

Enno Littmann, in a publication from 1940, mentions three inscriptions in which Safaitic רוח *rwḥ* is used about the dead, after a vocative, 'O God!'. The meaning is obviously: 'O God, give [them] rest'. A version of *Dona eis requiem*?

Luxenberg has suggested that Quranic *zawwaḡnāhum* (Q 44:54 and Q 52:20) might be a misreading for *rawwaḡnāhum*. These three Safaitic inscriptions may convince someone who has doubts about this suggestion that the reading *rawwaḡnāhum* (رَوَّحْنَهُمْ > رَوَّحَهُمْ > زَوَّجْنَهُمْ) at least deserves serious consideration.

Also *an-nufūsu zuwwiḡat* in Q 81:7 looks improbable. Here too, a form of 'to rest' seems to be much more plausible: *ruwwiḡat* (رُؤِّحَتْ > رُوحَتْ > رُؤِّجَتْ)?

William G. Oxtoby (1968) mentions Safaitic ארח *'rḥ* which, according to him, means 'to give rest', a *hiph'el/aph'el* or form IV, Standard Arabic أراح. The context of the inscription in which *'rḥ* occurs, Oxtoby 79, is, however, different from that of the three Littmann inscriptions. Oxtoby 79 is a short inscription of ten words. It does not refer to the dead. It must refer to a herd since *r'y*, 'to pasture', cf. Hebrew רעה, is used.

Oxtoby also refers to C 4956 where Allāt is asked to grant rest to the dead. Here too we meet with an imperative, of form IV of *rwḥ*, not a form II.

C 2718, on the other hand, again may show a form II of *rwḥ*: f-h-b'l-smn רוח, 'O Lord of the Heavens, give rest'.

- ☛ Enno Littmann, 'Thamud und Safa', in: *Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*, Band 25, Nr. 1, 1940. Kraus reprint, Nendeln (Liechtenstein) 1966. [See index at p. 161 sub רוח, *rwḥ*].
- ☛ W.G. Oxtoby, *Some Inscriptions of the Safaitic Bedouin*, New Haven 1968, p. 52-53.
- ☛ C: *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum: Pars Quinta Inscriptiones Saracenicis Continentis*, Paris 1950, xvi + 656 pp. Inscription 4956: p. 607. C 2718: p. 355.

It is difficult to put a precise date to Safaitic inscriptions. They are written in a form of early Arabic. They are assumed to date back to the third/fourth century AD.

June 16, 2008