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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.