

Further Safaitic Texts From Lebanon

by

G. Lankester Harding

The stone bearing these three Safaitic inscriptions was found by M. S. Ghadban at the same site as the one recently published in *The Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* vol. XVI; in the same volume M. Ghadban published an account and sketch plan of the site. It is of great interest to find further evidence of Safaitic activity so far west, though one cannot as yet speculate on the reason for this. I am grateful to M. Ghadban for the opportunity to publish these interesting texts

This new stone measures roughly 34 x 26 cms. by 9 cms. thick; it is a rather coarse sandstone, pink on the surface but showing white where it has recently been scratched. There is one text on one face and two on the other. The faces of the stone have suffered some damage here and there which renders some parts of the texts unreadable or at least uncertain; there are also a lot of scratchings on face 2, sometimes seemingly caused by a slipping of the tool used for graving the inscriptions. The letters are, on the whole, well made and graven by a sharply pointed piece of metal to an average depth of 2 mms. The forms of the letters are quite orthodox, though *f* takes rather extreme shapes in no. 1. Contents of the texts are likewise orthodox, yet because of gaps and accidental

erasures all are rather difficult to interpret.

1. l mqm bn j-- d'1 jhr (w t)šwq
'P^hth f hlt slm w qblł 'jn(?) w hm— h—
w' 'd h b n' l h f (?)

By Muqim son of J—of the tribe of Jaḥir. And he longed for his sister. So, O Lat, (give) security and good will——?

The name of the father of MQM cannot be read because of a flake having broken from the rock surface; the first letter is certainly *j* and the last perhaps *w*; there would seem to be room for only one letter between. Only two names with this first and final letter are known, JDW and JLW, and both are Thamudic (HIn p. 156 & 166)¹. The same flaking has removed the upper part of the *d* of d'1. JḤR as a tribal name is new, but is known as a proper name in Safaitic (HIn p.153).

The reading of *w* and *t* before šwq is certain, as the expression *w išwq* is well known, and *išwq 'P^hth* is found in HCH 42-44.² This expression is usually followed by an appeal to a deity, and here we seem to have an appeal to Lat for "security and goodwill"? (see Dr. Littmann's remarks in the commentary to HCH 42). But it is not certain if this can be read here, owing chiefly to doubts about the words following qblł; it

(1) Harding, *Index & Concordance of pre-Islamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions*, Toronto, 1971.

(2) *The Cairn of Hani'*, in *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan*, vol. II, 1953.

seems improbable that the first word can be *jl*, "quickly", urging the goddess to hasten the event. Unfortunately the next word fades out after the first two letters, *hm*; the surface at this point is badly rubbed, and nothing can be made out. It is possible that the appeal to Lat should end with the word *slm*, and that the next part should be read *w qbl l 'jl* (or *'jn*), "and be drew near to 'JL (or 'JN)"; neither is known so far as a place name, however. What follows cannot even be guessed at; a large area of the text from *hm* to the next *w* is so rubbed as to be unreadable. Which makes what follows also somewhat difficult though all the letters can be read, unless one regards it simply as two names joined by *bn*. Neither *'dh* nor *'lhf* (*'lsf* ?) is known, though *'d* is found once in Safaitic and once in Thamudic (HIn p. 55): *'wd* is a common name, and if one considers it as a verb the present form could mean "he was commended to the protection of god" (*'wd* IV pass.). *'lhf* could mean "It shines". A possible division of the words could be *w 'd hbn (sbn?) 'l hf*, "And HBN or SBN was commended to the protection of god because of starvation", Ar. *hafa'* — a somewhat improbable reading.

2. 1 h̄dr f(y)mjd w t̄swq '1 bjt bn
'qrbn d'1 r(hs?)

(3) Dr. Littmann in *Safaitic Inscriptions*, Leyden, 1943, quotes three examples, *yslm*, *yšrq* and *y'wr*, but in each case the meaning is optative, "may he be saved", *lyšrq* "that he

On the right of the beginning of this text are very faint traces of another, of which only *t* and *l* (?) show up on the photo and squeeze; nothing else can safely be read on the original save possibly a *h*.

In reading text 2 one encounters a problem immediately after the first name, for the most careful examination of the empty surface of the stone between the letters *f* and *γ* (?) shows that it is smooth and unbroken, and no letters have ever existed there. So should one insert and entirely imaginary *bn* in the space, to read *h̄drf (bn) ymj̄d* ? **HDRF** is unknown as a name in this form, though *drf* is found once in Thamudic (HIn p. 252); on the other hand **HDR** is common in Safaitic (HIn p.612). **YMJD** is found once in Sabaean (HIn p. 683); *mjd* is well known in Safaitic. Or should the *f* be taken as "and" or "so", and *ymj̄d* as the 3rd pers. sing. imperf. of *majuda* II, so that the beginning would read "By Hadhar; and he satisfies (the animals) with herbage"? The use of this form of the verb in Safaitic is extremely rare; and in fact the form of the *γ* itself (if such it be) is a little unusual with the loop left open on one side.³ Under any circumstances it is very difficult to see why a blank space should have been left; it is the only occurrence of such a thing I have so far encountered.

might go east", *y'wr* "may he be blinded". The present case could also be optative, "may he satisfy the animals with herbage", and perhaps this makes better sense than "he satisfies."

From here to the end of the text is quite straightforward, except for the reading of the tribal name, which looks like R(ḤS) or R(ḤJ); neither has a known root in Arabic, but the latter is found once as a proper name (HIn p.273). There is a tribe RKS found in WH 28374 which should perhaps be considered, though it would be a very strange *k*.

The full reading *could* be:

By Hadhir; and may he satisfy (the animals) with herbage.

And he longed for Bajjat son of 'Aqrabān, of the tribe of R(ḤS) or R(KS).

BJT is known from Safaitic and one example from Thamudic (HIn p.93), as is also 'QRBN (HIn p.427). Note the strange disproportion between the small *d* and the very tall *'* in *d'l*.

3. I 'mt w tšwqt 'l — m w 'lt w dšr —
(h) wdr(f?)t.

By 'Immit; and she longed for-M. And 'LT and DŠR——whoever rejects(?).

The name 'MT is well known is Safaitic (HIn p.435) but this seems the first time it is feminine as is suggested by the feminine ending of the verb: it is also the first time I have encountered this form of *tšwq*, but there seems to be no doubt about it. The name of the person she

longed for is lost in a hole in the stone. The invocation to 'LT and DSR is clear, but what they are asked to do is unfortunately unreadable; a number of lines, scratches and rubbings intervene at this point, and though some lines look like letters they are very uncertain and make no sense. It is therefore unsure whether the following *w* is the end of a verb or a conjunction starting a new word or phrase. The penultimate letter is very uncertain in its reading; there are faint hints of a return at the upper end of the letter, and the extension at the lower end might be where the graver slipped. As it stands it resembles no known Safaitic letter.

Remains the problem of what the *d* represents, part of a verb or the particle "whoever". These invocations usually call upon the deity to blind and/or otherwise incapacitate whoever damages, etc. (the writings); the space between the *'* of *dšr* and the *w* would accommodate three or at most four letters, but it would be pointless to guess at what they might be. If the end is read *d rft* "whoever rejects" (presumably the writing), it would certainly be preceded by a curse of some kind. The word *rft* may occur in SLJ 5605, where I would read the latter part as *f r (f) t d r f*, "He rejected him who flattered"; Ar. *rafata*, to reject, refuse. Winnett does not read this part of the text, but Jamme

(4) Winnett and Harding, 4000 Safaitic texts from Jordan, in preparation; see Harding, The Safaitic Tribes, in *Al Abhath XXII*, nos 3 and 4.

(5) F. V. Winnett, *Some Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*, Toronto, 1957.

(JSafN, n. 27)⁶ reads *fm flgt dlf* "Fulgat, he of Lafi', has cheated", treating both *r*'s as hooked *l*'s. The latter are rare in Safaitic, whereas *r* frequently has a hook on one end only. No doubt other readings are possible of both texts.

The photographs have been selected to show the greatest possible number of letters, but it must be emphasized that different lighting reveals (or obscures) different parts of the texts. The black and white figures are taken direct from inked squeezes.

G. Lankester Harding

(6) A. Jamme, *Safaitic Notes*, Washington, 1970.