

*Original article***HERITAGE IN STONE: SOME REMARKS ON NEWLY DISCOVERED ANCIENT NORTH ARABIA -SAFAITIC- GRAFFITI FROM SYRO-ARABIAN ḤARRAH**Al-Rawabdeh, N.<sup>1</sup> & Al-Manaser, A.<sup>2(\*)</sup><sup>1</sup>Tourism Management dept., Faculty of Tourism and Archaeology, Jordan Univ., Amman, Jordan.<sup>2</sup>Cultural Resources Management and Museology dept., Queen Rania Faculty of Tourism & Heritage, The Hashemite Univ., Zarqa, Jordan.\*E-mail address: [aliy@hu.edu.jo](mailto:aliy@hu.edu.jo)**Article info.****Article history:**

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**Abstract:**

*In this paper, we highlight a remarkable compilation of Ancient North Arabian (ANA) "Safaitic" inscriptions discovered in the Jordanian Badia, specifically in Wādī Swī'ad and the al-Wādī al-Abyyāḍ. Through thorough analysis and comparison with published inscriptions and other Semitic languages, we uncover an array of personal names and diverse terms. These inscriptions vividly portray the daily customs and beliefs of the inhabitants, offering a valuable glimpse into the intriguing realms of their religious and social spheres. This study underscores the significance of conducting additional survey efforts to record more inscriptions, ultimately enhancing our understanding of the culture of early inhabitants in the region during the first centuries CE. It also sheds light on the development of the Jordanian Badia throughout various time periods.*

**1. Introduction**

In the vast, rugged expanse of northeastern Jordanian desert lies a treasure trove of cultural evidence: the ancient North Arabian inscriptions. These inscriptions hold a vital key to understanding the inhabitants of the region during the pre-Islamic era and their connections with neighboring civilizations, particularly urban societies. In a dedicated effort to preserve and document these valuable inscriptions, a project was initiated in 2015 (The Badia Epigraphic Survey, BES) to survey the desert and its rich collection of inscriptions [1]. The Badia Epigraphic Survey is an offshoot of the Online Corpus of the Inscriptions of Ancient North Arabia (OCIANA). It undertakes surveys in the basalt desert (*ḥarrah*) of north-eastern Jordan to record systematically with photographs and GPS co-ordinates the Safaitic, Greek, Nabataean and Islamic inscriptions, as well as rock drawings of all periods, which have been carved in huge numbers on the rocks and boulders of this area. These inscriptions are then added to the OCIANA database with all ancillary information and photographs so that they are freely available to both academics and the public. One of the BES aims is to explore the "border" between the basalt desert (*ḥarrah*) and the limestone desert (*ḥamād*), an area which many authors of Safaitic inscriptions

record migrating to in the rainy seasons. BES team worked along this border from north to south visiting many sites, some of which had hundreds of inscriptions and others none. It was necessary, of course, to record both types of sites to establish the pattern of distribution of the texts. In most cases, the largest numbers of inscriptions were found at cairns, both ancient ones and modern structures built on the sites of ancient cairns. Unfortunately, most of these sites had been disturbed by looters who believe that there is gold under the desert. This does not of course destroy the inscriptions, but often means that they are now lying with the inscribed face downwards. Individual inscriptions can also be found in areas between the sites but they are far fewer [2].

**2. Methodology**

The BES team is dedicated to meticulously documenting inscriptions through cutting-edge methods and thorough field readings. Along with recording precise geographic coordinates of sites, the team takes note of all field observations, paying special attention to any changes made to the sites where inscriptions are located. This includes unauthorized excavations for treasure or gold. The team is diligent in

regularly and accurately documenting both ancient and modern inscriptions, smoothly transitioning between sites according to a set timeline. Additionally, the team incorporates the sites of stone cairns into electronic maps with precision. The scope of this study includes the discussion of novel terminologies, while excluding previously published and discussed names or terminologies found in the inscriptions of the present study, as they are readily accessible through the OCIANA database. The findings of our study have revealed a multitude of remarkable inscriptions, scattered across two distinct regions. One of these regions is the renowned Wādī Swī'ad, (approx. 34 km to the southeast of aṣ-Ṣafawī (H5) region, where the BES team has meticulously documented over 3200 Safaitic inscriptions in 2017. It is worthy to mention that a number of these inscriptions were previously published [3]. Moving on to the second area, we have the al-Wādī al-Abyyaḍ, which was visited by Geraldine King back in 1989. During her visit, King collected several inscriptions, which have now been included in the OCIANA electronic database. This Wādī located around 45km north-east of the village of as-Safawi, fig. (1).

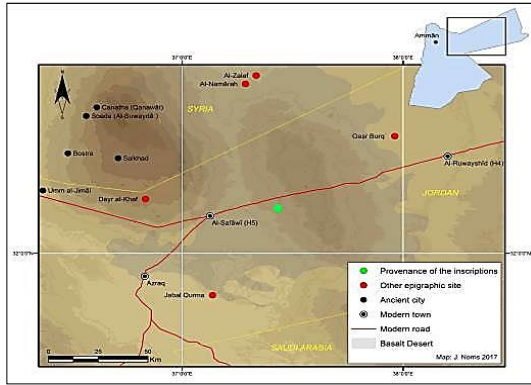


Figure (1) a map showing the sites on which the inscriptions were recorded.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Inscription No. 1, fig. (2)



Figure (2) stone 1, inscriptions 1-8 (© Al-Manaser).

- **Transliteration:**

*l rms' bn rb't bn 'dy w ḥdr fnyt b- dkr fšhd f'z'n l- qšb fh  
rdw s'lm w 'wr m 'wr*

- **Translation:**

*By Rms' son of Rb't son of 'dy and he came to water at Fnyt during Aries and it was waterless and so he searched for water right up to the channels which [are meant to] bring water from the springs and so O Rḍw [grant] security and blind whoever scratches out [the inscription]*

- **Commentary:** The sun is in Aries (*dkr*) during April [4], i.e. in the middle of *dt'* "the season of later rains" and so,

at that time of year, the author would not normally have had to come to a site of permanent water such as Fnyt, which is near Burqu' in north-eastern Jordan. It is in this context that he says he was searching for water or herbage as far as the channels which would normally be bringing water to the wells. For *šhd* cf. Arabic *ṣayhad* "waterless desert" [5]; for *z'n* cf. Arabic *za'ana* "he journeyed to seek after herbage or water, or he removed from water to water" [6]. For *qšb* cf. Arabic *qaṣab* "channels by which water flows from the springs or sources; or the channels by which the water of a well flows from the springs or sources" [6].

#### 3.2. Inscription No. 2

- **Transliteration:**

*l yḥm'l bn wqf*

- **Translation:**

*By Yḥm'l son of Wqf*

#### 3.3. Inscription No. 3

- **Transliteration:**

*l n'mn bn šnnt bn 'mhm bn ns'm*

- **Translation:**

*By N'mn son of Šnnt son of 'mhm son of Ns'm*

#### 3.4. Inscription No. 4

- **Transliteration:**

*l ḥmy bn yḥm'l bn wqf bn frq*

- **Translation:**

*By Ḥmy son of Yḥm'l son of Wqf son of Frq*

#### 3.5. Inscription No. 5

- **Transliteration:**

*l 'bṭ bn ḥrb*

- **Translation:**

*By 'bṭ son of Ḥrb*

#### 3.6. Inscription No. 6

- **Transliteration:**

*l 'zz bn yḥm'l bn wqf*

- **Translation:**

*By 'zz son of Yḥm'l son of Wqf*

#### 3.7. Inscription No. 7

- **Transliteration:**

*l mn' bn 'lht bn qs'm*

- **Translation:**

*By Mn' son of 'lht son of Qs'm*

#### 3.8. Inscription No. 8

- **Transliteration:**

*l 'ḥwd bn rhdt bn fr'*

- **Translation :**

*y 'ḥwd son of Rhdt son of Fr'*

#### 3.9. Inscription No. 9, fig. (3)



Figure (3) stone 2, inscription No. 9 (© Al-Manaser).

• **Transliteration:**

*l tlg bn dkr bn z'n bn nks' bn s'hwat w hrš s'n' f h dg{n/l}  
s'lm h- hfyt h- s'nt*

• **Translation:**

*By Tlg son of Dkr son of Z'n son of Nks' son of S'hwat and  
he was keeping watch for enemies and so O Dg{n/l} may  
this well be secure this year*

- **Commentary:** The text is thinly scratched on a rough surface which is not really suitable for inscribing. A deity *dgn* or *dgl* has not been found before in Ancient North Arabian or, as far as we can tell, elsewhere, unless one assumes that it is a mispronunciation of the divine name Dagan, which to the best of our knowledge has not been found spelt with a /d/ in those Semitic languages (such as Ugaritic) which have this phoneme. For *hfyt* cf. Arabic *ḥafīyah* "a well" [6]. Alternatively, one could read *s'lm-h hfyt h-s'nt* "keep him securely hidden this year" (literally "make him safe as to his being hidden this year"), cf. Arabic *ḥafīyah* "a state of being unapparent, covert, secret" [5,6].

3.10. **Inscription No. 10**, fig. (4)



Figure (4) stone 3, inscription No. 10 (© Al-Manaser)

• **Transliteration:**

*l s' d bn mlk bn s' d bn s' d bn mlk bn 'bd bn 'd bn hld bn  
s'rb bn glmt bn s'hr{n} bn df d- l d'fw r'y d'n fh l{t} s'lm l-  
d d'y s'fr glmt w wgm 'l- 'b -h w 'l- 'm -h {y}{z} 'wd*

• **Translation:**

*By S' d son of Mlk son of S' d son of S' d son of Mlk son of  
'bd son of 'd son of Hld son of S'rb son of Glmt son of S'hrn  
son of Df of the lineage of D'f and he pastured {some sheep}  
and so O Lt [grant] security to whoever reads the writing  
of Glmt and he grieved for his father and for his  
mother {y}{z} 'wd*

- **Commentary:** There appears to be part of another inscription, presumably running over from an adjacent face (which was not photographed), running down the left side of this text. There are too few letters to make a coherent interpretation. It is difficult to interpret the letters *{y}{z}* under the damage between *'m-hand* *'wd* (assuming that the *www{b}* after *'m-h* are part of the inscription from the adjacent side) and, given that it has no context, it is not possible to decide whether the last word, *'wd*, is a noun ("protection") or a personal name. The letter *t* has a very elaborate form derived from the swastika shape and is almost unrecognizable in the divine name *lt*. The form of *f* is also unusual and *d* has only one cross-bar. The *n* of *d'n* runs into a small crack in the rock making it look longer and more curved than it is. Note that this author does not use a definite article where it might be expected. Thus, *r'y*

*d'n* and *d'y s'fr*. This may be chance or it may be an example of a dialect which, like Hismaic, has no visible definite article [7,8].

3.11. **Inscription No. 11**, fig. (4)



Figure (5) stone 4, inscription No. 11 (© Al-Manaser).

• **Transliteration:**

*l q 'sn bn 'mhm bn n{s'}m w h rdh gnmt h- s'nt*

• **Translation:**

*By Q'sn son of 'mhm son of {Ns'm} and O Rdh, [grant]  
booty this year*

- **Commentary:** The middle letter of the second name was incised in the form of a *k* but then an extra line was hammered onto it to turn it into a *s'*. Another example of the genealogy *q'sn bn 'mhm bn ns'm* is found in KRS 120 and *'mhm bn ns'mis* found in three other Safaitic inscriptions [9]. Note that the *s'* in *s'nt* was incised as two vertical lines which were then joined by a short-hammered diagonal. Note the spelling of the divine name *rdh*, rather than the usual *rdw* or *rdy*, is at present unique in Safaitic, but is also found once in Thamudic B inscriptions.

3.12. **Inscription No. 12**, fig. (6)



Figure (6) stone 5, inscription No. 12 (© Al-Manaser).

• **Transliteration:**

*l n{z}r bn <<>> 'd'g bn hl h- htt w 'hd m- zd h- dmyt*

• **Translation:**

*By {Nzr} son of <<>> 'd'g son of Hl is the carving and he  
made the drawing of Zd*

- **Commentary:** The second letter of the first name looks at first sight like a *h*, but the middle stroke (which is like a very slim *t*) does not reach the top where the outer strokes are joined, and so though its presence is strange, it is not part of the letter. After the first *bn* the figures of the two horsemen (above) and the smaller camel-rider (below) intervene and the space between the hind legs of the camel and the patronym, *'dg*, is damaged by lime, hiding anything that might have been there. The phrase *w 'hd m- zd h-dmyt* does not seem to have occurred before and it is not exactly clear what "taking from Zd the drawing" means. It would



be strange if the author were saying that Zd had drawn the picture and he (the author) was now claiming it. We have therefore suggested very tentatively that Zd is the hors-eman whom the author has "captured" in the drawing.

### 3.13. Inscription No. 13, fig. (7)



Figure (7) stone 6, inscription No. 13-16 (© Al-Manaser).

#### • Transliteration:

*l 's'hr bn hlmt bn trml bn s'ry bn s'lm bn s'fd bn rf't bn gml  
bn zd'l bn 's'll bn mhl w ts'wq l- 'n'm bn gnt m- h'rn f h lh  
s'lm m- hlf w hrš s'n' gzz b- bql b- r'y 'ly w wg[ ]m 'l-  
'wd'l f h lt w yt' mhl{t} w nq't l- d'y'wr h- h'tt w 'rf 'tr <'>  
n'm f 's'y*

#### • Translation:

By 's'hr son of Hlmt son of Trml son of S'ry son of S'lm son of S'fd son of Rf't son of Gml son of Zd'l son of 's'll son of Mhl and he longed for 'n'm son of Gnt from the Hawrān and so O Lh [grant] security from a bad man and he was on the lookout for enemies raiding in the spring herbage during the rising of Taurus and he {grieved} for 'wd'l and so O Lt and Yt' [inflict] {dearth of pasture} and ejection from the grave on whoever erases the carving and he recognized the traces of { 'n'm } and he grieved.

- **Commentary:** The author carved two gs in wgm and appears to have omitted one stroke of the ' in 'n'm at the end of the text. The alternative would be read h- n'm "the livestock" which does not make much sense in this context. hlf could have a variety of meanings in this context. It can mean "compensation" (see Al-Jallad & Jaworska) which would imply that the author had done something which required compensation (presumably not to 'n'm for whom "he is longing"). Alternatively, it could mean a "successor" (Arabic *half* [6]); or a "bad man" (Arabic *hālīf* [6]). 's'y does not seem to have been found before in Safaitic but cf. Classical Arabic 'asiya "he grieved or mourned" [6].

### 3.14. Inscription No. 14

#### • Transliteration:

*l hnn {b}{n} fhd [bn] hrm bn {g}l'l bn h'r} 't bn  
whb' l}*

#### • Translation:

By Hnn {son of} Fhd [son of] Hrm son of {Gl}l son of {Hr't} son of {Whb'l}

- **Commentary:** The text has been carelessly carved and has suffered some additions and other damage. It encloses in a circular cartouche. It seems possible that the circle after the first name was originally a small bnin which the letters were later joined up. However, if this is the case the letters would have been considerably smaller than any of the others in the text. The next bn appears to have been

omitted. The fourth name is odd but it is difficult to see how else it could be read. In the next name the second letter is a straight line with a small horizontal stroke at one end which we have taken to be a r.

### 3.15. Inscription No. 15

#### • Transliteration:

*l bhl bn hlf bn bhl bn bny bn 'mr*

#### • Translation:

By Bhl son of Hlf son of Bhl son of Bny son of 'mr

### 3.16. Inscription No. 16

#### • Transliteration:

*l grbn bn 'ds<sup>1</sup>*

#### • Translation:

By Grbn son of 'ds<sup>1</sup>

### 3.17. Inscription No. 17, fig. (8)



Figure (8) stone 7, inscription No. 17 (© Al-Manaser).

#### Transliteration:

*l bdr bn gml bn hld w 'qd h- bkrt*

#### Translation:

By Bdr son of Gml son of Hld and he clipped the young she-camel

**Commentary:** The inscription runs downwards immediately in front of the camel and continues between its legs. The verb 'qd has occurred three times before, in two of which the object is a she-camel [10]. Although in Arabic, the root W-D-D is primarily to do with trimming the feathers for arrows, qadda and qāddada can mean "to cut, trim (the hair)" [5].

### 3.18. Inscription No. 18, fig. (9)



Figure (9) stone 8, inscription No. 18-19 (© Al-Manaser)

#### • Transliteration:

*l '<<>> hdm bn y'ly w wlh b'w f h lt kfyw w w*

#### • Translation:

By 'hdm son of Y'ly and he was distressed on account of unjust treatment and so O Lt [grant] sufficient food and w

- **Commentary:** There is what appears to be a vertical line between the second and third letters, but since it is thicker and rougher than the lines of the letters, it would seem to be extraneous to the inscription. For the interpretation of b'w see [8]. Here b'w is taken as an infinitive in the adverb-

ial accusative. For *kfyt* cf. Arabic *kufyah* "food, sufficiency" [5]. There is a large *w* and a partly formed *w* after *kfyt*. However, it appears that the author stopped at this point.

### 3.19. Inscription No. 19, fig. (10)



Figure (10) stone 9, inscription No. 20 (© Al-Manaser)

#### • Transliteration:

*l'kf bn wdm w wgm 'l- ḥbb f ḥbb*

#### • Translation:

*By 'kf son of Wdm and he grieved for friend after friend*

### 3.20. Inscription No. 20, fig. (11)



Figure (11) stone 10, inscription No. 21-22 (© Al-Manaser).

#### • Transliteration:

*l'ws' bn 'dm bn š'd w 'lfm- {š}wy*

#### • Translation:

*By 'ws' son of 'dm son of Š'd and he fed [the animals] on dry fodder because [everything] had dried up*

- **Commentary:** The loop of the *š*, if that is what it is, has been destroyed by a chip. The verb *'lf* means to feed the animals on dried fodder when there is no, or insufficient, herbage. In this context the word *šwy* (if this is the correct reading) explains the need to *'lf*, cf. Arabic *šuwān* infinitive of *šawā* "to be dry, dried up" [6].

### 3.21. Inscription No. 21

#### • Transliteration:

*l ks't bn nšr'l bn {ḡ}{y}r'l w s'qy mn tbr h- d' {n}*

#### • Translation:

*By Ks't son of Nšr'l son of {Ḡyr'l} and he watered the {sheep} from a hole in the rock caused by water*

- **Commentary:** *S'qy* means to give water to animals and despite the length of the final letter it is probable that *h-d'n* (the sheep) was meant. According to Groom 1983: 289 a *tabrah* is "a hole in rock caused by water" in south-west Arabia, but this would seem to be a more appropriate meaning here than those in Classical Arabic or northern dialects [11].

### 3.22. Inscription No. 22

#### • Transliteration:

*l ḥl bn s'lm bn {g}rz bn 'dm bn ḥdg w wgm ----*

#### • Translation:

*By Ḥl son of S'lm son of Grz son of 'dm son of Ḥdg and he grieved ----*

### 3.23. Inscription No. 23, fig. (12)



Figure (12) stone 11, inscription No. 23 (© Al-Manaser).

#### • Transliteration:

*l ḥd bn 'bgr bn wd bn 'qrb w nfr 'l- dḡ w ----ydh w ḥl f h lt s'lm*

#### • Translation:

*By Ḥd son of 'bgr son of Wd son of 'qrb and he fled to Dḡ and ----ydh and he camped and so O Lt [grant] security*

- **Commentary:** The phrase *w nfr 'l dḡ* is curious since if the author meant "he fled from the 'l dḡ" one would expect *\*nfr mn 'l dḡ*, as in the more common *nfr mn rm* "he fled from the Romans". On the other hand, it can hardly mean "the 'l Dḡ fled", since (as in Arabic) tribes are feminine in grammatical gender (see Al-Jallad 2015: 126, in *s'byṭ-h ṭy'* "The (tribe of) Ṭy' took him prisoner") [7]. Thus, the least unlikely interpretation seems to be to take *'l* as the preposition *'l-* "to" (cf. Arabic *ilā*). Unfortunately, it is impossible to make out from the photographs the letter between the following *f* and the letters *ydh*.

### 3.24. Inscription No. 24, fig. (13)



Figure (13) stone 12, inscription No. 24 (© Al-Manaser).

#### • Transliteration:

*l {š} 'b bn dhd bn {h}{'}b bn n'mn bn hn'mn bn w'l w ḥll h- dr w ḥrš 'l- hgr s'qmt f h lt rwḥ m- s'qm -h*

#### • Translation:

*By {Š'b} son of Dhd son of {H'b} son of N'mn son of Hn'mn son of W'land he camped here and he watched over Hgr who was sick, and O Lt [grant] relief from her sickness.*

- **Commentary:** An alternative interpretation could be that *hgr* could be interpreted on the basis of Arabic *haḡīr* "left, forsaken, abandoned" [6] and *sqmt* could be the maṣdar of *saquma* one form of which is *saqāmah* [6]. Thus, *w ḥrš 'l- hgr sqmt* would mean literally "he kept watch over a person who had been abandoned [because of] being ill [šaqaṣātan]". However, since *hgr* is a woman's name in Damascus Museum 21039.4 and in Nabataean, the interpretation offered here is possibly more likely.



### 3.25. Inscription No. 25, fig. (14)



Figure (14) stone 13, inscription No. 25(© Al-Manaser).

• **Transliteration:**

*l hrr bn {'}dm bn s'nf w ng' m- ' - mnrt fnyt b- r'y 'ly fh lt  
rwḥ w 'wr d'y 'wr*

• **Translation:**

*By Hrr son of {'dm} son of S'nf and he sought pasture  
from (Al-Namārah) to Fnyt during the rising of Taurus  
and so O Lt [grant] relief and blind whoever scratches out  
[the inscription]*

- **Commentary:** The verb *ng'* here probably means "he sought pasture" [5]. It seems probable that *mnrt* is a mistake for *nmrt* (i.e. al-Namārah) and that the ' before it represents the definite article. Al-Namārah is in the centre of the *ḥarrah* whereas *fnyt* appears to be a watering place near the border between the *ḥarrah* and the *ḥamād* where the nomads waited for the first rains. For the identification of 'ly as the sign of the Zodiac, Taurus [12].

### 3.26. Inscription No. 26, fig. (15)

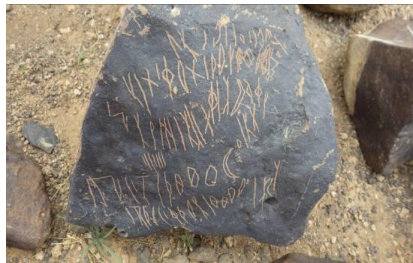


Figure (15) stone 14, inscriptions No. 26 & 27(© Al-Manaser).

• **Transliteration:**

*l zbd bn qdm' l w wgm 'l- 'b -h*

• **Translation:**

*By Zbd son of Qdm' l and he grieved for his father*

### 3.27. Inscription No. 27, fig. (15)

• **Transliteration:**

*l zn bn zbd w wgm 'l- 'h -h qdm' l qtl -h 'l ty' fh lt nqmt l-  
dm -h w dm<>y s'2' -h ḥrbn 'l ḡrb's'*

• **Translation:**

*By zn son of Zbd and he grieved for his brother who the 'l  
Ty' had killed and so O Lt [grant] vengeance for his blood  
and the blood of his companion both warring against Ḡrb's'*

- **Commentary:** This is one of the few Safaitic texts where vengeance specifically for blood is called for. We have interpreted *dmy* on the basis of Central Arabian Bedouin *dmiyy*, plural of *dam* "blood" ([13], cf. Classical Arabic *dum-iyyun*, [6]). There appears to be a *n* between the *m* and the *y*, but it is difficult to interpret a *n* in this position. *S'2'* is the singular of the more common plural *'s'2'y'* ("companions"). We have not been able to identify the last name.

## 4. Discussion

The inscriptions above are a rich source of Safaitic culture, providing insight into the daily lives of those who created them. They offer a glimpse into their daily routines and interactions with the divine entities. The inhabitants of the Jordanian desert, whether they called it home or were simply passing through on their journey north or south, relied on the stars to guide them. By using the stars, these individuals were able to successfully navigate their routes with precision and skill. These inscriptions not only depict daily events, but also capture the deeper emotions of these individuals such as love and sickness, forever immortalizing important moments in the author's life [14]. One such inscription even expresses a deep sense of affection and concern for a sick individual, serving as a genuine expression of emotion. The author of the inscription was deeply affected by the illness of a particular individual. Their emotions were sincerely portrayed in the words, serving as a poignant expression. As time passed, the author's heartfelt prayers and sentiments were etched onto the rocks, seeking divine protection for their beloved. By delving into the Safaitic inscriptions and their geographical and historical significance, we gain insight into the lifestyles and emotional expressions of the inhabitants of the Black Desert [15]. It poses the intriguing notion of whether they were cognizant of their enduring legacy, with their emotional outpourings etched into the very rocks [16].

## 5. Conclusion

This study highlights the crucial role of publishing more inscriptions featuring longer texts in order to gain a comprehensive understanding and enhance our knowledge of the inhabitants of the region. While our knowledge has gradually expanded, the launch of the OCIANA electronic platform has been a turning point, providing researchers all over the world with a valuable source of North Arabian inscriptions. After thorough analysis, the study concludes that there is no definitive differentiation between lengthy inscriptions and shorter ones consisting solely of personal names. In fact, the total number of recorded pre-Islamic inscriptions in the Jordanian black desert reaches an impressive 60,000. The Safaitic inscriptions offer a wealth of knowledge into the everyday existence, convictions, and worries of the early inhabitants of the area. By delving into these inscriptions, a variety of patterns come to light, such as the pursuit of sustenance and vegetation, familial ties, spiritual faiths, and interactions with nearby tribes. The inscriptions provide insight into the hardships that the people endured in their quest for water. This was particularly evident during periods of drought, as the inscriptions make mention of parched regions and the necessity of embarking on long journeys to locate sources of water. It serves as a poignant reminder of the harsh desert climate they inhabited, highlighting the critical role that water played in sustaining their existence. The community bonds of "Black Desert people" are vividly depicted through their inscriptions, which often include heartfelt mentions of their family lineages and lamentations for departed loved ones. These intimate expressions offer a window into the personal sentiments of these ancient people. Additionally, religious beliefs and rituals hold great significance in these inscriptions, as evidenced by references to deities like *Rdw* and *Dg(n/l)*. These allusions reveal a strong belief in divine guardianship and the value of seeking divine intervention for safety and prosperity. The Safaitic inscriptions offer unique insights into the social dynamics and relationships between various tribes. These inscriptions reveal details about important things like protecting herds, seeking retribution for harm, and interactions with neighboring tribes such as *Ḡrb's'*. Intriguingly, these inscriptions also provide a vivid portrait of the daily struggles and customs of the region's inhabitants. Delving deeper into their beliefs and interactions promises to enrich our understanding of this ancient civilization and its rich cultural heritage. In short, the Safaitic inscriptions are a valuable resource

for unravelling the mysteries of this fascinating civilization. It is crucial that we continue to conduct thorough surveys and documentation efforts in order to record as many inscriptions as possible. This task must involve the collaboration of researchers from various disciplines to ensure its success.

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