



TYCHE

Beiträge zur Alten Geschichte Papyrologie und Epigraphik

Herausgegeben von

Gerhard Dobesch, Hermann Harrauer
Peter Siewert und Ekkehard Weber

Band 11, 1996

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H O L Z H A U S E N

Herausgegeben von:

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Tafeln 1–10

LESLIE S. B. MACCOULL

Notes on Arab Allies as *foederati* in Inscriptions

It is a great merit of Irfan Shahîd's increasingly monumental series of works *Byzantium and the Arabs* to bring to the notice of scholars, both Byzantinists and Arabists, inscriptions mentioning figures who should be more widely known as they fit into the context of their times. Consonant with Shahîd's consistent designation of Byzantium's Arab allies as *foederati*, Chapter V section XV of *Byzantium and the Arabs on the Sixth Century*, Washington, D.C. 1994, (hereafter *BASIC*) vol. I, part 1, pp. 489–512, is entitled *Greek Federate Epigraphy*: it treats five inscriptions that throw light on sixth-century Ghassanid rulers and their activities. An earlier section (pp. 259–260) likewise deals with two inscriptions from Qasr el-Gharbi in Syria that mention Arethas (Harith), king of the Christian (Monophysite) Ghassanids A.D. 529–569. Discussing these texts with I. Shahîd has led me, at his prompting, to comment further in this journal on some of them and texts related to them.

I: *IGLSYR* V 2553B and D

In *BASIC* I.1, p. 259 Shahîd republishes Jalabert-Mouterde *IGLSYR* V 2553B, reprinting with it the French editor's translation from their p. 243¹. No one has straightened out the odd invocation formula in lines 1–4: Ἐν ἄνόματ[ι] | τοῦ Πατρὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, σωτήρα κ. τ. λ.; transl. by J.-M. as „Au nom de notre Père Jésus-Christ, sauveur ...“. Far from being some kind of indication of „doctrine monophysite“ (J.-M. *ibid.*), this is simply a case of a forgetful stonecutter's having switched in mid-stream from a Trinitarian invocation formula (comparable to Bagnall and Worp's Types 2G–2J from papyri)² to a Christ invocation formula (comparable to Bagnall and Worp's Type 1, *ibid.* 113). The word ἡμῶν led the stonecutter to think of κυρίου καὶ δεσπότου ... Θεοῦ καὶ σωτήρος ἡμῶν, and then hence go on to write Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ and the rest³. Further in this inscriptions, lines 12–14, J.-M. print στρατέ and translate „Qu'il combatte ...“. This is impossible. Shahîd points out in *BASIC* I. 1, pp. 506 and 528 that στρατηλάτης⁴, conceived of a synonymous with *magister militum*, could be an honorary title. Surely in 2553B this makes sense as a title of

¹Following D. Schlumberger in *Syria* 20 (1939) 370 with fig. 27, p. 367.

²R. S. Bagnall, K. A. Worp, *Christian Invocations in the Papyri*, CdÉ 56 (1981) 112–133, here 114.

³The first known invocation from an Egyptian papyrus, a Christ type (Type 1), is in *P.Erlangen* 67 (Herakleopolite), dated 17. IX. 591. The emperor Maurice's decree enjoining the use of invocations to head documents would have dated from before then and its effects taken time to reach Middle and Upper Egypt (Bagnall and Worp, *Invocations* 112). However, the use of invocations in inscriptions on stone, and in (Eastern) provinces other than Egypt, is far from having been studied systematically.

⁴Cf. J. Durliat in *BZ* 72 (1979) 306–320.

the addressee. Since the text of lines 10–12 proceeds normally in the form [ἐπὶ] ... τῆς φυλαρχίας τοῦ ἔνδοξοτάτου Ἀρέθας στρατε(λάτου) (my expansion of the last), the translation should be corrected to read: „In the phylarchate of the *gloriosissimus* Arethas, *magister militum*“. This Arethas was the Ghassanid ruler of 529–569.

Subsequently (p. 260) Shahīd republishes *IGLSYR* V 2553D, commenting, as lavishly elsewhere (pp. 293–294, 486–497, 515–518, 521–522), on the titulature of the person addressed in the inscription, Fl. Arethas, here styled *patricius*. This second inscription is dated Seleucid era 870⁵ = A.D. 558/9, and this dated document is used as evidence for the patriciate of this Ghassanid ruler and for when this rank was conferred.

II: Lef 685 = *SB* V 8704

In *TM* 12 (1994) 339–341 with Pl. III, J. Gascou re-edits Lef 685 = *SB* V 8704. In Gascou's new text we find in lines 4–5 the name and title of Fl. Arithas (i. e. Arethas), the *paneuphemos dux*. Πανεύφημος is usually the epithet of a consul (*CSBE* 132, for the years 542–566 *passim*); here and in *PSI* IV 481 are two of the three known instances where it is applied to a *dux*⁶. In *BASIC* I. 1 it is repeatedly argued that this title is also characteristic of a *patricius* (489–499, esp. 496, 518; cf. *BASIC* I.2, p. 629); its Latin equivalent is *famosissimus*. Among Byzantium's Arabs the supreme phylarch tended to be given this title. Now clearly this Arethas of Harith is not the Ghassanid king of 529–556: that person would not appear as a *dux*, and *duces* tended to have the epithet ἔνδοξοτάτος (*gloriosissimus*)⁷ or περίβλεπτος (*spectabilis*). There was an Arethas known from during the reign of Maurice (*BASIC* I.1, p. 664, stemma, List II, no. 6). Perhaps this Arethas of Lef 685 is that person, possibly one of the brothers (a Monophysite or a Chalcedonian?⁸) of the then Ghassanid king Mundir or of his son and successor Nu`man. Thus the fourteenth indiction of line 5 of this inscription would correspond to A.D. 595/6; Phaophi 1 of that year would be 28. IX. 595. The person who put up the inscription commemorating his rebuilding of a gate (*porta*) was a τοποτηρητής of this *dux* Arethas, a *comes* named Paulakios. The *dux* is here not also styled a patrician. Since the inscription apparently came from Upper Egypt (perhaps Ombos: Gascou 339), this member of the Ghassanid house of Arethas would have been serving in a military capacity in that part of the province.

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⁵Or possibly 880: the second numeral could be the top of a π, giving an equivalence to A.D. 568/9.

⁶The third example is the *dux* whose name is not preserved in line 1 of the draft portion of the text of *P.Berol.* 25009 (Hermopolite, 2nd half of the 6th cent.), in M. Maehler, *Trouble in Alexandria in a Letter of the Sixth Century*, *GRBS* 17 (1976) 197–203, here 198.

⁷In *P.Erlangen* 120 Fl. Hephaestus (*PLRE* III, pp. 582–583; fl. 540s–550s) has both ἔνδοξοτάτος and πανεύφημος. This individual was praetorian prefect of Oriens in 551/2.

⁸For the latter cf. *BASIC* I.1, pp. 471–475.