**Arabian archaeology
and epigraphy**

Reflections on the linguistic map of pre-Islamic Arabia

M. C. A. MACDONALD
Oriental Institute and Wolfson College, Oxford, UK

At a workshop on 'Civilisations de l'Arabie préislamique' in Aix-en-Provence in February 1996, I was asked by the organizers to give a survey of the state of our knowledge of the languages and scripts of pre-Islamic Arabia and to propose a coherent set of definitions and terms for them, in an attempt to clarify the numerous misapprehensions and the somewhat chaotic nomenclature in the field. I purposely concentrated on the languages and scripts of the Arabian Peninsula north of Yemen, and only mentioned in passing those of Ancient South Arabia, since these were to be the subject of another paper. Unfortunately, four years after it took place, the proceedings of this workshop remain unpublished. In the meantime, the contents of my paper have circulated widely and I, and others, are finding it increasingly frustrating having to refer to it as 'forthcoming'. I am therefore most grateful to the editor of *AAE* for allowing a considerably revised version of my paper to be published here. It should be seen as an essential preliminary ground-clearing for my detailed discussion of the Ancient North Arabian languages and scripts which will appear early in 2001 in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages* (ed. R.D. Woodard, Cambridge University Press) and my book *Old Arabic and its legacy in the later language. Texts, linguistic features, scripts and letter-orders*, which is in preparation.

Terminology

The epigraphy of pre-Islamic Arabia is littered with labels which were misnomers even when they were first applied (eg. 'Safaitic', 'Thamudic') or have become so as research has progressed (eg. 'Minaic'). I shall preface this paper with an attempt to present a more coherent taxonomy, taking account of what we now know, and do not know, of the linguistic situation at various periods in pre-Islamic Arabia.

When suggesting new terms (1) I have tried, as far as possible, to follow systematically the use of the ending *-ic* (Sabaic, etc.) for languages and scripts, and *-aean/ian* or *-ite* for peoples and cultures (Sabaean, Qatabanian, Lihyanite, etc.). The two cases in which this is not possible are the terms 'North Arabian' and 'South Arabian', where the *-ian* ending is necessary to distinguish these groups of languages and scripts from Arabic. The use by some scholars of the terms 'North and South Arabic' for 'North and South Arabian' is therefore to be regretted, particularly since others use the term 'North Arabic' to refer not to Safaitic, Thamudic, etc., but to what is normally called 'Arabic' (2). In the case of 'South Arabic' the term is particularly misleading since neither the Ancient nor the Modern South Arabian languages are in any sense 'Arabic' (3).

i) *Ancient North Arabian* **[ANA] (*nordarabique ancien, Altnordarabisch*)** [pre-Islamic *h-* (*hn-*) and apparently 'zero' dialects]

Oasis North Arabian [ONA]

Taymanitic	[formerly 'Thamudic A'/'Taymanite']
Dadanitic	[formerly 'Dedanite' and 'Lihyanite']
Dumaitic	[formerly 'Jawfian']
'Dispersed ONA'	[texts in the ONA scripts from Mesopotamia (formerly called 'Chaldaean') and other places, which cannot be classified as Taymanitic, Dadanitic or Dumaitic]

Safaitic

Hismaic [formerly 'Thamudic E'; also erroneously called 'Tabuki Thamudic' or 'South Safaitic']

Thamudic B, C, D, 'Southern Thamudic'

Hasaitic [?]

ii) *Arabic*

Old Arabic (*vieil arabe, Altarabisch*) [pre-Islamic *ˀl-* dialects]

'Pure' Old Arabic texts [wholly in Old Arabic but written in the Sabaic, Nabataean, early Arabic or Greek scripts]

'Mixed' texts: **Safaeo-Arabic, [Sabaeo-Arabic], Dadano-Arabic, Nabataeo-Arabic, Aramaeo-Arabic** [texts written in the Safaitic, [Sabaic], Dadanitic, Nabataean, or other Aramaic languages and scripts but with Old Arabic features]

Middle Arabic

Classical Arabic

Modern Standard Arabic

Spoken Arabic Dialects

[Appendix: *Undifferentiated North Arabian*]

(1) *'Pure Undifferentiated North Arabian' texts* [can be in any script, but are clearly North Arabian in language although they cannot be assigned either to Old Arabic or to a particular ANA dialect]

(2) *'Undifferentiated North Arabian Mixed' texts* eg. **Sabaeo-North-Arabian** [formerly 'pseudo-sabéen': texts written in the Sabaic (etc.) languages and scripts but including North Arabian features which cannot be assigned either to Old Arabic or to a particular ANA dialect]

Fig. 1.

Suggested terminology for languages and scripts: I. North Arabian (nordarabique, Nordarabisch).

Languages (4)

The ancient and modern languages of the Arabian Peninsula fall into two quite distinct linguistic groups: North Arabian and South Arabian. While they share some features which mark them off from most other Semitic languages, there are many more which distinguish them from one another and it is now realized that their relationship is not particularly close.

I. 'North Arabian' ('nordarabique', 'Nordarabisch') (5)

The term at present in general use is a sensible neutral label covering:

i) **'Ancient North Arabian' [ANA] ('nordarabique ancien', 'Altnordarabisch')** (6) which comprises the pre-Islamic *h-* (*hn-*) and apparently 'zero' (7) dialects:

Oasis North Arabian [ONA] viz.

> **Taymanitic**
> **Dadanitic**
> **Dumaitic**
> **Dispersed ONA** (8)

Safaitic

Hismaic (9)

Thamudic B, C, D, and 'Southern Thamudic'

and possibly

> **Hasaitic**.

At present, we know too little about the linguistic features of this group to make any further subdivision.

ii) Arabic
in all its forms and at all stages of its development. The earliest of these stages is:

'**Old Arabic'** ('**vieil arabe'** (10)), '**Altarabisch'** (11)). Just as 'Old English', 'Old French', etc. refer to the earliest surviving stages of these languages, Old Arabic refers to the pre-Islamic ᵓl-dialects of which traces remain in a handful of texts and in names (see below).

In the Islamic period we have evidence of other varieties of Arabic of which the principal are:

Middle Arabic
Classical Arabic
Modern Standard Arabic
Spoken Arabic Dialects

Appendix to the North Arabian group
There are a number of texts from the pre-Islamic period which are wholly or partially in a North Arabian language but which cannot be classed either as Old Arabic or as ANA because they contain only features which are common to both. I have labelled these **'Undifferentiated' North Arabian**, until such time as they can be classified more precisely. See the discussion below.

II. 'South Arabian' ('sudarabique',
'Südarabisch') (12)
A clear, neutral, geographical term to indicate both the ancient and modern non-Arabic, Semitic languages of the region covered by modern Yemen and Oman. Within this overall grouping, two sub-groups can be distinguished:

i) Ancient South Arabian [ASA]
('sudarabique ancien'
'Altsüdarabisch')
is perhaps a safer term than either 'Epi-

graphic South Arabian', which describes a language group by the materials on which it is written, or 'Old South Arabian' which implies (incorrectly) that it is the direct ancestor of Modern South Arabian (13). This collective label covers two subdivisions.

a) The Ṣayhadic (14) **languages**, ie. those traditionally called 'Epigraphic South Arabian', 'Old South Arabian', 'Altsüdarabisch', etc., *viz.*

Sabaic
Maḏābic (15)
Qatabanic
Ḥaḍramitic (16)

b) The non-Ṣayhadic languages, ie. the other ancient languages of southern Arabia, of which so far we have only rare glimpses. Among these is the spoken language of the Ḥimyarites, who used Sabaic in their inscriptions. At present, this is known only from reports by writers of the Islamic period, but is possibly the language of the hymn to the sun-goddess at Qāniya (17). The languages of two other texts (18) which are at present incomprehensible seem also to fall under this heading, as would probably 'Native Minaic', the language *spoken* by the Minaeans (as opposed to the Madhabic which they wrote), if an example were to be found. It is possible that the dipinti recently discovered in Dhofar (19) should be included as well, but they have yet to be deciphered.

ii) Modern South Arabian [MSA]
('sudarabique moderne', 'Neusüdarabisch')
is the common collective term for
Baṭḥarī,
Ḥarsūsī,
Hobyōt
Jibbālī,
Mehrī
Suquṭrī (Socotri)
the unwritten, non-Arabic Semitic languages spoken today, or in the recent past,

i) *Ancient South Arabian* **[ASA] (sudarabique ancien, Altsüdarabisch)**

  Sayhadic

    Sabaic

    Madhabic [formerly called 'Minaean'/'Minaic'. The written language used by the Minaeans and apparently inherited from their predecessors in the region of Wādī Maḏāb, in the Yemeni Jawf].

    Qatabanic

    Hadramitic

  Non-Sayhadic

    Himyaritic [the native language of the Himyarites, of which a handful of possible examples remain]

    Other non-Sayhadic texts (ZI 11?, Ja 2353?)

    ? 'Native Minaic' [this should be restricted to any evidence that may appear for the language the Minaeans *spoke*]

    ?? The language of the Dhofar dipinti [at present undeciphered]

ii) *Modern South Arabian* **[MSA] (sudarabique moderne, Neusüdarabisch)**

    Baṭḥarī

    Ḥarsūsī

    Hobyōt

    Jibbālī

    Mehrī

    Socotrī

Fig. 2.
Suggested terminology for languages and scripts: II. South Arabian (sudarabique, Südarabisch).

in Oman, southeastern Yemen and Socotra.

Although the terms 'North Arabian' and 'South Arabian' are both drawn from geography, the groups they describe are defined by very different criteria. 'North Arabian' describes a group of dialects (possibly languages?) which appear remarkably homogeneous linguistically. For each of these, its phonemic repertoire, morphology and (as far as we can tell) syntax, find closer parallels within the group than with any language outside it.

By contrast, the term 'South Arabian' is based more on geographical than linguistic criteria. While there appear to be fairly close internal relationships within the Modern South Arabian group, it is questionable to what extent all the languages within the Ancient South Arabian Sayhadic group really belong together on linguistic grounds. Indeed, future discoveries may prompt a drastic regrouping and relabelling of all the Ancient South Arabian languages. Equally, there seems to be no ques-

tion of any lineal 'descent', at least from the Sayhadic languages to the Modern South Arabian tongues (20). Thus, 'South Arabian' is a geographical term which at present covers three quite distinct types of language group, each defined by different criteria. 'Sayhadic' represents the official, written, languages of the ancient South Arabian kingdoms, a grouping based as much on the fact that they are all relatively well documented, as on linguistic features. 'Non-Sayhadic' is simply a *Restklassenbildung* for any language indigenous to ancient South Arabia, which cannot be defined as Sayhadic; while MSA is the only one of the three to be defined by linguistic criteria.

To some extent, the contrast between North Arabian and South Arabian reflects the extent of our knowledge of the two. The linguistic data available for Ancient North Arabian is relatively sparse and it is possible that if we had as much material for it as we do for Ancient South Arabian we might dis-

cover that the group was a good deal less homogeneous than it appears.

Scripts
The Arabian alphabetic tradition (21)
The Arabian and the North-West Semitic alphabetic traditions are the two great alphabetic writing systems of the Ancient Near East. It is generally assumed that they stemmed from a common source in the north and separated some time in the second millennium BC. Each has its own traditional alphabetic order (the North-West Semitic ʾbgd (22) and the Arabian hlḥm (23)) and both have been found at Ugarit (24). This in itself, of course, is only evidence that both letter orders were in use before the beginning of the twelfth century BC. It seems likely that the *hlḥm* was not native to Ugarit, where the local alphabetic order (ʾbgḥd) is amply attested, the inference being that it was in use elsewhere. The only region where it seems to have been in normal use is Ancient South Arabia, although the evidence is from a much later period. It is true that at sites in the Yemeni Jawf, fragmentary inscriptions in the South Arabian alphabet have been found in levels dated by Carbon 14 to between the ninth and thirteenth centuries BC (25) but, while the juxtaposition of these unrelated fragments of evidence raises intriguing possibilities, there is as yet no firm basis for dating the origins of the Arabian alphabetic tradition.

The individual scripts within the Arabian group are as follows:

I. The North Arabian scripts
    Taymanitic
    Dadanitic
    Dumaitic
    Dispersed Oasis North Arabian
    Safaitic
    Hismaic

'Thamudic', ie. a number of different scripts which have not yet been fully identified and distinguished, represented in some 11,000 graffiti scattered throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

II. The South Arabian scripts
Monumental South Arabian of which there are relatively minor variations in the
    Sabaic
    Madhabic
    Qatabanic and
    Hadramitic inscriptions; the
    Hasaitic script (developed from the Sabaic) (26); the
    zabūr **or 'minuscule' scripts** (27); and possibly the script(s) of the
    Dhofar dipinti and inscriptions.

III. The Ethiopic syllabary (or vocalized alphabet)
the only form of the Arabian alphabetic tradition still in use today.

New nomenclature for languages and scripts
The different North Arabian alphabets were related to each other and to the South Arabian alphabets in ways that are not yet fully understood. Among the **North Arabian scripts** there are a number of subcategories that urgently need redefinition. Because the majority of ANA inscriptions are short, very often consisting solely of names, genealogies of varying lengths and introductory particles, it is often impossible to identify the language of the text (28). It is therefore customary, *faute de mieux*, to apply the name of the *script* to the *language* in which (it is assumed) the text was written, unless there is evidence to the contrary (29). This is most unsatisfactory but at present unavoidable. The discussion which follows is therefore primarily concerned with the taxonomy of the North Arabian scripts (for which we have ample evidence). The nomenclature of the languages

(on which we have much less data) will inevitably follow that of the scripts in which they are habitually expressed, except where there is evidence to the contrary.

There is an increasing recognition that the distinction between the 'Dedanite' and 'Liḥyānite' scripts is artificial and that they represent the same script at different stages of development. Moreover, the chronological limits of these different stages do not necessarily coincide with the kingdoms of Dadan (see note 1) and Liḥyān, after which they are named. However, if we abandon the term 'Dedanite' it would still be anachronistic to talk of 'Lihyanite' before the kingdom of Liḥyān. It would seem to be more sensible to name the script (at all stages of its development) after the oasis in which it developed, rather than after a specific kingdom. I would therefore suggest that, from now on, the labels 'Lihyanite' and 'Dedanite' be abandoned and the script and language throughout their history be referred to as **'Dadanitic'**. It would then be possible to distinguish different phases within the development of the script ('early', 'middle', 'late', etc.) without tying them to political events, the dating of which is anyway uncertain.

Similarly, I would refer to the scripts which developed in the oases of Taymāʾ and Dūmā (modern al-Jawf) as **'Taymanitic'** (30) **and 'Dumaitic'** (31) respectively. These terms would also refer to the dialects normally expressed by these alphabets.

The scripts of the Early Dadanitic, Taymanitic and Dumaitic texts, together with those of the so-called 'Chaldaean' inscriptions (of which more below) are very close in form, and it is often difficult to assign a short text to one or other type (see Fig. 3). It therefore seems to me useful to think in terms of an **'Oasis North Arabian' [ONA]** script, which was employed, with small local variations in letter-form and orthographic practice, in the three major oasis-

towns of North Arabia: Dadan, Taymāʾ and Dūmā, and probably also among the Arab communities settled in Babylonia and elsewhere (32). I would suggest that Oasis North Arabian be subdivided into Dadanitic, Taymanitic, etc. only when there is clear evidence to justify this (33).

A new name is also urgently needed for the so-called 'Chaldaean' inscriptions, the brief texts in the ONA script, on seals, pottery, bricks, etc. which have been found in various parts of Mesopotamia and elsewhere (34). They are clearly in no sense 'Chaldaean' (35) and Burrows' description of the script as 'Old Arabic' is equally misleading (36). While it is likely, although in most cases unprovable, that at least some of these texts are to be associated with the Arab communities settled in Babylonia, others appear to be connected with Syria and Transjordan (37), and yet others seem to be from Arabia itself (38). They therefore do not form a homogeneous group. I would suggest that this be reflected in a descriptive term such as **'dispersed Oasis North Arabian inscriptions'**, failing a more concise and elegant title.

The name **'Thamūdic'** was the invention of western scholars even though there is virtually no evidence to connect any of the texts gathered under this rubric with the ancient tribe of Thamūd (39). However, the label is far too well established to be changed and its very inappropriateness, when recognized, serves to emphasize the artificiality of the category. For 'Thamudic' is no more than a *Restklassenbildung* (a term I owe to E. A. Knauf, *ZDPV* 97, 1981; 189, n. 7), a sort of undetermined' pigeon-hole into which one can put everything which does not fit into one of the better-defined categories. In a field such as Ancient North Arabian, in which so much of the evidence is uncertain and so much work still needs to be done, this serves a useful purpose.

However, while this is, or should be,

NB There are no chronological implications in the order in which the scripts are arranged. The numbers above the letters in the 'Dispersed ONA' line refer to the photographs of these inscriptions on plates in Sass, *Studia Alphabetica*: 1991.

Fig. 3.
Letter-forms in the Ancient North Arabian alphabets.

well known to those working in the field, it is necessary to warn those less familiar with the subject who may be misled into assuming that the items brought together under this rubric can in some way be treated as a whole. If scholars in other fields are misled or bewildered it is largely the fault of epigraphists such as Jamme and van den Branden who, against all the evidence, insist on 'l'unité de l'alphabet thamoudéen' and, in the case of van den Branden, on a connection with the tribe of Thamūd (40).

In an exhaustive study (41), Geraldine King has recently identified the distinguishing characteristics of the script which Winnett labelled 'Thamudic E', thus enabling us to remove it from the Thamudic' *Restklassenbildung*. This script, and the dialect normally expressed in it, therefore require a new name (42). The surveys conducted by Geraldine King and others in the Ḥismà (43) desert of southern Jordan, where to date at least 5000 texts have been recorded, suggest that this region of Jordan and northwest Saudi Arabia holds the major concentration of these inscriptions, although naturally smaller numbers are scattered over a much wider area. In a recent article, Geraldine King and I have therefore suggested that the script and dialect of these texts should be called **'Ḥismaic'** (44).

'Like Thamudic', the term **Ṣafaitic** is a misnomer, although for different reasons. It refers to the mainly barren area of extinct volcanoes and unbroken lava flows, southeast of Damascus and northeast of Jabal al-ᶜArab (45), which is known as the Ṣafā. It was near the eastern edge of this region that the first Safaitic inscriptions were discovered. The name is thus a purely modern label which bears no relation to what the authors of these tens of thousands of texts called themselves or the script they used (if indeed it had a name). Unfortunately, al-

though these inscriptions are spread over a huge area of desert in southern Syria, northeastern Jordan and northern Saudi Arabia, the one place where they have never been found is in the Ṣafā itself. However, the misnomer is far too well established to be changed, although the fact that it is a purely conventional term needs constantly to be borne in mind in the face of such artificial conceptions as 'Safaitic tribes' or a 'Safaitic name' (46).

The term **Ḥasaitic** (47) refers to inscriptions – almost entirely funerary – found principally in northeast Arabia at the sites of Thāj, Qaṭīf, etc. but occasionally further afield (48). Because of the small number of inscriptions so far published and the repetitive character of their content, little is known of the linguistic features of Hasaitic.

It is generally held that the Hasaitic inscriptions are written either in the monumental South Arabian alphabet (albeit with occasional unusual letter-forms) or in one closely derived from it (49). However, a very different theory has recently been advanced which claims that

> 'Comme on trouve des textes en écriture ḥaséenne dans le sud de l'Iraq à partir du VIIIᵉ siècle avant l'ère chrétienne, il semble vraisemblable que la région du Golfe a emprunté son écriture directement à la source, probablement dans la région Syrie-Palestine ... plutôt qu'en Arabie du sud.' (50)

Unfortunately, this theory is based on several misconceptions. Firstly, the only Hasaitic text so far discovered in Mesopotamia is CIH 699, which Loftus found *in situ* in an underground tomb at the foot of a mound where 'Seleucid tablets occurred' (51). The chamber had already been robbed and no dating evidence for either the tomb or the inscription is known.

Secondly, the only North Arabian inscriptions found in Mesopotamia which may date to the eighth century BC are some of the Dispersed Oasis North Arabian texts. However, the Dispersed ONA

inscriptions do not form a coherent corpus representing one script which could be considered native to this region. They are a random assortment of small finds from a very wide area, which display a considerable range of letter-forms and clearly represent a number of different varieties of the ONA scripts. This suggests that they represent imports rather than the products of a native form of literacy (52). It is for this reason that I have suggested calling them 'Dispersed Oasis North Arabian', a label which I hope emphasizes their heterogeneous character and the fact that they are unlikely to be indigenous to the places where they have been found.

Thirdly, the script of the Hasaitic inscriptions is clearly very different from that of any of the Dispersed ONA texts, as can be seen by comparing the relevant rows in Figure 3, and there is nothing to indicate that the former developed from the latter (53). Moreover, if it had, one would need to explain how this supposed independent development produced a script (ie. Hasaitic) which was identical, in all but the tiniest details, to the monumental South Arabian alphabet.

The dating of the Hasaitic inscriptions is at present uncertain. Pirenne made a tentative comparison of the script of one Hasaitic text (Ry 687) (54) with elements of her 'Stade D2' and 'Stade E', for which she offered rough dates of *c.*280 BC and 150–100 BC respectively, and more confidently assigned another, fragmentary and much damaged text (Ry 688) (55), to her 'Stade C', dating it to 350–300 BC (56). However, Pirenne's dating was based on the 'short' South Arabian chronology, which archaeological finds in recent years have shown to be untenable (57). Furthermore, Pirenne herself admitted that 'cette graphie du Golfe Persique ne s'intègre pas exactement à l'évolution de l'écriture sud-arabe; elle est spécifique...,' (58) the implication of

which is surely that it may be misleading to try to date it by fitting it into a South Arabian palaeographical schema (59).

Thus, at present we unfortunately have no direct evidence for either the origin or the dating (60) of the Hasaitic script. In the absence of such evidence, I can only suggest that the Hasaitic monumental script is so similar to the monumental South Arabian that it is highly unlikely that they could represent parallel developments from an early period. It seems far more probable that, at a date unknown, the South Arabian script began to be used for monumental inscriptions in the northeast of the Peninsula, possibly for reasons of prestige. Once this had begun, this alphabet ceased to be 'South Arabian' because it was being used at too great a distance from Southern Arabia for it to maintain the same evolutionary course as the true 'South Arabian script'. Instead it became 'the Hasaitic script' in the sense that it began its own palaeographical development. Alas, the tiny number of inscriptions so far known and the lack of direct external dating evidence makes any true palaeographical analysis impossible at present, and we must await the discovery of much more evidence before this, or any other, hypothesis can be tested.

Old Arabic seems to have remained a purely spoken language until the late fifth/early sixth centuries AD (61) which means, of course, that no specific script was associated with it before that period. Thus, on the rare occasions when it was written, the script associated with the local language of prestige was used: South Arabian in the southern half of the Peninsula; Dadanitic in Dadan; Nabataean at Ḥegrā, ᶜĒn ᶜAvdat in the Negev, and at al-Namāra; a form of eastern Aramaic at Mleiha (Malayḥa) on the Oman Peninsula; Greek in an ecclesiastical context in Syria (62); and early Arabic (63), again mainly in Syria. Some aspects

of the significance of this will be discussed below. Here I would only explain some distinctions which recent studies have revealed and which require some refinements of terminology.

The documentary evidence for Old Arabic is of two kinds, see Figure 1: (64)

(a) Texts in **'Pure' Old Arabic** are those expressed wholly in the pre-Islamic *ʾl*-dialect(s), although written in a variety of scripts, as outlined above.

(b) **'Mixed' Old Arabic** texts are those expressed in the language normally associated with the script (eg. Safaitic, Dadanitic, Aramaic, etc.) but which include some linguistic features identifiable as Old Arabic. In order to distinguish these from the 'pure' Old Arabic texts, I would suggest that these be called

   Safaeo-Arabic (65)
   [Sabaeo-Arabic] (66)
   Dadano-Arabic
   Nabataeo-Arabic
   Aramaeo-Arabic (67).

I would only apply such a label to a text if the intrusive elements can clearly be identified as Old Arabic as distinct from ANA or ASA. For the diagnostic criteria available at present, see below.

Given the paucity of material, the inadequacies of the scripts used and the apparently close similarities between the two sub-groups of North Arabian, there will inevitably be a number of cases where it is impossible to decide whether the intrusive elements in a particular document are Old Arabic or ANA. To avoid classifying these incorrectly and thus creating confusion in the future when the characteristics of the two groups are described, it is useful to have a *Restklassenbildung*, or 'pending' category into which such texts can be placed until such time as their language can be identified more exactly. I suggest, therefore, that these texts be called **'Undifferen-**

tiated North Arabian'. Within this class, subdivisions can be made to reflect the script and basic language of each text. Thus those Sabaic inscriptions from Haram which include intrusive elements from an undifferentiated North Arabian language (see below), I would call **Sabaeo-North-Arabian**, within the category of 'Undifferentiated North Arabian' (see Fig. 1).

Reflections on the linguistic map of pre-Islamic Arabia

At the outset it is important to distinguish between languages and scripts, especially since, as mentioned above, the same labels ('Sabaic', 'Safaitic', etc.) are usually applied to both. Any script can, of course, be used to express any language (more or less efficiently) and there is no inevitable or indissoluble link between a particular tongue and the written form in which it is habitually expressed. The fact that certain writing systems have become associated with particular languages is no more than convention and, more often than not, the script adopted is ill-suited to the phonological requirements of the language it is used to express. Indeed, phonology seems seldom to have been considered, when writing systems which had been developed to express one language (with varying degrees of competence) were employed to express another. One need only think of Akkadian written in a syllabary which had evolved to express Sumerian, or the Old Aramaic phonemic repertoire squeezed into an alphabet designed for that of Phoenician.

The fact that the same script may be used to write several different languages has far-reaching effects on our perception and classification of the ancient documents we study. To take just one example: scripts associated with languages of political or cultural prestige, or which have become the medium of international correspondence,

are liable to be used to express other, more local, languages. We are not particularly surprised, therefore, when we find a Hasaitic text in the South Arabian script, or an Old Arabic one in the Nabataean. But what of the names in a graffito in the South Arabian script, where there is no visible grammatical context to indicate the language; or a seal with a single name in the Aramaic script? Failing any internal indicators, such names have traditionally been assigned to the language usually associated with the script: they become 'South Arabian' or 'Aramaic' names (68). Then, all too often, we use linguistic or onomastic features to define the boundaries between communities. At best, these are extremely inexact indicators – after all, most of us have at some time written in languages other than our mother tongue and if, by chance, such a document was the only one to survive, future historians might, for instance, class me as French on the basis of a letter I had written in that language.

Similarly, we need to be extremely circumspect in the way we use onomastic material. Synchronically, a name represents the person who bears it, it does not 'mean' anything else (69). Of course, like all words, names have etymologies. But in the vast majority of cases those who give and those who bear them are unaware of, and unconcerned with their original signification. For, in most cases, the nugget of linguistic information a name contains is a fossil, and there is no way of relating it to a particular stage of the language in question or to a particular society using that stage. We therefore have no way of knowing whether the linguistic features of a name can give us accurate information about the language used by its bearer. Relatively few names at any one time are coined within the community which uses them, most are considerably older, and in many cases were 'borrowed' from another culture. Given that a man or woman's name is the

most intimate of personal identifiers, the personal choice of the name-giver must almost always have been paramount, and even in societies where practices such as paponymy are the norm, the unexpected is always possible. We therefore need to be very clear about what exactly we mean when we speak of a 'North Arabian' or a 'South Arabian' or a 'Nabataean' name, and we should avoid the temptation to use names of any sort as evidence for the language, let alone the 'ethnicity' of those who bear them (70).

In what follows, I shall divide Arabia very roughly by a northwest-southeast line and refer to the western two-thirds of the Peninsula as 'western Arabia' and to the eastern one-third as 'eastern Arabia' (see Fig. 4).

On present evidence, eastern Arabia (both at its northern and southern ends) appears to have had a development which is rather different from that of the cultures further west. This apparent difference may in part be due to an imbalance in the amount and type of research which has so far been devoted to the two sides of the Peninsula. The study of the ancient history of both the northwest and southwest is still dominated by epigraphy, and the results of the archaeological work of the last twenty-five years are only now beginning to change and fill out the traditional picture. By contrast, our understanding of eastern Arabia is due entirely to archaeological work and, with the exception of Dhofar, this side of the Peninsula has produced only a handful of inscriptions, containing very little information (71).

Thus for pre-Islamic western Arabia (especially the southwest) we have a great deal of information about those aspects of life which are the stuff of monumental inscriptions: social and political systems, land and water rights, religious practice, etc., whereas in the east, we are almost en-
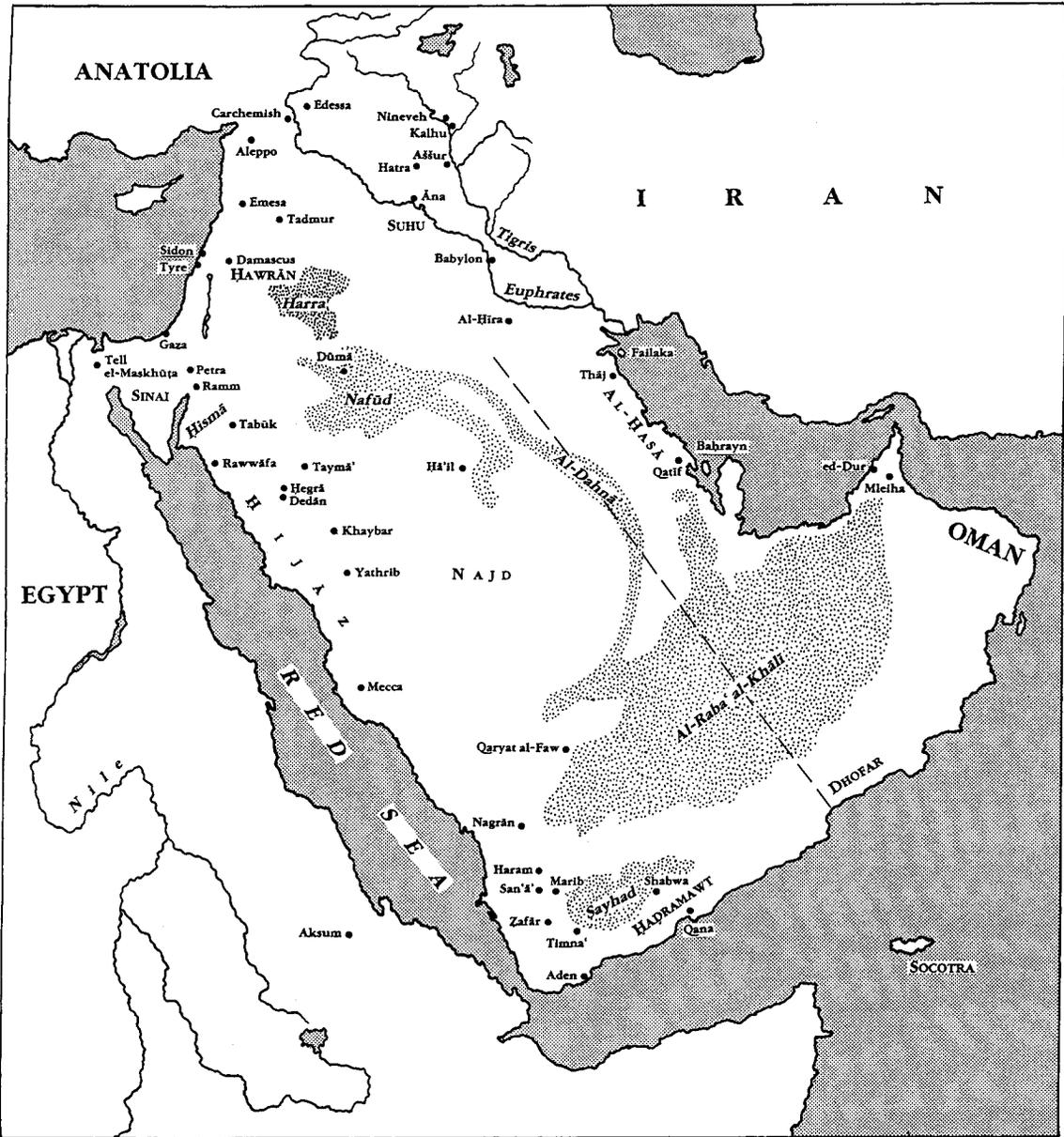
Fig. 4.
Sketch map of pre-Islamic Arabia showing the 'east-west' division used in this paper (map drawn by A. Searight).

tirely ignorant of these. Similarly, the archaeological exploration of the Gulf coast and Oman has provided information about chronology, city plans, diet, burial practices and much else, which is only slowly becoming available in the west of the Penin-

sula. Nevertheless, even accepting this, there are clear differences between the two regions, and these are worth exploring.

To the epigraphist, the most striking contrast between them is in the use of the art of writing. In northwest Arabia there was

a multiplicity of different native scripts, in addition to the imported Aramaic, Greek and South Arabian alphabets. From at least the mid-first millennium BC, forms of the Oasis North Arabian script appear to have been in use in the major oases of Dūmā, Taymāʾ and Dadan and, from a period not much later, the nomads seem also to have used a number of different alphabets (72). The question of the development and the interrelationships of the different Arabian scripts is still very uncertain, but it seems possible that most, if not all, of these North Arabian alphabets developed in parallel to the South Arabian scripts and not from them.

By contrast, the only native script to develop on the eastern side of the Peninsula was that of Dhofar. Apart from this, on present knowledge at least, writing in eastern Arabia appears to have been fundamentally derivative. However, I should emphasize that the amount of material so far discovered is derisory. A few dozen texts in cuneiform have been found at the northern end of the Gulf (73), and a scattering of Greek texts and fragments in the same region (74). The script of the Hasaitic inscriptions clearly derives directly from South Arabian monumental, although in individual texts there are occasional rather odd variations in the forms of certain letters (75). The few Aramaic texts from the Gulf are, with one major exception, short texts, fragments or coin legends. They display a variety of forms of the script in both the lapidary and cursive traditions and some texts – notably the coin legends but also others – contain letter-shapes apparently derived from both (76). Indeed, in some texts the scripts seem to have developed in unusual directions and, for instance, in the one long inscription the signs for d, r, k and ^{c} are identical, as are those for $ḥ$ and m (77). Although certain of its individual features can be compared with those of Hatran and Parthian (Arsacid), this particular form of the Aramaic script is not known from elsewhere. It is therefore possible that it represents a local development, of which as yet we have only two examples (78). However, the total number of Aramaic texts from the Gulf area is so tiny and their geographical and chronological range apparently so wide that it would be dangerous to draw any conclusions at present.

In the south, the contrast between west and east is slightly different. In Yemen a number of individual settled, literate cultures grew up and yet there appears to have been the most extraordinary degree of uniformity in the appearance of the monumental script (79). Since the palaeographical work of Jacqueline Pirenne, it has been assumed that this developed at a more or less uniform rate throughout the region and even in outlying areas (80). The differences between one inscription and another in the form of the monumental script are therefore generally attributed to chronological developments, rather than regional variations. At the same time, there are two other types of the South Arabian script: the adapted 'majuscule' of the graffiti and some of the inscribed sticks mentioned below, and the *zabūr*, or 'minuscule' script, used on the majority of the inscribed sticks which have been appearing in northern Yemen, in their hundreds, since 1970 (81). In both cases these are groups of scripts for, in contrast to the monumental writing, there is no uniformity here and, particularly in the case of the *zabūr*, there is a plethora of different script forms. Nor was literacy confined to the settled population, for in the deserts of southern Saudi Arabia there are thousands of graffiti in the South Arabian (82) and 'Southern Thamudic' (83) scripts, some of which may well have been written by nomads, like the Safaitic and 'Thamudic' graffiti of the north.

Thus, there is at present a very clear contrast between eastern Arabia, where writing seems hardly to have taken root, and the western two-thirds of the Peninsula where it seems to have been endemic. This said, however, there are also clear distinctions between the northwest and the southwest in languages, scripts, the types of document available and relations with other societies. In what follows, I shall be concentrating on what we know of the linguistic situation in north and central Arabia in the first millennia BC and AD. I shall not deal with the languages of ancient South Arabia, except when they impinge on those of the north (84).

Ancient North Arabian

The hn-*dialects*

In northwestern Arabia a multiplicity of dialects developed within the group I have called Ancient North Arabian, which uses *h-* as the definite article. The earliest occurrence of this article is in the name of the goddess *hn-ʾlt* in the Aramaic dedications on silver bowls found at her shrine at Tell al-Mashūṭa, in the Nile delta. These have been dated to the late fifth century BC (85). One of the dedicators was Qaynū bar Gešem, king of Qēdār, and it has recently been suggested that this is evidence that this tribe could have spoken a *h-/hn*-dialect (86). However, this is to stretch the evidence too far. The other dedications found at the shrine are also to *hn-ʾlt*. Of the two others which name the dedicator, one is made by a man with an Egyptian name and a North Arabian patronym (87), while in the other both names are Semiticized Egyptian (88). It seems clear, therefore, that the goddess of this shrine was worshipped as *hn-ʾlt*, regardless of how this epithet would be realized in the languages of individual pilgrims, or the Aramaic of the dedications. This epithet cannot therefore

be used as evidence for the language spoken by the tribe of Qēdār or any other of the dedicants.

Similarly, this example should warn us that the epithet ʾΑλιλάτ mentioned by Herodotus (89) is not necessarily evidence for the dialect of his Arab informants (who were probably living in eastern Egypt or Sinai). In ancient Near-Eastern religions epithets rapidly became names and, once this had happened, the form of the name was fixed. All we can say is that in eastern Egypt in the fifth century BC both the *h-* and the *ʾl*-dialects were represented in the epithet 'the goddess' (90), but with no certainty as to who was speaking these dialects at the time, or where they originated.

Dadanitic

The one dialect of Ancient North Arabian in which it is certain that *hn-* was used was Dadanitic. The normal Dadanitic article is *h-* but before /ʾ/ (91) and /ʿ/ (92) it is *hn-*. It has been suggested that *hn-* is a survival of the original article in all members of this group, but that in the other dialects it was reduced to *h-* (93). It is impossible to prove or disprove this theory, but if this were so, one would expect the odd irregularity of usage in Dadanitic and sporadic survivals in other dialects. In fact, however, there is only one possible instance in Dadanitic of *hn-* before a phoneme which is not a pharyngal or a glottal (94), and no certain examples (except in names) in the other dialects. So this feature could just as well, or perhaps more likely, be a euphonic development within Dadanitic, as a survival from an earlier period.

A Safaitic inscription, by an author who gives his *nisba* as *hn-ḥwly* (95), provides an interesting footnote to this discussion. It is clear from many other Safaitic texts that the *Ḥwlt* came from outside the normal migration areas of the tribes east of the Ḥawrān whose members wrote these graffiti,

and it is likely that the *Ḥwlt* should be identified with the *Avalitae*, whom Pliny associates with the oases of Dūmā and Ḥegrā (96), the latter at least being very much within the Dadanitic *hn-* dialect area. Unfortunately, the statement in the text – *w nfr mn rm* 'and he escaped from the Romans' – is too brief to identify its language.

Outside Dadanitic – ie. principally at Tell al-Mashūṭa and in the Hasaitic inscriptions – the evidence for the article *hn-* comes entirely from names, all but two of which are compounded with *hn-ʾlt* (97) and, as noted above, these are not evidence for the linguistic features of the texts in which they occur. This is particularly clear in the case of the name *hn-ʾmlt*, found in a Safaitic text from northern Saudi Arabia (98), since there is ample evidence that the article in Safaitic is *h-* before all sounds, not *hn-*.

The h- *and possible 'zero' dialects*

Hasaitic (?)
It is important to reiterate that the etymologies of personal names are not evidence for the language of their bearers, since Hasaitic has been classed with the *hn-* dialects simply because of the presence of the article *hn-* in theophoric names in the texts. Other than in names, there is as yet only one possible instance of the article in Hasaitic, and here it is the South Arabian suffixed *-n* (99). So limited is the material yet discovered that we have no other contexts in which the definite article might be expected (100). It is therefore far from certain what form it took in Hasaitic. It is even possible that it did not use a definite article at all, or else employed one, such as a vocalic affix as in Aramaic, which did not show up in the purely consonantal South Arabian script.

Despite its script, Hasaitic is classed as Ancient North Arabian rather than Ancient South Arabian because it uses the typically ANA expression *ḏʾl* and, with the one exception just quoted, lacks any characteristically ASA features. This classification is probably correct, but it is as well to be aware that it is, and can only be, based on the tiny amount of non-onomastic material available.

Oasis North Arabian
The report, in Akkadian, by the eighth-century BC governor of Suḫu on the middle Euphrates, concerning a raid he carried out on a caravan of the people of Taymāʾ and Sabaʾ, is by now well known. This is our earliest evidence for the involvement of the Sabaeans and Taymanites in the caravan trade (101). However, there may be another reference to Taymāʾ, this time in a hieroglyphic Luwian document also of the eighth century, which is by a certain Yariris, a palace official who seems to have become regent of Carchemish during the minority of its king. In this inscription, Yariris boasts that he knew twelve languages and at least four scripts (102). The latter were, 'the script of the City' (ie. his own hieroglyphic Luwian), and those of *Sura* and Assyria and finally the *Taymani* script. *Sura* has been identified as Tyre and its script, therefore, as Phoenician (103). Rather more tentatively, it has been suggested that *ta-i-ma-ni-ti* refers to the script of Taymāʾ (104). Like the other items in the list, this is an adjectival form (105), and this could explain the *-n-*. Such an interpretation is very attractive, not least because it provides a schematic map of the trading relationships of Carchemish at this period: with Phoenicia to the west, Assyria to the east and Taymāʾ and Sabaʾ to the south (106).

If this identification is correct, it provides the earliest historical reference to a North Arabian script. It does not seem to me necessary to assume that the South Ar-

abian script is meant here (107). The governor of Suḫu was quite capable of distinguishing between Taymanites and Sabaeans and there is no reason to suppose that Yariris would have said Taymanitic if he had meant Sabaic. If Sass is correct in dating to the eighth century BC some of the seals with Oasis North Arabian inscriptions found in Mesopotamia, this would fit very well with this reference.

Although I am unconvinced by many of Sass's arguments, unless one takes the extreme position that all the inscriptions on the seals are later additions, his dating is probably more or less correct in some cases. I would therefore suggest that we could take as a working hypothesis the existence of the Oasis North Arabian script, in one or more forms, by the eighth century BC. The way in which this was adapted to express the different dialects of the region is only just beginning to be worked out.

It would appear that the **Taymanitic** script had signs for all three unvoiced non-emphatic sibilants, represented by s^1, s^2 and s^3 (see Figs. 3 and 5). It seems probable that this s^3 sign originally had a form similar to Monumental South Arabian s^3, for a shape very close to the latter is found on a Taymanitic seal inscription (RES 2688) (108). What appears to have happened is that the distinction between the phonemes represented by s^3 and s^1 was retained longer in Taymāʾ than in other places (109). Developed forms of the s^3 sign appear in at least two other Taymanitic inscriptions (110), but in none of the other North Arabian scripts.

Similarly, it would appear that in its earliest form, the ONA script had no sign for /ḏ/ (see Fig. 3). In Taymanitic, which in this case again appears to be very conservative, the z sign was also used for /ḏ/, while the ḏ signs in early and late Dadanitic look very much as if they are adaptations of the z sign. At Dūmā, on the other hand, a different solution was found. The inherited z sign, with the horizontal bar set diagonally, was used for /z/, and a sign resembling the South Arabian ḏ was employed for /ḏ/ (in the verb ᶜwḏ) (111). At the same time a sign similar to the South Arabian ḏ was used for /ḍ/ in the N.Div. rḍw (112). This interchange of the ḏ and ḍ signs is paralleled in Safaitic and Thamudic B which also employ a sign identical to the monumental South Arabian ḏ for their /ḍ/. On the other hand, in Hismaic, an identical sign was used for /ṯ/, the common ṯ sign being used for /g/. No explanation has yet been found for this bizarre feature. There are many other examples and a thorough study of the relationships between signs and the sounds they represent in the different forms of the Arabian alphabetic tradition is long overdue.

Thamudic

In the last sixty years, the study of 'Thamudic' has progressed considerably, and thanks to the work of F.V. Winnett and Geraldine King, it is now possible to remove from the *Restklassenbildung* two groups of inscriptions, and to make a very rough preliminary subdivision of some of the rest. Of the two groups which can be removed one is Winnett's 'Thamudic A' which is now recognized as 'Taymanitic' and has been discussed above. The other is his 'Thamudic E' which I have suggested should be renamed Hismaic (113). Geraldine King has made a detailed analysis of this dialect and script (114) which, it is hoped, will be published before long, and so I shall add only the few brief remarks below. The distinctive features of language, orthography, style and content of both Taymanitic and Hismaic are now fairly well known and each constitutes a clearly defined type. Of course, the categories are not hermetically sealed and there are texts which could be either Taymanitic or early

Dadanitic, and others which could be Hismaic or Safaitic, or which show a mixture of the features of both groups. However, this is to be expected.

What is left as 'Thamudic' is a mass of over 11,000, mainly short, texts scattered over the whole of the western part of the Peninsula from Syria to Yemen (inclusive). Approximately 2,000 of these were copied and published by early scholars and travellers in northwest Arabia and were rather roughly divided by Winnett in 1937 into three sub-groups, **Thamudic B, C and D** (115). In 1970 he revised the division and the labels, calling Thamudic B 'Najdi' and combining C and D under the heading 'Hijazi' (116). However, this only led to confusion and his original classification has generally been retained (117). Of these groups, by far the largest is Thamudic B and it is almost certain that future work will show that this should be subdivided. Similarly, on the basis of different signs for *r* and *n*, Geraldine King has suggested that Thamudic C should be subdivided (118).

Most of the texts are known only in hand-copies of uncertain accuracy and this combined with their brevity makes them extremely difficult to interpret. In addition, the values of certain signs in Thamudic B, C and D are still in doubt. An interesting feature of Thamudic D, which is the script of the Thamudic counterpart of the Raqōš inscription (119) and which can therefore be dated to AD 267, is the apparently archaic forms of many of its letters (see Fig. 3). This is particularly clear in the case of ʾ, *b*, *z*, s^1, *ṣ* and *n*. This should serve as a warning to those who propose palaeographical developments between one script and another. For had we not had the Raqōš text with its date, Thamudic D would have been classed as one of the earliest of the North Arabian scripts.

The vast majority of the known Thamudic inscriptions (some 9,000) were discovered by the Philby-Ryckmans-Lippens expedition mainly in the southwestern part of Saudi Arabia. As might be expected, these display many features which are very different from the 'Thamudic' inscriptions of the north and they do not fit easily into the existing sub-groups. They are called 'Thamudic' simply because they are considered to be North Arabian but cannot be classified as Oasis North Arabian, Hismaic, Safaitic or Hasaitic. They are termed **'Southern Thamudic'** to distinguish them from the existing rough subdivisions B, C and D. Jacques Ryckmans described some of their features in his article 'Aspects nouveaux du problème thamoudéen' (120) which, in my opinion, even after half a century, remains the best available description of Thamudic as a category. We must await the full analysis of these texts before we can know how many more sub-groups are represented in the collection and whether any of these can be removed from the Thamudic 'pending file' and given labels of their own.

Hismaic

Some years ago, E. A. Knauf tried to show that the script and dialect which Winnett called 'Thamudic E' should be classed as a sub-group of Safaitic which he suggested renaming 'South Safaitic' (121). However, as Geraldine King has shown, the script, orthography, content and some linguistic features of these texts differ markedly from those of Safaitic and the attempt to subsume them under the 'Safaitic' rubric blurs important distinctions, bringing confusion rather than clarification (122). For instance, no fewer than six signs have identical shapes, but completely different values, in the two alphabets (Fig. 3). Thus the sign representing *g* in Hismaic is used for *t̠* in Safaitic, the sign for *ṭ* in Hismaic is *ḥ* in Safaitic, and so on (123). It will thus be clear that, although geographically, and perhaps chronologically, these scripts are

Proto-Semitic Phoneme	ANA & Old Arabic Sound	Letter	Standard Arabic Sound	Letter	Proto-Semitic Phoneme	Nabataean Sound	Letter	Late Nabataean Sound	Letter
/š/					/š/ → [ʃ]		ש	→ [ʃ]	ש
	[ʃ]	s¹ >	[s]	س					
/s/					/s/ → [s]		ס ~~~~~~~~	→ [s]?	ס (in loans)
/ś/ ——→ [ɕ]?		s² >	[ʃ]	ش	/ś/ ——→ ["ś"]		ש	→ ["ś"]?	ש

Aramaic /baʕal-ʃamīn [spelt Bʕl-šmyn]>Safaitic Bʕl-s¹mn (loan) = Safaitic Bʕl-s¹my (calque)

Nabataean /dūšarā/ [spelt Dwšrʔ]>Safaitic Ds²r (loan)

Proto-Semitic Phoneme	Taymanitic Sound	Letter			Proto-Semitic Phoneme	Old Aramaic Sound	Letter	Middle Aramaic (except Nabataean) Sound	Letter
/š/ ——→ [ʃ]		s¹			/š/ ——→ [ʃ]		ש ——→	[ʃ]	ש
/s/ ——→ [s]?		s³			/s/ ——→ [s]		ס ↘		
								[s]	ס
/ś/ ——→ ["ś"]?		s²			/ś/ ——→ ["ś"]		ש ↗		

Note: /d/=etymological phonemes, [d]=phonetic realizations, d=representation in writing. ["ś"]=the phonetic realization of /ś/, exact sound unknown.

Fig. 5.
Sibilant shifts in Ancient North Arabian, Arabic, Nabataean and other Aramaic dialects.

close neighbours, the palaeographical relationship between the two is fairly distant.

Similarly, although the two dialects were almost certainly mutually comprehensible, there are significant differences in usage. To take just one example, whereas Safaitic uses *h-* for both the definite article and the, much rarer, nearer demonstrative ('this'), Hismaic uses *h-* before nouns so infrequently that Geraldine King has suggested that when it *is* used it may have had a specifically demonstrative force. In most cases where one would expect the article, and where in Safaitic it would be present, there is no visible mark of definition in Hismaic. This suggests that Hismaic either had no definite article (as in Syriac) or else employed a vocalic affix (like the Aramaic emphatic ending) which would not have been represented in the purely consonantal script. In this regard it may be significant that affiliation to a social group is never expressed by the *nisba* in Hismaic (124).

It is for this reason that I have tentatively described Hismaic as neither a *h- / hn-* nor an *ʔl-* dialect, but as an apparently 'zero' dialect, as far as the definite article is concerned. As noted above, Hasaitic may also

be of this type, but as yet there is too little evidence to tell.

Safaitic
Much progress has been made in the study of Safaitic in the last twenty years and it is hoped that this will accelerate in the near future. It is the dialect of Ancient North Arabian about which we know most and yet the very nature of the texts puts a severe limit on the amount and type of information we can glean from them.

The texts were written largely by nomads who migrated across southern Syria, western Iraq, northeastern Jordan and northern Saudi Arabia probably between the first century BC and the fourth century AD. Some 20,000 inscriptions are known at present and there are tens of thousands more awaiting discovery. They thus represent a very dense concentration of evidence for a particular Ancient North Arabian script and dialect over a considerable area at the northern end of the Peninsula. The extent of the material available, and in particular the huge onomasticon, can sometimes distort comparisons with other dialects which are less well represented (125).

I have published elsewhere (126) a lengthy survey of the content of these inscriptions and I will not repeat that discussion here. Instead, I would like to draw attention to a few interesting, but unconnected, details which may help to place the dialect in its linguistic context.

Like the other North Arabian languages, Safaitic had two unvoiced non-emphatic sibilants, represented by the letters s^1 and s^2 (see Fig. 5). It is clear from the loan-words, or rather 'loan-names', found in Safaitic that these letters did not have the same phonetic values as their etymological equivalents in standard Arabic, represented by the letters س (*sīn*) and ش (*šīn*) respectively. It is for this reason that I now use the phonetically neutral notation for these letters, s^1 and s^2 (borrowed from Ancient South Arabian), rather than the traditional *s* and *š* which imply the pronunciation [s] and [ʃ] respectively.

In his brilliant studies of 'Arabian Sibilants', Professor Beeston showed that in Ancient North Arabian and in Arabic up to at least the eighth century AD, the two unvoiced non-emphatic sibilants, represented by s^1 and s^2, and in Arabic by the letters س (*sīn*) and ش (*šīn*), were pronounced respectively [ʃ] and [ç] and that there was no 'pure' [s] (127). This explains why the Aramaic divine name *Baʿal-šamīn* was spelt in Safaitic with s^1 (thus b^cls^1mn) not s^2. It is interesting to compare this loan form with the calque (ie. loan translation) b^cls^1my, also spelt with s^1, which is found in a few Safaitic texts (128). If s^1 and s^2 in Safaitic had had the values of their equivalents س (*sīn*) and ش (*šīn*) in standard Arabic, one would have expected the loan form from Aramaic *Baʿal-šamīn* to be spelt with s^2 and the calque b^cls^1my to be spelt with s^1, since we know that the word for heaven was s^1my (cf. Ar. *samāʾ*) in Safaitic. The fact that both are spelt with s^1 suggests that this was pronounced [ʃ].

It follows from this that, if the name of the deity which we pronounce (anachronistically) 'Dūsharā', had been pronounced with a [ʃ] in Nabataean, it would have been spelt in Safaitic with s^1, and this we never find. Instead, it is always spelt with s^2 and probably had a pronunciation approximating to the *ich*-laut [ç], which Sībawayhi describes for ش (*šīn*), the reflex of s^2, in eighth-century Arabic (129). As I explain below, we know that this name came to Safaitic via Aramaic because it is generally spelt with a *d* rather than the etymological *ḏ*. We must therefore conclude that in the Nabataean Aramaic of the Ḥawrān, at least, the phonemes /š/ and /ś/, which were represented by the same letter (ע) in the Aramaic alphabet, were still pronounced differently. This maintenance of the distinct pronunciation of the phoneme /ś/ marks out Nabataean Aramaic from most of the other Middle Aramaic dialects which underwent the sound-shift [ś]>[s]. Simplistic dismissals of this as 'Arabic colouring' (130) mask the really interesting questions which it raises (131).

In Safaitic and Hismaic, the lack of [s] obviously caused problems in the transliteration of Latin and Greek names and titles containing *S* or Σ. There are a few cases where s^1 has been used (ᵓ*qlds¹=Claudius*, *tts¹=Titus*) but the more usual expedient seems to have been to use the emphatic *ṣ* (*qṣr=*καῖσαρ, *grfṣ=*ᵓΑγρίππαϚ, *hrdṣ=* ᶜΗρῴδηϚ, *flfṣ=*ΦίλιπποϚ, *grmnqṣ=Germanicus*, etc.). It is almost certainly for this reason that *ṣ* was put in the place of *semkath* in the Hismaic ABC found at Khirbat al-Samrāᵓ (132).

Nabataean (133)

For many years it has been widely held that the Nabataeans wrote in Aramaic but spoke Arabic. This view is based on the presence of Arabic loan-words in the Nabataean inscriptions and on the claim that the

vast majority of the names in Nabataean inscriptions are 'Arabic' (134). However, if one excepts the Namāra inscription, which is in Old Arabic, and JSNab 17, which is in Nabataeo-Arabic (see below), only a small number of Arabic loan-words can be identified in the Nabataean inscriptions. I have counted a maximum of twenty-eight, six of which could also be Aramaic (135). Moreover, with two exceptions (136), these words occur only in the texts from Ḥegrā or Rawwāfa: exactly where some Old Arabic and Ancient North Arabian influence is to be expected. If these loans provide evidence of an 'Arabic substrate' in Nabataean Aramaic, it is therefore only in the language used in North Arabia from the first century AD onwards, not in the Nabataean of Petra or the other parts of the kingdom. It cannot therefore be used as evidence that Arabic was the spoken language of 'the Nabataeans' in general. This demonstrates the danger of treating as a homogeneous corpus all the inscriptions which *we* label 'Nabataean'.

Turning to the onomastic evidence, it is first necessary to distinguish what we mean by 'Nabataean' names. Generally, this is taken to mean all names found in Nabataean inscriptions unless there is a particular reason for attributing them to another group (eg. 'Greek' or 'Jewish' names). However, we use the term 'Nabataean' for texts in a number of local varieties of the Aramaic script from the Ḥawrān to Arabia, Sinai and Egypt, and while it may sometimes be helpful to use the label in this flexible way, we should not allow it to mislead us into assuming that the authors of all these texts belonged to a single homogeneous group, the 'Nabataeans'.

Names which are clearly of Arabic form, eg. those containing the definite article ʾl, or the word ʾbn 'son' (as opposed to Aramaic br), or the ʾfʿal nominal form, occur very largely in Sinai. But the script of these texts

from Sinai has its own characteristics and internal development, which is distinct from that of the Nabataean heartland around Petra. It is therefore misleading to refer to them as 'Nabataean' and to use them as evidence for 'the Nabataeans'. It would be wiser to return to the practice of earlier scholars and refer to them as 'Sinaitic'.

Moreover, while the vast majority of these texts consist simply of names accompanied by *šlm*, *dkyr*, *bryk*, *b-ṭb*, etc. (137) the language of the few statements which do occur is always Aramaic, not Arabic. It seems to me probable that someone writing a graffito would express himself in his language of normal use, rather than a literary tongue (138), and therefore the case for spoken Arabic even in Sinai seems to me unproven. Certainly, the widespread use of names which are linguistically Arabic is no evidence for the spoken language at the time the texts were carved. Names have an extraordinary record of survival and it is usually impossible to guess at the reasons for using, retaining, or discarding them in any particular society at any particular period.

Just as my name 'Michael' has been preserved through the survival of two religions, so the popularity of certain names in Sinai, or among the Nabataeans, could in some cases have been connected with the worship of deities who were also venerated by speakers of Old Arabic. Unfortunately, however, we do not know which of these cults, if any, were ancestral among the Nabataeans and which were later introductions. It is usually assumed that the Nabataeans came from Arabia, but I know of no argument for this origin that will stand scrutiny (139). In the earliest reference to the Nabataeans, when they were nomadic, they were already in southern Transjordan, which remained their heartland throughout their history and I know of no clear evidence that they came from anywhere else. Given their geographical position and their involve-

ment in the frankincense trades they naturally had links with peoples in northwest Arabia and eventually came to rule that area. They worshipped many of the same deities as their neighbours in that region. But if their chief deity, Dushara, was the god of the Petra mountains, as is generally believed, this surely suggests a very old and close attachment to this area. It is interesting that in the Hismaic graffiti from the area of Wādī Ramm, not far from Petra, invocations to Dushara outnumber by approximately 62% to 38% those to Lt/ʾlt (140), despite the fact that there was a major temple to ʾlt at Ramm (141) and that in the Safaitic graffiti, written by the nomads to the north and east of the area, she is by far the most popular deity. Moreover, the N.Div. 'Dushara' in these inscriptions is most often spelt in its North Arabian form $\underline{D}$-s^2ry (142), which contrasts with the entirely Aramaized form (ds^2r) normally found in the Safaitic inscriptions.

This may contribute a small piece of evidence to the debate on which language the Nabataeans spoke. If, as is commonly believed, $\underline{D}$-s^2ry/$Dwšrʾ$ means 'He of the Sharà' (the mountains, north of Petra) (143), he was presumably a local deity for the population of the Ḥismà of southern Jordan, which produced the Hismaic inscriptions. The meaning of the epithet would have been obvious to them and it would not be surprising, therefore, that they spelt it in its etymological form. On the other hand, it is also unsurprising that it should appear as a loan-form in the Safaitic texts, written several hundred kilometres away, in an area where most people would be unaware of the geographical reference (144). What is significant is that the loan in Safaitic is from Aramaic. It seems to me out of the question that ds^2r in Safaitic could be a spelling pronunciation, since this would require that all those writers of Safaitic inscriptions who in-

voked Dushara as ds^2r had read his name in an Aramaic text, without ever hearing it from a North Arabian speaker. This is obviously preposterous. However, the only alternative is that they received the cult from Aramaic speakers.

It is, of course, likely that they came into contact with the cult of Dushara in the Ḥawrān, rather than at Petra, and it is generally assumed, though there is virtually no evidence one way or the other, that the spoken language of the Ḥawrān was Aramaic (145). But the cult of Dushara was a vital and distinctive element of Nabataean communal identity. Other deities in Syria had important cult centres (eg. Baʿalshamīn at Sīʿ) but were also worshipped elsewhere (eg. Baʿalshamīn at Palmyra). Dushara was one of the very few to be uniquely associated with a particular people or state. It therefore seems likely that Nabataeans, from the heartland, would have been involved in his cult even in the Ḥawrān, indeed one might expect them to have dominated it. If these were speakers of Old Arabic there would have been no point in their communicating with the nomads in Aramaic, since Old Arabic and Safaitic would have been mutually intelligible. In this case, the name Dushara would have come into Safaitic with an initial /ḏ/ and a final, consonantal /y/. Instead, it was borrowed in its Aramaic form with an initial /d/ and (presumably) a final vowel, and this suggests that those Nabataeans from whom the cult was adopted spoke a dialect of Aramaic. Needless to say, this is very far from being conclusive. It is intended simply as a small contribution to a continuing debate.

Old Arabic

Diagnostic features

As I have said, Herodotus' statement that the Arabs worshipped a goddess named

ᵓΑλιλάτ, tells us that this form of the Arabic definite article was in use by the fifth century BC but, of course, gives us no other information about the dialect. So we cannot assume that this is a direct ancestor of the Old Arabic attested in later texts (146). However, there is a handful of inscriptions dating from the late first century BC onwards which are either expressed in, or display features of, Old Arabic and which have been found right across the Peninsula, in central, north and eastern Arabia, Syria and the Negev.

However, since Old Arabic appears to have been normally an *unwritten* language its features are not at all well defined. The most obvious characteristic is, of course, the use of the definite article ᵓl-. But, even here it is necessary to be cautious. As I remarked earlier, the presence of ᵓl- in a *name* does not mean that the text in which that name occurs is in Old Arabic. The inscription from Qaryat al-Faw, a photograph of which was published by Wafik Ghoneim and which was discussed by Manfred Kropp at the 1991 Seminar for Arabian Studies (147), was included in a recent list of the earliest inscriptions in the Arabic language, as the first attestation of the definite article ᵓl- (148). However, the only clear example of ᵓl- in this text is in the name of an ethnic group the ᵓ(ā)l ᵓl-ᵓḥnkt which one would expect to retain the article in its native form, whatever the language of the text (but see below under Dadano-Arabic). A second instance of the article has been assumed in this text in the phrase l-lt which Robin interpreted as *li-l-lāt, 'for Al-lāt'. However, we know from the Safaitic and Hismaic inscriptions that one of the most popular deities in North Arabia was Lt, who is distinguished in both theophoric names and in invocations from ᵓlt (*ilāt?/Allāt?) (149) – there are sometimes prayers to both in the same text (150) – and from the epithet (h)-ᵓlt ('the goddess') (151). It is therefore unsafe to assume that the article ᵓl- has been assimilated in this phrase, since llt could as easily represent *li-Lāt as *li-l-lāt.

One characteristic of Old Arabic, which has not so far been recognized, is that the 3rd. person masc. sg. of the suffix conjugation ('perfect') of verbs tertiae y/w ended in /-ā/ in Old Arabic, as in the later stages of the language, thus *banā 'he built' (152). This is in contrast to the ANA treatment of this class of verbs, in which the final radical retained its consonantal value, thus bny (presumably representing *banaya). This provides us with another important distinction between Old Arabic and ANA and one which is visible not only in scripts such as Dadanitic and Aramaic which use *matres lectionis* for final vowels, but also in those which do not. In the latter, the pronunciation *banā is expressed simply as bn, as in the inscription of ᶜIgl bn Hfᶜm (see below), as opposed to the regular ANA bny.

Another distinctive mark of Old Arabic is the feminine singular relative pronoun, ᵓlt (cf. Classical Arabic ᵓallatī), which occurs in JSLih 384, see below. This is not found in ANA, which uses ḏt (eg. in Safaitic and Hismaic) or ḏᵓt (eg. in Hasaitic).

Other features of Old Arabic distinguish it from the Sayhadic languages, but are shared with Ancient North Arabian. Thus it has two, rather than three, unvoiced nonemphatic sibilants, although the notation of these in scripts which have signs for three is sometimes unpredictable. This is a feature which Old Arabic shares with all but the oldest stages of Ancient North Arabian. The causative stem of the verb is ᵓfᶜl rather than hfᶜl or s¹fᶜl and it uses the preposition mn rather than bn 'from'.

Until recently, it was thought that the use of the negative particle lam plus the prefix conjugation (the 'jussive' in Classical Arabic) was a distinctive feature which could be used to identify Old Arabic (153). How-

ever, this construction has recently been found in a Safaitic inscription from north-eastern Jordan (154), the language of which, in other respects, could be either Safaitic or Old Arabic (155).

As explained in the section on nomenclature, before the sixth century AD, no one script was associated exclusively with Old Arabic and, on the rare occasions on which it was written, a number of different alphabets was used. The reasons for this will be discussed below, but the result is that, while there are relatively few inscriptions which are linguistically more or less 'pure' Old Arabic, there are several others which display a mixture of Old Arabic features and those of the language normally associated with the script in which the text is written: in particular Safaitic, Dadanitic, Nabataean or other Aramaic.

Texts in 'pure' Old Arabic
The earliest document which is indisputably in Old Arabic is the inscription of ᶜgl bn Hfᶜm, written in the Sabaic script, which was found at Qaryat al-Faw (156) and may date from the end of the first century BC (157).

This text uses the article ᵓl- (158), the *banā, rather than *banaya, form of the 3 m. sg. of the suffix stem of verbs *tertiae w/7* (159), the ᵓfᶜl form of the causative stem, and the preposition *mn* rather than *bn* (160). On the other hand, it has certain Sabaic features such as the form of the 3 m. sg. enclitic pronoun -*hw* which alternates with -*h* (161) and the sporadic attachment of -*m* to the end of words, possibly attempting to imitate Sabaic *mimation* without understanding its purpose (162).

W. W. Müller (163) has recognized that JSLih 384 should also be classed as Old Arabic rather than Dadanitic, since it contains the Arabic relative pronoun ᵓallatī in the form ᵓlt. The text also contains an example of the *banā rather than *banaya form of the

3 m. sg. of the suffix stem of verbs *tertiae w/7*. Dadanitic is the only ANA script in which *matres lectionis* are employed (164) and the letter -*h* is used to represent final /ā/ (165). Thus *banā appears in this text as *bnh* (166), as opposed to Dadanitic (and other ANA) *bny*, (ie. *banaya*) (167).

The other documents which can be said to be in more or less 'pure' Old Arabic are the Namāra inscription (AD 328) (168), lines 4–5 of the ᶜĒn ᶜAvdat inscription (169) (of uncertain date) (170), both in the Nabataean script; and the inscriptions of Umm al-Jimāl (of uncertain date), Zebed (AD 512), Jabal Usays (AD 528), and Harrān (AD 568) all of which are in what is recognizably the Arabic script (171).

In addition, there are two leaves of parchment from a Psalter found in the genizah of the Umayyad mosque in Damascus. They bear part of the Septuagint text of Psalm 78 (LXX, 77) with an Arabic gloss in Greek transliteration, set out in parallel columns. Following a detailed study of this text I am convinced that it is pre-Islamic (172). This is the most valuable text in Old Arabic so far discovered since the Greek transliteration seems to have been made with great care and consistency from an *oral* source, and thus is uncomplicated by the orthographic conventions of another script. It also, of course, provides the vowels and has the additional advantage that there can be no doubt as to the meaning.

Old Arabic 'Mixed' texts
As described in the section on nomenclature, the Old Arabic 'mixed' texts can be subdivided into Safaeo-Arabic, Dadano-Arabic, etc. These are texts written in the Safaitic (Dadanitic, etc.) scripts, and which are predominantly in the language normally associated with that script (ie. in Safaitic, Dadanitic, etc.), but which also

contain elements which can be attributed to Old Arabic.

[*Sabaeo-Arabic*]

At present, there are no clear examples of texts in the Sabaic script and language which contain elements clearly attributable to Old Arabic rather than ANA (173). However, when all the inscriptions from Qaryat al-Faw are published it is very probable that some will be found to fall into this category.

Safaeo-Arabic

There are a handful of Safaitic inscriptions which appear to contain the definite article *ʾl-*. The clearest of these is C 2446 which is known only from a hand-copy (Dn 68c). This reads

> l S¹ᶜd bn Mrʾ bn Nr w-wgm ᶜ[ll] ʾẖ-h Nr qtl<.>-h ʾ**1 (N)bṭy** mbᶜy nᶜm ᶜwḏ w-ḏf f-h-lt mᶜmn w-ʾlt dṯn w-gd-[ᶜ](w)ḏ w-gd-ḏf ṯʾr m-ḏ ʾs¹lf w-wlh kbr s¹ẖr ᶜl ʾẖ-h ḥbb-h l-ʾbd (174).

'By S¹ᶜd son of Mrʾ son of Nr and he mourned for his brother Nr (whom) the Nabataean killed during the attack (175) on the flocks of ᶜwḏ and Ḍf (176). And so, O Lt mᶜmn (177) and goddess of Dṯn (178) and Gd-ᶜwḏ and Gd-Ḍf (179) [grant the opportunity of] revenge on him who did this thing (180). And he mourned greatly s¹ẖr (181) for his brother, his beloved, for ever'.

On Dunand's copy, the first letter of *(n)bṭy* is the same length as the previous *l*, as opposed to the very short *n*s in the rest of the text, so the reading is not entirely secure. However, regardless of whether the *nisba* is *Nbṭy* or *Lbṭy*, it seems probable that the letters *ʾl* represent the Arabic article, rather than the word *ʾl* (cf. Ar. *ʾāl*) meaning 'social group', since in Safaitic this is always followed by the name itself (*ʾl rm* 'the people

of Rome, the Romans', *ʾl ḏf* 'the tribe of Ḍaif', etc.) and never by the *nisba* (*rmy, ḏfy*). Moreover, in Safaitic, 'the Nabataeans' are always called simply *nbṭ*, rather than **ʾl nbṭ*. If therefore, as seems likely, *ʾl* in this context is the Arabic article, this text contains a record of what I have called the 'northern Old Arabic isogloss' (182) in which the /l/ of the article is not assimilated, even before the sounds called by the grammarians of Classical Arabic *al-ḥurūf al-šamsiyya* or 'sun letters'.

However, other features of the text are characteristic of Safaitic, such as the vocative particle *h-* and the assimilation of the *n* in the preposition *mn*. I would therefore place C 2446 among the 'mixed texts' as an example of 'Safaeo-Arabic'.

Another possible text of this type is WH 589 which contains the statement *ʾs²r<.>q l-l-mdbr* 'and he migrated to the inner desert'. The two *l*s are clear on the photograph, but it is quite possible that they are the result of dittography on the part of the author, who had just written, and then crossed out, a second *s²* between the *r* and the *q* of *ʾs²rq*. In Safaitic, the word *mdbr* is never used with the article (183), but it is possible that it was referred to as **ʾl-mdbr* in Old Arabic, cf. the place-name *Rḥbt* which also does not take the article in Safaitic, but appears as *al-Ruḥbah* in later Arabic (184).

There are also several Safaitic inscriptions in which the definite article appears as *ʾ-* rather than *h-*. Given that in the Safaitic script the two letters are distinguished only by a short side-stroke (see Fig. 3), I restrict myself to those for which photographs are available and where it is difficult to suggest another explanation (other than an error by the author). Thus SIJ 37 has *s¹lm w-fṣyt m-bʾs¹ ʾ-s¹snt* 'security and deliverance from misfortune this year' (185), and KRS 125, an unpublished inscription from northeastern Jordan, has *ᶜwr*

l-m y^cwr ʾ-s¹fr 'blindness to whoever scratches out the writing' (186). In both cases, if my analysis is correct, these would be records of what I have called the 'central Old Arabic isogloss' in which the /l/ of the article is assimilated before a sibilant (187).

However, all these inscriptions display features typical of Safaitic, as well as possible examples of the Old Arabic definite article and it is for this reason that I have placed them among the 'mixed' texts, as Safaeo-Arabic.

Dadano-Arabic

The Dadano-Arabic texts (JSLih 71 and 276) and the Nabataeo-Arabic inscription (JSNab 17) were found in the very centre of an Ancient North Arabian (ie. *h-* dialect) area. The two former were found at Dadan and the latter at Ḥegrā, *c.*25 km to the north. In JSLih 71 and in JSNab 17 we find the name of the town in its Arabic form (ʾ)*l-ḫgr.* This contrasts with the forms *Ḥgrʾ* in Nabataean, possibly *ḫgr* in Safaitic (188) and the form behind Pliny's transcription *Haegra* (189).

JSLih 71 is an honorific inscription written in the late Dadanitic script. The name and genealogy take up the first two lines and are linguistically indeterminate, in that they could be either ANA or Old Arabic, although the *mater lectionis -h*, representing the final *-ā* in the first name, is a distinctive mark of Dadanitic orthography (190). Line 3 gives the tribal affiliation of the man honoured in the form *ḏ ʾl hn-ʾḥnkt.* As noted above, we cannot tell as yet whether the expression *ḏ ʾl* was used in Old Arabic or whether it is a distinguishing mark of ANA, therefore, at present this must also be treated as linguistically indeterminate. However, the situation is further complicated by the fact that, although the expression *ḏ ʾl* is typical of other ANA dialects (Safaitic, Hismaic, Thamudic B and

Hasaitic), it has not yet been found in Dadanitic where, on the relatively rare occasions when affiliation to a social group is expressed, it is usually marked simply by *ḏ* + the group name (191). As a final twist, however, the name of the honorand's social group is given as *hn-ʾḥnkt*, ie. with the distinctive Dadanitic definite article, even though the same name is found elsewhere in the form *ʾl-ʾḥnkt*, with the Old Arabic definite article *ʾl-* (192).

It is customary to link these examples with various South Arabian texts in which the *nisba*s *ḥnkyⁿ*, *ḥnkytⁿ*, and *ʾḥnkⁿ* are found (193). However, this does not seem to me possible. The form of the tribal name, *ʾḥnkt*, as attested in North Arabian, would produce the *nisba* * *ʾḥnky* in the masc. sg., * *ʾḥnkyt* in the fem. sg. and presumably * *ʾḥnkyn* in the pl. and this would surely be the same in Ancient South Arabian. I cannot therefore agree with Robin (and some earlier scholars) that the forms *ḥnkyⁿ* (194), *ḥnkytⁿ* (195), and *ʾḥnkⁿ* (196) are respectively the masc. and fem. sg. and the pl. *nisbas* from the clan/tribal name *ʾḥnkt* (197).

It is now generally accepted that lines 4–10 of JSLih 71 are in Old Arabic and it is certainly true that the definite article *ʾl-* occurs at least twice in this section of the text. However, although Professor Beeston's interpretation of this part of the inscription as 'near-classical Arabic' (198) was of great importance in drawing attention to its true language, I have difficulties both with individual details of his reading and, more importantly, with the fact that (like all the interpretations before it) it did not take account of the fact that the ends of lines 4–9 are missing. I am preparing a new reading of the text which I hope to publish in the near future. Here I will merely describe some of its Old Arabic features.

The article *ʾl-* occurs at least twice

(199), once in *b-l-ḥgr* (ie. 'in al-Ḥiǧr'), and once, following the demonstrative particle *h-* (also found in Ancient North Arabian and, as a preposed *ha-*, in early Arabic poetry) in the phrase *h-l-mfl* in line 8. Failure to recognize the demonstrative here has led some writers to assume that *hl-* represents another, otherwise unattested, form of the definite article: thus presupposing the use of three different forms in the same text.

The implications of JSLih 71 are intriguing. The inscription was set up in a town which was a centre of the Ancient North Arabian (*h-*) dialect, Dadanitic, and is written in the Dadanitic script. Yet the only part of the text which is *linguistically* Dadanitic is the definite article in the name of the honorand's social group (*hn-ʾḥnkt*), even though this is introduced by the non-Dadanitic ANA expression *ḏ ʾl*. The rest of the text is in Old Arabic. Why should this be? If the honorand, or the dedicator, was a speaker of Old Arabic, as might be suggested by the use of this language in the body of the text, why was the Dadanitic article used with his social group, particularly since the group's name occurs elsewhere as *ʾl-ʾḥnkt*? Whatever the explanation, this text is a dramatic example of the close co-existence of ANA and Old Arabic in this area.

A second Dadano-Arabic inscription is
JSLih 276. This reads
zdlh / bn / {k}{l}b / ḏ-ᶜmrtᶜ / f-ᶜrr / ḏġbt /
ᶜrr / ʾ-s¹fr ḏh
'Zdlh son of {Kl}b of the lineage of ᶜmrtᶜ. And so, may Ḏġbt defile the destroyer of this writing.'

The reading *ʾ-s¹fr ḏh* is clear (200) and there can be no doubt that the ʾ was intentional since (in contrast to their Safaitic equivalents) the letters ʾ and *h* have entirely different forms in the Dadanitic script. The ex-

pression finds an exact parallel, but this time with the Dadanitic article, in HE 1:

f-ᶜrr / ḏġbt / ᶜrr / h-s¹fr/ḏh.

The protective formula is typically Dadanitic and for this reason I have classed JSLih 276 as Dadano-Arabic, rather than pure Old Arabic. The treatment of the Old Arabic article in this text is identical to that in the ᶜgl bn Hfᶜm inscription, ie. the assimilation of the /l/ before a following sibilant, and this makes it a record of the 'central Old Arabic' isogloss (201).

Nabataeo-Arabic
If we except the ᶜĒn ᶜAvdat inscription, in which Aramaic and Arabic are not mixed but are used in different sections, the only Nabataeo-Arabic text so far identified is JSNab 17, at Ḥegrā/Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ, which is composed in a mixture of Nabataean Aramaic and Old Arabic and written in the Nabataean script (202). The interpretation of parts of the text are still disputed, but it is clear that some elements are in Aramaic (eg. *br*, *brt*, the date) and others in Old Arabic, and yet others could be in either (eg. *w-lᶜn mry ᶜlmʾ mn yšnʾ*, where, apart from the divine name, the rest could be either Nabataean Aramaic or Old Arabic). As in JSLih 71, the article *ʾl-* occurs twice, once in the place name *ʾl-ḥgrw* (line 4) and once before a common noun *ʾl-qbrw* (line 7).

The presence of these Old Arabic linguistic features in the Dadanitic and Nabataean Aramaic milieu suggests a degree of multilingualism in these North Arabian oases which parallels that at Qaryat al-Faw, and possibly at Naǧrān (203). In each of these places there was a dominant written language, respectively Dadanitic, Nabataean Aramaic or Sabaic, but these mixed texts suggest that speakers of Old Arabic were also present, although, in the north at

least, we have no way of knowing whether or not they were residents.

Aramaeo-Arabic

Finally, there is an Aramaeo-Arabic inscription, from Mleiha (Mulayḥa) in the U.A.E., which suggests that Old Arabic was also in use in eastern Arabia, at least in the second century AD (204). The text is composed in a rather barbarous Aramaic but contains a number of Old Arabic features including the use of the article ᵓl- and the preposition fī 'in', where Aramaic and Ancient North Arabian use b- (205). It may also be significant that the deities invoked are Manāt, here spelt mnt (ie. presumably with a long /ā/ which would not be represented in a medial position), rather than mnwtw as in Nabataean (206), and possibly Khl, the eponymous deity of Qryt ḏt Khl (ie. Qaryat al-Faw) (207). There are so few written documents from eastern Arabia that it is impossible to be sure what languages were spoken there at any time in the pre-Islamic period. However, this text from Mleiha provides a tiny fragment of evidence to suggest that Old Arabic may have been one of the vernaculars.

Undifferentiated North Arabian

In addition to the texts discussed above, there are a number of others which are clearly in a North Arabian language but which cannot be exactly classified within that grouping. In some cases it is not even possible to decide whether they are in Old Arabic or in ANA. But for the majority it is possible to exclude Old Arabic without being able to assign them to a particular ANA dialect.

Since most of the latter group come from Qaryat al-Faw it is quite possible that they represent the dialect of ANA spoken in the city at one or more periods. However, the number of published inscriptions from Faw is, at present, so small that it seems

safer to refrain from classifying this as a separate dialect until the full epigraphy of the site is published, after which the linguistic situation there should become a great deal clearer. I have therefore left these texts in the 'Undifferentiated' *Restklassen-bildung* for the present.

On Figure 1, I have divided the 'Undifferentiated North Arabian' documents, into two sub-groups: (1) 'Pure Undifferentiated North Arabian texts' and (2) 'Undifferentiated North Arabian Mixed texts' (see the explanations on Fig. 1 and the discussion below).

'Pure' Undifferentiated North Arabian texts

There are five such inscriptions from Qaryat al-Faw, and possibly two from Naǧrān. These are:

(i)   Ja 2122 (208) which is to all intents and purposes an ANA text. While much of the vocabulary could, of course, also be Ancient South Arabian, the ᵓfᶜl Form, ᵓḥdṯ, must be North Arabian. In this context, the spelling bny (ie. *banaya) as opposed to *bn (209) (ie. *banā) for the verb 'to build', suggests that the language is in a dialect of ANA rather than Old Arabic (see the discussion of JSLih 348 under 'Pure' Old Arabic texts, above).

(ii) The tomb inscription of Mᶜwyt bn Rbᶜt (210). With the exception of the Ancient South Arabian form of the nisba, qḥṭnyⁿ, the language of this text is 'pure' North Arabian. Given this, I would classify it as ANA rather than Old Arabic on the basis of the form bny. Kropp's conclusion that, if the clan name at the end of line 3 is restored as ᵓ[ḥnkt], then at least four letters must be lacking at the end of each line, is not necessarily correct (211). The name is clearly incomplete, but (regardless of whether or not the name was ᵓḥnkt) it is far more likely

that the inscription continued onto a fourth line, now lost (212). The text runs perfectly from the existing end of line 1 to the beginning of line 2, as it does from lines 2 to 3. The chances of this happening by coincidence must be extremely remote.

(iii) Ansary, *Qaryat al-Fau*: 147, no. 6 is also ANA for similar reasons, even though here the 3rd person masc. sg. enclitic pronoun alternates between *-h* and *-hw*. As already explained, the divine name *ʾl-ʾḫwr*, while itself linguistically Old Arabic, cannot, of course, be used to identify the language of the text.

(iv) Ansary, *Qaryat al-Fau*: 143/2, which reads *wʾl bn ṣqn ḏ ʾl ntn*; and possibly

(v) Ja 2142 (213) which is very fragmentary.

Similarly, two texts from Naǧrān which contain the phrases *ḏʾt ʾhl* and *ḏ ʾhl* respectively, should probably also be classed as 'Pure Undifferentiated North Arabian'. These are

(vi) Mü 2 (214)

(vii) Ja 859 (215).

Undifferentiated North Arabian Mixed texts
These are texts which are basically in the language normally associated with the script in which they are written, but which contain North Arabian features which are not sufficiently diagnostic to identify them clearly as Old Arabic or ANA. All those known at present are in the Sabaic language and script and I suggest they be termed Sabaeo-North-Arabian.

Sabaeo-North-Arabian
The first of these is CIH 450, a stela of unknown provenance with a nine-line inscription. It begins *nfs¹ w-qbr* (like many Hasaitic texts) and it contains the phrases *ḏʾt ʾl* and *ḏ ʾl* marking affiliation to a social

group (216), which are characteristic of ANA. On the other hand, its vocabulary is entirely Sabaic rather than North Arabian, including the Sabaic preposition *bn* 'from' (line 8) and mimation on the first two proper names.

Similarly, the Ghoneim inscription (217), which I have discussed above, is expressed in the conventional phraseology of a Sabaic dedicatory text. It contains the phrase *ḏ ʾl* and, once again is by a member of the *ʾl-ʾḥnkt*, but again this cannot help identify the language of the text. The verb 'to build' appears in the form *bny* which would seem to exclude its being Old Arabic (218). But it is likely that here *bny* is simply the Ancient South Arabian word rather than the ANA form.

The remaining texts in this category come from the area of Haram, in the north of the Yemeni Jawf. In his detailed study of the inscriptions from this area, Christian Robin has identified eleven of the twenty texts in the Sabaic script of the Amīrite period as being couched in 'une variété d'arabe avec un habillage morphologique inspiré du sabéen' (219), and has proposed naming this mixed language 'pseudo-sabéen'. However, this is surely to overstate the case. The non-Sabaic features in these texts are as follows: (1) the preposition *mn* 'from' rather than Sabaic *bn* (in five texts) (220); (2) a conjunction *hn* 'because' (in eight texts); (3) the negative particle *lm* followed by the prefix conjugation (in four texts); (4) the use of *s¹* for *s³* (in two texts); (5) the use of *s³* for *ṯ* (in one text); and (6) the omission of *ʾ* (in one text), and *h* and *ᶜ* (in two texts) (221).

This list does not seem particularly impressive, either in the linguistic importance of the features themselves or the regularity of their occurrence, especially when it is remembered that the definite article is always expressed in these texts by Sabaic *-n*, never Arabic *ʾl-* (or, indeed, ANA *h-*), and the

causative stem is always *hf ᶜl*, as in Sabaic, never *ʔf ᶜl*, as in North Arabian (222). All this suggests to me that, rather than being couched in 'une variété d'arabe avec un habillage morphologique inspiré du sabéen', the language of these texts is more likely to represent imperfect attempts to write correct Sabaic by non-native speakers (223).

Moreover, while these six features distinguish the language of these eleven texts from standard Sabaic, they do not necessarily all represent intrusions from the same language. Only half of them (nos. 1, 3 and 4) are characteristic of North Arabian, at least as it is known at present, although the use of *lam* plus the prefix conjugation makes it very likely that the four texts containing this expression have North Arabian affinities and all these also contain the particle *hn* (feature 2) (224). However, none of these texts contains any feature that is exclusive to Old Arabic or to ANA. At present, therefore, I would include these interesting inscriptions in the category of Undifferentiated North Arabian Mixed Texts, in the sub-category of Sabaeo-North-Arabian (225).

It will be clear from this that I cannot follow Robin in elevating what appear to me to be the irregular features of these Sabaeo-North-Arabian texts from Haram into a distinct, more or less artificial, language or dialect: 'pseudo-sabéen qaḥṭānite' (226). However, if I have understood him correctly, I am even more puzzled by his explanation of the development and use of this supposed dialect:

'Les Arabes proches du Yémen auraient donc utilisé le sabéen pour communiquer entre eux, mais l'auraient adapté pour en faciliter la maîtrise, réduisant le nombre des sifflantes à deux et introduisant subrepticement des mots et des formes propres à l'arabe. Il s'agirait donc d'une langue plutôt artificielle. ...

'Ce pseudo-sabéen pourrait donc être une première tentative de langue communication (ce que les spécialistes appelleraient une *koinè* ...) pour un certain nombre de tribus du sud-ouest de l'Arabie, entre le Ḥijāz et le Yémen: Qaḥṭān, Madhḥij, Amīr, ᶜAthtar et peut-être Kinda' (227).

The ANA dialects and Old Arabic would certainly have been mutually comprehensible and what little evidence we have suggests that all the tribes he mentions (with the possible exception of Amīr and ᶜAthtar) spoke one or other of these North Arabian languages. It is therefore not clear to me why they should have needed to communicate with each other in a *koinè* based on, and largely consisting of, Sabaic – a language which Robin himself admits they would have had to learn – even when it was 'modified' with a handful of fairly minor North Arabian, and possibly other, elements.

Furthermore, I do not understand why among these tribes both at Faw and at Haram

'il semblerait ... que les textes importants et soignés soient rédigés en pseudo-sabéen et que les autres le soient en nordarabique. Il en résulterait que la langue locale [*viz.* a North Arabian language] s'employait pour les usages communs mais qu'une autre [*viz.* pseudo-sabéen'], dont le prestige devait être plus grand ou qui était mieux comprise en dehors de l'oasis, était préférée pour les actes les plus solennels' (228).

In both Haram and Faw there are inscriptions in good Sabaic and, therefore, it is surely difficult to believe that this sort of 'pidgin Sabaic' would have been regarded as a language of prestige to be used intentionally 'pour les actes les plus solennels'.

I would therefore suggest the following alternative explanation.

1) The texts from Haram and those from Qaryat al-Faw should be considered separately. The geographical positions, histories (as far as we can tell), social and cultural lives of the two towns appear to have been very different. Haram, even in the Amīrite period, was firmly within the Sabaean cultural sphere, even if the dominant part of the population may have hailed originally from northern nomad stock (229). Faw, on the other hand, was an entirely Central Arabian town, albeit an extremely cosmopolitan one. Certainly, there was strong Sabaean influence there – Sabaʾ was its most powerful neighbour – but it was only one element among many, and I do not get the impression that it was in any way 'a South Arabian town'.

2) At Haram, the limited range and nature of the non-Sabaic elements in the Sabaeo-North-Arabian inscriptions suggest that they are clumsy attempts at writing correct Sabaic by people whose mother tongue was either a different language, or a dialect of Sabaic which contained elements from another language.

3) At Qaryat al-Faw, on the other hand, the situation is more complex. Here it seems very probable that at least two forms of North Arabian coexisted: Old Arabic and one or more, as yet undefined, dialects of ANA. There are a handful of texts in Old Arabic and ANA written in the Sabaic script, but we cannot know how widespread this practice was until the Faw inscriptions are fully published. However, there are also texts at Faw couched in the Sabaic language with only a few North Arabian intrusions and I would suggest that these, like the Sabaeo-North-Arabian inscriptions at Haram, are the products of North-Arabian speakers trying, not entirely successfully, to write correct Sabaic.

4) Too few inscriptions from Naǧrān have been published to make any realistic judgement on the linguistic situation there, although given its geographical position one would obviously expect there to have been a mixture of North Arabian and Ancient South Arabian languages. We can only hope that more texts will appear in the near future.

The late Pre-Islamic period

As we have seen, there are remarkably few documents in Old Arabic, and until the sixth century AD there was no single script associated with it. This implies that, until the period immediately before the rise of Islam, it remained a vernacular in societies which were either non-literate or which wrote in other languages – Sabaic, Ancient North Arabian, Aramaic, Greek. We can only guess at the reasons for this and the reasons why, on occasions, Old Arabic *was* written. In the late first millennium BC and the early first millennium AD, it was presumably the vernacular of groups which were basically non-literate, perhaps primarily nomadic, which when they moved into situations where literacy was necessary – eg. contact with settled peoples – found writing systems associated with other languages already established. Those who wanted to write would therefore have had to learn the rudiments of the language associated with the script, or simply have had their texts written for them by scribes and masons. Only in very special circumstances would an individual have insisted on his text being expressed in the vernacular, and the problems that this caused the scribes and masons in adapting the orthographic conventions of one language to an unfamiliar tongue, can be seen both in the true and mixed Old Arabic texts and in the Undifferentiated-North-Arabian inscriptions. Since several of these texts in ANA and Old Arabic (or approximations

to it) are the monumental inscriptions of important people (the king of Qaḥṭān, Imruᵓ l-Qays 'king of all the Arabs', etc.) it is possible that there was already a political implication in using the spoken tongue rather than what may, by then, have been regarded as a 'foreign' written language. However, until we have further evidence this can be no more than speculation.

It is interesting to compare the case of Old Arabic with that of those dialects of Ancient North Arabian used largely by nomads: Safaitic and Hismaic, to take the best documented. I have suggested elsewhere that the art of writing was acquired more or less accidentally by the nomads and served no useful purpose within their society, since the only readily available writing materials were rocks and boulders (230). In addition, since they used different scripts and different languages from the sedentaries around them, literacy was of no use to these nomads when they came in contact with settled society. Indeed, a handful of Greek graffiti by members of groups which also wrote in Safaitic, suggests that if they needed literacy in the settled lands then they had to learn the rudiments of Greek (231). In these societies, in the desert or on its fringes, the nearest equivalent to the self-conscious use of Old Arabic in monumental inscriptions, is in a burial cave in the desert of northeastern Jordan, near the important Roman fort of Dayr al-Kahf. Here, the construction of the tomb is recorded in a Nabataean inscription for 'general consumption', but the names of the dead are carefully inscribed on their sarcophagi in Safaitic, presumably the script and 'language' of the deceased (232).

If this explanation for the small number of Old Arabic texts in 'borrowed' scripts is correct, it may help to explain how Arabic came to be written in a derivative of the Aramaic alphabet, rather than in one of the, far more suitable, Arabian scripts. I am completely convinced that what we know

as the 'Arabic' script was not developed or derived *from* either the Syriac or the Nabataean alphabets, in any conscious way. It is simply the Nabataean alphabet in its latest form (233).

It is generally accepted that the Arabic script originated in the region of northern Arabia, southern Syria and southern Iraq. In northern Arabia and southern Syria there had been a strong tradition of Ancient North Arabian (ie. *h-* dialects) written in forms of the Arabian script. However, these dialects and scripts were gradually displaced by Aramaic as the vehicle of prestige writing in the oases of northern Arabia. This probably happened first in Taymāᵓ, which came under Mesopotamian influence from the sixth century BC onwards. It is noticeable that although brief Taymanitic inscriptions have been found in the sanctuary areas which have been excavated, the important religious texts are in Aramaic. The change took place much later in Dadan where there was a strong local political entity which survived the attentions of Nabonidus. It was only under Nabataean domination, when the political centre had been transferred to Ḥegrā (Madāᵓin Ṣāliḥ), that Aramaic became the general medium for public pronouncements.

The nomads probably continued to use their own dialects and scripts, but these had no prestige and were completely irrelevant to those in the settled areas. The distribution in the north of the Peninsula of the pure and mixed Old Arabic texts suggests that speakers of an ᵓl- dialect were present throughout the areas where Aramaic had come to be the prestige script. It was therefore natural that when Old Arabic came to be written in these regions, the Aramaic script should be the chosen vehicle. Of course, the late Nabataean script, which was the one chosen, was completely inadequate for the expression of Arabic. Not only did it have only twenty-two letters to

represent the twenty-eight phonemes of Arabic, but this number was effectively reduced still further since one letter, *semkath*, was not used and the forms of several others had become indistinguishable (234). I would suggest that even if its grave inadequacies were considered, they were thought to be completely outweighed by its prestige.

In this context, the use of the Nabataean script to write the Old Arabic epitaph of Imruʾ l-Qays, 'king of all the Arabs', is highly significant. The date is AD 328, more than two centuries after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom, but during this period the script had clearly continued to be used and thus to develop. It seems a fair assumption that the inscription was couched in Old Arabic because this was the native language of Imruʾ l-qays and those who composed his epitaph. If so, it is scarcely credible that they would have had it written in a script with which they were entirely unfamiliar or which was associated with a completely alien culture (235). It is usually assumed that the Imruʾ l-Qays of the Namāra inscription was the second Lakhmid king, although the evidence is by no means clearcut. If correct, this would suggest that by the fourth century AD the Lakhmid court (which Arab tradition makes one of the 'birthplaces' of the Arabic script) may already have been literate in Arabic, using the Nabataean alphabet to write it.

Of course, the use of a script to write a 'new' language (Arabic) does not preclude its continuing use to express the 'original' language (Aramaic). Thus, 160 years before the epitaph of Imruʾ l-Qays, an army unit formed from a north Arabian tribe, Thamūd, declared its loyalty to the Roman emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in inscriptions in the prestige languages of Greek and Nabataean Aramaic, at Rawwāfa, in northwest Arabia (236). Thirty years after the death of Imruʾ l-Qays

another royal epitaph in almost perfect Aramaic in a late, if archaizing, Nabataean script, was set up in Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ (237). Thus the Namāra inscription is within a tradition in which Aramaic and the Nabataean script are the vehicles for prestige public monuments of Arab polities in northern Arabia, just as Sabaic and the Sabaic script were at Qaryat al-Faw.

The difference between the north and the south lay in the fact that, in the south, Sabaic, however imperfectly written, seems to have remained the official language of prestige documents until shortly before the rise of Islam, whereas in the north the coming of Christianity appears to have produced a shift in the use of written languages from the mid-fourth century onwards. In the Byzantine provinces Greek became the language of political statements and Greek and Syriac (and the other Christian Aramaic dialects) the languages of the church. Most public documents were therefore composed in one or other of these languages. It was only in exceptional circumstances, and to make a clear cultural point, that an Arabic version was added to the Syriac and/or Greek as at Zebed (AD 512) or Harran (AD 568).

However, in southern Iraq, the Lakhmid court was one of a number of self-consciously Arab and Arabic-speaking political entities which grew up in the northern part of the Peninsula in late antiquity. In these, although the language of the church would have been Syriac, the political and cultural language was Arabic, not Greek. Thus it seems likely that it was in this region that Arabic first came to be a regularly written language, displacing Aramaic as the language of prestige documents for reasons of politics and ethnic pride, but continuing to use the Aramaic script, although in a form which was not associated either with the church (238) or the Sasanian state. In this way, almost acci-

dentally, Arabic came to be written in a completely inadequate script, and in this form eventually displaced the much more suitable Ancient South Arabian alphabet which gradually fell into disuse along with the Sayhadic languages it expressed.

It should be emphasized that, at present, all this can be no more than a hypothesis based on the fragmentary evidence available and inferences drawn from it. We must hope that, in the near future, more data will appear which will reveal whether it is founded on rock or on sand (239).

SIGLA

AMJ — Hismaic inscriptions published, with no coherent numbering system, by W.J. Jobling in the preliminary reports of his ᶜAqaba-Maᶜan Survey. G.M.H. King has collected them and given them a continuous numeration under the siglum AMJ, in King GMH. *Early North Arabian Thamudic E. A Preliminary description based on a new corpus of inscriptions from the Ḥismā desert of southern Jordan and published material*. Ph.D. thesis submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1990.

ARNA Nab — Nabataean inscriptions published by J.T. Milik and J. Starcky in Winnett FV & Reed WL. *Ancient Records from North Arabia.* Toronto: University of Toronto Near and Middle East Series, 6: 1970: 139–162.

C — Safaitic and Thamudic B inscriptions published in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars V.* Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1950–1951.

CIH — Ancient South Arabian and Hasaitic inscriptions published in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars IV.* Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1889–1932.

CIS ii — Aramaic (including Nabataean) inscriptions published in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars II*. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1889–1954.

Doughty — Thamudic B, C and D and Hismaic inscriptions copied by C.M. Doughty and republished with the 'Doughty' numeration in van den Branden A. *Les inscriptions thamoudéennes*. Louvain: Bibliothèque du Muséon, 25: 1950.

Ghoneim — A Sabaeo-North-Arabian text edited in Kropp M. The Inscription Ghoneim AfO 27. 1980. Abb. 10: A Fortunate Error. *PSAS* 22: 1992: 55–67.

H — Nabataean inscriptions published in Healey JF. *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Mada'in Salih*. Oxford: Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement, 1: 1993.

HCH — Safaitic inscriptions in Harding GL. The Cairn of Haniʾ. *ADAJ* 2: 1953: 8–56.

HE — Dadanitic, Taymanitic and Thamudic B, C and D inscriptions in Harding GL. The Thamudic and Liḥyanite Texts. In: Parr PJ, Harding GL & Dayton JE. Preliminary Survey in N.W. Arabia, 1968. Part II: Epigraphy. *Bulletin of the Institute of Archaeology, University of London* 10: 1971: 36–52, 60–61.

HSIM — Safaitic inscriptions in Har-

Table 1. Table of Old Arabic inscriptions and other documents.

Document	Script	Provenance	Date
Pure Old Arabic			
ᶜIgl bn Hfᶜm	Ancient South Arabian	Qaryat al-Faw	1st c. BC (?)
JSLih 384	Dadanitic	Dadan	Pre-1st c. AD (?)
ᶜĒn ᶜAvdat lines 4–5	Nabataean	ᶜĒn ᶜAvdat, Negev	(?)
Namāra Inscription	Nabataean	Al-Namāra, S. Syria	AD 328
Umm al-Jimāl	Arabic	Umm al-Jimāl, Jordan	6th c. AD (?)
Zebed	Arabic	Zebed, N. Syria	AD 512
Jabal Usays	Arabic	S. Syria	AD 528
Harrān	Arabic	Lejā, S. Syria	AD 568
Psalter fragment	Greek	Syria ?	(?)
Old Arabic Mixed Texts			
Safaeo-Arabic			
C 2446	Safaitic	Zalaf, S. Syria	1st c. BC–4th AD
WH 589	Safaitic	Burquᶜ, NE Joran	1st c. BC–4th AD
SIJ 37	Safaitic	Jathūm, NE Jordan	1st c. BC–4th AD
KRS 125	Safaitic	NE Jordan	1st c. BC–4th AD
Dadano-Arabic			
JSLih 71	Dadanitic	Dadan	Pre-1st c. AD (?)
JSLih 276	Dadanitic	Dadan	pre-1st c. AD (?)
Nabataeo-Arabic			
JSNab 17	Nabataean	Ḥegrā	AD 267
Aramaeo-Arabic			
Mleiha	East Arabian Aramaic	Mleiha	2nd century AD (?)
Pure Undifferentiated North Arabian			
Ja 2122	Ancient South Arabian	Qaryat al-Faw	3rd–2nd c. BC (?)
Mᶜwyt bn Rbᶜt	Ancient South Arabian	Qaryat al-Faw	2nd c. BC (?)
Ansary, *Fau:* 147/6	Ancient South Arabian	Qaryat al-Faw	(?)
Ansary, *Fau:* 143/2	Ancient South Arabian	Qaryat al-Faw	(?)
Ja 2142	Ancient South Arabian	Qaryat al-Faw	(?)
Mü 2	Ancient South Arabian	Naǧrān	(?)
Ja 859	Ancient South Arabian	Naǧrān	(?)
Undifferentiated North Arabian Mixed Texts			
Sabaeo-North-Arabian			
CIH 450	Ancient South Arabian	Unknown	(?)
Ghoneim	Ancient South Arabian	Qaryat al-Faw	3rd–2nd c. BC (?)
Haram 8	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	2nd c. BC–1st c. AD
Haram 10	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	2nd c. BC–1st c. AD
Haram 13	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	2nd c. BC–1st c. AD
Haram 33	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	1st c. BC–1st c. AD
Haram 34	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	1st c. BC–1st c. AD
Haram 35	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	1st c. BC–1st c. AD
Haram 36	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	1st c. BC–1st c. AD
Haram 40	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	1st c. BC–1st c. AD
Haram 56	Ancient South Arabian	Haram	1st c. BC–1st c. AD

ding GL. Safaitic Inscriptions in the Iraq Museum. *Sumer* 6: 1950: 124–129.

HU   Taymanitic, Hismaic and Thamudic B, C and D inscriptions copied by C. Huber and published with the 'HU' numeration in van den Branden, *Les inscriptions thamoudéennes*.

IIS   *Inventaire des inscriptions sudarabiques*. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres (Paris)/Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (Rome). Paris: Boccard/Rome: Herder.

Ja   South Arabian inscriptions published by A. Jamme.

JaL   Dadanitic (formerly Lihyanite) inscriptions published by A. Jamme.

JSLih   Dadanitic (formerly Dedanite and Lihyanite) inscriptions in Jaussen A & Savignac M-R. *Mission archéologique en Arabie*. (6 volumes). Paris: Leroux/ Geuthner, 1909–1922.

JSNab   Nabataean inscriptions published in Jaussen & Savignac, *Mission*.

JSTham   Taymanitic, Hismaic and Thamudic B, C and D inscriptions published in Jaussen & Savignac, *Mission*.

KJC   Hismaic inscriptions edited in King, *Early North Arabian Thamudic E*.

KRS   Safaitic inscriptions recorded by the Basalt Desert Rescue Survey in northeastern Jordan in 1990. See King GMH. The Basalt Desert Rescue Survey and Some Preliminary Remarks on the Safaitic Inscriptions and Rock Drawings. *PSAS* 20: 1990: 55–78.

Lisān   Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ᶜArab* (15 volumes). Beyrouth: Dār Ṣāder, 1955–1956.

LivH   Hasaitic inscriptions in Livingstone A. A Linguistic, Tribal and Onomastical Study of the Hasaean Inscriptions. *ATLAL* 8: 1984: 86–108.

LP   Safaitic inscriptions in Littmann E. *Safaïtic Inscriptions*. Syria. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–1905 and 1909. Division IV, Section C. Leyden: Brill, 1943.

Ph   Taymanitic, Hismaic and Thamudic B, C and D inscriptions copied by H.St.J.B. Philby and published in van den Branden A. *Les textes thamoudéens de Philby*. Louvain: Bibliothèque du Muséon, 39 and 41: 1956.

RES   *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique*. Publié par la Commission du Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres. (8 volumes). Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1900–1968.

Ry   Ancient South Arabian, Hasaitic and Undifferentiated North Arabian inscriptions published by G. Ryckmans in the series 'Inscriptions sud-arabes'.

SIJ   Safaitic inscriptions in Winnett FV. *Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*. Toronto: University of Toronto Near and Middle East Series, 2: 1957.

WAM S   Safaitic inscriptions in Winnett FV. An Arabian Miscellany. *AION* 31 [N.S. 21]: 1971: 443–454.

WH   Safaitic inscriptions in Winnett

FV & Harding GL. *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*. Toronto: University of Toronto Near and Middle East Series, 9: 1978.

WTay   Taymanitic inscriptions published in Winnett & Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia*.

WTI   Dumaitic, Thamudic B, C and D, Hismaic and Safaitic inscriptions published in Winnett & Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia*.

ZI   Ancient South Arabian inscriptions published in ʿInān ZA. *Taʾrīḫ ḥaḍārat al-yaman al-qadīma*. Al-Qāhira: Al-silfiyya, 1976.

References

1. When first mentioning a term I shall use diacritical marks, when appropriate, to indicate pronunciation or etymology. However, in subsequent references I shall follow normal practice and omit these marks. In transliterations of texts I use the following editorial sigla: a letter between { } is a doubtful reading; a letter between [ ] is restored; <.> represents signs or marks which are considered extraneous to the text and which have been omitted from the reading; a letter between ( ) is an emendation when a text is known only from a hand-copy; and - - - mark a missing or unreadable passage, regardless of its length. One / represents a word-divider, two // the end of a line. Inseparable particles and enclitic pronouns are attached by a hyphen to the following or preceding word respectively. With the exception of Dadanitic, most North and South Arabian texts are written entirely without *matres lectionis*, I have therefore not vocalized names in the translations. Finally, Alexander Sima has pointed out to me that the ancient name of the oasis now called al-ʿUlā was almost certainly pronounced *Dadan* (thus ᵘʳᵘ*da-da-nu* in the Nabonidus Stelae from Harran H2,A and H2,B, both i: 26, and the Septuagint's rendering of Hebrew *dᵉ*dān by Δαδαυ. The Hebrew transcription, *dᵉ*dān, (from which English 'Dedan' derives) is the result of two sound shifts characteristic of Hebrew: /a/>/ā/ in an accented syllable (He-

brew placing the accent on the final syllable) and the unaccented vocal in the preceding syllable being reduced to a schwa (cf. mᵉlāk-īm<*malak-īm). I therefore refer throughout this paper to *Dadan* and *Dadanitic* and only use the term 'Dedanite' when referring to the name formerly given to some of the Dadanitic inscriptions. I am most grateful to Dr. Sima for this suggestion which I have quoted verbatim.

2. Thus, for instance, Nabia Abbott's book entitled *The Rise of the North Arabic script...* which deals with the development of the *Arabic* script, not the North Arabian alphabets and the (to me) bizarre classifications in Bergsträsser's *Einführung in die semitischen Sprachen* (retained in the English translation of 1983) in which 'North Arabic' refers only to Arabic, and 'South Arabic' refers to Geʿez, Amharic, Tigrē and Mehri! Reference to Ancient South Arabian in Bergsträsser's book is confined to notes on Mehri.

3. In view of this confusion I would suggest that the terms 'North Arabic' and 'South Arabic' be abandoned altogether, since they are not even useful to describe the dialects of spoken Arabic found in the north and south of the Peninsula, for which the terms 'northern/southern Arabic dialects' are better used. In French too, Christian Robin has led a move away from the traditional terms 'nord-arabe' and 'sud-arabe' in favour of 'nordarabique' and 'sudarabique'. Unfortunately, such a distinction is not possible in German where 'arabisch' is used for both 'Arabian' and 'Arabic'. Nevertheless, a clear differentiation is still possible, see below.

4. See Figs 1 and 2.

5. See Fig. 1.

6. W. W. Müller, following Caskel, used the term 'Frühnordarabisch' for these texts. However, he did so in the belief 'daß die Sprache der thamudischen, lihyanischen, safaitischen und hasaitischen Inschriften eine Vorstufe des Altarabischen bildet' (Müller WW. Das Altarabische und das klassische Arabisch. In: Fischer W, ed. *Grundriß der Arabischen Philologie*, 1. Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1982: 17). More than a decade and a half later, I am not sure that he would maintain this view, and it is one with which I cannot agree. It is clear that in pre-Islamic Syria and Arabia there were two North Arabian dialect groups, one using *h-* (or possibly zero) as the definite article and one using *ʾl-*. It is only the latter which is the direct ancestor of the Arabic known from the Islamic period, and it is this which I have called 'Old Arabic' and to which I would suggest the term 'Altarabisch' be restricted. I

would therefore propose that the term 'Frühnordarabisch' be replaced by 'Altnordarabisch', which has the advantage of consistency with the well-established parallel term 'Altsüdarabisch', describing those Sayhadic and non-Sayhadic languages of ancient South Arabia known at present, none of which was the lineal ancestor of any of the Modern South Arabian tongues. It is also easily recognizable as the equivalent of the English and French terms, 'Ancient North Arabian' and 'nordarabique ancien'.

7. See the discussion of Hismaic and Hasaitic below.

8. For all these terms, see below.

9. Formerly 'Thamudic E'. See the discussion of this term below.

10. I owe this term to Christian Robin.

11. W. W. Müller used this term to cover both ANA and Old Arabic (Das Altarabische und das klassische Arabisch: 17–36), see note 6 above. However, I would suggest that the present, more restricted definition provides greater clarity, and that 'Nordarabisch' be used as the overall term for ANA (=Altnordarabisch), Old Arabic (=Altarabisch) and (Middle, Classical, Modern Standard and Spoken dialect-) Arabic (=Arabisch).

12. See Fig. 2.

13. On the analogy of Old English, Old French and Old Arabic. As noted above, there is no such close connection between the Sayhadic languages and Modern South Arabian. See, for instance, Porkhomovski V. Modern South Arabian Languages from a Semitic and Hamito-Semitic Perspective. *PSAS* 27: 1997: 219–223. We still know too little of the non-Sayhadic languages to decide whether they are 'related' in any lineal sense to Modern South Arabian.

14. For a fuller explanation of this term see Beeston AFL. Apologia for 'Sayhadic'. *PSAS* 17: 1987: 13–14.

15. That is, what was formerly called 'Minaean' or 'Minaic'. It is the language of the pre-Minaean inscriptions in the area which was to become the kingdom of Maᶜīn, and which the Minaeans (who probably spoke something quite different) appear to have adopted and used (more or less competently) as their written language. The term was first proposed by Christian Robin. For a fuller explanation see Robin C. L'Arabie antique de Karibᵓîl à Mahomet. Nouvelles données sur l'histoire des Arabes grâce aux inscriptions. *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 61: 1991: 98.

16. For a brief, clear and very useful discussion of

these languages, see Robin, L'Arabie antique: 95–100.

17. See Robin, L'Arabie antique: 96: 122–125.

18. That is, the latter part of ZI 11 and Ja 2353 (Jamme A. *Miscellanées d'ancient* (sic) *arabe*, 2. Washington, DC: [privately produced], 1971: 86), see Beeston AFL. Languages of Pre-Islamic Arabia. *Arabica* 28: 1981: 180–181 (where the page numbers in n. 6 should read 194–195); and Beeston, Apologia: 14 (where ZI II should read ZI 11).

19. See al-Shaḥrī AAM. Recent Epigraphic Discoveries in Dhofar. *PSAS* 21: 1991: 173–191, and al-Shaḥrī AAM. *Kayfa ibtadaynā wa-kayfa irtaqaynā bi-l-ḥaḍārati l-insāniyyati min šibhi l-ǧazīrati l-ᶜarabiyyati. Ẓafāru, kitābātu-hā wa-nuqūšu-hā l-qadīmatu.* [Privately published. Printed by al-Ghurair, Dubai], 1994: 61–145, and the discussion below.

20. This does not rule out the possibility of some links between some members of each group. See, for instance, the final paragraph of Frantsouzoff S. Regulation of Conjugal Relations in Ancient Raybūn. *PSAS* 27: 1997: 123.

21. This is a new term, which I owe to Christian Robin, for what is commonly called the 'South Semitic script'. The term 'Arabian' is appropriate since this branch of the alphabet was, to all intents and purposes, confined to Arabia, apart from the one case of expansion into Ethiopia.

22. In its earliest form, in Ugaritic, the order was ᵓbgḫd. However, since Phoenician, from which all the North-West Semitic alphabets derived, lacked the phoneme /ḫ/ and therefore had no sign to represent it, the order became ᵓbgd.

23. The *hlḥm* order was used in the South Arabian scripts and still survives in a modified form in Ethiopic (see Ryckmans J. L'ordre des lettres de l'alphabet sud-sémitique. Contribution à la question de l'origine de l'écriture alphabétique. *L'Antiquité classique* 50: 1981: 698–706; Ryckmans J. L'ordre alphabétique sud-sémitique et ses origines. In: Robin C, ed. *Mélanges linguistiques offerts à Maxime Rodinson par ses élèves, ses collègues et ses amis.* (Comptes Rendus du GLECS. Supplément, 12). Paris: Geuthner, 1985: 343–359; Macdonald MCA. ABCs and Letter Order in Ancient North Arabian. *PSAS* 16: 1986: 154–156, n. 145; Irvine AK & Beeston AFL. New Evidence on the Qatabanian Letter Order. *PSAS* 18: 1988; and Ryckmans J, Müller WW & Abdallah YA. *Textes du Yémen antique inscrits sur bois* (with an English Summary). Avant-Propos de J.-F. Breton. Louvain-la-Neuve: Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain, 43: 1994:

43–44, pl. 1A and B). However, among the North Arabian scripts it is only known in Dadanitic, the alphabet of an urban society where writing was probably taught in schools (see Macdonald, ABCs: 112–115 and note that Fig. 5 (on p. 113) has been printed upside-down). The Safaitic script, on the other hand, which seems to have been used almost exclusively by nomads, appears to have been spread informally from one individual to another with no fixed alphabetic order, the letters being grouped roughly according to shape, with the groupings being different in each case (see most recently Macdonald MCA, al-Muʾazzin M & Nehmé L. Les inscriptions safaïtiques de Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte. *CRAIBL* 1996: 439–443 and references there). For Hismaic, we have an interesting 'ABC' more or less in the *ʾbgd* order, but with differences which are very significant for the early letter-orders of the Arabic script (see Macdonald, ABCs: 105–112, 117–130 [note that, in that article, Hismaic was wrongly called 'South Safaitic']; and Macdonald MCA. On the placing of *ṣ* in the Maghribi *abjad* and the Khirbet al-Samrāʾ ABC. *JSS* 37: 1992: 155–166).

24. See Dietrich M & Loretz O. *Die Keilalphabete. Die phönizisch-kanaanäischen und altarabischen Alphabete in Ugarit*. Münster: Abhandlungen zur Literatur Alt-Syrien-Palästinas, 1: 1988, for a discussion of the evidence for the Ugaritic and Phoenician orders. Their discussion of the Arabian order has been overtaken by subsequent discoveries, see the important paper by Bordreuil P & Pardee D. Un abécédaire du type sud-sémitique découvert en 1988 dans les fouilles archéologiques françaises de Ras Shamra-Ougarit. *CRAIBL* 1995: 855–860, and references there. A partial *hlḥm* has also been found in the so-called 'short' Ugaritic alphabet at Beth-Shemesh in Palestine, some 500 km south of Ugarit (see the discussion and references in Bordreuil & Pardee, Un abécédaire).

25. See de Maigret A & Robin C. Les fouilles italiennes de Yalâ (Yémen du nord): nouvelles données sur la chronologie de l'Arabie du sud préislamique. *CRAIBL*: 1989: 286–291. Note that the authors very properly base their conclusions on the lower of the calibrated dates produced, while noting that *any* date within the range is equally possible.

26. See under Hasaitic below in the second section of this paper.

27. Represented by the private documents incised on sticks which have been appearing in their hundreds in northern Yemen since 1970. See Ryckmans et al. *Textes du Yémen antique*, especially 12–14, 31–33 and the works by J. Ryckmans cited in the bibliography there, pp. 18–19.

28. The linguistic material contained in a proper name does not, of course, identify the language of its bearer; only the linguistic context in which it occurs can do that. Even a graffito consisting solely of a single name would have had a linguistic context within the mind of the writer, but this, of course, is irretrievable.

29. Thus the language of a text in the Safaitic script is called 'Safaitic' unless there is evidence that it is in another language/dialect (see the examples quoted below under the *hn-* dialects and Safaeo-Arabic).

30. This is the script (and the dialect normally expressed in it) which Winnett originally called 'Thamudic A' (Winnett FV. A Study of the Lihyanite and Thamudic Inscriptions. Toronto: University of Toronto Studies, Oriental Series, 3: 1937: 20–28, 50, pl. III). After further work on the texts, he isolated the dialect and script sufficiently for it to be removed from the Thamudic *Restklassenbildung* and named it 'Taymanite' (Winnett FV & Reed WL. *Ancient Records from North Arabia*. Toronto: University of Toronto Near and Middle East Series, 6: 1970: 69–70, 89–93; Winnett FV. A Reconsideration of Some Inscriptions from the Tayma Area. *PSAS* 10: 1980: 133–140).

31. Called by Winnett 'Jawfian' (Winnett & Reed, *Ancient Records*: 69, 73, 80–81 (nos. 21–23), pls 1, 3, 12). So far only three texts in the Dumaitic script have been published, but the forms of *ḏ*, *z* and *ḍ* show them to be distinct from texts which can be classified as Taymanitic or Dadanitic. See Fig. 3 and the more detailed discussion below.

32. On these see Ephᶜal I. *The Ancient Arabs. Nomads on the Borders of the Fertile Crescent 9th-5th Centuries B.C.* Jerusalem: Magnes, 1982: 112–117. In Macdonald MCA & King GMH. Thamudic. *EI*, (new edition), 10. Leiden: Brill, 1998: 437, this script is referred to as '**Old** North Arabian'. This should be corrected to '**Oasis** North Arabian'.

33. For instance the distinctive Taymanitic *b* for *bn* in the ONA text on the Vienna seal 1247 (see Sass B. *Studia Alphabetica. On the Origin and Early History of the Northwest Semitic, South Semitic and Greek Alphabets*. Freiburg Schweiz: Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis, 102: 1991: Fig. 33) and in the text (*s¹lmn // b hfn*) on the seal impression in the École Biblique (Sass, *Studia Alphabetica*: 65–66, Fig. 41).

34. These are conveniently listed and illustrated in Sass, *Studia Alphabetica*: 38–66, Figs. 8–41, to which should be added Robin 5 (Robin C. Documents de l'Arabie antique, 3. *Raydān* 6: 1994: 86–87, pl. 46).

35. This name was given to them by W. F. Albright, on the basis of an extremely speculative argument in which he assumed that the Chaldaeans brought the script to Babylonia 'from an undetermined part of East Arabia, to which it had spread from ʿOmân [*scil.* Dhofar]', (Albright WF. The Chaldaean Inscriptions in Proto-Arabic Script. *BASOR* 128: 1952: 44–45).

36. See Burrows E. A New Kind of Old Arabic Writing from Ur. *JRAS* 1927: 795–806.

37. See Sass, *Studia Alphabetica*: 58–65.

38. Several unpublished seals in private collections are said to have come from Saudi Arabia. See Golding M. Artefacts from Later Pre-Islamic Occupation in Eastern Arabia. *ATLAL* 8: 1984: 166, who illustrates one such seal with the legend *klbm* in South Arabian letters (pl. 135b).

39. One or more tribes called Thamūd are known from the Annals of the Assyrian King Sargon II (722–705 BC); from Classical sources (dating from between the second century BC and the fifth century AD); from the Qurʾān and from Islamic commentators and historians (seventh century AD onwards), with nothing from the periods in between. While it is perfectly possible that some members of a tribe or tribes called *Thamūd* used one or more of the scripts which have been placed in the 'pending file' we call 'Thamudic', there is pitifully little evidence that they did so. In the approximately 11,000 'Thamudic' texts the name *tmd* occurs only four times (all in Thamudic B), with another two possible cases (one each in Thamudic B and Thamudic D) where the reading is doubtful or can only be obtained by emending the copy. Moreover, it is perfectly possible that in some, or all, of these occurrences *tmd* was not vocalized 'Thamūd' and/or did not refer to the tribe(s) of that name known to history. The four more or less secure occurrences are as follows: JSTham 280 (*ʾhs¹dt h-tmd(y)* 'ʾhs¹dt the Tmd(aean)') and 300 (*l bʾtr h-tmd[y]* 'By Bʾtr the Tmd[aean?]'), HU 172 (*h ʾlh tmd rllkgᶜ*? 'O god of Tmd ....?'), Doughty 51/2 (*s¹t h-tmd nm h(l)st* 'Lady of the Tmd. By H(l)st?'). It will be seen that although the letters *t-m-d* are clear in each of these inscriptions the reading and/or interpretation of the whole text is in each case far from secure. Even more uncertain are the Thamudic B text JSTham 339 (? *lᶜgtmdrktmgr{ḥ}* ?)

and the Thamudic D text HU 453 (? *nᶜmtbml(t)md* ?). Of course, there may be other reasons why the *ethnicon tmd* is so rare in these texts and I repeat that this paucity of occurrences cannot be taken as proof that members of the Thamūd did *not* use these scripts. It shows only that, at present, we have very little evidence that they did. The name *tmd* also occurs twice in a dating formula in Safaitic: *s¹nt ḥrb gs²m ʾl tmd* 'the year of the war [between] Gs²m and the ʾl Tmd' (WH 3792a) and *s¹nt ḥrb gs²m tmd* (WH 3792c). In this case, an identification with a tribe called Thamūd known from outside sources is more plausible, though unprovable.

40. Conveniently expounded in van den Branden A. L'unité de l'alphabet thamoudéen. *Studia Islamica* 6: 1957: 5–27, and van den Branden A. *Histoire de Thamoud*. Beirut: Publications de l'université libanaise – Section des études historiques, 6: 1960 (2nd edition, 1966). See also Jamme A. *Miscellanées d'ancient arabe*, 5. Washington, DC: [privately produced], 1974: 19–20.

41. King GMH. *Early North Arabian Thamudic E. A Preliminary description based on a new corpus of inscriptions from the Ḥismā desert of southern Jordan and published material*. Ph.D. thesis submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1990.

42. In the past, I have argued strongly for the retention of Winnett's original label, 'Thamudic E', as against his revised term 'Tabuki Thamudic' and Knauf's proposed 'South Safaitic'. The latter is entirely inappropriate since King's study has shown that in script, linguistic features and content these inscriptions form a distinct group which is markedly different from Safaitic. See the discussion below, plus Macdonald MCA. Safaitic. In: *EI*, (new edition), 8. Leiden: Brill, 1995: 760–762, and Macdonald & King, Thamudic: 437–438. I therefore regret my temporary adoption of Knauf's nomenclature in Macdonald, ABCs; and in Macdonald MCA. Inscriptions, Safaitic. In: Freedman DN, ed. *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 3. New York: Doubleday, 1992: 418–423 (submitted in 1988). My objection to the term 'Tabuki Thamudic' was that it suggested that the main concentration of these texts was in the region of Tabuk, and that it was 'the type of Thamudic' native to that area. Such a term runs perilously close to endorsing van den Branden's discredited theory, which denies that 'Thamudic' is an artificial *Restklassenbildung* and claims instead that there was only one 'Thamudic alpha-

bet' with various geographical variations. I therefore argued that the neutral term 'Thamudic E' which had no such implications was to be preferred, and it was under this label that Geraldine King analyzed the script and dialect. However, as a result of her study it would now be confusing to continue referring to the script and dialect as 'Thamudic', and for this reason a new name is required.

43. This spelling (ie. with *alif maqṣūrah*) is the one in the Official Standard Names Gazetteer for Jordan (Department of the Interior, Washington DC).

44. Macdonald and King, Thamudic: 437–438.

45. Formerly Jabal al-Durūz (le Djebel Druze) or Jabal Ḥawrān, Roman *Auranitis*.

46. See below and, for a detailed discussion, Macdonald MCA. Nomads and the Ḥawrān in the late Hellenistic and Roman Periods: A Reassessment of the Epigraphic Evidence. *Syria* 70: 1993: 305–310, 377–382.

47. These texts were first identified as representing a separate group by F.V. Winnett (A Himyaritic Inscription from the Persian Gulf Region. *BASOR* 102: 1946: 6). The name 'Hasaean' was originally suggested by R. le B. Bowen (*The Early Arabian Necropolis of Ain Jawan. A Pre-Islamic and Early Islamic Site on the Persian Gulf.* New Haven, CT: BASOR Supplementary Studies, 7–9: 1950: 5, 25) and taken up by A. Jamme (*Sabaean and Ḥasaean Inscriptions from Saudi Arabia*. Rome: Studi semitici, 23: 1966: 66). However, W.W. Müller has called for them to be renamed 'Hasaitic' to preserve the *-ic/aean* distinction mentioned above (Das Altarabische und das klassische Arabisch: 26). There is no complete corpus of all the Hasaitic texts known to date, but useful collections can be found in Potts DT. *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity.* 2. Oxford: Clarendon 1990: 69–85, with a good discussion and abundant references but with only one figure (showing four facsimiles) and no photographs. However, there are generally excellent illustrations in Livingstone A. A Linguistic, Tribal and Onomastical Study of the Hasaean Inscriptions. *ATLAL* 8: 1984: pls 85–90, although unfortunately the text of this article has been rendered unusable by numerous printers' errors.

48. Eg. at Warka in southern Mesopotamia (CIH 699) or on the Oman Peninsula, at Mleiha in Sharja, UAE (Robin-Mulayḥa I, see Robin, Documents de l'Arabie antique, 3: 80). Note that in the same article Robin republishes, under the siglum 'Wilkinson-Mulayḥa 1', Beeston's trans-

lation and a corrected version of his transliteration of a text (now lost) from the same site (see Beeston AFL. [Note on an inscription from Sharja]. In: Wilkinson JC. *Water and Tribal Settlement in South-East Arabia. A Study of the* Aflāj *of Oman*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1977: 135, n. 6).

49. See, for instance, Robin, L'Arabie antique: 118–119, or Müller, Das Altarabische und das klassische Arabisch: 25–26.

50. Robin, L'Arabie antique: 136 and see the table on 137, contradicting his statement on pp. 118–119.

51. Loftus WK. *Travels and Researches in Chaldaea and Susiana.* London: Nisbet, 1857: 233.

52. If a North Arabian script had been native to southern Mesopotamia – an area of obsessive literacy which has been explored by archaeologists for almost two centuries – one would expect far more texts to have been found and a far greater consistency in the scripts employed in them.

53. It would appear that Robin's idea of a connection between the Hasaitic and the Dispersed Oasis North Arabian scripts may derive ultimately from a misunderstanding of a remark by J. Ryckmans that the script of Ja 1049 (=Jamme, *Sabaean and Ḥasaean Inscriptions*: 6: Fig. 18), a rock graffito found near al-Ḥasā, was in a script 'proche de certains cachets trouvés en Mésopotamie' (Ryckmans J. Review of Jamme, Sabaean and Ḥasaean Inscriptions. *BiOr* 26: 1969: 246). However, Ja 1049 is known only from a rough and incomplete hand-copy and the unusual letter-forms it contains must inevitably be suspect. Thus, for instance, the triangle which Garbini compared with letters in some Dispersed ONA texts (Garbini G. Le iscrizioni proto-arabe. *AION* 36 [N.S. 26]: 1976: 170–171) could well belong to a *d* of the normal South Arabian form the stem of which was missed by the copyist. Note also that the forms of ʾ are South Arabian rather than ONA, see Figure 3 here. Moreover, if Ja 1049 *were* in one of the Dispersed ONA scripts this would automatically exclude its being Hasaitic, since the scripts of the Dispersed ONA texts are very clearly different from that of the known Hasaitic texts (see Fig. 3).

54. See Ryckmans G. Inscriptions sud-arabes. *Vingt-et-unième série* [Ry 687–688]. *Le Muséon* 76: 1963: 420–422, pl. VI;=Ja 1046 (Jamme, *Sabaean and Ḥasaean Inscriptions*: 72–73, pl. XVI).

55. See Ryckmans, Inscriptions sud-arabes. *Vingt-et-unième série*: 422–423, pl. VI;=Ja 1047 (Jamme, *Sabaean and Ḥasaean Inscriptions*: 73–74, pl. XVI).

56. Pirenne J. Quoted in Altheim F & Stiehl R. *Die*

Araber in der Alten Welt, 3. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1966: 60–61.

57. For a discussion of the whole problem of South Arabian chronologies see de Maigret & Robin, Les fouilles italiennes de Yalâ: 255–278; and for the archaeological evidence from C14 dating, *ibid.* 286–291. For a very clear and concise exposition of the problems and an argument for adopting a modified long chronology see Robin, L'Arabie antique: 49–51.

58. Pirenne, in: Altheim & Stiehl: 60.

59. This may seem to contradict the view given above that the Hasaitic texts are 'written in the monumental South Arabian alphabet (albeit with occasional unusual letter-forms) or in one closely derived from it', but see the hypothesis advanced below.

60. The site of Thāǧ, where a number of these texts were found, has been dated roughly to between the late fourth century BC and late first century AD (see Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, 2: 44 and 203), but this provides only the most uncertain of evidence for dating the inscriptions.

61. For more detailed discussions see Macdonald MCA. The Form of the Definite Article in Classical Arabic. Some Light from the Jahiliya. *JSS* (forthcoming); and my forthcoming book, *Old Arabic and its legacy in the later language. Texts, linguistic features, scripts and letter-orders*.

62. In a Psalter fragment from a Damascus genizah, the Septuagint text of Psalm 78 (LXX, 77) and an Arabic gloss written in Greek letters, are arranged in parallel columns. The fragment was first published in Violet B. Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment aus Damascus. *OLZ* 4: 1901: col. 384–403, 425–441, 475–488 and I have recently restudied it in Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article, and Macdonald, *Old Arabic*, where I have argued that it dates to the pre-Islamic period.

63. That is, the five pre-Islamic inscriptions in what is recognizably the Arabic script, so far known. For descriptions, references, discussion and illustrations see Grohmann A. *Arabische Paläographie*. Wien: Denkschriften. Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften. Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse 94.1–2: 1967–1971: 2, 14–17, Taf. I-II; and, for more recent references, Gruendler B. *The Development of the Arabic Scripts From the Nabatean Era to the First Islamic Century According to Dated Texts*. Atlanta, GA: Harvard Semitic Series, 43: 1993: 13–14.

64. For a list of all known Old Arabic texts see Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article.

65. This appears to me to be less ugly and more easily pronounced than 'Safaitico-Arabic'!

66. Robin first suggested calling these 'pseudo-Sabéen' but, as he recognized, this risks confusion with the 'Pseudo-Sabaic' texts of Abyssinia and he therefore proposed the label 'qaḥṭānite' (L'Arabie antique: 97). However, it is dangerous to name a language or a habit of writing after a historical political entity or social group, since this immediately implies a connection with, and limitation to, such an entity or group. It was for this reason that Robin proposed the new name 'Madhabic' to replace 'Minaic', and that I have suggested replacing 'Dedanite' and 'Lihyanite' with 'Dadanitic'. Furthermore, the name 'qaḥṭānite' does not immediately suggest the mixed nature of these texts and would artificially separate them from texts of the same sort in other scripts. However, as I explain below, no texts of this kind have yet been identified, although it is likely that when all the inscriptions from Qaryat al-Faw are published some will fall into this category. It is for this reason that I have placed the term between [ ].

67. That is, texts in Aramaic scripts and dialects other than Nabataean.

68. J. Ryckmans gives an instructive example of this. 'A graffito in South Arabian writing which we found in 1952 in Nafūd Musammā, about 10 km north-east of Kawkab [south-west Saudi Arabia] reads: "Ḥugr bin ʿAmr, malik Kiddat [ie. Kinda]". Had the royal title been left out, one would normally have added these names to the late Sabaean, and not Central Arabian, stock of personal names.' (Ryckmans J. Alphabets, Scripts and Languages in Pre-Islamic Arabian Epigraphical Evidence. In: al-Ansary AT, ed. *Studies in the History of Arabia*. 2: *Pre-Islamic Arabia*. (Proceedings of the Second International Symposium on Studies in the History of Arabia, Jumādā I, 1399 A.H./April 1979). Riyadh: King Saud University Press, 1984: 74).

69. See Beeston AFL. On the Correspondence of Hebrew ś to ESA s^2. *JSS* 22: 1977: 51.

70. This point is discussed more fully in Macdonald MCA. Some Reflections on Epigraphy and Ethnicity in the Roman Near East. In: Clarke G, ed. Identities in the Eastern Mediterranean in Antiquity. Proceedings of a Conference held at the Humanities Research Centre in Canberra 10–12 November, 1997. *Mediterranean Archaeology* 11: 1998: 177–190.

71. Even the several hundred inscriptions found in Dhofar by A.A.M. al-Shaḥrī and G.M.H. King are unlikely to redress the balance. They are in

a previously unknown form of the Arabian script and have so far defied decipherment but, even when eventually they can be read, the short, informal nature of the texts suggests that they may not be particularly informative. For excellent colour illustrations see al-Shaḥrī, *Kayfa ibtadaynā.*: 61–145.

72. If, as seems likely, the drawing of a chariot with a caption in Thamudic B represents an Assyrian vehicle, this could date from any time from the invasions of Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 BC) to those of Ashurbanipal (668–627 BC). See Macdonald MCA. Hunting, Fighting, and Raiding. The Horse in Pre-Islamic Arabia. In: Alexander DG, ed. *Furusiyya: The horse in the art of the Near East*, 1. Riyadh, 1996: 76–79 (and the corrigenda). Note that on Illustration IIa in this work the right-hand section of the composition has been omitted. However, a reproduction of the complete drawing can be found on pp. 224–225 of the book.

73. See the discussion, references and lists in Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, 1: 217–219 and 305–307 (Bahrain); 284–290 and 292–297 (Failaka), to which add Eidem J. In: Højlund F & Andersen H, eds. *Qala'at al-Bahrain. 2. The Central Monumental Buildings*. Århus: Jutland Archaeological Society Publications, 30.1: 1997; and, for the largest single find so far (some twenty tablets, thirty inscribed fragments and several bullae), see André-Salvini B & Lombard P. La découverte épigraphique de 1995 à Qalꜥat al-Bahrein: un jalon pour la chronologie de la phase Dilmoun Moyen dans le Golfe arabe. *PSAS* 27: 1997: 165–170.

74. See Roueché C & Sherwin-White SM. Some Aspects of the Seleucid Empire: The Greek Inscriptions from Failaka, in the Persian Gulf. *Chiron* 15: 1985: 1–39; Marcillet-Jaubert J. Une inscription grecque de Tell Khazneh. In: Calvet Y & Salles J-F, eds. *Failaka, fouilles françaises 1984–1985*. Lyon: Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient, 12: 1986: 265–267; Marcillet-Jaubert J. Une nouvelle inscription grecque à Failaka. In: Calvet Y & Gachet G, eds. *Failaka, Fouilles françaises 1986–1988*. Lyon: Travaux de la Maison de l'Orient, 18: 1990: 193–195; Marcillet-Jaubert J. Stèle funéraire du musée de Bahrein. *Syria* 67: 1990: 665–673; Piejko F. The Inscriptions of Icarus-Failaka. *Classica et Mediaevalia* 39: 1988: 89–92; and Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, 2: 183–194. The longest of these is the so-called 'Ikaros inscription' from Failaka (forty-four lines), on which see Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, 2: 186–193 for discussion and references. Three letters ('LNV') in the Latin alphabet on an amphora fragment were found in Area Z of ed-Dur (Potts DT. In: Boucharlat R, Haerinck E, Lecomte O, Potts DT & Stevens KO. The European Archaeological Expedition to ed-Dur, Umm al-Qaiwayn (U.A.E.). An Interim Report on the 1987 and 1988 Seasons. *Mesopotamia* 24: 1989: 26–27, Fig. Y); and Papadopoulos JK. A Western Mediterranean amphora fragment from ed-Dur. *AAE* 5: 1994: 276–279.

75. For example, *r* with a hook at the top (Ja 1044/1, see the photograph on *ATLAL* 8: 1984: pl. 89A), *d* back-to-front (Ja 1044/2, *ibid.*), *f* as a circle with a horizontal bar to the right or left (Ja 1048/1, 2, 3, see Jamme, *Sabaean and Ḥasaean Inscriptions*: pl. XVII).

76. See, for instance, Potts, *The Arabian Gulf in Antiquity*, 2: 219–221, 227, 278; Naveh J. The Inscriptions from Failaka and the Lapidary Aramaic Script. *BASOR* 297: 1995: 1–4, with references there (Aramaic lapidary); Sznycer M. L'inscription araméenne sur un vase inscrit du Musée de Bahrain. *Syria* 61: 1984: 109–118 (cursive?); Teixidor J. Une inscription araméenne provenant de l'émirat de Sharjah (Émirats Arabes Unis). *CRAIBL* 1992: 695–707 (the longest text, see below) and, on the coin legends, Maraqten M. Notes on the Aramaic script of some coins from East Arabia. *AAE* 7: 1996: 304–315; and Macdonald MCA. Queens in Pre-Islamic Eastern Arabia? Another Look at the so-called 'Abiel' Coin Legends. (Forthcoming).

77. See Teixidor, Inscription araméenne: 696 and the discussion below.

78. In the same article, Teixidor published a small fragment of a bronze plaque with part of a text in the same script (pp. 705–706).

79. See the interesting paper by Alessandra Avanzini in the proceedings of the workshop on 'Civilisations de l'Arabie préislamique', Aix-en-Provence, 1996, when these are eventually published.

80. Thus, to take only one example, Christian Robin dates texts in the South Arabian script from Faw on the same palaeographical grounds as those from Yemen (L'Arabie antique: 114ff).

81. See Ryckmans et al. *Textes du Yémen antique*: 35–39.

82. Some 3,000 South Arabian graffiti were recorded in southern Saudi Arabia by the Philby-Ryckmans-Lippens Expedition in 1951, see Ryckmans G. Graffites sabéens relevés en Arabie Saꜥudite. *Scritti in onore di Giuseppe Furlani. RSO* 32: 1957: 557–563.

83. The Philby-Ryckmans-Lippens Expedition re-

corded some 9000 'Thamudic' graffiti, see Ry-ckmans J. Aspects nouveaux du problème tha-moudéen. *Studia Islamica* 5: 1956: 5–17; and below. Unfortunately, these have yet to be published.

84. For a discussion of the South Arabian languages see the paper by Avanzini mentioned in note 79.

85. This dating is arrived at partly on palaeographical grounds (Rabinowitz I. Aramaic Inscriptions of the Fifth Century B.C.E. from a North-Arab Shrine in Egypt. *JNES* 15: 1956: 6, and n. 41) and partly by the quite arbitrary identification of *Gšm* (the patronym of one of the donors), with 'Geshem the Arab' mentioned in Nehemiah (2:19; 6:1 and cf. 6:2, 6). *Gšm* was, of course, a common name in southern Syria and northern Arabia in the pre-Islamic period and there is no external evidence to suggest that these two occurrences refer to the same person.

86. Robin, L'Arabie antique: 102.

87. Rabinowitz, Aramaic Inscriptions: 2, 4–5. W. Kornfeld (Onomastica aramaica und das Alte Testament. *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 88: 1976: 109–112) argues that the name *ṣḥʾ* may not be of Egyptian origin here on the grounds that the patronym (*ᶜbd-ᶜmrw*) is Semitic (he assumes it is 'Qēdārite', apparently because an entirely separate dedication at the shrine was made by a king of Qēdār). However, the possible North Arabian etymologies for *ṣḥʾ* which he proposes, are not entirely satisfactory and there seems no reason why the name could not be Egyptian, in view of the purely Egyptian names of another dedicator (Rabinowitz I. Another Aramaic Record of the North-Arabian Goddess Han-ʾIlat. *JNES* 18: 1959: 154–155) and the geographical position of the shrine, near Egypt's northeastern border, where one would expect just such an onomastic mingling of Egyptian and North Arabian. The countless examples of men and women with Greek or Latin names and Semitic patronyms (and vice versa) in the Hellenistic and Roman Near East should make us wary of the argument used by Kornfeld on this occasion.

88. Rabinowitz, Another Aramaic Record: 154–155.

89. Herodotus 1.131; 3.8.

90. Robin suggests that the form ʾΑλιλάτ 'pourrait correspondre en principe à une graphie sémitique **hal-Ilāt* ou **al-Ilāt*' (L'Arabie antique: 102). While, of course, this is theoretically possible, I am not aware of any evidence for a definite article *hl-* in Ancient North Arabian, although it appears to occur in a theophoric personal name

(*ᶜbd-hl-ᶜzy*) found in a graffito in South Arabian script in southwestern Saudi Arabia (Ryckmans, Aspects nouveaux: 11). The supposed examples of *hl-* in late Dadanitic (formerly 'Lihyanite') are 'ghosts'. JSLih 158 is an unfinished attempt to write the alphabet in the Arabian *hlḥm* order, which was restarted in the second line (see Müller, Das Altarabische und das klassische Arabisch: 22). Note also that JSLih 71, in which an article with *-l-* occurs in *b-l-ḥgr* and, following the preposed demonstrative adjective *h-* in *h-l-mfl*, is not Dadanitic but a Dadano-Arabic text (see below). A third 'ghost' is the supposed article *hl-* in the name of a Dadanite woman mentioned in the so-called 'hierodulenlisten' (see now the excellent edition by Bron F. *Inventaire des inscriptions sudarabiques. Tome 3.* Paris: Boccard/Rome: Herder, 1998: 106, no. Maᶜīn 93 (Gl. 1270/16); and see p. 116, no. 28/1270). The name of the woman is written *bmhl / ᶜzy* and it has been suggested that *hl* here is an example of the definite article (cf. Ryckmans, Aspects nouveaux: 11, n. 1). However, the position of the word-divider clearly shows that the name is *bmhl-ᶜzy* which could be analyzed *b-mhl-ᶜzy* 'with the forebearance/ gentleness of ᶜzy'.

91. For instance, *hn-ʾfklt* 'the priestess', JSLih 64/3, and many others. There are as yet no instances of the article before a word beginning with the glottal fricative /h/.

92. For instance, *hn-ᶜnk* 'the foundation', JSLih 54/3. There are as yet no clear instances in Dadanitic of the definite article before a word beginning with the other pharyngal fricative /ḥ/. Jamme read *hn-ḥs¹* in JSLih 269/4 (see Jamme A. *Miscellanées d'ancient arabe*, 7. Washington, DC: [privately produced], 1974: 117, but note that there is a misprint in his transliteration) and compared *ḥs¹* with 'Ar. ḥusâs 'trace, vestige, mark' (*ibid.*). However, I cannot find such a meaning in the lexica and a more natural reading is *h-nḥs¹*. The context is a curse on anyone who might damage the *ḥs¹* or *nḥs¹* (using the same phraseology as in JSLih 276 and HE 1, see below, which have *s¹fr* in place of *ḥs¹/nḥs¹*). Thus a word meaning 'writing' or 'inscription' would be expected. It is possible that this text was engraved as a warning beside a bronze plaque with a funerary inscription, similar to the one found at Mleiha (see Teixidor, Inscription araméenne, and the discussion below) and that *h-nḥs¹* refers to this. Only an examination of the rock-face will reveal whether there are signs that something was originally attached to the surface beside JSLih 269.

93 See, for instance, Müller, *Das Altarabische und das klassische Arabisch*: 18, 22, 24; and Müller WW. Some Remarks on the Safaitic Inscriptions. *PSAS* 10: 1980: 69.

94. JSLih 81/2–3 *hn-// qbr*. It should be noted that it is not clear from the published photograph whether the first three lines of JSLih 81 are really complete (see Jaussen A & Savignac M-R. *Mission archéologique en Arabie*, 2. Paris: Geuthner, 1914: pl. LXXXV). The article *hn-* appears to be at the end of line 2 and *qbr* at the beginning of line 3. But the syntax of the text as recorded by Jaussen and Savignac is awkward and has not yet received a convincing interpretation. The ends of lines 4–6 appear to be missing (they are appreciably shorter than lines 1–3) and it is possible that lines 1–3 are also incomplete. If this is so, the definite article *hn-* in line 2 would have referred to a noun no longer visible at the 'end' of that line, rather than to *qbr*. Only a re-investigation of the original will solve this problem. In all other cases the article is *h-* before words beginning with *q* (*h- qbr* in JSLih 79/2–3, *h- qrt* in JSLih 64/1, 366/2, JaL 85d/1=Jamme, *Miscellanées* 7: 73–74, pl. 19).

95. LP 87. See Macdonald, Nomads and the Ḥawrān: 308 for this reading.

96. *NH* 6.32.157 *Avalitae (oppida Domata, Haegra)*.

97. Thus the epithet of the goddess *hn-ᵓlt* at Tell el-Mashūṭa and, in Hasaitic, the names *ᵓmt-hn-ᵓlt* (LivH A.13/2 Pl.87A), *ᶜwd-hn-ᵓlt* (LivH O.15/2–3 Pl.85D), *ᵓws¹-hn-ᵓlt* (Ry 155/2–3, see Ryckmans G. Inscriptions sud-arabes. *Quatrième série* [Ry 155–202]. *Le Muséon* 50: 1937: 239–240) and {.}*rm-hn-ᵓlt* (Ja 1043, see Jamme, *Sabaean and Ḥasaean Inscriptions*: pl. XV). One of the exceptions is the name *hn-ᶜbd* in Ja 1044/2 (*ATLAL* 8: 1984: pl. 89A). The other is *hn-ᵓmlt*, on which see below.

98. JaS 162a (Jamme A. Safaitic Inscriptions from the Country of ᶜArᶜar and Raᵓs al-ᶜAnānīyah. In: Altheim F & Stiehl R, eds. *Christentum am Roten Meer*, 1. Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971: 93, 634), cf. Ar. *ᵓimla* 'hope'. The letters *l* and *n* are clearly differentiated in this text.

99. Wilkinson-Mulayḥa 1 (Robin, Documents de l'Arabie antique 3: 80) which A.F.L. Beeston read *nfs¹ w-qbr Dryt fty ᵓmlkⁿ* 'gravestone and grave of Dhariyyat servant of the kings'. However, as Robin rightly points out, *ᵓmlkⁿ* may be a personal name equivalent to the Arabic clan name *al-Amlūk*.

100. As in Hismaic (see below), affiliation to a social group is always marked by the phrase *ḏ ᵓl* 'who is of the lineage of' and, so far at least, never by the *nisba*.

101. For the most recent treatment of this text and its significance see Macdonald MCA. Trade Routes and Trade Goods at the Northern End of the "Incense Road" in the First Millennium B.C. In: Avanzini A, ed. *Profumi d'Arabia*. Atti del convegno. Roma: Saggi di Storia Antica, 11: 1997: 338–340, and references there.

102. The text is damaged at the beginning of the list of scripts.

103. Lipinski E. De fenicische inscripties uit Karatepe. In: Veenhof KR, ed. S*chrijvend Verleden. Documenten uit het oude Nabije Oosten vertaald en toegelicht*. Leiden: Ex Oriente Lux, 1983: 54; and Lipinski E. Phoenicians in Anatolia and Assyria. *OLP* 16: 1985: 82. Luwian having no exact equivalent to /ṣ/, *s* was used as the nearest approximation. The late Jonas Greenfield suggested that the term 'script of Tyre' could have been used to cover Aramaic as well as Phoenician since the distinction between the two alphabets would not have been obvious at this period (Greenfield J. Of Scribes, Scripts and Languages. In: Baurain C, Bonnet C & Krings V, eds. *Phoinikeia Grammata. Lire et écrire en Méditerranée*. Actes du Colloque de Liège, 15–18 novembre 1989. Namur: Collection d'Études Classiques, 6: 1991: 179–180).

104. Greenfield, Of Scribes: 180–181 and, independently, Livingstone A. New light on the ancient town of Taimā. In: Geller MJ, Greenfield JC & Weitzman MP, eds. *Studia Aramaica. New Sources and New Approaches.* Papers Delivered at the London Conference of the Institute of Jewish Studies University College London 26th-28th June 1991. Oxford: Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement, 4: 1995: 133–137.

105. I am most grateful to Professor David Hawkins, who is publishing an edition of this text, for this information. He himself suggested that *ta-i-ma-ni-ti* referred to the Aramaean tribe of Tēmān in northern Mesopotamia, but this was mainly because he felt that it would be inconceivable that Aramaic would not be among the scripts mentioned. However, as he points out, the beginning of the list is broken and we do not know what has been lost. Moreover, he agrees with Greenfield that Yariris is unlikely to have distinguished between the Phoenician and Aramaic scripts (pers. comm.). The gentilic form Taymāᵓ is attested as *tymnyᵓ* in Nabataean texts from Ḥegrā (H 1/2, 12/2) although this, of course, is from a very much later period (first century AD), see Healey JF. *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Madaᵓin Salih*. Oxford: Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement, 1: 1993: 71.

106. I have explored these relationships in Macdo-

nald, Trade Routes. See also Liverani M. The Trade Network of Tyre according to Ezek. 27. In: Cogan M & Eph^cal I, eds. *Ah, Assyria... Studies in Assyrian History and Ancient Near Eastern Historiography presented to Hayim Tadmor*. Jerusalem: Scripta Hierosolymitana, 33: 1991: 65–79.

107. Livingstone (incorrectly in my view) describes it as 'the old South Arabic script' (New light: 136). However, it is clear that he is confusing the terms 'South Arabic' and 'South Semitic' (ie. 'Arabian') and that he makes no distinction between the North Arabian and South Arabian scripts since on p. 137 he refers to the script of the seals found in Mesopotamia as 'South Arabian'.

108. The inscription on the Vienna seal 1247 (=RES 2688, see Sass, *Studia Alphabetica*: Fig. 33) must be Taymanitic because of the use of *b* for *bn* which is unique to this dialect. See Macdonald MCA. HU 501 and the use of s^3 in Taymanite. *JSS* 36: 1991: 20–21.

109. See Macdonald, HU 501.

110. HU 501 and WTay 4, on which see Macdonald, HU 501: 12–20.

111. WTI 22.

112. WTI 21, 22 and 23.

113. See below and Macdonald & King, Thamudic: 437–438.

114. King, *Early North Arabian Thamudic E*.

115. Winnett, *A Study*. Roschinski created a new category, 'F', which he claims stands 'in ihren Schriftformen zwischen D und E' and was contemporary with them (Roschinski HP. Sprachen, Schriften und Inschriften in Nordwest-arabien. In: *Die Nabatäer*. Erträge einer Ausstellung im Rheinischen Landesmuseum Bonn 24. Mai – 9. Juli 1978. Bonn: Kunst und Altertum am Rhein, 106: 1981: 43, 45). However, he does not explain the basis for creating this new category and the only two examples of 'F' texts he gives (Roschinski, Sprachen, Schriften und Inschriften: 43, Abb. 3/24–25= JSTham 98 and 97 respectively) are both Thamudic C. There thus seems no reason to retain this category.

116. Winnett & Reed, *Ancient Records*: 69–70, 205.

117. It is clear from the work of Geraldine King that Thamudic C and D are distinct categories, although Winnett's identification of some letters needs to be refined (pers. comm.). The geographical names given by Winnett in 1970 to the types are also confusing, since they suggest a link between the script and a particular region which is not borne out by the distribution patterns. Thus Thamudic B texts are found all over

western Arabia from Yemen (eg. Ph 212 a1, 2, 3; 212 d) to southern Syria (eg. C 3559, LP 273, 495), while C and D texts are by no means concentrated in the Ḥiǧāz. It therefore seems much safer to retain for these *rough*, provisional subdivisions, the neutral 'B', 'C', 'D', labels which do not carry any misleading overtones, until such time as a more refined classification is possible. It may be argued that the names 'Taymanitic' and 'Hismaic' for the two types which have been removed from 'Thamudic' risk creating similar confusion. However, it is now clear that the major concentrations of these texts are in the areas after which they have been labelled, and the major distinctive features of each have been identified. Thus, while the labels may yet turn out to be misnomers, this is of less importance with well-defined groups than with texts which have yet to be clearly classified, and it is important to show by the label that they are no longer in the 'Thamudic' *Restklassenbildung*.

118. King, *Early North Arabian Thamudic E*: 65, n. 105.

119. JSTham 1 and JSNab 17. See now Healey JF & Smith GR. Jaussen-Savignac 17 – The Earliest Dated Arabic Document (A.D. 267). *ATLAL* 12: 1989: pl. 46.

120. Ryckmans, Aspects nouveaux.

121. See, for instance, Knauf A. Südsafaitisch. *ADAJ* 27: 1983: 587–596.

122. See King, *Early North Arabian Thamudic E*: 12–13; Macdonald, Safaitic: 762 and references there; and Macdonald & King, Thamudic: 437.

123. The complete list is as follows: the signs which represent $\underline{t}$, *g*, *ḥ*, s^2, *ṭ*, *ẓ*, in Hismaic are used for *ḍ*, $\underline{t}$, *ḏ*, *n* (or *l*), *ḫ*, *z* respectively in Safaitic.

124. It is expressed by *ḏ* *ʾl* and in one case each by *mn* *ʾl* (KJC 641) as in Nabataean, and *ḏ* (AMJ 148=Jobling WJ. Desert Deities: Some New Epigraphic Evidence for the Deities Dushares and al-Lat from the Aqaba-Ma^can Area of Southern Jordan. *Religious Traditions* 7–9: 1984–1986: 32–35; and see King, *Early North Arabian Thamudic E*: 622–623).

125. See the remarks in Macdonald, Nomads and the Ḥawrān: 377–378.

126. Macdonald, Nomads and the Ḥawrān.

127. Beeston AFL. Arabian Sibilants. *JSS* 7: 1962: 222–233.

128. See for instance LP 258, 260, WH 2411.

129. See Beeston, Arabian Sibilants: 223–225; McDonald MV. The Order and Phonetic Value of Arabic Sibilants in the "Abjad". *JSS* 19: 1974: 42–43.

130. Healey, *Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions*: 59.

131. Some of these will be discussed in Macdonald, *Old Arabic*.

132. See Macdonald, On the placing of ṣ.

133. For the most recent survey of Nabataean and a detailed discussion of the points made here, see Macdonald MCA. Inscriptions, languages and scripts among the Nabataeans. In: Markoe G, ed. *Splendors of the Caravan Kingdom*. Cincinnati, OH: Cincinnati Art Museum, 2001 (in press).

134. See the classic expositions by Cantineau J. *Le Nabatéen*. 2. Paris: Leroux, 1932: 177–180; and in greater detail in Cantineau J. Nabatéen et arabe. *Annales de l'Institut d'Études Orientales* 1: 1934–1935: 77–97; more recently maintained by, for example, Roschinski, Sprachen, Schriften und Inschriften: 31–33.

135. See also the interesting analysis by M. O'Connor (The Arabic Loanwords in Nabatean Aramaic. *JNES* 45: 1986: 213–229). The difference between the number of loans in his list (15) and in mine (22–28) results from the fact that O'Connor restricted himself to examining Cantineau's list of loan-words (excluding JSNab 17) whereas I have tried to search all the Nabataean texts known to me. Moreover, I have included vocabulary from the Rawwāfa inscriptions which he discussed separately (O'Connor, Arabic Loanwords: 228–229).

136. The exceptions are ṣryḥʾ found at Petra (CIS ii 350/1 and RES 1432/1, 2) as well as at Ḥegrā (CIS ii 213/3, 4); and ʾl 'lineage' which is found mainly in texts from the Ḥawrān (x 6), close to the Safaitic inscriptions in which it is the normal word for any social group, with one (possibly two) texts from North Arabia (ARNA Nab 130/2 and JSNab 180/4?) and one from Madaba in northern Jordan (Milik JT. Nouvelles inscriptions nabatéennes. *Syria* 35: 1958: 244, no. 6/4).

137. The stylized or calligraphic way in which these conventional terms are often written, in contrast to the letter-forms of the rest of the text in which they occur, suggests that in many cases they may have been treated more as conventional 'frames' for a name than as transcriptions of conscious statements, cf. 'R.I.P' on modern tombstones, or '... was here' in modern graffiti.

138. Some of Diem's theories of the development of orthographic conventions within Nabataean depend heavily on the idea that writers of graffiti would etymologize the names and words they were writing and would choose to spell them not according to how they sounded but according to complicated rules of sound change between Arabic and Aramaic (eg. Diem W. Untersuchungen zur frühen Geschichte der arabischen Orthographie. 2. Die Schreibung der Konsonanten. *Or* 49: 1980: 75–82, 87). Diem was forced to this bizarre hypothesis because his entire analysis is based on the anachronistic assumption that pre-Islamic Arabic had a phonemic repertoire identical to that of Modern Standard Arabic. See the detailed discussions in Macdonald, ABCs: 149–151; The Form of the Definite Article; and *Old Arabic*.

139. I remain unconvinced by either J. T. Milik's highly speculative attempt to show that they came from eastern Arabia (Origines des Nabatéens. In: Hadidi A, ed. S*tudies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan*, 1. Amman: Department of Antiquities, 1982: 261–265) or by the similar proposals of D. F. Graf who does not seem to have understood the implications of much of the material he cites (The Origin of the Nabataeans. With an Appendix by D. F. Graf and H. I. MacAdam. *ARAM* 2: 1990: 45–75).

140. See King, *Early North Arabian Thamudic E*: 687. I have counted only those examples from southern Jordan (for the provenances of all the Hismaic texts see King, *Early North Arabian Thamudic E*: 603–607). There are only twenty-four invocations to Lt/ʾlt (twenty-three to *lt* and one to *ʾlt*) in the Hismaic inscriptions from the Wādī Ramm region, as opposed to thirty-nine references to Dushara from the same area (thirty-one to *ḏ-s²ry*, four to *ḏ-s²r*; two to *ds²ry*; two to *ds²r*).

141. I have added to the number of invocations to *lt* a Hismaic text found by F. Zayadine and S. Farès-Drappeau in 1997 (and therefore not in King, *Early North Arabian Thamudic E*). It is on a stone built into one of the inner walls of the temple and is not strictly an invocation since it states that the author *bny bt lt*, ie. 'built (or participated in the building of) the temple of Lt', see Zayadine F & Farès-Drappeau S. Two North-Arabian Inscriptions from the Temple of Lāt at Wādī Iram. *ADAJ* 42: 1998: 255–258; and Farès-Drappeau S. Wādī Iram: Un lieu du culte et de rassemblement des tribus arabes dans l'antiquité. Les premiers résultats de la mission épigraphique 1997. *Aram* 8: 1996: 269–283. Both these articles indulge in wild speculation as to the significance of this text and the authors ignore the fact that the inscription is not a monumental foundation text, but a simple graffito on a stone placed in a position where it would not have been visible in antiquity. They are also apparently unaware that the word *bny* in ANA is regularly used for 'participation in the building' of structures (usually burial cairns) and

that the most probable explanation of the text is that its author was one of the labourers employed in the construction of the temple. It is not impossible that he had a more important role, but nothing in the text suggests this. Finally, they base wide-ranging speculation (presented as fact) on the author's affiliation to the ethnic group ʾd, which they identify without hesitation with the tribe of ʿĀd mentioned in the Qurʾān. While such a vocalization is perfectly possible, it is no more or less likely than ʿīd, ʿayd, ʿūd, or ʿawd. What can be said, however, is that the presence of this text shows that at least some of the Hismaic inscriptions are likely to have been contemporary with the use of the temple, even though it does not remove the theoretical possibility that the majority of the Hismaic graffiti were written *before* the introduction of the worship of Lt/ʾlt to the area.

142. This preponderance of the spelling ḏ-s²ry shows that the deity was known principally in the North Arabian form, with some writers doubtful about whether the final sound was a long vowel (which would not appear in Hismaic orthography, hence ḏ-s²r) or a consonant (ḏ-s²ry), and only four examples showing Aramaic influence (with d for ḏ), although it should be noted that even here half of the cases have the final consonantal y of the North Arabian form (thus ds²ry) and half presumably have the final /ā/ of the Aramaic form dwšrʾ (thus ds²r). Occasional use of d for ḏ is found in the Hismaic texts from this area, but never the reverse. An unpublished text from Wādī Ramm uses d for ḏ consistently, thus d ʾl for ḏ ʾl, and dkrt lt for ḏkrt lt. There is, of course, no way of discovering the reasons for this. Was the author of this last text an Aramaeophone, or merely attempting to imitate Aramaic phonology, perhaps because it gave his text a superior or other 'accent'? Note that the supposed occurrence of d ʾn for ḏ ʾl in the Hasaitic text Ja 1044/3 (see Jamme, *Sabaean and Ḥasaean Inscriptions*: Fig. 18) is the result of a copyist's error. The photograph (*ATLAL* 8: 1984: pl. 89A) shows ḏ ʾl at this point.

143. For an excellent discussion of the problems with this etymology, but written before the Hismaic examples were published, see Starcky J. Pétra et la Nabatène. In: Pirot L & Robert L, eds. *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible, 7:* 1966: 986–987.

144. In eighty-six (or 78%) of the Safaitic references it appears as ds²r and in twenty-four (or 22%) as ḏs²r. This suggests that it was most widely current in the pure Aramaic form but that in some cases there was uncertainty over the pronunciation of the initial consonant. I know of only three examples in Safaitic of the etymologically correct form, ḏ-s²ry.

145. See Contini R. Il Ḥawrān preislamico ipotesi di storia linguistica. *Felix Ravenna* Quarta serie Fascicolo 1/2 – 1987 [1990] (CXXXIII-CXXXIV): 25–79, for an excellent review of the evidence (especially pp. 31–36).

146. The same is true of the supposed attestation of an 'Arabic' definite article which Livingstone has identified in the phrase ᶠANŠE.a-na-qa-a-te a-di ANŠE.ba-ak-[ka-ri-ši-na...] 'she-camels, together with their young' (Annals of Tiglath-Pileser III (733 BC) 142, 178, 188, 189), see Livingstone A. An Early Attestation of the Arabic Definite Article. *JSS* 42: 1997: 259–261. There are considerable problems with this and I discuss it in Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article.

147. Kropp M. The Inscription Ghoneim *AfO* 27. 1980. Abb. 10: A Fortunate Error. *PSAS* 22: 1992: 55–67.

148. Robin, L'Arabie antique: 114–115.

149. This occurs both where ʾlt seems to represent a divine name (as in LP 709, quoted in the next note, and C 1658 in the sentence h-gmln qṣyn l-ʾlt w-l-rḍw 'the two camels are dedicated to ʾlt and to Rḍw') and where it represents the common noun for 'goddess' in the name of a topical deity, eg. in Macdonald et al., Les inscriptions safaïtiques de Syrie: 466, inscription F: ... f h ʾlt h-nmrt s¹lm ... '... and so, O goddess of al-Namāra, [grant] security ...' or C 97 '... f h lt<.>s¹lm w h ʾlt ʾs¹s¹ nqʾt l-ḏ yᶜwr h-s¹fr ... and so, O Lt<.>[grant] security and O goddess of Usays [ie. Jabal Says, where the text was found] inflict nqʾt [an unknown evil] on whoever scratches out the writing.'

150. See, for instance LP 709 ... f h lt s¹lm w (ḥ)rṣ ʾl rm f ʾlt s¹lm '... and so, O Lt. [grant] security. And he was on the lookout for Romans, and so, ʾlt, [grant] security.'

151. The epithet h-ʾlt 'the goddess' (the exact equivalent in Safaitic of Arabic al-ilāt) is found in an unpublished text from northeastern Jordan which reads l zryt w ᶜwḏ b-h-ʾlt 'By Zryt and he sought refuge in the goddess,' and in such theophoric names as tm-h-ʾlt (C 263) and grm-h-ʾlt (C 1984).

152. The short vowel is, of course, a reconstruction.

153. See, for instance, Robin C. *Inventaire des inscriptions sudarabiques*. 1. *Inabbaʾ, Haram, al-Kāfir, Kamna et al-Ḥarāshif*. Paris: Boccard, 1992: 34.

154. It is hoped that this text will be published by its finder in the near future.

155. There is, of course, no reason why Old Arabic, which before the sixth century AD was a purely spoken language, should not have been written in the Safaitic script from time to time, and there are indeed some examples of this, see below and Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article.

156. See the excellent photograph in al-Ansary AT. *Qaryat al-Fau. A Portrait of Pre-Islamic Civilisation in Saudi Arabia*. London: Croom Helm, 1982: 146, and the translation and commentary in Beeston AFL. Nemara and Faw. *BSOAS* 42: 1979: 1–2. In the period of its prosperity, Qaryat al-Faw must have been one of the most cosmopolitan centres in Arabia. Inscriptions in the Sabaic, 'Thamudic', Pahlavi and Nabataean scripts have been found there and in the (Undifferentiated) North Arabian, Old Arabic, Pahlavi, Nabataean and Sabaic languages (see Ansary, *Qaryat al-Fau*: 19–20, 28, 73–74, 87–91, 99, 106, 118–119, 123, 129–133, 137, 141–147, and Ryckmans, Alphabets, Scripts and Languages: 75). In the 1980s, Jacques Ryckmans (Alphabets, Scripts and Languages: 75) and Walter Müller (Das Altarabische und das klassische Arabisch: 33–34) published admirable summaries of the evidence from Faw, and a few more texts have been recognized since then (see Kropp, The Inscription Ghoneim; Robin, L'Arabie antique: 97, 103, 113–116). Faw was the centre of the North Arabian tribes of Kinda, Maḏḥiǧ and Qaḥṭān. See the tombstone of *M*ᶜ*wyt bn Rb*ᶜ*t mlk qḥṭn w-mḏḫg* (Ansary, *Qaryat al-Fau*: 144/2); the Sabaic text from Maḥram Bilqīsī, Ja 635 (Jamme A. *Sabaean Inscriptions from Maḥram Bilqîs (Mârib)*. Baltimore: PAFSM, 3: 1962: 136–138), lines 25–28 of which mention *rb*ᶜ*t ḏ-ʾl ṯwrm mlk kdt w qḥṭn* at *Qryt*ᵐ *ḏt Khl* (ie. Qaryat al-Faw); and Ja 2110, also originally from Marib (Doe DB & Jamme A. New Sabaean Inscriptions from South Arabia. *JRAS* 1968: 15–16) lines 8–9 of which read *Mlk*ᵐ *bn bd mlk kdt w mḏḫg*ᵐ, although this text does not specifically link him with Faw. The adoption of Qaḥṭān as the ancestor of all the 'southern' Arab tribes seems to have been a later development (see Fischer A & Irvine AK. Ḳaḥṭān. In: *EI*, (new edition), 4. Leiden: Brill, 1978: 448).

157. So Robin, L'Arabie antique: 115–116, on palaeographic grounds.

158. See Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article for a detailed analysis of the treatment of the definite article in this text. The /ʾ/ is assimilated when it is preceded by an inseparable particle, leaving *l-*, while the /l/ is assimilated before sibilants leaving ʾ-. There is no case in this text where the article is both preceded by a particle and followed by a sibilant. Robin assumes that *wlh* in line 5 stands for '*wa-<Al>lāh*' (L'Arabie antique: 116). However, as just noted, the divine names *Lh* and *Lt* are known from Safaitic where they stand beside the common nouns ʾ*lh* (eg. *b*ᶜ*ls*¹*mn* ʾ*lh s*ᶜᶜ '*B*ᶜ*ls*¹*mn* god of Sīᶜ' in CSNS 424) and ʾ*lt* (see above), and the epithets *h-*ʾ*lh* ('*the* god', eg. WH 3923 as re-read in Macdonald MCA. Cursive Safaitic Inscriptions? A Preliminary Investigation. In: Ibrahim MM, ed. *Arabian Studies in Honour of Mahmoud Ghul: Symposium at Yarmouk University December 8–11, 1984*. Wiesbaden: Yarmouk University Publications: Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology Series, 2: 1989: 65–66, 73, 79) and *h-*ʾ*lt* ('*the* goddess', see above).

159. ᶜIgl bn Hfᶜm line 1 where *bana appears as the second of the three *bn*s in the line (no vowels are represented in the Ancient South Arabian script). See Beeston's excellent reading and commentary (Nemara and Faw: 1–2).

160. Robin interprets *bn* in line 8 as the South Arabian preposition (L'Arabie antique: 116) and remarks on its curious co-existence with Old Arabic *mn* in line 6. However, Beeston's explanation of *bn* from Arabic *bayn* 'in its primary sense of "separation, parting" [>'without']' (Nemara and Faw: 2) is surely preferable, both in the sense it gives and as an explanation of the presence of *bn* at this point in the text.

161. The two examples of the 3rd person pl. enclitic pronoun (lines 3 and 4) are also North Arabian *-hm* rather than Sabaic *-hmw*.

162. However, see Beeston, Nemara and Faw: 1, n. 1 for one possible explanation of this feature, and see below for another.

163. Müller, Das Altarabische und das klassische Arabisch: 32–33.

164. See Drewes AJ. The Phonemes of Lihyanite. In: Robin C, ed. *Mélanges linguistiques offerts à Maxime Rodinson par ses élèves, ses collègues et ses amis*. Paris: GLECS Supplément, 12: 1985: 165–173. *Contra* Drewes, only final /ā/ and /ū/ and the diphthong /ay/ in final position are consistently expressed in this way (by *–h*, *–w* and *–y* respectively). Final /ī/ and medial vowels and diphthongs seem rarely, if ever, to have been represented. Drewes assumes that, because diphthongs in medial position are not represented in Dadanitic (in accordance with the normal practice in all the ANA scripts), the diphthongs /aw/ and /ay/ must have been monophthongized. This *argumentum e silentio*,

combined with a reconstruction of Dedanitic morphology which sometimes relies too heavily on analogy with that of Classical Arabic, leads him to conclude that in final position *–w* often represents /–ō/ (</aw/) and *–y* almost always represents /–ē/ (</ay/). For a different view, see Macdonald MCA. Ancient North Arabian. In: Woodard RD, ed. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001 (in press).

165. Drewes, The Phonemes of Lihyanite: 167–169.

166. The fact that in JSLih 384 the subject of the verb *bnh* is a woman is, of course, not a problem since, as Jaussen and Savignac point out, a feminine subject *preceded* by a verb in the masculine is not unusual in Arabic (*Mission* 2: 533).

167. See, for example, in JSLih 45/1 and HE 84/1.

168. See the new transcription by A. Desreumaux and the new reading and translation in Bordreuil P, Desreumaux A, Robin C & Teixidor J. 205. Linteau inscrit: A.O. 4083. In: Calvet Y & Robin C, avec la collaboration de F. Briquel-Chatonnet et M. Pic, *Arabie heureuse Arabie déserte. Les antiquités arabiques du Musée du Louvre*. Paris: Notes et documents des musées de France: 1997: 265–269. Here, as in the inscription of ᶜgl bn Hfᶜm, there is a sprinkling of features taken over from the language normally associated with the script (ie. Nabataean Aramaic). In the Namāra inscription these features are limited to the use of *br* for *bn* in the name of the deceased, and the attachment of a final *-w* to certain proper names. However, in contrast to the Nabataeo-Arabic text JSNab 17 and the late Nabataean text LP 41, the use of final *-w* in the Namāra inscription accords perfectly with classical Nabataean orthographic practice.

169. A six-line text in the Nabataean script of which the first three lines and the last are in Nabataean and lines 4 and 5 in Old Arabic. For a recent interpretation and references to previous studies see Kropp M. A Puzzle of Old Arabic Tenses and Syntax: The Inscription of ᶜEn ᶜAvdat. *PSAS* 24: 1994: 165–174, and see Macdonald, *Old Arabic*. Bellamy has suggested that these lines are in verse and cites Epiphanius' statement that in the late fourth century the Nabataeans at Petra sang hymns to the virgin mother of Dushara Ἀραβικῇ διαλέκτῳ, 'in the Arabic language' (Bellamy JA. Arabic Verses from the First/Second Century: The Inscription of ᶜEn ᶜAvdat. *JSS* 35: 1990: 79, n. 13). Kropp regards the lines as a magic charm which the reader was invited to recite and which had to be spoken in the Arabic language. Whatever the

correct explanation, this text is another example of the coexistence of Old Arabic in close proximity to other languages.

170. Negev's dating of the text is based entirely on speculation (Negev A, Naveh J & Shaked S. Obodas the God. *IEJ* 36: 1986: 60) and until more evidence is available the inscription should be regarded as 'undated'.

171. The Jabal Ramm inscription appears to be written in something between the Nabataean and the Arabic script, but its interpretation is so uncertain that it is unsafe to try to classify its language. The only phrase which appears to be certain and which, curiously does not seem to have been recognized before, is *b-ʾrm* in the second line, which presumably represents *bi-ʾiram* 'in/at Iram'. This would be most appropriate given the provenance of the inscription. For a different interpretation of the text, plus references to the earlier treatment see Bellamy JA. Two Pre-Islamic Arabic Inscriptions Revised: Jabal Ramm and Umm al-Jimāl. *JAOS* 108: 1988: 370–372. Bellamy's interpretation of the letters *b'rm* as *bārim* is unlikely since it assumes that the *alif* represents medial /ā/, a feature which is entirely foreign to the orthography of both the Nabataean and the pre-Islamic Arabic scripts.

172. See Violet, Ein zweisprachiges Psalmfragment; Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article; and Macdonald, *Old Arabic*.

173. See below on the texts from Faw (Ghoneim, Ja 2122, the tomb inscription of Mᶜwyt bn Rbᶜt, and Ansary, *Qaryat al-Fa*w: 147/6) and those from Haram which do not meet this criterion and which I have therefore labelled 'Undifferentiated North Arabian'.

174. None of the uncertainties marked on the transliteration are serious and they most probably represent mistakes by the copyist.

175. This translation is based on taking *mbᶜy* as the *maṣdar* of *bᶜy*, in the accusative of *ḥāl*. *Bᶜy* in Safaitic means 'to do harm to, make an attack on' with a direct object and this is one meaning of the equivalent verb in Classical Arabic (*Lisān* 14: 75a). Cf. C 320 *s¹nt bᶜy ʾl ᶜwd̠ nᶜm ʾl ᶜbd* 'the year the ʾl ᶜwd̠ attacked the flocks of the ʾl ᶜbd'.

176. These are the two great tribal confederations of the *ḥarra*, or basalt desert, east and southeast of the Ḥawrān, in the Roman period.

177. The word *mᶜmn* is as yet unexplained.

178. For a discussion of *D̠tn*, see Macdonald et al., Les inscriptions safaïtiques de Syrie: 474–475.

179. These are tutelary deities of the two great confederations.

180. In Safaitic, the verb *ʾs¹lf* almost always occurs in the context of a killing and a call for vengeance and, like its equivalent in Classical Arabic (see Lane 1408a-b), means 'to do something (before the present time) which requires requital (either good or bad, at the present time)'.

181. The meaning of *s¹ḫr* here is not clear.

182. See Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article; and Macdonald, *Old Arabic*.

183. See, for example, *l-ys²rq l-mdbr* 'in order to migrate to the inner desert' (LP 180); or *w rdf h-ḍʾn l-mdbr* 'he urged [ie. walked behind] the sheep towards the inner desert' (WH 582).

184. See Macdonald MCA. North Arabian Epigraphic Notes 1. *AAE* 3: 1992: 23–25.

185. As opposed to Safaitic *h-s¹nt*, in parallel contexts (eg. C 1629, 1851, etc.). As in C 2446, the assimilation of the *n* of the preposition *mn* is a feature of Safaitic, not Old Arabic.

186. As opposed to *h-s¹fr*, which is very common in this context. However, note that the assimilation of the n of the relative pronoun mn is typical of Safaitic not Old Arabic. This text which was discovered by the Basalt Desert Rescue Survey is to be published by Dr. G.M.H. King, to whom I am most grateful for this information. On the survey and its discoveries see, in the meantime, King GMH. The Basalt Desert Rescue Survey and Some Preliminary Remarks on the Safaitic Inscriptions and Rock Drawings. *PSAS* 20: 1990: 55–78.

187. See Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article. Winnett and Harding translate *w-bny ʾrgm* in WH 234 as 'he built the cairn' and cite this as an example of a definite article *ʾ-*. However, it is more likely that *ʾrgm* is the plural of *rgm* and the sentence means 'and he built some cairns'. Winnett also finds a supposed *ʾ-* article in WAMS 11 which he reads *l yr bn gḫr ʾ-g{m}l* 'By Yr son of Gḫr is the camel'. But it is clear from the photograph that the text has been tampered with and that the supposed *ʾ* was originally written as a *h*, the lower side stroke (which turned it into a *ʾ*) being added by a different hand.

188. HCH 193 = HSIM 49218b (provenance unknown) ... *f dṯʾ b-ḫgr*.

189. *Naturalis Historia* 32.157.

190. See Drewes, The Phonemes of Lihyanite: 167–168; and the discussion above.

191. See for example JSLih 75/2, HE 2, Stiehl R. Neue lihyānische Inschriften aus al-ᶜUdaib. I. Mit einem Nachtrag M. Höfners. In: Altheim F & Stiehl R, eds. *Christentum am Roten Meer*. 1. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1971: 23 and 32, nos A18/2 and D5/

3, respectively. The expression *ḏ ʾl* appears to occur in JSLih 226. However, this number covers two separate inscriptions. The first (consisting of line 1) is in the late Dadanitic script and appears to read *grms²ll*. The second (consisting of lines 2–3) is in the South Arabian script (note the forms of *ʾ* and *ḏ*) and clearly reads *ḏ ʾl //bny*. Jaussen and Savignac treat the clan or family name as *ʾl-bny*, ie. with *ʾl-* representing the Arabic definite article, and this is possible. However, their comparison of this with the ethnicon *bnyn* (ie. with the Sayhadic article -*n*) in CIH 287/7–8, is inappropriate since, in the latter text, *bn-y* is a *nisba* form and this is the reason that it has the article (ie. *bn-y-ⁿ* 'the Bn-ite'). In JSLih 226, on the other hand, *ʾl* follows *ḏ* and so, if it *is* the definite article, it must be part of the name (as it is in the 'tribal' name which occurs in the forms *hn-ʾḥnkt* and *ʾl-ʾḥnkt*). It is clear that the two parts of JSLih 226 do not belong together and it seems probable that at least lines 2–3 are part of a text the beginning of which is lost.

192. That is, in the Ghoneim inscription discussed earlier (see Kropp, The Inscription Ghoneim; and Robin, L'Arabie antique: 114–115) and in the Sabaeo-North-Arabian inscription of unknown provenance, CIH 450/ 2–3 in relation to a woman: *ḏt / ʾl / ʾl / ʾḥnkt*, and in lines 5–6 in relation to a man: *ḏ-ʾl / ʾl / ʾl-ʾḥnkt*. The word division suggests that the (presumably Sabaeo-phone) engraver was unaware of the literal meaning of the ANA expression *ḏ ʾl* or of the significance of the Old Arabic article *ʾl*. Having correctly separated *ḏt* and *ʾl* in lines 2–3 he seems to have assumed that *ḏʾl* in line 5 was the masculine form of *ḏt*, and so treated it as a single word, and then repeated the pattern of two *ʾl's* between this and *ʾḥnkt*. On the other hand, having incorrectly separated the definite article *ʾl-* from *ʾḥnkt* in line 3, he correctly joined the two in line 6.

193. See for instance Robin, L'Arabie antique: 114–115; Robin, *IIS*. 1: 54–55.

194. In Kāfir 10 (Robin, *IIS*. 1: 135); Kamna 11/2 (*ibid*. 181); RES 4133/6; and Ryckmans, Graffites sabéens: 560.

195. In Haram 33 and 36 (Robin, *IIS*. 1: 101–102 and 104–105 respectively).

196. In Ry 455/2 (Ryckmans G. Inscriptions sudarabes. *Neuvième série* [Ry 444–498]. *Le Muséon* 64: 1951: 111), CIH 534/2, RES 4663/2, Haram 53 (Robin, *IIS*. 1: 122–123).

197. Note that there is no case of **ḏ- ʾḥnktⁿ* which would be the true equivalent of *ḏ ʾl hn-ʾḥnkt/ḏ ʾl ʾl-ʾḥnkt*.

198. Beeston AFL, Winnett FV, Ryckmans J & Ghul MA. The Inscription Jaussen-Savignac 71. *PSAS* 3: 1973: 69.

199. There is possibly a third example in line 4, where Beeston's reading of the seventh letter as *m* seems to me impossible. The sign looks far more like a *l* and is preceded by a clear ʾ. However, since what follows is partly destroyed, it remains uncertain whether or not this is another occurrence of the article.

200. See the photograph of the squeeze on Jaussen & Savignac, *Mission*, 2: pl. XCII, their copy on pl. CXXXV, and their description on p. 505.

201. See Macdonald, The Form of the Definite Article.

202. There are a number of problems in this inscription which are still unresolved, and none of the treatments so far appears to me entirely satisfactory. However, it is clear that there are passages which cannot be read as Aramaic and whose lexical and grammatical features are very close to Classical Arabic. For an excellent photograph of the text and the most recent discussion and references see Healey & Smith, Jaussen-Savignac 17. A new edition and discussion will appear in Macdonald, *Old Arabic*.

203. See below.

204. The dating is very approximate, see Teixidor, inscription araméenne ... de Sharjah: 699.

205. There are a handful of cases where *f* meaning 'in' has been identified in Safaitic, but these are very rare and *b-* is the norm.

206. The name is also spelt *Mnt* in theophoric names in Ancient North Arabian. However, since medial vowels of any quality are rarely if ever represented in these scripts it is impossible to know how this was pronounced.

207. The reading *khl* is uncertain since the word in the text is *klh* and the interpretation depends on assuming metathesis.

208. Jamme A. New Ḥasaean and Sabaean Inscriptions from Saudi Arabia. *OrAnt* 6: 1967: 181–183. It was correctly re-read and recognized as North Arabian by J. Ryckmans (ᶜUzzā et Lāt dans les inscriptions sud-arabes: à propos de deux amulettes méconnues. *JSS* 25: 1980: 199, n. 3); see, most recently, Robin, L'Arabie antique: 115.

209. Unlike Dadanitic, South Arabian orthography does not employ *matres lectionis*, hence *bn* rather than *bnh*.

210. Ansary, *Qaryat al-Fau*: 144 no. 2; see Robin, L'Arabie antique: 121.

211. Kropp, The Inscription Ghoneim: 59. Robin also assumes a loss of one or more letters at the end

of each line in his transcription (L'Arabie antique: 121).

212. When a photograph is published it may be possible to verify this.

213. Jamme A. The Pre-Islamic Inscriptions of the Riyâdh Museum. *OrAnt* 9: 1970: 122. It was recognized as North Arabian by J. Ryckmans (ᶜUzzā et Lāt: 199; Alphabets, Scripts and Languages: 75).

214. Müller WW. Ein Grabmonument aus Naǧrān als Zeugnis für das Frühnordarabische. In: Degen R, Müller WW & Röllig W, *NESE*. 3. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1978: 152–157.

215. Jamme A. South-Arabian Antiquities in the U.S.A. *BiOr* 12: 1955: 152–153. See the discussion in Müller, Ein Grabmonument: 154–155.

216. The name of the social group is ʾl-ʾḥnkt (see note 192, above) but this, of course, cannot be used to identify the language of the text.

217. See Kropp, The Inscription Ghoneim; and Robin, L'Arabie antique: 114. A. Sima has pointed out to me that in this text the enclitic pronoun *-h* in *mdqnt-h dt* refers to *Lt* (ie. 'this her portico') and thus is the regular Sabaic 3gg.f. enditic pronoun rather than a North Arabian feature. Similary in CIH450, the only example of *-h* refers to *nfsʾ* which is feminine in Sabaic.

218. See the discussion of Old Arabic above and, in more detail, in Macdonald, *Old Arabic*.

219. Robin, *IIS*. 1: 34.

220. However, in Haram 32 (which Robin includes in the list because of the omission of a medial *-h-*), the Sabaic preposition *bn* (rather than North Arabian *mn*) occurs in line 5.

221. Robin, *IIS*. 1: 33–34. He also mentions the word ʾhlht which he takes as the Arabic ʾālihah ('gods') pl. of *ilāh*, assuming the use of *h* to represent medial /ā/ (in two texts). However, the use of a *mater lectionis* for medial /ā/ would surely be extraordinary in any pre-Islamic Semitic alphabet.

222. See, for instance, *hwfy* in Haram 10/3, 8 and 13/10–11; *hqny* in 32/1; *hhtʾ* in 33/3–4, etc. This is in contrast to the consistent use of the ʾf ᶜl form in the Sabaeo-Arabic texts from Faw.

223. In a different work (L'Arabie antique: 97), Robin himself seems to have reached a conclusion similar, though not identical, to this; see below.

224. In one of these (Haram 40) medial *h* is omitted twice and medial ʾ once (see Robin, *IIS*:1: 34 and 110), although these could as well be errors as dialectal features.

225. Beeston had suggested that they were in a separate dialect which he termed 'Harami' (Beeston AFL. *A Descriptive Grammar of Epigraphic South*

Arabian. London: Luzac, 1962: 9). However, as he himself noted, this invited confusion since there are other texts from Haram which are expressed in pure Sabaic or Madhabic. Moreover, I am doubtful whether the language of these texts itself represents a dialect, rather than contamination of standard Sabaic by elements of one or more other languages. Christian Robin has called the language of these texts 'pseudo-sabéen' (*IIS*. 1: 34) or 'pseudo-sabéen qaḥṭānite' (L'Arabie antique: 97), but on this see below.

226. Robin, L'Arabie antique: 97. He includes under this rubric one, unpublished, inscription from Faw (that of Zaydwadd, 'le seul exemple véritablement significatif', L'Arabie antique: 120) and the tomb inscription of Mᶜwyt bn Rbᶜt (L'Arabie antique: 121). However, as stated above, I would class the latter inscription as ANA (although within the 'undifferentiated' category because we cannot yet assign it to a particular dialect). Robin also, tentatively, includes a text from Naǧrān, Ja 2147 (Jamme A. Liḥyanite, Sabaean and Thamudic Inscriptions from Western Saudi Arabia (Pre-Islamic Arabic Documentation, I). *RSO* 45: 1970: 91–94) despite the fact that it 'ne comporte aucun caractère linguistique qui le classe de manière évidente soit comme sabéen, soit comme pseudo-sabéen....' (Robin, L'Arabie antique: 122 and cf. 97).

227. Robin, L'Arabie antique: 97.

228. Robin, L'Arabie antique: 97.

229. As suggested by Robin (*IIS*: 1: 59).

230. Macdonald, Nomads and the Ḥawrān: 382–388.

231. For examples and a brief discussion see Macdonald et al., Les inscriptions safaïtiques de Syrie: 480–487.

232. See Macdonald MCA & Searight A. The Inscriptions and Rock-Drawings of the Jawa Area: A Preliminary Report on the First Season of Fieldwork of the Corpus of the Inscriptions of Jordan Project. *ADAJ* 26: 1982: 172.

233. See Macdonald, *Old Arabic* which will contain a detailed study of the origins of the Arabic script, with an edition of some previously unpublished inscriptions which display very clearly the transition from Nabataean.

234. The forms of *b* and *t*, *g* and *ḥ*, *z* and *r* were indistinguishable in all positions, and the initial and medial forms of *b*, *y*, *n* and *t* were identical, as were those of *f* and *q*.

235. This situation is entirely different from that of the Rawwāfa inscriptions which seem to have been composed on behalf of the nominal dedicants at the instigation of the governor of the Roman Province of Arabia. For this interpretation of the inscriptions see Macdonald MCA. Quelques réflexions sur les Saracènes, l'inscription de Rawwāfa et l'armée romaine. In: Lozachmeur H, ed. *Présence arabe dans le Croissant fertile avant l'Hégire*. Paris: ERC 1995: 98–101. The inscriptions are in Nabataean Aramaic and Greek, the 'prestige languages' of the indigenous population on the one hand and of the imperium on the other, and they have a symbolic rather than practical function. Indeed, it is questionable how many members of the tribe of Thamūd (the nominal dedicants) were literate in these scripts or even whether they would have understood the languages in which they were couched, if the texts had been read aloud.

236. For the interpretation of *šrkt* as an army unit see Macdonald, Quelques réflexions sur les Saracènes: 98–100.

237. See Stiehl R. A New Nabataean Inscription. In: Stiehl R & Stier HE, eds. *Beiträge zur alten Geschichte und denen Nachleben. Festschrift F. Altheim*. 2. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970: 87–90. The text dates to AD 357/8.

238. The Lakhmids were not always Christian, as the stories of their sacrifices to al-ᶜUzzà show, see Macdonald MCA & Nehmé L. Al-ᶜUzzā. *EI*, (new edition). Leiden: Brill (forthcoming).

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Address:
M. C. A. Macdonald
Oriental Institute
Pusey Lane
Oxford, OX1 2LE
United Kingdom
e-mail: michael.macdonald@orinst.ox.ac.uk