

## IG XII Suppl. 307: *Proxenia* and Second-Century Nabataea

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**Abstract:** Inter-state cooperation was a staple of Mediterranean life in the second century BC. However, second-century Nabataea has been seen as underdeveloped in such relationships and relegated to a peripheral sphere of influence. The Tenean inscription IG XII Suppl. 307 belies this small role and rather integrates Nabataea into the institutional norms of the Hellenistic Aegean. A Nabataean, Salamenes, was awarded a highly coveted *proxenos* position by the Tenean council and *demos*, granting him access to rights normally reserved for citizens. In addition, this honor bridged the cultural and physical divide between the two states, guaranteeing a facilitation of social and economic movement. Such a public honor may be read as additional evidence for early Nabataean state formation and its growing influence in the Aegean.

**Keywords:** Nabataea; Hellenistic Aegean; *proxenos*; Tenos

The Aegean of the second century BC was awash in inter-state networks and actors, crossing land, ocean, and territorial boundaries, in pursuit of goods and new markets. While Greek *poleis*, Hellenistic kingdoms, and even the Phoenician cities are central to understanding socio-political and economic developments in this period, the Nabataean Kingdom, the capital of which is located in modern-day Jordan, is often excluded from our reconstruction of the hum and buzz.<sup>1</sup> Once portrayed in modern interpretations as nomadic with tribal divisions loosely unified under kingship or single actors working outside of state institutions, the development of Nabataean kingship in the early Hellenistic period has only recently been appreciated.<sup>2</sup> New discoveries, such as the third-century Posidippus fragment, and recent re-analyses of Nabataean coinage show an earlier coalescence of Nabataean kingship than normally assumed.<sup>3</sup> To these should be added a rare and understudied second-century *proxenia* inscription from Tenos (IG XII Suppl. 307), honoring Salamenes, son of Edemon, the Nabataean.<sup>4</sup> Together, such evidence shows that Nabataean kingship, identity formation, and movement into the Aegean should not be confined

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<sup>1</sup> For a more extensive explanation of the boundaries of the Nabataean Kingdom, see Graf (2021).

<sup>2</sup> This erroneous characterization by earlier modern scholars was based on non-Nabataean sources, such as Diodorus Siculus who describes them using stock motifs (19.94.2-95.2).

<sup>3</sup> Graf (2006) and Barkay (2019). To this can also be added the long-known Halutza/Elusa inscription of ca.168 BC and references in 2 Maccabees Chapter 5 verse 8 (discussed below) and the possible mid-third century inscription in the Damascus Museum (Milik 2003).

<sup>4</sup> The patronym “Edemon” (l. 4) is highly unusual. The name itself may be a corruption of EDMN for Edom, but this is currently speculation. PHI notes that the word is a problem, but its use twice in the text indicates that it was not a mistake or spelling error, rather this is the intended term. As David Graf described, the problem is “interesting” (personal correspondence, January 2023).

to the first century BC.<sup>5</sup> The following argument has three parts: first, an analysis of the inscription and its relationship to the epigraphic habits of Tenos; second, a discussion of the complex nature of Nabataean identity and Salamenes' identification as "the Nabataean"; and third, a hypothesis of an economic reason for the association of Tenos and Nabataea.

The Nabataean Kingdom was famous for facilitating the trade of frankincense and myrrh, spices, gold, bitumen, fine pottery, and a dizzying variety of other goods. The capital at Petra was one of the northern anchors of trans-Arabian trade routes and government interest in controlling and protecting trade extended throughout the kingdom. Collecting taxes on imported goods,<sup>6</sup> it was in the best interest of the government, as well as its merchants, to ensure that it maintained a network of connections to markets and consumers spread far and wide. A reciprocal interest in exchange came from the Aegean, as some of the greatest consumers of rare resins were Greeks, who believed that the odors of these aromatics would entice and summon divinities during their rituals and festivals.<sup>7</sup> As such, it was similarly in the interest of Greek *poleis* to ensure their access to ingredients critical to their religious worship. In the case of Nabataea and the island *polis* of Tenos, the proxeny decree for Salamenes the Nabataean may provide one method by which these interactions were preserved.

Inscribed on a marble block, 57cm tall and 37cm long,<sup>8</sup> the reconstructed text is as follows:<sup>9</sup>

- 1      ἐπ[ι] ἄρχ[ο]ντος Ἐλεϋθε[ρ]ί[ου(?)]  
       [ἔδοξεν τῇ βουλῇ καὶ τῷ δήμῳ],  
       π[ρ]υτ[αν]ν[ε]ων γνώμη· ἐπειδὴ Σ[αλ]αμέν[η]ς  
       [Ἐδήμωνος(?) Ναβαταῖος ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός] ὑπάρχ[ει]  
 5      [καὶ εὖνους τῷ ἡμετέρῳ δήμῳ καὶ δια-  
       τελεῖ χρεῖας παρεχόμενος καὶ κ[οι]νῇ τῇ [πό]-  
       [λει καὶ ἰδίαι] Τηνίων [τοῖ]ς [έντυ]γχάν[ου]-  
       σ[ιν, σπο]υδῆς καὶ φιλ[οτ]ιμ[ί]ας οὐ[δ]έν ἐλ[λεί]-  
       [πων· ὅπ]ως οὖν καὶ ὁ ἡμέ[τερος] δῆμος *lac.*  
 10     ε[ὐ]χά[ρ]ις τῶν φαίνεται κ[α]ὶ τοῖς καλοῖς [καὶ]  
       ἀγ[α]θ[ο]ῖς ἀνδράσιν ἀποδιδούς τὰς κατα[ξί]-  
       ας τιμὰς καὶ χάριτας, [ἀ]γαθῇ τύχῃ δεδ[ό]-  
       χθαι τῇ[ι] βουλῇ καὶ [τ]ῷ δήμῳ· ἐπαινέσα[ι]

<sup>5</sup> Noted in only a few publications (Graindor (1910); Étienne (1990) 188; Roche (1996) 85; Cantineau (1930); Hackl et al. (2003) 122-24; Graf (2013a) 205; Terpstra (2015) 77-79), the inscription's implications have only been rarely examined for their greater socio-economic implications (Accettola (2021) 294-96).

<sup>6</sup> A 25% tax on imports is reported in the anonymous first-century CE text, *Periplus Maris Erythraei* 19; however, this may be a later tax by Roman officials and scholars argue that it should not be directly attributed to the Nabataeans. See Young (1997).

<sup>7</sup> Clements (2014).

<sup>8</sup> The only known photograph of this text, as far as I have been able to discover, is part of Graindor's original publication from 1910. Due to age and size, it is exceptionally difficult to read. This translation is my own. The current location of the inscription is unknown.

<sup>9</sup> The reconstruction comes from the *IG XII, Supplementum*.

15 Σαλαμ[έ]νη Ἐδήμωνος Ναβ[α]ταῖον καὶ  
 στεφα[νῶ]σαι [αὐ]τὸν θαλλοῦ στεφάνωι  
 τῷ ἱερ[ῶ]ι τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος καὶ τῆς Ἀμφιτρ[ί]-  
 της [ἀρ]ε[τ]ῆς ἔ[νεκ]εν καὶ εὐνοίας, ἥς ἔ-  
 χω[ν διατε]λε[ῖ]ς [τὸ]ν ἡμέτερον δῆμον,  
 [καὶ ἀναγορεῦ]σ[αι] αὐ[τ]ῷ τὸν στέφανον τὸν  
 20 ἄρ[χοντα τὴν στεφα]νηφόρον ἀρχὴν ἔν τε  
 τῷ ἱερῶι τοῦ Ποσειδῶ[ν]ος καὶ τῆς Ἀμ[φ]ι-  
 τρίτης, ὅτ[α]ν τὴν θυσίαν καὶ πα[ν]ήγυριν  
 [συντελεῖ ἡ πό]λις, καὶ ἐν τῷ θεά[τρῳ]ι  
 [Π]ο[σιδεῖων καὶ Διονυσί]ων τῷ ἀγῶν[ι] τῶν  
 25 [τρα]γωιδῶ[ν]· εἶ[ναι] δὲ [αὐ]τὸν [πρ]ό[ξενον] καὶ  
 εὐ[ε]ργέτη[ν το]ῦ ἡ[μ]ε[τε]ροῦ δή[μου]· δεδόσ-  
 [θαι] δὲ [αὐτῷ] κα[ὶ] πρ[ο]εδρίαν [ἐν τοῖς ἀ]γῶ-  
 σιν, οἷς [ἡ] πό[λις] σ[υν]τελεῖ, [κα]ὶ πρό[σο]δον  
 πρ[ὸς τὴ] μ[ε] βουλῇ[ν] καὶ [τὸν δῆμον, ἐά]ν τ[ου]  
 30 δ[έ]η[ται], [πρῶτῳ] μ[ε]τ[ὰ] τὰ ἱερ[ά]· ἀν[αγρ]άψ[αι]  
 δ[ὲ] καὶ τὸ ψήφ]ισμ[α] τ[ὸ]δε εἰς στ[ήλ]ην [λιθί]-  
 ν[ην καὶ στή]σαι εἰς τ[ὸ] ἱερ[ὸν τοῦ] Πο[σειδῶ]-  
 ν[ος καὶ τῆς] Ἀμφ[ιτρίτης].

1 In the archonship of Eleutherius  
 the council and the people decided  
 by the proposal of the Prytaneis: since Salamenes,  
 Son of Edemon, the Nabataean, shows himself a good man  
 5 and friendly to our people and continually  
 giving necessary things to the whole city  
 and to the private citizens of Tenos who entreat him,  
 lacking neither haste nor generosity -  
 So, then, that our demos also *lac.*  
 10 clearly be bestowing favors and giving to good  
 and fair men honors worthy  
 and acceptable, with good fortune  
 the council and the people decided - to commend  
 Salamenes, son of Eudemon, the Nabataean and  
 15 to wreath him with a crown of olive

holy to Poseidon and  
 Amphitrite, on account of his virtue and goodwill, which  
 he continuously brought forth for our demos,  
 and that the archon, who presides over the wearing of wreaths,  
 20 announce the wreath to him publicly, in  
 the temple of Poseidon and Amphitrite,  
 when the city celebrates the sacrifice and  
 the festival, and in the theater  
 at the competition of the tragedies  
 25 of Poseidon and Dionysus - and he be a *proxenos* and  
 benefactor of our people - and he  
 be given also *proedria* in the competitions,  
 which the city celebrates, and right to approach  
 the council and the demos, if ever he  
 30 needs, first after the sacrifices - and engrave  
 the decree on a stone stele  
 and place it in the temple of Poseidon  
 and Amphitrite.

Lines 3-4: The name Salamenes is clearly discernable; however, his father's name is somewhat obscured. Both names appear in regions surrounding Nabataea, though often with some variance (i.e. Σαλαμάνης). For further discussion see Graindor (1910); Vattioni (1987/88) 116 and 122; and Hackl et al (2003) 124.

Line 9: The lacuna at the end of the line obscures the meaning of the statement. Hackl, et al (2003) finish the line with “ωαψ,” but give no reason for the reconstruction. I cannot make out these letters, although I do agree with their general translation of the line.

Line 27: *πρ[ο]εδρί[αν]* or *proedria* is the right to sit with the city elite during festivals and is a less common benefit associated with *proxenia* (discussed in more detail below).

Line 30: *[πρώτῳ]ι μ[ετ]ὰ [τὰ ἱερ]ά* - if the reconstruction is correct - is oddly disconnected from the rest of the phrase. Perhaps it means that he could not have access to these rights until after the city celebrated the upcoming festival and he was formally announced as a *proxenos*.

In this decree, Salamenes, a Nabataean, was honored by the Tenean *boule* and *demos* and given the title *proxenos*, along with a handful of other benefits. William Mack's *Proxeny and Polis* (2015) shone a light on the prevalence and strength of Classical and Hellenistic *proxenia*, the formalized reciprocal relationship between states and “friendly foreigners.” Mack argues that proxenies elucidate the “indices of interaction” between states, both Greek and non-Greek.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Mack (2015) 149. In addition, his online database (<http://proxenies.csad.ox.ac.uk/places/home>) provides researchers with effective ways to visualize proxy lists and other epigraphic remains.

Through his outline of the societal expectations of the “*proxenos* paradigm,” Mack is able to show the role of the *proxenos* as an inter-state arbiter and contributes to the understanding of the Greek epigraphic practice more broadly.<sup>11</sup> Many *poleis* took part in this practice which peaked in the third century, but restrained their public inscriptions to a few choice individuals.<sup>12</sup> Over the course of the second century, inscribing honors for *proxenoi* abated significantly before it disappeared almost entirely in the early years of the first century.<sup>13</sup> However, this disappearance of public inscription should not be taken as an immediate marker of the decline of the institution of *proxenia*, but rather a changing attitude toward epigraphic practice and monumental priorities more generally in the Greek world during the increasing rise of Roman power in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>14</sup>

In Tenos, the epigraphic practice thrived in the third and second centuries BC. On the political front, Tenos remains the only *polis* to display inscriptions of the Koinon of the Nesiotes.<sup>15</sup> In addition, economically-connected honorees were well-represented epigraphically during this period, as evidenced by the honor for the Syracusan banker, Timon.<sup>16</sup> While, as in the Greek world more widely, the practice of public inscriptions tapered off in the first century BC, the second-century *proxenoi* continue to illuminate the connections between individuals and states.<sup>17</sup> In fact, Tenos inscribed a significantly larger number of *proxeny* inscriptions than most *poleis* – 51 surviving examples rather than a handful.<sup>18</sup> Given the changing political and social climate of the eastern Mediterranean, it seems possible that Tenos was particularly conscious of the public nature of these inscriptions and their own continuing epigraphic habit.

While Marek (1984) argued against strong economic implications for the granting of proxenies, Mack (2015) pushes back on this idea and, furthermore, demonstrates that proxeny lists can often illuminate economic activity.<sup>19</sup> Greek *oikonomia*, “embedded” as it was in the socio-political structures of their world, would rarely have been mentioned as a distinct reason for the awarding of honors.<sup>20</sup> However, the study of the geographical dispersion of Tenean proxenies may indicate a pattern of awarding that is closely associated with the economic opportunities in the home states of the honorees. An overview of the 51 recorded proxeny awards shows that *poleis* of economic strength make up the bulk of the honorees. Not only are the homelands of these men involved in economic endeavors, but were often famed for their inter-state activities.

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<sup>11</sup> Mack (2015) 24 describes the paradigm as follows, “social expectations rather than legal compulsion” and that “*proxenoi* are appointed on the basis that they behave as *proxenoi* should.”

<sup>12</sup> Mack (2015) 13-14.

<sup>13</sup> Mack (2015) 235-37.

<sup>14</sup> Mack (2015) 239-43.

<sup>15</sup> Étienne (1990) 101 and 118-119.

<sup>16</sup> Étienne (2011) 18-20.

<sup>17</sup> *Contra* Aymard (1958) 119-39, especially 178 and Marek (1984) 333-85.

<sup>18</sup> Mack (2015) 13-14 singles out Athens, Oropos, and Delos as the largest producers of *proxenia* inscriptions, with around 100 each. As such, Tenos is more similar to these mass producers than other *poleis* with significantly fewer inscriptions.

<sup>19</sup> See for example, Mack’s argument about the role of traders (Mack (2015) 62-3) and his illustration of the Tenedos-Histiaian connections (Mack (2015) 162-64). *Contra* Marek (1984) 359.

<sup>20</sup> While the term “embedded” has a distinct meaning in Greek economic history, I use it here only to emphasize the idea that economic motivations were not separate from the political sphere.

The geographical distance of these regions, as indicated by the groups of Italians (*IG XII Suppl.* 313) and Cretans (*IG XII Suppl.* 304) honored in the third century, seems to indicate the importance of far flung associations, especially with regions closely associated with increasing production and consumption. This pattern seems to continue in the in the second-century eastern Mediterranean, where two men from Andros were awarded proxenies, Aphobetos, son of Timokrates (*IG XII 5 825*) and Dionysios, son of Orthon (*IG XII 5 826*). Andros was not only well-situated to control the trade of the entire island and its interactions with the eastern Mediterranean, but was also famed for the quality of its wine, which was exported widely. Rhodes, Kos, Delos, Athens, and Syracuse were also represented in the third and second centuries.<sup>21</sup>

Mack adroitly points out that there was no requirement that inscriptions of *proxenia* be published. And while Tenos seems to have a robust history of publishing inscriptions of all kinds, it remains likely that most of grants of *proxenia* went unpublished, as they did in other Greek *poleis*. To this end, Mack argues that the publication of the inscription was an additional honor, above the standard rights given upon award of *proxenia* – an infrequent honor which Salamenes received.<sup>22</sup> Given this practice of inscribing honors to recipients from trade-rich cities, especially in light of the rarity with which proxenies were likely inscribed at all, the relative importance of Salamenes and his connection to Nabataea may be comparable to these other nodes of political and economic opportunity. If Mack is correct when he argues that awards of *proxenia* are “the products of self-conscious processes of selection...emphasizing their links with particular *poleis* and regions,” then Tenos may be making an explicit statement about its political and economic reach towards a variety of trade-rich regions.<sup>23</sup> Thus, when put into the a wider frame of epigraphic practice and interregional contact, this award of *proxenia*, which includes many of the benefits typical in Hellenistic proxenies, may show that Nabataea, as represented by Salamenes, was notable enough to be particularly honored alongside these well-known Aegean states of the second century BC.<sup>24</sup>

At first glance, one peculiarity of this proxyeny is Salamenes’ receipt a crown of olive (line 15 “θαλλοῦ στεφάνωι”) which was to be announced publicly. Mack characterizes this less common honor as “distinct, rewarding subsequent or exceptional services.”<sup>25</sup> However, in the case of Tenos, use of the crown seems to be fairly standard behavior. Of the 51 proxenies attributed to Tenos, 38 of them include the dedication of a crown.<sup>26</sup> In one instance, a proxyeny list from Tenos shows the granting of crowns to 12 individuals at one time, all from Cretan *poleis*.<sup>27</sup> It would seem that while crowns were often specialized gifts to exceptional *proxenoi*, Tenos was somewhat more generous with this attribute. While reasons for the inclusion of the

<sup>21</sup> For more on the relationship between Athens and Tenos, see Reger (1992).

<sup>22</sup> Mack (2015) 13-17 concisely describes the unequal distribution of inscriptional evidence, noting of course that certain cities were exceptional (Athens, Delos, etc.).

<sup>23</sup> Mack (2015) 149.

<sup>24</sup> In the following pages, I will delve into the complicated relationship between the individual and the state mentioned here and support the assertion that Salamenes was working for the benefit of the Nabataean Kingdom.

<sup>25</sup> Mack (2015) 123.

<sup>26</sup> Collection of inscriptions provided by William Mack’s online database “Proxeny Networks of the Ancient World,” divided by “Granting Authority.”

<sup>27</sup> Mack (2015) 333-35.

crown beyond standard practices for the rest of the Greek *poleis* remain unknown, it could be attributed to the naturally varying differences in honors between *poleis*. As an example, Delphi has also been noted for its preference for crowns, particularly “crowns of the god,” in certain circumstances.<sup>28</sup>

An important pattern to note is that, overwhelmingly, Tenean crowns are said to be announced publically before the temple of Poseidon and Amphitrite (lines 15-17 “στεφά[νῳ]σ[αι] [αὐ]τὸν θαλλοῦ στεφάνῳ/ τῷ ἱερ[ῶ]ι τοῦ Ποσειδῶνος καὶ τῆς Ἀμφιτρ[ί]-/ τῆς”). As such, the honor itself may also be closely connected to communal Poseidon worship and the inclusion of pseudo-community members in that worship.<sup>29</sup> While Poseidon was not a guide for merchants, his temples functioned as markers for maritime navigation. Possibly more importantly, on Tenos in particular, his consort, Amphitrite, held sway over protecting sailors and merchants from piracy and other seaborne dangers.<sup>30</sup> As such, the location of the awarding and the reputation of the crown as a reward for exceptional services may have been used to attract a greater number of wealthy and well-connected foreigners to the small island, especially given the long shadow of Rhodes’ political and economic domination at the time.

Apart from this particularity of Tenos’ epigraphic practice, by the late Hellenistic period much of the text of these inscriptions had become exceptionally formulaic and this inscription follows much of the same general pattern of Hellenistic *proxenia*.<sup>31</sup> Salamenes is honored with many, though not all, typical benefits. These include the title *euergetes* for his *euergesia*, general praise for his actions, and publication of the decree on a stele to be set in the temple of Poseidon and Amphitrite. Even though dealing with a Semitic *proxenos*, the inscription was written in Greek alone – likely due to its singular display in Tenos and intended Greek audience.<sup>32</sup> At this temple, it would have been seen by local and visiting Greeks alike, possibly acting as a reminder of the far-reaching network of associations available to the council and *demos* of Tenos.<sup>33</sup> In addition, Salamenes received *proedria*, the right to a seat during performances. As Mack explains, “*Proedria* was a privilege the *proxenos* shared with members of the civic elite and his seat, among the magistrates, important priests, and citizen-benefactors, emphasized the importance of the *proxenos* within the broader community looking on.”<sup>34</sup> Such rights show that Salamenes was not

<sup>28</sup> Schachter and Slater (2007) 90.

<sup>29</sup> Robertson (1984) 7.

<sup>30</sup> Étienne and Braun (1986) and Blakely (2017) 365-66.

<sup>31</sup> Previous to Mack’s more recent study, this standardization was equated with *proxenia*’s decline into meaninglessness during the Hellenistic Period: Aymard (1958) 119-39, especially 178; Marek (1984) 333-85; *contra* Wilhelm (1942) 30-35; Gauthier (1972) 18.

<sup>32</sup> There is no evidence of a reciprocal inscription on display in Nabataea.

<sup>33</sup> The Temple of Poseidon in Tenos was an important cultic center and drew crowds during the Poseidonia, as recorded by Strabo, *Geography* 10. 5. 11. As Paschalis Paschidis (2008) 501-2 concludes, Hellenistic *poleis* were heavily invested in the creations of networks of support and interaction, be they with the Hellenistic kings or “horizontal interconnections” among more equal polities. The display of inscriptions detailing different forms of these networks would have been one way in which to publicize them.

<sup>34</sup> Mack (2015) 125.



kept on the periphery of Tenean society due to his status as a non-Greek foreigner, but rather was included in a range of Hellenic institutions and customs.<sup>35</sup>

Salamenes' integration is codified in the grant of *prosodos*, in line 28, giving him the ability to address the council and *demos*. And, in fact, his *prosodos* may have mitigated those generally standard rights omitted from this inscription. Specifically, the *proxenia* of Salamenes does not include the honors of *politeia* (citizenship), *enktesis* (the right to hold land), nor an explicit statement of heredity. While not every proxeny was accompanied by the same honors, these do tend to be fairly common inclusions, as they work to reproduce standard citizenship rights.<sup>36</sup> In the case of Tenos, however, these seem to have only been awarded to individuals from Greek *poleis*, such as Andros (IG XII 5 825), Athens (IG XII 5 800), Delos (IG XII 5 799), Syracuse (IG XII 5 816/817), and Gortyn (IG XII 5 819). Italians generally did not receive these rights either (IG XII 5 917 and IG XII Suppl. 313).<sup>37</sup> In the case of Salamenes, the omission may have been due to the foreign (non-Greek) character of Nabataean citizenship<sup>38</sup> or the assumption that Salamenes would not be remaining in Tenos - therefore not requiring political or land ownership privileges.<sup>39</sup> The *prosodos*-given ability to address the council and *deme*, however, still allowed him the ability to address the political institutions of Tenos.

As for the inheritance of the proxeny, by the late Hellenistic period this was often assumed and not inscribed.<sup>40</sup> But in Tenos, explicit statements of hereditary grants last through the second century. While unable to prove given the current evidence, it seems possible that the omission may be due to Nabataean kingship. The usefulness of a *proxenos* from a kingdom would be heavily dependent on their ability to interact with the king or his representatives.<sup>41</sup> Rather than a multi-person institution or assembly which was somewhat less fickle, such as was common in Greek *poleis*, a non-Greek *proxenos* such as Salamenes could not guarantee that their position within a monarchical hierarchy would remain the same. While Greek *poleis* expected intermediaries of all sorts to act in their own self-interest while also pursuing the benefit of the

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<sup>35</sup> It should be noted that the people of Tenos could simply be “going through the motions” in regards to the honoring of proxenies and Salamenes. However, the placement of the inscribed decree in such a prominent temple in Tenos and the very act of inscribing it when so many proxenies went uninscribed would argue against the idea that Salamenes was granted a handful of honors with no other thought put into how he could or would interact with the local populace. Tenos' own preference for certain unusual honors as well (i.e. the olive crown) may also indicate that more intentionality was given to the specifics of each honor.

<sup>36</sup> Mack (2015) 104-5.

<sup>37</sup> The proxeny grant for Kointos Kalpornios, son of Kointos, of Rome (IG XII 5 841) is an exception.

<sup>38</sup> Grants of *politeia* were exceptionally rare for *proxenoi* from non-Greek communities. In an overview of 7 non-Greek states (Babylon, Laodikeia by the Sea, Arados, Berytos, Sidon, Tyre, and Carthage) which had 26 *proxenoi*, only 2 were given *politeia* (7.7%). *Enktesis* was more common with 11 instances (42.3%). Data pulled from Mack's database “Proxeny Networks of the Ancient World,” <http://proxenies.csad.ox.ac.uk/places/home>.

<sup>39</sup> According to Mack's analysis of the use of *proxenos* and *euergetes* in combination or alone, Salamenes, having received both, seems to be intended to return to Nabataea and provide “future *euergesiai*” to visiting Teneans. For geographical considerations as they relate to titles and honors, see Mack (2015) 42-43.

<sup>40</sup> Mack (2015) 164; 205; 292 fn. 16.

<sup>41</sup> With the extant evidence, it is not possible to speculate on the relationship between the Nabataean king and Salamenes. While certain Nabataean royal advisors were called companion/*hetairos* and brother/*adelphos* (Strabo 16.4.21), we do not know of other positions in the political hierarchy.



state, strong connections with and access to courts underpinned their choices in honorees.<sup>42</sup> In view of this practice, Salamenes may have originally come to Tenos in pursuit of his own interests, but given the exceptional honor of a published inscription and Greek expectations for *proxenoi*, Salamenes' ability to retain connection to the Nabataean court may have been a factor not only in the lack of inheritance, but his award *in toto*.

Notwithstanding these particularities, this decree falls within the bounds of a standard proxeny. Even without citizenship rights, this combination of honors may show that while Salamenes was not fully brought into the political sphere of Tenos, he did not hold a lesser position among Tenean *proxenoi*. Through his *proedria*, *prosodos*, and other benefits, Salamenes was able to interact with the civic elite and make connections with the most prominent members of Tenean society.<sup>43</sup> These experiences made him valuable as a *proxenos* and a mediator for Tenean interests in Nabataea. Moreover, these honors, as mentioned above, integrated Salamenes into Hellenic inter-state institutions.

From Salamenes' integration and his generally standard package of honors, we may further be able to deduce Nabataean integration and status. For as Étienne described, honors for Romans in Tenos illuminated the second century relationship between the two states.<sup>44</sup> While the contexts are obviously different, non-Greek *proxenoi* could be seen as representatives of their states acting in a wider Mediterranean context (i.e. IG XII 1 32, date unknown; *I.Magnesia* 59.1, third century BC; *IGUR* 3, ca. 100 BC).<sup>45</sup> For the Nabataean Kingdom, this could be a sign of their legitimacy as a political and economic power in the second century BC – a useful state with which to have a formal relationship. Étienne further describes Tenos as the center of a network of contacts which stretched across the Mediterranean and touched nearly all major areas of import and export during this time.<sup>46</sup> Another inscription from the late second century honors Moschion of Priene for his role as intermediary between his local government, the Ptolemies at Alexandria, and the Arabians at Petra (*I.Priene* 108), indicating that the Nabataeans had gained a certain amount of recognition in certain regions by this time. If Étienne's analysis of Tenos'

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<sup>42</sup> For the variety of roles that intermediaries could play in their movements between cities, see Paschidis (2008), in particular 478 and 493. Paschidis' argument does, however, speak directly to individuals with clearly stated links to the courts and kings of their homelands, which is not extant in the case of Salamenes. It seems likely though that Greek *poleis* would hold to their general expectations for an intermediary from a foreign kingdom.

<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, the extent to which Salamenes took these opportunities is unknown. While purely honorific awards have been argued in the Greek world (such as the award of *politeia* and *proxenia* by Athens to a citizen of Miletos, Osborne (2013) 136), no evidence suggests that this was Tenos' intention. Salamenes likely would have made certain advantageous social, political, and economic connections before returning to Nabataea, but this is generalization based on common expectations of those in Mack's "*proxenos-paradigm*" and understandings of social networks in the ancient Mediterranean. See for example Constantakopoulou (2015) on involvement of non-Greeks in Greek politics.

<sup>44</sup> Étienne (1990) 174.

<sup>45</sup> Mack makes clear that non-Greek communities and states intentionally and self-consciously adopt this method of inter-state interaction in order to integrate with Greek *poleis* to develop and communicate political identity and social parity ((2015) 229-232).

<sup>46</sup> Étienne (1990) 189.

ability to create connections with important centers is accurate, then it seems possible that Nabataea had developed an international reputation beyond that memorialized in literature.<sup>47</sup>

Moreover, this reputation as a commercial hub overcame certain geographical boundaries. Petra, the center of Nabataean commerce, was landlocked and *proxenia* was largely a maritime institution.<sup>48</sup> Even when extending this honor to non-Greek peoples, honorands usually remained along the Mediterranean coastlines, such as at Tyre (IG II<sup>3</sup> 468, ca. 332 BC, and IG XI 4 777, ca. 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC). However, the award of a *proxenos* at Babylon in the third century BC (IG XII 5 715), demonstrates that geography was not the defining factor in creating such associations.<sup>49</sup> For the case of Nabataea specifically, the importance of the kingdom as a commercial crossroads likely overcame any hesitancy about extending a proxeny beyond the coastline. For both the people of Tenos and Nabataea, it seems that having such a connection could allow them to keep their finger on the pulse, so to speak, of long-distance trade and the stability of political situations in those markets. The Teneans could have access to information concerning the importation of goods, such as frankincense, while the Nabataeans expanded their connectivity with trade outlets in Tenos, and eventually further into the Mediterranean, such as at Puteoli. Nabataea, in particular, was dependent on the stability of the Mediterranean markets for the exportation of their main goods (for instance frankincense, myrrh, and bitumen). Institutionalized engagement with far-flung cities would demonstrate both political and economic prowess by the newly-coalesced kingdom.

### ***The Relationship between Proxenia and Nabataean Political Identity***

A *proxenos* may have retained a certain amount of mobility between home and granting state, but one of their main functions, regardless of their location, was to shepherd new arrivals through the process of coming to a new land and, oftentimes, establishing new economic connections with markets, merchants, and suppliers.<sup>50</sup> Thus, while a *proxenos* was a private individual, he was usually monied, influential, and well-connected with the state apparatuses of his home and the honoring state. As Mack is clear to point out, this is one reason that the “ethnic” of the *proxenos* is predominantly featured in these inscriptions.<sup>51</sup> The political connections and importance illustrated by that descriptor were central to the functionality of the *proxenos*. In the case of Nabataea, however, understanding this “ethnic” is much more

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<sup>47</sup> Étienne (1990) 195 thinks that the Nabataean was a private agent, but I disagree given my analysis of Nabataean development as a state and its growth into the Mediterranean, as described in the following section.

<sup>48</sup> Thank you to the reviewer for drawing my attention back to this critical aspect of the *proxenia* institution.

<sup>49</sup> Given that the founding of Seleucia had replaced Babylon as the regional political and commercial center, it is unclear why the people of Andros elected to honor Babylon with a *proxenos*. However, that question is beyond the scope of this paper. For discussion of the term “Babylon” in this context and its possible reference to regional Babylonia see, Cohen (2013) 378-82.

<sup>50</sup> Marek (1984); Mack (2015) 123-26; Terpstra (2019) 56. For more on the mobility of *proxenoi* and the continuing discussion concerning their primary residences – which he argues convincingly is the native state rather than the granting *polis*-, see Mack (2015) 51-7.

<sup>51</sup> Mack (2015) 52-4. Étienne also makes a similar argument in his analysis of “les étrangers à Ténos et les Téniotes à l'étranger” (Étienne (1990) 173-95).

complicated given the multifaceted identity systems which existed within the political boundaries of the kingdom.<sup>52</sup>

In the case for Salamenes, his given identification is “Nabataean.” While sometimes assumed to be an *ethnos*, recent arguments have persuasively shown that instead the “Nabataean” identity seems to have been largely political and covered a large variety of dynamic social behavior within multiple tribes.<sup>53</sup> As David Graf argued, “what we call ‘Nabataean’ and understand as an *ethnicon* is better seen as the designation of a ‘state’ involving the integration of various indigenous Arab groups into a political framework or system.”<sup>54</sup> This political framework or Nabataean “state,” functioning as what might be misconstrued as an “ethnic” in a Greek *polis*, was a product of the Hellenistic period. Overstriking of Ptolemaic coinage, ca. 243–222, demonstrates an early institutional structure and a “deliberate programme” for the minting of coinage.<sup>55</sup> While purely Nabataean coinage (with inscriptions naming the king and regnal year) would not be struck until the first years of the first century BC,<sup>56</sup> these early steps show a self-conscious movement towards the development of bureaucratic practices and a state identity. The third-century Greek fragments of Posidippus of Pella as well indicate external recognition of the existence of a Nabataean king and, perhaps, this internal development of a state identity.<sup>57</sup>

Differentiated forms of identification for these “various indigenous Arab groups” were likely acceptable within the boundaries of the kingdom, where locals were familiar with the inner workings of the Nabataean state. Town of origin, familial relationships, and other such indicators of identity would have been readily understandable to others with ties to the same region. However, outside the bounds of the kingdom, local affiliations meant little, thus requiring a broader identification, especially in Greek *poleis* where state citizenry was a pervasive measure of identification.<sup>58</sup> As the Nabataean kingdom grew in power to the point where it expanded into the Aegean, a unifying descriptor of that politically-associated identity

<sup>52</sup> Wenning (2017) and Schmid (2021).

<sup>53</sup> Schmid (2021) 439–63. Unlike the conception of Greek *ethne*, while also complex, there is very little evidence of the self-referential use of “Nabataean” within the boundaries of the kingdom, as compared to the varied constructs in Greek identities (which could include self-identification with *ethne* and *polis* simultaneously), as in Beck, Buraselis, and McAuley (2019).

<sup>54</sup> Graf (2004) 150.

<sup>55</sup> Barkay (2011) 68: “The overstruck coins come from the reigns of “Ptolemy I or II (between 295 and 261/0 BC)... Ptolemy II (after the 261/0 BC reform); and...Ptolemy III (246–222 BC), the latest from the second half of the reign (c. 234–222 BC), which may well represent a *terminus ante quem* for this issue, for the good condition of the Ptolemaic undertypes suggests that they were issued not long before the Nabataean overstrikes.”

<sup>56</sup> Barkay (2019) 13–15 argues for a ca. 99 BC date for the first regnal year of Obodas I, the first Nabataean king to mint inscribed coinage (presumably at some point after taking the kingship). Anonymous issues had existed for more than 100 years previous. Two new drachms have recently been analyzed and published which may confirm this early first century date, as well as indicate an earlier King Obodas in Nabataean chronology (Hendin and Huth (2021) and Hoover (2021)).

<sup>57</sup> Graf (2006).

<sup>58</sup> For the centrality of the citizen in Greek *poleis*, see Ober (2015) 1–20. Often this attribution also includes a reference to the high god, Dushara, who is strongly linked with the kingship of Nabataea, such as in Rheneia, Egypt, Puteoli, Rome, and, perhaps, Chalchis. The complimenting use of “Nabataean” and invocation of “Dushara” seems to be not only an expression of personal identification, but also of loyalty to the Nabataean kingship.

would have been necessary. Under these circumstances, then, where *proxenia* implies an inter-state relationship and the use of “Nabataean” is an emic, rather than etic, choice – the identification of Salamenes as a “Nabataean” would seem to indicate a stronger tie with a well-defined political structure.<sup>59</sup>

Once the third-century settlement in Petra was well-established, the Nabataeans began to look outward.<sup>60</sup> In what may be described as a “second phase” of development, they slowly expanded their presence beyond the bounds of the kingdom proper and into the Mediterranean. Evidence for this coalescence both within and beyond the bounds of the kingdom may be indicated by the internal attestation of “Aretas, king of the Nabataeans” on an inscription from Elusa, ca. 168 BC, as well as the external corroboration from 2 Maccabees Chapter 5 verse 8 – both showing acceptance of the established state hierarchy.<sup>61</sup> By the later Hellenistic period, each site of their presence around the Mediterranean self-identifies as “Nabataean.”<sup>62</sup> Then in the first century BC, Nabataeans had begun to settle in foreign states, while still retaining their political and cultural affiliations with their homeland. Particularly in the case of Puteoli, Italy, the Nabataean identification was used for at least two generations, from the earliest influx of Nabataeans into the region.<sup>63</sup> Thus, we may be able to interpret this identification and self-expression of “Nabataean” as a statement for the strength of the kingdom’s inter-state reputation later in the “third phase.”

Salamenes provides evidence for the “second phase” of Nabataean expansion. For in order for him to fulfill his role (whether it be as an ambassador or philanthropic merchant), he would have needed to be well-ingratiated with developed, official mechanisms in his homeland.<sup>64</sup> The *proxenos* worked as “a true intermediary figure” to negotiate the differences between the two regions’ institutions and regulations, as well as, as in the case of Salamenes, languages and cultures.<sup>65</sup> As with Macedonian *proxenoi*, a strong, long-standing, and direct connection with the Nabataean state apparatus was probably key to his ability to sponsor and aid Teneans coming into the region – most likely the capital at Petra.<sup>66</sup> As mentioned before, Tenos had a keen interest

<sup>59</sup> For more on the differentiation of etic and emic identities, see Al-Otaibi (2015).

<sup>60</sup> The Hellenistic development of Petra is one focus of Schmid and Mouton (2013); particularly Graf (2013b) 35-56 and Renel and Mouton (2013) 57-78.

<sup>61</sup> On the Haluza/Elusa inscription, see Cowley (1914-15); Cantineau (1932) 44; Negev (1977) 545-546; Barkay (2019) 4.

<sup>62</sup> There are two exceptions to this statement. These two locations provide singular inscriptions, found in Maiuri (1921/22) 223-32 and *CIL* VI.34196. The first uses “Theudotos the Arabian” and has been attributed to a private Nabataean who joined a *koinon* or association (Accettola (2021) 304-05). Graf (2013a) thinks that Theudotos may have been a private wine merchant contributing to trans-Aegean commercial networks (Graf (2013b) 206) and supplementing the locally grown vintages (Al-Salameen (2005); Abudanah (2020); Bellwald (2020); Graf (forthcoming)).

<sup>63</sup> Lacerenza (1988/89); Lacerenza (1994); Terpstra (2015).

<sup>64</sup> We, unfortunately, have no evidence of what requirements foreigners had to meet in order to pursue their goals in Nabataea. Courts were available to them (Strabo *Geog.* 16.4.21), but how they gained entrance or if they required the equivalent of a *prostates* remains a mystery.

<sup>65</sup> Mack (2015) 126.

<sup>66</sup> Several other Nabataean locations were possibilities, such as Ostrakine, Rhinocorura or Gaza (see Graf (2013a) 199-201) or the recently economically developed area around Oboda – closer to the Hasmonean border (or less likely the more southern ports of Leuke Kome or Aila). Without more information, it is impossible to determine.

in establishing connections with regions of interest for trade. If, as argued here, Nabataean kingship had solidified, had firm control of the Transjordan region and trade routes to the north and south,<sup>67</sup> and then expanded its influence into the Aegean by the second century BC, awarding a proxeny to a member of this kingdom signifies its broader geographical importance, whether that be for political or economic purposes.

### ***Contextualizing a Nabataean in Tenos – A Hypothesis***

As stated in the beginning of this article, the original interaction between a Nabataean and the polis of Tenos was very likely due to Nabataea's place as a trade power after the third century BC. If Mack is correct in his assertion that proxenies can illuminate economic activity even if it is not explicitly stated, then economic beneficence and aid on both a public and private scale would likely have been built into the giving of "necessities" for which Salamenes was honored (line 6).<sup>68</sup> While a singular inscription or honor should not be taken as evidence of such activity, in combination with other evidence of Nabataean movement in the Mediterranean discussed in the previous sections, we may be able to hypothesize an economic motivation for the contact.

David Graf suspected that Salamenes was a commercial agent, due to the similar activities of Phoenician merchants on Tenos during that period, and the prevalence of Arabs at markets and ports during the second century BC.<sup>69</sup> This suspicion, when taken in conjunction with the prevalence of economic motives for Nabataean movement to other locations beyond the kingdom's borders, becomes more secure.<sup>70</sup> Petra's, and therefore Nabataea's, increasing importance as an inter-state market was inscribed in the aforementioned second-century honor for Moschion, son of Kydimos, of Priene (*I.Priene* 108). The dedication equates Petra with Alexandria as cities of import in 129 BC. It seems unlikely that, having reached this level of inter-state recognition, Nabataea would not have also been actively pursuing the thriving economic opportunities present in the second-century Mediterranean, especially in centrally located regions, such as Tenos.

The best evidence of the continuing development of Nabataean economic expansion comes from the first century BC when the diasporic node was founded at Puteoli. The Nabataeans first founded the site at one of Rome's most significant ports, which specialized in the incense trade, in the late 50s BC (after trade routes had largely reoriented westward) and occupied it for at

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For status and political connection of *proxenoi* from kingdoms, rather than *poleis*, see Mack (2015) 66, who argues that the usefulness of a *proxenos* was directly related to his ability to speak persuasively to the "power structures of the community" – i.e. assemblies and magistrates in *poleis*, the king in kingdoms.

<sup>67</sup> Graf (2006) 47-68.

<sup>68</sup> See fn. 19.

<sup>69</sup> Roche (1996) 86; Graf (2013a) 205. Unfortunately, no mention of a Phoenician *proxenos* has survived in Tenos, though several partial inscriptions lack the name of an honorand.

<sup>70</sup> For a more comprehensive look at all fragmentary evidence of Nabataean movement into the Mediterranean during the second century BC and the economic implications within Hellenistic socio-cultural contexts, see Accettola (2021) 265-318.

least two generations.<sup>71</sup> This site, very closely linked with Dushara and, thus, the kingship of Nabataea, remains the most clear cut evidence for Nabataea's pursuit of economic interests in the Mediterranean.<sup>72</sup> While thriving a century after the awarding of the *proxenia* under study, this site seems to be the culmination of Nabataea's interest and ability in integrating with Greco-Roman states in order to bolster their reputation and physical presence throughout the Mediterranean.<sup>73</sup> If the combination of state economic interests and Mack's assertion that proxenies can be read as "the deliberate efforts of *poleis* to assert their position within [the Mediterranean hum and buzz]"<sup>74</sup> are accurate, then we may be able to more confidently assign a mercantile understanding of the interconnection between this *proxenia* and Nabataea.

## Conclusion

At its essence, the *IG XII Suppl.* 307 inscription shows the strength of Hellenistic institutions and the incorporation of non-Greek entities, instead of emphasizing Nabataea as a state peripheral to the interconnected world of the second-century Aegean. Salamenes was able to penetrate this system by finding a way to be accepted by the society, regardless of his foreigner status, and to benefit himself and his own community. Salamenes did not simply migrate to an important Greek port city, he took the appropriate steps to fulfill a role which could provide the bridge between the Greek world and Nabataea.<sup>75</sup> His public honors left a mark of early evidence of Nabataean state formation and the expansion of its influence in the Aegean.

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<sup>71</sup> de Romanis (1996) 247-50; Hackl et al (2003) 120-22; Schmid (2004) 420-21; Schwentzel (2007); al-Salameen (2011) 70; Terpstra (2015) 87.

<sup>72</sup> For the link between Dushara and Nabataean kingship, see Starcky (1966), Healey (2001), and Schmid (2004).

<sup>73</sup> For more on the development of Nabataean "economic policy" abroad, see Accettola (2021).

<sup>74</sup> Mack (2015) 149. He mentions *poleis* specifically, but I believe that states around the Mediterranean more generally bought into the importance of Hellenistic inter-state ties, including institutions such as *proxenia*, as a way to overcome political and cultural boundaries. For more on this see Ma (2003) and Accettola (2021).

<sup>75</sup> In doing so, he adopted a "logic of appropriateness" in order to become an honored part of a completely foreign system. As defined by March and Olsen (2011) 478: "Actors seek to fulfill the obligations encapsulated in a role, an identity, a membership in a political community or group, and the ethos, practices, and expectations of its institutions. Embedded in a social collectivity, they do what they see as appropriate for themselves in a specific type of situation." See also, March and Olsen (2006) 689-708 and Mack (2015) 23-4.



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