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## **Kamna**

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# KAMNA / KAMINAHŪ

## (KINGDOM AND TRIBE)

*THEMATIC DICTIONARY OF ANCIENT ARABIA,*

(DIR. J. SCHIETTECATTE), 2023.

*Kaminahū (Sab. Kmnhw) was an important tribe and city-state in the Jawf Valley in the 8th–6th centuries BCE.*

### Territory, pantheon and institutions

The history of Kaminahū is known from some sixty ancient South Arabian inscriptions, most of which are dated to the 8th-6th centuries BCE. The tribe of Kaminahū formed a small kingdom, consisting of the homonymous city (see [Kamna](#)) and its surroundings: the site of al-Naṣā'ib and the [Banāt 'Ad temple](#) ([Kamna 7](#); Arbach & Darles 2019), and for some periods of time, the site of Ḥarāshif, as well as the cities of Manhayat (now Ḥizmat Abī Thawr) and al-Ṣanaf, east of [al-Bayḍā'](#) ([MAFRAY-aṣ-Ṣanaf 1](#)) (Robin 1992, Schiettecatte 2011: 70–73; Arbach & Rossi 2015).

The city of Kaminahū was one of the city-states of the Jawf Valley, and was characterised by the use of the [Minaic](#) language. It had its own pantheon: Nab'al, Madahū, Ildalīl, 'Athtar dhū-Raḥbah and 'Athtar Ḥagr (Robin 1992, 2002).

Decision-making in the city was collegial, with a Council of Twelve (*'hl tny 's<sup>2</sup>rn*) assisting the king in his public decisions. At the same time, the inscriptions reflect the importance of the religious institution and its close links with political institutions (Robin 2002; Arbach & Rossi 2014). Ministers (*qyn*) of the king performed the role of [priests](#) (*s<sup>2</sup>w'*, e.g., [Kamna 10, 24, 25](#)). An assembly/congregation (*'hl*) was in charge of the cult of 'Athtar Raḥbah ([Kamna 26](#)); the leadership of the cult of Nab'al was assumed by a personage bearing the title of 'king' (*mlk 'hl Nb'l* - [MŞM 3645](#)); a council of the god Madahū issued decrees with the deity ([MŞM 3634](#)).

### The city-state in the 8th century BCE

During the first half of the 8th century BCE, the small kingdom of Kaminahū was allied with the neighbouring city-state [Nashshān](#). On the bas-reliefs of the *intra muros* temple of Nashshān, Nab'al, the tutelary god of Kaminahū is depicted alongside the deities of Nashshān and those of the other Jawf city-states (Arbach & Audouin 2004). The first known rulers of Kaminahū certainly date from this period, although the inscriptions do not explicitly refer to them as kings. They are Dhahab'amar Rawyān son of Alīmyada' ([MAFRAY-aṣ-Ṣanaf 1](#)) and Yahzaḥ Rad'ān son of Sumhūsamī', builder of the Yasma'qahal temple ([al-Jawf](#)

04.5, 04.6). His son, Ilīsamīʿ Amar, succeeded him and undertook work on the temple of Nabʿal ([Kamna 28](#)).

The authority exercised by Kaminahū at that time over the upper Jawf and al-Ṣanaf may have posed a threat to the kingdoms of Nashshān and its ally Sabaʿ. This would explain the military intervention of the Sabaeen ruler (*mkrb*) Yathaʿamar Watār son of Yakrubmalik against Kaminahū. This event is reported in a dedication to Aranyadaʿ in his *intra muros* temple in Nashshān ([AO 31929](#)): ‘when Aranyadaʿ\* came back from Kaminahū to Nashshān, at the time of Yathaʿamar, and when Yathaʿamar established the territories of Aranyadaʿ and Nashshān and avenged Nashshān against Kaminahū’ (Caubet & Gajda 2003). The event is also mentioned in the account of the Sabaeen ruler Yathaʿamar Watār in *Ṣirwāḥ* ([DAI Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50](#)), where Sabaʿ is said to take possession of Manhayat, until then under Kaminahū’s authority (Nebes 2016: 9–38).

After this intervention, the city-state of Kaminahū seemed to fall within Sabaeen influence, yet remained autonomous, as reflected by the permanence of its kings and its pantheon. The Sabaeans settled on the site. The cult of the Sabaeen tutelary god *Almaqah* was introduced there and a temple may have been dedicated to him ([Kamna 30A, 30B, 31, 32, 33](#)). Finally, the Sabaeen rulers Yadaʿīl and Yathaʿamar Bayān are invoked alongside the rulers of Kaminahū ([Kamna 30A, 30B, 31 and 32](#)). These synchronisms date the few rulers of Kaminahū to the second half of the 8th century BCE (Arbach & Rossi 2015).

## Kaminahū in the 7th-6th centuries BCE

At the beginning of the 7th century BCE, during the reign of Nabaṭʿalī – probably Nabaṭʿalī Dharḥān son of Yashhurmalik ([Kamna 26](#)) –, the city-state of Kaminahū was the ally of Sabaʿ in the military campaigns led by the Sabaeen ruler *Karibʿīl Watar* against Nashshān ([RES 3945](#)). The territories formerly under Nashshān control reverted to him.

A text that appears to be from this period dates the presence of a governor (‘*qb*) of Sabaʿ at the head of the city of Kaminahū for seven months during the crushing of Nashshān ([Kamna 34](#)). The city nevertheless seems to have retained its autonomy.

During the second half of the 7th and probably the 6th centuries BCE, a few texts were authored by kings of Kaminahū: Ilīsamīʿ Nabaṭ son of Nabaṭʿalī, who fortified the city of Nashq (now al-Bayḍāʿ), then under Sabaeen control ([CIH 377](#)), and Ilīsamīʿ in co-regency with Dhamarkarib ([MŞM 3645](#)).

## The end of the kingdom of Kaminahū

During the 6th–5th centuries BCE a king of Kaminahū (e.g., [MŞM 4573, FR-Ṣanʿā 5](#)) alternated with a Sabaeen governor ([DhM 383](#)). The second half of the first millennium BCE is very poorly documented. Only a king of Kaminahū is

known there, Wahab son of Mas'ūd, ca. 2nd century BCE, mentioned in an inscription from [Haram](#) ([Haram 38](#)).

Like several other cities in the Jawf Valley, Kaminahū was devastated by the Roman army of [Aelius Gallus](#) in 26–25 BC. ([Plin. HN VI.32.160](#)).

In the tenth century CE, Kamna is mentioned as a ruin (*kharibat*) ([al-Hamdānī/Müller, Şifa 167](#)).

Mounir Arbach

## List of the rulers of Kaminahū

Date	Ruler's name	Synchronism
8th cent. BCE	Dhahabamar Rawyān son of Ilīmyada' ( <a href="#">Kamna 1</a> )	
	...	
	Yahzaḥ Rad'ān son of Sumhūsamī' ( <a href="#">al-Jawf 04.5</a> , <a href="#">al-Jawf 04.6</a> )	
	Ilīsamī' Amar son of Yahzaḥ ( <a href="#">Kamna 28</a> )	
	...	
	Yadhraḥmalik ( <a href="#">Kamna 31</a> )	
	Waqah'ab + Yadhraḥmalik ( <a href="#">Kamna 24</a> )	
	'Ammīkarib + Waqah'ab ( <a href="#">Kamna 25</a> , <a href="#">Kamna 29</a> )	
	Waqah'ab + Nabaṭ'alī ( <a href="#">MŞM 3630</a> )	
	Nabaṭ'alī ( <a href="#">Kamna 22</a> , <a href="#">YM 8871</a> )	
	Nabaṭ'alī + 'Ammī[karib] ( <a href="#">Kamna 19</a> )	
	'Ammīkarib + Bi'athtar ( <a href="#">Kamna 10</a> )	
	'Ammīkarib + Yashhurmalik	Yada''īl + Yatha''amar (Saba') ( <a href="#">Kamna 30A</a> , <a href="#">30B</a> )
	Nabaṭ'alī ( <a href="#">Kamna 32</a> )	Yatha''amar + Dhamar'alī (Saba')
		Yaqahmalik (Nashshān)
		Yatha''īl + Şabḥum (Ma'īn)
	...	
	Muhaqim + Ilīsamī' ( <a href="#">Kamna 9</a> )	
	Ilīsamī' ( <a href="#">Kamna 7</a> )	

Date	Ruler's name	Synchronism
7th cent. BCE	Nabaṭ' alī Amar son of Ilīsamī' (al-Ḥarāshif 2, <a href="#">Kamna 17</a> )	
	Nabaṭ' alī ( <a href="#">RES 3945</a> )	Karib' il Watār son of Dhamar' alī (Saba')
	Nabaṭ' alī son of Yashhurmalik ( <a href="#">Kamna 26</a> )	
	...	
6th–5th cent. BCE	Ilīsamī' Nabaṭ son of Nabaṭ' alī ( <a href="#">CIH 377</a> )	
	Ilīsamī' + Dhamarkarib ( <a href="#">MŞM 3645</a> )	
	...	
	Ilīsamī' Dharḥān ( <a href="#">YM 10886</a> )	
	Ilīsamī' ( <a href="#">al-Jawf 04.7</a> )	
	Dhamarkarib Riyām son of Ilīsamī' ( <a href="#">MŞM 4573</a> , <a href="#">Fr-Şan' ā' 5</a> , ...)	Sumhū' alī (Saba')
... ..		
3rd–2nd cent. BCE	Dhahabum son of Mas'ūdum ( <a href="#">Haram 38</a> )	
	See also <a href="#">Kamna (site)</a>	

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