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# The religious landscape of North-west Arabia as reflected in the Nabataean, Nabataeo-Arabic, and pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions

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## Abstract

This article examines the divine figures attested in the Nabataean, Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula from the first to the 6th century AD. The list of the divine figures attested in these texts, either mentioned as such or contained in theophoric names, is based on the examination of all the corpuses, published or unpublished, which are available to the author (from Madāʾin Šāliḥ, Taymāʾ and its region, Dūmat al-Jandal, etc.). The identification of about 400 divine names in the inscriptions allows to draw a picture of the deities who appear in different places at different times. Among the main conclusions are the identification of regional variations within the Nabataean kingdom and a decrease of the number of divine figures in the Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions, in favour of figures such as *mry ʾlm* and *ʾlh* (masculine) and *ʾlt*, *ʾlz* and *mnwtw* (feminine).

This contribution comes from a paper I originally gave at the University of Chicago in 2017, during the conference organized by Fred Donner entitled “Scripts and Scripture: Language and Religion in Arabia, circa 500–700”.<sup>1</sup>

The initial aim of my paper was to examine whether the gods mentioned in the Nabataean inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula were the same as those mentioned in the Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic texts from the same region. The objective was thus to determine what sort of evolution in the religious landscape can be traced between the first and the sixth century AD on the basis of a particular corpus of inscriptions. However, while I was collecting the material in the various corpora which needed to be taken into account, I realized that the gods who appear in the Nabataean inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula (as opposed to those from other regions of the Nabataean kingdom: Petra, the Ḥawrān, the Negev, Sinai, etc.) showed specificities which were also worth pointing out, e.g. the mention of local gods who do not appear elsewhere, or the popularity of certain gods over others.

Of course, the Arabian peninsula was never all part of the Nabataean kingdom. Therefore, when one deals with the Nabataean inscriptions recorded in this vast geographical area, one refers to regions which were either *part* of the Nabataean kingdom (at least down to Hegra, modern Madāʾin Šāliḥ/al-Ḥijr), were in the Nabataean area of *influence* (probably down to Yathrib, modern Medina), or were regions where a Nabataean *presence* is attested (down to South Arabia and the Farasān islands).

The three categories of script mentioned in the title of this contribution can be defined schematically as follows: the Nabataean inscriptions are written in a ‘calligraphic’ or ‘classical’ form of the Nabataean script, where most of the letters would be at home in Petra in the first century AD. They may show regional particularities but the letters are all recognizably

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<sup>1</sup> I am very grateful to Fred Donner for inviting me to this very enriching conference and for giving me the opportunity to visit our colleagues at the Oriental Institute. I also thank Michael Macdonald for reading an earlier draft of this paper. Any remaining mistakes are of course mine.

Nabataean and do not show clear traces of evolution. Nabataeo-Arabic inscriptions are written in a script the letters of which are starting to change, i.e. they are transitional between Nabataean and Arabic. The script is however not homogenous, some letters being evolved and others not. Finally, the pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions are written in a recognizable form of Arabic. They represent the outcome of the evolution and the letters are more standardized. On the basis of all the dated texts that are available so far, these categories can be chronologically defined as follows:

- Nabataean: first century BC to mid-third century AD;
- Nabataeo-Arabic: late-third to mid-fifth century AD;
- pre-Islamic Arabic: late fifth and sixth centuries AD.

One should keep in mind that the distinction between these three categories of scripts is sometimes difficult to make. One is dealing with short texts which do not always contain diagnostic letter forms, which do not clearly belong to one category or the other, or which contain both ‘developed’ and ‘archaic’ letter forms. The linguistic status of the inscriptions written in these scripts is another issue which is difficult to address. The Nabataean inscriptions are generally written in Aramaic but they contain a number of Arabic loanwords. It should be remembered that, if one excepts the Nabataean papyri from the Dead Sea region,<sup>2</sup> North-west Arabia is the region which has yielded by far the largest number of Arabic loanwords in the Nabataean inscriptions. It has also been reasonably argued<sup>3</sup> that the Nabataeans *spoke* Arabic, but it is difficult to be certain whether this was uniformly the case at all times and in all the regions under control by the Nabataeans. As for the Nabataeo-Arabic and even the pre-Islamic Arabic texts, the question of their language is complicated by the following facts:<sup>4</sup> 1/ they contain a very limited number of words (as opposed to personal names); 2/ even when they do contain words, these often belong to radicals which can be either Aramaic or Arabic (e.g. *ktb*, *yd*, *šnt*, etc.) and therefore cannot be used as criteria to determine the language of the texts in which they are used (unless they appear in derived forms which are either clearly Aramaic or clearly Arabic); 3/ even some of the pre-Islamic Arabic texts contain Aramaic words sometimes used as fossils (e.g. *br*, “son of”, see Macdonald 2010: 20).

This being considered, my wish was to collect, in all the possible corpora of inscriptions which were at my disposal, anything which could be identified either as a divine name or as a theophoric name. Obviously, these two groups do not have the same value: deities whose names appear in funerary and religious texts, or even in simple signatures carved by individuals on the rocks, were certainly the object of some sort of worship, in whatever form. They can therefore be considered as direct evidence. Conversely, theophoric names are at best indirect evidence for the worship of the deities who are mentioned in them. Indeed, as has been amply demonstrated by Macdonald (1999), personal names neither reflect the ethnic affiliation of the

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<sup>2</sup> In 2014, A. Yardeni published an article in which she gives a list of the words she identified as Arabic in the Nabataean and Aramaic legal documents from the Judaeen Desert. This list contains fifty-nine items, for each of which a translation is proposed and citations of the phrases in which each word appears is provided.

<sup>3</sup> Most recently in Macdonald 2010: 19–21.

<sup>4</sup> On the language issue, see among others Nehmé 2017a and Robin *et al.* 2014.

bearer's parents nor their religious beliefs. They should therefore not be used to describe the cultic preferences of those who bore them. These reservations kept in mind, it seemed however reasonable to assume, as a working hypothesis, that theophoric names do reflect, to a certain extent, the religious landscape of the regions and at the periods in which they appear, *if and only if* one appeals to the statistical value of series of names taken from as large a number of inscriptions as possible.

## 1. Methodology, documentary aspects

The first step of my research was to collect the material, i.e. the divine names and theophoric personal names attested in the inscriptions written in the three categories of scripts distinguished above. Since I needed to collect as representative a body of material as possible, I decided to take into account all the inscriptions the existence of which I was aware. These belong to three kinds of documentary sources:

A. Published material. This includes the various collections of inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula, usefully assembled by Sulaymān al-Dhuyayb in the two volumes of his *Mudawwanat al-nuqūš al-nabaṭiyyah* (al-Theeb 2010). The *Mudawwanat* contains 967 inscriptions, only 1% of which had not been published previously. Note that a few published inscriptions are missing from the *Mudawwanat*.<sup>5</sup> To these have been added the inscriptions recorded in works published after the closing date of the *Mudawwanat* (al-Theeb 2011a, 2011b, 2014, al-Ḥā'itī 2016, Robin *et al.* 2014, etc.), as well as the inscriptions discovered along the so-called Darb al-Bakrah, which is the name given to the ancient itinerary between Madā'in Šāliḥ and the Jordanian border (912 texts, *c.* 500 of which were not previously published).<sup>6</sup> If we add to these inscriptions those which are either under publication process or were discovered recently during survey projects which are sometimes still ongoing (for which see hereafter), the total number of Nabataean, Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula reaches about 2,000 texts.

B. Texts in the process of publication. These include:

- the inscriptions carved either in the Jabal Ithlib area, north-east of Madā'in Šāliḥ (ancient Hegra), or associated with religious monuments in other areas of the same site<sup>7</sup> (*c.* 200 texts). These texts are being prepared for publication by the author;
- the inscriptions from the Taymā' Museum which are soon to be published by Michael Macdonald and Muḥammad al-Najem (5 texts);<sup>8</sup>
- the inscriptions from the Taymā' excavations, which are soon to be published by Michael Macdonald (10 texts in the Nabataean script)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> For instance, unless I am mistaken: ARNA.Nab 15, CIS II 308, 321–323, 326–335, 338–339, 340–345, 346–348, the inscriptions published in Eskoubi 1999 and 2007, those mentioned in Livingstone *et al.* 1985: 142 and finally those in Moritz 1908.

<sup>6</sup> al-Ghabbān 2007, now all published in Nehmé 2018.

<sup>7</sup> For the publication of some of them, see Nehmé 2005–2006.

<sup>8</sup> I am very grateful to Michael Macdonald who kindly gave me access to the material from the Taymā' excavations and museum and allowed me to mention the divine and theophoric names they contain.

<sup>9</sup> There are also six texts in the Taymā' Aramaic script but they have not been included in this study, except one which is dated to the reign of a Nabataean king, TA 14285 + TA 14286.

C. Unpublished material. This includes:

- the inscriptions photographed in the regions of Sakākā and al-Jawf (ancient Dūmah) during the surveys undertaken by the Dūmat al-Jandal Archaeological Project (under the direction of G. Charloux) between 2009 and 2017. The examination of the *c.* 300 photographs taken by the team members showing Nabataean inscriptions allowed for the identification of 68 previously unpublished texts. These texts are also being prepared for publication by the author;<sup>10</sup>
- the inscriptions photographed in the region of Taymā’ in 2013 and 2015 during two seasons of the Taymā’ Epigraphic Survey Project (directed by M.C.A. Macdonald). The examination of more than 5,000 photographs allowed for the identification of *c.* 30 previously unpublished texts;<sup>11</sup>
- the inscriptions photographed in the region of Najrān during the surveys undertaken between 2007 and 2017 by the Saudi-French Najrān Archaeological Project (led by Chr. Robin). To my knowledge, four previously unpublished Nabataean inscriptions were photographed. The twenty-five Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions from the Ḥimā area, 100 km north of Najrān, discovered in 2014, have been published in Robin *et al.* in 2014.
- the inscriptions copied in various locations by H.St.J.B. Philby and R.E. Bogue during their expedition to Saudi Arabia in 1953.<sup>12</sup>

Up to 2017, 165 sites with inscriptions have been identified in the Arabian peninsula, a figure which increases year after year thanks to the new surveys undertaken. It does not, however, increase exponentially, particularly in the area south of ancient Hegra, where the Nabataean inscriptions remain a rarity. All the new inscriptions from the collections mentioned above were read, at least in a preliminary way, in order to collect the divine and theophoric names they contain. As for the previously known inscriptions, the names they contain were, whenever possible, checked on the original photographs. In total, 393 records of either divine or theophoric names were entered in a Filemaker database which thus contains the most complete and up to date corpus of this category of material.

## 2. General remarks on the corpus

One should keep in mind that the number of records in the database might change slightly in the future if some names are removed and others added. Besides, new inscriptions are discovered every day, and the field is in constant evolution. The figures which are given today will therefore soon be outdated, but they nevertheless give an idea of the available data and of the distribution of the names according to various criteria. For example, 65 records are divine names or divine epithets while 314 are theophoric personal names. Note that by “divine epithet”

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<sup>10</sup> A first group of eighteen texts from one site near Dūmah has already been published, see Nehmé 2017b.

<sup>11</sup> I am again very grateful to M.C.A. Macdonald for letting me go through the material of the Taymā’ Epigraphic Survey.

<sup>12</sup> The Nabataean texts have been handed over to E. Littmann and, after his death, to J. Starcky so that he could include them in the new volume of *CIS* II. Starcky died in 1987 but the Nabataean material was already in J.T. Milik’s hands, who passed over the manuscript to me before he died in 2006. I was therefore able to see that Milik had given new *CIS* numbers to the Nabataean inscriptions copied by Philby and Bogue. The copies made by Philby and Bogue were sent to me by M.C.A. Macdonald who had received them from J. Ryckmans in 1993.

I mean a deity who is not mentioned by his/her name but by a periphrasis such as *'lh gy'* (sometimes spelled *'lh gy'*), “the god of Gaia”.

If we consider the category of script in which the inscriptions are written, we can say that 350 divine or theophoric names are contained in inscriptions written in the Nabataean script, 24 are contained in inscriptions written in the Nabataeo-Arabic script and 8 are contained in inscriptions written in pre-Islamic Arabic. The overwhelming majority of the recorded items thus appear in the Nabataean inscriptions, which is not surprising. Finally, as far as the geographical distribution is concerned, almost all the names, whether divine or theophoric, come from North-west Arabia, and only five come from inscriptions discovered in the southern part of the Arabian peninsula. This reflects of course the distribution of the Nabataean inscriptions themselves, the overwhelming majority of which come from an area which stretches from Aqaba to Sakākā and down to Khaybar in the south.

### 3. The divine names or epithets attested in the Arabian peninsula

In the tables presented below, the inscriptions bear the numbers which have been given to them in the relevant projects, e.g. DaJ = Dūmat al-Jandal, MS = Madā'in Šāliḥ, etc. (see the list of sigla). They have not been renumbered because they belong to different corpora which will be published separately. The inscription numbers which are followed by a hash (#) are presented in the appendix at the end of this paper. This appendix has been added for the convenience of the reader and gives, in alphabetical order of the siglum, a selection of both published and unpublished texts. When a text is recorded in S. al-Theeb's *Mudawwanat* (ThMNN), this number is used preferentially but is usually followed by the better known JSNab or *CIS* number. A concordance of the references used in the table will help the reader find his way in the numbering of the inscriptions.

#### 3.1. Names or epithets attested in Nabataean only

<i>Name or expression</i>	<i>No. of attest.</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<i>'lh gy'</i>	4x	In three inscriptions from Umm Jadhāyidh, ThMNN 477#, 688 and UJadhNab 402, and in one from Dūmah (Savignac and Starcky 1957).
<i>'lhy' klhm</i>	3x	This expression, which means “all the gods”, was taken into account because it refers to the worship of a number of gods. It occurs in ThMNN 200, 555, and 681.
<i>'l'z'</i>	1x	MS8Nab1# (Nehmé 2005–2006: no. 12, p. 189–194, fig. 134).
<i>'lt</i>	6x	ThMNN 205, 306, 307, and 662, plus two unpublished inscriptions from the site of Qiyāl, northwest of Sakākā, DaJ29Nab13# and DaJ29Nab24#.
<i>'r' dy bbšr' 'lh rb'l</i>	1x	ThMNN 1 (JSNab 39, Madā'in Šāliḥ). This very interesting text (on which see Nehmé 2009: 43–44) was probably written by someone who came from Bošrā in southern Syria, hence the mention of <i>'r'</i> , probably meant to be <i>dwšr' 'r'</i> .
<i>'r' ('[r]r'?)</i>	1x	JSNab 201 (Mabarak an-Nāqah). There is no copy of this text which was read ... <i>qdm 'r'</i> (for <i>qdm</i>

		'r?) ---- <i>mnwtw btb</i> . For 'r', see the previous line.
<i>dwšr'</i>	21x	From a variety of sites: Nebes 2009, ThMNN 14, 107#, 133, 190, 197, 200, 205, 209, 218, 220, 221, 226, 278, 688, 692, 705, 819; UJadhNab 226, 391, 402.
<i>hbl</i>	1x	ThMNN 205 (JSNab 16, Madā'in Šāliḥ), in the cursing formula of the legal text carved on a tomb, along with <i>dwšr'</i> .
<i>m[n]wt</i>	1x	In UJadhNab 391, the author wrote <i>mwt</i> , which is probably a mistake for <i>mnwt</i> ( <i>mn qdm dwšr' w m[n]wt</i> ).
<i>mnwtw</i>	7x	All from previously published texts: ThMNN 197, 205, 209, 221, 224, 295, 705.
<i>mntw</i>	3x	All from previously published texts: ThMNN 278, 292, 549.
<i>mr byt'/mr' byt'</i>	4x	All from Madā'in Šāliḥ and all from previously published texts: MS8Nab1#; ThMNN 19, 20, 21.
<i>qyšh</i> and <i>byt qyš'</i>	2x and 1x	All from Madā'in Šāliḥ: ThMNN 197, 205, 226. This is either a deity or a divine attribute.
<i>{r}šw</i>	1x	Unpublished text from the site of Qiyāl, c. 15 km north-west of Sakākā, DaJ29Nab1#. This is to my knowledge the only attestation of Ruḏā in the Nabataean inscriptions.
<i>šmy'</i>	2x	<i>CIS</i> II 236# and a text discovered at Madā'in Šāliḥ in 2016, 64114 I01#.
<i>tbwš</i>	1x	This deity, if the reading is correct, is attested in one text only, ThMNN 107# (JSNab 142), from Madā'in Šāliḥ.
<i>tdh/trh</i>	1x	ThMNN 166# ( <i>CIS</i> II 336, from Taymā'). Female deity not attested elsewhere. Michael Macdonald suggests however that this text is written in the Taymā' Aramaic script (pers. comm.).
<i>tdhy/trhy</i>	1x	Legal text from Madā'in Šāliḥ, ThMNN 201 (JSNab 12), where the fine should be paid to <i>tdhy/trhy</i> . Since the owners of the tomb are Taymanites, it is likely that <i>tdhy/trhy</i> and <i>tdh/trh</i> in the previous line are the same female deity.

Two periphrases are used to designate deities, *mr byt'* (or *mr' byt'*) and *'lh gy'*. The first one, which means “The Lord of the house” or “The Lord of the temple”, behind which probably lies a major divine figure such as Dūšarā, appears four times, all from Hegra. Elsewhere in the Nabataean kingdom, it occurs once in Petra, once in Wadi Ramm and once in Zīza near Madaba, all in Jordan (see Nehmé 2005–2006: 192). It is therefore attested several times in the heart of the Nabataean kingdom and it is not surprising to find it in Hegra. The same is true of *'lh gy'*, “the god of Gaia”. We find this periphrasis in Avdat in the Negev, where it refers explicitly to Dūšarā (Negev 1963: no. 10, p. 113), and in al-‘Adnāniyyah on the Moab plateau, without any specification of the god (al-Salameen and Shdaifat 2017). In an inscription from Wādī Ram,<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Savignac 1934: 575, no. 17, reread by J.T. Milik (1958: 247) and reread again by J. Strugnell (1959: 30) as being indeed *'lktb' dy bgy'*. Note that in a yet unpublished inscription from the Sidd al-Ma‘jīn in Petra, MP 621,

it is al-Kutbā who is said to be *b-gy*' ("in Gaia") and it is therefore possible that al-Kutbā lies sometimes behind this anonymous expression. We also find it four times in North-west Arabia, in Dūmah (Savignac and Starcky 1957: *dwšr*' *lh gy*') and in Umm Jadhāyidh, in ThMNN 688 and UJadhNab 402 where we have *dwšr*' *lh gy*', as well as in ThMNN 477#. The latter is the signature of an individual followed by *qdm*' *lh gy*', without the god's name. Considering that four inscriptions mention explicitly Dūšarā as the god of Gaia and that *lh* is in the masculine, and since it is likely that the author of ThMNN 477# was travelling from Petra to Hegra, we can assume that in this text, Dūšarā is meant.

Finally, we find in the Arabian peninsula the expression *'lhy*' *klhm*, "all the gods", both in Hegra and in Umm Jadhāyidh. Since it is also attested twice in Petra,<sup>14</sup> it is a common way in the Nabataean kingdom to refer to a number of gods when the author of a text does not want to specify which gods are meant specifically. In the two inscriptions from Petra and in ThMNN 200 (JSNab 11), Dūšarā is named first, then "all the gods". The latter are therefore necessarily considered less important because they are not mentioned individually.

Three deities appear more than five times in the Nabataean inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula and can therefore be considered, with caution, as the most popular ones: Dūšarā, Manātū/Manawatū, and Allāt. It is no surprise that the most popular one is Dūšarā (21x), the main god of the Nabataeans, worshipped throughout the kingdom.<sup>15</sup> He is followed by Manātū/Manawatū (10x plus one possible *m[n]/wt* in UJadhNab 391).<sup>16</sup> Manātū/Manawatū is not attested elsewhere in Nabataea (Alpass 2011: 136) and her popularity is therefore restricted to North-west Arabia. As for *'lt* (6x), who is surprisingly not attested in Petra, she appears in inscriptions from Madā'in Šāliḥ, al-'Ulā, Umm Jadhāyidh and, what is new, two unpublished Nabataean inscriptions from Qiyāl, north of Sakākā.

One deity, *šmy*', and one possible deity (or divine attribute), *qyšh*, appear twice each. Until the recent discovery (2016) of a new attestation of *šmy*', this divine name was attested in one text only, from Madā'in Šāliḥ, ThMNN 166# (*CIS* II 236), copied by Ch. Doughty and read by J.T. Milik (1972: 409–410). The new inscription, 64114\_I04# (published in Nehmé 2017c), was brought to light by M. al-Musa during the excavations of a residential unit built next to the main Nabataean sanctuary of Hegra which is currently being excavated by a team led by the author. It had been reused in the external wall of the unit. In both texts, *šmy*', which is the emphatic plural of *šmy*, appears in the phrase *mn qdm šmy*', where *šmy*' is expected to be the name of a deity because the expression *mn qdm*, "in the presence of", is almost always followed by a divine name in Nabataean. It should be noted that the texts do not have *mn qdm 'lh šmy*', "in the presence of the *god* of Heaven", but simply *mn qdm šmy*', best translated as "in the presence of Heaven". Note also that the main sanctuary of Hegra was composed of an upper and a lower temple, and that the former was tentatively interpreted as being devoted to the worship of the Sun-god (Nehmé 2012b: 159–160). The new inscription, although not directly connected to the temple, may lead us to revise this interpretation and suggest that the upper

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J.T. Milik reads *'lz' gy'yt'* in line 3 of a signature, but all that can be read on the photograph is *'lz' g----* and it is therefore impossible to say whether the epithet "from Gaia" applies also to al-'Uzzā.

<sup>14</sup> *CIS* II 350 (Turkmāniyyah inscription) and Dalman 1912: no. 28 (MP 619).

<sup>15</sup> All from Madā'in Šāliḥ and its surroundings (13x), Umm Jadhāyidh (6x), Sakākā (1x) and Širwāḥ in South Arabia (x1).

<sup>16</sup> All from Madā'in Šāliḥ and its surroundings (8x) and Umm Jadhāyidh (2x),



temple was devoted to the cult of a supreme divine figure associated with Heaven. In the 2017 report of the Madā'in Šāliḥ Archaeological Project (Nehmé 2017c: 148–149), I already drew attention to the fact that *hšmyn* and *šmy'* were, according to J.T. Milik (1972: 410), the most frequent substitutes for YHWH from the Hellenistic period to the Talmudic literature, which led him to suggest a possible Jewish influence in Hegra. Also, in five Aramaic papyri from the Elephantine collection<sup>17</sup> dated to around 410 BC or before, the god worshipped by the Jews is called *yhw 'lh šmy'*, “YHW the God of Heaven”. Much later, in the late 4th and 5th century AD, the periphrasis “Master of the Sky and of the Earth”, or “Lord/Master of the Sky” is often used in the monotheistic Ḥimyarite inscriptions and the authors of these texts are identified as Jewish or Judaeo-monotheists by C. Robin (2015: § F.1, p. 138–141). Even if a Jewish presence is attested in Hegra by the fact that one of the monumental tombs, IGN 12, was owned by a man who is said to be *yhwdy'*, “Jew” or “Judaeon” in the inscription carved on its façade, JSNab 4, dated AD 42/43, it would probably not be reasonable to consider that the main temple of the ancient city was devoted, in the first century AD, to a Jewish god as such. What is certain is that it was devoted to a supreme deity, as is also indicated by the fact that in the Roman period of the site, in the second century, the temple was dedicated to Jupiter of Damascus.<sup>18</sup> Note that the divine element *šm'* appears in one theophoric name only, *'bd-'lšm'*, “servant of the sky/Heaven”, in UJadhNab 72.

As for *qyšh*, who appears under this form in two texts from Hegra, ThMNN 197 (JSNab 8) and ThMNN 205 (JSNab 16), it is not certain whether she is a divine figure or an attribute of Manawatū, who/which is mentioned in association with her: is what is meant “Manawatū and Qayšā” or “Manawatū and her *qyš'*”? J. Healey considers, probably rightly (1993: 119–120), that *qyšh* is a divine name, which would therefore be attested only in Hegra, just as *šmy'* above. Note that *byt qyš'* (with an alif) is said in ThMNN 226 (JSNab 36) to be the temple in which a copy of the legal inscriptions carved on the tomb façades of Hegra were archived.

There are also a number of divine figures which appear only once in the Arabian peninsula. Al-'Uzzā ('l'z') is surprisingly attested only once in Hegra whereas she is relatively popular in Petra and becomes popular in the Arabian peninsula at a later period (see below). She appears in Hegra in a context where she is associated with *mr byt'* and where a “mountain” is devoted to both of them (MS8Nab1#). In this very interesting text, the word for “mountain” is *gbl*, which is an Arabic loanword in Nabataean. An alternative meaning for *gbl*, suggested to me by Michael Macdonald, would be to take the Aramaic meaning of GBL, “to give a rounded shape, to knead” (Jastrow, s.v.), hence Syriac *gābīlāttā*, which can mean “image, work” (Sokoloff, s.v.). However, if what the authors of the text had meant to write was “This is the image of al-'Uzzā and the Lord of the house”, they would probably have used the word *nšb*, which occurs in several inscriptions from Petra, one of which says precisely *'lh nšyby 'l'z' w mr byt'*, “These

<sup>17</sup> Cowley 1923: two petitions (nos 27 and 30 lines 27–28, *qdm yhw 'lhy šmy'*) and a duplicate of one of them (no. 31); one answer to the repeated petition (no. 32 line 3, *mdbh' dy 'lh šmy'*, “the altar of the God of Heaven”); a letter of recommendation (no. 38 line 3, *{qdm}' 'lh šmy'* and line 5, *b-tll 'lh šmy'*, “with the help of the God of heaven”); a fragment of a letter (no. 40).

<sup>18</sup> This is known from a Latin inscription discovered by D. Gazagne in 2020 in the Hegra temple, 61236\_I01, to be published by P.-L. Gatiér.

are the betyls of al-‘Uzzā and the Lord of the house”, an inscription which is written to the left of an empty niche in which movable betyls were placed on particular occasions.<sup>19</sup>

A‘rā (‘r’) is mentioned in a text probably written by someone who came from Boṣrā (ThMNN 1 = JSNab 39). In one other text (ThMNN 295 = JSNab 201) the name is restored.

Four other gods appear also only once. *hbl* (Hubal) is one of the three gods, along with Dūšarā and Manawatū, to whom a fine should be paid by those who undertake illegal actions in a tomb (ThMNN 206 = JSNab 16). A god named *tbwš* (Tabūš?) appears once with Dūšarā in a signature from Madā’in Šāliḥ, ThMNN 107# (JSNab 142), the reading of which was checked, but about whom not much can be said in the absence of any parallels. There is also *tdh/trh* and *tdhy/trhy*, for which see the table above. If the reading of DaJ29Nab 1# is correct, it would provide the first attestation, in Nabataean, of the god {r}šw, Ruḏā, a deity otherwise widely attested in Safaitic and Thamudic.<sup>20</sup> The context in which the name appears, almost certainly after *qdm*, makes it highly likely that it is a divine name. Finally, we should perhaps mention the god *šlm*, not in Nabataean but in a Taymā’ Aramaic text dated to the 17th year of Malichus II, TA14285+TA14286, for which see Macdonald forthcoming a. This text is interesting because it shows that the main deity of Taymā’ was still the object of a worship in the first century AD (see also below the theophoric name ‘*bdšlm*’).

This systematic review of the divine names mentioned in the Nabataean inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula is very informative. First, we should note the almost complete absence, in the texts from the Arabian peninsula, of “foreign” gods who were relatively popular in Petra: Atargatis, Ba‘alšamīn and Isis.<sup>21</sup> More surprising, especially in Hegra, is the complete absence of ‘*bd*’, Obodas, who was very popular in Petra (not only because of the attestations of his cult but also because Obodas was, along with Dūšarā, the only deity worshipped by more than one fraternal society).<sup>22</sup> It is possible that the cult of Obodas was the closest to what we may think of an “official” cult and was therefore not practiced outside the Nabataean capital. On the other hand, there are gods who appear in North-west Arabia but not elsewhere in the Nabataean kingdom. This is the case of two pre-Islamic Meccan deities, Hubal and Ruḏā, of two deities from Taymā’, *tdh/trh* (which possibly equals *tdhy/trhy*) and *šlm*, the latter in Taymā’ Aramaic. Finally, three deities with no particular Arabian background, or about which we know nothing, appear in the inscriptions of this region: *šmy*’, *qyšh*, *tbwš*.

Apart from that, the main Nabataean deities, Dūšarā, Manāt/Manawatu and Allāt are well represented in the inscriptions from the Arabian peninsula, and the same is true of the vaguer expressions *mr byt*’, *’lh gy*’, and *’lhy’ klhm*.

All in all, and as one might have expected, the religious landscape in the Arabian peninsula as seen through the divine figures mentioned in the Nabataean inscriptions shares common features with that of other regions but it also has regional specificities which were worth noting and which might have escaped the attention of scholars if all the inscriptions known so far had not come under close scrutiny.

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<sup>19</sup> On this inscription and the niche, see Nehmé 2012a: inscription MP 617, p. 195, and niche 1760.1, p. 120.

<sup>20</sup> References in the OCIANA database online.

<sup>21</sup> The list of the deities worshipped in Petra is given in Nehmé 1997: 1044–1045. See also Alpass 2013: 48–49, who, however, questions the definition of these gods as “foreign”.

<sup>22</sup> On the popularity of Dūšarā and Obodas among the fraternal societies of Petra, see Nehmé 2013: 124 and map p. 125.

### 3.2. Names attested in Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic only

The corpus of Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic texts is much smaller than the corpus of Nabataean inscriptions and it is therefore to be expected that the number of deities mentioned in them would be much smaller. They are presented in the following table.

<i>Name or expression</i>	<i>No. of attest.</i>	<i>Comment</i>
'lh	3x (Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic)	Three attestations, one from Ḥimā, north of Najrān (Ḥimā-Sud PalAr 8#), one from site DaJ144, north-west of Dūmah (DaJ144PAr1#, Nehmé 2017b), and one from the excavations at Dūmah (DaJ000NabAr1#: Nehmé 2017b: 131).
'zy	4x	Four texts from the Darb al-Bakrah, UJadhNab 313#, 345#, 364# and 368#.

The main points which need to be raised are the following. First, there seems to be a real change between the texts written in Nabataean and the *c.* 160 ones written in Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic recorded so far (in 2019). The “standard” Nabataean deities who appear in the Nabataean inscriptions, listed above, are not mentioned in any of the texts which belong to the latter two categories. The only exception is al-‘Uzzā, who appears as 'zy, a spelling which suggests that in the dialect spoken by the authors of these inscriptions, the name of the goddess was pronounced ‘uzzay, not ‘uzzā.<sup>23</sup>

Another very interesting point is that two texts from Dūmah, one of which is dated to AD 548–549, mention, for the first time in North-west Arabia, 'lh, “the god”, who is very likely to be equated with the pre-Islamic Arabic name of the Christian God as it appears in other pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions from Syria (Zabad, AD 512)<sup>24</sup> and from southern Arabia (Ḥimā-Sud PalAr 8#, *c.* AD 469–470), as well as in the foundation inscription of the monastery of Hind in al-Ḥīra as it is preserved in the transcriptions of al-Bakrī and Yāqūt (*c.* AD 560).<sup>25</sup> It also appears in a recently discovered inscription from Qaṣr Burqu', in north-east Jordan, written by a Christian. This text (al-Shdaifat *et al.* 2017) says *dkr 'lh zydw 'mlk*, which the editors translate “May God be mindful of Yazīd the king”. The text is not dated but it is convincingly argued in the publication that it is from the reign of the Umayyad caliph Yazīd ibn Mu'āwiyah (AD 680–683). Note finally that 'lh also appears in a theophoric name in the pre-Islamic Arabic inscription from Umm al-Jimāl, LParab 1#, as reread by the author.

The Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions contain many interesting features which will be dealt with elsewhere but one of them is worth being addressed here. They make a more systematic use of the suffix conjugation with an optative force. It is true that the latter is known to have been used in Nabataean Aramaic, for example with L'N, “curse”, particularly in the legal inscriptions carved on the monumental tombs of Madā'in Ṣāliḥ,<sup>26</sup> and this is

<sup>23</sup> See Van Putten 2017: 52–53 (“this calls into question whether alternations between final ' and y found in Nabatean should be understood as two different ways of writing the same sound or rather actual phonetic alternation within the Arabic dialects of the speakers who wrote the Nabatean texts”). It seems to me that the second explanation is more likely.

<sup>24</sup> On the Zabad inscription see last Macdonald in Fiema *et al.* 2015: 410–411.

<sup>25</sup> See Robin 2008: 185–186. On the date of the Hind monastery inscription, see Robin 2013: 239.

<sup>26</sup> JSNab 1, 2, 8, 11, 16, etc.

considered as “one of the hallmark examples of Arabic influence on the Aramaic of the Nabataeans” (Al-Jallad 2015: 105), but it is the first time that it is used with ŠM‘ (*šm‘t l‘z*’ in UJadhNab 313#, 345#, and 364#) and it gives more examples of its use with DKR (*dkr l‘lh* in DaJ144PAr1# and DaJ000NabAr1#).

### 3.3. Divine epithet attested in both Nabataean and Nabataeo-Arabic

One divine epithet only appears in both the Nabataean and the Nabataeo-Arabic scripts. This is *mry l‘m*’, “the Lord of the world”, which occurs in both JSNab 17, dated to AD 267 and considered to be still written in the Nabataean script, and UJadhNab 538, dated to AD 303, which is written in a very elegant form of Nabataeo-Arabic. Since UJadhNab 538 mentions Passover and has a Jewish background, *mry l‘m*’ probably refers to the God of the Jews (see the Appendix).

## 4. The divine elements in the theophoric names

Going through the corpus of the Nabataean inscriptions of the Arabian peninsula led to the recording of 314 theophoric names. These contain *c.* 42 divine elements which indirectly reflect the religious landscape in the area and at the period under study. They have, of course, to be treated with more caution than the divine names mentioned as such but they offer a source of information which cannot be ignored.

The data is presented in the table below. When there are too many occurrences of one name, the references are not all given.

<i>Divine element</i>	<i>Theophoric name</i>	<i>Script</i>	<i>Comment</i>
’ysy	’ <i>bd-’ysy</i> (2x), ThMNN 688 and ThMNN 13 (ARNA.Nab 53)	Nabataean, with a <i>samekh</i> .	This is usually considered as a theophoric name built with the name of Isis.
’yš	’ <i>bd-’yš</i> (1x), ThMNN 602#	<b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b> , with a <i>shin</i> .	It is possible that this name is the equivalent, in Nabataeo-Arabic, of ’ <i>bd’ysy</i> . Or it could be ’ <i>bd+</i> the Arabic name <i>lyās</i> .
’/l	The divine element ’ <i>l</i> (sometimes written without the ’) occurs in a large number of names built with <i>grm-</i> , <i>dn-</i> , <i>whb-</i> , <i>zyd-</i> , <i>hlpt-</i> , <i>hn-</i> , <i>yd/yd{d}</i> -, <i>yhm-</i> , <i>myr-</i> ?, <i>mqm-</i> , <i>m’r-</i> , <i>mr-</i> , <i>nṭyr-</i> , ’ <i>bd-</i> , ’ <i>wd-</i> , ’ <i>wt-</i> , -’ <i>zr</i> , ’ <i>ly-</i> , ’ <i>mr-</i> , <i>phr-</i> , <i>qšm-</i> , <i>rm-</i> , <i>šlm-</i> , <i>tkr-</i> , to which should be added the names <i>rb-’l</i> and <i>rbyb-’l</i> . Note that the occurrences of some of these should be fully checked again. In one instance, ’ <i>l-z</i> (ThMNN 306 = JSNab 212), it is possible that the divine element is put first (’ <i>l</i> is strong?). Note also one occurrence of <i>whb-yl</i> in ThMNN 585, which may reflect	Almost all in Nabataean. The only names which occur in <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b> texts are: – possibly <i>yd{d}’{l}</i> (1x), S 2#, but very uncertain; – ’ <i>wd’l</i> (1x), UJadhNab 69 (cf. Arabic names ’ <i>Awḏ</i> , ’ <i>Awḏmanāt</i> ). – the Jewish name ’ <i>l’zr</i> (2x),	This element and <i>lh/lhy</i> would require a full commentary on their geographical distribution, on the distribution of the names where the ’ is assimilated, on those names which occur only in North-west Arabia, on the meaning, etymology and language of the non divine element, etc.

	an <i>īl/ēl</i> pronunciation, as in the Arabic name <i>Wahbīl</i> .	including one in UJadhNab 561. <sup>27</sup>	
<i>ʾlh</i>	<i>ʾbd-ʾlh</i> (1x), LPArab 1#	<b>Pre-Islamic Arabic</b>	First attestation of a name built with <i>ʾbd</i> and <i>ʾlh</i> .
<i>ʾlktbʾ</i>	<i>tym-lktbʾ</i> (1x), ThMNN 107# (JSNab 142); <i>tym-ʾktbʾ</i> (1x), ThNS 73; <i>tym-ʾlktbʾ</i> (4x), ThMNN 488, 584, 695 + UJadhNab 59 <i>ʾbd-ʾlktb</i> (1x) ThMNN 952	All Nabataean  Nabataean	Apart from <i>ʾbd-ʾlktb</i> , which occurs only in North-west Arabia, compound names with <i>ʾlktbʾ</i> are widespread in various regions of the Nabataean kingdom.
<i>ʾlzʾ/ʾlzy</i>	<i>ʾbd-ʾlzʾ</i> (2x), ThMNN 23 (JSNab 61, Nabataean) and TS14NabAr1# (Nabataeo-Arabic) <i>ʾbd-ʾlzy</i> (1x) UJadhNab 352#	Nabataean and <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b>  <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b>	
<i>ʾlt</i>	<i>hn-ʾlt</i> (2x), SBNab 4 and UJadhNab 399# <i>ʾbd-ʾlt</i> (1x), UJadhNab 331# <i>{ʾ}wyd-ʾlt</i> (1x), S 1# <i>tym-ʾlft</i> (1x), DBv3Nab12	Nabataean  <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b> <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b> Nabataean	These four compound names are attested only in North-west Arabia.
<i>bl</i>	<i>rhym-bl</i> (1x), ThMNN 583 <i>ydʿ-ʾb}l</i> (1x), ThMNN 870 <i>ʾyty-bl</i> (1x), ThMNN 644	All Nabataean	The first one also appears once in Petra (RES 1427D).
<i>bʾl</i>	<i>bʾl-ʾk}yn</i> (1x), ThMNN 440 (JSNab 385) <i>bʾl-ḥwn</i> (1x), ThMNN 720 <i>bʾl-ntn</i> (2x), ArNab 142, ThNS 87, and <i>bʿ-ntn</i> (1x), ThMNN 692 <i>bʾlw</i> (1x), ThMNN 113 (SNab 149) <i>hn-bʾl</i> (1x), ArNab 61	All Nabataean	All these names except <i>bʾlntn</i> are attested only in North-west Arabia.
<i>gʾ</i>	<i>ʾbd-ʾlgʾ</i> (18x)	All Nabataean except one, UJadhNab 536, <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b>	This name is widespread in Nabataean and is usually considered to mean “the servant of [the god of] Gaia [Petra]”.
<i>gd</i>	<i>gd-ḥb</i> (3x), ThMNN 127 (JSNab 163), ThMNN 166# (CIS II 236), and ThMNN 128 (JSNab 164), all from Madāʾin Šāliḥ	All Nabataean	Theophoric names built with Gad are attested in North-west Arabia and in the Ḥawrān.
<i>gyr</i>	<i>whb-ʾlgyr</i> (1x) UJadhNab 428	Nabataean (bilingual Nabataean-Ancient South Arabian)	First attestation of this name in Nabataean. One of the meanings of <i>jār</i> in Arabic is “protector, one who protects another from that which he fears” (Lane 1863–1893: 483c), thus “gift of the protector”?
<i>dwšrʾ</i>	<i>tym-dwšrʾ</i> (2x), ThMNN 327 (JSNab 234), ThMNN 726	Nabataean	Very widespread name.
<i>hbl</i>	<i>bn-hbl</i> (1x), ThMNN 539#	Nabataean	In North-west Arabia, in Petra (Milik and Starcky 1975: no. 5, p. 120–122,

<sup>27</sup> The other occurrence of *ʾlʾzr*, “God’s help” is in papyrus Starcky 1954, for which see now Yardeni 2001.

			<i>brhbl</i> ) and in Puteoli ( <i>CIS</i> II 158, <i>bnhbl</i> ).
<i>ḥwr</i>	<i>tym-ʿḥwr</i> (2x), ThMNN 497 and 595	Nabataean	It is not certain whether <i>ḥwr</i> is a divine name or not. It is not attested elsewhere (although the name <i>ʿḥwr</i> exists).
<i>lh/lhy</i>	Very many attestations of compound names built with <i>ʿbn-</i> , <i>ʿwš-</i> , <i>ʿḥš-?</i> , <i>grm-</i> , <i>hnʿ-</i> , <i>whb-</i> , <i>zyd-</i> , <i>ḥb-</i> , <i>ḥlp-</i> , <i>ḥrb-</i> , <i>mʿn-</i> , <i>mrʿ-</i> , <i>mrḥ-?</i> , <i>nšr-</i> , <i>ʿbd-</i> , <i>ʿwt-</i> , <i>ʿyr-</i> , <i>šyʿ-šʿ-</i> , <i>šld-</i> , <i>šʿd-</i> , <i>šlm-</i> , <i>tym-</i> and followed by <i>lh</i> or <i>lhy</i> , with or without the <i>ʿ</i> of the definite article between the two elements.	All Nabataean except one <i>šyʿʿlhy</i> in <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b> in ThMNN 862#	Same comment as for <i>ʿl/l</i> above.
<i>llh</i>	One possible attestation in the name <i>{šld}-llh</i> in UJadhNab 352# (see the comment in the appendix).	<b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b>	
<i>mnwtw</i>	<i>hnʿ-mnwtw</i> (1x), ThMNN 963 <i>zyd-mnwtw</i> (3x), ThMNN 449 (ARNA.Nab 25), ThMNN 959 and ThMNN 448 (ARNA.Nab 24) in Nabataeo-Arabic <i>ʿbd-mnwtw</i> (1x), ThMNN 206 (SNab 17) <i>ʿbd-mnwy</i> (1x), ArNab 80 (mistake for <i>ʿbd-mnwtw</i> ?) <i>ʿbd-{mnwtw}</i> (2x), DBv1Nab 11 <i>ʿwd-mnwtw</i> (2x), ThMNN 9 (JSNab 48) and ThMNN 678 <i>tym-mnwtw</i> (1x), ThMNN 55# (JSNab 93) <i>tym-mnwtw</i> (1x), ThMNN 54 (JSNab 92) <sup>28</sup>	Nabataean Nabataean and <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b>  Nabataean (3rd c.)  Nabataean Nabataean Nabataean  Nabataean	Note the genitive case-ending in <i>hnʿmnwtw</i> and others. Note also that in theophoric names, the name of the goddess is always spelled <i>mnwtw/mnwtw</i> , never <i>mntw/mnty</i> . Compounds with <i>mnwtw</i> are attested only in North-west Arabia.
<i>mnpw</i>	<i>ʿbd-mnpw</i> (1x) WRPAr3# from Wadi Ramm	<b>Pre-Islamic Arabic</b>	Cf. the Arabic name <i>ʿAbdmanāf</i> .
<i>mšyh</i>	<i>ʿbd-ʿlmšyh</i> (1x), Ḥimā-al-Musammāt PalAr 5	<b>Pre-Islamic Arabic</b>	Cf. the Arabic name <i>ʿAbdalmasīh</i> .
<i>ʿbdt</i>	A large number of theophoric names are built with the name of the deified Nabataean king Obodas following the words <i>ʿwš-</i> , <i>tym-</i> , <i>ʿbd-</i> . The name <i>ʿbdt</i> (and its diminutive form <i>ʿbydt</i> ) itself is also used as a name. <sup>29</sup>	All Nabataean	This very popular Nabataean name, the only one with <i>tymdwšrʿ</i> which occurs in all the regions of the Nabataean kingdom, never appears in the Nabataeo-Arabic inscriptions.
<i>šlm</i>	<i>ʿbd-šlm</i> (3x), ThMNN 701#, HNNUT 7, UJadhNab 383.	All Nabataean	This compound is attested only in North-west Arabia,

<sup>28</sup> JSNab 92 and JSNab 93 are written one above the other, one has *tymmnwtw* and one *tymmnwtw*.

<sup>29</sup> Note that since Obodas is the only deified Nabataean king, compound names built with kings' names other than *ʿbdt* (*ḥrtt*, *rbʿl*, *mnkw/mlkw*) are basileophoric rather than theophoric and have therefore not been taken into consideration in this paper.

			which is not surprising since <i>šlm</i> is the god of Taymā’.
<i>qyš</i>	<i>mr’-lqyš</i> (3x) MAIS 2#, Himà-Sud PalAr 5 and Himà-Sud PalAr 8#	<b>All Pre-Islamic Arabic</b>	This name does not occur in the Nabataean texts.
<i>qs</i>	<i>qs-’dr</i> (1x), ThMNN 539# <i>qs-ntn</i> (1x), ThMNN 226 (SNab 36) <i>qs-bnh</i> (1x), UJadhNab 553	All Nabataean	These names are built with the name of the Edomite deity Qōs. <i>Qsntn</i> and <i>qsbnh</i> is attested only in North-west Arabia; according to A. Negev, <i>qws-’dr</i> is attested in Sinai-Egypt-Negev (not checked).
<i>šm’</i>	<i>’bd-’šm’</i> (1x) UJadhNab 72#	Mixed Nabataean and <b>Nabataeo-Arabic</b>	cf. <i>šmy’</i> . This is the only name built with <i>šm’</i> .
<i>šmš</i>	<i>’bd-šmš</i> (1x), ThNIS 11 <i>šmš</i> (1x) DaJ29Nab5 <i>šmš-grm</i> (2x) CIS II 331 and DaJ29Nab2 (unpublished)	All Nabataean	Only in North-west Arabia.

The most popular Nabataean theophoric names, which are attested in several regions of the Nabataean realm (*whb’lhy*, *’bd’bdt*, *š’d’lhy*, *tymdwšr’*) are well represented in the inscriptions written in Nabataean characters in North-west Arabia, in a number of sites, and this is not particularly surprising. What is interesting, however, is that none of these names appears in texts written in Nabataeo-Arabic or pre-Islamic Arabic characters.

Out of the 314 theophoric names collected in the corpus of inscriptions I examined, 74 names (names or orthographic variants of names) are attested only in North-west Arabia, most of them only once. Among them, *c.* 52 were not previously listed in A. Negev’s list of names published in 1990 (quite a few of them appear in inscriptions published since then). It would be interesting to make a list of those names which are only *written* differently in North-west Arabia. This aspect of the description of the names, however, was not initially recorded in the database and would therefore require some additional work to be dealt with. It would allow to determine whether some differences appear more consistently than others. These are, as far as I can tell (but the list is not exhaustive):

- the assimilation or not of the ’ of the article before *-lh* and *-lhy* (e.g. *’wtlhy* versus *’wt’lhy*, *’hblhy* versus *’hb’lhy*);
- *-yl* for *-’l*, for example *whbyl* instead of *whb’l*, which may reflect an *īl/ēl* pronunciation (*īmālah?*);<sup>30</sup>
- the *-y* versus the *-’* or *-w* endings (*tymmnwty* versus *tymmnwtw* and *’bd’l’zy* versus *’bd’l’z’*), to which should be added the case of new names with a *-y* ending (*’wdmnwty*);

Other orthographic differences may simply be mistakes on the engraver’s part (*b’ntn* for *b’lntn*, *’bdmnwy* for *’bdmnwty?*). Note also that the name *’bd’lktb’* is written once without the final ’. As for the names themselves, one should note the popularity in North-west Arabia of names referring to the goddess *mnwtw*, who appears in several names which are not attested elsewhere:

<sup>30</sup> Is it the same phenomenon in Šarāḥīl (*\*šrh-’l > šrhyl*) of the Ḥarrān inscription? I am grateful to A. Al-Jallad for drawing my attention to that.

*hn'mnwtw*, *zydmnwtw*, *'bdmnwtw/'bdmnwty*, and *'wdmnwty*. Among the new names, it is worth noting *hn'lt* (compare with *hn'lhy*) and *'bdšmš*. Note also the very interesting three attestations of *'bdšlm*, built with the name of the god of Taymā', and of one *whb'lgyr* in a bilingual Nabataean-ASA text.

One may also point to the use of *new* non-divine elements such as *hlpt-*, *phr-*, *'wd-*. Again, it would be interesting to examine not only these *new* elements but all the non-divine elements attested in North-west Arabia and determine whether they are Aramaic, Aramaic or Arabic, or Arabic. If a number of them turn out to be clearly Arabic, this would indirectly – because they are used in personal names – increase the number of Arabic loanwords attested in this region. If we look now at the names which occur in the inscriptions written in Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic characters, the following remarks can be made:

- as said above, the most popular theophoric names attested in the Nabataean inscriptions are completely absent from the corpus of Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic texts;
- the most popular divine figures mentioned in the theophoric names in Nabataeo-Arabic texts are *'lz'* and *'lt*, both attested twice each;
- a theophoric name built with *'lh*, “the God”, *'bd'l'h*, appears for the first time in a pre-Islamic Arabic text from Umm al-Jimāl in Jordan. It is not particularly surprising since the divine figure *'lh* itself does not appear in the inscriptions before the beginning of the 6th century AD, in AD 512 in Zabad, in AD 548–549 in the area of Dūmah and around AD 469 in Najrān. It is not certain whether *šldllh* is also a compound built with *'lh*.
- the only theophoric names which appear in both Nabataean and Nabataeo-Arabic are *'bd'l'z'*, *šy'lhy* and *zydmnwtw*;
- a few theophoric names appear only in pre-Islamic Arabic. These are *'bd'l'h*, already mentioned above, *'bdmnpw* (‘Abdmanāf) in Wadi Ramm,<sup>31</sup> *mr'lqyš* (in texts from Ḥimā, in Zabad, and in Namārah), and *'bd'lmšyh* (‘Abdalmasīh, in Ḥimā only). They seem therefore to be *new* in the onomasticon of the pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions of the Arabian peninsula;
- the following names, finally, appear only in Nabataeo-Arabic: *'bd'yš* (but see above, this may be an orthographic variant of *'bd'yisy* or the name ‘Abd+Iyās), *yd{d}'{l}* (but the reading is quite uncertain), *'wd'l*, *'bd'lt*, *{'wyd}'lt*, *'bd'lšm'*.

## 5. Other remarks

The contents of the hundreds of inscriptions examined in this study raise many issues which could not all be developed in this contribution. They will be addressed later and are mentioned here only for possible discussion:

- *dkr/dkyr*: the Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions from the Ḥijāz sometimes use *dkyr* (Aramaic passive participle), sometimes *dkr/dkrt* (the perfect 3rd person masculine/feminine, possibly with an optative force), and sometimes neither. It is worth pointing out here that *dkyr* is never used in the 6th century texts, only *dkr* is. Besides, it is not followed, as in most of the Nabataean graffiti, by a personal name, but by a divine name.<sup>32</sup> This

<sup>31</sup> And see *'mtmnpw* in Zabad.

<sup>32</sup> Note however that the feminine, *dkrt* followed by the name of the goddess *'lt* is attested in five Nabataean inscriptions: JSNab 212, 213 as well as Savignac 1933: nos. 3, 7, 8 and 9 (in the latter, the goddess' name is spelled *'ltw*).



is true in DaJ144PAr1, the AD 548–549 inscription from Dūmah (*dkr ʿlʿlh*),<sup>33</sup> as well as in DaJ000NabAr1, the undated but probably middle to late-fourth century AD text from the excavations at Dūmah. Note that both *dkyr* and *dkr* are completely absent from the Najrān inscriptions. This formula, a verb in the perfect with an optative force followed by a divine name, is paralleled in the four unfortunately undated Nabataeo-Arabic texts from Umm Jadhāyidh which start with *šm ʿt* followed by *ʿlʿzy*. Rather than an Arabic “influence”, these uses of *dkr* and *šm ʿt* suggest strongly that the authors of these texts were Arabic speaking people.

– *bn/br*: as was pointed out by Macdonald (2010: note 41), *br* is always used instead of *bn* in the pre-Islamic Arabic inscriptions, and this is also true in the ones which have been examined in the course of this study. *br* was therefore considered as a “fossil”, very much like *šlm*, *dkyr* and *bṭb*.

– some names show a genitive case ending: *hnʿmnwty*, *ʿbdmnwty*, *ʿwdmnwty* and *tymmnwty*, which all happen to be written with the *mnwt* spelling of the deity’s name;

– the divine name *ʿlʿzy* and the theophoric name *ʿbdʿlʿzy* point to a pronunciation \*-ay of the divine name al-ʿUzzā;

– the definite article in the compound names is sometimes written *ʿl*, sometimes *ʿ* and is sometimes absent. It might be worth looking more closely at the distribution and treatment of the definite article in these names;

– the disappearance of the *samekh* from the inscriptions written in Nabataeo-Arabic: to my knowledge, the latest *dated* example of *samekh* used in a text is to be found in JSNab 386 (AD 306), in the month name *sywn* (if the reading is correct). It is therefore not surprising that it does not occur in any Nabataeo-Arabic text except one, ThMNN 556 (UJadhNab 219), in the name *ywsp*. This text, however, does not seem to me to be later than the 4th century AD. It is interesting to see that the name built with the name of the goddess Isis, *ʿbdʿysy* in Nabataean characters, seems to be written *ʿbdʿyš* in Nabataeo-Arabic, in ThMNN 602# (unless this is the name ʿAbdʿiyās, which does not exist in Ibn al-Kalbī’s genealogies). It is possible that at a certain period of time, the Nabataeo-Arabic character *š* became used to write ‘pure’ [s].

– a number of new theophoric names appear in the inscriptions recently published or still unpublished but since I have not specifically distinguished those from the ones which are listed in Negev’s *Personal names*, I cannot provide a list for the moment.

## 6. Concluding remarks

To summarize briefly, the present study has shown the following:

– there are local influences as well as regional and chronological specificities in the way divine and theophoric names are distributed but the most popular Nabataean names are widespread throughout the Nabataean kingdom;

– the Syrian and Egyptian deities, who were very popular in Petra (Atargatis, Baʿalšamīn, Isis, etc.) are completely absent from North-west Arabia, including in Madāʿin Šāliḥ;

– if one takes into consideration the divine names *tdh/trh* and *tdhy/trhy* as well as the mention of *šlm* both in a first century AD Taymāʿ Aramaic text from Taymāʿ and in the theophoric name

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<sup>33</sup> In this text, *dkr* is written once in Nabataeo-Arabic characters in the first line and once in Arabic characters in the second line. See Nehmé 2017b: 128–129.

- 'bdšlm*, attested in three texts from North-west Arabia (and nowhere else), it appears that the cult of the Taymā' deity Šalm was still relatively popular in this area of the Nabataean kingdom;
- some of the names show orthographic variants, although this aspect needs a much closer examination;
  - the worship of a god named *šmy'* at Hegra was made clearer by the discovery in the Madā'in Šāliḥ excavations of a new inscription mentioning it as well as by the new theophoric name *'bd'lšm'* in a Nabataeo-Arabic text;
  - the Nabataeo-Arabic inscriptions show the (relative) popularity of *'lt*, *'lz'* and *mnwtw*. This is not particularly surprising since they are the three major goddesses of pre-Islamic Mecca, but it is the first time that their preeminence in the fourth to fifth century AD inscriptions from Arabia is demonstrated;
  - one divine epithet only, *mry 'lm'*, is attested in both the Nabataean and Nabataeo-Arabic scripts (in the latter as the God of the Jews) but in two inscriptions which are only 36 years apart.
  - the name given to the pre-Islamic Christian god, *'lh*, is now found in a 6th century AD pre-Islamic Arabic text from the Ḥijāz;
  - there seems to have been, in the Ḥijāz, at the period represented by the Nabataeo-Arabic and pre-Islamic inscriptions, three major female divine figures and one major male figure. The latter is not Dūšarā but Al'ilāh, "God" who, in the 6th century, becomes widespread from Syria to Najrān. The religious landscape of northern Arabia thus seems to have witnessed a change which is visible in the inscriptions recorded in the three successive categories of scripts distinguished in this study.

## Appendix: a selection of the inscriptions mentioned in the text

**Note:** the inscription numbers are those given within each project or publication. They are presented in alphabetical order of the sigla.

### • 64114\_I04

**Nabataean, Madā'in Šāliḥ.** Inscription discovered during the Madā'in Šāliḥ 2016 excavation season in the so-called "residential unit", south-west of the Nabataean sanctuary IGN 132. Published in Nehmé 2017c.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig01\\_64114\\_I04](#) and the following caption: Photo M. al-Mūsā, facsimile L. Nehmé]

Reading (no. 4 on the copy):

*šlm š----m br k----*

*hn't mn qdm šmy'*

"May Š[l]m son of K---- [son of]

Hn't be safe, in the presence of Heaven".

Compare with ThMNN 166 (*CIS* II 236) below.

• **DaJ000NabAr1 (= DaJTrans1)**

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Dūmat al-Jandal.** Published in Nehmé 2016, with a new reading in Nehmé 2017b: 130–131. Inscription discovered at the bottom of the collapse layer of a tower located on top of the outcrop which overlooks the so-called western settlement of Dūmah from the south. This collapse layer yielded pottery dated to the interval between the 1st and the 4th century AD (Charloux *et al.* 2016: 227–228) as well as a Roman coin dated to the reign of Licinius (AD 308–324) which gives a *terminus post quem* to the inscription.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig02\\_s](#) and the following caption: Photo G. Charloux and facsimile L. Nehmé]

[d]kr ʾlh

mlkw br {..}

ḥy{h} w

t{b/y}ḥh

“May God [re]member Mālikū son of Ḥayyah and Tābiḥah”.

• **DaJ29Nab1**

**Nabataean, Qiyāl** (a Nabataean site c. 15 km northwest of Sakākā). Previously unpublished.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig03\\_DaJ29Nab1\\_DJ2012a1031B.JPG](#) and the following caption: Photo G. Charloux]

dkyryn

mšlm w <m{n}> mn

ḥyw

qdm {r}šw

“May Muslim (?) and Ḥayy be remembered in the presence of Ruḏā”.

This text is difficult to read because the order of the words as they are written on the stone is peculiar. *Mn qdm* should be read after *ḥyw*, the author intending, most probably, to write *dkyryn mšlm w ḥyw mn qdm {r}šw*. *Dkyryn* being in the plural, at least two names are expected. The name *mšlm* is attested alongside the more common *mšlmw*. If the reading is correct, this text may provide the first attestation of Ruḏā in the Nabataean inscriptions.

• **DaJ29Nab13**

**Nabataean, Qiyāl.** Previously unpublished.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig04\\_DaJ29Nab13\\_DJ2012a1088B.JPG](#) and the following caption: Photo G. Charloux]

dkyr ḥrtt

mn qdm ʾlt

“May Ḥāriṭat be remembered in the presence of Allāt”.

The text is obscured by letters which belong to another inscription but the reading is certain.

• **DaJ29Nab24**

**Nabataean, Qiyāl.** Previously unpublished.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig05\\_DaJ29Nab24\\_DJ2012a1122B.JPG](#) and the following caption: Photo G. Charloux]

*dkrt ʿlt šlmw br*

*ʿdrmw bʿb lʿlm*

“May Allāt remember Sālīm (or Sallām) son of ʿAdramū in well-being for ever”.

#### • DaJ144PAr1

**Pre-Islamic Arabic, Site 144 northwest of Dūmah.** Published in Nehmé 2017b.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig06\\_DaJ144PAr1\\_DJ2016a0150B.jpg](#) and the following caption: Photo G. Charloux, facsimile L. Nehmé]

*dkr*

*dkr ʿlʿlh*

*ḥgʿ{b/n}w br*

*šlmh*

*{b}y{r}{[h] šnt 4x100*

*+ 20+ 20+ 3 cross*

“May remember. May God remember Ḥgʿ{b/n}w son of Salama/Salāma/Salima {in} the m[onth] (gap) year 443”.

This very interesting text, the author of which was probably Christian because of the cross which follows the date, is the first pre-Islamic Arabic text dated to the sixth century ever discovered in North-west Arabia. It is dated to AD 548–549. For a full commentary, see Nehmé 2017b.

#### • Ḥimā-Sud PalAr 8

**Pre-Islamic Arabic, Ḥimā, north of Najrān.** Published in Robin *et al.* 2014: 1099–1102, fig. 8, 41–42.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig07\\_Ḥimā-Sud PalAr 8.jpg](#) and the following caption: Photo C. Robin, facsimile L. Nehmé]

Reading as in Robin *et al.* 2014: 1100.

*(Cross) Twbn br mrtđ*

*ʿlyʿ br mrʿlqyš br tymw*

*ʿlʿlh ----*

“Tawbān son of Martad

Elie son of Imruʿ al-Qays son of Taymū

God ----”.

The first two lines are signatures by two different individuals and are not connected with each other except by the fact that they are written one above the other. What follows *ʿlʿlh* is not clear. This text belongs to the same group as Ḥimā-Sud PalAr 1 (Robin *et al.* 2014: 1087–1092, fig. 10, 11, 29), dated to AD 469–470, and it is probably dated to around the same time.

#### • LPArab 1

**Pre-Islamic Arabic, Umm al-Jimāl.** Published in Littmann 1949 and others, see also al-Ghabban 2008: fig. 36–38.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig08\\_LPArab1](#) and the following caption: Photo L. Nehmé]

This difficult text requires a new full edition, especially since the stone on which it is written is now stored in the Mafraq museum in Jordan, where it can be examined.<sup>34</sup> Until this is done, I would only like here to suggest to read the end of the first line as *'bd'l'lh*, 'Abd'al'ilāh, a theophoric name built with *'bd + 'l'lh*.

### • MAIS 2 (Sakākā)

**Pre-Islamic Arabic, Sakākā.** Published in *al-Muaikil* 1993: no. 2.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig09\\_MAIS2\\_DJ2011a0774.jpg](#) and the following caption: Photo G. Charloux and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*b{'y}{s}w*

*dkyr mr'lqyš*

*br mlkw*

“Ba{yḏ} (?). May Imru' al-Qays son of Mālik be remembered”.

On the photograph, two letters are carved before the first word of the pre-Islamic Arabic text. They are carved a little higher and are not likely to belong to the text. The stroke of these two letters is thicker than those of the pre-Islamic text, the patina is lighter and there seems to be two dots below the first letter (a *y*?). For these reasons, it is probably (much?) later.

The first line of the text is difficult to read. The first letter can be a *b* or a *n*. The second one is likely to be a *'* although a *y* is also possible. The third one cannot be a *k* if one compares it with the *k* in *mlkw*. No satisfactory Arabic name starting with Na'- or Ba'- was however found. If read *by'w*, it could be the equivalent of Arabic Bayḏ. The second and third line of the text are clear.

### • MS8Nab1

**Nabataean, Madā'in Šāliḥ.** Published in *Nehmé* 2005–2006: no. 12, p. 189–194, fig. 134.

This text is carved on a terrace above a Nabataean monumental tomb (IGN 1), to the right of the drawing of two joint betyls, an eye-betyl on the left representing al-'Uzzā and a plain betyl on the right representing the Lord of the house.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig10\\_MS8Nab1.jpg](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*dnh gbl 'l'z' w mr byt'*

“This is the mountain of al-'Uzzā and the Lord of the house”.

Note the probable Arabic loanword *gbl*, “mountain”. This text is interesting because it shows that a “mountain” could be devoted to gods, in the present case one of the sandstone outcrops of the Jabal al-Maḥjar in Madā'in Šāliḥ. *Mr byt'* is probably a periphrasis for a major Nabataean god, possibly Dūšarā.

### • QNNab 5

**Nabataean, Qā' an-Nqayb** (Darb al-Bakrah). Published in *Nehmé* 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig11\\_QN5.jpg](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*šlm 'byw*

*br*

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<sup>34</sup> Information given by Ali al-Manaser.

*šld'lh̄y*

“May Ubayy son of Šald'allāhī be safe”.

The name *šld'lh̄y* appears here for the first time in Nabataean. There is no radical SLD in Arabic but Aramaic *šeled*, “a mass of a burnt or decayed body distinguishable in shape and outlines” (Jastrow, s.v.) is a particularly unfortunate compound for a theophoric name.

• S 1

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Sakākā.** Published in Nehmé 2010: 71–72.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig12\\_S1.jpg](#) and the following caption: Photo courtesy Kh. al-Muaikil and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*dkyrw mħrbw w 'šħbh*

*'l 'šrh w 'nymw w [w]'lw w ħrtw w {k}ħšw*

*bṭbw mħrbw br 'wyd't ktb ydh ywm 'šrh*

*w tmnh b'yr šnt 2x100+ 100+ 20+ 3 {d.ħg}---- 'l ħyrh*

“May Muḥārib and his ten companions and Ġunaym (?) and Wā'il and Ḥārīt and {K}ħšw be remembered in well-being. Muḥārib son of 'Awīd'allāt wrote [with] his hand day eighteen of Iyyār year 323 {'}{d}{'}{ħg}---- al-Ḥīrah?/the camp?”.

The text is dated to AD 429. 'Awīd'allāt means “the refuge of Allāt”. What precedes 'lħyrh is not clear and would require examining the text on the rock. Its precise location is however unknown.

• S 2

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Sakākā.** Previously unpublished.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig13\\_S2](#) and the following caption: Photo courtesy Kh. al-Muaikil]

According to Kh. al-Muaikil, this text comes from the same outcrop as the previous one. The reading is uncertain and it is given here for sake of completeness.

*dkyr {b}ly bṭb {w} šlm*

*w mħl{d} ---- l{b}{y/n}w br yd{d}'{l}*

No translation is given of this text the reading of which remains uncertain. The second word is possibly the exclamative particle *bly*, “Yea!”. On the third line, *mħl{d}* was preferred to *mħl{w}* because the loop of the letter is not closed at its top. The name may correspond to Arabic Muḥallad. The last name, which is the one which interests us here, is also uncertain because the last letter could be a badly formed final *h* while the second *d* is very uncertain. The only reason why this text is presented here is because it would be the only example of a theophoric name with -'l in Nabataeo-Arabic.

• ThMNN 55 (JSNab 93)

**Nabataean, Madā'in Šāliḥ.**

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig14\\_ThMNN55\\_JS Nab93](#) and the following caption: Photo L. Nehmé]

*šlm tymmnwty*

“May Taymmanawatī be safe”.

• **ThMNN 107 (JSNab 142)**

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig15\\_ThMNN107\\_JS Nab 142](#) and the following caption: Photo L. Nehmé]

**Nabataean, Madā'in Šāliḥ.**

*dkyr tymbktb'*

*qdm dwšr' w tbwš*

“May Taymalkutbā be remembered in the presence of Dūšarā and Tabūš”.

In the second line, one expects *tbwš* to be a divine name because it is coordinated to *dwšr'*.

• **ThMNN 166 (CIS II 236)**

**Nabataean, Madā'in Šāliḥ.** Copied by Ch. Doughty (1884: pl. XI, fol. 18) and read correctly in Milik 1972: 409–410. See also Nehmé 2017c.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig16\\_CISII236](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*dkrwn ṭb lzydw br gḏṭb*

*br zydw mn qdm šmy'*

*{zydw}*

“Good remembrance to Zaydū son of Gadṭab son of Zaydū in the presence of Heaven. {Zaydū}”.

• **ThMNN 477 (UJadhNab 88)**

**Nabataean, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Also published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig17\\_UJadh 88](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*'{d/r}{d/r}y br m{y/n}' dkyr*

*bṭb mn qdm 'lh*

*g{y}'*

A possible Arabic parallel for the first name, which does not occur anywhere else, is Udad. The second name is known neither in Nabataean nor in Arabic. The reading of *gy'* in this text is uncertain but I consider that the letter after *g* is a badly formed *y* and that the vertical stroke which follows is the ligature between this *y* and the very archaic form of the '.

• **ThMNN 539 (UJadhNab 350)**

**Nabataean, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Also published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig18\\_UJadh\\_350](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*šlm qs'dr br {bn}hbl*

*w dkyr bṭb*

This text is interesting because it contains both a theophoric name built with the name of the Edomite deity Qōs and a theophoric name built with Hubal, of which this is the third attestation in Nabataean and the second with the Arabic compound *bn* rather than Aramaic *br* for “son of”. It is *bnhbl* in Puteoli (CIS II 158) and Umm Jadhāyidh and *brhbl* in Petra (Milik and Starcky 1975: no. 5, p. 120–122).

• **ThMNN 602 (UJadhNab 105)**

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Also published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig19\\_UJadh 105](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

Nehmé 2010: 75–76, fig. 37.

*dkyr š‘dw*

*br ‘bd’yš*

*bšlm*

“May Sa‘dū son of ‘Abd’īs/‘Abd’iyās be remembered in well-being”.

• **ThMNN 701 (UJadhNab 145)**

**Nabataean, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Also published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig20\\_UJadh145\\_from\\_Theeb\\_226](#) and the following caption: Photo S. al-Theeb and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*šlm ‘bdšlm*

“May ‘Abdšalm be safe”.

• **ThMNN 862**

**(Early) Nabataeo-Arabic, Tabūk region.** Also published in Nehmé 2018.

To my knowledge, no photograph of this text is available.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig21\\_ThMNN\\_862\\_fs\\_Theeb\\_2010](#) and the following caption: Facsimile S. al-Theeb]

*dkyr {t}ymw w šlmn bny*

*šy‘lhy*

“May {T}aymū and Salmān the sons of Šay‘allāhī be remembered”.

This text is presented here because it contains to my knowledge the only example of the presence of the compound *-lhy* in a text written in Nabataeo-Arabic characters. Compare with the Arabic name Šay‘allāt.

• **TS14NabAr1**

**Nabataeo-Arabic, al-Šulaylāt, Taymā’ region.** Previously unpublished. I am grateful to Michael Macdonald for letting me present it here.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig22\\_TS014NabAr1\\_TS2013a0491B](#) and the following caption: Photo M.C.A. Macdonald]

*dkyr yw{z/n}w br ‘bd’l’z’*

“May Yū{z/n}ū son of ‘Abd’al’uzzā be remembered”.

The first name is not previously attested in Nabataean. It is just possible to read *yw/lw*, which occurs once in ThNJUT 51, but one would expect the *l* to be slightly higher than the other letters, as is the *l* in ‘*bd’l’z’*’.

• **UJadhNab 72**

**Mixed Nabataean and Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.



[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig23\\_UJadh72.jpg](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

<d> *dkyr 'bd'lšm' br rbw btb*

“May ‘Abd’lšamā son of Rabū be remembered in well-being”.

Note that *btb* is not visible on the photograph. This text is presented here because it contains the only theophoric name built with *šm'* known so far and because it offers an interesting parallel to the god *šmy'* mentioned in two texts from Madā' in Šāliḥ presented above (64114\_I04 and ThMNN 166).

### • UJadhNab 313

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.

This text, as well as UJadhNab 345, 364 and 368 have already been mentioned in other contributions because the four of them contain a formula which is not attested elsewhere, neither in the Nabataean nor in the Nabataeo-Arabic epigraphic corpus (Nehmé 2017a: 82–83 and Nehmé 2017b: 128–129). This formula is based on the use of the verb ŠM' in the 3rd person singular of the perfect with an optative force, followed by the divine name al-‘Uzzā. There is an exact parallel with the radical DKR in the formula *dkr 'lh*, “May God remember” which occurs in DaJ144PAr1 and DaJ000NabAr1 presented above.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig24\\_UJadh 313](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*šm't*

*'l'zy l{m}'š{r}*

*'{z/r}m ktb*

“May al-‘Uzzay listen to {M}a'ša{r}. 'A{z/r}m wrote”.

*M'šr* may be the Arabic name Ma'šar but note that the first letter could be also be read as a *q* or a *p*. As for the name in the third line, it is probably best read *'zm* because the shape of the second letter is very similar to that of the *z* in al-‘Uzzā. Besides, the name *'zmw* occurs in a Taymā' Aramaic inscription, CIS II 336, this time with a final *w*. If it is indeed the same name, it is interesting to have it once with *wawation* in Taymā' Aramaic and without *wawation* in Nabataeo-Arabic. The same name appears also in UJadhNab 364, for which see below. Note that the goddess' name is spelled with a final *y*, which suggests that her name was pronounced 'uzzay, not 'uzzā.

### • UJadhNab 331

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig25\\_UJadh 331](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*'bd't*

*br 'wšw šlm*

“May ‘Abd'allāt son of 'Awšū be safe”.

The name 'Abd'allāt is not attested in Nabataean. It is the feminine equivalent of Arabic 'Abdallāh, the closest parallels of which in Arabic are Awsallāt, Nahdallāt, Sa'dallāt, Wahballāt, Zaydallāt, etc.

• UJadhNab 345

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig26\\_UJadh345](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.

*šmʿt*

*l{ʿ}d{y/n}w*

*br {šb}rh*

*ʿlʿzy*

“May al-ʿUzzay listen to ʿAdyū/ʿUdayyū/ʿAddānū son of Šabira/Šabra/Šubāra”.

The syntax is odd since one would normally expect al-ʿUzzā to follow immediately the verb *šmʿt*.

• UJadhNab 352

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig27\\_UJadh352](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*dkyr {l} ʿbdʿlʿ[ʒ]y*

*br {š}ldllh*

“May ʿAbdʿalʿuzzay son of Šldllh be remembered”.

Note the dot above the *d* of *ʿbdʿlʿ[ʒ]y*. The reading of the second name is not absolutely certain because one may read *yḥ* at the beginning, but a close examination of the photograph shows that the small protrusion which appears in grey on the facsimile is a break and does not belong to the letter. The double *l* before the final *h* seems clear. It is possible that this is the equivalent of the name *šldʿlhy* found in QNNab 5, for which see above. One has probably to assume a name *\*šldʿlʿlh* where both *ʿ* are assimilated.

• UJadhNab 364

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig28\\_UJadh364](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*šmʿt*

*ʿlʿzy*

*lʿ{z/r}m*

“May al-ʿUzzay listen to ʿA{z/r}m”.

See the commentary under UJadhNab 313. ʿA{z/r}m is probably the same individual as the one who wrote UJadhNab 313.

• UJadhNab 368–369

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig29\\_UJadh 368-369](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*šmʿt ʿlʿzy*

*ḥ{b/n}y{b/n}w br ʿwšw*

“May al-‘Uzzay listen to Ḥ{b/n}y{b/n}w son of ‘Awsū”.

The name may be Arabic Ḥunayn, Ḥabīb, Ḥubayb, Ḥubayyib or even Ḥubayb.

• **UJadhNab 399**

**Nabataean, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig30\\_UJadh 399](#) and the following caption: Photo and facsimile L. Nehmé]

*dkyr bṭb bšlm hnʿlt*

The reading is certain. *hnʿlt* is not attested elsewhere in Nabataean.

• **UJadhNab 538**

**Nabataeo-Arabic, Umm Jadhāyidh.** Published in Nehmé 2018.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig31\\_Ujadh\\_538](#) and the following caption: Photo Farīq aṣ-Ṣaḥrāʾ 2017]

*bly dkyr šly br ʿwšw*

*bṭb w šlm mn qdm*

*mry ʿlmʿ w ktbʿ dnh*

*ktb ywm ḥg*

*ʿl-ptyr šnt mʿt*

*w tšʿyn w šbʿ*

“<sup>1</sup> Yea! May Šullay son of ʿAwšū <sup>2</sup> be remembered in well-being and may he be safe in the presence of<sup>3</sup> the Lord of world, and this writing<sup>4</sup> he wrote the day of the feast of the unleavened bread, year one hundred <sup>6</sup> and ninety-seven [AD 302–303]”.

This very interesting AD 303 text was discovered in the area of Umm Jadhāyidh by the Saudi Arabian team of amateur explorers known as Farīq aṣ-Ṣaḥrāʾ ([www.alsahra.org](http://www.alsahra.org)). The author, Šullay son of ʿAwšū, wrote another text in the same area, UJadhNab 309, seven years earlier. The expression *ywm ḥg ʿl-ptyr* refers to Passover, of which this is the first mention in North-west Arabia. This text is a good additional argument to interpret *mry ʿlmʿ* as the God of the Jews (Robin 2014: 58). For a full commentary, see Nehmé 2018: 186.

• **WRPAr3**

**Pre-Islamic Arabic, Wadi Ramm.** Previously unpublished.

[Insert here [Nehme\\_fig32\\_WRPAr3](#) and the following caption: Photo G. King]

This text was photographed by Geraldine King in Wadi Ramm and was kindly given to me, with permission to include it in this list, by Michael Macdonald.

*ʿl{..} w {qy}š ʿbdmnpw*

The last name is the well-known Arabic name ʿAbdmanāf. Note that *ʿmtmnpw* appears in the AD 512 pre-Islamic Zebed inscription (see Macdonald in Fiema *et al.* 2015: 411).

## Concordance of references

In bold, the reference under which it is quoted in the text. Followed by a #, texts which are presented in the appendix. For the sigla, see the bibliography.

<i>ThMNN</i>	<i>JSNab</i>	<i>CIS II</i>	<i>ThNUJ</i>	<i>UJadhNab</i>	<i>Other reference(s)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
<b>ThMNN 1</b>	JSNab 39				Nehmé 2009: 43–44	Published

<b>ThMNN 9</b>	JSNab 48					Published
<b>ThMNN 13</b>		CIS II 274			ARNA.Nab 53	Published
<b>ThMNN 14</b>	JSNab 52	<i>CIS</i> II 275				Published
<b>ThMNN 19</b>	JSNab 58					Published
<b>ThMNN 20</b>	JSNab 59					Published
<b>ThMNN 21</b>	JSNab 57	<i>CIS</i> II 235				Published
<b>ThMNN 23</b>	JSNab 61	<i>CIS</i> II 238				Published
<b>ThMNN 54</b>	JSNab 92				ARNA.Nab 71	Published
<b>ThMNN 55#</b>	JSNab 93	<i>CIS</i> II 283			ARNA.Nab 72	Published, see appendix
<b>ThMNN 107#</b>	JSNab 142					Published, see appendix
<b>ThMNN 108</b>	JSNab 143					Published
<b>ThMNN 113</b>	JSNab 149					Published
<b>ThMNN 127</b>	JSNab 163	<i>CIS</i> II 244				Published
<b>ThMNN 128</b>	JSNab 164	<i>CIS</i> II 244				Published
<b>ThMNN 133</b>	JSNab 169					Published
<b>ThMNN 166#</b>		<i>CIS</i> II 236				Published, see appendix
<b>ThMNN 190</b>	JSNab 1	<i>CIS</i> II 199				Published
<b>ThMNN 197</b>	JSNab 8	<i>CIS</i> II 197				Published
<b>ThMNN 200</b>	JSNab 11	<i>CIS</i> II 211				Published
<b>ThMNN 201</b>	JSNab 12	<i>CIS</i> II 205				Published
<b>ThMNN 205</b>	JSNab 16	<i>CIS</i> II 198				Published
<b>ThMNN 206</b>	JSNab 17	<i>CIS</i> II 271				Published
<b>ThMNN 209</b>	JSNab 19	<i>CIS</i> II 206				Published
<b>ThMNN 218</b>	JSNab 28	<i>CIS</i> II 208				Published
<b>ThMNN 220</b>	JSNab 30	<i>CIS</i> II 200				Published
<b>ThMNN 221</b>	JSNab 31	<i>CIS</i> II 217				Published
<b>ThMNN 224</b>	JSNab 34	<i>CIS</i> II 224				Published
<b>ThMNN 226</b>	JSNab 36	<i>CIS</i> II 209				Published
<b>ThMNN 278</b>	JSNab 184	<i>CIS</i> II 320F				Published
<b>ThMNN 292</b>	JSNab 198					Published
<b>ThMNN 295</b>	JSNab 201					Published
<b>ThMNN 306</b>	JSNab 212					Published
<b>ThMNN 307</b>	JSNab 213+214					Published
<b>ThMNN 327</b>	JSNab 234					Published
<b>ThMNN 440</b>	JSNab 385					Published
<b>ThMNN 448</b>					ARNA.Nab 24	Published
<b>ThMNN 449</b>					ARNA.Nab 25	Published
<b>ThMNN 477#</b>			ThNUJ 7	UJadhNab 88		Published, see appendix
<b>ThMNN 488</b>			ThNUJ 18	UJadhNab 83		Published
<b>ThMNN 497</b>			ThNUJ 25	UJadhNab 97		Published
<b>ThMNN 539#</b>			ThNUJ 68	UJadhNab 350		Published, see appendix
<b>ThMNN 549</b>			ThNUJ 77	UJadhNab 295		Published
<b>ThMNN 555</b>			ThNUJ 83	UJadhNab 228		Published
<b>ThMNN 556</b>			ThNUJ 84	UJadhNab 219	Nehmé 2010: 77–78	Published
<b>ThMNN 583</b>			ThNUJ 111	UJadhNab 137		Published
<b>ThMNN 584</b>			ThNUJ 112	UJadhNab 134		Published
<b>ThMNN 585</b>			ThNUJ 113	UJadhNab 133		Published
<b>ThMNN 595</b>			ThNUJ 121	UJadhNab 117		Published
<b>ThMNN 602#</b>			ThNUJ 128	UJadhNab 105	Nehmé 2010: 75–76	Published, see appendix
<b>ThMNN 644</b>			ThNUJ 170	UJadhNab 445		Published
<b>ThMNN 662</b>			ThNUJ 188	UJadhNab 237		Published
<b>ThMNN 678</b>			ThNUJ 204	UJadhNab 186		Published
<b>ThMNN 681</b>			ThNUJ 207	UJadhNab 189		Published
<b>ThMNN 688</b>			ThNUJ 213	UJadhNab 41		Published
<b>ThMNN 692</b>			ThNUJ 217	UJadhNab 47		Published
<b>ThMNN 695</b>			ThNUJ 220	UJadhNab 426		Published

<b>ThMNN 701#</b>			ThNUJ 226	UJadhNab 145		Published, see appendix
<b>ThMNN 705</b>			ThNUJ 230	UJadhNab 40		Published
<b>ThMNN 720</b>					ThNJUT 27	Published
<b>ThMNN 726</b>					ThNJUT 33	Published
<b>ThMNN 819</b>					Savignac & Starcky 1957	Published
<b>ThMNN 862#</b>					al-Theeb 1995: no. 26	Published, see appendix
<b>ThMNN 870</b>					al-Theeb 1995: no. 34	Published
<b>ThMNN 952</b>					al-Theeb 1995: no. 91	Published
<b>ThMNN 959</b>					ThNJUT 65	Published
<b>ThMNN 963</b>						Published
—				<b>UJadhNab 59</b>		Published
—				<b>UJadhNab 69</b>		Published
—				<b>UJadhNab 72#</b>		Published, see appendix
—				<b>UJadhNab 226</b>		Published
—				<b>UJadhNab 313</b>		Published, see appendix
				<b>UJadhNab 331#</b>		Published, see appendix
—				<b>UJadhNab 345</b>		Published, see appendix
—				<b>UJadhNab 352#</b>		Published, see appendix
—				<b>UJadhNab 364</b>		Published, see appendix
—				<b>UJadhNab 368</b>		Published, appendix
—				<b>UJadhNab 383</b>		Published
—				<b>UJadhNab 391</b>		Published
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—				<b>UJadhNab 402</b>		Published
—				<b>UJadhNab 428</b>		Published
				<b>UJadhNab 536</b>		Published
				<b>UJadhNab 538#</b>		Published, see Appendix
				<b>UJadhNab 553</b>		Published
—					<b>64114_I01#</b> (Nehmé 2017c)	Forthcoming, see appendix
—					<b>ArNab 61</b>	Published
					<b>ArNab 80</b>	Published
—					<b>ArNab 142</b>	Published
—					<b>CIS II 265</b>	Published
—					<b>CIS II 331</b>	Published
—					<b>DaJ000NabAr1#</b> (Nehmé 2016)	Published, see appendix
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—					<b>DaJ29Nab2</b>	Published
—					<b>DaJ29Nab5</b>	Published
—					<b>DaJ29Nab13#</b>	Published, see appendix
—					<b>DaJ29Nab24#</b>	Published, see appendix
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					<b>DBv1Nab 11</b>	Published

—					<b>Ḥimā-al-Musammāt PalAr 5</b> (Robin <i>et al.</i> 2014)	Published
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—					<b>WRPAr3#</b>	Published, see appendix

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