
Aegean Sea

Miletus, Turkey

49. The epigraph was found at Miletus in 1905, near the temple of Apollo Delphinios during the excavations conducted by a German archaeological mission led by Th. Wiegand on behalf of the Royal Museum of Berlin (today known as Altes Museum).¹

In the Nabataean section the script is cursive tending to the ligature, although it is curious considering the nature of the inscription and the dating of its editing.

It is a dedication commissioned by Sylleus, the *epitropos* of king Obodas III, during his journey to Rome. According to Josephus² and Strabo³ the stone could be dated to 10 or 9 BCE. (Plate XI, no. 1)

Dimensions height about 13 cm; length 13 cm

Dating 1st BCE

Bibliography Clermont-Ganneau 1906b, 305-29; 1906c, 159-60; 1907, 289-91; 1924, 114; *RES* nos. 675 and 1100; *ESE* III, 89; Kawerau, Rehm 1914, I.3, 387-9; Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 45-6; McCabe 1984, 295; Vattioni 1987-88, 108, no. 21; Dijkstra 1995, 70-2; Roche 1996, 80-2, no. 9; *Quellen*, 127-8; Healey 2009, 120-1, no. 18

1 The text of the inscription was published by Mordtmann, who gave the transcription of the Nabataean section with some wrong additions, but he did not provide a photograph of the stone. Cf. *editio princeps* in Wiegand 1906.

2 Joseph. *AJ* 16.220-228, 271, 283-8.

3 Strabo, 16.4.24.

Text and translation

- 1) šly 'h mlk' br tym[---]
- 2) [---]t' 'l hyy 'bdt mlk' byrh t[bt]
- 3) [Συλλ]αιος αδελφος βασιλ[εως---]
- 4) ανεθηκεν Δι Δου[σαρει---

- 1) Šullay (/Šollē) brother of the king, son of Taym[---]
- 2) [---] for the life of Obodas the king, in the month of T[ēbēt]
- 3) [Syll]aios, brother of the ki[ng---
- 4) erected for Zeus Du[sares---

Commentary

In line 1 Sylleus is named as 'h = Gr. ἀδελφός 'brother',⁴ here interpreted as a sobriquet that identifies an official relationship or a vaguer kinship.⁵ Sylleus' father's name is *tym-*, probably *tymw* meaning 'servant' (for the equivalent Greek form Θάμιος see nos. 8, 20 and 22).⁶

In line 2 we notice the letters *t* and ' . Healey (2009, 120-1) restores and reconstructs the word *mdt'* 'city, town' referring to Miletus. At the end of the line only the sign *t* is visible, linked to *t[bt*, that is the name of the tenth Hebrew month, the fourth of the secular calendar (Esth 2,16); it corresponds to a part of December and a part of January and it was simply called 'the tenth month' (1Chr 27,13).

In line 4 the Greek part presents an important case of cultural syncretism in which the cult of Zeus is associated with that of Dūšarā.

Littmann (*PPAES* IVA, XV-XVI) speculates that Sylleus came to Miletus carrying a handwritten copy of the text, drafted by himself on a papyrus or a parchment. Later he delivered it to a Greek man who translated the dedication and copied the Nabataean part.

4 Both Josephus and Strabo call Sylleus "brother" or "epitropos".

5 Healey 2009, 121. See also Starcky 1966, 939.

6 Sylleus' father's name is recorded in another inscription from Puteoli, in *CIS* II no. 157. The name is also found in Hatraean (Beyer 1998, 167) and Palmyrene (*PAT*, 441 = Stark 1971, 54-5 and 117).

Delos, Greece

50. The epigraph was found on the island of Delos. The inscription is engraved on a small white marble stone that is considerably ruined and broken on both left and right parts.⁷ This is another dedication to king Obodas III commissioned by Sylleus.

The difficulty in reconstructing the text is related to the wear of the stone that complicates the reading. Nevertheless, we notice three initial lines written in the Nabataean script and three more in Greek.

Dimensions height of the right part 185 cm; length 33 cm; thickness 15 cm; height of the Nabataean letters 2 cm; height of the Greek letters from 18 to 2 cm⁸

Dating 1st BCE (9 BCE)

Bibliography Plassart 1928, 263; *ID* 5 no. 2315; Bruneau 1970, 244-5; Milik 1976, 146, no. 11; Vattioni 1987-88, 106, no. 15; Roche 1996, 83-5; *Quellen*, 124-6

Text and translation

- 1) - *r*-
- 2) [---] *hyy* 'b[d]t [---]
- 3) [---] *dn* [---]
- 4) [---]ισια[---]
- 5) [---]υδο[υσαρει---
- 6) [---]ορον[---]

- 1) - [Dūša]r[a]
- 2) [---] for the life of 'Obo[d]as [---]
- 3) [---] this [---]
- 4) [---](Syllaios ?)[---]
- 5) [---](to Du)[sares---
- 6) [---] ? [---]

Commentary

In line 1 we only read *r* followed by unspecified signs.⁹

In line 2 we can distinguish *hyy* 'life' and 'b[d]t' 'Obodas'.¹⁰

⁷ Plassart 1928, 263.

⁸ The dimensions have been provided by Plassart 1928, 263.

⁹ Also Roche (1996, 84) reads the same.

¹⁰ Reconstruction by Roche (1996, 84).

In the Greek part, the first line is intended as ΙΣΙΑ¹¹ (in *ID* 5 no. 2315), while in line 5 ΥΔΟ and in line 6 ΟΡΟΝ appear. The inscription was also studied by Starcky and Milik who read in lines 2 and 3: ‘for the life of Obodas the king, the king of the Nabataeans’; while in lines 5 and 6: ‘[D]ii Dou[sarei] Sul[laios]’.¹²

At a later stage Milik suggests reading the inscription as completely as possible through the insertions of many reconstructions and the addition of a seventh line.¹³ He rebuilds a dedication made by Sylleus to Obodas III. Moreover, it is probable that the inscription dates back to 9 BCE and was written after that of Miletus. In addition, among the pottery remains in the sanctuary B three lamps of the Imperial era and the bottom of a lamp, today lost, carrying the inscription [Z] ωΣΙΜ[ος] were found; these findings are a proof that the site was frequently visited starting from a later period (1st century CE), so the dedication of Sylleus is a testimony to the fact that the sanctuary already operated towards the end of the 1st century BCE¹⁴

A further proof that the inscription was written by Sylleus is the discovery at Delos of a sculpted-head, representing Obodas III, belonging to the dedications produced by Sylleus during his journey to Rome.¹⁵

11 Plassart (1928, 263) initially reconstructed [ύ]ψίστ[οφ], while he transcribed the whole Greek section as follows: (1) -ΥΙΣΤ - (2) - ΥΙΔΟ - (3) - ΟΙΟΛ -. He did not provide the Nabataean part.

12 Bruneau 1970, 244.

13 Milik 1976, 146, no. 11. He presents the following reconstruction of the epigraph:

- 1 [’bd šly ’h] m[lk’ br tymw]
- 2 [nbtŷ]’ lwh’ ldwš[r’ ’lh]
- 3 [gy’’’] hyy ’bdt m[’k’]
- 4 [wd’ byw]m
- 5 bšbt šnt 20
- Συλ[λαῖος]
- 6 Δου[σαρει]
- 7 τὸ δε[λτίον]

Translation: 1 [A fait Šullai frère du] r[oi fils de Taimu] 2 [le Nabatéen] la tablette en l’honneur de Dūša[râ dieu] 3 [de Gaiâ pou]r le salut de ‘Ubdat le ro[i] 4 [et cela au jou]r 5 de shebat en l’an 2[1] (février 8 av. J.C.) Syl[laios] 6 à Dou[sares] 7 la ta[bl]ette].

Vattioni (1987-88, 106) believed that Milik’s transcription was simply an adaptation of that proposed by Bruneau who conversely does not follow the Nabataean-Greek layout of the original text.

It should be noted that Milik reads in line 2 *lwh’*, a term used in Com., meaning ‘stone tablet’ on which a text may be engraved (*DNWSI*, 569). In line 3 he identifies *Gay’â* (Ar. ‘al-Ġi), the name of the western suburb of Petra.

14 Bruneau 1970, 244-5.

15 al-Salameen 2008, 25.

Kos, Greece

51. The inscription was found on the island of Kos,¹⁶ in March 1936, near the little church of Saint George. Mario Segre announced this discovery at a marginal note in the *editio princeps* written by Levi Della Vida.¹⁷ The inscription was not carved in the place in which it was found, in fact, it is possible that the epigraph comes from a sanctuary brought to light dozens of metres away from the above-mentioned church. It was probably a sanctuary dedicated to Aphrodite Pandamos and Pontia. According to Segre, this suggestion is corroborated by the fact that the sanctuary, being located in the port, was frequented by traders who stopped over on the island; this is proved by an inscription mentioning a sacrifice to the ἔμποροι and to the ναυκλᾶροι, travellers and ship owners who sailed away from Kos. Therefore, it is possible that a Nabataean merchant made a vow to his own goddess assimilated to Aphrodite.¹⁸

The inscription consists of eight lines, of which the first five are written in Nabataean and the others are drafted in Greek, carved onto a white quadrangular marble stone, cut in the rear and upper part. The stone is also damaged on the right side. According to Levi Della Vida on the top of the stone, on the left, we may glimpse a cut decoration in the shape of festoon from which a twirling tendril climbs down; the same figure would appear on the right side.¹⁹ The two decorations, as other funeral altars from Kos show, were probably linked on the top by a garland crown, even though this kind of motif had not previously featured in votive monuments.²⁰ (Plate XI, no. 2)

Dimensions height 51 cm; length 60 cm; thickness 37 cm; the remaining part of the block is 41 cm high and 40.5 cm long; height of the Nabataean letters 3 cm; height of the Greek letters 2 cm

Dating 1st CE (9 CE)

Bibliography Levi Della Vida 1938, 139-48; Rosenthal 1939, 91, no. 4; Roche 1996, 78-80; Nehmé 2003, 11-3; *Quellen*, 128-9; *IG XII* 4,2, no. 558

16 This is part of the Dodecanese islands in front of the Turkish city of Bodrum, ancient Halicarnassus, 4 km off the coast. The island was frequented by Nabataean traders who traded their own products with the West.

17 Levi Della Vida 1938, 147-8.

18 Levi Della Vida 1938, 147.

19 Levi Della Vida 1938, 139.

20 Levi Della Vida 1938, 148.

Text and translation

- 1) [--] šnt 18 lhrtt
- 2) [--]w 'bd 'wšlhy
- 3) [br rwhw] br 'zqn rb't
- 4) [--]t' ll'z' 'lht'
- 5) [l hyy] hrtt mlk nbṭw
- 6) Αυσαλλασου Ρουα[ιου]
- 7) Ναβαταιου Θεα Αφρο[διτη]
- 8) ευχην

- 1) [--] year 18 of Aretas
- 2) [--] made 'Awšallah
- 3) [son of RWḤW (Rūehō?)] son of 'ZQN the altar
- 4) [--] for al-'Uzzā the goddess
- 5) [for the life] of Aretas king of the Nabataeans
- 6) Ausallos (son of) Roua[ios]
- 7) the Nabataean, to the Goddess Aphro[dite]
- 8) vow

Commentary

Line 1. At the beginning we read šnt 'year' followed by the numerical symbols 10+5+1+1+1 = 18. Levi Della Vida reconstructed the expression *byrh* 'b 'in the month of 'Ab' evaluating no more than six letters that may precede the term šnt in the cut part; in fact, *byrh* contains four letters and only the mention of the month 'b, of two characters, may fill the blank space.²¹ However it seems to be difficult to reconstruct this verse given the absence of epigraphic data and basing our assumption only on the Nabataean *usus scribendi*.²²

At the end of the line there is the mention of Aretas, *lhrtt* 'for Aretas'. So, the year 18 could be that of the reign of king Aretas III (87-62 BCE) or Aretas IV (9 BCE-10 CE). The lack of the common epithet of Aretas IV, *rhm* 'mh 'he who loves his people', corroborates the assumption that the inscription refers to king Aretas III,²³ but it may also concern Aretas IV, as Nehmé points out (2003, 13), since the epithet, though recurring, is not necessary in the inscriptions of Aretas IV.²⁴

²¹ Levi Della Vida 1938, 142.

²² Nehmé 2003, 12 fn. 28.

²³ Levi Della Vida 1938, 142; *Quellen*, 129.

²⁴ For instance, the inscription from al-Ġawf, northern Saudi Arabia, includes the name of Aretas IV without his epithet (lines 3-4): *šlm bšnt 13 lhrtt* 'peace, in the year

As regards the palaeography, we may ascertain that the author writes ' in different shapes; so ' occurs in the archaic form (3 times in line 4) and in the late form (4 times in lines 2, 3 and 4). In addition, sometimes the characters appear to be isolated in writing, as in the traditional archaic inscriptions, but on other occasions they show ligature tending to the cursive script; it is a stylistic transition that begins since the 1st century BCE. It is also true that the writing is not so archaic and it is also recorded in the few known inscriptions of Aretas III;²⁵ therefore it could simply belong to the period of Aretas IV. Moreover, Segre pointed out that the shape of the Greek characters dated back to the period between the end of the 1st century BCE and the beginning of the 1st century CE,²⁶ but Levi Della Vida rejected his hypothesis²⁷ taking into account what Littmann²⁸ spotted in the bilingual from Miletus (no. 49); in fact, it shows a more modern kind of script compared to the proposed dating, i.d. 9 BCE. Therefore, here the Nabataean characters could have been written by a Greek author who transcribed them from a copy in which they appeared in a cursive and modern shape. In his footnote Segre added that the Greek letters date back to the second half of the 1st century BCE;²⁹ finally, D. Bosnakis and K. Hallof date the epigraph to 9 CE.³⁰

Line 2. After the damaged part, on the right side, we see a final *w* that is part of the reconstructed common expression referred to Aretas IV: *mlk nbṭw* 'king of the Nabataeans'. At the end of the line the name 'wšlhy, in spite of 'wš'lyh,³¹ in *scriptio defectiva* appears. This theophoric (= Gr. Αυσαλλασου, in line 6) is based on the root 'wš 'to give, to offer' (for the analysis see no. 37).

Line 3. At the beginning we may only reconstruct the father's name according to its presence in the Greek part, in line 6, as Πουα[ιου]. Presumably it corresponds to the Nabataean name *rwhw* - Rūhū,³² from Arabic *rawh* 'rest, relief',³³ compared to Greek Πουαιος³⁴ and al-

13 of *hrtt*'; it resembles our inscription. Cf. al-Theeb 1994, 34.

25 Cf. *CIS* II nos. 349, 442 and *RES* no. 1432.

26 Levi Della Vida 1938, 143.

27 Levi Della Vida 1938, 143 fn. 2.

28 In *PPAES* IVA, XV-XVI.

29 Segre, *Postilla*, in Levi Della Vida 1938, 148.

30 *IG* XII 4,2, no. 558.

31 For its occurrences see Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 58.

32 As read by Nehmé 2003, 12.

33 *ICPAN*, 290; al-Khraysheh 1986, 164-5; Negev 1991, no. 1060.

34 Wuthnow 1930, 98 and 167.

σο Παουαος.³⁵ The name *rwḥw* is attested five times in the Nabataean inscriptions, but it only refers to two individuals.³⁶ If the reading is right, Greek helps us to demonstrate the presence of another *rwḥw* outside the *Nabataea*.³⁷

The following name is that of the author's grandfather. Levi Della Vida proposed to read *'lqn* that is akin to Arabic names *'Ilāqa* or *'Allāq*.³⁸ Conversely, Rosenthal interpreted the second letter *l* as *z* reading *'zqn*.³⁹ The name *'Azqān*⁴⁰ is not found in Nabataean and its origin remains obscure;⁴¹ we may suppose that it is a transcription of the Homeric Greek name *Ἀσκάνιος*.⁴² At the end of the line there is evidence of the dedicated object in the inscription, which is a *rb't'* (for a closer examination of the term see comments at no. 48).

Line 4. After the broken part of the stone there is the singular feminine suffix in emphatic state, *-t'*, referring to *šlmt'* 'statue' followed by the sentence *lb'l' 'lht'* '[and the statu]e (?) to the goddess Ba'alā'.⁴³ According to Levi Della Vida, this latter was the goddess *al-'Uzzā* 'mother goddess', similar to the Greek Aphrodite, who assumed several names among the Semites of the North and the Nabataeans. Probably *'lb'ly* 'the Lady' replaced the other epithet of *al-'Uzzā*, which was 'the Powerful'.⁴⁴ On the contrary, Rosenthal suggested reading the whole expression as follow: *ll'z' 'lht'*; if the reconstruction is right, and the goddess identified by Rosenthal is really *al-'Uzzā*, this will prove to be the only Nabataean inscription in the Mediterranean area that quotes a deity other than *Dūšarā*.⁴⁵

35 Cantineau 1930-32, 2: 146.

36 Macdonald 1999, 284-5. There are only two inscriptions in which the name is present. In one of these (*CIS* II no. 182) two people, both named *rwḥw*, are quoted once in line 1 and other two times in line 2. One of these two men is also mentioned in another inscription (*CIS* II no. 184).

37 Possibly, he could be a descendant of the two *rwḥw*, cited in *CIS* II no. 182, since they lived at the time of Malichus III, son of Aretas IV, in the year 17 of his reign, i.d. in 50 CE (line 3). In Palmyrene *rwḥ'* and *rwḥbl* (*PAT*, 440 = Stark 1971, 49 and 111) are attested.

38 Levi Della Vida 1938, 144.

39 Rosenthal 1939, 91, no. 4.

40 There is no trace of a *'* to read /ā/ and probably it is a *defective* spelling.

41 In Arabic the root *'azaqa* means 'to hoe, to hoe the ground' (cf. Heb. *'āzaq* with the same meaning), but it is not used to express personal names.

42 Roche 1996, 79. The name appears in Homer, *Il.* 2.862-3; 13.792. Cf. also Pape 1911, 158.

43 Levi Della Vida 1938, 144.

44 Levi Della Vida 1938, 149.

45 Roche 1996, 80.

Line 5. Levi Della Vida fills the last line with *ʿl hyy* ‘for the life of’ followed by *hrtt mlk nbṭw* ‘Aretas, king of the Nabataeans’.

Line 6. The Greek section mentions the name *Αυσαλλασου* in the genitive case rather than in the nominative. It is possible to find an isolated personal name in the genitive case, but only in sepulchral inscriptions in which the terms *μνήμα* or *τάφος* are implied; for this reason we may speculate that the noun *κτίσμα* ‘building’ is omitted here, even if it would be unusual.⁴⁶ In addition, we have *Αυσαλλας* and *Αυσαλλου*⁴⁷ in the genitive, but not *Αυσαλλασου* < **Αυσαλλασος* (?). This could imply that the author of the epigraph knew a bit of Greek and marked the genitive case as a calque of Nabataean *ʿwsʿlhy*, whose compound name reflects the genitive case. Furthermore, in *Αυσαλλασου* the intervocalic *σ* was not elided probably because the author considered it the ending *-ας*, so he added the genitive marker *-ου* to it.

⁴⁶ Levi Della Vida 1938, 140.

⁴⁷ Wuthnow 1930, 30.

