

# A Preliminary Evaluation of Al-Radā'ī's *Urğūzat al-Ḥağğ* as a Primary Geographical Source for Surveying the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route<sup>1</sup>

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Complementing the network of maritime routes linking the Yemeni harbours with Mecca via al-Sirrayn, al-Liṭ, or Jeddah are twelve inland pilgrim routes leading from South Arabia to Mecca (see map 1). The most significant of these is the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route and this has been the subject of research recently completed by the present writer and in which it was his aim to survey the route from an archaeological point of view.<sup>2</sup>

Before considering the documentary literature consulted relating to this principal Yemeni route, it will be helpful to identify the duration and nature of its popularity.

The Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route is identified variously in the available sources by the following names:<sup>3</sup> the Nağd Road, the Ṣan'ā' Road, the Mountain Road and the Upper Road. Nowadays the route is known locally as the Road of As'ad al-Kāmil,<sup>4</sup> the Road of the Elephant,<sup>5</sup> and the Army Route.<sup>6</sup>

An examination of the engineering methods employed in the construction of this route allows that the date of its erection was approximately 400 BC.<sup>7</sup> Its foundation should be linked directly with the pre-Islamic commercial activities of the ancient kingdoms of Southern Arabia. Notwithstanding the fact that scientific evidence so far is sparse, it is nonetheless conceivable from such evidence that certain of the commercial settlements along the route in due course acted as pilgrim stations.<sup>8</sup> It is documented that, with the advent

on the Saudi section of the route and I will now address a few remarks about two of these.

*Milestone no. 1 (see fig. 1)*

Al-Radā'ī refers fleetingly, in verse 65, lines 3–4, to the existence of a milestone near the watering-station of Khalāfah, according to his calculation, the twenty-fourth postal-stage. He recites the following:

1. 3: خَلَاقَةُ الْمَاءِ التَّضْيِيفِ النَّاضِبِ [...]

[...] The watering-place of Ḥalāfah where the water is exhausted

1. 4: حَيْثُ بَرِيدُ الصَّخْرَةِ الْمُجَانِبِ [...]

And there is an isolated milestone [...] <sup>27</sup>

According to our findings, this milestone is located about 45 km, as the crow flies, to the north of the city of Tabālah in a vast desert area called Ḥahr. It was found, lying on its side, on the north-western margin of the pilgrim route at the point where the route cuts consecutively through Wadis al-Quḍayf and Tawāthil. The inscription of this milestone reads:

1. One hundred

١ . ميه (sic)

2. miles

٢ . ميل

The name Ḥalāfah, taken from the watering-station recorded by al-Radā'ī, has been preserved until today in a major wadi located about 9 km to the north of the area where we discovered this milestone. In the light of these circumstances, it seems plausible that this milestone is the same one to which al-Radā'ī refers in this verse.

*Milestone no. 2 (see fig. 2)*

Our second milestone was discovered about 35 km to the north-west of the location of the previous one, in the area of Šu'bat (or Riyād) al-Ḥayl, which is still within the Ḥahr desert region. The inscription of this milestone reads:

1. Seven/nine

١ . سبعة / تسعة

2. miles

٢ . ميل (sic)

of Islam, the route was initially used by the Islamic armies and later by the pilgrim caravans setting out from Southern Arabia.

Unfortunately, it is not possible to pronounce with any degree of certainty the exact date when the route as a whole fell into decline. However, there appear to be grounds for believing that the northern part of the route was ultimately neglected following the practice of the pilgrims of northern Yemen taking the ancillary Sarawāt route in preference to the present Saudi section of the Highland route, from the end of the 6th/12th century onwards.<sup>9</sup>

Turning to the geographical writings which served as staple sources of reference in our research project, it should first of all be pointed out that those consulted were by the early and medieval Yemeni and non-Yemeni geographers and that they may, collectively, be placed between the second half of the 3rd/9th century and the first half of the 7th/13th century.<sup>10</sup> Of all those made available to us, one in particular distinguished itself in terms of the reliability of its recorded data. This is the work of Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā al-Radāʿī entitled *Urġūzat al-ḥaġġ* and, as far as we are aware, it is the earliest Yemeni writing to be published which focuses wholly on describing the entire length of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route.<sup>11</sup> In order to demonstrate the credibility of this remarkable work, the present paper will attempt to draw attention to certain of those observations recorded by al-Radāʿī which have subsequently been substantiated by the findings of the writer's research conducted along the route.

The earliest attempt known to us at writing a pilgrimage *urġūzah* based on the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route, which connects Ṣanʿāʾ and Mecca, was made by Abū Yūsuf b. Abī Faḍālah al-Abnāwī, who, according to al-Hamdānī,<sup>12</sup> acted as a guide to the Yemeni pilgrims following this route, sometime before the reign of Muḥammad b. Yuʿfir (*reg.* 258–265/872–878). It seems however that al-Abnāwī's verses were unsuccessful and that this very factor prevented their survival for posterity.

The composer of the *Urġūzah* which is the subject of this review, Aḥmad b. ʿĪsā al-Radāʿī al-Ḥawlānī, as his name suggests, came originally from Ḥawlān al-ʿĀliyah (or al-Ṭiyāl), known as Ḥawlān Udad in the pre-Islamic era, and eventually settled in the town of Radāʿ.<sup>13</sup> Although the dates of his birth and death are not recorded, it seems plausible that our poet was born in the first half of the 3rd/9th century and died in the second half of the same century. According to al-Hamdānī,<sup>14</sup> al-Radāʿī composed other poems in addition to this *Urġūzah*.

The duration of al-Radāʿī's journey from Radāʿ to Mecca via Ṣanʿāʾ and Ṣaʿdah, which forms the subject of his *Urġūzah*, was twenty-four days. It appears that he collaborated in the organization and leadership of his pilgrim

convoy, which does not appear to have formed part of an official Yemeni pilgrim caravan. We understand from the *Urgūzah*, that al-Radā'ī made this pilgrimage with an unspecified number of friends, to whom he refers in the following terms: *al-qawm*, *al-fityān*, *aṣḥābī*, *ṣīb wa-ṣubbān* and *iḥwānī*.

We may now note how the *Urgūzah* came to be discovered. It is reported that some people of Ṣan'ā', particularly the Abnā', distorted certain verses of al-Radā'ī's *Urgūzah* and al-Hamdānī attributes this corruption to motives of envy and rivalry. After establishing the currency of discrepant versions of the *Urgūzah* in Ṣan'ā', al-Hamdānī ultimately settled on the one recited by a certain Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. 'Ubayd as a definitive source and this was because the latter, notwithstanding his Persian origin, was noted for his impartiality. The validity of this version was further recommended by Aḥmad's claim that al-Radā'ī dictated it to him personally, ten lines at a time, in the town of Radā'. As well as annotating certain verses of the *Urgūzah*, al-Hamdānī confesses to having executed essential editing of the text in order to render it comprehensible.<sup>15</sup> It should be noted in this connection that the resultant version contains a number of lacunae; these are few in number however and do not interrupt al-Radā'ī's sequence of place-names.

The geographical value of al-Radā'ī's *Urgūzah* is at once borne out by the following statement of al-Hamdānī: 'It is unique of its kind; and we know of no other authority which presents a descriptive record of twenty-four days' camel journey in the Arabian Peninsula in verse form'<sup>16</sup> and further by this eminent geographer's frequent reference to it in his *Iklīl* (I, 295; VIII, 46f.) and *Ġawharatayn* (60, 228).

The year in which al-Radā'ī completed the *ḥağğ* is not given in this work. Conversely however there are three references to the month in which this journey was effected. At the beginning of the *Urgūzah*, al-Radā'ī says,

عُدُّ خَلِيلِي كَمْ مَضَتْ لَيَالٍ      مِنْ شَهْرِ ذِي الْقَعْدَةِ مَعَ شَوَالٍ

Count, my friend, how many nights have already elapsed/of the month of Dū al-Qa'dah, and the month of Shawwāl.<sup>17</sup>

Just before approaching the meeting-place (*mīqāt*), he pauses at the watering-place of Awqaḥ<sup>18</sup> and recites the following:

لَأَوْقِجِ ذِي الْمَتَهْلِ الْوَضَاخِ      يَا تَأْتِقْ هَمَّ الشَّهْرِ بِأَنْسِلَاخِ

Towards Awqaḥ, with its watering-place with insufficient water,/O she-camel, the month is coming to an end.<sup>19</sup>

It is evident in the second half of this line that al-Radā'ī makes a clear reference to the end of the month, which can only be the month of Dū al-Qa'dah. After departing from the meeting-place (*miqāt*), heading towards Mecca, our poet tells us that

وَالْعَيْسُ فِي ذِي طَخِيَّةٍ بِهِمِ      عَلَى سَبِيلِ الْحَقِّ مُسْتَقِيمِ

The camels are marching in a moonless night, following the true, straight path.<sup>20</sup>

Al-Hamdānī's interpretation of this last verse indicates that al-Radā'ī was then marching at the beginning of the month of Dū al-Ḥijjah. In conclusion, since al-Hamdānī states that al-Radā'ī took twenty-four marching days to reach Mecca, we may assume that our traveller departed from Radā' during the first week of Dū al-Qa'dah.

Let us now say a few words about the actual structure of the *Urġūzah*. It occurs in its entirety appended to al-Hamdānī's *Ṣifat Ġazīrat al-'Arab* and is composed of one hundred and twenty-seven verses, of five lines each. The content of the *Urġūzah* divides neatly into the following ten categories:

- 1) Verses 1 to 10 constitute an introduction.
- 2) Verses 11 to 19 are a description of the route between Radā' and Ṣan'ā'.
- 3) Verses 20 to 36 are concerned with the stretch between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah.
- 4) Verses 37 to 78 deal with the leg between Ṣa'dah and the Yemeni meeting-place (*miqāt*) of Qarn al-Manāzil.
- 5) Verses 78 to 85 focus on the section of the route between Qarn al-Manāzil and Mecca.
- 6) Verses 86 to 95 are a description of the *ḥaġġ* ceremony.
- 7) Verses 96 to 105 contain a tribute to the descendants of the Quraysh tribe.
- 8) Verses 105 to 107 refer to al-Radā'ī's farewell visit to the Ka'bah.
- 9) Verses 108 to 125 document al-Radā'ī's return journey to the Yemen.
- 10) Verses 126 to 127 are the closing verse of the *Urġūzah* in which al-Radā'ī thanks God for having been able to successfully perform the *ḥaġġ*.

In recording his itinerary al-Radā'ī does not refer to the pilgrim stations

only; of all the early Arab geographers he, uniquely, includes the names of the prominent topographical features, the watering-places, the animal feeding-places and the locations of milestones.

In describing the stretch between Ṣan'ā' and Ṣa'dah (see map 2), al-Radā'ī provides us with fifty-four place names. With the exception of al-Ḥarbī (*ob.* 285/898), whose account of this same leg contains nineteen place names and as such complements that of al-Radā'ī, the total number of place names recorded collectively by the rest of the early Arab geographers is only twelve.<sup>21</sup>

For the distance between Ṣa'dah and the Yemeni meeting-place (*mīqāt*) of Qarn al-Manāzil (see map 3), the *Urğūzah* yields one hundred and thirty-three place names and, whilst al-Ḥarbī has forty, the rest of the early Arab geographers collectively provide nineteen.<sup>22</sup>

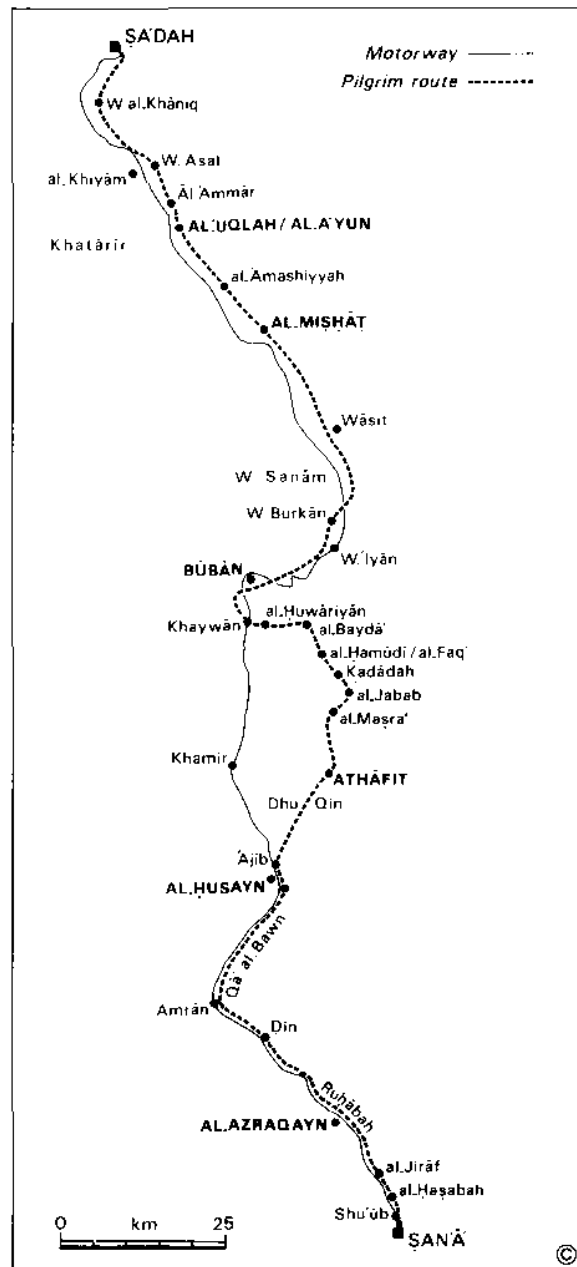
This comparison between al-Radā'ī's itinerary and the lists of the early Arab geographers is a clear indication of the significance of the *Urğūzah* for surveying the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route.

Apart from its primary value of providing the reader with a series of place names, identifying the itinerary followed by the traveller, the *Urğūzah* sheds light on other fields of interest. From the identification of tribal territories encountered, it is possible to establish the formation of local tribes at the time this poem was composed.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, two historical events, which are missing from the classical Arab sources, are brought to our attention. In both instances al-Hamdānī identifies a location where a number of Yemeni pilgrims were swept away by floods and, as the date of these events is not recorded, al-Hamdānī tells us that these disasters are referred to by citing the name of the place where they occurred. Thus, we learn of 'the year of al-Šaryānah' and 'the year of al-Ḥinṭawah'.<sup>24</sup>

In the final part of this review it will be useful to illustrate the worth of al-Radā'ī's *Urğūzah* from an archaeological point of view and we will attempt to do this by drawing attention to some of the observations of al-Radā'ī which are validated by the results of our fieldwork on the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route, which was conducted in 1989.

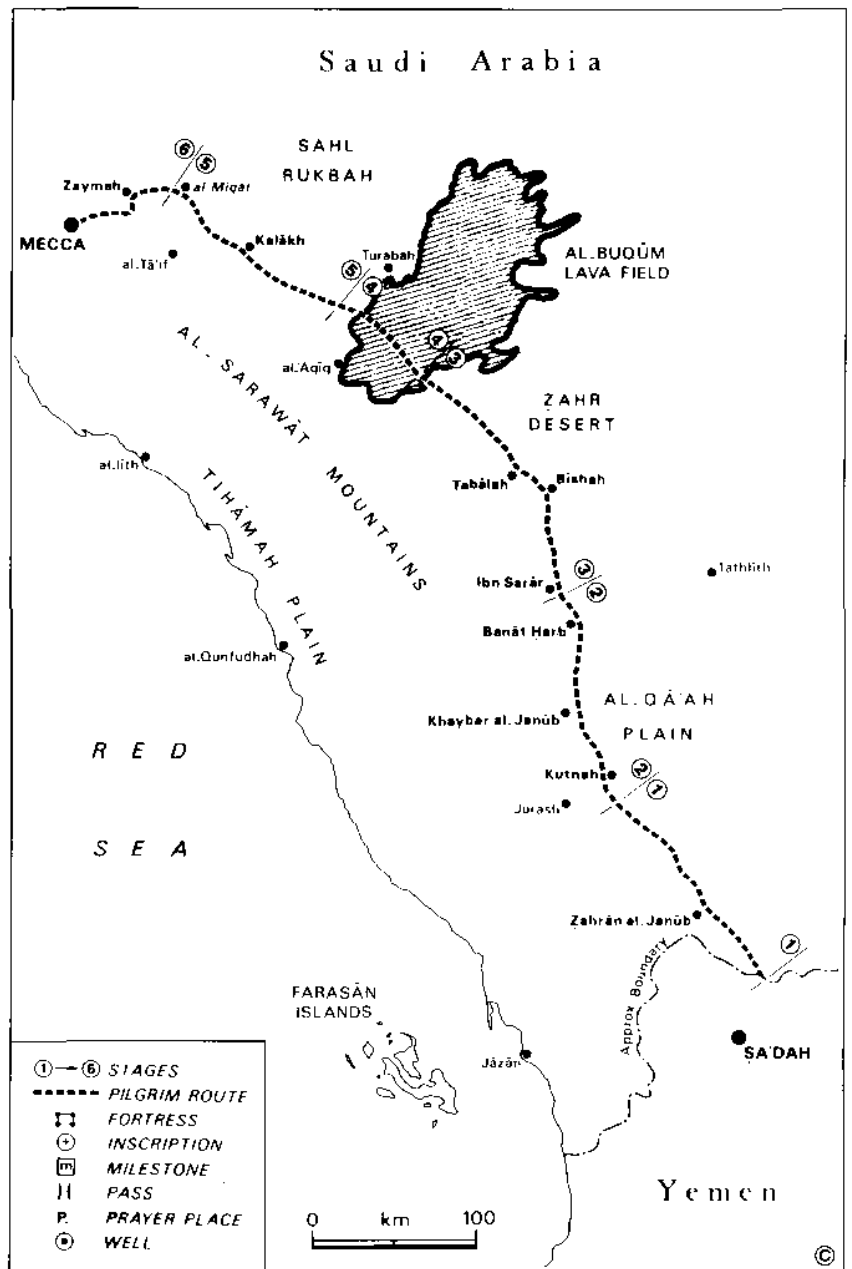
The Abbasid Caliph al-Mahdī b. al-Manṣūr (*reg.* 158–169/774–785) and the ruler of the dynasty of B. Ziyād, al-Ḥusayn b. Salāmah (*ob.* 402/1011), are credited with establishing the milestones on the Yemeni pilgrim routes.<sup>25</sup> The existence of such milestones on the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route is confirmed by al-Radā'ī. The *Urğūzah* is illuminated with thirty-five references to the existence of milestones along this route, monitoring distances in both miles and postal-stages (*sing. barīd*) and commonly termed *barīd al-ṣaḥrah*.<sup>26</sup>

Three milestones were discovered in the course of conducting our research



Map 2: The Yemeni section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.





Map 3: The Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.

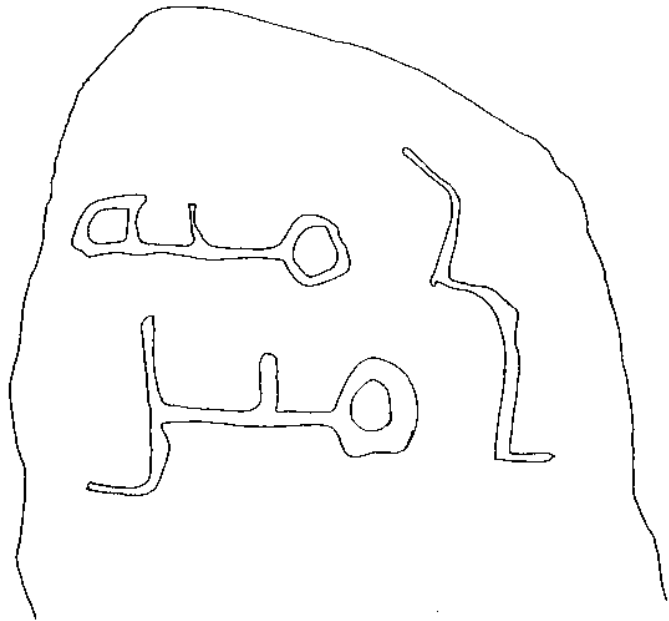


Figure 1: Milestone no. 1: Wadi al-Qudayf.

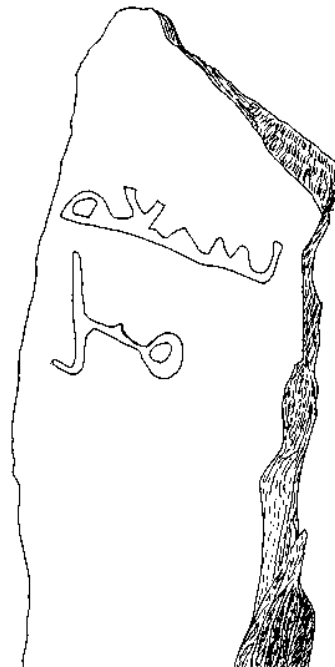


Figure 2: Milestone no. 2: Šu'bat al-Hayl.

In the *Urğūzah* al-Radā'ī refers to the existence of a milestone near the pilgrim station of al-Qurayḥā', according to his calculation the twenty-fifth postal-stage. He recites the following:

٢. إِلَى الْقُرَيْحَا سَدَدَ الْمَنَاهِجِ يَشْرَعْنَ فِي مَشْرَعِهَا الصَّهَارِجِ  
٥. حَيْثُ الْبَرِيدُ كَالْمُسْجَى الْبَائِجِ [...]

- l. 2: Heading towards the watering-place of al-Qurayḥā', by following the correct route,/they [the camels] will drink from its water-tank
- l. 5: Where there is a milestone which looks like a still, covered corpse/ [...] <sup>28</sup>

It is feasible that this milestone is the same one which we discovered in the locality of al-Qurayḥā', named after the pilgrim station which formerly existed on this site.

A predominant archaeological feature along the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route is the watering-place and this consequently furnishes us with another point of cross-reference between the findings of al-Radā'ī and those yielded by our own research.

Al-Radā'ī accurately identifies twenty watering-places along the entire length of the route and claims to have stopped at each of them. In describing the watering-places he uses the following terms: *manhal*, *mašra'*, or *ḡayl*, and he never fails to comment on the quantity of water available on his arrival.

Our fieldwork reveals that the present Yemeni section of the route is predominantly served by water-tanks (sing. *birkah*) and rain-water ponds (sing. *ma'ḡil*, or *māḡil*), whereas wells (sing. *bi'r*) are identified as a common feature of the current Saudi stretch of the route. We further found that the permanent water-flows (sing. *ḡayl*) occur on both sections of the route.

Let us now briefly consider two of the watering-places mentioned by al-Radā'ī and located just recently in the course of our fieldwork. The first example is the *Ḡayl* of al-Baradān. This watering-place is exclusively attested by al-Radā'ī, who describes it as follows:

٥. ثُمَّ عَلَى الْقَطَارِ ذِي النَّيْقِ لِلْبَرَدَانَ الْحَسَنِ الْأَيْقِي

- l. 5: Thence to al-Qaṭār (which resonates with) croaking,/thence to the pleasant, convenient watering-place of al-Baradān. <sup>29</sup>

The spring of Baradān is situated on the western bank of a major wadi called Šaj'. The main track of the pilgrim route is approximately 4 km to the north-west of the *ḡayl*.



The site of this *ḡayl* consists of a rocky pool within which there is a natural spring. Naturally, the pool is circled by smooth-faced outcrops of granite boulders. The water is stagnant and its depth, when we examined it, was 0.3 cm. The pond is currently in use and its output is relatively steady over the year, as we were informed by our local informant.

The two springs of al-Baradān and al-Mabraḥ, which are permanent and dormant respectively, are the only natural springs located on the Saudi section of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route.

Our second example is the well of Ranūn Ibn Sarār'. This watering-place is mentioned by al-Radā'ī, who links both the wadi and the well with Ranūm. He refers to it in verse 61, line 1, in the following terms:

١. حَتَّى إِذَا أوردْتها رَنُومًا      وادِيها وَالْمَنْهَلِ الْمَعْلُومًا

1. 1: Until when I brought her [his camel] to drink at Ranūm,/its wadi and well-known watering-place.<sup>30</sup>

Al-Hamdānī comments on this verse by saying that 'Ranūm is a well (*manhal*) of great depth.'

The name of the well seems to have been recently changed to Bi'r Ibn Sarār, whereas the ancient name, Ranūm (and not Zanūm as in Müller's edition of the *Ṣifah*), is nowadays preserved only in the wadi.

The well itself is dug in a bed of Wādī Ranūm and is still in use today. The opening of the well measures *ca.* 1.5 m in diameter. Its circular rim is *ca.* 0.5 m in height from ground level and the shaft of the well is around 9 m in depth.

A further feature of archaeological interest included in the *Urġūzah* is the Mosque of Ḥālid (see pl. III). This is the only mosque mentioned by al-Radā'ī and he informs us in verse 42, line 3:

٣. لِمَسْجِدِ إِحْالِدٍ مُقَابِرَةٌ      تُؤَيِّلُهُ الْأَنْجِدِ فِيهَا قَارِبَةٌ

1. 3: She [his camel] is drawing near to the mosque of Ḥālid,/she is approaching in the highlands of al-Thuwaylah.<sup>31</sup>

Al-Hamdānī, in his turn, clarifies al-Radā'ī's verses by adding that the Mosque of Ḥālid is situated at the foot of al-Thuwaylah. It has short walls and it is roofless.' Nowadays this small mosque is still known to the local inhabitants by its ancient appellation and its design and construction remain consistent with al-Hamdānī's description.

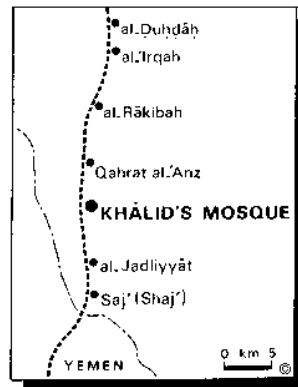
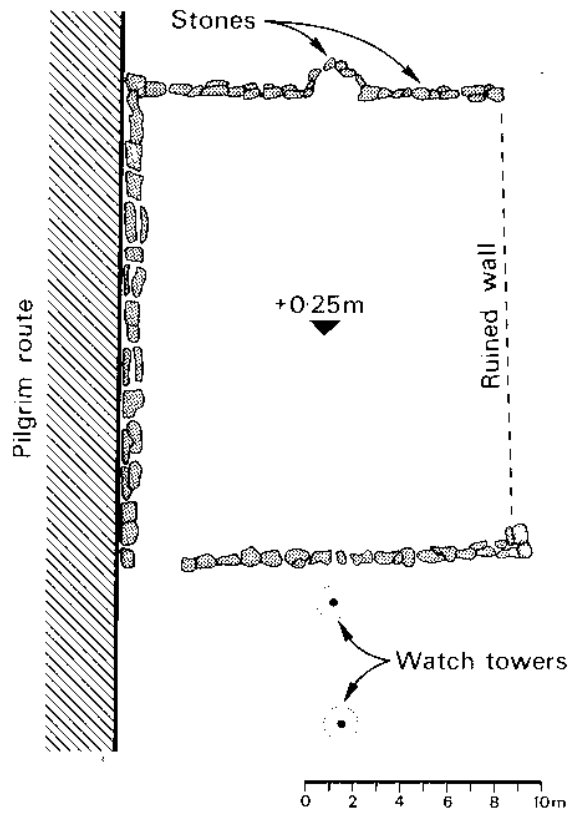


Figure 3: Top: plan of the mosque of Khālid, situated on the Saudi section of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.

The mosque is bordered north-north-east by Wadi ‘Amdān and west-north-west by the mountain chain known locally as Qahrāt al-Ḍi’āb and the tract of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route itself. South-south-east it is demarcated by a vast plain, which local inhabitants refer to as al-‘Aṣīdah.

This mosque is designed as a simple rectangle and it is roofless. The *qiblah* wall measures *ca.* 15.6 m in length and the *mihrab*, which measures *ca.* 2 m in width and *ca.* 1 m in depth, is pointed in shape. The western wall measures 21 m in length and *ca.* 0.5 m in thickness. The main entrance to the mosque, which measures around 2 m in width, is located in the south-western corner of the mosque.

Finally, any evaluation of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route and the *Urġūzah*, in which it is documented, would not be complete without saying a few words about the course of the route and the terrain through which it passes and noting what al-Radā’ī says on both of these counts.

Al-Radā’ī uniquely documents the landscape of those regions through which the route passes. For the flat country, he applies one of the following terms: *ṣayhad*, *suḥb faḍfad* or *sabsab*, whilst the rugged land is termed *ġarāwil* or *wa’t*.

From Wadi Ṣa’ūb in Ṣan’ā’ the course of the route heads (north-) north-west towards Ṣa’dah, following approximately the same course as the modern motorway connecting Ṣan’ā’ with Ṣa’dah. This Yemeni section of the route is demarcated in three areas only, *viz* in Ġūlat ‘Aġīb, al-Maṣra’, and al-Faq’.

The pass of al-Faq’, for example, is referred to in verse 25, line 5:

• . إلى تَقِيلِ الْمَقْعِ ذِي الْعَقَابِ      إلى الْحَوَارِيِّينَ فِي أَفْتِرَابِ

l. 5: To the defile of al-Faq’, where the route inclines, to al-Ḥuwāriyyayn, which [we] are approaching.<sup>32</sup>

The defile of al-Faq’, which is now known as ‘Aqabat al-Ḥamūdī, is situated *ca.* 4 km north-west of the station of al-Maṣra’. It is bordered by Ḥaywān to the east, and by the village of Bayt al-Aqra’ (or al-Qur’ān) and Ġabal ‘Uġmir to the west.

The average width of the route in this pass is between 3.5 m and 5 m and it is interesting to note that very few of its paved sections have survived until today.

The Saudi section of the route is largely consumed and widely demarcated in mountainous terrain. The most rugged areas are the mountain range of al-Sarāh and the lava-field of al-Buqūm, whereas flat stretches are found in the plains of al-Qā’ah, Ḍahr, and Rukbah. The paving of the track of the route

consumed in mountain passes and lava-fields is a prominent feature of the Saudi section of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route. In total, twenty-seven defiles were recorded during the course of our fieldwork and the major ones—i.e. al-Maṇḍaj, al-Šafšaf, and al-Nahqah—are all referred to precisely in the *Urğūzah*.

The pass of al-Maṇḍaj is mentioned in verse 44, line 2:

٢ . مَا لَكَ بِالظَّلِيْفِ مِنْ مَعْرَجٍ قَاطِئِي لَوْعَتِهِ مِنْ مَخْرَجٍ

- l. 2: You [she-camel] have no easy path up to al-Zalīf, /so you should seek an exit from its rugged terrain.<sup>33</sup>

This pass, which is known locally as al-Maṣlūlah, is situated about 10 km south-east of the town of Zahrān al-Ġanūb.

It is the longest and the best preserved paved section of the entire pilgrim route. The total length of this section of the road is roughly 2 km, oriented in a straight line and its width fluctuates between 5 m and 8 m. The track of this part of the route starts and ends with a single, shouldered path, which occasionally splits into dual pathways. In some parts of the route, a lined wall of five to seven courses is constructed on both sides of the main path, forming a corridor.

As a matter of fact, the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route only negotiates one lava-field and this is Ḥarrat al-Buqūm. Al-Radā'ī provides us with nine place-names within this lava-field and he describes meticulously the texture of the path.

Verses 67 to 69 narrate al-Radā'ī's passage through this lava-field and, in connection with his entry into and departure from it, the word *kurā'* is used.<sup>34</sup> We understand that *kurā' al-harrah* means an entrance to, or the extreme fringe of, any lava-field which has been cleared of all obstructing rocks in order to create a passage for travellers. He recites the following in verse 67, lines 4f.:

٤ . يَمَارِي عَافٍ مِنَ الْإِنْقَابِ تُمُّ مَكْرَاعِ الْبَابِ أَيُّ بَابٍ  
٥ . بَابِ صُخُورِ النَّحْرَةِ الصَّلَابِ يَا رَبِّ سَلِّمْهَا مِنَ الْأَوْصَابِ

- l. 4: With a sound [and] solid hoof, not worn down, /she [his camel] is approaching the *kurā'*, the entrance, what an entrance!  
The entrance to the craggy volcanic tract, /O my Lord, deliver her from suffering<sup>35</sup>

In the course of our surveying of Ḥarrat al-Buqūm, both the southern and northern *kurā'*s were registered.



The southern *kurā'*, for example, is situated approximately 10 km to the north-west of the village of Uġrub. The area in which this southern entrance is situated is presently called Wadi Ḍurā' and proceeds, at approximately 325 degrees, for a distance of about 200 m before reaching the main body of the lava-field. Throughout this connecting segment, the route averages 8 m in width and is unpaved; the margins of the route, however, are continuously marked out with loose volcanic stones, which ultimately form two parallel shoulders for the main track.

As soon as the route enters the southern *kurā'* of the lava-field, its structure and orientation alter. The route narrows to around 6 m in width and its surface is perfectly paved with carefully selected volcanic slabs. As far as one can tell, no binding materials were applied in the process of paving. An interesting feature of the paved causeway is that a series of steps is constructed into it at irregular intervals. These appear to act as a harness for the intervening paved segments.

In spite of the brief nature of this study, as a forerunner in this field of research, it is hoped that I have managed to throw some light on the relevance of al-Radā'ī's *Urġūzah* to a geographical and archaeological examination of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route.

### Notes and References

1. I would like to thank Prof. G. Rex Smith for his assistance in reading the manuscript of this paper.
2. M.A.R. Al-Thenayian, 'An Archaeological Study of the Yemeni Highland Pilgrim Route between Ṣan'ā' and Mecca', 2 vols, PhD thesis, University of Durham, 1993, *passim*.
3. Cf. e.g. al-Ḥasan b. Aḥmad al-Ḥamdānī, *Ṣifat Jazīrat al-'Arab*, ed. D.H. Müller (Leiden, 1884), 338; H.C. Kay, *Yaman: its Early Mediaeval History* [containing text and translation of the History of Naġm al-Dīn 'Umārah al-Ḥakamī, with excerpts from al-Ġanadī and Ibn Ḥaldūn] (London, 1892), 7; Naġm al-Dīn b. 'Alī al-Ḥakamī, *Tārīḥ al-Yaman, (al-musammā) al-Muḥīd fī aḥbār Ṣan'ā' wa-Zabīd*, ed. M. b. 'A. al-Akwa', 3rd ed. (Ṣan'ā', 1985), 67; Yahyā b. al-Ḥusayn, *Ġāyat al-amānī fī aḥbār al-quṭr al-Yamānī*, ed. S'A.F. 'Āṣūr (Cairo, 1968), 248.
4. This name refers to the Sabaean ruler (*tubba'*) who held office between ca AD 378 and 415. It is believed that, after his conversion to the Jewish faith, he travelled to Meḍina via this route. See 'Alī b. al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Mas'ūdī, *Murūġ al-ḍahab wa-mā'adin al-ġawhar*, ed. M. 'Abd al-Ḥamid (Cairo, 1377/1958), II, 76f.; H. St John B. Philby, *Arabian Highlands* (New York, 1952), 259.
5. This term almost certainly relates to the unsuccessful military campaign of Abrahah, the Abyssinian viceroy of the Yemen, in ca AD 570. See Qur'an CV: 1-5; A.F.L. Beeston, 'Abraha', *EI*<sup>2</sup>, I (1960) 102f.; S.A. Bonebakker, 'Abū riġāl', *EI*<sup>2</sup>, I (1960) 144f.

6. This appellation, used only in Saudi Arabia, is a reference to the military conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Yemen in 1934, during the course of which the Saudi forces advanced along certain stretches of the Yemeni highland pilgrim route.
7. Al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 151f.
8. Such as Raydah, Ḥaywān, Bīṣah, and Tabālah.
9. Al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 426f.
10. Ibid., xxxviiiif.
11. See al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 235.
12. *Ṣifah*, 234.
13. Abū 'Abdallāh Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *Mu'ğam al-buldān* (Beirut, 1955-7) III, 39f., s.v. Radā'; al-Hamdānī, loc. cit.
14. Loc. cit.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 235, v. 1, l. 3.
18. Detailed information about this watering-place can be found in al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 177-180.
19. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 262, v. 72, l. 2.
20. Ibid., 265, v. 80, l. 5.
21. See al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', II, table nos. 1 and 2.
22. See ibid., table nos. 3 and 4.
23. Cf. e.g. al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 243, v. 26, ll. 1-2.
24. Ibid., 260, v. 68; 263, v. 74.
25. Muḥammad b. Ġarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa-al-Mulūk*, ed. M.J. De Goeje (Leiden, 1965-6) III, 517; Kay, *Yaman*, 9; 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī al-Ṣaybānī Ibn al-Dayba', *Buğyat al-mustafid fī tārīḥ madīnat Zabīd*, ed. 'A.A. al-Ḥibṣī (Ṣan'ā', 1979) 40; 'Abdallāh al-Ṭayyib b. 'Abdallāh b. Aḥmad Bā Maḥramah, *Tārīḥ Ṭağr 'Adan*, ed. O. Löfgren, 2nd ed. (Beirut, 1407/1986) 60.
26. Cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', II, table no. 12.
27. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 258; cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 257f.
28. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 259, v. 66, ll. 2, 5; cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 260f.
29. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 249, v. 41, l. 5; cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 164f.
30. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 257; cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 173f.
31. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 249; cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 181f.
32. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 243; cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 113f.
33. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 250; cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 140f.
34. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 259-261.
35. Al-Hamdānī, *Ṣifah*, 259; cf. al-Thenayian, 'Yemeni Highland', I, 151f.