

TITLE OF GOD *RḤMNN* – “THE MERCIFUL” FROM JEWISH  
AND CHRISTIAN ARABIC INSCRIPTION BEFORE THE RISE OF ISLAM.  
POLYTHEISTIC OR MONOTHEISTIC ORIGIN OF KORANIC الرَّحْمَن?

**Summary**

Recited several times as part of the Muslim daily prayers *baslama* contains three definite nouns: Allah, *Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm* (بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ; *bismi-llāhi r-raḥmāni r-raḥīm*). Especially the epithet الرَّحْمَن (*Raḥmān* – “the Merciful”), which is found in the Sabaean inscriptions in the form *RḤMNN* (*Raḥmānān*), has a relatively long history in the Middle East. The study of the pre-Islamic Arabic cultures provides the context of numerous religious interactions in the evolution of *Raḥmān*'s meaning. *RḤMNN* – used by Polytheist Arabs, Jews and Christians – is constantly confirmed in inscriptions, particularly from the so-called “Late Sabaean Period” (after 380) that were associated with Monotheism. During that time Judaism and Christianity attempted to replace the traditional South Arabian religion. Muhammad might have borrowed this name from three sources, which were present in his milieu. *RḤMNN* – الرَّحْمَن understood by Jews and Christians as “Lord, the Merciful, Master of Heaven” was useful for Islam, the new Monotheistic religion. On the other hand, in South Arabia *RḤMNN* signified a Moon-god, whom Muhammad even occasionally confused with “Allah” or used as a substitute for “Allah”.

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<sup>61</sup> Na przykład zdaniem Helmera Ringgrena rdzeń *r-ḥ-m* wyrażał też młodość i siłę życia w nawiązaniu do hebrajskiego *rechem* („łono”). Por. H. Ringgren, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, Philadelphia 1973, s. 142–143.

<sup>62</sup> Nawet wydające się tak odległe, jak np. *Rimmon* / *Rēmēnū* znany jako *Ragim* w mezopotamskich, semickich językach. Por. T. G. Pinches, *The Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, London 1906, s. IV.