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Yemen Under the Rule of the Sasanids. Article Two. The Rule of Iranian Governors

Abstract

This article is the concluding part of a study on Sasanid dominion over Yemen (571/2–630s CE). The period under examination begins with the first months of 576 CE, when the South Arabian ruler of the Yazʿan family, an appointee of, and subordinated to, the Sasanids, perished. Thereafter, the Sasanid king Khusrō I Anōšag-ruwān (531–579), distrusting the Yazʿans' ability to govern Yemen, for the first time transferred the authority over it to an Iranian governor. Based on available sources, the sequence and chronology of these governors' tenures can be reconstructed approximately, although the reading of certain names remains problematic. Their succession is as follows: Wehrēz (died at the end of Khusrō I's reign) — Zarēr / ???-Burzēn — Zarrēn (dismissed by King Hormuzd IV

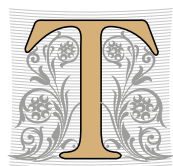
(579–591) — Marzbān / Mard-ōzan / Anōshagān (appointed by Hormuzd IV, died in the reign of Khusrō II Abarwēz (591–628)) — Wēnāgān (?) — Khwarrah-Khusrō — Bādān (appointed by Khusrō II before the beginning of the seventh century) all belonging to the noble family of Mihrān. The governors controlled key military and economic sites, while leaving local authority in the hands of the South Arabian elite and suppressing any attempts at insubordination. Relations with Arab tribes were conducted on the basis of treaties. This system enabled the Sasanids to maintain control over Yemen, but apparently collapsed in 631 CE, when Bādān, seeking to avoid the anti-Mihrān reprisals of Queen Bōrān (630–631), converted to Islam and sided with the Muslim state.

Keywords:

Arabs; Pre-Islamic Arabia; Sasanids; Yemen

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The present study concludes the examination of the history of the Sasanid dominion over Yemen in the late sixth to early seventh centuries, initiated by the present author in his previously published works, *The Sasanid Conquest of Yemen* and *Yemen Under the Rule of the Sasanids. Article One. The Reign of Yaz'an*. It seems useful to give here a brief summary of the events studied there and preceding those to be examined

here. In response to the attempt by the Byzantine Emperor Justin II (565–578) to orchestrate an offensive against the Sasanid territories from the northeast, with the help of the Turks, and from the southwest, through the efforts of the Ethiopian governor of South Arabia (which culminated in the well-known failed ‘Campaign of the Elephant’), the Sasanid king Khusrō I Anōšag-ruwān (531–579) undertook a naval expedition to Yemen in the winter of 571/72 and conquered it. Initially, a model of indirect governance was implemented in Yemen, a pattern employed by the Sasanids in other regions, including Arabia. A man belonging to the South-Arabian aristocratic family of Yazʿan, appearing in the extant sources under the name of Sayf or Maʿdīkarib, who had previously fled to the Sasanids and assisted them in the conquest, was appointed governor. Having ascertained that the South Arabian elite would accept Yazʿan’s rule, Khusrō I granted him the title of King of Yemen, and he thus became one of the local rulers subject to the Sasanids. Yazʿan’s rule lasted four years, from early 572 CE until the first months of 576 CE, when he was assassinated by his Ethiopian bodyguards. Thereafter, an Ethiopian rebellion broke out, which prompted the Sasanids to make another expedition to Yemen to suppress the the mutiny (576/577 CE). Having lost his confidence in the ability of the Yazʿan dynasty to maintain Yemen under the Sasanid power, and lacking alternative candidates for vassal rulers, Khusrō I transferred the authority to Iranian governors, the first of whom was Wehrēz, the commander who had led the campaigns of 571/72 and 576/77.

At this point begins the period which the present work is devoted to. The Iranian governors bore the title of *marzbān*, or ‘border-guard’, usual for such offices.¹ Muslim authors, whose

¹ This conclusion can be drawn on the basis of a verse by the Arab poet from Hīrah, ʿAdī Ibn Zayd (late sixth century CE), which includes, *inter alia*, the line: ‘After the descendants of the Tubbaʿ, the great men, *marzbāns* (*marāzīb*) were established among them (i.e., the inhabitants of Yemen)’ (*Dīwān ʿAdī bin Zayd al-ʿIbādī*. Ed. M.Dj. al-Muʿayyid. Baghdad: Sharikat Dār al-Djumhūriyya li-l-nashr wa-i-ṭabʿ, 1965. P. 47). Importantly, Abū al-Baqāʾ al-Ḥillī (fl. in the late eleventh to first half of the twelfth century) states that Bādān (on whom see below) was called king, ‘but in fact he was one of their (i.e., the Persians’) *marzbāns*’ (*Kitāb al-manāḳib al-mazyadiyya fī akhbār al-mulūk al-asadiyya*).

accounts form the basis on which the history of this period is re-constructed (given the lack of earlier sources), supply several lists of the Sasanid governors of Yemen:

— Ibn Ishāk (d. 760s CE): Wahriz² — his son al-Marzubān — his son al-B.i.n.djān³ — his son Khurrakhusraw — Bādhān⁴.

— Ibn Hishām (d. 828/29 or 833 CE): Wahriz — his son al-Marzubān — his son al-T.i.n.djān — his son (name missing) — Bādhān.⁵

— Hishām al-Kalbī (b. ca. 738, d. 819/20 or 821/22 CE): Wahriz — Zīn — al-Marwazān — Khurrakhusraw — Bādhān.⁶

— al-Masūdi (d. 956/57 CE): Wahriz — his son al-Nūshadjān — S.bḥān — Khurrazād⁷ — son of S.bḥān — al-Marwazān — Khurrakhusraw.⁸

Ta'ārif ... al-Hillī. Ed. S.M. Darādika, M.^sA. Kharīsāt. Amman: Maktabat al-risāla al-ḥadītha, 1984. P. 46). al-Hillī's statement that Bādhān was called king should, it seems, be understood in the sense that the Arabs transferred to the Sasanid governors the designation they had previously used for Yaz'an.

² *Wahriz* is the Arabic form of the name *Wehrēz*. Since the lists in question occur in sources written in Arabic, the governors' names are written here as in the sources, i.e., in the Arabic manner. How the initial Persian names are re-constructed from those forms, is discussed below.

³ Here and below, a dot in the middle of a name in each instance indicates that it is not known which vowel, if any, should be placed above the next preceding consonant. For example, *n.* may be read as *n*, *na*, *ni*, or *nu*.

⁴ *Annales quos scripsit Abu Djafar Mohammed Ibn Djarir at-Tabari*. Ed. M.J. De Goeje. Prima series. II. Rec. J. Barth, Th. Nöldeke. Lugduni Batavorum, 1881–1882. P. 957. The name written in Arabic sources as Bādhān (with the interdental *dh* representing Persian *d*) should be the Middle Persian Bādān.

⁵ *Sirat al-Nabī li ... Ibn Hishām*. Ed. M.F. al-Sayyid. Tanta: Dār al-ṣaḥāba li-l-turāth bi Ṭanṭā. 1995. T. 1. P. 112.

⁶ *Annales ...* 1881–1882. P. 1039–1040. This list is similar to the report given by al-Ṭabarī (838/39–923 CE), from whose work we know the accounts of Ibn Ishāk and Hishām al-Kalbī concerning the Sasanid rule in Yemen slightly above, but without reference to Hishām (*Annales ...* 1881–1882. P. 988). This similarity, together with the fact that in his narrative of Sasanid rule in Yemen al-Ṭabarī relies on the information of Ibn Ishāk (whose list is quoted above) and Hishām al-Kalbī, suggests that the fragment on p. 988 of the quoted edition derives from the latter.

⁷ In Middle Persian pronunciation, rather Khwarrazād.

⁸ al-Masūdi. *Murūdj al-dhahab wa ma'ādīn al-djawhar*. Ed. Ch. Pellat. Beirut: al-Djāmi'a al-lubnāniyya. Pts. 1, 2, 1966. Pt. 2. P. 210.

— Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī (d. after 960/61 CE): Wahriz — W.l.i.s.djān — Ḥ.r.zādān-shahr — al-Nūshadjān — Marwazān — his son Khurrahusraw — Bādhān⁹.

The similarity of certain of those forms suggests that they denote same persons. It is probable that *al-B.i.n.djān* (البينجان) of Ibn Iṣhāk is identical to *al-T.i.n.djān* (التينجان) of Ibn Hishām, to *S.b.hān* (سبحان) of al-Mas'ūdī, and to *W.l.i.s.djān* (وليسان) of Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, the last of these forms seeming the most distorted.¹⁰ Similarly, it seems highly likely that the names *al-Marwazān* (المروزان), *al-Marzubān* (المرزبان), and *al-Nūshadjān* (النوشجان) denote the same individual. The idea that the three names in question are interconnected is supported by the fact that both al-Marzubān and al-Nūshadjān are identified in the sources as sons of Wehrēz. The simplest explanation is that Wehrēz's son, while governing Yemen, bore the title of *marzbān* which the Arabs for some reason regarded as his personal name. In this case, it is to be assumed that in certain cases the form *al-Marzubān* (*marzbān*) transformed, in pronunciation, into *al-Marzuwān* which, due to a minor fault consisting in a single diacritical point being misplaced, was transformed into *al-Marwazān*. However, alternative possibilities cannot be ruled out either, such as *mard-ōzan* (literally, 'slayer of valiant men', in Arabic script: نازدرم) or *anōš agān* (literally, 'son of the immortal one').

⁹ *Kitāb tārikh sunī mulūk al-arḍ wa al-anbiyāʾ. Taʾlīf Ḥamza ... al-Aṣfahānī*. Berlin: Kaviani GmbH, 1921/22. P. 91.

¹⁰ The most plausible is the form *al-B.i.n.djān* which, as noted in the scholarly literature, is analogous to Βγγάνης, the name of a Sasanid military commander mentioned by Menander the Guardsman (fl. in the late sixth century) who in 578 CE was the garrison commander of the fortress of Chlomaron (modern Kilimli in Turkey) and defended it against Byzantine troops (Justi F. *Iranisches Namenbuch*. Marburg, 1895. S. 68; *The History of Menander the Guardsman*. [Ed.] R.C. Blockley. Liverpool: Francis Cairns (Publications) Ltd., 1985. P. 202–203). This name is apparently similar to the Middle Persian *wēnāg* in the sense of '[clearly] seeing' (Farrehwāshī B. *Farhang-i-pahlawī*. [Tehran:] Muʾassasa-i-intishārāt wa chāp-i-Dānishgāh-i-Tehrān, 1973. P. 463). If this is accepted, the governor's name should be reconstructed as *Wēnāgān*. However, the reconstruction of the original form of the name is a question that belongs rather to the field of Iranian linguistics and therefore lies beyond the scope of the present study.



Coin of Hormuzd IV.
From public resources

The identifications above suggest that the lists of al-Masʿūdī and Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī, in which some individuals are mentioned twice, probably due to some error in compilation (al-Nūshadjān and Marwazān; Khurrazād / Ḥ.r.zādānshahr¹¹ — Khurrakhusraw) cannot be considered as fully reliable.

The first three lists, which are seemingly more trustworthy, are not completely identical. The most apparent difference between them is that Hishām al-Kalbī names Zīn¹² as Wahriz's successor.

¹¹ Both of these forms are absent from the earlier lists of governors in Ibn Ishāk, Ibn Hishām, and Hishām al-Kalbī; consequently, they must be regarded as graphic distortions of the original *Khurrakhusraw*.

¹² Zīn (زین) is a conjecture of the editors of al-Ṭabarī's text, who, since this name has come down to them in a distorted form, marked it as 'extremely unclear' (*incertissimum*, *Annales* ... 1881–1882. P. 988). Prior to that, C. Tornberg, who published the text of Ibn al-Athīr containing the account of these events borrowed from al-Ṭabarī, proposed reading زَرین (evidently *zarrēn*, 'golden') (*Ibn-el-Athiri Chronicon quod perfectissimum inscribitur*. Ed. C.J. Tornberg. Vol. I. Lugduni Batavorum, 1867. P. 327; cf. Justi F., 1895. S. 386). The fact that the orthography of the name is distorted makes it impossible to select a single conjecture from among all possible ones. It seems that the most likely conjectures are *Zarēr* (زریر), the name of a legendary Iranian hero, and *Burzēn* (برزین), part of the name of one of the three sacred fires most venerated in the Sasanid Empire. This element could also form part of personal names; known, for example, is the *spāhbed* of the eastern regions of the Sasanid Empire, Čīhr-Burzēn (*Gyselen R. The Four Generals of the Sasanid Empire: Some Sigillographic Evidence*. Roma: Istituto Italiano per Africa e l'Oriente, 2001. P. 35). Since the office of *spāhbed* was introduced only under Khusrō I Anōšag-ruwān, this Čīhr-Burzēn could

The extant sources do not provide enough grounds to explain that. Hypothetically, the lists of Ibn Ishāk and Ibn Hishām may present a kind of a ‘dynasty’ of governors descending from Wehrēz. The sole exception is Bādhān, i.e., Bādān, yet he could not have been omitted from the list, since he was well known to Muslim authors (as the last Sasanid governor of Yemen) from accounts of his conversion to Islam. It is possible that the list of Ibn Ishāk and Ibn Hishām derives from transmitters who specifically narrated the rule of Wehrēz’s ‘dynasty’ and therefore excluded Zēn, who did not belong to it.

al-Ṭabarī states, on the authority of Hishām al-Kalbī, that Wehrēz died toward the end of Khusrō I’s reign, whereupon the latter dispatched Zēn to Yemen. Zēn acted tyrannically, and Khusrō’s successor, Hormuzd IV (579–591), dismissed him and appointed al-Marwazān as governor.¹³ This is generally consistent with what is known of Hormuzd IV. A number of mediaeval accounts depict Hormuzd as a king who severely curtailed the abuses of the nobility;¹⁴ it is also known that he executed several high-ranking officers of Khusrō I.¹⁵ Further details concerning the relations between the governors and the Sasanid kings are scarce. Through his actions in expanding Sasanid

have been a contemporary of Wahriz’s successor, although, of course, it is not possible to regard them as one and the same person merely because of that. Anyway, the Middle Persian equivalent for Arabic *Zīn* should be *Zēn*.

¹³ *Annales* ... 1881–1882. P. 988, 1039.

¹⁴ *al-Akhlāq al-ṭiwāl. Taʿlīf ... al-Dīnawarī*. Ed. ʿA. ʿĀmir. Cairo: Wizārat al-thaqāfa wa al-irshād al-ḵawmī (al-Iḵlām al-djanūbī), al-Idāra al-ʿamma li-l-thaqāfa, 1960. P. 75–78; *Annales* ... 1881–1882. P. 988–990; *Histoire des rois des Perses par ... al-Thaʿ ālibī*. Pub. et tr. H. Zotenberg. Paris, 1900. P. 637–638; al-Maʿūdī, 1966. Pt. 1. P. 312; *Muğmal at-tawārīḥ wa-l-qīṣaṣ: eine persische Weltgeschichte aus dem 12. Jahrhundert*. Hrsg. S. Najmabadi, S. Weber. Edingen-Neckarhausen: Deux mondes, 2000. S. 62; C. 75–78; *Ni-bāyat al-arab fī akhlāq al-furs wa al-ʿarab*. Ed. M.T. Dānishpezhūh. Tehran: Andjomani-āthār wa mafākhīr-i-farhangī, 1996/97. P. 349–350. According to one author, Hormuzd, in protecting his subjects from the abuses of the grandees, surpassed his father Khusrō I who was famous for his justice (Sadīd al-dīn Muḥammad ʿAwfī. *Djawāmiʿ al-ḥikāyāt. Tārīkh Irān wa Islām*. Ed. Dj. Shīʿār. Tehran: Mahārat, 1995/6. P. 151).

¹⁵ The issue of Khusrō I’s justice is examined by the present author in an earlier work (Mishin D.E. *Khusraw I Anushirwan (531–579), his epoch, and his biography and admonition in Miskawayh’s history*. Moscow: Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2014 (in Russ.). P. 376–377).



Coin of Hormuzd IV.
From public resources

authority over Yemen (to be discussed below), al-Marwazān earned the favour of Khusrō II Abarwēz, son of Hormuzd IV (591–628; *Kisrā bin Hurmuz* of Hishām al-Kalbī's text), who summoned him to his court. al-Marwazān set out for the king but died on his way to the court, according to the sources, in the land of the Arabs.¹⁶

Nothing is known of the rule of al-B.i.n.djān. Hishām al-Kalbī does not even mention him among the governors. This suggests that his tenure was hardly a long one.

On Khurrahkhusraw (whose name should rather be written in its Middle Persian form as *Khwarrah-Khusrō*) it is reported that the Sasanid king became enraged with him and wished to execute him; however, the intercession of an influential aristocrat enabled the governor to escape death. He retained his life but was dismissed. In his place, Bādān was appointed governor of Yemen.¹⁷

¹⁶ *Annales ...* 1881–1882. P. 1039–1040; *Kitāb ʿuyūn al-akhbār. Taʿlīf ... Ibn Ẹutayba al-Dīnawārī*. Cairo: Dār al-kutub wa al-wathāʾiq al-ḵawmiyya, 1996. Vol. 1. P. 179. That the king was favourably disposed toward al-Marwazān is evidenced by the clearly legendary but perhaps historically revealing continuation of the account given in these sources. According to it, the Sasanid king ordered the sarcophagus with the remains of al-Marwazān to be placed in the treasury, and then (according only to Ibn Ẹutayba) each year displayed the sarcophagus to the nobles, telling them of the governor's achievements.

¹⁷ According to the account of Ibn Ishāḵ (as transmitted by al-Ṭabarī), when the Yemeni nobles brought Khwarrah-Khusrō to the palace, one of those designated as *ʿuẸamāʾ* threw upon him a sword that had previously belonged to the father of the Sasanid king. Thereafter, the king decided not to execute Khwarrah-Khusrō and limited himself to dismissing him (*Annales ...* 1881–

Nowhere in the sources is Bādān referred to as the son of Khwarrah-Khusrō, although there are grounds for supposing that he belonged to the same house as Wehrēz and his descendants — namely, the Mihrāns.¹⁸ Thus, Khusrō II terminated the rule of the dynasty of

1882. P. 958). The term *‘uḏamā’* in Arabic texts designates nobles belonging to the highest Sasanid aristocracy (*wuzurgān*). Balʿamī, who in the second half of the tenth century made a Persian translation of al-Ṭabarī's history, presents this episode differently: King Hormuzd (and not Khusrō II, who, as shown above, is said to have been a contemporary of al-Marwazān and would, therefore, better suit for an identification with the Sasanid king of the fragment in question) sent a man to Yemen, ordering him to put Khwarra-Khusrō in chains. Then (apparently already at court) the king ordered the envoy to execute Khwarra-Khusrō. Thereupon the envoy took a garment that had previously been granted to him by Khusrō I Anōšag-ruwān and cast it over the governor's head. Because of the inviolable nature (*hurma*) of this garment, the king revoked the execution order (*Tārīkh-nāmeḥ-i-Ṭabarī. Gardānideh-i-mansūb be Balʿamī*. Ed. M. Rowshan. Tehran: Soroush, 1995. P. 732). Thus, the nobleman who saved Khwarra-Khusrō performed a symbolic act, presenting the matter as if some privilege granted by Khusrō I extended to the governor. It is natural to assume that this nobleman belonged to the same house as Khwarra-Khusrō, namely the Mihrāns, who at that time constituted the highest military aristocracy in the Sasanid Empire.

¹⁸ As shown below, in the account of the alliance with the Hamdānites, Bādān is called the son of Sāsān (but not of Khwarra-Khusrō). In some other sources Bādān is referred to as Abū Mihrān (*Aʿlām al-nubuwwa li ... al-Māwardī*. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1986. P. 89; *Manāqib al Abī Ṭalīb. Taʾlīf ... Ibn Shahr-ashūb al-Sarawī al-Māzandarānī*. Ed. Y. al-Bakāʿī. Beirut: Dār al-aḏwāʾ, 1991. Pt. 1. P. 113). Strictly speaking, Abū Mihrān (literally ‘father of Mihrān’) is not an indication of belonging to a particular house, but an agnomen (*kunya*) primarily given after the name of a man's eldest son. Meanwhile, the custom of giving a *kunya* was current only among the Arabs and was absent among the Persians. Therefore, the name Abū Mihrān was evidently given to Bādān by the Arabs. This can be explained by the fact that, according to one account (quoted by al-Ṭabarī on the authority of Ibn Ishāq), Bādān had a son named Mihrān, who in 634 CE participated (as part of the Sasanid army) in the battle against the Muslims at al-Buwayb and was killed (*Annales ...* 1890. P. 2200–2201). At the same time, it cannot be excluded that Bādān's son, like many other Sasanid nobles, was known by a family name which Muslim transmitters took as a personal name. The identification of Bādān with the Mihrāns is supported mainly by the historical context: among the highest Sasanid nobility, military affairs were entrusted to the Mihrāns. Under Khusrō I, the Sasanid Empire was divided into four great military districts, each comprising several provinces. Several seals of the commanders of such districts, called *spāhbeds*, are known. Of these, three seals belong to the Mihrāns (Gyselen R. *The Four Generals ...* 2001. P. 41, 44, 45), while on the remaining



Coin of Hormuzd IV.
From public resources

governors descending from Wehrēz and transferred authority over Yemen to another branch of the same family.

According to al-Masʿūdī, the rule of Khwarrazād, who as the successor of S.bḥān (identified above with al-B.i.n.djān or Wēnāgān) can be reliably identified with Khwarrah-Khusrō, lasted six months¹⁹. If this statement is accepted as accurate, which would not be at variance with the chronological framework set out in the following paragraph), it follows that the king dismissed the governor shortly after the latter's appointment. Consequently, something significant must have occurred (or come to light) that caused Khusrō II to reverse his attitude toward Khwarrah-Khusrō so abruptly. The extant sources tell us that the reason for Khwarrah-Khusrō's dismissal was his excessively favourable (in the king's view) treatment of the local elite²⁰.

seals the house to which the seal owner belonged is not indicated. Thus, generally speaking, a Mihrān would more likely have been appointed governor of Yemen than a member of any other family.

¹⁹ al-Masʿūdī. *Murūdj* ... Pt. 2, 1966. P. 210.

²⁰ According to Hishām al-Kalbī's text known through al-Ṭabarī's transmission, Khwarrah-Khusrō loved the Arabic language, recited Arabic poetry, and 'became arabized'; in the source this 'Arabization' is denoted by the Arabic word *taʿarrub* (*Annales* ... 1881–1882. P. 1040). This explanation is clearly legendary in nature, yet it should be considered in comparison with the parallel version of Ibn Ishāq, according to which the Sasanid king swore that the Yemenis would bring Khwarrah-Khusrō to him on their necks, and they did so (*Annales* ... 1881–1882. P. 958). These accounts are best interpreted to mean that the governor treated the local elite with excessive (in the king's view) leniency, thereby winning their sympathies.

No further indications are found in the sources, rendering any alternative hypothesis rather speculative.

Returning to Bādān, one finds that according to a number of medieval accounts, including those transmitted via the renowned medieval scholar and collector of antiquities Abū 'Ubayda Ma'smar ibn al-Muthannā (b. 728/9, d. 824/5 or 828/9), it was Bādān who dispatched from Yemen to Khusrō II a caravan which, while passing through the lands of northeastern Arabia, was plundered by the Arab tribe of Banū Tamīm²¹. Determining the date of the attack on this caravan lies beyond the scope of the present study. The present author therefore considers it appropriate merely to reiterate his previously expressed view, according to which the attack on the caravan and the subsequent reprisals against Banū Tamīm occurred at the very end of the sixth or the beginning of the seventh century.²² Consequently, the death of al-Marzubān (al-Marwazān), the governance of Wēnāgān and Khwarrah-Khusrō, as well as the appointment of Bādān, all took

²¹ *Dīwān 'Āmir bin al-Tufayl. Riwāyat Abī Bakr Muḥammad ... al-Anbārī 'an ... Tha'lab*. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1979. P. 62–63; *al-Kāmil fī-l-tārīkh li ... Ibn al-Athīr*. Vol. 1. Ed. A.ṢA. al-Kādī. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1987. P. 492; *Kitāb al-ʿafw wa al-ʿitidhār li Abī-l-Ḥasan ... al-ʿAbdī al-maʿrūf bi al-Rakḳām al-Baṣrī*. Ed. ʿA. Abū Ṣāliḥ. Riyadh: Djamīʿat al-Imām Muḥammad bin Saʿūd al-islāmiyya, 1981. P. 430 (citing Abū 'Ubayda); *Kitāb al-aghbān li-l-imām Abī-l-Faraj al-Aṣbahānī*. Ed. A. al-Shinkīṭī. Cairo, 1905. Pt. 16. P. 75 (citing Abū 'Ubayda and Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, d. 860 CE); *Kitāb djumal min Ansāb al-asbrāf šan-nafa-hu ... al-Balādhurī*. Ed. S. Zakkār, R. Zarkalī. Beirut: Dār al-fuikr, 1996. Pt. 11. P. 374; *Muḍjam al-buldān li ... Yāqūt*. Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1977. T. V. P. 291; *The Mufaḍḍalīyāt*. Ed. Ch. J. Lyall. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921. P. 708; *Thimār al-kulūb fī al-muḍāf wa al-mansūb li ... al-Thaʿālībī*. Ed. M.ṢA. Ibrāhīm. Cairo: Dār al-maʿārif, 1985. P. 140). In contrast, Hishām al-Kalbī believed that the caravan from Yemen had been dispatched by Wehrēz (*Annales ... 1881–1882*. P. 984). However, this version is not supported by historical context. In the events surrounding the caravan, a notable role was played by one of the chiefs of the Arab tribe of Banū Ḥanīfa named Hawdha ibn 'Alī. He died in 629 or 630 CE (Mishin D.E. Hawdha Ibn 'Alī al-Ḥanafī. *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta. Series 13. Vostokovedenie*. 2022;(2) (in Russ.). P. 113), whereas Wehrēz, as noted above, died toward the end of the reign of Khusrō I and could therefore have dispatched the caravan only in the period from 576/77 CE to approximately the end of 578 CE. Since the active career of Hawdha, judging by the date of his death, fell in a later period, it is more likely that the caravan was sent by Bādān to Khusrō II, rather than by Wehrēz to Khusrō I.

²² Mishin D.E. Hawdha ... 2022. P. 110.



Coin of Khusrō II.
From public resources

place within a relatively short period, from 592 CE (when Khusrō II, having defeated the rebellious general Bahrām Čōbēn, consolidated his power) — to approximately the end of the sixth century. This agrees with the considerations above that Wēnāgān and Khwarrah-Khusrō did not rule long.

The extant sources allow for re-constructing the most significant aspects of the Sasanid military commanders and governors' activities. In the initial period, they appear to have concentrated their efforts on consolidating their military position in Yemen. According to one source, Wehrēz, following the initial conquest of Yemen and his victory over the army of the Ethiopian ruler, proceeded to the Aden region and there, between two mountains and near a river, founded a city which gave rise to the Aden of later times²³. This action by Wehrēz should presumably be explained as an attempt to establish a coastal stronghold where troops to be transported by sea could potentially land.

According to one account, at the time of the Sasanid conquest of Yemen, the sea in the vicinity of Sanaa had become greatly shallowed: on the eastern side (toward Šīra) the seabed was dry, while on the other side the ground was imbued with water. The account then continues as follows:

The kings of Persia, having taken possession of Aden, saw the dry seabed and feared that a force greater [than their own] would lay siege

²³ *The Fārsnāma of Ibnū'l-Balkhī*. Ed. G. Le Strange, R.A. Nicholson. London: Luzac & Co., 1921. P. 96.

to the city (*al-balad*). Therefore, they established themselves there, opened a passage [for water] from the direction of Djabal ʿImrān, and let seawater flow toward the city. The water spread and rose, so that it flooded all the dry seabed around Aden, and Aden became an island.²⁴

Whether this account is true, can hardly be verified today; yet it is entirely plausible that the Sasanid governors sought to fortify their most important naval base, Aden, as effectively as possible, including by making a natural defence in the form of water barriers.

Another important piece of evidence is found in al-Ṭabarī's treatise, yet not in his quoting of Ibn Ishāq and Hishām al-Kalbī, but in a brief enumeration of Khusrō I's achievements of. According to al-Ṭabarī, Khusrō set out toward Aden, and blocked off the part of the sea lying between two mountains, on the side of the land of the Ethiopians, with large ships, rocks, iron supports, and chains.²⁵

Since no source tells that King Khusrō I ever visited Yemen, the reference to the king's personal involvement should probably be understood as Arab story-tellers' assumption that those constructions were his accomplishment. The works described by al-Ṭabarī most likely consisted in the restoration of what was called the 'Mandeb Chain' (*sʿlt Mdbn* of South Arabian inscriptions).²⁶ It should be noted that the author (or at least the co-author) of all the inscriptions *Ja* 1028, *Ry* 507, *Ry* 508 was the prince (*kayl*) Sharahʿīl Yaḳbul (*Sʿrh ʿl Yḳbl* in

²⁴ Ibn al-Muḡawir. *Descriptio Arabiae Meridionalis*. Ed. O. Löfgren. Pars prior. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1951. P. 115–116.

²⁵ *Annales* ... 1881–1882. P. 898.

²⁶ A detailed description of the Mandeb Chain is contained in the *Martyrdom of Arethas*. According to this source, King Yūsuf Asʿar Yathʿar, in order to prevent the invasion of the Ethiopian Negus' forces, stretched across the strait separating the lands of the Ethiopians and the Himyarites a chain made of iron links and floating because of wooden blocks inserted between them (*Acta SS. Arethae et Rumae et sociorum martyrum Negranae in Arabia felice*. Ed. E. Carpentier. Bruxelles, 1861. P. 88 (Greek version); *Historia dos martyres de Nagan. Versão ethiopica*. Pub. F.M. Esteves Pereira. Lisboa, 1899. P. 69 (Ethiopic version)). Mentions of Yūsuf Asʿar Yathʿar having fortified the chain are found in South Arabian inscriptions from his reign (*Ja* 1028, *Ry* 507, *Ry* 508). When the Negus's fleet set out on a campaign against Yemen in 525 CE, the chain proved a serious obstacle for it; however, the current carried the first ships across it. Then a storm arose, and the chain broke (*Acta* ... 1861. P. 88; *Historia* ... 1899. P. 69).



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From public resources

the inscriptions) of the Yazʿan family. It is probable that the work of restoring the chain, which al-Ṭabarī in effect describes, was undertaken on the advice of one of the Yazʿans, perhaps Sayf / Maʿdīkarīb, who might well draw the attention of the Sasanid officers to the useful experience of their predecessors.

Another sources in which the presence of Persians in Sanaa and Aden is also mentioned is a description of the fairs (*aswāk*) of pre-Islamic Arabia, attributed to Hishām al-Kalbī. According to the surviving transmissions of this text, such fairs were periodically held at certain times of the year in Yemen, in Aden and Sanaa, and the descendants of the Sasanid conquerors (whom the Arabs called *abnāʾ*²⁷, i.e., ‘descendants’) levied a tithe from merchants for the right to trade.²⁷ The tenth-century Muslim geographer al-Hamdānī mentions a silver mine at al-Raḍrāḍ²⁸ and reports that among those who worked there were descendants of Persians who had settled in that region in pre-Islamic times.²⁹ It may

²⁷ *Ibn-Wāḍhibh qui dicitur al-Jaʿqubī Historiae*. Ed. M.Th. Houtsma. Lugduni Batavorum, 1883. Pars prior. P. 314; *Kitāb al-amkina wa al-azmina. Taʿlīf ... al-Marzūqī*. Ed. Kh. Al-Manṣūr. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1996. P. 384 (citing Hishām al-Kalbī); *Kitāb al-muḥabbar li ... Muḥammad bin Ḥabīb*. Ed. I. Lichtenstädter. Hyderabad: Dāʾirat al-maʿārif al-ʿuthmāniyya, 1942. P. 266.

²⁸ Approximately 50 km northeast of Sanaa.

²⁹ al-Hamdānī. *Kitāb al-ḡauharatain al-ʿatīqatain al-māʾiʾatain aṣ-ṣafrāʾ waʾlbaidāʾ*. *Die beiden Edelmetalle Gold und Silber*. Hrsg. und übers. Chr. Toll. Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksells boktryckeri aktiebolag, 1968. S. 144–145. In those fragments, as well as in his other work, *Description of the Arabian Peninsula (Ṣifāt Djazīrat al-ʿarab. Taʿlīf ... al-Hamdānī*. Ed. M. al-Akwaʿ al-Ḥiwālī. Sana: Maktabat al-irshād, 1990. P. 321), al-Hamdānī

be concluded that the exploitation of the silver deposits was already taking place under the Sasanid governors, who probably provided military protection for the mine. These data suggest that the governors kept under their control not only military, but also economic sites.

Another task of each Sasanid governor was to provide for the collection of tribute (including both taxes and the trade fees discussed in the previous paragraph). As demonstrated in the article *Yemen Under the Rule of the Sasanids. Article One. The Reign of Yaz'an*, that task had previously fallen to Yaz'an (as the ruler of Yemen, subordinated to the Sasanid king). Following Yaz'an's death, the task passed to the new ruler, i.e., the Sasanid governor. According to Ibn Ishāq, Wehrēz, having been appointed governor after his second campaign to Yemen, collected tribute for the Sasanid king.³⁰ Bal'amī reports that Marzbān (identified above with Hishām al-Kalbī's al-Marwazān) annually sent the Sasanid king a tribute designated in the source by the term *kharādj*³¹. The main burden of the caravan dispatched by Bādān to Khusrō (see above) consisted of the goods which the governor had collected from the merchants.³² How exactly the collection of tribute was organized, is difficult to say due to the almost complete lack of information. The accounts of the fairs indicate that the Iranians collected the levies themselves; that was undoubtedly facilitated by the fact that their presence in both Aden and Sanaa was substantial. The episode discussed in the following paragraph shows that the Himyarite

calls the al-Raḍrād mine the foremost among silver mines and asserts that there is none like it.

³⁰ *Annales* ... 1881–1882. P. 958.

³¹ *Tārīkh-nāmeḥ* ... 1995. P. 735. In Bal'amī's times, *kharādj* meant land tax.

³² According to the sources, the booty of the Tamīmites who plundered the caravan consisted of: swords, vessels, gold belts, precious stones, perfumes (*Dīwān* ... 1979. P. 63; *The Mufaḍḍalīyat*, 1921. P. 708), Yemeni garments, musk, ambergris, and ornamented belts (*Kitāb al-aghbānī* ... 1905. Pt. 16. P. 75), valuable curiosities, precious stones, and ambergris (*Kitāb ḍjūmal* ... 1996. Pt. 11. P. 374), musk, ambergris, and jewels (*Kitāb al-ṣiḳd al-farīd. Ta'līf* ... *Ibn 'Abd Rabbih al-Andalusī*. Ed. A. Amīn, A. al-Zayn, I. al-Abyārī. Pt. 5. Cairo: Maṭba'at Ladjnat al-ta'līf wa al-tardjama wa al-nashr, 1965. P. 224; *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār li Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī*. Part 25. Ed. M. al-Nadjm. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 2010. P. 117), perfumes and curiosities (*Kitāb al-ʿafw* ... 1981. P. 430; *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab. Ta'līf* ... *al-Nuwayrī*. Vol. 15. Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-miṣriyya, 1949. P. 407).



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and Sabaean noble families subordinate to the Sasanid governor paid tribute, collecting it as taxes from their own subjects.

The governors relied mainly on the Sasanid troops stationed in Yemen. The aforementioned ‘descendants’ (*abnāʾ*³³) were also an important supporting force. In Hishām al-Kalbī's description of the pre-Islamic Arabian fairs, he states that the ‘descendants’ collected duties for the right to trade at the fair of Aden, but ‘neither bought nor sold in their markets.’³³ Such information best applies to soldiers or officers. When necessary, workers could also be called to war, for instance, those who were engaged in the above-mentioned mine at al-Raḍrāḍ.

After the death of Yazʿan, when, as shown above, the families of the highest Yemeni nobility became at least *de facto* independent, the Sasanid governors were compelled to contend with them. In this regard, the account of al-Marwazān is instructive, the final part of which (concerning how Khusrō II summoned him to court) has been examined above. According to that account, the inhabitants of al-Maṣānīʿ rebelled against al-Marwazān, ceased to pay tribute and barricaded themselves in a certain stronghold in the mountains. The governor boldly rode on horseback up to the walls and the defenders, seeing that, took him for a demon. al-Marwazān addressed them in Persian, ordering them to bind one another, which they did. He led them out of the fortifications, put some to death, and took others captive. According to the account, it was precisely

³³ *Kitāb al-amkina* ... 1996. P. 384; *Kitāb al-muḥabbar* ... 1942. P. 266.

this feat that earned al-Marwazān the admiration of Khusrō³⁴. If the clearly legendary elements are set aside, it may be imagined that the words spoken by the governor (likely, a guarantee of safe conduct for those who surrendered) caused discord among the defenders of the fortress, and the proponents of capitulation prevailed and opened the gates; those who continued to resist were put to death by al-Marwazān. The lack of information makes it impossible to determine against whom and where al-Marwazān fought in that manner. It can only be said that he was opposed by one of the families of the highest Yemeni nobility which, judging by the statement concerning the cessation of tribute payments, attempted to rid itself of Sasanid suzerainty and of their governor, and to rule its domains independently.³⁵

³⁴ *Annales* ... 1881–1882. P. 1039–1040; *Kitāb ʿuyūn* ... 1996. Vol. 1. P. 178–179.

³⁵ The name *al-Maṣānīʿ*, which is in fact the sole historical detail from which any further inquiry can proceed, denoted various objects. M. al-Akwaʿ al-Ḥiwālī, a recognized expert on the history of medieval Yemen and editor of a number of sources, states that [al-Maṣānīʿ meant] castles (*ḥuṣūn*), fortresses (*kilāʿ*), sources of water (*birak*), and mountain peaks; what is called *al-Maṣānīʿ* in Yemen is innumerable due to its abundance' (*Kitāb al-iklāl li ... al-Hamdānī*. Pt. 2. Ed. M. al-Akwaʿ al-Ḥiwālī. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-sunna al-muḥammadiyya, 1966. P. 4, note 2). The authoritative medieval scholar al-Aṣmaʿī (8th–early 9th century) asserted that the Arabs used the word *maṣānīʿ* to designate villages (*kurā*) in general (*Sharḥ ḍiḥwān Imrīʿ-il-Qays bin Hudjr al-Kindī li ... al-Aʿlam al-Shantamaʿī*. Ed. Ibn Abī Shanab. Algiers: al-Sharika al-waṭaniyya li-l-nashr wa al-tawzīʿ, 1974. P. 499). The encyclopedic geographer Yāqūt (b. 1178–1180, d. 1229) knows in Yemen a district (*mikhlāf*) of al-Maṣānīʿ and a fortress of al-Maṣānīʿ in the district of Sanaa (*Muʿdjam* ... 1977. T. V. P. 136). If one sets out to identify the al-Maṣānīʿ where the events under consideration took place, primary attention should be paid to places related to events of the pre-Islamic period. Proceeding in this manner, we find two possible solutions. The geographer of the mid- to second half of the ninth century, Ibn Khurdādhbih (Ibn Khurradādhbih), lists, among the places located in Yemen, Shibām, Bayt Aqyān, and al-Maṣānīʿ, and notes that they are inhabited by people of the clan of dhū Ḥawāl (the vocalization with *fathā* over the initial *ḥāʾ* belongs to the editor of the source text; however, the reading *Ḥiwāl* is more likely, since Muḥammad al-Akwaʿ called himself *al-Ḥiwālī*), descendants of dhū Maḳār, to whom belonged Yaʿfur Ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Ibn Kurayb al-Ḥawālī (*Kitāb al-masālik waʾl-mamālik (Liber viarum et regionum) auctore ... Ibn Khordādhbeh et excerpta e Kitāb al-kharāj auctore Kodāma ibn Djaʿfar*. Ed. M.J. De Goeje. Lugduni-Batavorum, 1889. P. 142; cf. *Muʿdjam* ... 1977. T. V. P. 136). The clan of dhū Maḳār frequently appears in the lists of the eight families of the highest Yemeni nobility (*mathbāmīna*) in Muslim authors. al-Hamdānī, recounting a place called Shibām bayt Aqyān, writes: 'Shibām is the kingdom of the clan

Another noteworthy episode is known from the treatise *Division of Truth and Falsehood Regarding Objects of Pride of the Kaḥṭānites and Yemenites*. According to this source, at a certain stage a conflict arose between a party of Himyarites (*kawm min ḥimyar*) and the Persians. The latter left Sanaa and took refuge in al-Bawn,³⁶ where they

of Yaʿfur, the Ḥiwālīs (*al-ḥiwāliyyīn*); it is further stated that its walls were built by Yaʿfur ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ḥiwālī (*al-Ikṭl. al-Djuzʿ al-thāmin. Taʿlīf ... Ibn al-Ḥāʾik al-Hamdānī*. Ed. N.A. Fāris. Beirut: Dār al-ʿawda, Sana: Dār al-kalima, s.a. P. 85). It may be concluded that the place called al-Maṣānīʿ by Ibn Khurdādhbih was located in the region of Shibām bayt Aqyān, i.e., Shibām Kawkabān. If one assumes that Shibām bayt Aqyān was located in the area of present-day Shibām and Kawkabān, the place where the fortress captured by al-Marwazān stood is likely to have been in the mountains to the northwest of Sanaa, known as Maṣānīʿ Ḥimyar.

Alternatively, in the recently published treatise by an unknown author, *Division of Truth and Falsehood Regarding Objects of Pride of the Kaḥṭānites and Yemenites*, mention is made of the ‘king of al-Maṣānīʿ’, dhū-l-Rumḥayn, who is described as a descendant of the clan of dhū Ruʿayn — one of the families of the highest Yemeni nobility. In the list of noble clans descended from Ruʿayn in this passage, immediately before dhū-l-Rumḥayn, mention is made of dhū Tarkham, king of Khāw (*al-Fāṣil bayna al-ḥakḥ wa al-bāṭil min mafākhīr abnāʾ Kaḥṭān wa al-yaman li muʿallif madjhbūl*. Ed. M.ʿA. Džāzim, M. ʿArbash. Sanaa: al-Maʿhad a-faransī li-l-āthār wa-l-ʿulūm al-idjtimāʿiyya bi Ṣanʿāʾ, al-Maʿhad alalmānī li-l-āthār bi Ṣanʿāʾ, 2009. P. 51–52). This fragment seems to be related to al-Hamdānī’s words about Yarīm dhū-l-Rumḥayn, the father of dhū Tarkham. In a note to this, M. al-Akwaʿ al-Ḥiwālī remarks that a fortress and a mountain in the region of Qāʿ al-Ḥaql are named after that dhū al-Rumḥayn (*Kitāb al-ikṭl li ... al-Hamdānī*. Pt. 2. Ed. M. al-Akwaʿ al-Ḥiwālī. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-sunna al-muḥammadiyya, 1966. P. 324). The geographical localization best suited to this statement is Yarīm located 4.5 km from Khāw, in the mountains between Ibb and Dhamār on the road from Taʿizz to Sanaa, to the south of the latter. It is not easy to prefer either of these identifications, since the fragments examined in this note contain no mention of either al-Marwazān, or his campaign. It may only be concluded that al-Marwazān was opposed by one of the families of the highest Yemeni nobility (in the above hypotheses, dhū Maḳār or one of the branches of dhū Ruʿayn).

³⁶ The name al-Bawn was applied to a region (see, e.g., *Descriptio imperii moslemici auctore ... al-Moqaddasi*. Ed. M.J. De Goeje. Lugduni Batavorum, 1906. P. 88, 103; *Kitāb al-masālik ...* 1889. P. 137) located on the road from Sanaa northward to the Tihāmah (*Ṣifat ...* 1990. P. 303). However, the Sasanid garrison would hardly have left Sanaa to disperse into the countryside north of it. Rather, this detachment fortified itself in some settlement. In this respect, it is likely that al-Bawn here means Rayda. The possibility of this may be proven by the following example. Ibn Khurdādhbih relates that in Rayda, which he includes in the region of al-Bawn, there were a dried-up well and a raised castle, mentioned in verse 44(45) of Sura 22 *al-Ḥadjdj* of the Qurʾān (*Kitāb al-masālik ...* 1889. P. 137). Yāḳūt, citing unnamed individuals, writes the same about al-Bawn,



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were well received by the Arabs of the tribal confederation of Banū Hamdān, who had condemned the actions of Sayf Ibn dhī Yaz'an and the Himyarites and were hostile to the latter. According to the author of the account, the Banū Hamdān and the Persians agreed upon mutual assistance and adhered to that agreement at the time when the account was being written.³⁷

The report examined in the previous paragraph shows that the Sasanid governors did not always prevail in their confrontations with those elements of the Yemeni elite who sought independence. It may be conjectured that such reverses led to the replacement of governors, as discussed above. Unfortunately, owing to the general lack of information, it is impossible to trace the course of those events; it is not even known how the episode of the Sasanid troops withdrawing to al-Bawn actually ended. Therefore, the course of events can only be re-constructed on the basis of their general pattern. The rule of the Sasanid governors continued, and there is no evidence of the expulsion of the Persians from Yemen or of the restoration, in any form, of the state of Himyar, Saba'. The Yemeni elite apparently never united against the

calling it 'a town in Yemen' (*Mu' djam ...* 1977. Vol. I. P. 511). The presence of Banū Hamdān in al-Bawn / Rayda is attested by Hishām al-Kalbī, who calls al-Bawn a town of Banū Hamdān (*Nasab Ma'add wa al-Yaman al-kalbī li Abī-l-Mundhir Hishām ... al-Kalbī*. Ed. N. Ḥasan. Beirut: 'Ālam al-kutub, 1988. P. 545). According to a legend, once, in pre-Islamic times, the Hamdānites, having decided to attack Sanaa, set out from al-Bawn (*Tārīkh madīnat Ṣan'ā' li al-Rāzī*. Ed. Ḥ. al-ʿUmarī. Damascus: Dār al-fikr, Beirut: Dār al-fikr al-muʿāṣir, 1989. P. 92).

³⁷ *al-Fāṣil ...* 2009. P. 191–192.



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Sasanids; the episodes we see were rather the actions of individual families. On the whole, there seems to have existed a consensus whereby the Sasanid governors held under their authority the most important sites (see below) and controlled the collection of tribute and its dispatch to the king, while not interfering (or interfering only to a limited extent) in the affairs of the local elite. The latter were to collect tribute from the population (as is evident from the example of the inhabitants of al-Maṣānīʿ), maintain order, and address other matters of daily life.

A description of the state of affairs in Yemen under the Sasanid governors is found in the late author Bahāʾ al-Dīn al-Djundī (d. 1331/32 CE), who states:

Authority over Sanaa was in the hands of the Persians and the Himyarites, the descendants of Sayf Ibn dhī Yazʾan, for he had perished by that time; thus, the Persians held sway, while the Himyarites governed the provinces, delivered the tribute (*kharāj*), and averted evil.³⁸

The relations between the Sasanid governors and the Arab tribes deserve a separate study. Most of the extant information on this matter concerns the tribal confederation of Banū Hamdān. As shown above, the Hamdānites at least once sided with a Sasanid governor against the Ḥimyarite elite. A detailed account of the alliance between the Hamdānites and Bādān is provided by Aḥmad al-Rāzī (d. ca. 1068 CE) in his ‘Narrative of the Alliance between the Hamdānites and the

³⁸ *al-Sulūk fī ṭabaqāt al-ʿulamāʾ wa al-mulūk. Taʾlīf ... al-Djundī al-Saksakī al-Kindī.* Pt. 1. Ed. M. al-Akwaʿ al-Ḥiwālī. Sana: Maktabat al-irshād, 1993. P. 161–162.

Persians at the Time of Bādān, Son of Sāsān, during the Reign of Khusrō, Son of Hormuzd’:

It happened that several chieftains gathered and, after deliberation, decided to make war on Bādān, son of Sāsān; [that occurred] during the reign of Khusrō, son of Hormuzd. They assembled at Mudhāb, in the [region of] al-Djawf.³⁹ Among them were ‘Amr ibn Maʿdīkarib al-Zubaydī, ‘Anbasa Ibn Zayd al-Khawlānī, al-Ḥuṣayn Ibn Kinān Ibn Yazīd al-Ḥārithī, Yazīd Ibn ‘Abd al-Madān, and Shihāb Ibn al-Ḥuṣayn, with a number of horsemen and notables. They encamped as a vast army and gathered a dense host [of warriors]. They took their stand in the land of ⁴⁰... seeking his support, but he did not give his consent to them. When this reached Bādān, he advanced against them with a cavalry force of horsemen from Sanaa. Then the Hamdānites came out to meet him with approximately ten thousand fighters, both horse and foot, in full armour. At that time, they were the most powerful of the inhabitants of Yemen, possessing more equipment and weapons, and being more valiant and stronger than all the others. Their leaders were ‘Amr Ibn al-Ḥārith Ibn al-Ḥuṣayn al-Shākiri and ‘Amr Ibn Yazīd Ibn al-Rabiʿ al-Hāshidī. So, they offered Bādān assistance and alliance. That pleased him and he hastened to them⁴¹ and concluded an alliance with them. On that day, all the chieftains of the Hamdānites, their noblemen, and their horsemen assembled. It was a day of great significance, with far-reaching consequences, impressive in appearance, with a large number of those present. When they gathered for the [completion of the] pact, their orators stood up, and each orator from both armies delivered a speech with beautiful and magnificent words which came to him, calling for alliance and concord and condemning disunity and discord. All aspired to that, rejoiced in it, and consented

³⁹ Mudhāb is mentioned in the sources, yet its exact location is difficult to ascertain. Notably, the encyclopedic geographer Abū ‘Ubayd al-Bakrī (b. ca. 1010, d. 1094) knows Mudhāb only as a place (*mawḍiʿ*) (*Muʿdjam mā istaʿd-jam min asmāʾ al-bilād wa al-mawāḍiʿ. Taʿlīf... al-Bakrī*. Ed. M. al-Sakḳā. Beirut: ʿĀlam al-kutub, 1983. P. 1202). Mudhāb should seemingly be associated with Wādī Mudhāb in the province of al-Djawf in modern Yemen.

⁴⁰ The name of the person in question is omitted from the text.

⁴¹ In the source text, here stands an evidently erroneous form of ‘hastened to him’ (*saraʿa ilay-hi*).



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to it with their whole souls, feeling relief that their cause was united. This was because the Hamdānites had continually sided with the Persian horsemen and aided them. Now, when the Arabs wrote, they would begin a letter with ‘In Thy name, O God!’ The Persians, when they wrote a letter, would begin with ‘In the name of the Merciful, the Guide [to the right path]!’ So, when they (the Hamdānites and the Persians. — D.M.) gathered to write, they combined both invocations and wrote one document in Arabic and one in Persian. They wrote as follows:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Guide [to the right path]! This is a document setting forth what the Hamdānites and the Persians in Yemen decided in the presence of the *marzbān* Bādān, son of Sāsān, before the leaders ʿ Amr Ibn al-Ḥārith and ʿ Amr Ibn Yazīd from the [tribes of] Bakīl and Ḥāshid, with the consent of those present, and that they (the Hamdānites and the Persians) gave assurances to one another concerning all those absent from both peoples, that they swore to each other, making promises before Almighty God, to unite their efforts and make them correspond to one another, to fight the enemy and keep away from him, and also that if any of us, from either of the nations, violates that which he has agreed upon and sworn to the other, or departs from that by which he has bound himself strongly and firmly, then upon him shall fall what has been promised by Almighty God, repeated, promised, confirmed, eternally strong, as long as there are father and child, forever, as ordained and confirmed, as long as the sky is covered by clouds which give shade, dust rises, water flows, rain falls, trees grow green, fruits are eaten, and humans

exist, and as long as there are turbulent water in the seas, leaves on the trees, life does not cease in time, as long as high mountains remain in their place, stars appear in their rising places, livestock grazes freely in pastures abounding with green grass; [this is] a promise confirmed by all promises, a covenant strengthened by all agreements, a firm, unshakeable, strong compact that will not disappear, and whose news will not perish.⁴²

It appears useful to compare this account to the extant information on the relations of the Hamdānites with the rulers of Yemen in earlier times. From the South Arabian inscriptions *Ja* 1028, *Ry* 507, and *Ry* 508, it is evident that the Hamdānites constituted a significant portion of the army of the Yazʿanite Sharahʿīl Yaḳbul (on whom see above), dispatched by Yūsuf Asʿar Yathʿar against the inhabitants of Najrān. After the establishment of Abraha's authority, the Hamdānites, seemingly perceiving him as an enemy, withdrew to the mountains and declared that they would submit to no one but the Himyarites.⁴³ However, in the South Arabian inscription *CIH* 541 (548 CE), mention is made of dhū Hamdān, apparently a tribal chief who was among the companions of Abraha. Even more indicative is inscription *Ja* 547+*Ja* 546+*Ja* 544+*Ja* 545, in which the chiefs of Banū Hamdān (*d-Hmdn* in the inscription) and, in particular, the tribes of Bakīl (*Bklm*) and Hāshid (*Ḥsʿdm*), mentioned in the account above, call Abraha their lord. From this it is evident that the Hamdānite chiefs acted pragmatically and in various ways came to terms with the rulers of Yemen, obtaining an acceptable position in exchange for recognition of their authority or for service. The aforementioned discontent of the Hamdānites with the actions of Sayf Ibn dhī Yazan (Yazʿan) should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence against this conclusion, for it is possible that Yazʿan and his partisans did not forgive the Hamdānites for recognizing Abraha's authority, and, perhaps, for having sided with the latter's successors. Thus, an alliance with the Sasanid governors as the rulers of Yemen was a step which could well be expected from the tribal leadership of the Hamdānites.

⁴² *Tārīkh* ... 1989. P. 92–94.

⁴³ *al-Ansāb li ... al-ʿAwtāl al-Ṣuḥānī*. Ed. M.I. al-Naṣṣ. Muscat: Wizārat al-turāth al-ḳawmī wa al-thakāfa, 2006. P. 240.

The lack of information makes it impossible to determine how other tribes behaved toward the Sasanid governors. In the above account of Aḥmad al-Rāzī, a coalition of chieftains belonging to various tribes, mainly from the tribal confederation of Madhḥij but also from the confederation of Khawlān, is arrayed against Bādān. The account does not specify what prompted those chieftains to decide to make war on the governor (strictly speaking, it is not even known whether the campaign they intended to undertake actually took place), but it may be admitted that conflicts occurred from time to time. Meanwhile, it seems that as a general rule the Sasanid governors and the Arab tribal chieftains came to terms rather than fought. As shown above, al-Marwazān, setting out for the king, died in the land of the Arabs. This implies that the governor travelled not by sea but overland, which would hardly have been possible if there had been a serious threat of attack from the Arab tribes. Bādān subsequently acted in much the same manner, sending valuables to Khusrō II not by sea but with a caravan overland. The caravan was attacked and plundered, but that occurred at a considerable distance from Yemen. It may therefore be assumed that the Sasanid governors were able to come to terms with Arab tribes, and that the latter ensured the safe passage of caravans. It is also noteworthy that, despite the large number of sources on medieval Yemen, none of them contains reports of bloody reprisals similar to accounts of the Lakhmid king ʿ Amr III (554–569), who reportedly burned one hundred people alive out of vengeance, or of the massacre arranged, in response to the seizure of the caravan (see above), by the Sasanid governor in the fortress of al-Mushakkar.

The Arab tribes, in their turn, would also have had to make some sort of arrangement with the Sasanid governors in order to be able to trade at the fairs that were under the latter's control. The terms of those agreements remain unclear. In the account of Aḥmad al-Rāzī, the Hamdānites and the Persians become equal allies, which likely reflects how such agreements were understood by the Hamdānites and by later transmitters. Such agreements were probably concluded primarily to address specific pressing tasks, such as repelling attacks by various tribes, ensuring the passage of caravans, and the like. It is possible that broader agreements on general principles of relations



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were also concluded (similar to those for which Arab embassies traveled to Yazʿan), within the framework of which certain tribes recognized the supremacy of the Sasanid king and undertook to pay tribute. However, at the present stage, this remains a hypothesis still not confirmed by convincing evidence.

The end of Sasanid governance in Yemen is usually linked to Bādān's conversion to Islam. In the sources, that is presented somehow ambiguously. A widespread account transmitted by Ibn Ishāk states that Muḥammad sent a letter to Khusrō II Abarwēz, calling upon him to accept Islam. Khusrō tore up the message but ordered Bādān to dispatch envoys to Muḥammad to bring him to the Sasanid court. When the envoys arrived before Muḥammad in Medina, he initially sent them away. According to Muslim authors, having received a revelation during the night, Muḥammad declared to Bādān's envoys the following day that Khusrō had been overthrown and put to death by his son, specifying the hour when that occurred. Upon returning to Bādān, the envoys reported that to him. Some time later Bādān received a letter from Kawād II Shērōe (Khusrō's son who overthrew him and was proclaimed king), announcing the latter's accession and the death of Khusrō II. Taking that as a proof of the truthfulness of Muḥammad's prophecies, Bādān recognized Muḥammad as a prophet, converted to Islam, and wrote to inform him of that.⁴⁴ The accounts

⁴⁴ *Aʿlām* ... 1986. P. 89; *Annales* ... 1882–1885. P. 1571–1575; *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa li ... Abī Nuʿaym al-Aṣḥabānī*. Ed. M.R. Ḳalʿatdī, ʿA. ʿAbbās. Beirut: Dār al-naṣāʾis, 1986. P. 349–351; *al-Iktifāʾ bi-mā taḍammāna-hu min maghāzī Rasūl Allāh wa*



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of how Muḥammad sent a letter to Khusrō are a topic of a separate study; for the purposes of this work, it is important that, if this version is accepted, Bādān's conversion to Islam should be dated to the months following the conspiracy against Khusrō and his assassination which occurred on the night of 28–29 February 628 CE.

According to other statements, found *inter alia* with Ibn Saʿd (b. ca. 784/85, d. 845 CE) and al-Ṭabarī, Bādān converted to Islam later, in the tenth year of the Hijra (631/32 CE).⁴⁵

Preference for one dating over the other can only be given on the basis of the historical context. In this respect, the following fragment found in al-Ṭabarī's historical treatise, is to be considered:

According to what has come down to us, the Messenger of God — may God bless him and grant him peace! — united under the authority of Bādhām (Bādān. — D.M.), when he converted to Islam and the

al-thalātha al-khulafāʾ. Taʾlīf ... *al-Kalāʾ al-Andalusī*. Ed. M.K.ʿI. ʿAlī. Beirut: ʿĀlam al-kutub, 1997. Vol. 1. Pt. 2. P. 388; *Kitāb al-ṭabakāt al-kabīr li Muḥammad bin Saʿd*. Ed. ʿA.M. ʿUmar. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khāndjī, 2001. Pt. 1. P. 223–224; *Nihāyat ...* 1996/97. P. 426–427; *Sīrat al-Nabī li ... Ibn Hishām*. Ed. M.F. al-Sayyid. Tanta: Dār al-ṣaḥāba li-l-turāth bi Ṭantā, 1995. Vol. 1. P. 113; *Tārīkh-nāmeḥ ...* 1995. P. 227–229; *al-Wafāʾ bi aḥwāl al-Muṣṭafā li ... Ibn al-Djawzī*. Ed. M.Z. al-Nadjdār. Riyadh: al-Muʾassasa al-saʿīdiyya, 1976. Pt. 2. P. 460–463.

⁴⁵ *Annales ...* 1890. P. 1763; *Kitāb al-ṭabakāt ...* 2001. Pt. 8. P. 92; *al-Miṣbāḥ al-muḍīʿ fī kuttāb al-Nabī al-ummī wa rusulī-hi ilā mulūk al-arḍ min ʿarabī wa aʿdjamī li ... Ibn Hudayda*. Ed. M. ʿAzīm al-dīn. Beirut: ʿĀlam al-kutub, 1985. Pt. 2. P. 156; *al-Rawḍ al-unuf fī sharḥ al-sīra al-nabawīyya li Ibn Hishām li ... al-Suhaylī*. Ed. ʿA. al-Wakīl. Part 1. Cairo: Dār al-kutub al-islāmiyya, 1967. P. 315; *Tārīkh al-khamīs fī aḥwāl anfas al-naḥīs*. Taʾlīf ... *al-Diyārbakrī*. Cairo, 1884/5. Pt. 2. P. 170.



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Yemenis converted to Islam, the whole of Yemen, and appointed him governor over all the districts (*makhbālīf*) of it (Yemen. — D.M.) And he (Bādān) remained the governor of the Messenger of God for the rest of his life, and the Prophet did not dismiss him from governance over Yemen nor over any part of it, nor did he associate anyone with him in governing Yemen, [and so it was] until Bādān died.⁴⁶

This passage indicates the existence of an agreement between Muḥammad and Bādān, pursuant to which the latter retained his authority over Yemen, but at the same time converted to Islam and recognized the supreme authority of the former. For Bādān, that undoubtedly was a very serious step, because both abandoning the Zoroastrian religion and betraying the king were considered crimes punishable by death. It would be natural to assume that Bādān would have taken such a step in a critical situation, when circumstances offered no other way out. If this is taken as a criterion and the conditions prevailing in 628 CE and in the 10th year of the Hijra (i.e., the period from 20 April 631 CE to 8 April 632 CE) are put to a comparison, the latter of those two periods would win. As Bādān, as shown above, belonged to the family of Mihrāns, the greatest danger for him arose during the sole rule of Queen Bōrān (630–631 CE), i.e., from the beginning or middle of June 631 CE to October of that same year, when nobles of his family suffered a persecution.⁴⁷ It may be assumed that Bādān received

⁴⁶ *Annales* ... 1890. P. 1851.

⁴⁷ Mishin D.E. The last Sasanids: Struggle for power (628–635). *Vostok (Oriens)*. 2025;(3) (in Russ.). P. 23.

news leading him to conclude that those persecutions would soon and inevitably affect him as well, and, deeming his situation hopeless, saw salvation in defecting to the camp of Muḥammad's supporters. If, on the other hand, one relies on the account in which Bādān converts to Islam upon receiving a message from Kawād II Shērōe (628 CE) announcing his accession, the governor's actions are more difficult to explain, since Kawād II did not carry out reprisals against the nobility and especially against the Mihrāns, who enjoyed great influence during his reign.

After Bādān thus seceded from the Sasanids, the history of Sasanid governors in Yemen effectively came to an end. It was definitively terminated with the death of Bādān, which most likely occurred at the beginning of 632 CE.⁴⁸ Thereafter, there are no further reports of the Sasanids appointing governors to Yemen.

Conflict of interests

The author declares no relevant conflict of interests.



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⁴⁸ The date of Bādān's death is approximately reconstructed on the basis that, according to one account of al-Ṭabarī, Muḥammad appointed the governors of Yemen after performing the Farewell Pilgrimage (*ḥadjjat al-tamām*), which took place in March 632 CE; by then, according to al-Ṭabarī, Bādān was no longer alive (Annales ... 1890. P. 1852).

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