

Reçu le : 14 - 03 - 2025	Accepté le : 15 – 05 - 2025	Publié le : 30 – 06 - 2025
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A New theory about the history of Thamudic Arabic script: A study in light of the Thamudic inscriptions accompanied by extinct animals in KSA

Une nouvelle théorie sur l'histoire de l'écriture arabe Thamoudique : une étude à la lumière des inscriptions thamoudiques accompagnées d'animaux disparus en Arabie Saoudite

Eid Alyahya 

Member of the Royal Commission for Alula,
RCU, KSA

e.alyahya@rcu.gov.sa

Qusay Alturkey 

Al Qassim University, KSA

qus.gaalturki@uoh.edu.sa

Abstract

This study questions until recently held assumptions that Nabataean script was a direct ancestor of Arabic script. Instead, this work argues that the earliest recognizable form of Arabic script is represented by the Thamudic script. The study focuses on a lacuna in academic literature in understanding the development of Arabic script and is often marked by a bias towards Eurocentrism when addressing Nabataean influence. By reassessing chronology and cultural context for Thamudic inscriptions, this work bases an alternative hypothesis rooted in a localized Arabian model. This study comesn therefore, to examine a large dataset of Thamudic inscriptions and associated petroglyphs of extinct fauna such a aurochs and wild deer based on data collected through archaeological, geomorphology, and zoology sources. The main stress is put on important archaeological sites in Saudi Arabia, in particular Al Hail, Al-Qaraa, and Al-Ula. These sites are used as a key case study to evaluate the simultaneous occurrence of Thamudic script and environmental conditions during the Holocene Humid Phase (8000–4000 BCE), a time when climatic conditions were favorable to have augmented vegetation, ample water resources, and a wider variety of fauna across the Arabian Peninsula.

In performing a comparative examination of both paleoclimatic and epigraphic evidence, this study explains how the Thamudic script existed simultaneously with long-extinct species thriving in lush landscapes a few centuries before the onset of the Nabataean script. This places the origins of the Arabic script in a cultural setting of the previous Neolithic period, as opposed to the late first millennium BCE. The occurrence of inscriptions declaring ownership and animal illustrations explains how the script was used in economic enterprise and day-to-day affairs of primitive Arabian societies.

The results are in need of an overall reassessment of the geographical and chronological parameters surrounding the history of the development of Arabic script. The information presented supports the view of script in Arabia as an autochthonous phenomenon and not merely a simplified modification of external writing systems. This study thereby contributes to the cultural value of the Arabian Peninsula, especially contemporary-day Saudi Arabia, to the history of writing. Additionally, this paper highlights an urgent need for a decolonized and interdisciplinary approach to Arabian archaeology to reinsert into mainstream discussions of early literacy and civilization the region's oft-neglected writing inscriptions, landscapes, and material culture. By highlighting the Thamudic tradition, this study reinstates Arabia not merely as a peripheral member to script culture but more importantly as a contributing factor to the advancement of Semitic writing systems.

Keywords : Arabian archaeology, extinct animals, rock art, Saudi Arabia, Thamudic script.

Résumé

Cette étude remet en question les hypothèses amplement admises selon lesquelles l'écriture nabatéenne serait l'ancêtre direct de l'écriture arabe. Elle soutient plutôt que la forme la plus ancienne identifiable de l'écriture arabe est représentée par l'écriture thamoudique. L'étude se concentre sur une lacune de la littérature académique concernant la compréhension du développement de l'écriture arabe, souvent marquée par un biais eurocentré dans l'évaluation de l'influence nabatéenne. En réévaluant la chronologie et le contexte culturel des inscriptions thamoudiques, ce travail propose une hypothèse alternative fondée sur un modèle localisé dans la péninsule Arabique.

L'étude examine un vaste ensemble de données comprenant des inscriptions thamoudiques et des pétroglyphes associés représentant des espèces aujourd'hui disparues telles que l'aurochs et le cerf sauvage, à partir de données recueillies via des sources archéologiques, géomorphologiques et zoologiques. L'accent est mis sur d'importants sites archéologiques situés en Arabie Saoudite, notamment Al Hail, Al-Qaraa et Al-Ula. Ces sites sont utilisés comme études de cas clés pour évaluer la concomitance entre l'écriture thamoudique et les conditions environnementales durant la phase humide de l'Holocène (8000–4000 av. J.-C.), une période durant laquelle le climat favorisait une végétation abondante, des ressources hydriques suffisantes et une faune diversifiée à travers la péninsule Arabique.

Par une analyse comparative des données paléoclimatiques et épigraphiques, cette étude montre que l'écriture thamoudique existait en parallèle à des espèces aujourd'hui disparues évoluant dans des paysages luxuriants, quelques siècles avant l'apparition de l'écriture nabatéenne. Cela situe les origines de l'écriture arabe dans un contexte culturel de la période néolithique, plutôt qu'à la fin du premier millénaire avant notre ère. L'apparition d'inscriptions déclarant une propriété ainsi que des représentations animales révèle l'usage de cette écriture dans les activités économiques et les affaires quotidiennes des sociétés arabiques primitives.

Les résultats appellent à une réévaluation générale des paramètres géographiques et chronologiques entourant l'histoire du développement de l'écriture arabe. Les informations présentées soutiennent l'idée d'un phénomène autochtone en Arabie, et non d'une simple adaptation de systèmes d'écriture étrangers. Cette étude contribue ainsi à valoriser le patrimoine culturel de la péninsule Arabique, en particulier de l'Arabie Saoudite contemporaine, dans l'histoire de l'écriture. Elle met également en lumière la nécessité urgente d'une approche décolonisée et interdisciplinaire de l'archéologie arabe, afin de réintégrer dans les discussions principales sur la littérature et la civilisation anciennes les inscriptions, paysages et cultures matérielles trop souvent négligés de la région. En soulignant la tradition thamoudique, cette étude rétablit le rôle de l'Arabie non pas en tant que simple périphérie de la culture scripturaire, mais comme acteur contribuant au développement des systèmes d'écriture sémitiques.

Mots-clés: archéologie de l'Arabie, animaux disparus, art rupestre, Arabie Saoudite, écriture thamoudique.

Al Turkey, Qusay, qus.gaalturki@uoh.edu.sa

Introduction:

Doubt and extreme caution are a natural element for every researcher who seeks to study the Thamudis, one of the most important peoples of the Arabian Peninsula. This is due to the vast disparity in the civilizational and historical views on these early peoples who constitute a significant part of our Arab and Islamic culture. Arab and Islamic historical studies, especially those related to the Holy Quran, extensively reference the Thamudis. The Quran mentions the people of Thamud in no fewer than 26 verses, often in the context of prophetic warnings and divine punishment. Interestingly, the Torah, the Jewish holy book, did not refer to the Thamudis among the Arab tribes and other peoples it mentioned in the peninsula, even though the Thamudis had spread to the northwest of the Arabian Peninsula, the main homeland where the Torah writings extensively mention the peoples of the region. The most recent linguistic studies of the Thamudic script, based on written evidence discovered in Palestine, indicate that the oldest text dates back to 1300 BC (Al-Dheeb, 2022: 118), while the original Torah was revealed to Moses in the thirteenth century BC according to most researchers (Soussa, 1981: 55). The same is true for early classical authors (fifth and fourth centuries BC) from Greece who wrote about the Arabs and mentioned them in their works, such as Herodotus, Theophrastus, and Eratosthenes. Still, they did not mention the Thamudis among the peoples of the Arabian Peninsula.

The origins and chronology of the Thamudic script, which is central for an understanding of Arabic script development, remains in modern scholarship the subject of controversy. Despite its significance for Arabian cultural heritage, the temporal context of the script is obscured in three key issues:

Chronological Disputations: Latest studies have presented disputed time records regarding the emergence of Thamudic script that range from the Late Bronze Age (the 13th century BC) through later periods, leading to disagreements over its first attested inscription.

Eurocentric Biases: Dominant accounts largely attribute the emergence of Arabic script to external influences (e.g., Nabataean or Greco-Roman traditions), thus minimizing the role of indigenous Arabian origins.

The reliance upon fragmented epigraphic documents, which have not otherwise been contextualized within environmental or archaeological contexts, has hindered full reconstructions of the script's cultural significance.

The current work endeavours to solve these lacunae through an examination of the poorly documented prehistoric origins as well as day-to-day uses of the Thamudic script in early Arabian societies in light of their co-existence with now-extinct animals well-suited for the duration of the Holocene Humid Period (8000–4000 BCE). Drawing upon converging evidence from paleoclimatic, zoological, as well as rock art studies, the present work countermands the usual assumption of Arabic script as an extraneous innovation, instead suggesting its emergence as an in situ development out of Neolithic Arabia.

Our study comes to put an end to the controversy surrounding the history of the Thamudis, at least in terms of the script in which they wrote, on which expect to deliver findings that conflict with much of what Western and even Arab researchers have been suggesting for almost a century. This can be through the archaeological physical evidence we present related to geomorphology, human life and zoology in the Arabian Peninsula, especially about the extinct animals whose drawings occupied large areas of rock facades throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The problem of the research revolves around the inability of researchers specializing in ancient Arabic writings, whether Arabs, foreigners, or even Orientalists, to determine a fixed date for the Thamudic script, whose beginning dates are contradictory between one archaeological school and another. The research attempted to answer this problem by analyzing Thamudic writings accompanying the animals that these writings referred to as representing the personal ownership of Thamudic names. They wrote clearly that they owned these animals, which, as it is proven, became extinct in the Arabian Peninsula at a date earlier than the date mentioned by researchers regarding the beginning of the appearance of the Thamudic script.

In the context of the spread of the Thamudic script and its initial invention in the Arabian Peninsula, we believe, from the evidence we have specifically located within the geographical boundaries of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, that the script was prevalent as early as the Holocene Humid Period (HHP) (BC 8,000-4,000). We can speculate that the Thamudic script, which originated locally in the Arabian Peninsula, was carried by the peoples who migrated to the edges of the Arabian Peninsula, with the first migration taking place at the beginning of the arid period in the fourth millennium BC, and the second migration occurring with the worsening drought in the second millennium BC. The second migration was towards the north and northeast of the Arabian Peninsula, bringing Thamudic script there for the first time. This is evidenced by the inscriptions in the Thamudic alphabets found at Lachish, a hill in Palestine, which Suleiman Al-Dheeb has proven to be Thamudic (Al-Dheeb, 2022: 112-115). We expect this to be further confirmed by the future discoveries of older Thamudic scripts in northern Arabia as well as the far south and southwest of the Arabian Peninsula. The small numbers of Thamudis who did not migrate from the centre of the Arabian Peninsula lived under harsh conditions due to the continuous relative desertification and drought up to the present day. The climatic development of the Arabian Peninsula represents an

extensive shift from moist to dry environmental conditions. Evidence suggested through work performed by Engel et al. (2012:131–141) is that the Peninsula went through an episode of desertification as early as the fourth millennium BCE, with the maximum aridity happening in the year 2200 BCE. This is corroborated in later work; Matthew et al. (2022: 193) have labeled this period as the end of the Holocene Humid Phase, whereas Petraglia et al. (2020: 8263–8270) have considered its impact on human settlement. Additionally, Preston and Parker (2013:87–94) framed these climatic shifts within local dynamics. Together, the results of these studies provide an indication that large areas of the Peninsula underwent an acute episode of increased aridity in the period in question.

At last, the main problem this research examines covers a critical gap within literature on the origins of the Arabic script by challenging the prevailing Eurocentric theory which supposes Nabataean cultural influence. On the contrary, we propose that the Thamudic script developed endogenously within Arabia, within a context of paleoclimatic and archaeological factors.

1. The Issue of the Historical Timeline of the Thamudic Script in Modern Studies Emphasizes its Antiquity

It is noteworthy that current studies and research regarding the origins of the Thamudic script remain inconclusive in terms of dating. Upon reviewing the literature on the beginnings of alphabets and recent discoveries related to them and their connection to the Thamudic script, and based on the information available to us, it is evident that despite the existence of models and examples of early alphabetic writing, a phrase commonly circulated persists, stating, "we lack clear and definitive dates" (Haring, 2020: 53-67). Consequently, our understanding of the history of the Thamudic script before the 13th century BC, which is the earliest widely recognized and known date among researchers, has been challenged by recent findings. These findings include the discovery of modern Thamudic letters that confirm our assertion that the commonly circulated historical date is imprecise and undecided regarding the commencement of writing in the Thamudic script.

Research now suggests the presence of potential early independent alphabetic writing, unconnected or uninfluenced by other scripts, likely dating back to the Late Bronze Age (c. 1600/1550-1200 BC) and the Iron Age (c. 1200-586 BC). Earlier indications suggested that early alphabetic writing developed in collaboration with miners (the Canaanites) in Sinai, or at least adopted by them, during the Middle Kingdom era in the 18th century BC. Today, there is a growing tendency among specialists to favour the view that early alphabetic writing evolved independently of Egyptian dominance (Höflmayer et al., 2021:705–719).

A recent discovery at the hill Lachish southwest of Jerusalem—a pottery shard bearing black ink inscriptions on a yellowish-white background (refer to figure 01)—exhibits two words in a circular script, a style typical of Thamudic writing (Sulaiman Dhib, 2022: 120, 117). Specialist Sulaiman Dhib conducted a meticulous critique of a recent study on the inscription comprising two significant words (Höflmayer, et al., 2021: 705 - 719), confirming that the second word "štl'n" is a Thamudic word meaning "cultivated plants" as a singular masculine noun (Al-Dhib, 2022: 118). This discovery prompts one to consider that the term "štl'n" likely serves as the root of the Arabic word (shatla (meaning "seedling" according to the comprehensive Arabic dictionary. Thus, these letters provide evidence of authentic Thamudic characters in the Arabic language. This study has provided remarkable insights into the era (pre-13th century BC) and the geographical distribution of the Thamudic script, correcting misconceptions that have prevailed for decades. (see figure.1 p. 4 in this article).

Future discoveries and current studies may indeed establish that the Thamudic script dates back to a much earlier period, a proposition we endeavour to substantiate in this study.



FIGURE.1 Pottery shard inscribed with Thamudic letters discovered at Tel Lachish (Image reproduced from Höflmayer et al. 2021, fig. 7: 716.).

2. Depictions of Extinct Animals Accompanied by Ancient Arabian Writings - A Field Study

Comparative studies between inscriptions and rock art are crucial in archaeology, epigraphy, and rock art studies. However, understanding the nature of these comparative studies and their interplay is essential for achieving better results, especially when considering similar and differing environmental and geological contexts. Our study provides the first detailed description of information gathered through field observations of rock art depicting extinct animals associated with the earliest Arabian script, Thamudic, in the Arabian Peninsula. The results of this research aim to rewrite the history of rock inscriptions in Arabia and the history of scripts worldwide. This will offer a new perspective on the history and archaeology of Arabia over thousands of years, marked by changing climatic conditions over the past 100,000 years, from a wet and verdant climate to the onset of aridity and desertification that started around the fifth millennium BC.

Our study follows numerous repeated modern studies over the past decade, which have indicated important information about human life in Arabia during the Stone Age. The Arabian Peninsula played a significant role in the spread of hominins to archaeological sites in the Middle Stone Age, extending from the Nefud Desert in northern Saudi Arabia inward. These human waves followed ancient lake and river networks in the heart of Arabia, with geomorphological and anthropological evidence marking the spatial and temporal boundaries between archaic humans and *Homo sapiens* (Groucutt, 2014: 1-22). Later periods during the Neolithic and pre-pottery periods across northern Saudi Arabia and its interiors have been verified, showing clear evidence of economic stability and well-being in favourable climatic and environmental conditions that fostered artistic creativity and skill learning (Alasmari, 2023: 26-34).

Analyses of lake remnants in various sites, including Jubbah in the northern region and other areas, have shown they were suitable for human settlement and stability around the fifth millennium BC. The population density is evident in numerous sites such as Hail, North Nefud, and Wadi Sirhan, most of which displayed representative inscriptions similar to Neolithic art in northern Arabia, Jordan, and Palestine. This indicates widespread human interaction and movement during the Neolithic, suggesting that living conditions were suitable for both artistic and craft creativity. Examples of excavated sites from the Neolithic in Saudi Arabia include Wadi Sharma in Tabuk Province, Jebel al-Qitar 101 in Jubbah, north of Riyadh, and Jebel al-Ayina north of Tabuk. The latter is significant for showcasing cultural development during the Neolithic, dating back to the 8th and 7th millennia BC, confirmed by carbon-14 dating of animal remains, including goats, sheep, and other bones, which are difficult to classify as domesticated or wild. The study suggests they closely resemble their wild ancestors (Alasmari, 2023: 26-34).



FIGURE 02 Luqat Lake mural in the Shamli area, and we highlighted from the multiple scene the drawing of the boat, (Rock drawing of an extinct deer (notable for its prominent rump) with its Thamudic ownership inscription beside it) with a modification from the camera lens of the researchers. © Taken by Eid Alyahya.

Among the aspects that influenced human life since the 10th millennium BC is the ability to create rock art and the accompanying inscriptions. Therefore, we conducted exploratory field trips across various regions of Saudi Arabia, documenting and recording thousands of rock art scenes of animals, using both engraving and carving techniques. The degree of weathering was visible on each rock art piece, frequently showing distinct levels of weathering on the same rock face for animals from different periods, making it easy to distinguish their respective eras.

Our focus will then shift to the inscriptions accompanying these animals, written in the ancient Arabian (Thamudic) script, under the supervision and management of anthropologist Eid Al Yahya, an expert in the wildlife and desert environments of Saudi Arabia. This study will rely on the evidence and visual scenes presented in the famous documentary series "In the Footsteps of the Arabs: Journey Six:1-29" (Al Arabiya 2019)

We will analyze each drawing of an extinct animal, explaining its type, name, biological nature, and ability to live in suitable conditions. Additionally, we will focus on the nature and degree of weathering of the animal rock art, comparing it to the same degree of weathering of the Thamudic script. Often, these inscriptions would have a proprietary nature, indicating ownership of the depicted animal.

An essential point regarding rock art in various Saudi regions is the artistic overlap of different periods on the same rock surfaces. This can be understood by focusing on the patina, and then reconstructing the scene to imagine it during its creation, based on the scene's subject. This phenomenon is common, as illustrated by the artistic study of wall paintings from the site of "Shuwaymis", northwest of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the Al-Hail Province in Hail. These scenes depict overlapping periods, with cattle herding over earlier hunting scenes (see figure no.5 in the Appendixes). The patina clearly shows the different periods, with herding scenes carved over older hunting scenes, likely created by earlier inhabitants, whom we can call the original inhabitants (Guagnin et al., 2015: 7, see fig. 6 in the appendixes).



FIGURE 03 A rock panel featuring scenes from two distinct eras: the hunting era of the Paleolithic and the herding era of the Neolithic, depicted through scenes of domesticated animal herding. Note the degree of patina used to distinguish between the two periods, along with the artistic aspects of the scene.

Adapted from: Guagnin et al., 2015, "Hunters and herders: Exploring the Neolithic transition in the rock art of Shuwaymis, Saudi Arabia," *Archaeological Research in Asia*, : 7, fig. 6 in the appendixes).

In light of the characteristics of the rock art and their surfaces, depicting lions, leopards, wolves, hyenas, ibexes, gazelles, and zebras—most of which are now extinct—along with the accompanying inscriptions, we have identified a collection of Thamudic writings accompanying extinct animals, each described with specific features, This is what we will present in the research appendix, and now let us clarify information about one of the animals that lived in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as models in which we prove the existence of animals that lived and became extinct ten thousand years before ago, and the model is the aurochs animal.

3. The Aurochs' Bull as A Model

Aurochs is a wild bull species that is the ancestor of domesticated cattle today. In Arabic, the animal is known as the aurochs bull, while its original Latin name was *Bos acutifrons* Lydekker; it is now scientifically called *Bos primigenius*. The English word "aurochs" is actually from the German words *Auerochse* or *Urochs*. The subject species, which could grow to a height of as much as two meters, was last seen in the Pleistocene period. Research in zoology shows that the aurochs inhabited areas with dense forests coupled with an assortment of wetlands that included marshy terrain, wooded riverine floodplains, and riparian corridors. The preference of aurochs for these conditions, particularly drier forests, is a strong indication that they could not survive in desertified or arid conditions. As mentioned above, desertification on the Arabian Peninsula began in the fifth millennium BCE and attained its culmination at about the close of the third millennium BCE (Matthew et al., 2022, p. 193; Engel et al., 2012, pp. 131–141; Petraglia et al., 2020, pp. 8263–8270; Preston & Parker, 2013, pp. 87–94).

Therefore, the presence of Thamudic writing next to the aurochs, and of the writing type known as personal ownership, is evidence of the antiquity of the Thamudic pen. It should be noted that the field surveys and discoveries of rock drawings throughout the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which were carried out by Eid Al-Yahya, resulted in the presence of drawings of the aurochs bull in more than one area in the Hail region, the Al-Masma mountains, and in the town of Al-Qaraa. In the Qassim region, where in front of an ancient dry lake there is a mural of an aurochs with semi-desert animals such as the oryx and ibex (see figure no.6 in the Appendixes): For more information about the mural, see the video, Al Yahia, 12 June 2023. (Aid El Yahyi ,2023).



FIGURE 04 A rock drawing showing the aurochs with semi-desert animals, from the town of “Al-Qaraa” in Qassim, © Taken by the researchers.

The Greek scholars described the aurochs as a very aggressive animal, like the African buffalo today, and killing one of them was considered an act of extreme courage for a person in ancient civilizations. Therefore, we find that the Thamudic man, whose name is “Amkhal,” boasted that he was able to obtain this huge bull and attribute it to himself, after he drew an image of the aurochs on the rock (see figure 03 on page 6 in this paper).

APPENDIX

Below we present an appendix of five models from different regions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia representing extinct animals referred to in Thamudic inscriptions "petroglyphs" of the type of personal ownership and ownership inscriptions.

1. Two Aurochs' Bull of a large size

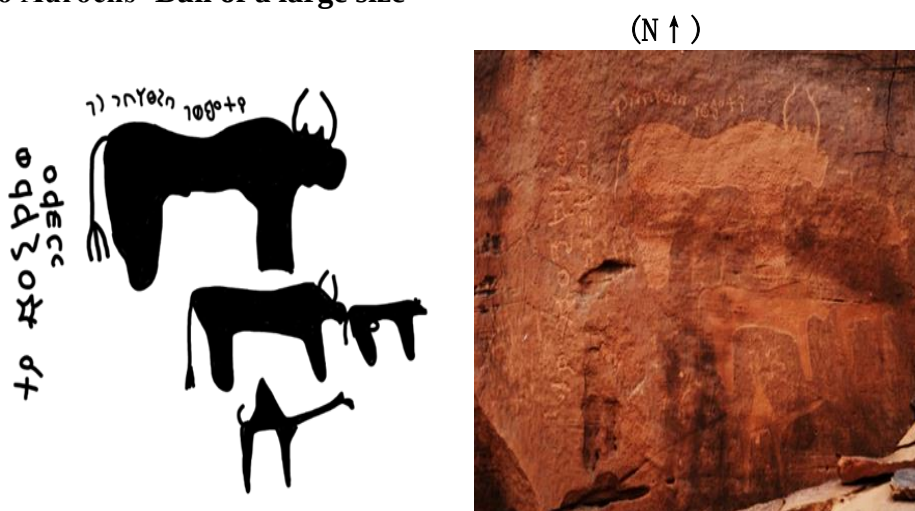


Fig. 5. Two buffaloes of large size

Table 1. Rock Inscriptions and Petroglyphs at Gully of Jethaa, Shuwaims Center, Ha'il Region

Inscription and reading	Location and description
The first inscription: (name) Ya-T. A Th. W. L B .N Wa. Ha.B A. Re. L (ي ت ع ث ول بن وهب أ ر ل) Yata Thol son's Wahab Arel The second inscription: (name) W.D. D. F A. Sh. Ya. T B. A. D K- R -B. و د د ف ع ش ي ت. ب ع د ك ر ب (ح ر ب). Ashia's greetings after the war. My affection for Ashia, Wadf Hobab. Coordinate:	Gully of (Jethaa), in Shuwaims Center in Al-Ha't governorate, Ha'il region. A rock drawing and royal inscriptions, on a smooth rock facade, almost in the average part of the mountain, near it, there is a vase of water. Next to this inscription, there are many drawings of camels, cows, and buffaloes. In addition to human drawings, two buffaloes of a large size, and a cow of a smaller size, all of which, look towards the right of the picture. The drawing was executed in a rather elaborate style. At the bottom of it, you notice a drawing of a fat female camel raising its tail to indicate that it is pregnant. 26.190560E, 39.834903N

This table presents a detailed account of rock inscriptions and accompanying petroglyphs located in the Gully of Jethaa, within the Shuwaims Center of Al-Ha't governorate, Ha'il region. The site features a smooth rock facade situated mid-mountain, near a water container. Surrounding the inscriptions are elaborate carvings depicting camels, cows, buffaloes, and human figures—all facing right. Notably, the image of a large pregnant female camel is featured at the bottom. Two inscriptions are recorded: the first names "Yata Thol, son of Wahab Arel," while the second reads as a greeting from "Ashia" after the war, expressing affection for Ashia and referencing "Wadf Hobab." The exact location is recorded at coordinates 26.190560E, 39.834903N.

The Deer with its Prominent Butt



Fig. 6. The Deer with its Prominent Butt

Table 2. Thamudic Inscription and Extinct Deer Petroglyph at 27.147673E, 38.928792N

Inscription and reading	Location and description
H. A. L. L. M. N. S. E هـ ا ل ل م ن س ي (This) deer belongs to Mensi	A rock drawing on a large rock facade containing many drawings of camels, horses, and Thamudic inscriptions. The inscription rises from the ground level by about 4 m The most important thing in the drawing is the deer with its prominent butt, which distinguishes this species of deer from other species. This deer no longer exists. Now, due to its extinction from the Arabian Peninsula is probably present in only a few reserves. In front of the drawing of the stag, we notice a symbolic inscription in which the owner documents his ownership of the drawing. 27.147673E, 38.928792N
Coordinate Inscription and reading	Location and description
H. A. L. L. M. N. S. E هـ ا ل ل م ن س ي (This) deer belongs to Mensi	A rock drawing on a large rock facade containing many drawings of camels, horses, and Thamudic inscriptions. The inscription rises from the ground level by about 4 m The most important thing in the drawing is the deer with its prominent butt, which distinguishes this species of deer from other species. This deer no longer exists. Now, due to its extinction from the Arabian Peninsula is probably present in only a few reserves. In front of the drawing of the stag, we notice a symbolic inscription in which the owner documents his ownership of the drawing. 27.147673E, 38.928792N
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Coordinate	27.147673E, 38.928792N

The table is a record of a rock inscription site on a large rock face approximately 4 meters off the ground. There are various images of camels, horses, and Thamudic inscriptions in the panel. Prominent in the illustration is a rare deer with a bulky posterior, a feature that makes it a now-extinct species which used to be on the Arabian Peninsula. The deer likely only exists in some protected reserves nowadays. Before the picture of the deer, a symbolic Thamudic script claims ownership of the picture and says:

"H. A. L L. M. N. S. E" (هـ ا ل ل م ن س ع) — "This deer is Mensi's."

The precise coordinates of this place are 27.147673E, 38.928792N.

The Aurochs' Bull "Al- Arkhas



Fig. 7. The Aurochs' Bull "Al- Arkhas
Table 3. Property Inscription and Aurochs' Bull Petroglyph at N26.8179508, E38.3673782

This table records a rock inscription on a conspicuous rock face at the base of a mountain in the Al-'Ula governorate, which is located well above the ground level. The petroglyph is the head of the

Inscription and reading	Location and description
The inscription can be read on both sides Name of person (AMKHAL) or to the mother of her son's name is (KhL) L A. M. KH. L H Th. W. R ل أم خ ل هـ ث و ر This aurochs'bull "property" belongs to AMKHAL (name) or the mother of KhaL L A M KH L H Th W R	On a rocky facade at the foot of the mountain in Alula governorate, on a prominent part of the mountain in a place high above the ground level, an inscription in front of a bull's head, known as the aurochs' bull "Al- Arkhas", is one of the property possession inscriptions, where the name of its owner is engraved to indicate his ownership.
Coordinate	N26.8179508, E38.3673782

now-extinct species of bull, the aurochs, also known locally as Al-Arkhas. A property inscription is written in front of the bull's head to claim ownership. The inscription reads in two different ways, one crediting the drawing to one AMKHAL or to the mother of KhaL.

The inscription says:

L A. M. KH. L H Th. W. R

L A M K H L H Th W R This bull "property" of the aurochs is of AMKHAL (name) or mother of KhaL.

Coordinates: N26.8179508, E38.3673782

The Thamudic Inscriptions of Two Wild Cows, Mention a Number of Animals:

(N ↑)



Fig. 8. The Thamudic Inscriptions of Two Wild Cows, Mention a Number of Animals

Table 4. Thamudic Inscriptions and Animal Petroglyphs from Najran Region

Inscription and reading	Location and description
Five inscriptions: Inscription.1: DH. A. B. M ذ أ ب م Wolf Inscription.2: A. B. H. R أ ب ح ر Set sail Inscription 3: K. L. B. ك ل ب Dog Inscription.4: L M. H. KH (L M H T) T. W. L. 'A KH. L. N. M ل م ه خ (ل م ه ت) ت و ل ع خ ل ن م By Mhkh (Mahat) very attached (in love) (on) khlnm (name) Inscription.5: L B. A. N ل ب أ ن By Ba'n (name)	Rock painting from the Najran region in the south of Saudi Arabia located on a medium-sized rocky plateau of sedimentary sand rocks of drawings of large-sized cows with small horns, one of these cows is decorated with painting. The Thamudic inscriptions of two wild cows, mention a number of animals.

Table 4 records five Thamudic inscriptions inscribed on a reasonably sized rocky plateau of sedimentary sandstone rock in the Najran region of south Saudi Arabia. The rock face also contains depictions of large wild cattle with small horns, one of which is very decorated. All of the inscriptions mention various animals and personal names and thus reflect the symbolic and ownership-based expressions that were prevalent in ancient Arabian culture.

A Thamudic Man Records his Name While Hunting an Ibex (Hunting Stage)

N ↑)



Fig. 9. A Thamudic Man Records his Name While Hunting an Ibex (Hunting Stage)

Table 5. Thamudic Property Inscription and Hunting Scene from Umm Sinman Mountain (Jebba Area)

Inscription and reading	Location and description
An inscription of property in which known figure is -name of a well the mentioned in the inscriptions of the Jebba area, as follows: L H . J . J ح ح ح ح For Hajaj (name). Coordinate	Umm Sinman Mountain, west Jebba city, on the north-western side and on scattered rocks of the mountain. A drawing of a Thumudic man whose name is repeated as one of the most prominent Thumudic in Jebba. In the drawing, he is holding a bow and arrow with a hunting dog to hunt a large ibex with crooked horns. 28.027165E, 40.910004N

This inscription, found on the north-western side of Umm Sinman Mountain near Jebba city, features a property claim associated with a prominent Thamudic figure, Hajaj. Carved into scattered rocks of the mountain, the scene includes a dynamic petroglyph of a Thamudic man identified by name, shown wielding a bow and arrow with a hunting dog beside him. The man is depicted targeting a large ibex with characteristically curved horns—an illustration of ancient hunting practices and social identity markers.

4. Findings and conclusion

This study provides tangible archaeological and written evidence on an important topic related to the civilization of writing in the world, the ancient Near East in general, and the civilization and history of the Arabian Peninsula in particular. For years now, there has been a debate between historians of the last century and contemporary historians today in many specialized and non-specialized departments. These departments are still arguing on research and compositions on the pages of some newspapers and websites. Perhaps we have come to the forefront with the subject of this study, regarding the first pen in history. Our study has concluded that the "ancient Arabic pen", more precisely, is the Thumudic pen. After years of discovery, inspection, field study, and repeated visits to thousands of inscriptions and rock drawings throughout the kingdom of Saudi Arabia and for more than ten years, we have come up with this result that includes many cultural and archaeological facts, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Of prosperity during the period known to researchers as the Holocene Humid Period (Holocene Humid Period =HHP), which was determined between 8000 to 4000 BC, then began the stage of desertification and drought relatively continuous to the present, where vast areas of the island were generally arid and culminated in a major drought around 2200 BC. (Matthew et al., 2022, p.193; Engel M et al, 2012, 131-141; Petraglia et al., 2020, : 8263-8270; Preston & Parker ,

2013, p.87-94). It's believed that during the Humid Holocene period, the availability of favourable environmental conditions reflected on the development and intellectual and cognitive development. Man became capable of creativity and excellence, so he left us a huge number of multi-thematic rock art drawings. Numbering hundreds of thousands of rock drawings, accompanied by tens of thousands of inscriptions that were harmonious with the painted artistic position, harmonious with the painted artistic position so that these writings can be understood just by looking at them. The Painted artistic scene on the rock facades. The aforementioned Humid Holocene periods were suitable for the presence of wild hunting animals that cannot be domesticated, such as the lion, African bull, wild deer, wild cow, and other animals. The rock facades contained Thamudi writings in harmony with the artistic scene and the content of the biblical inscription, and other animals. The rock facades contained Thamudic writings in harmony with the artistic scene and the content of the biblical inscription, and this, makes us think that it is likely the Thamudi Pen is the oldest in history. It was found with the presence of those animals that became extinct at the stage of desertification, where the drought peaked around 2200 BC, as proven.

2. The models in this study were selected from hundreds of rock drawings that included extinct animals, written next to each other. An expression of it in a felt-tip pen proves the ownership: This type of writing has been classified as personal property. The ownership of the inscription is associated with the rock drawing of the animal, which means it belongs to the owner of the writing accompanying the drawing. And the models that we have studied, clearly indicate a kind of animal with the name of the owner of the inscription. It is unreasonable for Thamudi to name the non-domesticated animal with his pen on the rock and draw himself into a hunting situation for that animal. It is unlikely that this animal could survive in a suitable environment for it lived only during the Humid Holocene period or much earlier. It is also unlikely that animals such as the "Al Arkhas bull" or the "wild cow", for example, could live in an arid climate and desolate land. We know that it is not possible to live in a climate and Environment other than the Savannah climate. It has been found naturally in Africa recently. (See the appendix of the rock drawings of extinct animals accompanying Thamudi writings)

What we can stand upon as the results of the study, dilemmas, and criticisms that might face the theory presented in this study, is that, according to the researchers, the history of the Thamudi pen does not exceed the late second millennium BC. But the studies that are published successively, and we found them during the past hundred years up to the current year, have provided us from one period to another, with an escalating history. It began in the tenth century BC. During the Thirties of the last century (Winnett, 1937, p.19) having an end two years ago. It was suggested that I present the oldest Thumudic writing dates back to the thirteenth century BC Al-Dhib, 2022, p.117,120), as a result of the succession of discoveries and their chronological differences through the discovered models of the Thamudi pen, it is likely that something older will be discovered.

3. Most important thing in the subject in a purely scientific and laboratory way, is to examine samples of rock drawings of extinct animals drawn by Thamudi artists attached to Thamudi writing next to them. We are sure that their laboratory results will show the time when the writing was done with the Samudi pen. This is what we hope to research urgently, then the study will be convincing to others who criticize or oppose the theory, but we are fully convinced that the Samudi Pen is the oldest Arabic pen in history. This is what the results of analysis and laboratory scientific studies will prove.

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