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UNPUBLISHED SYRIAC INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE RUINS OF SAINT SERGIUS' CHURCH IN ENEŠ (TURKEY)

This paper is part of a larger ongoing RIS project (“Recueil des Inscriptions Syriaques”), which aims at gathering Christian Syriac inscriptions from Turkey¹. The outcome of the project will be a volume in the series on Syriac inscriptions published by the “Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres”².

In this article, we will discuss the results of one case study, namely the unpublished inscriptions from the ruins of the church of Saint Sergius in Eneš, also written Ehresh, modern Gümüşgün. The village is located on the western

¹ We are grateful to Alain Desreumaux (CNRS, Paris) who entrusted us with the epigraphic material coming from Turkey he collected in the past, and we thank Andrew Palmer for his fruitful remarks.

² Volumes already published deal with the inscriptions from Kerala (Jacob Thekeparampil, Françoise Briquel-Chatonnet and Alain Desreumaux, *Inscriptions du Kérala* [Recueil des inscriptions syriaques 1], Paris, De Boccard, 2008) and from Iraq (Amir Harrak, *Syriac and Garshuni inscriptions of Iraq* [Recueil des inscriptions syriaques 2], Paris, De Boccard, 2010).

bank of the Euphrates, 16 km North of Zeugma, modern Belkıs, a well-known city on the main road connecting to Mesopotamia (Fig. 1).

The church of Saint Sergius is located slightly outside the village of Eneš. It originally belonged to the Syrian Orthodox community; at an unknown date, probably near the beginning of the second millennium, before the period of the Crusades, it became an Armenian church, as evidenced by a large number of Armenian graffiti left on the walls. About five kilometers to the North, Rumkale was the headquarters of the Armenian *catholicos* during the 13th century³. Since the site was never excavated, it is uncertain whether the church was part of a monastery or of a pilgrimage station. Hansgerd Hellenkemper reconstructed the plan of the church in 1978 which was adapted by Andrew Palmer in 1993⁴. It is a one-nave church, flanked on

³ For more information, see Andrew Palmer, “The Messiah and the Mahdi: History Presented as the Writing on the Wall”, in H. Hokwerda *et al.* (eds), *Polyphonia Byzantina: Studies in Honour of Willem J. Aerts*, Göttingen, Egbert Fortsten, 1993, p. 45-84. See also “Eneš” and “Erenköy” in Justine Gaborit, *La Vallée engloutie : géographie historique du Moyen-Euphrate (du IV^e s. av. J.-C. au VII^e s. ap. J.-C.)* (Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 199), vol. 1, Beyrouth, Presses de l’IFPO, 2015, p. 121, 130 (Map of F. Cumont’s journey in 1905), 137-138.

⁴ Hansgerd Hellenkemper, “Kirchen und Klöster in der Nördlichen Euphratesia”, in S. Şahin *et al.* (eds), *Studien zur Religion und Kultur Kleinasiens*, vol. 1 (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain 66/1), Leiden, Brill, 1978,

the South by a narthex. A room is adjacent to the sanctuary on the South (Fig. 2 & Fig. 3).

Eneš was first visited by Jean-Baptiste Chabot, then by Henri Pognon at the end of the 19th century, for epigraphic purposes⁵. They both published the long Syriac inscription engraved on the South wall of the church⁶. More recently, Andrew Palmer re-edited the same inscription and published the one on the East wall⁷. In 1998, Alain Desreumaux visited the site and found two other Syriac inscriptions and three graffiti. Since one of these is too damaged, only the two inscriptions and two of the graffiti will be presented here; they are published on the basis of Alain Desreumaux's photographs and drawings.

Inscription 1 - West Wall

The first inscription contains nine fragmentary lines (most probably ten lines originally) with deeply engraved letters written in Estrangela on a limestone block found inside the church among the debris collapsed from the

p. 389-414; Andrew Palmer, "The Messiah and the Mahdi ...", p. 49.

⁵ With regard to other journeys and visitors along the Euphrates river, see Justine Gaborit, *La Vallée engloutie ...*, p. 120-121, 137-138.

⁶ Jean-Baptiste Chabot, "Notes d'épigraphie et d'archéologie orientale", *Journal Asiatique* IX.16, 1900, p. 249-288 (in part. p. 283-288); Henri Pognon, *Inscriptions sémitiques de la Syrie, de la Mésopotamie et de la région de Mossoul*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1907, p. 148-151, n° 84, pl. XXXIV.

⁷ Andrew Palmer, "The Messiah and the Mahdi ...".

western wall. Therefore, the orientation of the text, i.e. horizontal or vertical, is hard to determine. It is likely that it was written vertically, since the inscription is engraved on a boss carved on one of the stone's short-sides, recalling vertical inscriptions engraved in a sort of cartouche in a *tabula ansata*.⁸ There is no way of knowing whether the boss was made specifically in order to bear the inscription – this hypothesis is probable, since, to our knowledge, it is the only rusticated stone in the building –, or whether it is a pre-existing boss. In both cases, the boss was deliberately used to highlight the inscription (Fig. 4).

Only the ending of each line is preserved, which makes it hard to understand the context. The remaining words or fragments of words do not suffice for a reliable reconstruction of the text:

[...] this	ܠܡ[
[...] and Passion	ܠܡܘܐ[
[...] the Father	ܠܡܦ[
[...] of the Son	ܠܡܝܢ[
[...] who/of those	ܠܡܝܢ[
[...] rejoice	ܠܡܝܢ[
[...] ?	ܠܡܝܢ[
[... of the Gre]eks in	ܠܡܝܢ[
Octob[er]/Novemb[er]	[ܠܡܝܢ, ܠܡܝܢ? ܠܡܝܢ]
[...] on the day	ܠܡܝܢ[

⁸ For example, the inscription of Baṣufān in Jabal Semʿān in Syria. See Françoise Briquel Chatonnet & Jimmy Daccache, “Researches on Syriac Writing in the Hinterland of Antioch”, *The Harp* 30, 2016, p. 417-436 (in part. Fig. 7).

Yūḥannon in Ḥāḥ (Ṭūr‘Abdīn), dated to 739/40¹¹, and of some inscriptions from Quṣūr al-Banāt in the Tektek Dağları region, also datable to the 8th century.¹² These paleographic indicators show that this inscription cannot be dated to a period after the middle of the 8th century.

Inscription 2 - Chancel

The second unpublished inscription is a graffito carved on the first course of the South jamb of the chancel-arch (Fig. 5). The inscription has five lines written in an Estrangela script displaying some cursive features. The fourth line was not very easy to read, because unfortunately a fallen stone hides the inscribed block. It reads:

Abrohom	ܐܒܪܗܡ
the sinner. Let everyone	ܫܘܠܡܢ ܗܘܢܐ
who reads (this) pray	ܕܡܢ ܕܩܝܠ ܕܝܗܘܢܐ
on behalf of	ܕܗܘܢܐ
our Lord	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

¹¹ See Andrew Palmer, “A Corpus of Inscriptions from Ṭūr‘Abdīn and Environs”, *Oriens Christianus* 71, 1987, p. 53-139 (in part. p. 60-61, n° A.2).

¹² Andrew Palmer, “Syriac Inscriptions of Quṣūr al-Banāt in the Tektek Dağları, Turkey”, in M. Tamcke & S. Grebenstein (eds.), *Geschichte, Theologie und Kultur des syrischen Christentums. Beiträge zum 7. Deutschen Syrologie-Symposium in Göttingen, Dezember 2011* (Göttinger Orientforschungen. I. Reihe: Syriaca 46), Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014 p. 209-289 (in part. inscriptions n° QB4, 6 and 16, and p. 277).

The words ܐܒܒܐ ܓܒܪ are often found in a similar context¹³. We suspect that the word ܡܐܠܗ or its abbreviation ܐܠܗ stood before it (or stands there, but is hidden by the fallen stone). However, in order to be certain, an autoptic examination of the graffito is required.

Inscription 3 - South Wall

Another small graffito is engraved on the third course counting upwards of the South wall, under the long inscription (Fig. 6). It is written vertically in Estrangela script, except for the last two letters, *he* and *'olaf*, which display the cursive forms. The inscription is partially damaged, but one can read:

ʿAbbās son of Ġabr
and Ġubayr son of
Sabīl
SB[--] H'

ܐܒܒܐ ܓܒܪ
ܐ ܓܒܪܐ ܓܒܪ ܡܐܠܗ
ܡܐܠܗ[--] ܐܠܗ

The graffito consists of at least two names and their patronymics. The first one, ʿAbbās, is an Arabic name meaning either “austere” or “the lion from which other lions run away”¹⁴. This name is already attested in a West-Syrian context, as it is shown by the manuscript BL Add. 12,160, fol. 107, copied in A.D. 584 in the monastery of Gubba

¹³ Andrew Palmer, “The Epigraphic Diction of Ṭūr ʿAbdīn and Environs”, *Oriens Christianus* 72, 1988, p. 114-123 (in part. p. 116).

¹⁴ Edward W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 5, Beirut, Librairie du Liban, 1968, p. 1939.

Barraya, between Aleppo and Mabbug¹⁵: it is borne by a Syrian Orthodox from Takrit, ‘Abbās son of Ṭubana¹⁶. In the present graffito, Ğabr, ‘Abbās’ patronymic, is an Arabic name referring to “strength”, influenced by the Syriac Gabrā¹⁷. The second line contains the well-known Arabic diminutive anthroponym Ğubayr¹⁸, which is the diminutive of Ğabr, and the patronymic Sabīl, which means “the way.”

Inscription 4 - North Wall

The last inscription we publish here is outstanding. It is a one-line horizontal inscription of 10.26 m covering 16 blocks (Fig. 7) of the North wall measuring around 11.5 m (Fig. 8). The ninth block bears a very interesting Arabic graffito that begins with لعن الله “May god curse”; although the rest of this graffito is damaged, we may at least read من “from” at the beginning of the second line (Fig. 9). Moreover, a single word, الله واحد “trinity”, is carved vertically on the last-but-one block. The engraver omitted the third *taw* and added it above the line. This word was certainly written by the engraver of the long inscription, as the letter-forms suggest (Fig. 10).

¹⁵ William Wright, *Catalogue of the Syriac Manuscripts in the British Museum acquired since the year 1838*, 3 vols, London, British Museum, 1870-72, vol. 2, p. 472-3 (n° dxc).

¹⁶ See Amir Harrak, “L’influence du syriaque sur l’onomastique arabe chrétienne”, *Parole de l’Orient* 18, 1993, p. 275-289 (in part. p. 289).

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 287.

¹⁸ *Lisān al-‘Arab*, p. 537.

The long inscription is in general well preserved, although some inscribed blocks are missing, leaving two gaps, one of 40 cm between the third and the fourth blocks and another of 47 cm after the sixth block¹⁹. These stones could have fallen down or would have been removed intentionally, in order to create openings in the wall after the inscription was made.

The inscription, including the word ܪܫܘܢܘܬܐ, is written in large Estrangela letters that share certain distinctive features with the inscriptions engraved on the East and South walls.²⁰ Firstly, the *he*, the *waw*, and the *taw* are joined to the following letters (Fig. 11). This phenomenon occurs in some inscriptions from the Limestone Massif in Syria, for example the Dār Qīta inscription²¹—which in fact also contains the word ܪܫܘܢܘܬܐ—, and from the Osrhoene region, such as the inscription mentioning the bishop Rabbula²². Secondly, the letter *he* has an atypical shape in Saint Sergius' inscriptions, unattested elsewhere. It is

¹⁹ See the drawing in Fig. 7.

²⁰ See above n. 6 & 7.

²¹ See Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, Alain Desreumaux & Widad Khoury, “Inscriptions syriaques de Syrie: premiers résultats”, *Les Annales Archéologiques Arabes Syriennes (AAAS)* 47-48, 2004-2005, p. 187-195 (in part. p. 190).

²² See Françoise Briquel Chatonnet, Alain Desreumaux & Joseph Moukarzel, “Découverte d’une inscription syriaque mentionnant l’évêque Rabbula”, in G. Kiraz (ed.), *Malphono w-Rabo d-Malphone. Studies in Honor of Sebastian P. Brock* (Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 3), Piscataway, Gorgias Press, p. 19-27.

characterized by its middle leg that has the shape of a wedge rather than a vertical line. As for the only final *he* in the word ܚܗܠ, its left leg joins the wedged one, unlike those attested in the two other inscriptions (South and East wall). Thirdly, the engraver made in all three inscriptions drill-holes resembling dots, as Andrew Palmer called them²³ (Fig. 12). These dots are not diacritical points. They could be decorative elements, some kind of a distinctive and characteristic mark of the engraver. We might also consider the possibility that they were outlines set to facilitate the drawing of the strokes. To our knowledge, the use of pricking such as we find in Syriac manuscripts – though in manuscripts it is used to trace the lines for the layout of the page – is unique in the Syriac epigraphic tradition. Since the inscription is very long, the engraver probably needed to prepare its layout, by “pricking” each letter, so that the lines would be straight and the letters regular. A parallel can be found in other epigraphic corpora, such as Phoenician, though not with drill-holes: a 4th-century BCE inscription from Cyprus shows the use of ruling technique to trace two parallel lines indicating the inscription baselines.²⁴

As for the minor differences between the North wall inscription and the South and East wall ones, the former is

²³ Palmer, “The Messiah and the Mahdi ...”, p. 58.

²⁴ Jimmy Daccache, “La ‘mise en pierre’ des inscriptions phéniciennes dans un milieu hellénistique : travail de scribes et de lapicides”, in S. Celestino Pérez & E. Rodríguez González (eds.), *A Journey between East and West in the Mediterranean. Proceedings of the IXth International Congress of Phoenician and Punic Studies vol. 1* (Mytra 5), Mérida, Instituto de Arqueología, 2020, p. 293-304 (in part. p. 296 and fig. 1b).

“Whoever does not [] that God [] in truth []
and for this reason Mary in [] bore
him/is his Mother, let him be
anathematized!”

It is thus a polemical inscription containing a theological anathema. Therefore, a fascinating and challenging part of the work was to identify this sentence.

Firstly, we were struck by the word ܡܝܫܝܘܨ , so we explored the presence of anathemas in epigraphy as a potential direction for a solution. We could find only one parallel: it is an inscription engraved on two blocks of stone, probably belonging to a sanctuary, found near Bīr al-Ganṭarī, in the Upper Jezireh, between Raqqah and Rās al-‘Ayn²⁶. It could be dated to the 6th or 7th century, since it is directed against the “Phantasiasts”, a polemical label used to designate the followers of Julian of Halicarnassus, the 6th-century Miaphysite theologian who denied that Jesus suffered in the flesh (l. 22-26)²⁷:

And whoever does not confess	ܡܫܝܘܨ ܕܥܠܝܗ ܡܫܝܘܨ
that the Word who (comes) from	ܕܥܠܝܗ ܡܫܝܘܨ
God	ܕܥܠܝܗ
suffered in the flesh and was	ܡܫܝܘܨ ܕܥܠܝܗ ܡܫܝܘܨ
crucified	

²⁶ Paul Mouterde, “Une inscription syriaque récemment trouvée en Haute Jéziré”, *AAAS* 10, 1960, p. 87-92; Briquel Chatonnet, Desreumaux & Khoury, “Inscriptions syriaques de Syrie...”, p. 188.

²⁷ Mouterde, “Une inscription...”, p. 89 (text), 90 (French trans.).

in the flesh and raised from the	ܕܒܫܪܐ ܘܡܪܝܕܘܢܐ
place of the	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
[dead], let him be anathema	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ [ܕܡܪܝܬܐ]
	ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

According to this passage, anathemas appear to have a formulaic beginning and ending, with a changing content in between. The beginning, in particular, ܕܡܪܝܬܐ allows us to reconstruct the first damaged word in our inscription as the active participle ܕܡܪܝܬܐ “confess”.

Secondly, the presence of the word ܡܪܝܬܐ referring to Mary as begetter of God allowed us to identify the passage. This verbal expression brings us to the Christological controversy and to the debate between Syrian Orthodox who profess the *theotokos* and East-Syrians who profess the *christotokos*. Within the corpus of anti-Nestorian literature available in Syriac, there are the famous twelve anathemas originally composed in Greek by Cyril of Alexandria in the early 5th century, translated later into Syriac. The inscription corresponds partly to the first anathema against Nestorius, as follows:

North Wall Inscription, Eneš

**Cyril of Alexandria, 1st
Anathema²⁸**

ܕܡܪܝܬܐ [ܕܡܪܝܬܐ] ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ [ܕܡܪܝܬܐ] ܕܡܪܝܬܐ [ܕܡܪܝܬܐ]
 ܕܡܪܝܬܐ [ܕܡܪܝܬܐ] ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 :ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ
 ,ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ ܕܡܪܝܬܐ

²⁸ Daniel King, *The Syriac Versions of the Writings of Cyril of Alexandria. A Study in Translation Technique* (CSCO 626, Sub. 123), Leuven, Peeters, 2008, p. 319-320.

ጠሐይብ ኣብሔይዳ

: ኣሔይዳ ኣክላዕታ

ኣብ ኣክላዕታ ኣሔይዳ ኣብ ሐይዳ
ኣሔይዳ ኣብ ሐይዳ ኣብ ሐይዳ

ሕይዳ ኣብ ሐይዳ

ሕይዳ ኣብ ሐይዳ

Whoever does not c[onfess] that
the [Emman]uel i[s] in truth
God, and for this reason the
[hol]y V[irgin] Mary bore
him/is his Mother,

Whoever does not confess that
the Emmanuel is in truth God,
and for this reason that the holy
Virgin is Mother of God,

For she hath borne after the
flesh the Word which is from
God when he became flesh,

Let him be anathematized!

Let him be anathema!

This identification allows us to fill in the *lacunae* of our inscription. The reconstructed letters of ጠሐይብ and ሕይዳ could perfectly fit in the two missing blocks. As for the reconstruction of ኣሔይዳ ኣክላዕታ, the block allows it in terms of space.

We notice that the original anathema is not quoted in full in our inscription; one sentence is not retained. Moreover, we can observe some differences in the parallel parts: instead of “Mother of God” ኣጠላ ሐይዳ, “Maryam” ሕይዳ is used; and instead of the absolute state of the noun, “anathema” ሕይዳ, the passive participle of the verb, “anathematized” ጠሐይብ, is used.

Cyril's twelve anathemas are found in Syriac manuscripts both as an independent text, for example in anti-Nestorian anthologies, and as part of the various works which include them, such as the *Contra Orientales* and the *Contra Theodoretum*. Daniel King studied the variants of the Syriac version of Cyril's anathemas as transmitted in six manuscripts dated between the 7th and the 10th centuries.²⁹ We can notice that these two words, ܐܘܨܘܢܐ and ܐܘܨܘܢܐ, are not attested as variants of the first anathema.³⁰ Our inscription is thus a further witness to this text and the first in epigraphy.

Cyril's anathemas were a reference for Syrian Orthodox identity³¹. Nevertheless, the question of how exactly they were circulated in the Syriac-speaking areas is

²⁹ King, *The Syriac Versions...*, p. 318-319 (see also p. 36-43 for a detailed presentation of the manuscripts).

³⁰ Ibid., p. 319-320. These variants are not attested for the original Greek text either. See Eduard Schwartz, *Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Tomus primus. Pars prima, Concilium inuniversale ephesenum. Volumen primum, Acta graeca. Pars prima. Collectio Vaticana 1-32*, Berlin, De Gruyter, 1927, p. 40-42.

³¹ Cyril of Alexandria's works began to be translated into Syriac at the request of Rabbula, the Miaphysite bishop of Edessa between 411 and 435, in order to counteract the translation process of the Antiochene, Dyophysite, Greek theologians (Diodore of Tarsus and Theodore of Mopsuestia) and to provide the Miaphysites with an authorial reference in Christological matters. See Anton Baumstark, *Geschichte der syrischen Literatur*, Bonn, Marcus und Webers Verlag, 1922, p. 71-72, King, *The Syriac Versions...*, p. 12-15.

still to be elucidated. Were, for example, Cyril's anathemas quoted in the liturgy? Is it possible that there was a library attached to Saint Sergius' Church – for which we have no evidence for the time being – containing manuscripts that the engraver, probably a monk, could have consulted?

In any event, this inscription is unique, since there are no other known Syriac inscriptions mentioning a theological identity in this way³². It quotes the herald of the Miaphysite faith, Cyril of Alexandria, thus defining this church unmistakably as belonging to the Syrian Orthodox Church. And even if the anathema itself is originally anti-Nestorian, it is unlikely that this polemical dimension was still of primary importance in 8th-century Eneš. The presence

³² It is worth mentioning an exception in the Coptic tradition: the Synodical letter of Damian, Miaphysite Patriarch of Alexandria from 578 to 607, which is another evidence from outside the manuscript tradition. The letter, painted probably in the 7th century on the wall of the vestibule inside the Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes in Egypt, promotes the Miaphysite faith. See Walter E. Crum and Hugh G. Evelyn White (eds), *The Monastery of Epiphanius at Thebes, Part II. Coptic Ostraca and Papyri; Greek Ostraca and Papyri* (Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 4), New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1926, Appendix I, p. 331-341 and pl. XV. Damian's letter is also quoted in Syriac by the Syrian-Orthodox Patriarch Michael the Great in his *Chronicle*, see Jean-Baptiste Chabot (ed.), *French Translation of the Syriac Text of the Chronicle of Michael the Great, Part II, Texts and Translations of the Chronicle of Michael the Great* 3, Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2011, p. 325-334.

of East Syrians in the region at that time is not well attested. On the contrary, the controversy with the Chalcedonians seems to be a more current issue. Indeed, when we take into account the other inscriptions carved by the same mason on the South and East wall of the church, we uncover a unitary theological program: the inscription of the South wall contains a list of meaningful events in chronological order (Fig. 6). One of them recalls the invasion of the Vale of Marʿaš, Northwest of Eneš, by the Byzantine Chalcedonian army who deported Miaphysites to Thrace in the year 777³³.

Moreover, the single-word “Trinity” written vertically above the long inscription (see Fig. 10) – upon which all Christian confessions agreed at that time – suggests that the polemical context was even larger and could include the non-Christians, namely the Muslims. Indeed, the concepts of Trinity and of Incarnation too as a matter of fact were part of the debates opposing Christians and Muslims known in Syriac literature, notably in the 8th century³⁴. The mention of “Mary bore him/is his Mother”

³³ Pognon n° 84; Palmer, “The Messiah and the Mahdi ...”, p. 64 (“In the year 1088 [=A.D. 777] the Vale of Marʿaš entered into captivity in the territory of the Romans on account of our sins”) and p. 70.

³⁴ Sidney H. Griffith, “Disputes with Muslims in Syriac Christian Texts: from Patriarch John (d. 648) to Bar Hebraeus (d. 1286)”, in B. Lewis and F. Niewöhner (eds), *Religionsgespräche im Mittelalter* (Wolfenbütteler Mittelalter-Studien 4), Wiesbaden, Otto Harrassowitz, 1992, p. 251-273 (in part. p. 254); David Bertaina, *Christian and Muslim Dialogues. The Religious Uses of Literary Form in the Early Islamic East* (Gorgias Eastern

in the inscription, instead of “Mother of God” attested in the original anathema, supports the idea that the text is no longer anti-Nestorian, but rather a sort of response to Muslim criticisms towards Christians³⁵. Incidentally, with the modification of the original “Mother of God” into “Mary bore him/is his Mother,” the logical connection between the two sentences, guaranteed by “and for this reason,” is much weaker and does not make sense any more. Another event recorded in the South wall inscription is in fact the invasion of Mesopotamia led by the caliph al-Mahdi in 779/780.³⁶

Put differently, more than a polemical inscription, we have here a profession of faith engraved in the stone, which could serve as a defensive weapon against political opponents with different religious beliefs. Since the inscription covers the entire length of the nave, it should be interpreted as the Syrian Orthodox signature with which the engraver sealed the very building of the Church.

Christian Studies 29), Piscataway, Gorgias Press, 2011, p. 145-159, 243.

³⁵ This is probably the case of another Syriac inscription from Quṣūr al-Banāt dated paleographically to the 8th century, which Andrew Palmer reconstructed as follows: “the Ex[alted One] gave birth [to a Son]”. Palmer, “Syriac Inscriptions of Quṣūr al-Banāt”, p. 265-266 n° QB26 and p. 281-282 for historical considerations.

³⁶ “In the year 1091 (=A.D. 779/80) the Commander of the Faithful came and entered as far as Giḥon and he returned and ordered the churches to be torn down and the Tanukhids to adopt Islam”. Palmer, “The Messiah and the Mahdi ...”, p. 64.

This makes of Eneš probably not just a small village with no importance, but rather one of the strongholds of the Syrian Orthodox faith in the age of Muslim caliphate.

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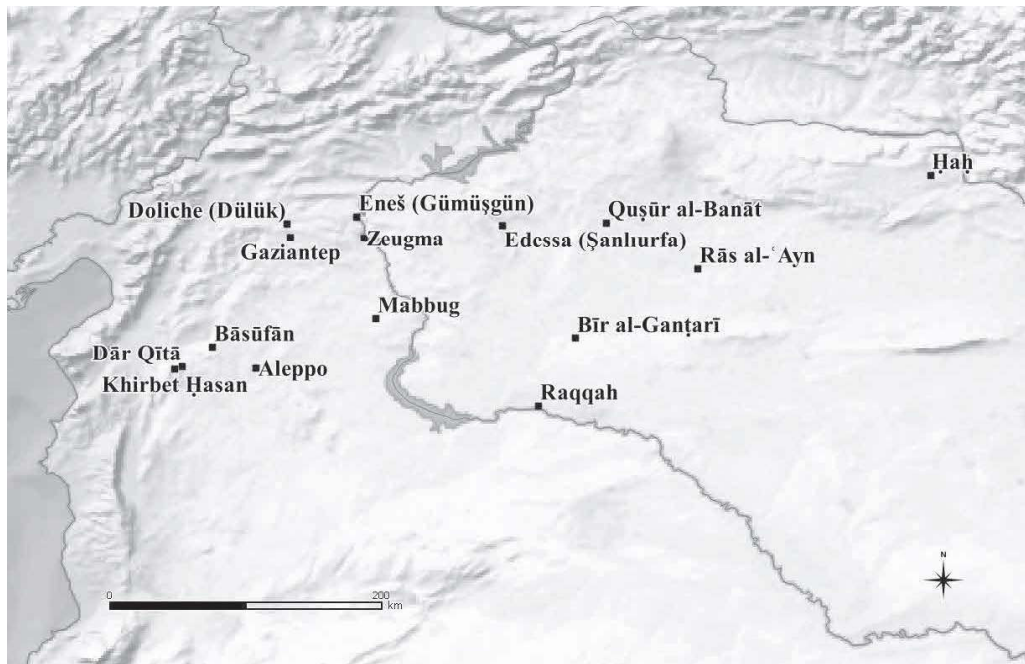


Fig. 1: Sites mentioned in the text (© Simon Brelaud).



Fig. 2: View to the southeast of the site (© Hellenkemper 1978, plate cxxx).

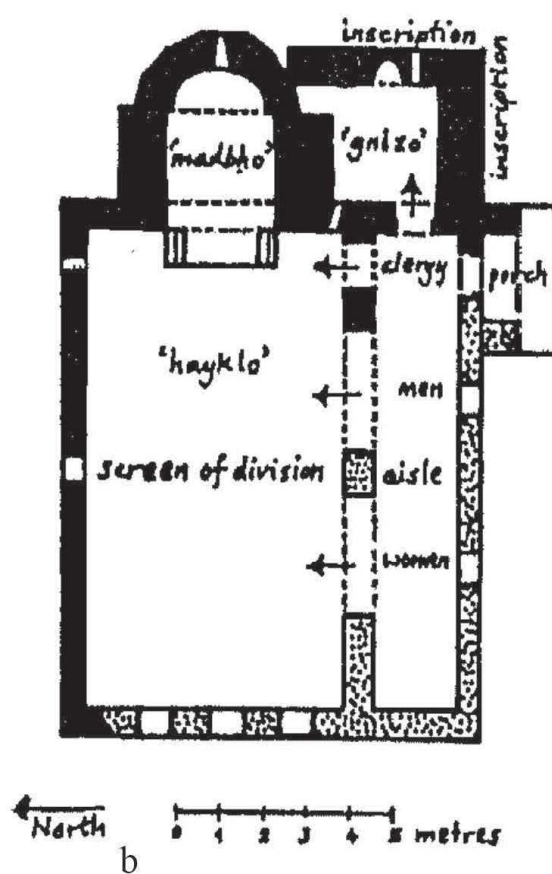
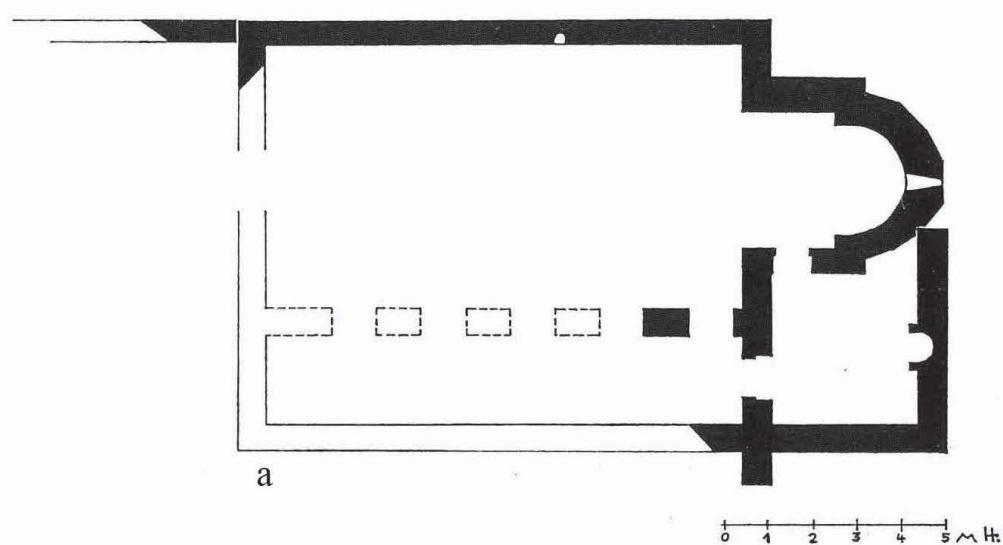


Fig. 3: Plans of the church:
 a) Hellenkemper 1978, p. 410; b) Palmer 1993, p. 49.

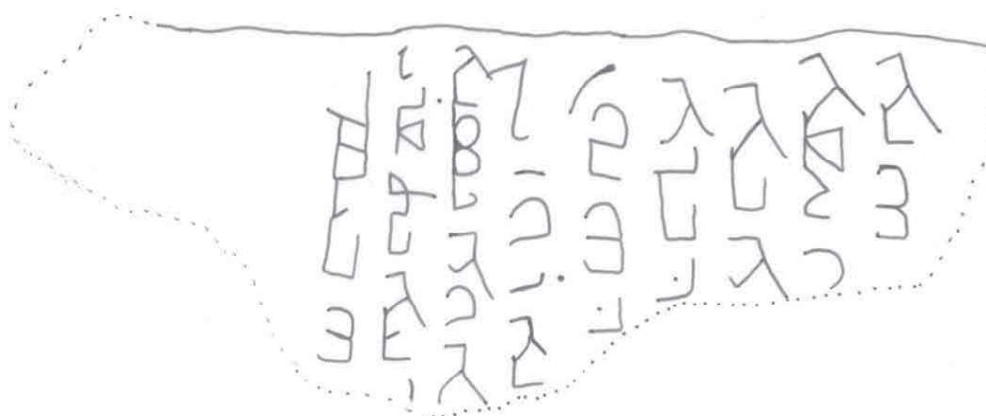


Fig. 4: Inscription 1 (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux) and drawing (© Jimmy Daccache).



Fig. 5: Inscription 2 on the South jamb of the chancel
(Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).

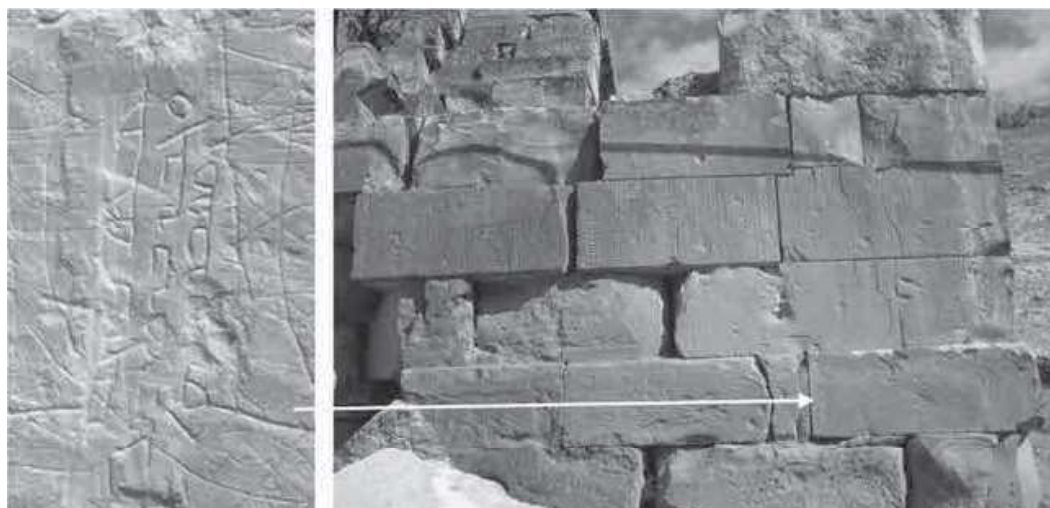


Fig. 6: Graffito on the South wall (Inscription 3)
below the South wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).

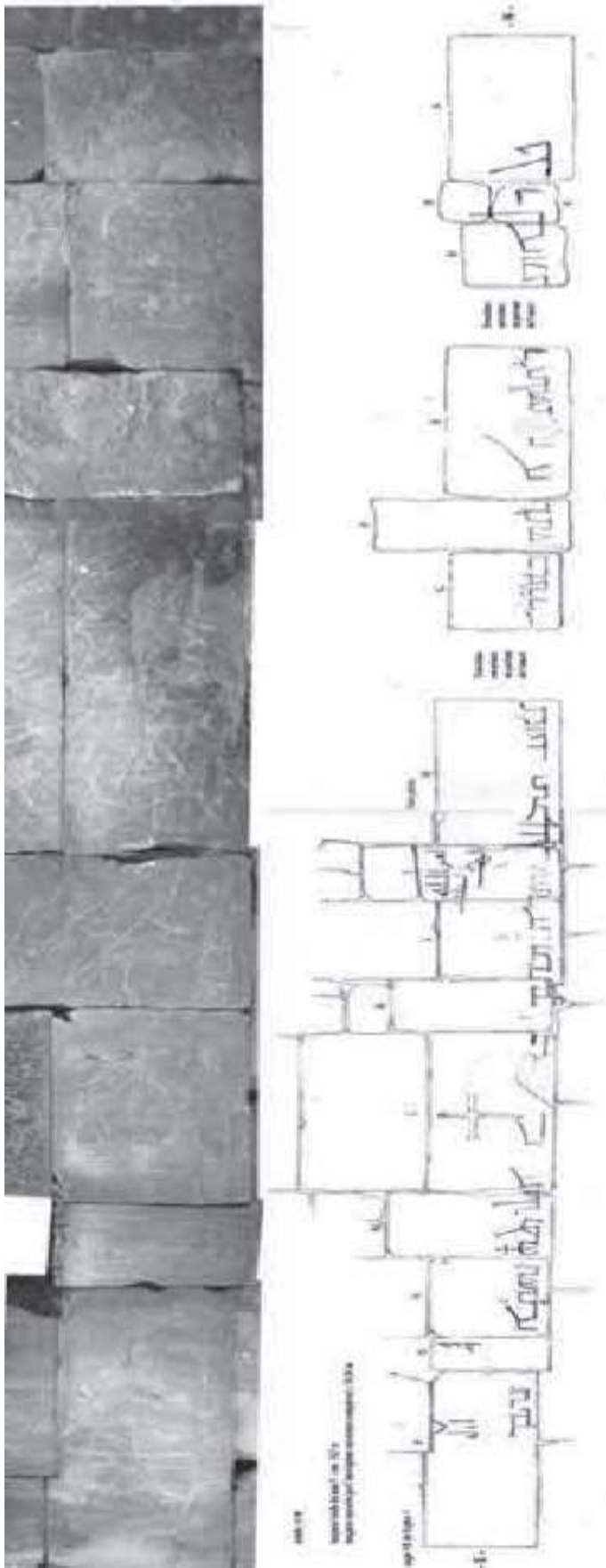


Fig. 7: Western part of inscription 4 on the North wall
(Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux) and drawing of the inscription (© Simon Brelaud).



Fig. 8: Northeast side of the church
(© Hellenkemper 1978, plate cxxx) and the
location of inscription 4.



Fig. 9: Arabic graffito above the North wall inscription
(Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).



Fig. 10: Block bearing the single-word “trinity”
(Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).

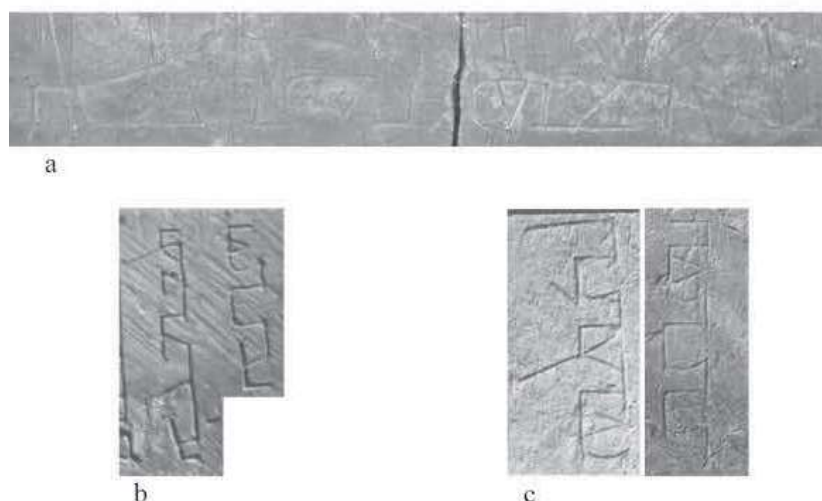


Fig. 11: Close-up of the letters *he*, *waw* and *taw* of: a) the North wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux); b) the South wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux); c) the East wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux).

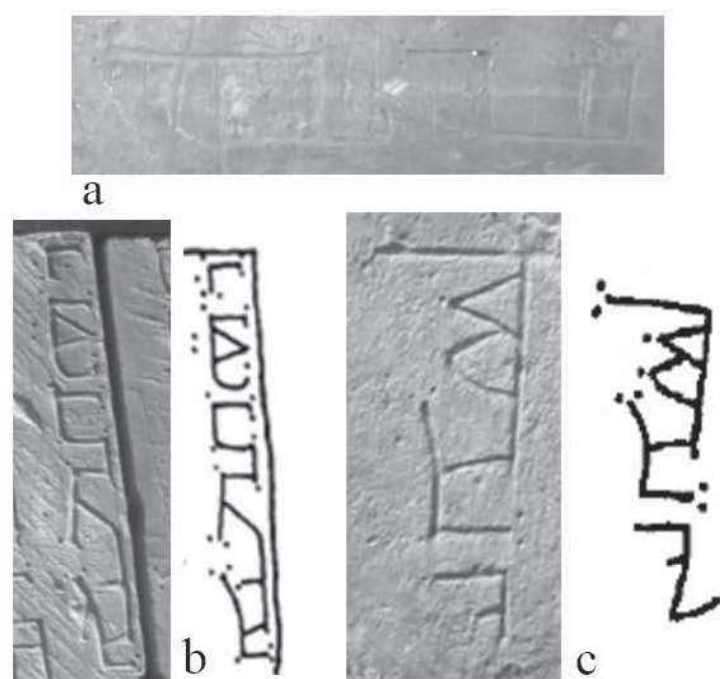


Fig. 12: Close-up of the drill-holes of: a) the North wall inscription (Courtesy of Alain Desreumaux); b) the South wall inscription (photograph: Alain Desreumaux; drawing: Palmer 1993, Fig. 4); c) the East wall inscription (photograph: Alain Desreumaux; drawing: Palmer 1993, Fig. 8).

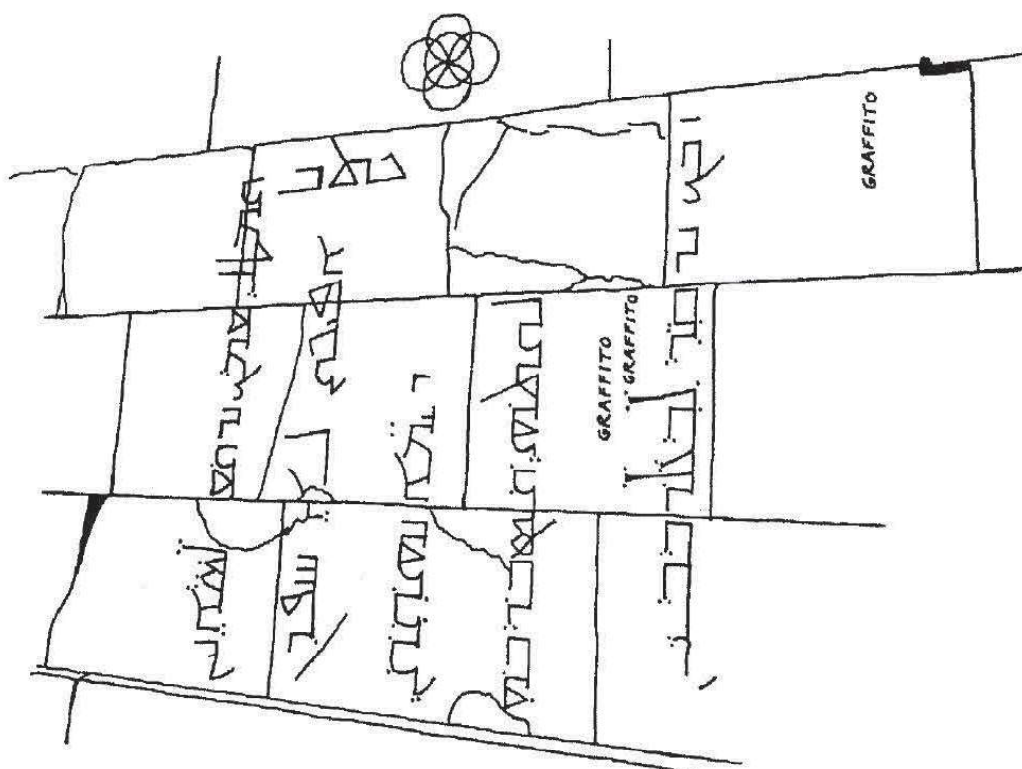


Fig. 13: Drawing of the East Wall inscription
(Palmer 1993, Fig. 4).