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## The Hadramitic funerary inscription from the cave-tomb at al-Rukbah (Wādī Ghabr, Inland Ḥaḍramawt) and burial ceremonies in ancient Ḥaḍramawt

SERGUEI A. FRANTSOUZOFF

The cave-tomb of al-Rukbah lies on the left bank of Wādī Ghabr, in front of the village of al-Khuraykhar, in the western part of Inland Ḥaḍramawt. In 1983 the Soviet-Yemenite Complex [i.e. multi-disciplinary] Expedition [SOYCE] discovered below one of the sepulchral niches in this tomb, a Hadramitic inscription which is unparalleled among South Arabian funerary texts, not only from the point-of-view of its length (four long lines) but also its content. Only at the end of the campaign of 1984 was this unique epigraphic document photographed, in complete darkness, and registered under the siglum SOYCE 903. Its reading and interpretation present serious difficulties. First of all, its surface is partly covered with lime formations which distort and hide some of the characters. Secondly, the inscription is split in two and the text on either side of the rift has been badly damaged, resulting in several lacunae in all four lines. Finally, many of the words in SOYCE 903, especially the technical terms relating to construction, are rare or unique in Hadramitic and in South Arabian epigraphy in general.

Until his sudden death in October 1989, G.M. Bauer, one of the SOYCE epigraphists, was trying to prepare this funerary text for publication. Unfortunately, however, he was unable to establish the exact reading of all the words, let alone make a full translation<sup>1</sup> and the archaeological description of the cave-tomb of al-Rukbah was published with no comment on the text by him (Amirkhanov 1996: 161, n. 1). Among A.G. Lundin's papers there are indications that he too studied this inscription. He managed to improve several of the readings proposed by his predecessor but had no time to finish the work before his untimely death. The first edition of SOYCE 903 presented below is based on a thorough new examination of all the available photographs in the SOYCE archives.<sup>2</sup> However, a number of notes left by Bauer and by Lundin, even those related to unreliable textual restorations, are of considerable interest and

it is a great pleasure for the present author to express his deepest gratitude to these scholars.

### SOYCE 903

#### Description

The text is engraved on a vertical limestone surface below sepulchral niche no. 2, inside the artificial cave at al-Rukbah. Similar surfaces were cut and polished on the western and north-western walls of this cave-tomb, below each of the four burial niches, but only this one was inscribed. Strangely enough, the text under niche no. 2 cannot have been intended to be read normally, even with artificial lighting, since the surface on which it is carved is only *c.* 0.45 m above the cave floor.<sup>3</sup> Its surface was carefully cleaned by G.M. Bauer during the excavation of this cave-tomb. The approximate dimensions of SOYCE 903 are 1.80 m x 0.35 m. No precise data on the sizes of the letters are available. Hardly any letter is damaged by the vertical fissure at the end of the text (Figs 1, 6, 7, and 8) which suggests that it may already have been in existence when the inscription was carved. On the other hand, another split, which crosses the text obliquely, has partly destroyed the middle of all four lines (Figs 1, 4, and 5).

#### Palaeography and Dating

The palaeographic features of the script of this text are typical of the so-called "recent" period [R] in the history of Raybūn which extended from the third to first centuries BC (Frantsouzzoff 2001a: 37-38, 46-47; forthcoming: chapter 2). These are the sharpened *r*, the open *m* in which the left side is concave, the oblique "horizontal" bar in the *n*, in the "staff" of the *h*, and in the apex of the *alif*, and last but not least, the large bulges at the ends of the strokes making up the signs. The presence,



FIGURE 1. SOYCE 903.

under the other three niches (nos 1, 3 and 4) in the same cave, of blank surfaces carefully prepared for inscriptions which were never carved, allows one to speculate that this sepulchre was abandoned soon after the funerary text SOYCE 903 had been engraved. There are reasons to connect this event with the final destruction of Raybūn, Biṛ Ḥamad and other settlements in the western part of Inland Ḥaḍramawt. If this is correct, the inscription in the cave-tomb of al-Rukbah would fall within the same chronological range as the latest texts at Raybūn, i.e. between approximately the late first century BC and the early first century AD.

### Text

1. *KRBHmw* / *bn* / *LS<sup>2</sup>HR* / *gs<sup>l</sup>m* / *qbr-s<sup>l</sup>* / *mnw<sup>c</sup>-m* / *h-s<sup>l</sup>* / *w-[...-s<sup>3</sup>]* / *w-<sup>c</sup>[tq](b)-s<sup>l</sup>(m)* / *<s<sup>l</sup>>* *mr* / *qr<q>* *t<y>* / *-s<sup>3</sup>#<n>* / *w / <d>-s<sup>l</sup>*
2. *w-g<s<sup>l</sup>>* *m* / *<mn-<m>* / *w-s<sup>l</sup>nb<sup>t</sup>* / *<yn-s<sup>3</sup>* / *w-rys<sup>3</sup>* / *<m / <>>* *h-s<sup>l</sup>* / *M<R><S<sup>3</sup>>* [*D-m* / *bn* / *<* / *L>* *S<sup>2</sup><H>* *R* / *w-brs<sup>3</sup>* / *grbt-s<sup>l</sup>* / *q(w)#* *<n-<sup>3</sup>wdn-s<sup>3</sup>*
3. *w-qtdm* / *w-brs<sup>3</sup>* / *b-s<sup>3</sup>* / *<bl-hn* / *<m / <h-[s<sup>l</sup>]* / *MRS<sup>3</sup>D-m* / [*w-gr*](*b*) / *g<r>* *bt-s<sup>l</sup>* / *rys<sup>3</sup>-m* / *w-s<sup>l</sup>wd<sup>3</sup>* / *s<sup>l</sup><r>* – *s<sup>3</sup>y<w>* # / *bn* / *Dw<sup>c</sup>n*
4. *w-bn* / *G̃b<r>* / *w-nšb* / *b-[...]* / *b-<h><y>* / *<F>* *S<sup>2</sup>(H)-N* / *rb<sup>c</sup>-h<n>*

### Translation

1. Karibhumaw son of IIs<sup>2</sup>ahar constructed his tomb as an obligation towards himself, and [its] (underground or surface structures ?) and furnished them with wooden details (made of acacia tree) attached to their (i.e. the tombs') two stone-pillars and with his grave goods
2. and he constructed securely and dug its (i.e. his tomb's) spring down to the water and, with his brother Mars<sup>3</sup>a[d<sup>um</sup>] son of IIs<sup>2</sup>ahar, laid in order and placed his undressed stones at the foundation of its (i.e. the tomb's) course of masonry
3. and he was in charge of these works and, with [his] brother Mars<sup>3</sup>ad<sup>um</sup>, placed in it (i.e. in his tomb) the camel and [pu]t his undressed stones in order and led its (i.e. his tomb's) two canals from (Wādī) Daw'an
4. and from (Wādī) Ghabr and erected a monument in ... in the fourth (year) of (the eponymate of) Fas<sup>2</sup>(h)ān.

### Commentary

**Line 1:** *KRBHmw*. This is the first occurrence of this personal name outside Raybūn. It is also attested in Rb XIV/89 no. 181 = SOYCE 2097/2 from the temple

Mayfa'ān and is restored with certainty in Raybūn-Kafas/Na'mān 37/1-2. Both inscriptions are to be dated from the seventh to sixth centuries BC on the basis of their palaeography. It should be noted that compound proper nouns with the element *-hmw* are wide-spread in the epigraphy of ancient Ḥaḍramawt, especially at Raybūn (see Frantsousoff 1998a: 136).

*LS<sup>2</sup>HR*. This rare Ancient South Arabian name occurs as a patronym in SOYCE 663/1 from the temple Raḥbān (site Raybūn I) and as a family name in a recently discovered Old Sabaic inscription on a bronze plaque from the sacred area of Maḥram Bilqis near Mārib (MB 2001 I.20/2).<sup>4</sup> Many other parallels between the onomastica of Raybūn and of the Old Sabaean Kingdom have been identified in the epigraphic documentation from the temple Kafas/Na'mān (Frantsousoff, forthcoming: chapter 4).

*gs<sup>l</sup>m*. An exhaustive interpretation of this Hadramitic verb was given in Frantsousoff 1998b: 65. Its most general meaning "to construct" is very appropriate to the present context since al-Rukbah is an artificial, not a natural cave (Amirkhanov 1996: 158).

*qbr-s<sup>l</sup>*. The enclitic pronouns *-s<sup>3</sup>* (3 f. sg.) and *-s<sup>3</sup>yw* (3 f. sg. on nouns in the dual or external pl.), which obviously refer to *qbr* in lines 2 and 3, prove that it is a feminine noun by usage not only in Sabaic (cf. Beeston *et al.* 1982: 103) but also in Hadramitic. Primarily, it designated the individual sepulchral niche of Karibhumaw (niche no. 2) as opposed to the other burial places which are considered to be either individual (niche no. 3) or collective (niches no. 1 and no. 4), see Amirkhanov 1996: 160. However, it is not impossible that this term could be employed by extension to denote the cave-tomb as a whole, as below, especially in lines 2 and 3.

*mnw<sup>c</sup>-m* / *h-s<sup>l</sup>*. This is the first occurrence of this noun derived from the Hadramitic verb *nw<sup>c</sup>* "demand, require", which is attested only in the inscriptions of Raybūn (Frantsousoff 2001a: 189). Hence an approximate interpretation of *mnw<sup>c</sup>-m* as "something that is required (for somebody)", "duty, obligation (towards somebody)" can be deduced.

*w-[...-s<sup>3</sup>]*. No reliable restoration for this lacuna is possible. What has been lost was probably a technical term denoting subterranean structures within the cave-tomb and connected with the author's grave, or certain installations erected outside, in front of the entrance to the cave or above it (see Amirkhanov 1996: 158).

*w-<sup>c</sup>[tq](b)-s<sup>l</sup>(m)*. The causative stem of this same root occurs in the Hadramitic inscription CT 4/7: ... *w-s<sup>c</sup>qb-s<sup>3</sup>* / *rhht-m* / ... "and (they) added to it (i.e. to the

well Sha<sup>bat</sup>) supplementary constructions (?) ..." (the translation is emended in Frantsouzoff 1998a: 145, 147). Its meaning is in perfect harmony with the present context but unfortunately only the t-infix stem of this verb can be restored here. The form <sup>c</sup>*tqb* is attested once in Qatabanic (RÉS 3688/7) in a quite different sense, viz. "to implement (an agreement)" (Beeston 1971: 12, 13). However, the most serious obstacle to its restoration in SOYCE 903 consists not in this semantic divergence but in the reflexive nature of the t-infix stem, since usually the verbs of this stem cannot be doubly transitive contrary to our supposition: *w*–<sup>c</sup>[*tq*](*b*)–*s*<sup>4</sup>(*m*) {first direct object} / <sup>o</sup><*s*<sup>4</sup>> *mr* / *qr* <*q*> *t* <*y*> –*s*<sup>3</sup># <*n*> / *w* / <sup>o</sup>*d*<sup>o</sup>–*s*<sup>4</sup> {two second direct objects}. Nevertheless, some rare exceptions to this general rule are known (for example, *ittahada* in Arabic). It seems possible to assume, with certain reservations of course, that <sup>c</sup>*tqb* in this context has almost the same sense as *s*<sup>c</sup>*qb* in CT 4/7.

<sup>o</sup><*s*<sup>4</sup>> *mr* / *qr* <*q*> *t* <*y*> –*s*<sup>3</sup># <*n*>. This is the first occurrence of the word *qrqt*, and indeed of this root, in South Arabian epigraphy (the slightly damaged *q* is discernible on Fig. 9). Its interpretation is based on one of the meanings attested for the common noun *zarqah* in post-classical Yemeni Arabic: "stone-pillar used for the uprights of the vine-trellis" (Piamenta 1990-1991, i: 199). The use of the character *q* for rendering [z] is well-known in Hadramitic, especially in the inscriptions of Raybūn (Frantsouzoff 2001a: 50-51). One might speculate that the Hadramitic dual form of this term (*qrqty*–, see Beeston 1984: § H 12:4) designated two stone-pillars framing the entrance to an open area in front of the cave-tomb, though these pillars could equally well have been situated inside the cave framing the niche, as in one of the Raybūn burial places.

The suffix –*s*<sup>3</sup>*n*, which is distinctly legible at the end of this word (Figs 6, 7, 9), can only be interpreted as an enclitic pronoun. The comparison of these pronouns in the Epigraphic South Arabian languages affords an opportunity to establish a regular correspondence between *s*<sup>4</sup> and *t*/*s*<sup>3</sup>, respectively in Qatabanic and Hadramitic feminine singular forms (–*s*<sup>4</sup>, –*s*<sup>4</sup>*yw*, on the one hand, and –*t*/*s*<sup>3</sup>, –*t**yw*/–*s*<sup>3</sup>*yw*, on the other, see Beeston 1984: § Q 23:2 and § H 23:2; Frantsouzoff 2001a: 51). Thus, one would expect the Hadramitic analogue of the Qatabanic enclitic pronoun –*s*<sup>4</sup>*n* (3 f. pl.) to be –*s*<sup>3</sup>*n*. This pronoun probably refers to the four sepulchral niches in this cave-tomb, since one niche seems to be designated here by the term *qbr*, which is feminine by usage.

Although the term <sup>o</sup>*s*<sup>4</sup>*mr* (pl.) obviously denotes

some details or structures linked with these two pillars, all attempts to find an etymological parallel between it and Arabic *mismār* "nail" must be entirely rejected, since the latter was borrowed from Hebrew or Aramaic (*masmēr*, *masmērāh*, *mismēr*, *maśmēr*, *maśmērāh*; Gesenius 1905: 497).<sup>5</sup> The form *ms*<sup>4</sup>*mr*–*n* attested in a fragmentary Old Sabaic text from Mārib (RÉS 2682/2) remains enigmatic.<sup>6</sup> The only possible interpretation of <sup>o</sup>*s*<sup>4</sup>*mr* is connected with Classical and Yemeni Arabic *samur* (pl. *samurāt* and *asmur*) "kind of tree ... the gum-acacia-tree" (Lane 1863-1893: 1425; Piamenta 1990-1991, i: 231). In the lexica it is emphasized that this tree "is transported to the towns and villages, and houses are covered with it" (Lane 1863-1893: 1425). Thus, it seems possible that acacia wood was used for some of the architectural or decorative details in the constructions in front of the entrance to the cave-tomb or inside it.

*w* / <sup>o</sup>*d*<sup>o</sup>–*s*<sup>4</sup>. The "inseparable" conjunction *w*– is sometimes separated from the following word by a word-divider in South Arabian epigraphic texts (see. Gr 162/4). The root <sup>o</sup>*d*<sup>o</sup> is already attested in the Sabaic common noun (*t*)<sup>o</sup>*d*<sup>o</sup>–*m* (Ja 750/7) reinterpreted as "payment, fulfillment" by analogy with Arabic *ta'diyah* (Beeston 1969: 228, 229). Here, <sup>o</sup>*d*<sup>o</sup> is to be compared with Arabic *adāt* and *adiyy* "instruments, tools, implements, utensils, apparatus, equipments, equipage, accoutrements, furniture, gear, tackling" (Lane 1863-1893: 37-38). Most probably this term was used for denoting certain grave goods prepared for the future burial of Karibhumaw.

**Line 2:** <sup>o</sup>*mn*–<*m*>. This noun, employed in an adverbial sense after *gs*<sup>4</sup>*m*, has been interpreted on the basis of the general meaning of the root <sup>o</sup>*MN* in Epigraphic South Arabian and other Semitic languages (e.g. the verbs <sup>o</sup>*mn* "be secure", *h*<sup>o</sup>*mn* "entrust", and the noun <sup>o</sup>*mn* "safety, security" in Sabaic, Beeston *et al.* 1982: 6).

*w*–*s*<sup>4</sup>*nb**t* / <sup>c</sup>*yn*–*s*<sup>3</sup>. The causative stem of this verb occurs in the same sense in all the epigraphic languages of ancient South Arabia, except Hadramitic: *hnb**t* in Sabaic ("dig a well down to the water", Beeston *et al.* 1982: 91), *s*<sup>4</sup>*nb**t* in Qatabanic ("to dig down to water in making a well", Ricks 1989: 102) and in Minaic ("forer", Arbach 1993, i: 65). However, <sup>c</sup>*yn* in Semitic languages means a "spring of water" not a "well". It is not clear where this spring was situated and how it was connected with the tomb of Karibhumaw.

*w*–*rys*<sup>3</sup>. This verb is attested in Sabaic but its meaning "decree" (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 120) is not appropriate to this context. It seems that both verbs, *rys*<sup>3</sup> and *brs*<sup>3</sup>, govern the same direct object, *grbt* "undressed

stones".<sup>7</sup> Moreover, in line 3 the noun *rys<sup>3</sup>-m* is also linked with *grbt*. Taking into account the interpretation of *brs<sup>3</sup>* given below and a semantic nuance of Sabaic *rys<sup>3</sup>* this Hadramitic verb can be translated with some hesitation as "lay, put in order".

*M<R><S<sup>3: this personal name restored here thanks to its occurrence in line 3 is attested in Bāqutfa 63/2 and in Rb I/90 bld. 4 no. 123 = SOYCE 2287/1 from the temple Raḥbān. It is often spelt with *ṭ* in Sabaic, Qatabanic and Hadramitic (Harding 1971: 538). In Minaic it is found once without mīmatation (Arbach 1993, ii: 87).</sup>*

*w-brs<sup>3</sup>*. The proposed interpretation of this verb, attested here for the first time in Hadramitic, is based on analogy with the noun *brṭ* "place, location, site", which occurs in Sabaic and Qatabanic, rather than with the homographic Sabaic verb meaning "raze a building" (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 32; Ricks 1989: 33-34).

*grbt-s'*. The meaning "undressed stones" perfectly corresponds to the archaeological description of the vestiges of the wall around the entrance to the cave (Amirkhanov 1996: 158).

*q(w)#n-<sup>3</sup>wdn-s<sup>3</sup>*. The absence of a word-divider is unusual in Ancient South Arabian monumental inscriptions. However, this phenomenon is attested twice in the Hadramitic construction text CT 4/5, 9, which dates from the same period: *ywm-D-S'MW* "on the day (festival) of Dhū Samaw(ī)"; *w-qdm-b-s<sup>3</sup>* "and (they) were in charge of its construction" (see Frantsouzoff 1998a: 145, 146).

The forms *<sup>3</sup>wdn* (sg. in Ja 551/1) and *<sup>3</sup>wdn* (pl. in CIH 375/1, Ja 555/1) occur in Sabaic (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 10) and their meaning "course of masonry" (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 10) or even "course of stones in a wall (marking point of new construction)" (Biella 1982: 8) is entirely appropriate to the present context. Thanks to this inscription, it is now clear that the *-n* at the end of these words is a suffix, as in *qbn* or *qrbn* (see Beeston *et al.* 1982: 18, 106), not the definite article.

*q(w)#n*. Some meanings of Arabic *qā'* (derived from the same root, QW<sup>c</sup>), e.g. "an even place", "plain or level land", (Lane 1863-1893: 2994), allow us to interpret this term as "lower course of masonry", "its foundation". If this is correct, then the final *-n* would be a suffix here too. However, it is also possible to read this word as *q#n-*, in which case, comparison with the Classical Ethiopic verb *qa'ana* "press together, squeeze together" (Leslau 1987: 417) would suggest the translation of the whole expression as "dense course of masonry".

**Line 3:** *w-qtdm*. This verb is attested in Hadramitic

as a technical term meaning "be in charge (or at the head) of construction works" (see Écluse A/5, Écluse B/3 and especially Hamilton 8/2-3).<sup>8</sup>

*w-brs<sup>3</sup> / b-s<sup>3</sup> / <sup>3</sup>bl-hn / <sup>c</sup>m / <sup>3</sup>h-[s'] / MRS<sup>3</sup>D-m*. Unlike Arabic *ibil*, Sabaic and Qatabanic *<sup>3</sup>bl* is normally not a collective noun (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 1; Ricks 1989: 3). This is its first occurrence in Hadramitic, though another word for "camels", *b<sup>c</sup>r*, has been found in Chantier V, 1975/8. This is also the first reference in a South Arabian inscription to the burial of a camel in a human tomb. It appears from the present passage, despite its brevity, that this ceremony took place *before* the burial of the occupant of the grave (probably some months or even years before his death) and that his brother participated in it. Unfortunately, this epigraphic evidence cannot be corroborated by archaeological data, since all the burial niches in the tomb at al-Rukbah had been plundered and only mixed fragments of human bone were recovered (Amirkhanov 1996: 160-161).

It seems strange that G.M. Bauer hesitated to interpret this passage, which is legible and clear. Possibly this resulted from his experience in the translation of Gr 114/3 where he misinterpreted the preposition *b-<sup>c</sup>r* as *b<sup>c</sup>r* "camel".<sup>9</sup>

*[w-gr](b) / g<r>bt-s' / rys<sup>3</sup>-m*. As well as the meaning "lay out (fields) in terraces" attested for *grb* in Sabaic (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 50) and Qatabanic (Ricks 1989: 40), this verb had in the monotheistic period another, albeit rather doubtful, sense which is entirely appropriate to this context, viz. "wall with stone (a burial place)" (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 50), though it seems reasonable to interpret it in a more general way as "put, lay (stones)".

**Lines 3-4:** *w-s'wd<sup>3</sup> / s'<r>-s<sup>3</sup>y<w># / bn / Dw<sup>c</sup>n | w-bn / Ḡb<r>*. Compare Sabaic *hw<sup>d</sup> (yhwd<sup>3</sup>n)* "lead (subsidiary canal) off (main canal)" (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 156). In the present context, *s'r* probably means not "valley" (cf. Beeston *et al.* 1982: 128), but "canal driven along the valley bed". This is the first occurrence in an Ancient South Arabian inscription of the toponym *Dw<sup>c</sup>n* mentioned by Arab Muslim geographers (e.g. in al-Hamdānī 1884-1891, i: 86, lines 21, 24; 87, lines 18, 21). The location of Ghabr presents no problem since the wadi, on the left slope of which the cave-tomb of al-Rukbah is situated, still bears this name.<sup>10</sup> However, it is not at all clear how these irrigation works were connected with the construction of this tomb by Karibhumaw. It seems useless to see this as some obscure aspect of burial ritual and funerary cult practiced among the inhabitants of ancient Ḥaḍramawt towards the end of the first millennium BC. The reference to the canals led

from two wadis is more likely related to the personal status of the author of SOYCE 903 who would have been responsible for the water-supply of the neighbouring area.

**Line 4:** *w-nšb / b-[...]*. Compare Sabaic *nšb* "set up, place a monument" (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 99). This monument probably resembled the roughly dressed stele, 3 m high, discovered by the SOYCE archaeologists 50 m from the temple Kafas/Na<sup>c</sup>mān (Frantsouzoff, forthcoming: chapter 1). Unfortunately it is not possible to ascertain where it was set up.

*b-<h><y> / <F>S<sup>2</sup>(H)-N / rb<sup>c</sup>-h<n>*. This is the sixth Hadramitic text to be dated by an eponym. The other five (RÉS 2687, Ja 2878 b, CT 10, Rb XIV/87 no. 16 = SOYCE 1142, BH/84 no. 16 = SOYCE 941) were examined in detail in Frantsouzoff 2001b. The restoration of *h* seems preferable to that of *h*, since the personal name Hafshaḥ derived from the root FS<sup>2</sup>H is widespread in Hadramitic (see Raybūn-Kafas/Na<sup>c</sup>mān 77/1 and commentary), while the root FS<sup>2</sup>H is not attested in proper nouns.

## Discussion

Although some of the technical construction terms in the inscription of al-Rukbah, especially those used in line 1, remain to a certain extent obscure, its principal importance lies in its unique reference to the presence of a camel in a grave destined for a man, from which it appears that the camel (*ʿbl-hn*) was buried in this cave-tomb.<sup>11</sup> One other epigraphic reference to a camel "dans un contexte apparemment funéraire" was discovered by Mrs Diana Kirkbride in a Nabataean inscription from Wādī Ramm cited in Lecomte, Boucharlat & Culas 1989: 56.<sup>12</sup>

Burkhard Vogt examined the archaeology of this type of interment, taking into consideration all the camel burials discovered at that time in the Arabian Peninsula (Vogt 1994: 289-290).<sup>13</sup> These were mainly to be found in two regions: the eastern part of South Arabia (Ḥaḍramawt and Mahrah) and Eastern Arabia, along the Arabian Gulf. Usually the camels were buried separately from the humans, but in burial place no. 5 of the Raybūn XVII cemetery a decapitated camel with its legs tucked up under it was found in the same tomb as the skeleton of a man (Sedov 1996: 146, fig. 3, pl. CXIII). The dimensions of this burial place (2.30 x 0.90 (at the bottom) x 1.35 m high) are similar to those of sepulchral niche no. 2 at al-Rukbah (2.20 x 0.75 x 0.80-

0.90 m), suggesting that there would have been enough space for both Karibhumaw and his camel. However, it is risky to draw a parallel between these burials, since Rb XVII dates from a quite different period, being founded, most probably by Bedouin, no earlier than the fourth century AD and continuing in use until the 15th century AD.<sup>14</sup>

Direct archaeological information on the ceremony of camel burial is scarce, but Vogt also examined some Arab Muslim sources, as interpreted by European Orientalists, which describe pre-Islamic rites and Islamic traditions rooted in the *jāhiliyyah*, with special reference to the sacrifice of *al-baliyyah*.<sup>15</sup> These showed that, before Islam, camels were slaughtered, or killed in other ways, either during the funeral or at the grave of the deceased (Vogt 1994: 280, 283-286). Independently, P.A. Grjaznevich, writing of the camel burials discovered in 1985 at a necropolis of Raybūn (Rb XV), mentioned that Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb (d. 245/859) describes a similar custom, though unfortunately Grjaznevich did not develop this comparison nor even give a precise reference to the passage he was citing (Grjaznevich 1995: 9). As a result, this passage has only recently been identified in Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb's historical encyclopaedia *Kitāb al-muḥabbar*. It proves to be one of the earliest references to this custom<sup>16</sup> and is worth citing in full, especially since the only printed edition of this work is difficult to find:

*Wa-kāna akṭaru ʿl-ʿarabi yuʿminūna bi-ʿl-baʿṭi. ... wa-kāna ʿl-rajulu iḍā māta, ʿamadū ilā rāḥilati-hi ʿllatī rakiba-hā, fa-yuwaqqifūna-hā ʿalā qabri-hi maʿkūsa<sup>m</sup> raʿsu-hu ilā yadi-hā, malfūfata ʿl-raʿsi fī waliyyati-hā. fa-lā tuʿlafu wa-lā tusqā ḥattā tamūta, li-yarkaba-hā iḍā ḥaraja min qabri-hi. wa-kānū yaqūlūna: "in lam yufal ḥāḍā, ḥuṣira yawma ʿl-qiyāmati ʿalā rijli-hi." wa-kānat tilka ʿl-nāqatu ʿllatī yufalu bi-hā ḥāḍā tusammā ʿl-baliyyata*

And the majority of the Arabs used to believe in the resurrection. ... And when a man died, they went to the she-camel on which he used to ride, and made it stay at his grave, with its head tied to its foreleg and its muzzle wrapped up in its sweat-cloth. And it was not fed and was not watered until it died, so that he might ride on it, when he leaves [i.e. rises from] his grave. And they used to say: "If this is not done, on the Day of Resurrection he will be forced to go on foot [to the gathering of souls]". And the she-camel to which this was done, was called *al-baliyyah*. (Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb 1942: 322, 323).



| Siglum of inscription           | Name of eponym                    | Clan of eponym       | Number of year                       |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| RÉS 2687/5                      | YS <sup>2</sup> RH <sup>2</sup> L | q- <sup>c</sup> DD-m | s <sup>2</sup> ny-hn 2               |
| Ja 2878 b/4                     | HMYT                              | q-HS <sup>2</sup> M  | rb <sup>c</sup> -hn 4                |
| CT 10/2-3                       | <sup>c</sup> DD-m                 | not mentioned        | s <sup>2</sup> ls <sup>3</sup> -hn 3 |
| Rb XIV/87 no. 16 = SOYCE 1142/3 | [Y]HM <sup>2</sup> L              | not mentioned        | s <sup>2</sup> ny-h[n] 2             |
| BH/84 no. 16 = SOYCE 941/2      | [..]H <sup>2</sup> L              | not mentioned        | s <sup>2</sup> ny-hn 2               |
| SOYCE 903/4                     | <F>S <sup>2</sup> (H)-N           | not mentioned        | rb <sup>c</sup> -h<n> 4              |

**TABLE 1.** *Datings by eponyms in Hadramitic inscriptions*

SOYCE 903 records a different practice. Here, the camel was buried in the tomb of Karibhumaw son of Ilshahar *before his death*, and both Karibhumaw and his brother Mars<sup>3</sup>ad<sup>um</sup> performed the ritual! It seems that there was a considerable difference between the funerary sacrifices of camels among the pre-Islamic Bedouin and the burial of camels among the sedentary population of ancient South Arabia.<sup>17</sup>

One more interesting detail of the funerary ritual practised in ancient Ḥaḍramawt concerns the water source dug during the construction of the tomb of Karibhumaw. It is possible to assume that it was destined for washing the deceased before the funeral, but this supposition needs to be corroborated by new archaeological and epigraphic material. In any case, this spring cannot have been situated either in the cave-tomb itself or on the slope in its vicinity. It was probably at the foot of the slope not far from the wadi bed.

Last but not least, this inscription is dated by an eponym. This suggests that its author occupied a high social position. It is difficult to determine if Karibhumaw was a priest or a local magistrate responsible for irrigation but in any case he was not an ordinary man. This dating formula in SOYCE 903/4 provides an occasion to summarize all the available data on the eponymate of Ḥaḍramawt and to advance some suggestions as to its nature.

It has been established that two different systems of eponymate coexisted in ancient Ḥaḍramawt (Frantsouzoff 2001b: 169-170). One of them was notable for the mention of the clans of the eponyms used in dating formulae (RÉS 2687/5; Ja 2878 b/4) and in this respect bore a resemblance to the eponymates of other South Arabian states and regions. This system was probably officially recognized by the central authorities of Ḥaḍramawt. The second system, used in SOYCE 903, was widespread in the western part of Inland Ḥaḍramawt on the eve of the Christian era. Its peculiar-

ity consists in the lack of any reference to the clans of the eponyms.

The distribution of the numbers of years in Hadramitic dating formulae, and the absence in them of a first year of any eponymate, suggest that the tenure of an eponym in Ḥaḍramawt was a minimum of four years.<sup>18</sup>

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> In his own works, G.M. Bauer did not even mention that the text of al-Rukbah contains the first epigraphic reference in ancient South Arabia to the burial of a camel in a human tomb. However, A.V. Sedov drew attention to the words the "place of the camel" in this inscription, based on Bauer's interpretation (Sedov 1988: 64-65; Vogt 1994: 280, n. 6).
- <sup>2</sup> Only the necessary minimum of these is reproduced in this article (Figs 1-9).
- <sup>3</sup> The distance between niche no. 2 and the cave floor is 1.20 m. The inscription itself is about 0.35 m high. Above the inscription, there is another (anepigraphic) surface of the same height (Fig. 1). It is worth noting that all the surfaces prepared for funerary texts in this cave-tomb occupy almost identical positions below the three other niches.

- <sup>4</sup> In the latter case, it is not impossible that <sup>3</sup>LS<sup>2</sup>HR was the name of the grandfather (LḤ<sup>c</sup>TT / bn / B<sup>c</sup>TTR / bn / <sup>3</sup>LS<sup>2</sup>HR), since three generation genealogies are attested, though very rarely, in South Arabian inscriptions (e.g. CIH 37/1). However, this possibility was not considered by the editors of this text (Maraqten & Abdallah 2002: 51).
- <sup>5</sup> For this reason, the specific meaning of *masāmīr*, "wooden-pole raising vines", in post-classical Yemeni Arabic (Piamenta 1990-1991, i: 232) is not admissible, even though it would fit perfectly with *zarqah*.
- <sup>6</sup> The interpretation of this term as "kind of land or construction" (Biella 1982: 338) seems to be somewhat inexact and unreliable.
- <sup>7</sup> The technical construction term *grbt* and other derivatives from this root were discussed in detail with special reference to Hadramitic inscriptions in Frantsouzoff 2001c.
- <sup>8</sup> Sometimes this verb is followed by a noun *mbny* "construction" clarifying its sense (cf. Uqayba 5/1-2), but its usage was facultative.
- <sup>9</sup> This error was corrected by A.G. Lundin who published this text independently (Lundin 1987).
- <sup>10</sup> The variant of this toponym with the definite article, al-Ghabr, is of less frequent occurrence (M.A. Rodionov, personal communication). The localization of both wadis and of the village of al-Khuraykhar is shown on schematic map 2 in Rodionov 1994: fig. 1.
- <sup>11</sup> It is not impossible that it had been sacrificed earlier on the completion of the tomb's construction. However, no allusion to such a custom is attested in the inscription of al-Rukbah or in any funerary texts in Hadramitic or other Ancient South Arabian languages.
- <sup>12</sup> To the best of my knowledge this unique inscription has not yet been published.
- <sup>13</sup> This excluded those excavated in Qaryat al-Fāw, which remain unpublished (Vogt 1994: 281, n. 15).
- <sup>14</sup> Burial place no. 5 dates from the fourth to fifth centuries AD (Sedov 1996: 157).
- <sup>15</sup> On the term *baliyyah*, for a camel sacrificed at its master's grave see Hell & [Pellat] 1960.
- <sup>16</sup> With the sole exception of *Kitāb al-tarbī wa-l-tadwīr* of al-Jāḥiẓ (160/776 – 255/868-869), a contemporary of Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, the sources used by Hell & [Pellat] in their article on *al-baliyyah* (1960) are from much later periods.
- <sup>17</sup> Vogt was also rather cautious about drawing parallels between the archaeologically attested camel

burials in Arabia and the data on this subject from literary sources and refrained from connecting this type of burial ceremony with the idea of resurrection (Vogt 1994: 286).

- <sup>18</sup> It should be noted that C.J. Robin has recently tried to demonstrate that, in Saba<sup>3</sup> at the beginning of the first millennium AD, this office lasted for only one year (1994: 233-236).

### Sigla

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Bāquṭfa 63          | Inscription in Pirenne 1979: 215, pl. 11.  |
| BḤ                  | Inscriptions discovered by the SOYCE at Biṛ Ḥamad, at present unpublished.   |
| Chantier V, 1975    | Inscription in Pirenne 1990: 76, pl. 58 a.   |
| CIH                 | Inscriptions in <i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</i> . Pars quarta. <i>Inscriptiones ḥimyariticas et sabæas continens</i> . (3 volumes). Parisiis: E Reipublicæ typographeo, 1889-1931. |
| CT 4, 10            | Inscriptions in Ryckmans G. 1944: 158-160, 162-163, pl. 63/3, 64/1.  |
| Écluse A, B         | Inscriptions in Pirenne 1990: 59-60, pl. 48.   |
| Gr 114              | Inscription in Bauer & Lundin 1998: 24-26, pl. 110-i a, b, 110-ii; and Lundin 1987.  |
| Gr 162              | Inscription in Bauer & Lundin 1998: 42-43.   |
| Hamilton 8          | Inscription in Brown & Beeston 1954: 55-56, fig. 2, pl. 18; and Pirenne 1990: 69, pl. 53 a.  |
| Ja 551, 555, 750    | Inscriptions in Jamme 1962: 15-16, 18-21, 220-223.   |
| Ja 2878 b           | Inscription in Jamme 1979: 94-95, pl. h.   |
| MB 2001 I.20        | Inscription in Maraqten & Abdallah 2002.   |
| Rb                  | Inscriptions from Raybūn.  |
| Raybūn-Kafas/Naṣmān | Inscription in Frantsouzoff, forthcoming.  |
| RÉS                 | Inscriptions in <i>Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique</i> . v-viii. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1929-1968.   |
| SOYCE + number      | Registration numbers of ob-  |

jects discovered at Raybūn by the SOYCE.  
 ʿUqayba 5 Inscription in Pirenne 1990: 53-54, fig. 16/5, 17.

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FIGURE 2. SOYCE 903, detail.

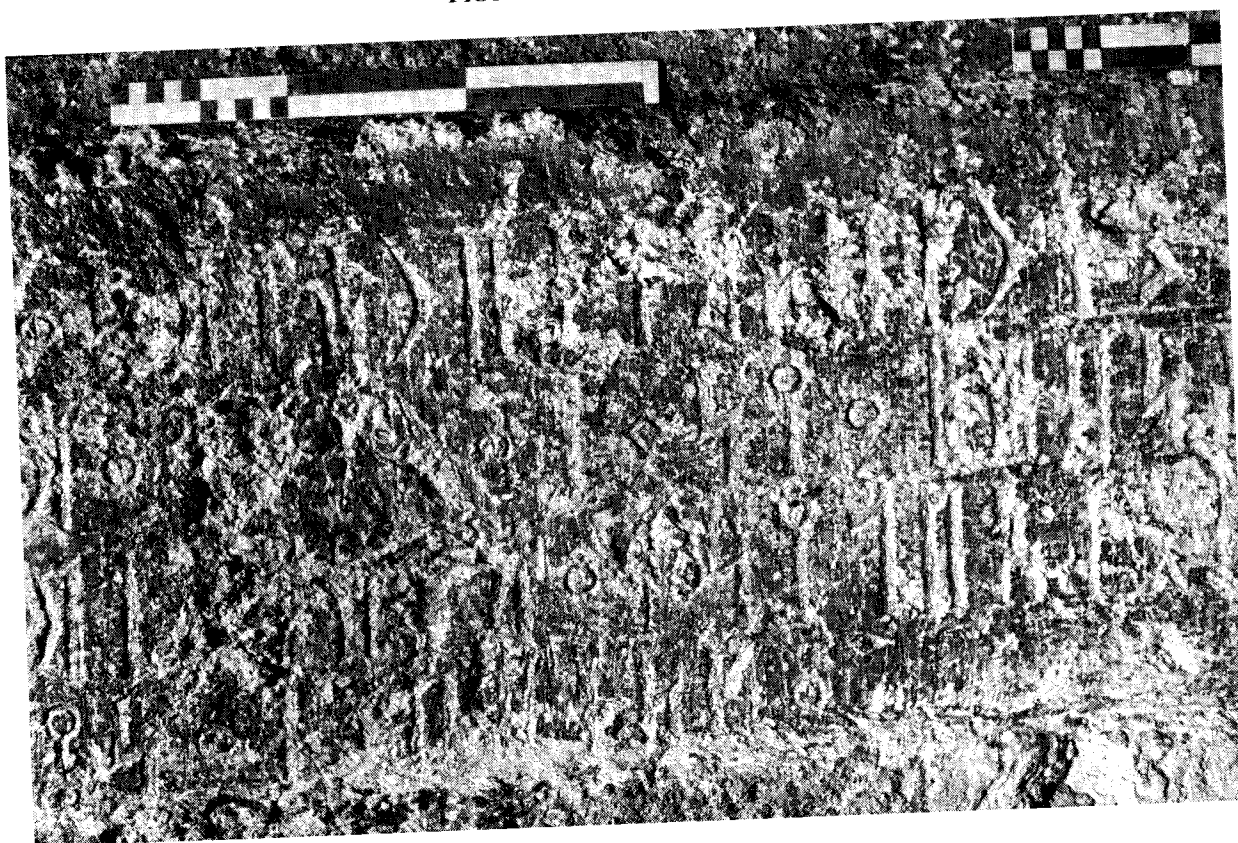


FIGURE 3. SOYCE 903, detail.



FIGURE 4. SOYCE 903, detail.

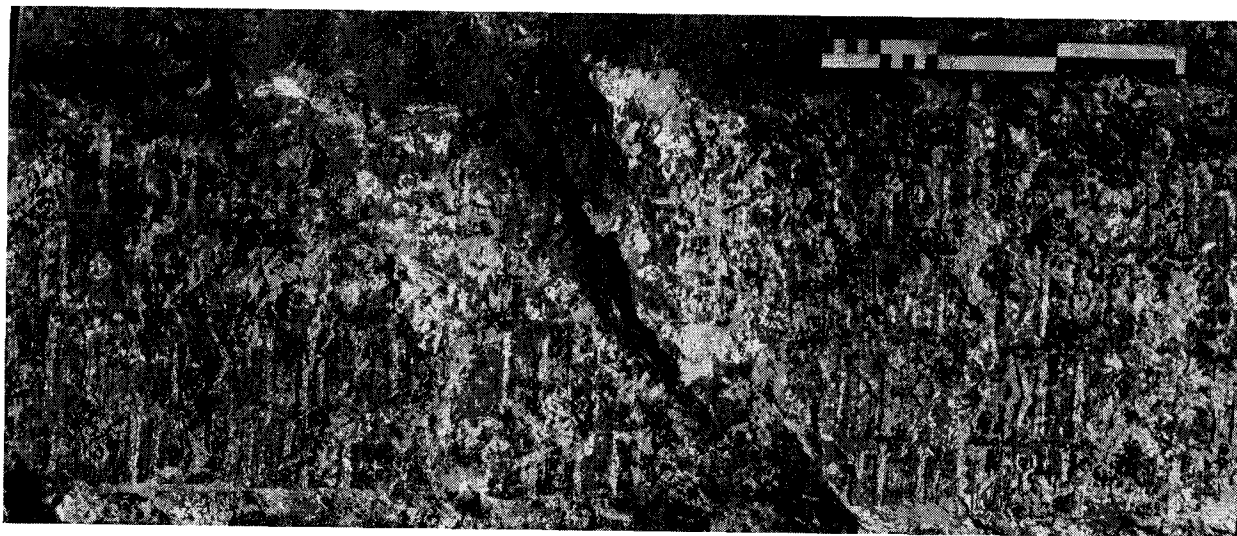


FIGURE 5. SOYCE 903, detail.





FIGURE 6. SOYCE 903, detail.



FIGURE 7. SOYCE 903, detail.



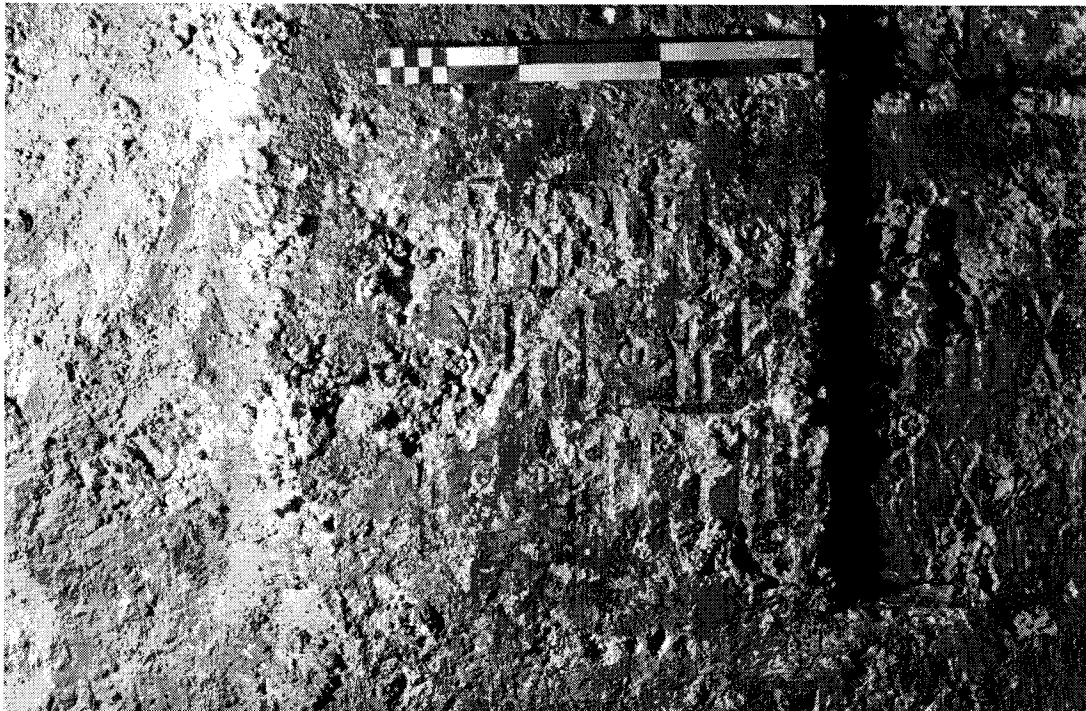


FIGURE 8. SOYCE 903, detail.



FIGURE 9. SOYCE 903, detail of /  $\underline{d}r<q>t<y>-s^3\#<n>$  in line 1