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Literature and violence in North Arabia

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The cover illustration is from a drawing of an Aramaic inscription that appeared in Charles Huber's *Journal d'un Voyage* (1889). Huber observed the inscription in Teyma, southwest of the Nefūd desert. It is probably part of a funerary monument dating from around the fifth century B.C. The drawing evokes some of the themes of the present book which suggest a relationship between the importance of "literary" metaphors in Bedouin oral traditions and the character of Arabian political history since ancient times. Although the principal features of the human face, eyes, brows, and nose, are represented, a phonetic inscription appears in the place of the mouth.