f.

b. Cairns (see pls. XL.A and B, XLI)

According to Ibn Manẓūr,¹ the term '*alam*' is synonymous with *manār*, the meaning of which is 'a cairn, way-mark, road sign, or watch-tower' which has been erected along the course of an inland route in order to guide the wayfarers in their travels. In addition, Ibn Manẓūr tells us that the word also means 'a mountain' or 'a banner' and he adds further that it denotes any materials piled up as a landmark on boundaries.

Although it seems difficult to define precisely for what purpose the cairns or road signs were established, it is likely that there were a number of aims behind their construction. Apart from their function in serving as boundary-markers, as Ibn Manẓūr tells us, they acted also as way-marks which would withstand the passage of time, for the guidance of commercial and pilgrim traffic, and for this reason they were set alight at dusk. The location of important facilities, such as rest-stations, watering-places, and animal-feeding places, was also marked by cairns. Finally, their military style of construction, in the form of watch-towers/guard-posts, reflects the importance of ensuring the safety of the caravans.

The Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route is intensively dotted with stone cairns or road signs on both of its sides. It is still possible to recognize these cairns from their remains. They have been constructed in the form of a tower, piled up from local slabs of stone. It has been observed that they were sited on commanding positions such as high hills, mountains, mountain passes, small eminences, or the edges of wadis. Their location was always chosen so that

1. *Lisān*, V, 241, 246; XII, 419. See also Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 147.

they would be as near as possible to the heart of the route. They also appear in flat areas. These cairns appear to have been set in a single track at various intervals all along the route. They generally share similar characteristics, being consistent in size and shape, constructed of unshaped, flattish stones hewn from nearby rock and frequently the outcrop on which they are erected. Some of them, however, were merely heaps of rubble. The large cairns are circular in shape and built on a plinth containing an interior chamber which is just wide enough to admit a person standing upright. Neither inscriptions nor drawings were found in them. Their diameters fluctuate from 4 to 6 m., whereas their heights range up to about 2 m.

Below, we will now describe some analogous examples of cairns and road signs constructed on the sides of the inland routes.

In his description of the trade road of al-Raḍrāḍ, which links the Yemen with Iraq, Ibn al-Mujāwir¹ informs us that the route was furnished with cairns built with limestone and stucco which were erected along the route at each parasang (*farsakh*). Furthermore, he portrays the route as if it were a string of lofty palaces crowned by beacons. Fire signals, or *manāwir*, were also similarly erected along the Zubaydah pilgrim route. It has been stated that Manārat al-Qurūn is a high beacon , built near the pilgrim station of Wāqīṣah.² Ibn Jubayr's³ description of Manārat al-Qurūn shows that it is a tower or minaret constructed in a vast desert where there is no other building around. It rises from the ground like a column. It is constructed with baked bricks between which

1. *Al-Mustabṣir*, II, 214 f.

2. See Yāqūt, *al-Bulḍān*, V, 201.

3. *Travels*, 212.

octagonal and quadrangular panels of terracotta are inserted.¹

As far as the construction and design of the road signs are concerned, the recent archaeological studies carried out along the Zubaydah pilgrim route indicate that cairns or way-marks were built in the shape of towers in order to withstand the inclement weather of the desert. Their height fluctuates from 2 to 3.5 m. The sole material used in their construction was untrimmed local stones of similar size and no binding substance was applied.² This method of marking the direction of the inland routes is also *used* along the Egyptian pilgrim road.³

Outside the Arabian Peninsula, Rees⁴ observed great numbers of cairns established alongside the ancient inland routes of Jordan. In accordance with inscriptions and drawings, which were discovered on or near some of these monuments, he dates them within the Roman period. The general design and location of these cairns are almost similar to those on the Yemeni and Zubaydah pilgrim routes.

Cairns or road signs, of various shapes and sizes, have been reported by most of the South Arabian explorers and archaeologists. In two different places within the Minaean country, Philby⁵ observed thousands of stone cairns. They were circular in shape, skilfully constructed of flat slabs of untrimmed local

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1. For a recent archaeological study of this monument, see al-'Azzāwī's "A Commentary", *Sumer*, XXXVI, 368 f.; *idem*, "Ṭarīq al-Ḥajj", *Sumer*, XLIV, 208.
 2. See Musil, *Northern Nejd*, 192 f.; al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 149, 372, pl. x, no. 2; *idem*, *al-Rabadhah*, 6, photo. 25; 17, photo. 16; Morgan, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, V, 89, pl. 101, plan B; 91, pl. 104; 97, pl. 106.A; 100.
 3. Al-Mughannam, "Catalogue", *Aṭlāl*, VII, 46.
 4. "The Transjordan Desert", *Antiquity*, III, 391 f., pl. I facing 400. For other analogous examples, see Jarvis, "To Petra", *Antiquity*, XIV, 144 f.
 5. *Sheba's Daughters*, 373 f., 377, 379 & see photos. facing 376, 378, 382.

limestone and they varied greatly in size, ranging up to 8 m. in diameter and 3 m. in height. Because of their vertical sides and flat tops, he called them 'pillboxes'. There were also similar cairns near the city of Najrān and on some of these Philby found pre-Islamic inscriptions.

In the vicinity of Wadi Bayhān, Bowen¹ reported a number of small cairns erected on low spurs. They were approximately 2 m. in diameter and 1 m. high and were provided with circular central cists made of flat stones. He discovered moreover a large cairn, measuring 3 m. in height and 10 m. in diameter.

On the other hand, Doe² noticed during his trip to the area of al-‘Abr many stone cairns built near a mountain pass. They overlooked the pass, lining its narrow ridge. They stood about 3 feet high and were spaced 5 feet apart. These cairns were carefully constructed of rough masonry laid flat with no mortar.

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1. "Archaeological Survey", *ADSA*, 10. See also *idem*, "Burial Monuments", *ADSA*, 133 f.
 2. *Southern Arabia*, 148, pl. 67-69; 236, pl. 127. For more information concerning this kind of monument in other places in South Arabia, see e.g. Meulen, *Aden to the Hadhramaut*, 119, 122, 127, 198; Thesiger, "Desert", *GJ*, CXVI, 153; Stark, "An Exploration", *GJ*, XCIII, 3; Ingrams, "Excursion", *GJ*, XCVIII, 124, 132.

CHAPTER VI

THE ARABIC ROCK- AND MILESTONE-INSRIPTIONS DISCOVERED ALONGSIDE THE SAUDI SECTION OF THE YEMENI HIGHLAND PILGRIM ROUTE

Part One: The Milestones

Part Two: The Arabic Rock-Inscriptions

The fieldwork undertaken by the present writer on the Yemeni section of pilgrim route yielded no examples of either Arabic rock- or milestone-inscriptions; the same is not true of the Saudi section, however, and this chapter is devoted entirely to the study of a selection of the Arabic rock- and milestone-inscriptions discovered. It is divided into two parts, the first of these focusing on two milestones. The second part represents a detailed exposition of forty-five Arabic rock-inscriptions.

Part One: the Milestones

Introduction

Way-markers, appearing in a variety of guises, were installed, at intervals, alongside trade- and pilgrim-routes in the Arabian Peninsula. These served both actively to define the routes themselves, and to guide all caravans passing along them. In addition to the erecting of cairns (sing. '*alam* or *manār*'),¹ other practical devices, such as milestones (pl. *amyāl*) were employed to this end. It has been stated that Abrahah Dhū al-Manār, the Abyssinian ruler of the Yemen (AD. 530-71), was the first person who constructed the milestones on inland routes.²

According to Ibn Manẓūr, '...milestones are those landmarks (pl. *a'lām*) which were constructed on the Mecca route.' He adds, '... the milestone (sing. *mīl*) is a high beacon (sing. *manār*), built in some elevated spots, for the

1. See Chapter V, pt. ii of this study.

2. Ibn Durayd, *al-Ishṭiqāq*, 532.

benefit of the wayfarers.”¹ Al-Azraqī² and Ibn Rustah³ both state that those milestones, which were erected between the Holy Mosque in Mecca and Jabal ‘Arafāt by the Umayyad Caliph Marwān b. al-Ḥakam (d. 65/685), were hewn in the shape of boulders, three cubits (i.e. *ca.* 1.5 m.) high.

Recent archaeological studies have confirmed the discovery of a number of Roman and Islamic milestones. The Roman milestones, which were discovered in Syria and Libya and date from the 3rd century A.D., are cylindrical in shape, approximately 2 m. in height, and have a diameter of *ca.* 0.36–0.4 m. at the base and *ca.* 0.38–0.4 m. at the top. They were originally positioned unsupported along the edges of the major inland routes. In accordance with the general design of such milestones, an inscription recording the distance and installation date, and sometimes the emperor’s reign, was carved into the stone’s surface, commonly at the very top of the stone.⁴

During the Islamic epoch certain of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs had milestones placed on the major inland routes. The four Umayyad milestones, which were sited on the Damascus–Jerusalem road and installed in the era of Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65–86/684–705), are approximately square-shaped (ranging from 0.57–0.3 x 0.4–0.3 m.) and bear inscriptions which include the title and the name of the caliph, as well as the distance in miles and the place-name.⁵ The four Abbasid milestones, which although discovered

1. *Lisān al-‘Arab*, XI, 639; cf. Whitehouse, *Dictionary*, 326.

2. *Akhbār Makkah*, 414.

3. *Al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 56.

4. For details, see Poidebard, *La Trace*, 49–51, pl. xxvi, no. 1 & no. 4; Salama, "Déchiffrement", *Libya Antiqua*, II, 39–45, pls. XII–XIII; Goodchild, "Inscriptions", *Libyan Studies*, 109–111, pls. 41–42.

5. For details, see Van Berchem, *Matériaux* (1923), XLIII, 17 f.; *ibid.* (1920), pls. I–II.

separately all evidently refer to the Kufa-Mecca pilgrim route, are likewise squarish in shape (ranging from 1.65–0.5 x 0.5–0.42 m.) and display inscriptions in which the distance, in both miles and postal-stages (*barīd*), and the place-name are all stated. The title and the name of the Abbasid Caliph, al-Mahdī (158–169/774–785), only appear on one of the milestones of this group.¹

An interesting observation² concerning the location and the mode of installation of the Islamic milestone reveals that the sixth milestone, situated between Mecca and Jabal 'Arafāt, was attached to a wall in the region of Wadi Muḥassir.³ Al-Samhūdī, in describing the 'Irq al-Zūbyah mosque, which is situated on the Medina-Mecca route,⁴ states that there was a boulder inside the mosque which served as a milestone. He adds that '...this milestone, which has been engraved in Kufic script, shows the mileage of so-and-so [*sic*] from the postal-stage (*barīd*) of so-and-so [*sic*].'⁵

According to the Arab historians,⁶ the postal service (*barīd*) linking the two holy cities of Medina and Mecca with the Yemen was founded in 166/782 by the Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī b. al-Manṣūr (158–169/774–785). This new operation was effected with the use of mules and camels. The geographer Qudāmah,⁷ who was writing at the beginning of the 4th/10th century and who was himself once the Secretary of the State Postal Service [*ca.* 297/908], cites three pilgrim-stations,

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1. For more details, see al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 229 f., pls. xxxvii, 1, xxxviii, 2; *idem*, "Aḥjār", *al-Uṣūr*, V, 123 f., pls. 1–4, fig. 1–7; Knudstad, "Preliminary Report", *Aṭlāl*, I, 55–57.
 2. Al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makkah*, 414; Ibn Rustah, *al-A'lāq al-Nafīṣah*, 56.
 3. For the identification of this toponym, cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, V, 62.
 4. For the identification of this toponym, cf. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, IV, 58, 108.
 5. *Wafā'*, III, 1008 f.
 6. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 517; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, V, 73; Abū al-Fidā, *Tārīkh*, II, 10.
 7. *Al-Kharāj*, 188 f.

situated along the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, where the post-master (*ṣāhib al-barīd*) used to reside. The existence of the milestones along the Mecca–Yemen pilgrim route, is confirmed in the same piece of writing when Qudāmah states that ‘...this is the road which is furnished with milestones.’¹

The second man in Islamic history to be credited with having improved the Yemeni pilgrim routes by providing them with a wide range of facilities, was the famous ruler of the dynasty of B. Ziyād (203–407/818–1016), Ḥusayn b. Salāmah (d. 402/1011). It is reported that, ‘Among the splendid works executed by Ḥusayn b. Salāmah are [. . .], and it was he who erected, along all the routes from Ḥaḍramawt to Mecca, milestones on which the distance was recorded in miles, parasangs (sing. *farsakh*), and postal–stages.’²

Al-Hamdānī,³ in his description of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, or ‘the road of Najd’ as he calls it, calculates the distance between Ṣan‘ā’ and Mecca in three separate systems of measurement, viz: 22 stages (sing. *marḥalah*), 35 postal–stages (sing. *barīd*), and 420 miles (sing. *mīl*). This data reveals that one postal–stage was equivalent to 12 miles (i.e. *ca.* 24 km.), and one stage was equivalent to *ca.* 19 miles (i.e. *ca.* 38 km.). Al-Idrīsī⁴ asserts in two *separate* pieces of writing, that the length of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, followed by all caravans, was 20 stages, or 480 miles. It is therefore to be deduced from this that one stage was equivalent to 24 miles (i.e. *ca.* 48 km.).

The poet Aḥmad b. ‘Īsā al-Radā‘ī (*ca.* late 3rd/9th century), the composer

1. *Al-Kharāj*, 190.

2. Kay, *Yaman*, 9; Ibn al-Dayba‘, *al-Mustafīd*, 40; Bā Makhramah, *Thaghr*, 60.

3. *Ṣifāh*, 338.

4. *Al-Mushū‘āq*, 147; Shawkat, “Diyār al-‘Arab”, *JIA*, XXII, 60.

of the pilgrimage *Urjūzah*, set out on this sacred journey from his home-town of Radā' in the Yemen and, on his way towards Mecca, passed through the two main towns of Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah respectively. The duration of al-Radā'ī's journey, according to al-Hamdānī,¹ was 24 days. It is expedient here to refer directly to the *Urjūzah* as this poem is illuminating with regard to the existence of milestones along the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.² The text contains references to:

- i) The existence of milestones along the entire length of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, monitoring distances in both miles and postal-stages (sing. *barīd*) and commonly termed *barīd al-ṣakhrat*.³
- ii) Milestones with legible inscriptions (*Urj.*, nos. 22 and 57).
- iii) Milestones with illegible inscriptions (*Urj.*, no.34).
- iv) Milestones presenting the distance in miles (*Urj.*, nos. 70 and 76).
- v) Milestones standing independently (*Urj.*, nos. 27, 30, 39, 47, 50, 56, and 81).
- vi) Milestones standing with aids to stability (*Urj.*, nos. 25, 41, 51, and 80).

Finally, it should be noted that the total number of postal-stages recorded by al-Radā'ī (i.e. 35 *barīd*) concurs with the figure supplied by al-Hamdānī.⁴

Three milestones have been discovered in the course of conducting the fieldwork on the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.⁵ The illegible status of the third milestone has disqualified it from being included in this study (see map 13.4). The two remaining milestones will now be *examined* systematically. The method used here is the same as that applied in Part Two of this chapter in analysing a selection of Arabic rock-inscriptions.

1. *Ṣifāh*, 400.

2. See tab. 12.

3. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 410-441; *Urj.*, 22-82.

4. *Ṣifāh*, 338.

5. The map references provided here for these two milestones are based on the Geographic Map of the Southern Najd Quadrangle, GM-211 B.

The Milestones

Milestone no. 1

Pl. XLII.A, XLIII, tab. 14, map 13.3

Type of stone: reddish granite

Location: Wādī al-Quḍayf

Dimensions of text area: ca. 45 x 40 cm.

Lines: 2

Spaces between lines: ca. 8 cm.

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Height of alif: N/A

Date: undated, probably 2nd–4th/8th–10th cents. *Map reference:* lat. 20° 00' 20° 30'

long. 42° 00' 42° 30'

Description

The text of this milestone has no date or diacritical points or ornamentation. It has been incised on the extreme upper part of the stone and is bordered on the right-hand side by a simple vertical frieze (ca. 0.3 m. in length), taking the form of a zigzag line.

This milestone was discovered on the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. It is located ca. 45 km., as the crow flies, to the north of the city of Tabālah in a vast desert area called Ṣahr. As mentioned earlier in studying the levelled segments of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, the whole tract lying between the city of Tabālah and the lava-field of Ḥarrat al-Buqūm constitutes the Ṣahr desert, through which the pilgrim route passes, heading north-north-west as far as the southern skirt of this lava-field. This milestone is situated, lying on its side, on the north-western margin of the pilgrim route at the point where the route cuts consecutively through Wādīs al-Quḍayf and Tawāthil. Other relics of archaeological interest observed in the

proximity of this milestone include a number of Arabic rock-inscriptions¹ and the mosque (prayer-place) of Wādī al-Quḍayf.²

The inscription of this milestone is complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

[sic] ١ . ميه

٢ . ميل

Translation

1. One hundred

2. miles

Commentary

The text consists of two words (ll. 1, 2) which state the distance in miles. The milestone measures 1.8 m. in length x 0.54 m. in width at the top and 0.23 m. in the width at its base. It may have been quarried from the adjacent mountainous area. It has been cut in an approximately cylindrical shape. Despite its sideways position when discovered, there can be no doubt that this milestone was originally erected in a vertical position. The unit of measurement employed here is the mile (sing. *mīl*, pl. *amyāl*) which is equal to ca. 2 km.³ (100 miles x 2 = 200 km.).

The poet al-Radā'ī refers fleetingly in his *Urjūzah*⁴ to the existence of a milestone (*barīd*) near the watering-place of Khalāfah, according to his calculation

1. See nos. 34, 35, and 36 below.

2. See p.183 f. of this study.

3. Hinz, *Masse*, 63.

4. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 431; *Urj*, 65, ll. 3 f.

the twenty-fourth postal-stage (*barīd*). Al-Hamdānī¹ describes Khalāfah as a well with brackish water. This name has been preserved in that it is now used in referring to a major wadi located *ca.* 9 km. to the north of the area where this milestone was discovered. If we consider all these points, it is plausible that this milestone is the same one to which al-Radā'ī refers in his *Urjūzah*.

Of orthographical interest is the omission of the medial mute *alif* in the word *miyah* (l. 1).²

Palaeography

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Lām final (l. 2): the letter *lām* in the final position is inscribed with a long, vertical shaft extending below the base line, where it turns sharply to the left with a short horizontal stroke forming a right angle. This structure is attested on an Abbasid milestone, discovered on the Zubaydah pilgrim route.³

Mīm initial (ll. 1,2): the letter *mīm* in the initial position is rounded in shape and rests on the base line. This outline has a parallel on an Abbasid milestone, discovered on the Zubaydah pilgrim route.⁴

Hā' final (l. 1): the letter *hā'* in the final position is incised in a semi-bell shape, resting on the base line. This version is to be found on two milestones erected during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65-80/685-705).⁵

1. *Ṣifāh*, 432.

2. Cf. Qur'an II: 259, 261; VIII: 65-66; XVIII: 25; Diem, "Glimpses", *Orientalia*, XLV, 258; Hopkins, *Grammar*, 118 f.

3. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 230 f., pl. xxxviii, 2; *idem*, "Aḥjār", *al-Uṣūr*, V, 128, pl. 2.

4. *Idem*, *Darb Zubaydah*, 229, pl. xxxviii; "Aḥjār", *al-Uṣūr*, V, 124, fig. 1.

5. Van Berchem, *Matériaux*, 18 f., pl. 1 & 2.

Milestone no. 2

Pls. XLII.B, XLIV, tab. 14, map 13.3

Location: Shu'bat al-Khayl

Lines: 2

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd-4th/8th-10th cents.

Type of stone: reddish granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 35 x 25 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 8 cm.

Height of alif: N/A

Map reference: lat. 20° 00' 20" 30'

long. 42° 00' 42" 30'

Description

The text of this milestone has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved on the extreme upper part of the milestone and has clearly suffered from the effects of erosion.

This milestone was discovered *ca.* 35 km., as the crow flies, to the north-west of the location of the previous milestone (no. 1), in the area of Shu'bat (or Riyād) al-Khayl, which is situated in the region of the Ḥahr desert. The pilgrim route passes through this area heading towards Wādī Ray' al-Qurayhā', and thereafter to the lava-field of Ḥarrat al-Buqūm via Wādī Ujrub. This milestone was found lying on its side on the western edge of the pilgrim route.

The inscription of this milestone is complete, partially legible, and poorly preserved.

Text

١. سبعة / تسعة

٢. ميل [sic]

Translation

1. Seven / *Nine*
2. miles

Commentary

The text is composed of two words (ll. 1, 2) which state the distance in miles (7 miles x 2 = 14 km.). The word *sab'ah* (l. 1) may alternatively be read as *tis'ah* (9 miles x 2 = 18 km.). The milestone measures 1.9 m. in length x 0.55 m. in width at the top and 0.4 m. in width at its base. It may have been quarried from the surrounding area; its shape, similar to no. 1, is cylindrical. Despite its sideways position when discovered, there can be no doubt that this milestone was originally erected in a vertical position.

In his *Urjūzah* the poet al-Radā'ī¹ refers to the existence of a milestone near the pilgrim station of al-Qurayhā',² according to his calculation the twenty-fifth postal-stage (*barīd*). If we consider all these points, it is feasible to conclude that this milestone corresponds with the one al-Radā'ī referred to in his *Urjūzah*.

Of syntactical interest is the occurrence of a singular counted noun, *mīl* (l. 2), after the numeral *sab'ah* or *tis'ah* (l. 1); it is tempting to accept this as a dialect form in this inscription as further examples of it feature in certain papyri texts dated to the 3rd/9th century.³

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 432; *Urj.*, 66, l. 2.

2. For its identification, see p.198 f. of this study.

3. Cf. Hopkins, *Grammar*, 199.

Palaeography

This inscription contains certain features, e.g. the final *lām* (l. 2), the initial *mīm* (l. 2), and the final *hā'* (l. 1), which have already occurred in the previous one (no. 1).

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Sīn initial or medial (l. 1): the letter *sīn* consists of three parallel indentations which have been incised in acute-angled triangles. This style of inscribing the dents of the letter *sīn* occurs in a number of Arabic inscriptions discovered in the area of the Ḥijāz, the earliest of which is an epitaph dated A.H. 160 [A.D. 776-7],¹ and also in four funerary inscriptions, dated A.H. 243-6 [A.D. 857-61]²

'Ayn medial (l. 1): the medial *'ayn* appears open, i.e. without the upper arch. This structure occurs in most of the early Arabic inscriptions, e.g. al-Ḥajrī's inscription, dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652],³ and Mu'āwiyah's inscription [in al-Ṭā'if] dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677-8].⁴

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1. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 9, Z-6; 14, Z-9; 16, Z-11; *idem*, "Origin", *Ars*, II, 209, fig. 27.
 2. Schneider, *Lapicide*, pl. I, 1-2; pl. II, 3-4.
 3. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930) pl. no. iii.
 4. Miles, "Inscription", *JNES*, VII, pl. no. xviii.

Part Two: the Arabic Rock Inscriptions

Introduction

According to the classical Arabic sources, there are at least four theories concerning the origin of the Arabic script and its development. The essence of the theory of *al-tawqīf* is that Adam or Hūd was the first to write down Arabic letters after God had revealed them to him.¹ Other historians believe that Arabic writing is derived from the Himyarite, i.e. Sabaeen, script (*al-musnad*).² The third theory argues that three men, viz Murāmir b. Murrah, Aslam b. Jazrah, and ‘Āmir b. Jadarah of the Bawlān³ section of the tribe of Ṭayy, succeeded in designing the Arabic alphabet, using Syriac as a model. These persons taught the Arabic script to a number of the inhabitants of al-Anbār who, in turn, shared their knowledge with a group of people from al-Ḥīrah. The majority of the Arab historians state that it was Bishr b. ‘Abd al-Malik, the brother of Ukaydir, king of Dūmat al-Jandal, who learned the Arabic script during his frequent visits to al-Ḥīrah and that, during one of his visits to Mecca, he taught a group of Meccan people, including Abū Sufyān, the Arabic writing.⁴

The most recent and plausible theory, which has been readily embraced by modern scholars, is that the Arabs borrowed their script from the Nabataeans. This theory is based on the fourth-century A.D. Namārah inscription and other Nabataean inscriptions.⁵ It should be pointed out at this juncture that, according to

1. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 4; cf. Dodge, *Fihrist*, I, 7; al-Qalqashandī, *Ṣubḥ*, III, 9–11.

2. Ibn Khaldūn, *al-Ibar*, I, 755–7; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 5.

3. Cf. Ibn Durayd, *al-Ishtiqāq*, 397.

4. Al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ*, 471; Ibn Durayd, *al-Ishtiqāq*, 372.

5. Beeston, "Script", *Cambridge*, 10–14; al-Fi'r, *Taṭawwur*, 130–42; Healey, *Alphabet*, 42 f.

the findings of a recent study, the JS 17 inscription should now be classified in the range of pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions.¹

Any attempt at a critical appreciation of these miscellaneous theories is beyond the scope of this introduction. The system of methodology used in analysing the following selection of Arabic rock-inscriptions will now be explained at length.

The following compilation of Arabic rock-inscriptions has been collected from areas which, if not traversed directly by the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, are at least in its vicinity. During the course of the fieldwork, a total of three hundred Arabic rock-inscriptions were recorded and from this figure forty-five inscriptions have been selected in order to represent a separate source of archaeological interest with regard to the theme of this thesis. They have been engraved into the rock faces overlooking the main course of the Saudi section. It is believed that such rock-inscriptions were incised, whether along the wayside of the pilgrim routes or in isolated places, by travellers, commercial or pilgrim caravan leaders, members of military detachments, or ordinary nomads.² This collection has only two inscriptions (nos. 11 and 31) in which a direct reference to the pilgrim route is mentioned. As far as we know, none of the Arabic rock-inscriptions included here has ever been either reported, copied, or published.³

Each rock-inscription is introduced systematically by a series of statistics

1. Healey and Smith, "Document", *Aṭlāl*, XII, 77 f.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, xx.

3. Cf. *ibid.*, x f.

which fall into specific categories: location, lines, style, date, type of stone, dimensions of text area, spaces between lines, and height of *alif*. This initial data is followed by exhaustive critical analysis which is indexed under five sub-headings: description, text, translation, commentary, and palaeography.

I. Location

The examples selected for analysis in this chapter have been collected from nineteen sites: five *jabals*, ten *wadis*, three passes, and one ancient settlement.¹ The inscriptions are arranged progressively according to the geographical sequence of their sites with those in the south being treated first. Only the name of the site where the inscription was discovered is supplied opposite the entry "Location", whereas further visual features are provided under the sub-heading "Description".

II. Style

Except for nos. 6, 26, and 30, which have been engraved in an elaborate Kufic script, the majority of the inscriptions of this collection are incised in simple Kufic. It is assumed that those rock-inscriptions with rough and thick lines were engraved by using a sharp stone, whilst the edge of a knife, dagger, or point of a spear would have been applied to execute those with thin and fine lines.²

1. See *Index of Locations and Map References* in this study. Map references are based on the Geographical Map of the Asir Quadrangle, I-217B; Geographical Map of the Southern Najd Quadrangle, GM-211B; and Geographical Map of the Southern Hijāz Quadrangle, I-210B.

2. Cf. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, xx.

III. Date

A primary challenge encountered in this analysis has been to attribute a date to each of the inscriptions, as none of them were dated at the time of execution.

The dating of an inscription is estimated in accordance with two complementary methods: on the one hand, the text is assessed palaeographically, a procedure to be exercised with extreme caution, according to Grohmann,¹ on account of its invariably fallible conclusions, and, on the other hand, the subject of the inscription is traced in the classical Arabic sources, any reference to the subject naturally yielding a feasible date.

IV. Type of Stone

The types of stone, on which the inscriptions are carved, were examined on the spot and they may be classified as follows: granite, blackish granite, reddish granite, and basalt. This collection comprises those inscriptions which have been engraved either on mountain surfaces, outcrops, or blocks which have broken away from mountains. We found no funerary inscriptions.

The classification of the stone is supplied opposite the entry "Type of stone". In some cases, details regarding characteristics of the stone are provided under the sub-heading "Description".

1. *Ibid.*, xxi.

V. Measurements (Dimensions of text area, spaces between lines, and height of *alif*)

Owing to constraints of time posed by my itinerary, it was not possible to register any measurements of the rock-inscriptions on the spot; the approximate measurements given here are derived from the photographs in which the measurement is shown by a metric rule.

Except for nos. 20 and 21, where the measure is shown by a known size of a ballpoint pen, the dimensions of the inscriptions are illustrated by the presence of two metric scales in the photographs. The first scale, shaped like an arrow, is 0.5 m. in length and it is divided into five parts, coloured alternately black and white, each part measuring 0.1 m. The second scale, spear-shaped, is 1 m. in length and is divided into two parts, coloured respectively red and white, each part measuring 0.5 m.

VI. Description

This is the first sub-heading which contains further details regarding various aspects of the inscription: its physical appearance, the size of the stone, its provenance, the degree of legibility of the text, and its general state of preservation. Confirmation also occurs of those texts which were not completed at the time of execution.

VII. Text – Translation

This is the second sub-heading. An exact copy of the original Arabic text, provided only with diacritical points, is given here and this is immediately

followed by a translation into English. In certain cases, the Arabic text has been supplied with brackets in order to modify its reading.

The types of sigla, which have been inserted in some of the Arabic texts, are as follows:

- i. (): rounded brackets enclose those letters (e.g. in inscript. nos. 29, 34, and 41) or words (e.g. in inscript. no. 14) or names (e.g. in inscript. nos. 5, 31, 40, 44, and 45) for which it is not possible to achieve a positive reading.
- ii. []: square brackets enclose the editorial additions undertaken by the present writer. They are to be found in the following inscript. nos.: 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 25, 26, 28, 29, 36, 37, 42, 43, and 45.
- iii. { }: plaited brackets enclose dittography of words. They are to be found in inscript. nos. 18 and 31.
- iv. « »: doubled parentheses enclose either a lacuna in the original text resulting from mutilation, or letters supplied to fill the lacuna. They are to be found in inscript. nos. 12, 25, and 31.
- v. [sic]: in addition to the above-mentioned sigla, a set of square brackets enclosing the Latin word *sic* is also employed in some of the Arabic texts, particularly whenever the reading of a particular word is questionable. This siglum is used in the following inscript. nos.: 6, 20, 22, 23, 25, 33, 39, 40, and 45.

VIII. Commentary

Three main subjects are treated under this fourth sub-heading.

i. Religious Formulae

There is only one rock-inscription (no. 14) which commences with the opening invocation (the *basmalah*).

The majority of these rock-inscriptions are religious prayers inspired by the Qur'ān, with the exception of inscript. nos. 5, 25, and 33 which contain literal quotations from certain Qur'anic verses.¹ The Prophet's first name is only mentioned three times throughout this collection (inscript. nos. 24, 26, and 33).

The most prevalent religious formulae occurring in this selection of Arabic rock-inscriptions may be referenced as follows:

1. Prayers for mercy: inscript. nos. 1, 39, 40, and 42.
2. Prayers of confession of faith: inscript. nos. 2, 17, 21, 29, 30, 33, 35, 37, and 41.
3. Prayers seeking salvation: inscript. nos. 3 and 28.
4. Prayers for forgiveness: inscript. nos. 4, 13, 19, 32, 38, 43, and 45.
5. Prayers admitting trust in God: inscript. nos. 5, 7, 16, 20, 22, 23, and 34.
6. Prayers of profession or exclamation: inscript. nos. 8 and 12.
7. Prayers of eulogium: inscript. nos. 9, 10, 11, and 18.
8. Prayers seeking refuge: inscript. nos. 2, 15, and 27.

Other formulae, e.g. praise (no. 14), creed (*al-shahādah*) (nos. 24, 26, and 44), admonition (no. 25), and curse (no. 31) also occur.

ii. Personal Names

There is a subject in each inscription of this collection and in every case

1. See *Index of Qur'anic Verses* in this study.

the subject's personal name is masculine.¹

a. Engravers' Names

There are only five inscriptions containing the name of the engraver.

Unhappily, there is no instance where an engraver's name exists in full:

1. Muḥammad b. « . . . » (inscript. no. 5).
2. Muḥammad b. « . . . » (inscript. no. 25).
3. Qāsim (inscript. nos. 13 and 14).
4. Sa'īd b. Sālim al-« . . . » (inscript. no. 6).

b. Prominent Personages

Four characters in this collection have been positively identified:

1. al-Ḥajjāj b. al-Manṣūr (inscript. no. 18).
2. Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir (inscript. no. 14).
3. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir (inscript. no. 13).
4. al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Ismā'il b. Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī (inscript. no. 1).

c. Professional Titles

There is only one inscription featuring the title of the subject:

1. The title *emir* precedes the subject Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir (inscript. no. 14).

There is only one inscription featuring the status of the subject:

2. The status *mawlā* reveals that the subject Abū Kathīr is the patron of Ḥabīb (inscript. no. 40).

d. The Nisbah

There are only eight inscriptions in this collection (nos. 1, 8, 10, 18, 19,

1. See *Index of Personal Names* in this study.

21, 32, and 38) in which the *nisbah* of the subject is stated.¹ A number of these *nisbahs* may be divided into two categories:

1. *Nisbahs* which may be associated with place-names (inscript. nos. 1, 8, 19, 32, and 38).
2. *Nisbahs* which may be affiliated with a tribal name (inscript. no. 21).

e. The *Kunyah*

There are only three inscriptions in this collection (nos. 40, 44, and 45) in which the *kunyah* of the subject is recorded:

1. Abū Kathīr (no. 40).
2. Abū Rizām (no. 44).
3. Abū Rizām (no. 45).

The remaining personal names occurring in this collection of Arabic rock-inscriptions are briefly reviewed below:

1. Names shared with the prophets: inscript. nos. 5, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 27, 28, 33, 36, 38, 39, and 43.
2. Names appearing twice in this collection: inscript. nos. 6, 7, 15, 26, 27, 28, 33, 41, 44, and 45.
3. Compound first names: inscript. nos. 6, 10, 30, and 37.
4. Inscriptions containing the first name only of the subject: inscript. nos. 7, 35, 40, and 41.
5. Inscriptions containing the first two names only of the subject: inscript. nos. 2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 20, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 34, 36, 39, 42, 44, and 45.
6. Inscriptions containing the first three names only of the subject ; inscript. nos. 4, 14, 16, and 43.
7. Inscriptions containing the first four names only of the subject: inscript. no. 1.

1. See *Index of the Nisbahs* in this study.

iii. Orthographical Features

The third subject which has been included under this sub-heading "Commentary" is orthographical features and the ones which occur in this collection are listed below:

1. The omission of the medial *alif* in the role of *matrix lectionis* (*alif al-madd*): inscript. nos. 1, 3, 6, 9, 10, 14, 15, 17, 25, 28, 29, 36, 37, 42, and 45.
2. The addition of the initial *alif* in the word *ibn*: inscript. nos. 1, 3, 26, and 32.
3. The replacement of the *alif maqṣūrah* by *alif mamdūdah*: inscript. nos. 20, 22, 23, 25, 33, and 40.
4. The substitution of *tā' ṭawīlah* for *tā' marbūṭah*: inscript. nos. 39 and 40.
5. The omission of *alif al-tanwīn*: inscript. no. 26.
6. There are no instances where *hamzah* occurs in either initial, medial, or final position.
7. There are no diacritical points at all in this collection.
8. The failure of the engraver to inscribe certain letters: inscript. nos. 4, 6, 43, and 45.

IX. *Paleography*

In this section attention is paid to the palaeographical style of the individual letters. If the shape of any letter is consistent with versions which have appeared earlier in this collection, a suitable comparison is made between this letter and all of the earlier examples of this outline. When the shape of a letter appears for the first time in this collection, it is described exhaustively, establishing a new prototype and, where possible, parallels are then drawn between this new outline and similar versions occurring in dated, published inscriptions.

In conclusion to our commentary on this section, it is worth drawing attention to certain points of palaeographical interest.

The majority of these inscriptions are incised in simple, Kufic script. The body of some of the words, e.g. in inscript. nos. 3, 5, 13, and 17, is greatly extended so that it occupies the whole of the line.

There is no trace of foliated or floriated Kufic script in any of these rock-inscriptions.

The most striking decorative elements in this collection are set out below:

1. The letter *alif* is decorated with a thorn (e.g. inscript. nos. 16 and 32).
2. The letter *alif* with a split top like a swallow-tail (e.g. inscript. no. 22).
3. The initial *alif* has a short base-stroke forming a right angle. This element is common throughout this collection.
4. The letter *'ayn* in medial position is closed, but it sinks down to form the shape of two symmetrical leaves (e.g. inscript. no. 6).
5. The letter *hā'* in medial position ends in the shape of two symmetrical leaves. This element of decoration has already been observed in the structure of the letter *'ayn* (e.g. inscript. nos. 6 and 26).
6. The base of the ligature *lām-alif* in initial position is adorned with inverted crenellation.

It should be mentioned that this study of Arabic rock-inscriptions is supplemented with photographs of the original inscriptions, tracing plates, palaeographic tables, and four indices of: Locations and Map References, Qur'anic Verses, Personal Names (as they occur in the inscriptions), and *Nisbahs*.

The Inscriptions

Inscription no. 1

Pl. XLV, tab. 15, map 13.1

Location: Jabal Qahrāt al-‘Anz

Lines: 3

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 1st–2nd/7th–8th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 70 x 30 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5–10 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 8–10 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been carefully incised on a brownish surface of Jabal Qahrāt al-‘Anz, which is situated on the edge of the main course of the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route. The inscription is carved in the centre of the above-mentioned rock face and the letters are easy to make out. It is accompanied on the right-hand side by a religious formula, and on the left by a pre-Islamic inscription consisting of a single line in which there are more than four letters. This inscription is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. يرحم الله على الضحاك

٢. ابن اسمعيل ابن فيروز

٣. ابن الديلمي امين

Translation

1. May God have mercy on al-Ḍaḥḥāk

2. ibn Ismā‘īl ibn Fayrūz

3. ibn al-Daylamī. Amen

Commentary

The text of the first line of this inscription is merely a prayer for mercy in which the imperfect tense يرحم الله is used to represent the optative mood.

This type of prayer, including other similar formulae, such as *يرحم / يغفر الله ربنا*, is frequently encountered in early Arabic inscriptions.¹ This inscription is finely incised in early Kufic which lacks any form of diacritic or ornamentation. The script of this graffito is well executed.

The peculiar features of this inscription include the addition of the *alif* in *ibn* (ll. 2, 3), which is a departure from standard orthography if the names given are genuine *isms*. A similar addition occurs in an inscription located in al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia.² A further feature lies in the second name (Ismā'īl, l. 2), which is written without the medial *alif*. This medial *ā* was not indicated by using an *alif* in Nabataean inscriptions and its omission, the norm in early Arabic orthography, is frequently found in the Qur'ān as in, for example, *al-Raḥmān*.³

The subject of this inscription appears clearly as al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Ismā'īl b. Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī.

Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī (ll. 2, 3)

Following the Abyssinian invasion of the Yemen, which lasted for some fifty years (AD 525–75), a national movement sprang up which aimed to free the Yemen from Abyssinian occupation. This anti-Abyssinian movement, led by Sayf b. Dhī Yazan, a Ḥimyarī chief, received generous military aid from the Persian Emperor Chosroes I.

Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī was amongst the eight hundred men who were despatched to the Yemen by the Persian emperor.⁴ Later this group of people was referred to as the Abnā' by most Arab historians.

1. See e.g. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 3-Z-2; 46-Z-45; 48-Z-49; 53-Z-64; 54-Z-65; Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, no. iii, 194-W4; 204-W9; 205-W12.

2. Donner, *art. cit.*, 204-W9.

3. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 7.

4. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 533.

Al-Ṭabarī states that Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī, along with the other members of the Abnā', was converted to Islam by Wabr b. Yuḥannis.¹ According to the biographies of Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī by Ibn Sa'd² and Ibn Ḥajar,³ the subject embraced Islam during the Prophet's lifetime; he became a promulgator of *Ḥadīth*. Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī was called al-Ḥimyarī because he had lived within the geographical territories of the Ḥimyar tribe; he also had other sobriquets (*kunyaḥs*), viz: Abū al-Ḍaḥḥāk, Abū 'Abd al-Raḥmān, and Abū 'Abd Allāh.

According to the sources at our disposal, Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī participated in the assassination of the false prophet 'Abhalah b. Ka'b al-'Ansī in Rabī' I, 11/June 632. Ironically, before the assassination took place, 'Abhalah appointed Ibn al-Daylamī leader of a military division, recruited predominantly from the Abnā'.⁴ At a later stage Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī succeeded in defeating Qays b. 'Abd Yaghūth al-Murādī; this leader was an apostate from Islam and he strove to drive the Abnā' out of the Yemen. As a leader of the Abnā' in Ṣan'ā', Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī received much encouragement in this from the Caliph Abū Bakr, and a number of Yemeni tribes, including the B. 'Uqayl, the B. Rabī'ah, and the 'Akk, who provided him with military assistance.⁵

In the course of his lifetime Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī held many offices in the Yemen. It has been stated that he was governor of the Yemen at the time of the Prophet's death.⁶ In accordance with this view, the Caliph Abū Bakr wrote to him and invested him with the governorship (*wilāyah*).⁷ In 11/632-3, when al-Muhājir's army entered the town of Ṣan'ā', Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī was removed

1. *Tārīkh*, I, 1763.

2. *Al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 533 f.

3. *Al-Iṣābah*, VIII, 106 f.

4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 1855. See also Ibn Samurah, *Fuqahā'*, 26; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-'Uyūn*, I, 66.

5. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 1989 f.

6. Ibn al-Dayba', *al-'Uyūn*, I, 74.

7. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 1989 f.

from office and replaced by Abān b. Sa'īd b. al-Āṣ.¹ During Mu'āwiyah's caliphate, Fayrūz was reinstated as governor of the Yemen, replacing 'Utbah b. Abī Sufyān. He held this post for more than nine years (*ca.* 42–53/662–73); however, his governorship was restricted to Ṣan'ā' and al-Janad.²

Ibn al-Daylamī died in the year 53/673 leaving three adult sons – al-Ḍaḥḥāk, 'Abd Allāh, and Sa'īd – all of whom transmitted those *Ḥadīths* which were passed on by their father.³

Al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Ismā'il b. Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī (ll. 1, 2, 3)

The inscription under discussion clearly bears the name al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Ismā'il b. Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī. It should be noted that the second forename of al-Ḍaḥḥāk, i.e. Ismā'il (l. 2), as it appears in the inscription, is not attested in the classical Arabic sources.

Al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī, one of the Abnā' in Ṣan'ā', achieved a great deal of recognition through his religious zeal.⁴ He was among those people who supported Mu'ādh b. Jabal, the Prophet's ambassador to the Yemen.⁵ It has been recorded that al-Ḍaḥḥāk was the governor of the Yemen, namely over Ṣan'ā' and al-Janad, during the first stage of the Umayyad caliphate (41–132/661–750).⁶ He was appointed to this office (54–60/674–80) by the Caliph Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān and remained in it until the death of Mu'āwiyah in 60/680.⁷ During the caliphate of 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr (64–73/683–92), al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Fayrūz Ibn al-Daylamī was reinstated in the governorship of Ṣan'ā' on two separate occasions.⁸

1. Rāzī, *Tārīkh Ṣan'ā'*, 150.

2. Ibn al-Dayba', *al-'Uyūn*, I, 91.

3. Al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh Ṣan'ā'*, 432 f.; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 534; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, VIII, 107.

4. Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 536; Bā Makhramah, *Thaḡhr*, 99 f.

5. Al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 131 f.

6. Al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 200.

7. Ibn al-Dayba', *al-'Uyūn*, I, 91.

8. Ibn Samurah, *Fuqahā'*, 51 f.; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 202; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-'Uyūn*, I, 95.

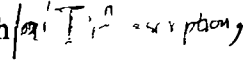
It is believed that al-Ḍaḥḥāk died in 114/732, leaving an adult son called al-Ghiṭrīf who, in the reign of Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik, was designated as governor over Ṣan‘ā’.¹

Al-Daylamī (l.3)

This is the *nisbah* of this family and it presumably refers to the Persian province.²

Palaeography

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif (ll. 1, 2, 3): it occurs in each line of this inscription with a relatively long vertical body and is linked to the base line by a short tail turning sharply to the right. The shape of these *alifs* resembles the *alifs* in the Mu‘āwiyah  which is dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677],³ and also those in the inscription of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia, dating from the 1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries.⁴

Ḥā’ initial and medial (l. 1): the form of initial and medial *ḥā’* in l. 1 is curved in the conventional angular shape.

Dāl medial (l. 3): the letter *dāl* in the word al-Daylamī (l. 3) is slightly curved with a large, angular body, and it has a short stroke ending its upper line. The feature denotes an archaic style. It is very much like the shape of the *dāl* in both the Wadi al-‘Aqīq⁵ inscription and al-Ḥajrī’s inscription; the latter is dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652].⁶

Rā’ medial (ll. 1, 2): the letter *rā’* in the word *yarḥamu* (l. 1) is engraved below the base line at a right-angle to it, whereas the second *rā’* in the name Fayrūz (l. 2) curls sharply beneath the base line.

1. Al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 204.

2. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 544.

3. Miles, "Inscription", *JNES*, VII, 240, fig. 1, pl. xviii, A.

4. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 184 f., W-1, fig. 1.

5. Rostem, *Inscription*, 24.

6. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930), pl. iii.

'Ayn initial (l. 1): it is incised in a semi-circular shape, upwards from the base line.

'Ayn medial (l. 2): a closed, triangular form, the shape of the letter 'ayn is almost identical to those occurring in the inscription located in 'Ā'ishah's mosque, dated A.H. 310 [A.D. 922],¹ as well as in the inscription of Egypt which is dated A.H. 392 [A.D. 1001].²

Mīm medial (ll. 2, 3): it is written in two forms: the first in the shape of a triangle as in the name Ismā'īl (l. 2), whilst the second is fully rounded as in the name al-Daylamī and the closing word *Amīn* (l. 3). The rounded medial *mīm* appears clearly in the text inscribed on the Dome of the Rock.³

Mīm final (l. 1): it appears triangular in shape rendering it similar to the letter *mīm* in the name Ismā'īl (l. 2). It has a short, horizontal tail.

Nūn final (ll. 2, 3): it appears with a tail curling downwards towards the next line in a loose, wide hook.

Yā' initial and medial (ll. 1, 2, 3): a vertical stroke sitting on the line, it occurs also in the Zaynah ibnat 'Uthmān inscription, dated A.H. 218 [A.D. 923],⁴ and in another inscription, dated A.H. 231 [A.D. 846].⁵

1. Al-Fi'r, *Taṭawwur*, 248 f., pl. 42, fig. 13.

2. Arif, *Kufic*, 42.

3. Kessler, "Inscription", *JRAS* (1970) pls. II, III; Smith, "Bilād al-Shām", *The IVth ICHBS*, II, 186, 192.

4. Miles, "Inscriptions", pl. 1.

5. Miles, "Inscriptions", pl. 1, 2.

Inscription no. 2

Pl. XLVI, tab. 15, map 13.1

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Jabal Qahrat al-‘Anz*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 150 x 35 cm.*Lines:* 2*Spaces between lines:* ca. 15 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 10–15 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It is engraved in the middle region of the same mountain in which inscription no. 1 is executed. All the letters are skilfully carved (excepting the first word of the second line), and are easy to decipher. It is complete and well preserved.

Text

١. بالله امن عمارة بن
٢. عبدة وبه يعتصم

Translation

1. In God has believed ‘Umārah b.
2. ‘Ubaydah and in Him he seeks shelter¹

Commentary

This inscription contains the usual religious formulae regarding the confession of faith (l. 1), and the seeking of refuge (l. 2). The inscription is delicately inscribed but contains no diacritical dots, and the genealogy of the subject’s name is incomplete (ll. 1, 2). In this inscription verb–tense varies; in l. 1 the verb is conjugated in the past tense (امن) whereas in l. 2 the present tense (يعتصم) is employed.

The inscription displays the name ‘Umārah b. ‘Ubaydah. It is possible that

1. After Qur’ān, III: 103; IV: 175.

the forename should be read as either Ghumārah¹ b. ‘Antarah, ‘Atīrah, or ‘Unayzah.² In all cases the name of the person is insignificant and therefore is not attested in any of the classical Arabic sources at our disposal. Furthermore, it seems impossible to derive biographical information from only two names. Orthographically this inscription has no peculiar features. The initial *alif* preceding *ibn* (l. 1) has been omitted here, whereas it is written in the previous inscription (inscript. no. 1, ll. 2, 3).

Palaeography

The palaeographical peculiarities which are common to this and the former inscription (no. 1) are as follows: The outlines of the letters *alif* (l. 1), initial and medial ‘*ayn* (ll. 1, 2), and medial *mīm* (l. 1) are similar to those in inscript. no. 1 above. Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Ṣād medial (l. 2): it is written with a rectangular body. The style of the letter *ṣād* has been attested in an inscription from the highlands of the Hijāz in Saudi Arabia, dating from the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries.³

Mīm final (l. 2): occurs with a roundish head and a tail extending straight down below the base line.

Nūn final (l. 1): at the beginning of l. 1 the final *nūn* is arching gently to the left from the base line, whereas at the end of the line the final *nūn* stretches straight down with a slight curl to the left at the end.

Hā’ final (ll. 1, 2): it is strictly triangular in shape. It occurs more frequently in the 4th–5th/10th–11th centuries. The detached form of the letter *hā’* in the names ‘Umārah and ‘Ubaydah corresponds with the *hā’* in an inscription in Najrān.⁴ In both of these inscriptions the letter *hā’* is pearl-shaped.

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 470 f.

2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 474 f.

3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 151 f., Z-264, pl. xix, 2.

4. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 125, Z-203, pl. xvi, 4.

Wāw initial (l. 2): it has a roundish head, rectangular body, and flat tail-end. The shape of this letter *wāw* is written in exactly the same way in an epitaph in Saudi Arabia which dates from the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.¹

1. Al-Bāshā, "Ahamiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 97 f., inscript. 8, pl. 30, fig. 10.

Inscription no. 3

Pl. XLVII, tab. 15, map 13.1

Location: Jabal Qahrat al-ʿAnz

Lines: 3

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 1st–2nd/7th–8th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 30 x 10 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

Executed above inscript. no. 4, this inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It is located in the rock face and, approximately 1 metre to the north-west of this inscription, there are some short and incomplete Arabic inscriptions, some of which are pre-Islamic in origin. The text is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. ان عمر ابن عبد
 ٢. الله يسأل الله ا
 ٣. لجنة

Translation

1. Verily ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd
2. Allāh asks God for
3. paradise

Commentary

There is an inscription, dating from the 1st/7th century and discovered in Wadi al-Sirrayn in Saudi Arabia, which contains a similar prayer to the one in this

inscription.¹

This inscription bears the name of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd Allāh (ll. 1, 2). This name, which contains no *nisbah*, is not mentioned in any of the classical Arabic sources referred to, although the names ‘Umar and ‘Abd Allāh enjoyed considerable popularity during the early Islamic period and are still in use nowadays.

The letter *alif* in the word *ibn* (l. 1) is added here, whereas it is omitted in the previous inscription (inscript. no. 2, l. 1). In l. 2 of this inscription the word *yas'al* is written with the medial *alif* omitted. The body of the word *al-jannah* (ll. 2, 3) is greatly extended so that it occupies the whole of l. 3.

Palaeography

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (ll. 1,2): the letter *alif* in this inscription is written with a long, vertical body which ends in a short horizontal stroke to the right, forming a right-angle with the parent stem. Its design corresponds approximately to that of the *alifs* in inscription no. 1.

Sīn medial (l. 2): the teeth of the letter *sīn* in the word *yas'al* are not clearly defined.

Lām final (l. 2): the lower body of the letter *lām* in the word *yas'al* is written with an extended tail which penetrates the base of l. 3, ending below it.

Mīm medial (l. 1): the letter *mīm* in the name ‘Umar is rounded, identical in shape to the *mīm* in inscription no. 2 above.

Nūn final (l. 1): it intersects the base line in a long, graceful stroke facing to the left. A similar design appears on a tombstone dating from the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th

1. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 100, Z-158, pl. xv, 2.

centuries.¹

Hā' final (l. 2): the letter *hā'* in the word *Allāh*, which occurs twice here, is triangular in shape and situated on the base line. With this shape, this letter resembles the same letter in the word *Allāh* on a milestone referring to the improvement of the pilgrim route during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65–80/685–705).²

1. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 25–7, Z-18, pl. iii, 4.

2. Sharon, "Inscription", *BSOAS*, XXIX, 366, pl. I.

Inscription no. 4

Pl. XLVII, tab. 15, map 13.1

Location: Jabal Qahrat al-‘Anz

Lines: 4

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–4th/8th–10th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 65 x 40 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 8–10 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 10 cm.

Description

This undated inscription boasts wide, flat lettering in simple Kufic script. It lacks diacritical points and decorative touches, apart from at the apices of the letters *alif-lām*. It is written below the former inscription (inscript. no. 3) in the southern rock face of Jabal Qahrat al-‘Anz. It is surrounded by a few incomplete graffiti, the texts of which are largely essential prayers such as, ‘There is no God, but God; O God...etc.’ This inscription is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١ . اللهم ا
٢ . غفر لشكير
٣ . بن بويه بن
٤ . حميد

Translation

1. O God for–
2. give Shukayr
3. b. Buwayh b.
4. Ḥamīd/Ḥumayd

Commentary

This inscription contains a popular prayer for forgiveness (ll. 1, 2) which is widely used in the Arabic inscriptions.

The inscription bears the name Shukayr b. Buwayh b. Ḥamīd (or Ḥumayd). The *nisbah* of this man has not been mentioned and this makes the task of identifying him very difficult. In the light of the fact that the forenames recorded in this inscription have not been attested in the classical Arabic sources, there is a possibility that his genealogy could be interpreted as follows.

l.2: Since the letters of the first name are legible, the most feasible interpretation is that which has been presented in the above text.

l.3: As well as Buwayh, the second name could be vocalized as Buwayh (بُوَيْه). Other readings are also possible: Būbah (بُوْبَه), Būnah (بُوْنَه), Būnuh (بُوْنُوْه), or Tawbah (تَوْبَه).¹

l.4: The third name may be read as Ḥumayd (حُمَيْد).²

The proposed reading of these names (as set out above) refers to Arabic forenames, some of which are still used today, such as Ḥamīd and Ḥumayd.

Palaeography

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif-lām initial and medial (ll. 1, 2): the letters *alif* and *lām* are composed of a vertical stalk which ascends from the base line, culminating in a split narrow head in the style of a swallow-tail. This decorative touch at the tip of the *alif* and *lām* appears in an inscription in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, dating from

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 104, 117.

2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 250.

the 4th/10th century.¹

Hā' initial (l. 4): it is shaped like a small lever. The formation of this letter is evinced in an inscription, dating from the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries.²

Dāl final (l. 4): it is triangular in shape and, as such, its outline is peculiar.

Kāf medial (l. 2): the letter *kāf* conforms to the traditional style, with the exception that it begins with a particularly short, curved stroke.

Hā' medial (l. 1): the shape of the letter *hā'* is oval and intersects the base line. The way in which this letter is written accords with the style used in the Khashnah inscription in Saudi Arabia, dated A.H. 56 [A.D. 667].³

This rock-face, accommodating inscriptions nos. 3 and 4, also bears three short pre-Islamic graffiti, each of which is composed of a single line. Due to its illegibility, the first graffito, which is to be seen in the centre of the photograph, has been excluded. Immediately to the left of no. 3 and above no. 4 is the second graffito, which reads: '*drm*'. It has been attested that '*drm*' is a Sabaeen personal name.⁴ Directly to the north-west of the above-mentioned graffito, the third one is engraved and this says: '*slm*'. It has been confirmed that '*slm*' is a personal name which occurs more commonly in Safaitic and Thamudic inscriptions.⁵ The basic meanings of *salām/silm* in classical Arabic are 'peace' or 'sue for peace'.⁶

1. Grohmann, "Origin", *Ars*, ii, 191, diagram A, no. 27.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 25, 218, pl. iii, 4.

3. Sharafaddin, "Inscriptions", *Atlāl*, I, 69 f., pl. 50, A.

4. Harding, *Index*, 412.

5. Harding, *Index*, 325.

6. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, XII, 289 f.

Inscription no. 5

Pl. XLVIII, tab. 16, map 13.1

Location: Jabal al-Rākibah

Lines: 6

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 25 x 20 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 3–5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been carved in the granite rock face and is situated below a partially eroded pre-Islamic inscription above which are two lines of an Arabic inscription. Except for the last line (l. 6), this inscription is easy to make out. All of the lines are skilfully incised. The inscription is complete and well preserved.

Text

- ١ . توكلت
- ٢ . على الله
- ٣ . لا حول ولا
- ٤ . قوة إلا
- ٥ . بالله وكتب
- ٦ . (محمد بن) «...»

Translation

1. I have placed my confidence
2. in God.
3. There is no power and there is no
4. strength but

5. in Allāh and it is written by

6. (Muḥammad b.)«...»

Commentary

This inscription begins with the saying, 'Trust in God', or 'I have put my trust in God' (ll. 1, 2), which occurs several times in the Qur'ān.¹ Confession of this nature is frequently encountered in early Arabic inscriptions.² Lines 3, 4, and 5 contain another fundamental prayer.³ These formulae are widely used in Arabic inscriptions.

The name of the engraver (l. 6) has been effaced. However, the first two words of this line may be read as Muḥammad b.

Palaeography

This inscription is engraved in an elegant way – the extended forms of certain letters such as *bā'*, *tā'*, and *kāf* creates a very elegant impression. There is a striking resemblance with the previous inscriptions in the shape of the letters *alif* (ll. 2, 4), *ḥā'* (l. 3), initial and medial *kāf* (ll. 1, 5), final *hā'* (ll. 2, 4, 5), and initial and medial *wāw* (ll. 1, 3, 4, 5). Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Bā' and *tā'* final (ll. 1, 5): the open-ended forms of final *bā'* and *tā'* are incised without any trace of a barb or vertical stroke to close the letter. The shapes of these letters resemble those in an inscription from the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in

1. A paraphrase of Qur'ān, cf. III: 159; IV: 81; X: 71; XI: 56; XXVI: 217; XXVII: 79; XXXIII: 3; LXV: 3; and LXIV: 13.

2. See e.g. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 1, Z-146, pl. xiv, 4; Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 87, graffito no. 120.

3. For the second half of this prayer, 'There is no strength but with Allāh', cf. Qur'ān XVIII: 39.

Saudi Arabia which is dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries.¹

Lām initial (ll. 3, 4): the letter *lām* is written in the herring-bone style. The same technique is used in an epitaph, dated A.H. 71 [A.D. 691]²

Yā' final (l. 2): the final *yā'* in the word '*alā*' extends shortly below the base line, culminating in a loose, discontinuous ring. Its shape is copied in a rock-inscription found near the pilgrim station of al-Suwāriqiyyah on the Zubaydah pilgrim route; this one is undated but estimated to date from the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries.³

1. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 183–5, W-1, fig. 1.

2. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1932) 290 f., pl. 1.

3. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 242, inscript. no. 2, pl. xxxi, 2.

Inscription no. 6

Pl. XLIX, tab. 16, map 13.1

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Jabal al-Rākibah*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 100 x 60 cm.*Lines:* 6*Spaces between lines:* ca. 10 cm.*Style:* incised elaborate Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 8 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date or diacritical points. It has been incised in the weather-beaten granite rock face of Jabal al-Rākibah. The text area is bordered, 50 cm. above the top line, by an Arabic graffito comprising two lines. A further Arabic graffito, consisting of three lines, is visible at the bottom right-hand corner of the central inscription. These two small Arabic graffiti appear to have been engraved by different persons. It seems likely that the engraver was unable to conclude his text owing to the extent of the erosion of the rock face at the base of this mountain. This theory is substantiated by the space (*ca.* 25 cm.) left at the end of l. 5. Similarly, this inscription may be regarded as being incomplete, as the engraver failed to complete the second half of the sixth line.

Of the five inscriptions which have been scrutinized so far, this one is the most elegant owing to certain features: the shape of the letters (the style of Kufic script employed is more sophisticated than those used in the other inscriptions); the execution of the words; and the uniformity of the lines. This prayer is well preserved and, with the exception of the last word in l. 6, it is perfectly legible.

Text

١ . اللهم ظلمت نفسي

٢. وسعيت في حياتي سعي [sic]
 ٣. لظيا فان يعف فالفو
 ٤. طلللبي وان يعاقب فلن
 ٥. يعلاقب بر يا وكتب
 ٦. سعيد بن سالم ال(...)

Translation

1. O God, I have wronged my own soul
2. and I have striven during my lifetime fiercely
3. Verily, if He [God] pardons [me], then the pardon would be
4. my desire, verily if He [God] punishes [me], He does not
5. punish an innocent person. Written by
6. Sa'īd b. Sālim al[-...]

Commentary

This inscription bears the name of Sa'īd b. Sālim al-J/H/Kh...F/Q (1. 6). Besides Sa'īd (سَعِيد), the vocalization Su'ayd (سُعَيْد) would also be possible.¹ The family name (*nisbah*) is incomplete. Apart from the definite article *al-* there are only two letters of the person's family name, which might be read either *jīm*, *hā'*, or *khā'* and *fā'* or *qāf*. It seems impossible to determine the *nisbah* since the personal names in this inscription are not attested in the classical Arabic sources. Nevertheless, these very same personal names are testified twice in at least two other undated Arabic inscriptions. The first inscription, in which the name of Sa'īd b. Sālim is mentioned, is an Arabic inscription found by the present writer in Wadi

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 360.

Ranūm,¹ while the second one was found in the vicinity of Medina at Bīr al-Rāḥah.² Nowadays, the names Saʿīd, Suʿayd, and Sālim are still in use.

L.1 is a paraphrase of a Qurʾanic verse, cf. VII: 23.

L.2 is a paraphrase of a Qurʾanic verse, cf. LIII: 39–40.

Ls.3, 4, and 5 contain an indirect plea for forgiveness and no punishment, delivered to the Lord. This particular expression is not attested in any other Arabic inscription to date, as far as I am aware. The first word in l. 3 is borrowed from the Qurʾān, LXX: 15.

This inscription contains some orthographical errors. There is a grammatical fault in the fourth word (l. 2) where *saʿy* has been written instead of the correct form *saʿyan* which is a cognate accusative. The medial *lām* (l. 4), which should come after the letter *ṭāʾ* in the word *ṭalabī*, is omitted. This omission of the letter *lām* must have been an error committed by the engraver. In l. 5 the medial *alif*, which should come after the letter *ʿayn* in the word *yuʿāqib*, is also dropped. This omission of the medial *ā* is an orthographical feature demonstrated in the Nabataean inscriptions and it is frequently found in the Qurʾān as, for example, in the word *al-Raḥmān*.³

Palaeography

This inscription is characterized by its beautiful and elongated vertical and

1. See below, inscript. no. 26.

2. Rostem, *Inscriptions*, 27, pl. IXb.

3. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 7.

horizontal letters. In palaeographical terms it may be described as the finest find in this collection. The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (ll. 1, 4): there are extensions on the base of independent *alifs* pointing to the right with a barb or hook. This barbed form of the *alifs* may be connected with the late Nabataean form of *alif*, but has become common in later Kufic inscriptions, assuming an ornamental character.¹ Faithful renditions of the shape of this letter are to be found in the previous inscriptions of this collection.

Bā' and *tā'* final (ll. 1, 2, 4, 5): these letters are engraved in a similar manner as they appear in inscript. no. 5 above.

Sīn initial and medial (ll. 1, 2, 6): the *sīn* dents are incised with sharp, pointed teeth like small triangles, a form which recurs both in an inscription dated A.H. 246 [A.D. 860]² and in an inscription found in the vicinity of al-Ṭā'if, dated to the 4th–5th/10th–11th centuries. It should be noted, however, that this *sīn* already appears in Egyptian epitaphs dated to A.H. 229 [A.D. 843–4], A.H. 244 [A.D. 858], and A.H. 323 [A.D. 848]³

'*Ayn* medial (ll. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6): the arch of the medial '*ayn* is closed, but it sinks down to form the shape of two symmetrical leaves. This foliated decoration lends a certain elegance to the letters. This form of '*ayn* occurs in two dated tombstones which have been found in Tihāmah. The first tombstone was discovered in the settlement of 'Ashm; it is dated A.H. 385 [A.D. 995]⁴ The second was found in the settlement of al-Khalīf, to the north-east of 'Ashm. It is dated to A.H. 406 [A.D. 1015]⁵

Fā' medial and final (ll. 1, 3): the letter *fā'* is inscribed with a fully rounded head

1. Grohmann, "Origin", *Ars*, II, 188; al-Fi'r, *Taṭawwur*, 208 f., pl. 30.

2. Al-Fi'r, *Taṭawwur*, 231 f., pl. 394.

3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 5, Z-4, pl. ii, 2. For other identical forms of the letter *sīn*, see *ibid.*, 9, Z-6; 14, Z-9; 16, Z-11; 19, Z-13; 20, Z-14.

4. Al-Zayla'i, *Southern Area*, 384, inscript. no. 47, pl. xxxii.

5. Al-Zayla'i, *Southern Area*, 396, inscript. no. 52, pl. xxxiii.

on the base line.

Nūn final (ll. 3, 4, 6): the letter *nūn* is incised similarly to the present form of the letter *rā'*. The shape of this letter is parallel to that in the inscription of a milestone on the pilgrim route of Zubaydah. This milestone is dated A.H. 304 [A.D. 916/7].¹

Hā' medial (l. 1): the medial form of *hā'* in the word *Allāhumma* is engraved in a striking manner. It is extended to the right, above and parallel to the base line. It ends in the shape of two symmetrical leaves. This element of decoration has already been observed in engraving the letter *'ayn* in this inscription. It occurs in a tombstone dated to the 3rd/9th century. Grohmann suggests that it looks as if it is borrowed from the cursive style.²

Yā' final (l. 2): the returning *yā'* under the word itself as a horizontal line is an archaic feature. It is observed in the *Namārah* inscription (A.D. 328), which is a later development of the Nabataean *yā'*.³ This form of the letter *yā'* persisted in most of the early Arabic inscriptions.

1. Miles, "Alī b. 'Isā's Pilgrim Road", *Bulletin*, XXXVI, 479, fig. 1.

2. *Paläographie*, 11.

3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 29 f., Z-21, pl. iii, 7.

Inscription no. 7

Pl. L, tab. 16, map 13.1

Location: Jabal al-Rākibah

Lines: 2

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 40 x 10 cm.*Spaces between lines:* ca. 5 cm.*Height of alif:* ca. 4 cm.*Description*

The inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been skilfully inscribed in the southern base of Jabal al-Rākibah, below some lines of pre-Islamic inscriptions. There is only one small Arabic graffito consisting of two lines; it is adjacent to the top left-hand corner of the main inscription. This inscription is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١ . بالله يتقي معتب

٢ . وعليه يتوكل

Translation

1. Of God Mu'attab has fear
2. and in Him he places his trust

Commentary

l.1: the inscription begins with a paraphrase of a Qur'anic verse, cf. XXXIX: 33; VII: 26; and II: 177, 189.

l.2: the inscription terminates with a religious saying which has already been noted in inscript. no. 5, ll. 1, 2, q.v.

This personal name which we initially transcribed as Mu'attab (مُعْتَب),¹ may alternatively be read as Mughīth (مُغِيث),² but, in any case, it is not accompanied by further forenames or a *nisbah*, thus rendering any attempt at biographical or genealogical analysis futile.

Palaeography

This inscription resembles inscript. no. 6 above in the forms of the letters final *tā'* or *thā'* (l. 1), medial *kāf* (l. 2), and initial *mīm* (l. 1). The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

'Ayn medial (l. 1): the medial letter 'ayn in the name Mu'attab appears open, i.e. without the upper arch; this shape occurs in most of the early Arabic inscriptions such as al-Hajrī's inscription (dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652])³ and Mu'āwiya's inscription [in al-Ṭā'if] (dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677-8]).⁴

Qāf medial and *yā'* final (l. 1): the medial form of letter *qāf* attached to the final form of letter *yā'* in the word *yattaqī* (l. 1) appears in the same striking shape as in an inscription found in the vicinity of Mecca, which is dated to the first half of the second century/722-750.⁵ The form in this inscription bears a strong likeness to the old form of the letter *qāf* which appears in an inscription of a tombstone, dated to the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th centuries.⁶

The rock-face accommodating inscription no. 7 is covered with seven pre-Islamic graffiti, certain of which are partially eroded. There are also letters, viz: *wāw* and *mīm*, which occur individually on the same rock-face, executed on a large scale. The letter *wāw* is engraved twice: in the centre and near the base of

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1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 607 f.
 2. *Ibid.*
 3. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930), pl. III.
 4. Miles, "Inscription", *JNES*, VII, pl. xviii.
 5. Al-Fi'r, *Taṭawwur*, 196, pl. 29, fig. 5.
 6. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 25 f., Z-18, pl. III, 4.

the rock-face, whereas the letter *mīm* is incised only once, to the left of the central *wāw*. Four of these one-line pre-Islamic graffiti are legible.

The first graffito, which appears on the upper right-hand corner of the photograph, reads: *wdd*. This has been attested as a personal name in certain Safaitic and Minaean inscriptions.¹

The second graffito is to be seen in the upper-centre of the photograph and reads: *'lnšd*. Whilst *'lnšd* is not attested as a personal name, the inverse construction – *nšd'l* – is, and in fact in certain Safaitic inscriptions.² The basic meaning of *nashad* in classical Arabic is 'to know'.³

The third graffito, visible above graffito no. 4, reads 'g. It has been attested that 'g is a Safaitic personal name.⁴ The basic meanings of 'agg in classical Arabic are 'to hasten' or 'noise'.⁵

The fourth graffito, immediately below graffito no. 3, reads: *mn't drq nsr...* The first word – *mn't* – is a personal name in certain Safaitic and Thamudic inscriptions.⁶ The second word – *drq* – which is not attested, could possibly be the tribal/clan name of *mn't*. The third word – *nsr* – is attested as a personal name in certain Safaitic and Thamudic inscriptions.⁷ The basic meaning of *nissr* in classical Arabic is 'eagle'.⁸

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1. Harding, *Index*, 637.
 2. Harding, *Index*, 588.
 3. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, III, 421 f.
 4. Harding, *Index*, 407.
 5. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, II, 318 f.
 6. Harding, *Index*, 569.
 7. Harding, *Index*, 586 f.
 8. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, V, 204.

Inscription no. 8

Pl. LI, tab. 16, map 13.1

Location: Wadi 'Amdān

Lines: 2

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 35 x 15 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 4 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised in the south-western rock face situated on the northern bank of Wadi 'Amdān. Apart from the *nisbah*, the text of this inscription is generally legible. It is complete and well preserved.

Text

١ . الله ولي زياد
٢ . بن مسلم الجرفي

Translation

1. God is the patron of Ziyād
2. b. Muslim al-Jurfī

Commentary

L.1 of this inscription begins with a religious exclamation, 'God is the patron/friend of', which is a close paraphrase of a Qur'ānic verse, cf. V: 58, 59. The same opening occurs in an inscription, dated 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries.¹

This inscription bears the name of Ziyād b. Muslim al-Jurfī (ll. 1, 2). In

1. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 67, Z-83, pl. X.

addition to the interpretation of the first two names provided in the text above, these names may be read as Zayyād (زَيَّاد)¹ or Zabād (زَبَاد)² b. Musallam (مُسَلَّم).³ Our reading of the *nisbah* is forcibly tentative since the letters (l. 2) are not clear enough to be identified; nevertheless, it is possible to interpret the *nisbah* as follows: al-Ḥurfī (الْحُرْفِي), al-Ḥuraqī (الْحُرْقِي), al-Khurufī (الْخُرْفِي), al-Kharaqī (الْخَرْقِي), or al-Khiraqī (الْخِرْقِي).⁴

Palaeography

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (ll. 1, 2): the letter *alif*, with a short barb or hook at its base turning to the right, exactly resembles the shape of *alifs* in the preceding inscriptions.

Dāl final (l. 1): the letter *dāl* has an angular shape with a short, straight stroke engraved at its upper end. It is similar to that in the Ḥanākiyyah inscription, dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries.⁵

Zā' initial (l. 1): this letter is incised in a small shape. Its form matches the present shape of the letter *dāl*.

Mīm initial and final (l. 2): the initial and final forms of *mīm* in the name Muslim are engraved with a full, roundish head. The final *mīm*, placed on the base line, has a very short tail. The initial *mīm* has a parallel in inscript. no. 2, l. 1 above, whereas the final *mīm* matches the letter *mīm* in inscript. no. 6, l. 1 of this collection.

Nūn final (l. 2): the final form of the letter *nūn* in the word *ibn* preserves the ancient character in extending below the base line. Its ends are sharp and straight,

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 339.

2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 339.

3. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 589.

4. For these proposed names, see al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 225–7.

5. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 185, W-1, fig. 1.

facing the next word.

Wāw initial (l. 1): the letter *wāw* is incised with a roundish head and a broken tail which is curved to the left.

Yā' final (l. 1): the final form of the letter *yā'* has a swept-back tail, turning sharply to the right. The closest resemblance to the shape of this letter *yā'* is found in the former inscription (no. 6), l. 2 of this collection.

Inscription no. 9

Pl. LII, tab. 17, map 13.1

Location: Pass of al-'Irqah*Lines:* 3*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Date:* undated, probably 1st-2nd/7th-8th cents.*Type of stone:* granite*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 20 x 15 cm.*Spaces between lines:* ca. 4 cm.*Height of alif:* ca. 4 cm.*Description*

This inscription under scrutiny has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved, along with other Arabic inscriptions, in the centre of a brownish granite rock face which borders the pass of al-'Irqah on the north-west. The inscription is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١ . رضي الله
٢ . عن مسلم
٣ . بن يـلـالـفـع

Translation

1. May God be pleased
2. with Muslim
3. b. Yāfi'

Commentary

This inscription commences with a popular religious maxim: 'May God be pleased with' (ll. 1, 2), which is frequently encountered in the early Arabic inscriptions and documents.

The name Muslim b. Yāfi'¹ (ll. 2, 3), which appears in this inscription is, as far as we have been able to ascertain, not attested in the classical Arabic sources. The first name, as it appears in this inscription, is already recorded as a second name in the previous inscription (no. 8). The second name, which has been interpreted as Yāfi', may be associated with the famous Yemeni tribe of Yāfi'.² It could, however, be read as Nāfi'.³

Whether the second name of this person is Yāfi' or Nāfi', the *alif*, which should come after the first letter *yā'* or *nūn*, is omitted (l. 3). Orthographically, this omission also occurs in inscript. nos. 1 and 6 of this collection.

Palaeography

The palaeographical peculiarities of this inscription have parallels with the previous inscriptions, e.g. the initial *alif* (l. 1) is similar to the letter's form in inscript. nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 8 above. The shape of the final *nūn* (ll. 2, 3), being extended in the incision below the base line, is parallel with the letter's form in inscript. nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 above. Finally, the final *mīm* with rounded head and short tail (l. 2) is identical with that in inscript. nos. 1 and 6 above.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Rā' initial (l. 1): the letter *rā'* is engraved in a very small shape.

Ḍād medial (l. 1): the body of the letter *ḍād* stands on the base line. It is incised in a rectangular form with the more extended side stroke above the line. This

1. Cf. al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 629.

2. See al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 176 f., 194, 198; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, IV, 773 f.

3. See al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 628.

form occurs in an inscription dated to the 1st/7th century.¹

'Ayn final (l. 3): the letter 'ayn in the name Yāfi' or Nāfi' (l. 3) is inscribed in an open form. Its shape is parallel to that in the inscription dated to the 1st/7th century.²

1. Kessler, "Inscription", *JRAS* (1970), 9.

2. Al-'Ushsh, "Kitābāt", *al-Abḥāth*, III, 372, pl. 39.

Inscription no. 10

Pl. LII, tab. 17, map 13.1

Location: Pass of al-‘Irqah*Lines:* 3*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Date:* undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.*Type of stone:* granite*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 55 x 25 cm.*Spaces between lines:* ca. 5 cm.*Height of alif:* ca. 4 cm.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been carved, on a larger scale, immediately beside the previous inscription (no. 9). The rock, which accommodates both of these inscriptions, is located in the north-west side of the pass of al-‘Irqah. A deep vertical crack separates these two inscriptions. This inscription is bordered, both above and below, by short Arabic inscriptions. It is reasonably well executed and preserved. The text is complete and legible.

Text

١ . رضي الله عن عبد الملك
٢ . بن عثمان بن سعيد بن ماها
٣ . ن

Translation

1. May God be pleased with ‘Abd al-Malik
2. b. ‘Uthmān b. Sa‘īd b. Māhā
3. n

Commentary

L.1 of this inscription begins, like the previous inscription also found on this site (no. 9), with an identical optative.

This inscription clearly bears the name of ‘Abd al-Malik b. ‘Uthmān b. Sa‘īd b. Māhān (ll. 1, 2, 3). This personal name is not attested, as far as we know, in the classical Arabic sources. The second name (‘Uthmān, l. 2) could be read as Ghaymān (غَيْمَان).¹ These names were very common in early times and most of them are still in use today.

Whether the second name of this subject is ‘Uthmān or Ghaymān, the letter *alif*, which should come before the final *nūn*, is omitted. This omission occurs in some of the previous inscriptions of this collection (such as nos. 1, 6, and 9).

Palaeography

The bodies of certain letters are greatly extended, e.g. the final *nūn* (ll. 1, 2) and final *yā’* (l. 1). The practice of extending such letters is well documented in the Qur’anic manuscripts of the 1st/7th and 2nd/8th centuries.²

The palaeographical peculiarities of this inscription have parallels with the previous inscriptions, e.g. the medial *ḍād* (l. 1) is similar to the letter’s form in inscript. no. 9 above. The form of the medial open ‘*ayn* (l. 2) matches that in inscript. no. 7 above.

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 490.

2. Cf. Safadi, *Calligraphy*, 8f.

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Dāl final (ll. 1, 2): the letter *dāl* occurs in the name elements 'Abd and Sa'īd with a left-curving shaft. The upper part of the letter *dāl* stands perpendicular. This form of the *dāl* is to be found in an inscription, dated A.H.285 [A.D. 898].¹

'Ayn initial (ll. 1, 2): the letter 'ayn in the initial position appears in this inscription rounded and based on the writing line. The body of the letter 'ayn is relatively large. The form of the letter 'ayn in this inscription is similar to that extant on a tombstone in the Ḥijāz, dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.²

Kāf final (l. 1): the body of the letter *kāf* is engraved parallel to the base line and its shaft slants to the right. This form is to be found on a tombstone discovered in the vicinity of the city of al-Ṭā'if in Saudi Arabia.³

Mīm initial and medial (ll. 1, 2): the letter *mīm* occurs with a roundish shape.

Yā' final (l. 1): the letter *yā'* is horizontally swept back to the right-hand side. The tail of the letter *yā'* is curved angularly. This form also occurs on a tombstone in the Ḥijāz, dated to the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries.⁴

1. Arif, *Kūfic*, 17.

2. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 95 f., pl. 29, fig. 9.

3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 32, Z-24, pl. iv, 6.

4. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 87, pl. 24, fig. 4.

Inscription no. 11

Pl. LII, tab. 17, map 13.1

Location: Pass of al-‘Irqah

Lines: 3

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 53 x 25 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 4 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved, along with other Arabic inscriptions, below the former inscription (no. 10) into a rock face located in the pass of al-‘Irqah. It is bordered on the top by an opening invocation (the *basmalah*) which appears to have been incised recently in this rock. A further Arabic graffito consisting of three lines is recognizable at the bottom line of the central inscription. This inscription is finely incised. It is complete, legible, and fairly well preserved.

Text

١. رضي الله عن عطا بن بشار و
 ٢. عن من مر هذه الطريق ا
 ٣. مين

Translation

1. May God be pleased with ‘Aṭā b. Bashshār and
2. upon everyone who passes *along this road*. A
3. men

Commentary

This inscription commences with a very common religious maxim, 'May God be pleased with...' (l. 1). This particular prayer is frequently encountered in the early Arabic inscriptions and documents. The two previous inscriptions (nos. 9 and 10), which have been engraved in this same rock also begin with the same religious formula.

The second line of this inscription, including the last letter in the first line (*wāw*), consists of a short statement in which the engraver included those people who use this road, i.e. the pilgrim route. It should be noted that, in order to modify the sense of this statement (l. 2), a preposition, such as *bi* or *'alā*, must precede the demonstrative pronoun *hādhihi*. It should further be noted that, as far as this collection of inscriptions is concerned, this inscription (l. 2) contains the first direct reference to the pilgrim route.¹

This inscription bears only the first two names of the subject (l. 1). These names, i.e. the first and second names of the person, have been so badly affected by weathering that they are barely legible. However, the subject's name may be read as 'Aṭā b. Bashshār. The name 'Aṭā b. Bashshār is not attested in the classical Arabic sources. It is also possible to read the second name as Yasār (يَسَار).² Accordingly, the name of the subject would be 'Aṭā b. Yasār. If this latter interpretation of the these two names is correct, then, according to al-Ṭabarī,³ they refer to the patron (*mawla*) of the Prophet Muḥammad's wife, Maymūnah.

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1. The second direct reference to the pilgrim route occurs in inscript. no. 31 below.
 2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushuabih*, 77 f.
 3. *Tārīkh*, III, 2552.

Palaeography

The letters of this inscription have been engraved with a fine implement, probably the edge of a knife. The palaeographical peculiarities of the inscription have parallels with some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. the initial *alif* (ll. 1, 2) is similar to those *alifs* occurring in inscript. nos. 1, 2, 3, etc. The shape of the medial *qād* (l. 1) is parallel with the letter's form in inscript. nos. 9 and 10.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Ṭā' medial (l. 2): the body of the letter *ṭā'* in the word *al-ṭarīq* occurs in this inscription with a parallel side more or less extended along the base line. The shaft of the letter *ṭā'* is engraved vertically on the left-hand side of the letter; it rests perpendicularly on the writing line. This form of the letter *ṭā'* is also to be found on an undated Abbasid milestone.¹

Qāf final (l. 2): the letter *qāf* occurs in this inscription with a broken tail (instead of curling round in the conventional way; here the stem hangs loosely below the base line culminating in a hook which opens towards the left). This style of writing the letter *qāf* is to be found in an undated rock inscription found in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia. This rock graffito has been dated to the 1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries.² Furthermore, this form of final *qāf* is to be found on a tombstone situated in the vicinity of the city of al-Ṭā'if, dated to the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th centuries.³ It also appears in the previous inscription (no. 7) of this collection.

Nūn final (ll. 1, 2, 3): the body of the final *nūn* occurs curled angularly to the left-hand side; it extends below the base line.

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1. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 229, pl. xxxviii, 1; *idem*, "Aḥjār", *al-'Uṣūr*, V, 124, pl. 1.
 2. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 189 f., W3, fig. 3.
 3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 25 f., Z-18, pl. iii, 4.

Hā' initial (l. 2): the letter *hā'* occurs in this inscription with an oval shape intersected in the centre by the base line, so that the lower part of the letter is incised below the writing line. This form of inscribing the letter *hā'* is to be found in the Mu'āwiyah / al-Ta'if inscription which is dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 777-8].¹

Yā' final (l. 1): the final form of *yā'* occurs in this inscription with a broken or recurved tail extending downward, below the base line, to the left-hand side. This form of the letter *yā'* is similar to the letter *yā'* in an undated rock inscription discovered on the mountain of Usays in Syria.²

1. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 240, pl. xviii, A.

2. Al-'Ushsh, "Kitābāt", *al-Abḥāth*, III, 278, inscript. 67, pl. 48.

Inscription no. 12

Pl. LIII, tab. 17, map 13.1

Location: Wadi Jawāl

Lines: 2

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 1st–3rd/7th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 15 x 30 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been skilfully inscribed in a smoothed granite rock face situated in the north of Wadi Jawāl. The Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route goes through this wadi, heading north-west towards the great pass of al-Maṣlūlah (or al-Maṣlūlah). Except for the last word of the final line (l. 2), this inscription is not difficult to make out. It is complete and well preserved.

Text

١ . الله اله محمد

٢ . بن حبيب وولـ«يه»

Translation

1. Allāh is the deity of Muḥammad
2. b. Ḥabīb and his patron

Commentary

This inscription commences (l. 1) and terminates (l. 2) with a common

religious confession which frequently appears in the early Arabic inscriptions.¹

The inscription bears the name of Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb (ll. 1, 2). Since the *nisbah* of the subject is not mentioned in this inscription, it seems to be impossible to identify him, furthermore, there are many persons whose first names are identical with this subject.² In addition to our reading of the second name of the subject (l. 2: Ḥabīb), there are other equally permissible versions:– Jubayb (جُبَيْب), Junayb (جُنَيْب), Hubayb (حُبَيْب), Hubayyab (حُبَيْيَّاب), or Khubayb (كُحْبَيْب).³

The word at the end of l. 2 is partially obliterated. The most feasible interpretation is that which is presented in the above transcription of the text.

Palaeography

This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. These include, for example, the initial *alif* (l. 1), with a hook or barb attached to the base, which is similar to the initial *alif* in inscript. nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 above. The final open *bā'* (l. 2), with no hook or barb to close the end of its body, is very much like that in inscript. nos. 5, 6, and 7 above. The final *nūn* (l. 2) in the word *ibn*, with extended tail below the base line, is identical to those in inscript. nos. 8 and 11 above.

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Dāl final (l. 1): it has a short stroke which springs upwards from the end of the upper part of the letter's body. Here, the letter *dāl* in the name Muḥammad (l. 1)

1. See e.g. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 50, Z-57, pl. vii, 1.

2. Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, VI, 10, 331.

3. See al-Dhahabī, *al-Muṣṭaḥabīh*, 134, 214 f., 256.

strongly resembles the shape of the *dāl* in al-Hajrī's inscription, dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652].¹

Mīm initial and medial (l. 1): full and rounded, it is not intersected by the base line. This particular rendition of the letter *mīm* appears clearly in the text inscribed on the Dome of the Rock.²

Hā' final (ll. 1, 2): strictly triangular in shape, it occurs more often in the 4th and 5th/10th–11th centuries. It also appears occasionally in the 3rd/9th century.³

Wāw initial (l. 2): the head of the letter *wāw* is semicircular. The tail of this letter is angular, engraved below the base line. This form of the letter *wāw* matches that in a tombstone inscription dated A.H. 243 [A.D. 857].⁴

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1. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930), pl. III.
 2. See Kessler, "Inscription", *JRAS* (1970), pls. II, III.
 3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 6.
 4. Schneider, *Lapicide*, pl. I, 1.

Inscription no. 13

Pl. LIV, tab. 18, map 13.1

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Pass of al-Maṇḍaj/al-Maṣlūlah [I]*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 30 x 25 cm.*Lines:* 7*Spaces between lines:* ca. 5 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 7 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 3rd/9th cent.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been executed in the same granite rock face which accommodates no. 14. This rock is located on the northern side of the main path of the pilgrim road which goes via the great pass of al-Maṇḍaj (al-Maṣlūlah I). The text of the inscription is complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١ . اللهم
 ٢ . اغفر
 ٣ . لمحمد
 ٤ . بن يعفر
 ٥ . كتبها
 ٦ . قا
 ٧ . سم

Translation

1. O God
2. grant forgiveness
3. to Muḥammad
4. b. Yu'fir

5. [They have both been] written by

6. Qā

7. sim

Commentary

This inscription commences with a standard prayer for forgiveness (ll. 1, 2).

Historically, the inscription is significant, since it bears the name of the second ruler of the Yu'firid dynasty, Muḥammad b. Yu'fir (ll. 3, 4).

Yu'fir (l.4)

This subject was a prominent tribal chief in the central highland area of the Yemen. His full name is Yu'fir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥiwālī.¹ The B. Yu'fir were descended from the Tubba's (ancient Ḥimyarite kings in the pre-Islamic era). The members of this family are therefore mentioned in the Islamic history as being of the posterity of Tubba'.² Yu'fir is regarded as the founder of the first independent local dynasty in the Yemen, the Yu'firids (232-387/847-997).³ He was well-known, especially among his own people, for his generosity, justice, tolerance, and bravery in warfare.⁴

The city of Shibām (with the suffix frequently of Kawkabān or Aqyān), including the surrounding areas, was the headquarters of the Yu'firid house.⁵ From this city, *ca.* 40 km. north-west of Ṣan'ā', Yu'fir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān launched his

1. For a full account of his genealogy, including his offspring, see tab. 13.

2. See 'Umārah, *Tārīkh*, 4.

3. Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan'ā'*, 55; *idem*, "History", *Yemen*, 130.

4. Al-Hamdānī, *al-Iklīl*, II, 85, 180 f.

5. For detailed information regarding this city and its vicinity, see al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifāh*, 86, 231 f.; Wilson, *Gazetteer*, 198; Smith, "Kawkabān", *Arabian Studies*, VI, 35 f.

political and military campaign against the Abbasid generals and governors. According to al-Hamdānī,¹ the year 214/829–30 marks the foundation of the state of the Yu'firids.

In 227/841–2, Yu'fir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥiwālī ordered his army, headed by Ṭarīf b. Thābit, to attack Ṣan'ā'. In due course the Abbasid governor of Ṣan'ā', Maṣṣūr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tanūkhī, succeeded in defeating Yu'fir's army before it was able to reach the city of Ṣan'ā'. The Yu'firid army was then compelled to retreat to its base in Shibām. Following the arrival of reinforcements from Iraq, the governor of Ṣan'ā', al-Tanūkhī, attempted to launch a fresh attack on the Yu'firid capital, Shibām, but this foundered owing to the unbreachable fortifications of the town.²

In 229/843–4, the Abbasid caliph, al-Wāthiq (227–232/841–7), sent a Persian general, Harthamah Shār Bāmiyān, known as al-Bashīr, with a military contingent to the Yemen. On arriving in Ṣan'ā', al-Bashīr continued towards the Yu'firid capital, Shibām, with the intention of conquering it and thereby bringing the Yu'firid dynasty to an end. Once again, however, the fortifications of Shibām proved too much for the Abbasid army. Consequently, Shār Bāmiyān decided to return to Ṣan'ā' and from there to Iraq.³

In 232/846–7 the Abbasid general Ja'far b. Dīnār, with his army, reached Ṣan'ā'. He laid siege to Shibām, but this came to an end with the news of the death of al-Wāthiq (d. 232/847). Ibn Dīnār eventually succeeded in securing a

1. *Al-Iklīl*, II, 90.

2. Ibn al-Dayba', *al-Uyūn*, 153 f.; Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan'ā'*, 55.

3. Al-Hamdānī, *al-Iklīl*, I, 240 f.; Ibn al-Dabā', *al-Uyūn*, 155; Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan'ā'*, 55.

truce with Yu'fir and thereupon returned to Ṣan'ā'.

During the reign of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil (232-47/846-61), a new Abbasid general, Ḥimyar b. al-Ḥārith, made an effort to suppress the Yu'firid rebels in the central highland area of the Yemen. He was defeated and ultimately left the Yemen. As a result of this, the Yu'firids regained control over the city of Ṣan'ā'. Thus, the year 233/847-8 marks the rise of the Yu'firid dynasty headed by its founder Yu'fir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥiwālī.¹ It has been reported that this Yemeni dynasty controlled a vast area in the Yemen, ranging between al-Janād in the south and Ṣa'dah in the north.² The coinage evidence shows clearly that the Yu'firid dynasty remained under the jurisdiction of the central government of the Abbasid state,³ although their silver coins were named after them, the Yu'firids' coins.⁴

In 258/871-2, owing to his old age and infirmity, Yu'fir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥiwālī decided to renounce his leadership of the state;⁵ Yu'fir was succeeded by his son Muḥammad.

The Yu'firid dynasty ruled precariously over the central highland area of the Yemen (232-387/847-997). The last Yu'firid ruler was 'Abd Allāh b. Qaḥṭān b. 'Abd Allāh who died in Ibb in 387/997. His death marks the end of the Yu'firid dynasty. It should be mentioned that during the reign of the Yu'firids, the Yemen witnessed the power struggle between the Yu'firids themselves and the first Zaydī

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1. Cf. al-Hamdānī, *al-Iklīl*, I, 243 f.; II, 180 f.; al-Janādī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 218 f.; Kay, *Yaman*, 224, n.8; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-Uyūn*, 155; Lewcock and Smith, "Two Early Mosques", *AARP*, 117.
 2. Kay, *Yaman*, 224, n.8; Smith, "History", *Yemen*, 130.
 3. Bikhazi, "Coins", *al-Abḥāth*, XXIII, 31 f.
 4. Al-Hamdānī, *al-Jawharatayn*, 114.
 5. Lewcock and Smith, "Two Early Mosques", *AARP*, 117; Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan'ā'*, 55.

imam, Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn (or al-Ḥādī ilā al-Ḥaqq, 245–298/859–91) on the one hand, and the Qarāmiṭah movement, headed by Maṣṣūr al-Yaman and ‘Alī b. al-Faḍl (both d. in 302/915), on the other.

Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir (ll. 3, 4)

As has already been mentioned above, Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥiwālī now became the sole ruler of the Yu‘firid dynasty.

In 259/872–3, Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir received a written diploma from Ṭalḥah b. al-Mutawakkil, who was acting on behalf of the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu‘tamid. This letter served as a formal acknowledgment of Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir’s status as ruler of the Yemen. In accordance with this letter, Muḥammad took the *bay‘ah* which was concluded with the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu‘tamid; he also commenced the practice of having his name included in the official, religious addresses (*khuṭbahs*).¹

Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir chose the city of Shibām as his seat, rather than the city of Ṣan‘ā’ where, it is reported, he had constructed its walls. He started to accrue wealth for the state by way of increasing taxation and relying heavily for revenue on the silver mine of al-Raḍrāḍ.²

In 262/875–6, following a violent flood which swept through Ṣan‘ā’, Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir set out on the pilgrimage to Mecca. Before his departure, he designated his son Ibrāhīm (see inscript. no. 14 below) as his deputy. In 265/878–9 on Muḥammad’s return from the pilgrimage, the latter ordered the

1. Ibn al-Dayba‘, *al-Uyūn*, I, 161 f.; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 229.

2. Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan‘ā’*, 55.

rebuilding of the *jāmi'* of Ṣan'ā'.¹ In the same year, Muḥammad decided to retire from the leadership of the Yu'firid dynasty and instead devoted himself entirely to contemplation and religion. Ibrāhīm, Muḥammad's son, continued in office as ruler of the dynasty.²

In 269/882–3, Muḥammad b. Yu'fir was callously murdered by his son Ibrāhīm in the minaret of the Shibām *jāmi'*.³

During the reign of Muḥammad b. Yu'fir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥiwālī (ca. 259–269/873–882–3), the main cities of the Yemen, such as Ṣan'ā' and al-Janad including Ḥaḍramawt, were under the jurisdiction of the Yu'firid dynasty. Muḥammad owed allegiance to the rulers of Tihāmah, the B. Ziyād, in the form of paying them the annual tribute (*kharāj*).⁴ Al-Hamdānī⁵ links the sacking and total destruction of al-Raḍrāḍ silver mine, which was an important source of wealth for the Yu'firids, with the assassination of Muḥammad b. Yu'fir, which he dates to 270/883.

L. 5 contains a dual form: 'They both [i.e. the two inscriptions, nos.13 and 14] have been written by'. It seems unquestionable that the scribe, whose name is Qāsim (ll. 6, 7), executed both of these inscriptions. It can be deduced that the engraver, in using the dual form (*katabhumā*), was referring to this inscription under scrutiny and the next inscription, no. 14. It seems most likely that Qāsim,

1. Al-Rāzī, *Tārīkh Ṣan'a'*, 518 f.; Ibn al-Dayba', *al-'Uyūn*, I, 162 f.; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 230; Kay, *Yaman*, 224 f.; Marūnī, *Masājid*, 36.

2. Ibn al-Dayba', *al-'Uyūn*, I, 163; Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan'ā'*, 55.

3. Al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 230; Lewcock and Smith, "Two Early Mosques", *AARP*, 117.

4. Ibn al-Dayba', *al-'Uyūn*, I, 162; al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, I, 229; Kay, *Yaman*, 224 f.; Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan'ā'*, 55.

5. *Al-Jawharatayn*, 13, 89–92; *idem*, *Ṣifah*, 151 f.; Smith, "History", *Yemen*, 131.

the engraver, started to inscribe this text (no. 13) as soon as he had finished engraving no. 14.

In ll. 6 and 7 there is a natural horizontal crack bordering the last line of the text. It is perhaps for this reason that the engraver did not find enough space to add his name at the end of the text. There are two short lines, written on the left-hand side of the last line (l. 5), which contain only the first name of the scribe, Qāsim (ll. 6, 7). The name itself was very common in early times¹ and is still in use today.

Palaeography

The letters here are more or less clumsily inscribed. The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Hā' medial (l. 3): the letter *hā'* in the name Muḥammad is chiselled with an arc-shape descending below the base line.

'Ayn medial (l. 4): the letter *'ayn* in the name Yu'fir occurs in a triangular shape. This particular form of the letter *'ayn* appears in a tombstone inscription dated A.H. 246 [A.D. 861]² It is also attested in the previous inscriptions, e.g. no. 1, l. 2 and no. 2, l. 2.

Fā' medial (ll. 2, 4): the medial *fā'* in the word *ighfir* and the name Yu'fir is engraved in a circular shape, resting on the base line. The form of this letter is similar to the medial *fā'* in the Mu'āwiyah / *al-Ṭā'if* inscription which is dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677-8]³

Mīm medial (ll. 3, 5): the letter *mīm* is incised in a semicircular shape, resting on

1. Cf. e.g. al-Janadī, *al-Sulūk*, II, 64, 552, 213, 321, 31.

2. Schneider, *Lapicide*, pl. II, 4.

3. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 240, fig. 1, pl. xviii, A.

the base line. The form of this medial *mīm* is parallel to that in the 'Abd al-Malik inscription, which is dated A.H. 73 [A.D.692].¹

Hā' medial (l. 1): the letter *hā'* in the word *Allāhumma* is engraved in a roundish shape intersected by the base line. This form is parallel to the letter *hā'* in a rock inscription discovered in Wadi Khashnah in Saudi Arabia, which is dated A.H. 56 [A.D. 675-6].²

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1. Sharon, "Inscriptions", *BSOAS*, XXIX, 367, pl. 1. Cf. also Ḥamidullah, "Inscriptions", *IC*, XIII, 434 f., pls. 8 and 10.
 2. Sharafaddin, "Inscriptions", *Aṭlāl*, I, 69 f., pl. 50, A.B.

Inscription no. 14

Pl. LV, tab. 18, map 13.1

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Pass of al-Maṇḍaj/al-Maṣlūlah [I]*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 35 x 45 cm.*Lines:* 6*Spaces between lines:* ca. 5 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 5 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 3rd/9th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved on a smooth, granite rock face, located beside the previous inscription (no. 13). This rock, which accommodates both these inscriptions, overlooks the main path of the pilgrim route in the pass of al-Maṇḍaj/al-Maṣlūlah [I]. Except for the last word in l. 4, the text of this inscription is legible. It is complete and fairly well preserved.

Text

- ١ . بسم الله الرحمن
- ٢ . الرحيم (أقر) [الله]
- ٣ . الامير ابر[ا]هيم بن
- ٤ . محمد بن يعفر و(اهداه)
- ٥ . وامتع به وكتب
- ٦ . قاسم

Translation

1. In the name of God, the Compassionate
2. the Merciful. God has assigned

3. Amir Ibrāhīm b.

4. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir and [may God] guide him

5. and [may God allow the Believers to] profit by him, and [it] has been written by

6. Qāsim

Commentary

The first line and the first word in the second line consist of the popular religious opening invocation (the *basmalah*).

The second word in l. 2 is dubious. However, in addition to the interpretation presented above in the text, the word could be read as امر or اعز.¹

The last word in l. 4 has two letters, i.e. the second and third, which are illegible. The appropriate reading, if a sense of textual continuity is to be maintained, is as given in the text above.

L. 3 commences with the contemporary formal title of the Yu'firid ruler, i.e. the amir Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir. Although Ibn al-Dayba² uses this title in his dealing with the history of the Yu'firid dynasty, this word is ambiguous in its meaning, since it may be taken to signify a prince, a governor, or a military commander.³

In contrast to the former inscription (no. 13), the content of this inscription leads us to assume that the scribe Qāsim (l. 6) executed this rock

1. Cf. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 22, inscript. no. 27; 24, inscript. no. 30.

2. *Al-Uyūn*, I, 162.

3. Kay, *Yaman*, 223.

inscription during the reign of the Yu'firid ruler, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir.

Apart from the opening invocation (ll. 1, 2), this inscription contains several optative phrases with reference to the subject. These phrases are اقر or اعز (l. 2), اهداه (l. 4), and امتع (l. 5). The phrases اعز¹ and امتع² are both attested epigraphically.

Historically, this inscription is significant, since it bears clearly the name of the third ruler of the Yu'firid dynasty, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir (ll. 3, 4).

Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir (ll. 3, 4)

Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad b. Yu'fir was the grandson of the founder of the Yu'firid dynasty, Yu'fir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥiwālī (see tab. 13). He is commonly known in Yemeni history by his *kunya*, Abū Yu'fir. Al-Hamdānī³ briefly describes the personality of Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad by stating that, whenever he became intoxicated he behaved immorally, and conversely when sober he expounded intellectual and moral theories. Ibrāhīm achieved a great deal of adverse publicity on committing the crime of patricide in 269/882–3. According to al-Hamdānī,⁴ it was Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad's addiction to alcohol that caused him to massacre both his father Muḥammad and his uncle, Muḥammad's brother, Aḥmad. It is also believed that this killing was engineered by the old man Yu'fir b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān who was either unhappy at seeing his son Muḥammad desist from further participation in the affairs of state, or wished

1. Cf. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 113, Z-179, pl. xxiii, 2.

2. Cf. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, pl. xviii.

3. *Al-Iklīl*, II, 182. See also *idem*, *Ṣifah*, 83.

4. *Al-Iklīl*, II, 182.

to ensure that his son would never again wield political power.¹

In 262/875–6, Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir (see inscript. no. 13 above), Ibrāhīm’s father, handed over the reins of power, during his absence, to his son. Since then, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad exercised authority as viceregent for his father. In 265/878–9 when Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir abdicated, Ibrāhīm became the sole official ruler of the dynasty.

As an immediate reaction to the cruel assassination of Muḥammad b. Yu‘fir, a number of local Yemeni tribes rose together and revolted against the murderer, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad.² Before leaving Ṣan‘ā’, Ibrāhīm placed his son ‘Abd al-Raḥman in charge as governor in Ṣan‘ā’. In 273/886, Ibrāhīm dismissed his son from office.³

In 279/892, the Abbasid caliph in Baghdad, al-Mu‘tamid, despatched a governor, ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, who was well known as Juftam, to the Yemen in order to strengthen the grip of the Yu‘firids on the area. According to Ibn al-Dayba‘, the new Abbasid governor was met with a resistance headed by one of Ibrāhīm’s allies, Ibn al-Du‘ām, before he entered the city of Ṣan‘ā’. At the same time, it is reported that before the arrival of ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn, the city of Ṣan‘ā’ had erupted in violence. This violence was perpetrated by the Abnā’ and the B. Shihāb in joint force. They compelled Ibrāhīm’s governors to leave the city of Ṣan‘ā’ before they set Ibrāhīm’s residence on fire.⁴

1. Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan‘ā’*, 55. See also *idem*, "History", *Yemen*, 130.

2. Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan‘ā’*, 55.

3. Smith, "History", *Yemen*, 133.

4. Ibn al-Dayba‘, *al-Uyūn*, I, 163 f.; Smith, "Early History", *Ṣan‘ā’*, 55.

In 282/895 when 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn departed from the Yemen, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad regained power while he was staying in Shibām.¹ According to al-Janādī,² he held authority for just a short time before he was assassinated in Shibām. He was succeeded by his son, As'ad (d. 344/955).

During the last years of Ibrāhīm's rule and that of his son As'ad, the Yu'firid state reached the limits of its expansion. Ibrāhīm maintained the alliance with the rulers of Tihāmah, the B. Ziyād.³

Of orthographical interest, the word *al-Raḥmān* (l. 1) is here inscribed in accordance with the Qur'ānic style of writing it. The medial *alif*, lengthening the vowel in the name Ibrāhīm (l. 3) is also omitted here. These omissions of the medial long *alifs* have already been observed in some of the previous inscriptions, such as no. 1, l. 2 and no. 6, l. 5. The word *Allāh* in l. 2 has the initial *alif* missing.

Palaeography

Owing to the relative smoothness of the rock face in which this inscription is incised, the letters are engraved more elegantly compared with those of the previous inscription (no. 13 above) which was doubtlessly carved by the same scribe, Qāsim. This inscription is beautifully executed and the letter forms, e.g. initial *alif*, final *bā'*, medial *'ayn*, medial *fā'*, and medial *hā'* resemble those of the former inscription (no. 13).

1. Bikhazi, "Coins", *al-Abḥāth*, XXIII, 39.

2. *Al-Sulūk*, I, 231.

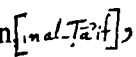
3. See Kay, *Yaman*, 225, n.8; Bikhazi, "Coins", *al-Abḥāth*, XXIII, 38 f.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Ḥā' medial (ll. 1, 2, 4): the letter *ḥā'* is incised with a small body, slanting into the base line. The medial *ḥā'* (l. 4) in the name Muḥammad intersects the writing line. This form of the letter *ḥā'* is similar to that employed in the 'Abbāsah inscription, dated A.H. 71 [A.D. 691].¹

Sīn medial (ll. 1, 6): the medial *sīn* in the word *bi'sm* and the name Qāsim is engraved with plain, blunt indentations; the teeth rest parallelly on the base line. The shape of this letter corresponds with that occurring on a tombstone dated A.H. 341 [A.D. 952].²

'*Ayn* final (l. 5): the final '*ayn* occurs with a triangular head. Its tail is swept angularly to the right-hand side below the base line. Such a form has been attested in a tombstone inscription discovered in the settlement of al-Sirrayn in Saudi Arabia, which is dated A.H. 379 [A.D. 990].³

Kāf initial (l. 5): the body of the initial *kāf* is engraved with its length parallel to the base line. The upper shaft of the letter stands perpendicularly. This way of writing the letter *kāf* is similar to that demonstrated in the Mu'āwiyah inscription , dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677-8].⁴

Mīm: the letter *mīm* is incised in this inscription inconsistently. It occurs here mainly in two forms, viz: in a triangular or rounded shape. Initially, *mīm* occurs in either the triangular (l. 3) or the rounded shape (ll. 4, 5). Medially, it appears in the triangular shape (ll. 1, 4). Finally, it occurs in either the triangular (ll. 1, 2) or the rounded shape (ll. 3, 6). The triangular *mīm* is to be found in a graffito dated A.H. 177 [A.D. 793-4].⁵ The rounded *mīm* is to be found in an inscription on a

1. Hawary, "Monuments", *JRAS* (1932), pl. 1.

2. Grohmann, "Origin", *Ars*, II, pl. 1.

3. Al-Zayla'i, *Southern Area*, 382 f., pl. 31, no. 46.

4. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 240, pl. xviii, A.

5. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 5 f., inscript. no. 5.

tombstone dated A.H. 289 [A.D. 902].¹

Nūn final (ll. 1, 3, 4): the final *nūn* in the name *al-Raḥmān* and word *ibn* is incised with a flattish body, the lower part of which curves slightly to the left, descending below the base line. This form of the letter *nūn* is to be found on a tombstone which is dated to the 1st–3rd/7th–9th centuries.²

Hā' final (ll. 1, 2, 5): in this inscription two contrasting versions represent the letter *hā'*. The first, engraved on the base line (ll. 2, 5) is triangular in form but here the vertical shaft is missing. In l. 1 the final *hā'* is strictly triangular in form. It is inscribed with a vertical shaft which stems from the base line. The style of the former *hā'*, including its position, is similar to that selected in the Ḥajrī inscription, dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652],³ whilst the form of the latter *hā'* occurs occasionally in the 3rd/10th century, and more often in the 4th–5th/11th–12th centuries.⁴

Lām-alif initial (l. 3): the ligature *lam-alif* in the word *al-Amīr* is engraved in a criss-cross pattern with a triangular base resting on the base line. Apart from the shaft, the triangular base of this letter is similar to that of this letter in the previous inscription (no. 5, l. 3) in this collection. This form of the ligature *lam-alif* is to be found in an inscription, dated A.H. 207 [A.D. 823].⁵

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1. Miles, "Tombstones", *Orientalis*, II, 224, fig. 11.
 2. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 84 f., inscript. no. 1, pl. 23, fig. 3.
 3. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930), pl. iii.
 4. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 4 f., Z-4, pl. ii, 2.
 5. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 6 f., inscript. no. 6.

Inscription no. 15

Pl. LVI, tab. 18, map 13.1

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Pass of al-Maḍaj/al-Maṣlūlah [I]*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 30 x 20 cm.*Lines:* 4*Spaces between lines:* ca. 4 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 4 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been inscribed in a granite rock face which is roughly triangular in shape. Its precise location is the north-west edge of the pilgrim route at the point where it makes its way through the pass of al-Maḍaj (al-Maṣlūlah I). The text of the inscription is complete, legible, and fairly well preserved.

Text

١ . محمد بن ثابت
 ٢ . يستعيز بالرحمن
 ٣ . الرحيم من الشيطان
 ٤ . الرجيم

Translation

1. Muḥammad b. Thābit
2. seeks refuge in the Compassionate One
3. the Merciful One from Satan
4. the Rejected One

Commentary

Excluding the first line, the text of this inscription (ll. 2, 3, 4) consists of a profession of faith. It is a very close paraphrase of a Qur'anic verse.¹ This particular formula of prayer is common and appears in an undated rock inscription found in the vicinity of al-Ṭā'if in the Ḥijāz.² The inscription bears the name of Muḥammad b. Thābit (l. 1). The second name of this person, Thābit, can also be read as Tā'ib (تَائِب) or Nābit (نَابِت).³ These two names, Muḥammad b. Thābit, are not attested in the available Arabic sources; furthermore, there are a number of persons in the historical and biographical sources who share the first two names of the subject of this inscription.⁴ The absence of the subject's *nisbah* in this inscription prevents him from being identified. Apart from the first name here, Muḥammad, the second name, Thābit, is still in current use.

Of orthographical interest are the two words *al-Raḥmān* (l. 2) and *al-Shayṭān* (l. 3) which are written without the medial *alif*. These words feature in this inscription exactly in the same form as they appear in the Qur'ān.⁵ This omission of the medial *alif* has already been observed in some of the previous inscriptions in this collection.⁶

Palaeography

This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The form of the letters *tā'* (l. 1), open '*ayn* (l. 2), and *mīm* (ll. 1, 2, 3, 4) are similar to those in inscript. no. 7. The letters *dāl* (l. 1),

1. After XVI: 98.

2. Cf. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 64, Z-76, pl. ix, 3.

3. See al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 109 f.

4. Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 1757; II, 417, 1923; III, 2403; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VII, 370.

5. Cf. XVI: 98.

6. E.g. no. 14 above.

dhāl (l. 2), and *nūn* (ll. 1, 2, 3) are very much like those in inscript. no. 12.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (ll. 3, 4): the shaft of the letter *alif*, already attested in some of the previous inscriptions of this collection, is inscribed vertically to the base line, whereupon the base-stroke turns sharply to the right forming a right-angle. It is believed that this additional base-stroke became common in later Kufic inscriptions, assuming an ornamental rôle.

Jīm medial (l. 4): curved at a slant to the writing line. Its shape is identical with the form of the letter *ḥā'* in this inscription (ll. 2, 3).

Ḥā' medial (ll. 1, 2, 3): the letter *ḥā'* occurs in this inscription in two different styles. In the name Muḥammad (l. 1), the letter *ḥā'* is engraved in a slanting position, intersecting the base line. The other *ḥā's* (ll. 2, 3) are incised in a slanting position to the base line. This form of writing the letter corresponds to that in a rock graffito which is dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries.¹

Ṭā' medial (l. 3): the body of the letter *ṭā'*, including its shaft, stands in a perpendicular position to the base line. The body of the *ṭā'* is inscribed in a relatively rectangular shape which is sealed on its left-hand side with a vertical shaft. This form of the medial *ṭā'* occurs in an undated Abbasid milestone,² and is also similar to the one in the previous inscription, no. 11 of this collection.

Yā' initial and medial (ll. 2, 3, 4): in both cases the style of the letter *yā'* is commensurate with standard indentation.

1. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 183 f., W-1, fig. 1.

2. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 229, pl. xxxviii, 1; *idem*, "Aḥjār", *al-'Uṣūr*, V, 124, pl. 1.

Inscription no. 16

Pl. LVII, tab. 18, map 13.1

Location: Wadi al-Mabrah*Lines:* 3*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Date:* undated, probably 2nd–4th/8th–10th cents.*Type of stone:* granite*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 20 x 25 cm.*Spaces between lines:* ca. 5 cm.*Height of alif:* ca. 4 cm.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritic points, or ornamentation. It has been elegantly engraved in an isolated granite rock face which is rectangular in shape and measures approximately 50 x 35 cm. It is located on the north-east bank of Wadi al-Mabrah. The inscription is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

- ١ . عبد الله بن
٢ . علي بن ابي محجن
٣ . توكل على الله

Translation

1. 'Abd Allāh b.
2. 'Alī b. Abī Miḥjan
3. has placed his trust in Allāh

Commentary

This inscription contains a common religious formula of confession (l. 3)

which also occurs in some of the previous inscriptions of this collection.¹

This inscription displays clearly the name of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Alī b. Abī Mihjan (ll. 1, 2). The full name of this subject is not attested in the classical Arabic sources. However, the individual names ‘Abd Allāh, ‘Alī, and Mihjan were well known in early times. Excluding the third name of this subject, i.e. Mihjan (l. 3), the names ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Alī are in current use. As far as I can ascertain, Mihjan is testified epigraphically as a first name in an undated rock inscription found in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia.²

Palaeography

It is beautifully inscribed and the letters are very well executed. The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (ll. 1, 2, 3): engraved with a vertical body. The top of the *alif* is decorated with a kind of thorn, whilst the base is attached by a short hook or barb. The embellishments are executed on the right-hand side of the *alif*. According to Grohmann,³ this method of writing the letter *alif* appears in the lapidary style as early as the second half of the second century/8th–9th centuries. This form of engraving the letter *alif* is to be found in rock inscriptions discovered in the area of the Ḥijāz in Saudi Arabia.⁴

Nūn final (ll. 1, 2): the endings of the letter *nūn* are adorned with the same element which the scribe of this inscription also places on the top or the base of the *alif* and other letters. The body of the letter *nūn* is inscribed in a right-angled shape. This form of writing the letter *nūn* is to be found on a stele in Egypt dated

1. See e.g. nos. 5, l. 1; 7, l. 2 above.

2. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 204 f., W-11.

3. *Inscriptions*, 21, 152; *idem*, "Origin", *Ars*, II, 192 f., diagram B, 2–4.

4. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 44, Z-39; 62, Z-73; 151, Z-264.

to A.H. 102 [A.D. 721] and on a restoration inscription from the Ḥijāz dated A.H. 160 [A.D. 776-7].¹

Hā' final (ll. 1, 3): the body of the letter *hā'* in the word *Allāh* is incised with a roundish shape. This form is to be found as early as A.H. 46 [A.D. 666] on a graffito in the Ḥijāz.²

Wāw medial (l. 3): occurs with a square head and an angular tail engraved below the base line. This form parallels the letter *wāw* occurring in a constructional inscription dated A.H. 110 [A.D. 728].³

Yā' final (ll. 2, 3): the letter *yā'* is inscribed here in two different forms. L.2 contains the *yā'* with a flat, horizontal tail turned to the right, whereas l. 3 has the letter incised in a quasi-semicircular fashion descending below the base line. The returning *yā'* (l. 2) is observed in the Nemara inscription.⁴ It is a later development of the Nabataean *yā'*. This form of writing the letter *yā'* continued to be used in early Arabic inscriptions.

1. Schneider, *Lapicide*, 72, pl. xvii.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 124, Z-202, pl. xxiii, 2; Schneider, *Lapicide*, 25 f., table v.

3. Grohmann, *Paläographie*, table no. xvi.

4. Al-'Ushsh, "al-Khaṭṭ al-'Arabī", *Syrian Annals*, XXIII, 59.

Inscription no. 17

Pl. LVIII, tab. 19, map 13.1

Location: Wadi Ithlah*Lines:* 4*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Date:* undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.*Type of stone:* granite*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 25 x 35 cm.*Spaces between lines:* ca. 8 cm.*Height of alif:* ca. 7 cm.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised, along with the next inscription (no. 18), in a granite mountain face which borders Wadi Ithlah on the eastern side. The inscription is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١ . محمد بن
٢ . عبد السلام
٣ . يؤمن
٤ . بالصمد^١

Translation

1. Muḥammad b.
2. ‘Abd al-Salām
3. believes
4. in the Eternal One

1. After Qur’ān, CXII: 2.

Commentary

This inscription contains a common religious formula for profession of faith (ll. 3, 4) in which the word *al-Ṣamad* (l. 4) is borrowed by the engraver from *Sūrat al-Iklāṣ* (CXII). Epigraphically, the entire content of this *sūrah* is attested in a number of Arabic rock and funerary inscriptions.¹

This inscription displays clearly the name of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Salām (ll. 1, 2). This name has not been attested in any of the classical Arabic sources. However, both names were very well known in the early period and are still in use nowadays.

Of orthographical interest is the *alif* in the second name of the subject, ‘Abd al-Salām (l. 2), which is omitted. This omission is reflected in the Qur’anic orthography in, for example, the word *malā’ikah*.²

Palaeography

This inscription has been neatly executed and arranged and the letters are extended. The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Dāl final (ll. 1, 2, 4): the letter *dāl* is engraved in two forms. The final *dāl* in the names Muḥammad (l. 1) and ‘Abd (l. 2) is extended parallel to the base line and its upper end is attached by a short stroke turning sharply to the right-hand side. This form is identical to those in the former inscriptions, nos. 15 and 16 of this collection, and also occurs in a tombstone inscription found in the vicinity of the

1. See e.g. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 4 f., Z-4, pl. ii, 2; 24, Z-17, pl. iii, 3.

2. Qur’ān, XXXIII: 56.

city of al-Ṭā'if. This epitaph is dated to the 3rd/9th century.¹ The second style of the final *dāl* is incised perpendicularly to the base line and its upper shaft is turned to the left-hand side. This form is parallel to that in a building inscription which has been dated to the 4th/10th century.²

Ṣād medial (l. 4): the letter *ṣād* is engraved perpendicularly to the base line. The shaft of the letter is cylindrical in shape and is closed at the left end with an oblique stroke. The form of the letter *ṣād* is similar to that in a tombstone inscription found in the area of al-Ṣahwah in Saudi Arabia. This epigraph has been dated to the 1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries.³

Mīm medial and final (ll. 1, 2, 3, 4): the medial and final *mīm* is incised in this inscription in a semicircular fashion. It rests on the base line. The form of this letter is similar to the letter *mīm* in a rock inscription attributed to the Umayyad period (41-132/661-750).⁴

Nūn final (ll. 1, 3): the final *nūn* is engraved in an arc shape which extends below the writing line. This pattern is to be found in a tombstone inscription which has been dated to the 1st-3rd/7th-9th centuries.⁵

1. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 16 f., Z-11, pl. ii, 3.

2. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 3 f., inscript. no. 2.

3. Al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 294, inscript. no. 4, pl. xx, 4.

4. Al-'Ushsh, "Kitābāt", *al-Abḥāth*, III, 246-8, inscript. no. 21, pl. 10.

5. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 84, no. 1, pl. 23, fig. 3.

Inscription no. 18

Pl. LIX, tab. 19, map 13.1

Location: Wadi Ithlah

Lines: 4

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd-4th/8th-10th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 50 x 45 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 10 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 8 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved beneath the former inscription (no. 17) on a granite mountain face located on the eastern bank of Wadi Ithlah. It is accompanied, to its left, by three primitive human figures, and above it is a short, pre-Islamic graffito comprising only two letters. The first line of this inscription is incomplete; it contains only one word, i.e. *r-d-y*. This inscription is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

- ١ . {رضي}
 ٢ . رضي الله على روح
 ٣ . بن الحجاج ابن
 ٤ . المنصور

Translation

1. May [God] be pleased
- 2 May God be pleased with Rawḥ
3. b. al-Ḥajjāj b.
4. al-Manṣūr

Commentary

This inscription commences with a common religious formula for forgiveness: 'May God be pleased with...' (l. 1). This particular prayer for forgiveness is frequently encountered in the early Arabic inscriptions and documents. It has already been attested in some of the previous inscriptions (nos. 9, 10, and 11) of this collection.

This inscription bears clearly the name of Rawḥ b. al-Ḥajjāj b. al-Manṣūr (ll. 2, 3, 4). Besides الْحَجَّاج, the vocalization al-Ḥujjāj (الْحُجَّاج) would also be possible.¹ The full name of this subject is not attested in the classical Arabic sources. Epigraphically, the first name, Rawḥ (l. 2), is attested in some other rock inscriptions.²

Al-Ḥajjāj b. al-Manṣūr (ll. 3, 4)

According to al-Janadī³ and Ibn al-Dayba',⁴ al-Ḥajjāj b. al-Manṣūr was appointed as governor of the Yemen (151–153/768–770) by the Abbasid Caliph Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (136–59/754–75).

Palaeography

The palaeographical peculiarities of this inscription have parallels in the previous inscriptions, e.g. the final returning *yā'* (l. 1) is similar to the letter's form in nos. 6, 9, and 16. The occurrence of a rounded medial *mīm* (l. 4) is attested in nos. 2, 6, 10, 12, and 15.

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushuabih*, 218.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 140, Z-235; 152, Z-265.

3. *Al-Sulūk*, I, 211.

4. *Al-Uyūn*, I, 123.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (ll. 1, 2, 3): the shaft of the letter *alif* is incised vertically on the base line. The *alifs* in ll. 1 and 2 lack the base extensions.

Jīm-ḥā' final (ll. 2, 3); the body of the final *jīm-ḥā'* is engraved in an arc shape, extending below the writing line. The upper part is at a slant to the body of the letter. This form of final *jīm-ḥā'* is to be found in an undated rock inscription in the Ḥijāz.¹

Ṣād medial (l. 4): the body of the medial *ṣād* is engraved parallel to the base line. It is oval in shape with a short vertical stroke closing its left end. The general shape of this letter mirrors that in the previous inscription, no. 17 and also in a tombstone inscription which has been dated to the 1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries.²

Nūn final (ll. 3, 4): the letter *nun* is suspended from the baseline with the tail curving upwards. A similar form appears in an inscription dated A.H. 304 [A.D. 916-7].³

Wāw medial (ll. 2, 4): the letter *wāw* is inscribed with a rounded head and a curved tail which extends below the writing line. This form is parallel to the letter *wāw* in a rock graffito found in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia, dated to the 1st-3rd/7th-10th centuries.⁴

1. Rostem, *Inscriptions*, 28, pl. Xa.

2. Al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 294, no. 4, pl. xx, 4.

3. Miles, "Alī b. 'Īsā's Pilgrim Road", *Bulletin*, XXXVI, 479, fig. 1.

4. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 192 f., W-4, fig. 4.

Inscription no. 19

Pl. LX, tab. 19, map 13.1

Location: Pass of al-Muḏābiyyah

Lines: 4

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd-4th/9th-10th cents.

Type of stone: basalt

Dimensions of text area: ca. 43 x 23 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 7 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 4 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved into a basalt stone. This stone, measuring ca. 0.6 x 0.35 m., has been found by the side of the main track of the pilgrim route which goes through the pass of al-Muḏābiyyah. The text of the inscription is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١ . الله
٢ . عفا عن حسن
٣ . بن احمد ا
٤ . لحكمي

Translation

1. May Allāh
2. grant forgiveness to Ḥasan
3. b. Aḥmad a
4. l-Ḥakamī

Commentary

This inscription commences with a prayer for forgiveness: 'May God forgive...'¹ (ll. 1, 2). It should be noted that this formula, as it appears in this inscription, is transposed. Rather than *عفا الله*, the usual formula is *عفا الله*. It is possible that the author of the inscription forgot to include the word *Allāh* after engraving the word '*afā*' (l. 2) and then, as an afterthought, placed the word *Allāh* above the completed inscription. Epigraphically, this prayer for forgiveness is attested in some of the Arabic rock inscriptions.²

This inscription bears the name of Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Ḥakamī. The full name of this subject is not attested in the classical Arabic sources. Nevertheless, the individual names, Ḥasan (l. 2) and Aḥmad (l. 3), were very well known in the early period³ and are still in use today.

Al-Ḥakamī (l. 4) is the *nisbah* of the subject and it presumably refers to the Yemeni *mikhlāf*. *Al-Ḥakam b. Ṣa'b b. Sa'd al-'Ashīrah* is a branch of the Madhḥij tribe.⁴

Palaeography

This inscription resembles the previous ones in the forms of some of the letters. The initial *alifs* (ll. 1, 3), with a short base stroke forming a right-angle, are quite the same as in most of the previous inscriptions of this collection. The initial and medial *hā's* (ll. 2, 3, 4) are similar to their counterparts in no. 15 above. The medial *kāf* (l. 4) matches the form of the *kāf* in nos. 4 and 16 above. The

1. After Qur'ān, cf. III: 155; V: 98, 104; IX: 43.

2. See e.g. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 15, inscript. no. 17; Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 73, Z-100.

3. Cf. al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 235, 268.

4. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 280; al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, II, 279; al-Maḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 186.

medial *mīms* (ll. 3, 4), semicircular in shape and resting on the base line, are parallel to those in no. 17 above. The final *hā'* (l. 1), in a triangular shape and resting on the base line, matches the final *hā'* in inscript. no. 14 above. The returning final *yā'* (l. 4) is parallel to those in inscript. nos. 6, 10, 16, and 18 above.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

'Ayn initial (l. 2): the initial *'ayn* is incised in an open, curved shape and is based on the writing line. This form is to be found in a rock graffito, dated A.H. 177 [A.D. 793–4].¹

Fā' medial (l. 2): the medial *fā'* is engraved directly on the base line. It is semicircular in shape. This form corresponds with the letter *fā'* in a tombstone inscription, dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.²

Nūn final (ll. 2, 3): the final *nūn* is inscribed in an arc shape, below the base line. This form is similar to the *nūn* in a tombstone inscription found in the Ḥijāz, dated to the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries.³

1. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 5, inscript. no. 5.

2. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 91 f., inscript. no. 5, pl. 27, fig. 7.

3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 25, Z-18, pl. iii, 4.

Inscription no. 20

Pl. LXI, tab. 19, map 13.2

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 40 x 20 cm.*Lines:* 2*Spaces between lines:* ca. 4 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 7 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 2nd–4th./8th–10th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been executed into a blackish granite stone which is located on the eastern foothill of Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ. This rock has a smoothed surface and it accommodates more than five Arabic inscriptions. The present inscription is incised on the northern side of the rock. The text is legible, incomplete, and well preserved.

Text

١. توكل صخر بن عبد

٢. الله علا ...[sic]

Translation

1. Has placed his trust Ṣakhr b. ‘Abd
2. Allāh in...

Commentary

This inscription begins and ends with a common religious formula of confession (ll. 1, 2) which has already occurred in some of the previous inscriptions

of this collection.¹

The inscription displays the name of Ṣakhr b. ‘Abd Allāh (ll. 1, 2). It is not possible to derive biographical information from only two names. The first name, Ṣakhr (l. 1), frequently occurs in early Arabic sources,² and the second name, ‘Abd Allāh (l. 2), is, of course, a common one, widely used in early times and nowadays.

Of orthographical interest is the final *alif* in the word ‘*alā* (l. 2) which is *mamdūdah* rather than the normal *alif maqṣūrah*. This phenomenon occurs in tombstone inscriptions discovered in the ancient settlement of ‘Ashm in Saudi Arabia and which have subsequently been dated to the 3rd/9th century.³

Palaeography

Certain of the palaeographical characteristics here have already been observed in previous inscriptions, i.e. the initial *alif* (l. 2), with a short base stroke forming a right-angle, is the same as in most of the previous inscriptions of this collection. The medial *kāf* (l. 1) is like the form of the *kāfs* in inscript. nos. 16 and 19 above. The final *hā’* (l. 2), in a triangular shape resting on the base line, is parallel to those in inscript. nos. 16 and 19 above.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Hā’ medial (l. 1): the medial *hā’* in the name Ṣakhr is engraved as an oblique stroke. The body of the letter intersects the base line. A similar form of this

1. See inscript. nos. 5, 7, and 16 above.

2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 1521, 2080, 2898; II, 1514.

3. Al-Zayla‘ī, *Southern Area*, 341 f., pl. 26, no. 26; 344 f., pl. 26, no. 28.

letter occurs in the inscription of the Dome of the Rock, dated A.H. 72 [A.D. 691-2].¹

Rā' final (l. 1): the final *rā'* is almost circular in shape, with a small opening directed upwards. The body of the letter is engraved below the base line. The shape of this letter is similar to the present form of the letter *nūn*. This form is to be found in a rock inscription, dated A.H. 113 [A.D. 731-2].²

Ṣād initial (l. 1): the initial *ṣād* is incised in a cylindrical shape with a short, oblique stroke closing its left end. The form of this letter corresponds to one occurring in a rock inscription in Wadi Najrān which has been dated to the 1st/7th century.³

Lām-alif final (l. 2): the ligature *lām-alif* is engraved in a criss-cross shape, with a small triangular base, resting on the writing line.

-
1. Kessler, "Inscription", *JRAS* (1970), pl. III.
 2. Al-'Ushsh, "Kitābāt", *al-Abḥāth*, III, 361, no. 42, pl. 26.
 3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 135 f., Z-227, pl. xxiv, 1.

Inscription no. 21

Pl. LXII, tab. 20, map 13.2

Location: Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ

Lines: 4

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.

Type of stone: granite*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 25 x 35 cm.*Spaces between lines:* ca. 8 cm.*Height of alif:* ca. 5 cm.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised into a coarse rock face on Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ. The depth of the engraving here is generally shallow. The text of the inscription is complete, legible, and fairly well preserved.

Text

١ . يؤمن الحكم
٢ . بن مالك
٣ . السهمي
٤ . بالله

Translation

1. Believes al-Ḥakam
2. b. Mālik
3. al-Sahmī
4. in God

Commentary

This inscription commences and terminates with a common religious

formula of confession of faith (ll. 1, 4). Such a confession has already occurred in inscript. no. 2 of this collection.

This inscription bears the name of al-Ḥakam b. Mālik al-Sahmī (ll. 1, 2, 3). This name as it appears here, is not attested in the classical Arabic sources. However, the names al-Ḥakam, Mālik, and the *nisbah* al-Sahmī were well known in the early period. The *nisbah* al-Sahmī may refer to the tribe of B. Sahm.¹

Palaeography

Some of the letters here are extended so that they occupy the whole space of the line (as in ll. 3 and 4). The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (ll. 1, 3): the initial *alif* is inscribed vertically to the writing line.

Kāf medial (l. 1): the medial *kāf* in the name al-Ḥakam is incised parallelly to the base line. The body, including the shaft, of this letter is the counterpart of those occurring in the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 16, 19, and 20.

Kāf final (l. 2): the final *kāf* in the name Mālik is inscribed with a large body attached to the base line. This form is to be found in a rock inscription in the vicinity of the city of al-Ṭā'if, which has been dated to the 1st/7th century.²

Mīm final (l. 1): the final *mīm* is engraved with a rounded head and a tail extending downwards below the base line. The tail-end is slightly curved to the left-hand side. This outline is duplicated in a tombstone inscription located in the ancient settlement of 'Ashm in Saudi Arabia and dated A.H. 371 [A.D. 981].³

Nūn final (ll. 1, 2): the final *nūn* is incised in an arc shape, extending below the

1. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, III, 122, 294.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 94 f., Z-152, pl. xiv, 8.

3. Al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 371 f., pl. 30, no. 40.

base line. This form is to be noticed in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 17 and 19.

Hā' medial (l. 3): the medial *hā'* in the name al-Sahmī is inscribed in a semicircular fashion, resting on the base line. This form is parallel to that in a commemorative rock inscription found on the route between Mecca and al-Ṭā'if. This graffito has been dated to the second half of the 2nd/8th century.¹

Hā' final (l. 4): the final *hā'* in the word *Allāh* is engraved on the base line in a roundish shape. This form is much like those in inscript. nos. 16 and 19 of this collection.

Yā' final (l. 3): the final *yā'* is swept back horizontally. The resultant shape is similar to that of the *yā'* in the previous (no. 19).

1. Al-Fi'r, *Taḍawwur*, 196 f., pl. 29, fig. 5.

Inscription no. 22

Pl. LXIII, tab. 20, map 13.2

Location: Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ*Lines:* 3*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Date:* undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.*Type of stone:* granite*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 28 x 20 cm.*Spaces between lines:* ca. 4 cm.*Height of alif:* ca. 5 cm.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved into the western side of the rock face which also accommodates nos. 20 and 21 above and 23 below. It is bordered on the top by a recent tribal mark. It is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. توكل زيد
٢. بن عبد الله
٣. علا [sic] الله

Translation

1. Has placed his trust Zayd
2. b. 'Abd Allāh
3. in God

Commentary

This inscription commences and terminates with a common religious confession of faith (ll. 1, 3). This type of confession has already occurred in some

of the previous inscriptions of this collection.¹

The inscription displays the name of Zayd b. 'Abd Allāh (ll. 1, 2). It is impossible to derive biographical information from these two names, as Zayd and 'Abd Allāh are names which occur frequently both in early times and nowadays. The first name of this subject could be read as Zabd (زَبْد), Zabad (زَبَد), Zand (زَنْد), or perhaps even Rand (رَنْد).²

Of orthographical interest is the word 'alā (l. 3) which is inscribed with *alif mamdūdah* instead of the normal *alif maqṣūrah*. This phenomenon has already been attested in a previous inscription, no. 20, l. 2 above.

Palaeography

The script here is well executed in comparison with the one studied previously (no. 21). The present inscription resembles no. 20 in the forms of some of the letters, e.g. initial *alif* (ll. 2, 3), medial *kāf* (l. 1), *lām-alif* (l. 3), final *hā'* (ll. 2, 3), and final *wāw* (l. 1).

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Dāl final (ll. 1, 2): the final *dāl* is engraved perpendicularly to the base line, the upper shaft rising sharply. This form is parallel to the letter *dāl* in the Mu'āwiyah *al-Ṭā'if* inscription, dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677–8].³

Lām final (l. 1): the final *lām* is incised with a vertical shaft, the lower part of which extends below the base line, developing into a hook. The shape of this

1. See nos. 5, 7, 16, and 20 above.

2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Muṣṭabih*, 342, 306.

3. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 240, fig. 1.

letter is similar to that appearing in a rock inscription discovered in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia. According to Donner,¹ this rock-graffito may be dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th century.

Lām-alif final (l. 3): the final *lām-alif* in the word *‘alā* is inscribed in a criss-cross shape with a triangular base resting on the base line. This form is much like the *lām-alif* ligature in the tombstone inscription of ‘Abbāsah, dated A.H. 71 [A.D. 691].²

1. "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 183 f., W1, fig. 1.

2. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1932), 290 f., pl. 1.

Inscription no. 23

Pl. LXIII, tab. 20, map 13.2

Location: Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ

Lines: 3

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 25 x 25 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been inscribed into the same rock face which accommodates nos. 20, 21, and 22 above, and is, in fact, situated underneath no. 22 above. The inscription is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. توكل بكر

٢. بن عبد الرحمن

٣. علا [sic] الله

Translation

1. Has placed his trust Bakr
2. b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān
3. in God

Commentary

This inscription begins and ends with a common religious confession of faith (ll. 1, 3). This type of confession has already occurred in some of the

preceding inscriptions of this collection.¹

The inscription bears the name of Bakr b. 'Abd al-Raḥmān (ll. 1, 2). The first name could be vocalized as Bakkar (بَكَّر).² The reading Nakar (نَكَر)³ is also possible. The names Bakr and 'Abd al-Raḥmān were common in early times and this is still the case today.

Of orthographical interest is the final *alif* in the word '*alā*' (l. 3) which is *mamdūdah*, replacing the normal *alif maqṣūrah*. This phenomenon has already occurred in some of the preceding inscriptions of this collection.⁴

Palaeography

Similar to the former inscription (no. 22), the letters of this one are elegantly extended and well executed. Taking into account the fine script and its uniform style, it seems possible that this inscription and the previous ones (nos. 20 and 22) were executed by the same person who may have used a single instrument, such as a sharp stone or the edge of a knife.

This inscription resembles the preceding ones in the forms of some of the letters. The initial *alif* (ll. 2, 3), with a short barb curved to the right-hand side, is identical to those in most of the former inscriptions of this collection. The initial '*ayn*' (l. 2), medial *kāf* (l. 1), final *lām* (l. 1), final *hā'* (l. 3), final *wāw* (l. 1), and final *lām-alif* (l. 3) accord with those in the previous inscriptions (nos. 20 and 22).

1. See nos. 5, 7, 16, 20, and 22 above.

2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 88.

3. *Ibid.*

4. See nos. 20 and 22 above.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Ḥā' medial (l. 2): the letter *ḥā'* in the name al-Raḥmān is incised as a slanting line, the shaft of the letter resting on the base line. The body of the letter is slightly curved to the left. This form is similar to that in the Qaṣr Burq¹ inscription, dated A.H. 81 [A.D. 700].¹

Dāl final (l. 2): the letter *dāl* is extended parallel to the base line with its top half curved upwards. This shape is identical to that of the *dāl* in no. 20 above and also to that featuring in a rock-graffito found in Jabal Usays. This latter inscription bears the date A.H. 113 [A.D. 731-2].²

Rā' final (ll. 1, 2): the final *rā'* in the names Bakr and al-Raḥmān is engraved angularly. It has a short shaft, curved to the left-hand side, slanting toward the base line. This form is similar to that in the epitaph of 'Abbāsah, dated A.H. 71 [A.D. 691].³

Mīm medial (l. 2): the medial *mīm* in the name al-Raḥmān is inscribed in an approximately triangular shape on the base line. This form is to be found in a rock graffito, dated A.H. 177 [A.D. 793-4].⁴

Nūn final (l. 2): the final *nūn* is incised with a long, curved tail below the base line, turning to the left. The form of this letter is similar to that in the Mu'āwiyah/al-Ta'if inscription, dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677-8].⁵

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1. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930), 326 f., pl. iv, c.
 2. Al-'Ushsh, "Kitābāt", *al-Abḥāth*, III, 361, no. 42, pl. 26.
 3. Hawary, "Monumant", *JRAS* (1932), 290 f., pl. I.
 4. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 5 f., inscript.V.
 5. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 240, fig. 1.

Inscription no. 24

Pl. LXIV, tab. 20, map 13.2

Location: Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ

Lines: 6

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd-4th/9th-10th cents.

Type of stone: blackish granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 27 x 27 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 4 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 4 cm.

Description

This undated inscription lacks diacritical points and ornamentation. It has been engraved on a square, blackish slab of granite (ca. 0.27 x 0.27 m.). This stone, along with other rubble, is located on the northern side of the main course of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route, within the area of Umm al-Qaṣaṣ. The inscription is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. شهد محمد
٢. بن عبد الله ان لا
٣. اله الا الله وحد
٤. ه لا شريك له
٥. وان محمدا عبد
٦. الله ورسوله

Translation

1. Has testified Muḥammad
2. b. 'Abd Allāh that there is no
3. God but Allāh alon
4. e; He has no partner

5. and Muḥammad is the servant

6. of God and His messenger

Commentary

This inscription contains the popular formula of confession of faith (*al-Shahādah*) (ll. 2–6), which is widely used in Arabic epigraphy.¹

This inscription bears the name of Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allāh. Since the *nisbah* of this subject is not included, it is impossible to derive biographical information from the first two names alone. The names Muḥammad and ‘Abd Allāh enjoyed great popularity in early times and this has persisted until the present day.

Palaeography

This text has been incised in a fine script, and the lines are arranged evenly. The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Shīn initial (ll. 1, 4, 6): the initial *shīn* consists of three parallel indentations which have been incised in acute-angled triangles. This style of inscribing the dents of the letters *sīn* or *shīn* occurs in a number of Arabic inscriptions found in the area of the Ḥijāz, the earliest of which is an epitaph dated A.H. 160 [A.D. 776–7];² and also in four funerary inscriptions, dated A.H. 243–6 [A.D. 857–61], engraved by Mubārak al-Makkī.³

Kāf final (l. 4): the final *kāf* is incised parallel to the base line with a short stroke, curved to the right-hand side, attached to its upper shaft. It is interesting to note

1. See e.g. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 99, Index, C; Miles, "Tombstones", *Orientalis*, II, 215 f.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 9, Z-6; 14, Z-9; 16, Z-11; 19, Z-13; 20, Z-14; 21, Z-15; 97, Z-156; cf. *idem*, "Origin", *Ars*, II, 209, fig. 27.

3. Schneider, *Lapicide*, pl. I, 1–2; pl. II, 3–4.

that the shape of the body of this letter is similar to that of the letter *dāl* in final position (ll. 1, 2) in this inscription. The form of the letter *kāf* is parallel to that in a rock inscription, dated to the first half of the 2nd/8th–9th century.¹

Mīm initial and medial (ll. 1, 5): the initial *mīm* in the name Muḥammad is engraved in a rounded shape, whereas in medial position it is incised on the base line in a semicircular shape. The form of the letter *mīm* in the initial position is much like that in a constructional inscription, dated A.H. 207 [A.D. 823]²

Mīm medial (ll. 1, 5): in medial position, the form of the *mīm* is parallel to that in a rock graffito found on the mountain of Sal' in Saudi Arabia.³

Hā': the engraver of this inscription was not consistent in engraving the final *hā'*; thus it occurs in two main forms. The final *hā'* (ll. 2, 3, 6) is incised in an approximately rounded shape, resting on the base line. This form is similar to the final *hā'* in the inscription of a milestone, dated A.H. 304 [A.D. 916–7].⁴ In lines 4 and 6, the letter *hā'* occurs in a strictly triangular shape, also resting on the base line. This second version occurs frequently in the Arabic epigraphy dating from the 3rd–5th/9th–11th centuries,⁵ and has already been recognized in inscript. no. 12 of this collection.

Lām-alif initial (ll. 2, 3, 4): the initial *lām-alif* occurs in a criss-cross pattern, with a triangular base resting on the base line. This outline is similar to the one of *lām-alif* in a funerary inscription dated A.H. 243 [A.D. 857].⁶

1. Al-Fi'r, *Taṭawwur*, 196 f., pl. xxix, fig. 5.

2. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 6 f., no. 6.

3. Hamidullah, "Inscriptions", *IC*, XIII, 438 f., pl. x.

4. Miles, "Alī b. 'Īsā's Pilgrim Road", *Bulletin*, XXXVI, 479, fig. 1.

5. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 6.

6. Schneider, *Lapicide*, pl. I, 1.

Inscription no. 25

Pl. LXV, tab. 21, map 13.2

Location: Banāt Ḥarb/Qaryat al-Ma'din

Lines: 2 & 11

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd-4th/9th-10th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 60 x 35 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 7 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 4 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved on a granite slab, rectangular in shape (ca. 100 x 60 cm.), located in Wadi al-Rabaḍ. This wadi is situated approximately 500 m. north-west of the ancient settlement of Banāt Ḥarb/Qaryat al-Ma'din. Apart from ll. 6, 9, and 11, where certain letters have been obliterated, this inscription is complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

- ١ . الله ولي
- ٢ . محمد بن «...»
- ١ . يا ايها الناس اتقوا ربكم ان
- ٢ . زلزله السلاعة شي عظيم
- ٣ . يوم ترونها تذهل كل مرضعه
- ٤ . عما ارضعت وتضع كل
- ٥ . ذات حمل حملها وترا [sic]
- ٦ . الناس سكارا [sic] وما هم
- ٧ . بسكارا [sic] ولكن عذ
- ٨ . اب الله شديد وكتب
- ٩ . محمد بن (لمرعا؟) وهو يسلا

١٠. الله المغفرة ونجه من ا

١١. لنار برحمته

Translation

1. Allāh, agent of
2. Muḥammad b. ...
1. O mankind! Fear your Lord! For
2. the convulsion of the Hour [of Judgment] will be a terrible thing.
3. The day you shall see it, every mother giving suck shall forget
4. her sucking babe and every pregnant female
5. shall drop her [unformed] load. Thou shalt see
6. mankind as in a drunken riot, yet not
7. drunk, but the wra
8. th of God will be dreadful. [It] is written by
9. Muḥammad b. [.....]. He asks
10. God's forgiveness [and may God] rescue him from t
11. he fire, by His mercy

Commentary

This inscription contains two Qur'anic verses (ll. 1-8) of admonition. These verses are a literal quotation from the Qur'ān.¹ It is striking that the *Basmalah* is omitted here.

In 1951, H.St.J.B. Philby discovered an inscription containing the same Qur'anic verses that we have in the present inscription, on a granite stone in Wadi al-Sirrayn, 20 km. south of the well of Ibn Sarār and 80 km. south of the city of

1. XXII: 1 f.

Bīshah. Philby's inscription has subsequently been dated to the 3rd/9th century.¹

This inscription bears the name of Muḥammad b. (l. 9). The second name of the scribe is difficult to make out, although it is engraved twice: at the top of the textual area (l. 2) and lower down in l. 9 of the text.

Of orthographical interest is the omission of the medial *alif* in the words *al-nās* (ll. 1, 6), *al-sā'ah* (l. 2), and *yas'alu* (l. 9). The words *tarā* (l. 5) and *sakārā* (ll. 6, 7) are written with final *alif mamdūdah* instead of the normal *alif maqṣūrah*.

Palaeography

The letters here have been neatly engraved. The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Dāl and *dhāl* initial and final (ll. 3, 5, 7, 8, 9): the letters *dāl* and *dhāl* in the initial and final positions are inscribed parallel to the base line. The bodies of the letters are angular in shape, with a short stroke attached to the shafts. This mode of writing these two letters has already occurred in some of the preceding inscriptions, e.g. nos. 12, 15, 16, and 24.

'Ayn and *ghayn* medial (ll. 2, 3, 4, 10): they occur in a closed, inverted triangle, resting on the base line, a form which has parallels in inscript. nos. 1, 2, 13, and 14 above.

'Ayn final (l. 4): the letter 'ayn in final position has an angular body extending vertically below the base line, with the head being a closed, inverted triangle. This form is much like the final 'ayn in a funerary inscription discovered in the ancient

1. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 97 f., Z156, pl. xiv, 9.

settlement of 'Ashm, dated A.H. 289 [A.D. 902].¹

Mīm initial (ll. 3, 6, 9, 10): the initial *mīm* is inscribed in a rounded shape. This form appears in inscript. nos. 1, 2, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 21, and 24 above.

Mīm medial (ll. 4, 5, 9, 10): the medial *mīm* is engraved in a semicircular fashion, resting on the base line. This form is similar to that in inscript. nos. 4, 13, 14, 19, 23, and 24 above.

Mīm final (ll. 1, 2, 3, 6): the final *mīm* is inscribed with a head, which is an approximate triangle in shape, resting on the base line. The tail of the letter *mīm*, extending below the base line, is curved sharply to the left-hand side with its tip bent upwards in a slight barb. This form is parallel to the final *mīm* in an epitaph on a tombstone which has been dated to the 1st-3rd/7th-9th centuries.²

Hā' medial (ll. 1, 3, 5, 6, 9): the letter *hā'* in medial position is triangular in shape, divided by an inclining stroke. The body of the letter rests on the base line. This form is similar to the letter *hā'* in an epitaph on a tombstone found in the vicinity of Mecca. This inscription has been dated to the 3rd-4th/9th-10th centuries.³

Hā' final (ll. 2, 3, 8, 10, 11): the letter *hā'* in final position is triangular in shape. It is parallel to those in inscript. nos. 12 and 24 above.

Yā' final (ll. 1, 2): the final *yā'* is swept back horizontally, underneath the base line. This method of inscribing the final *yā'* has already occurred in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 6, 10, 16, 18, and 19.

1. Al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 334 f., pl. 26, no. 28.

2. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 84 f., inscript. no. 1, pl. 23, fig. 3.

3. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 88 f., inscript. no. 4, pl. 26, fig. 6.

Inscription no. 26

Pl. LXVI, tab. 21, map 13.3

Location: Wadi Ranūm/Ibn Sarār

Lines: 7

Style: incised, elaborate Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 50 x 55 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 6 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date or diacritical points. It has been engraved, in conjunction with a number of other Arabic inscriptions, on a granite mountain face which borders the Well of Ranūm/Ibn Sarār on the north-west side.

Of the twenty-five inscriptions that have been scrutinized so far, with the exception of no. 6 above, this one is the most elegant owing to certain of its features: the shape of the letters (the style of Kufic script employed is more sophisticated than those used in the other inscriptions), the execution of the words, and the uniformity of the lines. It is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. سعيد ابن سالم

٢. يشهد الا ا

٣. له الا الله و

٤. حدة لا شر

٥. يك له وا

٦. ن محمد [ا] عبد

٧. ه ورسوله

Translation

1. Saʿīd ibn Sālim
2. testifies that there is no G
3. od but Allāh, the O
4. ne, there is no part
5. ner with Him, and th
6. at Muḥammad is His serv
7. ant and His messenger

Commentary

The text of this inscription is merely a religious formula of confession of faith (*al-Shahādah*) (ll. 2–7). This confession is widely used in the Arabic epigraphy and has already occurred in inscription no. 24.

This inscription displays clearly the name of Saʿīd b. Sālim (l. 1). The first name of this subject can be vocalized as Suʿayd (سُعَيْد).¹ Taken together, the names of this subject, which are not attested in the classical Arabic sources, have already been recognized in no. 6. As far as is ascertainable, the name Saʿīd (or Suʿayd) b. Sālim is testified once in an Arabic inscription discovered in the vicinity of Medina at Bīr al-Rāḥah.² The names Saʿīd, Suʿayd, and Sālim were well known in early times and still enjoy a wide currency to-date.

From the orthographical point of view, there are two dictation peculiarities which should be noted in this inscription, i.e. the adding of an *alif* to the conventional form of the word *ibn* (l. 1), and the expression *ان محمد* (ll. 5, 6).

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 360.
 2. Rostem, *Inscriptions*, 27, pl. IXb.

This phenomenon of affixing an *alif* to the word *ibn* has already been attested in some of the preceding inscriptions of this collection.¹ In this context, it should be pointed out that the same engraver, Sa'īd b. Sālim, failed to add this *alif* to the word *ibn* in inscribing his own name in no. 6, l. 6 above. The second dictation peculiarity, i.e. the omission of *alif al-tanwīn* at the end of the name Muḥammad, is quite a common grammatical mistake which has been testified epigraphically.²

Palaeography

As mentioned above, this inscription is elegantly carved by the same engraver who executed no. 6 above. Accordingly, it resembles the former one in such palaeographical characteristics as the form of certain letters, viz: the initial *alif* (ll. 1, 2, 3, 5), the initial and medial *hā'* (ll. 4, 6), the final *dāl* (ll. 1, 2, 4, 6), the initial *sīn* (ll. 1, 7), the medial *shīn* (ll. 2, 4), the medial '*ayn* (l. 1), the initial, medial, and final *mīm* (ll. 1, 6), and the medial *hā'* (l. 2).

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Kāf final (l. 5): the final *kāf* is incised parallel to the base line. The upper end of the letter's body is linked by a long stroke curving upwards to the left-hand side. This form of the letter is similar to the letter *kāf* in a funerary inscription found in the vicinity of the city of al-Ṭā'if. According to Grohmann,³ this inscription may be dated to the 3rd/9th century.

Hā' final (ll. 3, 5, 7): the letter *hā'* in final position is engraved angularly on the base line. The structure of this letter is to be found in a tombstone inscription

1. See e.g. nos. 1 and 3 above.

2. Miles, "Tombstones", *Orientalis*, II, 215 f.; Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 11; al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 296 f., pl. 21, no. 5.

3. *Inscriptions*, 16 f., Z-11, pl. ii, 3.

discovered in the vicinity of Mecca. According to al-Bāshā,¹ this inscription may be dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.

Wāw initial and final (ll. 3, 5, 7): the letter *wāw* in initial and final positions is engraved with a rounded head and an angular tail on the base line. The tail-end of the letter is adorned with a thorn-like pattern. The structure of this letter is parallel to the letter *wāw* in a tombstone inscription discovered in the southern cemetery of the ancient settlement of al-Sirrayn in Saudi Arabia. The epitaph of this tombstone bears the date A.H. 331 [A.D. 943]²

Lām-alif: the ligature *lām-alif* is incised in three different forms, viz:

Initially (l. 2), it occurs with a triangular socle. The two branches of the letter are engraved in a U-shape, inclining inwards. This style appears on a building inscription in Ṣan‘ā’, dated A.H. 136 [A.D. 753–4]³

Initially again (l. 3), it appears with a base adorned with inverted crenellation, above which are two semicircular branches, diametrically opposed. This form of engraving the ligature *lām-alif*, particularly the socle, is not epigraphically attested as far as we know.

Initially once more (l. 6), it occurs in a criss-cross pattern with a triangular base. This mode of writing the ligature *lām-alif* is considered to be the oldest; it occurs in a graffito in the Ḥijāz dated A.H. 46 [A.D. 666].⁴

1. "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 108 f., inscript. no. 15, pl. 37, fig. 17.

2. Al-Zayla‘ī, *Southern Area*, 354 f., no. 32, pl. xxvii, 32.

3. Schneider, *Lapicide*, 53 f., pl. III, 6.

4. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 124 f., Z-202, pl. xxiii, 2. Cf. also Schneider, *Lapicide*, 50 f., pl. I, 1 f., pl. II, 4.

Inscription no. 27

Pl. LXVII, tab. 21, map 13.3

Location: Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār

Lines: 2

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 30 x 15 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised on a granite rock face, along with a number of other Arabic inscriptions, situated in the north-west of Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār. This inscription is elegantly executed. It is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. عيسى بن شعبة
٢. بالله يعتصم

Translation

1. 'Īsā b. Shu'bah
2. in God he seeks refuge

Commentary

This inscription contains the usual religious formula regarding the confession of faith (l. 2). This prayer is a paraphrase of some Qur'anic verses;¹ it has already occurred in inscription no. 2, l. 2.

This inscription bears the name 'Īsā b. Shu'bah (l. 1). It is possible to read

1. Cf. e.g. III: 101; IV: 146; IV: 175; XXII: 78.

the first name of this subject as 'Absī (عَبْسِي).¹ In the same way, the second name may be read as *Sa'nah* (سَعْنَة), *Sa'yah* (سَعِيَة), *Shaghabah* (شَغَبَة), *Shu'thah* (شُعْتَة), *Shu'ayyah* (شُعِيَة), or *Sha'yah* (شَعِيَة).² Notwithstanding it is impossible to derive biographical information from the aforementioned names, it should be noted that they were indeed popular in early times and remain so today.

b. Shu'bah (l. 1)

This name may refer to the tribe of B. Shu'bah, a branch of the B. Kinānah.³

Palaeography

This inscription contains certain features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The medial 'ayn (ll. 1, 2), engraved as a closed, inverted triangle resting on the base line, is similar to those occurring in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 1, 13, and 25. The final *mīm* (l. 2), circular in shape with a horizontal, stub-tail resting on the base line, is much like those occurring in nos. 6, 8, 15, and 26. The final *hā'* (ll. 1, 2), incised in a triangle resting on the base line, is featured in some of the preceding inscriptions, e.g. no. 12. The final *yā'* (l. 1), incised with a flat, horizontal tail turning to the right-hand side, is attested in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 6, 18, 21, and 25.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Shīn initial (l. 1): the initial *shīn* in the second name of the subject has three parallel indentations, all of which are incised vertically to the base line. The form of this letter is similar to the medial *sīn* (l. 1) in this inscription. This version is attested in a rock inscription discovered in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 480.

2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 396.

3. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 7; al-Bilādī, *Bayna Makkah*, 196 f.

Arabia, dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries.¹

Ṣād medial (l. 2): the body of the medial *ṣād* is extended along the base line forming a rectangle which is sealed at its left-end by a tall, vertical stroke in chimney fashion. This style appears in two inscriptions from Egypt, dated A.H. 235 [A.D. 849–50] and A.H. 244 [A.D. 858–9].²

ʿAyn initial (l. 1): the initial *ʿayn* in the first name of the subject is inscribed as a curved stroke linked to the base line. This structure occurs in the epitaph of the *ʿAbbāsah* tombstone, dated A.H. 71 [A.D. 691].³

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1. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 189 f., W-3, fig. 3.
 2. Arif, *Kūfic*, 32.
 3. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1932) 290 f., pl. i.

Inscription no. 28

Pl. LXVIII, tab. 21, map 13.3

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 40 x 13 cm.*Lines:* 2*Spaces between lines:* ca. 7 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 5 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 2nd–3rd/8th–9th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been elegantly carved, with other Arabic inscriptions, on a granite rock surface situated in the north-west of Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār. It is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. عيسى بن شعبة
٢. يسأل الله الجنة

Translation

1. 'Īsā b. Shu'bah
2. asks Allāh for [entry into] paradise

Commentary

This inscription embodies a prayer for salvation (l. 2). This religious formula has already been attested in inscription, no. 3 above.

That the subject (‘Īsā b. Shu‘bah (l. 1))¹ and the style of the Kufic script are common with no. 27 of this collection would seem to indicate that the engraver here is the same. It should be noted that this duplication of certain features (nos. 27 and 28) has already been observed in inscriptions nos. 6 and 26 above.

Of orthographical interest is the word *yas’al* (l. 2) which is incised with the medial *alif* omitted. This dictation peculiarity has already occurred in inscription no. 3, l. 2.

Palaeography

This inscription resembles the previous one (no. 27) in the form of the letters medial *sīn* (l. 1), initial *shīn* (l. 1), initial and medial ‘*ayn* (l. 1), and the final *hā’* (ll. 1, 2). The initial *alif* appears in this inscription (l. 2) with a short extension at the base of the letter, turned angularly to the right-hand side. This structure has already been testified in earlier inscriptions in this collection (nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 11).

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Jīm initial (l. 2): the letter *jīm* in the initial position is shaped like a small lever resting on the base line; this formation is to be found in a rock inscription discovered in the vicinity of the city of al-Ṭā’if, an inscription which has been dated to the 3rd/9th century.²

Lām final (l. 2): the letter *lām* in the final position is engraved with a vertical shaft extending below the base line and culminating in a lever-like stroke which forms a right angle to the left. This structure features in a rock inscription detected on

1. For other possible readings of the name, see no. 27 above.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 80, pl. xi, 1.

Jabal Usays. According to al-‘Ushsh,¹ this example may be dated to the 2nd/8th century.

Nūn final (l. 1): the letter *nūn* in the final position is curved, below the base line, to the left-hand side. An example of this version occurs in a rock inscription discovered on the Zubaydah pilgrim road, bearing the date A.H. 40 [A.D. 661].²

Yā’ final (l. 1): the letter *yā’* in the final position is incised with a descending tail reminiscent of a swan’s neck. The earliest example of this style is dated A.H. 228 [A.D. 843].³

1. "Kitābāt", *al-Abḥāth*, III, 253 f., no. 31, pl. 17.

2. Sharafaddin, "Inscriptions", *Aṭlāl*, I, 69 f., pl. 50, A.

3. Schneider, *Lapicide*, 85, table XXI.

Inscription no. 29

Pl. LXIX, tab. 22, map 13.3

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 30 x 15 cm.*Lines:* 3*Spaces between lines:* ca. 7 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 4 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved on the same rock face, in Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār, which accommodates inscriptions nos. 26, 27, and 28 above. Owing to the effect of erosion, it is not possible to determine whether the first name of the subject (l. 1) should be read as al-Ḥasan or al-Ḥusayn.

The text is well executed, complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١. الحسن(ي) بن

٢. سليمان بن

٣. من بالله ربه

Translation

1. al-Ḥusayn b.

2. Sulaymān be-

3. lieves in Allāh, his Lord

Commentary

This inscription is a confession of faith (ll. 2, 3) and, as such, is essentially reflected in inscription no. 21 of this collection. It is a close paraphrase of a

Qur'anic verse.¹

In connection with the erosion effect, it is difficult to establish whether or not there was originally a fourth dent parallel to the dents of the letter *sīn* in the first name of the subject (l. 1). If, in fact, a fourth dent was incised, the first name should be interpreted as al-Ḥusayn; it could be vocalized as al-Ḥasīn (الْحَسِين).² If the converse is true, the first name would be read al-Ḥasan (الْحَسَن); equally it could be vocalized as al-Ḥusn (الْحُسْن).³ It is impossible to derive biographical information from only two names, but it is fair to point out that the names al-Ḥusayn, al-Ḥasīn, al-Ḥasan, al-Ḥusn, and Sulaymān were popular in early times⁴ and this still holds true today.

Of orthographical interest is the name Sulaymān (l. 2), engraved here without the medial *alif*. This feature is attested in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 1, 6, 10, 15, and 25.

Palaeography

It is elegantly inscribed and the letters are well executed in an elongated form.

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (l. 1): the letter *alif* in the initial position, incised with an additional base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection.

Rā' initial (l. 3): the letter *rā'* in the initial position is angular in shape and rests on the base line. The structure of this letter resembles that in a tombstone inscription

1. Cf. LXXII: 13.

2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushuabih*, 235.

3. *Ibid.*

4. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 1721 f.

in the Ḥijāz, dated A.H. 250 [A.D. 864].¹

Mīm initial and medial (ll. 2, 3): the letter *mīm* in the initial and medial positions is roundish in shape and, as such, may be identified further in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 2 and 3.

Nūn final (ll. 1, 2, 3): the letter *nūn* in the final position is incised in an arc shape below the base line. This form is to be found in a building inscription in Ṣan'ā', dated A.H. 136 [A.D. 753–4].²

Hā' final (l. 3): the letter *hā'* in the final position rests on the base line. The shaft is incised vertically and the body is curved to the base line in a semi-bell shape. This form is attested in some of the former inscriptions of this collection, e.g. nos. 2 and 26.

Wāw final (l. 2): the letter *wāw* in the final position appears with a roundish head and a short, angular tail curved, below the base line, to the left-hand side. This form is parallel to the letter *wāw* in an epitaph which is dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.³

1. Grohmann, "Origin", *Ars*, II, 209, fig. 27.

2. Schneider, *Lapicide*, pl. iii, 6.

3. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 116 f., no. 18, pl. xl, fig. XX.

Inscription no. 30

Pl. LXX, tab. 22, map 13.3

Location: Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār

Lines: 3

Style: incised, elaborate Kufic

Date: undated, probably 1st–3rd/7th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 40 x 25 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 7 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date or diacritical points. It has been elegantly engraved on the same granite rock face, in Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār, as the former inscriptions nos. 26, 27, 28, and 29. The text is complete, legible, and extraordinarily well preserved.

Text

١ . بالله يومن
٢ . عبد الله بن و
٣ . ردان مخلصا

Translation

1. In God believes
2. 'Abd Allāh b. Wa
3. rdān, sincerely

Commentary

L. 1 introduces the subject of devotion in this confession of faith. This formula has already appeared in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 2, 21, and 29. The text ends with the word مخلصا (l. 3); this emphasizes the pure and

exclusive nature of religious devotion. It occurs frequently in Qur'anic verses.¹

This inscription bears the name 'Abd Allāh b. Wardān (ll. 2, 3). As far as we know, this name does not appear in this sequence in the classical Arabic sources; however, taken separately, 'Abd Allāh and Wardān were both well-known names in early times.² The second one was used as *nisbah* with two possible readings: al-Wardānī (الورداني) or al-Wardhānī (الورداني).³

Palaeography

The text here has been elaborately incised in a simple Kufic script. The apices and bases of the letters are adorned with a kind of thorn; this decorative feature occurs in another rock inscription which has been dated to the 3rd/9th century, found in the vicinity of the city of al-Ṭā'if in Saudi Arabia.⁴

The most striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (ll. 2, 3): the letter *alif* in the initial position, incised with an additional base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection.

Khā' medial (l. 3): the letter *khā'* in the medial position appears as a lever, secured to the base line, slanting upwards to the left. This structure is similar to the version of the letter *khā'* in the Mu'āwiyah/al-Ṭā'if inscription, dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677-8].⁵

Dāl medial (ll. 2, 3, 4): the letter *dāl*, whether in medial position or independent (l. 3), is engraved in a rectangular shape, with a slight stroke at the top left-hand corner, jutting upwards diagonally to the right. The form of this letter occurs in the Mu'āwiyah/al-Ṭā'if inscription, dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677-8].⁶

1. Cf. e.g. XXXIX: 11, 14.

2. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 3458 f.; II, 213.

3. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 659 f.

4. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 78, Z-115, pl. xii, 4.

5. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 240, fig. 1, pl. xviii, A.

6. *Ibid.*

Rā' initial (l. 3): the letter *rā'* in the initial position is carved on the base line in a rounded shape which has a small opening directed to the left-hand side. The formation of this letter is parallel to the letter *rā'* in a rock graffito recorded in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia, and subsequently dated to the 1st-3rd/7th-9th centuries.¹

Ṣād medial (l. 3): the letter *ṣād* in the medial position takes the form of a rectangle which extends along the base line and is sealed at its left-hand side by a tall stalk-like stroke. The form of this letter is similar to the letter *ṣād* in inscription no. 27.

Mīm initial (ll. 1, 3): the letter *mīm* in the initial position is engraved in a circle. It is linked directly to the following letter. This structure is to be found in an epitaph discovered in the vicinity of Mecca, an inscription which, according to al-Bāshā,² may be dated to the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th centuries.

Nūn final (ll. 1, 2, 3): the letter *nūn*, whether in final or isolated position (l. 3), has been incised in a horseshoe shape. The identical outline is featured in a rock inscription discovered in the city of al-Ṭā'if, which has been dated to the 3rd/9th century.³

Wāw initial and final (ll. 1, 2): the letter *wāw* in initial and final positions occurs with a rounded head and short tail, incised angularly on the base line. This form is to be found in a rock inscription which has been dated to the 3rd/9th century.⁴

1. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 192 f., W4, fig. 4.

2. "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 87, no. 2, pl. xxiv, fig. 4.

3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 78, Z-115, pl. xii, 4.

4. *Ibid.*

Inscription no. 31

Pl. LXXI, tab. 22, map 13.3

Location: Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār

Lines: 6

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–4th/8th–10th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 70 x 50 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 7 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved on a granite rock face situated near that rock, in Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār, which accommodates the previous inscriptions, nos. 26, 27, 28, 29, and 30. The subject's second name (at the end of l. 2) and the last line of the text (l. 6) have been deliberately defaced.

The text is complete, mostly legible, and poorly preserved.

Text

١. اشهد من مر هذه الطريق
٢. اشهد {اشهد} ان (علي بن) «...»
٣. فاسق في دين الله جائر في
٤. حكم الله ورحم الله من لعنه
٥. فلعنه الله
٦. «...»

Translation

1. I testify ^{before} every single person who passes along this road
2. I testify, I testify that 'Alī b. «...»
3. is iniquitous in executing the religion of Allāh, [he is] an oppressor in
4. exercising the jurisdiction of Allāh. May God have mercy upon everyone who

curses him

5. May God curse him

6. « . . . »

Commentary

The expression 'every single person who passes along this road' (l. 1) has already been attested in inscription no. 11 above. This is the first inscription in this collection which contains an imprecation (ll. 3, 4, 5). This curse comprises some well-known Qur'anic terms: *fāsiq*¹ (l. 3), *dīn Allāh*² (l. 3), *jā'ir*³ (l. 3), *ḥukm Allāh*⁴ (l. 4), and *la'anah Allāh*⁵ (l. 5).

It is interesting to observe that the author of this inscription is herewith heaping accusations and curses upon his rival (or enemy) – he invokes the blessing of God upon every person who, heeding his inscription, confirms his curses; in so doing this person has conformed to a time-honoured practice – curses are attested, epigraphically, in some Nabatean⁶ and Arabic⁷ inscriptions.

The first name of the subject has been tentatively interpreted here as 'Alī b. (l. 2). As mentioned in the Description, the second name (l. 2) and the whole of the last line (l. 6) of the text have been deliberately defaced rendering these illegible.

Palaeography

The depth of the inscribed letters is shallow. Due to the coarse surface of

1. Cf. e.g. XXXII: 18; XLIX: 6.

2. Cf. e.g. III: 83; XXIV: 2.

3. Cf. e.g. XVI: 9.

4. Cf. e.g. V: 46; LX: 10.

5. Cf. e.g. IV: 118; V: 63.

6. Cf. al-Anṣārī, *Mawāqif*, 27, 31 f.

7. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 15 f., no. 17; 31, no. 37; 77 f., no. 103; Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 48, Z-50 f., pl. vii, 1; 85, Z-130, pl. xiii, 3.

this rock, the lines lack any form of systematic arrangement. This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The initial *alif* (ll. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5), incised with an additional base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The initial and final *dāl* and *dhāl* (ll. 1, 2, 3) correspond with the form of the letters in the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 13, 26, and 30. The final *rā'* (ll. 1, 4), rounded in shape with an opening directed towards the left, and resting on the base line, occurred in the previous inscription, no. 30. The medial *'ayn* (ll. 4, 5), a closed reversed triangle in shape, and resting on the base line, is parallel to those occurring in the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 1, 2, 14, 27, and 28. The initial *mīm* (ll. 1, 4), occurring with a circular head, is attested in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 1, 2, and 11.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Ṭā' medial (l. 1): the letter *ṭā'* in the medial position is incised along the base line and has a lever-like stroke inclining diagonally upwards, to the right, at its left end. The formation of this letter is similar to one featuring in a tombstone inscription discovered in the vicinity of Mecca and dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.¹

Nūn final (ll. 1, 2, 3, 4): the letter *nūn* in the final position occurs as a hook extending below the base line and lacking a barb at its left edge to close the end of the letter. This form is much like that detailed in the Ḥajrī inscription, dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652]²

Hā' medial (ll. 1, 2): the letter *hā'* in the medial position is incised in two styles. In l. 1 it occurs in a circular shape, intersected by the base line, whilst in l. 2 it appears in a triangular shape with a short stroke inclining to the right-hand side

1. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 111 f., no. 16, pl. xxxviii, fig. 18.

2. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930) 322, pl. iii.

and resting on the base line. The *hā'* of l. 1 is parallel to that in an inscription dated A.H. 56 [A.D. 667],¹ whereas the second version is similar to that in a rock graffito, dated to the 1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries.²

Yā' final (l. 3): the letter *yā'* in the word *fī* is swept back horizontally on the base line. The formation of this letter is to be found in a tombstone inscription which has been discovered in the vicinity of al-Ṭā'if and dated to the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th centuries.³

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1. Sharafaddin, "Inscriptions", *Aṭṭāl*, I, 69 f., pl. 50, A, B.
 2. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, W3, fig. 3.
 3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 25 f., pl. iii, 4.

Inscription no. 32

Pl. LXXII, tab. 22, map 13.3

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 50 x 30 cm.*Lines:* 3*Spaces between lines:* ca. 5 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 7 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date or diacritical points. It has been elegantly carved in the granite rock face of a neighbouring rock to the one accommodating the former inscription, no. 31, situated in Wādī Ranūm/Ibn Sarār. The text is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١ . اللهم اغفر لرزين

٢ . ابن يعقوب

٣ . الجرشي

Translation

1. O God forgive Razīn

2. b. Ya'qūb

3. al-Jurashī

Commentary

Introducing this inscription is the popular religious formula of forgiveness (l. 1) which is widely used in Arabic inscriptions. This type of prayer has already been attested in inscriptions nos. 4 and 13.

This inscription displays the name Razīn b. Ya'qūb al-Jurashī (ll. 1, 2, 3),

the first element of which may alternatively be interpreted as Zarrayn (زَرَيْن).¹ Considered in its entirety, the name of this subject, as it appears here, is not attested in any of the classical Arabic sources. This does not hold true for the names Razīn and Ya'qūb when viewed separately, however, as they were well established in the early period.²

Al-Jurashī (l. 3)

This is the *nisbah* of the subject, presumably referring to the ancient settlement of Jurash in Saudi Arabia.³ It may alternatively be read as al-Ḥurusi (الْحُرُسِي), al-Ḥarāsī (الْحَرَّاسِي), al-Ḥarashī (الْحَرَّاشِي), or even al-Khursī (الْخُرْسِي).⁴

Palaeography

The apices and bases of the letters are adorned, creating an elegant effect.

This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones: the formation of the initial *alif* (ll. 1, 2, 3), with a short base stroke forming a right angle, is almost constant in all the previous inscriptions of this collection; the final *bā'* (l. 2), occurring without any trace of a barb or vertical stroke to close the letter, matches those in nos. 5, 6, and 12; the medial *'ayn* (l. 2), appearing in a closed, inverted triangle resting on the base line, is parallel to those in nos. 1, 2, 13, 14, 25, 27, 28, and 31; the medial *fā'* and *qāf* (ll. 1, 2), incised with a fully rounded head on the base line, correspond to those letters in inscription no. 6 above; and the final *yā'* (l. 3), with a flat, horizontal tail turned to the right-hand side, is attested in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 6, 19, and 27.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

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1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushṭabih*, 316.
 2. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, II, 891, 1575, 1907; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, 302; V. 520.
 3. Yāqūt, *al-Buldān*, II, 126 f.
 4. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushṭabih*, 148.

Mīm final (l. 1): the final *mīm* is incised in a semicircular fashion, with a short tail, resting on the base line. This form is similar to the final *mīm* in a tombstone inscription discovered in the ancient settlement of Mas'ūdah in the Ḥijāz, dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries.¹

Hā' medial (l. 1): the medial *hā'* is engraved in a semicircular shape resting on the base line, with an inclining stroke intersecting the upper part of the body of the letter. This style is featured in a tombstone inscription discovered in the vicinity of al-Ṭā'if, dated to the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries.²

Wāw final (l. 2): the letter *wāw* in the final position is engraved with a rounded head and an angular tail extending below the base line. This form is much like the *wāw* in a tombstone inscription, dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.³

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1. Al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 291 f., pl. 20, no. 2.
 2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 25 f., Z-18, pl. iii, 4.
 3. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 97, no. 8, pl. 30, fig. 10.

Inscription no. 33

Pl. LXXIII, tab. 23, map 13.3

Location: Wādī Uḡdar

Lines: 3

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 25 x 22 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 8 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been elegantly carved in a smooth granite rock face situated on the eastern bank of Wādī Uḡdar. The text is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١ . امن محمد
٢ . بن ثابت بما
٣ . نزل علا [sic] محمد

Translation

1. Has believed Muḥammad
2. b. Thābit, in what
3. has been revealed to Muḥammad

Commentary

The inscription here records a common religious formula of profession of

faith (l. 1) which includes a literal quotation (ll. 2, 3) from the Qur'ān.¹

The text clearly bears the name of Muḥammad b. Thābit (ll. 1, 2). The second name, Thābit (l. 2), may also be read as Tā'ib (تَائِب) or Nābit (نَابِت).² The full name is not attested in the classical Arabic sources; however, it is testified epigraphically in the inscription no. 15 (l. 1) above. In certain historical and biographical sources, there are a number of persons who share their first two names with the subject of this inscription.³ The absence of the *nisbah* here renders it impossible to recognize the subject. As well as the first name, Muḥammad, the second name, Thābit, is still in current use.

Of orthographical interest is the final *alif* in the word 'alā (l. 3) which is *mamdūdah* rather than the normal *alif maqṣūrah*. This phenomenon occurs in tombstone inscriptions discovered in the ancient settlement of 'Ashm in Saudi Arabia which have subsequently been dated to the 3rd/9th century.⁴ Furthermore, it has already been attested in some of the preceding inscriptions of this collection.⁵

Palaeography

This inscription contains certain features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The initial *alif* (l. 1) is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The final *tā'* (l. 2), incised without any trace of a barb or vertical stroke to close the letter, is similar to those in nos. 5, 6, 12, and 32. The medial *hā'* (ll. 1, 3) accords with the conventional shape. The final *dāl* (ll. 1, 3), with a long, slim shaft levelled with the base line and the top line bending sharply at its left end forming a short barb, is featured in some of the former inscriptions,

1. Cf. XLVII: 2.

2. See al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushṭabih*, 109 f., 120.

3. Cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 1757; II, 417; III, 2403; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VII, 370.

4. Al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 341 f., pl. 26, no. 26; 344 f., pl. 26, no. 28.

5. See nos. 22 and 23 above.

e.g. nos. 15 and 30. The initial and medial *mīms* (ll. 1, 2, 3), engraved with a fully rounded head, are parallel to those in nos. 2, 6, 10, and 15. The final *nūn* (ll. 1, 2), incised below the base line in the shape of a square bracket opening to the left, is attested in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 8, 11, and 12.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Lām final (l. 3): the letter *lām* in the final position is engraved with a long, vertical shaft extending below the base line, where it turns sharply to the left with a short horizontal stroke forming a right angle. This structure corresponds to the letter *lām* on a milestone, dated to the reign of the Umayyad Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65–80/685–705).¹

Lām-alif final (l. 3): the letter *lām-alif* in the final position is incised with an oval-shaped body, balancing on a triangular base. This version appears in a building inscription in Şan‘ā’, dated A.H. 136 [A.D. 753–4],² and also occurs in inscription no. 26 above.

1. Al-Rāshid, "Aḥjār", *al-Uṣūr*, V, 141, pl. 6.

2. Schneider, *Lapicide*, 53 f., pl. iii, 6.

Inscription no. 34

Pl. LXXIV, tab. 23, map 13.3

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Wādī al-Quḍayf*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 40 x 25 cm.*Lines:* 3*Spaces between lines:* ca. 5 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 6 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 1st–3rd/7th/9th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised in a granite rock face which is located near to Wādī al-Quḍayf in the region of the Ṣaḥr desert. Except for the first name of the subject, where the second letter has been deliberately obliterated, this inscription is complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١. انا ز(ي)د بن

٢. مسلم توكلت

٣. على الله

Translation

1. I, Zayd b.
2. Muslim, have placed my trust
3. in God

Commentary

This inscription terminates with a common religious formula of confession of faith (ll. 2, 3) which has already occurred in some of the previous inscriptions of

this collection.¹

This inscription bears the name of Zayd b. Muslim (ll. 1, 2). Further possible readings of the first name are Zabd (زَبْد), Zabad (زَبَد), or Zand (زَنْد).² The second name, which has been interpreted as Muslim, could also be vocalized as Musallam (مُسَلِّم).³ This name has already been attested in this collection as a first name (inscript. no. 8) and, as here, a second name (inscript. no. 9). As the *nisbah* is missing here, it is not possible to derive valid, biographical information about the subject from the classical Arabic sources, given two names only. It can be affirmed, however, that Zayd and Muslim were common names in early times and this is still the case today.

Palaeography

Certain of the palaeographical characteristics here have already been observed in previous inscriptions. The initial *alif* (ll. 1, 3), with a short base stroke forming a right angle, is the same as those in most of the previous inscriptions of this collection; the final *tā'* (l. 2), engraved without a barb or vertical stroke to close the end of the letter, cf. nos. 5 and 6; the final *dāl* (l. 1), with an angular body and a short stroke springing upwards from the upper part of the letter's body, cf. nos. 12 and 15; and with the initial and final *mīm* (l. 2) incised in a rounded shape and resting on the base line, cf. nos. 2, 6, and 11.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Kāf medial (l. 2): the body of the letter *kāf* in the medial position is parallel to the base line; the upper shaft of the body is linked with a short stroke turned upwards. This version corresponds to the letter *kāf* in a rock inscription in Wādī

1. See nos. 5, 7, 16, 20, 22, and 23 above.
 2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushṭabih*, 306, 342.
 3. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushṭabih*, 589.

al-Shāmiyyah, dated A.H. 40 [A.D. 661].¹

Wāw final (l. 2): the letter *wāw* in the final position is incised with a roundish head, and an angular tail curved below the base line. This form is much like one in a tombstone inscription found in the vicinity of al-Ṭā'if, which has been dated to the 3rd/9th century.²

Yā' final (l. 3): the letter *yā'* in the final position is swept back horizontally below the base line. This particular form has a counterpart in a rock inscription found in Wādī Khashnah, dated A.H. 56 [A.D. 717].³ According to al-Fi'r,⁴ this form of the letter *yā'* in final position is attested in the 1st/7th century.

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1. Sharafaddin, "Inscriptions", *Aṭlāl*, I, 69 f., pl. 49, A,B.
 2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 21 f., Z-15, pl. ii, 5.
 3. Sharafaddin, "Inscriptions", *Aṭlāl*, I, 69 f., pl. 50, A,B.
 4. *Taṭawwur*, 35.

Inscription no. 35

Pl. LXXIV, tab. 23, map 13.3

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Wādī al-Quḍayf*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 40 x 6 cm.*Lines:* 1*Spaces between lines:* N/A*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 6 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 3rd–4th/9th–10th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised in the same granite rock face as no. 34 and just beneath it. The text is complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١ . انا سلم امنت بالله

Translation

1. I, Salam, have believed in God

Commentary

This inscription is an expression of faith and the formula used has already been attested in some of the previous inscriptions of this collection.¹ Only the first name of the subject is provided here and, as well as Salam, it may be vocalized Salm (سَلَم) or Silm (سِلْم).² This name enjoyed a wide currency in early times.³

Palaeography

This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in

1. See e.g. nos. 2, 29, and 30 above.

2. Al-Dhababī, *al-Mushtabih*, 366.

3. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, IV, 45, 189 f.

some of the previous ones. The initial *alif*, with a short barb curved to the right-hand side, is identical to those in most of the former inscriptions of this collection. The final *ā'*, incised without a barb to close the end of the letter's body, is similar to those in nos. 5, 6, and 34. The initial and final *mīms*, occurring with a rounded head and resting on the base line, are parallel to those in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 2, 6, 11, and 34.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Sīn initial (l. 1): the initial *sīn* consists of three parallel indentations. The shape of this letter is similar to that in the Mu'āwiyah *al-Ṭā'if* inscription, dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677-8].¹

Hā' final (l. 1): the final *hā'* is triangular in shape, which form is more prevalent in the 4th and 5th/10th and 11th centuries. It also appears occasionally in the 3rd/9th century.²

1. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 240, fig. 1.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 6.

Inscription no. 36

Pl. LXXV, tab. 23, map 13.3

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Wādī al-Quḍayf*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 40 x 25 cm.*Lines:* 4*Spaces between lines:* ca. 5 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 5 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 2nd–4th/8th–10th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised in a granite rock face, located near to Wādī al-Quḍayf in the Ṣaḥr desert region. Excluding the second name of the subject (l. 2), where certain letters are not clear enough to be identified, this inscription is well executed, complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١ . اللهم ابعث
 ٢ . يوسف بن رزين يو
 ٣ . م القيلامة مقاما
 ٤ . محمودا

Translation

1. O God, resurrect
2. Yūsuf b. Razīn on the D–
3. ay of Judgment to a status
4. of Praise

Commentary

The text begins (l. 1) and ends (ll. 2–4) with a prayer which is a

paraphrase of the Qur'anic verse.¹

This inscription bears the name of Yūsuf b. Razīn (l. 2), which is not attested in any of the classical Arabic sources; on its own, however, Razīn has already been attested as a first name in inscription no. 32 above. It may also be read Zarrayn (زَرَيْن).²

Of orthographical interest is the omission of the *alif* in the role of lengthening the vowel in the word *al-qiyaamah* (l. 3). This trait is common in early Arabic orthography, e.g. both in the Qur'an and Arabic epigraphy.³

Palaeography

This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The initial *alif* (ll. 1, 3, 4), incised with an additional base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The final *thā'* (l. 1), occurring without a barb or a stroke to close the end of the letter, is identical to the body of the letters *bā'* and *tā'* in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 5, 6, and 34. The medial open '*ayn* (l. 1), occurring without the upper arc, is identical to those in the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 7 and 15. The final *mīm* (ll. 1, 3), circular in shape with a horizontal, stub tail and resting on the base line, is parallel to those in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 6, 8, 15, 26, and 27. The final *wāw* (ll. 2, 4), engraved with a roundish head and an angular tail extending below the base line, is similar to those letters in the previous inscriptions, e.g. no. 34.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Fā' final (l. 2): the letter *fā'* in the final position is incised with a rounded head

1. Cf. e.g. XVII: 79.

2. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushṭabih*, 316.

3. Cf. Beeston, "Script", *Cambridge*, 12; al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 344 f., pl. 26, no. 28.

resting on the base line and a horizontal tail which is, unusually, open-ended here. This pattern is to be found in a tombstone inscription which has been dated to the 3rd/9th century.¹

Qāf medial (l. 3): the letter *qāf* in the medial position is engraved in the shape of a rhombus on the base line. This form is identical to the medial *qāf* in a tombstone inscription, dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.²

Hā' medial (l. 1): the letter *hā'* in the medial position is approximately triangular in shape, divided in the middle by a horizontal line. This version is similar to the letter *hā'* in a rock graffito discovered in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia, dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries.³

-
1. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 21 f., Z-15, pl. ii, 5.
 2. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 97, no. 8, pl. 30, fig. 10.
 3. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 189 f., W-3, fig. 3.

Inscription no. 37

Pl. LXXVI, tab. 24, map 13.3

Location: Wādī al-Khāyī'

Lines: 3

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd–5th/9th–11th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 35 x 22 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved in a granite rock face, located near Wādī al-Khāyī' in the Ṣāḥr desert region. It is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. انا عبد الرحمن

٢. بن عبد الله او

٣. من بخلالقي

Translation

1. I, 'Abd al-Raḥmān

2. b. 'Abd Allāh, be-

3. lieve in my Creator

Commentary

This inscription is the familiar expressions of faith (ll. 2, 3) in which the

word *khāliq* (l. 3) is taken from the Qur'ān.¹

The text clearly displays the name of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Abd Allāh. These names, 'Abd al-Raḥmān and 'Abd Allāh, were well known in early times and remain so today. According to the classical Arabic sources, there are many persons whose first two names are the same, and in the same combination as those in the present inscription.² However, the absence of the *nisbah* here renders it impossible to recognize the subject.

Of orthographical interest is the omission of the *alif* in the role of lengthening the vowel in the word *bi-khāliqī* (l. 3). Such an omission occurs frequently in the Qur'ān as, for example, in al-Raḥmān.³

Palaeography

The letters of this inscription are elegantly carved in elongated form. This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The initial *alif* (ll. 1, 2), with a short base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The final *dāl* (ll. 1, 2), with a long, slim shaft level with the base line, its upper left end turning sharply upwards into a short barb, is similar to those in previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 15, 30, and 33. The medial *mīm* (l. 1), circular in shape and interrupting the base line, is identical to those in the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 15 and 26.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Hā' initial (l. 1): the letter *hā'* in the initial position is shaped like a lever, with the lower prong level with the base line. The letter *khā'* (l. 3) in this inscription is engraved in a similar style.

1. Cf. e.g. VI: 102; XIII: 16; XV: 28; LIX: 24.

2. Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 111 f.; II, 1000; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 145 f.; VI, 366.

3. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 7.

Rā' final (l. 1): the letter *rā'* in the final position is incised in a small and incomplete circle below the base line. This version features in a tombstone inscription, dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries,¹ found in the Mas'ūdah settlement in the Hijāz.

Lām medial (l. 2): the medial *lām* in the word *Allāh* extends below the base line. According to Grohmann,² this particular style of engraving the word *Allāh* frequently occurs in the 3rd–6th/9th–12th centuries.

Mīm initial (l. 3): the letter *mīm* in the initial position is triangular in shape and rests on the base line. This structure is to be found in a tombstone inscription found in the vicinity of Mecca, dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.³

Nūn final (ll. 1, 2, 3): the letter *nūn* in the final position is incised below the base line in a square bracket, which inclines upwards. This form is parallel to the letter *nūn* in a rock inscription discovered in the vicinity of al-Ṭā'if, dated to the 3rd/9th century.⁴

Hā' final (l. 2): the letter *hā'* in the final position is approximately triangular in shape. The body of the letter is drawn up to the upper level of the base line. This form is to be found in a tombstone inscription, dated to the 4th–5th/10th–11th centuries.⁵

Yā' final (l. 3): the letter *yā'* in the final position is incised below the base line with a loosely descending tail, resembling a swan's neck. As far as we know, the form of this letter has no parallel.

1. Al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 291 f., pl. 20, no. 2.

2. *Inscriptions*, 7.

3. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 104 f., no. 12, pl. 34, fig. 14.

4. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 78, Z-115, pl. xii, 4.

5. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 4 f., Z-4, pl. ii, 2.

Inscription no. 38

Pl. LXXVII, tab. 24, map 13.5

Location: Jabal Khuluq

Lines: 3

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd-4th/9th-10th cents.

*Type of stone: granite**Dimensions of text area: ca. 44 x 40 cm.**Spaces between lines: ca. 8 cm.**Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.**Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved into a granite rock face of Jabal Khuluq. The text is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. غفر الله لمحمد
٢. بن حميد بن جامع
٣. العبالي

Translation

1. May God forgive Muḥammad
2. b. Ḥamīd b. Jāmi'
3. al-'Ubālī

Commentary

This inscription constitutes a popular prayer for forgiveness (l. 1) widely

used in Arabic inscriptions.¹

It bears the name of Muḥammad b. Ḥamīd b. Jāmi' al-'Ubālī (ll. 1, 2, 3) which is not attested in this form in the classical Arabic sources. There are many persons whose first two names are identical with those of the subject.² The second name of this subject (l. 2) may be read as Ḥumayd (حُمَيْد);³ it has already been attested as a third name in inscription no. 4 above.

Al-'Ubālī (l. 3)

This is the *nisbah* of the subject and it presumably refers to the Yemeni town of al-'Ubāl, which is situated in the vicinity of Ḥajjah and inhabited by B. al-'Ubālī.⁴ It is evident that there are many persons whose *nisbah* is identical with that of our subject.⁵

Palaeography

This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The form of the initial *alif* (ll. 1, 3) is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The final *dāl* (ll. 1, 2), with a long, slim shaft level with the base line, its upper left end turning sharply upwards into a short barb, is featured in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 30 and 33. The final *'ayn* (l. 2), incised with a triangular head and its tail curved to the right-hand side below the base line, matches the final *'ayn* in inscription no. 14 above. The medial *mīm* is engraved in two styles, viz: rounded, interrupting the base line (l. 1) and semicircular, resting on the base line (l. 2). Both of these have already been attested in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 19 and 26.

1. See e.g. nos. 4, 13, and 32 above.

2. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, II, 841; III, 917 f.; III, 1099; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VII, 474.

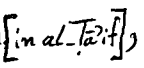
3. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushtabih*, 250.

4. Al-Ḥajarī, *Majmū'*, III, 573; Wilson, *Gazetteer*, 231.

5. Al-Maḥḥafī, *Mu'jam*, 422; al-Wazīr, *al-Ḥalwā*, 254, 353.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Jīm initial (l. 2): the letter *jīm* in the initial position is incised with a slanting line, linked to the end of the base line. This form is identical with the letter *ḥā'* (l. 2) in initial position in this inscription. The structure of these letters is similar to those in a tombstone inscription dated A.H. 276 [A.D. 889–90].¹

Nūn final (l. 2): the letter *nūn* in the final position is curved to the left below the base line. This version is similar to the letter *nūn* in the Mu'āwiyah inscription  dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677–8].²

Yā' final (l. 3): the letter *yā'* in the final position is curved below the base line, consistent with the conventional outline.

1. Littmann, *Inscriptions*, 19 f., no. 24.

2. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 237 f.

Inscription no. 39

Pl. LXXVIII, tab. 24, map 13.5

Location: Jabal Khuluq

Lines: 3

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 1st–3rd/7th–9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 45 x 20 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 4 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised on a brownish rock face of Jabal Khuluq. The text is complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١ . رحمت [sic] الله

٢ . على محمد بن

٣ . سلمه

Translation

1. God's mercy [be]

2. upon Muḥammad b.

3. Salamah

Commentary

This inscription is a common prayer for mercy (ll. 1, 2) which has already been attested in inscription no. 1 above. It displays the name of Muḥammad b. Salamah (ll. 2, 3). Ibn Salamah (l. 3) is the second name of this subject and

possibly refers to the tribe of B. Salamah.¹ It may be alternatively vocalized as Salimah (سَلِمَه).²

Of orthographical interest (l. 1) is the substitution of *tā' ṭawīlah* for *tā' marbūṭah* in the construct: رَحْمَةُ اللهِ = رَحِمْتَ اللهُ. This linguistic modification already occurs in the pre-Islamic inscriptions of Usays³ (A.D. 528) and Ḥarrān⁴ (A.D. 568), and in some of the early Arabic inscriptions, e.g. al-Ḥajrī's inscription,⁵ dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652].

Palaeography

This inscription has some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The form of the initial *alif* (l. 1) is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The final *tā'* (l. 1), lacking a barb to close the end of the letter, is identical to those occurring in previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 34 and 36. The medial *mīm* is incised in two styles, viz: rounded, interrupting the base line (l. 2) and semicircular, resting on the base line (ll. 1, 3). This formation is identical to that of the *mīms* in the preceding inscription, no. 38.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Dāl final (l. 2): the letter *dāl* in the final position is parallel to the base line; its shaft ends with a short stroke, curved upwards. This form is to be found in a tombstone inscription in the Ḥijāz, dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries.⁶

Rā' initial (l. 1): the letter *rā'* in the initial position is rounded in shape. This form is similar to one included in a rock graffito discovered in the vicinity of Najrān,

1. Al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb*, I, 549.

2. Cf. al-Dhahabī, *al-Muṣṭabih*, 365.

3. Al-'Ushsh, "Kitābāt", *al-Abḥāth*, III, 302 f., no. 107, pl. 85.

4. Grohmann, *Paläographie*, 17, fig. b.

5. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930) pl. iii; Kessler, "Inscription", *JRAS* (1970) 4; Smith, "Inscriptions", *The IVth ICHBS*, II, 186.

6. Al-Zayla'ī, *Southern Area*, 291 f., pl. 20, no. 2.

dated A.H. 46 [A.D. 666].¹

'Ayn initial (l. 2): the letter 'ayn in the initial position is simply incised in the form of a short, vertical shaft, resting on the base line. This outline is parallel to the letter 'ayn in a rock graffito, dated to the 1st/7th century.²

Hā' final (ll. 1, 3): the letter hā' in the final position is roundish in shape, resting on the base line. This form is similar to the letter hā' in the Mu'āwiyah / *al-Ṭā'if* inscription, dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 677–8].³

Yā' final (l. 2): the letter yā' in the final position is carved horizontally below the base line. This particular version is featured in an undated rock inscription detected in the vicinity of Medina.⁴

1. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 124, Z-202, pl. xxiii, 2; Schneider, *Lapicide*, 73, table XVII.

2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 137 f., Z-229, pl. xviii, 2.

3. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 237 f.

4. Rostem, *Inscriptions*, 28, pl. ix, d.

Inscription no. 40

Pl. LXXIX, tab. 24, map 13.5

Location: Jabal Khuluq

Lines: 2

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–4th/8th–10th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 70 x 15 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 6 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised, along with another shorter Arabic inscription (no. 41 following), in a reddish, granite rock surface which is oval in shape. This rock has fallen from Jabal Khuluq. The names of the two subjects here are not clear enough to be precisely identified. The text is complete, mostly legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١. برکت [sic] الله ورحمته علا [sic]

٢. ابي (كثير) مولى (حبيب)

Translation

1. God's blessing and mercy on
2. Abū Kathīr the client of Ḥabīb

Commentary

The text here is an invocation of God's blessing and mercy (l. 1). The

formula employed is a paraphrase of a Qur'anic verse.¹ It should be noted that this formula, as it appears in this inscription, is transposed. Rather than *بركة الله* *ورحمته*, the usual sequence is *رحمة الله وبركته/وبركاته* which is attested epigraphically.²

This inscription bears two personal names, Abū Kathīr and Ḥabīb (l. 2), but any reading of them is insubstantiable as their letters are not sharply incised. Since the *nisbahs* of the two subjects are not recorded in this inscription, it would be impossible to identify them. The name of the first subject may alternatively be read Kabīr (كَبِير), Kuthayyir (كُثَيِّر), Kanīz (كَنِيز), or Kunayz (كُنَيْز).³ The name of the second subject is also open to alternative readings: Jubayb (جُبَيْب), Junayb (جُنَيْب), Hubayb (هُبَيْب), Hubayyib (هُبَيَّيب), or Khubayb (خُبَيْب).⁴

Of orthographical interest (l. 1) is the substitution of *tā' ṭawīlah* for *tā' marbūṭah* in the construct *بركة الله = بركت الله* (l. 1). This linguistic phenomenon has already been attested in the previous inscription, no. 39. The second peculiarity in this inscription is the final *alif* in the word '*alā*' (l. 1) which is *mamdūdah* rather than the normal *alif maqṣūrah*. This phenomenon has already been attested in some of the previous inscriptions of this collection.⁵

Palaeography

Certain of the palaeographical characteristics here have already been observed in previous inscriptions, e.g. the initial *alif* (ll. 1, 2), with a short base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The letters *bā'* and *tā'* (ll. 1, 2), incised without any trace of a barb to

1. Cf. e.g. XI: 73.

2. Sharafaddin, "Inscriptions", *Aṭlāl*, I, 69 f., pl. 49, A and B; Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 93 f., Z-150.

3. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Muṣṭabih*, 545.

4. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Muṣṭabih*, 134, 214 f., 256.

5. Cf. e.g. nos. 20, 22, 23, and 33 above.

close the end of the letter, match those occurring in some of the preceding inscriptions, e.g. nos. 6, 12, and 32. The initial *ʿayn* (l. 1), engraved simply in the form of a short, vertical shaft resting on the base line, is identical with that in the former inscription, no. 39. The medial *mīm* (l. 1), rounded in shape and interrupting the base line, is parallel to those in most of the preceding inscriptions, e.g. nos. 6, 12, and 37. The ligature *lām-alif* in final position (l. 1), engraved in a criss-cross shape with a small triangular base resting on the base line, is identical with those occurring in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 20 and 22.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Ḥāʾ initial (ll. 1, 2): the letter *ḥāʾ* in the initial position is incised angularly on the base line. The shape of this letter is similar to that in the Ḥajrī inscription, dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652]¹

Rāʾ medial and final (ll. 1, 2): the letter *rāʾ*, whether in medial or final position, is semicircular in shape. This form is to be detected in a short rock inscription discovered in the vicinity of Mecca, dated A.H. 204 [A.D. 819–20]²

Kāf initial (ll. 1, 2): the letter *kāf* in the initial position is inscribed parallel to the base line with a short, vertical extension attached to its upper end. This structure is featured in a rock inscription, dated A.H. 40 [A.D. 661]³

Hāʾ final (l. 1): the letter *hāʾ* in the final position is roundish in shape and rests on the base line. This version is identical to that of the final *hāʾ* in a rock graffito discovered in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia, dated to the 1st–2nd/7th–8th centuries.⁴

Yāʾ final (l. 2): the shaft of the letter *yāʾ* in the final position is incised in a long, horizontal tail, to the right beneath the previous letter. This form is to be found

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1. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930) pl. iii.
 2. Al-Fiʿr, *Taṭawwur*, 212 f., pl. 34.
 3. Sharafaddin, "Inscriptions", *Aṭlāl*, I, 69 f., pl. 49, A.B.
 4. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 183 f., W-1, fig. 1.

in an epitaph, dated A.H. 242 [A.D. 856].¹

1. Schneider, *Lapicide*, pl. 12, no. 21.

Inscription no. 41

Pl. LXXIX, tab. 25, map 13.5

Type of stone: granite*Location:* Jabal Khuluq*Dimensions of text area:* ca. 35 x 15 cm.*Lines:* 2*Spaces between lines:* ca. 3 cm.*Style:* incised, simple Kufic*Height of alif:* ca. 4 cm.*Date:* undated, probably 2nd-4th/8th-10th cents.*Description*

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised beneath the former inscription, no. 40. The name of the subject is partially effaced. The text is short and crudely executed; it is complete, mostly legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١ . امن مع (تب)

٢ . بالله

Translation

1. Mu'attab has believed

2. in God

Commentary

This inscription contains the usual religious formula regarding confession of faith (ll. 1, 2).

The personal name, which we have tentatively transcribed as Mu'attab

(مُعْتَب), may alternatively be read as Mughīth (مُغِيث),¹ but, in any case, it is not accompanied by further forenames or a *nisbah*, thus rendering any attempt at biographical or genealogical analysis futile. This name has already been attested in inscription no. 7 of this collection.

Palaeography

Certain of the palaeographical features here have already been observed in some of the previous inscriptions. Thus, the initial *alif* (l. 1), with a short base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection; the final *bā'* (l. 1), occurring without a barb to close the end of the letter, is similar to those featured in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 12, 32, and 40; the medial open '*ayn* (l. 1), engraved on the base line without the upper arc, is identical with those in preceding inscriptions, e.g. nos 7, 15, and 36; and the initial *mīm* (l. 1), circular in shape and resting on the base line, has already occurred in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 2, 10, and 11.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Nūn final (l. 1): the letter *nūn* in the final position is carved below the base line; its shape is reminiscent of the classical *rā'*. The structure of this letter is featured in the Qaṣr al-Kharānah inscription, dated A.H. 92 [A.D. 710]²

Hā' final (l. 2): the letter *hā'* in the final position is incised on the base line; its body is approximately triangular in shape. This form is identical with the final *hā'* in a rock inscription discovered in the vicinity of Najrān, dated to the 1st/7th century.³

1. Al-Dhahabī, *al-Mushuabih*, 607 f.

2. Abbot, "Kharāna", *Ars*, XI-XII, fig. I; Smith, "Inscriptions", *The IVth ICHBS*, II, 189, 192.

3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 145 f., Z-250, pl. xviii, 1.

Inscription no. 42

Pl. LXXX, tab. 25, map 13.5

Location: Jabal al-Sarāyā'

Lines: 2

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 3rd-4th/9th-10th cents.

Type of stone: blackish granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 95 x 20 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 12 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 8 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been engraved in a blackish, granite rock face of Jabal al-Sarāyā', which is situated in the vicinity of the city of al-Ṭā'if. It is accompanied by a further incomplete Arabic inscription composed of a single line: 'May God have mercy upon everyone who...' The text is well executed, complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١. يرحم الله على عمرو بن
٢. عمرو وعلى من قال امين

Translation

1. May God have mercy on 'Amr b.
2. 'Amr and upon everyone who says Amen

Commentary

This inscription constitutes a prayer for mercy (ll. 1, 2) and the formula used has already been attested in inscription no. 1 of this collection.

The text clearly displays the name of 'Amr b. 'Amr (ll. 1, 2), but since the *nisbah* of this subject is not included here, it is impossible to derive biographical information from the first two names alone. The name 'Amr enjoyed great

popularity in early times and this has persisted until the present day.

Of orthographical interest is the omission of the medial *alif* in the role of lengthening the vowel in the word *qāla* (l. 2). Such omission has already occurred in some of the previous inscriptions of this collection.¹

Palaeography

This inscription contains some features which have already occurred in some of the previous ones. The initial *mīm* (l. 2), rounded in shape and resting on the base line, is featured in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 2, 15, and 26. The final *mīm* (l. 1), rounded in shape and attached by a stub tail, is parallel to those in some of the preceding inscriptions, e.g. nos. 26 and 27. The final *yā'* (ll. 1, 2), with a tail swept back horizontally to the right-hand side, is similar to those in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 10, 26, and 19.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Rā' final (ll. 1, 2): the letter *rā'* in the final position is small in shape. This version is harmonious with the one which occurs in an undated Abbasid milestone.²

'Ayn initial (ll. 1, 2): the letter *'ayn* in the initial position is engraved with a short shaft arching down to the base line. This form is to be found in a rock inscription dated to the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries.³

Qāf initial (l. 2): the body of the letter *qāf* in the initial position is approximately triangular in shape. This structure is similar to that in a tombstone inscription discovered in the vicinity of Mecca, dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.⁴

Nūn final (ll. 1, 2): the letter *nūn* in the final position is engraved below the base line. This version is similar to that of the final *nūn* in a rock graffito, dated to the

1. Cf. e.g. nos. 1, 6, and 25 above.

2. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 229, pl. xxxviii, 1; *idem*, "Aḥjār", *al-'Uṣūr*, V, 124, pl. 1.

3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 91, Z-146, pl. xiv, 4.

4. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 104 f., no. 12, pl. 34, fig. 14.

1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries,¹ discovered in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia. *Wāw* final (ll. 1, 2): the letter *wāw* in the final position is incised with an approximately triangular head resting on the base line and a short tail extending below it, inclining to the left.

1. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 186 f., W-2, fig. 2.

Inscription no. 43

Pl. LXXXI, tab. 25, map 13.6

Location: Wādī Jalīl

Lines: 4

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 2nd–4th/8th–10th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 45 x 30 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 4 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 7 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been carved in a brownish, granite rock face situated between Wādīs al-Sayl al-Ṣaghīr and Jalīl in the vicinity of Mecca. The text is complete, legible, and well preserved.

Text

١ . اللهم اغفر لايو
٢ . ب بن الوليد بن
٣ . مهران ولكمومنايكن
٤ . جميعا

Translation

1. Oh God pardon Ayyū–
2. b b. al-Walīd b.
3. Mihrān and the believers
4. in their entirety

Commentary

This inscription is a popular prayer for forgiveness (ll. 1, 3, 4), widely used in Arabic inscriptions.

The text bears the name of Ayyūb b. al-Walīd b. Mihrān (ll. 1, 2, 3). As far as we know, this name does not appear in this form in the classical Arabic sources. Considered separately, however, the names Ayyūb, al-Walīd, and Mihrān were well known in early times¹ and, with the exception of Mihrān (l. 3), remain so today.

Of orthographical interest is the omission of the medial *yā'* in the word *al-mu'minīn* (l. 3). This omission is undoubtedly a scribal error committed by the engraver. The body of the word *jamī'*^{an} (l. 4) is largely extended so that it occupies the whole line, a peculiarity which occurs in some inscriptions, e.g. nos. 3 and 5.

Palaeography

The palaeographical peculiarities of this inscription have parallels in some of the previous ones, e.g. the final *bā'* (l. 2), engraved on the base line without a barb to close its left end, matches those in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 36 and 39. The initial *ghayn* (l. 2), with a curved shaft resting on the base line, is parallel to those occurring in inscriptions nos. 2 and 4. The medial *hā'* (ll. 1, 3), with an oval shape intersecting the base line, is identical to the medial *hā'* in inscription no. 4 and to the initial *hā'* in inscriptions nos. 13 and 14 of this collection.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Alif initial (l. 1, 2, 3): the letter *alif* in the initial position is incised in an arc, which intersects the base line. This version is featured in a tombstone inscription

1. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, I, 984, 1780; III, 3509; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 231; VI, 340.

dated to the 1st–3rd/7th–9th centuries.¹

Dāl final (l. 2): the letter *dāl* in the final position is simply engraved, with a short body the upper end of which inclines upwards to the left. This style is similar to that applied in a tombstone inscription, dated to the 3rd–4th/9th–10th centuries.²

Rā' final (ll. 1, 3): the letter *rā'* in the final position is incised with a small body extending below the base line. This structure is parallel to the letter *rā'* in an undated rock inscription discovered on Jabal Usays.³ It also features in the Qaṣr al-Kharānah inscription, dated A.H. 92 [A.D. 710].⁴

'Ayn medial (l. 4): the letter *'ayn* in the medial position has a distinctive outline compared with its counterparts in the former inscriptions of this collection. It appears here as a complete circle, resting on the base line. This structure is similar to the medial *fā'* (l. 1) in this inscription, and to the letter *'ayn* in a tombstone inscription dated A.H. 243 [A.D. 858].⁵

Nūn final (ll. 2, 3): the letter *nūn* in the final position is carved below the base line in an approximate semicircle. This form is to be found in the Ḥajrī inscription, dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652].⁶

Lām-alif initial (l. 1): the letter *lām-alif* in the initial position is incised with an approximately triangular base, the branches of which incline upwards and outwards.

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1. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 84, no. 1, pl. 23, fig. 3.
 2. Al-Bāshā, "Ahammiyyah", *Maṣādir*, 97 f., no. 9, pl. 31, fig. 11.
 3. Al-'Ushsh, "Kitābāt", *al-Abḥāth*, III, 267, no. 50, pl. 31.
 4. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930) pl. iv; Smith, "Inscriptions", *The IVth ICHBS*, II, 189, no. 7, 192.
 5. Schneider, *Lapicide*, pl. ii, no. 3.
 6. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930) pl. iii.

Inscription no. 44

Pl. LXXXII, tab. 25, map 13.6

Location: Wādī al-Kufū

Lines: 4

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 1st-3rd/7th-9th cents.

Type of stone: granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 50 x 20 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 4 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been carved above inscription no. 45 on a blackish granite rock surface situated on the northern bank of Wādī al-Kufū in the vicinity of Mecca. Apart from the first name of the subject (l. 1) where certain letters are not clear enough to be identified, this inscription is complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١. شهد ابو (رزام) بن
 ٢. عبد الله انه لا اله ا
 ٣. لا الله وحده لا شر
 ٤. يك له

Translation

1. Has testified Abū Rizām b.
2. 'Abd Allāh that there is no God, b
3. ut Allāh, the One; He has no part-
4. ner

Commentary

This inscription contains the essential Islamic formula regarding confession

of faith (*al-shahādah*) (ll. 2–4) which is widely used in Arabic epigraphy and has already occurred in some of the preceding inscriptions, e.g. nos 24 and 26 of this collection.

The first name of the subject (l. 1) is problematic. The most plausible reading is as given above. As far as we know, this name, Abū Rizām b. ‘Abd Allāh (ll. 1, 2) does not appear in this form in the classical Arabic sources. Considered separately, however, the names Rizām and ‘Abd Allāh were well known in early times¹ and, with the exception of Rizām, remain so today.

Palaeography

Certain of the palaeographical features here have already been observed in some of the previous inscriptions. Thus, the initial *alif* (ll. 1, 2, 3), with a short base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The final *dāl* (ll. 1, 2, 3), with a long, slim shaft, level with the base line, its upper left end turning sharply upwards into a short barb, is similar to those in previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 30, 33, and 37. The initial ‘*ayn* (l. 2), with a curved shaft resting on the base line, is parallel to the letter *ghayn* in inscription no. 43 of this collection. The medial *hā’* (l. 1), with an oval shape intersecting the base line, is identical to the medial *hā’* in inscriptions nos. 4 and 43 and the initial *hā’* in nos. 13 and 14 of this collection.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Kāf final (l. 4): the letter *kāf* in the final position has no barb or vertical hook to close its end. It has a long horizontal shaft parallel to the base line and its upper end is extended upwards. This structure is similar to the version in the Qaṣr

1. Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 196, 219, 237, 319, 331.

Kharānah inscription, dated A.H. 92 [A.D. 710–11].¹

Hā' final (ll. 2, 3, 4): the letter *hā'* in the final position is incised, on the base line, in an approximately triangular shape. This particular version of this letter is to be found in a rock inscription, dated to the 2nd–3rd/8th–9th centuries, discovered in the vicinity of the city of al-Ṭā'if.²

Lām-alif initial (ll. 2, 3): the letter *lām-alif* in the initial position is incised in a criss-cross pattern. This form is featured on a milestone referring to the improvement of the pilgrim route during the reign of the Umayyad Caliph 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65–80/685–705).³

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1. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930) pl. iv; Smith, "Inscriptions", *The IVth ICHBSH*, II, 189, 192.
 2. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 90, Z-144, pl. xiv, 2.
 3. Sharon, "Inscriptions", *BSOAS*, XXIX, 366, pl. I.

Inscription no. 45

Pl. LXXXII, tab. 26, map 13.6

Location: Wādī al-Kufū

Lines: 4

Style: incised, simple Kufic

Date: undated, probably 1st-3rd/7th-9th cents.

Type of stone: blackish granite

Dimensions of text area: ca. 50 x 18 cm.

Spaces between lines: ca. 5 cm.

Height of alif: ca. 5 cm.

Description

This inscription has no date, diacritical points, or ornamentation. It has been incised beneath the former inscription (no. 44) on a blackish granite rock surface situated on the northern bank of Wādī al-Kufū in the vicinity of Mecca. Except for the first name of the subject (ll. 1, 2) where certain letters are not clear enough to render them legible, this inscription is complete, legible, and relatively well preserved.

Text

١ . اللهم [sic] اغفرا لـبو (ر)
 ٢ . زام) بن عبد الله
 ٣ . [الذنب له يوم يموت
 ٤ . امين

Translation

1. O God, forgive Abū Ri-
2. zām b. 'Abd Allāh
3. for all his sin(s) on the day that he dies
4. Amen

Commentary

Introducing this inscription is the popular religious formula imploring forgiveness: 'O God, forgive... his sins' (ll. 1, 3) and this is attested in a rock inscription of the 1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries.¹ The end of this prayer, 'on the day that he dies' (l. 3), is a literal quotation from the Qur'ān.² The first name of the subject (ll. 1, 2) is problematic, but it is plausible that this inscription, like the previous one, no. 44, bears the name Rizām b. 'Abd Allāh.³

Of orthographical interest is the missing letter *alif* in the ligature *lām-alif* preceding the first name of the subject (l. 1). The medial *bā'* in the word *dhanbih* (l. 3) is also missing. These two errors are to be attributed to the engraver.

It should be noted that if a sense of textual continuity is to be maintained, the letter *alif*, which is incised after the word *ghfr* (l. 1), must be taken as a superfluity. Thus, the word would be read as *ighfir*, otherwise a preposition word, such as *li*, ought to be added before the word *dhanbihi* (l. 3).

Palaeography

Certain of the palaeographical features here have already been observed in some of the previous inscriptions. Thus, the initial *alif* (ll. 1, 2, 4), incised with an additional base stroke forming a right angle, is consistent with its standard outline in this collection. The final *tā'* (l. 3), occurring without a barb or vertical stroke to close the end of the letter, is identical to the body of the letters *bā'* and *thā'* in some of the former inscriptions, e.g. nos. 5, 6, 34, and 36. The final *dāl* (l. 2), with a long, slim body level with the base line, its upper left end turning sharply upwards into a short barb, is identical to the final *dāl* in no. 44 above. The final

1. Cf. e.g. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 1 f., Z-1, pl. xxiii, 1.
 2. Cf. XIX: 15.
 3. See no. 44 above.

nūn (ll. 2, 4), incised below the base line in the shape of a square bracket opening to the left, is attested in some of the previous inscriptions, e.g. nos. 11, 12, and 33.

Further striking features of this inscription are as follows:

Rā' and *zā'* initial (ll. 1, 2): the two letters *rā'* and *zā'* in the initial position are engraved on the base line with a small curved body. This form is similar to that appearing in the Ḥajrī inscription, dated A.H. 31 [A.D. 652].¹

Fā' medial (l. 1): the letter *fā'* in the medial position is incised on the base line with a triangular shape. This structure is similar to those appearing in two rock graffiti discovered in the area of al-Ḥanākiyyah in Saudi Arabia, dated to the 1st-2nd/7th-8th centuries.²

Mīm final (ll. 1, 2, 3): the letter *mīm* in the final position is engraved with a roundish head and a short tail, both of which are resting on the base line. This version is to be found in a tombstone inscription dated to the 2nd-3rd/8th-9th centuries.³

Wāw final (ll. 1, 3): the letter *wāw* in the final position appears with a rounded head and a short tail curved below the base line. This form is similar to the version occurring in the Mu'āwiyah/al-Ṭā'if inscription, dated A.H. 58 [A.D. 777-8].⁴

* * *

Of the forty-five inscriptions composing this study, ten were located occurring independently on their host rocks (nos. 12, 15, 16, 19, 24, 25, 33, 37, & 43), whilst the remainder are on rock-faces which accommodate numerous inscriptions.

In deciding on which of the inscriptions observed *in situ* merited

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1. Hawary, "Monument", *JRAS* (1930) pl. ii.
 2. Donner, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, XLIII, 186 f., W-2, fig. 2; 189 f., W-3, fig. 3.
 3. Grohmann, *Inscriptions*, 25 f., Z-18, pl. iii, 4.
 4. Miles, "Inscriptions", *JNES*, VII, 240, pl. xviii, A.

palaeographical examination, our criterion of selection has relied on potential specimens fulfilling one or more of the following four requirements:

- i) at least two of the subject's names are given (where the subject is an eminent personage or, moreover, his *nisbah* is stated, inclusion in this selection is guaranteed).
- ii) the palaeographical style is elaborate or contains peculiarities.
- iii) the text of the inscription is complete.
- iv) the text of the inscription is extended.

The presence of pre-Islamic inscriptions, attested to earlier in our references to six representatives of pre-Islamic graffiti (cf. nos. 4 & 7) on rock-faces at the edge of the route, is very interesting as this confirms that the Highland Route was in use from pre-Islamic times. A further indicator as to the duration of the popularity of the route is the absence of cursive *naskhī* inscriptions in its vicinity.

Except for nos. 6 and 26, carved in elaborate Kufic, all of the inscriptions reviewed here are in simple Kufic script; and collectively they are datable between the 1st/7th and 5th/11th centuries.

All in all, one can observe six instances in the photographs illustrating our epigraphical research where inscriptions appear to have been engraved by the same hands (cf. pls. XLVII, XLIX-LXVI, LIV-LV, LXI-LXIII, LXVII-LXVIII, LXXXII).

The fact that parallels of certain of the palaeographical features in our selected inscriptions, all culled from the Saudi section of the Yemeni Highland

Pilgrim Route, have been recorded as occurring in inscriptions located in other regions of the Ḥijāz, including Tihāmah, is proof that the populations of all these areas shared a common epigraphical culture. In this connection, the following are the most striking palaeographical features that are attested in our collection and believed to be idiosyncratic to the area of the Ḥijāz:

- i) The letters *alif* and *lām* have been inscribed with a split top like a swallow-tail (cf. e.g. no. 22, pl. LXIII, tab. 20).
- ii) The letters *dāl* and *dhāl* are extended parallel to the base line with their tops half curved upwards (cf. e.g. no. 8, pl. LI, tab. 16; no. 21, pl. LXII, tab. 20).
- iii) The letters *sīn* and *shīn* consist of three parallel indentations which have been incised in acute-angled triangles (cf. e.g. no. 6, pl. XLIX, tab. 16; no. 24, pl. LXIV, tab. 20; no. 25, pl. LXV, tab. 21; no. 26, pl. LXVI, tab. 21).
- iv) The bodies of the letters *ṣād* and *ḍād* are extended along the base line, forming a rectangle which is sealed at its left-end by a vertical stroke in chimney fashion (cf. e.g. no. 2, pl. XLVI, tab. 15; no. 27, pl. LXVII, tab. 21; no. 30, pl. LXX, tab. 22).
- v) The body of the letter *kāf* resembles the outline of the letters *dāl* or *dhāl* (cf. e.g. no. 22, pl. LXIII, tab. 20; no. 23, pl. LXIII, tab. 20).
- vi) The ligature *lām-alif* occurs with a base adorned with inverted crenellation, above which are two semicircular branches, diametrically opposed (cf. e.g. no. 26, pl. LXVI, tab. 21).
- vii) The letter *yā'* is incised below the base line with a loosely descending tail, resembling a swan's neck (cf. e.g. no. 37, pl. LXXVI, tab. 24).

CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this study is a scrutiny of the available documentary material and the results of the present writer's fieldwork concerning the Yemeni Highland pilgrim route.

It is accepted that the Highland route was not an Islamic innovation; its foundation should be linked directly with the pre-Islamic commercial activities of the ancient kingdoms of southern Arabia. Notwithstanding the fact that scientific evidence is so far sparse, it is nonetheless conceivable from the evidence that certain of the commercial settlements along the route in due course acted as pilgrim stations. It is documented that, with the advent of Islam, the route was initially used by the Islamic armies and later by the pilgrim caravans setting out from south Arabia.

The notion is an attractive one that the ultimate decline of the northern part of the route was signalled by the practice of the pilgrims of northern Yemen of following the ancillary Sarawāt route¹ in preference to the present Saudi section of the Highland route. This theory is ventured on the basis of the fact that there is no mention of the present Saudi section of the Highland route in the available historical and geographical sources after the 6th/12th century, whereas from this period onwards reference is made to the Sarawāt route; the works of 'Umārah² (*ob.* 569/1173-4) and Ibn al-Mujāwir³ (*ob.* after 626/1228-9) exemplify this point. Lending further credibility to this view is the fact that from the 6th/12th century

1. Cf. ch. III, pt. ii of this study.

2. *Al-Mufīd*, 69 f.

3. *Al-Mustabṣir*, I, 37 f.

onwards Yemeni (such as al-Janadī¹ [*ob.* 732/1331–2] and Ibn al-Dayba² [*ob.* 943/1536–7]) as well as non-Yemeni (such as al-‘Umarī³ [*ob.* 749/1348–9] and al-Jazīrī⁴ [*ob.* 10th/16th century]) geographers and historians, refer in their writings on the journey from Yemen to Mecca exclusively to either the itinerary recorded by ‘Umārah or the Yemeni coastal route.

The Yemeni and non-Yemeni medieval sources consulted do not elucidate on the reasons underlying the apparent preferences of travellers for following the Sarawāt route instead of the Saudi section of the Highland route from the 6th/12th century onwards. The advantage to be derived by following this ‘new [Sarawāt] route’ is to be found in a comparison of the itineraries of the two alternative routes (the Saudi section and the Sarawāt route). The Sarawāt route leads more directly to Mecca and hence was probably preferred. Reference to Ibn al-Mujāwir’s favourable depiction⁵ of the terrain through which the Sarawāt route cuts would also seem to suggest that the abundant supplies of food and water available along its entire length were instrumental in enticing travellers to follow it.

Leaving aside the ongoing process of identifying the names of places associated with the route, the results of our fieldwork divide into three categories pertaining to separate aspects of the Yemeni Highland pilgrim route:

- i. The identification of the physical features including orientation.
- ii. The identification of certain major facilities including most of the rest-stations.

1. *Al-Sulūk*, II, 479 f.
2. *Qurrah*, I, 325 f.
3. *Al-Abṣār*, II, 341 f.
4. *Durar*, II, 1291 f.
5. *Al-Mustabṣir*, I, 37.

iii. The documentation of the Arabic rock- and milestone-inscriptions.

The documented starting-place of the route is Ṣan‘ā’ in the Yemen – or more precisely Wādī Sha‘ūb/Shu‘ūb – and its terminus is al-Manāqib (in Saudi Arabia), which is situated near the ‘meeting-place’ (*mīqāt*) of al-Sayl al-Kabīr. From Wādī Sha‘ūb the route leads (north-)north-west towards Ṣa’dah, following approximately the same course as the modern motorway connecting Ṣan‘ā’ and Ṣa’dah. Contrasting with the Saudi section, which is largely demarcated and consumed in mountainous terrain, the Yemeni part is demarcated in three areas only: Ghūlat ‘Ajīb, al-Maṣra‘, and al-Faq‘, and, with the exception of three major passes (Ghūlat ‘Ajīb, al-Faq‘, and al-Ḥuwāriyān), traverses relatively flat land.

As far as the structure of the Highland route is concerned, its Saudi section is a remarkable example in the field of road-building in the Arabian Peninsula. Crossing the present Yemeni/Saudi international border, the route maintains the same course as far as Mecca, passing through landscape presenting a variety of topographical features. The most rugged areas are the mountain range of al-Sarāt and the lava-field of al-Buqūm, whereas more even stretches are the vast flat plains, namely al-Qā‘ah, Ṣahr, and Rukbah. Reference to published records of pre-Islamic route structure in the Yemen and Ḥaḍramawt generally, and in the vicinity of the ancient south Arabian kingdom of Qatabān (*ca.* 400 B.C. – 2nd century A.D.) specifically, allows that certain features of construction and design (i.e. paving, levelling, shouldering, and ramping) thus located are repeated on the Saudi section of the route. We may, furthermore, observe that similar engineering methods to those used in building the route were extensively employed during the early Islamic eras in the construction and design of the northern

Arabian pilgrim routes of Kufa-Mecca, Basra-Mecca, and Egypt-Mecca.¹

A thorough examination of the sources at our disposal shows that, compared with the northern pilgrim routes in Arabia, the Highland route, in its entirety, received almost no attention, in terms of developing its facilities and securing its safety, from the central Islamic authorities.² This neglect is very likely attributable to the fact that the Yemen, as a whole, enjoyed neither enduring political unity nor a close relationship with the central Islamic governments during its early and medieval history.³ In the light of this period of neglect and considering that certain of the rest-stations (such as Raydah, Khaywān, Bīshah, and Tabālah) were definitely pre-Islamic in origin, we may conclude that the continued success of the route was in some measure owing to the stability of the pre-Islamic settlements.

Location of pottery and glass sherds constituted a primary objective of the fieldwork. Unhappily, our endeavours to this end, which were confined to a surface examination, were unsuccessful, both regarding the Yemeni and Saudi sections of the Highland route. There is a striking contrast between the lack of material culture along the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim route at ground level and the comparatively rich findings yielded by a recent surface survey along the Darb Zubaydah route.⁴ This is more readily comprehensible if we consider the relative isolation of the Yemen from the central Islamic government in Baghdad during the Abbasid caliphate, a period of immense prosperity. Throughout this era the Zubaydah route constituted a vital corridor between Baghdad and Mecca, and was

1. Cf. ch. V, pt. ii of this study.

2. Cf. ch. III, pt. ii of this study.

3. See al-Mad'aj, *Yemen*, 234 f.

4. Al-Rāshid, *Darb Zubaydah*, 253 f.

provided with a range of sophisticated facilities, attracting prestigious travellers.

As S. al-Rāshid points out,

...the volume of traffic during the early period of the Abbasid caliphs was extremely high so that a single caravan [following the Zubaydah route] might exceed twenty thousand and might carry with it an impressive amount of goods.¹

In comparison with the generous facilities provided along the Zubaydah, Egyptian, and Syrian routes, our fieldwork disclosed that certain of those on the Highland route were inadequate, both in terms of their number and quality of service.

The water resources discovered,² many of which are fully operational today, undoubtedly determined the sites of the pilgrim stations. They are classified into four categories:

- i. Water-tanks (sing. *birkah*).
- ii. Rain-water ponds (sing. *mājil*).
- iii. Wells (sing. *bi'r*).
- iv. Permanent water-flows (sing. *ghayl*).

We have remarked that the Yemeni section was predominantly served by the first two types of water resources, whilst the third is identified as a common feature of the Saudi section. The fourth type occurs on both sections of the route. One might attribute the absence of water-tanks on the Saudi section of the route to the conversely large number of wells.

A great number of minor and major rest-stations have been identified,

1. *Ibid.*, 330.

2. Cf. ch. IV of this study.

some of which nowadays act as main towns, whereas the remainder are presently archaeological sites. In this connection, it should be stressed that pilgrim stations (such as Dhū Qīn, al-Mahjarah, Yabambam, and al-Jasdā') recorded in our sources have not yet been found; we do know, however, that certain stations (such as al-Qurayhā' and al-Futuq) were destroyed by the nomads.¹

Although beyond the focus of this study, it must be acknowledged that pre-Islamic inscriptions, including rock-drawings of human and animal figures, were recorded in the course of the fieldwork completed on the southern part of the Saudi section.² The very presence of these pre-Islamic inscriptional relics confirms the fact that the route was used by the south Arabian commercial caravans. Undated Arabic rock- and milestone-inscriptions were also documented by the wayside of the Saudi section of the route. Missing from our collection of rock-inscriptions are ones which were inscribed on tombstones to serve as epitaphs, although this does not rule out the possibility that some of the rock-inscriptions may have been composed in the spirit of an epitaph in respect of pilgrims who had died and were thus buried *en route*. This consideration is a plausible one as there can be no doubt that mortalities occurred among the pilgrims.³ We were also unable to discover any example of foundational inscriptions. Our comprehensive analysis of this collection points to the conclusion that the Highland route enjoyed great popularity between the 1st/7th and 5th/11th centuries, which finding derives further currency from the number of inscriptions observed (i.e. more than three-hundred).

1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 258.

2. See tab. 5.

3. See e.g. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 424, 434, 437. See also tab. 3.

some of which nowadays act as main towns, whereas the remainder are presently archaeological sites. In this connection, it should be stressed that pilgrim stations (such as Dhū Qīn, al-Mahjarah, Yabambam, and al-Jasdā') recorded in our sources have not yet been found; we do know, however, that certain stations (such as al-Qurayhā' and al-Futuq) were destroyed by the nomads.¹

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1. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 258.

2. See tab. 5.

3. See e.g. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 424, 434, 437. See also tab. 3.

APPENDIX I

Four Indexes relating to the Collection of the Arabic Rock-Inscriptions

Index of Locations and Map References

<u>Inscription</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
1	Jabal Qahrat al-‘Anz	17° 00' 17° 30'	43° 30' 44° 00'
2	Jabal Qahrat al-‘Anz	17° 00' 17° 30'	43° 30' 44° 00'
3	Jabal Qahrat al-‘Anz	17° 00' 17° 30'	43° 30' 44° 00'
4	Jabal Qahrat al-‘Anz	17° 00' 17° 30'	43° 30' 44° 00'
5	Jabal al-Rākibah	17° 00' 17° 30'	43° 30' 44° 00'
6	Jabal al-Rākibah	17° 00' 17° 30'	43° 30' 44° 00'
7	Jabal al-Rākibah	17° 00' 17° 30'	43° 30' 44° 00'
8	Wādī ‘Amdān	17° 00' 17° 30'	43° 30' 44° 00'
9	Pass of al-‘Irqah	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 30' 44° 00'
10	Pass of al-‘Irqah	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 30' 44° 00'
11	Pass of al-‘Irqah	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 30' 44° 00'
12	Wādī Jawāl	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 30' 44° 00'
13	Pass of al-Manḍaj - al-Maṣlūlah I.	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 30' 44° 00'
14	Pass of al-Manḍaj - al-Maṣlūlah I.	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 30' 44° 00'
15	Pass of al-Manḍaj - al-Maṣlūlah I.	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 30' 44° 00'
16	Wādī al-Mabraḥ	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 30' 44° 00'
17	Wādī Ithlah	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 00' 43° 30'
18	Wādī Ithlah	17° 30' 18° 00'	43° 00' 43° 30'
19	Pass of al-Muḍābiyyah	18° 00' 18° 30'	43° 00' 43° 30'
20	Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ	18° 00' 18° 30'	43° 00' 43° 30'
21	Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ	18° 00' 18° 30'	43° 00' 43° 30'
22	Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ	18° 00' 18° 30'	43° 00' 43° 30'
23	Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ	18° 00' 18° 30'	43° 00' 43° 30'
24	Jabal Umm al-Qaṣaṣ	18° 00' 18° 30'	43° 00' 43° 30'

<u>Inscription</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
25	Settlement of Banāt Ḥarb – Qaryat al-Ma'din	19° 00' 19° 30'	42° 30' 43° 00'
26	Wādī Ranūm – Ibn Sarār	19° 30' 20° 00'	42° 30' 43° 00'
27	Wādī Ranūm – Ibn Sarār	19° 30' 20° 00'	42° 30' 43° 00'
28	Wādī Ranūm – Ibn Sarār	19° 30' 20° 00'	42° 30' 43° 00'
29	Wādī Ranūm – Ibn Sarār	19° 30' 20° 00'	42° 30' 43° 00'
30	Wādī Ranūm – Ibn Sarār	19° 30' 20° 00'	42° 30' 43° 00'
31	Wādī Ranūm – Ibn Sarār	19° 30' 20° 00'	42° 30' 43° 00'
32	Wādī Ranūm – Ibn Sarār	19° 30' 20° 00'	42° 30' 43° 00'
33	Wādī Uḡar	19° 30' 20° 00'	42° 30' 43° 00'
34	Wādī al-Quḡayf	20° 00' 20° 30'	42° 00' 42° 30'
35	Wādī al-Quḡayf	20° 00' 20° 30'	42° 00' 42° 30'
36	Wādī al-Quḡayf	20° 00' 20° 30'	42° 00' 42° 30'
37	Wādī al-Khāyī'	20° 00' 20° 30'	42° 00' 42° 30'
38	Jabal Khuluq	21° 00' 21° 30'	41° 00' 41° 30'
39	Jabal Khuluq	21° 00' 21° 30'	41° 00' 41° 30'
40	Jabal Khuluq	21° 00' 21° 30'	41° 00' 41° 30'
41	Jabal Khuluq	21° 00' 21° 30'	41° 00' 41° 30'
42	Jabal al-Sarāyā'	21° 00' 21° 30'	40° 30' 41° 00'
43	Wādī Jalīl	21° 30' 22° 00'	40° 00' 40° 30'
44	Wādī al-Kufū	21° 30' 22° 00'	40° 00' 40° 30'
45	Wādī al-Kufū	21° 30' 22° 00'	40° 00' 40° 30'

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III	159	5	III	101	27
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al-Ḥurfī	الحُرْفِي, or	8
al-Ḥuraqī	الحُرْقِي, or	8
al-Khurufī	الخُرْفِي, or	8
al-Kharaqī	الخَرْقِي, or	8
al-Khiraqī	الخِرْقِي	8
al-Jurashī	الجُرَاشِي, or	32
al-Ḥurusī	الحُرُوسِي, or	32
al-Ḥarasī	الحَرَسِي, or	32
al-Ḥarashī	الحَرَشِي, or	32
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al-Hakamī	الحَكَمِي	19
al-Daylamī	الدَّيْلَمِي	1
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APPENDIX II

A Glossary of Arabic Words and Terms

The following list of definitions has been compiled in order to render the meaning of the respective Arabic words and terms as they occur in the text of this study. The list follows the order of the Roman alphabet.

<i>abnā'</i> (pl.)	Sons; the Persian community in the Yemen
<i>ahl</i> (pl.)	people, folk (of...); individual tribesmen
<i>aḥwal</i> (sing.)	squint-eyed person
<i>ajnād</i> (pl.)	see <i>mikhilāf</i> below
<i>'alam</i> (sing.)	cairn
<i>'ām</i> (sing.)	year
<i>'ām al-fīl</i> (sing.)	Elephant Year, i.e. the year, generally held to be A.D. 570, in which the unsuccessful military campaign of the Ethiopian governor of the Yemen, Abrahah al-Ashram, against Mecca was launched. The same year marks the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad
<i>amīr al-ḥajj</i> (sing.)	the emir of a pilgrim caravan; the person who leads the pilgrim ceremony in the holy city of Mecca
<i>anṣār</i> (pl.)	supporters, the people of Medina after having offered their support to the Prophet
<i>'aqabah</i> (sing.)	pass; col, or natural obstacle, such as a hillock
<i>'arrādah</i> (sing.)	catapult
<i>athl</i> (pl.)	tamarisks

<i>'ayn</i> (sing.)	natural water spring
<i>bādiyah</i> (sing.)	nomads, bedouin
<i>barīd</i> (sing.)	postal service, postal stage (normally 12 miles apart)
<i>basmalah</i> (sing.)	opening invocation of God's name
<i>bī'r</i> (sing.)	lined well
<i>bilād</i> (sing.)	country, territory, land (of...)
<i>birkah</i> (sing.)	water cistern/tank, pool
<i>dā'ī</i> (sing.)	religious reformer; missionary, promulgator, propagandist
<i>dabbābah</i> (sing.)	armoured vehicle
<i>dār</i> (sing.)	abode; country, village
<i>darb</i> (sing.)	caravan trail; road; route, track
<i>ḡalaj</i> (sing.)	natural stream (Omani dialect)
<i>faqīh</i> (sing.)	jurist; theologian, person versed in Islamic jurisprudence
<i>farsakh</i> (sing.)	parasang: Persian unit of distance (equivalent to <i>ca.</i> 3 miles)
<i>fīl</i> (sing.)	elephant

<i>ghawr</i> (sing.)	depression, hollowed plain
<i>ghayl</i> (sing.)	water flowing permanently on the surface of the ground (Yemeni dialect)
<i>ḥadīth</i> (sing.)	Prophetic Tradition
<i>ḥafā'ir</i> (pl.)	ancient dug wells (South Arabian dialect)
<i>ḥajj</i> (sing.)	pilgrimage, the official Muslim pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca
<i>ḥarrah</i> (sing.)	lava-field, volcanic country
<i>ḥaram</i> (sing.)	sanctuary, sacred place
<i>ḥawḍ</i> (sing.)	water basin/trough of varying shape, usually smaller than a <i>birkah</i> (q.v.)
<i>hijrah</i> (sing.)	the journey of the Prophet Muḥammad, with some of his Companions, from Mecca to Medina. This event marks the commencement of the Muslim calendar and corresponds with the year A.D. 622
<i>ibn</i> (sing.)	son (of...)
<i>ibnat</i> (sing.)	daughter of...
<i>iqlīm</i> (sing.)	see <i>mikhlāf</i> below
<i>jabal</i> (sing.)	mountain
<i>jāddah</i> (sing.)	inland route; path; way, road

<i>jāmi'</i> (sing.)	great mosque
<i>jazzār</i> (sing.)	butcher
<i>jidār al-qiblah</i> (sing.)	the front wall of a mosque which is orientated towards Mecca
<i>khabt</i> (sing.)	salt marsh; salina, saline depression
<i>kharāj</i> (sing.)	annual tribute
<i>khurūj</i> (sing.)	open declaration of one's religious or political dogma
<i>khutbah</i> (sing.)	religious address; sermon, speech
<i>kiswah</i> (sing.)	the hanging of the <i>Ka'bah</i>
<i>kunyah</i> (sing.)	nickname; sobriquet, agnomen (consisting of <i>Abū</i> or <i>Umm</i> followed by the name of the son)
<i>kūrah</i> (sing.)	see <i>mikhlāf</i> below
<i>kurā'</i> (sing.)	the extreme fringe of a lava-field
<i>ma'din</i> (sing.)	mine
<i>madfa'</i> (sing.)	wall built to deflect rainwater into a constructed water-cistern/tank (<i>birkah</i> , <i>q.v.</i>)
<i>madrajah</i> (sing.)	difficult pass situated in a mountain region
<i>maghrabah</i> (sing.)	pass; col (Yemeni dialect)
<i>maḥajjah</i> (sing.)	road; route; way, path (<i>jāddah</i> , <i>q.v.</i>)
<i>mahdī</i> (sing.)	messiah, mahdi

<i>maḥmal</i> (sing.)	palanquin: a richly decorated litter perched on a camel
<i>maʿjil</i> (sing.)	pool; pond, puddle (Yemeni dialect)
<i>manār</i> (sing.)	high beacon-tower
<i>manhal</i> (sing.)	watering-station; spring, pool
<i>manjanīq</i> (sing.)	mangonel
<i>manqal</i> (sing.)	mountain road, short-cut route
<i>manzil</i> (sing.)	halt; rest-station; stopping-place, camp site
<i>marḥalah</i> (sing.)	one day's journey (equalling one stage, i.e. <i>ca.</i> 24 km.)
<i>maṣnaʿah</i> (sing.)	term applied to a <i>birkah</i> , literally construction
<i>maṭraḥ</i> (sing.)	travellers' halting-place (Yemeni dialect)
<i>mawḍiʿ</i> (sing.)	place; site, locality
<i>mawlā</i> (sing.)	patron, client, master, lord (of...)
<i>mūlaṭ</i> (sing.)	animals' feeding-place
<i>miḥrāb</i> (sing.)	prayer niche, recess in the centre of the front wall of a mosque (see <i>jidār al-qiblah</i>) indicating the direction of Mecca
<i>mikhhlāf</i> (sing.)	geographical term mainly used by the Yemeni geographers and historians to denote a region (<i>iqlīm</i>); it is roughly synonymous with the following terms: <i>ajnād</i> (used in Syria) and <i>kūr</i> (used in Iraq)
<i>mīl</i> (sing.)	Arab mile, equal to 2 km.

<i>minbar</i> (sing.)	platform; pulpit in a mosque in which the imam sermonizes; it is also used by the classical Arab geographers to define a place which is provided with a congregational mosque, or local governor meeting-place; designated pilgrim station at which pilgrims must make a short halt in order to prepare themselves before proceeding to the holy city of Mecca
<i>miqāt</i> (sing.)	
<i>miṣfāt</i> (sing.)	filter; settling-tank/cistern attached to a constructed water container, such as a <i>birkah</i>
<i>mukūs</i> (pl.)	tax dues
<i>musnad</i> (sing.)	the ancient script of South Arabia
<i>nakhīl</i> (pl.)	palm-trees
<i>naqīl</i> (sing.)	pass, col (see also ' <i>aqabah</i> , <i>maghrabah</i> , and <i>manqal</i> above)
<i>nisbah</i> (sing.)	family's name, surname
<i>qā'</i> (sing.)	vast flat plain, hollow where rainwater stagnates
<i>qāḍī al-mahmal</i> (sing.)	the official judge of a pilgrim palanquin
<i>qalīb</i> (sing.)	unlined dug well (cf. <i>bi'r</i>)
<i>qanāt</i> (sing.)	aqueduct; underground canal, passage through which water flows

<i>qānūn</i> (sing.)	canon; law regulations, legislation
<i>qaṣr</i> (sing.)	palace; fort, castle
<i>qiblah</i> (sing.)	the direction of Mecca to which Muslims turn in praying (cf. <i>mihrāb</i> above)
<i>rakb al-barr</i> (sing.)	travelling convoy, caravan which follows an overland route
<i>rajaz</i> (sing.)	a poetical metre (cf. <i>urjūzah</i> below)
<i>sabīl</i> (sing.)	permanent drinking place supplied for the public as an act of charity (sing. <i>ṣadaqah</i> , <i>q.v.</i> below); route, path, way, road
<i>sādah</i> (pl.)	the members of a noble family whose genealogy can be traced back to the House of the Prophet
<i>ṣadaqah</i> (sing.)	alms; almsgiving, charitable donation of money or goods to the poor or needy
<i>ṣāhib al-barīd</i> (sing.)	post-master, the official in charge of the postal service
<i>samsarah</i> (sing.)	khan; roofed chamber; inn with a large courtyard, caravanserai (Yemeni dialect)
<i>sanjaq</i> (sing.)	(from Ottoman Turkish:) a standard, flag; then an administrative district in the Ottoman Empire
<i>saqīf</i> (sing.)	roofed place (cf. <i>samsarah</i> above; Yemeni dialect)

<i>sariyyah</i> (sing.)	military detachment, raiding party
<i>sayl</i> (sing.)	flood, torrential rain
<i>sha'ib</i> (sing.)	dry water course, wadi, valley (cf. <i>wādī</i> below)
<i>shahādah</i> (sing.)	creed
<i>shaykh</i> (sing.)	sheik or sheikh; leader; chief, prominent figure in either religious affairs or social life
<i>sūq</i> (sing.)	market-place, group of shops
<i>ṭalh</i> (pl.)	acacia trees, self-grown wild thorn trees and bushes
<i>ṭarīq</i> (sing.)	road, route, path, way, highway, track, trail (cf. <i>darb</i> , <i>jāddah</i> , <i>maḥajjah</i> , and <i>sabīl</i> above)
<i>tubba'</i> (sing.)	any of the ancient Ḥimyarite (Sabaean) rulers of South Arabia in the pre-Islamic era
<i>'umrah</i> (sing.)	lesser pilgrimage (cf. <i>hajj</i> above) to Mecca
<i>'uqūd</i> (pl.)	arches
<i>urjūzah</i> (sing.)	sets of poetical verses composed in accordance with the <i>rajaz</i> metre
<i>'uṣbah</i> (sing.)	travelling party (Yemeni dialect)
<i>'uzlah</i> (sing.)	sub-district, allotment (Yemeni dialect)
<i>wādī</i> (sing.)	wadi, dry water course (cf. <i>sha'ib</i> above)
<i>wilāyah</i> (sing.)	governorship

ẓāhir (sing.)

plateau, table land (Yemeni dialect)

APPENDIX III

Index of Place Names

The following geographical index, containing toponyms written in Arabic, is compiled in accordance with the order of the Arabic alphabet. Certain commonly recurring words, such as Bi'r, Jabal, Wādī, and 'Aqabah, which usually precede specific place names, are omitted in this index.

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