

# A NABATAEAN STELA IN TAYMĀ' MUSEUM

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**ملخص:** سليمان الذيب، مسلة نبطية من متحف تيماء: يتناول هذا البحث بالدراسة مسلة عليها نحت بارز للنسر الذي كان يمثل رمزا للإله النبطي ذو الشرى وكذلك دراسة للنقش الذي يتكون من سطرين أسفل النسر. ويتحدث هذا النقش النبطي عن انجاز هذه المسلة والتي قام بها وائلة بن الخزن.

**Abstract:** This is a study of a Nabataean stela from the Museum of Taymā'. On the upper part occurs a sculpture of the eagle, which was a symbol of the Nabataean god *Dūšarā'*. Two-line Nabataean inscription is engraved beneath the eagle that informs about the achievement of the stela.

This is a small rectangular obelisk, (lengths 47.5cm, width 18cm, height 12cm), found by a local resident of this historical city, who kindly handed over the stela to the local museum of Taymā'.

The upper part, which occupy more than one third of the rock, contains the sculptured of an eagle. A short inscription below it was written in Nabataean to perpetuate this achievement.

The sculptured eagle, represents the famous Nabataean god *Dūšarā'*. As Zayadine indicated, 2003, p.59, *Dūšarā'* appeared to have three important titles: "Lord of the temple", "Lord of heaven and Earth" and "god of our lord (the king)".

*Dūšarā'* was the principle deity worshipped by the Nabataean, however, scholars are not sure if *Dūšarā'* was a god of vegetation or a deity that encompassed all of these attributes at the same time, for more information see (Healey, 2001, pp.85-107).

This sculpture reflects the highly skilled art of the sculpture. He highlighted the details of eagle wings, showing the precise details of the claws, which consist of "4" claws per foot; In

addition the sculptor showed the ribs of the eagle breast.

The eagle represents many ancient deities in the ancient Near East. In the southern Arabian Peninsula, the eagle symbolized the Hadramitic moon god known as *Siyān*, (Munro-Hay, 1991, p.399; Sedov, 1995, p.63). It should be mentioned that the sculptured eagle has come in many Nabataean sculptures, particularly persistent in Petra, and al-Hegar (Glueck, 1965, pp.472-3, pls. 32-34a).

The Inscription:

1. *m g m r w ' l t b r ḥ*
2. *z y n l ' l m*

Translation:

"Achievement of *Wā'ilat* son of *Ḥazyān* forever"

**Comments:**

Despite the highly technique of the engraving, two things can be noticed:

1. The reading of the second personal name is debatable, because it has been written in unsatisfactory manner.
2. Adding *l-'lm*, "forever", is misplaced,

because *w'lt* should add an commensurate word with it, such as: *lhyy* "for life", *slm* "peace, greeting", *bṭb*, "good", *dkyr* "remembered", *bryk* 'blessed'.

*Mgmr*: noun, singular *masculine*., absolute, derived from the root *gmr*, "achieve, complete", stated in other Nabataean inscriptions (al-Theeb, 1993, no. 91: 1), *gmr* defined in many other Semitic writings, for more see (al-Theeb, 2000, p.64). — *w'lt*: a simple personal name appeared in this form in a number of Nabataean inscriptions (al-Theeb, 2002, 135; al-Khraysheh, 1986, p.65), while it is known in a similar form as *w'l*, *w'lh*, in other Semitic inscriptions, for more parallels see (Shatnawi, 2003, p.750; al-Manaser, 2008,127; al-Said, 1995, p.174; Hayajneh, 1998, p.263; al-Theeb, 1998, 365). — *hzyn*: as far as we know, it is a personal name appeared

in this form for the first time in Nabataean inscriptions, but it came in Nabataean as: *hzn* (al-Theeb, 2002, 76), and *hznw* (al-Muaikel, al-Theeb, 1996, 55; al-Theeb, 1997, 10). *Hzn* known in Safataic (Harding, 1971, p.188), and Liḥyanite inscriptions (Abu al-Hassān, 1997, 163: 1), and also emerge as a tribal name in Safataic inscriptions (Winnett, 1957, 714). May be the best interpretation is to consider it a simple personal of (الْخُزْن) "the thick, the rough mountains or, rough place" (Ibn Manzur, 1955-1956, vol 13, p.113). — *l'im*: noun, masculine, singular absolute, preceded by the "*l'*", which in this case means "forever"; was heavily mentioned in the Nabataean inscriptions, and as well in other Semitic writings, for further information see (al-Theeb, 2000, pp 197 -198).



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