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## Two Inscriptions Commemorating the Construction of a Mountain Pass, by Yada"ab Dhubyân son of Shahr Mukarrib of Qatabân, and by the Qayls of the Madhî Tribe

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**TWO INSCRIPTIONS COMMEMORATING THE CONSTRUCTION  
OF A MOUNTAIN PASS, BY YADA‘AB DHUBYĀN SON  
OF SHAHR *MUKARRIB* OF QATABĀN, AND BY THE *QAYLS*  
OF THE MADĤĪ TRIBE<sup>1</sup>**

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In May of 2006 the Franco-Yemeni mission composed of Iwona Gajda, Khaled al-Hajj and Jérémie Schiettecatte surveyed the Upper Yafi‘ (Yafi‘ al-‘Ulya) and the region of al-Bayḏā’, in southern Yemen.

Thanks to information provided by Khaled al-Hajj, we discovered near ‘Aqaba Bura‘ (the Bura‘ Pass), next to Ra’s Bura‘ (the Bura‘ Summit), southeast of al-Bayḏā’, two inscriptions commemorating the construction of a mountain road (fig. 1).

From Ra’s Bura‘<sup>5</sup> (at an altitude of about 2100 m) we walked down a mountain pass for some 700 m (150 m lower in altitude) until we reached an inscribed rock face overlooking the valley beneath (the inscriptions are situated at an altitude of 1949 m, at a latitude of 13,89643°N and a longitude of 45,69061°E [UTM, WGS 84]). Remains of paving stones are still in place along this part of the pass. It continues downward in the direction of the wādī Bura‘<sup>6</sup> (fig. 2-3). According to the inhabitants, the pass leads from Yafi‘ to the coastal plain and it was used by merchants until some thirty years ago.

The first text is a royal inscription. It is accompanied by an inscription of *qayls* (“princes”) of the Madĥī tribe who supervised the construction of the mountain road (fig. 4).

These texts are interesting in many respects. First, in terms of the geographical situation, they are the most southwestern of all the Qatabānian inscriptions known thus far.

Dated to the reign of Yada‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr *mukarrib* of Qatabān (probably in the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC), they illustrate the important extension of the kingdom of Qatabān at that time, and prove that the Qatabānian influence reached as far as the coastal plain in this period. Thus, they confirm the testimony of Strabo who quotes Eratosthenes (writing in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC): “Cattabanians, whose territory extends down to the straits

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<sup>5</sup> In order to reach ‘Aqaba Bura‘, we left the asphalt road at al-Ma’zan, and followed a trail eastward for twenty minutes.

<sup>6</sup> The wādī Bura‘ goes further into the sayl al-Bayḏā’ where two monotheistic inscriptions from the first half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD were discovered a few years ago by Khaled al-Hajj and Fahmi al-Aghbari and copied also by Christain Robin (these inscriptions will be published in *Raydān*, 8).

and the passage across the Arabian Gulf” (Strabo, 16. 4. 2).

The second text sheds new light on the political and social organization of the South Arabian highlands since its authors use the title of *qayl* (“prince”) at that early period. It proves the existence of the *qiyāla* system in the southern part of the highlands as early as the reign of one of the first *mukarribs* of Qatabān.

The title of *qayl* occurs in the northern highlands at the beginning of the period of the kings of Saba’ (which corresponds roughly to the same period). This title was thus known in the northern and in the southern highlands in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC, prior to its wider distribution beginning in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

### Inscription ‘Aqaba Bura’ 1 (fig. 5-6)

H: 29 cm, W: 94 cm, Height of the letters: 5 cm.

#### Transcription:

- 1 *Yd‘b Dbyn bn S<sup>2</sup>hr mkrb Qtbn w-kl wld‘m w-‘ws‘n*
- 2 *w-Kḥd w-Dhs‘m w-Tbnw w-kl Yrf’ ‘s<sup>2</sup>m-s‘ [w-‘ym]n-s‘ bkr ‘*
- 3 *nby w-Ḥwkm d-‘mr w-s<sup>2</sup>mr qzr qyn r[s<sup>2</sup>w]‘mm s<sup>3</sup>ḥr w-rby ‘*
- 4 *m Ry‘n b‘l zrbt ltk[ b-d]bḥtm w-b-‘m ‘ḍfrm b-byt Qn*
- 5 *y Hwrn bny w-wzl w-brr mnqln Br‘m b-mns<sup>2</sup> Maḍḥym b-‘tt*
- 6 *r w-b-‘m w-b ‘nby w-b-ḍt Ṣntm w-b-ḍt Ḍhrn*

#### Translation:

- 1 Yada‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr *mukarrib* of Qatabān and of all the Walad ‘Amm, Awsān,
- 2 Kaḥad, Dahasum and Tubanū and of all the *Yrf’*, those of the north and those of the south, the first born of
- 3 Anbay and of Ḥawkum, he who orders and decrees, the tax collector, administrator, eponymous priest, wizard and priest of
- 4 ‘Amm Ray‘ān, lord of the landed properties, in charge of sacrifices and with ... (?) in the temple of *Qny*
- 5 *Hwrn* constructed, smoothed and opened up the Bura‘um pass with the mobilization of Maḍḥiyum. By ‘Athtar,
- 6 ‘Amm, Anbay, dhāt-Ṣantum and dhāt-Ḍahrān

#### Commentary:

1. 1-2, In the first part of his long series of titles, the sovereign, *mukarrib*, enumerates the names of peoples or tribes and regions under his control; this part of the title is very close to that found in another inscription of the same sovereign, CSAI I, 28/1-5: *Yd‘b Dbyn bn S<sup>2</sup>hr mkrb Qtbn w-kl wld‘m w-‘ws‘n w-Kḥd w-Dhs‘m w-Tbnw w-Yrf’ ‘ymn w-‘s<sup>2</sup>mn*. Most of these ethnic and geographic names appear in the titles of *mukarribs* or kings of Qatabān in other inscriptions<sup>7</sup>: Qatabān, the territory of “descendants of ‘Amm”

<sup>7</sup> See the title of the same *mukarrib* in the inscription CSAI I, 21; the title of *mukarrib* Yada‘ab

(which included the territories of Maḏḥī, Radmān and Khawlān), Awsān, Kaḥad (in the region of Dathīna), Dahasum (the region of Yāfi‘) and Tubanū (the wādī Tuban). However, the *mukarrīb* titles in the two inscriptions of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr (CSAI I, 28 and the inscription presented here, ‘Aqaba Bura‘ 1) differ from the longer titles found in other inscriptions, in mentioning one more tribe under the *mukarrīb*’s dominion, “*Yrf*”, those of the north and those of the south” (*w-kl Yrf*’ ’*s*<sup>2</sup>*m-s*<sup>1</sup> [*w-’ym*]n-s<sup>1</sup>, in ‘Aqaba Bura‘ 1; *w-Yrf*’ ’*ymnn w-’s*<sup>2</sup>*mn*, in CSAI I, 28/4-5). The exact location of *Yrf*’ is not known. *Yrf*’ also occurs as the name of a tribe in DAI Bar‘ān 2000-1, which dates to the reign of Sha‘arum Awtar, king of Saba’ and dhū-Raydān (3<sup>rd</sup> century AD); in that text *Yrf*’ is mentioned among several tribes, after Khawlān and Ash‘arān (the latter lived in the southern part of the coastal plain of the Red Sea). N. Nebes has proposed that *Yrf*’ could be situated southwest of the other territories mentioned in the title of *mukarrīb* of Qatabān, west of the wādī Tuban, as far as the Strait of Bāb al-Mandab (2004, p. 282-283 and n. 59).

1. 2-5, *bkr ’nby w-Hwkm d-’mr w-s<sup>2</sup>mr qzr qyn r[s<sup>2</sup>w ]’mm s<sup>3</sup>hr w-rby ’m Ry’n b’l zrbt ltk[ b-d]bḥtm w-b-’m ’ḏfrm b-byt Qny Hwrn*: In the second part of his series of titles the *mukarrīb* enumerates his religious and administrative distinctions; cf. also CSAI I, 18/3 and CSAI I, 26/5 (both texts from the reign of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im son of Shahr); CSAI I, 38 (from the reign of Yada‘‘ab Ghaylān son of Fara‘karib) and CSAI I, 116 (from the reign of Shahr Hilāl Yuhan‘im son of Yada‘‘ab).

1. 3, *d-’mr w-s<sup>2</sup>mr*: A. Avanzini translates “the one of *’mr* and *S<sup>2</sup>mr*” (CSAI, p. 66). F. Bron compares *s<sup>2</sup>mr* with Ge‘ez *šamra*, “*vouloir, juger digne, approuver*” and renders this formula as “celui qui ordonne et qui juge digne” (Bron 1999, p. 69). We suggest an interpretation close to that of Bron. *’mr* probably means “order, command” as Bron proposed; *s<sup>2</sup>mr* could be compared with the Arabic *šimir*: “a strong order” and could be translated as “decree”.

*qzr*: “tax collector”.

*qyn*: “administrator”.

*r[s<sup>2</sup>w ]’mm*: Cf. CSAI I, 18/2 (*rs<sup>2</sup>w ’mm tntm*): “eponymous priest for the second year”. According to A. Avanzini, *’mm* could be understood as another orthography of the name of the god *’m* (CSAI, p. 53-54), but the name of the god *’Amm* (*’m*) is never written with the orthography *’mm*. We therefore adopt the interpretation proposed by F. Bron: “eponymous priest” (1987, p. 25). Bron’s arguments are convincing: the word *’mm* can be compared with the Sabaic *’wm* and with the Arabic *’ām*. Moreover the form *’mm* occurs in a fragmentary inscription from Barāqish, B-M 196 (= M 168 = RÉŠ 2948) B/2: *w-l-yṭb ’m-s<sup>1</sup> rs<sup>2</sup>wn ’mm* and A/2: *r]s<sup>2</sup>wn kwn ’s<sup>1</sup>d ’mm*; the interpretation of these passages is difficult, nevertheless, in this Minaic inscription the word *’mm* is certainly not the name of the Qatabānian god *’Amm*.

1. 3-4, *rby*: A. Avanzini proposes to interpret *rby* as “a sacerdotal order” and translates it “priest” (cf. CSAI, p. 24, 76).

Dhubyān Yuhan‘im son of Shahr (who could be the same sovereign, see *infra*) in the inscriptions CSAI I, 18, CSAI I, 19 and CSAI I, 26. See also the inscriptions whose authors use the title of king of Qatabān: CSAI I, 5 (of Shahr Ghaylān son of Abshibām); CSAI I, 9 and CSAI I, 14 (of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhargib son of Shahr).

l. 4, *b'l zrbt*: F. Bron translates this formula “maître des propriétés” (1999, p. 69), A. Avanzini as “lord of land properties” (CSAI, p. 66).

*ltk*: F. Bron proposes comparing this word with Akkadian *latāku*: “essayer, éprouver” or with Syriac *lātek*: “propre à” (1999, p. 69, 72). A. Avanzini also compares it with Akkadian *latāku*, in the sense of “to check that a given number or measure is right” and suggests that the king decided the number and the moment for animal sacrifices (CSAI, p. 65-66).

*'ḏfrm*: the meaning of this word is not clear. F. Bron suggests comparing it with Arabic *ḏafr*, *ḏafrat* “tresse, natte de cheveux” or with Hebrew *ṣəpīrāh* “guirlande, couronne” and translating the passage *b'l zrbt ltk b-ḏbḥtm w-b-'m 'ḏfrm* as “maître des propriétés acquises (?) au prix d'un sacrifice et avec des couronnes (?)” (1999, p. 69, 72). A. Avanzini compares *'ḏfrm* with Hebrew *ṣāpīr* and with Akkadian *ṣupru* “he-goat”, and translates “animals (for sacrifices)” and renders the passage as “lord of the land properties, in charge of sacrifices and of animals (for sacrifices)” (CSAI, p. 65-66).

l. 4-5, *b-byt Qny Hwrn*: A. Avanzini considers *byt* as “temple” and *Qny Hwrn* as a divine name, “the divine Owner of *Hwrn*” (CSAI, p. 66). This interpretation seems probable.

l. 5, *brr* occurs among other verbs pertaining to the construction of a road in two other inscriptions from the reign of this same ruler, CSAI I, 21/3 (the Mabilaqa pass) and CSAI I, 28/5 (the *Zrm* pass). This verb has been rendered as “open up (a road)”. It is used to express an action of the king in the royal inscriptions, but it does not occur in the inscriptions of the sovereign's servants who supervised these constructions (‘Aqaba Bura’ 2; CSAI I, 33 and CSAI I, 28/9-11). It is possible that the verb *brr* had a solemn, symbolic connotation and was thus used only in direct connection with the sovereign.

*Br'm*: This toponym has been preserved in the names of ‘Aqaba Bura’ (the Bura’ Pass), Ra’s Bura’ (the Bura’ Summit) and in the name of the valley, the wādī Bura’.

*b-mns<sup>2</sup> Mḏhym*: Cf. the expression *b-mns<sup>2</sup> Qṭbn* “with the mobilization of Qatabān” that occurs in several royal inscriptions (CSAI I, 21/5; CSAI I, 5/2, etc.).

*Mḏhym*: See also ‘Aqaba Bura’ 2/2. The name of the important tribe of Maḏḥī (Maḏḥiyum) is mentioned in the legal text inscribed on the southern gate of Tamna’ by the same sovereign Yada’ab Dhubyān son of Shahr among the political entities and tribes composing the kingdom of Qatabān (cf. CSAI I, 204/2).

## Inscription ‘Aqaba Bura’ 2 (fig. 7-8)

Inscribed beneath ‘Aqaba Bura’ 1 (and in the same paleographic style).

H: 21 cm, W: 80 cm, Height of the letters: 5 cm.

### Transcription:

- 1 'b'm bn Lḥy'tt ḏ-Rḥbtm w-Ḍbm bn 'mkrb
- 2 ḏ-'lz qylw s<sup>2</sup>'bn Mḏhym s'[..]ymyw[..]'n ḏ-Tymm
- 3 'bd mlkn tqdmw w-ḥ[rg] s<sup>2</sup>'bn R'nn b-'s<sup>2</sup>q w-mbny
- 4 w-mwzl mnqln Br'm [b-t](ḥ)rg mr'-s'm Yd'ḥ'ḏ Dbyn
- 5 [bn] S<sup>2</sup>hr mlk Q[ṭbn]

*Translation:*

- 1 Abī‘amm son of Laḥay‘athat dhū-Raḥbatum and *Dbm* son of ‘Ammkarib
- 2 *d-‘lz* the two *qayls* of the tribe of Maḍḥī [... ...] *d-Tymm*
- 3 king’s vassal directed and supervised the tribe of Ru‘anān during the cutting, constructing and smoothing
- 4 of the Bura‘um pass on the command of their lord Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān
- 5 son of Shahr king of Qatabān

*Commentary:*

1. 2, *d-Tymm*: This family or clan name is also attested in funerary stelae from Ḥayd ibn ‘Aqīl, *CSAII*, 624; *CSAII*, 722 and possibly *CSAII*, 947.

1. 3, *R‘nn*: The tribe of *R‘nn*, a former enemy of Qatabān, was, at the time of this inscription, already a part of the Qatabanian dominion. The name *R‘nn* also occurs in the inscription of Jabal al-‘Awd, *CSAII*, 203/4 which mentions the war between the kings of Saba‘, Yada‘īl Bayyīn, Sumhū‘alī Yanūf and Yatha‘‘amar Watar and the kings of *R‘nn* on one side and Yada‘‘ab Yagul son of Dhamar‘alī king of Qatabān on the other.

## The Activities and Identity of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr *mukarrīb* of Qatabān

### *Construction Projects*

Several construction projects carried out by the king Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr *mukarrīb* of Qatabān were mountain passes:

- the Mablaqa pass, leading from wādī Bayḥān to wādī Ḥarīb, the construction of which is commemorated in two rock inscriptions, the royal inscription, *CSAII*, 21 and the inscription of the king’s servant (*nṣf*), *CSAII*, 33;
- the *Zrm* pass, “about two miles below Ḥinū az-Zurayr” (the ancient *Hrbt*); the construction of this pass is commemorated in the rock inscription *CSAII*, 28 which is composed of two texts: the royal inscription (lines 1-8) followed by the inscription of the king’s servant (l. 9-11).

The king’s servant who supervised the construction of the Mablaqa and the *Zrm* passes was Awsum son of Yaṣar‘amm of the family of Mahdam (*‘ws‘m bn Yṣr‘m bn Mhdm*).

- the Bura‘ pass commemorated by ‘Aqaba Bura‘ 1 and 2, the royal text and the text of the king’s vassals.

The three paired inscriptions of the sovereign and his vassals or servants are written following the same formulaic scheme and using similar expressions. This series of texts reflects the king’s policy to facilitate communication within the vast kingdom of Qatabān annexing new territories and reaching the summit of its power (fig. 9).

Other construction projects of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr include:

- a canal or an element of an irrigation system (*mwdyn Byḥn*) in the vicinity of the capital Tamna‘, probably in the wādī Bayḥān (see the royal inscription *CSAII*, 10);
- a tower in the wādī Jūba (see *CSAII*, 23; the authors are private individuals who supervised the construction);

- it was probably the same king who built the shrine of the goddess *S<sup>2</sup>ms<sup>1</sup> Whlt* in Tamnaʿ (see *CSAI I*, 16; the authors are private individuals);
- probably a tower and the southern gate of the city of Raḥab in the wādī Raḥab; the inscription engraved on the southern gate of Raḥab by a servant of the same king is fragmentary (*CSAI I*, 81).

### *Legal text*

Yadaʿab Dhubyān son of Shahr is the author of one of the legal inscriptions on the southern gate of Tamnaʿ (*CSAI I*, 204). The sovereign uses in this decree the title of *mlk* “king”, while in the royal construction inscriptions he uses the title of *mukarrib*. It seems to be a rule: in the Qatabānian legal inscriptions the sovereigns never mention the title of *mukarrib*<sup>8</sup>. The reason for this could be the character of these inscriptions<sup>9</sup>. They emanate not only from the sovereign but also from other parties, in this case an assembly composed of several groups and tribes. Thus the sovereign does not decree only in his own name but in the name of the entire kingdom of Qatabān, including its numerous components. In this sense the legal inscription is not only a royal decree but a normative document emanating from political or religious groups.

A certain Yadaʿab Dhubyān is mentioned (without filiation) in the final invocation of an inscription on bronze, Cox 4, which probably comes from the city of Maryamatum in the wādī Ḥarīb. It is a dedicatory text offered to the Qatabānian deity Ḥawkum<sup>10</sup>.

It has been proposed to identify the king Yadaʿab Dhubyān son of Shahr with Yadaʿab Dhubyān Yuhanʿim son of Shahr. The latter is known by the following inscriptions:

The royal construction inscriptions:

- *CSAI I*, 18 from Tamnaʿ (Hajar Kuḥlān), northern gate. Yadaʿab Dhubyān Yuhanʿim provides his full series of titles: *mkrb Qtbn w-kl wldʿm w-ʿwsʿn w-Kḥd w-Dhsʿm w-[Tbnw] bkr ʿnby w-Ḥwkm d-ʿmr w-s<sup>2</sup>mr qzr qyn rs<sup>2</sup>w ʿmm rs<sup>2</sup>w ʿmm tntm s<sup>3</sup>hr w-r[by ʿm] Ryʿn bʿl zrbt ltk b-dḥtm w-b-ʿm ʿdfm b-byt Qny Hwrn*. The inscription commemorates the construction of *Sʿqrw*, which is probably the northern gate of Tamnaʿ (see Bron 1999), and mentions a victory over Sabaʿ and Ḥaḍramawt;
- *CSAI I*, 26 from Tamnaʿ (Hajar Kuḥlān). Yadaʿab Dhubyān Yuhanʿim presents his full series of titles (see *CSAI I*, 18, *supra*) and reports construction works;
- *CSAI I*, 19 from ʿbr (Hajar Ḥuwaydar) in the wādī Ḍuraʿ. Yadaʿab Dhubyān Yuhanʿim presents a shorter series of titles: *mkrb Qtbn w-wld ʿm w-ʿwsʿn w-Kḥd w-Dhsʿm w-Tbnw bkr ʿnby w-Ḥw(k)[m] d-ʿmr w-s<sup>2</sup>m(r)*. The inscription commemorates the construction of the city wall of ʿbr during the war against Ḥaḍramawt. It is accompanied by the inscription *CSAI I*, 20, whose author directed construction works done on behalf of the king Yadaʿab Dhubyān Yuhanʿim.

<sup>8</sup> This has already been pointed out by M. ARBACH (2007, p. 120).

<sup>9</sup> According to A. Avanzini, the Qatabanian legal inscriptions are not so much “laws” as normative texts that take the form of a “pact” between two parties (*CSAI*, p. 261).

<sup>10</sup> Ch. Robin proposed identifying this king with Yadaʿab Dhubyān (Yuhanʿim) or with Yadaʿab Dhubyān Yuhargib son of Shahr (ROBIN 2007, p. 284-285).

Some private inscriptions mention the king Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im (without filiation):

- *CSAI I*, 7 from Tamna‘ (Hajar Kuḥlān); the authors are private individuals; they invoke Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im, Shahr Ghaylān and his son Bi‘amm kings of Qatabān;
- *CSAI I*, 78 from the wādī Bayḥān. In this fragmentary inscription the author commemorates construction works (the terms recall the work carried out near the northern city gate of Tamna‘, see *CSAI I*, 18). The king’s name appears in the final invocation: [Yd‘‘]b Dbyn Yhn‘m.
- *CSAI I*, 1087 from wādī al-Ḥanī; an official mentions Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im (without filiation). Judging from the paleography, this king could be also the Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im son of Shahr.

The identification of the king Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr with Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im son of Shahr is possible but not certain. H. von Wissmann had identified them (1976, p. 457), as did M. Arbach (2007, p. 121-122 and 129-130). F. Bron was not completely convinced of this identification (1999, p. 70-71). A. Avanzini has proposed to identify these kings without being absolutely sure (*CSAI*, p. 43-45).

There are some minor differences between the two groups of texts, the first one mentioning Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr and the second one mentioning Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im son of Shahr.

The series of *mukarrib* titles are slightly different. Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr adds a new name to the ethnic and geographic names reflecting the extent of his dominion: *Yrf*, “those of the north and those of the south” (*Yrf* is mentioned in ‘Aqaba Bura‘ 1 and *CSAI I*, 28, but not in *CSAI I*, 21 of the Mablaqa pass). This element of the title does not appear in the inscriptions of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im.

Moreover Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān son of Shahr mentions among his official titles *rs<sup>2</sup>w ‘mm* interpreted as “eponymous priest” (see ‘Aqaba Bura‘ 1), while Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im son of Shahr mentions *rs<sup>2</sup>w ‘mm rs<sup>2</sup>w ‘mm tntm*, “eponymous priest, eponymous priest for the second year” (see *CSAI I*, 18 and *CSAI I*, 26). The latter title should be posterior. However, it does not mention the annexed territories of *Yrf* which appear in the earlier title.

The name of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān is associated with the construction of roads while the name of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im appears in connection with the northern gate and the walls of the capital, Tamna‘. The victory over Saba‘ and Ḥaḍramawt and the war against Ḥaḍramawt are mentioned in the inscriptions concerning Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im.

Some minor differences of the paleography of the inscriptions can be noticed. In the inscriptions of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im the letters are more elongated, the upper part of the letters *h*, *ḥ* and *ḫ* is more angular and the letter *m* is more “open” than those of the inscriptions of Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān.

Nevertheless, the differences among the royal titles could be due to the fact that the titles are simply not always presented in the same way. The fact that Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān seems concerned with the construction of roads, while Yada‘‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im seems involved in the construction of the city walls of Tamna‘, could be pure coinci-



dence. The minor differences of the paleography of the inscriptions are likewise perhaps not significant.

The similarity of the long series of titles used by Yada‘ab Dhubyān in ‘Aqaba Bura‘ 1 and by Yada‘ab Dhubyān Yuhan‘im in *CSAII*, 18 and *CSAII*, 26, supports the hypothesis of their identification (fig. 10).

Still, we prefer to leave the question of the identity of these kings open.

## Introduction of the title of *qayl* (“prince”)

The title of *qayl* is attested as early as in the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC in the South Arabian highlands both in the north and in the south.

In the north, the title of *qayl* appears in the country of Sum‘ay at the end of the period of the *mukarribs* of Saba’ and is used during the period of the kings of Saba’. It occurs in only a few inscriptions<sup>11</sup>.

In the southern highlands, in the kingdom of Qatabān, *qayls* are mentioned twice in the inscriptions from the reign of Yada‘ab Dhubyān: in Cox 4<sup>12</sup> and in ‘Aqaba Bura‘ 2. In Cox 4/7-8, the authors invoke Yada‘ab Dhubyān king of Qatabān, their tribe/community and their *qayls*, colonists/settlers (*bklm*) of Maryamatum (*b-Yd‘‘b Dbyn mlk Qtbn w-b-s<sup>2</sup>b-s<sup>1</sup> w-‘qwl-s<sup>1</sup> bklm d-Mrymtm*). In ‘Aqaba Bura‘ 2/2, the authors are the two *qayls* of the tribe of Maḍhī (*qylw s<sup>2</sup>bn Mdḥym*). In the first case, the title is mentioned in the plural (‘*qwl*), in the second, in the dual (*qylw*). It seems that the title of *qayl* was used by several members of a family and was not reserved to one person in particular.

The title of *qayl* becomes more frequent beginning in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD<sup>13</sup>. The institution of *qayl* played an important role in the political organization of the South Arabian highlands until the final decline of the Ḥimyarite kingdom in the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The origins of this institution are ancient and can be traced back to the middle of the first millennium BC. The title of *qayl* appears as early as the 5<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC not only in the northern but also in the southern highlands as the recent discoveries show.

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<sup>11</sup> ROBIN 1982 a, I, p. 79-81.

<sup>12</sup> ROBIN 2007, p. 283-285 and pl. 176.

<sup>13</sup> BāFAQĪH 1990, p. 55-60.

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CSAI : cf. AVANZINI 2004.

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## Sigla of the incriptions mentioned

Cox 4: see Robin 2007, p. 283-285 et pl. 176.

CSAI: see Avanzini 2004.

CSAI I, 5 = CIAS 47.11/b 2

CSAI I 7 = Doe 6

CSAI I, 9 = Ja 405

CSAI I, 10 = Ja 2362

CSAI I, 14 = MQ-Ḥinū az-Zurayr 1

CSAI I, 16 = MuB 522

CSAI I 18 = MuB 673

CSAI I, 19 = Pi. Ḥuwaydar 1

CSAI I, 20 = Pi. Ḥuwaydar 2

CSAI I, 21 = RÉS 3550

CSAI I, 23 = RÉS 3553

CSAI I, 26 = RÉS 3880

CSAI, 28 = *RÉS* 4328  
 CSAI, 33 = Ry 390  
 CSAI, 38 = MQ-HK 11  
 CSAI, 78 = MuB 98  
 CSAI, 81 = Pi. Raḥab 1  
 CSAI, 116 = *CIAS* 47.10/r 3/c 82  
 CSAI, 203 = *RÉS* 3858  
 CSAI, 204 = *RÉS* 3878  
 CSAI, 624 = Ja 486  
 CSAI, 722 = Mift 99/53  
 CSAI, 947 = Ry 377  
 CSAI, 1087 = Lu 40  
 DAI Barʿān 2000-1: see Nebes 2004.s

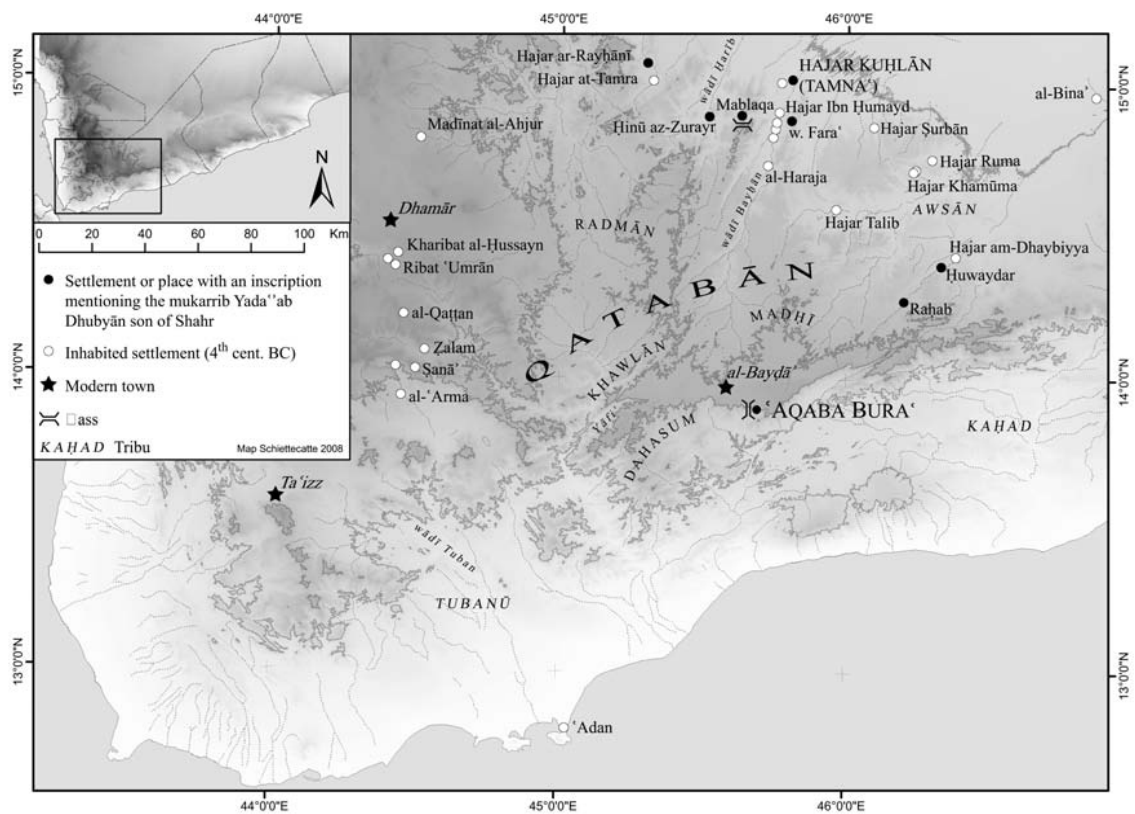


Fig. 1. Map of the kingdom of Qatabān



Fig. 2. The Bura' Pass. Remains of paving stones



Fig. 3. View of the wādī Bura' from 'Aqaba Bura'



Fig. 4. Inscriptions 'Aqaba Bura' 1 and 2

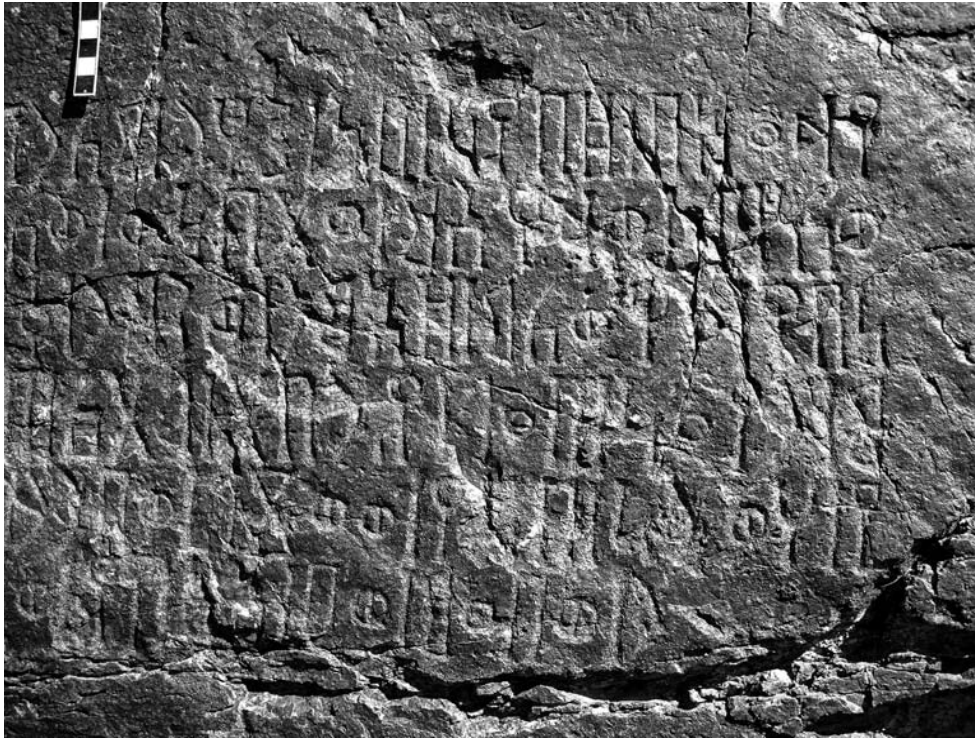


Fig. 5. Inscription 'Aqaba Bura' 1, right side

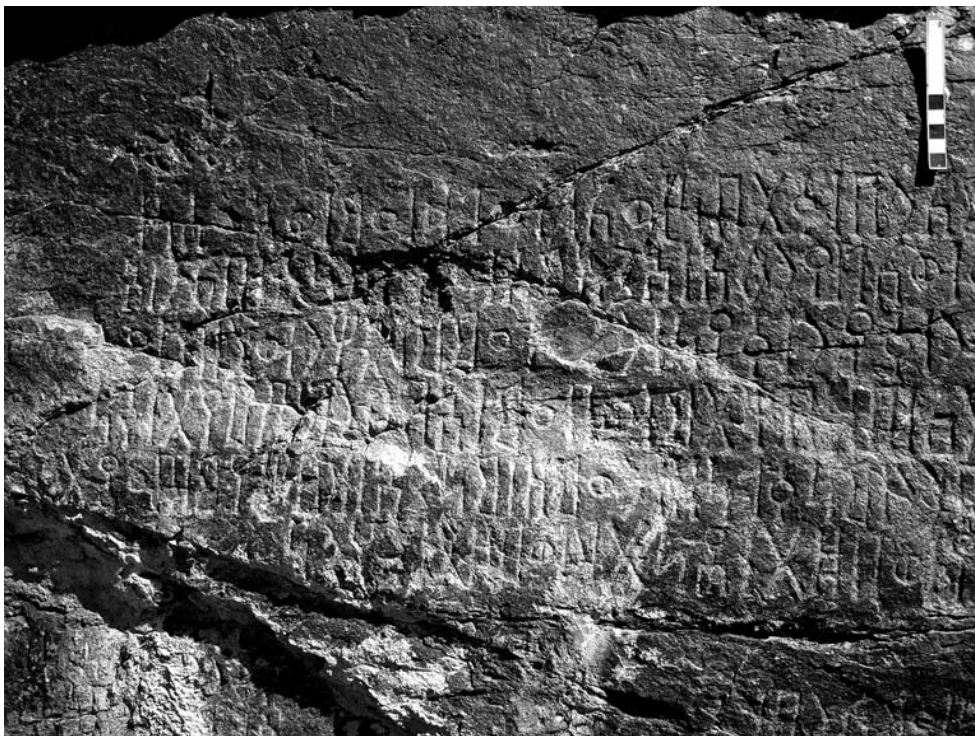


Fig. 6. Inscription 'Aqaba Bura' 1, left side



Fig. 7. Inscription 'Aqaba Bura' 2, right side

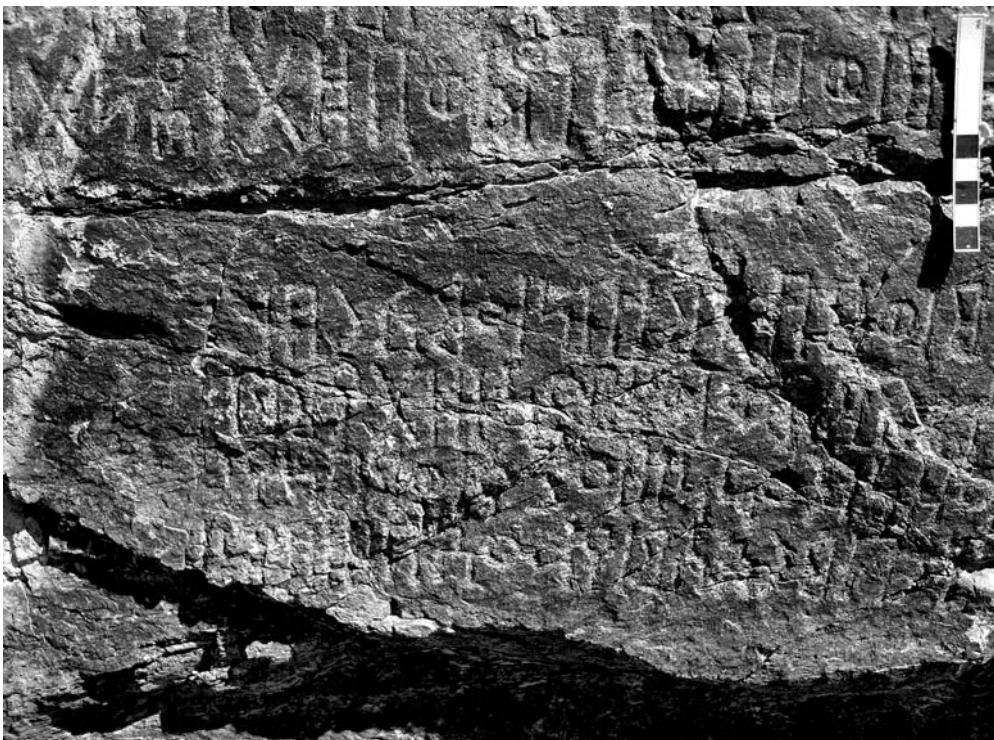


Fig. 8. Inscription 'Aqaba Bura' 2, left side



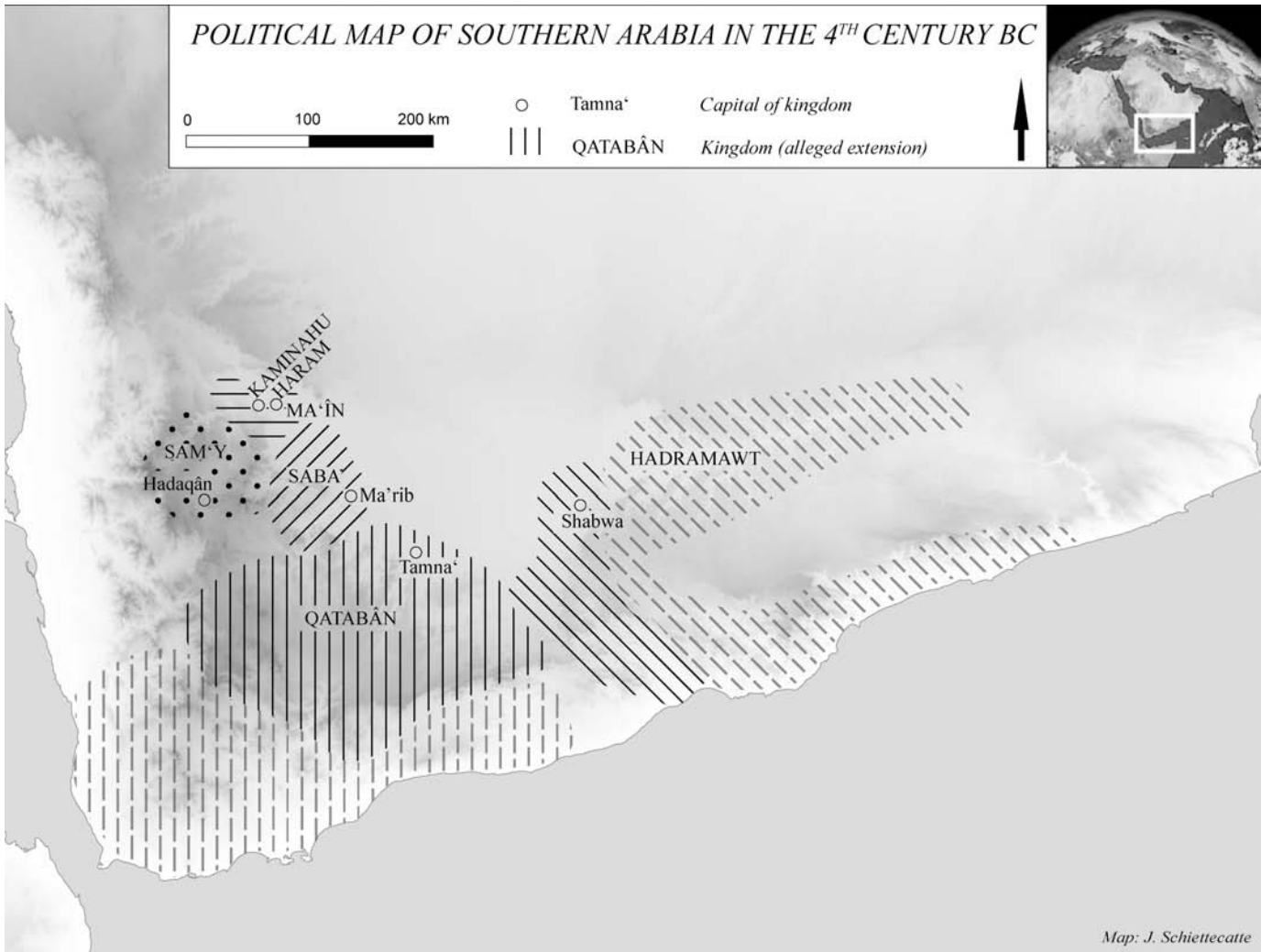


Fig. 9. Political map of Southern Arabia in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC

INSCRIPTION	NAME AND TITLE OF THE KING	LOCATION	CONTENT
Cox 4	<i>Yd''b Dbyn mlk Qlbn</i>	Wādī Harīb	Private inscription (offering)
CS411, 81 = Pi. Rahab 1	<i>Yd''b Dbyn mlk Qlbn</i>	Rahab	Private inscription (building)
CS411, 23 = RES 3553	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hrm mlk Qlbn</i>	Wādī Juba	Private inscription (building of a tower)
CS411, 16 = MuB 522	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn</i>	Hajar Kuḥlān	Private inscription (relig. building)
CS411, 33 = Ry 390	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn</i>	Mablaqa	Private inscription (Mablaqa pass)
Ra's Bura' 2	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn</i>	Ra's Bura'	Private inscription (Bura' pass)
CS411, 204 = RES 3878	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn</i>	Hajar Kuḥlān	Royal inscription (decree)
CS411, 1076 = CIAS 47.91/r 3	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn</i>	Wādī Fara'	Royal inscription
CS411, 10 = Ja 2362	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn</i>	Hajar Kuḥlān	Royal inscription (building)
CS411, 21 = RES 3550	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn w-kl wld 'm w's'n w-Klhd w-Dhs'm w-Thrw</i>	Mablaqa	Royal inscription (Mablaqa pass)
CS411, 28 = RES 4328	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn w-kl wld 'm w's'n w-Klhd w-Dhs'm w-Thrw w-Yrf ymn w-s'mn</i>	Ḥinū az-Zurayr	Royal inscription (Zrm pass)
Ra's Bura' 1	<i>Yd''b Dbyn bn S'hr mlk Qlbn w-kl wld 'm w's'n w-Klhd w-Dhs'm w-Thrw w-kl Yrf s'm-s' w-ymn-s' bkr 'nby w-Ḥwkm q-'mr w-s'mr qzr qyn rs'w 'mm s'hr w-rby 'm Ry'n b'l zrbt ltk b-qlbhm w-b 'm 'qfrn b-byt Qny Hwrn</i>	Ra's Bura'	Royal inscription (Bura' pass)
CS411, 18 = MuB 673	<i>Yd''b Dbyn Yhn 'm bn S'hr mlk Qlbn w-kl wld 'm w's'n w-Klhd w-Dhs'm w-Thrw bkr 'nby w-Ḥwkm q-'mr w-s'mr qzr qyn rs'w 'mm rs'w 'mm lntm s'hr w-rby 'm Ry'n b'l zrbt ltk b-qlbhm w-b 'm 'qfrn b-byt Qny Hwrn</i>	Hajar Kuḥlān	Royal inscription (building)
CS411, 26 = RES 3880	<i>Yd''b Dbyn Yhn 'm bn S'hr mlk Qlbn w-kl wld 'm w's'n w-Klhd w-Dhs'm w-Thrw bkr 'nby w-Ḥwkm q-'mr w-s'mr qzr qyn rs'w 'mm rs'w 'mm lntm s'hr w-rby 'm Ry'n b'l zrbt ltk b-qlbhm w-b 'm 'qfrn b-byt Qny Hwrn</i>	Hajar Kuḥlān	Royal inscription (building)
CS411, 19 = Pi. Huwaydar 1	<i>Yd''b Dbyn Yhn 'm bn S'hr mlk Qlbn w-kl wld 'm w's'n w-Klhd w-Dhs'm w-Thrw bkr 'nby w-Ḥwkm q-'mr w-s'mr</i>	Huwaydar	Royal inscription (fortification)
CS411, 20 = Pi. Huwaydar 2	<i>Yd''b Dbyn Yh[n 'm mlk Qlbn</i>	Huwaydar	Private inscription (building of a house)
CS411, 7 = Doe 6	<i>Yd''b Dbyn Yhn 'm w S'hr Gyln w-bn-w B 'm 'mlk Qlbn</i>	Hajar Kuḥlān	Private inscription (building of a house)
CS411, 78 = MuB 98	<i>Yd''b Dbyn Yhn 'm</i>	Wādī Bayḥān	Private inscription
CS411, 1087 = Lu 40	<i>Yd''b Dbyn Yhn 'm</i>	Wādī al-Ḥanī	Private inscription

Fig. 10. Royal titles of Yada'ab Dhubyān / Yada'ab Dhubyān Yuhān im (paleographic style B 1)

