

ANDREW PALMER

A Corpus of Inscriptions from Ṭūr ʿAbdīn and Environs

Introduction

For more than three-quarters of a century the work of Henri Pognon has been the only source of reliable information on the Syriac epigraphy of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn. His *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul* (Paris, 1907) contains his edition of six of the inscriptions in the present collection (A.5, A.6, A.12, A.19, B.13, C.2), with drawings, translations and a mainly philological commentary, in addition to a number of funerary memorials at Ṣalaḥ (Pognon 22-32), Ḥaḥ (Pognon 65-71) and Heshterek (Pognon 95, 97-116). In every case I have scrutinized afresh the inscriptions published by Pognon, except where they have been destroyed; even then it was sometimes possible to improve on his readings by reference to his own drawings or to photographic evidence from another source. Photographs have been published of A.2, A.7, A.10, A.15, A.16, A.17, C.2, C.14, D.4, D.5 and D.8-14; C.2 and a part of A.2 have since been destroyed, but I have reexamined and rephotographed the others and what remains of A.2. I have also reexamined A.4, which was published in 1896 by Ignazio Guidi with an accurate drawing; this inscription is not from Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, so what was said at the beginning does not imply that Guidi is unreliable.

In 1972 Jacques Jarry published a corpus of inscriptions from Ṭūr ʿAbdīn which was intended to supplement Pognon. In “Inscriptions syriaques et arabes inédites du Ṭour ʿAbdīn”, *Annales Islamologiques* 10 (1972), pp. 207-250, Jarry certainly showed that further inscriptions existed; he also gave photographs, albeit mediocre ones, of some of them. But a comparison of A.1, A.2, A.7, A.10, A.13, A.16, A.17, B.10, B.12, C.1 and most of the inscriptions in section D with Jarry’s edition and translation of the same inscriptions will show that his publication was indeed “too hasty”, as he admitted in a republication of A.17. An example will show sufficiently the limitations and faults which vitiate Jarry’s technique and make his collection unusable:

Jarri 21

1. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 2. ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܡܪܝܢܐ
 3. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 4. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 5. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 6. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 7. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 8. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 9. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 10. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 11. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ

Palmer A.16

1. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 2. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 3. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 4. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 5. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 6. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 7. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 8. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 9. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 10. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ
 11. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ

Commentary on Jarri's version

1. The fact that certain letters (indicated in my version by a circle underneath) are doubtful and others (enclosed by me in square brackets) have been restored by the editor is not shown.
2. The syntax is suspect at several points, not to say impossible: the order—object, verb, subject—is not found in any other inscription (lines 1-2); the unit in line nine is in the wrong gender; the preposition ܠ is needed before ܠܡܪܝܢܐ in (Jarri's) line 11.
3. The phrase ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ is striking, but unparalleled.
4. No other inscription in Ṭūr 'Abdīn refers by name to the village or monastery where it stands, only to "this village", "this church", "this monastery".
5. Even if ܡܪܝܢܐ (line six) were illegible, lack of space would make Jarri's reading impossible.
6. If we accept Jarri's reading of the date (A.G. 1061 = A.D. 749/50), we have difficulty with his reading of the bishop's name, since the death of Athanasius of Nunib in 746/7 was followed by a vacancy of several years until ca. 752, when Cyriac succeeded to the title of Ṭūr 'Abdīn (*Chron.* 819, A.G. 1030; *Chron. Michael*, XI.22c, text p. 464, a passage probably based on a contemporary account by Daniel, the son of Moses of Ṭūr 'Abdīn).
7. Jarri nowhere informs the reader of the situation of "Deir Mar Musa"

(this applies also to his two publications of A.17), an omission which might only be permitted if the site were already known from some other publication.

In comparison with the above, the “unscholarly” work of antiquarians within the Syrian churches does not seem so bad. They do not always retain the spelling of the original and presume occasionally even to “improve” on the text; they have no system to indicate degrees of legibility and are inclined to “restore” with too much confidence. But where the inscription is neither inaccessible nor badly damaged, they can be relied upon to understand it and to reproduce its sense correctly. The four publications which concern us are: Isaac Armalet, *siyyāḥa fī ʿabdin*, in *al-Machriq* 16 (1913), pp. 561-78, 662-75, 739-54, 835-54; Ignatius Efrem Baršawm (Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox), *maktbonūtō d'al atrō d'ʿabdin* (Lebanon, 1964; reprinted Glane, 1985); Philoxenos Hanna Dolabani (Bishop of the Syrian Orthodox diocese of Mardin), *maktabzabnē d'ūmrō qaddišō d'qartmīn* (Mardin, 1959); *id.*, *habbobō dmapṣaḥ 'al maktbonūtō ddayrō dmory ya'qūb dṣalaḥ* (Atchane, 1973). (See A.6, A.12, A.19, B.3, B.13.) One way in which these are useful is in their indication of the native consensus about names etc.; e.g. Armalet and Dolabani agree against Pognon in reading “of ʿAynwardo”, instead of “of Arnas (ʿŪrdnus)”, in A.6 (see the commentary on line one of that inscription).

This corpus contains all the older Syriac inscriptions which I have examined myself in ʿAbdīn, one I examined in Mardin (A.13) and another I examined in Rome (A.4). It also contains one inscription (C.2) of which only a drawing and a photograph survive and another (A.2), part of which has been destroyed since it was photographed before the First World War. It does not contain the funerary memorials of Ṣalaḥ, Ḥaḥ and Heshterek published by Pognon, which complement this corpus. Those of Ṣalaḥ and of Ḥaḥ have been checked by me; the errors were insignificant. Those of Heshterek have apparently perished with the building that contained them. The latest date represented in the present corpus is 1442/3, but all the other inscriptions are dated between 534 and 1226.

It is my intention to publish in subsequent volumes of this journal:

1. A study of the letter-forms used in ʿAbdīn and environs, based on this epigraphic corpus and on manuscripts;
2. A concordance of the epigraphic diction of ʿAbdīn and environs.

Together these will form an instrument with which the damaged inscriptions which remain to be found can be reliably reconstructed and a date can be assigned to those that are undated.

The present publication provides:

- a) The serial-number, date and situation;
- b) a material description of each inscription in its setting;
- c) previous publications, whether satisfactory or not, even mere photographs;
- d) a photograph, squeeze or drawing, where available/necessary;
- e) a critical reading of the text, in which doubtful letters are marked by a circle underneath, restorations are enclosed in square brackets, and letters accidentally omitted are enclosed in pointed brackets;
- f) a translation, in which italics are used to indicate uncertainty, square brackets the approximate extent of restoration, dots an indeterminate number of missing letters, pointed brackets a supplement to the text, and round brackets an addition by the editor intended to make the English more comprehensible;
- g) a philological commentary, line by line, sometimes extended to justify the date assigned to an inscription on the basis of its letter-forms or of argument from the historical context.

The above applies only to the first three categories of inscriptions: A. Inscriptions with a date; B. Inscriptions with an approximate date and C. Inscriptions with no date. The fourth category, D, has its own format; it is a self-contained group of inscriptions from a monastery near Ḥaḥ.

For an *historical commentary* on these and on Pognon's inscriptions, see the Appendix to my book, *Monk and Mason on the Tigris Frontier: The Early History of Tur 'Abdin* (Cambridge University Oriental Publications, forthcoming). Reference to the Index locorum will reveal further comments in the main text. The Appendix also considers the phenomenon of epigraphy as such in Tūr 'Abdīn and questions about its practitioners and their methods.

The research for these publications took place over a period of eight years during visits to the area in 1978, 1980, 1984 and 1986 and a visit to Rome in 1980. In this last case I was helped by a grant from Wolfson College, Oxford. In 1984 I travelled with a grant from the British Academy and in 1986 with the support of the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, Bonn. Malfono İsa Gülten of the Abbey of Qartmin (Deyrulumur manastırı) read many of the inscriptions with me while he was initiating me in the study of Syriac; this would not have been possible without the permission of the abbot, Samuel Aktash, now Bishop of Mardin and Tūr 'Abdīn. My doctoral thesis (Oxford, 1982, typewritten manuscript) included an earlier version of the inscriptions here numbered A.1, A.3, A.6, A.8, B.11, A.14, B.12, B.13 and A.18 (there numbered A.1-9) and of C.4, C.1, C.6, C.5, C.7-11 and C.12 (there numbered B.1-9 and B.11). I have a debt to the supervisor of my thesis, Dr. Sebastian

Brock, which cannot be repayed. Miss Joyce Reynolds also gave invaluable advice. My gratitude is extended to the villagers, priests and monks of the region I studied and to my travelling companions for their help and patience. An earlier draft of this article owed a great deal to Dr. Kai Brodersen and his word-processor. The inscriptions, except for those in Section D, are printed from a 'plot-out' made at Cambridge with a Fortran programme written in collaboration with Dr. Alan Winter. Dr. Hubert Kaufhold checked my readings and my reasonings with characteristic thoroughness and so saved me from several errors and inconsistencies. Occasionally, he made suggestions of substance which have been added with his initials in square brackets after the commentaries.

I wish to record here my indebtedness to the late Hannes Cornet, who died while this corpus was undergoing its final revision. He and his wife gave me much more than my first opportunity to explore Tūr 'Abdīn and my introduction to Munich and the editors of this journal. Perhaps this is a suitable place to draw attention to the vast archive of archaeological photographs accumulated by the Cornets on their many and wide-ranging journeys in South-East Turkey; these include two of the photographs published here and many other inscriptions too recent for inclusion in this corpus.

Mostly we have to do with inscriptions in Eṣṭrangelo letters on limestone. Where the material or the letter-forms are different, this is noted. In epigraphy it is important to be aware of certain possibilities which printed Syriac obscures; that is why the vertical orientation of many inscriptions is here preserved, as far as possible, in the illustrations and the Eṣṭrangelo SEMKATH is kept—as on the stones of Tūr 'Abdīn—unjoined on the left-hand side.

SECTION A: INSCRIPTIONS WITH A DATE

A.1 A.D. 534 (February, March, April, May or August) — QARTMĪN ABBEY

Unattached stēlē 90×40 cm. With one diagonal fracture (across top of sculpted arch). Text inscribed horizontally on Graeco-Roman *tabula ansata*, badly cratered and eroded (gun damage?). Small cross to right of first word. Above *tabula*: relief sculpture, destroyed beyond recognition, within a round arch also sculpted in relief. Traces of short inscription on right pillar of arch: DOLATH + 'E GOMAL + ? + RISH. Position in 1978: between asphalt road and ruins southwest of monastic enclosure, lying on its back, surrounded by stones and protected with a covering of branches. In 1986: upright against a new wall near former position.

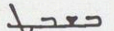
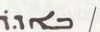
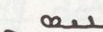

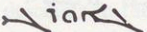






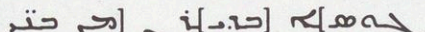

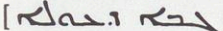
Previous publication: Jarry 76; photograph in Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, fig. 48.



A.1 detail (photo Bernt Larsson)

- 1 כּסם א[זֶכֶּר]א א[חַד]
- 2 אַלמַעֲלָא אַלזֶכֶּר א[עַל]מַע
- 3 בַּעֲדָה בְּזֶכֶּר אַלזֶכֶּר[א]...זֶכֶּר[א]בַּעֲדָה
- 4 אַלמַעֲלָה] א[חַד]א מ
- 5 מַעֲלָה] א אַלמַעֲלָה
- 6 זֶכֶּר] א[חַד]א[חַד]
- 7 מַעֲלָה אַלמַעֲלָה] א[חַד]
- 8 א[חַד]א[חַד] א[חַד]

On the fourth day [of ... of the ye]ar eight hundred and forty-five, in the days of M[or Seve]r[us ... the a]bbot, [...] the priest [Is]aiah, [...] and Mor Maron [...] and [...], priest and so'ūrô escaped [... ...].

Commentary: 1 Room for preposition with short month-name:  /  /  /  3 Diagonal incision at bottom left of unattached RISH in abbot's name, belonging either to GOMAL (e.g. ) or to extended OLAF (e.g. );  is attested by the local liturgical calendar (*AnBoll* 27 (1908), p. 146: Jan. 29) as the name of an abbot of Qartmīn and the cognomen , which is attached to the name Severus in a list of prominent early Qartminites (*Qartmin Trilogy*, edited in Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, XXIII.8), can be fitted between name and title on the stone. 4 The waw of  is a closed oval unlike waw elsewhere in the inscription. / The lacuna probably contained the words:  / The isolated QOF is the initial letter of the first word in line 5, reiterated to fill out the line. 5 The lacuna probably contained another title. / The OLAF after the lacuna was attached. / The last four letters are to be read as ; the stonecutter, having accidentally engraved RISH before MIM, found the most elegant correction was to engrave MIM after it, no doubt indicating the metathesis in paint with the usual pair of triangles of dots. 7-8 Restore perhaps:  /  [] “and took refuge in our monastery from the partisans of wickedness”, i.e. Chalcedonian persecutors?

(a) G[...] attended to and made this temple of the House of the Mother of [G]od from his work [...] *and no-one* helped him, so may God, for Whose Name's sake he made it, make him worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven and [pardon] his depar[ted ones! The year: one thousand]

(b) and fifty-one of Alexander, in the days of the holy Mor Athanasius+, patriarch, and the venerable Mor Lazarus+, bishop, and by the attentiveness [SEQUEL DELETED] +

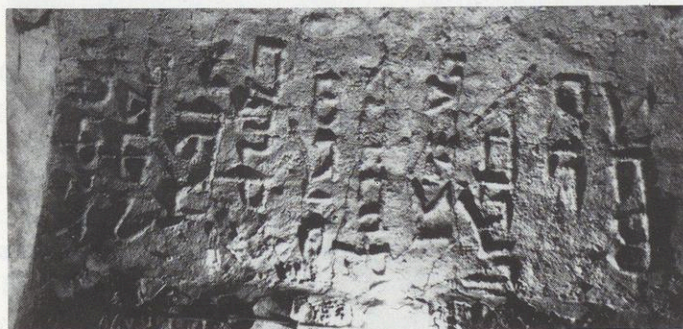
(c) M... ... *the sinner*] (wrote this); for our Lord's sake, pray for him [...]

Commentary: a) ,מאע for ,מאע; cf. Pognon 107 and B.8 ,מאע for ,מאע. b) The last word before the deletion is redundant, if G. was the only donor. Perhaps the stonecutter forgot how he had begun the inscription on the far side of the doorway and added some details about G. at the end, as if he had begun: *כח כלל מלך*. When he realized his mistake he deleted the redundant part, leaving only the cross at the end, out of respect, and the word *כחלל מלך*, which balances the beginning of (b) in a visual sense and could be pressed to yield the sense “and with attentive care”. c) Probably the ‘signature’ of the stone-cutter.

A.3 A.D. 757/8 QARTMĪN ABBEY

Moulded in relief in plaster on the south side of the vault over the ante-chamber from which one descends to the burial vaults. Traces of a mirror-inversion of the same text on the other side of the vault. If the surface of the vault were the page of a book, the text would be read from bottom to top: thus the reader who raises his eyes towards the west end of the vault encounters the first word there and the following words above it. Well preserved.

No previous publication.



A.3 detail of south side of vault

- 10 *ܠܗܝܠܐ*
- 9 *ܠܗܝܠܐ* []
- 8 *ܠܗܝܠܐ*
- 7 *ܠܗܝܠܐ*
- 6 *ܠܗܝܠܐ* []
- 5 *ܠܗܝܠܐ*
- 4 *ܠܗܝܠܐ*
- 3 *ܠܗܝܠܐ*
- 2 *ܠܗܝܠܐ*
- 1 *ܠܗܝܠܐ*

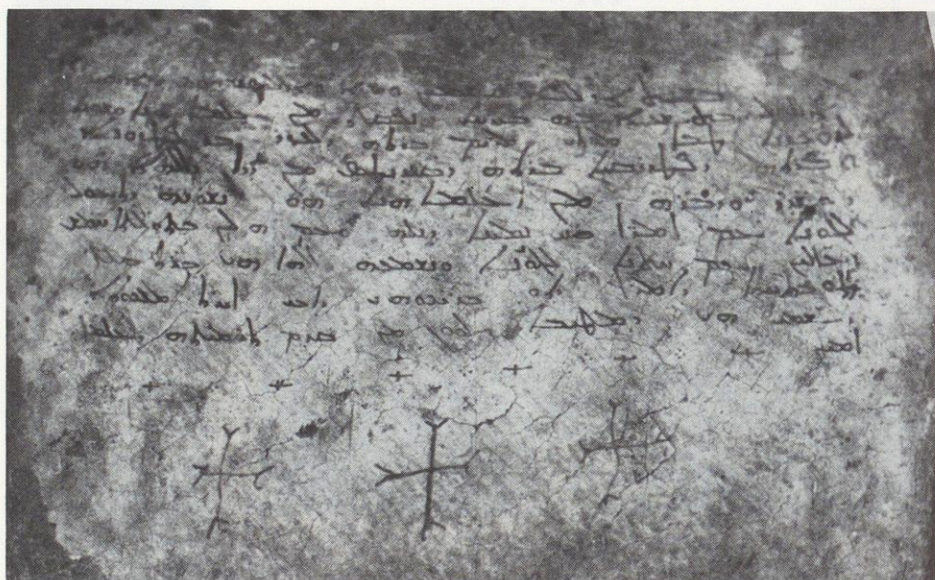
Abbas Mor Gabriel, the abbot, made this o[uter] house in the year one thousand and sixty-nine.

Commentary: 6 The conjectural restoration takes note of the function of the room as an antechamber. The BETH is marked as uncertain, because of the presence below the upper horizontal of a short 'branch' like the stump of the left foot of a MIM.

A.4 A.D. 759 or 760 ROME: BROUGHT FROM A CHURCH IN AMIDA/ DİYARBAKIR

Painted with a thin brush "on a brick covered with plaster, which is 37 cm. high, while its breadth is 27 cm. in the upper part and 30 cm. in the lower ... the script is somewhat careless and certain letters are covered in dust which sticks fast to them" (Guidi). Cross above and to right of first word; row of small crosses alternating with four-point-crosses below text; three big 'claw'-crosses below them. Brought to Museo Borgiano di Propaganda in Rome from an unidentified church in Amida/Diyarbakir. Now kept in Museo Pio Cristiano in the Vatican. Well preserved.

Previous publication: I. Guidi, *Actes du X^e congrès international des orientalistes*, II (Leiden, 1896), pp. 75-83, with drawing.



A.4 (photo Palmer; by permission of Vatican Museums)

- 1 כעט אלפא העכח העזא האלמאדאזא כארנ
 2 אלמא חלמא כח כרמא נפמא נח חלמא חמא חמא
 3 להחמא לברא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא
 4 נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא
 5 נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא
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 8 נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא
 9 נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא נחמא
 10 ארנ

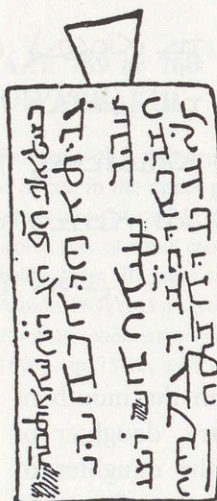
In the year one thousand and seventy-one of Alexander, in the month of September, on the ninth (day) in that month, Mort Mary, daughter of Lazarus, the son of Peṭruno, and daughter of Patricia the daughter of QNDYṬS, from Dara, went out of this world and is worthy of a good commemoration, so may God, Who sent to take her from this world, make her worthy to enter the Bridal Chamber with the lambs that are on His right Hand and with those five virgins who went in with the Bridegroom to the Bridal Chamber; and may God grant that she hear that blessed Utterance, which says: "Come blessed ones of my Father, inherit the Kingdom of Heaven, which has been prepared for you since before the foundation of the world." Amen.

Commentary: 2 כעט ... נפמא syntactically unusual. 4 The diacritical point is on the second נחמא whereas it should be on the first: it seems unlikely that נחמא should be understood as a woman's name; more probably it is a shortened form of Kandidatos/Candidatus. / Guidi's identification with Candidatus of Amida (fl.664/5) has the disadvantage that נחמא was a native of Dara. 6 The first NUN is omitted from חלמא / The author probably saw no humourousness in the picture of a bridal-chamber full of lambs and virgins! 7 The OLAF of חלמא makes visible the West-Syrian pronunciation, which, instead of doubling the L, lengthened the A before it: *d'ālēn*. 8 The WAW of נחמא was not pronounced and so the scribe forgot to write it. 9 נחמא: more commonly in the plural.

A.5 A.D. 771/2 HESHTEREK: CHURCH OF MOR ADDAI

The apse in which this inscription was found has been destroyed and with it, apparently, the inscription. It belonged to the outdoor oratory (ܡܫܬܪܝܩ) on the south side of the church of Mor Addai. According to Pognon the text was engraved vertically on the underside of the apse and was clearly in its original position.

Previous publication: Pognon 96, with drawing; Baršawm, *op. cit.*, p. 139.



A.5 (drawing Pognon)

- 1 ܡܫܬܪܝܩ ܕܡܪ ܐܕܝܐ
- 2 ܒܝܬܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܪܝܐ
- 3 ܡܪܝܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܪܝܐ
- 4 ܡܪܝܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܪܝܐ
- 5 ܡܪܝܐ ܡܪܝܐ ܡܪܝܐ

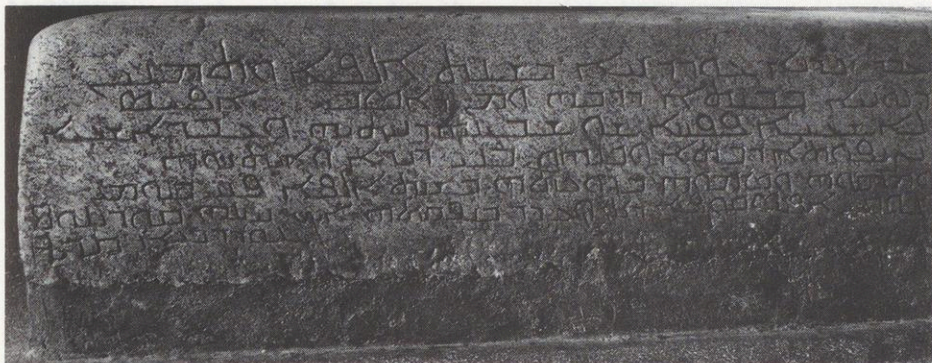
In the year one thousand and eighty-three of the Greeks, this church was raised by Ḥabib, the sinner, and Iyor, the rector, and the rest of the priests who were with them. Pray for all who participated!

Commentary: 1 ܡܫܬܪܝܩ for ܡܫܬܪܝܩ. 3 ܡܪܝܐ: legible in Pognon's drawing but not recognized by him, because he did not know B.3 or the *Life of Simeon of the Olives* (OstkSt 28 (1979), p. 178), where Iyor is attested as a personal name. / ܡܪܝܐ for ܡܪܝܐ. 4 ܡܪܝܐ for ܡܪܝܐ. 5 ܡܪܝܐ for ܡܪܝܐ.

A.6 A.D. 776/7 QARTMĪN ABBEY

Fawn-coloured, polished, highly-crystallized limestone slab 3.30 × 1.40 × 0.40 m., cemented together along several fractures, with sunken upper surface, drainable through hole in one corner, surrounded by raised rim which bulges inwards in the middle of one of the short sides to make room for a bowl-shaped depression in itself. Text inscribed horizontally in the short side below the bowl on surface measuring 133 × 44 cm.; lower opening of drain at bottom right of inscribed surface. Original pointing of text in distinctive "arrowheads" formed with two converging strokes of the chisel. Photograph of the whole slab in Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, fig. 63. Originally placed in the domed octagon northwest of the conventual church (*Qartmin Trilogy*, LXXXII.14-15), the slab was moved before 1880 to the nave of the conventual church, where it was mounted on a masonry base containing a bread-oven in front of the entrance to the central sanctuary (see Bell/Mango, figs. 5 and 19, plates 217 and 218; M. Sykes, *The Caliph's Last Heritage* (London, 1915), p. 356). In 1973 it was moved to the northwest corner of the nave. Well executed and well preserved.

Previous publication: a) slab: Preusser, *Baudenkmäler*, pp. 31-32; b) inscription: Pognon 13, with drawing; Baršawm, *op. cit.*, p. 126.



- 1 חבר ותרנא בארדנא בעל אלפא חלונא
- 2 דתרנא בעל דדכח חנא דאמב אפא
- 3 לאמבא פפא מנכמא דגלמא חבא אמבא
- 4 ספחלא רכלא חלמא חנא דנא האמלמא
- 5 חנאמא חלמא חנאמא בעל אלפא פא חנא
- 6 חנאמא חלמא חנא חנא חנא חנא חנא
- 7 בארדנא חנא


Zechariah of 'Aynwardo made (this) in the year one thousand and eighty of the Greeks in the House of the Bear and from the moment when he aged, he entreated Isaiah of Fofyath, his relative by sponsorship to bring it (to Qartmin); and Isaiah took great pains and (so did) all the sons (i.e. inmates) of the monastery; and they brought it and polished it and put it in its place in the year one thousand and eighty-eight, in the days of George, our bishop, and he (sc. the bishop) helped with the cost of it according to his power. Cyril of 'Aynwardo engraved (this).

Commentary: 1 The village from which Zechariah and Cyril (line 7) came was not Arnas (*pace* Pognon), but 'Aynwardo (as understood by I. Armalet, *al-*

Machriq 16 (1913), p. 836, and Dolabani, in the first work cited in the introduction, p. 165), which could be written ܡܪܝܐ (Berlin MS. Sachau 214, fol. 50b). A man from Arnas was called ܡܪܝܐ (cf. A.8). From ܡܪܝܐ was formed ܡܪܝܐܐ, but also ܡܪܝܐܐ (e.g. *ZDMG* 35 (1881), p. 267), pronounced 'ewardnoyô. Zechariah and Cyril are to be identified as the disciples of Simeon of the Olives, who died in 734, as recorded in his *Life* (cf. *OstSt* 28 (1979), p. 179): ܡܪܝܐܐ ܡܪܝܐܐ, ܡܪܝܐܐ ܡܪܝܐܐ "Mor Zechariah of 'Aynwardo and his brother Cyril". B.9 shows that "Mor" was a title of priested monks, and since thirty years was the minimum age for priestly orders (*The Synodicon in the West-Syrian Tradition*, II, p. 9 (no. 4)), it seems likely that Zechariah was at least 73 by the year 776/7. Perhaps this reasoning is not watertight; but as disciples of the saint the brothers were surely monks, so Zechariah (the elder brother, it would seem) can hardly have been less than 20 in 734 and 63 in 776/7. 2 ܡܪܝܐܐ ܡܪܝܐܐ: periphrasis for ܡܪܝܐܐ (cf. *Qartmin Trilogy*, LXXX. 19), grammatically analogous to ܡܪܝܐܐ ܡܪܝܐܐ. / ܡܪܝܐܐ ܡܪܝܐܐ: an error for the phonetically indistinguishable ܡܪܝܐܐ ܡܪܝܐܐ. Pognon found it odd that the process of aging should be spoken of as a momentary change of state and tried to remove the difficulty by postulating an Af'el form of the root *SBB*; this otherwise unattested verb is explained in a Syriac-Arabic glossary as "he removed" or "separated", so the Af'el might mean "he detached", i.e. quarried. Brockelmann apparently found this too conjectural and preferred to see ܡܪܝܐܐ as the Af'el of *NSB*; this is a common root, although the Af'el is unattested. It should mean "he caused to take". Both suggestions encounter the difficulty that the verb is apparently used intransitively in our inscription; nor is it really strange to speak of sudden enfeeblement by age. Besides, the transportation of the slab over rough country which is covered in four hours by a mounted traveller (A. Socin, *ZDMG* 35 (1881), p. 262) was more demanding work than the quarrying itself, particularly if Zechariah was merely supervising the latter. Pognon did not know that Zechariah was a disciple of Simeon of the Olives and therefore probably over sixty years old when he undertook the task (see on line one); nor was he aware that the eight years' delay between the first quarrying and the transportation coincided with one of the worst famines in the history of ʿAbdīn, a famine which was accompanied by the plague (*Chronicle of Zuqnīn* = Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell Maḥrê, p. 358 ff.; Chabot's translation, pp. 176-183). 3 ܡܪܝܐܐ: from ܡܪܝܐܐ, which is Kfarbê, a mile to the east of Qartmīn Abbey (Baršawm, in the work cited in the introduction, pp. 29-30 and p. 94; I. Armalet, *al-Machriq* 16 (1913), p. 843); a man from Fafi or Fafa was probably called ܡܪܝܐܐ (*AnBoll* 27 (1908), p. 145, Jan. 11; cf. *Le Muséon* 98

(1985), p. 98). / **ܡܠܝܬܐ** : from the identification of Zechariah as a monk (see on line one) it follows that this word must mean either “the man for whom he acted as sponsor” or “his relative by sponsorship from an earlier generation”. That a monk might have acted as sponsor for a layman is evident from a ninth-century canon forbidding the practice; another ninth-century canon shows that **ܡܠܝܬܐ** was considered a close relationship for several generations after the sponsorship which created it (*The Synodicon in the West-Syrian Tradition*, II, p. 54 (no. 6) and p. 62 (no. 14)). **3-6** The feminine object of the verbs and the substantive indicated by the feminine possessive pronoun is **ܡܪܝܬܐ**, never expressed in the inscription; the omission of the diacritical point over the HE is unique in this corpus. **5** **ܡܪܝܬܐ** : we should expect **ܡܪܝܬܐ** or **ܡܪܝܬܐ** **ܡܠܝܬܐ** : the plural was expected by a later reader, who added *syomê*; but these points are not characteristic “arrow-heads” noted above in the material description. / The SEMKATH of **ܡܠܝܬܐ** is written vertically.

A.7 A.D. 778/9 KARBÊ/FOFYATH: CHURCH OF ST. STEPHEN

Antechamber parallel to nave on south side, left jamb of former men's entrance (now walled up). Text inscribed vertically across four blocks = full height of doorway, not measured; the second block extends further to the left and the text is continued in the extra breadth, "sealed" at the end by a cross with pairs of wedge-shaped incisions at the ends of the arms. At the far left of the second block is inscribed a name () in the letter-forms of the Plain Script, which was clearly added later. The bottom block with the letters on its lower part is partially buried in cement. Well preserved.

Previous publication: Jarry 54, with incomplete photograph.

8 اكر

6. 6.

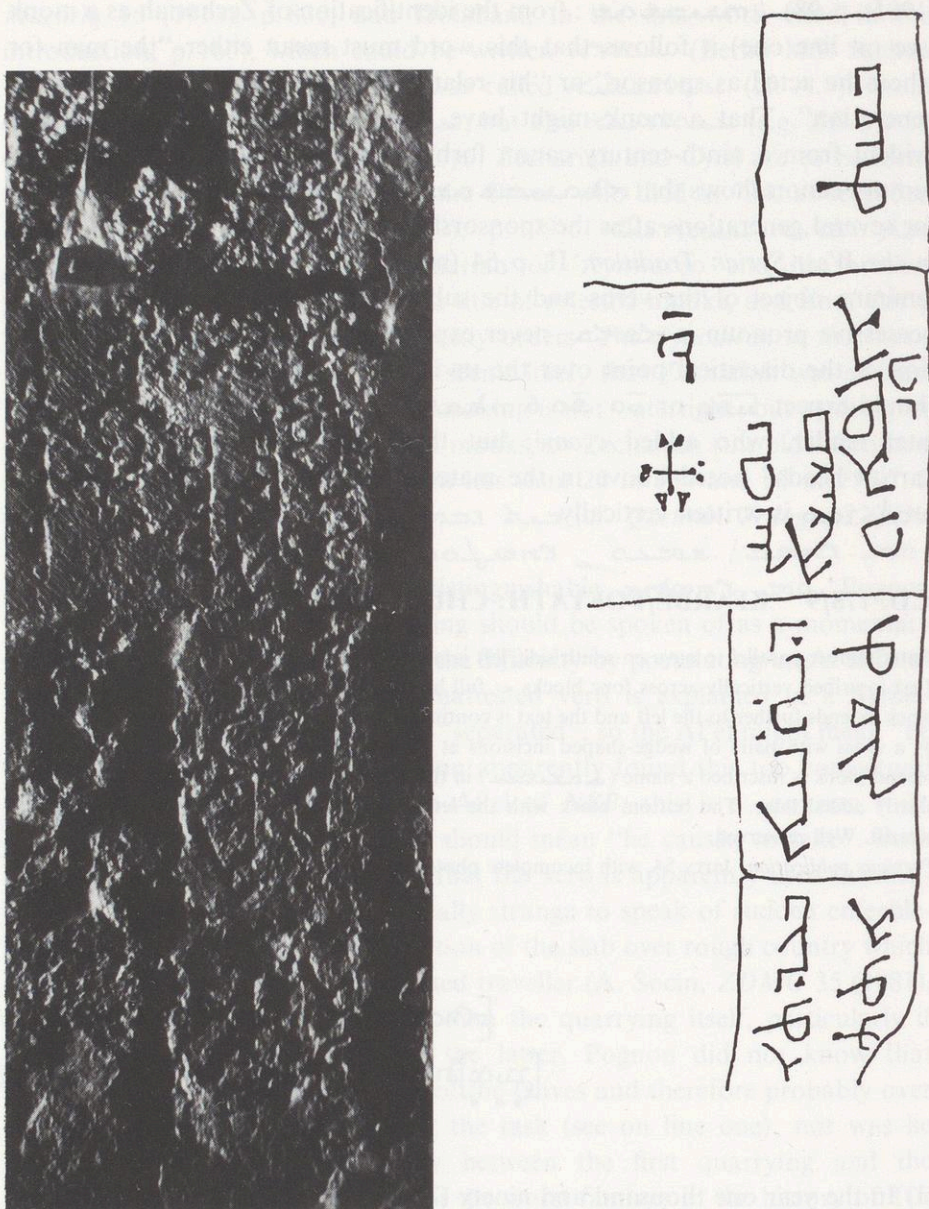
4/2/5 ממשל הר"מ בחדל מרמא

3/1 ଯୁକ୍ତ କାର୍ଯ୍ୟ ସମୀକ୍ଷା

7 7

(1) In the year one thousand and ninety (2) of the Greeks (3) was [entombed]
(4) in [this] church (5) the priest (6) John; (7) Alas! (8) Zakay (*sc.* cut the
inscription).

Commentary: The order in which the words were written differs from their order on the stone and the order of reading is different again. This is because the mason failed to foresee that he would need more space than was available in a single line on the left jamb of the door; perhaps he envisaged smaller



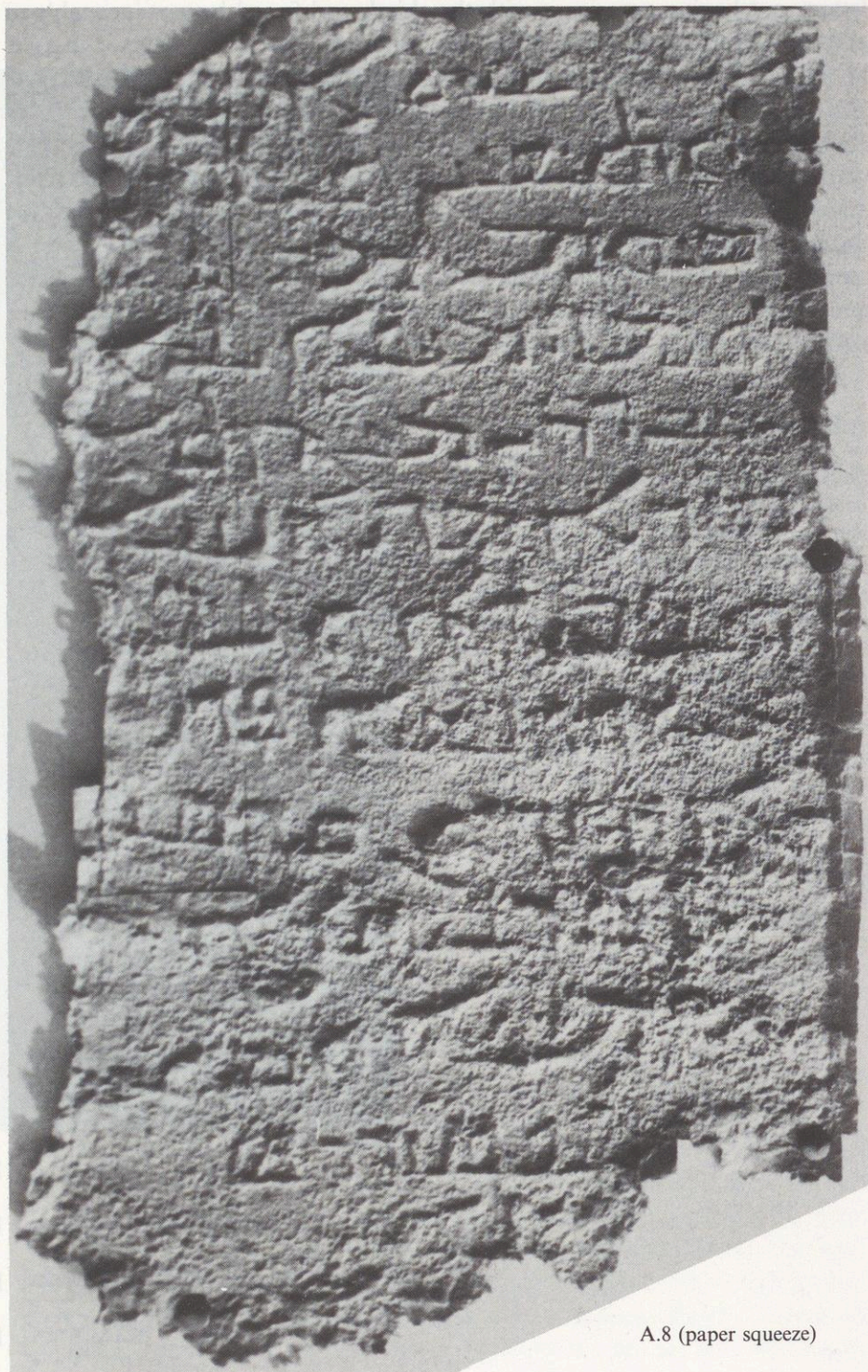
letters, not having experience with the chisel, and found he was incapable of cutting such fine lines. After engraving the words ܡܠܟܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ he began to cut the letters of ܡܠܟܐ; at this point he noticed that he had omitted ܡܠܟܐ, so he added it “above” the date (i.e. to the left of it). Returning to complete ܡܠܟܐ he found that he had reached the bottom of the jamb; there was no room for a second line “below” the first, so he added the words ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ “above” it, to the left of ܡܠܟܐ. Finding once more that he had run out of space, he added the title ܡܠܟܐ and the name ܡܠܟܐ and, what is presumably his own name, ܡܠܟܐ, “above” the date and on top of one another in the breadth of the second block. Finally, he added the word ܡܠܟܐ (cf. A.11) “under” the date, as an afterthought.

A.8 A.D. 784/5 QARTMĪN ABBEY

Block of soft limestone extracted from the Old Library (the current name for what was probably once a charnel-house) in 1978 (find-place marked on fig. 64 in Palmer, *Monk and Mason*); now immured in a bell-tower built in 1979 on the southwest corner of the conventual church. The inscribed surface, measuring ca. 36 × 20 cm., lay against the upper surface of the block beneath, so that only the broken corner of the latter enabled the top right-hand corner of the text to be observed from below. Small cross to right of first word. Somewhat broken at edges, surface damaged.

No previous publication.

- 1 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 2 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 3 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 4 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 5 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 6 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 7 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 8 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 9 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 10 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 11 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 12 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ
- 13 ܡܠܟܐ ܡܪܝܢ



A.8 (paper squeeze)

In the year one th[ousand] and ninety-six [of Greece], in the days of Mor Geo[rge] and Mor Michael, the b[ishop]: Mor Denḥo, the abbot, and Gadāl[iah] of Arnas, the admin[istrator], and Aaron, the sandal-mak[er] and steward, and Micah and Joshua [and A]lexander, [*the archi*]tects, made this winepress.

Commentary: **3** There is no room for the title of the patriarch George. **5** The singular verbal form **ܚܚ** is followed by one main subject and several subsidiary subjects; contrast B.11, where the two subjects, a patriarch and a bishop, are preceded by a plural form of the verb. **6** An abbot called Den[h]o is also found in C.10 (find-place adjacent). **8** **ܕܢܚܝܐ** is the adjective from **ܕܢܚܐ** or Arnas (cf. Baršawm, in the work cited in the introduction, pp.68, 69; Sachau, *Verzeichnis*, p.687; Mingana, *Catalogue*, p.275b). / **ܕܢܚܐ**; cf. B.9, line 10. **9** **ܕܡܝܥܐ**: a very rare word, but the lexica have no other beginning with the four letters legible on the stone. **10** **ܕܡܝܥܐ**: very difficult to read, but once deciphered certain.

A.9 A.D. 791/2 ḤABSENUŠ: MONASTERY OF MOR LAZARUS

Round, hollow tower on square, stepped base in centre of courtyard. See Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, fig. 38, for position of inscription. Bell/Mango, pl. 115 shows the inscribed stone, in the second course counting upwards from the top of the entrance to the tower, a short block between two long ones just to the left of that entrance. Size of squeeze ca. 41 × 37 cm. Text inscribed vertically. Weather-worn.

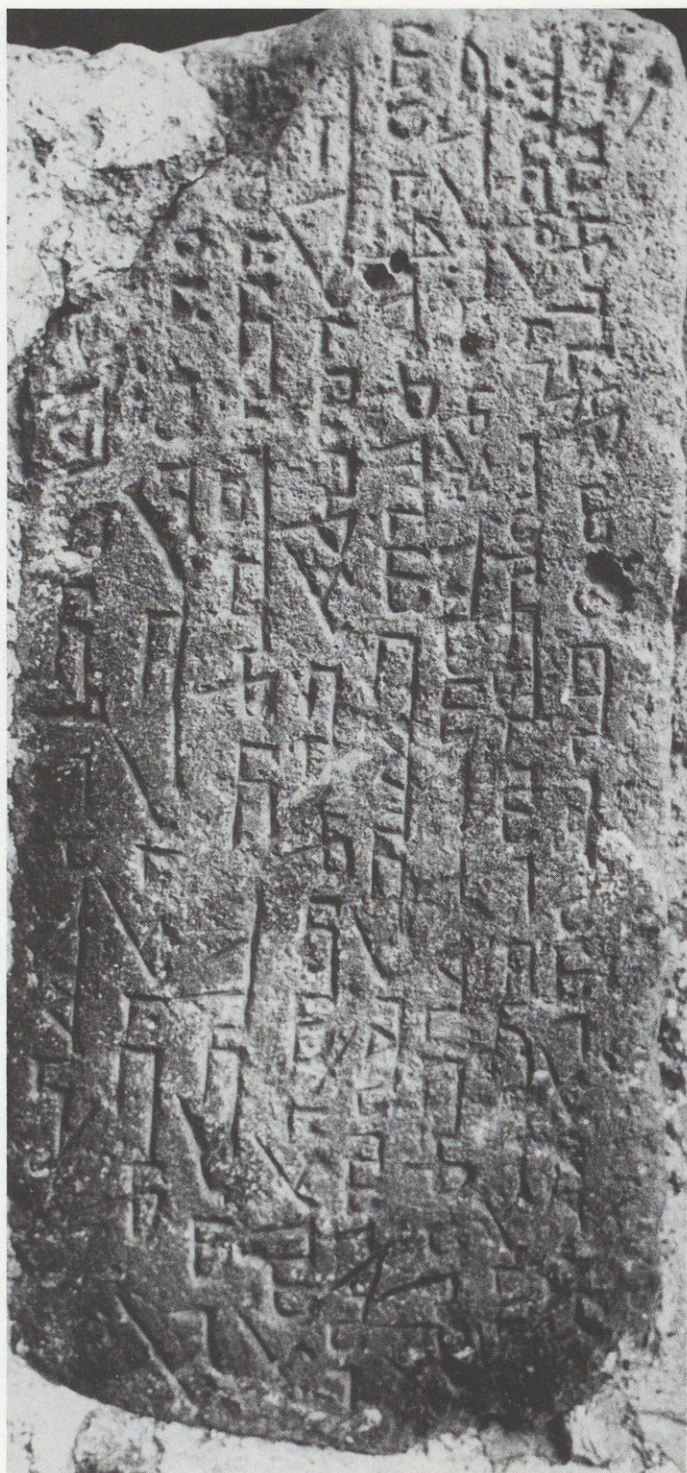
No previous publication.



ܕܡܝܥܐ ܕܡܝܥܐ 1
ܕܡܝܥܐ ܕܡܝܥܐ 2
ܕܡܝܥܐ ܕܡܝܥܐ 3
ܕܡܝܥܐ ܕܡܝܥܐ 4

This column was built in the year one thousand one hundred and three of Greece; *Marquno* wrote (this).

A.9 (latex squeeze)



A.10, orientation adapted (photo Bernt Larsson)

Commentary: 1 **𐤊𐤍𐤁𐤏**: here applied to a hollow tower with the round form of a pillar, whereas in A.13 it may have applied to a square tower. 4 The name is unattested; perhaps a diminutive of **𐤊𐤍𐤁**. The reading is uncertain: the second letter could be DOLATH, the third could be HETH, the fourth could be TAW. I am inclined to regard the “*hasta*” of the “TAW” as an accidental stroke of the chisel. But even allowing that it may not be, none of the combinations of possible letters are remotely plausible except for **𐤊𐤍𐤁**.

A.10 A.D. 911 or 914 MĪDUN: CHURCH OF MOR JACOB OF SERUGH

Basalt block (not measured), cemented with inscribed text horizontal, but upside-down, in the book-rest in front of the outdoor oratory on the south side of the church. Damaged in one corner.

Previous publication: Jarry 71, with photograph.

- 1 [בשר] כללך נחמך ונחמך
- 2 [נחמך] ונחמך ונחמך ונחמך
- 3 [נחמך] ונחמך ונחמך ונחמך
- 4 [נחמך] ונחמך ונחמך ונחמך
- 5 [נחמך] ונחמך ונחמך ונחמך
- 6 [נחמך] ונחמך ונחמך ונחמך
- 7 [נחמך] ונחמך ונחמך ונחמך
- 8 [נחמך] ונחמך ונחמך ונחמך

[In the year] one thousand two hundred and twenty-[three/six] of the Greeks, on the feast of the Nati[vity] of our Lord, the nun BRTMHN (or “a nun, the daughter of MHN”) went out of this [corru]pt world; so may God, Whose light yoke she bore, make her worthy of His bridal chamber full of joys with those ten (*sic*) wise virgins who were successful and greased their lamps with oil, by the prayer of His Mother and His Saints! Amen.

Commentary: 1 It is uncertain whether the letter-form after the MIM should be read as TAW or as a ligature of OLAF and TAW. 2 The lacuna could equally well be restored as ܐܠܐ. / The YUDH was omitted from ܐܠܐ. 4 ܐܠܐ: neither ܐܠܐ nor ܐܠܐ is attested as a name; yet there is no doubt about the reading. 6 ܐܠܐ: *sic*.

A.11 A.D. 932 (Jan. 13-Dec. 31) ZAZ: CHURCH OF MOR DĪMET

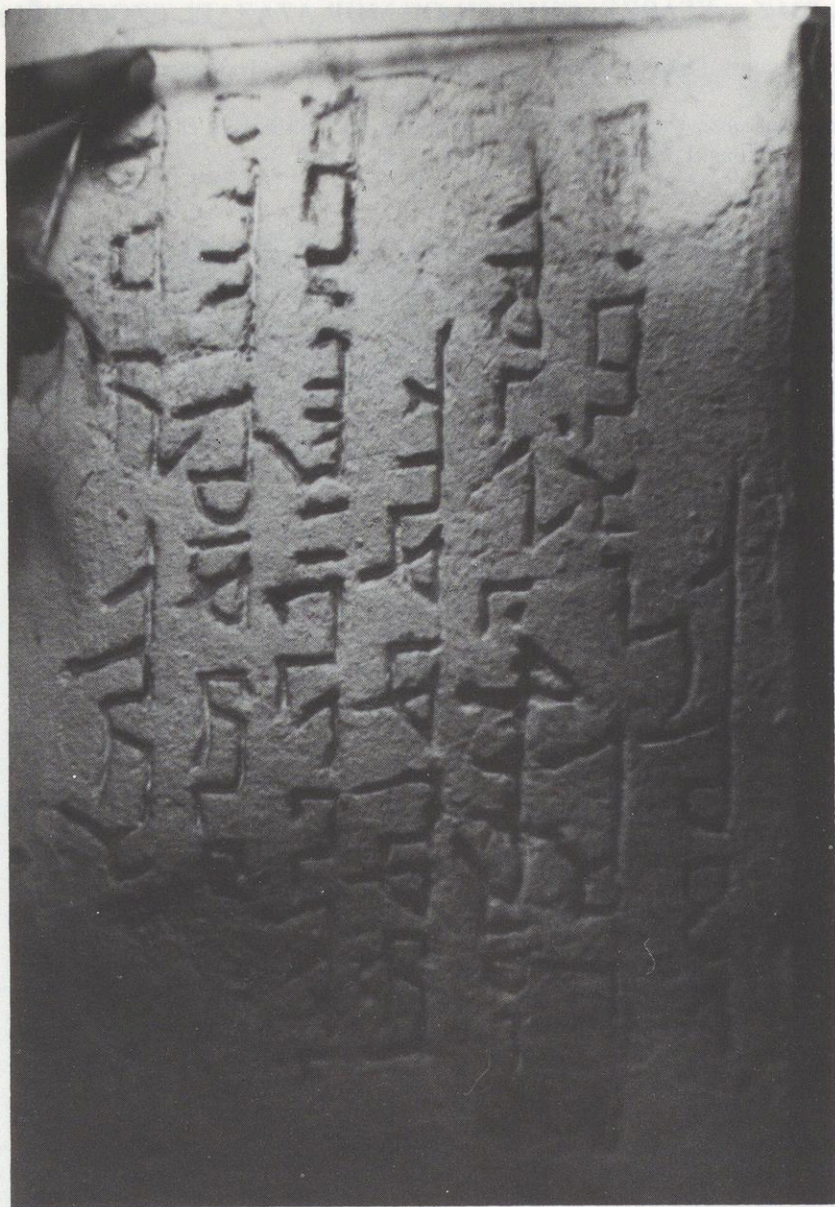
Text inscribed vertically on a single stone in the wall-pier nearest to the northern book-rest in the nave. Well preserved.

No previous publication.

KBDYNH' Zakhary, the son of Lazarus, went out of the world [and] departed to his Lord (in) the year three hundred [and] twenty of the Arab. Alas! [Whoever] reads (this), let him pray for him!

- 1 ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ
- 2 ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ
- 3 ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ
- 4 ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ
- 5 [ܐܠܐ] ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ
- 6 [ܐܠܐ] ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ
- 7 ܐܠܐ

Commentary: 3 ܐܠܐ: the reading seems clear, but the word is a mystery; to judge from its position before a name, it may be a title. 4 ܐܠܐ: for ܐܠܐ. 5 ܐܠܐ: cf. A.13, where the plural, however, conforms to normal usage; A.11 is the earliest known Syriac inscription dated by the Hijra. (Why in Zaz?) / ܐܠܐ is probably derived from the Greek οὐαί (cf. A.7). [Perhaps ܐܠܐ should be taken with the previous word, ܐܠܐ, and emended to read ܐܠܐ ܐܠܐ *vel sim.* H.K.]

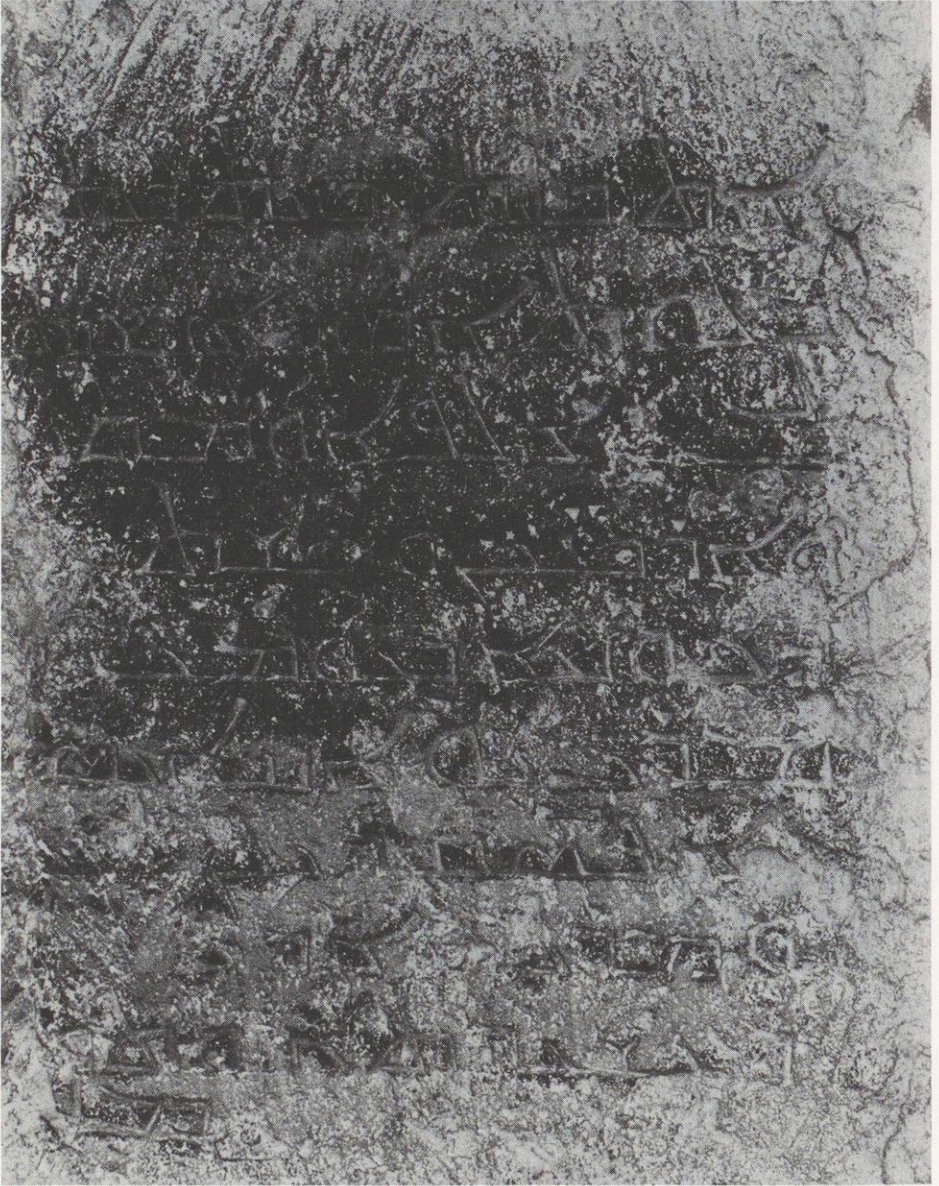


A.11

A.12 A.D. 934/5 Kfarzē: Church of Mor Azazael (ʿZozoyēl)

Outdoor oratory (ܡܨܠܬܐ) on south side of church. Text inscribed vertically. Well preserved.

Previous publication: Pognon 51, with drawing; Baršawm, in the work cited in the introduction, pp. 135-6; I. Armalet, in *al-Machriq* 16 (1913), p. 753.



A.12

- 1 ܐܪܬܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 2 ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 3 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 4 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 5 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 6 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 7 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 8 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 9 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ
- 10 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ ܒܬܬܐ

This beth šlutho was bilt built in the year one thousand two hundred and forty-six of the Greeks in the days of Mor Iwannis, our bishop, and Mor Addai, the rector, and Thomas.

Commentary: 1 ܐܪܬܬܬܐ was inscribed in error for ܐܪܬܬܬܐ; by way of correction, the cutter added ܐܪܬܬܬܐ, but without deleting the letters thus made redundant, unless he did so discreetly, by encircling them with dots in paint (cf. commentary on line five of A.1). 1-2 ܐܪܬܬܬܐ ܐܪܬܬܬܐ is feminine here, as in C.3; this raises the question of the plural form, for ܐܪܬܬܬܐ would imply a masculine singular. The *Qartmin Trilogy*, XVII.7, has ܐܪܬܬܬܐ ܐܪܬܬܬܐ. On the outdoor oratories of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn, see Palmer, *Monk and Mason* (via index). 3 ܐܪܬܬܐ for ܐܪܬܬܐ. 6 ܐܪܬܬܐ ܐܪܬܬܐ for ܐܪܬܬܐ (representing the vocalisation: *īwānāyīs*?) 7 ܐܪܬܬܐ for ܐܪܬܬܐ. 9-10 ܐܪܬܐ / ܐܪܬܐ : divided between two lines (ܐܪܬܐ for ܐܪܬܐ); OLAF engraved as vertical line.

A.13 A.D. 961 (Feb. 20) - 962 (Feb. 8) MARDĪN: MONASTERY OF MOR MICHAEL

Square tower (illustrated in Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, fig. 67) at west end of conventual church, supporting octagonal bell-tower of later date (cf. Jarry 67). Text inscribed vertically on a single block (conforming in size and character with the other blocks in the lower tower) in west façade just above roof-level of church. Enclosing the text at about 4.5 cm. from the rim of the block, a rectangular incision ca. 54 × 33.5 cm. Letter-forms from all three West-Syrian scripts, Estrangelo, Medial and Plain. Small cross within enlarged initial letter; cross at end. Well preserved.

Previous publication: Jarry 68.



In the name of God:
This column was built
in the year three hundred
and fifty of the Arabs.
Everyone who reads, let
him pray for Maron the
monk (who) took care of
the building of it!

- 1 ܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ
2 ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ
3 ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ
4 ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ
5 ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ
6 ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ
7 ܕܠܗܡ

Commentary: 1 ܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ: perhaps derived from *bismillāh*, showing Islamic influence. 2 ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ: here applied to a square tower (cf. A.9), perhaps by virtue of the title ܕܠܗܡ / ܕܠܗܡ = “stylite”, which was given to tower-dwelling hermits in this region. 3-4 ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ for ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ. 4 ܕܠܗܡ: cf. A.11. 6 The word ܕܠܗܡ was inserted below the line with a diagonal pointer showing that it should have been inscribed after ܕܠܗܡ / ܕܠܗܡ: we should expect ܕܠܗܡ. [It is possible that the penultimate full line originally read: ܕܠܗܡ ܕܠܗܡ and that this was altered afterwards to make specific reference to the monk Maron; this would explain why DOLATH is missing before ܕܠܗܡ (it was easily transformed into WAW) and why there was no room between ܕܠܗܡ and ܕܠܗܡ that the final NUN of the former even had to be written under the WAW (as in some of the Heshterek inscriptions, where Pognon’s ܕܠܗܡ should be emended from his drawings to ܕܠܗܡ). It would also explain the displacement of the word ܕܠܗܡ and the line joining this to the name Maron would be original NUN of ܕܠܗܡ, which was cleverly exploited as a pointer (elsewhere, missing words are usually inserted above the line). H.K. and A.N.P.]

A.14 A.D. 988/9 QARTMĪN ABBEY

Inscribed on detached fragment of stone window-grid extracted in 1963 from one of the windows of the south façade of the conventual church.

No previous publication.

ܬܠܬ ܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ

... the year one thousand and] three hundred.

Commentary: It is clear that there were no further letters after ܬܠܬܡܝܠܐ.

A.15 A.D. 1033/4 MONASTERY OF THE CROSS OF BĒTH ĒL

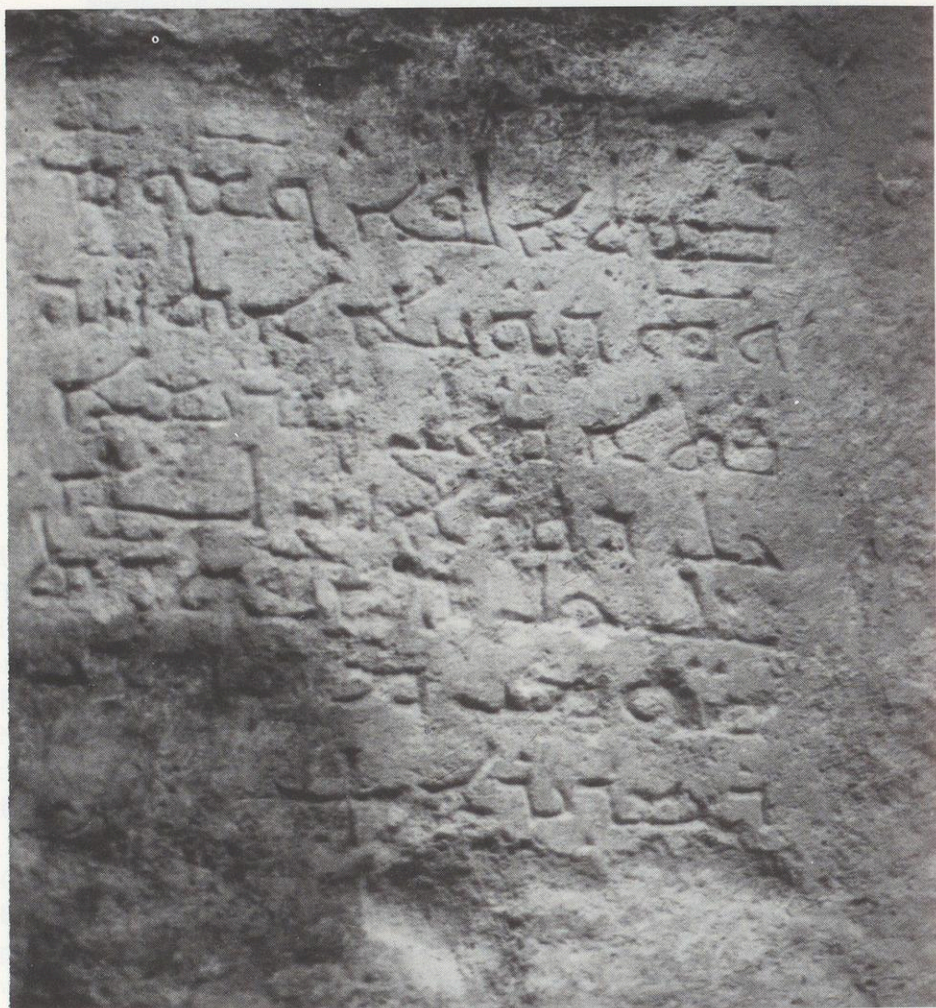
Corridor giving access from without to chapel and mausoleum (ܡܬܬܥܐ) of Mor Aḥo. Text inscribed horizontally on single block in east wall near entrance. Cross above first letter; cross at end. Well executed and evenly proportioned; well preserved.

Previous publication: Wiessner, *Kultbauten*, I, pl. 28 (photograph only).

ܬܠܬ ܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ 1
 ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ 2
 ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ 3
 ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ 4
 ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ 5
 ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ 6
 ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ 7

In the year one thousand and 300 and 40 and 5 of the Greeks these holy buildings were renovated. Let everyone who reads this pray for all who participated! In the days of Mor Zebedee, the abbot.

Commentary: 2 ܕܡܝܠܐ for ܕܡܝܠܐܬܐ. 3 ܕܡܝܠܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ: cf. B.9, where the same building is described as ܡܬܬܥܐ [ܡܬܬܥܐ] ܕܡܝܠܐ. 5 ܕܡܝܠܐܬܐ for ܕܡܝܠܐܬܐ.



A.15

A.16 A.D. 1085/5 MONASTERY OF MOR MOSES NEAR KFAZĒ

Long rectangular detached block near southern extremity of ruins. A similar block lying next to it bears the ends of some lines from two epitaphs, which must have been inscribed vertically across two blocks (cf. Jarry 22, with patent errors!). The text of A.16 runs in the direction of the greatest length of the stone and was therefore probably inscribed horizontally. Except for line 12, which continues line 11 to the left of the rest, the text is framed by an approximately square incision, the bottom side of which is imperfectly aligned: the incision coming from the left stops at the TETH of מִלֵּךְ, touching the lower segment of that letter, whereas that coming from the right coincides with the baseline of the same word, even extending the horizontal under the letter RISH, which makes it look like a small BETH. Size of squeeze 43 × 41 cm. Very badly weathered.

Previous publication: Jarry 21, with photograph.

- | | |
|-------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1 | בְּשִׁפְטֵהוּא קִדְמֵהוּא |
| 2 | בְּכִיבֵהוּ בְּמִיבִיבֵהוּ בְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 3 | הַ[בְּ]קִדְמֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 4 | הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 5 | הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 6 | הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 7 | הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 8 | הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 9 | הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 10 | הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |
| 11/12 | הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ הַבְּכִיבֵהוּ |

By the care (i.e. financial benefaction) of Kawsho of the family of the faithful Amos and of (those) who participated (i.e. contributed) and by the agency of Michael, priest and monk, who was a/the resident in this monastery, in the days of Mor Basil the bishop, in the year one thousand and 300 and 90 and 6 in that (i.e. the reckoning) of the Greeks. Let everyone who reads (this) pray for Ḥabib the sinner, who engraved (this memorial), and for all who participated.



A.16



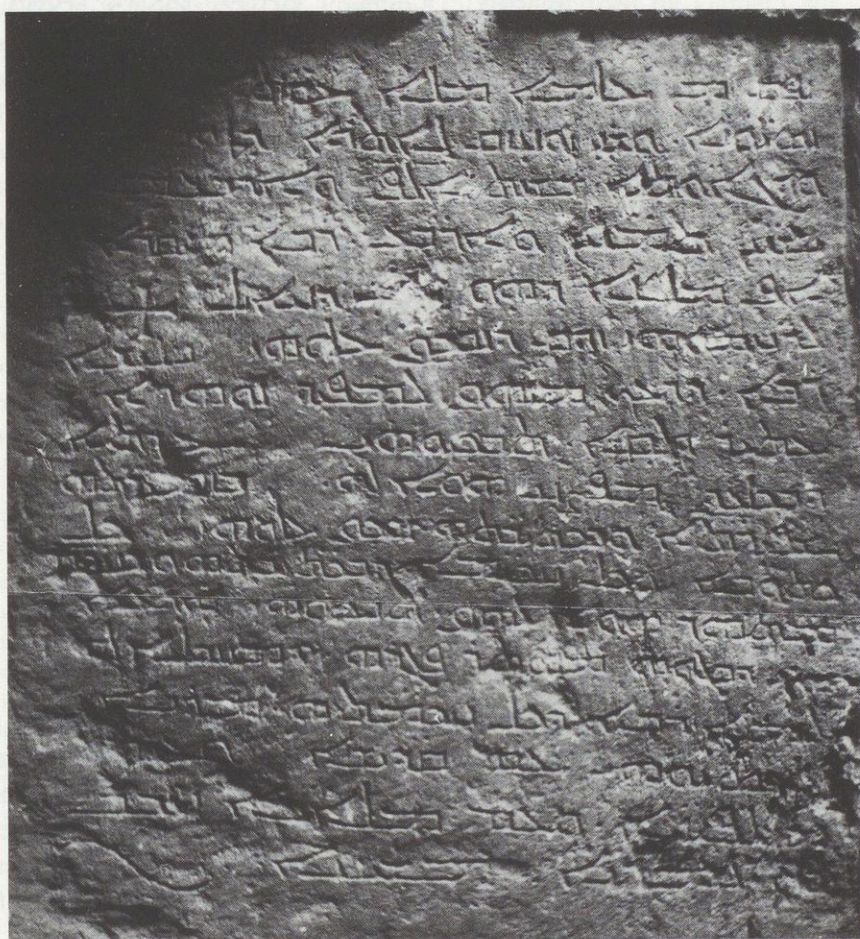
A.16 (paper squeeze)

line marking abbreviation, because there is no room for a letter between RISH and the frame (cf. on line five).

A.17 A.D. 1172/3 MONASTERY OF MOR MOSES NEAR KFARZÊ

Antechamber of a large rock-cut burial vault. Text inscribed vertically on prepared rectangular surface in left wall. Engraved diacritics. Verse-ends marked by point above baseline of writing; crosses to either side of the name Daniel; last line filled out with curved incision. Well planned and executed. Well preserved.

Previous publication: Jarry 23, with photograph; J. Jarry, *Syria* 52 (1975), pp.131-7, with photograph.



A.17 (turned through 90°)

- 1 נָחַם בְּךָ חַלְמָא מַלְכָּא חַתְלָא הַלְלָא
- 2 בְּעִלְמָא. הַגְבִּי הַבְּנִי לְאִלְמָא דְּהִלְכָא
- 3 הַדְּקָאִילְמָא. כַּעֲלָא רִלְפָא הַאֲזַחְכָּא
- 4 עֲלֵי אֲחִישַׁי הַאֲזַחְכָּא. זָכָא מַחְמָא
- 5 אַפְּ מַלְכָּא דְּמָחָא + דְּמָכָא +
- 6 לְתַשְׁמַחְמָא וְזָמַי דְּבִיבְלָא חַלְמָא כַּעֲלָא
- 7 זָכָא. דְּהַגְבִּי מַחְמָא לְחַפְּזָא מַחְמָא
- 8 חַלְמָא דְּלִיכָא. אַחְבְּרַמְחָא בְּדִילְכָא
- 9 דְּכַלְכָּא דְּפִיגְרָא מַחְמָא לְמָא. כַּוְכְּזִילְמָא
- 10 עֲפִילְכָא הַכַּעֲלִילְכָּא. בְּכִילְכָּא חַלְמָא חַלְמָא
- 11 מַחְמָכָא הַלְלָא עֲפִילְכָּא. דְּכַעֲלִילְכָּא הַכַּעֲלִילְכָּא
- 12 מַחְמָכָא מַחְמָא לְמָא. אַחְבְּרַמְחָא אֲזַחְכָּא
- 13 מָחָא דְּכַעֲלִילְכָּא מַחְמָכָא פִּיגְרָא. דְּכַעֲלִילְכָּא לְמָא
- 14 לְמָא זָכָא דְּכַלְכָּא עֲפִילְכָּא. מַחְמָא
- 15 לְחַפְּזָא חַלְמָא מַחְמָכָא חַלְמָא
- 16 מַחְמָכָא. חַלְמָא מַחְמָכָא לְמָא
- 17 עַל לְמָכָא מַחְמָכָא ~~~~~

In the year one thousand and four hundred years (*sic*) eighty and four, an honoured master and teacher left (this) world full of troubles and all trials and removed and departed to the land of blessings and of delights: Daniel was his name. His friends should mourn him with great sorrow, because a shining lamp, rich in inflammation (*sic*), has been extinguished from them. Let the Church mourn him, for he would ever cheer her with his beautiful hymns and his writings! Let all scribes and wise men mourn him, for he amazed them by his writings and by his wisdom! Let the earth, in which his body is hidden, mourn him, for it is destroying the great sea of all his wisdom! May the Lord allot him a place with the Saints and the Teachers, and with the angels may he shout out praise to the Lord Christ!

Commentary: Fourteen lines of twelve-syllable verse. 3 The broken line above **ك** is unique in this collection. / **ككككك** for **ككككك**. 4 Apparently the rules of versification forbade **ككككك**, the first syllable of which was probably felt to be too weak in this position. That the date is 1484 and not 1400 (the 84 being interpreted as Daniel's age: **كك** for **كك**) is clear from Pognon 115, another epitaph of the same man in the apse of the oratory at Heshterek. There he is described as:

ككككك ككككك ككككك

كك (cf. **كك** in A.17) is usually the title of a learned monk and Daniel was buried in a monastery; yet Pognon 115 was inscribed by Daniel's son. The paradox disappears if Daniel was a parish-priest who entered a nearby monastery when he was widowed (cf. C.2, line 10); the monastery of Mor Moses is about 3.5 km. from Heshterek. 6 **كك**: disyllabic. 8 **كك**: curiously pointed, but, in spite of the rather forced image, we must read *delqô*, literally "ignition". 10 See on line 6. 11 **ككككك** for **ككككك**. 17 **كك** for **كككك**.

A.18 A.D. 1188/9 QARTMĪN ABBEY

Formerly detached block (1978), later misleadingly immured in a pier of the arcade between the church of the Mother of God and the burial vaults. Dimensions: 33 × 28 × 18 cm. The inscribed surface was adorned, prior to inscription, with one small "wedge-tipped" cross (see description of A.7), the orientation of which suggests that the text was vertical, and (in the terms of that orientation) above that another cross, carved in relief. The geometrical design of the latter may be described as four semicircles joined at their apices, which intersect one another to form four "leaves" on the diagonals of a notional square. These diagonals divide the two sides of the grooves sculpted between the intersecting curves. The notional square is again divided into quarters which bisect the semicircles, and grooves are cut along these divisions between the "leaves" and closed by an outward curve, which, joined up across the "leaves", forms a circle inscribed within the notional square, making all the grooves three-sided. The splayed grooves form the arms of the cross. Besides these crosses, the surface was marred before inscription by a hole, now filled with cement. The text is damaged at one corner and obscured at the beginning by cement.

No previous publication.



A.18 (photo Bernt Larsson)

- 1 [חגית] למלכא מרדא כחנמ
 2 מלכא דסיב
 3 מרדא דלמא מר
 4 חגית דנר
 5 מסר
 6 מתלמא נסר
 7 אלכ
 8 מכתמא כחא מכתמא
 9 ח דמנא נר חלמא ד[ח]

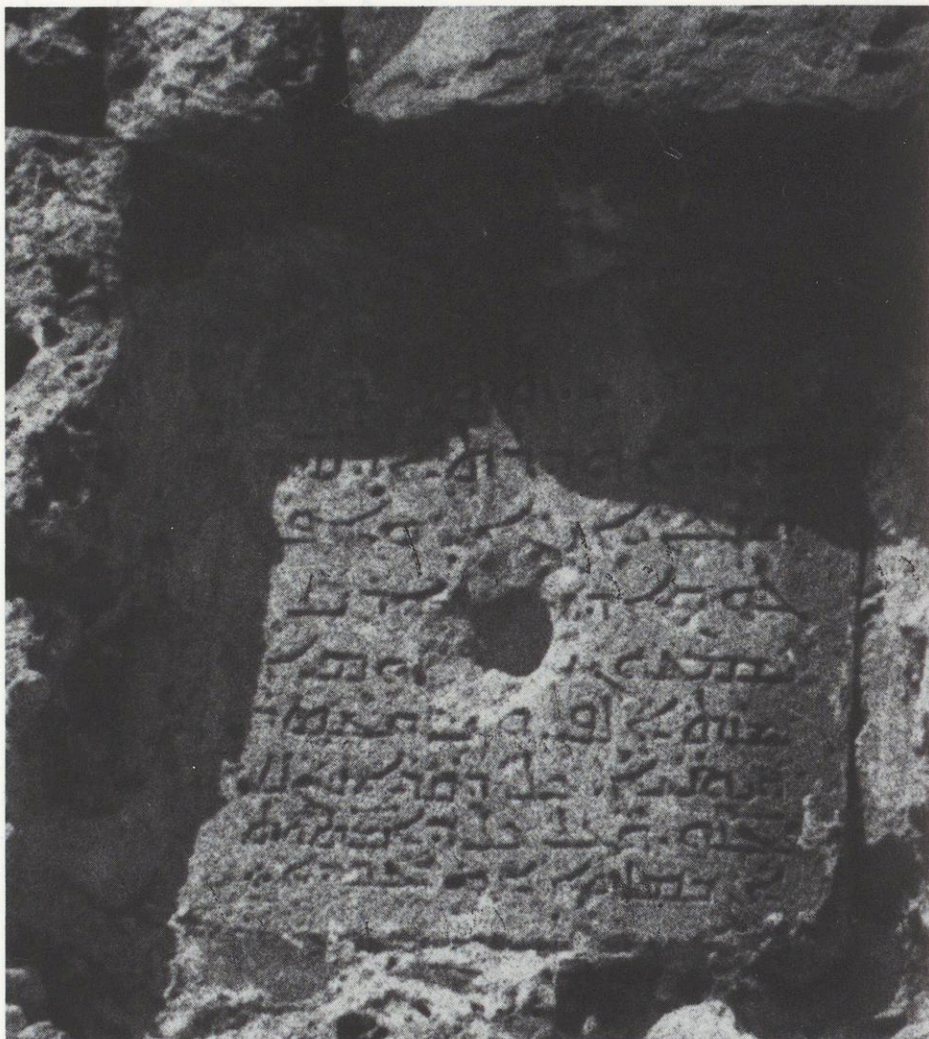
Abraham, metropolitan of Nisibis, and his great-uncle Gabriel, monk and priest, and Malkê, deacon, (all) of Bêth Svîrînâ, [made] this chamber in the year one thousand and five hundred of [Greece]. Let everyone who reads (this) pray for them!

Commentary: 1 Restored on the analogy of (e.g.) B.11. 2 ~~חגית~~ for ~~חגית~~. 3 This may only mean “and his old uncle”. 5 ~~מסר~~ would be normal. 6 *Syomê* placed on the name elicit the pronunciation *malkê*. / ~~נסר~~ for ~~נסר~~. 7 The positioning ~~אלכ~~ above the line in which it belongs is due to the cutter’s perception that ~~מכתמא~~ would have to be on line 8 if he was to have room for the rest of his text; ideally, he should have placed ~~מכתמא~~ on line 7, but a hole in the stone there only left room for a short word. 8 ~~מכתמא~~ for ~~מכתמא~~. 9 Finding he had a little room to spare at the end, the cutter added ~~ח~~ under the last figure of the date.

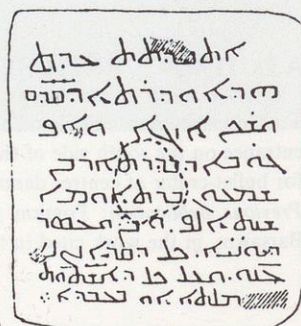
A.19 A.D. 1198/9 BÊTH SVÎRÎNÂ: CHURCH OF MOR DODHÔ

Text inscribed horizontally on a single block set back in a wall of less well-hewn blocks above the entrance on the south side of the church. Crosses at beginning and at end. Well preserved except for bullet-crater at centre; damage postdates Pognon’s examination.

Previous publication: Pognon 62, with drawing; Armalet, in *al-Machriq*, 16 (1913), p.841; Baršawm, in the work cited in the introduction, p. 137.



A.19



A.19 (Pognon's drawing, showing extent of gunshot damage)

- 1 ארמנא דארמנא
- 2 חרמא דארמנא דרמנא
- 3 חרמא דארמנא
- 4 חרמא דארמנא דרמנא
- 5 חרמא דארמנא דרמנא
- 6 חרמא דארמנא דרמנא
- 7 חרמא דארמנא דרמנא
- 8 חרמא דארמנא דרמנא
- 9 חרמא דארמנא דרמנא

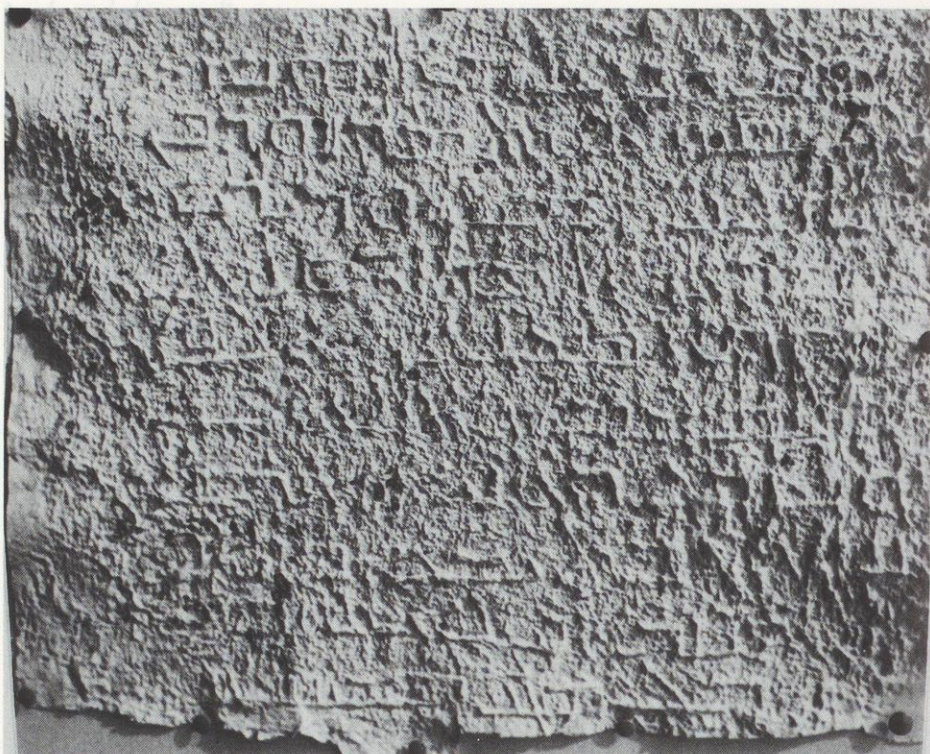
This church was renovated, together with the yard in front of it, and Rabban Simeon, the son of Thomas, donated the vault and also the cistern in the yard (in) the year one thousand five hundred and ten of the Greeks. Let everyone who reads (this) pray for him and for all who participated, whether by word or by deed!

Commentary: 1 Pognon was mistaken in marking the OLAF of **חרמא** as missing. 2 **חרמא** for **חרמא**. 3-5 The part marked on the drawing has been destroyed by a bullet since Pognon's time. 4 **חרמא**: This should mean that Simeon was a monk. 6 The point after **חרמא** is unique in this corpus. 7 Pognon was misled by the ligature of NUN + **חרמא** (also found in A.10, A.11 and A.18; cf. YUDH + **חרמא** ligature in A.6 and **חרמא** + **חרמא** ligature in A.8). 8 **חרמא** for **חרמא**. / **חרמא** for **חרמא**. 9 Contrary to Pognon's statement, the first three letters *are* legible.

A.20 A.D. 1226 (June) **ŞALAH: MONASTERY OF MOR JACOB THE RECLUSE**

Detached block in ruins to north of northeast corner of conventual church. Size of squeeze: 46 × 36 cm.










No previous publication.



A.20 (paper squeeze)

Rabban Elijah, priest and monk and spiritual son of this (episcopal?) chamber, left this world and departed to his Lord in the year one thousand [and] five hundred and thirty-seven of the Greeks, on the ninth of June. Let everyone who reads (this) pray for him [and acc]ept us for the sake of Christ!

- | | |
|----|----------------------|
| 1 | ܩܕܝܫܐ ܕܗܝ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܡܪܝܢ |
| 2 | ܡܪܝܢ ܠܗܝܠܐ ܡܪܝܢ ܕܗܝ |
| 3 | ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ |
| 4 | ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ |
| 5 | ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ |
| 6 | ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ |
| 7 | ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ |
| 8 | ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ |
| 9 | ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ |
| 10 | ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ ܡܪܝܢ |

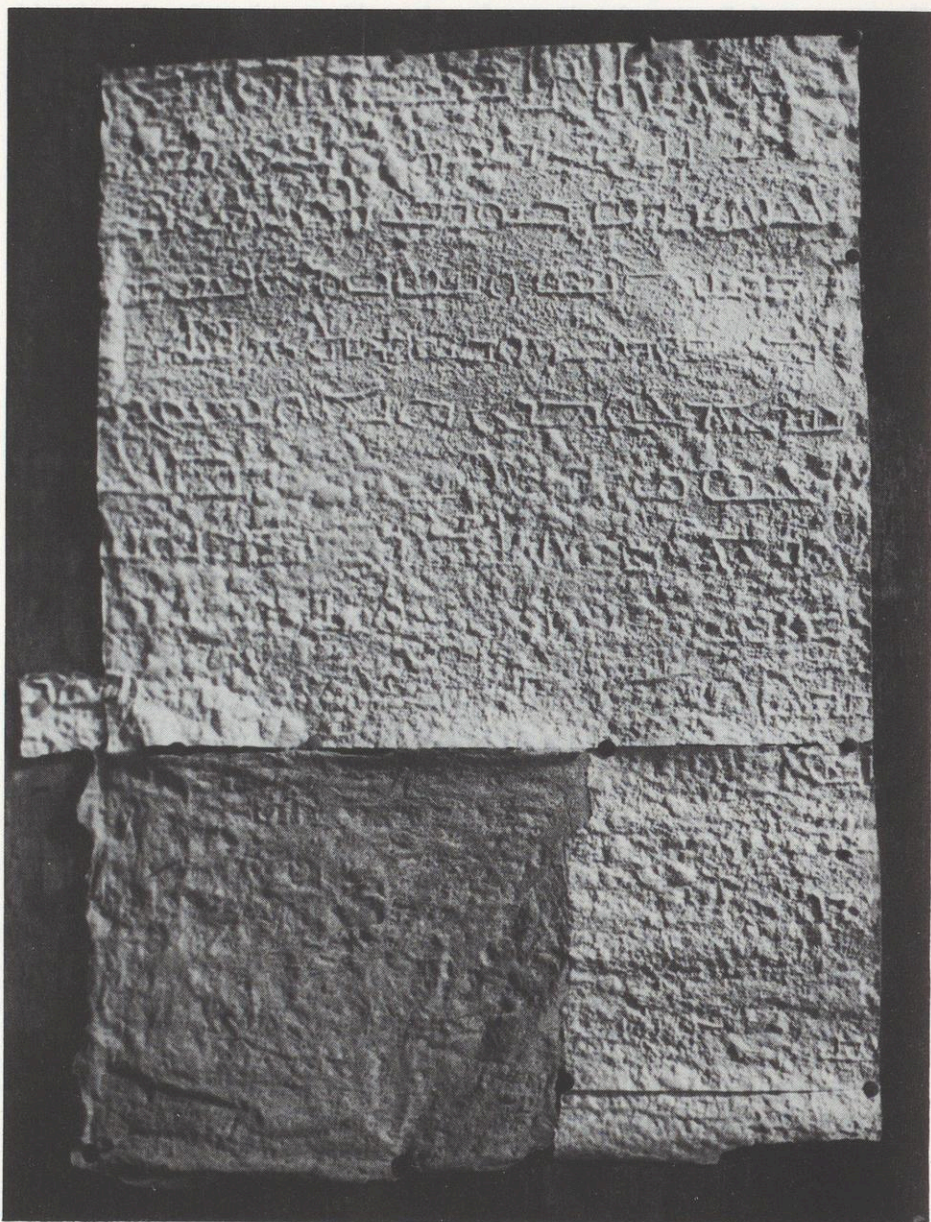
Commentary: 1 Punctuation is not found in this position elsewhere in this collection or in Pognon's. 2  for . 4 The OLAF of  is written as a vertical line, evidently to save space. / The phrase in lines 4-5 suggests that  should be understood as the "establishment" of a resident bishop, as in the phrase:  = σύγκελλος. 6  for . 8  for . 10 The restoration is not supported by any parallel known to me; if it is right, it should be interpreted: "and let him accept us", i.e. let him give due credit to the anonymous engraver, or composer, or both.

SECTION B: INSCRIPTIONS WITH AN APPROXIMATE DATE

B.1 A.D. 752-755, perhaps 753 (June) ṢALAH: MONASTERY OF MOR JACOB

Detached block now serving as the upright support of an altar-slab in the southern sanctuary-chapel of the conventual church. Inscribed surface: ca. 90 × 60 cm. Text on elongated *tabula ansata* with pronounced dog-tooth incisions on remaining left-hand border of raised plaque. There were letters on the left *ansa*. The right-hand side of the horizontal text has been cut away together with that border of the *tabula* and the right *ansa* (assuming there was one). The text is weatherworn and eroded beyond recognition below line 7; there is room for 11 lines. This suggests that the block in its original position on an external wall was unevenly sheltered, either by a sloping cornice (cf. B.8: a vertical text), or by some other projection. The damage to the right-hand side of the text is best explained by the need to loosen the block from its position in a wall. Normally, the blocks are laid on their greatest length in building a wall, but if this block was so laid, the illegible part would have lain to the right and the block could have been loosened by cutting some of that away. If we examine the exterior of the conventual church, we find one place, and only one, where a block was laid vertically, across two courses of horizontal blocks — and that block has been removed! Its place has been filled with small stones. The measurements of the hole correspond to the proportions of the block bearing B.1. The position is right for an inscription: above the former entrance to the church on the west side of the south façade and not too high to be illegible. In that position, the upper part of the inscription, which is the best preserved, was only 50-70 cm. below the sloping cornice. To loosen it, the workmen cut away the right-hand side, although they would have done better to damage the adjacent blocks instead. Most important of all, the anomalous position of the block bearing the inscription proves that the inscription is as old as the wall, which, in turn, is of a piece with the whole church.

No previous publication. This inscription, unknown previously even to the resident monk, was discovered by the Reverend Stephen Roundell Palmer in 1984. Photograph of B.1 in Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, fig. 50. The south façade is illustrated in Bell/Mango, pl. 234, and in Garsoïan etc., eds., *East of Byzantium*, pl. 31.



B.1 (squeeze in paper & latex)

1 [אח]יִשְׁרָאֵל בְּיָמֵי חֲדָשָׁה מְהֵרָה
 2 [כא]רְגֵם עֲלֵינוּ הַעֲלֵנוּ אֶלְפָּה הַעֲלֵנוּ
 3 [ה]רְגֵם אֶלְמַחְמֵדָה בְּתַנְתָּ לְבַחֲמֵנוּ פִּי
 4 [ה]רְגֵם נִרְגֵם לְמַחְמֵדָה אֶלְפָּה הַעֲלֵנוּ
 5 [ה]רְגֵם נִרְגֵם לְמַחְמֵדָה בְּתַנְתָּ לְבַחֲמֵנוּ
 6 [ה]רְגֵם אֶלְמַחְמֵדָה מְהֵרָה הַעֲלֵנוּ
 7 [כא]רְגֵם עֲלֵינוּ הַעֲלֵנוּ אֶלְפָּה הַעֲלֵנוּ
 8 מ ל ר פ
 9
 10 מ ל

...

This *church* was renovated [in the] month of June of the year one thousand and sixty-[four of] Alexander, in the days of our blessed patriarch Mor Yohanis and [our] venerable bishop Mor Cyriac and in the days of Mor Theophilus, [ab]bot of this abbey and Simeon [the son of] Sergius, *the so'uro*; *the administrator* was Daniel

Commentary: 1 It is clear from the following lines that one to three letters might be missing on the right, so the restoration there seems unassailable; yet the inscription is as old as the wall into which it was built, and that forms an integral unity of style and technique with the rest of the church, so the "renovation" must be understood in a radical sense. / The subject must be feminine; my restoration seems the only possible one, although 'E and OLAF appear to be joined horizontally. / What came between the verb and its subject may just possibly have been the initiatory **וּבְ**; but the clear traces which remain are perhaps better interpreted as the combination of an unfinished TAW with one wild upward stroke of the chisel, the TAW being explained as a reduplication. 3 The restoration of the last numeral is suggested by B.8, on the north façade of the same church, where the word **אֶלְפָּה** in line -12 is in the right gender to agree with **הַעֲלֵנוּ**; moreover, it is followed after two lines by a dating formula: **בְּתַנְתָּ** (line -10). / **פִּי** stands for **פִּי**. 4 **מַחְמֵדָה** is an unparalleled spelling of the name **מַחְמֵדָה**, but the spelling **מַחְמֵדָה** occurs in *Chron. Zuqnin* of 775,

pp. 189-90, with reference to the same patriarch. **5** Note the reiteration of the dating formula: **ܣܠܐܗ**, as if the formula naming the reigning patriarch and the local bishop were a closed unit. **7** After the name **ܣܡܝܥܐ** we read clearly SEMKATH followed (apparently) by WAW. It is likely that Simeon is listed after the abbot by virtue of his office, or else because he helped in some way to construct the church. Finding no title or trade beginning with SEMKATH + WAW, I have suggested that 'E was omitted by error from **ܣܡܝܥܐ**. / The restoration of Daniel's rank is even less secure, for there is no parallel for the simultaneous existence of a **ܣܡܝܥܐ** and a **ܣܡܝܥܐ** in one monastery. **8-17** I will be glad to show my squeezes to any scholar who wishes to try to make sense of the scattered traces in these lines.

B.2 A.D. 752-755 **ܣܠܐܗ: MONASTERY OF MOR JACOB THE RECLUSE**

Painted in red-brown on the vault of the conventual church. Exact position: on the second voussoir from the east end of the northernmost of the two supporting arches. The writing is aligned with the arch and interrupts the imitation-brick decoration on either side of a cross-in-medallion. It is legible from the floor. Well preserved.

Previous publication: Bell/Mango, p.92 n. 117 (of the other inscription mentioned there I can see no trace on my photograph).

Theophilus,
abbot.

ܣܡܝܥܐ 1

ܣܡܝܥܐ 2

Commentary: The name is the same as that of the abbot in B.1, although it is spelled here without the final SEMKATH, a frequent variation in the transcription of Greek names in Syriac.



B.2

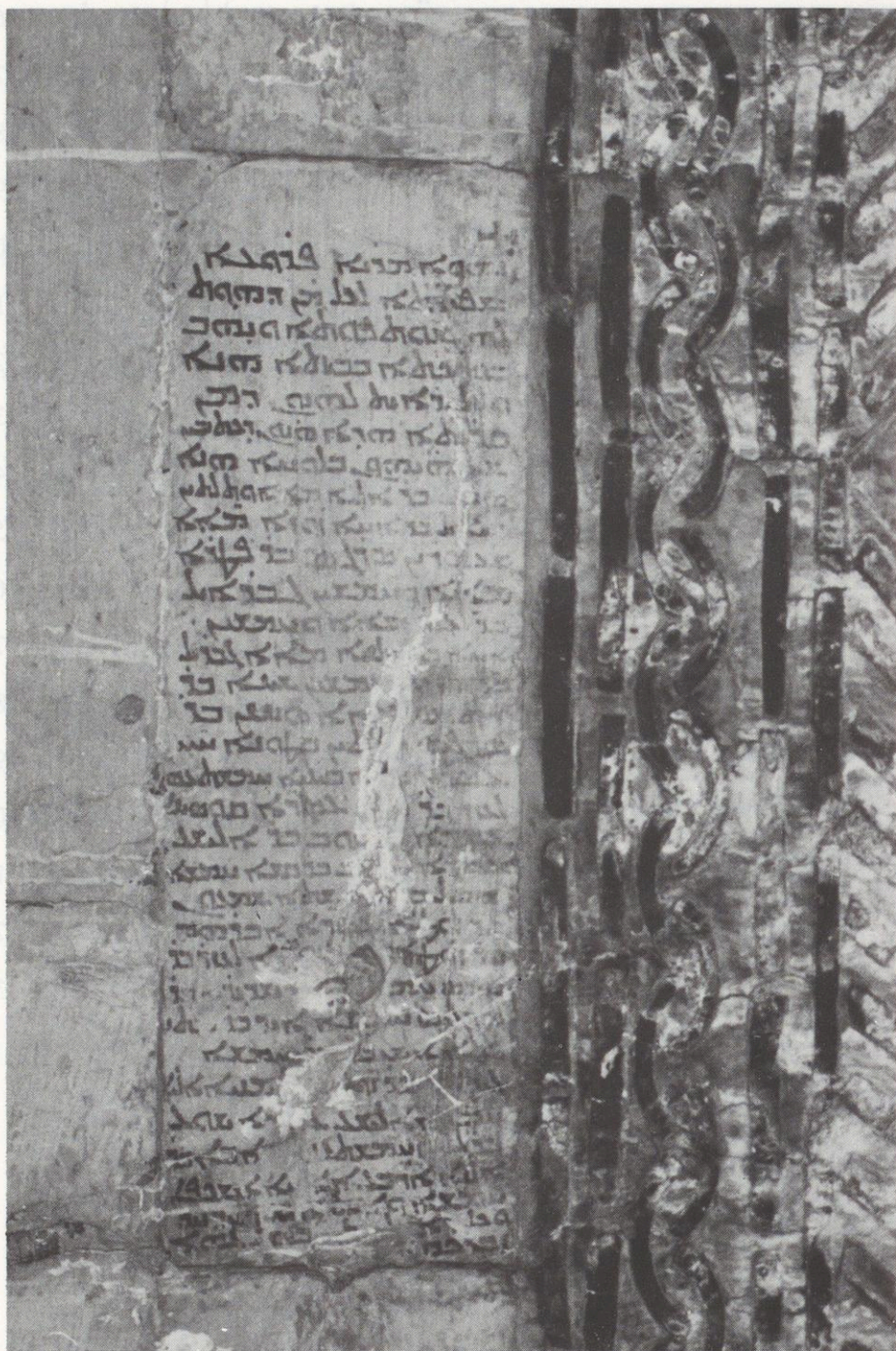
B.3 A.D. 752-755 ṢALAḤ: MONASTERY OF MOR JACOB THE RECLUSE

Painted in the same colour as B.2 on one block in the uppermost course of the east wall of the nave of the conventual church, above the main entrance to the sanctuary and directly below the first brickwork of the vault. If these bricks are the size of that illustrated in Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, fig. 27, then it can be calculated from Hannes Cornet's telephotograph that the surface on which the text is painted is ca. 1 m. long and ca. 33 cm. wide. The text is vertical in orientation. A small cross is painted above the first word. Well preserved, except for some partial erasure and a curved line of surface damage in the stone. From the painter's anxiety to fit everything onto a single block (cf. commentary to lines 13 and 17) one might infer that he did not paint *in situ*, in which case the damage can be attributed to the processes of handling and installation. The lines of erasure affecting the uppermost (or "right-hand") part of the text may be from cleaning cement off the stone after laying the bricks of the vault above.

Previous publication: Bell/Mango, pp. 43-4 (a vague and inaccurate description only); Dolabani, in the second of his books cited in the introduction, pp. 38-40 (very inaccurate). That I could publish a sharp telephotograph instead of my own slightly blurred attempt, I owe to the kindness of Hannes Cornet, in whose company I first saw the church.

- 1 מִסְתַּח וְזֶה פְּרִיטָא
- 2 [ה]עֲפִיטָא לֵל נָח וְהַחֲפִיטָא
- 3 לֵל מְסַחֲפִיטָא וְהַחֲפִיטָא
- 4 בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא כְּבִישָׁא מִסְתַּח
- 5 וְהַחֲפִיטָא לְחִישָׁא וְהַחֲפִיטָא
- 6 מִסְתַּח מִסְתַּח מִסְתַּח וְהַחֲפִיטָא
- 7 ע[ב]רִיטָא מִסְתַּח מִסְתַּח מִסְתַּח
- 8 מְסַחֲפִיטָא בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא מִסְתַּח מִסְתַּח
- 9 [ה]עֲפִיטָא בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא מִסְתַּח מִסְתַּח
- 10 מְסַחֲפִיטָא מִסְתַּח מִסְתַּח בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא
- 11 מִסְתַּח מְסַחֲפִיטָא מְסַחֲפִיטָא
- 12 בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא מִסְתַּח מְסַחֲפִיטָא
- 13 אִישָׁא בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא מִסְתַּח מִסְתַּח
- 14 בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא ... [ה]עֲפִיטָא מִסְתַּח בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא
- 15 [ה]עֲפִיטָא [ה]עֲפִיטָא [ה]עֲפִיטָא מִסְתַּח בְּ[א]חֲפִיטָא

- 16 מַלְאָכָא [...] חַיִּי מַלְאָכָא שֵׁט
 17 חַיִּי [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 18 לְחוּז כִּי [...] חַיִּי מַלְאָכָא
 19 חַיִּי [...] יְיָ מַלְאָכָא כִּי אֲלֵיב
 20 חַיִּי [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 21 [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 22 כִּי וְאֶל מַלְאָכָא אֲבוֹתָם
 23 כִּי וְאֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא לְחוּז כִּי
 24 [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 25 מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא כִּי אֲלֵיב
 26 אֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 27 [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 28 עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי אֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 29 כִּי [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 30 אֶל מַלְאָכָא אֲבוֹתָם אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 31 עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי אֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 32 חַיִּי [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא [...] אֶל מַלְאָכָא עַדְמַלְחַמֵּי
 33 בְּרִיתָם



B.3 (photo Hannes Cornet)

May the Lord be the Giver [of] good rewards to every individual who has had a part and has given a b[le]ssed gift in this House and especially to those who are from this village, whose names are written on this tablet:

(a) Sov[o], the son of Elijah	-one hundred and thirty;
(b) [Dani]el, the son of Aḥo	-one hundred and twenty zuzê;
(c) Sergius, the son of Peter	-one hundred and fifty;
(d) Gabriel, the son of Lazarus	-one hundred and fifty;
(e) Aḥo, the son [of E]lijah	-one hundred;
(f) Gabriel, the son of ...	-fifty;
(g) Shayno, the son of <i>Athanasius</i>	-one hundred;
(h) John, the son of Sergius	-[six- or thir-]ty;
(i) Qaṭuno Ḥayay	-twenty;
(j) ..., the smith	-fifteen;
(k) Lazarus, the son of ...	-ten
(l) Qusino	-ten
(m) [Ja]cob, the son of Elisha	-ten;
(n) [Jo]b, the son of <i>the priest</i>	-five;
(o) [Rube]l, the so[n of ...]	-six;
(p) Simeon, the son of Zuṭo	-ten;
(q) Abraham, the son of Zuṭo	-[ten zuzê];
(r) Lazarus, the son of [...]	-five;
(s) [<i>Theophilus</i> , the a]bbot, son of <i>Sergius</i>	-five;
(t) Iyor, the son of Matthew	-six;
(u) Jesse, the so[n of ...]	-five;
(v) G..., the son of Jo[hn]	-eight;
(w) Elijah	-five;
(x) Elisha	-ten;
(y) Joshua, the son of ...	-fifteen;
(z) Abo, the son of Elijah	-four;
(zz) Aḥo, the cobbler	-five;

and there are some who (gave) one (zuzo) each; and may God bless everyone who contributed to it.

Commentary: 2 Dolabani restores ܐܒܝܬܐ [ܐ]. / Note the extra diacritical points, here and in lines 3, 5, 6, and 10; this is the earliest known inscription in Tūr 'Abdīn with such points, unless they were painted on earlier inscriptions. Extra diacritical points are not *engraved* until the eleventh century (A.17, B.12, B.13, C.14). 4 The preposition ܐ is not locative: it harks back to the phrase ܐܒܝܬܐ ܕܐܒܝܬܐ, so ܐܒܝܬܐ ܐܒܝܬܐ should be seen as an exegesis of the concept of participation. 7 ܐܒܝܬܐ is masculine, as in Pognon 35 and 115 and *Qartmin Trilogy*, VI.14, all from Tūr 'Abdīn. 9 Note

as a NUN: the stonecutter's mistake, of course. If the subject of B.5 is the same as the Joshua named in lines 28-29 of B.3, then he was not distinguished by the amount of his contribution; perhaps his distinction was to have played an important part in the actual construction of the church.

B.6 A.D. 752-755 ṢALAḤ: MONASTERY OF MOR JACOB THE RECLUSE

Engraved vertically on one block 79.6 × 53 cm. in the eastern half of the pediment on the north façade of the conventual church. Inscribed surface: 42 × 28 cm. Letters carved big and in outline (cf. B.4), like those of MS. headings designed to be coloured in. Traces of red-brown paint in groove of outline (see on B.5). The block is cracked and the text is badly eroded. In attempting restoration the following measurements are useful: length of a line of writing: 42 cm.; HE: 7.9 cm. long; WAW: 4 cm. long; MIM: ca. 6 cm. long. We may take eight letters to the line as an approximate estimate, except for the last line, where [𐤊𐤍] seems to have been the last word. When freshly painted, B.6 may have been legible from the ground.

No previous publication.

*I, [...], the son of Moses,
deacon, from [...]
reno[vated] this house.*

𐤊𐤍 ... 𐤊𐤍	1
𐤊𐤍 𐤊𐤍 𐤊𐤍	2
[.....] 𐤊	3
𐤊𐤍 𐤊𐤍 𐤊𐤍	4
𐤊𐤍	5

Commentary: The shadow of 𐤊𐤍 at the beginning of line 1 may be deceptive. Most of the inscriptions in this corpus begin with a verb, a date, or a formula of praise. The letters 𐤊𐤍 at the beginning of line 2 do not lend themselves to the last two possibilities and the word 𐤊 in line 3 suggests that 𐤊 was part of a name. This name might have followed directly on a verb as its subject, but then we would not find an object further down. The letters 𐤊𐤍 at the beginning of line 5 apparently belong to the last word of the inscription, most obviously to be restored as [𐤊𐤍]. Comparison with other inscriptions suggests that the demonstrative pronoun refers to the building on which the memorial stands, so we might restore 𐤊𐤍 at the end of line 4 (cf. B.3 line 4 and B.7 line 5). This is most likely to be the object of a verb governed by the subject named at the head of the inscription; but in that case the verb must have stood at the beginning of line 4 and is probably to be restored (by reference to B.1 line 1) as 𐤊𐤍 or 𐤊𐤍, according to the restoration of a third or first person subject. (It must be admitted that line 4



B.6

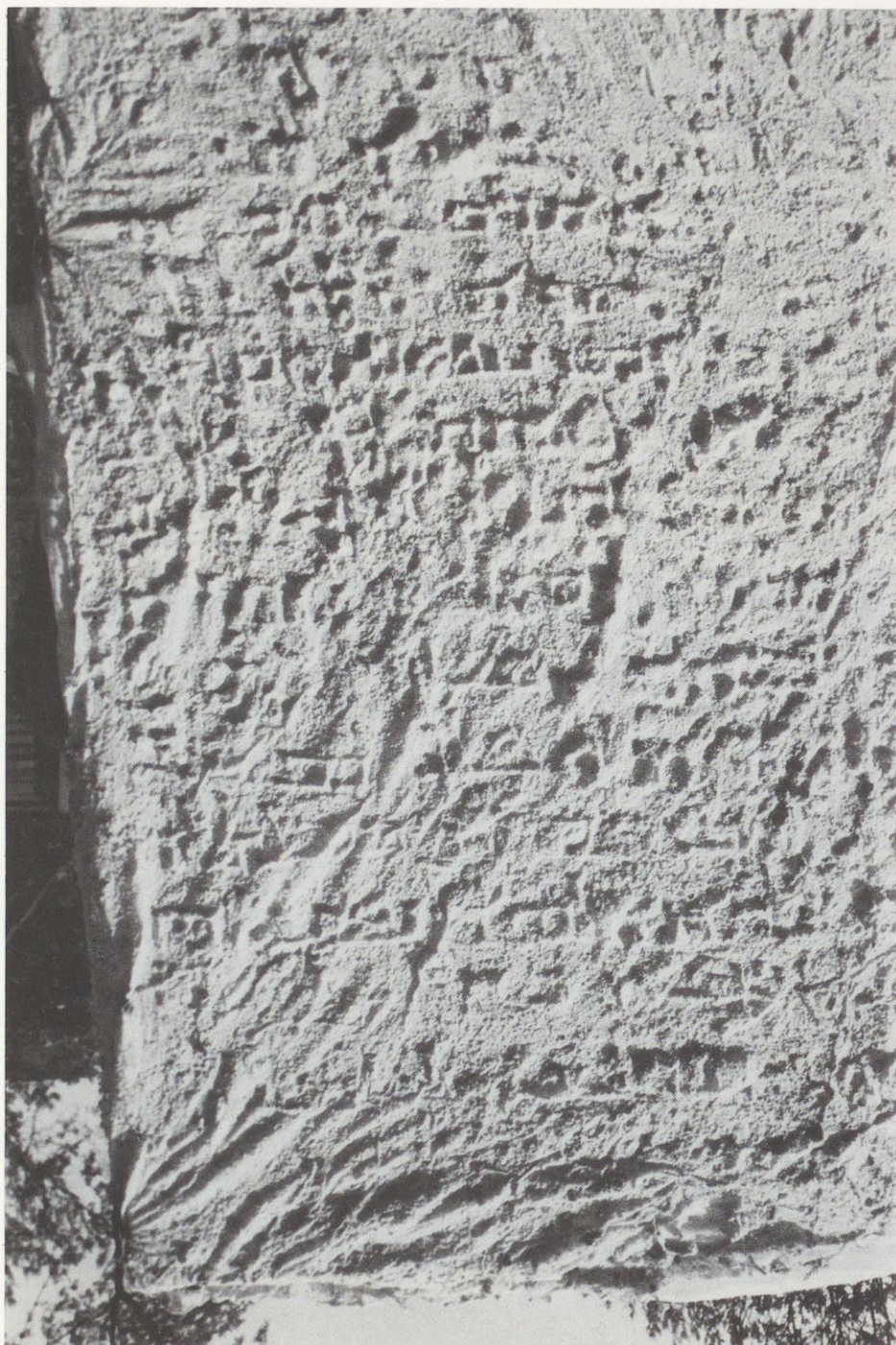
appears to have begun with $\text{HETH} + \text{YUDH}$, but I cannot find a suitable verb beginning with those letters, and the reading of YUDH is not certain.) The trace of an initial MIM in line 2 (towards the end) suggests the title ܡܝܡܝܢ , i.e. ܡܝܡܝܢ . All this is too conjectural to allow any conclusions to be drawn about the circumstances under which the church was built.

B.7 A.D. 752-755 ṢALAḤ: MONASTERY OF MOR JACOB THE RECLUSE

Engraved vertically on one block 60.5×110 cm. in the north façade of the conventual church, in the eastern half of the pediment, above and to the west of B.6. Medial height of letters: ca. 2 cm. or less; OLAF max. height 3.5 cm.; TETH max. vertical extension 6.3 cm.; LOMADH height 4.7 cm.; MIM max. length 4.3 cm.; QOF length 3.3 cm., height 2.5 cm.; TAW max. height 4.8 cm. Weather-worn. Traces of red-brown in incisions.

No previous publication.





B.8 detail, turned through 90° (latex squeeze)

- 14 א
- 13 א
- 12 הארוב הב אל
- 11 יעדא וז א ל
- 10 א בנחמנ ששנא חסר[י]א
- 9 [יגזר שגרימ]א [א]ישישנא [א]יגל[א]
- 8 רלנא א
- 7 מנא וזנא
- 6 אלפא מלך
- 5 מן[א]יגל[א] מן[א]יגל[א] א מלך
- 4 [א]א[א]א[א]א [א]א [א]א בלחא
- 3 אא בברא אלמא פרחמא
- 2 פרחמא לברא ב[א]לחמא
- 1 אלהא מנתא לחמא[א]

... and four ... in the days of *our* venerable and *h[ol]y* bishop [*Mor Cyriac*] ... a thousand *zuzê* ... *this* village and everyone who participated in it, whether in word or in deed, may God give him a good reward, by [the prayers] of all the saints, for ever and ev[er]!

Commentary: The first point of reference (and the only part of the inscription, apart from the closing prayer, which can be interpreted with certainty) is in line -10, where the words **ששנא חסר** can be regarded as secure. On the analogy of other inscriptions, and by reference to B.1 in particular, the restoration of this and the following line can be attempted. It is usual for such a dating formula to begin by naming the patriarch; that this one does not may indicate that the patriarch was mentioned earlier in the inscription. The traces in the eleventh and twelfth lines from the end do not lend themselves to a reconstruction involving the patriarch. Wherever the formula “in the year...” is used together with the formula “in the days of...” in the inscriptions of our corpus, the two follow one another without a break. Usually the year precedes the synchronism, but in A.16 it is the other way

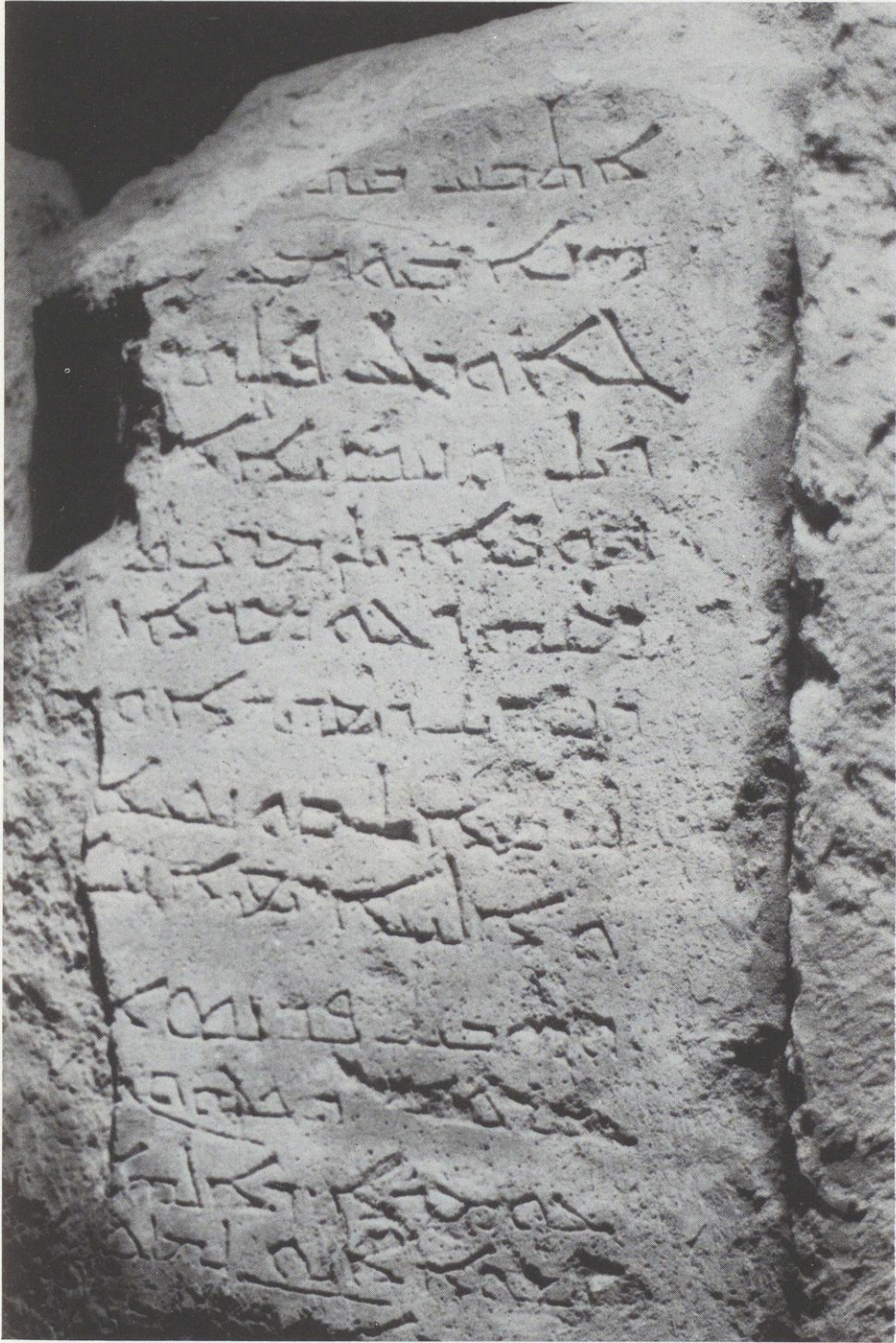
round. Line -8 contains traces which might be reconstructed as **ותק** and there is just room on the same line before that word for the date given in B.1, if the number 60 and the last digit were abbreviated. On the other hand, the word **ותק** on line -12 is in the right gender to agree with **ותק**, and there would be room before it for the rest of the date in full. After it can be read **ותק** (or perhaps **ותק**), perhaps the beginning of a relative clause about an event which occurred in the same year: ... [ותק]. In line -6 the clear reading **ותק** encourages the reading **ותק** in the previous line; the demonstrative before that presumably refers to the building (**ותק**). At the beginning of line -5 **ותק** suggests an analogy with B.3 lines 5 and 6, which invite the reader to look elsewhere for donors from outside Şalah. The thousand *zuzê* may be part of this external contribution, so that the lines -6 and -5 should be restored: **ותק** [ותק] **ותק**. In line -3: **ותק** for **ותק** (cf. A.2). In line -1 note the running together of **ותק**.

B.9 A.D. 775-790 MONASTERY OF THE CROSS IN BĒTH ĒL

In the corridor giving access to the chapel and mausoleum of Mor Aḥo (cf. A.15). Inscribed on one block 66 × 34 cm. (approx.) on the underside of the third arch away from the entrance in the west wall. Text across the shorter measurement of the surface in direction of curve of arch. Well preserved, except for top left corner of text and bottom lines.

No previous publication.

8	ותק	1	ותק
9	ותק	2	ותק
10	ותק	3	ותק
11	ותק	4	ותק
12	ותק	5	ותק
13	ותק	6	ותק
14	ותק	7	ותק
	[.....]	15	
	[.....]	16	



B.9 (detail)

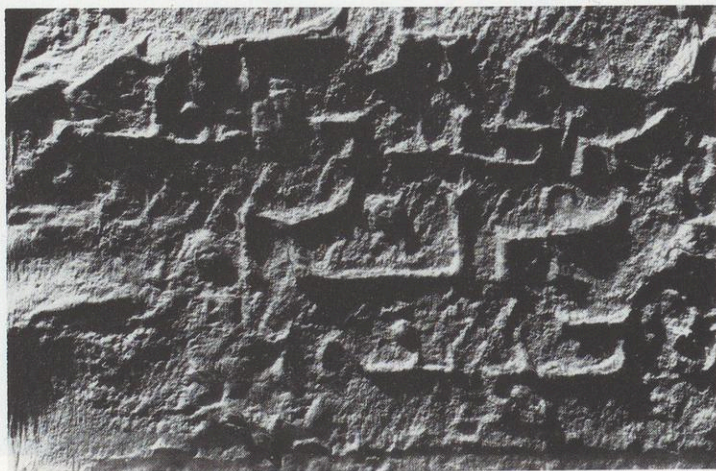
This beth [qadishê] was built in the days of [Mor] George, our patriarch, and our venerable b[is]hop, Mor S[ovo], of this abbey and [Mor] Daniel, the abbot, and [Mor] Ezekiel, the sacristan, and Elijah, the Head of the Brothers, and Abel, the administrator, [with] all the rest of [the sons (*i.e.* inmates: *cf.* A.6 line 4) of] the abbey; so may God make them worthy of [His] Kingdom which is in heaven [... ...].

Commentary: 1 The restoration is made by reference to A.15 and to the building itself, which is a burial vault. 4-5 Noteworthy is the cutter's readiness to split the word **ⲕⲁⲛⲁⲛⲁⲛⲁ**, although he might simply have abbreviated it to the first four letters on line 4. 5 The name of the bishop was not more than three or four letters in length, which makes the restoration virtually certain. 6 **ⲙⲁⲥ** for **ⲕⲙ ⲡ**, only here in this corpus. 9 **ⲕⲉⲗⲕⲁ** for **ⲕⲉⲗⲕⲁ**; note the absence of the title **ⲓⲁ**, showing that Elijah was of a lower rank: the "Brothers" of whom he was the chief were the unpriested monks (see Palmer, *Monk and Mason*, via index).

B.10 Probably A.D. 788/9 ⲬⲁⲬ: MONASTERY OF SAINTS SERGIUS AND BACCHUS

In nave of conventual church, above left-hand corner of southern entrance to sanctuary, on lintel stone. Thickness of lintel: ca. 38 cm. Text inscribed vertically. Max. vertical extension of cross to left of line 1: 18.5 cm.; original max. horizontal extension of same: ca. 10 cm. (*cf.* A.18). Well preserved, except for break across bottom left corner of text and cement covering end of text.

Previous publication: Jarry 47.



B.10 detail (paper squeeze)



B.10

ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ 1
 ܕܡܪܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ 2
 ܕܡܪܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ 3
 ܕܡܪܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ 4
 ܕܡܪܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ 5
 ܕܡܪܝܢ ܐܡܝܢ ܕܡܪܝܢ 6
 ... 7

To the glory and to the praise and to the honour of the Holy Trinity: this temple was built in the year one thousand and 100 in that (i.e. the reckoning) of the Greeks by the care [of ...].

Commentary: 2 Lack of space forced the mason to engrave the last OLAF below the RISH of **ܪܝܥܐܢܐ**. 4 The TAW was omitted in engraving **ܪܝܥܐܢܐ** and inserted afterwards, with a long *hasta* rising between the OLAF and the BETH. 5 After the WAW is preserved the right side of one of the rectangular letters: BETH, HE, MIM or QOF. These would indicate respectively: A.G. 1002, 1005, 1040, or 1100 (A.D. 690/1, 693/4, 728/9 or 788/9). The diction and the letter-forms are our only guides in choosing between these dates. The opening doxology is paralleled in C.3 (probably of 794/5) and the formula **ܠܝܠܐ** only in Pognon 99 and A.16 (of 976 and 1084/5). The distinctive TAW is paralleled by that in B.9 line 1. The latest of the four dates should therefore be provisionally restored. 7 This part of the stone is covered in cement; the text is unlikely to have finished with **ܝܫܝܥܐܢܐ**.

B.11 A.D. 887-96 QARTMĪN ABBEY

Complex incorporating five ground-floor rooms of non-liturgical function southeast of conventual church. Text moulded in relief in plaster on vault of southeastern room. The building is now a garage. Somewhat delapidated at left of text, otherwise well preserved.

No previous publication.

The patriarch, Mor Theodosius and
the venerable bishop of Ṭur 'Abdin (*sic*),
Mor Ezekiel, made this house.
Michael (wrote this).

ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ 1

ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ 2

ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ 3

ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ 4

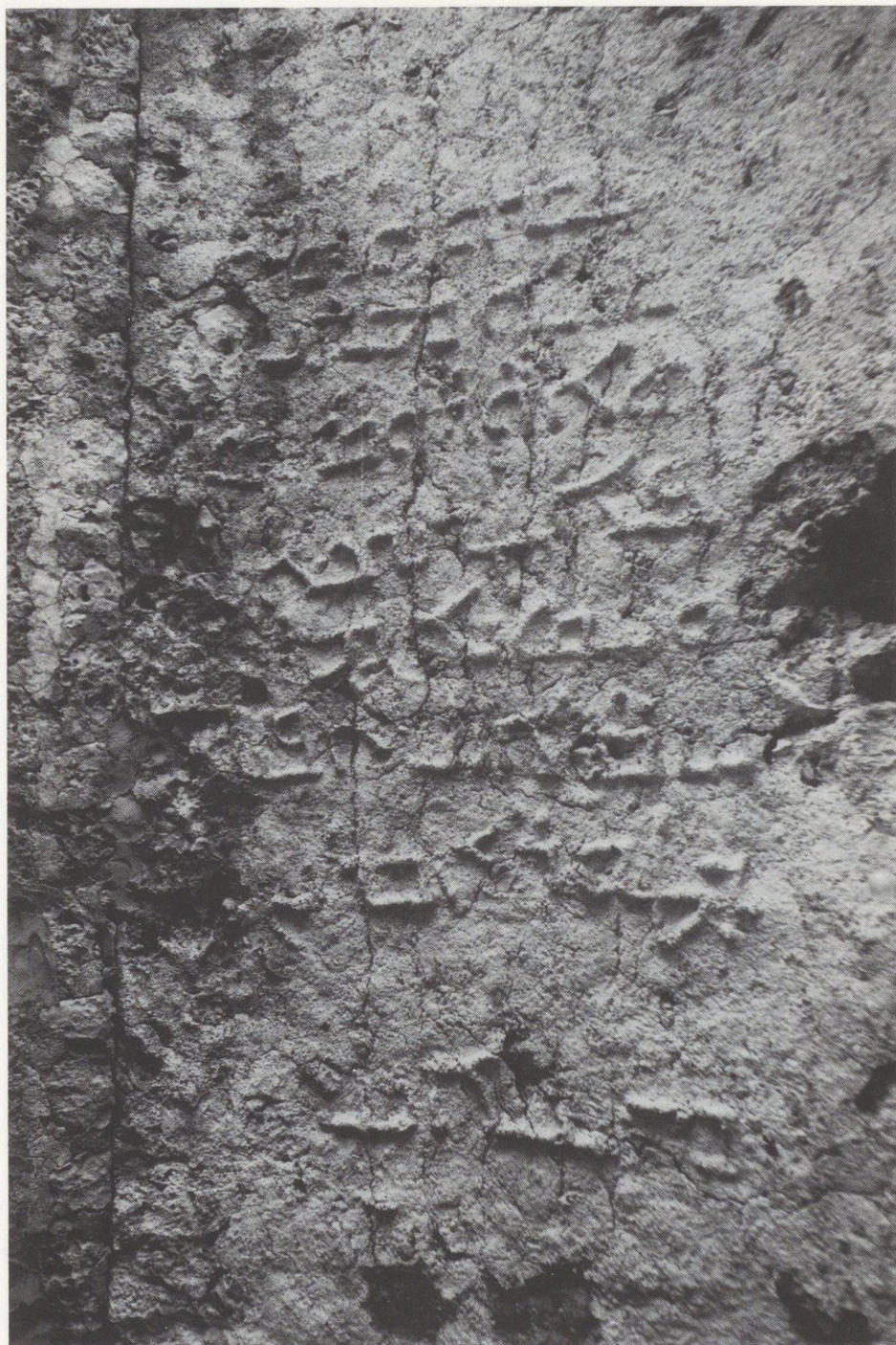
ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ 5

ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ 6

ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ 7

ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ 8

Commentary: 1-2 **ܠܝܠܐ ܠܝܠܐ** refers here to a complex of five chambers. 6 **[ܠܝܠܐ]** for **ܠܝܠܐ**. 7 This is the earliest known occurrence of a variant spelling of **ܠܝܠܐ**, with OLAF in place of 'E; it may have been invented by the patriarch Theodosius himself, who came from Qartmīn and resided there again at the end of his life (he reigned from 887-896); Theodosius knew Greek and the OLAF is best explained as a transcription of the ALPHA in τὸ Ῥάβδιον, τοῦ Ῥαβδίου etc., the Greek name for the castle of Ṭūr 'Abdīn. 8 Presumably the signature of the "writer" (cf. A.7 line 7).



B.11

B.12 A.D. 1031-ca. 1035 QARTMĪN ABBEY

Block, originally 45 × 20 cm. (approx.), now in two parts immured in east wall of nave of conventual church, below niche on south side of entrance to central sanctuary, one part on each side of an inscription dated 1867 (see pl. 13 in my unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford 1982; the nineteenth-cent. inscription is inaccurately represented by Jarry 78). Well planned; carefully executed; beautifully proportioned. Well preserved, but some in-filling with cement.

Previous publication: Jarry 77 and 79 (published as separate inscriptions, which form a good example of the shortcomings of his technique!)

1 בְּיָמֵינוּ הָיָה מִלְכָּא דְּכְרִיסְטוֹס
 2 אֲנִיכְרִיסְטוֹס דְּכְרִיסְטוֹס
 3 תְּכִיבְהוֹן דְּכְרִיסְטוֹס
 4 דְּכְרִיסְטוֹס דְּכְרִיסְטוֹס
 5 נְכִיבְהוֹן דְּכְרִיסְטוֹס
 6 אֲנִיכְרִיסְטוֹס דְּכְרִיסְטוֹס

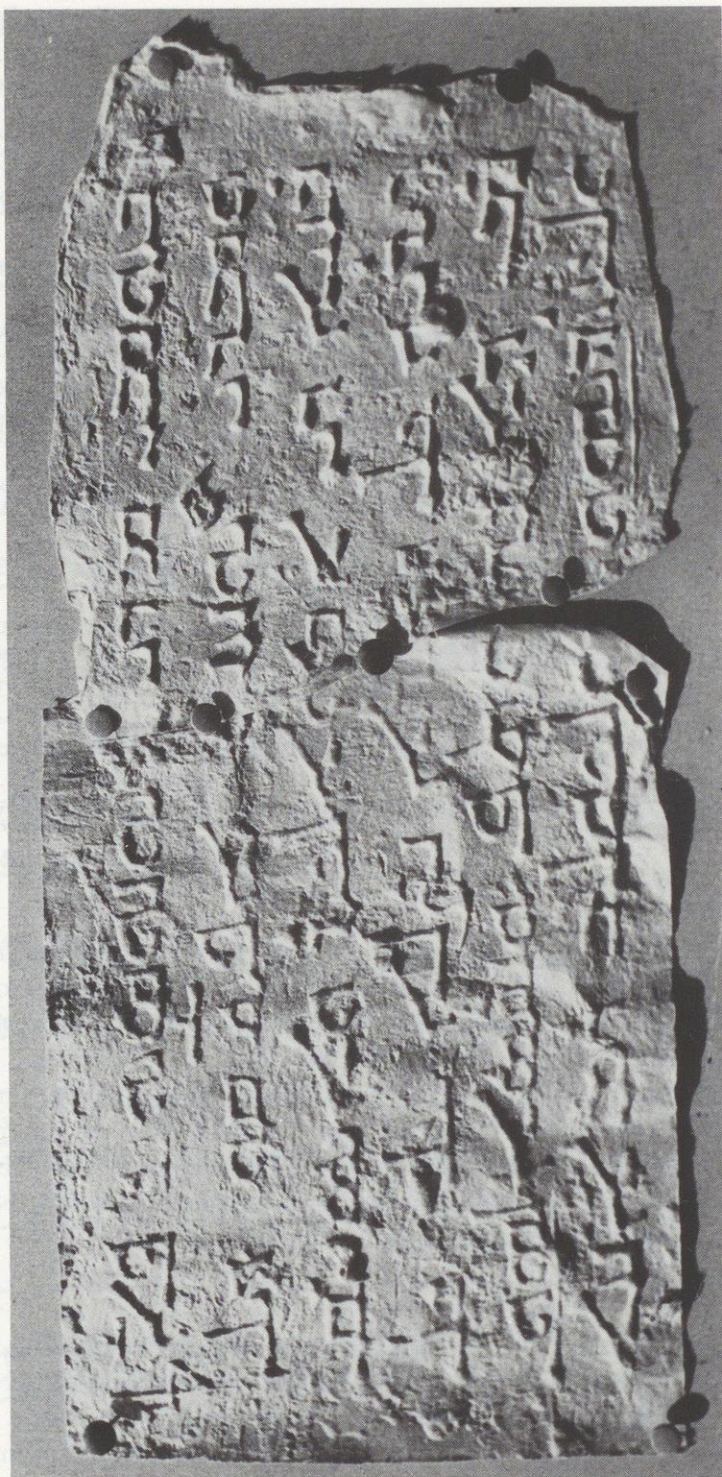
In the days of the patriarch Mor Denis and Mor John, our bishop. The builders were the monks Abū'l-Khēr and Isaac. Let everyone who reads (this) pray for all who participated and let him (ask God to) pardon them and their departed ones and Kulaib, the Head of the Brothers!

Commentary: 1 כְּרִיסְטוֹס for כְּרִיסְטוֹס. 2 אֲנִיכְרִיסְטוֹס for אֲנִיכְרִיסְטוֹס. 3 The third letter of אֲנִיכְרִיסְטוֹס is marred at the top right corner by a rising diagonal stroke. 4-5 Note the extra diacriticals, here engraved for the first time in this corpus (cf. B.3 line 2, commentary). [A text beginning “In the days of ...” is unusual and it is surprising, too, that “the builders” should be mentioned although the nature of the building is not specified; perhaps this information, with or without an exact date, was included in a line or two lines which have been lost from the head of the inscription. H.K.]

B.13 ca. 1105 QARTMĪN ABBEY

Highly crystallized, polished, red limestone block, immured in outer west wall of nave of conventual church to north of entrance as part of masonry blocking former opening to the nave. Inscribed surface measures 40.5 cm. in height, 33 cm. in width at top and 30 cm. at bottom. Rectangular sunken-relief zig-zag border carved around the text.

Previous publication: Pognon 14, with drawing; Baršawm, in the book cited in the introduction, p. 135; Dolabani, in the first book cited *ibid.*, pp. 167-8.



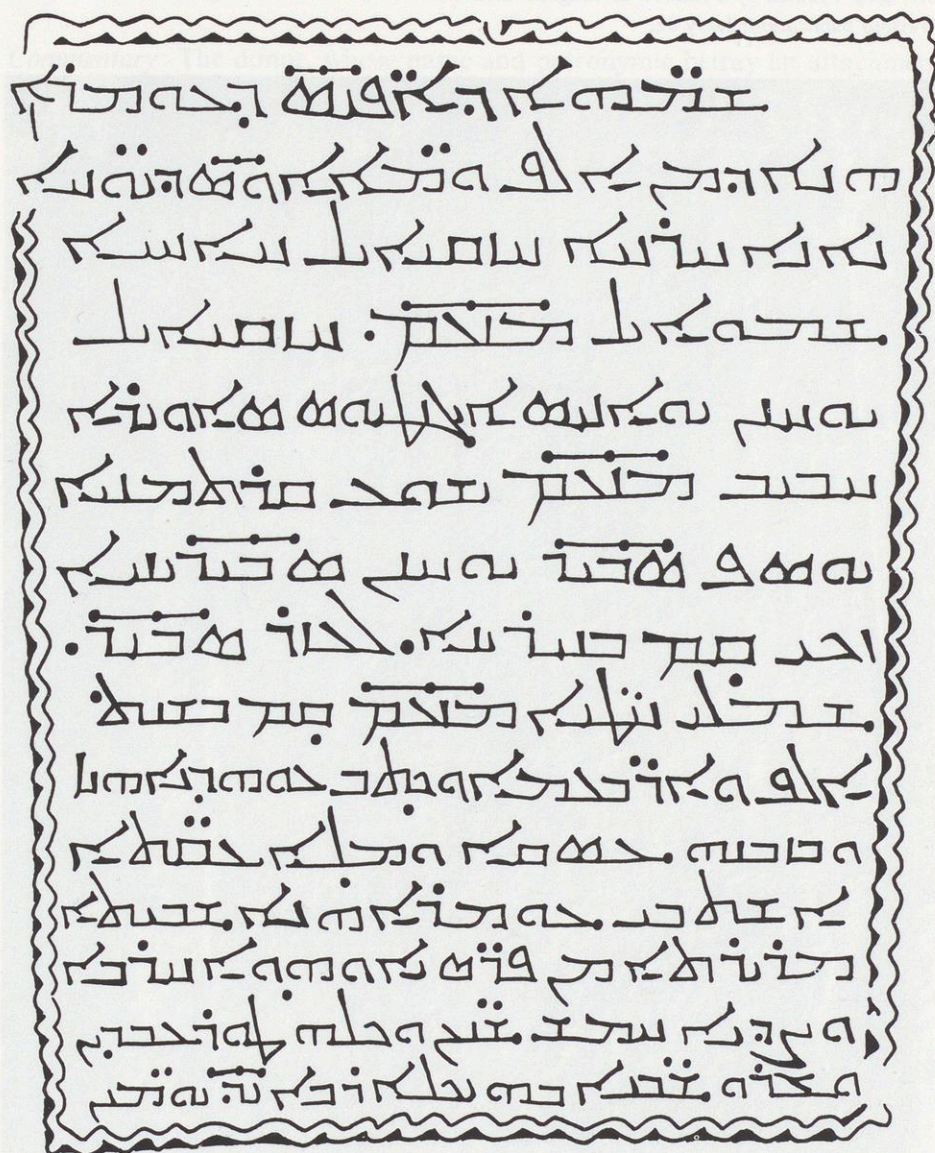
The two halves of B.12 (paper squeezes joined)

- 1 עֲבֹדָא דְּקִפְסָא דְּחַנְנִיָּא
 2 מִנְּהָ דְּרַחֲמֵי אֱלֹהִי דְּחַנְנִיָּא
 3 זִנְיָא שְׂמִיָּא שְׂמִיָּא
 4 עֲבֹדָא דְּחַנְנִיָּא. שְׂמִיָּא
 5 לֵשֶׁת לִשְׁמֵי אֱלֹהִי אֱלֹהִי
 6 עֲבֹדָא דְּחַנְנִיָּא שְׂמִיָּא
 7 לֵשֶׁת אֱלֹהִי אֱלֹהִי
 8 וְדִּם מִן חַנְנִיָּא לְחַנְנִיָּא.
 9 עֲבֹדָא דְּחַנְנִיָּא מִן חַנְנִיָּא
 10 אֱלֹהִי דְּחַנְנִיָּא דְּחַנְנִיָּא
 11 דְּחַנְנִיָּא דְּחַנְנִיָּא
 12 אֱלֹהִי דְּחַנְנִיָּא שְׂמִיָּא
 13 חַנְנִיָּא דְּחַנְנִיָּא דְּחַנְנִיָּא
 14 חַנְנִיָּא שְׂמִיָּא חַנְנִיָּא
 15 חַנְנִיָּא שְׂמִיָּא חַנְנִיָּא

The names of the bishops of this abbey from one thousand one hundred and 60 of the Greeks: Nonnus of Ḥarrān, Ezekiel of Ḥaḥ, Samuel of Bēth Manʿem, Ezekiel, John, Iwannis, Ignatius, Severus, Ḥabīb of Bēth Manʿem, Joshua of Qartmīn, Joseph of Bēth Svīrīnā, John of Bēth Svīrīnā, Zakay, whose accession was disputed, Lazarus of Bēth Svīrīnā, Shamly, sinner, of Bēth Manʿem, who acceded in the year one thousand and four hundred and wrote this memorial; and in his hard and trouble-filled time, this abbey was sacked in a cruel raid by the Persians and it was ruined and deserted for five years with all of Ṭur ʿAbdin; and the raiders camped in the Great Temple (for) 14 days.

Commentary: 1 ⲕⲁⲩⲉⲩⲩⲁ for ⲕⲁⲩⲉⲩⲩⲁ. 4 ⲕⲁⲩⲉⲩⲩⲁ for ⲕⲁⲩⲉⲩⲩⲁ, “of Bēth Manʿem” (also lines 6 and 9). 6 ⲕⲁⲩⲉⲩⲩⲁ; ⲕⲁⲩⲉⲩⲩⲁ is also attested. 7 ⲕⲁⲩⲉⲩⲩⲁ for ⲕⲁⲩⲉⲩⲩⲁ, “of Bēth Svīrīnā”; the mason clearly intended to abbreviate this word again at the end of the line, but changed his

mind after making an incision over the first part of it. 10 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥 for 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥. 14 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥; traditional and correct spelling, whereas a hand-written account of the "Persian" (i.e. Seljuq Turkish) invasion by the secretary of Bishop Shamly (cited by Baršawm in the book referred to above, pp. 91-2) affects the new spelling with OLAF (cf. B.11). 15 𐭠𐭣𐭥𐭥𐭥 refers to the conventual church.



B.13 (drawn by the author)

SECTION C: INSCRIPTIONS WITH NO DATE

C.1 Early 8th century QARTMĪN ABBEY

Pinkish limestone block 28×17 cm. recently reset in north wall of monastic enclosure ca. 20 m. from northwest corner at chest height. Text lightly and carefully inscribed with vertical orientation. Lower part markedly more eroded, showing that the upper part was protected (cf. B.1, B.8). Framed by a shallow rectangular incision.

Previous publication: Jarry 82.



ܩܬܝܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ 1

ܩܬܝܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ 2

ܩܬܝܪܐ ܕܡܪܝܡ 3

Patricia, the daughter of Eluṣṭriya, made this portico.

Commentary: The donor, whose name and patronymic betray an attachment to Byzantine aristocratic culture and who further demonstrates her Greco-Roman mentality by building a stoa and by proclaiming her financial autonomy as a woman, considered further identification of her person by origin or rank superfluous. It is fair to infer that her father, at least, was very well known in the region. There was a governor of Dara with the same name (a calque on Byz. ἰλλούστριος, itself derived from Lat. *illustris*) who flourished in the late 7th century and was a benefactor of a Jacobite monastery. This we learn from the unpublished *Life of Theodotos of Amida* (d. 698); the same text mentions another Ēlūṣṭrīyâ, a native of Ḥarrân, who was governor of Samosata. He showed hostility to at least one Jacobite monastery. To judge by the context, that was in the 680s. He should be identified with Ēlūṣṭrīyâ, the son of 'Araq, of Ḥarrân, a prisoner of war released with 6,000 Arab captives by the Byzantine emperor Justinian II in 705 (*Chron. 1234*, p. 298). Justinian's predecessor had ordered an invasion of the province of Samosata in which many thousands of Arabs were captured (*Chron. Michael*, XI.16a, p. 448). If C.1 was erected ca. 700, Patricia must have been a daughter of the governor of Dara, since Samosata is remote from Tūr 'Abdīn; and her father's name is only attested for these two governors. Characteristics of the letter-forms which encourage such an early dating are: the arched right leg of OLAF; WAW with a horizontal start to the curve and an end slightly below the baseline; the rounded "cat's ears" SEMKATH; the relatively upright TAW and the loop of the same letter, with its upper horizontal.

C.2 9th century ARNAS: CHURCH OF MOR CYRIAC

Templon- or chancel-screen, now destroyed together with the inscription. Text inscribed vertically at top right corner across two blocks (*pace* Pognon) between wall-pier of nave and capital of right-hand column (Bell/Mango, pl. 100). Double rectangular incision framing text, with single *ansa* to left. Unskillfully executed.

Previous publication: Pognon 52, with drawing; Bell/Mango, pl. 100 (photograph only); Baršawm, *op. cit.*, p. 136.



C.2 detail (photo G. M. L. Bell; by permission of the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne)

- 1 כעל אלפא העבדי הולדא
- 2 הולמנדא חבד דה סגלנדא מ
- 3 נא סנדא אלפא הולמנדא כולד
- 4 להבנדא פלנדא דה נרז אשעם
- 5 חבנדא שטא אשעם נרז
- 6 סולנדא אלמא מה דנדא [א] ענד
- 7 סנדא רנדא חבד מה [ב] כד דנדא
- 8 לבא לחנדא לחבד אדנ
- 9 נפ דה לבא מה סנדא אלפא חנד
- 10 חנדא כנד דנד נפד נרז
- 11 אכנדא כעל אלפא העבדי
- 12 הולמנדא כנד נפד כאנדא כנד [ב] מ[א]
- 13 נפ העבדי חב דוסא לחבד אדנ

In the year one thousand and seventy-two of Alexander: The priest and rector Elijah made this templon-screen in the days of our blessed patriarch, Mor Isaac, and in the days of the venerable bishop, Mor Cyriac. May God, for Whose holy Name's sake he made (it) with eagerness (*lit.* ran and made), make for his departed ones a good commemoration for ever! Amen.

The priest and rector Elijah, *the son* of the late departed Mor Abraham, went out of this world in the year one thousand and fifty-eight, in the month of April, on the fourth (day) in *this* (month). [*May*] his slumber [*be*] restful with the righteous for ever! Amen.

Commentary:

2 𐤀𐤓𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕 for 𐤀𐤓𐤕𐤕𐤕𐤕. / 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 for 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 (κατάστρωμα). 3 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 for 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕. / 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 for 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 (cf. A.5).

10 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 for 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕. / 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 for 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕; Pognon and Baršawm read 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕, but Pognon's drawing and Bell's photograph allow my reading, the bad spelling being typical of this inscription. Pognon takes 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 to be a transcription of the Arabic ديوان. But how could a village rector be described as being "in the administration" of Mor Abraham, whom Pognon takes for a bishop of Tūr 'Abdīn? And why should an Arabic word be used instead of, e.g., 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕? Neither is there a parallel for an epigraphic reference to a bishop without the title 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 or 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 or both. Elijah's father was probably a priest at Arnas, who retired as a widower to a nearby monastery, like Rabban Daniel of Heshterek (A.17 and Pognon 115); his priestly rank earned him the title of "Mor" in his monastery (cf. B.9). 12 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 for 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕.

13 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 for 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕. / 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕 for 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕.

How can Elijah have built his screen in 761/2, if he did so in the reign of Isaac (755-6), having died already in 746/7? The latter date is certainly corrupt; in alphabetic abbreviation A.G. 1078 (𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕) can be mistaken for A.G. 1058 (𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕). We must assume that the mason was copying from a handwritten draft which made this mistake possible. The synchronism with Isaac must be the inaccurate guess of a later generation. The letter-forms indicate a ninth-century date, particularly the angular HE and TAW and the occasional pointed WAW, and the SHIN, which is certainly earlier than the tenth century. Possibly, contemporary records were made of the construction of the screen and of the death of Elijah on the fly-leaf of the Gospel and, when this Gospel needed replacement, it was decided to make the inscription. The synchronism with bishop Cyriac was already present, but that with the patriarch Isaac is an interpolation, whence the unusual repetition of the formula 𐤕𐤓𐤕𐤕. The prayer for Elijah's departed ones (lines 7-8) was written while he was alive; and the phrase "the late departed" (line 10) was chosen while the memory of Abraham's death was still fresh in the mind of the writer.

C.3 Perhaps 794/5 BĒTH SVĪRĪNĀ: CHURCH OF MOR DODHŌ

Outdoor oratory (ܥܠܡܐ) on south side of church. Text around archivolt. Much eroded. Stones 8 and 9 empty.

Previous publication: Bell/Mango, pp. 92-3 n. 141.

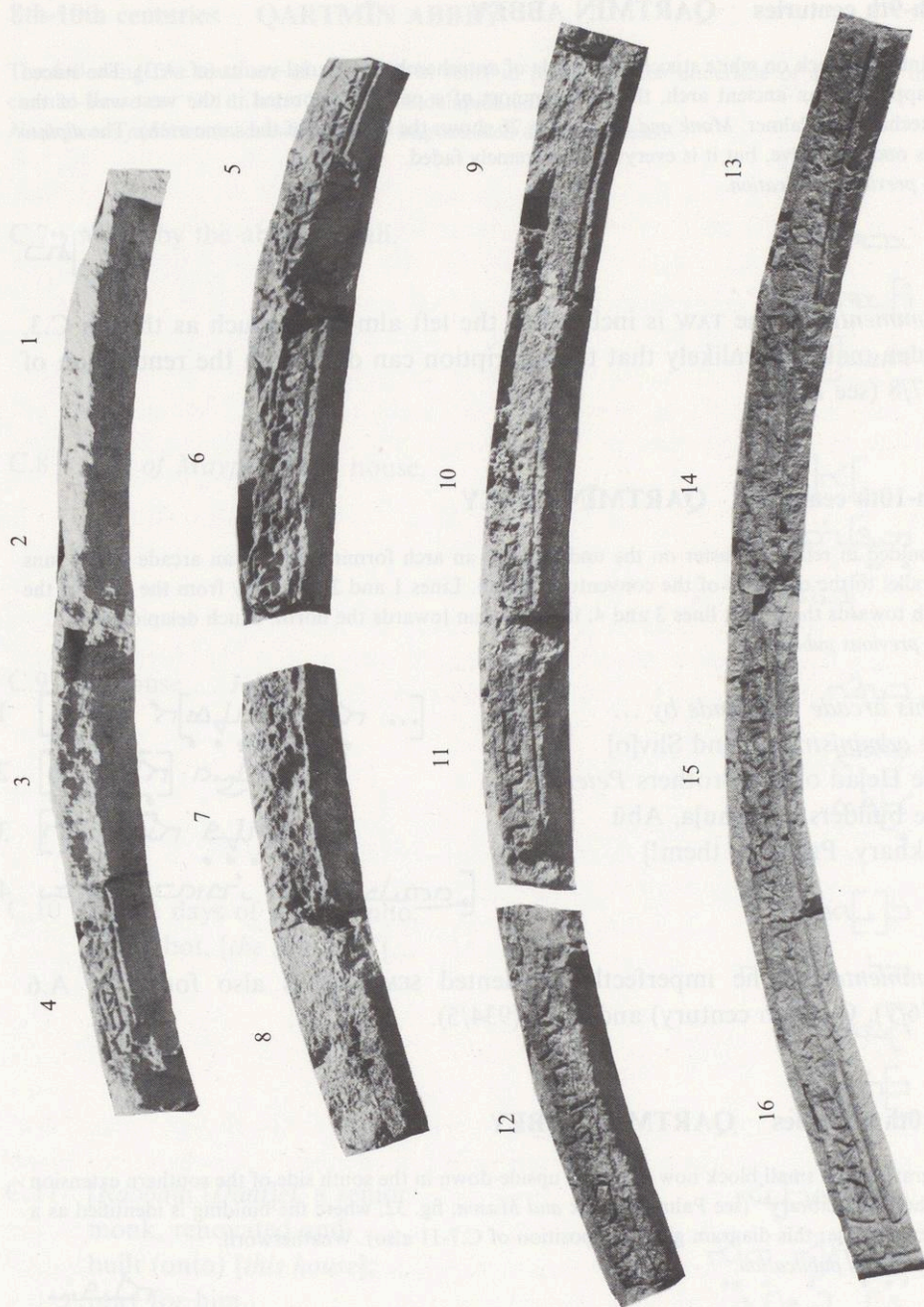


The oratory at Bēth Svīrīnā, showing the direction of inscription C.3 (see opposite)

- | | |
|---------------|----|
| [] | 1 |
| [] | 2 |
| [] | 3 |
| [ܥܠܡܐ] | 4 |
| ܡܪܕܘܬܐ ܕܠܗܐ | 5 |
| [ܐܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ] | 6 |
| [] | 7 |
| ܥܠܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ | 10 |
| [ܐܬܝܬܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ] | 11 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܥܠܡܐ | 12 |
| [ܥܠܡܐ ܕܠܗܐ] | 13 |
| [] | 14 |
| [] | 15 |
| ܡܪܕܘܬܐ | 16 |

... [with] holy prai[se] [the year one thousand] and [one hundred and] six of [the Greeks] was built [this] beth [šlutho]; the priest *Theodoṭios* wrote (this).

Commentary: Being prevented from working for any length of time at Bēth Svīrīnā, I have attempted a restoration from my photographs. Closer scrutiny of the stones will surely improve the readings. The oratory commemorated in “lines” (i.e. on stones) 12-13 contains an apse-cross similar in style to those of Arnas and Kfarzē churches and so is unlikely to be much later than the eighth century; the letter-forms of C.3 agree with that, although no other inscription earlier than the end of that century has such a pronounced inclination in TAW. (The hollow form of SHIN is not found after 962.) This is why I prefer to read ܐܬܝܬܐ at the left of the eighth line/stone, instead of ܐܬܝܬܐ which would suggest ܐܬܝܬܐ, giving the date A.G. 1046 (A.D. 734/5).



C.3

C.7-11 8th-10th centuries QARTMĪN ABBEY

The following five texts are all moulded in relief in plaster on the underside of arches in the charnel-house or "Old Library". All much delapidated.

No previous publication; drawings in my unpublished doctoral thesis.

C.7 Made by the abbot Isaiah.

חבר 1

י[עציה] 2

כ[עציה] 3

C.8 of *Mayperqaṭ* ... house.

י[עציה] 1

י[עציה] 2

י[עציה] 3

C.9 ... house ... John ...

י[עציה] 1

י[עציה] 2

י[עציה] 3

C.10 In the days of Mor Denḥo,
the abbot, [*the so*]n of G[...]

י[עציה] 1

י[עציה] 2

י[עציה] 3

י[עציה] 4

C.11 [*Rabba*]n [*Dani*]el, a senior
monk, renovated and
built (onto) [*this house*];
pray for him.

י[עציה] 1

י[עציה] 2

י[עציה] 3

י[עציה] 4

י[עציה] 5

Commentary: **C.7** The hollow SHIN is not found after 962. **C.8** The form conjectured in line 2 is unattested. / The architectural relation between C.7 and C.8 suggests that they are contemporary. **C.9** The third line runs vertically to the left of lines 1 and 2. / The SEMKATH shows no sign of the “stiffened” lines typical of the 10th century. **C.10** The find-place of A.8 (784/5) is in the wall built around the arch on which C.10 is written. Both mention an abbot Denho and the letter-forms show striking similarities, particularly GOMAL, which is drawn as one straight diagonal met by a horizontal, and YUDH tucked away underneath RISH. These characteristics are also found in A.3 of 757/8, but in none of the other inscriptions at Qartmīn. It is true that C.2 (9th century) has the YUDH tucked away under the RISH and, to judge by Pognon’s drawings, some of the inscriptions at Heshterek had the “tangential” GOMAL; but in other respects these inscriptions differ in their letter-forms from C.10 and from A.8. If C.10 and A.8 are contemporary, why was A.8 hidden? Perhaps the omission of the patriarch’s title made it unusable, so that the memorial had to be remade on another block. **C.11** There is no sign of the pointed angle on WAW which seems typical of 9th and 10th-century inscriptions and the forms of TAW and of SEMKATH confirm the impression that this is an 8th or early 9th-century production.

C.12 10th century? QARTMĪN ABBEY

Inscribed on a fractured stone now set in the pavement under the central arch of the arcade on the west side of the conventual church. What is preserved is well preserved.

No previous publication; drawing in my unpublished doctoral thesis.

Yulurios [... ...]
bishop of Ṭu[r] ‘Abdin

ܝܠܘܪܝܘܣ ܥܝܬܝܠܘܪܝܘܣ ܕܬܘܪ ܐܒܕܝܢ 1
ܝܠܘܪܝܘܣ ܕܬܘܪ ܐܒܕܝܢ 2

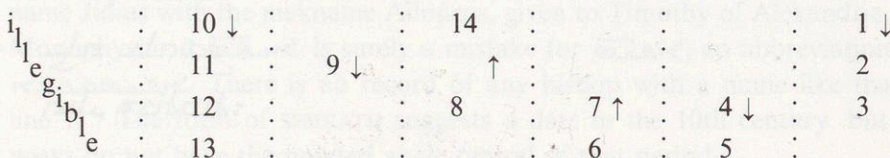
Commentary: **1** The name is a mystery: its ending is Greek, but what Greek name could possibly be so transcribed? It seems like a combination of the name Julius with the nickname Ailouros, given to Timothy of Alexandria, the Monophysite. **2** ܝܠܘܪ is surely a mistake for ܝܠܘܪܝܘܣ, an abbreviation for ܝܠܘܪܝܘܣܐܢܝܬܝܢ. There is no record of any bishop with a name like that in line 1. / The form of SEMKATH suggests a date in the 10th century, but the WAWs do not have the pointed angle typical of that period.

Commentary: 1 **ملبه**: apparently referring to a kind of portico behind the entrance-door, unless the inscription has been moved from its original position. 2 **حسب** for **حسب** or **حسب**. 5 A formula unique in this corpus. Note the use of a diacritical point to indicate the first person singular form of the verb. The careful layout, the distinctive **ṢODHE**, and the differentiated chisel-work, which attempts to imitate the thick-and-thin of quill-script, show that this inscription belongs to the period of calligraphic revival in Tūr 'Abdīn between the 11th and 14th centuries; it stands in the same tradition as A.15, A.17 and B.12.

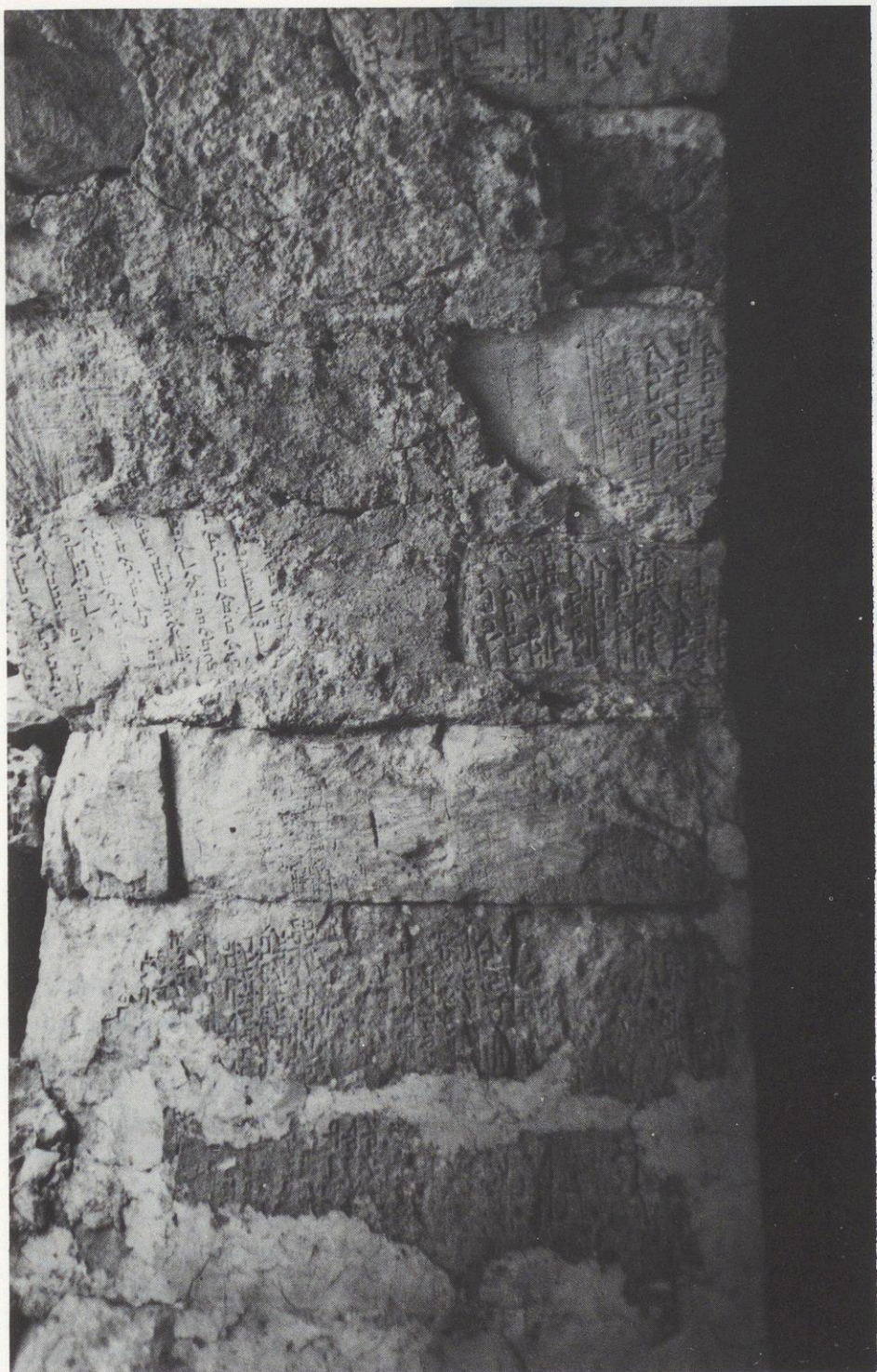
SECTION D: INSCRIPTIONS IN THE ANTECHAMBER OF THE
CONVENTUAL CHURCH IN THE MONASTERY OF STS. SERGIUS AND BACCHUS,
CLOSE BY **ḤAḤ**

The arch opposite the entrance to the church dated by B.10 is inscribed on the underside with a large number of epitaphs, a few graffiti and one record of renovation-work. Erosion and a partial layer of plaster, which I did not presume to remove, account for the disappearance of further inscriptions. Indeed, every bare surface of the underside of the arch, which is about one metre in breadth, shows traces of letters. With the exception of the record of a renovation, the legible inscriptions and graffiti will be taken here in sequence, beginning always at the top of the writing on each of the voussoirs in turn and moving from south to north. Each voussoir consists of one long and one short block, on which the inscriptions are engraved across the breadth of the stone in the direction of the curve of the arch, with one inscription below another, being separated from it by one or two horizontal incisions. D.4 has a frame sculpted in the form of two ropes twisted together. D.6, D.7, D.8 and D.14 run from north to south, the others in the contrary direction.

Diagram showing relative positions of inscriptions D.1-14



Previous publication: Jarry 44 = D.1; Jarry 43, with photograph = D.4 and D.5; Jarry 42 = D.6; Jarry 41, with photograph = D.8; Jarry 40, with photograph = D.9, D.10, D.11 and D.12; Jarry 39, with photograph = D.14; Jarry 45 = D.15.



D.4-14

D.1



(photo Hannes Cornet)

1 + ܢܥܡ ܕܠܥ
2 ܠܥܡ
3 ܢܥܡ ܠܥܡ
4 ܕܡܢ ܠܥܡ
5 ܕܡܢ ܠܥܡ
6 ܠܥܡ]
7 ...]

The monk Gabriel left the world
and went to his Lord in the year
one thousand [and ...].

Commentary: 4 Cf. B.3, commentary on line 13. 5 The NUN was first omitted, then inserted above the TAW.

(Further down:)

D.2 ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
Simeon the sinner.

(Further down:)

D.3 ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
Rabban Šlīvô.

(Further south:)

D.4 A.D. 1218.

... in the year 1529 of the Greeks, on
Tuesday the 17th of April. Let everyone
who reads (this) pray for him,
for our Lord's sake!

1 [...] ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
2 ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
3 ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
4 ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
5 ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
6 ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
7 ܠܥܡ ܠܥܡ
8 ܠܥܡ

Commentary: 2 ܠܥܡ for ܠܥܡ. 5 ܠܥܡ for ܠܥܡ; literally:
“the third day of the week”. (17th April, 1218, was indeed a Tuesday.)

(On the same stone:)

D.5 A.D. 1188.

1 ܥܕ ܟܠ ܡܫܬܬܐ
 2 ܩܕ ܡܬܬܬܐ ܒܢܐ
 3 ܐܚ ܕܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ
 4 ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ

In the year 1500 of the Greeks died Rabban Šlīvô, the monk, in October.

Commentary: 1-2 ܩܕ / ܡܬܬܬܐ for ܩܕܡܬܬܬܐ. 4 For the lines over ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ, although it is not abbreviated, compare ܡܬܬܬܐ in A.17. / From its position after D.4 on the same stone it must be inferred that this is a retrospective commemoration.

(Further south:)

D.6 A.D. 1182 or 1232.

[...] 1
 [...] 2
 3 ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ
 4 ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ
 5 ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ
 6 ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ
 7 ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ

... (and) three of the Greeks on Friday the 26th of February. Let everyone who reads (this) pray for him and for Abraham, the sinner!

Commentary: 1-3 Assuming that this inscription is to be dated in the 12th or 13th centuries, the date could be either [149]3 or [154]3 of the Seleucid era. 4 The BETH of ܡܬܬܬܐ was first omitted, then inserted above the TETH. 6-7 Inscribed in smaller letters.

(Further down:)

D.7 ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ / ܡܬܬܬܐ ܡܬܬܬܐ
 John, pray for him, a sinner.

(Further south:)

D.8 A.D. 1216

Rabban Gabriel, the chaste
solitary of noble works,
departed [to] his Lord in
the year 1528 of the Greeks
on the 25th of October.
Let everyone who reads
(this) pray for him!

[ܬܦܠܠ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ] 1
ܢܚܝܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ [ܕܚܝܬܐ] 2
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 3
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 4
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 5
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 6
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 7
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 8
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 9
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 10
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 11
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 12
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ 13

Commentary: 5 ܚܝܬܐ for ܚܝܬܐ.
8 ܚܝܬܐ for ܚܝܬܐ.

(Further south:)

D.9 ܚܝܬܐ / ܚܝܬܐ / ܚܝܬܐ / ܚܝܬܐ / ܚܝܬܐ
Abraham, the sinner, inscribed these memorials.

Commentary: ܚܝܬܐ for ܚܝܬܐ.

(Further south:)

D.10 A.D. 1102/3.

... Rub[el] [left the world and
departed] to [his Lord] (in)
the y[ea]r one thousand [400
and ...] four of the Greeks. Let
everyone [who reads (this pray
that God may) par]don [him
and his departed ones!]

[ܬܦܠܠ ܕܢܚܝܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ] 1
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ [ܚܝܬܐ] 2
ܚܝܬܐ — [...] 3
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ... 4
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ ܚܝܬܐ [ܚܝܬܐ] 5
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ [ܚܝܬܐ] 6
ܚܝܬܐ ܕܚܝܬܐ [ܚܝܬܐ] 7

Commentary: The restoration of the century is justified by D.11.

(On the same stone:)

D.11 A.D. 1124/5.

The monk Abraham left
this world and departed
to [his] Lord in the y[ear]
one thousand and four
hun[dred] and thirty-six
[of the] blessed Greeks,
on the da[y ...].

1	ܕܐܒܪܗܡ ܕܢܚܝܬ
2	ܕܠܗ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
3	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
4	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
5	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
6	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
7	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
8	[...]
9	[...]
10	[...]

Commentary: 6 With D.12 this inscription with an auspicious epithet for the nation after whom the Seleucid era is named stands alone in this corpus.

(On the same stone:)

D.12 A.D. 1125/6.

Jeremiah, the monk, left [this]
world and departed to [his Lord]
(in) the y[ear] one thousand and
four [hundred and] 37 of the
blessed Greeks.

1	ܕܝܪܡܝܐ ܕܢܚܝܬ
2	ܕܠܗ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
3	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
4	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
5	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

Commentary: 5 See the foregoing. If I have restored ܡܪܝܬܐ in full, in spite of the line over the first letters indicating abbreviation, it is because there must have been room for two letters on the broken corner. For a possible explanation, cf. comment on A.16 line 5.

(Further down:)

D.13 ܕܕܐܘܕ / ܕܐܘܕ

David left (the world), a sinner.

(On the same *voussoir* as D.8:)

D.14 A.D. 1442/3.

Some cement in-filling, especially in lines 6-8.

- | | |
|---------------------|----|
| [ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ] | 1 |
| [ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ] | 2 |
| + ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 3 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 4 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 5 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 6 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 7 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 8 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 9 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 10 |
| ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ | 11 |

Th[is] monastery was [renov]ated [by the bish]op Philoxenos, [that is,] the venerable Qawmê of Bêth Svîrînâ + [by the ca]re of the chaste monk Elijah [and of] the priests and the deacons and the rest [of] the true faithful of this abbey and region (vel sim.). Let everyone who reads (this) [pray for eve]ryone who participated! The year: 1754 of the Greeks, in the year ...

Commentary: **2-3** The continuator of the ecclesiastical chronicle by Gregory Barhebraeus (Addai of Bêth Svîrînâ, it would seem) records the election of Qawmê, the son of Jafal of Bêth Svîrînâ, as patriarch of Tûr 'Abdîn in 1445/6; he adds that Qawmê had previously been bishop of Qartmîn Abbey and had been transferred thence to Ḥaḥ, and that his name as bishop was Philoxenos (ed. Abbeloos and Lamy, II, col. 819). **6** ܐܠܗܐ for ܐܠܗܐ. **7** The translation *ad sensum* would suppose e.g. ܐܠܗܐ ܕܡܪܝܢܐ ܕܩܐܡܐ. **5** and **8** Abbreviations as in A.18 line 6 and A.5 line 5. **11** The bottom of these letters is broken away, so it cannot be decided what is joined to what.

- D.15 Engraved horizontally on the west wall of the church near the window to the left of the entrance. Next to it is a stone with a small human figure carved in outline ; the figure is robed like a monk.

Efrem the believer (and) John	ܐܦܪܝܡ ܕܐܒܝܗ ܝܗܢܐ	1
(his) spiritual brother renovated	ܡܢܗ ܕܐܦܪܝܡ	2
this monastery. Let everyone	ܡܢ ܡܢܗ ܕܐܦܪܝܡ	3
who reads (this) pray for him	ܕܐܦܪܝܡ ܕܐܒܝܗ	4
and for [his departed ones!]	ܠܗ ܕܐܦܪܝܡ ܕܐܒܝܗ	5
The year:]	ܠܗ ܕܐܦܪܝܡ ܕܐܒܝܗ	6
	[ܝܝܬܝܗ ܕܐܦܪܝܡ ܕܐܒܝܗ]	7
	[...]	8
	[...]	9

List of Inscriptions

Section A:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. QARTMIN ABBEY 534 (memorial) | 11. ZAZ 932 (epitaph) |
| 2. ḤAḤ 739/40 (building) | 12. KFARZE 934/5 (building) |
| 3. QARTMIN ABBEY 757/8 (building) | 13. MARDIN 961/2 (building) |
| 4. ROME/AMIDA 759 or 760 (epitaph) | 14. QARTMIN AB. 988/9 (memorial) |
| 5. HESHTEREK 771/2 (building) | 15. MON. OF CROSS 1033/4 (building) |
| 6. QARTMIN ABBEY 776/7 (slab) | 16. MOR MOSES 1084/5 (memorial) |
| 7. KFARBE 778/9 (epitaph) | 17. MOR MOSES 1172/3 (epitaph) |
| 8. QARTMIN ABBEY 784/5 (winepress) | 18. QARTMIN AB. 1188/9 (building) |
| 9. ḤABSENUS 791/2 (building) | 19. B. SVIRINA 1198/9 (building) |
| 10. MIDUN 911 or 914 (epitaph) | 20. ṢALAH 1226 (epitaph) |

Section B:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1-8. ṢALAH 752-5 (building) | 11. QARTMIN AB. 887-96 (building) |
| 9. MON. OF CROSS 775-90 (building) | 12. QARTMIN AB. 1031-35 (building) |
| 10. ḤAḤ 788/9? (building) | 13. QARTMIN AB. c. 1105 (memorial) |

Section C:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. QARTMIN AB. early C8 (building) | 6. QARTMIN AB. C8-C10 (memorial) |
| 2. ARNAS C9 (building) | 7-11. QARTMIN AB. C8-C10 (building) |
| 3. B. SVIRINA 794/5? (building) | 12. QARTMIN AB. C10? (memorial) |
| 4. QARTMIN AB. C8-C9 (memorial) | 13. QARTMIN VILLAGE C9-C10 (mem.) |
| 5. QARTMIN AB. C8-C10 (building?) | 14. ḤABSENUS C11-C14 (building) |

Section D:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1-13. ḤAḤ, SERGIUS AND BACCHUS 1102/3-1218 or 1232 (epitaphs) | |
| 14. ibid. 1442/3 (building) | 15. ibid. undated (building) |

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