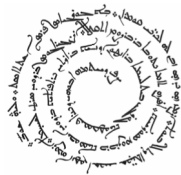


# The History, Poetry, and Genealogy of the Yemen



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# The History, Poetry, and Genealogy of the Yemen

The Akhbar of Abid b. Sharya Al-Jurhumi

Elise W. Crosby



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Elise Werner Crosby



## ABBREVIATIONS

Full references for the works listed here are given in the Bibliography.

<i>Akbbār</i>	‘Abīd b. Sharya al-Jurhumī, <i>Akbbār al-Yaman</i> ...
B	British Library ms. Or. 2901 (see Rieu, <i>Supplementary Catalogue</i> ..., 365)
<i>Bad’</i>	al-Maqdisi, <i>Kitāb al-bad’ wa-t-ta’rikh</i>
<i>Buldān</i>	Yāqūt, <i>Mu’jam al-buldān</i>
EP	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i> , 2nd edition
ESA	Epigraphic South Arabian
<i>GAL</i>	Brockelmann, <i>Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur</i>
<i>GAS</i>	Sezgin, <i>Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums</i>
<i>Iklīl</i>	al-Hamdānī, <i>al-Iklīl</i>
<i>Jambara</i>	al-Qurashī, <i>Jambarat ash’ār al-‘arab</i>
<i>Kāmil</i>	Ibn al-Athīr, <i>al-Kāmil fī t-ta’rikh</i>
<i>Ma’ārif</i>	Ibn Qutayba, <i>Kitāb al ma’ārif</i>
<i>Mu’ammārīn</i>	Abū Hātim as-Sijistānī, <i>Kitāb al-mu’ammārīn</i>
<i>Mulūk</i>	Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, <i>Mulūk Ḥimyar wa-aqyāl al-Yaman</i>
<i>Muntakhabāt</i>	Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī, <i>Muntakhabāt fī akbbār al-Yaman</i> ...
<i>Murūj</i>	al-Mas‘ūdī, <i>Murūj adb-Dhabab wa-ma’ādin al-jawhar</i>
<i>Nashwa</i>	Ibn Sa‘īd al-Maghribī, “Die Geschichte der ‘Reinen Araber’ ...”
<i>Qur’ān</i>	citations after Arberry, <i>Koran Interpreted</i>
Ṭab., <i>Tafsīr</i>	aṭ-Ṭabarī, <i>Tafsīr al-Qur’ān</i>
<i>Ta’rikh</i>	aṭ-Ṭabarī, <i>Ta’rikh ar-rusul wa-l-mulūk</i>
<i>Tanbīh</i>	al-Mas‘ūdī, <i>Kitāb at-tanbīh wa-l-isbrāf</i>
<i>Tijān</i>	Ibn Hishām, <i>Kitāb at-tijān</i>



## PART I: INTRODUCTION

### THE *AKHBĀR AL-YAMAN*

The *Akbbār al-Yaman* or, to give it its full title, *Akbbār al-Yaman wa-ash'arubā wa-ansābuhā* [The history, poetry, and genealogy of the Yemen] (hereinafter *Akbbār*), is a work on the pre-Islamic history of Southern Arabia. It is attributed to 'Abīd b. Sharyā al-Jurhumī, who reportedly lived in the seventh century A.D. We are told that 'Abīd was an expert on South Arabian matters, and that Mu'āwiya I summoned him to the Umayyad court on the suggestion of 'Amr b. al-Āṣ, who considered 'Abīd to be "the most knowledgeable of those still alive ... concerning the tales and the genealogies of the Arabs and the one best qualified to describe the vicissitudes of fortune that have occurred."<sup>1</sup>

The basis of this study is the text which purports to preserve 'Abīd's presentation to Mu'āwiya. It was published in 1928 in Hyderabad, together with Ibn Hishām's *Kitāb at-Tijān* (hereafter referred to as *Tijān*). *Akbbār* claims to be a record of nightly conversations between 'Abīd b. Sharyā and Mu'āwiya. On these occasions, 'Abīd related to Mu'āwiya the pre-Islamic history of the Arabs on the Arabian Peninsula, and everything about that subject the caliph wished to know.

Islamic scholars have debated both the author and his work. Modern scholars question 'Abīd's existence as well as the attribution of *Akbbār* to him. Fritz Krenkow, in particular, the editor of *Tijān* and *Akbbār*, cast doubt on 'Abīd's existence, his authorship of the work, and the historical validity of the material in *Akbbār*, which he dismissed as merely "Arabic folklore."<sup>2</sup>

*Akbbār* is couched in the form of stories intended to entertain the caliph and inform him about one of his great interests, the events and men of the *Jābilyya*. The lengthy dialogue between Mu'āwiya and 'Abīd records

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<sup>1</sup> *Akbbār*, 312.8–11. References to *Akbbār* are by page and line of the printed edition, reproduced on pp. 203–388 below; references to the translation are by page numbers in this volume.

<sup>2</sup> Fritz Krenkow, "The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore," 236.

‘Abīd’s narration of six major sagas, embroidered by many poems which enliven his account and are meant to boost their credibility. Mu‘āwiya’s secretaries presumably wrote down the conversations, which were edited later by an unknown editor or editors. Some material which is obviously of a later date also entered the text.

The exact chain of *Akbbār*’s transmission from the Umayyad court to its last transmitter, Ibn Hishām’s student Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Barqī (d. 249/863), is not clear. No *isnād* is indicated at the beginning of the work.<sup>3</sup> The earliest preserved manuscripts date from as late as the eleventh/seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> The history of the text is therefore uncertain from the time of its oral presentation to the date of al-Barqī’s transmission and its appearance more than nine centuries later in manuscripts.

With respect to persons and events, the text contains many anachronistic references. Such references, for example, include allusions to a Mahdī figure and to the Tubba’ kings as heralding the coming of Muḥammad. In Mu‘āwiya’s presence, ‘Abīd is dubiously recorded using Shī‘ite formulae. Allusions to distant peoples little known in ‘Abīd’s and Mu‘āwiya’s time<sup>5</sup> also cast suspicions on the dating and authenticity of the text as it is preserved.

‘Abīd might easily be considered nothing more than a name and a figment of the imagination, so little concrete information do we have about his life and writing. Islamic sources from the centuries after his presumed time of death during the caliphate of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (65/685 – 86/705) mention only his name and a few biographical data and give neither his birth nor his genealogy.<sup>6</sup> ‘Abīd does not introduce himself in the text. It only records that he was in ar-Raqqā when Mu‘āwiya summoned him.<sup>7</sup> Ibn an-Nadīm reports, however, that Mu‘āwiya summoned ‘Abīd from Ṣan‘ā’ in the Yemen.

Islamic authors do not usually attribute titles of specific works to ‘Abīd. They describe him as a sage versed in South Arabian matters, genealogy, and general events of the *Jābiliyya*. They refer to his “Book” as extant and in circulation. Ibn an-Nadīm specifically refers to a *Kitāb al-amṭhāl* and a

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<sup>3</sup> See n. 1 to chap. 6 on *Akbbār*, 312.4, p. 69 below, and chap. 4 below, p. 51, for a discussion of al-Barqī and his role in the transmission of the text.

<sup>4</sup> The British Library manuscript is dated 1031/1622. The Hyderabad manuscript is dated 1034/1625. See chap. 5 below, pp. 61f.

<sup>5</sup> See chap. 4 below, pp. 53–58.

<sup>6</sup> See chap. 1 below pp. 5f., and especially Ibn an-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, 89.

<sup>7</sup> *Akbbār*, 312.9, trans., 70.

*Kitāb al-mulūk wa-akbbār al-mādīn*, but not to any title corresponding exactly to the one in the preserved manuscripts.

‘Abīd’s work treats six sagas or cycles. Their subject matter by and large lacks outside confirmation. Except for the South Arabian inscriptions, a limited number of North Arabian pre-Islamic inscriptions, the poems of pre-Islamic poets, and the allusions of the *Qur’ān*, we have little information on pre-Islamic Arabia relevant to the events ‘Abīd describes. Apart from Jewish and Christian religious literature, sources originating outside Arabia provide only negligible information. The detailed accounts of the subjects ‘Abīd presents to Mu‘āwiya first become available for us in *Akbbār*. Nothing but their names is known about the several ancient transmitters Ibn an-Nadīm lists as ‘Abīd’s sources. Internal evidence in *Akbbār* clearly reveals Qur’ānic and Biblical bases for the work. Further points of departure for determining how ‘Abīd’s work took shape are references scattered in pre-Islamic poetry and Epigraphic South Arabian (ESA).



# 1 ‘ABĪD B. SHARYA AND HIS *AKHBĀR*

Bibliographical information about ‘Abīd is scant. Even the correct vocalization of his name is uncertain. The Islamic sources disagree as to whether his name was ‘Abīd or ‘Ubayd. The British Library manuscript, dated 1031/1622, gives ‘Ubayd b. Sharya.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Khallikān, however, specifically vocalizes ‘Abīd b. Sharya,<sup>2</sup> though he does not indicate how he knows that the name is ‘Abīd rather than ‘Ubayd. In the Yemen nowadays, the common pronunciation of this name is ‘Ubayd. Nonetheless, the contemporary historian Qāḍī Muḥammad al-Akwa’ of Ṣan‘ā’, editor of volumes 1 and 2 of al-Hamdānī’s *al-Iklīl*,<sup>3</sup> follows Ibn Khallikān’s reading.

The form Sharya, which is often not given properly, is confirmed by a verse in *ṭawīl* meter by al-Hamdānī in the first volume of *al-Iklīl*.<sup>4</sup> The meaning of *sharya* is a colocynth, a palm tree, a mountain lote tree from which bows are made, or a creeping plant such as a melon or cucumber. *Sharya* is the *nomen unitatis* of *sharyān*, *shiryān*, or *shary*. Ibn Durayd<sup>5</sup> gives Sharya as a proper name meaning colocynth.

‘Abīd’s *nisba* al-Jurhumī<sup>6</sup> refers to the Jurhumite tribe that migrated to Mecca and settled around the Ka’ba in pre-Islamic times. Though his tribal affiliation seems generally acknowledged, ‘Abīd’s origin and residence are not known. The only biographical information *Akhhār* supplies is that ‘Abīd was the last of the Jurhumites,<sup>7</sup> and, as noted above, that he was in ar-Raqqā on the Euphrates when Mu‘āwiya summoned him. A tradition in *Tījān* records ‘Abīd as saying, “... a Yemenī *shaykh* in Ṣan‘ā’ told us in the year of the *rida* ...” a story about a man from the ‘Ād al-Aṣghar.<sup>8</sup> Yāqūt

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Ubayd b. Sharya appears on folio 111a of the ms. See Charles Rieu, *Supplementary Catalogue to the Arabic Manuscripts of the British Museum*, 365 no. 578, Or. Ms. 2901.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ aẓ-ẓamān*, 4.420.

<sup>3</sup> Cairo, 1383/1963, and Cairo, 1386/1966.

<sup>4</sup> *Iklīl*, 1.6.

<sup>5</sup> *Kitāb al-Ishtiqāq*, 328.

<sup>6</sup> See W. Montgomery Watt, *EP*, 2:603, s.v. “Djurhum.”

<sup>7</sup> *Akhhār*, 313.13, trans., 71.

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Hishām, *Kitāb at-tījān*, 66.2.

quotes Ibn ‘Asākir as saying that Mu‘āwiya met ‘Abīd at al-Ḥīra in Iraq.<sup>9</sup> Qāḍī Muḥammad al-Akwa’ states that Raḥba, on the Ṣan‘ā’ plain, may have been ‘Abīd’s residence,<sup>10</sup> but written tradition does not substantiate this. These traditions suggest that ‘Abīd’s origin was in the Yemen, and that he lived there until, for unknown reasons, he traveled north to Syria.

‘Abīd’s fate after his sojourn at Mu‘āwiya’s court is unknown. No reference exists to the precise year or place of his death. He is credited with a very long life. The fancy of some later scholars attributes to him a life span of 220, 240, and even 300 years. ‘Abīd’s own claim when asked his age by Mu‘āwiya of 150 years is likewise not credible.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī included ‘Abīd in the list of *mu‘ammarīn*, indicating wide acceptance of the tradition that he lived a long time.<sup>12</sup>

We have no clear information about ‘Abīd’s birth. In *Tījān*, Ibn Hishām states that he was alive when the war of Dāḥis took place in Central-Arabia (ca. A.D. 575–595).<sup>13</sup> In *Akbbār*, ‘Abīd states that he heard “a Ḥimyarite before *Islām*” report a tradition about Tubba’ al-Aqran.<sup>14</sup> Ibn an-Nadīm reports that ‘Abīd was alive during the Prophet’s lifetime, but that he never heard him make a statement (*ḥadīth*).

‘Abīd was probably born around the end of the sixth century or the beginning of the seventh in the Yemen, where he spent most of his life. He traveled north and visited the court at Damascus before 42/663, the year of the death of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, who had suggested his attendance to Mu‘āwiya. Because Ibn an-Nadīm reports that ‘Abīd died after Mu‘āwiya during the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, these dates suggest that he lived fewer than one hundred years, a likely life span.

Another fragment concerning ‘Abīd’s identity comes from Krenkow’s suggestion, adopted by Sezgin,<sup>15</sup> that ‘Abīd was a *rāwī* of the poet al-A’shā (ca. A.D. 570–625), who transmitted poems of Ṭarafa (fl. later 6th century). Ibn al-Anbārī’s *Sharḥ mu‘allaqat Ṭarafa* lists an *isnād* which Ibn al-Anbārī uses to begin a report on a tradition about al-Mutalammis and Ṭarafa. It reads in

<sup>9</sup> Yāqūt, *Irsḥād al-arīb ilā ma’rifat al-adīb*, 5.10.

<sup>10</sup> Qāḍī al-Akwa’ mentioned this tradition to me in Ṣan‘ā’ in 1981. I have not found it documented by any other source.

<sup>11</sup> *Akbbār*, 313.13, trans., 71.

<sup>12</sup> Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī, *Kitāb al-mu‘ammarīn*, 40ff.

<sup>13</sup> *Tījān*, 209.17.

<sup>14</sup> *Akbbār*, 435.10–11.

<sup>15</sup> *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums (GAS)*, 1:260, 2:117, 131, although, as the index of vol. 2:766 seems to indicate, Sezgin had some reservations about the identification.

part: *ḥaddathani* (Simāk b. Ḥarb) *‘Ubaydun riwāyata ‘l-A’shā qāla ḥaddathani ‘l-A’shā ...*<sup>16</sup> Only the *ism* for ‘Abīd/‘Ubayd is given. The conclusion that this person was ‘Abīd b. Sharya al-Jurhumī is highly conjectural as based solely on the name ‘Ubayd in this *isnād*.

Though Ibn al-Anbārī’s statement is not sufficient proof, it is possible that ‘Abīd and al-A’shā had a professional association. Yāqūt locates ‘Abīd at al-Hīra, where al-A’shā lived. Al-A’shā died around 625, when ‘Abīd was a young man, and ‘Abīd thrice quotes verses from al-A’shā’s *Dīwān* in *Akhbār*.<sup>17</sup> Of course, none of this definitely proves their association.

Sezgin (*GAS*, 1:260, no. 3) gives the impression that ‘Abīd was quoted by Wahb b. Munabbih in his *Kitāb al-mulūk* (*GAS*, 1:306, no. 1), in the tradition preserved by Ibn Hishām in *Tījān*, 65ff. There, *qāla Wahb*, line 21, is probably meant to indicate the end of the previous paragraph and is not a quotation by Wahb of a tradition from ‘Abīd.

It is tempting to draw a connection between ‘Abīd and Wahb based on their Yemenī backgrounds. Both of them came from the Yemen. Wahb was born in 34/654 in Dhamār, south of Ṣan‘ā’, and died ca. 110/728. Therefore, Wahb reached maturity near the end of ‘Abīd’s life. Raif Khoury<sup>18</sup> reports the tradition from ath-Tha‘labī that Wahb visited Damascus before the death of Mu‘āwiya (d. 60/680). In that case, this event would have occurred before Wahb was thirty years old. If Wahb really did visit Mu‘āwiya’s court, he might have come in contact with ‘Abīd or have learned about his traditions; but surely then Wahb would have attributed this tradition in *Tījān* directly to him or would have cited ‘Abīd as his authority elsewhere. In fact, ‘Abīd’s two traditions in *Tījān* (66.2, 209.17) are not given on Wahb’s authority. No real evidence exists which allows us to associate Wahb directly with the transmission of traditions from ‘Abīd or from *Akhbār*.

<sup>16</sup> Ibn al-Anbārī, *Sbarḥ mu’allaqat Ṭarafa*, 1. For Simāk b. Ḥarb, see Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabdhīb at-tabdhīb*, 4.232. Simāk reportedly died in 123/740–1. His authorities ‘Abd Allāh az-Zubayr and ‘Ikrima flourished in the 7th century, and therefore it might be possible that Simāk was also a *rāwī* of ‘Abīd, although Ibn Ḥajar does not mention him.

<sup>17</sup> *Akhbār*, 354, 355, trans. 132f., and 367, but ‘Abīd attributes the poem on p. 355 to Asad b. Rabī‘a al-Kilābī, whom I have not been able to identify. The poem, however, belongs to al-A’shā. See chap. 11 §7, p. 193.

‘Abīd’s misattribution of the poem and the plethora of variants to the text of the *Dīwān* indicate that, assuming that this misattribution was his and not a mistake in transmission or a scribal error, he probably was not a *rāwī* of al-A’shā. A *rāwī* of a famous poet would not knowingly attribute a poem of his master to a lesser poet.

<sup>18</sup> Raif Khoury, *Wahb b. Munabbih*, 287.

During the century following his death, ‘Abīd was known by name to Muslim transmitters and scholars. Ibn Hishām<sup>19</sup> reports a tradition, on the authority of Makhūl ad-Dimashqī (d. ca. 112/730), from Abū Šāliḥ Dhakwān as-Sammān al-Madanī (d. 101/719), who mentions ‘Abīd’s report on the sixth-century Meccan ‘Abd Allāh b. Jud‘ān. Also in *Tijān*, ‘Abīd’s report on the ‘Ād al-Aṣghar is preserved by Ibn Hishām in the long tradition Ibn Ishāq (d. 150/767) received indirectly from ‘Abīd.<sup>20</sup>

Muḥammad b. as-Sā’ib al-Kalbī (d. 146/763) also knows about ‘Abīd. According to Ibn Ḥajar,<sup>21</sup> al-Kalbī reports that ‘Abīd lived 240 or 300 years, and that he was a Muslim. He then gives the account of ‘Abīd informing Mu‘āwiya about the strange event at a funeral during the *Jābilyya* (see the following paragraph).

Many later scholars refer to him and his works. Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī<sup>22</sup> (d. 255/809) lists ‘Abīd as one of the *mu‘ammarīn*, and as an aged sage of 300 or 220 years who came to Mu‘āwiya’s court to answer the caliph’s questions. Mu‘āwiya asked him about the best kind of wealth, gold and silver, and about what we would call the secret of his longevity, that is, how he stood up and how he sat down, what were his eating, drinking, and sleeping habits, and related matters. At the caliph’s request, ‘Abīd also described the strangest event he had observed during the *Jābilyya*: He once passed by the funeral procession of Ḥurayth b. Jabala of the Banū ‘Udhra, without knowing the deceased personally. ‘Abīd recited a poem. When he finished, a mourner told him that the poem’s original author was the dead man, who had described in it a stranger weeping at the bier, thus foretelling ‘Abīd’s role at the funeral.

Al-Jāhiz<sup>23</sup> (d. 255/869) speaks of ‘Abīd as a genealogist, transmitter, and scholar of the *Jābilyya*. He also calls him a sage and orator. He recognizes ‘Abīd as an authority on the Arabian past, yet he does not refrain from mentioning Khālīd b. Yazīd’s opinion that ‘Abīd knew only the exterior aspect of history.

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<sup>19</sup> See n. 13 above. This same tradition also occurs in *Iklīl*, 8.161. See *GAS*, 1:404, for Makhūl; and Ibn Ḥajar, *Tabdhīb*, 3.219, for Abū Šāliḥ Dhakwān as-Sammān.

<sup>20</sup> See n. 8 above.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣāba fī tamyiz aṣ-ṣaḥāba*, 5.115.

<sup>22</sup> *Mu‘ammarīn*, 40ff.

<sup>23</sup> al-Jāhiz, ‘Amr b. Baḥr: *al-Bayān wa-’t-tabyīn*, 1.361, and *Kitāb al-bukhālā’*, 67.

Ibn Qutayba<sup>24</sup> describes ‘Abīd as Mu‘āwīya’s conversational partner and reports the strange story of ‘Abīd’s recital of Ḥurayth b. Jabala’s poem at his funeral. He also credits ‘Abīd with the tale of Luqmān and the seven vultures, observing that it is neither found in a revealed book nor reported by other authorities. He states that ‘Abīd is the first to elaborate Luqmān’s tale.

Al-Hamdānī<sup>25</sup> (d. 334/945) often cites ‘Abīd (Ibn Sharya) in his works as an authority for traditions. He reports in a tradition preserved by Ibn Ḥajar<sup>26</sup> that because ‘Abīd’s work passed through a constant process of additions and deletions, no two manuscripts of it contained identical texts. Al-Hamdānī reports traditions from ‘Abīd on the Ḥimyar and the Jurhum in every extant volume of al-Iklīl, except the tenth. These traditions also appear in al-Hamdānī’s *Südarabisches mushtabih*.

Al-Mas‘ūdī<sup>27</sup> (d. 345/956) refers to ‘Abīd as an authority on past civilizations and the history of the Ḥimyar and the Kahlān. He quotes ‘Abīd extensively on the chronology of the Ḥimyarite kings in the Yemen and the tales of the Ṭasm and Jadīs. Al-Mas‘ūdī describes ‘Abīd as Mu‘āwīya’s informant on the persons, events, and genealogies of ancient times. He says that ‘Abīd’s work was well known and in the public domain but adds that some scholars held a low opinion of it, considering that it had been conceived as entertainment for a ruler. Though al-Mas‘ūdī questions the veracity of ‘Abīd’s reports, he obviously believes that he was a historical personality. He lends credence to his traditions on the Ḥimyarite kings as well as the Ṭasm and Jadīs by including excerpts from them in his own writing.

Ibn an-Nadīm<sup>28</sup> (d. 385/995) is, to our knowledge, the first to detail ‘Abīd’s biography. He indicates ‘Abīd’s authorities al-Kayyis an-Namarī, Zayd b. al-Kayyis an-Namarī, al-Lusayn al-Jurhumī, and ‘Abd Wadd al-Jurhumī. Sezgin<sup>29</sup> lists Zaid b. al-Kayyis an-Namarī as an early transmitter who wrote a book on genealogy. Al-Hamdānī<sup>30</sup> quotes a poem which mentions his father, al-Kayyis, the genealogist of an-Namr. Both al-Lusayn and ‘Abd Wadd were fellow Jurhumites, but I have not been able to identify any

<sup>24</sup> Ibn Qutayba, *Uyūn al-akbbār*, 2.305, and *Kitāb mukhtalif al-ḥadīth*, 313.

<sup>25</sup> See n. 4 above; also *Iklīl*, 8, trans., 18, trans. and 19; *Iklīl*, 2.47, 410; and *Südarabisches mushtabih*, 16.

<sup>26</sup> See n. 21 above.

<sup>27</sup> al-Mas‘ūdī, *Kitāb at-tanbīh wa-l-isbrāf*, 82; al-Mas‘ūdī, *Murāj adb-dhabab wa-ma‘ādīn al-jawbar*, 2.208, 264, trans., 2.392, 434.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn an-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, trans., 1.194trans. .

<sup>29</sup> *GAS*, 1:263.

<sup>30</sup> *Iklīl*, 1.6. In the meter *ṭawīl*, the form occurs as an-Namrī.

of them further. As we have seen above, Ibn an-Nadīm attributes two books to ‘Abīd: *Kitāb al-amthāl* [The book of proverbs], and *Kitāb al-mulūk wa-akbbār al-māḍīn* [The book of kings and the history of men of the past], neither of them preserved. The second title could possibly refer to *Akbbār*, but this is quite uncertain.

Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī<sup>31</sup> (d. 487/1094) quotes proverbs, and explanations of proverbs, on ‘Abīd’s authority. He does not attribute a special *amthāl* book to him. The quoted proverbs were no doubt derived from the work to which Ibn an-Nadīm refers.

Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī<sup>32</sup> (d. 573/1117) in *Mulūk Ḥimyar wa-aqyāl al-Yaman* quotes extensive passages of *Akbbār* almost verbatim. The passages concern the sagas of the ‘Ād, Thamūd, Ṭasm and Jadīs, and the Ḥimyarite kings. They contain both prose and poetry and are introduced by *qāla ‘Abīd fī kitābibi*. In his *Muntakhabāt fī akbbār al-Yaman*,<sup>33</sup> Nashwān reports ‘Abīd’s quotation of a verse from Tubba’ As’ad Abū Karīb.

Al-Maydānī<sup>34</sup> (d. 518/1124) cites ‘Abīd b. Sharya’s collection of proverbs as a basis for his own *Majma’ al-Amthāl*. He does not specifically mention its title. Al-Maydānī’s reference shows that ‘Abīd’s collection was in circulation as late as the sixth/twelfth century, more than a century after Ibn an-Nadīm first noted it.

Yāqūt<sup>35</sup> (d. 626/1229) lists ‘Abīd b. Sharya in his *Irshād al-Arīb*, giving alternate forms for Sharya, such as Sariyya and Sāriyya. He also recounts the information contained in Abū Ḥātim as-Sijistānī’s *Kitāb al-Mu‘ammarīn* about Mu‘āwiya’s questions to ‘Abīd and the story of the funeral procession.

Ibn Khallikān<sup>36</sup> (d. 681/1282) reports that ‘Abīd was credited with a life 300 years long. More significantly, he indicates what he considers the correct vocalizations of ‘Abīd and Sharya, an *a* vowel in the first syllable of ‘Abīd and vowellessness of the *r* of Sharya.

Ibn Ḥajar<sup>37</sup> (d. 852/1449) has ‘Abīd’s name as ‘Ubayd, a vocalization his editor presumably derived from indications in the manuscripts. He specifically vocalizes Shariyya, on the pattern of the name ‘Aṭiyya. Concerning

<sup>31</sup> Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, passim.

<sup>32</sup> Nashwān, *Mulūk Ḥimyar wa-aqyāl al-Yaman*, passim, esp. p. 143 for the reference to “his [‘Abīd’s] book.”

<sup>33</sup> Nashwān, *Muntakhabāt*, 103, and *Akbbār*, 404.6.

<sup>34</sup> al-Maydānī, *Majma’ al-amthāl*, 1.6.

<sup>35</sup> Yāqūt, *Irshād al-arīb*, 5.10ff. *Ta’rīkh Dimashq* by Ibn ‘Asākir, referred to by Franz Rosenthal, *EP*, 3:937, s.v. “Ibn Sharya,” is not available.

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-a’yān*, 4.417, 420.

<sup>37</sup> Ibn Ḥajar, *Iṣāba*, 5.115.

‘Abīd’s life, Ibn Ḥajar reports the traditions mentioned above from Muḥammad Ibn al-Kalbī and al-Hamdānī and recognizes him as one of the *mu’ammārīn*. He also records a tradition that his name is ‘Umayr, adding, however, that this may be a corruption of ‘Ubayd.

Modern bibliographers identify several works attributed to ‘Abīd, as well as manuscripts of the extant works. Brockelmann<sup>38</sup> lists the extant *Akbbār* and the non-extant *Kitāb al-mulūk wa-akbbār al-māḍīn* as known from Ibn an-Nadīm. He states that *Akbbār* is found together with *Tjān* in a Ṣan‘ā’ manuscript, copies of which are preserved in Hyderabad’s Aṣāfiya mosque, the Berlin Library, and the British Library. The contents of these manuscripts and the Hyderabad edition based on them is examined in chapter 5 below.

Sezgin<sup>39</sup> lists *Akbbār* as extant in the British Library manuscript and refers to the non-extant *Kitāb al-amtbāl*. He refers to *Tjān* as containing historical quotations from ‘Abīd through Wahb b. Munabbih(?) and Ibn Ishāq. As far as Wahb is concerned, this may not be correct.

Other modern scholars have recognized ‘Abīd’s importance. Von Kremer<sup>40</sup> was the first to appreciate ‘Abīd as an author. He describes him as a transmitter of folklore whose material on the ancient history of the Yemen must not be ignored. In ‘Abīd’s work he sees a historical romance that has preserved the names of historical kings and reflects, more or less correctly, actual events transformed into literature.

Goldziher<sup>41</sup> recognizes ‘Abīd as a South Arabian scholar whose work was already widely known among Islamic writers during the first three centuries of Islam. He classifies ‘Abīd’s writings as historical, or as belonging to the *awā’il* literature, but specifically not part of Islamic religious literature. Dating to the first century of Islam, ‘Abīd was among the first to transmit traditions that record the earliest events of Arab history.

Sellheim<sup>42</sup> concerns himself with ‘Abīd’s *Kitāb al-amtbāl*, which he places in the classic genre of proverb collections already popular in Umayyad times. Later authors who wrote books on proverbs, such as Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī and al-Maydānī, list ‘Abīd as a source. ‘Abīd’s collection, were it preserved, would no doubt turn out to be a compendium of wisdom

<sup>38</sup> *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur (GAL), Supplementband*, 1:100, 1a.

<sup>39</sup> *GAS*, 1:260.

<sup>40</sup> A. von Kremer, *Über die südarabische Sage*, 46ff.

<sup>41</sup> I. Goldziher, *Muslim Studies*, 1:169, 2:189.

<sup>42</sup> R. Sellheim, *Die klassisch-arabischen Sprichwörtersammlungen*, 29, 149.

sayings of the pre-Islamic and earliest Islamic periods. It definitely was a source for the later *amthāl* collections.

Fritz Krenkow and Nabia Abbott started the serious debate about the historicity of ‘Abīd b. Sharyā, his credibility as an author, and the authenticity of *Akbbār*. They assume diametrically opposite positions.

Krenkow,<sup>43</sup> who collated the manuscripts (see ch. 5 below, p. 64) for the Hyderabad edition of *Tījān* and *Akbbār*, dismisses ‘Abīd as a fictitious person. He reasons that he cannot have existed as a person or as an author because ‘Abīd is not included in the biographies of the traditionists. Yet, as shown above, ‘Abīd’s traditions in *Tījān* were known to other transmitters in the century after his death. Krenkow believes Ibn Ishāq to be the author of *Akbbār*, and Ibn Hishām to be its editor. His reasoning is as follows: Muḥammad al-Barqī, a student of Ibn Hishām, was the main authority for the transmission of Ibn Hishām’s edition of Ibn Ishāq’s *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, and he is also mentioned in the opening *isnād* of *Akbbār* as its transmitter. Therefore *Akbbār*, transmitted by al-Barqī, may also have been edited by Ibn Hishām, whose interest in the subject matter of *Akbbār* is also indicated by his authorship of *Tījān*. Krenkow also refers to Asad b. Mūsā (d. 212/827), one of Ibn Hishām’s *shaykhs* and his authority for *Tījān*, and says that one could attribute the authorship of *Akbbār* to Asad because he was an Akhbārī and a Yemenite and could be interested in “showing up the glories of the South Arabians,” along the example of *Tījān*.<sup>44</sup> Krenkow then concludes that Ibn Ishāq is the real author of *Akbbār* because in its preserved form it contains five additional traditions in Ibn Ishāq’s name (see ch. 4 below, p. 52).

Abbott<sup>45</sup> defends ‘Abīd’s authorship and the authenticity of the work. She explains that though ‘Abīd is considered a historian, he did not receive any traditions from Muḥammad, as Ibn an-Nadīm reports, and for this reason his exclusion from the body of traditionists is not unusual. She contends that Krenkow was mistaken in crediting Ibn Hishām with the editorship of the work because Ibn Hishām is not once mentioned as either a transmitter or an editor of *Akbbār*. Krenkow assumed that Asad b. Mūsā was a Yemenī. Abbott points out that he was not a Yemenī, but that he was an Umayyad and a resident of Egypt. It is therefore not necessary, or even plausible, to assume that Asad b. Mūsā had authored *Akbbār*.

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<sup>43</sup> Fritz Krenkow, “The Two Oldest Books on Arabic Folklore,” 234–36.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.

<sup>45</sup> Nabia Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri*, vol. 1: *Historical Texts*, 10ff.

Abbott also rejects Ibn Ishāq’s authorship of *Akbbār*. She contends that some anonymous transmitter or transmitters added material from Ibn Ishāq’s writings to the text of *Akbbār*. Had Ibn Ishāq been the author of the whole work, he would not have failed to use terminology indicating his authorship. Only once does the text read *qāla Ibn Ishāq*.<sup>46</sup> The other additions read *dhakara Ibn Ishāq*,<sup>47</sup> indicating quotations from writings, rather than primary authorship. Thus Abbott disassociates both Ibn Hishām and Ibn Ishāq from *Akbbār*.

Independent of Abbott’s reasoning, additions in the text are clearly marked as such where they occur.<sup>48</sup> They do not pretend to be integral parts of ‘Abīd’s narrative which they interrupt. These additions are explicitly identified as such by the statement, at the conclusion of each one, that at that point ‘Abīd’s narrative resumes.

A great gap remains nonetheless between the first-century ‘Abīd and the third-century al-Barqī, unbridged by any *isnād*. Abbott suggests that Asad b. Mūsā, *shaykh* of both al-Barqī and Ibn Hishām, might provide the link. She speculates that Asad b. Mūsā, a great-grandson of the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd, may have had a copy of *Akbbār* which came to him through his association with the Umayyad family. If it was an old copy, or even the original copy, it might well have lacked indications of any oral transmission. After Asad moved to Egypt, it could eventually have fallen into the hands of his student al-Barqī. As the final transmitter, al-Barqī would give no full *isnād* because the material came to him from his teacher, and nothing more was known of its earlier history.

The following stemmata indicate both Abbott’s and Krenkow’s proposals for the *isnād* of the text:

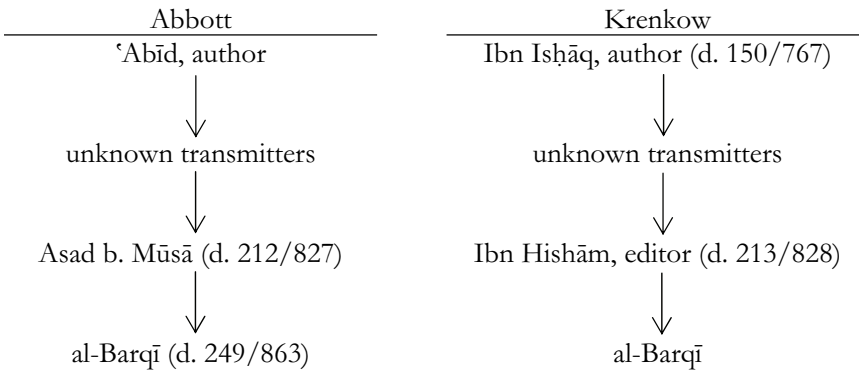
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<sup>46</sup> *Akbbār*, 382.1, trans., 156.

<sup>47</sup> *Akbbār*, 350.6–7, 378.5, 381.18, 394.1.

<sup>48</sup> *Akbbār*, 350.13, 378.11, 379.6, 382.5, 394.13, trans., 126, 151, 152, 156, 173.

An exception is the interpolation on the authority of ash-Sha‘bī about the conquest of Samarqand by Qutayba b. Muslim, 430.5ff.; at its end (line 16), there is no explicit statement to the effect that ‘Abīd’s tale is now resumed.



Franz Rosenthal, in *EP*, s.v. “Ibn Sharya,”<sup>49</sup> expresses skepticism about the attribution of *Aḳbbār* to ‘Abīd and points to some anachronisms in the work. Rosenthal suggests that “the use of [his] figure as a historical narrator does not antedate the early third/ninth century.”

Citations by historians as early as the second/eighth century to ‘Abīd’s presence at Mu‘āwiya’s court, and their quotations of traditions attributed to him (above, p. 8) provide strong evidence that he was more than just a name. As a person, ‘Abīd can be separated from the material preserved for us as *Aḳbbār*. His historical existence neither proves nor disproves *Aḳbbār*’s historical content. And those dubious historical accounts which occur in the text of *Aḳbbār*, as we have it, negate neither ‘Abīd’s existence nor the circumstances reported for *Aḳbbār*’s composition. Here, I accept the historical reality of ‘Abīd b. Sharya as the author of *Aḳbbār*.

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<sup>49</sup> *EP*, 3:937.

## 2 THE CONTENTS OF *AKHBĀR*

In its present form, *Akbbār* consists of six saga cycles:

(1) A report (after a brief introduction describing ‘Abīd’s arrival at Mu‘āwiya’s court) on the dispersion of the tribes from Bābil, and the descendants of Sām, Ḥām, and Yāfith (312–25);

(2) The story of the first and the last ‘Ād, and the Thamūd (325–56, 367–96);

(3) The tale of Luqmān b. ‘Ād and the seven vultures (356–67);

(4) The story of Sulaymān and Bilqīs (411–25);

(5) The saga of the Ḥimyarite kings (396–411, 425–83);

(6) The legend of the Ṭasm and Jadīs (483–88).

Most of the first cycle and all of the second cycle are given in translation below, so the synopsis of the contents here concentrates on those cycles that are not translated.

The work begins with the invocation and a reference to the role of al-Barqī in the transmission of the work. An editor states that Mu‘āwiya was a governor for both ‘Uthmān and ‘Umar, and he ruled by himself over all the earth for twenty years. Because of Mu‘āwiya’s great interest in the days and men of the past, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ suggested that he summon ‘Abīd from ar-Raqqa, as ‘Abīd was known to be an authority on the *Jābiliyya*. Mu‘āwiya sent for him, installed him at court, and instructed his secretaries to record ‘Abīd’s presentation in writing.

The first cycle begins with a description of the *Jābiliyya* in the Yemen. ‘Abīd gives Mu‘āwiya the names of the true Arabs and the arabicized Arabs and describes how the four winds dispersed the children of Nūḥ from Bābil. He recites poems by the descendants of Sām, beginning with Ya‘rūb, the first of them to speak Arabic. Poems of ‘Ād, Thamūd, Jadīs, ‘Imliq, Ṭasm, and their descendants follow Ya‘rūb’s poem. This part is translated below, chapter 6.

After the descendants of Sām, this cycle treats the descendants of Yāfith and Ḥām<sup>1</sup> (321.9–324.11) and the prophets Ibrāhīm, Ṣaliḥ, Hūd, and the descendants of Qaḥṭān (324.11–325.4). ‘Abīd reports that all the races of Persia descended from Yāfith, who was also the forefather of the Turks, Slavs, Gog and Magog, Bulgars (*Burjān*), Greeks, and Spaniards (*Asbān*). The Berbers, descendants of Ḥām, left Bābil for Palestine. They later spread all over the earth.

Dāwūd and Sulaymān (322.1) had founded Jerusalem (*al-bayt al-muqaddas*). Sulaymān asked God to provide for it that upon entering the temple in Jerusalem, everyone who believed in Him should be absolved of his sins and become sinless as he was on the day of his birth. Sulaymān was the only human being ever served by the wind, devils, demons, and birds. Dāwūd called the Berbers to God and fought them. Yūsha‘ b. Nūn battled them after Dāwūd.

A Ḥimyarite king, Ifrīqīs (322.9–10), started the process of removing the Berbers to the end of the earth. The next king, Abraha Dhū al-Manār, raided the land of Ifrīqiya, named after Ifrīqīs. He continued the removal of the Berbers to the farthest West while their brothers, the descendants of Qibṭ b. Miṣrāyim<sup>2</sup> b. Ḥām, settled the western deserts.

The Berbers claimed descent from the Qays (322.15ff.), who were descendants of Sām. ‘Abīd explained that this claim was false because the Berbers were descendants of Ḥām and brothers of the Nubians.

A certain Qauṭ<sup>3</sup> was the ancestor of the Ethiopians, who shared many traits with the Berbers (322.20–21, 323.1–13). The Berber women were more merciful than their men. Among the Berbers one could find inhumane behavior and lying. Their level-headedness was whimsical, for when they became angry, they denied their religion and became unbelievers. The men practiced treachery and witchcraft. Whether a newcomer among them was in the right or in the wrong, they would not welcome such a man if they could not tell what he wanted. They never obeyed one another. While their reputation was that of a unified people, they were in fact fragmented. Though not made to be conquerors, they nonetheless could be courageous

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<sup>1</sup> *Tījān*, 25.10–26.2, briefly lists some of the children of Yāfith and Ḥām. My translation of the first cycle stops at the story of Ḥām and Yāfith’s children.

<sup>2</sup> Miṣrāyim: b. Naṣr B. Qibṭ b. Ḥām occurs in *Tījān*, 25.3.

<sup>3</sup> Qauṭ: also B. ‘Abīd does not mention him again. *Tījān*, 25.11, says that Kaush b. Ḥām fathered the Ethiopians. Ibn Qutayba, *Kitāb al-ma‘ārif*, 26, reports that Qauṭ settled India and Sind and was the forefather of the people of these lands.

and patient. They made profit but forbade others from doing so; they did not lend money to others.

When the Berbers were victorious in battle, they would follow their passions. Rage and argumentativeness without cause came easily to them. They followed those who disobeyed God and as a people were given to amusement and pleasure. They neither honored their elders nor had mercy on their young.

The Berbers were easily misled by those who used deceptive language. They despised property, moved frequently, and rejected affection and friendship. Their men were harsh, and their women were clement. 'Abīd reports (323.14–18) that he had received information that the Berbers would go to war for a descendant of Fāṭima in order to accomplish his return to Mecca. He would be the master of justice (*ṣāhib al-'adl*) at the end of time and would have companions called *al-ghurabā'*.<sup>4</sup>

'Abīd refers to an ancient time when the (supreme) ruler on earth was Fāris b. Iram b. Sām. At a later time, Ya'rub ruled all the descendants of Sām, and their descendants were the kings of every race.

The king of the Copts, descendants of Ḥām, was Dārā b. Dārā, who was killed by Alexander (324.3ff.). Another Coptic king, Namrūd, refused to heed the prophet Ibrāhīm when Ibrāhīm called him to worship God. God therefore destroyed him and his fellow disbelievers.

Ibrāhīm was 120 years old when he was circumcised (324.12ff.). He initiated the pilgrimage to the Ka'ba in Mecca, where he established his son Ismā'īl and Ismā'īl's mother. Five hundred years elapsed between the prophets Hūd and Ṣāliḥ, who preceded Ibrāhīm by two hundred years.

In Ibrāhīm's time the residents around the Ka'ba were the 'Amāliq (Amalekites) and the Jurhum. The Jurhum had settled in Mecca after leaving the Yemen, which had become too confining for them (324.17–18). The oldest among the sons of Qaḥṭān (enumerated by 'Abīd) was Ya'rub, who was the first to speak Arabic and to use the royal salutation *abayta 'l-la'na*, "May you avoid malediction" (324.20–21). Qaḥṭān had twelve other sons, whose mother came from the 'Ād (325.1–4). Each son ruled a great kingdom.

The second cycle, which is translated below, chapters 7–9, covers the stories of the first and the last 'Ād (325.5–356.5, 367.19–370.3), and the Thāmūd (370.4–396.11).

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<sup>4</sup> See ch. 4 below, p. 53.

God sent Hūd the prophet to call the bedouin 'Ād to Islam. They refused to heed his warnings, and God inflicted a punishing drought upon them which ruined their livelihood. The 'Ād dispatched a delegation of their prominent tribesmen to Mecca to beg for rain. We find the first mention of Luqmān b. 'Ād at this point (332.3–4). His tale constitutes the third cycle (356.5ff.), which is described below.

The 'Ād delegation traveled to Mecca and lingered there in the camp of Mu'āwiya and his father, Bakr, of the 'Amāliqa tribe. After a long while, their great men approached the Ka'ba asking for fulfillment of their wishes. A voice was heard to ask their leader Qayl to choose one among three clouds, variously colored white, red, and black, to obtain rain for his people. Thinking it to be full of rain, he chose the black one, but in consequence a violent wind<sup>5</sup> appeared that destroyed the 'Ād. Hūd and the other Muslims were saved from the raging gale by escaping to the seacoast. Abū Sa'īd, a Muslim, and his descendants joined Hūd there. These descendants became known as the "last 'Ād" (367.19ff.). They multiplied and grew wicked.

Two tribes, the Banū 'Ufayr and the Banū 'Amr, fought among themselves because of a family quarrel. Led by their chief Luqmān b. 'Ād, the Banū 'Amr won. Some time later a Thamūdī visited the household of Manī'a, an 'Ādite woman who had once married among the Thamūd but had by then returned to her own family (368.19ff.). An 'Ādī killed him. In turn, Manī'a's two sons killed the murderer. Manī'a and her children fled to the Thamūd and sought refuge with their chief Ghanm b. 'Amr. The 'Ād pursued and fought them because of their protection of Manī'a. A certain Radam at-Ṭasmī arranged a reconciliation. Later, a man from the 'Ād killed a Thamūdī, and war broke out again during which the Thamūd destroyed all the remaining 'Ād.

This story leads to the tale of the bedouin Thamūd and their prophet Ṣāliḥ (370.4ff.). The Thamūd spurned Ṣāliḥ's warnings of the catastrophe that would befall them if they did not obey God. They dared him to produce a sign confirming his message, asking for a magnificent she-camel.<sup>6</sup> God produced such a sign when a huge boulder broke apart, and from it emerged a lofty she-camel.

Some of the Thamūd, however, still refused to accept Ṣāliḥ and his message. They hamstrung and butchered the camel. Her calf escaped by

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<sup>5</sup> The natural phenomena of destructive drought and rainstorms, accompanied by black clouds and violent winds, are common in South Arabia. The story reflects an often-experienced situation.

<sup>6</sup> Camels are central to bedouin life also in South Arabia.

climbing a high peak, which was inaccessible to its pursuers. Some of the Thamūd, nine in number, who were not satisfied just with what they had done to the she-camel, and who were upset by Šālih's dire prediction of the punishment awaiting, conspired to kill Šālih and his companions. He threatened that the faces of the Thamūd would turn yellow on Thursday, red on Friday, and black on Saturday. On Sunday the "shout" (*ṣayḥa*)<sup>7</sup> would come to them. The conspirators were pelted to death at Šālih's doorstep by angels with fiery stones.

Šālih and his companions fled to Syria. The "shout" struck the Thamūd, destroying them all except for a young girl, adh-Dharī'a, who fled to the people of Qurḥ. She too died after informing them about her tribe's destruction.

The third cycle<sup>8</sup> (356.5–367.18) treats the famous Luqmān b. 'Ād<sup>9</sup> (*Qur'ān* 31:12–13), the descendant of 'Ād b. 'Awṣ b. Iram b. Sām, who served as chief of the 'Ād delegation to Mecca. At the Ka'ba he prayed: "O God, Lord of the greenish-blue seas and of the earth covered with plants after the

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<sup>7</sup> The "shout" (*ṣayḥa*) refers to *Qur'ān* 54:31, etc. It may represent the violent earthquake (*rajjā*) of *Qur'ān* 7:78 which destroyed the Thamūd. A similar earthquake, reported to sound like a great roaring wind, shook the Yemen in December 1982. Its center was south of Ṣan'ā', and it flattened the rock houses in the Dhamār region, killing thousands. See *Akhhbār*, 388.9–10, trans., 163.

<sup>8</sup> This story occurs in the second cycle between the stories of the first 'Ād and the last 'Ād.

<sup>9</sup> *Tījān*'s version of Luqmān's tale, 69–78, is brief. It states that at the Ka'ba he prayed for a long life. He was given the choice of living the duration of seven dust-colored cows on a rough mountain untouched by fear, of seven date pits set on a boulder untouched by dew or rain, or of seven vultures in succession (70.9–13). He chose the vultures.

*Tījān* does not mention their names or aeries but does introduce quite a number of other elements, including that of Luqmān being a king of the Ḥimyar who ruled after his brother Shaddād b. 'Ād (69.17–18). He expelled the Banū Karkar b. 'Ād (71.1ff.) from the land of the Ḥimyar because of their misdeeds (75.2–3); they were the one afflicted by drought.

Luqmān and one Qayl b. al-Kuthayyir traveled to Mecca to ask for rain, and it was on that occasion that Luqmān asked for a long life (77.18–20). At the end of his life, Luqmān went to Ma'rib, the royal capital, with his last vulture Lubad (75.4–5). After Lubad's death, he died and was buried in al-Aḥqāf (76.3). See also Josef Horowitz, *Koranische Untersuchungen*, 132, and Dimitri Gutas, "Classical Arabic Wisdom Literature: Nature and Scope."

rain, I ask you for a [long] life surpassing every [other] life” (356.14–15). His request was granted.

God gave him the choice of either surviving as long as would seven pieces of dung from dust-colored gazelles on a rocky mountain untouched by rain, or living until the lives of seven sand-colored vultures were spent (356.16–18). Luqmān chose the life spans of the vultures. The circumstances of each vulture’s birth are described in detail. We are told where Luqmān found its egg, the name he gave to each hatchling, and how he fed and cared for it. He expressed in long poems the great grief he felt when each vulture eventually died. The stories of all of the first six vultures are essentially similar. Expectedly, the tale of Lubad, the seventh and last vulture, is different.

Briefly sketched, the information given about the vultures is as follows: Luqmān was walking one day on the mountain of Abū Qubays in Mecca (356.20ff.) when he heard a voice calling him to climb up to the top of the mountain of Thabīr. He ascended it and found a vulture’s aerie containing two cracked eggs from which chicks were emerging. Because he thought it was stronger and would live longer, Luqmān chose the male with the larger head and the bigger bones. To identify it, he tied a thong onto its leg and named this first vulture “Guarded one” (*al-maṣūn*). Luqmān cared for it and daily fed it chopped meat. It eventually grew old and so feeble that it could not fly. One day it choked on a piece of chopped meat and died, leaving Luqmān greatly aggrieved.<sup>10</sup>

He found the second vulture chick at aṭ-Ṭā’if above an ibex pasture on the top of as-Sirmāj (358.3ff.). He named it “Compensation” (*iwad*). It eventually died after flying rapidly through the branches of a tree (probably breaking its wings).<sup>11</sup>

Some while later near Mecca, Luqmān was mourning for himself (the waning of his own life span with each vulture’s death), walking in the mountain range of as-Sarāt. He heard a voice command him to climb up to a high place where there were *‘aratūn*<sup>12</sup> shrubs on aṣ-Ṣafā mountain (359.7ff.).

There he found a hatchling vulture he named “Successor” (*ḵbalaf*), for which he built a cage. It was said that Luqmān was the first to carry a caged bird. While Luqmān and his birdcage were at the ‘Ukāz sūq, some bedouins

<sup>10</sup> The poem in the meter *ḵbafif* appears at 357.14ff.

<sup>11</sup> I have not been able to restore the meter of the poem at 358.14ff.

<sup>12</sup> The dictionaries have *‘aratūn* or *‘urtūn*, a plant or tree resembling the boxwood. Al-Aṣma’ī, *Kitāb an-nabāt*, does not list it.

asked to examine the vulture. It died when they handled it. A Lakhmid king, ‘Amr b. Namāra b. Lakhm, was present when this happened and later recalled the event in a poem of exhortation to his people (360.19ff.).<sup>13</sup>

On another peak with *‘aratūn* shrubs, a place called as-Sahūr(?), Luqmān found the fourth vulture, which he named “Absent” (or, “place of absence,” *maghyab?*).<sup>14</sup> One day, after it had aged, Luqmān called it from a mountain top. It did not respond, and when he climbed up, he found it dead.<sup>15</sup>

On the shining high peak (*ash-shābiq al-aḡḡarr*) of Jabal al-Aysar, Luqmān found the fifth vulture among some trees and juniper bushes (362.12ff.). He named it “Prospero” (*myassar*). Luqmān called the bird to feed it one day toward the end of its life, but it could not fly when he tried to rouse it. He gathered wood in order to make a birdcage, but it was too late for that. The fifth vulture was already dead.<sup>16</sup>

Luqmān found his sixth vulture, as he had his third, atop the mountain of aṣ-Ṣafā by a crack in a rock (363.13ff.). He named it “Friendliness” (*anas*). While he was traveling from at-Ṭā’if to Mecca one day, the vulture was hovering above him waiting for its meat. It swooped down toward him and fell dead.<sup>17</sup>

Greatly saddened by having seen six vultures die, Luqmān heard a voice instructing him to climb up aṣ-Ṣafā (364.11ff.) to a clump of leafy trees containing a *kbalaṣa* bush (fragrant, red-berried). He ascended the mountain and found a vulture chick, which he named Lubad (“Abundance”). ‘Abīd explains that Lubad means “Fate” (*dabr*) in the language of the bedouins. According to ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, *lubad* also means “abundant,” as in *ablaktu mālan lubadan*, “I have consumed wealth abundant” (*Qur’ān* 90:6).

Luqmān’s end came when he was about to give Lubad its customary feeding. The vulture was unable to fly. Suddenly, its feathers disintegrated, and it dropped dead.<sup>18</sup> Veins in Luqmān’s back throbbled, and, as had been foretold, he expired. A son-in-law of Luqmān called al-Muthannā, a poet of the ‘Amāliqa, eulogized him in a poem.<sup>19</sup> He informed his tribe of Luq-

<sup>13</sup> Both Luqmān’s poem, 360.1ff., and this poem are in the meter *munsariḥ*.

<sup>14</sup> I do not know the accurate vocalization of the vulture’s name. At 362.6, the name appears in the meter *munsariḥ*. In this hemistich, the meter does not correctly scan as *maghīb*, *mughayyab*, or *maghyab*.

<sup>15</sup> The poem in the meter *munsariḥ* appears at 362.1ff.

<sup>16</sup> Luqmān’s poem in the meter *ṭawīl* occurs at 363.2ff.

<sup>17</sup> The poem at 364.3ff. is in the meter *munsariḥ*.

<sup>18</sup> Luqmān grieved in a poem in the meter *munsariḥ*, 365.13ff.

<sup>19</sup> At 366.7ff., the meter *ṭawīl*. The poem also occurs in *Iklīl*, 8.185.

mān's death, and they buried him. 'Abīd quotes poems by Labīd, an-Nābigha, and al-A'shā on Luqmān and his vultures (367.3ff., 11, 15).<sup>20</sup>

The fourth cycle (411.12–425.14) deals with the tale of Sulaymān and Bilqīs.<sup>21</sup> It is inserted in the middle of the fifth cycle about the kings of the Ḥimyar. The fourth cycle expands the Qur'ānic version of their encounter (*Qur'ān* 27:15–44), wherein the Queen of Sheba is not named. 'Abīd gives her name as Bilqīs. He describes her as the wise and sagacious daughter of a female *jinn* named Rawwāḥa and a Ḥimyarite king, al-Hadhād b. Sharaḥbīl, in the land of Saba' (411.13ff.).<sup>22</sup> This associates the Qur'ānic queen of Saba' and Sulaymān with the Ḥimyar dynasty. Its kings and the South Arabian past gained distinction by this connection.

<sup>20</sup> See chap. 11 below §8, p. 194, for Labīd; §9, p. 195, for an-Nābigha; and §6, p. 193, for al-A'shā.

<sup>21</sup> The story occurs in *Tījān*, 137–62, on the authority of Ibn Hishām. There, a king of the Ḥimyar, al-Hadhād, had bequeathed his kingdom to his daughter Bilqīs (137.10ff.). A tyrannical king, 'Amr Dhū al-Idh'ār, opposed her (138.1–2). She fled to the castle of the Ḥimyarite Ja'far b. Qurṭ on the river al-Ḥufayf in al-Aḥqāf (138.10–12). Ja'far also protected her brother 'Amr, while 'Amr Dhū al-Idh'ār searched for them (139.10–14).

Meanwhile, a famous brigand from Ma'rib, 'Amr b. 'Abbād (140.6–7), had caught up with Ja'far when he was on pilgrimage to Hūd's grave. After a time of alternately opposing and being generous to one another, the two men reached a truce, but 'Amr eventually succeeded in killing Ja'far (147.14–15). Bilqīs, strong and wily, managed to be alone with 'Amr. Repelling his advances, she drew a bejewelled dagger she had prepared and which she had artfully hidden in her hair (147.21–148.1ff.) and stabbed him in the chest with it, killing him (148.6–8).

When the news of Ja'far's death spread among the bedouins, 'Amr Dhū al-Idh'ār learned her whereabouts (148.13–14). He caught up with Bilqīs and made her his prisoner. She prepared to deceive him and brought him wine. When he was sufficiently intoxicated, she pulled out the bejewelled dagger and killed him (148.17–21, 149.1).

Bilqīs summoned the leaders of the Ḥimyar and lied to them, saying that 'Amr had married her and left the kingdom to her (149.6ff.). They vowed their allegiance to her, and she began her rule. Bilqīs traveled to Mecca, Bābil, Nihāwand, and Azerbaijan (151.9–10). During his journey to the land of Saba', Sulaymān met her deputy at Mecca, al-Bishr b. Mubligh al-Jurhumī, and her deputy at Najrān, al-Qalammas b. 'Amr (153.9–18). The rest of the story in *Tījān* agrees closely with the one in *Akbbār*. For Sulaymān, see Horovitz, *Untersuchungen*, 116.

<sup>22</sup> The vocalization of Sharaḥbīl (often Shuraḥbīl) is indicated in al-Hamdānī, *Mushtabih*, 16, no. 35. 'Abd Allāh, "Die Personennamen in al-Hamdānī's *al-Ikhlīl*," 69, also has Sharaḥbīl. For Saba', see Horovitz, *Untersuchungen*, 115.

‘Abīd mentions that at the end of his life al-Hadhād passed over the wise men of his kingdom and appointed Bilqīs to be the ruler. He bequeathed the kingdom to his young maternal cousin Nāshir b. ‘Amr, who was to rule when he reached majority. Bilqīs was a very patient and discerning woman. She never married (412.11ff.) and took as servants noble Ḥimyarite maidens who did not wish to marry or be separated from her. She had been ruling for ninety years when Sulaymān visited her kingdom.

When he visited her, Sulaymān rode the wind, accompanied by his servants, human beings and *jinn* (413.17ff.). During the journey he passed by Medina. From there, he informed his companions, would emerge a prophet called Aḥmad, the Seal of the Prophets. He traveled to Mecca, where he identified the Ka‘ba as the house originally constructed by Adam which Ibrāhīm had rebuilt.

He finally landed in the Yemen. His hoopoe, which was (amphibious?)<sup>23</sup> like a duck had preceded him and had met the hoopoe of Saba’, which described the queen Bilqīs and her people and that she ruled a vast kingdom of sun-worshippers. Sulaymān’s hoopoe returned to him and reported what it had learned.

Salaymān commanded his hoopoe to return and drop a letter into Bilqīs’s lap asking for her submission (*Islām*) (416.1ff.). In response to Sulaymān, she sent a delegation of forty men with three riddles for him to answer so that she could determine whether he was merely a king or, instead, a prophet (of God). The first riddle required him to distinguish between one hundred servants, maids and youths, who all dressed and appeared alike. The second riddle asked him to give the bloodline genealogies of one hundred horses of the same color whose birthdays Sulaymān did not know. The third riddle challenged him to pierce an unbored gem, without using iron (tools) or any process used by men or *jinn*, and also to thread a gem already bored with a twisted hole. Bilqīs furthermore sent Sulaymān a leaden box, soldered shut, which contained precious jewels. She asked him to identify its contents without opening it.

With God’s help, Sulaymān solved all these riddles (417.8ff.). He had the maids and youths all individually wash their hands in a basin, so that by observing how each did so, he could distinguish one from the other.<sup>24</sup> He said that the horses were all born on the same day and gave their blood-

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<sup>23</sup> The Arabic has *kāna mithla ’l-baṭṭa*.

<sup>24</sup> The text (417.8–11) seems to say that the boys put their hands into the basin and then poured the water into it, while the girls filled the basin first and then poured the water over their hands. I am not certain that this explanation is correct.

lines. A worm volunteered to bore a hole through the gem for him. It bored for three days before it came out on the other side. Another worm also volunteered to thread the gem with the crooked bore. He fastened a thread to its head, and it entered on one side and came out on the other. Sulaymān correctly identified many different and beautiful jewels as the contents of the leaden box.

Sulaymān had a secretary named Āṣaf (418.15ff.). With treachery in mind, Āṣaf asked Sulaymān's wives about certain intimate matters. The evil Āṣaf disliked what he found out and renounced Sulaymān. Meanwhile, the devil ordered a charm to be written (419.2ff.) and buried beneath the royal throne in order to harm Sulaymān. The devil entrusted it to Āṣaf, who showed it to the people. Criminals kept on believing in and using the charm after Sulaymān's death.

Sulaymān asked for the throne of Bilqīs, and a *jinn* got it for him (418.7–9). He decided to disguise it in order to see whether or not she would recognize it (419.11ff.). Her throne was magnificent, encrusted with gold, pearls, and jewels. 'Abīd does not say whether Sulaymān's ruse was successful.

Sulaymān sent a delegation to Bilqīs, and she decided to visit him accompanied by 12,000 chiefs and 120,000 horsemen (420.2ff.). She would know that he was a king if he ordered her to sit down in his presence, or that he was a prophet if he neither prohibited nor commanded her to sit. People sat in front of a king only on command. She brought three more riddles for him to answer. If he proved himself a prophet by giving the correct solutions, she would enter his service,

Sulaymān ordered *jinn* to build a mansion so magnificent that it detracted from the splendor of her own kingdom (420.13ff.). They made a floor of gilded bricks, leaving one missing. When Bilqīs came into Sulaymān's presence, she carried her own golden brick on which to sit should she be commanded to do so. She saw the place in the floor where the brick was missing and hesitated to proceed lest she be accused of having stolen the brick from its place on the ground. She placed her own brick into the gap and stood before Sulaymān quite a while without being offered a seat. She realized, eventually, that he was a prophet, as he had not commanded her to be seated (421.4).

Bilqīs next asked him for the solution of three riddles (421.9ff.) concerning the origin of water coming from neither earth nor sky, a child's resemblance to his parents when he could resemble either his father or his mother, and the color of the Lord. God, however, made her forget the last riddle. The men helped Sulaymān solve the first by galloping horses until

they dripped sweat, which was the solution to that riddle. Sulaymān answered the second by explaining that the child resembled the parent whose seed predominated.

Sulaymān proposed *Islām* and expressed his wish to marry Bilqīs. Some of the *jinn*, fearing that their favorable position with Sulaymān would be usurped, became jealous (422.1ff.). One of them, Zawba'a (422.5, 9–11), warned him against marrying Bilqīs because of her hairy legs. It was said that the offspring of female *jinn* and men had hairy legs like donkeys' hooves. Zawba'a proposed to build for Sulaymān a crystal palace and a channel filled with water through which Bilqīs would have to wade to reach him. While crossing the water, she had to lift her skirt, thus revealing to Sulaymān her hairy legs.

When Bilqīs saw Sulaymān's magnificent kingdom, she realized that her own realm was nothing in comparison. Filled with awe, she became a Muslim. Bilqīs's submission to Islam confirmed the importance of the South Arabian Ḥimyarite dynasty as precursors of Muḥammad.

Sulaymān married Bilqīs and asked the *jinn* to prepare a depilatory paste for her legs (423.3ff.). This depilatory, and the bath which Sulaymān had built for her, were the first in the world. Sulaymān charged the devils to work for her in the Yemen, making water mills (irrigation channels, probably) and practicing many crafts.

Bilqīs bore Dāwūd (423.6ff.)—a deviation from the Biblical version and *Qur'ān* 27:16. Sulaymān sent her back to the Yemen and paid her frequent visits that would last seven days. After he died, Raḥba'am (Rehoboam) became king and ruled for just one year.

'Abīd reports a tradition that Bilqīs died one month after Sulaymān, as well as another that she ruled in all for seventy years.<sup>25</sup> The line of the Ḥimyar continued with the reign of Nāshir b. 'Amr, called Nāshir an-Ni'am, who had been chosen by Bilqīs's father to rule after her (425.16ff.).

The fifth cycle is the longest (396.12–411.12, 425.16–483.4). It contains a generally continuous narrative about the dynasty of the Ḥimyarite kings. It begins with 'Abd Shams Saba' (397.3–4), a descendant of Ya'rub b. Qaḥṭān, and his son Ḥimyar b. 'Abd Shams. It ends with Ḥassān b. As'ad al-Kāmil (482.1ff., 483.3ff.), who led a military expedition against the Jadīs (described below in the sixth and last cycle). 'Abīd describes the exploits and travels of each king and intersperses each tale with poems by and about the kings.

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<sup>25</sup> See chap. 10 §§13–14, p. 185 below, for the two poems recited about Sulaymān and Bilqīs (423.18ff., 424.10ff.).

The cycle begins with an enumeration of Qaḥṭān's sons, the most famous being Ya'rub (396.16ff.). Ya'rub bore Yashjub, who bore 'Abd Shams Saba', the first to rule, who fathered Ḥimyar, called "al-'Aranjaj." According to Wahb b. Munabbih in *Tījān* and *Iklīl*,<sup>26</sup> "al-'Aranjaj" means *al-'atīq*, "the ancient." According to Ibn Durayd,<sup>27</sup> it is derived from *i'ranjaja* in the Ḥimyarite language meaning "to strive" (from the root *'-r-j*), on the pattern *if'anlala*.

The next king to rule, al-Ḥārith b. Dhī Shadad, is a very distant descendant of Ḥimyar. The relationship is illustrated by a long and complicated genealogical tree of all the descendants of Ḥimyar and his brother Kahlān, great-grandsons of Qaḥṭān (397.4–398.1–3). This passage contains several grammatically corrupt sentences and does not fully agree with the information in other sources.<sup>28</sup> As far as possible, I have inserted names from this long list in the genealogical table of Ḥimyar's descendants which follows (pp. 28f. below).

The story of the Jurhumites follows 'Abīd's list of Ḥimyar's descendants (398.3–18). Jurhum b. Qaḥṭān was their eponymous ancestor. The Yemen was their original home, where they grew numerous. Eventually, they warred with the Banū Ḥimyar, whose numbers were greater. The Ḥimyarites expelled the Jurhumites from the Yemen along with the Banū Qabṭūn, a group disloyal to them. Both groups migrated to Mecca. The Jurhum settled in the *ḥaram*, which at that time was inhabited by the 'Amālīq (Amalekites). The Banū Qabṭūn settled in Mecca at Qu'ayqī'ān, a mountain, and in a place called Ajyād.<sup>29</sup> The chiefs of the Jurhumites and the Banū Qabṭūn, Muḍāḍ and as-Samayda', recited poems celebrating their arrival in Mecca.<sup>30</sup>

'Abīd's narrative then returns to the descendants of Ya'rub b. Qaḥṭān (399.20ff.). 'Abd Shams Saba' was the first to rule and to take captives (*sabā as-sabāyā*). 'Abīd reports that Ḥimyar ruled next, and that all of this was long before the time of the 'Ād. Mu'āwiya mentions that he thought the Ḥimyar came after the 'Ād. 'Abīd explains that, on the contrary, the 'Ād had recalled the Ḥimyar in their poems. In fact, al-Khullajān b. al-Wahm, a poly-

<sup>26</sup> *Tījān*, 56.9, and *Iklīl*, 8.180.

<sup>27</sup> *Isbtīqāq*, 217.

<sup>28</sup> For example, see Caussin de Perceval, *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes*, vol. 3, tables I and II, for the genealogical tables of the descendants of Ḥimyar and Kahlān; and Ibn al-Kalbī, *Jamharat an-nasab*, 1.176, 274.

<sup>29</sup> Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-buldān*, 4.146, 1.138.

<sup>30</sup> At 398.20–399.19. Both poems are in the meter *rajaḥ*. See chap. 10 §8, p. 182 below.

theist among the ʿĀd, recited a poem<sup>31</sup> in which he referred back to the Ḥimyar.

A long time passed before the kingship came to al-Ḥārith b. Dhī Shadad (400.12ff.). At this point begins the saga of the Ḥimyarite kings, their adventures, and their poems. ʿAbīd mentions the names of many kings. The register that follows is intended to provide a clearer overview of these names and to allow comparisons with their counterparts in other sources.

Some of the names are attested in ESA. They date from the end of the third century A.D. until the early fifth century, according to the chronological scheme proposed by Albert Jamme.<sup>32</sup> I have listed the names as they appear in Jamme's list underneath their counterparts in *Akbbār*.<sup>33</sup>

The list of the Ḥimyarite kings in *Tījān* varies significantly from that in *Akbbār*, with respect to the actual names given and, sometimes, with respect to the forms of the names common to both sources, the order in which they appear, and the total number of kings cited. Many kings in the two lists show similar names but place differently in the chronological sequence. The many discrepancies between the two lists have made it necessary to draw up two registers. The first follows *Akbbār*,<sup>34</sup> using asterisks to indicate those kings found also in *Tījān*.

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<sup>31</sup> At 400.8ff. See chap. 10 §9, p. 183 below.

<sup>32</sup> Albert Jamme, *Sabaeen Inscriptions*, 393–94.

<sup>33</sup> I use Jamme's genealogical table from *Sabaeen Inscriptions*, 394, for the ESA equivalents of *Akbbār*'s last three kings.

<sup>34</sup> In the middle column, I use al-Ḥārith ar-Rāʿish b. Dhī Shadad's genealogy (400.12–14) to establish the list of kings going back to Ḥimyar, Qaḥṭān's great-grandson. Going further back in the genealogical tree, I have taken Qaḥṭān's ancestors descended from Sām b. Nūḥ from ʿAbīd's genealogy, *Akbbār*, 316.9–10, trans., 77.

After al-Ḥārith, I have taken the names of the kings who follow him, beginning with Abraha Dhū al-Manār, 406.8–9, and ending with Asʿad al-Kāmil and his three sons, 448.3, 482.1–11, from ʿAbīd's report in the cycle below. In the right column, Udad (397.3) has the same father as ʿAbd Shams Sabaʿ, and Kahlān (397.6) has the same father as Ḥimyar. Dhū al-Idhʿār has the same father as Ifrīqīs.

The genealogies for the Banū Jurhum and the ʿBanū Qabṭūn in the left column occur at 398.6–7, 10–12398.. Jurhum has the same father as Yaʿrub (396.19). The genealogy for Ḥaydān, a son of Qaṭan, occurs at 398.6–7. The men listed in the left column are not otherwise meant to be contemporary with those in the middle column. According to ʿAbīd, father–son relationships existed between all the individuals in the register, except between Ifrīqīs and ʿĀmir Dhū Barāsh, ʿĀmir Dhū Barāsh and al-Hadhād, Bilqīs and Nāshir an-Niʿam, and Nāshir an-Niʿam and Shammar Yarʿash.

Register of the Kings of the Ḥimyar Based on the Information in *Aḳbbār*

	Nūḥ	
	Sām	
	Arfakhshadh	
	Shālikh	
	Hūd (ʿĀbir)	
	Qaḥṭān	
(Banū) Jurhum b. Qaḥṭān ←	Yaʿrub	
Nabt	Yashjub	→ Udad b. Yashjub
Hayy(!)	*ʿAbd Shams Sabaʿ	Kahlān b. Sabaʿ
ar-Raqīb	*Ḥimyar (“al-ʿAranjaj”)	
Saʿd	al-Hamaysaʿ	
ʿAmr	Ayman	
Muḍāḳ	ʿArīb	
	Zuhayr	
	Qaṭan	
Haydān b. Qaṭan ←	ʿAmr	
Karkar	al-Miltāt	
(Banū) Qabtūn	ʿAmr	
Lāwī	*Dhū Shadad b. ʿAmr	
Māzin	*al-Ḥārith ar-Rāʿish	
Hawthar	*Abraha Dhū al-Manār b. al-Ḥārith	→
as-Samaydaʿ	Ifrīqīs b. Abraha	*Dhū al-Idhʿār al-ʿAbd b. Abraha
	*ʿĀmir Dhū Barāsh (cf. ʿĀmir Dhū Riyāsh, <i>Tījān</i> )	
	*al-Hadhād b. Sharaḥbīl	
	*Bilqīs bint al-Hadhād	
	*Nāshir an-Niʿam b. ʿAmr b. Yuʿfir b. ʿAmr b. Sharaḥbīl	
	<i>ESA</i> : Yasrum Yuhanʿim (end of 3rd c. A.D.)	
*Shammar Yarʿash b. Ifrīqīs b. Abraha	<i>ESA</i> : Shamir Yuharʿish (b. Yasrum)	
	(co-regent with the preceding, early 4th c.)	
	Tubbaʿ al-Aqran Dhū al-Qarnayn b. Shammar Yarʿash	
	Tubbaʿ ar-Rāʿid b. al-Aqran	
	Malkaykarib b. Asʿad(?) b. Tubbaʿ al-Akbar	
	<i>ESA</i> : Malikkarib Yuhaʿnim (b. Thaʿrān Yuhanʿim) (beginning of 5th c.)	
	*Asʿad al-Kāmil Abū Karib al-Awsaṭ b. Malkaykarib	
	<i>ESA</i> : Abkarib Asʿad (b. Malikkarib) (early 5th c.)	
Khālīd	*Ḥassān	Maʿadd Yakrub
	<i>ESA</i> : Ḥaṣan Yuhaʿmin (b. Abkarib Asʿad)	
	(co-regent with father, then ruled alone early 5th c.)	

\* Asterisk marks kings found also in *Tījān*.

.....→ Dotted arrow marks relationships that are filial, but not explicitly fraternal with adjacent king(s), in the text; solid line divides relationships that are not filial.

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 Register of the Kings of the Ḥimyar Based on the Information in *Tījān*


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- Qaḥṭān  
 Yaʿrub b. Qaḥṭān  
 Yashjub b. Yaʿrub  
 †ʿAbd Shams Sabaʿ b. Yashjub  
 †Ḥimyar b. Sabaʿ  
 Wāʿil b. Ḥimyar  
 as-Saksak b. Wāʿil  
 Yuʿfir b. as-Saksak  
 Bārān b. ʿAwf b. Ḥimyar (a usurper)  
 †ʿĀmir Dhū Riyāsh b. Bārān b. ʿAwf b. Ḥimyar  
 an-Nuʿmān al-Maʿāfir b. Yuʿfir b. as-Saksak  
 Shaddād b. ʿĀd b. Miltāt (a descendant of Wāʿil b. Ḥimyar)  
 Luqmān b. ʿĀd (brother of Shaddād)  
 †Dhū Shadad al-Hammāl b. ʿĀd (brother of Shaddad)  
 †Dhū Marāthid al-Ḥārith b. al-Hammāl ar-Rāʿish  
 aṣ-Ṣaʿb Dhū al-Qarnayn b. al-Ḥārith  
 †Abraha Dhū al-Manār b. aṣ-Ṣaʿb  
 †Dhū al-Ashrār al-ʿAbd b. Abraha  
 Dhū al-Idhʿār ʿAmr b. Abraha (brother of Dhū al-Ashrār)  
 (at Maʿrib) Sharaḥbīl b. ʿAmr b. Ghālib (a descendant of Yuʿfir b. Saksak)  
 †al-Hadhād b. Sharaḥbīl  
 †Bilqīs bint al-Hadhād  
 †Nāshir an-Niʿam Mālik b. ʿAmr b. Yuʿfir (a descendant of Wāʿil b. Ḥimyar)  
 †Shammar Yarʿash b. Nāshir an-Niʿam  
 Ṣayfī b. Shammar Yarʿash  
 (at Maʿrib) ʿAmr b. ʿĀmir b. Muzayqiyāʿ  
 Rabīʿa b. Naṣr b. Mālik  
 (interregnum before and after Abū Karib)  
 †Asʿad Abū Karib ar-Rāʿish b. ʿAdī b. Ṣayfī  
 †Ḥassān b. Asʿad Abū Karib  
 ʿAmr b. Asʿad Abū Karib (brother of Ḥassān)  
 ʿAbd Kālīl b. Yanūf  
 Tubbaʿ b. Ḥassān b. Asʿad Abū Karib (the last Tubbaʿ)  
 Rabīʿa b. Marthad b. ʿAbd Kālīl  
 Ḥassān b. ʿAmr b. Tubbaʿ  
 Abraha b. aṣ-Ṣabbāḥ  
 Lukhayʿa b. Yanūf  
 Dhū Nuwās Zurʿa (the last king of the Ḥimyar)
- 

 † Dagger marks kings found also in *Akḥbār*.

The second table lists the kings as they appear in *Tījān*.<sup>35</sup>

‘Abīd thus refers to five kings whose names are attested in ESA.<sup>36</sup> These are, as they appear in *Akbbār* in their Arabicized forms: Nāshir an-Ni‘am (425.16), Shammar Yar‘ash (428.18), Malkay Karib and Abū Karib As‘ad al-Kāmil (439.2, 16), and Ḥassān b. Abī Karib As‘ad al-Kāmil (482.1).

Though of South Arabian origin, we presume, ‘Abīd was not likely able to read and understand ESA. South Arabian inscriptions were so numerous and widespread that he must have seen some of them, even if *Akbbār* nowhere gives detailed information about the South Arabian script. ‘Abīd does, however, refer to it twice as *musnad*,<sup>37</sup> indicating that he was aware that the ancient Yemenīs used a different script.

We cannot establish the actual process by which knowledge of these kings, and their names, reached ‘Abīd over the more than two centuries that had elapsed since the time of the most famous Tubba‘ Abū Karib and his son Ḥassān (early fifth century). We may assume that he learned about them through an oral Arabic tradition whose origins and process of transmission are obscure.

Chaim Rabin<sup>38</sup> discusses a dialect of South Arabian known as “Ḥimyaritic” to al-Hamdānī. It was spoken, according to Rabin, by people during al-Hamdānī’s time who called it Ḥimyaritic. Al-Hamdānī believed it represented the ancient language of ESA. Rabin suggests that this Ḥimyaritic “was basically an Arabic dialect of the Yemenite type, but with some archaic features, and with a great deal of South-Arabian loanwords.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, ‘Abīd most probably never heard the names of these kings pronounced in the language of ESA. He may have heard them in a Yemenī

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<sup>35</sup> *Tījān*’s treatment of the Ḥimyar cycle is much less unified. It begins with ‘Abd Shams Saba’ on p. 47 and with Ḥimyar on p. 51, and ends with Dhū Nuwās, the last king of the Ḥimyar, on p. 301. The story is interspersed with many shorter episodes: for example, the Ghassān’s migration from the Yemen and their settlement in Syria, pp. 270–89.

With regard to the genealogy of the Ḥimyarite kings in *Tījān*, I have listed the descendants of Ya‘rub b. Qaḥṭān and the kings who ruled the Ḥimyar in the order in which they appear in the text. The genealogical table is made more complex by the fact that not every father of a listed king was a king himself and therefore may not place in the register.

See also Caussin de Perceval, *Essai*, vol. 3, tables I and II.

<sup>36</sup> See nn. 32 and 33 above.

<sup>37</sup> At 426.7, 429.21. See chap. 4, p. 57 below.

<sup>38</sup> Chaim Rabin, *Ancient West-Arabian*, 42.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

Arabic dialect influenced by South Arabian, unless their forms had become established in Classical Arabic by his time.

According to 'Abīd, the South Arabian rulers began to expand their martial activities under al-Ḥārith ar-Rā'ish, the son of Dhū Shadad (400.12ff.). He was called ar-Rā'ish because he made the Yemen prosper with plunder he amassed (*rāsha*) from his raids during his long rule, said to have lasted 225 years. He undertook far-flung military expeditions and raided India, where he ordered his kinsman Yu'fir b. 'Amr b. Sharaḥbīl to remain behind and build a city. It was named ar-Rā'ish in his honor.<sup>40</sup> Ar-Rā'ish also invaded Azerbaijan and the land of the Turks. In Azerbaijan he commemorated his journey with inscriptions on two rocks, which still existed in 'Abīd's time. He also celebrated his exploits in his own poems.<sup>41</sup> The great Imru' al-Qays is said to have recited a poem about him.<sup>42</sup>

Al-Ḥārith's son Abraha Dhū al-Manār (406.8–9ff.) ruled after him. Abraha fathered al-'Abd, whose mother was a *jinn* called al-'Ayūf (406.10). Father and son together raided the West, while Ifrīqīs, another son of Abraha, remained in the Yemen to rule. Abraha, who ruled 180 years, was called Dhū al-Manār<sup>43</sup> ("he of the lighthouse"), as he ordered lighthouses built and fires ignited in them to guide his armies returning from their raids. Al-'Abd's nickname was Dhū al-Idh'ār ("the terrorizer"), for he terrorized the many prisoners brought to his father.

Ifrīqīs took over after his father and ruled 164 years. He claimed fame for his colonization of the Berbers in the West (407.18ff.). These Berbers were the remnant of the Palestinian Berbers who survived Yūsha' b. Nūn's conquest of Palestine.<sup>44</sup> Mu'āwiya asks if the Berbers are the descendants of Qays, as some claim (408.2ff.) (and thereby descendants of Sām). 'Abīd replies that he knows nothing of that claim, but he knows that the Berbers are descendants of Kan'ān b. Ḥām. Mu'āwiya then wonders how the Qays can say that some of their descendants are also related to the Berbers (408.9–10), except on the basis of a poem recited by Ifrīqīs.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See chap. 10 §10, p. 183 below, for the poem that was recited about this event.

<sup>41</sup> At 403.5, 9ff. (the meter *wāfir*), and 404.11ff. (the meter *basīf*). Lines 404.2–3 also occur in *Ma'ārif*, 627, and al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-bad' wa-'t-ta'rikh*, 3.175.

<sup>42</sup> At 405.5ff. See chap. 11 §12, p. 196 below.

<sup>43</sup> See chap. 10 §11, p. 184 below.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. 322.7–10.

<sup>45</sup> At 408.12ff. (the meter *ramal*). Cf. p. 16 above.

Ifriqīs ordered a town built in the West to be called Ifriqiya after himself. As-Samayda' b. 'Amr, a Ḥimyarite, celebrated his rule in verse.<sup>46</sup>

His brother and successor, al-'Abd Dhū al-Idh'ār b. Abraha, ruled for only 25 years (409.13ff.). A paralysis of one side of his body forced him to discontinue raiding. His Ḥimyarite kinsman al-Mu'tarif eulogized him when he died.<sup>47</sup>

'Āmir Dhū Barāsh ascended the throne (410.11ff.) and ruled 69 years. Mu'āwiya remarks that he has never heard of this king, and 'Abīd reports that al-Aftas, a Yemeni poet, mentioned him in a poem.<sup>48</sup>

The father of Bilqīs, al-Hadhād b. Sharaḥbīl, succeeded 'Āmir. The stories of her becoming queen and of her meeting Sulaymān constitute the fourth cycle of *Akhhbār*, which has been described above.

After the death of both Sulaymān and his son Raḥba'am, the Ḥimyarite dynasty reinstated itself when Nāshir an-Ni'am became king (425.16ff.), as Al-Hadhād had assured Nāshir during his youth of his succession. Nāshir ruled 181 years. He earned his nickname Nāshir an-Ni'am ("spreader of generosity") by his generosity (an'ama) as a ruler toward his people, and the powerful influence he exercised in their behalf.

Nāshir an-Ni'am pushed his military adventures as far West as a place called Wādī ar-Raml ("Sand Valley"). Of the troops he ordered to cross that valley, none returned alive. He commemorated the event by setting up an idol made of copper. It was inscribed in the special Ḥimyaritic script with this warning to future travelers (426.10–11): "The Ḥimyarite king Nāshir an-Ni'am al-Yu'firī made this idol. Let no one attempt to go beyond this spot, lest he perish!"<sup>49</sup> Following these lines, four verses repeated the warning.<sup>50</sup> Other poems were written to commemorate this event and the restitution of the kingdom to the line of the Ḥimyar.<sup>51</sup>

Shammar Yar'ash b. Ifriqīs b. Abraha, who ruled 160 years, succeeded Nāshir an-Ni'am. Yar'ash (vocalization?) received his nickname from his

<sup>46</sup> At 409.4ff. (the meter *sarī'*). The first line of the poem also occurs in *Iklīl*, 2.76.

<sup>47</sup> See chap. 10 §12, p. 185 below.

<sup>48</sup> At 410.15ff. (the meter *khafīf*). The first line occurs in Nashwān, *Muntakhabāt*, 6.

<sup>49</sup> These lines also appear in *Tijān*, 221; *Iklīl*, 8.207; *Bad'*, 3.176, trans., 179; *Mu-lūk*, 89; and Ibn Sa'īd al-Maghribī, *Kitāb nashwat at-ṭarab*, 1.36. In Arabic, they are in the form of *saḥf*.

<sup>50</sup> At 426.13ff. (the meter *wafīr*). The poem also appears in *Iklīl*, 8.208.

<sup>51</sup> At 427.5ff., 19ff. See chap. 10, §§ 15–16, pp. 186, 187 below.