

# Arabian Epigraphic Notes

<http://www.arabianepigraphicnotes.org>

ISSN: 2451-8875

**E-mail alerts:** To be notified by e-mail when a new article is published, write “subscribe” to [editor@arabianepigraphicnotes.org](mailto:editor@arabianepigraphicnotes.org).

**Twitter:** Subscribe to the Journal on Twitter for updates: @AENJournal.

**Terms of usage:** This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>. © the author.



A Publication of the Leiden Center for the Study of Ancient Arabia  
<http://www.hum.leiden.edu/leicensaa/>

# Remarks on the etymon *trḥ* in the Safaitic inscriptions

Ali al-Manaser

Oxford University

Sabri Abbadi

University of Jordan

Arabian Epigraphic Notes 2 (2016): 45–54.

Published online: 15 June 2016

**Link to this article:** <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/40201>

# Remarks on the etymon *trḥ* in the Safaitic inscriptions

Ali Al-Manaser (Oxford University)

Sabri Abbadi (University of Jordan)

## Abstract

This paper discusses four new Safaitic inscriptions from Jordan. Two of the funerary inscriptions shed light on the enigmatic grieving term *trḥ*, which could have both a passive meaning “perished” (lit. grieved for) and an active meaning “grieving intensely”.

**Keywords:** Ancient North Arabian, Safaitic, Funerary Inscriptions

## 1 Introduction

The stones under study in this article were discovered in Wādī Al-Ḥašād, near Wādī Sārah, by Dr. Sabri al-Abbadi. Wādī Al-Ḥašād is situated about 45km north-east of the village of as-Safawi (see fig. 1). There are two areas in the northeastern Badia of Jordan that are named Al-Ḥašād. In the dialect of the local Bedouins, Al-Ḥašād refers to any area where small, black stones are found. Many researchers have surveyed in Wādī Sārah and Wādī Al-Ḥašād (Ḥarāḥṣah 2010: 73; Abbadi 2013: 119).

The first stone bears three inscriptions, the last of which is funerary and, by number of glyphs, is one of the longest Safaitic inscriptions known to date, consisting of eight lines of closely written text. The second stone contains only one text, which is also funerary in nature.

## 2 The Inscriptions

### 2.1 Stone 1

The lengthier text is in the middle of the stone with the two shorter inscriptions “framing” it above and below. The top inscription is covered in scratches, yet despite the damage the reading is certain. In the bottom inscription, the name *s<sup>1</sup>rr* (the fourth name in the genealogy) is interesting because, although the reading is sure, the same name is known from other inscriptions on the same stone as *s<sup>1</sup>r*. It also seems that the following word, which at first glance may resemble *kwd* with the *k* below the line, should be read as *bn wd* with the *b* and *n* written too close together. Macdonald (p.c.) suggests that the author forgot to include *bn* and then inserted it below the line.

- Inscr. 1:** *l wd bn tm bn wd bn s<sup>1</sup>r bn wd bn s<sup>1</sup>r d- ʔl ms<sup>1</sup>kt*  
 ‘By Wd son of Tm son of Wd son of S<sup>1</sup>r son of Wd son of S<sup>1</sup>r of the lineage of Ms<sup>1</sup>kt’
- Inscr. 2:** *l s<sup>1</sup>r bn tm bn wd bn s<sup>1</sup>rr < <bn> > wd bn s<sup>1</sup>r d- ʔl ms<sup>1</sup>kt*  
 ‘By S<sup>1</sup>r son of Tm son of Wd son of S<sup>1</sup>rr son of Wd son of S<sup>1</sup>r of the lineage of Ms<sup>1</sup>kt’
- Inscr. 3:** *l ʕm bn tm bn wd bn s<sup>1</sup>r bn wd bn s<sup>1</sup>r bn ʕbds<sup>2</sup>ms<sup>1</sup> d- ʔl ms<sup>1</sup>kt w wgm ʔ- ʔb -h trḥ w ʔ- dd -h trḥ w ʔ- ʕmt -h w ʔ- tʕmr trḥt w ʔ- wd bn dd- h w ʔ- ys<sup>1</sup>lm s<sup>1</sup>by w ʔ- tm s<sup>1</sup>by w ʔ- mḥlm w ʔ- tmlh w ʔ- t[[]]m rḡm mny w ʔ- ys<sup>1</sup>lm rḡm mny w ʔ- s<sup>1</sup>r qtl w ʔ- s<sup>1</sup>r qtl w ʔ- tm w ʔ- ʔs<sup>2</sup>mt w ʔ- ḥl w ʔ- ḥlt -h w ʔ- ḥl -h w ʔ- ḥts<sup>1</sup>[[]]t w ʔ- ʕd qtl w ʔ- s<sup>1</sup>hm {w} {ʕ}-l tm s<sup>1</sup>by w ʔ- s<sup>1</sup>ryt w ʔ- zbdn qtl w ʔ- s<sup>1</sup>r qtl w ʔ- {f}s<sup>1</sup>ln w ʔ- mḥlm*  
 ‘By ʕm son of Tm son of Wd son of S<sup>1</sup>r son of Wd son of S<sup>1</sup>r son of ʕbds<sup>2</sup>ms<sup>1</sup> of the lineage of Ms<sup>1</sup>kt and he grieved for his father who had perished and for his paternal uncle who was dead and for his grandmother and for Tʕmr who was dead and for Wd son of his paternal uncle and for Ys<sup>1</sup>lm who was captured and for Tm who was captured and for Mḥlm and for Tmlh and for {Tm} struck down by Fate and for Ys<sup>1</sup>lm struck down by Fate and for S<sup>1</sup>r who had been killed and for S<sup>1</sup>r who had been killed and for Tm and for ʔs<sup>2</sup>mt and for ḥl and for his maternal aunt and for his maternal uncle and for {ḥts<sup>1</sup>t} and for ʕd who had been killed and for S<sup>1</sup>hm {and} {for} Tm who was captured and for S<sup>1</sup>ryt and for Zbdn who had been killed and for S<sup>1</sup>r who had been killed and for Fs<sup>1</sup>ln and for Mḥlm’

### 2.1.1 Further Commentary on Inscription 3

Michael Macdonald (p.c.) has kindly commented on the text of this inscription. He notes that *tʕmr* is clearly a woman here (as in C 893) because *trḥt* is feminine, which is interesting because the same name is also found as a man’s name in C 1900, and in KRS 602 and 815 (where it may be the same person). Concerning the word *t[[]]m*, he points out that after the *t* the author wrote a letter which he then erased before continuing with the *m*. In the word *ḥts<sup>1</sup>[[]]t*, the author appears to have carved a *l* between the *s<sup>1</sup>* and the *t* and then scratched over it, and in *{w} {ʕ}l tm* part of the *w* and the whole of the *ʕ* have been obscured by damage to the surface. The first letter of *{f}s<sup>1</sup>ln* is obscured by damage to the surface and it is difficult to identify it; indeed, it may be two letters. He suggests that it could be a *f* turned at 90° to its normal stance (which is quite common) followed by a clear *s<sup>1</sup>* and then *ln* carved very close together.

## 2.2 Stone 2

**Inscr. 4:** *l s<sup>2</sup>hl bn tm bn s<sup>2</sup>hl w wgm ʿl- ʿqrb w trḥ -h l- ʿbd w b's<sup>1</sup> m zl*  
 'By S<sup>2</sup>hl son of Tm son of S<sup>2</sup>hl and he grieved for ʿqrb and he was sorrowful forever, for those who remain despair.'

## 3 Remarks on the etymon trḥ

The content of inscription 3 suggests that it was written in the aftermath of an attack on the writer's family or tribe by another group. It is evident that some of his family members were killed, while others were taken prisoner; some are simply described as having died, without being specifically killed, a nuance which is open to interpretation. The latter sense seems to be conveyed by the common epitaph *trḥ*, and the feminine *trḥt*.<sup>1</sup> The precise meaning of this word is hard to pin down, and has been discussed by many scholars (e.g. Al-Jallad 2015: 114, 348, who translates it neutrally as "perished"). The present inscription raises the possibility that the verb in fact has multiple meanings: though the form is usually the passive participle when used as an epitaph, it is possibly attested as an active verb in inscription 4, which would be understood, as in Classical Arabic, as the II-form which means "it made him sorrowful", therefore suggesting that he actively grieved for a long time. However, it is equally possible that the phrase *w trḥ -h l- ʿbd* in inscription 4 should be taken as a nominal sentence, where *trḥ* simply means something like 'sorrow' or 'sadness', and the entire phrase is to be translated as 'and his sorrow is everlasting'.<sup>2</sup>

A major theme of the Safaitic inscriptions is the expression of grieving or mourning for the dead, and several verbs are used in the compositional formula used for this genre of inscription. We find it useful here to gather all such verbs, with their conventional translations, in a table for comparison.

<sup>1</sup>On the meaning of the root *trḥ* and its derivations in Classical Arabic see Lane 302.

<sup>2</sup>We thank Ahmad Al-Jallad for this suggestion.

REMARKS ON THE ETYMON ṬRH

---

	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Siglum</b>
<i>wgm</i>	he grieved	HCH 5
<i>wlh</i>	he mourned deeply	HCH 71
	he despaired	SIJ 118
	he was distraught	C 25
	he grieved passionately	WH 164
<i>wg<sup>c</sup></i>	he mourned	JaS 30
	he grieved in pain	SIJ 119
<i>wny</i>	he became depressed	KRS 17
<i>ndm</i>	he was devastated by grief	KRS 2300
<i>ng<sup>c</sup></i>	he grieved in pain	C 763
	he suffered	WH 239
	he was sad	KRS 142
<i>bky</i>	he wept	ANSWS 59
<i>'tm</i>	he was sad	WH 376
<i>'ll</i>	cry, complain	LP 1300
<i>b's<sup>1</sup></i>	to be miserable	C 2544
	to make miserable	C 4010
<i>tql</i>	he became weighed down [with grief]	KRS 1435
<i>hwb</i>	he wept with grief	WH 73
<i>hyb</i>	he lamented greatly	WH 116
<i>dm<sup>c</sup></i>	he shed tears	CSNS 895
<i>s<sup>1</sup>qm</i>	he was sick [with grief]	KRS 776
<i>'bs<sup>1</sup></i>	he frowned	NST 2
<i>qsf</i>	he was miserable	HaNSB 217
<i>'s1f</i>	regret, sadly, be sad, feel sorry for	LP 718, WH 2017
<i>'g<sup>c</sup></i>	to cause pain	KRS 3074
<i>'nf</i>	cry, be angry	C 1475
<i>'nn</i>	howl, cry aloud (?) Complain	WH 345
<i>dwy</i>	He was miserable, be depressed, being sick	KRS 15

Address for Correspondence: ali.al-manaser@orinst.ox.ac.uk,  
sabri.abbadi@ju.edu.jo

## Figures



Figure 1: Map of Jordan showing the location of Wādī al-Hašād (Source: Google Earth)



Figure 2: The stone which bears the inscriptions 1–3



Figure 3: Digitally enhanced image of the inscriptions 1–3



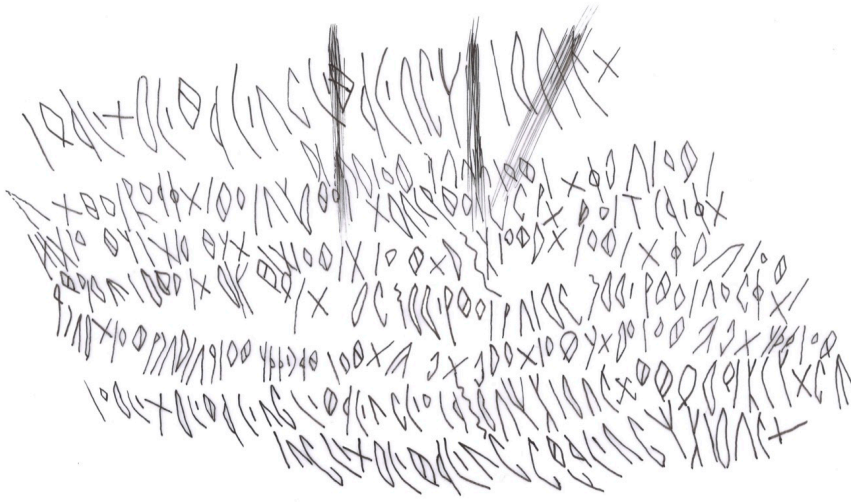


Figure 4: Tracing of the inscriptions 1-3.



Figure 5: The stone which bears inscription 4

## Sigla

ANSWS	Abbadi 2006.
C	Ryckmans 1950-1951.
CSNS	Clark 1979 [1983]
HaNSB	Ḥarāḥšah 2010.
HCH	Harding 1953.
KRS	“King Rescue Survey”. Inscriptions recorded by Geraldine King on the Basalt Rescue Desert Survey in north-eastern Jordan in 1989.
NST	Harding 1951.
JaS	Unpublished inscriptions recorded by the SESP 1995 at Jabal Says (to appear on OCIANA)
Lane	Lane 1863-1893
LP	Littmann 1943.
SIJ	Safaitic Inscriptions in Winnett 1957.
WH	Safaitic Inscriptions in Winnett & Harding 1978.

## References

- Abbadi, S. 2006. *Nuqūš šafawiyyah min wādī salmā (al-bādiyah al-urduniyah)*, Amman: Badia Research and Development Center.
- 2013. King Rabbel II in a Safaitic Inscription: An Analytical Study, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 145: 119–125.
- Al-Jallad, A. 2015. *An Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic Inscriptions*, (Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics 80), Leiden & Boston: Brill.
- Ḥarāḥšah, R.M.A. 2010. *Nuqūš šafā’iyyah min al-bādiyah al-urduniyah al-šmāliyyah al-šarqiyah — dirāsah wa-taḥlīl*, Amman: Ward.
- Clark, V.A. 1979 [1983]. *A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*, Ph.D. thesis, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, University of Melbourne.
- Harding, G.L. 1951. New Safaitic Texts, *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 1: 25–29.
- 1953. The Cairn of Haniṣ, *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, 2: 8–56.
- Lane, E.W. 1863-1893. *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, London: Williams & Norgate.
- Littmann, E. 1943. *Safaitic Inscriptions*, (Syria. Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–1905 and 1909. Division IV. Section C), Leiden: Brill.
- Ryckmans, J. (ed.) 1950-1951. *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum Pars V*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale.
- Winnett, F.V. 1957. *Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*, (Near and Middle East Series 2), Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Winnett, F.V. & Harding, G.L. 1978. *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*, (Near and Middle East Series 9), Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

