Corpus of Nabataean Aramaic-Greek Inscriptions

Giuseppe Petrantoni

Syria

al-Summāqīāt (al-Samāfiyāt)

18. The epigraph was found in the western part of the village of al-Summāqīāt, a little further to the south of the southern cemetery. The town, known today as al-Samāfiyāt, is located in southern Syria, in Hauran, about halfway between Bosra and Umm al-Jimāl in the district of Darʿā. At the time of its discover, the stone lay above the foundations of a well-defined tomb that was partially dug up. The text consists of six lines.

**Dimensions**  height 70.5-71.5 cm; length 29.5 cm; height of letters about 8 cm

**Dating**  unknown

**Bibliography**  *PPAES* IVA no. 10; *PPAES* IIIA, 2 no. 93

Text and translation

1) Οαρ-
2) ε(τ)αθο-
3) σ Σαιη-
4) λου
5) ετ(ων) Κζ
6) δ(υ)'l

1) Oar-
2) -e(t)atos
3) (son of) Saie-
Commentary

Lines 1-2. We find the deceased’s name Ωαρεθος. This is a Semitic name: in fact, the first part Ωαρετ may correspond to wrṭ(ː) and we may reconstruct it as Warṭat. According to Littmann, it derives from the Arabic warṭah ‘abyss’, also ‘a low or depressed piece of ground in which there is no way or road directing to escape’ (compare the Hebrew yarat with the same meaning).

Lines 3-4. The father’s name, Σαιηλου, corresponds to Nabataean šyʼl. The name is a theophoric and it is new in the Nabataean onomastics, but well-attested in the Safaitic: š2ʼl. It derives from the root šy’ meaning ‘to follow, to accompany’, Arabic šā’ ‘to spread, to become widespread’, in the fa’ala form šayya’a ‘to accompany, to follow’. In Hebrew ši’ā is considered a loanword that means the ‘council’ of the Syrians and Caldeans as well as ‘congregation, assembly’ (< šy’ ‘to accompany, join a caravan, escort’). On the basis of such a premise, it is difficult to establish the real pronunciation of the initial š of the name.

1 Wuthnow 1930, 85 and 137. Another form is Ωαρειαθος.
2 It is attested in CIS II no. 421 and in RES nos. 1472 and 2124.
3 PPAES IVA, 12.
4 PPAES IVA, 12.
5 Lane, 2938.
6 DGes, 497; KAHAL, 228.
7 Wuthnow 1930, 102.
8 Negev (1991, no. 1125) suggests that it derives from Arabic su’āl ‘cough’. Conversely, Macdonald (1999, 285) argues that it is the Safaitic name s2ʼl in which the first element is a divine epithet as in Nab. šy’-l-qwm and Saf. s2ʼ-h-qm.
10 The term šay’ also means ‘the one who follows’, ‘companion’, the noun ša’ah identifies the ‘wife’, ‘because she follows, or conforms with, [the wishes of] her husband’. Cf. Lane, 632. In Syriac sī’tā denotes ‘company, band, troop, body of soldiers’ < sayā’ ‘to aid’ (Sokoloff 2009, 1006). In OfA, BA and Pal. sy’ <*šy’ simply means ‘to help’ (PAT, 392).
11 Gesenius 1846, 585 = DGes, 884.
al-Ġāriyah

19. The inscription was found in the village of al-Ġāriyah, about 25 km south-east of Bosra, in the district of Darʿa. It is a funerary epitaph in which the deceased’s name is followed by the name of his father.

Dimensions  height 75 cm; length 35 cm
Dating  s.d.
Bibliography  VAS, 185-6 no. 59; RES nos. 85 and 1095; PPAES IIIA, 2 no. 194; ESE I, 332; ESE II, 254; Clermont-Ganneau 1901b, 172; Littmann 1909, 381-3

Text and translation

1) Ραββανης
2) νης Μο-
3) (ε)ιθου
4) rb'[br]
5) m'y(t)w

1) Rabba-
2) -nes (son of) Mo-
3) –(e)itos
4) Rabbā [son of]
5) Mo’ey(t)ō

Commentary

The two names are of Semitic origin. The first, in lines 1-2, is Ραββανης that corresponds to Nabataean rb’, in line 4, but the second appears less legible, judging from the copy of the stone; in fact, at the end of the line there appear a vertical sign (n ?) and a detached barely sketched horizontal one over another vertical sign (’ ?). Probably the first editors, Dussaud and Macler (VAS, 185), read rb’[n’] in comparison to the name Ραββουνί ‘my master’, a clear calque from Aramaic which is found in the Gospels (cf. Matt 22,8; Mark 10,51 and John 20,16). Moreover, they exclude the possibility of restoring rbyb’ or rfyn’, as proposed by Clermont-Ganneau. The name rb’ with the

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12 The transcription here presented follows that of Lidzbarski (ESE II, 254).
13 Wuthnow 1930, 96 and 166.
14 As it is recorded in CIS II no. 287.
15 It is present in Hauran (Clermont-Ganneau 1901a, 122, no. 1); he compared rfyn’ to the Greek transcription Ρουφίνος, a popular name in the Greek-Syrian onomastics.
suffix \(-n'\) = \(-ανης\) could be a simple Greek calque, or transcription, of a Semitic name. It may derive from Hebrew \(\textit{rbn} < \textit{rab} \) ‘chief, teacher’ (in Aramaic too), that is \(\textit{Rabban},\) a title conferred on a scholar, as well as \(\textit{rabbanā},\) a Babylonian title.\(^{16}\)

In the revised version of the epigraph\(^{17}\) the Nabataean text is read as follows: \(\textit{rb'} [br] \textit{m’ytw}.\) If the reading is correct, we get the Nabataean name \(\textit{rb'} \) ‘chief, teacher’.\(^{18}\) So, the Greek suffix \(-ανης\) would be an extended form of \(\textit{rb'}\) as it appears in \(\textit{wyd'} = \textit{Αουειδανος}\) (cf. no. 15 and \(\textit{RES}\) no. 1096) and \(\textit{rb'}\) seems to be a diminutive of \(\textit{rb’l} – \textit{Rab’ēl},\) even though this hypothesis is not convincing.

The second name is \(\textit{Μο }\) (\(\epsilon\)) \(\textit{ιθου}\) = \(\textit{Nab. m’y(t)w}\) in which the \(t\) is uncertain; initially Dussaud and Macler (\(\textit{VAS},\) 185) suggested reading \(r\) in spite of \(t\) in order to restore the well-attested name \(\textit{m’yrw}\)\(^{20}\) = \(\textit{Μοαιερος},\) \(\textit{Μογαιρος}\) etc. However, the Greek form with \(\theta\) excludes the latter possibility assuming the restitution of \(\textit{m’ytw}\) which is to be compared with Arabic \(\textit{mūqayt} \) ‘one who helps, aids, assists, helper, rescuer’\(^{22}\) and Greek \(\textit{Μογιτος}.\)\(^{23}\) The name derives from the Arabic root \(\textit{ġāṯa} \) ‘to help, to aid, to assist, to rescue’; a particular case is the Nabataean-Arabian Lion-God \(\textit{y’wt} – \textit{Yaġūt}\) worshipped during the pre-Islamic period by the Yemenite tribe of \(\textit{Maḏḥij}\)\(^{24}\) and mentioned both in the Bible, as \(\textit{io’ūš} \) (in the LXX \(\textit{Ιεους})\),\(^{25}\) and in the Koran, as \(\textit{yaġūt}.\)\(^{26}\)

\(^{16}\) Cf. \(\textit{LGPN}\) I, II, IIIA, IIIB, IV, VA, also Pape 1911, 1316.

\(^{17}\) It is published in \(\textit{RES}\) no. 1095 and \(\textit{ESE}\) II, 254.

\(^{18}\) Cantonieu, 1930-32, 2: 145; Negev 1991, no. 1051.

\(^{19}\) It is attested at \(\textit{Izr’a} \) or \(\textit{Zorava},\) in the region of \(\textit{al-Lajāh},\) southern Syria, in an inscription from the church of Saint George (cf. Wadd. no. 2483). \(\textit{Μοειθος}\) is also present at Umm al-Jimāl (cf. \(\textit{IGLS}\) 21,5.1 nos. 144, 366, 367). Other forms are \(\textit{Μοεαθος},\) \(\textit{Μοεειθον}\) (Wuthnow 1930, 77 and 156).

\(^{20}\) It is encountered in Wadd. no. 2203c. Cf. Wuthnow 1930, 77 and 156.

\(^{21}\) Cf. \(\textit{IGLS}\) 21,5.1 no. 359. The name \(\textit{Μοαιρος}\) in \(\textit{IGLS}\) 21,5.1 no. 361, while \(\textit{Μοεαρος}\) in \(\textit{IGLS}\) 21,5.1 nos. 363, 363, 364, 365. Wuthnow 1930, 76 and 157.


\(^{23}\) Strawn 2005, 214.

\(^{24}\) Cf. Gen 36,5-14-18; 1Chr 1,35; 7,10; 8,39; 23,10-11; 2Chr 11,19.

\(^{25}\) LXXI, 23.
Bosra

20. The inscription was found in the cemetery of Šuhādah, to the southwest of Bosra Citadel.²⁷ It is engraved in the lower part of the basalt that probably had the shape of an eagle. (Plate V, no. 2)

Dimensions  height 35 cm, thickness of the base 38 cm, length of the base 91 cm, height 7 cm; average height of the letters 5 cm

Dating  2nd-3rd CE (?)

Bibliography  Milik 1958, 235-41, no. 3; IGLS 13,1 no. 9003; Vattioni 1985, 769; Quellen, 183

Text and translation

1) Μοαινος
2) m’ynw br zbdy ‘bd nšr’ lqws
3) Ḥlypw br tym[’] ‘mn’

1) Moainos
2) Mo’aynō, son of Zaḇday, made the eagle for Qōs
3) Ḥolēfō son of Taym[ā], the sculptor.

Commentary

The author’s name, Μοαινος (= Nab. m’ynw), is of Semitic origin meaning ‘helper’,²⁸ while his father’s name, zbdy, is considered an Arabic hypocorism from zubayd < zabd ‘gift, present.’²⁹

²⁷ Bosra is located 140 km south of Damascus. It was the first Nabataean city in the 2nd century BCE under king Rabbel II. After the conquest of Cornelius Palma, a general of Trajan, in 106 CE, Bosra was renamed Nova Trajana Bostra and was the residence of the legio III Cyrenaica. It was made capital of the Roman province of Arabia Petraea. The city flourished and became a major metropolis at the crossroads of several trade routes, namely the Via Traiana Nova, a Roman road that connected Damascus to the Red Sea. For an in-depth analysis of the story of the Citadel, see Sartre 1985.

²⁸ Al-Khraysheh 1986, 110; Negev 1991, no. 666; Wuthnow 1930, 77 and 156.

²⁹ ICPAN, 294. Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 91; al-Khraysheh 1986, 72; Negev 1991, nos. 367, 369. Greek forms are: Ζαβδαιος, Ζοβεδος (Wuthnow 1930, 48 and 137). According to Macdonald (1999, 275): “the root z-b-d is common in the formation of names in Aramaic, Hebrew and Arabic. There seems no reason to prefer an Arabic or Ancient North Arabian etymology to an Aramaic one”. In Qumran, PTA, Sam., Syr. it takes on the meaning of ‘to provide, to give’ (Jastrow 1903, 377; DJPA, 171a; DJBA, 397a; Tal, Sam, 224). In Palmyrene we have zbdy, zbd, zbd’ ‘gift’; the latter is found at Dura Europos (PAT, 434 = Stark 1971, 17, 85 and 143). The root is also present in Hatra with the same meaning (Beyer 1998, 83 and 174).
The sculptor’s name is ḥlypw,30 son of tym’,31 but we must not confuse it with tym whose ‘ is omitted for haplography, as confirmed by the shape of m that is not a final m. 32 According to Milik (1958, 236), it is possible that the author of the inscription is the father of a certain Rabbû, son of Hulayfû, who also sculpted an eagle found at Hebron.33

The fact that the author sculpted an eagle dedicating it to the god Qws deserves particular attention. It is a deity worshipped among the Edomites appearing in the form of an eagle in the hellenised capital Bosra of the Provincia Arabia.34 The name Qws derives from the Semitic root indicating ‘bow’35 and it would designate the god of war, the archer god.36 It is also used as a theophoric.37 In Nabataean there is another mention of the cult of Qōs found in an inscription from Khirbat al-Tannûr (18 km west of Jerusalem) dated to 1st c. BCE-1st c. CE.38 A further proof of the cult of Qōs among the Edomites is provided by Josephus who remembers the figure of Kostobaros, a priest of the god Koze (Gr. Koζε), a deity worshipped by the Edomites before their conversion to the Judaism by Hyrcanus.39 The connection Qōs-Koze appears credible even though it has generated some disagreement.40

As regards the dating, Milik (1958, 237) proposed to date the inscription to the 2nd or the 3rd century CE.

30 al-Khraysheh 1986, 83. Cf. no. 3.
31 al-Khraysheh 1986, 186; Negev 1991, no. 1212. It is frequently used in Palmyrene as tym, tym’ and tymw (Stark 1971, 54-5 and 117) and in Hatran (Beyer 1998, 167).
32 Milik 1958, 236.
33 Dunand 1934, 95, no. 196.
34 Quellen, 183.
35 Cf. Pro. Afro-As. *ḳawas-ḳayas- ‘bow, arrow’ (HSED no. 1560). Knauf (1999, 676) believes that an original bi-consonant qs became tri-consonat by the addition of -t in Akkadic, Ethiopic, Canaanite and Aramaic, but by an infixed -w in Arabic.
36 Knauf 1999, 676.
37 See Kelley 2009, 255-80.
38 The inscription is written on a small stele that was found by N. Glueck and published by Savignac (1937, 401-16). It goes as follows: “[d]y ’bd qsmlk lqṣ ‘lh ḥwrw’”, “[stеле thɑ] Qusmlık made for Qūs, god f HWRW” (Kelley 2009, 259 who quotes Bartlett 1989, 200). Conversely Milik (1958, 237) reads “[stèle] that Qosmilik made for Qosallah. Ḥūrū (the sculptor)”.
40 Milik (1958, 239) doubted that the connection between the Greek transcription of the name and the Nabataean one is proper. By contrast Wellhausen (1897, 67, 81, 146) suggested identifying Qūs with the god Quzah, genius of the arch of the sky among the ancient Arabs, but this conjecture is improbable from the phonetic point of view. In Arabic the rainbow is called qaws quzah, literally ‘arch of the god Quzah’, probably referring to a Pre-Islamic cultural heritage. Indeed, in pre-Islamic Arabic we find qwst ‘bow’ (ICPAN, 491).
Jamarrīn

21. The inscription is engraved on the right part of a basalt architrave found by Milik in the modern Arabic cemetery of Jamarrīn, a small village located 3 km to the north of Bosra. The text is placed in a tabula ansata decorated with a metope representing a rose; this is a common element in the monuments of the Roman period.41

The inscription is damaged on the left part of the stone in which two or three letters are missing, in fact we may only reconstruct the beginning of the four Greek lines. (Plate V, no. 3)

Dimensions height of the stone 39 cm, length 90 cm; tabula ansata 60 cm; height of Greek letters 3 cm; height of Nabataean letters 4 cm

Dating 2nd-3rd CE (?)

Bibliography: Milik 1958, 241-2, no. 4; SEG 20 no. 408; IGLS 13,1 no. 9412

Text and translation42

1) [Δη]μητρις Βορδου
2) [επ]οηεν43 το ανα-
3) -[πα]μα εαυτω
4) [και] τυς44 υιοις
5) ηψ' δυ ‘bd dmtrys br [brdw]

1) [De]metris (son of) Bordos
2) [ma]de (the place of) re-
3) -[s]t for himself
4) [and] for his sons
5) (place of) rest that Demetrīs son of [Bordō] made

Commentary

The author is a certain Δημήτρις (< Δημήτριος),45 a well-documented name in the Greek onomastics,46 on the contrary, the Aramaic equiva-

42 The transcription follows that of Milik 1958, 242.
43 The verb is to be interpreted as ἐπόησεν.
44 Read τυς.
45 Pape 1911, 290.
46 Cf. LGPN I, II, IIIA, IV, VA, VB.
lent *dmtrys* is new in the Nabataean onomastics. The father’s name, Βορδος (= Nab. *brdw*), is of Semitic origin. In line 2 the author wrote –ΟΗΕΕΝ, reconstructed as [ἐπ]όησεν and followed by the substantive τὸ ἀνάυακαμα ‘resting place’, the latter was rare in Syria during the Roman period. In the Nabataean section we find the term *nyḥ* ‘rest’, ‘calm’, mentioned for the first time in Nabataean, but common in other varieties of Aramaic.

**al-Mu‘arribah**

22. The stele was found on top of the door of a farmer’s house in al-Mu’arribah, a village a few kilometres to the northwest of Bosra. The text presents a hollow from line 2 and reports two names.

**Dimensions** height 90 cm; length 30 cm; characters of line 1, 10 cm; lines 2-3, 5 cm; Nabataean lines 11-14, 5 cm

**Dating** 1st BCE-1st CE

**Bibliography** *RES* no. 1094; *PPAES I* no. 615; *PPAES IVA* no. 92; Littmann 1909, 380-1

**Text and translation**

1) Υφφαλ[ος]
2) Θαι[μ]-
3) ου

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48 Wuthnow 1930, 37 and 132.
49 In the *editio princeps* the name is reconstructed since it is not visible because of the damaged basalt.
50 Negev (1991, no. 196) links it to Arabic Burd, *Buraid* probably from *baruda* ‘to become cold’ (see also *ICPAN*, 101). The name is also attested in Hatraean as *bryd*’ meaning ‘dark’, ‘spotted’, ‘dunkel’, ‘gesprenkelte’ (Beyer 1998, 80 and 156, 171).
51 In the photograph of the inscription the lunate sigma blends in with the ε, therefore it should be the case that the author wrote the correct segment -οησεν.
52 *LSJ*, 115.
53 Cf. Wadd. nos. 2300, 2391.
54 The form *nyḥ*, *nyḥ* *nyāḥ, nyāḥā* is attested in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, CPA, JBA, Man., Syr. and in Pal. (Jastrow 1903, 904; Payne Smith 1903, 338; DJPA 349a; *DN-WSI*, 729); in the latter the feminine form *nyḥt* is present (*CIS II* no. 3907). The root derives from Common Aramaic *nḥ* ‘to rest’ and it is used in Hebrew *nḥ* and Arabic *nḥa* ‘to kneel down as a camel’, hence *munāḥ* the place in which the camels lie. In Phoenician the root *nh* means ‘to rest, to be at peace’ and the nouns *nḥt* and *mnḥt* mean ‘peace’ (see Krahmalkov 2000, 295 and 327-8).
4) ḥpl[w br]
5) ty[m][w]

1) Uffalo[os]
2) (son of) Tai[m]-
3) -os
4) Ḥuffālō [son]
5) of Tay(m)ō

Commentary

In line 1 there is the name Υφφαλ[ος] that corresponds to Nabataean ḥpl[w] in line 4. This name is difficult to explain because it can be interpreted in various ways. It seems to be constituted by the Arabic root ḥafala ‘to gather, to flow, to pour, to course’. According to the Greek transcription of the name, the vocalization suggested by the editors would represent the form huffāl meaning ‘multitude’, also ‘numerous, crowded’ referred to the name that would have been given to the child by parents hoping for his offspring to be prosperous. If this hypothesis is right, the Greek transliteration uses Y to render the Nabataean vowel /u/, but here some problems of interpretation arise. According to the historical period in which the Greek koinè develops, the υ has already changed its phonetic value to /i/ (< Classic Greek /ü/), therefore Aramaic /ḥ/ would have had the vowel /i/ rather than /u/ and the name should be read hiffāl not huffāl. Nevertheless, in Arabic hiffāl has no meaning; conversely, if huffāl is correct, the Greek transcription would be expected to be Ουφφαλ[ος] since in the koinè the diphthong ou = /u/ was phonetically productive.

In line 1 there is not any sign that could be ascribed to a possible initial o- for Ou or sufficient space to include it; in addition, the inscription shows the deceased’s name with the father’s name proving that it is not a fragmentary text.

So, Υφφαλ[ος] should be an atypical case of vocalization; in fact, contrary to Attic-Ionic dialect and koinè, only Beotian Aeolic of the 4th-3rd c. preserved ū and ū as back vowels, phonetically /u/ and /ū/ (ou in Attic-Ionic and koinè), and not Attic /ū/ or koinè /i/. Does this therefore constitute a mistake of the Aramaic speaking author who did not know Greek?

56 PPAES IVA, 69.
57 Meillet 2003, 124.
If we acknowledge the phonetic value /i/ of υ, according to Spielberg the name is a variation of Greek Ἰππάλος ‘rider, horseman’,58 that is usually used in Egypt.59 If we accept this hypothesis, the name has Greek origins and in Nabataean it should be read /ḥippalō/. In addition, a name is registered as hypalus by Pliny the Elder (HN 6.100), as well as it is recorded in the Periplus Maris Erythraei60 as Ἰππάλος indicating the Monsoon; the two forms would be a corruption of the most ancient ὑφάλος.61

As regards the father’s name, Greek θαῖ[μ]ου62 outstretches between lines 2 and 3 presenting the μ out of the engraved surface that we may restore thanks to the Nabataean equivalent tym[w].

al-Ḡāriyah al-Šarqiyah

23. This inscription was found in a wall of the village of al-Ḡāriyah al-Šarqiyah,63 about 24 km away from Dar’a District.

In the editio princeps Dussaud and Macler (VAS, 205) do not consider this inscription as truly bilingual,64 but rather as simply monolingual Greek. Lidzbarski (ESE I, 335), instead, reports a corresponding Nabataean part of the Greek text. Unfortunately, we have no precise knowledge of the real nature of the inscription.

Dating unknown
Bibliography VAS, 205 no. 96; ESE I, 335 no. 96

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58 Pape (1911, 560) translates as ‘Rössel’.
59 PPAES IVA, 69. It is also attested in Greece, at Eretria (LGPN I), and in Macedonia (LGPN IV).
60 It is a Greco-Roman periplus written in Greek describing navigation and trading opportunities from Roman Egyptian ports along the coast of the Red Sea, and others along Northeast Africa and the Sindh and Southwestern India. The document has been ascribed to the mid-1st-century CE.
61 For a close examination cf. Mazzarino 1982-87 and De Romanis 1997; this latter scholar thinks that ὑπάλος < ψάλος is a correct genuine form of the Greek denomination of the wind as a result of a technical term that was employed in Ionic science (particularly cf. De Romanis 1997, 688-9).
62 Cf. Pape 1911, 477 and Wuthnow 1930, 52-3 and 175.
63 The town is 4 km away from the other al-Ḡāriyah al-Ḡarbiyah that is located to the west, as the name suggests.
64 They assert that the final part of the Greek text, (e)ἰς θεόν [Ἀ]μέρου, corresponds to the Nabataean formula l’lh ʼmrw.
Text and translation

1) Γαφαλος Χαρητου εποησεν εις θεον [Α]μερου
2) dy ‘bd ghplw br hrtw l’lh ‘mrw

1) Gafalos (son of) Charetos built to the god of [A]meros
2) that built GHPLW son of Ḥaretō to the god of ‘Amerō

Commentary

The name Γαφαλος, transcribed as ghplw by Lidzbarski, presents difficulties of interpretation because of its rare use in the Greek onomastics⁶⁵ and its absence in the Nabataean. It is probably a Semitic name⁶⁶ that assumed a Greek form; it might be assumed to from the Arabic qafala ‘to pay no attention, to neglect, to omit’, but this hypothesis seems to be improbable.

The father’s name Χαρητος corresponds to the well-attested pre-Islamic Arabic name hrtw⁶⁷ < Ar. al-ḥāriṯ ‘farmer, ploughman’, also ‘lion’.⁶⁸

As regards Αμερος, Nabataean ‘mrw identifies a name found both in Palmyrene⁶⁹ and in the pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions in the shape of ‘mr⁷⁰ (< Ar. ‘amara ‘to live, to dwell’).⁷¹

The presence of the vowel ε in the Greek transliteration indicates the Arabic active participle ‘āmir, or better, the Nabataean Aramaic active participle /’āmer/ ‘the one who is living, dwelling’.⁷²

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⁶⁵ We have an occurrence in Hauran (ESE I, 219 no. 53) and two in Arabia (SEG 7 no. 1108 and 1115).
⁶⁶ Wetzstein (AGLI, 349 and 366) points out that it derives from Arabic ḥahfal ‘big army, legion, swarm’, in addition it also appears as a variation of Ταφαλος < Ar. ṭifl ‘child’. In Pre-Islamic Arabic ḥḥfl: Ḫahfāl is attested (ICPAN, 153).
⁶⁷ ICPAN, 182-3. In Syriac hrt means ‘to hollow out, to cut to pieces, to incise’, ‘to plough’ (Sokoloff 2009, 496).
⁶⁸ Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 100. Negev (1991, no. 493) proposes other two solutions: the first is that the root comes from Arabic ḥirrit ‘expert guide’; the second is that it derives from Arabic ḥurṭiy ‘useless articles of tent furnishing’. In Greek we also have the variation Χαρήτας (Pape 1911, 1670; LGPN II); cf. also Wuthnow 1930, 120 and 143.
⁷⁰ ICPAN, 436.
⁷¹ In Qumran Aramaic and in Christian Palaestinian Aramaic, Syr. and Man. ‘mr ‘to dwell, inhabit’ (Jastrow 1903, 1090; DNWSI, 873). Cantineau (1930-32, 2: 133) compares it with Arabic ‘mr = Gr Αμρος (Wadd. no. 2028 et passim).
⁷² Αμερου is found in AGLI, 35, 49, 111, 112, 113, 117, 121, 130. Αμερος at Umm al-Jimāl in IGLS 21,5 nos. 188, 189, 190, 191, 211.
al-Buṭaynah

The inscription was engraved on a pillar that was smuggled and subsequently reused as an architrave. This altar was found in the village of al-Buṭaynah, 7 km north of Šaqqa in the province of al-Suwaydā’.73

In the upper part of the stone we find four lines written in Greek and in the lower part we may distinguish some damaged Nabataean letters.

**Dating** unknown
**Bibliography** Dunand 1932, 410, no. 41

**Text and translation**

1) υ(ι)οι Μα-
2) - λα[χ]ου
3) Βαδου-
4) - ρου
5) [mlkw br bdr/bdrw] (?)

1) s(on)s of Ma-
2) - lakos (son of)
3) Badu-
4) - ros
5) [Malkō son of Baḏur/Baḏurō] (?)

**Commentary**

The Greek text could be incomplete. The damaged Nabataean letters represent the names of the author and of his father: *mlkw br bdr/bdrw*.

The name Μαλαχος is a variation of the well-known Μαλεχος and Μαλιχος from the common North-West Semitic root *mlk* that identifies the king or ‘one who rules’, also the ‘holder’, the ‘owner’ (e.g.

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73 The town is located at Jabal al-Durūz, literary ‘Mount of Druze’, also called Jabal al-ʿArab. Al-Buṭaynah is placed in the ancient ‘Ard al-Baṭaniyyah ‘land of Batanaea’, which is the Hellenized/Latinised form of the biblical Baṣân (Heb. ḥa-bāšān ‘soft, sandy soil’), hence the name al-Buṭaynah that is, according to Dussaud and Macler (*VAS*, 138), a diminutive form of baṭnah ‘level and soft soil, soft sand’, even though the root *ḥn* does not exist in Arabic. Presumably the toponym is a calque from Hebrew in which /š/ > Ar. /ṯ/.

74 *IGLS* 21,5 nos. 342, 428, 718.

75 Wuthnow 1930, 70; *LGPN* II; *IGLS* 21,5 no. 39.
Ar. mālik). The α, present in the Greek transcription, expresses the Arabic/Aramaic active participle.

As far as Βαδουρος = bdrw is concerned, it is a Semitic name well-known in the Greek and Nabataean epigraphy being of Arabic origin, from badara ‘to hasten, to hurry’, ‘to come suddenly’, also ‘to be full’ (referring to the moon) and in Common Aramaic bdr ‘to disperse, to scatter’. The presence of α in the Greek transcription permits us to establish that we are dealing with another active participle, from Ar. bādir ‘one who is hurrying’, also ‘one who is dispersing’ (< *bāder) should the root be connected to Aramaic. The diphthong ου in the Greek rendering sounds strange since it does not correspond to the second vowel of the Semitic root; therefore, a probable */bādūrō/ may be considered as a variation of the pronunciation of the Nabataean active participle.

al-Suwaydā’

25. This is a lost inscription that was carved into a cartouche located on the facade of a memorial, since destroyed. It was a mausoleum, placed in the western part of al-Suwaydā’, on the north bank of the wāḍī, that was depicted and drawn by all travellers who passed by this place.

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76 Cf. Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 70; ICPAN, 97; Negev 1991, nos. 173, 174. Other forms are: Βαδουρος (Wadd. no. 2354; Wuthnow 1930, 31 and 170; LGPN I) and Βαδαρου (Wadd. no. 2330). At al-Suwaydā’ the name bdr appears in a basalt altar (cf. Littmann 1904, 93-4).

77 Lane, 165.

78 Wetzstein (AGLI, 347) translates this name as an improbable ‘Vollmond’, ‘full moon’ < Ar. bādr.

79 See DNWSI, 145.

80 The building was destroyed with dynamite during the Ottoman period and no fragments were found.

81 It is the capital of al-Suwaydā’ Governorate located in southwestern Syria, close to the border with Jordan. The city was founded by the Nabataeans as Suada, lit. ‘the black’, due to black blocks of basalt that were used in constructing buildings. It became known as Dionysias (Ancient Greek: Διονύσιας) in the Hellenistic period and the Roman Empire; the city is situated in a famous ancient wine-producing region.

82 For further bibliography about the travellers who stopped at the site on their way cf. Sartre-Fauriat 2001, 196-7. The monument, which was built on step blocks with a pyramid on the top, consisted of Doric columns. In the intercolumniation low relief weapon trophies were carved, whereas the trabeation consisted of an architrave with a Doric frieze of triglyphs and smooth metopes on top of it and a contoured cornice.
Dimensions of the monument: height 10.50 m, height of the pyramid 5.10 m  

Dating  
1st BCE or beginning of 1st CE

Bibliography  
CIG no. 4620 (Greek part); Vogüé 1864, 284, no. 1; Wadd. no. 2320 (Greek part); VS, 89-92; Schröder 1884, no. 5; CIS II no. 162; Brünnow, Domaszewski 1909, 3: 98-101; Sartre-Fauriat 2001, 1: 197

Text and translation

1) npšḥ dy ḥmrt dy bnh lh ‘dynt b’lḥ
2) Οδαινατος ὁ ἀνήλιον ὁικοδομησεν τὴν στήλην Χαμρατη τῆς αὐτοῦ γυναίκι

1) Tomb of Hamraṯ who built for her ‘Oḏaynaṯ her husband
2) Odainatos (son of) Annelos built the tomb for Chamrate his wife

Commentary

In line 1 npšḥ, in the emphatic state, corresponds to Greek στήλη (as at Umm al-Jimāl in no. 16) identifying the memorial. The addressee of the tomb inscription is ḥmrt = Χαμρατη, an Aramaic name meaning ‘red’ (Com. ḥmr’ ‘wine’ < ḥmr ‘to become wine or bitumen colored’; Ar. ḥmr ‘wine’).

We cannot be sure of the identity of the husband, named ‘dynt = Οδαινατος. The name, which is found both in Nabataean and in Greek epigraphy (whose meaning is linked to Arabic uḏaynah ‘small ear’ < uḏn ‘ear’ and Com. ‘dn’), should refer to Odaenathus the Arab, probably a phylarch of the region before the Roman occupation; he was chief of Beni Samayda or Beni Amila al-Amālik as reported in the Arabic sources. This was Waddington’s hypothesis, who found two

83 In VIS, 89 and CIS II no. 162 the name is written with θ: Οδαιναθος.
84 The connection with the bitumen is justified by the fact that the root, also used in Hebrew, identifies the boiling, the fermentation, hence ḥēmār ‘bitumen’ (= Gr. ἄσφαλτος). The Dead Sea erupted asphalt from the middle of the lake as if the waters boiled, and once it became hard, given the heat of the sun, it remained on the Dead Sea surface, therefore it is also called lacus asphaltites, as Strabo (16.2.42-3) and Tacitus (Hist. 5.6) pointed out.
86 Wuthnow 1930, 87 and 124; Pape 1911, 1035.
87 We rule out the possibility of connection with Odaenathus, the founder king of the Palmyrene Kingdom (died 267/268 CE).
88 VIS, 91.
Greek inscriptions bearing this tribe’s name in the same region. The father’s name is present only in the Greek text as Αννηλου = Nab. ḥn’l (cf. nos. 27, 28).

In the Nabataean section we notice the use of b’lh (with the 3rd p. masc. sg. suffix pronoun -h) designating the ‘lord’, then ‘her husband’.

As regards the dating, the epigraph appears to have been carved in the 1st c. BCE or at the beginning of the 1st c. CE if we consider the usage to write ο after ο and η in ὠικοδόμησεν and in Ἡμράτη τῆι.

Sī’

26. The epigraph was part of a series of inscriptions coming from the temple of Ba’alšamin, a place of pilgrimage of nomads of the steppe who passed through Sī’. It is a temple built between the 1st c. BCE and the 2nd c. CE. The majority of the inscriptions include a script labelled as ‘Aramaic’, but with characters similar to the Nabataean, today known as the Hauranitic script. The Nabataean text is engraved at the base of a pedestal, under the portico of the temple, whereas the Greek text is carved into a die of another pedestal, found further down the road, which should have been linked to the same base.

Dating 1st BCE

Bibliography  
CIS II no. 164; Wadd. no. 2366; Vogüé 1864, 286; VIS, 94-6; Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 13-4; Grushevoi 1985, 51-4; YTDJD, A: 309; B: [101]; Quellen, 174-6; Tholbecq 2007, 288-90; Healey 2009, 115 no. 15

Text and translation

1) dnh slm’ dy ‘qymw l ‘byšt
2) lmlk ty m’yrw br mlkty
3) lqbl dy hw bnh byrt’ ‘lyt’
4) kdw br ‘byšt mn’ slm

1) Ο δημος ο τ-
2) ον Όβαισην-
3) ον ετειμησε-

89 In Wadd. no. 2308 φυλῆς Σομαιθηνῶν is encountered in an inscription belonging to the period of Commodus, coming from al-Suwaydā’, whereas in Wadd. no. 2495 the Arabic form αβαβαιη ἡ Σομαιδαθη is recorded.

90 They are Nabataean and Greek inscriptions found by W.H. Waddington and M. de Vogüé in 1861-62 on the top of a small citadel located 3 km southeast of Qanawāt (Tholbecq 2007, 285).

91 Kropp 2010, 5.
4) -ν Μαλειχαθον
5) Μοιαιρου υπερ-
6) οικοδομησαν-
7) -τι το ιερον αρε-
8) -της τε και ευσ-
9) -εβειας χαριν

1) This is the statue that the tribe of ´Oḥayšaṯ erected
2) for Malīḵaṭ son of Mo’aiyɾō son of Malīḵaṭ
3) because he built the upper part of the temple
4) Kaḏō son of ´Oḥayšaṯ, the artisan. Peace.

1) The people of
2) the Obaisen-
3) -os honour
4) -ed Maleichatos
5) (son of) Moaieros who
6) built upon
7) the top of the temple on acc-
8) -ount of his vir-
9) -tue and piety

Commentary

In line 1 of the Nabataean text we read the name of the ´Obayšat’s tribe who erected the statue as a gift for Malīkat. We notice the verb ’q ymw, an ap’el form of qwm (Sem. ‘to erect, to stand up’), frequently used in Palmyrene, Hatraean, Qumran and Biblical Aramaic with the same meaning. The tribe’s name is indicated through the substantive ‘l, known in Arabic (‘āl) and sporadically used in Hauran. In Aramaic it might be a hapax, used only in Nabataean; according to Cantineau (1930-32, 2: 62) it is a clear Arabism. The mention of the tribe of ´Obayšat is important since it is found in Safaitic inscriptions of the desert; here it is identified in Greek as δῆμος of the village of Si’. Therefore, we may state that they were inhabitants of a village within the Provincia Arabia, besides being a tribe of wandering shepherds in the desert during the transhumance.

In line 2 we find Malīkat, a name that probably derives from a diminutive of the root mlk ‘king’; it is present in the Greek part, in

92 See Afro-Asiatic root *kam- ‘rise, lift’ (HSED no. 1543).
93 Cf. CIS II no. 165, RES nos. 2042, 2065, 2066, and Milik 1958, 244, no. 6.
94 The term is also employed in Pal. ‘l ‘army corps’ (PAT, 338; DNWSI, 55).
line 4, as Μαλειχαθον. His father’s name, m’yrw (= Gr. Μοαιεροῦ), may originate from Arabic muğayr ‘one who puts down the furniture of his camel from off him, to relieve and ease him,’ even if a derivation from ʿār ‘to wander, to roam’ is more likely.

In line 3 the syntagma lqbl dy ‘because, given that’ is presumably a hapax since it is not employed in Nabataean with this meaning; the Aramaic usual meaning is ‘in front of, opposite, over against’. Here there is a semantic correspondence to Egyptian Aramaic and Biblical Aramaic.

The employment of byrt’, which in Aramaic mostly identifies a ‘fortress’, is interesting since here it takes on the meaning of ‘temple precinct’, in accordance with the Greek τὸ ἱερόν. The following expression, ‘lyt’, suggests that it is referring to the upper part of the temple (cf. Syr. ‘elitā ‘the upper floor, room’, ‘a pinnacle’) as the analogous Greek term ὑπεροικοδομήσαντι (ὑπεροικοδομέω ‘to build over or above’), here in the dative rather than in the accusative (anacoluthon?) case, proves.

The builder’s name, kdw, does not appear in the Greek section, and it is not attested in other Nabataean inscriptions.
27. The inscription is carved on a lintel of a tomb found among the ruins of built tombs that looked like round towers.107 These tombs were near the road leading from Sī’ to Qanawāt,108 a village in South Syria located 7 km northeast of al-Suwaydā’.

The Greek text precedes the Nabataean,109 the entire inscription is engraved in a tabula biansata according to the common usage in the Roman provinces. (Plate VI, no. 1)

**Dimensions**
- height 45 cm; length 151 cm; height of the Greek letters 6.5-9 cm;
- height of the Nabataean letters 5-8 cm

**Dating**
- 1st CE (25-50 CE)

**Bibliography**
- Buttler, Littmann 1905, 409; ESE II, 260; RES no. 1093; Littmann 1909, 378-80; PPAES IVA no. 105

**Text and translation**

1) Τανενοις Αννη-
2) Λου το μνημειον
3) Τθννω βρ ḥnl ḫnps’
4) Ḥwrw βρ ‘byšt ‘mn’

1) Of Tanenos son of Anne-
2) -los (is) the monument
3) For Ṭanenō son of Ḥann’ēl, (is) the monument
4) Ḥūrō son of Ḫōbašaṯ, the artisan

**Commentary**

The name ṭnnw (= Gr. Τανενος) would be an adjective of fa’il or pe’il form for ṭn(n)-’l,110 according to the first editors. The name ṭn-’l (Τανηλος), ṭnn-’l (Ταννηλος), ṭn and ṭnn (Ταννος) is frequently at-

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107 PPAES IVA, 84.
108 Qanawāt is one of the earliest cities in Hauran. It is probably referred to in the Bible as konāt (cf. Num 32,42 and 1Chr 2,23). The town called Kanatha (Gr. Κάναθα) is mentioned for the first time in the reign of Herod the Great (1st century BCE) when Nabataean forces defeated the Jewish army. The city remained a bone of contention between the two powers. Under Pompey (106-48 BCE) and Trajan (53-117 CE) Kanatha was a city of the Decapolis; in the 1st c. CE it was annexed to the Roman province of Syria. In the 2nd c. CE it was renamed Septimia Canatha by Septimius Severus (145-211 CE) and transferred to the province of Arabia (cf. Burns 2009, 246-7).
109 According to Macdonald (2003, 45), this Nabataean script belongs to the local Aramaic script called Hauranitic, like that in the previous inscription (no. 26).
110 ESE II, 260; Littmann 1909, 379.
tested in Safaitic inscriptions. According to Littmann (PPAES IVA, 85) the correct transliteration should be Ṭāninū, since in Hauran the names deriving from the stems of mediae geminatae do not have contracted forms.

The father’s name, ḥn’l, is also attested on the altar of Gālis, at Sī’, as one of the benefactors of the statue, and we cannot rule out the hypothesis that he is the same person. This name is a theophoric in which the first element ḥnn in Aramaic means ‘merciful’.

In line 4 we read the name ḥwrw, probably Hūrō, that is either linked to Ḥūr, son of ‘Oḇayšaṯ, who may be the same sculptor who carved his name in a little round altar of Ba’lšamīn’s temple, or referred to the brother of a certain Kadō, son of ‘Oḇayšaṯ, mentioned in CIS II no. 164. The same name that designates the artisan, ‘mn’, is found in other inscriptions from Sī’ (see e.g. CIS II no. 166) in which a certain Šdw (Šūdō?), the sculptor, appears.

The root ‘mn’ is productive in Biblical Hebrew ʿāmān ‘workman, artificer’ and also in Syriac ʿawmanā ‘workman, maker, craftsman’.

28. This is a pedestal in the form of an altar that served to bear a statue. It was found among the ruins of a temple. The pedestal is broken in the middle and the four corners of the capital are ornamented with lion-heads linked to wreaths in high relief.

The Nabataean text, consisting of seven lines, is engraved in the front, which has been well preserved, whereas the only three Greek lines are inscribed on the broken side of the pedestal.

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112 The name is also recorded in PPAES IVA no. 9, in an inscription from al-Summāqīāt. Cf. also al-Khraysheh 1986, 88 and Negev 1991, no. 469.

113 In CPA, JBA, Gal., Pal. and Syr.; in BA and Syr. the verb ḥnn means ‘to show mercy’ (Jastrow 1903, 484; Payne Smith 1903, 149; DNWSI, 389; PAT, 366; DgPA, 209a; DjBA, 474a). Also, Ge. ḥannā ‘grace, charm, joy’ (Leslau 1991, 236).


115 PPAES IVA, 85.

116 The same person appears in an inscription published by Savignac (1904, 580): Šdw br ‘byšt ‘mn’ šlm ‘Šūdū son of ‘Ubašat the sculptor, peace’. The three artisans quoted in the text should belong to the same family (Buttler, Littmann 1905, 409-10, no. 1).

117 Gesenius 1846, 58 = DGes, 74 and KAHAL, 34 ‘Handwerker, Werkmeister, Künstler’ and Payne Smith 1903, 6 and Sokoloff 2009, 17. Akk. ummānu, ummiānu < Sum. um-me-a (AHw III, 1413-4 and CAD XX, 108 and ff.).
Dimensions  height of the Nabataean inscribed surface 33 cm; width 42 cm; height of the left side of the Greek part 49 cm, width of the extant portion, at the top 32.5 cm, at the bottom 30 cm, height of the Nabataean letters 3-6 cm, height of the Greek letters 4.5-6 cm

Dating  1st CE (29-30 CE)

Bibliography  PPAES IIIA 6 no. 768; PPAES IVA no. 101

Text and translation

1) bšnt 33 lmrn’
2) plps ‘bdw wrtw br
3) bdr wqṣyw br šwdy
4) whn’l br mšk’l wmn’ b[r]
5) grmw bwms šlm glšw
6) br bntw
7) ‘n’m br ‘šbw ‘mn’ šlm

1) In the year 33 of our lord
2) Philippos, made Wiṯrō, son of
3) Baḏur(?) and Qašiō, son of Šūday
4) and Hann’ēl, son of Mašeḵ’ēl and Mono’a(?) son of
5) Garmō this altar of the statue of Gališō
6) son of Banaṭō (?)
7) ‘An’am, son of ‘Aṣbō, the sculptor. Peace!

Commentary

Lines 1-2. The sentence: bšnt 33 lmrn’ plps ‘in the year 33 of our lord Philippos’ is important for our understanding of the inscription from an archeological and historical point of view, since Philip, the Tetrarch or Herod Philip II, is mentioned; he was the son of Herod the Great. He ruled in the north-eastern part of his father’s kingdom, as recalled by Flavius Josephus (AJ 17.8).118 His popularity was noteworthy in the Nabataea to such an extent that local inhabitants in the independent territories of Hegra, Petra and Bosra used to calculate the days of the year according to those of his rule. For this reason, Herod Philip was not named mlk’ by the common people, who scarcely knew the Greek title (τέτραρχος), but mrm’ ‘our lord’. The date mentioned in line 1 presumably refers to the year in which the pedestal was erected, i.e. 29 or 30 CE. In the same line we have the

118 Josephus wrote that he ruled in Gaulanitis, Trachonitis, Batanea and Paneas. Herod Philip is also quoted in the New Testament (Luke 3,1 and Mark 6,17) as husband of Salome, daughter of Herodias and Herod II.
sequence of the authors’ names of the altar followed by their fathers’ names. The first is \textit{wtrw} which is transcribed in Greek as \textit{Ουθρός},\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Οθρός},\textsuperscript{120} coming from Arabic \textit{watar} ‘rope, cord, bowstring’,\textsuperscript{121} \textit{witr} ‘alone, unique’\textsuperscript{122} or from \textit{waṯir} ‘bed, carpet’.\textsuperscript{123} Another possible derivation may be directly from Hebrew, given that the name of Jethro is used (Exod 3,1; 4,18) – \textit{yitərō} lit. ‘His Excellence, Posterity’ (< \textit{yitərâ} ‘abundance, rich’, ‘Überschüssiges, Erübrigtes’).\textsuperscript{124}

Line 3. After the father’s name \textit{bdr}, the root of which is extensively discussed at no. 24, the name of the second sculptor, \textit{qṣyw},\textsuperscript{125} appears; this is probably a diminutive form (\textit{qāṣin}?) from the Arabic \textit{qaṣā} ‘to be faraway’,\textsuperscript{126} rather than \textit{qaṣiyy} ‘faraway, distant’.\textsuperscript{127} His father’s name, \textit{šwdy} or \textit{šwry}, discovered in two other inscriptions from Sī’,\textsuperscript{128} seems to be of uncertain origin.\textsuperscript{129} It presumably derives from Arabic \textit{sadā} ‘to offer’, ‘benefit, favour’\textsuperscript{130} or a nisbah for \textit{suwadī} ‘inhabitation of Soada’ (modern al-Suwaydā’), as it was originally interpreted by Littmann (\textit{PPAES} IVA, 79).

The names in line 4 are well-known: \textit{ḥn’l} (cf. no. 27), \textit{mšk’l}, a theophoric made up of \textit{mškw} (no. 15) and \textit{’l}, and \textit{mn’} linked to \textit{mn’t} (no. 11).

Line 5. The father of \textit{mn’} is \textit{grmw} = Gr. \textit{Γαρμος},\textsuperscript{131} from Arabic < \textit{ǧarama} ‘to cut off, to sever’\textsuperscript{132} (cf. Heb. \textit{gāram} and Syr. \textit{gram}) or more

\textsuperscript{119} Wadd. nos. 92, 2537; \textit{AGLI}, 156; Wuthnow 1930, 92 and 137.
\textsuperscript{120} Wadd. no. 137; Wuthnow 1930, 87 and 137.
\textsuperscript{121} Cf. Heb. \textit{yeter}, Syr. \textit{yatrâ} and JBA, in addition to Ge. \textit{watr}.
\textsuperscript{123} Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 90.
\textsuperscript{124} \textit{DGes}, 516; \textit{KAHAL}, 234. As well as in OfA., Gal., Sam. \textit{ytr} ‘remaining part, excess’ < verb \textit{ytr} (Jastrow 1903, 605; \textit{DNWSI}, 482; \textit{DJPA}, 248b; Tal,Sam, 369b).
\textsuperscript{125} It is also found in \textit{PPAES} IVA no. 11.
\textsuperscript{126} Al-Khraysheh (1986, 161-2) translates ‘fern (weit)entfernt’ < \textit{Qusaiu} ‘Derjenige, der ins Exil geschickt wurde’ with a clear connection with an ‘exile’. \textit{ICPAN}, 483: \textit{qsy}.
\textsuperscript{127} Cantineau 1930-32, 2; 143; Negev 1991, no. 1037. The same form is recorded in Greek as \textit{Κασσαίος} (Wuthnow 1930, 63), \textit{Κασσίος} (Wuthnow 1930, 165; Pape 1911, 633), which are very frequent in the inscriptions from Negev (\textit{LGPN} I, IIIA-B, IV, VA), and \textit{Κασιός} (\textit{IGLS} 21,5 nos. 336, 347).
\textsuperscript{128} \textit{ESI} II, 260.
\textsuperscript{129} Cantineau 1930-32, 2; 149.
\textsuperscript{130} \textit{ICPAN}, 314; Negev 1991, no. 1115. Greek \textit{Σοδαίος} (Wuthnow 1930, 112 and 169) and \textit{Σαδός} (\textit{IGLS} 21,5 nos. 319, 455, 457, 704).
\textsuperscript{131} Wadd. no. 2513 and Wuthnow 1930, 39 and 134.
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{ICPAN}, 159; Cantineau 1930-32, 2; 78-9; al-Khraysheh 1986, 56-7; Negev 1991, no. 253. Here it takes on the meaning of ‘to decide’, ‘to determine’, in Palmyrene \textit{grymy}, \textit{grmy} are recorded (\textit{PAT}, 433 = Stark 1971, 14 and 82) with the same meaning, as \textit{grm’lt} < \textit{grm} in Hatraean appears (Beyer 1998, 157 and 172).
probably < Heb. gerem, Com. grm ‘bone’ and Ar. ġīrm which is used in the sense of ‘body’, ‘beast of burden’.\footnote{133}

The artefact is named bwms */bŭmos/ ‘pedestal, altar’, a word also used in Syriac\footnote{134} and in Christian Palestinian Aramaic\footnote{135} it is a clear loanword from Greek βοῦμος ‘raised platform’, ‘altar with a base’.\footnote{136} The statue on the top of the altar was erected by a certain glšw. This name is new in the Nabataean onomastics, probably = Gr. Γαλεσος (Wadd. 2041)\footnote{137} and Saf. gls. It may derive from Arabic ġālīs ‘one who is sitting’, ‘assis’.\footnote{138}

Line 6. The father’s name, bntw, is linked to Greek Βαναθος,\footnote{139} coming from Arabic bannah ‘smell, aroma, fragrance’\footnote{140} and employed both in male and female names.

Line 7. The sculptor’s name ‘n’m is an elative form of Arabic na’īm ‘calm, relaxed serene’ (& nu’aym and nu’m ‘comfortable life’, ‘wealth, prosperity, tranquility’).\footnote{141} In Greek the forms Αναμος, Ανεμου, Ανημος and Ανομου\footnote{142} Αν’um are present. The name can be read An’um or An’um in which the transition from /a/ to /u/ results from the presence of

\footnotetext[133]{133}{The masculine name garəmî ‘bony’ is also attested in the Bible (1Chr 4,19).}
\footnotetext[134]{134}{In Pešiṭtā 2Chr 1,3 we read: būmsā.}
\footnotetext[135]{135}{DNWSI, 168.}
\footnotetext[136]{136}{Monferrer-Sala 2013, 101. Actually, this Greek term, which generally derives form ḫaɪm < ḫm ‘altar’ (Chantraine 1968, 204; Beekes 2010, 251), might be a loanword from Semitic if we consider that būmāt, ‘hills, high places’, Jewish places of worship, derives from būmā (< būm) ‘fortress, castle’, also ‘a sanctuary built on a mountain to God or idols’ (Gesenius 1846, 124-5 = DGes, 155-6 ‘Anhöhe, Berg- Höhen- rücken’, ‘Kultöhöhe, Kulttätte, Bama’; KAHAL, 71). In Qumran Aramaic, PTA bmh, bmt ‘pagan altar, high place’ (Jastrow 1903, 176; DJPA, 105a) and byms ‘pedestal, elevated stand, rostrum’ in CPA, JBA, Nab. and Syr. (Jastrow 1903, 162; Payne-Smith 1903, 42; DNWSI, 168; DJPA, 96a; DJBA, 210b). The root has a parallel meaning in Akkadian bamātu ‘open country, plain, field, slope of a hill’ (AHw I, 101; CAD II, 76-7) linked to Sum. bâ ‘half, share, portion’.}
\footnotetext[137]{137}{Other occurrences in AGLI, 59; Wuthnow 1930, 30; IGLS 21,5 nos. 67, 163, 369.}
\footnotetext[139]{139}{Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 72; AGLI, 99 and 347-8; IGLS 21,5 nos. 51, 260; Wuthnow 1930, 32 and 130.}
\footnotetext[140]{140}{ICPAN, 119; Negev 1991, no. 185.}
\footnotetext[141]{141}{ICPAN, 80; for n’m and derivatives, ICPAN, 593-5; Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 121; al-Khraysheh 1986, 40; Negev 1991, no. 113. The same root is productive in Heb. na'āmā (DGes, 826; KAHAL, 356) that is, besides the meaning of ‘pleasant’, a proper name of two women in the Bible (cf. Gen 4,22; 1Kgs 14,21-31; 2Chr 12,13) and in Gal. with the same meaning (DJPA, 354b). In Palmyrene ‘n’m ‘tender’ (PAT, 430 = Stark 1971, 6 and 70).}
\footnotetext[142]{142}{AGLI, 152, 155; Wuthnow 1930, 21 and 152.}
\footnotetext[143]{143}{AGLI, 76, 182, 186; Wuthnow 1930, 22 and 159.}
\footnotetext[144]{144}{Wadd. no. 2412.; Wuthnow 1930, 22-3 and 152.}
the following /m/.  

This last reading also identifies a southern Arabic tribe, the An’um, the watchmen of the temple of the god Yaǧūṯ in a place called Guraš. 

The father’s name, ‘sbw, is new in Nabataean corresponding to Greek Αοσβος and Οσβος. Initially it was linked to Arabic ḥusayb (diminutive of ḥasab ‘pebbles, flints, gravel’) or ‘uṣayb (< ‘aṣaba ‘to tie, to tighten, to bind’, Syr. ṣab with the same meaning).

In the broken part of the pedestal we find the Greek inscription that was copied by Mr. Magies: ἔργον Ζαιδῆλου ἱεροδούλου. It is probable that Zaid'eł, a theophoric name, built the pedestal or worked as a sculptor among those who erected this altar.

29. The inscription is engraved on a tablet that was found by Littmann in 1909 in the north wall of the podium of the new temple presumably dedicated to Dūšarā. (Plate VI, no. 2)

Dimensions  height 38.5 cm; length 42.5 cm; height of the Greek letters 2.5-3 cm; height of the Nabataean letters 4.5-5.5 cm, with the exception of l in line 1 that is 8 cm high

Dating  unknown

Bibliography  RES no. 1092; Littmann 1909, 375-8; PPAES IIIA, 6 no. 767; PPAES IVA no. 103; Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 14-5; SEG 29 no. 1603

Text and translation

1) Σεεια κατα γην Αυρα-
2) νειτιν εστηκυια
3) d’ slmt’
4) dy š’y’w

1) Seia, in the land of Aura-
2) -nitis (is) standing

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145 The same name appears in PPAES IVA nos. 12, 14.
146 Wellhausen 1897, 19-20.
147 RES no. 2117.
148 Wadd. no. 2008; ESE I, 329 no. 31; Wuthnow 1930, 26 and 159.
149 Wadd. no. 2412; Wuthnow 1930, 90 and 159.
150 Wetzstein (AGLI, 361) translates ‘Brennstoff (des Kampfes)’ < Ar. ḥasaba ‘to throw stones’, ‘to stone’.
152 Wuthnow 1930, 49 and 138. For the etymology see inscription no. 31.
153 On the contrary, RES no. 1092 reports that the epigraph was found in 1905 inside the temple of Ba’alsamin.
3) This (is) the image
4) of Še‘ī’ō

Commentary

Line 1. The name of ΣΕΕΙΑ occurs at the beginning of the line. There are other forms of this name, such as ΣΕΕΙΝΟΥ, ΣΕΙΝΟΣ and ΣΑΙΝΟΥ. After the mention of ΣΕΕΙΑ, a segment written in scriptio continua appears: καταγήναυρα; it is made up of the preposition κατά followed by the feminine substantive γῆ ‘in the land’ and Αυρα-, which constitutes the initial part of the toponym Hauran and whose final part ends in the following line.

Line 2. We read Αυρανειτιν, the Hellenised form of the Semitic name Auranitis, Αὐρανῖτις -ιδος, here in the accusative. In the last part of the line we see the singular feminine perfect participle ἐστηκυία ‘she is standing, rising up’ < ἵστημι.

Line 3. After the Nabataean demonstrative d’ the word ṣlmt’ occurs meaning ‘image’. In the Akkadian pantheon Šalmu ‘statue’ is employed along with the name of a deity to indicate its image. Akkadian šalāmu ‘to be black’ would probably originate from the root zī (zl > sl) ‘shadow’ (cf. Ar. zulmah ‘shadow’ < zalama ‘to become dark’; Ge. źallim ‘balck, dark’); according to some scholars, the acceptance of ‘image’ is based on the aforementioned origins. Moreover, in Greek σκιά means ‘shadow’ assuming the concept of ‘reflection, image, phantom’. Line 4. At the beginning the particle dy, as nota relationis, is followed by the name š’y’w, which is the appellative of the local goddess of Sī’. As regards its etymology, in Jewish Babylonian Arama-
ic šʾī’a means ‘smooth’ (Heb. šā’a’ ‘to spread, to stain, to smooth’, ‘bestreichen, glätten’); Littmann (PPAES IVA, 82) translates it ‘lev-elled square’ or ‘even space’, comparing to ū ĩerā ṭlaṭeīa and ū plāṭīos īeratīkī (in Wadd. nos. 2034 and 2035) from plātūs ‘wide, spacious and holy space’. In Arabic the term is shortened by haplology to sī’ < sʾy’, in addition šʾyw occurs in an inscription from Sinai (Euting 1891, 558, line 3) standing for sīʾy ‘man from Sī’.

Ultimately, the Greek transliteration suggests that the final -w of šʾyw does not correspond to the suffix -u, equivalent to the Arabic nominative case, but coincides with the original vowel /ā/, written as /ō/ in various Greek transliterations, probably reflecting the real Aramaic pronunciation of the vowel /ā/; this implies that the deity’s name should be pronounced /šeʾīʾō/ (?).

As regards the question of the correspondence between the deity’s name and the place where the statue was found, Littmann wondered the name of the place appeared before or after the name of the goddess that appeared first. The fact that šʾyw is an abbreviation of rbt šʾyw ‘Lady/Goddess of Šʾyw’ might imply that the name of the place existed before. We have to make clear that during the pre-Islamic period, Arabic pagan names of deities and places coalesced, the Semites, in particular, never separated a god from its ‘house’. Considering that the temples at Sīʾ were dedicated to Baʾalšāmin and Dūṣarā, we may infer that Šeʾīʾō was not the goddess of Sīʾ, but probably an abstract form or the personification of the holy place: a θεὸς σύνναος inside the temple of Dūṣarā.

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163 DJBA, 1137b.
164 DGes, 1397; KAHAL, 631.
165 Cf. RES no. 1092.
166 LSJ, 1413-4.
167 PPAES IVA, 82.
170 Littmann 1909, 377.
171 PPAES IVA, 82-3.
172 Wellhausen 1897, 9-10.
173 PPAES IVA, 83.
The inscription was found in the little village of Harrân, 50 km north of Bosra, by M. Wetzstein.\textsuperscript{174} It was revisited at a later date by W.H. Waddington.\textsuperscript{175} The two texts are carved on a lintel, today reemployed above a house door; originally, the lintel was garnished with Christian crosses, which were placed at the beginning and in the middle of each inscription.\textsuperscript{176}

The text was classified, by the first editors as being among the Nabataean inscriptions; it exhibits handwriting and morphological features that reflect the last stage of the Nabataean-Aramaic script moving towards the Kufic calligraphic form of the early years of Islam.\textsuperscript{177} It is to be noted that there exists a long chronological gap between the latest dated Nabataean inscription and the earliest instances of cursive Arabic script.\textsuperscript{178} Although the inscription is considered to be written in Arabic, it seems appropriate to include it in this corpus both for further historic and linguistic consideration and to preserve a proof of the (Nabataean-Arabic) linguistic transition, during the Byzantine and Christian period in southern Syria. (Plate VII, nos. 1-2)

**Dating** 6th CE (568 CE)

**Bibliography** *AGLI*, no. 110; Wadd. no. 2464; *VIS*, 117-18; Schroeder 1884, 530-4; DM, 726-7; Littmann 1912, 193-8; Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 50-1; Abu al-Faraj al-Ušš 1973, 55-84 (Arabic); Mascitelli 2006a, 183-7, no. 19; Hoyland 2008, 55-6 (reproduction); Fiema et al. 2015, 414-5

**Text and translation**

1) ‘n’ šrḥył bn/br ṭlmw bnyt d’ ‘lmṛtwl
2) snṭ 463 b’d mfsd (?)
3) ḥybr/ḥyn(? ) b’m

1) Σαραηλος Ταλεμου
2) φύλαρχ[ω]ς εκτισεν το μαρτυριον
3) του αγιου Ιωαννου ινδικτιονος Α του ετους ΥΞΓ. Μνησθιε ο γραψας

1) I, Šarḥil son of Ṭalemō, built this martyrion
2) in the year 463, after the expedition/defeat?
3) of Khaybar? One year
1) Saraelos (son of) Talem, 
2) the phylarch, founded the mart[yrion]
3) of Saint John in the first ind[iction] of the year 463. May the 
writer be remembered

Commentary

In line 1 the first singular personal pronoun ‘n’ already assumed the 
same shape as the Classic Arabic ānā, with its final mater lectionis ‘, 
and that of the Syriac ānā. 179 The author of the epigraph, šrḥyl = Gr. 
Σαραηλος,180 bears a name that is well-documented in South Arabic like 
srḥ’s1 and only in the Greek part of the inscription he declares himself 
to be a phylarch; but according to the sources, his name is not recorded 
elsewhere, and above all we must not confuse him with the Ghassan-
id phylarchs, since at the time of the building of the church of Ḥarrān 
the Ghassaind phylarch was a certain al-Munḏir.182 This is a theophor-
ic from Arabic šaraḥ ‘to uncover, to reveal’,183 so ‘God has revealed’.

The father’s name, ṭlmw = Gr. Ṭαλεμου, is problematic from the 
point of view of transliteration and phonetic interpretation.184 However, 
as already mentioned, in this stage of graphic transition from Nabatae-
an to Arabic, the alphabet, which was still without diacritical marks, 
used the grapheme ṭ both for /ẓ/ and for /ṭ/, for this reason the name 
should be read Ŗālim ‘unjust, unfair, oppressive’, from Ŧalam ‘to be un-
just, to oppress’;185 unfortunately, Greek does not have a grapheme nei-
ther for /ẓ/ nor for /ṭ/, and consequently it does not help us in any way.

179 In an Arabic graffito from Jabal Usays (100 km east of Damascus), dating back to 
528-529 CE, the 1st sg. pers. is ‘nh (Macdonald 2010, 141-3) = BA ānā; this may prove 
that still in the 6th c. CE in Arabic -h and -’ interchange as mater lectionis as a result 
of an Aramaic influence.

180 Waddington reads it Σαραηλος, as does Cantineau report (1930-32, 2: 51), proba-
bly due to a misreading resulting from the presence of the icon of the cross, carved at 
the beginning of the Greek inscription. Cf. also Wuthnow 1930, 105 and 174.

181 In Minean (RES no. 2999), in Qatabanic (RES no. 3902) and in Sabean (Ryck-
mans 1949, 57-8).

182 Wadd. no. 2464. Further information in Mascitelli 2006a, 186.

183 ICPAN, 345 reports šrḥyn.

184 For the Greek form see Wuthnow 1930, 115.

185 See the root Ŧlm in ICPAN, 393. Cf. CPA, Man., Sam. Ŧlm and Syr. Ŧlm with the 
same meaning (DJPA, 225b; Jastrow 1903, 537; Payne Smith 1903, 175; Sokoloff 2009, 
533; Tal, Sam, 313a).
After the demonstrative particle ḏā, we read ‘al-mortūl, a loanword from Greek μαρτύριον and also a hapax in Nabataean and Arabic; the usage of the final l in mrtwl is intriguing.\textsuperscript{186}

In lines 2-3, after the mention of the year 463, we find several words that present problems of interpretation. After b’d (presumably ba’ad ‘after’), the term mfsd is not present in Arabic as a substantive, but as a verb of form ‘af’al, afsada, which is employed by Ibn Khaldūn meaning ‘to sack, to ransack’, as well as the plural form mafṣṣid ‘raids, loots, robs’ (sing. mafṣadah\textsuperscript{187}); in ancient literature ‘al-ifsād fī l-ārd̲ has the same meaning of fitnah in a political sense.\textsuperscript{188} The last words were read by R. Dussaud and J. Cantineau hyn[yl]d (= hayna’id ‘at the time, at that time, then’) n’m translating the entire sentence as: “après la corruption, la prospérité (?)”.\textsuperscript{189} Conversely, Littmann read hyn[yl]d as ḥybr (=Khaybar) and n’m as b’m (= bi-‘ām), so ba’da mafṣadī ḥaybara bi-‘āmin, and translated: “un anno dopo la spedizione di Khaybar”.\textsuperscript{190} To his mind, the sentence is related to a raid, to looting carried out at Khaybar\textsuperscript{191} by al-Ḥāriṯ bin Abī Šamir,\textsuperscript{192} although Littmann (1912, 195) identified the individual as al-Ḥāriṯ bin Jabalah.\textsuperscript{193}

In contrast, the Greek text does not include references to military campaigns, but to the building of the martyrion of Saint John – τοῦ ἁγίου Ιωάννου – with the indication: ἱνδ(ικτιῶνος) Α τοῦ ἔτους ΥΞΓ, i.e. the year 463 (of the year of Bosra) that roughly corresponds to the period running from 22 March to 1 September 568 CE. The final sentence in the last line mentions the person who wrote the inscription: Μνησθῖε ὁ γράψας. There is a textual incongruity because the Greek section is of a religious rather than military nature and in addition it clearly refers to the addressee of the martyr’s sanctuary. Moreover, we would expect a mention of John in the Nabataean-Arabic part of the inscription, but the name does not seem to occur. C. Robin, by contrast, suggests another reading of the last Nabataean-Arabic lines

\textsuperscript{186} Fiema et al. (2015, 414 and no. 209) also quote the explanation of Shahid who reconstructs mrtwr [sic. for marṭwr].
\textsuperscript{187} Dozy 1881, 2: 266.
\textsuperscript{188} Littmann 1912, 194 on the basis of the consideration that was stated by the Dutch Orientalist Prof. Snouck Hurgronje (1857-1936). Cf. Koran II, 251.
\textsuperscript{189} Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 50; DM, 727.
\textsuperscript{190} Littmann 1912, 194.
\textsuperscript{191} It is an oasis situated 153 km north of Medina that was inhabited by Jews before the advent of Islam.
\textsuperscript{192} As Ibn Qutayba suggests (Kitāb al-ma’ārif: 414).
\textsuperscript{193} He is known as [Φλάβιος] Ἀρέθας from an inscription (IGLS 5, no. 2553D) and as Khālid ibn Jabalah in later Islamic sources (cf. Shahid 1995, 1: 216-17; Greatrex, Lieu 2002, 102-3); he was a king of Ghassanids from 528 to 569. For further details, see Mascitelli 2006a, 185-6.
translating them: “for [as is the sense of b’d in Dedanite] the holy [assume mfsd is a mistake for mqds] John [i.e. Hnyn] vale [i.e. ni’ma]”. Mascitelli is sceptical about this hypothesis (2006a, 185) and hesitates to state that the final letter of the name Ḥnyn is n, but rather r which is of the same shape of the other r occurring in the text; in addition, on the basis of the hagiographic sources, he observed that there was no Saint John visiting the surroundings of Ḥarrān except Saint John the Hesychast who died in 558 (ten years before the building of the martyrion), meaning that the chronology does not correspond. Taking into account C. Robin’s reading, we may reexamine the proposed translation and review the sequence of letters Ḥnyn. If we check the image better, we may notice that the last grapheme is not n but r, as Mascitelli also points out (2006a, 185), and if Ḥnyn were a proper name, the final -w would be expected to appear as in the two previous names, so Ḥnynw. Furthermore, we clearly do not see the double marks ḫ after ḥ and we may simply read ḥibr ‘prelate, religious authority’, a term often used in the Arabic-Christian world. The sentence then assumes the following meaning: ‘for the holy prelate. Peace’ indicating a clergyman who did a lot of good for the little community of Ḥarrān and was remembered for this reason. If the last reading is right, it is possible that y is used as mater lectionis to distinguish the substantive from ḥibr ‘ink’.

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195 He was also known as Saint John the Silent and he was bishop of Colonia in Armenia (today Köylühisar, in Turkey).
196 Mascitelli 2006a, 187.
197 Kazimirski 1860, 366; Lane, 498; Dozy 1881, 1: 243.
198 In Nabataean the root bbr (as well as in Hebrew) means ‘companion’, also ‘member’, especially of a religious confraternity. In Syriac it means ‘to be a companion of’, in Pal. ‘to make a partner of’, in Qumran, Gal., PTA, Sam. (Sokoloff 2009, 409-10; DJ-PA, 186a; DJBA, 428a; Tal, Sam, 243; Cook, Qumran, 75). The term appears in an inscription from al-Ḥiǧr (Nehmé 2005-06, 194-200, no. 13, fig. 138). Hoyland (2008, 55) claims, with regard to the figure of John, that he was: “evidently an important man in the local Christian community”.

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