Two New Nabataean inscriptions from Wadi Lihyan in southern Sinai

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Abstract
Wadi Lihyan is located in southern Sinai, about 35 km from Serabit el-Khadim. It is accessed through Wadi al-Nasb through a winding and spiral road that passes through the areas of quarries and mines of the Manganese Company. Wadi Lihyan is a wide and spacious valley characterized by a large number of Nabataean inscriptions, in addition to a lot of Rock arts. In November 2016, I was invited to participate in the training course “Archaeological Survey and Desert Survival Skills” at Sarabit El-Khadem Training Center, under supervision Mr. Mustafa Nour El-Din, who told me that there is a rock with Nabataean inscriptions in Wadi Lihyan. On examination, it was found that is a small fallen rock contains two Nabataean memorial inscriptions. In this paper, the researcher deals with an analytical study of these two Nabataean inscriptions.

Keywords: Nabataean inscriptions, Sinai, Wadi Lihyan.

Inscription no. 1 (Fig.2)

Transliteration

\[ slm \ bṭb \]
\[ 'bd' lhy \ br \ ḥr īšū \]

Translation
Good Greetings of ʿAbdallahi son of ḥrish.

Commentary
This text is carved into a small rock, its letters are well carved and some of them are joined together. The reading proposed above is quite certain. The first word is to be read as \( slm \) "Greetings", The second is \( bṭb \) "for good, well".
The first personal name is most likely to be read 'bd’lhy عبد الله, followed by br "son of", and The last personal name is clearly ḥrīšū حريش.

slm: "Greetings", a noun in the masculine singular absolute, found in Nabataean and other Semitic inscriptions(1)

bṭb: a noun (ṭb) in the masculine singular absolute preceded by the preposition (b), meaning "for good, well"; known in Nabataean, as well as in many other Semitic inscriptions(2).

'bd’lhy: "'Abdallahi عبد الله", a compound personal name meaning "servant of Allah", The name is frequently attested in other Nabataean and Semitic inscriptions (3).

br: The son’s name br, meaning "son of"; has been used a lot in Nabataean inscriptions(4), and came here in the case of the masculine singular.

ḥrīšū: "ḥarish حريش", A simple personal name, that came in other Nabataean inscriptions (5). in the ancient Arabic inscriptions ḥarsh حرش, "who hunts lizards", and Lizards are similar to a hedgehog and a frog(6).

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(2) al-Theeb, S., 2000a: 107
Inscription no. 2 (Fig.3)

Transliteration

ḏkyr ḥnẓlw
br ǧʾnīū
snt 140

Translation

May be remembered Ḥanẓal son of Gʾnyw, in year 140 [AD 246].

Commentary

The first word read ḏkyr, "may be remembered". The first personal name is ḥnẓlw حَنْظَل, also followed by br, "son of". The father's name is ǧʾnīū جَنّي. The last line contains Nabataean numerals:100, 20, 20, preceded by the word snt " the year", it indicates that this inscription was written in the year 140 of Bosra [= AD 246].

ḏkyr:
"may be Remembered", a common adjective that often appears at the beginning of the Nabataean inscriptions(7), and Semitic inscriptions(8).

ḥnẓlw:
"Ḥanẓal", A simple personal name common in Nabataean(9), and other Semitic inscriptions(10).

Derived from the bitter melon tree الحَنْظَل, It is a tree with bitterness; to be characterized by its bearing bitterness, hardness

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and strength\textsuperscript{(11)}. The name was known in Arabic classic as "Hanẓlḥ" (حنظلة)\textsuperscript{(12)}.

\textit{g̣̱nī̱ū:}  
\textit{g̣̱nī̱:} A brief personal name occurs in other Nabataean\textsuperscript{(13)}. Meaning "hidden-preserved", from the root \textit{g̣nn} ن ن ج "cover-save"\textsuperscript{(14)}.

\textit{snt 140:}  
The importance of This inscription represented in its Nabataean numerals(Line 3): the first sign denotes 100, the second 20, the third again 20. So we have the year 140 of Bosra [ = AD 246].

Fig.1: a small rock in w.Liyan, contains two Nabataean memorial inscriptions.

\textsuperscript{(12)} abn mnzūr, (1956), ǧ11: 183.  
\textsuperscript{(13) }al- Theeb, S., 1431h: 794 -795.  
\textsuperscript{(14)} abn mnzūr, (1956), ǧ13, ṭ 3: 92-93.
Fig. 2: Inscription no. 1.

Fig. 3: Inscription no. 2.
Fig. 3: Map of Sinai showing location of Wadi Liyan.
Arab arch epi : Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy.

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