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L'illustration de la vignette, sur la couverture, combine deux silhouettes – navigateurs, voyageurs ? – empruntées à une stèle romaine, actuellement au Landesmuseum de Trèves, et des vagues inspirées d'un relief d'époque romaine se trouvant à la Glyptothèque Ny Carlsberg de Copenhague (dessin de M. Gorea).

Sous les eaux court la citation soluite uela citi de l'Énéide de Virgile – récit non d'un naufrage, mais d'un audacieux périple.

Les beaux vers qui précèdent éclairent le travail de tout chercheur : Præcipites uigilate, uiri, et considite transtris ; soluite uela citi : « Vite à vos bancs, amis, debout ! Mettez à la voile ! » (IV, 573-574).

Maquette et maquette de couverture

LUIGI FABII

Mise en pages et secrétariat de rédaction

EMMANUELLE CAPET



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KERRY HULL,
LINCOLN H. BLUMELL

The Ancient South Arabian collection at Tokai University (Japan) and a miscellaneous item

1/ INTRODUCTION

The Research Institute of Civilization of Tokai University's Shonan campus in Kanagawa, Japan, possesses an assemblage of archaeological artifacts from Egypt and other countries in the Gulf region, known as the Suzuki Collection.¹ This collection is a part of the Ancient Egypt and Near Eastern Collection of Tokai University (AENET), which is currently under the auspices of The Research Institute of Civilization in Tokai University (RICT) (東海大学文明研究所). The Demotic, Hieratic, and parts of the Greek papyri from the Suzuki Collection have recently been published.² The collection totals some 6,000 artifacts that were acquired by the late Professor Hachishi Suzuki of Tokai University during his trips to the Middle East between 1958 and 1968. These items were later bequeathed to Tokai University by his wife, Sachiko Suzuki, in 2010.

Within this collection are nine alabaster stones and artifacts, eight of them bearing Ancient South Arabian (ASA) inscriptions. While it is certain that a large portion of the Egyptian material in the Suzuki Collection was purchased from several antiquities dealers in Cairo, the provenance of the ASA objects is less clear. Professor Suzuki participated a survey in Bahrain and Gulf region of Saudi Arabia, which may be where he encountered the objects. He also traveled extensively in the area while serving as cultural attaché for the Japanese embassy in Cairo during which time he acquired items from Iran, Iraq, and other parts of the Middle East. As the ASA pieces have not been published, we here present an edition of these objects.

2/ THE COLLECTION

2a/ A Sabaic inscription from *Şirwāḥ*

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 1 (Figure 1)³

1/ [...](*tt*) *w-bn-hw* '(g)r{w}m [*w*]-*Dk*(')m-
2/ *r bnw d-Ḥbb hqnyw 'lmqh b'l*
3/ 'w'l *Şrwh ṣlmn d-dhbn l-wfy*
4/ *bn-hmw Hn'm w-l ws³f-hmw '-*
5/ (*lmqh*) 'wldm 'dkrwm hn'n |

1/ [...](*tt*) and his sons 'grm and *Dk'mr*
2/ descendants of the clan *dhū-Ḥbb* dedicated to Almaqah, master of
3/ the ibexes of *Şirwāḥ*, this statue in bronze for the well-being of
4/ their son *Hn'm*, and so that Almaqah may multiply to them
5/ male and healthy children

This alabaster stone, measuring 19.75 cm high, 32.25 cm wide, and 7.25 cm thick is the only piece of the collection coming from the kingdom of Saba'. From the content of the text, there is no doubt that its origins are to be found in *Şirwāḥ*, a great city located in the Sabaeen lowlands, 90 km east of Sanaa and 34 km west of the Sabaeen capital Ma'rib.⁴ The stone is broken off on all

3. In order to ease the reading, in this article only the well attested ASA proper names have been vocalized according to the most common scholars' conventions. Textual sigla are as follows: letters of uncertain or partial readings are between (); a supplied text is between []; [], etc. indicates an unrestored lacuna; a deleted text is between { }. The word divider is only transcribed with | when it appears at the beginning or at the end of a line.
4. An historical and documentary summary of *Şirwāḥ* can be found in SCHIETTECATTE 2011, pp. 117-124.

1. Parts of the collection can be seen at <http://aenet.pr.tokai.ac.jp/english.php> (accessed on 09/30/2019).
2. JASNOW *et al.* 2016; See also BLUMELL, HULL & YAMAHANA 2019.



Figure 1 - Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 1 (photos by K. Hull).
1a - Front of alabaster stone.
1b - Side view.
1c - Hollow carved on upper face.

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four sides, and most heavily on the upper and lower right corners, where some letters have been lost or damaged. The stone was conceived to be the pedestal of a statue, as testified by the hollow carved on the top face and by the dedication in the previously mentioned text.

Paleographically, certain graphic features, such as the acute angles, the thickening of the letter ends showing serifs (although not fully formed everywhere), the twofold curving of the letter *r*, and the oblique central strokes of the letter *ḡ*, all point to the late C1 or most probably to the early C2 phase. In his periodization of the ASA script, Peter Stein sets the transition between these phases to the end of the 2nd and the 1st centuries BC.⁵ Worthy of note is also the shape of the ' letter, in which the upper part is not centred in relation to the lower part, but carved at the right end.

This dating is also confirmed by some elements in the text itself, first of all the mention of the deity to which the dedication is addressed, Almaḡah "master of the ibexes of Širwāḡ." This god was worshipped in the main temple of Širwāḡ, which has been excavated by German archaeologists, and whose foundation dates back to the very beginning of the site occupation.⁶ However, compared to the two well-known historical documents dating between the late 8th to the beginning of the 7th centuries BC found in the temple court and reporting the *res gestae* of the *mukarrib-s* Yatha'amar Watar and Karib'il Watar (DAI Širwāḡ 2005-50 and RES 3945),⁷ the first dedications to Almaḡah "master of the ibexes of Širwāḡ" appear much later, precisely not earlier than the last two centuries BC.⁸ Moreover, the individuals who commissioned the inscription belong to the family dhū-Ḥbb, the princely clan of the city who controlled the tribes of Širwāḡ and of its neighbor Khawlān Khāḡilum, and

whose first epigraphic evidence is again not earlier than the 2nd century BC.⁹

The main author bore a name that was most probably composed of a three-letter root (now lost) and of the apochoristic theonym 'tt (from the pan-south Arabian deity 'Athtar), of which the first lost letter can reasonably be restored. He associates in his dedication his two sons, 'grm and Dk'mr. The proposed reading of both names is not indisputable from the stone. With regard to the first name, there are various signs of hesitation in the carving, as faint lines are visible over the ' and the g, and a w (expunged in our edition) is also faintly carved after the r. The scribe must have surely written another name, before fixing the mistake and carving the right one (this also explains the overly stretched shape of the ' and, perhaps, the little distinct upper horizontal stroke of what we read as a g). In the second name, which was preceded by the conjunction w, the upper section of the first three letters is damaged. We read the third letter as a ', which gives 'mr, a root meaning of "order," or "say,"¹⁰ that is broadly attested in the ASA onomasticon.

The inscription is written in Sabaic language. During the middle phase, which goes from the 3rd century BC to the 4th century AD, the use of Sabaic increased enormously geographically, and this language consequently developed a great diatopic variation with the emergence of different dialects throughout the Sabaeen domains. The area of Širwāḡ shared with Ma'rib and the rest of the Yemeni lowlands up to the Jawf, as well as with the Yemeni highlands north of Sanaa, a dialectal variety called *central*, which is also the most innovative one.¹¹ This short inscription thus contains a shortened version of the conventional formula typical of the central middle Sabaic votive texts, of which only the main dedication clause (*hqny*) and two final clauses introduced by the particle *l-* are used.¹² The usual grammatical carelessness in the marking of the dual (l. 1) of the word *bn* "son" is also common in this category of texts which were reproduced by the hundreds in the scribal laboratories.¹³

2b/ The Qatabanian pieces

The Tokai collection comprises a lot of six inscribed objects, all made of alabaster, and varying from slabs (nos. 2 and 3), bases of statuettes (nos. 4 and 5), and bases of stelae (nos. 6 and 7). These artifacts, which were placed

5. STEIN 2013, pp. 189-190. The novelty of his palaeographic systematization is that he tried to base it as much as he could on the absolute dates available in the ASA documentation.
6. GERLACH 2003.
7. While the Karib'il's inscription has been known for almost a century (the first publication is that of RHODOKANAKIS 1927; most lately, see STEIN 2012, pp. 47-51, AVANZINI 2016, pp. 261-293), the much-awaited full publication of the Yatha'amar Watar's inscription (discovered in 2005) has appeared only recently (NEBES 2016).
8. Before the discovery of Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 1, the earliest evidence of the formula 'lmḡh b'l 'w'l Šrwḡh was that in the two inscriptions dating back to the reign of the Sabaeen king Nasha'karib Yuha'min, toward the end of the 1st century AD, a period in which the sanctuary was also expanded architecturally (see Fa 28 and Fa 29). However, a third, less certain mention was already known in a fragmentary text that looks palaeographically much more archaic and could be contemporary to our inscription (CIAS 95.11/r 8 no. 2).

9. ROBIN 2013, pp. 171-172.

10. LESLAU 1987, p. 25.

11. STEIN 2004; more recently, ID. 2013, p. 24.

12. A central middle Sabaic votive inscription with a much richer formula has been published recently in this journal by one of the authors (PRIOLETTA & ROBIN 2018).

13. On the scribal errors, see recently STEIN 2018.

in temples and necropolises, testify to the cult of the dead and the religious worship of the peoples from ancient South Arabia.¹⁴ A great part of them has been found in the cemetery of Ḥayd Ibn ‘Aqīl (ancient Timna’), the capital of the kingdom of Qatabān,¹⁵ but similar items also originate from the peripheral areas that fell under the control of Qatabān during their history, such as the region of wādī Markha, in the lowlands to the east of Qatabān, where the tribe of Awsān was settled. Since all these artifacts share a remarkable artistic homogeneity with no marked sign of regional variations, it is often difficult to assign a certain provenance in the absence of information or with insufficient textual data.

Two items of the corpus (nos. 2 and 3), however, certainly come from Awsān, and there is limited but reasonable evidence to assume that some other of them also originate from the same area.

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 2 (Figure 2)

- 1/ *Rgnm ḡ-(‘)[... s’qny mr’-s’ Y]–*
- 2/ *ṣdq’l Fr(r)[‘m S’rh’t mlk ’ws’n]*
- 3/ *bn [Wdm] br[... .. ḡg wqh ’b-s’]*
- 4/ *Wdm b-ms’(‘)[l-s’]*

- 1/ *Rgnm* he of ‘[...] dedicated to his lord
- 2/ *Yṣdq’l Fr’m S’rh’t* king of Awsān
- 3/ son of Waddum *br*[... .., as his father Waddum]
- 4/ ordered him in his oracle [... ..]

This slab fragment, which measures 9.5 cm high, 8 cm wide, and 2.25 cm thick, lacks part of its left half and is also broken off on the lower edge. The extant inscription is a four-line text in which, despite the lacunae, we recognize the name of *Yṣdq’l Fr’m S’rh’t*, an Awsanite king who likely lived in the 1st century AD, a period when the tribe of Awsān had regained its full independence from Qatabān.¹⁶ The script of the text, with its flowery and elegant style, is also typical of this stage.

From the remaining text and the comparison with analogous examples, we can deduce the votive character of the inscription and reconstruct part of its formulary (albeit with some degree of doubt, as the formulae may



Figure 2 - Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 2 (photo by K. Hull).

vary slightly). The interesting cultural point in this small group of texts is that their commissioners address the dedication (*s’qny*) to the king Yaṣduq’īl and not to a deity, as normally happens. This implies that the king had been deified in his subjects’ minds, which is further shown by the fact that in these texts Yaṣduq’īl takes the patronymic of the god Waddum, although his real father was in fact the king *M’d’l*.¹⁷ The funerary character of at least one of these inscriptions made Christian Robin argue that Yaṣduq’īl was probably divinized after his death and not during his lifetime.¹⁸ This would be substantially different from the self-deification that is known in ancient Egypt

14. ANTONINI 2001; ANTONINI DE MAIGRET 2012, pp. 90-106.

15. The necropolis was excavated by a mission funded by the American Foundation for the Study of Man (CLEVELAND 1965). A number of tombs have been excavated and studied together with their architecture and ceramics by the Italian-French Mission (ANTONINI 2016, pp. 344-427).

16. The chronological limits of this phase cannot be securely established, but it probably lasted from the late 1st century BC to the late 1st century AD. For a summary of the main linguistic and cultural changes during this period, see PRIOLETTA 2013, p. 127.

17. As proved by the text CIAS F 58/s 4/49.10 no. 3, engraved on the base a statue representing the king himself: *Yṣdq’l Fr’m S’rh’t mlk ’ws’n bn M’d’l S’lḥn mlk ’ws’n*, “*Yṣdq’l Fr’m S’rh’t* king of Awsān, son of *M’d’l S’lḥn* king of Awsān.”

18. ROBIN 2012, pp. 95-97. Besides this new text from the Tokai collection, the corpus is made of five votive inscriptions placed in the sanctuary of *N’mn* (e.g., CIAS 49.10/o 1 no. 2 = CSAI III, 3), another text mentioning the offering of a bronze statue but with no reference to the sanctuary (CIAS 49.10/o 1 no. 1 = CSAI III, 2), and one funerary inscription referring to the “memorial” (*m’mr*) of the king (CIAS 49.10/p 2 no. 1 = CSAI III, 6).

and Mesopotamia kingship traditions,¹⁹ and would much more bring to mind the post-mortem *consecratio* of some Roman emperors contemporary to the Awsanite king.²⁰

From a linguistic point of view, despite the lack of any relevant grammatical element, we also infer that the inscription was written in Awsanitic, a dialect of the Qatabanic language that developed in the period of the Awsanite independence.²¹ The text author (l. 1), who bears a “Qatabanian” individual name,²² might be a member of the clan dhu-’byd’—of which only the initial letter ’ is preserved—attested in some Qatabanic texts of which at least one is surely of Awsanite origin (see also Tokai-ASA no. 6).²³

The most difficult philological problem concerns the restoration of l. 3 after the divine name. The formulary of these texts would impose at this point that the object of the dedication be mentioned, usually a bronze statue (*šlm ḏhbn*).²⁴ The extant letters, however, do not fit with this interpretation, and no other suggestion can at present be put forward.

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 3 (Figures 3ac)

| *Yšdq’l Fr’m S’rh’t*

These two fragments of alabaster slab measuring about 9.25 cm high, 22.75 cm wide, and 4.5 cm thick

bear the name of the same Awsanite kings as no. 2, and are decorated on the lower edge with a sequence of three motifs: a gammed cross (or swastika), a rosette, and a double volute motif.

Interestingly, the object has an almost exact parallel in a piece housed at the British Museum and published by Albert Jamme (Ja 2218b, Figure 3d),²⁵ an alabaster slab that has the lower register enriched with a gammed cross and a double volute motif, and bears on the upper register part of a dedication. Several elements appear to be identical between the two items: material, the height and thickness of the two stones, the layout of their textual and ornamental elements, and the graphic style of the two inscriptions. In addition, what is most interesting, both texts show the traces of what seems an intentional removal of the text.²⁶ If indeed these are two examples of *damnatio memoriae* rather than randomly damaged objects, it seems the erasure was more heavily executed in the Tokai item than in Ja 2218b, as if the name of the king Yašduq’il had to be completely cancelled and his memory condemned to oblivion.²⁷ Finally, it should be added that since Ja 2218b is said to come generically from Qatabān, it could well be that it too originates from the area of Awsān.

All these things being considered, it would not be unreasonable to assume that the two items were originally part of the same object. The item from the Tokai collection could constitute a fragment of the beginning, and Ja 2218b



Figure 3a - Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 3 (photo by L. Blumell). Both fragments.

19. While there are many studies on the former, the divine kingship of the Mesopotamian tradition has been comprehensively addressed only in FRANKFORT 1948.
20. On the ruler cult in ancient Rome, see WOOLF 2008.
21. AVANZINI 2004, pp. 537-538.
22. Namely, a name that, so far, has only been found in Qatabanic inscriptions.
23. Cf. RES 4232, whose author is *Lhy’l d-’byd’* and that mentions the very king Yašduq’il.
24. This is however omitted in CIAS 96.51/o 1/R 71 = CSAI III, 9.

25. JAMME 1971, p. 54.

26. Often the effects of a text that has been damaged or is weathered out look similar to an intentional scratching out, as in one of the inscriptions mentioning the very king Yašduq’il (CIAS 49.10/o 1 no. 3 = CSAI III, 4). In the case of the two alabaster slabs, however, the willfulness of the act seems clear, considering that only the texts have been wiped out, while the decorative motifs have been left untouched.

27. The practice of post-mortem oblivion was well known not only in the Greek and Roman societies, but also throughout



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Figures 3bc - Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 3 (photos by L. Blumell). Right and left fragments.

a fragment of the end, of the inscription. The author of the votive plaque would be a woman, perhaps the sister of Yaşduq'il, who is known to have left another inscription for her brother.²⁸ A hypothetical reconstruction of the text could therefore be: [... .. *dt-Dğyt'lt*]²⁹ *Yşdq'l Fr'm S'rh't*³⁰ [*mlk 'ws'n s'qny*]³¹ *mr'-s' 'd mħrm-s*³² [*N'mn ħg wqh 'b-s' Wdm b-ms'l-s'*]:³³ “[... ..] she of *Dğyt'*, sister of *Yşdq'l Fr'm S'rh't* king of Awsān dedicated to her lord in his sanctuary *N'mn*, as his father Waddum ordered her in His oracle.” On the other hand, the arrangement of the decorative motifs cannot be reconstructed as the two extant fragments show different sequences (gammed cross + rosette + double volute in Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 3 and gammed cross + double volute in Ja 2218b).



Figure 3d - Ja 2218b (© The British Museum).

the ancient Near East (see e.g., MAY 2012). The peoples from ancient Arabia also feared to have their written memorials erased, which is reflected in a number of formulae closing the texts, no matter their script register (official inscriptions or more informal graffiti) and textual genres. The Awsanite king Yaşduq'il was not exempted, as testified by the closing formula of his funerary inscription CIAS 49.10/p 2 no. 1 = CSAI III, 6 (see above n. 18): *w-'l 's'n s'whs'-s' bn br't-s' l-m'mrm b-ymz' 's'-l-ww bn 'mlk 'ws'n*, “and it is not permitted to remove it (i.e., the memorial) from its place for the sake of another memorial that might be placed to the detriment of it (and) from another king of Awsān.” Our translation agrees more with that of Beeston's (in CIAS II, I, p. 156) than with that of AVANZINI's (2004, p. 542). In ancient South Arabia, the *damnatio memoriae* is also attested in the texts of the pair *Nmrm 'wkn* and *Għdm 'ħsn*, in which the name of *Nmrm 'wkn* has been scratched out in four texts (Ja 684, Ja 711, Ja 739 and R-Ma'rib 9). We thank the anonymous reviewer for this remark.

- 28. CIAS 49.10/o 1 no. 4 = CSAI III, 5. Another votive text addressed to Yaşduq'il is also commissioned by a woman (CIAS 49.10/o 1 no. 3 = CSAI III, 4).
- 29. Text lost, restored on the basis of CIAS 49.10/o 1 no. 4 = CSAI III, 5.
- 30. Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 3.
- 31. Text lost, restored on the basis of CIAS 49.10/o 1 no. 4 = CSAI III, 5.
- 32. Ja 2218a.
- 33. Text lost, restored on the basis of CIAS 49.10/o 1 no. 4 = CSAI III, 5.

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 4 (Figure 4)

'mrm d-Krb'l

'mrm he of *Krb'l*

Little can be said about this fragment of alabaster statuette, measuring 6.75 cm high, 12.75 cm wide, and 6.5 cm thick. A generic Qatabanian origin of the item is only assumed because of the type of object. The onomasticon of the remembered person is also hardly informative. He bears an individual name, *'mrm*, which is quite common in ancient South Arabia,³⁴ and his family name, *Krb'l*, is not usual as such, being normally used as a name of a king and, more rarely, as a personal name.³⁵



Figures 4a-b - Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 4 (photo by L. Blumell). Statue base front and upper views.

- 34. *'mrm* has been found on some similar items of Qatabanian provenance (CIAS F 53/s 4/97.12 = CSAI I, 292 and RES 3902 no. 60 = CSAI I, 817).
- 35. In the only two Qatabanic instances in which *Krb'l* has been considered as a name of individual by the *DASI* editors, it might well be in fact that the name is royal too (<http://dasi.cnr.it/>, accessed on 08/09/2019). RES 4238 = CSAI I, 919: *Krb'l bn 'M'd'l w-'ls'rh* (a text carved on a statuette where the remembered persons could be members of the Awsanite royal family) and RES 3902 no. 15 = CSAI I, 797: *Krb'l Yhwq'* (the latter has been only found elsewhere in Qatabanic as a royal family name).

As for the dating, the script style points to a phase a little earlier than that of the two preceding texts, probably in the early 1st century BC.³⁶

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 5 (Figure 5)

M'd'l Mwtrm

This statue base, which has feet on top broken off at the ankles, measures 10 cm high, 20.25 cm wide, and 7.25 cm thick. Palaeography sets the text to the same chronological phase as the pieces above (between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD), with no possible further precision.

Moreover, as for the item no. 4 of the Tokai collection, it cannot be established whether the object comes from Awsān or from the central Qatabanian area. There exists a similar item on which the same name, *M'd'l Mwtrm*, is carved, a piece that belongs to Kaiky Muncherjee's collection³⁷ and is housed at the National Museum of Aden, but in this case too the provenance is uncertain.³⁸

The onomasticon is not decisive either. It is clear that the name *M'd'l* is more common in inscriptions from Qatabān than in those from the other kingdoms. The name is attested in the inscriptions from Awsān where *M'd'l*, with the royal epithet *S'l'hn*, is the individual name of two kings, respectively the great-grandfather³⁹ and the father⁴⁰ of the king Yaşduq'il seen above (Tokai Suzuki-ASA nos. 2 and 3). However, it has also been found often in the necropolis of Timna^c and it could well be that the Tokai item (as well as the piece in Aden) come from the capital of the kingdom too.⁴¹



Figure 5 - Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 5 (photo by K. Hull).

The family name, *Mwtrm*, on the other hand, is interesting. The name is formed with a root, *wtr*, which expresses the idea of “abundancy,”⁴² and not only is well attested in the south Arabian onomasticon, but it was also especially used to form royal family names (*wtr*, *Wtr*). Moreover, in the Awsanitic inscriptions, *Mwtr* (with no mimation) is a god of the kingdom's pantheon.⁴³

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 6 (Figure 6)

[... ..] *dt 'byd'*

[... ..] *she of 'byd'*

This base of this stela, measuring 10.5 cm high, 11.75 cm wide, and 7.5 cm thick, lacks the right part containing the individual name of the woman remembered. The type of object as well as the script style point to a Qatabanian origin. The woman's family name, *'byd'*, has been found as such in a number of similar objects from Qatabān.⁴⁴ The script style is in accordance with the other pieces of the collection, pointing to a date between the 1st century BC and the 1st century AD.

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 7 (Figure 7)

Dyd'l 'byd'

This last object, measuring 7 cm high, 12.5 cm long, and 7 cm thick, is chipped on all sides but more heavily so on the left. The individual name is a compound theophoric

36. See above what is said for Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 1.

37. RES 3902 no. 64 = CSAI I, 821. The piece was published in the early 20th century by A. JAUSSEN 1926, p. 562, pl. XII, who reproduced the pictures of one of the three existing photographic catalogues of the collection. Despite the extremely poor-quality photo, it is certain that it is not the same object as the Tokai item.

38. K. Muncherjee was an Indian merchant residing in Aden, who between the end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, was able to collect an exceptional and heterogeneous selection of artifacts and inscriptions from the personal collection of the sultan of Lajd, the most part of which originated from the areas of Qatabān and Saba^c.

39. His name is mentioned as patronymic in the statue representing the king *Yşdq'l Fr'm*, grandfather of *Yşdq'l Fr'm S'r'h't* (CIAS F 58/s 4/49.10 no. 1 = CSAI III, 12). His name was perhaps carved on another statue of which only the base and the statue feet are preserved, and where *M'd'l* bears no royal title (CIAS F 59/s 4/49.10 no. 6 = CSAI III, 20: *M'd'l S'l'hn bn Dyd'm*).

40. Cf. the statue bearing his name and royal title (CIAS F 58/s 4/49.10 no. 2 = CSAI III, 13); he is also mentioned as the father of *Yşdq'l Fr'm S'r'h't* on the statue representing the latter (CIAS F 58/s 4/49.10 no. 3 = CSAI III, 14).

41. Cf. e.g., Ja 224 = CSAI I, 485.

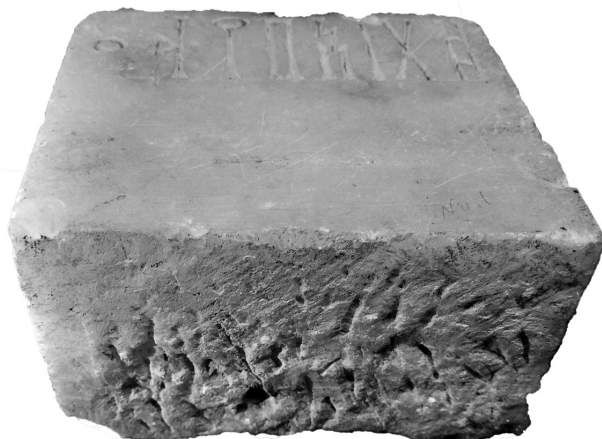
42. See HAYAJNEH 1998, pp. 164-165.

43. See UAM 508 and WWM-Balu 1.

44. Cf. what was said in the commentary of Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 2.



a



b

Figures 6ab - Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 6 (photos by L. Blumell).
Stela base front and lower views.



Figure 7 - Alabaster fragment Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 7
(photo by L. Blumell).

name made of the root *dyd* “protect,”⁴⁵ which has already been found in the Qatabanic onomasticon.⁴⁶

As for the epithet *'byd*, it is a family name in numerous Qatabanic inscriptions on stelae and statue bases, at least one of which comes surely from the necropolis of Timna', Hayd Ibn 'Aqīl.⁴⁷ As Yves Calvet et Christian Robin argued, *'byd* “peut être analysé comme un nom à deux éléments (*'b* + *yd* [abréviation de *yd'*?], à vocaliser Abīyad) ou comme un élatif de la racine BYD (Abyad).”⁴⁸

Palaeographically, although none of the most revealing letters is present, the text looks as the most archaic of the collection, and could date to the 3rd/2nd century BC.

2c/ Two objects of unknown provenance

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 8 (Figure 8)

This rectangular stone container is carved from a yellow, greyish limestone and measures 6.75 cm high and 21 cm wide. The walls of the interior are 3 cm deep and quite rough. The outer wall is beveled near the rim. Four legs in the shape of animal hooves that are 2 cm high originally supported the box, two of which are now partially missing.

A single, stylized bucranium appears on the front face of the box. We see the same schematic form of the bucranium on a so-called “beehive vessel” made of alabaster from the cemetery at Awām Temple,⁴⁹ as well as various other vessels of the same genre.⁵⁰

On one of the long sides a monogram is carved.⁵¹ The components of the monogram are *'b y/* and *f*, which give as a possible reading *'byf*’.⁵² Ultimately, however, the reading of the monogram on the Tokai box remains uncertain. As for the dating, the shape of the aleph letter with acute angles excludes an early dating and rather suggests the 3rd/2nd century BC as *terminus post quem*.

45. See HAYAJNEH 1998, pp. 142-143.

46. See the name *Dydm* twice in RES 3878 = CSAI I, 204 and in CIAS F 59/s 4/49.10 no. 6. In the latter, *Dydm* is the father of the Awsanite king *M'd'l S'lh*.

47. CIAS F 53/s 4/97.12 = CSAI I, 292: *'mrm 'byd Kr*.

48. CALVET & ROBIN 1997, p. 113.

49. Aw 99 B 784.

50. Bucrania are also attested on a calcite-alabaster box or offering table in the British Museum, which has four legs and multiple bucrania on the all edges (BM 135682 = 1972,0226.1).

51. For other stylized bucrania used in conjunction with monograms on containers, see LEGRAIN 1934, p. 336.

52. This individual name as such is rare in the ASA onomasticon, although both the theophoric *'b* and the root *yf* are commonly found. One interesting occurrence of *'byf* is that in the Sabaic inscription DA1 Sirwāh 2005-50/2 where *'byf* is the name of a king of Wusr, a tribe located in the area of Awsān. We are, however, at the end of the 8th century BC, a too much early date for the object.





Figure 8 - Alabaster box Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 8 (photos by K. Hull).

8a - Box side view.

8b - Bottom of box.

8c - Bucranium on side of box.

8d - Monogram, possibly reading 'byf'.

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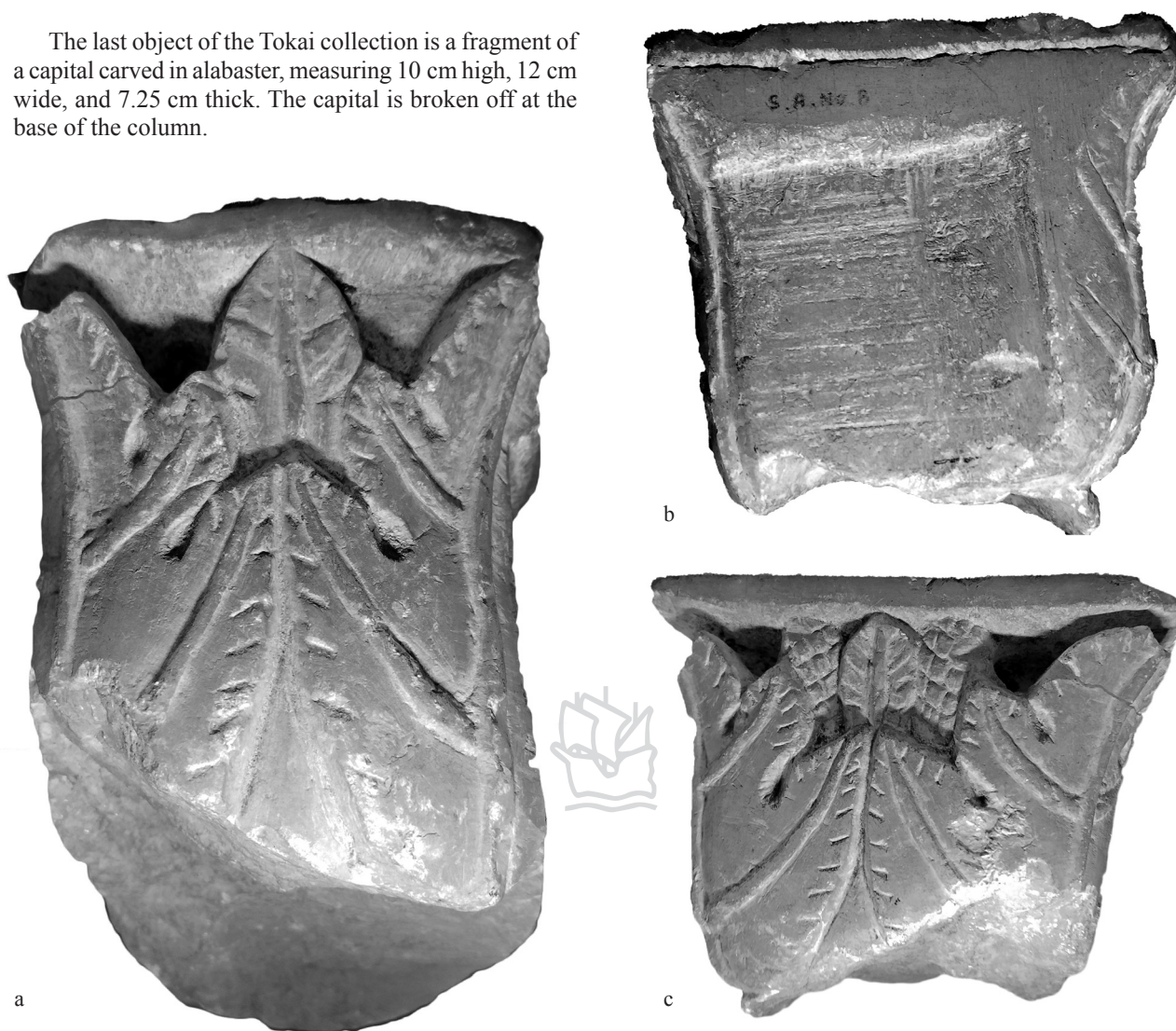
On the other hand, there are no obvious clues as to the geographical origin of the container. Similar objects, rounded or rectangular and homogenous in dimensions and decorations, have been found in the Sabaean and Qatabanian necropolises, or are of unknown origin and conserved in museum collections as the Tokai item.⁵³

The function of such stone boxes is also difficult to discern. Cleveland proposed the general label of “stone housing for memorial objects.”⁵⁴ However, the small dimensions of the container suggest that these artifacts might have been used as cosmetic containers.

Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 9 (Figure 9)

The last object of the Tokai collection is a fragment of a capital carved in alabaster, measuring 10 cm high, 12 cm wide, and 7.25 cm thick. The capital is broken off at the base of the column.

The shape of the capital with acanthus leaves is typical of the Corinthian style. S. Antonini has argued that such South Arabian Corinthian-type capitals, which have been found in several sites, from Ma’rib to sites of the Yemeni highlands such as Dhamār or Zafār, are influenced by those from Hellenistic East and southern Syria in particular.⁵⁵ A number of such capitals, dated from the 4th century AD, have been found reused in Yemeni mosques.

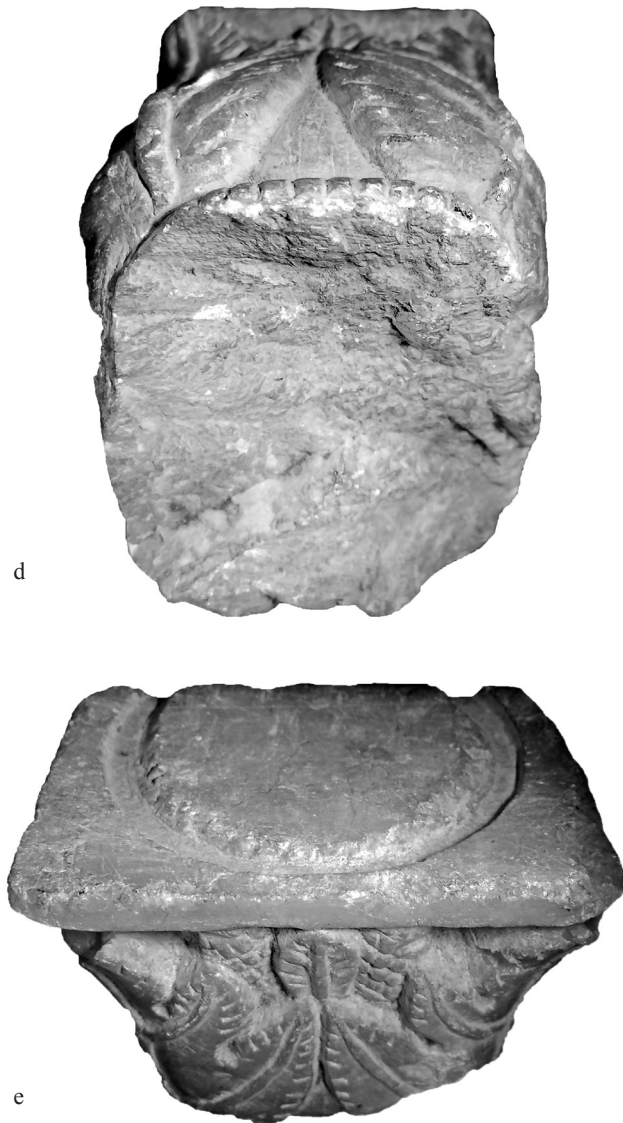


Figures 9ac - Alabaster, Corinthian-style capital Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 9 (photo by K. Hull). Capital front, back and side views.

53. See e.g., *RES* 4819, PM-30-47-41 or Ja 2219.

54. CLEVELAND 1965, p. 169.

55. ANTONINI DE MAIGRET 2012, p. 137, figs. 140-143.



Figures 9de - Alabaster, Corinthian-style capital Tokai Suzuki-ASA no. 9 (photos by K. Hull). Capital bottom and top views.

3. A miscellaneous item

Japan-ASA no. 10 (Figure 10)

This piece was found by Kerry Hull and Lincoln H. Blumell at the Middle Eastern Culture Center (中近東文化センター) in Tokyo, Japan. It is an alabaster face plaque measuring roughly 34 cm high, 30 cm wide, and 4 cm thick, chipped on all sides and with traces of modern carving on its forehead. The face and the forehead are flat and only the rectangular nose is in relief. The face has



Figure 10 - Japan-ASA no. 10, Alabaster mask in Middle Eastern Culture Center, Tokyo, Japan (photo by K. Hull).

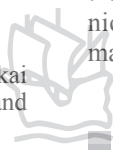
arched eyebrows and irregularly almond shaped-eyes with drilled pupils. The mouth is also indicated by an irregular oval incised line. The ears are missing.

Face plaques are less common as funerary artifacts than face stelae. They were usually inserted inside the niches of pillar stelae or directly into the façades of mausolea. Their origin is mostly Sabaeen.⁵⁶

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56. This typology of funerary artifacts has been studied recently by A. LOMBARDI (2016, see the review by A. PRIOLETTA in this journal).



artifacts discussed in this article and providing helpful information about them.

We would like to thank the Idemitsu Museum of Arts and Chieko Ando for permission to edit the item in Figure 10 and to publish this image of it. We would also like to thank Kenichi Suetsugu, General Affairs Deputy Manager at the Middle Eastern Culture Center, Tokyo, Japan, for hosting us during our visit to view the face plaque. Finally, we would like to thank Alessandra Lombardi and Christian Julien Robin for their expertise.

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■ ABBREVIATIONS

ASA Ancient South Arabian.

Aw 99 B 784 I. GERLACH, “What is Sabean art? Problems in distinguishing ancient South Arabian art using Saba and Qataban as examples”, in *The periodisation and chronological terminology of ancient Yemen : Rencontres sabéennes. 6* (Archäologische Berichte aus dem Yemen 10), Deutsches archäologisches Institut Šanā, Mainz am Rhein, 2005, pp. 31-43.

BM The British Museum. See *DASI*.

CIAS *Corpus des inscriptions et des antiquités sud-arabes. 1-2*, Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres), Louvain, 1977, 1986.

CSAI *Corpus of South Arabian inscriptions* = AVANZINI 2004.

DAI Širwāh 2005-50 NEBES 2016.

DASI Digital Archive for the Study of pre-Islamic Arabian Inscriptions: <http://dasi.cnr.it/>.

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Ja 2218b, Ja 2219 JAMME 1971.

PM Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. See *DASI*.

RES *Répertoire d’épigraphie sémitique, publié par la Commission du Corpus inscriptionum Semiticarum. 1-8*, Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Paris, Imprimerie nationale, 1900-1967.

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