

Syria

al-Summāqīāt (al-Samāfīyāt)

18. The epigraph was found in the western part of the village of al-Summāqīāt, a little further to the south of the western cemetery. The town, known today as al-Samāfīyāt, is located in southern Syria, in Hauran, about halfway between Bosra and Umm al-Jimāl in the district of Dar'ā. 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)αθo-
- 3) σ Σαιη-
- 4) λου
- 5) ετ(ων) κς
- 6) š(y)ʿl

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

- 4) -los
5) ag(e) 26
6) Ša(y)'ēl

Commentary

Lines 1-2. We find the deceased's name $\text{O}\alpha\text{p}\epsilon\text{t}\alpha\theta\omicron\varsigma$.¹ This is a Semitic name: in fact, the first part $\text{o}\alpha\text{p}\epsilon\text{t}$ - may correspond to $wr\check{t}[t]$ -² and we may reconstruct it as *Wartat*.³ According to Littmann, it derives from the Arabic *wartāh* 'abyss',⁴ also 'a low or depressed piece of ground in which there is no way or road directing to escape'⁵ (compare the Hebrew *yarat* with the same meaning⁶).

Lines 3-4. The father's name, $\Sigma\alpha\iota\eta\lambda\omicron\upsilon$,⁷ corresponds to Nabataean $\check{s}y''l$.⁸ The name is a theophoric and it is new in the Nabataean onomastics, but well-attested in the Safaitic: $s''l$. It derives from the root $\check{s}y'$ meaning 'to follow, to accompany',⁹ Arabic $\check{s}\bar{a}'$ 'to spread, to become widespread', in the *fa''ala* form $\check{s}ayya'a$ 'to accompany, to follow'.¹⁰ In Hebrew $s\bar{i}\bar{a}$ is considered a loanword that means the 'council' of the Syrians and Caldeans as well as 'congregation, assembly'¹¹ (< *sy'* 'to accompany, join a caravan, escort'). On the basis of such a premise, it is difficult to establish the real pronunciation of the initial \check{s} of the name.

1 Wuthnow 1930, 85 and 137. Another form is $\text{O}\alpha\text{p}\epsilon\iota\alpha\theta\omicron\varsigma$.

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'al* 'cough'. Conversely, Macdonald (1999, 285) argues that it is the Safaitic name $s''l$ in which the first element is a divine epithet as in Nab. $\check{s}y'-l-qwm$ and Saf. $s''-h-qm$.

9 Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 150. Negev (1991, no. 1126) compares the Greek form with Nabataean $\check{s}y''lhy$ < Ar. 'witch, hag'. Here, the hypothesis to translate the root 'the witch of Allah' is absurd (Macdonald 1999, 285). Cf. pre-Islamic Arabic $\check{s}y'$, *shai'* 'companion, follower' (*ICPAN*, 364).

10 The term $\check{s}ay'$ also means 'the one who follows', 'companion', the noun $\check{s}\bar{a}'ah$ identifies the 'wife', 'because she follows, or conforms with, [the wishes of] her husband'. Cf. Lane, 632. In Syriac $s\bar{i}\bar{t}\bar{a}$ denotes 'company, band, troop, body of soldiers' < *saya'* 'to aid' (Sokoloff 2009, 1006). In OfA, BA and Pal. *sy'* < * $\check{s}y'$ 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 Dar'a. It is a funerary epigraph 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 translation¹²

- 1) Ραββα-
- 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 Ραββανης¹³ 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 *ryyb'*¹⁴ or *rfyn'*, as proposed by Clermont-Ganneau.¹⁵ The name *rb'* with the

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 of 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 *rbn* < *rab* 'chief, teacher' (in Aramaic too), that is *Rabban*, a title conferred on a scholar, as well as *rabbānā*, a Babylonian title.¹⁶

In the revised version of the epigraph¹⁷ the Nabataean text is read as follows: *rb' [br] m'ytw*. If the reading is correct, we get the Nabataean name *rb'* 'chief, teacher'.¹⁸ So, the Greek suffix *-ανης* would be an extended form of *rb'* as it appears in 'wyd' = *Αουειδανος* (cf. no. 15 and *RES* no. 1096) and *rb'* seems to be a diminutive of *rb'l* - *Rab'ēl*, even though this hypothesis is not convincing.

The second name is *Μο(ε)ιθου*¹⁹ = Nab. *m'y(t)w* in which the *t* is uncertain; initially Dussaud and Macler (*VAS*, 185) suggested reading *r* in spite of *t* in order to restore the well-attested name *m'yrw*²⁰ = *Μοαιερος*²¹, *Μογαιρος* etc. However, the Greek form with *θ* excludes the latter possibility assuming the restitution of *m'ytw* which is to be compared with Arabic *muḡayt* 'one who helps, aids, assists, helper, rescuer'²² and Greek *Μογιτος*.²³ The name derives from the Arabic root *ḡāta* 'to help, to aid, to assist, to rescue'; a particular case is the Nabataean-Arabian Lion-God *y'wt* - *Yaḡūt* worshipped during the pre-Islamic period by the Yemenite tribe of Madhij²⁴ and mentioned both in the Bible, as *ṯ'ūš* (in the LXX *Ἰεους*),²⁵ and in the Koran, as *yaḡūt*.²⁶

Cf. *LGNP* I, II, IIIA, IIIB, IV, VA, also Pape 1911, 1316.

16 Cf. *rbn*, *rbn'* in Pal., Qumran, Sam. meaning 'chief, head man', 'scholar, doctor' in Gal. and Syr. (Jastrow 1903, 1444; Payne Smith 1903, 526; *DNWSI*, 1055; *PAT*, 409; Tal, Sam, 809a), *rabbānan* 'the rabbis', 'our teacher' in JBA. For a close examination of the employment of the term in the Targumic passages see *DJBA*, 1055b. The name *rb'* is also attested in pre-Islamic Arabic (*ICPAN*, 263). In the Hatraean onomastics *rbn* is recorded (Beyer 1998, 58 and 184) meaning 'chief', 'Meister'. In Palmyrene we have *rb'n* and *rbn* (*PAT*, 440 = Stark 1971, 49 and 111) 'teacher'.

17 It is published in *RES* no. 1095 and *ESE* II, 254.

18 Cantineau, 1930-32, 2: 145; Negev 1991, no. 1051.

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

20 al-Khaysheh 1986, 110 and Negev 1991, no. 667.

21 Cf. *IGLS* 21,5.1 no. 359. The name *Μοαιρος* in *IGLS* 21,5.1 no. 361, while *Μοεαρος* in *IGLS* 21,5.1 nos. 363, 363, 364, 365. Wuthnow 1930, 76 and 157.

22 Pre-Islamic Arabic < 'yr or *mḡyr* < *ḡyr* (*ICPAN*, 460 and 558-9). Cf. Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 117 and Negev 1991, no. 668. See also *PAT*, 436 = Stark 1971, 34 and 96 for Palmyrene.

23 It is encountered in Wadd. no. 2203c. Cf. Wuthnow 1930, 77 and 156.

24 Strawn 2005, 214.

25 Cf. Gen 36,5-14-18; 1Chr 1,35; 7,10; 8,39; 23,10-11; 2Chr 11,19.

26 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) Μοαινοϝ
- 2) m'ynw br zbdy 'bd nšr' lqws
- 3) ḥlypw br tym['] 'mn'

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

Commentary

The author's name, Μοαινοϝ (= 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: Ζοβδαίος, 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 *hlypw*,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 Rabbū, son of Ḥulayfū, 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-Tannūr (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. Κοζε), 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-Khaysheh 1986, 83. Cf. no. 3.

31 al-Khaysheh 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 Hatrean (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-consonant by the addition of *-t* in Akkadic, Ethiopic, Canaanite and Aramaic, but by an infix *-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 qsmilk lqs 'lh ḥwrw'", '[stele] taḥt Qūsmilk made for Qūs, god f HWRW"' (Kelley 2009, 259 who quotes Bartlett 1989, 200). Conversely Milik (1958, 237) reads "[stele] that Qosmilik made for Qosalah. Ḥūrū (the sculptor)".

39 Josep., *AJ* 15.7.9.253-4.

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 *Quzaḥ*, 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 quzaḥ*, literally 'arch of the god *Quzaḥ*', 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]μητρῖς Βορδου
- 2) [επ]οηεν⁴³ το ανα-
- 3) -[πα]υμα εαυτω
- 4) [και] τυς⁴⁴ υιοις
- 5) *nyh' dy '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 Δημήτρῖς (< Δημήτριος),⁴⁵ a well-documented name in the Greek onomastics,⁴⁶ on the contrary, the Aramaic equiva-

⁴¹ Milik 1958, 242.

⁴² The transcription follows that of Milik 1958, 242.

⁴³ The verb is to be interpreted as ἐπόησεν.

⁴⁴ Read τούς.

⁴⁵ Pape 1911, 290.

⁴⁶ Cf. *LGPN* I, II, IIIA, IV, VA, VB.

lent *dmtry*s is new in the Nabataean onomastics.⁴⁷ The father's name, Βορδοϛ⁴⁸ (= Nab. *brdw*),⁴⁹ is of Semitic origin.⁵⁰

In line 2 the author wrote -OHEEN, reconstructed as [ἐπ]όησεν⁵¹ and followed by the substantive τὸ ἀνά[πα]ύμα 'resting place',⁵² the latter was rare in Syria during the Roman period.⁵³ In the Nabataean section we find the term *nyh'* 'rest', 'calm', mentioned for the first time in Nabataean, but common in other varieties of Aramaic.⁵⁴

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* IIIA 5, no. 615; *PPAES* IVA no. 92; Littmann 1909, 380-1

Text and translation

- 1) Ὑφφαλ[οϛ]
- 2) Θαι[μ]-
- 3) ου

47 Negev 1991, no. 280.

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 *nyh*, *nyh'* */nyāh, nyāhā/ 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 *nyht* is present (*CIS* II no. 3907). The root derives from Common Aramaic *nwh* 'to rest' and it is used in Hebrew *nūh* and Arabic *nāha* 'to kneel down as a camel', hence *munāh* the place in which the camels lie. In Phoenician the root *nh* means 'to rest, to be at peace' and the nouns *nht* and *mnh* mean 'peace' (see Krahmalkov 2000, 295 and 327-8).

- 4) *hpl[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 *hpl[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 *hafala* ‘to gather, to flow, to pour, to course’.⁵⁵ 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.⁵⁶ If this hypothesis is right, the Greek transliteration uses Υ 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 ου = /u/ was phonetically productive.

In line 1 there is not any sign that could be ascribed to a possible initial ο- for Ου 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 *ū̄* as back vowels, phonetically /u/ and /ū/ (ου in Attic-Ionic and *koinè*), and not Attic /ü/ or *koinè* /i/.⁵⁷ Does this therefore constitute a mistake of the Aramaic speaking author who did not know Greek?

⁵⁵ Negev (1991, no. 475) proposes *hafūl* ‘assiduous’, on the basis of *ICPAN*, 195 *hfl*, *hfīl*. Cf. also Wuthnow 1930, 117 and 143.

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 Ἴππαλος ‘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 /hippalō/. 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 Erythraei*⁶⁰ as Ἴππαλος indicating the Monsoon; the two forms would be a corruption of the most ancient ὕφαλος.⁶¹

As regards the father’s name, Greek θα[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-Ġāriyah al-Šarqiyah

23. This inscription was found in a wall of the village of al-Ġāriyah 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

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 South western 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 ὕπαλος < ὕφαλος 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-Ġāriyah al-Ġarbiyah that is located to the west, as the name suggests.

64 They assert that the final part of the Greek text, (ε)ἰς θεὸν [A]μέρου, corresponds to the Nabataean formula *l’lh ‘mrw*.

Text and translation

- 1) Γαφαλος Χαρητου εποησεν ις 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 *ḡafala* '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 *hrtw*⁶⁷ < Ar. *al-hārit* '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 *'mr*⁷⁰ (< 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

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 *ḡahfal* 'big army, legion, swarm', in addition it also appears as a variation of Ταφαλος < Ar. *ṭifl* 'child'. In Pre-Islamic Arabic *jhfl*: *Jahfal* is attested (*ICPAN*, 153).

67 *ICPAN*, 182-3. In Syriac *hrtw* 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 *hīrrit* 'expert guide'; the second is that it derives from Arabic *hurṭiy* '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.

69 *PAT*, 438 = Stark 1971, 45 and 106. Hatraean records /'jmrṭ (Beyer 1998, 102 and 164).

70 *ICPAN*, 436.

71 In Qumran Aramaic and in Christian Palaestianian 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

24. 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 Ṣaqqā 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 Baḍur/Baḍurō] (?)

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 Μαλεχος⁷⁴ and Μαλιχος⁷⁵ from the common North-West Semitic root *mlk* that identifies the king or 'one who rules', also the 'holder', the 'owner' (e.g.

73 The town is located at Jabal al-Durūz, literary 'Mount of Druze', also called Jabal al-'Arab. Al-Buṭaynah is placed in the ancient 'Arḍ al-Baṭaniyyah 'land of Batanaea', which is the Hellenized/Latinised form of the biblical Baṣān (Heb. *ha-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 *bṭn* does not exist in Arabic. Presumably the toponym is a calque from Hebrew in which /š/ > Ar. /t/. The town has archaeological remains of Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine and Islamic eras.

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 epigraphy⁷⁶ being of Arabic origin, from *badara* ‘to hasten, to hurry’, ‘to come suddenly’,⁷⁷ also ‘to be full’ (referring to the moon)⁷⁸ and in Common Aramaic *bdr* ‘to disperse, to scatter’.⁷⁹ 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.⁸⁰ It was a mausoleum, placed in the western part of al-Suwaydā’,⁸¹ on the north bank of the *wādī*, that was depicted and drawn by all travellers who passed by this place.⁸²

76 Cf. Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 70; *ICPAN*, 97; Negev 1991, nos. 173, 174. Other forms are: Βαδρος (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. *badr*.

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: Διονυσιάς) 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); *VIS*, 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) *npšh dy hmrt dy bnh lh 'dynt b'lh*
- 2) Οδαινατος⁸³ Αννηλου ωικοδομησεν την στηλην Χαμρατη τη
αυτου γυναικι

- 1) Tomb of Ḥamrat̄ who built for her 'Oḏaynat̄ her husband
- 2) Odainatos (son of) Annelos built the tomb for Chamrate his wife

Commentary

In line 1 *npšh*, 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 *hmrt* = Χαμρατη, an Aramaic name meaning 'red' (Com. *hmr*' 'wine' < *hmrt* 'to become wine or bitumen colored';⁸⁴ Ar. *hamr* 'wine').

We cannot be sure of the identity of the husband, named '*dynt* = Οδαινατος. The name, which is found both in Nabataean⁸⁵ and in Greek⁸⁶ epigraphy (whose meaning is linked to Arabic *uḏaynah* 'small ear' < *uḏn* 'ear' and Com. '*dn*'), should refer to Odaenathus the Arab,⁸⁷ 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.⁸⁸ 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 *hēmār* '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.

⁸⁵ Negev 1991, no. 36; al-Khaysheh 1986, 27.

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.⁸⁹ 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 *ι* after *ω* and *η* in *ὠικοδόμησεν* and in *Χαμράτη τῆι*.

Sī'

26. The epigraph was part of a series of inscriptions coming from the temple of Ba'alšamīn,⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹ 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 šlm' dy 'qymw 'l 'byšt*
- 2) *lmlykt br m'yrw br mlykt*
- 3) *lqbl dy hw bnh byrt' 'lyt'*
- 4) *kdw br 'byšt 'mn' šlm*

- 1) Ο δημος ο τ-
- 2) -ων Οβαισην-
- 3) -ων ετειμησε-

89 In Wadd. no. 2308 φυλῆς Σομαιθινῶν is encountered in an inscription belonging to the period of Commodus, coming from al-Suwaydā', whereas in Wadd. no. 2495 the Arabic form αβαβαη 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) Μοαιερου 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 'Obayšat erected
- 2) for Malīkaṭ son of Mo'ayrō son of Malīkaṭ
- 3) because he built the upper part of the temple
- 4) Kaḏō son of 'Obayšat, 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 *'qymw*, an *ap'el* form of *qwm* (Sem. 'to erect, to stand up'⁹²), 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.⁹³ In Aramaic it might be a *hapax*, used only in Nabataean; according to Cantineau (1930-32, 2: 62) it is a clear Arabism.⁹⁴ 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 Sī'. 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';⁹⁵ 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).

⁹⁵ Cf. Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 114-15; al-Khraysheh 1986, 108; Negev 1991, no. 641.

line 4, as Μαλειχθον.⁹⁶ His father's name, *m'yrw* (= Gr. Μοαιερου), may originate from Arabic *muḡayr*⁹⁷ 'one who puts down the furniture of his camel from off him, to relieve and ease him,'⁹⁸ even if a derivation from 'ār 'to wander, to roam'⁹⁹ 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 Aramaic¹⁰⁰ and Biblical Aramaic.¹⁰¹

The employment of *byrt'*, which in Aramaic mostly identifies a 'fortress',¹⁰² is interesting since here it takes on the meaning of 'temple precinct', in accordance with the Greek τὸ ἱερόν.¹⁰³ 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'¹⁰⁴) as the analogous Greek term ὑπεροικοδομήσαντι (< ὑπεροικοδομέω 'to build over or above'¹⁰⁵), 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.¹⁰⁶

96 It is attested in the same shape at Sūr al-Laḡā (*Quellen*, 145-7), and at Sī', in inscriptions from the ruins of the temple of Ba'alšāmīn (*CIS II* no. 163; Wadd. nos. 2367, 2368). See also Wuthnow 1930, 69 and 148.

97 Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 117.

98 Lane, 2316.

99 Precisely, al-Khraysheh (1986, 110) translates it as 'traveller', 'Reisender'; cf. also Negev 1991, no. 667. In the past this Semitic root had different meanings among sedentary and nomadic peoples if we consider that also today in Hebrew (language of sedentary people) 'ir indicates the 'city', whereas in Arabic (language of nomadic people) 'ir refers to the 'the caravan'. In Palmyrene *m'yr'* is the 'traveller' (*PAT*, 436 = Stark 1971, 34 and 96).

100 Porten, Yardeni 1986-99, B3.10, 17.

101 Ezra 4,16.

102 *DNWSI*, 155-6; Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 70. In Akkadian *birtu* 'fort, citadel, castle' (*AHw I*, 129; *CAD II*, 261), the term is also attested in Egyptian Aramaic (Porten, Yardeni 1986-99, B2.2 R.3), in Biblical Aramaic (Ezra 6,2) and in Syriac (*Pešittā*, 2Chr 17,12).

103 The substantive appears with the same meaning in the main inscription of the temple of Sī' (*CIS II* no. 163).

104 Sokoloff 2009, 1102-3.

105 *LSJ*, 1866.

106 al-Khraysheh 1986, 98. Cantineau (1930-32, 2: 106) asserts that we may also read it as *krw*. In pre-Islamic Arabic *kd* 'work, toil' is recorded (*ICPAN*, 496).

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) ΤΑΝΕΝΟΥ ΑΝΝΗ-
- 2) -ΛΟΥ ΤΟ ΜΝΗΜΕΙΟΝ
- 3) ṭnnw br ḥn'l nps'
- 4) ḥwrw br '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 'Oḅayšaṭ, 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-

¹⁰⁷ *PPAES* IVA, 84.

¹⁰⁸ Qanawāt is one of the earliest cities in Hauran. It is probably referred to in the Bible as *kanāt* (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.¹¹¹ According to Littmann (*PPAES* IVA, 85) the correct transliteration should be *Tāninū*, 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,¹¹² 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'.¹¹³

In line 4 we read the name *ḥwrw*, probably *Hūrō*,¹¹⁴ that is either linked to *Hūr*, son of 'Oḥayšaṭ, 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 'Oḥayšaṭ, mentioned in *CIS* II no. 164.¹¹⁵ 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 *šwdw* (Šūdō?), the sculptor, appears.¹¹⁶

The root 'mn' is productive in Biblical Hebrew 'āmān 'workman, artificer' and also in Syriac 'āwmanā 'workman, maker, craftsman'.¹¹⁷

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.

111 Pre-Islamic Arabic *znn* > *zanūn* 'suspicious' < *zn* 'thought, belief' (*ICPAN*, 394). Littmann 1909, 379; Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 102; Wuthnow 1930, 115 and 144. Negev (1991, no. 510) transcribes *Zānin* = Gr. Ζωναίος, Ζωνενη (Wuthnow 1930, 51 and 144).

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; *DJPA*, 209a; *DJBA*, 474a). Also, Ge. *ḥannā* 'grace, charm, joy' (Leslau 1991, 236).

114 al-Khraysheh 1986, 78-9. Negev (1991, no. 424) reads *ḥūwār* as 'young camel'.

115 *PPAES* IVA, 85.

116 The same person appears in an inscription published by Savignac (1904, 580): *šwdw br 'byšt 'mn' šlm* 'Šūdū son of 'Ubaišaṭ 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) <i>bšnt 33 lmrn'</i> | 1) [ερ]γον Ζαι- |
| 2) <i>plps 'bdw wtrw br</i> | 2) [-δ]ηλου ιερο- |
| 3) <i>bdr wqšyw br šwdy</i> | 3) [-δ]ουλου |
| 4) <i>wḥn'l br mšk'l wmn' b[r]</i> | |
| 5) <i>grmw bwms šlm glšw</i> | |
| 6) <i>br bntw</i> | |
| 7) <i>'n'm br 'šbw 'mn' šlm</i> | |

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1) In the year 33 of our lord | 1) [wo]rk of Zai- |
| 2) Philippos, made Wiṭrō, son of | 2) [-d]elos temple-ser- |
| 3) Baḏur(?) and Qašīō, son of Šūday | 3) - vant |
| 4) and Ḥann'el, son of Mašek'el and Mono'a(?) s[on] of | |
| 5) Garmō this altar of the statue of Gališō | |
| 6) son of Banaṭō (?) | |
| 7) 'An'am, son of 'Ašbō, 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 *mrn'* '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 *wtrw* which is transcribed in Greek as Ουιθρος,¹¹⁹ Οιθρος,¹²⁰ coming from Arabic *watar* 'rope, cord, bowstring',¹²¹ *witr* 'alone, unique'¹²² or from *waṭir* 'bed, carpet'.¹²³ Another possible derivation may be directly from Hebrew, given that the name of Jethro is used (Exod 3,1; 4,18) – *yit̄arō lit.* 'His Excellence, Posterity' (< *yit̄arā* 'abundance, rich', 'Überschüssiges, Erübrigtes').¹²⁴

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

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

Line 5. The father of *mn'* is *grmw* = Gr. Γαρμος,¹³¹ from Arabic < *ğarama* 'to cut off, to sever'¹³² (cf. Heb. *ğāram* and Syr. *gram*) or more

119 Wadd. nos. 92, 2537; *AGLI*, 156; Wuthnow 1930, 92 and 137.

120 Wadd. no. 137; Wuthnow 1930, 87 and 137.

121 Cf. Heb. *yeter*, Syr. *yatrā* and JBA, in addition to Ge. *watr*.

122 Negev 1991, no. 365 and al-Khraysheh 1986, 71-2. The latter reads *Wātiru* as 'einer, der auf Rache sinnt'.

123 Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 90.

124 *DGes*, 516; *KAHAL*, 234. As well as in Ofa., Gal., Sam. *ytr* 'remaining part, excess' < verb *ytr* (Jastrow 1903, 605; *DNWSI*, 482; *DJPA*, 248b; Tal, Sam, 369b).

125 It is also found in *PPAES* IVA no. 11.

126 Al-Khraysheh (1986, 161-2) translates 'fern (weit)entfernt' < *Qusaiu* 'Derjenige, der ins Exil geschickt wurde' with a clear connection with an 'exile'. *ICPAN*, 483: *qšy*.

127 Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 143; Negev 1991, no. 1037. The same form is recorded in Greek as Κασσαίος (Wuthnow 1930, 63), Κασσιος (Wuthnow 1930, 165; Pape 1911, 633), which are very frequent in the inscriptions from Negev (*LGPN* I, IIIA-B, IV, VA), and Κασσιος (*IGLS* 21,5 nos. 336, 347).

128 *ESE* II, 260.

129 Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 149.

130 *ICPAN*, 314; Negev 1991, no. 1115. Greek Σοδαίος (Wuthnow 1930, 112 and 169) and Σοδος (*IGLS* 21,5 nos. 319, 455, 457, 704).

131 Wadd. no. 2513 and Wuthnow 1930, 39 and 134.

132 *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 *grmy*, *grmy* are recorded (*PAT*, 433 = Stark 1971, 14 and 82) with the same meaning, as *grm't* < *grm* in Hatraean appears (Beyer 1998, 157 and 172).

probably < Heb. *gerem*, Com. *grm'* 'bone' and Ar. *ġirm* which is used in the sense of 'body', 'beast of burden'.¹³³

The artefact is named *bwms* */būmos/ 'pedestal, altar', a word also used in Syriac¹³⁴ and in Christian Palestinian Aramaic;¹³⁵ it is a clear loanword from Greek βωμός 'raised platform', 'altar with a base'.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)¹³⁷ and Saf. *gls*. It may derive from Arabic *ġālis* 'one who is sitting', 'assis'.¹³⁸

Line 6. The father's name, *bntw*, is linked to Greek Βαναθος,¹³⁹ coming from Arabic *bannah* 'smell, aroma, fragrance'¹⁴⁰ and employed both in male and female names.

Line 7. The sculptor's name *n'm* is an elative form of Arabic *na'im* 'calm, relaxed serene' (< *nu'aym* and *nu'm* 'comfortable life', 'wealth, prosperity, tranquility').¹⁴¹ In Greek the forms Αναμος,¹⁴² Ανεμου,¹⁴³ Ανημος and Ανομου¹⁴⁴ are present. The name can be read *An'am* or *An'um* in which the transition from /a/ to /u/ results from the presence of

133 The masculine name *garāmī* 'bony' is also attested in the Bible (1Chr 4,19).

134 In *Pešittā* 2Chr 1,3 we read: *būmsā*.

135 *DNWSI*, 168.

136 Monferrer-Sala 2013, 101. Actually, this Greek term, which generally derives from βαίνω < βῆμα 'altar' (Chantraine 1968, 204; Beekes 2010, 251), might be a loanword from Semitic if we consider that *bāmôt*, 'hills, high places', Jewish places of worship, derives from *bāmā* (< *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', 'Kulthöhe, Kultstätte, Bama'; *KAHAL*, 71). In Qumran Aramaic, PTA *bmh*, *bmt* 'pagan altar, high place' (Jastrow 1903, 176; *DJPA*, 105a) and *bym*s '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. *bā* 'half, share, portion'.

137 Other occurrences in *AGLI*, 59; Wuthnow 1930, 30; *IGLS* 21,5 nos. 67, 163, 369.

138 From pre-Islamic Arabic *jls*, Jals, Jils (*ICPAN*, 165). Cf. Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 78 and Negev 1991, no. 233 as well.

139 Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 72; *AGLI*, 99 and 347-8; *IGLS* 21,5 nos. 51, 260; Wuthnow 1930, 32 and 130.

140 *ICPAN*, 119; Negev 1991, no. 185.

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).

142 *AGLI*, 152, 155; Wuthnow 1930, 21 and 152.

143 *AGLI*, 76, 182, 186; Wuthnow 1930, 22 and 159.

144 Wadd. no. 2412.; Wuthnow 1930, 22-3 and 152.

the following /m/.¹⁴⁵ This last reading also identifies a southern Arabic tribe, the An'um, the watchmen of the temple of the god Yağūt in a place called Guraš.¹⁴⁶ The father's name, 'šbw, is new in Nabataean¹⁴⁷ corresponding to Greek Ασβος¹⁴⁸ and Οσεβος¹⁴⁹. Initially it was linked to Arabic *huṣayb* (diminutive of *ḥasab* 'pebbles, flints, gravel')¹⁵⁰ or *uṣayb* (< *aṣaba* 'to tie, to tighten, to bind', Syr. 'šab with the same meaning).¹⁵¹

In the broken part of the pedestal we find the Greek inscription that was copied by Mr. Magies: ἔργον Ζαιδηλου ιεροδούλου. It is probable that *Zaid'el*, a theophoric name,¹⁵² 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 1909¹⁵³ 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 / 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 εστηκεια
- 3) *d' šlmt'*
- 4) *dy š'y'w*

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

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'.

151 *PPAES* IVA, 79. It also means 'tense', 'emotional'. Negev (1991, 929) interprets it as *ḡaḏab* 'rage, anger'.

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'alšamin.

- 3) This (is) the image
4) of Še'īō

Commentary

Line 1. The name of ΣΕΕΙΑ occurs at the beginning of the line. There are other forms of this name, such as ΣΕΕΙΗΝΩΝ,¹⁵⁴ ΣΕΙΗΝΟΣ¹⁵⁵ and ΣΑΙΗΝΩΝ.¹⁵⁶ After the mention of ΣΕΕΙΑ, a segment written in *scriptio continua* appears: καταγηνουρα; 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,¹⁵⁷ Αὐρανίτις, -ιδος, here in the accusative.¹⁵⁸

In the last part of the line we see the singular feminine perfect participle ἑστηκυῖα 'she is standing, rising up' < ἵστημι.

Line 3. After the Nabataean demonstrative *d'* the word *šlmt'* occurs meaning 'image'.¹⁵⁹ 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 *zl* (*zl* > *šl*) 'shadow'¹⁶⁰ (cf. Ar. *zulmah* 'shadow' < *zalama* 'to become dark'; Ge. *šallim* 'balck, dark'); according to some scholars, the acceptance of 'image' is based on the aforementioned origins.¹⁶¹ Moreover, in Greek σκιά means 'shadow' assuming the concept of 'reflection, image, phantom'.¹⁶²

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 Šī'. As regards its etymology, in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic

154 Wadd. no. 2367.

155 Wadd. no. 2418.

156 In DM, II no. 250.

157 Josephus wrote that it was a Greek-Roman *provincia* (cf. *AJ* 16.9.1; 17.11.4).

158 We notice the diphthong *ei*, *usus* of the *koinè*, employed by the author in order to identify *ī* < *ēi*.

159 In Com. *šlm*, *šlm'* 'image (physical)'; JBA 'picture', BA *šalēm* 'form, appearance' (Dan 3,19), Syr. *šalmā* 'image, statue, idol' (Jastrow 1903, 1284; Payne Smith 1903, 480; *DNWSI*, 968; *DJPA*, 465b; *DJBA*, 966a; Sokoloff 2009, 1290). In Phoen. *šlm* 'statue' (Krahmalkov 2000, 417).

160 Eybers 1972, 29-32.

161 Scagliarini 2008, 63 and no. 6.

162 *LSJ*, 1609. Cf. *Soph. Aj.* 301. The original meaning is 'refuge, covering' < σκιάζω 'to overshadow, to cover' (cf. *LSJ*, 1610; *Hom. Il.* 21.232). Compare the Greek term with Hebrew *sukkā* 'shed, tabernacle, covering', Akk. *sukku* 'shelter'.

ic *š'ī'a* means 'smooth'¹⁶³ (Heb. *šā'a'* 'to spread, to stain, to smooth', 'bestreichen, glätten'¹⁶⁴); Littmann (*PPAES* IVA, 82) translates it 'levelled square' or 'even space', comparing¹⁶⁵ it to ἡ ἰερά πλατεῖα and ἡ πλατίος ἰερατική (in Wadd. nos. 2034 and 2035) from πλατύς 'wide, spacious and holy space'.¹⁶⁶ In Arabic the term is shortened by haplology to *sī' < s'y'*;¹⁶⁷ in addition *š'yw* occurs in an inscription from Sinai (Euting 1891, 558, line 3) standing for *si'y* 'man from Sī'.¹⁶⁸

Ultimately, the Greek transliteration suggests that the final -w of *š'y'w* 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/;¹⁶⁹ this implies that the deity's name should be pronounced /še'īō/ (?).

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.¹⁷⁰ The fact that *š'y'w* is an abbreviation of *rbt š'y'w* 'Lady/Goddess of Š'y'w' 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;¹⁷¹ the Semites, in particular, never separated a god from its 'house'.¹⁷² Considering that the temples at Sī' were dedicated to Ba'alšamīn and Dūšarā, we may infer that Še'īō was not the goddess of Sī', but probably an abstract form or the personification of the holy place: a θεὸς οὐνοῦ inside the temple of Dūšarā.¹⁷³

¹⁶³ *DJBA*, 1137b.

¹⁶⁴ *DGes*, 1397; *KAHAL*, 631.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. *RES* no. 1092.

¹⁶⁶ *LSJ*, 1413-4.

¹⁶⁷ *PPAES* IVA, 82.

¹⁶⁸ al-Khrayshah (1986, 183-4) reads *sā'iyu* 'Herr des Stammes'; Negev (1991 no. 1182) links it to Arabic *sa'īah* = Gr. Σαίος (Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 153).

¹⁶⁹ Garbini 2006, 214, no. 1.

¹⁷⁰ Littmann 1909, 377.

¹⁷¹ *PPAES* IVA, 82-3.

¹⁷² Wellhausen 1897, 9-10.

¹⁷³ *PPAES* IVA, 83.

Ḥarrān

30. The inscription was found in the little village of Ḥarrān, 50 km north of Bosra, by M. Wetzstein;¹⁷⁴ It was revisited at a later date by W.H. Waddington.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.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 Nabataeo-Aramaic script moving towards the Kufic calligraphic form of the early years of Islam.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.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 (Nabataeo-Arab) 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-ʿUṣṣī 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' šrhyl bn/br ṭlmw bnyt d' 'lmrṭwl

2) snt 463 b'd mfsd (?)

3) ḥybr/ḥnyn(?) b'm

1) Σαραηλος Ταλεμου

2) φυλαρχ[ο]ς εκτισεν το μαρτ[υριον]

3) του αγιου Ιωαννου ινδ[ικτιωνος] Α του ετους ΥΞΓ. Μνησθιε ο γραψας

1) I, Šarḥīl son of Ṭalemō, built this *martyrion*

2) in the year 463, after the expedition/defeat?

174 *AGLI*, no. 110.

175 *Wadd.* no. 2464.

176 Mascitelli 2006a, 184.

177 *VIS*, 117.

178 Healey 1990, 94.

- 3) of Khaybar? One year
 1) Saraelos (son of) Talemōs,
 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, *šrhyl* = Gr. Σαραηλος,¹⁸⁰ bears a name that is well-documented in South Arabic like *s²rh'l*¹⁸¹ 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 Ghassanid phylarches, since at the time of the building of the church of Ḥarrān the Ghassanid phylarch was a certain al-Mundīr.¹⁸² This is a theophoric from Arabic *šarah* 'to uncover, to reveal',¹⁸³ so 'God has revealed'.

The father's name, *ṭlmw* = Gr. Ταλεμου, is problematic from the point of view of transliteration and phonetic interpretation.¹⁸⁴ However, as already mentioned, in this stage of graphic transition from Nabataean to Arabic, the alphabet, which was still without diacritical marks, used the grapheme *ṭ* both for /z/ and for /t/, for this reason the name should be read *Zālim* 'unjust, unfair, oppressive', from *zalam* 'to be unjust, to oppress';¹⁸⁵ unfortunately, Greek does not have a grapheme neither for /z/ nor for /t/, 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 Ασαρηλος, as does Cantineau report (1930-32, 2: 51), probably 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 Sabeian (Ryckmans 1949, 57-8).

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

183 *ICPAN*, 345 reports *šrhyn*.

184 For the Greek form see Wuthnow 1930, 115.

185 See the root *zlm* in *ICPAN*, 393. Cf. CPA, Man., Sam. *ṭlm* and Syr. *ṭlam* with the same meaning (*DJPA*, 225b; Jastrow 1903, 537; Payne Smith 1903, 175; Sokoloff 2009, 533; Tal, *Sam*, 313a).

After the demonstrative particle *dā*, we read *'al-marṭūl*, a loanword from Greek μαρτύριον and also a *hapax* in Nabataean and Arabic; the usage of the final *l* in *mṛṭwl* is intriguing.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 *mafāsīd* 'raids, loots, robs' (sing. *mafsadah*¹⁸⁷); in ancient literature *'al-īfsād fī l-ārḍ* has the same meaning of *fitnah* in a political sense.¹⁸⁸ The last words were read by R. Dussaud and J. Cantineau *hyn[y]d* (= *ḥayna'id* 'at the time, at that time, then') *n'm* translating the entire sentence as: "après la corruption, la prospérité (?)".¹⁸⁹ Conversely, Littmann read *hyn[y]d* as *hybr* (= *Khaybar*) and *n'm* as *b'm* (= *bi-ām*), so *ba'da mafsadi ḥaybara bi-āmin*, and translated: "un anno dopo la spedizione di Khaybar".¹⁹⁰ To his mind, the sentence is related to a raid, to looting carried out at Khaybar¹⁹¹ by al-Ḥārīṭ bin Abī Šamir,¹⁹² although Littmann (1912, 195) identified the individual as al-Ḥārīṭ bin Jabalah.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 Ἰωάννου - with the indiction: ἰνδ(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: Μνησθεῖ 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 Nabataeo-Arabic part of the inscription, but the name does not seem to occur. C. Robin, by contrast, suggests another reading of the last Nabataeo-Arabic lines

¹⁸⁶ Fiema et al. (2015, 414 and no. 209) also quote the explanation of Shahid who reconstructs *mṛṭwr* [sic. for *marṭwr*].

¹⁸⁷ Dozy 1881, 2: 266.

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.

¹⁸⁹ Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 50; DM, 727.

¹⁹⁰ Littmann 1912, 194.

¹⁹¹ It is an oasis situated 153 km north of Medina that was inhabited by Jews before the advent of Islam.

¹⁹² As Ibn Qutayba suggests (*Kitāb al-ma'ārif*: 414).

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. *Ḥnyn*] vale [i.e. *ni’ma*]”.¹⁹⁴ 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 Hesychast¹⁹⁵ who died in 558 (ten years before the building of the *martyrion*), meaning that the chronology does not correspond.¹⁹⁶ 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 *↔* after *ḥ* and we may simply read *ḥibr* ‘prelate, religious authority’, a term often used in the Arabic-Christian world.¹⁹⁷ 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.¹⁹⁸ If the last reading is right, it is possible that *y* is used as *mater lectionis* to distinguish the substantive from *ḥibr* ‘ink’.

¹⁹⁴ Hoyland 2008, 66, no. 14.

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 *ḥbr* (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-Ḥiḡr (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”.

