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New Nabataean inscriptions from the site of al-Sīj in the region of al-'Ula, Saudi Arabia

Solaiman 'Abd al-Rahmān al-Theeb

Summary
A group of twenty-eight Nabataean inscriptions was found at the site of al-Sīj, c.40 km east of al-'Ula, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Several of them are by men who describe themselves as frs 'horseman, cavalryman'. Some provide names which are rare or new in the Nabataean onomasticon.

Keywords: Nabataean inscriptions, Saudi Arabia, al-'Ula, cavalry, personal names

This group of inscriptions was found at the site of al-Sīj, 40 km east of al-'Ula in north-west Saudi Arabia (Fig. 1). They were discovered by Dr Badr al-Faqayr, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, King Saud University, during his geographical survey of the province, in the spring of 2008.

The study of these twenty-nine inscriptions provides the following information.

1. There are thirty-six personal names, which can be analysed in the following manner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Simple</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Compound</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Hypocoristic</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Consisting of a divine name</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Non-Semitic</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Unspecified</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

   a. Among the twenty-three simple personal names, the *fāl* form is the most common. Thus: *blhw* (no. 15), *dmy* (nos 7; 16/2; 20), *hwrr* (11d), *hy* (12), *dyw* (6: 2, 9), *nwq* (9), *rbw* (4). There are six names of the *fāl* or *fā'il* form: *hn* (11b), *mtrw* (13), *ndmw* (10), *śm* (1), *rdw* (13a), *slhw* (4). There are three names of the *mfbl* form: *mslm* (13), *myqd* (3), *msd* (11b). There are two names of the *fa'alah* form: *gydt* (no. 21), *wert* (5/2; 17/2). There are two names of the *fa'ālān* form: *glqyn* (21), *lyr* (1). There is one example of each of the following three forms, the *afk* form: *ḥlb* (11c); the *fa'kal* form: *swrw* (11a; 14/1); and the *tafa'kal* form: *thnh* (13a).

   b. Compound names: *ws*b ‘gift of b’ (15a), *mr*lyy ‘the servant of lyy’ (11c), *bd*sms ‘servant of sms’ (11), *bdfrtt ‘servant of Ḩrtt’ (16/1), *šy*lhy ‘follower of lhy’ (10).

   c. Hypocoristic names: *hyw ‘life [+ the name of a deity]’ (5/2; 17/1), *hnyw ‘virtue [+ the name of a deity]’ (2; 3), *tyrw ‘servant [+ the name of a deity]’ 5/1; 8; 18/1).

   d. One personal name consists of the name of a god: *b*twr (6/2), which is a name containing the divine name ‘ttr, preceded by the preposition b.

   e. There are only two personal names that do not have a Semitic etymology: *hr* (2) which may represent the Egyptian divine name *Hrw* via its Greek form *Horos/Hōros*, and *rws* (5/1; 8; 18/1; 22; 23), which is the Latin name *Rufus*.


3. Five of the authors of these commemorative inscriptions give their profession as frs ‘the horseman’.
4. There are several different ways in which the inscriptions begin: (a) with the singular noun $\Psi$kyr ‘remembrance’ (1; 5; 7; 11; 11a; 11c; 12; 14; 15; 16); possibly appearing as $\Psi$k in 11d; (b) with a personal name (2; 3; 4; 6; 9; 10; 19; 20; 23); (c) with the conjunction $w$ (8); (d) with the singular noun $slm$ ‘greetings’ (11b; 13a; 17; 18; 21; 22); (e) with the interjection $bly$ ‘yes, indeed’ (13).

5. The longest inscriptions are numbers 5, 6, and 16, which each consist of three lines, while we have four inscriptions of two lines (14; 17; 18; 19). The remaining twenty-two are of one line.

6. This group of inscriptions provides us with nineteen lexical items. Two verbs, both in the third person singular masculine perfect: $ktb$ (16/3; 18/2), $qr$ (19/2); thirteen nouns including one, $hry$ ‘the freedman’ (11a) occurring here in the emphatic state for the first time; the prepositions $b$ (ten times) and $l$ (once); the conjunction $w$ occurs five times; the interjection $bly$ occurs once.

7. Some of these inscriptions were well carved (5; 7; 16; 17; 18; 20; 21) by people with a good knowledge of Nabataean calligraphy. Others were reasonably well engraved (1; 9; 22; 23) and the rest were either carelessly written or have suffered from weathering, making it difficult to obtain the correct reading. The inscriptions of this group are distributed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elegantly written</th>
<th>Well written</th>
<th>Carelessly written</th>
<th>Weathered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. The engravers of only four of these inscriptions (3; 7; 16; 20) used the dot to distinguish the letter $d$ from the letter $r$.

9. Each of the inscriptions in this group relates to only one person, with the exception of no. 5, which was written by the two friends, Tymw son of Rwfs and Hyw son of N’rt, and no. 16 which was carved by two brothers, Khylw and ‘bdhršt sons of Dmy.

10. These texts were accompanied by a number of animal drawings, some carefully drawn such as the ostrich near no. 6, and the two camels (nos 13 and 19). There is also a scene representing a dog chasing an ibex (no. 5).

11. All of these inscriptions were written by or for men, except for 13a, which — if my reading is correct — was carved by or for a woman.

**Inscription no. 1 (Fig. 2)**

$\Psi$kyr ‘$\check{\alpha}m$ frs’ $br$ ‘$\check{\lambda}n$ b-tb
The good remembrance of ‘$\check{\alpha}m$ the horseman son of ‘$\check{\lambda}n$
This short commemorative inscription is well written and the reading given above is therefore certain.

δkyr: a noun in the masculine singular construct (passive participle). It occurs very frequently in Nabataean and other Semitic inscriptions (see al-Theeb 2000a: 71).

ψm: a simple personal name of either the fā'il or the fi'āl form. Thus, it could be vocalized as ʾašım, ʾišām, or ʾašm. The first would mean ‘defender’, and the second would mean ‘the one who has been protected’. All three personal names appear in the early Arabic sources: ʾašım in al-Qalqashandi 1984: 447; Ibn al-Kalbi 1986: 692; al-Andalūsī 1983: 274; ʾašm and ʾišām in Ibn Durayd 1991: 338, 544. Indeed, the personal names ʾašım and ʾišām are still in use today (Ibn al-Zubayr & Badawī 1991: 1098, 1173).

frs: a noun in the masculine singular emphatic meaning ‘the horseman, the cavalryman’, occurs in this form in a number of Nabataean and other Semitic inscriptions (see al-Theeb 2000a: 210–211).

hrś: probably a form of the Egyptian divine name Ḥrw via its Greek form Horos/Hörōs (Preisigke 1922: col. 343), in which case it would be a hypocoristic. It appears here for the first time in Nabataean inscriptions.

hnynw: a hypocoristic name which means ‘virtue [+ the name of a deity], derived from the Semitic root Ḥ-N-N, ‘to show favour, to be merciful’, which is attested in a number of Semitic inscriptions (e.g. al-Theeb 1993: no. 219; 1995: no. 1). The name is found in this form in a number of Nabataean (e.g. JSNab 250, 259/2, 279; al-Theeb 1995: nos 1, 37; 2002a: nos 1/1, 2/2; 2005: nos 19d, 50), and Palmyrene inscriptions (Stark 1971: 89). It also occurs in the form ħmn in Ugaritic (Gröndahl 1967: 136), Aramaic (Maraqten 1988: 166), Ammonite (Jackson 1983: 512), Safaitic (e.g. al-Rūsān 2004: no. 346; Clark 1983: nos 302, 1065), Thamudic (e.g. Eskoubi 1999: no. 94), and Syriac inscriptions (e.g. Drijvers & Healey 1999: no. Am 10/13), and in the Old Testament (Brown, Driver & Briggs 1906: 339; Holladay 1988: 110). It is also attested in Qatabanic inscriptions as hnynm (Hayajneh 1998: 125), and as ħyn in Minaic (al-Said 1995: no. 94), and ḥnnh in Lihiyanite inscriptions (e.g. JSLiḥ 252). It could be the equivalent of the Arabic name ḥnayn, which is found in early Arabic sources (al-Andalūsī 1983: 116) and is still in use among the Arabs (Ibn al-Zubayr & Badawī 1991: 474).

slm: a noun in the masculine singular absolute, found in Nabataean and other Semitic inscriptions (see al-Theeb 2000a: 253–254).

Inscription no. 2 (Fig. 2)

hrś frs’ b r ḥnw nw slm
Greetings of Hrs the horseman son of Ḥnw

Inscription no. 3 (Fig. 2)

ḥnw frs’ b r ṣyw slm
Greetings of Ḥnw the horseman son of Ṣyw

This short commemorative inscription is distinguished by the use of the dot, which occurs on the fourth letter of the second personal name, a phenomenon well known in Nabataean inscriptions (see Nehmé 2010: 55, 56–59). Since there is no dot over the r in frs’ and br, this means
that this name must be read 𝑚DEPTH_yr𝑤DEPTH
depth/mDEPTH_yrwdepth (rather than
depth/mDEPTH_yr𝑤, mDepth/gyr𝑤, etc).

To the best of my knowledge a name with this spelling
has not been found before in any Semitic inscription.
However, 𝑚Depth/d is well attested in Safaitic inscriptions
(Harding 1971: 552), and 𝑚Depth/gy𝑤 is also known (1971: 553,
to which add Clark 1983: no. 253). It is worth mentioning
that two names probably from the same root are also
known from Safaitic inscriptions: .Depth/gyDepth (e.g. Abbadi 2006:
132; Al.Depth/lūlū 1996: nos 373, 352), and .Depth/gyDepth (e.g. Ababneh
2005: no. 286) the latter also being found in Liḥyānī

**Inscription no. 4 (Fig. 2)**

\[\text{Ϧḥlw frs} \text{ Depths br rbw slm}\]

Greeting of Ψḥlw the horseman son of Rbw

\[\text{Ϧḥlw:} \text{ a simple personal name in the } fa\text{ Depth} \text{ form of the root } S-H-L, \text{ which is found in Ugaritic (Gordon 1965: 473), and in the Old Testament (Brown, Driver & Briggs 1906: 843), Syriac (Costaz 1963: 299) with the meaning } \text{ Depths to neigh}. Ψ\text{ It appears that the intended meaning of this name is courage and bravery. A name, } \text{Ψḥylt, from the same root is found in Nabatean inscriptions (JSNab 280).}\]

\[\text{rbw:} \text{ although this is the most likely reading, it should be borne in mind that because the letters } d \text{ and } r \text{ can have identical forms, and the shapes of } b \text{ and } n \text{ can be very similar, especially in medial position, this name could in theory also be read } \text{rnw}, \text{ dbw} \text{ (or } gbw\text{), } d\text{nw} \text{ (or } gnw\text{).}\]

The name rbw occurs in Nabatean (Cantineau 1978, ii: 145), and Safaitic inscriptions (e.g. al-Manaser 2008: no. 299). Compare rDepth/ in Palmyrene texts (Stark 1971: 111), rDepth/ in Thamudic (e.g. al-Qāḥṭānī 2007: no. 101; Shatnawi 2002: 691) and in Qatabanic inscriptions (Hayajneh 1998: 145). It could be compared with the name rDEPTH Depth, which was reported in Liḥyānī inscriptions (Abū al-Depth/حسن 2002: 295). It could be explained as a simple personal name meaning 'the master, the great'.

\[\text{To the best of my knowledge, this name has not been found in any of the Semitic }\]

\[\text{inscriptions. It could be derived from the Arabic roots R-W/Y-N.}\]

\[\text{The name } \text{DEPTH/db, occurs in Safaitic inscriptions (Harding 1971: 233; Clark 1983: 452). A simple name related to Arabic dābDEPTH \text{ Depths ‘bear’}.}\]

\[\text{The name } GB\text{ is found in Safaitic (Harding 1971: 248), and } GB\text{DEPTH in Qatabanic }\]

\[\text{inscriptions (Hayajneh 1998: 69).}\]

\[\text{A name, } an\text{, is found in Thamudic (al-Theeb 1999: no. 171) and Safaitic }\]

\[\text{inscriptions (Harding 1971: 244), and in the Old Testament (Brown, Driver & Briggs 1906: 192). It might be compared with the name } dB\text{ in Palmyrene (Stark 1971: 83) and dyny in Syriac inscriptions (al-Jadir 1983: 369). The most acceptable interpretation would be that it is derived from the Semitic root D-Y-N, meaning ‘do justice’, found in the Old Testament (Brown, Driver & Briggs 1906: 193) and Syriac (Costaz 1963: 60) and in other Semitic languages (see Hoříček & Jongeling 1995: 363).}\]

\[\text{A name } GB\text{ is found in SafaiDepth} \text{ tic inscriptions (Winnett & Harding 1978: no. 1725a).}\]

\[\text{A similar name, } rDEPTH Depth, \text{ occurs in Thamudic inscriptions, meaning ‘their master’ (al-Theeb 2002b: 78).}\]
Inscription no. 5 (Fig. 2)

Ψkyr tymw br rwf
whyw br nrt b-Γb
wslm l-ΚlmΜ

Good remembrance of Tymw son of Rwfs, and Дyw son of NКrt and greetings for ever

This inscription, which is composed of three lines, is the longest in this group. With the exception of the interjection bly ‘truly, indeed’, the writer Tymw has used all of the terms which appear in Nabataean memorial inscriptions: Ψkyр, b-Γb, slm, and l-КlmΜ.

tymw: a hypocoristic name ‘servant [+ the name of a deity]’. It has been found in Nabataean (Cantineau 1978, ii: 155; al-Khraysheh 1986: 187; Negev 1991: 68), International (Imperial) Aramaic (e.g. al-Theeb 2007: no. 4b/1–2), Palmyrene (Stark 1971: 115), Minaic (al-Said 1995: 76–77), Sabaic (e.g. RES 463/2), Safaitic (e.g. al-Khraysheh 2002: no. 297), and Thamudic inscriptions (Shatnawi 2002: 662); the name resembles the well-known Arabic personal name Taym.

rwf: a transliteration of the Latin name Rufus which, to the best of my knowledge, has been found twice before in Nabataean inscriptions (Cantineau 1978, ii: 146).

Ήyw: I consider this to be a hypocoristic personal name meaning ‘living [+ the name of a deity]’. It is found in other Nabataean inscriptions (e.g. al-Theeb 2002a: nos 80, 89/4, 103, 154; 2005: nos 25, 29; Negev 1991: 28), as well as in Sabaic (e.g. RES 3090), Qatabanic (Hayajneh 1998: 126), Minaic (al-Said 1995: 96), Safaitic (e.g. Caskel 1954: no. 77/1), and Lihyanite inscriptions (e.g. Clark 1983: no. 375). The close proximity of the signs Κ and Κ may suggest to some that it should be read as m. If so, the name would be mrt (see al-Theeb 1998: no. 213/1).

nΚrt: a simple personal name in the faΚalah form from the root N- ‘R, (Ibn Manzūr 1955–1956, v: 220–221). It is found in this form in Nabataean (e.g. al-Theeb 2002a: no. 83; Negev 1991: 44) and Thamudic inscriptions (King 1990: 555). Compare nrt in Palmyrene (Stark 1971: 100) and n r in Sabaic inscriptions (e.g. CIS iv 552/3), and the theophoric name nrgd, in a Dedanite inscription (JSLih 138).

l-ΚlmΜ: the preposition l-‘for’ and the masculine singular noun in the emphatic state ‘lm’. The phrase occurs frequently in Nabataean inscriptions, mostly in the form l-Κlm but occasionally as l-ΚlmΜ, as here (e.g. Healey 1993: no. 11/4), and almost exclusively in Palmyrene (see Hoftijzer & Jongeling 1995: 860). It is found in a number of Semitic languages (for more information see al-Theeb 2000a: 197–198).

Inscription no. 6 (Fig. 3)

bΚΕrw
br ‘dyw
slm

Greetings of BΚΕrw son of ‘dyw

This short commemorative inscription is composed of three lines, written below a good drawing of an ostrich.

bΚΕrw: a personal name composed of the divine name ΚΕr, preceded by the preposition b-. A similar name bΚΕtr is found in Sabaic (Tairan 1992: 84), Minaic (al-Said 1995: 71), and Thamudic inscriptions (Shatnawi 2002: 656). This type of name is known from a number of other Semitic inscriptions, such as the name bΙm in Qatabanic (Hayajneh 1998: 99) and bΙlh in Safaitic (e.g. Clark 1983: no. 375).

‘dyw: The name is found in this form in other Nabataean Inscriptions (al-Khraysheh 1986: 135; Negev 1991: 48), while ‘dy occurs in other Semitic inscriptions, thus: Thamudic (e.g. al-Theeb 2000–2001: no. 190), Safaitic (e.g. al-Khraysheh 2002: 133; al-Rūsān 2004: 402; Abbadi 2006: nos 62, 85). It is a simple name meaning ‘the man who runs to fight’ (Ibn Durayd 1991: 50–51; al-Khazrajī 1988: 448), which is also found in Early Arabic sources (Ibn al-Kalbī 1986: 263; al-Qalqashandī 1984: 253; al-Hamdānī 1987: 93; al-Andalūsī 1983: 120).

Inscription no. 7 (Fig. 4)

Ψkyr khylw br d{m}y b-Γb

The good remembrance of Khylw son of D{m}y

Above this short commemorative inscription we find two good drawings. The first drawing is an ibex with a large body, the second is perhaps a dog. The letters are well formed and show a good knowledge of the Nabataean script. Note, in particular:

1. The use of the diacritic point over the first letter of

----

a

8 The close proximity of the signs n and ‘ may suggest to some that it should be read as m. If so, the name would be mrt (see al-Theeb 1998: no. 213/1).
the second name, used to distinguish the ḍ from the examples of ṣ which in the text have an identical shape.

2. The use of the final forms of b (in b-tb) and y (in dmy).

khylw: As far as I know, this is the seventh appearance of this personal name in Nabataean inscriptions (e.g. al-Theeb 1995: no. 28; 1998: nos 197/1, 231; 2002a: nos 5, 54; 2005: no. 59). The name appears in this form in Palmyrene inscriptions (Stark 1971: 92), and as khl in other Semitic languages, e.g. Thamudic (King 1990: 541; Shatnawi 2002: 736), Safaitic (e.g. al-Khraysheh 2002: no. 407; al-Theeb 2003a: no. 30; Abbadi 2006: 132), Sabaic (e.g. al-Anazī 2004–2005: no. 92), and Minaic (al-Said 1995: 154–155). It is found as khlm in Qatabanic texts (Hayajneh 1998: 222). The name could have several explanations, as follows:

1. It could be a simple personal name derived from the Arabic word al-kahl, the ‘person who has passed the age of fifty’ (Ibn Manξūr 1955–1956, xi: 600), in this case it would mean ‘elderly’.

2. It could be a hypocoristic of a theophoric name compounded with the divine name Khl who was worshipped in Arabia as a moon-god and caravan-god. An image of this deity was found at the site of Qaryat al-Fāw, in southern Saudi Arabia (al-Ansary 1989: 107), and references to him are also found in the Thamudic and Lihyanite inscriptions (Bākhashwayn 1993: 78–79).

3. It could be interpreted as the passive participle of the Aramaic verb ‘to be able’ (Brauner 1984: 255; Hofijzer & Jongeling 1995: 489–490); while in Sabaic it means ‘be able to, succeed in, win’ (Beeston et al. 1982: 77; Biella 1982: 241). Thus the name could mean ‘winner, victor’.

dmy: A name of this form may have been found in a Lihyanite inscription (Harding 1971: 244); and could be compared with the name dm, in Safaitic (e.g. Winnet 1957: no. 442) and Thamudic inscriptions (e.g. al-Theeb 1999: no. 167; Eskoubi 2004: no. 120). The personal name might be explained as:

1. a hypocoristic name, its first element (dm) could be compared with the Hebrew root D-M-M meaning ‘to be, or to grow, silent’ (Brown, Driver & Briggs 1906: 198).

2. a simple personal name based on the Arabic root D-M-M ‘to smear all over’, cf. Arabic dumma al-ba‘īru damman ‘the camel was loaded with fat’ (Ibn Manξūr 1955–1956, xii: 207).

The name could also be read as ḏy, a personal name which, to the best of my knowledge, appears here for the first time in Nabataean.
Inscription no. 8 (Fig. 4):

Inscription no. 9 (Fig. 4)

Inscription no. 10 (Fig. 5)

Inscription no. 11 (Fig. 6)
inscriptions, such as Safaitic (e.g. Ababneh 2005: no. 265), Liyanite (Abū al-Ḥassan 1997: no. 159; 2002: no. 197/2–3?, 259, 276), Aramaic (Maraqten 1988: 195), Hatran (Abbadi 1983: 143), Syriac (al-Jadir 1983: 394). A similar name appears as ‘bdšmsm and Sabaic (Harding 1971: 399) and as ‘bdšmy’ in Palmyrene (Stark 1971: 103).

Alongside this inscription there are several other texts, some badly or carelessly carved, others damaged or badly weathered. The readings proposed below must therefore remain tentative.

Inscription no. 11a (Fig. 6)

\[
\text{Ψkyr swrw br } {n} \text{Κ{m} ... ΉryΜ } b-Γb
\]

The good remembrance of Swrw son of {N}Κ{m}...the freedman

The text is crudely carved on the left side of the rock face. The reading above is suggested tentatively. It is possible that this author is the same as the Swr who left two inscriptions at al-Ḥijr (JSNab 181, 344).11

swrw: a simple personal name, which may be derived from the Arabic root S-W-R, meaning ‘to bounce, leap’ (Ibn Durayd 1991: 216). A second possibility is that it is derived from the Arabic al-sawwâr, meaning ‘the lion’ (al-Ḍazrajī 1988: 371).

hry: a masculine noun in the singular emphatic, meaning ‘the freedman’, which is found as hry elsewhere in Nabataean (CIS ii 161 II/2). For further comparisons with the other Semitic languages see al-Theeb 2000a: 101.

Inscription no. 11b (Fig. 6)

\[
\text{slm } m{s}(Κdw) \text{ br } hnΜ
\]

Greetings of M{sΚdw} son of HnΜ

This poorly carved inscription is engraved immediately below no. 11a.

msΚdw: a simple personal name, in the mafāl form meaning ‘the one who is happy, blessed, glad’. See also msΚwdw, in other Nabataean inscriptions (e.g. JSNab 334, 335). Ms’d occurs in Thamudic (e.g. Eskoubi 1999: nos 2, 12, 19), Safaitic (e.g. al-Theeb 2003a: no. 11), and Sabaic inscriptions (e.g. al-ΚAnazi 2004–2005: no. 38), and Ms’dm in Qatabanic inscriptions (Hayajneh 1998: 234).

hnΜ: a simple personal name of the fā‘il form found in a number of Nabataean inscriptions (e.g. JSNab 2005: nos 24, 54; JSNab 192). The name appears in various forms in a number of Semitic inscriptions (see al-Theeb 1998: 129).

Inscription no. 11c (Fig. 6)

\[
\text{Ψkyr } {m}rΜlhy {b}r ΜΉlb b-Γb
\]

The good remembrance of {M}rΜlhy {son of ΜΉ}lb

11 Note that I would reread JSNab 181 as follows: gylw br swr dwm’ slm, meaning ‘Greetings of Gyl son of Swr the plasterer.'
This inscription is carelessly engraved and so the reading above is offered tentatively.

mr’lhy: To the best of my knowledge, this is the first occurrence of this name in a Nabataean inscription. It is found as a personal name in Safaitic (Hazim 1986: 80) and Ugaritic (Gröndahl 1967: 160).

ḥlb: There is one occurrence of a name ḥlbw in Nabataean (Negev 1991: 29), and ḥlb is found in Safaitic inscriptions (e.g. Ababneh 2005: no. 936; al-Manaser 2008: no. 122).

Inscription no. 11d (Fig. 6)


This crude inscription is carved immediately below no. 11b, right at the bottom of the rock face. It seems that Ḥwrw accidentally carved the letter 𐤈 instead of 𐤇 in ḡk’r.

Inscription no. 12 (Fig. 6)


There are a number of difficulties with this commemorative inscription. One of them is the appearance of the phrase b-ṯb between the first name and br, which is very unusual.
in Nabataean. It is therefore possible that Ḥwry added the name of his father (Ḥy) later.

Ḥy: a simple name meaning ‘alive’. This is the first time it has appeared in this form in the Nabataean inscriptions (cf. Ḥyw in no. 5/2), but it is found as Ḥy in a number of Semitic inscriptions such as Safaitic (e.g. Alülü 1996: 162; al-Khraysheh 2002: 125; al-Rūsān 2004: 396; Ababneh 2005: no. 408; al-Manaser 2008: no. 259), Liḥyanite (Harding 1971: 209), and Thamudic (Shatnawi 2002: 680).

**Inscription nos 13, 13a, and 14 (Fig. 7)**

This rock face has suffered the same wear and tear as the previous one, as well as deliberate tampering. This makes it very difficult to give a proper reading of these inscriptions. I suggest the following:

**Inscription no. 13 (Fig. 7)**

\[ bly \text{ slm mṯrw frs'} \{b\}/r; m/s/\text{lm} l-c'(lm) \]

Indeed greeting of Mṯrw the horseman \{son of\} M{s}/lmw, for \{ever\}

---

**Figure 7. Al-Sīj Nabataean inscriptions 13–14.**
bly: an interjection which occurs at the beginning of many Nabataean inscriptions. For variations on this formula in Nabataean see al-Theeb 2000a: 42–43. This particle also occurs in Hatran (Vattioni 1981: no. 99).

mΓrw: as far as I am aware, this name appears here for the first time in Nabataean. However, mΓr is found in Thamudic (e.g. al-Theeb 2000b: no. 94; King 1990: 547), Liyanite (e.g. Abū al-Ḥassan 2002: nos 200, 301), and Safaitic inscriptions (e.g. ‘Abd Allāh 1970: nos 52, 64; Abbadi 2006: 132); mΓrn occurs in Sabaic (e.g. RES 4546/1). It is a simple name in the faΚl or fāΚil form of the root M-Κ-R from which nouns are formed not only in Arabic but also in Old Aramaic (Hoftijzer & Jongeling 1995: 619), Jewish-Palestinian Aramaic (Sokoloff 1992: 303), Sabaic (Beeston et al. 1982: 88), Liyanite (al-Oudrah 1993: 123), Safaitic (e.g. ‘Alulū 1996: 179; al-Rūsān 2004: no. 344), and the Old Testament (Brown, Driver & Briggs 1906: 564). A name mΓr is known in early Arabic sources (Ibn al-Kalbī 1986: 215; al-Andalūsī 1983: 227; Ibn Durayd 1991: 217), and is still in use among the Arabs up to the present day (al-Khazraji 1988: 571; Ibn al-Zubayr & Badawī 1991, ii: 1521, 1522). I suggest the following reading for the crudely and badly engraved inscription below no. 15.

mslm: the reading is uncertain, but it could be mΊlw/mslw. The name mslm is a simple mafΚal form meaning ‘submitted’. It occurs in a Nabataean inscription at al-Dijr (JSNab 235) and in other Semitic texts, e.g. Palmyrene (Stark 1971: 97–98), Minaic (al-Said 1995: 161), Thamudic (Shatnawi 2002: 741), and Safaitic (al-Theeb 2003b: no. 54). It could be compared with the Arabic personal name ‘Muslim’ (Ibn Durayd 1991: 276–277; al-Andalūsī 1983: 234; al-Qalqashandī 1984: 332).

Inscription no. 13a (Fig. 7)

slm th[nt]h (brt) ... (br) [r]k[Pw
Greetings of Th[nt]h [daughter of] . . . . [son of] [R]k[Pw
This short commemorative inscription was carved to the left of no. 13. The scratching of random lines as well as the bad state of the face makes it very difficult to read the central part of this inscription, so the reading given above is purely a suggestion. It should be noted that it is futile to attempt reading the rest of the inscriptions on this face from the photograph, since only one or two signs are clear.

Inscription no. 14 (Fig. 7)

dkyr swrw br b-tb
The good remembrance of Swwa son of
This inscription consisting of two lines is carved directly below no. 13. The father’s name was either not carved or was subsequently destroyed.

Inscription no. 15 (Fig. 8)

[d] {k} {y} {r} blhw br mmt . . . .
[Remembrance of] Blhw son of Mmt . . . .
The indiscriminate scratching of lines is reminiscent of the previous rock face with nos 13, 13a, and 14. In addition to the vandalism this rock is badly weathered, which has also damaged these two inscriptions.

blhw: a simple personal name derived from the Arabic al-balh, ‘the dates’ (Ibn ManΞūr 1955–1956, ii: 414). As far as I know, it occurs here for the first time in Nabataean, although it is also found in Thamudic inscriptions (e.g. al-Theeb 2003: no. 16).

Inscription no. 15a (Fig. 8)

q{d}{m}w br Μ{w}{s}Μb
Q{dm} son of Μ{ws}Μb

Inscription no. 16 (Fig. 9)

dkyr khylw w ‘bdhrrt
‘lyhwh bny dmy b-tb khylw
ktb
The good remembrance of Khylw and ‘bdhrrt his brother, sons of Dmy. Khylw wrote [this inscription]
Unlike the previous three rock faces, this is smooth and has been professionally prepared. All four inscriptions are clearly and beautifully carved. This inscription is by
two brothers, though only Khylw (author of nos 7 and 20) did the carving. Compare inscription no. 5 which was also by two (apparently unrelated) persons. Note that the diacritical dot is used over the d of dmy.

\[ \text{KbdHērΕt} \]

a compound personal name meaning ‘servant of ĐrΕt’. To the best of my knowledge this name occurs only in Nabataean (e.g. al-Theeb 1998: nos 118/1, 219/5; JSNab 254) and Thamudic inscriptions (King 1990: 522).

\[ \text{ΜΟwhy} \]

a masculine noun in the singular construct with the third person singular masculine suffix, which occurs in other Nabataean inscriptions (e.g. al-Theeb 2002a: no. 123; Winnett & Reed 1970: Nab. no. 30). It is also found in Palmyrene (e.g. CIS ii 4072/2) and Hatran inscriptions (e.g. Vattioni 1981: no. 34/6). For more comparisons see al-Theeb 2000a: 6–9.

\[ \text{bny} \]

a masculine noun in the plural construct. It is found in a number of Nabataean inscriptions (e.g. al-Theeb 1998: 193/5; al-Muaikil & al-Theeb 1996: 6/2, 23) and a number of Semitic languages (for further comparisons see al-Theeb 2000a: 45–46).

\[ \text{ktb} \]

a verb in the third person singular masculine (see al-Theeb 2000a: 136).

**Inscription no. 17 (Fig. 9)**

\[ \text{slm hyw br} \]

\[ \text{nিrt b-tb} \]

Good greetings of Ḥyw son of Nirt

This short commemorative inscription is carefully and elegantly written. It is highly likely that this Ḥyw son
Figure 9. Al-Sij Nabataean inscriptions 16–19.
of Nкрат was the author of no. 5, since the writing is very similar.

**Inscription no. 18 (Fig. 9)**

slm tymw br rwfš
w rwfš brh hyw ktb
Good greetings of Tymw son of Rwfs and Rwfs his son.
Hyw wrote [this]

In no. 5 Hyw wrote a joint inscription for himself and Tymw. Here he has written two separate texts, one for himself (no. 17) and one for Tymw and his son Rufus (no. 18). Finally, Hyw records that he read or recited (the inscriptions) (no. 19).

*brh:* a masculine singular noun in the construct with the third person singular, masculine suffixed pronoun, meaning ‘his son’ (see al-Theeb 2000a: 56–57).

**Inscription no. 19 (Fig. 9)**

*hyw
qrμ*
Hyw read [the inscriptions?]

This short inscription was written alongside a beautiful drawing of a camel.

*qrμ:* a verb in the third person masculine singular perfect (see al-Theeb 2000a: 231–232).

**Inscription no. 20 (Fig. 10)**

khylw br dmy slm
Greetings of Khylw son of Dmy

Another inscription by the author of nos 7 and 16. Note the dot over the *d* of *dmy* to distinguish it from *r*, as in the other texts by this author.

---

**Figure 10. Al-Sij Nabataean inscription 20.**
Inscription no. 21 (Fig. 11)

$s\!l\!m$ $g\!l\!q\!y\!n$ $b\!r$ $g\!y\!d$ $\{t\}$ $f\!r\!\alpha$

Greetings of Glqyn son of Gyd$\{t\}$ the horseman

This short commemorative inscription was carved to the left of no. 20.

$g\!l\!q\!y\!n$: a personal name which, as far as I know, occurs here for the first time in Nabataean and for which I have no explanation. The second name could be read as: $g\!y\!d\!t$ or $g\!y\!r\!t$. Gyry, a similar name is known in Qatabanic inscriptions (Hayajneh 1998: 113, 115). The more probable explanation for the name $g\!y\!d\!t$ is to derive it from Arabic $a\!l\!-\!j\!a\!\!y\!d$ ‘beauty’ (Ibn Manzûr 1955–1956, iii: 139).

Inscription no. 22 (Fig. 12)

$s\!l\!m$ $t\!y\!m\!w$ $b\!r$ $r\!w\!\alpha$ $\$s$

Greeting of Tymw son of Rwfs

Inscription no. 23 (Fig. 13)

$t\!y\!m\!w$ $b\!r$ $r\!w\!\alpha$ $s\!l\!m$

Greeting of Tymw son of Rwfs

See nos 5, 8, and 18.
Figure 13. Al-Sīj Nabataean inscription 23.

Personal names

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<tr>
<td>ḏṭrw</td>
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<tr>
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<td>ln'</td>
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<td>ḫy</td>
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<td>Ṣḥrw</td>
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New Nabataean inscriptions from the site of al-Sīj in the region of al-ʿU rahatsız, Saudi Arabia

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Our thanks to Badr al-Faqayr, Associate Professor in the Department of Geography, Faculty of Arts, King Saud University, who discovered this site during his survey of natural habitats in the area.

Sigla

Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars II

CIS ii

Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum. Pars IV.

CIS iv


JSLih


JSNab


RES

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ʿAbd Allāh Y.

Abū al-Ḥasan ʿH.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
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Vocabulary

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<th>Word</th>
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<td>ḫḥ</td>
<td>‘his brother’</td>
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<tr>
<td>ḫḥwhy</td>
<td>‘preposition’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bny</td>
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<td>bly</td>
<td>‘indeed, yes’</td>
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<td>‘the freedman’</td>
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<td>‘good’</td>
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<tr>
<td>kṭb</td>
<td>‘he wrote’</td>
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New Nabataean inscriptions from the site of al-Sīj in the region of al-ʿUlā, Saudi Arabia

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