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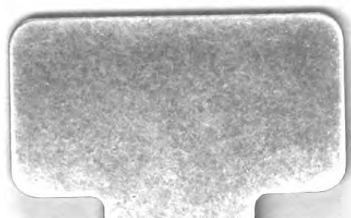
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HIMYARIC  
INSCRIPTIONS

OF

*Hishn Ghoráb.*

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH AND ELUCIDATED.

BY

GEORGE HUNT, M.A. F.R.S. & F.S.A.

MDCCCXLVIII.

To  
The Rev. Dr. Ingram  
President  
of Trinity College Oxford

From the Author  
with best thanks

for  
the valuable present of  
"Memorials  
of Godford St. Mary"

48. 211<sup>4</sup>

(presented to the  
College)

*Valueable work, & interesting.*



# Himyaric

## INSCRIPTIONS

OF

# HISN GHORÁB.

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MDCCCXLVIII.





## INTRODUCTION.

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HAT the object of this publication may be made clear to those, who may possibly have no previous knowledge of *Hasn Ghoráb*, or its inscriptions, it will be proper to give an extract from Wellsted's *Travels in Arabia*, 2 vols. 8vo. Lond. 1838. Vol. ii. p. 421.

“ On the Morning of the 6th of May, 1834, we anchored in a short and narrow channel, joined on the one hand by a low rocky islet, and on the other by a lofty black-looking cliff, to which our Pilots applied the designation of *Hasan Goráb*. Some ruins having been perceived on the summit of the latter, shortly after our arrival I proceeded to the shore, for the purpose of examining them. To avoid the swell, which rolled along the opposite side of the island, and produced a considerable surf against the seaward front of the cliff, as it rose up perpendicularly from the sea, we pulled into a small bay on the north-east side, where the water was much smoother. Landing on a sandy belt, which extended from the margin of the sea to the base of the hill, we found ourselves amidst the ruins of numerous houses, walls, and towers. The former are small, of a square form, and have mostly four rooms on a single floor. The walls appear to have been carried along the face of the hill in parallel lines at different heights: several towers also occur at unequal distances. The hill at this side, for one third of its height, ascends with a moderate acclivity, and along the slope the ruins are thickly scattered. There are, however, no apparent remains of public edifices, nor are there any traces of arches or columns. The whole are constructed of fragments detached from the rock, and from the several

patches which remain it appears that they must have been covered with cement; but owing to the action of the weather, both this and the mortar have almost entirely disappeared. From the traces yet left on the beach the cement appears to have been obtained, as it is at present on many parts of the Arabian coast, by the calcination of coral. *Hasan Goráb* is about five hundred feet in height, and its basis is a dark, greyish-coloured, compact limestone. It appears to have been formerly insulated, although now connected to the main by a low sandy isthmus, blown up there by the violence of the south-westerly winds, and evidently of recent formation. The action of the sea might indeed be plainly traced in the cavities and hollows exhibited by a ridge of rocks now some distance from the water, but which, evidently at some no very remote period, must have been covered by it.

“We had been vainly looking for a path by which we might ascend to the summit, but it appeared inaccessible on every side, and had almost given up our search, when it was suggested that the two towers which were standing by themselves, might possibly have commanded the approach and entrance to one. Scrambling, accordingly, over the ruins formed by the falling of the upper part of these, we at length discovered some faint traces of a track, which, in order to facilitate the ascent, had been cut along the face of the hill in a zigzag direction; but beyond and above that, the cliff had been hewn away, so as to form a sort of terrace; and even here the path, at the widest part, would not admit of more than one abreast. As there was a steep precipice on either hand, above and below us, we did not find in those places where the rains had washed parts of it away a safe or pleasant route.

“On the smooth face of the rock to the right, about one-third the ascent from the top, we were, however, rewarded by the discovery of some inscriptions. The characters are two and half inches in length, and executed with much care and regularity. To avoid the possibility of omission or error, three separate copies were taken by different individuals, all of which have been subsequently examined and compared.\* Continuing our route from hence to the top of the hill, houses nearly as numerous as those below, walls and other defensive edifices, were perceived at various distances, scattered over its surface, and on the verge of the precipice, a square tower of massive masonry. It probably once served both as a watch-tower and light-house, and may still be

\* A fac-simile of this inscription appears in the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for 1834.

discerned for many miles to seaward. Some of the stairs are of very large dimensions; the windows and doors are plain, without arches. About one hundred yards from this tower the tanks are situated: they have been excavated with much labour out of the solid rock, and are cemented inside.

“Having now surveyed every part of the hill, I could not but come to the conclusion, that it had been formed both by nature and art as a place of extraordinary strength. While the former had left it inaccessible at but one point, the latter had so fortified it in that quarter, that it was impossible for the most daring courage or address to scale it. But, independent of this advantage, when we consider the lawless and barbarous character which the inhabitants of the coast have borne from the earliest periods, its insular situation must have rendered it invaluable, both as a safe retreat and as a magazine of trade; and, indeed, the circumstance of its possessing two harbours, affording anchorage in either monsoon, on a coast remarkably destitute of any so well sheltered, at least as far as our present knowledge extends, would appear to indicate great commercial importance. But it is to the inscription we must look for elucidation on this point, as well as the several others connected with it. My previous remarks on those discovered in the ruins of Nakab el Hajar, will equally apply to those discovered here. There is so trifling a difference between the two, that I assign to them a common origin. I cannot, however, neglect to draw attention to the obvious and striking coincidence between the ports of *Hasan Goráb*, as deduced from our survey, and that specified by Arrian, two hundred and fifty miles, as the distance of the port of Cave Kanim, from that called Arabia Felix, which modern geographers, with much confidence, place as the present harbour of Aden. The natives possessed no information regarding the ruins, excepting that they had always heard them ascribed to the *Feringees*.

“A tribe of Arabs, bearing the same name as the hill on which these ruins are situated, the *Beni Goráb*, formerly possessed both the hill and neighbouring district.”

To Mr. Forster, in his *Historical Geography of Arabia*, 2 vols. 8vo. 1844—Vol. ii. p. 81,—is due the sole credit of suggesting, that a Poem published in Albert Schultens' *Monumenta Vetustiora Arabiæ*, 4to. L.B. 1740, page 67, is a translation of the *Hisn Ghoráb* Inscription. Mr. Forster too was the first to publish vol. ii. p. 450, 451, the original Arabic text of the Leyden MS., from which Schultens transcribed the Poem. This Arabic text, with corrections, and with the vowel points added throughout, is given in Plates 1, 2.

The work itself is thus described in a MS. *Haji Khalfa*, which the present writer possesses:—

“Antiquities of Countries and Accounts of Men,—in one Volume—  
“comprising accounts of the Seven Climates.” It begins thus,—“To  
“Him be ascribed the Praise and the Glory, and the Greatness, &c.”  
“It is the composition of the Sheikh Alfazil Zacaria Ibn Mohammed  
“Alcazwini, Author of the Book entitled ‘Wonders of Creation.’—  
“He has here collected what he knew, had witnessed, and heard of  
“the things peculiar to Persons and Countries. But there are in it  
“some errors, as in other similar writings. The date of its composition  
“was A.H. 634”—*i.e.* A.D. 1236—or—37.

The Leyden MS.\* is said to be an incorrect transcript. I have not hesitated, therefore, to adopt new readings where either the sense or the metre required them. A notice however of any variation of importance is subjoined to the extract in Plate 2. Next after the extract from Cazwini is given in Plate 2, the Inscription No. 1, rejecting, however, the unmeaning circles, and inserting the two letters on the margin in their proper place—at the beginning of line seven. Then comes in, Plate 3, this same Inscription in common Arabic letters, letter for letter; and next in the same Plate the same Inscription with the spelling modernized. This will enable any Arabic scholar to judge for himself whether the interpretation now offered be exact or not. Let him however bear this in mind, that before he sets down any word as mistranslated, he should look for it, not in any single Arabic dictionary, but the whole of them, viz.—Golius, Giggeus, Castel, Meninski, Kamus, and Freytag. What he cannot find in one, he will in another. In Plate 4, are given the words under Inscription No. 1. The Inscriptions No. 3, and No. 4, are also written letter for letter in common Arabic characters.

Differing as I do from Mr. Forster, both in reading and interpreting, it became necessary that a new alphabet should be prepared in accordance with my own views. This is accordingly inserted in Plate 4. In the same Plate, Inscription No. 2, is explained; which makes the account now given of these Inscriptions complete. Nothing is passed over or left unexplained. How far the explanation given may or may not be the true one, it is for the reader to judge.

After the Plates follow the English translations—of the extract from the Leyden MS. and <sup>of</sup> all the Inscriptions. And these translations are, I believe, as close as the idioms of the respective languages will admit. On comparing the translations of the first Poem and the Inscription No. 1, the reader will immediately perceive that the <sup>first</sup> Poem

\* Other MS. Bibl. Reg. Paris. N° 957. St Germ. N° 397. Bibl. Escor. N° 1682. Bibl. Gothan. N° 234.

Nº 1.

is not a close translation of the Inscription. So far otherwise, that the translator seems merely to have borrowed a few leading ideas from the Inscription, which were then worked up into a Poem of ten couplets to suit the taste of the Court of Bagdad. The Poem is much in the style of the Poems introduced in tales by the Storytellers of the Coffeehouse. See Tale of the Brazen City, vol. i. p. 11, 12, 13, of the New Arabian Nights, 3 vols. 8vo. 1829.

There is, however, such a general resemblance between the two as will convince those who are conversant with the loose style of Arabic translation, that this Poem actually was meant to be a version of the Inscription.

The Rules adopted by the present Interpreter in reading and interpreting these Inscriptions are the following four:—

1st Rule.—In reading the Inscriptions no account is taken of the round circles. They evidently have no meaning, nor apparently any use, except it be as ornament or to lengthen out the line. They cannot be points separating between the words, for if so, some of the words would be of such a length as a trisyllabic language like the Arabic could not admit. They are found isolating a letter or letters, which by themselves have no meaning. They cannot be orthographic points or stops, for they are scattered at random; besides, the use of stops would cast suspicion on the genuineness of the Inscription. Like an uncial Greek MS. of the same period, it is an Inscription in capital letters only—without any division into words. They are not vowels, for it is against the rules of the language to cumulate two or three vowels on one consonant, or ever to allow more than two consonants to be without a vowel.

2nd Rule.—Every letter in the Inscription has been represented by what is considered its equivalent in the modern character. That there should be variations in spelling between the ancient word and the modern one, this was to be expected. The same thing has occurred in our own language. To this day there is a sort of indiscriminate use in English of *s* and *z*, *c* and *k*. We cannot be surprized therefore if we find a something of the same kind in the Himyaric—in which we observe—1. That one and the same sound may be represented by two or more different characters. This the Himyaric alphabet has in common with the Egyptian—the parent of all other alphabets. 2. That the characters for similar or related sounds are mutually interchangeable, as—<sup>s and ss</sup> *s* and *sh*, *d* and *dh*, *h* and *hh*, *hh* and *lh*, *s* and *z*.<sup>x</sup> 3. That of two similar and related sounds, both may be represented by one and the same character, as—*t* and *tt*, *k* and *c*.

<sup>x</sup> several variations of *z*.

ك ك ق ط ت

ظ ض ذ ز

(b)

ص ن م  
ش خ س  
ح ع ه

This state of things was to be expected in a language as yet unfix'd by a literature; and these principles are still to be traced in the modern Arabic. With respect to dialect, if dialect it be and not mere archaism, the chief variations appear to be in retaining *naw* unaltered, when the rules of permutation would require its change into *alif* or *ya*; and in also retaining *naw* as a *mater lectionis*, when the modern spelling would have *dammah* only. Also in suppressing the *alif* of *tanwin* in the *nasbun* of nouns,—the formative *alif* in the tenth and eleventh conjugations of verbs: **and the article** **ال** **no where appears.**

3rd Rule.—In dividing the letters into words, the only guide is one's own judgment, just as it would be in reading an uncial Greek or Latin MS. But I have laid down this as a law, never to admit any word, of which the root is not now to be found in the language, nor yet to give such word any sense that the root at least does not still bear: except the word be evidently foreign, like the two words borrowed from the Ethiopic. To derive forms from roots is what every reader of Arabic MSS. must do, or he cannot get on. The root he may find in the dictionaries with its meaning, but the form he has to find for himself, according to the rules of grammar, and then adapt the meaning to the form. Thus the second word *wosho-un*, which is a plural, is not found in the dictionaries, but its singular is; *washi-un*,—a tent so placed for the general of an army that he may thence overlook his troops. When the word is applied, as here, to the buildings of a Prince, the nearest approach to its true import seems to be "Watch-tower of a Chieftain." It is obvious that a general in a tent overlooking his army owes his safety to his troops. But a Prince in a fortress overlooking his capital may be said to be "self-protected." The modern Arab Sheikh, dwelling amidst his people in a tent, has no power but that of influence. An Himyaric Prince, inhabiting a stronghold and surrounded by guards, could be, as he was, a Sovereign.



According to my version of this inscription it assumes the form, that might have been expected from the bard of an Himyaric Prince. He begins with setting forth his master's magnificence and power, and then proceeds to speak of the natural advantages of the country and its enjoyments, as well as its civil superiority in being ruled by Princes, at once just and wise, encouraging the deserving, coercing the worthless, and protecting all from insult or injury by successful warfare. By these representations encouragement was held out to visitors to become settlers and subjects; and the patriotism of the actual inhabitants was fostered, as enjoying a condition, with which they had abundant cause to be content.

و  
شع  
وشيع

Thus regarded the Inscription has common sense in it; but to suppose that a Himyaric Sovereign would cut an Inscription on a rock to tell future generations that he once had been, but was now no more, is absurd. If such had really been the import of the Inscription, this would at once prove it to be the forgery of a later age, indulging its own vanity in a record of what its ancestors had been.

No doubt a different reading of the letters, or a different division of the letters into words may in some cases be adopted, and thence will arise a difference of meaning. The readings and interpretations now adopted are those, which seemed to give the best sense upon the whole. But it would be wrong in a case of so much difficulty—and if any one doubts the difficulty, let him make the trial with some unexplained Inscription—to assert dogmatically that the present interpretation is faultless, that the true meaning has been hit in every point, and that no other can be given. The track is as yet an unbeaten one, and its traces, at times, are sufficiently faint.

4th Rule.—The Grammar is the Grammar of the existing language, with however, as might be expected, a greater simplicity. This is an internal evidence both of genuineness and antiquity. *I have introduced the Tanwin into the transcript of these Inscriptions in the common character, in order to mark the grammatical distinction of words; but no Tanwinat appear in the Original.*

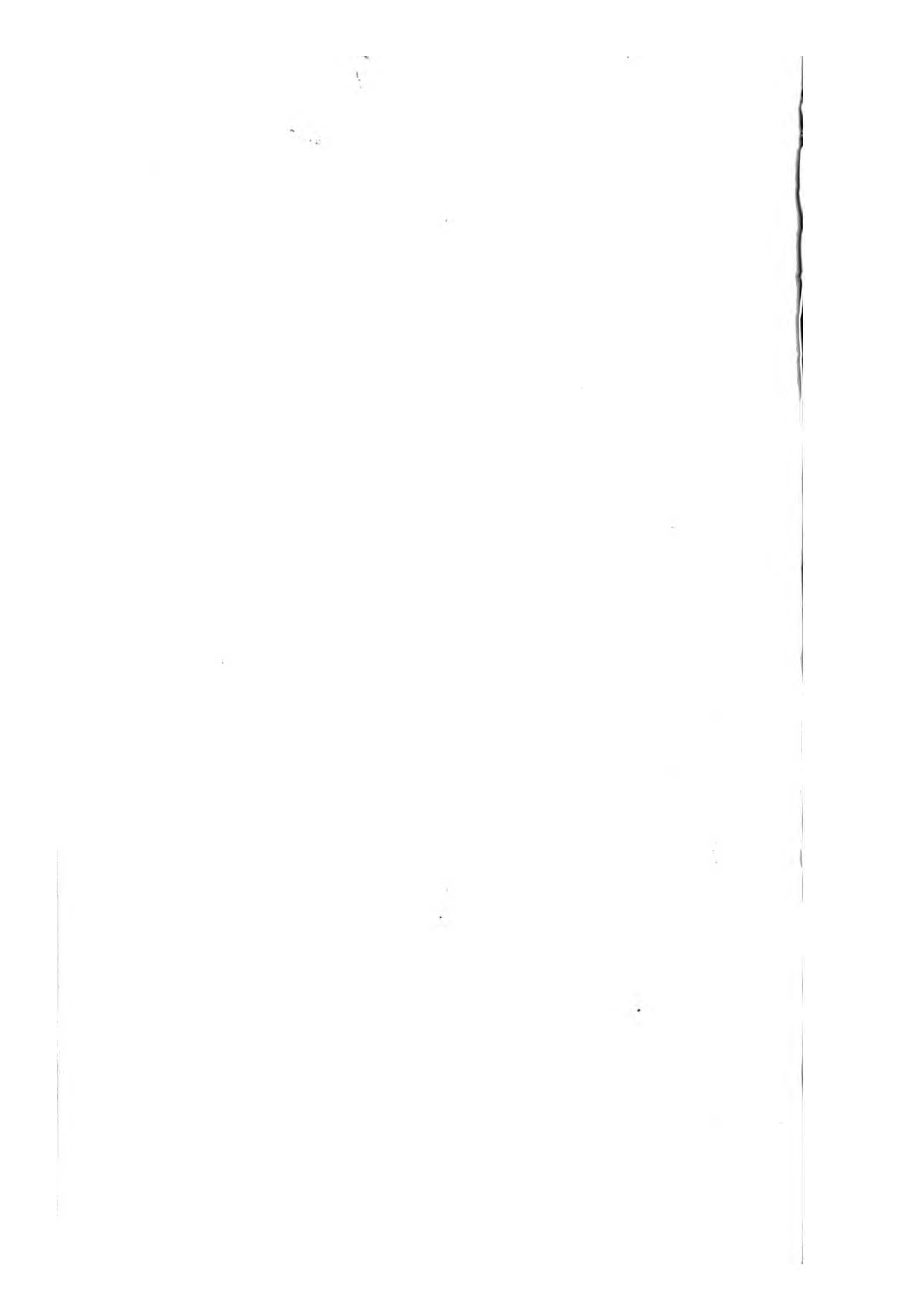
*In Wellsted's facsimile of these Inscriptions, these irregularities are observable. i. Two letters  in the word, which ends line 6 & begins line 7. of No. 1. viz (جنى) are transposed to the margin. ii. The fourth line of No. 3 is engraved *Dispersedly*.  *sedly*. iii. The first five letters of No. 4 line 2. are sunk below the level of the rest of the line. I suppose all this to be by design— with the intention of averting the stroke of the evil eye, when speaking of what is good, & of eluding the bad omen, when speaking of what is evil: superstitious feelings, which, it is well*

## ERRATUM—TRANSLATIONS.

Page 5, line 21, was read were.

*known exercise a powerful influence on any Semi-Barbarous people, <sup>such as</sup> ~~like~~ the Nations of Antient Greece, Antient Rome, & Antient Arabia.*





كتاب آثار البلاد وأخبار العباد

وبها القصور من قصور عاد ولما بنت معوية عبد الرحمن بن الحكيم إلى  
اليمين وليا بلغه أن يساجل عدن قصور من قصور عاد وأن في بحرها كنزا  
فطبع فيه وذهب في بادية فارس إلى ساحل عدن إلى قوب القصرين فرأى  
ما حوله من الأرض سباحا بها إبار الأبار ورأى قصرا منيا بالصخر والكليت  
وعلى بعض أبوابه صخرة عظيمة يتصا مكتوب عليها شعر

غنيننا زمانا في عراضة ذا القصر  
يعيش رخي غير صنك ولا نزر  
يعيض علينا البحر بالمد زاهرا  
وأتهارنا بالماء مبرعة يجسر  
خلال نخيل باسقات نواطيير  
هاتف بالقسب المجرع والتمر  
ونصطاد صيد البر بالجل والقنا  
وطورا نصيد الثور من حجج البحر  
ونرفل في الخرد المرقرة . . .  
يلينا ملوك يبعدون عن الخنا  
شديد على أهل الجبانة والفدر  
يقم لنا من دين هود شرايع  
ونؤمن بالآيات والبعث والنشر  
إذا حل أرضنا عدو يريدنا  
بذرتنا جميعا بالثقتة السمير  
على الشهب والكت المعانيف والنشر  
نحامي على أولادنا ونسائنا  
نقارح من يبغي علينا ويعتدي  
ثم مضى إلى القصر الآخر وسما أربع فراسخ فرأى حوله إبار الحناس  
والبساء قال فدناوا يابن القصر فاذا هومن حجرة وكلس علب عليها  
ماء البحر ورأينا على بابها صخرة عظيمة عليها مكتوب

غنيا بهذا القصر دهرًا فلم يكن  
لنا همة إلا البلاد ذو القطف  
ندوح علينا كل يوم هنيئة  
من الأبل يعيشو في معاطفها الطرق  
وأضعنا تلك الأبل شاء كأنها  
من الحسن أرام أو البقر القطف

فَعِشْنَا بِهَذَا الْقَصْرِ سَبْعَةَ أَحْقَابٍ : بِأَطْيَبِ عَيْشٍ جَلَّ عَنْ ذِكْرِهِ الْوَصْفُ  
 جَلَّتْ سُنُونُ مَجْدِيَّاتٍ قَوَّاجِلُ إِذَا مَا مَضَى عَامٌ أَيْ آخِرٌ يُقْفَوُ  
 فَظَلْنَا كَأَن لَمْ نَعْرِ فِي الْخَيْرِ لِحَاثَةَ مَا تَوَاوَلَمَا يَبْقَ خُفٌّ وَلَا يَلْفُ  
 كَذَلِكَ مَنْ لَمْ يَشْكُرِ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَزُلْ مَعَالِمُهُ مِنْ بَعْدِ سَاخْتِهِ تَعَفُّو

٤٦٥ line 1<sup>st</sup> ٤٦٥. تَلَمَّ فِي الْإِبْتِدَاءِ. i. e. هَانَفَ. Poem 1<sup>st</sup> line. 3. الطويل. *Metre*  
 | الكليت. 1.4. Lect: Var: الأقران. Poem. 2<sup>nd</sup> line ١٥٥. الأوصاف.  
 | يمح. 1.9. F. نوطر | نواطير. 1.8. F. انوابه | ابوابه. 1.5. F. الكلين  
 | الكت. 1.14. F. اذا ما عدو لاصل رضا يريدنا | اذا حل ارضا يريدنا. 1.18. S. ليج  
 | البلد | البلاد. 1.9. F. على | عليها. 1.18. F. ~~الوصف~~ | الكليت  
 | نعم. 1.24. F. ذكره الوصف | ذكر الوصف. 1.22. F. يعشق | يعشو. 1.20.  
 | نعين. F.

Hisn Ghorab Inscriptions. Wellsted. Vol. 2. p 424.

Nº:1. X1Y7H4HI311H3A117M61176H431414H13A111M6 1  
 3111M6H4Y14131Y37111M647137X1H147A1X4Y7A11M6Y1 2  
 1H61137M71H77114137X1X4Y11M6A1A111M631 3  
 M4Y7M114711731377H414471X1Y3137X6141471M4H7 4  
 47M1147A11M6Y137X11H4147A1377A1X6Y1M4H3A 5  
 H13437M14H11M6A137A1N137H14737M117A1437A17A1A1 6  
 7137M1Y477A1M6Y147Y1X3771YH1A1X1M141Y1X 7  
 137A137H47A11A1A1X37H41M6A147H1A1H7A1YH137A1A1 8  
 1H437A137M4A1Y71A1M6Y11M6Y1A17M17Y1A1M11M6Y1H3A1H137X 9  
 M4Y37Y1M6X37M6A11H37A7H147Y7N1Y4Y3 10

Place those on the take those hold of.  
 X - Milk on agdend.

N°1. in common Arabic letters, letter for letter.

1. صَاكٌ وَشَعُوزَانٌ وَغَيْبٌ ذَلُّ رَوَّاسٌ مِرْوَقٌ وَشَيْزُورٌ أَقْبُوضٌ بِزْرِبٌ أَخَا
2. لِمَايَ دَمَاءِ ظَرْبٍ خَوْصَرُونُو زَاخْتَنُورُونُمُ وَمِيارُ نُوعِيقِنُونُ بَدْمٌ وَأَنَّ
3. أَعِيمٌ وَأَيْهٌ وَمَشَى زَمُوقٌ بِجَوْزَحٍ شَأُ نُوارِزُورَانُونُ أَشْرُو
4. رَزَبٌ مُورِوَأُونُ سَحِينُونُ بِجَاخُوءَ رِيرُونُ قَدْرُونُ عِبْرَاوَزَنَا وَمَرَّبٌ مِ
5. تَعِ زَبٌ مُوْبِئِخٌ وَشَرِبُونُ شَرَقُونُ زَاقٌ حَقِ يَأْتُمُ وَيَسْكُونُ مَرِينُ
6. نُوسْتَشْرُونُ حَشِيرٌ وَشَطِيٌّ وَمِيرٌ وَشَارُونُ ذَنْسَقِ وَصِمِيٌّ وَزَلُونُ هَنْزُونُ
7. حِينُونُ مَاحٌ وَشَارَبٌ وَرَنٌ صَحْبٌ وَدَرْقَبٌ وَمَشْرُجِبٌ وَمَنْكِرٌ
8. شَصٌ خَشَنٌ وَزَبٌ وَشَرَزٌ تَوْرُونُ شَيْحٌ وَبَزَعٌ خَوْشَصَاوُ شَبْ طَعْنٌ وَحِيقٌ
9. خَنْوَزٌ تِيزٌ وَمَيْمٌ وَشَبِيرٌ وَمَرْسٌ وَمَيْمٌ وَشَقَ رَبٌّ وَشَبْمٌ يَبُوشٌ يَبْرُو
10. يَدَبٌ وَذَبْرُ حَنْوَزٌ شَيْزَاوُ صَاوُمٌ شَحْمٌ وَدِيقٌ حَمٌ

N°1. with the spelling modernized.

مِنْ رَوَّ

إِصْمَاكٌ وَشَعُوزَانٌ وَغَيْبٌ ذَلُّ رَوَّاسٌ مِرْوَقٌ وَشَيْزُورٌ أَقْبُوضٌ بِزْرِبٌ أَخَاوِي  
 دَمَاءِ ظَرْبٍ خَوْصَرُونَا زَاخْتَنُورُونُمُ وَمِيارُ نُوعِيقِنُونَا بَدْمٌ وَأَنَّ أَعِيمٌ وَأَيْهٌ وَمَشَى  
 زَمُوقٌ بِجَوْزَحٍ شَأُ نُوارِزُورَانُونَا أَشْرُورَبٌ مُورِوَأُونَا سَحِينُونَا بِجَاخُوءَ حَوِي  
 رِيرُونَا قَدْرُونَا عِبْرَاوَزَنَا وَمَرَّبٌ مِ تَعِ زَبٌ مُوْبِئِخٌ وَشَرِبُونَا شَرَقُونَا زَاقٌ حَقِ  
 يَبُوشٌ وَيَسْكُونَا مَرِينُ أَنَا اسْتَشْرُونَا حَشِيرٌ وَشَطِيٌّ وَمِيرٌ وَشَارُونَا ذَنْسَقِ وَصِمِيٌّ وَزَلُونَا  
 هَنْزُونَا حِينُونَا مَاحٌ وَشَارَبٌ وَرَنٌ صَحْبٌ وَدَرْقَبٌ وَمَشْرُجِبٌ وَمَنْكِرٌ  
 شَصٌ خَشَنٌ وَزَبٌ وَشَرَزٌ تَوْرُونَا شَيْحٌ وَبَزَعٌ خَوْشَصَاوُ شَبْ طَعْنٌ وَحِيقٌ  
 وَشَبْمٌ يَبُوشٌ يَبْرُو وَيَدَبٌ وَالذَّبُّ بِرَحْنَا زَبٌ شَيْزَاوُ صَاوُمٌ شَحْمٌ وَدِيقٌ حَمٌ

from the Ethiopic root ስጠሶ . . . . .

'Punahay' is read the better to read of 'Zanān' & 'صَاكٌ' Consider them both to be in the 40<sup>th</sup> (by) position of 'Saka'  
 'مور' & 'مور' for 'مور' the plural of 'مور' of the XX<sup>th</sup> form of the XXIII<sup>th</sup> form. 'فعلان' .  
 'مور' contraction of 'مور'

N° 1. under the ten-line inscription.

ሆሀሀኃጎጎሀሀሀሀሀሀ. 𐩈ሀ𐩈ግግግ ግግ  
شَصْبُ صَرَا حَا صِرْحَايْ شِصْبُ

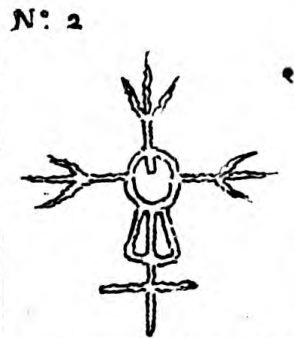
شَصْبُ from the Ethiopic 𐩈𐩈𐩈𐩈	N° 4	N° 3.
	194HHIገግግግግግግግግግግግ Xግግግግግግግግግግግግግግግግግግ	ግግግግግግግ ግግግግግግ ግግግግግግ
	𐩈 𐩈	𐩈 𐩈 100

N° 3. مَيَّارُ مُوزَرُ نُوْشُ صَمَّ وَصَيِّبُ وَصَيِّبُ  
مَاءَةً. 100. ذُ ذَنُ

N° 4. صَارُمُوشُ زِيْرُوْزِيْنُ وَ مِرْعَنُ وَ مَسُ وِشُوْزُزِعُ وَ  
صَارْمُوقُ زُوْوقُ نَشُوْ شُحَيِّ وَ زِيْ وَ بَنُ وَ مَاحُ  
شَعُ  
صَعُ

Alphabet of the Inscriptions at Hisn Ghorab.

ا	𐩇	𐩇	𐩇	ش
ب	𐩆	𐩆	𐩆	ص
ج	𐩅	𐩅	𐩅	ذ
د	𐩄	𐩄	𐩄	ر
هـ	𐩃𐩃𐩃𐩃	𐩃𐩃𐩃𐩃	𐩃𐩃	يا
و	𐩂	𐩂	𐩂	
ضوذز	𐩁	𐩁	𐩁	
ح	X	𐩀	𐩀	
ط	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀	
ي	𐩀	𐩀	𐩀	



Apparently the Him-yaric Sceptre.

\* N seems equivalent to 1N is. ذو - دُوْونُ Plural. -

𐩇 is. يا.

\* Should prefer reading  
 "The variety is all continuous."  
 \*  
 The variety affords a good part of the guide.  
 \*

مِرَاةُ الزَّمَانِ وَتَارِيحُ الْأَعْيَانِ تَأْلِيْفُ أَبِي الْمُظْفَرِ يُوسُفَ بْنِ قُرَّةَ عَلِيٍّ

MS. Vol. 2. fol. 3, 4.

الْمَعْرُوفِ بِسِبْطِ ابْنِ الْجَوَازِيِّ

وَفِيهَا قَدَمٌ مَكَّةَ سُؤَيْدِ بْنِ الصَّامِتِ وَكَانُوا يُسَمُّونَهُ الْكَامِلَ لِشَرَفِهِ  
وَفَضْلِهِ وَهُوَ الْقَائِلُ

أَلَا رَبُّ مَنْ يَدْعِي صَدِيقًا وَلَوْ يَرَى  
بِسِرِّكَ بِأَدْيِهِ وَتَحْتَ أَدِيمِهِ  
تَبِينُ لَكَ الْعَيْنَانُ مَا هُوَ كَاتِمٌ  
فَرَشْتِي بِخَيْرِ طَالَمَا قَدَّرْتِي

مَقَالَتُهُ بِالْغَيْبِ شَاكِكٌ مَا يَفْرَى

نَيْمَةٌ عَشَّ تَبْتَرِي عَقِبَ الظَّهْرِ

وَيُبْدِي بِالْبَعْضَاءِ وَالنَّظْرِ الشَّدِيرُ

فَخَيْرُ الْمَوَالِي مَنْ يُرِيثُ وَلَا سُرَى

فَتَصَدَّى لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ وَدَعَاهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَقَالَ

سُؤَيْدُ لَعَلَّ الَّذِي مَعَكَ مِثْلُ الَّذِي مَعِيَ فَقَالَ لَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ وَمَا الَّذِي

مَعَكَ وَكَانَ فَصِيحًا فَقَالَ مَعِيَ مَجَلَّةٌ لِقَمَانٍ يَعْنِي حِكْمَتَهُ وَعَرْضَهَا عَلَى

رَسُولِ اللَّهِ فَقَالَ كَلَامٌ حَسَنٌ وَلَكِنْ مَعِيَ أَفْضَلُ مِنْهُ قَالَ وَمَا هُوَ قَالَ

قُرْآنٌ أَنْزَلَهُ اللَّهُ عَلَى هَدْيٍ وَنُورٍ وَقَرَأَ عَلَيْهِ مِنْهُ وَدَعَاهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ

فَلَمْ يَبْعُدْ عَنْهُ وَقَالَ إِنَّ هَذَا الْحَسَنُ

Same MS. fol. 40.

وَقَالَ عُلَمَاءُ السِّيَرِ كَانَ أَيْمَةً قَدْ قَرَأَ الْكُتُبَ الْقَدِيمَةَ

line. 5. Metre الطويل

Ms. الظهري | الظهر Ms. شاك | شاكك Var. Lect.


سُرَى a poetical contraction for سُرَى

Extract from the كشف الظنون of Haji Khalifa. MS.  
 الآثار البلاد و اخبار العباد مجلد واحد مشتمل على اخبار الاقاليم  
 السبعة اوله لك الحمد والجلال والكبرياء الى اخره تاليف الشيخ الفاضل  
 ذكريا بن محمد القزويني صاحب كتاب عجائب المخلوقات قد جمع فيه  
 ما عرف وشاهد وسمع من خصائص العباد والبلاد لكن فيه بعض  
 المنظورات كما في امثاله وكان تاريخ تاليفه سنة اربع وثلثين وستماية

In the فَاكْفَةُ الزَّمَانِ a MS History of Yemen  
 by الاشرف ابو العباس اسمعيل Ashraf Abul Abbas  
 Ismael, 7<sup>th</sup> Prince of the line of Beni Ra-  
 sul Gassani, - a regular list is given of the  
 Chief Governors of Yemen from the time of  
 the Prophet. In this list Abdurrahman  
 Ben alhaim's name is not given. It is  
 plain therefore, that he was sent in some  
 subordinate capacity, as sub Governor  
 of a District merely (مخلاف) - it might be of  
 Aden, or of Jannad - & not as Governor-  
 General of the whole Province. - 4<sup>th</sup>

## Translations.

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XTRACT from the "Antiquities of Regions and Accounts of Men," by *Zacaria Ben Mohammed Al Kazwini*. (Leyden MS. No. 512.) And in it are two castles of the Castles of *Aad*. [*i.e.* ancient.] And when *Moawiyah* sent *Abdur Rahman Ben Al Hacim* to *Yemen* as Governor, it reached him, that on the sea-shore of *Aden* were two castles of the Castles of *Aad*, and that in their tanks was a treasure. Then he longed for it, and passed with one hundred horsemen unto the sea-coast of *Aden* unto the neighbourhood of the two Castles. Then he saw the country about them to be salt-lands, in which were the best of figs [or of wells.] And he saw a Castle built of large stones and oblong blocks. And over one of its <sup>defiles</sup> gates a <sup>great rock smooth'd</sup> ~~large stone worn away~~, on which was written

(Verse)

1. We have lived long in <sup>the</sup> a wide <sup>domains of this</sup> ~~land having a~~ Castle, a soft life without strait or solicitude.
2. The sea is pouring in upon us with its tide abundantly, and our rivers are flowing with a full stream.
3. The interval between the lofty palms their keepers are sowing both with the soak'd \* *kasb* and the dry *tamr*.

\* Dates—the *kasb* is a dry date with a thick and hard stone, which nevertheless dissolves in moisture. In a hot climate, where rain is rare, evidently such a seed should be soaked before sown, to give it a better chance of vegetating. The *tamr* is a dry date. v. Crichton's *Arabia*. II. 417.



4. And we hunt the land-game with snares and with spears.  
And in like manner we catch the fish, that harbour in  
the sea.
5. And we sweep along sometimes in striped silk, and at  
times in plain silk, and in cloaks of green.
6. Kings govern us, who are far from speaking base words,  
severe against the fraudulent and perfidious.
7. They appoint for us Institutes according to the religion  
of *Hud*, and we believe in Miracles, the Resurrection,  
and the Revival.\*
8. When an Enemy comes suddenly into our land seeking  
us, we ~~strike~~<sup>rush on</sup>, all together, with the dun-coloured lance.
9. We protect our children and our women on grey and  
light-red, long-necked and bright bay horses.
10. We meet face to face with our swords those who are  
fierce against us and injurious, till they turn the  
back.†

---

Then he [*Abdur Rahman*] passed to the other Castle.  
The two Castles were four leagues<sup>2</sup> apart. Then he saw  
about it the best of cypresses and bis-trees. Then they  
approached the right side of the Castle, and lo! it was a  
wall [or a chamber]; and the sea-water beat against it and  
made marks upon it. And we saw over its gate a large stone  
on which was written

1. We have dwelt in this Castle a long time, and there is  
no care upon us except for our vineyards.

\* This mention of *Hud* and his religion is foisted in by the Moslim translator—  
there is nothing of the kind in the original Himyaric.

† Common sense as well as the frequent use of the present tense in the Arabic  
require us to understand this Poem, as speaking of the present time and not of the past.

<sup>2</sup> The Bis-tree would seem to be a species of *Celtis*.  
*Burckhardt's Syria*. 4°. 615. —

2. Every day there returns to us a century of camels, whose places of lying down the eye overlooks at eventide.
3. And the sheep, which are like white antelopes in beauty, or the slow-moving heifers, are twice as many as the camels.
4. And we lived in this Castle seven years the best of lives, such as description would fail to recount.
- ×
6. Then we became, as if we could shew no appearance of prosperity, for they [our cattle] died, and there was left neither camel's hoof nor cow's hoof.
7. Thus as to him, who has made no return to God, all trace of him and his abode shall soon be obliterated.\*

Schultens—*Mon. Vet. Arabiae*, 4to. L.B. 1740, p. 71—says that this visit of *Abdur Rahman* took place between the fourteenth and the fifteenth years of the Hegira, between A.D. 660, and 670.

The Arabic of this extract is given in Plates 1, 2.

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TRANSLATION OF THE HISN GHORAB INSCRIPTIONS,  
PLATES—2, 3, 4.

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No.1.—*The ten-line Inscription.*

1. Very <sup>strong</sup> lofty are the watch-towers of the Chieftain, and self-protecting; for a Princely condition is exempt from constraint. And the tides are flowing in through a channel that is a
2. brother to the sea, which <sup>beats upon</sup> adjoins our abodes. Our singing-women and our feuds strongly excite us. But

\* Possibly this second Inscription may yet be recovered within a range of from twelve to twenty miles of *Hisn Ghorab*. There should be however the greatest accuracy in copying it; for without perfect accuracy it will be of little use.

× 5. But these came upon us years before 8 day; and as often as one year was gone, then came another that had in its steps.

- a firm purpose turns us aside. For the present season\*
3. is left without milk, and is cried out upon. And now the openers [of the granaries] walk in the wide valley. They make a skilful drawing backwards and forwards of the rice [*i.e.* they rake it in,] and they contend with us also in casting the most dry [seeds]. And
4. † <sup>wolves are</sup> the ~~wolf~~ <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>their</sup> lurking in his lairs. We drive <sup>on</sup> ~~him~~ <sup>on</sup> [~~before us~~].  
 † They reach ~~es~~ <sup>are</sup> the desert. We exult. Our garments get soiled. They ~~is~~ <sup>are</sup> taken, or escape ~~s~~ <sup>they</sup> to his holes. Then by the Prince are
5. supplied the juicy dates. We drink. We are splendidly adorned with sandals that are perfumed. And we are wont to wear collars having a double row of pearls and of gems.
6. <sup>We are they who</sup> ~~As to us we~~ coerce the abandoned, the seditious, and the slothful, but we strongly love the orderly and the steady. And the base we stigmatise.
7. Our strong camels fit for travelling sweep on proudly and are lean [*i.e.* hardy]. And the bow-twang sounds sharply, and the sword-clash is frequent. And the smart [soldier] is made welcome, but the disapproved
8. is dismissed. The crafty plunderers acted ferociously, but they were punished. We were greatly excited. There was a scouting; and many a one suffering hunger with a fixed look [*i.e.* determinately]. And the youths advanced along the highlands. And surrounded was
9. the rear [of the enemy]. There was a struggle for the victory, both by those deprived of their wives and by the ravisher. The contest was fierce: but by those deprived of their wives there was quickly gained

\* It would seem that a scarcity had compelled them to give up the pursuit of glory and revenge for that of agriculture.

† v. Burckhardt's Arabia. ii. 379.

an ascendancy. And now the plunderer is shivering, being himself stripp'd and

10. creeping on slowly. For he who afflicted us,—either the sword's point has scarr'd, or being famished he is enfeebled, and escape is taken away from him.

*The words under the ten-line Inscription.*

The scarcity still remains. The scarcity <sup>is</sup> distressing <sup>a large</sup> ~~all who~~ <sup>live.</sup> ~~portion of the~~ Tribe.

*No. 3.—The four-line Inscription.*

The provision merchants being found guilty were seized, <sup>x</sup> built up, and perished on the spot, and are withered away. They who perished from exhaustion were one hundred.

This Inscription seems to record some act of severe justice, or it may be of injustice, towards the sellers of food in a famine,—similar to that ascribed to *Nadir Kuli*, in Frazer's *Kuzzilbash*, vol. iii. p. 5.—

“I remember on one occasion his unexpectedly joining a division of the army which in general was attached to the camp of the Shah, and finding that the soldiers were ill-supplied with grain, and forced to purchase wholesome food at an extravagant rate, the persons whose duty it was to supply the bazaar ~~was~~ immediately sent for, and while themselves were undergoing a strict examination, their dwellings were searched with equal severity: the stores of grain and choice food of different descriptions found there, sufficiently declared that, however neglectful of the soldiers' comfort, they had amply provided for their own. The trembling wretches attempted to excuse themselves, but were sternly stopped by the General. ‘By the head of the Prophet! I wonder not that the enemies of the King should prosper, and rebels abound, when the soldiers of the state are starved by vermin like you, who fatten on the meat they should eat; but I will teach you and the like of you to feed upon pillaw and kubaubs, while my soldiers are even in want of bread and sour milk!’ He issued his orders; the stores of the miserable wretches were distributed among the soldiers, and they themselves, bound hand and foot, were thrust into a small apartment, the door of which was then built up with brick and mortar. No one dared to expostulate, nor did any one venture to approach the place for ten days, when it was opened by order of the General, and disclosed a horrid spectacle. One of the poor creatures had died before the rest, and the other two had endeavoured to assuage the pangs of hunger by feeding on his body.”

Vintage of grapes in Arabia XXIV, 13.

No. 4.—The two-line Inscription.

There comes merely a grape-gleaning. The vat is prepared and the press, and the husbandmen are diligent and unwearied. And there comes a perishing,—the effeminate youths are adorned and perfume their garments and strut proudly.

A moral sentence pointing out the strong contrast between industry and luxury.

With respect to the date of these Inscriptions,—the use of Ethiopic letters, or of letters closely resembling the Ethiopic, and the introduction also of words, which are apparently not of Arabic but Ethiopic origin,—these are circumstances which would seem to imply that these Inscriptions were not cut before the Abyssinian Dynasty reigned in Yemen. If this be so, since only eight sovereigns, Abyssinian or Persian reigned before the conquest of Yemen by the Moslims, about A.D. 630—then eight reigns at thirty years to a reign will give 240 years. Deduct these 240 years from 630, and this will give A.D. 390, or say A.D. 400, as the earliest probable date of these Inscriptions. And the period of 340 years which elapsed between A.D. 400 and A.D. 750, the time when the Arabic language became fixed in its present form under the Abbasid Khalifs, will sufficiently account for the archaic spelling, and great simplicity of grammatical construction,—without taking into the account the known variation between the dialects of *Himyar* and *Koreish*. A greater difference took place in our own language between A.D. 1200 and 1550.

Although, however, this may be the probable date, it is not altogether certain. For the dialects and alphabets of *Habesh* and *Himyar* might have borrowed the one from the other at an earlier æra, and very probably did so. It seems best and safest to speak upon this point with considerable diffidence. The materials for forming a judgment at present before us are too few and scanty to warrant a peremptory decision. What is now said, is offered only as a suggestion, which future investigation may either refute, or confirm, or modify.

For any one who compares the *Hisn Ghoráb* characters with the ancient Hebrew characters on the Shekels—in Walton's Prolegomena, à Wrangham, 2 vols. 8vo. vol. ii. p. 1,—cannot but be struck with the resemblance. If a few variations be made, such as a difference of penmanship and materials will account for, some of the *Hisn Ghoráb*

characters will be found identical with the ancient Hebrew, more especially if we add the props, which are the characteristic distinction of the *Almosnad* alphabet.

I have not attempted the Inscription at *Nakab al Hajr*, because I think with Professor Røediger (Forster, ii. p. 385, n.\*) that it is too small and indistinct to be worth the time and trouble of the attempt. At the risk probably after all of finding all this time and trouble thrown away, the moment a larger and clearer copy of the Inscription is produced. A very small variation in a single character, such as might escape even an accurate copyist, may change the whole drift of a sentence and consequently of the Inscription. Time and toil are things too valuable to be needlessly thrown away. And before they are bestowed, all the certainty that mere mechanism can give, should first be secured. There should be a Daguerreotype, or a cast, or a rubbing, or a tracing, or two or three separate and independant copies. I have accepted Mr. Wellsted's copy as exact, and made no deviation—but I could point out a passage, in which a very minute alteration of a single letter would materially improve the sense, which as it stands does not satisfy me. A glance at the original or at a fac-simile would settle the point at once.

One of the *Hism Ghoráb*, Inscriptions, No. 4, is, it appears, a moral sentence. Amongst the multitude of Inscriptions<sup>x</sup> scattered over the Arabian Peninsula, may there not also be many which are moral sentences and proverbs? We know that this was a favourite branch of literature amongst the ancient Arabians, and that remains of it are still to be found in the collections<sup>of</sup> *Ali* and *Maidani*, already edited, and probably also in the collection of *Lokman*, still in MS. Of *Lokman*, Burckhardt (Travels in Syria, 4to. Lond. 1822, p. 551) mentions a MS. as being seen by him in the Convent Library on Mount Sinai. And that such a work existed and was valued in Mohammed's day is clear from a passage in the 2nd vol. of the *Merat uz Zeman*, by *Yusuf*, surnamed *Sibta'bnul Janzi*. Of this volume, by the kindness and liberality of N. Bland, Esq., I have been permitted to make a transcript. The following is a translation of the passage in which *Lokman* is referred to. The Arabic is in Plate 5. I insert the whole, because it seems to me worthy of attention in more than one point of view.

“ And in this year (the tenth year of the prophecy) *Sowid* [or *Sowaid*] *Ben as Samat* came to Mecca; they were wont to call him *Alcamil* [i.e. the perfect] on account of his noble

\* It is an Arabic Proverb *أَبْقَى مِنْ وَجْهِ فِي حَجْرٍ* “More enduring

“than Inscription on a Rock”: “The Arabs of Yemen”, says *Ibn Moosi*, “were wont to write wise sentences on a rock, with a view to their preservation. They say commonly—Inscription in Youth is like Inscription on Rock!”

disposition and superior intellect; and he recited these verses :—

1. "Is there not a Lord who calls the upright? And if he sees his private opinion and his public profession throw doubt the one upon the other,
2. "He invalidates his enterprise: For detraction undermines his dignity, so that success is cut off even from that which is good.
3. "His eyes will make plain to thee that which he is concealing. For they will soon be displaying vehemence of hate and the look of unquietness.
4. "Truly my portion of water brings blessings. What was by my wine" [*i.e.* the pleasure I took in drinking wine] "endured too long. For he is the best of patrons who enriches, <sup>and it is not</sup> but takes ~~nothing~~ away." [*i.e.* the drunkard's stock of wine is consumed as soon as gained; whereas the gains of the water-drinker remain with him.] "And the Prophet of God,—God bless and save him—met *Sowid* and called him to God. And *Sowid* said, 'Perhaps that which is with you is like that which is with me.' Then said the Prophet of God to him, 'And what is with you?' For *Sowid* was eloquent. Then *Sowid* said 'With me is a volume of *Lokman*, that is, of his wisdom.' And he shewed it <sup>to</sup> the Prophet of God. Then the Prophet said, 'It is a beautiful work, but with me there is a better than it.' *Sowid* said, 'And what is it?' The Prophet replied, 'A Koran, which God has sent down to be a guide and a light.' And he read to him out of it; and called him to God. And *Sowid* rejected it not, but said 'This indeed is beautiful.'"

From this passage it is clear that the ancient Arabians had one book at least, and it is not probable that this was the only one, for in

the same MS. volume—folio 40, line 15—are found these words, of which the Arabic is given in Plate 5.

“ They who are skilled in history say, that *Ommiyah* had read the ancient books.”

This may refer, and probably does refer, to the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, genuine or apocryphal. But it may include other writings, such as Proverbs and Poetry, which we know were at that time in existence, and which, as we have seen in the case of *Sowid Ben Assamat*, were taken as guides of life in the absence or rejection of better ones.

If a full and complete collection were made of the ancient ~~Arabic~~ <sup>in Arabia</sup> Inscriptions, more especially of the longest, it is possible that a something might yet be recovered of ~~the~~ ancient Poetry, ancient Ethics, and even of ~~the~~ ancient History ~~of Arabia~~. The success of Major Rawlinson with the Arrow-headed Inscriptions, and of Champollion with the Egyptian, are evidences that, with similar materials and similar diligence in the use of them, some light may even yet be thrown on the ancient literature of Arabia.











