

# The “One” God in a Safaitic Inscription<sup>1</sup>

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## 1 Introduction

Under the lemma *whd* in the 2015 edition of my Safaitic lexicon,<sup>2</sup> I identified an invocation to a hitherto unknown deity, *'hd* ‘One’, which I suggested was a title for the Jewish God. I left questions about how this deity, here referred to by the monotheistic epithet *par excellence*, ended up in an invocation beside Allāt, the ancient Arabian goddess. In this paper, I revisit this inscription to produce a new edition of the text and explore the circumstances that could have led to our earliest recorded instance of Arabian “shirk” (association).<sup>3</sup>

Before beginning, a few words on the Safaitic inscriptions are in order. Safaitic is the name of a script and writing tradition concentrated in the Syro-Jordanian Ḥarrah, the basalt desert stretching from the Ḥawrān to northern Arabia. The inscriptions, carved in a purely consonantal alphabet, attest a continuum of Old Arabic dialects, spoken by the nomadic-pastoralist inhabitants of this land some twenty centuries ago. While the exact chronological boundaries of Safaitic remain unclear, their authors appear to have been active in Nabataean and Roman periods, and a sizable minority of texts date between the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BCE and 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE.

The Safaitic inscriptions fall into multiple genres, ranging from building inscriptions and funerary monuments to simple graffiti bearing personal names. The inscriptions are composed according to strict structural formulae, beginning with a personal name, continuing with a narrative and terminating in an invocation, usually for the well-being of the author and for those who read the inscription and curses upon anyone who would vandalize the text. Narratives follow a small number of themes, usually describing dangerous and uncertain activities such as pasturing, raiding, patrolling, and migrating. These are often followed by prayers to the gods that are thematically connected with what precedes: authors going on a raid will make an invocation for spoil, those pasturing request security, others keeping watch for the rains may petition for precipitation. The inscription we will discuss in the present article is in all these respects a typical Safaitic text, but with one exception: the invocation to the deity *'hd*.

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<sup>1</sup> Note the following conventions: {} = damaged letter; [] = restored letter; *s* = *s*<sup>1</sup> (Classical Arabic *sīn*) and *ś* = *s*<sup>2</sup> (Classical Arabic *šīn*). The meanings of all vocabulary cited in this article are based on the Safaitic Dictionary (Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019) and the grammatical interpretations rely on Al-Jallad 2019 and 2015.

<sup>2</sup> Al-Jallad 2015, s.v. For the latest grammatical description of Safaitic, see Al-Jallad 2019; see Al-Jallad and Jaworska (2019) for the most up-to-date lexicon of Safaitic.

<sup>3</sup> I thank Daniel A. Beck for this clever way of putting it.

## 2 The inscription KRS 1131

This inscription was discovered in 1989 during the Basalt Desert Rescue Surveys, carried out by G.M.H. King in northern Jordan and remains, as far as one can know, *in situ*. It is published online in the OCIANA database without a philological commentary. Its author employed a thin instrument to carve the glyphs in the so-called *fine script*.<sup>4</sup>

### **Reading and translation**

*l 'm[d] bn ḥd bn 'bgr bn 'šḥr bn šḥtr w ḥl syr h-dr m'dy w ḥrṣ 'hl-h ḥḍr f h 'ḥd w h lt slm w ḡnmt l-ḡ d'y*

'By 'md son of Ḥd son of 'bgr son of 'šḥr son of šḥtr and he camped having returned to this place of water from a raid/having gone on a raid; and he kept watch for his family while camping near water so O 'ḥd and O Allāt may he be secure; and may he who would read (this writing) have spoil.'

### 2.1 Philological Commentary

**'m[d]:** While the first name is clearly 'm on the photograph, a common name in the Safaitic onomasticon,<sup>5</sup> this seems to be the result of a writing error. Three other texts exist attesting an individual named 'md with the same father and grandfather, and in one case, the same great grandfather.

KRS 1283: *l 'md bn ḥd bn 'bgr*

KRS 1284: *l 'md bn ḥd bn 'bgr bn 'šḥr bn šḥtr bn mr' bn 'ḍr bn 'ḡnt bn 'slm*

KRS 2301: *l 'md bn ḥd bn 'bgr w qṣf f h lh ḡyrt l-ḡ qṣf*

'By 'md son of Ḥd son of 'Abgar and he grieved (for the dead) so O Allāh may he who grieves be compensated with (lit. have) blood money'

While it is possible that 'm was intended here and that this individual was a brother of 'md, it seems more likely considering the fact that 'md was a rather prolific writer that this is one of his inscriptions. I therefore suggest restoring the name as 'm[d].<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> On the classification of the various script types in Safaitic, see Clark (1979, 70–71).

<sup>5</sup> The name is attested 1721 times, including all positions in the lineage chain. It should likely be vocalized as /'amm/, attested frequently in Greek transcription as Ἀμμος, and likely means 'paternal kinsman' (Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019, s.v.).

<sup>6</sup> For an excellent discussion on the Classical Arabic equivalents of this name, see Overlaet, Macdonald, and Stein 2016.

**‘dy:** Context easily permits the interpretation of *‘dy* as the name of a place in the desert. However, in Safaitic epigraphy (and certainly other traditions), ‘toponym’ is often jargon for “we don’t know”, and is a label frequently given to words which do not lend themselves to a straightforward interpretation based on the vocabulary of the classical Semitic languages. In this case, other possibilities are available. The term may be related to Aramaic *‘dy* ‘spoil’, ‘booty’, and Classical Arabic *‘udiya* ‘*alay-hi* ‘he had his property stolen’. I therefore suggest that *‘dy* is an equivalent of *ġzz* ‘to raid’, and that the author had returned to the Ḥarrah from an incursion, perhaps against a group pasturing their animals in the inner desert.<sup>7</sup> The other attestations of this word support my suggested meaning.

National Museum of Qatar 1:<sup>8</sup>

*l mn`t bn ḥ{b}rt bn tm bn `ys bn gm{h}{s} bn {ġ}sm d-`l b{y}d w `dy f h dśr ġnmt*

By Mn`t son of {Ḥbrt} son of Tm son of `ys son of {Gmhs} son of {Ġsm} of the lineage of {Byd} and he went on a raid so Dśr let there be spoil!

Al-Mafraq Museum 59:<sup>9</sup>

*l blq {b}n wsmt h-ḥmr w `dy b-`śll*

By Blq son of Wsmt is (the drawing of) the donkey and he raided (the tribe of) `śll.

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<sup>7</sup> *ṣyr* is used to refer to movement away from the inner desert (*mabr*) back to water, the opposite of *‘śrq* ‘to move/migrate to the inner desert’; on these terms, see Macdonald 1992.

<sup>8</sup> This text was edited on OCIANA, and there the verb *‘dy* is translated as a passive meaning ‘he was robbed’. This meaning seems to be in contradiction with the request for booty – usually an author will invoke the gods for vengeance after they have been wrong. Booty and spoil on the other hand suit a prayer before setting off for a raid.

<sup>9</sup> This is my reading and interpretation (see image 2). The text is published and edited on OCIANA as follows: *l blqḥn w smt l-ḥmr w `dy b-`śll* ‘By Blqḥn and he came back with a donkey which he had been robbed from the lineage of `śll’ [sic]. The edition does not give an explanation as to why *smt* is translated as ‘he came back’, why the preposition *l-* is translated as ‘with’ and why *b-* is translated as ‘from’, nor is there any explanation of the unattested name *blqḥn*. In fact, it is clear from the photograph that the text has been misread. The genealogy in fact contains two names – the first is *blq*, which is attested 16 times in the corpus, and the second is *wsmt*, attested 49 times. A vandal seems to have added a small line to the *b* of the patronymic *bn*, causing it to resemble a *ḥ*. The letter the edition took as an *l* before *ḥmr* is clearly an *h*, giving us the definite article/demonstrative prefix. The inscription now begins with a two-generation genealogy and falls into the genre of ‘signing rock art’. A drawing of man with a spear riding a donkey accompanies this text, and perhaps illustrates the raid mentioned in the narrative component of the inscription. *‘śll* is a well-attested tribal group, e.g. RWQ 65.

While the semantic range of *ʿdy* seems clear, its morphological identity is more difficult to establish. A noun *ʿady* ‘raiding’ or ‘a raid’ is possible, rendering ‘he returned from raiding’ or ‘he returned from a raid’. If we take the *m* preceding it as part of the word, we may take the word as a D-stem active participle of the verb *ʿaddaya* ‘to raid, obtain spoil’, giving us *moʿaddīya*, an accusative of circumstance, here to be understood with a perfective meaning.<sup>10</sup>

### 3 The deity *ʿhd*

Following the narrative, the author petitions two gods for security and the protection of those who read and invoke his text. The second deity, *lt* = /Allāt/, is the most frequently invoked deity in the Safaitic inscriptions.<sup>11</sup> She is called upon beside another god, a unique deity named *ʿhd*, attested for the first, and as far as I know, only time in this text. The etymology is clear: ‘One’. While writers often invoke Allāt alongside other gods, especially Dusares, whom many scholars regard as her partner, it would be odd to take *ʿhd* as an epithet of the chief Nabataean deity.<sup>12</sup> Dusares is invoked hundreds of times and there are no examples of him being referred to by an epithet. Moreover, there is no evidence from the Nabataean tradition that he was given such a title, or that ‘oneness’ was a characteristic associated with him.

The ‘One’ is a known attribute of the Jewish god, clearly reflected in the Shema<sup>13</sup> Deut. 6:4 “Hear, O Israel, YHWH is our lord, YHWH is ‘One’, and also Zechariah 14:9 ‘on that day, YHWH will be one and his name (is) ‘One’.<sup>13</sup> In Hebrew liturgical poetry of Late Antiquity, the most common literary form is the use of metonymy (*kinnui*), usually an allusion to scripture. In such a context, *ʿeḥad* could be used as an epithet for God, and indeed an attestation of this is found in a Piyut of Shimʿon bar Megas.<sup>14</sup> Qurʾan 112, which Neuwirth convincingly argues is an engagement with the Jewish Shema<sup>15</sup>, recasts the declaration, naming Allāh as the ‘One’: *qul huwa llāhu ʿaḥad*, which gave rise to the divine epithet: *al-ʿaḥadu* ‘the One’.

#### 3.1 Context

There is abundant evidence for contact between the nomads of the Ḥarrah and the Jews,<sup>16</sup> in particular in the form of references to the Herodian rules of the Ḥawrān, which

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<sup>10</sup> See Al-Jallad (2015: 115) on the perfective meaning of the participle.

<sup>11</sup> According to OCIANA, 1461 inscriptions contain invocations to her; see Bennett (2014, 45).

<sup>12</sup> Healey 2001, 108.

<sup>13</sup> Gordon 1970. I thank Professor G. Rendsburg for this helpful reference.

<sup>14</sup> Yahalom 1984, 222. I thank Prof. M. Swartz for this helpful reference.

<sup>15</sup> Neuwirth 2007, 26.

<sup>16</sup> The Jews appear as *yhd* /yahūd/ and *yhdy* /yahūdeyy/ in the inscriptions.

M.C.A. Macdonald has assembled in a masterful way in his articles from 1995 and 2004.<sup>17</sup> The Herodian rulers governed the Ḥawrān for more than a century and several inscriptions are dated by references to events concerning them.<sup>18</sup> Many less precise references to the ‘Jews’, *yhd*, *yhdy*, and *’l yhd*, are also found, but as Macdonald has already explained, in most cases these are too vague to allow for the precise identification of the events or peoples involved.<sup>19</sup> When taken together, however, it seems that events involving the Jews were of some concern to the inhabitants of the Ḥarrah, and point to a variety of relationships between the two groups.

Despite such contact, there is so far no evidence for the existence of Jewish nomadic tribes in the Ḥarrah. There is only one inscription known to me written by a man with a Jewish name, *ysf* (*yôṣēp* = Joseph) but we must keep in mind that this text is known only from a crude hand copy.<sup>20</sup> The short inscription, consisting of just two names, makes it impossible to identify its author’s confessional background – considering that some nomads had Greek and Latin names, it is possible that *ysf* belongs to this marginal category of anthroponyms.

The fact that our author invokes *’hd* beside Allāt prevents us from regarding this text as a monotheistic Jewish inscription. So then, what are we to make of it? The polytheistic climate of the Ḥarrah allowed the pious to seek favor from any source, both local and outside deities. Many of the gods, and certainly the most common, belong to the familiar ancient Arabian stock, *lt* (Allāt), *rḍw/y* (*roṣaw/y*), *yṯ* (*yayṯe*), *lh* (Allāh), etc., other gods originate among neighboring peoples. Nabataean deities are popular, such as Dusares and Shayḥaqqawm. Baḥsamīn, whose temple was located in the town of Seḥī, was the primary god invoked for rain. While these deities came from beyond the Ḥarrah, they seem to have been fully assimilated into the local pantheon as evidenced by their popularity.<sup>21</sup>

The nomads sometimes called explicitly upon the deities they felt to be foreign: ASFF 122 invokes the god of the people of Ḥabgar, perhaps the Edessans (*h ’lh ’bgr*), while the author of Khunp 1 calls upon the Tyche of the Nabataeans (*gdnbt*).<sup>22</sup> Sometimes authors would invoke the tutelary gods of their allies. The author of C 2446 petitions both the Tyche of the tribe of *’wd* (*gd’wd*) and of the tribe Ḍf (*gdḍf*) for vengeance against the man who killed his brother; the same pair is invoked in KRS 1683. Unfortunately, neither author mentions his lineage group, so we cannot know if they belonged to either tribe. Yet, the pairing of the two seems to reflect an alliance between the two confederations, attested

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<sup>17</sup> Macdonald 1995 and 2014, 151–52. For an excellent discussion on the epigraphic evidence for the interaction between the nomads of the Ḥawrān and settled peoples, see Macdonald (2009).

<sup>18</sup> For example, *snt myt grfš h-mlk* ‘the year Agrippa the king died’ (SESP.U 8); *snt kbs h-mlk grfš h-mdnt* ‘the year king Agrippa laid siege to the city’ (HN 91); on these references, see Macdonald 2014: 152.

<sup>19</sup> Macdonald 1995: 285. See the appendix following this article for a list of these references.

<sup>20</sup> ISB 330: *l-ysf bn bgd*

<sup>21</sup> Bennett 2014, 45.

<sup>22</sup> This is the siglum for the inscription given in OCIANA. It was first published by Hayajneh and Ababneh (2015) and re-edited the same year by Al-Jallad and Macdonald (2015).

in RWQ 346: *snt t'ql 'l ḏf w 'l 'wḏ* ‘the year the lineages of Ḍf and ‘wḏ formed an alliance’. Khunp 1 contains an elaborate prayer for the destruction of the author’s enemy. He invokes gods from across the region, presumably in hope that one would hear his call and grant him his request for retribution. It is worth repeating the text here:

### Khunp 1

*l-'dm bn whb' l bn ḥl bn whbl bn 'dm bn ḥḏg bn swr w ḥrṣ f {h} lt nqmt m-ḏkr  
bn ḏlm f h lt nqmt w h b'ismn w š'hqm w ḏsr w 'lh-tm w ḡd-ḏf w ḡd-nbṭ w  
'lh-fls nqmt w 'wr ḏ y'wr h-sfr w šḥq w mḥq w nq't b-w{d}d ḏ yḥbl m-h-sfr*

‘By ‘dm son of Whb’ l son of Ḥl son of Whbl son of ‘dm son of Ḥḏg son of Swr and he kept watch so, O Allāt, grant retribution against Ḍkr son of Ḍlm, and again, O Lt, let there be retribution! And O B’ismn and Š’hqm and Ḍsr and the god of Tm and the Tyche of Ḍf and the Tyche of the Nabataeans and the god Fals, let there be retribution! And blind him who would efface this inscription, and may ruin and misfortune befall him who would efface any part of this inscription, and may he be thrown out of the grave by a loved one (thereafter).’

It is clear that our writer did not belong simultaneously to all of these groups. The first four gods appear frequently in the Safaitic inscriptions, and tutelary gods of the tribes of Taym, Ḍayf, and the Nabataeans follow these. Finally, and for the first time and only time so far, this author invokes a god named Fals, which Macdonald and I have suggested to be associated with the tribe of the Ṭayyi’, whose territory lay far away in the environs of Ḥā’il.<sup>23</sup> There is no reason to assume that this author called upon deities of his allies exclusively, as the Ṭayyi’ only appear as enemies in the Safaitic inscriptions.<sup>24</sup> It seems, instead, that he simply wanted to cover all his bases by invoking gods worshipped very widely, such as Allāt, and tutelary gods of both friends and perhaps enemies.

We can now return to the interpretation of the invocation in our inscription. A nomad perhaps belonging to a group cooperating with the Jews, such as the author of AbaNS 1080, or someone belonging to a tribe like Ḍayf, who were involved in a conflict with the Jews, if my interpretation of RWQ 336 (see appendix) is correct, may have decided to invoke their deity.<sup>25</sup> Of course, the Tetragrammaton would not have been pronounced, and so our author, and perhaps the nomads of the Ḥarrah more generally, may have only been familiar with epithets of the Jewish god. ‘Aḥad is a very possible candidate for such a title, as discussed above, and an especially suitable one in a polytheistic environment. Thus, the ‘tutelary’ god of the Jews, from the point of view of the nomads, would have

<sup>23</sup> Al-Jallad and Macdonald 2015.

<sup>24</sup> For example, the invocation in BEnv.b 2 *h lt t'r m-ty'* ‘O Allāt, may he have vengeance against the Ṭayyi’’. There are no unambiguous, positive references to the Ṭayyi’ in the inscriptions, although at least one Safaitic text appears to be composed by a man from this tribe: BS 767 *l-w' l bn wmm h-t'y* ‘by W’ l son of Wmm the Ṭā’Ṭ’.

<sup>25</sup> It is also possible that the nomads served in Herodian military units, as suggested very cautiously by Macdonald 1995: 290, and n. 36, and argued for more generally in Macdonald 2014.

been *ʿhd*, and our author could have called upon this deity, alongside the popular Arabian goddess Allāt in the same spirit as the author of Khunp 1 – to have his invocation heard by all.

### Excursus: the narrative of SSWS 80

Our new understanding of *ʿdy* motivate us to revisit the interpretation of the narrative portion of SSWS 80:

*mr b- ḏf f ʿdy h-ʿsʿd f ḥbl rbʿt f h lt brkt ʿh-k d..*

‘he passed by Ḍf and then **ʿdy h-ʿsd** and ruined **rbʿt** so O Allāt, may you bless your brother of ...’

This enigmatic text, known only from a hand copy, contains several unformulaic expressions and *hapax legomena* and so we must regard every interpretation as tentative until new inscriptions provide better context. In my treatment of this inscription in the *Safaitic Grammar* (2015), I suggested that it had a seasonal and astronomical signification. *h-ʿsd* was Leo and *ʿdy* I initially took as ‘transgression’ signified the early coming of summer heat associated with the appearance of this asterism, which ruined the time of abundance, *rbʿt* associated with the season of the later rains, *ḏtʿ*. In light of our new understanding of *ʿdy*, it seems that the metaphor used for the early appearance of the summer heat was ‘plundering’ and ‘raiding’, a fitting description of the effects of the drying up of water and herbage on livestock.

A non-astronomical interpretation is possible as well. Perhaps *h-ʿsd* should be understood as ‘the raiding party’, but this leaves the next phrase unexplained.<sup>26</sup> It is certainly tempting to connect *rbʿt* with the famed Arabian tribe of *rabīʿah*, but in the tens of thousands of Safaitic inscriptions known so far, not a single reference to this group is attested, whereas words connected to times of spring abundance derived from the root *rbʿ* are known.<sup>27</sup> *Rbʿt* is, however, a personal name and it is possible that the author was referring to a colleague of his who was injured or killed in the raid, but this would certainly be a strange expression as *ḥbl* is almost always used to refer to damaging an inscription or drawing and never humans.

The end of the inscription seems to be broken on the copy. If so, then it is possible that the letters nearing the end were worn or damaged and therefore we cannot be completely

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<sup>26</sup> On this meaning of *ʿsd*, see for example RWQ 187 *šml ʿsd* ‘he went north to raid’ or LP 319 *h rḏw hb l-qdm nqmt mn ʿsd ʿbl-h* ‘O Rḏw grant to Qdm vengeance against the one who has raided he camels’ (Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019, s.v.).

<sup>27</sup> For example, *mr bʿt* ‘the period of first spring rains’; *h-rbʿ* ‘fresh herbage’ (Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019, s.v.).

sure about the accuracy of the tracing of this portion. Indeed, it is curious that the author would refer to himself as the ‘brother’ of Allāt, whom he invokes for blessings.

### **Appendix Safaitic Inscriptions mentioning *yhd***

**Inscriptions dated to ‘the year of the Jews’:** This ambiguous statement does not provide any chronological evidence for us to locate inscriptions containing this reference in time. It is moreover unclear whether there was only one ‘year of the Jews’ or if these references point towards different years in which the Jews played some significant role in the affairs of the inhabitants of the Ḥarrah.

C 2732

*ǧzy b-nmrt f h lt slm snt h-yhdy*

‘he set off to raid Namārah so, O Allāt, may he be secure in the year of the Jews’

AbaSWS 79

*w qnt ʾl rm sʾnt yhd f h lt ..... wqyt m bʾsʾ*

‘and he was in fear of the Romans the year of the Jews so, O Allāt .... protect from misfortune’

AWS 347

*byt b-ʾbl b-h-wrd snt h-yhdy*

‘he spent the night with camels at H-Wrd (the lowlands?) the year of the Jews’

**Inscriptions dated to ‘the struggle/war of the Jews’ and related events:** These texts refer to an unknown conflict, or perhaps conflicts, involving the Jews. The only time information that is more precise is given is in AbHYN 1, which mentions a war between the Nabataeans and the Jews, likely referring to the conflict between Nabataeans and Hasmonaeans. It is possible that other references to the ‘war of the Jews’ refer to this same event and are simply abbreviated. RWQ 336 could indicate that the tribe of Ḍayf was involved in such a conflict.

C 3360

*snt wsq h-yhdy*

‘the year of the struggle of the Jews’

AbHYN 1

*ʿlf snt ḥrb nbṭ yhd*

‘he fed (the animals) on dry fodder the year the Nabataeans waged war against the Jews’

BS 2003

*snt ḥrb yhd*

‘the year of the war of the Jews’

**Inscriptions dated to the ‘expulsion of the Jews’:** The primary verb used in these statements is *nz(z/t)*, which Clark convincingly argued should be interpreted as ‘to remove’.<sup>28</sup> It is tempting to these statements as referring to the aftermath of the Jewish-Roman wars (66-135 CE), but they could equally intend a much smaller scale conflict. Given that there seems to have been some small Jewish presence in the Ḥarrah (AbaNS 1080), this dating may refer to a conflict that saw the expulsion of the Jews from the area. Such a hypothesis might be supported by the event mentioned in RWQ 191, where the people of a group called ‘Abgar, which OCIANA speculates may be connected to the Edessans, were exiled from an unknown toponym, *sdr*, while the Jews are ‘expelled’, *ḥw*’.

ASWS 186

*wld b-h-dr snt nzt yhd*

‘he helped (the goats) to give birth in this place the year of the expulsion of the Jews’

SIJ 688

*snt nzz ʿl yhd*

‘the year of the expulsion of the Jews’

ASWS 217

*wld h-mʿzy b-knn snt nz ʿl yhd*

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<sup>28</sup> Clark 1979, 86–88.

‘he helped the goats to give birth the year of the expulsion of the Jews’

RWQ 191

*snt gly ʾl-ʾbgr mn-sdr w ḥw{ } {ʾ}l yhd f h bʾlsmn fšyt m- bʾs w ḥlšt*

‘the year the people of ʾAbgar were exiled from Sdr and the Jews were expelled so, O Baʾl-Samīn, deliver from misfortune and save (us)’

**Inscriptions mentioning alliances with the Jews:** The author of AbaNS 1080 could have acted as a guide, leading the Jews through the Ḥarrah, but the reasons for this are not given. KRS 37 contains a prayer for security for the Jews, suggesting that its author regarded them in friendly terms.

AbaNS 1080

*l rwḥy bn ydʾʾl w mr mʾ ʾl-yhd*

By Rwhy son of Ydʾʾ and he passed by (this place) with the Jews

KRS 37

*štt-h nwy f h lt qbl ʾ-slm ʾhl-h slm l-yhd w rgʾ b-ʾbl rʾy l-ḥrt ʾf ht*

‘he spent the winter migrating so, O Allāt, (grant) a safe reunion with his family; and security to the Jews; and he return with camels towards the Ḥarrah to pasture on low-lying tracts of land’

### Miscellaneous texts:

AWS 1

*dʾʾ snt mlk d ʾl yhd*

‘he spent the season of the later rains (here) the year of Mlk of the people of the Jews’

The interpretation of the word *mlk* as the generic noun for ‘king’ is ruled out by the following *d*. Kings of peoples and nations are always in construct with the group they ruled, while individuals connected with their group through the phrase *d ʾl* ‘he of the lineage of’. It is therefore clear that *mlk* is an individual, but whose identity is lost to time.

LP 353

*w ḥrṣ mlkt 'l yhd f hy lt w rdy slm*

'and he kept watch for the Queen of the Jews so, O Allāt and Roṣay, may he be secure'

M.C.A. Macdonald has suggested that this inscription refers to a certain Queen of the Jews, whom he tentatively identified as Berenice, sister of Agrippa II.<sup>29</sup> It is also possible to take *mlkt* as a male personal name, *molaykat*, attested frequently in Safaitic. In this case, the narrative would contain a different subject than the genealogy, which is uncommon but attested. This would render a much more common phrase: 'and Mlkt kept watch for the Jews'.

AbJ 1

*snt ṣlb h-yhdy 'bkr*

The syntax of this inscription is ambiguous. The unmarked word order suggests that the Jews had crucified a man named *'bkr*, a common anthroponym. Crucifixion was a common event in Classical Antiquity; it is possible that *'bkr* was a nomad who for reasons unknown had suffered this capital punishment at the hands of the Herodians or Hasmonaeans. If *h-yhdy* is fronted for emphasis, it may suggest that a man named *'bkr* crucified an unnamed Jew, an odd formulation to be sure.

RWQ 336

*snt b'y h-yhdy 'l ḏf*

'the year the Jews treated the lineage of Ḍf unjustly'

This event may be related to one of the many conflicts involving the Jews mentioned above. Also see the broken texts below.

C 1270bis

*... m b's 'l yhd*

...'from the affliction of the Jews'

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<sup>29</sup> Macdonald 2014, 153.

Macdonald interprets this as the final part of an invocation for protection against the Jews, perhaps related to the statement attested in RWQ 336.<sup>30</sup>

C 5188

*...rḥbt m-yhd w h l{h} flt*

‘...the Ruhbah from the Jews so O Allāh deliver!’

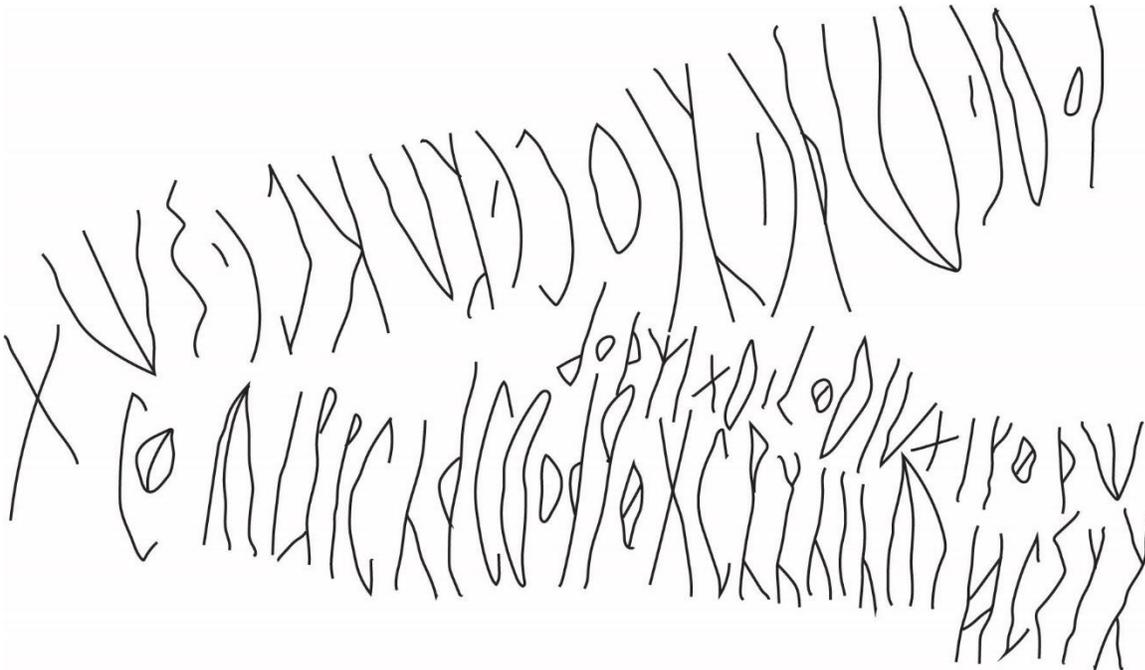
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<sup>30</sup> Macdonald 1995, 285.

KRS 1131



Image 1 (G.M.H. King, courtesy OCIANA)



Tracing (A. Al-Jallad)

Al-Mafraq Museum 59



Image 2 (courtesy OCIANA)

## **Sigla**

AbaNS	Safaitic inscriptions in Ababneh 2005
AbaSWS	Safaitic Inscriptions published on OCIANA
AbHYN	Safaitic inscriptions in Abbadi 1996
AbJ	Safaitic inscriptions published on OCIANA
Al-Mafraq Museum	Safaitic inscriptions from the Mafraq Museum published on OCIANA
ASWS	Safaitic inscriptions in Awad 1999
AWS	Safaitic inscriptions in Alolow 1996
BS	Inscriptions from the Badia Surveys published on OCIANA
BRenv.b	Safaitic inscriptions published on OCIANA
C	Safaitic inscriptions in Ryckmans 1950
ISB	Safaitic inscriptions in Oxtoby 1968
KRS	Safaitic inscriptions from the Basalt Desert Rescue Surveys published on OCIANA
LP	Safaitic inscriptions in Littmann 1943
National Museum of Qatar	Safaitic inscriptions from the National Museum of Qatar published edited on OCIANA
OCIANA	Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia ( <a href="http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/ociana/">http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/ociana/</a> )
SESP.U	Safaitic inscriptions published on OCIANA
SIJ	Safaitic inscriptions in Winnett 1957
SSWS	Safaitic inscriptions in Al-Sweerky 1999

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