New Qatabanic Lexical Material
Philological Observations and Semitic Parallels*

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[New Qatabanic lexical material is presented and it is analysed from a philological and comparative perspective. Furthermore, this material is discussed in relation to the origin and classification of ancient South Arabian.]

1. *Introduction*

In recent years there has been the discovery of a large number of written records from ancient South Arabia that include many new documents from the kingdom of Qataban. Despite the historical importance of this kingdom, Qatabanic language has not been fully investigated, and its lexicon is poorly known. Scholars still rely on the dictionary published by Ricks three decades ago,[1] a work that is largely outdated.[2] Research on Qatabanic lexicography needs to focus on the recently published material, and a substantial revision of the rest of the documentation is required. This paper will deal with new lexical material occurring in the inscriptions ATH 866 and CSAI I, 115=Arbach Sayūn 1 + ATM 877 A+B that will be analysed from a philological and comparative perspective and considered in the broader framework of the classification of Semitic.

2. *The inscription ATM 866*

The inscription ATM 866[3] is a royal edict regulating a donation by the king of private buildings to a family of subjects.[4] A clause in the edict (lines 13-15) sanctions against people who trespass and commit crimes in these private buildings (possibly palaces).

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1. Ricks 1989.
2. See the reviews by Avanzini 1989; Bron 1990; Beeston 1991.
3. This inscription was published by Arbach - Bāṭāyiᶜ - al-Zubaydī 2013, 59-65.
4. The dating of this inscription is still open to debate, as the king *Hwfᶜm Yhnᶜm bn ᶜnmrm* mentioned in the document has no parallels in Qatabanic documentation.

w- [13]l yḫrmwn bn kl-ḏm b-yᶜrb-sʲm
l-(ḫ)ytmm w-t [14]ʾbym w-ngzm ʾw nhb ʾw sᵌḫb ʾw sʲḫllm [15] ʾw sʲgzym
wsʲṭn sʲmt ʾbytn (……)

"and [13]let (the palaces) be prohibited (protected, be inviolable) against anybody who will enter them
to be in a squat and to [14] cause incidents and to create brawls or to pillage or to cause destruction or
to plunder [15] or to install himself
inside these palaces (……)"

These crimes are described by a sequence of 7 infinitives, ḫytmm / tʾbym / ngzm / nhb / sᵌḫb / sʲḫllm / sʲgzym[5], all attested in Qatabanic for the first time.

The verb ḫytmm is the -t- infix stem from the root ḫym[6], which is only attested in the Minaic fragment M 315=R 3340, 3:

[... ...]ṣrḫḫtm w-kl ḫymm w-ᶜlwhm w-ʾsʲt[... ...]

Here, the context refers to architectural structures, as indicated by the term ṣrḫḫtm. Since this term ṣrḫt is attested in ASA with the sense of "*the upper storey or floor of a building*"[7], the Minaic term ḫymm is likely to refer to a "*covered structure / room*", which is also consistent with the semantic value of the Semitic root ḪYM designating the "*tent*" or a type of "*dwelling*"[8]. Significantly, the Classical Arabic term ḫiyām in Qur 55, 72[9] as well as in the Muᶜallaqa Labīd, 12[10] refers to a type of dwelling that is associated to a refined place of pleasure[11]. A similar association appears to be reflected in the Ugaritic passage KTU 1.4 I, 23-43, where the divine blacksmith Kṯr w-Ḫss fabricates precious furniture of gold and silver, including a ḫym (line 29)[12]. These data suggest that the Qatabanic verb form ḫytmm can be interpreted as the action of "*taking shelter within a dwelling as a permanent home*". Given the context mentioning serious

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5. The infinitives having the suffix -*m* are derived stems; on this particular morpho-syntactical structure of Qatabanic, see Nebes 1988, 70-71, 73, 77; 1997, 127; Nebes - Stein 2004, 472, 4.7.3.4, 484, 5.8.3; Kogan - Korotayev 2007, 186; Stein 2011, 1062.

6. Arbach - Bāṭāyiᶜ - al-Zubaydī 2013, 63 suggest that this term derive from the root ḫtm , attested in the form ḫytmtn in the Sabaic text Ja 655, 17 and interpreted by SD, 63 "*cultivated plot*" (but the context is unclear, and the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena considers this term as a proper name), hence their rendering of Qatabanic ḫytmm (at pg. 60) "*zarāᶜa*". This interpretation, however, must be rejected. The rest of their translation of the whole passage under examination also appears unclear, and cannot be accepted; see the pages 60 and 63-64.

7. See Loreto 2011, 69 with bibliography in footnote 5.

8. Cohen 2012, 983.

9. See the passage ḫūrun maqṣurātun fī l-ḫiyāmi, where the term ḫūr refers to the fairest women granted by God (see Qur 44, 54; 52, 20; 56, 22). The term ḫūr is etymologically connected to the Semitic root ḪWR; see Bulakh 2004, 273-274.

10. See the passage in line 12 šāqat-ka ẓuᶜnu l-ḫayyi yawma taḥammalū fa-takannasū qaṭunān taṣirru ḫiyāmu-hā and more in general the context in lines 12-15.

11. See also in general Kazimirski 1860, 659 and Lane 1865, 837.

12. This term has been interpreted either as "*a canopied resting place*, *canopy*, *baldachin*, *tent*" (DUL, 411; Smith - Pitard 2009, 397, 413-415) or as "*Wohnung*" (Dietrich - Loretz 2000, 208). These oscillations in the interpretation are caused by the literary connotation of the term ḫym in Ugaritic poetry, which is meant to evoke a marvelous item (hence the sense "*a canopied resting place*, *canopy*, *baldachin*" appears to be preferable). The parallels with Classical Arabic mentioned above are helpful in understanding this specific connotation.

infractions, this action is likely to have a legal connotation such as "*occupying buildings*" in the sense of "*being (illegally) in a squat*".

This interpretation is consistent with the meaning conveyed by the other verb form *âgzym* occurring at the end of the verb sequence mentioned above. This is the *â-* stem from the root *gzy*, which is well attested in Sabaic, although its interpretation has been a subject of discussion. Recently, Stein has proposed the rendering "*verbleiben*"[13] for the verb form *ygzyy* in the minuscule text X.BSB 44=Mon.script.sab 515, 2-3. This interpretation was already suggested by Ryckmans for other Sabaic documents[14] and subsequently accepted by many scholars[15]. Interestingly, this meaning is confirmed by the same root in Ge°ez, with the sense "*time, moment, period*"[16], and in Yemeni Arabic with the meaning "*to pass time*"[17].

The meaning occurring in Sabaic appears to suit the Qatabanic context under examination. It can be pointed out, therefore, that the two verb forms *ḫytmm* and *âgzym* refer to a major infraction consisting of the illegal occupation of private buildings, which appears to be central in the edict ATM 866.

By contrast, the verb *tʾbym*, a *t-* prefix stem form the root *ʾby*, appears to designate a different type of infraction. A similar form is attested, as the noun *tʾby*, in the Sabaic edict R 4176, 10, and has been interpreted by Møller "*sich untereinander bekämpfen*"[18]. The same term occurs in the minuscule documents X.BSB 99=Mon.script.sab 331, 6 and X.BSB 107=Mon.script.sab 80, 5, and it is rendered by Stein "*Auseinandersetzung*"[19]. The expression *tʾby ʾḫd-km* occurring in X.BSB 99=Mon.script.sab 331, 6 is noteworthy. Here, the noun *tʾby* is associated to the verb root *ʾḫd* that is rendered by Stein "*Auseinandersetzung, von welcher ihr erfaßt worden seid*"[20]. The same expression, *tʾbym d-yʾḫd*, occurs in CIH 612+C 522, 3[21], which is a legal text dealing with infractions committed in a temple of the god *d-Sⁱmwy*. The expression *tʾby + ʾḫd* may have been a Sabaic idiom indicating the action of "*quarrelling, brawling*"[22]. Unfortunately, the bad state of preservation of the inscription CIH 612+C 522 prevents us from a full understanding of the document. Nevertheless, the occurrence of the idiom *tʾby + ʾḫd* as well as the presence of the term *ngz* (also attested in the Qatabanic passage under examination; see the observations below) indicate that CIH 612+C 522 regulated cases of quarrels or incidents within the sacred area of the temple[23].

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13. Stein 2010, 181. This meaning also applies to the Sabaic texts Ja 629, 38, YM 11749, 3 and possibly to A 40-3, 2 (see Stein 2010, 626); see the discussion by Stein 2010, 180-181.

14. Ryckmans 1974, 245 footnote 4; 1976, 485, footnote 1. Note that SD, 53 proposes the meaning "*?receive official commendation // acquit oneself of a task*" and "*?award, commendation // mission, task*"; see the observations by Bron 1996, 108-109 and Stein 2010, 181.

15. See Pirenne 1977, 157; Bron 1996, 108-109; Ryckmans - Møller - Abdallah 1994, 64; Sima 2001, 286; Stein 2003, 186; see the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena "*bleiben, veweilen*".

16. Leslau 1991, 210.

17. Landberg 1920, 282; Piamenta 1990, 67; see also Cohen 1994, 110-111.

18. See Møller 1997, 93, 104 who accepts the interpretation by Biella 1982, 2 "*disputation*". This term is not translated in Ghul 1984, 34, 37. By contrast, the rendering proposed by SD, 1 "*permanent residence in a place // ancestral boasting*" (following Beeston 1978, 144; see below footnote 33) must be rejected.

19. Stein 2010, 350, 352.

20. Stein 2010, 350.

21. See the correct reading *t£bym* proposed by Robin 1997, 213, 214.

22. The rendering of this expression by Robin 1997, 213 "*dans une résidence (?) ce qu'il prend*" cannot be accepted.

23. As also suggested by Beeston 1980, 27-29.

This meaning suggested above for *tʾby* in Sabaic is further corroborated by the use of the verb pattern *taʾābaya* in Geʿez[24] with a similar sense.

Notably, there are also parallels in Northwest Semitic. In Ugaritic, the term *ʾabynn*,[25] attested in KTU 1. 17 I, 16, means *"miserable"*. The form *ʾabynm* in the economic text KTU 4.70, 6 has been interpreted as *"insolvent"*[26], which might be linked to the same root. The structure of this text, however, suggests a personal name[27]. The syllabic Ugaritic form *i-b/pu-ú*, in the lexical text RS 20.123+, is also noticeable. Huehnergard suggests the possibility of the interpretation "*/ʾibû/ < *ʾibyu "desire, need"*"[28]. Furthermore, the nominal pattern *abiʾānāku*, interpreted *"je suis (... ...) lésé"*,[29] occurs in the Akkadian of Mari,[30] which is considered a Northwest Semitic linguistic trait.[31] A similar meaning is also attested in Biblical Hebrew, where the root *ʾby* as a nominal pattern means *"poor, needy"* and as a verb pattern indicates *"to crush"* in Am 4, 1; 8, 4, *"to oppress"* in Ez 18, 12; 22, 29, *"to kill"* in Jb 24, 12 and *"to cause to fall"* in Ps 37, 14, all contexts referred to the poor[32]. The root *ʾby*, therefore, can be considered a Proto-West Semitic root[33] with a general sense of *"want, need misery"* that has developed and specialised in ASA with the sense of *"incident, quarrel"*.[34]

The data above suggest that the Qatabanic form *tʾbym* refers to any action causing a *"quarrel"* or *"incident"*. This interpretation is consistent with subsequent verb forms *ngzm*, *nhb*, *sᶟḥb* and *sᵗḥllm* that appear to refer to similar actions.

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24. Note the passage in Galatians 5, 17 rendered by Dillmann 1865, 760 "*sibi invicem repugnare*"; see also Leslau 1991, 6 "*contend resist one another, be in opposition to one another*".

25. Despite long controversy, the reading *ʾabynn* appears to be definitively established by Pardee 2010, 906, 910, and accepted by Tropper 2012, 823 *abynn* (despite KTU3, 49 *aby*[[x]]*n*). The alternative reading *ʾabynt* (see Mazzini 2011a, 48) must be rejected.

26. See DUL, 15; this interpretation is accepted by Kogan 2015, 278. Note also the expression *rᶜh ʾabyn*, in a broken context in KTU 1.22 I, 27, which remains unclear; see Pardee 2011, 29, 37, 45.

27. As pointed out by McGeough 2011, 62.

28. Huehnergard 2008, 91.

29. Durand 1998, 450.

30. This forms occurs as *a-bi-ia-na-ku* in ARM 37, 23 and ARM 44, 10. There are also *a-bi-a-tam* in ARM 46, 13 and *a-bi-ia-tim* in ARM 55, 10; see Dossin 1978, 70, 79, 82.

31. See in general Streck 2000, 83-84. In view of these data, the hypothesis of an Egyptian lexical influence (Lambdin 1953, 145-146; Von Soden 1969, 323; Muchiki 1999, 236-237) should be rejected, as suggested by Kogan 2015, 277.

32. See in general Clines 1993, 104.

33. See in general Cohen 1994, 3. It is noteworthy that in Classical Arabic the root *ʾby* means "*to refuse*" which reflects a significant semantic development. Despite this, the root is often associated in the Quran with a major sin such as the refusal and dislike or disdain of the disbelievers, including IblÇs (Qur 2, 34; 15, 31; 17, 99; 20, 56; 20, 116; 25, 50; a similar use occurs in the Muʿallaqa Ḥāriṯ 24, 49; see also Kazimirski 1860, 7; Lane 1863, 12-13; Zammit 2002, 67, 543), which can be connected with the sense "*to be miserable*" attested in Northwest Semitic. Note also the further semantic development in the verb form *hʾbyn* in the h- stem meaning "*to prevent, to hinder*" in the Sabaic legal text MB 2002 I-20, 1 (Maraqten 2004, 158; in X.BSB 42= Mon.script.sab 152, 3 the same verb form may be attested, but the reading is uncertain; see Multhoff - Stein 2008a, 415 and Stein 2010, 175 respectively; see the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena "*hinder*"). This specific connotation occurring in Sabaic can be compared to the verb *ysᵗʾby* (line 7) and the noun *tʾby* (line 8), in the Minaic market regulation R 3695=M 356, forms which were interpreted by Beeston 1978, 143, 143-144 "*shall require ... to stay*", "*stock*" respectively, although the text is fragmentary, and its exact sense is unclear. The term *tʾbyt* is also attested in the recently published Minaic inscription MÛM 3634, 8 (see Prioletta 2014), in a similar context to R 3695=M 356, and has been rendered by Prioletta 2014, 192, 194 "*propriétés*". The verb form *ysᵗʾby* in the Minaic inscription YM 28981, 5 is unclear, given the fragmentary context; see Arbach - Audouin 2007, 56.

34. Significantly, in certain Yemeni dialects this root is attested with the meaning "*to want, to wish*" (see Landberg 1920, 22 and Piamenta 1990, 2), which appears to reflect the old sematic value of the West Semitic root.

The form *ngzm* is also attested in the legal Sabaic text C 612+C 522, 1[35], mentioned above in relation to *tʾbym*, and was rendered by Beeston "*create a brawl*".[36] As previously discussed, C 612+C 522 reports a number of crimes committed within the temple of the deity *ḏ-Sʰmwy*,[37] and it is striking that two of these crimes (expressed by the two terms *tʾby* and *ngz*) coincides with those mentioned in the Qatabanic edict under examination. They may have been technical idioms specifically related to building, either private or sacred. Note that in Sabaic this root is also attested in the *h-* stem that is interpreted "*to do away with, to put an end to, to finish off a person*".[38] This interpretation is further corroborated by Classical Arabic *munājaza, tanājuz* "*fight, combat*".[39]

The meaning "*to create a brawl*", therefore, is also appropriate for the Qatabanic form *ngzm*.

The form *nhb* is a hapax in ASA as a whole. It is interesting the parallel with Classical Arabic *nahaba* "*to pillage, to plunder*",[40] such as in the muʿallaqa al-Ḥāriṯ, 32, where the verb form *yuntahabu* is associated with the term *ġiwārān*, the raids against the people (*al-nāsu*)[41]. Note that the same root is attested in Jibbāli with the meaning "*(passion) to carry so, away, to take by force*".[42]

The meaning "*to pillage*" appears to fit the context where the Qatabanic form *nhb* occurs.

The form *s³ḥb* can be compared to the verb *s³ḥb* in the Sabaic construction inscription Ry 63=R 4069, 6, in a context referring to the physical damage or destruction of an irrigation system, which is interpreted by Møller "*weggeschemmt warden*".[43] Notably, in a passage of the Old Testament, 2S 17, 13, the verb *sāḥab* indicates the action of "*tearing a city to ruins*". A similar meaning is attested in Classical Arabic in Qur 54, 48, where the verb *yusaḥbūna* refers to the destruction of the disbelievers in the fire (*fī l-nāri*)[44].

The data above suggest that *s³ḥb* in the context under examination can be interpreted as "*to cause destruction*".

The form *sʰḥllm* derives from the root *ḥll* that is already attested in Qatabanic, in the edicts CSAI I, 204=R 3978, 7 and CSAI I, =R 3566, 19 with specific legal connotations. In CSAI I, 204=R 3978, 7, this root designates the legal position of an individual that is unprotected by the law, while in CSAI I, 208=R 3566, 19 the root *ḥll* refers to the legal action of annulling any legal activity carried out without the king's permission. Notably the term *mḥlt* is also attested in the legal

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35. On the reconstruction of this inscription, see Multhoff - Stein 2008b, 13. The reading of the letter *z* was suggested by Beeston 1980, 27, 28, correcting Rhodokanakis 1932, 167, and can be confirmed after personal inspection of the original.

36. Beeston 1980, 29. Note that the pattern *ngzn* points to an infinitive of the D stem (see Stein 2002; 2003, 198-200; 2011, 1065-1066; 2013, 115-122; Nebes - Stein 2004, 467, 482-483; Kogan - Korotayev 2007, 187), as is the case with Qatabanic.

37. See Beeston 1980, 28-29.

38. SD, 94; see also Beeston 1976, 67 and the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena "*töten, vernichten (oder: wegbringen(?))*". Note the verb form *hgzn* attested in X.SBB 46=Mon.script.sab, 274, 6 which is interpreted by Stein 2010, 185 "*aus der Welt zu schaffen*", 728 "*beenden, beseitigen*", but its connection with the root *ngz* discussed above remains unclear.

39. Kazimirski 1860, 1204.

40. See Kazimirski 1860, 1351-1352.

41. Note also the nominal form *nihāb* "*booty*" in the muʿallaqa ʿAmr, 66 and al-Ḥāriṯ, 54.

42. See Johnstone 1981, 185.

43. Møller 2010, 212.

44. Note that S³ḤB is a Proto-West Semitic root originally attested with the meaning "*to draw, to drag*" (see Kogan 2015, 97), but it has developed the specific sense "*to drag to distruction, to cause destruction*" in Qatabanic, Sabaic, Biblical Hebrew and Classical Arabic, all languages belonging to Central Semitic.

Sabaic text Schm / Mārib 24, 8, 11-12 with the similar meaning "*Ablösegebühr*"[45] that is linked to the legal principle expressed by the root *ḥll* in CSAI I, 208=R 3566.[46] The legal value of the root *ḥll* appears to be consistent with the concrete meaning of the verbs *tʾbym*, *ngzm*, *nhb* and *s³ḥb* in the context under examination which suggests the form *s¹ḥllm* to have a similar meaning. This is further corroborated by the frequent use of the root *ḥll* in Sabaic with the meaning "*Ausgeplønderter*" in military context,[47] although it is never attested as a verb.

Notably, the root *ḥll* is attested in Biblical Hebrew with the specific meaning "*to profanate, to desecrate*", which appears to be a parallel semantic development to Qatabanic and Sabaic.[48]

The sense "*to plunder*", therefore, appears to suit the form *s¹ḥllm* in the context under examination.

3. *The inscription CSAI I, 115=Arbach Sayūn 1 + ATM 877 A+B*

The inscription CSAI I, 115=Arbach Sayūn 1 + ATM 877 A, B[49] is a royal dedicatory inscription reporting a detailed narrative of Qatabanian military activities carried out against certain tribes in the kingdom of Ḥaḍramawt.[50] Here, a number of terms, describing the military undertakings, are attested for the first time in Qatabanic.

The verbs *dhr* (lines 1, twice), *ṯll* (line 2, twice), *ḫrs²* (line 2), *s¹nq¶* (line 3) and *s¹lqḥ* (line 3) are commonly used in Sabaic military narratives, and can be interpreted "*to burn / destroy*,[51] *to carry off booty*,[52] *to destroy monument / ravage territory / plunder / pillage*,[53] *to despoil / plunder enemy*,[54] *to rout / throw into disorder*".[55]

In particular, *dhr* in attested in Middle Late Sabaic texts. It is noteworthy that in the Yemeni Arabic and in the Modern South Arabic the root *dhr* is attested with the meaning "*to make a fire, to set on fire*",[56] which fits the general sense of Qatabanic and Sabaic. Interestingly, the root *dhr* occurs in Biblical Hebrew with the meaning "*to gallop*" in Ju 5, 22 and Na 3, 2[57] in military context.[58]

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45. Møller 1986. This interpretation is accepted by Nebes 2004, 304.

46. See the analysis of this root in the aforementioned legal documents in G. Mazzini, The Ancient South Arabian Royal Edicts from the Southern Gate of Timnaᶜ and the Ǧabal Labaḫ. A New Edition with Philological and Historical Commentary, forthcoming in EFAH 8.

47. According to the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena; see also Beeston 1976, 15, who mentioned the parallel with Classical Arabic *ḫulla* and SD, 67-68.

48. See in particular Ez 39, 7; Lv 19, 29; 21, 9, 23 and the observations by Milgrom 2000, 1695-1698, 1831-1832. The parallel with ASA was already identified by Rhodokanakis 1924a, 24; on the use of this root more in general, see also Wilson 1994.

49. It was published by Arbach - as-Saqqāf 2001. New editions of this text appeared by Avanzini 2004a, 163-165; 2004b and Frantsouzoff 2014, 182-185. The further fragments ATM 877 A, B were published by Arbach - Bāṭāyiᶜ - al-Zubaydī 2013, 76-77.

50. It may be dated to the end second / beginning first centuries BC; see the observations by Prioletta - Arbach 2015, 266-271. By contrast, the dating to "Period B2", second / early first centuries BC, by Avanzini 2004a, 29, 142; 2004b, 102-106; 2016, 181-182 must be rejected.

51. SD, 35; the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena "*verbrennen, zerstören*".

52. SD, 150.

53. SD, 62; the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena "*plündern*".

54. SD, 97; the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena "*erbeuten, zu Beute machen*".

55. SD, 82; the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena "*wegnehmen>vertreiben*".

56. See Landberg 1920, 859, Johnstone 1981, 36 and more in general Cohen 1993, 230.

57. See the observations by Christensen 2009, 336.

The verb *ṯll* is attested in Sabaic archaic documents such as in R 3945, 13[59]. This verb derives from the Semitic root ṮLL which is used in parallel contexts, as shown in Biblical Hebrew (verb *šālal*) in 2K 3, 23 and in Akkadian (verb *šalālu*) in the Neo-Babylonian inscription of Simbar-Šiḫun, 13[60].

The verb *ḫrs²* is attested in Sabaic archaic documents such as in R 3945, 6, 16, 19[61]. The Semitic root ḪRS² is attested with the sense "*to scratch*",[62] and the military connotation occurring in Qatabanic and Sabaic appears to be a specific semantic development.

The form *s¹nqd* is the *s¹-* stem from the root *nqd*, and its use is parallel to the *h-* verb stem in Sabaic which is specifically associated to the capture of the horses[63]. No Semitic parallel are available except for Classical Arabic where the root *nqd* means "*to save*", and its relation to ASA remains unclear. The term *naqīda* meaning "*cheval pris à l'ennemi dans le combat*",[64] however, is notable. According to Lisān al-ᶜarab,[65] this type of horse is "the one taken (and hence saved) from the enemy", which explains the sense of the verb pattern. This suggests the possibility that the root *nqd* is specific to ASA as a designation of the capture of the horse as a booty in military context[66].

The form *s¹lqḥ* is the *s¹-* stem from the root *lqḥ*, and its use is parallel to the *h-* verb stem in Sabaic. The use of the verb *leqû* in Akkadian with the specific meaning "*take away, carry off booty, captives*" is notable[67]. A similar meaning is attested for the root *lqḥ* in Biblical Hebrew such as the case with Is 52, 5 and Gn 12, 15, where the *quṭṭāl* stem of this root specifically means "*to be taken away in slavery*"[68] and "*to be taken hostage*" respectively[69].

In line 3, there is the expression *rkwb-s¹m w-ʾftn-s¹m*, where *rkwb* refers to the "*mounted troops*". Given the structure of this expression the term *ʾftn* is likely to indicate another type of soldiers. Although the first term is well-known in Sabaic[70], the broken plural, following the well-known ASA pattern *fᶜwl*, is only occurring in the context under examination. The second term is a hapax in ASA, and the context (in parallel with the plural broken plural *rkwb*) suggests that it is a broken plural form following the well-known ASA pattern *ʾfᶜl*.

The possibility of *ʾftn* being a type of soldier is confirmed by the parallel with the Classical Arabic term *fatan* "*young, brave man*", and its use with a military connotation in relation to the figure of ᶜAlī in the Islamic tradition[71]. In this connection, the expression *abu l-fityān* meaning

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58. In Classical Arabic, the root *dhr* designates the time with a negative connotation such as in Qur 45, 24 *namūtu wa-naḥyā wa-mā yuhliku-nā ilā l-dahru* "*we die and live and there is nothing that destroys us except the time*".

59. Møller 1985, 656 renders this verb "*erbeuten*".

60. See Goetze 1965, 122; Brinkman, 152-154, 1968.

61. Møller 1985, 654, 657 renders "*Zerstörung veranlassen*", 658 "*zerstören*".

62. See Cohen 2012, 1030 and Rhodokanakis 1927, 16-17. Note that this root is attested in Yemeni Arabic with the meaning "*to raze to the ground*" (Piamenta 1990, 124; see also Rossi 1940, 206) that could be an ASA lexical influence; on this aspect, see more in general Møller 2014.

63. For the attestations of this root in Sabaic, see SD, 97, with the addition of the inscription al-Miᶜsāl 4, 10.

64. See Kazimirski 1860, 1322.

65. See Lisān al-ᶜarab II, 882-887.

66. Note that the noun *nqyd* in Ja 665, 45 was interpreted by SD, 97 as a "*captured animal*" (following Beeston 1976, 15, 67), which is also accepted by the Sabaic dictionary on line sabaweb.uni-jena "*Beutetiere, Erbeutetes Vieh*".

67. See the passage in YOS 10, 11, 21.

68. See the observations by Blenkinsopp 2000, 341.

69. Note also the use of the *lqḥ* as a verb in Ugaritic with the legal value of "*taking something unlawfully from the hands of someone*" (KTU 3.2, 13; 3.5, 17; 3.12, 12); see DUL 498; Kienast 1979, 436-439; Márquez Rowe 2006, 290-292.

70. See Beeston 1976, 11-12 and Yule - Robin 2005-2006.

71. See Canova 2005, 148, 153.

"*lion*"[72] is also notable. Given the structure of *rkwb-sᵐ w-ʾftn-sᵐ* it is possible that it is a merism indicating the whole of the army, such as "the mounted and the unmounted soldiers", and accordingly *£ftn* could refer to any type of "*infantryman*".[73] These observations suggest that the term *ʾftn* derives from the root *fty*, which is unattested elsewhere in ASA[74]. As a consequence, the -*n* suffix (that cannot be the determination, the term *ʾftn* being in the construct state) indicates a *fᶜl-n* nominal pattern, a known category in ASA.[75] Considering the Qatabanic *fᶜl-n* nominal pattern *ṣryn* (CSAI I, 120 =R 311, 2) in the singular with the third weak radical similar to *fty*, the term *ʾftn* may reflect an original structure such as / *ʾftVy-Vn*/, with - *Vy-Vn* being contracted into a long vowel. It appears that the -*n* nominal suffix is preserved in the plural, which is unattested elsewhere in ASA.

The word *ṯkt* occurs as a verb in line 3, and possibly as a noun in the new fragment ATM 877 A+0B, 2. No ASA parallels are available with the exception of a homographic term *ṯkʾtʾm* occurring in the minuscule text X.BSB 6=Mon.script.sab 421, 3[76]. Unfortunately, the meaning of this term is still unclear[77]. The context in line 3 of the Qatabanic inscription seems to suggest the meaning "*to take refuge, shelter*".[78] The only possible Semitic parallel is the Ugaritic term *ṯkt*, occurring in KTU 1.4 V, 7, which may indicate a type of "*boat*".[79] Notably, this Ugaritic term occurs in a context describing a storm conjured up by the god Baal. This would imply a semantic area indicating an "*enclosed protective area*". The meaning and etymology of Ugaritic *ṯkt*, however, remains controversial, and the hypothesis of a Hurrian loanword[80], which would invalidate the parallel with Sabaic and Qatabanic[81], cannot be ruled out.

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72. See Kazimirski 1860, 541. Note also the personal name *Pətūʾēl*, attested in the Old Testament, Jl 1,1, that could be interpreted "*El is a strong warrior*". According to Rechenmacher 2012, 56 this name can be interpreted "*Jüngling des El (?)*". According to Kogan 2015, 95, PTY is a Proto-West Semitic root meaning "*to desire*" (see also Ugaritic "*to seduce*"; DUL 687). It is reasonable to suggest, therefore, that Central Semitic has developed specific sense "*strong warrior, hero*", as pointed out above.

73. As also suggested by Arbach - as-Saqqāf 2001, 112, 118 "*mušāt*" and followed by Frantsouzoff 2014, 184 "*pechotincy*". The translations by Avanzini 2004a, 163 "*young soldiers*"; 2004b, 110 "*soldiers*" do not render the exact sense of the term.

74. This may be further corroborated by the personal name *Ftym* (attested in the Qatabanic inscription C 852, 1, see Robin 1997, 133, who mentions Arabic names such *Fityān*, *Fitya* / *Futuyya*, and also occurring in Sabaic) derived from the root *fty* that can be connected with the noun *ʾftn*.

75. See in Sabaic Stein 2003, 57; 2013, 604.2.2.1.

76. According to the reading by Stein 2010, 79.

77. Stein 2010, 79, 80-81.

78. See the renderings by Arbach - as-Saqqāf 2001, 112, 118 "*al-taǧaʾ*", Avanzini 2004a, 163 (=2004a, 110) "*to take shelter*"; Stein 2010, 81 "*Zuflucht suchen*"; Frantsouzoff 2014, 184 "*ukrylisi*".

79. As suggested by DUL 891-892; see also Watson 2007, 144.

80. See Loretz 1996; 2011, 279-280; 2015, 318 (recently reaffirmed by Wikander 2014, 137) who rendered *ṯkt* as "*Wagen*" (see also Wyatt 2002, 101 "*storm-chariot*", but he does not exclude the hypothesis of the ship in footnote 136) on the basis of Hurrio-Akkadian forms *ßu-ki-tu₄* attested in the tablet HSS 15, 167, 18 from Nuzi and possibly *ßu-Åi-tu* in EA 34, 21/2 (see Mayer 1976, 212-213 and Rainey 2015, 337, 1378-1379); see also Watson 2007, 27, 135. Note that Smith - Pitard 2009, 532 propose the emendation to *ṯrt* from the root *ṯry* "*water, moist*"; see also Pardee 2003, 260 "*driving showers*". The reading proposed by Virolleaud 1932, pl. 27 read *šk(?)t*, however, appears quite certain (it was followed by Herder 1963, 26 and recently reaffirmed by Pardee 2003, 260 and KTU3, 21).

81. Note the verb form *ṯtkʾnn* occurring in the Sabaic minuscule text X.BSB 149=Mon.script.sab. 42, 10 which is interpreted by Stein 2010, 519, 525 "*vermehrt*" from the root *wtk*. This sense, however, does not appear to suit the context under discussion. The form *ṯk* in the minuscule Ḥadramitic text X.Rb-87 no. 4, 4 remains unclear; see Frantsouzoff 1999, 60-61.

The term *ṯfwd* is a hapax, and no satisfactory interpretation is available. The term occurs in the following context (line 4)

> *w-y^clww ṯfwd-s¹m l-ʾrḍ Qtbn*

with the subject of the verb *y^clww* being the Qatabanians and his king.

This passage emphasises the end of the successful military expedition in support of the Ḥadramitic king against the rebellious tribes in the kingdom of Ḥadramawt. It appears that the Qatabanians had (conquered and) brought to Qataban their (of the enemies) *ṯfwd*.

Arbach - as-Saqqāf render the Qatabanic term as "*ṯafāfīd*",[82] which is interesting. This interpretation, however, may be misleading, and hence deserves a specific explanation. In classical Arabic *ṯafāfīd* generally indicates any "*doublure, pièces de drap dont on garnit en dedans*"[83]. Notably, this type of layered clothes can specifically referred to the cuirass (*rid^c*), as indicated by the verb pattern *ṯaffada* and its use in the ancient Arabic poetry[84]. Given the context, one may suggest that the Qatabanic term *ṯfwd* specifically designates the "*coat of mail, coat of defence of any kind*"[85] which could constitute a very prestigious and valuable booty after a victorious military campaign. This is also corroborated by the Islamic traditions emphasising the coat of mail as a significant part of military booty such as the case with the coats of mail conquered in battle that belonged to the Prophet[86].

4. *Final comments*

The Qatabanic lexical material analysed above suggests two important observations that appear to provide clues on the origin and classification of ASA.

First, the terms *ʾftn*, *nhb*, *ṯfwd* and possibly *ṯkt* are only typical of Qatabanic within ASA, the terms *dhr*, *ḥrs²*, *ngzm*, *s³ḥb*, *s¹ḥllm*, *s¹gzym*, *s¹lqḥ*, *s¹nqd*, *t²bym* and *ṯll* are in common with Sabaic, and the term *ḫytmm* shares the same root of a term attested in Minaic.

Second, the terms *s¹ḥllm* (common to Sabaic), *s³ḥb* (common to Sabaic), *dhr* (common to Sabaic) share a similar semantic connotation with the same roots attested not only in Classical Arabic but also in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic (the case of *ḫytmm*). Notably, *ṯkt* may be an exclusive Qatabanic / Ugaritic lexical parallel.

The first observation shows that an interplay between distinct local lexical features and common ASA can be detected. On the one hand, certain terms distinguish Qatabanic from the rest of ASA, and hence are diagnostic to identify a specific linguistic area. On the other, certain terms indicate a linguistic continuity within ASA. This continuity also reveals a common cultural heritage as these terms reflect both similar features in the legal tradition and a common vocabulary

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82. Arbach - as-Saqqāf 2001, 112, 118.

83. As reported in Kazimirski 1860, 226 and Renfroe 1991, 153-155, following Lisān al-ʿArab II, 502-503. This rendering is followed by Frantsouzoff 2014, 104 "*voinskie odeyaniya*" (military attire).

84. See Schwarzlose 1886, 329, footnote 7 who pointed out that the expression *ṯaffada* + *rid^c* referred specifically to "*gefütterte Panzer*".

85. The rendering "*booty*" suggested by Avanzini 2004a, 163, 165; 2004b, 110 is generic, and does not identify any type of item comprised in the military booty.

86. See Canova 2005, 156 and Robin 2005-2006, 269.

describing military deeds. As already pointed out by the present writer,[87] this interplay characterises the lexica of all the major ASA linguistic areas on a more general level. As a consequence, ASA lexical data do not appear to reflect any specific affiliation amongst the different linguistic areas (Sabaic, Qatabanic, Minaic, Ḥaḍramitic) of ancient South Arabia.

The first observation is directly linked with the second observation. The linguistic parallels with Classical Arabic, Biblical Hebrew and Ugaritic can be considered in the broader framework of the classification of ASA within Central Semitic, which is nowadays accepted by most scholars[88]. Nevertheless, the more specific connection with Northwest Semitic is relevant for the present discussion. It is crucial to point out that the ASA - Northwest Semitic parallels are randomly distributed in the different linguistic areas of ancient South Arabia. Notably, *sᵗḫllm*, *s³ḫb* and *dhr* are common to Sabaic, Qatabanic and Biblical Hebrew, *ḫytmm* to Sabaic, Qatabanic, Minaic and Ugaritic, while *ṯkt* may only be exclusive to Qatabanic and Ugaritic. Furthermore, the connection with Northwest Semitic chronologically points to a period dating as early as the very beginning (Biblical Hebrew) to the end of the second millennium (Ugaritic) BC. It appears, therefore, that ASA as a whole is part of a linguistic continuum within Central Semitic dating back to the second millennium BC, with ASA and Northwest Semitic being the marginal and more archaic areas within Central Semitic. In this perspective, it is possible to identify an ASA common linguistic phase, dating to at least the late second millennium BC, prior to the first written ASA sources of the early first millennium BC. This linguistic phase may have been more homogeneous than the later phase in the first millennium BC, where the well-known different linguistic areas of ancient South Arabia are well established[89]. Accordingly, the formation and emergence of ASA as a branch of Central Semitic can be considered an endogenous historical process with various factors leading to its fragmentation in the first millennium BC. If one accepts the existence of an ASA homogeneous phase at the end of the second millennium BC, the process of formation and emergence of ASA requires a much longer time period during the course of the Bronze Age. Archaeological investigation over the last few years points to a developed local culture on the Yemeni high plateau dating to the third millennium BC, and this may provide us with a plausible historical context for the formation of ASA in this area[90].

A last observation should be made in relation to the terms *nhb* (only in Qatabanic), *ṯfwd* (only in Qatabanic), *sᵗnqḏ* (common to Sabaic). These terms can only be compared with Classical Arabic within Semitic, a fact that appears to demonstrate the impact of the ASA lexicon not only on the dialectal Arabic of Yemen, but also on Classical Arabic more generally[91].

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87. See Mazzini 2009, 162-163; 2011b, 127. However, a systematic investigation on the lexical relationship of the different ASA linguistic areas has never been carried out. This would be an essential study for defining the lexical dimension of ASA as a whole.

88. See in general Huehnergard 2005 and the critical remarks by Kogan 2015, 129-221.

89. According to this perspective, the hypothesis of a specific connection between Sabaic and Aramaic, recently proposed by Kottsieper - Stein 2014, is invalid.

90. An overview on the earlier periods of the Bronze Age in ancient South Arabia is offered by Wilkinson 2005. A significant example of an old linguistic and cultural connection is examined by Mazzini 2016; see also del Olmo Lete 2012. Note also the root *ḫrs²* (common to Sabaic) has a specific military connotation that holds no parallels in any other Semitic languages.

91. The lexical influence of ASA on Classical Arabic has never received sufficient attention; see in general Rabin 1984 and Hayajneh 2011.

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