

Who are the Sabaeans?

Sheba was one of the oldest centers of civilization in the Near East. Its relatively fertile land and adequate rainfall in a moister climate helped sustain a stable population, a feature recognized by the ancient Greek geographer Ptolemy, who described Sheba as Eudaimon Arabia (better known in its Latin translation, Arabia Felix) meaning "fortunate Arabia," due to green land and moderate climate. Between the 12th century BC and the 6th century AD, it was dominated by three successive civilisations which controlled the lucrative spice trade: Minaean, Sabaean and Himyarite.

But first we will look at the Sabeian rule seeing that this thread is dedicated to its mysterious queen. During Sabaean rule in the 8th century, an impressive dam was erected that provided irrigation and stood for over a millennium. (It finally collapsed in AD 570 after centuries of neglect.) The Sabaeans were polytheistic, and should not be confused with the Sabians mentioned in the Qur'an, whose name is written with the Arabic letter sad rather than sin, and is widely believed to refer to the Mandaeans. Much wealth was generated from the spice trade, and Sheba was best known as the source of myrrh and frankincense.

These were exported to the Mediterranean, where they were greatly prized by many cultures, using camels on routes through Arabia, and to India by sea. From the coast of Oman it was transported in huge camel caravans across the desert along the edge of Arabia's Empty Quarter. The ancient camel tracks, like highways, can be seen in the desert today. Only now are we beginning to understand the full dimensions of this trade and the social and economic structures which

supported and were a part of it. A book. **The Road to Ubar (1999)**, sheds light on the trade which originated in one of the harshest regions on earth.

In an even deeper level of time, the Arabian peninsula had a much better climate and sustained great cities and vast stretches of irrigated agricultural land. This was the world of the fabled Queen of Sheba, whose people conducted the most far-reaching expeditions along the East Coast of Africa.

Until comparatively recent times knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula was limited to that provided by ancient Greek and Roman writers and by early Arab geographers; much of this material was unreliable. In the 20th century, however, archaeological exploration has added considerably to the knowledge of the area.

Land of the mountains and the small valleys among them, area of an unprecedented Wadi-phenomenon at Hadramawt, focal point of land routes and desert routes of trade, territory encompassing long and rich coastal strips, turned to various seas, to the Red Sea and to the Indian Ocean as we call these seas now, Sheba has long been the most African part of Asia, or... the Asiatic part of Africa! Undoubtedly, Sheba linked India with Egypt, East Africa with Assyria, Persia with Sudan, Rome with China, all ways - land, desert and sea - involved.

But whenever a certain expansion of the many, various and diversified Sabean peoples, tribes and states took place in the past, it was manifested in Africa. This is probably due to physical delimitations, the Oman coastal strip being too limited a place for expansion, the Hedjaz coastal strip being an uninviting place, the greatest part of the peninsula being desert (Rub' al Khali), and other lands being simply ... too

far! What is closest to Sheba is either the high seas or Africa...

Sheba goes back to the middle of the 8th century BCE. It is a reference to tribute and gifts presented to the Assyrian emperor Tiglat-Pileser (Tukulti - apil - Esharra) III (745 - 727) by Sheba, as well as by Arabs of the Hedjaz, and other countries. Despite the Assyrian and the Babylonian expansion in the East and the North of the peninsula (Yathribu was the summer residence of the Babylonian Nabonid Kings in the 6th century BCE), Sheba was too far for the Sargonid Assyrian empire and the Nabonid Babylonian royal pretensions.

Assurbanipal (669 - 625) ruled from Central Iran to Upper Egypt, and from the eastern coast of the Persian Gulf to the western coast of Turkey, but Sheba escaped his dominion by simply paying tribute. Cambyses, the Achaemenid Shah of Iran, in the second half of the 6th century, was ruling from Napata of Kush (today's Karima in Sudan) to Central Asia, but again Sheba was spared! Alexander the Great, at the end of the 4th century, invaded all the lands between Macedonia and India, but Pentapotamia (Pundjab), not Sheba, seemed closer to either Pella (his first capital) or Babylon (his ultimately chosen capital)!

During all these long centuries, the peoples and the tribes of ancient Sheba could not be kept united under the scepter of a descendant of the famous Queen Balqis. Yet, writing was introduced as early as the 6th century BCE, or to put it better, it was invented! It would be essential at this point to stress the originality of the event! At a moment the Assyrian - Babylonian cuneiform ('al kitabeh al mesmariyeh' in Arabic), syllabogrammatic Writing (the term means that the cuneiform characters were of syllabic phonetic value) was diffused in

Iran (introduction of the old Persian Ach Shibam's skyscrapers, in Hadramout Gov.

aemenid cuneiform writing system that was in use for about 300 to 400 years), and the Phoenician and the Aramaic alphabetic writings were diffused throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East (more precisely among Greeks, Israelites, Romans, and Persians), the different peoples of Ancient Sheba, instead of adopting a foreign writing system, developed their own syllabogrammatic writing, no less than 1200 years before the arrival of Islam! Through a historical overview of almost 1400 years of Sabaeen pre-Islamic history (based on Assyrian - Babylonian, Sabaeen, Persian, Ancient Greek, Latin and Aramaic sources), we can get a clear diagram of several basic cultural characteristics.

The geographical divisions of the land of Sheba, many mountains and plains, various coastal strips, all oriented differently to the outer world, were probably the reason of the political disunion that mostly characterized Sheba. Of course, this was repeated throughout Islamic times, but it would be wrong for us to perceive disunion in terms of enmity, fratricide or civil wars. We should rather see the various ancient Sabaeen states in terms of specific task assignments.

The war of Sheba and Himyar against Qataban (around 115 BCE) is rather due to Sabaeen and Himyarite reactions to the Qatabanic performance in respect of preserving the Sabaeen thalassocracy and the complete navigation control throughout the Red Sea at a moment of rise of Ptolemaic Egyptian seafaring and sea trade in which Aramaeans seem definitely involved. The different Sabaeen states, Saba, Awsan, Hadramawt, Main, Timna, Qataban, Raydhan and

Himyar, were often in agreement with regard to the role each one had to play in its own domain with regard to a generally conceived Sabaean interest. However, reunification considerations we attest only as late as the end of the 2nd century CE, and it is the Himyarites, who seem to be more conscious in this regard.

Sabaean expansion in Africa, in terms of population, language and scripture. Despite the lack of unity, or perhaps due to this phenomenon, many waves of Sabaeans have reportedly crossed the Bab el Mandeb straits, and settled either in the African Red Sea shore opposite the Sabaean coast, or further in the African inland. What the famous Abyssinian legend and the great epic text Kebrä Negäst (the Glory of the Kings) narrate is rather an extension to the Biblical and the Quranic texts' references to the legendary Queen of Sheba - Balqis - Makeda, and to her contacts with Solomon, the King of Israel. But it reflects perfectly well the reality of the millennium-long, repeated Sabaean waves of Asiatic immigrants to the Horn of Africa area.

Menelik, as son to Solomon and Balqis - Makeda, is an abstraction made for poetic reasons within the text, and it concerns all the numerous Sabaeans, who repeatedly and in successive waves expressed their predilection for Africa. It is not only literary sources and archaeological evidence that testify to this event; full epigraphic and linguistic support is offered for this assertion, since the ancient Abyssinian language and scripture (dating back to the early Christian era) have derived from the earlier attested ancient Sabaean semitic dialect and syllabogrammatic writing. Gueze, as is called the ancient Abyssinian language, is very important to Christianity, as one of the languages and the scriptures of the Evangiles and the New Testament - along with Aramaic - Syriac, Greek, Coptic, Latin, Armenian and Georgian.

Gueze is the ancestral linguistic form of modern Abyssinian languages like Tigrinia, Tigre and Amharic (Amarinia) that are widely spoken in Eritrea and Abyssinia. The name itself of Abyssinia ('-b-sh-t, Abashat) is mentioned in Ancient Sabaeen texts and epigraphic documentation as the name of a ... Sabaeen tribe! This tribe, or at least a sizeable part of it, migrated to Africa and transferred there its name that lasts until now, as ultimate proof of the Sabaeen origin of a large part of the populations of Abyssinia and Eritrea.

'Returning' the compliment, Gueze - that was never lost, since it still is the religious language and scripture of the Christians of Ethiopia and Eritrea - helped a lot in the deciphering of the ancient Sabaeen epigraphic monuments. It was as useful as Coptic to Champollion deciphering Egyptian hieroglyphics. Without Coptic, Champollion would have failed; without Gueze the likes of Conti Rossini and Rhodokanakes would have failed too.

From: <http://www.ancientworlds.net/aw/Post/686729>

These two regions, the south and the north, were homes to two entirely separate Semitic peoples: the Sabaeans in the south and the Arabs in the north.

Also called the Himyarites or the Yemenites, the Sabaeans had from a very early period adopted a sedentary way of life in the relatively lush climate of southern Arabia. Eventually, the south came under the control of city-states ruled by priest-kings called mukkarib whose functions may have been very similar to the earliest kings of Sumer and Akkad. By the first millenium AD, however, these priest-kings had largely given way to a secular monarchy, the malik.

The four most powerful city-states of the south were Saba' (whence the name, Sabaeans), Hadramawt, Qataban, and Ma'in, all located in the southwest of the Arabian peninsula, the area with the heaviest rainfall in all of Arabia. Although the south never formed a political or ethnic unity, the most powerful of all these city-states was Saba', which slowly expanded its political influence to include all the major kingdoms of the south by 300 AD.

For much of its history, the area around Saba', Hadramawt, Qataban, and Ma'in was a center of incredible wealth legendary all throughout the Fertile Crescent and northern Africa. It was an area of exotic plants, spices and luxury items that gained high prices in commerce all throughout the Mediterranean and Asia. Its most lucrative export was frankincense, which in ancient times grew only in Hadramawt and in the Sabaeen colony of Somalia in Africa.

The Sabaeans, however, lived on two major two trade routes: one was the ocean-trading route between Africa and India. The harbors of the southwest were centers of commerce with these two continents and the luxury items, such as spices, imported from these countries. But the Sabaeen region also lay at the southern terminus of land-based trade routes up and down the coast of the Arabian peninsula. Goods would travel down this land-route to be exported to Africa or India and goods from Africa and India would travel north on this land-route.

From: <http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/ISLAM/PRE.HTM>

Before the battle for the city of Tamane, Karab, the Malek of the Qataban, attempted to negotiate with Yazil. "By what right do you break the sacred covenant between the tribes, and attack your neighbor unprovoked?," demanded Karab. To which Yazil replied, "Your weakness is what provoked me. That I can stand before you like this proves that you are not worthy to be the Mukarrib, and that I will defeat you tomorrow shall prove that you were not worthy even as the Malek of your tribe."

It is hard to reckon the years of Arabian history before the reestablishment of Sabaean hegemony among the tribes of Yemen by Yazil II Watar. Certain dates can be figured out through the records of other nations, if cross-referenced with the ancient records of the kings, but before Yazil, it is hard to tell history from myth. The Sabaean had originally held leadership over the federation of Southern Arabian tribes. Their kings took the title of Mukarrib, meaning the "covenant maker". It is said that their rule lasted for nearly 700 years, and that their influence expanded across the Red Sea over the kingdom of D'mit. The last Malek of the Saba to hold the title of Mukarrib was Samahu'Ali Yanuf. Roughly two-hundred fifty years before Yazil II Watar would come to power [approximately 525 BC].

It is sadly unknown why exactly the Saba lost their position of preeminence among the Arabian tribes. Most scholars believe, however, that it had to do with the completion of the

Great Maryab Dam, which occurred during Samahu's rule. It is suspected that the taxes he levied from the other tribes in order to fund its completion caused the Sabeans to fall out of favor. Regardless, after his death, the title of Mukarrib passed to the Malek of Qataban.

Under Qataban's leadership, the alliance slowly began to decay. Disputes over everything from resource and trade rights, to religious affairs broke out between the petty kingdoms frequently. By the time Yazil II Watar became the Malek of the Saba, the Mukarrib held power in name only. And the vacuum of any real leadership in the various kingdoms allowed the various priesthoods to gain influence and power. Even though Yazil II Watar himself was Malek of the Saba, and was even recognized as a descendant of Almaqah, the Sabean patron deity, his powers were by now purely secular. Yazil II Watar was in his forties by the time he became king. He was a strong and healthy man, but he had more the bearing of a general than a king. His gruff manner and selfish disposition made him more popular among his soldiers than the priesthood. Despite this, he still had a great deal of influence among his people, and proved to be an expert at quickly levying troops for his cause.

Yazil saw the weakness of the alliance and the Qataban Mukarrib as an opportunity to reestablish Sabaeen hegemony. Thus, two years after he assumed the title of Malek of the Saba [272 BC], he moved against the Karab, the king of Bnai 'Amm, as the people of Qataban called themselves, and claimed the title of Mukarrib for himself. The lesser tribes of Haram and Himyar joined with Yazil, but the

more prominent tribes, the Hadramis, the Minaeans, and the Awsan, who still resented the Saba for the destruction of their capital centuries earlier, remained loyal to the Qataban Mukarrib. Leaving his son, Yakrib, in charge of Maryab, Yazil II Watar marshaled his forces swiftly, and lay siege to the Qataban capital of Tamane. The forces were equally matched, with roughly seven thousand men on both sides. Aside from the allied tribal forces, both sides had hired a number of Ethiopian mercenaries.

When Karab, the Malek of the Bnai 'Amm refused to surrender, Yazil began his assault. Tamane was surrounded by a simple barricade. The ancient earthwork walls had long since fallen into decay. It was simple for Yazil's spies in the city to destroy the city gates the night before his assault. Karab, upon discovering the sabotage, positioned his the best of his troops behind the broken gates, and waited.

As dawn arose over Tamane, Yazil cast a prayer to Almaqah to grant him victory, then began his assault by raining arrows down upon Karab's men. Tamane's poor defenses offered little protection from the endless barrage of missiles, and the Qataban soldiers were quickly thrown into a panic.

Seeing the enemy's disarray, Yazil stormed the city gates with the bulk of his forces, his men hurling javelins over the ramparts before pouring into the city. Most of Karab's men were poorly disciplined levies, and fled the initial assault. Qataban's nobles, however, stood their ground, and fought bravely against the Saba, but Yazil's elite force of warrior-priests proved to much for them, however, and they were massacred.

Karab, seeing his best men being slaughtered, sent his Ethiopian mercenaries to drive the Saba back. Yazil, seeing that his men were weary from their initial struggle for the gates, ordered his own mercenaries to engage Karab's, while he rallied his men for the final assault.

Though Yazil's mercenaries were inferior to Karab's, they were able to buy him the time he needed to reorganize his men. He pulled the Ethiopians back, and personally led the push for the city center. Unable to halt Yazil's onslaught, Karab ordered his archers to fire on his own troops in an attempt to stop the Sabaeans, but to no avail. The Ethiopian swordsmen were soon massacred, and, in a panic, ordered all of his remaining men to charge the Sabaeans. Taking advantage of the brief break in the melee, Yazil fell back, and sent his Ethiopians forward once more.

The fighting dragged on for hours, and just as Karab's men were starting to gain the advantage, Yazil and his men returned to the fight, slaughtering the now exhausted Qataban levies, and pushing them back all the way back to the city center, where Karab made his final stand, and Yazil emerged victorious.

He then sacked the city of Tamane, and enslaved nearly the entire population, over 13,000 of the Bnai 'Amm and Awsan tribesmen in all, leaving only the 4,000 Himyar tribesman living in the city free. In spite of the brutal totality of Yazil's victory, he was not yet secure. The Hadramis had sent a force in support of Karab, led by their general, Shahrib. Though he had arrived too late to help his allies, he was now marching Tamane with a force of nearly four and a half

thousand men. Yazil faced with another foe whose forces matched his own, opted to confront Sharhib rather than retreat to Maryab.

They met on the plains east of Tamane, across a depression from each other. The Sabaeans took up a defensive position on their side of the depression, forcing Sharhib to make the first move.

Sharhib's infantry, most of whom were pirates or mercenaries, charged Yazil's position, but came under fire from Yazil's archers, and, facing an uphill battle, almost immediately turned tail and ran.

Yazil's men pursued them across the valley, where they suddenly turned and held their ground, with the terrain now in their favor. At that moment, Sharhib and his cavalry charged from their hilltop position towards the Saba.

Just as the situation began to look grim, Yazil's plan came into action. He had sent his own cavalry, allies from the Himyar tribes, around the depression, where they now charged the enemy's right flank.

Realizing that he had been outwitted, and seeing his own men cut down in droves, Sharhib and his cavalry abandoned his men, and fled the battlefield. With their general gone and the battle lost, the remaining Hadramis surrendered, and the battle was won.

Yazil's men pursued Sharhib well into the night, only to find his body near a stream, apparently murdered by his own men as they stopped for water. After this, Yazil returned to

Tamane, where attempted to secure the region and set up a provincial military government under Himyar leadership. However, no sooner had he returned to the city than he received word from his son, Yakrib, that the Ma'in were marching on Maryab, led by their king, Nasha Karab, apparently hoping to seize it while Yazil was fighting in the south. Faced with a new threat in the north, but unwilling to leave Qataban, he made a risky gamble, and sent around two-thirds of his men back to Maryab, trusting his son, Yakrib, to defeat the Minaeans.

Yakrib was a rather different man than his father. He was young, and thus far untested in battle. Where his father was a man of strategy and tactics, Yakrib was a man of virtue and valor. He was well spoken, and popular among the people, as well as the priesthood. The nobles and the military, however, were less sure of him. Many of them thought him naive at best, and slow at worst. Thus Yazil saw this crisis as an opportunity for his son to prove himself.

Despite being significantly outnumbered, Yakrib moved to intercept the Ma'in north of Maryab, rather than fortify himself in the capital, as his officers suggested.

He met Nasha Karab in the hills north of the city, near a large stone outcrop. He assaulted the Minaeans with a hail of javelins, before charging strait into the heart of the enemy line. Despite being outnumbered, Yakrib's bravery inspired his men, and they able break the enemy line, and push them into retreat.

Nasha Karab escaped, along with the few men able to escape capture, and they retreated to Carna, the Ma'in capital. Yakrib then returned in triumph to Maryab, where he was hailed by all as a hero. Any questions about his candidacy for the throne were now a thing of the past.

From: <http://forums.totalwar.org/vb/showthread.php?133474-The-Rise-of-the-Arabs-A-Sabaeen-AAR>

The Amhara (pronounced am-HAH-ruh) are mostly farmers who live in the north central highlands of Ethiopia. The Amhara display a mixed physiological heritage. They speak a Semitic language, and historical and linguistic factors, compared with their primary myths of origin, seem to indicate that their Semitic ancestors came from what is modern-day Yemen. Addis Abeba, the capital of Ethiopia and of the previous Amhara Abyssinian Empire, is home for many Amhara but actually an enclave within the land of the Oromo peoples.

According to their traditions they trace their roots to Menelik I, the child born of the queen of Sheba and King Solomon. Most scholars agree their traditions and legends are quite fanciful, though they seem to contain, as legends of origin commonly do, a core of historical information. Surely the people's own oral traditions have to be considered in reconstructing their history. There are extensive sources reporting on their traditions. They are so well-known as to be considered common knowledge.

These oral traditions seem to reflect a historical link to the Sabaeen (Sabeen or Sheban) people, referred to in several

ancient sources. It is thought that the Sabaean (Sheban) people began to settle on the west coast of the Red Sea, from their home in southern Arabia, about 1000 BC. Menelik I was the first of the Solomonic line of rulers of Ethiopia that ended only with the deposing of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974.

From: <http://orvillejenkins.com/profiles/amhara.html>

The rulers of Sheba were referred to as Sabaean, were a separate people from the Himyarites. **THEY WERE CONQUERED BY THE HIMYARITES in the 1st Century BC.**

Because they dominated the Red Sea, Sabaean settled in East Africa, particularly in Eritrea and Ethiopia. Today, a distinct group called the Hararis in Ethiopia are descendants of the Sabaean who left Yemen.

Himyar was the son of Ya'rub, son of Yashjub, son of QAHTAN. This is as about as genetic as evidence can get.

From: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9jfjpeXIAo>

WHO ARE THE 'SABEANS':

Mr. [Herbert W.] Armstrong taught the Sabeans are the descendants of Sheba living in the eastern countries, Sheba, Seta, Raamah, Dedan, living also in India., and Ethiopia. (Plain truth July 1975, Trumpet Jan 2002) (Smith commentary says Sheba, Joktanite, Cushite, Keturahite, sheba son of Ramah, in Persian Gulf where Aryan Indians came.) Abraham and Keturah begot Jokshan, he begot Sheba and Dedan. In Gen 25: 3-6 says, Abraham sent them to eastward to eastern countries. (Easton commentary..... Sheba, a son of

Ramah settled in Persian Gulf) Int.stand.Bible Ency. Says, Sheba, an Arab tribe with Dedan are Cushite in South Arabian tribes. Their worship took the form of gifts to temples, especially incense. According to the "Plain Truth" July 1975 and "Trumpet" Jan 2002, The "Sabeans" came from Ethiopia and settled in India.

Esther 1:1 India to Ethiopia was untied with 127 provinces. So these Ethiopian Sabeans would have settled in India those days. These facts prove Sabeans are also in India. The Ethiopians are very dark colored people, and the leader of this group also very dark . Job 1:15 "Sabeans" were used by Satan to destroy Job's children also. In this end time also, the spiritual Israelites were destroyed by Sabeans, used by Satan. So "Sabeans" are destroyers used by Satan. James 5:11 remind us Job's perseverance. He watched his children being destroyed by Sabeans. Joel 3:8 God says He will cause some children to be sold to Sabeans as a punishment. These Sabeans have been destroyers if God's people.

Jer 6:20 To what purpose cometh there to me INCENSE FROM SHEBA AND SWEET CANE FROM A FAR COUNTRY. Incense and sweet cane are found abundantly in India. (Gill's commentary Joel 3:8) Very rarely you find a shop or a house which does not burn incense sticks daily. Interestingly, the incense sticks are called Joksticks in some parts of India.. (Joktan, Jokshan) Also, even in streets in India, you find sweet cane juice , they crush and sell.as a drink in ez 20:28 – 29 the sweet aroma comes from incense and the drink offerings come from sugar cane, which were offered in Bamahwaram. This verse in Jeremiah 6:20 shows one of the problems God showed Jeremiah was, pcg sharing the incense or the prayers of God with these uncircumcised "Sabeans" by inviting 14 of them as ministers of God, to His sanctuary, and absorbing 800 people.Ez:23:

From:

<http://www.gentileassembly.org/docs/Ezekiel%27s%20wife%27s%20stroke.htm>