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Abdel Aziz Saleh

The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.

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THE *GNBTYW* OF THUTMOSIS III'S ANNALS AND THE SOUTH ARABIAN *GEB(B)ANITAE* OF THE CLASSICAL WRITERS

Abdel-Aziz SALEH

The aim of this study is two-fold : first, to call attention to a probable new chapter in the episode of trade relations between Egypt and the lands that were able to supply the much sought-after aromatics in ancient times; secondly, to bring to light what may be the first recorded appearance of the Qatabanian tribes of South Arabia in history, about the fifteenth century B.C.

In the annals of the year 31-32 of Thutmosis III's reign, after his seventh campaign in Western Asia, we read : « When His Majesty arrived in Egypt, the messengers of the *Gnbtyw* came bearing their presents (or products *inw*), consisting of *ʿntyw* (frankincense), and *kꜣy*-gum (?) and (?)... ».



The ethnic name *Gnbtyw* is rare and difficult to explain. It occurred only twice or thrice in ancient Egyptian sources [2]. From the reference in the text just quoted to the frankincense and the *kꜣy*-gum as being the main products of the *Gnbtyw* people, it may be assumed that they might have lived either in Pwenet [3] (Punt), the chief incense-producing area known to the ancient Egyptians, or else in some other tropical region to the south of Egypt. But there remains the fact that the name in question is nowhere mentioned in the geographical or ethnographical lists of either Pwenet (Punt) or the southern lands, at present known to us from

[1] K. Sethe, *Urk.* IV, 695, 5-7.

[2] Cf. H. Gauthier, *Dictionnaire des noms géographiques contenus dans les textes hiéroglyphiques*, t. V, pp. 215, 175.

[3] For this reading and others, see below p. 248 notes 1, 4, 5.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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the New Kingdom [1]. Moreover, it is extraordinary to find a text only concerned with a subdivision of the Pwenetites without giving the name of the land of Pwenet alongside of it. Hence, it will not be amiss to summarize some earlier views still at present held on the possible identification of the *Gnbtyw* and their original home.

On the etymology of the name, nothing definite has been asserted. Long ago, H. Brugsch tried to connect it with the Semitic *khanub* (Arabic *ganūb* جنوب) which signifies the south. From this, he drew the conclusion that the name, with Egyptian complexion in style and grammatical form, signifies « the south-folk » generally [2]. However, Lepage-Renouf reasonably proved that such a meaning from such a root is forced. He based his contention on that unlikely the *Gnbtyw* would have called themselves « Southerners ». « But if they had wished so to do, (he says), the people from Punt would not have thought of *genûb,* and the Egyptians would not, in the time of Thutmosis III, have designated them by an Arabic term which probably did not come into existence till nearly two thousand years later » [3]. W. Max Müller called attention to the sign which determines the name in hieroglyphs. It represents a lock or tress of hair. Hence, it has become a motive for the conjectural meaning : « Lockenträger, Lockenkoph » [4]. This is, however, a qualification of a general character.

On the basis of earlier publications, Breasted's translation of the text under consideration, added to the frankincense (called myrrh) and *kꜣy*-gum in the tribute of the *Gnbtyw*, « ... 10 male negroes for attendants, 113 oxen (and) calves, 230 bulls; total : 343 ; besides vessels laden with ivory, ebony, skins of the panther, products... » [5]. As much as these articles were almost identical with the items of commerce carried on with the southern lands in particular, the name *Gnbtyw* was considered as that of an African people, and this interpretation has been generally accepted. However, Breasted's translation overlooked an enormous gap after the words « frankincense and *kꜣy*-gum ». In the comprehensive edition

[1] E. Zyhlarz, « The Countries of the Ethiopian Empire of Kash (Kush) and Egyptian old Ethiopia in the New Kingdom » (tr. by M. Jackson), *Kush* VI (1958) pp. 7-38.

[2] H. Brugsch, *Z.Ä.S.*, XX, S. 33; H. G. Tomkins, in *Proceedings S.B.A.*, 1888, p. 372.

[3] Le Page Renouf, in *Proceedings S.B.A.*, 1888, pp. 373-375.

[4] W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa,* Leipzig, 1893, S. 117 ; also Le Page Renouf, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

[5] J.H. Breasted, *Ancient Records of Egypt,* II, 474.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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of K. Sethe, there appears a heading for the tribute of Kash in the missing part of the inscription [1]. This, no doubt, indicates that the negroes, cattle, ivory, ebony and panther skins formed part of the tribute of the Kashites, and accordingly they did not belong to the *Gnbtyw* — a fact which obliges us to look for these people in some other direction within the very extensive areas yielding frankincense and odorous gums in antiquity.

Hence, before entering into detail regarding the possible identification of the *Gnbtyw,* we should have to mention briefly the commonly held opinions about the aromatic-yielding areas with which the ancient Egyptians were in contact. As a matter of fact, the various studies devoted to this topic are so numerous that yet another may seem presumptuous. But the circumstances are that in spite of the abundance of these studies, and the fact that each one has some sound reasons favouring its validity, the question as to the real extent of the aromatic-supplying areas, the identity of their owners, as well as the nature of the communications between them and the ancient Egyptians, are still matters of debate. It would be appropriate here to summarize some of the more important points of difference.

First, and more prevalent, is the theory which upholds the view that the aromatic-producing land with which the ancient Egyptians were in contact was Pwenet, which must have been situated on the African side of the Red Sea in the latitudes of the Eritreas and Somalia. However, within this broad location there are different opinions [2]. Ancient Pwenet is variously located in the vicinity of what is now called Zula Bay (by Sølver) [3], or Tadjura Gulf (Max Hilzheimer) [4], or where the later Axum is situated (Krall, Doresse, and Wessel) [5], not far,

[1] *Urk.* IV, 695, 9 f.

[2] For a good summary of the older bibliography, see, R. Herzog, *Punt* (Abh. des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Kairo, Ägyptologische Reihe, Band 6), Glückstadt, 1968.

[3] Carl v. Sølver, *Egyptian Shipping* . . . , pp. 462 f.; *Puntlandets Genopdagelse c.* 1500 *f. c.*, 1935, 46 f. 54 f. u. 58. (quoted by Säve-Söderbergh).

[4] Max Hilzheimer, « Zur geographischen Lokalisierung von Punt », *Z.Ä.S.* LXIII (1932) S. 112-114; H. Kees, *Ancient Egypt* . . . , (tr.), London 1961, p. 112.

[5] J. Krall, *Das Land Punt,* Wien 1890, S. 75 f.; S. Cole, *The prehistory of East Africa,* London, 1954, p. 272; J. Doresse, *Au pays de la Reine de Saba, l'Éthiopie antique et moderne,* Paris, 1956, p. 18; K. Wessel, *Das Christentum in Äthiopien und Nubien,* Wien, 1964, S. 10.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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however, from the Straits of Bab el-Mandab (Fr. W. von Bissing and Säve-Söderbergh) [1], and not beyond Cape Guadafui (Köster) [2], or, at most, only a little farther (Faulkner) [3].

As to the identification of the written Egyptian name of this African *Pwnt*, certain scholars have supposed it to be a pronunciation brought by ancient Egyptian caravan leaders of one or another of its more correct etymological equivalents : Pwāni, Pwēne, Pownet, Pouanit, and Pyene, in the Swahili and Bantu languages of East Africa [4]. However, any of these supposed alternatives has not been established with absolute certainty [5]. It is questionable, too, whether *Pwnt* signifies the name of a country or a racial group, whether it was applied to a particular territory with definite boundaries or to a group of areas from which aromatics were obtained [6].

Secondly, some Egyptologists and Semitists have turned their eyes to Arabia. Their point of view is supported by the fact that South Arabia had long been considered among the chief areas that supplied the ancient world markets with the precious substances of : frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and lidanon [7]. And perhaps also by the circumstance that the geographical position of Arabia to the east of Egypt corresponds fairly closely with the original significance of the formula

[1] Fr. W. von Bissing, « Pyene (Punt) und die Seefahrten der Ägypter », *Die Welt des Orients*, 1948, 146 f.; Säve-Söderbergh, *The Navy of the Eighteenth Egyptian Dynasty*, Uppsala 1946, 9 f.; D.M. Dixon, in *JEA*, 1969, p. 56.

[2] A. Köster, « Zur Seefahrt der alten Ägypter », *Z.Ä.S.*, 58 (1923), S. 128; H. Kees, *op. cit.*

[3] R.O. Faulkner, « A possible royal visit to Punt », *Studi Rosellini*, II (1955), pp. 84 f.

[4] C. Meinhoff, « Pwani », *Zeit f. Eingeborenen-Sprachen*, XXXII, Berlin 1942, S. 300-302; E. Zyhlarz, « Das Land Punt », *id.*, S. 304 f.; M. Alliot, « Pount-Pwāne, l'Opône du géographe Ptolémée », *Revue d'égyptol.*, VIII (1951), pp. 1-7. See also A.H. Gardiner, *Egypt of the Pharaohs*, Oxford, 1961, p. 37 and n. 1.

[5] Cf. G.A. Wainwright, « Early foreign trade in East Africa », *Man* 47 (1947), pp. 143 f.; G.W.B. Huntingford, *id.*, 48 (1948), p. 24.

[6] Cf. E. Naville, « Le pays de Pount et les Chamites », *Revue Archéologique*, 5. Serie, 23 (1926), pp. 114, 116; A. Erman - H. Ranke, *Ägypten und ägyptisches Leben im Altertum*, 1922, 599; A. Erman, *The Literature of the Ancient Egyptians*, (tr.), p. 33 n. 6; G. Rœder, « Punt », *Eberts Reallexikon*, Bd. 10, Berlin, 1928.

[7] De Lacy O'Leary, *Arabia before Muhammad*, London, 1927, pp. 38-39; H. von Wissmann, in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd. ed, I, Leiden, 1960. For older bibliography see R. Herzog, *op. cit.*, S. 27-28, 30, 39, 46, etc.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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t³-nṯr « God's-Land » which frequently indicated the Orient and was usually associated with lands yielding incense and resinous trees [1].

Since both theories seem reasonable, recent scholars, such as N. de G. Davies, E. Zyhlarz and J.A. Wilson, (besides older authorities like Naville, Erman, Glaser, Tkatsch and O'Leary) [2] have maintained a third line, that the designations of God's-Land and *ʿntyw*-terraces, if not occasionally the name of *Pwnt* too, were often extended to cover both sides of the Red Sea where the aromatic plants, including *ʿntyw*, that is frankincense, had grown in ancient times. I happen to agree with this third point of view, but for reasons quite distinct from the evidence usually produced in support of the theory.

There remains, however, a different approach to the problem which must be touched upon in this preliminary survey of opinions. A few scholars have long suggested that Pwenet had quite a southern location somewhere in the Sudan and the adjacent lands to the south of it in the interior of Africa. Although this view has failed to find acceptance, there has been a recent tendency to revive it [3], partly on the ground of the scepticism in the capability of the ancient Egyptian sailor to travel the whole way down to the Straits of Bab el-Mandab [4], and partly because of certain ethnographical considerations [5]. And lastly on the evidence that the Pwenet huts depicted in Deir el-Bahari reliefs are very similar to the huts (*Guṭṭia*) seen by modern travellers in Bahr el-Ghazal province and the neighbouring regions, both in shape and construction [6].

[1] N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Puyemrê at Thebes*, New York 1922, p. 86, n. 1; M. Ch. Kuentz, *BIFAO*, XVII (1920), pp. 178 f.; E. Naville, *The Temple of Deir el-Bahari*, III, p. 11.

[2] N. de G. Davies, *op. cit.; The Tomb of Rekh-mi-Rê at Thebes*, 1943, I, p. 19; Egyptian Expedition 1934-1935, *BMMA*, 1935, p. 49 ; J.A. Wilson, *The Burden of Egypt*, Chicago, 1951, p. 176; E. Zyhlarz, in *Kush*, VI (1958) pp. 10, 17. For the older authorities, see R. Herzog, *op. cit.*

[3] For a summary of the works of G. Schweinfurth, B. Moritz, and E. Meyer, see, R. Herzog, *op. cit.*, together with his opinions, S. 55 f., 81-83, and compare, Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, p. 9, n. 2.

[4] R. Herzog, *op. cit.*, 75, 79, 80; R.D. Barnett, « Early Shipping in the Near East », *Antiquity* XXXII (1958), p. 223; J. Krall, « Das Land Punt », *Sitz. Phil-hist.*, Bd. 121, S. 10-12.

But compare, R.O. Faulkner, « Egyptian seagoing ships », *JEA* 26 (1940), p. 7; Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 29; N. de G. Davies, in *BMMA*, 1935, pp. 46 f.; K.A. Kitchen, *Orientalia*, 40 (1971), pp. 188 f.

[5] R. Herzog, *op. cit.*, S. 56 f. and references.

[6] *Ibid.*, Tafeln 3-6, S. 69 f.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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In the course of the following study, some reasons will be advanced to show the great probability that there was also direct commercial intercourse between the Egyptians and some early Qatabanians tribes of South Arabia from about the fifteenth century B.C.

As mentioned above, the ethnic appellation *Gnbtyw* of the annals of Thutmosis III has not yet received any convincing explanation, and it is evident that earlier interpretations need revision. However, a plain resemblance can be seen between it and the name *Gebbanitae* which is mentioned in certain accounts given by classical writers. Pliny, for instance, tells of seven kinds of myrrh from as many districts in Arabia. One of these is the *Gebbanitic* from the Kingdom of the *Gebbanitae*. He says that frankincense can only be exported through the country of the *Gebbanitae* and accordingly a tax is paid on it to the king of that people [1].

The question of the *Gebbanitae* of Pliny (VI, 153; XII, 63, 68 f., 87 f., 93) is linked, however, with that of the better known Qatabanian Arabs of South Arabia who, according to the synopsis in Strabo (XVI, 768) of Eratosthenes (end of the third century B.C.), « dwelled down to the Straits and the entrance to the Arabian Gulf » [2].

According to the information supplied by such classical accounts, both the Qatabanians and the *Gebbanitae* were scattered, at times, over a wide expanse of territory stretching from the interior of South Arabia down to the Straits of Bab el-Mandab. Both were regarded as the suppliers of frankincense, if not also the full possessors of the districts that yielded frankincense in South Arabia. In Pliny's statement, the *Gebbanitae*, like the Qatabanians (mentioned twice by him), had the town of Tamnaʿ as capital. The characteristics in common between these two peoples of the same area and with the same capital, could be explained by one or another of the following theories. If the connection between the *Gebbanitae* and the Qatabanians is not to be admitted as due to the use of two names of similar sound for one people (see Hartmann) [3], it will follow that either the two peoples were of the same origin and co-existed in the same area, or that one of them

[1] Pliny, *Natural History*, tr. by H. Rackham, London, 1945, 12 : 35. Cf. Jr. R. Le Baron Bowen, « Ancient trade routes in South Arabia », *Archaeological Discoveries in South Arabia*, Baltimore, 1958, pp. 40-41.

[2] Cf. J. Tkatsch, « Katabān », *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Leiden 1936, pp. 809-810.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 811.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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was a subdivision of the other. According to Glaser, the *Gebbanitae* were a subdivision of the Qatabanians and were settled to the west of them in the western parts of the south coast of Arabia [1]. It may be that at one time one of the two parties seized power in the land before or after the other. In Sprenger's view, supported by D.H. Müller, the Qatabanians lived before the *Gebbanitae* and were driven out by them [2]. Now although any of these alternatives seems possible, the fact remains that the South Arabian inscriptions at present known to us are of very little help in determining anything definite about the *Gebbanitic* people. There is no reference found in the inscriptions, as yet, to an independent *Gebbanitic* civilization. Attention has been drawn, however, to a certain name of similar sound in Strabo (XVI, 768, quoting Eratosthenes), the *Gabaioi,* which has been equated with the *Gaba'ān* of the South Arabian texts [3]. In view of this puzzling state of affairs which obliges us to proceed with extreme caution, it would suffice to assume simply that the *Gebbanitae,* or whatever they were actually called, were a certain tribe of some importance in the area of the historic Qataban. They were so famous for their commercial activities that the classical writers put them and the Qatabanians on a like footing with regard to each other. The fact that Pliny mentions the importance of their kingdom at a date when it had come to an end and was a part of the Saba' and Himyar Kingdom makes it highly probable that his source for the material must have been written much earlier and based on authentic information that probably went further back in history [4].

Myrrh was grown in Qataban as well as in some other countries of South Arabia. But the frankincense-producing areas were confined to the coastal mountain range of Dhôfār and eastern Hadramaut in South Arabia (and only to a lesser extent on the highlands of northern Somalia) [5]. Thus Qataban was beyond the

[1] Glaser, « Punt und die südarabischen Reiche », *M.V.A.G.* 1899, IV, S. 35, 60; *Skizze der Geschichte und Geographie Arabiens,* Berlin 1890, II, 6, 8, 19.

[2] Sprenger, *Geographie* . . . , S. 256, 268, 282; D.H. Müller, *Burgen,* II, 1208 f.; Glaser, « *Punt* » . . . , 2, 3, 36. However, see below.

[3] Tkatsch, « Gabaioi », *Pauly-Wissowa Realenzyklopädie,* 1920; *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 1936, pp. 809, 812.

[4] Jr. R. Bowen, *op. cit.,* p. 40 and references.

[5] *Ibid.,* pp. 36, 139-140; F.N. Hepper, « Arabian and African frankincense trees », *JEA* 1969, p. 66, and see pp. 66-67 where he cites three varieties of the Arabian frankincense: two are to be found in the high dry steppe country, and the third grows on the coastal plain at the base and on the sides of the mountains, almost 5 miles from the shore.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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frankincense-yielding countries, but because it had, for a long time, dominated parts of the road linking the Hadrami-controlled lands of Dhôfār with the route that went north to Najd and Hidjaz, or that which went to the Red Sea coast [1], it appears very probable that Qataban must also have benefited from the frankincense trade.

Now, if the connection between the *Gnbtyw* of Thutmosis III's annals and the *Gebbanitae* of Qataban in classical records is taken as established, as seems very likely, it will offer, of course, the first recorded appearance of the Qatabanian tribes in history, as well as the earliest direct proof that the South Arabian traders could convey their goods to Egypt about the fifteenth century B.C., without the need of any intermediaries.

There is more information supporting the assumption of the un-African original home of the *Gnbtyw* in the brief list of nations at the temple of Abydos. There, the *Gnbtyw* occur among the eastern peoples, just after the Asiatics, but clearly before the Southerners [2]. Nor was this all. In another instance, though admittedly later and dubious, Müller and Gauthier reported *Ḳnb(t)yw*  as a variant of *Gnbtyw* [3]. If so, and the initial *Ḳ* actually replaced the older *G*, it would probably bring the Egyptian vocalization of the word another step nearer to the name of the Qatabanians themselves. Yet, this does not exclude that the said hieroglyphic word might be simply read *Ḳnbw*, meaning a subdued foreign people.

It may be admitted that this chain of information for the identification of the *Gnbtyw* in the Egyptian texts seems rather insufficient evidence for the construction of a theory, but even the smallest clue may lead to important results. Let us give as an example the fact that the mention of Israel in Merenptah's hymn of victory is the only instance of the name in ancient Egyptian writing at present known to us [4].

The question of the Qatabanian chronology is here of paramount importance. Evidence of the existence of Qatabanian tribes at an early date may be inferred from the various studies of certain Semitists. According to Albright's chronology

[1] Jr. R. Bowen, *op. cit.*, pp. 37, 39 f. See Albright, «Explorations in Dhôfār, Oman», *Antiquity*, 133, p. 38.

[2] A. Mariette, *Abydos*, II, 2; W. Max Müller, *Asien und Europa*, S. 117.

[3] J. Dümichen, *Rec. mon.*, IV, 62; *Geogr. Inschr.*, II, pl. 62; H. Gauthier, *Dict. géogr.*, V, pp. 175; W. Max Müller, *op. cit.* Cf., however, *Wb.*, V, 53, 3.

[4] J.A. Wilson, «Egyptian hymns...», *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Princeton 1955, p. 376.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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of South Arabian history, the migration of « S » tribes, including the Qatabanians, from North Arabia to their historical homes in South Arabia, must have taken place earlier than 1500 B.C. [1] G.A. Barton, however, has long been convinced that the Qatabanians, the worshippers of the god ʿAmm, were an offshoot of the widely spread Amorites, or at least from the same archaic stock [2].

Further points of historic interest based on more solid ground have emerged from the discoveries of the American expedition in South Arabia. Relatively very ancient graffiti have been discovered on the rocks of Wadi al-Fara in Qataban. A. Jamme considered them the oldest type of script so far known from South Arabia, dating back probably to around the tenth century B.C. [3]. Furthermore, the earliest levels of the city of Hajar bin-Humeid in Wadi Baihan in Qataban showed roughly that the city was probably established first in just about the same century [4]. With the help of these discoveries, which, of course, mark a further stage in the development of Qataban, it can be surmised that the Qatabanians may well have started as a community much earlier than when their cities and types of script first arose. The beginning would go back into the second millennium B.C.

Reference should be made, moreover, to A. Fakhry's finding of a scarab inscribed with the name of Amenophis III (*Nb M*ꜣ*ʿt R*ʿ) in Yemen [5]. If this scarab actually belonged to Amenophis III's reign, and did not arrive in Yemen a ta much later age, it could perhaps, confirm the existence of direct trade contacts between Egypt and the civilized South Arabians of the period, including the Qatabanians [6].

[1] Cf. W. Phillips, *Qataban and Sheba*, New York, 1955, p. 247.

[2] G.A. Barton, *Semitic and Hamitic Origins, Social and Religious*, Oxford, 1934, p. 73.

[3] W. Phillips, *op. cit.*, pp. 105 f.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

[5] A. Fakhry, *An Archaeological Journey to Yemen*, Cairo, 1952 f., vol. I, Fig. 95, pp. 136-138.

The finding contains also five small objects dated between the VIth and IIIrd centuries B.C. Fakhry cautiously refrains from drawing far results. He reasonably concludes that such articles of trade can wander in all directions, and can be used in all periods. See however, the following note.

[6] On the other hand, it must be noted that Dixon (*JEA* 1969, pp. 64-65) calls attention to « the discovery at Nakuru in Kenya of a well-preserved short cylinder-bead » and « a quantity of typically eighteenth dynasty blue faience cylinder-beads which had been found at an unspecified locality on the coast of Jubaland ». Their importance lies in « their relationship to what can now be recognized as a widespread trade from the Eastern Mediterranean c. 1400 B.C.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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The organization of the Qatabanian state was certainly a matter of gradual development. It is possible that in the fifteenth century B.C., the unit of rule among the *Gebbanitae* and the Qatabanians was still relatively small, and that the large state came into being later; for the earliest known Qatabanian Mukarribs, whose names appear in inscriptions, belong only to the seventh century B.C. (a fact which does not preclude possible earlier dating) [1]. While keeping in mind that the chronology of South Arabia in general is still fluid, it is noteworthy that similar early dates have been assumed for other South Arabian communities. Marib, the famous city of the Sabaeans, is supposed by some archaeologists (though without absolute certainty) to be somewhat older than the Qatabanian cities [2]. The Minaean rule is said to have begun some time in the last half of the second millennium B.C. [3]. In any case, it is still difficult to decide which state would appear to be the earlier.

What the *Gnbtyw* Arabs brought to the court of Egypt was called *inw*, presumably presents or products or imports. The event may point to the beginning or probably the revival of trade relations through diplomatic channels [4]. In other words, the *Gnbtyw* delegation, loaded with goods to be exchanged for the valuable products of Egypt, in addition to gifts which were to be presented in the court of Thutmosis III, seems to have come in line with a certain policy. That policy was perhaps the intention to maintain the good will of the mighty Pharaoh of the developing world power. The men sought to secure their commercial interests along the channels upon which the incense trade moved through his Afro-Asiatic empire. An analogous act may be seen in the inscriptions of Rekhmirê, the vizier of Thutmosis III. There, we read about the Pwenetite emissaries : « The arrival in peace of the great men of Pwenet, doing obeisance with bowed head at the place where His Majesty . . . is . . . , because of the grandeur of his might through all

[1] The most important period in the history of Qataban fell between about 350 and 50 B.C. (W. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 245). Compare however, W.F. Albright, « The Chronology of Ancient South Arabia in the light of the first campaign of Excavations in Qataban », *BASOR*, 119, pp. 5 f.; J. Ryckmans, *Les Institutions Monarchiques*, 1951; H.B. Philby, *The background of Islam*, 1927; Rhodokanakis und Andere, *Handbuch der Altarabischen Altertumskunde*, Tübingen 1927.

[2] W. Phillips, *op. cit.*, p. 221.

[3] Nabia Abott, in *AJSL*, Jan. 1941, vol. LVIII, pp. 1 f.

[4] On this point see my article, « Some Problems Relating to the Pwenet Reliefs at Deir el-Bahari », *JEA* 58 (1972).

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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their (foreign) countries (*ḫ3śwt·sn*) » [1]. The countries of Pwenet surely remained outside the sphere of the Egyptian sovereignty. Regardless of the formal note that the Pwenetites came « doing obeisance with bowed head », J. Capart has rightly pointed out that the formula : « Arrival in peace of the great men of Pwenet » indicates that they do not obey under direct constraint. The princes of distant lands who sent presents to the court of Egypt were anxious to secure the Pharaoh's good will « owing to his victories » [2]. All that which was asked by such foreigners in return was, the texts say, « to be given to them the breath of life, through desire of being loyal to His Majesty, so that his might may protect them » [3]. In another instance, they sought « to crave peace with him, and breath of his giving », « the breath of life which the king disposes » [4]. This is a polite statement of the payment they wished for their goods. The real meaning of such symbolic expressions seems to imply their desire to gain the king's personal favour and the benefit of trading with his court above all.

In the present lacuna at the end of the tribute record of the *Gnbtyw* in the annals of Thutmosis III, there might have been some other items of commerce which may have passed only from one area to another. The *Gebbanitic* merchants or envoys might have been unable to journey all the way from South Arabia to Egypt in one direct move. Whether they travelled overland or by sea, either along the Arabian desert ways of commerce or along those of the African coast after passing the Straits, they had, apparently, to move by many slow stages. They had to linger from time to time in halting places or bartering markets for rest and supplies. Now and again they might have found it profitable to sell portions of their products in exchange for other goods with which they would proceed en route to Egypt [5].

[1] N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-Rê at Thebes*, New York, 1943, II, p. 20.

The annals of Thutmosis III recorded that in the year 38 : « [Marvels] brought to the fame of His Majesty from Pwenet : dried frankincense 240 *ḫḳ3t* ». *Urk.* IV, 720; *AR*, II, 513.

[2] J. Capart-M. Werbrouck, *Thebes, the glory of a great past*, Brussels, 1926, pp. 166-167. See also Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, p. 22; N. de G. Davies, *op. cit.*

[3] *Urk.* IV, 1098-9, concerning the chieftains of Keftiu and of the islands in the midst of the Great-Green sea, too.

[4] Capart-Werbrouck, *op. cit.; AR*, II, 892.

[5] For trading caravans generally, see, M.I. Rostovtzeff, *Out of the past of Greece and Rome*, 4th ed., Yale 1944, 68 f.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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In the absence of more historical information, we can hardly go beyond guesswork and an attempt to formulate working hypotheses. One cannot explain, for instance, the emergence of the *Gebbanitic* or Qatabanian trade at the time then reached as due to the introduction of domesticated camels which must have given the caravaneers an extraordinary advantage over donkey trains of commerce. The oldest published reference to the camel dates only from the end of the twelfth century B.C. [1], excluding, of course, wild camels, which are represented in rock drawings and figurines from North Africa and South-western Asia as early as Neolithic and Chalcolithic times [2].

We must not, however, assume that Arab delegations like that of the *Gebbanitae* came regularly to Egypt. The largest part of what was imported from the incense-producing areas of God's-Land, including the famous African Pwenet, was in the main carried by Egyptian ships engaged in the Red Sea trade [3].

From the Egyptian side, there are other bits of evidence which support the oriental location of some aromatic-supplying areas and thus support the probability that a certain number of these areas belonged to Arabia proper. These references are to be found in the royal inscriptions of Thutmosis III and after.

Contrary to Queen Hatshepsut's claim in the inscriptions of her obelisk at Karnak, concerning the land of Pwenet, as the southernmost limit of her empire [4], we read in the hymn enumerating the excessive favours which the god Amun-Rê has bestowed upon his son Thutmosis III : « I have come to cause thee to trample down the eastern land (*t3 i3bty*); so treadest thou (upon) those who are in the districts

[1] Cf. W.F. Albright, Syria, The Palestines and Phœnicia, *The Cambridge Ancient History*, revised edition, 1966, II, Ch. 33, p. 49; *The Archaeology of Palestine*, Pelican Books, 1961, pp. 206-207; and see *Bull. A.S.O.R.* 163 (1962), p. 38, n. 9; R. Walz, « Zum Problem des Zeitpunkts der Domestikation der altweltlichen Cameliden », *ZDMG*, Bd. 101 (1951), S 29 f.

[2] Out of fifteen representations of the camel from Ancient Egypt recorded by A. Scharff, there were two from Naqada II period, one from Dyn. VI, and three from the New Kingdom. To these may be added one from the Prehistoric Maadi; and two others belong to the XIIth Dynasty. See, A. Scharff, *Abusir el-Meleq*, S. 40-41; G.A. Wainwright, in *JEA* XXI (1935), pp. 260-261; *Maadi* I, pl. XX, 2-3; J. Vandier, *Manuel d'Archéologie Égyptienne*, Paris, 1952, I, 314, n. 3; G.W. Murray, « Early camels in Egypt », *Bull. de l'Inst. du Désert* II, No. I, Le Caire, 1952, pp. 105-106.

[3] Cf. N. de G. Davies, in *BMMA*, 1935. p. 49; Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 29.

[4] Breasted, *Anc. Records*, II, 321.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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of God's-Land » [1]. This reference, which locates God's-Land to the east of Egypt and presents it as including several districts (*ww nw t3-nṯr*), is given in the hymn to correspond with other statements about certain distinguished peoples living to the west, north and south of Egypt, in that order.

In the inscriptions of Amenophis III, we get a variation with an interesting change, setting the countries of Pwenet in place of the districts of God's-Land and locating them, too, in the east (*lit.* sunrise). In expressing his gratification at the splendid monuments bestowed upon Thebes by this king, Amun-Rê greeted him saying : « When I turn my face to the Orient, I work a wonder for thee; I make the countries (pl.) of Pwenet come to thee bearing all the sweet plants of their countries to beg peace from (thee and to) breathe the breath of thy giving » [2]. The contrast has rightly been emphasized in this inscription between the countries of Pwenet in the east, Kash in the south, the countries of Asia in the north, and Libya in the west. All these lands were supposed to give their tributes when Amun-Rê turned his face to the east, south, north, and west, successively.

In like manner, another interesting variant of this theme occurs in the inscriptions of Seti I. The god Amun assures his son Seti of the submission of all the aromatic-yielding areas in the Orient, saying : « When I turned my face to the East, I worked a wonder for thee . . . , I gathered together all the countries (pl.) of Pwenet, all their tribute of *ʿntyw*, cinnamon (?), and all the pleasant sweet woods of God's-Land » [3].

Turning to the inscriptions of Thutmosis III, we find that in the 33rd year of his reign, « Marvels were brought to His Majesty *ḥr* the land of Pwenet, in this year : dried *ʿntyw*, 1665 *ḥḳ3t*, gold [of the *ʿmw* land] » [4].

It is noticeable, as J.H. Breasted has observed, that the preposition *ḥr* is used here, not *m* as usual [5]. If *ḥr* is not a mere variant of *m* and simply means *from*, it will not be improbable that it implies in this exceptional occasion the meaning of 'on' or 'via' and, therefore, shows the land of Pwenet as a meeting-place at which various products were collected and passed on, besides its own products

[1] *Op. cit.*, II, 658; *Urk.*, IV, 615; Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[2] J.A. Wilson, in *ANET*, 376; Breasted, *op. cit.*, II, 892.

[3] *Ibid.*, III, 116. Amun is said to have opened for him (Seti I) the highways of Pwenet (*id.* III, 155). Compare also the inscriptions of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu (R. Herzog, *op. cit.*, S. 26 and references).

[4] *Urk.*, IV, 702.

[5] *Op. cit.*, II, 486 e and 616, l. 9.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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of incense and odoriferous substances. This supposition is partly proved by the scenes in the reliefs of Pwenet at Deir el-Bahari. There appear various types of racial stock and cultural patterns besides a variety of animals and plants. Different peoples do not trade in exactly the same goods. What is presented to the Egyptian emissaries of Queen Hatshepsut by the Pwenetites is not quite the same as what is brought by the negroes, but all are loaded together from the same place on the Egyptian ships [1].

It would not be without significance that the marvels which were brought to the court of Thutmosis III in the year 33 of his reign, are recorded in his annals after the imposts and the presents of various northern and north-eastern countries, such as Syria, Lebanon, Babylon, Assyria and Asia Minor, but apparently before those brought from the southern lands of Kash and Nubia. This is in contrary to Breasted's statement which missed the heading of the tribute of Kash and accordingly attributed it to Pwenet [2].

APPENDIX

Afro-Asiatic Characteristics of some South-Eastern Delegations in the Illustrations of the New Kingdom.

Confirmation of the hypothesis we formulated about the great probability that some parties of the delegations of the south-eastern incense-producing areas had come to Egypt, since at least as early as the reign of Thutmosis III, from Arabia in Western Asia, may be found in several illustrations of these delegations in scenes and inscriptions of New Kingdom date. They often exhibit unmistakable mixture of Asiatic and African characteristics. Information about these illustrations is given by the publications of N. de G. Davies. Pictures as well as inscriptions are consulted.

In the tomb of Rekhmirê, a great picture, in five registers one above the other, represents the foreign delegations « loaded with their products ». In the upper

[1] E. Naville, *The Temple of Deir el-Bahari*, III, pp. 12-13 ; W.S. Smith, « The land of Punt », *JARCE*, I (1962), pp. 59-61.

[2] Compare *Urk.*, IV, 702, 9 f. and Breasted, *op. cit.*, 486.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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register come the Pwenetite emissaries. As we pointed out above, the text accompanying the scene runs as follows : « The arrival in peace of the great men of Pwenet, with respectful obeisance (*lit.* doing obeisance with bowed head), at the place where His Majesty, the King of the Two Lands, Men-Kheper-Rê — may he live for ever — is, bringing their goods (*lit.* tribute), and diverse acceptable offerings of their highland (*ḫ3śt·sn*) untrodden by others, because of the grandeur of his might through all their (foreign) countries (*ḫ3śwt·sn*) . . . » [1].

There is no explicit reference in the text to their relation to one side or another of the Red Sea, but internal evidence as to the identification of the direction from which they came may be gleaned by their position in the upper register of the tribute series, just before the northern messengers of Keftiu (*i.e.* the Cretans?), and the Retjnu, and quite distinct from the pure southern inhabitants. Assuming that this arrangement was intentional, can it be surmised that the Pwenetites under consideration would be likely to have arrived by one or another of the desert routes going northward from Arabia and branching off at the coast of the Mediterranean along the northern border of Sinai en route to Egypt? This is, perhaps, a bold conjecture, but the following may correspond to it.

The Pwenetite representatives shown are of two types. Roughly speaking, they seem to comprise Hamito-Semites and negroids. The attitudes given to the first group are those usually attributed to the Pwenetite chiefs of other scenes in the tombs of the New Kingdom. But of note are their exceptional aprons which are decorated with particular stripes or bands of cloth(?). Although little can be ascertained from the types of aprons which were common among various peoples in antiquity, the particular designs of these Pwenetite aprons can well be compared with interesting designs shown on a tunic of an Asiatic depicted among the emissaries of the « hindquarters of Asia » (or « further Asia »?) in the tribute scenes of the tomb of Puyemrê at Thebes. The man is described by N. de G. Davies as being of a more Semitic type (than his Syrian fellows), probably from the less fertile lands of eastern Syria. He wears a tunic with red and blue lines on the hem, which sags down a little between the legs in front [2].

[1] N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-Rê at Thebes*, New York, 1943, I-II, pl. XVII, p. 20.

[2] N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Puyemrê at Thebes*, New York, 1922, I, pl. XXXI topmost row, pp. 80-81.

Note also the short white kilts with horizontal red stripes worn by the Asiatics of Retjnu,

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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In line with this Asiatic characteristic of the Pwenetites in the tomb of Rekhmirê, N. de G. Davies has noted that the inclusion of a loop on the waistband of their costume is found also on the Syrian and Libyan garments. Davies raised the question whether, after ruling out laxity on the part of the artist, there might have been intercourse between the Pwenetites and the Syrians up the Red Sea or along the Arabian littoral. He concluded that possibly the two types of men in Pwenet may refer to Semitic control of a Hamitic element [1].

Further evidence of the combination of Asiatic and African characteristics is to be seen in the figures of the emissaries of God's-Land in the tomb of Puyemrê, presumably from the opening years of Thutmosis III's independent reign. There are two types of men shown, according to N. de G. Davies, similar in dress and complexion, but differing in their hair styles. Three of the men have hair like that of the Asiatics [2]. The hair is abundant, caught up at the back, and held in place by a fillet. The other type shows long hair worn loose, hanging down behind and held in place by a fillet tied behind with strands extending downwards. This style is not uncommon among the Pwenetites in early times, but is given more often to Syrian chiefs (of the bedouins?) in the tombs [3]. The kilts, again, which are the same for both types, have a triple red vertical stripe on white material which seems, in Davies' view, something quite new.

Of note is the separation here between the *bi3w* « marvels » of Pwenet, and the *inw* « presents » (or imports ?) of God's-Land. Each are set in a row and registered by a certain scribe of the treasury [4]. The scene of « registering the presents of God's-Land » is labelled, in addition, « bringing forward the great (men) of . . . ». Unfortunately, the name of their country has been destroyed and it is difficult to identify. However, since no other deputation is shown in the register of the

probably of the region between Egypt and Palestine, in the reliefs of Sinai from the Middle Kingdom. (J. Černý-A.H. Gardiner-T.E. Peet, *The Inscriptions of Sinai*, II, 1955, Fig. 17).

[1] N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-mi-Rê*, I, p. 19, 22.

[2] N. de G. Davies, *The Tomb of Puyemrê*, I, pl. XXXII, XXXIV, p. 86.

[3] Davies adds the note that the contemporary tomb No. 276, shows similar types, clearly northern, to judge by their products. Borchardt too found a Syrian type along with men of Pwenet which he could not identify (L. Borchardt, *Das Grabdenkmal des Königs Sahure'*, II, S. 21).

[4] N. de G. Davies, *op. cit.*, I, p. 85.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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marvels of Pwenet proper, Davies thinks that the two types of men depicted in the register in question, as related to God's-Land, may be explained as representing the two peoples of the two localities, *i.e.* Arabia and the African Pwenet [1].

In the scenes of the tomb of Meryrê II at Amarna, the usual products of Pwenet are brought by men shown in the Amarna style, with shaven heads, and with the characteristic Asiatic beards, and wearing a national garb extending from the waist to about the ankles [2]. Here, much as in the tomb of Rekhmirê, they occur together with northern delegations.

Still more problematic is the report of Papyrus Harris I, 77, 8 f. [3], that Ramesses III dispatched large ships over *p*ꜣ *ym* ꜥꜣ *n mw ḳd(w)* to the highlands (*ḫꜣśwt*) of Pwenet, and that the expedition travelled in caravan and by ships, to and from Egypt. Most scholars are of the opinion that the great sea of the *mw ḳd(w)* must represent the Red Sea, with the meaning of the inverted or circulating water. They also suggest that it is quite possible that the ships were taken overland in sections from Coptos to the Red Sea and assembled there for the voyage. After a successful journey, the ships returned to some harbour near al-Qoseir. The goods that were brought back, and even the children of the chiefs of God's-Land(s), were loaded on donkeys at the coast and conveyed to Coptos. On the other hand, other authorities, including A. Erman, E. Naville, and P. Montet, went so far as to identify the great sea of the *mw ḳd(w)* with the Persian Gulf, on the supposition that the *mw ḳd(w)* is certainly the Egyptian name of the Euphrates. P. Montet arrived at the following conclusion : Ramesses III had managed to haul fir-trees from the Lebanon to the Euphrates, and had built a fleet on the banks of the river. Through a treaty with the king of Babylon, his troops sailed down the Euphrates and doubled the enormous Arabian peninsula so as to reach the land of Punt [4]. It is not necessary

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 86 and note 1.

[2] N. de G. Davies. *The Rock-Tombs of El-Amarna*, II, p. 41, pls. 37, 40; Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-29, Fig. 9.

On the Karnak pylon of Horemheb, the Pwenetites are similar in physical type to the Egyptians, with pointed beards like those of the Pwenetites in the reliefs of Deir el-Bahari, and wear plain aprons extending from the waist to about the ankles. (Cf. Säve-Söderbergh, *op. cit.*, Fig. 8).

[3] W. Erichsen, *Papyrus Harris* I, Bruxelles, 1933.

[4] P. Montet, *Everyday Life in Egypt* . . . , (tr.), London, 1962, p. 189.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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to have recourse to this last supposition, yet a few remarks must be added to what has already been said on this topic.

(*a*) In addressing the god Ptah (48, 6), the king combined, either by chance or intentionally, the merchandise of God's-Land with the presents which were from southern Syria. He pointed out that the fleet had been sent out to the midst of the Great-Green « in order to transport the goods of God's-Land and the dues of the land of Djahi to thy great treasuries of thy city of Memphis »[1]. Afterwards, he mentioned incense and frankincense among the offerings presented to the god.

(*b*) The *t*3 ideogram in the term *t*3-*nṯr*, God's-Land, is written twice in certain cases (49, 7; 52 a, 2; 77, 10,11). Whether the second *t*3 was a mark of duality and conveyed the meaning of two lands, or only served as a determinative, or was simply due to carelessness in writing, is not clear.

(*c*) Not infrequently, the same term is followed immediately (in 48, 6; 52 a, 2; 70 a, 2) by the ideogram of *ḫ*3*śt*, which is treated as feminine. In 49, 7, the term *t*3-*nṯr* or *t*3*wy*-*nṯr*(?) is preceded by a *ḫ*3*śt* sign and followed by another. Again, whether this actually conveys the meaning of either some barren coastal zone particularly intended in the context, or a sandy hill country farther inland, or merely stands for an additional determinative, must remain a matter of doubt.

(*d*) Pwenet is also represented in the accounts of the papyrus as including, several *ḫ*3*śwt*. The ships are said to have reached its highlands.

The names Pwenet and God's-Land would here seem to be used interchangeably. The confusion of the two names can, perhaps, be explained on the ground that both were generally given to all the lands that were able to supply the much-prized aromatic substances.

[1] God's-Land may refer here to the Orient generally. Cf. J.A. Wilson, in *ANET*, p. 260 and n. 3.

BIFAO 72 (1972), p. 245-262 Abdel Aziz Saleh
The Gnbtyw of Thutmosis III's Annals and the South Arabian Geb(b)anitae of the Classical Writers.
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