now yields to that of a new people, the Homerites or Ḥimyar, and the king henceforth bears the title “ king of the Himyarites and Sabaeans.” Naval expeditions from Berenice and Myos- hormus to the Arabian ports brought back the information on which Claudius Ptolemy constructed his map, which still surprises us by its wealth of geographical names.

Sabaean colonies in Africa have been already mentioned. That Abyssinia was peopled from South Arabia is proved by its language and writing; but the difference between the two languages is such as to imply that the settlement was very early and that there were many centuries of separation, during which the Abyssinians were exposed to foreign influences. New colonies, however, seem to have followed from time to time, and, according to the *Periplus* (§ 16), some parts of the African coast were under the suzerainty of the Sabaean kings as late as the Sabaeo-Himyaritic period; the district of Azania was held for the Sabaean monarch by the governor of Maphoritis (Ma'ãfir), and was exploited by a Sabaean company. Naturally difficulties would arise between Abyssinia and the Sabaean power. In the inscription of Adulis (2nd century) the king of Ethiopia claims to have made war in Arabia from Leucocome to the land of the Sabaean king. And the Ethiopians were not without successes, for on the Greek inscription of Axūm (c. the middle of the 4th century) King Aeizanes calls himself “ king of the Axūmites, the Homerites, and Raidān, and of the Ethiopians, Sabaeans, and Silee.” More serious was the conflict under Dhū-Nu’ās (Dhū- Nuwās of the Arab historians) in the beginning of the 6th century; it ended in the overthrow of the Himyarite king and the sub­jugation of Yemen, which was governed by a deputy of the Axūmite king, till (about 570) the conquerors were overthrown by a small band of Persian adventurers.

With the exception of what the South-Arabian Hamdānīrelates of his own observation or from authentic tradition, the Mahommedan Arabic accounts of South Arabia and Sabaea are of little worth. The great event they dwell on is the bursting of the dam of Ma’rib, which led to the emigration northwards of the Yemenite tribes. We may be sure that this event was not the cause but the consequence of the decline of the country. When the inland trade fell away and the traffic of the coast towns took the sea route, the ancient metropolis and the numerous inland emporia came to ruin, while the many colonies in the north were broken up and their population dispersed. To this the Koran alludes in its oracular style, when it speaks (xxxiv. 17) of well- known cities which God appointed as trading stations between the Sabaeans and the cities He had blessed (Egypt and Syria), and which He destroyed because of their sins.

*Inscriptions.—*This abstract of the history of Yemen from ancient sources can now be verified and supplemented from inscriptions. Doubts as to the greatness and importance of the Sabaean state, as attested by the ancients, and as to the existence of a special Sabaean writing, called "Musnad," of which the Arabs tell, were still current when Niebuhr, in the 18th century, brought to Europe the first account of the existence of ancient inscriptions (not seen by him- self) in the neighbourhood of Yarīm. Following this hint, Seetzen, in 1810, was able to send to Europe, from porphyry blocks near Yarïm, the first copies of Sabaean inscriptions. They could not, however, be read. But the inscriptions found by Wellsted in 1834 at Ḥiṣn Ghorāb were deciphered by Gesenius and Rödiger. Soon after this the courageous explorer Arnaud discovered the ancient Mariab, the royal city of the Sabaeans, and at great risk copied fifty-six inscriptions and took a plan of the walls, the dam, and the temple to the east of the city. These, with other inscriptions on stone and on bronze plates brought home by Englishmen, found a cautious and sound interpreter in Osiander. The historical and geographical researches of Kremer and Sprenger gave a fresh impulse to inquiry. Then Joseph Halévy made his remarkable journey through the Jauf, visiting districts and ruins which no European foot had trod since the expedition of Gallus, and returned with almost 800 inscriptions. Of more recent travellers S. Langer and E. Glaser have done most for epigraphy, while Manzoni is to be remembered for his excellent geographical work.

The *alphabet* of the Sabaean inscriptions is most closely akin to the Ethiopic, but is purely consonantal, without the modifications in the consonantal forms which Ethiopie has devised to express vowels. There are twenty-nine letters, one more than in Arabic, *Samech* and *Sin* being distinct forms, as in Hebrew. This alphabet, which is probably the parent of the South-Indian character, is un­doubtedly derived from the so-called Phoenician alphabet, the

connecting link being the forms of the Ṣafa inscriptions and of the Thamudaean inscriptions found by Doughty and Euting. Of the latter we can determine twenty-six characters, while a twenty-seventh probably corresponds to Arabic ■ ■A sign for ص also probably existed, but does not occur in the known inscriptions. In the Thamudaean and Sabaean alphabets the twenty-two original Phoenician characters are mostly similar, and so are the differentiated forms for غ and خ while ث, ر and probably also ڟ and ص have

been differentiated in many ways. This seems to imply that the two alphabets had a common history up to a certain point, but parted company before they were fully developed. The Tha- mudaean inscriptions are locally nearer to Phoenicia, and the letters are more like the Phoenician; this character therefore appears to be the link connecting Phoenician with Sabaean writing. It may be noticed that a Thamudaean legend has been found on a Baby­lonian cylinder of about 1000 n.c., and it is remarkable that the Sabaean *satara,* “ write,” seems to be borrowed from Assyrian *shatāru.*

The *language* of the inscriptions is South Semitic, forming a link between the North Arabic and the Ethiopie, but is much nearer the former than the latter. Of the two dialects commonly called Sabaean and Minaean the latter might be better called Hadramitie, inasmuch as it is the dialect of the inscriptions found in Ḥaḍramut, and the Minaeans seem undoubtedly to have entered the Jauf from Ḥaḍramut.

The inscriptions not only give names of nations corresponding to those in the Bible and in classical authors, but throw a good deal of fresh light on the political history of Yemen. The inscrip­tions and coins give the names of more than forty-five Sabaean kings. The chronology is still vague, since only a few very late inscriptions are dated by an era and the era itself is not certain. But the rulers named can be assigned to three periods, according as they bear the title "mukrab of Saba,” “ king of Saba,” or “ king of Saba and Raidãn.” The last, as we know from the Axūm in­scriptions, are the latest, and those with the title “ mukrab ” must be the earliest. Four princes of the oldest period bear the name Yatha’amar, and one of these may, with the greatest probability, be held to be the “ ltamara Sabai ” who paid tribute to Sargon of Assyria. This helps us to the age of some buildings also. The famous dam of Ma’rib and its sluices were the work of this ancient prince—structures which Arnaud in the 19th century found in the same state in which Hamdãnî saw them a thousand years ago. The power of these old sovereigns extended far beyond Ma’rib, for their names are found on buildings and monuments in the Jauf.

We cannot tell when the kings took the place of the mukrab, but the Sabaeo-Himyaritic period seems to begin with, or a little after, the expedition of Aelius Gallus. A fragmentary inscription of Ma’rib (Br. Mus., 33) was made by “ Ilsharḥ Yaḥḍib and Ya’zil Bayyin, the two kings of Saba and Raidãn, sons of Far'm Yanhab, king of Saba.” If this Ilsharḥ is identical with the ■ of Strabo, king of Mariaba at the time of the Roman invasion, the inscription preserves a trace of the influence of that event on the union of the two kingdoms.

The inscriptions of the latest period present a series of dates—669, 640, 582, 573, 385—of an unknown era. Reinaud thought of the Seleueid era, which is not impossible; but Halévy observes that the fortress of Mawiyyat (now Ḥiṣn Ghorāb) bears the date 640, and is said to have been erected "when the Abyssinians overran the country and destroyed the king of Himyar and his princes.” Referring this to the death of Dhū Nuwās (a.d. 525), Halévy fixes 115 B.c. as the epoch of the Sabaean era. This ingenious combination accords well with the circumstance that the oldest dated inscription, of the year 385 (A.D. 270), mentions 'Αthtar, Shams and other heathen deities, while the inscriptions of 582 (A.D. 467) and 573 (a.d. 458), so far as they can be read, contain no name of a heathen god, but do speak of a god Raḥmānān—that is, the Hebrew Rahmān, “ the compassionate ” (Arabic, al-Raḥmān), agreeably with the fact that Jewish and Christian influences were powerful in Arabia in the 4th century. The only objections to Halévy’s hypothesis are (1) that we know nothing of an epoch-making event in 115 B.c., and (2) that it is a little remarkable that the latest dated inscription, of the year 669 (a.d. 554), should be twenty-five years later than the Abyssinian conquest. An inscription found by Wrede at 'Obne is dated “ in the year 120 of the Lion in Heaven/’ which we must leave the astronomers to explain.

The inscriptions throw considerable light not only on the Sabaeans but on other South-Arabian nations. The Minaeans, whose import- ance has been already indicated, appear in the inscriptions as only second to the Sabaeans, and with details which have put an end to much guesswork, *e.g.* to the idea that they are connected with Minānear Mecca. Their capital, Ma’īn, lay in the heart of the Sabaean country, forming a sort of enclave on the right hand of the road that leads northward from Ma’rib. South-west of Main, on the west of the mountain range and commanding the road from San'a to the north, lies Barãqîsh, anciently Yathil, which the inscriptions and Arabic geographers always mention with Ma'īn. The third Minaean fortress, probably identical with the Κ*άρvα* of the Greeks, lies in the middle of the northern Jauf, and north of the other two.