A NOMINAL AND GRAPHICAL INSCRIPTION

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The Inscription: History and Material

The inscription is made from basalt with a length of 45 cm, a width of 30 cm, and a height of 10 cm. It is clearly meant to include prominent parts and to have a very special frame including artistic designs. The inscription is in a very fine state by a percentage of 98%. There is a prominent writing up in the inscription, and so if we place the inscription with these writings at the top of it, we obtain a profile for a human face in his sixties who seems to be powerful. This man is apparently opening his mouth and crying, as we can notice some tears getting out of his eye.

The location of the inscription was found in the south of Syria, and now the inscription is kept in the U. A. E.

The age of the inscription according to studies and reports made by The Radiocarbon Dating Laboratory, the inscription's radiocarbon age is about twenty thousand years old. The results of dating of the different samples of the inscription have been slightly different varying from 19857+200 years (before present time) to 24294+170 years (before present time). For further information about the samples read the analysis report in (Al-Jowhari 2007. PP. 128-157).

The truth is that we found these results very strange and contrary to the age of Thamudic writing which is reverted to 800 years B.C. Although Borzati thinks that Thamudic writings refer to 2500 B.C (Al-Ghul, 2005, pp.63-64), but it is still very faraway from the scientific report in which we do not doubt.

Components in the inscription: The inscription has two main components:

1- The nominal aspect:

In which two images; the first one is a profile for a severe and tough man with no ugliness features. The second image includes half a face for a very tough and ugly one-eyed man. Through these two images, we notice other images like the scorpion, the pig’s facade, the monkey’s facade, the facade of a horse, the head of a cow, and a portrait of an ugly face.
The person in situation (A)

The person in situation (B)

2. The graphical aspect:

These writings can be said to be technical subjugation because it is noticed that the formation of the letters was a written expression of a voice.

It is known that some symbols(?) were expressed by more than one letter. For example the symbol (?) used to express both (?) and (?) in different Thamudic inscriptions. But in this inscription the writer expressed the two uses.

Another example is the symbol (?) which expresses (?) and (?) in this inscription. There are also many other symbols in this inscription.

From the formal molding in this inscription, we can take two words written in old Canaanite script,
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which had been adopted by the Jews in the first days of their appearance beside the Phoenicians and before they started using the square Aramaic script (the square Hebrew script that is used now). Before the transliteration if the formation of the letters in the inscription and their significances, I have to move to a very important observation in reading the inscription that is the one we noticed in the technical formation, as we could form the image wherever we looked from. For example, if we place the inscription vertically we would see a kind of image but if we looked horizontally we would see a completely different one.

This was also applied to the writings, as the word could be read both from right and left but with different meanings according to the Thamudic writings in which it was not important or structural to read from a specific side. Therefore, the writer can start from left to right or the other way round. He can also write spirally from any side or from up to down and visa versa.

We can explain why the writer did not use the northern Arabic script, by which the Holy Qur'an was written and is still used, that is because this script was not known at that time.

We can notice that the writer avoided the square Hebrew script. The reason might be that the inscriptor himself wanted to hide the inscription from the Jews because he feared of them. Thus, he wanted to say something that was not easy to tell.

We will classify the writings in the inscription according to the script to which it belongs into three groups:

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<th>1-</th>
<th>Thamudic words:</th>
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Thamudic writing is an Arabic one, which had been used by north regions individuals long time before northern Arabic script was known. Most studiers say that Thamudic handwriting was existed in the seventh or eighth century before the birth of the Christ. The scholar Winnett classified the Thamudic inscriptions he found into five groups depending on the date.
GROUP (A) which comes before the fifth century B.C. GROUP (B) belongs to the period from third to first century before the birth of the Christ. GROUP (C) belonging to the first or second century A.D. GROUP (D) belongs to the period between the first and third century after the birth of the Christ. This group has an inscription, which belongs to 267 A.D. GROUP (E) which belongs to the fourth and fifth century A.D. (Winnett, PP. 50-54). Kerstin Eksell saw that this classification is not accurate because it does not apply to Thamudic inscriptions period of time. Therefore, she went to say that the Thamudic inscriptions originate to the eighth century B.C. (Eksell, 2002). Actually, Thamudic writings just like most Semitic languages do not use symbols of vowels whether they were short or long. For example, they write (????) like (????) without any differences. This is the same way that the Holy Qur’ was written and still. Strangely enough, the interpenetration between Thamudic words in the inscription seems to be intended, because the area between any letter and the other forms a letter for another word included. These are read from right to left in the words mentioned before. The First Thamudic phrase: Its transletteration is (t.bn.lk<), (tbn.lk<), (t.bn.lh<), (tbn.lh<), (t.bn.ls<), (tbn.ls<), (t.bn.lhg), or (tbn.lhg). all these readings have explanations connected to the significances they have. here are the details: The reading that suits the whole vision and it means—depending on my analysis: a virile (potent) mean (villainous) (Farahidi, Alhuruf, P. 20), this was mentioned in one line of poetry for zuhayr Ibn >ab? Sulm?: The inscriptor might have wanted to satirize the man in situation (A) as a potent mean person, or he might have wanted to say that the man is tough and violent in which there is no satirization. It worth mentioning that the inscription was empty of the glottal hard catch (hamzah) which is familiar in Thamudic inscriptions. As examples we mention the word (brt) which means innocent and the word (hd) that means quietness, which was written without glottaling. (Harding & Littmann, no.293, Jaussen & Savignac, no.374).
This is a predicate for an implied subject to which the image indicates that is ??? ??? ??? In Arabic (tabn ?????) and (tabaniyat : ???????? ) means intelligence and acumen. (?) ???? : ???? ???? a smart person. ???? means to bury fire, and this meaning is accurate and probably connected to a verse in the holy Qur'an as said as the prophet Moses Said : Taha/10 ??? ????? ????? ????? ????? ????. ( my people, I have found flaming fire so stay here as I could bring you some of it or I might find someone by the fire to show us the way to Egypt) this word indicates that the man in the picture is the person who puts out fire. The meaning might more appropriate be a deceiver. (?)(means wickedness and foolishness. (Ibn-Manzur, 8/383).

( ???) was explained before ( ??? ) or ( ???) means the person who speaks fluently, or a person who is easygoing in buying and selling. It also has the meaning of a lazy person. (Ibn-Manzur 8/389).

We also mentioned that ( ??? ) is the smart person who knows everything. Thus we find compliments and praise to the man in situation (A), so he is a fluent and smart man. (?)(means a stung man).

It is probable that it is pronounced as (?????) which means the intelligent man in situation A was stung which indicates to the tricks and deceptions this clever man faced, or the pests and serpents that hurt him.
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Means a man who is persistent on copulation just like his father. (Ibn-Manzur, 2/419). It is important here to mention that the writer or the inscriptor intended to obtain a variety of readings and significances, as the word could be read as complimentary or defamatory. The way in which we can specify how to read the word is the image. As an explanation, the praise is a description for the person in situation (A) while the defamation describes the person in situation (B). (Ibn-Manzur, 2/419).

The second Thamudic Phrase

This word can be read from situation B under the formation in front of the man with one eye and its translitterative writing is (ghl. nsb), (ghl. nbt), (ghl. nbh), (hl. nbt), or (sl. nbt). There are also other possible readings, but we will only mention the significance of the first readings.

1. (ghl. nsb): (????? ) means family relationship (kinship) especially with fathers and sons or with homeland. The word (ghl) means ignorance, although this word could be read in different ways it will stay having the same meaning. It might mean a person with unknown descent (Ibn-Manzur, 1/889, Ibn-Fares, Mugmalu’ugha, 4/399-400) as in the word (???? ) which represents a passive participle in the spelling of (???? ) in the Holy Qur’an (???? ?? ???? ???? ) (Al-Tariq 6). This word might also represent an active participle in the meaning of a person who ignores his descent. This word could (???? ) in the meaning of a passive participle is common, and I have brought forward many of them in my book (?????? ?? ??? ????? ????? ??????? : studies in philology and Arabic phonology, Ababnih Y, pp.75-81).

2. (ghl. nbt): The Nabateens are those people who lived in wide areas at the desert of Syria (badiyatu-��?m) and Iraq. The Nabateens had become weighty in the centuries through which this inscription was made. These folk had remained until the Romans attacked them and
destroyed Petra in the second century after the birth of the Christ.

Tending to mean the ignorant who hurts others with his voice as he is more like a barking dog with no benefit. It might be read as (???? ???? ) It could have the meaning of the unknown voice just like the dog’s voice which usually mixes with many other voices.

Can be read in one way (<span>???? ?????</span>) which means the king or monarch of the Nabateens, which means that this person with one eye in position (B) is the king of the Nabateens.

Means the person who extracts honey.

The discovery of the position of this word needed much experience in analyzing old inscriptions. It needed more attention than any other word as the inscriptor has been so clever in hiding this word by writing the two words mentioned before which could be read from right to left and visa versa. He also took good use of the symbols and so the distances produced by sculpting had formed another different word. Thus, we can see that the sunken lines existed between the prominent lines were not produced by sculpting. On the contrary, they were meant to be there.

It worth mentioning that the style of the Thamudic letters creates an opportunity to a variety of readings. The readings of this word are: (<span>???? ?????</span>) The readings of this word are: (<span>???? ?????</span>) which lies east of (???? ???? ???? ) in the North of Yemen. (Ibnul ḤAtir, 2/473, Rabin, p. 195)
It means confrontation or meeting face to face. It also means fighting in War. This word base also indicates to cowardice (Ibnul-Atir, 2/678). So it is coward if for situation (B) and the warrior if connected to situation (A).

It is proofed by the expiration outer of his mouth and those tears and pain signs appearing on his face.

This person is in situation (B).

It is the same word that we found in fore readings, but the differences are the starting direction and the explanation of the way in which the Thamudic letters were drawn. There are four possible readings:

Read as (????, (???) or (????) This word is considered to be complimentary, which indicates that it is meant to be a description of the person in situation (A)

It means liveliness and quickness at work. In Arabic (?????????) and (????????) means quickness in everything (Ibnul Atir, 2/419). This description applies to the person in situation (B) because the Arab Sources state that the Antichrist (?????) was known to be very fast, and this hints at the cooperation between him and both monkey and pig in the inscription. These expectations about the meaning of this word and its significance are probably very near to the truth because the Antichrist is known to be very fast (????) (Ibn katheer, Annihayah fil fitan walmalahim 1/121).
This word has two meanings: the first one is the malodorous black mud in the bottom of a well (????? ?????? ????? ???? ?? ????? ?????? ???????) (Ibn Manzur,1/74-75) the second meaning is rage and anger. If this word had the first meaning then it goes to describe situation (B) because the writer wanted to express that man negatively from the first place. However if the word had the other meaning then it applies to the person in situation (A).

4- (hmk): In Arabic it means any small thing, or it can have the meaning of origin ( ??<span>?</span>??) (Ibn Manzur,1/501). If this word was meant to be a description of the man in situation (B), which is a more probable expression, then it means that this evil man is nothing compared to the person in situation (A) because he represents the origin of wickedness and evil as the scorpion representing all harm that controls his mind, the monkey lies in his mind beside his right ear, and the pig appears on his ugly face.

The fifth Thamudic phrase:
Which is written as
In this word we notice a line that is possibly forming a part of the first letter of the word just mentioned. The possible readings are (Ibn Manzur 2/632-633).
2- (tfh): It means to be filled. It is said for the mind in the meaning of advancing. A drunk person is called in Arabic (???) (Ibn Manzur 2/627). The most probable meaning is the elevation in mind. Thus it is a description for the person in situation (A).

The sixth Thamudic phrase:
This is the same last word upside down and inverted by side.
It has these readings:

1- An old Arabic verb which means a man getting hit and saying that he did not feel pain (Ibn-Manzur, 7/312). This means that the man in situation (B) -with all the dirtiness and evil he has- does not own anything to hurt the others with. (the others are presented by the person in situation (A)).

2- Means the speed of flowing down and it is a description for food but it is used to express the speed of humans (Ibn-Manzur, 7/340). Although of the detailed study of these words and their meanings, this is not the final study for this strange inscription which is rich with denotations and significances.

This Syriac writing in this inscription represents the oldest Syriac formation at all, and it was written in (Serto) or (Nastourian) script, not (Strangolian) Syriac script. This Syric word is read from right to left with both images in situations (A) and (B).

The Syriac words are only two; one read in situation (A) (from right to left), the other is obtained by taking the inscription inverted to get the word read in situation (B) from right to left with a completely different significance. Here are the details:

The word could read as or as. In syriac writing there is no difference between the (daleth) has a dot under.
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The Syriac script in the inscription period did not use dots; that is to say, the dot was not used as a means of distinguishing for (daleath) or as late Syriac writings which are still known till now.

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The issue of mixing image and writing in old Thamudic inscriptions. We can say that this inscription is unique because it is with no doubt a technical and a proficiently done inscription carrying a religious point of view, but this does not mean jumbling words with drawings because this blending is existed even in (shepherd scrabbles:?????? ??????) as in the inscriptions that will be mentioned after a while. The obviously strange thing in this inscription is the great techniques which enabled the writer to express many notions and meanings by mixing writing and drawing with the same lines. The inscriptor utilized the lines he had drawn with to express words. On the other hand, he used writings to be parts of the features in the drawing. For example, the nose we saw could be a nose in situation (A) and an ear in situation (B). It could also be a part of the word.

So are the mouth and the ear. These are two Thamudic inscriptive examples of the humbleness of expression in which the writer does not use for significance. (Eksell, P.87).

However, we still say that these unpretentious images cannot be measured for this inscription which undoubtedly has the significance about the antichrist. The writings and images in this inscription indicate to the antichrist with these religious visions about his
associations like harm and evil presented in the inscription by the images of the monkey, the scorpion, and the pig, and perhaps the devil who mentally leads all this wickedness.

Now, it is appropriate to say that all of this report was only a whole vision, not a detailed study.

References

- Ibn Katheer, Annihaya fil-fitan walmalahim, (?), Almaktabuthaqfi, Cairo.
- Harding & Littmann, Some Thamudic Inscriptions, (TIJ).