The Religious Beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians

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9 February 2016

This thesis is presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

i

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATURE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled **"The Religious Beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians"** has not been previously submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Cassandra Lea Bennett ()

9 February 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This dissertation, *The Religious Beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians*, takes an integrative approach to the study of Safaitic religious beliefs utilising theories and methodologies from both archaeological and anthropological studies of religion. It employs a synthesis of textual and iconographic evidence in order to create an overview of the religious beliefs of the pre-Islamic nomadic and semi-nomadic tribes of modern-day Jordan, southern Syria and north-western Saudi Arabia.

The Safaitic inscriptions give us a rare insight into the daily lives of the pre-Islamic Arabians in an era usually termed the age of ignorance. This study involves an intensive analysis of the inscriptions in an effort to determine the religious beliefs. My contribution consists of a critical synthesizing of the available material, both iconographic and textual, and arranging it to show a clear, concise presentation of the inscriptions featuring religious attributes.

In the construction of this thesis I first created 2 databases of over 28,000 Safaitic inscriptions. In these databases I broke the inscriptions down into their base elements then tabulated this raw data into statistically relevant tables and figures. These databases recorded all the primary aspects of these inscriptions as well as their geographical locality in order to allow the analysis of any potential geographic religious trends in the worship of the deities mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions.

Following this, the methodology established through a study of the archaeological and anthropological approaches to religion was applied to a detailed and extensive analysis of the raw data extracted from these databases. Previous studies on Safaitic have focused on epigraphy and onomastics yet there has been no recent comprehensive analysis on the religious beliefs. Little has been written about the religious aspects of these inscriptions or the geographical impact of the deities invoked. These are gaps this thesis aims to fill.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would also like to thank my husband, James, for supporting me through the years, pretending to be interested when I was telling him passionately about a new theory I had developed when he hadn't a clue what I was talking about, and not minding (too much) that when he got home from work the house looked like a construction zone. And finally, I would like to thank my gorgeous kids, Lenny and Edwin, not so much for their physical contribution to this thesis (in fact, they probably hindered the process), but for being the lights of my life and the reason I get up in the morning (as hard as that may be since they usually do not let me sleep much).

DETAILED TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF MAPS

ABBREVIATIONS

AAE	Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy
ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
AfO	Archiv für Orientforschung
AJA	American Journal of Archaeology
AKM	Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
AO	Analecta Orientalia
AOS	American Oriental Series
ARA	Annual Review of Anthropology
ARAM	Aram periodical
BAH	Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BiOr	Bibliotheca Orientalis
BSOAS	Bulletin of the Society for Oriental and African Studies
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CIS	*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*
CRAIBL	Comptes-rendus de l'Academie des inscriptions et belles-lettres
DBS	Dictionnaire de la Bible. Supplément, Paris
GRBS	Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual

IR	Iconography of Religions
JA	Journal Asiatique
Jds	Journal des savants
JHA	Journal for History and Archaeology
JNES	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JRS	The Journal of Roman Studies
JSTham	Jaussen and Savignac 1909-1922
KAI	Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften
MA	Mediterranean Archaeology
MUSJ	Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth
MVAG	Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatisch-Aegyptischen Gesellschaft
NEA	Near Eastern Archaeology
NMES	Near and Middle East Series
PAM	Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean
PEQ	Palestinian Exploration Quarterly
PSAS	Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies,
RAO	Recueil d'Archeologie Orientale
RB	Revue Biblique
RGRW	Religions in the Graeco-Roman World
SI	Studia Islamica

ZDMG   Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft

ZdPV   Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins

ZfA   Zeitschrift für Assyriologie

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Study overview

The remotest parts of the north Arabian deserts hide an interesting phenomenon. Scattered on rock faces and cairns over a vast distance are hundreds of thousands of inscriptions, painstakingly carved around 2,000 years ago by shepherds and slaves, merchants and mercenaries, women and warriors. Their authors were the nomadic and semi-nomadic inhabitants of the region, a people hardly renowned for their ability to write, who appear to have gone to great lengths to preserve their heritage by recording aspects of their daily lives. The content of these inscriptions includes ancestral history, simple expression of emotions (particularly love and loss), and the historical record of wars with surrounding cultures and feuds between tribes. These inscriptions can be found throughout most of north Arabia, southern Syria, Jordan and north-western Saudi Arabia. Some ancient north Arabian inscriptions have even been found as far afield as the Nile Delta, Yemen, Iraq and even Pompeii, demonstrating that this "epigraphic habit" was practised by members of this culture outside their primary locale. The inscriptions depict the authors as living a day-to-day existence of inter-tribal warfare in a tumultuous society, often at the mercy of nearby groups. This is particularly reflected in many of the prayers analysed below.

The texts are generally inscribed on established boulders or on the faces of cliffs, although some have been found on smaller, more versatile rocks. More often than not the inscriptions are located in areas that are shaded for at least part of the day with a water source close-by. This water source, if not clearly visible, is usually revealed by digging under the sand or dirt in the vicinity of the inscription. The surfaces on which the texts are incised are often not the smoothest or most easily accessible surfaces to write on, such as rough cliff faces. The texts themselves are rarely, if ever, written over pre-existing texts. Where there are multiple inscriptions they tend to be written in between each other, sometimes making for a messy or awkward look.

This study deals with inscriptions that feature a religious element, predominately those in the form of a prayer or a curse. Given the brevity of these inscriptions and the lack of detailed

secondary sources on the region in this period, it is impossible to make any definitive statements relating to culture and history. In the context of something as enigmatic and ambiguous as religion this is often the case regardless of whether there exist a plethora of resources or not. The purpose of this study is therefore to examine and reconstruct, as best we can, what little we know of the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians. This will consist of a multi-pronged approach involving a detailed analysis of the deities and prayers that survive in extant inscriptions, as well as a spatial analysis to determine if any geographical religious trends exist. Religion is of course not a fixed category, and so for the purpose of this thesis an intentionally broad categorisation was adopted. This approach includes phenomological elements and formal elements such as formulae and vocative particles. The criteria for the inclusion of inscriptions classed as religious in this thesis are those that feature the presense of a deity, that feature religious practices such as sacrifice or augury, or that include the identification of an individual that served a supernatural function, such as a sorcerer.

This work focuses primarily on the inscriptions of the Safaitic Arabians. Of all the ANA scripts, inscriptions written in Safaitic are, generally speaking, the most detailed and without doubt throw more light on the religious lives of their authors than those of the scripts found in neighbouring regions, which were also written by nomadic and semi-nomadic Arabians.

To date there has been little research on the religious beliefs expressed in the Safaitic inscriptions, and what has been done is now relatively out-dated. The majority of studies have previously been primarily epigraphically-focused. While many of the collections of inscriptions contain introductions to Safaitic history and culture, they are usually rather brief and tend to only focus on evidence found in the particular collection, rarely taking into account the greater corpus of inscriptions. As a result, we are often left with conflicting accounts or opinions on what exactly could have constituted Safaitic religion. This study intends to identify and fill the lacunae by evaluating all available inscriptions both individually and as a whole. It will thus become the first comprehensive analysis on the religion of the Safaitic Arabians.

The inscriptions featuring religious elements are approached from a number of different angles. Firstly, the inscriptions, whether they be in the form of prayers, curses or fleeting references to religious features, are analysed both in their individual context and considered as a whole in the greater Safaitic corpus. All known inscriptions have been entered into a database so they can be easily cross-referenced based on the content of the inscription, as well as their geophysical location and accompanying drawings or symbols. Secondly, the physical spread

of the inscriptions is evaluated in order to determine any geographical trends. This is done by analysing the spatial distribution of the inscriptions. Finally, the drawings and symbols that accompany the inscriptions are scrutinised to determine what, if any, religious significance they hold.

The first section of the introduction examines the geographical frame of Ancient North Arabia and discusses the different ANA scripts in order to establish a context for the Safaitic inscriptions through their geographical locality, content and societal differences. This is followed by a detailed introduction to the Safaitic inscriptions so as to better understand the format of religious inscriptions. Then there is an examination of the differences in the general content of ANA texts and external sources on nomadic religious beliefs during this period. Following this is a discussion on what constitutes literacy in a nomadic or non-literate society, and the uses or purposes of writing in such a context. Finally the research methodology of this study is discussed and the introductory chapter concludes with an overview of the content of the remaining chapters and appendices.

Ancient North Arabia

The term "Ancient North Arabia" refers to the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula in what is now known as the southern part of Syria, Jordan and north-western Saudi Arabia. The areas where the majority of texts can be found are the Ḥarra and Ḥisma deserts, Tābuk, Taymā, al-ʿUlā and Madāʾin Sāliḥ. A number of ANA inscriptions feature outside the realm of North Arabia and some can be found as far afield as the Nile Delta, the Sinai, Iraq, Lebanon and even Pompeii. An analysis of the differences and similarities present between the various ANA texts will be discussed later.

Ancient North Arabian inscriptions

The ANA scripts can de dated to roughly between the 8th century BC and the 4th century AD. The scripts known as Safaitic, Ḥismāic and Thamudic B, C and D can be found scattered primarily in the desert regions of North Arabia, while the dialects known as Dedanite/Lihyanite and Taymanite were used primarily around the oases of modern-day north-eastern Saudi Arabia and thus are generally referred to as Oasis North Arabian.[1] Since these terms are names imposed not by the people who wrote these inscriptions but by scholars and epigraphists

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[1] For a map of this distrubtion see Appendix C: Map 22.

millennia later, Hayajneh has proposed referring to these different epigraphical groups as "speech communities."[2] The concept of "speech communities" primarily concerns the linguistic features such as morphology and phonology, much like how we would consider modern Arabic dialects. Not all ANA scripts were written by nomads; Hasaitic,[3] for example, was employed by settled groups occupying the eastern regions of Saudi Arabia while others, such as Dumaitic from the oasis of Dūma, constitute a comparatively small corpus.[4]

As mentioned above, the distribution of these texts indicates that they are generally inscribed on large boulders or on the faces of cliffs. Only rarely are inscriptions found on smaller, more mobile rocks. More often than not they are located in an area that is shaded for at least part of the day where there is a nearby water source. This is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter. The quality of inscriptions is of variable degrees.[5] Some, due to positioning, have been subject to greater weathering over the years and are less clear in their reading. Many inscriptions are little more than short genealogies.

North Arabian groupings

It is important to understand that these texts groups are spread out over a very long period of time as well as a large geographical space, with a variety of social and historical backgrounds many of which are interlaced both in spatial and temporal limits. Some scholars have rightly observed that the authors of the ANA texts did not indicate that they considered themselves to be a homogenous grouping as "a script is not the exclusive property of one particular group".[6]

The ANA scripts, such as Safaitic, Thamudic, Ḥismāic and Dedanite, were originally thought to have been derivations of the South Arabian scripts,[7] such as Sabaean, Minaeic, Qatabanic and Hadramitic. Recent scholarship has however suggested that the South Arabian and North Arabian scripts did not evolve independently from one another but rather shared a common ancestor with Proto-Canaanite some time during the second millennium BC.[8] What

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[2] Hayajneh 2011, p. 758
[3] Eksell 2002, p. 18
[4] Winnett and Reed refer to these texts as Jawfian, see Winnett and Reed 1970, pp. 73, 80–81, 207, 216
[5] Eksell 2002, p. 21
[6] Macdonald 1993, p. 307
[7] Graf 1997, p. 477; Oxtoby 1968, p. 8; Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 5. For more on the South Arabian scripts see Beeston 1981, pp. 178–186; Hayajneh and Tropper 1997, p. 27
[8] Woodard 2008, p. 4; Macdonald 2000, p. 40

follows in this section is a brief introduction to the ANA scripts. Safaitic is dealt with briefly here but is discussed in greater detail in the following section.

The designation of Safaitic texts as "Safaitic" is one of the many misnomers in the study of ANA texts as this term refers to the Ṣafā region of southern Syria: to date, this area has not yielded any Safaitic inscriptions. The name was first used by Halévy and further established by Dussaud who argued that it was appropriate since the Tulūl al-Ṣafā was the most characteristic of the volcanoes in the Ḥārra, the area where most of the inscriptions had been found up until that point.[9] Since that time many more inscriptions have been found much further away from that region in areas such as northern Jordan as well as clusters in Saudi Arabia. However, the term "Safaitic" is so entrenched in scholarship that it is perhaps too late to rectify the issue and thus renaming would be counterproductive at this time.

The main concentrations of Safaitic texts are to be found around the Jebel Haurān area[10] and in the Ḥārra region of Syria and Jordan.[11] Other areas with a significant concentration of Safaitic inscriptions include Dura Europos, Palmyra, Badana and Sakaka in Saudi Arabia[12] with much smaller, more isolated finds, well outside these regions in areas such as Lebanon, Iraq and Pompeii.[13] The general consensus regarding the dating of the Safaitic texts places their range as roughly between the 1st century BC and the 4th century AD,[14] although this is not universally accepted.[15]

"Thamudic" texts first came to the attention of western scholarship through travellers to the Middle East during the 19th and 20th centuries, in particular Charles Doughty, Charles Huber, Julius Euting, Antonin Jaussen and Raphaël Sauvignac.[16] These early travellers misinterpreted the texts as belonging to the ill-fated, pre-Islamic tribe of Thamud, known from the Qur'ān and classical Islamic history,[17] hence the origin of the name. Although there are a

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[9] Macdonald 1993, p. 306
[10] Trombley 1993, p. 173
[11] Oxtoby 1968, p. 2
[12] Clark 1979, p. 5
[13] Macdonald 1993, p. 304; Calzini Gysens 1990, pp. 1–8; Harding 1975, p. 99
[14] Braun 2001, p. 217; Khraysheh1995, p. 401; Naveh 1979, p. 28
[15] Jamme 1971a, p. 54; Ababneh 2005, p. 11
[16] Dussaud 1910, p. 460
[17] Sura, *Hud*, 11.68

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number of texts written in Thamudic scripts where authors claim tribal lineage to the Thamūd tribe, these references are few in number.[18]

A partial decipherment of the Thamudic script was first offered by D.H. Müller in 1893 and then Joseph Halévy in 1901–1902, further translations were then done by Enno Littmann in 1904[19] and Lidzbarski in 1908.[20] However, it was not until 1937 that F.V. Winnett noticed when analysing the varied regional dialects in accordance with their script, direction of writing, vocabulary and supposed date, that the Thamudic inscriptions were in fact five distinct linguistic groupings.[21] He classified those five groupings in their presumed chronological order, as Thamudic A, B, C, D and E.

Thamudic A was later reclassified by Winnett when he realised that a more appropriate terminology would have been "Taymanite" as examples of this script are found only around Tayma.[22] Tayma is an oasis in modern-day north-western Saudi Arabia and has a rich heritage dating back over 3000 years due to its abundant supply of groundwater and location on ancient trade routes.[23] The dating of Taymanite inscriptions is difficult but the general consensus is that the script was in use from around the 6th and 5th centuries BC.[24] Aiding in this relative dating are the few inscriptions that refer to "Nabonidus king of Babylon" who spent ten years of his reign (552–543 BC) in Tayma.[25] Winnett notes that due to similarities in content and structure between these texts and many Dedanite texts, Taymanite inscriptions and Dedanitic inscriptions are likely to have comparable time frames.[26] His dating also relies on inscriptions mentioning the god *Ṣalm* whose cult was introduced during the mid-5th century.[27]

Since the Tayma region was an oasis on an important trade route it is understandable that the ethnicity of its people would be diverse. Foreigners living in Tayma were common, as we see with the use of the name Nabonidus. Some of the names mentioned in inscriptions

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[18] Hu 172; Branden 1950, no. 637; JaS. 280, 339; Thnsm.III 48
[19] Littmann 1904
[20] Lidzbarski, 1908, pp. 23–48, 345–362
[21] Winnett 1937, pp. 18–49
[22] Winnett and Reed 1970, pp. 69–70, 89–90
[23] Winnett and Reed 1970, p. 88 n. 3
[24] Macdonald 2004, p. 181
[25] Macdonald 2004, p. 181; Müller and Al Said 2002 pp. 105-122; Hayajneh 2001, pp. 203-222
[26] Winnett 1937, p. 27
[27] Winnett 1938, p. 306

provide evidence of mercenary soldiers staying in Tayma who may have come from as far afield as the southwest of modern Turkey.[28]

Most of the ANA scripts seem to consist of an alphabet of 28 letters. However this is not the case with Taymanite. Only 26 or 27 letters can be identified with full certainty.[29] The direction of writing is almost always right-to-left but texts that are more than one line long are often written boustrophedon or with lines are written under one another. While the inscriptions are generally composed without spaces there are a number of examples where word-dividers are used.

Like Taymanite, the terminology of the scripts known as Thamudic B, C and D, was later refined by Winnett based on specific geographical regions within Arabia. For example, where Thamudic A became Taymanite, Thamudic B became Najdi, Thamudic C and D became Hijazi, and Thamudic E became Tabuki.[30] To avoid confusion here they will be referred to as Thamudic B, C and D even if this distinction is "relatively crude"[31] as this study later deals with a number of similarities between Thamudic B and Safaitic.

Thamudic B, C and D texts are notoriously hard to date given their wide-ranging provenance, and also the brevity of the texts themselves. One Thamudic B text mentions a "king of Babylon" suggesting that it may be dated to a time prior to the fall of the Babylonian Empire in 539 BC,[32] while a bilingual Thamudic D/Nabataean inscription found at Madā'in Ṣāliḥ (ancient Ḥegra) mentions an adjacent Nabataean tomb dated to AD 267.[33]

The script now known as Ḥismāic is a relatively recent designation. Originally classified as Thamudic E by Winnett, it was later reclassified according to its geographical region, as Tabuki, based on the area of Tabuk.[34] King points out that most of the texts from this region are Safaitic or mixed Safaitic/Thamudic E, so the term "Tabuki" is confusing.[35] Knauf prefers the term "South Safaitic" because he found that the structure of the majority of Thamudic E texts had more in common with Safaitic than with the majority of other Thamudic

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[28] Eichmann, Schaudig, Hausleiter 2006, pp. 163–176
[29] Macdonald 2004, p. 185
[30] Winnett and Reed 1970, p. 205
[31] Macdonald 2004, p. 183
[32] Ph 279 aw; Macdonald 2004, p. 183
[33] JSTham 1
[34] Winnett and Reed 1970, p. 70
[35] King 1990, p. 13

texts. He kept the term "Tabuki Thamudic" however, for the classification of texts with the same script but with a non-Safaitic structure.[36] He also showed that "South Safaitic" and "Tabuki Thamudic" share distinguishing features in orthography and script which differentiate them from Safaitic and other Thamudic dialects. In particular, the Safaitic _ṯ_ sign was used to represent the /g/. Macdonald opposes the use of the term "South Safaitic" arguing this is a misnomer as it is clear that Thamudic E is a separate linguistic variant[37] as King has shown that the script, orthography and content display markedly distinct features from Safaitic.[38] Furthermore he observes that calling the dialect South Safaitic "blurs important distinctions, bringing confusion rather than classification."[39] Together with King he suggests this script be designated 'Ḥismāic' since the vast majority of texts are found in the Ḥismā region. Knauf on the other hand believes that labeling is not important "as long as all know what they are talking about" and that arguments "*e nomine* can well be left to the last witch-hunters and other obscurantists."[40] This seems to be the approach that Graf has also taken in choosing to refer to the script as Thamudic E since inscriptions with this script are still being found outside the Ḥismā region.[41]

The majority of Ḥismāic texts come from the Jordanian Ḥismā desert and south-western Saudi Arabia. Ḥismāic inscriptions have been found as far west as the Negev and the Sinai Peninsula, as far east as Madā'in Ṣāliḥ and in the north as far as al-Jawf and Transjordan. As is the case with Safaitic inscriptions however, isolated finds of Ḥismāic inscriptions do not necessarily indicate that the area was customarily inhabited by the authors of these inscriptions. Likewise with Safaitic inscriptions, the writers of these texts lived a predominately nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, so variations in the provenance of Ḥismāic inscriptions is understandable. In areas such as the Ḥismā and the region around Tabuk in Saudi Arabia, it is reasonable to assume that the majority were written by nomads who were local to the area or returned regularly.

Ḥismāic texts, unlike Safaitic texts, are harder to date due to the absence of significant datable events. There are however, a few anomalous examples that help with determining the approximate date of creation. According to Winnett, the Ḥismāic inscriptions were

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[36] Knauf 2010, p. 216, n. 57
[37] Macdonald 2004, p. 183
[38] King 1990, p. 12–13
[39] Macdonald 2000, p. 44
[40] Knauf 2010, p. 216, n. 57
[41] Graf & Zwettler, 2004, pp. 57–58; Graf 2003, p. 45

chronologically the latest of the dialects known by the prefix "Thamudic". The Ḥismāic inscriptions can be dated from roughly the 6th century BC to the 3rd century AD,[42] during the time when the Nabataean script was still in regular usage despite the kingdom having ended. Winnett suggests a date for the composition of Ḥismāic texts up until the 4th or 5th century AD,[43] as inscriptions SSA 8-13 were written around an earlier Nabataean text.[44] However it also possible that the texts may have been written shortly after the Nabataean.[45] In addition, the latest date for Safaitic texts and Thamudic D texts is in the mid-3rd century, so the continuation of Ḥismāic texts to such a late date seems unlikely.

The ANA term Dedanitic is an amalgamation of the words Dedanite and Lihyanite and refers to the two separate successive kingdoms with control over the oasis of Dedan. The term was suggested by Macdonald who believes that the "linguistic and paleographical developments did not necessarily parallel political changes"[46] and that the two separate terms, Dedanite and Lihyanite, were unnecessarily confusing. Many scholars still prefer the terms Dedanite and Lihyanite, while others class these inscriptions as Dedano-Lihyanic.

Dedanitic inscriptions come from the oasis of Dedan (modern-day al-ʿUlā) or in the immediate vicinity. Like Taymāʾ, Dedan has seen a long history of human settlement. An important oasis on the trade routes, the kingdom of Dedan witnessed trade in products such as frankincense from Egypt to Mesopotamia and Syria. As part of the Oasis North Arabian grouping, these texts make up some of the oldest inscriptions in the ANA category. Dedanitic texts are considered to be older than Lihyanite texts together ranging from approximately the 6th century BC to around the 1st century AD.[47] Dedanite texts covered the earliest part of this period to approximately the 1st century BC while Lihyanite covered the latter phase.[48]

As is the case with many other ANA texts, the Dedanitic inscriptions consist mostly of graffiti. However, unlike the majority of these texts, the number of personal names mentioned in them is rather limited. A number of theophoric names are mentioned and these give further

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[42] Hackett 2008, p. 932
[43] Winnett 1937, p. 53
[44] Savignac 1934, p. 578 n. 24
[45] King 1990, p. 175 n. 11
[46] Macdonald 2004, p. 492
[47] Eksell, p.18
[48] Beeston 1981, p. 181

clues as to the religious beliefs of their authors. This is explored further in Farès 2005 work *Dédan et Liḥyān*.

Of the ANA texts, inscriptions written in Safatitic have by far the longest genealogies with some inscriptions mentioning up to 15 forefathers[49] and averaging 2.5 names each inscription. This is in comparison to Ḥismāic which on average mentions 1.4 names per inscription and Thamudic C and D which average 1.3.[50] Unlike Safaitic, there is often a lack of papponymy in Ḥismāic. This absence of extended genealogies makes it hard to attribute multiple inscriptions to any one author or even to identifying relationships between authors. In Safaitic, however, extended genealogies make determining prosopographies easier. As King suggests with genealogies of three generations or more, it is more certain that the individual in question is the same person.

Average number of names mentioned in ANA texts

Safaitic	Ḥismāic	Thamudic C and D
2.51	1.44	1.32

Fig. 1.1 – Average number of names mentioned in ANA texts

Major differences in the content of the ANA texts can be seen most clearly in the treatment of deities invoked in the inscriptions. Safaitic inscriptions often feature lengthy prayers to deities while other ANA inscriptions merely invoke the deity with a one word request. The deities themselves also differ greatly. Although it is important to note that regular overlapping still exists with deities mentioned within different scripts, the imported deities, (such as Dushara who was borrowed from the neighbouring Nabataean pantheon) mentioned in Safaitic and Ḥismāic tend to originate from the sedentary communities of North Arabia. In contrast, deities in the Dedanite, Taymanite and Thamudic texts are more often Central or South Arabian in origin.[51] Likewise, the concerns of the authors often differ greatly from one place to another and this is reflected in their treatment of deities.

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[49] MISSD 1
[50] See Fig. 1.1
[51] These differences are discussed at length in Chapter Three.

In conclusion, it is important to note the similarities and differences that exist in the ANA texts and, given the level of overlap, to understand their social and historical backgrounds.

The Safaitic inscriptions

The Safaitic inscriptions are, to date, the largest corpus of a single ANA script. With approximately 28,000 recorded inscriptions, they account for more than double the number of all the other ANA inscriptions put together.

Previous scholarship on the Safaitic texts

Safaitic texts first came to the attention of western scholarship in 1858 when Cyril Graham published a few untranslated inscriptions from his expedition to Syria.[52] Early attempts at a translation of the texts were made by the orientalist Otto Blau in 1861[53] and David Müller in 1876,[54] but due to the small amount of available texts at the time, their attempts were unsuccessful. It was not until 1882 that a deciphering became possible with Joseph Halévy[55] successfully identifying 16 of the 28 letters based on the publication of Safaitic texts by Charles de Vogüé in 1877.[56] Frank Praetorius succeeded in identifying an additional 5 letters in 1883,[57] followed by the remaining 7 in 1901 by Enno Littmann.[58] The latter was the first to recognise that the alphabet was made up of 28 letters rather than 23 as had previously been thought.[59] Since then the study of Safaitic inscriptions has largely been focused on expanding the corpus of inscriptions to an impressive 28,000 texts to date, while also attempting to place the language in its appropriate linguistic setting in Ancient North Arabia.

Prior to 1950, many of the Safaitic inscriptions, with or without proposed transliterations and/or translations, were only available in a variety of obscure journals. However, with the publication of the monumental work of Gonzague Ryckmans, in *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* (CIS) in 1950, many of the known inscriptions were amalgamated into one volume translated into Latin to standardise the language for translation and

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[52] Oxtoby 1968, p. 4
[53] Blau 1861, pp. 437–456
[54] Müller 1879, pp. 514–524
[55] Halévy 1877, pp. 461–508; Halévy 1881, pp. 44–83, 179–251, 289–314; Halévy 1882, pp. 461–508
[56] de Vogüé 1877
[57] Praetorius 1883, col. 804–806
[58] Littmann 1901
[59] Macdonald 1992, p. 418

commentary. This collection of 5380 Safaitic texts was not only a compilation of previously published inscriptions housed in a central location, but also contained nearly 2700 previously unpublished texts from Dunand. A number of corrected translations of the earliest texts with somewhat dubious interpretations was also included.[60] Unfortunately, despite achieving its intention to collect a large number of inscriptions together in one place the work fails to accurately indicate which texts were published previously and where.[61]

Not included in the CIS was Enno Littmann's *Syria: Publications of the Princeton University Archaeological Expeditions to Syria in 1904–5 and 1909*, published in 1949. Produced over 30 years after the initial expeditions, Littmann's work provides 1302 texts from 29 sites in the Hama el-Ala region. The introductory sections include a brief analysis of the inscriptions, language and their authors, and is historically regarded as the first attempt to systematically analyse the textual material following the correct identification of the alphabet. It must be noted however, that some of his conclusions have since required correction.[62]

In 1957 Fred V. Winnett published 1009 previously unedited inscriptions in *Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*. However, as was the case with Littmann's work, many reproductions were made by people who were unfamiliar with the script thus paving the way for potential errors in interpretation.[63] This work by Winnett however, marks the first proper attempt at dating Safaitic inscriptions, for example, he believed that the texts written in a square type of script were older and should be dated to the 1st century BC whereas the more cursive texts should be dated to a later period.[64] Oxtoby's *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin*, published in 1968, added 480 inscriptions to the collection of Safaitic texts, mainly from the Wādī Miqāt, and provides indices useful for mapping the genealogical spectrum of frequently recognisable Safaitic tribal names. Oxtoby also included a helpful and comparatively thorough introduction to the lives of the inscriptions' authors.

Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns published by Winnett and G.L. Harding in 1978 is a monumental work and essential for any study of the Safaitic Arabians. The book comprises

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[60] Harding 1953, p. 8; See for example Jamme 1970a, p. 5 whose reinterpretation of some C material was challenged by Clark 1979, p. 17
[61] An index and onomasticon has since been provided in Harding 1971, pp. 705–756
[62] For example nos. 1291–1298 — Jamme 1971b, pp. 136–141
[63] Winnett 1957, p. 3
[64] SIJ 688

4087 new inscriptions from Jordan in the Burqu and Wādī Miqāt regions as well as a brilliant bibliography and lexicon.

In terms of PhD theses, Vincent Clark's *A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan* from 1979, is comprised of 1197 new inscriptions from the Ḥārrat ar-Rajil region of Jordan. This work is more systematic in its approach to the Safaitic inscriptions than previous efforts through the detail offered in mapping the locations of inscriptions. Clark's thesis also features a detailed and thorough introduction to the content of the Safaitic inscriptions including a brief analysis of the deities featuring in the collection of inscriptions translated.

In 2004, Mohammad Ababneh published his doctoral thesis, *Neue safaitische Inschriften und deren bildliche Darstellungen*, which consists of 1162 inscriptions from Jordan and an impressive compilation and commentary on the accompanying rock drawings. Ali Yunes Khalid al-Manaser then added another 423 inscriptions and rock drawings from al-Fahdah and Wādī al-Aḥīmr to the existing corpus of inscriptions in 2008 with his published dissertation *Ein Korpus neuer safaitischer Inscriften aus Jordanien*.

Ahmad al-Jallad, in 2015, published his book *An Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic Inscriptions*. This book contains the most extensive work on the grammar of the Safaitic inscriptions to date, and is currently the only complete grammar of any of the inscriptions in the Ancient North Arabian corpus. It also features an annotated dictionary, appendix and a thorough overview of those who composed the Safaitic inscriptions and their daily lives.

Works that deal primarily with the content of the Safaitic inscriptions are rare, especially those that focus purely on religious beliefs. One of those works is in Hubert Grimme's *Texte und Untersuchungen zur safatenisch-arabischen Religion* from 1929. While it is an excellent work for its time this work suffers from the contemporary lack of availability of religious inscriptions. Indeed, there were so few available in 1929 that Grimme's republishes each inscription in the second chapter, and the commentary on the actual religious aspects of these inscriptions is only 40 pages long. Now, more than 80 years later, there are many more inscriptions available and so a far more detailed analysis of the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians is possible.

Provenance of Safaitic texts

All Safaitic texts with known locations are mapped in Map 1 in Appendix C which will give the reader an indication of their distribution. The main concentration of Safaitic texts are around the Jebel Haurān area[65] and in the Ḥārra district of Syria and Jordan.[66] Other areas with a significant number of Safaitic inscriptions include Dura Europos, Palmyra, Badana and Sakaka in Saudi Arabia[67] with much smaller, more isolated finds, well outside the regions where these texts are generally found, in areas such as Lebanon, Iraq and Pompeii.[68]

Many of the isolated finds may be the result of authors travelling outside their usual area, or as Calzini Gysens suggests in his commentary on the inscriptions found at Pompeii, they "could be slaves, political hostages or just travellers, probably coming from nearby Puteoli".[69] With the exception of the material from Pompeii, the distribution of Safaitic texts is fundamentally based on the authors' ability to find shelter from the harsh physical environment of North Arabia[70] as well as the availability of suitable rock surfaces.

Dating the texts

The general consensus regarding the dating of the Safaitic texts ranges from approximately the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD,[71] although this is not universally accepted. Jamme, for example, speculates that the inscriptions first appeared around the 4th century BC,[72] while Ababneh argues for a later date of the 2nd century BC.[73] Some have even suggested that the Safaitic script may have been in use until as late at the 7th century AD.[74]

The writers of the Safaitic inscriptions dated their texts in terms of shared references — points in time and cultural memory — for example "in the year of the truffles"[75] or "the year of the hyenas".[76] This method of dating inscriptions through recognisable local events is similar

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[65] Trombley 1993, p. 173
[66] Oxtoby 1968, p. 2
[67] Clark 1979, p. 5
[68] Macdonald 1993, p. 304; Calzini Gysens 1990, pp. 1–8; Harding 1975, p. 99
[69] Calzini Gysens 1990, p. 5
[70] Bartl and Moaz 2008, p. 305

[71] Braun 2001, p. 217; Khraysheh 1995, p. 401; Naveh 1979, p. 28; Rendsburg 1988, p. 74; Helms 1981, p. 36
[72] Jamme 1971a, p. 54
[73] Ababneh 2005, p. 11
[74] Dussaud 1907, p. 91
[75] WH 2867a
[76] WH 710

to methods found in early Muslim sources.[77] Since there are few examples of absolute dating it is very difficult to date the inscriptions retrospectively. Without local knowledge we are unable to know which year out of the hundreds of years during which the Safaitic inscriptions were written, had a particular abundance of truffles or hyenas. Thus, the date of a specific inscription can only be known for certain if it is specified within the text itself[78] or references an event recognisable within a wider historical context. This is always difficult since so little is known of the history of the area.[79] An example of a potentially datable inscription is one believed to be from AD 124 that was written in "the year 18 of the Romans".[80] We know from other sources that the Romans established the province of Arabia in AD 106. Likewise, with the inscriptions found at Pompeii, we are given a *terminus a quo* and a *terminus ad quem* for their chronology. The theatre on whose walls the inscriptions were discovered was constructed around 80 BC and was destroyed by the earthquake in AD 62. It would then have been completely destroyed by the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79.[81] Al-Jallad has also recently proposed a method of dating inscriptions to the lunar month they were inscribed in through a re-examination of celestial and astral terminology based on Mesopotamian understanding of the Zodiac.[82]

Much of the contention on the dating of the Safaitic texts rests on one's interpretation of what is known as the "square script". Winnett argues that the square script is the oldest form of the script due to its similarity to epigraphic South Arabian[83] (a theory which Macdonald later disproved)[84] and cites SIJ 688, an inscription written in square script that mentions the "struggle with the Jews". Winnett believes that this inscription refers to the Arabians of Trachonitis and their conflict with Herod in 12 BC. This may not necessarily be the case however, as the inscription does not reveal what community of Jews is specifically referenced.[85]

It is believed that inscriptions written in the square script tend to contain texts that provide easier to date events, usually from surrounding sedentary cultures. These are less ambiguous and thus easier to class in their appropriate historical context.[86] Some scholars have

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[77] Shahin 2009, p. 55, n. 95
[78] Nehmé 2010, pp. 47–88
[79] Sasson 1955, p. 2392
[80] Butler and Littmann, 1905, p. 405
[81] Calzini Gysens 1990, pp. 3–4
[82] Al-Jallad 2014a; Al-Jallad 2014b
[83] Oxtoby 1968, p. 6; Clark 1970, p. 65
[84] Macdonald 2006, p. 292
[85] Vermes 2004, pp. 1–25; Feldman & Hata 1980, p. 232
[86] SIJ 39,78; C1292, 4448

dated this script to the 1st century BC.[87] whereas others have suggested it may have been used up to a century earlier.[88] However, recent work has proven that there does not seem to be any chronological significance to the use of the square script.[89] It has also been suggested[90] that Nabataean Aramaic spread through north-western Arabia as a prestige written language around this time, possibly replacing the square script.

Comparison of Safaitic inscriptions written in square script and conventional script

	Conventional script	**Square script**	**Total corpus**
Written in "simple authorship" format	73.68%	43.1%	73.31%
Authors state their tribal lineage	2.73%	38.9%	2.71%

Fig. 1.2 – Comparison of Safaitic inscriptions written in square script and conventional script

In the Safaitic inscriptions authors mention their tribal lineage in approximately 2.7% of inscriptions. However, inscriptions written in the square script mention the tribe of the author in nearly 39% of all inscriptions. In addition, inscriptions in the greater Safaitic corpus written in a "simple authorship" format (that is, inscriptions that only feature the name/s of the author with or without their tribal lineage, for example, no prayer or narrative) make up approximately

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[87] Winnett 1957, p. 263
[88] Abbadi 2006
[89] Macdonald 2006, pp. 291–294
[90] Macdonald 2010a, p. 18; Oxtoby 1968, p. 8

74% of all inscriptions. Inscriptions written in the square script are comprised of texts written in simple authorship format in approximately 43% of cases. Thus square script texts are not only more detailed, but are more likely to mention the tribal lineage of the author. In addition, 77% of inscriptions written by members of the tribe of *'mrt* are written in the square script, a far higher percentage than any other tribe which suggests a strong correlation between that style of script and the tribe. Since the tribe *'mrt* may have had close connections with the Nabataeans[91] a possible suggestion is that use of the square script was related in some way to the Nabataeans.[92] Perhaps this script is an example of a natural development between regional contacts and nomadic, semi-nomadic and sedentary cultures. As previously mentioned, inscriptions of this type usually featured significant events from neighbouring sedentary cultures.

A 4th century end date for the writing of the Safaitic inscriptions has been suggested due to a noticeable absence of references to Christianity.[93] A further argument in support of this dating is a strong lack of recognisable events after the 3rd century AD in the inscriptions. There is also no mention of the Safaitic tribes, such as *'wd* and *df*, in the writings of early Muslim histories. Thus most scholars believe that the tribes had dispersed by the time of the Muslim conquest of Syria.[94] Their disappearance around the 4th century has been attributed to the Tanūkhid migration into this region at which time the Safaitic tribes lost their distinctiveness.[95]

Ethnicity and onomastics

The term and significance of defining "ethnicity" has grown in importance in the latter half of 20th century scholarship.[96] Macdonald raises an important problem with regard to the ethnicity of the authors, in particular the texts being classified with the Safā region in southern Syria. This misnomer led to the identification of these authors as "Safaites", thus applying a collective ethnic identity for an unknown group of people. Furthermore, the authors of the Safaitic texts we have to date do not refer to their communities and tribal groupings in any way which would

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[91] Milik 1980, p. 45
[92] A more in-depth analysis of the tribe *'mrt* and their relationship with the "square script" is offered in Chapter 3.
[93] Dussaud 1955, p. 40; Sartre 2005, p. 236
[94] Clark 1979, p. 102
[95] Trombley 1993, p. 173
[96] Millar 1993, p. 23; Graf 2004, p. 145

indicate that they considered themselves to be a homogenous grouping. As Macdonald states, "A script is not the exclusive property of one particular group."[97]

Since the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions did not constitute a single *ethnos*, or at least did not expressly state that fact like the Nabataeans,[98] nor was there a theory or seemingly understanding of a group identity, they will be referred to in this thesis as the Safaitic Arabians or as "the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions". With the exception of the inscriptions found at Pompeii, the texts largely come from Arabia.[99] As the authors did not necessarily have a developed ethnic consciousness I also avoid the use of the terms "Safaitic Bedouin" and "Safaitic nomads". Although popular in the past, these terms should not be used to categorise the Safaitic Arabians. Not all of the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions would have identified themselves as Bedouin and indeed many may have come from societies not considered nomadic[100] although this still a matter of some debate.[101]

Onomastics is an important field in the study of Safaitic research. The texts show that their Bedouin authors took great care to recall their genealogy with accuracy,[102] as is still the case with Bedouin today. The more forefathers an author mentions suggests a higher social status.[103] Oxtoby states that the personal names that appear seem to be almost entirely Arabic[104] although it is difficult to judge from a personal name whether there is any ethnic or linguistic affiliation. In addition some 20 different tribal names appear in Harding's mammoth concordance of pre-Islamic Arabian names all of which are attested in Safaitic inscriptions.[105] Many more tribal names have since been identified and a comprehensive list can be found in the database accompanying this thesis, entitled SID.

Regard for ethnicity is important in determining how one conceptualises the term "tribe". Tribal membership conveys identity and a sense of belonging to individuals and comes with its own structures and intertribal relationships. Marx considered the fundamental aspects of tribes as providing members with kinship and territory and that a tribe was "a kind of political organization, in the sense that it controls territory and permits members access to the

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[97] Macdonald 1993, p. 307; See also Macdonald 2000, pp. 28–79
[98] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 20
[99] For a discussion on what constituted an "Arab" in antiquity see Macdonald 2009, pp. 277–332
[100] Dussaud 1952, cols. 322–325; Milik 1980, pp. 41–54
[101] Macdonald 1993, pp. 311–322, 342
[102] Bosworth 2002, p. 761
[103] Littmann 1943, p. viii
[104] Oxtoby 1968, p. 12
[105] Harding 1971

resources in its various parts".[106] This is definitely the case with the Safaitic Arabians and tribal allegiance was clearly a highly valued commodity. Indeed, inscriptions that feature the name of the authors' tribal lineage name, on average, more ancestors than those without. If the more forefathers an author mentions suggests a higher social status then it is possible to consider that individuals with tribal lineages were also of a higher social status.

Script

The origin of the Safaitic script has long been contested within ANA scholarship, in particular with its obvious similarity to its contemporary, the monumental script of epigraphic South Arabian from south-western Arabia. The view that Safaitic evolved from epigraphic South Arabian script was an early belief, due primarily to the reliance that those early translators of Safaitic had on the epigraphic South Arabian alphabet. That view persisted because of a belief that nomadic peoples would not have been capable of developing a script without the influence of a settled people. In addition, the Arab world regularly saw the progression of cultural ideals as being transferred from south to north, a view that further supported the thinking of early Safaitic scholars. While some scholars supported the view that the Safaitic script essentially originated in South Arabia, such as Littmann,[107] Winnett[108] and Oxtoby,[109] most French scholars such as Rodinson[110] argued that the North and South Arabian linguistic branches stemmed from a common ancestor.[111]

The close similarity between many of the letters of Safaitic and epigraphic South Arabian can be explained as a result of independent evolution once the letters were removed from the influence of the stem script, although a common ancestor is yet to be identified. Clark has suggested the differences in exigencies are between the scrawling graffiti on various types of rock rather than the creation of monumental inscriptions.[112] A script table comparing the various ANA script forms can be in Appendix A: Table 1, while Appendix A: Table 2 focuses only on the Safaitic script.

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[106] Marx 1977, p. 343
[107] Littmann 1904a, p. 113
[108] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 5
[109] Oxtoby 1968 p. 8
[110] Rodinson 1963, pp. 131–134
[111] Clark 1979, p. 58
[112] Clark 1979, p. 59

A number of letters in Safaitic can be shown in a variety of different forms, which at times makes translation of these texts troublesome. The uneven surfaces and the weathering of the rocks over thousands of years make this an even harder endeavour. It is often difficult to fully identify a character until the greater context is made clear. For example, note the similarity between the following letters.

Comparison of Safaitic letters that appear similar

ب	⊂	د	(
ذ	人	ح	ƙ
ع	O	خ	O

Fig. 1.3 – Comparison of Safaitic letters that appear similar

Phonology

Simply put, most of the ANA dialects seems to have been a collection of 28 sounds and are thought to have been usually similar to their corresponding sounds in Classical Arabic, although there is no way of knowing this for certain. Unlike Classical Arabic with its *matres lectionis* and later marks, the Safaitic script does not show vowels or diphthongs.

In most Semitic languages, the etymological phonemes /ṣ/, /ṭ/, /ḍ/, and /ẓ/ are emphatics, with /ṣ/ the correlate of [s]. Since there is no [s] in Safaitic however, /ṣ/ is often used to show the Greek *sigma* in foreign words such as Philip or Caesar.

In Safaitic there is a lot of fluctuation between the sounds /w/ and /y/, which has led to many debates on the existence of a deity known as *rḍy*, the supposed female companion of the more common *rḍw*. Dumaitic and Thamudic B inscriptions are significantly earlier than Safaitic and make mention of this deity only in the form of *rḍw*, which has led some scholars to conjecture that it merely marks a change in pronunciation over time. However, the Akkadian transliteration *Ruldaiu* dates from the 7th century BC and seems to favour a pronunciation similar to **ruḍayu*, which thus supports *rḍy*, suggesting that a dialectical difference between the two is feasible. The differences between the deities *rḍw* and *rḍy* are addressed in Chapter Three.

Nasal assimilation is common in Safaitic, for example the vowelless /n/ is regularly assimilated. While this is also common in most ANA dialects, it is particularly pronounced in Safaitic and Ḥismāic. For example, the word for daughter, *bnt*, is occasionally spelt *bt*.[113]

Morphology

The norminal feminine singular ending in Safaitic is –*t*, although the word "day", *ym*, (extant only in the plural *'ym*, and the dual *ymn*) appears to have been considered feminine. Nominals in ANA were split into three numbers: singular, dual and plural. The dual, seen clearly in Safaitic, only exists in Safaitic, Dedanitic and Thamudic B. In Safaitic one inscription where *ḍll-y* ("lost" or "dead") refers to two people is in the same text shown aside three *ḍll-n* (LP 305). In Safaitic, the form of *bny-h* is also a possible dual. However, since Safaitic orthography does not show diphthongs in this case it is likely that it represents a diminutive.

The masculine plural is formed by adding –*n* to the singular, for example *ẓbyn* "male gazelles". The ending of the feminine plural is the same as the singular, but the change is in the vowel, for example, *ẓbyt* "female gazelles". Collective nouns are also represented in Safaitic *'bl* "camels" and *m'zy* "goats", but it is unclear if they are feminine as they are in their linguistic successor, Classical Arabic. As the Safaitic script does not show any vowels, we cannot know whether case endings actually existed. Likewise, there is also no evidence of indetermination, like the *tanwīn* in Arabic. Adjectives follow the noun and agree with the gender, number and determination of the noun.

Three verb stems can be identified in Safaitic, the *'*-prefix stem (*'wr* "to blind or obscure" – root *'-w-r*), the *t*-prefix stem (*ts²wq* "he longed for" – root **s²-w-q*) and *t*-infix stem (*t's¹* "he despaired" – root *y-'-s¹*). Two conjugations are identifiable in ANA, one in person, number and gender and one that is indicated by prefixes (and occasionally person as well). As no short vowels are expressed in Arabian consonantal scripts, it is not possible to tell if the Safaitic verbal system had a passive voice or not. In the same sense, it is also impossible to tell if there were indicative, subjunctive or jussive moods meaning that only the imperative can be identified in the context of the text. In addition this also leaves us with no visible distinction between the masculine and feminine forms. For example, in Safaitic, *flṭ* "deliver!" occurs in some situations where it must be masculine, but others where it must be feminine.

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[113] WH 148.1, 214

In Safaitic the distinction between the definite article and the nearer demonstrative ia not always clear, and it is possible that there may be a mild demonstrative implied, for example, *h-dr* "this place", like the Arabic, for example, *'al-yawm* "today".[114] In Safaitic the introductory particle *l* (the *lām auctoris*) meaning "by" is used in all but a few inscriptions. The vocative particle in Safaitic is *h*, such as *h lt* "O Lt". It has been suggested by Winnett and Harding that the Safaitic forms *hylt* "O Lt", "O Ylt" etc. represent a different vocative particle, *hy*, similar to the Arabic *hayā*.[115] There are two conjunctions known in ANA, *w* "and" and *f-* "and (then)". The first is common in all ANA dialects, but the latter exists only in Safaitic, Dedanitic and Ḥismāic.[116]

As far as is known currently, cardinal numbers precede nouns in ANA. As yet there is no example for the number one in Safaitic, although there are extant inscriptions of the verb *wḥd* "he was alone". The number two is represented using the dual and the rules of agreement in Safaitic appear to conform to the rules of Classical Arabic. The idea of totality is expressed in Safaitic inscriptions, for example, as with the Arabic, when *kll* is followed by the subject or object, for example, *kll ʿs²r ṣdq* "every true kinsman".

Syntax

Since many ANA inscriptions are fragmentary in nature, it is difficult to provide a full description of ANA syntax. What can be gathered in a less comprehensive manner are word order, participles, relative clauses and invocations.

Word order

As previously mentioned, Safaitic graffiti generally begin with the *lām auctoris*, followed by the name of the author and his genealogy. Statements are connected by *w* "and" in the pattern of "verb, subject, object" or "verb, object, subject", as is the case in Classical Arabic. For example, *s¹ nt ḥrbt 'l ʿwḏ 'l ṣbḥ* - "the year the 'l ʿwḏ made war on the 'l ṣbḥ". In this next case, the indirect object can precede the direct object – *ngy* (he fled) *b-h-bqr* (with the cows) *h-nḫl* (the valley) – "he fled the valley with the cows". In Safaitic inscriptions, verbs can have multiple direct objects, for example – *r ʿy h-nḫl bql n ʿm-hm* – "he pastured their small cattle in the valley on spring-herbage". There are many examples of nominal sentences in Safaitic, used

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[114] See also Al-Jallad and al-Manaser 2015, p. 58
[115] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 47
[116] Sima 1999, pp. 110–114

instead of the verb "to be" as a copula. For example, *l-N h-ḫṭṭ* – "By N and the carving [is by him?]". A common expression in Safaitic is *l N h-dr*, which basically means, "N was here".

Participles

There are a few different uses for participles in Safaitic, for example an active participle as a finite verb with a perfective sense can be seen in – *w-wgd 'tr gs²-h qbrn ḏw 'l yẓr* "he found the traces of his raiding party, members of the 'l yẓr having performed the burial". Active participles can also form a circumstantial clause, for example, *w-wḥd ġzz* "and he was alone on a raid". In Safaitic the active participle can take a direct object, and a passive participle can be used on its own or within construct of another word. Macdonald believes this is probably the explanation of passive participles that follow the names of those who are mourned.[117] The perfective use of the active participle in Safaitic is also shared with many modern dialects such as Levantine Arabic.[118]

Relative clauses

In Safaitic inscriptions, relative clauses can be formed with relative pronouns, such as *h lt 'yr m-ḏ qtl-h* – "Oh lt [grant] recompense from [him] who [has] killed him". Relative clauses may also be formed without a relative pronoun by utilising the prefix-conjugation with a reference to the antecedent. This practice in Safaitic is contrary to Classical Arabic, where a relative clause cannot be used after a defined antecedent, although evidence of this practice has been found in earlier versions of Classical Arabic.[119]

Invocations

Invocations can be articulated in three different ways in Safaitic: by the vocative particle *h* + deity + imperative + predicate – for example, *h lt 'wr ḏ yꜥ wr h-s¹fr* "O lt blind whoever scratches out the writing"; by the vocative particle *h* + deity + verb + noun – for example, *h lt ġnmt* "O lt [grant] booty"; and a verb in the suffix-conjugation with an optative implication + deity + predicate. Invocations are dealt with at length later in this study.

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[117] Macdonald 2004, p. 219
[118] Al-Jallad (forthcoming)
[119] Beeston 1970, p. 50 n.1

General content of the inscriptions and major differences between the Ancient North Arabian scripts

The content of the Safaitic inscriptions when compared with the other scripts in the ANA corpus is quite distinct in a number of areas. The most distinctive of these differences are the religious beliefs of the authors. An in-depth discussion of these differences can be seen in the latter part of Chapter Three. With the exception of religion, other major differences involve the authorship of inscriptions, the number of forefathers mentioned, the amount of detail, general content in inscriptions of different dialects and of course geographical spread. Since the Safaitic, Ḥismāic and Thamudic C and D inscriptions are thought to date to later periods than the Dedanite, Taymanite and Thamudic B texts, the following comparisons will be limited to the texts that tend to appear later. The reason for this is to show a consistency between authorship. It would be unwise to compare Safaitic inscriptions with Taymanite inscriptions since despite the fact that both are from Ancient North Arabia, Taymanite inscriptions are considered to pre-date Safaitic by a number of centuries.[120]

Firstly, there is a common trend in the Thamudic C and D inscriptions where an inscription may be "written" by two or more individuals. Of course, in most circumstances only one individual is actually inscribing but the authorship can be claimed by more than one individual in the inscription itself. This trend towards multiple authorship is rare in the Safaitic inscriptions, although it can be seen to exist in a handful of examples. In the Thamudic C and D inscriptions however, 2.7% of inscriptions are written in this fashion. Like Safaitic, the Ḥismāic also rarely feature inscriptions written by more than one individual.

Another major distinction between the general content of ANA inscriptions is the number of names mentioned in genealogies. Safaitic inscriptions mention on average 2.5 names per inscription with the highest number of names in a genealogy being 16.[121] In Ḥismāic texts the average number of names in the genealogy of an author is 1.4 with the greatest number of names mentioned being 10.[122] And of the names in the Thamudic C and D texts, the average number mentioned is just 1.3 with the greatest being only 3.[123] This shows the importance of genealogies in Safaitic inscriptions. The reason for the differences in the lengths of genealogies is unclear but it could suggest a more nomadic element to the Safaitic inscriptions since, as

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[120] Macdonald 1991b, p. 21
[121] MISSD 1
[122] KING1 37
[123] Brande 1950 Hu2, Eut. 89

previously stated, lengthy genealogies seemed to be of more importance to non-sedentary communities.

The amount of detail in the different inscriptional dialects is another example of differing content. As previously mentioned, in the Safaitic texts approximately 73% of the inscriptions are of the type known as "simple authorship": they include only the name/s of the author and their tribal affiliation, if provided. Yet, in the Thamudic C and D texts only 58.4% of inscriptions can be considered to have simple authorship format. However, the Safaitic texts that are not "simple authorship" generally contain far more detail than Thamudic C and D texts. The reason for this perhaps lies in the purpose of writing for the Thamudic writers versus the Safaitic writers. Inscriptions in Safaitic usually discuss an author's daily life in a comparatively detailed narrative, whereas the Thamudic writers often write in much shorter inscriptions about the love, grief or loss of an individual. Ḥismāic inscriptions, while slightly more detailed than the Thamudic, feature much of the same general content as the Thamudic C and D inscriptions.

Naturally the geographical spread is another defining difference between the Safaitic inscriptions and other ANA texts. As mentioned previously, the Safaitic inscriptions are centred around southern Syria, north/north-eastern Jordan and north-western Saudi Arabia, the Ḥismāic around southern Jordan with smaller concentrations around Tayma. The Thamudic inscriptions are scattered around more southern parts of Jordan and north-western Saudi Arabia, with occasional occurrences in South Arabia.

External sources for Ancient North Arabian religious beliefs

Inscriptions, archaeological remains or iconographic motifs give us immediate, primary sources for understanding the history of the ANA Bedouins, yet it is also important to analyse their societies in the broader Near Eastern context. Inscriptions can give us an insight into the cultural and social aspects of their society while an analysis of contemporary Greco-Roman sources, pre-Islamic poetry and Islamic sources can also assist in giving an interpretative insight into their lives.

Archaeological remains in this region are quite rare with the exception of the Nabataean temple for Allāt worship at the base of Jebel Rum in Wadi Rum.[124] While this was a Nabataean

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[124] Savignac and Horsfield 1935, pp. 245–278; Tholbecq 1998, pp. 241–254; For a photograph of this temple see Appendix E: 2

temple it may have been used by the surrounding non-Nabataean nomads, as evidenced by a number of Ḥismāic inscriptions found within metres of the complex.[125]

The information from classical antiquity most relevant to the study of the history of the Arabian Peninsula in the pre-Islamic era can be found in Strabo's *Geography* (written between 25 BC and 23 AD), Pliny the Elder's *Natural History* (AD 77) and Ptolemy's *Geography* (c. AD 150). Pliny splits Arabia up into four regions, the one of interest for this study being east of the Dead Sea which he calls "Arabia of the Nomads".[126] He describes a wealthy people that engage "in trade or live by brigandage".[127] Strabo's description of Arabia, starting from book XVI, is what MacAdam describes as "arm-chair" geography with many of his descriptions coming from the works of Eratosthenes, Artemidorus and Poseidonius with the exception of an eye-witness account of Petra.[128] In contrast, Ptolemy's description of Arabia is quite different from both Strabo and Pliny the Elder and does not mention the Nabataeans (whose name derives from the Semitic *nbṭw*[129]) specifically referring to them only with the adjective "Petraea"[130] which may have been politically motivated.[131] What these texts indicate is that Arabia through this period was considered by many as a largely desolate, extensive desert.

The relationship between pre-Islamic poetry and the inscriptions of the Ancient North Arabians serves as a further reference point for understanding the world of pre-Islamic nomads. Pre-Islamic poetry is particularly important as it did not have the stigma of the post-Islamic definition of the *jāhiliyah* period attached to it when it was written. The concept of an author writing post-*jāhiliyah*, or of the era prior to Muhammad and thus in the days of "ignorance of divine guidance" suggests that this period was viewed with a belittling or condescending attitude. Pre-Islamic poetry remained largely unchanged and provides us with the closest source to the ANA inscriptions both in time and relationship, being passed down orally until it was written down at the request of Umayyad and Abbasid royalty.[132] In the odes or *qasidahs*, there are lengthy descriptions of Bedouin life in the pre-Islamic era, including significant life events like depictions of "rite of passage" rituals and the importance of the she-camel.[133] The

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[125] Zayadine and Fares-Drappeau 1998, pp. 255–258
[126] Pliny, a*b oriente Arabia Nomadum* V.15.72
[127] Pliny, a*b oriente Arabia Nomadum* VI 32.161–162
[128] MacAdam 1989, p. 297
[129] Taylor 2001, p. 14
[130] Bowersock 1988, p. 51
[131] MacAdam 1989, p. 307
[132] Stetkevych 1993, p. 3
[133] For a description on the major themes in pre-Islamic poetry see Jacobi 1971

importance of the she-camel in religious events can also be seen in the Qu'ran depicting the fall of the tribe of Thamūd.[134]

Similarities between pre-Islamic poetry and the ANA inscriptions were first discussed by Littman in 1940; he noted in particular its relationship with Safaitic. Regular occurrences of words such as longing and sorrow are concepts commonly discussed in many ANA dialects as well as in the *qasidahs*, as are finding traces of friends or loved ones, or mentions of encampment, a concept also common in the Safaitic inscriptions. Corbett and Höfner speak at length of the similarities between the scenes depicted in pre-Islamic poetry and the iconography present in ANA rock drawings, most notably hunting motifs and the importance of the she-camel in both Arabian poetry and the inscriptions.[135] However, it is important to note that what we know of pre-Islamic poetry is influenced by what the Arabic editors in the 9th and 10th centuries chose to focus on and repeat.

In addition, the Qur'ān is a useful source for the study of pre-Islamic Arabia, for example, its description of the fate of the tribe of Thamūd. However, as mentioned above, it is important to view the Qur'ān cautiously as pre-Islamic Arabia was subject to many *jāhiliyah*-based biases. The same can be said for Arab literary sources post the advent of Islam, especially since many are late in date. One of the many problems with utilising sources of this period is that the texts themselves were often put together at a later date to settle controversies and respectively justify an Islamic salvation history, or Heilsgeschichte.[136] The most useful book for determining the potential religious beliefs of pre-Islamic Arabia is the *Book of Idols* by Hishām ibn al-Kalbi (d.821),[137] although it has been argued that the writings are at times exaggerated. Nevertheless his work covers many deities that feature in the Safaitic writings, such as the frequently mentioned divinities Allat and Dhu-al-Shara and the lesser-mentioned Nasr. Thus we can see that while useful, many Islamic sources have a number of internal contradictions.[138]

Literacy and the existence of writing amongst the Safaitic Arabians

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[134] Qur'an, 7:73–74
[135] For a greater discussion on these themes see Höfner 1959, pp. 53–68; Corbett 2010, pp. 24–33, 129–132, 165–173; Eksell 2002, pp. 14–16, 87–93
[136] Berkey 2003, p. 40
[137] Seidensticker 2010, p. 301
[138] Hawting 1999, pp. 88–110

It is important to determine to what extent "literacy" or writing was used by the Safaitic Arabians in any discussion of Safaitic inscriptions. As a society made up of predominately nomadic pastoralists, the importance of writing would not, on the face of it, seem to have fulfilled a significant need for the Safaitic Arabians. So did it serve a practical purpose? The following section will discuss the need or desire for, and importance of, writing in pre-Islamic North Arabia by non-sedentary people and comment on the role that writing played in this society.

Firstly, it is important to note that the existence of the writing used by the Safaitic Arabians should be viewed in a very different context to the writing used by contemporaneous sedentary societies. It has been argued that the introduction of writing to a society brings with it a so-called "literate mentality" whereby the oral mentality and traditions prevalent in that society gradually decrease and are displaced by the advent of literacy. However, in recent years ethnographic studies have shown that the introduction of literacy to a culture is by no means a uniform experience.[139] This is understandable and particularly relevant in terms of the Safaitic inscriptions. Not only are the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions from a predominately nomadic community, a social grouping not generally known for their skill in written transmission, but the authors of the inscriptions come from every gender and social class. In Greece and Rome at this time, the profession of writing was a skill generally only transferred to male members of a higher social status. The Safaitic inscriptions in contrast, were written by soldiers and mercenaries,[140] merchant traders,[141] prisoners,[142] women[143] and slaves.[144]

Many scholars have suggested reasons why the authors of the ANA scripts chose to write, arguing that since the vast majority of the texts are graffiti the authors may have been writing simply to pass the time.[145] However, we should be careful not to conflate modern practices with ancient ones, such as equating graffiti with vandalism, and thus also being guilty of ignoring context. Where the authors discuss hunting it is possible that they wanted to express pride in a successful mission or boast about their exploits to others.[146] Where an inscription claims ownership over a well or a campsite the purpose of the inscription may simply be to

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[139] Lewis 1975, pp. 265-276
[140] C2076
[141] For example salt traders — WH 24; HaNSB 184; KhMNS 14, 15
[142] KRS 1570
[143] For example WH 2814; CSNS 304; For more on women and writing in pre-Islamic Arabia see Okab 2009
[144] See HFSL 2; KRS 167, 303; HSIM 49218.1
[145] Oxtoby 1968, p. 16
[146] Littmann 1940, p. 98

warn others not to encroach on their territory. Since many authors often go to great lengths not to write over or obscure existing inscriptions (there are very few examples of *damnatio memoriae* where the name of someone was intentionally erased), it might be suggested that there is in fact great importance attached to writing and the written word for the authors of these inscriptions. Stetkevych, when analysing Labīd's Muʿallaqah, posited that the message of the stone was undecipherable and that the "message, then, is that the silence of illegibility or indecipherability is death."[147]

Grimme theorises that the inscriptions served a funerary purpose and that the activities mentioned within the inscriptions themselves were a reference to the cult of the dead.[148] I would disagree with this assertion as very few of the writings that have been found on known burial cairns give any indication that there was any sacral function, or belief in the afterlife. Lipiński suggests that the purpose of the inscriptions was as memorial texts.[149] This may be true to some extent. However, it is interesting to note that when compared with the Ḥismāic inscriptions that overlap at times in both a temporal and geographic space with the inscriptions, the Safaitic texts are far less likely to seek remembrance (*ḏkrt*) from a deity through prayer than are those written in Ḥismāic. This suggests that remembrance of deceased individuals was of less importance in the Safaitic religious sphere. In addition the amount of inscriptions in Safaitic that reference the mourning of a deceased individual are by far outnumbered by those that are simple graffiti. This too indicates that any memorial aspect of the Safaitic inscriptions was not the primary function of writing in the region and can be considered merely a by-product.

Eksell disagrees with the theory that the inscriptions were largely written simply to pass the time, arguing instead for a sacral function based on the introductory particle *l*. This has been traditionally translated as *by* but Eksell believes it should be translated as *for*.[150]

Using examples of bilingual Safaitic inscriptions, Hayajneh has shown that the *lam auctoris* translates as the term "by"[151] and Al-Jallad has shown that the term appears both with and without inscriptions that are expressly memorial[152] suggesting that the *l* may simply be an introductory particle, as conventionally argued by scholars such as Macdonald.[153] It has also

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[147] Stetkevych 1993, p. 23
[148] Grimme, 1929
[149] Lipiński 1997, p. 72
[150] Eksell, 2002, p. 176
[151] Hayajneh 2001, pp. 81-95
[152] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 5
[153] Macdonald 2006, pp. 294–295

been suggested that the *l* might be an abbreviation for the deity *lt*, akin to the statement *bismillah* meaning "In the name of Allah".[154]

Inscriptions that feature more than the genealogy of the author often mention everyday actions in the lives of the individual, ranging from prayers to narratives. As Al-Jallad states, it is the mundane nature of these texts that supports the theory that writing was used as a means to pass time in the desert.[155] He goes on to state that the thematic nature of the Safaitic inscriptions, and where they deviate from common themes in the Ḥismāic inscriptions suggest that there was an art to writing the Safaitic inscriptions. He argues that the formulaic and aesthetic nature of the Safaitic inscriptions means they may have been considered a genre of rock art.[156]

Macdonald cautions against calling nomadic and semi-nomadic groups, like the Safaitic Arabians, literate societies because writing was not essential to their everyday functioning. While there may have been more members of Safaitic tribes who could write than, for example, people who could write in Mycenaean Greece, writing was considered essential in Greek society but not in Safaitic.[157] Furthermore he argues that since these inscriptions are rarely found in settled areas it is safe to say that they were only used by nomadic populations and that sedentary populations would have used the more widely recognisable scripts such as Aramaic or Greek.[158] Given that these inscriptions are found predominately in the desert, where there would have been little if any audience, it appears that the writers only intended their inscriptions to be read by other nomads. Thus he states that nomadic groups like the Safaitic writers should be considered a non-literate society.[159] Macdonald further notes that the inscriptions are very informal with no uniformity in writing direction, and the few abecedaries that have been found to date do not show any consistent regularity in the letter order.

However, just because writing direction and letter order were not standardised (as they were not in early Greek or Latin) and there are thus writing practises that differ from a modern context or "classical" practice does not necessarily mean that the authors intended only for other nomads to read their inscriptions. Likewise, different directions of writing might also

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[154] Abbadi 2014, p. 3
[155] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 6
[156] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 7
[157] Macdonald 2005a, p. 49
[158] Macdonald 1993, pp. 382–383; Macdonald 2005a, pp. 75–78
[159] Macdonald 2010, p. 7

suggest a high level of familiarity with writing practices able to cope with these variants. In addition, the very existence of abecedaries shows that skill in writing was being consciously and practically taught, arguably a mark of a literate society. By definition a society that habitually produces textual inscriptions should not be considered "non-literate". While there may not be clear evidence of conventional practices that require the production and reading of written texts, nor a group within the society that is trained in reading and writing those texts, it is clear through the vast corpora of Safaitic inscriptions that their existence and composition must have held clear importance for the writers indicating more than a mere pastime. It is also possible that the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions may have written on perishable surfaces that just have not survived to the current day. Should this have been the case there is no evidence for or against writing being an integral part of the lives of the Safaitic Arabians.

The question that then follows is why did the Safaitic Arabians leave behind such an expansive corpora of inscriptions if writing was not essential to their society? Macdonald believes that writing was utilised by the nomads of Ancient North Arabia as a way to pass the time,[160] or as a personal outlet for the emotional concerns of the author.[161] This may well be the case, but in turn leads to the question: what was the ritual significance of writing to the Safaitic Arabians? Why did they often go to great lengths to ensure that the inscription they wrote did not obscure a previous inscription or would itself be obscured in the future? Many inscriptions are written rather awkwardly as the author twists and winds his words between or around an existing inscription. This would suggest that the written word was important, at least symbolically, to the Safaitic Arabians. Many inscriptions are accompanied with curses that threaten divine retribution on anyone who would obliterate them. Yet, very few of the inscriptions, regardless of whether a curse is present in the inscription, seem to have been purposely obscured. Rather, great lengths seem to have been taken by the writers to ensure that the writing of a previous person remains and is unobscured. Furthermore, many of the inscriptions are accompanied with surrounding cartouches or a series of seven particular symbols which many believe exist to further protect the text from destruction. If the purpose of these inscriptions was merely to just record graffiti or the emotional issues of the author, then why would the writer go to such lengths to protect the text? There must be some

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[160] Macdonald 1993, p. 368; Macdonald 2005a, p. 81
[161] Macdonald 2005a, p. 77

significance or form of negativity attached to a text being obliterated that the authors wanted to avoid.

In his dissertation, Corbett discusses "the inviolable character of the written word" and believes that to obscure the text meant one was actively disdaining the memory of the author and destroying what he had hoped to achieve by inscribing the text.[162] He also argues that "writing" in pre-Islamic poetry was a symbolically loaded motif,[163] and that in pre-Islamic Arabia the written word provided a permanent voice for the author.[164] While the exact purpose of the existence of writing by the Ancient North Arabians continues to remain unclear, what can be determined is that for some reason, the obscuring of a text was considered negative both for the author of the inscription and the person who obscured it.

When discussing the potential reasons why the Safaitic authors employed inscriptions as a means to convey their ideas or ideals, we have to admit that we may never know their true intentions. What we do know, however, is that writing and the written word carried weight among the Safaitic authors. This is evident in the effort they made to ensure that their writings were not obscured and that they themselves did not obscure another author's work. It suggests that their writing was done with purpose and cause, and not taken lightly. We also know that Safaitic inscriptions adhered to a number of strict formulaic conditions that differed greatly from neighbouring ANA scripts such as Ḥismāic. Once again, this indicates that Safaitic was written with, and for, a purpose. The Safaitic authors were not merely passing time but potentially engaging in an important aspect of their culture and society. The practice of writing and the ability to write were clearly important to the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions, indicating that writing was an integral part of their society and culture. For this reason I would argue that the authors were members of a "literate" rather than "non-literate" society.

Nomadic and sedentary peoples in Ancient North Arabia

The Safaitic Arabians were just one of a number of societies and cultures residing in or around North Arabia during the period they recorded their inscriptions. Within the inscriptions many authors use relative dating methods based on events that occurred in surrounding sedentary cultures. Macdonald makes an important distinction between these events stating that they take

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[162] Corbett 2010, p. 106
[163] Corbett 2010, p. 110
[164] Corbett 2010, p. 112

two forms: those where an author claims to be involved in the event, and those by which he or she dates their inscriptions. He argues that references used by the author to date an inscription are evidence of the spread of news but not evidence of contact or involvement.[165]

The major predominately sedentary culture that Safaitic Arabians interacted with on a regular basis were the Nabataeans. Inhabiting northern Arabia and part of the Southern Levant, the Nabataeans, whose culture was comprised of both nomadic and sedentary elements, controlled a trading network that centred on desert oases stretching from the Euphrates to the Red Sea. With a capital based at Petra throughout much of the period that the Safaitic inscriptions were inscribed, the Nabataeans were the closest sedentary culture, both in geographical proximity and in cultural and religious heritage. For example, the two cultures shared many of the same deities, such as Dushara, and there were many similarities in their spoken languages. Occasionally we find in the Safaitic inscriptions examples of Safaitic/Nabataean bilingual inscriptions,[166] including a number of inscriptions written only in Safaitic where the author clearly refers to themselves as Nabataean.[167] However, it is also clear that not all relations with the Nabataeans were positive as one inscription references the capture of the author by Nabataeans and their subsequent escape.[168] In yet another inscription we find commentary by an author who seeks blood vengeance on a certain Nabataean for the murder of his brother.[169]

Another prominent culture in ancient North Arabia at the time were the Palmyrenes whose society consisted of both sedentary peoples and tribal pastoralists. Ancient Palmyra lay half way along the caravan route between Emesa and Abû Kimal on the Euphrates and thus was an important cultural and commercial centre. At times home to the Amorites, Aramaens and the Romans, Palmyra was a crossroads and a melting pot of peoples and cultures. Like the Nabataeans the Palmyrenes shared a number of similar religious aspects with the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions, most noticeably the worship of the deities Baalshamin and Allat.[170] Since Safaitic graffiti have been found in the sanctuary of Allat in Palmyra it may be possible that in Palmyra both the sanctuary and the Temple of Baalshamin[171] were places of pilgrimage for

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[165] Macdonald, 1993, p. 329
[166] E.g. al-Khraysheh 1994, pp. 109–114, and Macdonald 1993, p. 348.
[167] CSNS 661; C 2820; MISSB1; For a discussion of this inscription see Macdonald 1991a, p. 107
[168] HaNSB 304
[169] C 2664
[170] Teixidor 1980, p. 279
[171] See Appendix E:1 for an image of the temple prior to its destruction in 2015.

nomadic groups in the region. Safaitic inscriptions have also been found at the caravan city of Dura Europos[172] which had close ties to Palmyra.[173] Within the Safaitic inscriptions themselves multiple references are made to Palmyra as a destination of travel for the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions, for example "and he came from Palmyra",[174] and "he came in the morning to Palmyra".[175]

The Safaitic Arabians also had connections with the Greeks and Romans. References to the people of ancient North Arabia are evident in the writings of many prominent ancient Greek authors. However, although there exist a number of bilingual Safaitic inscriptions, in both Safaitic and Greek,[176] there are rarely any references in the Safaitic inscriptions to the Greeks themselves and little to suggest that there existed much Greek influence in the region. The Romans however, feature frequently in Safaitic inscriptions. Indeed, Safaitic inscriptions have even been found in Pompeii. The authors of the Safaitic inscriptions would presumably have had a great deal of interaction with the Romans in this region given the many auxiliary Roman outposts. They are certainly very aware of the major Roman events that occurred outside of the desert. It is even likely that a number of writers of Safaitic inscriptions served in units of the Roman army, particularly members of the tribe known as ʿmrt, as the Romans were known to have recruited army units from the nomads of the ancient North Arabia.[177] The relationship between the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions and the Romans however, seems to have been very tumultuous at times with inscriptions rarely depicting their interaction in positive terms.[178]

The Safaitic Arabians also made contact with other non-sedentary cultures. Frequently mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions are confrontations between the writers and the tribe known as the ḥwlt. Originally Winnett believed that this tribe was one of the largest of the Safaitic tribes,[179] a view adopted by later scholars.[180] Macdonald notes that of the two inscriptions, one in Safaitic[181] and one in Ḥismāic,[182] written by someone claiming to be a

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[172] Macdonald 2005b, pp. 118–129
[173] Goldman 1990, pp. 5–25
[174] LP 717
[175] WH 2833a
[176] C 2823-2824; MISSI 1; WH 1860; WH 3563; MISSJ 1–2; See Al-Jallad and Al-Manaser 2015, pp. 62-63 for more on Safaitic bilingualism.
[177] Macdonald et. al 2015, pp. 11–89; Fisher 2015, p. 24
[178] Graf 2002, p. 153
[179] Harding 1969, p. 20
[180] Sartre 1992, p. 43
[181] LP 87
[182] Macdonald 1993, p. 308 n. 34

member of the *ḥwlt*, the definite article used is distinctive to Lihyanite and Hasaitic inscriptions, and not Safaitic.[183] Macdonald therefore believes the *ḥwlt* to be the Chaulotaeans (Χαυλοταίοι) mentioned by Eratosthenes and possibly the *ḥawlid* from Genesis 25:18.[184] The inscriptions describe this tribe as a widely distributed and fierce enemy of the Safaitic Arabians with many inscriptions referencing their holding people prisoner,[185] warring[186] and taking booty[187] with some writers seeking blood-revenge for these crimes.[188]

Research methodology

The majority of literature previously published on the Safaitic inscriptions has largely dealt with these inscriptions as individual collections. Much of the work has focused on onomastic and linguistic concerns such as personal names of the authors and names of tribes, while also establishing a vocabulary for the inscriptions, predominately using Classical Arabic as a source. Currently there are very few works that approach the general content of the Safaitic inscriptions, let alone those with religious elements. Many collections make fleeting reference to the nature of the inscriptions, often only insofar as the defined boundaries of the collections dictate. In addition, with the exception of Macdonald and Al-Jallad, few contemporary works approach the narratives contained in the Safaitic inscriptions from a geographical perspective. This study attempts to rectify this gap in research by analysing the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians through the overall content of these inscriptions as well as observing any relevant geographical significance. My analysis will be structured around quantifying references to both deities and potential religious practices and cross-referencing every occurrence. I will also draw comparisons with other ancient religions and pantheons that occur in the same temporal and geographic boundaries.

Database

In order to accurately analyse the religious beliefs present in the Safaitic inscriptions, two specific Excel databases were established. This first, entitled the "Safaitic Inscription Database (SID)", was created to catalogue all 28,000 known inscriptions. This database categorised basic religious elements as well as making note of relevant or potentially important social aspects of

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[183] Macdonald 1993, p. 308
[184] Macdonald 2001, p. 18
[185] C2552; HCH 132
[186] HCH 126
[187] WH 3736
[188] AbMS 1

the inscriptions, for example, if an inscription contained datable elements it was included here. The second database, entitled the "Safaitic Religious Inscription Database (SRID)" was created to collate those inscriptions that contained religious elements. The purpose of creating two databases rather than one was for ease of reference with regard to religious elements in the inscriptions. In addition, having a second database that focused only on religious elements meant it was possible to include more pertinent and in-depth data than was available in the larger database and even allowed for whole texts to be included when appropriate. These databases are available in digital CD-ROM format in the Appendix to this collection.

Both databases record in the left hand columns (A and B) the collection in which the inscription was initially published, accompanied by its numerical catalogue reference number. The provenance of the inscription with a proposed latitude and longitude (columns C and D) of its location follows. The geographical location of the inscriptions were necessary for this analysis in order to easily cross-reference inscriptions with similar religious features or functions. This additional information allowed me to approach these inscriptions both in an individual sense and also as part of a whole. In SID column E details later publications relating to the inscription, although this is usually only when inscriptions have undergone revised or significantly altered translations or transliterations. This was an important aspect to include particularly when proposed translations differed greatly between scholars. Column E in SRID and column G in SID, states the name of the site where the inscriptions were found or directions to its provenance. These locations are the ones recorded in the original collections which in some instances may be nearly 100 years old. Thus the current place locations may not bear much similarity to those in the original collections.

Column F in both SID and SRID logs the number of names mentioned in each inscription. For example, HN 61 is as follows: "*l grmʾl bn ḥd bn ḫlṣ…*" This inscription features the name of the author (*grmʾl*), his father (*ḥd*) and his grandfather (*ḫlṣ*), so three names would be logged. The purpose of this was to show whether there was any correlation between the number of names mentioned in an inscription and the function of that inscription. For example, were simple authorship inscriptions more likely to mention fewer names than texts with religious significance? Following the number of names the column H in SID designates whether the text was of "simple authorship" or not. To be considered a "simple" text, the inscription needed to feature the name of the author and/or their tribal affiliation. This method of determining simple authorship was borrowed from Geraldine King's work on the Ḥismāic

inscriptions. Unlike her work however, I have not categorised texts with multiple authorship as simple since texts with multiple authorship are comparatively rare in Safaitic. If a text is not considered simple authorship it is because the text features more than the name of the author and/or their tribal affiliation. The purpose of this column was to determine to what extent the inscriptions of the Safaitic Arabians were simple graffiti in the manner of "I was here", and what percentage of inscriptions featured more than the bare minimum.

In SID column I states whether the inscription features religious aspects or not. Rather than go into detail in SID a user might look up the corresponding inscription in SRID to determine the particular religious significance of an inscription. The purpose of this was to make detailed study of the database and the religious inscriptions easier for the user. In SID the adjacent column J lists the tribal names present in the Safaitic inscriptions where an author has specifically stated he is a member. The purpose of this column is to determine in the analysis if there are any religious aspects or trends that corresponded with tribes where authors claim lineage. Column K indicates whether the plates that accompanied the original inscriptions were complete or not. The existence of this column was necessary since many of the early studies of the Safaitic inscriptions come from collections that do not contain a full set of plates. Many of the early collections lack accompanying plates altogether so have been categorised in the SID as "N/A". In some instances the plates provided are incomplete, featuring only copies of particularly interesting inscriptions or rock art. The plates for those such collections are labelled "incomplete".

More recent editors have tended to include a full, unabridged collection of plates accompanying the inscriptions. In these cases they have been labelled as "complete" collections. This designation was essential for the study of these inscriptions when analysing accompanying rock art or symbols. In the analysis of rock art, only collections that feature a "complete" designation in column K were included for analysis. The purpose of this was to ensure that the commentary and investigation on rock art were presented without bias. Where earlier editors omitted rock drawings or symbols this compromised the integrity of the portrayal of accompanying rock art. For this reason in the current study the investigation on rock art accompanying the Safaitic inscriptions was only analysed if the plates in any given collection were labelled "complete".

Column L in SID lists inscriptions that mention drawings in their text. Since many of the drawings that feature alongside Safaitic inscriptions have no clear dating, it is impossible

to know if a drawing is contemporaneous with a text unless specified within the text itself. Rock art was commonplace in ancient North Arabia in the centuries and indeed millennia that preceded the Safaitic inscriptions so it is not always clear if a drawing was inscribed by the author of an inscription or pre-dated the inscription. Thus the only drawings subject to analysis in this study are those that are specifically mentioned within the text of the inscription themselves.

Following this is column M which lists the symbols that accompany the inscriptions. The purpose of this is to attempt to analyse what religious intent, if any, symbols held in the creation of Safaitic inscriptions. Column N records which animals are present alongside the Safaitic texts and column O records whether the rock art was part of an artistic scene, for example, a hunting scene or armed horsemen in battle. Column P lists human counterparts that occur alongside inscriptions. The purpose of recording human figures was once again to determine if the representation of humans contained any religious function.

Column Q lists which inscriptions are written in what is known as "square text". The purpose of this column is to determine if there are any religious elements that are prominent in square text inscriptions over those inscriptions written in conventional Safaitic, and to further identify if those inscriptions are more common to particular areas or more familiar with particular tribal groupings.

Column R lists inscriptions that are expressly written by females, the purpose of which is to determine if there are any gender differences between the content of inscriptions written by women, any religious variances that might occur and why. Finally the database ends with column S where the translations of particularly interesting inscriptions are recorded.

In SRID column G catalogues the vocative particles that precede a deity's name. The purpose of this column was to determine what the most frequently used vocative particles were and whether there was any significance with regard to the frequency used for a particular deity. It is also used to determine whether individual vocative particles are more common to certain tribes and/or in particular geographic regions. In column H the names of the deity or deities invoked in the prayer are noted in the order in which they appear. For example, if *lt* and *yṯ'* are both invoked in an inscription but *lt* is mentioned first then the cell would read "*lt; yṯ'*". The intention of this is to determine if the order in which a deity is invoked over another holds any religious significance in ascertaining the importance of the relevant deity. Column I follows

this theme and lists how many times the deities mentioned in the previous column are invoked. For example, in CSA 1.2, the deities invoked in the prayer are *lt* (who is mentioned first) and *ds²r*. Since *lt* is invoked twice in this prayer then the designation in the cell in column I is "2;1". The purpose of this column is to determine which deities are mentioned more than once and if there is any hierarchy between those divinities.

Column J indicates what basic requests are made in each prayer, for example, prayers that ask for *s¹lm*, "peace/security". This makes it easier to search for prayers that contain a particular function and makes it simpler to differentiate between what prayer requests are most common alongside each another. Column K categorises the prayers in separate classifications and breaks down the prayer into its basic function, for example, *s¹lm* is classed as a "defensive" prayer. These classifications are dealt with at length in the next chapter.

Column L lists the different types of curses that feature in the Safaitic inscriptions and which deity, or deities if multiple are present, are requested to perform the malediction. These curses are always conditional on anyone who should obscure the writing of the author. Column M is the antithesis of column L and lists the requests made to deities where the author wishes to bless a certain individual, usually someone who leaves the inscription untouched. Curses and blessings are an essential part of any analysis on Safaitic inscriptions and thus their inclusion in the SRID was important.

Column P details inscriptions where sacrifice (*dbḥ*) is mentioned, followed by column Q which records the names of any tribal affiliation noted by the author. Many tribes are mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions, but the only tribes recorded in this column are those where the author has specifically claimed a tribal membership. Recording tribal lineage in the Safaitic inscriptions allows an analysis to be made of particular allegiances between tribal members and particular deities, as well as identifying any geographical significance. In SRID, column R, like column K in SID, determines whether the plates accompanying a collection of inscriptions can be considered complete or not.

Column S lists the symbols that accompany inscriptions and column T states whether or not the inscription was surrounded either in full or in part by a cartouche. The purpose of the inclusion of a cartouche is to determine if there is any religious symbolism of a line surrounding the text, perhaps to protect it. Whether a Safaitic prayer is written in a formulae that is similar to prayers found in Thamudic B is the subject of the next column, column U.

The intention in including this column is to determine whether there exists a variation in religious themes written in the "mixed texts" to those written in conventional Safaitic. Column V states whether an earlier translation has been considered dubious or doubtful by a later translator. This is to ensure clarity in each translation/transliteration and to provide for ease of reference when a particular inscription is being studied.

Column W determines whether an inscription was written on a surface that was easily movable and thus may not have been found and recorded in the area where it was initially inscribed. This column is particularly important for inscriptions that feature in museum collections.[189] The columns X, Y, Z and AA in SRID correspond with the previously mentioned columns N, O, P and Q in SID.

Column AB in SRID lists any associated inscriptions, that is, inscriptions written on the same surface as another inscription that also features a religious element. The intention of this column is to determine if there are any instances of "copy-cat" prayers. For example, it is reasonable to assume that if a text was written in the immediate proximity of another text, then the author of the later inscription may have been influenced by the content of the first inscription. For example, if two religious texts appear side-by-side and both feature *lt* then perhaps this may be a case of the author of a previous text influencing the content of a later one. Column AC in SRID corresponds with column R in SID which lists inscriptions with female authorship, the intent of which is to determine if there are any variations in religious features between male and female authors. Finally, column AD, like column R in SID, lists translations of certain inscriptions.

Regional religious devotion

Analysis of potential regional religious devotion is pertinent to this study. Firstly, there have been no previous studies done on geographical disparities between the Safaitic inscriptions. Secondly, it is important to note if there are any geographical variations in regional religious devotion, in order to determine to what extent the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians were influenced by the beliefs of surrounding cultures.

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[189] For example, Jamme 1971, pp. 136–141

The latitudes and longitudes of the inscriptions recorded in the database were imported into the program DMAP,[190] a distribution and coincidence mapping program, and were used to show the variations and spatial patterns between the different categories used within the database. Spatial mapping enhanced the visual comparison between the worship of different deities. The analysis was then used to evaluate any geographical differences or similarities between the worship of deities, as the geographic model given in the database included multiple variables to represent the different aspects of the inscriptions.

There were a few methodological limitations encountered in the geographical portion of the study. For example, many of the inscriptions fell outside the geographical scope of this study, such as those found at Pompeii. These were unable to be mapped because their inclusion would have drastically increased the scale of the maps required and therefore necessarily reduced the clarity of the maps. In addition, the locations of inscriptions were plotted remotely utilising satellite imagery, physical maps, and local area knowledge. However, since many of the earlier corpora of published inscriptions date from studies published nearly a century ago, it was often hard to determine the exact locations of particular cairns. For example, when the original location is described as "200km west of Shifateh"[191] it is often difficult to determine the modern location. It was not always possible to definitively map the locations of some of the inscriptions since many of the names attributed to the sites where these inscriptions had changed over time. In these situations the inscriptions were not included in the geographical portion of this study. This limitation was inevitable without physically visiting every one of the 28,000 inscriptions featuring in this study and recording its exact coordinates. In general terms the inscriptions have been mapped to the nearest 6km.

The framework presented here has the ability to be applied to religious beliefs present in all ANA scripts and so further work on the nomadic and semi-nomadic pre-Islamic religious beliefs and practices of all of Ancient North Arabia.

Chapter overview

Chapter Two begins with a discussion on the study of religion, in particular how one would approach the religious beliefs of not only an extinct peoples but also primarily nomadic people, since most patterns of analysis in the history of religion are based on sedentary populations.

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[190] Morton, 2001
[191] HSIM IM49217

This section also deals with the dichotomy between studies on the archaeology of religion versus the anthropology of religion and which studies are relevant to this current study. Following this, the major features of the Safaitic religious inscriptions are investigated. This section begins with a discussion on the Safaitic/Thamudic B mixed texts, followed by commentary on the Safaitic prayers involving the religious formulae that make up the prayers and the vocative particles used in the inscriptions. A typology of the prayers that feature in the inscriptions is then analysed to determine what this suggests about Safaitic society. Curses and blessings present in the Safaitic inscriptions are discussed in detail in a section outlining the significance that the Safaitic Arabians placed on the obliteration of an inscription and what this tells us about the people who wrote the inscriptions. Epithets that are attributed to particular deities are divided into toponymic epithets and idiosyncratic epithets with accompanying discussion. This leads to further investigation relating to the existence of the practice of sacrifice by authors of Safaitic inscriptions. The practice of burial and grave markings are then analysed, followed by a final section which details miscellaneous religious elements present in the Safaitic inscriptions where religious ritual may have been practised.

Chapter Three deals with the deities mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions. The main body of this chapter discusses the role/s that each deity seems to play in the inscriptions with a focus in each section on the role that deity played in surrounding contemporary cultures. Following this is an intensive analysis of the position of particular deities in the Safaitic pantheon. There is an etymological analysis of the name of particular deities indicating the various forms under which that name features in the inscriptions and an analysis of the main functions that deities were expected to perform. The discussion centres on whether they played a significant role in the enactment of curses or blessings, as well as any significant partnerships, before ending with commentary on the significance of the deity in inscriptions featuring sacrifice or if they feature in the Safaitic/Thamudic B mixed texts. The geographical significance of each individual deity is also investigated. Following these sections is an analysis of the minor deities mentioned in the inscriptions. The deities are examined in their Safaitic context and questions are raised as to whether they existed outside the realm of the inscriptions. An overall discussion on the regional importance of individual deities as well as trends in regional devotion follows and includes a summary of spatial and landscape analysis. The nature of the relationship between members of specific tribes and specific deities is then a focus of attention, for example, the tribes *ʿwḏ* and *ḏf* and the deities *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf*. The chapter ends with a discussion of the Safaitic theophoric names, followed by a summary of the differences

in religious beliefs in the Safaitic inscriptions when compared to those found in other ANA scripts.

Chapter Four addresses the potential religious aspects of the rock art that accompanies the Safaitic inscriptions. It opens with an introduction, followed by an overview of the animals that feature in Safaitic rock art: domesticated animals, hunted animals and animals of prey. Images that depict hunting scenes are then discussed as well as the various forms in which humans are depicted. The section on female images is divided into two parts, namely where women have been considered as goddesses by some scholars, and others where they may be depicted as mothers. The symbolic images accompanying Safaitic inscriptions are then addressed, with a focus on the different forms in which symbols in Safaitic inscriptions are represented. Representation of music and dancing as well as their potential relevance to religious practices are important matters for consideration. The chapter ends with a discussion on representations of war in Safaitic rock art.

Chapter Five consists of a conclusion, drawing all of these threads together to create a complete picture. This chapters summarises the findings of this study.

Included in this study are a number of supporting appendixes. Appendix A contains a number of tables that were not included in the body of the text. Appendix B consists of a word list that records all the prayers, curses and blessings present in the Safaitic inscriptions. Appendix C includes all the maps made in the course of this study showing the spatial and geographical spread of the inscriptions. Appendix D consists of a list of the abbreviations of inscriptions used in the database and throughout the study. Finally, Appendix E and F can be found on the CD-ROM that accompanies this study and include the databases SID and SRID that were created to catalogue this research.

CHAPTER TWO

RELIGION AND THE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE RELIGIOUS SAFAITIC INSCRIPTIONS

Introduction

This chapter features discussion on various academic approaches to the study of religion followed by an analysis of the structural and linguistic features that characterise the "religious" inscriptions and a typography of types of religious inscriptions by functions. It begins with a focus on the general issues relating to the study of religion, with emphasis on "dead" religions and nomadic versus sedentary religious beliefs and practices. Special attention is given to an archaeological approach to religion versus an anthropological approach including debate on which is most applicable for the current study. An in-depth analysis of the major structural features of the Safaitic religious inscriptions follows addressing both typology and commentary on the prayers and curses in the Safaitic inscriptions. Epithets used in the Safaitic inscriptions, as well as references to sacrifice and burial, are the focus of the penultimate section. The final section deals with miscellaneous religious and ritual elements and their identification in the inscriptions. This chapter offers a unique insight into the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians, being the first time they have been analysed and addressed as a whole.

This chapter provides the framework on which the religious discussion on the following chapters rests. It considers what is meant by the term "religion" in this context, identifies religious phenomena and seeks to determine what is a coherent set of religious practices, both what they are and what subsets apply. The modern concept of religion does not in fact map onto any ancient thought structure and the application of the term "religion" to ancient societies is anachronistic. Thus a detailed discussion of the methodological and disciplinary issues affecting the study of past, "dead" religion is essential.

Issues in the study of religion

As stated previously, religion is not a fixed category and so defining what might beconsidered divine is essential. For the purpose of this thesis, the criteria for the inclusion of inscriptions classed as religious are those that:

feature the presense of a deity. To determine whether an individual mentioned was a mortal of the representation of a deity the existence of a vocative particle *fh*, *h*, *wh* and *w* (in cases where more than one potential deity is mentioned) preceding the name remains.

that feature religious practices such as sacrifice or augury,

that include the identification of an individual that served a supernatural function, such as a sorcerer.

The approach taken in this study is ambitious both in nature and scope. It seeks to view religious beliefs and practices from a period quite removed from 21st century western society and focuses on the religious beliefs of a nomadic people that have long since disappeared from the areas which they formerly inhabited. The nomadic people who currently inhabit North Arabia are generally members of a post-axial age religion compared with the religious beliefs of the authors who inscribed the Safaitic inscriptions. Thus, issues of distance in both time and culture will necessarily influence any investigation into ancient religion from this area.

The term "religion" itself is a useful construct under which to consider certain practices and beliefs associated with deities. However, there are limitations in that the term does suggest a uniformity in worship and belief and the establishment of a formalised doctrine. In contrast the religious beliefs expressed in the ANA inscriptions suggest that while each script had a relatively organised pantheon of deities we are not necessarily dealing with an organised religion. Different scripts feature different emphasis on different deities and the importance of those deities in their respective pantheons are not uniform. For example, *lt* is the chief deity in the Safaitic inscriptions, but shares that title in the Ḥismāic inscriptions with the deity *ds²r*. This may suggest a geographic preference for major deities popular in surrounding sedentary cultures. Each ANA script suggests that the religious beliefs of the authors were susceptible to surrounding influences, and that belief was not necessarily something fixed and unalterable, as was the case with many other religions from this era.

Issues regarding the study of religion in relation to the beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians involve embracing a number of elements. Approaching Safaitic religious beliefs from an archaeological perspective means that assumptions relating to belief could be made with limited physical evidence. However, most, if not all, theories on the archaeology of religion

are based on sedentary societies since non-sedentary societies tend to leave only a limited physical record. This necessarily causes issues in any application of such theories to a nomadic society. An anthropological approach to religion in contrast is based on the existence of far more tangible evidence of religious beliefs, for example, living members of a particular religion to interview. Again, this presents its own problems when the religion in question passed out of existence centuries ago.

In the field of religious studies it is a well-known argument that the term and concept of religion is a modern construction arising from a desire to divide religious aspects of society from secular ones. The division of church and state is a common concept in the Western world and indeed Western scholarship, yet this has only been of importance in the last few centuries. Prior to this period religion as we know it today was far more enmeshed, multi-faceted and indeed indistinguishable in the social, political and everyday life of a culture. Thus as part of the first step towards understanding the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians we must acknowledge that we are not dealing with "religion" in the formal sense of the word, but rather in a set of pious or spiritual beliefs that seem to be characteristic of the daily routines of the ANA societies.

Archaeology of religion in an Archaeological context: a methodological approach

The disciplines of archaeology and anthropology often intermingle and are at times dependent on each other in order for scholars to fully comprehend the culture and society under unvestigation. The religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians are one such example. Anthropology, in its most basic definition, is the study of humanity across space and through time,[192] of which archaeology itself is considered a sub-classification. Archaeology, also in its most basic form, is the study of human cultures through the study of extent material and environmental remains.[193] In order to accurately understand the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians consideration of the methodologies of both disciplines needs to critically evaluated. It is necessary to understand both the strengths and weaknesses of each discipline in order to determine the most appropriate methods by which to interpret the content of the inscriptions. The purpose of this section is therefore to orient the reader to contemporary and historical

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[192] McAnany 2008, p. 445
[193] Bollt 2010, p. 92

approaches towards archaeological and anthropological religious methodologies. Critical discussion is presented for what constitutes religious behaviour and actions while existing definitions and methodologies are scrutinised and where necessary alternative approaches proposed.

The concept of religion in anthropology has long been debated and there exists a substantial body of literature devoted to its study. The study of religion in archaeology however is a relatively modern concept and is still developing a theoretical framework and distinctive body of work. Perhaps this lack of emphasis on the archaeology of religion is due to many aspects of religion being themselves intangible concepts. Archaeologists deal with the material artefacts and written texts, both of which give very partial and yet complex access to the "consciousness" of past societies. Nevertheless, the aim of historical disciplines is to develop methodologies and theoretical frameworks of interpretation that enable attempts at reconstructing "consciousness" or an "archaeology of mind". In contrast, anthropologists, particularly those who deal with current religious theories, have access to a wide range of living members from those religious communities that they can interview and study. Thus their corpus of information is of a substantially different nature. It is this crucial distinction that differentiates attitudes towards religious theory in both archaeology and anthropology. Thus we need to take a combined approach that makes use of the characteristics of both archaeology and anthropology that are relevant to this discussion.

Before a discussion on the intricacies of methodology and how it pertains to this thesis begins, it would be useful to attempt a definition of the concept of "religion". While Segal states that "a search for ever more comprehensive definitions spans the history of the anthropology of religion",[194] establishing a definition of religion is important for the researcher, primarily in order to be able to limit the area of inquiry so as to know what behaviours should be considered religious and what should not. Since the idea of religion was likely a very foreign notion to the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions, religion is best been considered a series of beliefs thoroughly enmeshed within their cultural and social spheres that focused on the power or force of an unidentifiable entity. The authors of the Safaitic inscriptions who composed prayers would not have knowingly believed that what they were doing constituted a "religious action". Religion and "religious behaviours" are modern conceptions that assign the causality of behaviour to underlying religious beliefs. It must be

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[194] Segal 1985, p. 78

understood that the nature of religious theory in this period is very different to that of the Western world today, and indeed the Judeo-Christian concept of religion that seems to dominate religious theory. What we may consider as a defining characteristic in the study of religion and religious behaviours would most likely have been viewed as an everyday cultural or social action by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. For example, further on in this chapter a discussion on the usage of epithets in the Safaitic inscriptions is offered. Epithets are a common component of organised religion, for example Mary 'mother of God.' But in these instances we have a wide array of myths and narratives that help us to decode these epithets.[195] This is not the case within the Safaitic Arabians religious inscription and the amount of assumption and guesswork needed to make any sort of substantial statement is great. Thus it was important to keep this in mind throughout the analysis of these inscriptions. It is also prudent to note that how religious beliefs affect the behaviour of a peoples cannot be identified by the outside observer. Thus, we must first acknowledge our limitations in the understanding of these religious beliefs before attempting a methodological approach towards religious practices. In the current thesis, the definition of religion as it pertains to the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions is that religious beliefs consist of an inherent understanding in the power and existence of an unidentifiable force that underlie everyday social and cultural behaviours and practices. It must also be acknowledged that there will always be aspects of religious studies that cannot be understood or gathered by empirical methods.

Following any discussion of the concepts of religious beliefs and practices there is a need to define the methodological approaches in both archaeology and anthropology towards religion. The main sources of the study of religion in an archaeological sense come from the existence of physical remains both large, such as sacral buildings, and small, such as epigraphic, numismatic and artisanal sources. In contrast, the primary sources for the study of religion in an anthropological sense are far less tangible than archaeology and usually involve intensive analysis and studies of the people currently practising a particular religion as well as an intensive exegesis of written religious texts.

Generally the field of anthropology is divided into two separate categories, physical anthropology (or the study of humans as biological organisms) and cultural anthropology.

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[195] Hoyland 2002, p. 140

Cultural anthropology focuses on the study of humans and can be further categorised into branches of ethnography, linguistic anthropology and archaeology.[196]

Ethnography in an archaeological context is known as ethnoarchaeology with some anthropologists arguing that the archaeological record can be considered a long-term ethnography[197] or part of the same approach.[198] Since ethnography deals with systematic descriptions of cultures and most often with technologically simple cultures the methods employed by ethnographers is particularly important in the study of the Safaitic Arabians. This is because they were a largely nomadic society quite distinct from the surrounding cultures of their period.

Linguistic anthropology studies human language, traditionally from indigenous cultures, and examines how it evolves and develops through time and where the changes draw their influence from. The underlying argument within linguistic anthropology is that "language structures reflect experiential-conceptual structures which, in turn, reflect social structures".[199] The methodologies developed by linguistic anthropologists are therefore relevant to this study, for example, when discussing the origin of deities mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions and evaluating the evolution of their names over time and in the geographic regions in which they appear.

There are many different schools of thought regarding the study of religion in terms of cultural anthropology. Functional theories saw religion as "performing certain functions for society"[200] and was a popular approach with writers such as Marx, Freud and Durkheim. The 1960s saw a rejection of the dominant functionalist theories with many scholars turning back to the arguments proposed by early writers like Frazer and Spencer. Functionalist accounts were considered to be too reductionist in their approaches to religion; for example, by explaining religion in terms of humanity's conception of right and wrong and disregarding of the exegesis of religious practice. The alternate methodology proposed was the intellectualist approach initiated by Tylor[201] who argued that religion arose from peoples' need to explain the

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[196] Haviland 1993, pp. 7–18
[197] Jochim 1991, p. 308
[198] Levi-Strauss 1963, p. 16
[199] Danesi 2012, p. vii
[200] Christiano, Swatos and Kivisto 2008, pp. 6–7
[201] Tylor 1871

world around them. His followers that argue believers perform rituals because they believe them to be effective.

Other major schools of thought include evolutionary theories of religion which see it as an adaptation or by-product of society (where belief originates as explanation of natural phenomena), as well as phenomenological approaches which see religion as comprising different components applicable to various religious traditions, and the symbolist approach introduced by Durkheim[202] where religion is viewed as a tool in defining social order. Each of these theories have approaches that are applicable to this thesis. Thus, in terms of understanding the anthropological methodology of religion it is important to remember that competing theories are not exclusive. However, the issues involved with implementing any of these approaches to the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians is that these traditions were established with societies and cultures in mind where a great deal more material evidence is available than is present in the ANA inscriptions. For example, given the brevity of the ANA scripts, and there being no known or recorded mythology to speak of, there is no way of knowing how the Safaitic Arabians used religion to explain the world around them.

When studying the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians it is important to ensure that appropriate methodological guidelines are established and followed. Cultural anthropology generally assumes that culture is adaptive, more or less integrative and fluid.[203] In addition, anthropological approaches to archaeology tend to omit or neglect the importance of written traditions with many anthropologists making assumptions exclusively on observable facts.[204] For this study, therefore, it is important to combine the methodological approaches of both archaeology and anthropology as well as to acknowledge where the weaknesses in both approaches lie.

Unlike the study of religion in anthropology, the study of religion in archaeology is a relatively modern concept. As it is in its infancy it needs more theoretical constructs before a fully comprehensive methodology is established. Since archaeology deals fundamentally with the remnants of human society, a purely archaeological approach to religion might fool the reader into thinking that religion is wholly based on funerary or mortuary concepts and sacred sites. However, religion is far more than this. There are many fundamental problems within the

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[202] Durkheim 1915
[203] Ember and Ember 1990, pp. 24–29
[204] Kaplan and Manners 1972, pp. 190–192

study of religion through archaeology that do not exist within an anthropological approach. The first and most obvious is that the archaeologist does not have a living member of the religion with whom to discuss ritual. While there may be living members of a religion that share similarities to the one the archaeologist is studying, the distance of time and space are often too great to overcome. For example, Judaism in the first century BC bears little similarity to Judaism of the present. Secondly, given the lack of tangible and intangible evidence a study of the archaeology of a particular religion is likely to be faced with presumptions of ritual norms rather than facts. Ritual practice was likely fluid and thus, given the archaeological constraints of chronological dating, it can be difficult to determine with definitive accuracy the date of a potential religious object, especially in the absence of dated records. Thus the archaeology of religion must at times rely on the work of religious anthropologists.

Archaeological approaches to religion are most relevant in that they focus on the study of "dead" religions with finite resources. Yet rarely, if ever, does archaeology approach the religious beliefs of non-sedentary people, primarily due to the rarity of nomadic peoples leaving behind an archaeological record, and therein lies another problem.[205] Much of the definition of archaeology in religion relies on the conception of ritual. Insoll calls it "the archaeologists' favourite catch-all category for 'odd' or otherwise not understood behaviour".[206] Using this as a warning we therefore need to be careful about applying religious labels without firm context. Burkert further defines religion as a program of demonstrative acts involving the invocation of "invisible powers".[207] This is a useful tool in the study of the Safaitic Arabians religious beliefs. While we are limited in our evidence of organised religion among the Safaitic Arabians there are a number of references in the inscriptions to "rituals". However, given the brevity of the sources these rituals do need to be understood in context with the assistance of concurrent or later sedentary Semitic cultures.

Archaeological methodology can be summarised into two basic levels: data retrieval through archaeological excavation; and philosophical inquiry and interpretation of the raw data. Data retrieval faces numerous problems, including difficulties faced by the archaeologist in the field such as tenuous regional security issues or retrieval methods that are constantly needing refinement, among others. On the whole, however, archaeological data retrieval has progressed tremendously since the discipline was pioneered centuries ago. In contrast,

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[205] For an excellent discussion on nomads and archaeology see Cribb 1991
[206] Insoll 2004, pp. 1–2
[207] Burkert 2004, p. 8

philosophical inquiry is faced with ever-expanding material and information on any given subject which naturally necessitates periodic updating of approaches and theories.

A key concept in any methodological analysis of religion in archaeology is the integrative approach coined by W.F. Albright. He argued when attempting to identify "biblical archaeology" that religion by its very nature was integrative and broad by design, encompassing both temporal and spatial concerns as well as the integration of correlating fields of study such as anthropology and philology, in addition to the constant evolution of the field based on new archaeological material and practices.[208] A further key concept is the importance of textual evidence and its ability to support or disprove claims or beliefs made by scholars on extant archaeological remains. The study of primary literary material in its context is crucial in supporting the theories put forth by archaeologists as a means of understanding the cultural remains of a society. Thus the methodology of an archaeological study of religion should seek to adhere to the following concepts: (1) include all primary material, both artefacts or literary commentaries; (2) ensure that the archaeological inquiry remains within the historical setting; (3) ensure that constant evolution of newly discovered material and technological advancements in the field are addressed; and finally (4) consider the primary goal the illumination of the religious beliefs of the society under study. The points raised in this archaeological methodology will be applied rigorously to the religious inquiry in this thesis.

In order to establish an effect methodology and framework for the study of the religious aspects of the Safaitic Arabians a variety of material elements have been employed. Firstly, the epigraphic remains provide the most complete record of the religious beliefs of their authors. These inscriptions can be split into two categories, those that feature prayers or curses and the deities and functions attributed to them by the believers, as well as passing references made by those writers to aspects of their daily lives that can be interpreted as references to religious ritual or behaviour, such as pilgrimage. An anthropological perspective on the religious elements that can be garnered from these texts, such as the theories mentioned above and specifically the functionalist method, is useful when attempting to understand the religious behaviours and ritual that might exist for these people. Likewise, a background in archaeology and history is beneficial since the texts we are dealing with, unlike those in a regular religious literary format such as the Qur'ān, are most often *in situ* and need to be evaluated together in their geophysical location and surroundings, such as the desert. Both of these epigraphic

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[208] Albright 1969, p. 6

categories benefit from both an archaeological and anthropological approach. Likewise, a discussion on the temples that may have been frequented by the Safaitic nomads might on the face of it seem more relevant to the realm of archaeological inquiry but also benefits from an anthropological perspective on the use of sacral places of worship within an individual and communities religious realm. Finally, rock art, again a traditionally archaeological concept benefits from both a symbolist approach like Durkheim's as well as archaeological understanding.

The religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians involved a series of religious and cultural exchanges and throughout their history underwent numerous variations and transformations in the course of the transmission of the inscriptions. Thus the methodology established for this thesis must acknowledge the integrative aspects of this transition and incorporate aspects of the disciplines of both archaeology and anthropology. While there are limitations in either approach, both archaeology and anthropology have much to offer in terms of understanding the religion of an ancient nomadic peoples. It is therefore crucial to this analysis of the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians that both the archaeology of religion and the anthropology of religion are used together. However it is also important to realise that the study of the anthropology of religion and the archaeology of religion are not exhaustive, particularly where the study of these religious phenomena is based on cursory accounts of incomplete descriptions of practices and beliefs.

In addition to the methodological approaches towards archaeological and anthropological religious theory mentioned above, this thesis benefits from a detailed view of the methodological approaches towards some specific key Safaitic concepts discussed later in this chapter. The main features of the Safaitic religious beliefs that can be seen in their inscriptions cover prayer, curses, sacrifice and death rites which can all be understood as ritual. Anthropologists have developed a number of different classifications for the term "ritual" ranging from periodic rituals performed on fixed days (for example, on the solstice), non-periodic or transitional rites (for example, circumcision, ceremonies of marriage, rites of passage) and more. In anthropology the term designates prescribed, formal acts that take place in the context of religious worship.[209] In archaeology however, ritual is generally considered a form of human action that focuses on how the rite promotes social order[210] although "the

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[209] Barfield 1997, pp. 410–411
[210] Fogelin 2007, pp. 55–71

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precise nature of what is meant by ritual… [in] the archaeological record is complex and variable".[211]

The relationship of ritual and myth is also a concept regularly subjected to academic inquiry in both archaeology and anthropology with many early researchers believing the two were inseparable.[212] Since there is, as far as is currently known, no extant example of mythology in the Safaitic religious beliefs, the value of myth in this thesis is limited. We should acknowledge that there was probably a mythology behind many of the beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians that perhaps influenced their religious inscriptions, but it is not wise to make assumptions on what these mythological aspects were.

Prayer in the Safaitic tradition can be considered a form of ritual as the inscriptions treat prayer in a very formulaic sense, through the introduction of the writer, an invocation to the deity, and a petition to that deity. Prayer can be loosely defined as supplication to a divine power with the belief that the deity will hear the request and act upon on it. The following thesis will determine, using anthropological and archaeological religious models, what constitutes a prayer for the Safaitic Arabians and whether "revenge" prayers in the Safaitic inscriptions should actually be considered prayers or curses.

In an anthropological sense, prayer varies widely and ethnographic studies are relatively rare. Prayer is often considered a ritual aspect of religious action as it is usually formulaic, adhering to a number of "phonological or metrical features [that] may serve to mark prayer off as a particular speech genre".[213] It "may be expressions of devotion and loyalty on the one hand, or pleas or requests for assistance on the other, or a combination of both".[214] Since the evidence of prayer that we have from the Safaitic Arabians is textual, the oral systematic aspects of prayer will not apply to this thesis. Instead the focus will be on the formulaic nature of the prayers and how they are structured in order to identify what constituted a prayer to the writers of the inscriptions. Likewise the content expressed in the prayer itself, such as the deity invoked and the thing requested of that god or goddess will also help to specify prayer. The study of prayer through archaeological methods tends to focus primarily on the literary context. Since prayer is usually considered an oral practice it is largely intangible and

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[211] Owoc 2008, pp. 1923
[212] Smith 1969, pp. 17–18; Harrison 1921, pp. 23–27; Raglan 1958, p. 54; Boas 1936, p. 457
[213] Barfield 2000, p. 378
[214] Winzeler 2012, p. 133

tends to leave little archaeological trace. In fact, most scholars take for granted the extent to which prayer was practiced historically since the actual evidence is scant.[215] In addition, many of the archaeological works that have been dedicated to the study of prayers in antiquity have been focused on the extant Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions, religious traditions that differ greatly from the texts we have from the Safaitic Arabians. Thus much of the following investigation of the use of prayer in the Safaitic religious tradition will lean heavily on the anthropological approaches.

In regards to rock art, both archaeological and anthropological approaches need to be addressed and analysed. Archaeological depictions of the rock art themselves are juxtaposed with the anthropological interpretations of pre-Islamic poetry and literary expressions of physical drawings. An example is the representation of the she-camel throughout pre-Islamic Arabia and her existence in rite of passage *qāsidahs*. For instances such as these the van Gennep tripartite approach towards the rite of passage has been adopted, where these life "transition" periods are expressed in three phases, as separation, margin (symbolising "threshold" amd aggregation.[216] Likewise, sacrifice, redemption, sin and ritual death can also be viewed in this context where the ritual paradigm is established in order to facilitate the separation from society and re-entry into it.[217]

In a thesis such as this that draws on interdependent archaeological and anthropological models it is important to devise a research strategy that allows for a crucial analysis of all relevant aspects of the archaeological data. The methodology employed, drawing on Albright,[218] in this current thesis involves those factors mentioned above in connection with other important elements:

include all primary material, both artefacts or literary commentaries;

ensure that the archaeological inquiry remains within the historical setting;

ensure that constant evolution of newly discovered material and technological advancements in the field are addressed;

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[215] McDowell 2006, p. 14
[216] Van Gennep 1908, *passim*; Turner 1977, pp. 94-95
[217] Stetkevych 1993, p. 8
[218] Albright 1969, p. 6

consider the primary goal the illumination of the religious beliefs of the society under study;

ensure that statements on religious attitudes of the Safaitic Arabians are not influenced by Judeo-Christian-Islamic backgrounds. Do not modern conceptions of religions, such as the need for a governing religious book, influence how the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians should be determined;

keep in mind that culture is generally fluid. Ensure that sweeping statements are not made and remember that there was no self-defined group called the Safaitic Arabians. The religious beliefs are thus not likely to follow strict dogmatic guidelines.

This methodological approach ensures that the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians will be analysed in a consistent manner employing both archaeological and anthropological methods of study.

Features of the Safaitic religious inscriptions

In the following section the major features of the Safaitic religious inscriptions will be addressed, beginning with an analysis of the Safaitic/Thamudic B mixed texts followed by an analysis of the prayers and ritual elements occurring in the texts.

The most common way religious elements are represented in the Safaitic inscriptions are in the form of prayers. Safaitic prayers make up over 99% of all inscriptions featuring religious elements, and appear in just under 7% of the total of all Safaitic inscriptions. They are useful not only as a tool to determine the religious beliefs and practices of the Safaitic Arabians, but are also an excellent source to aid our understanding of what the Safaitic Arabians found important in both cultural and social terms.

Prayers in the Safaitic inscriptions are primarily petitionary prayers, seeking help and express the wishes and desires of the authors. Thus they offer us a glimpse into what life may have been like for a pre-Islamic nomadic Arab, what motivated them and what was most important to them.

The formula for a typical Safaitic inscription that contains religious elements is as follows:

Introductory participle; Name of author; Vocative particle; Name of Deity; Request of Deity; Curse if applicable

E.g. Stehle 14 – *l s²ḥdd bn bs¹ʾ ḏ- ʾl ʿmrt w h ds²r ḏkr rḥṭ ṣdq w h ds²r lʿn rʾṯ s¹ʾ* (By *S²ḥdd* son of *Bs¹ʾ* of the lineage of *ʿmrt* and O *ds²r* remember good people and O *ds²r* curse bad people)

Occasionally a narrative is offered following a curse but this is relatively rare. This narrative occurs either after the author has introduced himself but before the vocative particle, or after the prayer but before the curse.

Safaitic/Thamudic B mixed texts

Interestingly, although a large number of religious texts are written in Safaitic, some are structured in different ways and can contain very different elements.

In contrast to the regular Safaitic inscriptions, the atypical inscriptions feature the following formulae:

Vocative particle; Name of Deity; Request of Deity; Name of author if applicable

E.g. CIS 1280 – *"h ʾlt s¹ʿd ys¹mʿl bn rbbn…"* (O *ʾlt*, help *ys¹mʿl* son of *rbbn…*)

E.g. CSNS 13 – *"h rḍw dwd fsʿd ḫḏ"* (O *rḍw*, he was infested with vermin, so help *ḫḏ*!)

While the above example, CSNS 13, also features a narrative this is unusual in inscriptions of this format.

This atypical inscription format is rare in Safaitic, Thamudic C, Thamudic D and Ḥismāic but is very common in the Thamudic B inscriptions that pre-date those ANA inscriptions previously mentioned. For this reason I have tentatively named inscriptions of this format Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts. Littmann has written briefly about these inscriptions noting that some of the characters in the texts appear Thamudic in origin. However Thamudic characters appearing occasionally in Safaitic texts are also well-known.

What is particularly interesting about these texts is not just that their structure is remarkably different to mainstream Safaitic religious inscriptions, but that their content is as

well. While Safaitic texts feature a very wide range of requests consisting of hundreds of different functions that could be requested of a deity, the deities invoked in the mixed texts are more focused in terms of what roles they were expected to play and what types of assistance was required. For example, the most common request from authors of deities in the mixed texts is help (*s¹ʿd*), constituting 75.4% of all religious inscriptions in this format. In comparision, among the Safaitic inscriptions analysed in this study, requests for help (*s¹ʿd*) consist of little more than 7.2% of all religious inscriptions. Despite being similar in both script and geographical location, differences in prayer content between many of the nomadic and semi-nomadic ANA scripts is quite common. For example, the primary requests made of deities in the religious inscriptions of the Thamudic C and D texts are for help (*s¹ʿd*) followed by requests to restore (*ʾtm*) an individual to health.[219] In Ḥismāic texts the primary function of deities is to aid in the remembrance of friends and family (*s⁷*). In this context, the focus on seeking help identifies these mixed texts as atypical.

The prayers in the mixed Thamudic B/Safaitic texts also place different emphases on certain deities. The most commonly invoked deities in those inscriptions are *rḍw* (featuring in 56.3% of all mixed text religious inscriptions), *ʾlt* (13.5%) and *yṯʿ* (15.9%).[220] When we compare the Safaitic inscriptions we can see that *rḍw* is the second most invoked deity (featuring in 11.9% of inscriptions), *ʾlt* is the sixth (5.2%) and *yṯʿ* is the seventh (5.1%).[221] For a full list of the deities mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions see Appendix A: Table 3 and Table 4.

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[219] However, the exact translation of the term *ʾtm* has been debated. Branden favours the translation "perfection", Winnett prefers "restore" and Jamme believes it should be translated as "engaged in sexual relations (with)" — see Branden 1956; Jamme 1968, pp. 290–294; Winnett 1987, pp. 239–244
[220] See Fig. 2.1 below for a full list of deities appearing in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts.
[221] These percentages are excluding the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts from the corpus of inscription analysed.
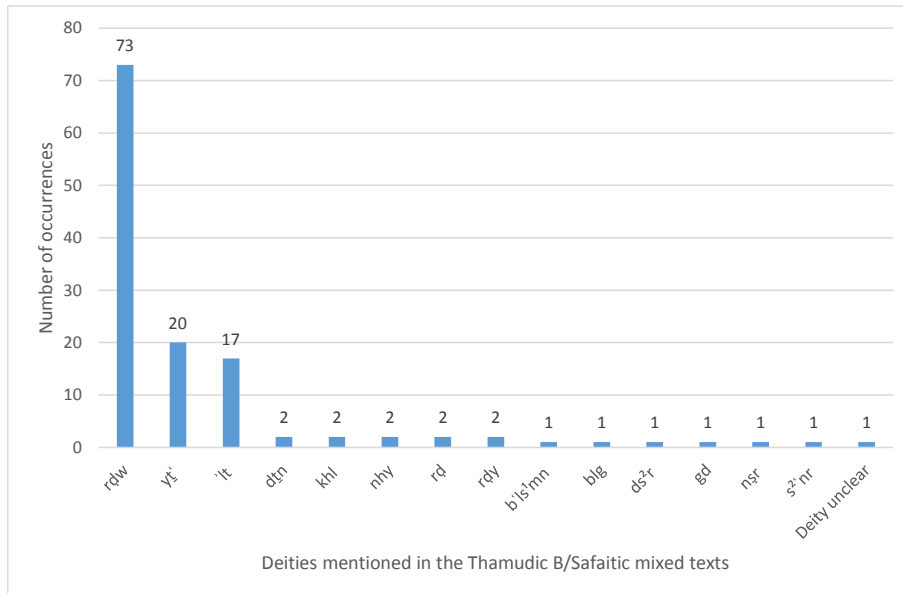
Fig. 2.1 – Deities mentioned in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts

The differences in both divine addressee and the requests made suggest a different religious tradition to the larger corpus of Safaitic inscriptions. What is even more interesting is that while these religious trends share many similarities with Ḥismāic or Thamudic C and D there are significant differences. While there is some overlap of deities mentioned within these inscriptions, for example, *rḍw* is the chief god of the Thamudic C and D inscriptions, the mixed texts appear to constitute a separate tradition. In addition, neither Thamudic C and D nor Ḥismāic feature the inscriptional format used in the mixed texts.

There are a number of possibilities for what the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts may represent. Since Thamudic B inscriptions are thought to have been composed centuries earlier than Safaitic inscriptions, perhaps they are representative of an earlier evolution of the script used in the Safaitic inscriptions. Another suggestion is that they indicate a somewhat distinct, localised form of Safaitic. A map showing the distribution of the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts can be seen in Appendix C: Map 2. When this is compared with Map 1 (showing the distribution of the Safaitic inscriptions), it becomes clear that the geographical dispersion of these texts adheres to the same basic regions as the entire corpus of Safaitic texts. Thus it seems

unlikely that this form of text could be considered a localised form of Safaitic or some other similar script.

It is noteworthy that the goddess *lt*, the most frequently mentioned deity in the Safaitic inscriptions, is absent from these mixed texts while *ʾlt* is quite common. Since the format of these inscriptions bear remarkable similarities to the Thamudic B texts which pre-date the Safaitic texts by a number of centuries,[222] it is possible that this may reflect a change in pronunciation over time and be evidence of the evolutionary nature of the ANA scripts. She may not have been known as *lt* in the mixed Thamudic B/Safaitic texts because they potentially pre-date the majority of Safaitic texts, which might also explain the different format of these prayers. *ʾlt* is mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions relatively regularly which may be indicative of a gradual transformation from *ʾlt* to *lt*. The only problem with this theory is that there exist a few inscriptions in Safaitic where both *lt* and *ʾlt* are mentioned alongside each other in the same inscription, suggesting that the authors may have considered both deities as distinct from one another. The deity (or deities) *lt* and/or *ʾlt* is discussed in greater depth in the following chapter.

Macdonald notes in a passage discussing the interchangeability of the *–w* and *–y* in regard to the Safaitic deities *rḍw/rḍy*, that in Thamudic B only the deity *rḍw* is present. He says that this may suggest that the form *rḍw* is older and the advent of *rḍy* may mark a change in pronunciation.[223] In the mixed Thamudic B/Safaitic texts there are two references to *rḍy* and 61 to *rḍw* while in the Safaitic inscriptions, the number of references to *rḍw* and *rḍy* are relatively comparable with only slightly more inscriptions featuring *rḍw*. It is possible that this may be an example of that transformation from *rḍw* to *rḍy* suggested by Macdonald and could explain the absence of the deity *rḍy* in the Thamudic B texts.

This leads me to suggest that the mixed Thamudic B/Safaitic texts are an evolution of the ANA script, written in a script similar if not occasionally identical to Safaitic, but featuring the formula, content and spelling of an earlier branch of Ancient North Arabian. This theory will be addressed in more detail in the analysis of deities featuring in the Safaitic inscriptions in the following chapter.

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[222] For example, there exists a Thamudic B inscription that mentions a "king of Babylon" (Ph. 279 aw) suggesting it may date to a time prior to the fall of the Babylonian empire in 539 BC – Macdonald 2004, p. 183
[223] Macdonald 2004, p. 192

Safaitic prayers

Since prayers in the Safaitic inscriptions are primarily petitionary prayers, seeking help and expressing the wishes and desires of the authors, they offer us a glimpse into what life may have been like for a pre-Islamic nomadic Arab, what motivated them and what was most important to them. What follows is an attempt to categorise the different types of prayers seeking assistance. They are grouped together based on the primary function of the request, for example, defensive prayers, benevolent prayers, material prayers and malevolent prayers.

Defensive prayers

Defensive prayers are pervasive, protective requests made to deities. They often have a wide scope and do not necessarily benefit only the author. Examples of defensive prayers are requests for security (*s¹lm*) or protection (*wqyt/qyt/wqy*). Defensive prayers are the most common requests made to deities in the Safaitic religious inscriptions, with 1012 requests made in this form. For example, WH 167 – "… *fh lt s¹lm*" (O *lt*, grant security).

Benevolent prayers

Benevolent prayers are requests to a deity to show kindness to someone, usually the author. These are usually passive requests and involve prayers asking for relief (*rwḥ*) or help (*s¹ʿd*). Benevolent prayers are usually made for intangible requests. They are the second most common form of requests made to deities, with 482 found in the Safaitic texts. For example, M 358 – "…*w fh b ʿls¹mn rwḥ*…" (…and O *b ʿls¹mn* [grant] relief…)

Material prayers

Material prayers involve the author of an inscription requesting that the deity provide them with something physical or a tangible need, such as booty (*ġnmt*) or food (*ṭ ʿmt*). These prayers consisting of physical requests are primarily for the benefit the author. Material prayers are the third most common form in the Safaitic inscriptions with 279 references. For example, WH 82 – "…*wh rḍy ġnmt*." (…O *rḍy* [grant] booty).

Malevolent prayers

Malevolent prayers are requests made of a deity to act upon another individual in a negative manner and are often vengeful requests. Examples of malevolent prayers include requests for blood revenge (*ṯ'r*) or vengeance (*nqm/nqmt*). These are the least common form of prayers in

the Safaitic inscriptions appearing in only 113 cases. It is debatable whether prayers of this type are in fact prayers or should be interpreted as curses. For example, WH 1220 – "…*fh lt nqmt*." (O *lt*, [grant] vengeance).

So what constitutes a prayer and what makes a curse in the Safaitic inscriptions? In particular, should "malevolent" prayers actually be classified as curses or prayers? In order to answer these questions we need to compare a number of examples of curses from other ANA and Ancient Near Eastern religious traditions with the Safaitic religious tradition.

Maraqten, in his paper on curse formulae in South Arabian inscriptions, defines a curse as an invocation to a deity "that evil may befall and injure" an individual and that one of the main functions was apotropaic.[224] Kitz, when discussing cursing in the Ancient Near East, has defined curses as petitionary prayers to deities that seek to do harm to a person, place or thing.[225] Furthermore, she argues that cursing in the Ancient Near East seeks "judgement in a perceived unjust situation".[226] Should these definitions be applied then "malevolent" prayers certainly fulfil the criteria of what constitutes a curse.

If they are to be considered curses then it is important to further distinguish the types of curses they represent. The Safaitic inscriptions of this type may be considered to exist in two different forms: curses seeking retaliation (or "malevolent" prayers) and curses seeking to protect an inscription (or "protective curses"), such as SIJ 191 " *'wr ḏ y 'wr h ḫṭṭ*" (blindness to the obliterator of an inscription). The main structural difference between malevolent prayers and protective curses are primarily their position in the physical format of the Safaitic religious inscriptions. Protective curses are almost always positioned at the end of an inscription, perhaps as a postscript warning the reader that if they damage the writing they will face terrible consequences. Malevolent prayers, however, are often placed within the inscription, either before or after a narrative, if one is offered. The fundamental difference, however, is that malevolent prayers regularly feature in the "prayer" portion of an inscription alongside other requests. This difference in positioning leads me to believe that the authors of the inscriptions did not consider malevolent prayers the same as the protective curses. I would suggest that the placement of the content of the malevolent prayers within the context of other items prayed for being offered means they were considered no different from ordinary prayers. An individual

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[224] Maraqten 1998, p. 189
[225] Kitz 2007, p. 616
[226] Kitz 2007, p. 618

might invoke the help of a deity to provide them with blood-revenge (*ṯ'r*) in the same way they would ask a deity for security from their enemies (*s¹lm m- s²n'*). In some cases the requests are in the part of the same inscription phrase, for example, "…*s¹lm w ṯ'r mn- s²n'*" (…security and blood-revenge from enemies).[227]

For this reason, even though malevolent prayers may be considered curses according to the definitions of the term "curse" given above, they will be categorised as prayers in this study. The authors of the Safaitic inscriptions clearly did not consider malevolent prayers any different from any other type of prayer they might make to a deity. Protective curses on the other hand, are treated quite differently. They are clearly distinguished both in terms of formula and physical position in the Safaitic inscriptions.

Typology of prayers

What follows is a general introduction and discussion of the most frequent types of prayer requests made to deities in the Safaitic inscriptions. With the exception of *ḏkr* which features very infrequently, all of these requests are nouns. A complete list of the unabridged prayers that feature in the Safaitic inscriptions can be seen in Appendix B:1 with a table showing the number of occurrences for each prayer request in Appendix A: Table 5.

s¹lm – Security

s¹lm is the request most frequently asked of deities in the Safaitic inscriptions appearing in approximately 903 inscriptions as either a singular request, for example, *fh rḍy s¹lm* (O *rḍy* [grant] security[228]) or as part of a compound request, for example, *s¹lm h- mlk* (security for the chief[229]) and *s¹lm h- s¹nt* (security for the year[230]). In those inscriptions there are 638 instances where *s¹lm* is the only thing requested of a deity. In Classical Arabic *s¹lm* or سالم can be translated with a number of different, albeit similar, meanings. The translators of the Safaitic inscriptions differ somewhat on their translations of the word *s¹lm*, but the favoured translation seems to be "security". The word *s¹lm* is known in various forms in many Semitic texts such as shalom (שָׁלוֹם) in Hebrew, sälam (ሰላም) in Ge'ez and šlama (ܫܠܡܐ) in Western Syriac.

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[227] C2318
[228] Oxtoby 1968, p. 10
[229] LP 619; For further use of the term *mlk* as a designation for chief/tribal leader etc. see Shahin 2009, pp. 189–204
[230] KRS 330, 1451

The use of *s¹lm* in prayers in the Safaitic texts shows not only its versatility, but its popularity. Featuring in over 800 individual prayers (excluding instances where the term *s¹lm* is used more than once in a prayer), *s¹lm* as a thing requested of deities features nearly five times more often than the second most frequent prayer in the Safaitic inscriptions. The number of ways *s¹lm* can be translated is tantamount to the versatile nature of this prayer and more than likely contributes to the high number of times it features in Safaitic inscriptions. The term *s¹lm* can also be considered a defensive prayer because the primary function of this request is to protect either the individual or their community.
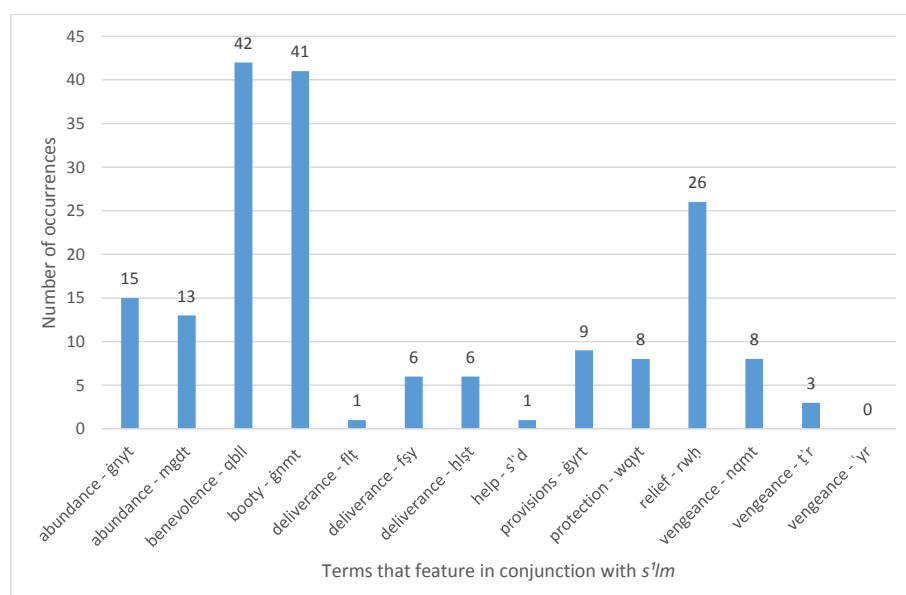
Fig. 2.2 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *s¹lm*

When used in conjunction with other things requested, the term *s¹lm* features most often with the term *ġnmt* (booty), followed by *qbll* (benevolence) and *rwḥ* (relief). Since *ġnmt* is a frequently used term in the religious inscriptions its prominence alongside *s¹lm* is understandable. However, *qbll* is far less prominent featuring less than a third of the times that *ġnmt* is mentioned. This would suggest a conscious correlation between the writers of the Safaitic prayers and the terms *s¹lm* and *qbll*. To theorise on what that relationship might be would be purely conjecture but the correlation does suggest a link between the two.

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As a largely nomadic society it makes sense that requests for *s¹lm* are the most common elements of Safaitic religious prayers. With the writers of the inscriptions always being at the mercy of the elements when herding livestock, *s¹lm* would have provided them with the safety and security they desired. Likewise, given the somewhat hostile nature of nomadic communities during this period, requests for *s¹lm* to a deity would have made the writer of the inscription feel more secure. Given the wide-ranging applications for a prayer featuring *s¹lm* it is no wonder that it is the term most frequently featured in the Safaitic prayers.

rwḥ – Relief

Prayers featuring the term *rwḥ* comprise the second most common thing requested in the Safaitic inscriptions. *rwḥ* features in 181 inscriptions, with 123 of those as the only thing requested of a deity. The term *rwḥ* is thought to be related to the Classical Arabic *rawāḥ*, translated as "rest" or "repose", but Winnett and Harding have suggested that the use in Safaitic and the context it occurs in suggest a translation like *rawwāḥ*, meaning "to quiet, calm, soothe".[231] Al-Jallad however, translates the term *rwḥ* as "ease/relief/send winds".[232]

Where *rwḥ* features as part of a compound prayer, the prayers tend to consist of phrases such as "relief through booty" – *rwḥ b- ġnmt*,[233] "relief from the [tribe] Daif" – *rwḥ m- h- ḏf*,[234] "relief among those who are hungry" – *rwḥ m ḏ ḫrṣ*[235] and "relief through rain" – *rwḥ b- mṭr*.[236] These expressions suggest that *rwḥ* might also be interpreted as a form of passive protection, for example, a request to provide restful protection. The term *rwḥ* has been classified as a benevolent prayer request since a requesting relief does not directly negatively affect another individual.

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[231] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 40
[232] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 207
[233] C60
[234] C1969
[235] KRS 18
[236] KRS 1233; Mu 321

Fig. 2.3 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *rwḥ*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *rwḥ* features most frequently with the term *s¹lm* meaning security, followed by booty (*ġnmt*). The purpose for this correlation is unclear but there is not enough statistical data to make any assumptions on the relationship between booty (*ġnmt*) and *rwḥ*. As is the case with *s¹lm*, requests for *rwḥ* are understandable given the tumultuous nature of the society of the Safaitic Arabians with, for example, their tenuous relationships with neighbouring political forces[237] and the harshness of their natural environment.[238]

s¹ʿd – Help

s¹ʿd appears in the Safaitic inscriptions as a request in 170 inscriptions. The term *s¹ʿd* is related to the Arabic *sāʿd* (سعد) .pleh gninaem (ديـعـ) .D .pleh gninaem (سـ)espite appearing in the Safaitic prayers relatively regularly, the term *s¹ʿd* is almost always the only thing requested of a particular deity in 157 cases. In inscriptions where the request *s¹ʿd* is made, only 7.65% of those inscriptions feature

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[237] Graf 2002, p. 153
[238] Bartl and Moaz 2008, p. 305

an additional request, such as "help and deliverance" – *s¹ʿd w flṭ*[239] and "immunity and help" – *ġrt w s¹ʿd*,[240] or are part of a compound request, for example, "help whoever loves and deliver them from distress" – *s¹ʿd ḏ wd w flṭ m- b's¹*[241] and "help in a country exposed to sun" – *s¹ʿd s²ʿ ḏḥ*.[242]

It is interesting that out of the 170 requests for *s¹ʿd* to deities in the Safaitic inscriptions, the majority of the prayers (at 61.2%) are written in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed text formulae. Like the majority of prayers that feature *s¹ʿd*, those that are written in conventional Safaitic also predominately feature *s¹ʿd* as the only request in that prayer. However, of the 13 inscriptions where *s¹ʿd* features alongside other requests of a deity, only five are written in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed text formulae. As discussed previously, *rḍw* is the most commonly invoked deity requested to provide *s¹ʿd*, regardless of whether the inscription is written in the Safaitic or Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed text formulae. Like relief (*rwḥ*), help (*s¹ʿd*) may also be considered a benevolent request since requests for help benefit primarily the author. It is thus a relatively passive directive.

Terms that feature in conjunction with s¹ʿd

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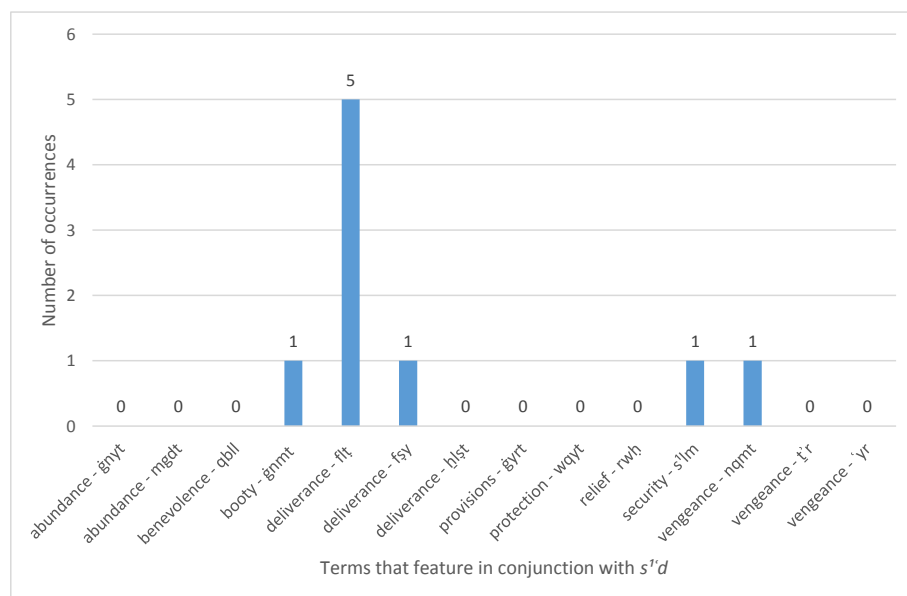
[239] KRS 2812
[240] Stehle 16
[241] MKJS 80
[242] LP 1260

Fig. 2.4 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *s¹ʿd*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *s¹ʿd* features most commonly with the term *flṭ* (deliverance) and rarely with any other terms. Since the term *s¹ʿd* is used most often with deities that can be considered more solitary deities[243] it is understandable that this term does not often feature alongside other requests. Interestingly, both the term *s¹ʿd* and that which it features with most frequently, *flṭ*, are the most common requests made of deities in the mixed texts.

ġnmt – Booty

The fourth most common prayer in the Safaitic inscriptions is for *ġnmt*, or booty. *ġnmt* is related to the Arabic *ġanīmah* (غُنم), meaning booty or loot as spoils of war, distribution of which was subject to extensive customary regulation in pre-Islamic Arabia.[244] The term *ġnmt* appears in 169 inscriptions in total. Of these 152 references are in direct prayers and 17 appear in blessing form. The term features as the only request in a prayer (excluding curses) in 88 inscriptions. In prayers that feature more than a simple invocation of *ġnmt*, the supplication to the invoked deity usually consist of requests such as "booty this year" – *ġnmt h- s¹nt*[245] and "booty from enemies" – *ġnmt m- s²nʾ*.[246] Occasionally there are less common requests for *ġnmt* such as "booty as compensation" – *ġnmt bddt*[247] or "booty to him who is suffering from a lack of milk" – *ġnmt l- ḏ s²ḥṣ*[248] and "relief through booty" – *rwḥ b- ġnmt*.[249] Requests for booty (*ġnmt*) have been classified as material requests since its acquisition is very much a tangible object of desire.

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[243] The connection of deities to the term *s¹ʿd* is dealt with in greater detail in the following chapter.
[244] Lambton 1981, p. 214
[245] KRS 2981; Mu 227
[246] C4332; KRS 1824; WH 2375a; M 296
[247] C3121
[248] C8
[249] C60
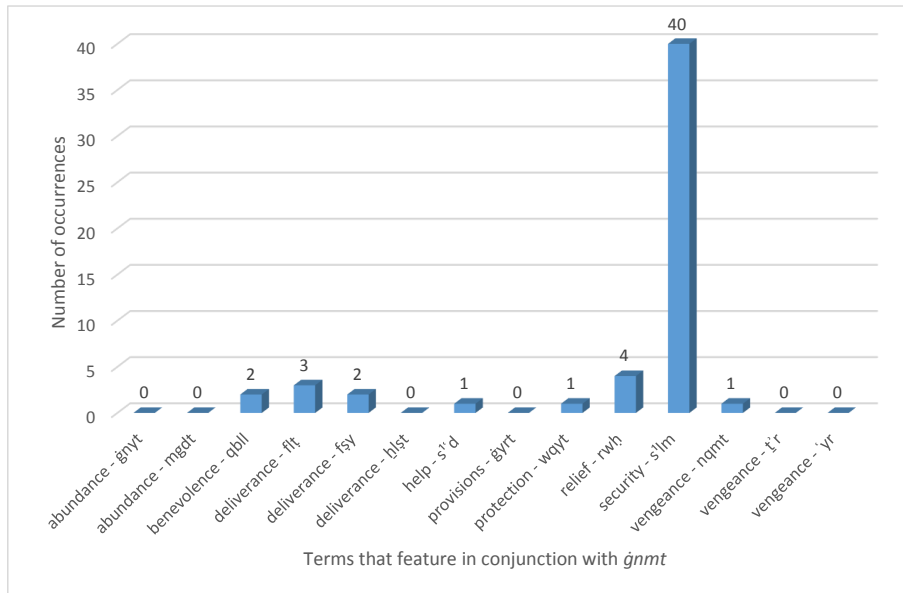
Fig. 2.5 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *ġnmt*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *ġnmt* features far more frequently with the word *s¹lm* (security) than any other. This might suggest an affinity between the need for both security (*s¹lm*) and booty (*ġnmt*) which is understandable in the context. For an individual to physically obtain booty (*ġnmt*) it is likely that they would have to engage in a dangerous situation.

That *ġnmt* is the fourth most requested action of the deities in the Safaitic religious inscriptions is a reflection on the society and context in which these inscriptions were written. With nearly 200 references, including blessings, *ġnmt* is clearly an integral part of the lives of the Safaitic Arabians. Since *ġnmt* specifically means booty acquired in battle this suggests that the acquisition of goods through war and spoils was a common occurrence. Raids were a part of Bedouin life in pre-Islamic times. Following the advent of Islam the sheer amount of booty acquired meant that a precise and fair method of distribution needed to be established. Hence we have the evidence of Sura VIII of the Qur'ān "On the Spoils of War".[250] Booty in this period

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[250] See also Tafsir ibn Kathir, *Surah 8. Al-Anfal* (41)

would have most likely been in the form of weapons, horses, camels, movable goods and slaves.

flṭ – Deliverance

The fifth most commonly requested thing is *flṭ*, and is mentioned in 72 prayers, remarkably less than the previous four terms discussed. Winnett and Harding translate the term as deliver/deliverance based on the Syriac *pallet*,[251] a translation supported by Macdonald[252] and Al-Jallad.[253] In approximately 61.1% of these inscriptions *flṭ* is the only thing requested of the deity in the prayer. It is interesting to note that in the requests made to deities in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts, 8.7% of those requests were for *flṭ*. Compound requests that feature *flṭ* include "deliverance from affliction this year" – *flṭ m- bʾs¹ h- s¹nt*[254] and "help whoever loves and deliver them from distress" – *s¹ʿd ḏ wd w flṭ m- bʾs¹*.[255] Deliverance (*flṭ*) is a difficult term to classify but has been classified here as a defensive prayer because the general concept of the term is related to protection. When it has been combined in a compound prayer however, it does not always completely fit this definition.

[251] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 643
[252] Macdonald 2008, p. 207
[253] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 209
[254] C1629
[255] MKJS 80
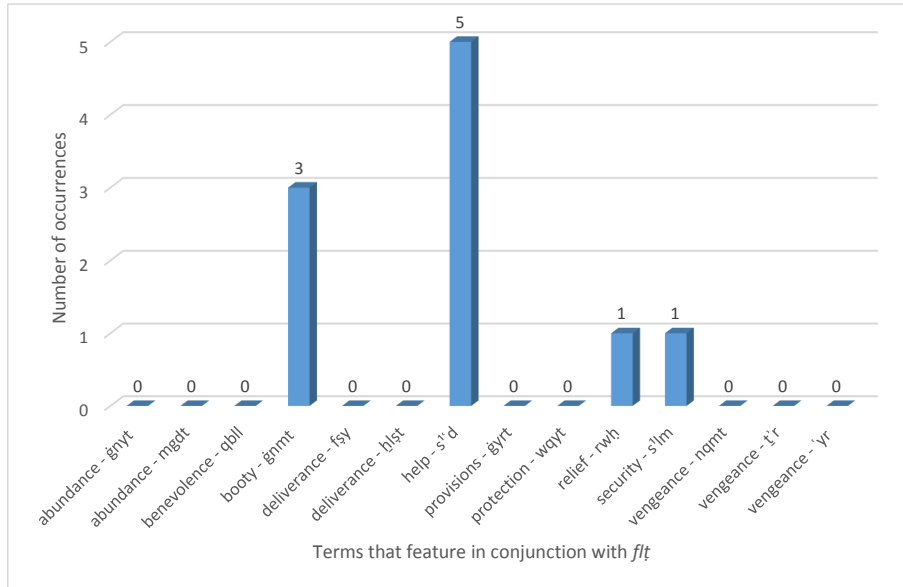
Fig. 2.6 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *flṭ*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *flṭ* features most commonly with the term *s¹ʿd* (help) followed by *ġnmt* (booty). Since *flṭ* is a common feature of the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts it is hardly surprising that the most common accompanying request is *s¹ʿd*. *ġnmt* is a term that is associated relatively frequently in the prayers to the deity *rḍw*, a divinity who is another common character in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts, suggesting an affinity between the term *flṭ* and the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts.

qbll – Benevolence

qbll is a term used in 68 of the Safaitic prayers related to the Arabic *qabala*, translated as acceptance or welcome. The term features as the only thing requested of a deity in only 30.9% of cases. Interestingly, when *qbll* is requested in a Safaitic prayer, the term *s¹lm* is mentioned alongside it in 48.5% of cases as the only two requests mentioned. This would suggest that *s¹lm* and *qbll* are associated to some extent. The term benevolence (*qbll*) has been classified as a benevolent prayer since it is an intangible concept that primarily benefits the author.

Fig. 2.7 – Terms that feature in conjunction with qbll
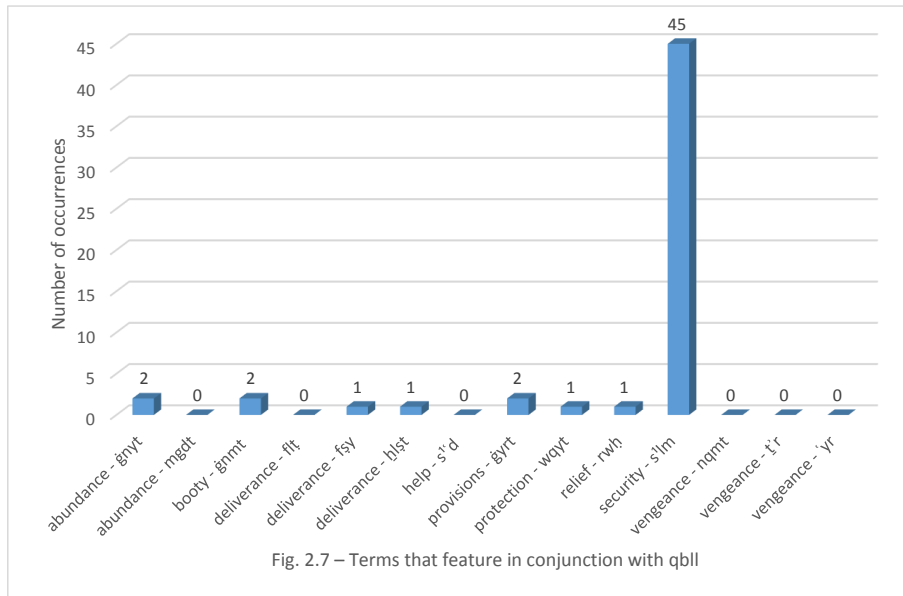
Fig. 2.7 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *qbll*

As mentioned previously, when used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *qbll* features far more frequently with the term *s¹lm* (security) than any other term. Given that it features in context with very few other terms this would suggest that *qbll* and *s¹lm* might be considered complementary requests by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. What the relationship between the two terms are cannot be known but the sheer frequency of requests that feature *s¹lm* alongside *qbll* does suggest a trend.

nqm(t) – Avenge/Vengeance

The terms *nqm* and *nqmt* are related to the Arabic *nāqama* and *naqmah*, and feature in 51 inscriptions in the Safaitic religious prayers. In approximately half of these occurrences the terms form the only thing requested in that prayer. When these terms feature in compound requests the most common form is "vengeance from enemies" – *nqmt m- s²n* '[256] featuring

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[256] C835, 1077, 2194

alongside less common compound requests such as "vengeance from misfortune" – *nqmt wfsy mb's*.[257] Avenge/Vengeance (*nqm/nqmt*) has been classified as a malevolent prayer request.
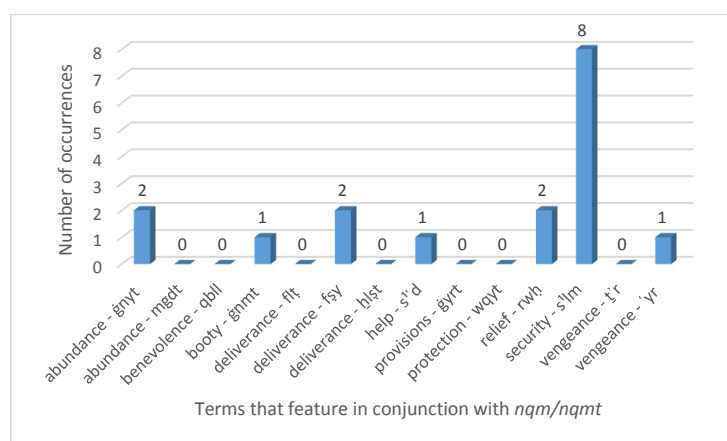
Fig. 2.8 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *nqm(t)*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *nqm(t)* features most frequently with the term *s¹lm* (security). The correlation between *s¹lm* and *nqm(t)* is not altogether surprising given the prevalence of *s¹lm* in the Safaitic texts. However, given the sparsity of references, exact determinations on the relationship between the two terms cannot be made.

The terms *nqm* and *nqmt* once again support the view of a society whose culture and lifestyle was steeped in war. Many of the inscriptions that feature *nqm* and *nqmt* are texts that seek vengeance on those responsible for the deaths of loved ones or retribution where the author believes they have been wronged in some way.[258]

ġnyt – Abundance

Featuring in 39 inscriptions in the Safaitic texts, the term *ġnyt* is related to the Arabic *gunyah* or *ġinyah.* In just under 38.5% of cases the term *ġnyt* is used as the only request present in a prayer. The term *ġnyt* also features commonly as part of compound requests. The most common

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[257] CSNS 214
[258] C5121; LP 460

of these types are "abundance of pasturing" – *ġnyt m- rʿyt*[259] with less common compound requests including "abundance for whoever is in need of milk" – *ġnyt m- ʾl ṣbḥn*[260] and "abundance of rain" – *ġnyt b- mṭr*.[261] Abundance (*ġnyt*) has been classified as a material prayer request.
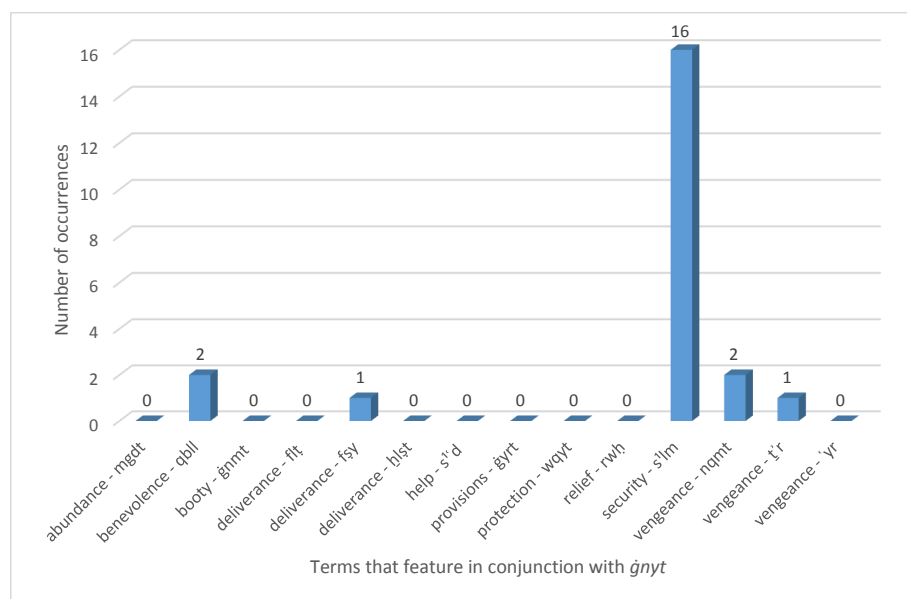
Fig. 2.9 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *ġnyt*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *ġnyt* features most often with the term *sᵃlm* (security). As with the correlation between *sᵃlm* and *nqm(t)*, the relationship between *ġnyt* and *sᵃlm* is understandable. Given the frequent references to *sᵃlm* in the texts however, this particular correlation does not suggest a particularly unusual relationship between the two terms.

Since *ġnyt* in these inscriptions tends to refer to a healthy abundance of crops, rain or other such pastoral endeavours, prayers that feature this request really reflect the agricultural

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[259] KRS 34, 1886, 1892
[260] KRS 532
[261] WH 2143

capabilities of the Safaitic Arabians. They show aspects of the society that may not be necessarily revealed amidst the more common war-related requests.

ġyrt/ġyr – Provisions

The terms *ġyrt/ġyr* feature in 35 inscriptions in the Safaitic prayers and are related to the Arabic *ġāra* or *ġīr* meaning provisions. This term it is mentioned alone as the only request present in the prayer 62.9% of the times it appears. KRS 756 reads *l mty bn ʿdy bn mty bn mkbl bn ḏhd bn ʾbṭ w ḏbḥ f h s²ʿhqm s¹lm m ʿl- h ʾbl mtʿt l- mdbr* or "By *Mty* son of *ʿdy* son of *Mty* son of *Mkbl* son of *Ḏhd* son of *ʾbṭ* and he made a sacrifice so, O *s²ʿhqm*, keep safe what is upon the camels, provisions for the inner desert". In the context of KRS 756 we see that *ġyrt/ġyr* was considered a very tangible concept, while the request to *s²ʿhqm* in KRS 756 was in fact to keep the provisions safe rather than for provisions themselves. The request for provisions (*ġyrt/ġyr*) has been classified as a material prayer request.
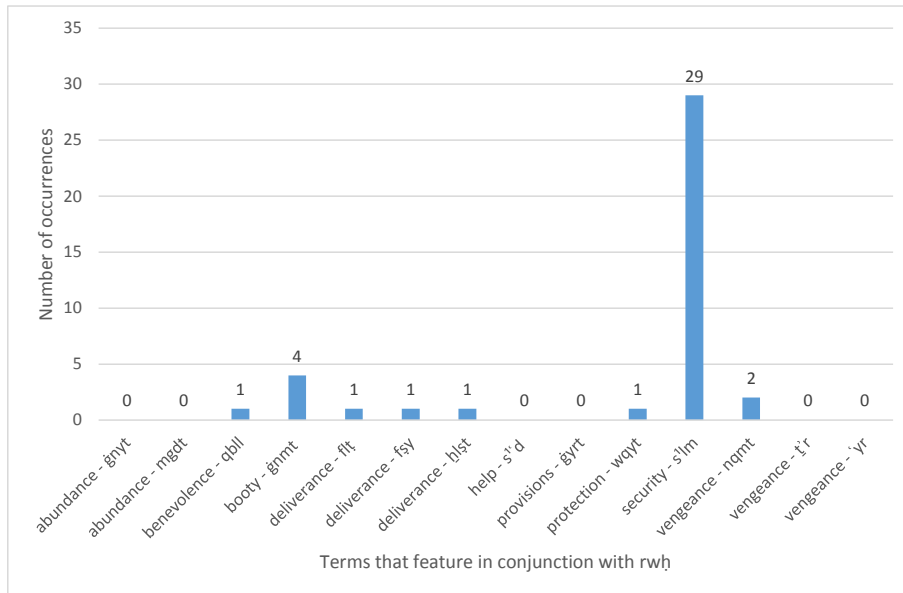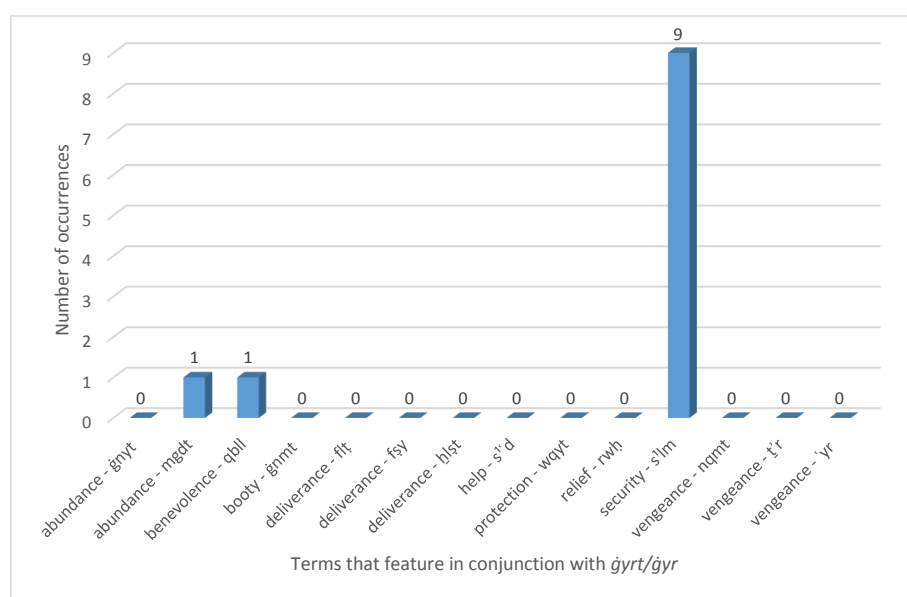

Fig. 2.10 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *ġyrt/ġyr*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *ġyrt/ġyr* features most often with the term *s¹lm* (security). As was the case with previous terms, the overwhelming

presence of *s¹lm* in the texts of the Safaitic Arabians suggests that there is no especially significant relationship between the terms *s¹lm* and *ġyrt/ġyr*.

ṯ'r – Blood-revenge

The term *ṯ'r* features in 29 inscriptions in the Safaitic prayers, on 26 occasions as the only thing requested of a deity. An example of the term being used as part of a compound request can be seen in "blood-revenge against the *ḥwlt*" – *ṯ'r mn- ḥwlt*.[262] The term is related to the Arabic, *ṯa'r* (ثأر) meaning revenge. Blood-revenge (*ṯ'r*) has been classified as a malevolent prayer request because the author of the inscription is actively seeking for a negative action to be taken on someone else.
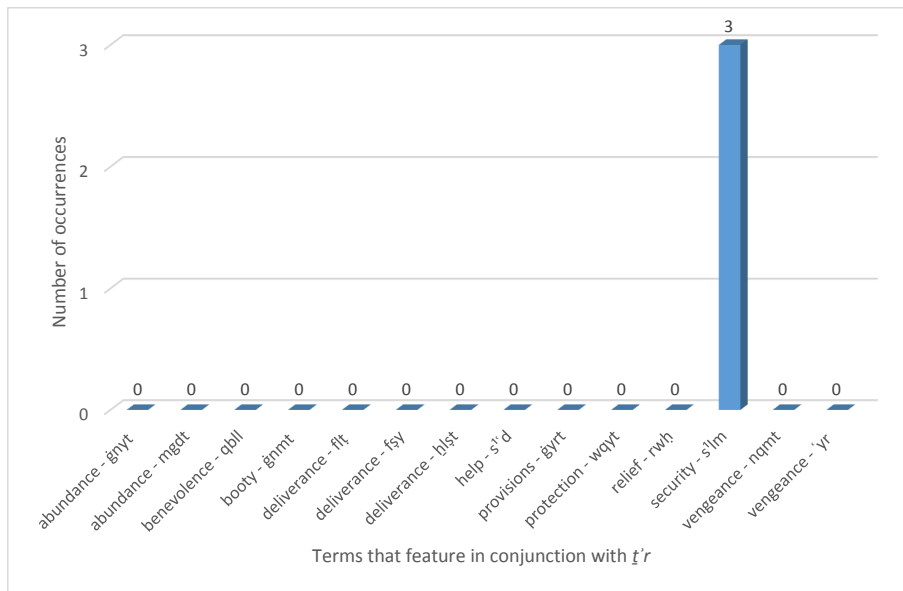
Fig. 2.11 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *ṯ'r*

The term *ṯ'r* only features in conjunction with other prayer requests alongside requests for security (*s¹lm*). The relationship between *s¹lm* and *ṯ'r* is not necessarily significant in itself, but what is interesting is the distinct lack of overlap of this term with any other. It is also interesting to note the term *ṯ'r*, despite only being featured 29 times, is mentioned alongside the deity *ds²r* on 12 of those occasions, half of those as the only deity mentioned in that inscription and the other half with the deity *lt*. The deity *lt* also features as the only one mentioned when this term was used in 13 instances, however given the prevalence of *lt* in the

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[262] AbMS 1

Safaitic religious inscriptions this is perhaps not surprising. What it does suggest however, is a higher than average correlation and possibly that a significant relationship exists between the god *ds²r* and the term *t'r*. What that relationship may be is as yet unknown.

In the context of the Safaitic Arabians' religious beliefs, *t'r* or blood-revenge, literally means retaliation by blood. In many pre-Islamic societies blood-revenge could be mean retaliation against a male member of the offenders' family to make amends for the blood-debt. The concept of blood-revenge also features in the Qur'ān.[263] Blood feuds often had devastating effects on tribal communities so as a result Qur'ānic teaching attempted to introduced the concept of blood-money in an attempt to make family members accept financial compensation rather than the slaying of the culprit. While the Qur'ān did not abolish blood-revenge[264] it did help to reduce the amount of feuds and provided security for family members.[265]

The Bible also makes mention to the concept of blood-revenge, for instance, where unavenged blood cries out to the Lord[266] and when innocent blood is spilt the land is defiled and must be expiated by the avenger.[267] As with the Qur'ān, eventually blood-revenge was legislated by a more centralised government and the responsibility of avenging ones death was taken out of the hands of the tribal communities in an attempt to reduce the amount of blood-feuds held by clans.[268]

fṣy/fṣyt – Deliverance

The terms *fṣy/fṣyt* feature in 29 prayers in the Safaitic inscriptions, eight stand alone and 21 compound requests. An example of the terms being used in a compound prayer can be seen in "deliverance from enemies" – *fṣy m- s²n'*.[269] The terms are related to the Arabic *faṣah* or *faṣīyah* meaning to deliver. Deliverance (*fṣy/fṣyt*) has been classified as a defensive prayer request.

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[263] Qur'an, Sura 5.45
[264] Phipps 1999, p. 174
[265] Lapidus 2014, p. 146
[266] Gen. 4.10
[267] Num. 35.31-34; see also Ewert 1993, p. 68
[268] Ewert 1993, p. 68
[269] KRS 1640
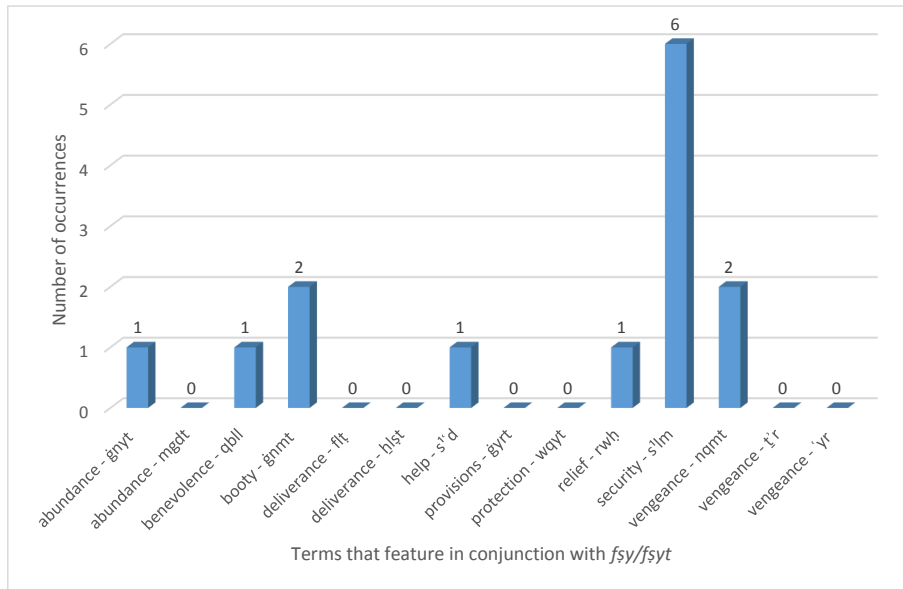
Fig. 2.12 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *fṣy/fṣyt*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *fṣy/fṣyt* features most often with the term *s¹lm* (security).

***wqyt/qyt/wqy* – Protection**

The terms *wqyt/qyt/wqy* are related to the Arabic *wiqāyah* (وقي) meaning protection or preservation. The terms feature in 26 inscriptions in the Safaitic texts, in 10 texts it the only thing requested of the deity and in 16 texts it is part of a compound request. An example of the term usage in a compound prayer can be seen in "*s¹lm* of protection" – *s¹lm wqyt m- bʾs¹*.[270] Protection (*wqyt/qyt/wqy*) has been classified as a defensive prayer request.

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[270] KRS 2425

79
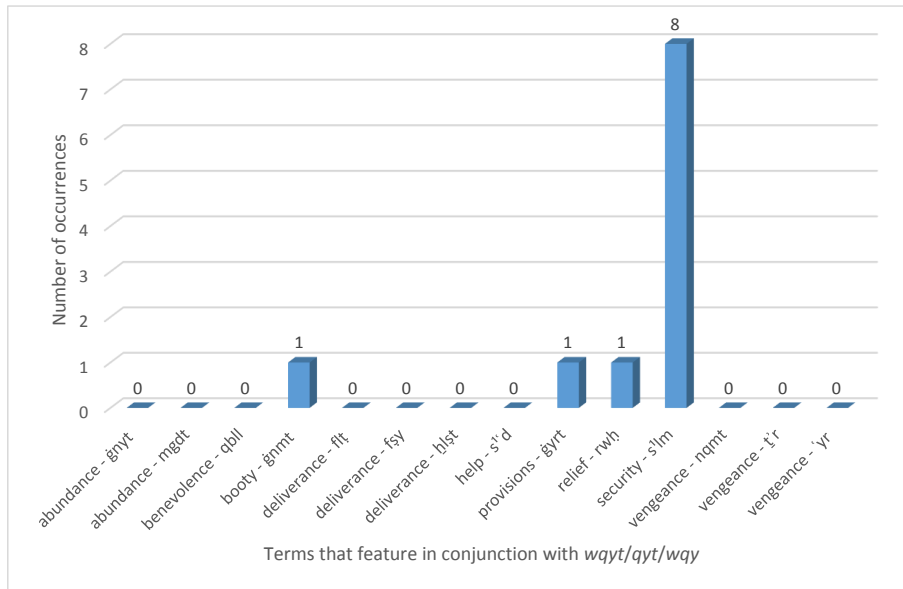
Fig. 2.13 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *wqyt/qyt/wqy*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *wqyt/qyt/wqy* features most often with the term *sᵗlm* (security). The link between the two terms is clear in that protection and security go hand in hand.

ʿyr/ʿyrt – Vengeance

The terms *ʿyr/ʿyrt* is found in 18 Safaitic prayers. Of these 18 prayers, there is only one instance where the terms *ʿyr/ʿyrt* is not the only request asked of the deity in question. The terms *ʿyr/ʿyrt* is comparable to the Syriac *ʿayārā*, meaning vengeance. Vengeance (*ʿyr/ʿyrt*) has been classified as a malevolent prayer request.
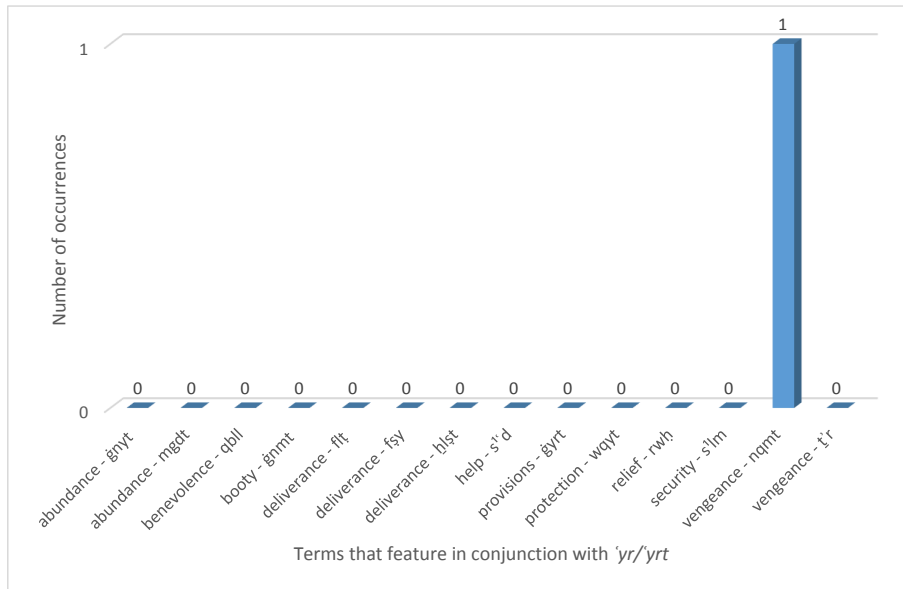
Fig. 2.14 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *ʾyr/ʿyrt*

When used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *ʾyr/ʿyrt* only features alongside one other request, *nqmt* (vengeance), a term with a similar meaning. There are not enough examples of this term in the extant Safaitic inscriptions to make a determination on the relationship between these two terms.

mgdt – Plenty

The term *mgdt* is known in 17 Safaitic prayers, featuring as the only request asked of the deity on two occasions. The term has generally been translated to mean "plenty" or "abundance,"[271] but the origin of the word in the ANA inscriptions is unknown. Plenty (*mgdt*) has been classified as a material prayer request.

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[271] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 209
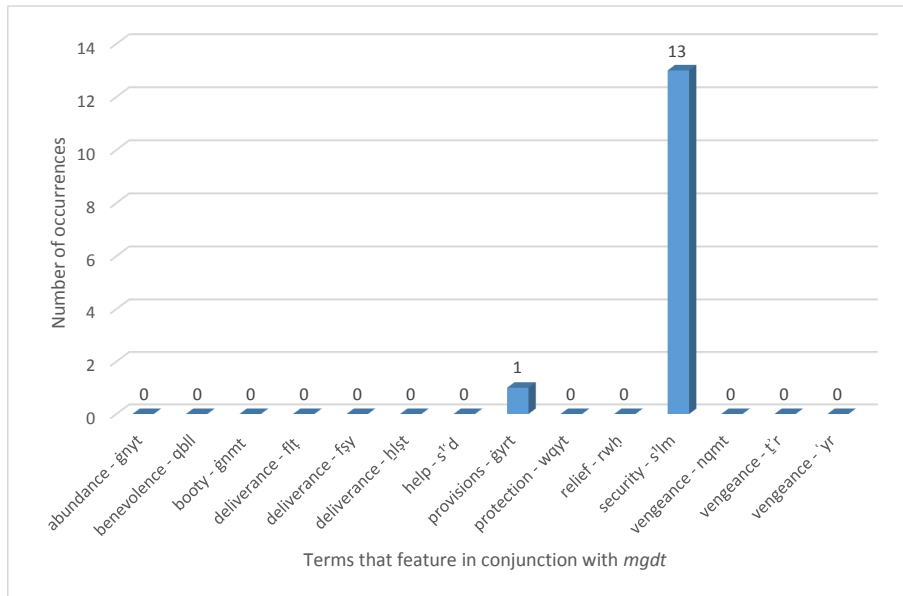
Fig. 2.15 – Terms that feature in conjunction with *mgdt*

As mentioned previously, when used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term *mgdt* features most often with the term *sᵏlm* (security).

ḫlṣ/ḫlṣt – Deliverance

The terms *ḫlṣ/ḫlṣt* feature in 12 Safaitic prayers, five times as the only thing requested of a deity and seven times as one of a number of requests in a prayer. The terms *ḫlṣ/ḫlṣt* are related to the Arabic *ḫalāṣ* meaning deliverance. Deliverance (*ḫlṣ/ḫlṣt*) has been classified as a defensive prayer request.
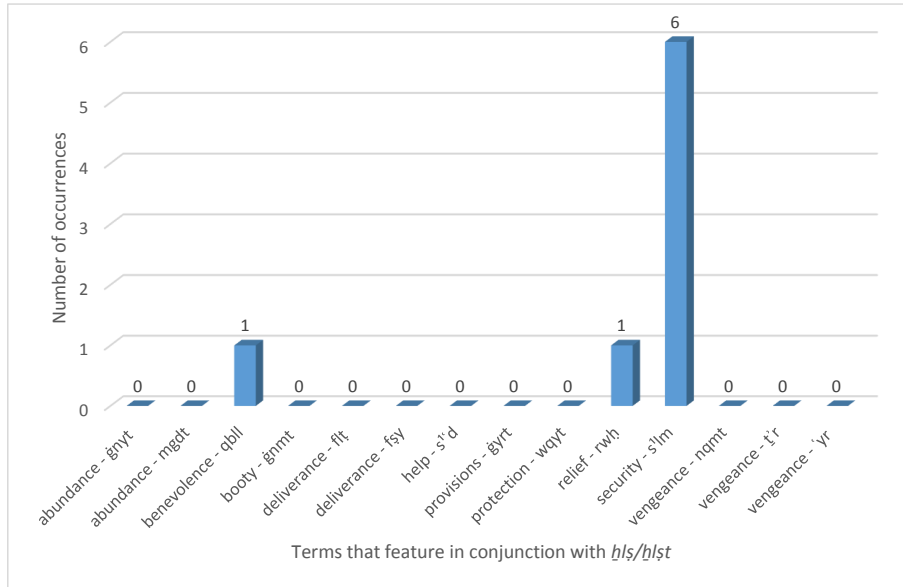
Fig. 2.16 – Terms that feature in conjunction with _ḫlṣ/ḫlṣt_

As mentioned previously, when used in conjunction with other items prayed for, the term _ḫlṣ/ḫlṣt_ features most often with the term _s¹lm_ (security).

ḏkr – Remember

The verbs _ḏkrn/ḏkr_ only feature twice in the Safaitic prayers, but are the most common feature of prayers written in the Ḥismāic script.[272] They also regularly feature in Nabataean texts. The terms _ḏkrn/ḏkr_ are related to the Arabic _ḏakara_, meaning to remember.

While a very common feature of Ḥismāic prayers, the nearest neighbour to Safaitic geographically, prayers seeking remembrance of a person (_ḏkr_) are quite rare in Safaitic. In Ḥismāic prayers seeking remembrance of a party usually begin the inscription with the verb _ḏkr_. The practice of initiating a prayer with request to a deity does not occur in Safaitic. When _ḏkr_ occurs in Safaitic prayers, the prayers do not feature a specific person to be remembered, unlike the Ḥismāic. Of the few instances where the verb _ḏkr_ is used in Safaitic the requests

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[272] See King 1990, pp. 94–99

have been to "remember good people" – *ḏkr rḥṭ ṣdq*[273] and to "remember us" – *ḏkrn*.[274] It appears that while remembrance prayers of this sort may have been used as a memorial texts in other ANA scripts, it does not seem that the verb *ḏkr* was used in this way in Safaitic. Remember (*ḏkrn/ḏkr*) has been classified as a benevolent prayer request.

By analysing the different prayers that feature in these inscriptions, we can see that the prayers classed as "defensive" are by far the most common type in the Safaitic inscriptions, consisting of 1012 different prayers. The second most common prayers are the "benevolent" ones occurring on 482 occasions. "Material" prayers occur on 279 occasions and the smallest amount are "malevolent" prayers with 113 occurrences. What these prayers show about the society in question is that the principles of security and protection were of vital importance to the Safaitic Arabians. They also indicate that while the authors seemed to have lived a turbulent existence, they were proactive in their requests to deities far more frequently than they were reactive – seeking protection and security more often than vengeance and retribution.

Curses and blessings

Protective curses, henceforth referred to as curses, and blessings are a primary feature of the Safaitic inscriptions. As previously mentioned in this study curses in the Safaitic inscriptions have been defined as limited to occasions where the author seeks vengeance on the obliterator of an inscription. This was a common theme in the Ancient Near East. What follows is a typology, general introduction and discussion of the requests made to deities through curses in the Safaitic inscriptions. A complete list of the unabridged curses can be seen in Appendix B:1 with a table showing the number of occurrences for each prayer request in Appendix A: Tables 6 and 7.

Typology of curses

In the Safaitic inscriptions there are 501 different curses, the vast majority of which include mention of a deity in the inscription. In those few examples where a deity is not cited it is possible that the inclusion of a deity in the enactment of curses was understood as implied. Many curses feature multiple requests to the deity.

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[273] Stehle 14
[274] Zega 17

ʿwr – **Blind**

The most common form of curse in the Safaitic inscriptions comes in the form of the verb *ʿwr*, or blindness. The term *ʿwr* is related to the Arabic *ʿawwara*, meaning to blind or obliterate. It is commonly used twice in a curse, literally calling down a curse that will blind the person who "blinds" (or obliterates) the writing. Used in a curse, *ʿwr* features in 335 and approximately 66.9% of all curses and blessings. Interestingly, the term *ʿwr* is the only curse put forward by the author in 305 of cases.

In the context of these inscriptions, a curse calling down blindness on an effacer of an inscription would have been a horrible affliction. Blindness for someone in a nomadic society would have meant a slow yet almost certain death and the blind individual would have been an immense burden on their tribe, for example as it would reduce ones physical security especially at night and would cause them to be at an obvious disadvantage, particularly during night time raids.[275] Thus the use of this permits use as a curse is meant not to create a mild discomfort for the obliterator of an inscription, but to cause total and painful destruction.

nqʾt – **Ejection**

The second most frequently occurring thing requested in curses is the term *nqʾt*. This term features in 124 inscriptions, making up 24.8% of all the curses and blessings. The translation of this word has proven difficult since there does not exist a root for the word *nqʾ* in Arabic and as such a number of possible translations have been suggested over the years. Littmann suggests translating the term *nqʾt* as ejection based on his analysis of LP 282 where *nqʾt* precedes the word *mqbr* meaning tomb.[276] His view is further supported by van den Branden.[277] A similar interpretation can be seen with Lipiński who translates the term as "clearing" based on the Aramaic and Hebrew word *nāqīʾ* meaning "clear". Thus, he translates the phrase in LP 282 (*nqʾt mqbr l- ḏ yʿwrn -h*) as "clearing out of the tomb".[278] Al-Jallad supports the view that

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[275] Trombley 2001, p. 195
[276] Littmann 1940, pp. 129–130; 1943, p. 56
[277] Van den Branden 1950, p. 263
[278] Lipiński 1997, p. 565

nq't should be translated as 'ejection'[279] although both Macdonald and Al-Jallad[280] dispute his suggested connection with the "Aramaic and Hebrew nāqī".[281]

Winnett, on the other hand, believes the term should be translated as "the evil-eye" given the similarity of the word to the Arabic *najʾah*, meaning "evil eye",[282] a proposal accepted by both Beetson[283] and Milik.[284] However, Jamme stated that the Safaitic *q* did not correspond with the Classic Arabic *ǧīm*.[285] Jamme further argued that *nqʾt* derives from a root meaning 'to vomit'[286] although Al-Jallad and Macdonald successfully argue that this theory was based on an incorrect transliteration by the original copyist.[287]Another translation of this word is Rodinson's suggestion that *nq't* is related to the Akkadian *naqū* or *nequ* meaning "to pour libations to the dead" or perhaps to the Arabic *naqaʿa* meaning "to scatter dust on the head as a sign of mourning".[288]

The term *nq't bwdd* was found in LP 348, 673 and 684 which led Littmann to suggest a translation of "ejection into calamities", interpreting *bwdd* as *'idad* or *'iddah*, meaning "calamity". The translation of these inscriptions was slightly altered by Jamme into "rejection into calamities",[289] though Winnett and Harding caution that these views are highly speculative.[290] Winnett and Harding further argue that *wdd* is used elsewhere as a noun in Safaitic meaning "loved one" supplementing this view by using WH 181 as an example where the term *nq't bṣdq* is used, with *ṣdq* understood as "friend". The argument here is thus that the inscriptions should be interpreted as *nq't* on a friend or loved one, and was thus considered a positive sentiment. With regard to *nq't mqbr* in LP 282 Winnett and Harding argued at the time that as there existed no photograph to confirm the inscription they maintained that their proposed translation of *nq't* as the "evil-eye" should stand. However, since the publication of their work another inscription (M 26) has been discovered that corroborates the term *nq't mgbr*. With two instances of *nq't mgbr* in existence, I am inclined to agree that *nq't* should be

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[279] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 335
[280] Al-Jallad and Macdonald 2015, p. 10
[281] Lipiński 2001, § 66.2
[282] See commentary on WH 56, and SIJ 87
[283] Beeston 1960, p. 184
[284] Milik 1960, p. 179
[285] Jamme 1967b, p. 84
[286] Jamme 1967b, p. 84
[287] Al-Jallad and Macdonald 2015, p. 10
[288] Rodinson 1959, pp. 217–218
[289] Jamme 1967a, pp. 386–392
[290] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 48

translated as "ejection". Perhaps *nqʾt* represents erasing one's memory, thus *nqʾt mgbr* might be translated as erasing one's memory from their tomb and *nqʾt bṣdq* could perhaps mean erasing the memory of them in the minds of their loved ones. Since the etymology of this word is still unclear the translation of the term *nqʾt* will follow Macdonald as "(inflict) *nqʾt* [an unknown evil] on whoever…"[291]

mḥlt – Dearth

The term *mḥlt* is thought to be related to the Arabic word *maḥala* or *maḥl* meaning "dearth of pasture or famine". The term is used in the third most common curse featuring in the Safaitic religious texts with 14 occurrences, although it has substantially fewer appearances than the previously mentioned curses calling down *ʿwr* and *nqʾt*. This term also features in other forms, for example, *mḥltn*, which King translates as "dearth of pasture for two seasons".[292]

A curse such as a dearth of pasture or famine would have been catastrophic for a nomadic community. Thus, a desire to inflict such a destructive curse on an individual shows that the writer of the inscription felt strongly that no one should obscure the text.

lʿn – Curse

The verb *lʿn* occurs in 16 Safaitic inscriptions and can be translated as a generic curse based on the Arabic لعن

ʿrg – Lame

The term *ʿrg* is related to the Arabic *ʾaʿraj* (أعرج) meaning lameness.[293] This term features in 10 inscriptions in the curses and blessings. In a nomadic society to suffer from a disability of this degree lameness would have been disastrous for the individual as well as the greater community.[294]

ḥrsʾ – Dumbness

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[291] Macdonald 2000, p. 74
[292] KRS 1551
[293] Lipiński 1997, p. 221
[294] Ibn Qutayba, Maʿārif, *passim.*

The term *ẖrs¹* is used as a curse in eight extant inscriptions. It is related to the Arabic *ẖaras* (خرس) meaning dumbness.

t̠ʾr – Blood-revenge

As mentioned previously in this chapter, the term *t̠ʾr* is an item commonly prayed for and directed at the deities of the Safaitic Arabians. In the curses in the inscriptions *t̠ʾr* features four times. The term is related to the Arabic, *t̠aʾr* (ثأر) meaning revenge.

grb – Scab

The term *grb* is thought to be related to the Arabic *garab* (جرب) meaning scab, and features in just three Safaitic curses.

Typology of blessings

In the Safaitic inscriptions there are 58 different blessings attached to the end of an inscription, all of which occur alongside mention of a specific deity. What follows is a typology of the most common blessing requests seen in the texts. Many blessings feature multiple requests which have been included here as separate examples. All of the blessings feature elsewhere in the inscriptions as items requested from a deity. A complete list of the unabridged blessings in the Safaitic inscriptions can be seen in Appendix B:1.

Since all of the blessings seen in the Safaitic inscriptions have been dealt with and analysed previously there is no need to discuss the etymology behind these requests in this section. Appeals for *s¹lm* are the most frequently observed blessings requested from deities appearing in 33 separate inscriptions. This is followed by requests for booty to fall on those who leave the inscription untouched and appears in 18 different blessings. Relief (*rwḥ*) is the equal third most common request in the Safaitic blessings, appearing in three separate inscriptions along with *ẖlṣt*, or deliverance, also featuring in three blessings. Finally, the term *s¹ʿd* appears twice in blessings in the Safaitic inscriptions and is related to the Arabic *sāʿd* meaning help.

"Blind the obliterator" – the effacing of inscriptions in pre-Islamic Arabia

Content aside, what the Safaitic curses and blessings show unequivocally is that the destruction of an individual's inscription was considered a great transgression. The sanctity and inviolability of the written word was a powerful tool that authors of the Safaitic inscriptions used to achieve permanence. To obliterate the inscription of an individual was to prevent the request from occurring, or disdain the memory of the author. Authors therefore sought to prevent this by calling down upon the person the curse of whatever deity was named. Therefore effacing an inscription can be considered a widely recognised transgression.

Epithets

In the Safaitic inscriptions there exist a number of epithets accompanying the names of some of the deities. In many monotheistic and polytheistic religions, epithets were utilised to emphasise an important trait of a particular god or goddess; for example, in the pantheon of Palmyra the god Bel was also known as Bel, the Gad of the olive tree (*gd mšḥ*).[295] Epithets were also used to identify a deity with a particular region emphasising a localised aspect of the god; for example, Yahweh Zebaoth of Shiloh.[296] When referring to a toponym, the localising epithet functions as an epiphanic means of recognition and local appropriation.[297] For smaller, "less complex" soceities epithets attributed to deities regularly assumed the name of a particularly prominent place.[298]

Occasionally a new, distinct deity may arise from an epithet as the result of an evolution over time of an older, more archaic divinity. An example of this in the Safaitic tradition is the north-west Semitic deity *b ʿlsⁱmn* (or Baʿalshamin) whose name was originally an epithet of the supreme god of the people (or Baʿal).[299] It is unlikely that the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions considered the name "shamin" an epithet of the god Baʿal as there exists an inscription in which the deity Baʿalshamin is referred to as *b ʿlsⁱmn ʾlh sⁱ ʿ ʿ* (Baʿalshamin, god of Ši ʿ), unless a double epithet was intended. This would suggest that the name *b ʿlsⁱmn* in the Safaitic had evolved to become the name of the individual deity. This topic will be discussed in greater length in the

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[295] Teixidor 1979, p. 100
[296] 2 Sam. 7.26
[297] Borgeaud 2004, p. 8
[298] Hoyland 2002, p. 141
[299] Teixidor 1979, p. 63

following chapter. Figure 2.17 lists all the deities with epithets or potential epithets found in the Safaitic inscriptions.

Deity and epithet	Possible translation[300]	Occurrence
b ʿlsʲmn ʾlh sʲ ʿ ʿ	God of Ši ʿ	1[301]
ʾlh ḥġsʲ		1[302]
ʾlh tm		1[303]
ʾlt dṯn		4[304]
ʾlt h- nmrt	Goddess of Nemara	2[305]
ʾlt rm ʿn	Goddess of Rm ʿn	1[306]
ʾlt ʾsʲsʲ	Goddess of Usays	1[307]
ṣlm ʾlh dmt	God of effigies	1[308]
yṯ ʿ ʾlh ḥmgt		1[309]

[300] All translations are courtesy of M.C.A. Macdonald unless otherwise stated.
[301] CSNS 424
[302] Khunp 1
[303] Khunp 1
[304] C994; C192; C2446; C4982
[305] HN 89; MISSF 1
[306] M 26
[307] C101
[308] KRS 30
[309] KRS 797

Fig. 2.17 – Epithets in the Safaitic inscriptions

bʿlsʼmn ʾlh sʼ‛‛ – This epithet likely means the author of the inscription associated the deity Baʿalshamin with Sī‛ in the Hauran, near the modern-day town of Qanata in Syria, home of a 1st century BC temple of Baʿalshamin.[310] While this is the only extant epithet of Baʿalshamin in the Safaitic inscriptions, there are a number of localising epithets found in the Nabataeans inscriptions, including a 1st century AD altar in Salkhad dedicated to Baʿalshamin god of *mtnw*[311] and a 1st century AD inscription in Bosra to Baʿalshamin the god of Shuʿaydu[312] as well as an inscription from Wadi Musa in southern Jordan from the early 1st century associating Baʿalshamin as the god of Manku, a Nabataean king.[313] This suggests that Baʿalshamin may have been associated with many other geographical toponyms throughout the periods of his worship.

ʾlh ḥġsʼ and *ʾlh tm* – These epithets only occur in one inscription with a number of other relatively obscure deities. They do not seem to represent the god *lh* or *ʾlh* without an epithet. It is most likely that these epithets represent localised deities and their names are representative of a toponym the location of which is as yet unknown, for example *ʾlh ḥġsʼ*, god of *ḥġsʼ*. There is a tribe regularly mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions as *tm*,[314] so it is possible that *ʾlh tm* stands for the god of *tm*. This suggestion was also made recently by Al-Jallad and Macdonald[315] while Hayajneh and Ababneh suggest the reading *ʾlh h-ġsʼn* which might refer to the tribe known as the Ghassānids, a conglomerate of Arab tribes[316] who migrated from Southern Arabia in the 2nd century,[317] although this view has recently been disputed by Al-Jallad and Macdonald.[318]

ʾlt dtn – The most common epithet in the Safaitic inscriptions is *ʾlt dtn*. The unusual feature of this epithet is that both *ʾlt* and *dtn* are mentioned in prayers as deities in their own right and distinct from one another. In the four instances where *ʾlt dtn* is mentioned there is no *w* separating *ʾlt* from *dtn* thus excluding the possibility that the inscription was a prayer

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[310] For the dating of this temple see Littmann 1904a, p. 89
[311] Littmann 1914, pp. 21–22 n. 23
[312] de Vogüé 1889, pp. 204–205
[313] Milik 1981, 26
[314] For example, CIS 2555, CSNS 410, HCH 129, JaS56a, KRS 860, NSE 2.1, NST 2, SIAM 13, WH 711, ZSI 1
[315] Al-Jallad and Macdonald 2015, p. 1
[316] Hayajneh and Ababneh 2015, p. 267-268, 270
[317] Robin 2015, pp. 92-96
[318] Al-Jallad and Macdonald 2015, p. 12

individually requesting assistance from both deities. *dṯn* also features as a personal name but in the three extant inscriptions where this name occurs it is introduced by the vocative *wh* rather than the introductory participle *l* showing it was not intended as a personal name. Likewise the lack of a *h-* separating *ʾlt* and *dṯn* suggests that it was not intended to be read as *ʾlt* of *dṯn* eliminating the possibility that *dṯn* was a geographical toponym, although *ʾlt ʾsˈsˈ* also does not feature a *h-*.

In the situations in which the goddess *ʾlt* is invoked in a prayer singularly, 14.3% of the inscriptions are written in what I have called the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed format. Of the Safaitic inscriptions analysed in this study, prayers invoking a deity for help (*sˈʿd*) make up 75.4% of the requests made to deities in the mixed Thamudic B/Safaitic inscriptions. In terms of inscriptions seeking help (*sˈʿd*), in the entire Safaitic corpus analysed here (including the mixed texts), 59% of those inscriptions were mixed texts. Interestingly, 71.4% of the inscriptions mentioning *dṯn* request help (*sˈʿd*). It may be possible then that if there were a separate religious belief system unique to the mixed texts then perhaps *ʾlt dṯn* was part of that tradition, although it may just be coincidence.

ʾlt h- nmrt – This epithet meaning *ʾlt* goddess of Namara features twice in the inscriptions analysed in this study and is likely a toponymic epithet referring to Namara. Namara, modern day Nimreh, is in southern Syria and is most famous for being the place of discovery for the Namara inscription.

ʾlt rmʿn – As with the previous epithet, *rmʿn* is probably a toponym, possibly referring to al-ʿÛsæwi. Macdonald makes this suggestion because it would be unusual to invoke the topical deity of another place to protect a drawing left here.[319]

ʾlt ʾsˈsˈ – This epithet is most likely a localising epithet referring to Usays, presumably modern-day Jabal Usays in southern Syria as relatively modern Arab geographers use the name Usays when referring to the volcano.[320]

ṣlm ʾlh dmt – This epithet has been translated as *ṣlm* god of effigies. It is unusual in two respects, firstly as this is the only extant Safaitic inscription where the Arabian deity Ṣalm is mentioned, and secondly, there is no evidence as yet for effigies in Safaitic religion. The

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[319] Personal communication with M.C.A. Macdonald
[320] Macdonald, al-Muʾazzin, Nehmé 1996, p. 466

deity Ṣalm was the chief deity of Tayma '[321] and the moon god who was often represented as a bull with or without a solar disc.[322] It might be possible that the author of this inscription saw Ṣalm as a personal deity who may have been accepted by other writers of the Safaitic inscriptions but perhaps not widely understood, hence why he added the *ʾlh dmt* in order to explain who he was. The term *dmt* might have referenced a personal name or perhaps a toponym, for instance *ṣlm* god of *dmt*.

yt̠ʿ ʾlh ḥmgt – The reading of this particular epithet is unclear. The deity *yt̠ʿ* is common in the Safaitic religious inscriptions but the term *ḥmgt* is subject to interpretation. It is possible that *ḥmgt* represented a currently unknown toponym. Likewise *ḥmgt* might also represent a tribe, however there is currently no evidence of a tribe of that name. The name *ḥmgt* does feature as a personal name in a few situations however.[323] It should also be noted that this inscription is written in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed text format.

It is interesting that in the epithets that feature in the Safaitic inscriptions there is no epithet for the goddess *lt* given that she is the most commonly invoked deity. It seems unusual that there would be none for *lt*, but many for *ʾlt*. It is also interesting that with the exception of *ṣlm ʾlh dmt*, every inscription featuring an epithet is located within 50km of each other in southern Syria. Even *ṣlm ʾlh dmt*, which is located in northern Jordan, is quite close to the border of Syria. It is important to note however, that many of these epithets are still highly subjective, for instance, many of the supposed toponyms are still as yet unknown.

Sacrifice

This section deals with evidence of sacrifice and offerings present in the Safaitic inscriptions, focusing on physical or blood sacrifices only. A discussion on whether images of camels drawn by authors constitutes an act of sacrifice is discussed further in Chapter Four. This section will attempt to determine to what extent sacrifice was practiced by the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions and whether there exists any geographical significance in the references to sacrifice.

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[321] Knauf 1985, p. 78-80
[322] Hausleiter 2010, p. 233
[323] ISB 147; KRS 816; WH 1991

Sacrificial terminology

The word for sacrifice is represented in the Safaitic inscriptions as _ḏbḥ_, which is related to the Arabic root (ﺫﺑﺢ or _ḏabaḥa_, meaning to slaughter. The word _ḏbḥ_ also features in Ugaritic terminology.[324] The verb _ḏbḥ_ features in 32 Safaitic inscriptions although it is interesting to note that in nine of these inscriptions no deity is mentioned. Other terms that feature in the inscriptions and suggest a form of sacrifice include: the term _qṣyn_ which has been translated by Ryckmans as "dedicate" and features in two inscriptions,[325] and _nsᴵk_ which Ryckmans translates as "offering".[326]

In inscriptions that feature the verb _ḏbḥ_ only four specify that the sacrifice offered is meant for the deity mentioned. These inscriptions feature the prefix _l-_ before the _ḏbḥ_ (e.g. _l-ḏbḥ_). Of these inscriptions, three mention sacrifices to the deity _bᶜlsᴵmn_. Two of these inscriptions come from the same area although they appear to have been written by different, non-related individuals.[327] The only other inscription of this type is one that refers to the deity _rḍy_.[328] Of the 20 inscriptions that feature the verb _ḏbḥ_ and also feature the name of deity, only two include the names of more than one deity. This may suggest that even though the author has not specifically stated that the sacrifice was in honour of the deity mentioned it might be implied.

Including those inscriptions featuring more than one deity, the deity most likely to be mentioned in any particular sacrifice was the chief deity _lt_ who is mentioned in six separate inscriptions. The second most common deities mentioned were _gd ᶜwḏ_, _bᶜlsᴵmn_ and _ytᶜ_ who feature four times. Of the references to _gd ᶜwḏ_, three are in roughly the same vicinity, as are two of those dedicated to _bᶜlsᴵmn_. This may suggest that those particular places were significant areas of worship for those particular deities. Yet it also possible that those inscriptions feature joint sacrifices by two unrelated travel companions who both happened to perform a sacrifice to that particular deity and inscribe a text in an area well-documented by 19th and 20th century epigraphers.

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[324] Cooley 2011, p. 282
[325] C1658 – …these camels are dedicated to Allat and Ruda… – _h/ gmln qṣyn l- ᵓlt w l- rḍw_; JaS 145.1 – and dedicate – _w qṣyn_ (very uncertain translation).
[326] C1585 – O _ytᶜ_ help and accept this offering in favour of _ḏwd_ son of _yqnᵓl_ – _h ytᶜ sᴵᶜd h/ nsᴵk ᵓl- ḏwd bn yqnᵓl_; See also Ryckmans 1950–1951, p. 431–433
[327] C4358, 4360, 4409
[328] MA 1

The other most frequently mentioned deity is *yṯ'* who features in four inscriptions, three of those under the lesser used name *'ṯ'*. Of those three inscriptions that feature the spelling *'ṯ'*, the provenance of all is the same, and they seem to have been written by two brothers and their father. In that same region there is another reference to *ḏbḥ* written by another brother that does not mention a deity, but it can be presumed that the intended deity was also *yṯ'*. Following *yṯ'*, the deity *s²'hqm* is mentioned in three inscriptions featuring the verb *ḏbḥ*, two of which are on the same cairn and were written by two individuals whose relationship to each other is unclear. Two other inscriptions featuring a sacrifice also appear very close to those mentioning *s²'hqm*, again made by individuals that may potentially have been related to the authors of the *s²'hqm* texts.[329] It is possible that these inscriptions also refer to the sacrifice performed to *s²'hqm* but neglect to mention the deity. All three of the inscriptions mentioning *s²'hqm* come from the north-eastern Jordanian badia. Finally, there also exist inscriptions featuring *ḏbḥ* that mention the deities' *ds²r* and *dṯn* (in the single inscription) and *rḍy*, each mentioned only once.

Finally, we have CIS 1658 which reads …*h- gmln qṣyn l- 'lt w l- rḍw f h yṯ' 'wr m 'wr h- ḫṭṭ* or "the two camels which are dedicated to *'lt* and *rḍw*. O *yṯ'* blind the obliterator of the inscription". While this inscription does not specifically refer to sacrifice it can be inferred through context. It is interesting that the author of this inscription specifically references *'lt* and to *rḍw* as the receivers of this camel sacrifice but excludes to *yṯ'* who is asked to enact a curse but is not a direct beneficiary of the sacrifice. Perhaps this suggests that to the author of this inscription *yṯ'* was considered a deity of lesser importance.

Given that many of the inscriptions that feature references to sacrifice tend to mention the same deity and appear in the same area it seems possible that the sacrifices performed by the Safaitic Arabians were done so in connection with other individuals and that this was not a solitary event. For this reason I would not place too much importance on the number of times an individual deity is mentioned as numerous inscriptions may merely be representative of a single, group sacrifice to that particular deity rather than multiple sacrifices by individuals. However, this does suggest that the practice of sacrifice was regarded as a social or familial ritual act. Many of the inscriptions that are found in the same vicinity are written by members that seem to have been related to each other. This would suggest some form of social function

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[329] See KRS 532, 535, 537, 540

which likely involved the distribution of the sacrificed meat after the ceremony had been performed.

The authors of these inscriptions did not often elaborate on the method of sacrifice that they enacted. We therefore have little information on details such as where the sacrifice was performed, what it entailed or what exactly was sacrificed. This a trend which seems to be a common theme in the ANA texts, for example with Dedanite texts. [330] One inscription written in Safaitic, however, features more detail than the rest. KRS 824 states that the author "[was present on] the high ground [and] he sacrificed camels" (*h- ṣmd [w] ḏbḥ gml*). Since high places for sacrifice were a common theme in performing sacrificial acts in Ancient North Arabia, this suggests that that importance carried over to the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions.

The practice of animal sacrifice is known in Islam under the Arabic term *ḏabiḥa* (ذَبِّحَة) and is only offered in Eid l-Adha. The meat is divided into three parts and is distributed between the person who performs the sacrifice, his relatives and the poor. Palmyrene sacrifice involved animal sacrifice to a deity and it is likely that the Safaitic versions followed these practices. Sacrifice was also an essential component of neighbouring Nabataean religious beliefs. These sacrifices usually occurred in high-places[331] with an altar and a basin with a drain for sacrificial blood or libations. The significance of sacrifice occurring in a high-place is shared with a number of religious practices contemporaneous to the Safaitic Arabians and the Nabataeans. Early references to high-places and altars can be seen in biblical references such as Numbers 21:28, 1 Chronicles 16:39 and 1 Kings 3:2–4.[332] It is likely that Safaitic sacrifice would have followed this system. Most sacrifice in this period would have involved a distribution of the meat afterwards.[333] This was likely the case for the authors of CIS 4358, 4360 and 4409 in their sacrifices to *bʿls¹mn* and the sacrifices made to *s² ʿhqm* in KRS 756 and 757. It is probable that the sacrifice of the animals were made as part of a group and the meat was shared between the individuals who wrote the inscriptions, as well as possibly more people included in their party yet not recorded in the inscription.

Thus we can see that sacrifice in the Safaitic religious tradition was likely similar to sacrifice in greater Near Eastern society at this time, both in terms of physical practice in the

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[330] Alpass 2013, p. 130
[331] Starcky 1966, col. 1005; Healey 2001, p. 48
[332] Barick 1974, pp. 257–259
[333] Kaizer 2008, p. 184

slaughter of the animal but also in the shared cultural aspects of consuming the meat post-sacrifice.

Burial and the afterlife

It has been postulated in the past that Safaitic cairns were in fact burial grounds.[334] This is an argument that has been fiercely disputed by other scholars,[335] despite the excavation of many cairns proving that some did indeed house human remains.[336] However, given the brevity of the Safaitic texts it remains unclear from the inscriptions what was the exact nature of the burial methods of the writers. In terms of records of practices all the information we have concerning graves and burials are the brief references made in some of the inscriptions.

So what do we know in terms of burial practices as recorded in the inscriptions? In a series of inscriptions published in *Fifty Safaitic Cairns*,[337] the authors translate *ʾtm* as *maʾtam* meaning "obsequies, funeral ceremony". This translation suggests that burials were not a matter of the straightforward internment of the deceased, but rather that some measure of ritual accompanied the burial. This is not to say that there may or may not have been any religious aspect to these burials, merely that a ceremony of some sort was performed and recorded. Likewise, an inscription from that same collection[338] states that the author "set up gravestones" (*bny ʾfs¹*). This implies that marking graves was a practice among some of the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions. Finally, C 2156 references a burial ceremony, stating that "members of the *yẓr* performed the burial" (*-h qbrn ḏ wʾl yẓr f ngʿ*). While this too is a brief and undetailed reference it does however suggest that some sort of funeral ceremony or ritual took place.

In contrast to the dearth of information on actual ritual and burial practices many Safaitic inscriptions exist that seek to remember the person who has passed. Unlike the Ḥismāic where the verb *ḏkr*, meaning "remember", was the most common term used when remembering someone who had (presumably) passed, the Safaitic inscriptions more commonly express sorrow or grief but rarely *ḏkr*. The Ḥismāic texts suggest that the authors wanted to ensure that for whatever reason, the deity would not forget their loved ones. This does not seem to be the case in the Safaitic. Instead, they seem to be regular prayers attached to a statement of grief at

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[334] Van den Branden 1969, pp. 733–744
[335] Jamme 1979, pp. 478–528; Jamme 1970a, pp. 323–324
[336] HCH; Harding 1978, pp. 242–249
[337] WH 374, 375, 377, 496
[338] WH 1191

the loss of a loved one. Interestingly, the most common requests in these prayers are for security (*s¹lm*), benevolence (*qbll*) and revenge (*t̲'r*).

While many of the inscriptions accompany actual graves, such as those from the Cairn of Hani, others do not. Perhaps these are merely been reflections on lost loved ones made by the author of the inscription during their travels. Indeed, the content of the inscriptions does not indicate whether graves, burials or even the afterlife have any particular religious importance to the Safaitic Arab writers. Unlike the Ḥismāic texts where many prayers and invocations are made of deities to remember (*d̲kr*) loved ones that had passed, these instances are comparatively rare in the Safaitic texts. In cases where there are known burials, such as the Cairn of Hani, there exist only slightly more invocations to deities than in the greater Safaitic corpus. The Cairn of Hani features 200 inscriptions (173 that specifically name Hani), only 19 of which display religious elements. In those prayers none petition the deity for the remembrance of the deceased.

The second most common term used in connection with death in the Safaitic inscriptions is *nq't*. As previously mentioned in this chapter, this term might be translated as "ejection", which in terms of death and burial presumably means from a tomb. Are the authors requesting that the deity invoked eject the obliterator of an inscription from the tomb? If this is an appropriate translation, then it would assume that there existed some religious element to death among the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. However, we do have to be careful in attributing things to different societies and cultures. It may also simply be that the idea of a deceased body being ejected from a tomb was not an attractive concept. Nevertheless, since the nature of curses in the Safaitic inscriptions usually involves something particularly horrible, such as blindness (*'wr*), the intention of the author when they request *nq't* must surely mean something more negative than a deceased body being exposed to elements.

Miscellaneous religious/ritual elements

There are a number of other potentially religious elements alluded to in the Safaitic inscriptions. Many of these are references to activities that the authors themselves undertook, and, whether they hold any religious significance or not, it is still important to analyse the content of the inscriptions. The activities discussed below will be assessed in their original context in the Safaitic inscriptions as well as by cross-referencing those terms and activities with nearby contemporary societies and early Islamic references.

Temples

In the Safaitic religious inscriptions there exist a number of references to temples which the authors of the texts frequented. We know that people carrying held images or idols of the gods visited temples through the rite of pilgrimage. The most widely recognised pre-Islamic temple in Arabia is naturally the Kaaba at Mecca which was at some point dedicated to the Nabataean deity Hubal and contained the images or idols of 360 pre-Islamic deities. Pilgrimages to the Kaaba were common in Antiquity. However, as there have as yet been no extant Safaitic inscriptions found that far south it is unknown whether the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions would have participated in these particular pilgrimages.

A prominent pre-Islamic temple that more than likely saw a bevy of Safaitic inscription authors pass through its columns was the sanctuary of *b'ls¹mn* at Sīʿ. The temple at Sīʿ is located near Qanawat just outside the modern-day city of as-Suwayda in the Jebel al Arab region of southern Syria. Sīʿ first came to prominence historically as a Semitic 'high place' attracting worshippers from surrounding areas. The area then came under Nabataean influence where worship of the local cult of the deity *b'ls¹mn* was further supported.[339] The main temple at Sīʿ was built at the end of the 1ˢᵗ century BC and was dedicated to the deity *b'ls¹mn*. An early published reading of LP 350 (CIS 3262) was thought to refer to the temple at Sīʿ but Macdonald has argued that this was a misreading of the original text and that the supposed reference to Sīʿ was actually about *b'ls¹mn* withholding rain.[340]

Nevertheless, the connection between the deity *b'ls¹mn* and Sīʿ can be found in a number of other Safaitic texts. The prime example is CSNS 424, "…and he rebelled against the people of Rome, so O *b'ls¹mn*, god of Sīʿ, grant security" (*fmrd ʿl- ʾl rm fh b'ls¹mn ʾlh s¹ʿʿs¹lm*). M 358 features a prayer to the deity *b'ls¹mn* ending the prayer with the statement "…the year (*wk'k*) withdrew from Sīʿ" (*s¹nt brḥ w{k}ʾk m- s¹ʿʿ*). While not explicitly connecting the deity with the temple at Sīʿ the intention of the author may be to imply some sort of connection. Furthermore, M 198 states that the author "…waited for the rains but it did not come the year the images/idols left Sīʿ…"[341] (*…w tẓr h- s¹my w ṣlf h- {m}l s¹nt brḥ h- ʾṣlm s¹ʿʿ…*). Again, although this reference does not specifically mention *b'ls¹mn*, the reference to the idols leaving Sīʿ may be related to CIS 3261 "the year in which they kept *b'ls¹mn*" (*l- s¹nt*

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[339] Burns 2009, p. 285
[340] Macdonald 1993, p. 366 n. 414
[341] This translation comes from Macdonald 2003, pp. 278–280

ḫ[g]z -h bʿls¹mn). Macdonald has suggested an alternate reading for this inscription as "the year of the withholding of *bʿls¹mn*" (*s¹nt ḫgz{t} bʿls¹mn*).[342] Regardless of the role of *bʿls¹mn* at Sīʿ it is obvious that the centre held cultic and sacral importance to the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions.

Finally, there exists an inscription that Ryckmans believes refers to the author attending on numerous deities and making requests. CIS 4045 has been translated as "attending the deity *s²ʿhqm*, and the deity *ytʿ* and *bʿls¹mn* on Wailatum for a leave of absence for this year, and safeguarding from the evil one" (*nẓr ʾl- s²ʿhqm (w) ʾl- ʾtʿ w (b)ʿl ʾl- w(ʾ)lt f (g)yrt b- s¹nt (w) wqyt m- bʾs¹ ----*). Should this translation be correct, and I am not convinced it is, then it would further support the existence that at least some of the authors utilised and worshipped deities at regional cultic centres, such as Sīʿ.

Idols/Effigies

As mentioned previously, 360 idols or images of pre-Islamic deities were present at one time in the Kaaba in Mecca.[343] The use of idols was a common religious practice throughout the ancient Near East and pre-Islamic Arabia. In the Safaitic inscriptions there are a number of examples that suggest that the writers of these texts worshipped idols. In M 198 the author dates his inscription by stating that "…he waited for the rains but [it?] did not come the year the images/idols left Sīʿ…" (*tẓr h- s¹my w ṣlf h- {m}l s¹nt brḥ h- ʾṣlm s¹ʿʿ*).[344] As mentioned previously, Sīʿ was a significant temple for the nomadic populations of Ancient North Arabia where there was a temple to *bʿls¹mn*. That the idols or images had left Sīʿ suggests that idols need not stay in the one temple and could have perhaps have been "loaned" to other temples or used in religious ceremonies outside the area of the temples from which they originated, or perhaps even relocated due to war or rebuilding efforts.

Ryckmans in CIS 3261 translates *l- s¹nt ḫ[g]z -h bʿls¹mn* as "the year in which they kept *bʿls¹mn*". This, while not necessarily related, may be an indication of the potential practice alluded to in M 198 where images or idols may have been borrowed or moved. However,

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[342] MRSS p. 278 and n.8
[343] Reynolds 2012, p. 105
[344] This translation is suggested by Macdonald 2003, p. 31

Macdonald has suggested an alternate translation and reading as *s¹nt ḫgz{t} bʿlsᵃmn*, as "the year of the withholding of *bʿlsᵃmn*" or the year *bʿlsᵃmn* withheld rain.[345]

In terms of references to effigies, King translates KRS 30, an inscription from Wadi Salma, *h- dmy w ḫrṣ f h ṣlm ʾlh dmt* as "this effigy is by… O ṣlm, god of effigies..." This inscription might be interpreted as referring to an image or idol, and thus it is unusual that the deity *ṣlm* is invoked. The term *dmy/dmt* might also be translated as drawing or image rather than effigy. It is important to note however, that there were no images present on or around the rock where this inscription was recorded.

What these inscriptions indicate is that there did exist in the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians a form of idol worship and the possible existence of religious effigies. However, in drawing any further conclusions it is important to keep in mind that these references are very scant in number. The concept of pre-Islamic idols and effigies is also closely related to a number of derivatives from the root *nṣb* "to erect (a stone)" or "set up a sign."

Signs – "and he set up a sign"

Littmann has translated a section from LP 237 (*w nṣb h lt s¹lm*) as "and he set up a sign for *lt*, O *lt* [give] peace". However, even if *nṣb* is to be read as "set up a sign", the deity's name appears only once, so the translation should more accurately read "and he set up a sign. O *lt* security". The significance here being that if the author had "set up a sign" there is no guarantee that it was intended for *lt*. While there is some argument for the idea that it may be implied that the author has set up the sign for the deity, it is not guaranteed and the author has not specified.

The term *nṣb* is translated by Littmann as "set up a sign", which is related to the Arabic *nuṣb* meaning to "set up". Littmann argues that the stone, or sign, served as an altar.[346] Should this translation be as Littmann suggests, and this was a sign set up for *lt*, it would indicate that symbols of devotion to a deity, or possibly idols, need not only be housed in temples but could be created by average people. However, I am not convinced by Littmann's initial translation. Firstly, there is no evidence that the *nṣb* refers to *lt*. Instead, this may merely be a composite inscription where the author states a narrative that he "set up a sign" and then finishes his inscription with a prayer to the deity *lt*. Other examples of the use of the root *nṣb* in a religious

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[345] MRSS p. 278 and n.8
[346] LP commentary on 237, p. 56

inscription can be seen in KRS 929:1 …*w ns -h ds²r s'lm* which translates as "… and he erected a stone, O *ds²r*."[347]

In addition, LP 236, the inscription that immediately precedes this current inscription in the collection which is presumably found quite close to LP 237, states *w wgm ʿl- g̱t qtl f yq(h)r* which Littmann translates as "and he laid a stone on the tomb of Ghauth who was killed". If the term *nṣb* refers to setting up a stone as Littmann argues for LP 237, then perhaps the author of the inscription was similarly setting up a stone as a memorial for a deceased person. However, MISSD 1 also features a reference to the term *nṣb*. The author of the inscription claims *w nṣb ʾt̲ʿ s¹nt ʾmd qyṣr h- mdnt* which has been translated as "and he erected a sacred stone to ʾt̲ʿ the year Caesar sent reinforcements to the town". The translators have, in this instance, translated the term *nṣb* as "sacred stone" which they suggest may have meant an altar.[348] Teixidor has argued that "sacred stones" originally began as sacrificial altars but later came to represent the deities themselves,[349] most notably the Black Stone at the Kaaba in Mecca. What these inscriptions suggest is that the *nṣb*, if it refers to setting up a stone, might represent some form of ritual element to the Safaitic Arabians. Whether this was in regard to burial or in reverence to a deity is however, as yet unclear.

Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage by the Arabians to communal sacred sites would have consisted of numerous economic and social activities that would have greatly benefited nomadic tribes and would have helped them form a sense of common identity.[350] The concept of pilgrimage is alluded to in WH 3053 where the author states *rḥḍ b h- ngm l- yḥg* or "…he washed (his clothes) [and] sexual intercourse he curbed in order to go on pilgrimage". In the commentary on this inscription Winnett and Harding state that this is evidence some of the later Islamic regulations regarding pilgrimage were being followed prior to its legislation in the Qurʾān.[351] In Islam, sexual intercourse is not allowed while individuals are on pilgrimage and also while they are in the sanctuary in Ahram at Mecca.[352] Likewise, cleanliness in terms of oneself and one's clothes, indicating purity or *taharah* (طهارة), is found in Islam as well as Ancient Israel and

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[347] KRS 929:1, see also KRS 3073 for another usage of the root *nṣb*
[348] Macdonald, al-Muʾazzin, and Nehmé 1996, p. 456
[349] Teixidor 1977, p. 86
[350] McCorriston 2011, p. 43
[351] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 437
[352] Wheeler 2004, p. 111

modern Judaism. It is essential in Islam before offering prayers and by extension when on pilgrimage. Similar South Arabian inscriptions have been found demonstrating that ritual purity was also practiced in Ancient Yemen.[353] In his commentary on WH 3053, Al-Jallad has offered an alternative translation which reads "and he washed while the sun was in Virgo in order to perform a pilgrimage".[354] While his translation does not address restraining from sexual intercourse, it does refer to what we may assume was considered ritual washing prior to pilgrimage.

Another potential reference to a pilgrimage in the Safaitic inscriptions can be seen in KnNGQ 4, *w ṣyr b- ḥg* which Knauf translates as "when he travelled on a pilgrimage". Littmann earlier argued that the noun *ḥg* could be translated as "festival".[355] In his commentary on the inscription Knauf emphasises that the existence of this inscription on Jebel Qurma does not mean the mountain itself was considered sacred, rather that it was a resting point on a major caravan route.[356]

A number of unpublished inscriptions also make reference to pilgrimage. For example, on unpublished inscription, BREnv.A.I states *bṭl ḥg s¹ʿʿ* or "the pilgrimage to with Sīʿ was rendered void". While another found at Jebel Qurma states *ḥg bt h-ʾlt* translated either as "he made a pilgrimage to the temple of the goddess"[357] or alternatively "he made a pilgrimage to the temple of *ʾlt*". Macdonald has suggested that in stating that the pilgrimage was rendered void BREnv.A.I may have referred to the deity *bʿls¹lmn* not providing enough rainfall that year.[358] Since *bʿls¹lmn* appears to have been associated with weather occurrences, both in the Safaitic inscriptions and in neighbouring religious practices, this would seem to make sense.[359]

In light of BREnv.A.I, it seems that the temple to *bʿls¹lmn* at Sīʿ would have likely been a common place to which the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions went on pilgrimage. It has also been suggested that since the only Safaitic graffiti found in Palmyra on the temple of Allat it may have also functioned as a pilgrimage destination for nomads.[360] What the inscriptions featured above does show us is that pilgrimage was indeed an aspect of religious life for the

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[353] Ryckmans 1975, pp. 454–457
[354] Al-Jallad 2014, p. 223
[355] Littmann 1943, p. 314
[356] Knauf 1991, p. 96
[357] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 322
[358] Macdonald 2003, p. 278
[359] Munt 2015, p. 25
[360] Dirven 1999, p. 81

writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. However, given the brevity of the texts we do not know whether pilgrimages were an expectation of the writers of the inscriptions, nor what place pilgrimages held in their religious beliefs. We can only ascertain that there is evidence that they occurred.

Sin

The concept of sin features occasionally in the Safaitic inscriptions and indicates that there was a clear relationship between individuals and their deities that was predicated on established rules. A sin is a transgression of moral or religious law or custom and therefore the appearance references to sin in inscriptions is suggestive of an understanding of the concept. Inscriptions that feature references to sin also occur in the Minean and Lihyanite texts.[361] An example of this is KnNGQ 5, *w ḥwb ʾl- rḍw*, which Knauf translates as "and he sinned against *rḍw*" which Knauf considered either a confession or a boast.[362] This inscription demonstrates not only that a concept of morality existed but that it was dictated by the deities themselves. Perhaps this inscription even stands as an example of a form of confession. In another example the inscription CSNS 918 reads *h ḥwb ʾl- rḍw* which Clark translates as "this misfortune of the god *rḍw*". Knauf, however, suggests a revised translation of "the habitual sinner against *rḍw*".[363] If Knauf's translation is correct then this would further support the concept of sin and judgement delivered by the gods. However, it is also possible that *ḥwb* in both of these inscriptions does not refer to the act of sinning at all and may merely be a reflection of grief. It is also important to note that sin may not have been considered a matter of morality, but rather cultic sin or fault. It is important to ensure that current Judeo-Christian-Islamic influences do not impact our interpretation of the existence of sin in these inscriptions. Whereas the adherents of organised relions during this period took their faith as a truth that applied to all the world,[364] this would not have been the case with the religious beliefs expressed by the Safaitic Arabians.

Finally, Winnett and Harding translate WH 1550, *l ms²br bh (w)hnn mkybr,* as "By *ms²br*. He remembered (and) wept because of great sins". However, Macdonald finds this translation very uncertain and in his *Safaitic Database* suggests an altered reading, *l ms²br b[n] hʿ(ḏ) (b)n mkbyr* or "By *ms²br* son of *hʿ(ḏ)* son of *mkbyr*". This would suggest that *mkbyr*,

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[361] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 31
[362] Knauf 1991, p. 96–97
[363] KnNGQ p. 97
[364] Berkey 2003, p. 7

which Winnett and Harding read as coming from the Arabic *kabāʾr,* is in fact a personal name. I am inclined to agree with Macdonald as I find the alternative translation of *mkbyr* unconvincing. Given that these three potential examples of sin are the only ones we know of currently in the Safaitic inscriptions it would be unwise to assume that the concept of sin was an integral part of the Safaitic Arabians religious beliefs.

Greetings in the name of a deity

A possible example of a Safaitic greeting can be seen in LP 1267, *w ḥy f h ʾlt l- kʿmh ʾḫ -h t,* which Littmann translates as "and he greeted in the name of *ʾlt* his brother *kʿmh*". If this is indeed and accurate translation it would indicate a particular form of greeting. This style of address involves greeting an individual in the name of a deity. It is reminiscent of the formal Islamic greeting, *wa `alaykumu s-salāmu wa rahmatu l-lāhi wa barakātuh,* or "may peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you". It may be that LP 1267 demonstrates the form of greeting when welcoming known individuals, such as a brother. Invoking the name of a deity in order to seek a blessing for the person being greeted is suggestive of a fairly close relationship. On the other hand, there is an argument to be made that such a greeting given to a stranger may in fact be an act of recognition. For example, reference to the deity may be a way of demonstrating a shared religious faith between the two individuals.

Circumcision

A possible reference to circumcision can be seen in WH 1423. The phrase *s²mq w ʿḏr*, has been translated by Winnett and Harding as "he has been circumcised" with *ʿḏr*, they argue, sharing a root with the Classical Arabic *adara*, to circumcise.[365] Although King suggests that this inscription may possibly be read as *ʿḏb* rather than *ʿḏr*. If this were the case then the inscription would seem to be an incomplete inscription written by multiple authors, for example, translated as "[By] *s²mq* and *ʿḏb*". The trend of multiple authorship is a common practice in Thamudic scripts but is very rare in Safaitic. Should the translation offered by Winnett and Harding be correct, however, this could potentially indicate that the practice of circumcision existed to some extent in Ancient North Arabia. Josephus references circumcision in *Antiquities* where he says that "for the Arabian, they circumcise after the thirteenth year".[366] Perhaps this

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[365] Winnet and Harding 1957, p. 237
[366] Josephus, *Ant*. 12.2

inscription was written by a 13 year old boy shortly after he was circumcised and he left this text to mark the occasion.

Menstruation

In an inscription similar to WH 1423 mentioned above discussing circumcision we can observe another social element with potentially religious affiliations. WH 2814 contains text in which a female author refers to herself as a menstruating woman. WH 2814 reads *l ṯnyt bnt ḥr{m} ḥyḍt f h lt rwḥ w sˡlm* which Winnett and Harding translate as "By Taniyat the daughter of Haram, a menstruating woman. O *lt*, [grant] relief and health". They determine that the term *ḥyḍt* is related to the Arabic *ḥāʾiḍah*, meaning "menstruation". The significance of this inscription is that the author specifically refers to herself as a menstruating woman. In Islam there are a number of restrictions on the activities a woman can perform while menstruating because she is not *ṭaharat*, or ritually pure at that time. For example, she is not allowed to touch the writings of the Qurʾān, nor can she recite verses of the Qurʾān in which prostrating is necessary while menstruating. Other restrictions include entering or putting something in a mosque, praying, fasting and sexual intercourse. Likewise, the Book of Leviticus also enforces restrictions on menstruating Jewish women. They are considered unclean from the beginning of their menstruating period and for seven days after its completion. Since there are many rules concerning the conduct of women while menstruating in Islam as well as in biblical sources, it is possible that the woman who wrote this inscription stated her status as a menstruating woman because there was some religious significance attached to it.

In connection with the inscription above, WH 3053 mentions purity in terms of pilgrimage. These references suggest that ritual purity was an aspect of religious worship to the Safaitic Arabians. Given that ritual cleansing for menstruating women and for those about to embark on pilgrimage was a common aspect of religious life in surrounding cultures, it would be a reasonable assumption that the same methods were practised by the Safaitic Arabians.

Augury

The practice of augury was widely used in the ancient world as a method of determining whether a person or group of people had divine approval prior to undertaking an action. This was a form of divination that required a strict observation of the flight and/or behaviour of birds

prior to sacrifice. Augury was particularly common amongst the Romans[367] where a college of augurs were established. However the practice, while still used,[368] was less common in the ancient Near East.[369] A reference to the practice of augury can be seen in WH 3696:*l ʾn w ʿf* or "By 'Aun. He augured". Winnett and Harding note that the term *ʿf* is related to the Arabic *ʿāfa* meaning "to augur, draw omens from the flight of birds". The translation of this inscription would then assume that at least some of the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions believed in the power of divination and possibly used it to seek favour with the gods.

Sorcery

An interesting inscription that suggests that at least some of the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions believed in the concept of sorcery can be seen in WH 1757. This inscription states *w hrq ʾ nqm h ʿrf ngṣ* and is translated by Winnett and Harding as "the great magician tormented the diviner who failed". In their commentary on this inscription Winnett and Harding translate *rqʾ* as *raqqāʾ* or "great and skilful wizard" and *ʿrf* as *ʿarrāf*, or "diviner". This, they argue, points to two different classes of diviners. The concept of sorcery is similar to augury in that both WH 1757 and WH 3696 deal with a form of magic that exploits supernatural forces. Another reference to sorcery can be seen in WH 752 which reads *l s²rb bn ʾḥbb bn ns²wn hgrt b ʿwḏt rqwt* or "By s²rb son of ʾḥbb son of Ns²wn is senseless through a spell of sorcery".[370] Here Winnett and Harding have translated *rqwt* as *raqwah* or "enchantment, magic or sorcery". As Hoyland states, this inscription is uninformative of the nature of magic and tells us nothing of the manner of application,[371] merely that it existed. He draws on an example of magic having the power to render another speechless through a later Muslim narrative by Bukhari.[372] What these inscriptions indicate, both those on augury and those on the nature of sorcery, is that there is evidence in the Safaitic religious inscriptions that some of the authors believed in the power of sorcery or magic spells although the rituals, spells or incantations that would have been used to manifest this magic do not feature in the inscriptions.

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[367] For example see Cicero, On Divination. 1.41-2
[368] For example, Qurʾān, *Sura* 27.47
[369] For example Seleucid gods would give approval of cult statues via augury – Ewan 1981, pp. 58–69
[370] However, Macdonald considers this inscription to be two separate inscriptions – personal communication.
[371] Hoyland 2002, p. 151
[372] Bukhari 4.67, *ṭibb* 47

Summary

This chapter analysed the various academic approaches to the study of religion followed by an analysis of the structural and linguistic features that characterise the 'religious' inscriptions and a typography of types of 'religious' inscriptions by functions. A methodology was established that determined which aspects of archaeological religious theory and anthropological religious theories were most relevant in the current study. Following this an in-depth analysis of the major structural and formulaic features of the Safaitic religious inscriptions was offered, as well as other common religious elements that feature in the texts such as sacrifice and epithets. This chapter provides the framework for which the following chapters depend on. It is important to keep in mind that many of the terms that feature throughout this chapter can be translated in a myriad of ways, thus is must be emphasized that a lot remains uncertain both with the translations offered as well as the anaylsis of these texts.

Throughout this chapter a definition of religion was established which led to a differentiation between what constitutes a prayer in these inscriptions or a curse. In addition, a new way of categorising certain Safaitic texts was proposed in the section entitled Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts. This section detailed how texts written in this style share both a formulae and general content with the Thamudic B inscriptions, yet are written in a distinctly Safaitic script. The specific requests for deities that featured in these texts, such as help (*s¹ʿd*), were common in inscriptions of this style, but comparatively rare in the greater Safaitic corpus. Likewise, the hierarchy of deities mentioned in these inscriptions also differed greatly, including the occasional mention of deities that were rarely, if at all, seen in the conventional Safaitic religious inscriptions but that regularly featured in the earlier Thamudic texts. In addition, a geographical analysis of the spread of these inscriptions showed that they occupied much of the same areas that the conventional Safaitic texts did. Since the format of these inscriptions bore a remarkable similar formulae to that of the Thamudic B texts, which pre-date the Safaitic texts by centuries, it was suggested that these texts represented a change in pronunciation over time and may be evidence of the evolutionary nature of the ANA scripts. This theory was explored through the existence of the deities' *ʾlt* and *lt* and the deities' *rḍw* and *rḍy* with the suggestion that *ʾlt* and *rḍw* may have been an earlier version of the names of those divinities. This led to the suggestion that the Thamudic B/Safaitic texts were an evolution of the ANA script, written in a script similar if not occasionally identical to Safaitic, but featuring the formula, content and spelling of an earlier branch of Ancient North Arabian.

Later in this chapter, prayers in the Safaitic inscriptions were analysed and split into broad categories to help classify the most common elements in the religious inscriptions. What these analyses showed was that the primary requests made of deities in the Safaitic religious inscriptions were appeals to provide safety or protection for the individual and/or their tribes. These requests were reflective of a society highly influenced by warring and raiding whether direct or indirect.

Other major religious aspects analysed in this chapter involved the determination of curses, the existence of epithets and the practice of burials. The practice of sacrifice was also discussed and was shown to be a social or familial practice often performed by members who shared a similar genealogy. The chapter concluded with less common religious practices that also featured in the Safaitic inscriptions.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF THE DEITIES MENTIONED IN THE SAFAITIC INSCRIPTIONS

Introduction

This chapter introduces and analyses the deities that feature in the Safaitic inscriptions. However, it is first necessary to discuss theories relating to the origins of those deities so as to provide a background for their worship as displayed in the Safaitic inscriptions. The deities are introduced according to their prominence in the Safaitic inscriptions with those deities mentioned most frequently appearing first followed by the lesser mentioned ones. Following the section on individual deities there is a discussion on the regional importance of specific deities and an analysis of evidence of regional religious devotion. Part of this discussion requires distinction of the significance of the labels "social" and "antisocial" when applied to particular deities. The major Safaitic tribes and their significant relationships, if any, with certain deities follows. Finally, there is a brief discussion on the most common Safaitic theophoric names, and the chapter concludes with a summary of the overall discussion and analysis.

In the Safaitic religious inscriptions there is a definitive hierarchy among the primary deities mentioned in these inscriptions. The deity *lt* is clearly the chief deity in the Safaitic texts and is followed by *rḍw* and *rḍy*. They also have their own clearly defined roles and functions that they were expected to perform.

Given the brevity of many of the Safaitic inscriptions it is not possible to fully reconstruct a vowel system[373] and thus the vocalisation of many of the deities' names is not possible. Since the vocalisation of the names of deities is therefore generally almost entirely hypothetical the deities will be referred to using their names as they appear in the original Safaitic inscriptions. *lt* is generally vocalised as Allāt, *rḍw* as Ruḍa, *rḍy* as Raḍu, *bʿlsᵌlmn* as Baalshamin, *dsᵌr* as Dushara, *ʾlt* as Ilat, *ytʿ* as Yithā, *sᵌhqm* as Shai-ha-qwam, *gd ʿwḏ* as Gadd ʿAwidh, *lh* as Allah, and *gd ḏf* as Gadd Daif. A full list of deities found in the Safaitic

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[373] Lipiński 2001, p. 168

inscriptions and their relative number of occurrences can be seen in Appendix A: Table 3. The most frequently occurring deities can be seen in greater detail in Appendix A: Table 4.

Methodology of analysis

In terms of methodology I begin with discussion of the origins of the deities themselves. This provides background information relating to the previous geographical and spatial worship of particular deities and will assist in placing them in the correct context for the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions. This is followed by observation of the deity as they are perceived in the Safaitic inscriptions. This involves examining how many individual inscriptions the deity features in, how many times they feature in more than one inscription, and what, if any, different forms of the name appear in the inscriptions. Following this is an analysis of the different roles or functions the deity is asked to perform in the Safaitic prayers, then a discussion of whether these prayers suggest anything about the overall view of the deity in the inscriptions. Curses and the role of the deity in enacting those curses is a natural part of this analysis.

It is important to determine whether the deity can be considered a "social" deity or an "antisocial" deity. Many of the deities in the Safaitic inscriptions are rarely mentioned alongside other deities and thus they are labelled as antisocial. Deities that regularly feature in inscriptions amongst a number of other deities are termed social. In order to make this distinction we also need to consider whether the deity under discussion has a specific relationship with any other deity, and if so, what might this suggest.

Other significant areas of focus in this chapter are the tribal lineages mentioned in inscriptions in connection with particular deities and references to sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*) in inscriptions that feature a particular deity. These are analysed in order to determine if there is any significant relationship between sacrifice and individual deities. While sacrifice was dealt with in the previous chapter, this section looks more at the individual deity's role in sacrificial acts rather than the role of sacrifice in society. This section is most pertinent for deities such as *rḍw*, *ʾlt* and *yṯʿ*.

The section also contains descriptions of significant inscriptions that feature unusual or interesting aspects of individual deities. The purpose of this part of the work is to address all the possible characteristics that a deity may possess including those mentioned too infrequently

to be addressed in the main body of this thesis. For example, this is the section in which questions are raised regarding scholarly discussions on whether the same deity was known under multiple names in the Safaitic inscriptions, or whether there was any significance to the order in which deities are mentioned in the inscriptions. One important aspect of the discussion is also whether the deity features in the Safaitic/Thamudic B mixed texts. Finally, the topographical occurrences of the deity are addressed and their geographical significance is analysed.

In this analysis, unless otherwise stated, all figures and percentages relating to inscriptions that feature a deity only include those inscriptions where the deity is specifically stated as being asked to perform a particular function. In inscriptions that feature curses where multiple deities are mentioned the aspects of that curse are only attributed to a certain deity if the inscription specifically mentions that deity. For example, in AbaNS 266 both *lt* and *yt* ʿ are invoked, but the author of the inscription specifically asks *lt* to curse the obliterator of an inscription with *nqʾt*. Inscriptions such as KRS 1706 that invokes multiple deities, in this case *bʿls¹mn*, *ds²r*, *lt* and *s²ʿhqm*, and feature both a prayer and a curse but does not specify to which deity the author is referring, are excluded from the analysis. The reason for this distinction is to ensure accurate analysis of the roles of individual deities. It is only in inscriptions where the author has specified a certain to deity, whether in the form of prayers or curses, where we can be certain of a connection between that deity and the request. An analysis such as this might also be expected to consider the impact on the study of deities that are mentioned more often in inscriptions featuring multiple deities, such as *bʿls¹mn*. However, this chapter is intended to determine the specific specialities of the Safaitic deities and thus the distinction cited above is necessary. It must be noted however that because this method of analysis is likely to benefit deities frequently mentioned alone, such as *lt*, and has a potential to skew the statistics, in some cases the figures for both specified deities and non-specified deities in inscriptions featuring multiple divinities have been included.

lt

The origin of *lt*

lt, commonly vocalised as Lāt, was a regularly venerated deity in Ancient North Arabia and was herself a divinity of Arabian origin.[374] Evidence of Allāt worship in South Arabia is scant[375] with the exception of the Nağrān area,[376] but she had a very strong presence in North Arabia.

lt was worshipped widely by the Nabataeans as a chief goddess alongside other prominent female deities, Manāt and al-'Uzzā. It is in fact unclear if *lt* and al-'Uzzā were considered separate deities in the Nabataean tradition. Since both appear in inscriptions at 'Ayn esh-Shallaleh it has been argued that they were considered two separate deities each representing different phases of the planet Venus. Healey argues that the names of these deities varied in part due to differences in geographical worship, for example, *lt* is rarely mentioned at Petra, but seems to be the chief goddess in the northern Nabataean capital of Bosra. It is interesting to note that neither Manāt nor al-'Uzzā appear in the Safaitic inscriptions except when evidenced in theophoric names. It has also been suggested that the goddess *lt* may have been considered the mother of Dushara in the Nabataean religion.[377]

The deity *lt* was also worshipped widely both at Palmyra and by the Palmyrenes at Dura Europos. Despite being considered a relatively "new" deity worshipped by the Palmyrenes,[378] we do know that a number of shrines and temples existed venerating the goddess at Palmyra. One of these such temples was the sanctuary to Allāt-Athena, where her symbol was a lion protecting a gazelle. This temple was established in the 1st century BC.[379] Much of it was destroyed in 300 AD,[380] although the sanctuary continued to be used for almost another century. This is significant as it shows that Allāt worship continued despite Christianity becoming the officially accepted religion in the area.[381] Allāt worship was also prominent in the Arab city of Hatra where she was venerated alongside other deities identified with Shamash,

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[374] Drijvers 1978, pp. 331–351; Drijvers 1976, pp. 9–22; Höfner 1962, pp. 483-552
[375] Krone 1992, p. 111
[376] Retsö 2003, 604 n. 55
[377] Healey 2001, pp. 109–110; Wenning and Merklein 1997, p. 106
[378] Kaizer 2008, p. 6
[379] Gawlikowski 2009, p. 532
[380] Gassowska 1982, p. 121
[381] Terlikowski & Narloch 2013, p. 182

Atargatis and Sin.[382] Allāt worship came to prominence with the accession of the ruler Sanatruq I[383] around 140 AD. As she is at Palmyra, she is depicted as a lion in many of the reliefs from this region.[384]

It was common practice in the Arab world to assimilate Arab deities with gods and goddess of surrounding cultures "depending on which of his or her attributes was uppermost in the mind of the person making the equation".[385] Allāt was no different being associated with the Greek goddess Athena by the Nabataeans[386] such as those in Bosra,[387] and the Palmyrenes.[388] To a lesser extent she was also associated with the goddess Artemis[389] and Aphrodite, according to Herodotus.[390] She was in turn assimilated with other non-Greek deities such as the Syrian goddess Atargatis[391] and Ishtar.[392] Despite a similarity in the names her origin was not related to the Mespotamian deity Allatu-Ereskigal.[393] Instead her name was a contracted form of al-ilāt.

lt was a relatively common deity in the Thamudic inscriptions and was frequently invoked from Thamudic B inscriptions onwards where her name features as both *lt* and *ʾlt*. It is interesting to note that in the Thamudic inscriptions she is rarely invoked alongside another deity.[394] She also seems to feature in the oldest religious strata of Thamudic.[395] It is therefore likely that the transmission of the deity *lt* came through to the Safaitic Arabians from the "Thamudic" tribes.

lt in the Safaitic religious tradition

Many scholars have noted that *lt* is the most frequently invoked deity in the Safaitic tradition,[396] potentially fulfilling the role of chief deity.[397] She also been considered by some as a sun

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[382] Frye 1983, p. 280; Kaizer 2000, pp. 229-252
[383] Kaizer 2006, p. 149
[384] Ahmed 1972, p. 111
[385] Macdonald 2012, p. 264
[386] Figueras 1992, p. 174; Healey 2001, pp. 108–114
[387] Kindler 1983, pp. 57–58; Sourdel 1952, pp. 69–73
[388] Kindler 1983, p. 57; Teixidor 1980, pp. 277–287; Kaizer 2008, p. 6
[389] Gawlikowski 1983, p. 181
[390] Herodotus III, 8; Macdonald 2012, pp. 264–265 for an interesting discussion about this passage.
[391] Sourdel, 1952, 73; Teixidor 1979, p. 62
[392] Retsö 2003, p. 604
[393] Krone 1992, p. 23
[394] Krone 1992, pp. 91–92
[395] Krone 1992, p. 95
[396] Oxtoby 1968, p. 20
[397] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 30; Clark 1979, p. 126

goddess[398] perhaps associated with the sun symbols that appear relatively regularly in the Safaitic inscriptions.[399] This concept is dealt with further in the following chapter.

Worship of the goddess *lt* in the Safaitic religious inscriptions far outweighs references to any other deity. *lt* features in 1018 individual inscriptions, comprising roughly 48% of all inscriptions featuring a deity.[400] These figures only refer to the amount of individual inscriptions in which *lt* features, rather than the total of all invocations in all inscriptions, for example, in texts where she is featured more than once. The name *lt* features in a number of different forms in the Safaitic inscriptions. The most common form is the previously mentioned *lt* which accounts for 935 references to the goddess. Another form can be seen in the use of the name *ylt* which accounts for 54 invocations. An additional example of the name *lt* comes in the form *ʾlt*. This form accounts for 122 different invocations, 15 of which come in the form *yʾlt*. These figures are not included in the statistics noted for the deity *lt* and are thus in addition. Many scholars have argued that the deities *lt* and *ʾlt* should be considered separate deities rather than the same goddess but with alternate spelling. Given these objections, *lt* and *ʾlt* will be treated as distinct deities in the discussion below. Their differences and similarities will then be investigated later in this chapter in order to determine whether they should be considered the same deity.

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[398] Wellhausen 1897, pp. 29–54
[399] Littmann 1940, p. 105, 118–119
[400] See Table 3 in Appendix A for a visual representation of references to *lt* and other deities in the Safaitic inscriptions.
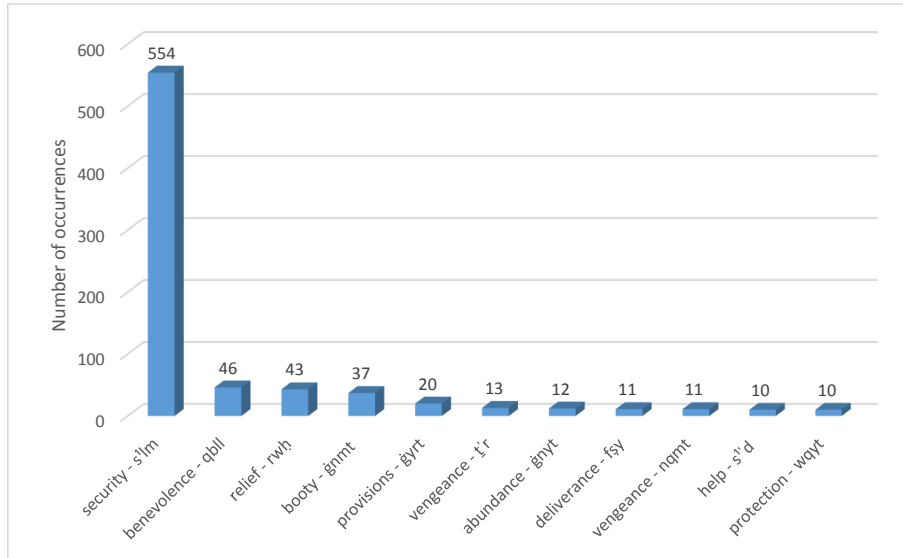
Fig. 3.1 – Most common requests made to the deity *lt*

Tables 8 and 9 in Appendix A contain a full list of requests made to the deity *lt* and record the number of times they feature. *lt* is expected to perform, by far, the most functions in Safaitic prayers. This is due in part to the sheer amount of times she is invoked in the Safaitic inscriptions. She is most commonly called up to respond to requests for security (*s¹lm*). This is a request that appears in 62.81% of prayers to her which indicates that this is by far her primary role in the Safaitic religious texts. Secondary functions include requests for benevolence (*qbll*) at 5.22%, relief (*rwḥ*) at 4.88% and booty (*ġnmt*) at 4.20%. As noted above, these figures have been calculated by taking into account only those circumstances in which *lt* is the only deity mentioned. Where an inscription features multiple deities, it has only been counted if the author has specified that the deity *lt* is requested to perform that particular function. For example, in the inscriptions there are 538 requests to *lt* to provide *s¹lm* in inscriptions where *lt* is the solitary deity, and 16 where *lt* is featured amongst other deities but the author has expressly singled her out to request *s¹lm*. Prayers where the author features multiple deities who are asked to perform multiple functions have necessarily been excluded from these calculations as we cannot be sure which request the author intended for which particular deity.
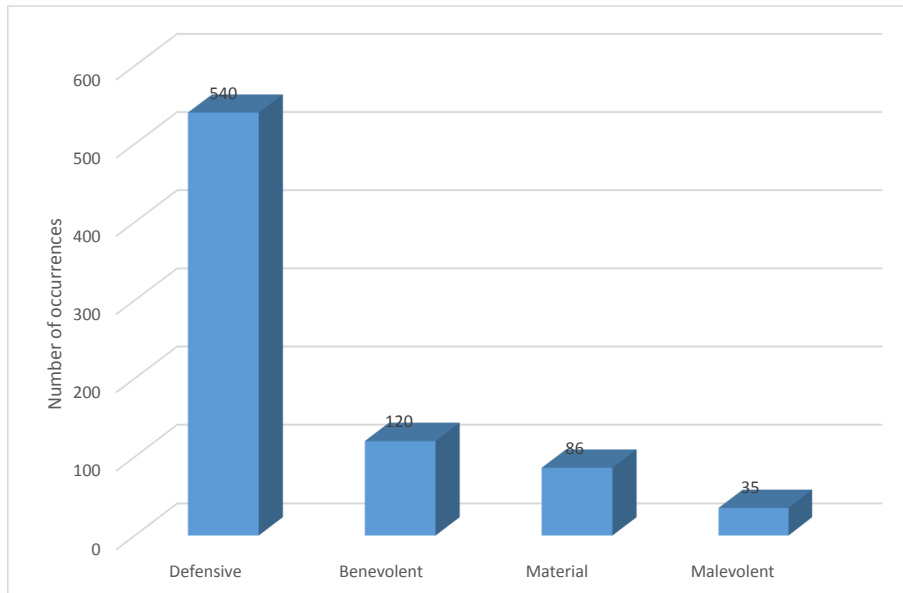
Fig. 3.2 – Types of prayers made to *lt*

Of all the requests made to the deity *lt*, approximately 69.1% of the prayers can be classified as defensive prayers. This is understandable when we consider that most of these are requests for *s¹lm*. This is followed by benevolent prayers at 15.4%, material prayers at 11% and malevolent prayers at 4.5%. Thus we can deduce that the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions considered *lt* to be mostly a defensive deity tasked with the duty of protecting the safety and overall well-being of the tribes. While these figures may eventually change with the discovery of additional texts and prayers, at this point in time we can conclude that *lt* was predominantly a goddess of protection either in terms of responding to entreaties for security or in enacting curses against those who threatened her people.

Of the blessings that can be seen in the Safaitic inscriptions, approximately 49.12% are mentioned in inscriptions where *lt* is the only deity mentioned, indicating that the author intended *lt* to fulfil their request. This figures rises to 66.67% when all references to *lt* are included. What this would suggest is that *lt* played an important role in the enactment of blessings in the Safaitic inscriptions, at a much higher percentage than other deities. In the blessings that she features in, she is most often requested to provide security (*s¹lm*) with 78.58% of cases or booty (*ġnmt*) which appears in 21.43% of cases. These requests are once again the

most common form of requests identified in the blessings in the Safaitic inscriptions. These figures change slightly (to 67.65% in the case of blessings featuring *s¹lm* and 26.47% in the case of booty (*ġnmt*)) if all references to *lt* in all references to blessings are included.

As a goddess who grants security as well as one who is referenced far more frequently in inscriptions than any other deity in the Safaitic pantheon, it is not surprising that *lt* appears to be the most commonly invoked deity in terms of curses generally. A list of deities and the amount of times they are invoked in a curse can be seen in Table 10 in Appendix A. The deity *lt* is specifically asked to provide assistance in the enactment of curses in 77.39% of cases. As previously mentioned, these figures only refer to inscriptions where the deity is mentioned as either the solitary god or goddess in an inscription or has been specifically requested by the author of the inscription to enact the curse. When we look at the number of times *lt* is mentioned in an inscription that also features a curse, regardless of the number of other deities also mentioned in that inscription, the figure drops to 60.29%. This is because *lt* is frequently mentioned alone in inscriptions at greater percentage than many other (though not all) deities. Of inscriptions where *lt* is the only deity mentioned or is specified by the author, approximately 27.37% of all prayers featuring the goddess also include curses. This figure rises slightly to 28.92% if all inscriptions and all curses featuring *lt* are included. Since 23.67% of all Safaitic religious inscriptions also feature curses, what these figures show is that the deity *lt* may have been considered more influential in the enactment of curses than the average deity in the Safaitic pantheon.
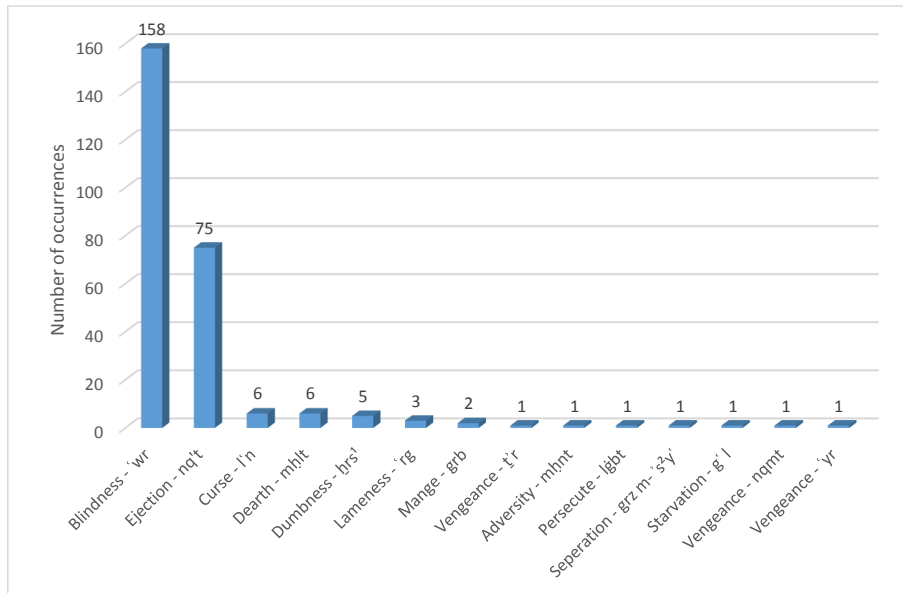
Fig. 3.3 – Requests for curses made to the deity *lt*

     In the Safaitic curses, the requests she was asked to provide or the punishments the authors wished her to enact were often very varied. The requests most commonly asked of *lt* in curses were to cause blindness (*ʿwr*) or ejection (*nqʾt*) to be inflicted on the obliterator of an inscription. Requests for *ʿwr* against an obliterator comprise 62.96% of all curses asked of *lt*, followed by requests for *nqʾt* at approximately 30.45%. These figures change slightly when all extant references to *lt* in the Safaitic curses are included, rising to 64.19% for requests of blindness (*ʿwr*), and decreasing slightly to 29.39% for examples of ejection (*nqʾt*).

	ds²r	b'¹lm	gd 'wḍ	s²'h qm	rḍy	'lt	yṯ'	gd ḏf	rḍ w	n'r	'ḥd	s² ms¹	lh	s² mt	s²'n 'r	'lh tm	gd nbṭ	'lh hġs¹	ṣr	dṯn	gd wh b'l
Series1	50	17	13	12	9	6	6	5	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Series2	16	15	14	16	2	1	1	4	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
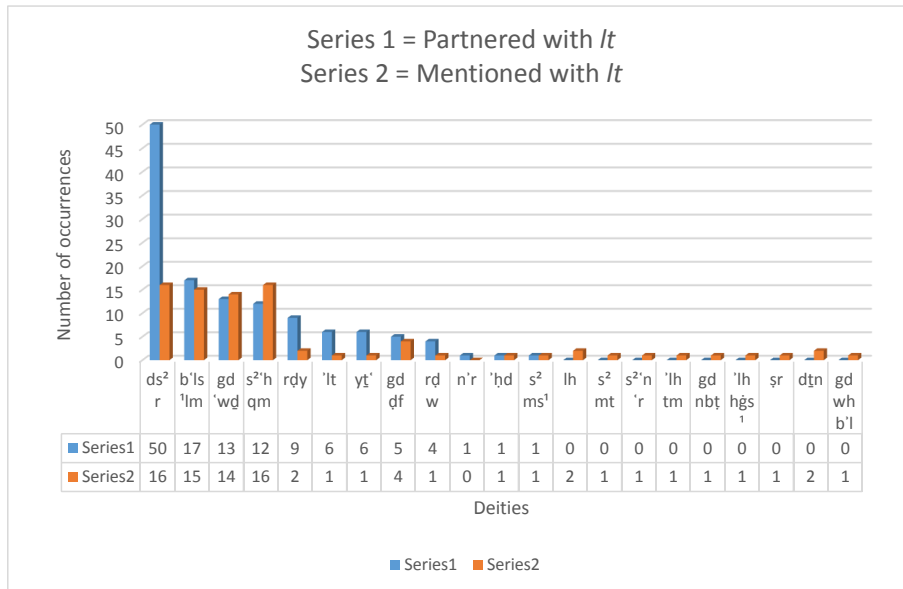
Fig. 3.4 – The deity *lt* partnered and mentioned with other deities

In terms of her relationship with other gods and goddesses *lt* cannot be considered a very "social" deity, though admittedly she appears far more social than the second most commonly invoked deity, *rḍw*. The deity *lt* features in prayers alone in approximately 84.02% of Safaitic religious inscriptions. She is mentioned alongside multiple deities (that is, more than two) in only 3.44% of inscriptions and is partnered with another deity in just 12.64% of cases. In inscriptions where she is partnered with another deity she is most often partnered with the male deity *ds²r*, almost three times as frequently as with any other deity. The relationship between *lt* and *ds²r* is dealt with at length in the section relating to *ds²r* below. Apart from *ds²r* there does not seem to be any other deity that has a particular affinity with *lt* in terms of specific partnerships cited in the Safaitic inscriptions.

It is interesting to note that when *lt* does in fact feature in an inscription with multiple other deities, if a deity is ever mentioned more than once, it is always *lt*.[401] Perhaps this indicates and attempt by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions to acknowledge that while they appreciate the specialisation and assistance of other deities, the main body of the prayer is directed towards *lt*. This deity is also mentioned more than once in the same prayer much more

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[401] See AbaNS 92; C 1936, 2795; CSA 1.2; Khunp 1; KRS 1422, 1857; NSR 55

frequently than any other deity. Many of these inscriptions feature both a prayer and a curse and the authors tend to reaffirm that the curse be enacted by *lt*, thus distinguishing the prayer aspect from the curse aspect.[402] In inscriptions featuring only one deity, there are seven other deities that are mentioned more than once in a single prayer.[403] However, there is only one example of each of these deities being mentioned more than once in an inscription. This is in stark contrast with the 21 examples of *lt* being mentioned more than once in an inscription where she is the solitary deity. The frequency of references to lt, both in terms of individual inscriptions and multiple references within the same inscription indicate that *lt* was considered distinctly more important than the majority of other deities.
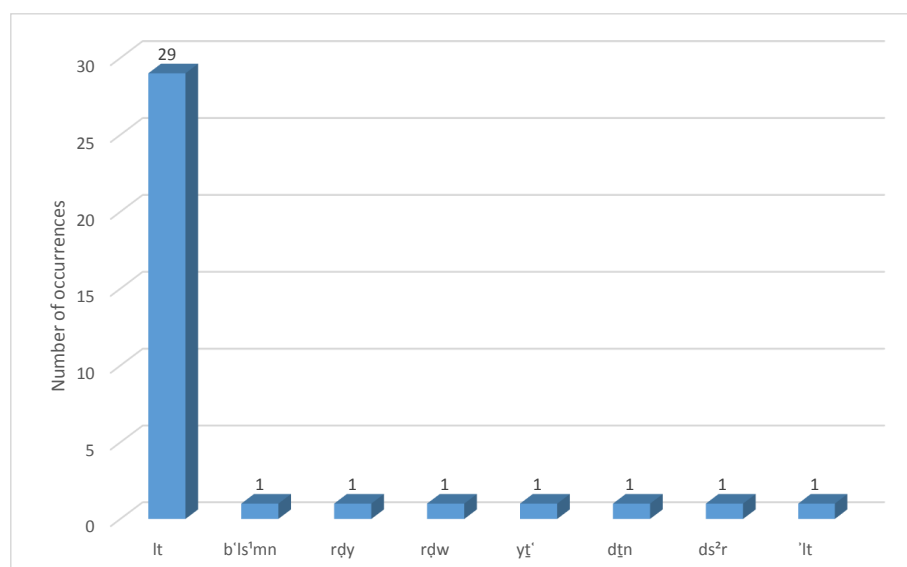
Fig. 3.5 – Deities mentioned more than once in a single prayer

In the inscriptions to the goddess *lt* a number of tribal lineages are also mentioned.[404] The most common tribal lineage mentioned in a prayer to *lt* is the tribe *dʾf* overlapping in 19 inscriptions. It is understandable that *dʾf* would be the most frequently mentioned tribe as it is the most common tribe mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions. This is followed by the tribes

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[402] C 1871, 1875, 2163, 2590; HaNSB 347; KRS 26, 1344, 1435, 1871, 2914; LP 233, 257; WH 367
[403] *bʾls¹mn* – C 4360; *ʾlt* – C 5108; *rḍy* – HaNSB 352; *rḍw* – KRS 102; *ytʿ* – KRS 794; *dṯn* – LP 1097; *ds²r* – Stehle 14
[404] For the most common tribal lineages mentioned with *lt* see Fig. 3.5 below. For a comprehensive list of al tribal lineages mentioned with *lt* see Table 11 in Appendix A.

ms¹kt, overlapping 11 times, and *ḫzy*, overlapping nine times. These equate to approximately one quarter of references to the tribe *ḫzy* in the entire Safaitic inscriptions and one third of inscriptions relating to the tribe *ms¹kt*.
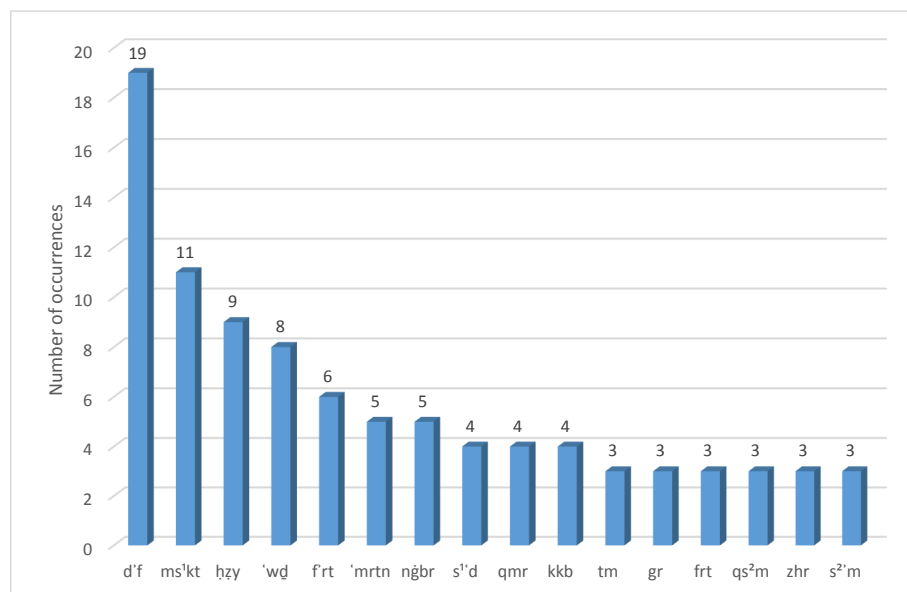
Fig. 3.6 – Most common tribal lineages mentioned with *lt*

In the Safaitic inscriptions there are six references to sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*) in inscriptions where *lt* is mentioned.[405] While this is the greatest amount of inscriptions relating to sacrifice that also feature the name of a deity, when compared with the amount of invocations to other deities in inscriptions that feature a sacrificial element and given how many times she is invoked in the Safaitic inscriptions in total, we can see that sacrifice to *lt* was not a huge priority for the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions. As there are comparatively few references to sacrifice in the Safaitic inscriptions it is important not to read too much into this. Of the six inscriptions where *lt* features in an inscription that also mentions sacrifice none of these specifically state that the sacrifice was intended in honour of *lt*, although this seems to be a common trait of Safaitic inscriptions mentioning sacrifice.

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[405] For a table showing all deities mentioned in inscriptions featuring sacrifice see Table 12 in Appendix A.

Interestingly, there are no references to *lt* in the mixed texts, although there are many to the goddess *ʾlt* who features relatively frequently in the Safaitic texts but far less frequently than *lt*. The lack of appearance of the deity *lt* in the mixed texts may represent a different religious tradition within the conventional Safaitic texts and the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts. The relationship between *ʾlt* and *lt* is dealt with at length in a section below.

There are a number of significant inscriptions in the Safaitic corpus that help to illustrate the importance of the goddess *lt*. LP 237, an inscription discussed previously in Chapter Two, states that the author "set up a sign" (*w nṣb*) which Littmann believes was intended for the deity *lt*. While this may be indicative of an altar,[406] the true purpose of this inscription is as yet unknown. However, we can assess the level of importance of the deity by the fact that some sort of structure was dedicated to her. In addition to this inscription we also have LP 1010 which has been translated by Littmann as "and he was on the look-out under the protection of *lt*". This is further proof that the deity *lt* was considered a protective or defensive deity. To further round out the picture of *lt* we need only look to LP 1267 which has been translated as "and he greeted in the name of *lt* his brother Ka'ammih" (*w ḥy f h ʾlt l- kʿmh ʾḫ -h t*). As mentioned above, this is a significant inscription as it is, as yet, the only example of a greeting in Safaitic. We do not know if this was a greeting used only for those who were familiar with one another or whether this was a greeting that could be used generically. Yet, what it does show is that worship of the deity *lt* must have been significant enough that she would be incorporated into such a greeting.

Geographical significance of *lt*

When the inscriptions that feature the goddess are plotted on a map we can see that worship of *lt* in the Safaitic inscriptions was wide-reaching.[407] She was effectively worshipped wherever the Safaitic inscriptions are found. This is another example of how *lt* would have been seen as the chief deity of the Safaitic inscriptions. The main clusters of *lt* worship tend to focus on the ḥarra region of modern-day southern Syrian and northern Jordan, with smaller but significant outcrops further south and in the north-western regions of Saudi Arabia. This shows that her geographical reach was not only broad but concentrated in particular regions. Worship of the goddess was not spread thinly throughout the region.

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[406] Wellhausen 1897, p. 101
[407] A map showing the distribution of references to the deity *lt* can be seen in Map 3 in Appendix C.

Summary

What we can see through an analysis of the references to the deity *lt* in the Safaitic inscriptions was that she could clearly be considered the chief deity of the Safaitic order of deities. Given the requests made to her by the authors of the texts it is also clear that she was considered a protective or defensive deity. Her role as protective deity is further evident when we observe that she is the most frequently invoked deity in the enactment of curses. Curses were not only used to defend people but also frequently to "protect" the inscriptions themselves from destruction. Her importance in the inscriptions is further reiterated by the authors of the Safaitic religious texts when she is mentioned in inscriptions that feature multiple deities. *lt* is the only deity mentioned more than once in any inscription. As this occurs a number of time, we can conclude that it is evidence of more than merely coincidence, and is in fact proof of a correlative frequency showing the dominance of *lt* in the religious culture of the Safaitic Arabians. We can see that worship of the deity *lt* was part of a greater tradition in Ancient North Arabia in the pre-Islamic era.

rḍw

The origin of *rḍw*

The deity *rḍw* was an important and prominent deity in Ancient North Arabia worshipped by many of the pre-Islamic tribes and was generally considered by other scholars to be a protective deity.[408] In evidence found Palmyra we see that he shared many features of a warrior deity and was identified with Ares, the Greek god of war.[409] In addition to Ares, *rḍw* was also associated with a number of deities in the pre-Islamic era, such as the Palmyrene Arṣū.[410] Some of this association may be attributed to the interchangeability of the *ḍ* with *ṣ* in Aramaic dialects.[411] The name Arṣū is derived from the root *rḍw* meaning to be gracious/mild.[412] At Palmyra, Arṣū and *rḍw* were also worshipped together with Azizos and are depicted as gods of the steppes.[413]

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[408] Lipiński 2000, pp. 618–619
[409] Lipiński 1983, p. 17
[410] Landsberger 1948, p. 48 n. 122; Lipiński 1994, pp. 208–211; Dussaud 1907, p. 142
[411] Münnich 2013, p. 211
[412] Hvidberg-Hansen 2007, p. 12
[413] Teixidor 1979, p. 69

Other scholars have posited a connection with the western Semitic god Rešep, based on the divine name Arq-Rešep.[414] Littmann suggests an identification with Ruldayu and Nuhay.[415] The name *rḍw* is also found in early Islamic writings,[416] but it is not known whether the name indicated a deity, a sanctuary, or even an idol of a human.[417] Some scholars believe the etymology behind the name *rḍw* refers to benevolence,[418] while others argue for "well disposed".[419] I believe both interpretations clearly suggest a similar concept.

Some of the earliest examples of the name have been noted in an Assyrian report dating from the 7th century BC as well as in Herodotus' work from that period. The report details when the Arab King Haza'il received back some gods who had been taken from him previously.[420] In Herodotus' *Histories* the diety is identified with Οροτάλτ in a reference to the main gods of the Arabians.[421] If the *rḍw* of the early Muslim tradition was the same deity as the one mentioned in the pre-Islamic North Arabian religious traditions, then this would suggest a continuity of worship for nearly a millennia at least. The name *rḍw* is also well-known in the Thamudic religious tradition although it does not feature in the Lihyanite texts.[422]

There are number of controversies surrounding *rḍw* and his association with other prominent ANA deities, namely *ds²r* and *s²ʿhqm*. Some scholars argue that they were considered interchangeable names in pre-Islamic inscriptions. Others believe that *rḍw* and *ds²r* should be considered the same deity,[423] while yet more argue that *s²ʿhqm* and *rḍw* could be considered the same deity.[424] These debates, and their implications in the Safaitic religious inscriptions, will be dealt with later on in this chapter.

Another debate surrounding the deity *rḍw* is his supposed gender which many describe as ambiguous.[425] There are numerous examples in epigraphic sources where the name of the

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414 Niehr 2014, p. 162; Lipiński 1994, p. 210
415 Steiner 1977, p. 92
416 Ibn al-Kalbī (Aṣnām) (trans. Faris, 1952, 26); Ibn Hishām, Sīra, I, 87
417 Hawting 1999, p. 118
418 Healey 2001, p. 94
419 Lipiński 1994, p. 210
420 Krone 1992, p. 76, 443
421 Herodotus, *Histories* III, 8; For further discussion on this identification see Zayadine 1990, p. 38, 42; Teixidor 1979, p. 57
422 Krone 1992, pp. 448–449
423 Clark 1979, p. 130
424 Knauf 1990, pp. 179–180
425 Healey 2001, pp. 94–95

deity *rḍw* is accompanied by feminine verb-forms[426] as well as some iconographic evidence,[427] although this is a matter for debate. In Safaitic the name *rḍw* is known in two forms, *rḍw* and *rḍy*. Some scholars argue that the name *rḍy* represented the female version of this deity.[428] The scholarship surrounding the "gender" of the deity (or deities) *rḍw* and *rḍy* is debated below following an introduction to the worship of *rḍy* in the Safaitic religious inscriptions. For ease of reference, *rḍw* will be referred to in the current section as a male deity.

rḍw in the Safaitic religious tradition

rḍw is the second most commonly invoked deity in the Safaitic inscriptions. He appears in 304 inscriptions, which is approximately 14.83% of all Safaitic religious inscriptions that feature a deity. Approximately 23.36% of those inscriptions that mention the deity *rḍw* are written in what I have termed the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts. As previously mentioned, the name appears in two forms in the Safaitic inscriptions, *rḍw* and *rḍy*, appearing in 196 inscriptions.

	Help (sʿd)	Booty (ġnmt)	Delive rance (flṭ)	Relief (rwḥ)	Securi ty (sʿlm)	Venge ance (nqm/ nqmt)	Give/g rant (hb)	Life (ḥyw/ ḥlw)	Venge ance (ʾyr)
Total references	93	37	23	19	12	12	7	7	6
Excluding mixed text references	31	35	21	19	12	12	7	7	6
Only mixed text references	62	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
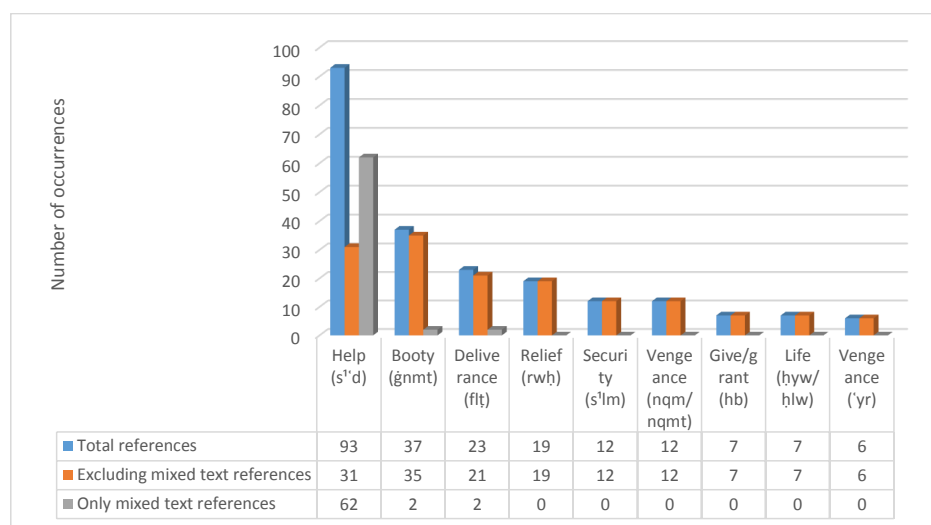
Fig. 3.7 – Most common requests made to *rḍw*

In addition to being the second most commonly invoked deity in the Safaitic texts, *rḍw* is also the primary deity mentioned in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts, featuring in

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[426] Healey 2003, p. 95
[427] Krone 1992, pp. 290–328
[428] Littmann 1940, p. 107

56.35% of all inscriptions of this type.[429] When we look at inscriptions where *rḍw* is the sole deity featured in the inscription or has been given a specific role to perform by the author, and excluding his appearances in the mixed texts, we find the most common requests made in prayers are for booty (*ġnmt*) appearing in 15.49% of cases, help (*s¹ʿd*) appearing in 9.73% of cases and deliverance (*flṭ*) seen in 9.3% of cases. Lesser occurring requests that were still comparatively common in prayers to *rḍw* include relief (*rwḥ*), found in 8.41% of cases, followed by security (*s¹lm*) at 5.31% and vengeance (*nqm*) at 4.87%.[430] Of the requests made to the deity *rḍw* in the mixed texts, prayers most frequently request help (*s¹ʿd*) consisting of 80.28% of cases. There does not seem to be any clear secondary function for the deity *rḍw* in the mixed texts. If the requests made of *rḍw* are analysed as a whole, regardless of the format of the prayers, his primary function is that of help (*s¹ʿd*) at 26.6% followed by booty (*ġnmt*) at 12.46% and deliverance (*flṭ*) at 8.08%.

	Material	Malevolent	Defensive	Benevolent
■ Total references	55	21	43	131
■ Excluding mixed text references	53	20	41	67
■ Only mixed text references	2	1	2	64
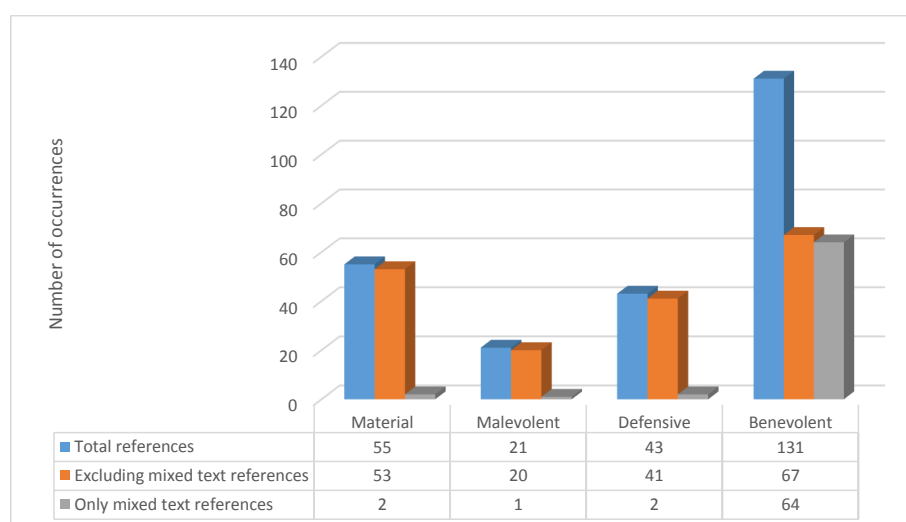
Fig. 3.8 – Types of prayers made to *rḍw*

Of all the requests made to *rḍw* in the entire corpus of inscriptions, approximately 52.4% of the prayers can be classified as benevolent prayers. Of course, since this figure includes the mixed texts, most of these requests are for help (*s¹ʿd*). If only the prayers written in the conventional Safaitic form are included in the analysis, this figure drops to 37.02%,

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[429] See Table 14 in Appendix A for a full list of the deities that occur in the mixed texts.
[430] See Table 15 in Appendix A for a full list of the requests made to *rḍw*.

slightly higher than the second most common form of prayer which are material prayers at 29.28%. Following this are defensive requests accounting for 22.65% of all prayers excluding the mixed texts (17.20% of the entire corpus), and malevolent prayers at 11.05% (or 8.4% of the entire corpus). It is significant that very few of the prayers can be considered defensive prayers. Given that defensive prayers make up approximately 54.61% of all requests made to deities in the Safaitic religious inscriptions it is pertinent to note that the second most commonly invoked deity in the inscriptions, *rḍw*, despite scholars believing he was a protective deity, is comparatively rarely requested to perform protective functions. These figures are in stark contrast to the chief deity *lt*, who, as previously mentioned, in prayers seeking her assistance approximately 68% could be classified as defensive. Thus we can observe that *rḍw* may not have been considered highly as a protective deity, or at the very least was not the first choice by the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions when a defensive prayer was inscribed. Material prayers are far less frequent in the Safaitic religious texts, yet *rḍw* is regularly invoked to provide such requests. Perhaps this indicates that *rḍw* was considered more of a vegetation deity, like the god Hadad, and was therefore the recipient of more tangible requests.

When the prayers made to *rḍw* are analysed by taking into account only the prayers that are written in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed text formula we are given a very different view of his primary function.[431] Of the 71 inscriptions written in this format that feature *rḍw*, approximately 81.69% of all prayers are for help (*s¹ʿd*), compared with 9.73% of prayers in the entire corpus if the mixed texts are excluded. There is no secondary function obvious in the mixed texts in terms of requests made to *rḍw*. When the prayers are categorised, we can see that 92.75% of prayers made to *rḍw* in the mixed texts are benevolent, followed by 2.9% of prayers being material and defensive, and finally 1.45% being malevolent. Again this is starkly contrasted with the greater Safaitic corpus where only 32.26% of inscriptions (excluding the mixed texts inscriptions) refering to *rḍw* can be considered benevolent prayers. The deity presented in the mixed texts is almost unrecognisable from the one in the greater corpus of Safaitic inscriptions.

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[431] See Fig. 3.6 above or Table 15 in Appendix A.
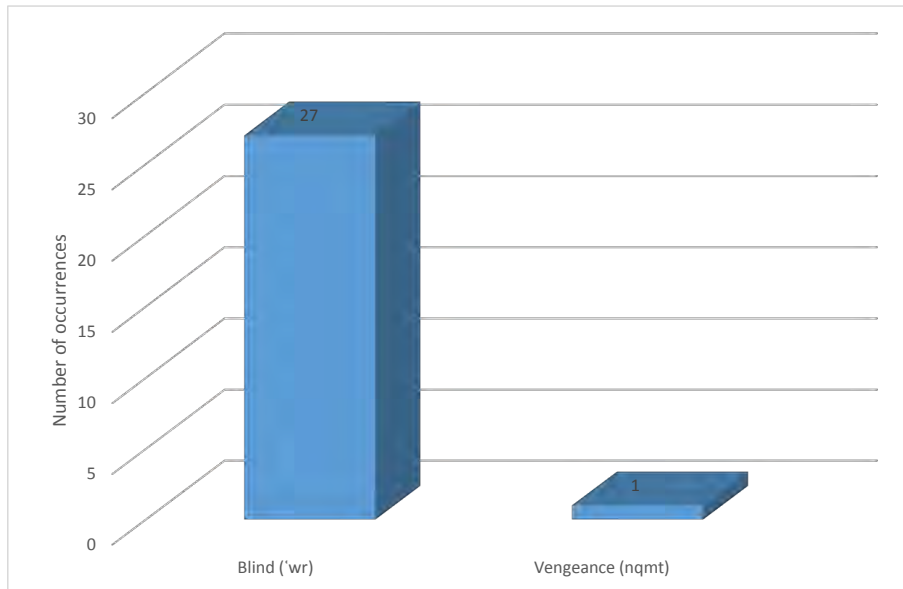
Fig. 3.9 – Requests for curses made to *rḍw*

Unlike the deity *lt*, *rḍw* is comparatively rarely invoked in the enactment of curses in the Safaitic inscriptions. He only features in 27 curses, which is approximately 9.09% of all references in the texts where he is either the solitary deity or where he is specifically requested to perform the curse. The deity *lt*, on the other hand, in similar inscriptions, amount to 27.37% of prayers that also included curses. As yet there are no examples of curses in the mixed texts, nor are there any examples of *rḍw* featuring in a blessing in the curse inscriptions. Of the curses that he does features in, he is asked primarily to blind the obliterator of an inscription (ʿwr), which occurs in 96.3% of cases.
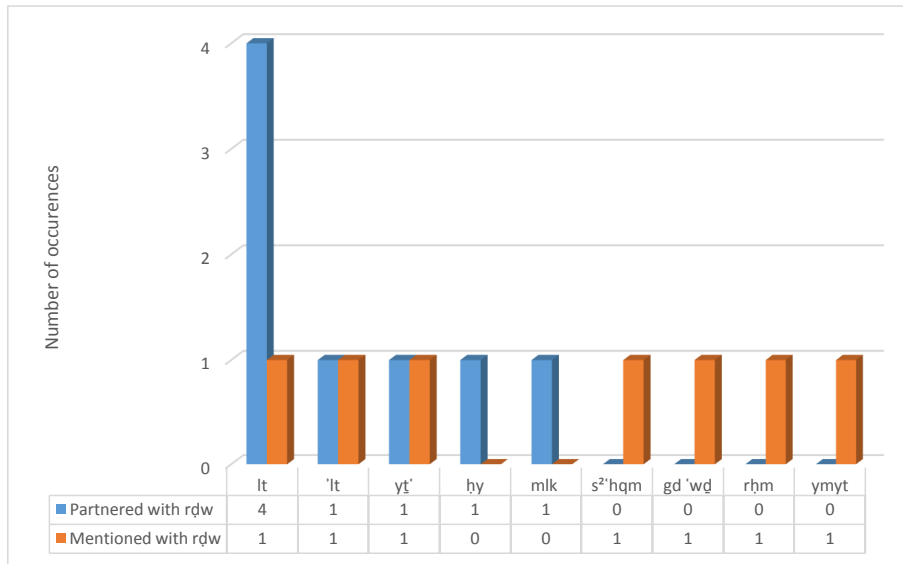
Fig. 3.10 – The deity *rḍw* partnered and mentioned with other deities

rḍw also seems to be a very isolated deity, far more unsocial than *lt*. In prayers in which he has been invoked, he is the singular deity in 96.38% of all inscriptions. In addition, when he is featured with other deities, most of the other deities mentioned are rather uncommon ones in terms of the Safaitic inscriptions. For example, we find him mentioned with *rḥm* and partnered with *mlk*, two deities that are far more common in the Thamudic inscriptions. He is also mentioned alongside more common deities such as *s²ʿhqm* and *gd ʿwḏ* and the very uncommon deities *rḥm* (another deity common in the Thamudic inscriptions) and *ymyt*. So far, he has been found partnered with the deity *lt* in only four inscriptions, which is quite unusual. In addition, twice he is partnered or mentioned with the lesser used form *ʾlt*.

References to *rḍw* where he appears with more than one other deity are likewise very rare. Currently there are only three extant examples: C4351 where is mentioned alongside *gd ʿwḏ*, *rḥm*, and *ymyt*; C 12 where he appears alongside *lt* and *s²ʿhqm*; and C 1658 where we can see him alongside *ʾlt* and *yṯʿ*. Macdonald suggests that the part of the inscription C 12 that mentions *lt* and *s²ʿhqm* may actually belong to another text. This would make sense since *lt*, *s²ʿhqm* and *rḍw* seem to be an unusual collection of deities. It is interesting to note that *rḍw* is never mentioned in the same inscription as the deities *bʿls¹mn* or *ds²r*. Both of these deities appear with *rḍy*, but never with *rḍw*. The reasons for this unclear but it may be significant that

130

both *bʿlsˡmn* and *dsˀr* are imported deities in the Safaitic religious tradition, whereas *rḍw* and all other deities that he is mentioned with are of Arabian origin. Perhaps this divide was due to an exclusivity between imported and indigenous deities. It is also possible that since *bʿlsˡmn* and *dsˀr* could be considered relatively recent deities, perhaps the deity *rḍw*, or at least the spelling of his name, had fallen out of usage by the time *bʿlsˡmn* and *dsˀr* entered the Safaitic religious sphere. The significance of *rḍw* being an "unsocial" deity is that when he is mentioned alongside other deities, they too seem to be comparatively unsocial. This could suggest that there is in fact a separate tier of deities in the Safaitic inscriptions.
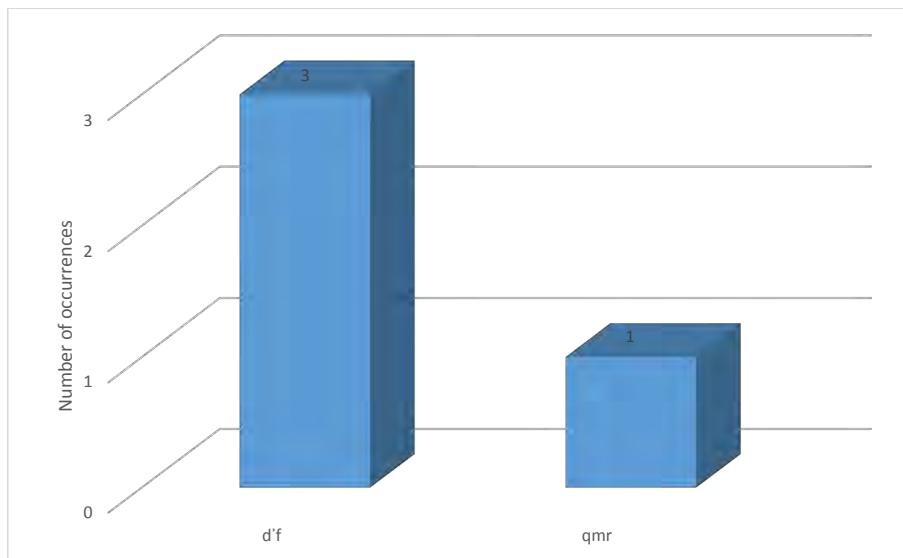
Fig. 3.11 – Most common tribal lineages mentioned with *rḍw*

rḍw is only mentioned in four inscriptions where the author has added his tribal affiliation. Given that the most common tribe mentioned is *dˀf*, it is understandable that three of those inscriptions were written by members of that tribe.

As yet there are no references to sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*) in any religious inscription that also mentions the god *rḍw*. This is not altogether surprising as there are still comparatively few references to *ḏbḥ* in the Safaitic inscriptions as a whole. However, one inscription, C 1658, exists where the author states that the "camels are dedicated to *ˀlt* and *rḍw*". This may potentially be a reference to sacrifice but the exact translation is still a matter of debate.

A number of inscriptions featuring the deity *rḍw* mention interesting aspects of the god that sit somewhat outside the scope of this thesis but are still of significance. KnNGQ 2 states that the author of the inscription "sinned against *rḍw*" (*ḥwb ʾl- rḍw*). This suggests that the deity *rḍw* played a role in the judgement of the morality of the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. Furthermore, we also have CSNS 918. Clark initially translated this inscription as "this misfortune of the god *rḍw*" (*h ḥwb ʾl- rḍw*). This translation was later challenged by Knauf who suggests as a revised translation "the habitual sinner against *rḍw*"[432] suggesting that the author of the inscription believed there to be a moral code attached to worship of *rḍw*. The etymology behind this particular inscription is discussed above. It is also possible that the term *hwb* in both inscriptions may not be a reference to sin at all, but rather a reflection of grief. The concept of sin and the deity *rḍw* can be viewed further in WH 167 which states that "*rḍw* is all-knowing of that which repenters offer up" (*rḍw ʿlm m qdm nʾbn*). This inscription reinforces the idea that *rḍw* was understood to have some sort of role in terms of enforcing religious law. It is interesting that of the three possible references to sin in the Safaitic inscriptions that also feature the name of an individual deity, *rḍw* is that deity. *rḍw* was clearly attributed a role in in terms of morality and offering judgement by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions.

Geographical significance of *rḍw*

When the inscriptions featuring the deity *rḍw* are plotted on a map we can observe that worship or reverence for the deity *rḍw* was relatively common throughout most of the area in which the Safaitic inscriptions are found. The exceptions incorporate areas in modern-day north-west Saudi Arabia.[433] What this shows is that worship of the deity *rḍw* in the pre-Islamic world was quite well-spread. The most concentrated areas where inscriptions mentioning the deity *rḍw* are featured include the ḥarra region of southern Syria, as well as numerous locations in the north-eastern Jordanian badia. These regions were very isolated in the ancient world from surrounding sedentary cultures which perhaps might suggest that worship of the deity *rḍw* was more popular amongst the desert-dwelling writers of the Safaitic inscriptions.

Summary

What we can see from an analysis of the deity *rḍw* was that his worship was undoubtedly an important aspect of the religious beliefs of the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. He was also

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[432] KnNGQ p. 97
[433] See Map 4 in Appendix C.

clearly the most important deity in the mixed texts. Given the roles that the Safaitic authors attributed to him, it is clear to see that he was not considered especially important in the protective aspects of their religion which is surprising since protection is a role that has been attributed to *rḍw* by many scholars. He still however played a comparatively greater role in terms of more material or tangible requests. He was also not considered particularly vital in the enactment of curses comparatively speaking although he was invoked on a number of occasions. Most significantly, there are a number of essential differences in the ways *rḍw* was represented in the mixed texts and the other Safaitic inscriptions. The predominantly benevolent deity presented in the mixed texts is almost unrecognisable from the one in the greater corpus of Safaitic inscriptions. Finally, *rḍw* can be considered a very unsocial deity given that the vast majority of inscriptions where he features he is the solitary deity mentioned. There are very few examples of an overlap in inscriptions alongside the chief deity *lt*. What this might suggest will be addressed later in this chapter.

rḍy

The origin of *rḍy*

Since the name *rḍy* originates from the same etymology as the name *rḍw*, the origin of the deity *rḍy* would likely have been the same as the deity *rḍw*. As mentioned above, the name could be interpreted as refering to benevolence or being well disposed. For a more detailed discussion see the section on the origin of *rḍw* above.

rḍy in the Safaitic religious tradition

In terms of the Safaitic religious tradition, the deity *rḍy* is the third most frequently invoked deity in the Safaitic inscriptions and features in 196 inscriptions and approximately 9.56% of all religious inscriptions that include a deity. However, in contrast to the deity *rḍw*, there are only two examples of *rḍy* in inscriptions written in the mixed text format.
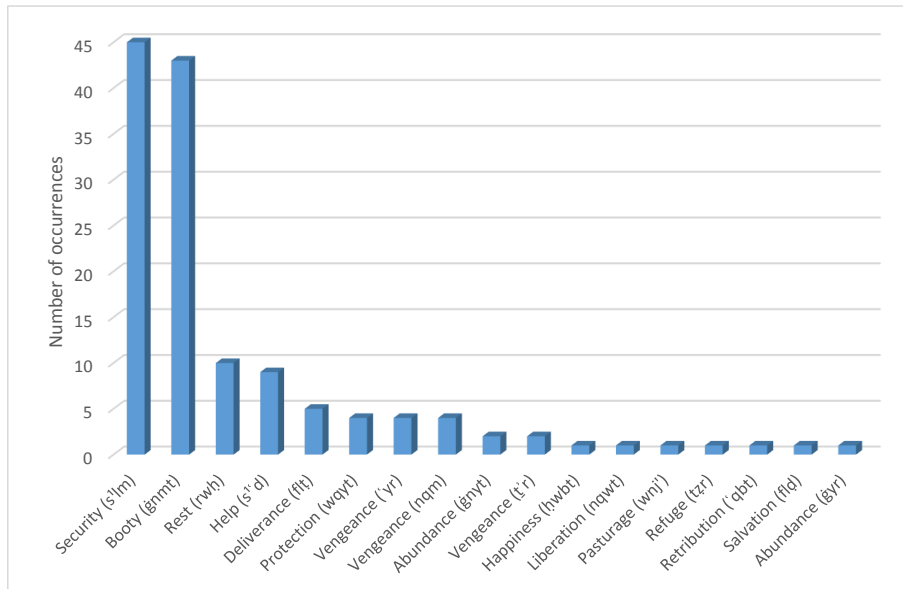
Fig. 3.12 – Full list of requests made to *rḍy*

The most common functions attributed to the deity *rḍy* in the Safaitic inscriptions are security (*s¹lm*) and booty (*ġnmt*) which both feature in 44 inscriptions and make-up approximately 24.58% each of all inscriptions containing reference to *rḍy*. There does not seem to be any clear second most significant thing requested of the deity as all other recorded requests are relatively varied and comparatively infrequent.
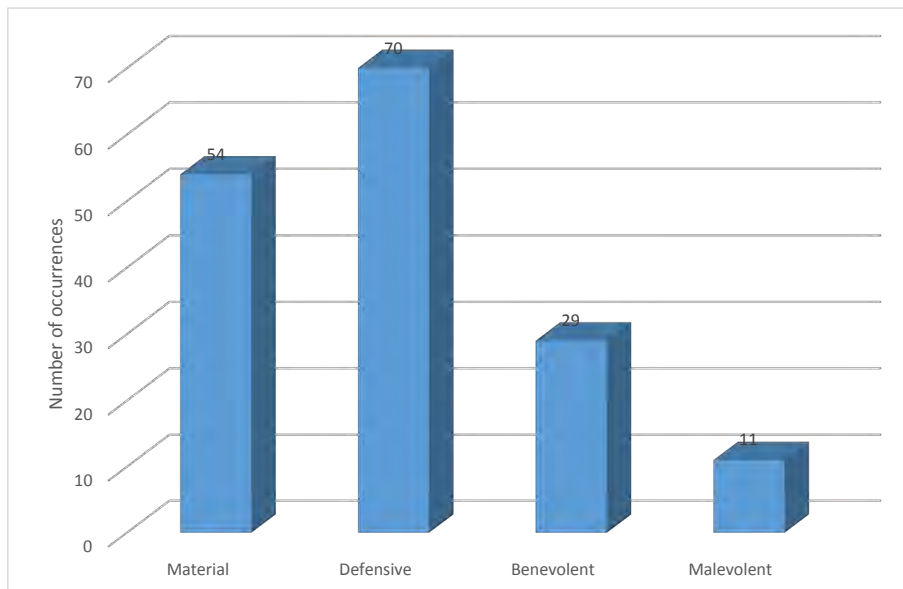
Fig. 3.13 – Types of prayers made to *rḍy*

Of all the requests made to the deity *rḍy* approximately 40.60% can be classified as defensive prayers. This is followed closely by material prayers at 36.09%, benevolent prayers accounting for 15.79% of prayers and malevolent prayers in 7.52% of cases. These figures are in contrast to those cited for the deity *rḍw*. While material prayers rate quite highly in inscriptions seeking assistance from *rḍw*, as they do with *rḍy*, defensive prayers are rather more rare. For *rḍy*, defensive prayers are the most common form of inscription. Since material requests run a close second as the most common form of prayer for *rḍy* this could suggest that the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions may have considered *rḍy* a defensive or protective deity that, like *rḍw*, was also adept at providing for material or tangible requests.
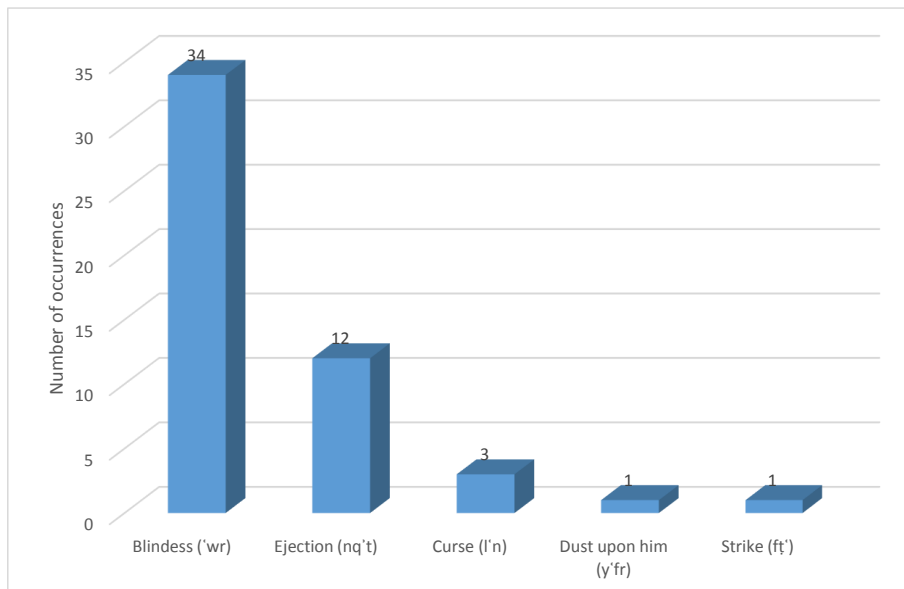
Fig. 3.14 – Requests for curses made to *rḍy*

The deity *rḍy* is the third most frequently invoked deity in terms of curses in the Safaitic inscriptions and also features in one blessing. Approximately 27.04% of prayers that *rḍy* features in also include a curse. Of all the curses *rḍy* features in, the most common requests are for blindness (ʿwr) occurring in 67.35% of the curses, followed by ejection (*nqʾt*) appearing in 24.49% of inscriptions. Since ʿwr and *nqʾt* were the most common requests made in curses, these statistics suggest that the requests made in curses were not subject to a deity's individual specialisation. Significantly the number of times *rḍy* is invoked in a curse is far greater than *rḍw*. This is an example of where the roles attributed by the writers of the Safaitic Arabians differ between the deities *rḍy* and *rḍw*.

	lt	ytʿ	lh	ʾlt	s²ʿhqm	bʿls¹mn	ds²r	gdʿwḏ	gdḍf
■ Partnered with rḍy	6	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with rḍy	2	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	1
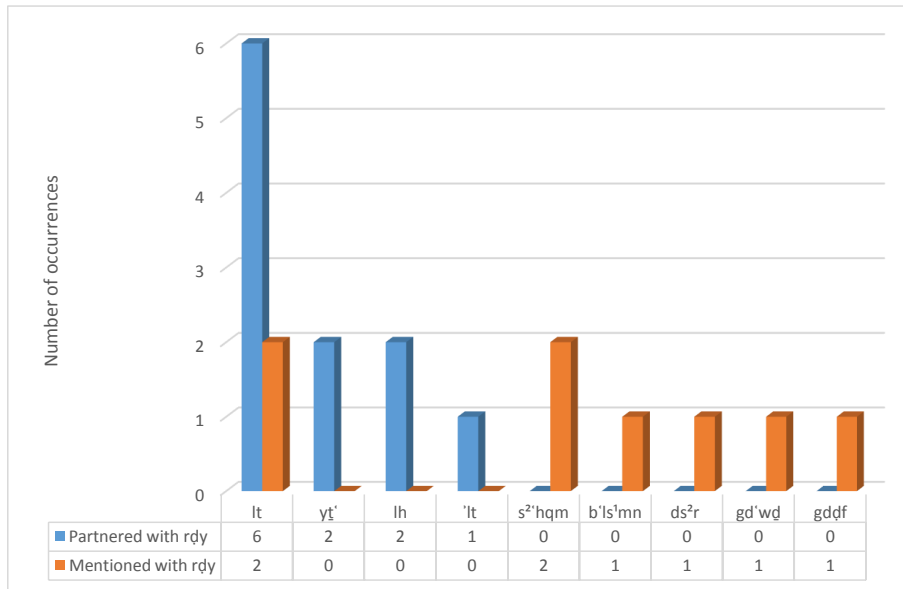
Fig. 3.15 – The deity *rḍy* partnered and mentioned with other deities

Like the deity *rḍw*, *rḍy* is another very solitary deity. *rḍy* is mentioned as the solitary deity in a prayer in 90.31% of cases. When *rḍy* is mentioned alongside another deity, the most common partnering is with the goddess *lt*, a partnering that occurs in eight situations. Despite *lt* being the deity most frequently partnered with *rḍy*, the number of times they are actually partnered is comparatively rare when compared with the references to them as solitary deities. This suggests they did not have a particularly significant relationship with each other. Further, when *rḍy* is mentioned alongside other deities, there also does not seem to be any significance in terms of relationships with the deity or deities mentioned. However, this may be due in part to the fact that inscriptions featuring *rḍy* and additional deities are so comparatively rare.

In terms of reference to tribal affiliation, the deity *rḍy* is mentioned in four inscriptions where the author has added their tribal affiliation. The tribes mentioned, namely, *qs²m*, *qmr*, *hzn* and *llb*, only feature in one inscription each. Significantly they also represent the less common tribes in the corpus of Safaitic tribes. As there are so few examples of this type of prayer it would, however, be unwise to read too much into this and to draw too any conclusions.

Currently there is only one example of an inscription featuring the deity *rḍy* that also mentions the practice of sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*). MA 1 reads …*ḏbḥ l- rḍy* or "sacrificed for *rḍy*", the significance of which is that the author actually specifies that the sacrifice is intended for the deity *rḍy* with the vocative particle *–l*. Few inscriptions mentioning sacrifice specify the deity intended.

In terms of the frequency of references to *rḍy* in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts, the deity only appears two inscriptions. From this we can conclude that *rḍy* was not a very common deity in texts of this format. Given than the deity *rḍw* was frequently mentioned this is somewhat surprising.

Geographical significance of *rḍy*

The deity *rḍy* appears within the same general geographical spread as the deity *rḍw*.[434] *rḍy* appears in much the same regions as the greater Safaitic inscriptions showing seemingly consistent occurrences. Clusters of inscriptions that features the deity *rḍy* can be seen throughout southern Syria, northern Jordan and the north-eastern Jordanian badia.

Summary

What we can see from an analysis of *rḍy* was that the deity was most likely an important deity for the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. Given the roles attributed by the authors of the inscriptions, it seems that *rḍy* was considered a defensive or protective divinity who, like *rḍy*, was also adept at providing material requests in addition to addressing security concerns. The deity *rḍy* also seems to have played an important role in the enactment of curses. Like *rḍw* and to a lesser extent *lt*, *rḍy* can be considered unsocial given that the deity comparatively rarely features in prayers alongside other deities.

rḍw or *rḍy*: Same deity? Male or female?

In the scholarship surrounding the Safaitic inscriptions the exact nature of the deity *rḍw* has been the subject of many debates. Some scholars argue that the deity *rḍw* was a male deity, others say female.[435] Some say the name *rḍy* was used interchangeably with the name *rḍw*,[436]

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[434] See Map 5 in Appendix C.
[435] Lundin 1981, pp. 211–218
[436] Jamme 1971c, p. 277

while others beleive they represent separate male and female deities.[437] What follows below is an attempt to elucidate this debate with an analysis of the divine names *rḍw* and *rḍy* and how they were represented in the Safaitic inscriptions.

Dussaud argues that the Palmyrene deity Arṣū represented the evening star i.e. Venus, and further that Arṣū could be considered the same deity as *rḍw*. Thus by extension *rḍw* could also be considered as a representation of the evening star. In the drawing of de Vogüé accompanying the inscription C 4351, a female character is featured alongside a rayed circle. He identifies this rayed circle as the evening star, thus commenting that the figure must represent the deity *rḍw*.[438] In later years however, this theory has fallen out of favour amongst scholars.[439] As Macdonald states, there is nothing in the accompanying inscription that would link the image to any deity.[440] However, the renowned German orientalist Littmann also identifies the deity *rḍw* with the planet Venus arguing that the two different forms of the name, *rḍw* and *rḍy*, represent the two forms of the deity.[441] Rostovtzeff argues that *rḍw* represented a goddess rather than a god.[442] Jamme rejects this association of *rḍw* with Venus arguing for the interchangeability of the *w* and *y* in Safaitic.[443] The interchangeability of *w* and *y* is also discussed by Macdonald in *Ancient North Arabia* though not in reference to the *rdw/rdy* debate.[444] However, as noted above, Macdonald is of the view that the deities *rḍw* and *rḍy* were probably male.[445] Al-Jallad has suggested that from an etymological standpoint the deities between *rḍw* and *rḍy* share a common root and *rḍy* would have arisen from a separate dialect. He also states that in general Safaitic shifts *w* to *y* in most word final positions so *rḍw* may be the traditional pronunciation and *rḍy* the contemporary.[446]

Furthering the debate surrounding the ambiguous gender of *rḍw* are a number of examples in epigraphic sources where the deity appears to be female. For example, Healey points out that in C 5011 the deity's name *rḍw* is accompanied by feminine verb-forms.[447] He additionally notes that the pronoun in the passage detailing the destruction of *rḍw* in Ibn al-

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[437] Rousan 1992, pp. 166–167, 430; Winnett & Reed 1970, pp. 75–76; WH 31
[438] Dussaud 1907, pp. 144–145
[439] Macdonald 2012, p. 267. This particular drawing is discussed further in the following chapter.
[440] Macdonald 2012, p. 263
[441] Littmann 1940, p. 107
[442] Rostovtzeff 1932, p. 110
[443] Jamme 1971c, p. 277
[444] Macdonald 2004, p. 509
[445] Macdonald 1995, p. 761
[446] Personal communication
[447] Healey 2003, p. 95

Kalbī's *Kitāb al-Aṣnām* is also feminine. He then points out that in a Thamudic inscription *rḍw* is referred to as "lady".[448]

Both *rḍw* and *rḍy* are common deities in the Safaitic inscriptions. They are, in fact, the second and third most frequently invoked deities. In addition, both appear in relatively similar numbers of invocations. The first major difference between the two is the dominance of *rḍw* in the inscriptions known as the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts. *rḍw* is by far the most frequently invoked deity in these texts, and while *rḍy* does feature in prayers of this format, there are only two extant inscriptions where this deity is mentioned, far less than the 71 appearances of *rḍw*.

	Boot y (ġnm t)	Help (s¹ʿd)	Deliv eranc e (flṭ)	Rest (rwḥ)	Secur ity (s¹lm)	Veng eanc e (nqm)	Life (ḥyw /ḥlw)	Veng eanc e (ʾyr)	Prote ction (wqy t)	Abun danc e (ġnyt)	Com pens ation (bdd/ bddt)	Veng eanc e (t̠ʾr)
■ Main requests of rḍw	35	31	21	19	12	12	7	6	3	3	3	0
■ Main requests of rḍy	43	9	5	10	45	4	0	4	4	2	0	2
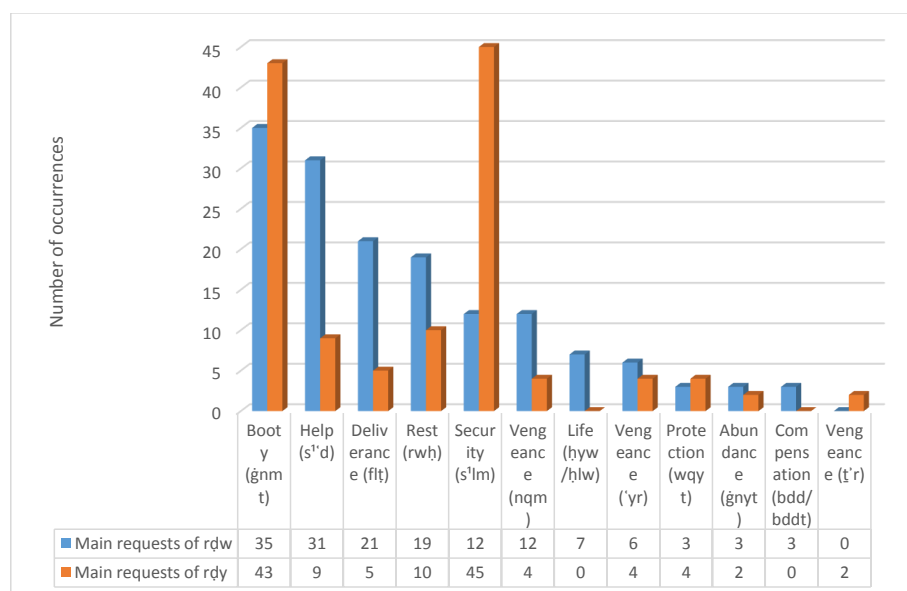
Fig. 3.16 – Comparison of the main requests of *rḍw* and *rḍy* excluding the mixed texts

If the requests of the deities *rḍw* and *rḍy* are compared, excluding appearances of *rḍw* in the mixed texts, then there are a number of notable differences between the functions attributed to them by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. The most notable difference is the frequent request to the deity *rḍy* for security (*s¹lm*). Requests for *s¹lm* to *rḍw* appear in only

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[448] Healey 2003, p. 95; van den Branden 1966, pp. 112–114 – although the translations of van den Branden should be approached with caution.

140

5.31% of prayers addressed to him, while requests for *sᶜlm* made to *rḍy* make-up 24.58% of all prayers made to this deity. In contrast requests for booty (*ġnmt*) are relatively common for both deities occurring in 15.49% of prayers to *rḍw* and 24.58% of prayers to *rḍy*.
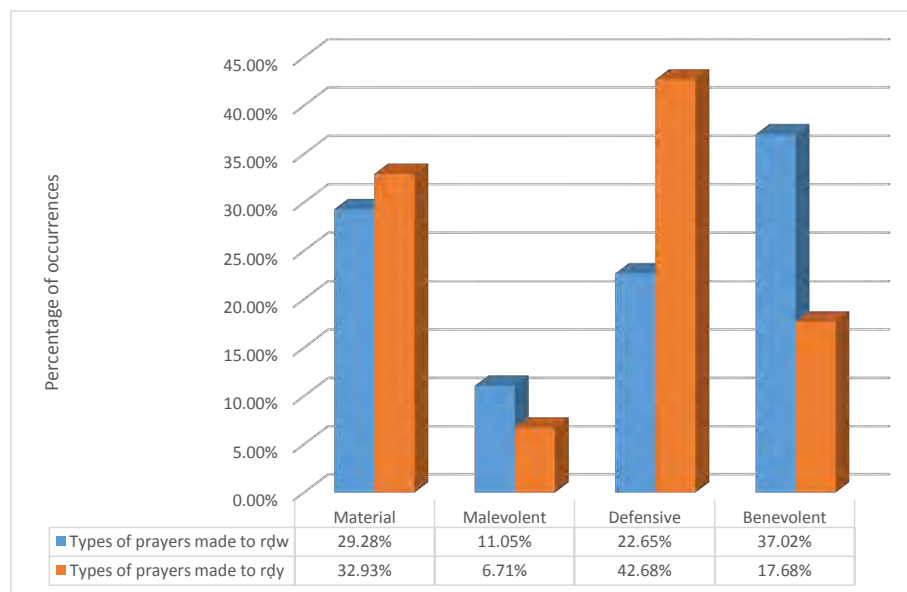
Fig. 3.17 – Comparison of the types of requests made of *rḍw* and *rḍy* excluding the mixed texts

When viewed as percentages of the inscriptions in which they feature we can see that a main key difference between the deities are the types of prayers they are asked to perform. As stated in the previous section, approximately 42.68% of all prayers made to the deity *rḍy* can be classified as defensive prayers. This is in contrast with *rḍw* where defensive prayers only make up 22.65% of prayers. Invocations classified as benevolent prayers feature in 37.02% of inscriptions featuring *rḍw*, but only 17.68% of inscriptions to *rḍy*. However, the number of requests for material assistance are relatively similar between the two deities with 29.28% of prayers to *rḍw* and 32.93% of prayers to *rḍy*. Malevolent prayers are comparatively rare in the requests made to both deities with *rḍw* at only 11.05% and *rḍy* at 6.71% of prayers. What this suggests is that the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions may have considered the deities *rḍw* and *rḍy* to be distinct deities. *rḍw* seems to have been considered a far more benevolent deity than *rḍy*. In contrast, *rḍy* seems to have been seen as a protective or defensive deity. Interestingly

both deities appear to have been considered adept at providing material assistance. The differences in this case are in the type of assistance sought. *rḍw* seems to have served more of an agricultural function for the Safaitic Arabians, while *rḍy* a was more frequently invoked by people see more militaristic aid.

In terms of the Safaitic curses as a whole, *rḍy* is mentioned far more frequently than *rḍw*. Only 9.09% of references to *rḍw* also include a curse, compared with 27.04% of cases involving *rḍy*. There is thus enough of a difference in the roles of *rḍw* and *rḍy* for this to be evident in the figures related to the enactment of curses.

From evidence found in the Safaitic inscriptions both *rḍw* and *rḍy* can be considered unsocial deities. As previously mentioned, *rḍw* and *rḍy* feature alone in prayers in approximately 96.38% and 90.31% of cases respectively. This makes these deities the most likely to be featured in an inscription alone by a rather significant margin. However, they do occasionally appear in inscriptions with other deities. In this context, *rḍy* is more likely to feature in an inscription where multiple deities are mentioned more frequently than *rḍw*. Where *rḍw* is invoked alongside other deities those deities tend to be rather obscure and only infrequently found in the Safaitic inscriptions. However those deities are mentioned more frequently in Thamudic, Central and South Arabian inscriptions, for example *rḥm* and *mlk*. The deities featured with *rḍy* however, are deities that appear far more frequently in the Safaitic corpus.

The geographical spread of the deities *rḍw* and *rḍy* indicates that the inscriptions they feature in seem to overlap across almost the same regions. This suggests that there is not much difference between the deities based on geographical religious trends. It also suggests that the etymological differences in their names was not dependant on geographic parameters.

When the Safaitic inscriptions are analysed as a whole, it appears therefore that *rḍw* and *rḍy* were considered separate deities by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions to some degree. However, it is important to note that these deities never feature together in the same inscription. This leads us to another possible conclusion. As previously mentioned, the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts may represent a bridge in the evolutionary progression of the ANA texts, or perhaps are indicative of a gradual shift from a script like Thamudic B to Safaitic. Given that the deity *rḍw* features far more frequently in the greater Thamudic corpora of inscriptions (inscriptions generally thought to have pre-dated the Safaitic inscriptions by a few

hundred years) than the deity *rḍy* this could be interpreted as indicating that the transliteration *rḍy* was an evolutionary phonological progression from the transliteration *rḍw*.

As previously mentioned, in those few examples where *rḍw* is mentioned alongside another deity many of those deities tended to be less common in the Safaitic religious corpus. Perhaps they were earlier Thamudic deities whose worship or reverence died out once the evolution from the mixed texts to the conventional Safaitic texts began. Many of the deities mentioned in the mixed texts are also far less common in the greater Safaitic corpus. In terms of deities cited in connection with *rḍw*, they are also more likely to be deities that feature more prominently in Thamudic texts; for example, *nhy* and *khl*, who almost always appear in the mixed texts. In addition, two of the most prominent deities in the Safaitic religious inscriptions, *bʿlsˡmn* and *ds²r*, are never mentioned in an inscription alongside *rḍw*. Since *bʿlsˡmn* could be considered a relative "newcomer" to Palmyra[449] and *ds²r* worship only began (at least under that name) from around the 1ˢᵗ century BC to the 1ˢᵗ century AD, then it is fair to argue that these "imported" deities may not have entered the Safaitic religious pantheon until rather late. In contrast, both of these deities are mentioned alongside the deity *rḍy*. When *rḍy* does feature alongside other deities they are more conventional Safaitic deities, rather than the potentially older, Thamudic-style deities that are more commonly associated with the name *rḍw*. It is quite possible then that the name *rḍw* represents an earlier version of the name of the deity and *rḍy* represents the later form.

One of the major differences between the greater corpus of Safaitic inscriptions and the mixed texts, aside from the deities mentioned in those texts, are the requests made of the deities invoked. As we saw from the analysis of the deity *rḍw* above, when the requests made of him in the mixed texts are compared with those made of him in the greater Safaitic corpus excluding the mixed texts, we are given a view of a very different deity. In the mixed texts *rḍw* is invoked in benevolent prayers in approximately 92.31% of prayers and yet only 32.26% in the greater Safaitic inscriptions excluding the mixed texts. Likewise, his secondary function in the greater Safaitic inscriptions are material requests where he is invoked in 31.61% of cases, which can be set against a meagre 3.08% in the mixed texts. Thus, as mentioned above, the view of *rḍw* provided by the mixed texts is a markedly different one of the deity we see in the greater corpus of Safaitic inscriptions.

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[449] Kaizer 2008, p. 6

Given these very dissimilar representations of the deity *rḍw*, if the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts did predate the Safaitic inscriptions, then it is possible that the representation of *rḍw* evolved over time. If *rḍy* represents an evolution of the name of the deity then the differences in the way *rḍw* and *rḍy* were perceived by the Safaitic Arabians would be explained in terms of as a gradual change over time. This would satisfy questions regarding the differences in the requests made to *rḍw* and *rḍy* — it is the same deity but both the spelling of the name and the functions attributed to the deity evolved and changed. This theory also accords with the differences observed in terms of needs of the authors themselves. If the society of the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions was becoming more militaristic then it makes sense that that change be reflected in the prayers offered to the primary deities. The changing roles of *rḍw* and *rḍy* may thus reflect a wider societal change in the stability of the region over time.

In summary, there is no definitive proof whether the deities *rḍw* and *rḍy* were considered the same or separate by the writers of the Safaitic Arabians. Previously I have supported the argument that they were separate deities of separate genders,[450] but given the differences in their roles in the mixed texts versus the conventional Safaitic I now support the view that they were possibly the same deity but the changes in spelling reflected the change in pronounciation over time. The differences in requests made through Safaitic prayers might also be reflective of a change in attitudes towards these deities over time, however Al-Jallad has pointed out that this conflates a three-dimensional distribution (including variation over time) into a two-dimensional one. In addition, as yet there is no proof that the deity or deities were necessarily considered either male or female. All we know for certain is that there are not only distinct differences in the way that *rḍw* and *rḍy* were represented in the Safaitic inscriptions, but also markedly similar aspects to their representations as well. One answer may be that the name *rḍw* was an earlier incarnation of the name *rḍy*. This evolution is also evident in the functions attributed to both *rḍw* and *rḍy*.

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[450] Bennett 2014, pp. 43-52

b ʿlsᵃlmn

The origin of *b ʿlsᵃlmn*

Worship of the deity *b ʿlsᵃlmn* dates to at least the 10th century BC originating in Phonecia,[451] with an early reference to him in an inscription from Byblos.[452] From here, the worship of *b ʿlsᵃlmn* spread through to Aleppo, southern Anatolia[453] and Karatepe.[454] References to *b ʿlsᵃlmn* increase greatly from the 1st century AD onwards with localised places of worship including the Hauran at Sīʿ, Palmyra, Dura Europos and Hatra.[455] Attestations of the deity *b ʿlsᵃlmn* were seemingly widespread in the ancient world with references appearing in locations far from the deity's origin such as Carthage[456] in the 4th–3rd centuries BC.[457] The name *b ʿlsᵃlmn* entered Safaitic as a direct loan from the Aramaic Baʿalshamīn,[458] although it also appears in the texts in an Arabicised version of *b ʿlsᵃmy*. The deity additionally features as a divine name in Dedanite.[459]

One of the earliest references to *b ʿlsᵃlmn* in a Nabataean text comes from Sīʿ in the Hauran dating from 32–12 BC and details the construction of the temple built for the deity.[460] From here it is thought that *b ʿlsᵃlmn* worship spread east towards Hatra, Dura Europos and Palmyra.[461] The earliest Nabataean texts date from the 1st century BC,[462] followed by the Palmyrene texts from the 1st–2nd centuries AD,[463] and finally the Hatra texts dated to the 1st–2nd centuries.[464] Worship of *b ʿlsᵃlmn* likely continued until the 5th century AD as references to the deity can be seen in the works of Eusebius in the early to mid-4th century AD.[465] and those of Jerome in the very late 4th century AD.[466]

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[451] Niehr 2003, p. 230; Dirven 1999, p 80
[452] KAI Nr. 4 – see Dunand 1930, p. 329; Albright 1947, pp. 153–160.
[453] KAI Nr. 202
[454] KAI Nr. 26
[455] Niehr 2003, p. 285; Ababneh 1994, p. 42–43
[456] Berger 1901, pp. 847–849.
[457] For a detailed analysis of the worship of *b ʿlsᵃlm* in the early years see Chase 1994
[458] Hayajneh and Ababneh 2015, p. 265
[459] Farès-Drappeau 2005, p. 84
[460] Littmann 1914, p. 77; Savignac 1904, p. 581
[461] Chase 1994, p. 75
[462] Healey 2001, pp. 124–126; Sourdel 1952, pp. 19–31
[463] Gawlikowski 1973, p. 118; Dirven 1999, p. 116, n. 66
[464] Niehr 1996, pp. 67–73; Vattioni 1981, p. 191
[465] Eusebius' *Praep. Evang*. I, 10, 7
[466] Jerome, *Letter to Theodora*, Epistola LXXV

The name *bʿlsⁱlmn* has been translated as "Lord of Heaven"[467] and he was often associated with the Syro-Mesopotamian storm-god Hadad,[468] the Roman period Zeus,[469] the Syrian deity Maralhe[470] and Zeus and Kyros at Dura Europos.[471] He was known as both a tribal god as well as a state god[472] with a long history that can be traced back to the storm and fertility god Baʾlu in the Ugaritic texts.[473] The shrine at Sīʿ was an important place of pilgrimage to *bʿlsⁱlmn*[474] especially for the Safaitic Arabians. He is regularly referred to as a storm and weather god,[475] for example, in his association with the name Zeus Megostos Keraunios (thundering)[476] and the storm-god Hadad.[477]

The transmission of the worship of *bʿlsⁱlmn* into the religious psyche of the writers of the Safaitic Arabians may have occurred around the time of the construction of the temple at Sīʿ.

bʿlsⁱlmn in the Safaitic religious tradition

The deity *bʿlsⁱlmn* appears in 144 inscriptions in the Safaitic religious texts. This amounts to approximately 7.02% of all religious inscriptions that also feature a deity. The version of the deity's name most frequently occurring in the Safaitic inscriptions is the form *bʿlsⁱlmn*, a transliteration borrowed from the Aramaic,[478] but it also appears in an Arabicised version as *bʿlsⁱmy*. The name *bʿlsⁱlmn* appears in 137 inscriptions, while *bʿlsⁱmy* only occurs in seven extant inscriptions. Unfortunately the inscriptions featuring the transliteration *bʿlsⁱmy* do not contain any datable events nor do they accompany any associated drawings that would suggest the time of composition. This means we are unable to determine whether the Arabicised transliteration was a result of evolutionary phonology or a regional dialect. When plotted on a map[479] there does not seem to be any particular regional variation between the two spellings, with most inscriptions covering the same approximate area. However, given that the

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[467] Healey 2001, p. 124
[468] Healey 2001, p. 124
[469] Sourdel 1952, pp. 21–27; Taylor 2002, p. 105; Downey 2004, pp. 117–128
[470] Drijvers & Healey 1999, p. 80
[471] Buchmann 2011, p. 38
[472] Niehr 2003, p. 236
[473] Healey 2001, p. 124
[474] Dussaud 1955, p. 147
[475] Steinsapir 2005, p. 2
[476] Sourdel 1952, pp. 29–31
[477] Healey 2001, p. 124
[478] Macdonald 1995, p. 751; Niehr 2003, p. 263
[479] See Appendix – maps of *bʿlsⁱm* and *bʿlsⁱmy*

transliteration *bʿlsʾlmn* features in many more inscriptions than the less frequent *bʿlsʾmy*, it is probable that their existence was contemporary in both time and geographically. While there exists a reference to a god called *bʿl*, or Baʿal, it is unclear whether this is a shortened version of the name *bʿlsʾlmn* or whether he represents a separate deity.[480]
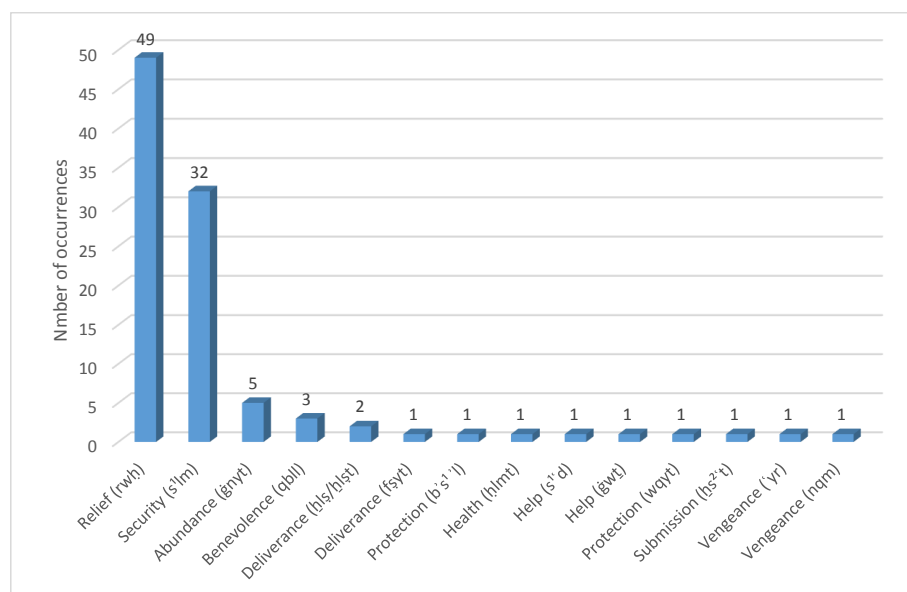
Fig. 3.18 – Full list of requests made to the deity *bʿlsʾlmn*

As the fourth most frequently invoked deity in the Safaitic religious corpus, *bʿlsʾlmn* was tasked with many different functions in the Safaitic prayers,[481] although it is apparent that he had a clear speciality within the roles that he was expected to perform. In prayers that feature *bʿlsʾlmn* as the solitary deity invoked in a text, or where he is given a specific function in a prayer featuring multiple deities, the request most often made is for relief (*rwḥ*), occurring in 44.95% of all prayers made to him. His secondary function in the Safaitic texts was to provide security (*sʾlm*), a request which appears in 27.52% of prayers made to him. There do not seem to be any clear additional functions attributed to *bʿlsʾlmn* apart from these two primary functions.

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[480] Niehr 2003, p. 243
[481] See Appendix – Roles of *bʿlsʾm*
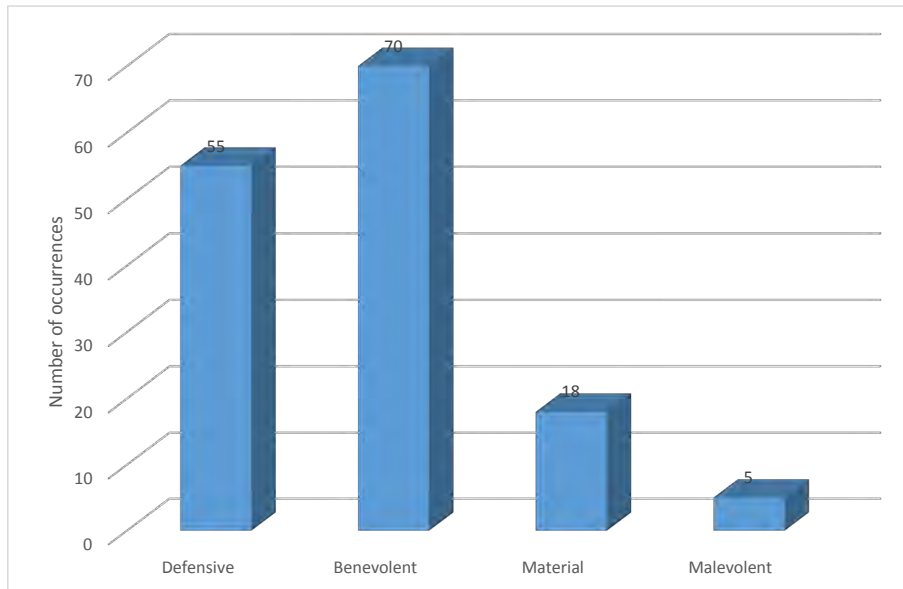
Fig. 3.19 – Types of prayers made to *bʿls¹lmn*

Of all the requests made to the deity *bʿls¹lmn*, approximately 47.3% can be classified as benevolent prayers. Defensive prayers then account for 37.16% of all prayers made to *bʿls¹lmn*, followed by material prayers at 12.16% and malevolent prayers at 3.38%. These figures suggest that *bʿls¹lmn* was considered above all a benevolent, protective deity. Few of the requests made to the deity showed that the authors desired personal gain, either in the form of material possession or vengeful aggression. Instead, more passive functions such as relief (*rwḥ*) or security (*s¹lm*) were more often sought by authors who called on assistance from *bʿls¹lmn*.
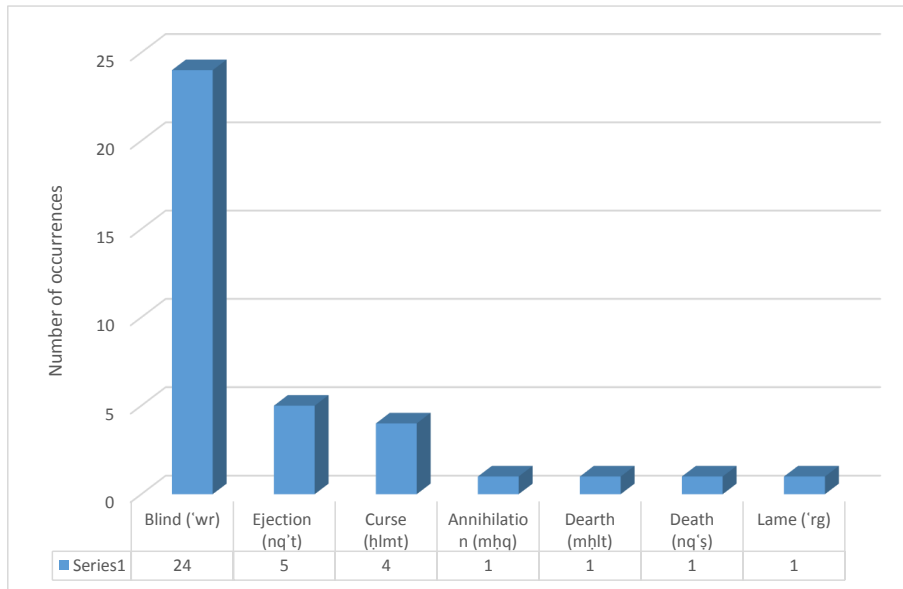
Fig. 3.20 – Requests for curses made to the deity *bʿlsˀlmn*

The deity *bʿlsˀlmn* was frequently invoked in religious inscriptions that also featured curses or blessings. Of the prayers in which he is the solitary deity, or is singled out by the author of an inscription to provide a particular request, curses make up approximately 33.33% of all prayers featuring *bʿlsˀlmn*. This figure rises to 37.50% when all inscriptions that do not specifically mention the role *bʿlsˀlmn* was expected to play in that particular curse are included. This is quite a high number of invocations in the enactment of curses and suggests that the deity *bʿlsˀlmn* may have been considered one who played an important role in the fulfilment of maledictions. Of course the deity *lt* is still invoked in a far greater number of curses than *bʿlsˀlmn*, but comparatively speaking *bʿlsˀlmn* is invoked in a far greater percentage. Like the chief goddess *lt*, curses invoking *bʿlsˀlmn* frequently request that the deity punish the obliterator of an inscription with blindness (*ʿwr*), ejection (*nqʾt*) or seek a generic curse. Curses for *ʿwr* are the most common, comprising 64.86% of all requests. Generic requests for a curse feature in 10.81% of inscriptions, closely followed by requests for *nqʾt* which appear in 8.11% of inscriptions. Unlike prayers, which usually demonstrate that deities had different specialisations within the Safaitic pantheon, the content or requests found in curses do not seem to be subject to fulfilment by a particular deity. The percentage of curses made to bʿlsˀlmn suggest that he was expected to respond to requests for curses at a slighter greater rate than

149

other deities, the exception being *lt*, although the content of these curses did not differ between the deities.

As there are very few examples of blessings made to the god *bʿlsˡlmn* it is hard to glean much information. It is interesting, however, to note that of the blessings in which *bʿlsˡlmn* is invoked, the most common thing requested by the authors of the inscriptions was for relief (*rwḥ*), accounting for approximately 60% of all blessing requests made to *bʿlsˡlmn*. This suggests that while there is no basic difference in the requests asked of *bʿlsˡlmn*, *lt* and *rḍy* in the curses, requests in the form of blessings may actually reflect the specialisations of that particular deity.

	lt	s²ʰqm	ds²r	gd ʿwḏ	yṯʿ	ʾlt	lh	gd ḏf	rḍy	s²nʿr	ʾlh tm	gd nbṭ	ʾlh hġs¹	ṣr	gdw hbʾl
Partnered with bʾlsˡlm	17	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentioned with bʾlsˡlm	14	11	10	5	2	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
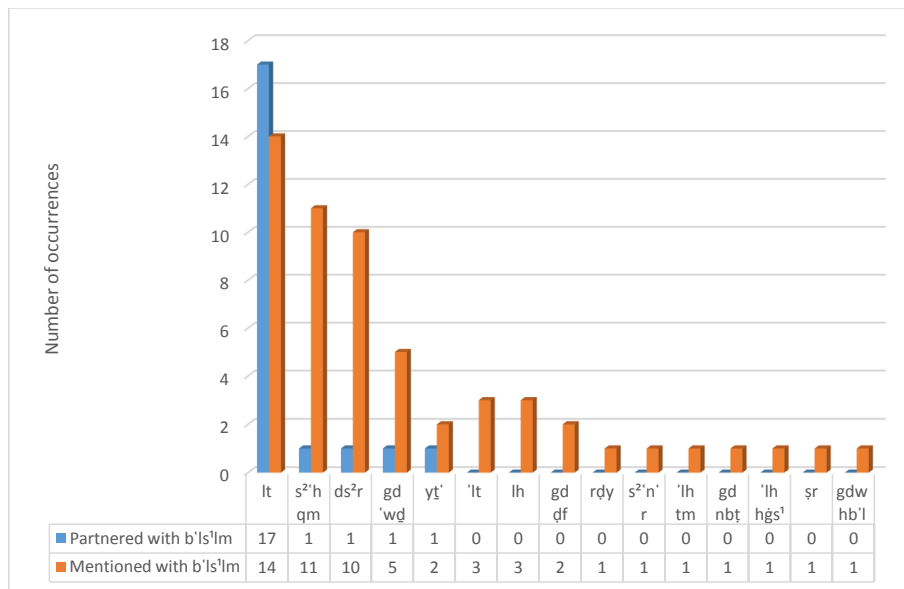
Fig. 3.21 – The deity *bʿlsˡlmn* partnered and mentioned with other deities

The deity *bʿlsˡlmn* appears as a solitary deity in 71.53% of the Safaitic religious inscriptions in which he is mentioned. This would suggest that he was considered a rather social deity in comparison to the amount of times deities such as *rḍw* are mentioned alongside other deities. In inscriptions where more than one deity is featured alongside *bʿlsˡlmn* there does not seem to be any difference between whether he is partnered with a deity, or mentioned alongside multiple deities. In terms of the inscriptions where he features alongside only one other deity

he is partnered most frequently with the goddess *lt*. The partnership between *bʿlsʾlmn* and *lt* is the second most frequently occurring partnership between *lt* and another deity. However the occurrences of these partnership inscriptions are only slightly more common than *lt* being partnered with *s²ʿhqm* and *gd ʿwḏ*. Since *lt* is partnered three times more often with *ds²r* this does not suggest any particularly relevant relationship between the deities *bʿlsʾlmn* and *lt*.[482]
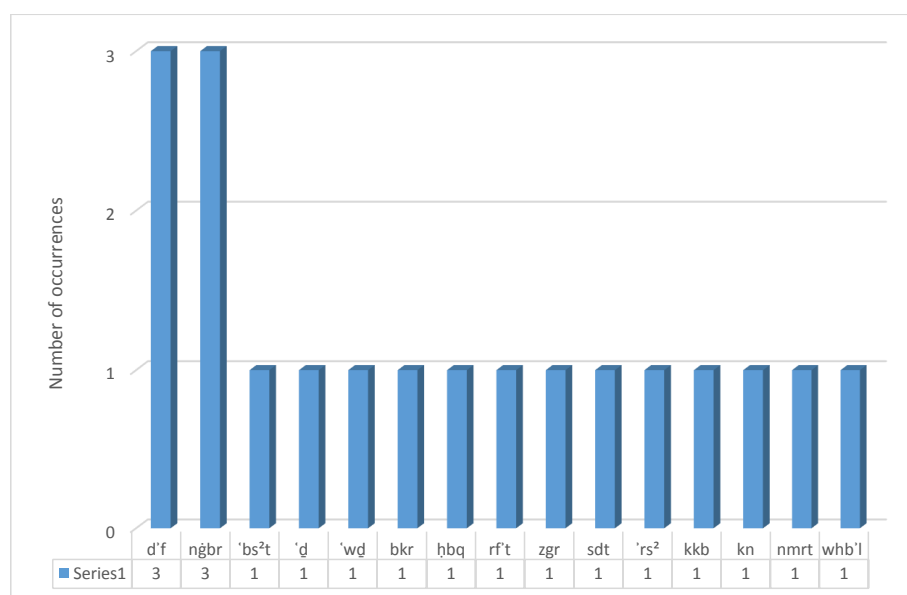
Fig. 3.22 – Full list of tribal lineages mentioned with *bʿlsʾlmn*

There does not seem to be any correlation between *bʿlsʾlmn* and any particular tribe mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions. There are only multiple references to the tribes *ḏf* and *ngʾbr*, and they in turn are very small. Instead, *bʿlsʾlmn* is mentioned in connection with a wide variety of tribes accross a range of occasions (see fig. 3.22 above). What is interesting is the fact that there are single references across a number of tribes. This in turn highlights the distinct lack of tribal references in connection with the deities *rḍw* and *rḍy*.

As yet, there are only four extant references to sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*) found in the same inscription as the deity *bʿlsʾlmn*. Of these, three are specific references to the sacrifice being performed in honour of *bʿlsʾlmn*. There is only one other extant inscription that specifically

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[482] This belief is supported by Niehr 2003, p. 243

states that the sacrifice was performed in honour of a specific deity, namely *rḍy*, as mentioned above. The majority of references to sacrificial acts in the Safaitic religious inscriptions merely state that the author performed a sacrifice. Some sacrifices are mentioned alongside a prayer where a deity is invoked, whereas others do not feature a deity at all. The significance of the references to sacrifice that feature *bʿlsⁱlmn* is that so few of these inscriptions specifically name the deity to which the sacrifice is performed. Of the inscriptions featuring the practice of sacrifice three are be found in roughly the same region. This is an area known as al-Mrœshæn. The other inscription, in which the reference does not specify that the sacrifice was in honour of *bʿlsⁱlmn*, can be found at Ṣanæyim al-Gharz. These locations are to be expected given the fact that references to *bʿlsⁱlmn* in the Safaitic inscriptions have been identified as having an affiliation with Sīʿ in southern Syria. For example, we have references to temples of *bʿlsⁱlmn*,[483] most notably the temple at Sīʿ. A further association with Sīʿ can be seen in an epithet of the deity *bʿlsⁱlmn* where he is referenced as *bʿlsⁱmn ʾlh sⁱʿʿ* or *bʿlsⁱlmn* of Sīʿ. It could be argued then that temples of worship may have had a correlation with sacrificial practices, although as there are so few extant examples of inscriptions mentioning sacrifice that this cannot be definitively proven.

In the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts there is only one extant inscription featuring *bʿlsⁱlmn*.[484] It is constructed in the common format of these mixed texts with no introductory particle, nor a lengthy genealogy. The inscription – O *bʿlsⁱlmn*, ʾH is weary (*sⁱlḥ l- ḫt*) – does not even feature a request of the deity, merely a statement of fact holding *bʿlsⁱlmn* as witness.

bʿlsⁱlmn was considered a weather god by surrounding cultures. This seems to have carried over to the perception of *bʿlsⁱlmn* in the Safaitic inscriptions and a number of the texts appear to regard him as the provider or withholder of rain. Two inscriptions make specific reference to *bʿlsⁱlmn* withholding rain,[485] while another says the author "waited for the rains but it did not come the year the images/idols left Sīʿ".[486] The reference to Sīʿ would suggest that the author meant the deity *bʿlsⁱlmn*. Other references to *bʿlsⁱlmn* include authors asking for "provisions of rain" (*ġnyt b- mṭr*)[487] and "relief through rain" (*rwḥ b- mṭr*).[488] This suggests

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[483] See Littmann1, 350
[484] WH 2471
[485] C 1240; C 3261 – see the translation in Macdonald 1993, p. 366, n. 414
[486] M 198 – see the translation in Macdonald 2003, pp. 278–280
[487] WH 2143
[488] Mu 321; KRS 1233, 1482, 2420

that it was not just the name of *bʿls¹lmn* that was borrowed by the Safaitic Arabians, but also one of his major functions.

Geographical significance of *bʿls¹lmn*

When the inscriptions featuring *bʿls¹lmn* are plotted on a map it is interesting to note their geographical significance, especially when compared with the deity *ds²r*.[489] Inscriptions featuring *bʿls¹lmn* and *ds²r* appear roughly the same amount of times, although inscriptions featuring *ds²r* are more widespread throughout Ancient North Arabia than those of *bʿls¹lmn*. This suggests that the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians were influenced by the major deities of their surrounding cultures. For example, *ds²r* was worshipped as a major Nabataean deity, and *bʿls¹lmn* was very prominent in southern Syria. This is reflected in the geographical spread of the inscriptions featuring these deities. Although *bʿls¹lmn* was known in the Nabataean inscriptions his influence does not seem to have permeated the religious psyche of the Bedouin in the southernmost regions of these inscriptions. The inscriptions featuring *bʿls¹lmn* likewise appear most frequently in clusters in southern Syria, mirroring the areas of his worship by the non-nomadic peoples of that area in the pre-Islamic era.

Summary

We can see through an analysis of the references to the deity *bʿls¹lmn* in the Safaitic religious inscriptions that he was clearly an important deity in the religious pantheon. Given the requests most frequently asked of him he appears to be a benevolent god with a protective function. His appearance in curses occurs in a relatively high number of cases giving the impression that he was considered a deity particularly adept at punishing offenders who obliterated inscriptions.

ds²r

The origin of *ds²r*

ds²r was the chief deity worshipped in the Nabataean religion under the form of the name *dwšr*,[490]and played an important role in both the religious and political affairs of the people due to his close association with the Nabataean royal family. The name *ds²r* literally translated means "the one of the Sharā", referring to the Shara mountain range near Petra.[491] Healey and

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[489] See Maps 6 and 7 in Appendix C.
[490] Healey 2005, p. 6388-6389
[491] Healey 2001, p. 87

Texidor argue that *ds²r* may have actually been associated with the valleys near Wādi Mūsā rather than the mountains around Petra suggesting that he was a localised deity around Petra.[492]

It is unknown if the name *ds²r* was the original name or merely an epithet. For example, Knauf argues that *ds²r* was an epithet of the Edomite god Qos[493] noting that the Nabataean temple at Jebel et-Tannur connected the two deities, and that the translation "the one of the Sharā" is similar to "the One of Sinai".[494]

ds²r is often referred to in Nabataean inscriptions as the god of the king[495] suggesting he is the supreme deity in the Nabataean pantheon. He is also the only deity whose worship does not seem to have been defined by regional popularity. He is assimilated with many non-Nabataean deities, such as the Greek gods Zeus,[496] Ares[497] and Dionysos,[498] as well as the A'ra, the god of Bostra[499] from the 1st century AD,[500] and the Palmyrene Arṣū.[501] He has also been equated with the Babylonian storm god Hadad due to the epithet *du-sar-ra*,[502] but this is debatable. The deity d*s²r* was a new god who gained prominence through his position in the Nabataean state[503] and was worshipped well into the 5th century AD.[504]

ds²r in the Safaitic religious tradition

ds²r is usually believed to have been borrowed by the Safaitic Arabians from the Nabataeans.[505] Some have argued that *ds²r* represents a solar deity[506] taking the place of the deity *Shams*, who appears very infrequently in the Safaitic inscriptions, but is well-known in surrounding cultures.[507] However, this view is not accepted by all scholars.[508] It has also been argued that

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[492] Teixidor 1977, pp. 91–92; Healey 2001, pp. 85–92
[493] Knauf 1991, p. 676
[494] Judg 5:5
[495] Dijkstra 1995, pp. 310–314
[496] Rehm & Kawerau 1914, pp. 263–265: no. 165; Starcky 1966, col. 990; Texidor 1977, pp. 82–85; Healey 2001, p. 101
[497] Seyrig 1970, pp. 111–112
[498] Sourdel 1952, pp. 63–64; Starcky 1966, col. 990; Healey 2001, p. 100; Rūsān 1992, p. 434
[499] Healey 2001, pp. 63, 97–100; Dijkstra 1995, p. 312
[500] Bowersock 1983, p. 73
[501] Zayadine 1990, pp. 38, 42
[502] Fahd 1968, pp. 72–73
[503] Healey 2001, p. 81
[504] Syriac version of Epiphanius' Panarion dating to 4th/early 5th cent AD, "Dusares and Obodos" are mentioned as deities worshipped by the "Arabians."
[505] Clark 1979, p. 128
[506] Ryckmans 1951, p. 314
[507] Ryckmans 1951. pp. 22–23
[508] Clark 1979, p. 131

he is depicted as a rayed sun symbol accompanying some of the inscriptions,[509] a view that is accepted by some scholars.[510] An alternative option is given in the following chapter which deals with the pictorial representation of the Safaitic deities, including *ds²r*.[511]

ds²r is a commonly invoked deity in the religious Safaitic inscriptions featuring in approximately 6.39% of all religious inscriptions that feature a deity, only slightly less than the deity *bʿls¹lmn*. His name appears most frequently in the form *ds²r* which is the Aramaic form of the name,[512] indicating that the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions learnt of the deity through the Nabataeans,[513] rather than the Ḥismāic Arabians.[514] His name is represented far less frequently in the Arabicised form of *ds²ry*, appearing in only three inscriptions.[515] As is the case with the Arabicised spelling of *bʿls¹lmn*, as yet it is not possible to know if this spelling was a result of evolutionary phonology or a regional dialect. This is most due to the absence of datable events mentioned within the inscriptions that feature this particular transliteration of the deity's name. When locations of inscriptions are plotted on a map there does not seem to be any suggestion of a particular regional variation between the two spellings.

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[509] Jamme, JaSV402, p. 18
[510] Oxtoby 1968, p. 22
[511] Caquot 1970, p. 189
[512] Macdonald 1995, p. 761; 2000, pp. 46, 48
[513] Healey 2003, p. 87
[514] Macdonald 2000, p. 48
[515] C2955; WH 61; KRS 2569
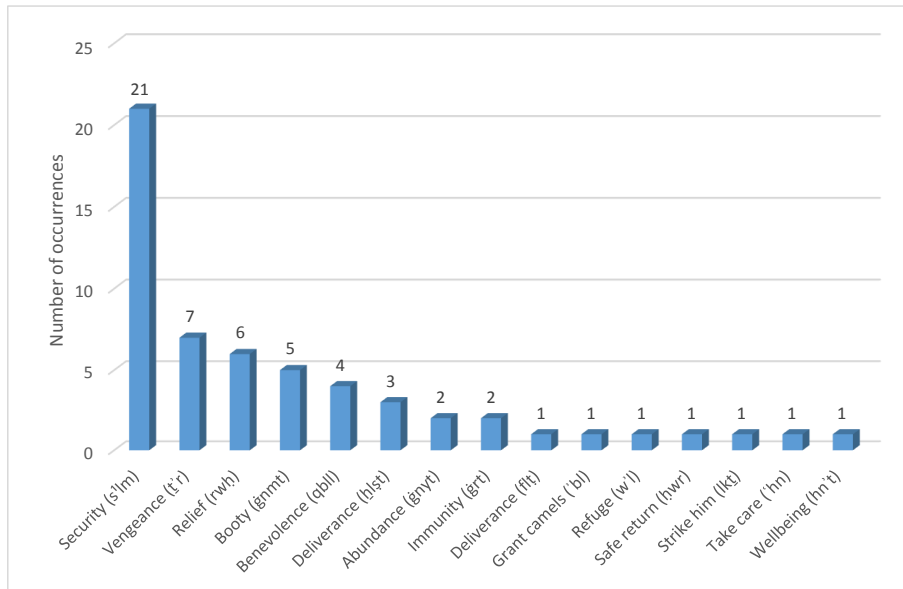
Fig. 3.23 – Full list of requests made to the deity *ds²r*

The deity *ds²r* was responsible for many functions in his role as a frequently invoked deity in the Safaitic inscriptions. The request most often put of him in the Safaitic religious texts is a call for security (*s¹lm*) appearing in approximately 35% of prayers made to the deity. There does not seem to be any clear secondary function but the next most frequently documented prayers include requests seeking vengeance (*ṯ'r*) appearing in 10% of inscriptions, and booty (*ġnmt*) and relief (*rwḥ*) each appearing in 8.33% of inscriptions.

	Material	Benevolent	Defensive	Malevolent
■ Series1	24	24	65	17
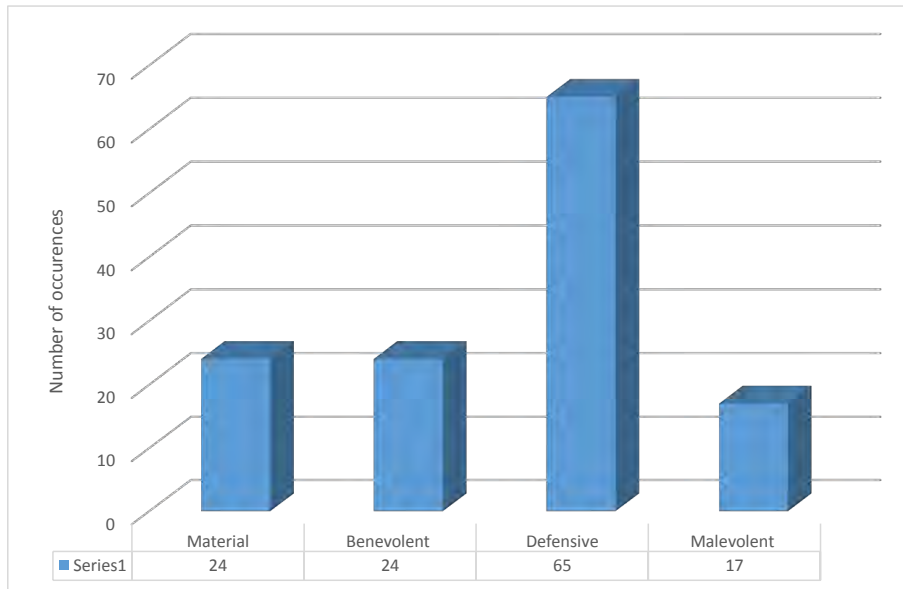
Fig. 3.24 – Types of prayers made to *ds²r*

Of all the requests made to the deity *ds²r*, 50% can be classified as defensive prayers. This number is followed by benevolent and material prayers which account for 18.46% of all prayers made to the deity *ds²r*. The final 13.08% of prayers are malevolent. These figures suggest that *ds²r* was considered a protective deity. The percentage of malevolent prayers featured is similar to the figure given for *rḍw*. In both cases these percentages are slightly higher than the average given the comparative rareness of malevolent prayers extant in the greater Safaitic corpus of religious inscriptions.
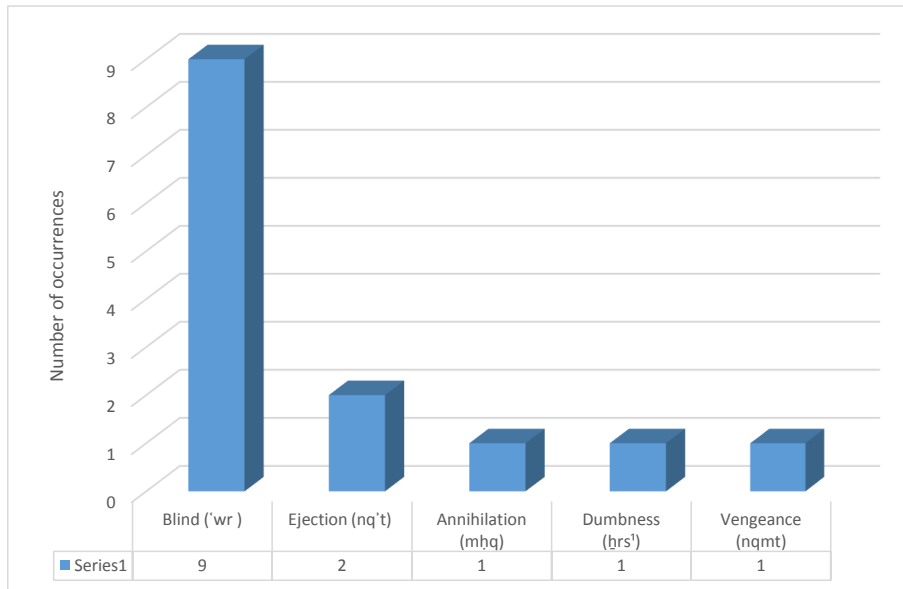
Fig. 3.25 – Requests for curses made to the deity *ds²r*

ds²r was the divinity invoked fourth most frequently in religious inscriptions that sought the enactment of a curse to protect the writing of the inscription. In the Safaitic curses that feature *ds²r*, he is most frequently sought after to inflict blindness (*ʿwr*) on an enemy, a request that appears in approximately 64.29% of cases. These figures only account for curses where *ds²r* is the single deity mentioned in a prayer, or is specifically requested to enact the curse. In terms of the entire corpus of inscriptions that feature *ds²r* and also a curse he appears in approximately 21.37% of cases. This figure rises slightly to approximately 22.22% when inscriptions that feature *ds²r* as a single deity or specifically request his assistance are included. While he is mentioned relatively frequently in curses, his role in their enactment does not seem to be as relevant to the Safaitic Arabians as the connection between deities such as *lt* and *bʿls¹lmn* and curses seems to be.

It is interesting to note that in Ancient North Arabia, curses are far more common in Safaitic inscriptions than any of the surrounding linguistic groups, such as Thamudic, Ḥismāic

and Nabataean.[516] Of further significance is the fact that of the three examples we have of the spelling *ds²ry* being used instead of *ds²r*, two of those inscriptions also feature curses.

	lt	s²'hqm	gd 'wḏ	b'ls¹lm	dṯn	'lt	s²'n'r	'lh tm	gd nbṭ	'lh hġs¹	ṣr	gd ḏf	lh	rḍy
Partnered with ds²r	50	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mentioned with ds²r	14	6	4	10	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
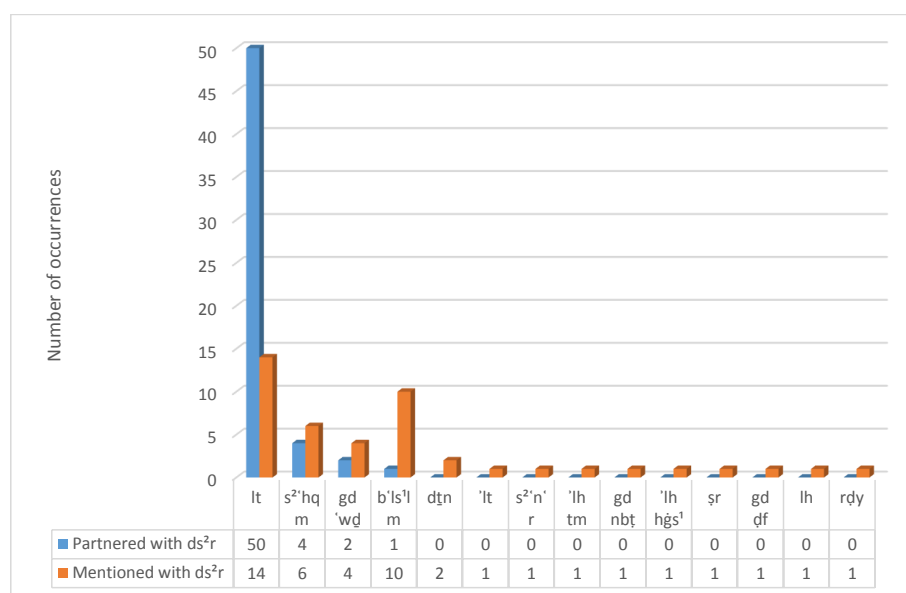
Fig. 3.26 – The deity *ds²r* partnered and mentioned with other deities

As mentioned above, it has been suggested that in Nabataean religion *ds²r* may have been considered a divine partner of *lt* as part of a "dyothetistic pairing".[517] However, whether *lt* played the role of wife or mother is as yet unclear. In the Safaitic inscriptions *lt* is partnered alongside *ds²r*, with no other deities present in the inscription, in 33.58% of cases, nearly three times as frequently as the next closest contender, *b'ls¹lmn*. This would seem to suggest that there was a significant relationship between *lt* and *ds²r*, more than likely as a result of religious borrowing by the Safaitic Arabians from the Nabataeans. What that relationship amounts to in the Safaitic inscriptions however, is unclear, particularly given the brevity of many of the religious inscriptions.

Regarding partnerships with other deities, and excluding *lt*, there does not seem to be any particular relationship between *ds²r* and any other deity in the Safaitic pantheon. As

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[516] An example of *ds²r* being invoked to enact a curse can be seen in CII, 211
[517] Healey 2003, p. 114

mentioned above, *ds²r* does not feature in any inscriptions alongside *rḍw*. Once again, the significance of this will be dealt with later in this chapter. In the Safaitic religious inscriptions, *ds²r* appears as the solitary deity in an inscription in approximately 43.51% of prayers. This suggests that he was considered a very inclusive deity, in stark contrast to *rḍw* who is rarely mentioned in inscriptions alongside other deities.

	mrt	rks¹	blqy	d'f	ms¹kt	bs¹	bwg	'd	dd	dhh	ḥbb	ḥḍr	ḥyl	kkb	'mrtn	nġbr	nmrt	qs²m	'rs²	s¹'d	'ṣr	tm	'ty	ṭy'	wqr'l	zd'l	zhr
Series1	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
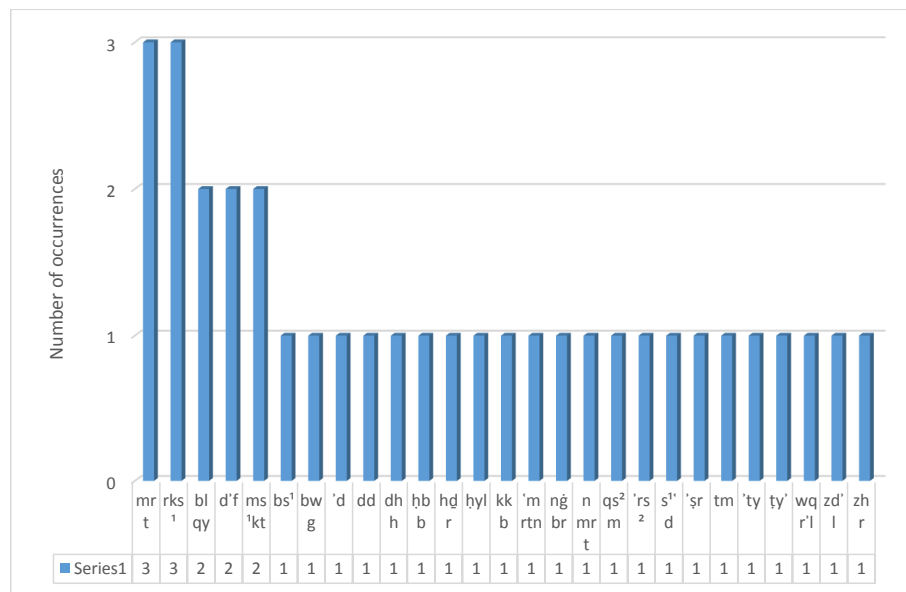
Fig. 3.27 – Most common tribal lineages mentioned with *ds²r*

It is interesting to note that of the inscriptions featuring *ds²r* where the author also reveals their tribal affiliation, there are three inscriptions citing the tribe *'mrt,* a potentially Nabataean tribe. Further discussion detailing the prominent tribes in the Safaitic inscriptions and their relationships with relevant deities follows in a later section.

As yet there are no specific references to sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*) in inscriptions that also feature *ds²r*, but the practice of blood sacrifice by the Nabataeans at Petra where he was known as the chief deity perhaps suggests that sacrifice could have been performed in his honour there.[518]

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[518] Ball 2002, p. 68

In the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts there is only one extant inscription featuring *ds²r*. It reads "*h ds²r lkt ynḏġ*" which Winnett and Harding have translated as "O *ds²r* strike lkt".[519]

Geographical significance of *ds²r*

As mentioned previously it is interesting to note the geographical differences between the deities *b ʿls¹lmn* and *ds²r*. Both appear in roughly the same number but their geographical spread differs greatly. [520] Reference to *ds²r* is found broadly across Ancient North Arabia, while *b ʿls¹lmn* seems rather more localised to the regions of modern-day southern Syria and northern Jordan. The physical spread of inscriptions mentioning the deity *ds²r* tend gravitates towards the areas in which the Nabataeans had political or cultural influence. For example, we find inscriptions in areas of southern Jordan in the Wadi Rum/Petra regions and the north-west regions of modern-day Saudi Arabia in the al-Ula sector close to Madāʾin Ṣāliḥ, both of which served as popular Nabataean capitals. *ds²r* was not only common in these areas but spread throughout the entire geographical region in which the Safaitic religious inscriptions are found.

It has been suggested that the Nabataeans were a nomadic or semi-nomadic people. This could explain the geographical spread of *ds²r* as the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions were themselves largely nomadic and would likely have had a lot of contact with Nabataean traders or herders.

In terms of the inscriptions in which *ds²r* is partnered with *lt* alone, there does not seem to be any geographical significance to the locations. This is unusual since, as previously stated, the perceived relationship between *ds²r* and *lt* was likely to have come from the Nabataean religious beliefs. One would therefore expect a correlation between the realms of Nabataean influence and occurrences of inscriptions featuring a partnership between *ds²r* and *lt*. Perhaps it is enough to note that the writers of these inscriptions were nomadic and thus it is likely that the religious beliefs of the Nabataeans permeated the Safaitic pantheon through movement of people. It must be reiterated that while inscriptions featuring *ds²r* may have clustered around regions of Nabataean influence the deity was essentially worshipped throughout the entire sphere of Safaitic religious and non-religious inscriptions.

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[519] WH 3596a
[520] See Maps 6 and 7 in Appendix C.

ds²r: rḍw or s²ʿhqm?

It has been argued by some scholars in the study of Nabataean religion, that *ds²r* was actually an epithet of either *rḍw* or *s²ʿhqm*, possibly both. In the case of *rḍw*, Clark believes that should this be true "then we may assume that among the Safaites also DSR and RDW were one and the same".[521]

Starcky argues that the name *ds²r* was an epithet of the god *rḍw*, with *rḍw* being worshipped by nomadic peoples and *ds²r* by sedentary communities.[522] Among the sedentary communities *ds²r* became a nameless deity, with the term *ds²r* translating to "The One of Shara", refering to the Jebel Shara mountain range near Petra.[523] Starcky's theory follows assimilations of *ds²r* and *rḍw* with other deities made in classical texts. Hesychios identifies *ds²r* with Dionysius, while Herodotus associates Dionysius with Orotal.[524] Since *rḍw* is often associated with the deity Orotal as well Starcky concludes that the deity of "Shara" was *rḍw* which would explain his absence in the Nabataean texts.[525] The problems with this theory, according to Healey, are firstly that *rḍw* is not mentioned in the Nabataean texts at all,[526] and secondly that the gender of *rḍw* is somewhat ambiguous.[527]

However, as Macdonald states, "often one deity from the Semitic world may be equated with more than one from the Classical world… depending on which of his or her attributes was uppermost in the mind of the person making the equation".[528] Thus, the assumption that *rḍw* and *ds²r* were the same gods in the Nabataean religion because of assimilations with the same Greek deities may not necessarily be correct. Even if this were the case in the Nabataean religion, it does not mean that the assimilation of *rḍw* and *ds²r* is necessarily applicable to the Safaitic religious beliefs.

While there are no examples of *ds²r* mentioned in the same inscription as *rḍw*, there does exist an inscription that features both *rḍy* and *ds²r*: *h lt w rḍy w ḏs²r s¹lm ġnmt* or "O *lt* and *rḍy* and *ḏs²r* security and booty".[529] It is possible, as discussed above, that the reason *ds²r*

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[521] Clark 1979, p. 130
[522] Starcky 1966, col. 991
[523] Clark 1979, p. 129
[524] Herodotus, *Histories*, III:8
[525] Starcky 1966, p. 718
[526] Healey 2001, p. 23, 94
[527] Healey 2001, p. 94; Krone 1990, pp. 441–456
[528] Macdonald 2012, p. 264
[529] KRS 2869

and *rḍw* are never mentioned in the same inscription is because they entered the Safaitic corpus at different periods. If, as previously suggested, the deity *rḍw* was a more archaic deity, whose name gradually evolved into the form known as *rḍy* then it is possible that the reason *rḍw* and *ds²r* are not mentioned in the same inscription is because *ds²r*, a deity who possibly did not enter the Safaitic religious realm until the 1ˢᵗ century AD, was introduced at a time when the name *rḍw* had already ceased to exist in contemporary Safaitic inscriptions, eing replaced by this time with *rḍy*.

In addition, the functions most often attributed to the deities *ds²r* and *rḍw* in the Safaitic inscriptions are quite varied. For example, the most common request of the deity *ds²r* is security (*s¹lm*), a request that is rarely made of *rḍw*. *ds²r* is also asked relatively regularly to provide vengeance (*t'r*) against an enemy. While requests for vengeance are also asked of *rḍy* they occur to a much lesser extent than they do with *ds²r*. Plus the specific request for *t'r* does not feature in any prayers for vengeance made to *rḍw*. While the deity *rḍw* is requested to provide aggressive assistance at times, generally he is a far more benevolent deity,[530] especially in comparison to *ds²r*. The fact that both deities seem to have had very specific functions in the Safaitic pantheon suggest that they were considered separate deities by the Safaitic Arabians.

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[530] Both including and excluding mixed Thamudic B/Safaitic texts.

The chart shows two data series with the following values:

Category	Main requests of rḍw	Main requests of ds²r
Help (s¹'d)	19.63%	0%
Booty (ġnmt)	22.09%	10.00%
Deliverance (flṭ)	12.88%	2.00%
Relief (rwḥ)	11.66%	12.00%
Security (s¹lm)	7.36%	34.00%
Vengeance (nqm/nqmt)	6.75%	0%
Life (ḥyw/ḥlw)	3.68%	0%
Vengeance ('yr)	3.68%	0%
Deliverance (fṣyt)	2.45%	0%
Abundance (ġnyt)	1.84%	2.00%
Compensation (bdd/bddt)	1.84%	0%
Protection (wqy/wqyt)	1.84%	0%
Vengeance (ṯ'r)	0%	8.00%
Deliverance (ḫlṣt)	0%	6.00%
Benevolence (qbll)	0%	4.00%
Immunity (ġrt)	0%	4.00%

Fig. 3.28 – Comparison of the deities *rḍw* and *ds²r* partnered and mentioned with other deities

ds²r can be considered a very "social" deity as he is mentioned quite frequently alongside other deities. *rḍw* on the other hand is far more likely to feature as a solitary deity in religious inscriptions, appearing alone in 96.38% of all inscriptions. The deity *ds²r* is mentioned alone in only 43.51% of inscriptions. The majority of the times *ds²r* is accompanied in an inscription he is partnered with *lt*. Another important thing to note is that *rḍw* is only partnered with *lt* in four inscriptions while *ds²r* is partnered with *lt* in 44. This suggests that not only is *ds²r* a more social deity than *rḍw*, he also has a more intimate connection with the goddess *lt*. Through the above analysis of *rḍw* and *ds²r* in the Safaitic inscriptions, we can see that they most definitely were not considered the same deity by the Safaitic writers.

Knauf offers the theory that *rḍw* may be identified with the deity *s²ʿhqm* as well as *ds²r*,[531] based on their similar militaristic aspects.[532] I would argue that this does not seem to

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[531] Knauf 1990, pp. 179–180
[532] Healey 2001, p. 147

164

be the case in the Safaitic inscriptions however since, as stated above, *rḍw* does not seem to have a played a particularly militaristic role in the Safaitic religious beliefs.

The most notable difference between the deities *ds²r* and *s²ʿhqm* concerns alcohol. Some texts claim that *s²ʿhqm* was the god "who does not drink wine", yet the association of *ds²r* with Dionysos suggests that he does. Knauf counters this argument by suggesting that wine consumption in the cult of *ds²r* may have been introduced by Hellenistic settlers, but may not have been accepted by the nomadic populations due to the practical implications of transporting wine while living a nomadic lifestyle.[533] This view that *ds²r* and *s²ʿhqm* were the same deity is also supported by Patrich, whether or not they are associated with *rḍw*.[534]

Evidence from the Safaitic points to the fact that *ds²r* and *s²ʿhqm* were more likely considered separate deities. They are mentioned together in ten inscriptions, six as a part of a conglomeration with other deities[535] and four where they are specifically partnered together.[536] In those where they are partnered together a '*w*' separates their names showing they were considered separate deities rather than one being an epithet of the other.

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[533] Knauf 1990, pp. 177–178
[534] Patrich 2005, p. 103
[535] C 3263; C 4753; Khunp 1; KRS 1706; M 155; Mu 95
[536] HaNSB 123; HSD 1; KRS 29; KRS 1163
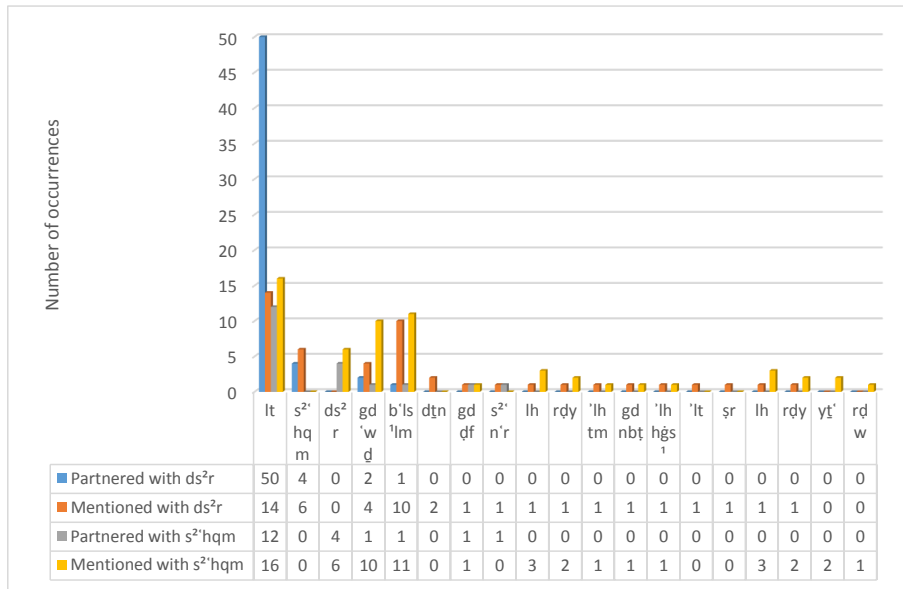
Fig. 3.29 – Comparison of the deities *ds²r* and *s²ʿhqm* partnered and mentioned with other deities

	lt	s²ʿhqm	ds²r	gdʿwḏ	bʿls¹lm	dṯn	gddf	s²nʾr	lh	rḍy	ʾlhtm	gdnbṭ	ʾlhġs¹	ʾlt	ṣr	lh	rḍy	yṯʾ	rḍw
■ Partnered with ds²r	50	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with ds²r	14	6	0	4	10	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0
■ Partnered with s²ʿhqm	12	0	4	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with s²ʿhqm	16	0	6	10	11	0	1	0	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	3	2	2	1

Nevertheless, their functions in the Safaitic inscriptions as well as their "sociability" are comparatively similar. Both *ds²r* and *s²ʿhqm* can be considered very social deities. *ds²r* is mentioned alone in inscriptions only 44% of the time, while *s²ʿhqm* is mentioned alone in 60% of cases. These statistics make these two deities the second and third least likely to be invoked in a prayer singularly. The similarities do not end there. As mentioned previously, the main functions of *ds²r* in the Safaitic inscriptions were as a source of security (*s¹lm*), vengeance (*ṯʾr*), booty (*ġnmt*) and relief (*rwḥ*). Likewise, the main functions asked of *s²ʿhqm* were also in order of importance, security (*s¹lm*), abundance (*ġnyt*), booty (*ġnmt*) and relief (*rwḥ*). Both feature somewhat similar levels of invocation for each request, and have relatively similar levels of occurrences in the Safaitic inscriptions. They are also mentioned in relatively similar numbers in terms of curses in the Safaitic inscriptions.

It is also interesting to note the geographical spread of both deities.[537] While *ds²r* inscriptions are found across a very wide area of Ancient North Arabia, with inscriptions appearing in both settled and non-settled regions, *s²ʿhqm* is less widely attested but does appear

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[537] See Maps 6 and 10 in Appendix C.

166

slightly more frequently in more remote areas. This provides support for the idea that *ds²r* was worshipped amongst sedentary people and *s²ʿhqm* among the more desert-dwelling people.

It is in the relationship that *ds²r* has with *lt* where we fidn the most differences between these two deities. The deity *ds²r* is mentioned with *lt* in a partnership in 44 inscriptions, whereas *s²ʿhqm* is partnered with *lt* in only 12 inscriptions. While the Safaitic Arabians may have considered their functions similar, it does not seem that the relationship with *lt* was the same.

It seems therefore that in the Safaitic inscriptions *ds²r*, *rḍw* and *s²ʿhqm* were considered different deities. This does not necessarily mean that they should be considered different deities in the Nabataean religious beliefs, although that question is outside the bounds of this study. If they were considered the same in Nabataean terms then those beliefs apparently did not transfer over to the nomadic populations of Ancient North Arabia.

ds²r and *lt*, or *lt* and *ds²r*: the order in the naming of a deity

In terms of religious texts that invoke multiple deities, Trombley states that "every Arab invoked and feared the powers of the last-named divinity".[538] There are some parallels to this observable in in contemporary Arab culture, for example, the most revered person enters a room last. The inscription Trombley refers to specifically features *lt* as the last named deity. As discussed above, she is by far the most commonly invoked deity in the texts. Thus the theory that she was the most revered deity is a reasonable assumption. However, it is important to note that not all scholars agree with the assertion. Healey for example, argues that this was not the case in Safaitic or Nabataean.[539]

In the Safaitic religious inscriptions that consist of both prayers and curses in the same inscription, prayers always precede curses. As such, the last deity mentioned is almost always the deity assume dto be asked to enact the curse. An analysis of the order of deities mentioned in religious inscriptions yields some interesting results, taking into account in which position they are mentioned in the prayer section of an inscription, or where they feature in the whole inscription regardless of whether it features a curse.

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[538] Trombley 1993, p. 178
[539] Personal communication with J. Healey

	lt	rḍw	rḍy	b'ls¹lm	ds²r	'lt	yṯ'	s²'hqm	gd 'wḏ	lh	gd ḏf
■ Deities mentioned last in an inscription	22	8	13	22	57	6	6	20	19	1	6
■ Deities mentioned last in an inscription - excluding curses	7	1	3	7	4	1	1	8	3	0	1
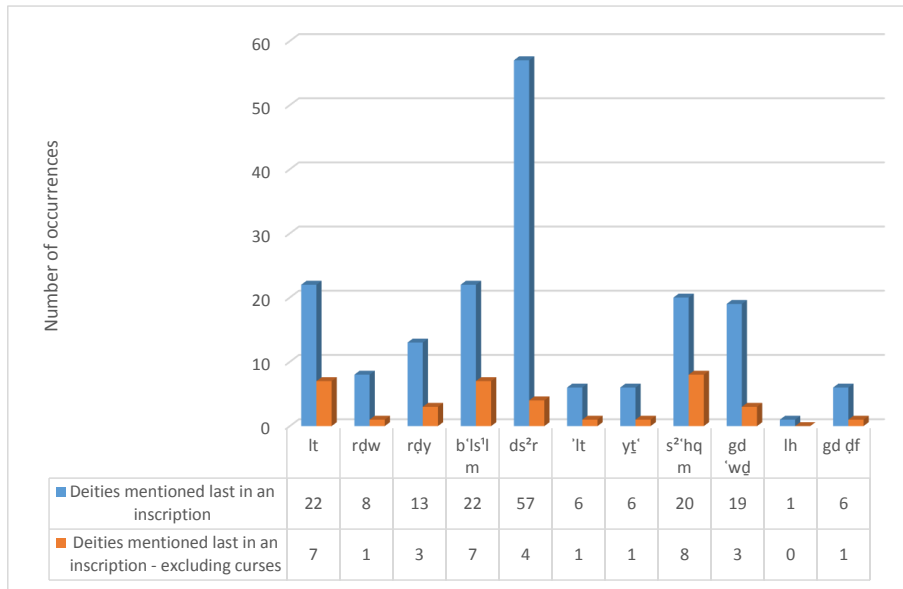
Fig. 3.30 – Comparison between deities that feature as the last named deity in the Safaitic inscriptions

In inscriptions that featuring more than one deity, *ds²r* is overwhelmingly the last-named divinity in the Safaitic religious texts. This is regardless of whether the text features a curse or not. *ds²r* features as the last named divinity in 57 inscriptions. In contrast, *lt* and *b'ls¹mn* are the next last-named divinities in 22 inscriptions, followed by *s²'hqm* in 20 inscriptions and *gd 'wḏ* in 19. Since many of the inscriptions where *ds²r* is the last mentioned deity are inscriptions that feature only two deities, if we only include inscriptions that feature more than two deities, the results change. In numbers alone, *s²'hqm* becomes the most frequently last-named divinity followed by *lt* and *b'ls¹lmn* featuring in seven inscriptions, and finally *ds²r* and *gd 'wḏ* in three inscriptions. What these figures indicate is that *ds²r* is mentioned frequently as the last named divinity when he is paired with a partner. When he is mentioned with more than one deity there is no evidence of a significant relationship.

What these figures also suggest is that while the last-mentioned divinity may have been potentially more feared than other deities in greater pre-Islamic Arab cultures, as Trombley suggests, it does not seem that this is the case within the Safaitic religious inscriptions. If this were the case, we would expect to see the deity *lt* featuring as the last-named divinity far more

frequently than she is, given her position in the Safaitic pantheon as chief deity. In addition, analyses that place importance in the pantheon onto the last-named deity do not do justice to deities that are not as social as others. For example, deities such as *lt*, *rḍw* and *rḍy* cannot be appropriately analysed because they are rarely mentioned in connection with other deities. Given that they are the three most frequently mentioned deities in the Safaitic inscriptions their importance is well-known, but this would not be reflected in any analysis of last-named divinities. Since there also does not seem to be any deity who is overwhelmingly regarded as the last-named divinity, this belief of the importance of the last-named deity does not seem to have been a relevant aspect in the Safaitic Arabians religious thought.

However, what an analysis of the positioning of deities does highlight is the location of the deity *lt* in prayers where she is partnered alongside a male deity. For example, in prayers where she is partnered with *ds²r*, excluding the curse section of a prayer, *lt* is only ever the last deity mentioned in 4.55% of inscriptions. She is the last deity mentioned slightly more often when she is partnered with other male deities, such as *bʿls¹lmn* where she is the last named deity in 29.41% of the inscriptions, and *s²ʿhqm* where she is mentioned last in 16.67% of cases. This might suggest that her gender plays a role in where her name is positioned in religious prayers, rather than there being any specific importance placed on the last-named divinity. As there are no other deities definitively proven to be female, it is not possible to compare name positioning within other partnerships.

Yet, the positioning of names in inscriptions where *ds²r* and *lt* appear might not be gender-related, but rather a result of their relationship with each other. It has been suggested in discussions about Nabataean religion that *ds²r* could be considered a divine partner of *lt*.[540] It is possible that she is his mother as a Nabataean inscription describes *lt* as "the mother of the gods of our lord Rabbel"[541] and *ds²r* is frequently referenced as "the god of our lord Rabbel".[542]

In the Safaitic inscriptions where a prayer features only two deities partnered together, there is a definite trend towards *lt* being partnered more often with *ds²r* than any other deity (see Fig. 3.4 above). In 33.58% of cases *lt* is partnered with the deity *ds²r*, nearly three times the number of times for any other deity. As a result, it is clear that a close relationship between the two deities existed, though the exact nature of that relationship is, as yet, unknown. In

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[540] Healey 2001, p. 114
[541] CII, 185; Sourdel 1952, p. 73; Healey 2001, p. 109
[542] Healey 2001, pp. 109–110; Wenning & Merklein 1997, p. 106

Islamic culture, it is common practice for older people to enter a room first, or be served first at meals. This could potentially reflect an earlier version of this trend, and incorporate the tradition by mentioning the elder first in a prayer. Thus we can see that the position of a deity's name in a religious inscription may be significant, possibly relating to gender or a specific relationship between the two deities, however what that significance may actually be, is as yet unknown.

It is important to note that in the inscriptions where *ds²r* and *lt* are featured together, if a deity is mentioned more than once in that inscription, it is always the goddess *lt* and never *ds²r*.[543] This shows that regardless of the positioning of the deities names in the inscription, it is obvious that the goddess *lt* was regarded more highly than the deity *ds²r* in the Safaitic inscriptions.

Summary

Through an analysis of the deity *ds²r* and the roles attributed to him by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions we can establish that he was probably considered a protective deity. There are a high percentage of requests made to him suggesting he played a defensive role in the pantheon. He had a crucial role in the enactment of malediction but his importance in curses was not as significant as contemporary deities such as *lt* and *b'ls¹lmn*. He can be seen as being a relatively social deity, regularly featuring in inscriptions alongside multiple other deities. In addition, there may be a connection with the deity *ds²r* and the tribe known as *'mrt*. Geographically worship of *ds²r* was more common in areas further south than those of other deities in the Safaitic inscriptions.

Furthermore it is unwise to identify the deity *ds²r* with the other deities *rḍw* and *s²'hqm* at least in the Safaitic inscriptions. An analysis of those deities suggest they were considered separate divinities. While *rḍw* is never mentioned with the deity *ds²r* (at least in this form of his name), he may have actually predated the deity in the Safaitic inscriptions. Likewise, while the deity *s²'hqm* shares a number of similarities with *ds²r*, for example, they have similar requests made of them in prayers and they are both social deities, although they differ slightly in their geographical representation. However, an important factor indicating that the Safaitic Arabians considered them as separate characters are the number of times *lt* features in an

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[543] AbaNS 92; CSA 1.2; Khunp 1; NSR 55

inscription alongside *ds²r* in comparison to *s²ʿhqm*, and of course the fact that they are mentioned in the same inscription on no less than ten different occasions. Finally we learn that there is a correlation between the last named divinity in inscriptions that feature the deity *ds²r* and the goddess *lt*, evidence of a relationship the nature of which is, as yet, unclear.

<p align="center">*ʾlt*</p>

The origin of *ʾlt*

Worship of the deity *ʾlt* presumably originated from the same source as *lt*. For a detailed discussion of the origins of *lt* see above.

ʾlt in the Safaitic religious tradition

ʾlt, presumably a female deity, is mentioned in approximately 5.80% of all Safaitic religious inscriptions with 119 invocations, or 5.30% of inscriptions if her appearances in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts are excluded with 102 invocations. In the mixed text inscriptions she is the third most frequently invoked deity, appearing in 13.49% of inscriptions of this format, only slightly fewer than the deity *yt̲ʿ*. It is unknown whether the deity *ʾlt* was considered the same deity as the chief goddess *lt* by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. Below is an analysis of the inscriptions that feature the goddess (presumably) *ʾlt* as well as a comparison of both deities.

	Security (sᶟlm)	Help (sᶟ'd)	Rest (rwḥ)	Deliverance (flṭ)	Vengeance (nqmt)	Booty (ġnmt)	Deliverance (fṣy)	Vengeance ('yr)	Abundance (ġyrt)	Bring back (hgry)	Humility (rk')	Keep away (fb'd)	Life (ḥyy)	Life (wb'lb)	Protection (wqyt)	Well-being (hn)
Total references	21	16	12	11	8	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Excluding mixed text references	21	3	12	8	8	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Only mised text references	0	13	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
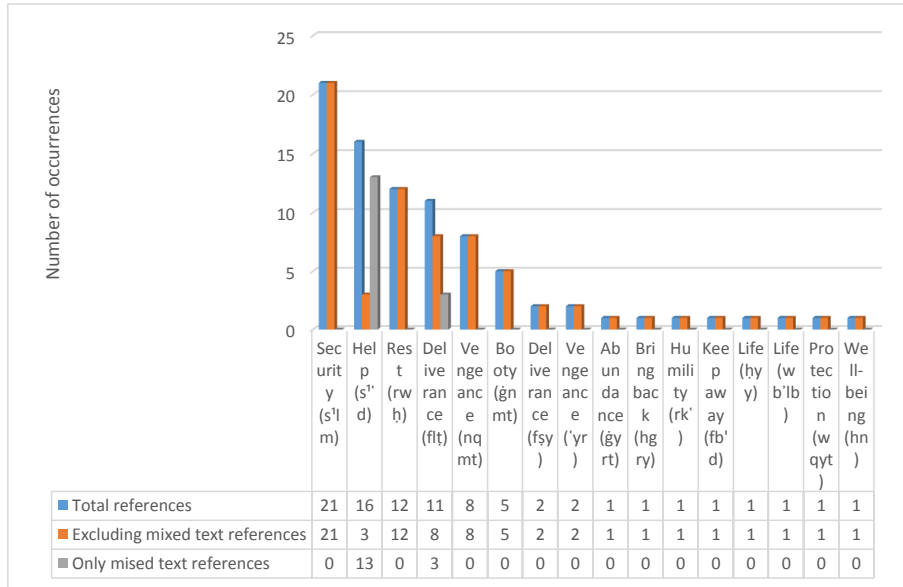
Fig. 3.31 – Full list of requests made to ʾlt

In the Safaitic inscriptions when she is invoked in a prayer she is most commonly requested to provide security (*sᶟlm*) for the author of the inscription. In inscriptions where she is the solitary deity mentioned or she is specified to enact a particular request, requests for *sᶟlm* account for approximately 24.14% of all inscriptions, followed by requests for help (*sᶟ'd*) occurring in approximately 18.39% of all inscriptions, then relief (*rwḥ*) at 13.79% and deliverance (*flṭ*) at 12.64%. However, these figures change when inscriptions that are written in the mixed text format are excluded. When mixed texts are excluded the most commonly requested prayers are for *sᶟlm* which rises to 29.58%, *rwḥ* again rising to 16.90% and vengeance (*nqmt*) at 12.68%. Other previously common requests such as *flṭ* drops to 11.27%, but the greatest reduction is in requests for *sᶟ'd* which decreases to merely 4.23% and drops from the second most frequently invoked request of the deity to the sixth. Thus the most common requests made to ʾlt when only her appearance in the mixed texts are analysed are help (*sᶟ'd*) at 81.25% and deliverance (*flṭ*) at 18.75%.
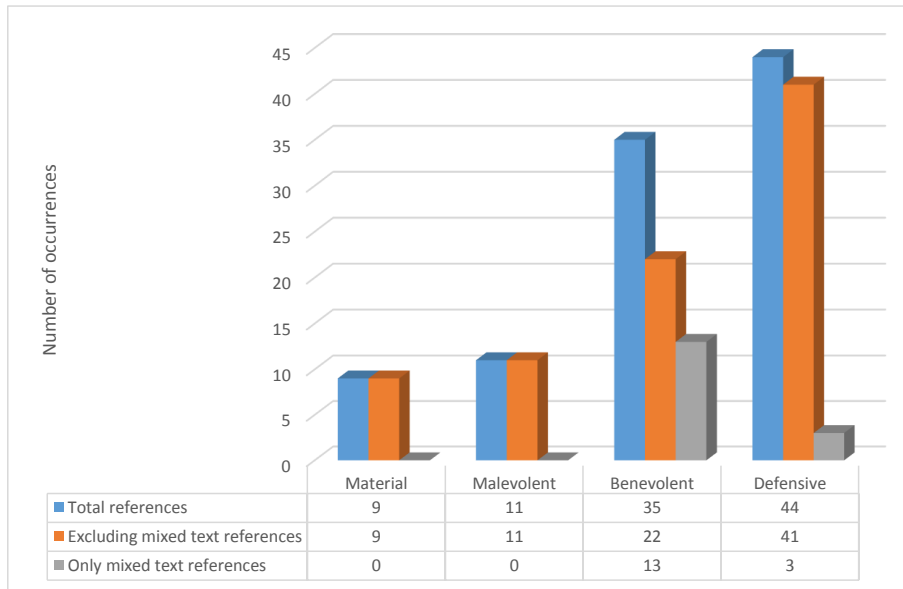
Fig. 3.32 – Types of prayers made to ʾlt

Of the requests made to the deity ʾlt in the entire corpus of inscriptions, approximately 41.67% of inscriptions can be classified as defensive prayers. Following this, 36.90% of inscriptions can be considered benevolent prayers, with 13.10% malevolent prayers and finally 8.33% material prayers. If all prayers where the deity ʾlt is the sole deity mentioned or is specified to enact a certain task are surveyed, then an impressoin is created in which the Safaitic Arabians considered the deity to be a defensive or protective deity who also performed a number of benevolent functions. However, if requests made in the mixed text format are excluded the figures change. While ʾlt is still most frequently requested to answer defensive prayers at 47.06%, benevolent prayers addressed to the deity decrease to 26.47%, followed by malevolent prayers at 16.18% and material prayers at 10.29%. From these figures however, we can see that overall the deity ʾlt was considered a protective deity in the Safaitic inscriptions with an important secondary role providing for benevolent prayer requests.

173

	Ejection (nqʼt)	Blind (ʻwr)	Deafness (ṣm)	Curse (lʻn)	Lame (ʼrg)
■ Series1	8	4	1	1	1
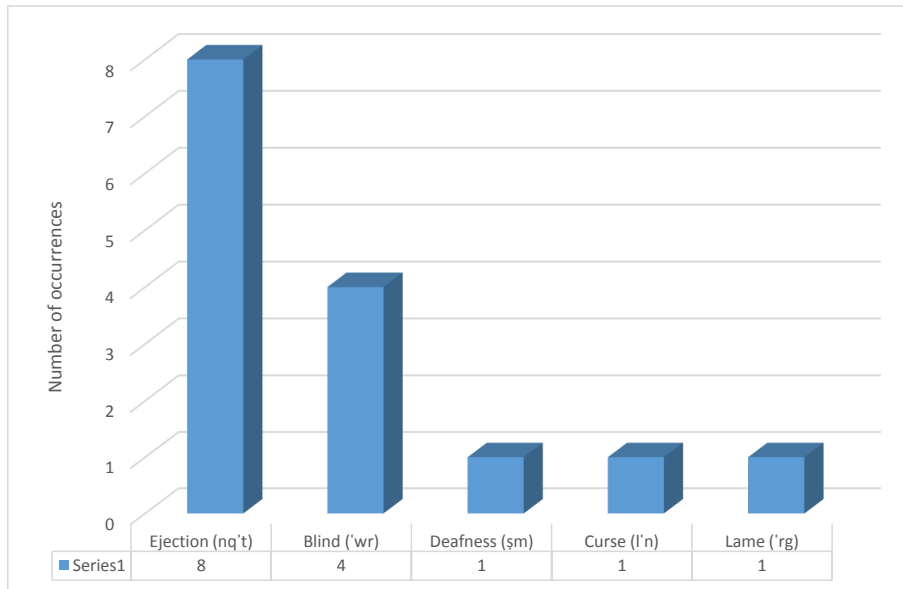
Fig. 3.33 – Requests for curses made to the deity *ʾlt*

The deity *ʾlt* appears in a number of curses, although she is mentioned substantially less frequently than other deities mentioned in the Safaitic religious inscriptions. Of the curses she features in she is most frequently asked to curse the obliterator of an inscription with ejection (*nqʼt*) in 53.33% of cases, followed by blindness (*ʻwr*) in 26.67% of cases. This is unusual as it is the only instance in the corpus of insriptions where a deity mentioned in the enactment of a curse is requested to provide *nqʼt* more often than *ʻwr*. Noevertheless it is important to note that there are only 15 examples of curses invoking the deity which may in itself account for the unusual percentage of requests for *nqʼt*.

174

	lt	gd ʿwḏ	rḍw	rḍy	ytʿ	bʿls¹m	ds²r	gd ḏf	s²ʾhqm
■ Partnered with ʾlt	6	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with ʾlt	1	2	1	0	3	3	1	1	1
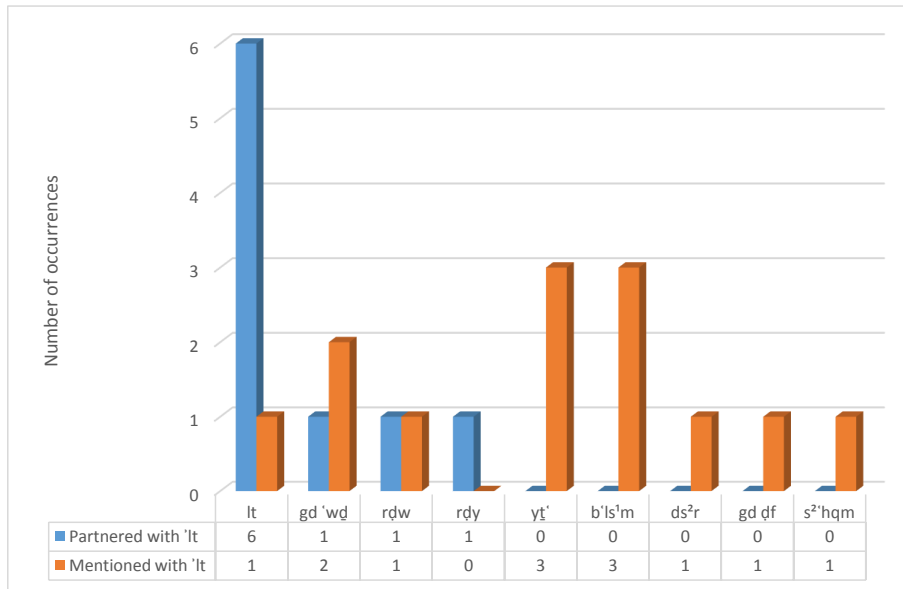
Fig. 3.34 – The deity *ʾlt* partnered and mentioned with other deities

In regards to the "sociability" of the deity and her ability to be partnered or mentioned in a prayer that features multiple deities, *ʾlt* is mentioned alone in 87.39% of inscriptions in which she features. This makes her the fourth least social deity in the Safaitic inscriptions, appearing slightly less frequently with other deities in inscriptions than the goddess *lt*, but slightly more than the deity *rḍy*. Of all the deities she is partnered with, she is most frequently seen with the goddess *lt* and they feature in five inscriptions together. There does not seem to be any significance in the other deities mentioned alongside her in inscriptions that feature multiple divinities.

Evidence is scant in terms of references to tribal lineages and sacrifice or other rituals. As yet, there are no extant references to the deity *ʾlt* in any inscription that also mentions sacrifice. When she is mentioned in inscriptions where the author also mentions their tribal lineage, the tribes *mʿyr*, *mlkt* and *rwḥ* each appear. However, they are only mentioned in one inscription each so there does not seem to be any significant tribal link with the deity *ʾlt* in the Safaitic inscriptions.

175

An interesting aspect of the worship of *ʾlt* are the higher than average numbers of epithets that accompany her name. She features in four different epithets in the Safaitic inscriptions. She is known as *ʾlt dṯn*,[544] *ʾlt h- nmrt* or the Goddess of Nemara, [545] *ʾlt rm ʿn* or the Goddess of Rmʿn[546] and *ʾlt ʾsⁱsⁱ* or the Goddess of Usays.[547] The latter two epithets are only mentioned once in the inscriptions, but the former, *ʾlt dṯn* and *ʾlt h- nmrt*, occur four times and twice respectively.

The epithet *ʾlt dṯn* is a curious one as there also seems to be a deity that features occasionally in the Safaitic inscriptions who goes by the name *dṯn*. This deity features in just seven inscriptions, excluding the ones that seem to be an epithet of the deity *ʾlt*. As mentioned previously, in the four extant inscriptions that feature the epithet *ʾlt dṯn* there is no introductive vocative particle, nor is there a *w* indicating that the inscription should read *ʾlt* AND *dṯn*. It is possible that the epithet should read *ʾlt* the goddess of *dṯn* possibly suggesting a partnership between the two deities, a practice that was common in many other contemporary religions.[548] Since there is also no introductory participle or *l* we can determine that the *dṯn* was not intended as a personal name after the invocation of the deity. It is also interesting to note that in the seven inscriptions featuring *dṯn*, the deity is asked to provide help (*sⁱʿd*) in 71.43% of cases. While there are no references to *dṯn* in the mixed texts, the request for *sⁱʿd* is the one most commonly asked of deities in inscriptions of that format. Likewise, as previously stated, the deity *ʾlt* is regularly featured in texts of that format. This suggests there may actually be a connection between *dṯn* and *ʾlt*.

The epithet *ʾlt h- nmrt* features twice in the Safaitic inscriptions and associates the deity *ʾlt* with the area of Nemara in southern Syria. Likewise, the epithet *ʾlt rm ʿn* may refer to an area named *rm ʿn*, although if it does this place name has since been lost. Macdonald suggests that it may be the name of al-ʿÛsæwi, where the inscription was found, as it would unusual to associate a deity with a particular place at another location.[549] Finally, the epithet *ʾlt ʾsⁱsⁱ* once more suggests a geographical connection to the deity *ʾlt* since it most likely refers to the area Usays, probably modern-day Jabal Usays, in southern Syria.

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[544] C994; C192; C2446; C4982
[545] HN 89; MISSF 1
[546] M 26
[547] C101
[548] Sokolowski 1972, p. 174 n. 11
[549] Personal communication with M.C.A. Macdonald.

While epithets are known to occur in the Safaitic religious inscriptions, the frequency with which *ʾlt* appears with an epithet, in comparison with other deities, is of significance. However, we are again hampered in drawing too many conclusions because of the brevity of sources.

Geographical significance of *ʾlt*

The deity *ʾlt* features prominently when references to her in Safaitic religious inscriptions are plotted on a map.[550] The majority of inscriptions are in clusters in the region of modern-day southern Syria, but there are also numerous occasions where she appears further afield in much smaller outcrops, for example in areas of north-western Saudi Arabia and further west. It is interesting to note that the areas that have the highest clusters of inscriptions featuring the deity *ʾlt* are in southern Syria. Interestingly this is also the region where most of her inscriptions bearing epithets naming geographical locations are found.

lt or *ʾlt*: One goddess or two?

It is unknown whether the chief deity of the Safaitic inscriptions *lt* can be considered the same deity as the deity *ʾlt* so a comparison of their respective positions in the Safaitic pantheon is essential. Some scholars argue that *lt* and *ʾlt* represent separate deities[551] while many others consider them to be the same.[552]

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[550] See Map 8 in Appendix C.
[551] Starcky 1956, p. 4, 212
[552] Clark 1979, p. 126

	Secu rity (sˡlm)	bene volen ce	Boot y (ġnm t)	Rest (rwḫ)	Abun danc e (ġyrt)	Help (s¹'d)	Veng eanc e (t̠'r)	Deliv eran ce (fṣy)	Veng eanc e (nqm t)	Abun danc e (ġnyt)	Prote ction (wqy t)	Plent y (mgd t)	Veng eanc e ('yr)	Deliv eran ce (flṭ)
■ Series1	68.05	4.92%	4.66%	4.66%	2.33%	1.55%	1.55%	1.42%	1.42%	1.29%	1.16%	0.91%	0.65%	0.52%
■ Series2	30.43	0%	7.25%	17.39	1.45%	4.35%	0%	2.90%	11.59	0%	1.45%	0%	2.90%	11.59
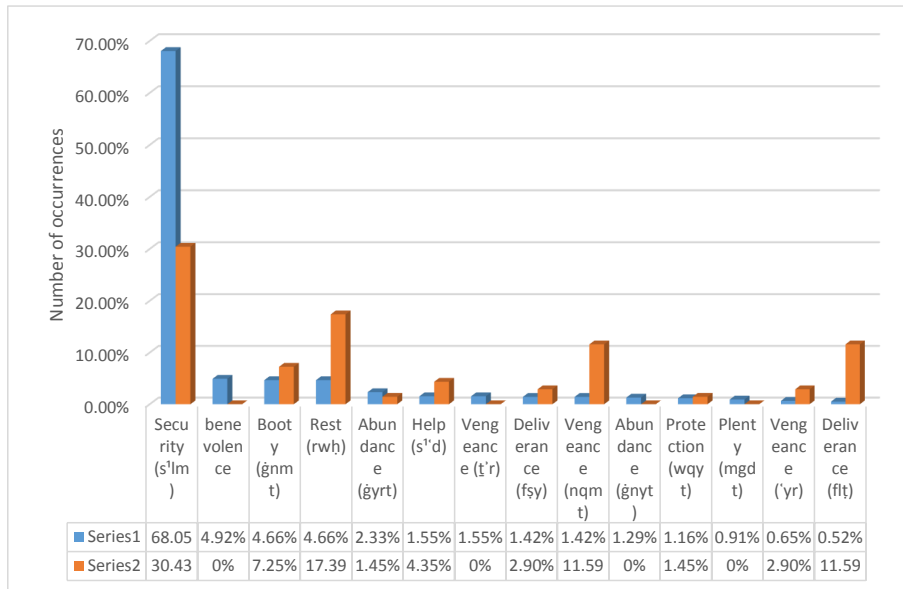
Fig. 3.35 – Comparison of the main requests of *lt* and *ʾlt* including and excluding the mixed texts

The goddess *ʾlt* is the sixth most commonly invoked deity in the Safaitic pantheon and similarly to *lt* has been given a wide range of functions to perform. Like *lt* she is most commonly requested to provide security (*s¹lm*), though not nearly at the same percentage that *lt* is. She is also asked relatively frequently to provide deliverance (*flṭ*), rest (*rwḫ*) and vengeance (*nqmt*). These are all common requests made to *lt* as well. Where these two religious representations differ in regard to their functions in prayers is in terms of requests for help (*s¹'d*). While approximately 18.39% of prayers made to *ʾlt* are requests for help only two inscription exist where *lt* is asked for help, and this is also when the mixed texts are included in the analysis.

It is important to note that many of the inscriptions that feature the deity *ʾlt* are written in the mixed text format, inscriptions that traditionally seem to feature content that is markedly different to the majority of the inscriptions in the corpus of Safaitic religious texts. If these texts are excluded, then the functions of *ʾlt* become predominantly similar to those of *lt*. The exception is the extent to which *ʾlt* is invoked in order to provide security (*s¹lm*). Whn this function is considered we find *ʾlt* is invoked nowhere near the amount, or percentage, of times

178

of *lt*. However, the lack of prayers featuring security (*s¹lm*) is also a feature of the mixed texts so this is not altogether surprising. While *ʾlt* does feature occasionally in curses in the Safaitic inscriptions, the number of times she appears is a fraction of the number of times *lt* appears.

	ds²r	bʿls¹lm	gd ʿwḏ	s²²hqm	rḍy	ʾlt	ytʿ	gd ḏf	rḍw	lh
■ Partnered with lt	50	17	13	12	9	6	6	5	4	0
■ Mentioned with lt	16	15	14	16	2	1	1	4	1	2
■ Partnered with ʾlt	0	0	1	0	1	6	0	0	1	0
■ Mentioned with ʾlt	1	3	2	1	0	1	3	1	1	0
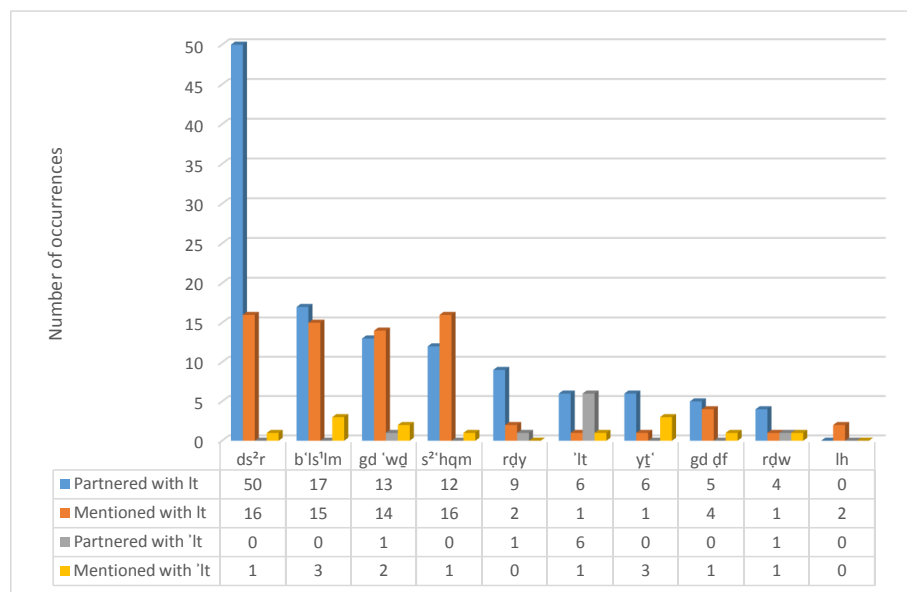
Fig. 3.36 – Comparison of the most common deities partnered with the *lt* and *ʾlt*

Another important similarity between the two deities are that both can be considered relatively "solitary" deities. *lt* features as the only deity in approximately 84.02% of religious inscriptions, compared to *ʾlt* who is mentioned alone in approximately 87.39% of prayers.

In terms of geographical spread, both deities seem to share roughly the same area. This can be seen when you compare Map 3, which covers the geographical distribution of the goddess *lt,* with Map 8 which covers the distribution of the goddess *ʾlt*.

Analysis of the functions and geographical spread of *lt* and *ʾlt* in the Safaitic inscriptions, excluding the mixed texts, supports the view that these goddesses were in fact considered the same deity by the authors of the inscriptions. Yet, there are a number of inscriptions where the deities are mentioned together in the same inscription which does throw some doubt on this theory. For example, in C 96 the text reads *f h lt s¹lm w h ʾlt ʾs¹s¹ nqʾt l- ḏ yʿwr h/ s¹fr*. If we take the *wh* preceding *ʾlt* to represent the vocative particle "*wh*" then it can

179

be translated as "O *lt* security, O *ʾlt* of *ʾsⁱsⁱ nqʾt* on the obliterator of the inscription". However, if we take the *w* as *wāw* meaning "and" and the *h* representing the vocative particle *h* then the *w h* can be translated "O *lt* security AND O *ʾlt* of *ʾsⁱsⁱ nqʾt* on the obliterator of the inscription". While the second interpretation suggests the two were considered separate deities, there is no way of knowing conclusively which translation is closer to the intended meaning. Another example of the ambiguity of *wh* or *w h* is found in C 4986, *f h lt sⁱlm l- ḏ sⁱʾr w h ʾlt dṯn,* which could translate as "O *lt* security this year, O *ʾlt* of *dṯn*…" or "O *lt* security this year and O *ʾlt* of *dṯn*".

In C 2446 the vocative particle, or lack of a vocative particle, is more transparent. The inscription reads *f h lt mʿmn w ʾlt dṯn w gdʿwḏ w gd ḏf* which translates as "O *lt*, fatness, and *ʾlt* of *dṯn* and *gdʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf*". This inscription certainly seems to suggest they were considered different deities.

However, another theory posits that perhaps *ʾlt* might also be translated as simply "the goddess". If this were the case then, for example, C 96 would read "O *lt* security, and O the goddess of *ʾsⁱsⁱ nqʾt* on the obliterator of the inscription". Likewise, C 2446 would read "O *lt*, fatness, and the goddess of *dṯn* and *gdʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf* …" If *ʾlt* is translated as "the goddess" then *ʾlt* could merely be an additional invocation of the goddess *lt*. For an example of an inscription without an epithet, HaNSB 307 reads "*f h lt sⁱlm w qbll w ġnmt w bny ʾnfsⁱ w dʿy ʾlt ʿl- mn yḫbl –h* and may be translated as "O *lt*, security and benevolence and booty and he built the funerary monument and may the goddess curse whoever spoils it".

Yet another potential theory is that the deity *ʾlt* is actually an earlier version of *lt*. The name could still translate as "the goddess" but as time progressed have evolved to be represented as *lt* rather than *ʾlt*. As already discussed the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts predate the greater Safaitic corpus. Since *ʾlt* is quite common in those texts but does not feature as frequently in Safaitic it could be argued that *ʾlt* was an earlier phonetic transliteration of the name *lt*. This would explain their relative similarity in terms of functions attributed to them in prayers. It would also explain why there are no occurrences of *lt* in the mixed texts but there are some for *ʾlt* in the Safaitic. This could possibly represent the transitioning period in the name of the deity. As *ʾlt* is only mentioned once in an inscription with *ds²r*, while *lt* is mentioned quite frequently, this could also represent the transmission of the Nabataean *ds²r* into the religious psyche of the North Arabian nomads and semi-nomadic tribes since the deity *ds²r* was a relatively recent addition.

In Krone's monumental work on *lt* she notes that in the Thamudic B inscriptions the form in which the name of the deity appears most often is *ʾlt*, appearing slightly more frequently than the form *lt*. She then shows that in the Thamudic E/Ḥismāic inscriptions, which were constructed at a later period than the Thamudic B inscriptions, the form *lt* is far more common.[553] Krone also states that evidence for the deity "al-Lāt" is not evident in the oldest aspects of the Thamudic inscriptions, a conclusion she comes to since the deity is not mentioned as frequently as others deities such as ᶜAttaršamain, Nuhai or Ruḍa. Furthermore, she argues that the cult of "al-Lāt" seems to have not perpetuated the Thamudic region until the 5th century BC.[554] Krone's findings supports the theory suggested above, particularly given the importance of the deity *ʾlt* in the mixed texts.

The deity *ʾlt* is common in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts, though not to the same extent as *rḍw*. Likewise, *ʾlt* is far less common in the entire Safaitic corpus than *lt*. As noted above, perhaps this is because the deity *ʾlt* was an earlier form of the deity *lt* and the name gradually evolved into the deity we know as *lt*, the chief deity of the Safaitic inscriptions. The fact that the roles and attributes of the two deities are remarkably similar suggest that while the name may have evolved over the time, the perception of the deities by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions stayed relatively similar. In terms of differences we need only to look at changing social circumstances. *ʾlt* is tasked with protective and defensive roles to a lesser extent than the deity *lt* which suggests that over time the society of the Safaitic Arabians may have needed protection to a greater degree than their predecessor society. This is similar to the changes that may have also occurred with the evolution of the deity *rḍw* into *rḍy*. In terms of inscriptions where *lt* and *ʾlt* are mentioned together, it is possible, as Krone suggests, that the change occurred over such a lengthy time that during some of that time the deities were actually considered separate.[555] Thus, it seems probable that this is yet another example of how the earlier mixed texts demonstrate the transmission and evolution of deity names and functions over time.

Summary

In summary, we can see through an analysis of the deity *ʾlt* that worship of this goddess was considered relatively important to the writers of the Safaitic inscription, though not nearly as

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[553] Krone 1992, p. 96
[554] Krone 1992, p. 94
[555] Krone 1992, p. 109

significant as many of the other deities. The deity also played an important role in inscriptions written in the mixed text format where she is predominantly considered a benevolent deity. In the greater Safaitic inscriptions, while her benevolent role was still evident, she had come to be considered more of a protective or defensive deity. In general terms *ʾlt* was an unsocial deity, rarely featuring in inscriptions alongside other deities. Yet, she was also the deity introduced most often with an epithet following her name, something quite unusual in the corpus. Geographically, worship of *ʾlt* was focused more towards the southern regions of modern-day Syria, although there are outcrops of inscriptions further afield. Finally, whether the deity *ʾlt* could be considered the same deity as *lt* is still yet to be seen, but it is possible that they were considered the same by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions, and that the differences in their names and functions were actually the result of evolutionary change across the region.

<div align="center">

yṯʿ

</div>

The origin of *yṯʿ*

The name *yṯʿ* comes from the root "to save" as seen in names such as Joshua and Jesus[556] and it has been argued by some that in South Arabic and Safaitic, *yṯʿ* actually represents the Christian Jesus.[557] This view has been strongly disputed with Ryckmans arguing that the name pre-dates Christianity in South Arabia.[558] There also exist a number of theophoric names featuring *yṯʿ*, such as *ʾm-yṯʿ* (*yṯʿ* is with (me))[559] and Taim-Yitha' (Servant of *yṯʿ*).[560] Oxtoby believes that even if the name were a borrowing from Christianity the characteristics of the deity definitely were not.[561] The name is also found in some Sabaean votive-texts.[562]

yṯʿ in the Safaitic religious tradition

yṯʿ is the seventh most commonly invoked deity in the Safaitic inscriptions appearing in approximately 5.76% of all religious inscriptions that feature a deity. His name appears in the Safaitic inscriptions in two forms: *yṯʿ* the most common form appears in 80.83% of the

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[556] Oxtoby 1968, p. 22
[557] Winnett 1941, pp. 341–353; Littmann 1950, pp. 16–18
[558] Ryckmans 1949, pp. 63–73
[559] Macdonald 2010b, p. 441 n. 166
[560] Littmann, 1914, p. 48, no. 53
[561] Oxtoby 1968, pp. 22–23
[562] Müller 1980, p. 68

inscriptions, and *ʾtʿ* in 19.17% of the inscriptions. When plotted on a map[563] there does not seem to be any particular regional variation between the two spellings, with most inscriptions covering the same approximate area.

	Security (s¹lm)	Help (s¹ʿd)	Deliverance (flṭ)	Rest (rwḥ)	Booty (ġnmt)	Deliverance (fṣy)	Vengeance (nqmt)	Assistance (ġwṯ)	Protection (qyt)	Prosperity (whb)
Total references	27	25	18	14	5	3	3	1	1	1
Excluding mixed text references	27	8	17	14	5	3	3	1	1	0
Only mixed text references	0	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
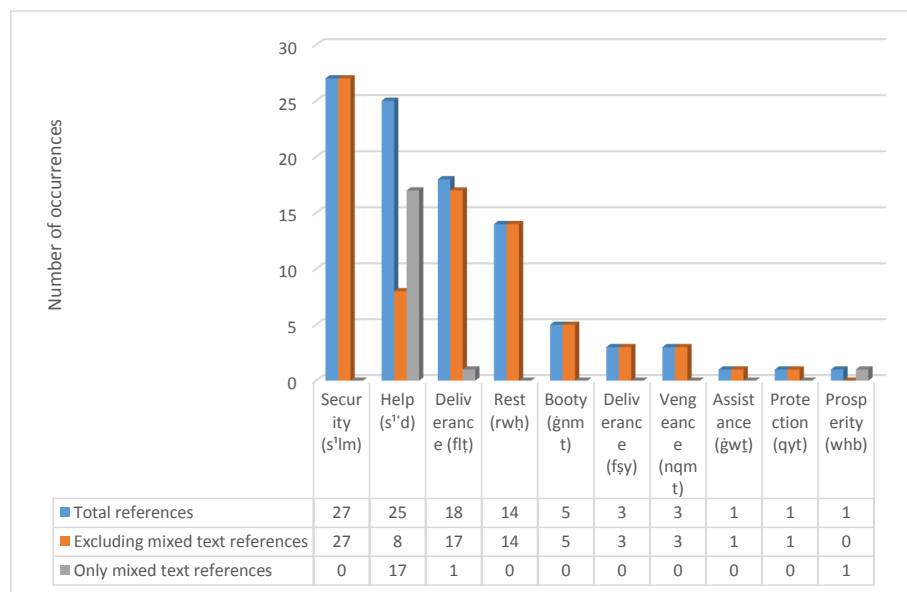
Fig. 3.37 – Full list of requests made to the deity *yṯʿ*

yṯʿ is most commonly asked to provide help (*s¹ʿd*) featuring in approximately 26.88% of cases, followed closely by security (*s¹lm*) in approximately 25.80% of cases, then deliverance (*flṭ*) at 18.28% and rest (*rwḥ*) at 16.13%. These statistics only include inscriptions featuring *yṯʿ* as the solitary deity or where is he specifically request to enact a prayer. He is only very rarely invoked in prayers seeking protection (*qyt*) and vengeance (*nqmt*) perhaps suggesting that his position in the pantheon of Safaitic religious figures was one for reserved for times of peace.

The deity is the second most commonly invoked deity in the mixed texts appearing in 15.87% of prayers in that format, and accounting for 16.67% of all prayers in which the deity *yṯʿ* features. When the requests made of the deity *yṯʿ* in the mixed text format are excluded from those in the greater Safaitic corpus then our image of *yṯʿ* is changes slightly, although the god

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[563] See map in Appendix C

represented in these texts is not altogether dissimilar. Requests for help ($s^1\mbox{'}d$) drop to 8.22%, while requests for security (s^1lm) rise to 32.88%, deliverance (*flṭ*) to 21.92% and rest (*rwḥ*) to 20.55%. Requests for $s^1\mbox{'}d$ are, as previously stated, a very common distinction between the conventional Safaitic texts and the mixed texts. All other invocations to *yṯ'* remain relatively similar. It is also important to note that the transliteration *'ṯ'* does not feature in the mixed texts.

	Material	Malevolent	Benevolent	Defensive
Total references	7	2	39	40
Excluding mixed text references	6	2	22	39
Only mixed text references	1	0	17	1
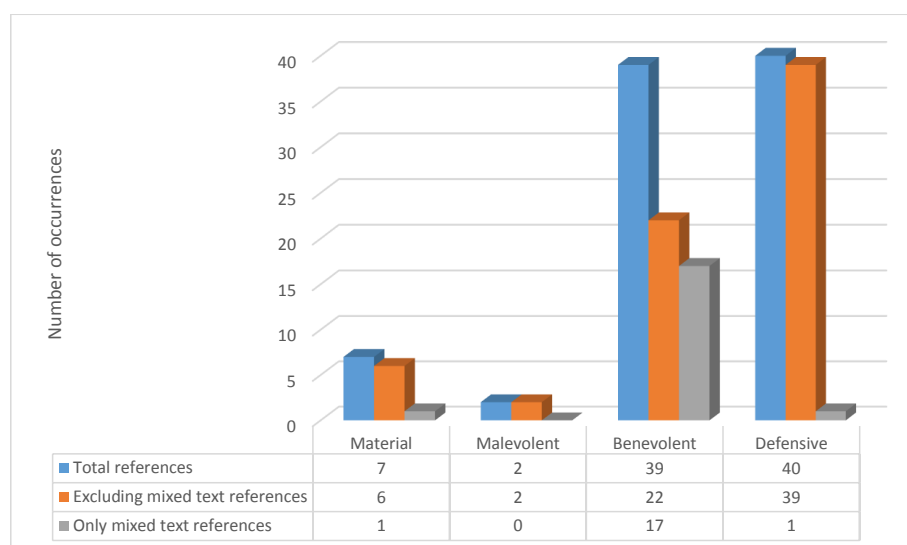
Fig. 3.38 – Types of prayers made to *yṯ'*

Of all the requests made to *yṯ'*, the most common form of prayer classifications are benevolent and defensive, both featuring in approximately 45.16% of cases. Material prayers then make up 7.53% of all prayers, with malevolent prayers at 2.15%. However, if the appearances of *yṯ'* in the mixed texts are excluded from this analysis, then the most common requests come in the form of defensive prayers at 56.16%, followed by benevolent prayers at 32.88%, material prayers at 8.22% and finally malevolent prayers at 2.74%. This suggest that the deity *yṯ'*, regardless of his appearance in the mixed text, was considered above all to be a defensive deity who still played an important role in the enactment of benevolent prayers.

184

	Blindness ('wr)	Dearth (mḥlt)	Ejection (nq't)	Vengeance (nqm)
■ Series1	12	3	3	1
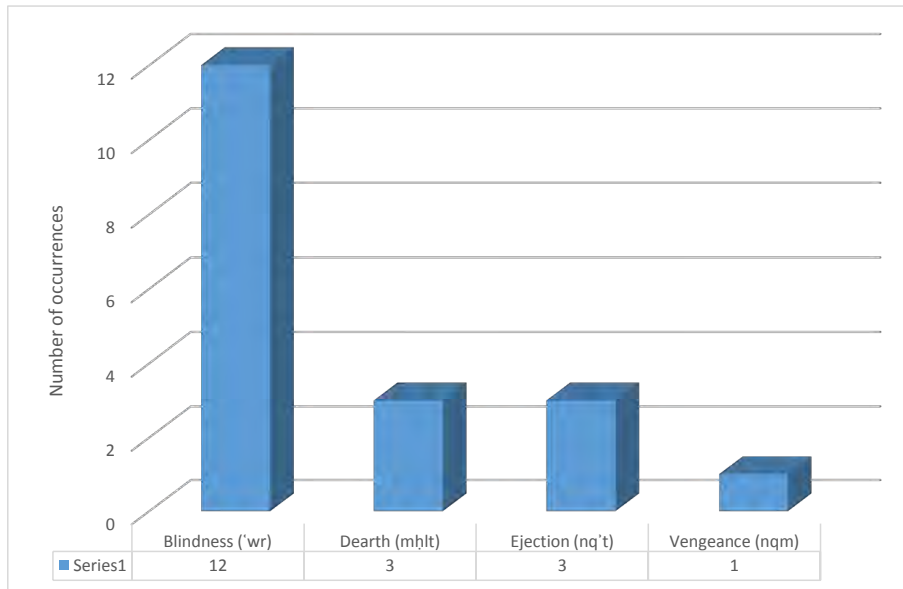
Fig. 3.39 – Requests for curses made to the deity *yṯ*ʿ

In inscriptions that also feature curses, the deity *yṯ*ʿ is the eighth most commonly invoked deity, a figure that is relatively approximate to his overall occurrence in the Safaitic inscriptions. When featured in a curse he is most often asked to blind the obliterator of an inscription (ʿwr), accounting for approximately 61.11% of all curses. The second and third most common curses are dearth of pasture for the obliterator (*mḥlt*) and ejection (*nqʾt*), both at 16.67%. As is the case with most deities, the curses he is asked to perform do not reflect a certain speciality of *yṯ*ʿ, but rather a commonality in the subject matter of curses. Interestingly, while he is mentioned in a few blessings, these occurrences are comparatively rare.

185

	lt	rḍy	bʿls¹m	rḍw	s²ʿhqm	ʾlt	ḫḏʿ	lh
■ Partnered with yṯʿ	6	2	1	1	0	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with yṯʿ	1	0	2	0	2	2	1	1
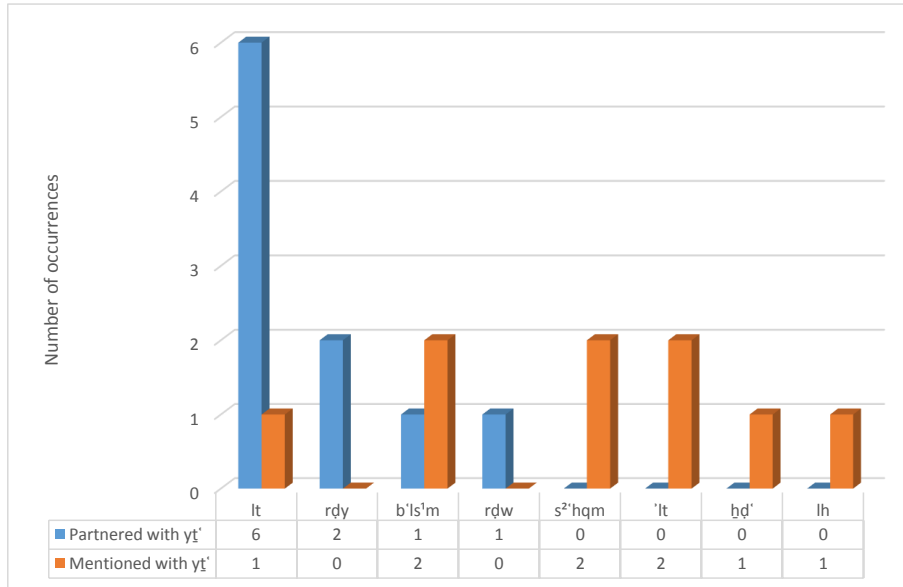
Fig. 3.40 – The deity _yṯʿ_ partnered and mentioned with other deities

      Unlike the deities _ds²r_ and _bʿls¹lmn_, _yṯʿ_ is rarely mentioned with other deities, either in a partnership or in an inscription featuring a number of deities. He is mentioned in a partnership in only 9.17% of inscriptions, and alongside multiple deities in just 4.17% of inscriptions. He is, in contrast, mentioned as the solitary deity in 86.67% of cases. These figures are significant in that deities that also feature in the mixed texts tend to be the least social of all the deities mentioned in the Safaitic pantheon, for example, _rḍw_ and _ʾlt_, discussed above. When the deity _yṯʿ_ is partnered with other deities he is most often partnered with _lt_ who appears in six inscriptions (two of those inscriptions in the form _ʾṯʿ_). This is followed by _rḍy_ with whom he is partnered twice and _rḍw_ only once. He is also partnered once with the deity _bʿls¹lmn_.

      Again, in terms of tribal lineages, the information we have available is very limited. There are only two extant examples of the author of an inscription mentioning their tribal lineage alongside the deity _yṯʿ_. Those two examples refer to the tribes' _yẓr_ and _ḏf_. Since there is nothing particularly significant about these tribes the lack of evidence of further connections between specific tribes makes an assessment of the tribal impact of _yṯʿ_ difficult to assess.

The deity _yṯ ʿ_ appears alongside four extant inscriptions mentioning sacrifice (_ḏbḥ_). This makes _yṯ ʿ_ the second most common deity to be mentioned in inscriptions featuring a reference to sacrifice, and puts him on an equal footing with with _gd ʿwḏ_ and _b ʿls¹mn_. As is the case with inscriptions featuring _ḏbḥ_, these inscriptions do not specifically mention _yṯ ʿ_ as the deity the sacrifice was intended for, although it can be assumed. Of the inscriptions mentioning sacrifice, three of the four use the form _ʾṯ ʿ_ in the body of the prayer. Interestingly, all of these inscriptions are from the same provenance. They also seem to have been written by a family group: two brothers and their father. In the same area there exists yet another reference to _ḏbḥ_ although this one does not mention the name of a deity. Since the inscription seems to have been written by another brother from the family group it is more than likely that _yṯ ʿ_ was the deity intended in the sacrifice. Further, given that these inscriptions were written by relatives it is possible that only one sacrifice was actually performed.

An interesting inscription mentioning the deity _yṯ ʿ_ exists in MISSD 1 where the author states _w nṣb ʾṯ ʿ s¹nt ʾmd qyṣr h- mdnt,_ "and he erected a sacred stone to _ʾṯ ʿ_ the year Caesar sent reinforcements to the town". The translators have translated the term _nṣb_ as "sacred stone" which they suggest may be a reference to an altar.[564] A sacred stone could represent a sacrificial altar where sacrifices to deities were made, which some scholars have argued later became inexplicably linked to the deities themselves and indeed may have became actual representations of the deities themselves.[565] The further significance of this inscription, insofar as it relates to worship of the deity, is the use of the name _ʾṯ ʿ_ over _yṯ ʿ_. Since this inscription is a later inscription in the Safaitic corpus, given that it references Caesar (_qyṣr_), evidence suggests that the form of the name _ʾṯ ʿ_ may be a later evolution of the name of _yṯ ʿ_. Likewise, if we assume that the inscriptions written in the mixed text format predate those in the greater corpus of Safaitic inscriptions, _yṯ ʿ_ is the only form found in those types of inscriptions. It is therefore entirely possible that _ʾṯ ʿ_ may be a later evolution of the name of the deity.

Geographical significance of _yṯ ʿ_

When the inscriptions featuring _yṯ ʿ_ are plotted on a map it shows that reverence of _yṯ ʿ_ was far more common in the areas of modern-day southern Syria, and northern Jordan with clusters in the eastern Jordanian badia.[566] These inscriptions are clustered quite closely to one another and

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[564] Macdonald, al-Muʾazzin, Nehmé, 1996, p. 456
[565] Teixidor 1977, p. 86
[566] See Map 9 in Appendix C.

are not spread over as wide an area as many of the Safaitic deities are, but rather centre in the one rough region.

Summary

yṯ ʿ was thus a semi-common deity in the Safaitic religious inscriptions. His origin or transmission to the Safaitic religious realm is unclear although he was possibly transmitted through the borrowing of central and southern Arabian religious traditions. Nevertheless he seems to be a very "Arabian" deity. His primary functions within the Safaitic inscriptions seem to be have been to fulfil defensive role followed to a lesser degree by a benevolent role.

He is the second most common deity mentioned in the mixed texts. While he does feature in inscriptions he is not a particularly important deity in the execution of maledictions. We can also see that *yṯ ʿ* was a very solitary deity, a trait which is particularly common amongst deities that feature regularly in the mixed texts. In addition, he is mentioned comparatively regularly in inscriptions mentioning sacrifice, although most of these inscriptions were written by members of the same family so it is possible that fewer sacrifices were performed than we have epigraphic evidence for. Finally, the differences in the name of the deity may be attributed to *ʾṯ ʿ* being a later evolution of the name *yṯ ʿ* given the inscription known as MISSD 1 and the fact that *yṯ ʿ* is the only name that features in the mixed texts.

s²ʿhqm

The origin of *s²ʿhqm*

The name *s²ʿhqm* is a composite divine name that can be translated as "protector of the people"[567] or "companion of the people"[568] with the term *qm* translated as a group of families with the same chief, thus defining the people.[569] *s²ʿhqm* has a background as a protective deity in the religious traditions of nomadic and desert-dwelling people in Ancient North Arabia.[570] He was known in the Nabataean and Palmyrene religious traditions and while he was not frequently attested in inscriptions his cult seems to have been widespread.[571] It has been suggested that *s²ʿhqm* was an angel or protector of travelling people much like the angel of

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[567] Littmann 1940, p. 107; Texidor 1979, p. 85
[568] Dussaud 1955, p. 145
[569] Oxtoby 1968, p. 22; Musil 1928, p. 50
[570] Healey 2001, p. 143
[571] Healey 2001, p. 144, 146

Yahweh during the exodus of the ancient Israelites.[572] The Safaitic version of the name *s²ʿhqm* is thought to have come from the Nabataean *Šyʿ- ʾl-qwm* meaning "the companion of the group".[573]

An inscription from Palmyra written in 132 AD refers to *s²ʿhqm* as "the good and bountiful god who does not drink wine".[574] Based on this reference, some scholars identify *s²ʿhqm* with the god Lycurgus.[575] Dussaud rejects this association, arguing that nomads had no need for wine, and instead he considers *s²ʿhqm* a tribal tutelary deity like *gd ḏf*.[576] As mentioned above, many scholars believe *s²ʿhqm* to be another name for the deity *ds²r*, whether or not this was true for the Nabataean religious beliefs it does not seem to have transferred into the Safaitic religious beliefs.

s²ʿhqm in the Safaitic religious tradition

s²ʿhqm is the eighth most commonly invoked deity in the Safaitic inscriptions appearing in 104 inscriptions, or approximately 5.07% of religious inscriptions that feature a deity. His name appears in two forms in the inscriptions, the more commonly used *s²ʿhqm*, and the lesser commonly used *s²ʿqm*, which is present in only six inscriptions and makes up 5.77% of invocations to the deity. As is the case with the differences in transliteration of many of the names of previous deities mentioned, the scarcity and brevity of the inscriptions means that we are unable to determine if these differences in transliteration are as a result of regional differences in pronunciation or are actually reflective of the age of transition.

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[572] Texidor 1977, p. 89; Exodus 23: 20, 23
[573] Hayajneh and Ababneh 2015, p. 265; Healey 2001, pp. 143-144
[574] CII, 3973; Littmann 1901, pp. 381–390
[575] Clermont-Ganneau 1901, pp. 382–402
[576] Dussaud 1955, pp. 145–147; This disapproval of wine may also be reflected in Nabataean culture in a quote of Diodous Siculus, XIX, 94.2, but Healey 2001, p. 147 cautions against making too much of this point.
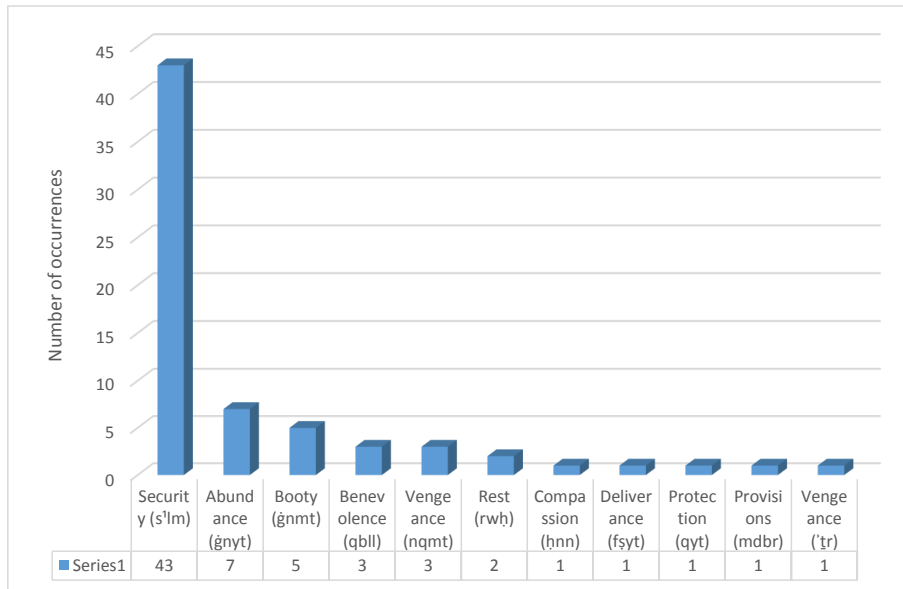
Fig. 3.41 – Most common requests made to the deity *s²ʿhqm*

In terms of Safaitic religious prayer where *s²ʿhqm* is the only deity mentioned or is specifically requested to enact a function, in 63.49% of inscriptions he is asked to provide security (*s¹lm*). This is followed by abundance (*ġnyt*) which appears in 11.11% of inscriptions. Following these two functions there is little differentiation between the content of the remaining prayer functions asked of *s²ʿhqm*. There are no references to the deity in the mixed texts.
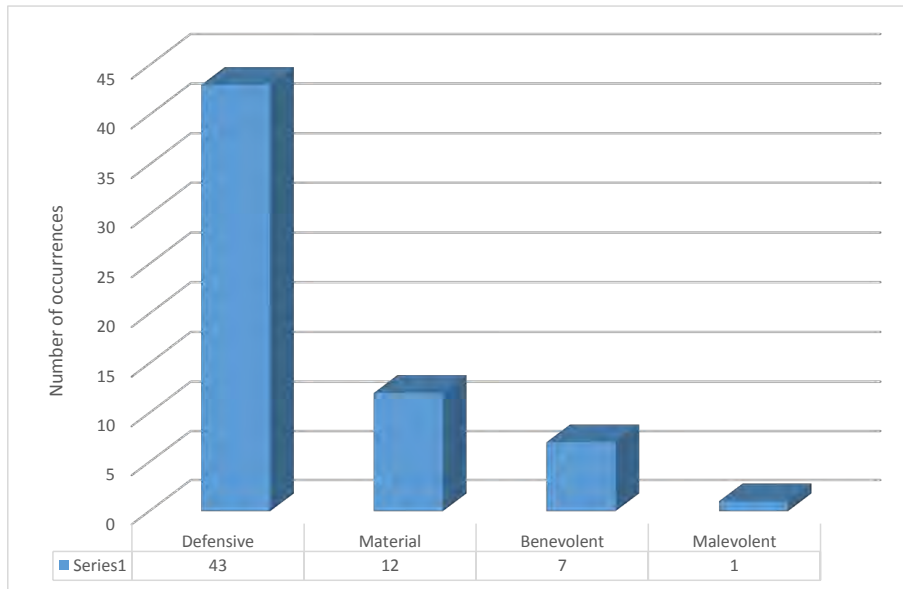
Fig. 3.42 – Types of prayers made to *s²ʿhqm*

  Of all the requests made of *s²ʿhqm* approximately 65.08% of those can be classified as defensive prayers. This is followed by material prayers occurring in 19.05% of inscriptions, benevolent prayers at 11.11% and finally malevolent prayers at 4.76%. These statistics give the impression that *s²ʿhqm* was primarily considered a defensive deity.
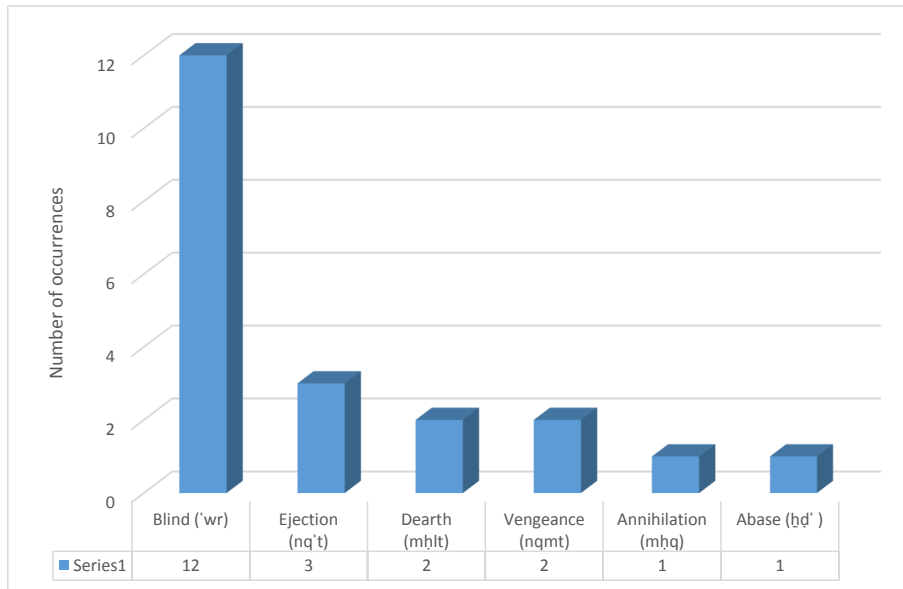
Fig. 3.43 – Requests for curses made to the deity *s²ʿhqm*

s²ʿhqm is the fifth most commonly invoked deity in inscriptions that feature curses. Approximately 33.65% of prayers to the deity also include a curse. Of course, many of these references to curses are in inscriptions that also feature a number of other deities. Of the curses that *s²ʿhqm* appears in as the solitary deity or is specifically requested to play a particular role, the most common requests made of the deity *are* for blindness (*ʿwr*) appearing in approximately 64.71% of inscriptions, followed by dearth of pasture (*mḥlt*) and ejection (*nqʾt*) both appearing in approximately 11.76% of curse inscriptions. These requests are comparable with most requests made of deities in the Safaitic curses.

	lt	ds²r	b'ls¹m	gd ʿwḏ	gddf	s²'n'r	lh	rḍy	yṯʿ	rḍw	'lh tm	gd nbṭ	'lh ḫġs¹
■ Partnered with s²ʿhqm	12	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with s²'hqm	16	6	11	10	1	0	3	2	2	1	1	1	1
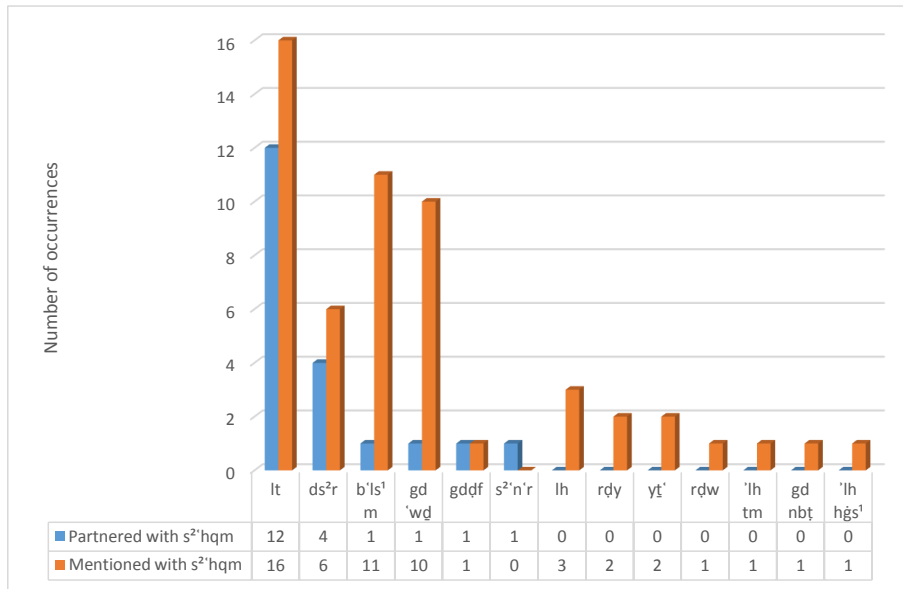
Fig. 3.44 – The deity *s²ʿhqm* partnered and mentioned with other deities

The deity *s²ʿhqm* can be considered a very "social" deity as he is mentioned alone in just 59.62% of religious inscriptions, making him the third most social deity after *ds²r* and *gd ʿwḏ*. Of the inscriptions where he is featured alongside another deity, he is partnered in approximately 20.19% of all inscriptions, and mentioned alongside multiple deities in 20.19% of inscriptions. Of the deities he is partnered with, *lt* features most often in 57.14% of inscriptions, followed by *ds²r* who is partnered with *s²ʿhqm* in 19.05% of inscriptions.
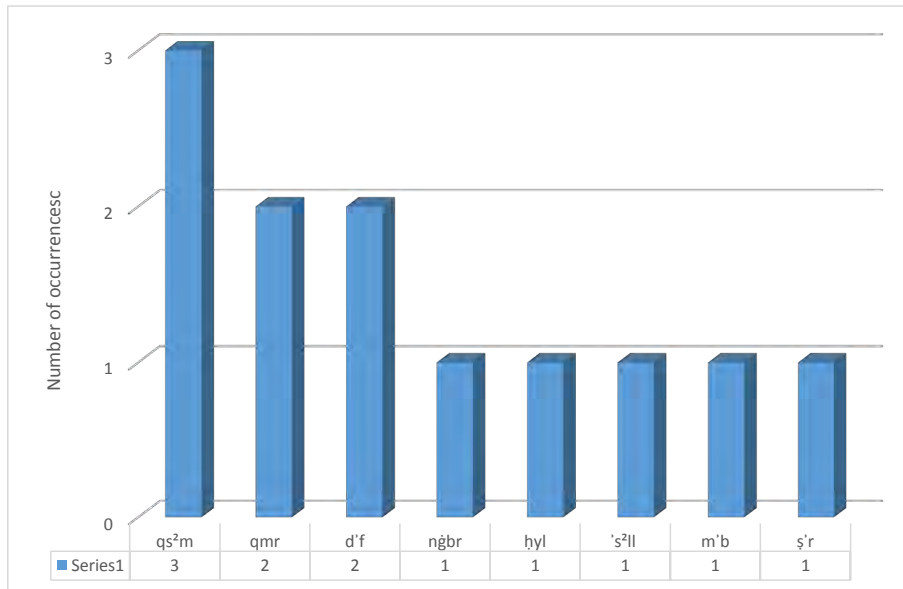
Fig. 3.45 – Tribal lineages mentioned with *s²ʿhqm*

Of the tribes mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions, *s²ʿhqm* appears in inscriptions featuring a total number of eight different tribes. The tribe most frequently mentioned is *qs²m* which appears in three different inscriptions, followed by *qmr* and *dʾf* which both appear twice. *s²ʿhqm* is mentioned relatively frequently in inscriptions where authors state their tribal lineage which may suggest that he was considered a deity of travelling peoples. The mention of an author's tribal lineage can be correlated to the number of forefathers that author mentions in an inscription. Since nomadic societies traditionally leave behind greater genealogies, the same could be said about tribal lineage. Thus, *s²ʿhqm* may be mentioned in inscriptions that feature the tribal lineage of the author more frequently than other deities because the authors of those inscriptions were more nomadic than other writers of Safaitic inscriptions. This fact also relates to *s²ʿhqm* being more of a deity that specialised in travel.

The deity *s²ʿhqm* is mentioned in three inscriptions that also reference sacrificial acts (*ḏbḥ*) but, as is the case with *ytʿ*, none of these inscriptions specifically state that the sacrifice be made to *s²ʿhqm*. Unfortunately the locations of these inscriptions were unable to be mapped so if there was any geographical significance to be ascertained we cannot be sure of it. However, we do know that two of the references to *s²ʿhqm* and *ḏbḥ* were found on the same

194

rock face.[577] This suggests that the authors of those inscriptions perhaps performed the sacrifice together and that only one actual sacrifice was offered.

There are two interesting extant inscriptions mentioning *s²ʿhqm* that speak to his character. The author of ZeWA 1, alongside a prayer to the deities *s²ʿhqm* and *lh* states that the "king of Nabaṭ smote one hundred [and] thirty warriors of the Romans". While it is difficult to properly date this inscription, it does indicate that worship of the deities *s²ʿhqm* and *lh* continued at least until the Roman period. The king of Nabat may be a reference to the King of Nabataea, which would place the terminus ad quem before 106 AD. Another interesting inscription is KRS 32 which states *w ẓlʿ mṭy f ʾdm b- s²ʿhqm*, or "and he was slightly lame whilst journeying quickly and so he held *s²ʿhqm* in contempt". What this inscription demonstrates is that the author believed very strongly in the power of the deity *s²ʿhqm* even going so far as to blame the god for his lameness.

Geographical significance of *s²ʿhqm*

Inscriptions featuring *s²ʿhqm*, like *ds²r*, occur over a wide area.[578] His appearances in the Safaitic inscriptions, when plotted on a map, show that his worship was widely attested in Ancient North Arabia, though not nearly to the same extent as *ds²r*. It is interesting to note that many inscriptions featuring him appear in more remote areas, supporting the belief that *s²ʿhqm* was more often revered by nomadic peoples rather than sedentary Arabians. Furthermore, this would also support the theory that *s²ʿhqm* was considered a protector of travelling peoples.

Summary

s²ʿhqm was considered by far a protective or defensive deity, primarily responsible for the security (*s¹lm*) of his followers. As we can see in KRS 32 he was also believed to possess real power in the enactment of punishments. In addition he does not feature in the mixed texts which suggests that he may not have entered the Safaitic pantheon in the same way or at the same time as some of the other deities such as *rḍw*. This makes sense if his worship was the result of a religious borrowing from his existence in the Nabataean religious beliefs. He is a relatively common deity in the enactment of curses and can be considered a very social deity. He is mentioned relatively frequently by authors who also state their tribal lineage and inscriptions

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[577] KRS 756, 757
[578] See Map 10 in Appendix C.

featuring prayers to *s²ʿhqm* are found more often in more remote areas of North Arabia. Since some have considered him to be a protector of travelling peoples perhaps this isolation is related to his connection with the nomadic lifestyle. Finally, he is mentioned in a number of inscriptions that also feature the practice of sacrifice (*dbḥ*), though it is possible that of the amount of sacrifices actually carried out may not be relative to the individual inscriptions that have been found.

gd ʿwḏ

The origin of *gd ʿwḏ*

The deity *gd ʿwḏ* likely entered the Safaitic religious realm from within, since his name is shared with a prominent Safaitic tribe *ʿwḏ*, although he was worshipped by people other than those with lineage in the tribe of *ʿwḏ*.[579] Some scholars have called him a fortune deity.[580] The tribe of *ʿwḏ* is discussed at length below in the section detailing significant tribes in the Safaitic inscriptions. Oxtoby suggests that deities such as *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḍf* were tribal deities rather than personal ones given the apparent association with the tribes *ʿwḏ* and *ḍf*.[581] Furthermore, Milik argues that worship of the deities *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḍf* represented a form of ancestor worship,[582] a theory which has since proven to have been based on a mistranslation.[583]

gd ʿwḏ in the Safaitic religious tradition

The deity *gd ʿwḏ* is a lesser deity in the Safaitic inscriptions mentioned in approximately 2.73% of all inscriptions featuring a deity.

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[579] Littmann 1940, p. 108
[580] Graf 1989, p. 366
[581] Oxtoby 1968, p. 45
[582] Milik 1972, p. 77
[583] Macdonald 1993, p. 364
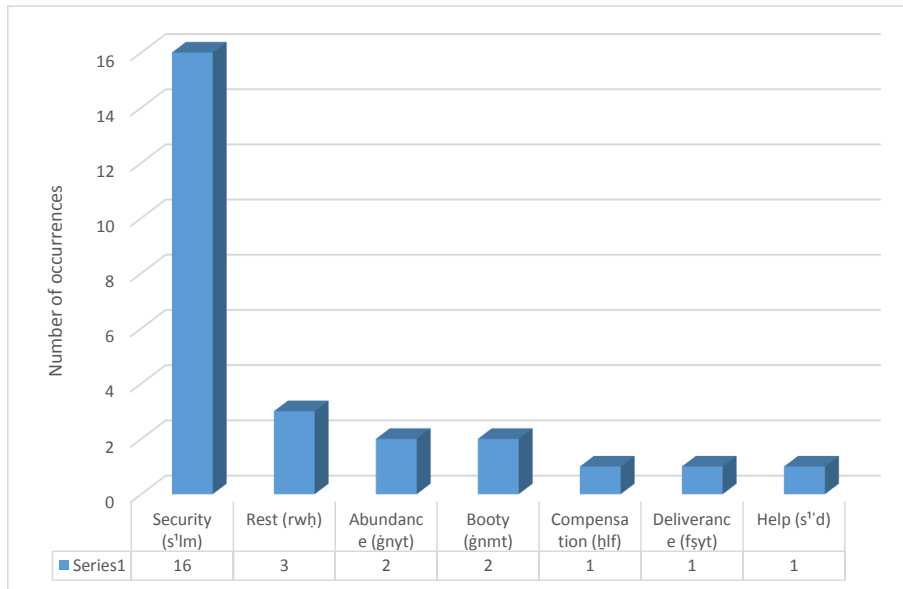
Fig. 3.46 – Full list of requests made of the deity _gd ʿwḏ_

The most common thing requested of _gd ʿwḏ_ in inscriptions where he features as the solitary deity or is specifically mentioned by the author, are related to security (_s¹lm_). Requests for _s¹lm_ comprise approximately 59.26% of all prayers made to _gd ʿwḏ_. These requests are followed by requests for relief (_rwḥ_) in approximately 11.11% of all inscriptions, then booty (_ġnmt_) and abundance (_mgdt_) both at 7.41%. This suggests that the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions considered the main function of _gd ʿwḏ_ as providing security for his followers.
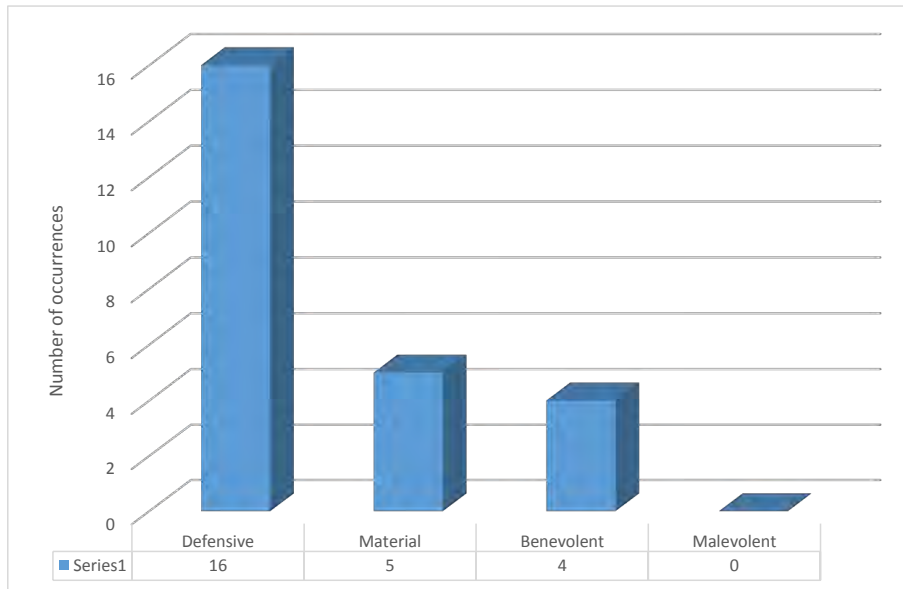
Fig. 3.47 – Types of prayers made to *gd ʿwḏ*

Following an analysis of the functions attributed to *gd ʿwḏ* we can see that the majority of prayers made to the deity are related to defensive actions. Approximately 62.96% or requests are for protection. Material prayers occur in 22.22% of cases while benevolent prayers account for the final 14.81%. As yet there are no malevolent prayers offered to the deity although this does not mean they do not exist. As with other deities there are comparatively few inscriptions to *gd ʿwḏ* in the Safaitic inscriptions and this makes drawing any firm conclusions somewhat difficult.
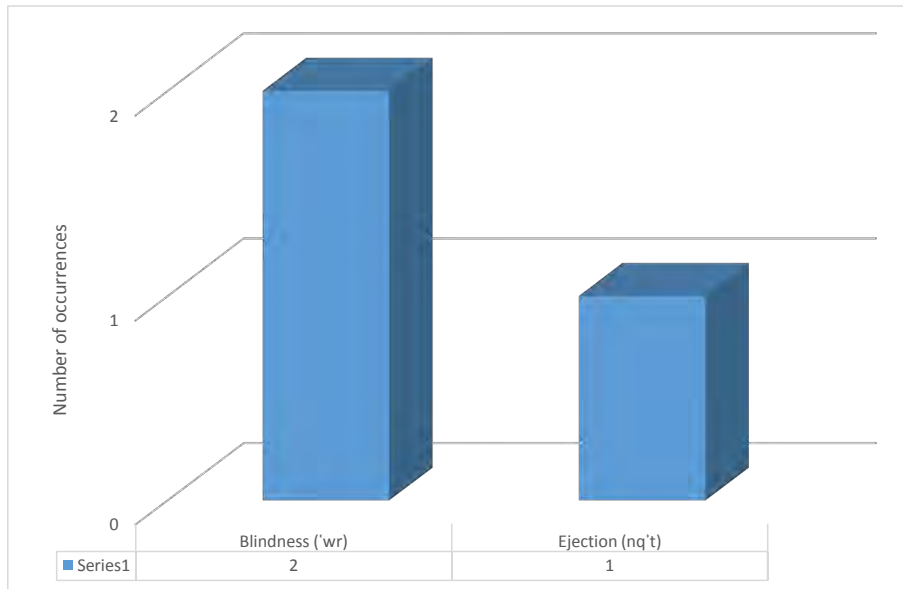
Fig. 3.48 – Requests for curses made to the deity *gd ʿwd*

There are, however, a number of curses in which *gd ʿwd* is featured. In all of the inscriptions to the deity approximately 42.86% include curses. While many of these inscriptions do not specify that the deity *gd ʿwd* was intended to enact the curses they do occur in inscriptions in which the god is featured. There exist, as yet, only three curses that *gd ʿwd* features in as the solitary deity or is specified as enacting the curses. In these curses the most common request is for blindness to obliterator of an inscription (ʿwr) followed by ejection (nqʾt). These requests are consistent with those made to other deities in the enactment of maledictions and so we cannot draw any specific conclusions relating to *gd ʿwd*.

	lt	ds²r	s²hqm	b'ls¹m	'lt	s²'n'r	s²mt	gd df	lh	rḍy	s²ms¹	ymyt	rḥm	rḍw
■ Partnered with gd ʿwḏ	13	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with gd ʿwḏ	13	4	10	5	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
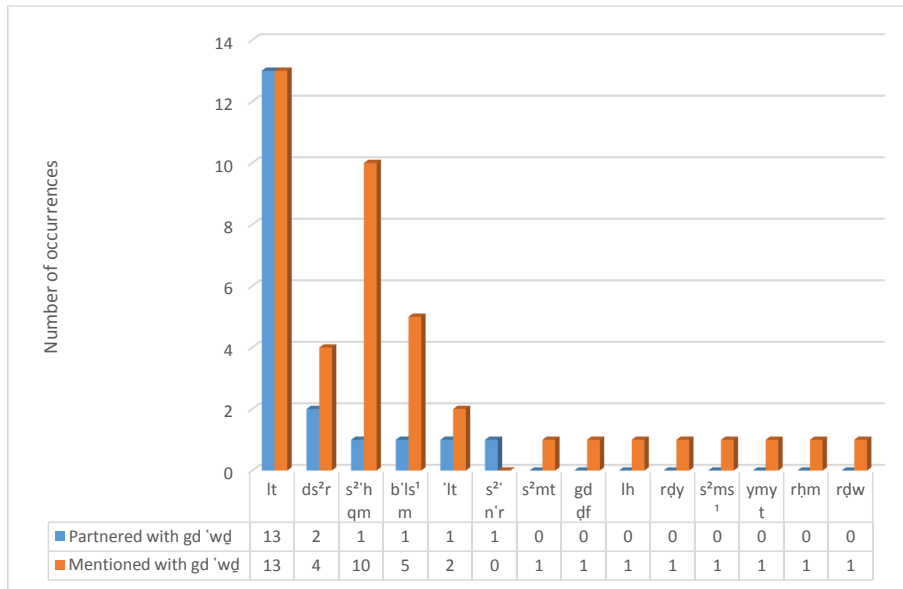
Fig. 3.49 – The deity *gd ʿwḏ* partnered and mentioned with other deities

gd ʿwḏ can be considered a "social" deity as he is invoked comparatively rarely as a solitary deity in the Safaitic inscriptions. One theory is that perhaps he is a deity that was considered to "assist" the more common deities of the Safaitic inscriptions and thus usually appears in connection with others. He is mentioned as the solitary deity in only 32.14% of inscriptions, making him the most social deity by a far in terms of percentages. Yet, there does not seem to have been any significant partnership in the Safaitic inscriptions between him and any other deity. He is partnered most often with *lt* in 65% of all inscriptions, but they do not feature so frequently that we can draw any conclusions about whether or not there was a particular significance or relationship between the two. In regard to inscriptions where he is mentioned alongside multiple deities, he appears relatively frequently alongside the deity *s²ʿhqm*. This may perhaps suggest an association but we would need more evidence in order to establish a link between the two deities.

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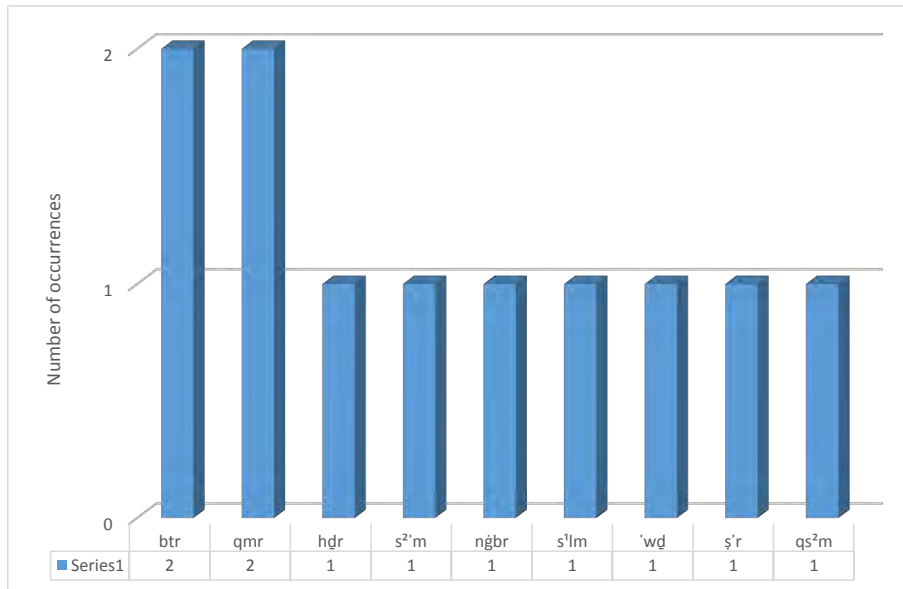
Fig. 3.50 – Tribal lineages mentioned with *gd ʿwḏ*

While the deity *gd ʿwḏ* shares a name with one of the most frequently mentioned tribes in the Safaitic inscriptions, the *ʿwḏ* tribe, he is only actually once mentioned in a prayer where the author claims lineage to the tribe *ʿwḏ*. This is not altogether surprising as another tribal deity, *gd ḏf*, is also rarely mentioned alongside members of his namesake tribe. However, since many have argued that the tribes' *ʿwḏ* and *ḏf* were part of a congregation of tribes it is possible that the authors who claim tribal lineage to other tribes may fall under the jurisdiction of the tribes' *ʿwḏ* and *ḏf*. For more on these tribes, see the section on tribes below.

For a comparatively rare Safaitic deity, it is interesting that there exist four extant inscriptions making mention of sacrifice.[584] However, once again it must ne noted that none of the inscriptions specifically state that the sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*) was performed in honour of the deity *gd ʿwḏ*. Since three of the inscriptions were all from the same collection and found in very close proximity to each other it is possible that the authors knew each other and may have performed a single sacrifice together. Given that we we have no further information regarding

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[584] C 853, 857, 860, 4646

the nature of the sacrifice or the reason for performing it all we can determine is that sacrifice was an element of the religious connection to *gd ʿwḏ*.

Interestingly *gd ʿwḏ* is not featured in any of the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts. The significance of this is as yet unknown but might suggest that he entered the Safiatic religious corpus at a later date.

One important inscription exists in the Safaitic inscriptions that mentions the deity *gd ʿwḏ*. ZeWA 1 records a chief or spokesman of *gd ʿwḏ* along with a reference to the Romans. The inscription reads ...*w s²ty h- dr {m-} rk s¹nt ṭrq mk mlk nbṭ ṯlṯn mʾt qtl ʾl rm w s¹q tmr l- -h + z + {ʾ}m gd ʿwḏ w h lh w h s²ʿhqm ġnyt w s¹lm m- ḏ ḫrṣ w ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy h- ḫṭṭ* or "and he spent the winter here {on account of} an area on which a small amount of rain had fallen the year [in which] *Mk* king of Nabaṭ smote one hundred [and] thirty warriors of the Romans and {the spokesman} [chief] of *gd ʿwḏ* drove *tmr* to him [*Mk*]. And O *lh* and O *s²ʿhqm* [grant] plenty and safety from whoever is on guard and [grant] booty to whoever leaves the carving intact".[585] This inscription suggests that a priest of some sort existed in order to honour the worship of *gd ʿwḏ*. It also shows that worship of the deity continued at least until the time of the Romans.

Geographical significance of *gd ʿwḏ*

When the inscriptions featuring the deity *gd ʿwḏ* are plotted on a map, we can see that worship of the deity is clustered around the Ḥārra region of modern-day southern Syria with a few examples found further south.[586] This roughly overlaps with occurrences of the tribal name *ʿwḏ* and strengthens the connection between the deity and the tribe that bears the same name.

Summary

gd ʿwḏ is a relatively rarely mentioned deity in the Safaitic inscriptions. His primarily role in the enactment of prayers was to maintain the security (*s¹lm*) of his followers and he was considered above all a defensive deity. He is also the deity most likely to be mentioned alongside another deity in prayers in which he features indicating that he is quite a social deity. In general terms he appears comparatively frequently in the enactment of curses, however this figure decreases dramatically if only the prayers that he features in as the solitary deity or is specifically mentioned by the author are included. While he shares a name with a common

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[585] Translation by Macdonald in OCIANA
[586] See Map 11 in Appendix C.

Safaitic tribe, *ꜥwḏ*, there is little if no further evidence of a relationship between the deity and this particular tribe. The deity is also mentioned comparatively frequently in inscriptions that also feature references to sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*) although never categorically linked to the actual sacrifice. Finally the geographical distribution of the deity *gd ꜥwḏ* shows that worship of the deity was far more common in the northern most areas of where the Safaitic inscriptions have been found.

lh

The origin of *lh*

The name *lh* means *Allāh* and is a contraction of the Arabic for the *al-* (the) and *ilāh* (god), translating as to "the god". The name is similar to other Semitic languages such as the Aramaic *Alah* (אלה) or the Syriac *ʾAlâhâ* (ܐܲܠܵܗܵܐ). *lh* was a common deity in central pre-Islamic Arabia, presumably the chief deity since the translation of his name literally means god, but was not the sole deity. Existence of deity known as *Allah* can be seen as far back as the Babylonian Epic of Atrahasis from 1700 BC.[587] However, belief in a deity called *lh* only came into prominence from the 5th century BC and can be seen in the form of *hlh* in the Lihyanite inscriptions.[588] The transmission of *lh* to Lihyan came, according to Hitti, from Syria and led to Lihyan becoming the first centre of worship to the deity in Arabia.[589] The name *lh* existed in many pre-Islamic cultures, mainly in the form of theophoric names, for example in the Nabataean names "Abd Allah" (Servant of Allah).[590]

lh in the Safaitic religious tradition

The Safaitic inscriptions provide the first known instances of the spelling of the name *lh* used independently and as distinct from its use as an element in theophoric names.[591] The deity *lh* is known in the Safaitic religious inscriptions under two forms of the name, *lh* which account for approximately 70% of invocations and *ʾlh* which amounts to 30%. There are a number of references to a deity named *ʾlh* that also include epithets. For example, we have *ʾlh tm* and *ʾlh ḥġsⁱ*.[592] *ʾlh* is also used to designate "god of" in epithets involving other gods such as *ṣlm ʾlh*

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[587] Dalley 1989, pp. 3–10
[588] Hitti, p. 100
[589] Hitti, p. 101
[590] Versteegh 1997, p. 30
[591] Oxtoby 1968, p. 21; Dussaud 1955, p. 143
[592] Khunp 1

dmt.[593] In these situations reference to *ʾlh* has of course been excluded from this analysis and only instances where *ʾlh* appears as a distinct deity are included. The deity features in 41 inscriptions, comprising approximately 2% of all inscriptions mentioned in the Safaitic corpus that also feature a deity.

	Security (sⁱlm)	Abundance (ġnyt)	Compassion (hnn)	Relief (rwḥ)	Deliverance (flṭ)	Booty (ġnmt)	Deliverance (ḫlṣ)	Look (lḥ)	Overpower adversity (mty)	Vengeance (nqmt)
Series1	13	3	3	3	2	1	1	1	1	1
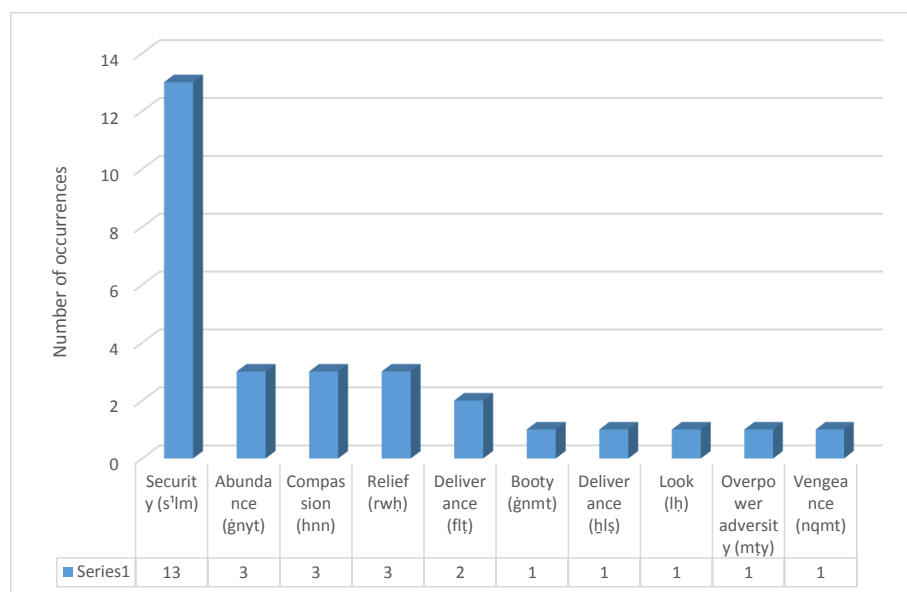
Fig. 3.51 – Most common requests made of the deity *lh*

lh is most commonly tasked with providing security (*sⁱlm*) in religious inscriptions which account for approximately 48.28% of inscriptions that he features in as the solitary deity or where he is specifically requested to act by the author of an inscription. This is followed by abundance (*ġyrt*) which features in 10.34%, and relief (*rwḥ*), deliverance (*flṭ*) and compassion (*ḥnn*) at 6.90% each. It is clear through these figures that his primary role by far was a defensive one. He does not appear in any of the mixed texts.

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[593] KRS 30

	defensive	malevolent	benevolent	material
■ Series1	17	1	9	4
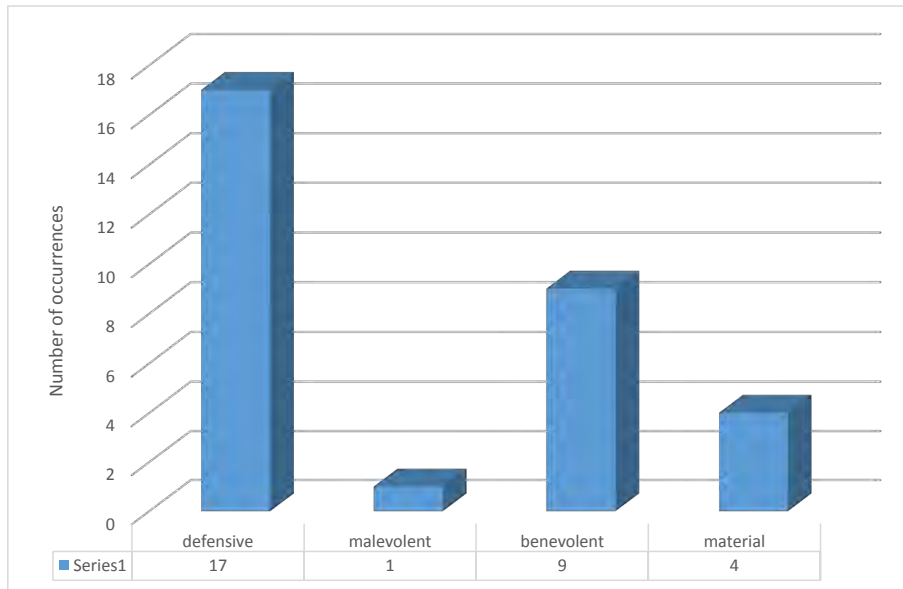
Fig. 3.52 – Types of prayers made to *lh*

When the prayers that *lh* features in are classified, we can observe that he is most often requested to answer defensive prayers which occur in 58.62% of inscriptions. These are followed by benevolent prayers at 27.59%, material prayers at 10.34% and finally malevolent prayer at 3.45%. We can see from this evidence that his main role in the Safaitic inscriptions was primarily defensive.
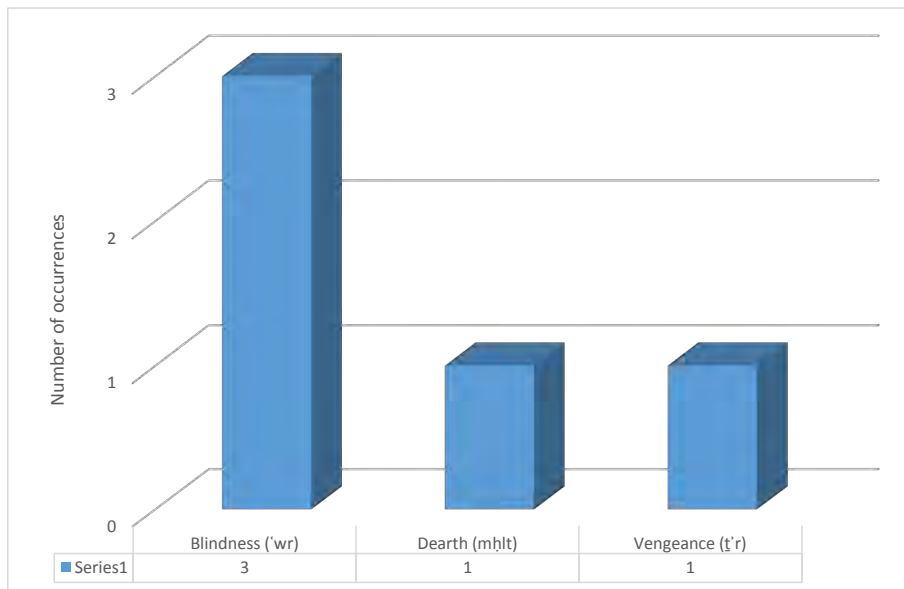
Fig. 3.53 – Requests for curses made to the deity *lh*

The deity *lh* appears in eight curses in the Safaitic inscriptions. On half of those occasions he appears alongside other deities. Of the four curses in which he appears in as the solitary deity he is most often asked to provide blindness (ʿwr) followed by dearth (*mḥlt*) and vengeance (*t̠ʾr*).
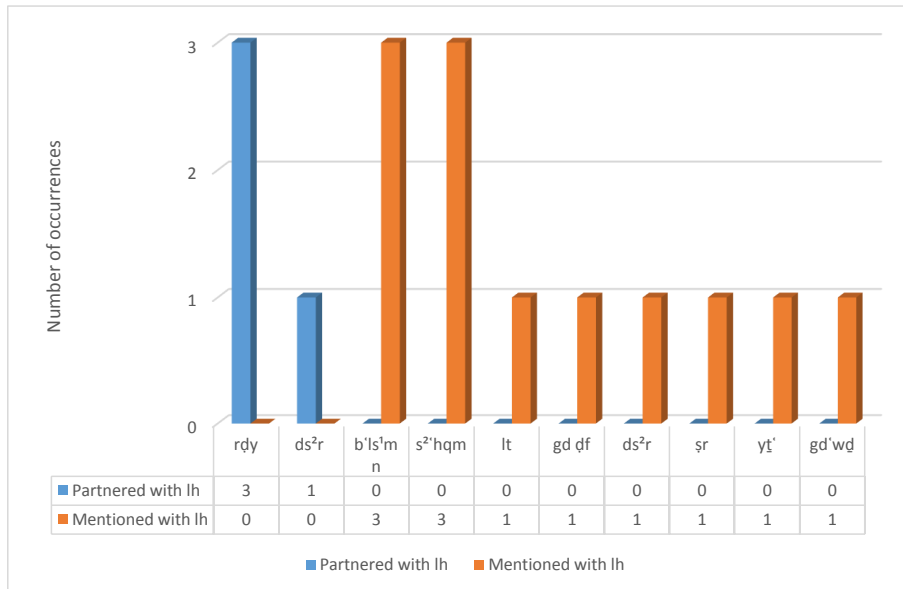
Fig. 3.54 – The deity *lh* partnered and mentioned with other deities

The deity *lh* is mentioned as the solitary deity in approximately 80.49% of all inscriptions in which he is featured. This makes him neither a social nor a particularly solitary deity. He is most often partnered with the deity *rḍy* with whom he features in three inscriptions, followed by *ds²r* in just one. In addition, he only features in one inscription that also mentions the deity *lt*. Since *lh* does not feature in any mixed text inscriptions and is generally featured with deities that entered the Safaitic pantheon later in its evolution, we can assume that *lh* was likewise a later deity.

lh is mentioned alongside four tribes, the more commonly known tribes *ms¹kt* and *qs²m* and the lesser known *lhṯn* and *'ty*. Since there are so few inscriptions mentioning the authors' tribal lineage and the deity, no connection can be made to any of them. As yet there are no extant inscriptions referencing both sacrifice and *lh*.

Geographical significance of *lh*

When the inscriptions featuring *lh* are plotted on a map, the spread does not gravitate towards any particular area.[594] Indeed, despite there being relatively few invocations to this deity, his influence covers much of the same areas as the Safaitic religious inscriptions tend to, from well into southern Syria, to northern Jordan, the eastern desert and further south around Karak.

Summary

We can see from the above that *lh* was not a particularly common deity in the Safaitic religious inscriptions. From inscriptions in which he features in we can see that his primarily function in the Safaitic pantheon was as a defensive deity. He can also be considered a relatively solitary deity but not nearly to the same extent as other deities. Since there are comparatively few inscriptions mentioning *lh* these figures will most likely change in the future with the discovery of more inscriptions. Geographically the deity tends to appear over a wide area where the Safaitic inscriptions are attested. He may also be considered a somewhat recent deity in the Safaitic pantheon.

gd ḏf

The origin of *gd ḏf*

As with *gd ʿwḏ*, *gd ḏf* is also likely to have entered the Safaitic religious realm from within, sharing his name with the largest Safaitic tribe, the *ḏf*. Like *gd ʿwḏ,* he has also been considered a fortune deity of the tribe.[595] As a deity named in connection with the largest tribe, or perhaps confederation of tribes as some scholars argue, it is surprising that he does not play a greater role in the Safaitic pantheon.

gd ḏf in the Safaitic religious tradition

Like *gd ʿwḏ*, the deity *gd ḏf* is comparatively rarely named, although his existence in the inscriptions is still notable and he appears in approximately 1.27% of inscriptions featuring deities.

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[594] See Map 12 in Appendix C.
[595] Graf 1989, p. 363; Fasi 2007, p. 28
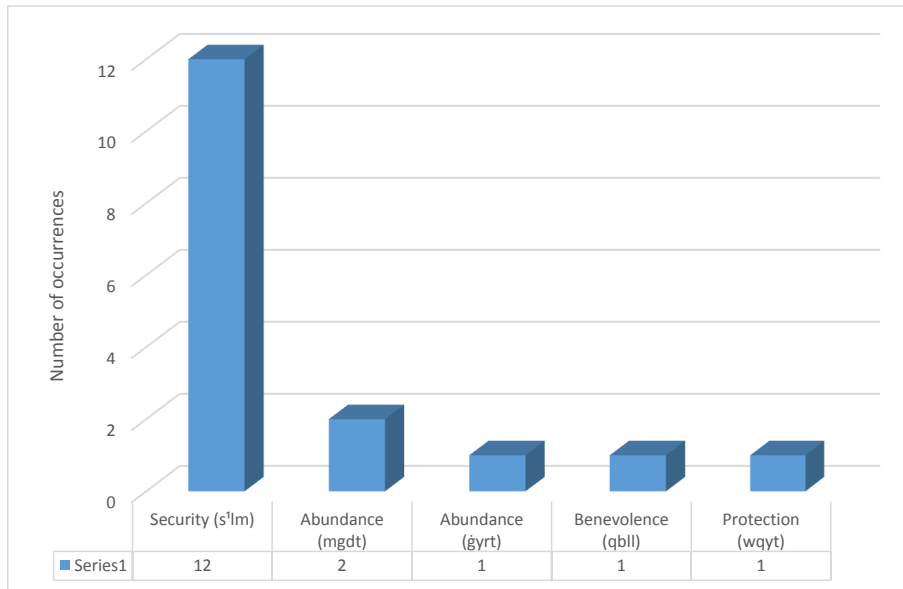
Fig. 3.55 – Full list of requests made to the deity _gd ḏf_

    _gd ḏf_ is most commonly invoked in prayers seeking security (_s¹lm_). These prayers make up approximately 70.59% of all the requests made to the deity where he is the solitary deity invoked or is specifically requested to provide assistance. Following _s¹lm_, he is most often asked for assistance providing abundance (_ġyrt_) in 11.76% of cases, requests for protection (_wqyt_), benevolence (_qbll_) and abundance (_mgdt_) occur in approximately 5.88% of inscriptions each.
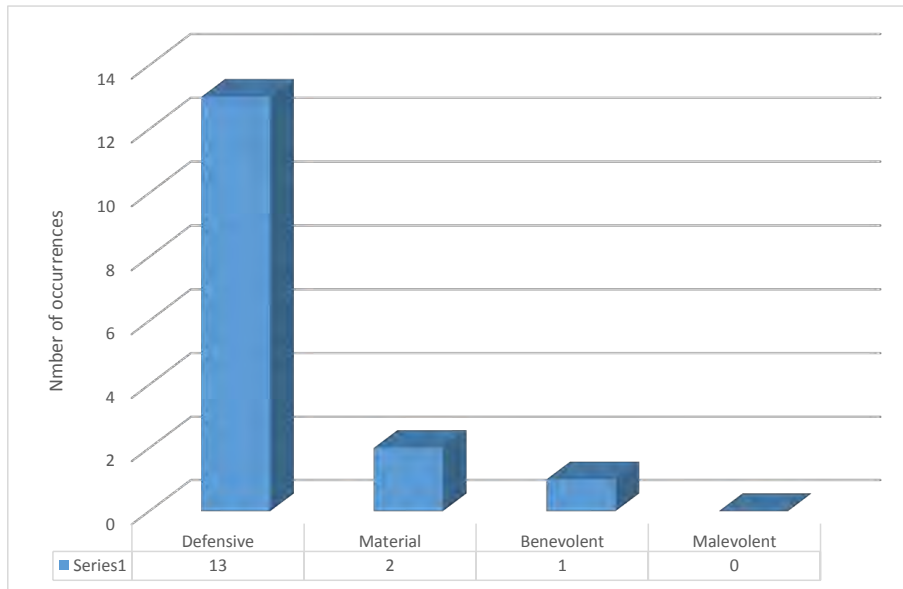
Fig. 3.56 – Types of prayers made to *gd ḏf*

The deity *gd ḏf* can be considered above all a protective deity as evidenced in the prayers he is asked to enact. Approximately 70.59% of inscriptions made to the deity can be classified as defensive prayers, followed by material prayers at 17.65% and benevolent prayers at 5.88%. Since there are comparatively few material and benevolent requests made to the deity, we can only really argue that his primary function was to provide assistance through defensive and protective prayers.
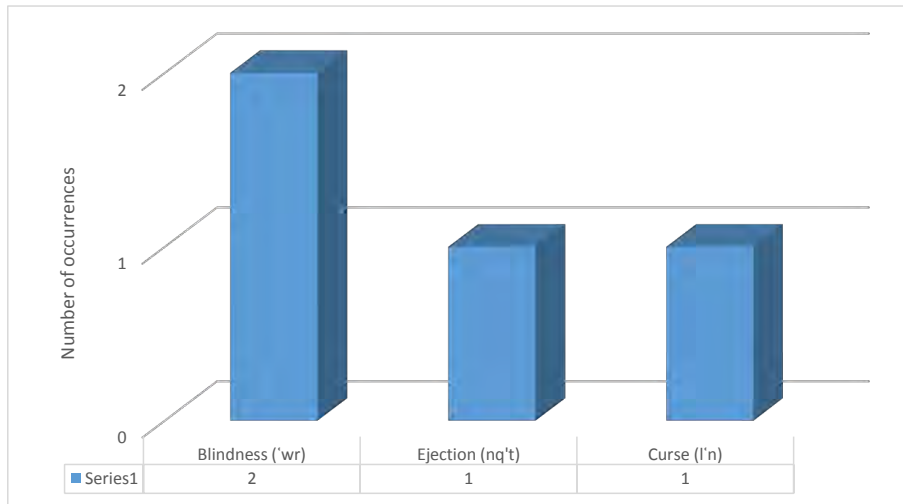
Fig. 3.57 – Requests for curses made to the deity _gd ḏf_

_gd ḏf_ is only rarely invoked in curses and blessings in the Safaitic inscriptions. When he does appear in curses he is most often asked to blind the obliterator of an inscription (_ʿwr_).

	lt	s²ʾhq m	ds²r	bʾls¹m n	ʾlt	gd ʿwḏ	ṣr	rḍy	ʾlh tm	gd nbṭ	ʾlh hġs¹
■ Partnered with gd ḏf	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with gd ḏf	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
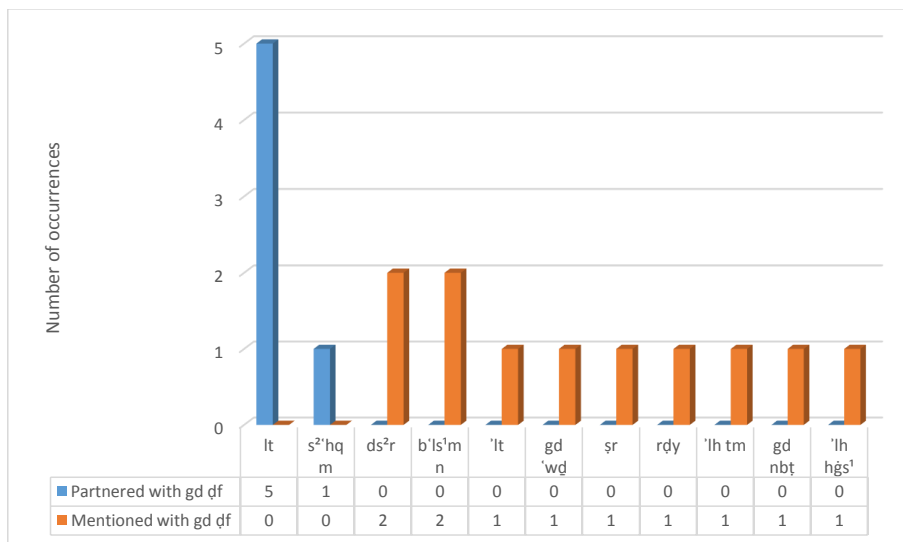
Fig. 3.58 – The deity _gd ḏf_ partnered and mentioned with other deities

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The deity *gd ḏf* can be considered a relatively "social" deity appearing in only 61.54% of inscriptions as the solitary deity. Interestingly, these figures are nearly twice that of *gd ʿwḏ*. Of the times that he is partnered with another deity, he is most commonly featured with the deity *lt* with whom he features in five inscriptions, although there is not enough evidence to suggest any particular form of relationship with the goddess. In addition, he does not feature in any of the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts and as yet there are no sacrifice references in a prayer that he features in.

Geographical significance of *gd ḏf*

When plotted on a map the inscriptions of *gd ḏf* seem to focus around the areas of modern-day southern Syria.[596] In this region they are quite spread out and for the most part do not cluster in any particular area, with the exception of a small cluster near Qasr Burquʿ. Despite supposedly being a tribal deity for the tribe *ḏf*, there are, as yet, no inscriptions claiming a tribal lineage with *ḏf* that also mention the deity in the same inscription. This is somewhat surprising as *ḏf* is by far the most common tribe mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions.

Summary

gd ḏf is thus a deity whose primary role in the Safaitic inscriptions was as a protective or defensive deity. He was also considered quite a social deity by the writers of the inscriptions and was regularly invoked alongside other deities. Finally, despite his name being shared with the tribe *ḏf* there is no evidence of a significant relationship.

Minor deities mentioned in the Safaitic religious inscriptions

dṯn

The term *dṯn* appears a number of times in the Safaitic inscriptions as a personal name,[597] an epithet for the deity *ʾlt*[598] and in seven inscriptions where the authors seem to suggest that *dṯn* was considered a standalone deity.[599] Of the inscriptions where *dṯn* appears as a deity and the locations are known, all the inscriptions were found at or around il-Isawi in southern Syria. In terms of the occasions whe *dṯn* is used as an epithet none of these inscriptions appear at il-

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[596] See Map 13 in Appendix C.
[597] LP 399; WH 3607; CSNS 684; M 198; B40000 2
[598] C 994, 1292, 2446, 4982
[599] LP 461, 1097; M 129; Mu 242; H 730; AloNSWS 316, 317

Isawi. This leads one to suggest that perhaps *dṯn* was the name of deity with a particular affinity with the area of il-Isawi. When prayers to the deity occur outside the geographical region they use the term *ʾlt dṯn*, or the goddess *dṯn*, to show which goddess the author intended in the prayer.

The requests asked of the deity include a curse seeking blindness (*ʿwr*) and vengeance against the obliterator of an inscription (*ṯʾr*). There are also prayers seeking help (*sˡʿd*) in four inscriptions. It is interesting to note that the deity *ʾlt* is quite common in the mixed texts, as are requests for help (*sˡʿd*), both of which seem to have a certain affinity with *dṯn*. In addition, *dṯn* appearing as a deity can be found in two inscriptions written in the mixed text format.[600]

nhy

The deity *nhy*, occasionally vocalised Nahy, appears in three inscriptions in the corpus of Safaitic inscriptions, two of which are written in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed text.[601] *nhy* was considered one of the oldest Arabian gods[602] and was regularly worshipped in the Thamudic inscriptions,[603] often mentioned alongside *lt* and *rḍw*.[604] He is also seen further afield where he was worshipped at Edessa,[605] featuring in a Syriac tomb inscription at Serrin dating to 73 AD and is evident in a few Edessene theophoric personal names.[606] In addition, he is mentioned in cuneiform inscriptions detailing how Sennacherib (704-681 BC), after the conquest of Adumatu, deported a number of divine images, including those of *nhy* and *rḍw*.[607]

In the Thamudic inscriptions the god *nhy*, like *rḍw*, was more common in the northern areas of the Arabian Peninsula[608] known not only from prayers but also from theophoric names[609] and even the dedication of a village.[610] It has been suggested that *nhy* was a sun god in light of the inscription Hu. 327: "By Nuhai, exalted Sun! By Yahthi".[611] Although this belief

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[600] AloNSWS 316, 317
[601] Conventional Safaitic – WH 1112; Mixed text – C 3879; LP 1067
[602] Rūsān 1992, p. 187
[603] Lurker 1987, p. 131
[604] Ryckmans 1956, p. 5
[605] Colledge 1986, p. 6
[606] Drijvers 1980, p. 155
[607] Drijvers 1980
[608] van den Branden 1957, p. 22; Rūsān 1992, p. 194
[609] Hu. 417, 798; van den Branden 1957, p. 15; Rūsān 1992, p. 188
[610] van den Branden 1957, p. 8
[611] Winnett-Reed 1970, p. 81

is dependent on interpretation.[612] Other scholars believe he should be considered a moon god in terms of the Thamudic inscriptions.[613]

Unsurprisingly, the prayers that *nhy* appears in in the mixed text inscriptions are usually seeking help (*s¹ʿd*), the most common request in prayers of that form. The author of the only other inscription written in conventional Safaitic, WH 1112, first asks *nhy* for security then in the form of a curse seeks blindness for the obliterator of the inscription (*ʿwr*). The location of these three inscriptions when plotted on a map indicate their locations in southern Syria and northern Jordan, regions that were not particularly close to areas where Thamudic inscriptions were regularly found. This would suggest that *nhy* was known to a few writers of the Safaitic inscriptions but was not considered a major deity. Given his recognition in the mixed texts and his prominence in the Thamudic texts, it is possible that worship of *nhy* was more common in older inscriptions. It is also possible that recognition of the deity in these regions gradually died out over time, resulting in the comparatively infrequent references to him in the greater Safaitic corpus.

khl

The god *khl*, often vocalised as Kahil, is another relatively common Arabian deity known in a number of Thamudic[614] and Lihyanite inscriptions.[615] He is also found on some Sabaean coins,[616] in a South Arabian rhymed inscription from Mārib.[617] Additionally he is one of the deities mentioned in the funerary text from Qaryat al-Fau.[618] He is usually considered to be the god of the Arabian tribe Kinda.[619]

Kahil is mentioned in two extant Safaitic inscriptions, both of which are written in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts.[620] In both of those inscriptions he is asked for deliverance (*flṭ*). This differs slightly to the most commonly thing requested to deities in these types of inscriptions, which are generally for help (*s¹ʿd*). However, requests for *flṭ* are not altogether uncommon. Both inscriptions are located in Jordan. That *khl* was a common Thamudic deity

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[612] Rūsān 1992, p. 187
[613] Nielsen 1917, p. 254
[614] For example, Branden1 256; Branden2 178-x-1; Al-Theeb2 111; Eskoubi3 102; Winnett3 3
[615] Frantsouzoff 2001, p. 277
[616] Ja2122 – Jamme 1967b, pp. 181–183; al-Ansary 1982, p. 24, 84
[617] It was first edited under the siglum (Inān 11 and critically republished in: Bâfaqïh 1978, pp. 17–18, 20–21
[618] al-Ansary 1982, p. 20; Beeston 1979, pp. 1–2; Kropp 1991, pp. 253, 257; Maraqten 1998, p. 192
[619] al-Ansary 1982, p. 24
[620] KRS 2028; SIJ 516

is relevant to his appearance only in the mixed texts. Once again perhaps worship of *khl* is seen only in the mixed texts because they predate the greater Safaitic corpus, thus more Thamudic and older deities are often more frequently mentioned.

rḥm

As well as being an epithet of Allah and one of the 99 names of God in early Islam meaning "the Merciful and the Compassionate",[621] *rḥm*, commonly vocalised as Raḥīm, was also a common Palmyrene deity.[622] The name *rḥm* is probably derived from *raḥmana* (the compassionate),[623] a common term applied to gods at Palmyra.[624] At Palmyra he was worshipped together with Shamash and Allat in a temple in the western quarter of the city[625] and also features with Allat in a relief found at Khirbet esh-Shana.[626]

He is invoked twice in the Safaitic inscriptions, once as the solitary deity in the prayer[627] but also as part of a prayer featuring multiple deities.[628] When he is the sole deity invoked he is asked to provide vengeance (*nqmt*) and security (*s¹lm*). In the prayer featuring the invocation of multiple deities he features with the deities *gd ʿwḏ*, *ymt* (see below) and *rḍw*. Both of these inscriptions are found in the Ḥārra region of southern Syria, an area in relatively close proximity to Palmyra, where *rḥm* was regularly worshipped.

s²ʿ n ʿr

The deity *s²ʿ n ʿr* is mentioned in five extant Safaitic inscriptions[629] and may have represented the Palmyrene deity *s²ʿ nwr*, the "bringer of light".[630] Of these five inscriptions, four are in the regular Safaitic prayer formulae, while one is written in the formulae common in the mixed texts.[631] Of those prayers in the conventional Safaitic prayer formulae *s²ʿ n ʿr* is asked to provide security (*s¹lm*),[632] the knowledge of the whereabouts of a watcher (*l- -h s²hrt*)[633] and a

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[621] Teixidor 1979, p. 63
[622] Ryckmans 1951,p. 23
[623] Gawlikowski 1976, pp. 198–200, fig. 2
[624] Teixidor 1979, p. 63
[625] Teixidor 1979, p. 62
[626] Cantineau 1933, p. 181
[627] C 3315
[628] C 4351
[629] M 153; H 1017; KRS 36, 2224; Mu 290
[630] Macdonald – OCIANA database
[631] KRS 2224
[632] Mu 290; KRS 36
[633] M 153

companion for his watch (*s²y ꜥ l- ḫrṣ -h*), protection (*wqyt*) and hiding for his flocks (*kns¹ h-nꜥm*) along with a curse for blindness (*ꜥwr*) and a blessing for booty (*ġnmt*).[634] In the mixed text inscription he is asked for the most common request in these types of inscriptions, which is help (*s¹ꜥd*). In the regular Safaitic inscriptions *s² ꜥ n ꜥr* is mentioned alongside a number of other deities: *s²ꜥhqm, gd ꜥwḏ, b ꜥls¹mn, ds²r* and *lt*. Where the locations of these inscriptions are known they are mostly found in Wadi Salma in the north-eastern Jordanian desert, and il-Isawi in southern Syria.

n'r

In the Safaitic inscriptions a deity appears called *n'r* by the authors. It is unclear whether this deity is the same as *s² ꜥ n ꜥr* just with a slightly shortened name, or whether they were considered separate deities. Jamme argues that *n'r* did not exist in the Safaitic inscriptions[635] but this view has been challenged.[636] Instead, it has been argued that *n'r* represents the Palmyrene equivalent of the deity Nār of Nūr.[637]

The deity *n'r* features in at least two Safaitic inscriptions both alone and accompanied.[638] In the inscription where *n'r* is the solitary deity[639] he is asked to "repay evil" (*ḫrf*). In the other he is accompanied with the deity *lt* and the author of the inscriptions seeks security (*s¹lm*). The inscriptions featuring the deity *n'r* are mostly found in southern Syria and the north-eastern Jordanian badia.

s²ms¹

The deity *s²ms¹*, possibly vocalised as Shams, is mentioned twice in the Safaitic inscriptions[640] and is probably the same deity as the Shams who appear elsewhere in the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula, for example, in the Thamudic[641] and Sabaean inscriptions.[642]

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[634] H 1017
[635] Jamme 1970b, pp. 177–178
[636] Clark 1979, p. 134
[637] See Ryckmans 1971, p. 98; Cp. 103
[638] CSNS 98; C 743; Ryckmans also believes the deity is present in an inscription with Radu in C 1970 but I am not convinced.
[639] CSNS 98
[640] C 25, 4404
[641] For example, al-Theeb3 163, 164; Branden1 Hu 18, 255, 565, Branden 3 Ph. 264-a
[642] Prioletta 2011, pp. 283–294

In the Safaitic inscriptions, *s²ms¹* is mentioned alongside *gdʿwḏ* and the goddess *lt* where they are involved in the enactment of a curse and are asked to both slaughter and blind an obliterator (*ʾs¹lf w ʿwr*). These inscriptions were found at Jabal Seys and al-Mroeshan, both in southern Syria.

gd nbṭ

The deity *gd nbṭ* is mentioned in one Safaitic inscription[643] located in southern Syria, although further north than the majority of inscriptions are usually found. This deity is mentioned alongside a number of other rare deities. The appellative *gd*, or Gadd, is found in Safaitic, most notably in the names of the gods *gdʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf*. In the cases of *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf*, the Gadd is followed by the names of two prominent tribes in the Safaitic inscriptions, but it has been suggested that personal Gadds may have existed as well.[644] This may be the case with *gd nbṭ* as *nbṭ* features as a common personal name in the Safaitic inscriptions.[645] The name also exists in the Safaitic inscriptions as the term for Nabataea (*mlk nbṭ* – "the king of Nabataea")[646] as well as the name of a people (*s¹nt ws¹q ʾl ḥwlt ʾl nbṭ* – "the year the *hwlt* struggled against the people of Nbṭ").[647] In the latter circumstance it could be suggested that *ʾl nbṭ* be translated as the people of Nabataea, given that the Nabataeans were a known enemy of the *hwlt* tribe.[648] However, since there is no reference to a "Gadd of the Nabataeans" in the Nabataean inscriptions, and the deity *ds²r* is mentioned alongside *gd nbṭ* clearly showing that the author considered them separate deities, it is more likely that *gd nbṭ* constituted a personal deity for someone named *nbṭ*.

gd whbʾl

Like *gd nbṭ*, *gd whbʾl* seems to be another personal Gadd, given that the name *whbʾl* seems to have been quite a common personal name in the Safaitic inscriptions.[649] He is mentioned twice in the Safaitic inscriptions, one found at il-Isawi where he is mentioned alongside the deities *lt*

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[643] Khunp 1
[644] Oxtoby 1968, p. 45
[645] See for example, R 138; BTH 291; CEDS 106; Khbg 401.2, 454; CSNS 1060; ISB 374; SIJ 60, 61
[646] Khnsj 1; ZeWA 1
[647] MRTA 1
[648] For example, see the revised translation of Stehle 16 by Macdonald – *l qḥs² ḏ- ʾl ʾrs² w wgm ʾl- s¹ʾdʾl w ʾl- wtr w ʾl- hdrgt w ʾl- ḥf---- w ḫrṣ f h lt w ds²r w b ʾ[l]s¹m{n} ġ{r}t w s¹ʾd h- {n}bṭ ʾl- ḥwlt* – "By Qḥs² of the lineage of ʾrs² and he grieved for s¹ʾdʾl and for Wtr and for Ḥdrgt and for Ḥf---- and he was on the look-out and so Lt and Ds²r and {Bʿls¹mn} [grant] revenge and help the Nabataeans against Ḥwlt".
[649] For example, C 96, 1292, 1380, 1381; N 255; KRS 173; ZeWA 1; MA 4

and *b ʿ lsʾmn*, and is asked for security (*sʾlm*) and booty (*ġnmt*).[650] In the other inscription he is mentioned alone. This inscription comes from Zalaf in southern Syria and the deity is asked to provide deliverance (*fṣy*).[651]

ṣlm

The deity *ṣlm*, possibly vocalised Ṣalm, appears in only one Safaitic inscriptions where he is called *ṣlm ʾlh dmt*, or *ṣlm* god of effigies.[652] The name *ṣlm* appears as a personal name in a number of Safaitic inscriptions.[653] The existence of *ṣlm*, or Ṣalm, as the name of a deity outside the Safaitic inscriptions can be seen most prominently in Tayma around the mid-fifth century BC[654] although he was mentioned less frequently in later years.[655] The etymological origin of the name Ṣalm is "picture".[656] This may explain the epithet "god of effigies" in the Safaitic inscriptions. The Safaitic inscription where *ṣlm* is found originates from Wadi Salma in north-eastern Jordan. In this inscription he is asked to provide relief (*rwḥ*).

nṣr

The deity *nṣr*, possibly vocalised as Nasr, appears in one inscription from Jebel Ṣaqaʿ and is written in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed text.[657] He is asked to help whoever loves and deliver them from distress or evil (*sʾd ḏ wd w flṭ m- b ʾsʾ*). The origin of the deity *nṣr* is unclear, but as the root of the term *nṣr* can translate as vulture,[658] he may be regarded as Nasr, the vulture deity who was worshipped among the Himyarites[659] and elsewhere in the pre-Islamic world,[660] also known as Neshra in the Aramaic.[661]

Vocative particles

As previously mentioned, in the Safaitic religious texts invocations to deities follow a formula. Within this formulae the divine name is preceded by a vocative particle. Often this begins with

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[650] Mu 116
[651] C 1713; For a discussion of this text see Clark 1979, p. 410
[652] KRS 30
[653] WH 2724, 2746, 2967; C 3393
[654] Alpass 2013, p. 116
[655] Alpass 2013, p. 125
[656] Niehr 2014, p. 383
[657] MKJS 80
[658] Lipiński 1994, p. 131
[659] Robertson Smith 1894, p. 226; Stetkevych 1993, p. 67
[660] Littmann 1929, pp. 197–204
[661] Majid 1991

a conjunction (such as *f* meaning "and") which is then followed by the vocative particle, the most common form being *h*, for example "and O *lt*" might read *fh lt*. The conjunctions used often vary which has led Hayajneh and Ababneh to state that a comparative study of the usage of *f-h* and the name of a deity is required, for example, *w-h* and the name of the deity in the Safaitic texts "to define the syntactic and semantic differences between the two expressions".[662] Al-Jallad has also previously stated that some particles are only associated with particular deities.[663] The following section seeks to determine which conjunctions and vocative particles are most common with particular deities and suggest reasons for why that may be so.

The vocative particles used in the Safaitic religious texts are as follows:[664]

h: AbaNS 182: *h rḍw ʾyr* (Vocative – Divine Name – Request)

ʾy: KRS 1562: *rwḥ ʾy lt* (Request – Vocative – Divine Name)

hy: C 74: *hy ʾlt ʾʿzz* (Vocative – Divine Name – Narrative)

ʾyh: Mu 141: *ʾyh lt* (Vocative – Divine Name)

hyh; LP 619: *hyh lt* (Vocative – Divine Name)

y: CIS 2005: *f y lt* (Conjunction – Vocative – Divine Name)

The following tables show the number of occurrences of each vocative particle, the deities that are associated with them and the accompanying conjunctions that appear most frequently. The figures quoted in these tables include data from inscriptions where multiple deities, invocations and conjunctions are used. For example, H 1017 which reads …*f h b ʾlsˡmn w h dsˀr w h sˀnˁr w h lt*, would count as four instances in which *h* is used as the vocative particle, one instance where *f* is the conjunction and three where *w* is the conjunction.

[662] Hayajneh and Ababneh 2015, p. 264
[663] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 158
[664] For the vocalisation of each of these vocative particles see Ababneh 2015, pp. 158–159
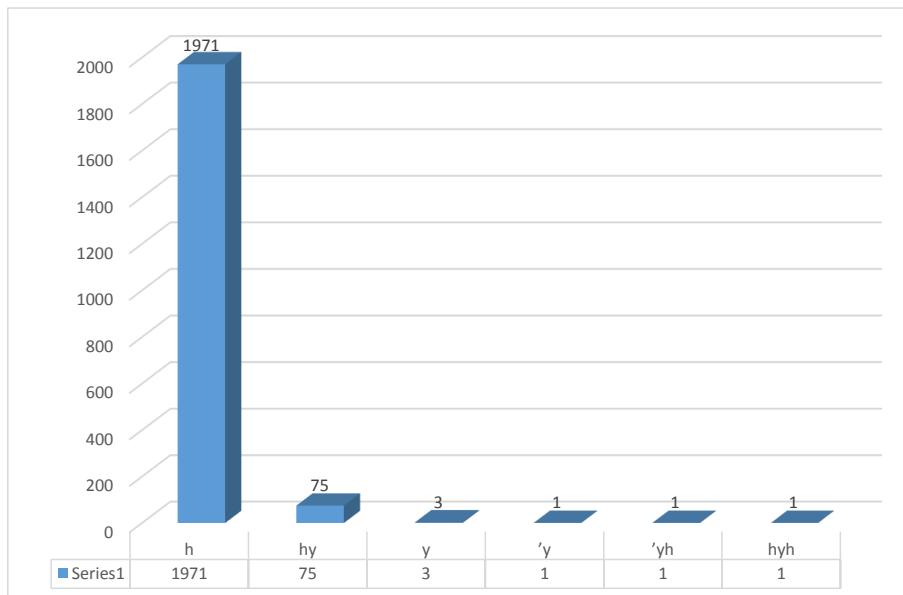
Fig. 3.62 – Vocative particles used in the Safaitic inscriptions

Figure 3.62 shows the vocative particles evident in the Safaitic inscriptions. The most common particle is *h* which is used in just under 2000 instances. Clearly the most frequently used particle, Al-Jallad has stated the vocalisation would have been */hā/.[665]

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[665] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 158
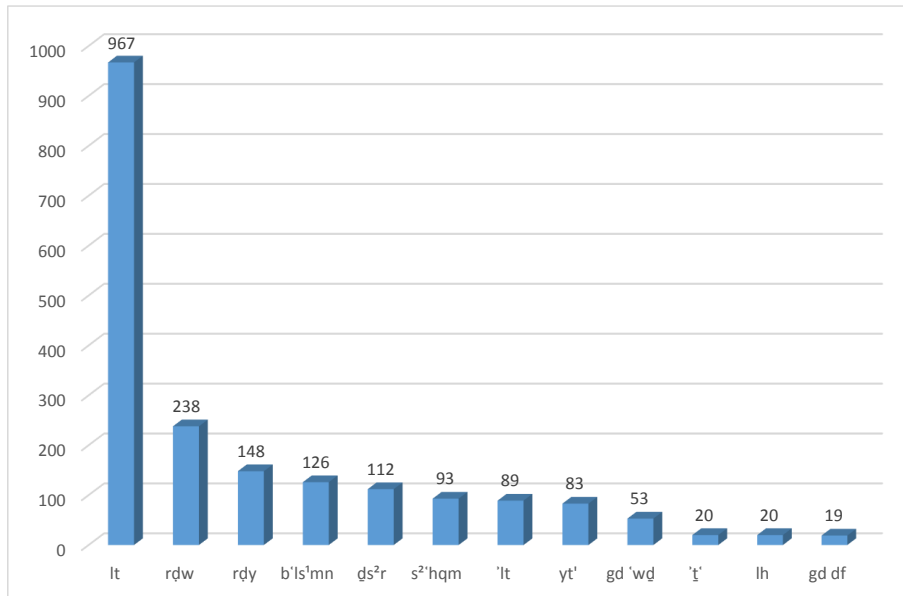
Fig. 3.63 – Deities most commonly associated with _h_

Due to the high number of instances where the vocative particle _h_ has been used, figure 3.63 only shows the deities most commonly associated with the particle. A full list can be seen in Appendix A: Table 16. We can see from this table that _lt_ is by far the deity most commonly associated with _h_. This is followed by _rḍw_ who is featured considerably less frequently that _lt_.

Commented [SP1]: ???
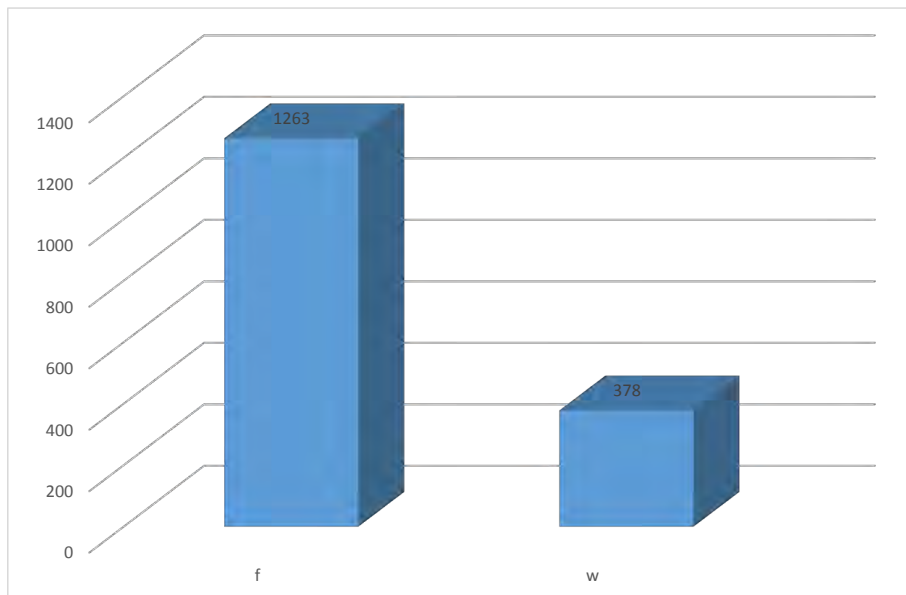
Fig. 3.64 – Conjunctions most often associated with *h*

Of the conjunctions most often associated with *h*, *f* is the most common featuring 1263 times followed by *w* with 378 occurrences. Clearly, to the writers of the Safaitic Arabians, *f* was the preferred conjunction to precede *h*.
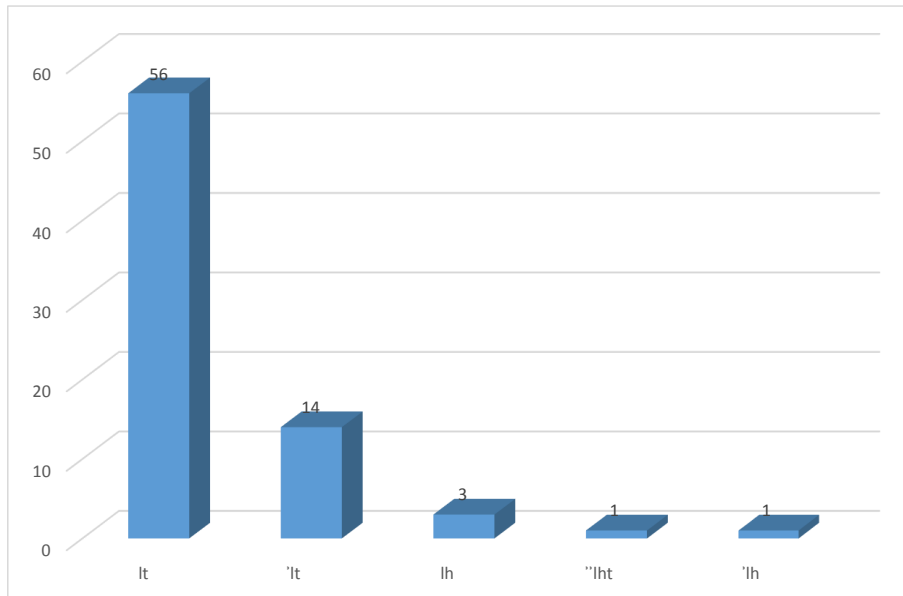
Fig. 3.65 – Deities most often associated with *hy*

The vocative particle *hy* is a variant of the particle *h*[666] and is similar to the Arabic *hayā*.[667] As can be seen in Figure 3.65 the deity most commonly associated with the vocative particle *hy* is *lt*. Given that *lt* is the most frequently occurring deity in the Safaitic religious inscriptions this is not surprising. What is surprising however is that the next most common deities are far less commonly invoked. The deity *ʾlt* is mentioned in 14 inscriptions followed by *lh* in just three instances. This suggests a trend between these deities and the vocative particle *hy*. What the relationship between these deities and *hy* can be is as yet unknown but I would suggest the relationship may have something to do with a practicality of vocalisation between deities and *hy* since *lt, ʾlt* and *lh* when vocalised would all have had a similar sound.

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[666] Al-Jallad 2015, p. 158
[667] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 47
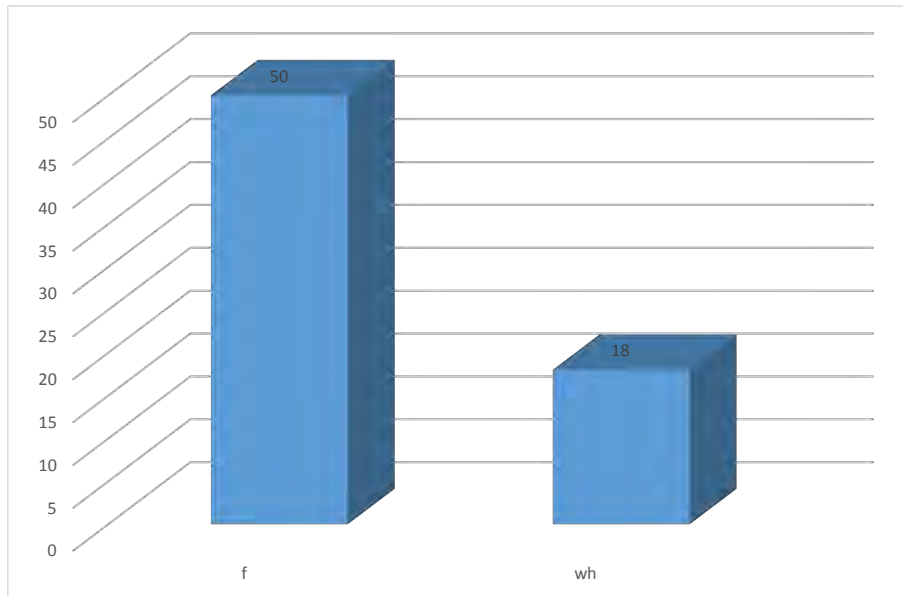
Fig. 3.66 – Conjunctions most often associated with *hy*

As with *h* the common conjunction that can be associated with *hy* is *f* featuring 50 times, and followed by *w* in 18 instances. Interestingly these are similar percentages to those found when these conjunctions follow *h*.

In summary, it is therefore clear that the particle *hy* was commonly associated with certain deities, namely *lt* and *ʾlt*. We can also see that the associated conjunctions appear in similar percentages regardless of whether they accompany the particle *h* or *hy*.

Regional importance of individual deities/regional devotion

What we can see from a summary of the spatial and landscape analyses above and in the maps in the Appendices is a representation of the regional importance and devotion of the various deities mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions. When plotted the location of each inscription or group of inscriptions on a map provides a visual representation of the physical spread of the influence of that particular deity.

In terms of the goddess *lt*, we can see that her influence was far-reaching, not just in because of the multitude of inscriptions that exist worshipping her. She was worshipped

basically wherever the Safaitic inscriptions were found with main clusters in southern Syria and northern Jordan, and outcrops appearing further south and in the north-western regions of Saudi Arabia. Likewise, the deity *ʾlt* features under roughly the same geographical spread as *lt*.

The deity *rḍw* also featured prominently across the region, with the exception of some parts of north-western Saudi Arabia. The deity *rḍy* likewise appears in roughly the same regions as the deity *rḍw*.

It is interesting to compare the geographical spread of the deities *b ʿls¹lmn* and *ds²r* with one another. *b ʿls¹lmn* is featured most frequently in clusters in southern Syria, which mirrors his importance outside the Safaitic religious realm having originated from Syria itself. *ds²r* on the other hand, appears in inscriptions that are much more widespread, and mirror the geographical impact of the Nabataeans from whom he more or less originated. These geographical variations suggest that regional importance in terms of deities did in fact exist, at least to some extent.

Reverence of the deities *ytʿ* and *lh* seems to occur in roughly the same areas where the Safaitic inscriptions were most prominent. The deity *s²ʿhqm* however, appears over a rather wider region, although not as widely as *ds²r*. *s²ʿhqm* tends to appear in more regional or remote areas, which supports the argument that he was a deity who was considered a protector of travelling peoples. While there is nothing concrete in the Safaitic inscriptions to validate this theory, his geographical prominence seems to be enough to at least give the theory c=some credence.

Finally, the deities that share their names with two of the most prominent Safaitic tribes, *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf* appear across the same regions where inscription are found written by authors of their respective tribal lineage. This if of course less noticeable with the deity *gd ḏf* since there are comparatively few references to him in the Safaitic inscriptions. Interestingly, neither deity actually appears in an inscription alongside the tribe they supposedly have a connection with, as evidenced by their names.

What we learn from an analysis of the geographical trends in the Safaitic inscriptions therefore is that regional importance in terms of deities does exist, although not in every circustance. For example, it is clear in terms of the deities *b ʿls¹lmn* and *ds²r*. Topographical

analyses also lends support to theories on the worship of particular deities as well. For example, it is through a topographical analysis that we can observe the role of *s²ʿhqm* as the travelling person's deity.

"Social" and "Unsocial" deities

The purpose of seeking to determine whether there was a difference between"social" and "unsocial" deities was to observe any trends within the religious inscriptions. There does seem to be a distinct difference between those deities seemingly imported from Thamudic/Central Arabian traditions to those from neighbouring sedentary cultures such a Nabataea or Palmyra in terms of their sociability and connection with other deities. This difference may be somewhat explained when we consider the period of time when each deity entered the Safaitic religious pantheon.

Deities such as *bʿls¹lmn*, *s²ʿhqm* and *ds²r* are very social deities and likewise seem to have been imported, *bʿls¹lmn* from Syria, *s²ʿhqm* presumably from Palmyra and *ds²r* from the Nabataeans. The tribal deities *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf* are also very social deities, worship of whom probably arose from within the Safaitic cultural realm. More unsocial deities such as *rḍw*, *rḍy*, *ʾlt*, *yṯʿ*, *lt* and *lh* appear to have been borrowed (or continued if there were a continuity of religious worship between the Thamudic and Safaitic scripts) from Thamudic religious beliefs. These are more often than not also are more traditionally "Arabian" deities. It could be that the imported deities were actually more social because the society they originated from regularly featured prayers with multiple invocations of deities. This tradition then transferred over to their worship in the Safaitic texts. Likewise the more typically Arabian deities may be unsocial because the culture from which they originate, for example, in the Thamudic prayers, only occasionally features multiple deities in individual prayers.

Another possibility is that deities who feature more frequently with others are in fact less important in the Safaitic inscriptions, and therefore potentially need the "assistance" of other deities in order to ensure that the prayer requests be granted. This theory correlates with the number of invocations individual deities receive in the total of the Safaitic religious corpus. For example, the most frequently invoked deities in the Safaitic are *lt*, *rḍw* and *rḍy*, all of whom are relatively rarely mentioned in connection with other deities. In terms of percentages they are then followed by *bʿls¹lmn* who, out of all the unsocial deities is the one most likely to be mentioned alone. Of course, this theory does not work for deities who are only mentioned

infrequently but show unsocial characteristics such as *lh*. Should this theory be correct, it may also suggest that prayers made to the imported deities were less powerful or potentially successful than those made to traditionally Arabian deities. Perhaps this is why the deity *lt* features so frequently in prayer to imported deities. As the most important deity in the inscriptions perhaps she is included by the author to ensure that the prayer will be fulfilled.

The deities and the Safaitic/Thamudic B mixed texts

Since the requests made of deities in the Safaitic/Thamudic B mixed texts, the actual deities, the amount of times they are invoked and the format of the inscriptions differ greatly from the conventional Safaitic texts, I am inclined to believe that the mixed texts constitute a different tradition. The geographical spread of inscriptions of both formats are roughly the same physical regions, and so it seems more likely that the differences between these two traditions is related to the periods in which they were inscribed.

The main difference between these inscriptions lies in their structure. Conventional Safaitic texts open with an introductory participle, followed by the name/s of the author, a vocative particle, the name of the deity and if necessary a request and/or a curse, often with or without a narrative placed either after the author's genealogy or following the prayer but before the curse. An inscription written in the mixed text format opens with a vocative particle, the name of the deity, the request to the deity and finally the name/s of the author. The mixed text format is very similar to that of the Thamudic B inscriptions. As Littmann notes in his very brief passage on inscriptions of this format, some of the characters appear in a similar format to those found in the Thamudic inscriptions.[668]

Another clear distinction between conventional Safaitic texts and ones of this format is related to the hierarchy of the deities invoked. *rḍw* features as the second most commonly invoked deity in the Safaitic inscriptions, but his importance in the religious realm is vastly below that of *lt*. Yet, in the mixed texts he is the chief deity occurring in 56.35% of all inscriptions. The second most frequently invoked deity in the mixed texts is *yṯ ʿ* appearing in 15.87% of texts of that format. In comparison he is the sixth most commonly invoked deity in the greater Safaitic texts only appearing in 5.85% of inscriptions. The next most common deity in the mixed texts is *ʾlt* who features in 13.49% of inscriptions, whereas in the greater Safaitic

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[668] Littmann 1904a, p. 110; See also Littmann 1940, pp. 79, 140–143; Littmann 1943, p. xi

religious inscription she is the seventh most frequently invoked deity appearing in only 5.80% of inscriptions. The chief deity of the entire Safaitic inscription corpus, *lt*, does not even feature in these texts. Some deities that feature far more frequently in the greater Safaitic corpus are also mentioned in the mixed texts, such as *b ʿls¹mn* and *ds²r*, but they are each only mentioned once. In addition, many traditionally Thamudic deities feature in the mixed texts but only rarely, if at all, in the greater Safaitic texts, such as *khl*, *nhy*, *blg*, *nṣr* and to a lesser extent *dtn* and *s²ʿnr*. Thus we can see a clearly different hierarchy within the pantheon in the two formats.

In addition, the requests made of deities in the mixed texts differ greatly to those in the greater Safaitic corpus. The most commonly requested prayer in the mixed texts is for help (*s¹ʿd*), a request which features in 80.16% of inscriptions. This is in contrast to a mere 2% of inscriptions in the greater Safaitic inscriptions but is common in Thamudic B inscriptions.[669] It is interesting to note that in the inscriptions written in the conventional Safaitic format, the deities most often requested to provide *s¹ʿd* are *rḍw*, *yt̠ʿ* and *ʾlt*. These are the deities, as discussed above, who figure most regularly in the mixed texts and are noticeably less obvious in the greater corpus of inscriptions.

It is likely that the texts written in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed text format pre-date the majority of the Safaitic inscriptions written in the conventional format. I would argue that the mixed text inscriptions are a continuation of the Thamudic B inscriptions, which is why many of the characters show distinct Thamudic features and why the format for religious inscriptions is so similar. Likewise, mixed text inscriptions rarely give more than one name in the genealogy of the author, similar to the Thamudic inscriptions, whereas the greater Safaitic inscriptions regularly feature multiple names. I believe the mixed texts represent a gradual evolution from the Thamudic B inscriptions to what we now know as Safaitic inscriptions. This would also explain why traditionally Thamudic deities such as *khl* and *nṣr* appear in the mixed texts but never in the greater Safaitic inscriptions.

In addition, this gradual transmission is also evident in the evolution of the importance of particular deities and indeed the function of those deities over time. For example, the name *rḍy* is seen in only two mixed text inscriptions but is far more common in the Safaitic. I believe that the name *rḍw* gradually evolved from *rḍw*. This also explains why *rḍw* in the conventional Safaitic inscriptions tends to feature in inscriptions with "older" deities or those of recognised

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[669] For example, Eskoubi-A 43

Thamudic origin, such as *mlk* and *rḥm*. The deity *rḍy* on the other hand, features more frequently with relatively "newer" deities such as *bʿlsʾmn* and *ḏsʾr*. The evolution theory further offers a solution to the question of differences in the requests made to both *rḍw* and *rḍy* by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. In general terms *rḍw* transformed over time from an almost entirely benevolent deity in the mixed texts, to the slightly militaristic deity *rḍy* by the time the Safaitic inscriptions fell out of usage.

A theory based on the evolution of the inscriptions is also demonstrated in the transmission betwen names such as *lt* and *ʾlt*. The name *ʾlt* is the only version of that name seen in the mixed texts. Perhaps, like *rḍw* and *rḍy*, the diety gradually changed her name over time and what we are seeing in the mixed texts with the name *ʾlt* is merely an earlier version of the name of the goddess. The fact that the form of the name *ʾlt* is far more common in the Thamudic texts than the Safaitic supports this view. In the case of inscriptions where they are mentioned together I would argue that *ʾlt* merely represents a generic term "the goddess". It may also indicate early confusion between the writers of the inscriptions as to the nature of the deity *lt*.

As we saw from analysis of the deity *ʾlt* above, the goddess shares many of the same characteristics with the deity *lt*. One major difference would be the number of times *ʾlt* is invoked to provide security (*sʾlm*) when contrasted with the far greater number of times *lt* is requested to provide the same function. This perhaps also represents a gradual change in the priorities of the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. Since the requests made in the mixed texts differ greatly from those made in the conventional Safaitic texts it is possible that requests such as security (*sʾlm*) gained more importance in their religious psyche over time. Interestingly, requests for *sʾlm* are usually more prominent within nomadic communities – for example, requests for security are comparatively rare in the Thamudic and Ḥismāic inscriptions. This lends weight to the idea that when the writers of the mixed texts inscribed their texts they were actually representative of a more sedentary community than those of the conventional Safaitic inscriptions. Furthermore, since there does not seem to be much difference in the geographical spread of the mixed texts when compared with the conventional Safaitic texts, it seems likely that the mixed texts represent an earlier version of the greater Safaitic texts.

What an analysis of the conventional Safaitic texts when contrasted with the mixed texts also indicates is a relative chronology of when deities entered the Safaitic religious sphere. We are limited by the fact that so few of the inscriptions can be accurately dated and thus it is impossible to suggest specific centuries for when the deities came into usage. However, as the

229

evidence above suggests, a general chronology might still be possible. I therefore propose that there were two general waves of deities that entered the inscriptions. The older deities, *rḍw*, *ytʿ* and *ʾlt* appeared as a result of the evolution of the Thamudic B religious beliefs. The second wave of change then involved the introduction of "newer" deities such as *bʿlsʾlmn*, *ds²r*, *s²ʿhqm*, *lh*, *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḍf*. The final evolutionary stage is then evident in the transmission of two of the names from *ʾlt* to *lt* and from *rḍw* to *rḍy*.

Major tribes mentioned in the Safaitic inscriptions and their relationships with deities

The following section addresses the major tribes that authors of the Safaitic inscriptions claim in their tribal lineages. I will first look at the individual tribes themselves, followed by an analysis of the religious elements in the inscriptions connected to those tribes. It is important when approaching the study of different tribes that feature in the Safaitic inscriptions to avoid referring to them as "Safaitic tribes". While the names of many of these tribes have, as yet, only been catalogued in Safaitic inscriptions this does not mean that the members of the tribes themselves spoke only Arabic no wrote in only Safaitic. In the Safaitic inscriptions, authors have claimed a tribal lineage to approximately 200 different tribes.[670] Over 100 of these tribes only feature in one reference, while others, such as the tribe *dʾf*, feature far more prominently throughout the inscriptions. An authors' tribal affiliation is generally denoted by the prefix *ḏʾl*, meaning "he of the tribe of…".[671]

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[670] A comprehensive list of these tribes and the inscriptions in which they feature is provided in Appendix A.
[671] Harding 1969b, p. 3

	Total	Mentions tribal lineage	Does not mention tribal lineage
■ Simple Authorship	73.31%	28.55%	74.56%
■ Not Simple Authorship	26.69%	71.45%	25.44%
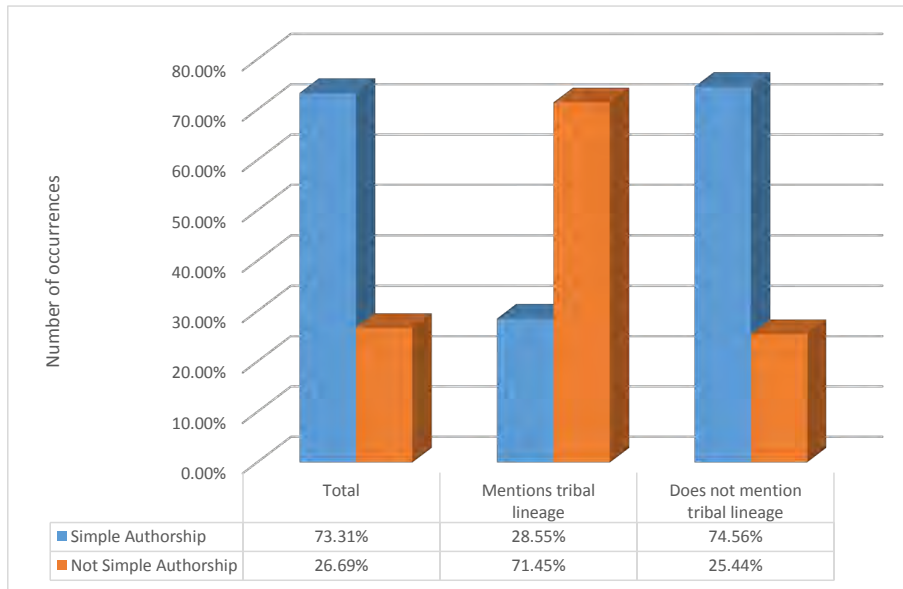
Fig. 3.59 – Comparison of the differences between "simple" and "not simple" inscriptions and the authors' tribal lineage

Inscriptions where the author has declared their tribal lineage tend to be more comprehensive than those that do not contain any tribal references. They are also less likely to be written in the simple authorship format. A text is defined as "simple authorship" if the inscription consists of only the name/s of the author and their tribal lineage. Out of all Safaitic inscriptions where the author does not declare a tribal membership, 74.56% can be considered simple authorship. Of those do contain a declaration of tribal membership, only 28.55% of inscriptions can be considered simple authorship.

231

	Total	Mentions tribal lineage	Does not mention tribal lineage
■ Contains religious features	7.01%	20.70%	6.63%
■ Does not contain religious features	92.99%	79.30%	93.37%
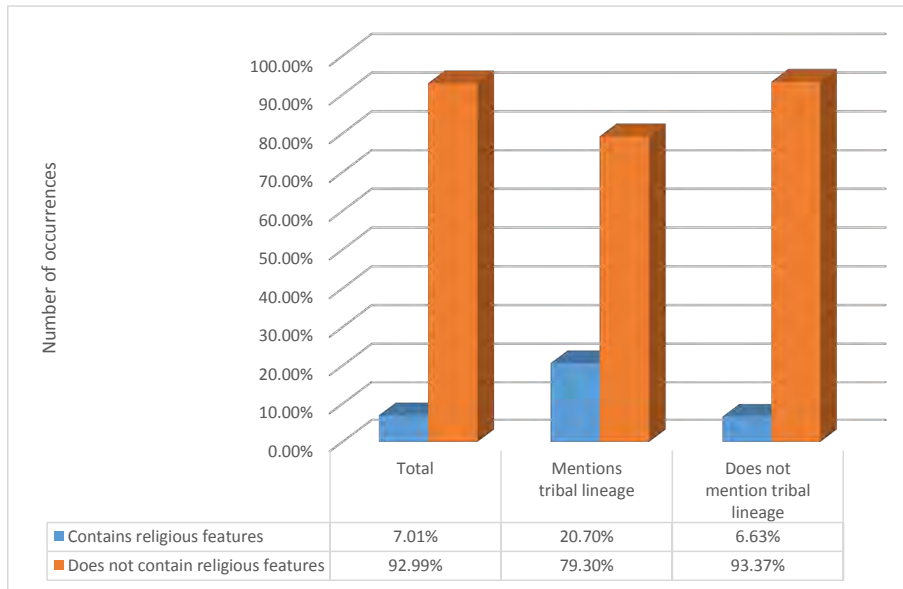
Fig. 3.60 – Comparison of the differences between inscriptions featuring religious elements and the authors' tribal lineage

In addition, texts that feature the author's tribal lineage also tend to feature more religious elements than others. Inscriptions that do not feature the name of the author's tribe contain approximately 6.60% of religious elements while inscriptions that do feature the author's tribe have 21.29% of religious elements.
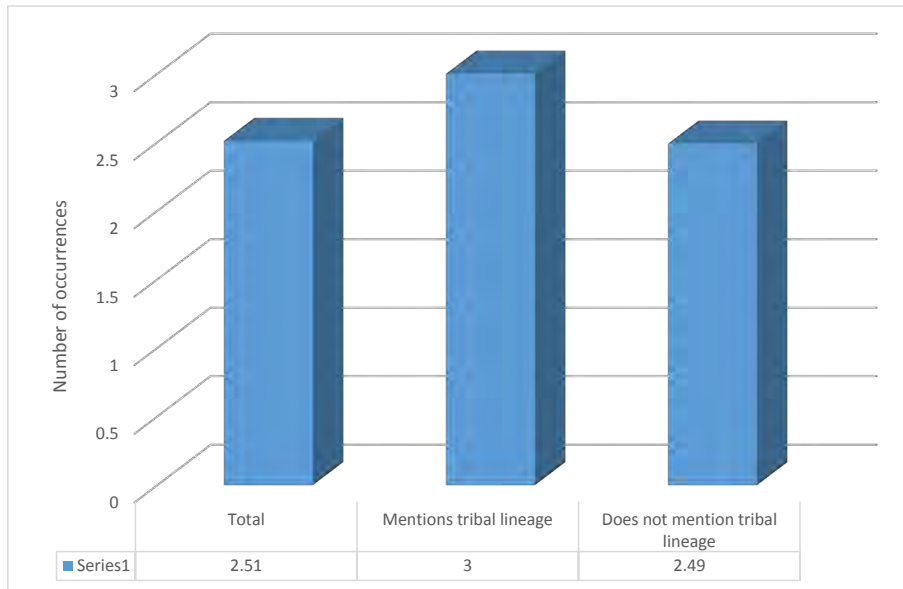
Fig. 3.61 – Comparison of the differences in the average amount of names mentioned in inscriptions and the authors' tribal lineage

In an onomastic analysis the average number of names mentioned in inscriptions excluding tribal memberships was 2.49, as against 3.00 where the author mentioned their tribe. From this we can conclude that, having declared a tribal connection, it may have been essential for the author to then verify his lineage and membership of that particular tribe. Thus we find a higher number of names mentioned in tribal inscriptions. Or perhaps there is a more prosaic reason, having opted to write a more comprehensive text the author merely maintained that level of effort and thus increased the content.

Below is an analysis of the inscriptions that feature the tribal lineage of the author. Only the most prominent tribes that occur most frequently in the Safaitic inscriptions have been discussed since the vast majority of these tribes only occur occasionally or infrequently.

d̠ʾf

Featuring in 109 inscriptions, *d̠ʾf* is the tribe most frequently mentioned when authors claim membership of a particular tribe. It has been called the largest of the tribes in the Safaitic

inscriptions[672] with Graf arguing that this tribe, along with the tribe ʿwḏ, represented a large tribal confederation.[673] One basis for Grafs' theory is that dʾf and ʿwḏ share their names with the deities gd ḏf and gd ʿwḏ, regarded by many as fortune and tribal deities of "their" respective tribes.[674] However, I would caution against using this theory to support the existence of a large tribal confederation. As previously discussed, there is no significant reason to assume that worship of the deities gd ḏf and gd ʿwḏ originated with the tribes ḏf and ʿwḏ. Since both ḏf and ʿwḏ also feature as personal names in the Safaitic inscriptions, they may have originated independently and merely manifested as personal deities. In addition, there does not seem to be an overwhelming preference by members of the tribes' ḏf and ʿwḏ to recognise these deities over any other divinity. Furthermore, even should the worship of these deities have originated with the tribes ḏf and ʿwḏ, this does not necessarily indicate that they then make up a large tribal confederation.

As evidenced in the Safaitic inscriptions, dʾf interacted with many different tribes and cultures. This is useful for any study of the inscriptions. In many inscriptions written by those claiming membership of the dʾf the authors reference events of more prominent cultures which can then be used as a form of relative dating. For example, the inscriptions MISSE 1 and 2 can either be interpreted as referencing the kingdom of Liḥyan with the statement sⁱnt kbsⁱ h- ʾsⁱkn ʾl lḥyn or "the year Liḥyan conducted a surprise attack on the ʾsⁱkn". This statement offers us a clues in terms of dating. Furthermore, references to Rome and the Parthians also feature in this manner, for example, w hdy sⁱnt ngy qṣr h- mḏ or "and he acted as guide the year the Romans ejected the Parthians". Other references to Rome include WH 1698: w wld h- mʿzy sⁱnt ngy qṣr h- mdnt or "and the goats bore young the time that a Roman army delivered the city". The references to both Liḥyan and Rome suggest that the tribe dʾf was a prominent tribe that existed over many centuries.

In terms of references to other cultures and tribes we have a possible reference to the tribe of dʾf and the Nabataeans in WH 1700a: w ʾs²rq b- h- ḫl b ʿd h- nʿm sⁱnt ḥrb h- mlk ʾl sⁱbṭt or "and he went eastward with horses behind the grazing-livestock the year the king waged war with the tribe of sⁱbṭt". Winnett believes the reference to a king (h- mlk) represents the Nabataean king of the time. However, while this is a possible interpretation we have no further proof. In addition, the tribe qmr that features regularly as the tribal lineage of many authors in

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[672] Macdonald 1992, p. 28; Khraysheh, 1992, pp. 5–14
[673] Graf 1989, p. 363
[674] al-Rosan 1987, pp. 328–332; Graf 1989, p. 366; Littmann 1940, p. 108

the Safaitic inscriptions also features in a text written by a member of the *dʾf* and helps us to date the inscription because we know they were written during the Roman period. The author of the text, seen in CIS 1952, writes *h- dr s¹nt ṭrq ʾl qmr {h-} s¹lṭn* or "the year the government smote the *qmr*".[675]

The geographical spread of the tribe *dʾf* can be seen when the inscriptions written by authors claiming tribal membership are plotted on a map.[676] Inscriptions featuring *dʾf* range widely and cover much of the regions were Safaitic inscriptions are found, with a high concentration around the Qasr Burquʾ region of north-eastern Jordan. Similarly high concentrations also exist in the region of southern Syria. There are a lack of inscriptions featuring the tribe *dʾf* in north-western Saudi Arabia despite considerable collections of Safaitic inscriptions being found in this region. Given that the Safaitic Arabians had the means to travel many miles it is unusual that there would be a distinct lack of inscriptions featuring this tribe in the area. This inconsistency suggests a potential area for further research.

Of the inscriptions that feature the tribe *dʾf*, approximately 25 also include religious elements, roughly 23% of all inscriptions written by an author who claims lineage to the *dʾf*. Of these inscriptions 19 invoke the deity *lt*, with three of those inscriptions also featuring the deities *s²ʿhqm* once and *ds²r* twice. The deity *bʿls¹mn* features alone in another three inscriptions, followed by *s²ʿhqm* and *ds²r* both appearing twice. The deity *rḍw* also features in a single inscription. Of these religious inscriptions, eight feature a curse or a blessing (six curses, two. blessings) most frequently seeking blindness (*ʿwr*) on the obliterator of an inscription. Of the prayers that occur in these inscriptions, the most frequently request is for security (*s¹lm*) followed by glory (*mgdt*).

ḥẓy

ḥẓy is the second most frequently mentioned tribe to which authors claim tribal lineage featuring in 40 inscriptions. Despite being the second most commonly cited tribe, there are, as yet, no references to *ḥẓy* outside the Safaitic inscriptions. However, there are a few references in the inscriptions themselves that suggest that the tribe had a lot of contact with neighbouring cultures. An inscription written by a member of *ḥẓy* may reference the kingdom of Liḥyan in KRS 2287, which states "and he built the shelter the year *ʾbdrbʾl* confronted Liḥyan" (*w bny*

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[675] This is a revised translation from Macdonald.
[676] See Map 14 in Appendix C.

h- s¹ tr s¹nt ws¹q ʿbdrbʾl lḥyn). However, it is unclear if Liḥyan represents the kingdom of Liḥyan or merely an individual with the same name. There are two other references, from the same region, to *ʿbdrbʾl* confronting Liḥyan, including one reference from a member of *dʾf*,[677] so it seems to have been a significant event for the authors. Again, these references to Liḥyan may also indicate that *ḥzy* was a tribe that had been in existence for many centuries since inscriptions at Lihyan tended to pre-date those in the Safaitic script. It also appears that the tribe *ḥzy* were not universally liked by all authors of the Safaitic inscriptions, for example, C 1065 states that the author "lamented over the *ḥzy*" (*s̲yr ngʿ ʾl- ḥzy*).

Unfortunately the specific location of a number of inscriptions from north-eastern Jordan written by members of *ḥzy* were unable to be identified, but the remaining inscriptions still give a decent view on the geographical spread of the tribe of *ḥzy*.[678] A high concentration of the inscriptions featuring this tribe come from the Jawa area of southern Syria and northern Jordan, as well as smaller outcrops from north-eastern Jordan. There are also two standalone inscriptions from north-western Jordan.

Of the 40 inscriptions featuring the tribe *ḥzy*, nine feature religious elements, roughly 23% of those inscriptions. Amongst those inscriptions, the only deity invoked is the chief deity *lt*. Seven prayers ask the deity for security (*s¹lm*) with one also requesting deliverance (*fṣy*). A further inscription asks the deity for abundance (*ġnyt*). Only one of these inscriptions features a curse where *lt* is asked to inflict ejection (*nqʾt*) on the obliterator of the inscription.

ʿ*mrt*

ʿ*mrt* is the third most common tribe cited by authors of the Safaitic inscriptions. References to tribal lineage of ʿ*mrt* appear in approximately 32 inscriptions. It is a matter of scholarly debate whether the tribe ʿ*mrt* is, or was related, to the tribe Banū ʿAmr[679] of the Umm al-Jimāl inscription, or perhaps the Arab tribe that resided near Madaba sharing the same name, Banū ʿAmr.[680] The Umayyad poet Jarīr refers to this tribe calling them Nabataeans.[681] Graf also sees a relationship between ʿ*mrt* and a Nabataean tribe residing near Madaba.[682]

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[677] *dʾf* – KRS 2342; See also – KRS 2287
[678] See Map 15 in Appendix C.
[679] Knauf 1984, p. 584; Milik 1980, pp. 41–54
[680] Knauf 1984, p. 584
[681] Jarīr, *Diwān*, 902
[682] Graf 1989, p. 360

The geographical spread of inscriptions from authors in the tribe range widely.[683] A number of outcrops where *ʿmrt* inscriptions are more prominent include the Qasr Burquʾ region and Wādī al- Ġuṣayn in the north-eastern Jordanian badia as well as near Deir el-Kahf in north-western Jordan. A few inscriptions can be also be found close to the Madaba region of Jordan.

Of the inscriptions that feature the tribe *ʿmrt*, five feature religious elements, approximately 15% of the total number of inscriptions referencing *ʿmrt* in the Safaitic corpus. Of these five inscriptions, four invoke the deity *lt,* two of those in connection with *ds²r*. The deity *ds²r* also features in an inscription as the lone deity invoked. This inscription is unusual as it is one of the only examples where a request of remembrance (*d̲kr*) is made. Such a request is significant as the term *d̲kr* is relatively rare in the Safaitic inscriptions while being remarkably common in the Ḥismāic and Nabataean inscriptions. Since *ds²r* is venerated in the Ḥismāic and Nabataean religious realms to a much greater extent than the Safaitic, the number of times *ds²r* is invoked in inscriptions featuring the tribe *ʿmrt* may be significant. However, it is important to remember that we are still dealing with a very small number of inscriptions.

Of the prayers made to deities in these inscriptions, with the exception of the previously mentioned prayer, all requests seek security (*s¹lm*). There is only one curse in these prayers, notably connected to the aforementioned prayer requesting remembrance (*d̲kr*) and the curse itself is in a very unusual format for a Safaitic prayer. The prayer requests that *ds²r* "curse bad people" (*lʿn rʾṭ s¹ʾ*). What makes this curse unique is that it does not specify who the "bad people" are. The vast majority of Safaitic curses stipulate that the curse be placed on the obliterator of an inscription. This curse however, seeks to impose a moral judgement on unnamed persons. Once again, this type of curse is remarkably rare in Safaitic, but is far more common in the Nabataean religious texts.

The tribe *ʿmrt* and the "square script"

Of the 32 inscriptions that feature authors claiming tribal lineage to *ʿmrt*, 26 are written in what is known as the "square script" discussed in Chapter One. As mentioned previously, it is unknown why some inscriptions were written in square script and others in the more conventional form. It has been noted that many square script texts are easier to date[684] because many contain significant events from neighbouring cultures outside the realm of the Safaitic

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[683] See Map 16 in Appendix C.
[684] SIJ 39,78; C1292, 4448

inscriptions. Some scholars have argued that Nabataean Aramaic, which was a prestige written language during this period, may have replaced the square script for official inscriptions, which may be an explanation for why square script inscriptions are more prevalent in earlier years and less so later.[685] Of all the inscriptions written in the square script approximately one third are written by authors who mention their tribal lineage. Nevertheless the tribes mentioned appear nowhere near the number of times that *ʿmrt* features using this written script. Given that the tribe *ʿmrt* may have been a Nabataean tribe, or at the very least had a close relationship with the Nabataeans, we can suppose that the existence of the square script was related actually in some form to the Nabataeans.

ms¹kt

The tribe *ms¹kt* is the fourth most common tribe mentioned by authors of the Safaitic inscriptions in terms of lineage or membership. Some 30 inscriptions of this type are currently known. Little is known of this tribe outside of the Safaitic inscriptions, however.

When the inscriptions are plotted on a map, we can see that the geographical spread centres around the areas of southern Syria, northern Jordan and the north-eastern Jordanian desert. This represents an area more confined than previously mentioned tribes.[686] Unfortunately a number of *ms¹kt* inscriptions coming from the north-eastern Jordanian badia were unable to be more specifically located.

Of the inscriptions that feature the tribe *ms¹kt*, 11 include religious elements, which makes for approximately 37% of the total number of texts. Of these 11 religious inscriptions, 10 include invocations to the deity *lt*, with only one of these texts featuring another deity, *ds²r*. The only other religious inscriptions invoke two deities, *lh* and *ds²r*. Eight of these inscriptions request security (*s¹lm*) followed by one request each of relief (*rwḥ*), abundance (*ġyrt*), destruction (*s¹ḥqt*) and continued existence (*mwgd*). Of these religious inscriptions only one features a curse, a request to *lt* to seek ejection (*nqʾt*) for the obliterator of the inscription.

ʿwḏ

ʿwḏ features is the fifth most common tribe in terms of tribal lineage in the Safaitic inscriptions. There are 29 inscriptions of this type currently known, only slightly fewer than the tribe *ms¹kt*

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[685] Macdonald 2010a, p. 11; Oxtoby 1968, p. 8
[686] See Map 17 in Appendix C.

discussed above. Given that the name of the tribe *'wḏ* is shared with the deity *gd 'wḏ*, it is one of the more well-known tribes that feature in the Safaitic inscriptions. *'wḏ* also features in inscriptions written in various other North Arabian dialects and we know that it was an important tribal confederation.[687]

The geographical spread of inscriptions referencing *'wḏ* seems to be quite far-reaching stretching well into southern Syria and the north/north-western deserts of Jordan.[688] The inscriptions tended to be fairly evenly spread throughout this region.

Of the inscriptions that feature the tribe *'wḏ*, nine include religious elements, approximately 31% of the total. Of these religious inscriptions, eight are invocations to the deity *lt*, and only one is to the tribe's namesake *gd 'wḏ*. Seven of these prayers ask the deities to provide security (*s¹lm*) with two also seeking sufficient means of subsistence (*ġtt*) and booty (*ġnmt*). Of these religious inscriptions four feature curses, two requesting the deity inflict blindness and dumbess (*'wr w ḫrs*), one requests only blindness (*'wr*) and another asks for vengeance (*nqmt*) on the obliterator/s of the inscriptions. These inscriptions also feature two blessings that ask the deity *lt* to reward those who leave the inscription intact with security (*s¹lm*) and booty (*ġnmt*).

tm

The tribe *tm* features as the sixth most common tribe with which authors of the Safaitic inscriptions might claim lineage and there are 24 inscriptions currently known. While comparatively common in the inscriptions, the tribe was relatively unknown outside of the Safaitic inscriptions. The tribe has a surprisingly wide geographical range, spreading from the north-eastern Jordanian desert to the southern regions of Karak and Balqa' and into north-western Saudi Arabia.[689]

Of the inscriptions that feature the tribe *tm*, only three include religious elements, approximately 13% of the total number of texts. Of these three religious inscriptions, all include a prayer to the deity *lt* with one prayer also invoking the deity *ds²r*. The only requests made in these prayers are for security (*s¹lm*). In addition, there were no curses or blessings present.

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[687] Graf 1989, pp. 362–363
[688] See Map 18 in Appendix C.
[689] See Map 19 in Appendix C.

nġbr

nġbr is the seventh most common tribe amongst the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions with 21 inscriptions currently extant. The tribe *nġbr* does not have the same geographical spread of *tm*, with the majority of inscriptions written by members of the tribe clustering around southern Syria in higher than usual concentrations.[690] Graf argues that the tribe *nġbr* is one of the apparent subdivisions of the tribe *ʿwḏ*[691] although Macdonald has since argued that this was not the case.[692]

Of these inscriptions that feature the tribe *nġbr*, eight also contain religious elements, which is approximately 43% of the total. Of these eight religious inscriptions, five include a prayer to the deity *lt*. In four of those inscriptions *lt* features as the singular deity. The only other prayer to feature *lt* includes a number of other deities, notably *s²ʿhqm*, *gd ʿwḏ*, *bʿls¹mn* and *ds²r*. The deity *bʿls¹mn* appears in two additional prayers as the only deity invoked. This slightly greater than average concentration of prayers to *bʿls¹mn* may be related to the geographical proximity of the tribe of *nġbr* to Sīʿ, a southern Syria town with a temple to the deity *bʿls¹mn*.

qmr

The tribe *qmr* is the eighth most common tribe in which we can see claims of tribal lineage bu the authors of the Safaitic inscriptions. There are 19 of these inscriptions currently known. The geographical spread of inscriptions belonging to members of the tribe of *qmr* indicate that the tribe's main areas of activity were far reaching.[693] Out of the inscriptions that were able to be mapped there are three main clusters, one in the north-western corner of Jordan, another in the north-eastern Jordanian desert and the largest cluster in southern Syria.

Of these inscriptions, seven contain religious elements, approximately 37% of the total number of inscriptions. Four are prayers to the deity *lt*, with one prayer also featuring *s²ʿhqm*. The deities *gd ʿwḏ* and *s²ʿhqm* are the second most commonly occurring deities in these inscriptions, featuring together in one inscription, while *gd ʿwḏ* also appears alone in another prayer. Finally the deity *rḍy* also features solo in a prayer. In these inscriptions, security (*s¹lm*)

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[690] See Map 20 in Appendix C.
[691] Graf 1989, p. 362
[692] Macdonald 1993, pp. 364–365
[693] See Map 21 in Appendix C.

is requested in six prayers, followed by five requests for booty (*ġnmt*) and one of compensation (*ḫlf*).

Individual tribes or tribal confederation?

It is unknown whether there existed a tribal confederation and hierarchy in the tribes that feature in the Safaitic inscriptions. Graf frequently refers to a number of tribes in the Safaitic inscriptions as part of a tribal confederation, for example, he claims *nġbr* is one of the sub-divisions of the *ʿwḏ* tribe[694] and that *ḏf* is part of another tribal confederation intimately associated with the *ʿwḏ* tribe.[695] Much of this belief seems to focus on the existence of the deities *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf*. However, the evidence seems to suggest otherwise. Indeed, *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf* are rarely worshipped by members of their respective tribes. In addition, since both *ʿwḏ* and *ḏf* exist as personal names as well as tribal names there is no proof that the deities were ever originally associated with those tribes. Yet the similarities in names cannot be overlooked and therefore it is more than likely that they originated as tribal deities. By the time of the Safaitic inscriptions they appear to have become worshipped widely by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions regardless of their tribal lineage.

Interestingly, a small number of inscriptions exist that seem to imply the author was a member of multiple tribes. For example, Mu 321 states "By *Gyrʾl* son of *sʾlm* son of *Gyrʾl* son of *Ḥwt* of the lineage of *zgr* of the lineage of *kn* of the lineage of *ḏf* of the lineage of *whbʾl*" (*l gyrʾl bn sʾlm bn gyrʾl bn ḥwt ḏ- ʾl zgr ḏ- ʾl kn ḏ- ʾl ḏf ḏ- ʾl whbʾl*). ZEGA 16 is similar stating "by *mʾn* son of *bhm* of the lineage of *ġhm* son of *ʾht* of the lineage of *ḏf*" (*l mʾn bn bhm ḏ- ʾl ġhm bn ʾht ʾl ḏf*) which Zeinadden translates as "der vom Stamme Ghm des Neffen des Stammes Ḏf ist". Since both mention the largest tribe *ḏf* this evidence points to *ḏf* being perhaps the parent tribe of other smaller tribes. However, the inscription could also be evidence of movement between tribes, suggesting that people did not need to remain with the same tribe their entire life. In Mu 321 there are as many personal names as there are tribes, which may be interpreted as an example of the author listing the tribe he is a member of, as well as those of his forefathers. If we accept this interpretation we can see movement between tribes over the generations.

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[694] Graf 1989, p. 362
[695] Graf 1989, p. 363

While tribal confederations may have existed amongst the tribes that are featured in the Safaitic inscriptions, it is not definitive at this point in time. What we can say for certain is that to some extent the deities invoked in religious inscriptions where the authors' have stated their tribal lineage occasionally demonstrate preferences amongst particular tribes, for example, the tribe *nġbr* and the deity *bʿls¹mn*. In this case there may also be something to be said regarding a geographical relationship with Palmyra. The tribe *ʿmrt* and the deity *ds²r* also demonstrate an affinity, possibly due to their close relationship with the Nabataeans.

Women writers of the Safaitic inscriptions

While the majority of the Safaitic inscriptions were written by men there still exist a number of texts where the authors claim to be female. In this current study there were 34 inscriptions written by women that were analysed, as well as one inscription of multiple authorship written by both a male and a female.[696] Of these inscriptions 53% are written with simple authorship which is a substantially higher percentage than the rest of the Safaitic corpus. The content of these inscriptions does not differ greatly from those inscriptions written by males. Many of these inscriptions involve expressions of longing,[697] grief[698] and prayer.[699] Of the prayers written by females one, CSNS 304, is an invocation to the deity *rḍw* (expressed as *rḍʾ*) and written in the formulae of the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts. As yet there are not enough examples of religious inscriptions written by females for us to make any comment on whether there exist variations in cult determined by gender.

Summary

This chapter introduced and analysed the deities featured in the Safaitic inscriptions through the content of the individual inscriptions and in terms of their geographical spread. It introduced and expanded on the new concepts of "social" or "unsocial" deities. In additiona, the vocative particles and conjunctives used in religious inscriptions were analysed, as were the religious trends visible through tribal culture as well as the role of women in the authorship of the Safaitic religious inscriptions.

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[696] See L 283
[697] RyDamas 13094d
[698] SIAM 30
[699] CSNS 304; Mu 13; NTSB 1; RyDamas 13094.5

From this analysis we saw that *lt* was by far the most commonly invoked deity in the Safaitic religious inscriptions as well as the most important, being regularly referenced multiple times in inscriptions. Her role was primarily as a protective deity and she had the greatest geographical spread of all the deities. The relationship between *lt* and *ʾlt* was also discussed above, concluding that they can be considered as representing the same deity with her name appearing in different forms. It is possible that *ʾlt* is the earlier version of the name of the goddess. This conclusion was reached through a comparison of their similar geographical spread, their relatively similar roles and functions in the Safaitic texts, and an analysis of their position in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts.

The deities' *rḍw* and *rḍy* were also discussed as were their roles within the Safaitic religious texts. It was concluded that like *lt* and *ʾlt*, *rḍw* and *rḍy* likely represented the same deity whose roles and functions gradually changed over time. *rḍw* most likely represents an earlier form of the name *rḍy*, a claim supported by the above analysis of the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts.

An analysis of the vocative particles that feature in the Safaitic inscriptions was also undertaken. This indicated that the vocative particle *hy* was more common with the deities' *lt*, *ʾlt* and *lh*. The conclusion was that this is somehow due to a certain practical vocalisation of the names of those deities.

A geographical analysis of the deities demonstrated differences and similarities between the major divinities, as did the above analysis relating to social and unsocial deities. What this analysis suggests is that there was a distinctive divide between local and imported deities.

The analysis of the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts and the study of the deities featuring in those texts in turn led to the suggestion that texts of this type may predate the Safaitic inscriptions and may actually be evidence of two waves of deities entering the Safaitic religious realm. These are namely the older deities, *rḍw*, *yṯʿ* and *ʾlt*, and the new deities *bʿls¹lmn*, *ds²r*, *s²ʿhqm*, *lh*, *gd ʿwḏ* and *gd ḏf*.

In terms of the investigation of religious aspects and links or relationships with tribal lineages, specifically the tribe of *ʿmrt*, there was not enough evidence available to make any concrete assumptions or promulgate any theories. What this study showed was that there

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appeared to be a relationship between that tribe and the Nabataeans evident in the use of the square script.

The final section on female authorship in Safaitic religious inscriptions indicated that there is not enough currently available evidence to draw any solid or conclusive theories.

CHAPTER FOUR

ICONOGRAPHY AND SYMBOLISM IN THE SAFAITIC INSCRIPTIONS

Introduction

Accompanying many of the Safaitic inscriptions are a wide array of symbols, tribal wasms and figural or zoological representations. They come in many forms from crude pictographs to detailed rock art and have been found either alone or as part of a large iconographic scene or sequence. The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether there exists any religious significance to the occurrences of these symbols and drawings. This analysis will examine whether there exist any particular relationship between deities and specific symbols or drawings, as well as determine if there is any geographical significance in terms of the occurrences of these rock art drawings.

Problems that arise with the study of Safaitic rock art

A number of problems arise when attempting to analyse the rock art accompanying Safaitic inscriptions. Firstly, without the author of an inscription specifically stating in the text that the drawing is also by his hand we have no precise way of knowing if the accompanying rock art is contemporary with the inscription or not.[700] While we may be able to ascertain a rough estimate for the date of the creation of the Safaitic inscriptions through datable events mentioned within the texts themselves, Arabian rock art remains relatively similar throughout the millennia and thus dating is somewhat problematic. Unless there exist within the drawing itself enough detail to categorise the image within a particular time frame, for example with weaponry or clothing styles, the art itself is subject to a wide time frame. The only way of being certain a picture is contemporary with an inscription is if the author specifically states in the inscription that the picture is also of his or her composition. A further problem arises however, when we consider that multiple authors sometimes claim credit for a single picture. When this happens the true composer remains unknown.[701]

There is also a varying level of diligence evidenced by epigraphers when dealing with rock art in their collections of inscriptions. For example, many of the early Arabian epigraphers

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[700] Clark 1979, p. 46
[701] See WH 767 and 768, 1228 and 1229, 3502 and 3502; MSTK 17 and 18

do not include all accompanying rock art in the plates. Some may make a brief mention of the existence of additional art on a rock face but not provide copies. Littmann is one such scholar who does this. Thankfully the trend is changing and many modern epigraphers, now do go to great lengths to ensure that all rock art is accurately reproduced in the plates sections of their works or alongside the translation and transliterations of inscriptions. In terms of modern epigraphers who do this we have only to look to the work of Ababneh.[702]

As we can see therefore, there are significant problems associated with accurately determining the age of Arabian rock art. In addition, there is the issue of the potential existence of more drawings that have not been recorded. With these limitation in mind the figures and analyses in this chapter should necessarily be approached with caution.

Safaitic symbols

The significance of symbolic images and the importance of "seven"

One of the most common forms of imagery accompanying the Safaitic inscriptions are symbolic representations of the number seven, appearing most often in the form of seven lines, dots or circles. Whereas depictions of animals seem to exist with or without an accompanying inscriptions, symbolic images only feature in connection with inscriptions. The prevalence of symbols of seven in Ancient North Arabia are also far more common when accompanying Safaitic inscriptions than other ANA linguistic strains such as Thamudic or Ḥismāic. While the symbols that accompany the inscriptions are never explicitly referred to in the texts, the fact that they seems to be a predominately Safaitic occurrence and only appear in concordance with an inscription means it is easier to analyse their importance to the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. Scholars argue that these symbols were intended as protection for the inscription and that their purpose is to prevent the inscription from being effaced or perhaps even damaged by erosion.[703]

The significance of the number seven has been debated amongst scholars with many believing the number represents an astral element, for example the Pleiades[704] or perhaps the seven planets visible in our solar system.[705] In contrast, others argue that their symbolism may

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[702] Ababneh 2005
[703] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 26; Clark 1979, pp. 52–53
[704] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 26; Clark 1979, p. 26
[705] Dhorme 1946, p. 79

not be astral in origin, but rather representative of the seven pebbles used in casting lots.[706] Personally I feel it is more likely to hold an astral function. Al-Jallad has presented a compelling argument for the existence and use of the Zodiac in determining time in the Safaitic inscriptions, as well as identifying the Pleiades in the Safaitic inscriptions. The series of seven dots in particular may possibly exist as a representation of the Pleiades. It has been suggested that if the dots appear in a cluster or a line this is indicative of the writers being from different Safaitic districts,[707] although this claim has since been disputed.[708] The true purpose of images such as these is still a matter of debate and no definitive conclusions have been agreed by scholars. For example, Grimme suggests a funerary association, an argument supported by van Buren.[709]

Many scholars believe that the symbols provide some measure of protection for the inscription. Some, such as Clark, suggest that in some cases the seven symbols may be protective of the author rather than the inscription. Clark notes in a commentary on CSNS 821 that the accompanying image of a bowman fighting a swordsman is one such example. The bowman is surrounded by four groups of seven dots in rows whereas the swordsman has no accompanying symbols. He concludes that the author of the inscription could be the bowman as the swordsman is left "unprotected by this magical device".[710] Nevertheless, while the exact purpose of the series of seven symbols remains as yet be unknown, most scholars concede that it does have a religious significance.[711]

Similarity with symbols in Mesopotamian religion

While the symbols analysed here are distinctly Safaitic in design, series of seven symbols accompanying inscriptions was also a common motif in ancient Mesopotamian religion. It may have even been considered as a form of apotropaic magic.[712]

There are a number of similarities between the uses of symbols of seven in Safaitic and those seen in Mesopotamian religious images. For example, a series of seven dots or circles is a common image in both Safaitic and Mesopotamian religious inscriptions. In terms of

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[706] Van Buren, 1947, p. 74.
[707] Grimme 1929; Or see Van Buren 1945, p. 82 for reference
[708] Oxtoby 1968, p. 28
[709] Van Buren 1945, p. 82
[710] Clark 1979, p. 49
[711] Oxtoby 1968, p. 29
[712] Dhorme 1946, p. 74f

Mesopotamian religion, Moorey believes these symbols of seven represent deities, in particular Ishtar.[713] Van Buren on the hand thinks they represent the Sibitti,[714] a group of seven gods invoked amongst others "to enforce the sanctity of oaths".[715] Interestingly, as is the case with the seven dots seen in Safaitic inscriptions, the number does not have to be just seven but can be larger. However, while the seven dots accompanying Mesopotamian inscriptions can actually be increased the amount must still be divisible by seven.[716]

I believe, generally speaking, there are in fact very few direct parallels in the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians and Mesopotamian religion and therefore it is unlikely that the group of seven symbols were borrowed from the Mesopotamians. What is more likely is that Semitic religious beliefs placed an importance on the sanctity of the number seven, a belief that manifested itself in the Safaitic inscriptions as a series of protective symbols. As Littmann points out, regardless of what the origins of the symbols are, they may have actually been forgotten and for the Safaitic Arabians may have merely represented a magic symbol.[717]

Lines

The most common form of symbols accompanying Safaitic inscriptions are seven parallel lines. This symbol appear in connection with 279 inscriptions. Occasionally the author inscribes more than seven lines but they usually add up to a multiple of seven, such as 14 or 21.

| NST1 | SIJ 939 | ISB 35 | AbaNS 370 |

Fig. 4.1 – Examples of depictions of seven lines

The lines are most often depicted as seven parallel lines one after the other, although occasionally the ends are joined to look like a ladder.[718] And as can be seen in fig 4.1 the lines are not necessarily always the same length.

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[713] Moorey 1975, p. 87
[714] Van Buren 1939–1941, p. 277
[715] Van Buren 1947, p. 74
[716] Van Buren 1947, p. 75
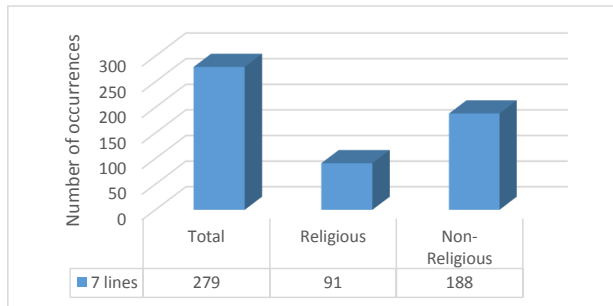[717] Littmann 1940, p. 121
[718] See WH 574, 709

Fig. 4.2 – Seven lines appearing with religious and non-religious texts

It is difficult to determine if there is any religious significance attached to these symbols because they do appear with religious texts and non-religious ones. However, there does seem to be a trend towards symbols of this sort appearing alongside religious texts relatively more frequently. Just over 7% of all Safaitic inscriptions contain religious elements yet the series of seven lines accompanies religious inscriptions in 91 inscriptions, or approximately 32.62%. This would suggest a significant relationship between the series of seven lines and religious inscriptions.

Many scholars argue that the symbolic images accompanying Safaitic texts were used as a form of added protection for the inscription. Since this seems to be the main goal of the Safaitic curses an analysis of the appearance of symbols and their relationship with curses is necessary. Of the inscriptions where a series of seven lines features alongside a religious prayer, approximately 33.71% of these prayers also includes a curse. Since curses make-up 22.27% of all religious inscriptions in the Safaitic corpus that have a completed record of plates this would suggest that there may be a relationship between the two.
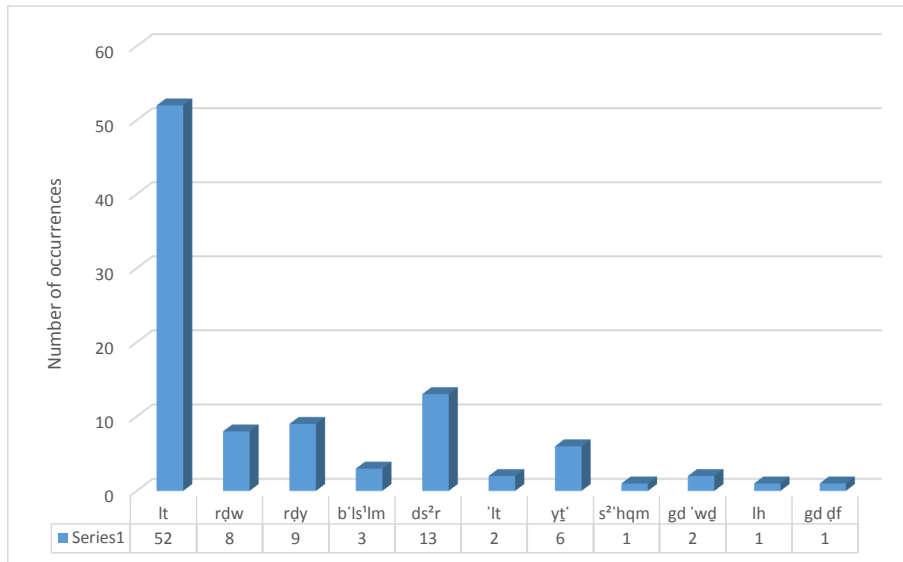
Fig. 4.3 – Deities most often mentioned with symbols of seven lines

When the occurrences of seven lines are analysed in connection with deities that feature in the inscriptions we can see that the most common deity mentioned is the goddess *lt*, followed by *ds²r*, *rḍy* and *rḍw*. Given that *lt* is the most frequently mentioned deity in the Safaitic inscriptions the higher number of occurrences is expected. For the remaining deities, the number of invocations is comparatively small and thus there is not enough data for us to determine if there are any clear relationships.

Dots

The second most commonly occurring symbol is in the form of dots. There are symbols made up of a series of seven dots appear accompanying 220 inscriptions. These figures also include occurrences where a human figure has been drawn amongst the seven dots. The dots do not always need to be featured in a line and they are often drawn together in a cluster.

| ISB 69 | ISB 91 | AbaNS 383 |
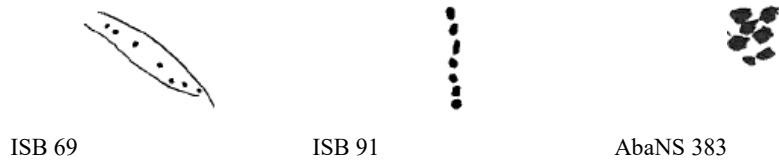
Fig. 4.4 – Examples of depictions of seven dots

	Total	Religious	Non-Religious
■ 7 dots	220	7	213
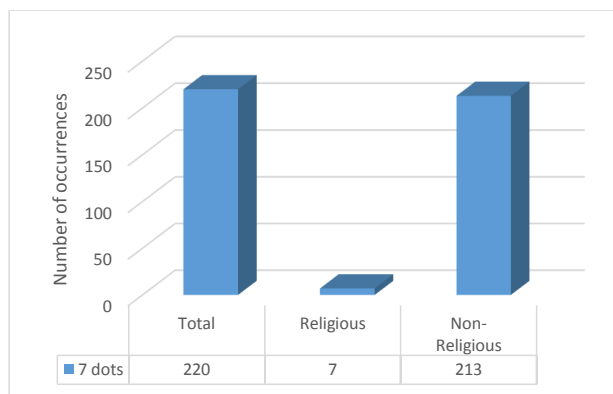
Fig. 4.5 – Seven dots appearing with religious and non-religious texts

Unlike the series of seven lines, the series of seven dots accompany religious inscriptions in only 3.18% of cases, remarkably fewer than the figures quoted for the symbol of seven lines above. Since this is also less than half of the percentage of times religious inscriptions feature in the greater corpus of Safaitic inscriptions completely it would suggest that there is no relationship between the series of seven dots and religious inscriptions. Likewise when the occurrences of the symbol are analysed in conjunction with the appearance of curses in the Safaitic inscriptions we find that only approximately 14.3% of all inscriptions that feature religious significance and an image of seven dots also include a curse. This low figure also suggests that there does not exist a relationship between the series of seven dots and the appearance of curses.

|	lt	rḏw	rḏy	bʾlsˡlm	dsˤr	ʾlt	ytʾ	sˤʾhqm	gd ʿwḏ	lh	gd ḏf
■ 7 dots	4	4	5	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
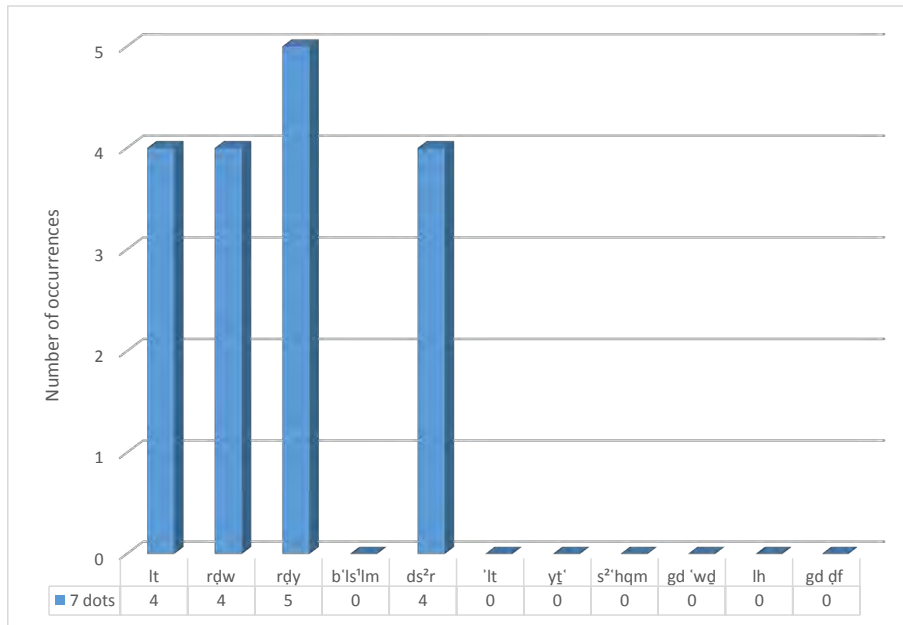
Fig. 4.6 – Deities most often mentioned with symbols of seven dots

When the occurrences of seven dots are analysed in connection with deities that feature in the inscriptions we find that the most frequent deity mentioned is *rḏy* followed closely by *lt*, *rḏw* and *dsˤr*. It is important to note that we are yet again dealing with a very small number of inscriptions. However, it is interesting to note that *lt*, despite being the most frequently invoked deity in these inscriptions by quite a large margin, is not the deity most commonly associated with symbols of seven dots.

Circles

A further symbol found appearing in connection with the inscriptions is a series of seven. This symbol accompanies only 29 inscriptions and appears much less frequently than either the series of seven lines or seven dots, discussed above. Like the dots the images of seven circles can be represented in a line or as a cluster of circles. Figures in seven circles also appear occasionally which the figures below include. An example of this can be seen in WH 2325 which appears in Figure 4.7 below.

AbaNS 299   SIJ 921   AbaNS 1042 WH 2325
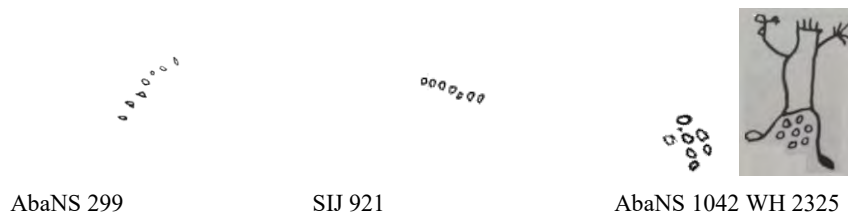
Fig. 4.7 – Examples of depictions of seven circles

	Total	Religious	Non-Religious
7 circles	29	18	11
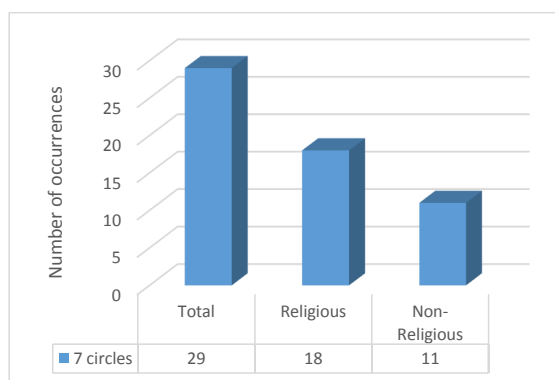
Fig. 4.8 – Seven circles appearing with religious and non-religious texts

There is a much higher correlation of the series of seven circles appearing alongside religious texts than there is for either the seven lines or seven dots with 62.07% accompanying religious texts. However, it is important to note that we are dealing with a much smaller number of images than we are when analysing the appearing of lines or dots. Interestingly images made up of seven circles do not occur alongside any curses.

|	lt	rḍw	rḍy	b'ls¹lm	ds²r	'lt	ytʿ	s²'hqm	gd ʿwḍ	lh	gd ḏf
■ 7 circles	1	1	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
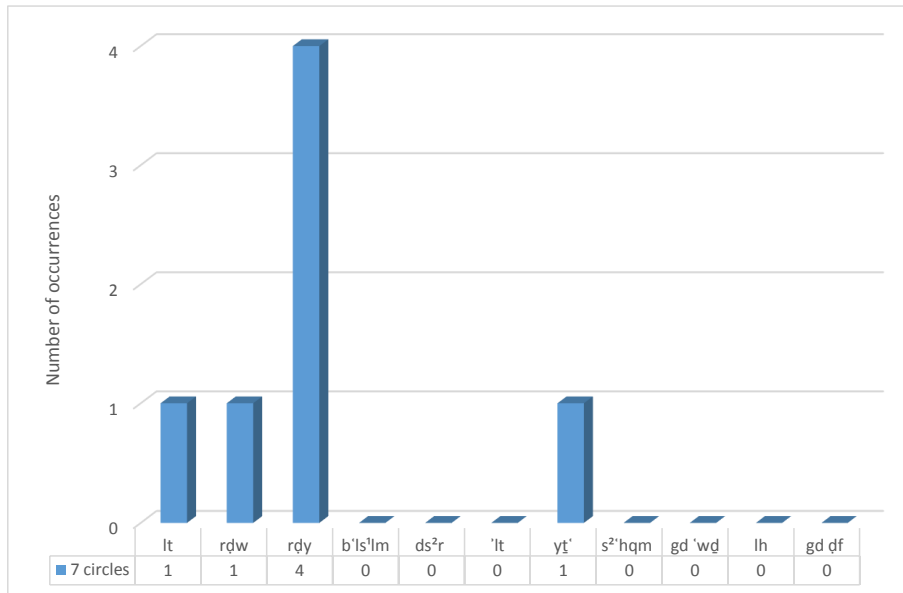
Fig. 4.9 – Deities most often mentioned with symbols of seven circles

When the occurrences of seven circles are analysed with deities that feature in the inscriptions the most frequent deity mentioned is found to be *rḍy* followed by *lt*, *rḍw* and *ytʿ*, all with the same percentage of appearances. Although we are still dealing with a very small number of inscriptions here it is interesting to note that in both the case of the image of seven dots and that of seven circles, *rḍy* is the most commonly mentioned deity in both instances. The dots and the circles are very similar and the question could be asked if they are not just variations of the same thing. Their connection the the same deity supports this theory.

Figure in dots/circles

A number of inscriptions also feature a human figure positioned amongst seven dots or seven circles. Figures such as these are also known from Mesopotamia.[719] The detail of the human figure varies. In some instances it can be quite detailed and show gender, for example, CSNS 699 which is female, while on other occasions it is a rather rudimentary image with the figure being represented as merely a lines. Examples of the different representations of these figures can be seen below. Those in figure 4.10 display both the more rudimentary representations

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[719] Van Buren 1945, p. 76, 82

while those in figure 4.11 are the more detailed images. In many of these depictions the figures are represented with their arms raised, a common pictorial theme in Safaitic representations of humans.
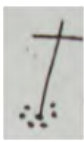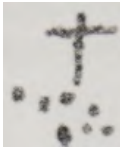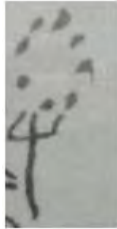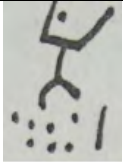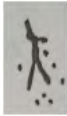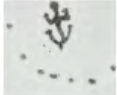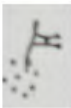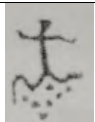
CSNS 646	AbaNS 860	AbaNS 418	AbaNS 406	WH 2704
SIJ 539	WGO 53	CSNS 426	CSNS 694	WH 2704
CSNS 430	CSNS 689	CSNS 688	AbaNS 345	AbaNS 505

Fig. 4.10 – Rudimentary representations of figures in seven dots

255

CSNS 699	**WH 1315**	**AbaNS 371**	**AbaNS 49**	**AbaNS 456**
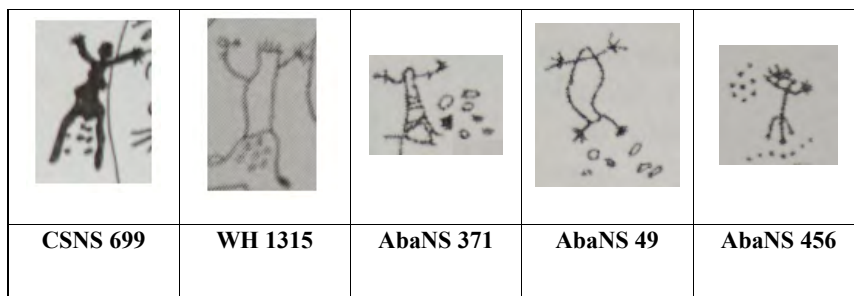
Fig. 4.11 – Detailed representations of figures in seven dots
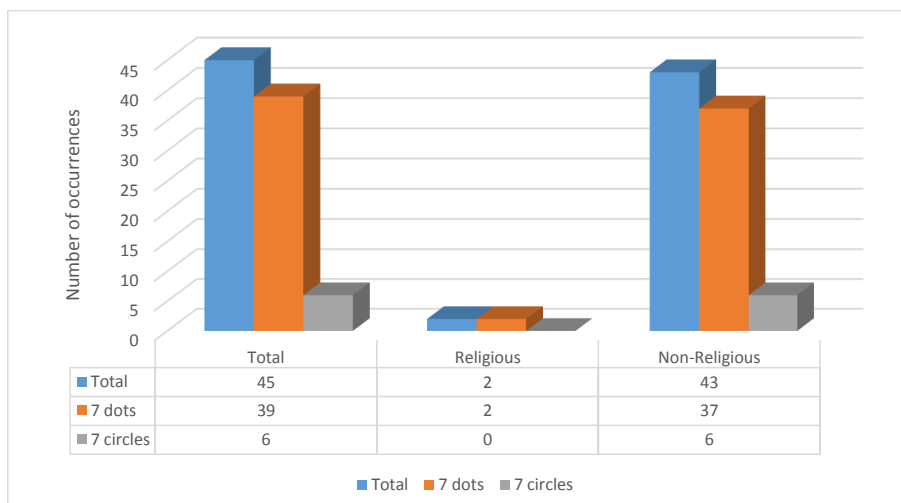
Fig. 4.12 – "Figure in seven" images appearing with religious and non-religious texts

Images that depict a "figure in seven" occur in connection with 45 inscriptions out of the texts analysed in this section of the study. Of these 45, 39 consist of a figure in seven dots, while the other six as a figure in seven circles. Only 4.4% of these images accompany a religious text. This suggests that if there was a religious significance to these images then the religious aspect was not dependant on accompanying a specific inscription.

Rayed disks

Another common symbol that regularly appears accompanying Safaitic inscriptions is the depiction of a rayed sun disk. This image appears 47 times. Some scholars have suggested that rather than representing a sun disk it may be considered a star,[720] although the consensus generally favours the former.

ISB 7   AbaNS 370   ISB 36   SIJ 216

Fig. 4.13 – Different representations of sun disks in the Safaitic inscriptions

	Total	Religious	Non-Religious
■ Sun disk	47	25	22
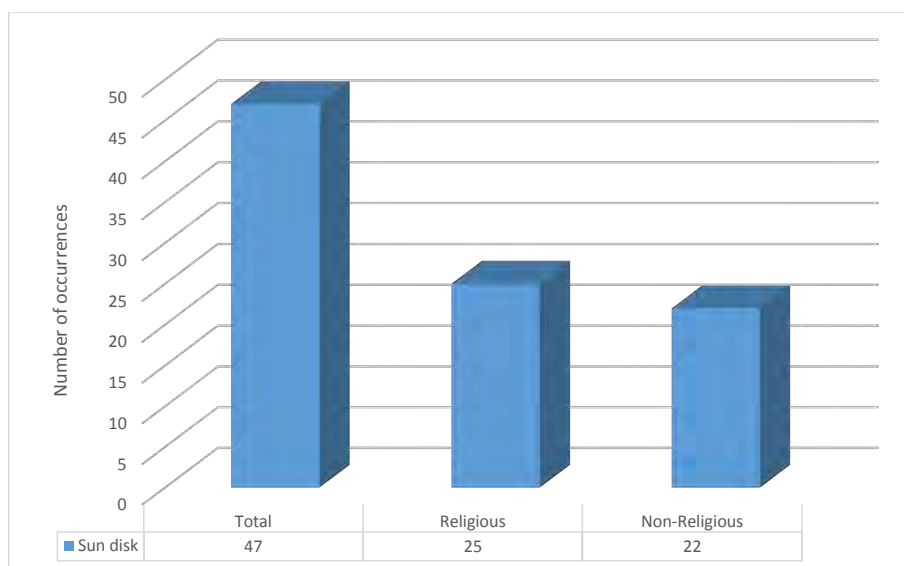
Fig. 4.14 – Sun disk images appearing with religious and non-religious texts

Approximately 53.2% of all sun disks accompany religious texts which suggests a relationship between the appearance of images of a sun disk and religious writings. Further, when images of sun disks are analysed in conjunction with religious prayers that also feature curses we find that approximately 25.6% of all occurrences of sun disks also include a curse.

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[720] Clark 1979, p. 54; Littmann 1940, p. 119

This figure is comparable to the number of times curses appear in the religious inscriptions although not every sun disk accompanies a curse and likewise there are many curses that do not also have a sun disk in evidence.

	lt	rḍw	rḍy	b'ls¹lm	ds²r	'lt	yt'	s²'hqm	gd 'wḏ	lh	gd ḏf
■ Series1	10	4	6	1	2	1	3	0	0	0	1
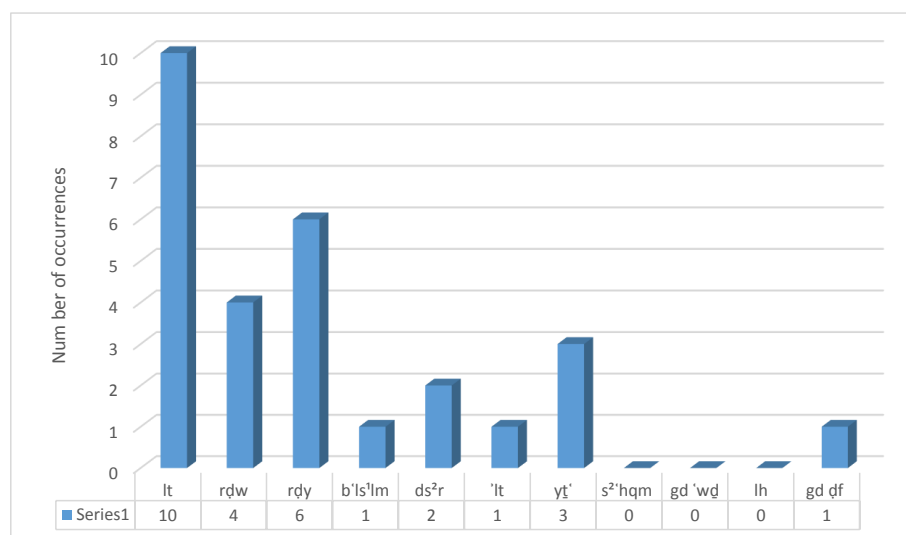
Fig. 4.15 – Deities most often mentioned with symbols of sun disks

Many scholars have argued that since the deity *ds²r* may have been considered a sun god in Nabataean religion,[721] the sun disk accompanying Safaitic inscriptions may have been a pictorial representation of the deity.[722] However, it has also been suggested that the sun disk represents the deity *lt*[723] as images of her in other traditions include a sun disk atop her head.[724] When the occurrences of images of sun disks are analysed in conjunction with deities we find that the most frequently cited deity is *lt*, appearing in 36% of cases, followed by *rḍy* in 21% of cases and *rḍw* in 14%. It is interesting to note that *ds²r* only occasionally accompanies an image of a sun disk leading to the opposite conclusion to the one above; that the sun disks were not a manifestation of the deity *ds²r*. Scholars have argued that *ds²r* could be considered a sun god due to inscriptions that accompany him with the epithet "unconquered", an epithet characteristic of the sun deity Helios.[725] I would argue that while this may the case in

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[721] Healey 2001, p. 102; Ababneh 2005, p. 78
[722] Ababneh 2005, p. 78
[723] Wellhausen 1897, pp. 29–34; Littmann 1940, p. 105; Fahd 1968, pp. 117–119
[724] Natan 2006, p. 390
[725] Healey 2001, p. 110

neighbouring religious traditions where *ds²r* plays a role, this was not the case in the Safaitic inscriptions. In general terms however, we are still dealing with a relatively minor number of inscriptions and thus it is unwise to assume that the sun disks represent any specific deity.

Cartouches

Safaitic inscriptions are sometimes enclosed by cartouches. These are relatively common and accompany approximately 2.6% of all Safaitic inscriptions contained in publications that include full plates. There may be more examples we do not have access to because the authors of those collections failed to record the cartouche in the plate representations. Most often the cartouche surrounding an inscription consists of a single line, although occasionally they can be a double line.
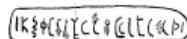
ISB 37   AbaNS 395   SIJ 531

Fig. 4.16 – Different representations of cartouches in the Safaitic inscriptions
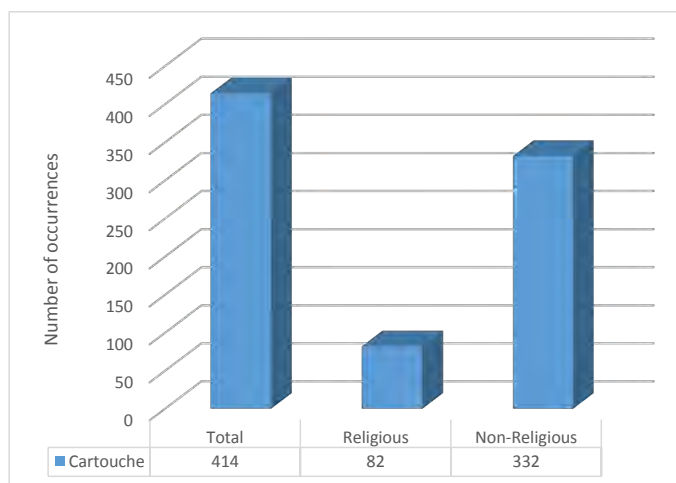
Fig. 4.17 – Cartouches appearing with religious and non-religious texts

259

Approximately 19.81% of cartouches also accompany religious texts, suggesting that there is a relationship between the religious texts and the appearances of cartouches. In these inscriptions 24% also include curses, a figure similar to the rate of curses accompanying images of sun disks. These figures and the sample size extant however mean we cannot accurately assess if there exists any kind of particularly important relationship between the existence of curses and the appearance of cartouches.

	lt	rḍw	rḍy	b'ls¹lm	ds²r	'lt	yt'	s²'hqm	gd 'wḏ	lh	gd ḏf
■ Series1	31	15	14	5	5	3	8	1	0	1	0
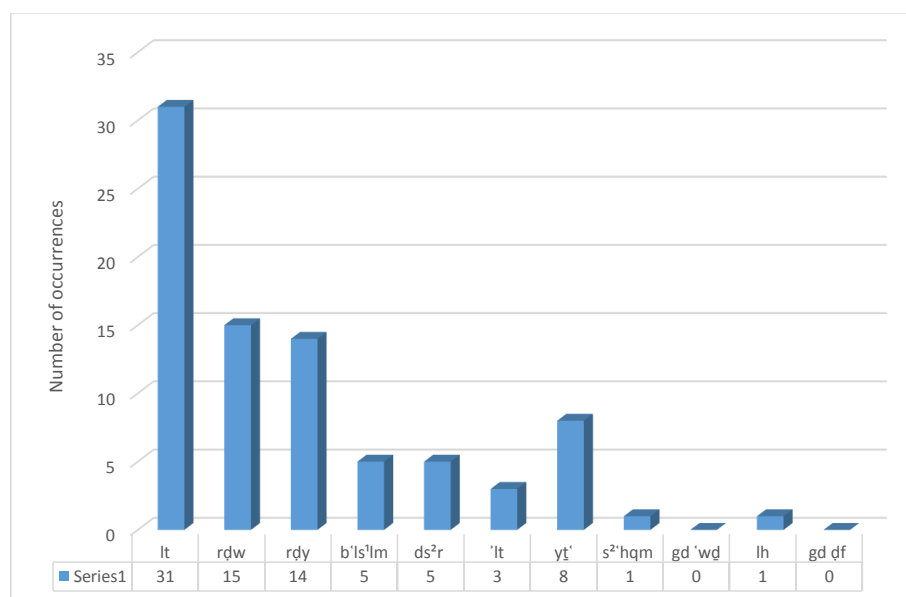
Fig. 4.18 – Deities most frequently mentioned accompanying cartouches

When the occurrences of cartouches are analysed in connection with featured deities we can see that the most frequently mentioned deity is *lt*, followed by *rḍw* and *rḍy*. This is very similar to the findings recorded in the analysis of the connection between religious inscriptions and the appearance of sun disk images. Interestingly, these deities seem to mirror the most commonly invoked deities in the greater Safaitic corpus and may therefore be considered a potential factor in the statistics.

Clark states that the existence of cartouches surrounding inscriptions was to protect the text. They were probably used to ensure greater efficacy for the seven symbols.[726] Cartouches

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[726] Clark 1979, p. 54

appear alongside symbols in approximately 51.3% of cases, a figure which seems to support this theory.

Deities and symbols
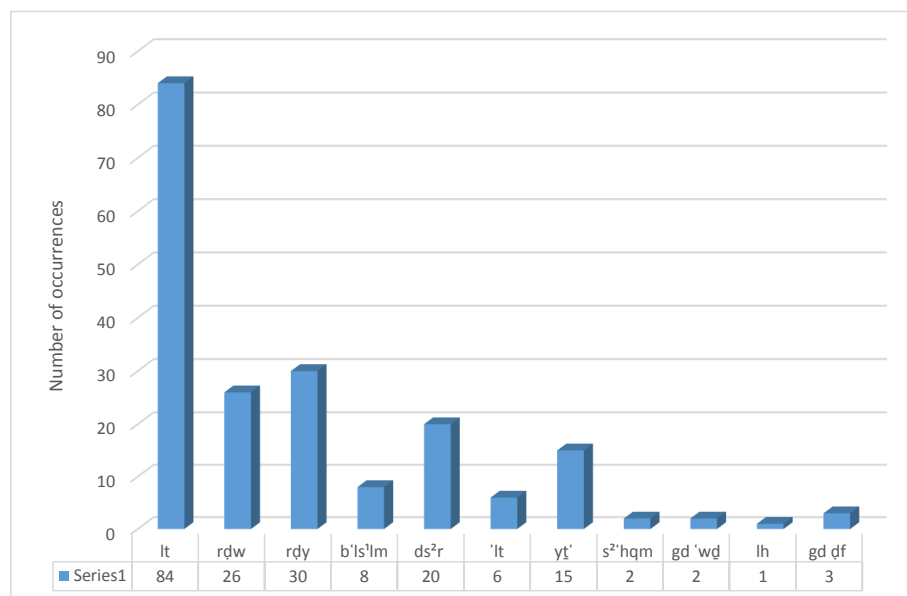
Fig. 4.19 – Deities most frequently mentioned in inscriptions with accompanying symbols

The most commonly appearing deities, when all types of symbols are included, are *lt*, followed by *rḍw*, *rḍy* and *ds²r*. In general terms there does not seem to be any particular relationship with individual deities and the number of symbols that accompany Safaitic inscriptions. It is interesting to note however, that *b'lslm*, despite being a relatively common deity in the Safaitic inscriptions, does not seem to have much association with symbols. The reason for this is as yet unclear and may be an avenue for further research.

Summary of Safaitic symbols

An analysis of the symbols that accompany the Safaitic inscriptions indicates that when they are analysed as a whole the corpus of symbols may not necessarily have any religious function. Nevertheless, some specific forms of symbols do have a higher rate of correlation with religious

inscriptions. Symbols with seven lines accompany religious inscriptions in approximately 32.62% of cases, a percentage that is much higher than the 7% of inscriptions that feature religious elements across the entire corpus. Likewise, symbols that consist of seven circles are found in connection religious inscriptions in 62.07% of cases, though notably they are a lot less frequent in number than the series of seven lines. Sun disk also feature very prominently alongside religious inscriptions at 53.2%. Cartouches feature noticeably less than those symbols previously mentioned at 19.81% correlation yet their presence does still suggest a relationship between religious elements and the appearance of symbols. The only notable exception is the correlation between appearance of series of seven dots and religious inscriptions which occur in only 3.18% of cases. This is surprising since the series of seven dots is quite common in the Safaitic inscriptions. Likewise, images of figures in seven dots or circles also feature rarely with religious inscriptions, in fact in only 4.4% of cases. Why the series of seven dots appear far less frequently alongside religious inscriptions is unknown and this lack of correlation is surprising. What it does suggest is that some forms of symbols were more synonymous with religious inscriptions than others and that the exact purpose of "symbols" in general was not uniform. There does however seem to be a relationship between the appearance of cartouches surrounding the text and additional symbols, which occur in over half the number of times that cartouches appear.

Thus we can clearly see that there was a relationship between symbols and religious inscriptions. Further we have evidence that symbols most likely represented a religious pictorial expression for the Safaitic Arabians, although that pictorial representation does not seem to have been specific to any particular deity. Since there is a correlation between religious inscriptions and the appearance of symbols we can perhaps offer the theory that these symbols were intended to protect the text. We can take this one step further and note that the higher correlation with religious inscriptions may indeed indicate that to the Safaitic Arabians religious images were determined to be more in want of protection. Cartouches in particular may have existed to enhance the "power" of certain symbols, a theory put forward by several scholars previously. While we may assume that these symbols served some sort of religious purpose, the exact purpose of these symbols remains unknown. It is likely to remain unknown in the future since unlike rock art, the inclusion of images alongside an inscription is never actually mentioned in the inscriptions themselves.

262

Safaitic rock art

Many Safaitic inscriptions are accompanied by sometimes remarkably elaborate rock art featuring a number of different artistic scenes. Unfortunately, as stated previously, the only way of knowing for sure that these drawings are contemporary with the inscriptions or even linked the inscriptions is where they are specifically mentioned in the inscription itself. Because of the limitations this restriction places on the research the remainder of this chapter will be more of an overview of Safaitic rock art instead of an in-depth analysis.

Human figures

Human figures feature frequently in Safaitic rock, be they solitary individuals, part of hunting scene or perhaps even depicted in celebrations. When they are not depicted as part of a visual scene, the human figures, both male and female, who feature in most Arabian rock art are usually depicted with their arms raised. This particular physical stance has been considered by many scholars to have some religious significance, possibly as a form of worship,[727] for example, with their arms upraised in praise. Other interpretations include participation in a dance or even a representation of cattle horns.[728] While there is evidence of dance and music in other pictures that accompany the Safaitic inscriptions, I believe there is some sort of religious elements to images of this particular type.

It is possible that the figures in rock-art accompanying Safaitic inscriptions may be an indication of the author's personal dedication to particular elements of their religion. That this motif is common throughout Arabia and many surrounding regions suggests that this type of figural depiction was not an invention of the Safaitic Arabians.

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[727] Achrati 1999, p. 468; Anati 1999, p. 27
[728] Le Quellec 1993, p. 308
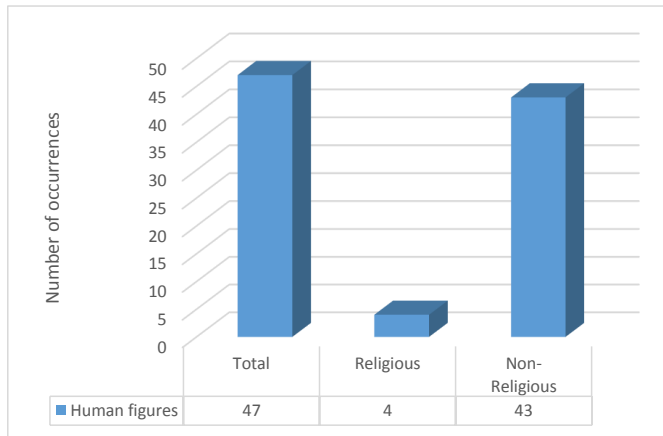
Fig. 4.20 – Human figures appearing with religious and non-religious texts

When we consider the human figures, both male and female, that feature in signed Safaitic rock art alongside religious inscriptions, as a whole we can see that there is little evidence for any specific correlation or relationship. In this section of the analysis the human figures referenced do not include those figures located in or near seven dots as they have been analysed previously. While the figures with their arms upraised may potentially indicate some sort of religious activity or expression there is no significant correlation between religious content in the Safaitic inscriptions and this depiction of human figures. It is interesting to note that there are hardly any depictions of female characters without their arms upraised.

Female images

Throughout the Safaitic inscriptions many depictions of female figures are observable. As is the case with the solitary human figures discussed above, many of these individuals are depicted with their arms upraised or held out to the side clutching strands of their long hair in each hand. Figure 4.21 offers examples of the number of ways females are depicted in Safaitic rock art.

| CSNS 69 | CSNS 895 | FSC 442 | FSC 568 |
| LP 143 | LP 404 | AbaNS 187 | AbaNS 432 |

Fig. 4.21 – Examples of representations of females in the Safaitic inscriptions

Whether these images were considered goddesses by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions or perhaps just community women has been the subject of much debate by Safaitic epigraphers. This debate started with the discovery of C 4351 which led Dussaud to identify the female figure represented beside the inscription as *rḍw*, one of the deities mentioned in the accompanying text. Dussaud believes these drawings depicted the goddess of the evening

star,[729] whereas Littmann argues that the female figures are in fact sun goddesses.[730] In contrast, Grimme notes that rather than represent the deity *rḍw*, the drawing actually represents the goddess *lt*.[731] All of these theories have since come into question with the discovery of inscriptions that refer to adjacent drawings of "slave-girls" drawn in the same manner as the women identified above.[732] Macdonald successfully argues that the women depicted accompanying the Safaitic texts should therefore not be considered goddesses.[733]

Significantly, in the entire corpus of inscriptions analysed for this study very few drawings of female figures were found accompanied by inscriptions that also feature an invocation to a deity. This strongly suggests that these depictions of women are not to be considered religious figures.

Animal rock art accompanying Safaitic inscriptions

In the rock art accompanying the Safaitic inscriptions, animals are the most common form of artistic expression. In many cases the drawings are unrealistic or show exaggerated elements, for example, a camel with a high hump. Rather than being an accurate depiction of a camel this image appears to have been exaggerated in order to suggest the great wealth of the camel's owner. In addition, drawings such as this may have actually been wishful thinking on the part of the writer and were perhaps used as a form of sympathetic magic.[734] Thus while the representation may be interpreted as depicting the wealth of an individual it may equally be an indication of a desire for wealth, or indeed a form of wish fulfilment.

The animals most commonly seen in Safaitic rock art can be divided into three categories: pack animals, hunted animals and animals of prey. In the following analysis the only drawings included will be those recorded by epigraphers who included all accompanying rock art in their works and where the author has specifically stated that he/she composed the image.

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[729] Dussaud 1907, pp. 114–145
[730] Littmann 1940, p. 118
[731] Grimme, 1929a, p. 40
[732] For example, LP 143, AbaNS 187
[733] Macdonald 2012, pp. 261–272
[734] Winnett and Harding 1978, p. 22

Pack animals
Camels

The most common animals represented in "signed" Safaitic rock art is the camel. Camels appear in 396 inscriptions. As previously stated, many of the camel feature exaggerated or unrealistic hump sizes which may indicate actual or merely idealised and wished-for prosperity. Camels appear as solitary animals or as part of artistic scenes, for example, with a cameleer leading them or even as part of a hunting scene. Sometimes the author will specify if the camel drawn is a she-camel or a bull camel.

	Total Camels	She-camels	Bull-camels	Not specified
■ Series1	384	258	88	38
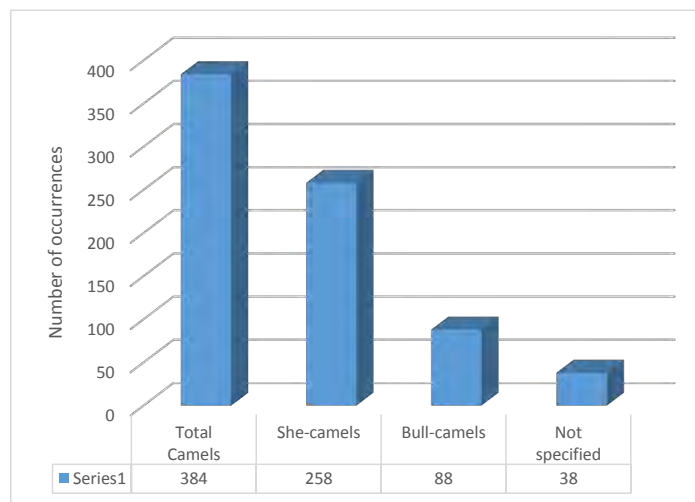
Fig. 4.22 – Frequency of camel type distribution in the Safaitic inscriptions

As can be seen in figure 4.22 the most common camel represented in signed rock art is she-camel with numbers that almost triple the number of bull-camels represented. Many of these she-camels are also depicted with a suckling calf. In his work on Thamudic E/Ḥismāic inscriptions from the Wadi Hafir, Corbett details the importance of the she-camel in pre-Islamic poetry.[735] The she-camel, he claims, carries the symbolic burden of the journey, hardship and purpose of the journey for the poet.[736] The she-camel is also regularly featured in rite of passage

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[735] Corbett 2010, p. 129
[736] Corbett 2010, p. 130

analogies often appearing in the van Gennep tripartite rite of passage phases: separation, margin and aggregation.[737]

	Total Camels	She-camels	Bull-camels	Not specified
■ Total	384	258	88	38
■ Religious	9	5	1	3
■ Non-Religious	375	253	87	35

■ Total ■ Religious ■ Non-Religious
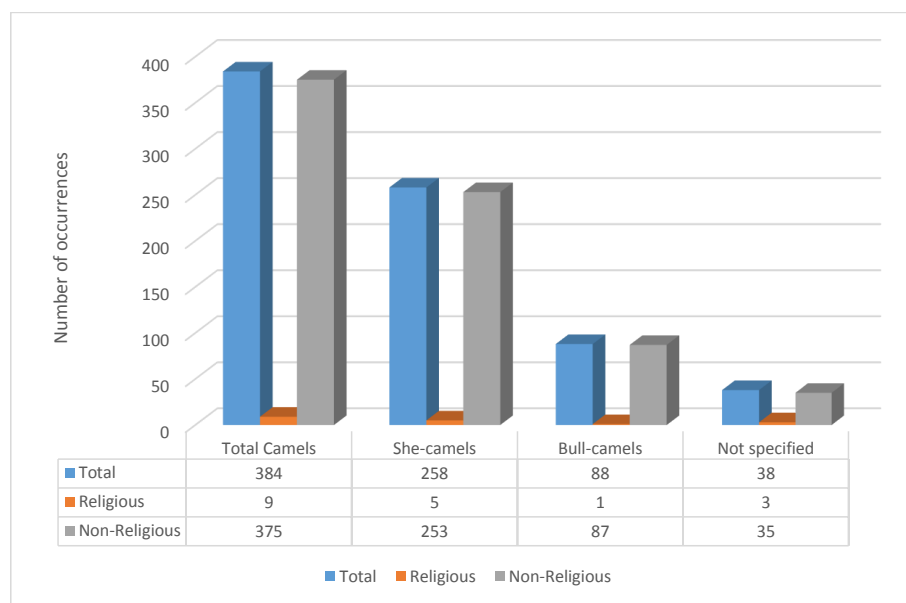
Fig.4.23 – Camel representation in rock art accompanying religious and non-religious texts

As can be seen in figure 4.23 there does not seem to be any significance to the appearance of camels in rock art and the composition of religious texts. In fact, there is rarely an overlap between religious texts and depictions of camels. This may suggest that the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions did not place any particular importance on the religious significance of drawings of camels. Yet it might also merely mean that they did not feel the need to amalgamate drawings with religious texts.

Ass

Asses feature alongside signed Safaitic inscriptions on 43 occasions, and rarely alongside humans. As is the case with depictions of she-camels, she-asses are occasionally specified by the authors of the inscriptions. We have records of five different inscriptions inwhich this

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[737] Van Gennep 1908, *passin*.

occurs. There are also depictions of a few wild asses[738] evidence that not all asses during this time period were domesticated.

In terms of the religious significance ofthe depiction of asses, there are currently no examples extant of an ass being depicted alongside a signed religious inscription in any collection where the epigrapher has provided a full plate series. Of course, there could be as yet undiscovered or unrecorded examples but nevertheless it seems unlikely there was a link between asses and religious text.

Horse

Another pack animal that features alongside Safaitic inscriptions is the horse. Horses appear in connection with 39 signed Safaitic inscriptions. Interestingly 19 of these drawings also featuring human figures.
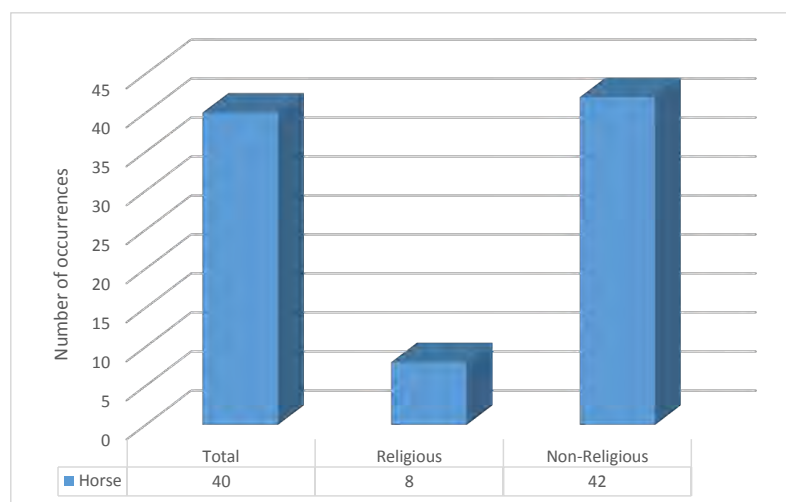
Fig. 4.24 – Horse depictions in rock art accompanying religious and non-religious texts

As can be seen in figure 4.24, there does not seem to be any substantial overlap between representations of horses in signed Safaitic rock drawings and religious texts. This would suggest that depictions of horses were not considered symbols of Safaitic piety.

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[738] E.g. KRS 2108; HaNSB 616

Hunted animals

Other animals that feature alongside Safaitic inscriptions include a number of different species hunted for meat or animal by-products. Of those that feature in signed rock drawings, the most common is the ostrich.

The second most common animals are oryx, generic animals whose species was not clearly depicted by the composer. In addition there are also gazelles and occasionally deer and hyenas. There is very little overlap between signed drawings of hunted animals and religious inscriptions with only one drawing of an oryx that also features a religious inscription.[739] Thus there is no obvious connection between depictions of hunted animals and religious expression.

	Series1
Ostrich	21
Oryx	17
Generic Animal	12
Gazelle	11
Deer	1
Hyena	1
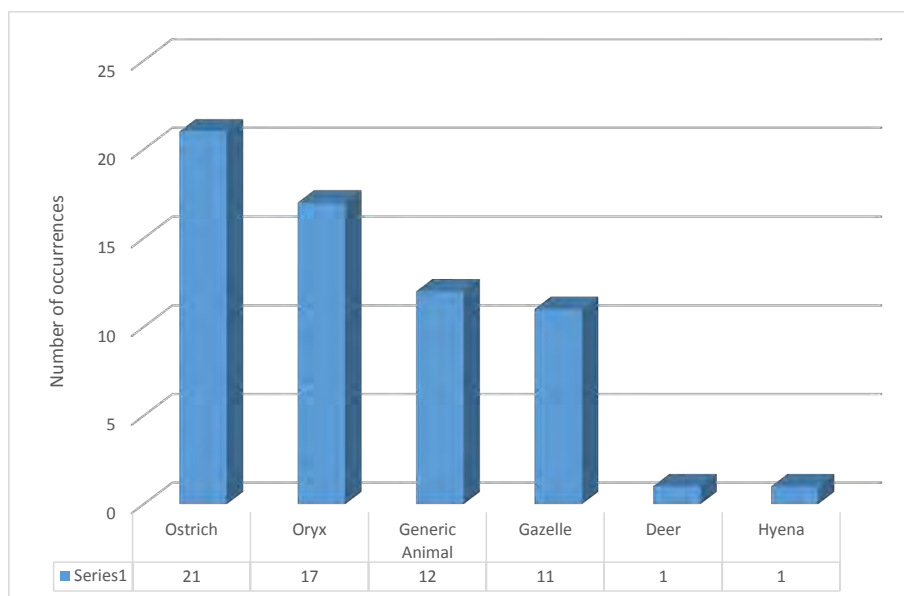
Fig. 4.25 – Hunted animals that feature alongside signed Safaitic rock drawings

Animals of prey

Animals of prey are also evident in signed Safaitic rock art, although they appear with far less frequency than pack or hunted animals. While the following animals are also hunted by the Safaitic Arabians, I have made a distinction between the "hunted animals" who were clearly

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[739] AbaNS 266

used for food or their by-products, and the "animals of prey" which presumably were hunted to ensure the safety of the community or for other purposes such as to enhance the prestige of the hunter.
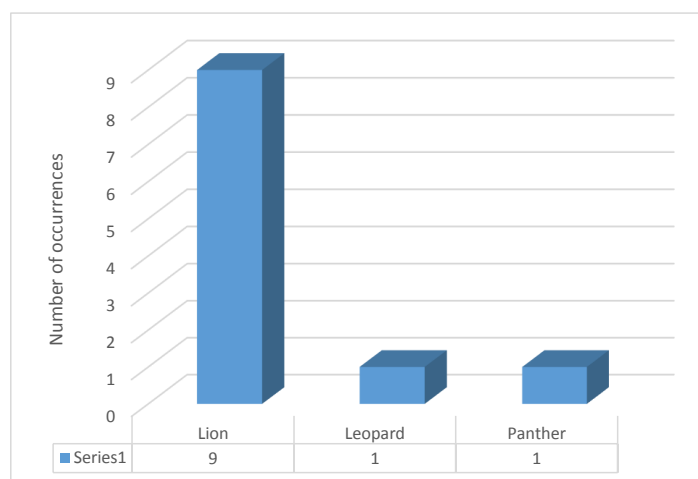
Fig. 4.26 – Animals of prey that feature alongside signed Safaitic rock drawings

The most common animal of prey is by far the lion which features regularly in hunting scenes. Given that no inscription explains the purpose of the hunt other than to claim its composition, we have no way of knowing if there were any ritual or religious functions connected with lion hunts by the Safaitic Arabians. There is no evidence of overlap between signed rock drawings of animals of prey and religious inscriptions. Thus suggesting that there was no religious significance to depictions of animals of prey.

As we can see from the sections above, an analysis of the animals featured in Safaitic rock art indicates that there is no obvious correlation between depictions of animals and the composition of religious inscriptions. While animals were clearly important enough to be represented in rock art and they occasionally appear in proximity to religious inscriptions, there is no evidence of a relationship between the religious inscription and the image.

Iconography and symbolism in Safaitic rock art

The analysis of the Safaitic rock art above highlighted a number of problems with this area of study. Incomplete plates provided by some of the early epigraphers as well as the difficulties

271

in dating rock art that was not specifically referred to in the text of an inscription are just two such issues. The extant and recorded inscriptions and drawings are meagre in number, making any form of analysis difficult.

However, an analysis of the symbols that accompanied therock art did indicate that there was a relationship between the drawing of symbols and the composition of religious Safaitic inscriptions. In addition, some symbols seemed to bear more religious weight than others, for example, the use of seven dots featured far less frequently than the use of sun disks. While we may not know the exact purpose of the symbols, it is reasonable to assume that they did in fact serve a religious function, possibly even as a means of magically further protecting the texts from destruction over time.

What was also clear was that there does not seem to be any particular correlation between certain deities and the existence of symbols accompanying texts. This suggests that the symbols are not deity specific.

The depiction of human figures accompanying signed Safaitic rock drawings suggests that there may be some religious element to the depiction. This may be oobserved in the way the human figures are featured. However, we are hampered in any analysis by the fact that the drawings are only alluded to in the inscriptions themselves in terms of the author claiming credit for composition. We are given no further information about the nature of the drawing or how we are supposed to interpret it. There is also little correlation between the composition of these drawings and religious inscriptions generally suggesting that there is in fact little or no relationship between depictions of human figures in rock art and Safaitic religion. The same appears to be true in terms of the drawings of rock animals that accompany Safaitic inscriptions, both religious and non-religious.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

This thesis set out to establish a methodology by which to investigate massive amounts of Safaitic inscriptions and correlate the data collected into a comprehensive analysis of the trends in religious beliefs and practices of the Safaitic Arabians. In the previous three chapters I have used a range of sources with which to illustrate the varying aspects of the religious beliefs evident in the Safaitic inscriptions. The results indicate that there are wide ranging ways in which Safaitic religious beliefs were expressed: prayers, curses and rock art.

Chapter One provided a geographical frame and scope for this research, giving the background on which the religious discussions in the following chapters was built. This chapter also included an overview of previously published works, as well as a discussion the difficulties of dating Safaitic inscriptions with accuracy and how we should approach the term "literacy". The chapter concluded with an overview of the research methodology used in this study and a descriptive review of the attached databases which catalogued some 28,000 inscriptions, their content and geographical locality.

Chapter Two began with a discussion on academic approaches to the study of religion before determining that an amalgamation of both archaeological and anthropological methods of analysis were appropriate in this study given the scant survival of extant physical evidence. Following this was a discourse on the different features of the Safaitic inscriptions. This began with an overview of the inscriptions that I have termed the Safaitic/Thamudic B mixed texts. I particularly noted the differences in the format of these texts and summarised the most commonly invoked deities when compared to the remaining corpus of Safaitic inscriptions.

The different features of the Safaitic prayers were then categorised with a commentary on whether they should considered defensive, benevolent, material or malevolent. This led to an identification of the main requests made in Safaitic prayers. The etymology of these prayers as well as what the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions expected to receive from the deity they invoked were recorded and analysed. This was followed by a typology and intensive discussion of the actual curses and blessings that occasionally accompanied Safaitic prayers, which in turn led to an analysis of the epithets that occasionally accompanied the names of some of the deities. Finally, religious rituals alluded to in the texts were discussed. Overall this chapter

demonstrated that the Safaitic ritual religious beliefs tended to fit in with traditional ritual religious practices and beliefs of other Ancient Near Eastern cultures of this time period; for example, the practices of sacrifice, circumcision and pilgrimage as well as the concept of sin.

In Chapter Three, I surveyed and analysed the deities invoked in the Safaitic religious prayers. This chapter consisted of an intensive examination of the individual characteristics of each deity by analysing the requests most commonly made to those deities and contrasting them with one another. The analyses from this chapter revealed that many of the deities evidenced a certain "specialisation" in the minds of the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. For example, the chief deity *lt* was tasked at a much higher percentage with providing security (*s¹lm*). The writers therefore deliberately made certain requests to certain deities considered more adept at fulfilling their needs. This deliberate allocation of prayers also indicates that, despite what some scholars have said in the past, there was a definitive Safaitic pantheon with a structured order of deities who played different roles in the religious beliefs of the Safaitic Arabians.

This chapter goes on to suggest through an analysis of inscriptions featuring the deities *rḍw* and *rḍy* that they may have actually been considered the same deity by the Safaitic Arabians, but that over time the name evolved as well as the most common requests attributed to them. *rḍw* was shown to be the most commonly invoked deity in the mixed text examples, inscriptions that were arguably older than the majority of the corpus. This reasoning in turn led to a discussion on the general time periods in which deities entered the realm of Safaitic religious beliefs. For example, *rḍw* was generally mentioned alongside typically "older" deities and never in connection with potentially more recent religious imports such as *ds²r* and *b'ls¹mn*, while *rḍy* was mentioned in this context, albeit rarely. The analysis in Chapter Three further demonstrated that there was a substantial and significant relationship between the deity *ds²r* and the goddess *lt*, though we are unable to know what the exact nature of that relationship may have been, for example, mother–son or husband–wife. It also determined that despite speculation by other scholars, the deities *ds²r*, *s²'hqm* and *rḍw* should be considered distinct deities.

An analysis of the "socialness" of deities showed that some were very rarely mentioned in connection with others. Generally this tended to coincide with deities that were "indigenous" to the Arabian Peninsula whereas deities that were "imported" tended to be less unsocial and mentioned more frequently in inscriptions with others. One possible interpretation is that this

274

may imply a hesitation on the part of the Safaitic Arabians to completely amalgamate and merge the religious beliefs indigenous to their area with those from surrounding dominant cultures. However, it may also be indicative of the age of the inscription. Geographical analyses further demonstrated that there were at times distinct regional variations in the provenance of certain deities that may have been influenced by dominant surrounding sedentary cultures. Finally, an analysis of the tribal lineages mentioned in inscriptions that feature a religious element revealed that there was not enough evidence to fully determine whether a particular tribe favoured a certain deity, although this analysis did lead to an interesting discussion on the potential ethnicity or allegiances of the tribe *'mrt* given their wide use of the square script.

Chapter Four dealt with the potential religious elements of Safaitic iconography and symbolism through accompanying rock art. It was demonstrated that there were correlations between symbols and religious inscriptions suggesting that the purpose of the symbols may have been to serve a religious function. Some symbols had a much higher rate of religious correlation than others, for example, symbols featuring seven dots in comparison with images of sun disks. The depiction of human figures, particularly the way they were usually presented with arms upraised, suggests they may have been linked to religious functions. However, the absence of specific references to the actions of these characters means we cannot know exactly what that connection was or indeed the strength of such a connection.

The final part of this chapter addressed the religious significance of animals in Safaitic rock art. While it was obvious that animals were considered important enough to the Safaitic culture to be depicted again there was no correlation between the actual drawings and extant religious inscriptions. Thus we have to assume that there was no religious significance to these pictures.

In summary, the study of Safaitic religious beliefs through extant inscriptions indicates that there was an organised pantheon of deities, each with their own characteristics as attributed by the Safaitic Arabians. The study also shows that it may be possible to ascertain the general period when individual deities entered the Safaitic pantheon. We also have evidence, albeit limited, of organised ritual practices undertaken by the writers of the Safaitic inscriptions. Likewise we know that the use of symbolism accompanying texts was a common tool and means of expressing the religious piety of the Safaitic Arabians.

A number of problems arose throughout this study, the most prominent of which was the accuracy with which early epigraphers recorded and mapped some of the earliest published inscriptions. A lack of detailed recording of the exact locations of collections of inscriptions made it difficult at times to accurately pinpoint the coordinates when undertaking mapping or GIS analyses. Without accurate locations for inscriptions some collections inscriptions were not able to be included in the geographical analysis. In addition, many early epigraphers did not include a conclusive record of the accompanying rock art and symbols. As a result we have a wide disparity in the amount of rock art featured in many of the published collections. Because of this lack of consistency between many of the early epigraphers the rock art collections of some published sources could not be analysed. These shortcomings could be addressed in the future through additional fieldwork and a re-recording of the early inscriptions to ensure that no texts or rock art are excluded and that their transmissions are correct. This is a task which Macdonald is currently undertaking.

There are many directions that can be taken for further study in the area of pre-Islamic North Arabian religious beliefs. This area would benefit from an analysis of the Thamudic B inscriptions to see if there was in fact a transmission from Thamudic B to Safaitic which the mixed texts analysed in this study certainly suggests. Furthermore, the approach taken in this study could easily be applied to other ANA scripts such as Ḥismāic and Thamudic C and D, scripts written by people who were more traditionally nomadic than other ANA scripts such as Taymanite and Dedanite. Finally, a comprehensive analysis of the rock art from the regions of Jordan and Syria, regardless of whether it accompanies a signed inscription or not, is sorely needed and would be greatly beneficial to the study of the pre-Islamic ANA texts.

This thesis makes an important contribution to the fields of both pre-Islamic nomadic religion as well as ANA epigraphy as it is the first comprehensive work to focus solely on the religious beliefs of the Ancient North Arabians in over 80 years. One day perhaps, more inscriptions will be discovered that fill the gaps in our knowledge.

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298

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TABLE 1: Comparison of the various ANA scripts

From:

TABLE 2: Safaitic Script Table

Transliteration	Arabic	Safaitic script
ʾ	ا	Ⴟ
b	ب	Ɔ
t	ت	✝
ṯ	ث	ȹ
j	ج	Ο
ḥ	ح	⋀
ḫ	خ	✝
d	د	ρ
ḏ	ذ	⅄
r	ر	Ɔ
z	ز	⊤
s¹	س	Ⴙ

305

s²	ش	
ṣ	ص	
ḍ	ض	
ṭ	ط	
ẓ	ظ	
ʿ	ع	
ġ	غ	
f	ف	
q	ق	
k	ك	
l	ل	
m	م	
n	ن	

306

h	ه	
w	و	
y	ي	

TABLE 3: Full list of deities in the Safaitic inscriptions – Graph

Deities	lt	rd w	rd y	b'l s'l m	ds ²r	'lt	yt'	s²' hq m	gd 'w m	lh d	gd df	'lh	dt n	s²' n'r	rd	gd	nh y	gd w hb 'l	khl	lyt	'lhn't	'r	rh m	s² ms¹	bl g	b'l	by t	gd nb ṭ	gd '	'h d	hd '	hy	'ly	nṣ r	rd ḫr	rd'	s² mt	ṣl m 'lh d mt	ṣr	y m	y' yt
Series1	99	30	19	14	13	12	12	10	56	28	24	12	6	6	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

TABLE 4: Main deities in the Safaitic inscriptions – Graph

Series1	lt	rḍw	rḍy	bʿls¹lm	ds²r	ʾlt	ytʿ	s²ʿhqm	gd ʿwḏ	lh	gd ḏf
	990	304	196	144	133	120	110	102	56	28	24

Y-axis: Number of occurrences. X-axis: Deities.
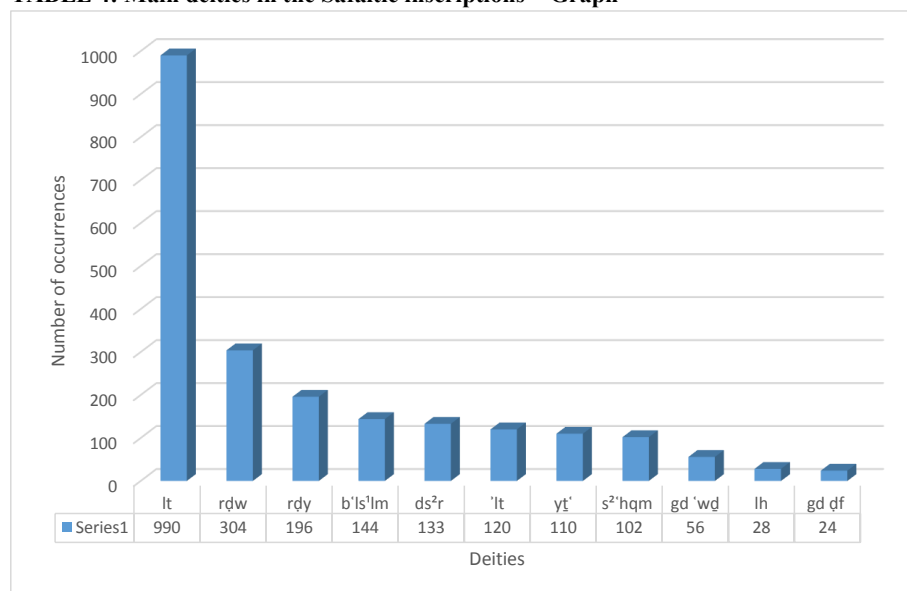
TABLE 5: Full list of requests made in the Safaitic inscriptions

Request	Original text	No. of occurrences
Security	*s¹lm*	865
Rest	*rwḥ*	175
Booty	*ġnmt*	173
Help	*s¹ʿd*	152
Deliverance	*flṭ*	72
Benevolence	*qbll*	66
Vengeance	*nqmt*	50
Abundance	*ġnyt*	37
Abundance	*ġyrt*	34
Vengeance	*t̠ʾr*	30
Deliverance	*fṣyt/fṣy*	29
Protection	*wqyt/qyt*	26

308

Vengeance	*ʿyr*	18
Plenty	*mgdt*	15
Deliverance	*ḫlṣ/ḫlṣt*	12
Give	*hb*	12
Compassion	*ḥnn*	7
Abundance	*rʿy*	6
Life	*ḫyw/ḫyy*	6
Send rain	*mṭr*	6
Assistance	*ġwṯ*	5
Comfort/favour	*nʿm*	5
Immunity	*ġrt*	5
Accompany	*wgm*	4
Guard	*ḫrṣ/ḫrṣt*	4
Grant	*bdd*	3
Refuge	*tẓr*	3
Food	*ṭʿmt*	2
Heal	*brʾ*	2
Make life agreeable	*ḥlw*	2
Regard him with goodwill	*s²kr*	2
Remember	*ḏkrn/ḏkr*	2
Retribution	*qbt*	2
Accompany	*s¹yb*	1
Assistance	*ʾḫy*	1
Attack	*tʿtk*	1
Blind the enemy	*ʿwr s²nʾ*	1
Care	*s²nṣ*	1

309

Comfort	*frg*	1
Compensation	*ḫlf*	1
Crush him	*dhk*	1
Defense	*rdt*	1
Deliverance	*ngy*	1
Destruction	*ʿqrt*	1
Direction	*s¹qs¹*	1
Food	*ġr*	1
Fullness	*tfyt*	1
Grant love	*wdt*	1
Heal	*ʿhn*	1
Help	*fsʿd*	1
Liberation	*nqwt*	1
Make speed	*ʿgl*	1
Prosperity	*flḥt*	1
Repay evil	*ḥrf*	1
Retribution	*qs¹n*	1
Strike him	*lkṯ*	1
Torrential rains	*ṭwf*	1
Watch over him	*ḫrṣt*	1
Well-being	*hnʾt*	1

TABLE 6: Requests for curses in the Safaitic inscriptions – Graph

Requests for curses in the Safaitic inscriptions
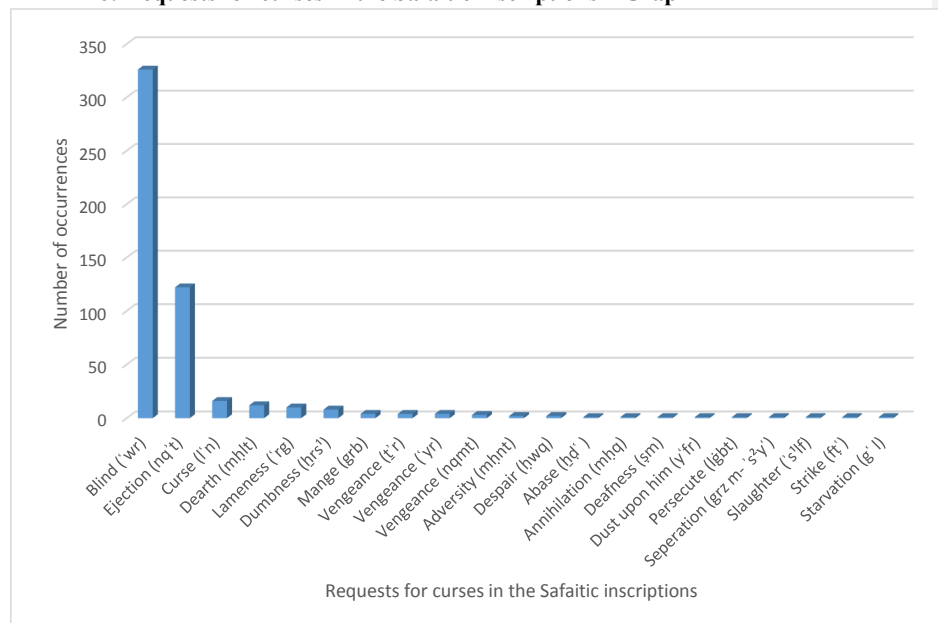
TABLE 7: Requests for curses in the Safaitic inscriptions – Chart

Request	Original text	No. of occurrences
Blind	ʿwr	326
Ejection	nqʾt	122
Curse	lʿn	16
Dearth	mḥlt	12
Lameness	ʿrg	10
Dumbness	ḫrs¹	8
Mange	grb	4
Vengeance	ṯʾr	4
Vengeance	ʿyr	4
Vengeance	nqmt	3
Adversity	mḥnt	2
Despair	ḥwq	2

311

Abase	*ḫḍʿ*	1
Annihilation	*mḥq*	1
Deafness	*ṣm*	1
Dust upon him	*yʿfr*	1
Persecute	*lġbt*	1
Separation	*grz m- ʾs²yʿ*	1
Slaughter	*ʾs¹lf*	1
Strike	*fṭʿ*	1
Starvation	*gʿl*	1

TABLE 8: Full list of requests made to *lt* – Graph

Full list of requests made to *lt*
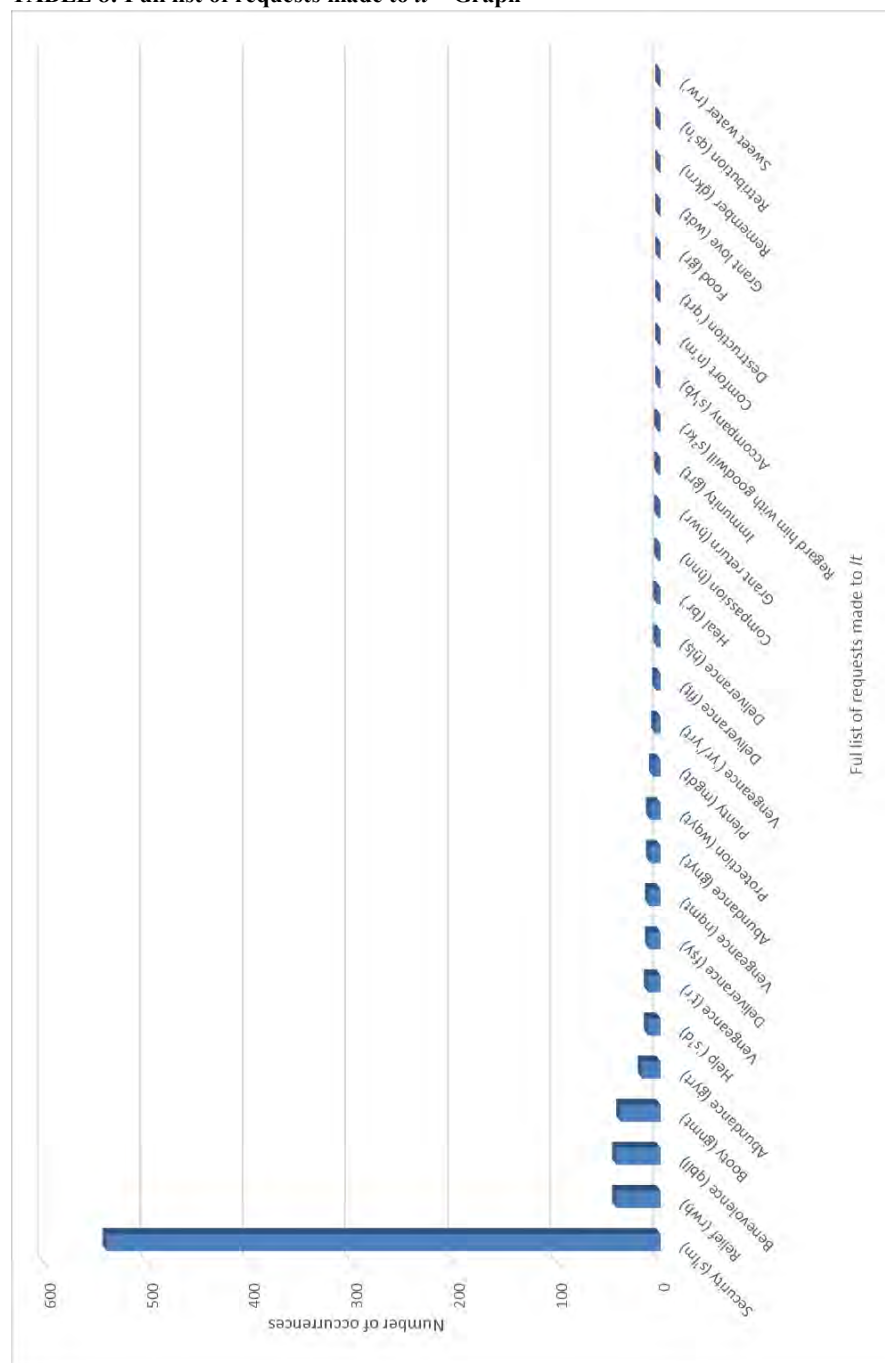
TABLE 9: Full list of requests made to *lt* – Chart

Request	Original text	Number of occurrences
Security	*s¹lm*	540
Relief	*rwḥ*	43
Benevolence	*qbll*	43
Booty	*ġnmt*	39
Abundance	*ġyrt*	18
Help	*ʾs¹d*	12
Vengeance	*t̲ʾr*	12
Deliverance	*fṣy*	11
Vengeance	*nqmt*	11
Abundance	*ġnyt*	10
Protection	*wqyt*	10
Plenty	*mgdt*	7
Vengeance	*ʿyr/ʿyrt*	5
Deliverance	*flṭ*	4
Deliverance	*ḫlṣ*	3
Heal	*brʾ*	3
Compassion	*ḥnn*	2
Grant return	*ḥwr*	2
Immunity	*ġrt*	2
Regard him with goodwill	*s²kr*	2
Accompany	*s¹yb*	1
Comfort	*nʿm*	1
Destruction	*ʿqrt*	1
Food	*ġr*	1
Grant love	*wdt*	1

Remember	*ḏkrn*	1
Retribution	*qsⁱn*	1
Sweet water	*rwʾ*	1

TABLE 10: Full list of deities mentioned in prayers featuring curses in the Safaitic inscriptions

	lt	rḍw	rḍy	b'lsⁱl m	ds²r	'lt	yṯ'	s²'hq m	gd 'wḏ	lh	gd ḏf	'lh	dṯn	gdw hb'l
■ Total references	296	28	54	55	28	21	25	35	24	6	8	2	2	0
■ Alone or specified only	248	27	47	34	10	14	19	16	3	3	5	1	0	0
■ Mentioned with other deities'	48	1	7	21	18	7	6	19	21	3	3	1	2	0

Deities' mentioned in inscriptions featuring curses

■ Total references   ■ Alone or specified only   ■ Mentioned with other deities'
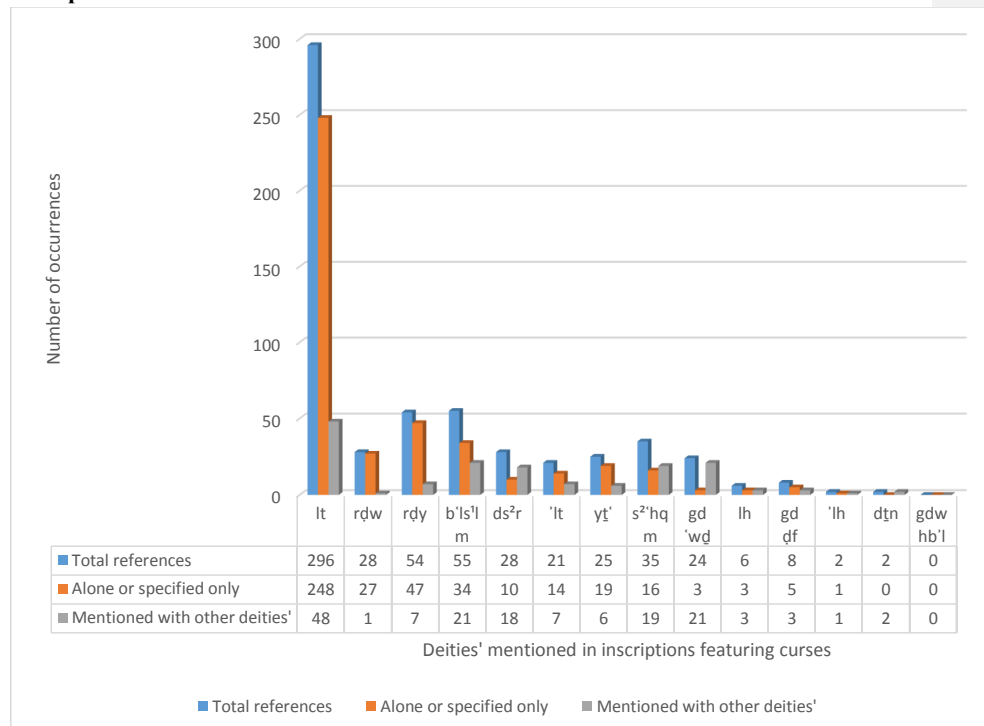
TABLE 11: Full list of deities mentioned in prayers featuring blessings in the Safaitic inscriptions

	lt	rḍw	rḍy	b'ls¹lm	ds²r	'lt	yt'	s²'hqm	gd 'wḏ	lh	gd ḍf	'lh	dṯn	gdw hb'l
■ Total references	38	1	3	7	5	2	2	4	5	1	4	0	0	1
■ Alone or specified only	28	1	3	5	1	2	2	2	5	0	3	0	0	0
■ Mentioned with other deities'	10	0	0	2	4	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	1

Deities' mentioned in inscriptions featuring blessings

■ Total references   ■ Alone or specified only   ■ Mentioned with other deities'
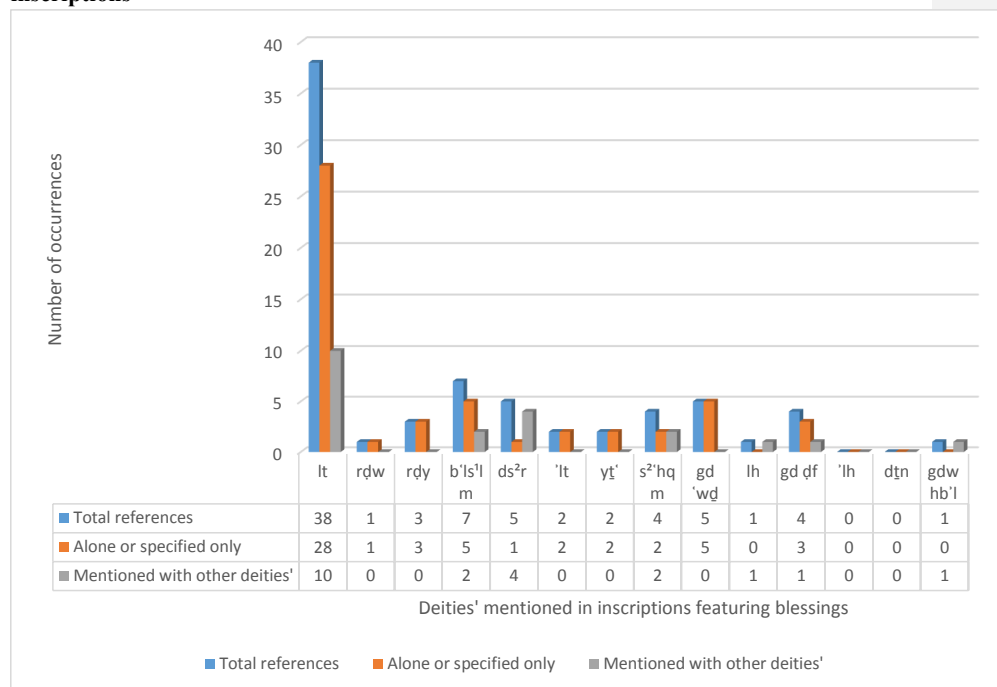
TABLE 12: Full list of tribal lineages mentioned with *lt*

Tribe name	Number of occurrences
dʾf	19
ms¹kt	11
ḥzy	9
ʿwḏ	8
fʾrt	6
ʿmrtn	5
nġbr	5
s¹ʿd	4
qmr	4
kkb	4

316

tm	3
gr	3
frt	3
qs²m	3
zhr	3
s²ʾm	3
ʾṣr	2
bs¹	2
blqy	2
ṣhyn	2
ḥr	2
rks¹	2
kn	2
mʿṣ	2
n'br	2
ʿbs²t	2
ʾty	1
ʾd	1
ʾḫt	1
ʾrs²	1
bdn	1
bs¹ʾ	1
bʿd	1
bwk	1
t̲fly	1
gʿbr	1

ġḫr	1
jl	1
ḥbq	1
ḫg	1
ḥmy	1
ḥrm	1
ḫly	1
dhh	1
rks¹	1
rm	1
rhy	1
zdʾl	1
zhmn	1
s¹	1
s¹ʿb	1
s¹lm	1
s¹btt	1
s²d	1
s²rd	1
ṣʾr	1
ṣlḫd	1
tyʾ	1
ʿby	1
ʿḏl	1
fṣmn	1
fsy	1

318

qrḥ	1
qmm	1
mʿyr	1
mʿṣ	1
mlk	1
mn	1
nmrt	1
hthr	1
wrqn	1

TABLE 13: Full list of deities mentioned in inscriptions featuring sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*)

Deities mentioned in inscriptions featuring sacrifice (*ḏbḥ*)

	No deity	lt	bʿls¹mn	gd ʿwḏ	yṯʿ	s²ʿhqm	ds²r	dṯn	rḍy
Series1	11	6	4	4	4	3	1	1	1
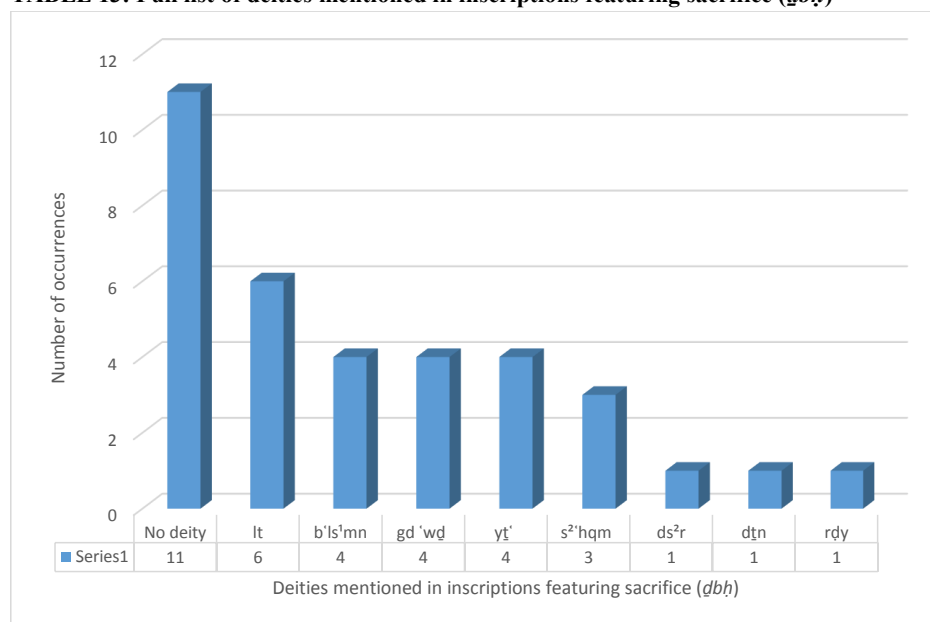
TABLE 14: Full list of deities mentioned in the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts

	rḍw	yṯ'	'lt	dṯn	khl	nhy	rḍy	blg	b'ls¹ mn	ds²r	gd	nṣr	rḍ	s²'nr
Series1	71	20	17	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

y-axis: Number of occurrences; x-axis: Deities
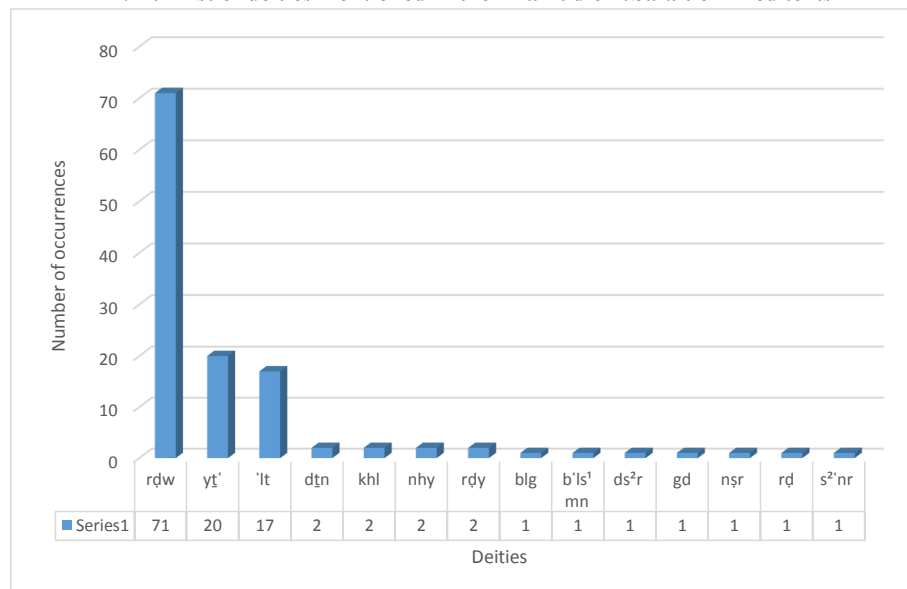
TABLE 15: Full list of requests made to the deity *rḏw*

Full list of requests made to *rḏw*.

	Help (šꜥd)	Booty (gnmt)	Deliverance (ftt)	Relief (nwḥ)	Security (sꜣm)	Vengeance (nqm/nqmt)	Give/grant (ḥb)	Life (ḥyw/ḥꜣw)	Vengeance (wr)	Abundance (gꜣwt)	Compensation (bꜣd/wqꜣw)	Protection (wqꜣy/ttki)	Attack (ttki)	Comfort (frg)	Crush him (dhk)	Direction (sꜣqs)	Favour (nrm)	Feed (kll)	Heal (hnn)
Total references	93	37	23	19	12	12	7	7	6	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Excluding mixed text references	31	35	21	19	12	12	7	7	6	3	3	3	1	0	0	1	1	1	1
Only mixed text references	62	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0

TABLE 16: Full list of vocative particles used with *h*
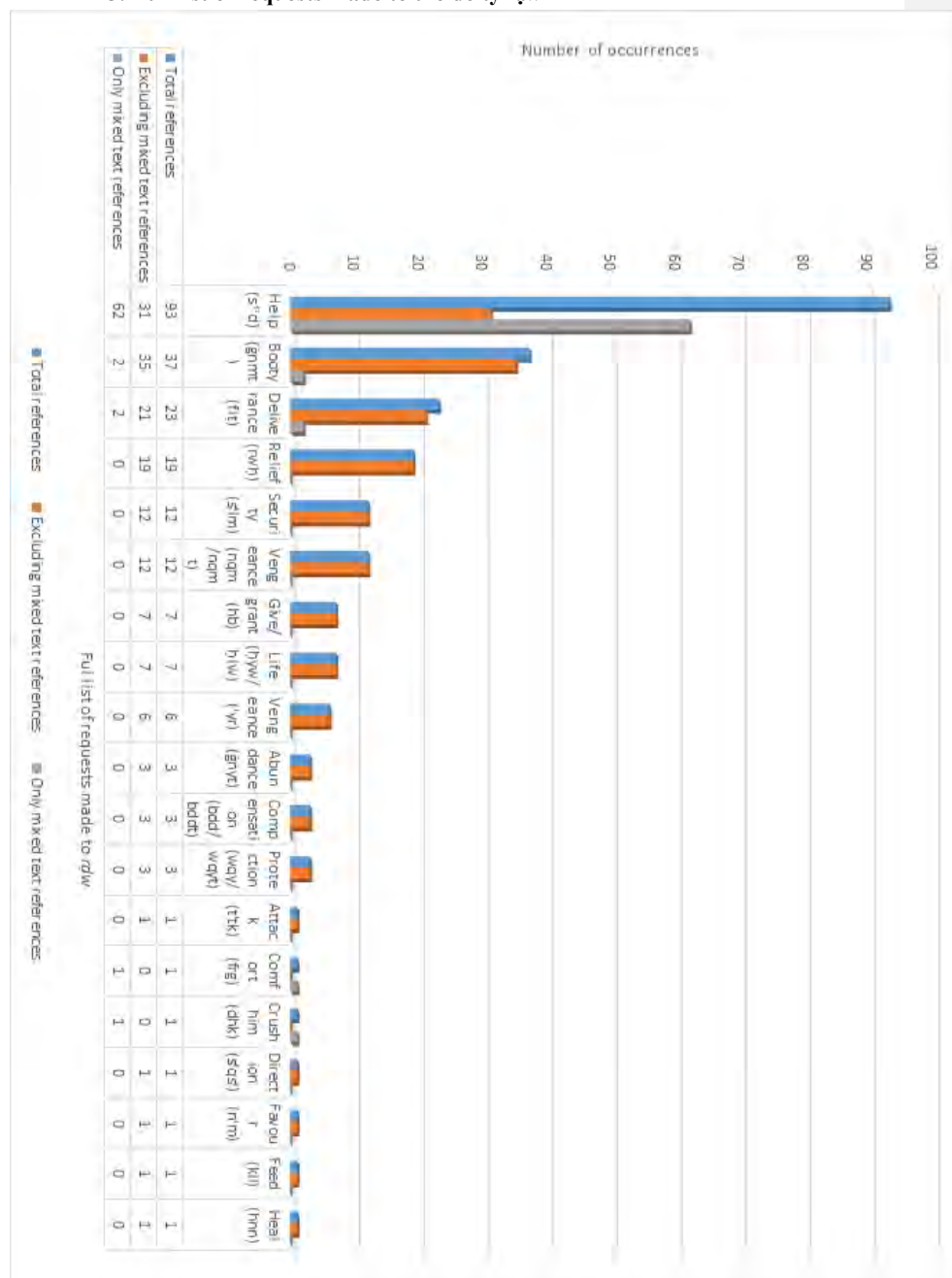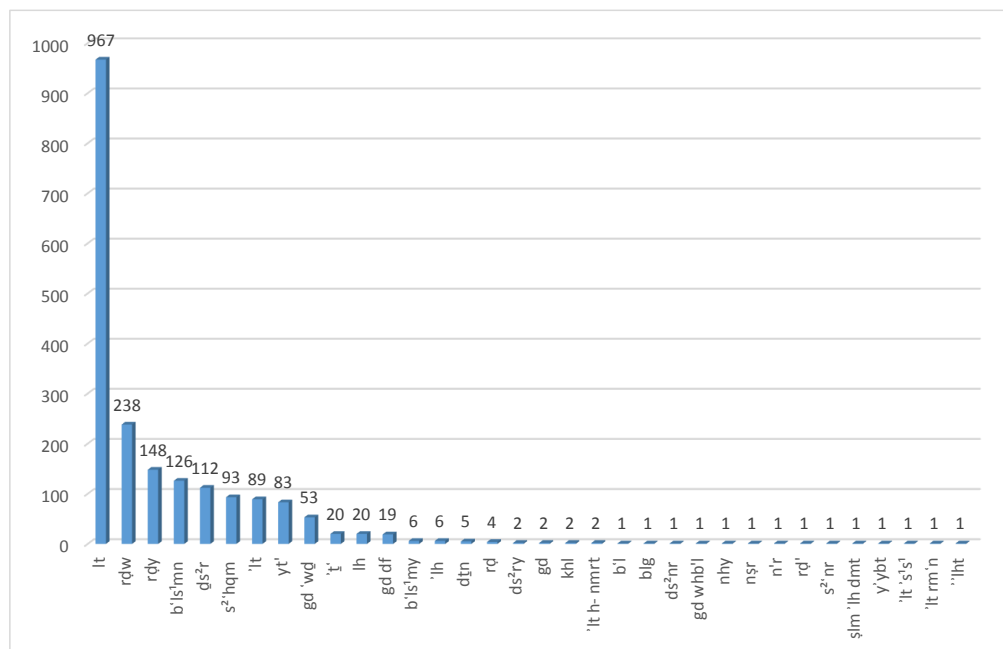
APPENDIX B: WORD AND SENTENCE LIST

1: Word and sentence list of requests made in Safaitic prayers

ʾ	ʾbl l- ḏ rʿy	grant camels to whoever pastures (verb)
	ʾṭn ʾl- -km yd -h l- ṯ ʾr m- ḏ ʾs¹lf	may he cut off his hand for you (in promise) for vengeance upon him who committed this act (verb)
	ʾʿly l- -h mʿn m- bʾs¹	raise up a helper
	ʾġd -h	be without needs
	ʾḥy	assistance
b	bdd -h m- ʾgrt -h	grant his share of compensation
	bdd -h m- nʿm m- ʾgrt -h	grant his share from the pasturing animals which is his compensation
	brʾ	Heal
	brʾ l- h- ns¹	healing to the people
ṭ	ṭ rd	Defense
	tẓr	Refuge
	tʿtk	attack
	tfy	Fullness
ṯ	ṯ ʾr	Vengeance
	ṯ ʾr m- ḏ ʾs¹lf	blood vengeance on he who committed this act
	ṯ ʾr m- s²nʾ	blood revenge this year
	ṯ ʾr mn	blood vengeance from his killing
ḥ	ḥrf	repay evil
	ḥlmt m- ḏ qbl	Health
	ḥlw	make life agreeable
	ḥnn	show compassion
	ḥwr	safe return

	ḫyw	prolong life
	ḫyy l- ḏ s¹ʾr	Life
ḫ	*ḫrṣ*	Guard
	ḫs²ʿt	submission C 2692
	ḫlṣ/ḫlṣt	Deliverance
	ḫlf	Compensation
	ḫlf l- s¹lḥ -h m-	compensation for his two weapons
d	*dhk*	crush him
	dyq w ʿwr s²nʾ ḥnnm	blind and put down the enemy
ḏ	*ḏkrn/ḏkr*	Remember
r	*rd f nwy by*	Prosperity
	rdt	Defense
	rwḥ	Rest
	rʿy	Happiness
	rʿy bql ntl	provide him with nourishment and he pastured spring herbage while on the move
	rkʿ ḥm bʿhn	humble someone
	rwʾ	sweet water
z	*z mm*	tall grass
s¹	*s¹br ḫl lmʿzn*	abundance of horses
	s¹ḥqt rḥṭ ks¹ṭ	may those people be destroyed
	s¹qs¹	Direction
	s¹lm	Security
	s¹lm ḏ- ʾl	security of the lineage
	s¹lm ḏ ʾʿm	security to whoever is lacking milk
	s¹lm ḏ s¹ʾr	security to whoever is left
	s¹lm l- ḏ s²rd	security to who has escaped

324

s¹lm s¹nt	security this year
s¹lm s¹nt h- yhdy w wgm	security this year and accompany the servants
s¹lm l- ḏ	security to whoever is alone
s¹lm ḏ s¹ʾr	security to those who remain
s¹lm l- ḏ s²r	security to whoever is of good character
s¹lm l- ḏ s²rd	security to him who ran away
s¹lm l- ḏ s¹ʾr m- bʾs¹	security from despair
s¹lm l- ḏ s²rd	security to him who ran away
s¹lm l- m ḫrṣ	security to whoever is keeping watch
s¹lm l- h- ṯṯ	security to the party
s¹lm m- ʾls¹nt	security to evil tongues
s¹lm m- bʾs¹ w ʿhn b- mgdt	security from despair and grant that he may dwell in plenty
s¹lm m'- bʾs¹	security from affliction
s¹lm m- bʾs¹ w mn- ḫlt	security from affliction and an attack
s¹lm m- ḏ ḫrṣ	security among those who keep watch
s¹lm m- s¹qm	security from disease
s¹lm m- s²nʿ	security from enemies
s¹lm -h m- h s¹lṭn	security against the government
s¹lm h- mlk	security to the chief
s¹lm h- s¹nt	security for the year
s¹lm w ʿwḏ -k --- -km h- ʾbl	protection to the camels
s¹lm w ṯʾr mn- s²nʿ w s²mt	security and revenge from enemies
s¹lm w mgdt	security and plenty
s¹ʿd	Help
s¹ʿd ḏ wd w flṭ m- bʾs¹	help whoever loves and deliver from distress

	s¹ʿd s²ʿ ḏḥ	help in a country exposed to sun
	s¹ʿd --- m- h- nṣʿ	help him against/concerning enmity
	s¹ʿd h- ytm	help the orphan
	s¹yb	Accompany
s²	*s²kr*	regard him with goodwill
	s²nṣ	Care
	s²y hn w s¹lm hn njr -h	here and grant well-being from his thirst
ṭ	*ṭʿmt*	Food
	ṭwf	torrential rains
ʿ	*ʾhn*	Heal
	ʿqbt	Retribution
	ʿqrt	Destruction
	ʿgl	make speed
	ʾyr/ʾyrt	Vengeance
	ʾyr l- ʾḫ -h	vengeance for his brother
ġ	*ġr*	Food
	ġrt	Immunity
	ġnmt	Booty
	ġnmt bddt	booty and food
	ġnmt h s¹nt	booty this year
	ġnmt h s¹nt m- s²nʾ	booty against enemies this year
	ġnmt m- s²nʾ bʿd	booty from an enemy who is far away
	ġnyt	Abundance
	ġnyt l- ḏ s²ḥṣ	abundance for whoever is in need of milk
	ġyrt w s¹lm w mgdt	abundance and security and plenty
	ġwṯ	Assistance

	ġyr h- s¹nt	abundance this year
	ġyrt	Abundance
	ġwṯ h bʾsʾt	assistance in adversity
f	*fbʿd*	keep away
	frg	Comfort
	fsʿd	Help
	fṣy	Deliverance
	fṣy h- s¹nt	deliverance this year
	fṣyt	Deliverance
	fṣy ʾl ms¹k h s¹nt	deliver from an evil torment
	fṣy m- bʾs¹ s¹ʿd	deliverance from despair and help
	fṣy m- ḏ kwn	deliver from those who humiliate
	flṭ	Deliverance
	flṭ m- bʾs¹	deliverance from misery
	flṭ m- bʾs¹ h- s¹nt	deliverance from affliction this year
	flṭn m- bʾs¹ w nhyy	deliver us from adversity and may we be saved
	flṭ m- ḫrṣ -h	deliverance from paying attention
	flṭ m- s²nʾ	deliverance from enemies
	flṭ h- s¹nt	deliverance this year
	flṭ -h m- ḏ kf s¹ʾ	deliverance for him who possesses evil
	flṭ -h m- s²nʾ	deliverance from he who possesses evil
	flṭ m- s²nʾt	deliverance from enemies
	flṭʾt	Deliverance
	flḥt	Prosperity
	flḍ	grant salvation
q	*qbt*	grant retribution

	qbl l- ḏ ts²wq b- mdbr	show benevolence to whoever yearns in the inner desert
	qbll	Benevolence
	qbll ʾhl -h s¹lm	benevolence to his family and grant security
	qr	Coolness
	qs¹n	Retribution
k	*krm*	be generous
	ks¹r h- s¹ls¹lt	deliverance for the breaker of the chain
	kll nʿm wlʿ bql	feed all grazing animals eager for spring herbage
l	*lḥ*	Look
	lʿm	grant healing
	lʿn ḏ yʿwr h s¹fr	protect the writing
	lʿn rʾṭ s¹ʾ	curse bad people
	lʿṣt ḏ ʾḏyr	cause difficulty for he who causes harm
	lkt	strike him
	l- -h s²hrt	give to him
m	*m- ḍr*	deliver him from harm
	m- ḥwbt -h	make him happy from his grief
	mbrh	he is troubled
	mṭr	send rain
	mgdt	Plenty
	mgdt w s¹lm	security and plenty
	mty -h w wgm ʿl- ʾs¹d w ʾrṣf	overpower adversity and help
	mʿdt	Return
	mqdt	Plenty
n	*nʿm*	comfort/favour

	ngy	Deliverance
	nqmt	Vengeance
	nqwt	Liberation
	nḥ w ny w nfr mn- rm	Lamentation
h	*hb*	Give
	hb l- znfʿt l- ḫlbt	give me useful things
	hb l- -h h-myt	give him the water
	hbl	Give
	hgr	Protection
	htf ṭʿmt mn- ṣd	abundance of food from hunting
	hmngr wflṭh	deliver him
	hnʾt	Wellbeing
w	*wʾl m- bʾs¹*	grant an escape from grief
	wbʾlb	prolong life
	wgm	Accompany
	wdt	grant love
	wʿ lh 'bb'nsh	shelter him
	ws'dh	Help
	wqy	Protection
	wqyt/qyt	Protection
	wnj'	Pasturage
	whb	Give
	whb ḫl fṣy	give deliverance to whoever keeps watch
	whb rkbt l- bny ḏ- ʾl	give the tribe camels
	whbt s²nʾ -h bn- yd -h -	grant the handing over of his enemies into his hands

329

2: Word list of curses made in Safaitic prayers

<table>
<tr><td>ʾ</td><td>*ʾḥgr dn -h m y ʿwr*</td><td>lame a friend of whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td>**b**</td><td>*bʾsʾ l- ḏ ʿwr m ʾl- ḥwq w ḏ kf -h*</td><td>despair to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td>**ṯ**</td><td>*ṯʾr w ts²wq ʾl- dd -h w ʾs²yʿ -h kll -hm w ʿwr l- ḏ y ʿwr*</td><td>blood revenge and blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ṯwl ḏ y ʿwr h/ s¹fr*</td><td>possessed by a devil be he who effaces this inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td>**ḥ**</td><td>*ḥrs¹ l- m mḫbl h- s¹fr w ġmt l- -h*</td><td>dumbness and grief to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ḥrs¹ w ʿrg l- ḏ ḫbl h/ s¹fr*</td><td>dumbness and lameness to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ḫdʿ m ʿwr h- ḫṭṭ*</td><td>abase whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td>**r**</td><td>*rwḥ l- ḏ s¹ʾr w ʿwr l- ḏ y ʿwr h/ s¹fr*</td><td>relief to who leaves untouched, blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td>**s¹**</td><td>*s¹ḫq w ws¹q l- ʿdw w nd ḏ y ʿwr h- s¹fr*</td><td>flight to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td>**ṣ**</td><td>*ṣm w nqʾt m- qbr l- ḏ y ʿwrn -h*</td><td>deafness and ejection from the tomb to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td>**ʿ**</td><td>*ʿrg w kmh l- ḏ y ʿwr h/ ḫṭṭ*</td><td>lameness and blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ʿrg w ʿwr l- ḏ <<>> y ʿwr ʾ- ḫṭṭ*</td><td>lameness and blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ʿfr l- ḏ y ʿfr w nqʾt*</td><td>dust upon him who rubs this inscription with dust, and ejection</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ʿqb b -h rm ḏ ʾs¹lf w ʿwr ḏ y ʿwr*</td><td>slaughter and blind whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ʿmt w ʿwr l- ḏ ʿwr*</td><td>loss of eye sight and blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ʿn*</td><td>Curse</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>*ʿw---- w grz m- ʾs²yʿ l- ḏ ʿwr*</td><td>blindness and separation from companions for whoever obliterates the inscription</td></tr>
</table>

ʿwr ḏ ḫbl	blind whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr ḏ y ʿwr h- s¹fr w s¹ḥq w mḥq w nqʾt b- wdd ḏ yḫbl h- s¹fr	vengeance, blindness, inflict destruction and annihilation and nqʾt on the loved one of whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr ḏ y ʿwr h- s¹fr	blind whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr ḏ y ʿwr h- frs¹	blindness to whoever obliterates the drawing
ʿwr l- ḏ ʿwr h- tll	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr l- ḏ y ʿwr	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr l- ḏ y ʿwr h- ḫṭṭ	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr l- ḏ y ʿwr h s¹fr	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr l- ḏ y ʿwr h s¹frt	blindness to obliterator
ʿwr l- ḏ y ʿwr mʾl h- ḥwq	blindness on whoever scratches out the writing
ʿwr l- ḏ ymṯl h s¹fr	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr l- mn ḫbl	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr l- mn ʿwr h- ḫṭṭ	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr l- m ʿwr h- s¹fr	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr m ḫbl mʾl ḥwq	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr m ʿwr -h	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
ʿwr m ʿwr h- frs¹	blindness to whoever obliterates the drawing of the horseman

331

	ʿwr w ḫrsⁱ l- ḏ yʿwr h- ḫṭṭ	blind and strike dumb to whoever obliterates the inscription
	ʿwr w ʿrg ḏ- yʿwr h- ḫṭṭ	blind and lame whoever obliterates the inscription
	ʿwr w ʿrg l- ḏ yʿwr h/ ḫṭṭ	blindness and lameness to whoever obliterates the inscription
	ʿwr w ʿrg w ḫrsⁱ w grb w ḥkk l- ḏ yʿwr h- sⁱfr	blindness, lameness, dumbness, scab, mange to whoever obliterates the inscription
	ʿwr w grb w gʿ l- ḏ yʿwr h- sⁱfr	blindness and scabies and starvation upon him who obliterates the inscription
	ʿyr m ḏ qtl -h	Vengeance
ġ	ġrr ḏ ġnṯ	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
q	qʾwsⁱgʿgʿrl	revenge, perdition, blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
	qbln w ʿwr l- ḏ yʿwr -h	squinting and blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
l	l- ḏ dʿy w ʿrg w ʿwr ʿyb l- ḏ ḫbl h- tl	lameness, blindness and deformation to whoever obliterates the inscription
	l- ḏ dʿy w ʿwr --- ḏ ḫbl	blind him whoever obliterates the inscription
	l- ḏ ḫrṣ w ʿwr l- ḏ yʿwr	blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
	l- ḏ sⁱʾr w ʿwr	revenge to whoever obliterates the inscription
	lʿn ḏ ḫbl	Curse
	lʿn ḏ yʿwr m yhnʾ	curse whoever may scratch out that which gives pleasure
	lʿn l- ḏ yʿwr h- ḫṭṭ	curse whoever obliterates the drawing
	lʿnt lt mn yḫbl -h	curse whoever obliterates the inscription

332

	lġbt l- ḏ ʿwr	persecute whoever obliterates the inscription
m	*m y ʿwr h/ sʹfr*	blind whoever obliterates the inscription
	mt l- ḏ y ʿwr h- sʹfr	death to whoever obliterates the inscription
	mġt ḏ y ʿwr h- sʹfr	blind whoever obliterates the inscription
	mḥlt l- ḏ y ʿwr	dearth of pasture to whoever obliterates the inscription
	mḥlt l- ḏ y ʿwr h- ḫṭṭ	dearth of pasture to whoever obliterates the inscription
	mḥlt l- ḏ y ʿwr h- sʹfr	dearth of pasture to whoever obliterates the inscription
	mḥltn l- ḏ y ʿwr h- sʹfr	two seasons death of pasture to whoever obliterates the inscription
n	*nqʾt b- nfsʹ wdd ḏ y ʿwr h- sʹfr*	nqʾt and blindness to whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt b- ṣdq l- ḏ y ʿwr	nqʾt on a friend of whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt b- wdd -h yḫbl h- ḫṭṭ	nqʾt on the loved one of whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt b wdd ḏ- y ʿwr h- sʹfr	nqʾt on the loved one of whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt ḏ y ʿwr h- sʹfr	nqʾt to whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt l- ḏ ḫbl h- sʹfr -	nqʾt to whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt l- ḏ ʿwr	nqʾt to whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt l- ḏ y ʿwr	revenge and revenge on whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt l- ḏ y ʿwr h- sʹfr	nqʾt on whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾt l- ḏ y ʿwr h- frsʹ	nqʾt to whoever obliterates the horse
	nqʾt m- qbr l- ḏ y ʿwrn -h	nqʾt from a tomb whoever obliterates the inscription
	nqʾṣ l- mn ḏḫbl h- sʹfr	death to whoever obliterates the inscription

333

	nqm m- ḏ ḏʾw h- ḫṭṭ	vengeance on whoever obliterates the inscription

3: Word list of blessings made in Safaitic prayers

ʾ	*ʾrk rḥ l- ḏ dʿy h/ ḫṭṭ*	peace and forbearance for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
b	*...brʾ m- bʾs¹ ḏ dʿy*	protection from harm and help for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
ḏ	*ḏ dʿy*	grant approval for whoever leaves this inscription untouched and curse whoever spoils
r	*rwḥ l- ḏ s¹ʾr*	relief for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
s¹	*s¹ʿd m dʿy*	help for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	s¹ʿdt mn dʿy h/ s¹fr	help to him who leaves this inscription untouched
	s¹lm l- ḏ s¹ʾr	security for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	s¹lm l- ḏ s¹ʾr h- s¹fr	security for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	s¹lm l- ḏ s¹ʾmr	security for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	s¹lm l- ḏ dʿy h- s¹fr w gnmt w wgm ʿl- ʾb -h f ngʿ ʾl- ʾb -h s¹nt kym ʾl ḥwlt b- rḥbt	security, booty and accompany for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	s¹lm m- s²nʾ s¹lm l- ḏ dʿy	security for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	s¹lm w ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy	security and booty for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	s¹lm w ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy h- s¹fr ...	security and booty for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
ġ	*ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy*	booty to who leaves untouched
	ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy h- ḫṭṭ	booty for whoever leaves this inscription untouched

334

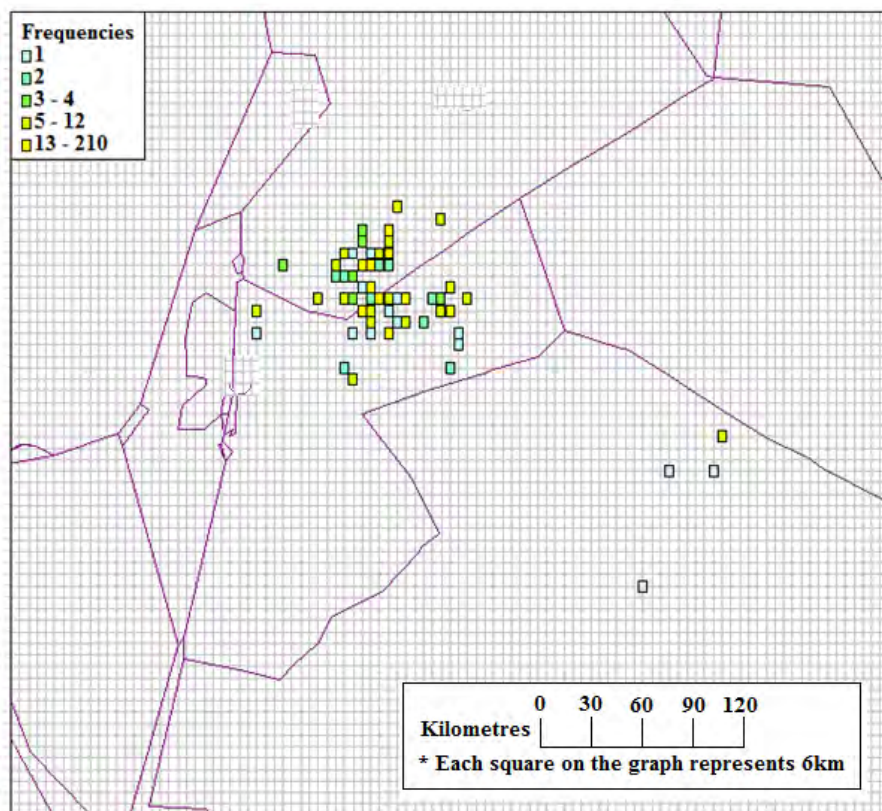|		
	ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy h- tll	booty for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	ġnmt m- ḏ ʿwr h/ sˡfr	booty to him who leaves this inscription untouched
f	*fṣy w sˡlm w ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy gn*	deliverance, security and booty for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	fṣyt l- ḏ sˡʾr	deliverance for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
m	*mʿwn sˡlm l- ḏ sˡʾr w ġnyt m- s²ḥṣ w m- ḫlt w ḫrsˡ ... w ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy*	security, abundance, booty for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	mʿwn sˡlm l- ḏ sˡʾr w ġnyt m- s²ḥṣ w m- ḫlt w ḫrsˡ ... w ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy	security, freedom from want and enmity, booty for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
ḥ	*ḥnn l- ḏ sˡʾr w ʿwr ḏ ʿwr h/ sˡfr*	show compassion for him who leaves this inscription untouched
h	*hnyt w sˡfr ...*	good health for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	... h- sˡfr w ġnmt l- ḏ dʿy	booty for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
	... h- sˡfr w ġnyt l- ḏ dʿy	abundance for whoever leaves this inscription untouched
w	*wqyt m- s²nʾ*	protection from enemies

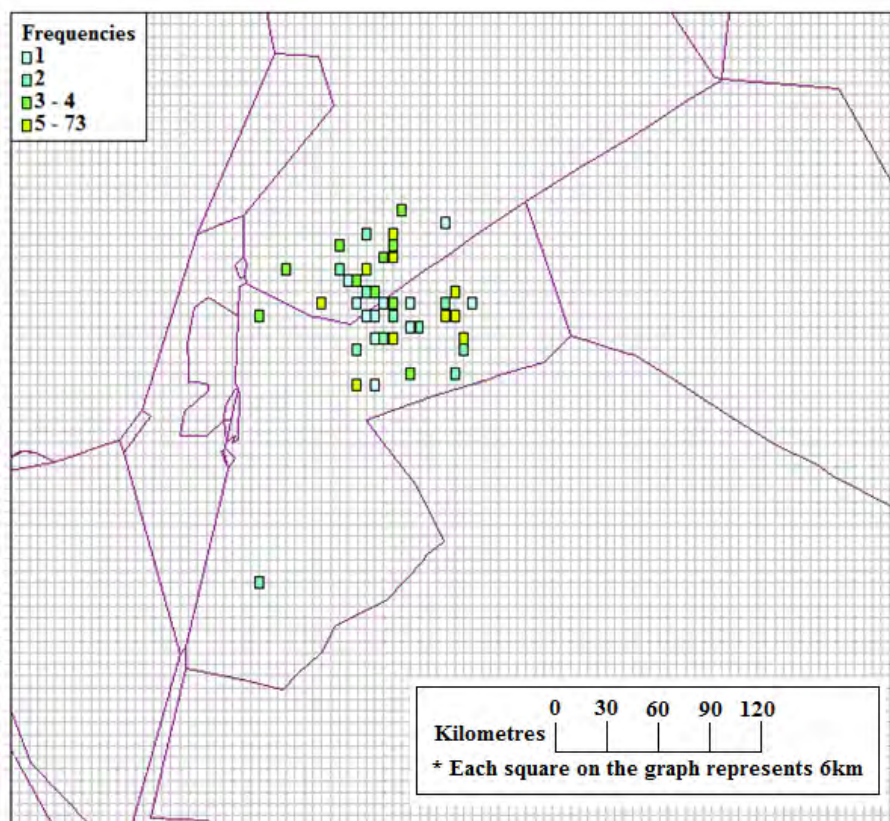**MAP 1: Distribution of the Safaitic inscriptions**
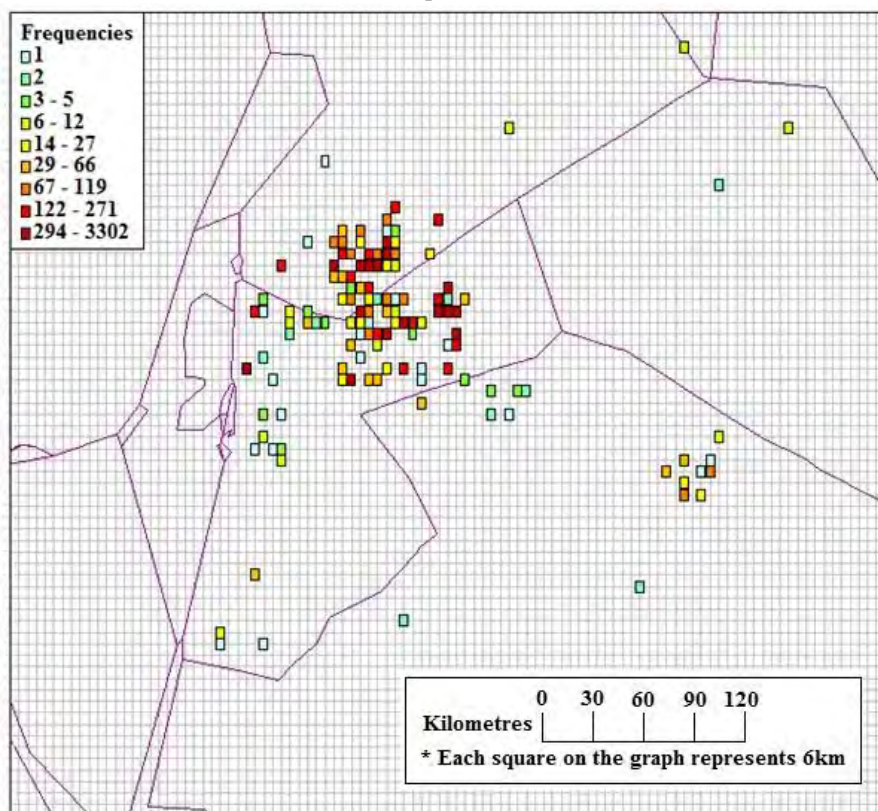
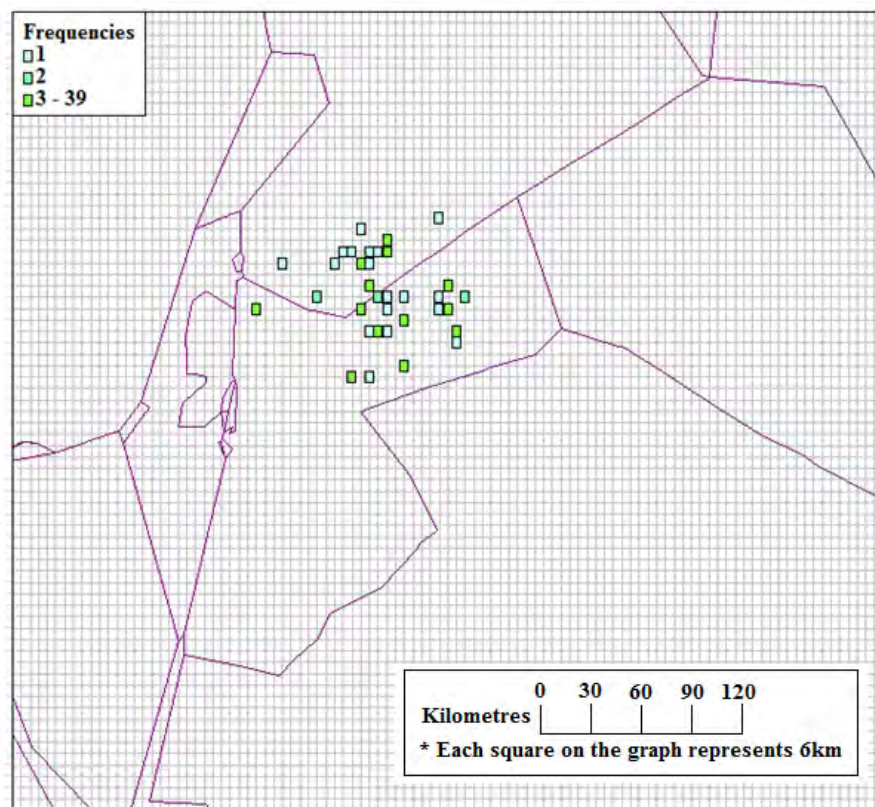**MAP 2: Distribution of the Thamudic B/Safaitic mixed texts**
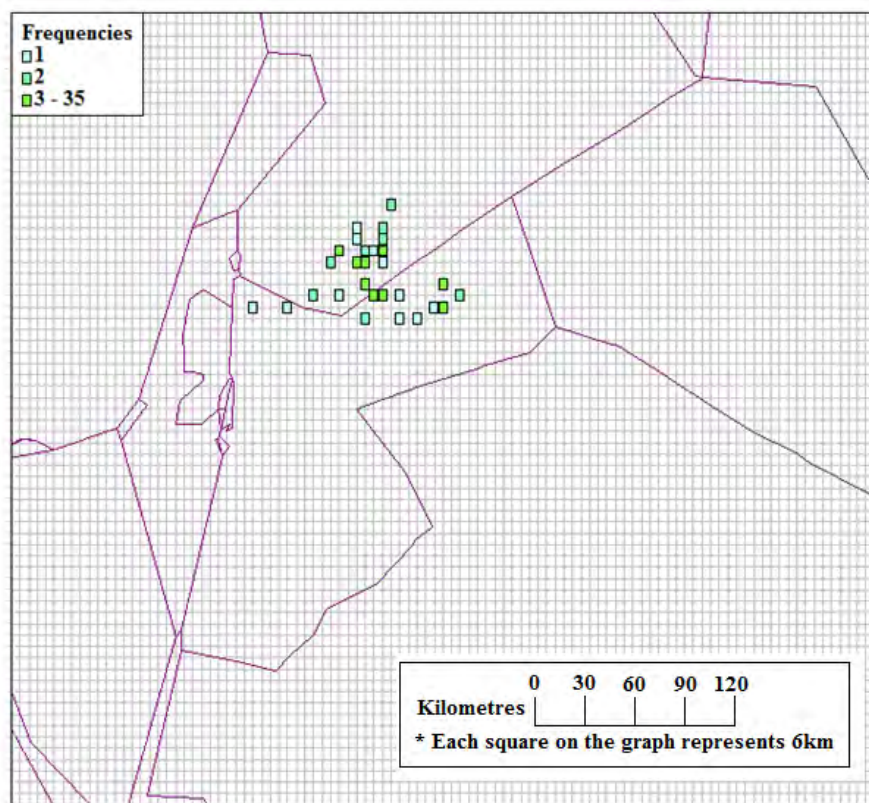

337
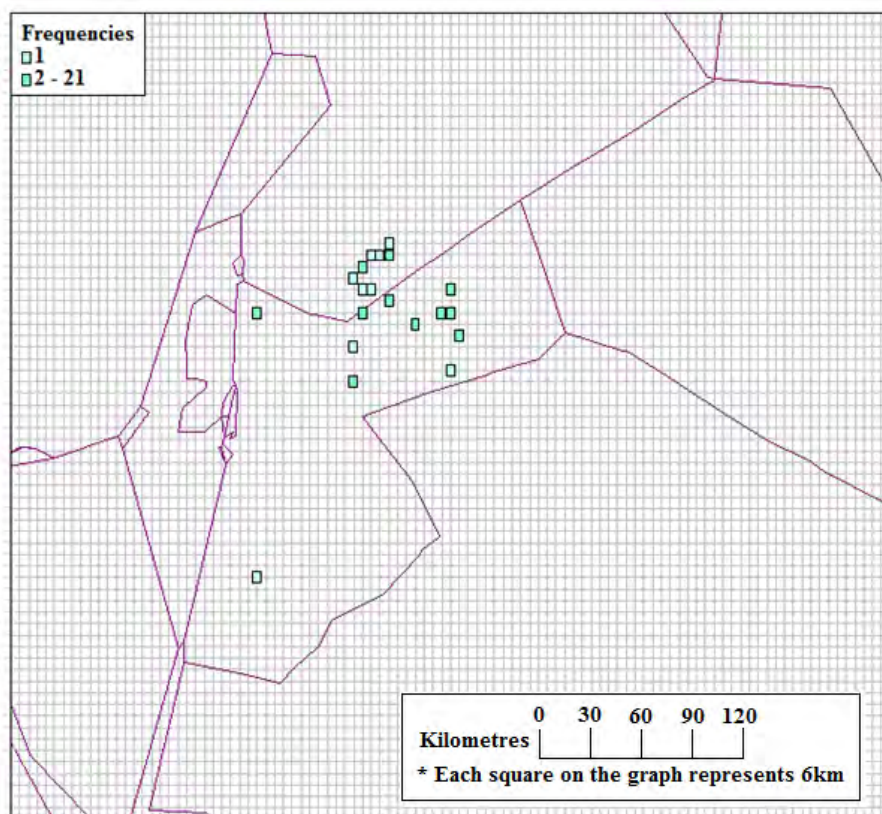
MAP 3: Distribution of references to the deity _lt_
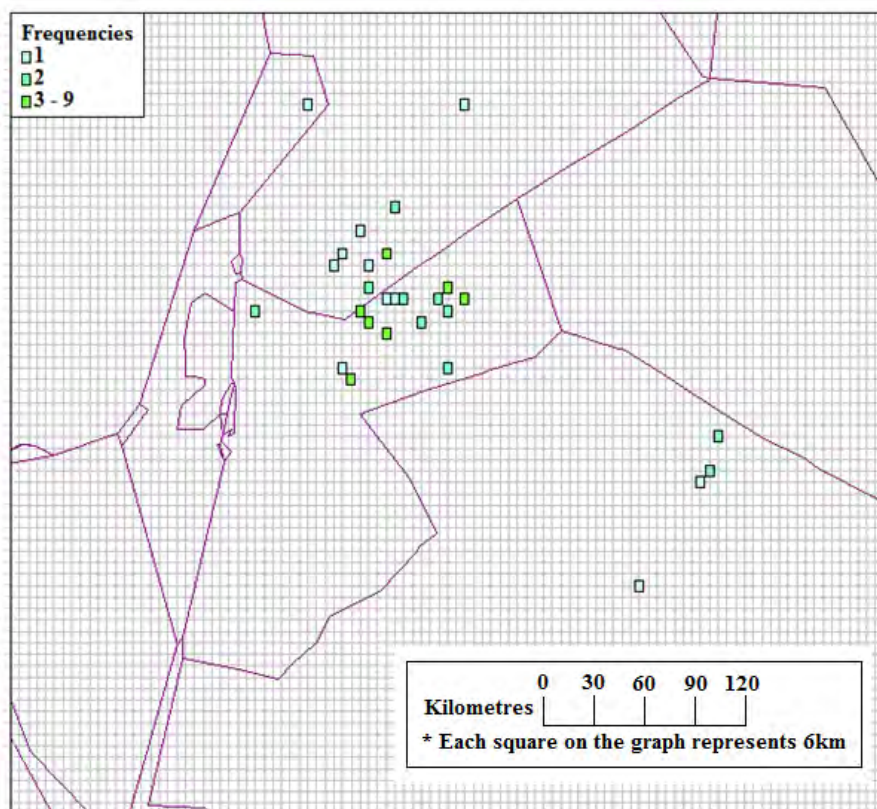

338

MAP 4: Distribution of references to the deity *rḏw*

Frequencies
- 1
- 2
- 3 - 4
- 5 - 73

Kilometres
0   30   60   90   120

* Each square on the graph represents 6km

339

MAP 5: Distribution of references to the deity *rḍy*
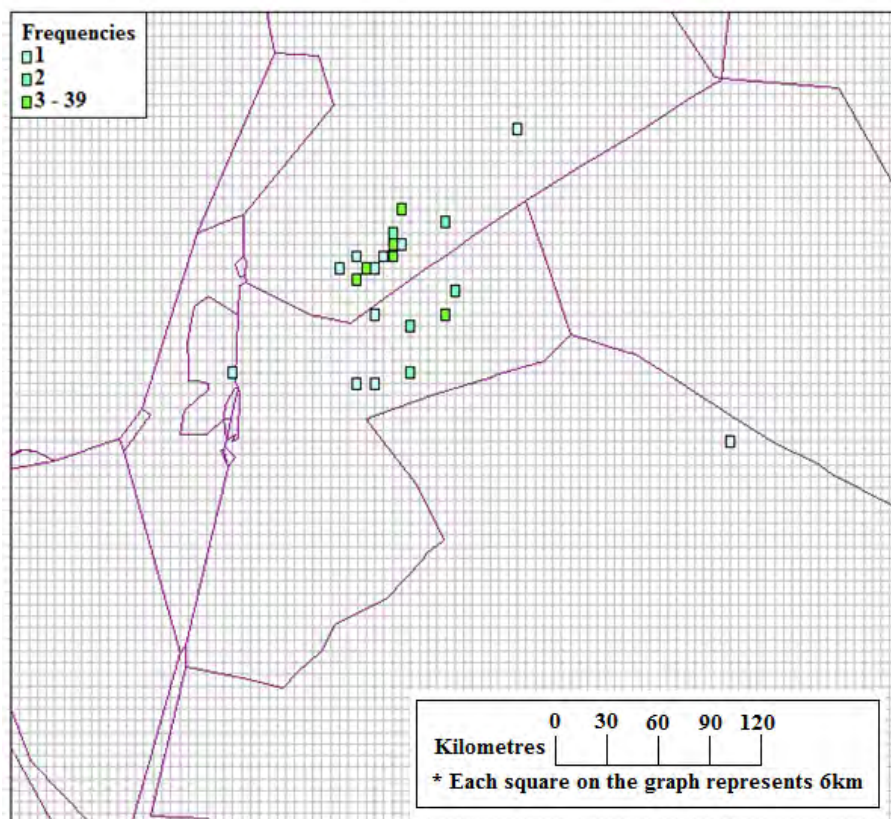

340

MAP 6: Distribution of references to the deity *bʿlsʰlm*
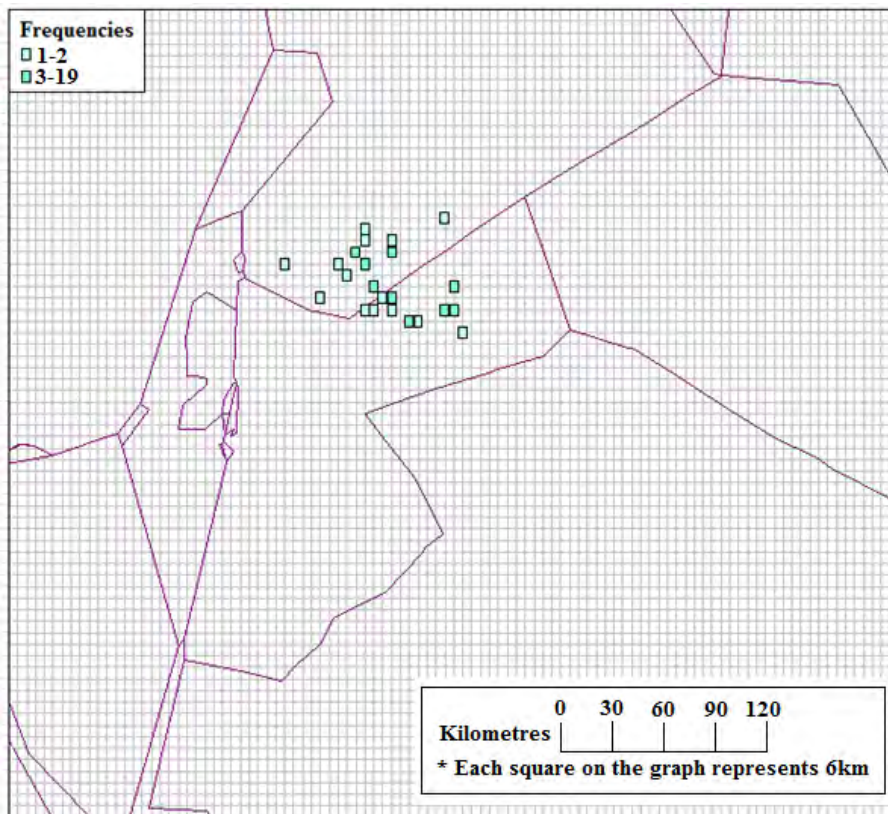

341
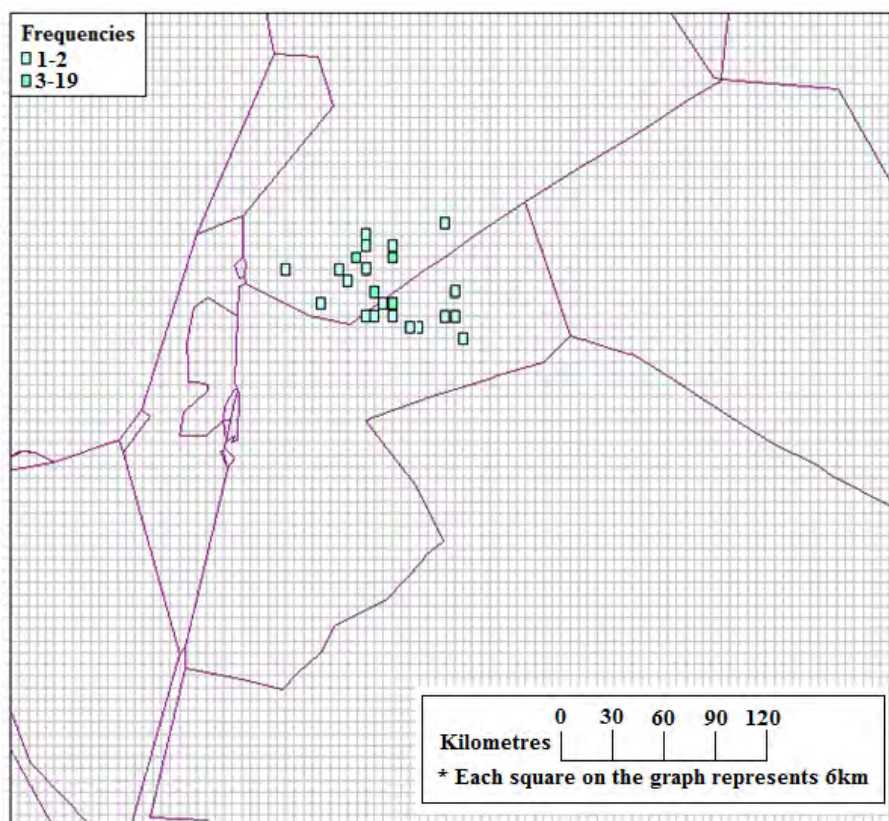
MAP 7: Distribution of references to the deity *ds²r*

342

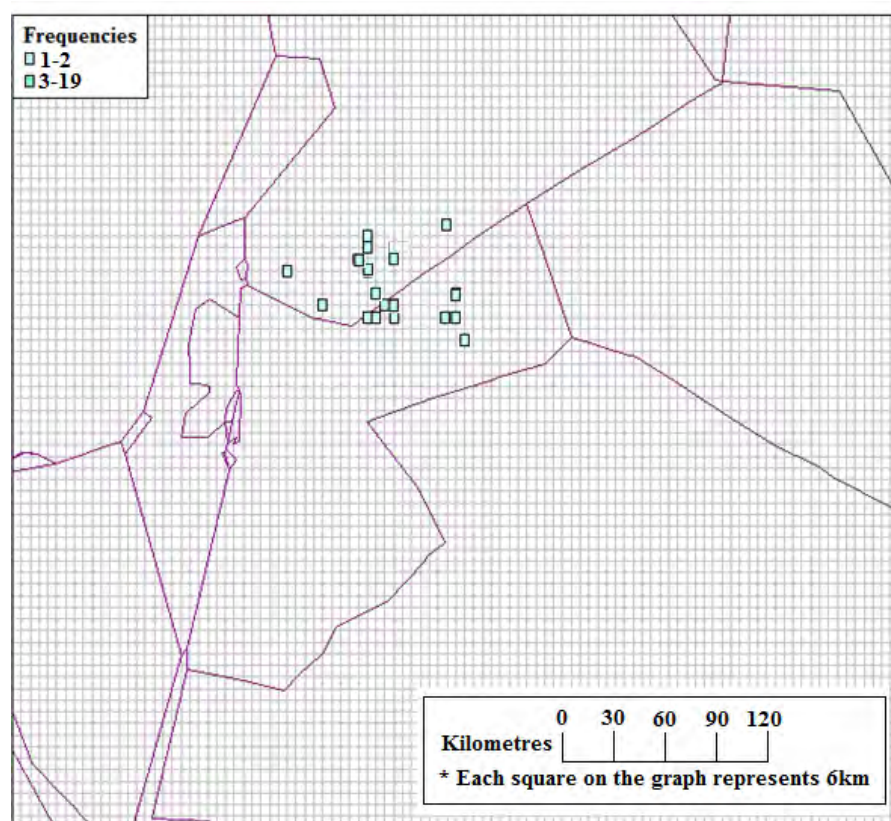**MAP 8: Distribution of references to the deity ʾlt**

343

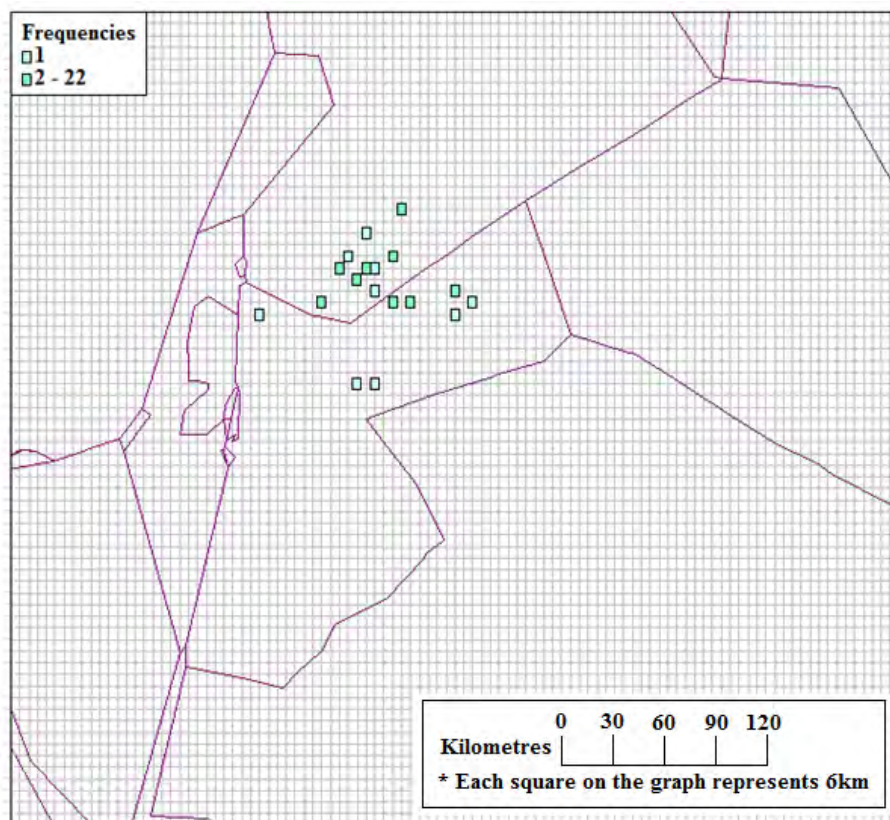**MAP 9: Distribution of references to the deity _yt̠_ʿ (combined spellings of _yt̠_ʿ and _ʾt̠_ʿ)**

MAP 9a: Distribution of references to the deity *yṯ'* (spelling of *yṯ'*)

Frequencies
- 1-2
- 3-19

0   30   60   90   120
Kilometres
* Each square on the graph represents 6km

MAP 9b: Distribution of references to the deity _yt'_ (_'t'_ spelling)

Frequencies
1-2
3-19

0 30 60 90 120
Kilometres
* Each square on the graph represents 6km

346

MAP 10: Distribution of references to the deity *s²ʿhqm*

Frequencies
□ 1
□ 2 - 22

0   30   60   90   120
Kilometres
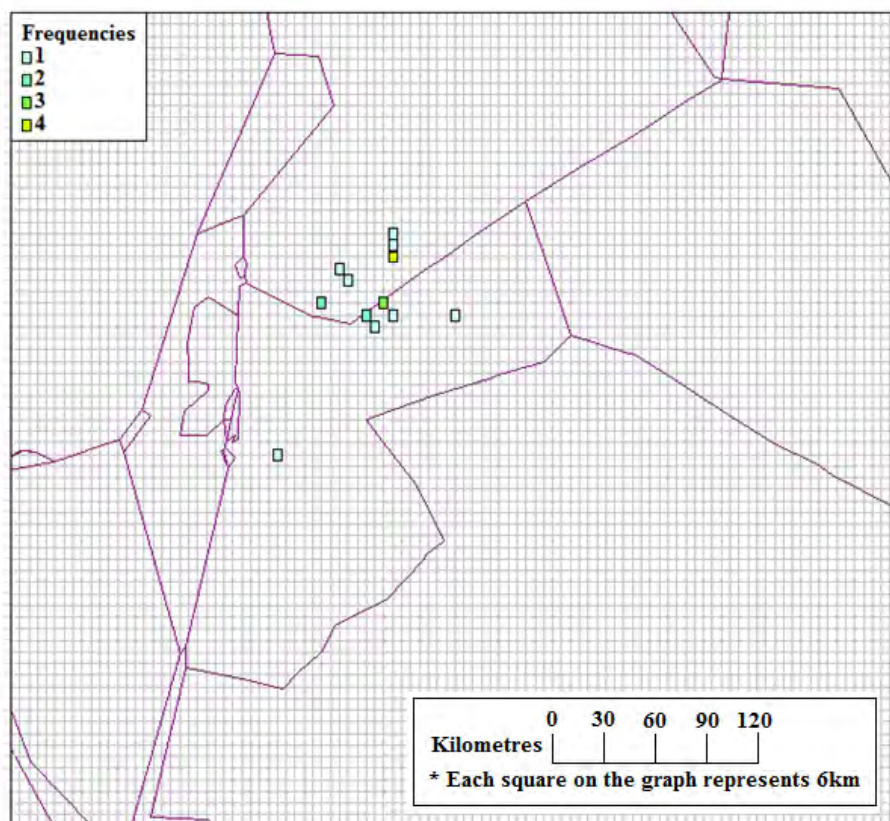* Each square on the graph represents 6km
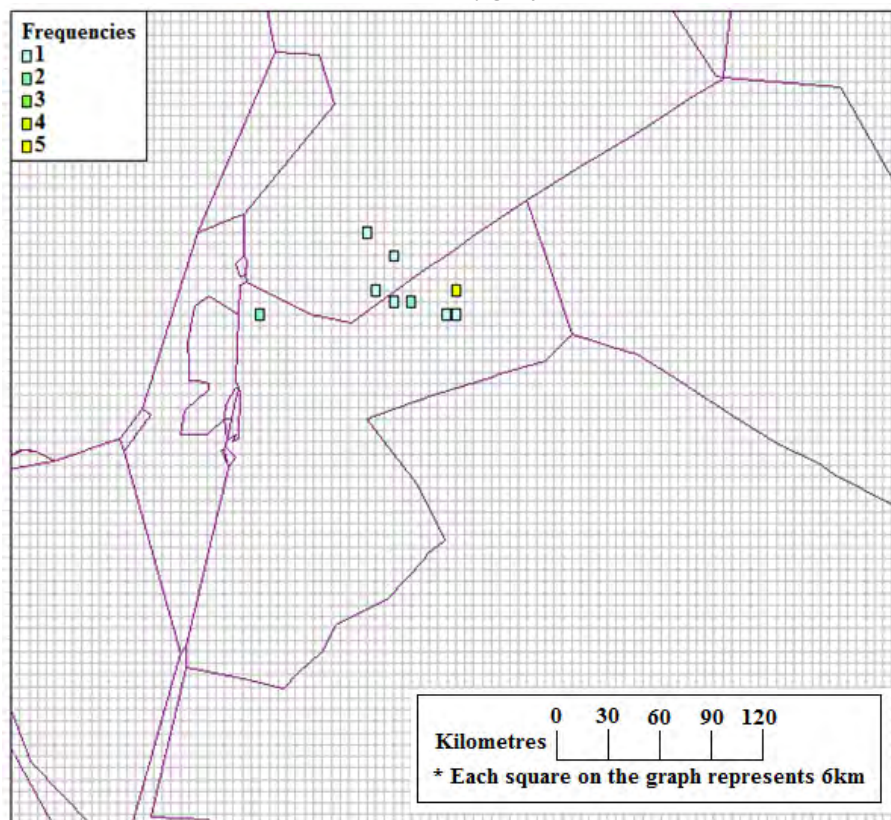
347

MAP 11: Distribution of references to the deity *gd ʿwd*

348
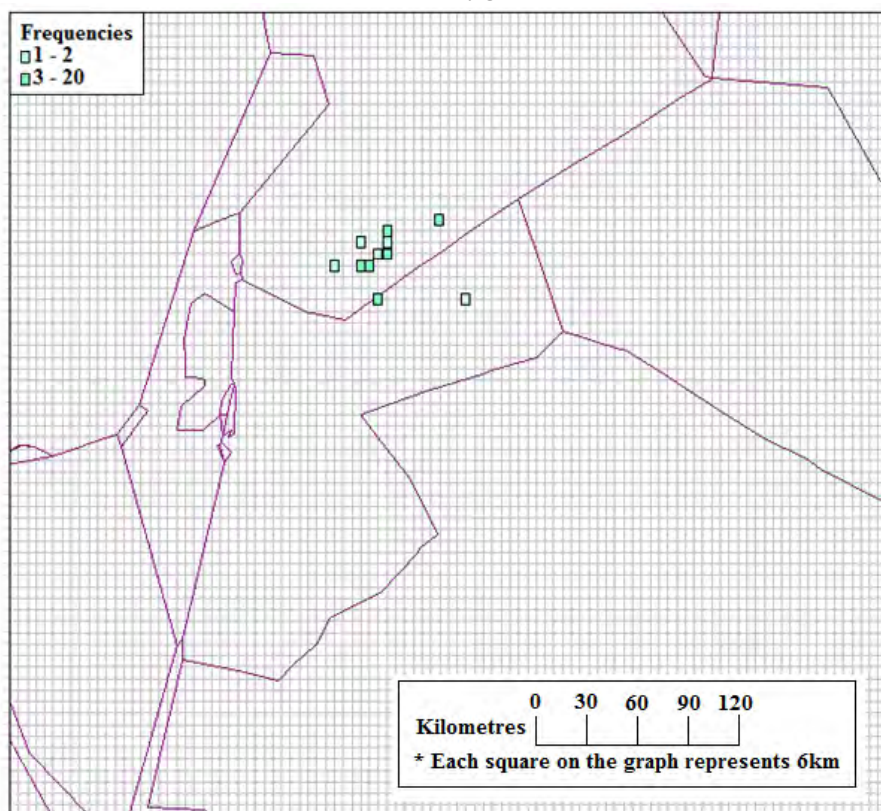
MAP 12: Distribution of references to the deity *lh*

MAP 13: Distribution of references to the deity *gd ḏf*
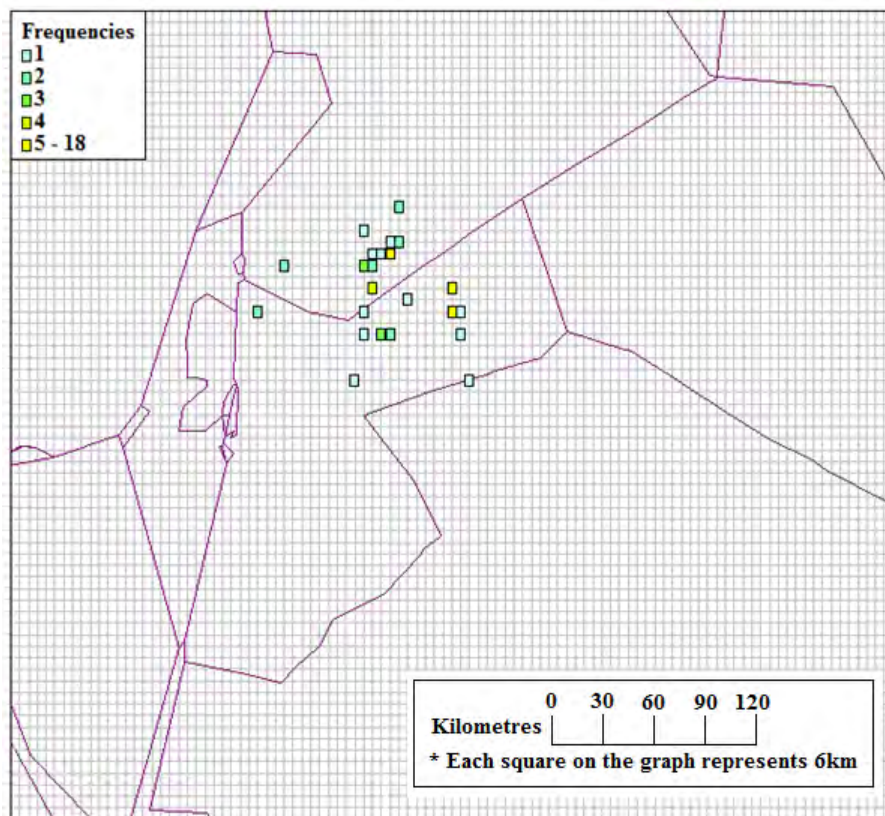
Frequencies
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Kilometres
0   30   60   90   120

* Each square on the graph represents 6km

350

MAP 14: Distribution of references to the tribe *dʾf*

351

MAP 15 – Distribution of references to the tribe _ḥzy_

Frequencies
1
2
3
4
5 - 14

0   30   60   90   120
Kilometres
* Each square on the graph represents 6km

**MAP 16: Distribution of references to the tribe ʿ*mrt*

Frequencies
☐ 1
☐ 2
☐ 3
☐ 4
☐ 5

0   30   60   90   120
Kilometres
* Each square on the graph represents 6km
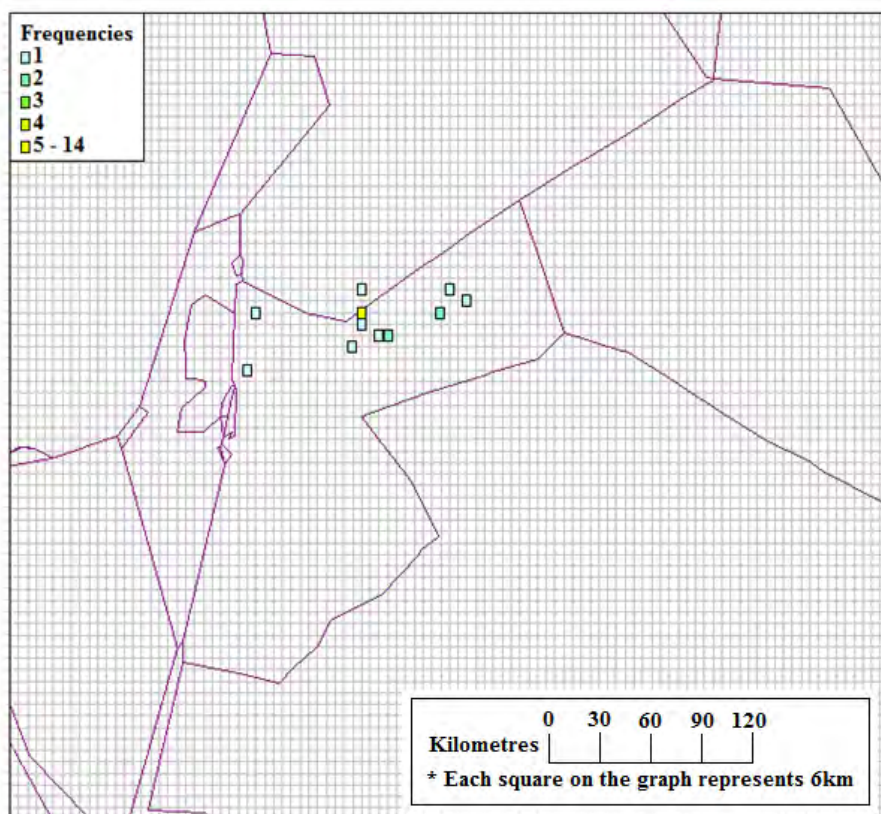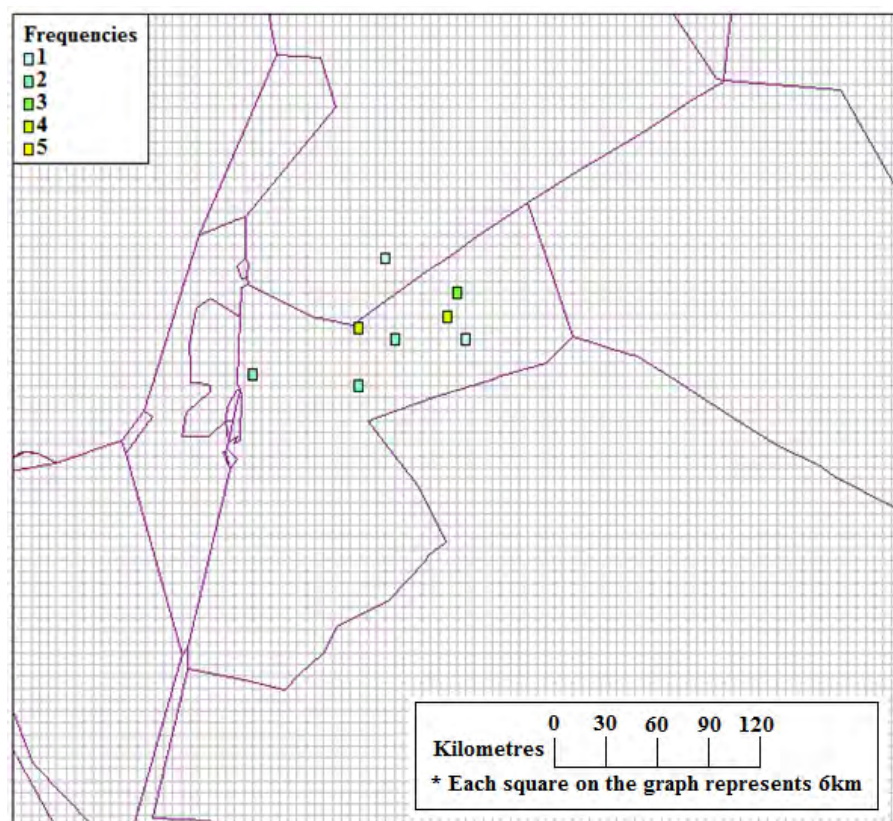
MAP 17: Distribution of references to the tribe *ms'kt*

354

MAP 18: Distribution of references to the tribe ʿwḏ

355

MAP 19: Distribution of references to the tribe *tm*

356

MAP 20: Distribution of references to the tribe *nġbr*
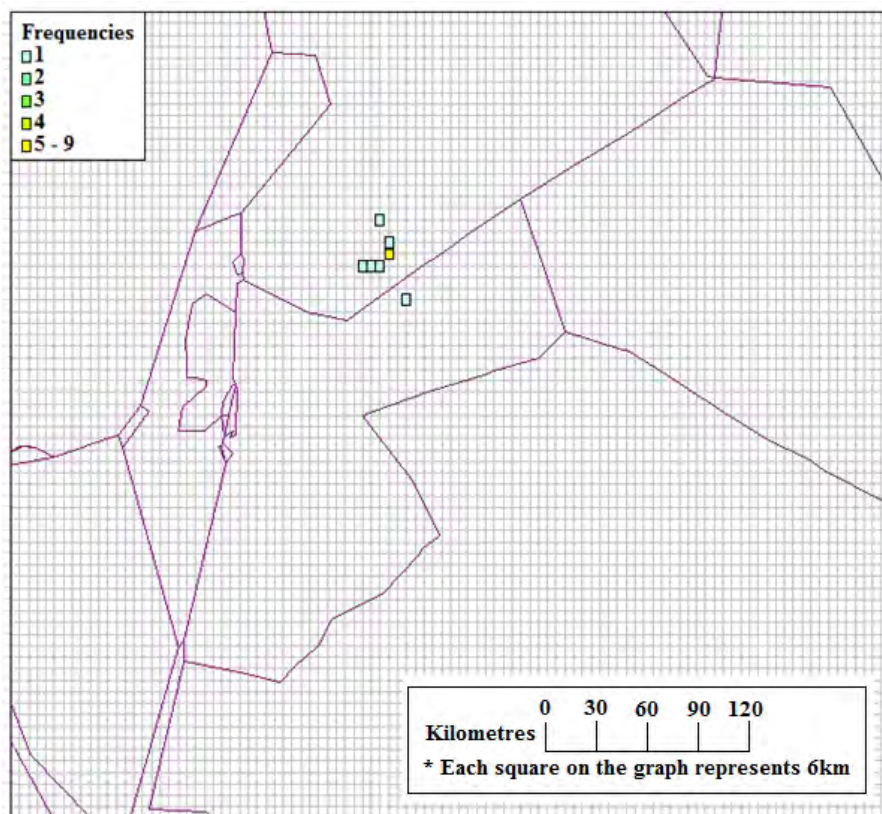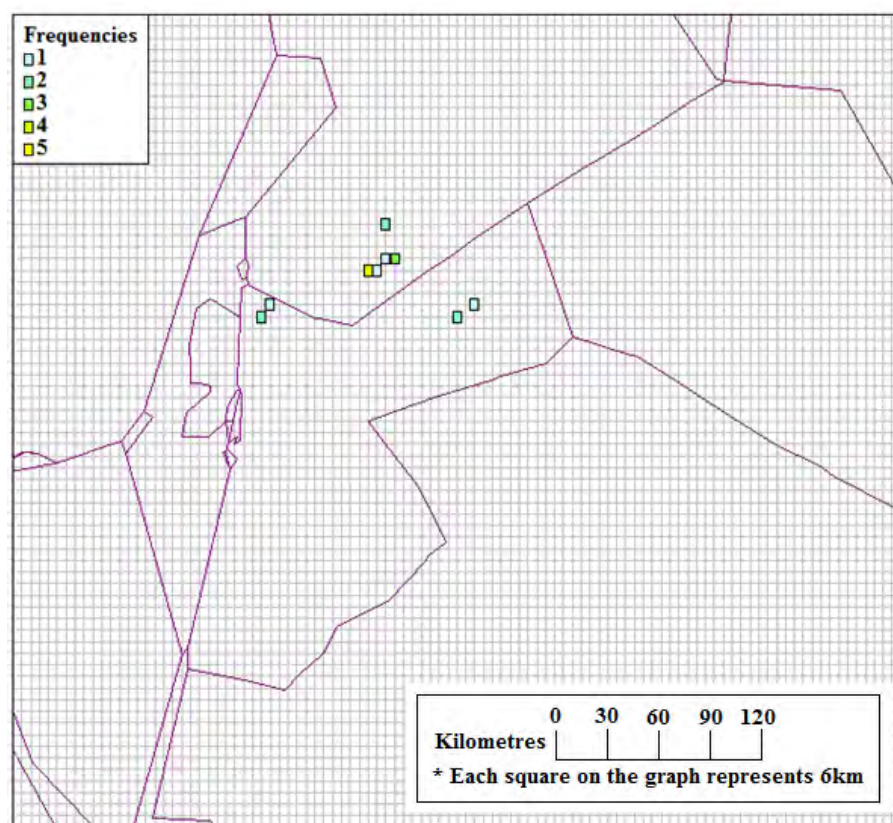

357

MAP 21: Distribution of references to the tribe *qmr*

Frequencies
□ 1
□ 2
□ 3
□ 4
□ 5

Kilometres 0 30 60 90 120

* Each square on the graph represents 6km

358

MAP 22: Distribution of the ANA texts

359

APPENDIX D: ABBREVIATIONS OF INSCRIPTIONS USED IN DATABASE AND IN STUDY

AbaNS   Ababneh, (M.I.), 2005. *Neue safaitische Inschriften und deren bildliche Darstellungen,* Aachen.

AbGQ   Abbādi, (S.), 1987. "Kitābāt ṣafawiyyah min Ǧabal Qurmah", *Dirasat* XIV(X): 125–155.

AbMS   Abbādi, (S.), 1996 "Naqš ṣafawiyy ǧadīd min marabb as-ṣuweida".

AbNSID   Abbādi, (S.), 2001. "A New Safaitic inscription dated to 12-9 B.C.", *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* VII: 481–484.

AbNSJ   Abbādi, (S.), 1997. "Naqš ṣafawiyy ǧadīd yuʾarraḫu".

AbNSMM   Abbadi, (S.), "Nuqūš ṣafawiyyah ǧadīdah min matḥaf Āṯār al-mafraq," *Abḥath Al-Yarmouk* 13(2): 79–90.

Abudanah   Abudanah, (F.), 2004. "The Archaeological Survey for the Region of Udhruḥ, 2003 (preliminary report)", *ADAJ* 48: 51–69.

AbWH   Abbadi, (S.), 1992. "Three New Safaitic Inscriptions in Jordan Al Hashad Valley", *Dirasat* 23(2): 242–252.

AIIH   Atallah, (N.), 1995. "Inscriptions inédites du Hawran (Raoat Al–Roye'y)", *Syria* 72(3–4): 387–399.

Aksd   Abu Assaf, (A.), 1973. "Kitābāt 'arabiyyah ṣafawiyyah ǧadīdah fī al–matḥaf al–waṭanī bi–Dimašq", *Les Annales Archaeologiques Arabes Syriennes* XXIII: 201–214.

AKSJ   Abu Assaf, (A.), 1975. "Kitābāt ṣafawiyyah ǧadīdah fī matḥafay Dimašq wa–Tadmur", *Les Annales Archaeologiques Arabes Syriennes* XXIV: 141–145.

Al–Manaser   Al–Manaser, (A.Y.K.), 2008. *Ein Korpus neuer safaitischer Inschriften aus Jordanien*, Semitica et Semitohamitica Berolinensia, Band 10, Herausgeber, Berlin.

AloNSWS   Alolow, (G.), 1996. *Dirāsat nuqūš ṣafawiyyah ǧadīdah min Wādī as–Sūʾ ǧanūb Sūriyah*, PhD thesis, Yarmouk University.

ANKS   Naji, (A.), 1962. "Kitābah ṣafawiyah min ṣaḥrāʾ al–ruṭba", *Sumer* 18(1–2): 165–170.

AQ   Abbadi, (S.), 1986. "An Archaeological Survey of Gabal Qurma", *Archiv für Orientforschung* 33: 259–262.

ATIN   Atallah, (N.), 2007. "Inscriptions from Tell Rimah and its area in North East Jordan", *Syria* 84: 287–294.

ATWN   Atallah, (N.), 1997. "Trois Épitaphes du Nord–est De la Jordanie Trouvées À Al–Khān", *Abhath al–Yarmouk, Humanities and Social Sciences* 13(1.A): 9–14.

AZNG   Abbadi, (S.) & Zayadine, (F.), 1996. "Nepos the Governor of the Provincia Arabia in a Safaitic Inscription?" *Semitica* 46: 155–164.

B27000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 27000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B30000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 30000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B30120   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 30120 (to appear on OCIANA).

B30121   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 30121 (to appear on OCIANA).

B31000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 31000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B32000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 32000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B33000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 33000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B34000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 34000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B35000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 35000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B36000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 36000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B37000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 37000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B38000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 38000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B39000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 39000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B40000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 40000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B41000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 41000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B42000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 42000 (to appear on OCIANA).

B43000   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Betts site 43000 (to appear on OCIANA).

BBCD   Bikai, (P.), Sha'er, (M.), Fitzgerald, (B.), 1994. *The Byzantine Church at Darat Al–Funûn*, Amman: Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation.

Betts   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from NE Jordan (to appear on
             OCIANA).

BQAH   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Qāʿ Abū Ḥussayn (to appear
             on OCIANA).

BRCM   Bikai, (P.M.), 2005. "Rajl: Cairn of Mermaids", *ACOR Newsletters* 17(2): 4–
             5.

BTH   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Tell Hibr (to appear on
             OCIANA).

BWM   Betts, (A.V.G.), unpublished – inscriptions from Wadi Miqat (to appear on
             OCIANA).

CEDS   Clark, (V.A.), unpublished – inscriptions from the Eastern Desert Inscription
             Survey, 1980 (to appear on OCIANA).

CEDSQM   Clark, (V.A.), unpublished – inscriptions from the Eastern Desert Inscription
             Survey, 1980, Qāʿ al–Mahfūr (to appear on OCIANA).

CGSP   Calzini Gysens, (J.), 1990. "Safaitic Graffiti from Pompeii", *PSAS*, vol. 20, pp.
             1–7.

CIS   *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum: Pars Quinta Inscriptiones Saracenicas*
             Continens, Paris 1962, Pars 5, Inscriptiones Saracenicae.

CSA   Clark, (V.A.), "New Safaitic Inscriptions from Sakaka and Azraq", *Abr–*
             Nahrain XXIII (1984–85): 14–21.

CSI   Clark, (V.A.), 1987. "The Semitic inscriptions". *Parker*, pp. 723–755.

CSNS   Clark, (V.A.), 1979. *A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*, PhD
             Thesis, University of Melbourne.

CSP   Clark, (V.A.), 1976–77. "Some New pre–Islamic Arabian Inscriptions from
             Northern Arabia", *Abr–Nahrain* XVII: 35–42.

CST   Clark, (V.A.), 1987. "Safaitic and Thamudic Inscriptions from Wadi Bayir, Jordan", *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina vereins* 103: 185–191.

CTBC   Clark, (V.A.), 1981. "Archaeological Investigations at two burial cairns in the Ḥārra region of Jordan", *ADAJ* 25: 235–265.

DIYATHEH Unpublished inscription from Diyatheh (to appear on OCIANA).

DN   Inscriptions copied by Dunand and published in CIS.

DV   Dussaud, (R.) and Macler, (F.), 1901. *Voyage archéologique au Ṣafâ et dans le Djebel ed–Drûz*, E. Leroux.

Extra   Unpublished inscriptions from al–ʿĪsāwī, Wādī Shām from Safaitic Epigraphical Survey Project (to appear on OCIANA).

FCBG   Field, (H.), 1952. *Camel Brands and Graffiti from Iraq*, Syria, Jordan, Iran and Arabia, Supplement to the Journal of the American Oriental Society, 15.

FV   Inscription in a photo taken by F. Villeneuve in 1992 in the Damascus Suq (to appear on OCIANA).

GLH.Misc Unpublished Safaitic inscriptions recorded by G.L. Harding (to appear on OCIANA).

GNI   Graham, (C.C.), 1860. "Art. XII. – On the Inscriptions found in the region of El–Hârrah in the Great Desert South–East and East of the Haurân", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland* 17: 286–297.

GrafS   Safaitic inscription recorded by David Graf (to appear on OCIANA).

H   Unpublished inscriptions from al–ʿĪsāwī, Wādī Shām (to appear on OCIANA).

HaNS   Continuation of HaNSB

HaNSB   Harahshah, (R.), 2010. *Nuqūš ṣafāʾiyyah min al–bādiyyah al–urduniyyah al–šamāliyyah al–šarqiyyah, dirāsah wa–taḥlīl*, 1st ed., Amman, Dar Ward, 2010.

HaNSC   Harasheh, (R.), 2007. "Nuqūš ṣafāiyyah muḫtārah minal–Bādiyah al–Urduniyyah" *Journal of Epigraphy and Rock Drawings*, vol. 1, pp. 29–52.

HCH   Harding, (G.L.), 1953. "The Cairn of Hani", *ADAJ* II: 8–56.

HFSI   Harding, (G.L.), 1970. "Further Safaitic Texts in the Iraq Museum", *Sumer* 26: 179–186.

HN   Unpublished inscriptions from the Namarah Rescue Survey in southern Syria from 1996 (to appear on OCIANA).

HSD   Harding, (G.L.), 1969. "A Safaitic Drawing and Text", *Levant* 1: 68–72.

HSIL   Harding, (G.L.), 1971. "Safaitic Inscriptions from Lebanon", *ADAJ* 16: 83–85.

HSIM   Harding, (G.L.), 1950. "Safaitic Inscriptions in the Iraq Museum", *Sumer* VI: 124–9.

IMA   Inscription displayed at l'Institut du monde arabe in Saudi Arabian exhibition 1998 (to appear on OCIANA).

ISB   Oxtoby, (W.G.), 1968. *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin*, American Oriental Society, Connecticut.

Jabal Says   Unpublished inscriptions from Jabal Says collected by M.C.A. Macdonald and R. Hoyland (to appear on OCIANA).

JaS   Inscriptions recorded by A. Jamme.

      Jamme, (A.), 1959. "A Safaitic Inscription From the Negev", *Atiqot – Israel Department of Antiquities* 2: 150–151.

      Jamme, (A.), 1967. "Safaitic Inscriptions from Saudi Arabia", *Oriens Antiquus* 6: 189–213.

      Jamme, (A.), 1969. "New Safaitic and Hasaean Inscriptions from Northern Arabia", *Sumer* 25: 141–152.

Jamme, (A.), 1971. "Safaitic inscriptions from the country of 'Ar'ar and Ra's al-'Ananiyah", *Christentum am Roten Meer*, eds. F. Altheim and R. Stiehl, Berlin/New York, pp. 41–109, 611–37.

JSSAF   Macdonald, (M.C.A.), 1993. "Nomads and the Ḥawrān in the late Hellenistic and Roman periods: a reassessment of the epigraphic evidence", *Syria* 70: 303–413.

JSW   al–Jabur, 1996. "Inscriptions from Wādī Salmā".

K   Unpublished inscriptions from al–ʿĪsāwī, Wādī Shām (to appear on OCIANA).

Kawar   Unpublished inscription found by Kawar (to appear on OCIANA).

KBDRS   King, (G.), 1990. "The Basalt Desert Rescue Survey and some preliminary remarks on the Safaitic inscriptions and rock drawings", *PSAS* 20: 55–78.

Kennedy   Safaitic inscriptions photographed by D.L. Kennedy (to appear on OCIANA).

KhBG   Khraysheh, 2002, *Naqūš ṣafawiyya min Biyār al–Ġuṣayn.* (Mudawwanat an-nuqūš al-ʾUrdunniyyah 1). Irbid: Yarmouk University Press.

KhMNS   Khraysheh, F. 2007. "al-ṣayd ʿinda ʾl-ʿarab al-ṣafāʾiyyīn qabla ʾl-ʾislām", Journal of Epigraphy and Rock Drawings 1: 9–28.

KhNSB   Khraysheh, (F.), 1994. "Eine safaitisch–nabatäische bilingue Inschrift aus Jordanien". In N. Nebes (ed.), *Arabia Felix. Beiträge zur Sprache und Kultur des vorislamischen Arabien. Festschrift Walter W. Müller zum 60. Geburtstag*. Ḫārrassowitz, Wiesbaden, pp. 109–114.

KhNSJ   Al–Khraysheh, (F.), New Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan, Syria, 72, 3/4, 1995, pp. 401–414.

KhNSSU   Khraysheh, 1987. "An–nuqūš aṣ–ṣafawiyya fī–ʾl–ṣaḥrāʾ al–ʾurduniyyah".

KhoIAS   Khouri, (M.) and Infranca 2005, "The Archaeological Site of Qaṣr al–
              Uṣaykhim," ADAJ, 2005, vol. 49, p. 351-364.

KhU   Unpublished inscriptions found at Khirbet Umbashi found by Khraysheh (to
              appear on OCIANA).

Khunp   Unpublished inscription found by Khraysheh (to appear on OCIANA).

KnEGSIH   Knauf, Eine Gruppe safaitischer Inschriften aus der Hesma, Zeitschrift des
              Deutschen Palästina–Vereins, 1980, pp. 169–173.

KnMNGO   Knauf, (E.A.), *More Notes on Gabal Qurma, Minaeans and Safaites*, ZDPV,
              1991, 107, pp. 92–101.

KnNGQ   Jamme, (A.), 1988. "Notes on Ğebel Qurma," ZDPV, 104, 125-127

KnSS   Knauf, 1986. "Ein safaitischer Schlägel vom Ğebel Qurma," ZDPV, 102, 110-
              112.

KRS   The Basalt Desert Rescue Survey published by G.M.H. King and published on
              http://krcfm.orient.ox.ac.uk/fmi/webd#bdrs

KRS–d.   The Basalt Desert Rescue Survey – drawings only

KWQ   King GMH. Unpublished inscriptions from Wadi Qattafi (to appear on
              OCIANA).

L   Unpublished inscriptions from al–ʿĪsāwī, Wādī Shām (to appear on
              OCIANA).

Lemaire   Photo shown to L. Nehme by Prof. A. Lemaire (to appear on OCIANA).

LP   Littmann, (E.), 1943. *Publications of the Princeton University
              Archaeological* Expeditions to Syria in 1904-5 and 1909, Division IV, Section
              C. Leiden: Brill.

LSI   Safaitic inscriptions in Littmann 1904a

M Unpublished inscriptions from al–ʿĪsāwī, Wādī Shām (to appear on OCIANA).

MA Maani, (S.), and Ajlouny, F., Safaitic Inscriptions From the Eastern Part of Mafraq Governorate/Jordan, Adumatu, 2003, July 8, pp. 33–49.

MAHB Ababneh, (M.), "Safaitische Inschriften aus El–Hseniyyat/jordanisches Badiyah, Magallat an nuqus wa'r rusum as-sahriya", *Journal of Epigraphy and Rock Drawings* 1: 19–28.

MDT Maʿānī, 1999. "Dirāsah taḥlīliyyah l–nuqūš ṣafawiyyah"

MEG Macdonald, (M.C.A.), "Epigraphic gleanings from the archive of the Palestine Exploration Fund", *PEQ*, 1991, 123:109-116.

MGIshs MacAdam and Graf, 1989. "*Inscriptions from the Southern Hawran Survey, 1985 (Dafyana, Umm al-Quttayn, Dayr al-Qinn)*". *ADAJ* 33, pp. 177-197

MISSA Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSB Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSC Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSD Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSE Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSF   Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSG   Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSH   Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSI   Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MISSJ   Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Muazzin, (M.), Nehmé (L.), 1996. "Les Inscriptions safaïtiques de la Syrie, cent quarante ans après leur découverte", *Comptes rendus de séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions & Belles-Lettres*: 435–494.

MKJQ   Macdonald, (M.C.A.) & King, (G.M.H.), unpublished – inscriptions from Jebel Qurma (to appear on OCIANA).

MKJS   Macdonald, (M.C.A.) & King, (G.M.H.), unpublished – inscriptions from Jebel Ṣaqaʿ (to appear on OCIANA).

MKMR   Macdonald, (M.C.A.) & King, (G.M.H.), unpublished – inscriptions from Mithnayat Rajil (to appear on OCIANA).

MKOWI   Macdonald, (M.C.A.) & King, (G.M.H.), unpublished – inscriptions from Wadi Ireinbeh (to appear on OCIANA).

MKTF   Macdonald, (M.C.A.) & King, (G.M.H.), unpublished – inscriptions from Tell Farah (to appear on OCIANA).

MKWI   Macdonald, (M.C.A.) & King, (G.M.H.), unpublished – inscriptions from Wadi Ireinbeh (to appear on OCIANA).

MKWS	Macdonald, (M.C.A.) & King, (G.M.H.), unpublished – inscriptions from Wadi Safawi (to appear on OCIANA).
MNNAI	S.A. Maani, New North Arabic Inscriptions from the Ḥārra in Jordan
MNSI	Macdonald, (M.C.A.), "Notes on some Safaitic Inscriptions," *Jawa, Lost City of the Black Desert*, Metheun, Longon, pp. 257–263.
MRTA	al–Rousan, 2009. "Ḏikr liṣirāʿ bayn ʾalʾanbāṭ wa qabīlat ḥawaylah ʾal-ṯamūdiyyah fī naqš ṣafawī", *Journal of King Saud University, Tourism and Archaeology* 21/2: 149–161.
Ms	Macdonald, (M.C.A.), Unpublished miscellaneous inscriptions from northern Jordan. (to appear on OCIANA).
MSABC	Inscriptions from ABC outcrop recordied by Macdonald/King (to appear on OCIANA).
MSFS	Maani, (S.A.) and Sadaqah, (I.S.), 2003. "Four New Safaitic Inscriptions From Mafraq", *Adumatu* 7: 49–56.
MsNASHA	Al–Gabr, (O.M.) and Al–Samady, (S.T.), Safatic inscriptions from Eastern Hurra
MSNS	Maani & Sadaqah, 2002. "New Safaitic Inscriptions from the Mafraq Office", *Syria* 79
MSTJ	Macdonald, (M.C.A.) and Lankester Harding, (G.), 1976. "More Safaitic Texts from Jordan", *ADAJ* 21: 119–133.
Mu	Unpublished inscriptions from al–ʿĪsāwī, Wādī Shām (to appear on OCIANA).
N	Unpublished inscriptions from al–ʿĪsāwī, Wādī Shām (to appear on OCIANA).

NSIHRNJ   Alzoubi & al-Qudrah, New Safaitic Inscriptions from the Haroun Region in Northeast Jordan, *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hung.,* 2014, Vol. 67 (3), pp. 259 – 272.

NSR   Abdallah 1970. Al-nuqūš al-ṣafawiyya fī maǧmūʿat ǧāmiʿat al-riyāḍ ʿām 1996, MA Thesis. American University of Beirut.

NST   Harding, (G.L.), 1951. "New Safaitic Texts", *ADAJ* 1: 25–29.

NTSB   Naveh, (J.), 1978. "Ancient North Arabian Inscriptions on three stone bowls, *Eretz-Israel* 14, (1978), p. 178-182.

PH.Is   Inscr. in Photo Misc. PH 21 (to appear on OCIANA).

PhS   Philby 1923 Inscr. in Philby 1923 (PhJNA)

R   Unpublished inscriptions from al–ʿĪsāwī, Wādī Shām (to appear on OCIANA).

RaIM   al–Rawi's copies of unublished inscriptions in Iraq Museum (to appear on OCIANA).

Rees   Inscriptions and drawings in DRS (Dussaud 1929)

Rsh   Macdonald. (M.C.A.), 2006. Inscription from Rushaydah village. See M.C.A. Macdonald, "Death between the desert & the sown".

Ruben   Inscription found at W. Shuwayid, H4/Ruwayshid, now in a private collection (to appear on OCIANA).

RuNTJ   Ar–Rousan 1996. "Nuqūš ṯamūdiyya ǧadīda"

RVP   Ryckmans, (G.), 1941. Safaitic Inscriptions (except Stein, q.v.) in Ryckmans G 1941 (RVP)

RyDamas   Ryckmans, (G.), 1951. Safaitic inscriptions in Musée de Damas published in Ryckmans G 1951 (RyBM)]

RyF   Ryckmans 1955 – Ryckmans/Field?

             Ryckmans, (G.), 1955. "Ṣafaitica. Inscriptions safaïtiques relevées par Henry
             Field"

SaDM   Saeed 1998. "Field Study in the Inscriptions of the Badia"

Samas   SAMAS 2003. *Silsilah aṯār al–mamlakah al–ʿarabiyyah as–saʿūdiyyah*

             SAMAS Vol. 9 2003 S*ilsilah aṯār al–mamlakah al–ʿarabiyyah as–
             saʿūdiyyah*, Vol. 9

             SAMAS Vol. 13 2003 S*ilsilah aṯār al–mamlakah al–ʿarabiyyah as–
             saʿūdiyyah*, Vol. 13

SHNS   Ibrahim, (S. Sadaqah) & Harahsheh, (R.), 2005. "New Safaitic Inscriptions
             from Marab al–Ghanam N/E Jordan (Arabic)", *Adumatu* 12: 45–72.

SHS   Inscriptions from David Kennedy's S. Hauran Survey, Site 363, near Dayr al–
             Qinn (to appear on OCIANA).

SIAM   Macdonald, (M.C.A), 1979. "Safaitic Inscriptions in the Amman Museum and
             other collections I", *ADAJ* 23: 101–119; Macdonald, (M.C.A.), 1980. "Safaitic
             Inscriptions in the Amman Museum and other collections II", *ADAJ* 24: 185–
             208.

SIJ   Winnett, (F.V.), 1957. *Safaitic Inscriptions from Jordan*, University of
             Toronto Press.

SIJSp   Inscriptions read from SIJ photos in Dept. of Antiquities of Jordan (to appear
             on OCIANA).

SIT   Harding, (G.L.), 1972. "Safaitic Inscriptions from Tapline in Jordan", *ADAJ*
             17: 5–14.

SIWH   Safar, (F.), "Inscriptions from the Wadi Hauran", *Sumer* 20: 9–27.

SN.A   Inscription from a site the near new road from Biʾr al–Ruṣayʿī, east of Jabal
            Hawran (to appear on OCIANA).

SS   Starcky 1949. "Appendice. Les inscriptions"

Stehle   Stehle 1960. *South Arabic Graffiti from Field Museum*

Stein   Safaitic inscriptions copied by Sir A Stein & published in RVP

TaNOE   Talafha, (Z.), 2009. "New Safaitic Inscriptions from Qac al–Fahdeh", *Abhath
            al–Yarmouk* 25(4): 777–798.

TANS   Talafha, (Z.), 2006. "Safaitic Inscriptions from al–Fahdah Pan in the Jordanian
            Badia (in Arabic)", *Adumatu*, 14 July: 55–68.

TaNSTF   Talafha, (Z.), 2009. "Safaitic Inscriptions from Till al–Fehdawey in the
            Jordanian Badia", *Adumatu* 19: 27–46.

Thns   Al–Theeb, (S.), 1996. "New Safaitic inscriptions from the North of Saudi
            Arabia", *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 7: 32–37.

Thnsm.I   Al–Theeb, (S.), A Study of New Safaitic Inscriptions

Thnsm.II   Al–Theeb, (S.), New Safaitic Inscriptions from the Museum of the
            Archaeology and Museology Department, King Saud University, (Group 2)

Thnsm.III   Al–Theeb, (S.), Safaitic Inscriptions from the Museum of the Department of
            Archaeology and Museology, King Saud University – Group 3

Thnsms   Al–Theeb, (S.), 1991. "New Safaitic Inscriptions from the northern part of the
            Kingdom of Saudi Arabia", *Ages* VI(1): 35–41.

Hnsus   Al–Theeb, (S.), New Safaitic Inscriptions from Um Saḥab Site, Saudi
            Arabia,Journal of King Saud, M10, Arts

ThSaf   Al–Theeb, (S.), 2003. Safaitic Inscriptions from the north of the Kingdom of
            Saudi Arabia, 2003

Thsmj Al–Theeb, (S.), New Safaitic Inscriptions from the Museum of Science in Al Jawf Dar, 130-1559

TIJ Harding, (G.L.), and Littmann, (E.), 1952. *Some Thamudic Inscriptions from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, Leiden: Brill.

VEA.S Voigt, (R.M.), "Einige Altnordaraische Inschriften," ZDPV, vol. 97, pp. 178–187.

Vogüé404 Milik 1978/1980

W W [Safaitic Inscriptions collected by Wetzstein but published in GT (Grimme 1929) and republished in C]

Wadd Safaitic inscriptions copied by Waddington & published in C

WAMS Safaitic Inscriptions in WAM (Winnett 1971), p. 45

Wasta Ryckmans, (G.), 1947–1948. "Appendix. Graffito safaitique(?)" (p. 20) in A. Beaulieu and R. Mouterde, "La grotte d'Astarté à Wasta" *MUSJ* 27, 1947-48, p. 3-20.

WH Winnett, (F.V.) & Harding, (G.L.), 1978. *Inscriptions from Fifty Safaitic Cairns*, Toronto.

WMS Inscriptions from W. Mughr as–Salh, photographed by Paul Hortop in 1998 (to appear on OCIANA).

WSFG Worrell, (W.H.), 1941. "Four Safaitic Graffiti", *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 58(2): 217–218.

ZEGA Zeinadden, (H.), 2000. "Safaitische Inschriften aus dem Ǧabal al–ʿArab'", *Damaszener Mitteilungen,* Band 12, pp. 265–289.

ZeWa Zeinaddin, (H.), 2002. "Al–ʿalāqāt al–ṣafāʾiyyah al–nabaṭiyyah", unpublished paper from Petra conference 2002 (to appear on OCIANA).

ZF   Inscriptions found by Paul Hortop in area of Zelaf Fort (to appear on
              OCIANA).

ZN   Inscriptions from Zimlet Nāṣir found by the SESP (to appear on OCIANA).

ZSI   Zayadine, (F.), 1980. "A Safaitic Inscription in the Amman Archaeological
              Museum", *ADAJ* XXIV: 107–109.

ZTNIJ   Zayadine, (F.), 1999. "Two North–Arabian Inscriptions from Jordan", *ADAJ*
              XLIII: 311–319.

APPENDIX E: IMAGES

IMAGE 1: Temple of *bʿlsʾlmn* at Palmyra

(Photo courtesy of Bob Wilson)

IMAGE 2: Temple of Allat at the base of Jebel Ramm

From: http://www.art-and-archaeology.com/jordan/wrum/wr01.html accessed 08/02/2016