An Epigraphical Expedition to North-Eastern Transjordan

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6. mu dšu-ili-šu lugal-e bād-gal i-si-in\textsuperscript{KI} dšu-ili-šu ri-im-îš-tar mu-du (III. 12 f.)
   “the year Shu-ilishu the king built the great gate of Isin ‘Shu-ilishu beloved of Ishtar.’”
7. mu dšu-ili-šu lugal-e G18gu-za-bára d nin-i-si-in-K1ra mu-na-dim (III. 24 f.)
   “the year Shu-ilishu the king fashioned the dais-throne for Ninisimma.”
8. mu dšu-ili-šu lugal-e ma-gur, maḫ d nin-urta-ra mu-na-dim (IV. 7 f.)
   “the year Shu-ilishu the king fashioned the makurru-boat for Ninurta.”
9. mu dšu-ili-šu lugal-e G18gu-za-bára d nin-gal-ra mu-na-dim (IV. 16 f.)
   “the year Shu-ilishu the king fashioned the dais-throne for Ningal.”
10. mu ṻs-Ša dšu-ili-šu lugal-e G18gu-za-bára d nin-gal-ra mu-na-dim (RIU no. 214)
    “the year after Shu-ilishu the king fashioned the dais-throne for Ningal.”

AN EPIGRAPHICAL EXPEDITION TO NORTH-EASTERN TRANSJORDAN

F. V. WINEbett

It has long been known that southern Syria is rich in epigraphical remains. Some 6,500 Safaitic, in addition to numerous Arabic, Greek, and Latin inscriptions have been found there.\textsuperscript{1} A recent expedition of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem in co-operation with the Jordan Department of Antiquities indicates that north-eastern Transjordan may be equally rich in inscriptive material. On September 16, 1950, a party consisting of Mr. G. W. L. Harding, Chief Curator of Antiquities for Jordan, Dr. Lucetta Mowry, Dr. William H. Morton, Mr. D. C. Baramki, and the writer, together with two Arab assistants, penetrated to Jāwā, thirteen kilometers north of pumping-station H5 on the IPC pipeline. Modern Jāwā consists of a small Bedawin encampment around a weak spring, but the presence of a large fortified site (now in ruins) and a dam across the wady two kilometers to the west shows that it lies on what was once an important caravan route. On the rocks around Jāwā such a large number of Kufic and Safaitic inscriptions were found that it was impossible to record them all in the short time available.

On October 16 a return visit was made to Jāwā, which became a base of operations for an examination of the surrounding territory during the next five days. The personnel of the party was the same as before.

\textsuperscript{1} For these, see E. Littmann, Safaitic Inscriptions (Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria, Division IV, Section C, Leyden, 1943), and the Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, Part V, vol. 1 (in press).
except that Mr. J. A. Thompson, an Honorary Fellow of the School, replaced Miss Mowry. Through the courtesy of Glubb Pasha an Arab Legion truck and two legionnaires were placed at the disposal of the expedition. Without them it would have been virtually impossible to traverse the difficult terrain. The photographing of the inscriptions was done by Mr. Harding and Dr. Morton; Mr. Baramki copied the Kufic, and Mr. Thompson and the writer copied the Safaitic. The largest finds of inscriptions were made at Jāwā, Jathūm, and Tell el-'Abd, the latter two sites being close to the Syrian border. Visits were also paid to Deir el-Kahf and Deir el-Qinn but no inscriptions were found there, except a badly weathered Greek inscription at the latter place. At Deir el-Kahf the American School linked hands, as it were, with the Princeton Expedition to Syria which visited this site in 1904-5.

The collation of the copies and photographs of the inscriptions could not be completed, but a provisional estimate would be: 700 Safaitic, 100 Kufic, and 7 Greek texts. Many more Safaitic inscriptions were observed, especially on the way back from Tell el-'Abd, but there was no time to copy them. It seems very probable that there are thousands of Safaitic graffiti in northeastern Transjordan awaiting the collector. It is true that the average Safaitic inscription, taken by itself, is a most unimpressive relic but, taken in bulk, they yield a respectable fund of information regarding the religion, culture, and dialect of the pre-Islamic Arabs of this area, and an effort should be made to salvage them.

A number of the newly found inscriptions are dated by current events. Only one of these will be discussed here. It reads as follows: "lmt-y bnl ḫzn wmr ḫl rm st ‘ty ḥmdy ḫyry dhlt sml—‘By Ṭālī ḫnl. ḪZN. He rebelled against Rome the year the Persians came to Boṣrā. So ḫnl Allāt, (grant) protection.” It is probably the same war which is referred to in DM 554. Dussaud reads this inscription as follows: "lhmwr bnl ghtfn bn ‘dnq ḫṣṛ ḫṣnt ḫrb ḫqdy ‘l rm ḫbṣr sq’trz—‘By Muḥāwwar b. Ḥaṭṭafān ḫnl. ‘Odḥainat. He came to Fingt (?) the year when ḥa-Gadhy made war against Rome at Boṣrā...” Littmann suggested reading the latter part of the inscription as ṣwṛ ḫqṭ (or ṣn’qṭh) sn’t ḫrb ḥmdy ‘l rm ḫbṣr sq wrz—‘and he came with his bands (or his lambs) the year of the war of the Medes (i.e. Persians) with the people of Rome at Boṣrā. Waraz (i.e. Shahwaraz, the general of Chosroes II, 590-628 A.D.) was repulsed.” Our inscription, as well as DM’s own copy, shows that the emendation ḥmdy is justified. The other emendations are questionable. Our inscription shows that in Safaitic “Boṣrā” was spelled with a final y, as it is in Classical Arabic. Therefore, DM’s s is a mistake

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5 These two places were first described by Dussaud and Macler in their Mission dans les Régions Désertiques de la Syrie Moyenne (Paris, 1903), pp. 431, 433.
8 In the Minæean inscription, Hall, 535, the Persians are referred to as ḥmdy.
for y. (The top of a Safaitic s has the form of y.) It follows that q should be read as w. (The two letters are very similar in Safaitic.) For bjngth I would suggest reading bjnyrth (bi-fanājirathu) "with his skilful horsemen." The inscription would then read: "By Muḥawwar b. Ghaṭafān b. 'Udhainat. He came with his skilful horsemen the year that the Persians fought with the Romans at Boṣrā, and he distinguished himself." Muḥawwar is careful not to say on which side he fought, but it is evident from Māṭi's inscription, quoted above, that the "Safaitic" Arabs aided the Persian invaders. After the Persians were driven out, Māṭi felt it necessary to invoke the protection of the goddess Allāt against the wrath of the Byzantines.

Littmann hesitated to identify the Persian-Roman struggle at Boṣrā referred to in DM 554 with the Persian capture of Boṣrā in 614 A.D. for several reasons: (i) The wars between the Romans or Byzantines and Persians were so frequent that it is difficult to tell which war is meant here. (ii) The absence of Christian influence in the Safaitic texts suggests that all these texts date from a period before Christianity had become widespread in Syria. (iii) The bulk of the Safaitic inscriptions seem to date from the second and third centuries A.D. A seventh century date for one text is, therefore, improbable.

There are a number of considerations, however, which lead one to believe that this distinguished scholar has been, in this instance, overly cautious. In the first place, the only known Persian occupation of Boṣrā took place in 614 A.D. Secondly, it is by no means certain that Christian influence is absent from the Safaitic texts. In an article entitled "References to Jesus in Pre-Islamic Inscriptions," published some years ago,¹ I attempted to demonstrate that the god Yṯ, who appears quite frequently in Safaitic, is none other than Jesus. Thirdly, the argument from the second-third century A.D. date of most of the Safaitic inscriptions is scarcely valid since we are by no means sure when the Safaitic script fell into disuse. Dussard's discovery near en-Nemārah in southern Syria of an inscription, dated 328 A.D., which seemed to be a link between Nabataean and Islamic Arabic, led scholars to assume that the old Arabic scripts were by this time on the way out and that a new script, evolved from Nabataean, was coming into use in North Arabia. But if this were so, how are we to account for the small number of inscriptions in this proto-Arabic script? Up to the present only four have been found!² The contrast between the number of inscriptions in the Safaitic script and in the proto-Arabic script is so striking that one is impelled to ask, Had the northern Arabs forgotten how to write? And if so, why? What can account for this sudden decline in literacy?

Why should the northern Arabs have abandoned their script in the fourth century A.D. whereas the Arabs of the Yemen continued to use their script right down to the triumph of Islam? Littmann himself has

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¹ The Moslem World, XXXI (1941).
² In addition to the en-Nemārah inscription, we have the Zabād, Harran, and Umm al-Jimal texts, the latter three dating from the 6th century A.D. Some inscriptions found on the Nabataean temple at Ramā may possibly be pre-Islamic (cf. Rev. Bib., xlv, 1935, p. 270).
drawn attention to the fact that the presence of the article 'al in the en-Nemârah inscription shows that its author did not belong to any of the tribes of the Ṣafā, who regularly employed the article ha. Therefore, the existence of this inscription is no proof that the Safaitic script had been abandoned by 328 A.D. There would seem to be every likelihood that the Safaitic and Thamudic scripts continued in use right down to the rise of Islam.

To sum up, the usual assumption that the proto-Arabic script had displaced the Safaitic and Thamudic scripts before the rise of Islam is open to serious question. The paucity of inscriptions in the proto-Arabic script is evidence that it had very little currency before the rise of Islam. How and why it came to be adopted by the founders of Islam is a subject which needs further investigation. One thing is clear: the rise of Islam was an historical phenomenon of sufficient strength to bring about the disuse of the old scripts associated with the days of paganism, but it is doubtful if it is possible to discover any equally powerful cause in the history of Arabia in the fourth and fifth centuries able to effect such a radical change. The arguments advanced above are, admittedly, not conclusive but they are of sufficient strength to warn us that it may yet be necessary for us to revise our ideas about the history of the art of writing in Arabia.

AN IMPORTANT CORRELATION BETWEEN THE PALESTINIAN AND SYRIAN CHALCOLITHIC

G. Ernest Wright

In a prehistoric seminar conducted by Professor Henri Frankfort at the Oriental Institute (1939-1941) a definite correlation was discovered between one phase of the Chalcolithic cultures of Palestine and those of the ‘Amuq valley in Syria. With the generous permission of Professor Robert J. Braidwood I am able to mention it here.

The earliest occupation discovered in the ‘Amuq by the Oriental Institute expedition, chiefly at Tell Judeideh, is in Phases A and B (approximately contemporary with the lowest level, V, at Ras Shamra). Above these was Phase C, in which Halafian painted wares were first imported from Northern Mesopotamia and locally imitated. At Judeideh itself this was followed by Phase E, filled with typical Obeid painted ware, whereas Phase F contained pottery of the Early Bronze I type in Palestine.¹

On the neighboring Tell Kurdu, in an excavated area of some twenty square meters with ca. four and one-half meters of depth, there was found

¹In the preliminary report, American Journal of Archaeology, Vol. XLI (1937), pp. 10-11, the cultural sequence at Judeideh was given in levels, numbered with Roman numerals. Level XIV there is now broken down into Phases A-C, and Level XIII is the same as Phase F.