

P E T R A

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Lost City of the Nabataeans

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Half title: Architectural fragment with lion mask, Petra.
h: 35.0 cm. Department of Antiquities, Amman, Jordan.

Pages 2-3: View of "Royal Tombs" at Jebel el-Khubthah ridge,
looking east from Colonnaded Street, Petra.

Title spread: Ed-Deir (Monastery), Petra.

1666
1667

2431

1882
1883

1878

3031

1082

952

2874
2875

1867

1857

1108

890

2667

3 | Languages, Scripts, and the Uses of Writing among the Nabataeans

M.C.A. MACDONALD

SOMETIME IN THE MID-SIXTH CENTURY AD, an Alexandrian merchant, known to history as Cosmas Indicopleustes, was traveling through the Sinai Peninsula when he noticed that many of the rocks were covered with writing, in a script which he took to be Hebrew (fig 16).¹ These inscriptions excited his curiosity, and after copying some and having them “translated”—alas rather inaccurately—he decided that they must be graffiti carved by the Children of Israel during their forty years in the Wilderness. From this, he reasoned that the script must be the God-given primeval alphabet in which the Israelites had received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and from which, he thought, all other alphabets were derived. He would have been surprised to learn that these inscriptions were in fact no more than three or four centuries old when he saw them and that their authors were not the Israelites of the Exodus but, for the most part, the pagan inhabitants of the Sinai in the Roman period. However, unlike many later writers, he was at least correct in identifying the texts as graffiti.

Although innumerable travelers and pilgrims in the Sinai must have noticed these inscriptions in subsequent centuries, it was more than a thousand years before they are mentioned again in surviving records, this time in the works of seventeenth-century European travelers. From then on, there were numerous speculations as to who had written them and what they might say but, though many copies were published, the script remains undeciphered and unidentified.

It was only in 1818 that the English traveler W. J. Banks made the first copy of an inscription at Petra, in southern Jordan. With great perceptiveness, he immediately connected the script of this beautiful monumental text (fig. 17) with that of the roughly pecked graffiti in the Sinai (fig. 16) which he had

seen and copied three years earlier, and suggested that both were the work of the Nabataeans.²

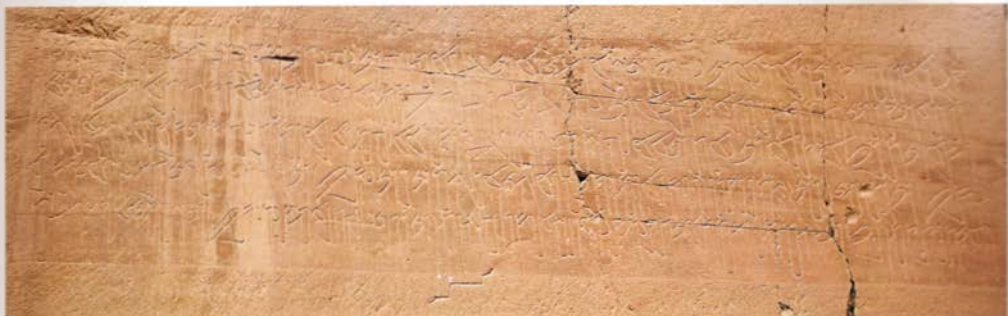
Unfortunately, Banks never published his copy of the Petra inscription nor his speculations about it and so it was not until 1840 that the connection between the Nabataeans and the graffiti in the Sinai was finally suggested in print.³ This was the work of the brilliant young German scholar E.E.F. Beer, who produced a virtually complete decipherment of the script and an extraordinarily accurate analysis of the content and background of the texts. To the shame of the scholarly community of his day, “he died of starvation and neglect, just as [his monograph] had acquired celebrity enough to procure him aid too late.”⁴

It was not until twenty years later that M. A. Levy, following the publication of new texts, was able to show palaeographical connections between the script of the graffiti in the Sinai, and the scripts used in texts at Petra and the Aramaic inscriptions of the Hauran (southern Syria).⁵ Then, in the 1880s, Charles Doughty returned from a journey in north-west Arabia with many copies of inscriptions, some of which were immediately recognized as being in a script similar to those which were by this time known as “Nabataean.”⁶

Since then, almost 6,000 texts on stone in similar scripts have been found in Arabia, Jordan, and Syria, as well as in the Negev, in the Sinai, in Egypt,⁷ and as far away as the Greek islands and southern Italy.⁸ In addition, several papyri bearing Nabataean writing by both scribes and non-scribes, have been found in caves near the Dead Sea.⁹ Finally, a few fragments of plaster bearing writing in ink or paint have been excavated,¹⁰ as well as a handful of informal texts written in ink on potsherds or pebbles.¹¹

Unfortunately, this large body of writing represents a very narrow range of content. For example, we have no Nabataean literary, philosophical, or scholarly texts; no codes of laws, religious liturgies or scriptures, no historical annals, administrative

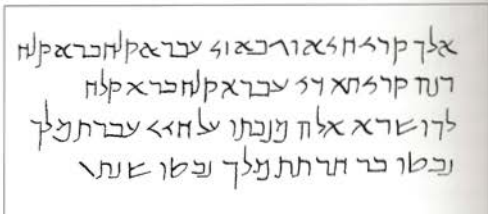
16. Graffiti from Sinai in the “Nabataean” script. All numbers refer to the texts in CIS 2.



17



19



18



20

17. The inscription on the Turkmaniyah Tomb, Petra, thought to be mid-first century AD. See fig. 38.5.

18. The earliest inscription so far found in Petra. A dedication by Ašlah son of Ašlah, dated to the first year of Obodat I, c. 96/95 bc. See fig. 38.4.

19. A fragment of a Nabataean inscription from Petra dated to year 18 of Aretas IV [= 10 AD] commemorating the construction of buildings at Petra by a commander of cavalry "for the life of" King Aretas, his queen, Hagarū, and their children. Department of Antiquities, Amman, Jordan.

20. Signature ("May Ašlah be safe and sound") carved on a rock-face on the route between the Deir plateau and the small High Place at Jabal Qarūn, Petra (cf. Lindner 1986, 98 and 100).



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archives, business letters or accounts; and most of what we know of the history, way-of-life, and commercial activities of the Nabataeans comes, not from their own writings but from relatively brief descriptions by Greek and Roman authors.

The label “Nabataean” is nowadays applied to a number of related forms of the Aramaic script, found in texts spread over a wide area of the Near East and beyond. It is convenient to use this label but it is important to remember two things. Firstly, these varieties of the Aramaic script have been grouped together and called “Nabataean” by modern scholars, and we do not know whether those who used them in antiquity would have seen the same connections between them, or whether they called all, or any, of them “Nabataean.”

Secondly, we should not assume that all those who wrote or commissioned a text in what we call the “Nabataean language and script” thought of themselves as ethnically or politically “Nabataean,” any more than someone who writes in the language we call “English” is necessarily “English” by nationality. This is vividly illustrated in several of the papyri



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21–22. Scripts used by some of the Nabataeans' neighbors.

21. A Himaic inscription from the Wadi Ramm area, with a prayer to Dūsharā. “O Dūsharā. [grant] good fortune to ‘Ajād” (See King 1990, no. KJC 405.)

22. A Safaitic inscription by a Nabataean. “By Murf’im son of Ars-Manawat son of Abgar son of ‘A’til, the Nabataean” (See Macdonald, Al Mu’azzin, and Nehmé 1996, 444–449, no. B1).

just mentioned, where some members of a Jewish community in the Nabataean kingdom wrote in Nabataean and others in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic. Conversely, there is an inscription in the Palmyrene language and script, commissioned by a man who specifies that he was a Nabataean but who happened to be working in the area of Palmyra.¹² Other Nabataeans, out in the desert east of the Hauran, wrote graffiti in the language and script of the local nomads (fig. 22).¹³ Thus, when someone wrote a document or commissioned an inscription, the language and script they used would depend more on where they had been brought up, or where they happened to be at the time, than on their ethnic or political affiliations.

In view of this, and of the fact that the “Nabataean” language and script were used, often extensively, in geographical areas which did not form part of the kingdom (e.g., the Sinai and Egypt) and at periods after it ceased to exist (e.g., in the Hauran, Arabia, and the Sinai), it seems wise when discussing the inscriptions and their language and script to distinguish

between, on the one hand, the “Nabataean cultural area” and, on the other, political entities such as “Nabataea” or the “Nabataean kingdom.”

THE USES OF WRITING

Social, political, and environmental conditions differed from region to region of the Nabataean cultural area and this is reflected in the ways in which writing was used in each. This means that Nabataean written documents do not form a coherent, homogeneous corpus and it is misleading to assume that a feature in a text from one area is typical of “Nabataean” as a whole. Like everything else, a document is much better understood when seen within its context. In this chapter I shall therefore describe not only the various types of Nabataean texts which have survived but examine what they can tell us about the use of written languages in each region of the cultural area.

Over 90 percent of the surviving Nabataean inscriptions are “signatures.” These texts consist of the name of the author with usually that of his father and sometimes a longer genealogy. Occasionally other members of his family (e.g., brothers, sons, daughters, etc.) are included. This “signature” can appear alone but, more often, it is preceded, followed, or enclosed by conventional words of blessing such as

šlm “may he be safe and sound,”¹⁴

dkyr “may he be remembered,”

bryk “may he be blessed,”

b-tb “in well-being,” etc.

Thus, for example, *šlm N br N b-tb* “May N son of N be safe and sound in well-being.”

Petra In Petra, these signatures (fig. 20) make up approximately 82 percent of the known written documents.¹⁵ In the past, they have been regarded simply as graffiti and dismissed as uninformative and of little interest. However, in an important study of the geographical distribution of the inscriptions in Petra, Laïla Nehmé has recently pointed out that large numbers of the signatures are grouped at particular sites. Among these are five small sanctuaries, such as that of Obodas the god at An-Nmeir, which alone has 132 of these texts, and other meeting places of the *thiasoi*, or “dining-clubs” associated with religious or funerary cults. These meeting places are only found in certain parts of Petra and are usually associated with Strabo’s statement that the Nabataeans “prepare common meals together in groups of thirteen persons, and have two singing-girls for each banquet.”¹⁶ These signatures, which are rarely found elsewhere in Petra such as the great high-places of sacrifice or the city center, seem to have been intended to commemorate the authors’ participation in these ritual banquets.¹⁷

Of the monumental inscriptions at Petra, the largest group is funerary, though this represents surprisingly few texts given the large numbers of tombs there. Moreover, of these, only the Latin epitaph of the Roman governor, Sextius Florentinus,¹⁸ and the Greek epitaph of a Roman soldier,¹⁹ were carved on the exterior of tombs and both these date from after the Roman Annexation in 106 AD and so may reflect a practice different from the local Nabataean one. These are also practically the only true epitaphs in Petra.²⁰ The only Nabataean text which could be called an epitaph reads

this is the *nefesh* of Petraios son of Threptos and he is honored because he had been at Raqmu [the Semitic name for Petra]. He died at Jerash and his master, Taymu, buried him there.²¹

A *nefesh* is a memorial which usually took the form of an elongated pyramid on a base which could be carved on the interior or exterior walls of a tomb, or could be engraved or carved in relief on a rock-face, as a simple memorial independent of a tomb. The inscriptions on these usually say simply “*nefesh* of so-and-so.” Other grave markers were engraved on the rock inside the tomb near the loculus where the body was placed, or on a stone used to close the loculus, or were painted on the plaster which covered the interior walls of the tomb. However, those found so far give no more than the name, patronym, and occasionally profession or title of the deceased.

In Hegra (modern Madā’in Šālih), the Nabataean city in northwest Arabia, a number of tombs have inscriptions on the façades. These are not epitaphs but copies or summaries of the title deeds to the property (see below under **Hegra**). There is only one text of this type at Petra, the elegant five-line inscription on the façade of the so-called Turkmaniyah tomb (fig. 17).²² Although in some ways it is similar in content to the Hegra texts, there are significant differences, most notably that it does not mention the owner of the tomb (compare the Hegra tomb inscription quoted below). It has been suggested that the tomb was carved by a property developer, possibly working on behalf of a temple or religious corporation, and that the names of the eventual owner and occupants were to be inserted in the original deeds, written on papyrus, which were probably lodged at a temple.²³

Scholars have long tried to explain why there are so few monumental inscriptions carved directly onto the façades of tombs at Petra, but none of the explanations which have been proposed is particularly convincing. It should be remembered that the only Nabataean inscriptions on the exteriors of the tombs at Hegra or Petra are, without exception, deeds of real estate *not* epitaphs, grave-markers, or memorials. Hegra has yet to be comprehensively explored, but at Petra, the commonest

surviving commemoration of the dead is on a *nefesh* memorial, while grave-markers in both Hegra and Petra are found *inside* the tombs near the loculus, not on the exterior.

Thus, it may simply be that there was a difference in legal practice between Hegra and Petra in this matter. It is possible that, at Petra, the deposition of a deed of ownership in a temple was deemed sufficient protection for the owner(s) of the tomb and it was not felt necessary to carve a “private property” notice on the monument itself. Or it may simply be that the Petrans were less litigious than the population of Hegra. The Greek philosopher Athenodorus of Tarsus, who had lived in Petra, noted that it was only foreigners living there who initiated law-suits “both with one another and with the natives. None of the natives prosecuted one another, and they in every way kept peace with one another.”²⁴ This, possibly idealized, view seems to reflect a general reluctance to go to law among the Petrans, which is in marked contrast to the impression presented by the tomb inscriptions at Hegra.

Of the small number of Nabataean inscriptions of a religious nature at Petra, most are simple dedications or identifications of cult statues, baetyls²⁵ or niches.²⁶ However, fragments of what appears to be a decree listing religious obligations and penalties, found in the Temple of the Winged Lions at Petra, hint at a much more sophisticated use of monumental writing in the service of temple and cult, though, alas, we have at present no other evidence for this.²⁷

In Petra, as in all parts of the Nabataean realm, there are only a handful of Nabataean honorific inscriptions, all of them referring to kings.²⁸ This is in marked contrast to Palmyra, for instance, where the great men of the city were regularly honored with statues or busts. In Si⁴, too, which was in an area of the Hauran that was not under Nabataean rule, statues were erected to public benefactors (see below). We can only guess at the reasons for this apparent difference in practice, but both Palmyra and Si⁴ were far more heavily Hellenized than Petra, while in Palmyra, at least, the key civic institutions were modeled on those of a Greek city. Interestingly, the situation in Petra seems to have changed in the period after the Roman annexation in 106 AD, when inscriptions in Greek and Latin honoring individuals begin to appear, albeit in very small numbers.²⁹

On the present evidence, it seems that within the Nabataean realm, and especially at Petra, a living individual could only be commemorated in an inscription, “obliquely” by stating that he had erected or dedicated a cult image or structure to a deity “for the life of” the king, and often other members of the royal family. This practice is documented from the earliest inscription so far found in Petra (fig. 18), which reads

This is the chamber and the cistern which Ašlah son of Ašlah made . . . for Dushara, the god of Mankatū [or Manbatū]³⁰ for the life of Obodat [I], king of Nabatū, son of Aretas king of Nabatū, year 1 (?)

and continues right up to the end of the first century AD when an inscription was set up to “the god of [. . .]lū . . . for the life of Rabbel [III]” and his family.³¹ An elegantly carved example, alas broken, is illustrated in fig. 19. Apart from semi-honorific dedications of this sort, there are very few Nabataean inscriptions at Petra which record the construction or cutting out of buildings, though one is the so-called Bab al-Siq Nabataean–Greek bilingual inscription which records that a certain ‘Abd-Mankū made the tomb for himself and his descendants in perpetuity.³²

Thus, as might be expected, Petra, the principal city of the Nabataean realm, has examples of most types of inscription, both public and private, but they have survived in meager quantities. Whereas at Petra just under 1,100 inscriptions in Nabataean, Greek, and Latin have been discovered, of which 82 percent are simple signatures, at Palmyra, if one excludes the inscribed *teserae* (small tokens), there are more than 2,100 inscriptions, in Palmyrene, Greek, and Latin, of which the vast majority are public texts, such as official pronouncements, honorific or commemorative inscriptions, and hardly any are signatures. Moreover, while in Palmyra large numbers of inscriptions adorned the city center in Petra the equivalent area has provided less than 1 percent of a much smaller total.

Individual Nabataean funerary inscriptions, dedications, and signatures have been found in other parts of Transjordan.³³ However, only in Wadi Ramm is there a concentration of Nabataean inscriptions of different sorts.

Ramm Southeast of Petra the land continues to rise until you come to the edge of a great escarpment. From here, the land falls away several hundred meters to the Hisma desert from which multicolored mountains stick up like islands in a sea of sand which stretches from southern Jordan down into northwest Saudi Arabia. In the Nabataean period, this was home to tribes of camel-breeding nomads, some of whom were in close contact with the Nabataeans since they gave their children names such as Taym-‘Obodat or ‘Abd-‘Harethat, that is “servant” or “worshipper” of the Nabataean kings Obodas and Aretas. These nomads were literate and left thousands of graffiti on the rocks and cliff-faces of the region, not in Nabataean but in a language and alphabet of their own called “Hismaic” (fig. 21), though a few were able to write their names in both scripts.

This region is one of the few places in the Nabataean cultural area where we can glimpse what must have been an



23–26. Nabataean handwriting. Compare the hands of experienced scribes on plaster (23) and on papyrus (24), with those of illiterate laymen on papyrus (25) and on a pebble (26).

23. Dedication to the goddess Allat written in ink on plaster in her temple at Ramm, southern Jordan. Dated to year 40+ (?) either of Aretas IV [= between 33 and 40 AD] or of the Roman Province of Arabia [= between 146 and 154 AD]. See fig. 38.14. (See Savignac and Horsfield 1935, pl. X.)

24. Part of a papyrus from Nahal Hever, *P. Starcky* = *P. Yadin* 36, written in Nabataean, showing the script of a professional scribe. Dated to year 20 (?) of Malichus II [= between 58 and 67 AD]. (See Starcky 1954, pl. I and Yardeni 2001)

25. Part of a papyrus from Nahal Hever, *P. Yadin* 22 [130 AD], showing (1) part of the Greek text, (2) the 5-line witness statement in Nabataean, in the hand of a literate layman with a Jewish name (Yohana son of Makhoutha), see fig. 38.16, followed by signatures in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (3 and 5) and Greek (4). (See Lewis, Yadin, and Greenfield) 1989, Pl. 27.

26. A list of names written in Nabataean in ink on a pebble from Nessana in the Negev. 1. Klybw br Mnhlw 2. Mhlmw br Bny 3. 'bd'lg' br-h 4. Mwtw br 'bd'bd 5. Zyd'byw br Lhw 6. — br 'lyw. (See Rosenthal 1962, pl. XXXIV, 1).

almost universal phenomenon: the symbiosis and interaction of the Nabataeans with neighboring peoples using other languages and scripts. The Hisma, whose mountains contain many springs, has been a favorite route from Arabia to the Levant for millennia and so seems to have been a rather cosmopolitan place in which merchants, nomads, soldiers, and pilgrims traveled, mixed, and sometimes left graffiti. As well as thousands of Hismaic and tens of Nabataean inscriptions, there is a fragment in Latin, and small numbers of texts in Greek, Minaic (from south Arabia), Dadanitic (from northwest Arabia), Thamudic B, C, and D (by nomads from central Arabia),³⁴ and early Arabic, as well as thousands of rock drawings from many periods.

One of the valleys in this desert is Wadi Ramm³⁵ which has many springs, some of which were regarded as holy places in antiquity. One of these is today called Ain Shallalah, and here we find the signatures and prayers of worshippers of the goddess Allat, as well as the baetyls of several other deities carved on the same cliff-face and identified in accompanying inscriptions. At this sanctuary there was also a small building on which was placed a dedication,³⁶ presumably to Allat (the divine name is lost), "who is at Iram," "for the life of" the last Nabataean king, Rabbel II, and at least seven members of his family, a type of text familiar from Petra. Interestingly, this is the only formal Nabataean inscription so far found in Ramm.

In the shadow of Jabal Ramm itself there was a temple to Allat. Here a fragmentary dedication to the goddess in Nabataean was written in ink on the plaster of the interior walls together with signatures in Greek and Nabataean (fig. 23).³⁷ A stone re-used in the building bears a graffito in the Hismaic language and script by a man who took part in the construction of the temple.³⁸

On the opposite side of Wadi Ramm, at a place today called Khashm Judaydah, near the entrance to a small building which may have been another sanctuary of Allat, three signatures were carved into the rock, two by a *kahin* (i.e., "soothsayer, diviner") of the goddess, and the third by a certain Hayyān "in the presence of Allat the goddess who is at Iram for ever."³⁹

Ramm and its environs seem therefore to have been an area where the settled Nabataeans and their nomadic neighbors joined in the worship of Allat and probably in many other activities. It is important because it provides more evidence than any other region of the Nabataean cultural area for interaction between the Nabataeans and their neighbors, though it should be recognized that even here the evidence is very meager. The inscriptions reveal the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the area not only in the range of their languages and scripts but in their religious content. While only one Nabataean

text mentioning Dushara has yet been found here, there are numerous prayers to him in Hismaic. The Nabataean baetyls and their inscriptions are dedicated to deities from all over the Nabataean kingdom. Thus, besides Allat "who is at Iram," there is Allat "who is at Bosra," al-Kutba "who is at Ga'ya" (modern Wadi Musa, outside Petra), al-'Uzza and the "lord of the temple," whose worship is found throughout the Nabataean cultural area and beyond, and Baal-Shamin, the lord of Heaven, whose principal cult-sites were in Syria.

Hegra and Arabia Hegra rivals Petra in the range, if not the number, of its inscriptions. There are many more monumental texts than at Petra, but they are almost all of one particular type: legal documents proclaiming property rights. The property in question is always one of the elaborately carved tombs cut into the rock-face that resemble those at Petra. Thus, although they are often known as "tomb inscriptions," it is important to recognize that they are in no way epitaphs. An example may make this clear (fig. 27).

This is the tomb that Kamkam daughter of Wa'ilat daughter of Ḥaramū, and Kulaybat her daughter, made for themselves and their descendants. In the month of Tebet, the ninth year of Ḥaretat king of Nabatū, lover of his people. And may Dushara and his Mōtab, and Allat of 'Amnad, and Manōtū and her Qaysha curse anyone who sells this tomb or who buys it or gives it in pledge or makes a gift of it or removes from it body or limb or who buries in it anyone other than Kamkam and her daughter and their descendants. And whoever does not act according to what is written above shall be liable to Dushara and Hubalū and to Manōtū in the sum of 5 shamads and to the priest for a fine of a thousand Hegratite sela's, except that whoever produces in his hand a document from the hand of Kamkam or Kulaybat her daughter, regarding this tomb, that document shall be valid.⁴⁰

These texts have many interesting features. Firstly, in contrast to the situation at Petra, they are carved directly onto the façades of the tombs, usually within a frame that is in relief (e.g., fig. 27). Secondly, when one examines them closely they are often rather carelessly laid out, with lines running over onto the frame (e.g., the last line on fig. 27). In addition, the masons have very often added their signatures at the bottom of the text, on the bottom of the frame, or immediately under it (see fig. 27). However, most of this is more or less invisible without binoculars since the inscriptions are usually positioned too high to be read with any ease from ground level. Given that they are detailed and complex legal documents, one might have expected them to be placed in a position where they could easily be read. As noted above, one inscrip-



27. Arabia. The earliest dated inscription [1 BC/AD] on the facade of a tomb at Hegra (H 16). Note that the last line of the text is carved on the bottom of the frame and below it is the mason's signature, "Wahb-'allāhi son of 'Abd-'Obodat made [it]." See fig. 38.6. (See Healey 1993, 154–162).

tion refers to a copy of the text which was deposited in one of the temples⁴¹ and it may be that this was the version used for reference, while the one inscribed on the tomb was intended to have a more talismanic than practical function.

None of these texts mentions the achievements of the dead or displays any grief for him or her, for they were probably carved before any of the prospective occupants of the tomb had died. Only in three cases does a second text, inside the tomb, refer to the deceased. From this it seems clear that tombs at Hegra were considered to be pieces of real estate that were either commissioned by a family, or carved by a developer as a speculation, and could be purchased, transferred by gift, leased, or mortgaged. There are even sections of cliff on which no tomb has been carved, which seem to have been reserved by an individual.⁴²

This situation is paralleled at the neighboring oasis of Dedan, twenty kilometers away, where inscriptions in the local language and script, Dadanitic, record the construction and taking possession of tombs—or sections of cliff-face preparatory to the carving of tombs—using the same word for assuming ownership of a piece of real estate, *'hd* in Nabataean, *'hd* in Dadanitic.⁴³

There are no epitaphs at Hegra. The emphasis is always on tombs as *property*, in marked contrast to the simple state-

ments that so-and-so made a tomb for himself and/or another, which are found occasionally at other places in Arabia,⁴⁴ once in Petra,⁴⁵ and are fairly common in the Hauran (see below). Only one inscription at Hegra is of this sort,⁴⁶ and that is *inside* a tomb which has a property inscription on the façade.

There are also some simple prayers, and a handful of dedications and identifications of niches and baetyls, but the vast majority of the Nabataean inscriptions of Hegra are property-inscriptions and signatures.

Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to subject the inscriptions of Hegra to the same meticulous analysis that Nehmé has provided for Petra, but preliminary indications suggest that the distribution of signatures in the two cities may well be similar. In addition, however, at Hegra, though interestingly not at Petra, we also have the signatures of some of the masons who carved the great rock-cut tombs in the first century AD.⁴⁷ One of these can be seen below the frame round the tomb inscription on fig. 27.

The Nabataeans were also established at other centers in northwest Arabia, for instance at Dedan just south of Hegra, where many inscriptions have been found,⁴⁸ and Dūmā (modern al-Jawf) where they seem to have had a military presence.⁴⁹ They also left large numbers of graffiti, mainly signatures, on the rocks along the tracks between the various oases of the area.⁵⁰ The most southerly Nabataean inscription so far found is northeast of Najran near the border between Saudi Arabia and Yemen.⁵¹

Hauran Of all the regions within the Nabataean cultural area, the Hauran is epigraphically the most complex. Our knowledge of the chronological and geographical limits of Nabataean rule there is very sketchy, but it seems to have been at best intermittent and localized. At the same time, at least one “native” form of the Aramaic script seems to have been in use in the Hauran in parallel with the Nabataean script from Petra (see below, under *Script*).

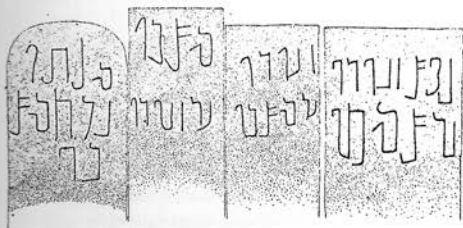
Moreover, only about 180 inscriptions in the local and the Nabataean versions of the Aramaic script have been published from the whole of the Hauran, with an unknown number of additional texts—probably little more than 100—found but still awaiting publication.⁵² We therefore have about the same number of Aramaic inscriptions from the whole region of the Hauran as from the single city of Hegra, and this is only about a quarter of the total from Petra.

The inscriptions found in the Hauran are very different in content and purpose from those of Petra and Arabia. Firstly, no groups of signatures have been found here. This may partly be due to topography, for in areas such as the Hauran, as also in the Negev, where buildings were con-

structed from blocks of stone rather than carved out of the rock, lists of members of *thiasoi*, if they existed, were probably written on perishable materials which have not survived, such as plaster (as at Ramm), papyrus, or wood.

By contrast, it seems to have been common in the Hauran for sculptors and masons to carve their names in prominent places on their work and there are a number of such signatures on reliefs and sections of architectural decoration, a practice which does not seem to be found at Petra, though the masons' signatures on the Hegra tomb inscriptions provide a parallel. Thus, the base of a sculpture of an eagle bears the text carved in relief "this is the eagle which Rabbū son of Ḥanīpū, the mason, made."⁵³ The pedestals of statues have the artists' signatures along the bottom, while on the arch of a niche another artist has signed his work in a crude *tabula ansata*, this time in Greek: "Tauēlos son of Rabbos son of Socheros made [it]."⁵⁴ On the lintel of a mausoleum shown on fig. 28, the mason's "signature" is as prominent as the name of the deceased (see the translation below).

Although in every case the signature of the artisan is carved in a prominent position on the object, with the exception of the last, it is seldom an integral part of the composition. Usually, it is squeezed into an area of unused space



28–29. Aramaic inscriptions from the Hauran.

28. Lintel, probably of a mausoleum, with an inscription in Greek and Hauran Aramaic "For Ṭaninū son of Ḥann'el [is] the funerary monument. Ḥūrū son of 'Ubayshat [was] the mason." (Photograph of a squeeze. See Littmann 1914, 84, no. 106).

29. Gravestones with the names of four members of one family from Umm al-Jimāl in the Hauran. The one with the rounded top commemorates a woman. (See Littmann 1914, 52, nos. 60–63).

or carved on the frame or base, and, to our eyes, often mars the effect of the sculpture. This practice is comparable to that of the masons who left their signatures on or below the tomb inscriptions at Hegra, but those would have been less obvious from ground level. A closer parallel is with the funerary and religious sculptures at Palmyra, where the inscriptions giving the name of the deceased or the dedicant are again often squeezed into unused spaces between the figures in an apparently haphazard manner.

These artisans' signatures and a handful of graffiti in the desert,⁵⁵ and very occasionally elsewhere,⁵⁶ seem to be the only texts of this type found so far in the Hauran, in stark contrast with all other regions of the cultural area.

Another distinctive feature is that a large proportion of the Nabataean and other Aramaic inscriptions in the Hauran are grave markers. The normal custom seems to have been to set up simple gravestones with just the name of the deceased and his or her patronym (e.g., fig. 29), though there are some more elaborate texts, occasionally on stelae, but more often on lintels, probably intended for the doorways of stone-built mausolea (e.g., fig. 28).⁵⁷ However, even these latter simply record the name of the occupant of the tomb and, sometimes, who built it and/or a date.⁵⁸ Thus, for instance, the lintel from Sī[†] mentioned above (fig. 28), which is in Greek and the local Aramaic script, rather than Nabataean, reads:

[Greek] The monument of Tanenos son of Annēlos
[Aramaic] For Ṭaninū son of Ḥann'el [is] the funerary
monument [wps']
Ḥūrū son of 'Ubayshat [was] the mason.

As will be described below, the Hauran was a region in which several languages were used. Greek and Aramaic were the principal ones spoken and written in the settled areas, but the nomads in the desert east and southeast of the Hauran spoke, and at this period wrote, a different language, using an Ancient North Arabian script that today is known as Safaitic (fig. 22). The contact between these nomads and the population of the Hauran is symbolized by a handful of Safaitic-Greek and Safaitic-Nabataean bilingual inscriptions and by a cave-tomb not far from the Roman fort at Deir al-Kahf (northeastern Jordan). There, a Nabataean inscription was carved around three of the four walls explaining that the tomb was built by Khulayf son of Awshū for himself and his brothers, while on each sarcophagus the deceased's name and patronym were written in Safaitic.⁵⁹

Of all the regions in the Nabataean cultural area, the Hauran has the largest concentration of inscriptions recording the construction of sacred buildings and the dedication of



30–33. Nabataean and local Aramaic inscriptions from the Hauran.

30. Nabataean inscription on an altar from Bosra, dated to year 11 of Malichus I [= 47 BC]. (CIS 2, no. 174. Musée du Louvre, A.O. 4990.

31. Aramaic inscription on the pedestal of a statue at Si', dated to year 33 of Philip the Tetrarch [= 29/30 AD]. (LPNab 101, Suweidah Museum no. 158.

32. Aramaic inscription from Hebrān recording the construction of a gateway, dated to year seven of the Roman emperor Claudius (= 47 AD). (CIS 2, no. 170. Musée du Louvre, A.O. 4992).

33. Nabataean inscription from Salkhad, dated to year 17 of Malichus II [= 57 AD] recording the construction and repair of the temple of Allat at Salkhad. [Compare the script of this text with that of fig. 36]. (CIS 2, no. 182. Suweidah Museum no. 377).



altars and sacred objects. They are found in Greek, Nabataean, and Hauran Aramaic and in some cases are bilingual.

While, in Petra, the only traces of statues seem to have been those of kings, in those parts of the Hauran outside Nabataean control, such as Si', statues of non-royal individuals were erected. Thus, the pedestal shown on fig. 31 bears the inscription

In the year 33 of our lord Philip [the Tetrarch], Witrū son of Bard and Qašiyū son of Shuday, and Ḥann'el son of Mashak'el, and Muna' son of Garmū, made this pedestal (?) of the statue of Galishū son of Banatū.⁶⁰

As usual in the Hauran, the mason has signed his work, this time along the bottom of the object.

Thus, the Aramaic epigraphy of the Hauran consists almost entirely of formal, i.e., monumental, inscriptions, the very few simple signatures being mainly those of artisans "signing" their work. In this it is in marked contrast with the rest of the Nabataean cultural area, where signatures vastly outnumber formal texts. The epigraphy of the Hauran is also unique in the range of subject matter and the variety of objects that bear inscriptions. Finally, it is one of only two regions where Nabataean coexisted in close proximity to a different form of the Aramaic script, the other being the southern end of the Dead Sea, to which we will turn next.

The Southern Dead Sea Valley In the late first and early second centuries AD, Maḥōza at the southern end of the Dead Sea, was a prosperous settlement with large numbers of

date palms. It was part of the Nabataean kingdom until the annexation by Rome in 106 AD, after which it became part of the Roman Province of Arabia. As well as the gentile population, it also had a thriving Jewish community, at least until the Second Jewish Revolt (132–135 AD) led by Simon Bar Kokhba, when some of its members took refuge in a cave in the Naḥal Ḥever, on the western side of the Dead Sea. Among them were two women, one called Babatha and the other called Salome Komaïse. Each of them took with her a bundle of legal documents on papyrus relating to property and family matters,⁶¹ and others from the community probably did the same. It seems that they died before they could return to their homes and the documents remained in the cave until their discovery there in 1961.

The majority of these papyri were written in Greek, but some are in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic [JPA] and others are in Nabataean (e.g., fig. 24).⁶² A number of the Greek documents also bear the signatures and statements of witnesses in Greek and/or Nabataean and/or JPA (e.g., fig. 25).⁶³

As might be expected, legal documents written before the annexation were couched in Nabataean and those composed under Roman rule were generally written in Greek, though there is at least one exception to this, *P. Yadin* no. 6, which apparently dates to 119 AD.⁶⁴ The continued use of Nabataean in official documents more than ten years after the annexation is extremely interesting.

It is significant that in most of the papyri written in Nabataean the people involved, both as principals and witnesses, are all Jews. Similarly, in the signatures and statements of witnesses on many of the Greek papyri, some witnesses wrote in JPA and others in Nabataean. Some of those who wrote in Nabataean have Jewish names and are very closely involved with the Jewish family of Babatha.⁶⁵ Thus the division does not seem to be between Jews writing in JPA and gentiles using Nabataean. Members of the Jewish community in the same village appear to have used both, and this suggests that, while some were locals and wrote in the Nabataean dialect of Aramaic and the Nabataean form of the Aramaic script,⁶⁶ others may have moved to the Nabataean kingdom relatively recently (perhaps after the Romans crushed the First Jewish Revolt in 70 AD) bringing with them the dialect and form of the Aramaic script used in Judaea (i.e., JPA).

The Negev Our knowledge of the Nabataean epigraphy of the Negev is still very patchy. Although large numbers of informal inscriptions on the rocks of the desert have been reported,⁶⁷ only a handful have been published.⁶⁸ Similarly, many of the inscriptions found during the excavations of the Nabataean sites there apparently remain unpublished,⁶⁹ and those that have appeared are almost all fragmentary. On the

other hand, the site of Nessana has produced some of the very few Nabataean texts in ink (e.g., fig. 26),⁷⁰ in a script comparable, but not identical, to that used in the signatures and witness statements in Nabataean on the Greek and Nabataean papyri from the Dead Sea area. From northwest of Beer-Sheba has come an incantation text of about 100 BC written in ink on a pebble in a pre-Nabataean script (fig. 38.3), and from Khalāṣa/Elusa, an inscribed stela dated to the mid-second century BC and mentioning “Ḥa[r]jetat king of Nabatū,” which is probably in another pre-Nabataean Aramaic script of the Negev (fig. 38.2).⁷¹

Apart from these, almost all the published Nabataean inscriptions from the Negev, most of which are fragments, come from the ruins of Oboda/Avdat and its environs. Among them are parts of two well-carved texts on fragments of marble, one of which apparently mentions three of the sons of Aretas IV.⁷² There are also three interesting and enigmatic religious inscriptions on large stone troughs found in and around Oboda, the most complete of which refers to “Dushara the god of Ga’ya.”⁷³

Even more extraordinary, however, is a six-line inscription on a rock at ‘En ‘Avdat, not far from the city of Oboda, which was the cult center of the deified Nabataean king Obodas I.⁷⁴ The text was written (“in his own hand”) by a certain Garm-‘allahī son of Taym-‘allahī and records that he set up a statue before Obodas the god. He then includes two lines of Old Arabic verse⁷⁵ (written in the Nabataean script), in praise of Obodas, which may have been part of a liturgy used in the worship of the god.⁷⁶

All this amounts to approximately twenty-five published Nabataean inscriptions, most of which are fragments. There are far more texts in Greek, though all those that are dated come from the period after the Annexation.⁷⁷ It is difficult to explain this apparent dearth of Nabataean inscriptions in a region which was of vital economic importance to the Nabataeans and which contained a number of cities including the cult center of the deified Obodas.

The Sinai By contrast, the Sinai Peninsula, another region crossed by important trade-routes, has produced more Nabataean inscriptions than any other part of the cultural area. Almost 4,000 have been recorded so far,⁷⁸ but they are all graffiti (fig. 16) and not a single monumental Nabataean inscription has yet been found there. The handful of dated texts all seem to refer to the second and third centuries AD, the earliest apparently being forty-five years after the end of the Nabataean state. However, there is no way of telling how long before and/or after this period they were being written. At one end of the chronological scale there is nothing in the content of the inscriptions to connect the people who wrote

them specifically with the Nabataeans, and at the other, although a number of Nabataean and Greek graffiti in the Sinai are accompanied by crosses,⁷⁹ none of the Nabataean texts contains any reference to Christianity.

As might be expected, the graffiti of the Sinai are in a wide range of styles (fig. 16). A few are enclosed in a rough *tabula ansata*,⁸⁰ others are very carefully, almost elegantly, carved,⁸¹ yet others are so messy that they are barely legible.⁸² Some may well have been the work of travelers or pilgrims, but the huge numbers of inscriptions, the limited range of names they contain, the fact that the same person seems often to have written several different texts,⁸³ and the peculiarities and relative homogeneity of the script (see below under *Script*), all suggest that the vast majority were carved by the local population of desert herdsmen and cultivators of the oases. In this they would be comparable to the Safaitic and Himaic graffiti of the generally nomadic neighbors of the Nabataeans in other regions.⁸⁴

The presence of huge numbers of Nabataean graffiti but a total absence of Nabataean monumental inscriptions makes the Sinai one of the most curious and intriguing regions of the cultural area. If, indeed, the vast majority of the texts are by the indigenous population and date to a period after the end of the Nabataean kingdom, we should be particularly careful about identifying their authors as "Nabataeans" and drawing conclusions about Nabataean language or culture as a whole from features specific to these texts, though this has been a common practice among scholars in the past. By the beginning of the second century AD, the political and commercial activities of the Nabataeans had made their script the prestige Semitic writing system throughout the whole region south of the Hauran, with the exception of Palestine, as far as the area of Sabaeans cultural hegemony in the southern half of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, whatever their ethnic origins, if members of the population of the Sinai were going to learn to write at this period, the Nabataean alphabet was the most obvious, perhaps the only, one to choose.⁸⁵

Egypt Fewer than one hundred Nabataean graffiti have also been found in eastern Egypt, mainly on well-established trade routes, in the eastern Delta, and between the Red Sea and the Nile.⁸⁶ Most have been published from extremely bad hand copies and their content is often uncertain,⁸⁷ so it is not clear how closely related they are to the texts of the Sinai.

However, the site of Tell el-Shuqafiyeh in the southeastern Delta has produced two monumental inscriptions of great importance. One is a dedication to the goddess al-Kutba,⁸⁸ dated to "year 4 of Ptolemy the king," that is either 77 BC (Ptolemy XIII) or 48 BC (Ptolemy XIV). The second is the dedication of a sanctuary "to Dushara the god who is at

Daphne [?]" (identified as modern Tell el-Defenneh, in the eastern Delta),⁸⁹ which is dated to "year 18 of Queen Cleopatra, which is year 26 of Malichus king of the Nabataeans" and year 2 of an unidentified person or institution named 'llh. This is a reference to the famous Cleopatra and the date is equivalent to 34 BC.⁹⁰ These dedications of the first century BC suggest an established Nabataean presence and religious infrastructure in the eastern Delta at an early period, a situation in marked contrast to that which we find in the Sinai.

It will be clear from this brief survey that the term "Nabataean inscriptions" does not refer to a homogeneous group of texts, but to a wide range of documents that vary in both form and purpose from one region of the Nabataean cultural area to another. To take just one example, we have seen how signatures were used in one way in Petra and Hegra and quite another in the Hauran, and yet another in the Sinai. Similarly, while most of the texts in Petra and Hegra can probably be ascribed to people who were subjects of the Nabataean king, in the Hauran the texts reflect a complex, frequently changing, political situation that does not interlock neatly with the equally complex relationships of the different varieties of the Aramaic script in use there. Thus, the inscriptions cannot be treated as a single, uniform source for "the Nabataeans." Instead, a regional approach is vital to an understanding both of the documents themselves and of what they can (and cannot) tell us about the Nabataeans and their neighbors.

LANGUAGE

The Nabataeans lived in a region of many languages and scripts and their commercial activities would have brought them into contact with others from further afield. In southern Jordan, they might possibly have encountered the vestiges of Edomite and would almost certainly have found one or more dialects of Aramaic. By the first century AD, at the latest, they were certainly in close touch with people speaking and writing the Ancient North Arabian⁹¹ dialect Himaic (fig. 21) in the sand desert of southern Jordan and northwest Arabia, of which Wadi Ramm is a part. They were also in contact with speakers of Old Arabic,⁹² and the Nabataean kings would certainly have had some subjects for whom this was their first language, though, as will be seen below, it is at present impossible to know whether this was true of the majority.

In the Hauran, they would have come into contact with Greek, with Aramaic, and with Safaitic, another Ancient North Arabian language, spoken and written by the nomads in the deserts which stretch away to the east and the southeast (see fig. 22). In northwest Arabia, they would have encountered Old Arabic and several dialects of Ancient North Arabian.⁹³ Aramaic was also written there, but it is not certain

34-36. Nabataean and local Aramaic inscriptions from the Hauran. Inscriptions from the reign of Rabbel II. Note the sharp differences in the script among these three almost contemporary texts.



35



36

34

34-36. Nabataean and local Aramaic inscriptions from the Hauran. Inscriptions from the reign of Rabbel II. Note the sharp differences in the script among these three almost contemporary texts.

34. Dedication on an altar from Imtân, dated to year 23 of Rabbel II [= 93/94 AD]. RES 83. (Facsimile from Cantineau 1930-1932, 2, 22).

35. Part of the inscription on a hexagonal altar at Dmeir, dated to 405 of the Seleucid era and 24 of Rabbel II [= 94 AD]. The script is very close to that of Petra. See fig. 38.12. (CIS 2, no. 161. Musée du Louvre, A. O. 3025).

36. Inscription recording the reconstruction of the temple of Allat at Salkhad in year 25 of Rabbel II (= 95 AD). Compare the very square script, closer to the Hauran type than to that of Petra, with the much more Nabataean script of fig. 33 from the same temple and by members of the same family, 40 years earlier. See fig. 38.11. (CIS 2, nos. 184+183 = Milik 1958, 227-231, no. 1. Suweidah Museum nos. 374 and 375).

whether it was spoken. In the Dead Sea Valley, the Nabataeans would have heard the Jewish Palestinian dialect of Aramaic and possibly Hebrew. In the Negev, they would have found Old Arabic, and probably one or more dialects of Ancient North Arabian, since for centuries people from the Arabian Peninsula had been settling along the trade route across the Negev to Gaza, which was the major Mediterranean outlet for the frankincense trade. Other groups from the peninsula seem to have settled in large numbers in the Sinai and eastern Egypt, so Old Arabic was almost certainly spoken there too, along with Greek, Aramaic, and Egyptian.³⁴ Even when they were still nomadic, the Nabataeans seem to have been heavily involved in the frankincense trade from south Arabia to the

Levant³⁵ and so would also have come into contact with the south Arabian languages of the Sabaeans and the Minaeans.

In this polyglot environment, many Nabataeans must have been capable of speaking and writing several languages and it is not surprising that we find occasional bilingual texts. The most common combination is Nabataean-Aramaic and Greek, which represented the two languages of international prestige in this part of the Near East during the Hellenistic and Roman periods and, understandably, these are all formal inscriptions.³⁶ However, a few bilingual Nabataean/Hispanic and Nabataean/Safaitic graffiti have also been found.³⁷ On many of the Greek legal documents from the Dead Sea area (see above), some witnesses signed their names and made their witness statements in Greek, some in Nabataean, and some in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (e.g., fig. 25). Finally, at the great city of Qaryat al-Faw, in central Arabia, on the northwest edge of the Empty Quarter, a bilingual inscription has been found in Nabataean and the local language of prestige, Sabaic.³⁸

Aramaic, which originated in Syria, later spread to Mesopotamia, the southern Levant, and northern Arabia. In many of these places it was used as a vehicular language enabling people whose mother tongues were mutually incomprehensible to communicate and so was much used in administration and commerce. Because of this, in about 500 BC, the Achaemenid king Darius I made Aramaic the administrative language of the western part of his empire and, as a result, it came to be spoken and written from Egypt to Mesopotamia. There were already many spoken dialects of Aramaic in different regions and new ones no doubt developed over time,

but throughout the Achaemenid empire, the written language and script maintained an extraordinary homogeneity, no doubt under the influence of the imperial chancellery.

However, with the conquests of Alexander the Great at the end of the fourth century BC, Greek became the new official language, and, without the unifying force of the Achaemenid chancellery, the local spoken Aramaic dialects began to intrude more and more into the written language.

It is often said that “the Nabataeans” used Aramaic simply as a literary language and *spoke* a dialect of Old Arabic in daily life, but this idea is based on several false assumptions. For a start, one has to decide whom exactly one means by “the Nabataeans” in this context. It is unwise to generalize about the population of a kingdom spread over a wide and polyglot area. The Nabataean kings would almost certainly have had some subjects who spoke Old Arabic or dialects of Ancient North Arabian, particularly in northwest Arabia and probably in the Negev. Equally, elsewhere in the kingdom there were people who wrote, and almost certainly spoke, Greek or Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, and there seems no reason to suppose that among all these languages there were not also people who spoke the Nabataean dialect of Aramaic.

In the past, it has usually been assumed that most of the personal names found in Nabataean inscriptions are linguistically Arabic.⁹⁹ The real and supposed Arabic etymologies of these names have then been used as an argument that the “native language” of the Nabataeans must have been Arabic.¹⁰⁰ But, of course, the etymological language of a personal name does not mean that its bearer speaks that language.¹⁰¹ For instance, etymologically, the names Sarah and Alexander are respectively Hebrew and Macedonian Greek, but it would be absurd to assume that these are the native languages of everyone called Sarah and Alexander today. Personal names can “travel” and, within a particular community, names very

often come from several different linguistic traditions.¹⁰² This is especially true of mixed and cosmopolitan societies heavily involved in trade, such as that of the Nabataeans, or of areas on trade-routes such as the Sinai. Thus, while it is possible, even likely, that some Nabataeans with “Arabic names” spoke Old Arabic, we cannot deduce this simply from their names. This is well illustrated in the few Nabataean graffiti in the Sinai that contain more than just names and stock phrases. In these, the language is clearly Aramaic, despite the fact that the authors of these texts and their relations have names that are etymologically Arabic.¹⁰³

When one removes the personal names from the equation, the visible Arabic influence on the Nabataean language is seen to be extraordinarily small. There are remarkably few loan-words which can definitely be said to come from Arabic¹⁰⁴ and all but two of these are found exclusively in texts from northwest Arabia. This is exactly where one would expect to find *external* Arabic influence.¹⁰⁵ These words appear with Aramaic grammatical endings and there is little evidence of Arabic influence on the morphology of words or on syntax,¹⁰⁶ which are the clearest indications of a writer thinking in one language while writing another.¹⁰⁷

Even in Arabia, we have only one example of a text apparently composed by an Arabic-speaker with only a limited grasp of Aramaic. It is a funerary inscription at Hegra and was carved in 267 AD, i.e., 162 years after the end of the Nabataean kingdom. It contains a mixture of Aramaic and Arabic words, misplaced endings, Arabic syntax, and stock Aramaic expressions.¹⁰⁸ A comparison of this with true Nabataean texts from Arabia and elsewhere in the cultural area shows just how consistent is the Aramaic of the latter.¹⁰⁹

On the other hand, we need to remember that the texts of monumental inscriptions were almost certainly composed by professional scribes, while Nabataean “signatures” and graffiti consist mainly of names and stock expressions. So the available evidence is unlikely to tell us what language a person who wrote or commissioned a Nabataean inscription *spoke* in any part of the cultural area, at any period.

37. The Old Arabic inscription in the Nabataean script from al-Namārah, east of the Hauran. Dated to year 223 [of the era of Province of Arabia? = 328 AD]. See fig. 38.13. (See Bordreuil et al. 1997. *Musée du Louvre* A.O. 4083).



Nabataean-Aramaic continued to be used as a *written* language long after the kingdom was replaced by the Roman Province of Arabia, in 106 AD: it simply became dissociated from a political entity. Certainly in the Hauran, but possibly also in the Nabataean heartland of southern Jordan and the Negev, Greek may already have been well established by the time it became the official language of administration in the new Province of Arabia.

However, as time passes, we begin to glimpse another language being used in the same area. The first tiny fragments of hard evidence for the use of Old Arabic in the former Nabataean cultural area begin to appear. In the Negev, there is the inscription from 'En 'Avdat with its two lines of Arabic verse written in the Nabataean script,¹¹⁰ while at al-Namarah, east of the Hauran, an epitaph, composed in Old Arabic written in the Nabataean script (fig. 37);¹¹¹ was set up to commemorate a certain Imru'-l-qays, who called himself "king of all the Arabs." In the late fourth century, the Palestinian monk Epiphanius (d. 403 AD) recorded that the people of Petra used Arabic in the liturgical worship of Dushara;¹¹² and, by the early sixth century, the Greek papyri recently found in a church in Petra show that many of the fields and orchards in the vicinity of the city and even some buildings in Petra itself had Arabic names.¹¹³ Frustratingly, however, we know so little about the demography of the region at this period, that it is impossible to say whether this was a recent or a long-standing situation.

Ironically, it is in Arabia that the Nabataean-Aramaic language seems to have been preserved for longest. For, while Greek became the official language in the heartland of the former kingdom, it seems not to have penetrated to any great extent into its southernmost extension. Here, the Ancient North Arabian languages used by the settled populations (Taymanitic and Dadanitic) ceased to be written and seem to have disappeared well before the early second century AD, no doubt leaving Old Arabic as the predominant spoken language and Nabataean-Aramaic as the only local written language of prestige.¹¹⁴

Thus, sixty years after the Annexation, in the late 160s AD, a small temple in the Classical style was erected at a remote spot in northwest Arabia, called Rawwafah. The temple was for the worship of the local god *'lh*, venerated by the Arab tribe of Thamūd,¹¹⁵ some of whom may have been formed into an auxiliary unit of the Roman army.¹¹⁶ A classical temple to the local god was a symbol of the inclusion of the tribe in the Roman cultural and political sphere. Around the outside of the building was carved a long dedication (nominally by the members of this unit) to the Roman emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, in Greek for the Roman side and in Nabataean as the local written language

(fig. 38.7).¹¹⁷ It is not known whether the tribesmen of Thamūd, in whose name and for whose benefit the inscriptions were set up, were able to read either language.

A century later, at Hegra, the funerary inscription described above was composed in a mixture of Nabataean-Aramaic and Old Arabic. Down the right side of the text, a brief summary was inscribed in the Thamudic D script,¹¹⁸ and so this one inscription brings together three languages and two scripts. Yet almost a century later than this, in 356 AD, again in Hegra, an inscription was carved in perfect Nabataean-Aramaic to commemorate the wife of the ruler (*ryš'*) of the city (fig. 38.8).¹¹⁹ This is the latest dated inscription in the Nabataean-Aramaic language to have been discovered so far, and is more than two centuries later than anything further north, where the Nabataean script seems already to have been appropriated to express the Old Arabic language.

SCRIPT

The surviving inscriptions, papyri, and ostraca in the Nabataean script must represent only a tiny and random selection of what once was written. Moreover, the circumstances in which each text was produced may well have influenced how it was written in ways that we can rarely even guess at. It is therefore risky to draw detailed palaeographical conclusions from the differences between one text and another, particularly when they are on different surfaces (stone, papyrus, plaster, potsherd, etc.). Here, I shall simply suggest some of the processes by which the different ways of writing Nabataean, as represented in the surviving documents, could have developed.¹²⁰

Even as nomads, the Nabataeans were clearly entrepreneurs, and would probably have needed written documents in their business activities. Given that shortly after the Macedonian conquest they were already famous for the wealth they had accumulated from this trade,¹²¹ their involvement must certainly have begun under the Achaemenid empire when Aramaic would have been the natural, indeed the **only** realistic, choice. The form of the script they adopted was presumably that used in southern Jordan. The earliest reference to writing in connection with the Nabataeans occurs at the end of the fourth century, when they were in that area and still nomadic. The Greek historian Hieronymus of Cardia, who took part in the events, says that after Antigonus the One-eyed, one of Alexander's successors, had sent an army to attack them, the Nabataeans wrote him "a letter in Syrian characters,"¹²² a phrase which can only refer to the Aramaic script.

The form of the Aramaic alphabet used by the Nabataeans is distinctive but seems to belong to a continuum of local

developments which stretch from the Hauran, through Transjordan and the Negev (figs. 38.2, 38.3) to the Sinai, Egypt, and northwest Arabia. In all these regions individual versions of the Aramaic letter-forms probably grew up in the centuries following the end of the Achaemenid empire, though alas very few documents have survived.

In the Aramaic scripts used under the Achaemenid empire (fig. 38.1) each letter was written separately. This was true both of texts carved in stone and of those written in ink.¹²³ Yet, even in the earliest Nabataean inscriptions at Petra (e.g., figs. 18, 38.4), some of the letters are joined by ligatures.¹²⁴ There are relatively few of these in the earliest texts but as time goes on they steadily increase and they occur equally in inscribed formal texts and in the carved signatures of individuals.¹²⁵

Ligatures normally develop when one is writing in ink, to save the writer having to lift the pen between each letter.¹²⁶ They have no practical use on stone, require more work from the mason, and reduce the clarity of the text for the reader. Thus their presence in the earliest Nabataean inscriptions at Petra, and their increasing use in later texts, suggest that this form of the Aramaic script originally developed for writing in ink and that it continued to be employed in this way parallel with its use in inscriptions.

We are fortunate in having some Nabataean texts on papyrus, and these, like the monumental inscriptions, are official documents written by professional scribes (e.g., figs. 24, 38.15). The script in these, and in the dipinti from Ramm (e.g., figs. 23, 38.14), is recognizably the same as that of the monumental inscriptions of Petra and Hegra, but more compressed. This compression allows more text to be fitted into each line and is easy to achieve when writing in ink, but it often results in the distortion of letter shapes and so is another factor in the development of the script. It is, however, much more difficult to compress the text when carving on stone—even the relatively soft sandstone of Petra or Hegra—and it is anyway usually unnecessary and undesirable in a public inscription.¹²⁷

Thus, the Aramaic script of Petra, which was then carried to other regions of the Nabataean cultural area, must have been used primarily for writing in ink and it was in this medium that it developed and changed. When transferred to stone, at least for monumental inscriptions, a somewhat more “calligraphic” version was used, in which greater care was taken in shaping and spacing the letters, with the occasional inclusion of archaisms for aesthetic purposes or for emphasis.¹²⁸ There were not, therefore, two separate Nabataean scripts—a lapidary and a cursive—but a single script, whose development, through writing in ink, can be traced only

38. Script too e showing some varieties of the Nabataean and Hauran Aramaic scripts. Note this table is not intended to suggest a linear development of the script.

An * above a letter in the table indicates that this form is found at the end of a word in this text. In some cases, this is a special “final form” of the letter, in others it is identical to the forms in other positions, and in yet other cases, there are too few examples in the text to be sure. Those forms not marked with an * occur in initial or medial positions.

The vertical positions of the letters relative to those of the other letters in the same line reflect their arrangement within the text.

Where space permits, all the significantly different forms of each letter in each text are shown, to illustrate the lack of consistency in letter shapes even within monument inscriptions.

Key to the script table:

1. Imperial Aramaic: The Tayma Stela, 5th/4th century BC (CIS ii, 113, Musée du Louvre A.O. 1505).
2. A pre-Nabataean local script of the Negev used on stone in an inscription from Elusa in the Negev, 3rd/2nd century BC (?) (Cowley 1914–1915).
3. A pre-Nabataean local script of the Negev c. 100 BC (?), used for a text written in ink on a pebble (Naveh 1979).
4. The earliest inscription so far found in Petra c. 96/95 BC. See fig. 18. Note that the form of k marked with a *? is often read as a b, though k seems the more likely reading.
5. The Turkmaniyah inscription in Petra, c. mid-first century AD. See fig. 17.
6. The earliest dated inscription from the façade of a tomb at Hegra, Arabia, 1 BC/AD. See fig. 27.
7. The Nabataean part of the bilingual inscription at Rawwāfah, Arabia (between 167 and 169 AD). (See Millik 1971). Note the cross-stroke on the stem of the r to distinguish it from d (see Macdonald 1995, 96, n. 15).
8. The latest text in the Nabataean script. An epitaph from Hegra dated to 357 AD. (Stiehl 1970). Note the diacritical dot over the d to distinguish it from r, even though the two letters by now have distinct forms.
9. The second inscription from Tell el-Shuqafiyeh, Egypt, 34 BC (Jones et al. 1988, Fiema and Jones 1990). Note that the unusual forms of medial *n and medial p marked with *? occur in a place name which has been tentatively read as Dpn? “Daphne.”
10. The local Aramaic script of the Hauran in an inscription from Si* dated to year 308 of the Seleucid era = 5 BC (Littmann 1904, 90ff, no. 2).
11. The local Aramaic script of the Hauran in an inscription from Salkhad dated to year 25 of Rabbel II (= 95 AD). See fig. 36. There is one example of k in final position in this text but its form is not sufficiently clear on the photographs available to me for it to be included in the table.
12. The inscription on a hexagonal altar at Dmeir, southern Syria, dated to 405 of the Seleucid era and 24 of Rabbel II (= 94 AD). See fig. 35. The script is very close to that of Petra.
13. The epitaph in Old Arabic written in the Nabataean script at al-Namārah, east of the Hauran and dated to 328 AD. See fig. 37.
14. A text painted on plaster at Ramm. See fig. 23.
15. Nabataean script used by a professional scribe, 97/98 AD. *P. Yadin 3* recto (Yadin et al. 2002, Pl. 24).
16. Nabataean script used by a literate layman, 130 AD. *P. Yadin 22*, see fig. 25. Note that the s is marked with a *? because the only (possible) example in the text is damaged.

imperfectly through the occasional “snap-shots” of various stages of its evolution provided by the inscriptions.

The form of the script used by literate people who were not scribes was much less conservative, and developed letter-forms and ligatures which reflect a preference for ease and speed of writing over clarity.¹²⁹ The shapes of many letters became drastically different from those used by the scribes and masons, and a number of letters became indistinguishable from each other. Examples of this sort of handwriting can be seen on figs. 25–26, 38.16.

The only examples from Petra are written in ink on a handful of fragmentary sherds and, in one case, on the outside of a pot that was probably complete at the time.¹³⁰ The script is remarkably similar to that on the pebbles and ostraca found at Nessana (e.g., fig. 26) and is not far removed from that of the signatures and witness statements in the Naḥal Ḥever papyrus (e.g., figs. 25, 38.6).

When people who were not scribes carved their names on rock, either at, or on the way to, a sanctuary (e.g., fig. 20) or simply as a graffito (e.g., fig. 16), they used approximations to the “calligraphic” form of the script, just as graffiti in the West are almost always written in capitals rather than lower-case letters. This was probably the result not only of a desire for clarity, in view of the permanence and public position of the text, but also of the extra time and effort involved in carving on rock, as opposed to writing in ink where speed and ease are more often determining factors. It also means that those who were literate but not necessarily professional writers must have carried in their minds the ideal forms of each letter (not simply the shapes they assumed on papyrus), even if their attempts to reproduce these were not always successful.

As the Nabataean kingdom expanded, the “Petra script” spread to other parts of the region where it encountered other, indigenous, forms of the Aramaic script. As mentioned above, the mid-second century BC inscription at Elusa/Khalaṣa in the Negev (fig. 38.2) is in a local variety of the Aramaic alphabet.¹³¹ But, all the later Aramaic formal inscriptions so far found in the Negev are “Nabataean,” i.e., they are in a script very close to that of the inscriptions of Petra. However, the corpus of texts from the Negev is so tiny that no conclusions can be drawn from this.

As noted above, only part of the Hauran was ruled by the Nabataeans for any length of time and many of the Aramaic inscriptions of the region are in local forms of the Aramaic script rather than in Nabataean.¹³² In these local forms, in contrast to the Petra script, there is a marked tendency to keep the letters separate, and ligatures are relatively rare. Virtually all the letters are of the same height, with only the *lamedh* rising slightly above the others to distinguish it from the *nūn*,

and none descending below the rest. Special final forms of letters, which in the Petra script and that of the papyrus usually continue below the line, are therefore rare (e.g., figs. 28, 29, 31, 37, 36, 38.10, 38.11). Several letters have shapes which, though recognizably similar to their Nabataean counterparts are distinct from them, e.g., the squat, square or triangular *aleph* (figs. 38.10, 38.11), a *mēm* usually closed on the left side in all positions (figs. 38.10, 38.11), and in some texts the *hē* with an open base even in final position (fig. 38.10), etc.

The type of script used in any particular text was almost certainly the result, not of political considerations, but of the background of the particular scribe. Those brought up in the Hauran would have used the local script, regardless of whether they found themselves subjects of the Nabataean king,¹³³ the Herodian rulers,¹³⁴ the Romans, or others.¹³⁵ Similarly, a scribe who came from Petra to the Hauran, and any pupils he may have trained there, would have used the Petra form of the script, or approximations to it.

A study of the inscriptions on pages 46 and 48 will illustrate this (see also 38.10–12). The inscription on figure 31 comes from an area outside Nabataean control. It is in the Hauran script and is dated by a regnal year of Philip the Tetrarch. Contrast its script with those of 30 and 33, from within the Nabataean kingdom. These are dated respectively by regnal years of the Nabataean kings Malichus I (47 BC) and, a century later, Malichus II (57 AD), and the script of both is much closer to that of Petra inscriptions at these respective dates.

On the other hand, figs. 34–36 show three almost contemporary inscriptions, dated respectively to years 23, 24, and 25 of Rabbel II (93–95 AD). Text 34, whose script is very similar to that of Petra, comes from Imtan which was almost certainly within the Nabataean kingdom. Here, although the letter shapes are similar to those of Petra (including the use of special final forms), the more or less uniform height of the letters suggests local influence. Contrast this with 36 (see also fig. 38.11), which also comes from within the Nabataean kingdom and is dated by a regnal year of a Nabataean king, but whose script is clearly the local Hauran Aramaic. Finally, 35 (see also fig. 38.12), whose script is indistinguishable from that of Petra and shows no local Hauran features, comes from Dmeir, some 40 km northeast of Damascus and apparently well outside the Nabataean kingdom. It is dated by both the Seleucid era and a regnal year of Rabbel II.

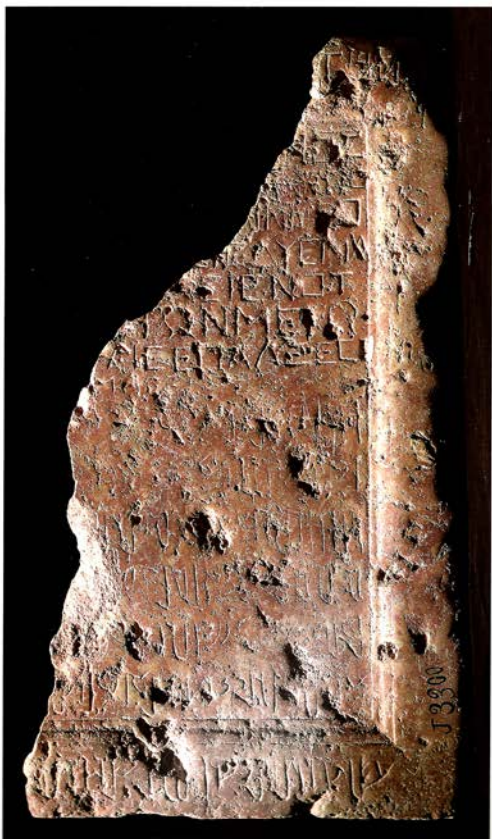
But perhaps the most telling comparison is between fig. 33 and 36 (see also fig. 38.11). Both texts are from the temple of Allat at Ṣalkhad, which was within the Nabataean kingdom, and they were almost certainly commissioned by members of the same family. The inscription shown on fig. 33 is dated to year 17 of Malichus II (57 AD) and is written in a close

approximation to the Petra script. That on fig. 36 is dated forty years later, to year 25 of Rabbel II (95 AD) and is in the local Hauran script. Thus, even in that part of the Hauran that was under Nabataean control, both scripts were used by monument masons in the same town, for texts on the same temple, commissioned by members of the same family. Moreover, far from the Nabataean replacing the local form, it is the earlier text that is in Nabataean, and the later one—carved in the reign of Rabbel II and only a few kilometers from his capital at Bosra—that is in the Hauran script.

Thus, in the Hauran, the Petra script seems not to have “dominated” the local forms¹³⁶ but to have co-existed with them. Indeed, there are texts which seem to show elements of both, such as that on fig. 32 (47 AD), where the letter-forms

are close to those of Petra, but most of the letters are written separately, as in the Hauran scripts rather than joined as in the Petra-script of this period.¹³⁷

It will be clear from this that in the Hauran, as elsewhere, it is important not to regard script as a vehicle of political expression and that such terms as “national scripts”¹³⁸ can therefore be misleading. We have already seen that the use of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic or Nabataean in the Jewish communities of the Dead Sea Valley was not dependent on the ethnic or religious community to which the user belonged, but more on the region from which they came (though the two might, of course, coincide). Equally, in the Hauran, the use of these only subtly different forms of the Aramaic alphabet must surely have been a matter of background and train-



39. A fragment of a Greek-Nabataean bilingual inscription found at Jerash (Gerasa of the Decapolis), on the slopes below the the present museum. Both texts are too badly damaged to allow a coherent interpretation, but two kings, Aretas (IV?) and Rabbel (II?), are mentioned in the Nabataean section. If this is correct, it would place the inscription in the late first century AD. Department of Antiquities, Amman, Jordan.

ing, not of politics and ethnicity. Only very rarely was a script used to make a political point as, for example, when the Jewish leader Bar Kokhba replaced Aramaic with the revived ancient Hebrew script in his official documents.

As one might expect, the graffiti of the Sinai are in a multitude of different handwritings, and yet, taken as a whole, there is a surprising homogeneity about the script (see fig. 16). Of course, there are some bizarre and exceptional letter-forms and there are plenty of examples of individuals playing with the inscriptions they wrote, adding decorative flourishes or drawing a line along the bottom of the text joining all (or most of) the letters.¹³⁹ Yet, despite these oddities, in the vast majority of texts the forms of the individual letters and their relationships to each other are remarkably constant, given that some inscriptions were the work of travelers or pilgrims but most were probably written by the local nomads and cultivators.

It is instructive to compare the graffiti of the Sinai with the Safaitic graffiti in the desert east of the Hauran. The script of the latter is also remarkably homogeneous, despite the long period (approximately 400 years) over which they appear to have been written and the huge numbers of texts involved. They represent the different “handwritings” of innumerable individuals, but there seems to be relatively little development in the script. One possible reason for this is that it was used *only* for carving graffiti on rocks and not generally for writing in ink, where the very speed and flexibility of the medium produces change. With a script which is well adapted for use on stone and which is used for nothing else, there is no particular stimulus to alter the shapes of the letters or their relationship to each other. Thus, instead of a development of letter-forms in the Safaitic and Himaic scripts and the Nabataean of the graffiti in the Sinai, we find the occasional playful additions, as described above. While interesting in themselves and not without significance, these should not be confused with palaeographical developments.

In the various oases of northwest Arabia, forms of the Aramaic script were in use from at least the fifth century BC, and there are inscriptions at Tayma (fig. 38.1), Dedan, and Hegra in approximations to Imperial Aramaic, and at Tayma³ in local developments of the script (cf., for example, the votive inscription from Tayma, Louvre A.O. 26599).¹⁴⁰ How-

ever, with the Nabataean development of Hegra, the north-west Arabian Aramaic scripts seem to have been swamped by the Nabataean form. Eventually, the native Ancient North Arabian Dadanitic script disappeared (the Taymanitic had apparently long since died out), and Nabataean was left as the only “local” written language, hence its use at Rawwafah (fig. 38.7).

This dominance of the Nabataean script in Arabia continued until at least the mid-fourth century AD (fig. 38.8).¹⁴¹ But by this time, further north, it was already being used to write the Arabic language. The epitaph at al-Namarah for Imru³-l-qays “king of all the Arabs” (figs. 37, 38.13), is dated to 328 AD and although by no means the earliest example of Old Arabic written in a borrowed script, it is the first which seems to make a political statement associating the use of the Arabic language with a sense of being “Arab.”¹⁴²

Unfortunately, there are no inscriptions in the Nabataean script dated later than the mid-fourth century AD, while the first inscriptions in what is recognizably the Arabic script do not appear until the early sixth century.¹⁴³ So, while it is generally accepted that the Arabic script developed out of the Nabataean, we cannot follow the processes of this development in any detail. The fact that the Namarah epitaph and all the pre-Islamic inscriptions in the Arabic script have been found in Syria suggests that the development may have taken place there, rather than in Arabia, where the association of the Aramaic language with the Nabataean script seems to have lasted much longer.¹⁴⁴ But this could equally well be an accident of discovery.

Although what has survived of the Nabataeans’ own writings is relatively meager, their legacy has been incalculable. In their heyday their alphabet was used more widely than any other of the late Aramaic scripts and it continued to be so long after the demise of their kingdom, eventually to be rivaled only by Syriac in the extent of its use. Centuries after the other achievements of the Nabataeans had been forgotten, a late form of their script was given new life when it was used as the vehicle for recording the Revelation of Islam and was spread with the Muslim conquests from the Atlantic to the Far East, becoming the script for a large number of different languages and developing new and often very beautiful forms.

about occupation in Edom in Persian times, but precisely the continuity between the earlier Edomite culture and the later Nabataean culture is at present becoming more and more emphasized" (De Geus 1979: 1980: 69-70). The suggestion sometimes made - and alluded to by De Geus - that the distinctive fine pottery produced from about the late second or early first century BC by the urban Nabataeans has stylistic and technical affinities with the Edomite pottery of some four hundred years earlier, is completely untenable. Nabataean pottery is exclusively influenced by the Greco-Roman world.

28. In addition to the other places mentioned in connection with Nabonidus's campaign, the oasis of al-Jawf (Adummatu, Dumah) had been one of the main Arab centers in Assyrian times, and was later to become a large Nabataean town, judging from archaeological evidence.

29. See Sahlins 1968: 37.

CHAPTER 3

1. Cosmas Indicopleustes 1864: cols 217-218. For more detail, see Lewis and Macdonald 2002
2. See chapter 11 and Lewis and Macdonald 2002
3. Beer 1840: xvi.
4. Stanley 1862: 58. This statement is not in the first edition of 1856.
5. Levy 1860: 375.
6. Doughty 1891: 18 and Renan on pp. 2-3 of the same work.
7. For details, see below under the sections on these regions.
8. For details of Nabataean inscriptions from these and other peripheral areas see the references in Wenning 1987: 22-24.
9. See below under the section on "The Southern Dead Sea Valley."
10. At Ramm see Savignac and Horsfield 1935: 265-69, and at Petra see, for instance, Zayadine 1974: 148 and pl. LXVI, 1 and 3
11. The ostraca from Petra have not yet been published, though see Kirkbride 1960: 118 and pl. VIII, 1, and the discussion below under "Script." The ostraca and pebbles from the Negev come from the site of Nessana, see Rosenthal 1962: 198-210, nos 1-4 (pebbles), 5-10 (ostraca). See also a pebble from northwest of Beer-Sheba with an incantation text in a formal script very similar to Nabataean (Naveh 1979). For the ostraca at Masada, see Yadin, Naveh and Meshorer, 1989: 44-45, pl. 39, nos 514-15.
12. CIS 2 no. 3973.
13. See Macdonald, Al Mu'azzin and Nehmé 1996: 444-49.
14. For this interpretation of the word *šm* (rather than the traditional "peace!" or "greetings!"), see Milik and Starcky 1970: 142.
15. That is, there are 874 Nabataean signatures out of the 1069 known inscriptions in Nabataean, Greek and Latin in Petra. See Nehmé 1997b: 126-27.
16. Strabo 16. 4. 26.
17. For an excellent analysis of the distribution of the inscriptions of Petra, see Nehmé 1997b, from which the information in the paragraph above is taken.
18. Sartre 1993: 85-87, no. 51.
19. Sartre 1993: 91-94, no. 55. The tomb collapsed in 1847, but the text had already been copied *in situ* by early visitors to Petra.
20. There is a handful of other, mainly fragmentary, Latin and Greek epitaphs, most

- post-dating the Annexation, see Sartre 1993: nos 52-53 (Latin) and nos 56-69 (Greek). No. 54 is not an epitaph but a claim to have constructed a tomb.
21. See Starcky 1965 a, and 1965 b.
22. CIS 2 no. 350, see Healey 1993: 238-42 and Macdonald and Nehmé in preparation.
23. At Hegra, inscription H 36/9 says that a copy of the inscription was lodged in a temple, and this may well have been the case with the other texts. On the "Turkmaniyah" tomb and inscriptions see Macdonald and Nehmé (in preparation).
24. Quoted by Strabo [c. 64/BC to c. AD 21] 16.4.21
25. A *bactyl* is a stylized cult-image.
26. See Nehmé 1997b: 130-31 for these and other examples, and references.
27. See Hammond, Johnson and Jones 1986, and corrections to the reading in Jones 1989.
28. For instance, CIS 2, no. 349 (and see the references in Wenning 1987: 202-3) and CIS 2, no. 354.
29. Sartre 1993: nos. 45-49.
30. See the note to fig. 38.4.
31. Dalman 1912: 101-3, no. 92.
32. See Milik 1976 and, most recently, Healey 1993: 243-44 and references there. The Greek part is a summary of the Nabataean. Although this text is unique in Petra, it is of a type which is quite common elsewhere (see below).
33. These are, from south to north, at Buseirah (Starcky 1975), Khirbet et-Tannur (Savignac 1937), Dhat Ra's (Zayadine 1970), Umm al-Raṣāṣ (CIS 2 no. 195), Zizia/al-Jizah (JSNab 392), Madaba (CIS 2 no. 196, Lyon no. 45/Brussels no. 51, and Milik 1958 no. 6), Beit Ra's (RES 1098).
34. On these languages and scripts see note 91 below.
35. The ancient name of this place, at least in the Nabataean period was *'rm*, as attested in some of the Nabataean inscriptions there. Some of the Mediaeval Arab geographers who deal with the *Hismā* mention a place called *'ram* and this has generally been identified with modern Ramm (see al-Hamdāni and al-Yāqūbī, conveniently translated in Musil 1926: 315-317). Nabataean *'rm* has therefore been vocalized *ram* by most scholars (see Savignac 1932: 584, n. 1). However, the modern name is "Ramm" (pronounced like the drink "rum").
36. Savignac 1933: 407-11, Nabataean no. 1.
37. On the temple and its inscriptions the principal publications are still Savignac 1932, 1933, 1934 and Savignac and Horsfield 1935.
38. See Zayadine and Farès-Drappeau 1998, though the conclusions they draw from this text should be treated with caution, see Macdonald 2000: 73-74, n. 141.
39. Savignac 1932: 590-94, nos. 1-3. See the plan of the distribution of these texts in Savignac 1934: fig. 1 (with a key on p. 573).
40. H 16 (Healey 1993: 154-62). Translation by Healey with some minor changes.
41. H 36/9. This was probably the case with the others as well.
42. JSNab 43, 54 and 56, all of which are on Qaṣr al-Bint, the isolated rock into which some of the most magnificent tombs are carved.
43. For instance JSLih 66 and 79.
44. For instance, the Nabataean inscription CIS 2 no. 332 (see Healey 1993: 245) from Dedan which says "This is the funerary monument of Ab... son of Muqaymū son of Muqaym'el which his father built for him. In the month of Elūl, year 1 of Haretat king of Nabaū" (the

- translation is Healey's with minor changes). See also ARNA Nab 16 from Dūmā (modern al-Jawf, in northwest Saudi Arabia), reproduced in Healey 1993: 246.
45. The Bab al-Siq bilingual (Pl. 13.8) mentioned above, under Petra.
46. H 13 which says "This is the burial-niche which Hagarū made for Maslamū her brother and for Malmuyyat her maternal aunt. May it never be opened over them." The "property inscription" on the façade of this tomb is H 14.
47. For a list of the inscriptions mentioning stone-cutters which are found on these tombs see McKenzie 1990: 27, Table 4.
48. See, for instance, Jausen and Savignac 1909-1922: nos 201 bis-224, 382-91.
49. See the inscription published by Savignac and Starcky 1957a. For other Nabataean inscriptions from Dūmā and its environs see Theeb 1993: nos. 92-95; 1994.
50. See, for instance, Jausen and Savignac 1909-1922: nos. 225-80, 317-81 and Theeb 1993, 1995 and 2000.
51. Macdonald 1994. The text is dated to year 17 of Rabbel II, i.e. AD 87/88.
52. Starcky 1985: 172-173. These inscriptions are being prepared for publication in the near future by Laila Nehmé.
53. Musée de Suweida' inv. 196, see Teixidor in Dentzer and Dentzer-Feydy 1991: 148 and pl. 24.
54. For artists' signatures on the bases of statues, see, for example, Musée de Louvre AO 4991 (Shudu the artisan) and LPNab 10117. For the arch of the niche see Musée de Louvre AO 11079. Lyon no. 43a/Brussels no. 71
55. See, for instance, Milik 1980, Starcky 1978.
56. See, for instance, Milik 1958: 242-43, no. 5, from Mu'arribah, six kilometers west of Bosra. If Milik's reading is correct, the text is very odd. He reads "in year 9 of Malkū [the] Nabataean (?), [it is] Thomas who carved [this]."
57. For instance, LPNab 40, 93, 105 (= fig. 28 here) and Starcky 1985: 180.
58. On funerary monuments in the Hauran, see Starcky 1985: 179.
59. Macdonald and Searight 1982: 172 and Macdonald (in preparation, b).
60. LPNab 101.
61. On Babatha's documents see Yadin 1962, 1963b; Lewis, Yadin and Greenfield 1989 and Yadin 2002; on Salome's see Cotton 1995.
62. One was published in Starcky 1954 (see now the new edition in Yardeni 2001). Editions of another six texts, plus two fragments, can be found in Yadin 2002: 169-268. Cotton, Cockle and Millar noted, but were unable to catalogue, an unspecified number "of Nabataean papyri said to come from Nahal Še'elim, but likely in fact to come from Nahal Hever," which are to be published by E. Puech. (Cotton Cockle and Millar: 1995: 215).
63. For Greek documents with signatures and witness statements in Nabataean, see Lewis, Yadin and Greenfield 1989, nos. 12, 14, 15, 16, 20, 22, and Cotton 1995: no. IV.
64. Yadin 2002: 257-67. Another document in Nabataean, *P Yadin* no. 9, is said to date to AD 122, but the passage containing the date is so badly damaged that no secure conclusion can be drawn from it, see Yadin 2002: 268-76.
65. Thus, for instance, at the end of *P Yadin* 22 in Lewis, Yadin and Greenfield 1989, Babatha's guardian (*adōn*) who has the Jewish name Yōhana wrote a five-line statement in Nabataean in what was a transaction

- between two members of the Jewish community. In the fourth signature on the back of *P Yadin* 16, the name "Yōhana son of 'Abd'obodat Makoutha" would present an extremely interesting mixture of Jewish and Nabataean names, were it not that all the letters in *'bd'bd* except the last are uncertain.
66. Similarly, the Shim'on who signed his name in the Nabataean form of the Aramaic script on at least one ostrakon found at Masada (Yadin, Naveh and Meshorer 1989: 44-45, pl. 39, nos. 514-15), may have been brought up in the Nabataean cultural sphere.
67. See, for instance, Glueck 1956: 23-28, Negev 1963: 122 (which is almost certainly referring to Glueck's site 211, described on p. 25).
68. See, for instance, Jausen, Savignac and Vincent 1905: 237-42, and Anati 1979 (unnumbered plates). No readings or translations are given in the latter.
69. For example, Negev reported that "more than two score Nabataean inscriptions were discovered" during the clearance of the site of Oboda/Avdat (1961: 127). Of these, only 16 have so far been published (under 12 numbers, in Negev 1961, and 1963). Note also Stone 1992-1994, vol. 3: 164, nos. 8374-75 (apparently unpublished).
70. These are written on potsherds and pebbles (Rosenthal 1962).
71. The incantation text was found at Horvat Raqiq/Khirbet Abū Raqayiq, near Beer-Sheba, and was published in Naveh 1979. The stela was originally published in Cowley 1914-1915: 146, fig. 59. See Wenning 1987: 141, for later bibliography.
72. Negev 1961: 127-28, no. 10.
73. Negev 1963: 113-17, no. 10. Negev's reading *škr* (which he translates "dam") in nos 74, 8 and 10 is impossible. The first letter is clearly *m* and the word is probably *mkr*, perhaps from Aramaic *krā*, *k'rē* (cf. Hebrew *kārā* "to dig, bore," referring to the fact that the objects are troughs hollowed out of single blocks of stone, though see Naveh 1967: 187-188, for a different reading). Note also that while Naveh's reading *mzhl* in line 2 of Negev's no. 7 b is very probable (Naveh 1967: 188), Negev's reading of the same word at the end of line 2 of his no. 10 is doubtful.
74. See Negev, Naveh and Shaked 1986. For the most recent treatment, with references to previous studies, see Kropp 1994.
75. For a definition of Old Arabic see note 92 below.
76. Bellamy suggested that the first hemistich was taken "from a hymn to Obodas" (1990: 79), but it seems more likely that the whole Arabic passage is quoted from a liturgical work (see also Kropp 1994: 171).
77. See Negev 1981.
78. Of the 3851 Nabataean inscriptions listed by Stone as coming from Sinai (1992-1994, vol. 3: 205-8), 3846 are in fact from there (his nos. 7299-301 and 8374-75 are from Oboda in the Negev; but note that nos. 4194-201, 4203-12 which are ascribed to Timna' in the Wadi 'Arabah [Vol. 2, 98-99], are actually from Wadi Berrah, in Sinai). This 3846 includes virtually all of the published Nabataean inscriptions from Sinai and large numbers of those recorded by Israeli expeditions in the late 1960s and the 1970s, most of which remain unpublished.
79. See, for instance, fig. 16 here, no. 1867, and also CIS 2 nos 1081, 1134, 1216, 2499, 2845, 2846, 3184.

80. For example, CIS 2 nos. 3022, and 3031 (on fig. 16 here).
81. For example CIS 2 nos. 1108, 1666, 1667, 1876, 1882, 1883, 2874, 2875, all shown on fig. 16 here.
82. For example CIS 2 no. 1082, shown on fig. 16 here.
83. It is usually difficult to be sure of this because many names were so popular that the chances are very high of there having been more than one 'Awhū son of 'Abd-al-Ba'ali, for instance. However, when both father and son bear less popular names it is possible to suggest (though we can seldom, if ever, be sure) that two or more texts are by the same person, e.g. Hirshū son of Hugarū in CIS 2 nos 1665, 1701 and 2227. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the graffiti from Sinai are known only from hand-copies of varying accuracy, and very few photographs have ever been published. Most copyists had their own 'style' and this effectively masks that of the original author (on fig. 16, compare nos 1876, 1882, 1883 which were copied by J. Euting, with the others which are copies by G. Bénédict). This makes it impossible at present to use the "handwriting" of different inscriptions containing the same names as a guide to whether they are by the same person.
84. On the question of nomads and literacy see Macdonald 1993: 382-88, and Macdonald, Al Mu'azzin and Nehmé 1996: 442-43.
85. The only alternative would have been one of the Ancient North Arabian scripts (see below), but the extreme rarity in Sinai of texts in any of these alphabets suggests that in fact this was not an option.
86. Note that on several occasions in Littmann and Meredith 1953 and 1954, the same inscription was published twice from different copies.
87. However, recent photographs of four texts which Littmann and Meredith published from bad hand copies show that they contain some interesting material not found before in Nabataean, see Nehmé 1999. The only date so far identified among the graffiti from Egypt is Littmann and Meredith 1953, 16, no. 46a, where the date appears to be 160 (assumed to be of the Era of the Province), i.e. AD 265/6, though the construction of the dating formula is very odd.
88. See Strugnell 1959: 31-34. This goddess is also the subject of brief dedication from another site in the eastern Delta called Qasrawet, near Qatīyeh (Littmann and Meredith 1954: 230-232, no. 82 = 83. See Strugnell 1959: 34-35).
89. Jones 1988. Note that the reading of this place-name is not entirely certain since the forms of the *n* and the *p* are unusual and differ from the other examples of these letters in the text.
90. See Fiema and Jones 1990, correcting to the date given in Jones 1988.
91. Ancient North Arabian is a group of dialects related to Arabic, but distinct from it. These were used in central and north Arabia and in southern Syria between about the eighth century BC and the fourth century AD, and were written in a number of different alphabets of the "Arabian" or "South Semitic" script-family (of which the South Arabian and Ethiopic scripts are also members). Some dialects were used by the settled peoples of the oases, such as Dadanitic (formerly called "Dedanite" and "Lihyanite") at Dedān (modern al-'Ulā) and Taymanitic at Taymā'. Others were used almost exclusively by nomads, Safaitic mainly in the deserts east and southeast of the Hauran, Hismaic (formerly called "Thamudic E") in the Hisma desert of southern Jordan and northwest Arabia, and the various scripts listed together as "Thamudic" with rough divisions into "B," "C," and "D," found throughout the Peninsula. See Macdonald and King 1999 on Thamudic, and Macdonald 2000 and 2002 on Ancient North Arabian in general.
92. The Arabic language is only properly attested from the Rise of Islam (seventh century AD) onwards. In the eighth/ninth centuries AD Arab grammarians produced the normalized and systematic amalgam of dialects known as Classical Arabic which is still the basis of written Arabic today. The term "Old Arabic" refers to the forms of the Arabic language that have survived from the pre-Islamic period independently of these early Arab grammarians—i.e. inscriptions and other original documents, but not the pre-Islamic poetry which was written down and possibly "normalized" in the Islamic period. Until the late fifth/early sixth centuries AD, Old Arabic was a purely spoken language with no script "of its own." Thus, on the very rare occasions when someone wanted to write something in Old Arabic they had to "borrow" a script normally used by another language, such as Sabaic (from South Arabia), Dadanitic (in northwest Arabia, see the previous note), Nabataean, and Greek. It was only in the fifth/sixth centuries AD that Old Arabic began to be written on a regular basis, in a late form of the Nabataean alphabet. See Macdonald 2000: 36-37, 48-54, 57-60 and Macdonald (in preparation, a).
93. Dadanitic, possibly Taymanitic, and some of the poorly understood dialects which are lumped together under the label "Thamudic."
94. On immigration into Sinai, Egypt and Gaza from the Arabian Peninsula, see Eph'al 1982: 101-8, 137-42, 193-201, 206-10.
95. Diod. Sic. 19.94.4-5.
96. However, if one excludes those bilinguals in the Hauran in which the Aramaic section is in the local, rather than the specifically Nabataean, script (see below), the number of examples is not great, e.g. LPNab 31 (al-Ghāriyah); Milik 1958, nos 4 (Jammārīn, near Bosra), 6 (Madaba); Kraeling 1938: 371-73, pl. XCV, see fig. 39 here; JSNab 392/JSGreg 21 (Zizīa/al-Jīzah); Milik 1976 (Petra) fig. 128 here; possibly Savignac and Horsfield 1935: 263-64, 269, Greek no. 1 and Nabataean no. 5 (Ramm), if Milik's reconstruction is correct (1976: 145, n. 5). Understandably, Nabataean inscriptions outside the Nabataean cultural area are often bilinguals, e.g. CIS 2, no. 160 (Sidon); Levi Della Vida 1938 (the Greek island of Cos), etc. See Wenning 1987: 22-24. There is also a Nabataean-Latin bilingual at Rome (CIS 2 no. 159).
97. King 1990, nos KJC 380 and Nab 1 (Hismaic) and possibly Jobling 1990: 107-8 (Hismaic); Khraysheh 1994 (Safaitic).
98. I am most grateful to the excavator of Qaryat al-Faw, Professor A. T. al-Ansary, for this information (personal communication). The text will appear in his forthcoming edition of the inscribed material from the site.
99. In many cases such etymologies are very strained and a derivation from Aramaic would be far more plausible, see Macdonald 1999: 256-61, and 273-285 *passim*.
100. To take just one instance among many others, Roschinski 1981: 31 "the Nabataeans' mother tongue was clearly Arabic, as above all their personal names show us."
101. See Macdonald 1998: 187-88; 1999: 254-55; 2000: 47.
102. A curious example of this can be found on an inscribed stone used to close a burial niche in Petra (Lyon no. 46/Brussels no. 52). The deceased's name was *šm'nm br 'z'yrw* "Simon son of 'Uzayrū." The first name is Jewish and the root of the second is almost certainly Hebrew 'z-r (from which the name Ezra is formed and of which the Arabic cognate is 'z-r, and the Aramaic is 'd-r). Yet this apparently Hebrew root has been used to produce a diminutive of an Arabic form, 'uzayr (as noted by Starcky in his commentary).
103. See, for instance, CIS 2, no. 890: *dnh svsy' dy'bd šllyh br 't* ("this is the horse which Sha'ad-lahi son of 'A'la made"). This is pure Aramaic even though the names are etymologically Arabic.
104. See O'Connor 1986, who isolates approximately 15 such words, and the discussions in Healey 1993: 59-63 and Macdonald 1998: 187; 2000: 46-47.
105. See Macdonald 2000: 47.
106. For a possible exception in H 36/5-6, from Hegrā, see O'Connor 1986: 221.
107. These were also Cantineau's conclusions, despite his suggestion that the Nabataeans spoke Arabic (1932: 177-78).
108. See, most recently, Healey and Smith 1989 and the comments in Macdonald 2000: 53-54.
109. Another late text, from about the same period, was found at Umum al-Jimāl in northern Jordan (LPNab 41). This is the tombstone of the tutor of a king of the Arab tribe of Tanūkh. It is in Nabataean and Greek and there are mistakes in both. But here, the errors in the Nabataean cannot be ascribed to Arabic influence, since they would be equally incorrect in Arabic (see the commentary to LPNab 41).
110. This text is unfortunately undated and the date which is usually assigned to it (ca. AD 150) is based on the flimsiest of evidence (see Negev, Naveh and Shaked 1986: 60).
111. See Bordreuil 1997 and Bellamy 1985.
112. *Panarion* 51.22.11 (text in Epiphanius 1980: 286-87; translation in Epiphanius 1994: 51).
113. See Koenen 1996b: 187-88, and chapter 22 in this volume, and Ghul 1999.
114. The fact that other Ancient North Arabian written languages (Safaitic, Hismaic and Thamudic B, C and D) were used more or less exclusively by nomads, can have given them little prestige in the eyes of the settled populations which seem generally to have ignored them.
115. Note that the so-called "Thamudic" inscriptions have no demonstrable connection with the tribe of Thamūd, see Macdonald and King 1999: 436.
116. For this interpretation see Macdonald 1995.
117. See Milik 1971, and Macdonald 1995.
118. The Nabataean is JSNab 17 (on which see, most recently Healey and Smith 1989 and Macdonald 2000: 53) and the Thamudic D text is JSTham 1.
119. See Stehl 1970.
120. For a history of the development of the Nabataean script see Starcky 1966: 926-37.
121. Diod. Sic. 19.94.4-5, quoting an eye-witness account of the nomadic Nabataeans in 312 BC, only eleven years after the death of Alexander the Great.
122. Diod. Sic. 19.96.1.
123. On the development during this period of different forms of the script for use on hard and soft materials, see Naveh 1970: 21-64.
124. A ligature is an additional line, or an extension of part of a letter used to join it to the one that follows.
125. In the earliest inscription from Petra of 96/95 BC (figs. 18, 38.4) only a few of the letters are joined, mainly in common combinations such as the *n-h* of *dnh*, 'b-d, b-r, etc. but the majority are still written separately. Compare this with the Turkiyaniyah inscription (figs. 17, 38.5) of the first century AD in which the majority of the letters are joined.
126. This does not always happen and, for instance, in both the Aramaic script used by the Achaemenid chancellery, and its Jewish Palestinian derivative, each letter was written separately.
127. Thus, in some of the tomb inscriptions at Hegrā the mason has continued some lines onto the frame rather than compress the letters, see, for instance, fig. 27 here (last line) and the plate of H 36 in Healey 1993 (the ends of lines 3 and 5-7). More drastic is the case of H 9 where part of the frame has been removed apparently to accommodate the final letters of lines 4 and 5.
128. For instance, the use of an "archaic" final 'aleph in certain words in texts which elsewhere use the 'looped' form in this position. Thus, for instance, in H 16 of 1 BC/AD (figs. 27 and 38.6) the "archaic" final 'aleph is found in the key words *hpr* ('tomb', lines 1, 5, 10), *ktb* ("document", line 10) and the divine name *dsh'* (lines 3 and 8) but the looped form in all other cases (*'l* line 7, *'l'* line 7, and *'pl'* line 8). Similarly, in an inscription from Petra (CIS 2 no. 354) of AD 20, the 'archaic' final 'aleph is used in the word *lh* "god" and the name of the deity *dsh'*, but the looped form occurs in the word *šlm* "statue." Compare fig. 34, the inscription on an altar from Imtān, in the Hauran (dated to year 23 of Rabbel II = AD 93/94) which is in the Nabataean (rather than the local Aramaic) script. Here the "archaic" final 'aleph is used only in the divine name *Dūshārā*, and the looped form in every other instance.
129. It is instructive to compare the careful professional hand of the Nabataean papyri (e.g. figs. 24, 38.15) with the signature and witness statement (figs. 25, 38.16) of someone from the same community who was 'an experienced writer' but not a professional scribe (Lewis, Yadin and Greenfield 1989: 136).
130. Kirkbride 1960: 118-19 and pl. VIII, 1. They have not yet been published but I am most grateful to the late Mrs. Diana Kirkbride-Helbaeck for showing me photographs of them.
131. Cross aptly described it as "pre-Nabataean" (1965: 207).
132. See Starcky 1966: 930-31; 1985: 160, 173, and the discussion above in the section on 'The uses of writing'.
133. For texts dated by the regnal years of Nabataean kings see, for example, fig. 10 (year 11 of Malichus I = 47/46 BC, see Fiema and Jones 1990: 242 for the year of Malichus' accession); fig. 33 (year 17 of Malichus II = AD 57); fig. 34 (year 23 of Rabbel II = AD 93/94); fig. 35 (year 24 of Rabbel II = AD 94); fig. 36 (year 25 of Rabbel II = AD 95); Starcky 1985: 181, and fig. 3 on p. 177 (year 31 of Rabbel II = AD 101/102). Note

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N

a.

that some of these come from outside the Nabataean kingdom.

111. For texts dated by the regnal years of Herodian rulers see fig. 31 (year 13 of Philip the Tetrarch = AD 29/30), and LPNab 102 (Agrippa I or II).

115. For texts dated by the regnal years of Roman emperors see fig. 34 (year 7 of Claudius = AD 48); Starcky 1985: 180 (year 9 of Claudius = AD 50), and LPNab 27 (year 7 of Hadrian = AD 124). Other inscriptions are dated by the Seleucid era (which began in 312/111 BC); see LPNab 100 (year 280-300 (or 311) Seleucid = 32/31 to 12/11 BC (or 1 BC/AD)); Littmann 1904: 90-93, no. 2 (year 108 Seleucid = 4/3 BC); fig. 35 ~~107-12~~ (405 Seleucid = 24 of Rabbel II = AD 94).

136. Starcky 1966: 930.

137. Similarly, the altar inscription from Imtān (fig. 34, dated AD 93/94) where the letter shapes and the use of ligatures are characteristic of the Petra script, but the more or less uniform height of the letters is a feature of Hauran Aramaic.

138. See, for instance, Cross 1965: 206, "the national scripts of Palmyra, Judaea and Nabataea..."

139. For example on fig. 16, working from top to bottom: nos. 2874 and 2875 form a single, interlinked composition. In 952, the letters of each line are joined along the base and the word *šm* has been elongated vertically so that it runs down the right hand 'margin' of all three lines. In addition, two diagonal strokes have been added to the elongated flourish of its *m* to match those of those of the *š* nos. 1882, 1883 and 1876 show three different ways of joining the letters of the name *klbw* (Kalbū). At the end of 1882 the letters are joined along the base, in the first name of 1883 the *l* and the *b* are joined by a ligature halfway down the stem of the *l*, while in 1876 the *k* and the *w* are joined along the base but are not joined to the *l* and the *b* which float together in mid-air (as also in the two examples of *klbw* in 1108). In 1857 the two names are joined by a line along the bases of the letters and the word *br* ("son of") has been reduced to two diagonal lines floating above the last letter of the first name.

140. Tayma: examples of Imperial Aramaic, the Louvre stela fig. 38.1 (CIS 2 no. 113, Gibson 1975: 148-151) and the new stela (Cross 1986). Dedan: Imperial Aramaic, JSNab 390, and Našif 1988: pl. 124a. Between Dedan and Hegra; JSNab 268. Hegra: Imperial Aramaic, JSNab 127: 146.

141. As noted above, the latest inscription in the Nabataean-Aramaic language and script is from Hegra and dates to AD 356, see Stiehl 1970.

142. See Bordreuil 1997 and Macdonald 2000: 59-60.

143. The Greek, Syriac and Arabic inscription on the lintel of a church at Zebed in northern Syria, dated AD 512; the graffito by a soldier of the Ghassanid king al-Hārith at Jabal Sāys (Usays), dated AD 528; and the Greek-Arabic bilingual inscription on the lintel of a church at Harrān, in the Leja, southern Syria, dated AD 568. There are also two undated texts which are usually classed with these, one from Ramū and the other from Umm al-Jimal. Neither has been satisfactorily read. See the bibliography in Gruendler 1993: 13-14, and the discussions in Grohmann 1967-1971: 2, 14-17, with photographs on pls 1 and 2.

144. Stiehl 1970, and note that even JSNab 17 was a partially successful attempt by an Arabic speaker to write Aramaic, rather than an unequivocally Arabic text like the Namārah inscription.

Abbreviations used in the notes to Chapter 3

ARNA Nabataean inscriptions published in Milik and Starcky 1970.

H Nabataean tomb inscriptions of Hegra, republished in Healey 1993.

JSLih Dedanitic (Lihyanite) inscriptions in Jausen and Savignac 1909-1922.

JSNab Nabataean inscriptions in Jausen and Savignac 1909-1922.

JSTham Thamudic inscriptions in Jausen and Savignac 1909-1922.

LPNab Nabataean and other Aramaic inscriptions in Littmann 1914.

PYadin Papyri from the Naḥal Ḥever "Cave of Letters" as numbered in Lewis, Yadin and Greenfield 1989 and Yadin et al. 2002. [Note that in Yadin 1962 and 1963, Documents nos. 1-4 = *PYadin* 1-4, but that "Document no. 6" = *PYadin* 7, and so on.]

CHAPTER 4

1. ANET: 305.
2. Lemaire: 1995: 68-69.
3. CIS II, 1907: 391.
4. Milik 1982: 263-65.
5. Milik 1982: 264.
6. Graf 1992: 970.
- 6b. al-Khaysheh 2000.
7. Glueck 1965: 143, pl. 31.
8. Glueck 1965: 315, pls. 1-2.
9. Meunier 1980.
10. al-Kalbi 1924: 18.
11. Yaqut 1955: s.v. 7038.
12. Starcky, 1966: 887.
13. Cantineau 1932: 3-5.
14. CIS II, 1907: 218.
15. Cantineau 1932: 22.
16. Cantineau 1932: 46.
17. Parr 1957: 13-14.
18. Starcky, 1966: 990.
19. Bowersock 1990: 21-27.
20. Strugnell 1959: 29-36.
21. Milik 1982: 22.
22. Milik and Starcky 1975: 118.
23. Meyerson 1983: 130-40.
24. Fiema and Jones 1990: 239-48.
25. Oren 1982: 203ff.
26. Harding 1971: s.v.
27. Sourdel 1952: 81.
28. Jausen and Savignac 1909: 221, no. 72.
29. Littmann 1901: 381-90.
30. Bignasca 1996: 142.
31. CIS II, 1907, no 182.
32. Savignac 1933: 411-12.
33. Zayadine 1990a: 40 & pl. 1, 2.
34. Gawlikowski 1983.
35. D. Sourdel, *Les cultes*, 70 and no. 7.
36. ANET 1955: 299.
37. Caskel 1954: nos. 13 & 25.
38. Zayadine 1981: 113-18, Pls. (I) 1-3, (II) 1-4; Zayadine 1990b: 163-64.
39. Milik and Starcky 1975: 124-26.
40. Dalman 1912: 96.
41. Levi Della Vita 1938.
42. Zayadine 1991a: 293-95.
43. al-Kalbi, *Kitab*, 25.
44. Healy 1993: index 252 under mnwtw.
45. CIS II, 1907, 209.
46. al-As'ad and Teixidor 1985: 286-92.
47. al-As'ad and Teixidor 1985: 287-88.
48. Ryckmans 1980: 193-204.

49. al-Kalbi, *Kitab* 19, who reports that the three goddesses were venerated as the daughters of Allah.
50. See Seyrig 1932: 50-64.
51. Seyrig 1932: pl. 18, 4.
52. Leclant 1986: 341.
53. Witt 1971.
54. Grenfell and Hunt 1915: 197.
55. See Zayadine 1991a: 297.
56. Leclant 1986: 343.
57. Meza 1996: 167-176 and fig. 1.
58. Hammond 1990: 115-27.
59. Graf 1988: 171-211.
60. al-Kalbi, *Kitab*, 27-28.
61. Zayadine 1990a: 18-19.

CHAPTER 5

1. Graf 1997b: 45-68; cf. Potts 1992: 223-24.
2. Graf 1983: 555-69.
3. Hiller von Gaertringen 1906: no. 108/168.
4. Graf 1996: 208; cf. Pulleyblank 1999: 76-77.
5. Graf 1996: 209.
6. see N. Groom 1981: 143-48.
7. Casson 1989.
8. Sedov 1997.
9. Ingraham 1981: 76-77; but cf. Gatier and Salles 1988: 186-87; see discussion Sidebotham 1986b: 125-26.
10. Bowersock 1983: 70; Casson 1989: 145.
11. Young 1997; but cf. Healey 1993: 30.
12. Parker 1997: 40.
13. cf. Johnson 1987: 101-3.
14. Crone 1987: 24-25.
15. cf. Johnson 1987: 101-3.
16. Tarn 1929: 15-16; cf. Lorton 1971.
17. cf. Crone 1987: 24 n. 51.
18. cf. Bowsler 1989: 22.
19. Graf 1997b: V; cf. Bowsler 1989.
20. Marqen 1996.
21. Gawlikowski 1994.
22. Marqen 1996: 229-30.
23. RES: 1088.
24. Graf 1997b: V, 276.
25. Knauf 1990: 177.
26. McKenzie 1990.
27. Healey 1993.
28. Personal communication from U. Bellwald; cf. Knauf 1998: 95-97.
29. Personal communication from U. Bellwald.
30. Bowersock 1983: 13; Graf 1997b: I. 51-54; Bows 1998: passim.
31. Bowersock 1983: 90-109.
32. Potts; De Maigret 1997; Macdonald 1997.
33. Zayadine 1992; Graf 1997b: II.
34. al-Ansary 1982: 22, 28, 63-64.
35. Potts 1991; Potts 1992: 95-97; Graf 1997b: I. 63-64.
36. Graf 1996: 210.
37. Zarins 1981: 27 and pl. 28, no. 6.
38. Zarins 1983: 32.
39. Stucky 1983: 12 and abb. 10-11.
40. Sedov 1992: 120, 122, fig. 10.
41. RES: 4153; Mordtmann 1932: 429-30; cf. Macdonald 1994: 135-36.
42. Macdonald 1994: 136 and n. 30.
43. Macdonald 1994: 134.
44. Gatier and Salles 1988: 181.
45. Bowersock 1983: 48, 57, 59-60.
46. Wenning 1996: 254.
47. Healey 1993.
48. Bowersock 1983: 57; Graf 1997b: V. 283-84, 289.
49. Bowsler 1986.
50. Healey 1993: 27.
51. Winnett 1970: 71-73, 88-93, 113-20.
52. Starcky 1957a.
53. Bowersock 1983: 154-59.
54. Meshel 1973; Zayadine 1985; Graf 1998: 110.
55. Oren 1993 IV: 1215; cf. Oren 1982.

56. Starcky 1955: 156; Tsafir 1982: 212-14; cf. Clermont-Ganneau 1919; and Jones 1988.
57. Rokéa 1983.
58. cf. Sperber 1976.
59. Starcky 1979: 38.
60. CIS: 790; Graf 1997b: V. 283.
61. Graf 1997b: V. 286; XI. 344-45.
62. Roche 1996; Roller 199b: 225, 226-28, 234.
63. Dubois 1907: 99-101, 161-62, 268; Frank 1940: 274; Ostrow 1977: 210, 226 n. 31.
64. CIS: II, 1.158; Renan 1873: 380; CIL X: 2644 and 2935; Meshorer 1975: 61; IC: 926, add. 842a; Roche 1996: 89ff.; De Romanis 1996: 166; Bowersock 1997c: 347-52.
65. Müller 1978; Groom 1981.
66. Sidebotham 1986b: 13.
67. Johnson 1987: 80-84, 87; cf. Bows 1998: passim.
68. Meredith 1957; Johnson 1987: 75-78.
69. Chabel 1985.
70. Kisnawi 1983: 76-78 and pls. 79-81.
71. Patrie 1984; Goldman 1996; Rosenthal-Heginbottom apud A. Negev 1997: 202-06.
72. Crone 1987: 67-69.
73. Bowersock 1983: 28-44.
74. Sidebotham 1986b: 120-30.
75. Bowersock 1997b.
76. Sidebotham 1986b.
77. cf. Greene 1986: 39-40; Duncan-Jones 1982: 366-69.
78. Sidebotham 1986b: 71 n. 74.
79. Johnson 1987.
80. Sidebotham 1986b: 71-72.
81. Graf 1997b: VI, 2-5.
82. cf. Koenen 1996b: 178-79, 186-87.
83. Clermont-Ganneau 1919; Littmann and Meredith 1954: 227.
84. Green 1909: 320; Winkler 1938: 4, 7, 10; Littmann and Meredith 1953; Littmann and Meredith 1954.
85. Clermont-Ganneau 1919.
86. Hammond 1979: 245-47.
87. Briquel-Chatonnet and Nehmé 1998.
88. C. Toll 1994: 381-82.
89. Winkler 1938: 4, 7, Site 24N, 10 summarized in De Romanis 1996: 203-4.
90. Sidebotham 1986b: 94-95.
91. Whitcomb 1982: 67, pl. 21d.
92. Hayes 1995: 38; Hayes 1996: 150.

CHAPTER 6

1. Concise overviews on Nabataean pottery and the history of research with much further bibliography can be found in Wenning 1987: 296-98; 1990: 414; Schmid 1997a; 2000a; 2001a,b,c. In general on the function of pottery for modern archaeology see Orton - Tyers - Vince 1993.
2. On Hellenistic moldmade bowls in general see Rotroff 1982; Kossatz 1990; Hausmann 1996; Rogl 1996; on the Peloponnesian production cf. Siebert 1978; for Ionian bowls Laumonier 1977 and Mitsopoulos-Leon 1991: 67-74; on moldmade bowls from the Black Sea area cf. Kovalenko 1996. For Eastern Terra Sigillata in general see Hayes 1985 and for Western terra sigillata Ertlinger, Hedinger and Hoffmann 1990.
3. On this phenomenon see Schmid 2000a: 111-13; Hannestad 1983: 83-120, both with further references.
4. For the provenience of ESA see Hayes 1985: 10; Schneider 1995.
5. On the date and process of Nabataean sedentarization see Schmid, 2001a; 2001b.
6. The misinterpretation about Petra being a "city of the dead" only with tombs and temples, leading to the misinterpretation of the pottery as being used only for cultic purposes can still be found in Negev 1977: 590f.

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