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CONTENTS

Abbreviations	8
<i>Michał Gawlikowski, Marta Żuchowska</i> La mosaïque de Bellérophon	9
<i>Michał Gawlikowski, Khaled Asʿad</i> The Imperial cult in Palmyra under the Antonines	43
<i>Michał Gawlikowski</i> The Roman army in Palmyra under Tiberius	49
<i>Karol Juchniewicz, Khaled Asʿad, Khalil al Hariri</i> The defense wall in Palmyra after recent Syrian excavations	55
<i>Dagmara Wielgosz</i> La sculpture en marbre à Palmyre	75
<i>Marta Żuchowska</i> The Western Gate at Palmyra	107

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	<i>Archäologischer Anzeiger</i>
AAAS	<i>Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes</i>
AE	<i>L'Année épigraphique</i>
AM	<i>Athenische Mitteilungen</i> – <i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der antiken Welt</i>
ArchCl	<i>Archeologia Classica</i>
AS	<i>Antiquités syriennes</i>
BAR	<i>British Archaeological Reports</i>
BEtO	<i>Bulletin d'études orientales</i>
BGU	<i>Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen [Staatlichen] Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden</i>
BJb	<i>Bonner Jahrbücher</i>
BMC Arabia	<i>Coins in the British Museum. Arabia, Mesopotamia and Persia</i>
BMC Parthia	<i>Coins in the British Museum. Parthia</i>
BMusBeyr	<i>Bulletin du Musée de Beyrouth</i>
BSAA	<i>Bulletin de la Société archéologique d'Alexandrie</i>
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i>
CIS	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum</i>
CRAI	<i>Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i>
DaM	<i>Damaszener Mitteilungen</i>
DHA	<i>Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne</i>
EtTrav	<i>Etudes et Travaux</i>
FGrH	<i>Fragmente Griechischer Historiker</i>
HR	<i>Cassius Dio, Historia Romana</i>
IG	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae, Berlin</i>
IGLS	<i>Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie</i>
IGR	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes</i>
ILS	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae</i>
Inv.	<i>Inventaire des inscriptions de Palmyre</i>
JGS	<i>Journal of Glass Studies</i>
JRA	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
LIMC	<i>Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae</i>
MEFRA	<i>Mélanges de l'Ecole française de Rome</i>
MUSJ	<i>Mélanges de l'Université St. Joseph</i>
NH	<i>Naturalis Historia</i>
PACT	<i>Journal of the European Study Group on Physical, Chemical and Mathematical Techniques applied to Archaeology</i>
PAM	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i>
P. Dura	<i>Dura-Europos Parchments and Papyri</i>
P. Oxy	<i>Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i>
PAT	<i>Palmyrene Aramaic Texts</i>
PNO	<i>La Palmyrène du Nord-Ouest</i>
RA	<i>Revue archéologique</i>
RdA	<i>Rivista di Archeologia</i>
RM	<i>Römische Mitteilungen</i> – <i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung</i>
RMD	<i>Roman Military Diplomas</i>
RTP	<i>Recueil des tessères de Palmyre</i>
SEG	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
SHA	<i>Scriptores Historiae Augustae</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
ZPE	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

THE ROMAN ARMY IN PALMYRA UNDER TIBERIUS

MICHAŁ GAWLIKOWSKI

In 2006, Khalil al-Hariri, the new director of the Palmyra Museum, found an interesting monument in the Valley of Tombs. It is now on display in the Museum garden, to the right of the entrance [Fig. 1]. I am grateful to Mr. Khalil al-Hariri for his kind permission to publish this discovery.

The stone was lying face down between the ruins of the funerary temples nos 84 and 84a, which stand side by side just south of Diocletian's Camp. Both tombs are utterly destroyed and cannot be dated precisely, but they are at any rate more than a century younger than our inscription (cf. Gawlikowski 1970: 129), which could have been reused in one of them as a building block. It is a high rectangular stele (H. 230 cm, W. 62 cm, Th. 42 cm) with an uneven lower end once set into the ground. The decoration sculpted in low relief is rudimentary: flat ring, perhaps meant to be a wreath, inscribed in a steep triangular pediment and a simple *cavetto* moulding around the epigraphic field (W. 33 cm). Above the inscription there is a sunken rectangle (W. 33 cm, H. 15 cm), the rough surface of which probably received a plate with a painted likeness of the deceased. The text includes nine lines, together 40 cm in height. The letters are of unequal size, from 3 to 4 cm high [Fig. 2].

The Greek text is written very inexpertly: the letters vary considerably in size and shape, the lines are cut in an erratic manner. Nevertheless, there are no mistakes in the Greek.

Μαβογαῖον
Δημητρίου σ-
τρατιώτη<ν> σπεί-
ρης Δαμασκηνῶ-
ν Αναμος καὶ Θαιμ-
ος οἱ ἐπίτροποι α-
ὐτοῦ ἀρετῇ-
ς ἔνεκαν ἡλτ'
Γορπίου

For Mabogaios son of Demetrios, soldier of the cohort of the Damascenes, Anamos and Thaimos, his tutors, because of his virtue. In the month of Gorpiaios 338. (September AD 27)

The formula is honorific, with the name of the honorand in the accusative and the final ἔνεκα being typical of this class of inscriptions in Palmyra and elsewhere. It is enough to recall here two dedications of statues for a benefactor of the Bel sanctuary, both contemporary with our

inscription.¹ I know only one other example of such syntax in a funerary context, in which the influence of honorific monuments seems highly probable (the likenesses of the dead were sculpted on a column in this case) (Gatier 2005: 77-97, esp. 82). Our stele belongs to a well represented type of Hellenistic origin. Even if the *naïskoi* of Southern Syria are more often shrines than funerary monuments (cf. Arnaud 1986: 373-386), there are early examples of similar tombstones in Apamea and elsewhere (cf. e.g. Balty 1981: 201), although not in Palmyra.

The name of the deceased, Mabogaios, means "One of Mabbôg", that is from Hierapolis, called by the Aramaic name of this site of the great sanctuary of Atargatis. Needless to say, the name is not proof of our soldier being a native of the place, but more surely a sign of devotion to the "Syrian Goddess" of Mabbôg-Hierapolis.² His two older colleagues bear typically Arabic names An'amu and Taymu, transcribed as Anamos and Thaimos, both common in Syria.³ The self-description of the two as *epitropoi* is unusual (normally, the term is translated as the Latin *procurator*), but the meaning in this case seems clear: Anamos and Thaimos were soldiers responsible for the training of a new conscript.

The early date of the inscription makes for its main interest in the local context. In fact, there is only one earlier testimony of Roman military presence in Palmyra, an inscription of Minucius Rufus, *legatus* of the *legio X Fretensis*, dedicating the statues of Tiberius, Germanicus and Drusus in the Bel temple.⁴ This dedication must have occurred during Germanicus' stay in Syria, that is, in AD 18-19. It is generally thought, after H. Seyrig, that this monument marked the annexation of Palmyra into the province. On that occasion, the legionary commander probably visited the oasis with some troops, but there is no proof of a fixed garrison having been left there.

Strictly speaking, our monument in itself is not proof either. An auxiliary unit or a part of it could have stayed in Palmyra on some consignment for a short while, and a soldier happened to pass away. However, this massive tombstone would rather suggest a permanent presence of the troop, even if no other soldiers are on record for over a century to come. After all, only six military tombstones were found in Palmyra up to date, while the stationing of the Roman garrison is well documented from AD 167.⁵

More importantly, this is the earliest mention of this unit, and indeed of any auxiliary unit recruited in Syria.⁶ There are on record two of them levied originally in Damascus.⁷ One is *cohors I Flavia Damascenorum milliaria equitata sagittariorum*, so a double regiment of archers, partly mounted. The name *Flavia* suggests the unit was formed under Vespasian to fight in the Jewish war, but all available evidence points to its continuous presence in Upper Germany since at least AD 90 but certainly after 82; it would have been transferred there soon after the war ended. This cohort need not concern us here.

The other Damascene cohort had no dynastic surname and for this reason always appeared as recruited earlier, even if attested later.⁸ A prefect of the *cohors prima Damascenorum*, C. Cornelius Minicianus, retired to Bergomum in Italy; he could be identical with a friend of Pliny the Younger, recommended by him to the governor of Judaea in AD 106/107.⁹ The presence of the *cohors*

1 *Inv.* IX 11-12, dated AD 24 and 25: Μάλιχον | εὐνοίας ἕνεκα .

2 The name Mabogaios: inscription in Damascus National Museum no. 243, cf. R. Mouterde in *SEG* VII 229; Abdul Hak 1951: 72. Aurelius Mambogaeus (*P. Dura* 97,18) and Mombog[aeus] Themarsa (*P. Dura* 82 II 19) were two soldiers of the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* in the 3rd century. For the variants of the name in Syria, see Lightfoot 2003: 56-57; another new case shall be published shortly by J. Aliquot, *IGLS* XI 22 (cf. also *IGLS* XI, 20, 36, A/2). I thank Julien Aliquot for having provided this information.

3 Both names appear very often in southern Syria, cf. Sartre 1985: 177-178 and 204-205. For Anamos, cf. Wuthnow 1930: 21; Stark 1971: 6, 70 (only one example, *PNO* 57). For Thaimos, cf. Wuthnow 1930: 52; Stark 1971: 54-55, 117 (very popular in Palmyra).

4 Seyrig 1932: 266-275; *Inv.* IX, 2. Cf. Will 1985: 268-269.

5 Seyrig 1933: 152-168. Holder 1980: 159, cites in Syria only five 1st-century military tombstones, including three from Gerasa and one from Bazuriyeh near Palmyra (Seyrig 1933: 166 = *AE* 1933, 215).

6 Cf. Dąbrowa 1986: 93-108 (102, note 1): two auxiliary units stationed in Syria under Augustus; Dąbrowa 1979: 233-254, listing 12 cohorts about AD 60.

7 Spaul 2000: 432-433.

8 Spaul 2000: 432; Russel 1995: (history of the cohort, 84-87); Eck and Pangerl 2005: 101.

9 *CIL* V 5126; *ILS* 2722. Cf. Russel 1995: 84-85, resuming the discussion on the case, not relevant here.

I Damascenorum sagittaria is evidenced in Syria Palaestina between AD 136 and 186, that is immediately after the Bar Kochba revolt (AD 132-135).¹⁰ During this war, two of the cohort's retired commanders, M. Claudius Serenus and Claudius Philoxenos resided in Egypt,¹¹ but this is no reason to follow those who believe that the cohort itself stayed there.

At any rate, a mention of *coh. I Damascenorum Armeniaca* has been recently found in a military diploma dated AD 90 and a fragment of AD 87, both listing the units in Iudaea (Cotton, Eck and Isaac 2003: 17-18). It must be the same unit. The cohort is mentioned again, as *Damascenorum Armeniacum*, in the same province (then called *Syria Palaestina*) in AD 160 (Eck 1993: 451-459). The title should be understood as a distinction earned in the expedition of Corbulo in AD 58-60.

The new inscription shows that Damascenes were recruited already in the very beginning of the 1st century AD. The names of soldiers as mentioned in the text are distinctly Syrian. Sent to Palmyra to keep the Syrian desert for Rome, they were probably in part a horse unit, though they are described only as archers. They distinguished themselves in the Armenian expedition, then probably took part in the Jewish war of Vespasian, or at least served in Palestine after the fall of Jerusalem, then took part in suppressing the Bar Kochba rising and stayed on to secure the country for the Empire.

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¹⁰ RMD III 160, 173, I 69.

¹¹ P. Oxy III 477, AD 133; P. Oxy III 477, BGU I 73, AD 135. Cf. Alston 1995: 188.

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*Fig. 1. Funerary tombstone of Mabogaios in the Palmyra Museum
(Photo M. Gawlikowski)*

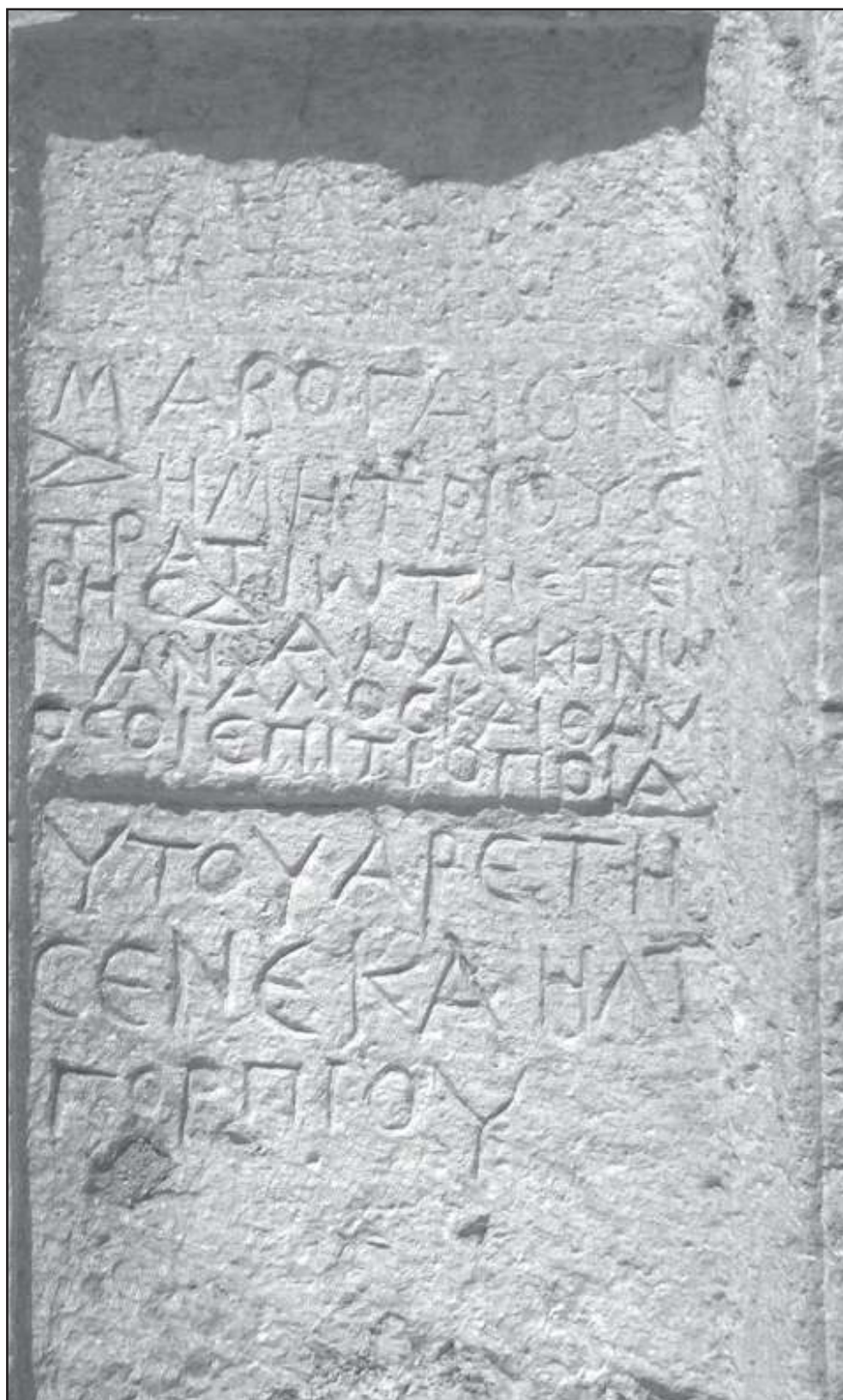


Fig. 2. Close-up of the inscription of Mabogaios
(Photo M. Gawlikowski)