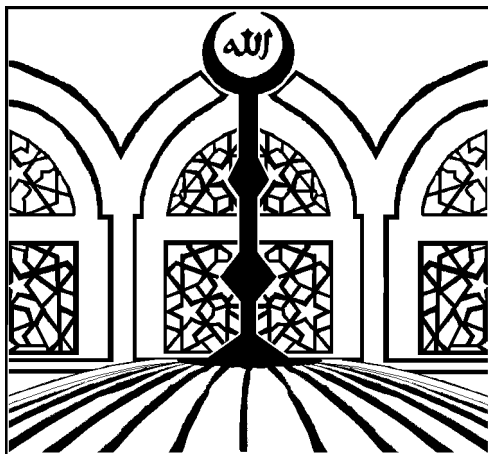


Moon-o-theism

Religion of a War and Moon God Prophet

Volume I of II

By Yoel Natan



Allah (Arabic: *aUI*) in the crescent of a finial in front of windows with a star-field motif. *Al-Aksa Mosque*, Temple Mount, Jerusalem.¹

Yoel Natan is the author of:
The Jewish Trinity,
The Jewish Trinity Sourcebook,
Baptism &
Lutheran Eschatology
Web site: www.Yoel.Info

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¹ Figure 00-01 (doubles as Figure 12-18). *Allah* (Arabic: *aUI*) in crescent in front of *Mosque* windows with a star field motif. Caption for the source picture is: “The ‘*alam* (finial [*sic*]) of the small dome above the entrance to the *Aqsa Mosque* [at the temple mount]” (Nuseibeh & Grabar. *Dome*, pp. 175-176). For more information on the association of the name *Allah* with crescent finials, see the *Lahut* and *Turkish Blessing* entries in the Index.

Critique of the Revisionist View on the Sun- and Moon-gods in Southern Arabia

The Revisionist View That Almaqah and Syn Were Sun-gods Rather Than War-and-moon-gods

Nearly as long as South Arabia has been studied, scholars believed that the half dozen or so high-gods of southern Arabia were male war-and-moon-gods. Jacques Ryckmans wrote as recently as 2004 that some archeologists now believe that *Saba's* *Almaqah* and *Hadramawt's* *Syn* were both sun-gods instead of moon-gods.¹⁸⁴⁷ This section aims to accurately present and then convincingly refute this Revisionist view.

The following table is derived from J. Ryckmans' "Arabian Religions" article printed by *The Encyclopedia Britannica* (2004):

Ryckmans' Revisionist View of Sun- and Moon-gods of South Arabia		
Kingdom	Sun-god or goddess	Moon-god
<i>Hadhramaut</i>	<i>Syn</i> (or <i>Sayin</i>) is a sun-god and national god	<i>Hawl</i>
<i>Ma'in</i>	Not mentioned	<i>Wadd</i> is the moon-god and national god
<i>Kataban</i>	Not mentioned	' <i>Amm</i> is the moon-god and national god
<i>Saba</i>	<i>Almaqah</i> is a sun-god and national god. <i>Shams</i> is a minor sun-goddess	Not mentioned
<i>Himyar</i>	<i>Shams</i> is the national sun-goddess	Not mentioned

Jean-Francois Breton also holds to the Revisionist view, but in 1999 thought that '*Amm* is Mercury. Breton's 1999 book *Arabia Felix* cites a 1989 article written by J. Ryckmans for a French journal that equated '*Amm* with *Nabu*, the scribal god whose planet is Mercury.¹⁸⁴⁸ In 1992 Ryckmans wrote about '*Amm*: "There is no good reason to consider him a moon god."¹⁸⁴⁹ J. Ryckmans then disavowed his earlier ideas when he wrote in 2004, "In *Kataban* the national god '*Amm*, 'paternal uncle,' may have been a moon god."¹⁸⁵⁰ One can see that J. Ryckmans' views have moved somewhat toward the traditional view over the years.

Here are some quotations that sum up the Revisionist view that *Almaqah* and *Syn* were sun-gods rather than moon-gods as traditionally thought. J. Ryckmans wrote:

Next to '*Athtar* [Venus], who was worshiped throughout South Arabia, each kingdom had its own national god, of whom the nation called itself the "progeny" (*wld*). In *Saba*' the national god was *Almaqah* (or *Ilumquh*), a protector of artificial irrigation, lord of the temple of the *Sabaeen* federation of tribes, near the capital *Ma'rib*. Until recently *Almaqah* was considered to be a moon-god, under the influence of a now generally rejected conception of a South Arabian pantheon consisting of an exclusive triad: Father Moon, Mother Sun (the word "sun" is feminine in Arabic), and Son Venus. Recent studies underline that the symbols of the bull's head and the vine motif that are associated with

¹⁸⁴⁷ Ryckmans, Jacques. *EB*, "Arabian Religions" entry, 2004; also see *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of World Religions* (2000), pp. 70-71, "Arabian religions."

¹⁸⁴⁸ Breton. *Felix*, p. 122 + endnote 8 found on p. 192 which refers to bibliography p. 204. It is possible that Breton confuses '*Amm* with *Anbay* who Ryckmans elsewhere says is like *Nabu* (Mercury) (Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 172), but one would need to look at his cited sourced.

¹⁸⁴⁹ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 172.

¹⁸⁵⁰ Ryckmans, Jacques. *EB*, "Arabian Religions" entry, 2004.

him are solar and *Dionysiac* attributes and are more consistent with a sun god, a male consort of the sun goddess....¹⁸⁵¹

Joël Donnet wrote:

...*Almaqah* was the main god of the *Sabeans*, to whom it was proper, even if he had equivalents in the neighboring tribes. Associated with fertility, agriculture and irrigation, it was first represented by a bull, and possibly by an ibex. It [*Almaqah*] was also often associated with a moon crescent, which led numerous archaeologists—including *Abdu Ghaleb* and Dr. Yusuf *Abdullah*, the president of the General Organization of Antiquities, Museums and Houses of Manuscripts—to call it the moon-god, and therefore to name *Mahram Bilqis* the Moon Temple. But Bill Glanzman disagrees with this vision, as he considers the moon as only one symbol of *Almaqah*, and certainly not the most important one, according to the numerous inscriptions from the site recovered during the 1950s and the last four years of the AFSM's fieldwork: 'So far, the moon isn't even mentioned in the texts, and we have found only a few examples of the *Almaqah*'s crescent moon in artwork. We very commonly find the bull (*Thawran*) associated with *Almaqah* in the inscriptions.'¹⁸⁵²

J. Ryckmans wrote:

...the ancient [i.e. 1920s] claim of Ditlef Nielsen to reduce the whole pantheon to a basic triad Moon-father, Sun-mother (sun is feminine in Arabia), and Venus-son, has continued to exert negative influence, in spite of its having been widely contested...¹⁸⁵³

A. F. L. Beeston wrote similarly to J. Ryckmans in *The Encyclopaedia Of Islam*:

For the period down to the early 4th century AD, few would now agree with the excessive reductionism of Ditlef Nielsen, who in the 1920s held that all the many deities in the pagan pantheon were nothing more than varying manifestations of an astral triad of sun, moon and Venus-star; yet it is certainly the case that three deities tend to receive more frequent mention than the rest...¹⁸⁵⁴

Dr. Christian Ditlef Nielsen (1874-1949 AD) is credited with presenting the traditional triadic paradigm for South Arabian deities in the 1920s. The peculiar South Arabian astral triad (Father-moon, mother-sun and Venus-son) evidently was not known as late as 1885 when Richard F. Burton wrote:

The moon is masculine possibly by connection with the Assyrian Lune-god *Sin*; but I can find no cause for the Sun (*Shams*) being feminine.¹⁸⁵⁵

Critique of the Revisionist View That Almaqah and Syn Were Sun-gods Rather Than Moon-gods

The Revisionist view summarized above, even if it were true, would not significantly affect the argument that *Allah* was a moon-god. Why? The Revisionist view states that most of the main high gods in Southern Arabia were moon-gods, but

¹⁸⁵¹ Ryckmans, Jacques. *EB*, "Arabian Religions" entry, 2004.

¹⁸⁵² Donnet, Joël. "Looking for the Queen of *Sheba*," wanadoo.fr, May 2001.

¹⁸⁵³ Ryckmans, Jacques. "The Old South Arabian Religion," quoted in Daum, W. (editor). *Yemen: 3000 Years Of Art And Civilization In Arabia Felix*. Pinguin-Verlag (Innsbruck) und Umschau-Verlag, Frankfurt/Main, p. 107.

¹⁸⁵⁴ Beeston, A. F. L. "*Saba*" in Bosworth, C. E., E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs & G. Lecomte, *The Encyclopaedia Of Islam*, 1995, v. viii, E. J. Brill, Leiden, pp. 664-665.

¹⁸⁵⁵ Burton. *Nights*, vol. 4, fn. 388.

two were sun-gods. Thus the odds are that *Allah* would be a moon-god, and there is plenty of evidence that says *Allah* really was a pre-Islamic moon-god.

Dr. Christian Ditlef Nielsen (1874-1949 AD) is often credited with noticing the triadic paradigm for South Arabian deities in the 1920s. Jacques Ryckmans and Jean-Francois Breton are two proponents of the Revisionist view of South Arabian deities who are currently active in this field of study. Jacques Ryckmans wrote:

...the ancient claim of Ditlef Nielsen to reduce the whole pantheon to a basic triad Moon-father, Sun-mother (sun is feminine in Arabia), and Venus-son, has continued to exert negative influence, in spite of its having been widely contested...¹⁸⁵⁶

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Notice that in order to knock Nielsen's triadic theory, Ryckmans and Beeston understandably resort to *Argumentum ad Populum*, i.e. Nielsen's theory lost a popularity contest, and *Argumentum ad Verecundiam*, i.e. Nielsen is not an authority on the subject any longer since his scholarship is dated.

Ryckmans and Beeston unwittingly set up straw-man arguments when they suggest that there is no proof that *Almaqah* and *Syn* were a moon-god, and there is evidence that does not fit in Nielsen's theory in regard to *Almaqah* and *Syn*.

Nielsen, when formulating his theory, could hardly have missed the type of evidence that Ryckmans and other Revisionists cite. The vines would have been impossible to miss, and the fact that *Almaqah* was associated with the bull was known at least since 1955 when Wendell Phillips wrote:

In ancient *Sheba*, the bull always represented *Ilumquh*, who was known under other names, one of which was *Thor* (Bull).¹⁸⁵⁸

The evidence that Ryckmans says shows that *Almaqah* is a sun-god could also be interpreted in keeping with Nielsen's contention that all the South Arabian moon-god were war-gods, too. A. F. L. Beeston admits as much in the *Encyclopaedia Of Islam*:

Garbini has produced cogent arguments to show that the attributes of 'Imkh [i.e. *Almaqah*] are rather those of a warrior-deity like Greek *Herakles* or a vegetation god like *Dionysus* [a sun-god].¹⁸⁵⁹

So the evidence that Ryckmans says shows *Almaqah* is a sun-god could also be interpreted to show that *Almaqah* is a war-god (notice the "or" in the quote above). Evidently, Ditlef Nielsen interpreted the vines and bulls associated with *Almaqah* to be war-god and male attributes rather than as solar attributes. Nielsen wrote:

¹⁸⁵⁶ Ryckmans, Jacques. "The Old South Arabian Religion," quoted in Daum, W. (editor). *Yemen: 3000 Years Of Art And Civilization In Arabia Felix*. Pinguin-Verlag (Innsbruck) und Umschau-Verlag, Frankfurt/Main, p. 107.

¹⁸⁵⁷ Beeston, A. F. L. "Saba" in Bosworth, C. E., E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs & G. Lecomte, *The Encyclopaedia Of Islam*, 1995, v. viii, E. J. Brill, Leiden, pp. 664-665.

¹⁸⁵⁸ Phillips. *Sheba*, p. 299.

¹⁸⁵⁹ Beeston, A. F. L. "Saba" in Bosworth, C. E., E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs & G. Lecomte, *The Encyclopaedia Of Islam*, 1995, v. viii, E. J. Brill, Leiden, pp. 664-665.

...the main god, the **national** god of **war**...this is in all South Arabian, yes, nearly in all Semitic monuments, a sure identifying mark of the **moon-god**.¹⁸⁶⁰

The same could be said of *Syn*'s eagle coin as was said of *Almaqah*'s bull and vines. Instead of the eagle being interpreted as being solar, Nielsen may have interpreted the eagle as being a moon- and war-god or male attribute. After all, the eagle was the main symbol found on the war standards of Roman legions. *Syn*'s eagle coin is discussed in detail below.

One can see that the Revisionist view of the South Arabian gods has a certain appeal to Westerners in that at least two of the main South Arabian deities, *Almaqah* and *Syn*, can be interpreted in the same manner as the preponderance of Mediterranean deities of Antiquity: instead of the high god being a moon-god, he's a sun-god, and instead of the vine and bull being war-god symbols, they are solar in nature.

Ditlef Nielsen's theory lets South Arabian mythology interpret itself first. This approach is especially appropriate in the case of *Almaqah* and *Syn* first because both their cults were thoroughly Mideastern and their origins pre-date the coming of Mediterranean influences to *Yemen*—probably by several centuries. Second, the use of vine, bull and eagle decorations is not a very strong indicator as to whether a god is solar or lunar, as is discussed in detail in this section.

The fact that the inscriptional evidence so far recovered at the *Bilqis* temple does not mention that *Almaqah* was a moon-god could be explained through statistics. Since most inscriptions have perished over time leaving only a few hundred intact, the chances are slim that any one of them would mention *Almaqah*'s astral association.

The nature of temple inscriptions is mainly votive and dedicatory, and the astral association of the god would be deemed too obvious to mention in inscriptions. Usually the astral nature of gods is determined from ancient myths, but there is no mythological literature that mentions *Almaqah* or the other South Arabian gods. It seems the oldest manuscript found in *Yemen* is from the *Islamic* era—the *Koran*.

From the fourth century AD to the time of *Islam*, Judaism and Christianity were on the ascendancy in South Arabia, so some of the temples like *Bilqis* fell into disuse already then. From the fourth century AD until the present, these temples have been covered and uncovered by blowing sand dunes, often leaving them to the mercy of iconoclasts and salvagers of metal and stone. One ought not expect to find many intact crescent artifacts and lunar inscriptions.

Aside from the crescents-and-orb symbols, the uncovered temple inscriptions currently are silent on whether *Almaqah* and *Syn* are moon- or sun-gods. This is other evidence, though, some of which is:

☉ Archaeologists found “a few examples of the *Almaqah*'s crescent moon in artwork” (see the Joël Donnet quote above) at the *Bilqis* temple. One archaeologist wrote of *Almaqah*'s temple, now called *Bilqis*:

Near the top of the delicate stone shaft was a beautifully carved circular sun with a crescent-moon...for some twenty-five hundred years this graceful pillar had stood guard above the sands near *Marib*...¹⁸⁶¹

☉ A *Hadramawt* temple altar had a crescent-and-orb symbol as well as a Venus altar symbol.¹⁸⁶²

¹⁸⁶⁰ Nielsen, 1912, pp. 593-594, as translated in Krause, “*Haram–Harimat*.”

¹⁸⁶¹ Phillips. *Sheba*, pp. 226-227.

☉ There are few, if any, solar disks and rays found in *Almaqah*'s and *Syn*'s temples.

All this suggests that *Almaqah* and *Syn* were moon-gods, not sun-gods.

In Ryckmans' view, *Almaqah* was a sun-god and *Shams* was a sun-goddess. In his "Arabian Religions" article for *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Ryckmans does not mention who exactly in his view the moon-god at *Saba* was even though one would suspect the moon-deity would have been mentioned in inscriptions.

In Ryckmans' view, there are two sun deities of note at *Saba*. The traditional view seems to make better sense in that each slot of the South Arabian sun-moon-Venus triad was populated by a notable deity and no slot is doubly occupied: 1) *Almaqah* as moon-god 2) *Shams* as sun-goddess and 3) *Athtar* as Venus.

Both *Syn* and *Almaqah* fit best in their respective astral triads as moon-gods rather than sun-gods, and each for the same reason: the sun deity position is already taken by a major sun-goddess, and if *Syn* and *Almaqah* are sun-gods, that leaves no prominent deity for the moon-god position of the triad.

Breton wrote that *Sayin* was associated with and worshipped along side of 'Athtar and *dhat-Himyam*.¹⁸⁶³ 'Athtar is Venus. Simpson wrote that the gender of *dhat-Himyam* is feminine indicating that she is a goddess. Simpson also wrote that...

...*Shamsum* was most certainly a solar goddess; as *Shamsum* in Middle *Sabaeen* times [110 BC-300 AD] often replaces the older deities *Dhat-Himyam* and *Dhat-Ba'danum*, these may also have been some sort of sun deities.¹⁸⁶⁴

Ryckmans wrote about *Dhat-Ba'danum*:

Among other *Sabaeen* feminine denominations, that of *Dhat-Ba'danum*, a goddess who received dedications of votive statuettes of horses, was probably a sun goddess since the horse is associated with the solar cult in the Mediterranean culture.¹⁸⁶⁵

Ryckmans said that *Hawl* was the *Hadramawt* moon deity, yet apparently nothing is known of *Hawl* beyond his name. Ryckmans wrote:

In *Hadramawt*, *Hawl* was probably a moon-god; his name apparently alludes to the lunar cycle.¹⁸⁶⁶

Simpson, however, wrote that *hwl* (with a dot under the *h*) as a noun means "magical power," as a verb *hwl* means "to avert," and *hwl* was a word used on an amulet of the sun goddess *Shams*.¹⁸⁶⁷ So while *Hawl*'s etymology might be distantly related to a moon phase, that does not necessarily make *Hawl* a moon-god.

Since the moon-god would have been a major god, *Hawl* probably was not the moon-god. Thus the *Hadramawt* astral triad would be: 1) *Syn* was the moon-god, 2) *dhat-Himyam* was a sun-goddess who was later replaced by the sun-goddess *Shams*, and 3) *Athtar* was Venus.

Ryckmans says that a bull—the symbol of both *Almaqah* and *Syn*—is "more consistent with a sun god, a male consort of the sun goddess."¹⁸⁶⁸ Bowen and

¹⁸⁶² Crescent-and-orb (Thompson, *Moon*, p. 55, plate Lxviii); and Venus altar carving (Thompson, *Moon*, pp. 50-51, plates xviii and xxi). The Venus-altar carving is illustrated in this Moon-o-theism book in relation to the Dome of the Rock (see the Thumbnail Gallery).

¹⁸⁶³ Breton. *Felix*, p. 122.

¹⁸⁶⁴ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 162.

¹⁸⁶⁵ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 172.

¹⁸⁶⁶ Ryckmans, Jacques. *EB*, "Arabian Religions" entry, 2004.

¹⁸⁶⁷ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 178, catalog item 236.

¹⁸⁶⁸ Ryckmans, Jacques. *EB*, "Arabian Religions" entry, 2004.

Albright say that “carved bulls heads” were “ubiquitous” in South Arabia,¹⁸⁶⁹ suggesting that the bull was primarily a lunar symbol in lune-loving South Arabia.

A bull and bull’s head (bucranium) were used as moon-god icons due to their curved horns. Whenever bulls are paired with ibexes as on many plaques,¹⁸⁷⁰ the pairing strongly suggests the bull is lunar rather than solar. The same could be said of bulls paired with crescent-and-orbs. A bull’s head artifact from 3rd C BC South Arabia has a crescent-and-orb on its forehead, and between the horns is a pair of ibexes flanking a tree of life that together form a crescent-and-orb motif.¹⁸⁷¹ Ibex horns sometimes have crescent-and-orbs behind them, too.¹⁸⁷²

Bulls as lunar icons probably far outnumber bulls used as solar icons among Semitic peoples, let alone in South Arabia. Moreover, the fierce bulls could be associated with the fact that the South Arabian moon-gods were also war-gods.

Almaqah was not only associated with bulls but also with ibexes and goats, which are moon-god animals owing to their curved horns. This suggests that the bulls associated with *Almaqah* were also considered lunar animals due to their curved horns. Joel Donnet wrote about *Almaqah*’s association to bulls and ibexes:

Almaqah however was the main god worshipped by the *Sabeans*. Symbolized first by a bull and then by an ibex, he was also associated with a crescent, which led certain archaeologists to call him the moon-god and therefore name *Mahram Bilqis* ‘the moon temple.’¹⁸⁷³

Micha Lindemans wrote about *Almaqah*’s association to bulls and goats:

A moon-god and tutelary god of the South Arabian kingdom of *Saba*. The members of the tribe of *Saba* called themselves ‘the children of *Almaqah*.’ He is symbolized by a cluster of lightning flashes and a weapon which looks similar to the letter S. His symbolical animal is the bull. *Almaqah* is referred to in some texts as ‘Lord of the horned goats.’¹⁸⁷⁴

Simpson wrote that a temple’s dedicatory inscription at *Sirwah* read “*Almaqah*, Master of the Ibex.”¹⁸⁷⁵

Ryckmans says the vine motif was *Dionysian*. *Dionysus* was the widely worshipped night-sun. Ryckmans’ surmise reminds one of what the Roman historian Tacitus (~55 AD to ~120 AD) wrote about the Jewish temple:

From the fact that their priests used to chant to the music of flutes and cymbals and to wear garlands of ivy, and that a golden vine was found in the temple, some have thought that they worshipped Father *Liber* [*Dionysus*, i.e. the Night Sun], the conqueror of the East, though their institutions do not by any means harmonize with the theory; for *Liber* established a festive and cheerful worship, while the Jewish religion is tasteless and mean [i.e. by gaudy Roman standards].¹⁸⁷⁶

¹⁸⁶⁹ Bowen & Albright. *Arabia*, p. 225, left column, top.

¹⁸⁷⁰ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 54, catalog 17; pp. 60-61 + catalog 26; p. 117, catalog 125.

¹⁸⁷¹ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 132, catalog 160, Bronze bull’s head with ibex and tree of life motif.

¹⁸⁷² Ibexes with crescent-and-orbs: Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 96, catalog 104; p. 139, catalog 180.

¹⁸⁷³ Donnet, Joel. “Quest for a Queen,” *Frontline*, frontlineonnet.com, v.19, issue 3, 2-15 Feb 2002.

¹⁸⁷⁴ Lindemans, Micha F. pantheon.org, 9 Oct 2004, *Almaqah* entry.

¹⁸⁷⁵ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 55.

¹⁸⁷⁶ Tacitus, *Histories*, 5.3ff, as excerpted from *Tacitus, Histories*, translated by A. J. Church & W. J. Brodribb, 1888, reprinted in Modern Library, New York, 1942, as quoted in MacMullen & Lane. *Sourcebook*, p. 162.

Just as Tacitus dismissed the vine motif as being *Dionysian* in the case of *Yahveh* based on the evidence, the same should apply in the case of *Almaqah*. The use of the vine motif in South Arabia probably differed from elsewhere because the gender, roles and astral association were different than in the Mediterranean world.

In Western cultures, the moon was usually a goddess, but in the Mideast the moon was the high god; in the West and Mideast Venus was a goddess, but in South Arabia Venus (*Athtar*) was generally male. In the West the sun was a high god, but in the Mideast the sun was most often a goddess.

With the genders of the sun, moon and Venus often being opposite that in the West, it is not surprising that the standard iconography in the Mideast was different. For instance, in the Mediterranean world vines might be associated with the sun god, not so much because of the astral aspect, but because of male fertility. Since the moon is male in the Mideast and Southern Arabia, vines then become a lunar symbol.

In the Mediterranean area and in the Mideast vines were most often carved in a scroll or undulating pattern. An artistic crescent-and-orb was created by curving the vines and using leaves or clusters of grapes for the orb—hence a moon-god symbol. That a scrolled vine is indeed intended as a crescent-and-orb pattern become obvious when a crescent-and-orb alternates between a vine scrolled as just described.¹⁸⁷⁷

The crescent-and-orb vine motif is found throughout the moon-god-loving Mideast including *Marib* in South Arabia and *Petra* in northern Arabia.¹⁸⁷⁸ Vine art and the tall-short-tall *Allah* motifs are illustrated in this Moon-o-theism book, especially in regard to the Dome of the Rock (see the Thumbnail Gallery).

That vines were a lunar symbol in South Arabia can be assumed from the fact that vine friezes from *Husn al-'Urr* in the *Hadramawt*, had lunar “ibexes standing behind crossed tendrils.”¹⁸⁷⁹ Other plants besides vines were associated with the moon-god animals such as ibexes and bulls, for instance...

...a limestone capital with [an] acanthus leaf decoration beneath which is a crouching ibex flanked by bucrania [plural of bucranium, meaning “ceremonial bull’s head”] panels...was found in the *Wadi Harib* [but] it is thought to have been brought from *Marib*.¹⁸⁸⁰

Ibexes and bulls were associated with the moon because of their curved horns. Ibexes were depicted in friezes with crescent-and-orb couplets formed from grape clusters and vines at *Marib*¹⁸⁸¹ and at *Petra* in northwest Arabia.¹⁸⁸²

At *Petra* even a lion is depicted in a scrolled vine.¹⁸⁸³ *Petra* was known for its many decorative crescent winged capitals atop columns and in building facades.¹⁸⁸⁴ This shows *Petra*’s love of the moon, and suggests that the lion may have been a moon-god symbol.

Nowadays people might associate the lion with the sun due to the orange-ish fur, and for the fact that people visit zoos, and wildlife shows are filmed, during daylight.

¹⁸⁷⁷ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 97, catalog 109.

¹⁸⁷⁸ Nabatean crescent-and-orb grape vines at *Petra*: Glueck. *Dolphins*, plate 30 (p. 54), plates 176-177 (pp. 388-389).

¹⁸⁷⁹ Doe. *Southern*, p. 34, picture 4.

¹⁸⁸⁰ Doe. *Southern*, p. 34, picture 6.

¹⁸⁸¹ Doe. *Southern*, p. 36, picture 9.

¹⁸⁸² Ibex in scroll vine at *Petra*: Glueck. *Dolphins*, plate 169 (pp. 370-371), plate 170 (p. 372).

¹⁸⁸³ Lion in scroll vine at *Petra*: Glueck. *Dolphins*, plate 169 (pp. 370-371).

¹⁸⁸⁴ Nabatean crescent-and-orb capitals at *Petra*: Glueck. *Dolphins*, plate 173 (p. 385).

People in ancient times knew that lions are nocturnal hunters especially on moonlit nights, so naturally they associated the lion with the moon-god:

- ☉ In the *Gilgamesh Epic*, *Gilgamesh* prayed to *Sin* the moon-god for help in fending off lions at night.¹⁸⁸⁵
- ☉ At *Hazor's* moon-god temple, a lion orthostat guarded the entrance.¹⁸⁸⁶
- ☉ At the moon-god temple in *Marib* a bronze statue dedicated to *Almaqah* wears a moon-god approved curved knife under his belt and a lion-skin cape as shown by the four paws.¹⁸⁸⁷

Archaeologists discussing a cherub riding a lion statue found at *Timna*, capital of *Kataban* in southwest *Yemen*, note that this was a popular ancient statue motif that, at least in *Timna*, would have represented the moon-god controlling the sun. Berta Segall wrote that the cherub riding a lion motif...

...outside Arabia, indicates a supremacy of the divinity of the night-sky over that of the sky of the day, is possibly a sign that they meant to emphasize their special loyalty to the Arabian male god of the heavens. In Babylon the moon-god had from very ancient times 'renewed the royal seed to distant days' and was therefore the divinity of rulers and the ruling class and, in a wider sense, the 'life-index' the index to health and prosperity, of the ruled, as W.F. Albright suggested.¹⁸⁸⁸

In the case of *Timna*, though, this statue may in fact represent a moon-god controlling a lunar animal, since the lion in the Mideast may have been a lunar animal more than a solar animal.

Revisionists cite classical Greek and Roman writers to support their theory in several points. For instance, a Greek historian Theophrastes of *Eresos* (372-287 BC) wrote that frankincense was collected in a *Sabean* temple of the sun even though he meant a *Hadramawt* temple hundreds of miles to the east.¹⁸⁸⁹ Breton says this suggests that the *Hadramawt Syn* was a sun-god, though Theophrastes' geography mistake suggests that Theophrastes was just hazarding a guess. Theophrastes made other mistakes such as he thought cinnamon was grown in South Arabia rather than in India.¹⁸⁹⁰ Lastly, Theophrastes could have had in mind the temple of the *Hadramawt* sun goddess *dhat-Himyam*.

Theophrastes' information implies that *Syn* would have been a sun-god if his temple was meant, except that Theophrastes probably just assumed that the *Hadramawts'* national god was a sun-god based on Mediterranean mythology. This mistake is similar to how Greek travelers thought the *Abyssinian* moon-god *Mahrem* was the god of Mars (*Ares*)¹⁸⁹¹ on account of *Mahram's* male gender and his preoccupation with war-making. After all, Greek moon-gods were female and were involved in hunting but not warfare.

¹⁸⁸⁵ Anonymous. *Gilgamesh*, "The Search for Everlasting Life." Also, Pritchard. *Ancient*, I:62, middle of Tablet IX.

¹⁸⁸⁶ Yadin, Yigael. *Hazor: The Rediscovery Of A Great Citadel Of The Bible*. Weidenfield and Nicolson, London & Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 44-47.

¹⁸⁸⁷ Phillips. *Sheba*, p. 287.

¹⁸⁸⁸ Segal, Berta. "The Lion-riders from *Timna*," Bowen & Albright. *Arabia*, pp. 163-164.

¹⁸⁸⁹ Breton. *Felix*, p. 122. Theophrastus' *Natural History*, 9.4.5.

¹⁸⁹⁰ Breton. *Felix*, pp. 54, 61.

¹⁸⁹¹ Nielsen, 1912, pp. 593-594, as translated in Krause, "*Haram-Harimat*."

Coins Show That Almaqah and Syn Were Moon-gods

The topic of South Arabian antiquities, including coins, has been de-mythologized and de-astralized to a greater extent than warranted. This was not always the case. For instance, in 1937 John Walker discussed the moon-god in relation to South Arabian coins, and in 1952 he wrote an article “The Moon-god on Coins of the *Hadramawt*.”

Scholars de-emphasize the solar or lunar evidence by leaving a lot left unsaid in the literature, and it is sometimes said that an argument that so-and-so deity is lunar is speculative. Simpson wrote:

...the lunar nature of ‘*Almaqah* and *Ta’lab* is speculative...[*Sayin*’s] connection with the moon is merely speculative.¹⁸⁹²

The evidence is also said to be ambiguous. For instance, Breton wrote about South Arabia in general:

There are bas-reliefs depicting ibexes (sitting or standing), bulls and gazelles, but it is unclear which gods these figures were meant to represent.¹⁸⁹³

Inscriptions consecrated to the gods are often accompanied by a small circle which is generally interpreted as an image of planet Venus. These two symbols show up together in a variety of contexts such as engraved plaques, incense altars, and buildings. The image seems to have been essentially a form of talisman to bring good luck and ward off evil, rather than being exclusively related to a specific divinity. Scholars have been so far unable to establish a link between each symbol and a particular deity.¹⁸⁹⁴

Just as bas-reliefs and Venus-and-moon couplets are often left uninterpreted, so also is the case with legends and images on coins. Nowadays, words such as *Shahr* (moon) and *Hilal* (crescent), and monograms (e.g. *Yanap*), are transliterated and generally not translated or interpreted, and there is no hint that such words or their etymology refer to moon-god worship. Untranslated words such as *Shahr* or *Sukr* (meaning “bright”) are merely said to be the names of kings, temples, palaces or mints.

Even if such words did refer to a king or mint, the fact that the name is etymologically connected to mythology and religion ought to be considered significant enough to mention just as scholars in similar discussions find it helpful to point out that, say, Nebuchadnezzar means “*Nabu* protects.”

Some words could be interpreted as applying to a moon-god or to a king or mint, so it is necessary to set out the case for each interpretation to see which is more plausible.

Many South Arabian coins have a crescent-and-orb symbol, or an owl or snake or bull or another moon-god symbol (see illustration below). Few if any have a sun-with-rays symbol as one would expect there to be if any of the high gods were sun-gods.

On a few *Katabanian* and *Sabean* coin issues, the obverse has a male bust and the reverse has an owl with an inscription next to the owl that reads: “*Shahar Hilal, Ynp!*” meaning “Moon Crescent, the Exulted.” Similarly, an issue of *Hadramawt* eagle coins has a tri-literal inscription *Y.Sh.H.* standing for “*Ynp, Shahar Hilal*” meaning “The exulted, Moon Crescent” (all illustrated and discussed below).

¹⁸⁹² Simpson. *Sheba*, pp. 162...163.

¹⁸⁹³ Breton, *Felix*, p. 118.

¹⁸⁹⁴ Breton, *Felix*, p. 125.

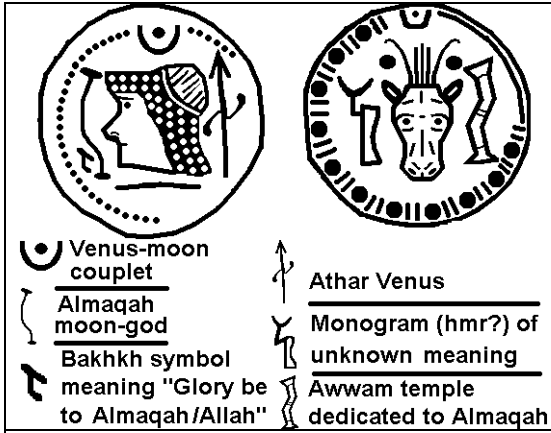


Figure 02-01. These are symbols often found on South Arabian coins—all of which just happen to be found on this later *Sabean* bucranium coin issue from the early 2nd to mid-3rd century AD. *Almaqah*'s symbol is found on many *Sabean* coins.¹⁸⁹⁵ Simpson wrote that the bull with lyre-shaped horns with a plume in between is “probably an animal manifestation of ‘*Almaqah*.’”¹⁸⁹⁶

The *Bakhkh* symbol is of especial interest. It was placed on the obverse of some *Sabean* coins right next to the bent-ladder symbol of *Almaqah*.¹⁸⁹⁷ Since the *Bakhkh* symbol meant “Glory be to Allah,” *Almaqah* was probably known as *Allah* already in pre-Islamic times. Egerton Sykes said that *Allah* “seems to have been preceded by *Ilmaqah* [aka *Almaqah*] the moon-god.”¹⁸⁹⁸ See the coins appendix for more on the *Bakhkh* symbol.

Scholars have generally taken the view that the *Sahar Hilal* mentioned on *Sabean* coins above the owl refers to a certain *Katabanian* king (or kings) by that name, and that “the exulted” (*YNP*) is “the king’s title in *Sabaeen*.”¹⁸⁹⁹

There are a few *Sahar Hilals* attested in inscriptions and coins: *Shahr Hilal* (~370 BC), *Shahr Hilal* Yuhan’im (~300 BC) and *Shahr Hilal* Yuhagbid (~100-120 BC), but there probably were other *Shahr Hilals* of which no record has been found.

The fact that “*Shahr Hilal* the exulted” surrounds the upper part of an animal manifestation of a moon-god (the owl) suggests that the phrase “Moon Crescent, the Exulted” refers to the moon-god, or alternatively, to the King *Shahr Hilal* and his high god. If the legend honored the king exclusively, one would think the legend would have been found not by the owl, but on the obverse by the man’s portrait. The man’s portrait may represent the moon-god *Almaqah* as suggested by the fact that some later issues of this coin have a crescent-and-orb touching the top of the head. However, there are some issues with the owl on both sides of the coin and the phrase “Moon Crescent, the Exulted,” which more strongly suggests the phrase refers to the moon-god.¹⁹⁰⁰

That the *Sabeans* would call their moon-god “the exulted” is in keeping with the religious culture. After the *Mekkans* had fought the *Muslims* at the Battle of *Uhud* in

¹⁸⁹⁵ Coins with *Almaqah*'s symbols: Doe. *Southern*, pp. 121-122 and plate 44 (p. 85), 2nd row, *Qataban* coin 3 (1st C. BCE – 1st C. AD), 3rd row, *Sabean* coins 2 & 3 (1st C. BCE) and 5th row, *Sabean* coins 1 & 2 (late 1st C. AD), etc.

¹⁸⁹⁶ Simpson. *Felix*, p. 77, coins 69-70 Series with bucranium, early 2nd-mid-3rd centuries AD.

¹⁸⁹⁷ Bucraneum *Saba* coin series with *Bakhka* symbol: Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 77, catalog no. 69, *Saba* coin series with bucraneum, early 2nd-mid 3rd centuries AD; Doe. *Southern*, pp. 122 + plate 44, 5th row, *Saba* coin 1.

¹⁸⁹⁸ Sykes. *Mythology*, p. 7, *Allah* entry.

¹⁸⁹⁹ *Sylloge. Himyarite-Katabanian* coins 1462-1485 (end of 2nd C. BC to 1st C. BC).

¹⁹⁰⁰ *Sabean* coins with owl on both sides: Doe. *Southern*, pp. 121, plate 44, 2nd row, coin 1 (2nd C. BC); 3rd row, coin 2 (1st C. BC).

625 AD, *Abu Sufyan Ibn Harb* cried out to his god “*Hubal*, be thou exalted.” Then *Muhammad* replied “*Allah* is more exalted and more majestic.”¹⁹⁰¹

(◇ P NY) = ◇
 Monogram YNP
 Yanap!
 The Exulted!

L L H R H S
 Hilal Shahr
 Crescent Moon

= Barbarous Greek standing for AOE
 "N" denomination mark
 Symbols of Alumqah
 HDR = mint Hadhur, town east of San'a

Figure 02-02. A right-to-left phrase found on *Katabanian* and *Sabean* “old style” owl-on-amphora coins is: “*Shahar* [Moon]

Hilal [Crescent], *Ynp* [be exulted!].¹⁹⁰² *Ynp* is written here as a tri-letter monogram.¹⁹⁰³

In “new style” issues of this coin (not illustrated here), the inscription is replaced with a pair of monograms on either side of the owl, a bent-ladder symbol of *Alumqah* is added to the right of the owl’s talons, and some have a crescent-and-Venus couplet: 1) at the top margin of the obverse¹⁹⁰⁴ or reverse,¹⁹⁰⁵ or atop of the man’s portrait on the obverse.¹⁹⁰⁶

Indications that the owl represents the *Sabean* moon-god and high-god are:

- C *Almaqah*’s bent-ladder symbol (depicted on the above two illustrations) is found on some later issues of the owl-on-amphora coin next to the owl.
- C The fact that the owl coins were the only coin the *Sabeans* minted from the mid-4th BC to late 1st C BC suggests that the moon-god was the high-god.
- C A later *Sabean* coin, the bucranium series (2nd-3rd C AD), has a crescent-and-orb, further suggesting the moon-god was the *Sabean* high-god.¹⁹⁰⁷

The crescent by the owl’s back on *Sabean* coins is not the similar-looking South Arabian letter “r” since this coin is imitative of the Athena-owl Attic *tetradrachm* that has a crescent in nearly the same position. Also, the “r” is not a denomination mark since these series have an “n” and “g” to denote denomination.^{1908 1909}

The fact that the “Moon Crescent, the Exulted” is on more than one kingdom’s coins suggests that it refers to the moon-god rather than any particular king or king. *Sahar Hilal* is mentioned on the *Katabanian* “series with two heads” coins (1st C BC-

¹⁹⁰¹ *Al Kalbi. Idols*, p. 24.

¹⁹⁰² *Sabean* coins with bust on obverse, owl on the reverse: Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 75, catalog no. 55, *Sabeao-Qatabanian* coin, late 2nd-1st C. BC; others like it are: Doe. *Southern*, pp. 121, plate 44, 1st row, coins 1 (5th C BC) & 2 (3rd C. BC); 3rd row, coin 1 (early 2nd C. BC).

¹⁹⁰³ The inscriptions and the fact that a symbol on the owl coins is *Almaqah*’s are found at: Doe. *Southern*, pp. 121-122 and plate 44 (p. 85), 2nd row, coin 2, *Saba* (2nd C. BCE); 3rd row, coin 3 (1st C. BCE); *Sylloge*, plates 50+51, *Sabean* coins 1460-1461 (end of 2nd C. BCE) and *Himyarite-Katabanian* coins 1462-1485 (end of 2nd C. BCE to 1st C. BCE).

¹⁹⁰⁴ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 76, catalog nos. 64+68, *Saba* coins late 1st C. BC-early 1st C. AD.

¹⁹⁰⁵ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 76, catalog no. 59, *Saba* coin Mid-2nd-late 1st C. BC.

¹⁹⁰⁶ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 76, catalog nos. 61-63, *Saba* coin Mid-2nd-late 1st C. BC.

¹⁹⁰⁷ Simpson. *Sheba*, pp. 75-77.

¹⁹⁰⁸ Simpson. *Sheba*, pp. 75-76.

¹⁹⁰⁹ South Arabian alphabet charts are online, or see Phillips. *Sheba*, p. 42, or start of *Sylloge*.

1st C AD), on *Katabanian* owl-and-amphora coins (mid-2nd C BC), and on *Sabean* owl-and-amphora coins (late 2nd-1st C BC).¹⁹¹⁰ John Walker wrote:

...both *Shahar* and *Hilal* have lunar significance in the South Semitic monuments. The former is a proper name meaning “moon” = Arabic *Shahr* (month); the latter is the same as the Arabic *Hilal* (new-moon [i.e. waxing crescent]).¹⁹¹¹

Scholars have not considered the possibility that “Moon Crescent, the Exulted” refers to the moon-god, yet there is no other satisfactory solution, as Simpson wrote:

The reading and interpretation of the legend have raised many questions and prompted extensive study. Generally it is identified as the name of a *Katabanian* king, a certain *Shahr Hilal*, but **there is no understandable reason why** the *Katabanian* royal name was written on *Sabean* coins and in such a [“‘cursive’ rather than formal, but ‘formerly identified as “Aramaic” or “Lihyanite””] script....In any case, we may suggest that the existence of both series—with *Sabaeen* typological features but with a portrait of a *Katabanian* ruler on the obverse, and with the name of a *Katabanian* king on the reverse of *Sabaeen* coins—reflects some form of political subordination or suzerainty of the South Arabian kingdoms when *Kataban* dominated a large part of southwest Arabia (Hill 1922, 53-55, plates VII, 27-28; VIII, 3-4).¹⁹¹²

Another indication that “Moon Crescent, the Exulted” (*Sh.H.Y.*) refers to the moon-god is this legend is found on *Hadramawt* coins, too, but transposed as *Y.Sh.H.* (The exulted Moon Crescent). Walker came close to the aforementioned solution in 1937 when he wrote about the *Syn*-eagle coin (as was partly quoted above):

If by any chance *Y.Sh.H.* should stand for *Yuhan'im Shahar Hilal* it is a noteworthy coincidence that both *Shahar* and *Hilal* have lunar significance in the South Semitic monuments.¹⁹¹³

Another solution scholars offer is that *Y.Sh.H.* stands for the first three consonants of a king's name: **Yashhur**'il Yuhar'ish, son of Abiyasa, *Mukarrib* (i.e. federation leader) of *Hadramawt* who lived around the time of Christ.¹⁹¹⁴ Of course, this is conjectural based only on the congruence of three letters of the *Syn*-eagle coin and not inscriptional evidence where Yashhur'il says he minted new types of coins.

That Yashhur'il Yuhar'ish would use the first three letters of his first name on a coin seems unusual since South Arabian coins, including those of the *Hadramawt*, had the kings' names spelled out, or his initials or monogram. Note that the solution to *Sh.H.Y.* being “Moon Crescent, the Exulted” uses initials that are more in keeping with custom.

Another indication that *Y.Sh.H.* probably does not stand for King **Yashhur**'il Yuhar'ish is that the three series of *Hadramawt* coinage (eagle, square and bull) have enough similarities that Simpson says they were introduced by, or could be associated with, **Yashhur**'il.¹⁹¹⁵ Yashhur'il, however, reigned in the early first

¹⁹¹⁰ Simpson. *Sheba*, pp. 74-75, coins 50-55.

¹⁹¹¹ Walker. *New*, p. 270.

¹⁹¹² Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 75, coins 52-55 *Sabaeo-Qatabanian* series.

¹⁹¹³ Walker. *New*, p. 270.

¹⁹¹⁴ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 78.

¹⁹¹⁵ Simpson. *Sheba*, pp. 78-79, series with eagle, coins 75-79; square coinage, coin 80; and series with bull, coins 81-82.

century, but the Series with a Bull coins were not issued until starting in the late first century AD—well after Yuhar’ish’s time!¹⁹¹⁶

One wonders whether the *Syn*-eagle coin was re-dated to the early first century merely to tie it to King **Yashhur**’il Yuhar’ish, since in 1971—perhaps before the *Y.Sh.H.* equals **Yashhur**’il theory came into vogue—Doe dated the *Syn*-eagle coin to the “third or fourth century AD.”¹⁹¹⁷

Ryckmans and other Revisionist scholars have said that the eagle on *Syn*-eagle coins is a sun-god symbol just as *Nasr*, meaning eagle, was a male sun-god in north Arabia and Syria popular among the Arabs. *Nasr* is mentioned in *K* 071:023.

There was no consensus in the ancient world that the eagle was solar since, for example, the eagle was a symbol of Zeus, but his planet was Jupiter—not the sun. In 1937, Walker related that pre-*Islamic* amulets show the eagle was a South Arabian moon-god symbol:

☉ An amulet in the British Museum has *Himyarite* (pre-*Islamic* South Arabian) and *Pahlavi* (Persian Sassanian-era) scripts and shows an eagle standing on a crescent.

☉ Another amulet in the Berlin Museum has an eagle and the words “May ‘*Amm* make happy.”¹⁹¹⁸ Ryckmans wrote “In *Kataban* the national god ‘*Amm*, ‘paternal uncle,’ may have been a moon god.”¹⁹¹⁹

Another indication that the *Syn*-eagle coin was a moon-god coin was that it was preceded by, and is similar to, three issues of *Hadramawt* lunar-oriented coins:

☉ From the mid-4th to 2nd C. BC, the *Hadramawt* kings issued an imitation Athena-owl and crescent and *AEO* legend coin.

☉ A variant of the above coin minted during the same period has a male head on the obverse and an owl and crescent with the word *SKR* rather than the pseudo-Greek *AOE* legend. What this indicates is the Athena-owl coin was updated to reflect the fact that in South Arabia the moon-gods were male.

☉ A third coin issued from ~1st C. BC-early 1st C. AD has a radiant male head on the obverse, and a caduceus snake on the reverse.¹⁹²⁰ Breton says the serpent was a symbol of the moon-god *Wadd* popular throughout South Arabia.¹⁹²¹

One can see that the *Syn*-eagle coin continued the centuries-long pattern (noted above) of coins more closely reflecting South Arabian male moon-god mythology. The *Syn*-eagle coin has a male head on the obverse with the name *Syn*. The male head probably represents the moon-god *Syn* and not a king since a later similar coin issue (illustrated later in this section) has a radiant head with an *S* standing for *Syn*.

The reverse of the *Syn*-eagle coin has the legend “Moon Crescent, the exulted” (*Sh.H.Y.*), as was discussed above.

The reverse of the *Syn*-eagle coin has an eagle standing on a crescent and the word *SKR* that means bull’s horn and moon crescent. Simpson wrote “*Shaqqar* (*SKR*),

¹⁹¹⁶ Simpson. *Sheba*, pp. 78, series with bull, coins 81-82.

¹⁹¹⁷ Doe. *Southern*, p. 122.

¹⁹¹⁸ Walker. *New*, pp. 271-272.

¹⁹¹⁹ Ryckmans, Jacques. *EB*, “Arabian Religions” entry, 2004.

¹⁹²⁰ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 77, *Athena*-owl coins 71-72; male head-owl coin 73; radiant head-caduceus coin 74.

¹⁹²¹ Breton. *Felix*, p. 121.

the name of the royal residence in *Shabwa*, denoting, most probably, the royal mint as well.”¹⁹²² Walker explained that *SKR* was an alternate name for *Syn*:

Mr. Beeston, in the above mentioned article [*Le Museon*, lxiv, 1951, p. 131]...regards it [*SKR*] as a quality or attribute of the moon-god, and suggests that it goes back to a root meaning ‘to be bright’ [Note: a crescent moon is bright]. This may be the correct derivation, but on the coins it would appear to be a proper name like *Sin*. In addition to the...coin evidence, there are other indications. The word *SKR* commonly denotes the roof or the upper part of the building. It [*SKR*] frequently occurs in the phrase...‘from its foundation to the roof’ [Walker footnote: See K. Conti Rossini, *Chrestomathia*, p. 252]...we know that the people of those days placed representations of the moon-god on the roofs of their temples and other buildings. A very good illustration of this is seen in fig. 6 [reproduced below] which shows an alabaster slab from the *Yemen*, now in the *Eski Sark Museum, Istanbul*, on which appears the outline of the elevation of a *Sabaeen* temple. On the roof of the temple can clearly be seen the bull’s horns of the moon-god projecting from each of the pinnacles.

Other pertinent illustrations showing gargoyles or rainwater heads in the shape of bulls’ heads are in C. Rathjens and H. v. Wissmann’s *Vorislamische Altertumer*, Hamburg, 1932, pp. 55-56. They are from the roof of a temple at *Hugga*...It is interesting to note that this practice still survives in the *Hadramawt* at the present day, although its original significance has been forgotten. Freya Stark (*Seen in the Hadhramaut*, London, 1938, p. 38) gives a photograph of a native house with ibex horns on the roof.¹⁹²³

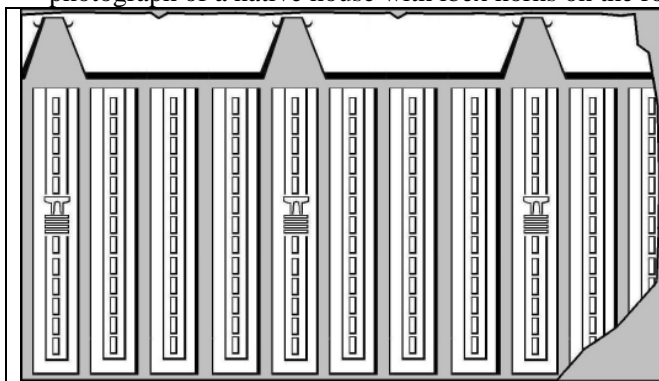


Figure 02-03. A Sabaeen moon-temple with pairs of “bull’s horns of the moon-god projecting from each of the pinnacles” in the form of a crescent.¹⁹²⁴ The temple is carved into an alabaster slab from *Yemen* now in

the *Eski Sark Museum, Istanbul*. Note the three arched-door Venus altars halfway up the wall, and the “tall narrow triple recesses which were a common feature on buildings facades during this period.”¹⁹²⁵ The slab is broken on the right side so one cannot tell how long the temple was, but judging from the size of the bull horns, the temple must have been about two stories high minus the pinnacles.

Breton wrote that in South Arabia:

The gutters of a great many civilian and religious buildings were also adorned with bull’s head motifs.¹⁹²⁶

¹⁹²² Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 77.

¹⁹²³ Walker. *Hadramaut*, pp. 625-626...fn. 1 on p. 626.

¹⁹²⁴ Walker. *Hadramaut*, pp. 625-626, figure 6 (see fuller quotation above).

¹⁹²⁵ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 148.

¹⁹²⁶ Breton. *Felix*, p. 125.

Ryckmans wrote that “reliefs representing a bucranium and called *SHR* [accent on *S*, dot under *H*] ‘talismán’ were inserted into the façade of buildings.”¹⁹²⁷ The word *SHR* that Ryckmans writes of seems to be closely related to Walker’s word *SKR* in both meaning and spelling. Ryckmans says *SHR* also was one of the names of temple priests and administrators but their “functions are not clearly distinguished.”¹⁹²⁸ Note that *SKR* and *SHR* are fairly close in spelling to the word *Shhr* (*Shahr*) meaning crescent. This suggests they all mean crescent, and the priests called *SHR* would be moon-god priests.

The royal palace and mint of the *Hadramawt* region was a towerhouse complex called *SKR* (or *Shaqar*) though it is unclear whether this fact is assumed based on the mint name of coins, or whether there is an inscription to that effect.¹⁹²⁹ If it was named *SKR*, one can surmise that the building got this distinction due to the fact that its roof sported bull horns and was the tallest of the 250 tower-houses in the city of *Shabwa*.¹⁹³⁰

That the *Hadramawt* mint would be named after a bull-horn crescent would be similar to how the *Katabanian* mint was, according to Doe, “probably” named *Harib*.¹⁹³¹ *Harib* is related to the word *Harba*, to fight, and all the high gods of South Arabia were war-and-moon gods as Nielsen wrote:

...the main god, the **national** god of **war**...this is in all South Arabian, yes, nearly in all Semitic monuments, a sure identifying mark of the **moon-god**.¹⁹³²

Each *Islamic Mosque* also has a “fighting” place called a *Mihrab* because *Allah* was, and still is, a war- and moon-god. Gibb and Kramers wrote:

Mihrab [dot under *h*] has been derived from [the word] *Harba* [with dot under *h*] “spear,” and from South Arabic *Mikrab*, Ethiopian, *Mekrab* “temple,” but the etymology is not certain...¹⁹³³

Above it was discussed how *SKR* meant bull’s horn or crescent, but one can do a word-picture study of *Hadramawt* coins to find by the process of elimination the meaning of *SKR* (see the illustration below). The earliest three series of *SKR* coins are not illustrated here since they imitate coins from the Mediterranean and do not shed much light on the South Arabian word *SKR* other than the fact that *SKR* is lunar-related:

- ☉ The Athena-owl has a crescent but not the word *SKR*.
- ☉ The male head-owl coin has the word *SKR* and may or may not have a crescent, but the owl is a moon-god symbol nonetheless.
- ☉ The radiate head-winged caduceus coin has the word *SKR* and the snake is a South Arabian moon-god symbol.¹⁹³⁴

If one looks at the coins below, the only element that is common to all the coins with the word *SKR* is not a bull or bull’s head, but a bull’s horn (under the eagle). Thus Walker’s word *SKR* means bull’s horn, and so might Ryckmans’ *SHR*.

¹⁹²⁷ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 174.

¹⁹²⁸ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 173.

¹⁹²⁹ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 144.

¹⁹³⁰ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 144.

¹⁹³¹ Doe. *Southern*, p. 119.

¹⁹³² Nielsen, 1912, pp. 593-594, as translated in Krause, “*Haram-Harimat*.”

¹⁹³³ Gibb & Kramers. *Encyclopedia*, p. 343, middle of the left column, *Masjid* entry.

¹⁹³⁴ Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 77, coins 71-74 are the two owl and radiant head coins of the early series.

The position of the bull's horn below the eagle suggests the horn represents a crescent. The position of the first letter (*S*) of *Syn*'s name between the bull's horns on the square coin suggest an orb-and-crescent.

Figure 02-04.
Hadramawt Syn coins
 (~1st half of 1st C AD to late 3rd C AD).

Note that by the process of elimination, *SKR* seems to mean “bull’s-horn crescent.”

The *Syn*-eagle coin is sketched from Doe. *Southern*, plate 44 (p. 85), and the rest are sketched from Walker. *Hadramawt* and Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 78.

Škr = = Bull's horn
 Bull's horn = Crescent
 Y. S. H. = The exulted Moon Crescent
 Syn = Sin the moon-god

Scholars generally have not noticed the crescent on *Syn*-eagle coins only because those scholars drew their conclusions and seem to have not revisited all the evidence in a meaningful way since the first few *Syn*-eagle coins were found even though their condition was poor. Perhaps this is because coins end up in different museums and private collections and go unpublished for decades.

In 1937 Walker published five samples, two of which had the bull's-horn crescent worn off, two had the bull's horn mostly intact, and one had a bull's horn that dipped down on the left side which made Walker think it was an undulating line or perhaps *Almaqah*'s bent-ladder symbol.

The reason for the dip on the left side of the horn might have been artistic expression or a meaningless variation common on anything hand-made. Even in the industrial and information age, stamps and coins have unintended variations that make them unique and collectors' items.

Walker took the undulating bull's horn to be the norm though only one of his samples showed this feature and two show a bull's-horn crescent. Walker's 1937 reproduction showed the eagle standing straight up which correctly displays the half-crescent,¹⁹³⁵ but his 1952 composite drawing tilts the eagle rightward (see illustration below) because Walker thought the bull's horn was an artistic baseline or the bent-ladder symbol of *Almaqah*.¹⁹³⁶

Walker understandably missed the crescent because of the paucity of samples available to him. Even in 1952, Walker did not have a complete, unworn *Syn*-eagle coin, but had to provide a composite drawing.¹⁹³⁷ Moreover, Walker expected a well-formed full-crescent like those on other South Arabian coins, not a primitive bull's-horn half-crescent. Walker wrote in 1937:

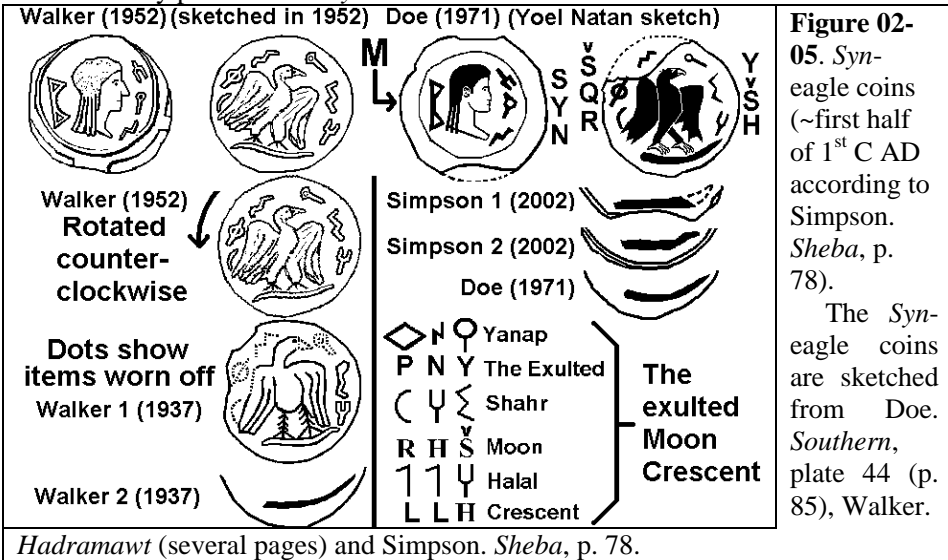
...his name *Sin* occurs on several inscriptions from the *Hadramawt*. But this is the first recorded instance of his name appearing on coins, although his

¹⁹³⁵ Walker. *New*, plate 33.

¹⁹³⁶ Walker. *Hadramaut*, pp. 625-626...fn. 1 on p. 626.

¹⁹³⁷ Walker. *Hadramaut*, p. 623, figure 1.

crescent-symbol is found frequently on *Himyarite* and other South Arabian epigraphic and numismatic remains. In view of this fact it is all the more remarkable that his crescent should be absent from the present coins though his name is written in full, unless, of course, we regard the curved line below the eagle on the reverse as being intended for that. But, as will appear below, this is doubtful....Below the eagle an undulating line will be observed...The question arises: Has this any special significance? Or is it simply a base line? The presence of a curved line, presumably a lunar crescent below the eagle on the British Museum gem mentioned above [discussed above in this Revisionist section], suggests that perhaps the present line may have a similar significance. There is, however, just another possibility which suggests itself, namely, that it may represent the well-known curved sign [*Almaqah's* bent-ladder symbol] on the already published *Himyarite* coins.¹⁹³⁸



Hadramawt (several pages) and Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 78.

Factors that indicate the eagle on the *Syn*-eagle coin (illustrated above) is standing on a bull's-horn crescent include:

- C The word *SKR* is to the left of the eagle. Walker argued that one of the meanings of *SKR* was a “bull’s horn of the moon-god projecting from each of the pinnacles” of a *Sabean* moon-god temple.¹⁹³⁹ Birds of prey surely were seen perched on these horns just as is pictured on the *Syn*-eagle coin.
- C The initials *Y.Sh.H.* standing for “*Ynp, Shahr Hilal*” meaning “The exulted, Moon Crescent” are to the right of the eagle (discussed above).
- C The later *Hadramawt* coins all featured a bull or bull’s head showing that the bull was the main symbol of the moon-god *Syn* (illustrated above).
- C The earliest examples of the *Syn*-eagle coins were found between the cities *Shihr* and *Tarim*,¹⁹⁴⁰ and *Shihr* likely is related to “moon” (*Shahr*).
- C The “r” letter in the word *SKR* forms a crescent next to the left side of the eagle in the *Syn*-eagle coin in the same position as the crescent in the coin

¹⁹³⁸ Walker. *New*, pp. 266...278-279.

¹⁹³⁹ Walker. *Hadramaut*, pp. 625-626, figure 6 (see fuller quotation above).

¹⁹⁴⁰ Walker. *New*, pp. 260; also Simpson. *Sheba*, p. 78.

that preceded it—the *Hadramawt* imitation of the *Athena-owl* on amphora coin. So one lunar coin begets another.

- ☉ The left side of the half-crescent horn does not dip down except on one sample (Walker 1937, coin 1), and that is not as pronounced as Walker's 1952 drawing would suggest. The left side of the Doe 1971 sample actually curves up to form three-fourths of a crescent.
- ☉ Other South Arabian coins (some are illustrated in this section) have baselines but they are relatively straight and in no way suggest they are a half-crescent, full-crescent or bull's horn.

Artifacts and Dedicatory Plaques Show That Almaqah Was a War-and-moon god
(See the "Allah as a War-god" section earlier in this Moon-o-theism book.)

Phonetics Suggest that Syn Really Was Sin, the Main Moon-god of the Mideast

The Revisionist theory has it that the *Hadramawt Syn* was not the moon-god *Sin*, but the sun-god *Sayin*, a god whom we know little about.¹⁹⁴¹ The conjectured pronunciation *Sayin* is based on the original three-letter root, and the vowels used in a transliteration (*Sabin*) by the Roman scholar Pliny the Elder (23–79 AD).¹⁹⁴²

The likely reason that the Revisionists have started referring to the *Hadramawt Syn* (or *Sin*) as *Sabin* or *Sayin* is to deny the competing theory a proof that the *Hadramawt Syn* is the Mesopotamian *Sin*. Denying the opponent the use of language is known as the scorched-earth propaganda trick.

Semitic languages were written only with consonants and without any vowels or vowel pointing until the seventh or eighth centuries. This is why the scholars sometimes insert the vowels of Greek and Latin transliterations into Semitic words.

If one wanted to insert vowels into the name *Syn*, it might be better to borrow those used for the *Akkadian Su-en*. So instead of *Sayin*, it would be *Suyen*. One cannot put much stock in Greek and Roman historians' transliterations of South Arabian words since they are known to be unreliable. Examples from inaccurate Roman and Greek transliterations from Breton's book *Arabia Felix* (1999) include:

- ☉ Pliny: *Sabota* (*Shabwat/Shabwa*), p. 65; *Gebbanitae* (*Qatabanites*), p. 73.
- ☉ Stabo: *Sabata* (*Shabwat/Shabwa*), p. 80; *Marsiaba* (*Maryab/Ma'rib*), p. 167.
- ☉ Theophrastus: *Kitibaina* (*Qataban*); *Mamali* (*Qarnaw/Ma'in*), p. 54.¹⁹⁴³

It is easy to imagine that immigrants, travelers or traders brought *Su-en* or *Sin* from the Mideast to the *Hadramawt*, since much of the Arabian language, culture and religion originally came from the Mideast. Moreover, some of the first major consumers of frankincense and myrrh were the moon-god priests of ancient Mesopotamian empires where *Sin* and other moon-gods loomed large. Breton wrote:

...around the eighth or seventh centuries...frankincense arriving in Assyria was referred to by its South Arabian name of *Libnay*.¹⁹⁴⁴

The fact that Assyrian priests were using the South Arabian name for frankincense already in the eighth century BC increases the likelihood that the *Hadramawt Syn* is really the Mesopotamian *Sin*.

¹⁹⁴¹ Breton. *Felix*, p. 122.

¹⁹⁴² *Natural History*, bk. 12, sec. 32, para. 63.

¹⁹⁴³ The first name is the ancient name and the second is the modern Arabic name as found in The *Jawf* and the *Arabia Felix* maps at Breton. *Felix*, pp. x-xi.

¹⁹⁴⁴ Breton. *Felix*, p. 115.

The Greeks and Romans only started using exotic fragrances centuries later when their empires spanned into the Mideast and Egypt. Pliny (23-79 AD) lamented that despite the recently introduced perfumes, the gods were more benevolent back in the days when worshippers “petitioned them with salted spelt.”¹⁹⁴⁵ Spelt was a wheat grown in Europe from the Bronze Age until the advent of modern bread wheat.

Some of the main caravansaries were moon-god worshipping centers: *Haran*, *Ur* and *Tema* in northern Arabia. *Tema* was a center of moon-god worship set up by Babylonian Emperor Nabonidus (556-539 BCE) whose mother was a *Sin* priestess.

Likely, it was only a matter of time before *Su-en* and *Sin* morphed into *Syn* or *Suyen* or *Sayin* in the *Hadramawt*. The pronunciation may not have reflected the spelling exactly if the spelling of *Syn* ossified. In fact, inscriptions from *Aden* in southeast *Yemen* and in *Abyssinia*—where there may have been immigrants from the *Hadramawt*—have the spelling *SN* and probably pronounced *Sin*.¹⁹⁴⁶

Ryckmans however says that “phonetic objections” indicate that the *Hadramawt* *Syn* is not the widely worshipped moon-god *Sin*. Phonetics aside, one must ask “What are the chances of there being a sun-god named *Syn* in the *Hadramawt* and moon-god named *Sin* (or *Su-en*) known throughout the Mideast for millennia?”

It is recognized that other gods in South Arabia came from the Mesopotamian area despite the slightly different spelling and pronunciation, so why would *Syn* not be derived from *Sin* (or *Su-en*)? For instance:

- ☉ The *Makkan Hubal* likely was derived from *HaBaal* meaning “The *Baal*,” or “The Lord.”
- ☉ The South Arabian sun-god *Shams* corresponds to *Shemesh* of Mesopotamia.
- ☉ The South Arabian Venus god *'Athtar* corresponds to that of the Mesopotamian Venus goddess *Ishtar*.
- ☉ The Arabian cosmic god *Il* and *Ilah* was the Mesopotamian cosmic god *El*.
- ☉ The *Qataban* moon-god *Anbay* corresponds to the Babylonian god *Nabu* (note the “n” and “b” consonants in *Anbay* and *Nabu*). *Nabu* was the Mesopotamian god of writing and wisdom who wrote down the words and wisdom of the moon-god *Sin*. Thus the leap from being a wisdom and scribal god to moon-god was not great.

The Arabic culture, language, religion and religious iconography was largely derived from, and remained dependant on, Aramaic culture. For instance, artwork at *Marib* included the common Mideast cherubs, griffins, sphinxes, bulls, bucrania, crescent-and-orb couplets and trees of life.¹⁹⁴⁷

Sin was first known as *Su-en* in Mesopotamia but within a few centuries became known as *Sin* within that same region. One can see the drift in the pronunciation of gods’ names in place names and in compound names, for instance:

- ☉ *Sin*: Desert of *Sin*, Desert of *Zin*, *Sennacherib* (*Sin* multiplies brothers), *Sanballat* (*Sin* has given life)¹⁹⁴⁸
- ☉ *Nabu*: Mt. *Nebo*, *Nebuchadnezzar* (May *Nabu* protect the crown)

¹⁹⁴⁵ Pliny the Elder. *Natural History*, 12.82; also at 12.93.

¹⁹⁴⁶ *Aden*: Walker. *New*, p. 265, fn. 8 (Aden); *Abyssinia*: Walker. *New*, p. 277.

¹⁹⁴⁷ Doe. *Southern*, pp. 36-37, pictures 9-13.

¹⁹⁴⁸ *NIV Study Bible* (2002) note on Neh 02:10: “*Sanballat*. A Babylonian name meaning ‘*Sin* (the moon-god) has given life.’”

So a change in the pronunciation and spelling from *Sin* (or *Su-en*) to *Syn*: 1) across the millennia, 2) across the 1,400 miles from Babylon to *Yemen* and 3) across the Aramaic-Arabic language barrier would be expected.

Some language purists like to say that Arabs are sticklers for pronunciation, and that the vowels and consonants would have remained constant over thousands of years. This is an exaggeration since even if there had been dictionaries and everyone was literate, such precision in pronunciation and spelling would have been a feat nothing short of miraculous. Even the spelling of the city *Marib* changed over time in inscriptions. Originally it was *Maryab* (*mryb*) but by the end of the second century BC, it had changed to *Ma'rib*.¹⁹⁴⁹ Another South Arabian word that seems to have changed spelling is bucranium (*SHR*),¹⁹⁵⁰ which in the *Hadramawt* became *SKR*.¹⁹⁵¹

The change in language occurs even when everything is written down and sacralized. For instance, the *Koran* standardized Arabic, but within 1350 years most Arabic speakers can no longer understand the *Koran* without training and familiarization. Students of the *Koran* even travel to *Makka* and *Yemen* to hear and learn an Arabic dialect that is closer to that of the *Koran*.

Richard Burton (1821–1890 AD) was not naïve about etymology. He said that a drift in the pronunciation of an Arabic word was an attempt to make it easier to pronounce. He relates that the first letter of the word *Sirat—Islam's* Sword Bridge—changed twice in less than thirteen hundred years: from *Sin* to *Sad* to *Za*. Burton wrote in 1885 AD:

The word [*Sirat*] was originally written with *Sin* [letter] but changed for easier articulation to *Sad* [letter], one of the four *Huruf al-Mutabbakat*, 'the flattened,' formed by the broadened tongue in contact with the palate. This *Sad* [letter] also by the figure *Ishmam* (=conversion) turns slightly to a *Za*, the intermediate [letter] between *Sin* and *Sad*.¹⁹⁵²

Thus for *Sin* (or *Su-en*) to become *Syn* for ease of pronunciation, or as a peculiarity in a local dialect, is entirely conceivable.

There are other indications that the *Hadramawt* was directly affected by the Mideast, and thus by implication *Syn* was *Sin*. Caton Thompson wrote:

The southwest orientation, dissimilar to other recorded temples in southwest Arabia, conforms to the Babylonian ancestral practice of an axis diagonal to the cardinal points. The raised platform style of the building seems derived, probably indirectly, from the same area [i.e. Babylon].¹⁹⁵³

A *Hadramawt* colony in *Yemen* called *Sumhuram* near *Khor Rory*, *Dhofar*, yielded an inscription using Babylonian letters, and another inscription to *Syn*, which all suggests that *Syn* was indeed *Sin*. Wendell Phillips wrote:

Dr. Jamme had deciphered a newly uncovered bronze inscription mentioning the name of the *Hadhramaut* moon-god *Sin* and giving for the first time the name...*Sumhuram*, a long-lost city. Next came a strange inscription on a stone trough, running from left to right, and with peculiar forms of letters found previously only in inscriptions belonging to the Biblical *Chaldeans*.¹⁹⁵⁴

¹⁹⁴⁹ Breton. *Felix*, p. 182.

¹⁹⁵⁰ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 174.

¹⁹⁵¹ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 173.

¹⁹⁵² Burton. *Nights*, vol. 4, fn. 318.

¹⁹⁵³ Thompson. *Moon*, p. 57.

¹⁹⁵⁴ Phillips. *Sheba*, pp. 337-338.

Also in *Saba, Yemen*, there are similar indications that the temple to *Almaqah* was a moon-temple with similarities to those built in Mesopotamia. Ryckmans wrote:

The temple of *Almaqah* in *Marib* had an unusual shape, that of an ellipse [meaning the main walled room was oval] with a major axis about 345 feet long, with a strong wall about 28 feet high, built of fine limestone ashlars.¹⁹⁵⁵

The curved walls may be in honor of the curved crescent of the moon-god. The *ziggurat* at *Ur* was built in honor of the moon-god *Sin*. Many arches and curved walls are built using the principle of entasis, meaning the walls and columns are curved slightly so they look straight to the human eye. So...

...surprisingly, there is not a single straight line in the structure. Each wall, from base to top and horizontally from corner to corner, is a convex curve...¹⁹⁵⁶

A Sometimes Misconstrued Inscription Mentioning Syn and Athar

The following *Hadramawt* inscription excerpt has been misconstrued by some to say that *Sin* the moon-god was not the high god in the *Hadramawt* region:

...to *Sin*, He of *‘Ilum*, and to *Attar*, his father (Pritchard, *Ancient*, II:238).

Simpson seems to have fallen for the misinterpretation of the above inscription when he wrote:

In one *Hadramatic* inscription ‘*Athtar* is called ‘father’ of the *Hadramatic* deity *Sayin*.¹⁹⁵⁷

Simpson takes the *Hadramawt* inscription to mean that *Attar*, a Venus-god in *Yemen*, fathered *Sin* even though Simpson wrote that *Syn* was “at the top of the *Hadramitic* pantheon.”¹⁹⁵⁸ It is unlikely that lowly *Attar* would father the top god in theogonic myths, especially when another goddess is called “mother of ‘*Attar*.”¹⁹⁵⁹

Shabbir Ally of *Islamic Awareness* used the misinterpretation to attack the *Allah* was a moon-god theory. Ally wrote:

Quite revealing! This shows that the moon-god *Sin* had a father *Attar* who was also a god. So for these people the moon-god was not the high god. This again disproves [Robert] Morey.

Morey kept telling us that the moon-god was the high god among the pagans. Now we know that...he [*Sin*] also had a father. *Allāh* of course was never believed to have a father.¹⁹⁶⁰

The reason that this inscription is misunderstood is twofold. South Arabian inscriptions are, as Ryckmans wrote: “...solemn texts drawn up in the third person...”¹⁹⁶¹ Ryckmans also wrote:

In ancient times the ruler might call himself the ‘firstborn’ (*bikr*) of the god, while the nation was the ‘progeny’ (*wld*) of its national god.¹⁹⁶²

Elsewhere Ryckmans wrote that “The protective formula...‘*Wadd* is father’ written on amulets or on the walls of buildings...”¹⁹⁶³ So “his father” (third person) in the

¹⁹⁵⁵ Ryckmans, Jacques. *EB*, “Arabian Religions” entry, 2004.

¹⁹⁵⁶ “Third dynasty of *Ur*, 22nd–21st century BC,” *EB*, 12 May 2002.

¹⁹⁵⁷ Simpson. *Felix*, p. 163 + fn. 4: “RES 2693” (RES = *Repertoire d’epigraphic semitique*, 8 vols., *Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, Paris, 1900-1968).

¹⁹⁵⁸ Simpson. *Felix*, p. 163.

¹⁹⁵⁹ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 172.

¹⁹⁶⁰ Ally, Shabbir. “Reply To Robert Morey’s Moon-god Myth & Other Deceptive Attacks On *Islam*,” *Islamic Awareness*, *Islamic-awareness.org*, accessed 1 Nov 2003.

¹⁹⁶¹ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 171.

¹⁹⁶² Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 172.

above inscription likely should be understood as “my father” (first person), meaning that the royal person who commissioned the inscription was referring to *Attar* (Venus) as “my father” as was customary for royalty to do at the time in *Yemen*.

Attar (Venus) may have been considered the special protective god of the royal house in *Yemen* just as *Mahram* the war-and-moon-god was a “special protective god” of *Abyssinian* royals.¹⁹⁶⁴

James B. Pritchard gave the correct interpretation of the inscription in question. He capitalized the pronouns referring to deities while leaving the pronouns that pertain to the devotee in lowercase. Note that the capital “He” in the inscription is a grammatical appositive and refers to the god *Sin*, and the small-letter “his” refers to a mortal king who is claiming divine parentage or ancestry:

Saduqdar Barran, prefect of the property of the king of *Hadramawt*, son of ‘Ilsarah, dedicated to *Sin*, He [*Sin*] of [Pritchard: “the temple of”] ‘*Ilum*, an offering in bronze of which the weight is true, reddish-brown bronze—and he [the prefect] offered it—, which he [the prefect] promised to *Sin* as He [*Sin*] had him [the prefect] [promise] by His [*Sin*’s] oracle. And Saduqdar consecrated in submission to *Sin*, He [*Sin*] of ‘*Ilum*, and to ‘*Attar*, his [the prefect’s] father, and to the goddess of His [*Sin*’s] temple ‘*Ilum*, and to the gods and goddesses of the city of *Sabwa*, his [the prefect’s] person and his understanding and his children and his possessions and the light of his eye and the thought of his heart as homage and submission which may be agreeable.¹⁹⁶⁵

So the devotee happens to be a government prefect and is a member of royalty. The prefect is of royal lineage since ‘Ilsarah is the King of *Saba* and *Dhu-Raydan*, as Pritchard noted in his book a few pages earlier when he discussed another inscription.¹⁹⁶⁶ Perhaps this is the same Ilsarah Yahdub who fought off the Roman legion that, according to the Roman historian Strobe, tried to conquer *Marib* in 24 BC.¹⁹⁶⁷

The inscription also seems to say that *Sin* is the moon-god ‘*Ilum*, or it equates the *Hadramawt Sin* with the *Sabean Ilumquh* (aka *Almaqah*). That *Sin* would be considered *Alumqah* is entirely possible because:

☉ In *Sin*’s *Hadramawt* temple at *Huraydah* one inscription addresses *Syn* and another inscription addresses *Almaqah*.¹⁹⁶⁸

☉ Breton wrote:

As the influence of *Saba* spread throughout South Arabia, the cult of *Almaqah* was imposed upon tribal groups who already had pantheons of their own. The result was a hodge-podge of religious conceptions.¹⁹⁶⁹

Conclusion

The recent Revisionist view is wrong. *Almaqah* and *Syn* were not sun-gods, but were moon- and war-gods as the traditional view states.

¹⁹⁶³ Ryckmans. *Anchor*, v. 6, p. 172.

¹⁹⁶⁴ Nielsen, 1912, pp. 593-594, as translated in Krause, “*Haram–Harimat*.”

¹⁹⁶⁵ Pritchard. *Ancient*, II:238. Note: The inscription line numbers and some accent marks have been excluded, while bracketed comments have been added.

¹⁹⁶⁶ Pritchard. *Ancient*, II:231.

¹⁹⁶⁷ Elahi, Rahmat (the archaeologist). “A Glimpse of Archaeological Sites in Southern Part of the Republic of *Yemen*,” *Yementimes.com*, Issue 10, Culture Page, 6–12 Mar 2000, vol. x.

¹⁹⁶⁸ Thompson. *Moon*, p. 52 + plate LXII: *Syn* inscription, no 17a, *Almaqah* inscription no. 17b.

¹⁹⁶⁹ Breton. *Felix*, p. 117.