A dictum ascribed to Dr Samuel Johnson says: 'Dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true'. Hence, in spite of its shortcomings, of which only a small number has been noted here, there is no doubt that the present work is an invaluable tool for any student of Judaeo-Arabic. Moreover, MAF and his assistant, Dr Amir Ashur, should be congratulated for their arduous work which involved checking each entry against the most important Arabic dictionaries and lexicons, for the usually very clear definitions, for selecting scores of examples to illustrate the use and usages of the words inside the sentence and for the rich bibliography and useful indexes.

The time has come to have an on-line version of Judaeo-Arabic vocabulary, which will record all the words, expressions and idioms in Judaeo-Arabic from all the literature known us, which could be frequently revised and updated.

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NORBERT NEBES, *Der Tatenbericht des Yiṯaʿamar Watar bin Yakrubmalik aus Ṣirwāḥ (Jemen). Zur Geschichte Südarabiens im frühen 1. Jahrtausend vor Christus* (Epigraphische Forschungen auf der Arabischen Halbinsel. Band 7). Ernst Wasmuth Verlag, Tübingen and Berlin 2016. Pp. 148. ISBN: 978-3-8030-2203-5.

This book by N. Nebes collects all pieces of linguistic and historical information that a scholar may wish to find in the edition of an epigraphic text. It offers an accurate and stimulating edition of an important inscription, useful for reaching a better understanding of the most ancient phase in Ancient South Arabian (ASA) history.

The text edited in Nebes's book is the early Sabaic inscription DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50. It was discovered in 2005 by the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Ṣirwāḥ during the restoration works of the temple courtyard. Indeed, this inscription is one of the most interesting, maybe *the* most interesting epigraphic discovery of our century from ancient Yemen. Nebes had previously provided information on the content of the inscription and its full translation.[1]

E. Glaser had copied in the same courtyard, a hundred years before, the two inscriptions RES 3945 and RES 3946. These were commissioned by the king of Saba' Karib'il Watar, and have been considered for a long time to be a unique example of a textual typology, which we can call 'annalistic'. The achievements of a Sabaean king in the ancient history of the kingdom are narrated.[2]

The author of the inscription DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 is the king of Saba' Yiṯaʿamar Watar.

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[1] N. Nebes, 'Ita'amar der Sabäer. Zur Datierung der Monumentalinschrift des Yiṯaʿamar Watar aus Ṣirwāḥ', *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 18:1 (2007), 25–33; , 'Der Tatenbericht eines sabäischen Mukarribs als Widmungsinschrift', *Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments* (Neue Folge, 6, Gütersloh 2011), 362–7; 'Könige der Weihrauchstraße. Zur Geschichte Südarabiens und Äthiopiens im frühen 1. Jahrtausend vor Christus', in M. Meyer, F. Römer and S. Weigelin-Schwiedrzik, *Fakultätsvorträge der Philologisch-Kulturwissenschaftlichen Fakultät der Universität Wien*, 11 (Vienna 2014), 5–46.

[2] Only the inscription in Early Sabaic RES 3943 from Marib may be cited, which presents a similar textual typology. The author of this inscription, incomplete in its first part, can only be hypothesized (A. Avanzini, *By Land and by Sea. A History of South Arabia before Islam Recounted from Inscriptions* [Arabia Antica 10, Rome 2016], 131–2).

Nebes begins with a description of the stone block where the text is carved, its transcription and translation accompanied by a detailed philological commentary.

In chapter two the structure and composition of the text is described and the text is compared to the two inscriptions of Karib'il Watar. The following chapter is dedicated to palaeographic comments. Chapters four and five deal with historical reconstruction issues starting from the date of the text. Chapter six presents other unpublished texts contemporary to DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 and a new edition of one of the two inscriptions of Karib'il Watar from the courtyard of the temple of Almaqah in Ṣirwāḥ (the inscription RES 3946).

Nebes concludes his book with indexes of the words discussed in the book (with their translation), of the proper names, and a complete bibliography. In an appendix I. Gerlach and M. Schnelle provide information on the archaeological context of the inscription. Five maps and twenty-seven tables (in colour) of the texts and their archaeological context are published at the end of the book. Whatever is needed to reach a full understanding of an epigraphic text is included in Nebes's work.

Nevertheless, a criticism regarding the indexes I feel I have to make. For words and proper names Nebes mentions only the inscriptions where they are attested. There is no analytical index of cited inscriptions, words, proper names and main historical events discussed in the volume. Many of the comments on grammar, lexicon, and history disseminated in the book risk being left aside by the reader. An analytical index would have been indeed difficult to organize considering the amount of data presented, but in my opinion it would have made an important difference to readers.

Nebes offers a good translation of the text, justified throughout with philological comment. However, I would like to discuss a few passages where I do not think his translation is convincing, even if it is not always possible to offer a valuable alternative.

Line 1: *w-h'ḏb 'lmqh w-S¹b' w-Mryb ḍrm w-mns²'m* is translated by 'and he compensated for Almaqah, Saba' and Marib (the damages brought about by) war and hostility'. For the noun *mns²'*, never attested in Sabaic until today, Nebes's translation is satisfactory. Morphologically speaking though, as in other cases in Early Sabaic texts, the adverbial value given to the noun by the ending *m* (the mimation) should not be underestimated. I would suggest 'and he gave strength to Almaqah, Saba' and Marib in war and hostility'. Almaqah, Saba' and Marib are the elements that identify the Sabaean state, which I will discuss later on.

As I already have mentioned,[3] I am not fully convinced by the translation of the verb *h'tw* in the sentence (at line 1): *w-h'tw wld 'lmqh bn kl gwm.* Nebes translated: 'and he took the sons of Almaqah away from all tribal areas (*aus Stammesgebieten*)'. Nebes justified his translation with a comparison with RES 3945, where at line 6 there is: *w-h'tw wld 'lmqh w-gwm ḥr-hw w-'bd-hw bn 'bḍ ḏ-'ws¹n w-'hgr-hw* translated by Nebes (p. 15 n. 11) 'and he brought the sons of Almaqah and (each) tribal group, its free men and its subjects away from the territories of Awsān and its cities (to Saba')'.

The 'sons of Almaqah', as far as I know, are cited only in these two passages and in a fragmentary text, probably parallel to the others: CIH 363, 3: [… … w]*ld 'lmqh bn Ngrn*. Also in this case we may integrate with *h'tw w]ld 'lmqh bn Ngrn*.

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[3] Avanzini, *By Land and by Sea*, 279–80.

Karib'il Watar may have taken the Sabaeans and their allies away from the territories of Awsān. Now we know for sure that Awsān was an ally of Saba' under Yiṯa''amar Watar; Saba' and Awsān made pacts, and Sabaean communities could reside in the territory of Awsān. After the Sabaean victory, Sabaean communities seem to have been taken away from the territories of Awsān and probably taken back to Saba'. Also, CIH 363 could be translated as: 'he took the sons of Almaqah away from Najrān'.

However, the general meaning of the inscriptions raises doubts. The objective of Saba' was to occupy territories, increase the population under its control, have Sabaean communities that reside in the conquered territories, as mentioned several times in the texts of Yiṯa''amar Watar and Karib'il Watar; so why should the Sabaean communities be taken away from the territories they had just settled in?

In DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2004-50 the translation is even more problematic: Yiṯa''amar Watar would have taken away the Sabaeans from the territories of their allies. Nebes (p. 15, n. 10) accepted the meaning offered by A. Korotayev and Ch. Robin for *gwm*.

gwm indicates a union of other communities, which probably did not accept the cult of Almaqah but formed an alliance with Saba'. This union seems to include several geographical areas, the alliances extended to the east and west of the kingdom of Saba'. So is it possible that there could be a geographically defined territory of *gwm* from which the 'sons of Almaqah' may have been taken away?

H'tw 'dy 'took, let [somebody] go to' is attested in Middle Sabaic[4] but probably *h'tw bn* 'took [somebody] away from' is not the right meaning in our three Early Sabaic inscriptions. The preposition *bn* in Early Sabaic may introduce a movement from a place (even if in the sentence 'from … to' in Early Sabaic *ln …'d* is used), but, as I will show in an example later on, *bn* also means 'based on, in relation to, between'. I suggested the translation: 'reunited', but I am not satisfied with it. Rather than 'to take away', the verb *h'tw* means 'to let [somebody] go'.[5] We might also translate with 'made [somebody] enter between'.

But the meaning of the sentence is unclear, because it remains unclear what was inferred with 'the sons of Almaqah' in the ancient Sabaic documentation. The most immediate solution is that it indicated Saba's allies who worshipped Almaqah, unlike other allies who did not worship the Sabaean god. For Nebes (p. 15) there is a strict comparison between the 'sons of Almaqah' and 'the sons of 'Amm'; they mean respectively the allies of Saba' and Qatabān united by the cult of the main god.

But we know too few attestations of the 'sons of Almaqah' to be sure of this 'banal' explanation; these 'sons of Almaqah' may indicate something else, for example a priestly class. Certainly, it is not by chance that in the three examples known to us, the 'sons of Almaqah' can be found in perfectly parallel texts: the king *h'tw* the 'sons of Almaqah' *bn*.

Just before (in DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50), and immediately after (in RES 3945) the sentence analysed above it is mentioned that the territory of *S¹rm* was given to Almaqah and Saba'.

Like many other toponyms cited by Yiṯa''amar Watar and Karib'il Watar, *S¹rm* is not attested in later documentation Nebes suggests finding the territory of *S¹rm*

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[4] DAI Bar'ān 2000-1, 9–10: *w-h'tw Rb't … 'dy hgrn* 'he took *Rb't* to the city'.
[5] Avanzini, *By Land and by Sea*, 280.

in the north of Yemen. I do not think this hypothesis is convincing. In RES 3945 the area of S^1rm is included in the context of the wars of Karib'il Watar against Awsān (with a flight of fancy, I even thought this could point to the large valley of Wadi Markha); even if it did not suffer a direct attack by Karib'il Watar (nor by Yiṯaʾʾamar Watar); it was only 'assigned' to the Sabaean power and not 'broken' by its army. At line 7 in RES 3945, Karib'il Watar walled the cities of S^1rm.

Even if I do not agree with Nebes's hypothesis of locating the territory of S^1rm near Ṣaʿda in the north of Yemen, it is interesting that this hypothesis stemmed from his belief that commerce and its routes are of utmost importance for understanding ASA history. A belief I share willingly. Nebes never forgets this aspect throughout his commentary, clarifying the reasons why the troops of Yiṯaʾʾamar Watar moved towards a specific region of Yemen to allow their king to conquer key cities and territories and control the pivotal commercial route.

Concerning: *w-Tmnʿ-m ḥḥrm bn mṭbrm w-mwfṭm* (at line 2) and the parallel text: *w-Kmnhw-m ḥḥrm bn mṭbrm w-mwfṭm* (at line 4), I do not think Nebes's transla-tion: 'regarding Timnaʿ (or, regarding Kaminahū[6]) at his command it was not destroyed and burnt (he ensured that it was spared from the destruction and the fire)' is right. Also in this case, the translation is justified by the preposition *bn* considered by Nebes as: 'from'. From my point of view, Nebes ruled out too easily the translation that Ch. Robin[7] proposed for a parallel passage in RES 3945, 16: *w-hgrn Ns²n yḥḥrm bn mwfṭm* 'ainsi que la ville de Nashshān qu'il anéantit par le feu'; a translation accepted later on by L. Monroe[8] and G. Hatke[9] and compared with the documentation from the same period in north-western Semitic.

I do not think many acts of clemency are ever mentioned in the ASA inscriptions and the comparisons brought by Monroe and Hatke are, in my opinion, culturally stringent.[10]

The sentence that is syntactically most difficult in the text is at line 7.

> *w-nḥly hʿs¹y-hw Ḫlʾmr bn Ḥḍrḥmw b-Wnb ḏ-ḥwl wqr-hw w-ʾdm-hw ʾl ḥwl wqr-hw ḏ-dwmm w-nḥly hʿsy-hw nḥl Ḫlʾmr ʾl wqr-hw ḏ-dwmm*

Nebes's translation is:

> 'regarding the two palm groves, that *Ḫlʾmr*, son of *Ḥḍrḥmw*, sold him in *Wnb*, whose stone document he and his subordinates moved, his stone document shall not be moved, forever. Regarding the two palm groves that the administrator of *Ḫlʾmr* sold him, then his stone document shall not be <moved>'.

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[6] For the vocalization of *Kmnhw* see Avanzini, *By Land and by Sea*, 123.

[7] Ch. Robin, *L'Arabie antique de Karib'îl à Mahomet. Nouvelles données sur l'histoire des Arabes grâces aux inscriptions.* (Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Mediterranée, 61, Aix-en-Provence 1991/1993), 57–8.

[8] L.A. Monroe, 'Israelite, Moabite and Sabaean war-*ḥērem* Traditions and the Forging of National Identity: Reconsidering the Sabaean Text RES 3945 in Light of Biblical and Moabite Evidence', *Vetus Testamentum* 57:3 (2007), 318–41.

[9] G. Hatke, 'For 'Ilmuquh and for Saba': the *Res Gestae* of Karib'il bin Dhamarʿalī from Ṣirwāḥ in Context', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 105 (2015), 87–133.

[10] Moreover, the Qatabanic example proposed by Nebes is not convincing. YM 14556=CSAI I, 114: *w-ḥrmt bn ṭrd bn Bnʾ* 'it is forbidden from removing (this basin) from (the temple) *Bnʾ*'. In this case, it is evident that the verb, not in the causative form, means 'to forbid'. In the causative form, the ambiguous meaning of 'to forbid' shifts to the meaning of 'to make something forbidden, cursed', but also 'to make something sacred'.

The first reason why I find it difficult to accept this translation is related to the meaning of *ḥwl*; Nebes compared it with the Arabic *ḥawwala* 'move something from a place', but in my opinion, as in RES 3945 10: *w-kl ʾhgr w-ʾbḍ ḥwl bḍ Tfḍ* 'and all cities and territories surrounding the territory of *Tfḍ*', *ḥwl* seems a noun grammaticalized as a preposition, meaning 'around'.[11] Furthermore, I do not think that *ʾl* is the negation. Nebes underestimates the parallelism between *ḏ-ḥwl wqr-hw* and *ʾl ḥwl wqr-hw*.

ḥwl wqr could mean, in more concrete terms: 'which is close, around the stone document (i.e. whose limits are marked by the stone document)', or in a figurative way: 'that are (cited) in the stone document'.

A literal translation is also meaningful:

> 'for what concerns the two palm groves, that *Ḫlʾmr*, son of *Ḥḏthmw*, sold him in *Wnb*, those two (*ḏ* dual) that are around his stone document, and the people those (*ʾl* plural) around his stone document, forever. And for what concerns the two palm groves that the functionary of *Ḫlʾmr* sold, those of his stone document, forever'.

Also in the following sentence *ʾl* appears:

> *w-ʾlyn ḏ-hʾsy-hw ʾl ḏmrm*

Nebes translated: 'for what concerns (the property) *ʾlyn*, that he sold him no legal issue shall ever be raised'.

I agree with Nebes about *ʾlyn*: it indicates territories and not the name of a man. I also think the grammatical analysis by Nebes is correct, recognising in *ʾl ḏmrm* a nominal sentence (marked by the mimation of *ḏmr*). But even in this case I am not sure that *ʾl* is to be considered as a negation. *ḏmr* does not have many attestations in Sabaic and this is the only one existing in Early Sabaic. Nebes accepts the translation of Sabaic Dictionary as 'legal issue'. In my opinion, the root probably means 'to make a positive decision' from which the meanings 'to decree', but also 'to be benevolent, to protect' derive. The noun can also be translated as 'decree' in the inscription mentioned by Nebes (RES 4964=Gl 1574,6). *ḏmr* 'decree' is attested also in Qatabanic (RES 3566=CSAI I, 208, 23). In inscription CIH 392 the verb used in the final invocation: *w-l yḏmrn ʾlmqh* was correctly translated by Müller with: 'and might Almaqah be benevolent'.

My tentative translation is:

> 'also for what concerns (the properties) *ʾlyn* that he sold him, those which are as protected areas (protected by a decree)'.

The accurate and detailed commentary on the inscription is full of many linguistic and historical suggestions. Once again, I often felt the need for an analytical index in the book. I wish to mention here two examples, one grammatical and the other historical.

Regarding the verb *ws³f* 'increase' at line 1, Nebes recalls a parallel text in RES 3946,8: *w-ws³f hw-hw Fys²n ʾdm hs²ʾm-hw* 'and he increased his tribe Fayshān with the subordinates whom he sold him'. Two other attestations of the verb in the prefix-form (in RES 3946: at the line 4: *w-ys³f-mw hw-hw Fys²n w-ʿs¹y*, and at the line 6: *w-ys³f-mw qny-hw*) are recalled by Nebes (p. 15, n. 13).

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[11] See Avanzini, *By Land and by Sea*, 132, for another example in Early Sabaic of a noun (*mnḫy*), in my opinion, grammaticalized as a preposition. *ḥwl* 'around' is attested in a Minaic inscription (MAFRAY-Darb-aṣ- Ṣabī 15, 2: *ḏ-ḥwl bytn*).

According to Nebes -*mw*, after *ys³f*, may not be the enclitic particle (as I always thought) but the pronoun -*hmw* written -<*h*>*mw*.

P. Stein[12] had already hypothesised that -*mw* in the two examples of RES 3946 was not the enclitic particle, but it could be -<*h*>*mw*.

Indeed, these may be the only two cases in Early Sabaic where the enclitic is written –*mw* and not -*m* (examples of enclitic -*m* are attested in our inscription, as in the already quoted examples *Tmnʿ-m* and *Kmnhw-m*). Furthermore, these would be the only two cases of the use of the enclitic after a verb.[13]

Clearly, the verb has a double accusative as evidenced in RES 3946, 8 mentioned before.

The hypothesis of Nebes and Stein is interesting. The plural suffixed pronoun written -*mw* and not -*hmw* can be found in some Sabaic inscriptions in Ethiopia. It is difficult to decide which of the two hypotheses is better: -*mw* instead of -*m*, used after a verb *vs*: -*mw* for -<*h*>*mw*. I still think that the first one is preferable. -*mw* is attested both times after the same verb in the same form (*w-ys³f-mw*), and it looks like a fixed form in legal language to declare an increase in goods and peoples. The use of enclitic particles is largely attested in legal texts. I had already noted how the enclitic -*ʾy* can be found in Qatabanic and in Minaic only in legal texts.[14]

From a cultural point of view, Nebes offers an interesting hypothesis about the family name *S²mr*. After the successful Sabaean wars against the Qatabanian kingdom, Yitaʿʿamar kills the king of Timnaʿ and gives the throne to a king, friend of Sabaʾ: *S¹mhwtr ḏ-S²mr*.

Clearly, in this case Shamir is the name of the king's family. Nebes notes that *ḏ-S²mr* is among the numerous epithets of the Qatabanian king when he became *mukarrib*. A Qatabanian *mukarrib*, among other titles, is also *bkr ʾnby w- Ḥwkm ḏ-ʾmr w-s²mr*. Nebes partly modified the translation proposed several years ago by N. Rhodokanakis, and he translates 'first born of (the divinities) *ʾnby* and *Ḥwkm*, those of the oracular order, and (the first born) of the tribe of Shamir'. Here it is only marginal that *Ḥwkm* is not a goddess (at least when *Ḥwkm* is attested outside the fixed formula of the Qatabanian *mukarribs*). What is not convincing, in my opinion, in Nebes's translation is that one of the two epithets refers to the gods and the other to the king. From this point of view, I think the translation proposed by Rhodokanakis is better, relating both *ʾmr* and *S²mr* to the two divinities. If *S²mr* refers to the king, then also *ʾmr* should refer to him, but *ʾmr* seems to indicate the divine command, which manifests itself through the oracle. The hypothesis of Nebes is interesting, but not fully convincing.

Nebes believes that there is a relationship between the practices of Sabaean power and Qatabanian power. In his opinion, in Sabaʾ all the *mukarribs* belong to the family *Ḫll*, in Qatabān all the *mukarribs* could belong to the family *S²mr*. I doubt this statement about the Sabaean *mukarribs* and even more about the Qatabanian *mukarribs*. In any case, the family *Ḫll* is largely documented in Sabaean history covering all periods, while for the family of the king who was chosen by Yitaʿʿamar to command Timnaʿ, we do not have any other attestations in Qatabanic texts.

[12] P. Stein, *Untersuchungen zur Phonologie und Morphologie des Sabäischen* (Epigraphische Forschungen auf der Arabischen Halbinsel. 3, Rahden/Westf. 2003), 230, n. 181.

[13] This observation seems correct and supported by the Qatabanic and the Ḥaḍramitic texts.

[14] A. Avanzini, *Ancient South Arabian within Semitic and Sabaic within Ancient South Arabian.* (Quaderni di Arabia Antica, 2, Rome 2015), 31.

Certainly, S^2mr is the family of the first king that Saba' imposed on Qatabān. The fact that the main market square of Timnaʿ is called S^2mr is particularly relevant: it was such an important place: its name had to be evocative!

For what concerns the chronological relationship between the two kings Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar and Karib'il Watar, who left their texts in the courtyard of the temple of Almaqah in Ṣirwāḥ, despite the attempt by G. Garbini[15] to consider Karib'il Watar the oldest of the two, the arguments offered by Nebes to consider Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar the oldest of the two Sabaean kings seem perfectly convincing. That Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar ruled before Karib'il Watar is also proved by new archaeological data (p. 54).

Nebes rightly believes that Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar, author of the inscription DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50, is the same *mukarrib* who commissioned the bronze altar AO 31929.[16]

Incidentally, as I have already noted, the almost contemporary publication of the inscription AO 31929 and some relevant information relating to the most significant historical aspects of DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 is an interesting case in the history of ASA studies. Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar, *mukarrib* of Saba', clearly a king with great historical relevance, remained unknown until the beginning of 2000. This is only an example to show how the reconstruction of ASA history depends on the randomness of the discovery of new epigraphic texts.

In AO 31929, Malikwaqah, king of Nashshān, an ally of Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar is cited.

Nebes (p. 56) supports his own hypothesis, which he already presented in 2007, that Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar and Karib'il l Watar are the two kings mentioned as Ita'amra in Sargon annals (715 bce), and Karibilu in Sennacherib annals (685 bce) respectively.

ASA long-distance trading traffic between the end of the eighth century bce and the beginning of the seventh century bce is under the strict control of Saba'. The fact that in Ṣirwāḥ there are two monumental stelae with the annals of two kings, called Yiṯaʿʿamar and Karib'il, makes the hypothesis about their identification with Ita'mara the Sabaean and Karibilu king of Saba' — cited in a geographically and culturally distant area, though certainly part of the Sabaean trading circuit — very suggestive and possibly reliable.

Nevertheless, it is my opinion that some of the historical arguments offered by Nebes are a bit too hasty.[17]

Some data point to a longer period between the two kingdoms. I can summarize my doubts in the names of two kings: Malikwaqah, king of Nashshān and Yiṯaʿʿamar Bayyin, *mukarrib* of Saba'.

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[15] G. Garbini, 'Yathamar Watar "il vendicatore" e gli inizi di Saba', in A. Bausi, A. Brita and A. Manzo (eds), *Aethiopica et Orientalia. Studi in onore di Yaqob Beyene*, II. (Studi Africanistici. Serie Etiopia, 9, Napoli 2012).

[16] A. Caubet and I. Gajda, 'Deux autels en bronze provenant de l'Arabie méridionale', *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* (2003), 1219–42. For example, the description of the war against the city of Kamna and the alliance with the city of Nashshān is similar in the two texts: w-nqm Ns²n w-hṯb bḏʿ 'rnydʿ w-Ns²n bn Kmnhw (DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50, 3) and w-ywm hṯb Yṯʿʿmr 'bḏʿ 'rnydʿ w-Ns²n w-nqm Ns²n Kmnhw (AO 31929, 3–4).

[17] I have already discussed this in Avanzini, *By Land and by Sea*, 100–1.

The history of Nashshān in the eighth century bce is fairly well known[18], and between Malikwaqh (cited in AO 31929) and Sumhuyafaʿ the enemy of Karibʾil Watar (cited in RES 3945) different kings seem to have reigned. Indeed, these reigns may have been very short, but four or five generations probably existed between Malikwaqih and Sumhuyafaʿ.

Even the chronological sequence of the Sabaean kings may pose some difficulties for the reconstruction provided by Nebes. Nebes places the period of the very short and little documented reign of Ḏamarʿalī, father of Karibʾil Watar, between the two reigns of Yiṯaʾʾamar Watar and Karibʾil Watar.

In my opinion Nebes's criticism (p. 57) of the so-called co-regency of the Sabaean kings is interesting and well grounded. But precisely because a co-regency within Saba' probably never existed, some doubts arise in relation to the close genealogical vicinity between Yiṯaʾʾamar Watar and Karibʾil Watar.

Nebes is right (p. 57, n. 219) when he criticises the tendency — which I also find premature — of some scholars to create tables for the succession of ASA kings in the first millennium bce. He is also right when he finds that the tables drawn by M. Arbach are often too 'hineinpacken'. We cannot provide a reliable date for the reigns of Sumhūʿalī Yanūf, nor of Yadaʾʾil,[19] who may precede Yiṯaʾʾamar Watar, but a similar criticism is not valid for Yiṯaʾʾamar Bayyin, about whom much documentation is available.

Nebes gets rid of the cumbersome presence of Yiṯaʾʾamar Bayyin a little too easily, I think. He cites him as one of the four Sabaean *mukarribs* who recall in their inscriptions the 'pact of alliance', and that he is the author of the construction of a bastion on the walls of Marib (Garbini MM 1973). Unfortunately, he underestimated the documentation that puts Yiṯaʾʾamar Bayyin and Karibʾil Watar in close relation to one another. G. Garbini[20] thought that the two kings participated in the same sacred hunt in the gorge of ʿAql. It is not the same hunt which Yiṯaʾʾamar Bayyin and Karibʾil Watar participated in, but undoubtedly the two kings are chronologically close. The relationship between Yiṯaʾʾamar Bayyin and Karibʾil Watar clearly emerges in the documentation of wadi Raġwān, where the two *mukarribs* left numerous construction inscriptions on the walls of *Ktlm* and *ʿrrtm*.[21] The consolidation of Sabaean power in this key region between Saba' and the Jawf was possible thanks to these two *mukarribs*.

Nebes provides some contexts (p. 58) to support his chronological succession of kings: Yiṯaʾʾamar, Ḏamarʿalī, Karibʾil between the end of the eighth – beginning of the seventh century. Unfortunately, this documentation does not solve the chronological problem for the reign of Yiṯaʾʾamar Watar. None of the examples cited by Nebes present the epithet of the king: Yiṯaʾʾamar may well be Yiṯaʾʾamar Bayyin and not Yiṯaʾʾamar Watar.

H. von Wissmann, who lacked information about the presence of a Yiṯaʾʾamar Watar in Sabaean history, supposed that Ita'amra in the annals of Sargon could be

[18] M. Arbach and I. Rossi, 'Réflexions sur l'histoire de la cité-État de Nashshân (fin du IXe – fin du VIIe s. av. J.-C.)', *Egitto e Vicino Oriente* 34 (2011), 149–76.

[19] Nebes recalls that a king Yadaʾʾil, son of Ḏamarʿalī, attested at Ṣirwāḥ, should be dated to 900 BCE.

[20] G. Garbini, 'The inscriptions of Si'b al-ʿAql, Al-Gafnah and Yala/Ad-Durayb', in A. de Maigret (ed.), *The Sabaean Archaeological Complex in the Wādī Yalā (Eastern Hawlān at-Tiyāl, Yemen Arab Republic). A Preliminary Report.* (Reports and Memoirs, 21, Rome 1988), 21–40.

[21] Cf. Avanzini *By Land and by Sea*, 86–7.

identified with Yiṯaʿʿamar Bayyin. He was probably wrong, but I am not completely sure about it.

The identification of Yiṯaʿʿamra Watar with Itaʾamra cited by Sargon cannot even be solved on the basis of the different political scenarios witnessed in the texts of Yiṯaʿʿamr Watar and those of Karibʾil Watar.

History rarely ever follows the same rhythms and in a handful of years many things may have changed over a period of evolution. Thirty years between Yiṯaʿʿamr Watar and Karibʾil Watar may be a sufficiently long period for justifying the political and cultural differences attested in the texts.

The text of Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar and the two others of Karibʾil Watar from Ṣirwāḥ present a similar structure. Both kings bear the title of *mukarrib* and carry on the activities typical of all great kings in history. They celebrate rites for the gods, build constructions for the community, and guide the army to victory.

The parallelisms between the texts of Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar and Karibʾil Watar are evident and well emphasised by Nebes.[22] The structure of DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 presents all the elements that can be found in RES 3945-RES 3946, the same formulae (e.g. *ḥṯb l-ʾlmqh w-S¹bʾ*), a similar lexis (e.g. *mḫḍ*). But it is exactly because these texts have been written in the same place, and belong to the same writing tradition, that I am struck by differences rather than by similarities.

First of all, I think that it a shift should be noticed in the narrative structure of royal enterprises: in inscription DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 no prefixed forms of verbs are present. The two texts bear witness to a different way of storytelling (rather than a linguistic evolution of the Sabaean language). The glorious enterprises of Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar are coordinate without any stylistic effort needed to link them together, or emphasise the succession of events. As I mentioned earlier, even if I do not accept Nebes's translation of the two passages I think he shed some light on another detail. In DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 there is: *w-Tmnʿ-m ḥḫrm bn*, in RES 3945 *w-hgrn Nsn yḥḫrm bn.* Nebes rightly notes that stylistically, the enclitic particle in DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 plays the same role that in RES 3945 is carried out by the prefixed form of the verb.

Much has changed also in the historical scenario, and I am not really impressed by the variations between allies and competing kingdoms; the great enemies of Karibʾil Watar (Nashshān, Awsān) were allied to Yiṯaʿamr Watar and his allies (Kamna, Qatabān) were enemies of Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar.

Alliances may not last for long, therefore other elements should be analysed.

In RES 3945 the difference between structured and powerful kingdoms and small local kingdoms is clear. Only the names of important enemy kings are mentioned, the others are passers-by in the description of the wars against them and their names are not worthy of any mention. In DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 a large number of kings are recorded. The overall structure of power seems to have changed much in Yemen between the kingdom of Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar and that of Karibʾil Watar.

Also the presence of the central territory (its capital, one of its oases[23]) among the elements of identity of the state seems to refer to a more ancient, almost local, Sabaean tradition, less projected towards hegemony. In later documents, from

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[22] I may be wrong, but I still cannot rely on the presence of the same names in the two inscriptions (e.g. *ʿmwqh ḏ-ʾmrm* in DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50, 6 and in RES 3946, 2). There are too many cases of homonyms in ASA texts to be sure that they refer to the same person.

[23] At line 1 the already quoted: *w-hʿḏb ʾlmqh w-S¹bʾ w-Mryb*, and: *w-nqm Ykrbmlk w-S¹bʾ w-ʾḏnt* 'he avenged Yakrubmalik (the father of Yiṯaʿʿamar), Sabaʾ, and (the wadi) ʾAḏanat'.

Karib'il Watar onwards, the Sabaean state, like many other ASA kingdoms, were to be identified by three elements: its god, its king and its tribe.

As previously stated[24] one of the elements that captured my attention in the military campaigns of the two kings is the lack of war prisoners in DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50. Karib'il Watar never forgets to cite them after the number of dead enemies, just as ASA kings would do in the centuries following. A very different interpretation of the consequences of victory in war may be detected in the two texts. Prisoners are an important factor for the demographic increase of the Sabaean state. They were indispensable for the great construction works ordered by the king. Probably by chance, but compared to the description of the different construction works to irrigate Marib oasis mentioned in RES 3945, the irrigation works under Yiṯa''amar Watar are summed up in: *wfr Ys¹rn w-'byn* 'he put in order[25] (the two oases) *Ys¹rn* and *'byn'*.

The rites carried out by Yiṯa''amar Watar are the same as the rites carried out by Karib'il Watar, but the latter adds the sacred banquet and the offer of a holocaust on the Jebel al-Lawḏ. This sanctuary played a key ideological role in Sabaean history, the system of alliances that stood at the basis of Sabaean power was validated in this sanctuary.

Chapter Five is a goldmine of historical comments. Nebes presents a clear picture of Yemen during the ruling period of Yiṯa''amar Watar.

The 'sons of 'Amm', in this historical moment, is not a generic definition of the allies of Qatabān. They are a coalition of tribes located in a geographically precise territory: from the Jebel al-'Awd to Timna'. As Nebes rightly notes, Awsān is not a part of this coalition.

Even 'omitted' data take on significance in his historical reconstruction states that the number of enemies killed in the war against Qatabān and 'the sons of 'Amm' is reasonably near the truth, moreover he points out that in DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 the number of enemies killed in the war against Kamna is not mentioned. Nebes deduces that probably in the Jawf there were fewer problems related to masses of peoples who battled against Saba'.

Even the complex system of alliances organised by Saba' is clearly outlined in this chapter: the territories of defeated enemies were not always directly annexed to Saba', but rather they were assigned to allies. After the war of Karib'il Watar, Awsān was to be divided between the kingdoms of Qatabān and of Ḥaḍramawt, who were allies of Saba' at the time.

Quite often the annals of the two Sabaean *mukarribs* mention a sort of 'justice' in Sabaean military actions. The territories that were unjustly conquered by enemies were given back to their previous owners. In DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 and in AO 31929 the territories of Nashshān conquered by Kamna were given back to Nashshān by the Sabaeans, who reinstated the just balance of power under the Sabaean aegis. Also, Awsān was conquered by Qatabān. Yiṯa''amar Watar brought justice back to Awsān and freed it from the domination of 'the sons of 'Amm', who were under the leadership of Qatabān (even if, as we mentioned, the situation was going to reverse under Karib'il Watar).

The second sentence is interesting. As we will see later on, the re-establishment of a justice, broken by enemies, is often the reason that leads the Sabaean king to declare war.

[24] Avanzini, *By Land and by Sea*, 100.

[25] This is the translation by , perhaps: 'he cultivated …' seems to me to be better.

Unlike Karib'il Watar, who does not mention in his text that he elected ('made king') new — and agreeable to Saba' — rulers in the territories he vanquished, Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar chose two new kings: one in Timnaʿ and the other in Radmān. Regarding the title 'king of Timnaʿ' Nebes (p. 61, n. 228) makes an interesting observation. The title of 'king of Timnaʿ', instead of 'king of Qatabān' given to the killed king as well as to the new king imposed by Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar, seems to diminish the status of the king to a mere king of a capital and not of a state. The geographical connotation (as in the case of the 'king of Wusr' killed by Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar, who was called 'king of the people of Wusr') willingly diminished the importance of the enemy's power.

In Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar's annexations, Nebes distinguished two categories: the first includes the annexations in the north-western area to ensure the control of the caravan trade route, the second includes the south-east area to protect Marib. Nebes notes that in the first category of annexations the cities of *Ktlm*, in wadi Raġwān and *Khlm* in the Jawf are mentioned. Unlike for *Ktlm* and other city annexations marked as *s¹y* + toponym, for the second city there is *s¹y ṯʿd-hw b-Khlm* '[he] took his part in *Khlm*'. Nebes (p. 63, n. 233) wonders whether the personal pronoun refers to the person who sold the territory or maybe directly indicates the Sabaean king, thus implying a previous Sabaean control of territories and peoples close to *Khlm*. Indeed, Nebes provides a very stimulating interpretation of the text.

That the annexations of territories relate to the eastern border of Saba' is clearly demonstrated by Nebes thanks to his accurate localisation of some toponyms referring to the oasis of al-Jūba/*Wnb*.

Coherently with other wars carried out by Karib'il Watar, also in the inscription of Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar Sabaean interest for the southern region of the plateau is evident. After the wars against 'the sons of ʿAmm', Qatabān, and Kamna, the king's army destroyed Dahasum and *R'nn*. The vicissitudes of the tribe *R'nn* and the region next to Jebel al-ʿAwd are accurately explained by Nebes.

Chapter Five concludes with a fundamental comment: archaeological and epigraphic data of Ṣirwāḥ confirm that Sabaean history did not begin in the eighth century with the kingdom of Yiṯaʿʿamr Watar. There is a past, witnessed in Ṣirwāḥ, that began in the tenth century. The Sabaean kingdom at the beginning of the eighth century already had notable organisational and logistic skills, as indicated by its expansion beyond the Red Sea in Ethiopia.

After so many notes and philological accuracy, the reader may feel a little dissatisfied by the edition of texts in Chapter Six. As I mentioned earlier, apart from a new edition of inscription RES 3946 carried out on an attentive reading of the text, in the chapter there are also some new inscriptions.

Some of these texts are historically relevant. For example, in inscription DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-1A it seems that Ṣirwāḥ was attacked and some of its buildings damaged by a group of Minaeans, in the period under the rule of Yiṯaʿʿamar Watar's father. The Minaeans were killed and any survivors were expelled from Ṣirwāḥ. The translation of the text is not at all definitive. At least two words (*ṯqb* and *nwl*) are two hapax legomena in epigraphic ASA. Nevertheless, the overall significance of the text seems to follow Nebes' intuition, and is historically interesting. Today, this is the most ancient attestation of Maʿīn. *ḏ-M'nm*, as rightfully stated by Nebes, may indicate here the tribe of Maʿīn or the reign that at that time ruled the city of Qarnawu (*M'nm*). We will later see the king of Maʿīn, faithful ally to Saba' at the end of the eighth century. Therefore, it seems that also the city of Maʿīn played the same ambiguous role against the intrusive Sabaeans, as many

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other cities of the Jawf did in the eighth century, shifting from alliances to wars and vice versa.

A marginal, but important, last comment for the reader who does not speak fluent German: Nebes' book is written in a clear and unambiguous form. An excellent book indeed!

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JULIANE MÜLLER, *Nahrungsmittel in der arabischen Medizin: Das Kitāb al-Aǧḏiya wa-l-ašriba des Naǧīb ad-Dīn as-Samarqandī* (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science 101). Brill, Leiden and Boston 2017. Pp. x + 528. Price: €140.00 hardback. ISBN: 978-90-04-34508-9.

The book announced here is the revised version of a PhD thesis; this seemingly trivial information is relevant insofar as Juliane Müller's work is distinguished by a remarkable level of maturity, serenity and circumspect scholarship.[1] The general topic of her book — food and drink in medieval Arabic medicine — is innocuous enough at first glance, and it is true that there are other areas in this vast scientific field which appear to be far more treacherous; but, as is almost always the case with medieval Arabic science, nothing is ever easy because all is manifoldly connected and interlaced within an overarching system at once guilelessly naïve and immensely complicated. Thus, the study of food and drink in a medical context, oscillating between prophylactic and dietetic parameters, involves the whole spectrum of humoralism, as well as pharmacy, culinary art and various technical terminology; moreover, Arabic medical literature in general tends to become increasingly elaborate as one progresses in time, and the gradual elimination of earlier contradictions and incoherencies usually comes at the cost of an ever-greater complexity. On that background, Müller's topical choice is both significant and brave.

The starting point and core of Müller's book is a long Arabic treatise titled *al-Aghdhiya wa'l-ashriba* 'Foods and Drinks', written around 1200 CE by the Central Asian physician Najīb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Samarqandī, about whose life and circumstances very little is known, other than a sojourn in a Baghdad hospital and a violent death in the course of the Mongol conquest of Herat in 1222 CE; al-Samarqandī authored at least six comprehensive works on pathology, dietetics and pharmacy, as well as at least four small tracts on heart medication, eye physiology, arthralgia and geophagy, most of which are not yet edited; al-Samarqandī had a gift for synthesizing medical knowledge in relatively plain language — the popularity of his writings and the large number of extant manuscripts testify to this observation. Müller rightly notes (p. 4) that al-Samarqandī's medico-alimentary lexicon was conceived at a time when this topic, in the Islamic East, had already somewhat exhausted itself, but she refrains from drawing any further conclusions. The Arabic text contains information about more than 500 items, arranged in separate chapters

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[1] A similar appraisal could have already been made with regard to Müller's first published work, *Zwei arabische Dialoge zur Alchemie* (Berlin 2012) — here, by the way, the name of the elusive Indian interlocutor of Aristotle, a sage called Yūhīn (يوهين), may actually be a corruption of Yogin (يوغين > योगिन् 'possessed of magical powers; a religious or devout man, a magician, conjurer, one supposed to have obtained supernatural powers' and also an epithet of the Vedic sage Yājñavalkya, of the deities Viṣṇu and Śiva, and of Buddha, among others; cf. M. Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary* [Oxford 1872], 823a).