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The Safaitic scripts: palaeography of an ancient nomadic writing culture

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The Safaitic scripts

Palaeography of an ancient nomadic writing culture

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Data-sets and conventions

The primary data-set used for this research is the Jebel Qurma corpus (JQC) from north-eastern Jordan (see §1.2). The images of all JQC inscriptions referenced in this book can be accessed at: `https://doi.org/10.17026/dans-xcv-nwk8`.[1] In §3.2, Chapter 4, and Appendices A–B, the data-set mainly consists of texts from other collections. Inscriptions from editions other than the JQC have been accessed via the Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia (OCIANA) at `http://krcfm.orient.ox.ac.uk/fmi/webd/ociana`. For such corpora, I follow the *sigla* employed in OCIANA.

The *siglum* of texts from the JQC is QUR. The inscription number is a combination of site, panel, and text number, which are always in this order. For example, the text QUR 2.353.7/C was found in the site QUR 2 (which is the hill named Jebel Qurma itself), on a panel which was assigned the number 353, while the text was assigned the number 7 (since apparently there are several texts on the panel). Whenever I wish to refer to the whole panel rather than to individual carvings I simply leave out the inscription number, e.g. QUR 2.353 in the example just mentioned. Whenever a text is already known from a previous edition, it will be followed by '= [edition *siglum/sigla*]', e.g. QUR 2.646.1/C = WH 3925, HYGQ 95.

Almost all texts *sigla* in this study are followed by '/[script]'. Thus, in QUR 2.353.7/C, the C means that the text is in the 'common' script. I use the following abbreviations: C = 'common' script; F = 'fine' script; SoS = SoS (i.e. 'Southern Safaitic') script; C/F = transitional between 'common' and 'fine'; ThB = Thamudic B script; C/ThB = texts with both 'common' Safaitic and Thamudic B features; H = Hismaic script; ThD = Thamudic D script. If the script is likely one of these scripts but we do not have enough distinguishing features to be sure, the abbreviation is followed by a question mark, as in QUR 372.19.4/C?. If we have no clear hints, they are followed by '/U', which stands for 'Unclassified'. The only exceptions to this rule are the texts *sigla* in Chapter 4 and Appendix A, which are followed by '/[generation number]' rather than by '/[script]'.

I follow the transliteration system of Safaitic graphemes employed in the OCIANA (see Al-Manaser and Macdonald 2017:xv). I also use some of OCIANA editorial conven-

[1] In case the reader wishes to check the original photos of the texts which are here displayed with my tracing over them, at this link they can also find the photos without my tracings.

tions:[2] { } for a graph which is weathered or damaged and whose reading is uncertain; {{ }} for a graph which has been altered and turned into another; [ ] for a graph which is completely damaged and which had to be reconstructed from context; ---- when one or more graphs within a text are very damaged and can be neither read or reconstructed; < > for an editorial correction of a graph; < < > > for an editorial excision of a redundant graph; [[ ]] for a graph which has been either corrected or erased by the author of the text.

I do not employ a special notation system to distinguish the different graphematic and graphetic units, i.e. grapheme, basic shape, graph, and graph form.[3] All units are represented by the transliteration in italic type, but whenever a precise distinction of the different levels is particularly relevant to the point being made, the meant unit will be made clear in the text. For instance, by referring explicitly to the graph/form/shape of *b*, it will be clear that the referent is either a graph or a graph form or a basic shape of the grapheme *b*.

All photographs appearing in this thesis which are not accompanied by credits are by default 'Jebel Qurma Archaeological Landscape Project'. The provenance of images which come from other sources is always acknowledged in the captions.

[2] Al-Manaser and Macdonald 2017:xii.

[3] For a definition of these terms, see §1.1.3.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Tens of thousands of ancient inscriptions in a script labelled as 'Safaitic' are found on the rocks of the Ḥarrah, a basaltic desert stretching from southern Syria, through north-eastern Jordan, into northern Saudi Arabia (Fig.1.1). The chronological span of Safaitic texts is uncertain, but some were no doubt produced between the first century BC and the first half of the second century AD (§1.1.4). The vast majority of Safaitic inscriptions are only names or brief texts, such as rock art signatures, references to nomadic and pastoral activities, expressions of longing and grief for loved ones, and short prayers. Their language is Old Arabic (§1.1.2).

This work is the first systematic investigation of the materiality of the Safaitic script. The primary data-set used for this study is the Jebel Qurma corpus (abbr. JQC) from the north-eastern Jordanian Ḥarrah (§1.2).

The first Section of this Chapter is an introduction to several aspects of Safaitic epigraphy (§1.1). The second Section (§1.2) offers some information on the context and features of the JQC. The last Section (§1.3) introduces the aims of this research (§1.3.1), reviews previous scholarship on Safaitic palaeography (§1.3.2), and illustrates the terminology and approach employed in this study (§1.3.3).

1.1 The Safaitic inscriptions

The term 'Safaitic' is a modern misnomer. It was coined by early scholars of Safaitic and it is derived from the Ṣafā, a volcanic region of unbroken lava flows which is located south-east of Damascus. However, no Safaitic inscriptions have actually been found in the Ṣafā, but only in its proximity (Macdonald 2000:35). Indeed, the vast majority of Safaitic texts are concentrated in the Ḥarrah to the south and to the east stretching until northern Saudi Arabia (Fig. 1.1).[4] Nevertheless, the term has become established

[4]Outside of the Ḥarrah, Safaitic inscriptions were found in the Ḥawrān – see, e.g., the texts at Umm al-Jimāl (Littmann 1943:278–281), at Boṣra (Sartre 1985:148), and on the eastern slopes of Jabal al-ʿArab (Zeinaddin 2000) –, in and around Palmyra (Ingholt et al. 1951), at Dura Europos (Macdonald 2005b), in western Iraq (Safar 1964), in Lebanon (Harding 1971, Harding 1975) and even as far as Pompeii (Calzini Gysens 1990).

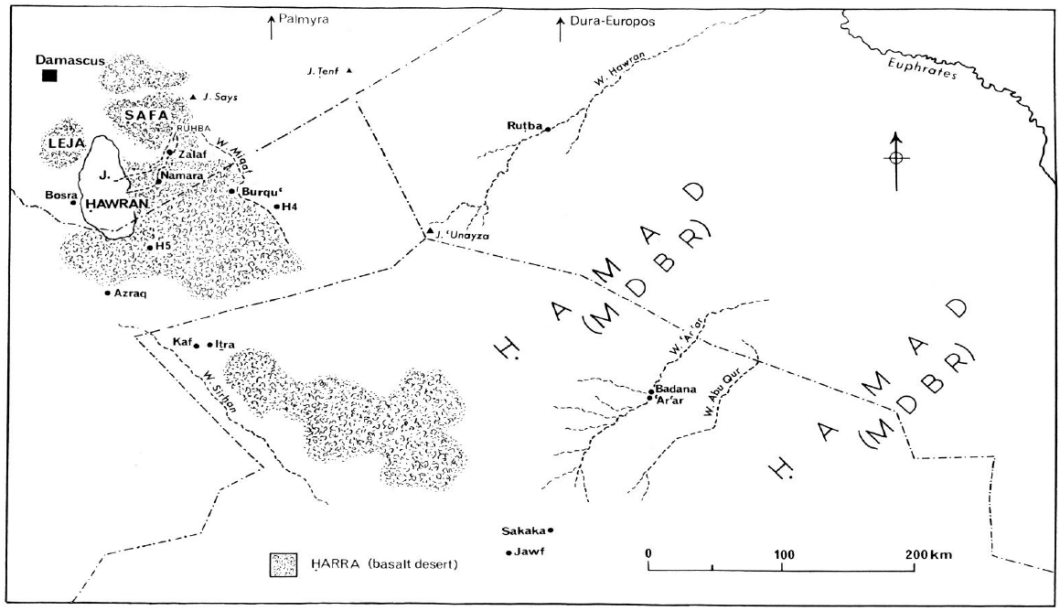


Figure 1.1: Map showing the Ḥarrah and the Ḥamād deserts (from Macdonald 1993:321)

and hence conventionally accepted in the scholarship.[5]

1.1.1 Decipherment and history of collections

The earliest copies of Safaitic texts were made by nineteenth century travellers to the Ḥarrah and the Ḥawrān. In 1857, C.C. Graham copied some Safaitic inscriptions during his travel in the Ḥarrah in southern Syria, which he published in 1858 (ZMDG XII) and 1860 (Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society XVII),[6] but they were so inaccurate that they played no role in the decipherment of the script (Grimme 1929:12). Around the same time in 1858, J.G. Wetzstein travelled in the Ḥawrān and the Ḥarrah and made 379 copies of much higher quality. He published only 27 copies, ten of which in his *Reisebericht über Ḥawrān und die Trachonen* in 1860,[7] while 17 further copies were published in 1876 by D.H. Müller in his article '*Die Ḥarra-Inschriften und ihre Bedeutung für die Entwicklungsgeschichte der südsemitischen Schrift*' (ZMDG XXX).[8] The rest of Wetzstein's copies were published later by H. Grimme in his '*Texte und Untersuchungen zur ṣafatenisch-arabischen Religion*'.[9] Further early collections of texts were made by M. de Vogüé, W.H. Waddington, R. Dussaud and F. Macler.[10]

The process of decipherment of the Safaitic script was started in 1877–1882 by J.

[5]Littmann 1901:ii; Littmann 1940:92; Macdonald 1993:305–306.
[6]Graham 1858; Graham 1860.
[7]Wetzstein 1860.
[8]Müller 1876.
[9]Grimme 1929.
[10]See the overview in Littmann 1940:93–94 and the references in there.

Halévy, who was named by E. Littmann as '*der wirkliche Begründer der Safâ-Epigraphik*'.[11] While Halévy believed to have completed the decipherment of the script, he had identified only 22 out of 28 graphemes, of which only 16 correctly. Soon after, F. Praetorius recognised that the Safaitic graphematic inventory was larger and identified 5 further graphemes (Littmann 1940:95). In 1901, Littmann deciphered the remaining 7 graphemes, thus completing the decipherment of all 28 graphemes of the Safaitic script.[12]

The first major collections of Safaitic inscriptions were from modern southern Syria. In 1943, Littmann published an edition of 1302 Safaitic texts collected within the framework of the Princeton Archaeological Expedition to Syria in 1904-1905 and 1909 (LP[13]). The year 1950 saw the publication of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, Pars V* (C), edited by G. Ryckmans, which contained 5380 Safaitic texts.[14] With the exception of LP, this corpus included most Safaitic inscriptions published before 1950 plus 2600 new texts copied by Maurice and Mireille Dunand in the 1920s.

The following decades have witnessed the publication of an increasing number of Safaitic collections, most of which are from north-eastern Jordan. The largest ones are: Winnett and Harding 1978 (WH), with 4087 texts, and KRS (now published on OCIANA, see below), which contains 3372 texts collected and edited by the late G. King within the framework of the *Basalt Desert Rescue Survey*.[15]

Since 2017, the Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia (OCIANA), has been made available online.[16] The OCIANA, edited by Ali Al-Manaser and Michael Macdonald, gives access to most published and unpublished collections of Safaitic texts, including various MA theses and PhD dissertations, and provides photographs of the texts whenever available, together with an up-to-date edition and translation. At present, it contains 33,339 records of Safaitic texts.[17]

1.1.2 Script and language

The Safaitic writing system consists of 28 graphemes, each corresponding to a consonantal phoneme, while vowels are not represented—it can hence be defined as a *consonantal alphabet*.[18] The recent works by Al-Jallad have shown that the language

[11] Littmann 1901:ii; Halévy 1882.

[12] Littmann 1901.

[13] Littmann 1943.

[14] Ryckmans 1950–1951.

[15] See King 1990b. Other major collections from north-eastern Jordan include: Winnett 1957 (SIJ), Oxtoby 1968 (ISB), Clark 1979 (CSNS), Harahsheh 2001 (HaNS), Al-Khraysheh 2002 (KhBG), Ababneh 2005 (AbaNS), and Al-Manaser 2008 (AAEK).

[16] See `http://krcfm.orient.ox.ac.uk/fmi/webd/ociana`.

[17] Accessed on 23 May 2021.

[18] This is the term used in Healey 1990 and Gnanadesikan 2009. Other terms for this type of writing system have been proposed, such as *abjad* (Daniels 1996) and *consonantal linear segmentary* (Gnanadesikan 2017).

expressed by Safaitic inscriptions is Old Arabic.[19]

Within the Safaitic script there is a great extent of graphic variation, and one can single out different *scripts*, that is, different inventories of basic shapes.[20] In my graphetic study of the JQC (see §1.3 below and Chapter 2), I identify three scripts: 'common', 'fine', and SoS ('Southern Safaitic').[21]

The Safaitic script belongs to the Ancient North Arabian (ANA) group of the South Semitic script-family.[22] This group includes the scripts of three ancient Arabian oases – Dadanitic, Taymanitic, and Dumaitic – and the scripts used in the deserts from the southern Levant to south-western Arabia: Safaitic, Hismaic, Thamudic B, C, D,[23] and Himaitic[24] (former Southern Thamudic).[25]

The ANA inventories that are closest to the Safaitic script are: Thamudic B, which is found in largest concentrations in the Najd and in the area between Madāʾin Ṣaliḥ and Taymāʾ in north-west Saudi Arabia (Macdonald and King 1999), and Hismaic, which is primarily found in the Ḥismā desert of southern Jordan and in the area around Tabūk in north-west Saudi Arabia (King 1990a:§1.C).[26] While there is still no comprehensive study of the Thamudic B script, a detailed analysis of the graphetic features of the Hismaic script was carried out by the late Geraldine King in her doctoral thesis (King 1990a:Chapter 2).

The ANA scripts are clearly related, but their developments and interrelationships are unclear, especially since we lack any precise chronology (Macdonald 1992a:418).[27]

[19]Al-Jallad 2015:10–14; Al-Jallad 2019. Previously the language of Safaitic texts was considered as part of a single dialectal bundle with the languages expressed by the other related Ancient North Arabian scripts (cf. Macdonald 2000; Macdonald 2004).

[20]I here follow Meletis' definition of a script as an inventory of basic shapes (Meletis 2019:20, n. 7); see the discussion of the terminology and approach in §1.3 below.

[21]I borrowed the first two terms from two of the five categories proposed by Clark (1979), while the term SoS is employed here to refer to a group of inscriptions with features which have been labelled by some scholars as 'Mixed Safaitic/Hismaic'. For a discussion of the scripts terminology employed here, see §1.3.3.4 below.

[22]The other group is Ancient South Arabian, from which the Ethiopian script developed; the Ethiopian syllabary is the only member of the South Semitic script-family which is still used nowadays (Macdonald 2000:32).

[23]The labels Thamudic B, C, and D, reflect Winnett's preliminary subdivision of the 'Thamudic' material (see Winnett 1937:18–49), which included also Thamudic A (now labelled as Taymantic) and Thamudic E (now labelled as Hismaic). The term 'Thamudic' was coined by 19th century scholars and is conventionally employed as a 'pending category' including all those ANA scripts which have not been properly investigated yet; it bears no relationship with the ancient people of Thamūd (see Macdonald and King 1999; Macdonald 2000:33, 43–44).

[24]Robin and Gorea 2016.

[25]See Macdonald 2000, and the script table at p. 34; Macdonald 2004; Macdonald 2010; see Al-Jallad 2018 for the most recent survey of the features of the languages expressed by these scripts.

[26]For a comparison of the Safaitic scripts to Hismaic and Thamudic B, see §2.2.2, where I list the features distinguishing them as well as their shared features.

[27]Most ANA texts are undated. A few texts in the Taymanitic and Thamudic B scripts mention Nabonidus king of Babylon and date to the mid-6th century BC (see Macdonald 2010:11, 16). These are the earliest dated ANA texts. The latest dated text is a Thamudic D inscription which is dated to AD 267 by the associated Nabataean text with which it forms a bilingual (Macdonald 2010:16). On the chronology of Safaitic, see §1.1.4 below.

While comparing these scripts it appears that, although there are a number of shapes which are identical – or at least very similar – across scripts (e.g. the shapes of *d* , *y* , and *w*), there are also similar or identical shapes which have completely different graphematic values from one script to the other. In some cases, this may be the result of parallel development. Macdonald points at the example of the straight vertical line shape , which is used for *n* in Thamudic B, for *r* in Thamudic D, for s^2 in Hismaic, and for *l* in Safaitic (Macdonald 2015:21). This shape may have developed independently in each script.

However, there are two cases for which parallel development can probably be ruled out: 1) the shape , which is used for the *ḏ* in 'common' Safaitic and Thamudic B, while it represents the grapheme *ṯ* in Hismaic; 2) the shape , which expresses the *ṯ* in Safaitic and Thamudic B forms, while it is used for the *g* in Hismaic (see Table 2.2).[28] As argued by King, such examples clearly show the inadequacy of uni-evolutionary models which see the various ANA inventories as the result of a single gradual development from one script to the other, since they suggest that the process by which some ANA scripts developed involved the adoption as well as deliberate rearrangement and modification of pre-existing inventories (King 1990a:§2.J).

1.1.3 Text form and subjects

The style of Safaitic inscriptions is laconic and formulaic. Virtually all texts start with *l*, the so-called *lām auctoris*,[29] followed by the name of the author, as in QUR 1020.74.1/C *l zmhr* 'By Zmhr'.[30] This can be considered as the minimal unit of the Safaitic text. To this unit several authors added the patronym, as in QUR 171.166.1/C (Fig. 1.2(a)) *l bnʿrt bn ʾmy* 'By Bnʿrt son of ʾmy', or longer genealogies.[31]

After the name/genealogy, many texts indicate affiliation to a social group, usually through the expression *ḏ ʾl* 'of the people of' + [group name], as in QUR 239.12.1/C *l ʾḏnt bn ʿbd ḏ ʾl* s^1*bq* 'By ʾḏnt son of ʿbd of the people of S^1bq', or, more rarely, the *nisbah* adjective, as in QUR 1016.10.1/C *l qṣyt h-ḫ{*s^1*}by* 'By Qṣyt, the {Ḫs^1b-ite}'. The term *ʾl* was employed to refer to social groups of varying nature and sizes.[32]

[28] King 1990a:§2.J.

[29] For a recent discussion of the functions of the *lām auctoris*, see Macdonald 2006:294–295.

[30] The only exception to this are initial prayers, as for example QUR 428.18.1/C, see §1.2.2.10 below.

[31] E.g. QUR 146.8.2/C *l ʾqdm bn ẓnn bn dḥ bn d{ġ}m bn ʾqdm* 'By ʾqdm son of Ẓnn son of Dḥ son of {Dġm} son of ʾqdm'.

[32] See Harding 1969:3–5; Macdonald 1993:354, n.317; Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019:30. By default, I translate the expression *ḏ ʾl* as 'of the people of', but in case the affiliation is to either *ḏf* or *ʿwḏ*, which we know were large lineages (see Appenices A–B), I translate this expression as 'of the lineage of'.

In addition to the term *ʾl*, one rarely encounters the term *ʾhl*, which may have indicated the closer family group (Nehmé and Macdonald 2015:73–74).

(a) 'Common' text (QUR 171.166.1/C) consisting of the author's name plus his patronym

(b) 'Fine' text (AbSWS 80/F) containing all the typical elements of Safaitic inscriptions (Photo: OCIANA)

Figure 1.2: Examples of Safaitic texts

A large minority of the texts continues with a brief statement, an invocation, or a curse against potential effacers. Most Safaitic inscriptions express only a limited set of subjects, mostly falling into one of the following categories: references to associated drawings, statements concerning the author's activity (such as pasturing, camping, migrating, keeping watch, raiding, etc.), mention of unfavourable conditions (e.g., drought, war, etc.), statements concerning the author's emotions (mainly longing and grieving), prayers, curses, and dating formulae. In §1.2.2 below, I show examples of the most common Safaitic text types and subjects found in the JQC.[33]

The form of most Safaitic texts can be conceptualised according to the following additive structure: *l* PN ± [genealogy] ± [social group] ± [statement] ± [invocation] ± [curse/blessing] (cf. Macdonald 1992a:421).[34] When the statement contains a verb, this is almost always in the 3rd person singular perfect.

An example of a text containing all these elements is AbSWS 80/F (Fig. 1.2(b)). It reads: *l tm bn ẓnʾl bn ʿbd bn nʿmn ḏ ʾl kn w rʿy h-ʾgml f h lt s¹lm w ʿwr ḏ yʿwr h-s¹fr* 'By Tm son of Ẓnʾl son of ʿbd son of Nʿmn of the people of Kn and he pastured the camels and so, O Lt, [grant] security and blind whosoever would efface the inscription'. But the vast majority of the Safaitic corpus are only names, as the example in Fig. 1.2(a), or extremely short texts, as for instance QUR 2.132.1/C *l ns¹ʾ bn nybt bn bngd w w{g}m* 'By Ns¹ʾ son of Nybt son of Bngd and he {grieved}'. Thus, it is important to stress that inscriptions as AbSWS 80/F are not necessarily representative of the Safaitic corpus as a whole, since most Safaitic inscriptions are considerably shorter. Moreover, it is not by chance that this text is carved in the 'fine' script: texts written in this script are on average longer and less concise than 'common' texts. While they share the same

[33] For other recent surveys of Safaitic formulae with examples, see Al-Jallad 2015:201–220 and Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019:8–18.

[34] Sometimes the various elements follow a different order than the one outlined here, see, e.g., a group of texts accompanying drawings where the statement referring to the drawing is placed within the genealogy (see the examples in §1.2.2.2 below).

structure and subjects of 'common' inscriptions, they present longer genealogies (see §A.1) as well as longer narratives which often include a broader range of formulae.

1.1.4 Chronology

Safaitic is conventionally dated to the centuries between the first century BC and the fourth century AD (Macdonald 1995b), but these chronological limits are notoriously problematic and uncertain (Al-Jallad 2015:17–18). The lower limit of the first century BC is not based on any securely dated texts[35] (but see below and §4.2), while the upper limit of the fourth century AD is based on the argument from silence that the inscriptions make no reference to Christianity.

Some of the most precisely dated Safaitic inscriptions are a group of texts in the 'fine' script which are dated to the appointment/regnal years/death of *grfṣ* 'Agrippa'. These texts could refer to either Agrippa I, who ruled in the Ḥawrān from AD 37 to 44, or to Agrippa II, who ruled there from AD 53 to his death probably in 92/93 AD.[36] An inscription (Is.H 763/F) dated to the year 18 of king Agrippa, is the only one which unambiguously refers to Agrippa II, since Agrippa I ruled for a much shorter period.[37]

Most inscriptions mentioning Agrippa are by members of the lineage of *ḏf* and present long genealogies, allowing us to locate them in their lineage tree (see Appendix A). In §4.2, I have combined the chronological framework of these texts (using as a point of reference both Agrippa I and Agrippa II) with the attested generations of *ḏf* authors. The aim was to calculate a minimal *secure* time span of Safaitic writing among the *ḏf*. By employing a minimal generation time span of 20 years, I have obtained an earliest secure date at the beginning of the first century BC and a latest secure date at the end of the first century AD. This result places our earliest secure dating of Safaitic in the first century BC, thus confirming the traditional chronology.

Needless to say, since this is a minimal time frame, it is very likely that *ḏf* authors carved Safaitic texts also before and after.

There are also a number of 'fine' texts making reference to events involving *qṣr* 'Caesar', *mdnt* 'the province' (either Syria or Arabia),[38] and *rm* 'the Romans', but it is mostly difficult to date them precisely.[39]

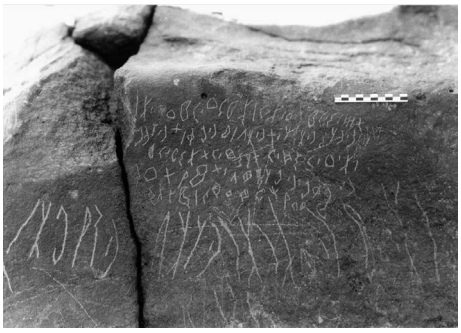
[35]To my knowledge, there are only two texts which, if the interpretation by the editors is correct, may date to the end of the first century BC. In one text, published by Abbadi, the dating formula reads *s¹nt ʾty s¹ly m-rm* 'the year S¹ly came from Rome'. Abbadi connected this formula with the return from Rome of the Nabataean minister Syllaeus and suggested that the text dates to 12–9 BC (Abbadi 1997; Abbadi 2001). A further text possibly mentioning the same event was published by Al-Rawabdeh and Abbadi (2017).

[36]See King 1990b:62; Macdonald 1995a:289–290. On the history of the two Agrippas, see Schürer 1973:442–454, 471–483.

[37]See Macdonald 2014:152. In the same paper, Macdonald surveys several other Safaitic texts referencing events which involve the local kingdoms of the Ḥawrān and the Romans, and cautiously suggests some possible identifications.

[38]On this interpretation of *mdnt*, see Macdonald 2014:154.

[39]See the discussion of these texts in Macdonald 2014; Macdonald put forward a translation of the dating formula *s¹nt ngy qṣr h-mdnt* as 'the year Caesar announced the province', and suggested that it may date



(a) 'Fine' text (SESP.U 8/F) dated to the year king Agrippa died (AD 44 or (?)92/93); *Photo: OCIANA*

(b) SoS text (ISB 57/SoS) dated to the year Rabbel II became king (70/71 CE); *Photo: OCIANA*

(c) 'Common' text (QUR 2.353.7/C) hammered over 'fine' texts

(d) 'Common' text (BES15 1107/C) by Gregory son of Claudius; *Photo: OCIANA*

Figure 1.3: Panels of chronological significance

Several inscriptions in different Safaitic scripts mention *nbṭ* 'the Nabataeans' in various contexts.[40] The earliest references to the Nabataeans in other historical sources go back to the 4th century BC.[41] In the Hellenistic and Roman period, the Nabataeans gained considerable wealth thanks to their involvement in long-distance trade. Their capital was Petra, in southern Jordan, and they gradually expanded into the southern Ḥawrān to the north and into north-west Arabia to the south. In AD 106, this territory was annexed by the Romans as *Provincia Arabia*. The Nabataeans employed a script which was a local development of Imperial Aramaic. The Nabataean script continued to be used well after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom by the Romans (see, e.g., the Nabataean/Safaitic bilingual dated to 125 AD mentioned below),[42] and, in

to the announcement of *Arabia adquisita* by Trajan in AD 111 (see Macdonald 2014:154–155).

[40]See Al-Salameen et al. 2018; Al-Manaser, Al-Jouharah, et al. 2019; Al-Rawabdeh and Al-Manaser 2020; there are also instances of Safaitic writers who self-identified as *h-nbṯy* 'the Nabataean' (see Macdonald, Al-Muʾazzin, et al. 1996:444–449) or as *ḏ ʾl nbṭ* 'of the Nabataean people' (see Al-Salameen et al. 2018:72–73). For examples of references to *nbṭ* in the JQC, see §1.2.2.4 below.

[41]See Wenning 2007.

[42]The Nabataean script was also used far beyond the geographical limits of the Nabataean kingdom (see Macdonald 2003a; Healey 2007). On the small number of Nabataean texts found in the Ḥarrah, see Al-Manaser and Norris 2019.

Late Antiquity, it eventually developed into the Arabic script.[43]

To my knowledge, the only Safaitic inscriptions referencing the Nabataeans which can be precisely dated are three texts in the SoS script dated to the regnal years or death of the Nabataean king Rabbel II (AD 70–106). Two of them (ISB 57/SoS and AbKRI 1/SoS), by the same author, are carved in square graph forms[44] and are dated to the year Rabbel became king and to the third year of Rabbel respectively.[45] One problem with mentions of a king Rabbel in Safaitic inscriptions is that there is no way to know if the reference is to Rabbel I or to Rabbel II. However, as argued by Abbadi, in this case he can only be Rabbel II, since Rabbel I ruled only for one year in 85/84 BC.[46] Thus, these two texts can be dated to AD 70/71 and AD 72/73 respectively. The third inscription is CSNS 628/SoS, which reads: *l brd bn ṣġf ḏ ʾl ʿmrt w dṯʾ s¹nt ʿs²r l-rbʾl* 'By Brd son of Ṣġf of the people of ʿmrt and he spent [here] the season of the later rains, the year ten of Rabbel'.[47] This text can thus be dated to 79/80 AD.

From a dated Nabataean/SoS bilingual we know that the SoS script was used well into the Roman period. The Nabataean portion is dated to the year 19 of the month of Adār, which most likely follows the era of the Province of Arabia, thus corresponding to February/March 125 AD (see Norris 2018:86–87).

Moreover, there are SoS texts by members of a social group called *tts¹*, i.e. the Latin name 'Titus',[48] and a SoS text surrounded by a cartouche in the form of a *tabula ansata*.[49]

Unlike the few instances of dated 'fine' and SoS texts mentioned above, so far we lack absolute dates for texts in the 'common' script. In Chapter 4 we shall see that the 'fine' script developed from the 'common' script, thus showing that the 'common' script is earlier. However, this does not mean that texts in the 'common' script stopped being written after the 'fine' script developed. This is clearly shown by the panel in Fig.1.3(c),

[43]Nehmé 2010.

[44]The script of these texts is labelled in previous literature as the so-called 'square script', but see §1.3.2 below and §3.2.

[45]The whole texts read: ISB 57/SoS *l ʾs¹ybn bn mrh bn ʿbṯn ḏ ʾl mḥrb w wgm ʿl-ʾḫt-h ʿḏb w qṣṣ s¹nt mlk rbʾl* 'By ʾs¹ybn son of Mrh son of ʿbtn of the people of Mḥrb and he grieved for his sister ʿḏb and he patrolled, the year Rabbel became king'; AbKRI 1/SoS *l ʾs¹ybn bn mrh bn ʿbtn ḏ ʾl mḥrb w qṣṣ s¹nt ṯlṯ l-rbʾl f h lt w ds²r s¹lm* 'By ʾs¹ybn son of Mrh son of ʿbtn of the people of Mḥrb and he patrolled, the year three of Rabbel so, O Lt and Ds²r, let there be security'. On the translation of the verb *qṣṣ* as 'to patrol', see Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019:111–112. It is worth pointing out that the author spelled the papponym as *ʿbṯn* in the first text and as *ʿbtn* in the latter. Considering the cultural proximity of the author to the Nabataeans – which seems also to be the case of the SoS script in general (see the discussion in §8.3) – it is possible that the variant *ʿbtn* should be interpreted as a calque of Nabataean Aramaic orthography. Since the Nabataean script has no grapheme for the interdental fricative *ṯ*, *ʿbtn* is how one would expect *ʿbṯn* to be spelled in Nabataean. Note also the Aramaic spelling of the Nabataean deity *ds²r* (rather than *ḏs²r*) in both texts, which seems to be a consistent feature of SoS texts.

[46]Abbadi 2013:122.

[47]Clark did not read the dating formula and he also misread the patronym of the author. He read and translated the text as follows (the words that I read differently are in bold): *l brd bn* ***ṣrf*** *ḏ ʾl ʿmrt w dṯʾ* ***bntg nẓrn*** *rbʾl* 'By Brd son of Ṣrf, of the tribe of ʿmrt, he spent the spring with the animals which were giving birth, while watching out for Rbʾl' (Clark 1979:318).

[48]These are: CEDS 322/SoS, QUR 294.113.3/SoS, and SIAM 42/SoS.

[49]See Al-Theeb 2000:234, inscr. 145.

which is found on top of Jebel Qurma, where a text in the 'common' script superimposes a group of texts in the 'fine' script. There are also instances of 'common' texts whose authors have Graeco-Roman names. For example, the author of BES15 1107/C (Fig.1.3(d)) had a Greek name, while his father had a Latin one, his genealogy reads: *grgs*[1] *bn ʾqlds*[1] 'Gregory son of Claudius'.

The Safaitic text which could provide the latest date is carved on the body of a crater which was found in the hinterland north-west of Palmyra. The inscription is ISP 21 bis (see Ingholt et al. 1951:151) and it is possibly dated by the Palmyrene inscription on the handle of the same crater, which is dated to either AD 261/2 or to AD 266/7.[50] Unfortunately there is no picture of the Safaitic text, which is only known from a not very accurate drawing. In any case, if we assume that the Safaitic text was carved at the same time or later than the Palmyrene one, this crater may provide the *terminus post quem* for Safaitic of AD 261/2.

1.2 The Jebel Qurma corpus

The Jebel Qurma corpus (JQC) is the primary data-set used in this study. It contains 5638 Safaitic texts collected within the framework of the 'Jebel Qurma Archaeological Landscape Project', directed by Prof. Peter Akkermans at Leiden University, and in close collaboration with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. This is a multi-period project which since 2012 conducts annual fieldwork consisting of survey and excavation in the Jebel Qurma region in north-eastern Jordan. In addition to thousands of inscriptions and pictorial carvings, this project has documented a large number of cairns, enclosures, and other types of stone-built structures.[51]

The present PhD thesis is part of the spin-off project 'Landscapes of Survival: Pastoralist Societies, Rock Art and Literacy in Jordan's Black Desert, c. 1000 BC to 500 AD', funded by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) between 2014 and 2018 and directed by Prof. Peter Akkermans. This project aimed to investigate the cultural landscapes of the Jebel Qurma region between the first millennium BC and and the first half of the first millennium AD by bringing new data-sets on inhabitation, rock art, and epigraphy within a single interpretive framework (Akkermans 2020a:12). Thus, in addition to the present study, the 'Landscapes of Survival' project included two other dissertations: one dealing with the archaeology (Huigens 2019), and one devoted to the pictorial carvings (Brusgaard 2019).[52]

My role within the project was to investigate the 5638 Safaitic texts of the Jebel Qurma region.[53] The research area is located ca. 30 km east of Azraq on the south-

[50]Schlumberger 1942–1943:49; I thank Michael Macdonald for bringing this text to my attention.

[51]See Akkermans, Huigens, and Brüning 2014; Akkermans and Huigens 2018; Huigens 2019; Akkermans, Brüning, et al. 2020.

[52]Another result of this project is the 2020 volume which brings together several contributions on the archaeology and epigraphy of Jordan's north-eastern desert (Akkermans 2020b).

[53]These are the texts which were documented between 2012 and 2016. I took part in the inscriptions

western edge of the Jordanian Ḥarrah, and it is surrounded by the limestone desert of the Ḥamād (Fig. 1.4). It has been conventionally labelled 'Jebel Qurma region' after the prominent basalt hill known as Jebel Qurma. Fig. 1.5 shows the survey area of the JQC, enclosed by the grey line. It is bordered to the west by Wādī Rāğil and to the north by the mudflat Qaʿ Al-Ṭayyarāt.[54]

This area has been systematically and intensively surveyed,[55] which makes the JQC a highly representative sample of the epigraphy of the region, allowing for different types of quantitative analyses.[56]

The vast majority of texts and images are concentrated in a limited number of large sites; most of the inscriptions were found in clusters on sites with good visibility.[57] The site on the top of Jebel Qurma (QUR 2) is the largest site of the region and it presents 568 inscriptions, i.e. approximately 1/10 of the total corpus.[58]

1.2.1 Scripts

Fig. 1.6 shows the distribution of the Safaitic scripts in the JQC.[59] The vast majority of the inscriptions of the Jebel Qurma region is in the 'common' script: 4915 specimens belong to this script. The second most attested script is SoS, with 58 texts. In stark contrast with more northern collections, we only have 23 clear examples of inscriptions carved in the 'fine' script,[60] and one instance of a text which is transitional between the 'common' and the 'fine' script.[61] Additionally, one text (QUR 2.712.1/Other?) presents

and rock art surveys in 2015 and 2016. Further fieldwork has been carried out in 2017, 2018, and 2019, focusing more intensively on excavations. The inscriptions recorded within these last three seasons have not been included in the data-set of the present study.

[54]See Huigens 2019:18–45 for a more detailed description of the geographic and topographic characteristics of the region.

[55]For a detailed discussion of the survey and documentation methods, see Huigens 2019:47–53 and Brusgaard 2019:25–27.

[56]See §1.2.1 and §1.2.2 below for a description of the distribution of the scripts and contents in the JQC.

[57]For a study of the distribution of Safatic carvings in the landscape, see Brusgaard 2019:§6.3, 6.4.

[58]A portion of the texts from Jebel Qurma have already been edited and published, some texts more than once. I will list the various editions here in chronological order: 36 texts in Winnett and Harding 1978:536–539 (these are WH 3901–3936, with the exception of WH 3914, which is probably from another site, possibly from the environs of Qaṣr Burqūʿ, see the OCIANA commentary); 5 texts published in Abbadi 1986; 19 texts published in Abbadi 1987 (AbGQ); 4 texts in Hübner and Knauf 1986 (KnSS), 3 of which were re-edited in Knauf 1991 (KnGQ) along with 2 new ones; 117 texts collected by Abbadi and edited by Ḥasan 2001, all published in OCIANA (HYGQ).

[59]On the scripts terminology used in this study, see §1.3.3.4 below.

[60]Of these, 9 texts are unfortunately heavily weathered and difficult to read, but I could reconstruct most graphs in 3 of them (QUR 2.253.1/F, 2.239.1/F, 148.76.3/F) thanks to better preserved texts by the same authors found in other regions.

[61]The text is QUR 529.20.1/C/F, and it is associated to a camel figure whose style seems 'hybrid': the form is typical of camels associated to 'fine' texts, while the technique is typical of the rock art of the Jebel Qurma region associated to 'common' texts (Brusgaard 2019:118). Thus, the transitional features of the text match the hybrid style of the camel figure.

There are further possible transitional texts, such as QUR 321.2.1/C/F? and QUR 733.7.2/C/F? – possibly by the same author of QUR 529.20.1/C/F – and QUR 239.16.1/C/F? and QUR 678.2.2/C/F?, but they are either too weathered or lack sufficient distinguishing features and are therefore unclassified. On

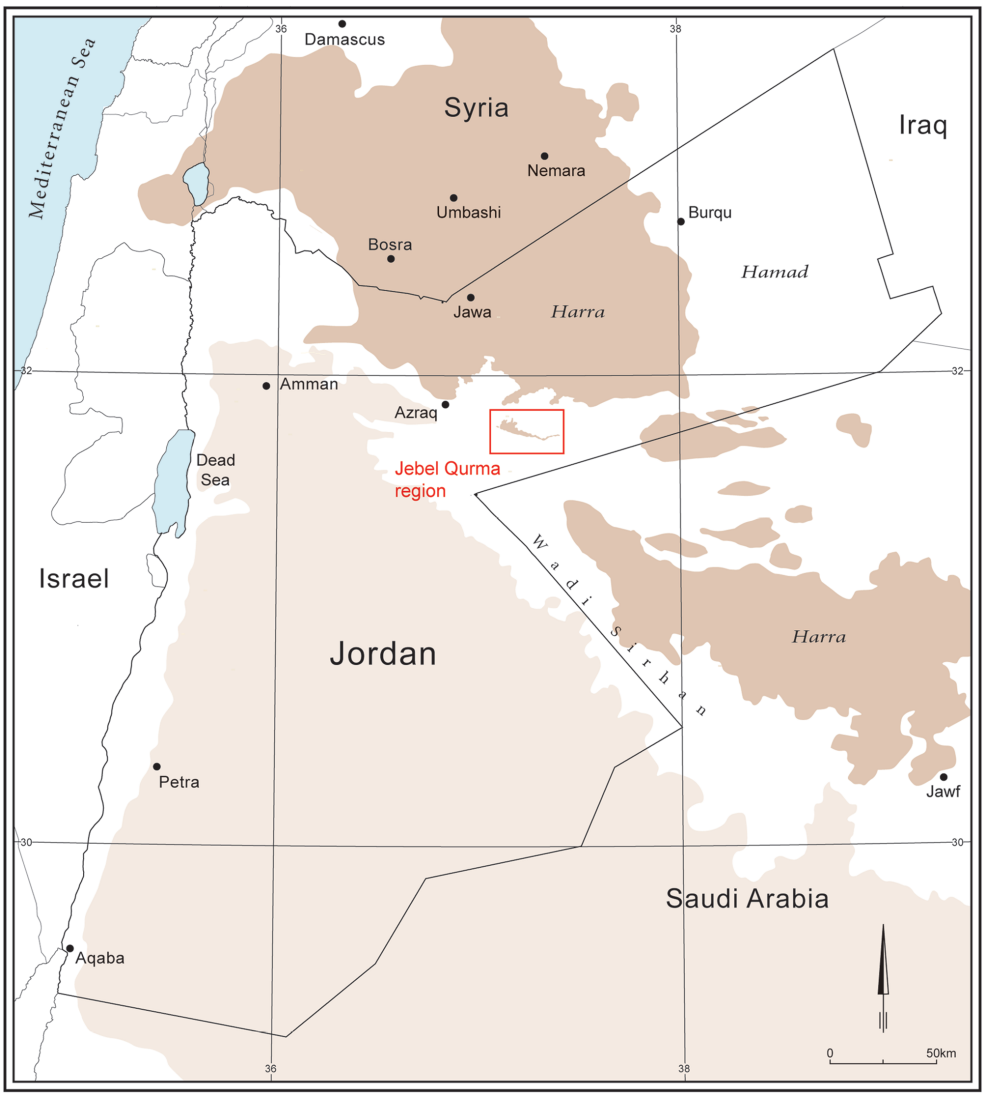


Figure 1.4: Location of the research area (map: Jebel Qurma Project Archive)

Figure 1.5: Survey area of the JQC (adapted from Brusgaard 2019:16)

features which do not fit into any of the script categories identified here and possibly represents a further Safaitic script,[62] while 3 texts present both 'common' and Thamudic B features.[63]

A large number of texts, 636 specimens, are either too weathered, damaged, or lack sufficient distinguishing features to be assigned with certainty to a script category, and thus they are unclassified. If they are likely to belong to a certain script category, they are simply labelled as either 'Common?', 'Fine?', 'C/F?', or 'SoS?'. If we have no clear hints at all, they are labelled as 'Unclassified'.

In addition to the 5638 Safaitic texts, the JQC contains 6 texts in the Hismaic script,[64] 4 texts in the Thamudic D script,[65] one text in the Thamudic B script,[66] and 36 texts in an ANA script which does not seem to be Safaitic, but their features are unclear and insufficient to assign them to a script category with any certainty. Moreover, 29 out of the 5638 texts of the Safaitic corpus lack sufficient distinguishing features to be assigned to either Safaitic or to other Ancient North Arabian scripts.[67] These texts have

transitional texts, see §4.1.

[62]See §2.3 for a description of its features and some parallels from other corpora.

[63]The features of these texts are discussed in §2.4.

[64]QUR 32.6.1/H, 36.7.1/H, 370.133.1/H, 657.2.1/H, 859.2.1/H, 1020.1.1/H.

[65]QUR 147.5.1/ThD, 186.64.1/ThD, 951.12.1/ThD, 974.42.1/ThD.

[66]QUR 956.91.1/ThB.

[67]11 texts could be either 'common' Safaitic or Thamudic B, 13 texts could be either SoS Safaitic or Hismaic, 3 texts could be either 'common' Safaitic or Hismaic, and 2 texts could be either 'common' or

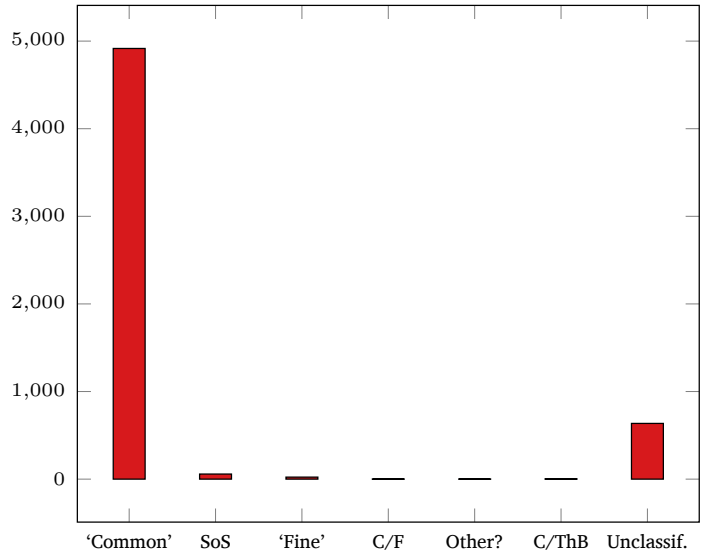


Figure 1.6: The Safaitic scripts in the 5638 Safaitic texts of the JQC

all been included in the Safaitic corpus within the 'Unclassified' group.

1.2.2 Contents

The majority of the Safaitic texts of the JQC (ca. 64%) are only names – often followed by short genealogies (see below) – while 18% of the inscriptions go on to express different types of subjects (see Fig.1.8[68]). The content of the remaining 18% of the corpus remains unclassified. These are inscriptions which are either heavily damaged or ambiguous, and one cannot identify their content with any certainty.[69]

In the following, I shall describe and show examples of various types of content found in the JQC.

1.2.2.1 Genealogies and social groups

The genealogies of the texts of the JQC are generally short. Fig. 1.7 displays the number of generations in the genealogies of 4419 texts.[70] Most inscriptions (2702

another unclassified ANA script.

[68]The chart includes each single attestation of a given subject, regardless of whether it is the only subject in a given text, or whether it is found next to other subjects within the same text; see §1.2.2.2 – 1.2.2.12 below for examples of each subject. The category 'Other' includes either subjects which are attested less than three times, or subjects which are unclear because the text is of difficult interpretation.

[69]Among the unclassified category, I have also included several inscriptions consisting of only one to maximum three graphs, as for example QUR 64.140.3/U *lḥ*, QUR 2.227.1/U *ʾb*, and QUR 64.258.2/U *h*. It is not clear whether they should always be considered as texts in the first place. In many cases, since they start with an *l*, they may represent incomplete inscriptions.

[70]This much lowered number of texts is mainly due to the fact that in many inscriptions the part with the genealogy is damaged or weathered and it is therefore impossible to be sure about the exact number

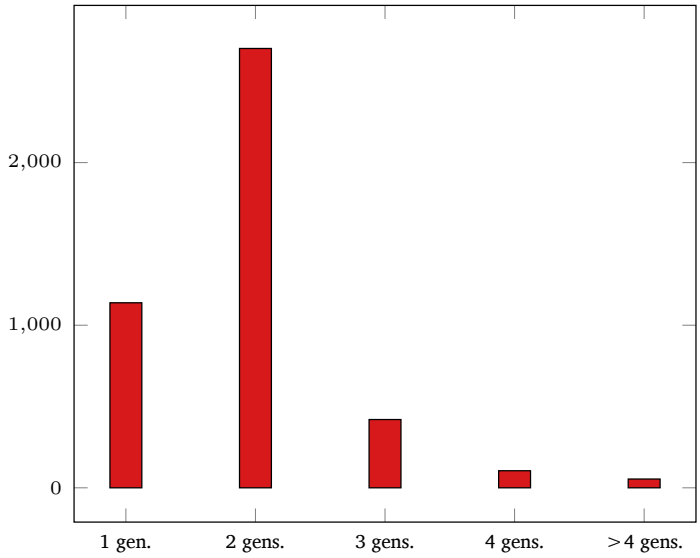


Figure 1.7: Number of generations in 4419 Safaitic texts of the JQC (1 gen. = only author's name)

items) present only the author's name followed by the patronym (i.e. 2 generations), while a great number of texts (1138 items) indicate only the author's name (i.e. 1 generation). In 420 texts, the genealogy reaches the papponym, while in 105 texts it goes back to the author's great grandfather. Only 54 texts in total have genealogies which are 5 generations long or longer.[71]

It has been mentioned above (§1.1.3) that texts in the 'fine' script have on average longer genealogies than 'common' ones. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the genealogies of 'common' texts are always short, nor that 'fine' genealogies are always long. In the JQC, the small number of texts with extended genealogies going back 8 to 12 generations are all in the 'common' script,[72] while 10 out of the 23 'fine' texts have genealogies which are only one to two generations long. Concerning the texts in the SoS script, they appear to be similar to 'common' texts in this respect: they mostly present short genealogies with occasional examples of extended genealogies.[73]

Only a small portion of the JQC (46 texts in total) express affiliation to a social group, mainly through the expression *ḏ ʾl* + [social group], or, in 4 cases, through the

of generations.

[71]Of these, 29 texts show 5 generations, 7 texts show 6 generations, 8 texts show 7 generations, three texts show 8 generations, two texts show 9 generations, three texts show 10 generations, one text shows 11 generations, and one text shows 12 generations.

[72]QUR 20.31.1/C, which features 12 generations, is the text with the longest genealogy; it reads: *l ngs² bn kr{f}s¹ bn ḥrb bn ʿqrb bn yṣḥḥ bn ʾfrt bn {l}h{g}n bn yṯʿ bn gr bn nmrn bn r{f}ʾt bn zmhr w h rḏ{w} [ʿ][w]{r} [m] ʿwr* 'By Ngs² son of {Krfs¹} son of Ḥrb son of ʿqrb son of Yṣḥḥ son of ʾfrt son of {Lhgn} son of Yṯʿ son of Gr son of Nmrn son of {Rfʾt} son of Zmhr and O {Rḏw}, {blind} {whosoever} would efface!'.

[73]QUR 739.89.1/SoS presents the longest SoS genealogy, which is 7 generations long. The text reads: *l ʾmr bn mʿn bn ʾmr bn ḥy bn ṣbḥ bn mḥs¹wt bn ḏʾb w wgm ʿl-mʿn* 'By ʾmr son of Mʿn son of ʾmr son of Ḥy son of Ṣbḥ son of Mḥs¹wt son of Ḏʾb and he grieved for Mʿn'.

nisbah adjective. Table C.1 (in Appendix C) provides a complete list of the social groups found in the JQC, arranged by script.[74] A trait which seems to be shared by SoS and 'fine' texts against 'common' ones is that they indicate proportionally much more often affiliation to social groups—6 out of 23 'fine' texts and 23 out of 58 SoS texts *vs* 9 out of 4916 'common' texts.

1.2.2.2 Texts accompanying images

Around 30% of the texts are associated to rock art.[75] Inscriptions accompanying images fall into four categories: 1) name-only texts; 2) texts following the structure *l* PN ± [genealogy] + [reference to drawing]; 3) texts with other types of statements (a description of the author's activity, a prayer, etc.); 4) a combination of 2) and 3). Categories 1) and 2) are by far the most common. Below are examples of the last three categories:

> QUR 256.48.1/C (Fig. 1.9(a))
> *l s²b bn yṣḥḥ h-ṯr*[76]
> 'By S²b son of Yṣḥḥ is the male oryx'

> QUR 839.42.1/C (Fig. 1.9(b))
> *l bgt bn gʾwn bn zdh bn ʾs¹ w tẓr h-rʾl*[77]
> 'By Bgt son of Gʾwn son of Zdh son of ʾs¹ and he lay in wait for the young ostriches'

> QUR 786.7.1/C
> *l gry bn mġyr h-bkrt w tẓr nbṭ w s¹ʿd rḍw*
> 'By Gry son of Mġyr is the young she-camel and he lay in wait for the Nabateans and may Rḍw help!'[78]

In some cases, the caption is placed between the author's name and the patronym:[79]

[74]The table excludes 5 out of the 46 texts, where the group name is damaged and illegible. These are: QUR 20.39.1/SoS, 203.7.1/SoS, 32.77.1/C, 521.3.1/C?, and 9.54.1/C?.

[75]For a study of the rock art, see Brusgaard 2019.

[76]This text is chiselled and runs vertically downwards to the left of the image. In addition, there are two further incised texts which run horizontally above and below the image respectively. The upper text (QUR 256.48.3/C) reads *l tʾb bn ʿn* 'By Tʾb son of ʿn', while in the bottom text the value of some graphs appears to have been modified (on this practice, see §7.2). This is my tentative reconstruction: QUR 256.48.2/C *l ʾ{{b}}{{f}} bn ʾh{{b}}* 'By {ʾbf} son of {ʾhb}'.

[77]After the *l* of *rʾl* there are some smaller and lightly scratched graphs: *{w?} {b-}{s¹?}{l?}{ʿ?}t-h*. Unfortunately they are too weathered to be be made sense of with any certainty, and it is unclear whether they should be considered as part of the original text in the first place.

[78]The inscription is associated to several figures: a she-camel, four ostriches, two dogs, two archers, and an anthropomorphic figure with seven dots underneath.

[79]This phenomenon has been attested also in other collections (see Winnett and Harding 1978:15) and in Thamudic B (Norris 2017).

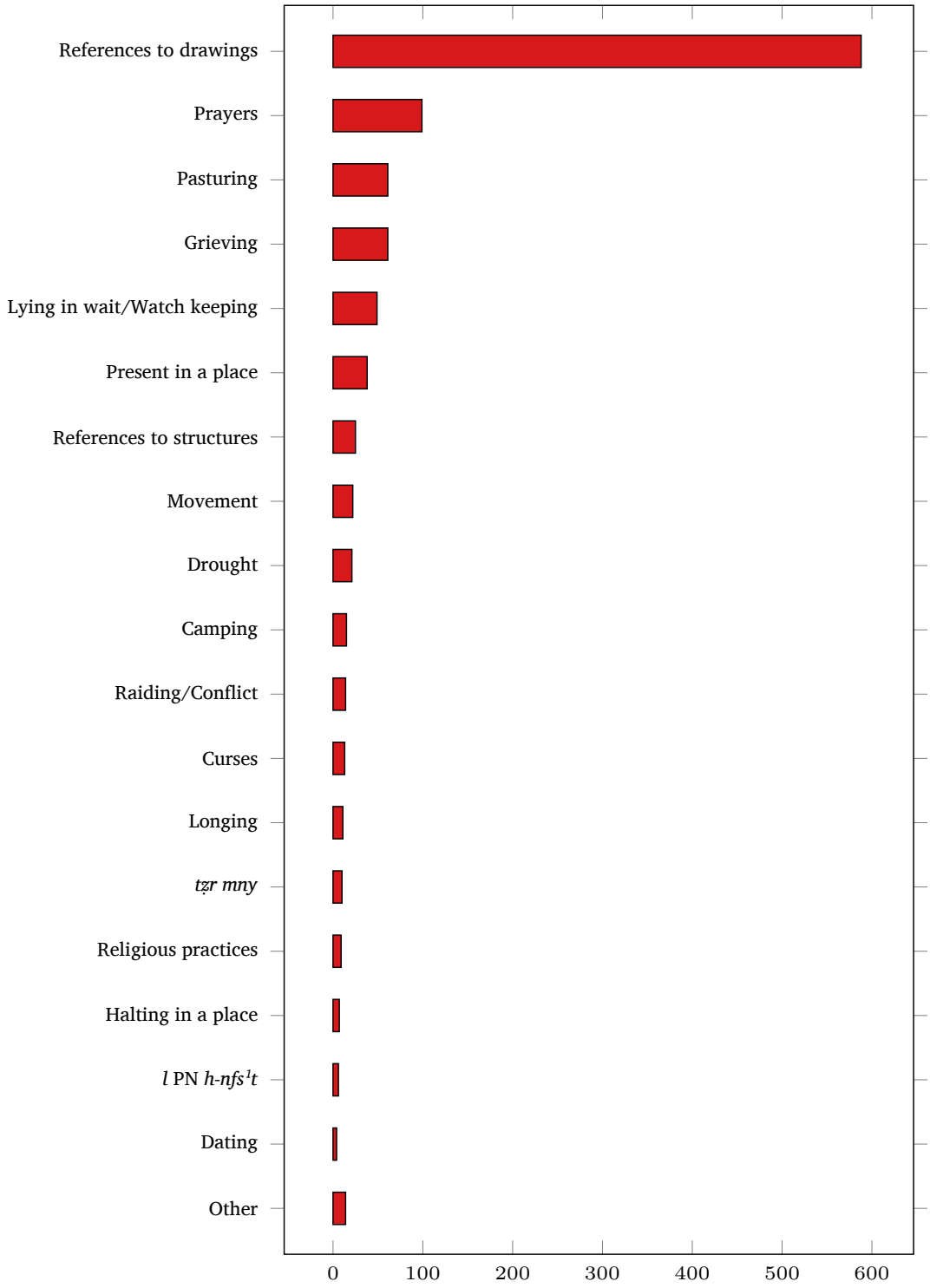


Figure 1.8: Distribution of subjects in the JQC

QUR 186.161.1/C
l hnʾt h-ts¹ bn {ʾ}{.}bṯ
'By Hnʾt is the he-goat, son of...'

1.2.2.3 Pastoral and nomadic activities

Several texts are statements describing various pastoral and nomadic activities: pasturing, camping, being present or halting at a place, migrating, and returning to a place of water:

QUR 628.50.1/C (Fig. 1.9(c))
l s¹ny bn s¹lm {b}{n} my w rʿy
'By S¹ny son of S¹lm {son of} My and he pastured'

QUR 207.13.1/C
{{l}} {{l}}ʾb bn ṯʿl h-gml w rʿy h-dr rmn
'{By} {Lʾb} son of Ṯʿl is the camel and he pastured at this place on *rmn*[80]'

QUR 994.7.1/C (see Fig. 5.3(b), Chapter 5)
l ḍr bn yʾs¹ʾl w rʿy h-b{k}r{t}
'By Ḍr son of Yʾs¹ʾl and he pastured the {young she-camel(s)}'

QUR 333.7.1/C
l ḫr bn ʾlh w ḥll h-rglt
'By Ḫr son of ʾlh and he camped at the water course'

QUR 28.19.2/C
l flṭl bn dḥrt w ṣyr m-mdbr
'By Flṭl son of Dḥrt and he returned to a place of permanent water from the inner desert[81]'

QUR 176.115.1/C
l brqt bn ʿrd w s²ty h-dr
'By Brqt son of ʿrd and he spent the winter at this place'

[80] This could be a term for a type of herbage, perhaps from the root *RMM*, cf. Classical Arabic *rimmun* 'The herbage and other things that are upon the land [...] what is borne [on its surface] by the water' (Lane 1863–1893:1151a).

[81] The term *mdbr*, usually translated as 'inner desert', has been interpreted by Macdonald as referring to the Ḥamād limestone desert east of the Ḥarrah (see Fig. 1.1 above; Macdonald 1992c:4–7, 9–10; Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019:94).

(a) Image of an oryx accompanied by three Safaitic texts (QUR 256.48.1–3/C)

(b) Drawing of ostriches associated to a text stating '...and he lay in wait for the young ostriches' (QUR 839.42.1/C)

(c) Inscription stating that the author was pasturing (*rʿy*) (QUR 628.50.1/C)

(d) Inscription with expression of grief (QUR 956.67.1/C)

(e) Initial prayer directed to *rḍw* (QUR 428.18.1/C)

(f) Panel with text referencing a cairn (*rgm*) (upper text; QUR 215.28.1/C?)

Figure 1.9: Examples of JQC texts expressing different subjects

1.2.2.4 Lying in wait, watch keeping, and raiding

Another type of activities which often occur in the texts are lying in wait, keeping watch, or raiding:

> QUR 766.39.1/C
> *l lbʾn bn bʾdd bn ḫly w ḫrṣ*
> 'By Lbʾn son of Bʾdd son of Ḫly and he kept watch'

> QUR 176.15.1/C
> *l ʾ{s¹} {b}n kʿbr bn ʾs²ṣr bn ʾs¹ bn yṯʿ bn tmn w t{ẓ}r s²nʾ*
> 'By {ʾs¹} {son of} Kʿbr son of ʾs²ṣr son of ʾs¹ son of Yṯʿ son of Tmn and he {lay in wait} for enemies'

> QUR 551.32.1/C
> *l s¹mk bn ʾbdn bn mr{s¹}b {w} ḍbʾ*
> 'By S¹mk son of ʾbdn son of {Mrs¹b} {and he} was on a raid'

Many of these texts include references to *nbṭ* 'the Nabataeans':

> QUR 2.305.1/C
> *l ḫr bn ws²kt w tẓr nbṭ*
> 'By Ḫr son of Ws²kt and he lay in wait for the Nabateans'

> QUR 628.4.1/C
> *l ʾs¹lm bn ḍbʿ w ḍbʾ nbṭ f h rḍy ġnmt w s¹lm*
> 'By ʾs¹lm son of Ḍbʿ and he was on a raid against the Nabateans, so, O Rḍy, let there be spoil and security'

> QUR 2.646.1/C = WH 3925, HYGQ 95 (Fig. 1.10(a))
> *l ʾhm w ḍbʾ l-nbṭ*
> 'By ʾhm By ʾhm and he was on a raid to/for the Nabataeans'

The meaning of the expression *ḍbʾ l-nbṭ* in the last example is somewhat ambiguous. The preposition *l-* may be taken to mean that the author was raiding *to* the Nabataeans, i.e. the Nabataeans were the target of the raid,[82] as in QUR 628.4.1/C above, or, alternatively, one could take it to mean that the author was on a raid *for* the Nabataeans.[83] As shown in Fig. 1.10(a), the inscription is associated to an image of three men riding camels which are depicted as if in movement (Brusgaard 2019:99). The other associated text (QUR 2.646.2/C) reads: *l mgr h-bkrt* 'By Mgr are the young she-camels'.

[82]This is the interpretation of the *editio princeps* (WH 3925).

[83]This is the interpretation of this text proposed by Al-Jallad 2015: 292. Macdonald, on the other hand, suggested that *ḍbʾ l-* should be interpreted as 'he sought refuge with' in light of Classical Arabic *ḍabaʾa ilā* (Lane 1863–1893:1763a; Macdonald 1993:314, n. 72).

In light of other JQC texts which seem to refer to the Nabataeans as targets of raids through the same expression but without the preposition *l-*,[84] it is possible that *l-* here was meant to convey a sense of movement, as depicted in the associated drawing, and that the writer was on a raid to the Nabataeans.

(a) QUR 2.646.1/C = WH 3925 (upper text)

(b) QUR 7.92.1/C

Figure 1.10: Texts referencing the Nabataeans (a) and the Ḥawīlat (b)

Other peoples mentioned in similar contexts are *ḥwlt*[85] and, in one text, *ṯmd*:[86]

QUR 7.92.1/C (Fig. 1.10(b))
l mqṭt w nẓr ḥwlt
'By Mqṭt and he kept watch for the Ḥwlt'

QUR 32.36.1/C
l bgl bn gḥf w tẓr ḥwlt
'By Bgl son of Gḥf and he lay in wait for the Ḥwlt'

QUR 7.91.1/C
l {ʿ}ḏr bn ʿly bn ns²{d}ʾl bn ḥrb w h rḍy ġnmt m-ḥwlt
'By {ʿḏr} son of ʿly son of {Ns²dʾl} bn Ḥrb and, O Rḍy, [let there be] spoil from the Ḥwlt!'

QUR 2.199.3/C
----*w nẓr {ṯ}md*
'…and he kept watch for the {Ṯmd}'

[84]See, e.g., QUR 628.4.1/C above and QUR 7.82.1/C *l r{ṯ} w {ḍ}bʾ nbṭ* 'By {Rṯ} and he was on a raid against the Nabateans'; there are also several inscriptions with the formula *w tẓr nbṭ* 'and he lay in wait for the Nabataeans', as in QUR 2.305.1/C above as well as 64.81.1/C, 215.41.1/C, 28.19.1/C, 786.7.1/C.

[85]On some possible identifications of this group in different historical sources, see Al-Manaser and Norris 2018:2–3 and the references in there. There are two Safaitic texts in which the authors possibly self-identified as members of this group: LP 87/F = C 3787, 3788, from southern Syria, and QUR 2.161.1/C?, found on the top of Jebel Qurma.

[86]This may refer to the ancient people of Thamūd, which are known from 8th c. Assyrian annals, classical writers, the Quran, and other historical sources (see Macdonald 2005a:104–105 and the references in there). Only two other Safaitic inscriptions which mention *ṯmd* are known so far, WH 3792a and WH 3792c.

1.2.2.5 Religious practices

A small group of texts seem to commemorate the performance of religious practices: burnt offerings, sacrifices,[87] and the erection of cult-stones (*nṣb*). See the examples below:

> QUR 683.7.1/C
> *l ws^{1ʿ} bn mlkt h-ṣʿdt*
> 'By Ws^{1ʿ} son of Mlkt is this burnt offering'

> QUR 20.39.1/SoS
> *l ls^{1}d bn {ʾ}bḥ{t} bn ʿtk bn ʾʿ{l}{y/ṣ} ḏ {ʾ}{l} {ḫ}{l}{s^{2}/f} {w} {n}{ṣ}b w ḏbḥ w {ḏ}kr wʿl w ʾr{m}s^{1} w ---- {ḏ} ----*
> 'By Ls^{1}d son of {ʾbḥt} son of ʿtk son of…of the {people} of...and he erected a cult stone and he made a sacrifice and may wʿl and ʾrms^{1} and…be remembered…'

1.2.2.6 References to structures

A group of inscriptions contain references to structures. The form of these texts is usually: *l* PN ± [genealogy] + [structure name].

Two texts refer to a *rgm* 'cairn'.[88] One text (QUR 143.2.1/C), is not associated to any cairn, and it reads: *l mḥl{m} bn ṯḥr w wgm ʿl-n{k}r ----ʿ w h-rgm* 'By {Mḥlm} son of Ṯḥr and he grieved for {Nkr}…and this cairn was made by him/he was at this cairn[89]'.

The other text, shown in Fig. 1.9(f), is located in the proximity of two cairns.[90] It states: QUR 215.28.1/C? *l ms^{1}k bn ʿmr h-rgm* 'By/for Ms^{1}k son of ʿmr is the cairn'. The text is associated to another inscription which runs below it (QUR 215.28.2/C? *l q{y}mt* 'By {Qymt}'). In the expression *l* PN *h-rgm*, the *lām auctoris* is often translated as 'for' instead of 'by';[91] this interpretation is only possible if we assume that the cairn was always a grave and that the person following the *lām auctoris* was the deceased. However, in cases such as QUR 143.2.1/C above, the person following the *lām auctoris* was clearly not deceased, since the statement says that he was grieving. Therefore, I have decided to keep both 'by' and 'for' as viable alternatives in the translation of QUR 215.28.1/C?. A further possibility is that *h-rgm* should be interpreted as 'at this cairn', and that the author was simply referencing an already existing cairn, which is one of

[87] On sacrifices in the Safaitic texts, see Ababneh and Harahsheh 2015; Macdonald n.d.(b).

[88] Al-Jallad and Jaworska opted for the translation 'funerary cairn' in light of the occurrence of this word in funerary contexts (see Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019:115).

[89] I have here presented two possible ways of translating the expression *h-rgm* in this context. The first possibility takes *h-rgm* as syntactically bound to the *lām auctoris*, implying authorship, while the second possibility interprets *h-rgm* as in the accusative (see Al-Jallad 2015:70).

[90] One was unfortunately looted, while the other one has been excavated and contained burial remains; see the discussion of the results in Huigens 2019:145–155.

[91] Cf. Macdonald 1993:383, n. 481; Al-Jallad 2015:77; Macdonald (2006:294–295) argued that the *lām auctoris* may have been an untranslatable introductory particle and translated this expression as '(this is) PN whose cairn this is [i.e. it is built over his/her body]'.

the possible interpretations of QUR 143.2.1/C above as well.[92] In any case, one should keep in mind that the expression *l* PN *h-rgm* may have not always necessarily referred to a grave: as remarked by Macdonald, cairns were likely used and re-used for several different purposes (see Macdonald 1992b:303–305). A context of re-use and modification of structures across different periods has also emerged from the excavations carried out at the site.[93]

Several inscriptions refer to an 'enclosure', usually through the term *ẓrt*, or, in one case, the variant form *ẓyrt*. Most of these texts have actually been found in the vicinity of enclosures. In the site QUR 20 we found an interesting interaction: two writers, Hms[1]k and Ḫld, both claim that they either made or perhaps 'owned' the enclosure and accuse each other of being a liar.[94] It is impossible to determine whether the object of their altercation was the possession of the enclosure or whether they were disagreeing on who had actually built the enclosure. The inscriptions follow the concise '*l* PN + [enclosure]' text form:

QUR 20.45.1/C
l hms[1]k h-ẓrt
'By Hms[1]k is the enclosure'

QUR 20.50.1/C
l ḫl{d} bn w{n}nt h-ẓrt
'By {Ḫld} son of {Wnnt} is the enclosure'

QUR 20.50.2/C
l hms[1]k h-ẓrt w kḏbn ḫld
'By Hms[1]k is the enclosure and Ḫld is a liar'

QUR 20.50.3/C
l ḫld w kḏb hms[1]k
'By Ḫld and Hms[1]k lied'

1.2.2.7 *l* PN *h-nfs[1]t*

Six inscriptions follow the structure *l* PN ± [patronym] + *h-nfs[1]t*. This expression is generally interpreted as referring to a funerary monument of some sort:[95]

[92] I would also like to point out that there is a twin inscription of QUR 215.28.1/C? in another corpus: AAEK 142/C *l ms[1]k bn ʿmr h-rgm*, which furthermore is associated to a twin inscription of QUR 215.28.2/C? (AAEK 143/C), as well as to three other texts by different authors (AAEK 144/C, 145/C, and 146/C). Of course, this could be just a coincidence, and these texts may be by two completely different authors who incidentally had the same names and carved the same texts.

[93] See Huigens 2019:145–155.

[94] On the excavations of the associated enclosure, see Huigens 2019:129–130.

[95] See Macdonald 2006:288–290; Al-Jallad 2015:330; Hayajneh 2017; Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019:103. Al-Jallad interprets the final *t* in *h-nfs[1]t* as a feminine singular demonstrative (Al-Jallad 2015:82–83).

QUR 333.14.1/C
l bkr bn s²hr h-nfs¹t
'By/for Bkr son of S²hr is this funerary monument'

QUR 523.16.1/C
l ʿ{ḏ}{r} {h-}{n}{f}s¹t 'By/for {ʿḏr} is this funerary monument'

1.2.2.8 Droughts

Pasture for the domestic animals depended on the rainfall, which for the nomads who carved the inscriptions was regulated by at times very punitive gods.[96] Several texts witness the occurrence of droughts:

QUR 628.41.2/C (Fig. 5.3(e))
l hnẓr bn rqs² bn wḏr w ʿgzt h-s¹my
'By Hnẓr son of Rqs² son of Wḏr and the sky withheld (the rain)'

QUR 2.665.1/C = KnGQ 1
l ʿqrb bn ʿd{s¹} bn mlkt w tẓr h-s¹my ʿgzt
'By ʿqrb son of {ʿds¹} son of Mlkt and he awaited the rains during a drought'[97]

QUR 523.8.1/C
l wʾl w ṣḥwt[98] *s¹my*
'By Wʾl and [the] sky was cloudless'

1.2.2.9 Expressions of emotions

Several inscriptions are expressions of longing and grieving, while a few texts state that the author was suffering because of a drought, see the following examples:

QUR 370.232.1/SoS
l ʾs¹rk w ts²w{q} ʾ{l-}bn-h
'By ʾs¹rk and he {longed} {for} his son'

370.124.1/C?
l ʿmrt bn {w}ʾl bn ʿmrt w wgm ʿl-ʾb-h
'By ʿmrt son of {Wʾl} son of ʿmrt and he grieved for his father'

[96] See §1.2.2.10 below for examples of prayers requesting rain.

[97] Note that the same author left many other texts in the region (see the description of his writing style in §6.1.8). My reading and interpretation of this text differ from Knauf's, who read the last two graphs as *w ʿzt* instead of *ʿgzt* and translated the statement as 'when he watched the sky and the evening star' (Knauf 1991:92).

[98] Cf. Classical Arabic *ṣaḥā* 'It was, or became, cloudless […] ṣaḥwun signifies the departing of the clouds […] *ʾaṣḥati s-samāʾu* 'The sky became cloudless' (Lane 1863–1893:1656).

QUR 956.67.1/C (Fig. 1.9(d))
l bnʾmt bn ʿm w ḥwb ʿl-ʾḫ-h
'By Bnʾmt son of ʿm and he lamented over his brother'

QUR 439.37.1/C
l mlk bn gml w wlh ʿl-ḥbb-h
'By Mlk son of Gml and he was distraught over his beloved'

QUR 813.14.1/SoS (Fig.6.17(a))
l bs¹ʾ bn {s¹}{ʿ}dlh [b][n] [r][ḍ][ʾ]----{w} {w}{g}m ʿl-hmnt w ʿl-mlk w ʿl-ʿbṯn f h lt w ds²r ṯʾr m{n-}{ḥ}{w}[l][t]
'By Bs¹ʾ son of S¹ʿdlh [son of Rḍʾ]…and he grieved for Hmnt and for Mlk and for ʿbṯn, so, O Lt and Ds²r, may there be revenge from [the Ḥwlt]'

QUR 551.93.1/SoS
l ġyrʾl {b}{n} {ḥ}{n}{n} bn nẓrʾl w tẓr s¹my f ʾlt mṭr ʿgl ḏ ʾl nẓrʾl w gls¹ l-s²gʾs² rgʿ yʾs¹ m-my
'By Ġyrʾl {son of} {Ḥnn} son of Nẓrʾl and he awaited rains so, ʾlt, grant rain quicky, of the people of Nẓrʾl, and he halted [on his way] to S²gʾs², while he was returning, suffering because of [the lack of] water'

1.2.2.10 Invocations

Table C.2 (Appendix C) shows the invoked deities of the JQC together with a list of the associated requests.[99] The two most frequently attested deities – both in the JQC and elsewhere[100] – are *lt/ʾlt* and *rḍw/rḍy*.[101] As shown in the Table, the overwhelming majority of the invocations are directed to one single deity, the only exception being four invocations to the pair *lt* and *ds²r*.

The typical structure of invocations is *h* 'O' + DN + [request].[102] See the following examples:

QUR 122.7.1/C
l {ʿ}ml bn ʿḏ f h rḍy ġnmt
'By {ʿml} son of ʿḏ so, O Rḍy, grant spoil'

QUR 256.9.1/C
l ʾs¹ bn ʿmr bn ʾs¹ bn ṭrd w h lt s¹lm
'By ʾs¹ son of ʿmr son of ʾs¹ son of Ṭrd and, O Lt, [grant] security!'

[99]For the sake of convenience, longer requests are simplified in the table. For instance, the curse QUR 2.363.14/C *h ʾlt ʿwr {ḏ} {ʿ}{w}r h-s¹fr* 'O ʾlt, blind {whosoever would efface} this writing' is shown as the *ʿwr* 'blind [curse]'-type of request. Prayers with unclear or damaged parts have not been included.

[100]Cf. Winnett and Harding 1978:30; Macdonald 1992a:421; Bennett 2014:44–45.

[101]The actual significance of the variant forms *ʾlt* and *rḍy*, which occur less frequently, is unclear (see Macdonald 1992a:421–422).

[102]Only in some cases, the elements of the invocation are in a different order, see, e.g.: QUR 202.17.1/C *l wʿr bn gs²m w flṭ h rḍw* 'By Wʿr son Gs²m and deliver, O Rḍw'.

QUR 64.135.1/C
l ʿyd bn {{z}}d bn ʿbs² h rḍy s¹ʿd-h
'By ʿyd son of Zd son of ʿbs², O Rḍy, help him!'

QUR 64.4.1/C
{l} ʿyd f h lt {ġ}nmt m-{s²}{n}ʾ----w tẓr
'{By} ʿyd so, O Lt, let there be spoil from {enemies}…and he lay in wait'

QUR 626.25.1/C
l y{{s²}}{{k}}r b{{n}} ʾnhk w rʿy bq{l} dn f h rḍy mṭ{{r}} {{h-}}fl
'By {Ys²kr} {son of} ʾnhk and he pastured on dry {herbage}[103] so, O Rḍy, [grant] {rain} on {this} dried out land[104]'

In initial prayers, the name of the author follows the invocation:

QUR 428.18.1/C (Fig. 1.9(e))
h rḍw s¹ʿd w flṭ ʿm{n}
'O Rḍw, help and deliver {ʿmn}!'

QUR 766.26.1/C
h ʾlt flṭ rd{{s¹}} {{b}}{{n}} q{{ṣ}}yt
'O ʾlt, deliver {Rds¹} {son of} {Qṣyt}'

There are also few cases of abbreviated invocations where the deity is not explicitly addressed:

QUR 171.27.2/C
l ʾbyn bn ʾm{r} bn mʿlṭ w ġnm[t]
'By ʾbyn son of {ʾmr} son of Mʿlṭ and {let there be spoil}!

QUR 766.28.1/C
l ṣrmt bn wṯf w ḥwb f s¹ʿd-h
'By Ṣrmt son of Wṯf and he cried out, so help him!'

Several invocations are curses against whosoever would efface the text:[105]

[103] I have translated *rʿy bq{l} dn* as 'he pastured on dry {herbage}', and interpreted the word *dn* on account of Classical Arabic *dindinun* 'Herbage and trees, or dry herbage, become black, or wasted and black, by reason of oldness' (Lane 1863–1893:918b), which is a reduplicated form derived from the root *DNN*. This interpretation would fit with the prayer for rain which follows. For the word *bql* – cf. Classical Arabic *baqlun* 'herbage produced by the spring rain' (Lane 1863–1893:236b) – Al-Jallad has proposed the translation 'fresh herbage' (see Al-Jallad 2015:308). However, in this context, since it is followed by *dn*, which seems to be a substantive or an adjective referring to dry pasture, a generic translation 'herbage' seems more appropriate.

[104] The expression 'dried out land' translates the word *fl*, cf. Lane (1863–1893:2434b) *fillun* 'Land in which is no herbage; or land not rained upon, and in which is no herbage'.

[105] For a description of the practice of effacing texts, see Chapter 7.

QUR 2.196.2/C (Fig. 5.6(c))
l ʾ{r}{{ḥ}}m bn rhz h ʾlt ʿwr m ʿwr h-{s¹}{f}r
'By {ʾrḥm} son of Rhz, O ʾlt, blind whosoever would efface this {writing}'

QUR 551.6.1/C
l ʿbdʾl bn s¹wr <b>n gmḥ bn ʿhm w h rḍy ʿwr m ʿwr
'By ʿbdʾl son of S¹wr son of Gmḥ son of ʿhm and, O Rḍy, blind whosoever would efface!'

1.2.2.11 *tẓr mny*

This is a typical Safaitic expression which occurs ten times in the JQC; see the following examples:

QUR 64.98.1/C
l----{b}{n}----{r/d}n w t{ẓ}r mn{y}
'By…{son of}…and he awaited Fate'[106]

QUR 186.122.1/C (Fig. 5.8(b))
l nẓrn bn rdḥ w tẓr mny
'By Nẓrn son of Rdḥ and he awaited Fate'

1.2.2.12 Dating

Only four texts attest a dating formula, although none of these can be clearly connected to a known historical event. QUR 215.59.1/C, shown in Fig. 5.9(c), is dated to the year S¹lk came (*s¹nt ʾty s¹lk*), while QUR 276.33.1/C is dated to the year ʾbdr died (*s¹nt myt ʾbdr*). The dating component of the two other texts is difficult to make sense of.[107]

1.3 Investigating the materiality of the Safaitic script

1.3.1 Research aims

The Safaitic script presents a considerable amount of variation, to the extent that it is appropriate to talk about different Safaitic *scripts*. In my study of the JQC, I identify three scripts: 'common', 'fine', and Southern Safaitic (abbr. SoS).

So far, there have been only a few attempts to describe and analyse this variation—most research on Safaitic has rather focused on philological, linguistic, sociocultural, and historical issues. But while the content of Safaitic texts is laconic, ambiguous, and often defies a clear interpretation, their materiality is concrete, readily analysable and measurable. In previous scholarship one finds the assumption that, since Safaitic literacy was passed on in a nomadic, non-institutionalised context, variation in the Safaitic

[106] Al-Jallad proposed the alternative translation 'and Fate lay in wait' (Al-Jallad 2015:219).
[107] QUR 139.3.1/C is dated to *s¹nt b{n/ʿ}yt h-h{w/ḍ}t*, while QUR 372.53.1/C is dated to *s¹nt h-ʿhk*.

script would be too spontaneous and idiosyncratic for a systematic investigation to be possible (§1.3.2). This research shows that it is possible to analyse this variation systematically by using a theory of writing which aptly distinguishes the abstract from the material, that is the emic from the etic level. To quote the linguist Dimitrios Meletis, it is 'undeniable that that there is an emic level in writing, as concrete, graph*etic* substantiations can be – even must be – classified into abstract emic units to make an analysis of writing possible' (Meletis 2019:29). Indeed, despite the great extent of idiosyncratic variation in the Safaitic script, this variation cannot be said to be completely spontaneous, as a formal analysis of Safaitic texts allows to identify different scripts as well as certain recurring patterns of graphic variation. Thus, an important goal of this research is to show that variation in the Safaitic script is worth being studied for its own sake.

§1.3.3 below explains in more detail the terminology and approach employed in this study, while the analysis of the Safaitic inventories in Chapter 2 seeks to classify the variant forms which occur in the Safaitic texts of the JQC and to describe different levels and patterns of graphic variation. Chapter 3 is an investigation of the uses and functions of special features – i.e. square forms, forms turned by 90°, and elongated forms – for which there is evidence that they were sometimes stylistically marked.

Another reason for the scarcity of palaeographic studies of Safaitic is the lack of a chronological framework for most of the inscriptions, which makes it particularly challenging to distinguish synchronic from diachronic variation as well as to trace the development of graphic forms through time. However, for a group of Safaitic texts we do have at least some sort of diachronic framework. Thanks to the long genealogies in several texts by members of the lineage of *ḍf* we are able to partially reconstruct their lineage-tree and to identify authors as belonging to different generations (Appendix A). This allows us to describe and measure the palaeographic development from the 'common' to the 'fine' script across generations, which featured the increasing compression and elongation of the 'common' inventory (Chapter 4). In the same Chapter, I combine the information from the *ḍf* lineage-tree and the attested generations with the dated texts by members of the same lineage. My aim is to provide a working chronological framework for Safaitic writing among the *ḍf*.

Chapter 5 deals with several aspects of the materiality of Safaitic texts which have never been treated systematically; it describes the techniques employed to carve the inscriptions as well as a variety of features concerning their visual appearance and organisation on the panel which can be loosely referred to as 'text layout'.

Chapter 6 investigates the writing styles of prolific authors and their family members. It shows that although one finds a certain extent of idiosyncratic variation even within different texts by the same author, same-author texts – as well as texts by close relatives – always seem to share a relatively consistent set of features.

Chapter 7 is an analysis of disruptive practices towards the texts, that is, their effacement and modification.

Finally, Chapter 8 discusses evidence for Safaitic 'graph classes' (Meletis 2020), some of the possible motivations for the development and graphetic features of the 'fine' script, and the sociocultural contexts of the 'fine' and of the SoS script.

1.3.2 Previous scholarship on Safaitic palaeography

In previous scholarship on Safaitic inscriptions, very little attention has been devoted to their material features. In the few cases in which scholars have discussed palaeographic issues, this is mostly in the form of limited remarks, while systematic and comprehensive investigations have been lacking. In addition, in these works palaeography is viewed as an auxiliary discipline whose main scope is identifying older and younger stages of the Safaitic script. However, in absence of a chronological framework for most Safaitic texts (see §1.1.4 above), this approach is obviously problematic. Such a limited notion of the scopes of palaeography has led, on the one hand, to subjective and misleading observations as to the presumed archaic nature of certain features, and, on the other hand, to an outright rejection of these as well as of palaeographic inquiry of Safaitic altogether.

1.3.2.1 Littmann's 'archaic features'

Enno Littmann, who completed the decipherment of the Safaitic script in 1901, thought that the Safaitic script represented the latest stage of a continuous development from South Arabian.[108] Thus, he interpreted features which in his eyes looked more similar to the monumental South Arabian graph forms as archaisms reflecting the earliest stages of the script, and claimed that inscriptions with square forms or with forms turned by 90° were older simply because of their style and presumed similarity to South Arabian.[109] This view is repeatedly found in later scholarship as well, cf. Harding,[110] Winnett,[111] Oxtoby,[112] and Clark, whose classification of the Safaitic scripts includes the 'square' and '90°' categories.[113]

However, as argued by Macdonald, and as will be further shown in this study, it

[108]See, e.g. Littmann 1940:92, 97.

[109]Littmann 1904:106, 142; Littmann 1943:46–47.

[110]'From texts so far published there would seem to be at least an early and a late form of the alphabet, in one of which the letters have a close resemblance to their South Arabian prototype, but in the absence of any dated texts we can have no exact idea of their range in time. The very striking square form (as in no. 105) has a wide distribution in space, but here at least seems to be contemporary with the more usual type' (Harding 1953:12). As noted by Macdonald, Harding later became increasingly more skeptical about the chronological significance of square forms (see Macdonald 2015: 30, n.109).

[111]Winnett 1957:3, 11–12, 19, 95; he names inscriptions with square forms as in an 'archaic type of the script'.

[112]Commenting on ISB 57/SoS: '[t]his inscription is the only one in the present collection to make use of the square characters that in Safaitic most strikingly suggest the South Arabic forms from which the Safaitic alphabet ultimately derived' (Oxtoby 1968:47). Incidentally, this inscription can be dated to the late 1st c. AD (see Abbadi 2013; §1.1.4 above).

[113]While Clark recognised the problems with this approach, he concluded that the so-called 'square script' may have been archaic: '[t]here is no palaeographic reason to date this type of script to any particular era or even to give it a chronological position relative to the other types of script. However, the square, almost monumental style of this script, coupled with its relatively infrequent use, does suggest that this may have been one of the earliest manifestations of Safaitic, a style which quickly gave way to other, more easily inscribed styles of script shortly after its first introduction' (Clark 1979:68). He also assumed the '90° script' to be archaic.

appears that square and 90° graph forms were purely stylistic variants: they often occur next to normal forms within the same text – sometimes to emphasise the name and genealogy of the author – and were used inconsistently in different texts by the same author.[114]

1.3.2.2 Grimme's script categories

In his monograph *Texte und Untersuchungen zur ṣafatenisch-arabischen Religion* (1929), Grimme identified the following script categories:[115] '*Thamudisch-Ṣafatenisch*', whose graph forms can all be subsumed under the 'common' Safaitic inventory as described in this study; '*Ṣafatenisch*', consisting mainly of forms from what is here referred to as the 'fine' inventory, but including also some 'common' variants; and '*Umm al-Jimāl*', i.e. the script of a group of texts from Umm al-Jimāl which is here labelled as 'SoS script' (see §1.3.3.4 below for more details). He suggested, without any argumentation, that the '*Thamudisch-Ṣafatenisch*' and the '*Umm al-Jimāl*' scripts were archaic (Grimme 1929:17).[116]

The fact that Grimme's '*Ṣafatenisch*' category mainly corresponds to what is here labelled as the 'fine' script, can be explained through the provenance of the texts he had studied. Indeed, most Safaitic texts known at the time came from southern Syria to the east of the Ḥawrān, where a great number of texts in the 'fine' script is found (see §1.3.3.4 below). Grimme interpreted the features of 'common' texts (his '*Thamudisch-Ṣafatenisch*' category) as more archaic simply because their features appeared as less compressed, and hence visually more similar to '*Thamudisch*' (i.e. the Thamudic B script[117]), from which he believed that the Safaitic script gradually developed.[118] But while the study in Chapter 4 will in fact confirm that the 'fine' script – i.e. Grimme's '*Ṣafatenisch*' – is the result of a palaeographic development from the 'common' script (Grimme's '*Thamudisch-Ṣafatenisch*'), this does not mean that all 'common' texts are

[114]See Macdonald 1992a:418; Macdonald 2006:292, and the examples cited in n.86 and n.87; Macdonald 2015:12, Appendix 2. In the last study, he concludes: '[t]he term 'square script' is thus a misnomer since it is not a script as such, nor even a coherent version of a script, like the *musnad* or *Esṭrangelā*. The letter forms which have been identified as belonging to this so-called 'square script' are simply attempts by numerous different individuals to give some of the letters more angular forms, for reasons we can only guess at' (Macdonald 2015:32–33). Similarly, he argued against the validity of a '90° script' category: '[o]nce again, this is not a script, or even a version of a script, but simply refers to a practice in some Safaitic inscriptions of turning one or more of the letters *b*, *ḥ*, *s*[1], *k*, *m*, at 90° to the direction of the text for decorative purposes. There is no consistency between texts as to which of these letters is turned, and often within a single inscription one example of a letter will be at 90° and another have its normal stance' (Macdonald 2015:33).

[115]See Grimme 1929:15–16 and his *Schrifttafel* (*Tafel* I) at the end of the book.

[116]He also mentioned a distinction between a so-called '*Lapidarschrift*' and a '*Kursivschrift*', although he does not distinguish these alleged variants in the script table; see Grimme 1929:15, *Tafel* I.

[117]See §1.1.2 above and Table 2.2.

[118]Unlike Littmann, who as seen above thought that the Safaitic script was the latest offshoot of the South Arabian script (Littmann 1940:92), Grimme maintained that the Safaitic script was the result of a development from Proto-Sinaitic via 'Thamudic' (Grimme 1926; Grimme 1929:16–17).

necessarily older than 'fine' ones.[119] Grimme's assumption that the Safaitic script developed from '*Thamudisch*' (Thamudic B), while certainly possible, remains entirely speculative.[120]

1.3.2.3 Clark's 'Safaitic scripts'

Clark devoted a section of his dissertation to the palaeography of Safaitic inscriptions and proposed a classification of the Safaitic scripts on the basis of his collection of texts. He identified five categories: 'common', 'fine', 'square', '90°', and 'formal', while at the same time he remarked how 'the categories suggested here are only intended to be a tentative beginning to a palaeographic study, a task for which not enough reliable data yet exists and which may yet prove to be impracticable' (Clark 1979:67).

Clark's 'common' and 'fine' categories have been adopted in this study as well (see §1.3.3.4 below). Concerning the 'square' and '90°' categories, we have already seen above that, as argued by Macdonald, rather than constituting separate scripts, 'square' and '90°' forms were idiosyncratic stylistic features (see also Chapter 3).

Finally, Clark describes the 'formal' script – in a rather subjective and ambiguous manner – as 'very elegant, in a style which seems to be mid-way between the square and the common script' (Clark 1979: 69). Some texts which Clark labels as 'formal' can be placed in the SoS script category as defined in this study.[121]

1.3.2.4 Macdonald's approach

The first study by Macdonald dealing with material aspects of the Safaitic script is his 1989 article 'Cursive Safaitic Inscriptions? A Preliminary Investigation', which is a detailed analysis of the Safaitic practice of joining adjacent graphs.[122] In subsequent studies, most of which are referenced in §1.3.2.1 above, Macdonald mainly responded to attempts by previous scholars to identify earlier and later phases of the Safaitic script. To the studies mentioned above, one should add a long footnote in his 1993 paper 'Nomads and the Ḥawrān',[123] where he stated that '[i]t is difficult, if not impossible, to

[119]See §1.1.4 above.

[120]More recently, Al-Jallad has resumed this hypothesis: he suggested that Safaitic possibly reflects a continuous development from Thamudic B on the basis of commonalities in the basic shapes and formulae (Al-Jallad 2021:73). For a list of the differences as well as shared features between the 'common' Safaitic and Thamudic B graph forms, see §2.2.2.2. Three texts of the JQC present both 'common' Safaitic and Thamudic B features (see §2.4).

[121]E.g. CSNS 1004/SoS and CSNS 895/SoS; the latter presents some features which are typically found in the SoS texts from the Dūmah area (see Norris 2018:80–81 and §1.3.3.4 below).

[122]Macdonald 1989; see §5.3 for a further description of this practice based on the evidence from the JQC.

[123]Macdonald 1993:385, n. 487. The footnote is a response to Knauf's 1991 claim that the Safaitic script derived from Minaic (Knauf 1991:97–98). In the same footnote he also addressed the highly problematic palaeographic schemata produced by Jamme (1971:611–612) using the forms of JaS 44–176. Jamme's schemata are not based on any dated texts and therefore entirely arbitrary. On the basis of such schemata, he believed to have demonstrated that the Safaitic script developed from South Arabian as well as that the so-called 'square script' was a later development (Jamme 1971:56).

establish a palaeography for a script which appears to have been used only for carving graffiti and in which there are virtually no datable texts'.

Macdonald's most recent contribution to the subject is the 2015 paper 'On the uses of writing in ancient Arabia and the role of palaeography in studying them', where he again rejected the possibility of palaeographic analysis of Safaitic altogether.[124] On the one hand, he reiterated that, in absence of a firm chronological framework for most of the texts, a palaeography of Safaitic would be a practically impossible task. On the other hand, he claimed that there is no palaeographic development in the Safaitic script, since in his view palaeographic development cannot exist outside a scribal environment. The latter assertion relates to his idea of Safaitic literacy as an 'informal' pastime activity, which he defined in opposition to literacy in institutionalised contexts.[125] Accordingly, for Macdonald variation in the Safaitic script is purely spontaneous and idiosyncratic, since 'the only pressures for stability or change are created by the exigencies of the writing materials (the surfaces of the rocks and the inscribing tools), and the personal taste, fantasy and skill of the individual inscriber'.[126]

While I agree with Macdonald's critique of impressionistic identifications of 'archaic' features and palaeographic development in previous scholarship, I cannot agree with his generalisations about the nature of script variation and development in Safaitic. Such views are not the product of a systematic analysis of the script. Rather, they stem from an approach to Safaitic inscriptions which imposes a very specific usage of writing – i.e. the official, scribal, and administrative context – as the literate norm, and consequently denies the very existence of palaeographic development in the script simply because it is not the product of such an institutionalised environment.

As to the problem of the lack of a chronological framework, while this certainly poses significant challenges, it does not in any way hinder a material study of the Safaitic script. Moreover, in Chapter 4 we shall see how the long genealogies in several texts by members of the lineage of *ḏf* can be employed as a chronological tool to trace the palaeographic development from the 'common' to the 'fine' script across generations.

In his 'Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic inscriptions' (2015), Al-Jallad states that '[t]he circumstances under which the Safaitic inscriptions were produced make the paleography of the script impossible'.[127] He maintains that the script has 'two primary variants', that is 'normal' and 'square' – he follows Macdonald in considering the latter

[124] Macdonald 2015:10–13.

[125] See Macdonald 1993:382–388; Macdonald 2010:15–16.

[126] Macdonald 2015:14; he continues: 'There was no external pressure to maintain a particular set of letter forms written in a certain way, as there would be in a school, a monastic scriptorium, a chancery, or a monumental mason's workshop'.

[127] He continues: 'For a comparison between letter forms to be meaningful, they must be produced under similar circumstances and within a single scribal tradition. The Safaitic inscriptions vary not only in terms of instrument and support, both of which play an important role in giving the glyph its ultimate look on the rock, but in terms of their authors as well: the texts were produced by a diverse group of people over a relatively large area and an unknown chronological span' (Al-Jallad 2015:27–28).

as stylistic – and presents a brief description of the Safaitic script with a few selected variant forms per grapheme. This description is then followed by a script chart of what he calls 'idealized forms of the Safaitic glyphs', with the top row representing 'normal forms' and the bottom row showing the 'so-called square variants' (Al-Jallad 2015:36–37).

As this overview shows, Safaitic palaeography has received very limited attention in previous scholarship. This thesis aims to fill this lacuna as well as to show the interest of a study of the materiality of the Safaitic script for its own sake.

1.3.3 Terminology and approach

In the following, I will define the terminology and approach employed in this study to analyse variation in the Safaitic script. One important methodological premise of this study is that the Safaitic script, like any script, can be investigated through a theory of writing which adequately distinguishes the abstract from the concrete, that is the emic from the etic level. I here adopt the framework and terminology proposed in Meletis's 2019 paper on the concept of grapheme as a universal unit of writing.[128]

Meletis argues for a four-level model of writing (Fig. 1.11), which he adopted from Rezec's studies on the structure of the German writing system (Rezec 2009, Rezec 2013). According to this model, the *graphemes* are the emic units at the graphematic level, while the *basic shapes* (Rezec's *Grundformen*) are the emic units at the graphetic level (Meletis 2019:29). Within this framework, Meletis differentiates graphetic from graphematic allographs: *graphetic allographs* are different instantiations of the same *basic shape*, whereas *graphematic allographs* are different *basic shapes* associated to the same *grapheme* (Meletis 2019:33).

One can also distinguish the *graphetics* as the study of 'the materiality of writing (i.e. the visual constituents of graphemes)' from the *graphematics* as the study of 'the relationship between the visual and the linguistic' (Meletis 2019:35). The present study deals primarily with the graphetics of Safaitic writing, i.e. the level comprehending its basic shapes and graphs.

While graphematics as a field of study is well-established in the German grapholinguistic tradition,[129] graphetics is a much more understudied field, which presents several overlaps with disciplines such as palaeography and epigraphy (see Meletis 2015b; Meletis 2015a). Graphetics has been recently defined as 'an interdisciplinary field concerned with the analysis and description of the materiality of scripts as well as its role in

[128]Meletis defines a *grapheme* as 'a basic unit of writing that (1) distinguishes meaning, (2) has a linguistic value (typically by referring to a linguistic unit), and (3) is minimal in that it is not composed by smaller units which are themselves graphemes' (Meletis 2019:43). It should be noted that in Safaitic epigraphy instead of the term *grapheme* one usually finds the term *letter*, which is generally applied indiscriminately to both abstract and concrete entities. Al-Jallad often seems to prefer the term *glyph* over *letter/grapheme*, although he uses the term *letter* as well, with no apparent difference in meaning and to refer to both abstract and concrete entities (see Al-Jallad 2015:26–27).

[129]Meletis 2019:25; see, e.g., Dürscheid 2016: Chapter 4.

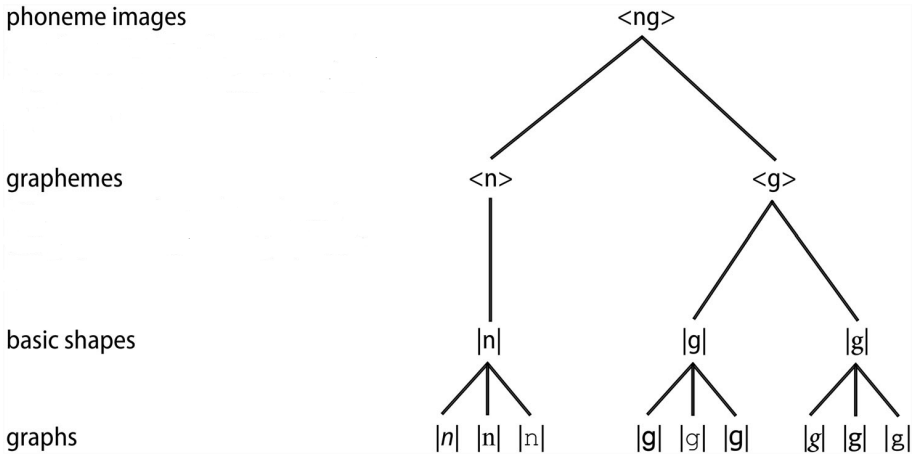


Figure 1.11: Four-level model of writing (example from Meletis 2019:34)

the production and perception of written language' (Meletis 2015a). Accordingly, this thesis may be labelled a graphetic study of Safaitic, as it deals with several facets of the materiality of the Safaitic script, ranging from formal analyses of script variation and palaeographic development (Chapters 2, 3, 4, 6), to investigations of various aspects concerning the production of Safaitic texts (Chapter 5), to descriptions of practices involving their malicious disruption (Chapter 7).

In the following, I will define the terminology that I employ to describe and analyse script variation: *basic shape*, *graph*, *graph form*, *distinguishing features*, *writing style*. Subsequently, I will introduce the terms and geographic distribution of the three Safaitic scripts which are the object of this study.

1.3.3.1 Basic shapes, graphs, and graph forms

To describe variation in the Safaitic script, I use the concepts of *basic shape*, *graph*, and *graph form*. For the first two terms I follow the definitions by Meletis (2019), while I have coined the third term specifically for Safaitic.

In the model shown in Fig. 1.11 above, one can see that the *basic shape* is in between the grapheme and the *graph*. A *basic shape* is '[a] material yet abstract unit' (i.e. both etic and emic) representing 'a 'skeleton', a bundle of visual features that are necessary to perceptually distinguish a shape from the other shapes in an inventory'.[130] For example, the 'common' basic shape of the *k* ʃ – a deep curve with a tail attached to it – is distinguished from the 'common' shape of the *b* ⊂ – only a deep curve – by the tail, which is necessary to perceptually distinguish the *k* from the *b* (see §2.1.3 and §2.1.13).[131]

[130]Meletis 2019:43–44, n. 6

[131]Moreover, the tail of the *k* can have any stance but the horizontal one, since this is a feature distinguishing the shape of 'common' *k* from the shape of 'common' s^1, which is a curve with a horizontal tail

I also follow Meletis' definition of a *script* as an inventory of *basic shapes* (Meletis 2019:20, n. 7.). I use this term to refer to the different Safaitic scripts – i.e. 'common' script, 'fine' script, and SoS script (see §1.3.3.4 below) – as well as to the 'Safaitic script', which encompasses all these inventories, as opposed to Hismaic, Thamudic B, and the other Ancient North Arabian scripts.

Meletis defines a *graph* as an etic and concrete substantiation of a *basic shape*.[132] In our case, a *graph* is a unique concrete instantiation of a basic shape which is carved (direct hammered, chiselled, or incised) on a given rock surface with a given instrument. Depending on factors such as the chosen carving technique, the author's skill, and the writing support, a graph may be carved neatly or irregularly, deeply or shallowly, with more or less pronounced hammering/incising blows, etc. This is the type of variation pertaining to the level of the graph. To the terms *basic shape* and *graph*, I have added the concept of *graph form* (often abbreviated to *form*), by which I mean a unit that is slightly more abstract than the concrete *graph*. I use this term to describe the form/stylistic features of one or more Safaitic *graphs*.

For example, as mentioned above the 'common' basic shape of *b* can be defined as a deep curve.[133] But while the 'common' graphs , and all share a curvilinear graph form ⊂ , the graphs , , and are 'common' graphs of *b* with a square form ⊏ .

I employ the concept of graph form to refer to different types of features. For instance, ⊂ , (, ∩ are all curvilinear forms of *b*, but the first is a deep curve form, the second a shallow curve form, and the third a deep curve form turned by 90°.

The difference between *basic shape* and *graph form* is an important conceptual distinction which is functional to a first systematic investigation of the different layers of graphetic variation in the Safaitic script(s). What is relevant at the level of the basic shape are the visual features which are necessary to distinguish different shapes from one another within a consistent inventory, whereas the less abstract level of the graph form is functional to a proper description of the great extent of allographic variation in the form and stylistic features of Safaitic graphs.

In order to better illustrate the features of a given graph form, I often use drawings which are based on actual graphs. Basic shapes, which are the most abstract entities at the graphetic level, are described without being drawn.

1.3.3.2 Distinguishing features

As we shall see in the next Chapter, with the exception of *ḍ* – which in the SoS script is represented by a completely different shape than in the 'common' and in the 'fine' scripts – the Safaitic inventories generally exhibit graph forms representing either the same or closely related shapes. Most differences among the Safaitic scripts can be ex-

-⊂ (see §2.1.19).

[132]Ibid.

[133]The curvilinearity of the 'common' basic shape of *b* is ultimately a conventional choice, and it is based on evidence showing that angular forms were sometimes stylistically marked (see §2.1, Chapter 3).

	‘common’	‘fine’	SoS
ḍ			
r			

Table 1.1: Examples of primary vs secondary distinguishing features

plained through *recurring graphic variables*, i.e. recurring patterns of graphic variation, such as the shift from curvilinearity to angularity or the compression of forms.[134]

Certain graph forms are connected to one specific script, and so they can be used to distinguish scripts. I have divided distinguishing features into two classes:

- Primary distinguishing features, i.e. a *graph form* which is found exclusively in a given script and which is radically different from *graph forms* representing the same *grapheme* in other scripts, to the extent that they could not be derived from each other through *recurring graphic variables*;

- Secondary distinguishing features, i.e. 1) a *graph form* which is characteristic of a particular script and which is not radically divergent from *graph forms* representing the same *grapheme* in one or more other scripts, i.e. they could be easily derived from each other through *recurring graphic variables*; 2) a *graph form* characteristic of one *script*, but only rarely found in others to represent the same *grapheme*.

Table 1.1 shows some selected forms of *ḍ* and *r* in the three Safaitic scripts as attested in the JQC.[135] An example of a primary distinguishing feature is the SoS form of *ḍ vs* the ‘common’ and ‘fine’ forms, since they cannot be derived from each other through *recurring graphic variables*. On the other hand, the ‘fine’ form of *ḍ* is an example of secondary distinguishing feature in relation to the ‘common’ form, the only difference being its greater compression and the slanting of lines, which are both *recurring graphic variables*.

Concerning the selected forms of *r* shown in the table, these are all examples of secondary distinguishing features. As we shall see in Chapter 4, the ‘fine’ form of *r* as a shallow curve with two vertical hooks has developed from the ‘common’ shallow curve form through the addition of hooks (see §4.1.3.2), which in itself is a *recurring graphic variable*. The ‘fine’ form of *r* constitutes also a good example of definition 2) of *secondary distinguishing feature*, since two SoS texts of the JQC attests a graph form of *r* as a shallow curve with two vertical hooks as well (see §2.1.18). But since in the vast majority of cases this form of *r* occurs in the context of texts in the ‘fine’ script, it can be considered as a secondary distinguishing feature of this script.

Lastly, it is important to stress that forms representing secondary distinguishing features, although clearly related, can still correspond to different basic shapes. For

[134]For a list of the most common recurring graphic variables, see §2.1.
[135]See Chapter 2 for a more complete account.

example, although the addition of hooks is a *recurring graphic variable*, the hooks of the 'fine' *r* can still be considered as part of its basic shape—they are necessary to perceptually distinguish the *r* from the *b*, which in the 'fine' script is a simple shallow curve and therefore identical to the basic shape of 'common' *r*.[136]

1.3.3.3 Writing styles

A *writing style* is defined by the choices of graph forms (Chapter 2), carving technique and text layout (Chapter 5) within a particular script, i.e. 'common', 'fine', or SoS. The majority of writing styles are characterised by a set of features which are commonly attested in other texts, although the choice and arrangement of such features often varies in an idiosyncratic manner. The study of texts by prolific authors (Chapter 6) shows that some writing styles exhibit distinctive characteristics specific to individual writers, such as the use of special features or of a particular layout, which are sometimes shared by members of the same family. At the same time, it also shows that there is a certain extent of variation even among different texts by the same authors. Prolific authors did not always employ the exact same graph forms and features through all of their texts. Thus, the term *writing style* is generally employed here to refer to the features of a single given text, which are sometimes shared fully or partially with other texts. Additionally, in the study of prolific authors in Chapter 6, I will sometimes use the term to refer to the writing style of an author, whereby I mean a consistent set of features which are shared by the texts of a certain author, be they distinctive or not. It should be stressed that, in the sample of prolific authors studied in Chapter 6, authors never changed script from one text to the other. Rather, variation within one author seems to function mainly in terms of choices of graph forms within a single script.

1.3.3.4 The Safaitic scripts

In my study of the JQC, I distinguish three scripts: 'common', 'fine', and SoS. I here introduce the terminology of these scripts as well as their general features and geographic distribution.

The 'common' script While Clark employed the term 'common' as an umbrella category referring to the script of most of the texts that could not be subsumed under any of his other categories,[137] in this study, the 'common' script is defined and described as a consistent inventory of basic shapes (see Chapter 2). I decided to keep Clark's 'common' term as most Safaitic inscriptions of the JQC – and, most likely, of the Safaitic corpus as a whole – are in this script.

Inscriptions in the 'common' script are mainly concentrated in corpora from northeastern Jordan,[138] especially its southern areas until the northern-most regions of Saudi

[136] Similarly, the deep curve form of *r* attested in the SoS script, which would represent a *b* in the 'common' script, can be considered as a different shape as well.
[137] Clark 1979:69.
[138] See, e.g., QUR, CSNS, WH, ISB, AbaNS, HaNS, CEDS.

Arabia close to the border with Jordan,[139] and they are also well attested in southern Syria.[140]

The 'fine' script The 'fine' script is an inventory of compressed and elongated basic shapes which developed from the 'common' inventory (see Chapter 4). While in 'common' inscriptions with elongated forms usually only some graphs are elongated (see §3.1.3), the 'fine' graph forms reflect a consistent, distinctive inventory of basic shapes, which are used throughout all the graphs of the text. The term 'fine' was first introduced by Clark[141] to refer to the distinctive elongated appearance of this script. Since the 'fine' script appears to be the result of a gradual palaeographic development from the 'common' script, I here label as 'fine' only those texts which are from the 'late 'fine' stage' of development – i.e. the stage attesting the complete stock of 'fine' basic shapes –, while I label texts whose features are still in between the 'common' and the 'fine' script as transitional between the two (see §4.1.3).

The JQC, which is located at the southern edge of the Jordanian Ḥarrah, contains only 23 examples of texts in the 'fine' script.[142] However, corpora including texts from regions further north in north-eastern Jordan, such as SIJ, but also WH and KRS, present a greater number of 'fine' texts. The collections from southern Syria[143] are the ones with the highest concentrations of texts in this script. Only a few scattered examples of inscriptions in the 'fine' script are attested further south in Saudi Arabia.[144]

The SoS script The SoS – i.e. 'Southern Safaitic' – script is the most complex script, as it presents a great extent of variation, and it shares a number of features with Hismaic, most prominently the double circle *ḍ* (see §2.1, §2.2.2.3). Because of such features, some texts in this script have been labelled in previous scholarship as 'mixed' texts or 'Mixed Safaitic/Hismaic'.[145] Such terms are problematic, however, as they imply that this script would represent a deliberate mix of the two scripts.

[139]See the texts from the al-Qurayyāt region (cf, e.g., ThSaf 60/C, ThSaf 69/C, and ThSaf 70/C), which is geographically very close to the JQC.

[140]See, e.g., C, LP and RSIS.

[141]Clark 1979:69.

[142]Clark noticed the same scarcity of 'fine' texts in his corpus (CSNS), which is also relatively southern (Clark 1979:69).

[143]See, e.g., C, LP, RSIS, and all the texts collected within the framework of the SESP.

[144]See, e.g., NSR 12/F, NSR 97/F, JaS 35/F, and JaS 36/F.

[145]See Harding 1972:5; Macdonald 1980:188; King 1990a:§2.I; Norris 2018:79–81. Clark (1979:76–77) used the term 'Safaitic/Thamudic' to refer to some texts belonging to this script (e.g. CSNS 1004–1011/SoS), but at the same time he also questioned the distinction between Safaitic and Thamudic E (i.e. Hismaic). In Clark (1980:127–128), he incorporated Thamudic E within the category of the Safaitic script, but see the reply of Macdonald (1980:188) in the same volume. Winnett defined the script of the SoS texts of WTI as 'Tabuki' Thamudic (i.e. Hismaic); see Winnett and Reed 1970. However, as pointed out by Macdonald 1980 and by King 1990a, the distinctive features of the Hismaic script are clearly distinct from the script of the WTI texts labelled as 'Tabuki' by Winnett. According to King, the WTI corpus contains only one text in the Hismaic script (WTI 11/H), while all others belong to what she calls 'Mixed Safaitic/Hismaic', i.e. the SoS script (see King 1990a:§2.I).

Since the greatest concentration of texts in this script is found in the area of Dūmah (modern al-Jawf, northern Saudi Arabia, see Fig. 1.1),[146] – a region located much further south in relation to those areas of the Ḥarrah where the vast majority of 'common' and 'fine' texts are found – I employ here a geographic term: Southern Safaitic (SoS).[147] As we shall see below, examples of this script are also scattered in more northern regions, but in those areas SoS script texts seem to be attested in comparatively much smaller numbers, whereas in the Dūmah region they make up the majority of Safaitic texts. Though this term is not without caveats – as one has to label as 'Southern Safaitic' also texts which were found in more northern regions – it is more neutral than 'Mixed Safaitic/Hismaic' in respect to the palaeographic features of the script and its relationship to Hismaic, which need to be investigated further.

Most SoS texts are found in regions of the Nabataean cultural area, especially the ones along and connected by the Wādī Sirḥān stretching from its lower end at Dūmah up to the southern Ḥawrān in the north. The corpus of SoS texts from the Dūmah area amounts to 462 items,[148] representing the largest corpus of SoS texts known so far. Texts in this script have been attested as far south as Ḥāʾil,[149] and, to the north-east of Dūmah, in the ʿArʿar region.[150]

Several texts in this script are found along the Wadī Sirḥān between Iṯrā and Ṭuraif.[151] Further to the north, the JQC contains 58 SoS texts. There are also several texts scattered over other regions of north-eastern Jordan[152] and southern Syria.[153] In the southern Ḥawrān, there are some SoS inscriptions carved on dressed stones at Umm al-Jimāl.[154]

Further examples of SoS texts have been found in southern Jordan,[155] in Lebanon,[156] in the hinterland of Palmyra,[157] further to the east on the west bank of the Euphrates,[158] and in western Iraq.[159]

[146]On this corpus of texts, see Norris 2018.

[147]Note that this term has no association with Knauf's 'South Safaitic', or *Südsafaitisch*, with which he referred to Hismaic (Knauf 1983; Knauf 1985).

[148]Norris 2018:74–75.

[149]See, e.g., HU 789c/SoS, WHI 62/SoS, 127/SoS, 149–151/SoS.

[150]E.g. JaS 83.1-3/SoS, NSR 1.1/SoS, NSR 55/SoS, NSR 56/SoS, NSR 78/SoS.

[151]E.g. WTI 81/SoS, INAS 69/SoS, and JaS 192/SoS.

[152]See, e.g., HaNSB 361/SoS, 363/SoS, HaNSC 24-26/SoS, AAEK 131/SoS, HCH 191/SoS, ISB 57/SoS, WH 2182/SoS, TLWS 20/SoS.

[153]E.g. C 88.1/SoS.

[154]LP 1269-1271/SoS; Grimme recognized that the Safaitic texts from Umm al-Jimāl had distinctive features which were different from the other Safaitic texts from Syria known at the time and classed such texts as the 'Umm al-Jimāl script'. He wrote: '[...] *Endlich zeigen mancherlei Eigentümlichkeiten die Inschriften von Umm el-Jimāl, die alle auf rechteckig behauenen Steinen stehen und in ihrem Duktus mehrfach von den Inschriften der Ḥarra abweichen*' (Grimme 1929:12).

[155]E.g. HH 1/SoS and KhNSB 1/SoS (the Safaitic portion of a Safaitic/Nabataean bilingual).

[156]E.g. HSIL 1/SoS and HFSL 2/SoS.

[157]E.g. ISP 63 bis/SoS, Meyer 2017:171–172, 178, Fig. 260.

[158]Palmyra Museum 1357.1–3/SoS.

[159]E.g. HSIM, RaIM, HFSI 46940/SoS, HFSI 67801/SoS, and ANKS 1/SoS.

Chapter 2

Basic Shapes and Graph Forms

As seen in §1.2.1 (Fig.1.6), the vast majority of the inscriptions of the JQC is in the 'common' script (4915 texts), while a small portion of texts is in the SoS script (58 texts), and an even smaller number is in the 'fine' script (23 texts). The first Section of this Chapter offers a description of the basic shapes and graph forms of the 'common', 'fine', and SoS inventories as they appear in the inscriptions of the JQC.[160] It also provides a list of *recurring graphic variables*, that is, the most common patterns of graphic variation. Subsequently, §2.2 outlines the various features distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from each other as well as the features distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from Hismaic and Thamudic B. In §2.3, I describe the script of a single text whose features do not fit into any of the script categories identified here and which may represent a further Safaitic script, while also pointing at some parallels from other collections. Finally, §2.4 discusses the features of three texts which have both 'common' and Thamudic B features.

2.1 Safaitic inventories

In this Section, I will describe the basic shapes and graph forms of the 'common', 'fine', and SoS scripts. For each grapheme, I define the corresponding basic shape (or shapes), and then go on to describe the various types of graph forms attested in each script.[161]

Several basic shapes are instantiated by both curvilinear and angular – either angular pointed or angular square – allographs. Because we have evidence that angular forms were sometimes stylistically marked (see Chapter 3), whenever both alternatives

[160] For a discussion of the terminology and approach used in this study, see §1.1.3.

[161] In defining the main features of basic shapes and graph forms, I found the meticulous framework employed by King in her dissertation on Hismaic very useful (see King 1990a:§2.A, n. 6). She looked attentively at form, stance, and direction, and I have tried to do the same. I describe the individual basic shapes and graph forms as if they were in the context of a text running horizontally from left to right (for a description of the different types of text direction in Safaitic, see §5.4.). Square or elongated forms and forms turned by 90° to their basic shapes stances are included in the descriptions when attested, but their uses are specifically treated in Chapter 3.

are attested, I conventionally take the basic shapes to be curvilinear.

From the idealised basic shapes hence defined, most variation in the graph forms can be reduced to a set of recurring graphic variables. I have identified the following:

- The shift from curvilinearity to angularity (and vice-versa);
- The depth of curves/angles;
- The size of geometric components such as strokes, forks, circles, half-circles;
- The change of orientation by 45°, 90°, or 180° (i.e. facing backwards) to the basic shapes stances;
- The compression/elongation of forms;
- The way small geometric components such as forks or circles are formed and attached to the stem;[162]
- The number of waves/angles in a wavy/zigzag line;
- The addition/subtraction of hooks or curly elements to/from the extremities of strokes;
- The slanting/curving of straight lines or, conversely, the straightening of slanted/curved lines;
- The addition/subtraction of parallel lines to/from the constitutive line(s) of the basic shape;
- The simplification of small circles/dashes to a dot.

Through such variables, graph forms reflecting distinct basic shapes sometimes happen to be very close or identical in form. For instance, through the last variable in the list, i.e. the simplification of small circles/dashes to a dot, the ʿ and the *n* – whose typical 'common' forms are a small circle and a vertical dash respectively – can end up having the same form.[163]

In the descriptions of graph forms, I mostly abstain from statements about the frequency of certain forms unless they are very common or very rare. In the case of the 'common' script, such statements are especially difficult, because they would require a study of the forms of all graphs in every single inscription; considering the size of the 'common' corpus, this would be a hardly manageable task.[164] As to the 'fine' and the SoS script, their corpora are much more limited in size. In these two cases, therefore,

[162]E.g., in the case of forks, if they are formed by adding a slanted stroke to one side of the stem or in other ways.

[163]This occasionally happens within the same text as well, as for example in QUR 333.10.1/C *l s¹lg bn mḫr bn hmʿḏ* 'By S¹lg son of Mḫr son of Hmʿḏ', where both the *n*'s and the ʿ have a dot form.

[164]The only partial exception to this are the graph forms of the *l* (see Table 2.1 below).

the frequency of certain graph forms, though easily assessable, is not very significant because we have too few examples. The 'fine' script presents the lowest sample of graph forms, which is probably in part also due to the limited number of 'fine' script texts in the JQC.[165] On the other hand, it is remarkable that the SoS script, represented by only 52 texts, has a rather high number of variant forms, especially for the *k*, *r*, and *s²*.

A fruitful method to determine if certain variant forms were actually employed contemporaneously is the study of allographic variation within the same text or in different texts by the same author. Thus, while describing the graph forms I sometimes mention whether I found evidence that different forms of the same basic shape were used either within the same inscription or interchangeably by the same author, or whether they were idiosyncrasies typical of a particular author (see Chapter 6).[166] However, since in the case of the 'fine' and SoS scripts our samples are very limited, and since in the case of the 'common' script no systematic comparative study of all graphs has been made, such remarks should be simply taken as illustrative of how variation works.

2.1.1 ʾ

The basic shape of ʾ is a vertical stroke with a fork at each end.

'Common' The forks can be formed by attaching them to the ends of the stroke or by adding to the stem slanted or curving strokes which can be attached to either side, e.g. , . The two different types of fork formation can also coexist in the same graph . Sometimes the stem is slanted: . An elongated form with longer stem has also been attested: .

'Fine' In the 'fine' script, the two forks are usually sharper and more elongated than in the 'common' script: , , . This is also the case with all other forked graph forms described below, i.e., *ḏ*, *h*, and *ṣ*.

SoS The graph forms of the SoS script are mainly the same as in the 'common' script (see above). Some instances are also attested in which either one fork is slanted in relation to the stroke , or both forks are slanting in the direction of the text [167] or the stem itself is curving .[168] In two texts,[169] variants with a remarkably short stem

[165]Cf. the much higher number of graph forms in the texts from the late 'fine' stage studied in Chapter 4, see Fig. 4.1.

[166]For a similar approach, cf. King 1990a:§2.H.2, who noted that several graph forms in Hismaic were likely to be contemporary because they were found either within the same text or in different texts by the same author or in different texts by possibly related authors.

[167]Cf. QUR 952.83.1/SoS, where this variant occurs next to the non-slanting one.

[168]QUR 952.50.1/SoS.

[169]These texts are by the prolific author *bs¹ʾ bn s¹ʿdlh* (QUR 813.14.1/SoS) and his grandfather (QUR 952.83.1/SoS); see §6.3.1, §6.3.4.1.

– which makes the graphs look very similar to a *ḫ* – appear next to regular ones. In two other cases, the upper fork is square .[170]

2.1.2 ʿ

This grapheme has the shape of a circle of relatively small size, as opposed to the shape of the *g*, which is also a circle, but bigger.

'Common' The 'common' script attests, next to the usual small circle form , its simplification to a dot ,[171] as one of the forms of the *n* in the SoS script and, more rarely, in the 'common' script as well (see §2.1.16 below). When the size of the circle is bigger, it can be easily confused with the *g* .

In QUR 669.34.2/C a dot is placed inside the circle: .[172]

'Fine' A small circle , an oval , a rhomboid , or a triangle .

SoS A small circle or sometimes a bigger one . In one text (QUR 137.90.1/SoS) it has a triangular shape , but this particular text is deeply incised and all of its graphs have pointed forms.

2.1.3 *b*

In the 'common' script the shape of the *b* is a deep curve – deeper than the curve of the *r* – facing in the direction of the text, while in the 'fine' script it is a shallow curve. In the SoS inventory we find two graphematic allographs: 1) a deep curve, as in the 'common' script; 2) a straight line with two short arms.

'Common' Usually a deep curve , which can sometimes have long arms . Graph forms with shallower curves also occur, although less commonly , in which case it can sometimes be confused with the curved version of the *r* (see §2.1.18 below). Another

[170]These are two graphs in QUR 294.60.1/SoS and QUR 27.7.1/SoS respectively; The first inscription is by a member of the *ʿmrt* social group, whose members often employed square graph forms (see §3.2). In the second text this form appears together with another instance of the graph with slanting fork.

[171]This seems to be the case especially in hammered texts, while the incised ones generally have the small circle form. In a couple of cases a hammered dot has been used in the context of an incised text, see, e.g., QUR 294.46.1/C (Fig.5.6(a)). Note also that both the circle and the dot-shaped versions of the ʿ are attested in QUR 2.591.1/C *l mnʿ bn ʿṯf* 'By Mnʿ son of 'ṯf'. The same author has written other texts in the region (QUR 2.529.1/C, 148.92.1/C, 961.4.1/C) in which the ʿ is always a dot. Note also that the prolific author *ʿqrb bn ʿds*[1] used the small circle variant in all three texts which he incised, while he used the dot form in all hammered texts (see §2.1.8).

[172]See Fig. 3.1(a) (the second text starting from left). The other inscriptions by the same author *ws*[1ʿ]*l bn zb* (QUR 175.2.1/C, 243.1.2/C, 249.3.1/C, 669.13.1/C) do not have this feature. Macdonald interpreted a text in the ' common' script with a similar feature as a playful way of representing the *ʿayn*, which in that text is supported by the fact that the *yod* has fingers added to its loop (see Macdonald 2005a:94–95).

form consists of a vertical back with two arms of varying lengths ⊏, but usually longer than the arms of the *r* as a straight line with two arms, while the back is shorter. It can also have a square ⊏ and a pointed form <. Its opening faces towards the direction of the text.[173] In some texts it is turned by 90° ∩ and is sometimes also square: ⊓. In this particular stance, the arms are sometimes longer, making it look very similar to a *ẓ*: ∩ , ⊓.

'Fine' A slightly curving line (or, in some cases, an obtuse angle 〈.

SoS The SoS script attests mainly variants found also in the 'common' script: ⊂ , (, ⊏. The small curve form ⊂ is very similar to the Hismaic shape of the *r*, which is sometimes attested in SoS texts as well and once (QUR 297.7.1/SoS) in conjunction with this same form of the *b*, so these two graphs are only contextually distinguishable in the inscription. In a few texts it is also attested as a straight line with two short arms ⊏, [, looking very similar to one of the 'common' script forms of the *r*; in one text (QUR 689.3.1/SoS), the two arms are converging ⊏.

2.1.4 *d*

The shape of *d* is a vertical stroke with a half-circle attached to its middle and facing in the direction of the text.

'Common' The size of the half-circle can vary, but usually it is not bigger than half of the shaft length ⊳; it can also be rather small and filled in ⊳. The half-circle rarely faces backwards ⊲. There are also elongated variants where the vertical line is longer and the half circle small: ⊳, ⊳.

'Fine' The half-circle is very small ⊳ and sometimes takes a triangle form ⊳. It can also face backwards ⊲.

SoS In the SoS script we usually find the same forms as in the 'common' script ⊳⊲, but sometimes the half-circle is bigger ⊳, and, in one case (QUR 813.14.1/SoS) it is squarish ⊡.

2.1.5 *ḏ*

The basic shape of *ḏ* is a curve with a stroke running through its middle and extending to form a long tail.

[173] In two inscriptions by *qblt bn ʿm* (QUR 176.78.1/C and QUR 186.112.1/C), the author wrote the *b* facing backwards, which would seem an idiosyncrasy of this author, as it is otherwise unattested in the 'common' script and only rarely attested in Hismaic (see King 1990a:§2.C.2).

'Common' The 'common' forms are usually curved or pointed, facing both downwards and upwards: , , . Sometimes it lies horizontally, i.e. turned by 90° to its basic shape stance . If the tail is very short it can be confused with the form of the *ḥ* with a protruding tail. It can sometimes take a square form .

'Fine' In the 'fine' script the *ḏ* has mostly a pointed form and while the shaft is longer, the fork usually has a more acute angle than in the 'common' script forms . There are three cases in which the tail has a small hook, similarly to the SoS form (see below): in one case (QUR 176.24.1/F) the hook forms an acute angle with the shaft ,[174] while in the two other cases it forms an obtuse angle .[175]

SoS In the SoS script the tail typically curves either leftwards or rightwards , and the curve can also continue to form a hook . Sometimes instead of curving the tail has a dash attached to its end . In one inscription (QUR 207.49.1/SoS), together with a hooked form , another variant is attested in which the fork is slanted almost by 90° in relation to the shaft, which has no hook . In one text (QUR 739.83.1/SoS) the shaft has a zigzag form . In some cases, the *ḏ* takes the 'common' script hook-less form , and in two cases the tail is not aligned with the central spike of the fork .[176]

2.1.6 *ḍ*

The *ḍ* has two different shapes: 1) in the 'common' and the 'fine' script it consists of two vertical lines joined by two parallel lines in the middle; 2) in the SoS script it is made of two concentric circles.

'Common' The most common form is the one of a rectangular grid with only the vertical lines protruding , but it is also attested as a square grid with all lines extending past the square . In two texts,[177] the grid has a cross inside .

'Fine' In the 'fine' script the two horizontal parallel lines are slanted .

SoS A circle with a smaller concentric circle inside ⊚ which is sometimes simplified to a dot ⊙ .

[174] This graph form occurs also in another text by the same author, i.e. the prolific author *mgd bn zd*, see §6.2.1.

[175] The latter two are in two inscriptions by the prolific author *ms¹k bn ʾnʿm* (see §6.2.3).

[176] In the Dūmah region some SoS texts attest a variant of *ḏ* in which the tail does not dissect the curve in two parts, which is similar to the form of an *s¹* turned by 90° and with hooked tail (see Norris 2018:80–81).

[177] QUR 960.4.1/C and QUR 533.20.1/C. Note that possibly the same author of the latter, *gry bn mġyr*, carved another text (QUR 786.7.1/C) in which the *ḍ* appears as a square grid, as in 2), but without the cross inside.

2.1.7 *f*

This grapheme has the shape of a vertical wavy line with three undulations, the middle one being the biggest.

'Common' In most 'common' forms the middle undulation is curved ʕ, but sometimes it takes a square form ʕ.[178] The waves can also have similar sizes ʕ, and appear as zigzags ʕ. There are also variants in which only the side waves are pointed ʕ, or simplified to hashes ʕ. It can also rarely have extra curls on both sides ʕ, in which case it looks very similar to the *s*[2] (see below).

'Fine' In the 'fine' script the *f* has a zigzag form, usually with three angles ʕ, but sometimes simplified to two angles ʕ. In one inscription (QUR 176.24.1/F) the central angle is a curve ʕ, but the usual zigzag form is also attested in the same text. One inscription (QUR 2.490.1/F) contains a curved form of a type sometimes attested in the 'common' script ʕ. This curved form, however, may also be an idiosyncrasy of this author.[179]

SoS In the SoS script the *f* takes the usual 'common' curvilinear forms: ʕ, ʕ.

2.1.8 *g*

The shape of the *g* is a circle of relatively big size—bigger than the ʿ.

'Common' In the 'common' script it is usually a circle ○, or an oval ○, or a more irregular blob ○. It can also take square forms, usually looking like a rectangle standing on its short side □.

'Fine' A circle ○ or more often a rhomboid ◊.[180] It sometimes has an elongated form, looking very similar to an *m*.

SoS The usual 'common' script circle form ○.

2.1.9 *ġ*

The shape of the *ġ* is a vertical wavy line with two undulations or a straight line with a small curve attached to the top.

[178]Note that both variants of the *f* (with square and curved middle undulation respectively) are attested in QUR 147.20.8/C *l frhz bn ḫfy* 'By Frhz son of Ḫfy'.

[179]This is the same author who employed the hooked version of the *ḏ*; see the description of his writing style in §6.2.3.

[180]In QUR 176.24.1/F both types are attested: the first variant, bigger, is used in the name of the author while the rhomboid variant is employed later in the same text. The first variant may have been employed to emphasize the name (see §6.2.1).

'Common' In the 'common' script it often takes the form of a vertical line with two curves, and it can consist of one single line [181] or of two parallel ones . It can sometimes face backwards .[182] The two parallel lines sometimes converge . The curves can also be very stretched out, looking like an elongated blob . Other attested variants include vertical straight lines with a curving line attached to its top , or a curve with a slanting line on top . It is also sometimes found in the form of a curve with a slanting hash on top .

'Fine' A straight line with a zigzag line on top having mostly one or sometimes two angles . The angle is usually small, but in one case (QUR 148.76.3/F) it is relatively big . In one inscription (QUR 176.24.1/F), a slanted dash protrudes from the lower part of the stroke , but it is unclear if this is an intentional mark, as the other *ġ* further in the same text does not have it.

SoS In the SoS script we have one of the forms attested in the 'common' script , also facing backwards , and one form similar to one of the 'fine' forms, although less pointed . One inscription (QUR 639.3.1/SoS) shows a slightly different variant , and in the same text there is another form also attested in the 'common' script . QUR 551.93.1/SoS shows a zigzag form , similar to one of the forms of SoS *s²* (see §2.1.20 below).[183]

2.1.10 *h*

The basic shape of *h* is a vertical stroke with a fork attached to one end.

'Common' The variation in the ways in which the fork can be formed is very similar to that found in the forks of ʾ, e.g. , , , . In some elongated forms, the fork has a more acute angle and a longer spine: .

'Fine' The fork is small and acute angled: , .

SoS The same forms as the 'common' script , . In QUR 207.49.1/SoS the line forming the lower fork is particularly curved .

[181] Note that this form would represent an *s²* in the SoS script, see §2.1.20.
[182] E.g. QUR 186.100.2/C.
[183] Norris notes that the SoS texts from Dūmah also attest the variant form of a wavy line identical to the 'common' form of *s²* (Norris 2018:80–81).

2.1.11 *ḥ*

In the 'common' and SoS scripts the shape of the *ḥ* is a curve facing in the direction of the text with a horizontal stroke cutting it in two equal parts. In the 'fine' script it is pointed and turned by 90° to the 'common'/SoS shape stances.

'Common' In the 'common' script it is often curvilinear ∈ , with the horizontal line sometimes extending to the left shortly past its back ∈ . The horizontal line can also extend only shortly to the right ∈ . The form of the curve varies in similar ways as the curve of the *b*: it is sometimes shallower ∈ , takes square forms E , E , E , and, more rarely, a pointed form ∈ . It is sometimes turned by 90° and in such cases it is usually squarish: ⊓ .

'Fine' The 'fine' texts attest only pointed forms with a a vertical stance ⋀ , ⋁.

SoS The same forms as in the 'common' script, with the central line never protruding past the back ∈ . Square forms are also attested E , E , which sometimes have also longer arms ∈ .

2.1.12 *ḫ*

The basic shape of this grapheme consists of two oblique lines crossing each other at their middle.

'Common' The two crossing lines are usually straight X , but sometimes one of the two or both lines can be slightly curving X .

'Fine' The two oblique lines in the 'fine' script are usually more squeezed than in the 'common' script X .

SoS The same forms as in the 'common' script: X , X . In one inscription (QUR 232.30.1/SoS) both lines are curving and on the upper part slightly converging X .

2.1.13 *k*

The 'common' shape of the *k* is a deep curve facing in the direction of the text with a tail attached to it and protruding towards the outside of the curve. In contrast to the 'common' shape of the *s*[1], where the tail has a horizontal stance (see §2.1.19 below), the tail of the *k* can have any stance but the horizontal one. In the SoS shape, the tail has a vertical stance and is proportionally longer, while the body is smaller. The 'fine' shape is a shallow curve with a slanted dash attached to one end.

'Common' The most typical 'common' script form is a curve with a tail attached either to its bottom-left or to its top-left . Sometimes the tail is vertical , or it curves towards the direction of the text . The form of the curve varies similarly to the curve of the *b*, i.e. it is sometimes shallower , pointed , or square (see below).

There are forms in which the tail is a continuation of the back and has a vertical stance . In square forms, the tail is always a prolongation of the back , and, in a few cases, square forms are also elongated . Similarly to the most common SoS script forms (see below), there are rare instances with longer tails and smaller body as well . Sometimes in such forms the two arms of the fork are slanted .[184] In QUR 256.3.4/C this graph shares a similar formation as the 'fine' one, albeit unlike the 'fine' form it is neither compressed or elongated, i.e. a curve with a line (in this case slightly curving) attached to one end .[185]

Finally, there are rare cases in which the *k* is turned by 90°, its form being either square or curved: , .

'Fine' A curve with a slanted dash attached to one end , . The transitional text QUR 529.20.1/C/F shows a less compressed form .

SoS In the SoS script the *k* mostly has a long vertical tail, with the arms being either straight, or curving, or slanting: , , , . In QUR 370.84.1/SoS, the fork slants backwards , but in QUR 370.84.2/SoS, by the same author, it takes the usual form, although it is formed differently, i.e. by adding a small curving line to the bottom of a shallow curve . Sometimes the stroke is hooked or slanted: , , . Two graphs are closer in shape to the typical 'common' forms: in QUR 305.11.1/SoS, the *k* is a curve with a curving tail and in one instance (QUR 952.50.1/SoS), it is a curve with a vertical stance , although later in the same text another graph takes a normal SoS form .

2.1.14 *l*

The shape of the *l* is a vertical, relatively long stroke (longer than the *n*).

'Common' Mostly a vertical stroke with or without a hook attached to its top or bottom: , , . The hook can be either at right angles to the vertical stroke, or slightly slanting , or a curving short dash .[186] The graph form of the *lām auctoris* often differs

[184] E.g. QUR 2.523.2/C, 449.10.2/C, 823.15.5/C. Forms with slanted arms appear also in some pre-'fine' script texts by members of the lineage of *ḏf*, cf., e.g., the graph form, although with a short tail, found in Is.Mu 562/C , whose author is only three generations removed from *ḏf* (see Chapter 4).

[185] Note that in QUR 258.72.1/C, by the same author *wkyt bn ʾbqt bn tʿḏh*, the *k* is formed in the typical 'common' way: it is a curve with a tail attached to its top-left (see above).

[186] The prolific author *ys²kr bn ḏfgt* left five texts in the region (QUR 2.399.1/C, 2.659.1/C, 64.175.2/C, 147.20.9/C, 147.29.2/C) using the same fine chiselling technique and very similar graph forms. However,

lām auctoris straight	46%	68%
lām auctoris straight short	7%	
All *l*'s straight	15%	
lām auctoris hooked	19%	24%
All *l*'s hooked	5%	
lām auctoris straight, other *l*'s hooked	5%	
lām auctoris hooked, other *l*'s straight	1%	
lām auctoris curving	2%	

Table 2.1: Graph forms of l in 3525 'common' texts

from the other *l*'s in the inscription. If other *l*'s are present, we can find for example an inscription which has a hooked *lām auctoris*, the other *l*'s being straight, or vice versa. Sometimes the *lām auctoris* is a shorter line [187] or slightly curving . In Table 2.1 one can see the distribution of the different graph forms and their combinations.[188] In the 'common' script, straight *l*'s are the most common option, but hooked *l*'s are also well attested. Very rarely, the *lām auctoris* can also have two hooks , looking like an *r*.

'Fine' In the 'fine' script the *l* is always a straight line .

SoS Always a straight line .

2.1.15 *m*

This basic shape consists of two concentric curves facing in the direction of the text. Both lower and upper ends are joined together by two small curves.

'Common' Most 'common' script forms are curved . The depth and form of the curves can vary. One or both curves can take a square or a pointed shape , , . In some cases the curves are elongated . Forms turned by 90° have also been attested: , . The two curves are sometimes not connected: .

he used the *lām auctoris* with a hook in the two inscriptions in QUR 147 (QUR 147.20.9/C, 147.29.2/C), but a straight *lām auctoris* in the two inscriptions he left in QUR 2 (QUR 2.399.6/C, QUR 2.659.1/C), and a curving *lām auctoris* in QUR 64 (QUR 64.175.2). At least at some point, these variants were probably contemporary.

[187] See, e.g., QUR 628.50.1/C, which presents two straight *l*'s, and the *lām auctoris* is shorter.

[188] The fields '*lām auctoris* straight' and '*lām auctoris* hooked' include those inscriptions in which no other *l* is present. The field '*lām auctoris* straight short' also includes rare examples of inscriptions which have a short straight *lām auctoris* and longer straight *l*'s. Within the field '*lām auctoris* straight, other *l*'s hooked', there are some texts with the *lām auctoris* being also short, but they are unmarked in the database. Also the cases in which the *l*'s are all hooked but the *lām auctoris* is shorter have been simply marked as 'All *l*'s hooked'.

'Fine' In comparison to the usual 'common' forms, the 'fine' ones are more elongated and compressed , and sometimes also pointed .

SoS All 'common' script forms or very similar forms have been attested in the SoS script, cf. , , . Some texts have elongated and pointed forms . QUR 25.73.1/SoS has a form similar to the 'fine' script one . In QUR 639.12.1/SoS, the *m* consists of an outer square form and a pointed inner indentation . In QUR 294.60.1/SoS, by a member of the people of *ʿmrt*, the *m* in the name of the author takes an elongated form , while the *m* in the name of the social group has the two arms curling back and not joining together, and only the lower one is joined to the back .[189] In QUR 551.93.1/SoS, the first instance of *m* has a regular slightly pointed shape , while the second one is turned by 90° and the legs curve inside without being joined .[190]

2.1.16 *n*

The basic shape of *n* is a short vertical stroke—shorter than the *l*.

'Common' In most cases it is a short dash , but sometimes it is relatively long , generating ambiguities with the straight form of the *l*. Occasionally it is also attested in the form of a dot , and can therefore be confused with the dot version of the ʿ.[191]

'Fine' A short dash .

SoS In the majority of texts it is a dot , but the dash form is also well attested.[192]

2.1.17 *q*

The shape of the *q* is a vertical stroke going through a circle in its middle.

[189]There are also instances from the Dūmah region in which the arms both curl back and none of them is joined to the back, cf., e.g., WTI 14/SoS, 16/SoS, 17/SoS, 20/SoS. In WTI 55/SoS, this form occurs next to an allograph with the usual concentric curves form, the outer one being square. In JaS 132.2/SoS, from the ʿArʿar region, a form with both arms being joined to the back occurs next to the usual concentric curves allograph.

[190]Cf. the same form, although not turned by 90°, in WTI 55/SoS, found at Sākāka.

[191]In the rock art signature QUR 962.1.1/C *l ḏkr bn rbn h-ʿr* 'By Ḏkr son of Rbn is the ass', the *n* of *bn* 'son of' is a dot, whereas the *n* of the patronym takes the usual short dash form, so this would seem to represent a 'common' variant form, although rarely attested. Since the examples of dot form of *n* are generally direct hammered texts, this could represent a faster way to carve the graph employing this technique. In some hammered inscriptions both *n* and ʿ appear in their dot form (e.g. QUR 39.5.1/C and QUR 7.95.2/C). A simple matter of 'economy of carving' can therefore perhaps explain the use of a dot version of the ʿ as well, since it is much easier to carve than a circle.

[192]In QUR 25.73.1/SoS dot and dash forms coexist within the same text.

'Common' The 'common' graph form is mostly a circle with a vertical line crossing it . Sometimes it is carved by first drawing a circle and then two vertical lines protruding from both sides .[193] The circle can be also filled in and, in the elongated form, rather small .

'Fine' In the 'fine' script the circle is usually an oval or a rhomboid , .

SoS Same form as the usual 'common' script one . In two texts,[194] the circle is a big oval: , .

2.1.18 *r*

The 'common' shape of the *r* is a shallow curve facing in the direction of the text, while the 'fine' shape is a shallow curve with two vertical hooks, which help in distinguishing it from the 'fine' shape of the *b*, also a shallow curve (see §2.1.3 above). In the SoS script we find different graphematic allographs: a shallow and a deep curve (often with one or two hooks/curly elements).

'Common' The most common graph form is a vertical line with two short protruding arms, which are either at right angles to the line or slanting open , but the shallow curve form is rather common as well.[195] The curvilinear variant can generate ambiguity with the shape of the *b*, while the elongated form has very short arms: , .

'Fine' A shallow curve or sometimes an angle with two vertical hooks. In the transitional text QUR 529.20.1/C/F, it is just a shallow curve , which is usually the form of the *b* in the 'fine' script; in this text it is distinguished from the *b* because it is in comparison shallower, as in the 'common' script.[196]

SoS In the SoS script, the *r* exhibits a great number of variants, among which are 'common'- and 'fine'-like forms, as well as Hismaic-like and original SoS forms. Often it is curvilinear or square and has the top arm curled in a hook – , , , – and, in two cases,[197] the lower arm curves downwards: , .[198] Sometimes it has the form of

[193]In QUR 171.107.1/C, the author exploited a natural circle-shaped hollow in the rock and carved the circle of the *q* around it, which gave the graph a nice three-dimensional effect.

[194]QUR 297.7.1/SoS and 533.36.1/SoS.

[195]The author *fhrn bn khln* (see §6.1.3) employed both the shallow curve form and the form as a straight line with two short arms, indicating that they were used interchangeably.

[196]On the development of the 'fine' *r*, see §4.1.3.2.

[197]QUR 689.3.1/SoS and 956.43.1/SoS.

[198]In the SoS inscriptions from Dūmah, the *r* can also take the comparable graph form of a vertical line with a curl (cf. the script table in Norris 2018:80) and it sometimes has a horizontal rather than a vertical stance (cf., e.g., Al-Theeb 2000, inscr. 124).

a small deep curve , as in Hismaic, and in some cases a vertical short hook protrudes from one or both arms of the small curve , . In a few texts it is a straight line with two arms, as in the 'common' script . In one inscription (QUR 639.3.1/SoS) the arms are curved and slightly converging , while in another (QUR 952.50.1/SoS) it has a graph form similar to the 'fine' script one, i.e. a shallow curve with two vertical hooks, although this form is not as compressed as in the 'fine' script . In QUR 551.93.1/SoS, six instances of *r* are attested and remarkably each example is different from the others: , , , , , .

2.1.19 *s¹*

In the 'common' and SoS scripts the basic shape of *s¹* is a curve facing in the direction of the text with long arms and a short horizontal tail attached to its back, while the 'fine' shape is an acute angle facing either downwards or upwards.

'Common' The 'common' forms are often curvilinear ; sometimes the tail is just hinted and barely visible, and it can look very similar to a *b*. The curve often takes a square form . It can also have the form of a pointed curve or an acute angle form facing the direction of the text, with or without a shaft protruding from its vertex: , . It is sometimes formed by carving a horizontal line and adding a curving line to it . Variants in which the *s¹* is turned by 90° have also been attested: , ; in QUR 689.3.2/C, the *s¹* is also pointed, similarly to the 'fine' form: .

'Fine' The 'fine' forms are mostly turned by 90° to the usual 'common' stances and consistently pointed, with the opening facing either downwards or upwards , . In one hammered inscription (QUR 2.336.1/F), its form is curvier and does not have a vertical stance , although the same author wrote incised texts in which he employed the usual 'fine' form and stance.[199]

SoS In the SoS script it has usually a pointed form , and in some cases it is an acute angle . In QUR 137.90.1/SoS it has a square form and the stance is turned by 45° . In QUR 203.7.1/SoS the shaft curves upwards , while in QUR 232.30.1/SoS it is rather long and slightly bent downwards .[200] In the SoS script sometimes the *s¹* is very small in proportion to the other graphs of the text .[201]

2.1.20 *s²*

In the 'common' and 'fine' scripts this grapheme has the shape of a vertical wavy line with four or more undulations—in any case more than the undulations of the *f*. In the

[199] Cf. QUR 2.490.1/F and see the discussion of the writing style of this author in §6.2.3.

[200] Long shafts are also found in the SoS texts of Dūmah (Norris 2018:81) and in some Hismaic variants (see King 1990a:§2.A).

[201] See for example QUR 294.113.3/SoS.

SoS script, it has only two undulations,[202] but some SoS texts attest the 'common' shape as well.[203]

'Common' In the 'common' script it is often curved, the undulations being of the same size , . The relative size and conformation of the undulations can vary a lot, the central wave is sometimes bigger than the others , as in the *f*,[204] and the form of the side waves varies and can curl up in different ways, e.g. and .[205]

The undulations also occur as zigzags , .

'Fine' A zigzag vertical line with varying numbers of dashes.

SoS A wavy or zigzag-form consisting of two undulations/angles facing either in the direction of the text or backwards: , ,[206] , , . A 2-shaped version of this form is also attested twice . Other types with waves of different sizes and conformations with three instead of two waves are attested: , , . Variants more similar to the 'common' script forms are also found , .

2.1.21 *ṣ*

A vertical stroke with a circle attached to its top and a fork attached to its bottom.

'Common' The circle is usually empty , but can sometimes be filled in or, in incised texts, the vertical stroke can pass through it . In elongated forms, the loop is small and the fork has an acute angle: . In QUR 256.27.1/C, the fork is square and the graph is turned by 180°, with the fork facing upwards .[207]

'Fine' In comparison to the 'common' script, the angle of the fork is more acute and the loop more elongated and pointed .

[202]One of the few Hismaic texts of the JQC (QUR 657.2.1/H) remarkably shows graphs with this shape rather than the typical Hismaic vertical-line shape.

[203]The same has been observed by Norris in his study of the SoS texts of the Dūmah region (see Norris 2018: 80).

[204]The prolific author *ys²kr bn ḍfgt* employed the most frequent form of the *s²* in all but one inscription, in which he used the variant with a bigger central undulation (QUR 64.175.2/C). A similar form of the *s²* as an *f* with two extra curls is also attested in SoS, cf. WTI 18/SoS.

[205]Clark interpreted the latter shape in CSNS 27/C as a variant form of the *ġ* (see his script table in Clark 1979: 71), but it is most probably a 'common' *s²*.

[206]Note that this form is very similar to the 'common' form of *ġ*, see §2.1.9 above.

[207]It should be noted that in the same text there is a further graph with a forked shape – the *h* – but in that graph the fork takes the usual pointed form and the graph has the usual stance with the fork facing downwards.

SoS The usual 'common' script form . In some cases the circle is bigger and the shaft remarkably short: , .

2.1.22 *t*

The shape of the *t* is a square cross.

'Common' The two strokes are mostly at 90° to each other +, but they are occasionally rotated by 45° X. In the latter case, especially if the two lines are not at 90° to each other, it can be mistaken for a *ḫ*.

'Fine' The same form as the 'common' one +. In many examples the cross is turned by 45° ×, sometimes with oblique crossing lines x, looking like a *ḫ*.

SoS Same forms as in the 'common' script (see above).

2.1.23 *ṯ*

The basic shape of *ṯ* consists of a vertical stroke with a circle attached to each end.

'Common' The circles (or loops) are usually attached centrally to the stroke , but they sometimes protrude from one side of the stroke . The two circles can be filled in or, in incised texts, the vertical stroke can pass through them . In the elongated form the loops are small .

'Fine' As in the *ṣ*, the loops are more compressed than in the 'common' script .

SoS The usual 'common' script form .

2.1.24 *ṭ*

The shape of the *ṭ* consists of three vertical strokes crossed centrally by a horizontal one.

'Common' In the 'common' script it mostly consists of the three vertical lines crossed by a single horizontal one , but sometimes it has two horizontal lines .

'Fine' We have only two graphs of *ṭ* in the 'fine' texts, one (QUR 2.490.1/F) is identical to the usual 'common' script form , while the other (in the transitional text QUR 529.20.1/C/F) has a slanted crossing line .

SoS In QUR 551.93.1/SoS there is the only clear attestation of *ṭ*, and it takes the 'common' script usual form .

2.1.25 *w*

The shape of the *w* is a circle with a line crossing it in the middle.

'Common' In the 'common' script it has a circular or an oval form of variable regularity: , . The crossing line can also have a vertical stance . In a few texts it takes a square form .

It is also rarely attested as an oval with a cross inside .

'Fine' In the 'fine' script it is usually a rhomboid with a slanted line crossing it .

SoS The usual 'common' script forms (see above). In one inscription (QUR 12.1.1/SoS) it has a rectangular form .

2.1.26 *y*

The *y* has the shape of a vertical stroke with a circle attached to one extremity.

'Common' In the 'common' script a circle or loop is attached to either the top or the bottom end . The circle is sometimes filled in and smaller in the elongated variant .

'Fine' The 'fine' graph form has a squeezed and pointed loop , cf. also *ṣ* and *ṯ* above.

SoS Mostly the same form as in the 'common' script . In some cases the circle is bigger and/or formed on one side of the stroke: , . In two texts[208] the loop is pronouncedly pointed .

2.1.27 *z*

The shape of the *z* is a vertical stroke with a short dash joined at right angles to one extremity at its middle.

'Common' The short dash is usually attached to the top, or, more rarely, to the bottom: , .[209] The elongated form has a shorter dash .

[208] QUR 739.75.1/SoS and 739.87.1/SoS.

[209] In QUR 148.13.1/C *l ʿzz bn r{b}{ʾ}{l}*, the second *z* is upside down in relation to the first, perhaps to create symmetry; on this phenomenon in Hismaic, see King 1990a:§2.D.2.

'Fine' Same form as in the 'common' script ⊤.

SoS Same form as in the 'common' script.[210]

2.1.28 ẓ

The basic shape of the ẓ is a deep curve facing downwards and with two long legs.

'Common' In the 'common' script the ẓ takes either a curved or a square form (∩, ⊓) and it can be confused with a *b* turned by 90°, which can also have long legs.[211] It can also have converging legs ∩, sometimes also facing in the direction of the inscription ⊏ (i.e. turned by 90°). It sometimes has a pointed form ∩.[212]

'Fine' The most distinctive 'fine' graph form is an open rectangle or a pointed form with two slanted dashes protruding from its legs ⊓,[213] ∩. It sometimes has the square form of an open rectangle, as in one of the 'common' script variants ⊓.

SoS Three 'common' script variants are attested: the curved one ⋂, and in the same text (QUR 551.93.1/SoS) the pointed ∩ and the V-shaped ones ⋀.[214]

2.2 Distinguishing features

This Section discusses the features distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from each other as well as the features distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from Hismaic and Thamudic B. Table 2.2 shows the graph forms of the Safaitic scripts of the JQC[215] together with Hismaic and Thamudic B,[216] the two Ancient North Arabian scripts which are closest

[210]Norris notes that the SoS texts of Dūma sometimes attest also the Hismaic form (Norris 2018: 80).

[211]See §3.1.2 for some examples.

[212]E.g. QUR 974.43.1/C.

[213]Note that this form is very similar to a 'common' script *f* with square middle undulation (see above), the main distinction being its vertical stance and the slanted dashes (in the 'common' *f* they are two curls instead).

[214]According to both King 1990a:680 (in the commentary to WTI 40/SoS) and Norris 2018:80 (script table), the 'common' form with converging arms is also attested in the SoS script. However, this form is not attested in the SoS texts of the JQC.

[215]NB: in order to slim down the table, I have not always displayed all forms described above, especially in cases where several graph forms are attested, as for example SoS script *r*; see above for a more complete representation of the attested forms.

[216]Because only a few examples of Hismaic and Thamudic B texts were found in the Jebel Qurma region, the graph forms of these two scripts have been adapted from King 1990a:719–723 and Macdonald 2000:34 respectively. The graph forms of the Safaitic scripts and Hismaic are displayed as if they were in a text running horizontally from left to right. The Thamudic B graph forms, however, have been kept in their original direction following Macdonald's script table, i.e. as if in a text running horizontally from right to left, as this is the usual direction of Thamudic B texts. Because the left-to-right direction is the most intuitive way of reading a table in a text written in the Latin script, and because the main focus of this

to Safaitic.

As we shall see, unlike the features distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from Hismaic and Thamudic B, the ones distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from each other are prevalently secondary distinguishing features.[217]

It should be noted that the distinguishing value of a given graph form is relative to which scripts we are comparing. For example, the Thamudic B graph form of *ḍ* with slanted strokes can be derived from the 'common' form through a recurring graphic variable, i.e. the slanting of strokes (see the list at the beginning of §2.1 above), and hence can be considered as a secondary distinguishing feature in relation to the 'common' script. On the other hand, this same form has a primary distinguishing value if compared to the Hismaic and SoS form of *ḍ*. For this reason, in this Section I make separate lists for the features distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from each other (§2.2.1) *vs* the features distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from Hismaic and Thamudic B (§2.2.2).

2.2.1 Differences between the Safaitic scripts

In the following, I will list the features distinguishing the Safaitic scripts from each other as represented by the inscriptions of the JQC. The 'common' script and the 'fine' script are distinguished from each other exclusively by secondary distinguishing features, as the latter is derived from the former through compression and elongation, which is a *recurring graphic variable* (see the list in §2.1 above). The SoS script, however, is distinguished from the 'common' and the 'fine' script by one primary distinguishing feature, i.e. the form of the *ḍ* (shared with Hismaic).

2.2.1.1 'Common' script distinguishing features

If compared to the other Safaitic inventories, the 'common' script exhibits the following distinguishing features:

- The ʿ as a dot · and the rare form of a circle with a dot inside ⊙;
- The *b* with long arms ⊂;
- The usual 'common' script form of the *ḍ* 𐪈;[218]
- The form of the *ḍ* as a hash 𐪈 and the one with a cross inside 𐪈;
- The following forms of the *f*: 𐪊, 𐪊;
- The rectangle form of the *g* ▯;

study are the Safaitic scripts, I preferred to leave this small inconsistency in the table rather than to adjust the text direction of the other inventories according to the Thamudic B direction. Note that, unlike Safaitic and Hismaic, the Thamudic B inventory does not attest any clear graphs for *ẓ*, which may suggests that it was not part of its graphematic inventory.

[217] For a definition of primary *vs* secondary distinguishing features, see §1.3.3.2.

[218] A similar form is also found in the 'fine' script, although slightly different, i.e. with the horizontal lines being slanted (see below).

	‘Common’	‘Fine’	SoS	Hismaic	Thamudic B
ʾ					
ʿ					
b					
d					
ḏ					
ḍ					
f					
g					
ġ					
h					
ḥ					
ḫ					
k					
l					
m					
n					
q					
r					
s[1]					
s[2]					
ṣ					
t					
ṯ					
ṭ					
w					
y					
z					
ẓ					

Table 2.2: Graph forms of the Safaitic scripts (Jebel Qurma region) in comparison with Hismaic (adapted from King 1990a:719–723) and Thamudic B (based on Macdonald 2000:34).

- The wavy forms of *ġ* (,[219] , ,) and the rare form of the *ġ* as a curve with a slanting dash on top ;
- Forms of the *ḥ* with the crossing line protruding past the back (, , ,) ;
- The *k* as a curve with a slanted tail attached to its top-left or bottom-left (as well as), pointed forms (,) and 90° forms (, ,);
- The square forms of the *k* with a short tail , ;
- The *l* with a hook and the rare curving *lām auctoris* variant ;
- The *n* as a relatively long line ;
- The forms of the *r* as a shallow curve and as straight line with two short arms , which are most typically employed in the 'common' script although rarely attested in the other inventories as well;
- Some peculiar rare forms of the *s²*: , , ;
- The rare form of the *ṭ* with an extra horizontal line ;
- The form of the *ẓ* with converging arms .

2.2.1.2 'Fine' script distinguishing features

The most distinctive 'fine' distinguishing features are:

- The form of the *r* with two vertical hooks , ;[220]
- The form of the *k* (,), which is a stylization of the 'common' form (see §4.1.3.3);
- The pointed and elongated form of *ḥ* with vertical stance (,);[221]
- The pointed form of *s¹* with a vertical stance (,), which only rarely features in the 'common' script.

Furthermore, the following forms are found exclusively in the 'fine' inventory:

- Forms with rhomboids instead of circles (, *g* , *w* and *q*);
- Forms with slanted lines *vs* the horizontal/vertical lines in the 'common' script equivalents: *ḍ* , *ṭ* and *w* ;
- The pointed and elongated form of the *m* ;

[219] Note that this form would correspond with an *s²* in the SoS script.
[220] This form is marginally attested in the SoS script, although less compressed (see §2.1.18 above).
[221] Pointed forms of the *ḥ* are attested also in the 'common' script, but they have a horizontal stance and are not as elongated and compressed.

- Graph forms with more compressed and more pointed loops than their ‘common’ equivalents: *d* , *ṣ* , *ṯ* , *y* .
- The forms of the *ẓ* with two slanted dashes protruding from the legs: , ;
- The zigzag form of the *f* simplified to two angles ;
- The pointed and elongated form of *g* ;
- The obtuse angle variant of *b* .

2.2.1.3 SoS script distinguishing features

As mentioned above, the SoS script presents one primary distinguishing feature which clearly distinguishes it from the other Safaitic inventories, i.e. the *ḍ* as two concentric circles , also attested as a circle with a dot inside . In addition, it exhibits several secondary distinguishing features:

- The s^2 as a wavy line with two curves, attested in several variants (, , , etc.);
- Forms of ʾ with slanted forks or stem (, ,), a form with very short stem and a further variant with a square upper fork ;
- The *b* as a straight line with two short arms ;
- The *d* with a square loop ;
- Forms of *ḏ* with peculiar conformations or positions of fork/tail (, ,);
- A number of variant forms of *k* with a hooked tail (, , ,), other variants with a curving stroke (,), and one particular form of the ‘common’ shape with a curly tail ;
- One form of *ḫ* with converging upper arms ;
- The forms of *m* with arms curving backwards and not joined together , ;
- The *q* with a big compressed oval element instead of a circle (,);
- Several distinctive variant forms of *r* with one or two curly elements (, , , , ,) and the variant as a small deep curve ;
- The forms of s^1 with a long slightly curving shaft (,);
- The forms of *ṣ* with big loops (,);
- The forms of *y* with big loops (, ,).

Some forms are typical of the SoS script but they are rarely attested in other inventories as well. These are:

- The *ḏ* with a hooked tail (, , , ,);[222]
- The forms of *k* with a long vertical tail and small body (, , ,), occasionally found in 'common' texts;
- The *n* as a dot ˙ , only rarely employed in 'common' script texts.

2.2.2 The Safaitic scripts, Hismaic, and Thamudic B

In this Section, I will compare the Safaitic inventories to the Hismaic and Thamudic B inventories, discussing the features distinguishing them as well as their shared features. For the Hismaic inventory the reference is King 1990a:§2.A, 719–723, while for the Thamudic B inventory I used Macdonald 2000:34. It should be noted that the Hismaic graph forms displayed in Table 2.2 are only a selection of the ones described in King (1990a), to which the reader is directed for a complete account. Because the 'fine' script is mainly a more compressed and elongated form of the 'common' script, and because forms with a compressed style are not part of the Hismaic and Thamudic B inventories, I will limit my comparison to the 'common' and the SoS inventories. While treating the shared features, I will not discuss those graphemes which attest either the same or closely related graph forms in all the inventories, as it would be redundant. This concerns the forms of fourteen graphemes: ʿ, *b*, *d*, *f*, *h*, *ḫ*, *l*, *q*, *r*, *s*[1], *ṣ*, *t*, *w* and *y*. However, similarities in the graph forms – as well as differences – will be brought up when relevant.

2.2.2.1 The 'common' script *vs* Hismaic

Primary distinguishing features There are several primary distinguishing features which differentiate the 'common' script from Hismaic:

- The forms of *ḏ* (, , etc.) *vs* Hismaic (, , etc.) ;
- The forms of *ḍ* (, ,) *vs* Hismaic (,) ;
- The forms of *g* (, , etc.) *vs* Hismaic , representing the *ṯ* in the 'common' Safaitic script;
- The forms of *ġ* (, , etc.) *vs* Hismaic ;
- The forms of *ṯ* *vs* Hismaic , representing the *ḥ* in 'common' Safaitic;

[222] This form is never found in the 'common' script, but it is attested in two texts by the 'fine' script author *ms*[1]*k bn ʾnʿm* (see §6.2.3).

- The forms of *ṯ* *vs* Hismaic (, , etc., these two Hismaic forms representing the *ḍ* in the 'common' Safaitic script);
- The 'common' form of the *z* *vs* Hismaic , ;
- The forms of *ẓ* (, , etc.) *vs* Hismaic , .
- The Hismaic form of *s*[2] as a straight line *vs* the 'common' squiggly line form (, , etc.).

Secondary distinguishing features A number of features can be employed as secondary distinguishing features to differentiate the 'common' script from Hismaic:

- Some Hismaic forms of the ʾ: , , , ;
- The 'common' script form of the *b* as a curve with long arms , representing the *r* in Hismaic;
- The large Hismaic forms of the *b*,[223] made of a straight line with two arms (, ,), the forms with short arms corresponding to the *r* in the 'common' script;
- Some Hismaic forms of the *d* (, , ,) unattested in the 'common' script;
- In the 'common' script the half circle of the *d* only rarely faces backwards. This is the exact opposite of Hismaic, in which it mostly faces backwards;
- The 'common' script form of *ḥ* in which the crossing line does not extend to form a tail , as it is mostly the case in Hismaic, where a tail-less form, only rarely attested for the *ḥ*, is normally employed for the *ṭ*;
- The typical 'common' script forms of the *k* (,), only rarely attested in Hismaic;
- The hooked forms of *l* are shared with Hismaic, and also the slightly curving form (.
- Two Hismaic forms of the *m* : , ;
- The Hismaic hooked form of the *l* with the hook being deeply curved ;
- The 'common' script form of the *l* as a straight line, only rarely found in Hismaic;
- The two forms of *n* as a dash and a dot are attested in both the 'common' script and in Hismaic, but they occur with the opposite frequency: the dash shape is typical of the 'common' script, while the dot shape is typical of Hismaic;

[223] In the 'common' script, the *b* is usually proportionally smaller than the *r* and its curve is deeper than the curved version of the *r*, while Hismaic witnesses the exact opposite situation (see King 1990a:§2.B).

- The form of the *s²* as a squiggly line, the typical 'common' graph form of this grapheme, is only rarely attested in Hismaic, where it is mostly a straight line, which on the other hand would stand for *l* in the 'common' script.
- The Hismaic form of *ṣ* with a big loop and the one with the fork being joined directly to the loop ;
- The Hismaic *y* with a big loop .

Shared features Despite the many differences, there are also a number of features which are shared:

- The form of the *ḥ* with the crossing line extending past its back to form a tail;
- The forms of the *k* in which the tail is vertical;
- The hooked forms of the *l* with the hook being a small dash: , ;
- The curved form of the *l*: ;
- The form of the ʿ as a dot, although this form is very rare in Hismaic;
- The form of the ʿ as a circle with a dot inside, rarely attested in both scripts.

2.2.2.2 The 'common' script *vs* Thamudic B

Primary distinguishing features The 'common' script is distinguished from Thamudic B by a number of primary distinguishing features:

- The 'common' forms of ʾ (, , etc.) *vs* Thamudic B , , etc.;
- The 'common' forms of *ḏ* (, , etc.) *vs* Thamudic B , , etc.;
- The 'common' forms of *ġ* (, , etc.) *vs* Thamudic B , ;
- The 'common' forms of *ḥ* (, , etc.) *vs* Thamudic B , which represents the *ḏ* in the 'common' script;
- The 'common' forms of *s²* (,) *vs* Thamudic B , ;
- The 'common' form of the *ṭ* *vs* Thamudic B , .

Secondary distinguishing features The two scripts are moreover differentiated by several secondary distinguishing features:

- The ‘common’ forms of ʿ as a dot and as a circle with a dot inside, is not part of the Thamudic B inventory;
- Two ‘common’ forms of *ḍ*: ⌗ , ⊞ ;
- The Thamudic B forms of *ḍ* with slanted protruding lines: ⌘ , ⌑ , ⌘ ;
- The Thamudic B forms of *f* turned by 90° to the ‘common’ stance: ∩ , ∩ ;
- Some ‘common’ forms of *g*: ○ , ○ , ▯ ;
- The ‘common’ *l* as a straight line | ;
- The Thamudic B form of *l*, whose hook is deeply curved ⎫ , unlike the usual form of the hook in the ‘common’ script ⎡ ;
- The ‘common’ form of the *n* as a short line or as a dot *vs* the Thamudic B form as a long line, which would represent an *l* in the ‘common’ script;
- All ‘common’ forms of *b*, *k* and s^1 not turned by 90°;
- One Thamudic B form of *ḫ*: ⤫ ;
- All ‘common’ angular forms of *r*;
- The Thamudic B form of *r* as a shallow curve facing backwards;
- The Thamudic B form of *ṣ* with the shaft crossing the fork ⚲;
- The Thamudic B square *w* with a cross inside ⊞ .

Shared features Despite the many differences outlined above, the ‘common’ script and Thamudic B no doubt share also some features:

- The form of the *ḍ* as a rectangular grid with a vertical stance and only the vertical lines protruding ⌸ ;
- The forms of *b*, *k*, *m* and s^1 turned by 90°;
- The *ṯ* as a straight vertical line with two loops attached to both extremities;
- The *r* as a shallow curve facing in the direction of the text.
- The oval form of the *g*.

2.2.2.3 The SoS script *vs* Hismaic

Primary distinguishing features Seven primary distinguishing features differentiate the SoS script from Hismaic. They are only one less than the ones distinguishing the 'common' script, as the SoS script and Hismaic share the same concentric circle form of the *ḍ*.

- The SoS form of the *ḏ* (, , etc.) *vs* Hismaic , , etc.;
- The SoS form of the *g* *vs* Hismaic ;
- The SoS form of the *ġ* (, , etc.) *vs* Hismaic , , etc.;
- The SoS form of the s^2 (, , etc.) *vs* Hismaic ;
- The SoS form of the *ṯ* *vs* Hismaic , , etc.;
- The SoS form of the *ṭ* *vs* Hismaic ;
- The SoS form of the *ẓ* *vs* Hismaic , ;
- The SoS form of the *ẓ̣* *vs* Hismaic .

Secondary distinguishing features The following secondary distinguishing features differentiate the SoS script from Hismaic, some of which are the same as the ones distinguishing the 'common' script:

- Some Hismaic forms of the *d* (, ,) unattested in the SoS script;
- In the SoS script, as in the 'common' script, the half circle of the *d* only rarely faces backwards. This is the exact opposite of Hismaic, in which it mostly faces backwards;
- In the SoS form of the *ḥ*, the crossing line never extends to form a tail, as is the case in Hismaic, where a tail-less form is only rarely attested for the *ḥ*, as it represents the *ṭ*;
- The SoS graph forms of the *k* with a long hooked tail (, ,) looking like a Hismaic *ġ*;
- The SoS form of the *k* as a curve with a curly tail , also an attested Hismaic form for the *ġ*;
- The Hismaic hooked forms of the *l* as well as the curving form are never found in the SoS script, where the *l* is always a straight line;
- All SoS forms of the *r* except the small-curve form, which is shared;
- The SoS forms of the s^1 with long and slightly curving tails: , .

Shared features The SoS script and Hismaic share a number of features:

- Some forms of the ʾ: , , ;
- The *b* as a vertical line with two arms;
- The form of the *d* with a bigger loop , and the one with a squarish loop ;
- The *ḍ* as two concentric circles or as a circle with a dot inside ;
- The forms of the *k* with long vertical tails and small bodies ;
- The *r* in the SoS script is sometimes a small curve and this is the usual Hismaic form.[224]
- The form of the *q* with the circle as a big oval: ;
- The *y* and the *ṣ* with big loops.

2.2.2.4 The SoS script *vs* Thamudic B

The SoS script is distinguished from Thamudic B by the same features distinguishing the 'common' script (see §2.2.2.2 above), to which should be added the primary distinguishing features of the SoS shapes of *ḍ* and s^2, as well as the following secondary distinguishing features:

- The Thamudic B 90° forms of *b*, *k*, *m*, s^1;
- All SoS script forms of the *k*;
- The SoS script form of the *l* as a straight long line, *vs* the Thamudic B hooked form;
- All SoS script forms of the *r*.

Excluding the form of the *ṯ*, which is the same in the SoS script and in Thamudic B, the SoS script does not share any other of the features which are on the other hand shared with the 'common' script (see above).

[224] In one SoS text (QUR 297.7.1/SoS) both the *b* and the *r* are small curves and only contextually distinguishable. Cf. the very similar situation of ambiguity between *b* and *r* often arising in Hismaic, as observed by King 1990a:§2.B.

2.3 On the features of QUR 2.712.1

QUR 2.712.1 (Fig. 2.1(a)) exhibits a set of features which cannot be classed as either 'common', 'fine', or SoS, and which may constitute a further Safaitic script.[225]

The script of this inscription is characterised by an overall compressed outlook, showing some similarities with the 'fine' script – see, e.g., the very compressed and elongated *m*'s and some graphs of *w* with rhomboid forms, e.g. – but at the same time it presents graph forms which are clearly distinct from the typical 'fine' forms. For example, the forms of *ḥ* and of *s*[1] do not have a vertical stance, which is a distinguishing feature of the 'fine' inventory.[226] Moreover, while the first two graphs of *b* are an obtuse angle and a very shallow curve respectively – two forms which are also found in the 'fine' script – the third graph is not as compressed . The two graphs of *r* are both hooked: the first one is unfortunately partially damaged, but it would seem a shallow curve with two hooks , similarly to the 'fine' script; the second one has a square form with the top arm curled in a hook , a form usually found in SoS texts (see §2.1.18 above). Finally, the shaft of the *ḏ* ends with a hook , which is a feature typical of the SoS *ḏ*, although it sometimes occurs in 'fine' texts as well (see §2.1.5 above).

Texts with similar features are attested also in other collections, see, e.g., HCH 3 (Fig. 2.1(b)), HCH 69 (Fig. 2.1(c)), and BS 1085 (Fig. 2.1(d)[227]). Also in these examples one finds compressed forms which are typical of the 'fine' script next to different, less compressed forms. In HCH 3 (Fig. 2.1(b)), the *r* is a straight line with two converging arms , which is also found in some 'fine' texts from later generations (see §4.1.4). HCH 69 and BS 1085 exhibit graphs of the *r* as a small shallow curve with two hooks, also a typical 'fine' form. At the same time, all three texts present forms of *ḥ* and *s*[1] with a horizontal stance. HCH 3 and HCH 69 attest a square form of the *ḥ*, in HCH 3 this form is found next to a curvilinear allograph. While the *m*'s in BS 1085, similarly to QUR 2.712.1, are quite compressed and elongated, in HCH 69 they appear to be much less compressed. I would finally like to note that, as in QUR 2.712.1, the shaft of the *ḏ* in HCH 69 ends with a small hook.

2.4 Texts with both 'common' and Thamudic B features

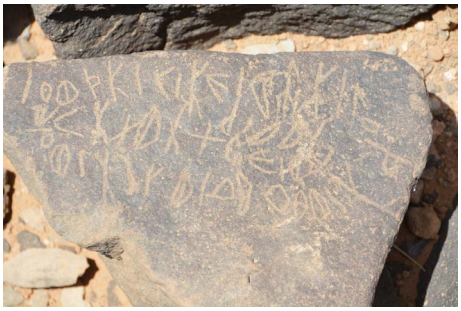
While the JQC contains only one clear example of a text in the Thamudic B script,[228] in three texts 'common' Safaitic forms occur next to Thamudic B ones. It is possible that

[225]The text reads: *l ʿwdʾl bn ʾḥlm ḏ ʾl s*[1]*ʿdʾl w wgm ʿl-whbʾl w ʿl-ḥb ʾḫw-h trḥn w {r}{ġ}m[n] mny* 'By ʿwdʾl son of ʾḥlm of the people of S[1]ʿdʾl and he grieved for Whbʾl and for Ḥb, his two brothers, who had perished and were {taken away} by Fate'.

[226]See §2.2.1.2 above and §4.1.1.1.

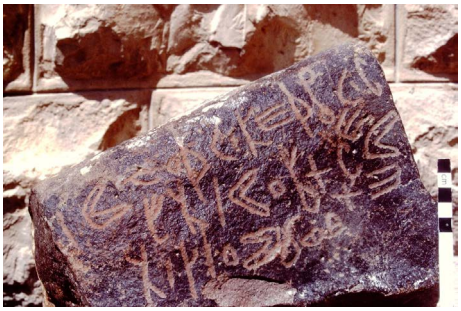
[227]NB: this text was collected via OCIANA in 2019, but now (December 2021) it is not to be found in the OCIANA anymore.

[228]The text reads: QUR 956.91.1/ThB *h rḍw s*[1]*ʿd-n ʿl-ndb* 'O Rḍw, help me/us on the matter of/against *ndb*'. I thank Jérôme Norris for suggesting this reading to me. My initial reading was: *h rḍw s*[1]*ʿd nʿl [b]n db* 'O Rḍw, help Nʿl [son of] Db!'.



(a) QUR 2.712.1

(b) HCH 3 (Photo: OCIANA)



(c) HCH 69 (Photo: OCIANA)

(d) BS 1085 (Photo: OCIANA)

Figure 2.1: QUR 2.712.1 and other texts with similar features

(a) QUR 176.22.1/C/ThB (rock side 1)

(b) QUR 176.22.1/C/ThB (rock side 2)

(c) QUR 64.175.1/C/ThB (upper text)

(d) QUR 7.25.1/C/ThB (bottom text)

Figure 2.2: Texts with ‘common’ and Thamudic B features

such features are due to graphic interference of the ‘common’ features on Thamudic B authors passing by in the region or, the other way around, of Thamudic B features on ‘common’ script authors who were familiar with Thamudic B. In absence of chronological context the direction or even plausibility of such an interference is difficult to establish.

All three texts are initial prayers directed to the god *rḍw*—this prayer and god are well attested both in Thamudic B and in ‘common’ texts.[229]

In QUR 176.22.1/C/ThB,[230] which runs vertically downwards on a panel of curving shape (see Figs. 2.2(a)-2.2(b)[231]), the *r* is a shallow curve, a form found both in the ‘common’ script and in Thamudic B. The *n* is a long stroke (as in Thamudic B), but it is occasionally found in the ‘common’ script as well. The *ḍ* has the Thamudic B form of a circle with protruding slanting lines. However, the *ḥ* has the ‘common’ form and the ʿ

[229]There are also some initial prayers which could in principle be classed as either ‘common’ or Thamudic B, as their script lacks sufficient distinguishing features to decide, e.g. QUR 2.32.3/C?, 370.90.1/C? and 952.88.1/C? = C 5278, Rees 49. For a list of the features distinguishing the ‘common’ script from Thamudic B, see §2.2.2.2 above.

[230]The text reads: *h rḍw s¹ʿd ʿmr bn bz{ḥ}* ‘O Rḍw, help ʿmr son of {Bzḥ}!’.

[231]Note that the images are turned by 90° to the right. Fig.2.2(a) shows the first part of the text, while Fig. 2.2(b) shows the other side of the curving rock with the second part of the text.

takes the 'common' dot form. Also the form of the *b*, a straight line with short arms, is sometimes attested in the 'common' inventory, but never in the Thamudic B inventory, where the arms are always long.

In QUR 64.175.1/C/ThB *h rḏw s¹ʿd bnn* 'O Rḏw, help Bnn!' – the top inscription in Fig. 2.2(c) – the *ḏ* has the typical Thamudic B form with slanted protruding lines.[232] At the same time, the *ʿ* takes the dot form – attested in the 'common' inventory but not in the Thamudic B one – and the *r* has the typical 'common' form of a straight line with two short arms. The *b* and the *s¹* are curved, as is mostly the case in the 'common' script.

The third inscription is QUR 7.25.1/C/ThB (Fig. 2.2(d)), composed of two lines and running boustrophedon. In this ambiguous text,[233] the features shared by the 'common' script and Thamudic B are: the *r* as a shallow curve, the *s¹* with a square form and turned by 90°, the *m* turned by 90°, the form of the *h*. The three *l*'s have all hooks, the first being deeply curved, as in the usual Thamudic B form, while the other two have a 90° hook, as in the usual 'common' hooked variant. At the same time, the *ḏ* exhibits the typical Thamudic B form of a circle with slanted protruding lines, while all other graphs (*ʿ*, *g*, *ḏ̲* and *z*) have typically 'common' forms. The *d* curiously lies horizontally.

[232]Note that QUR 64.175.2/C *l ys²kr bn ḏfgt* 'By Ys²kr son of Ḏfgt', the 'common' inscription carved right below, shows the 'common' form of the *ḏ* as a rectangular grid, which can be contrasted to the Thamudic B form right above.

[233]The text reads *h rḏw s¹ʿd-hn gzz ʿl-ḏ̲ m ḥll h-ʾl* 'O Rḏw help...' . The reading is clear, but I am not able to make any sense of the text.

Chapter 3

Special Features

Several Safaitic texts attest graphs with square forms, forms turned by 90° to their basic shapes stances, or elongated forms. From the study of variation in the graph forms of the Safaitic texts of the JQC (§2.1), it appears that such features can be considered as *recurring graphic variables*. The way in which they are employed varies from text to text and they often appear inconsistently in different texts by the same author. Since they are sometimes used to emphasise the name of the author, while the rest of the inscription is carved without using these features,[234] it seems that, as argued by Macdonald in several places for square and 90° forms,[235] they should be interpreted as idiosyncratic stylistic elements. What would justify the classification of these features as separate scripts – as maintained by Clark (1979) with his 'square' and '90°' script categories (see §1.3.2.3) – would be the consistent employment of similar graph forms sharing such features throughout whole texts *and* in large groups of texts.

In the following, I first analyse in more detail the uses of each of these features through examples from the JQC. Subsequently, I comment on the features of texts labelled by a number of scholars as in the so-called 'square script', and argue, following Macdonald (2015), against the validity of such a script category.

3.1 Special features in the JQC

3.1.1 Square forms

In the description of the Safaitic inventories in Chapter 2, we have seen that the basic shapes of several graphemes can instantiate both curvilinear and square graphs, see for example *b*, *g*, *k*, *ḥ*, *m*, *r*, *s*[1], and *ẓ*. In most JQC texts in which square graphs appear, these are not employed consistently through the whole text or specific parts of it, but rather only one or few isolated graphs are square. Most examples of square graphs of the JQC are in the 'common' script, but other corpora attest clear instances of square

[234] On the practice of distinguishing the name of the author through other methods, see §5.2.

[235] Macdonald 1992a:418; Macdonald 2006:292, and the examples cited in n.86 and n.87; Macdonald 2015:12, Appendix 2.

(a) Panel with texts containing square and non-square allographs (QUR 669.34/C)

(b) Square text (QUR 148.139.1/C) running next to the camel drawing

Figure 3.1: Two 'common' texts with square graphs

graphs in the context of 'fine' and SoS texts as well.[236] It seems that the texts which have been mostly taken as examples of the so-called 'square script' were either in the SoS script or in the 'fine' script (see §3.2 below).

A typical example of the use of square forms in the JQC is shown in panel QUR 669.34/C (see Fig.3.1(a)), with a cluster of inscriptions associated to the image of a she-camel. Both square and non-square forms seem to be mixed in different ways: in both the first and the second text (starting from left),[237] the *k* takes square forms, but only in the second text the *m* is square. The s^1 of the second text, however, takes a curvilinear form,[238] while the s^1 of the third text[239] is square.

There are also examples of prolific authors using square graphs in some texts and their curvilinear equivalents in others.[240]

More rarely, however, square forms are used in most graphs of an inscription. In QUR 148.139.1/C *l bdḥ bn rgl* 'By Bdḥ son of Rgl' (Fig. 3.1(b)) – a skilfully chiselled text running vertically downwards and then turning by 90° – all relevant graphs of the name and patronym of the author are square.[241]

[236] In those scripts, one sometimes finds also the feature of giving square forms to the forks of *ʾ*, *h*, and *ṣ*, a feature only rarely found in the 'common' script.

[237] The first text (QUR 669.34.3/C) reads: *l ʾkmd bn ʾbgr* 'By ʾkmd son of ʾbgr', while the second text (QUR 669.34.2/C) reads: *l* $ws^{1\circ}l$ *bn zb bn ʾlmlk h-bkrt* 'By $Ws^{1\circ}l$ son of Zb son of ʾlmlk is the young she-camel'.

[238] Other inscriptions by the author of the second text, $ws^{1\circ}l$ *bn zb*, have been attested in the corpus in which he consistently used square forms (cf. QUR 175.2.1/C, 243.1.2/C, 249.3.1/C, 636.3.1/C, 669.13.1/C), keeping overall the same writing style. Only in this inscription, however, he put a dot inside the *ʿ*, see §2.1.2.

[239] This text (QUR 669.34.1/C) reads: *l* ns^1ry *bn wd* 'By Ns^1ry son of Wd'.

[240] See, e.g, the texts by *mrr bn ʾʾb* (see §6.1.1).

[241] For a discussion of the writing style of this author, who typically employed square graphs, see §6.1.6.

3.1.2 Forms turned by 90°

Most JQC examples of this feature are in the 'common' script, where it occurs especially in graphs of *b*, *ḥ*, *k*, *m*, and *s*[1], which sometimes also present square forms (see Table 2.2).[242] Compared to the 'common' script, in the 'fine' script the basic shapes of *s*[1] and *ḥ* are consistently turned by 90°, which helps to increase their compression.[243] As to the SoS script, in the JQC we have only one example (QUR 551.93.1/SoS) of a 90° *m*, while the other *m* in the same text has a regular stance.[244]

A good example of the use of this feature is QUR 186.162.1/C (Fig. 3.2(a)) *l mrr bn ʾʾb w wlh ʿl-ḥbb-h* 'By Mrr son of ʾʾb and he was distraught on account of his beloved', where the *b*'s of *bn* 'son of' and of the patronym of the author (traced in red) are turned by 90°, while in the following part the *b*'s of *ḥbb* 'beloved' (traced in green) are carved in the regular stance. Additionally, the 90° *b*'s are also square, while the ʾ's of the patronym are elongated. Different special features can thus be used in combination within the same text as well as within the same graphs. It should also be noted that, unlike for example QUR 64.73.1/C (see below), the *m* of the name was not turned by 90°. This same author and his family members carved several texts in the area, and they all seem to use special features.[245]

An interesting counterpart to this example is the structurally identical text QUR 439.37.1/C (Fig.3.2(b)), reading: *l mlk bn gml w wlh ʿl-ḥbb-h* 'By Mlk son of Gml and he was distraught on account of his beloved'. The name and patronym are distinguished through technique (hammering) and size, the statement being incised and only partly hammered, and carved in smaller graphs. In this case, unlike QUR 186.162.1/C, 90° graphs were employed to distinguish the word *ḥbb* 'beloved', rather than the name and patronym of the author, which is distinguished otherwise through technique and size. This shows that this feature could be used to distinguish any part of the text, and not only the name and genealogy of the author.

In the finely chiselled inscription QUR 64.73.1/C *l grmt bn nʾlt* 'By Grmt son of Nʾlt' (Fig. 3.2(c)), the *m* and the *b* are both turned by 90°. Texts with this name and patronym, which are possibly by the same author, occur seven times in the region, both with graphs turned by 90° and with graphs with regular stances.[246]

In QUR 372.19.4/C? *l ḥtmt bn ngy* 'By Ḥtmt son of Ngy' (Fig. 3.2(d)), the author wrote his name with the *ḥ* and the *m* turned by 90° and he also added serifs to their legs, while the patronym is carved in normal graphs.

90° graphs can also be used consistently through the entire text. For example, in

[242]The combination of these features is also a distinctive mark of the Thamudic B inventory (see §6.2.2.2).

[243]See §4.1.1.1.

[244]See §2.1.15; one of the reasons this feature is not well attested in the SoS script may be the small size of the corpus. Beyond the JQC, I am aware of one example (SIAM 42/SoS) in which only the *s*[1] and the *f* are turned by 90°, but curiously not the *b* and the *m*, as it is most often the case in the 'common' script.

[245]See §6.1.1 and §6.1.9.1.

[246]QUR 64.73.1/C and 360.37.1/C present 90° graphs, while QUR 2.493.3/C (see Fig. 7.3(a)), 148.16.1/C, 186.33.4/C, 449.78.1/C, and 965.53.1/C have no 90° graphs. In QUR 360.37.1/C, unlike QUR 64.73.1/C, the *m* of *grmt* is turned, while the *b* is not. Texts with this combination of name and patronym are not found outside the Jebel Qurma region (cf. OCIANA, accessed on 2 June 2021).

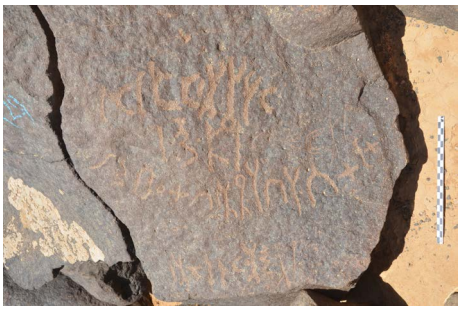
(a) QUR 186.162.1/C

(b) QUR 439.37.1/C

(c) QUR 64.73.1/C

(d) QUR 372.19.4/C? (upper text)

(e) QUR 186.41.4/C (incised text)



(f) QUR 148.129.1/C (2nd text from the bottom)

Figure 3.2: Inscriptions with graphs turned by 90°

(a) QUR 186.127.1/C

(b) QUR 12.34.1/C

Figure 3.3: Two 'common' texts with elongated forms

the incised inscription QUR 186.41.4/C (Fig. 3.2(e)) *l s¹krn bn[[]] ʿḏy h-bk{r}{t}* 'By S¹krn son of ʿḏy is the {young she-camel}', all graphs which could be rotated, including the *b* and the *k* of the caption 'young she-camel', have been turned by 90°. This is also the case in QUR 148.129.1/C (Fig. 3.2(f)) *l s²gʿt bn ʾṣhb h-s¹trt* 'By S²gʿt son of ʾṣhb is this shelter'. This inscription has been fully carved using 90° graphs, but the inscription probably written by his brother within the same cartouche[247] has not.

It can be concluded that 90° forms represented an ornamental alternative contemporary to regular 'common' forms and that there was a certain degree of idiosyncratic variation in the way they were employed.

3.1.3 Elongated forms

Elongated basic shapes represent a distinctive feature of the 'fine' script (§4.1.1.1), but elongated forms are also found in a small group of texts in the 'common' script, where this feature mostly affects the proportional length of the shafts and of the straight vertical lines of *ʾ*, *d*, *h*, *r*,[248] *ṣ*, *ṯ*, *z*, and *y*. Such components appear as very long, while smaller elements such as forks and loops are tiny. The loops and circles are often filled in.

It should be noted that the graph forms of the few elongated 'common' texts are clearly distinct from the graph forms of 'fine' texts. Moreover, in 'common' texts usually only some graphs are affected by this feature, while the distinctive elongated forms of the 'fine' script are characteristic of their inventory.

'Common' texts with elongated forms are more elaborate than the average 'common' texts and they are mostly chiselled. There are some cases in which the forks and spaces within the graphs were decorated by partially filling them in. For instance, in QUR

[247] I.e. QUR 148.129.2/C *l s¹rk bn ʾṣhb* 'By S¹rk son of ʾṣhb', the first text from the top.

[248] The 'common' forms of the *r* as an open curve or as a vertical line with two short arms are already quite elongated, but in the context of elongated texts such features are sometimes exaggerated, cf., e.g., the ultra-short arms of the *r* in QUR 186.127.1/C (Fig. 3.3(a)).

12.34.1/C (Fig.3.3(b)) *l ḫll bn gmḥy* 'By Ḫll son of Gmḥy', the *ḫ* is made of two elongated oblique lines and the space near the point where the two lines meet is filled in. The inscription runs above the finely chiselled drawing of a camel and then down next to his neck. The name of the author, *ḫll*, beside being distinguished through the use of this special form of the *ḫ*, is also larger and more deeply and carefully chiselled than the patronym.

In QUR 186.127.1/C (Fig. 3.3(a)), one notices the same feature of partially filling in spaces applied to the fork of the *ṣ* in the name of the author (*ṣmry*), which is carved in an elongated form. Also the *r* and the *y* appear as elongated. However, unlike in the 'fine' script, the *m* is not elongated. Moreover, in this example the name is carved in bigger graphs in comparison with the rest of the genealogy: it is distinguished both in size and through the use of elongated graphs.

In §3.1.2 above, we have seen that 90° forms are sometimes combined with square ones. Also in the case of elongation, we sometimes find it used in combination with other special features within the same graph. For example, in QUR 186.37.1/C *l ʿbdy bn mrr* 'By ʿbdy son of Mrr', the *b* of the author's name is square and elongated, while the *b* of *bn* 'son of' takes the regular curvilinear form. Another example is in QUR 186.18.1/C (see Fig. 6.9(a)) by *ʿzhm bn mrr bn ʾʾb* – possibly *ʿbdy*'s brother[249] – who carved the papponym *ʾʾb* with an elongated 90° square form of *b*. Because of all such features, this graph accidentally looks remarkably similar to some 'common' forms of *ẓ* ⊓.

3.2 The so-called 'square script'

As seen in §1.3.2, several scholars have maintained that Safaitic texts with square graphs represent the most archaic form of the Safaitic script. Among these scholars is Clark (1979), according to whose classification of the Safaitic scripts 'square' would constitute a separate script.[250] Macdonald, on the other hand, questioned the presumed archaic nature of square texts as well as the validity of a 'square script' category. He pointed out that square forms often intermingle with curvilinear forms within the same text and that they also appear to have been used inconsistently in different inscriptions by the same author.[251]

Several texts which have been considered as typically 'square' in previous scholarship are SoS script texts by individuals who expressed their affiliation to the *ʿmrt* social group.[252] In such texts, we see that square forms are employed inconsistently from one

[249]The use of special features appears to have been characteristic of the writing style of this author's family (see §6.1.9.1, §6.1.1).

[250]Clark 1979:67–68.

[251]Macdonald 2006:292; Macdonald 2015:12, Appendix 2.

[252]The striking correlation between the use of the so-called 'square script' and the *ʾl ʿmrt* was first pointed out by G.L. Harding (*apud* Macdonald 1980:185), but cf. Macdonald 2006:292, n. 81, who remarked that not all texts by authors affiliating to this social group are square. Indeed, while the *ʾl ʿmrt* typically employed a square form of the SoS script, non-square SoS texts by *ʿmrt* authors have also been attested, e.g. CSNS 628/SoS. Another social group associated with the use of square SoS forms, the *ʾl mḥrb*, is only

(a) Ms 64/SoS

(b) AAEK 133/SoS

(c) HANA.Saf 1/SoS

(d) FMC 158706.1/SoS

Figure 3.4: Examples of square texts in the SoS script by the ʾl ʿmrt (Photos: OCIANA)

text to the other, and sometimes also within the same text. For example, if we compare Ms 64/SoS (Fig.3.4(a)) and AAEK 133/SoS (Fig. 3.4(b)), the *b*'s and the *s*[1]'s in the first text are curved, but in the latter they are square. In Ms 64/SoS itself, which has two instances of the *g*, the first one is curved, while the second one is square.

We can classify the script of texts by the *ʿmrt* as SoS because of the occurrence of the primary distinguishing feature of this script, i.e. the *ḍ* as two concentric circles ⊙ – see Ms 64/SoS (Fig. 3.4(a)), HANA.Saf 1/SoS (Fig. 3.4(c)), HCH 194.1/SoS, HASI 23/SoS, KhNSJ 2.1/SoS – as well as the following secondary distinguishing features:[253]

- The *s*[2] as a wavy line with two curves S, e.g. HANA.Saf 1/SoS (Fig. 3.4(c)), FMC 158706.1/SoS (Fig. 3.4(d)), HCH 191.2/SoS, ASFF 406/SoS, etc.;
- The *ḏ* with a hooked tail Ψ, e.g. AAEK 133/SoS (Fig. 3.4(b)), HANA.Saf 1/SoS (Fig. 3.4(c)), FMC 158706.1/SoS (Fig. 3.4(d)), etc.;
- The form of *k* with a long vertical tail and small body F, e.g. HANA.Saf 1/SoS (Fig. 3.4(c)), ASFF 406/SoS, etc.;

attested in two texts by the same author (ISB 57/SoS and AbKRI 1/SoS).

[253]For a definition of primary *vs* secondary distinguishing features, see §1.3.3.2; for a complete list of the SoS script distinguishing features, see §2.2.1.3.

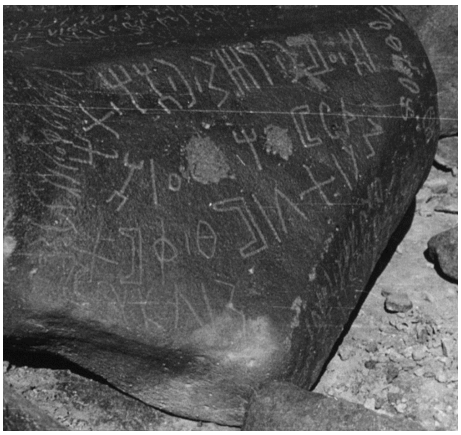
- The square form of *r* with two curly elements protruding towards the inside , see, e.g., all examples of *r* in Fig. 3.4 and note also Al-Mafraq Museum 93/SoS, which contains the SoS variant with only one arm curling back .

Some texts present a *t* with a swastika form (e.g. FMC 158706.1/SoS (Fig. 3.4(d)), ASFF 406/SoS, etc.), which, as noted by King (1990a), is a feature which is occasionally found in SoS texts[254]—although it is not found in the ones from Jebel Qurma. This form also occurs in a few 'fine' texts; it is one of the typical stylistic traits of the texts by the *ʾl dʾf*, possibly a sub-group of the *ʾl ʿwḏ*.[255]

A further group within the so-called 'square script' presents 'fine' features. One example is SIJ 39/F, by a member of the lineage of *ʿwḏ*, shown in Fig. 3.5(a). Winnett (1957) assumed this and other texts from his collection to be archaic merely because of the use of square forms. However, as in the SoS script examples above, square forms are employed inconsistently: the *ʾ*, the *ḏ*, and the *m* take square forms, while the *b* exhibits the typical 'fine' form, i.e. a shallow curve, as do the *r* – a shallow curve with two vertical hooks – and the s^1, which has the typical 'fine' pointed form with a vertical stance. Macdonald also pointed at examples of 'fine' texts in which square forms are used to emphasise the name, genealogy, and lineage of the author, the rest of the text being written in normal forms.[256] One such example is WH 1673/F (Fig. 3.5(b)), by a member of the lineage of *ḍf*, where the *m* in the first part of the text is square, while the *m* later in the text is curvilinear. The *b*'s, however, are regular shallow curves throughout the whole text. One can also notice that while the *ḥ* is among the graphs taking a square form, it still features the vertical stance characterising the 'fine' shape . Another example Macdonald brings is LP 325/F (Fig. 3.5(c)), by a member of the *ʿwḏ*, in which the genealogy, lineage and first part of the text is square, while the rest is in the normal 'fine' script. One can clearly contrast the square form of the *r* in the first part of the text to the most common curved 'fine' equivalent later in the text . RMSK 1/F (Fig. 3.5(d)), by a member of the lineage of *ḍf*, of the *kn* sub-group, is fully carved using square graphs, see, e.g., the forms of *b*, *r*, *m*, *ʾ*, *h*, and *ḏ*. Nevertheless, one can point at the distinctive 'fine' form of the *k*, i.e. a shallow curve with a slanting stroke on top, and at the vertical stances of both s^1 and *ḥ*. In LP 325/F, WH 1673/F and RMSK 1/F, the square forms of the *r* still keep the vertical hooks which are typical of the 'fine' shape of the *r* . This feature can be contrasted to the typical square SoS form of *r*, which is similar but slightly different, since there the arms end with hooks curving backwards .

Finally, it should be noted that, as shown in the examples discussed in §3.1.1 above, the use of square forms is not only a trait of SoS and 'fine' texts, since it appears in 'common' texts as well. The attestation of square forms in texts in all three Safaitic scripts further confirms Macdonald's idea that, rather than representing a separate Safaitic script, square graphs were employed as a stylistic device.

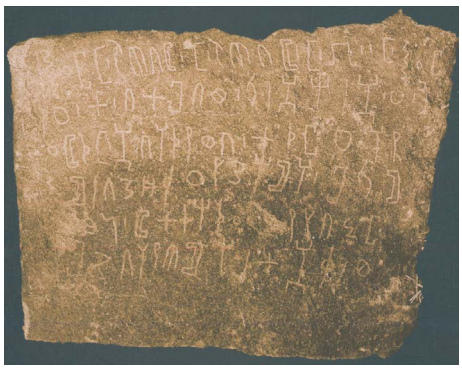
[254]See King 1990a:§2.I, n. 97; cf., e.g., the occurrence of this form in NSR 20/SoS and HASI 62/SoS.
[255]See, e.g., BRenv.A 1/F, BRenv.A 2/F, and KRS 1024/F (see §B.2).
[256]See Macdonald 2015:32.



(a) SIJ 39/F

(b) WH 1673/F

(c) LP 325/F



(d) RMSK 1/F

Figure 3.5: Examples of square texts in the ‘fine’ script (Photos: OCIANA)

Chapter 4

The Development of the 'Fine' Script

This Chapter has two aims. The first is to show that the 'fine' script is the result of a palaeographic development which started from the 'common' script. Most 'fine' texts are by members of the lineage of *ḍf*, and the many texts with long genealogies by authors belonging to this social group allow us to reconstruct their lineage-tree up to the earliest generations after *ḍf*, where we find texts that are still in the 'common' script. Thus, the identification of texts from different generations of the *ʾl ḍf* provides a diachronic framework to investigate this palaeographic development.[257]

The second aim is to establish a working chronological framework for Safaitic writing among the *ḍf*, namely by combining the information from the *ḍf* lineage-tree and the attested generations with the dated texts by members of this lineage. While the use of generations and lineage-trees for chronological purposes certainly involves a number of unknowns and requires several caveats, such a framework is relevant for the chronology of Safaitic in general, as it offers a much more certain time-range than the one provided by the conventional chronology of Safaitic (see §1.1.4). My calculations yielded a minimal secure time-span for Safaitic literacy among the *ḍf* of 220 years, with a *terminus ante quem* of the beginning of the 1st century BC and a *terminus post quem* of the end of the 1st century AD.[258]

Since the JQC contains only 23 texts which are unambiguously in the 'fine' script,[259] in this Chapter the Jebel Qurma data-set will be integrated with inscriptions from other corpora which have all been accessed via the OCIANA. Unlike all other Chapters, in which the *sigla* of inscriptions are followed by '/[script]', here they are followed by '/[generation number]', for the generation of the author is a more insightful label to

[257] For a discussion of the structure of this lineage and a reconstruction of the genealogical trees on which this study is based, see Appendix A.

[258] With *terminus ante quem* (TAQ) I mean the latest possible date for the earliest writing generation, while with *terminus post quem* (TPQ) I mean the earliest possible date for the latest writing generation.

[259] In addition, one text (QUR 529.20.1) is in the transitional script, and 4 others (QUR 321.2.1, 733.7.2, 239.16.1, and 678.2.2) are possibly transitional as well, but they lack sufficient distinguishing features to be sure (see §1.2.1); for a definition of transitional texts, see §4.1.3 below.

describe a palaeographic development from the 'common' to the 'fine' script – especially in the transitional stage between the two scripts. As it is only through genealogies which are at least three-generations long that we can identify authors – if not with complete certainty, at least with very high probability – whenever a text indicates only the patronym, the generation number is followed by a question mark.[260] But in all cases for which we have no clue as to the generation of the author, or if the author belongs to a lineage other than *ḍf* (i.e. *ʿwḏ*), I only present the 'naked' *siglum* of the text, without any additions.

The generations are counted starting from *ḍf*, which means that *ḍf*, who was probably the eponymous ancestor of the lineage, is counted as the first generation. We can deduce that *ḍf* was considered as the eponymous ancestor since many authors explicitly affiliated to *ḍf* – either through the phrase *ḏ ʾl ḍf* 'of the lineage of *ḍf*', or, more rarely, through the *nisbah* adjective *ḍfy* '*ḍf*-ite'.[261]

While the *ʾl ḍf* is also the social group to which we can ascribe the highest number of texts in the 'fine' script, it is not the only *ʾl* associated with this script. It is often difficult to determine if certain *ʾl*'s were large lineages, as the *ḍf*, or smaller groups, since the word *ʾl* in Safaitic appears to have been used to refer to groups of various sizes,[262] but it seems that some of the *ʾl*'s associated with the 'fine' script, as for example the *ʾl kn*, were sub-groups of the lineage of *ḍf* (see §A.1.1). However, this is not necessarily the case for all of them: a clear instance of an *ʾl* which seems to be a separate lineage is the *ʾl ʿwḏ*, attested in several 'fine' texts as well as in examples of less compressed texts from earlier generations.[263] It is therefore possible that the same kind of palaeographic development which occurred within the *ḍf* happened within the *ʿwḏ* as well. Further *ʾl*'s employing the 'fine' script include: *ms¹kt*,[264] *ḥẓy*,[265] *nġbr*,[266] *qmr*,[267] *wrqn*,[268] and *fṣmn*.[269] It would seem that, in texts by members of *ʾl*'s other than the *ḍf*, either their genealogies are too short, or, as in the case of the *ʾl ʿwḏ*, although long genealogies are well attested, we do not have a sample of texts from different generations which is as wide as the *ḍf* corpus. At any rate, we know that at least some *ʾl*'s using the 'fine' script

[260] A two-generations genealogy is not enough to identify with certainty the generation of an author, as different individuals may have shared the same name and patronym. Furthermore, different names may be hiding within the same consonantal skeleton. These issues have already been discussed in previous scholarship, see the references in Corbett 2012: 180, n. 7.

[261] In the OCIANA (accessed on 3 June 2021), *ḏ ʾl ḍf* occurs 95 times, while *ḍfy* is attested 10 times.

[262] See Harding 1969:3–5; Macdonald 1993:354, n.317; Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019:30.

[263] See, e.g., the transitional script of Is.H 513, a text by a distant ancestor of the prolific 'fine' author *ṣʿd bn ġṯ*, of the *ʾl ʿwḏ* (see §6.2.2). This text is on the same panel as a *ḍf* text, to which it seems associated (on the relationship between *ḍf* and *ʿwḏ*, see §B.1).

[264] E.g. AbWS 1–3, AMSI 89, KRS 2306.

[265] E.g. HSNS 2, KRS 1420, MKWI 7.

[266] E.g. ASWS 226, MRTA 1, RMenv.D 8. Graf 1989: 362 maintained that *nġbr* was a sub-group of the *ʿwḏ*, but, as remarked by Macdonald 1993: 364, he lacked to demonstrate this on the basis of the genealogies.

[267] E.g. C 8, SESP.S 6, SIJ 894.

[268] E.g. AbSWS 33, MSTJ 6, RWQ 295.

[269] E.g. AMSI 51 and Is.H 763, the latter dated to the year 18 of Agrippa (Macdonald 2015: 152).

were sub-groups of the lineage of *ḍf*, and perhaps, as we will see, some others may have constituted sub-groups of the lineage of *ʿwḏ*, which furthermore seems to have had some sort of relationship to *ḍf*.[270]

Among the 23 inscriptions in the ‘fine’ script of the JQC, 5 can be no doubt ascribed to members of the lineage of *ḍf*,[271] with one author belonging to the *ġyr* sub-group,[272] and one to the lineage of *ʿwḏ*.[273] In addition, one text[274] indicates affiliation to the *bdn*, which seems to be a sub-group within the *ḍf* (see §A.1.1), but the genealogy of the author is weathered and illegible, and two texts[275] are by the same author of the *ʾl qs²m*, possibly a sub-group of the *ʿwḏ*,[276] but, in these two texts, this could not be confirmed on the basis of their genealogies.

4.1 From the ‘common’ to the ‘fine’ script

Fig. 4.1 shows two images of a panel with the inscriptions KRS 907/5 and KRS 907/10. In Fig. 4.1(a), one can see the whole panel, with KRS 907/5 (the hammered bottom text) in its entirety,[277] while Fig. 4.1(b) shows a close-up with KRS 905/10, which is lightly incised and runs above and to the left of the name of KRS 907/5. *mṭr*, the author of KRS 905/10, states that he found the writing of his grandfather (*ʿm-h*), likely referring to *mlk*, the author of KRS 907/5, who is his great great great grandfather.[278]

[270]See Appendix B.

[271]QUR 176.24.1/14, 586.20.1/14?, 2.239.1/11 and 2.253.1/11. The last two texts, by the same author *ḥrb bn mḥlm*, do not explicitly indicate affiliation to the *ʾl ḍf*. However, they present long genealogies which overlap with other *ḍf* genealogies going back to the eponymous ancestor, and can therefore be placed in the *ḍf* lineage tree (see Fig. A.9, Table A.6). They read: QUR 2.239.1/F *l ḥrb bn mḥlm bn ḥrb bn ʾ{d}m bn {ḥ}{ḍ}{g} {b}{n} {s¹}{w}{r} {b}{n} {ḥ}{m}{y}{n}* ‘By Ḥrb son of Mḥlm son of Ḥrb son of {ʾdm} son of {Ḥḍg} {son of} {S¹wr} {son of} {Ḥmyn}’; QUR 2.253.1/F *[l] ḥrb bn mḥlm bn ḥrb {b}{n} {ʾ}{d}m {b}{n} {ḥ}{ḍ}{g} {b}{n} {s¹}{w}{r} w----h f h lt ġ{n}mt w s¹l{m}* ‘{By} Ḥrb son of Mḥlm son of Ḥrb {son of} {ʾdm} {son of} {Ḥḍg} {son of} {S¹wr}…so, O Lt let there be {booty} and {security}!’.

[272]QUR 176.24.1/14; see §A.1.1 on the *ġyr* sub-group and §6.2.1 for a discussion of the writing style of this author.

[273]QUR 148.76.3.

[274]QUR 9.12.2.

[275]QUR 2.336.1 and 2.490.1.

[276]See §B.2. For a discussion of the writing style of this author, see §6.2.3.

[277]The text reads: KRS 907/5 *l mlk bn bdn bn rfʾt bn ws²yt* ‘By Mlk son of Bdn son of Rfʾt son of Ws²yt’.

[278]The full text reads: KRS 905/10 *l mṭr bn rdf bn ḫbṯ bn s¹mk b[n] s¹wr bn mlk w wgd s¹fr ʿm-h* ‘By Mṭr son of Rdf son of Ḫbṯ son of S¹mk {son of} S¹wr son of Mlk and he found the writing of his (great great great) paternal grandfather’ (see OCIANA). It appears that the authors of KRS 907/5 and KRS 905/10 are related, both belonging to the *bdn* sub-branch of the *ḍf*, splitting at generation 4 within the *ws²yt* branch (for the position of *bdn*, see the genealogical tree in Fig. A.3). This relationship is shown by texts with overlapping genealogies; cf. the genealogies of Mr.A 2 = LP 258/9 (*ḫyḏt bn ḫbṯ bn s¹mk bn s¹wr bn mlk bn bdn*) and C 2361/9 (*ḫyḏt bn ḫbṯ bn s¹mk bn s¹wr bn mlk bn bdn bn rfʾt*), both by *mṭr*’s uncle *ḫyḏt*, and the genealogy of C 2694/9 (*l rdf bn ḫbṯ bn (s¹)mk bn s¹wr bn mlk*), by *mṭr*’s father. None of the authors of the other texts on the panel (KRS 909, 910 and 911) would be eligible as *mṭr*’s grandfathers. Note that the word *ʿm*, usually translated as ‘paternal grandfather’, appears to have been employed also to refer to great grandfathers; cf. KRS 379/13, by an author of the *bʿḏrh* sub-branch of the *ḍf* (splitting at generation 5, see again Fig. A.3), who self-identified as *nhb bn s¹ʿd bn ġyrʾl bn s¹krn bn zkr bn ẓnʾl bn s¹b*, and said that

(a) KRS 907/5; bottom text (Photo: OCIANA)

(b) KRS 905/10; incised text (Photo: OCIANA)

Figure 4.1: Panel with texts by mlk (KRS 907/5) and his great great great grandson mṭr (KRS 905/10)

The graph forms of the two texts are strikingly different. KRS 907/5 is a typical text in the ‘common’ script, while KRS 905/10 is much more compressed and exhibits several typically ‘fine’ features. The *b*’s in KRS 907/5 are small deep curves ⊂, to be contrasted to the *b*’s in KRS 905/10, which are shallow curves/obtuse angles ⟨. The body of the *w* in KRS 907/5 is an oval with horizontal stance and vertical crossing line ⦶, while in KRS 905/10 it is a triangle ▽ or, elsewhere in the text, a rhomboid ◊. While the form of the *k* in KRS 907/5 is more elongated and compressed than the usual ‘common’ forms – it is composed of a shallow curve with a slanted line protruding from the inside ⟨ –, this formation is still distinct from the ‘fine’ form of *k*, which is found in KRS 905/10 five generations later: an obtuse angle with a stroke attached to its bottom ⟨.[279] Beside the forms of *b*, *w* and *k* described above, in the late text by *mṭr* one can notice the following ‘fine’ forms: the *m*’s composed of shallow curves/obtuse angles ☾ ⟨ – *vs* the squarish, non-compressed *m* of KRS 907/5 ⊂ –, the *ṭ* with a slanted crossing line ⫼, and the s^1 pointed and turned by 90° ∧, although neither *ṭ* or s^1 occur in KRS 907/5, and cannot be compared. The *r*, in any case, is still a simple shallow curve ⟨, as in the earlier text by *mlk*, and it looks very similar to the *b* ⟨, which in this text is shallower than the *b* in the earlier text ⊂. Because of this feature, KRS 905/10 can be labelled as transitional between the ‘common’ and the ‘fine’ script, and it provides a snapshot of the palaeographic development which will be described in more detail in this Section. But first, let us look at the type of features distinguishing the ‘fine’ script from the ‘common’ script.

he found the traces of his *ʿm zkr*, probably referring his great great grandfather, as his grandfather is *ġyrʾl*. The OCIANA commentary to the text states: ‘This text is a good illustration of how the word *ʿm* in Safaitic can mean “grandfather” or “ancestor beyond grandfather”’.

[279] In all ‘fine’ forms of the *k* attested in the JQC the body is a curve rather than an angle (see §2.1.13), but note that pointed variants are attested in the corpus of texts studied in this Chapter (see §4.1.3.3 below). Moreover, the simplification of a curved form to a pointed one is within the typical range of recurring graphic variables in Safaitic (see §2.1); cf. the *b* attested as both a curve and as an angle.

4.1.1 The ‘fine’ *vs* the ‘common’ script

As seen in the previous Chapter, the ‘fine’ inventory is distinguished from the ‘common’ inventory by several distinctive graph forms.[280] I have grouped the defining stylistic features of the ‘fine’ script as follows: 1) elongation and compression, and 2) further distinctive stylistic traits.

4.1.1.1 Elongation and compression

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of the ‘fine’ script is the distinctive elongated and compressed look of its inventory. Inscriptions in the ‘fine’ script appear as much more compressed than the average ‘common’ text. In ‘common’ texts we sometimes find elongated and compressed graphs as well, but mostly with different forms. For example, the ‘common’ form of the *r* as a shallow curve or as a long vertical line with short protruding arms are already compressed, and the ‘fine’ form is distinguished from the shallow curve form because of its vertical hooks. Moreover, in most ‘common’ texts only some graphs appear as elongated/compressed,[281] and sometimes elongated forms seem to have been used with the specific purpose of emphasising parts of the text.[282] This is never the case in ‘fine’ texts, as elongated forms are constitutive part of their inventory and are therefore always employed consistently in all graphs rather than being selectively used to emphasise the name of the author.[283] Furthermore, in the ‘fine’ script the forms of *ḥ* and *s*[1] are consistently pointed and turned by 90° – which gives them a more vertical stance and compressed look –, while in the ‘common’ script the 90° feature appears in conjunction with either curved or square forms and is used inconsistently, sometimes in order to emphasise parts of the text.[284]

4.1.1.2 Further distinctive stylistic traits

Beside the elongation/compression of ‘common’ forms, the following stylistic features characterize the ‘fine’ script against the ‘common’ script:

- The addition of hooks, see the form of *r* and the variants of *ẕ* *vs* ‘common’ and ;
- The preference for slanting rather than horizontal/vertical crossing lines in the forms of *ṭ* , *ḍ* and *w* , *vs* ‘common’ , and ;

[280] For a complete list of the ‘fine’ distinguishing features as represented by the texts of the JQC, see §4.2.1.2.

[281] Cf., e.g., the writing style of the prolific ‘common’ author *fhrn bn khln*, with the *f*, *h* and *r* being compressed and elongated, but not the *b* and the *k* (see §6.1.2).

[282] See §3.1.3.

[283] In the ‘fine’ script, emphasis is mainly achieved via the use of bigger graphs. More rarely, square forms have also been attested, with other distinctive features of the ‘fine’ script being still recognisable; see the examples discussed in §3.2, Fig. 3.5(d)) and Fig. 3.5(c).

[284] See §3.1.2.

- The preference for pointed forms, cf. the forms of *s*[1] and *ḥ*, which in the 'fine' script are consistently pointed rather than curved or square, and the rhomboids *g* and *w* ;[285]
- The use of incision in virtually all 'fine' texts.

4.1.2 Data-set

In order to investigate the palaeographic development from the 'common' to the 'fine' script, I will focus on a set of six graphemes:

- ***b***: its shape is a curve and is found at least once in all the texts selected for this analysis (embedded in the word *bn* 'son of'). The 'fine' forms of the *b* are mostly different from the 'common' ones < because of their greater compression. For this reason, I have decided to measure the compression of the graphs of the *b* across generations by calculating their height to width ratio (the compression of graphs representing other graphemes has not been measured);
- ***r***: the 'fine' shape of *r* is a shallow curve with vertical hooks . While this shape is stylistically distinct from the 'common' one, it is not distinguished by virtue of its greater compression, since the 'common' shape of *r* is quite compressed as well ;[286]
- ***k***: in the 'common' script it is usually a curve with a protruding, mostly slanted tail , while in the 'fine' script it takes the more compressed form of a shallow curve with a slanted line attached to one end, as in .
- ***ḥ***: an instance of a 'fine' shape which is turned by 90° to its 'common' equivalent , as is also the case of *s*[1] (cf. the 'fine' form *vs* 'common');
- ***ḍ***: the main difference with the 'common' form is its compression and slanting of its crossing lines , as also in the *ṭ* ;
- ***w***: an example in which the usual 'common' forms are circles/ovals/rectangles , which become rhomboids in the 'fine' script (cf. also some forms of and *g*); the crossing line is moreover consistently slanted, as in the *ḍ*.

I will trace the palaeographic development of *b*, *r*, *k*, *ḥ*, *ḍ*, and *w* in the texts by members of the *ʾl ḍf*, using the generations as chronological framework.

It should be kept in mind that texts from the same generation do not always need to have been written at the same time. It is therefore to be expected that some texts from a given generation may be more similar palaeographically to texts belonging to older or later generations. There is, moreover, the component of individual and idiosyncratic

[285] While there are pointed forms also in the 'common' inventory, they appear less often in the texts, with curvilinear forms being generally preferred.

variation: different authors who wrote at the same time may have developed or adopted certain features at a different pace. Some of the variation between texts from the same generation could be due not only to chronological differences, but also to an interplay between general trends – e.g. a tendency to use compressed forms – and the individual choices and preferences of the authors. Nevertheless, a general trend towards the development of distinctive stylistic features is observable. The main concern of this Section is to show this development, and I will describe it following the generations, because this is not only a useful chronological anchor, but also the only one we have, as dated texts are very few (see §4.2 below).

For generations 3 to 5, I have studied texts from all branches of the *ḏf*, since we have only a few texts from the earliest generations.[287] From the 6th generation onwards, we find larger quantities of texts. For the purpose of this analysis, I will only focus on the texts of one sub-branch, splitting from the 5th generation author *ḥmyn bn ġḏḏt bn ʾnḏt bn ws²yt bn ḏf*.[288] This sub-branch offers a sufficiently wide sample of texts for our investigation.[289] I will stop my analysis at generation 13, which after generation 12 is the second generation attesting only compressed texts with 'fine' features. I have merged the texts from generation 3 to 5, and the ones from generation 6 to 7, as to form two single groups to be compared to the later generations. The texts from early generations are so few that it would have not been very significant to consider each generation separately and to compare it separately to the later generations. This way the description of the development is more balanced. The data-set for this study includes only those inscriptions which are known from pictures and it consists of 169 texts in total: 14 texts from gens. 3 – 5; 11 texts from gens. 6 – 7; 15 texts from gen. 8; 31 texts from gen. 9; 28 texts from gen. 10; 29 texts from gen. 11; 26 texts from gen. 12; 15 texts from gen. 13. For the measurements of the compression of the *b*'s, the data-set is smaller than the one used for the study of graph forms, since I have further selected only the pictures that were taken perpendicularly in relation to the panel—in pictures taken from a slanted position, the proportions of the graphs are distorted.[290]

[287] See the remarks in §A.1 and the trees in §A.2, Figs. A.3 – A.5.

[288] See the trees in the Appendix, Figs. A.6 – A.13. Note that, unfortunately, the only text which may be ascribed to *ḥmyn* himself is C 2700/5?, but it is only known from a tracing; the 5th generation texts studied here all come from other sub-branches.

[289] Note that even though I will not describe the development in the other sub-branches, they all seem to show the same kind of development.

[290] Moreover, because rocks are often multifaceted and some texts run on more than one panel but not all panels were photographed frontally, and because parts of texts may be damaged, in the texts where one or more *b*'s are either not properly visible or damaged, those *b*'s have not been measured, but the others have. It should also be remarked that in Safaitic epigraphy it is rare to find a writing surface which is completely flat. In most cases, it is inevitable that, even though pictures have been taken frontally, there may be small hollows or irregularities on the rock which may partly alter the proportion of some of the *b*'s. If the irregularities do not appear to significantly affect the forms of the *b*'s, such graphs have been measured anyway. Lastly, even in those pictures which were taken frontally on a smooth panel, we can never be sure that they were taken in an exact perpendicular position to the panel. For all such reasons, while I excluded the instances with significantly deformed proportions, one should always keep in mind that, because of the nature of the material, a slight margin of error in the measurements cannot be avoided.

Finally, I shall note that 21 texts from generations 3 – 8 indicate only the patronym, so we cannot be completely sure about their identification.[291] I have therefore excluded such texts from the data-set of measured *b*’s, while for the study of graph forms I have highlighted examples of graph forms coming from the dubious cases through the use of a gray colour—see, e.g., , attested in WH 302/5?, *vs* , attested in WH 1711.2/5.

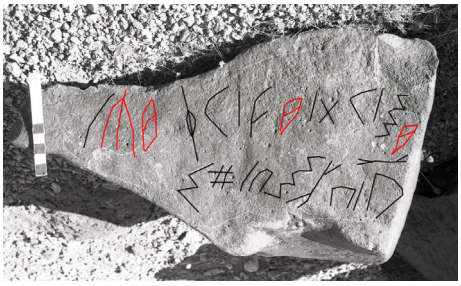
Thus, I will study the palaeographic development from the ‘common’ to the ‘fine’ script by focussing on the forms of *b*, *r*, *k*, *ḥ*, *ḍ* and *w* in the texts of the *ʾl ḍf* from generation 3 to generation 13, zooming in on the *ḥmyn* sub-branch of the *ḍf* in generations 6 to 13.

4.1.3 Tracing the palaeographic development

Having defined our data-set, let us look at how the palaeographic development from the ‘common’ to the ‘fine’ script unfolded. I have sub-divided the data-set according to three main stages: 1) ‘common’, 2) transitional, and 3) late ‘fine’.

‘Common’ stage This is the earliest stage, represented by the texts from generation 3 to 5, which can mainly be classified as typically ‘common’ texts (see, e.g., KRS 278/5, Fig.4.2(a)). A few texts from generation 4 and 5 already exhibit two ‘fine’-looking forms – the 90° pointed *ḥ* and the *w* as a rhomboid with a slanted crossing line (see KRS 1479/5, Fig.4.2(b), highlighted in red) – , but all other graphs are still ‘common’.

(a) KRS 278/5; hammered text



(b) KRS 1479/5

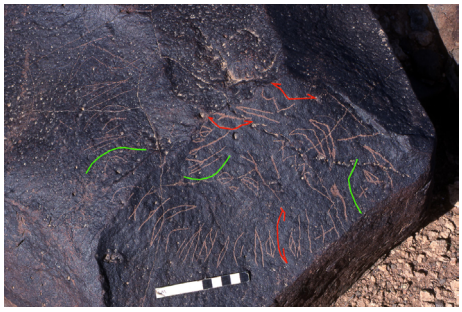
Figure 4.2: Two texts from the ‘common’ stage (Photos: OCIANA)

Transitional stage It is within generations 6 to 11 that the development from the ‘common’ to the ‘fine’ script truly unfolds: the distinctive features of the ‘fine’ inventory are gradually formed and the average compression of the *b* – and likely also of other graphs which have not been measured – steadily increases. In this stage, we see the appearance of more elongated and compressed forms, not all of which conform

[291] These are: KRS 1912/3?, WH 744.1/3?, KRS 1397/3?, Is.Mu 562/4?, WH 395.1/4?, KRS 469/4?, KRS 1449/4?, KRS 1802/4?, KRS 2456/4?, Is.H 47/5?, WH 274/5?, WH 302/5?, WH 1747/5?, WH 470/5?, Is.L 192/6?, Is.L 132/7?, Is.K 90/7?, Is.L 85/7?, Is.L 51/8?, Is.H 515/8?, Is.L 131/8?.

to the ‘fine’ inventory yet, as for example in KRS 173/6 (Fig. 4.3(a)), where a 90° *m* (highlighted in green) occurs next to the typically ‘fine’ 90° *ḥ* (highlighted in red). Additionally, as shown in the example in Fig. 4.3(b) (KRS 2993/10), some ‘fine’ hooked *r*’s start to appear (in red), and they can also occur next to the shallow curve form typical of the ‘common’ script (in green). From generations 9 to 11, a growing number of texts consistently employs the ‘fine’ forms of this and other graphemes.

(a) KRS 173/6



(b) KRS 2993/10

Figure 4.3: Two texts from the transitional stage (Photos: OCIANA)

Late ‘fine’ stage This is the final stage, starting from generation 12 onwards, in which nearly all texts present the complete stock of ‘fine’ features (see the examples in Fig. 4.4). I here take the consistent use of the hooked form of the *r* – since it developed rather late – as the point of reference for the end of the palaeographic development and the start of the ‘fine’ inventory as described in Chapter 2. This stage also coincides with the stabilization of the compression averages of the *b*.[292]

(a) KRS 1885/12

(b) AbSWS 18/13

Figure 4.4: Two texts from the late ‘fine’ stage (Photos: OCIANA)

The distinctive graph forms which constitute the ‘fine’ inventory did not all develop at the same time and at the same pace. For example, the rhomboid *w* with a slanted line

[292]See §4.1.3.1, Fig. 4.5 below.

first appears in generation 4 and it is consistently used in most texts already starting from generation 6,[293] whereas the *r* with vertical hooks is first attested in generation 9 but it is not employed consistently before generation 12, starting from which it is found in virtually all texts.[294]

Now I will describe the development of the graph forms of *b*, *r*, *k*, *ḥ*, *ḍ* and *w*. Table 4.1 shows a selection of the attested graph forms across generations. While the Table does not show drawings of every single graph, I have tried to include all graph forms which are representative of the type of variation found in each generation.

Gen.	*b*	*r*	*k*	*ḥ*	*ḍ*	*w*
3 – 5						
6 – 7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						

Table 4.1: Graph forms of b, r, k, ḥ, ḍ, and w across generations

4.1.3.1 *b*

In order to study the development of the forms of *b* across generations, I have calculated its height to width ratio in each 'measurable' instance,[295] and included only texts whose genealogies reach at least the papponym. This resulted in the measurement of 534 *b*'s in total.[296] In order to simplify the description and visualisation of all the ratios, I have subdivided them into 10 ranges of compression (R), with R 1 representing the lowest compression and R 10 the highest:

- R 1 = 1 to 2.50;

[293] See §4.1.3.6 below.

[294] In the 12th and 13th generation, there are only occasional attestations of other forms (see §4.1.3.2 below).

[295] I.e. known from a good-quality picture taken frontally, see the remarks in §4.1.2 above.

[296] These are, per generation: 15 from gens. 4 – 5; 25 from gens. 6 – 7; 24 from gen. 8; 96 from gen. 9; 97 from gen. 10; 99 from gen. 11; 112 from gen. 12; 62 from gen. 13. Note that the first group has not measured *b*'s from gen. 3, as in the only possible attestations known from pictures (KRS 485/3?, KRS 1912/3? and KRS 1397/3?) the genealogies all stop at the patronym.

- R 2 = 2.51 to 4;
- R 3 = 4.01 to 5.50;
- R 4 = 5.51 to 7;
- R 5 = 7.01 to 8.50;
- R 6 = 8.51 to 10;
- R 7 = 10.01 to 11.50;
- R 8 = 11.51 to 13;
- R 9 = 13.01 to 14.50;
- R 10 = > 14.50.

The attested ranges of compression as well as the single measurements can be found in the Appendix, arranged by generation.[297] Fig. 4.5 shows the compression averages of each generation, while Table 4.2 displays their attested ranges (considering only more than two attestations).

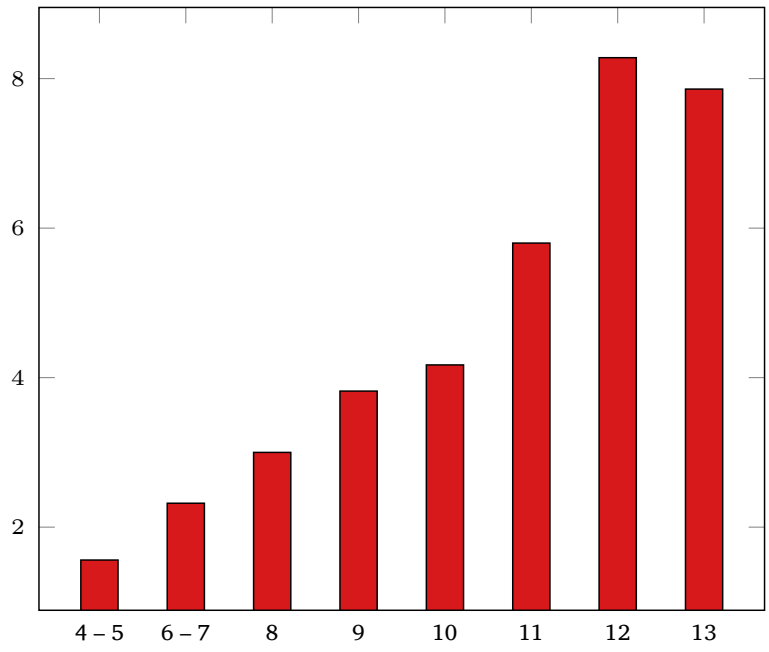


Figure 4.5: Averages of b’s h:w ratios per gen. (x-coords. = gens.; y-coords. = averages of b’s h:w-ratios)

[297] See §A.3.1 and §A.3.2.

	R 1	R 2	R 3	R 4	R 5	R 6	R 7	R 8	R 9	R 10
Gens. 4 – 5	✓									
Gens. 6 – 7	✓	✓								
Gen. 8	✓	✓	✓							
Gen. 9	✓	✓	✓	✓						
Gen. 10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Gen. 11	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Gen. 12		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Gen. 13			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

Table 4.2: Attested ranges per generation (considering only > 2 instances)

In the 'common' stage, the *b* is mostly a deep curve ⊂ , but square and pointed forms are also attested ⊏ < . The first two *b*'s of KRS 1479/5 (see Fig. 4.2(b) above) are pointed, while the last three instances are turned by 90° and have rather long legs ⊓ ⊓ .[298] All the measured *b*'s at this stage fall within R 1 of compression.[299]

In the transitional stage, we find, in the beginning – i.e. generations 6-7 – most *b*'s within R 1, 5 *b*'s within R 2, and only one within R 3.[300] But starting from generation 8, we have more and more *b*'s whose forms are shallow curves ⟨ or obtuse angles with the two sides of the angles of varying length ⟨⟨⟨ . The number of *b*'s within R 1 decreases, and we see that greater proportions of *b*'s belonging to higher ranges start to appear. By generation 11, most *b*'s are within R 3, followed by R 2, R 4, R 5 and R 1, and with scattered instances from the higher ranges until R 10.[301] As shown in Fig. 4.5, in the transitional stage the average compression of the *b*'s follows an almost linear progression which stabilizes in the late 'fine' stage – this is also the stage in which most *r*'s take the typical 'fine' form with vertical hooks. Moreover, Table 4.2 shows that generations 12 and 13 attest the highest ranges, with generation 13 attesting *b*'s up to the maximal range, i.e. R 10. At the same time, generation 12 attests only one *b* from R 1 and 6 from R 2, while generation 13 attests no *b*'s from R 1, and only 2 from R 2.[302] But at this stage the other lower ranges are nevertheless well attested, showing that the main difference with previous generations is the very attestation of high ranges which are not found earlier. KRS 1872/13 exhibits, in addition to 'regular' curved/pointed compressed forms, a new form composed of a vertical line with a shallow curve attached on top ⟨ .

[298] Unlike the 90° *ḥ*, present in the same text, this 90° form of the *b* will not become part of the 'fine' inventory. Cf. also the 90° *m* attested in generation 6 (see Fig. 4.3(a) above).

[299] See Table A.14 and Fig. A.19 in the Appendix.

[300] See Fig. A.20 in the Appendix.

[301] For more details, see Fig. A.24 in the Appendix.

[302] See Figs. A.25, A.26 in the Appendix.

4.1.3.2 *r*

In the ‘common’ stage, the *r* is either a shallow curve or a straight line with perpendicular/slanting short arms . ‘Common’ forms are the norm also at the beginning of the transitional stage from generations 6 to 9, with only one text (BES15 191/9) taking the ‘fine’ form – this text exhibits two rather compressed and elongated *b*’s very similar to the curve of the *r*, with h:w ratios amounting to 10 and to 6.47 respectively. From generation 10 onwards, the ‘fine’ hooked forms of *r* appear increasingly more often.

It is possible that the vertical hooks of the ‘fine’ form of *r* developed to distinguish the shallow curve variant of *r* from the ‘fine’ form of the *b*, which is also a shallow curve, and whose average compression starkly increased precisely in those generations – 9 to 12 – in which the hooked form becomes progressively more widespread. Table 4.1 shows that, starting from generation 9, some of the more compressed and elongated forms of the *b* are very similar to the shallow curve form of the *r*. In Is.H 847/10, one can notice that the *b*’s and the *r*’s are almost identical shallow curves. The h:w ratios of the *b*’s are 4.38 – 4.67 – 4.14 – 3.86, while the ratios of the *r*’s are 4.38 – 4.14 – 4.6 – 2.8.[303] A different situation is found in KRS 2993/10 (see Fig. 4.3(b) above), which attests both ‘common’ and ‘fine’ forms within the same text: 2 out the 6 *r*’s have vertical hooks,[304] while the other *r*’s are simply shallow curves. In this text, the *b*’s are in any case further distinguished from the *r*’s by being smaller curves, as is usually the case in the ‘common’ script, in which the *b* is usually distinguished from the curved form of the *r* by being a smaller and deeper curve.

In the late ‘fine’ stage, virtually all *r*’s take the hooked form. In the 12th generation, among 20 texts with *r*’s, 17 have exclusively hooked *r*’s.[305] In the 13th generation, 11 texts containing *r*’s are attested, of which only one (ZeGA 10/13) has *r*’s in the form of a vertical line with short slanting open arms .

While it would seem that the ‘fine’ hooked shape of the *r* developed to distinguish it from the increasingly compressed *b*, one should keep in mind that, beside the shallow curve form, the other ‘common’ variant of the *r* is the vertical line with two protruding hooks . This graph form, which in fact rarely appears in texts from the late ‘fine’ stage as well (cf., e.g., ZeGA 10/13), would have represented a viable alternative to the shallow curve shape, as it is both compressed and clearly distinct from the *b*.

[303] Also in Is.L 33/11, the *r* is a curve and it is not shallower than the *b*, but very similar in form and only distinguished from it because slightly bigger.

[304] These are the *r* of the great great great grandfather *s¹wr* and the *r* of *s¹fr* ‘writing’.

[305] Non-‘fine’ forms occur in Is.H 891/12, where the *r* is a shallow curve very similar to the *b*’s, while in KRS 132/12, all but one *r* – a very shallow curve – have vertical hooks. In BES15 799/12, only the last *r* is a vertical line with open arms, but in the other texts by the same author (KRS 1885, 1886), all *r*’s are hooked.

4.1.3.3 *k*

In the 'common' stage, we have some of the typical 'common' forms, e.g. WH 302/5? and WH 1711.2/5 . In Is.Mu 562/4? the arms are slanted and in WH 650/5 and KRS 1479/5 (see Fig. 4.2(b) above) we find more compressed forms of this variant . In KRS 907/5 (see Fig. 4.1(b) above), the *k* is formed as a shallow curve with a slanted protruding line .

In generations 6 – 7, only two *k*'s (both from generation 7) are attested . They are found in two texts by the same author *nhb bn kṯbt*.[306] Such forms are still transitional between the 'common' and the 'fine' one. But in Is.L 151/8, by the son of *nhb bn kṯbt*, the form of the *k* is already the typical compressed 'fine' form of a shallow curve with slanted line attached to one end , while in Is.Mu/8, by another author from the same generation, it is still transitional , and KRS 218/8 attests a further variant with a smaller body . Starting with generation 9, we only find 'fine' forms, both curved and pointed . Sometimes the slanting stroke is also curved or angled .

From generation 11 onwards, there are some instances of *k*'s further compressed to a straight line with a slanted stroke . AbSWS 18/13 (see Fig. 4.4(b) above) attests three different types of compression: the body of the first *k* is a straight line with a shallow curve on top , as in some late forms of the *b* (see above), the second one presents a pointed form with a hook , while the third is a straight line with a slanted stroke on top. The *k* in KRS 132/12 atypically takes a compressed fork form .[307]

4.1.3.4 *ḥ*

In the 'common' stage, we find 'common' forms , with one text (KRS 1479/5, see Fig. 4.2(b) above) already attesting the 'fine' pointed 90° form . From generation 6 onwards, most forms are 'fine'. Between generation 7 and 9 there are attestations of curved rather than pointed forms , which are found exclusively in hammered texts.[308] There are, however, hammered texts with pointed forms of *ḥ* as well.[309] In two instances from generation 9, both by the same author, the *ḥ*'s do not have the usual vertical stance , but they appear together with forms with a vertical stance.[310]

[306] These are Is.M 7/7 and Is.M 36/7.

[307] A similar form occurs in SESP.U 8/12, shown in Fig. 1.3(a), which is dated to the death of Agrippa (see §4.2 below).

[308] E.g. Is.L 132/7?; cf. the incised text Is.L 25/7, by the same author, where the *ḥ* is pointed.

[309] E.g. SESP.D 22/9.

[310] Cf. Is.M 300/9 and Is.M 349/9, by *ḥrb bn ḥny*, the first hammered and the second incised. In the writing style of this author, the *ḥ* of the name has a vertical stance, while the *ḥ* of the patronym lies horizontally.

4.1.3.5 *ḍ*

The ‘common’ stage attests exclusively the typical ‘common’ variants: , but from generation 6 onwards, the ‘fine’ forms with slanted lines appear in virtually every text.

4.1.3.6 *w*

Besides ‘common’ forms , in the ‘common’ stage we find also rhomboids with slanted lines , as in the ‘fine’ script.[311] From the 6th generation onwards, similarly to *ḥ* and *ḍ* (see above), nearly every text attests ‘fine’ forms. In addition to the typical rhomboids with slanted lines , we find also almond-shaped variants and further compressed variants with different forms: .

4.1.4 Notes on texts from later generations

While my analysis stopped at generation 13, I should like to briefly comment on some features which are found in texts from later generations of the *ḥmyn* sub-branch, but which are rare or absent in earlier texts within the same branch. AbWS 5/15 (Fig. 4.6(a)),[312] for example, exhibits one instance of completely straightened *r* with converging arms [313] and two instances of *m* with an almond form ,[314] but the other instances of these and other graphemes take the regular non-straightened forms, as do all graphs in Is.H 214/15, which is from the same generation as AbWS 5/15.

Is.Mu 367/16 (Fig. 4.6(b)) is the latest text from the *ḥmyn* sub-branch which I was able to trace:[315] it exhibits consistently ultra-compressed forms. Some of the *b*’s are very shallow, almost straight lines , the *r* is a straight line with two converging hooks ,

[311] See Is.Mu 562/4?, KRS 1479/5 (see Fig. 4.2(b) above) and WH 650/5.

[312] Note that the genealogy of this text (*qlb bn ʾbkr bn qlb bn s²hm bn rgl bn ʿmd bn mlk bn qḥs² bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn*) omits 7th generation *ḥḍg*.

[313] It is the *r* contained in the phrase *h-dr* ‘at this place’.

[314] See the *m* in the word *mʿzy* ‘goats’ and *bʿls¹mn* (deity name); this study did not discuss the development of the *m*, but it will suffice here to remark that in previous generations it is mainly attested with a curved/obtuse angle form, the only exception being KRS 1867/12, which attests the same ultra-compressed almond form found in AbWS 5/15. In the other late ‘fine’ texts, however, – e.g. ZeGA 10/13 – this same almond form usually indicates the *g* rather than the *m*.

[315] The genealogy goes: *lbʾt bn ṣʿd bn ʾs¹ bn qlb bn s²hm bn ʿmd bn mlk*, overlapping with the genealogies of AbWS 5/15 *qlb bn ʾbkr bn qlb bn s²hm bn rgl bn ʿmd bn mlk bn qḥs² bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn*, AbSWS 84/12 *s²hm bn rgl bn ʿmd bn mlk* and KRS 1333/12 *mlk bn rgl bn ʿmd bn mlk bn qḥs² bn ḥḍg bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn*, although the genealogy of Is.Mu 367/16 omits 11th generation *rgl* (see the tree in the Appendix, Fig. A.12). It is technically possible that *lbʾt* was a 15th rather than a 16th generation author, whose branch split at 10th generation *ʿmd*, and who shared only by coincidence the ancestors *qlb bn s²hm* with the texts mentioned above, but this option seems to me the less likely one. For a comparable situation, cf., e.g., the genealogy of ASDD 301 = ZSSH 5/16 and the discussion in §4.2.1 below.

and the *m* takes the elongated almond form . A feature which seems peculiar to this text is the *k* as a straight line with its slanting stroke simplified to one hook .

(a) AbWS 5/15

(b) Detail of Is.Mu 367/16

Figure 4.6: Two texts from later generations (Photos: OCIANA)

While in the *ḥmyn* sub-branch this text is the latest in terms of generation that I am aware of, without further texts from the same or later generations to compare this text to, we do not have sufficient evidence to interpret it as the end-stage of a progressive development towards increasing compression. Its features could in fact be equally the result of the preferences of this author, who for some reasons decided to consistently exaggerate the typical 'fine' stylistic traits of compression.

4.2 The chronology of Safaitic writing among the *ḍf*

The attestation of texts from different generations of the lineage of *ḍf* provides a basic chronological framework for the Safaitic writing practice among members of this lineage. In this Section, I will first employ the attested generations to calculate both a minimal and a maximal time-span for writing among the *ḍf*. Subsequently, as there are six inscriptions mentioning *grfṣ* 'Agrippa' which can be placed within three branches of the *ḍf* lineage-tree, I will use them to anchor the information provided by the generations to chronologically fixed points. This way, I will be able to estimate a *terminus ante quem* (*TAQ*) and a *terminus post quem* (*TPQ*) for Safaitic writing among the *ḍf* based on the distance of the earliest and latest securely attested generations from the 'Agrippa'-texts in the tree.

I should stress that it is not my aim to date texts on the basis of their generation, as this would be an impossible task. Indeed, the actual time-span between two texts at one generation of distance from each other rests on three unknown variables: 1) the age of the father at writing; 2) the age of the son at writing; 3) the age of the father at his son's birth. Moreover, we know that brothers could independently write and leave

several texts each[316] and we have also prolific authors who clearly did not write all of their texts in the same year.[317] This implies that we should expect a variety of both age and date of writing within texts by different authors from the same generation as well as in different texts by the same authors.

Thus, the scope of this study is different, namely to use the attested generations in order to date the presence of literacy. For this task, variables 1) and 2) become irrelevant, as we are dating the ability to write, not when the texts were carved. Since we cannot dispose of variable 3), however, we need to posit an artificial generation length: I will use 20 years because it is the minimal possible average time-frame which one could expect. While a 20 years generation pace is with certainty unrealistic, as we can surely expect that authors had children also at a later age, if we want to determine a minimal time-span of writing within which we can be sure that literacy was employed, a 20 years time-unit provides a good basis, precisely because it is very likely that the mean was higher. For the calculation of the maximal time-span of writing, on the other hand, I will use 40 years, which is also unrealistic, but for the opposite reason, i.e. the average is most likely to be lower.

The calculations of the absolute dates related to these time spans will be based on the three lineage sub-branches with the texts referencing 'Agrippa'. These are:

- *ġḍḍt bn ʾnḍt bn ws²yt bn ḏf*, here abbr. to '*ġḍḍt* branch';
- *zkr bn rfʾt bn ws²yt bn ḏf*, here abbr. to '*zkr* branch';
- *ṯḥrt bn hws¹r bn bʾs² bn ḏf*, here abbr. to '*ṯḥrt* branch'.

The first two branches share the 2nd generation ancestor *ws²yt*, while the third is an independent branch splitting from *ḏf* at 2nd generation *bʾs²*.[318] I have searched through the OCIANA for texts from the earliest and the latest attested generations in each sub-branch. I have also checked the other sub-branches and have not found any significant difference, as they all seem to be within the range of the sub-branches studied here.

In identifying texts from the earliest generations, we have the problem that most of the possible candidates indicate only the patronym and it is thus impossible to be sure about their identity. Even though such an identification is still possible, or, in some cases, even likely, it cannot be proved. Thus, I will focus on the earliest *securely* attested generations – i.e. from texts with genealogies going at least as far up as the papponym – and, only by way of comparison, show how much bigger the span would have been if candidates from earlier generations were considered.

For the first task, which is calculating the minimal and the maximal time-span of writing, the number of attested generations within each sub-branch will be our only needed information, while for the second task, which consists of providing the *TAQ* and the *TPQ* for Safaitic writing, the dating will rest on the 'Agrippa'-texts. Six texts mentioning *grfṣ* 'Agrippa' can be located in the *ḏf* lineage-tree:

[316] Cf., e.g., the 7th gen. brothers *ḥs²s²* and *ḥḍg* (see Fig. A.6 and Table A.3).

[317] Cf. HSNS 4/13 and HSNS 1/13, by the same author, dated to the appointment and death of Agrippa respectively (see below).

[318] See the trees in Figs. A.14 – A.16 in the Appendix.

- Two texts – HSNS 4/13 and HSNS 1/13 – by the same author, who belongs to the *ġḍḍt* branch. They are dated to 'the year Agrippa was appointed' and 'the year Agrippa died' respectively;[319]
- Two texts – HSNS 5/11 and SESP.U 8/12 – by members of the *zkr* branch, dated to 'the year of king Agrippa son of Herod'[320] and to 'the year Agrippa died' respectively.[321] The two authors are first cousins once removed (see the tree in Fig. A.15);
- Two texts – KRS 1023/14 and KRS 1039/15 – by authors of the *ṯḥrt* branch, who state that they 'rebelled against king Agrippa';[322] As in the *zkr* branch, the two authors are first cousins once removed (see the tree in Fig. A.16).

I will use these dated texts as points of reference to calculate a *TAQ* and a *TPQ* for the earliest and latest attested generations within the three branches involved. For this task, the artificial generation unit is again the minimum of 20 years, since it is, as explained above, an unrealistically rounded down time-frame. Thus, we can be sure that literacy was employed within the calculated chronological limits, although it is highly probable that it was also used earlier and later.

Since the authors could have meant either Agrippa I (37 – 44 AD) or Agrippa II (53 – (?)92/93 AD),[323] both options will be kept in consideration while establishing the

[319]The full texts read: HSNS 4/13 *l qḥs² bn s²mt bn zkr w ḥll h-dr s¹nt ngy grfṣ* 'By Qḥs² son of S²mt son of Zkr and he camped here in the year Agrippa was appointed'; HSNS 1/13 *l qḥs² bn s²mt bn zkr bn ġyrʾl bn zkr w ʾs²rq l-mdbr s¹nt myt grfṣ* 'By Qḥs² son of S²mt son of Zkr son of Ġyrʾl son of Zkr and he migrated to the inner desert the year Agrippa died' (see OCIANA).

[320]By 'son of Herod', i.e. *bn hrdṣ*, the author probably meant that Agrippa belonged to the Herodian family, as neither Agrippa I or II had Herod as father (see the Herodian family tree in Schürer 1973: 614).

[321]The full texts read: HSNS 5/11 *l lbʾt bn ḫṭs¹t bn flṭt bn bhs² bn ʾḏnt bn ʾs¹lm bn zkr bn rfʾt bn ws²yt bn ḍf bn ʿgd bn tʿwḏ w ḥl dr s¹nt mlk grfṣ bn hrdṣ w wgd ʾṯr ʾḫwl-h ʾl ʾs²ll tm w grmʾ w ʾḥwḍ w zbd f ngʿ w h ds²ry w lt ġnmt l-ḏ dʿy w lm yḫbl s¹fr* 'By Lbʾt son of Ḫṭs¹t son of Flṭt son of Bhs² son of ʾḏnt son of ʾs¹lm son of Zkr son of Rfʾt son of Ws²yt son of Ḍf son of ʿgd son of Tʿwḏ and he was here in the year of king Agrippa son of Herod and he found the traces of his maternal uncles [of] the people of ʾs²ll, Tm and Grmʾ and ʾḥwḍ and Zbd so he grieved in pain and O Ds²ry and Lt [grant] booty to whoever leaves [the inscription intact] [inflict] suffering on him who destroys [the inscription]'; SESP.U 8/12 *l ʾnʿm bn grmʾl bn ʾnʿm bn flṭt bn bhs² bn ʾḏnt bn ys¹lm bn rqlt bn zkr [[]] bn rfʾt bn ws²yt bn ḍf bn gnʾl bn bqr bn rh[[y]]w s¹nt myt grfṣ h-mlk w ʿwr ḏ yʿwr* 'By ʾnʿm son of Grmʾl son of ʾnʿm son of Flṭt son of Bhs² son of ʾḏnt son of Ys¹lm son of Rqlt son of Zkr son of Rfʾt son of Ws²yt son of Ḍf son of Gnʾl son of Bqr son of Rhyw the year king Agrippa died. And blind whoever scratches out the inscription' (see OCIANA). Note that the genealogy of HSNS 5/11 skips 5th generation *rqlt* (see the tree in Fig. A.15), while SESP.U 8/12 spells 6th generation *ʾs¹lm* as *ys¹lm*.

[322]The full texts read: KRS 1023/14 *l ʿlm bn ṣʿb bn grmʾl bn ḏʾb w mrd ʿl-h-mlk grfṣ ks¹r {h-}s¹l{s¹}[lt]* 'By ʿlm son of Ṣʿb son of Grmʾl son of Ḏʾb and he rebelled against king Agrippa to break {the bonds}'; KRS 1039/15 *l ʿlm bn ẓnʾl bn ʿlm w mrd ʿl-h-mlk grfṣ f h lt fṣyt ks¹r h-s¹ls¹lt* 'By ʿlm son of Ẓnʾl son of ʿlm and he rebelled against king Agrippa and so O Lt [grant] deliverance of the breaker of the chain' (see OCIANA). Note that, as suggested by Macdonald, the verb *mrd* 'to rebel' could be perhaps interpreted as 'to mutiny', perhaps from an auxiliary military troop drawn from the nomads (Macdonald 2014:162).

[323]See King 1990b:62; Macdonald 1995a:289–290; Schürer 1973:442–454, 471–483. In Is.H 763 – a 'fine' text by an author who identified himself as belonging to the *ʾl fṣmn – grfṣ* could have only referred to Agrippa II, as the text is dated to the year 18 of Agrippa and Agrippa I ruled only for a much shorter time (Macdonald 2014:152). Note that even though Agrippa II was granted the kingdom of Chalcis in 50

chronology of the respective branches. Unlike the estimation of the minimal/maximal time-span of writing above, the calculation of the *TAQ/TPQ* will provide – and is based on – actual dates. Thus, for this task I will artificially posit that authors always wrote the texts in question at the age in which their son was born, which in this study is the minimum average of 20 years. In addition, the following choices were made for the individual branches:

- In the *ġḍḍt* branch, in which the author is the same in both dated texts – they are dated to the first regnal year and to the death of Agrippa respectively –, generation 13 will be anchored to the date in which Agrippa became king, rather than to his death, since the age of the author was more likely to be proximate to 20 years when he carved the earlier text;
- The *zkr* branch is the most unproblematic, as it attests one text from the 11th generation and one from the 12th generation, the first dated to the year Agrippa became king, while the second is dated to Agrippa's death. Thus, the text from the earlier generation will be used to calculate the *TAQ*, while the other one will be the reference for the *TPQ*;
- In the *ṯḥṛt* branch, both generation 14 and 15 present texts referring to a rebellion against Agrippa, whereby the 14th generation author is the first cousin once removed of the 15th generation one. In this case, although we can imagine that the two authors, who were also close relatives, referred to the same event,[324] we cannot know at which point in the reign of Agrippa the rebellion took place. Since the scope of calculating *termini* is that we should aim at a *minimal* secure time-frame, I will anchor generation 14 to the latest possible date in which the rebellion could have happened, i.e. the year of the death of Agrippa, and use it as the reference to calculate the *TAQ*. By reverse, generation 15 will be anchored to the earliest possible date of the rebellion – the first year of Agrippa's reign –, but it will be employed as point of reference to determine the *TPQ*.

Within each branch there are several further sub-branches, and in considering texts from different generations it is not always possible to compare authors from the same exact branch-line. In the *ġḍḍt* branch, the latest authors belong to the 15th generation. However, the 13th generation 'Agrippa'-texts, on which the dating of these late texts is based, do not belong to the same exact branch, but split further up at 7th generation *s¹b* (see the tree in the Appendix, Fig. A.14). Similarly, the sub-branch of the latest (14th generation) authors in the *zkr* branch splits from the one of the 'Agrippa' texts at 7th generation *ʾḏnt* (see the tree in Fig. A.15).

AD, it is only in 53 AD that he was given the tetrarchy of Philip (Schürer 1973:472) which comprised the areas of the Ḥawrān most proximate to the territory of our nomads. Therefore, I here take 53 as the first year of his reign.

[324]Note also that the two texts are from the same edition and that they were assigned proximate numbers (i.e. KRS 1023/14 and KRS 1039/15). Therefore, we can even assume that they were found in the same location and that they were perhaps carved at the same time.

However, any discrepancy between the branches with the dated texts and the ones with the latest generations are not significant for our calculations, as they are based on the unrealistically rounded-down minimum of 20 years anyway. In other words, while such splits may have caused some chronological discrepancies which we cannot control for, the method here employed provides dates which are so rounded down that we can deem the consequences of such splits to be negligible for our purposes.

Finally, I shall briefly explain two minor caveats on some of the texts employed for calculation. The first caveat regards the texts I used as point of reference for the earliest generation with PN *bn* PN genealogies in the *ṯḥrt* branch. Such texts do not come from *ṯḥrt*'s direct lineal branch, as they are by *ṯḥrt*'s uncles.[325] However, this minor discrepancy has no impact at all on the calculation of the secure minimal time-span and TAQ, which are based on WH 1711.2/5, a 5th generation text by *ṯḥrt*'s son *kdr*.

The second caveat concerns the generation of ASFF 301 = ZSSH 4/15 and of KRS 1982/15, the two examples of latest texts from the *ġḍḍt* branch. The genealogy of ASFF 301 = ZSSH 4/15 goes *rmzn bn s¹krn bn rmzn bn qdm bn rmzn bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b*, and through the overlapping genealogies of several texts, it seems that *rmzn* was a 15th generation author.[326] However, another group of texts suggests that there could be an extra ancestor – *rmzn* – between *mfny* and *nʿmn*,[327] implying that the genealogies of the first group would reflect a 'shortened' form of the latter group, i.e. omitting 10th generation *rmzn*.[328] Following this interpretation of the genealogies, ASFF 301 = ZSSH 4/15 would be a 16th rather than as a 15th generation text, and one would have to take KRS 1982/15 *qdm bn ghm bn qdm bn qḏy bn qdm bn mfny* as a further instance of 16th generation text as well, as it belongs to a branch splitting at *mfny*.[329] However, since there is a possibility that these two different versions were both accurate and reflected two separate branches splitting at 9th generation *nʿmn* and sharing the sequence *rmzn bn mfny* – I have decided to follow the genealogy as it is shown in ASFF 301 = ZSSH 4/15 and in several other texts, and therefore to take generation 15 rather than 16 as the latest attested generation for this branch. This choice seems also the most cautious

[325]This of course only in case their identification is correct, as they only indicate the patronym. The texts are: AWS 118/3?, KRS 1912/3? and WH 744.1/3?, by *s²wʾ bn bʾs²*, and KRS 1397/3?, by *ḫṭmt bn bʾs²*; see the tree in Fig. A.16 and Table A.11 in the Appendix.

[326]I thank Michael Macdonald for pointing this out to me; cf. AWS 200/12 and C 2471/12, both with *rmzn bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b*; HNSD 166/12 *qḏy bn qdm bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b bn ʿḏrʾl bn bʿḏrh bn ġḍḍt*; KRS 338/11 *tm bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b*; KRS 344/12 and KRS 352/12, both with *qḏy bn qdm bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb*; KRS 350/13 *qdm bn qḏy bn qdm bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b*; KRS 1253/14 *tm bn qdm bn s¹ḫr bn qdm bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb*; WH 248/12 *tm bn s²ḥl bn tm bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb*; WH 792/12 *ʾs¹ bn s²ḥl bn tm bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b bn ʿḏrʾl bn ġḍḍ bn ʾnḍt*.

[327]Cf. AWS 171/11 *mfny bn rmzn bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b bn ʿḏrʾl bn bʿḏrh*; CSNS 997/12 and KRS 1028/12, both with *rmzn bn mfny bn rmzn bn nʿmn bn whb*; WH 54/12 *rġḍ bn mfny bn rmzn bn nʿmn bn whb*; C 1745/12 *s¹ḫr bn mfny bn rm{z}{n} bn n[ʿ]mn*; HaNSB 229/12 and SIJ 815/12, both with *ḥny bn mfny bn rmzn bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b*.

[328]This type of omissions is a well attested phenomenon in texts from late generations (see §A.1).

[329]One of the texts showing that he belongs to that branch is KRS 350 *qdm bn qḏy bn qdm bn mfny bn nʿmn bn whb bn s¹b* (and note that this is one of the genealogies omitting *rmzn*); see the tree in Fig. A.14 and Table A.9 in the Appendix.

one considering its use, which is calculating the minimal secure time-span as well as the TPQ.

Having in mind all the relevant choices and caveats presented above, Table 4.3 shows the calculations of the minimal time span, *TAQ*, and *TPQ*, for writing among the *ḍf* in three lineage sub-branches. For the calculations of *TAQ* and *TPQ*, I used as a point of reference both Agrippa I and Agrippa II. The calculations were made according to the earliest attested generation with PN *bn* PN genealogies as well as according to the earliest *secure* generations, i.e. using texts with genealogies showing at least the papponym. In the following, I shall discuss the results.

4.2.1 Time-span of Safaitic writing among the *ḍf*

It appears that there are no stark discrepancies in the calculated time-spans of the three branches. If we consider only the earliest securely attested generations, the *zkr* and the *ṭḥrt* branches are the ones attesting the broadest generations ranges: the *zkr* branch attests 10 generations, while the *ṭḥrt* branch attests 11 generations. The *ġḍḍt* branch, on the other hand, attests only 8 generations. With a minimal generation average of 20 years, their minimal time-spans are 160 (*ġḍḍt*), 200 (*zkr*), and 220 (*ṭḥrt*) years. Thus, the longest secure minimal time-span of Safaitic writing among the *ḍf* is 220 years, while the maximal secure time-span would be, taking as an average generation period 40 years, 440 years. By accepting less secure attestations of earlier generations, in the *ġḍḍt* branch the number of generations would increase to 13, which would yield a span of 260 years with the minimal 20 years generation average, and a span of 520 years with the maximum average of 40 years. The same exact numbers would be obtained in the *ṭḥrt* branch, where we would also have a span of 13 generations, while in the *zkr* branch we would gain a 12 generations span, i.e. a minimal span of 240 years and a maximum span of 480 years.

4.2.2 *TAQ* and *TPQ*

As shown in Table 4.3, the calculations of the *TAQ* and *TPQ* in the three branches yield very similar dates:

TAQ The secure dates of the *TAQ* are, according to Agrippa I, between the end of the II c. and the beginning of the 1st century BC, while, according to Agrippa II, they are all at the beginning of the 2nd century BC. However, if we consider less secure attestations of earlier generations, the *TAQ* can be pushed back to the beginning of the 2nd century BC (see especially the *ġḍḍt* branch).

TPQ Unlike the *TAQ*, whose calculation is based on several generations before Agrippa, the results of the *TPQ* are less telling, as they are based on merely one to two generations of distance from the dated texts, hence all oscillating around the middle/end of

ḏf's sub-branch	Earliest generation with PN *bn* PN genealogy	Earliest secure generation (at least PN *bn* PN *bn* PN genealogy)	Latest generation	Minimal time span of writing	Dated generation	*TAQ* acc. Agrippa I (37 – 44 AD)	*TAQ* acc. Agrippa II (53 – 93 AD)	*TPQ* acc. Agrippa I (37 – 44 AD)	*TPQ* acc. Agrippa II (53 – 93 AD)
ġḏḏt bn ʾnḏt bn ws²yt bn ḏf	2 (WH 884)	7 (Is.Mu 354, KRS 563, SESP.G 1)	15 (ASFF 301 = ZSSH 4, KRS 1982)	With 8 generations (7 to 15): 8 × 20 = **160 yrs.** With 13 generations (2 to 15): 13 × 20 = 260 yrs.	13 (Two texts by the same author: HSNS 4 *s¹nt ngy grfṣ*; HSNS 1 *s¹nt myt grfṣ*)	With 7th generation as earliest: ((13 – 7) × 20) – 37 = **83 BC** With 2nd generation as earliest: ((13 – 2) × 20) – 37 = 183 BC	With 7th generation as earliest: ((13 – 7) × 20) – 53 = **67 BC** With 2nd generation as earliest: ((13 – 2) × 20) – 53 = 167 BC	((15 – 13) × 20) + 37 = **77 AD**	((15 – 13) × 20) + 53 = **93 AD**
zkr bn rfʿt bn ws²yt bn ḏf	2 (WH 884)	4 (C 1483)	14 (KRS 1131, 1283, 1284, 2301, 1408, 1409)	With 10 generations (4 to 14): 10 × 20 = **200 yrs.** With 12 generations (2 to 14): 12 × 20 = 240 yrs.	11 (HSNS 5 *s¹nt mlk grfṣ bn hrdṣ*) 12 (SESP.U 8 *s¹nt myt grfṣ*)	With 4th generation as earliest: ((11 – 4) × 20) – 37 = **103 BC** With 2nd generation as earliest: ((11 – 2) × 20) – 37 = 143 BC	With 4th generation as earliest: ((11 – 4) × 20) – 53 = **87 BC** With 2nd generation as earliest: ((11 – 2) × 20) – 53 = 127 BC	((14 – 12) × 20) + 44 = **84 AD**	((14 – 12) × 20) + 93 = **133 AD**
ṯhrt bn ḫws¹r bn bʾs² bn ḏf	3 (AWS 118, KRS 1912, WH 744.1, KRS 1397)	5 (WH 1711.2)	16 (SESP.U 22)	With 11 generations (5 to 16): 11 × 20 = **220 yrs.** With 13 generations (3 to 16): 13 × 20 = 260 yrs.	14 (KRS 1023 *mrd ʿl-mlk grfṣ*) 15 (KRS 1039 *mrd ʿl-mlk grfṣ*)	With 5th generation as earliest: ((14 – 5) × 20) – 44 = **136 BC** With 3rd generation as earliest: ((14 – 3) × 20) – 44 = 176 BC	With 5th generation as earliest: ((14 – 5) × 20) – 93 = **87 BC** With 3rd generation as earliest: ((14 – 3) × 20) – 93 = 127 BC	((16 – 15) × 20) + 37 = **57 AD**	((16 – 15) × 20) + 53 = **73 AD**

Table 4.3: Calculations of the time-frame of writing among the ḏf (with 1 gen. = 20 yrs.)

the 1st century AD and, only in one case (the *zkr* branch, acc. Agrippa II), the beginning of the 2nd century AD.

On account of these results, we can state that writing among the *ḍf* was no doubt employed between the beginning of the 1st century BC and the end of the 1st century AD, but most probably also earlier and later, also considering that the minimal secure time-span calculated above reached 200 years in the *zkr* branch and 220 years in the *ṭḥrt* branch.

Chapter 5

Carving Techniques and Text Layout

5.1 Carving techniques

Safaitic inscriptions were carved employing different types of techniques. The terminology used here is based on Michael Macdonald's unpublished guide which he prepared for the SESP expeditions.[330] Macdonald classified three main technique categories: direct hammering, chiselling, and incising. The same categories have been identified for the rock art.[331] Direct hammering consists of hitting the rock directly with a hammerstone. A feature typical of this technique is that 'the face is usually badly chipped around the letters where the stone has missed the line' (Macdonald n.d.[a]). Chiselling on the other hand is an indirect form of hammering: the instrument which is in contact with the rock (the 'chisel') carves the surface by being in turn hit by a hammerstone. Compared to direct hammering, the lines produced using this technique result as cleaner, 'often with small horizontal indentations within the line where each blow has been made' (Macdonald n.d.[a]).[332] Finally, incising is characterised by 'usually thin letters, cut with a sharp tool pulled over the face' (Macdonald n.d.[a]).

Table 5.1 shows the percentages of the uses of the different techniques in the JQC. Since many panels surfaces are irregular, heavily weathered, or damaged, it can be challenging to infer which type of hammering was employed. The category 'Hammering (uncertain)' covers all cases in which it is particularly difficult to decide whether the technique is direct hammering or indirect hammering (i.e. chiselling). 'Mixed' refers to the use of a combination of different techniques, mainly incision and direct hammering techniques, within the same text. From Table 5.1 it appears that direct hammering was

[330] I thank him for sending it to me and for kindly sharing his knowledge of these matters with me.

[331] See Brusgaard 2019:32–34, 105–113. Note that Brusgaard follows the international rock art terminology, whereby the terms 'direct hammering' and 'chiselling' correspond to 'pounding' and 'pecking' respectively (Brusgaard 2019:32).

[332] In addition, as noted by Brusgaard, chiselling generally results in deeper grooves than direct hammering (Brusgaard 2019:33).

Direct hammering	41%	74%
Chiselling	14%	
Hammering (uncertain)	19%	
Incision	22%	
Mixed	4%	

Table 5.1: Techniques employed in 5638 Safaitic inscriptions of the JQC

the most widespread technique, but also that there is a significant number of incised and chiselled inscriptions, while texts carved using a mixed technique would seem to be a small minority.[333]

It is important to stress that within each of these categories there is a lot of variation in the way the inscription was carved, the nature of the rock surface, the depth of the line, the technical skills of the author, and probably also the type of instrument being used.

In the following, I describe and show some examples of each of the technique types employed in the JQC.

5.1.1 Direct hammering

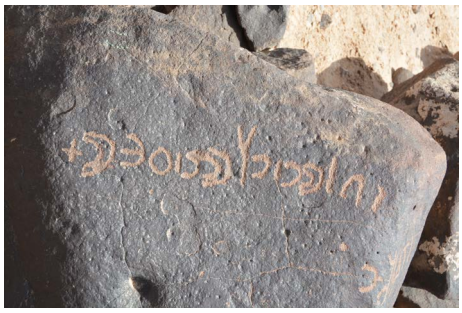
Direct hammered texts can appear as very thickly and roughly inscribed, as in Fig. 5.1(a), but can also present relatively neat lines, as in Fig. 5.1(b). In addition, there is a certain extent of variation in the degree of homogeneity of the stroke. For example, if compared with the two texts in Figs.5.1(a)–5.1(b), the strokes of the texts in Figs.5.1(c)-5.1(d) result as discontinuous. In QUR 2.520.1/C (Fig. 5.1(c))[334] one can see that in some graphs the carver did not always hammer throughout all of the points which make out the strokes of the graphs, leaving instead several tiny gaps within the lines. Such gaps are especially visible in the strokes of the *ġ* in the last word of the text *ġnmt* 'booty'.

QUR 913.18.1/C (Fig. 5.1(d)), which reads *l ʾs¹ḥm* 'By ʾs¹ḥm', may be an example of incomplete text, as the lower arm of the last *m* looks unfinished. In this text, the last two graphs (*ḥ* and *m*) present much less homogeneous strokes than the first three graphs, which on the other hand appear as more carefully filled-in. This feature may suggest that in some cases direct hammered inscriptions were not made just in one go – i.e. by simply hammering one blow after the other – but that strokes were instead hammered over and over again until the desired thickness of the line was reached, a process which may be compared to the 'Rubbed incising' category (see §5.1.3 below).

[333]Cf. the figures discussed in Brusgaard 2019:105–107, who notes a similar pattern in the distribution of the carving techniques employed for the rock art, with direct hammering being the most common technique as well.

[334]The text reads: *l ʿwḏ bn hmlk bn ʿmd w tẓr ġnmt* 'By ʿwḏ son of Hmlk son of ʿmd and he lay in wait for booty'.

(a) Crudely direct hammered text (QUR 2.434.1/C)



(b) Neatly direct hammered text (QUR 186.19.1/C)

(c) Discontinuously direct hammered text (QUR 2.520.1/C)

(d) Incomplete direct hammered text (QUR 913.18.3/C)

Figure 5.1: Examples of direct hammered technique

(a) Panel with direct hammered and chiselled texts (QUR 186.125/C)

(b) Thick chiselled inscription (QUR 64.73.2/C)

Figure 5.2: Panels containing chiselled texts

5.1.2 Chiselling

As an indirect form of hammering, chiselling can be distinguished from direct hammering thanks to the neater lines which it produces on the rock. In Fig.5.2(a) one can see two examples of thinly chiselled inscriptions – the first two inscriptions starting from the bottom (QUR 186.125.3/C and 186.125.2/C) – whose clean lines can also be easily contrasted to the direct hammered graphs of the inscription above them (QUR 186.125.1/C). Chiselled texts do not always have thin graphs. Fig.5.2(b) shows an example of a huge text carved with a rather thick tool.[335] Chiselling appears to have been typically employed in stylistically elaborate texts. For example, texts in which special features[336] are particularly prominent are often chiselled.

5.1.3 Incising

Two main types of incising are found in the JQC, which mainly diverge in the conformation of the trait: 1) simple trait incising (see Figs. 5.3(b) – 5.3(c)), and 2) 'rubbed incising', i.e. rubbing the tool up and down in order to produce thicker lines (see Figs. 5.3(e) – 5.3(f)). A further sub-category is the extremely rare rocking-blade technique, on which see below. Type 2) in some cases is combined with hammering (see §5.1.4 below) and it can also result in rather neat lines, as in the two associated texts in the panel QUR 628.41 (see Fig. 5.3(e)). The scratched out *{ġ}* in QUR 628.41.1/C (the top text in Fig. 5.3(e)), which was likely effaced by the author himself, who wrote another *ġ* again above,[337] gives us a direct insight into the rubbing incising process. Since the

[335]Note that some of the graphs have been joined by direct hammered ligatures, see the discussion of such features in §5.3 below.

[336]I.e. square, elongated, or 90° forms, see Chapter 3.

[337]See §7.1.1 on the practice of corrective effacement. The text reads: QUR 628.41.1/C *l s²nf bn rġb bn s²nf w tẓr h-rgl mn-ḥrn* 'By S²nf son of Rġb son of S²nf and he lay in wait for the *rgl* from the Ḥawrān'. Interestingly the effaced *ġ* presents the form with two parallel lines, while the other *ġ* takes the single line

graph has been effaced before being completed, it has been only partially rubbed incised, presenting much thinner and less neat strokes if compared to the other graphs of the panel, which on the other hand represent the finished product of rubbed incising.

The size of incised texts is on average smaller than the size of hammered texts. The depth, thickness, and neatness of the strokes produced by this technique varies depending on the kind of instrument used and on the amount of pressure applied to the rock surface. For example, one can compare the relatively deeply incised trait of Figs. 5.3(a) – 5.3(b) to the very shallowly incised strokes in Fig. 5.3(c). Sometimes the quality of the strokes varies within the same inscription. For instance, in QUR 305.19.1/C/F? (Fig. 5.3(d)), the first three graphs are more deeply incised than the rest, which is more lightly incised and exhibits some traces of rubbed incision.

5.1.3.1 Rocking-blade

According to Macdonald, the rocking-blade is 'a relatively rare technique (both ancient and modern) which produces a rather beautiful effect. Instead of drawing the implement with a sharp point across the rock, you rock it back and forwards as you produce the line. The result is a line made up of tiny zig-zags'.[338]

In the JQC, this technique appears only in four texts,[339] three in the SoS script (see the example in Fig. 5.4(b)) and one in the 'fine' script (QUR 2.490.1/F) a detail of which is shown in Fig. 5.4(a).[340] I am not aware of any example of text in this technique in the 'common' script.

In ANKS 1/SoS, a further SoS script example from western Iraq, the rocking-blade technique is used for the text and for the associated drawings as well, which are however carved with a much sharper instrument, resulting in a much thinner outline.

5.1.4 Mixed techniques

A minority of texts is carved by combining incision and hammering. These techniques are mixed in different ways: 1) by hammering some graphs or parts of them and incising others; 2) by sketching an incised layer which is then hammered over; 3) by using both 1) and 2), i.e. the two techniques are combined by hammering parts of the texts and

graph form (see §2.1.9). It is possible that the author effaced the first graph because he was not happy with how it turned out or perhaps because he wanted to make a better use of the panel space above in order to make the text fit. Thus, the text runs from left to right until the first graph of the patronym *r*, and then interrupts at the effaced graph *ġ* and continues above with the new instance of *ġ*, curving along the panel edges and then running boustrophedon below squeezed in between the first line of the first text and the first line of the bottom text (QUR 628.41.2/C), which runs in a curving boustrophedon fashion as well (see §5.5 below on the different types of text direction in Safaitic). It is likely that the bottom text (QUR 628.41.2/C) was carved first, it reads: *l hnẓr bn rqs*^{2} *bn wḏr w ʿgẓt h-s*^{1}*my* 'By Hnẓr son of Rqs^2 son of Wḏr and the sky withheld (the rain)'.

[338]Michael Macdonald, p.c. 2016.

[339]The texts are: QUR 2.490.1/F, 541.18.1/SoS, 541.18.2/SoS, 541.18.3/SoS.

[340]The full text is shown in Chapter 6 (Fig. 6.14(b)) where I also discuss the writing style of its author, see §6.2.3.

(a) Detail of incised text (QUR 176.24.1/F)

(b) Deeply incised text and rock art (QUR 994.7.1/C)

(c) Very shallowly incised text (detail of QUR 586.34.1/C)

(d) Incised text with strokes of varying depth (QUR 305.19.1/C/F?)

(e) Panel with two associated texts carved through rubbed incision (QUR 628.41)

(f) Rubbed incision (detail of QUR 20.27.1/C)

Figure 5.3: Examples of incised texts

(a) Detail of QUR 2.490.1/F

(b) Detail of QUR 541.18.1/SoS

Figure 5.4: Examples of rocking-blade technique

(a) Detail of QUR 171.99.1/C, with direct hammered *q* circle

(b) Incised and direct hammered text (QUR 2.479.1/C)

Figure 5.5: Examples of mixed technique

incising others, and moreover one can see that the hammered parts have an underlying incised layer.

Type 1 is often employed to distinguish the name of the author, which is usually completely hammered, while the rest of the text is incised (see the examples in §5.2 below).

Occasionally, this type of mixing is also employed by hammering circles or small parts of the graphs in incised texts, as in QUR 171.99.1/C (Fig. 5.5(a)), an incised text in which only the circle of the *q* has been filled in through direct hammering.

An example of Type 2 is QUR 2.479.1/C (Fig. 5.5(b)), which reads *l bnġyr bn mlkt* 'By Bnġyr son of Mlkt'. One can still see, by zooming in the graphs, that the inscription was first outlined through incision and then direct hammered, because some graphs were not completely superimposed by the hammering, see the particularly visible incised strokes in the *b* and the *ġ* of the name of the author. In addition, even in the parts where the incised sketches of the graphs have been completely hammered over, one can still

see the incised layer, as it seems to have been more deeply carved than the hammering layer above. The example in Fig. 5.6(a) discussed in §5.2 below is an example of Type 3: by zooming in the *h* in the author's name, one can see that the extremities of the two hooks of the fork are incised rather than chiselled, likely representing a part of the incised sketch which was not completely hammered over. The use of sketching is obviously sometimes difficult to detect on the stone. Moreover, if the hammered layer is sufficiently deep and wide as to completely cover all the incised parts, it is of course impossible to establish if the inscription had been sketched first. Therefore, it is plausible that this very technique was employed for many more inscriptions. The process of first sketching the graphs through incision and then hammering them over is paralleled by a similar procedure attested for drawing the rock art.[341]

While the techniques which are mostly mixed are direct hammering and incision, there are also some rare cases of Type 1 mixing in which it would seem that the name of the author is chiselled, or alternatively more carefully hammered than the rest of the inscription, which is direct hammered.[342]

5.2 Emphasis

This widespread practice mainly consists of carving the name of the author – and often also his patronym and other parts of the genealogy – in stylistically marked graph forms, i.e. bigger, thicker, and/or with special features. It was first recognised by Macdonald, who referred to WH 3923 = QUR 2.192.4/C (see Fig. 7.3(f) in Chapter 7) as 'one of a number of Safaitic inscriptions in which the author's name is 'writ large' and the statement (or, in some cases, all or part of the genealogy) in smaller or less prominent letters'.[343]

A common way of emphasising the name/genealogy is the use of bigger graphs, as for example in QUR 176.24.1/F and QUR 952.83.1/SoS,[344] where the graphs of the genealogy and of the affiliation to the social group are distinguished by a slightly bigger size, although they are carved in the same technique as the rest of the text. In several examples, the author further emphasised his name by employing thicker lines, which were mostly accomplished through a different technique, as for example by mixing hammering (for the name) and incision (for the rest of the text).

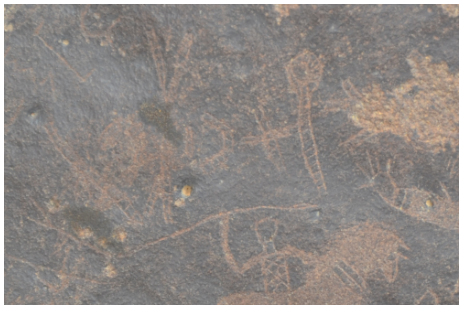
An example of this is QUR 294.46.1/C[345] (Fig. 5.6(a)), in which the name and patronym are carved in big, thinly chiselled graphs, while the much smaller statement part (traced in red on the photo) is shallowly incised, and it runs boustrophedon above it. Another example is QUR 148.127.1/C *l d{ṣ}y bn frḫ* 'By {Dṣy} son of Frḫ' (Fig. 5.6(b)), where the graphs of the name of the author, *dṣy*, are very thickly chiselled, while the patronym is incised in much smaller graphs and runs vertically downwards

[341]See Brusgaard 2019:107–111.
[342]See, e.g., QUR 12.58.1/C.
[343]Macdonald 1989:65; see also his discussion in Macdonald 2006:292.
[344]See Fig. 6.12(a) and Fig. 6.20 respectively, Chapter 6.
[345]The text reads: *l kʿmh bn bs¹ʾ h-drt ʿm f ʿm* 'By Kʿmh son of Bs¹ʾ at this place, year after year'.

(a) Name and patronym chiselled, text scratched (QUR 294.46.1/C)

(b) Name thickly chiselled, patronym incised (QUR 148.127.1/C)

(c) Name and patronym hammered, curse incised above in smaller graphs (QUR 2.196.2/C)



(d) Name and patronym in outline and filled with lines (detail of QUR 449.2.1/C)

Figure 5.6: Texts with emphasised names

to the *y* of the first name. Furthermore, the *ṣ* of *dṣy* has been joined to the *d* through the addition of a ligature, perhaps to further embellish the name (see §5.3 below).

As noted by Brusgaard, size and technique are devices which are also used in the rock art to emphasise some elements within a scene.[346]

In some rock art signatures, such as QUR 974.43.1/C[347] (see Fig. 6.11(a) in Chapter 6), the name, patronym and associated drawings are hammered, while the caption of the image is incised. As noted by Brusgaard, in all cases of rock art signatures in which the name of the author is emphasised through hammering, the associated drawing is always hammered as well, showing that the author wanted to put the visual emphasis on both the drawing and on his name.[348]

A different example of emphasis through technique and size is QUR 2.196.2/C (Fig. 5.6(c)), which reads: *l ʾ{r}{{ḥ}}m bn rhz h ʾlt ʿwr m ʿwr h-{s¹}{f}r* 'By {ʾrḥm} son of Rhz,

[346]See Brusgaard 2019:106–107, 117–118. For example, in raiding scenes, the camel, which is the object of the raid, is usually much larger than the anthropomorphs participating in the raid, and then also distinguished by technique, usually hammering, while the anthropomorphs are incised (Brusgaard 2019:118).

[347]The text reads: *l mrʾt bn ḫlʾl h-ẓbyn* 'By Mrʾt son of Ḫlʾl are the gazelles'.

[348]Brusgaard 2019:107.

O ʾlt, blind whosoever would efface this {writing}'. In this text, name and patronym of the author are hammered and bigger than the curse (traced in red on the photo), which is incised above the name and patronym, with the last word *s¹fr* curving downwards in between the *n* of *bn* and the *r* of the patronym.

In Chapter 3, we have already come across the practice of emphasising the name of the author not only by size and technique, but also by using square, elongated, or 90° graph forms. For example, as discussed in §3.1.3, in QUR 12.34.1/C *l ḫll bn gmḥy* 'By Ḫll son of Gmḥy' (see Fig. 3.3(b)), the first name is carved in finely chiselled and elongated graphs which are bigger than the graphs of the patronym. They are also more deeply carved and the *ḫ* is elongated and with part of the space in its gaps skilfully filled in. Similarly in QUR 186.162.1/C (see Fig. 3.2(a) in Chapter 3) only the name and patronym have square and 90° *b*'s, while the *b*'s in the statement take the usual curved form facing in the direction of the text.

In one inscription (QUR 449.2.1/C), the graphs of the name and patronym are drawn in outline and filled in with incised parallel lines (see Fig. 5.6(d)), while the remaining part of the text is in regular incised graphs. This type of decoration is mostly found in the rock art, where the bodies of animals or humans are sometimes filled in with lines.[349]

5.3 Joined graphs and ligatures

In a 1989 paper, Macdonald drew the scholars' attention to the Safaitic practice of joining adjacent graphs in different ways:[350] by extending parts of the graphs to join each other, by joining them directly or through ligatures (usually dots or bars),[351] by distorting them,[352] or by drawing a straight line through them.[353] This phenomenon has been noticed in Hismaic as well.[354] One of the most common features is the joining of *b* and *n* of *bn* (i.e.'son of' in the genealogy), see, e.g., , , , ,[355] although in some cases the joining of these graphs may have been the result of attempts to vandalise the text.[356]

[349]See 'Patterned figures' in Brusgaard 2019:113–115.

[350]Two of the examples Macdonald discusses are from Jebel Qurma (see Macdonald 1989:65–67). They are QUR 2.514.1/C = WH 3912 and QUR 2.192.4/C = WH 3923, which are interpreted here as vandalised texts. They are both discussed in §7.2.

[351]The term 'ligature' is here employed to refer exclusively to the graphic element joining two adjacent graphs together; this use is different from its current meaning in Latin palaeography, where it has been defined as 'the linking of two or more letters into one graph, in which the original letter forms have been altered' (Derolez 2003:xxi).

[352]I have not found any example of this type in the JQC.

[353]However, this last type is here interpreted as a form of modification (see §7.2).

[354]See King 1990a:§2.E.

[355]This has also been noted by Macdonald 1989:63 and, for Hismaic, by King 1990a:§2.E.1. On the joining of the *b* and *n* of *bn* in Dadanitic inscriptions, see Macdonald 2018:8–9.

[356]Cf., e.g., QUR 372.27.1/C (Fig. 7.3(e)), where in addition to two short bars joining the *b* and the *n* together, further bars have been added to other graphs to alter their graphematic values; see the discussion of this text in §7.2.

QUR 2.184.3/C (Fig.5.7(a)) – which reads: *l ns²l bn ʿbd bn mk bn ḫzr* 'By Ns²l son of ʿbd son of Mk son of Ḫzr' – is a good example of a text with both dots or bars ligatures and graph extension. Most graphs have been ligatured through roughly hammered dots and bars – see the *lām auctoris* and the *n*, the *s²* and the *l*, the *n* and the *ʿ*, the *d* and the *b*, the *b* (of the third *bn*) and the *n*, the *n* and the *ḫ* – which thus seem to have been added after the inscription had been carved. However, the *b* and the *d* of the patronym *ʿbd* have been joined by extending the arms of the *b* using an accurate hammering technique which is remarkably similar, and perhaps identical, to the one used to carve the graphs. Thus, the extensions of the arms of the *b* may have been carved either at the same time as the graph or later as the rest of the ligatures, but using a more accurate technique. In the majority of cases, as noticed by Macdonald for Safaitic and by King for Hismaic, ligatures are more roughly and shallowly carved than the graphs, which suggests that they were mostly added after the text had been carved.[357] This feature makes us question if they were always decorative features added by the author himself after he had finished the text or if they were rather malicious later additions. In the example in Fig. 5.2(b) above, one can clearly see that the bar ligatures are more shallowly and roughly direct hammered than the graphs, which are neatly chiselled. Moreover, the vertical bar closing the arms of the *b* is not joining it to the following *n*, so in this sense it is not strictly a ligature.

In other examples, however, as in the case of the *b* arms in QUR 2.184.3/C (Fig. 5.7(a)) just discussed, the technique used to carve the ligatures is indistinguishable from the one used for the graphs. In such cases, although weathering may have created the illusion of a uniformity that was not there originally, it is plausible that the author was responsible for them. Fig. 5.7(b) shows an example of a large chiselled inscription (QUR 64.139.1/C) reading *l ʿly bn grmt* 'By ʿly son of Grmt' in which the ligatures are carved using a technique similar to the one used for the graphs. The *l* of the name of the author has been joined to the following *y* through one bar on top and another at the bottom. The *n* of *bn* 'son of' has been extended to close the two arms of the *b*, forming a single sign. In addition, the arms of the *r* of the patronym have been extended to join the following *m*.

There are also instances in which the first graph of the author's name is joined to the *lām auctoris*, as in QUR 611.4.1/C (Fig. 5.7(c)) *l ġfr bn nhbt*, where the *ġ*, which is 'S'-shaped and facing backwards, is joined to the *lām auctoris*. In addition, the *b* of the patronym, which sits above the preceding *h*, is joined to the upper end of its shaft. In QUR 148.48.1/C (Fig. 5.7(d)) *l hs²ll bn ʿ{m}hm bn hwḥd*, the name of the author is distinguished through bigger graphs and only one ligature joins the shaft of the *h* to the *lām auctoris*, or, alternatively, the *lām auctoris* is hooked and its hook is simply joined to the *h*.[358] In such cases, it is likely that the process of joining graphs and/or adding ligatures had a decorative purpose and that it was the work of the author himself.

Another example is QUR 370.106.1/C *l s²kr {{b}}n s²bḥ* (Fig. 5.7(e)); the inscription

[357] See Macdonald 1989:63, 68; King 1990a:§2.E.

[358] Although the other *l*'s are not hooked, there are some cases in which the *lām auctoris* is hooked, while the other *l*'s in the text are not (see §2.1.14).

(a) QUR 2.184.3/C (text in cartouche)

(b) QUR 64.139.1/C

(c) QUR 611.4.1/C

(d) QUR 148.48.1/C

(e) QUR 370.106.1/C

(f) QUR 956.56.1/C (bottom text)

Figure 5.7: Examples of joined graphs and ligatures

is surrounded by a directly hammered cartouche from which several lines protrude. The *s²* of the author's name is joined to the following *k* by a dot, and the arms of the *k* extend to join the following *r*. A line joins the *r* to the following *b*, but it goes past it, making it look like a *ḥ*. While most of the joining in the text may be the result of authorial choice, the line which alters the graphematic value of the graph suggests otherwise. There are many examples of texts in which several graphs have been tampered with and turned into others by adding lines to them with a most likely malicious purpose (see §7.2) and that is why cases such as this are especially difficult to interpret. What we see may even be the result of different hands: perhaps the author of the text added the ligatures and joined some of the graphs, and then someone else turned the *b* into a *ḥ*. It may also be the case that the line crossing the *b* was seen as a decorative rather than a damaging feature.

An even more ambiguous example is QUR 956.56.1/C (Fig. 5.7(f)), an inscription carved in huge graphs in which the name of the author has been made almost illegible by ligatures and other lines joining the graphs and their respective parts.[359] Such lines are carved very skilfully, which makes one think that they had the purpose of embellishing the name of the author, distinguishing it from the rest of the text.[360] This apparent contradiction makes it very difficult to understand what has really happened.[361] It is possible that the public for which the inscription was meant immediately understood the name behind it: while the interpretation is challenging for us, it could have been immediately intelligible to the nomads inhabiting the area at that time. On the other hand, if illegibility was the actual purpose of adding such strokes, a further explanation may be that the author himself intentionally hid his name, perhaps in order to protect it from curses of enemies passing by.

Nevertheless, in none of the examples of ligatures discussed so far we can completely exclude the possibility that someone else added these features and tampered with the inscription later. While in his paper Macdonald recognised that in some cases the addition of ligatures may represent a form of vandalisation, he generally seems inclined to interpret most examples of ligatures as intentional.[362] However, since ligatures are mostly carved in a rougher manner than the graphs themselves, and since they often hinder the legibility of the text, a lot of caution is needed in their interpretation. In §7.2, we shall see some examples in which the addition of bars to the text was most likely disruptive.

5.4 Text direction

The text direction of Safaitic inscriptions varies a lot, which is probably in part due to the irregular shape of the basalt rocks.

[359] I would tentatively read the text as follows: *l ḫ{{l}} {{b}}{{n}} ws²yt* 'By {Ḫl} {son of} Ws²yt'.

[360] On this practice, see §5.2 above.

[361] Cf. the similar observations by King (1990a:§2.E.2) on the Hismaic practices of joining and filling in the spaces of graphs, which according to her study are also embellishing and at the same time destructive.

[362] See, e.g., Macdonald 1989:68.

As shown in the examples in Fig. 5.8, Safaitic texts can often curve in various ways, as in Fig. 5.8(a) and 5.8(b), and they sometimes form coils (from edge to center, as in Fig. 5.8(e), or vice-versa) or circles (see Fig. 5.9(c) below). They can also run in more or less straight lines: horizontally (left to right or right to left), vertically (downwards, as in Fig. 5.8(a) or upwards), obliquely,[363] boustrophedon (starting left to right, as in Fig. 5.8(c), or right to left, as in Fig. 5.8(f), and running either upwards, as in Fig. 5.8(c) and 5.8(f), or downwards), zig-zag (Fig. 5.8(d)).

However, these categories should not be seen as mutually exclusive options, since in practice texts very often combine different directions. For example, in some boustrophedon inscriptions the text curves from one line to the other (Fig. 5.8(f)) rather than being arranged in straight lines (Fig. 5.8(c)), and QUR 813.14.1/SoS (see Fig.6.17(a) in Chapter 6) starts curving along the panel edges and then curves towards the inside of the panel running in a curving boustrophedon fashion. Another typical example of change in text direction is provided by the first two texts from the left in Fig. 5.8(a), which both start running vertically downwards. The first (QUR 64.180.2/C) at some point curves and forms a circle, while the second (QUR 64.180.1/C) turns by 90°. At the point where the latter text turns, we see that the orientation of the *ḥ* follows the the new text orientation, but there are also cases in which graphs in the same position rather follow the previous orientation. In QUR 207.49.1/SoS (Fig. 5.8(f)), which starts running horizontally from right to left, at the point where the text first changes direction, the *l* changes abruptly orientation and is turned by 90° to the preceding *ʾ*, as in the example just discussed, while at the second curving point we see that the *w* and *q* gradually turn their stances towards the new diagonal direction. When the text direction changes, generally the graphs orientation remains consistent to the new text direction, with most variation occurring within the graphs placed at the turning or curving point. However, in some cases, after the text has changed direction some graphs keep the orientation of the initial direction. For example, in QUR 12.34.1/C *l ḫll bn gmḥy* 'By Ḫll son of Gmḥy' (see Fig. 3.3(b) in Chapter 3), the first part of the text until the *g* runs diagonally downwards above the camel drawing, while the last three graphs turn vertically downwards to the side of the drawing. While both *m* and *ḥ* changed direction accordingly, the *y* keeps a vertical stance, i.e. it is turned by 90° in relation to the preceding *ḥ*.

A curious way of laying out some of the graphs has been attested in a few inscriptions in which parts of the text, mostly the word *bn* ('son of') of the genealogy run vertically downwards to the inscription. An example is QUR 2.58.1/C = AbGQ 3 *{l}{n}{f}{r}{t} bn ṯlm bn ḥ{b}ʾl bn qn*, where the graphs of the second and the third *bn* are both turned by 90° and written vertically downwards, while the direction of the inscription is horizontal right to left. No other graphs have been turned. This feature, which distinguishes the *bn* from the names of the genealogy, can be compared to the practice of joining them to form a single sign (see §5.3 above).

Although Safaitic texts can run in almost any direction, they are usually carved

[363] This is especially used in rock art signatures, see, e.g., QUR 2.511.3/C *l ʾhwd bn ʿlyn*, running diagonally downwards between images of ostriches (see §5.5 below).

(a) Panel covered with texts running vertically downwards, curving, and turning by 90° (QUR 64.180/C)

(b) Text curving following the panel edges (QUR 186.122.1/C)

(c) Boustrophedon text (QUR 176.24.1/F)

(d) Zig-zag text (QUR 186.101.1/C)

(e) Coil (QUR 139.10.1/C)

(f) Curving boustrophedon (QUR 207.49.1/SoS)

Figure 5.8: Examples of different text directions

following one single continuous line. Thus, even when they are arranged in straight parallel lines, they run boustrophedon. However, in a minority of cases the text flow interrupts and continues in a separate line. Sometimes this seems to be done in order to distinguish different parts of the text. For example, in QUR 2.196.2/C (see Fig. 5.6(c) above) we saw that the curse runs in a separate line and is incised in smaller graphs above the genealogy of the author, which is hammered. This type of breaks in the flow of the text are also common in rock art signatures, where they often distinguish the genealogy from the caption (see the examples discussed in §5.5 below).

The organisation of the Safaitic text is always in interplay with the size and shape of the rock on which it is carved. On large boulders, as the example in Fig 5.8(a), one can often find conglomerations of rock art and texts. However, the majority of Safaitic texts are carved on smaller panels, where the layout of the text(s) often needs to be adapted to their more limited size and features. It is common for the text to run following the panel edges (Fig. 5.8(b)), or, if the text is longer, to start along the edges and then to turn/curve in various ways towards the inside of the panel, see, e.g., Fig. 5.8(c), 5.8(e), and 5.8(f). Associated carvings, i.e. two or more carvings which were carved on the same panel and likely on the same occasion,[364] are often intertwined and carved very close together, curving in order to adapt to the panel features as well as to the space left blank by the other carving(s). For example, in QUR 186.150 (see Fig. 5.10(b) below), with two associated texts, the top text runs horizontally from left to right, whereas the bottom text, which was likely carved afterwards, starts horizontally from left to right, and then turns boustrophedon downwards, finally curving in a zig-zag fashion in the little space left, ending where the same text begins.

Sometimes the text runs on more than one rock face, having a three-dimensional layout,[365] and in some rare occurrences text and rock art are placed on different panels of the same rock.[366] Nevertheless, in the majority of cases single texts as well as associated carvings are organised within one single panel.

5.5 Text and image

Safaitic images were produced in a similar way as the texts, with which they share not only the same techniques, but also further comparable graphic devices. For example, as seen in §5.2 above, the use of a different size and/or technique is often used to distinguish parts of the text, but it is also employed in the rock art to emphasise particular figures within scenes.[367] Furthermore, in the next Chapter we shall see an example of a

[364] See §5.5 and §5.7 below.

[365] See, e.g., QUR 775.1.1/C *l gml bn fḏḥl w rʿy h-ʾgʾ nwy* 'By Gml son of Fḏḥl and he pastured on the ʾgʾ whilst migrating', whose last few graphs curve upwards and continue on another side of the rock perpendicular to the face where the inscription starts out.

[366] See, e.g., QUR 307.11/C (Fig. 5.11(b)), discussed in §5.7 below, which is a panel with two texts by father and daughter associated to a camel figure on the other side of the rock, although the camel is not shown in the picture.

[367] On this phenomenon in the rock art, see Brusgaard 2019:106–107, 117–118.

prolific author and artist whose texts present a set of distinctive stylistic features which are analogous to the features characterising the style of his drawings (see §6.1.5).

Fig. 5.9(a) shows a a very typical example of Safaitic drawing and associated text, which reads: QUR 171.146.1/C *l hʾs¹ bn ʿmrt h-bkrt* 'By Hʾs¹ son of ʿmrt is the young she-camel'.[368] This is also a typical signature layout, running vertically or slightly diagonally downwards and then curving around the image. The texts accompanying drawings most commonly curve around them and sometimes they are intertwined in the figure, as in Fig. 5.9(b), where two of the texts associated to the hunting scene run diagonally in between some of the ostriches. Another example of this is QUR 994.7.1/C (see Fig.5.3(b) above), where the text curves between the two figures. In Fig. 5.9(c), the text runs around the camel drawing forming an almost perfect circle.[369] As noted by Brusgaard, the fact that Safaitic texts mostly curve around or in between figures indicates that the images were carved first.[370]

Sometimes the part of the text with the genealogy is distinguished from the caption of the image, for example by writing the genealogy on a more or less straight line, while the caption curves, or by carving the caption in a separate line. In QUR 2.528.1/C (Fig. 5.9(f)),[371] which is finely chiselled below the drawing of a camel, the part with the genealogy curves below the feet of the camel, while the caption is carved on a separate line above the genealogy and runs vertically downwards between the camel legs.

In QUR 290.6.1/C (Fig. 5.9(d)), which reads *l ʿwḏ bn rb* ⟨⟨ ⟩⟩ *h-frs¹* 'By ʿwḏ son of Rb is the horse', the caption *h-frs¹* is carved on the other face of the rock and runs towards the opposite direction. In addition, it seems that the author hammered a line between the *lām auctoris* and the beginning of the caption, perhaps in order to better divide the two parts and disambiguate the reading of the text.

In Fig. 5.9(e), the image is associated to three texts, only one of which (QUR 2.365.2/C *{l} {k}{m}{d} {b}n s²k {h-}gmln* 'By Kmd son of S²k are the two camels') has the caption of the figure, the other two being only names.[372] The text signing the rock art starts above the camels heads and runs diagonally downwards from right to left, it is also the text carved in biggest graphs, while the text carved on top of the panel (QUR 2.365.1/C *l ʾbyṯʿ bn fḥl* 'By ʾbyṯʿ son of Fḥl') is the smallest one. The text referring to the image is another example in which the caption is carved on a separate line, as it runs below the patronym in the same direction. The other text carved right above the rock art (QUR 2.365.3/C *{l} {h}{ʾ}{s¹} bn {y}{ṣ}{ḥ}{ḥ}* '{By} {Hʾs¹} son of {Yṣḥḥ}') runs specular to the signature from left to right, and its *lām auctoris* is joined to the one

[368]Camels are the most common motif in Safaitic rock art (see Brusgaard 2019:50).

[369]The text reads: QUR 215.59.1/C *l wfd bn {ġ}{r}z{t} bn ḏhd w l-h h-bkrt s¹nt ʾty s¹lk* 'By Wfd son of {Ġrzt} son of Ḏhd and the drawing of the young she-camel is by him, the year S¹lk came'.

[370]See Brusgaard 2019:110.

[371]The text reads: *l w{{h}}b bn s²{y}{ṯ}---- h-gml* 'By {Whb} son of…is the camel'.

[372]This is often the case in panels where more than one text is associated to a drawing. Another example of this is QUR 176.32 (see Fig.6.2(b) in Chapter 6). This text, by the prolific author *fdy bn yṣḥḥ* refers to the images of 'the ibex and the animals', but the two other inscriptions on the same panel are name-only texts. In §5.7 below, however, we will see an example in which two associated texts by brothers both refer to the rock art.

(a) QUR 171.146

(b) QUR 2.511

(c) QUR 215.59

(d) QUR 290.6

(e) QUR 2.365

(f) QUR 2.528

Figure 5.9: Panels with texts and associated figures

Incised	1070	1339
Incised & lines	269	
Directly hammered	346	366
Directly hammered & lines	20	
Mixed	30	
Dotted	27	
Chiselled	16	

Table 5.2: Cartouches in 1778 Safaitic texts

of QUR 2.365.2/C, forming one single line. In this kind of panels, it is impossible to know if all names appearing next to the rock art were equally responsible for it. It is possible, however, that the author who carved the biggest text with the caption was the one who made the drawing, or perhaps most of it, while the other two helped. One may also wonder whether the positioning of the caption on a separate line in this case signified that the drawing was a collective work, although it may have also simply had to do with lack of space on the panel.

5.6 Cartouches

More than one third of the Safaitic texts of the JQC are surrounded by cartouches: these are lines which can be carved in any technique around one or more texts or drawings. Associated carvings are often surrounded by one single cartouche. Fig. 5.10(a) shows the example of a text and associated figure surrounded by a direct hammered cartouche, while in Fig. 5.10(b) the same roughly hammered cartouche surrounds two associated inscriptions sharing the same writing style.[373]

As shown in Table 5.2, the vast majority of cartouches are incised, mostly by scratching, and some cartouches are so faintly scratched that they are barely visible. In QUR 186.34.1/C (Fig. 5.10(c)), for example, the inscription is finely chiselled, whereas the cartouche has been faintly scratched in more than one go, using the 'Rubbed incising' technique (see §5.1.3 above), which is often employed for cartouches. More than one fifth of the cartouches is direct hammered, as for example in Fig. 5.10(a) and 5.10(d).

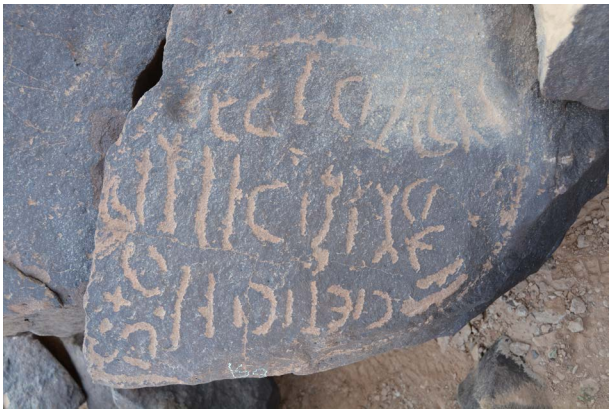
In Fig.5.10(e) (QUR 176.72.1/C), we have an example of a cartouche carved using a mixed technique: it has been first rubbed incised, and then parts of it have been roughly direct hammered.

Sets of lines or dots are commonly attested geometric symbols[374] which are often

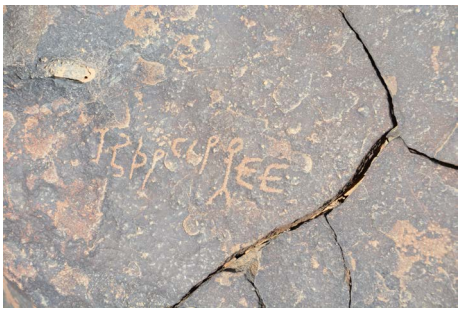
[373]Cf. also the example in Fig.5.11(a) below, in which one incised cartouche surrounds the rock art and the two signatures by brothers.

[374]See Brusgaard 2019:81–85 for a detailed description.

(a) Text and figure surrounded by direct hammered cartouche (QUR 974.96.1/C)



(b) Two associated texts with roughtly direct hammered cartouche (QUR 186.150)



(c) Chiselled text with scratched cartouche (QUR 186.34.10/C)

(d) Direct hammered cartouche with protruding lines (QUR 186.102.1/C)

(e) Scratched and roughly direct hammered cartouche (QUR 176.72.1/C)

(f) Dotted cartouche (QUR 176.95.1/C)

Figure 5.10: Examples of cartouches

associated to inscriptions and drawings. In some cases, they are incorporated in the cartouche, as for example QUR 186.102.1/C (Fig.5.10(d)), whose cartouche has seven lines protruding from it. In QUR 176.95.1/C (Fig. 5.10(f)), the cartouche is composed of dots hammered all around the inscription. There are also some cases in which the cartouche is composed of concentric incised lines.[375]

In some texts, the edges of the panel are employed as a natural cartouche, and the author simply hammered the panel along its edges fully or partially (see Fig. 5.9(f) above). There are also examples in which the cartouche is only hinted at by hammering one or more curving lines around the inscription.[376]

Although there are some examples of skilfully chiselled or deeply incised cartouches, in most instances, cartouches are carved in a technique which is less elaborate than the one employed for the inscription and the rock art.

5.7 Associated texts by family members

Associated inscriptions are texts carved on the same panel and likely produced on the same occasion. This can be deduced from the fact that they either are associated to the same drawing, share a similar writing style, are surrounded by one single cartouche, or are organized in a way which presupposes that the panel space was planned accordingly.[377] In all cases in which the genealogies of associated texts do not present any shared relative, it is impossible to know whether their authors were tied by blood relationships or not. They may have also been friends or companions, for example.[378]

In some cases, however, the genealogies clearly indicate that associated inscriptions were by members of the same family: I will discuss four instances of this practice and their specificities.

In Fig. 5.11(a) one can see a drawing of two horsemen with two inscriptions by brothers. The texts are incised in exactly the same writing style and arranged one above the other, running horizontally above the figure. The first text (QUR 171.39.1/C) reads *l ʾrs¹m bn bny bn nʾlt h-ʿr* 'By ʾrs¹m son of Bny son of Nʾlt is the ass' and the second (QUR 171.39.2/C) *l ʾlt bn bny bn nʾlt bn bly h-ʿr* 'By ʾlt son of Bny son of Nʾlt son of Bly is the ass'.[379] Both texts have the caption of the figure, which, as seen in §5.5 above, is not always the case in texts associated to rock art. This could mean that each brother carved one of the two horsemen. One figure is bigger than the other and the body of

[375]E.g. QUR 171.138.1/C and QUR 2.665.1/C.

[376]E.g. QUR 171.81.1/C and QUR 176.142.1/C.

[377]A yet different practice is the later addition of an inscription to a panel with a text by a relative, as in the panel from southern Syria shown in the discussion of the texts by ancestors of the prolific author *ṣʿd bn ġt* (see Fig.6.16(b) in Chapter 6). In that example, texts have been added and squeezed in later upon finding the text, as clearly expressed by the formula *wgd s¹fr* 'he found the text of' + [person].

[378]See, e.g., Fig. 5.3(e) above, the two associated texts are intertwined, surrounded by the same scratched cartouche, and carved in the same writing style, but from their genealogy we cannot evince any relationship between them.

[379]It is worth noting that while the genealogy of *ʾrs¹m* stops at the papponym, *ʾlt*'s genealogy continues until the great grandfather.

(a) Rock art 'signed' by two brothers (QUR 171.39/C)

(b) Two inscriptions by father and daughter (QUR 307.11/C)

(c) Texts by father (hammered) and two sons (incised) (QUR 171.103/C)

(d) Ligatured texts by four brothers (QUR 533.25/C)

Figure 5.11: Examples of associated inscriptions

the animal is decorated by partial infilling, while in the smaller figure it is the rider who is filled in with parallel lines.[380] The texts and the images are surrounded by a cartouche and in the low-left corner of the panel, outside the cartouche, there is the geometric symbol of seven parallel lines.

The panel QUR 307.11/C (Fig. 5.11(b)) has two texts by father and daughter. The above text (QUR 307.11.1/C), by the father, says *l nhḍ bn fhz* 'By Nhḍ son of Fhz[381]', while the text by the daughter *mny* (QUR 307.11.2/C) simply states *l mny bnt nhḍ* 'By Mny daughter of Nhḍ'. Inscriptions by female authors in general are very rare in Safaitic, and, to my knowledge, this is the only panel by father and daughter so far attested. Both texts are finely chiselled and present graphs turned by 90° (see the *b* and the *m*). The text of the father is carved in bigger graphs. On the left and upper sides they are framed by a cartouche composed of two bundles of parallel lightly scratched lines which converge to form a pointed shape, following the triangular shape of the panel. Although not visible from the picture, on another face of the same rock to the left of

[380] For a discussion of patterned figures in the rock art, see Brusgaard 2019:§5.3.3.

[381] The PN *fhz* is peculiar and so far unattested. It is possible that the author forgot a *r*, and that the patronym was the well-attested PN *frhz* instead.

the texts there is the drawing of a she-camel, possibly associated to the inscriptions, which however do not refer to it.

QUR 171.103/C (Fig. 5.11(c)) consists of three associated texts by *tlmy* and his two sons. The text by the father is emphasised through hammered bigger graphs, while the texts by the two sons *nẓm* and *nd*ʾ are both incised and carved in smaller graphs to its left. It is possible that the texts by the two sons were added later, but the fact that the inscription by the father curves to occupy only the central-right side of the panel suggests that the space was planned in order to leave room for the two other texts. It is nevertheless clear that the text by the father was carved first, as the texts by his sons curve around it, and that the emphasis lies on the text by the father *tlmy*.

The final example is the panel QUR 533.25.3/C (Fig. 5.11(d)), which has four inscriptions sharing the same writing style. They are by four brothers, sons of *hʾs*[1], who were probably the grandsons of the prolific 'common' author *bdḥ bn rgl* (see §6.1.6). The inscriptions present ambiguous cases of ligatures which could be either a decoration or the mark of later effacing.[382] The fact that the crossing line in 533.25.4/C does not cross over the *g* favours the ligatures interpretation. Interestingly, one of these ligatures is a continuous line connecting the first inscription from the left to the one to its right: if this is indeed an original intentional feature of the text, it could represent a graphic mean of binding the two brothers together.

[382]On the ambiguities of ligatures, see the discussion in §5.3 above.

Chapter 6

Writing Styles

The aim of this Chapter is to investigate the interplay of writing styles, graphetic variation, authorship, and family relationships. A study of writing styles can help us to better understand not only the nature of graphetic variation, but also certain important aspects of the transmission of Safaitic literacy. Stylistic variation can best be appreciated through a study of texts written by the same author. I have therefore selected 14 authors who left three or more texts – 8 'common' script authors, 3 'fine' script authors, and 3 SoS script authors – and have sub-divided the Chapter accordingly into three Sections. For each prolific author, I first give a list of the distinctive stylistic traits which are shared by his texts, and then I look at the differences occurring among them. At the end of each Section, in case inscriptions by family members of the prolific authors are attested, I also look at how certain features may have been kept or changed from one generation to another. I will limit this investigation to the close family, i.e. relatives at up to two generations of distance from the authors in question.

I define a writing style on the basis of the choices of graph forms, carving technique, and text layout within a given script. While most writing styles present features which are also found in other texts in the same script, the ways in which these features are chosen and combined vary from text to text. The writing style of some authors is characterised by salient distinctive features which are sometimes also shared with other members of the same family. However, there always seems to be a fluctuating component of variation from text to text by the same author and among texts by relatives—no inscription is identical to the other. Therefore, I mainly use the term 'writing style' to refer to the stylistic features of a single text which can be more or less distinctive and be shared to a greater or lesser extent with other texts by the same author or by relatives. In some cases, however, I will refer to the 'writing style of an author', by which I mean the set of features that are shared by his texts, be these features distinctive or not.

In most of the texts studied here, the genealogies of the authors, if present at all, only give the patronym. For the purposes of this investigation, this is problematic, as a name lacking genealogy or even followed by a patronym could correspond to

many different authors. Furthermore, it has already been noted by several scholars that, since Safaitic is consonantal, more than one PN could be hidden behind the same consonantal skeleton.[383] Thus, we mostly cannot resort to genealogies alone to know whether we are dealing with texts by the same author or by family members. However, as remarked by King for Hismaic, other types of evidence make it more probable that the author in question is the same. She proposed the following clues: 1) similarities in script (i.e. what is here referred to as 'writing style'); 2) similarities in drawings; 3) certain features of the distribution of the texts.[384] The Safaitic inscriptions of the JQC present a very similar situation to the one described by King for Hismaic, and we will see that in many cases a study of stylistic features can in turn be employed to identify inscriptions by the same authors. The more similarities we observe in texts sharing the same name, the likelier it is that these texts were by the same author. Some of the prolific authors discussed here were also prolific artists. Thus, the similarities in their drawings will also be brought up as further evidence of their authorship. In any case, for each studied prolific author, all attested texts bearing his name and patronym have been considered, even the ones attested in other corpora, which have all been collected via the OCIANA database.

That being said, it should be stressed that, in all cases in which no sufficient genealogical information is supplied by the inscriptions, the identification of same-author texts should be treated as uncertain. The same applies to the identification of family relationships. Fortunately, some inscriptions indicate genealogies extending to the papponym or further. In such instances, it is highly probable that they were carved by the same person.

Despite the difficulties due to the shortness of most genealogies, it is striking that the various case studies examined in this Chapter show very similar patterns of stylistic consistency and variation. Such patterns can be synthesised as follows:

- Different texts by the same author share a relatively consistent set of features (these can be said to make up the author's *writing style*);
- The variation among texts by the same author is generally limited to, e.g., differences in layout, technique and/or in a few graph forms, but I found no examples of same-author texts with radically divergent features;
- The writing styles of some authors come out as more peculiar/distinctive than others;
- Distinctive stylistic features, if present, were sometimes passed on from one generation to the next;

[383] See Corbett 2012:180 and the references he gives in there, n. 7.

[384] See King 1990a:§5.C.1, n. 66; also Corbett (2012:180) considered writing and rock art style as useful criteria to recognize authors in Hismaic, but he mainly confined his study to a spacial analysis of the distribution and position of texts by the same authors or family members on the same or nearby sites. In the JQC, I have observed same author texts or texts by family members were sometimes distributed in the same site or in sites close-by, but for the scopes of this study I will not undertake a distribution analysis.

- When texts by more than one son of a prolific author are attested, it appears that some sons followed the writing style of their father more than others;
- Even in those cases in which the writing styles of family members present clear differences, one can observe that the similarities still outnumber the differences.

The similarities in the writing styles of Safaitic prolific authors and members of their close family bear witness to the transmission of Safaitic literacy from generation to generation. It should moreover be remarked that, among our case studies, there are no instances of authors who carved some texts in one inventory (‘common’, ‘fine’, or SoS) and others in a different one. Likewise, we have no examples of close relatives writing in different scripts. Even in the particular case of the development of the ‘fine’ script from the ‘common’ one (see Chapter 4), it appears that palaeographic change unfolded rather gradually and across several generations. This is confirmed by the study of ‘fine’ prolific authors in this Chapter, as their writing styles do not differ significantly from the ones of close relatives at one to two generations of distance.

6.1 ‘Common’ script authors

6.1.1 *mrr bn ʾʾb*

This author left six inscriptions in the Jebel Qurma region[385] and three more are attested in other corpora.[386] The genealogies of QUR 64.117.2/C and WH 2873/C reach the papponym *ngy*, while KRS 2412/C has a remarkably long genealogy, showing seven generations.[387] The rest of the texts indicate only the patronym, but present writing styles which are strikingly similar to the inscriptions with longer genealogies just mentioned. The writing style of this author features some distinctive characteristics:

- The graphs are finely chiselled and well spaced between each other;
- The two ʾʾ's of the patronym are elongated, resulting as bigger in proportion to the other graphs;
- The *b*'s and/or the *m* of the author's name are sometimes embellished through the use of either square or 90° graph forms, or a combination of both features.

There is, however, a certain extent of variation in the type of special features used from text to text as well as in which graphs take special features and which ones do not. For example, in QUR 974.38.1/C (Fig.6.1(a)) only the *b* of the patronym is turned by 90° and is squarish, while in QUR 186.187.2/C (Fig. 6.1(b)), none of the graphs is turned, but both *b*'s have square forms. In QUR 186.131.1/C, the two *b*'s and the

[385] QUR 64.117.2/C, 186.131.1/C, 186.162.1/C, 186.187.2/C, 974.19.3/C, 974.38.1/C.
[386] These are ASFF 340/C, KRS 2412/C, and WH 2873/C.
[387] *l mrr bn ʾʾb bn ngy bn ʾṯfḥ bn ṣyd bn ʾs¹d bn ʿḏr.*

(a) QUR 974.38.1/C

(b) QUR 186.187.2/C

Figure 6.1: Inscriptions by Mrr son of ʾʾb

one *m* are all turned by 90°, while in QUR 186.162.1/C[388] only the *b*'s of *bn* and of the patronym are square and turned by 90°, while the *m* of the author's name and the *b*'s of the statement are written in curved forms and not turned. Comparable features and variation are found also in the texts from outside the Jebel Qurma region. One can note that the commonly attested forms of the *lām auctoris* with a short hook and of the *r* as a straight line with slanted short arms are found consistently in all of his texts.

6.1.2 *fdy bn yṣḥḥ*

This combination of name and patronym is attested six times in the JQC,[389] but it is not found in other Safaitic corpora. The most remarkable feature of his writing style is the consistent use of the form of the *f* with a big square middle undulation and much smaller side-undulations (see the examples in Fig. 6.2).

The technique used is mostly chiselling or, in one text, rubbed incision,[390] always with a neat trait. His inscriptions are usually surrounded by lightly scratched cartouches.

Three texts by this author are associated to rock art: two of them (QUR 171.20.1/C and QUR 176.32.2/C, both shown in Fig. 6.2) refer to the associated drawings. Both images depict stylistically similar ibexes with exaggeratedly long horns.[391] In QUR

[388] It reads: *l mrr bn ʾʾb w wlh ʿl-ḥbb-h* 'By Mrr son of ʾʾb and he was distraught on account of his beloved'. This text is shown in Chapter 3, see Fig. 3.2(a).

[389] The inscriptions are: QUR 148.59.2/C, 171.20.1/C, 176.32.2/C, 186.34.5/C, 186.159.1/C, 202.4.1/C.

[390] QUR 202.4.1/C; the text reads *l fdy bn y{{ṣ}}ḥḥ h-s¹trn b-h-ngd* 'By Fdy son of {Yṣḥḥ} are the two shelters at this high place'.

[391] It appears that they were both effaced. In QUR 171.20.1/C both the text and the images of the ibexes have been damaged by hammering, while in QUR 176.32.2/C only the caption has been scratched out, while the rock art figures have been left intact. Both panels are moreover associated to other texts by different individuals. QUR 176.32.2/C is accompanied by the text of *ṣbwn bn rḏwn* (QUR 176.32.1/C), carved with the same writing style, and, lightly scratched on the upper edge of the panel is also a text by *ṣbwn*'s brother, *zʿm bn rḏwn* (QUR 176.32.3/C).

(a) QUR 171.20.1/C (right text)

(b) QUR 176.32.2/C (lower text)

Figure 6.2: Two rock art signatures by Fdy son of Yṣḥḥ

(a) QUR 786.1.1/C

(b) QUR 232.29.1/C

Figure 6.3: Inscriptions by Fhrn son of Khln

176.32.2/C, the two ibexes are in the context of a hunting scene.[392]

6.1.3 *fhrn bn khln*

Inscriptions by authors bearing this name and patronym have not been attested outside the Jebel Qurma region, where we have eight instances[393] sharing a similar writing style. Most texts by this author are finely chiselled.[394]

fhrn’s texts feature the use of elongated and compressed graph forms (see Fig. 6.3), especially in the form of the *h* – the angle of its fork being very acute and its shaft very long – and of the *r*, which appears as a very long vertical stroke with very short arms or,

[392]Although in Fig.6.2(b) only a bow and two arms are visible on the low-right part of the panel, the body of a archer is carved on the other side panel as if sneaking up on the ibex. On this peculiar type of exploitation of the boulder faces in hunting scenes, see Brusgaard 2019:127–132.

[393]QUR 2.62.1/C, 148.128.2/C, 176.50.1/C, 232.29.1/C, 256.12.2/C, 372.19.1/C, 786.19.1/C and 980.19.2/C. Except for QUR 980.19.1/C, which lacks a genealogy, they all indicate the patronym *khln*.

[394]QUR 232.29.1/C (Fig. 6.3(b)) is carved using rubbed incision but has a very neat trait. Only QUR 148.128.2/C and 980.19.1/C, hammered and incised respectively, are carved less elaborately.

in two cases (QUR 148.128.1/C and 176.50.1/C), as a very shallow curve. However, other graph forms, such as the *b* and the *k*, never appear as elongated. Further non-compressed graph forms include, e.g., the *w* and *ḥ*, attested in QUR 372.19.1/C, the first being a circle and the second being square.

fhrn left also drawings: three of his inscriptions are embedded in panels with rock art. Two inscriptions (QUR 980.19.2/C and 148.128.2/C) are rock art signatures and they both refer to the drawing of a camel, while QUR 256.12.2/C is on a panel with two images of camels and other texts. It does not refer to any image and it may have been added later.

6.1.4 *ẓby bn mlkt*

The JQC attests eight identical name-only texts reading *l ẓby bn mlkt* 'By Ẓby son of Mlkt'.[395] A further inscription by this author was found ca. 40 km to the north-east of Jebel Qurma.[396]

The most remarkable features recurring in all of *ẓby*'s inscriptions are idiosyncrasies in the style of the text layout:

- The loop of the *y*, rather than being positioned on top or at the bottom of the text height, as usual, always sits in the middle, with the stroke hanging either downwards or upwards;
- In some texts, the position of the other graphs of the name is also moved as to create a zigzag-like effect in the text flow. Thus, in QUR 2.194.1/C (Fig. 6.4(a)), the *lām auctoris* and the *ẓ* are slightly raised in comparison to the *b*, while in QUR 210.18.1/C (Fig. 6.4(b)), the *lām auctoris* and the *b* are placed much below the *ẓ* and *y*.

In the latter text, a part of the horizontal bar of the *t* is placed inside the curve of the previous *k*, but it is difficult to decide whether this is the result of insufficient space planning—as the graphs become increasingly smaller—or a stylistic choice. In any case, it should be noted that in QUR 202.3.2/C, by the same author, this same phenomenon occurs even though there is plenty of space on the panel. A feature unique to QUR 2.194.1/C (Fig. 6.4(a)) is the cartouche adorned with fourteen protruding curves.[397]

From the point of view of the graph forms, in the writing style of this author the *b*'s are mostly straight lines with two relatively long perpendicular or slightly open arms, and in some cases the back is slightly curving. All *l*'s are consistently hooked, and the legs of the *ẓ* face upwards in all but one text (QUR 232.8.1/C). The author also made use of square forms, most consistently in the *b*, which is usually a vertical line with two

[395] These are: QUR 2.194.1/C, 2.708.1/C, 64.96.2/C, 64.245.1/C, 202.3.2/C, 210.18.1/C, 232.8.1/C, 442.17.1/C.

[396] TLWS 10.3/C.

[397] When geometric figures are added to Safaitic texts, their number is mostly seven and sometimes multiples of seven, although other numbers are also attested (see Brusgaard 2019:84–85). In some cases, these elements are incorporated in the cartouche, as in this text (see §5.6).

(a) QUR 2.194.1/C

(b) QUR 210.18.1/C

Figure 6.4: Two inscriptions by Ẓby son of Mlkt

horizontal arms, but less consistently also in other graphs, see, e.g., the square *m* in Fig. 6.4(a) *vs* the curved variant in Fig. 6.4(b). The *k* has the most variable forms from text to text, appearing either as curved or as square, with the tail protruding upwards, downwards, vertically or obliquely, although in most cases it has a vertical stance.

6.1.5 *ḫlʾl bn ʾṯʿ*

Four inscriptions by an author named *ḫlʾl bn ʾṯʿ* are found in the JQC,[398] and three more approximately 35 km as the crow flies to the north-east of Jebel Qurma.[399] Unlike the Jebel Qurma texts, these also indicate the papponym *ʿmd*.

In the writing style of this author, the graphs, especially the ones of the genealogy, are embellished by the following stylistic features, used either separately or in combination (although they never occur all together):

- Elongation, especially in the strokes of *ḫ* and *ʾ* in the author’s name, this feature is particularly prominent in QUR 64.61.1/C (Fig. 6.5(a)) and ZMQJ 15/C (Fig. 6.5(d));
- The graphs are carved with very little space between each other, see all the examples in Fig. 6.5;
- The *b* is mostly square – see QUR 148.74.13/C (Fig. 6.5(b)), QUR 2.617.1/C (Fig. 6.5(c)), ZMQJ 15/C (Fig. 6.5(d));
- The graphs gaps are partially filled-in, e.g. QUR 64.61.1/C (Fig.6.5(a)) and ZMQJ 15/C (Fig. 6.5(d)), where the spaces inside the gaps of the *ḫ* near the point where the two lines cross have been partially filled in.[400]

[398] QUR 2.202.1/C, 2.617.2/C (Fig. 6.5(c)), 64.61.1/C (Fig. 6.5(a)), and 148.74.13/C (Fig. 6.5(b)).
[399] HNSD 201/C, ZMQJ 8/C, and ZMQJ 15/C = HNSD 12/C (Fig. 6.5(d)).
[400] Moreover, in QUR 64.61.1/C (*l ḫlʾl b{{n}} {{ʾ}}ṯʿ {{h-}}dm{{y}}t* ‘By Ḫlʾl {son of} {ʾṯʿ} is {this image}’), the forks of the second *ʾ* and of the *h* have been filled in. These features are either embellishments

(a) QUR 64.61.1/C (large text on the left side of the panel)

(b) QUR 148.74.13/C

(c) QUR 2.617.1/C

(d) ZMQJ 15/C (*Photo: OCIANA*)

Figure 6.5: Inscriptions and drawings by Ḫlʾl son of ʾṯʿ in QUR (a–c) and in ZMQJ (d)

- The use of ligatures, cf. the joining of the *ḫ* to the following *l* and of the ʾ to the following *l* in QUR 64.61.1/C (Fig.6.5(a)).[401]

In QUR 148.74.13/C (Fig. 6.5(b))[402] the stroke of the *y* of *dmyt* curves and goes inside the preceding *m*, a stylistic feature which, as the other distinctive features by this author, finds a parallel in the style of the associated drawings, whose forms are also elongated and carved very close to each other. In QUR 148.74.13/C (Fig. 6.5(b)), two elongated ostriches to the right of the text are carved one above the other, their shapes lining up, as if they were two tiles of a mosaic. This particular effect is typical of the style of the inscriptions and rock art of this author.[403] Just as the graphs by this author are well carved and often tiled together, similarly, in his drawings the various animals are carved with very little space between each other, and in some cases their silhouettes line up. This peculiar aesthetic feature can be observed in Fig. 6.5(a) (see the animals to the left of the camel), Fig. 6.5(b) (see the ibexes to the left of the camel and the two ostriches to its right), and Fig. 6.5(d) (see the thick mosaic of animals below the text).

6.1.6 *bdḥ bn rgl*

Three inscriptions indicating this name and patronym have been attested.[404] Other inscriptions lacking a genealogy by an author named *bdḥ* may be ascribed to the same author for stylistic reasons. These cases, however, are very uncertain, especially because other authors named *bdḥ* but with a different patronym are attested in the JQC.[405] The following set of features characterize *bdḥ bn rgl*’s writing style:

- His texts are chiselled with a thick instrument;
- The use of square graph forms, see the square *b*’s and *ḥ*, and the *g* as a vertical rectangle;
- The loop of the *d* is only hinted at, being either a tiny filled-in half circle or a single chisel blow—probably because of the thickness of the instrument;
- The *r* is a vertical line with two short arms type.

or perhaps effacements; several hammering dots across the panel suggest the second option, but it is also possible that the joining of graphs and other features were original, while the damage may have been produced later. On similar ambiguities concerning the interpretation of ligatures, see the footnote below.

[401] Note also that also the *b* and the *n* of *bn* ‘son of’ were joined through ligatures to form a single graphic sign, although these may have been malicious alterations, considering other types of effacement on the same panel (see the footnote above). On the difficulty of interpreting such elements, which could be either decorative or disruptive, see §5.3 and §7.2.

[402] *l ḫlʾl bn ʾṯʿ h-dmyt* ‘By Ḫlʾl son of ʾṯʿ is the image’.

[403] See also head and horns of the second ibex from the top, which line up with feet, legs, and front belly of the above ibex, while his feet are placed right above the third ibex back.

[404] QUR 147.15.1/C (Fig. 6.6(a)), 148.139.1/C (see Fig. 3.1(b), Chapter 3), and 449.83.4/C (Fig. 6.6(b)).

[405] Cf. *bdḥ bn yṯʿ* (QUR 146.18.1/C) and *bdḥ bn bny* (QUR 1020.10.1/C).

(a) QUR 147.15.1/C

(b) QUR 449.83.4/C

Figure 6.6: Two inscriptions by Bdḥ son of Rgl

These features can be seen in the two inscriptions shown in Fig. 6.6.[406]

The three inscriptions indicating both name and patronym are all embedded in panels with rock art.

Three texts without genealogies (QUR 2.192.4/C,[407] 256.27.1/C, 428.9.1/C) may have been written by the same *bdḥ* because of the similarities in the writing style. As in the other texts by *bdḥ bn rgl*, both QUR 2.192.4/C and QUR 256.27.1/C are chiselled with a thick instrument, have square graph forms, and the *d*'s loop is only hinted at. QUR 428.9.1/C is less neatly carved, being directly hammered rather than chiselled, but it presents the same graph forms.

6.1.7 *ḍbʿn*

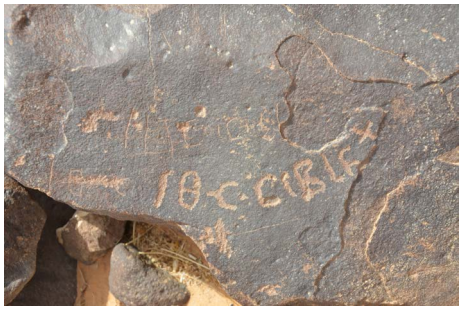
Although most of the Jebel Qurma inscriptions by an author bearing the name *ḍbʿn* have no genealogy,[408] it is interesting to note that they all share a peculiar form of *ḍ* as a rectangular grid with the branches extending only very shortly past the rectangle. Moreover, the *ʿ* is always a dot except for one case, QUR 533.27.1/C (Fig. 6.7(b)), the only incised text, in which *ʿ* is a small circle. The carving technique employed for all other texts seems of the same type of hammering. In QUR 360.38.1/C and QUR

[406] QUR 147.15.1/C (Fig. 6.6(a)) *l {{b}}d{{ḥ}} {{b}}n r{{g}}l* was subjected to different types of alterations, which could be the result of authorial choices, but which could equally be interpreted as vandalisations. The *lām auctoris* and the following *b* are joined by hammering, a vertical line closes the *b* by joining its two arms, the *b* and the *n* of *bn*, 'son of', are joined by a horizontal line, and the *g* of the patronym has a line crossing horizontally the rectangle, making it look similar to a rectangular *w*. These lines may represent a decorative feature made by the author himself, but since they compromise the legibility of the text this option seems less likely; on the ambiguities of additions and modifications to texts, see the discussion in §5.3 and §7.2. As to QUR 449.83.4/C (Fig. 6.6(b)) *l {{b}}dḥ bn rgl*, some graphs of the author's name have been partly effaced by limited hammering. Excluding the *b*, which because of some hammering in the middle looks similar to a *ḥ*, this limited effacement does not compromise the legibility of the name. As I will show in §7.2, effaced texts are often still perfectly legible.

[407] = WH 3923/C; this text is presented in §7.2, see Fig. 7.3(f).

[408] See QUR 2.351.1/C = WH 3921.1/C, QUR 12.62.4/C, QUR 64.215.1/C (Fig. 6.7(a)), QUR 458.10.2/C, and QUR 952.53.1/C = MKTF 6/C.

(a) QUR 64.215.1/C



(b) QUR 533.27.1/C (incised upper text)

Figure 6.7: Two inscriptions by Ḍbʿn

533.27.1/C (Fig. 6.7(b)), *ḍbʿn* indicates also the patronym, but both inscriptions are too weathered to read it with certainty. Nevertheless, the first graph of the patronym, which is in both cases an *s²*, has a very similar form in both texts, with the central undulation being more prominent than the upper and lower ones.

6.1.8 *ʿqrb bn ʿds¹*

Inscriptions bearing this name and patronym have only been found within the Jebel Qurma region, where this author left thirteen inscriptions. Three of these describe pastoral activities,[409] in one text the author states that he was awaiting the rains during a drought,[410] three texts say that he was present in a place,[411] one is a rock art signature (QUR 439.4.1/C), and the rest are name-only texts,[412] one of them (QUR 186.261.1/C) with a remarkably long genealogy extending to the twelfth generation.[413] In five inscriptions,[414] *ʿqrb* wrote both patronym and papponym. Thus, together with the inscription with the long genealogy just mentioned, we have six texts for which it is fairly certain that the author was the same. The remaining seven inscriptions[415] indi-

[409] QUR 32.8.1/C (Fig. 6.8(b)), 974.4.1/C, 998.4.1/C (Fig. 6.8(a)).

[410] QUR 2.665.1/C = KnSS 1.

[411] QUR 1051.2.1/C, 171.94.1/C, 439.45.1/C.

[412] QUR 171.89.1/C, 186.261.1/C, 449.37.1/C, 739.21.2/C, 786.7.2/C.

[413] QUR 186.261.1/C *{l} {ʿ}{q}rb bn ʿds¹ bn mlkt bn ʾs¹ bn yṣḥḥ bn ʾ{f}rt bn lhgn bn yṯʿ bn gr bn nmrn bn rfʾt* ‘{By} {ʿqrb} son of ʿds¹ son of Mlkt son of ʾs¹ son of Yṣḥḥ son of {ʾfrt} son of Lhgn son of Yṯʿ son of Gr son of Nmrn son of Rfʾt’. There are also inscriptions by members of the same family of *ʿqrb* with rather long genealogies. A text by his third cousin has the longest genealogy of the JQC, with eleven generations: QUR 20.31.1/C *l ngs² bn kr{f}s¹ bn ḥrb bn ʿqrb bn yṣḥḥ bn ʾfrt bn {l}h{g}n bn yṯʿ bn gr bn nmrn bn r{f}ʾt bn ẓmhr w h rḍ{w} [ʿ][w]{r} [m] ʿwr* ‘By Ngs² son of {Krfs¹} son of Ḥrb son of ʿqrb son of Yṣḥḥ son of ʾfrt son of {Lhgn} son of Yṯʿ son of Gr son of Nmrn son of {Rfʾt} son of Zmhr and O {Rḍw}, {blind} {whosoever} would efface’. While the investigation of texts by his family members in §6.1.9.8 below is limited to the texts by members of the same close family, it should be noted that all texts by more distant relatives of *ʿqrb* are in the ‘common’ script as well.

[414] QUR 171.89.1/C, 2.665.1/C, 449.37.1/C, 739.21.2/C, 786.7.2/C.

[415] QUR 32.8.1/C, 439.4.1/C, 439.45.1/C, 974.4.1/C, 998.4.1/C, 1051.2.1/C.

(a) QUR 998.4.1/C

(b) QUR 32.8.1/C

Figure 6.8: Two twin inscriptions by ʿqrb son of ʿds[1]

cate only the patronym, but their writing style is similar to the one of the other texts, making it probable that all these texts were written by the same author.

In the writing style of this author, we do not have many distinctive features, but the same set of graph forms appears rather consistently in all of his texts, with the exception of some minor variation which seems to be mainly tied to differences in technique:[416]

- The *lām auctoris* is a straight short line in all inscriptions where it is visible,[417] whereas other *l*'s, whenever present, are long straight lines;
- The *r* is a straight line with two short arms;
- The ʿ is a dot in hammered texts, but in the three incised texts it is a small circle;[418]
- The *q* has either an empty or a filled-in circle in hammered texts, while in the incised texts it has a circle with the vertical line crossing it;
- The *d* has a small loop, which is always filled in hammered texts, and empty in incised ones.

The form of the *k* is the one which varies the most, independently of the technique used, the tail being placed in different places and positions (protruding diagonally or vertically, either from the arm or from the back). This kind of variation, however, is found in other authors as well.[419]

[416] I.e. hammering (employed in most texts) *vs* incision (used in QUR 2.665.1/C, 439.4.1/C and 449.37.1/C).

[417] In some inscriptions (QUR 171.94.1/C, 186.261.1/C, 739.21.2/C, 1051.2.1/C), the part which has it is unfortunately too weathered to be sure. In QUR 1051.2.1/C *[l] [ʿ][q]rb bn ʿds[1] h-dr* '{By} {ʿqrb} son of ʿds[1], at this place', the first three graphs had to be reconstructed because the rock fragment which supposedly had them is missing.

[418] This suggests that these two variants were connected to carving techniques, see §2.1.2.

[419] Cf. *ẓby bn mlkt* in §6.1.4 above.

Beside sharing the same graph forms, all inscriptions by this author are accompanied by geometric symbols consisting of either one or more sets of seven dots or seven lines.[420] Only QUR 2.665.1/C = KnSS 1 is not, but instead it is surrounded by a cartouche made of seven concentric scratched lines.[421]

As shown in Fig.6.8, *ʿqrb* left two twin inscriptions (QUR 32.8.1/C and QUR 998.4.1/C) reading *l ʿqrb bn ʿds¹ w rʿy* ‘By ʿqrb son of ʿds¹ and he pastured’. They are both carved with the same exact direct hammering technique and graph forms. They also exhibit a very similar layout, which follows the shape of the panel, and are associated to a set of seven dots. Only two differences can be noted: the *q* in QUR 998.4.1/C has an empty circle and the text is surrounded by a scratched cartouche, while in QUR 32.8.1/C the circle of *q* is filled-in and the text is not framed by a cartouche.

6.1.9 Family members

As we will see, the family members here identified are mainly sons, grandsons, in two cases brothers, and, only in the case of *ʿqrb bn ʿds¹*, possibly the father. This scarcity of ancestors does not necessarily imply that the prolific authors’ fathers/grandfathers could not write. Rather, it may be partly due to the fact that most ‘common’ texts have short genealogies, thus making the identification of texts by ancestors much harder.

6.1.9.1 *mrr bn ʾʾb*’s sons and brother

QUR 186.18.1/C (Fig. 6.9(a)), by *mrr*’s son *ʿzhm*, has a long genealogy[422] and it shares several stylistic features with the texts by his father:

- The finely chiselled and well spaced graphs;
- The *ʾ*s are elongated and bigger in proportion to the other graphs;
- The use of square and 90° forms, see especially the *b* in the papponym *ʾʾb*, which usually presents both features, once in combination with elongation as well (see Fig. 6.9(a)).

A further stylistic device employed by this author but not present in the texts by *mrr* is the infilling of the upper forks of two *ʾ*s. Moreover, the arms of the *b* of the first *bn* have been joined through a vertical line, although this could be an alteration as well.

An individual named ‘Hʾs¹ son of Mrr’ left a rock art signature accompanying the drawing of a young she-camel (see Fig. 6.9(b)).[423] Also in this text, the similarities with *mrr*’s writing style are striking, suggesting that he may have been his son: the graphs

[420] On these geometric motifs, see Brusgaard 2019:81–85.

[421] Thus, the cartouche may have incorporated the graphic functions of the symbols; see §5.6.

[422] We can thus be sure about this identification, the text reads: *l ʿ{z}hm {b}n mrr bn ʾʾb bn ngy bn ʾṭḥ{f}* ‘By {ʿzhm} {son of} Mrr son of ʾʾb son of Ngy son of {ʾṭḥf}’.

[423] QUR 974.23.1/C *l hʾs¹ bn mrr h-bkrt* ‘By Hʾs¹ son of Mrr is the young she-camel’. Note that both the camel figure and the author’s name have been partially effaced.

(a) QUR 186.18.1/C

(b) QUR 974.23.1/C

Figure 6.9: Inscriptions by Mrr's sons ʿzhm (a) and Hʾs[1] (b)

are finely chiselled and well spaced, the ʾ is elongated, some graphs are square/turned by 90°.

A further possible son of *mrr* is *ʿbdy*, who left several name-only texts reading *l ʿbdy bn mrr* 'By ʿbdy son of Mrr'.[424] Of these, QUR 186.37.1/C is the one closest in style to *mrr*'s texts, as it is carved in thinly chiselled graphs. *ʿbdy* employed square forms as well, although in a different way: unlike the *b* of *bn*, which takes the regular curvilinear form, the *b* of his name takes a square form and it is also elongated. In addition, the graphs of his name are carved more closely together than the rest of the text, whose graphs are well spaced as in the texts by *mrr*. Perhaps this was also a decorative device employed by this author in order to distinguish his name.[425]

Finally, QUR 449.77.3/C *l {ḥ}{t} {b}{n} ʾ{ʾ}b* may be by *mrr*'s brother on account of its style: the graphs are finely chiselled, the ʾ's are elongated and bigger than the other graphs, the *ḥ* and both *b*'s are turned by 90°, with the *b* of the patronym being also square.

6.1.9.2 *fdy*'s sons

Several texts by authors with the patronym *fdy* have been attested – *ʿrd*,[426] *ʾgrd*,[427] and *zmhr*[428] – but unfortunately none of them reaches the papponym.

The text by *ʿrd* (QUR 137.74.7/C), however, exhibits the same form of the *f* with a pronounced angular back, which, if *fdy* was indeed his father, could be a feature he inherited from him. The other authors do not share this distinctive trait, the middle undulation being curving and smaller. They may have not followed their father's style or simply not be related to *fdy bn yṣḥḥ*.

[424] QUR 64.14.2/C, 186.37.1/C, 186.132.1/C, 974.22.1/C, QUR 974.30.1/C.
[425] Cf. the writing style of *ḫlʾl bn ʾṯʿ* discussed in §6.1.5 above for a similar practice.
[426] QUR 137.74.7/C.
[427] QUR 2.557.1/C.
[428] QUR 137.81.1/C, 146.24.1/C, 148.66.3/C.

(a) QUR 176.94.1/C

(b) ZMQJ 4/C (Photo: OCIANA)

Figure 6.10: Inscriptions and drawings by Gd (a) and Gdy (b)

The texts by *zmhr*, on the other hand, are all associated to rock art: QUR 137.81.1/C is accompanied by the same motif of an ibex as his father’s, although more roughly hammered than the elaborated chiselled figures by *fdy*; QUR 146.24.1/C is associated to a roughly hammered quadruped, with lines joining his bodily parts, possibly a later modification; QUR 148.66.3/C runs next to the image of a roughly executed camel. If *zmhr* was indeed the son of *fdy bn yṣḥḥ*, it is striking that his carvings result as less elaborated than the ones by his father.

6.1.9.3 *fhrn bn khln*’s sons and grandson

Several inscriptions carved by sons of *fhrn* – *bʿmh*, *bgdt*, *gd*, *gdy*, and *tmn* – are attested.

The son with the writing style which is closest to *fhrn*’s is *gd*, who left at least three texts (QUR 139.19.1/C, 176.94.1/C, and 1020.37.1/C). Like in the writing style of his father, he features elongated and compressed forms of *h* and *r*. QUR 139.19.1/C is a name-only text whose genealogy goes at least until the papponym *khln*,[429] while the two other texts, QUR 176.94.1/C and QUR 1020.37.1/C, are associated to drawings, as are also some texts by *fhrn*. QUR 176.94.1/C (Fig. 6.10(a)) presents a genealogy reaching the papponym *khln*[430] and it is associated to the drawing of a hunting scene with three goats and surrounded by a scratched cartouche.

Although in QUR 1020.37.1/C the genealogy only reaches the patronym,[431] the writing style is strikingly similar to the two other texts, and the drawing as well is stylistically very similar to the one associated to QUR 176.94.1/C.[432] The writing style

[429] QUR 139.19.1/C *l gd bn fhrn bn khln bn----*.

[430] The text reads: *l gd bn fhrn bn khln h-ʾ{ʿ}{n}{z}* ‘By Gd son of Fhrn son of Khln are the {she-goats}’.

[431] QUR 1020.37.1/C *l gd bn fhr{n} {h-}{ʾ}{ʿ}{n}z* ‘By Gd son of {Fhrn} are {the she-goats}’. The caption was effaced, perhaps by the author of QUR 1020.37.4/C, who may have added his text later: QUR 1020.37.4/C *{l} {.}ḥ{l} {b}n ʾdʿn* ‘{By}… {son of} ʾdʿn’. Note that he used the line of a goat neck as shaft of the *d*, which is incorporated in the drawing. There is a conglomerate of inscriptions and effaced inscriptions which makes the reading of the first part of the text particularly difficult.

[432] The main difference with the other rock art is that the bodies of the goats have not been completely

differs mainly in the form of the *g* in the author's name, which is an irregular circle, while in the other texts it is a rectangle. This text and rock art by *gd* are associated to an identical text and similar drawing by the brother *bgdt*,[433] in which the graphs of patronym *fhrn* and of the caption are much more elongated and compressed than the ones of the name. The writing style, especially in this part of the text, is very similar to the one of his brother and father, with compressed and elongated *h* and *r*. *bgdt* left at least two other texts (QUR 9.32.1/C and QUR 148.25.3/C), both chiselled and surrounded by a roughly hammered cartouche, in which the graph forms of the patronym are not as elongated as in the incised one.

A text associated to the rock art of a hunting scene by a person named *gdy bn fhrn bn khln* (see Fig.6.10(b)) was attested ca. 35 km as the crow flies to the north-east of Jebel Qurma.[434] The text presents exactly the same graph forms and compressed style as the text by *gd*.[435] Another point in common with *gd* is the rock art style, since the body of the hunted lion and the shield of a hunter are filled with stripes, like the two goats in QUR 1020.37.1/C.

Two texts by the son *bʿmh* were found: QUR 372.43.3/C,[436] scratched on the side of a panel covered with hammered texts, and QUR 956.75.4/C,[437] an incised text curving above the image of a hunting scene. The style with which the patronym *fhrn* is written is the same as all other texts by the brothers discussed above and *fhrn* himself, but their trait is less neat than the texts by his father and the brothers discussed above. *bʿmh*'s son (*fhrn*'s grandchild), *kʿmh* left two texts (QUR 867.1.1/C and 956.39.2/C).[438] They are directly hammered and do not present any of the stylistic features of the rest of the family.

Finally, three texts by another son of *fhrn*, named *tmn*, were found: QUR 913.2.1/C,[439] QUR 980.17.1/C,[440] and QUR 1008.5.2/C.[441] In both the text with a 4 generations

filled in, but rather one is empty and the other two are filled with stripes, which are probably decorative (see Brusgaard 2019:§5.3.3).

[433]QUR 1020.37.2/C *l bgdt bn fhrn h-ʾʿnz* 'By Bgdt son of Fhrn are the she-goats'.

[434]ZMQJ 4/C *l gdy bn fhrn bn khln h-ḥyt* 'By Gdy son of Fhrn son of Khln are the animals'.

[435]One may wonder whether this text was by *gd* himself, and the final *y* which distinguishes it was perhaps an hypocoristic element not spelled in the other texts. Interestingly, the *y* is squeezed in between the preceding *d* and the following *y*, and it may have been added later.

[436]*l b{ʿ}{m}{h} bn f{h}{r}{n}* 'By {Bʿmh} son of {Fhrn}'.

[437]*l bʿmh bn fhr{n} bn {k}hln bn yṣḥḥ w {ʾ}{ʿ}{h}{r}ḥ{m}* 'By Bʿmh son of {Fhrn} son of {Khln} son of Yṣḥḥ and...'.

[438]They read QUR 956.39.2/C *l kʿmh bn bʿmh bn fhrn* and QUR 867.1.1/C *l kʿmh b bʿmh b fhrn b kh{l}{n}*. Note that in the first text 'son of' in the genealogy is written *bn*, as usual, while in the second text it is consistently spelled *b* with assimilation (?) of *n*; the omission of the *n* could represent a stylistic choice by the author rather than a linguistic reality. It is also possible that in the dialect of the author the assimilation already took place, but in one of the two inscriptions he opted for an archaic spelling.

[439]*l tmn bn [[b]][[n]] fhrn* 'By Tmn son of Fhrn'. Note the dittography of *bn*, the second *bn* seems to have been slightly hammered over, perhaps by the author himself (see 'Corrective effacement' in Chapter 7). Parts of the rock edges have been roughly hammered and reused as natural cartouche. The text is associated to seven dots.

[440]*l tmn bn fhrn bn khl{n} bn {y}{ṣ}{ḥ}[ḥ]* 'By Tmn son of Fhrn son of {Khln} son of {Yṣḥḥ}'. It runs next to the image of a camel

[441]*l tmn bn f<<l>>hrn* 'By Tmn son of Fhrn'. The text is associated to the symbol of seven circles clustering

genealogy (QUR 980.17.1/C) and in the texts which only give the patronym, in comparison to the other texts by his family members, *tmn*'s texts appear as executed more roughly and with the least neat trait. In addition, none of the graph forms are as stylistically distinctive as in the texts by his father and some of his brothers.

6.1.9.4 *ẓby bn mlkt*'s sons

Texts by three sons of *ẓby* – *hnbt*, *gg*, and *rṯʾl* – have been found, all showing the typical stylistic characteristics featuring in the texts by their father. Three texts are only known from drawings,[442] but in all of them one can still observe the same distinctive features.

One text by the son *rṯʾl*[443] shows both patronym and papponym. The patronym *ẓby* is carved in the same style of the texts by his father, with the zigzag layout, the loop of the *y* being set in the middle, the legs of the *ẓ* facing upwards. In addition, the *l*'s are hooked and the *b*'s square, as in *ẓby*'s texts.

Two texts by Gg son of Ẓby[444] likewise exhibit a slightly zigzag layout in the name of the father, although not as marked as in the texts by the father. In QUR 256.3.5/C one can also see the squarish *b*'s and the *ẓ* with the legs facing upwards, characteristic of *ẓby*'s writing style.

Four texts by *hnbt* were attested: QUR 640.8.1/C,[445] with a 5 generations genealogy, AbaNS 968/C,[446] with the genealogy reaching the papponym, and the two texts QUR 171.109.2/C and AbaNS 495/C[447] both indicating only the patronym. Of these, only AbaNS 968/C and AbaNS 495/C clearly exhibit the distinctive zig-zag layout of the graphs of the patronym as found in the texts by the father. The other texts show it to a certain extent as well, although less marked.

6.1.9.5 *ḫlʾl bn ʾṯʿ*'s son (?) and grandson (?)

A person named *mrʾt bn ḫlʾl*, possibly *ḫlʾl*'s son, left five texts in the Jebel Qurma region[448] and five others elsewhere.[449]

While his texts are mostly neatly chiselled and elaborated, as the texts by *ḫlʾl*, his writing style does not share the distinctive stylistic features of the texts by *ḫlʾl*. One exception is perhaps the occasional use of a form of the ʾ with an exaggeratedly long stroke – see, e.g., ASFF 417/C (Fig. 6.11(b)) – which distinguishes also the texts by his father.

together from which a line comes out.

[442]These are: AbaNS 495/C and AbaNS 968/C, by *hnbt*, and AAEK 247/C, by *rṯʾl*.

[443]AAEK 247/C *l rṯʾl bn ẓby bn mlkt* 'By Rṯʾl son of Ẓby son of Mlkt'.

[444]QUR 256.3.5/C *l gg bn ẓby*; QUR 640.8.2/C *l gg bn {{ẓ}}{{b}}y*.

[445]QUR 640.8.1/C *l hnbt bn ẓby bn m[l]kt bn s²k bn gg*.

[446]AbaNS 968/C *l hnbt bn ẓby bn mlkt*.

[447]QUR 171.109.2/C *l hnbt bn ẓby*; AbaNS 495/C *l hnbt bn ẓby h-bkrt* 'By Hnbt son of Ẓby is the young she-camel'.

[448]QUR 27.6.2/C, 176.47.1/C, 911.2.1/C, 931.1.1/C, 974.43.1/C.

[449]ASFF 417/C, CEDS 357/C, CEDS 446/C, HaNSB 80/C, 346/C.

(a) QUR 974.43.1/C

(b) ASFF 417/C (Photo: OCIANA)

Figure 6.11: Two inscriptions by Mrʾt son of Ḫlʾl

Like *ḫlʾl*, *mrʾt* carved also images: four of his Jebel Qurma texts are accompanied by drawings (see, e.g., Fig. 6.11(a)).[450] But his drawings always consist of one to maximum three animal figures, and there is no trace of the 'mosaic' style of his father. ZSSH 39/C,[451] by *ḫlʾl*'s grandson *mnhr*, is incised with an irregular trait. Similarly to some texts by his father, the only prominent feature he shares with *ḫlʾl* is the use of a form of the *ʾ* with a very long stroke, resulting as much bigger than the other graphs of the text.

6.1.9.6 *bdḥ bn rgl*'s sons/grandsons (?)

Several inscriptions by authors who were possibly descendants of *bdḥ* were found. However, none of them presents the whole range of distinctive stylistic features characterising the texts by *bdḥ*. In general, the texts appear as less elaborated both technically and stylistically. Three inscriptions by a *hʾs*^{1} *bn bdḥ*, possibly the son of *bdḥ bn rgl*, are attested: QUR 7.12.1/C,[452] QUR 147.9.2/C, and QUR 137.40.1/C. While they all indicate only the patronym, the possibility of such relationship is shown by the long genealogy of an inscription by the great grandson *s*^{2}*rb*: HaNS 706/C *l s*^{2}*rb bn ġnṭ bn hʾs*^{1} *bn bdḥ bn rgl*. The only features in common with *bdḥ*'s writing style are the use of a form of the *d* with a very small filled-in loop and the occasional use of square graph forms.

The second text is a rock art signature associated to an inscription by *s*^{2}*nf* (QUR 147.9.1/C) running parallel to it. We know from another text that *s*^{2}*nf* was possibly *hʾs*^{1}'s son, i.e. the grandson of *bdḥ* (see below). The associated rock art is an image of a

[450] The texts are: QUR 27.6.2/C *l mrʾt bn ḫlʾl h-ʿr* 'By Mrʾt son of Ḫlʾl is the ass'; QUR 176.47.1/C *l mrʾt bn ḫlʾl h-nqtn* 'By Mrʾt son of Ḫlʾl are the two she-camels'; QUR 911.2.1/C *l mrʾt bn ḫlʾl h-nqt* 'By Mrʾt son of Ḫlʾl is the she-camel'; QUR 974.43.1/C (Fig. 6.11(a)) *l mrʾt bn ḫlʾl h-ẓbyn* 'By Mrʾt son of Ḫlʾl are the gazelles'.

[451] = ASFF 307 = QHGHA 14. It reads: *l mhnr bn mrʾt bn ḫlʾl bn ʾṯʿ w tẓr h-s*^{1}*my mḍ/ṭ----* 'By Mhr son of Mrʾt son of Ḫlʾl son of ʾṯʿ and he awaited the rains...'.

[452] *l hʾs*^{1} *bn bdḥ w rʾy ḥl* 'By Hʾs^{1} son of Bdḥ and he was on the look-out while camping'.

camel whose body has been decorated by partial infilling and lines;[453] an animal with similar stylistic features is found on the same panel as a text by *bdḥ* (QUR 148.139.1/C; see Fig.3.1(b) in Chapter 3). If *bdḥ* himself produced the latter rock art,[454] this particular style may have been inherited by his son *hʾs¹*, who decided to reproduce it on this figure together with his son. In the third text, the *d* is joined to the following *ḥ* by rough hammering. It is associated to an inscription without genealogy by *ʿbdy* (QUR 137.40.2/C *<<>>l ʿbd{y}*), in which the *d* is joined to the following *y* by a ligature, and the loop of the *y* is bending backwards in the direction of the *d*, although it is not touching it. An inscription by an *ʿbdy bn bdḥ* has also been attested on a panel next to an inscription by *ḥgg bn bdḥ*, no doubt another son of *bdḥ*.[455] Thus, contextually *ʿbdy* is likely to be the brother of *hʾs¹*. While family relationships are often implicit in associated inscriptions, we know from other cases that the practice of writing inscriptions together as members of the same family was common (see §5.7).

Some texts by what are possibly grandsons of *bdḥ* are also attested. One is QUR 147.9.1/C *l s²nf*, associated to a text by *hʾs¹ bn bdḥ* (see above). Then we have QUR 171.79.1/C *l s²nf bn hʾs¹* and QUR 1028.6.1/C,[456] in which the upper fork of *ʾ* is pronouncedly slanted. This feature is attested, although in a less pronounced way, also in two texts by the father *hʾs¹* (QUR 137.40.1/C and 147.9.2/C). The panel QUR 533.25/C, with inscriptions by *s²nf* and his brothers, is shown and discussed in §5.7 (see Fig.5.11(d)).

6.1.9.7 *ḍbʿn*’s son

The hammered text QUR 39.7.1/C (*l ḥbʾl bn ḍbʿ{n}* ‘By Ḥbʾl son of {Ḍbʿn}’) may have been written by the son of *ḍbʿn*, considering that the patronym *ḍbʿn* is carved using the same writing style. It presents the distinctive form of the *ḍ* as a rectangular grid with the branches extending only very shortly past the rectangle, which is typical of *ḍbʿn*’s texts, as well as the dot form of the *ʿ*, which is found in all hammered texts by him.

6.1.9.8 *ʿqrb bn ʿds¹*’s father and brother

On the panel QUR 439.29/C there are two associated texts, one by a person named ‘ʿds¹ son of Mlkt’,[457] while the other is by ‘Ḫwf son of ʿds¹’.[458] Both inscriptions indicate only the patronym, but because they are associated, it is likely that they were carved on the same occasion by father and son. It is possible that the first text is by *ʿqrb*’s father *ʿds¹*, while the other is by his brother *ḫwf*, as the texts have the same graph forms as *ʿqrb*’s – cf. the *lām auctoris* as a straight short line, the *r* as a straight line with two short arms, the *ʿ* as a dot, the *d* with a small filled-in loop – and, as *ʿqrb*’s texts, they are also

[453]See Brusgaard 2019:§5.3.3 for a discussion of patterned figures in the JQC.

[454]As can be seen from the figure, there are other texts on the same panel. Thus, the author could be somebody else.

[455]These are QUR 122.1.2/C and QUR 122.1.6/C.

[456]*l s²nf bn hʾs¹ bn bdḥ w tẓr h-{.}r{g/ʿ}* ‘By S²nf son of Hʾs¹ son of Bdḥ and he lay in wait…’

[457]QUR 439.29.1/C *l ʿds¹ bn mlkt h-dr* ‘By ʿds¹ son of Mlkt at this place’.

[458]QUR 439.29.2/C *l ḫwf bn ʿds¹* ‘By Ḫwf son of ʿds¹’.

associated to a set of seven dots. Two further inscriptions by *ḫwf* indicating only the patronym *ʿds*[1] were found,[459] and they present the same graph forms found in *ʿqrb*'s texts as well. The first text is incised – hence the *ʿ* is a small circle rather than a dot, as it also appears in *ʿqrb*'s incised texts – and associated to seven dots. It is found on another face of the same rock as an inscription by *ʿqrb* (QUR 739.21.2/C). Its location further supports the idea that *ḫwf* was *ʿqrb*'s brother.

6.2 'Fine' script authors

6.2.1 *mgd bn zd*

mgd is a 14th generation *ḏf*-ite[460] who left at least five texts.[461] Excluding one text from the Jebel Qurma region, all other instances are found in more northern areas, between north-eastern Jordan and southern Syria. *mgd*'s four longest texts (QUR 176.24.1/F,[462] SIJ 823/F,[463] BRenv.G 1/F[464] and WH 947/F[465]) run boustrophedon and are incised in small graphs.[466] In *mgd*'s writing style, the graph forms are typical of the 'late 'fine' stage',[467] see the consistently hooked *r* and the *ẓ* with two slanted dashes in both texts

[459] QUR 739.21.6/C *l ḫwf bn ʿds*[1] *h*---- 'By Ḫwf son of ʿds[1]...' and QUR 775.1.3/C *l ḫwf bn ʿds*[1] 'By Ḫwf son of ʿds[1]'.

[460] For his position in the *ḏf*'s lineage-tree, see Fig. A.18 in Appendix A.

[461] In QUR 176.24.1/F, SIJ 823/F, BRenv.G 1/F, BS 639/F, and WH 947/F (only known from a tracing), the genealogies are all long enough – i.e. at least until the papponym but in most texts they go further up – to consider these texts as definitely by the same Mgd (NB: BS 639/F was collected via OCIANA in 2019, but now (December 2021) it is not to be found in the OCIANA anymore). In addition, there is one hammered text (the other texts just mentioned are all incised) which indicates only the patronym; it reads: BES15 946/F? *l mgd bn zd* 'By Mgd son of Zd'. While this short text does not present sufficient diagnostics to classify it as 'fine' in the first place, the *m* and *b* seem relatively compressed considering the use of hammering, and the *g* of the name of the author is a big circle, as in other texts by this author (see below).

[462] It reads: *l mgd bn zd bn qdm bn mrʾ ḏ ʾl ġyr h-ḏfy w gls*[1] *h-mẓrt f h lt w ds*[2]*r ġnmt w lʿn m ḫbl h-s*[1]*fr* 'By Mgd son of Zd son of Qdm son of Mrʾ of the people of Ġyr, the Ḏf-ite, and he halted at this look-out point so, O Lt and Ds[2]r, grant spoil and curse whosoever would obscure this writing!'. Note that the *ʾl ġyr* is probably a branch of the Ḏf lineage named after *mgd*'s ancestor *ġyr bn rfʾt bn ws*[2]*yt bn ḏf* (see §A.1.1).

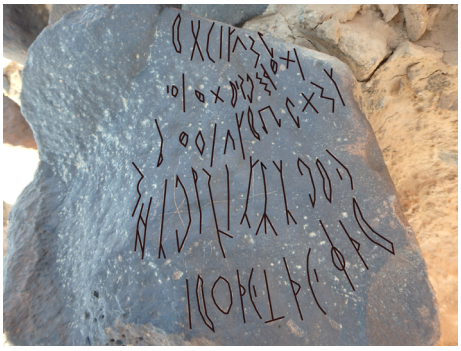
[463] It reads: *l mgd bn zd bn qdm bn mrʾ ḏ ʾl ḏf w qṣṣ bʿd ḏf s*[1]*nt mrd dmṣy {ʿ}l----mn w ʾs*[1]*lm f {ʾ}...* 'By Mgd son of Zd son of Qdm son of Mrʾ of the lineage of Ḏf and he patrolled on behalf of the Ḏf, the year Dmṣy rebelled against...but he surrendered (?), so...'.

[464] The OCIANA reads: *l mg{d} bn zd bn qdm bn mrʾ bn ẓnnʾl {w} wgd s*[1]*fr ʿm-h {b}ʿl{y} w wqr----ʾs*[1]*ʿ---ydhm{ʿ}yh{f}tʾmrʾnfḫ{r}bnʾnn* 'By Mgd son of Zd son of Qdm son of Mrʾ son of Ẓnnʾl and he found the inscription of his grandfather...'.

[465] The text reads: *l mgd bn zd bn qdm bn mrʾ w nẓr h-s*[2]*nʾ f h lt fṣy w s*[1]*lm w ġnmt l-ḏ dʿy gn* 'By Mgd son of Zd son of Qdm son of Mrʾ and he was on the look-out for the enemy, so, O Lt, [grant] deliverance and security and booty to whosoever...' (see OCIANA).

[466] The graphs of the text from southern Syria (BRenv.G 1/F) are remarkably small—they are on average around 1 cm high. The picture of this text is blurred. The last part of the text is of difficult reading, but the word *ʿm* in *wgd s*[1]*fr ʿm-h* probably refers to his great great grandfather (BRenv.G 2/C *l ẓnnʾl bn mrʾ*), whose inscription is carved right below on the same panel. Its graph forms are visibly less compressed than *mgd*'s text, and the *r* takes the 'common' form of a straight line with two short arms; see §4.1 on the development of the 'fine' script from the 'common' script.

[467] For a definition of the 'late 'fine' stage', see §4.1.3.



(a) QUR 176.24.1/F

(b) SIJ 823/F *(Photo: OCIANA)*

Figure 6.12: Inscriptions by Mgd son of Zd

where it occurs.[468] A distinctive feature is that the *g* of the author’s name *mgd* is bigger and, in two texts, QUR 176.24.1/F and SIJ 823/F (see Fig. 6.12), more rounded than the average ‘fine’ *g*, perhaps as a way to emphasize the name of the author.[469] In the other texts, however, *mgd*’s *g* appears as a big-sized rhomboid.

A further distinctive trait found in both QUR 176.24.1/F and SIJ 823/F is the *ḏ* with a very small hook protruding from its shaft and forming an acute angle. This is remarkable, as hooked *ḏ*’s are otherwise a typical feature of the SoS script.

Two idiosyncrasies are found exclusively in QUR 176.24.1/F: 1) in the *f* of the word *ḍf*, the central angle is a curve, but the usual zigzag form is also attested in the other instances of the *f* in the same text as well as in the other texts by him; 2) a slanted dash protrudes from the lower part of the stroke in *ġyr*, but the *ġ* in the same text and the other *ġ*’s in other texts do not have it. Moreover, in this text, the name, genealogy and affiliations of the authors are written in bigger graphs than the rest of the text.

6.2.2 *ṣʿd bn ġṯ*

This author is a 16th generation *ʿwḏ*-ite[470] who left at least four texts in the Ḥarrah. Apart from one text found in the Jebel Qurma region (QUR 148.76.3/F[471]) three texts

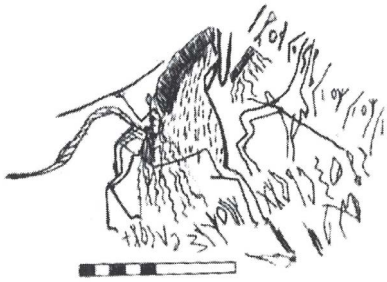
[468] QUR 176.24.1/F and WH 947/F.

[469] Note that the other *g* attested in QUR 176.24.1/F in the verb *gls*[1] ‘he halted’ is in fact a small rhomboid, which is the typical ‘fine’ graph form.

[470] His position in the tree is showed by the overlapping genealogies of, e.g., *ṣʿd*’s text QUR 148.76.3/F *{ṣ}ʿd bn {ġ}ṯ bn ʿḏ bn ʿ{ḏ} bn ġṯ* and SESP.D 5/F, by his brother, going back to the eponymous ancestor: *rmyn bn ġṯ bn ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bn ġṯ bn wdm bn s*[1]*r bn ṣbḥ bn q<<>>s*[2]*<<>>m bn s*[1]*by bn ʿ{b}d bn hngs*[2] *bn whbn bn qmr bn r{ṯ}{ʾ} bn ʿwḏ* (see OCIANA).

[471] It reads: *l {ṣ}ʿd bn {ġ}ṯ bn ʿḏ bn ʿ{ḏ} bn ġṯ ḏ ʾl ʿw{ḏ} w {r}{d}{f}{ʾ}{t/ḫ}m {w} {ʾ}{f}*— ‘By {Ṣʿd} son of {Ġṯ} son of ʿḏ son of {ʿḏ} son of Ġṯ of the lineage of {ʿwḏ} and…’. The inscription superimposes another incised text and is carved above the drawing of a camel (see Fig.6.13(a)). The camel is most probably not related to the text, as another text in the ‘common’ script referring to it runs vertically downwards to its right: QUR 148.75.1/C *l hlb bn khnt h-gml* ‘By Hlb son of Khnt is the camel’. Moreover, the image of the camel – its figure being completely filled in by chiselling and with an exaggerated hump and unnaturally

(a) QUR 148.76.3/F



(b) AbaNS 286/F

Figure 6.13: Inscriptions by Ṣʿd son of Ġṯ

were found much further north in southern Syria (C 2769/F, LP 244/F) and one in north-eastern Jordan (AbaNS 286/F), in an area very close to the border with Syria. The most consistent features of his writing style are:

- The use of highly compressed graph forms;
- The pointed *b* and *r*;
- The *d* with the loop facing backwards;
- The *ġ* with its head being angled and bigger than the straight line to which it is attached.

C 2769/F [472] is only known from not very precise drawings. We have only tracings also of AbaNS 286/F (Fig. 6.13(b)), a text which curves around a very elaborated drawing of a horseman with a spear,[473] and of LP 244/F.[474] The tracings of the latter two texts seem quite accurate and both show all the stylistic features typical of this author listed above.

straight neck – is typical of 'common' camels found in the Jebel Qurma region, but very different from the style of 'fine' camels, which are usually incised and exhibit more naturalistic proportions (see Brusgaard 2019:118–119).

[472] *l ṣ{ʿ}d bn ġ(ṯ) bn [ʿ]ḏ bn ʿḏ w wgd s¹f[r] {ʾ}b-h w ʿm-h f bk{y} f h lt s¹lm l-ḏ s¹ʾr* 'By {Ṣʿd} son of {Ġṯ} son of {ʿḏ} son of ʿḏ and he found {the inscription of} his {father} and his grandfather and so {he wept} and so O Lt [grant] security to whoever leaves [the inscription] intact' (reading and translation: OCIANA).

[473] The text reads: *l ṣʿd bn ġṯ bn ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bn ġṯ w s²ry m-ʾḫ-h mʿḏ h-frs¹ b-mʾt* 'By Ṣʿd son of Ġṯ son of ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ and he bought the horse from his brother Mʿḏ with a hundred' (reading and translation: OCIANA).

[474] *l ṣʿd bn ġṯ bn ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bn ġṯ bn wdm bn s¹r bn ṣbḥ bn qs²m bn gby bn ʿbd* 'By Ṣʿd son of Ġṯ son of ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ son of Wdm son of S¹r son of Ṣbḥ son of Qs²m son of Gby son of ʿbd' (see OCIANA).

(a) QUR 2.336.1/F

(b) QUR 2.490.1/F

Figure 6.14: Inscriptions by Ms¹k son of ʾnʿm

6.2.3 *ms¹k bn ʾnʿm*

The author *ms¹k bn ʾnʿm*, of the social group of *qs²m*,[475] left two texts on top of Jebel Qurma (QUR 2.336.1/F, 2.490.1/F; Fig.6.14), while a third was found in southern Syria, at Al-ʿĪsāwī (Is.K 291/F). In QUR 2.336.1/F, the author indicates only the patronym, but in both QUR 2.490.1/F and Is.K 291/F the genealogies extend until the papponym. In any case, all three texts affiliate to the *ʾl qs²m*.

Both QUR 2.490.1/F[476] (Fig. 6.14(b)) and Is.K 291/F[477] are incised with a fine point,[478] while QUR 2.336.1/F,[479] (Fig. 6.14(a)) is directly hammered. The texts by this author, although they all share ‘fine’ features, they also present a certain extent of variation in the graph forms.

A trait shared by both Jebel Qurma texts is the *ḏ* with a slanting hook attached to its tail, which is usually a distinctive trait of the SoS script.[480] The *ḏ* of Is.K 291/F is damaged by hammering and thus it is not possible to see if it is hooked or not. A remarkable feature of QUR 2.490.1/F is the use of a curved *f* instead of the ‘fine’ zigzag form.

In Is.K 291/F, the *ṭ* has an extra horizontal line, unlike the *ṭ* in QUR 2.490.1/F.[481] The *ẓ*, attested only in this text, takes a peculiar form ⌊ which may be interpreted as a stylised, compressed form of the ‘common’ form of the *ẓ* with converging arms;[482] the

[475]Note that *qs²m* may have been a sub-group of *ʿwḏ* (see §B.2).

[476]*l ms¹k bn ʾnʿm bn {s¹}ʾr ḏ ʾl qs²m w mṭy f h s²ʿhqm ġnmt* ‘By Ms¹k son of ʾnʿm son of {S¹ʾr} of the people of Qs²m and he journeyed so, O S²ʿhqm, may there be spoil!’.

[477]*l ms¹k bn ʾnʿm bn {s¹}{ʾ}{r} ḏ ʾl qs²m w nẓr s¹nt ngy mlk slṭ{n}* ‘By Ms¹k son of ʾnʿm son of {S¹ʾr}, of the people of Qs²m, and he stood guard, the year *ngy mlk slṭ{n}*’.

[478]QUR 2.490.1/F is carved using the rare rocking-blade technique; see §5.1.3.1 for a more detailed discussion and pictures of this type of carving technique.

[479]*l ms¹k bn ʾnʿm ḏ ʾl {q}{s²}{m}* ‘By Ms¹k son of ʾnʿm of the people of {Qs²m}’.

[480]This form is also found in two texts by the ‘fine’ script author *mgd bn zd* (see above).

[481]The feature of adding an extra line is attested in some ‘common’ script texts as well, both in the *ṭ* and the *ḏ* (see ‘*ḏ*’ and ‘*ṭ*’ in Chapter 2).

[482]See ‘*ẓ*’ in Chapter 2.

arms face backwards and only one of the two arms is closed.[483]

In QUR 2.336.1/F, which is hammered, although one finds the typical 'fine' forms of the *k* and of the *b* as a shallow curve, the other graphs have less compressed forms. The last graphs are very roughly outlined and have an irregular trait. The circle of the *q*, for example, is only roughly hinted at. Moreover, the *s¹* of the author's name does not have a vertical stance, a typically 'fine' stylistic trait which is on the other hand found in the incised texts, but rather a form more similar to the 'common' one.[484]

6.2.4 Family members

The first two 'fine' script authors discussed above – *mgd bn zd*, of the lineage of *ḏf*, and *ṣʿd bn ġṯ*, of the lineage of *ʿwḏ* – have relatively long genealogies. This allows us to identify with certainty relatives several generations removed from them.

6.2.4.1 *mgd bn zd*'s brother, father, grandfather and uncle

Several texts by close relatives of *mgd* are attested in north-eastern Jordan, all from regions much further north than Jebel Qurma.[485] A text by *mgd*'s brother *mrʾ* (SIJ 834/F[486]) was found at Tell al-ʿAbd, which is the same site as one of the texts by *mgd* (SIJ 823/F). The text is only known from a tracing but nevertheless with clear 'late 'fine" features, just like *mgd*'s writing style – see the hooked *r*'s and the *ẓ* with slanted dashes protruding from its legs. One text by the father *zd* (BES15 623/F) is known. It seems also 'late 'fine" and runs boustrophedon, incised in very big graphs—the ones of the name are around 10 cm high. Unlike the texts by *mgd* and his brother *mrʾ*, however, the *ẓ* is simply an open rectangle without slanted dashes. This difference could be either stylistic or due to the fact that the text, which belongs to an earlier generation, reflects an earlier stage of development of the script.[487]

In the texts by *mgd*'s grandfather *qdm*,[488] the *r*'s are consistently hooked, but the

[483]A similar graph form, although with both arms converging, is attested in NEH 1, discussed in Norris 2020:365–368.

[484]However, in other corpora there are cases of hammered 'fine' texts in which the *s¹* keeps a vertical stance (see, e.g., KRS 2415/F).

[485]Note that texts by more distant relatives were also found in southern Syria, see, e.g., C 3897/C/F, by his great grandfather *mrʾ*, and C 2377/F, by his granduncle *mgd*.

[486]*l mrʾ bn zd bn qdm bn mrʾ bn ẓnnʾl bn m[r]ʾ* 'By Mrʾ son of Zd son of Qdm son of Mrʾ son of Ẓnnʾl son of {Mrʾ}' (reading: OCIANA).

[487]The text reads: *l zd bn qdm bn mrʾ w wgd ʾṯr ʾb-h w dd-h f bʾs¹ m ẓll* 'By Zd son of Qdm son of Mrʾ and he found the traces of his father and of his paternal uncle and so those who remain despair'. On the translation of the expression *bʾs¹ m ẓll*, see Al-Jallad 2015: 207; OCIANA did not read *w dd-h* 'and his paternal uncle'. The phrase *ʾṯr dd-h* ('traces of his paternal uncle') is probably referring to the text BES15 622/C/F (*l mgd bn mrʾ* 'By Mgd son of Mrʾ'), hammered on the same panel and partly superimposed by BES15 623/F. The text by Mgd's granduncle is less compressed than his father's. While this may be partly due to the different technique used, since the *r* is represented by a simple curve without vertical hooks, it would seem that the script of this text was still transitional between the 'common' and the 'fine' script according to the definition in §4.1.3.

[488]These are: BES15 207/F, BES15 886/F, KRS 1007/F, KRS 1037/F and KRS 1153/F.

(a) KRS 1037/F

(b) KRS 904/F

Figure 6.15: Horsemen by Mgd’s grandfather Qdm (a) and his uncle Mṣrm (b) (Photos: OCIANA)

ẓ’s have no slanted dashes. While all of *qdm*’s incised texts are rather compressed, the hammered one (BES15 886/F[489]) is much less so. This is a good example of how the choice of a particular technique can in some cases influence the graph forms, but without altering the distinctive features of their underlying shapes. For instance, despite the lower degree of compression, all *r*’s in the text still exhibit vertical hooks, which characterise the ‘fine’ shape. Two inscriptions by *qdm* – KRS 1037/F (Fig. 6.15(a)) and KRS 1153/F[490] – are accompanied by very elaborated and skilfully incised drawings.

Finally, there are two late ‘fine’ texts by *mgd*’s uncle *mṣrm*, KRS 904/F and RSIS 171/F. KRS 904/F (Fig. 6.15(b)) shows that, like *mgd*’s grandfather *qdm*, *mṣrm* left drawings as well. The text is intertwined with and refers to the finely incised figure of a horseman.[491] The form of the horse looks stylistically similar to the one by his father *qdm*, i.e. *mgd*’s grandfather (cf. Fig. 6.15(a)).

6.2.4.2 *ṣʿd bn ġṯ*’s relatives

Like *ṣʿd*’s texts, the inscriptions by his close family members are all highly compressed.[492]

SESP.D 5/F, by his brother *rmyn*, SESP.D 6/F, by his uncle *wdm* and SESP.D 7/F, by his cousin *ẓnn* son of *wdm*, are incised on the same big boulder and run parallel to each other.[493] Beside the high compression, they share with *ṣʿd*’s writing style the

[489] *l qdm bn mrʾ bn ẓnnʾl w wgd ʾṯr mnʿt f ngʿ {f} bʾs¹ m ẓl* ‘By Qdm son of Mrʾ son of Ẓnnʾl and he found the inscription of Mnʿt and was stricken with sorrow {so} those who remain despair’. He could have referred to the text by his brother *mnʿt* (BES15 905/F).

[490] KRS 1153/F is incorporated within the drawing of two camels and its layout is adjusted to the empty spaces within the images.

[491] It reads: *l mṣrm bn qdm bn mrʾ h-ḫṭṭ w ʾḫḏ l-ṣʿd* ‘By Mṣrm son of Qdm son of Mrʾ is the carving and he took for Ṣʿd’.

[492] The texts by the brother *ʿḏ* (C 1278/F, AWS 352/F) and by the father *ġṯ* (C 1279/F, C 2768/F) are only known from tracings and will not be discussed here.

[493] The texts by the brother *rmyn* and the uncle *wdm* both present very long genealogies going back to the eponymous ancestor *ʿwḏ*: SESP.D 5/F *l rmyn bn ġṯ bn ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bnj ġṯ bn wdm bn s¹r bn ṣbḥ bn q<◇>s²<◇>m // bn s¹by bn ʿ{b}d bn hngs² bn whbn bn qmr bn r{ṯ}{ʾ} bn ʿwḏ // [[]] wgm ʿl-ʿm-h* ‘By Rmyn son of Ġṯ son of

(a) Text by Ṣʿd's uncle Wdm (BES15 1004/F)

(b) Panel with text by the grandfather (Is.H 516/F) and others (Is.H 513/C/F, 514/F, 515/C/F)

Figure 6.16: Inscriptions by Ṣʿd's relatives (Photos: OCIANA)

use of a *ġ* with a big head, the *d* facing backwards, and some instances of pointed *b*'s, especially in the text by the uncle *wdm*. BES15 1004/F (Fig. 6.16(a))[494] another text by *wdm*, shares some typical stylistic features found *ṣʿd*'s texts, see the pointed *b*'s and the *d* facing backwards. The head of the *ġ* is also big, as in *ṣʿd*'s texts, although it is curved instead of pointed.

SESP.D 16/F,[495] by his uncle *s¹ḫr*, is incised on another face of the same large boulder where the texts by the two brothers and the nephew of *ṣʿd* were found.[496] *s¹ḫr* also wrote Mr.A 6/F, associated to the image of a horseman and another equid, both animals bodies are skilfully decorated.[497] At the same site, a text by another uncle, *mġyr*, is attested, Mr.A 10/F = C 4407/F,[498] which runs boustrophedon downwards and then

---

ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ son of Wdm son of S¹r son of Ṣbḥ son of {Qs²m} son of S¹by son of ʿbd son of Hngs² son of Whbn son of Qmr son of {Rṭʾ} son of ʿwḏ and he grieved for his grandfather'; SESP.D 6/F *l wdm bn ʿḏ bn ʿ{ḏ} bn ġṯ bn wdm bn s¹r bn ṣbḥ bn qs²m bn s¹by bn ʿbd bn hngs² bn whbn bn qmr bn rṭʾ bn ʿwḏ* 'By Wdm son of ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ son of Wdm son of S¹r son of Ṣbḥ son of Qs²m son of S¹by son of ʿbd son of Hngs² son of Whbn son of Qmr son of Rṭʾ son of ʿwḏ' (readings: OCIANA).

[494] It reads: *l wdm bn ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bn ġṯ bn wdm bn s¹r* 'By Wdm son of ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ son of Wdm son of S¹r'.

[495] *l s¹ḫr bn ʿ{ḏ} bn ʿḏ bn ġṯ bn wdm bn s¹r bn ṣbḥ bn qs²m w ḥll h-dr* 'By S¹ḫr son of ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ son of Wdm son of S¹r son of Ṣbḥ son of Qs²m and he camped here' (reading: OCIANA).

[496] See the OCIANA commentary to SESP.D 1/F. On this same face, there is also a text by his second cousin *ḫr*: SESP.D 19/F *l ḫr bn mġyr bn s¹r bn ġṯ bn wdm bn s¹r bn ṣbḥ bn qs²m bn s¹by bn ʿbd bn hngs² bn whbn bn whbl bn qmr* 'By Ḫr son of Mġyr son of S¹r son of Ġṯ son of Wdm son of S¹r son of Ṣbḥ son of Qs²m son of S¹by son of ʿbd son of Hngs² son of Whbn son of Whbl son of Qmr' (reading: OCIANA).

[497] The text reads: *l s¹ḫr bn ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bn ġṯ w s²ry m-ʿ{ḏ} bn ʾḫ{-h} h-dmyt w ʿ{w}r l-ḏ {y}ʿ{w}r* 'By S¹ḫr son of ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ and he bought the image [sic!] from ʿḏ, the son of his brother and may whosoever would efface be blinded'. *ʿḏ* would be the brother of *ṣʿd*, two texts by him are known, unfortunately only from tracings, C 1278/F and AWS 352/F. They are not associated to any drawing.

[498] *l mġyr bn ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bn ġṯ bn {w}dm bn s¹r bn ṣbḥ w ḫrṣ ʾḫw-h f h lt s¹lm l-ḏ ḫrṣ w ʿwr ḏ yʿwr*. 'By Mġyr son of ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ son of Wdm son of S¹r son of Ṣbḥ and he was on the look out for his brothers. So, O Lt [grant] security to whoever keeps watch and blindness to whoever scratches out the inscription' I follow the OCIANA reading, except for *wdm*, which was read as *{ḫ}dm* in OCIANA.

curves vertically upwards. It is highly compressed and features pointed *b*'s, but, unlike *ṣʿd*'s texts, the *ġ* has a small head.

Is.H 516/F (Fig.6.16(b)), a small text by *ṣʿd*'s grandfather *ʿḏ*, is incised in a style similar to *ṣʿd*'s – cf. the pointed *b*'s, the *ġ* with a big pointed head, and the *d* facing backwards – between the graphs of a bigger text (Is.H 513/C/F). Is.H 513/C/F is clearly older – as Is.H 516/F is incised in between its graphs – and it is by a 10th generation ancestor, *nʿmn*, who is the brother of the great great great great grandfather of *ṣʿd*.[499] There is a clear difference in compression, the text being several generations older, and the graph forms seem to belong to the transitional script (see §4.1.3). The text is associated to Is.H 515/C/F, also a transitional text, whose author is most probably by a 8th generation *ḏf*-ite.[500] The text by *ṣʿd*'s grandfather reads that he found the text of his father *ʿḏ*[501] (*ṣʿd*'s great grandfather). It refers to Is.H 514/F, which is also clearly added later and carved with the same writing style as *ṣʿd*'s (i.e. high compression, pointed *b*'s, *ġ* with big head and *d* facing backwards) in between some graphs of the older transitional text. It reads that he found the inscription of *nʿmn*,[502] who is indeed the author of the transitional text Is.H 513/C/F. This cluster of texts by authors from generation 10, 13, and 14 of the *ʿwḏ* lineage, is a good example of the practice of adding texts directly to panels with inscriptions by relatives.

6.3 SoS script authors

6.3.1 *bs¹ʾ bn s¹ʿdlh*

Three texts by this author have been attested: one text was found in the Jebel Qurma region (QUR 813.14.1/SoS,[503] Fig.6.17(a)) and two other texts (HaNSB 306/SoS and HaNSB 379/SoS)[504] were found in a region ca. 25 km away (as the crow flies) from Jebel Qurma and, just like QUR 813, situated along Wādī Rāǧil. In all three texts the

[499]The text reads: Is.H 513/C/F *l nʿmn bn ṣbḥ bn qs²m w wgm ʿl- ḥbb* 'By Nʿmn son of Ṣbḥ son of Qs²m and he grieved for a loved one'.

[500]This text reads: *l s¹wr bn nqm* 'By S¹wr son of Nqm'. Although it indicates only the patronym, it has the same exact graph forms as as the ones found in Is.M 258/C/F, which can be safely located within the lineage tree since its genealogy indicates 4 generations: *l s¹wr bn nqm bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn w wgm ʿl-ḥ----*. For the position of this author in the *ḏf* lineage-tree, see Appendix A, Fig. A.8.

[501]Is.H 516/F *l ʿḏ bn ʿḏ bn ġṯ w wgd s¹fr ʾb-h f ngʿ* 'By ʿḏ son of ʿḏ son of Ġṯ and he found the inscription of his father and he grieved in pain' (reading: OCIANA).

[502]Is.H 514/F *l ʿḏ bn ġṯ bn wdm bn s¹r bn ṣbḥ w wgd s¹fr nʿmn f ngʿ* 'By ʿḏ son of Ġṯ son of Wdm son of S¹r son of Ṣbḥ and he found the inscription of Nʿmn and he grieved in pain'. I follow OCIANA apart from the reading of the name of the author, which in the OCIANA omits the *ḏ*.

[503]The text reads: *l bs¹ʾ bn {s¹}{ʿ}dlh {b}{n} {r}{ḏ}{ʾ}----{w} {w}{g}m ʿl-hmnt w ʿl-mlk w ʿl-ʿbṯn f h lt w ds²r ṯʾr m{n-}{ḥ}{w}[l][t]* 'By Bs¹ʾ son of {S¹ʿdlh} {son of Rḏʾ}…{and he grieved} for Hmnt and for Mlk and for ʿbṯn, so, O Lt and Ds²r, may there be revenge from [the Ḥawīlat]'. The last two graphs were completely reconstructed because the stone is very weathered.

[504]HaNSB 306/SoS is a grieving text: *l bs¹ʾ bn s¹ʿdlh b[n] rḏʾ bn bs¹ʾ ḏ ʾl bs¹ʾ w wgm ʿl-hmt* 'By Bs¹ʾ son of S¹ʿdlh son of Rḏḫ son of Bs¹ʾ of the social group of Bs¹ʾ and he grieved for Hmt', while HaNSB 379/SoS is a name-only text: *l bs¹ʾ bn s¹ʿdlh bn rḏʾ* 'By Bs¹ʾ son of S¹ʿdlh son of Rḏʾ'. Excluding the papponym of the first text, which I read as *rḏʾ* instead of *rḏḫ*, I here follow the readings and translations of OCIANA.

(a) QUR 813.14.1/SoS

(b) HaNSB 306/SoS

Figure 6.17: Inscriptions by Bs[1ʾ] son of S[1ʿ]dlh

genealogies reach the papponym. In HaNSB 306/SoS, the genealogy goes even one generation further, and the author affiliates to the social group of Bs[1ʾ]. As shown in Fig. 6.17(a), the Jebel Qurma text is neatly chiselled with a fine instrument on a small limestone slab. The two HaNSB texts are unfortunately known only from drawings, but one can still recognize certain features which seem to be shared among all three texts:

- The use of a form of the ʾ with a very short stem next to a graph with the usual form of ʾ within the same text;
- The *d* with a big loop, which in QUR 813.14.1/SoS and HaNSB 379/SoS is also squarish;
- The *r* is a deep curve, as the *b*, but proportionally smaller.

In addition, in the two less weathered examples of *r*'s in QUR 813.14.1/SoS (the ones in the words *ds[2]r* and *ṯʾr*), it seems that two small vertical hooks protrude from both ends,[505] while in the drawing of HaNSB 306/SoS (Fig. 6.17(b)), its form seems slightly more pointed and a vertical hook protrudes only from the upper arm. Further distinctive features are attested in QUR 813.14.1/SoS, which presents the graphs *k* and *s[2]* (not attested in the other two texts): the *k* has the curly variant, identical to a Hismaic *ġ*, while the *s[2]* presents a peculiar form of the typical SoS 'S'-shape of the *s[2]*, the upper curve being slightly squarish and with a wavy back.

QUR 813.14.1/SoS exhibits also a peculiar layout, which is found in the text by *bs[1ʾ]*'s grandfather as well (see below): it curves along the panel borders and then turns towards the inside of the panel continuing boustrophedon. In the middle of the panel, there is the geometric symbol of seven parallel lines joined together by another line to their side.

[505]Note that this form is clearly distinct from the typical 'fine' form of the *r*, also with vertical hooks, since the curve is deep, while in the 'fine' script it is always shallow.

(a) QUR 370.130.1/SoS

(b) QUR 370.231.1/SoS

Figure 6.18: Inscriptions by Ḏr son of ʾnʿm

6.3.2 *ḏr bn ʾnʿm*

Three texts by *ḏr* – QUR 370.16.1/SoS,[506] 370.130.1/SoS[507] and 370.231.1/SoS[508] – were found in the same site, the genealogy of the latter two extending until the papponym. The texts are all rather tiny, with graphs on average 2 cm high. The *n* is always a dot and, in the word *bn* 'son of', placed inside the preceding *b*.[509]

Despite such similarities, there is also a discrete amount of variation from a text to the other. In QUR 370.16.1/SoS, the *b* and the *r* are two straight lines with perpendicular arms, but the *b* is distinguished by size, being much smaller. In QUR 370.130.1/SoS and QUR 370.231.1/SoS, however, they are both curved and very close in form. The *ḏ* takes a different form in each text: in QUR 370.16.1/SoS it has a perpendicular hook at the end of the tail, in QUR 370.231.1/C the tail curves to form a hook, while in QUR 370.130.1/C it has no hook. In QUR 370.130.1/SoS, the s^2 is composed of three waves with the central wave rather small and the lowest being the biggest, but in QUR 370.231.1/SoS the three waves have more or less the same size, and two further curls are attached to the upper and lower ones.

QUR 370.16.1/SoS is a signature to a group of hammered and incised figures covering the whole panel: four she-camels – one of which led by an incised anthropomorph whose body is filled in with stripes –, two equids with roughly hammered bodies and incised spears, and a quadruped. QUR 370.130.1/SoS (Fig.6.18(a)) runs next to the stylized image of an incised anthropomorph holding a spear: similarly to the antropomorph in QUR 370.16.1/SoS, also in this image the body is filled with stripes.

[506] *l ḏr bn ʾnʿm h-dmyt* 'By Ḏr son of ʾnʿm is the image'.

[507] *l ḏr bn {ʾ}nʿm bn {ḏ}ʾb bn m{s²}ʿ{r}* ---- 'By Ḏr son of {ʾnʿm} son of {Ḏʾb} son of {Ms²ʿr}…'.

[508] *l {ḏ}r bn ʾnʿm bn ḏʾb bn ms²ʿr bn* ---- 'By {Ḏr} son of ʾnʿm son of Ḏʾb son of Ms²ʿr son of…'.

[509] This practice is perhaps comparable to the joining of *b* and *n* to form a single graphic sign in texts where the *n* is a short line (see §5.3).

(a) QUR 639.3.1/SoS

(b) QUR 639.8.1/SoS

Figure 6.19: Inscriptions by Ġyr son of Mġyr

6.3.3 *ġyr bn mġyr*

As *ḏr bn ʾnʿm* above, also *ġyr*, of the social group of *ʾkt*, left three texts at the same site: QUR 639.3.1/SoS,[510] 639.7.1/SoS,[511] and 639.8.1/SoS[512]. The genealogies of all three extend until the papponym, although in one (QUR 639.7.1/SoS) only the first graph of the papponym is legible. These three texts present shared graph forms, but also a lot of variation from text to text, and, in some cases, even within the same text. In all of *ġyr*'s texts the *n* is a dot[513] and in both QUR 639.3.1/SoS and 639.7.1/SoS, where the *k* is present, it takes the usual SoS script fork form, and the two arms are very close to each other and both slightly curving downwards. In QUR 639.3.1/SoS, the only text attesting a *ḏ*, its tail is not hooked, but joined to the side of the fork rather than centrally.

Some variation is attested in the forms of *b* and *r* and the way these are distinguished, both within the same texts and from text to text. In QUR 639.3.1/SoS, the *r*'s are small curves very close in form to the *b*, but the first two instances can be distinguished because the arms are slightly curved and the back is more straight. QUR 639.8.1/SoS (Fig.6.19(b)), on the other hand, attests forms of the *r* which are similar to the ones found in QUR 639.3.1/SoS (Fig. 6.19(a)). However, in this case the first two *r*'s are deep curves indistinguishable from the *b*, but in the third *r* a vertical hook protrudes from the arm, clearly disambiguating its graphematic value.

The *ġ* exhibits most variant forms. In QUR 639.3.1/SoS (Fig.6.19(a)), the *ġ* of the first name is a slanted line with a curve facing upwards attached to its top, but its allograph immediately later takes the rather different form of two joined curves. In QUR 639.7.1/SoS, which has been heavily effaced, one can still see that the first *ġ* is a short line with a curve facing in the text direction attached to its top. Finally, in QUR

[510] *l ġyr bn mġyr bn ḫ{r}ṯn {ḏ} ʾl ʾ{k}t w dmyt* 'By Ġyr son of Mġyr son of {Ḫrṯn} {of the people of} {ʾkt} and [the] image [is his]'.

[511] *l {ġ}{y}{r} {b}{n} {m}{ġ}{y}{r} {b}{n} {ḫ}—kt {w} d{m}{y}{t}* 'By {Ġyr} {son of} {Mġyr} {son of}…{and} [the] image [is his]'.

[512] *l ġyr bn mġyr bn ḫrṯn {.}* 'By Ġyr son of Mġyr son of Ḫrṯn'.

[513] Note that in QUR 639.3.1/SoS the dotted *n* is placed inside the preceding *b* of *bn*.

Figure 6.20: Inscription by Bs¹ʾ's grandfather (QUR 952.83.1/SoS)

630.8.1/SoS, the *ġ*'s take yet different forms: the first is a short vertical line with two waves on top, while the second is a long line with three waves on top.

All three texts are embedded in panels with stylistically similar drawings of roughly hammered camel figures, their body parts being depicted in a highly stylized manner (cf. the examples in Fig. 6.19).

6.3.4 Family members

6.3.4.1 *bs¹ʾ bn s¹ʿdlh*'s grandfather

A text by *rḍʾ bn bs¹ʾ* (Fig.6.20), most probably *bs¹ʾ*'s grandfather, was attested in the Jebel Qurma region in a site not far from the one of *bs¹ʾ*, it reads: QUR 952.83.1/SoS *l rḍʾ bn bs¹ʾ ḏ ʾl bs¹ʾ w wgm ʿl-bgt w ʿl-bs¹ʾ w ʿl-s¹rdt w ʿl-ʾrt* 'By Rḍʾ son of Bs¹ʾ of the social group of Bs¹ʾ and he grieved for Bgt and for Bs¹ʾ and for S¹rdt and for ʾrt'. While the genealogy of this text stops at the patronym, the author affiliates to the same social group as the one indicated in one of *bs¹ʾ*'s texts (HaNS 306/SoS). The writing style of this author presents some striking similarities to *bs¹ʾ*'s texts:

- One instance of ʾ – the one of the patronym – has a very short stem, unlike the others, and in two instances, the stem is slightly curving;
- The *r*'s are generally small curves and the *r* of *ʾrt* has also a small vertical hook protruding from the upper arm, as attested in HaNSB 306/SoS by *bs¹ʾ*;
- The inscription runs in a similar fashion as the Jebel Qurma text by *bs¹ʾ*: it curves along the panel borders and then descends boustrophedon towards the center of the panel.

6.3.4.2 *ḏr bn ʾnʿm*'s cousin

The genealogy of QUR 613.20.1/SoS (*l ʾs¹d bn s²b bn ḏʾb bn {m}{s²}ʿr* 'By ʾs¹d son of S²b son of Ḏʾb son of {Ms²ʿr}') suggests that it may be a text by *ḏr*'s cousin. This possible relationship is substantiated by two shared features. First, as in the texts by *ḏr*, in

this text the *n* is a dot. Second, similarly to two texts by *dr* (QUR 370.130.1/SoS and 370.231.1/SoS), the *b* and the *r* are both small curves, although in this text the *r* is slightly bigger.

Chapter 7

Effacement and Modification of Texts

More than one fifth of the inscriptions of the JQC were intentionally damaged one way or another.[514] The most common is effacement, a disruptive practice which consists of hammering or incising marks over carvings and which is also documented in the texts: curses against whosoever would efface (*ʿwr*) the inscription/carvings are well attested in Safaitic and also occur in the inscriptions of the JQC.[515]

The most frequent curse is the homographic formula *h* DN *ʿwr m* [i.e. 'whosoever would'] *ʿwr*, usually translated as 'O DN, blind whosoever would efface'. The verb *ʿwr*, likely in the D-stem, is thus invoked as retribution against the person who would *ʿwr* the text. The G-stem of the root in Classical Arabic means 'to become blind of one eye'.[516] Al-Jallad and Jaworska argued that the Safaitic verb 'would seem to denote general blindness, as the same verb is used for the effacing of an inscription, creating the juxtaposition 'if the inscription cannot be read (because it was effaced) then let the one who has effaced it lose the ability to read (i.e. implying blindness in both eyes)".[517] While this interpretation is certainly plausible, one should note that effaced inscriptions are often still perfectly legible (see below). Thus, *ʿwr* may have also had a more generic meaning of 'blind (either one or both eyes)'. Al-Manaser, Al-Jouharah, et al. (2019), on the other hand, proposed the translation 'to harm' on the basis of the uses of this verb in some modern Arabic dialects.[518] Whatever the actual meaning of this verb in Safaitic, the curse seems to wish for the potential effacer a punishment which is comparable to the damage inflicted upon the text.

Another type of damage is the modification of texts through the addition of bars or other graphic elements which alter the graphematic value of graphs or make them illegible. It is probable that for the authors of Safaitic inscriptions this form of vandalisation

[514] On the practice of effacing images, see Brusgaard 2019:119–121.
[515] See the examples in §1.2.2.10.
[516] Cf. *ʿawira* 'He was, or became, blind of one eye' (Lane 1863–1893:2193b).
[517] Al-Jallad and Jaworska 2019:56.
[518] Al-Manaser, Al-Jouharah, et al. 2019:260–261; see also Al-Manaser and Al-Turki 2020:114.

Figure 7.1: Example of effaced and modified text (QUR 2.363.3/C)

was considered as part of the category of effacement (*ʿwr*). However, since modifications represent a distinctive way of tampering with the text, they are here described separately. These two types of damage can also occur together in the same inscription. An example of this is QUR 2.363.3/C = WH 3928 (Fig. 7.1) *{l} {{ʾ}}{ʾ}{{b}} {b}{n} {n}{g}{y}* '{By} {ʾʾb} {son of} {Ngy}'. In addition to traces of destructive hammering occurring throughout the whole text, two bars close the forks of the first *ʾ*, making it look like a *ṯ*, while a horizontal line has been added to the middle of the first *b*, turning it into a *ḥ*.[519]

Lastly, a much rarer type of intentional damage is the superimposition of one or multiple carvings with another carving.

7.1 Effacement

There is a lot of variation in the types and extent of effacement. Inscriptions were partly or fully effaced by either direct hammering over the graphs in various ways or by incising several lines over them, or, in some cases, a combination of both techniques.

[519] WH read this text as *l ṣʾb bn nn ....*, while in OCIANA it is read as *l {{ṣ}}{ʾ}{r} b{n} {n}{g}{y}* (`http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/ociana/corpus/pages/OCIANA_0014901.html`, accessed on 30 April 2020). However, the first graph of the name of the author was probably originally a *ʾ* rather than an *ṣ*: the two forks of the graph were closed by similar straight bars which have probably been added at the same time later. OCIANA proposes to read the first *b* as an *r* since it looks different from the following *b*. However, the following *b* has been partly effaced and it is thus difficult to be sure about its actual form. Moreover, the curve of the *b* which would supposedly represent an *r* is rather deep and hence more proximate to a *b*. A further argument in support of such a reading is that, unlike the proposals by WH and OCIANA, it yields an already attested sequence of name and patronym. The sequence '*ʾʾb bn ngy*' occurs five other times in the context of genealogies: QUR 64.117.2/C (*mrr bn ʾʾb bn ngy*), QUR 186.18.1/C (*ʿ{z}hm {b}n mrr bn ʾʾb bn ngy bn ʾṯḥ{f}*), CEDS 312/C (*bnʾhrb bn ʿbdy bn mrr bn ʾʾb bn ngy*), KRS 2412/C (*mrr bn ʾʾb bn ngy bn ʾtfḥ bn ṣyd bn ʾs¹d bn ʿḏr*), WH 2873/C (*mrr bn ʾʾb bn ngy*).

Fig.7.2(a) shows a panel in which most texts have been effaced and made illegible, although one can still recognize many of the graphs. Fig. 7.2(b) by contrast is an example of a text which has been fully scratched over, but which is still perfectly legible, it reads: QUR 148.21.3/C *l {ẓ}{k}{r} {b}{n} {ʿ}{m}{r}* 'By {Zkr} {son of} {ʿmr}'. It is associated to the image of a camel, which has not been effaced. Effacement of figures appears to have been much rarer than the effacement of texts, and, where both text and image are present, it is often the case that only the text is effaced.[520] In QUR 2.428.1/C (Fig. 7.2(c)) *{l} ---- [b][n] {ḏ}{k}{r} h-gml* '{By}… [son of] {Ḏkr} is the camel', both genealogy of the author and head of the camel have been heavily effaced, while the caption of the text and the rest of the camel body present only hammering marks, but are otherwise intact. Brusgaard noted that it is rare to find an entirely effaced animal figure; in most cases, only specific body parts are targeted, with the head being the most frequent one.[521] In QUR 64.81.1/C *l s¹ḫr bn ʾbd {w} {t}{ẓ}r nb{ṭ}* 'By S¹ḫr son of ʾbd {and he lay in wait} for the {Nabataeans}', we find a less common situation, i.e. the name and patronym were not effaced, while the narrative part of the inscription has been scratched out, even though it is still legible.

It is important to stress that in many cases effaced inscriptions are still legible. This is in a way also paralleled by the way rock art is effaced, since usually only some parts of the drawings are damaged, as seen above. Thus, the purpose of effacement was not always necessarily to fully erase carvings, but rather to ruin them in different ways. Erasures of texts by hammering over the whole written area as to obscure them completely – as it happened to the text in Fig. 7.2(d), where one can barely recognize part of a *m* – are relatively rare.

For this reason, I would also tend to consider cases in which a line crosses the inscription only slightly altering its legibility as a type of vandalisation rather than ligaturing (see §7.2 below).

7.1.1 Corrective effacement

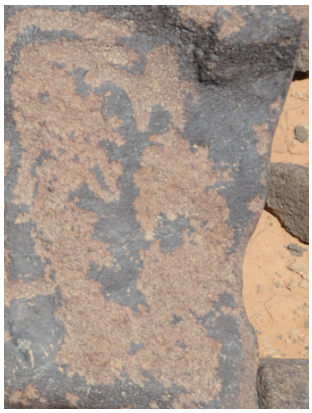
In some cases, one can evince that effacement was probably done by the authors themselves in order to correct or erase their own inscriptions partly or fully. For example, in QUR 171.112.1/C (Fig. 7.2(e)), the text curves upwards abruptly after the ʿ of the patronym, running above an effaced area which is likely to represent a mistake which was erased by the author himself, while in QUR 913.2.1/C *l tmn bn [[b]][[n]] fhrn* 'By Tmn son of Fhrn' (Fig. 7.2(f)), which exhibits dittography of *bn* 'son of', the second *bn* has been lightly scratched out, probably by the author himself, who realized his mistake after carving the text. Another example is QUR 2.434.1/C (see Fig.5.1(a) in Chapter 5), where before the beginning of the inscription there seems to be an attempt by the author at carving the *lām auctoris* and the first two graphs of his name ({*n*} and *{ẓ}*). These graphs have been erased, and the inscription starts again on the same line next to it. Then a partial cartouche has been drawn at the beginning of the newly carved

[520] See Brusgaard 2019:120–121.
[521] Brusgaard 2019:119.

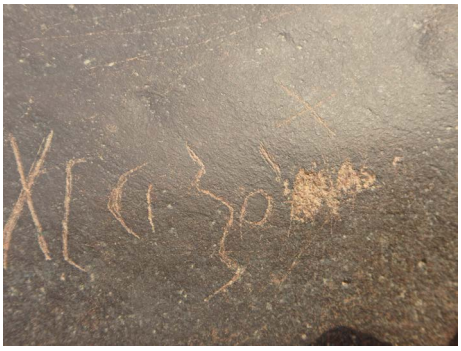
(a) Panel with effaced texts (QUR 2.399)

(b) Fully scratched over but still legible text (QUR 148.21.3/C)

(c) Effaced name and camel head (QUR 2.428.1/C)



(d) Completely erased text (QUR 294.55.4/C)



(e) Detail of corrected text part in QUR 171.112.1/C

(f) Text with scratched out dittography of *bn* ‘son of’ (QUR 913.2.1/C)

Figure 7.2: Examples of effacement

text which leaves the effaced part out in order to avoid ambiguity as to where the text starts. Cases such as this suggest that a portion of the effacement found in the JQC may have been done by the authors themselves who perhaps were not satisfied with the result.

7.2 Modification

Many texts are affected by modifications of various sorts, which for the Safaitic authors were probably part of the category of effacement (*ʿwr*). A typical type of modification was closing the prongs of *h*, *ʾ*, and *ṣ* by adding a bar or by filling them in, which turned the first into a *y* and the other two into a *ṯ*. Another widespread way of altering graphs was the addition of horizontal bars across their middle, by means of which one could for example turn a *b* or a *s*[1] into a *ḥ*, and a *g* into a *w*. These are just some examples as many other types of modification are attested. Texts that went through such modifications are often very challenging to read, because one cannot always distinguish modified parts from the original strokes of the graphs. However, as we shall see in some of the examples below, in the fortunate cases in which one of the possible readings corresponds to already attested authors, one can provide a more plausible interpretation. Occasionally, this can also be corroborated by similarities in writing style, as for example in the case of the modified text QUR 2.493.3/C = WH 3915, which appears to be by the prolific author *grmt bn nʾlt* (see below).

The panel QUR 2.493/C (Fig. 7.3(a)) provides a good sample of modifications, as it is covered by heavily altered inscriptions. Excluding the second text from the top (QUR 2.493.2/C), which was effaced,[522] all others have been damaged by adding marks which change the graphematic value of the graphs.

In the first text from top, QUR 2.493.1/C = WH 3913 *l ʿmr {{b}}n {{g}}rm w nẓr h-s*[1]*my* 'By ʿmr {son of} {Grm} and he awaited the rains',[523] the name is emphasised by being hammered and carved in bigger graphs than the narrative part, which has been incised.[524] The *b* has been turned into a *s*[1] by attaching a bar to its back, and the *g* into a *w* through the addition of a horizontal line.

The third inscription (QUR 2.493.3/C = WH 3915) has been interpreted by previous editors as a text by a female author,[525] but I would suggest that it rather provides another interesting example of modified text. The *g* has been turned into a *w* through a horizontal bar and another bar crosses the *n* of *bn* – hence the interpretation of *bn* 'son of' as *bnt* 'daughter of' rejected here – and it joins it to the following *n* of the patronym *nʾlt*, whose *ʾ* has been turned into a *ṣ* by filling in its upper fork. Moreover,

[522]It reads: QUR 2.493.2/C = WH 3916.1 *l {ṣ}{b}{ḥ} {b}{n} {s*[1]*}{l}m* 'By {Ṣbḥ} {son of} {S[1]lm}', as also interpreted by OCIANA; this text was not read by WH. Note that two other texts with this same name and patronym were found on the same site (QUR 2.362.1/C and 2.542.4/C) and they have both been effaced as well.

[523]Both WH and OCIANA read the patronym as *wrm*, while WH does not read the statement (see OCIANA).

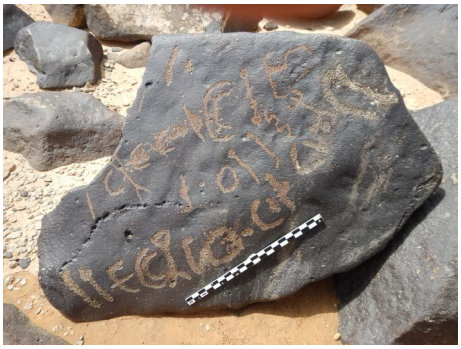
[524]On this phenomenon, see §5.2.

[525]WH reading: *l wrmt bnt nʾrt*; OCIANA reading: *l wrmt bnt t{{ʾ}}rt*.

(a) QUR 2.493/C

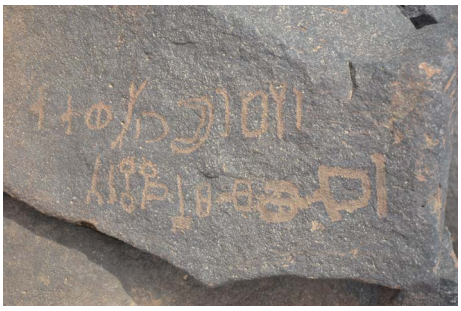
(b) QUR 2.514.1/C = WH 3912

(c) QUR 28.18.1/C



(d) QUR 628.2

(e) QUR 372.27.1/C



(f) QUR 2.192.4/C (first text from bottom)

Figure 7.3: Examples of modification

the graph of the patronym is here read as an *l* rather than as a *r* – which may or may not have been modified through the addition of a further hook – since this way we can read the inscription as another text by *grmt bn nʾlt*. Six other texts with this name and patronym and sharing a similar writing style are found in the JQC.[526] Thus, following this reconstruction the text would read: QUR 2.493.3/C = WH 3915 *l {{g}}rmt b{{n}} {{n}}{{ʾ}}{{l}}t* 'By {Grmt} {son of} {Nʾlt}'.

The last text of the panel is QUR 2.493.3/C = WH 3916 *l {{s¹}}{{r}}{{y}} {{b}}{n} {{ḥ}}b{q} {b}{{n}} {w/g}{d}* 'By {S¹ry} {son of} {Ḥbq} {son of} {W/g}{d}'.[527] The *lām auctoris* has been partly hammered at the bottom, the *s¹* has been turned into a *ḥ*, the *r* and the *y* into a *ṯ*. The *b* of the first *bn* has been turned into a *s¹* and joined through two bars to the following *n* which was effaced by a crossing line joining it to the following *ḥ*. The upper arm of the *ḥ* has been joined through a bar to the crossing line, which has in turn been joined to the following *b*, while the *q* has been effaced through hammering. A short bar crosses the *b* of the second *bn* 'son of', while another one crosses the following *n*, turning it into a *t*. Finally, the papponym *{w/g}{d}* seems to have been only effaced, although it is possible that the *w* represents a altered *g* and that the papponym should be read as *{{g}}{d}* instead. In any case, texts by a 'S¹ry son of Ḥbq' are found 9 other times in the JQC, most of which are associated to drawings. One of such texts is QUR 2.514.1/C = WH 3912 (Fig. 7.3(b)), which is discussed below.[528]

As seen in §5.3, in many cases it is difficult to determine if ligatures – i.e. dots or bars joining graphs together – were actually made by the author himself or by someone who altered the text later. For example, one of the modifications to one of the texts discussed above (QUR 2.493.3/C = WH 3915) consists of a bar crossing the *n* of *bn* to the following *n* of the patronym, hence joining the two graphs together. Because in both types of phenomena the addition of lines or dots is involved, and since they were often clearly carved after the text had been finished and mostly in a less elaborate technique, it is often challenging to reconstruct what really happened to the text. Although QUR 2.514.1/C = WH 3912 (Fig. 7.3(b)) was taken by Macdonald as an example of ligatured text of the type with a straight line going through it,[529] the roughly hammered lines

[526]These are: QUR 64.73.1/C, 148.16.1/C, 186.33.4/C, 360.37.1/C, 449.78.1/C, 965.53.1/C. Concerning the form of the *l* with two hooks, it should be noted that in all inscriptions with this name and patronym the *l*'s are hooked, and in one of them (QUR 186.33.4/C) the *l* of the patronym has two hooks, as in the inscription discussed here. Since this graph form is rarely attested in Safaitic, and since that text has no apparent modifications, this graph does not need to have been tampered with.

[527]WH reads *l ḥrṯ bn ḥbq bn gl*, while OCIANA reads *l ḥ{{l}}{{y}} {{b}}{{n}} {{ḥ}}b{q} b{{n}} {g}{y}*.

[528]The remaining 8 texts are: QUR 2.248.1/C, 2.547.1/C, 148.50.1/C, 370.107.1/C, 372.47.1/C, 372.134.4/C, 683.35.1/C, 956.75.1/C.

[529]See Macdonald 1989: 66-67. His interpretation, which partly differs from the one of the present study (see below), is also followed in the OCIANA, and it reads: *l {{ʿ}}{{s¹}}{{l}}{{y}} b{{n}} {{n}}{{n}} {{b}}{{n}} {{n}}{{b}}{{q}} h-s¹{{ḥ}}{{l}}{{y}} {{w}} {{h-}} {{n}}{{q}}tn* 'By {ʿs¹ly} {son of} {Nn} {son of} {Nbq} the {S¹ḥlite} {and} {these} {two} {she-camels}'. As noted by both Macdonald and Clark 1979: 169, in WH this inscription is wrongly edited as two separate texts. Although not visible in Fig. 7.3(b), there is a further she-camel next to the left one, and it is therefore possible, as noted by Macdonald 1989: 66, that the short line on top of the tail of the right camel should be read as a *n*, and that the last word

which cross the text may equally be interpreted as a form of disruption, as they hinder the legibility of the inscription, especially of the author's genealogy. Moreover, the rock art has been partly effaced as well – see especially the head of the camel and the feet of the female ass – suggesting that the whole carving has been vandalised through hammering.

Another example of text with a straight crossing line is QUR 28.18.1/C[530] (Fig. 7.3(c)), where beside the hammered line running throughout the whole text, two graphs have been tampered with. The *{{y}}* of the patronym has been turned into a *ṣ* through the addition of a slanted bar to the shaft,[531] and the fork of the *{{h-}}* has been closed by a bar. The latter type of additions of lines has been interpreted by Macdonald as a phenomenon possibly related to ligaturing as well, although he remarks that such additions 'constitute a discreet form of vandalism'.[532] Indeed, since they ultimately alter the graphematic value of graphs, they can also be interpreted as having a malicious rather than a decorative purpose.[533]

There are also examples of lines crossing only parts of the text. These are also more likely to represent effacement rather than ligatures, as for example QUR 628.2.1/C (the top text in Fig. 7.3(d)), where the name and patronym of the author have been effaced by several hammering marks, some of which are horizontal bars: see the thick line inside the s^1, the short bar crossing the ʿ and the bar joining the *r* of the patronym to the following *b*, in this context most likely disruptive rather than decorative. Moreover, in the papponym *{{t}}*s^2*ry*, the *{{t}}* has been turned into a *ḏ*, curiously transforming it into the divine name *ḏ*s^2*ry*,[534] while the *b* and *n* following the papponym have been merged as to form a circle, which makes them look like a *g*. This reconstruction of the original text, supported by the genealogies of other texts,[535] thus reads: *l b{ʾ}{*s^1*}*

should be read as the dual *nqtn*. My interpretation of the text partly differs from Macdonald, as it reads: QUR 2.514.1/C *l {*s^1*}{r}{y} {b}{n} {ḥ}{b}{q} {{h-}}*s^1*{ḥ}{l}{y} w h-nqt{n}* 'By {S^{1}ry} {son of} {Ḥbq} are {the} {s^1*ḥly*} and the two she-camels'. As seen in the discussion of QUR 2.493.4/C above, possibly by the same author, texts by an author with this same name and patronym are found 9 other times in the JQC, most of which like this one are associated to drawings. As to the word s^1*ḥly*, while it is possible that it represents a *nisbah* adjective indicating the social group of the author, as suggested by Macdonald, this same word occurs in two other rock art signatures (AbaNS 703/C and 729/C), both associated to the image of an ass; the word has therefore been interpreted by Ababneh as a noun for ass, also on account of Classical Arabic *miṣḥāl* (see Ababneh 2005:294–295). I would therefore follow Ababneh's interpretation of this word and consider it here as part of the caption, perhaps as referring to one of the two asses depicted in the associated drawing, possibly the male one on top, as the other two images associated to this word in AbaNS appear to represent male asses, although they are only known from copies.

[530]The text reads: *l ġ{r}{t} bn ḫf{{y}} {{h-}}{n}f{*s^1*}{t}* 'By/for {Ġrt} son of {Ḫfy} is {this} {funerary monument}'.

[531]Note also that *ḫfṣ* is so far unattested as a PN in Safaitic, while *ḫfy* is not only well attested, but also in the context of the same genealogy *ġrt bn ḫfy* (QUR 147.20.6/C, 207.37.3/C).

[532]See Macdonald 1989:65; see also King 1990a:2.E on this phenomenon in Hismaic.

[533]One may also point out that below this text on this panel there is another incised inscription (QUR 28.18.2/C) which has been fully effaced through scratching and hammering. Thus, both texts on the panel may have been vandalised using different techniques.

[534]The form of the name of this deity with the final *y* is only rarely found in Safaitic, but never in the JQC; see C.2 for a list of the divine names found in the JQC.

[535]Cf. QUR 965.48.1/C *l bʾ*s^1 *bn dmṯr bn {t}*s^2*ry*; QUR 802.7.2/C *l bʾ*s^1 *bn dmṯr*; QUR 956.64.1/C *l bʾ*s^1 *bn*

b{n} dmṯr bn {{t}}s²ry {{b}}{{n}} ʿd 'By {Bʾs¹} {son of} Dmṯr son of {Ts²ry} {son of} ʿd'.

In QUR 372.27.1/C *l n{{g}}{{ʾ}} {{b}}{{n}} qld* (Fig. 7.3(e)), the arms of the *b* of *bn* have been joined to the *n* through the addition of short bars, a well attested phenomenon which is not necessarily malicious (see §5.3). The *g*, however, has been turned into a *q* by adding two lines, and the *ʾ* into a *ṣ* by closing one fork through a bar. These additions are more likely to have been made by a vandaliser. Indeed, the joining of *bn* and the alteration of the other graphs may be the result of two different hands, the author's and the vandaliser's respectively, but unfortunately we have no way to assess the 'relative chronology' and paternity of such additions.

QUR 2.192.4/C = WH 3923 (Fig. 7.3(f)), another text from Jebel Qurma discussed in Macdonald (1989) as an instance of ligaturing, may be an example of a text with two different layers of additions, i.e. both ligaturing and later modifications. It says: *l {{b}}{{d}}{{ḥ}} w {{ʿ}}w{{ḏ}} b-{{h-}}{{ʾ}}lh* 'By {Bdḥ} and he {sought refuge} {in the god}'.[536] The name of the author is distinguished by thicker chiselling and is stylistically similar to the other texts by the same author.[537] Some ligatures have been added to the text: the arms of the *b* of the name have been extended to join the following *d*, whose half circle is in turn joined to the crossing line of the following *ḥ*. Some hammering joins the *w* to the following *{{ʿ}}* in a way which makes the *{{ʿ}}* readable only contextually, although it does serve the purpose of joining the two graphs together. Finally, the arms of the second *b* have been joined to the following *{{h}}*. Such ligatures may be interpreted as decorative. However, there are other hammered marks which did not necessarily have an aesthetic function and rather compromise its legibility: 1) some dots were engraved inside the *ḥ* and some hammering closes its lower arm joining it to the crossing line; 2) the fork of the *{{ḏ}}* has been completely filled in; 3) the *{{h}}* has been turned into a *y* by closing its fork; 4) the *{{ʾ}}* was turned into a *ṯ*.

7.3 Superimposition

Finally, Fig. 7.4 shows two examples of the rarest form of vandalisation: superimposition. In most cases, the superimposing carving is hammered, while the superimposed one is incised.

In Fig. 7.4(a) one can see a direct hammered 'common' script text (QUR 2.353.7/C) superimposing two incised inscriptions in the 'fine' script (QUR 2.353.8/F and 2.353.9/F).[538]

In Fig. 7.4(b), the direct hammered inscription – QUR 202.7.1/C *l ḏbʿ bn ʿzz w bkrt*

dmṯr.

[536] I here follow the translation by Macdonald 1989:66, n.12.

[537] Most remarkably, the *lām auctoris* has a small hook, the *b* is square, and the loop of the *d* is small and made of a chisel blow (see the discussion of the writing style of this author in §6.1.6).

[538] This panel also clearly shows that while the 'fine' script started to be written later than the 'common' script, as the former developed from the latter, this does not need to imply that all 'common' texts are necessarily earlier than the 'fine' ones (see §1.1.4).

(a) QUR 2.353

(b) QUR 202.7

Figure 7.4: Examples of superimposition

‘By Ḍbʿ son of ʿzz and [his is the drawing of the] young she-camel’ – is carved over an incised text (QUR 202.7.2/C), which is likely the original signature of the drawing.[539] Thus, the author of the superimposed text may have claimed a drawing which he did not originally produce.

[539] I could reconstruct the following: QUR 202.7.2/C *l ḫ{b}{ʾ} {b}n {ḫ}l{ʾ}{l} {h-}*---- ‘By {Ḫbʾ} {son of} {Ḫlʾl} is {the}...’.

Chapter 8

Final Remarks

This thesis has dealt with different aspects of the materiality of Safaitic, with a special focus on the mechanisms of graphic variation in the Safaitic script. I hope to have shown that this variation is much less idiosyncratic and spontaneous than previously thought, since it is possible to identify different levels and patterns of graphetic variation and, in the case of the 'fine' script, even to trace its palaeographic development across generations. This study differs from previous approaches to the palaeography of Safaitic in that it does not consider palaeography as merely an auxiliary discipline. Rather, the study of the materiality of the Safaitic script is approached as worth being pursued for its own sake.

In this final discussion, I will address three further issues which I did not get the chance to discuss in detail in the course of this study: 1) evidence for Safaitic 'graph classes' (according to Meletis' 2020 definition); 2) the possible pressures for the development and graphetic features of the 'fine' script; 3) the relation of the 'fine' and of the SoS script with certain social groups and cultural regions.

8.1 Safaitic 'graph classes'

As a unit between the basic shape and the graph, Meletis (2020) proposed the concept of *graph class*, which he uses to refer to a given typeface, style of typeface, or to someone's handwriting, as consistent inventories. Meletis also discussed the contrastive use of different graph classes in the same context, as in the sentence 'I do *not* believe this is true', where, in his own words, 'the main function of the visual feature italics or more generally, the switch to a different inventory, is to indicate a contrast, to conceptually distinguish the word printed in italics from not only the other words in the sentence but also the other paradigmatic possibilities that could have been produced in its slot, mainly the nonitalicized <not>' (Meletis 2020:256).

Thanks to several instances of Safaitic texts in which the authors emphasised part of the text through different strategies, we are able to identify a number of Safaitic 'graph classes', since such examples show that certain features were in paradigmatic relationship to the features of the unmarked section of the text. In Chapter 3, which

investigated the uses of special features – i.e. square, 90°, and elongated graph forms – I have shown examples in which such features were clearly stylistically marked, since they were used to emphasise the name and genealogy of the author.[540] Further common devices to mark parts of the text, discussed in §5.2, are the use of a bigger size and/or thicker lines (usually achieved through a different carving technique), which are employed to emphasise elements in the rock art as well.

The contrastive use of features such as curvilinearity *vs* angularity and incision *vs* hammering show that they can be conceptualised as different Safaitic graph classes according to Meletis' definition. At the same time, there are no doubt some important differences between the examples of typeface writing considered by Meletis and Safaitic texts, where one finds a much higher extent of graphetic variation.

First, it is not possible to consider Safaitic graph classes as rigid inventories which stay more or less the same from text to text. Square graphs in a given script do not always have the same exact forms (as is for example the case of a given typeface), and one often finds different variants, even within the same text.

Second, in Safaitic it is not uncommon to find graph forms which should in principle belong to different graph classes – e.g. curvilinear and angular allographs – in the same text, even if the use of different forms does not seem to have any contrastive function. The only type of graph classes which almost never mix without a contrastive function are technique and size. Usually if different techniques or sizes occur within the same text this is done with the purpose of emphasising part of it. But one often finds texts in which only one or two isolated graphs are square, or turned by 90° to their usual stance, or elongated, while such features do not seem to have a clear contrastive value.

Therefore, I would loosely define Safaitic graph classes as contrastive stylistic features which can be applied in different ways depending on the author's choices.

In §3.2, I have discussed examples of texts where almost all graphs have square forms.[541] Similarly to the use of italics throughout a sentence in typeface writing (cf. Meletis 2020: 256), angularity in those texts clearly does not have any marking function. Thus, the choice to use the square graph class throughout the text likely had purely aesthetic purposes.

As a final note, I would like to mention that sometimes more than one marking feature are combined in the same texts and even within the same graphs, since elongated graphs or graphs turned by 90° are sometimes also square,[542] or special features are used in conjunction with a bigger size/different technique.[543] This combined use of different graph classes may be compared to the employment of different typographic styles – such as *italics* and **bold** – ***in combination***.

[540]It should be noted that in the 'fine' script, where elongation is a consistent feature of the inventory – and the basic shapes of s^1 and *ḥ* are consistently turned by 90° – in the cases in which authors wished to emphasise their name and genealogy, they mainly resorted to bigger and/or square graphs; see, e.g., WH 1673/F (Fig. 3.5(b)).

[541]E.g. Ms 64/SoS (Fig.3.4(a)), AAEK 133/SoS (Fig. 3.4(b)), RMSK 1/F (Fig. 3.5(d)).

[542]E.g. the *b*'s of the genealogy in QUR 186.162.1/C (Fig. 3.2(a)), which are square and turned by 90°.

[543]See, e.g., QUR 12.34.1/C (Fig. 3.3(b)), where the first name of the author is distinguished by finely chiselled and elongated graphs which are also larger than the graphs of the patronym.

8.2 On the development of the ‘fine’ script

As shown in Chapter 4, the ‘fine’ script is the result of a gradual development from the ‘common’ script, which featured the increasing compression of the ‘common’ inventory. Most texts in the ‘fine’ script are incised (§4.1),[544] and it is likely that the distinctive pointed and compressed shapes characterising the ‘fine’ inventory developed through the use of incising rather than hammering, as the latter technique is not ideal for carving graph forms with such features.[545] In light of this, one may argue that an important pressure for the development of the ‘fine’ script was the consistent use of this carving technique at some point. Yet it should be stressed that there is nothing intrinsically ‘fine’ about incising, since this technique is employed in a great number of texts in the ‘common’ script as well. Thus, it is more likely that authors purposefully used incision in order to obtain more pointed and compressed forms rather than incision alone being the trigger of such features.

‘Fine’ texts have on average longer narratives and genealogies than ‘common’ ones, and it appears that *ḏf* authors began to write long genealogies consistently around the same time in which we start to see the palaeographic development from the ‘common’ to the ‘fine’ script’, a practice which was continued and expanded for several generations, with texts showing up to 16 generations-long genealogies (see Appendix A).

It is therefore possible that the development of compressed shapes was motivated by the purpose of allowing increasingly larger amounts of text on the limited writing space provided by basalt rocks.

8.3 The sociocultural contexts of the ‘fine’ and of the SoS script

An interesting aspect which has not been explored in depth in this study is the relationship of the ‘fine’ and of the SoS script with certain social groups and cultural regions.

In comparison to the ‘common’ script, the ‘fine’ and the SoS script appear as much more limited and localised phenomena. The territory in which the majority of ‘fine’ texts are found are the northern-most regions of the Syro-Jordanian Ḥarrah east and south-east of the Ḥawrān, while texts in the SoS script are scattered across different regions of the Nabataean cultural area. In addition, ‘fine’ and SoS texts express more often affiliations to social groups than ‘common’ ones, which allows us to identify some correlations between the use of these scripts and certain social groups.

A great number of texts in the ‘fine’ script are by members of the lineage of *ḏf*. The second most common social group associated with the ‘fine’ script is the lineage of *ʿwḏ*,

[544] Although hammered ‘fine’ texts do exist (e.g. HASI 12/F and HASI 13/F), they do not seem to occur very often.

[545] In Chapter 6, we have seen that the incised texts by *qdm* – the grandfather of prolific ‘fine’ script author *mgd bn zd* – are all rather compressed, but there is an hammered text (BES15 886/F) which appears as visibly less compressed, although it still keeps typical ‘fine’ shapes (see §6.2.4.1).

which appears to have been connected to *ḏf* by some sort of relationship (see §B.1).[546] As pointed out above, the vast majority of 'fine' texts are concentrated in the proximity of the Ḥawrān. The connection to this region, in particular its northern part, is also shown by other types of cultural cues, as for example a group of 'fine' texts dated to Herodian rulers,[547] the frequent invocations to the deity *bʿls¹mn* 'Baalshamin' (cf. his temple at Sīʿ in the northern Ḥawrān[548]), and the Safaitic-Greek bilinguals,[549] which further indicate proximity to the Hellenised cultural setting of the northern Ḥawrān.

Concerning the SoS script, there seems to be a relation of this script with several social groups (e.g. *ʿmrt*, *rwḥ*, *bs¹ʾ*, and *ʾkt*[550]) as well as with certain regions of the Nabataean cultural area. Several SoS texts are found in the proximity of the Nabataean centres along and connected by the Wādī Sirḥān stretching from Dūmah[551] up to the southern Ḥawrān. This geographic distribution is also reflected by a number of cultural and sociolinguistic cues, such as inscriptions dated to the regnal years of Rabbel II (see §1.1.4), SoS/Nabataean bilinguals,[552] and the use of expressions which appear to be calques from the Nabataean.[553]

[546]Moreover, it should be noted that among the other groups employing the 'fine' script, some are clearly or potentially sub-groups of *ḏf* (see §A.1.1) or of *ʿwḏ* (see §B.2).

[547]See the examples discussed in §4.2; Macdonald 1995; Macdonald 2014.

[548]On references to Sīʿ in the Safaitic inscriptions, see Macdonald 2003b; cf. also Bennett's 2014 observation that most invocations to this deity seem to be concentrated in northern areas of the Ḥarrah (Bennett 2014:48).

[549]See, e.g., WH 1849/F and WH 1860/Gr (see Macdonald 1993:347), and the bilinguals published in Al-Jallad and Al-Manaser (2016).

[550]For a complete list of the social groups associated with the SoS script in the JQC, see Appendix C.

[551]On the connections of the SoS texts from the Dūmah region with the Nabataeans, see Norris 2018:86–88.

[552]See the bilingual from Dūmah in nothern Saudi Arabia (Norris 2018:86–87) and the bilingual from Bāyir in southern Jordan (Al-Khraysheh 1994).

[553]See, e.g., AAEK 133/SoS *l ʾs¹ bn rwḥ ḏ ʾl ʿmrt s¹lm* 'By ʾs¹ son of Rwḥ of the people of ʿmrt, may he be secure'. This is probably a calque of the Nabataean formula consisting of the name of the author preceded or followed by *šlm* 'May he be safe and sound' (see Macdonald 2003a:40); see Norris 2018:86 for a discussion of the examples from the Dūmah region.

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Appendices

Appendix A

The Lineage of *ḍf*

This Appendix is divided in three parts. The first part describes the structure of the *ʾl ḍf*, discussing the information which can be gleaned from the genealogies, the evidence for the various sub-groups, and the texts showing ancestors beyond *ḍf*. The second part presents my reconstruction of various genealogical trees which show the position of the authors of the texts relevant to Chapter 4 and to §A.1 below. The third part contains the data of the compression measurements of the *b*'s across generations within the *ḥmyn* branch of the *ḍf*, which was employed for the palaeographic study in §4.1. This Appendix follows the *sigla* convention used in Chapter 4, i.e. the inscriptions *sigla* are followed by '/[generation number]' instead of '/[script]', which is the convention used in the rest of the thesis. The generations are counted considering *ḍf* as the first generation. As in Chapter 4, if the genealogy of the text stops at the patronym, the generation number is followed by a question mark.

A.1 The structure of the *ʾl ḍf*

The genealogical information provided by the texts of members of the *ʾl ḍf* allows to delineate the structure of their lineage-tree, with its various branches and sub-branches. We can be relatively sure about the reconstruction of most genealogies up until *ḍf*, as usually several texts from different generations independently confirm and agree on the same genealogy. It is only in some texts from late generations that we sometimes find inconsistencies, with genealogy members either missing,[554] or being spelled differently,[555] or their position being exchanged.[556]

[554]Cf., e.g., Is.H 891/12, omitting 5th generation *ḥmyn*, AbWS 5/15, omitting 7th generation *ḥḍg*, and Is.Mu 367/16, omitting 11th generation *rgl*.

[555]Cf., e.g., 4th generation *ġḍḍt* spelled as *ġḍḍ* in WH 792/12, 3rd generation *hws¹r* spelled as *hys¹r* in SESP.S 1/16 (see Macdonald, Al-Muʾazzin, et al. 1996:456), and 6th generation *ʾs¹lm* spelled as *ys¹lm* in SESP.U 8/12.

[556]See, e.g., the genealogy given by the 12th generation author *s¹ny* in KRS 132/12: *s¹ny bn ys¹lm bn ʿwḏn bn mlk bn qḥs² bn ḥḍg bn s¹wr bn {ġ}{ḍ}[ḍ]t bn ʾnḍt bn ws²y bn ḥmyn bn ḍf*; he wrote the 5th generation genealogy member *ḥmyn* right after *ḍf*, instead of 2nd generation *ws²yt*, which he placed after *ḥmyn* and

The trees in Figs. A.2 – A.5 (§A.2.1) display my reconstruction of the *ʾl ḏf* until generation 5. The genealogies show that *ḏf* had at least three sons: *ws²yt*, *bʾs²*, and *fkl*,[557] with the majority of texts coming from descendants of *ws²yt* and *bʾs²*. In some texts, the genealogies continue past *ḏf*, but we will see that this part is very inconsistent from text to text, suggesting that it may have been subject to modifications and adaptations. While most texts seem to agree on at least the name of *ḏf*'s father, who is mostly *gnʾl*, there are texts attesting different names as well. Since the name of *ḏf*'s father belongs to the more inconsistent part of the genealogy, it is difficult to determine if there are any texts by *ḏf* himself or by his close descendants. In any case, we have no attestation of an author named *ḏf bn gnʾl*, and there is only one possible 2nd generation text by an author named *ws²yt bn ḏf*, but it is only known from a copy.[558] In the 3rd generation, seven texts are attested that may have been by grandsons of *ḏf*, but in none of them the genealogy goes beyond the patronym.[559] However, in generations 4 – 5, beside several texts with two-generations genealogies, I identified ten texts which indicate three or more generations[560] – although only one of these (KRS 1479/5) shows the whole genealogy up until *ḏf* – and, from generation 6 onwards, we find a growing number of texts with increasingly longer genealogies. The latter group of texts provides us with the main bulk of genealogical information on the lineage of *ḏf*. Indeed, even though we have only a few secure attestations of texts by the earliest generations after *ḏf*, we can still reconstruct their names and positions in the tree, since they consistently and independently appear in the long genealogies of several texts from later generations. For instance, the sequence '*ws²yt bn ḏf*' occurs 28 times in the OCIANA (accessed in October 2019). Of these, excluding the uncertain WH 884/2? mentioned above and KRS 839 (whose genealogy is partially illegible), the remaining 26 attestations are all in the context of texts by members of the lineage of *ḏf*, with genealogies showing 7 or more generations.

Anthropological investigations of non-literate nomadic societies have shown that people consistently named their ancestors up to 3 – 5 generations back, after which the more ambiguous part of the genealogy begins, with genealogies being adapted to the alliances and affiliations of the moment.[561] Above this ambiguous part, one finds the

misspelled as *ws²y*. We know from several other texts that the correct arrangement in that part of the genealogy should have been: *ḥmyn bn ġḍḍt bn ʾnḍt bn ws²yt bn ḏf* (see the tree in Fig. A.3). Another example is AbSWS 18/13, which exchanged 7th generation *ḥḍg* and 6th generation *s¹wr*.

[557] A further son could have been *ḫrm*, although the genealogies of only two texts – SESP.K 5/7 and RMenv.D 10/9 – show this.

[558] It reads: WH 884/2? *l ws²yt bn ḏf bn*— 'By Ws²yt son of Ḏf son of...'.

[559] See the list of authors in Table A.2, and the genealogical trees in Figs. A.3 – A.5.

[560] These are: KRS 2454/4 (*bdn bn rfʿt bn ws²yt*), KRS 907/5 (*mlk bn bdn bn rfʿt bn ws²yt*), C 1583/4 (*zkr bn rfʿt bn ws²(y)[t]*), WH 650/5 (*mrdy bn kwnt bn s²wʾ*), KRS 1479/5 (*ḥwq bn kwnt bn s²wʾ bn bʾs² bn ḏf*), WH 1711.2/5 (*kdr bn ṯḫrt bn hws¹r*), C 2322/5 (*ʿ{ṣ}ṣ bn qṭʿn bn hgml*), KRS 278/5 (*ʿlhm bn qṭʿn bn hgml*), WH 807/5 (*ʿlhm bn qṭʿn bn hgml*), C 3855/5 (*rfd bn wʿl bn hgml*); see again Table A.2 and Figs. A.3 – A.5.

[561] See the discussion in Robinson 2013:32–34, who cites the cases of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica (as described in Peters 1960:40–41) and of the Rwāla Bedouin (see Musil 1928:48 and Lancaster 1981:24–42). The Bedouin of Cyrenaica consistently remembered their ancestors until the fifth ascending generation,

uppermost portion of the genealogy, which connects the founders of the confederated groups. This part is more difficult to manipulate and entirely figurative – i.e. it is neither based on actual father-son relationships nor on real ancestors.[562]

The members of the lineage of *ḏf* appear to have written their genealogies relatively consistently for several generations up until the eponymous ancestor *ḏf*. Although we cannot know if *ḏf* was a real person or not, genealogies longer than two generations appear only starting from the 4th and 5th generations, with the first attestation of a genealogy reaching *ḏf* appearing in the 5th generation.

It is possible that a desire to preserve genealogies by carving them on stone was a reason for which early descendants of *ḏf* started to consistently write down longer genealogies, a habit which was then embraced, expanded, and continued by their descendants for several generations, with texts showing up to 16 generations-long genealogies.[563] Around the same time in which long genealogies become increasingly more numerous, i.e. from generation 6 onwards, we also see the beginning of the palaeographic development from the 'common' to the 'fine' script (see §4.1, §8.2).

While *ḏf* genealogies are rather consistent up until the eponymous ancestor, some room for genealogical creativity was perhaps still allowed in the upper part of the genealogy – i.e. the part showing *ḏf*'s ancestors – since some of the texts showing this part present conflicting versions (see §A.1.2 below).

Among the branches investigated in this Appendix, I have not found any text from generations later than the 16th, with most attestations stopping earlier. There may be different reasons for this feature. It could be due to a drop in population or in writing activity. Another reason could be that later texts are simply more difficult to trace, perhaps because authors increasingly employed different forms of self-affiliations – e.g. to sub-groups such as the *ʾl kn* (see below) – and/or did not indicate long enough genealogies which would allow us to place them in the lineage-tree. It is also possible that the genealogies and affiliations of authors from later generations had been modified, making it impossible for us to connect them to their ancestors.

A.1.1 Sub-groups

Beside the common expression *ḏ ʾl* + [group name], Safaitic authors explicitly indicated affiliation to a given social group through long genealogies going back to the ancestor of the group or through the *nisbah* adjective, e.g. *h-ḏfy* 'the Ḏf-ite'.[564] In a minority of cases, the author gave a double affiliation, stating both their lineage and their sub-group within the lineage. An example of this form of affiliation is QUR 176.24.1/14: the author identified as *ḏ ʾl ġyr h-ḏfy*, with *ġyr* being the sub-group which is likely named after the ancestor of the author, as confirmed by the genealogies of several texts. In most

while the Rwāla reached only the third.

[562]See Lancaster 1981:24–26.

[563]See, e.g., SESP.S 1/16, whose author wrote down his whole lineage up until *ḏf*: *nʿmn bn ḫbyṯ bn nṣr bn nʿmn bn nṣr bn gr[m]ʾl bn kn bn nʿmn bn wʿl bn rbn bn s²ʿr bn kn bn ṯḥrt bn hys¹r bn bʾs² bn ḏf*; for the whole text and a commentary, see the OCIANA.

[564]E.g. RWQ 18/6.

cases, however, one can indirectly determine the affiliation of authors, provided that we have long enough genealogies, by comparing them with the overlapping genealogies of other texts from the same or earlier generations, going up until the ancestor. Thus, there are three ways to evince that a certain *ʾl* was a sub-group of a lineage: 1) if the author claimed affiliation to both lineage and sub-group, as in the example above; 2) if the author self-affiliated only to the sub-group, but his genealogy goes back to the eponymous ancestor of the lineage and includes the name of the ancestor after which the sub-group was named; 3) if the author affiliated only to the sub-group, but his genealogy is long enough to reconstruct his relationship to both lineage group and sub-group thanks to the information from the genealogies of other texts.

The *ḏf* branches splitting at 2nd generation *bʾs²* and *ws²yt* are the ones attesting the highest number of texts—it is in these branches that we find authors from later generations who affiliated to *ʾl*'s which seem to constitute further sub-groups within the *ḏf*. In the *bʾs²* branch, we have people affiliating to the *kn* and the *ẓmr* sub-groups, while in the *ws²yt* branch, we have evidence for the *ġyr* and the *bdn* sub-groups.

The trees in Figs. A.17 – A.18 below show the two branches with the respective sub-groups; the ancestors after whom the sub-groups were probably named and the authors of texts affiliating to such groups are underlined.

kn The *ʾl kn* is the sub-group to which the highest number of authors explicitly affiliated,[565] although the often short genealogies of their texts do not always make it possible to place them in the *ḏf* lineage-tree.[566] As remarked in the OCIANA commentary to SESP.S 2/16, this text, by 16th generation *ḏhd*, together with the texts by his two brothers *ʿm* (SESP.S 3/16) and *ṣʿb* (SESP.S 4/16),[567] clearly show that *kn* was a sub-group of the *ḏf*. In the first text, the author's genealogy goes back to both *kn*, the ancestor of the sub-group, and to *ḏf*, the ancestor of the lineage, while in the two other texts his brothers both self-identify as *ḏ ʾl kn*. The position of these authors in the lineage-tree is shown in Fig. A.17. In the tree I also represented the 16th generation authors *ḏʾb* and *ʿbd*, cousins of *ḏhd*, *ʿm* and *ṣʿb*, who self-identified as *ḏ ʾl kn* as well. Furthermore, the text by *ʿbd* (Ms 29/16[568]) was found on the same panel as the Greek

[565] In the OCIANA (accessed in October 2019), 27 texts contain the espression *ḏ ʾl kn*.

[566] See, e.g., KRS 1304 (*l ẓnn bn s²ʿr ḏ ʾl kn w...*) and KRS 1862 (*l bnt bn gnʾl bn bnt ḏ ʾl kn w...*); I was not able to find any overlapping genealogies through which they could be connected to the ancestors *kn* and *ḏf*. The *kn* sub-group was first identified in Macdonald, Al-Muʾazzin, et al. 1996:455.

[567] The three texts read: SESP.S 2/16 *l ḏhd bn ʿbd bn ḏhd bn ʿbd bn ḏʾb bn nʿmn bn kn bn nʿmn [[]][[]][[]][[]][[]][[]]bn wʿl bn rbn bn s²ʿr bn kn bn ṯḥrt bn hys¹r bn bʾs² bn ḏf w h lt s¹lm l-ḏ {d}ʿy w nqʾt l-ḏ ḫbl h-s¹{f}r* 'By Ḍhd son of ʿbd son of Ḍhd son of ʿbd son of Ḏʾb son of Nʿmn son of Kn son of Nʿmn son of Wʿl son of Rbn son of S²ʿr son of Kn son of Ṯḥrt son of Hys¹r son of Bʾs² son of Ḍf and O Lt [grant] security to whoever {reads [the inscription] aloud} and [inflict] ejection from the grave on him who effaces this {inscription}'; SESP.S 3/16 *l ʿm bn ʿ[[]]bd bn ḏhd bn ʿbd bn ḏʾb bn nʿmn bn kn bn nʿmn ḏ ʾl kn* 'By ʿm son of ʿbd son of Ḍhd son of ʿbd son of Ḏʾb son of Nʿmn son of Kn son of Nʿmn of the people of Kn'; SESP.S 4/16 *l ṣʿ[[]]b bn ʿbd bn ḏhd bn ʿbd bn ḏʾb ḏ ʾl kn* 'By Ṣʿb son of ʿbd son of Ḍhd son of ʿbd son of Ḏʾb of the people of Kn' (readings and translations: OCIANA).

[568] It reads: *l ʿbd bn ʿlm bn ḏhd bn ʿbd bn ḏʾb bn nʿmn bn kn bn nʿmn bn wʿl bn rbn bn s²ʿr ḏ ʾl kn h-ḫṭṭ w h lt ʿwr m ḏ ʿwr h-s¹fr* 'By ʿbd son of ʿlm son of Ḍhd son of ʿbd son of Ḏʾb son of Nʿmn son of Kn son of Nʿmn son

text Mg 1, in which the author gives his name, patronym, papponym, and affiliation to both the *kn* sub-group and to the lineage of *ḏf*.[569] Probably the same author left another similar Greek text[570] as well as the Safaitic text RMSK 1, in which he states his affiliation to the *ʾl kn*,[571] one of the rare examples of 'fine' inscriptions in square graphs.[572]

zmr Two texts with the expression *ḏ ʾl zmr*, AbMNS 2/14 and BES15 1379/14,[573] demonstrate that the *ʾl zmr* was a further sub-group within the *bʾs²* branch. The position of their authors in the lineage-tree (see Fig. A.17 below) shows that they both share the 5th generation ancestor *zmr*.

Figure A.1: Is.Mu 321, affiliating to zmr, kn, ḏf and whbʾl (Photo: OCIANA)

of Wʿl son of Rbn son of S²ʿr of the people of Kn is the carving and O Lt blind whosoever would scratch out the writing' (see OCIANA).

[569]Mg 1 CAAPOC XECEMANOY TOY XECEMANOY CAIΦHNOC ΦYΛHC XAYNHNΩN MNHCΘH 'May S²aʿar son of Kehs¹eman son of Keḥs¹eman a Ḍaifite of the section of Kawnites be remembered' (Reading and translation: OCIANA).

[570]WR.C 1 = MISS.I 1 CAAPOC XECEMANOY CAIΦHNOC ΦYΛHC XAYNHNΩN (see Macdonald, Al-Muʾazzin, et al. 1996:483–484).

[571]The text reads: *l s²ʿr bn kḥs¹mn bn ḳḥs¹mn bn ẓnn bn s²ʿr bn gnʾl ḏ ʾl kn w s¹rt s¹nt ngy ʿmd bn ʾs¹ hdy w s¹nt drghṣmkrn h-mḏ f h gdḏf s¹lm w ġnmt l-ḏ dʿy h-s¹fr w nqʾt l-ḏ mḥy h-s¹fr* 'By S²ʿr son of Kḥs¹mn son of Ḳḥs¹mn son of Ẓnn son of S²ʿr son of Gnʾl of the people of Kn and O Gdḏf [grant] security he served [in a unit] the year ʿmd son of ʾs¹ was announced leader and the year drghṣmkrn the Persians and so O Gdḏf [grant] security and booty to whoever leaves the inscription intact and [inflict] ejection from the grave on whoever scratches out the inscription' (see OCIANA).

[572]See §3.2, RMSK 1 is displayed in Fig.3.5(d).

[573]The full texts read: AbMNS 2/14 *l grmʾl bn ʿqrb bn grmʾl bn ḫṭs¹t bn ws¹m ḏ ʾl zmr w tʾmr-h wḥd f h gdḏf s¹lm w wld h-mʿzy s¹nt ḥgz-h bʿls¹mn ʿl-h-mdnt w h lt nqʾt bm ḫbl-h* 'By Grmʾl son of ʿqrb son of Grmʾl son of Ḫṭs¹t son of Ws¹m of the people of Zmr and he controlled the area alone so, O Gdḏf [grant] security and he helped the goats give birth the year that Bʿls¹mn withheld it [the rain] from the Province [or region] and O Lt [inflict] nqʾt on him who destroys [the inscription]'; BES15 1379/14 *l ʿqrb bn grmʾl bn ẓʿn bn ḫṭs¹t bn ws¹m ḏ ʾl zmr* 'By ʿqrb son of Grmʾl son of Ẓʿn son of Ḫṭs¹t son of Ws¹m of the people of Zmr' (Readings and translations: OCIANA). Two further texts with the expression *ḏ ʾl zmr* are WR.A 15 and Is.Mu 321 (see below on the latter), but I could not place them in the lineage tree.

In Is.Mu 321 (Fig. A.1) the author self-identified as *ḏ ʾl zmr ḏ ʾl kn ḏ ʾl ḏf ḏ ʾl whbʾl*.[574] He first affiliates to *zmr*, but then continues with *kn*, which is supposedly a separate sub-group, and finally affiliates to the *ḏf* lineage and to *whbʾl*, which we know from some texts to have been an ancestor of *ḏf* (see §A.1.2 below). Even if we do not know the generation of the author, as his genealogy does not allow us to place him in the *ḏf* tree, the text presents some very late palaeographic features, such as the *r* as a straight line with converging arms and the almond-shaped *m*.[575] That being said, it is difficult to determine what the first part of the author's affiliation implies. The *zmr* and the *kn* sub-groups belong to the same branch, and perhaps in later generations these affiliations became blurred or authors started to consciously or subconsciously re-interpret them. It seems, from the final affiliation to the ancestors *ḏf* and *whbʾl*, that the author ordered his affiliations from the smallest to the biggest group. Thus, another possibility is that *zmr* was an actual later sub-group within the *kn* which had nothing to do with the sub-group descending from 5th generation *zmr*.

ġyr The JQC attests one inscription in which *mgd*, an author who left several other texts between north-eastern Jordan and southern Syria,[576] self-identified as *ḏ ʾl ġyr h-ḏfy*,[577] whereby he first gave the name of his group, and then he further expressed affiliation to the *ḏf* lineage through the *nisbah* adjective. The genealogy of the author is long enough to place him within the *ḏf* lineage-tree if compared to other genealogies, and it shows that the *ʾl ġyr* is most probably a sub-group named after *mgd*'s ancestor *ġyr bn rfʾt bn ws²yt bn ḏf* (see the tree in Fig. A.18).[578]

bdn Two texts by the same author *ʾnʿm*, SESP.U 9/11 and 15/11, exhibit two different forms of affiliation to *bdn bn rfʾt bn ws²yt bn ḏf* (see Fig. A.3 below). In the first text, the author explicitly affiliates to the sub-group through *ḏ ʾl bdn*,[579] while the second

[574]The full text reads: *l ġyrʾl bn s¹lm bn ġyrʾl bn ḥwt ḏ ʾl zmr ḏʾ l kn ḏ ʾl ḏf ḏ ʾl whbʾl w rʿy h-ḏʾn s¹nt ngy tm bn ʾnʿm h-dr w qnṭ h-s²nʾ w hʾmʿgrm h-{n}mrt {w} tnẓr h-s¹my f h bʿls¹mn rwḥ b-[m][ṭ]r*. I follow the reading of OCIANA, except for the reading of the first affiliation, which I read as *zmr* instead of *zgr*: the graph in question has the typical elongated almond form of the *m* in texts from late generations. This same form appears also in the other *m*'s of the text and can be contrasted to the smaller and more compressed rhomboid form of the *g* in the word *ngy*.

[575]See §4.1.4.

[576]See §6.2.1.

[577]The full text reads: *l mgd bn zd bn qdm bn mrʾ ḏ ʾl ġyr h-ḏfy w gls¹ h-mẓrt f h lt w ds²r ġnmt w lʿn m ḫbl h-s¹fr* 'By Mgd son of Zd son of Qdm son of Mrʾ of the people of Ġyr, the Ḏayfite, and he halted at this look-out point so, O Lt and Ds²r, grant spoil, and curse whosoever would obscure this writing'.

[578]There are two other texts in which the authors identify as *ḏ ʾl ġyr*, MA 3 and SIJ 730, but I could not locate them in *ḏf*'s lineage.

[579]SESP.U 9/11 *l ʾnʿm bn whbʾl bn hʾs¹ bn ġyrʾl ḏ ʾl bdn w bny h-s¹tr l-ẓnʾl f h s²ʿhqm nqʾ[[]]t l-ḏ ʿwr h- s¹fr* 'By ʾnʿm son of Whbʾl son of Hʾs¹ son of Ġyrʾl of the people of Bdn and he built the shelter for Ẓnʾl, so, O S²ʿhqm, [inflict] ejection from the grave on whoever would scratch out the inscription' (see OCIANA). Note that the text runs below SESP.U 8/12, dated to death of Agrippa by an author of the *zkr* branch (see the tree in Fig. A.15), which is sister to the *bdn* branch, as they share the same ancestor *rfʾt bn ws²yt bn ḏf*.

text[580] reaches the ancestor *bdn* through the genealogy. Furthermore, *dʾyt*, the author of SIJ 87/13, affiliated to the *bdn* as well[581] and his genealogy can be brought back to the same ancestor (see the tree in Fig. A.18).[582]

It should be noted that in the *bʾs²* branch, *kn* and *ẓmr* are both from the 5th generation, while in the *ws²yt* branch, *ġyr* and *bdn* are both from the 4th generation. This striking symmetry in the two branches may indicate that there was a generation-based pattern in the way sub-groups were defined, although there may have been differences from branch to branch, as in one branch they are formed according to 5th generation ancestors, while in the other according to 4th generation ancestors. Indeed, these are not the only 4th and 5th generation *ḏf*-ites, and it is entirely possible that people affiliated to further sub-groups from either the same or earlier or later generations of the *ḏf* lineage-tree, but did not fix them on rock, or perhaps they have not been identified yet. Within the *ḏf*, there is further evidence of affiliation to a *s²wʾ* sub-group (perhaps after a 3rd generation ancestor of the *bʾs²* branch)[583] and to a *qnʾl* sub-group (perhaps a later 9th generation ancestor of the *ws²yt* branch),[584] but in both texts there is no conclusive evidence from the genealogies.

A.1.2 Ancestors beyond *ḏf*

There are a number of texts, ranging from generation 6 to generation 14, in which the genealogies continue past *ḏf*.

[580]SESP.U 15/11 *l ʾnʿm bn whb«»ʾl bn hʾs¹ bn ġyrʾl bn s¹mk bn wḥ{l} bn mlk bn bdn w ḥḏr f h lt s¹lm w nqʾt l-ḏ yʿwr h-s¹fr* 'By ʾnʿm son of Whbʾl son of Hʾs¹ son of Ġyrʾl son of S¹mk son of {Wḥl} son of Mlk son of Bdn and he camped near a permanent source of water, so, O Lt, [grant] security and [inflict] ejection from the grave on whoever scratches out the carving' (see OCIANA).

[581]The text reads: *l dʾyt bn brd bn whbʾl bn ṣbḥ bn s¹ʿd bn s²hyt bn dhr ḏ ʾl bdn w ʾḫḏ h-nhy w {ḫ}{r}ṣ w h lt nqʾt ḏ yʿwr h-s¹[f][r]* 'By Dʾyt son of Brd son of Whbʾl son of Ṣbḥ son of S¹ʿd son of S²hyt son of Dhr of the people of Bdn and he took possession of the pool and {was on the look-out} and O Lt [inflict] ejection from the tomb [on] whoever scratches out the {inscription}'. I here follow the OCIANA reading and translation of this text except for the reading of the group name, which I read as *bdn* (as in the *edition princeps*) instead of *bdl* (OCIANA reading).

[582]Three other texts explicitly affiliate to a social group named '*bdn*': QUR 9.12.2, in the 'fine' script, WTI 18, in the SoS script, and SIJ 237, which seems in the SoS script as well, but it lacks sufficient diagnostic features to be sure. The *ʾl bdn* of these texts does not need to represent the same social group as the sub-group of *ḏf* discussed here. The PN *bdn* is a very common name in Safaitic, in the OCIANA (accessed in October 2019), the name *bdn* occurs 143 times. In the JQC, it occurs 18 times.

[583]Cf. RWQ 346 and 347, whose authors express their affiliations as *ḏ ʾl ḏf mn ʾl s²wʾ* and as *ḏ ʾl s²wʾ* respectively. This affiliation may go back to *s²wʾ bn bʾs² bn ḏf* (see the tree in Fig. A.4). On these two texts, which furthermore allude to an alliance between *ḏf* and *ʿwḏ*, see §B.1.

[584]In WH 21, the author self-identifies as *ḏ ʾl ḏf mn ʾl qnʾl*. While I am not aware of any early ancestor with this name, a possible identification could be 9th generation *qnʾl*, of the *ḥmyn* sub-branch (see the tree in Fig. A.10 below).

Texts	Genealogies from *ḏf* onwards
C 1472/8, 2094/6, 2152/9, 3160/10, KRS 155/8, 159/7, WH 463/11, 832/7, Al-Mafraq Museum 26/14	*ḏf bn gnʾl*
C 1993/12, SESP.U 4/13	*ḏf bn gnʾl bn whbʾl*
KRS 173/6	*ḏf bn gnʾl bn whbʾl bn ys¹r*
AbNAS 3/14	*ḏf bn whbʾl*
C 2648/11	*ḏf bn gnʾl bn rʾy*
SESP.U 8/12	*ḏf bn gnʾl bn bqr bn rhyw*
BES15 865	*ḏf bn gnʾl bn rhy bn ʾm*
KRS 39/10	*ḏf bn rhy*
AbWS 8/12	*ḏf bn gnʾl bn gʿr bn ʿwḏ bn whbʾl bn ʾdd bn ʿyl bn ʾm bn rglt bn ḏrʾl bn hrm bn ʾbgr bn ʾns¹*
C 3046/6	*ḏf bn gnʾl (b)(n) ʿyl bn ḥlʾt bn hs¹r*
HSNS 5/11	*ḏf bn ʿgd bn tʿwḏ*

Table A.1: Texts with genealogies showing the ancestors beyond ḏf

In Table A.1 one can see that *ḏf*'s father is mostly *gnʾl* and, in three texts, *whbʾl* is *ḏf*'s grandfather.[585] In AbNAS 3/14,[586] *ḏf* is immediately followed by *whbʾl*, but in its genealogy 5th generation *bʿḏrh* and 6th generation *ʿḏrʾl* are missing as well,[587] which may suggest that he also skipped *gnʾl*. In the text Is.Mu 321 discussed above, the author affiliated to *zmr*, *kn*, and ended with *ḏf* and *whbʾl*, an order which suggests that *whbʾl* represented the highest level of social organization. Nevertheless, as one can see in Table A.1, there are also texts showing different ancestors, cf., e.g., SESP.U 8/12 *ḏf bn gnʾl bn bqr bn rhyw*, BES15 865 *ḏf bn gnʾl bn rhy bn ʾm*,[588] C 3046/6 *ḏf bn gnʾl (b)(n) ʿyl bn ḥlʾt bn hs¹r*, and HSNS 5/11 *ḏf bn ʿgd bn tʿwḏ*.

The reason for this general lack of consistency may be that the authors skipped some of the genealogy members further up in the tree, and/or it may be due to the fact that this was the most 'creative' part of the genealogy, i.e. the part in which the authors could display their self-affiliations, which they may have created or modified depending on their changing alliances and affiliations. While the *ḏf*-ites wrote down

[585]The Table does not include C 2152/9 – whose genealogy reaches *ḏf*'s father – but the text is known only from a not too accurate drawing, and the name of *ḏf*'s father is unclear, reading *{m/g}tʾ{l/y}*. In the OCIANA it is emended to the commonly attested *{g}(n)ʾl*, which is certainly possible, as the *n* may have been turned into a *t* later. Without an actual photo, however, it is impossible to know.

[586]The full text reads: *l ʾs¹lm bn nʿmn bn gnʾl bn ḥy bn ṣbḥ bn gnʾl bn whb bn s¹b bn ġḏḏt bn ʾnḏt bn ws²yt bn ḏf bn whbʾl w ʿwr l-ḏ ʿwr h-s¹fr* 'By ʾs¹lm son of Nʿmn son of Gnʾl son of Ḥy son of Ṣbḥ son of Gnʾl son of Whb son of S¹b son of Ġḏḏt son of ʾnḏt son of Ws²yt son of Ḏf son of Whbʾl and blindness to whoever scratches out the inscription' (see OCIANA).

[587]See the tree in Fig. A.14 below.

[588]My reading of this genealogy agrees with OCIANA except for the reading of the name following *ḏf*, which I read as *gnʾl* instead of *ʿnʾl*.

their genealogies, most of these genealogies do not continue past *ḏf*. It is possible that, at the point in which the genealogies in Table A.1 were written (i.e. around gens. 6 – 14), the part following *ḏf* was the only area of the genealogy for which it was considered as acceptable to display one's affiliations and be creative. In this respect, the presence of *whbʾl* in some of these upper genealogies is particularly significant, as *whbʾl* also follows the eponymous ancestor *ʿwḏ* in several texts by members of that lineage, which, according to different types of evidence, could have been allied to the *ḏf* (see §B.1). Moreover, in AbWS 8/12,[589] in which *ḏf* is followed by several genealogy members, the first ones are *gʿr*, *ʿwḏ*, and *whbʾl*, as if to imply that *ḏf* was a sub-branch of *ʿwḏ*, but unfortunately neither photo or tracing of the text has been published.

A.2 Genealogical trees

The genealogical trees displayed here reconstruct various branches of the *ʾl ḏf*. The main purpose of this Section is to show the position of the authors whose texts are relevant to Chapter 4 and to §A.1 above within the *ḏf* lineage-tree.[590] Figs. A.2–A.13 show the trees with the authors of texts studied in §4.1 on the development of the 'fine' script.[591] Figs. A.14–A.16 display the authors of the inscriptions discussed in §4.2 on the chronology of Safaitic writing among the *ḏf*. Finally, Figs. A.17–A.18 exhibit the genealogies of further authors/branches relevant to the discussion on the sub-groups of the *ʾl ḏf* in §A.1 above. Within the trees, authors are singled out by the use of the bold style. The trees are followed by tables with lists of the authors shown in the trees and the *sigla* of the texts in which they appear.[592]

[589]The full text reads: *l qdm bn s²mt bn ġyrʾl bn zkr bn ẓnʾl bn s¹b bn ʿḏrʾl bn bʿḏh bn ġḍḍt bn ʾnḍt bn ws²yt bn ḏf bn gnʾl bn gʿr bn ʿwḏ bn whbʾl bn ʾdd bn ʿyl bn ʾm bn rglt bn ḏrʾl bn hrm bn ʾbgr bn ʾns¹ w ḏbḥ l-gdḏf wqyt m-bʾs¹* 'By Qdm son of S²mt son of Ġyrʾl son of Zkr son of Ẓnʾl son of S¹b son of ʿḏrʾl son of Bʿḏh son of Ġḍḍt son of ʾnḍt son of Ws²yt son of Ḍf son of Gnʾl son of Gʿr son of ʿwḏ son of Whbʾl son of ʾdd son of ʿyl son of ʾm son of Rglt son of Ḏrʾl son of Hrm son of ʾbgr son of ʾns¹ and he sacrificed to Gd-Ḍf [for] protection from misfortune' (see OCIANA). It is very likely, on the basis of several comparable genealogies, that one should read *bʿḏh* as *bʿḏ[r]h*.

[590]Note that the lineage of *ḏf* attests many more authors than the ones represented in the trees here, but a complete reconstruction of *ḏf*'s genealogies would go far beyond the scopes of this study. Other reconstructions of the *ḏf* lineage-tree can be found in Harding 1969:25 – although a far lower amount of texts by members of this lineage was known back then – and in Norris 2020:376, Fig. 10, who reconstructed a partial lineage-tree of the *ḏf* showing the position of the authors of two of the texts he re-edited.

[591]I had to break down the tree with the authors from the earliest generations (gens. 1 to 5) and the tree of the *ḥmyn* sub-branch into multiple trees, because otherwise their sizes would have been too large to fit the page.

[592]The PNs of the genealogy members are generally read as in the OCIANA, with the exception of Is.K 90/7?, where I read the author's name as *ḥḍ{{g}}* instead of *ḥḍw{t}*, and AWS 51/13, where I read the author's name as *ẓnʾl* instead of *ʾl*.

A.2.1 Trees §3.1

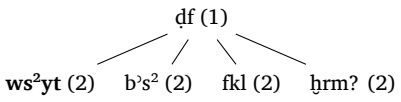


Figure A.2: The ḍf until generation 2

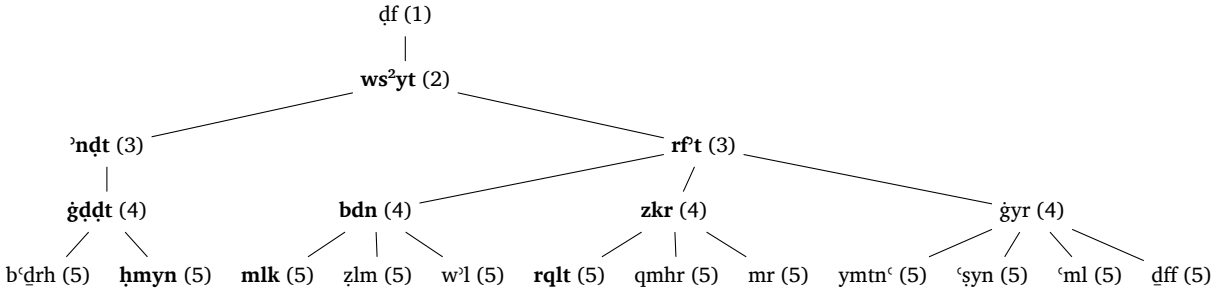


Figure A.3: The ws²yt branch until generation 5

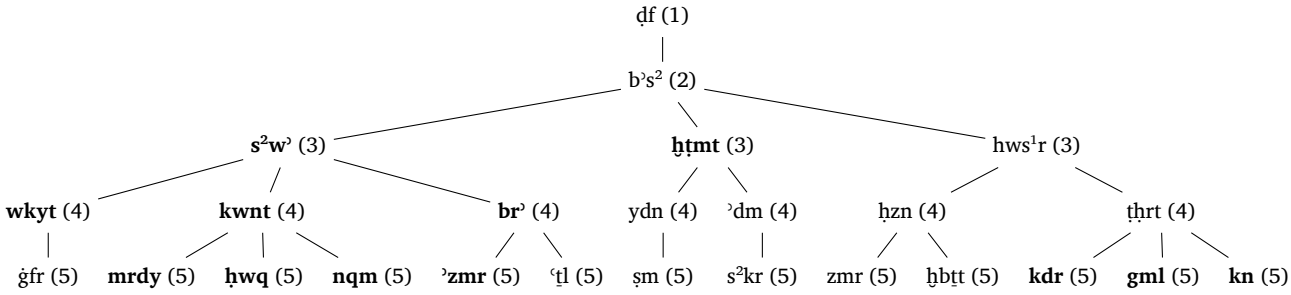


Figure A.4: The bʾs² branch until generation 5

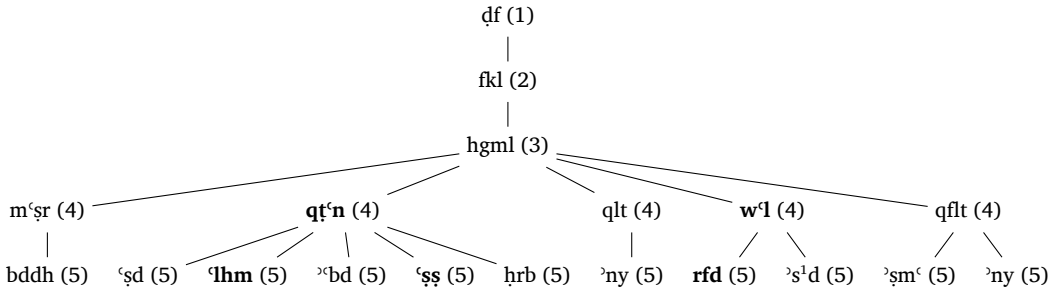


Figure A.5: The fkl branch until generation 5

Gen.	Author	Sigla
2	*ws²yt*	WH 884/2?
3	*ʾnḏt*	WH 1948/3?, AbaNS 1162/3?
3	*rfʿt*	KRS 485/3?
3	*s²wʾ*	WH 744.1/3?, AWS 118/3?, KRS 1812/3?
3	*ḫṭmt*	KRS 1397/3?
4	*ġḍḍt*	WH 395.1/4?
4	*bdn*	KRS 2454/4
4	*zkr*	C 1583/4, KRS 469/4?
4	*wkyt*	C 3894/4?, LP 106/4?
4	*kwnt*	LP 111/4?, Is.Mu 562/4?
4	*brʾ*	LP 113/4?
4	*qṭʿn*	LP 1226/4?, KRS 2456/4?
4	*wʿl*	KRS 1449/4?, KRS 1802/4?
5	*ḥmyn*	C 2700/5?
5	*mlk*	KRS 907/5
5	*rqlt*	SSWS 305/5?, WH 1945/5?
5	*mrdy*	WH 650/5
5	*ḥwq*	KRS 1479/5, AWS 219/5?
5	*nqm*	C 651/5?
5	*kdr*	WH 274/5?, WH 1711.2/5, WH 1747/5?
5	*gml*	Is.H 47/5?
5	*kn*	C 928/5?, LP 99/5?, WH 302/5?
5	*ʿṣṣ*	C 2322/5
5	*ʿlhm*	KRS 278/5, WH 807/5
5	*rfd*	C 3855/5

Table A.2: Texts by authors in Figs. A.2 – A.5

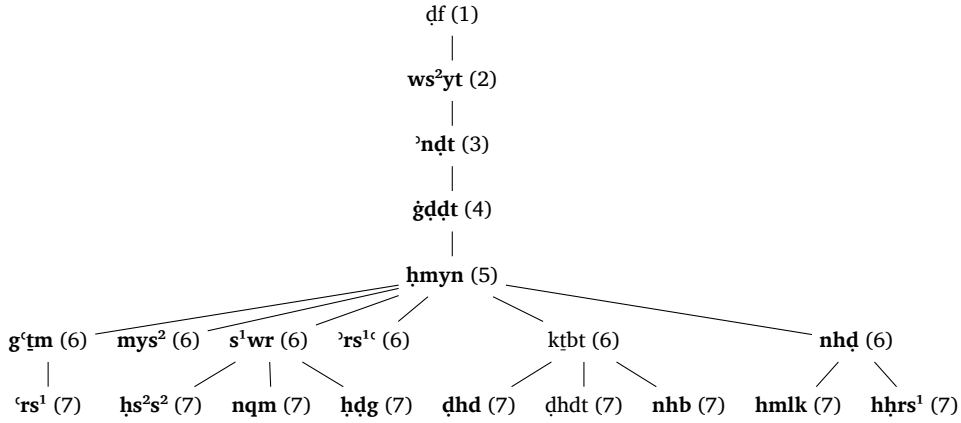


Figure A.6: The ḥmyn sub-branch until generation 7

Gen.	Author	Sigla
6	*gʿṯm*	C 1969/6?
6	*mys²*	Is.H 146/6
6	*s¹wr*	C 800/6?, 2357/6?, 3592/6?, LP 458/6?, Is.L 192/6?
6	*ʾrs¹ʿ*	RSIS 140/6
6	*nhḍ*	KRS 173/6
7	*ʿrs¹*	C 2257/7
7	*ḥs²s²*	C 3927/7, 4467/7, 4499/7, SSWS 191/7?, KRS 1276/7
7	*nqm*	C 2277/7?, 4523/7
7	*ḥḍg*	C 2456/7, 2672/7, SSWS 166/7, Is.L 25/7, 32/7, Is.K 90/7?
7	*ḍhd*	C 2523/7, 4668/7
7	*nhb*	Is.M 7/7, 36/7
7	*hmlk*	C 2681/7
7	*hḥrs¹*	Is.N 15/7

Table A.3: Texts by authors in Fig. A.6 (gens. 6 – 7)

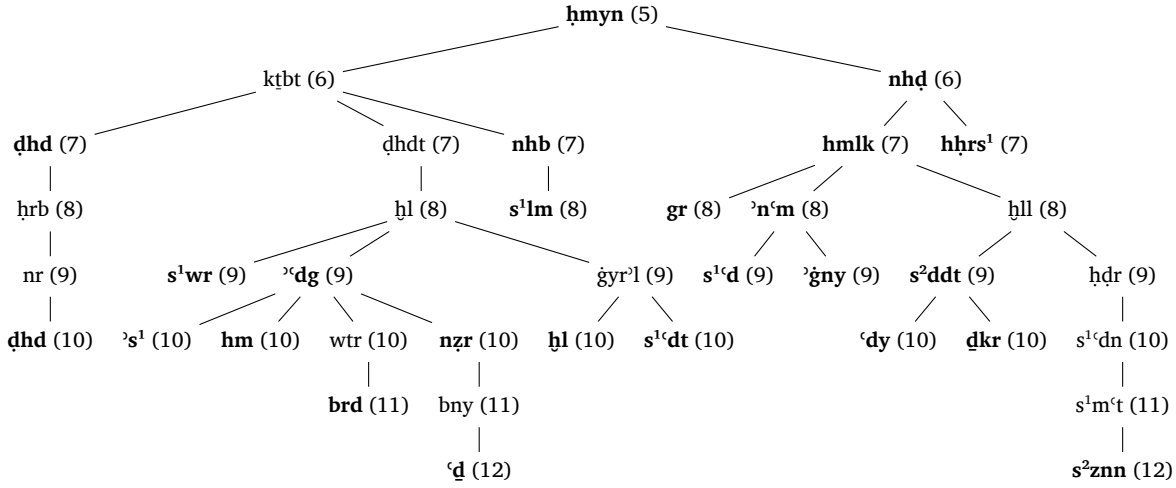


Figure A.7: The kṯbt & nhḍ bn ḥmyn sub-branches

Gen.	Author	Sigla
8	*s¹lm*	Is.L 151/8
8	*gr*	KRS 218/8
8	*ʾnʿm*	Is.Mu 240/8
9	*s¹wr*	C 4777/9, RSIS 147/9, 294/9, SESP.G 3/9
9	*ʾʿdg*	RSIS 148/9, 303/9
9	*s¹ʿd*	KRS 3029/9
9	*ʾġny*	WH 845/9, 1883/9, RWQ 113/9
9	*s²ddt*	Is.L 171/9, Is.Mu 203/9
10	*ḍhd*	HaNSB 218/10
10	*ʾs¹*	KRS 1090/10
10	*hm*	KRS 1085/10
10	*nẓr*	LP 302/10
10	*ḫl*	KRS 1076/10
10	*s¹ʿdt*	WH 2143/10
10	*ʿdy*	Is.H 850/10
10	*ḏkr*	Is.H 847/10, 852/10
11	*brd*	NBR 2/10
12	*ʿḏ*	NBR 1/12
12	*s²znn*	Is.H 891/12

Table A.4: Texts by authors in Fig. A.7 (gens. 8 – 12)

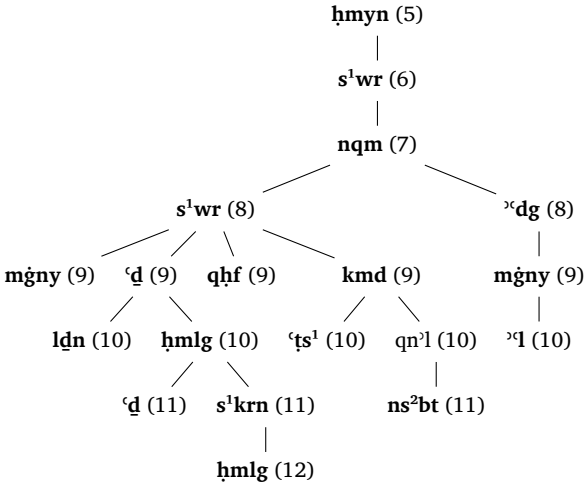


Figure A.8: The nqm bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn sub-branch

Gen.	Author	Sigla
8	*s¹wr*	Is.H 515/8?, Is.M 258/8
8	*ʾʿdg*	Is.H 109/8, Is.K 89/8
9	*mġny (bn s¹wr)*	RSIS 225/9
9	*ʿḏ*	C 1837/9, 2272/9, LP 436/9, Is.L 68/9, Is.H 247/9, 260/9, Is.R 84/9, RWQ 17/9
9	*qḥf*	BES15 191/9
9	*kmd*	RSIS 226/9, 237/9
9	*mġny (bn ʾʿdg)*	Is.K 91/9, Is.H 606/9, KRS 91/9
10	*lḏn*	C 1571/10, Is.Mu 235/10, Is.M 9/10, Is.L 45/10
10	*ḥmlg*	C 2458/10, 2964/10, 4425/10, KRS 2592/10
10	*ʿṭs¹*	C 3847 = LP 168/10
10	*ʾʿl*	KRS 859/10
11	*ʿḏ*	C 2023/11
11	*s¹krn*	Is.L 33 = LP 1040/11, Is.Mu 189/11, Is.H 708/11
11	*ns²bt*	C 1838/11
12	*ḥmlg*	KhS 10 /12

Table A.5: Texts by authors in Fig. A.8 (gens. 8 – 12)

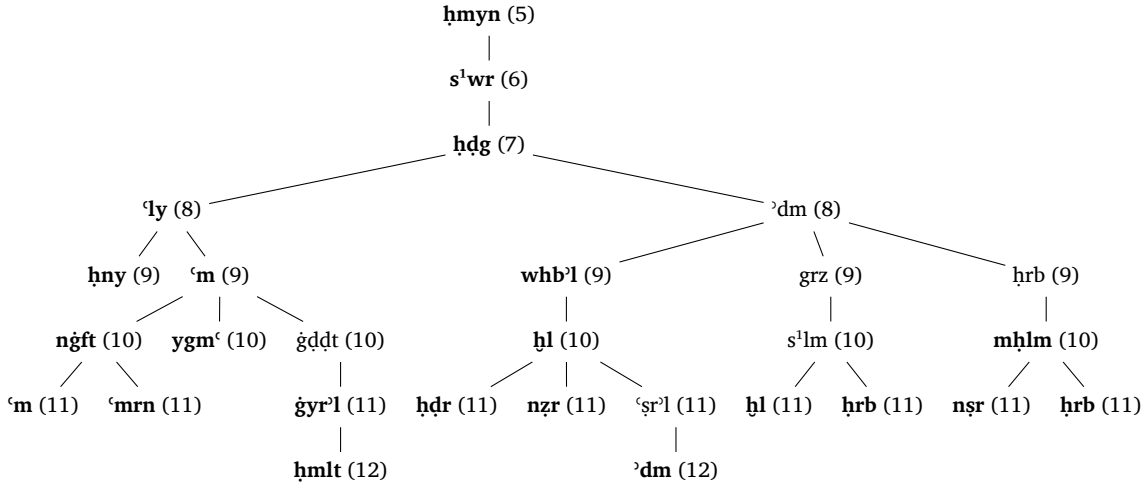


Figure A.9: The ḥḍg bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn sub-branch (ʿly & ʾdm bn ḥḍg)

Gen.	Author	Sigla
8	*ʿly*	Is.L 48/8, 131/8?, 193/8, 272/8, Is.R 72/8, KRS 1247/8
9	*ḥny*	Is.H 546/9
9	*ʿm*	C 2740/9, Al-Namārah.H 120/9, RSIS 156/9, RWQ 286/9
9	*whbʾl*	Is.H 1025/9, RSIS 69/9
10	*nġft*	KRS 110/10, 111/10
10	*ygmʿ*	WH 2116/10
10	*ḫl*	C 1381/10, 1921/10, 2673/10, KRS 1000/10, RSIS 68/10, Is.H 1026/10, MKMR 67/10
10	*mḥlm*	KRS 2993/10
11	*ʿm*	SSWS 331/11
11	*ʿmrn*	WH 2108/11
11	*ġyrʾl*	C 3161/11
11	*ḥḍr*	KRS 2870/11
11	*nẓr*	C 2656/11
11	*ḫl*	C 2575/11, 2320/11
11	*ḥrb*	KRS 117/11, QUR 2.239.1/11, 2.253.1/11
12	*ḥmlt*	HCH 153/12, ZeGA 8/12
12	*ʾdm*	Khunp 1/12

Table A.6: Texts by authors in Fig. A.9 (gens. 8 – 12)

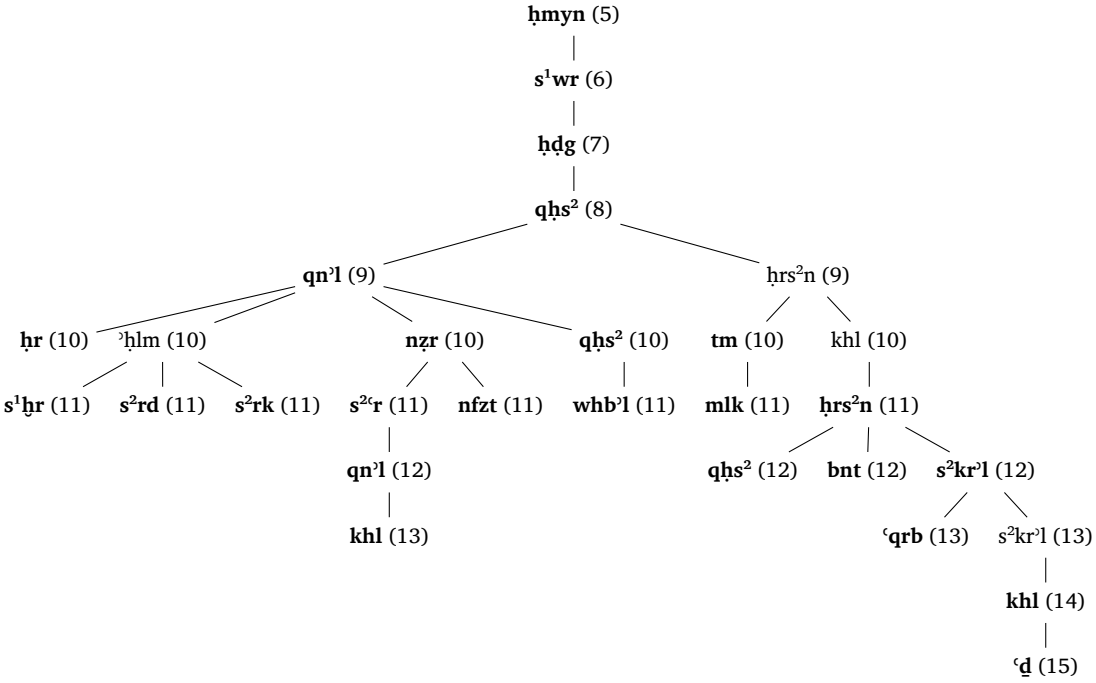


Figure A.10: The ḥḏg bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn sub-branch (qnʾl & ḥrs²n bn qḥs² bn ḥḏg)

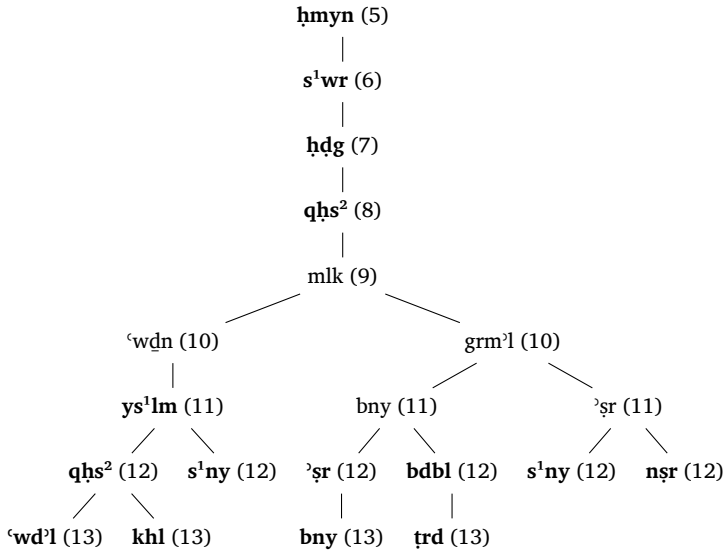


Figure A.11: The ḥḏg bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn sub-branch (ʿwḏn & grmʾl bn mlk bn qḥs²)

Gen.	Author	Sigla
8	*qḥs²*	C 2002/8, 2104/8
9	*qnʾl*	SESP.D 22/9
10	*ḥr*	Is.M 92 = LP 317/10
10	*nẓr*	Is.Mu 51/10
10	*qḥs²*	RSIS 9/10, Al-Namārah.M 34/10
10	*tm*	Internet 4/10
11	*s¹ḫr*	RSIS 41/11
11	*s²rd*	RSIS 67/11
11	*s²rk*	RSIS 30/11
11	*s²ʿr*	C 3846/11, LP 166/11
11	*nfẓt*	RSIS 333/11
11	*whbʾl*	C 4814/11, KRS 1150/11
11	*mlk*	RSIS 191/11, RWQ 298/11
11	*ḥrs²n*	C 1833/11
11	*ys¹lm*	KRS 1706/11
12	*qnʾl*	KRS 227/12
12	*qḥs² (bn s²krʾl)*	Is.Mu 100 = LP 352/12
12	*bnt*	KRS 134/12, 339/12
12	*s²rkʾl*	Is.Mu 131 = LP 387/12, Is.Mu 413/12
12	*qḥs² (bn ys¹lm)*	KRS 1009/12
12	*s¹ny (bn ys¹lm)*	KRS 132/12
12	*ʾṣr*	KRS 2510/12
12	*bdbl*	KRS 1116/12
12	*s¹ny (bn ʾṣr)*	KRS 141/12
12	*nṣr*	KRS 330/12
13	*khl (bn qnʾl)*	Ms 50/13
13	*ʿqrb*	KRS 441/13
13	*ʿwdʾl*	WH 330/13
13	*khl (bn qḥs²)*	WH 331/13
13	*bny*	KRS 1867/13, 1872/13, Al-Mafraq Museum 31/13
13	*ṭrd*	AbSWS 18/13
14	*khl*	HaNSB 244/14
15	*ʿḏ*	Is.H 214 = LP 617/15

Table A.7: Texts by authors in Figs. A.10 – A.11 (gens. 8 – 15)

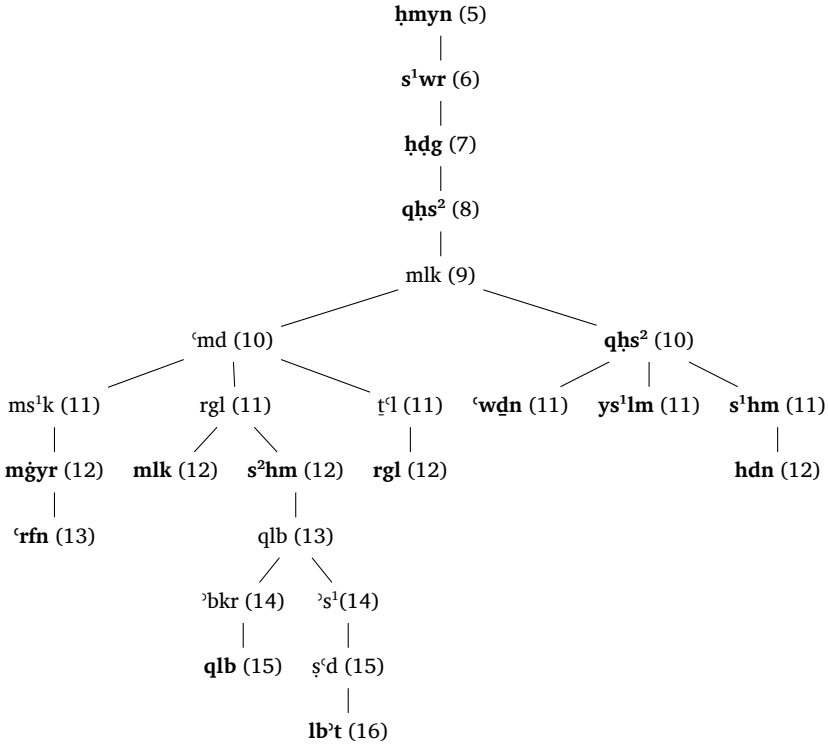


Figure A.12: The ḥḍg bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn sub-branch (ʿmd & qḥs² bn mlk bn qḥs²)

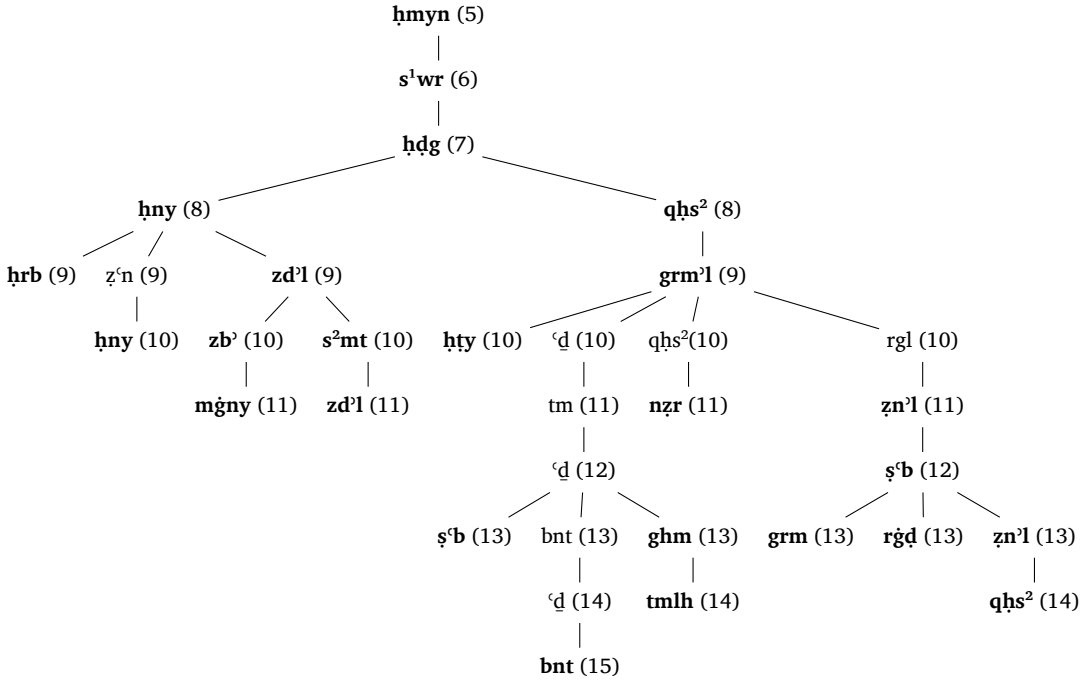


Figure A.13: The ḥḍg bn s¹wr bn ḥmyn sub-branch (ḥny bn ḥḍg & grmʾl bn qḥs² bn ḥḍg)

Gen.	Author	Sigla
8	*qḥs²*	C 2002/8, 2104/8
8	*ḥny*	LP 462/8, 1074/8, Is.L 51/8?, Is.Mu 286/8
9	*ḥrb*	Is.M 300/9, 349/9
9	*zdʾl*	WH 2170/9
9	*grmʾl*	Is.L 182/9
10	*qḥs²*	BES15 802/10
10	*ḥny*	Is.H 156/10, 168/10
10	*zbʾ*	AWS 163/10
10	*s²mt*	WH 2133/10, 2157/10, RWQ 257/10
10	*ḥṯy*	KRS 95/10
11	*ʿwḏn*	KRS 2583/11
11	*ys¹lm*	KRS 1729/11, 1731/11
11	*s¹hm*	ASWS 66/11, KRS 140/11
11	*mġny*	AWS 58/11, 215/11
11	*zdʾl*	AWS 163/11
11	*nẓr*	Al-Namārah.M 23/11, KRS 163/11, RSIS 335/11
11	*ẓnʾl*	AWS 255/11, C 5140/11, KRS 633/11, RMenv.D 4/11, WH 53/11, 123/11, 399/11
12	*mġyr*	BES15 799/12, KRS 1885/12, 1886/12
12	*mlk*	KRS 1027/12, 1333/12
12	*s²hm*	AbSWS 84 = RWQ 331/12
12	*rgl*	KRS 2820/12
12	*hdn*	KRS 130/12
12	*ṣʿb*	C 2394/12
13	*ʿrfn*	Al-Mafraq Museum 70/13, HaNSB 220/13, RSIS 254/13
13	*ṣʿb*	Al-Mafraq Museum 32/13
13	*ghm*	AbWS 44/13
13	*grm*	BES15 1386/13
13	*rġḏ*	ZeGA 10/13
13	*ẓnʾl*	AWS 51/13, 111/13
14	*tmlh*	C 1665/14, QUR 586.20.1/14?
14	*qḥs²*	WH 593/14
15	*qlb*	AbWS 5/15
15	*bnt*	SIJ Extra 1/15
16	*lbʾt*	Is.Mu 367/16

Table A.8: Texts by authors in Figs. A.12 – A.13 (gens. 8 – 15)

A.2.2 Trees §3.2

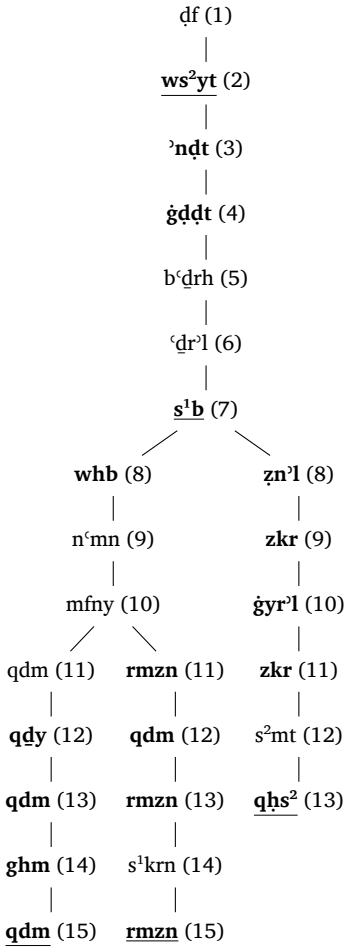


Figure A.14: The ġḍḍṭ branch

Gen.	Author	Sigla
2	*ws²yt*	WH 884/2?
3	*ʾnḏt*	WH 1948/3?, AbaNS 1162/3?
4	*ġḏḏt*	WH 395.1/4?
7	*s¹b*	C 1497/7, 4505/7, Is.Mu 354/7, KRS 563/7, LP 1298/7, SESP.G 1/7
8	*whb*	Is.Mu 305/8?
8	*ẓnʾl*	C 1498/8
9	*zkr*	C 266/9, 3444/9, KRS 366/9, 382/9, Is.H 1014/9, Is.L 202/9
10	*ġyrʾl*	C 1899/10, WH 393/10, Is.H 54 = LP 952/10?, Is.H 277/10, Is.M 93 = LP 216/10?, Is.Mu 135/10
11	*rmzn*	AWS 200/11, C 2471/11
11	*zkr*	C 2472/11
12	*qḏy*	HNSD 166/12, KRS 344/12, 352/12, 811/12, WH 1307/12, 1637/12
12	*qdm*	KRS 812/12
13	*qdm*	KRS 350/13, 2508/13, WH 251/13
13	*rmzn*	KRS 1167/13
13	*qḥs²*	HSNS 1/13, 4/13
14	*ghm*	WH 327/14
15	*qdm*	KRS 1982/15
15	*rmzn*	ASFF 301 = ZSSH 4/16

Table A.9: Texts by authors in Fig. A.14

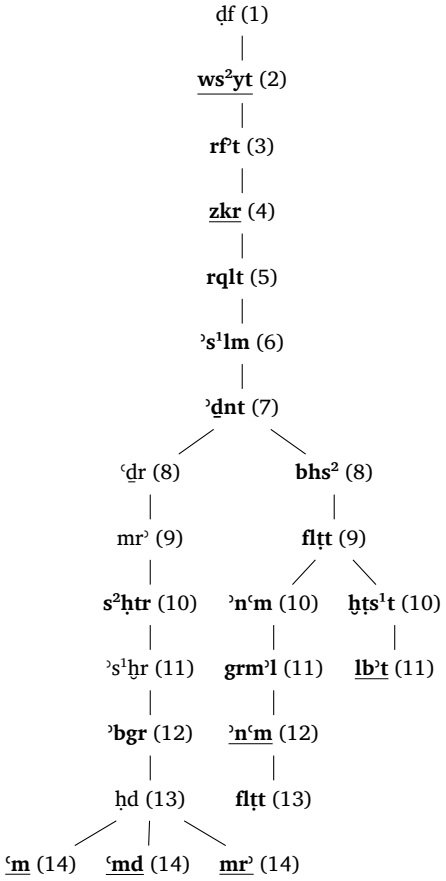


Figure A.15: The zkr branch

Gen.	Author	Sigla
2	*ws²yt*	WH 884/2?
3	*rfʾt*	KRS 485/3?
4	*zkr*	C 1583/4, KRS 469/4?
5	*rqlt*	WH 1945/5?, SSWS 305/5?
6	*ʾs¹lm*	C 2354/6?, Is.R 2/6?, Is.L 227 = LP 454/6?
7	*ʾḏnt*	C 694/7?, 3325/7?, 3603/7?, Is.H 629/7?, Is.L 240/7?, Is.Mu 6/7?, LP 492/7?, 1139/7?, RWQ 308/7?
8	*bhs²*	C 2525/8?
9	*flṭt*	C 2759/9?
10	*s²ḥtr*	Is.K 286/10
10	*ʾnʿm*	KRS 282/10, KRS 324/10
10	*ḫṭs¹t*	C 2840/10, C 3740 = LP 23/10, C 3743/10, KRS 327/10, Al-Namārah.H 184/10, SESP.K 1/10
11	*grmʾl*	Is.Mu 186/11
11	*lbʾt*	HSNS 5/11
12	*ʾbgr*	KRS 1133/12
12	*ʾnʿm*	HaNSB 243/12, KRS 1231/12, SESP.U 8/12
13	*flṭt*	WH 2606.1/13
14	*ʿm*	KRS 1131/14
14	*ʿmd*	KRS 1383/14, 1284/14, 2301/14
14	*mrʾ*	KRS 1408/14, 1409/14

Table A.10: Texts by authors in Fig. A.15

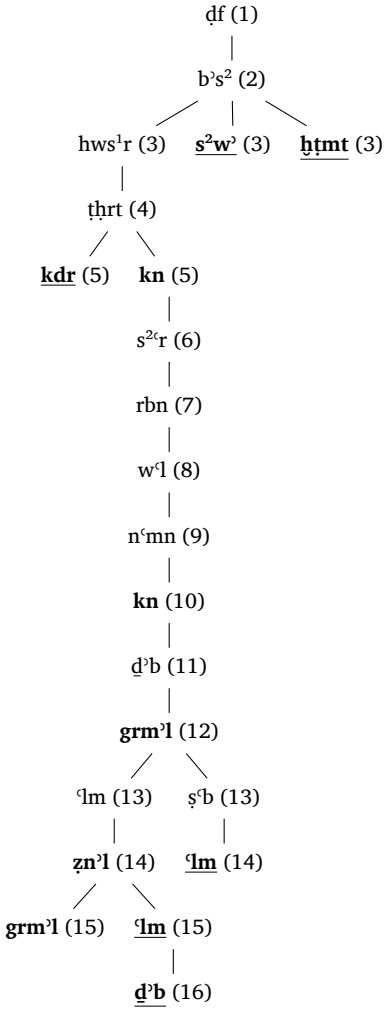


Figure A.16: The ṭḥrt branch

Gen.	Author	Sigla
3	*s²wʾ*	AWS 118/3?, KRS 1912/3?, WH 744.1/3?
3	*ḫṭmt*	KRS 1397/3?
5	*kdr*	WH 1711.2/5
5	*kn*	C 928/5?, LP 99/5?, WH 302/5?
10	*kn*	QWs 4/10?
12	*grmʾl*	C 242/12, 2153/12, 2967/12, 3312/12, 3728 = LP 782/12, Is.H 642/12, Is.L 32 = LP 1041/12, Is.L 67 = LP 435/12, Is.Mu 190/12, LP 835/12, Al-Namārah.H 38/12
14	*ẓnʾl*	Is.L 80 = LP 430/14
14	*ʿlm*	KRS 1023/14, 1169/14
15	*grmʾl*	WH 1685/15
15	*ʿlm*	C 4052/15, KRS 1039/15
16	*ḏʾb*	SESP.U 22/16

Table A.11: Texts by authors in Fig. A.16

A.2.3 Trees §A.1

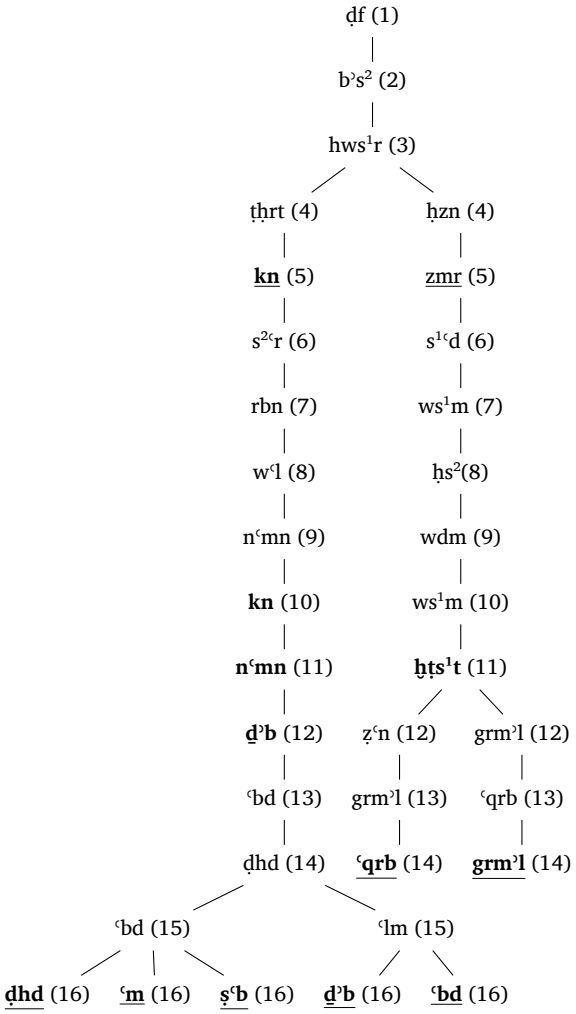


Figure A.17: The kn and the zmr branches

Gen.	Author	Sigla
5	*kn*	C 928/5?, LP 99/5?, WH 302/5?
10	*kn*	QWs 4/10?
11	*nʿmn*	C 2143/11
11	*ḫṭs*[1]*t*	C 2706/11?, WH 253/11?, KRS 1981/11
12	*ḏʾb*	C 2315/12
14	*ʿqrb*	C 3969/14, BES15 1379/14
14	*grmʾl*	AbMNS 2 = RWQ 333/14
16	*ḍhd*	SESP.S 2/16
16	*ʿm*	SESP.S 3/16
16	*ṣʿb*	SESP.S 4/16
16	*ḏʾb*	RSIS 232/16
16	*ʿbd*	Ms 29/16

Table A.12: Texts by authors in Fig. A.17

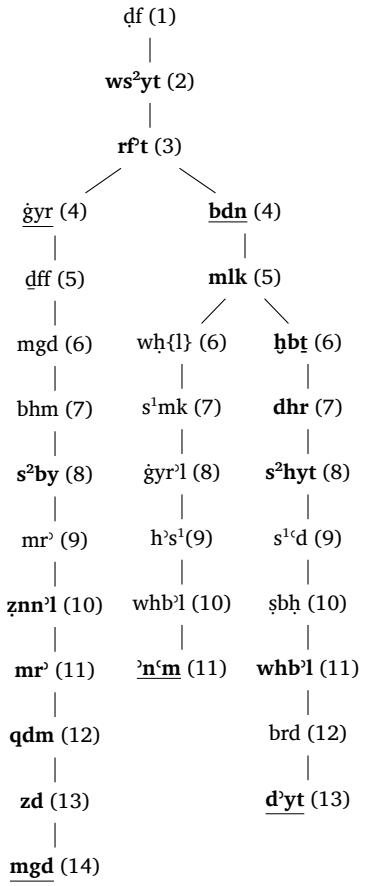


Figure A.18: The ġyr and the bdn branches

Gen.	Author	Sigla
2	*ws²yt*	WH 884/2?
3	*rfʾt*	KRS 485/3?
4	*bdn*	C 2143/11
5	*mlk*	KRS 907/5
6	*ḫbṯ*	C 4671/6
7	*dhr*	Al-Namārah.H 176/7
8	*s²by*	C 517/8, 739/8, 3532/8
8	*s²hyt*	C 2365/8
10	*ẓnnʾl*	Brenv.G 2/10
11	*mrʾ*	C 3897/11, BES15 699/11
11	*whbʾl*	C 1141/11, LP 1262/11
12	*qdm*	BES15 207/12, 909/12, KRS 1007/12, 1037/12, 1153/12
13	*zd*	BES15 623/13
13	*dʾyt*	SIJ 87/13, SIJ 90/13
14	*mgd*	QUR 176.24.1/14, SIJ 823/14, BRenv.G 1/14, BS 639/14, WH 947/14

Table A.13: Texts by authors in Fig. A.18

A.3 The compression of the *b*'s

A.3.1 *b*'s compression measurements

Sigla	*b*'s compression (height:width)
KRS 2454/4	1.77 – 1.62
KRS 1479/5	1.85 – 1.5 – 1.16 – 1.1 – 2.17
WH 650/5	2.19 – 1.04
KRS 278/5	1.17 – 1.58
KRS 907/5	1.25 – 1.3 – 1.67 – 2

Table A.14: Compression of 15 b's in 5 texts by authors from generations 4 to 5 (all branches)

Sigla	*b*'s compression (height:width)
Is.H 146/6	3.18 – 2.86
KRS 173/6	2.4 – 2.13 – 1.83 – 2.08 – 1.94 – 2.3 – 2.06 – 2.26 – 1.35
Is.L 25/7	3.5 – 2.22
KRS 1276/7	2.3 – 2.66
Is.N 15/7	1.71 – 2.33 – 1.2
Is.M 36/7 (same author as Is.M 7 below)	2.03 – 2.18 – 3.03
Is.M 7/7	2.49 – 1.95 – 2 – 4.12

Table A.15: Compression of 25 b's in 7 texts by authors from generations 6 to 7 (ḥmyn sub-branch)

Sigla	*b*'s compression (height:width)
Is.H 109/8 (same author as Is.K 89 below)	3.57 – 2.63 – 5
Is.K 89/8	4.33 – 2.5
Is.M 258/8	2.87 – 2.82 – 2.27
Is.R 72/8 (same author as Is.L 131, 193, 272, KRS 1247 below)	2.65 – 2
Is.L 193/8	1.4 – 3.28
Is.L 272/8	3 – 1.67
KRS 1247/8	2 – 3.33
Is.Mu 240/8	4.96 – 4.46
KRS 218/8	3.77 – 3 – 3.83 – 2.25
Is.Mu 286/8	2.29 – 2.22

Table A.16: Compression of 24 b's in 10 eighth generation texts (ḥmyn sub-branch)

Sigla	*b*'s compression (height:width)
Al-Namārah.H 120/9 (same author as RSIS 156, RWQ 286 below)	4.08 – 4.23
RSIS 156/9	4.18 – 6 – 4.81
RWQ 286/9	4.12 – 4.44
RSIS 226/9 (same author as RSIS 237 below)	6.8 – 5.2 – 4.9 – 4.5 – 7.86 – 3.56 – 5.9
RSIS 237/9	5 – 6
RSIS 147/9 (same author as RSIS 294, SESP.G 3 below)	3.33 – 4.38 – 4.53 – 3.41 – 5.07
RSIS 294/9	3 – 3 – 4.3 – 4.4 – 3 – 3.85
SESP.G 3/9	3
BES15 191/9	10 – 6.47
Is.H 247/9 (same author as Is.H 260, Is.L 68, Is.R 84 below)	2.63 – 2.75 – 3.29
Is.H 260/9	2.83 – 2.33 – 3.23
Is.L 68/9	3.8 – 4.46
Is.R 84/9	3.5 – 2.95
Is.H 546/9	2.35 – 1.4
Is.H 606/9 (same author as Is.K 91, KRS 91 below)	4.75 – 5 – 2.6 – 4.33
Is.K 91/9	3.33 – 3 – 3.33
KRS 91/9	2.5 – 5.4 – 3.25
KRS 3029/9	6.75 – 5.07 – 4.33 – 3.21
Is.M 300/9 (same author as Is.M 349 below)	1.5 – 1.75 – 1.44
Is.M 349/9	2.25 – 4.87
Is.L 182/9	3.75 – 2.29
RSIS 69/9 (same author as Is.H 1025 below)	3.17 – 4 – 3.45 – 4
Is.H 1025/9	4 – 4.31 – 3.04
RSIS 148/9	2.91 – 3.24 – 3.6 – 4.5 – 4.04
RWQ 113/9 (same author as WH 845 below)	4 – 3 – 3.5
WH 845/9	2.6 – 4.33 – 4 – 3.6
SESP.D 22/9	2.29 – 2 – 2.5 – 2.25 – 3.14 – 1.8 – 2
Is.Mu 203/9 (same author as Is.L 171 below)	2.11 – 4.29 – 4.94 – 2.9 – 2.28
Is.L 171/9	4.88 – 6.21

Table A.17: Compression of 96 b's in 29 ninth generation texts (ḥmyn sub-branch)

Sigla	*b*'s compression (height:width)
Internet 4/10	3.4 – 3.8 – 5.2
Is.M 92/10 = LP 317	3.03 – 3.28 – 2.1
Is.H 168/10	2.52 – 4 – 3.5 – 4 – 2.5
RSIS 29/10	8.13 – 4.75 – 5.8
Is.H 847/10	4.38 – 4.67 – 4.14 – 3.86
Is.H 850/10	4.33 – 2.92 – 4.88 – 3.7 – 4.7
KRS 1076/10	5 – 4.62 – 4.4 – 3.2 – 2.6 – 4.33
KRS 1085/10	4 – 3.92 – 6 – 5.8 – 7.5
KRS 1090/10	4 – 4.35 – 3.8 – 3.9 – 3.5 – 3.92 – 3.05 – 3.25 – 4 – 3.53 – 3.75
Is.Mu 235/10 (same author as Is.M 9, Is.L 45 below)	3.25 – 3.05
Is.M 9/10	4.6 – 5.29
Is.L 45/10	2.75 – 3
Is.H 1026/10 (same author as RSIS 68, KRS 1000, MKMR 67)	3.52 – 3.13 – 6.88
RSIS 68/10	3.61 – 3.4 – 3.75
KRS 1000/10	5.59 – 5.53 – 8
MKMR 67/10	2.85 – 3.33 – 2.78
KRS 95/10	7 – 7.8 – 4 – 3.5
KRS 2592/10	5.32 – 5 – 5.09
KRS 2993/10	4.83 – 2.23 – 4.24 – 3.5 – 7.4
RSIS 9/10 (same author as Al-Namārah.M 34 below)	2.6 – 3.18 – 3.04 – 1.51 – 4.93
Al-Namārah.M 34/10	3.55 – 4.6
RWQ 257/10 (same author as WH 2157 below)	3.9 – 2.27 – 2.22 – 2.5
WH 2157/10	4 – 5.38 – 4.5 – 4.17 – 4.92
WH 2116/10	5 – 3.79 – 4.42 – 3.5 – 5.29 – 5

Table A.18: Compression of 97 b's in 24 tenth generation texts (ḥmyn sub-branch)

Sigla	*b*'s compression (height:width)
Is.L 33/11 = LP 1040 (same author as Is.Mu 189 and Is.H 708 below)	4.08 – 4.23
Is.Mu 189/11	6.82 – 5.06 – 6.15 – 7.14
Is.H 708/11	5.67 – 6.25
RSIS 335/11	2.1 – 3.17 – 4 – 4.33
RSIS 67/11	2.89 – 2.33 – 4.58
RSIS 56/11	2.3 – 4.75 – 3.14
RSIS 41/11	3.22 – 2.67 – 3.13
RSIS 30/11	4.46 – 5.59 – 5.25
KRS 2870/11	4.33 – 2.25 – 8.5 – 4.81
RSIS 191/11	4.44 – 3.25 – 3.09
RMenv.D 4/11 (same author as Internet 5 and WH 123 below)	1.96 – 2.08 – 3.57
Internet/11	2.4 – 4.6 – 5
WH 123/11	4.38 – 4.5 – 3.15
KRS 117/11 (same author as QUR 2.239.1, 2.253.1 below)	3.69 – 3.09 – 4.08 – 4.19 – 3.95 – 4.55 – 5 – 2.67 – 2.59 – 2.88 – 5.57
QUR 2.239.1/11	2.29 – 3.5 – 6 – 4.72 – 7.8 – 8.08
QUR 2.253.1/11	4.5 – 4.8 – 4.82 – 3.89 – 5.6 – 4.07 – 5.6
KRS 1150/11	14 – 10.67 – 9.29 – 7.25 – 8.33
NRW.C 1/11	6 – 7.5 – 9.58 – 18.57 – 6.17 – 6 – 4.64
NBR 2/11	14.4 – 4.33 – 8.86 – 12.5 – 5.28 – 6 – 4.5 – 3.25 – 5
KRS 1706/11	3.5 – 3.27 – 3.17 – 2.17 – 3.17
KRS 1729/11 (same author as KRS 1731 below)	4.74 – 7.69
KRS 1731/11	5.5 – 10.67 – 6
KRS 2583/11	7.13 – 6.67 – 5 – 5

Table A.19: Compression of 99 b's in 23 eleventh generation texts (ḥmyn sub-branch)

Sigla	*b*'s compression (height:width)
Is.H 891/12	3.92 – 4 – 2.4 – 4.33 – 3.07 – 4.11 – 4.62
AbSWS 84/12 = RWQ 331	6.43 – 9.63 – 6.67 – 9.17 – 6.5 – 9.14 – 9.2 – 8
KRS 132/12	6.92 – 7 – 6.8 – 7.2 – 7.14 7.5 – 11.5 – 13.67 – 10.33
KRS 227/12	4.67 – 5.2 – 6
KRS 339/12 (same author as KRS 1344 below)	14 – 6 – 10.67 – 9.2 – 6.8 – 7.4
KRS 1344/12	6 – 4.12 – 4.75 – 7.5 – 4 – 5.38
KRS 1116/12	7.54 – 8.5 – 6.07 – 10.38 – 8.89 – 8 – 6.25 – 5.6
KRS 1333/12	8.29 – 6.9 – 6.4 – 6.8 – 6.6 – 8.7 – 9.2
NBR 1/12	5.14 – 4.88 – 5.23 – 3.08 – 6.57 – 6.13 – 5.5 – 4.75
ZeGA 8/12	3.7 – 5.67 – 7.38 – 8.57 – 5.54 – 6.43 – 4.38
Is.M 131/12 = LP 387 (same author as Is.Mu 413 below)	9.2 – 6.44
Is.Mu 413/12	8.58 – 12.6 – 7.31
BES15 799/12 (same author as KRS 1885, 1886 below)	7.14 – 5 – 5.67 – 7.5 – 5.67 – 4.75
KRS 1885/12	6.67 – 5.47 – 5.2 – 5.5 – 17.6
KRS 1886/12	3.5 – 12.4 – 8.29 – 13.33
KRS 2820/12	27.67 – 9 – 6.33
KRS 1009/12	6.7 – 10.17 – 12.5 – 4.5
Ms 57/12	11.75 – 7 – 10.83 – 4.5 – 9.17 – 9.67 – 9.83
KRS 2510/12	5.17 – 4.79 – 9.45 – 5.71
KRS 330/12	6.14 – 4.29 – 7.5
Is.Mu 100/12 = LP 352	5.33 – 6.44

Table A.20: Compression of 112 b's in 21 twelfth generation texts (ḥmyn sub-branch)

Sigla	*b*'s compression (height:width)
Ms 50/13	7 – 8 – 4.2
KRS 1867/13 (same author as KRS 1872, Al-Mafraq Museum 31 below)	6.92 – 9.13 – 5.77 – 6.8 – 10.5
KRS 1872/13	10.1 – 13.13 – 18.17 – 7.33 – 8.86 – 10.5 – 5.67 – 6.2 – 10.6 – 7.13 – 9.25
Al-Mafraq Museum 31/13	8 – 7.42 – 14.17
AbSWS 18/13	9 – 8.14 – 7.38 – 8.33 – 11 – 16.75 – 13.6 – 11.5 – 8 – 12.8 – 5.5
Al-Mafraq Museum 70/13 (same author as RSIS 254 below)	4.67 – 5.56 – 8.33 – 6.88
RSIS 254/13	6.5 – 5 – 9.86
WH 330/13	4.08 – 4.83 – 5.2
WH 331/13	5 – 5 – 3.47 – 5.63
Al-Mafraq Museum 32/13	21.34 – 11.4 – 9.5 – 5.92 – 5.12 – 5.5 – 5.82
BES15 1386/13	4.17 – 3.68 – 4.44
AbSWS 44/13	4.71 – 4.16 – 4.61 – 4.35 – 5.71

Table A.21: Compression of 62 b's in 12 thirteenth generation texts (ḥmyn sub-branch)

A.3.2 *b*'s compression ranges

The following bar charts visualise the attested ranges of compression of the *b*'s. The ten ranges displayed in the charts correspond to the following values: R 1 = 1 to 2.50; R 2 = 2.51 to 4; R 3 = 4.01 to 5.50; R 4 = 5.51 to 7; R 5 = 7.01 to 8.50; R 6 = 8.51 to 10; R 7 = 10.01 to 11.50; R 8 = 11.51 to 13; R 9 = 13.01 to 14.50; R 10 = > 14.50.[593]

[593] For more details, see §4.1.3.1.

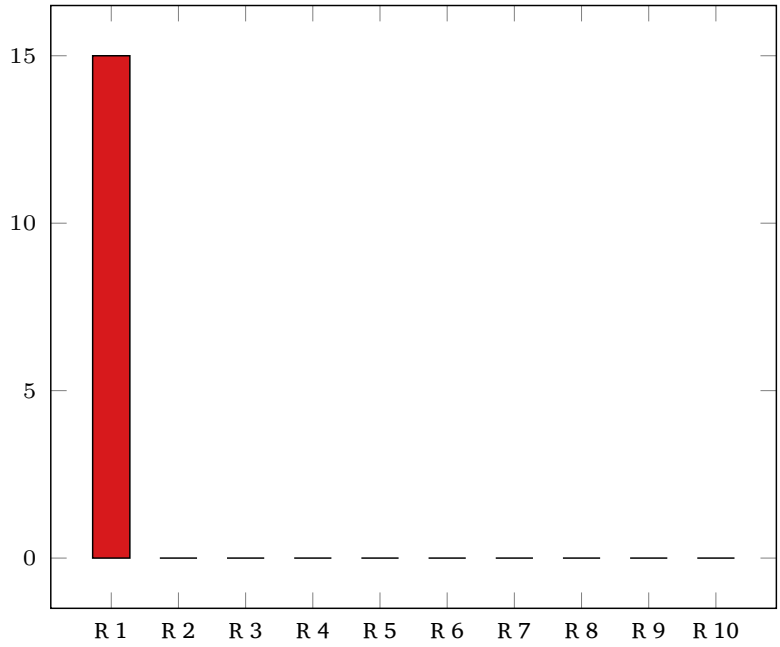


Figure A.19: Compression ranges of 15 b's from generations 4 – 5

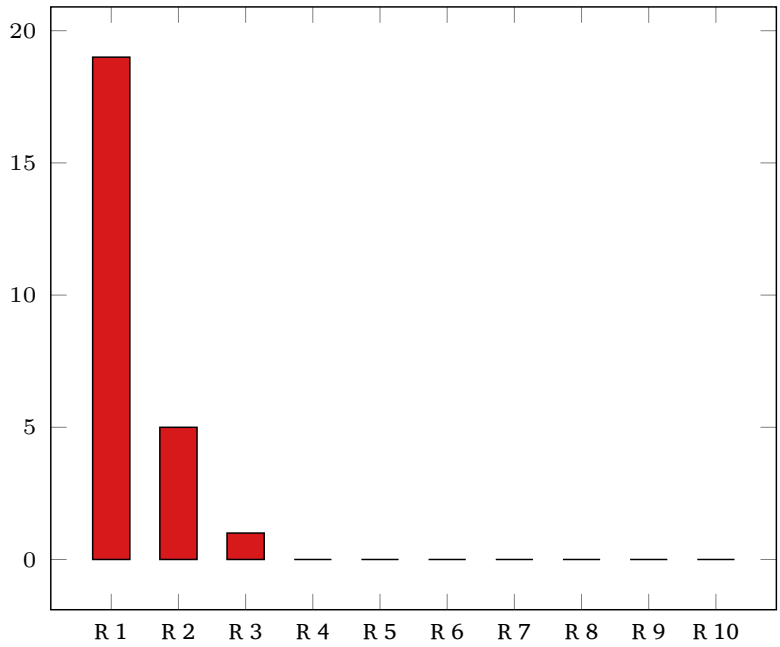


Figure A.20: Compression ranges of 25 b's from generations 6 – 7

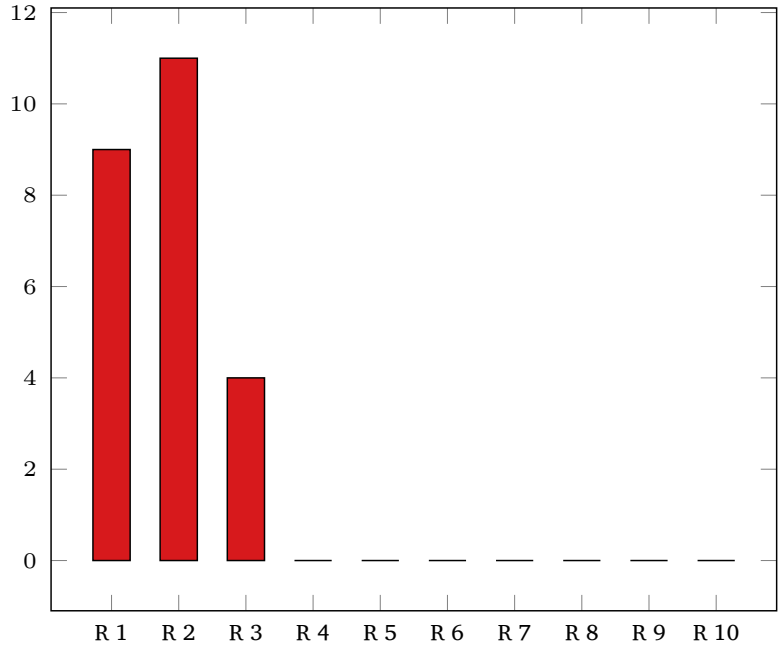


Figure A.21: Compression ranges of 24 eighth generation b's

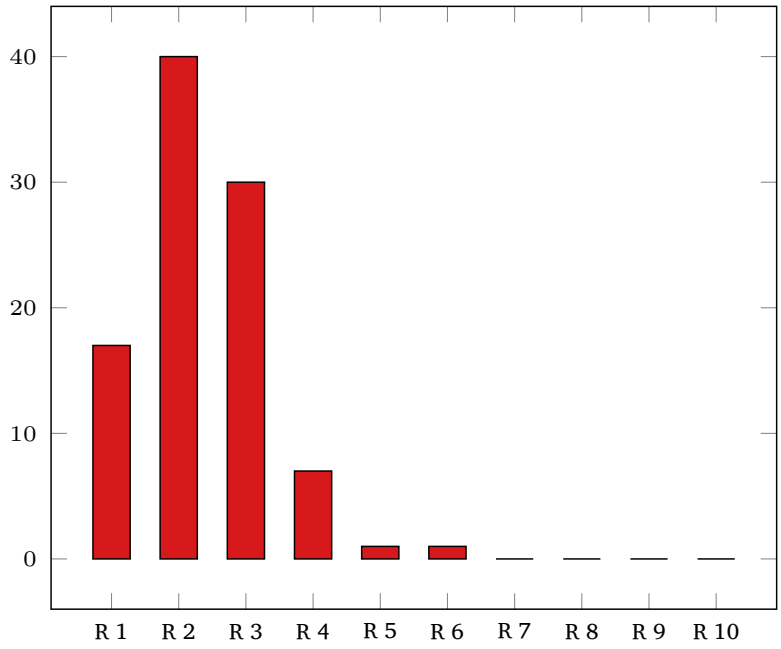


Figure A.22: Compression ranges of 96 ninth generation b's

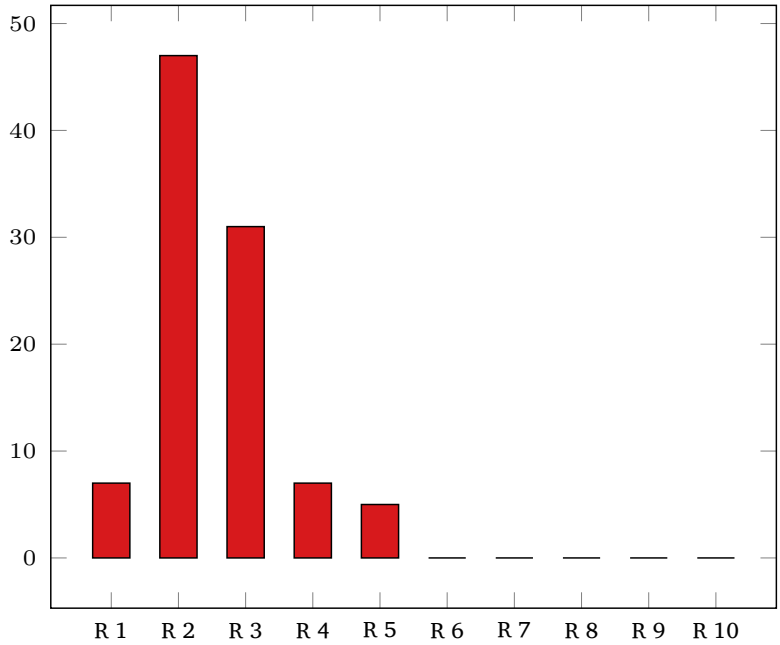


Figure A.23: Compression ranges of 97 tenth generation b's

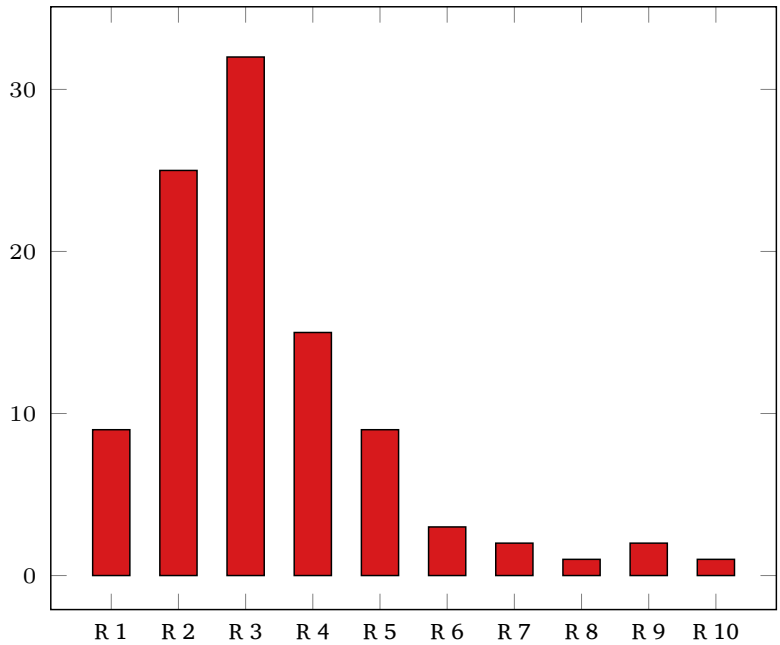


Figure A.24: Compression ranges of 99 eleventh generation b's

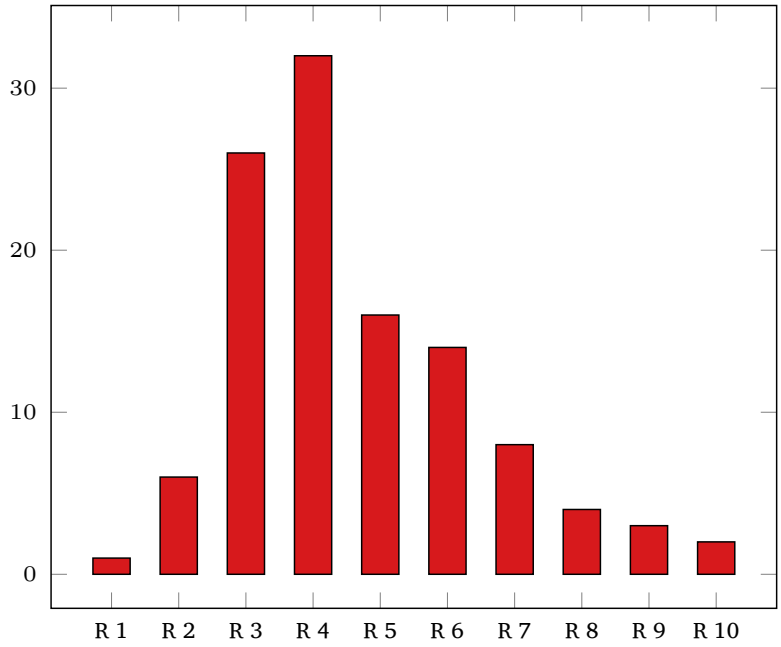


Figure A.25: Compression ranges of 112 twelfth generation b's

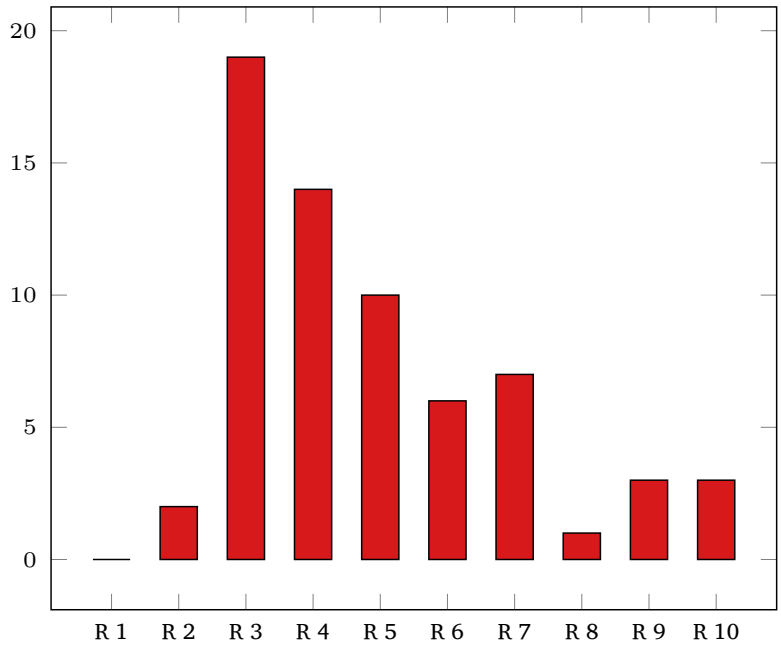


Figure A.26: Compression ranges of 62 thirteenth generation b's

Appendix B

The Lineage of *ʿwḏ*

After the *ʾl ḍf*, the *ʾl ʿwḏ* is the second social group associated with the 'fine' script of which we know that it was also a lineage, although far fewer texts have been found in comparison to *ḍf*. Unlike the previous Appendix on the lineage of *ḍf*, which examines the structure of the lineage and presents a reconstruction of some of its genealogical trees, this Appendix is limited to a survey of the evidence for the relationship of the *ʾl ʿwḏ* with the *ʾl ḍf* and to a brief discussion of some of its possible sub-groups.

B.1 The *ʾl ʿwḏ* and the *ʾl ḍf*

Different types of evidence suggest that the *ḍf* and the *ʿwḏ* were connected by some sort of relationship, but apart from the fact that such relationship may have entailed shared pasturing and perhaps also military activities (see below), we cannot glean much information about its actual nature and implications, such as for example if it involved intermarriage or not.

First, in two texts, C 2446/F and KRS 1683/F (Fig. B.1), the authors worship the tutelary deities of both lineages (i.e. *gdʿwḏ* and *gdḍf*) side by side, together with other deities. The author of C 2446/F prays the two *gd*'s for vengeance against whoever killed his brother – and he also states that he pastured the livestock of *ʿwḏ* and *ḍf* – whereas in KRS 1683/F the author invokes the two deities in order to protect the camels.[594] In both texts, *gdʿwḏ* is placed first, and it seems that the author of KRS 1683/F was a 14th

[594]The full texts and their translations (following OCIANA) are: C 2446/F *l s¹ʿd bn mrʾ bn nr w wgm ʿ[l-]ʾḫ-h nr qtl[-h] ʾl-{n}bṯy [ ] {r}ʿy nʿm ʿwḏ w ḍf f h lt mʿmn w ʾlt dṯn w gd[ʿ]{w}ḏ w gdḍf ṯʾr m-ḏ ʾs¹lf w wlh k{b}{r} s¹ḥr ʿl-ʾḫ-h ḥbb-h l-ʾbd* 'By S¹ʿd son of Mrʾ son of Nr and he grieved {for} his brother Nr {whom} the Nabataean killed while pasturing the livestock of ʿwḏ and Ḍf, so, O Lt-Mʿmn and ʾlt-Dṯn and Gdʿwḏ and Gdḍf, he will have vengeance against him who committed this act; and he was continuously distraught with a broken heart over his brother, his beloved forever'; KRS 1683/F *l bny bn wrd bn s²hyt bn ʾs¹ w ḥll h-dr b-ʾhl-h w ḫr{ṣ} ʿl-ʾbl-h f hy lt w h s²ʿhqm s¹lm w ʿwḏ-k w h gdʿwḏ w h gdḍf ʿwḏ-km h-ʾbl* 'By Bny son of Wrd son of S²hyt son of ʾs¹ and he camped at the place with his family and he watched over his camels and O Lt and O S²ʿhqm let there be security and your protection and O Gdʿwḏ and O Gdḍf the camels are [under] your protection'.

generation *ʿwḏ*-ite.[595] I could not determine the affiliation of the author of C 2446/F.

Figure B.1: KRS 1683/F, invoking both gdʿwḏ and gdḏf (Photo: OCIANA)

Second, there are two texts by *ḏf*-ites of the *s²wʾ* sub-group (RWQ 346 and 347) which allude to a bond between the two lineages. RWQ 346 is dated to the year the lineage of *ḏf* and the lineage of *ʿwḏ* 'banded together' (*tʿql*),[596] while RWQ 347 may indicate that there was a military component to such bond.[597] However, unfortunately we do not have either photo or copy of the texts.

Third, we have a number of cases in which texts by both *ḏf* and *ʿwḏ* are found on the same panel. For example, LP 162 = Hf.A 3/F, by a 17th generation *ʿwḏ*-ite,[598]

[595]This can be evinced from his genealogy, which overlaps with, among others, the genealogy of MA 4/F, which goes: *s²qq bn s²hyt bn ʾs¹ bn ḥg bn s²bḥr bn {g}rmʾl bn ʿbṭ bn ʿzhm bn mrʾ bn ʿrs¹ bn rġs¹ bn s²hr bn rṯḫ bn ʿwḏ bn whbʾl*.

[596]The full text reads: RWQ 346 *l ʾs¹ bn ḥs¹n bn ḥnn ḏ ʾl ḏf mn ʾl s²wʾ s¹nt tʿql ʾl ḏf w ʾl ʿwḏ* 'By ʾs¹ son of Ḥs¹n son of Ḥnn of the lineage of Ḏf of the people of S²wʾ, the year the lineage of Ḏf and the lineage of ʿwḏ banded together'. On the verb *tʿql*, cf. Classical Arabic *taʿāqala*, which appears embedded in the following phrases: *taʿāqalū dama fulānin* 'they paid among themselves, or conjointly, the mulc for the blood of such a one'; *yataʿāqalūna baynahum maʿaqilahumu l-ʾūla* 'they shall take and give among themselves, or conjointly, their former bloodwits'; *al-qawmu ʿalā mā kānū yataʿāqalūna ʿalayhi* 'the people, or party, are acting in conformity with that usage in accordance with which they used to pay and receive among themselves bloodwits' (Lane 1863–1893:2114); cf. also *ʿaqala l-baʿīra* 'He bound the camel with the [rope called] *ʿiqāl*; meaning he bound the camel's fore shank to his arm; i.e. he folded together the camel's fore shank and his arm and bound them in the middle of the arm with the rope called *ʿiqāl*' (Lane 1863–1893:2113a).

[597]It reads: RWQ 347 *l s¹krnn bn grmʾl ḏ ʾl s²wʾ s¹nt s¹rt ʾl ḏf l-ʿwḏ* 'By S¹krnn son of Grmʾl of the people of S²wʾ, the year the lineage of Ḏf served in a troop for ʿwḏ' (see OCIANA).

[598]The text reads: *l ẓnn bn drʾl bn ʾs²ym bn drʾl w ḥll h-ḥs¹y f ḫs¹f f h lt s¹lm l-ḏ s¹ʾr* 'By Ẓnn son of Drʾl son of ʾs²ym son of Drʾl and he camped at this place where the water lies just below the surface and he dug to reach the water and so O Lt [grant] security to whoever leaves [the inscription] untouched' (see OCIANA). The affiliation of the author to the *ʿwḏ* is shown by the genealogy of C 2732/F, by his father *drʾl* (*drʾl bn ʾs²ym bn drʾl bn ks¹ṭ bn ʾs¹ bn ʾs²ym bn ʿbd bn ʾʾ[s¹]d bn bwk bn ʿ{r}{s¹}*), which can be taken back to *ʿwḏ* by comparison with the genealogy of 15th generation C 97, 96/F (*nmr bn s¹ʿd bn s¹bʿʾl bn ḥyn bn {ʾ}ḫwf bn flṭ bn ʾs¹d bn bwk bn ʿrs¹ bn ʿwḏ bn whbʾl*).

is written in between the graphs of LP 161 = Hf.A 2/F,[599] by a 11th generation *ḍf*-ite.[600] In another instance, two inscriptions in the transitional script by members of the respective groups seem to be associated on the same panel: Is.H 513/C/F, by a 10th generation *ʿwḏ*-ite (see Chapter 6, Fig. 6.16(b)), and Is.H 515/C/F, likely by an 8th generation *ḍf*-ite.[601]

Finally, in most texts in which the genealogies continue past *ʿwḏ*, *ʿwḏ* is followed by *whbʾl*,[602] which is also an ancestor of *ḍf* in a number of *ḍf*'s texts (see §A.1.2). This suggests that *ḍf* and *ʿwḏ* shared the ancestor *whbʾl*. This genealogical relationship between the two groups, however, does not need to be real, as it may have been created *ad hoc* later. In any case, the fact that they would have had a common ancestor, either real or invented, is an additional clue of the connection of the *ʿwḏ* to the *ḍf*.

B.2 Possible sub-groups

As with the lineage of *ḍf*, there is some evidence that suggests that certain *ʾl*'s using the 'fine' script were sub-groups of the lineage of *ʿwḏ*.[603]

ḥg Some 'fine' texts were left by people affiliated to a group named *ḥg*.[604] In AMSI 142/F,[605] the author identifies as *ḏ ʾl ʿwḏ ḏ ʾ[l] ḥg* and if we compare the genealogy of AMSI 152/F,[606] whose author affiliated to the *ʾl ḥg*, to other overlapping genealogies,[607] it seems that he had as ancestor 11th generation *ḥg*, who may have been the ancestor of the group. If this genealogical reconstruction is correct, the author of KRS 1683/F (see above, Fig. B.1) may have belonged to this sub-group.[608]

[599]The text reads: LP 161 = Hf.A 2/F *l flṭt bn tm bn flṭt bn bhs² bn ʾḏnt w ḥll ʿl-h-ḥs¹y f klm-h h-ʾs¹d f h lt {s¹}{l}m* 'By Flṭt son of Tm son of Flṭt son of Bhs² son of ʾḏnt and he camped on the edge of an area of sand then the lion injured him so O Lt [grant] security' (see OCIANA).

[600]For a discussion of the two texts, see Macdonald, Al-Muʾazzin, et al. 1996:449–452.

[601]Although it indicates only the patronym, this text has the same exact writing style as Is.M 258/C/F by the same author.

[602]See C 97, 96/F, MA 4/F, KRS 822/F, C 990/F, C 2216/F, KRS 1161/F, Is.N 255/F, AWS 107/F, LP 1196/F. In RSIS 127/F and SSWS 200/F, *whbʾl* is followed by *lʿṯmn* and *ʿly* respectively.

[603]For a list of the different ways in which one can determine if a certain *ʾl* may constitute a sub-group within a lineage, see §A.1.1.

[604]8 texts with the affiliation *ḏ ʾl ḥg* were recorded in OCIANA (accessed in October 2019).

[605]*l ʾs¹ bn ʿwḏ bn mġyr ḏ ʾl ʿwḏ ḏ ʾ[l] ḥg w wgd ʾṯr ʾs²yʿ-h* 'By ʾs¹ son of ʿwḏ son of Mġyr of the lineage of ʿwḏ of the people of Ḥg and he found the traces of his companions' (see OCIANA).

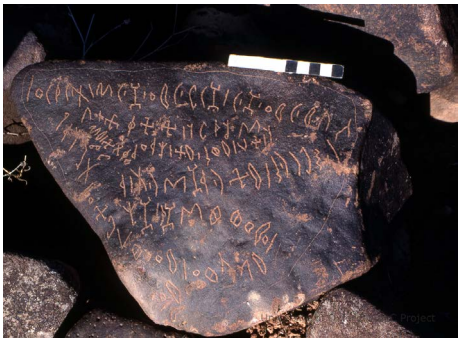
[606]*l mġyr bn ẓnn bn s²hyt bn ʾs¹ ḏ ʾl ḥg w bny ʿl-wrd* 'By Mġyr son of Ẓnn son of S²hyt son of ʾs¹ of the people of Ḥg and he built for Wrd' (see OCIANA).

[607]Cf., e.g., the genealogy of MA 4/F: *s²qq bn s²hyt n ʾs¹ bn ḥg bn s²bḥr bn {g}rmʾl bn ʿbṭ bn ʿzhm bn mrʾ bn ʿrs¹ bn rġs¹ bn s²hr bn rṯḫ bn ʿwḏ bn whbʾl.*

[608]See his genealogy: *bny bn wrd bn s²hyt bn ʾs¹.*

qs²m The JQC attests two texts by the same author of the *ʾl qs²m*,[609] and 16 attestations of authors affiliating to this group are found in OCIANA.[610] The author of ZeWA 1/F[611] who affiliated as *ḏ ʾl qs²m*, attests a long genealogy which, if compared with other genealogies, may be brought back to *ʿwḏ*. One can thus compare ZeWA 1/F (*whbʾl bn ḥnn bn ʿbd bn ġṯ bn s²rk bn s¹krn*) to, e.g., Is.H 506/F (*kmd bn ʾnʿm bn s²rk bn s¹krn bn ṣbḥ bn qs²m*) and SESP.D 6/F (*wdm bn ʿḏ bn ʿ{ḏ} bn ġṯ bn wdm bn s¹r bn ṣbḥ bn qs²m bn s¹by bn ʿbd bn hngs² bn whbn bn qmr bn rṭʾ bn ʿwḏ*). If these genealogies are related, the ancestor of the group could have been 8th generation *qs²m bn s¹by bn ʿbd bn hngs² bn whbn bn qmr bn rṭʾ bn ʿwḏ*.

(a) BRenv.A 2/F



(b) KRS 1024/F

Figure B.2: Two texts by members of the ʾl dʾf (Photos: OCIANA)

dʾf Several records of texts by members of the *ʾl dʾf* have been attested.[612] A hint that the *dʾf* may represent a sub-group of the *ʿwḏ* is provided by two texts by the same author *ʿbd bn ḫlf bn ʾnʿm*,[613] who, if he is really the same author of both texts, in one identifies as a member of the *ʿwḏ*, while in the other he affiliates to the *dʾf*.[614] Given that they both indicate the same patronym and papponym, and that HCH 115/F presents the same peculiar form of the *f* turned by 90° as KRS 1024/F – which is also found in other texts of the *dʾf* – these two texts are likely by the same author. It is thus interesting

[609] QUR 2.336.1/F, 2.490.1/F; see §6.2.3 for a discussion of his writing style.

[610] Accessed in October 2019; one of these is the Jebel Qurma text QUR 2.490.1/F, attested in OCIANA as HYGQ 99 = AbGQ 4.

[611] *l whbʾl bn ḥnn bn ʿbd bn ġṯ bn s²rk bn s¹krn ḏ ʾl qs²{m} w s²ty h-dr {m-}rk s¹nt ṯrq mk mlk nbṭ ṯlṯn mʾt qtl ʾl rm w s¹q tmr l-h zʿm gdʿwḏ w h lh w h s²ʿhqm ġnyt w s¹lm m-ḏ ḫrṣ w ġnmt l-ḏ dʿy h-ḫṭṭ* 'By Whbʾl son of Ḥnn son of ʿbd son of Ġṯ son of S²rk son of S¹krn of the people of {Qs²m}, and he spent the winter here {on account of} an area on which a small amount of rain had fallen the year [in which] Mk king of Nabaṭ smote one hundred [and] thirty warriors of the Romans and {the spokesman} [chief] of Gdʿwḏ drove Tmr to him [Mk]. And O Lh and O S²ʿhqm [grant] plenty and safety from whoever is on guard and [grant] booty to whoever leaves the carving intact' (reading: OCIANA).

[612] 22 texts with *ḏ ʾl dʾf* are found in the OCIANA (accessed in October 2019).

[613] HCH 115/F and KRS 1024/F.

[614] A further text from Jawa providing evidence that *dʾf* was a sub-group of *ʿwḏ* was mentioned in Macdonald and Searight 1982:166.

that the author identified himself as a *ʿwḏ*-ite at the cairn of Hani (HCH 115/F), but he gave a longer genealogy with affiliation to the *dʾf* in KRS 1024/F. It has already been noted[615] that some of the *dʾf* texts share distinctive stylistic traits, see especially the *f* turned by 90° and the swastika form of the *t*, found in BRenv.A 2/F (Fig. B.2(a)), KRS 1024/F (Fig. B.2(b)) and others.

[615]See Macdonald, Al-Muʾazzin, et al. 1996:463, n.76.

Appendix C

Social Groups and Deities in the JQC

Script	Social Group	Affiliations & Texts Sigla
'Common'	*ʾty*	*h-ʾtyy* (QUR 551.96.1/C)
	ʿms¹	*ḏ ʾl ʿms¹* (QUR 171.7.1/C)
	bʿd	*ḏ ʾl bʿd* (QUR 449.96.1/C)
	ḏẖr	*h-ḏẖry* (QUR 148.40.1/C)
	gr	*ḏ ʾl gr* (QUR 239.5.6/C, 2.399.16/C)
	ẖs¹b	*h-ẖs¹by* (QUR 1016.10.1/C)
	s¹bq	*ḏ ʾl s¹bq* (QUR 239.12.1/C)
'Fine'	*ḍf*	*ḏ ʾl ḍf* (QUR 586.20.1/F)
	ġyr (sub-group *ḍf*)	*ḏ ʾl ġyr h-ḍfy* (QUR 176.24.1/F)
	bdn (sub-group *ḍf*?)	*ḏ ʾl b{d}n* (QUR 9.12.2/F)
	ʿwḏ	*ḏ ʾl ʿwḏ* (QUR 148.76.3/F)
	qs²m (sub-group *ʿwḏ*?)	*ḏ ʾl qs²m* (QUR 2.336.1/F, 2.490.1/F)
SoS	*ʾkt*	*ḏ ʾl ʾkt* (QUR 207.49.1/SoS, 370.225.1/SoS, 370.226.1/SoS, 370.37.1/SoS, 370.42.1/SoS, 639.3.1/SoS) *ḏl* [sic] *ʾkt* (QUR 122.4.1/SoS)
	ʿmrt	*ḏ ʾl ʿmrt* (QUR 294.60.1/SoS)
	bgd	*ḏ ʾl bgd* (QUR 956.43.1/SoS)
	bs¹ʾ	*ḏ ʾl bs¹ʾ* (QUR 952.83.1/SoS)
	ḏẖr	*ḏ ʾl ḏẖr* (QUR 739.87.1/SoS)
	frṯ	*ḏ ʾl frṯ* (QUR 952.28.1/SoS)
	ḥly	*ḏ ʾl ḥly* (QUR 376.29.1/SoS)
	mnʾl	*ḏ ʾl mnʾl* (QUR 244.11.1/SoS)
	nmr	*ḏwl* [sic] *nmr* (QUR 689.3.1/SoS)
	nmrt	*ḏ ʾl nmrt* (QUR 25.73.1/SoS)
	nẓrʾl	*ḏ ʾl nẓrʾl* (QUR 551.93.1/SoS)
	rwḥ	*ḏ ʾl rwḥ* (QUR 27.7.1/SoS)
	s²hr	*ḏ ʾl s²hr* (QUR 297.7.1/SoS, 952.50.1/SoS)
	tts¹	*ḏ ʾl tts¹* (QUR 294.113.3/SoS)
Other?	*s¹ʿdʾl*	*ḏ ʾl s¹ʿdʾl* (QUR 2.712.1/Other?)
Unclassified	*ʾṣr*	*ḏ ʾl ʾṣr* (QUR 309.12.3/SoS?)
	ʾty	*ḏ ʾl ʾty* (QUR 254.9.1/U)
	gmm	*ḏ ʾl gmm* (QUR 172.4.1/C?)
	ḥwlt	*h-ḥwly* (QUR 2.161.1/C?)
	nẓrʾl	*ḏ ʾl nẓrʾl* (QUR 733.23.1/U)

Table C.1: Social groups in the JQC

Deities	Requests & Texts Sigla
lt	*s¹lm* ‘security’ (QUR 256.9.1/C, 32.50.1/C, 64.1.1/C?, 428.27.1/C, 370.72.1/SoS, 739.91.1/SoS) *ġnmt* ‘booty’ (QUR 2.153.1/C/F?, 2.353.8/F, 2.353.9/F, 64.4.1/C) *ġnmt* ‘booty’ + *s¹lm* ‘security’ (QUR 2.253.1/F, 2.360.1/F, 586.31.1/F) *ġnyt* ‘abundance’ (QUR 20.32.1/C?, 20.32.2/C) *ġyrt* ‘abundance’ (QUR 523.20.1/C) *ġnyt* ‘abundance’ + *s¹lm* ‘security’ (QUR 586.34.1/C) *flṭ* ‘deliverance’ (QUR 139.3.1/C) *fṣyt* ‘deliverance’ (QUR 171.67.1/C) *qbll* ‘reunion [with loved ones]’ (QUR 307.77.1/SoS) *s¹lm* ‘security’ + *rwḥ* ‘deliverance’ + *ḍrṭ* ‘winds (?)’ (QUR 974.49.1/C) *nqmt* ‘revenge’ + *ʿwr* ‘blindness [curse]’ (QUR 268.1.1/C)
ʾlt	*s¹ʿd* ‘help’ (QUR 458.3.1/C, 171.59.3/C) *flṭ* ‘deliverance’ (QUR 2.399.15/C, 766.26.1/C) *mṯr* ‘rain’ (QUR 551.93.1/SoS) *ʿwr* ‘blindness [curse]’ (QUR 2.196.2/C, 2.363.14/C) *ḥgrt h ʾlt dwn* [curse] (QUR 372.54.1/C)
h-ʾlt	*ʿwḏ b-h-ʾlt* ‘he sought refuge in the goddess’ (QUR 2.348.1/C)
rḍw	*s¹ʿd* ‘help’ (QUR 2.32.3/C. 2.64.1/C, 7.25.1/C/ThB, 7.36.1/C?, 9.16.1/C, 27.4.1/C, 64.175.1/C/ThB, 64.199.2/C?, 202.3.1/C, 289.14.1/C, 360.13.1/C, 370.90.1/C, 533.20.1/C, 628.30.1/C, 669.24.2/C, 766.4.1/C, 786.7.1/C, 952.88.1/C, 960.4.1/C, 974.15.1/C, 171.162.1/C, 176.22.1/C/ThB) *flṭ* ‘deliverance’ (QUR 1016.55.1/C, 202.17.1/C) *s¹ʿd* ‘help’ + *flṭ* ‘deliverance’ (QUR 428.18.1/C) *ġnmt* ‘booty’ (QUR 137.74.3/C, 779.14.1/C) *ʾws¹* ‘help’ (QUR 687.3.1/C) *ḥwb ʾl-rḍw* ‘he cried out to Rḍw’ (QUR 2.482.1/C) *ʿwr* ‘blindness [curse]’ (20.31.1/C, 449.2.1/C) *rġm* ‘strike down [curse]’ (137.69.2/C)
rḍy	*ġnmt* ‘booty’ (QUR 28.11.2/C, 122.7.1/C, 237.1.1/C, 7.91.1/C, 814.1.1/C) *ġnmt* ‘booty’ + *s¹lm* ‘security’ (QUR 628.4.1/C) *s¹ʿd* ‘help’ (QUR 64.135.1/C, 372.134.1/C) *mṯr* ‘rain’ (QUR 626.25.1/C) *ʿwr* ‘blindness [curse]’ (QUR 529.19.1/C, 551.6.1/C, 952.71.1/C)
rqy	*rwḥ* ‘deliverance’ (QUR 276.33.1/C)
yṯʿ	*s¹ʿd* ‘help’ (QUR 172.18.1/C, 606.5.1/C, 669.22.1/C, 1014.15.1/C)
ḏs²r	*ḥnn* ‘compassion’ (QUR 232.35.1/C)
ds²r	*s¹lm* ‘security’ (QUR 952.49.1/SoS) *qbll* ‘reunion [with loved ones]’ (QUR 297.7.1/SoS)
lt + ds²r	*s¹lm* ‘security’ (QUR 370.225.1/SoS, 7.30.1/SoS) *ġnmt* ‘booty’ + *lʿn* ‘curse’ (QUR 176.24.1/F) *ṯʾr* ‘revenge’ (QUR 813.14.1/SoS) *s²kr* ‘favour’ (QUR 586.25.1/C?)
s²ʿhqm	*ġnmt* ‘booty’ (QUR 2.490.1/F)
lh	*s¹lm* ‘security’ (QUR 305.19.1/C/F?)
h-ʾlh	*ʿwḏ b-h-ʾlh* ‘he sought refuge in the god’ (QUR 2.192.4/C)
ḏgn	*flṭ* ‘deliverance’ (QUR 428.28.1/C)

Table C.2: Invoked deities and associated requests in the JQC

Appendix D

Glossary of Technical Terms

Allographs — Graphetic *allographs* are different instantiations of the same *basic shape*, whereas graphematic *allographs* are different *basic shapes* associated to the same *grapheme* (Meletis 2019:33).

Basic shape — 'A material yet abstract unit' representing 'a 'skeleton', a bundle of visual features that are necessary to perceptually distinguish a shape from the other shapes in an inventory' (Meletis 2019:43, n. 6); the *basic shape* is the emic unit at the graphetic level (Meletis 2019:29). The term is sometimes abbreviated to 'shape'.

Cartouche — A line carved around one or more engravings.

Chiselling — Carving technique which consists of placing a chisel against the rock and hitting it with a hammerstone.

'Common' script — The most common Safaitic script of the JQC and likely also of the Safaitic corpus as a whole.

Direct hammering — Carving technique which consists of carving the rock surface by hitting it directly with a hammerstone.

Effacement — Safaitic *ʿwr*: the act of damaging an engraving by hammering or incising marks above it; texts were also effaced through modifications of various sorts (see *modification* below).

Emphasis — The use of stylistically marked *graph forms* – bigger, thicker, and/or with *special features* – in order to emphasise part of a text, most commonly the name and genealogy of the author.

'Fine' script — A Safaitic inventory characterised by distinctive compressed and elongated *basic shapes* which are the result of a gradual palaeographic development from the *'common' script*.

Graph — An etic and concrete substantiation of a *basic shape* (Meletis 2019:44, n. 6).

Graph form — A unit which is slightly more abstract than the concrete *graph*; term used to refer to the form/stylistic features of one or more *graphs*. It is sometimes abbreviated to 'form'.

Grapheme — The emic unit at the graphematic level (Meletis 2019:29) which can be defined as 'a basic unit of writing that (1) distinguishes meaning, (2) has a linguistic value (typically by referring to a linguistic unit), and (3) is minimal in that it is not composed by smaller units which are themselves graphemes' (Meletis 2019:43).

Hammering — Carving with a hammerstone, either by hitting the rock directly with it (*direct hammering*) or by using it to hit a chisel (*chiselling*).

Incising — Carving technique which consists of cutting the rock with a sharp tool.

Ligature — Graphic element (a bar or a dot) joining two graphs together.

Modification — The addition of bars or other graphic elements to one or more *graphs* of a text in order to change their graphematic value or to make them illegible; probably considered by Safaitic authors as a form of *effacement*, i.e. Safaitic *ʿwr* (see above).

Primary distinguishing feature — A *graph form* which is found exclusively in a given *script* and which is radically different from *graph forms* representing the same *grapheme* in other *scripts*, to the extent that they could not be derived from

each other through *recurring graphic variables* (*vs secondary distinguishing feature*, see below).

Recurring graphic variables These are recurring patterns of graphic variation, as for example the shift from curvilinearity to angularity or vice-versa.

Rocking-blade A rare type of *incising* which consists of pulling a sharp instrument back and forth in order to produce a zig-zag outline.

Rubbed incising A type of *incising* which consists of rubbing the tool up and down on the same strokes in order to produce thicker lines.

Script An inventory of basic shapes (Meletis 2019:20, n. 7); term used to refer to the different Safaitic scripts (i.e. *'common' script*, *'fine' script*, and *SoS script*) as well as to the 'Safaitic script', which comprehends each of these inventories, as opposed to Hismaic, Thamudic B, and the other ANA scripts.

Secondary distinguishing feature 1) A *graph form* which is characteristic of a particular *script* and which is not radically divergent from *graph forms* representing the same *grapheme* in one or more other *scripts*, i.e. they could be easily derived from each other through *recurring graphic variables*; 2) a *graph form* characteristic of one *script*, but only rarely found in others to represent the same *grapheme* (*vs primary distinguishing feature*, see above).

SoS script A Safaitic inventory often labelled in previous literature as 'Mixed Safaitic/Hismaic'; SoS stands for 'Southern Safaitic': this script is found in greatest numbers in Dūma and its surroundings, i.e. much further south than the areas of concentration of 'common' and 'fine' texts.

Special features Expression used to refer to certain *graph forms* – i.e. square forms, forms turned by 90° to their *basic shapes* stances, and elongated forms – for which there is evidence that they were sometimes stylistically marked, since they appear to have been used to emphasise the name of the author (see *emphasis* above).

Superimposition The carving of a text above another.

Writing style The choices of *graph forms*, carving technique, and text layout within an inventory in a given text; when referring to the 'writing style of an author': a consistent set of features which are shared by the texts of a certain author.

Nederlandse Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift behelst de materialiteit van Safaïtische inscripties met speciale aandacht voor de structuur van grafische variatie in het Safaïtische schrift. Safaïtische inscripties werden door nomadische groepen in steen gehouwen en bevinden zich voornamelijk in de Ḥarrah, een basaltachtige woestijn die zich uitstrekt van zuid-Syrië via noordoost-Jordanië tot in het noorden van Saoedi-Arabië. De chronologische reikwijdte van Safaitische inscripties is onbekend, maar het staat vast dat veel van de teksten tussen de eerste eeuw voor Christus en de eerste helft van de tweede eeuw na Christus geschreven zijn. De overgrote meerderheid van Safaïtische inscripties bestaat uit namen of korte teksten, zoals auteursaanduidingen bij rotskunst, verwijzingen naar nomadische en pastorale activiteiten, uitingen van verlangen en verdriet voor dierbaren, en korte gebeden. De taal van de inscripties is Oud Arabisch.

In eerder onderzoek over Safaïtische inscripties is slechts weinig aandacht besteed aan de materiële kenmerken; de bespreking van paleografische kwesties is meestal in de vorm van beperkte opmerkingen, die niet op een systematisch en uitgebreid onderzoek zijn gebaseerd. Dit proefschrift streeft ernaar om deze lacune op te vullen en het belang van een studie van de materialiteit van het Safaïtische schrift aan te tonen.

Het eerste hoofdstuk begint met een inleiding tot verschillende aspecten van Safaïtische epigrafie. De tweede paragraaf biedt informatie over de context en kenmerken van het Jebel Qurma corpus (JQC) uit het noordoosten van Jordanië, wat de primaire dataset voor dit onderzoek vormt. De laatste paragraaf introduceert de vraagstelling en doelen van het proefschrift, bespreekt eerder onderzoek over Safaïtische paleografie, en legt de terminologie en benadering uit die in deze studie worden gebruikt.

Hoofdstuk 2 beschrijft de Safaïtische schriften zoals geattesteerd in het JQC. Het klassificieert de variantvormen die in het JQC vorkomen en brengt de verschillende patronen van grafische variatie in kaart. De eerste paragraaf biedt een lijst van de meest voorkomende patronen van grafische variatie en vervolgens een beschrijving van de ‘gewoon’, ‘fijn’ en SoS schriften. De tweede paragraaf schetst de kenmerken die de Safaïtische schriften onderling onderscheiden, evenals de kenmerken die de Safaïtische schriften van Hismaisch en Thamudisch B onderscheiden. De derde paragraaf beschrijft het schrift van één specifieke tekst waarvan de kenmerken in geen van de drie geïdentificeerde Safaïtische schriften passen en dat mogelijk als een verder schrift kan worden beschouwd. Ten slotte bespreekt de vierde paragraaf de kenmerken van drie teksten die zowel ‘gewone’ als Thamudisch B kenmerken hebben.

Hoofdstuk 3 bestudeert het gebruik van speciale kenmerken – d.w.z. rechthoekige vormen, vormen die 90 graden zijn gedraaid, en langwerpige vormen – waarvoor er aanwijzingen zijn dat ze soms stilistisch gemarkeerd zijn. De eerste paragraaf beschrijft het gebruik van speciale kenmerken aan de hand van voorbeelden uit de JQC. De tweede paragraaf bespreekt de kenmerken van teksten die in eerder onderzoek als in het zogenaamde 'rechthoekige schrift' zijn gelabeld en pleit tegen hun identificatie als een aparte schriftcategorie.

Hoofdstuk 4 beschrijft de paleografische ontwikkeling van het 'gewone' naar het 'fijne' schrift. De meeste teksten in het 'fijne' schrift zijn door leden van de *ḍf* afstamming geschreven. De vele teksten met lange genealogieën van auteurs die tot deze groep behoren kunnen worden gebruikt om hun stamboom tot de vroegste generaties na *ḍf* te reconstrueren, waar we teksten vinden die nog in het 'gewone' schrift zijn gehouwen. De identificatie van teksten uit verschillende generaties van de *ʾl ḍf* biedt dus een diachroon kader om deze paleografische ontwikkeling te onderzoeken. Daarnaast wordt er in de tweede paragraaf geprobeerd om een chronologisch kader voor Safaïtische geletterdheid onder de *ḍf* vast te stellen door de informatie uit de *ḍf* stamboom en de geattesteerde generaties met de gedateerde teksten van leden van deze afstamming te combineren. De berekeningen leverden een minimale tijdspanne van 220 jaar, met een *terminus ante quem* voor het begin van de tijdsspanne aan het begin van de eerste eeuw voor Christus en een *terminus post quem* voor het einde van de tijdsspanne aan het einde van de eerste eeuw na Christus.

Hoofdstuk 5 is gewijd aan verschillende aspecten van de materialiteit van Safaïtische inscripties die nog nooit systematisch zijn behandeld. Het beschrijft de technieken die worden gebruikt om de inscripties in steen te houwen en verschillende kenmerken met betrekking tot de visuele verschijning van teksten en de visuele organisatie van de teksten op de steen.

Hoofdstuk 6 onderzoekt grafische variatie in de schrijfstijlen van productieve schrijvers en hun familieleden. Het bestudeert de schrijfstijlen van 14 auteurs die drie of meer teksten hebben achtergelaten: 8 auteurs die 'gewoon' schrift gebruiken, 3 auteurs die 'fijn' schrift gebruiken, en 3 auteurs die SoS-schrift gebruiken. Voor elk van deze schrijvers wordt een lijst gegeven van de onderscheidende stilistische kenmerken die door zijn teksten worden gedeeld, evenals een bespreking van de verschillen tussen de teksten. Wanneer ook teksten van familieleden van de productieve auteurs konden worden geïdentificeerd, wordt ook besproken hoe bepaalde kenmerken van generatie op generatie zijn bewaard of veranderd. De analyse van schrijfstijlen van productieve schrijvers en hun familieleden laat zien dat men weliswaar binnen verschillende teksten van dezelfde auteur een zekere mate van variatie aantreft, teksten van dezelfde auteur – evenals teksten van naaste verwanten – altijd een relatief consistente reeks kenmerken laten zien.

Hoofdstuk 7 beschrijft ontwrichtende praktijken tegen de teksten, dat wil zeggen, hun uitwissing en wijziging.

Ten slotte bespreekt Hoofdstuk 8 nog drie onderwerpen: het bewijs voor Safaïtische *graph classes*; enkele van de mogelijke motivaties voor de ontwikkeling en grafische

kenmerken van het ‘fijne’ schrift; de sociaal-culturele contexten van het ‘fine’ schrift en van het SoS-schrift.

Het boek heeft vier bijlagen. Bijlage A beschrijft de genealogische structuur van de *ʾl ḏf*, waarbij wordt ingegaan op de informatie die uit de genealogieën kan worden gehaald, het bewijs voor de verschillende subgroepen, en de teksten die voorouders van *ḏf* laten zien. Het tweede deel van de bijlage toont de reconstructie van verschillende genealogische bomen. Het derde deel bevat de gegevens van de compressiemetingen van de letter *b* over verschillende generaties binnen de *ḥmyn* subgroep van de *ḏf*, die voor de paleografische studie in Hoofdstuk 4 werden gebruikt. Bijlage B bespreekt de *ʾl ʿwḏ*. Na de *ʾl ḏf* is de *ʾl ʿwḏ* de tweede sociale groep die van het ‘fine’ script gebruik maakt, hoewel er veel minder teksten zijn gevonden dan van de *ʾl ḏf*. Bijlage B beperkt zich tot een overzicht van het bewijs voor de relatie van de *ʾl ʿwḏ* met de *ʾl ḏf* en een korte bespreking van de mogelijke subgroepen. Bijlage C bestaat uit twee tabellen met de sociale groepen en goden waarnaar in de JQC wordt verwezen. Bijlage D biedt een woordenlijst van de technische termen die in het boek worden gebruikt.

Curriculum Vitae

Chiara Della Puppa was born in San Severino Marche (Italy) in 1990. In 2008 she went to study *Languages, History, and Cultures of the Islamic Countries* at the University of Naples "L'Orientale" and obtained her Bachelor of Arts (*cum laude*) in 2012 with a thesis on the terminology of the plough in the modern Arabic dialects. In 2014 she obtained her Master of Arts in Arabic Studies (*cum laude*) at Leiden University with a thesis in which she re-edited a collection of Safaitic texts from north-eastern Jordan. In the same year, she started a PhD on the Safaitic inscriptions of the Jebel Qurma region (north-eastern Jordan) within the framework of the NWO-funded project *Landscapes of Survival*, led by Prof. Peter Akkermans. This book is the outcome of her PhD research.