

Ahmad AL-JALLAD

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BIOGRAPHY

Ahmad Al-Jallad specializes in the early history of Arabic and North Arabian. He has done research on Arabic from the pre-Islamic period based on documentary sources, the Graeco-Arabica (Arabic in Greek transcription from the pre-Islamic period), language classification, North Arabian and Arabic epigraphy, and historical Semitic linguistics. His notable decipherments include a zodiac star calendar used in the Safaitic inscriptions (*Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*, 2014), the oldest Arabic poem yet discovered (*Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion*, 2015), and the decipherment of the oldest, fully vocalized Arabic text, written in Greek letters (*Arabian Epigraphic Notes*, 2015). He is the author of *An Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic Inscriptions* (Brill, 2015); *The Damascus Psalm Fragment: Middle Arabic and the Legacy of Old Hīgāzī* (OI, 2019); *A Dictionary of the Safaitic Inscriptions* (Brill, 2019, with K. Jaworska). He has led or been a member of several epigraphic and archaeological projects.

POSITIONS

The Ohio State University, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, *Sofia Chair of Arabic* (2018-Present)

Leiden University, Centre for Linguistics and Institute for Area Studies, *Assistant Professor of Ancient Arabia and Arabic and Semitic Linguistics* (2012-2018); *Director* of the Arabic language program (2013-2014); *Director* of the Leiden Center for the Study of Ancient Arabia (2015-2018).

Oxford University, Khalili Research Center, *Research Associate* on the Online Corpus of Ancient North Arabian Inscriptions project (2013-present)

University of Pisa, *Post-doctoral fellowship* on the Digital Archive for the Study of pre-Islamic Arabic Inscriptions project (2012)

Harvard University, *Teaching Fellow in Arabic language acquisition* (2007-2012); *Intensive Summer School instructor* (2009)

Brandeis University, *Instructor of Arabic language* (2009-2010).

EDUCATION

Harvard University

PhD, 2012, Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (with distinction); secondary field, Historical Linguistics

MA, 2011, Semitic Philology

GRANTS, FUNDED PROJECTS AND AWARDS

Gratama Science Prize (Netherlands), 2017.

NWO VENI grant: *The Writings on the Rocks: Thamudic and Arabia's Linguistic Past*, PI

NWO Free Competition Grant: *Landscapes of Survival: Pastoralist Societies, Rock Art, and Literacy in Jordan's Black Desert, c. 1000 BC to 500 CE*, Co-PI, PI Peter Akkermans

NWO PhD Scholarships in the Humanities: *Linguistic Variation at Dadān*, Supervisor, PhD student Fokelien Kootstra

Royal Dutch Academy honours programme for young artists and scientists, 2016-2017

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Forthcoming

The Word, the Blade, and the Pen: Three-Thousand Years of Arabic. Princeton University Press (in Contract).

2019

The Damascus Psalm Fragment: Middle Arabic and the Legacy of Old Ḥigāzī. Chicago: Oriental Institute.

A Dictionary of the Safaitic Inscriptions. Leiden: Brill, with Karolina Jaworska

2018

To the Madbar and Back Again: Studies in the Languages, Cultures, and Archaeology of Ancient Arabia dedicated to M.C.A. Macdonald. Leiden: Brill, with L. Nehmé.

2017

Arabic in Context (ed.). Leiden: Brill.

2015

[*An Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic Inscriptions*](#). Leiden: Brill

Articles and Book Chapters

2018

Safaitic Inscription C 4714 and the Old Arabic Names for the Planet Mars. *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes*. 108: 11-19.

[What is Ancient North Arabian?](#) In D. Birnstiel and N. Pat-El (eds.) *Re-Engaging Comparative Semitic and Arabic Studies*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. 1-45.

[The History and Development of Arabic. A Review article of Al-Sharkawi \(2017\), with Special Focus on Archaeology and Epigraphy.](#) *Bibliotheca Orientalis*. 49-59.

[‘Moge God Yazīd de Koning indachtig zijn’ Nadere beschouwingen over de Yazīd-inscriptie en de ontwikkeling van de Arabische schriften.](#) In J. van den Bent, F. van den Eijnde, and J. Weststeijn (eds.), *Mohammed en de Late Oudheid*. Amsterdam: Zenobia Stichting. Pp. 198-208.

[The Arabic of the Petra Papyri.](#) In A. Arjava, J. Frösén, & J. Kaimio (eds.), *The Petra Papyri*, vol. V. Amman: Acor. pp. 35-55.

[The Earliest Attestation of Laysa and the Implications for its Etymology.](#) In M.C.A. Macdonald (ed.), *Languages, Scripts, and their uses in Ancient North Arabia: Papers from the Special Session of the Seminar for Arabian Studies held on 5 August 2017*. Oxford: Archaeopress. pp. 111-119.

[The Thāj Archaeological Project: results of the first field season.](#) *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies*. 48: 287-302, with J. Rohmer, M. Al-Hajiri, R. AlKontar, T. Beuzen-Waller, P. Calou, D. Gazagne, & K. Pavlopoulos.

[The Earliest Stages of Arabic and its Linguistic Classification.](#) In E. Benmamoun and R. Bassiouney (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Arabic Linguistics*. Pp. 315-331.

[The Etymology of Hattā.](#) In L. Nehmé and A. Al-Jallad (eds), *To the Madbar and Back Again: Studies in the Languages, Cultures, and Archaeology of Ancient Arabia dedicated to M.C.A. Macdonald*. Leiden: Brill, 338-345.

2017

[An early Christian Arabic graffito mentioning ‘Yazid the king’.](#) *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy*. 28: 315-324, Y. Shdaifat, Z. al-Salameen, and Rafe Harahsheh.

[Graeco-Arabica I: The Southern Levant.](#) In A. Al-Jallad (ed.), *Arabic in Context*. Leiden: Brill, 99-186.

[The Arabic of the Islamic Conquests: Notes on Phonology and Morphology based on Greek Transcriptions from the First Islamic Century.](#) *BSOAS* 80: 419-439.

[Was it sūrat al-baqārah? Evidence for antepenultimate stress in the Quranic Consonantal Text](#)

[and its Relevance for **صلوه** Type Nouns](#). *ZDMG* 167.1:81-90.

[The Case for Proto-Semitic and Proto-Arabic Case: A reply to Jonathan Owens](#). *Romano-Arabica* 17: 87-117, w. Marijn van Putten

[Pre-Islamic “Hamāsah” Verses from Northeastern Jordan: A New Safaitic Poetic Text from Marabb al-Shurafā’](#), with further remarks on the ‘Ēn ‘Avdat Inscription and KRS 2453. *Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies* 47: 117-128.

[Marginal notes on and additions to An Outline of the Grammar of the Safaitic Inscriptions \(SSLL 80; Leiden: Brill, 2015\), with a supplement to the dictionary](#). *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 3: 75-96.

2016

[A few notes on the alleged occurrence of the group name ‘Ghassān’ in a Safaitic inscription](#). *Archiv für Orientforschung* 53, with M.C.A. Macdonald.

[New evidence from a Safaitic inscription for a late velar/uvular realization of š in Aramaic](#). *Semitica* 58: 257–270.

[New Epigraphica from Jordan II: three Safaitic-Greek partial bilingual inscriptions, w. Ali al-Manaser](#). *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 2: 55–66.

[An ancient Arabian zodiac. The constellations in the Safaitic inscriptions, Part II](#). *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 27: 84–106.

2015

[New Epigraphica from Jordan I: a pre-Islamic Arabic inscription in Greek letters and a Greek inscription from north-eastern Jordan](#). *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 1: 51–70, with A. al-Manaser.

[Echoes of the Baal Cycle in a Safaito-Hismaic Inscription](#). *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religion* 15.1: 5–19.

A Thamudic B Abecedary in the South Semitic letter order. In A. Butts (ed.), *Semitic Languages in Contact*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1–15, with A. al-Manaser

On the voiceless reflex of *š and *ṭ in pre-Hilalian Maghrebian Arabic. *Zeitschrift für Arabische Linguistik* 62: 88–95.

Yusap‘il or Yuhap‘il, that is the question – two solutions to sound change $s^l > h$ in West Semitic. *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 165.1: 27–39.

[What’s a caron between friends? A review article of Wilmsen \(2014\), with special focus on the etymology of modern Arabic šī](#). *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 72: 34–46.

Provincia Arabia: Nabataea, the emergence of Arabic as a written language, and Graeco-Arabica. In G. Fisher (ed.), *Arabs and Empires before Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 276–373, with Z.T. Fiema, M.C.A. Macdonald, and L. Nehmé.

2014

[An ancient Arabian zodiac. The constellations in the Safaitic inscriptions, Part I.](#) *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 25.2: 214–230.

[On the genetic background of the Rbbī bn Hfīm grave inscription at Qaryat al-Fāw.](#) *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and Asian Studies* 77.3: 445–465.

[As-sādu llatī ka-s-sīn: evidence for an affricated Sād in Sibawayh?:](#) *Folia Orientalia* 51: 51–57.

[Final short vowels in Gəʿəz, Hebrew attā, and the anceps paradox.](#) *Journal of Semitic Studies* 49.1: 315–327.

2013

[The Arabic toponyms and oikonyms in 17.](#) In L. Koenen, M. and J. Kaimio, and R. Daniel (eds.), *The Petra Papyri II*. Amman: ACOR, pp. 23–48, with R. Daniel and O. al-Ghul.

Popularizing

[The Yazid Inscription.](#) *15 Minute History Podcast*

[What writing can tell us about the Arabs before Islam.](#) *15 Minute History Podcast*

[A reexamination of the alleged reference to the crucifixion of Jesus in a Safaitic inscription.](#) *Academia.edu*.

[An ancient Zodiac from Arabia discovered.](#) *Leiden Islam Blog*

[Het Arabisch: taal van de leemten.](#) *Leiden Islam Blog*

TEACHING

BA-Level

All levels of Arabic, from 1st year MSA to advanced reading and speaking courses

The linguistic history of the Middle East

Reading Arabic texts: Medieval and Modern prose

Language, Power, and Identity (honors course)

Introduction to Sociolinguistics

Introduction to the comparative grammar of the Semitic languages

Arabic linguistic diversity

Sociolinguistics of the Middle East

MA-Level

Historical grammar of Arabic

Ancient North Arabian epigraphy

The language of the Qurʾān: from early Islamic sources to the Luxenberg hypothesis

PhD-Seminars

Nabataean inscriptions
Hebrew for North Arabianists
Reading Dadanitic inscriptions
Ancient South Arabian (Sabaic)

Leiden Linguistic Summer School

Introduction to Ancient North Arabian (2013, 2015)
Historical Grammar of Arabic (2014)

EDITORSHIPS

Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics, Brill, co-editor, w. A. Rubin

Arabian Epigraphic Notes, Editor-in-Chief

International Journal of Arabic Linguistics, Editorial board member

Digital Archive for the Study of Pre-Islamic Arabian Inscriptions, Editorial board member

DIGITAL HUMANITIES PROJECTS

Founding editor of the *Journal Arabian Epigraphic Notes*, published by LeiCenSAA. The Journal establishes a model for publishing without the involvement of a for-profit Academic publisher, utilizing the repository resource of university libraries (in our case, Leiden University). Online epigraphic databases are fully integrated into the citation system, so references are linked to the individual cards of these databases. Verification: www.arabianepigraphicnotes.org

Editor of on the OCIANA open-access database of North Arabian epigraphy. Verification: <http://krc.orient.ox.ac.uk/ociana/index.php/staff>

Editor of the DASI open-access database of pre-Islamic Arabian epigraphy. Verification: <http://www.dasiproject.eu/index.php?id=9>

Online Dictionary of Old Arabic. Still in Alpha stage testing, and only includes vocabulary from the Safaitic inscriptions. Verification: <http://arabianepigraphicnotes.org/dict/>

IT SKILLS

MS Office: Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Access
Adobe: Photoshop, illustrator
Filemaker Pro
Perch
Praat

LANGUAGES

Modern Languages: English (fluent), Arabic (fluent, Levantine and MSA), Dutch (conversational, reading and writing), French (reading), German (reading), Italian (reading)

Classical Languages: Greek, Classical West Semitic languages, Akkadian (no cuneiform)