

THE HĪJRIDS AND THE NAŞRIDS IN ARABIA AND MESOPOTAMIA

The HĪjrids, Kinda, Ma'add, Muḍar, and the HĪmyarites

The relationship between HĪmyar and the HĪjrid dynasty of Kinda has attracted comparison with that between the Jafnids and Rome and the Naşrids and the Sasanians, as a leadership group dependent on a certain degree of state sponsorship.⁴¹ It is appropriate, however, to set some distance between the HĪjrids and Kinda, just as the Jafnids and Naşrids are to be set apart from Ghassān and Lakhm, as while the HĪjrids seem to have originally come from Kinda, their subsequent relationship with the Kinda tribe is unclear.⁴² Initially the expansion of the kingdom of Saba had affected Kinda, but after Saba was annexed in approximately 275 by HĪmyar, the HĪmyarites became the dominant power in southern Arabia and slowly began to extend their authority northwards. This was probably done to counteract Roman efforts to win influence in Arabia, and, on the basis of extant inscriptions, the HĪmyarites were able to command the support of several Arab tribes from a relatively wide area, including Kinda.⁴³ Ry 509, an inscription from the fifth century from Ma'sal al-Jumḥ, west of Riyāḍ and very probably the centre of HĪmyarite power in central Arabia,⁴⁴ celebrates an HĪmyarite expedition to the 'land of Ma'add' and can be read, with the support of a Muslim source, Ibn Ḥabīb, as reflecting the HĪmyarite installation of HĪjir of Kinda over the Ma'add group of Arabs.⁴⁵ It seems that this action towards Ma'add (whose territory may have spanned central Arabia, north of Riyāḍ⁴⁶) was part of the wider attempt to gain influence in the deserts of Arabia (see Map 4). After the mid-fifth century, HĪmyarite royal inscriptions include 'the Arabs of the highlands

⁴¹ Olinde, *Kings of Kinda*, 37.

⁴² Robin, 'Les Arabes de HĪmyar', 193.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 170; *id.*, 'Royaume HĪjride', 665-75.

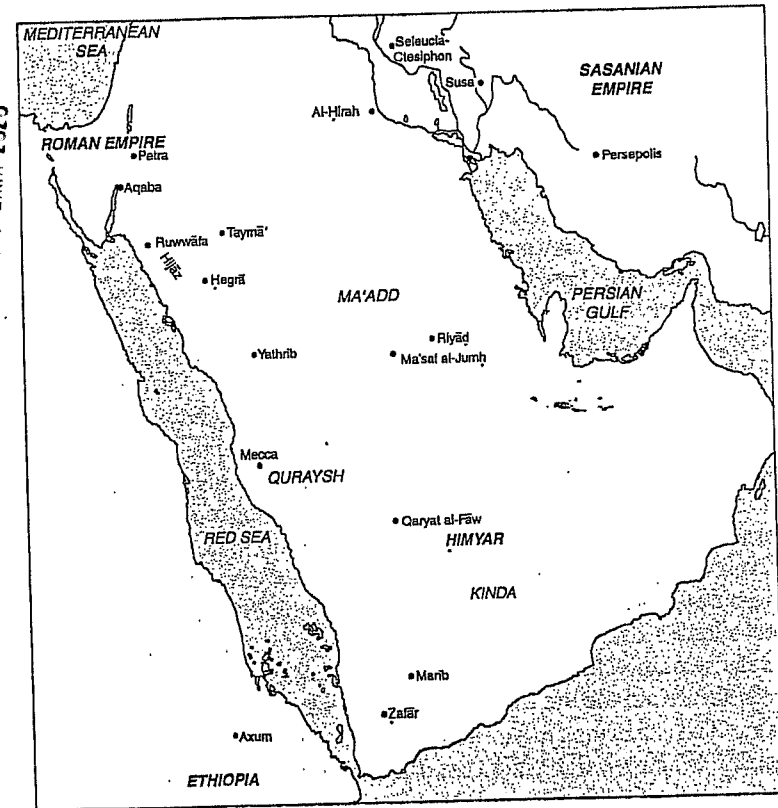
⁴⁴ Robin, 'Les Arabes de HĪmyar', 187.

⁴⁵ Ry 509 = G. Ryckmans, 'Inscriptions sud-Arabes (dixième série)', *Le Muséon*, 66 (1953), 267-317, at 303-7; Ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-mūḥabbar*, 368; Hoyland, *Arabia*, 49; Robin, 'Royaume HĪjride', 692; M. Zwettler, 'Ma'add in late-ancient Arabian epigraphy and other pre-Islamic sources', *WZKM* 90 (2000), 223-309, at 244-5.

⁴⁶ Robin, 'Les Arabes de HĪmyar', 168.

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Greg Fisher, *Between empires: Arabs, Romans, and Sasanians in late antiquity*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013. İSAM DN. 281814



Map 4. The Arabian peninsula, after C. Robin, 'Les Arabes de HĪmyar, des «Romains» et des Perses (III^e-VI^e siècles de l'ère chrétienne)', *Semitica et Classica* 1 (2008), 168, indicating major settlements and presumed areas of tribal activity. Note the proximity of Axum to HĪmyar.

and the littoral' as part of their kingdom.⁴⁷ Kinda appears in such inscriptions, taking part in military operations in the Arabian desert. In Ry 510 (AD 521), for example, they are included in a military mission against the Naşrid leader al-Mundhir in Mesopotamia, alongside other auxiliaries.⁴⁸

While Kinda appear as an ally of HĪmyar, the HĪjrids seem to have been used by the rulers of HĪmyar primarily to control not Kinda, but Ma'add, an Arab group in northern and central Arabia with whom they

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 171-3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* 173; Ry 510 = Ryckmans, 'Inscriptions', 307-10.

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