

## THAMUDIC AND NABATAEAN INSCRIPTIONS FROM UMM AL-RASAS

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The following inscriptions were discovered during the excavations at Umm al Raṣāṣ by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan<sup>1</sup>. They were found on rocks re-used in the building of the church of Bishop Sergius, dated by the dedicatory mosaic to A.D. 587, and that of St. Stephen, which is dated by the same means to A.D. 785. I have worked from photographs kindly sent me by Fr. Michele Piccirillo and I am most grateful to him for allowing me to study these texts and publish them here.

### Inscriptions 1-2

Umm al Raṣāṣ 1 and 2 (Fig. 1.1-2; Phot. 1) run parallel to each other on a slab of limestone found in the Church of Bishop Sergius at Umm al Rasas. They are in the Thamudic D script and are among the most northerly examples of texts of this type<sup>2</sup>.

#### 1. The right hand text.

*zn ḥr bn tmr*  
“This is Ḥr son of Tmr”

*Hr* is known from Safaitic, with one example each in Thamudic B (WHI 4) and E (WAMT 49). *Tmr* has not been found before but compare Ar. *tamr* “dates”.

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1. See Piccirillo and Aṭṭiyat 1986.

2. For another, from even further north, see C 407 (W. 7) which is from Riḡm al-Marā, northeast of the Ṣafā. Unfortunately, this is known only from a copy of dubious accuracy.

2. The left hand text.

*zn qs<sup>l</sup> bn mld*  
 “This is Qs<sup>l</sup> son of Mld”

*Qs<sup>l</sup>* is known from Safaitic and Thamudic E<sup>3</sup>. *Mld* is known only from Safaitic.

### Inscription 3

The inscriptions 3-10 are Thamudic E. For other Thamudic E texts from Umm al Raṣāṣ see SPT and TIJ 495-498.<sup>4</sup>

3. The inscription is written boustrophedon and is the only text on this stone (Fig. 1.3; Phot. 2).

*I ḥlf bn ḥlf bn zdqm bn ḥrg bn ‘lm*  
 “By Ḥlf son of Ḥlf son of Zdqm (son of) Ḥrg son of ‘lm.”

The third *bn* is not clear on the photographs and looks more like an *‘*. However, I think this is because of an indentation in the rock which appears to join the two corners of the *b*. The final *bn* is crossed by another indentation on the rock face, giving it the superficial appearance of a large *y*. All the names are known. *Zdqm* is particularly common in the Thamudic E texts from Wādi Ġudayyid, in southern Jordan, shortly to be published by Dr. .M.H. Ring<sup>5</sup>, and the other names in this text are also attested in that collection.

3. Note HIn’s reference to *Qs<sup>l</sup>* in TIJ 511 should be deleted. The text reads from right to left and, like TIJ 510, is an invocation to *‘trs<sup>l</sup>m*. For similar invocations see WHI 160 and 161.

4. In SPT Savignac published only the copies of the inscriptions without readings (1936: 245). They were edited a year later by G. Ryckmans (1937: 343-44). SPT 2, 5 and part of 6 were re-published in TIJ as 495-496, 498, and 497 respectively.

5. King (forthcoming).

### Inscriptions 4-11

The inscriptions 4-11 are carved on one block. Nos 4-10 are Thamudic E and no. 11 is Nabataean (Fig. 1.4-1; Phot. 3).

4. At the top of the stone. Crudely pecked from left to right.

*bn ʿm*  
B(n) ʿm

An unattested name in a rather uncertain reading. However, names compounded with *bn-* are common in Thamudic E and Safaitic.

5. At the top of the stone, running from right to left before turning downwards possibly to avoid the last letter of no.4.

*I ḏbt bn klm*  
“By Ḍbt son of Klm”

Although Ḍbt has not been found before,<sup>6</sup> it is known as a name in Arabic,<sup>7</sup> while ʿḏbt probably occurs in SPT and *Ḍb is* common in Safaitic and has been found three times in Thamudic E.<sup>8</sup> The second name has been found once before, in Safaitic.<sup>9</sup>

6. This text runs vertically below no. 4.

*I mṭr*  
“By Mṭ(r)”

A name known from Safaitic and Thamudic E.<sup>10</sup>

6. The reference to *Ḍbt* on HIn. p. 380 should be deleted. It an error for *Ḍbt*.

7. See HIn. p. 380 s.v. *Ḍbt*.

8. See King (forthcoming).

9. SIT 23. The reading *klm* (in HIn p. 504, as against *klb* in the edition) is confirmed by the photograph (Department of Antiquities of Jordan photograph A. 2453).

10. See King (forthcoming).

7. This text is composed of two lines and runs diagonally below no. 6.

*l ms<sup>l</sup>r / / bn 's<sup>l</sup> d w l - - -*  
 “By Ms<sup>l</sup>k son of 's<sup>l</sup>d and . . . .”

Ms<sup>l</sup>k is well known in Safaitic and has been found three times in Thamudic E.<sup>11</sup> 's<sup>l</sup>d is common in Thamudic E and Safaitic. The end of the text is invisible on the photographs.

8. This text runs vertically in the centre of the rock-face.

*I ns r bn hdd*  
 “By (N)s<sup>l</sup>r son of Ḥdd ....”

Both names are known in Thamudic E and Safaitic.

9. This text runs vertically below no. 8.

*l mṭr bn khl bn khl*  
 “By Mṭr son of Khl son of Khl”.

Both names are known in Thamudic E and Safaitic.

10. This text runs vertically to left of no. 9.

*l 'bdlh bn 'm*  
 “By 'bdlh son of ('m)”

Both names are known in Thamudic E and Safaitic.

There are traces of other Thamudic E texts on this face but they are too faint to read from the photograph.

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11. See King (forthcoming).

11. A three line Nabataean graffito very crudely pecked over the Thamudic texts. Very tentatively I would suggest reading

2.        *ḥd/r*
1. *dkyr rhq br*
3.        *bṭb (?)*

“May Rhq son of Ḥd/r be remembered for good” (?).

There is a sign which I cannot interpret below the *r* of *dkyr*. If my suggested reading is correct, the order of the lines is odd. *Rhq*, *Ḥd* and *Ḥr* are not known as names in Nabataean, but all are attested in Safaitic, and the last two also in Thamudic E.

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### Siglae

C Safaitic inscriptions in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*, Pars V. Paris, 1950-51.

HIIn Harding 1971.

JS Tham Thamudic inscriptions in Jaussen and Savignac 1909-22.

Naveh TSB Safaitic and Thamudic inscriptions in Naveh 1978.

SIT Safaitic inscriptions in Harding 1972.

SPT Thamudic inscriptions in Savignac 1936: 245 and edited in Ryckmans 1937: 343-44.

TIJ Thamudic inscriptions in Harding and Littmann 1952.

W Safaitic and Thamudic inscriptions copied by J.Wetzstein and published in C.

WAMT Thamudic inscriptions in Winnett 1971.

WHI Thamudic inscriptions in Winnett and Reed 1973.