

The article of Fergus Millar in this volume has provided a rich and detailed sketch of many aspects of Roman Arabia in Late Antiquity and of the additional light shed on it by the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia disavowing tritheism (the idea that each member of the trinity had its own substance rather than being consubstantial). There is, therefore, no need for me to go over any of this again and I shall confine myself to a much more limited task, namely to investigate a little further Nöldeke's thoughts on the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia regarding the Monophysite church and the tribal federation of Ghassan.¹ In his article of 1875 he devoted most of his time to identifying the place names specified in the subscriptions of the archimandrites for their monasteries. He made two particular observations. Firstly, Ghassan was powerful in this same area where the monasteries were located, as is suggested by:

- the appearance of some place names in both the archimandrites' letter and Ghassanid poetry (especially the key sites of Dārayyā, Jāsim and 'Aqrabā');
- the description in signature no. 121 of Mundhir (ibn al-Hārith) as "the glorious and Christ-loving patrician" and the association of a church with him (the construction of which was most likely funded by him);
- the occurrence of the toponym Ghassāniyya (signature no. 129);
- the direct references to the Ghassanid leader al-Hārith (ibn Jabala) in the corpus of letters connected with the tritheism controversy and portrayal of him as an active and influential player in this controversy.

* This article draws upon two seasons of survey work (2007-2008) in southern Syria, for the successful completion of which I am immensely grateful to Sarah Waidler, Taysir Khalaf, Tora Olsson, Khalid Mohammed and Ned Hercock. I am also very grateful to the Carnegie Trust and the Honeyman Foundation for contributing to the funding of these two seasons.

1. T. NÖLDEKE, "Zur Topographie und Geschichte des Damascenischen Gebietes und der Hauran Gegend", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 29 (1875), pp. 419-443.

Secondly, a number of the monasteries listed in the letter appear to lie outside of the Roman province of Arabia, in particular, a few would seem to be located very close to Damascus, and even north of it, which would then put them in Phoenicia Libanensis. From this Nöldeke concluded that the realm of the Monophysite "church province" of Arabia was pretty much coterminous with the Ghassanid sphere of authority.²

There are two rather startling aspects to this conclusion: the idea of a "church province" of Arabia that was different from the administrative province of Arabia and the idea that Ghassan exercised power over or within this church province. In his article in this volume Fergus Millar strongly objects to these two points and indeed from the perspective of the imperial government and church it does look all wrong. However, on the peripheries of the Late Roman Empire the world looked very different and in the middle decades of the sixth century in particular a number of changes were taking place in Provincia Arabia that would have major consequences for the future of the Empire. Here I would like, then, to view the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia from a very different perspective to that of the imperial government, namely, from the perspective of the Monophysite and Arab groups with which it is concerned. I do not thereby mean to suggest at all that

2. *Ibid.*, p. 420 ("Dies lässt sich nur so erklären, dass diese monophysitische Kirchenprovinz 'Arabia' so weit gerechnet wurde, wie die Macht der Ghassânischen Phylarchen ging"). Cf. I. Shahid: "the Arabia referred to in the letter of Sergius was the Provincia, which probably in ecclesiastical parlance included also the region of Damascene in Phoenicia Libanensis and Palaestina Secunda, as it did in the letter of the archimandrites of 570" (I. SHAHID, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century [BASIC]*, Washington DC 1995-, 1.2.880, though on 1.2.824-5 he dismisses the idea of a distinct ecclesiastical province of Arabia), and M. Sartre: "certains de ceux-ci [les monastères de la lettre des archimandrites de l'Arabie] me semblent appartenir aux proches environs de Damas, ce qui me fait douter qu'ils se situent tous dans les limites de l'Arabie au sens administratif du terme" (M. SARTRE, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine*, Paris, 1982, p. 70).

Nöldeke is right and Millar wrong, but that looking at Nöldeke's ideas anew encourages us to explore a more marginal world. The sources for the latter are inevitably fragmentary and unfocused, which will make my musings seem at times somewhat speculative, but I hope that it will be a stimulus for further reflection and debate.

■ THE EXTENT OF GHASSAN'S POWER

It would perhaps be helpful if I say a few words at the outset about the nature of Ghassan. Very occasionally contemporary sources refer to Ghassan collectively; for example, Simeon of Beth Arsham, head of the Monophysites in Iran, tells us that in July 524 AD he visited "the camp of Jabala king of the Ghassanids ('sny')."³ But mostly our sources speak only of the individual leaders or else of their immediate familial group; thus Syriac sources often use the terms Beth Hārith and Beth Mundhir, literally the "house of al-Hārith", "the house of Mundhir", meaning the ruling clan.⁴ A South Arabian inscription of ca. 360 AD speaks of "the land of Ghassan", placing it in central Arabia. Another from around 260 AD mentions "the kings of the tribes ('mlk 'sh'b) of Ghassan".⁵ One might then

conceive of Ghassan as a confederation of tribes, many of them based in central Arabia, but others, such as the clan to which al-Hārith and Mundhir belonged, went and settled in Syria in the fifth century. It is perhaps instructive to compare them to the Shammar tribal confederation of 17th-19th century Mesopotamia. This comprised 17 major tribes, amounting to 12,000 tents (i.e. households), and 9 principal allied/tributary tribes, amounting to a further 16,300 tents (so a majority were not directly of Shammar, though part of the larger Shammar confederation). "They exact tribute from the smaller tribes of Mesopotamia and are independent of Turkish authority".⁶ The chief of the ruling tribe was the chief of the whole confederation (though the other tribes still had their own individual chiefs) and was a descendant of the one who had led them out of Najd in central Arabia in the 17th century; another branch had remained behind in Najd, constituting the Shammar of Jabal Shammar, but the two still maintained close relations. In what follows I shall use the term Ghassan/Ghassanids to refer to this branch that migrated to Syria.

At the turn of the sixth century a number of Arab tribes "made a raid against the Roman realm and ravaged the property of Mesopotamia, both Phœnicia and the Palestines. After suffering harshly at the hands of those in command in each place, they subsequently kept the peace, after collectively making agreements with the Romans".⁸ One of these tribes was Ghassan and for the next couple of decades (ca. 502-528) they joined a number of other Arab tribes, most famously Kinda, as allies of Rome. Then, shortly after Justinian (527-565) assumed the imperial office, Ghassan were promoted to become Rome's paramount allies, the thinking being that they would then be better able to counter the might of Iran's Arab vassals, the clan of Mundhir:

Mundhir, holding the position of king, ruled alone over all the Saracens in Persia, and he was always able to make his inroad with the whole army wherever he wished

3. I. SHAHID, *Martyrs of Najran*, Brussels, 1971, pp. xxxii + 63.

4. E.g. John of Ephesus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed./tr. E.W. BROOKS (CSCO scr syr 105/6; Paris/Louvain, 1935-1936), 209/156 (Beth Hārith bar Gabalā), 67/48 (Beth Mundhir bar Hārith). It is very likely that the term "Beth Tha'laba", used in Joshua the Stylite's *Chronicle* (ed./tr. W. WRIGHT, Cambridge, 1882, 54/45-6) for a group of "the Arabs of the Roman realm", in like manner refers to the household of Tha'laba ibn 'Amr, whom the Arabic sources name as the chief of Ghassan when they entered Syria.

5. C. ROBIN, "Les arabes de Himyar, des 'Romains' et des Perses (III^e-VI^e s.)", *Semitica et Classica* 1 (2008), pp. 172, 191. Christian Robin recently posed to me the interesting question of why the term "Ghassan" does not appear in contemporary Greek sources whereas Kinda and Ma'add do. This could be because the Ghassan that were in Syria were just a small group that had left the main body of Ghassan in Central Arabia whereas Kinda and Ma'add seem to have stayed based in Arabia. It could also be connected with the comment in a sixth-century poem that "Ghassan is a tribe whose strength lies in other folk (i.e. not their own tribesmen); both lightly armed men and squadrons of cavalry fight on their behalf" (C.J. LYALL, *Mufaddaliyat*, Oxford, 1918, p. 41). This perhaps means that they were acting more like a state, marshalling manpower from different sources for a common aim. The same is true of the Nasrid clan of Lakhm in Iraq and Greek sources do not mention the term "Lakhm" either, but only their individual chiefs.

6. Lady Anne BLUNT, *Bedouin Tribes of the Euphrates*, London, 1879, 2.188; ch. 24, deals with the Shammar and the information was given to her by "a committee of Arabs, Bedouin and fellahin at Sherghat and revised by Faris himself [the supreme chief]".

7. Later Muslim sources sometimes speak of *Banū Jafna* / "the sons of Jafna", and some modern scholars follow this, using the term Jafnids (beginning with T. NÖLDEKE, *Die ghassanischen Fürsten aus dem Hause Ġafna's*, Berlin, 1887). The reference is to a distant ancestor, Jafna ibn 'Amr; there are, however, problems with this term (see I. KAWAR, "Ghassan and Byzantium: a new terminus a quo", *Der Islam* 33 [1958], p. 244 n. 32 and p. 252).

8. Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History*, tr. M. WHITBY (Liverpool, 2000), p. 180 (III.35).

in the Roman domain. Neither any commander of Roman troops, whom they call *duces*, nor any leader of the Saracens allied with the Romans, who are called *phylarchs*, was strong enough with his men to array himself against Mundhir, for the troops stationed in the different districts were not a match (individually) in battle for the enemy. For this reason the emperor Justinian put in command of as many clans as possible al-Hārith the son of Jabala, who ruled over the Saracens of Arabia, and bestowed upon him the dignity of king (*basileus*), a thing which among the Romans had never been done before.⁹

For the next half a century Ghassan enjoyed this role of privileged ally of Rome. How much power did this new status give them? Did they only enjoy authority over the Arab tribes who were not citizens of the Roman Empire, or did they have some say over the affairs of some of the citizens in the territory where they were based? Clive Foss asserts that the Ghassanids “essentially ruled the countryside”.¹⁰ However, Fergus Millar, in the previous article (p. 98, n. 9), maintains that “the idea that there was a whole region which they controlled is a fantasy”. This disagreement reflects a wider debate about the role of Arab tribes in the East Roman Empire. Scholars like Michael Whitby and Mark Whittow are of the opinion that they were of “no importance in contemporary wars and diplomacy”,¹¹ whereas others, like Irfan Shahid, feel they were of immense significance, serving, for instance, as “a crucial pillar in the Byzantine defence system in Oriens”.¹² More recently Arab tribes have also been adduced as an explanation for the apparent rise in population and prosperity in the border regions of the eastern Empire in the fourth to sixth centuries, when there was, it is alleged, a “nomad thrust” into these regions.¹³ Many settled, so the story goes, and contributed to the local economy in a variety of different ways. Tribal leaders in receipt of subsidies from the Empire spent them on fine houses and church buildings, enhancing their prestige and enriching their neighbours. Dan Urman

puts it very simply: “The Ghassanids enjoyed their service with the Byzantine Empire, increased their property, and their stay in an agricultural area caused them, at least partially, to settle down and to build many buildings... The Ghassanid presence in Bashan can explain the prosperity of its villages”.¹⁴ Yet, though plausible, many of these claims for Arab presence and power in the frontier provinces of the Empire tend to be more based on assumption than evidence.

It is important to note that Nöldeke is not claiming that Ghassan controlled the whole of the region where the Monophysite monasteries of Arabia are found. “Of course”, he notes, “the Romans did not let the really key places slip out of their hands”, and, he goes on to say, “that is the reason why neither Bostra nor any other major city appears among the places of Arabia in these subscriptions”.¹⁵ It is in the rural areas in between the cities, then, that Ghassan wielded influence according to Nöldeke, and their subjects were monks, “the farmers of the plains of Damascus” and the tribes of this region. This would seem to be C. Foss’ line too, for he states, as quoted above, that Ghassan “ruled the countryside” and also that it had been “given control of a large part of the Syrian frontier to defend against the Persians and their allies”, but he admits that “they did not actually rule, for imperial officials still controlled the local administration”.¹⁶

The most obvious acknowledgement of Ghassan’s power in these rural and steppe enclaves is the dating of buildings according to the reign of their chiefs (and not that of the emperor or provincial governor):

Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (between Damascus and Palmyra), lintel of monastery:

“In the name of our Father Jesus Christ, saviour of the world, who takes away the sins of the world, *in the time of*... the archimandrite and of the deacon Anastasius and of the phylarchate of the most illustrious Hārith (*Arethas*)... To Flavius Hārith, *patrikios*, long years, life, great, welcome... year 870” (569 AD; *IGLS* 2553bd).¹⁷

al-Hayyat (between Damascus and Bostra; see map), lintel of house:

“Flavius Seos, son of Olbanos, *epitropos*, and his son Olbanos at their own expense constructed the entire court from the foundations to the top *in the time of* Mundhir (*epi tou Alamoundarou*), *paneuphēmos* and *patrikios* in the year 473 of the eparchy” (578 AD; *IGLS* 2110).

9. Procopius, *History of the wars*, ed./tr. H.B. DEWING (Cambridge MA, Loeb, 1914), I.17.
10. C. FOSS, “Syria in Transition, AD 550-750: an archaeological approach”, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 51 (1997), p. 251.
11. M. WHITBY, “Greek historical writing after Procopius”, in A. CAMERON, L. I. CONRAD (eds.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East I*, Princeton, 1992, p. 80; cited approvingly by M. WHITTOW in a review of I. Shahid, in *Journal of Roman Archaeology* suppl. 31 (1999), p. 219.
12. I. SHAHID, *BASIC* (*supra*, n. 2), I.1.646.
13. F. VILLENEUVE, “L’économie rurale et la vie des campagnes dans le Hauran antique”, in J. M. DENTZER (ed.), *Le Hauran I : Recherches archéologiques sur la Syrie du Sud à l’époque hellénistique et romaine* (Paris, 1985), p. 122 (“poussée des nomades”).

14. *Rafid on the Golan: a profile of a Late Roman and Byzantine village* (British Archaeological Reports [= BAR] 1555), Oxford, 2006, p. 287.
15. T. NÖLDEKE, “Zur Topographie” (*supra*, n. 1), p. 421.
16. C. FOSS, “Syria in Transition” (*supra*, n. 10), pp. 250, 263.
17. *IGLS* = Philippe LE BAS et W. H. WADDINGTON, *Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Grèce et en Asie Mineure*, Tome III.1: Textes, Paris, 1870.

Similarly, a sixth-century Syriac manuscript from a monastery near Palmyra was copied, so it asserts, when Abū Kārib (*'bwkryb*) was king, most likely a reference to the brother of al-Hārith ibn Jabala.¹⁸ He had been appointed a phylarch in Palestine by the emperor Justinian and in this capacity he sent a diplomatic envoy to Abraha, king of Himyar, in 558 and acted as arbitrator in a dispute between two church deacons at Petra concerning the sale of a vineyard.¹⁹ Again, this is a clear indication of the Ghassanids' high status at the local level.

Much is made in the secondary literature of building activity by Ghassan.²⁰ However, we actually have only one firmly attested example of Ghassanid building:

al-Burj (east of Damascus; see map)

"Flavius Mundhir, *paneuphēmos*, *patrikios* and *phylarchos*, erected this martyrium in gratitude to the Lord God and St. Julian for the safety of himself and his most illustrious offspring" (*JGLS* 2562c; re-read recently by P. Gatier, who emended "tower" to "martyrium").

It is certainly an important text, since it shows a Ghassanid leader participating in local community matters and, as the string of titles in this and the previous two inscriptions illustrates, enjoying a high position in the imperial elite. However, all three of these inscriptions are from the eastern edges of the Byzantine Empire. This is true of two other inscriptions connected with Ghassan, that from Samma', near Suweida, which calls on "the Lord God of St George" to "protect the most illustrious (*endoxotatos*) phylarch Abū Kārib", and even more so that from Jabal Says, well to the east in the basalt desert, which reports, in Arabic language and script, the dispatch of an armed unit by "the king

al-Hārith" (see figure 1).²¹ This is, of course, where Byzantine authors tend to place them. For example, Menander the Guardsman, writing in the reign of Justin (563-578), situates them "on the borders of Arabia":

When the Saracens (allied to the Persians) reached their own land and reported to Ambros ('Amr ibn Mundhir of Lakhm) the attitude of the emperor towards the Saracens who were subject to the Persians, then Ambros ordered his brother Kaboses (Qabus ibn Mundhir), who lay opposite Alamoundar (Mundhir ibn al-Hārith of Ghassan), the leader of the Saracens subject to the Romans, to ravage Alamoundar's territory (*tēn Alamoundarou gēn*). This territory was on the borders of Arabia (*hypo Arabian telei*).²²

Yet the monasteries in the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia are mostly further to the west, many near the borders of Palestine and Phœnicia. Let us now turn to these monasteries to investigate this further.

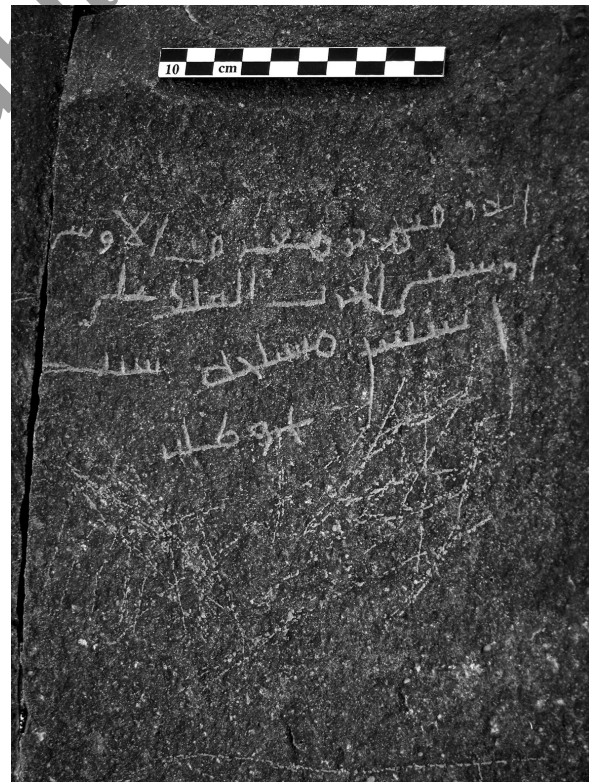


Figure 1 - Jabal Says Inscription

18. W. WRIGHT, *Catalogue of the Syriac manuscripts in the British Museum*, London, 1871, 2.468; see further below.

19. S. SMITH, "Events in Arabia in the 6th century AD", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 16 (1954), pp. 428 (citing Procopius), 440 (citing the dam inscription of Abraha); M. KAIMIO, "P. Petra inv. 83: a Settlement of Dispute", in *Atti del XXII Congresso Internazionale di Papirologia*, Firenze, 2001, 2, pp. 719-724.

20. Often buildings are attributed to Ghassan just because they were erected in the sixth century and in the region where Ghassan were thought to be present; thus Claude Dauphin for Ramthaniyya ("Pèlerinage ghassanide au sanctuaire byzantin de Saint-Jean-Baptiste à Er-Ramthaniyye en Gaulanitide", in E. DASSMAN and J. ENGEMAN (eds.), *Akten des XII Internationalen Kongresses für christliche Archäologies*, Münster, 1995, 2, pp. 667-673), and Urman for Rafid (*Rafid on the Golan* [*supra*, n. 14], pp. 287-289).

21. M. SARTRE, "Deux phylarques arabes dans l'Arabie byzantine", *Le Muséon* 106 (1993), pp. 150-153; C. ROBIN and M. GOREA, "Un réexamen de l'inscription arabe préislamique du Ġabal Usays", *Arabica* 49 (2002), pp. 503-510.

22. R. C. BLOCKLEY (ed./tr.), *The History of Menander the Guardsman*, Liverpool, 1985, *Frag* 9.3.

■ THE LOCATION OF THE MONASTERIES OF ARABIA

Nöldeke expended a lot of effort in trying to locate the monasteries named in the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia. He did this primarily on the basis of historical references (especially Ghassanid poetry), similarity to modern place names, and the ordering of the subscriptions. With regard to the latter point, the list shows some signs of a geographical arrangement; moreover, Nöldeke assumed, plausibly, that where an archimandrite sent someone to sign on their behalf, they most likely used someone from the vicinity of their monastery. In investigating these toponyms I have added an extra criterion, namely, evidence of sixth-century remains. This I have established by visiting the sites myself and by consulting archaeological publications, especially the multi-volume geographic encyclopaedia of Syria that was produced in the 1990s by the Syrian Antiquities Authority. Of course, many place names remain unidentified and a few might be wrongly identified, but it seems to me that this methodology yields a reasonably fair picture of the spread and location of a good number of these monasteries (see *Appendix* below and figure 2).

The area in which these monasteries are found is bounded by the basalt desert to the east, the River Yarmuk to the south, the Anti-Lebanon range of mountains to the west and the environs of Damascus to the north. The eastern boundary is an obvious one and needs no discussion. The southern one is curious. Nöldeke notes that the region south of the river (modern Jordan) was much less fertile and populated than north of the river (modern south Syria), so one would not expect so many monasteries. It is also possible, he speculates, that behind a few of the unidentified toponyms are places south of the River Yarmuk – for example, Fādīn (no. 44) could refer to al-Fadayn in modern north Jordan, where sixth-century remains have been found.²³ Furthermore, since the meeting of the archimandrites most likely took place near Damascus – probably in the locality of Dārāyā that is mentioned 11 times in the list – it is to be expected that those further away would be much less well represented than those nearby. Another possibility, one not mentioned by Nöldeke, is that the imperial creed held greater sway south of the River Yarmuk. The dialect of Aramaic

called Christian Palestinian Aramaic is commonly encountered in this area, and this dialect is also called Melkite Aramaic, though to what degree this epithet is deserved I am not sure.²⁴

Moving westwards we come to the cities of Dion and Neve (modern Nawa), which are close to the point where the provinces of Arabia, Palaestina Secunda and Phoenicia meet (Eusebius says Neve is “around the angle of Arabia”, as Millar notes in his article in this volume). The exact line of the border of Arabia is difficult to determine here, but it is likely that it proceeds northwards along the natural divide provided by the Ruqqad valley before swinging eastwards just north of ‘Aqraba’ (figure 3).²⁵ In this case quite a number of the monasteries identified by Nöldeke and others lie just outside Arabia. A few are found to the west of Arabia, in Phoenicia I (Maritima). It is of course possible that some have been incorrectly identified, but this cannot be true for all of them. For example, Ar‘abnayē (no. 134) and Ūfaniā (no. 66) are so close to the modern names Ra‘abanā and Ūfaniyā and are such distinctive names that identification is all but sure. So either the border between Phoenicia I and Arabia is a little more to the west than is usually thought or our letter includes a few monasteries that are just across the border in Phoenicia.

Moving to the northern end of the area where the monasteries are found, we find ourselves in what is usually regarded as the territory of Phoenicia II (Libanensis). This time we cannot solve the problem by postulating that the true border was a little further to the north than has usually been thought, since our monasteries would seem to encircle Damascus, which is very definitely a city of Phoenicia II, and the era in which inscriptions found here are dated is no longer the era of Arabia (counting from the creation of the Provincia Arabia in 105/106 AD), but the era of the Seleucids (counting from the reign of Seleucos Nicator

23. Abd AL-QADIR M. AL-HUSAN, “Aḏwā’ ‘alā al-muktashifāt al-athariyya al-ḥadītha fī mashrū‘ay ḥafriyyāt al-Fadayn wa-Riḥab – al-Mafraq”, *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 46 (2002), pp. 71-79 (excavation of a monastery which the author calls “Nestorian” for reasons that are not clear).

24. For a useful study of this Aramaic dialect, see Moshe BAR-ASHER, “Le syro-palestinien : études grammaticales”, *Journal Asiatique* 276 (1988), pp. 27-59; many of the texts listed with publication details in C. MÜLLER-KESSLER, *Grammatik des christlich-palästinisch-Aramäischen*, Hildesheim, 1991, pp. 9-26; for the texts of Khirbet el-Samra in northern Jordan, see J.-B. HUMBERT and A. DESREUMAUX, *Khirbet es-Samra I, Jordanie*, Turnhout, 1998.

25. If the border between the early Islamic provinces of Damascus and Jordan were any guideline, then the border between the Roman provinces of Arabia and Palaestina II would have been a little further to the west than is usually thought, since the Muslim province of Damascus included Khisfin (Aḥmad al-Ya‘qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. M.J. DE GOEJE, *Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum* [BGA] 7, Leiden, 1892, p. 327).

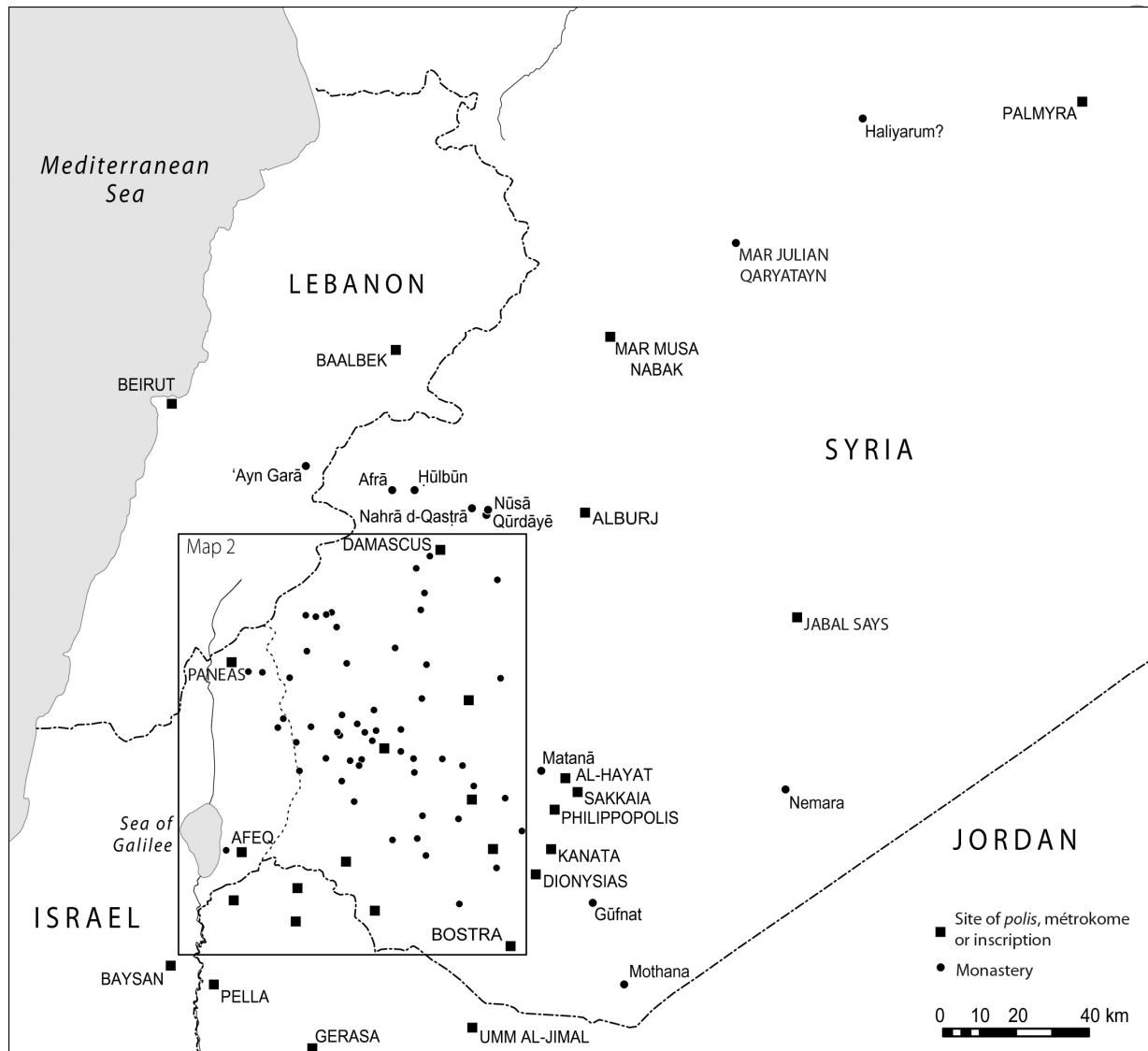


Figure 2a - Overview of the monasteries of the Letter of the Archimandrites of Arabia (570 AD), with inscriptions and key settlements in the sixth century.



Figure 2b -The Monasteries close up of the Golan-Damascus region.

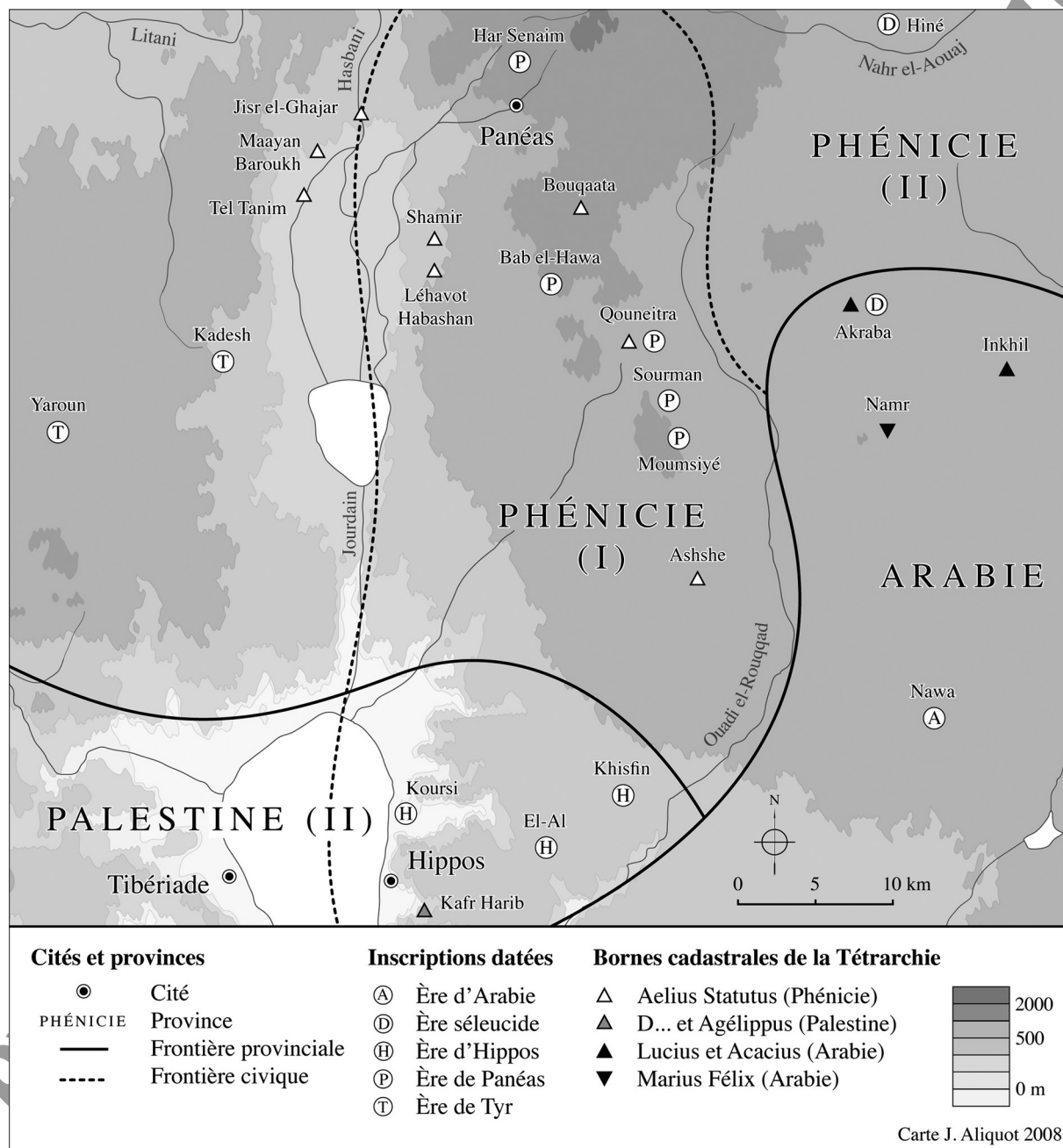


Figure 3 - Intersection of provinces of Arabia, Palæstina II and Phoenicia
(by kind permission of Julien Aliquot).

in 312/311 BC).²⁶ Again, though, we have good reason to believe that the identification of a substantial proportion of our monasteries is correct. To the west of Damascus is the cluster: Bytymn, Kafr Hawar, Hīnā and Dūrbīl (nos. 75-79, 81-83), which are so close in form to the modern place names: Bayt Tīma, Kafr Hawar, Hīna and Durbul that the identification would appear certain. In the immediate vicinity of Damascus is the cluster of monasteries numbered 85-112; their proximity to one another is corroborated by the frequency with which a member of one of the monasteries signs for the member of another at the meeting. In this cluster are Darayyē (nos. 86-87, 91, 103-107, 110-112), Kafr Sūsyā (no. 89), Sakkayā (nos. 93-94) and Kūsītā (no. 100), identified by Nöldeke with modern Dārāyyā, Kafr Sūsyā, Sakkā' and Kiswa. Though each one might be contested if it stood alone, the fact that their modern equivalents are physically very close to one another makes the identification much more compelling. Darayyē is a special case, for it is mentioned 11 times in the list of subscriptions, far more than any other place in the list, and would appear to comprise five separate monasteries. Evidently, it was an important settlement, and it has been suggested that it was the venue for the meeting of the archimandrites. It is irresistibly close in form to the modern town of Dārāyyā, which is only five or six miles from the old city of Damascus and this helps explain the importance of the place. It is also noted in Arabic sources as a Ghassanid haunt and as the home of a number of prominent early Muslims,²⁷ a point that will be taken up further on in this article.

It would seem, then, that there are indeed monasteries in the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia that are from just across the border in Phœnicia I and II (Maritima and Libanensis), but if so what should we make of this? In his article above (p. 108) Fergus Millar reasons that "when the archimandrites describe themselves as coming from 'the province of Arabia', the natural presumption must be that they meant what these words would have meant to contemporaries, namely the Roman province", the boundaries of which he gives in his map. Given my comments above and the consensus of more than half a dozen scholars, it seems impossible simply "to presume that all the places referred to belonged within the bounds of the Roman province" (p. 108 in this volume). However, with only a slight adjustment one could still accept Millar's reasoning:

we could assume that the archimandrites of Arabia, wishing to swell their numbers as much as possible in order to make their statement of faith look all the more impressive, invited a few Monophysite archimandrites from across the border in Phœnicia to participate in their conference. There are no major physical borders between the two provinces at this point (indeed, topographically they belong together); road connections and communication so near Damascus would presumably have been fairly good. It is to be expected that Monophysite monasteries in such close proximity would have been in regular contact with one another anyway. This solution would not then require any changes to the traditional conception of the shape and running of the Late Roman provinces.

Another way of explaining the presence of archimandrites from monasteries of Phœnicia in a list of archimandrites of Arabia would be to suppose that people's perceptions of territorial divisions did not exactly match administrative divisions. It is certainly true that in the imagination of many, Provincia Arabia, though its borders were redrawn a number of times after its establishment in 105/106 AD, was for long equated with the Nabataean kingdom that it had originally been based on. Thus Epiphanius of Salamis, writing in the fourth century, describes Petra as being "the main city of Arabia", even though in his day it was in the province of Palaestina III Salutaris (= modern southern Palestine and Jordan). And he says of the Manichaean Scythianus that "he originated from the *Sarakēnia* and was raised in the borderland of Palestine, that is, in Arabia", evidently again thinking of the old Provincia Arabia, now Palestine III.²⁸ A similar situation may have obtained for the villages on the eastern slopes of the Anti-Lebanon range, which, for the first to fourth centuries AD, belonged to the district of Damascene, as is seen by their use of the Seleucid era, which is the one in use in the territory of Damascus.²⁹

■ GHASSAN AND THE EARLY ISLAMIC PROVINCE OF DAMASCUS

If we wanted to be a little bolder, however, we might argue that this discrepancy reflects a changing situation. Less than seventy years after the archimandrites of Arabia drafted their declaration, the Muslims were in control of the whole of this region: Palestine and Phoenicia as well as Arabia. Their province (*jund*) of Damascus comprised the southern half of the Roman

26. E.g. *IGLS*, 2558 (Lebaba/Dayr 'Alī), 2562ab (Sakkā').

27. Yāqūt, *Kitāb mu'jam al-buldān/Jacut's geographisches Wörterbuch*, ed. F. WÜSTENFELD, Göttingen, 1866-1873, s.v. "Dārāyyā". The nisba (surname) al-Darrānī is already very common in the Umayyad period (660-750).

28. References given in J. RETSÖ, *The Arabs in Antiquity*, London, 2003, p. 510.

29. J. ALIQUOT, *IGLS 11: Mont Hermon*, Beirut, 2008, p. 18.

province of Phœnicia (Maritima and Libanensis) and pretty much all of Roman Arabia (except a small area around Gerasa, which was annexed to the Muslim province of Urdunn/Jordan). The question then arises whether this was a re-organisation that the Muslims themselves undertook or whether they simply adopted the divisions that they found there. If the latter, we must assume reforms occurred in the decades just before their arrival. It is very tempting to see in the apparent inclusion of monasteries from Phœnicia in a letter from archimandrites of the province of Arabia the beginnings of this new development. If so, one of the major factors behind it was likely to have been the increasing prominence of Arab tribes, particularly Ghassan, in this region. This is clearly illustrated in poetry composed for Ghassanid leaders, the verses of which are replete with place names from this region. One lament, for example, speaks of Dārayyā, Sakkā', Jāsim and Hārith al-Jawlān (i.e. al-Hārat),³⁰ all of which are mentioned in the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia (see *Appendix* below). It is true that we only know of this poetry from compilations of the ninth century, but it is certainly innocent and independent of the archimandrites' letter, and so the overlap in place names is still significant. One verse of the aforementioned lament speaks of this area as the pasturing grounds for the horses and camels of Ghassan. This is interesting, for if Ghassan were fielding significant numbers of cavalry in their campaigns on behalf of Byzantium, then good pasture would be essential, and the countryside of the Golan, Batanea and Ghuta is ecologically very well suited to provide this.³¹

It is also surely of some significance that al-Hārith ibn Jabala and his brother Abū Kārib served as phylarchs in provinces that were next to each other, that is, Arabia and Palestine respectively. This situation endured probably for at least two decades, from the 530s to the 550s, and could plausibly have led to some rapprochement between the two provinces, if only among the Arab elements. Furthermore, the Arab phylarchs

had to liaise with the Byzantine military command, which in Phœnicia was vested in at least two leaders (*duces*), one at Emesa and one at Damascus;³² in Arabia the *dux* was based in Bostra. The fact that the Muslim province of Damascus was composed of southern Phœnicia and Arabia, taken together with the fact of the inclusion of monasteries from Phœnicia in the list of monasteries of Arabia,³³ makes one wonder whether there had already been some coalescence of the two military commands before Islam. The two cities are in any case quite close to each other and so it is reasonable to assume that the *duces* based there would have come to work closely together. Moreover, as we have seen, elements of Ghassan were present in the areas between the two cities, and this would plausibly have linked the two *duces* even more. It may even be that some major event, such as the Sasanian invasion of the Levant in the early seventh century, led to the two offices being amalgamated, central command being located in Damascus.³⁴

According to later Muslim Arabic texts the Ghassanid chiefs had houses in Damascus itself, and in a number of other settlements such as 'Aqrabā' and Dārayyā.³⁵ This is quite likely – we know from better documented periods that the ruling families of well-off tribes had bases in the cities, in part to facilitate dealings with the state authorities and in part to enjoy the trappings of city life (though they always spent chunks of time with their still nomadic tribal following as well). But did any of the rank and file of the tribe of Ghassan settle? This has been a popular idea, as noted above, for it has been regarded as a plausible explanation for the apparent demographic rise in the fourth to sixth-century Levant, and it has been seized upon by a number of scholars. Certainly, in the West we have examples of how, when in straitened circumstances and in need of military muscle, the Late Roman Empire

30. L. CONRAD, "Epidemic disease in central Syria in the late sixth century: some new insights from the verse of Hassan ibn Thabit", *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 18 (1994), esp. pp. 29-30. Further comments on the poem are given by I. SHAHID, *BASIC*, 2.1.291-302 (the whole of this volume is devoted to "toponymy, monuments, historical geography and frontier studies", and so is immensely useful for anyone working on the connection of Ghassan to this region).

31. G. SCHUMACHER, *The Jaulan*, London, 1888, pp. 135-136, says that the villages of el-Eshsheh and el-Butmeh were becoming emptied because "the government required this district as pasture for the horses of the soldiers from Damascus".

32. E. JEFFREYS *et al.* (tr.), *The Chronicle of John Malalas*, Melbourne, 1986, pp. 245-246.

33. Remember also the mention of Abū Kārib in the manuscript of the monastery near Palmyra, and of al-Hārith in the inscription of Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, near Palmyra (plausibly Ḥaliyōrum; see no. 119 in the *Appendix* below).

34. For some discussion along these lines, see J. HALDON, "Seventh-Century Continuities: the *ajnad* and the thematic myth", in A. CAMERON (ed.), *The Byzantine and Early Islamic near East III: states, resources and armies*, Princeton, 1995, esp. pp. 403-420.

35. E.g. Aḥmad al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-buldān*, ed. M. J. DE GOEJE, BGA 7 (*supra*, n. 25), p. 326 (*kānat dimashq manāzil mulūk ghassān wa-bihā āthār li-āl jafna*); Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, s.v. "'Aqrabā'" (*kāna yanziluhā mulūk ghassān*) and "Dārayyā". The aforementioned poem remarks that to Ghassan belongs "Dārayyā, Sakkā' and the neighbouring residences (*quṣūr*)".

sometimes ceded land to a people to settle on in return for their support. The government would have hoped that the solution would be a temporary one and would certainly have sought to go on ruling the ceded land via the normal structures of provincial civilian administration. Yet, whatever the government may have wished, the settlement in a region of a large group of military capable men under their own leader could easily lead to the transfer of some de facto power to that leader in that region.³⁶ Unfortunately, however, the account of how (certain clans of) Ghassan arrived in Syria is only related in a single Arabic version and not in enough detail to permit understanding of the mechanics of this event.³⁷

Contemporary authors portray Ghassan as devotees of Christianity, its upper echelons at least. Now we have many accounts of how Christianisation was often accompanied by sedentarisation, such as that recounted by perhaps the most famous writer on the saints of the Judaeian desert, Cyril of Scythopolis (d. ca. 558), in the course of his *Life of St Euthymius*:

Aspebetos, though a pagan and a Persian subject, became an ally of the Romans (by converting after having had his son healed by the monk Euthymius)... On hearing that the great Euthymius (d. 473) had eventually returned, he came to him with a great number of Saracens, men, women and children, and begged him to preach to them the word of salvation. The holy elder catechised them all and received them into the lower monastery where he baptised them... These people who had previously been wolves of Arabia but had then joined the spiritual flock of Christ begged to remain near him... Taking them to an appropriate spot he said to them: "If you want to be very near me, settle here"... Marking out (the site of) a church for them and tents round it, he told them to build the church and settle there. He frequently made visits to them and assigned them a priest and deacons. Those who had already been baptised came and settled there, and others too who arrived gradually were baptised by him. Since in consequence they became extremely numerous and spread out to form various encampments, our great father Euthymius wrote to Juvenal, patriarch of Jerusalem, requesting the ordination of a bishop and, when he consented, sent him Aspebetos as most capable of drawing

souls to salvation. So it was that Aspebetos (now named Peter) was the first to be ordained in Palestine bishop of the encampments.³⁸

Is such a model applicable to Ghassan? A considerable number of buildings – religious, domestic and military – have been attributed to them. For example, it has been argued that a number of the houses of the Batanaea, near the Ghassanid headquarters at Jābiya, belonged to members of Ghassan. This is because many of them, especially at Nawa and Kafr Shams, do not follow the typical pattern of architecture in this region: at Nawa there are grand houses with several wings and reception rooms alongside the stabling on the ground floor and at Kafr Shams some houses have large windows and doors, spaces open to the countryside, and no stabling. The size of these houses and the lack of evidence for stables at Kafr Shams have led to the plausible suggestion that their owners were unusually wealthy and did not raise livestock.³⁹ However, focusing on the open nature of the architecture, C. Foss has suggested that the inferred difference in outlook, and increased inclination to engage with the space outside the house reflected the regional dominance of Ghassan, who had "nothing to fear", since they "essentially ruled the countryside". The lack of stabling and livestock space could then be linked to the fact that the horses and camels that "gave these fighters their mobility shared a common military pasture".⁴⁰ Such ideas are attractive, but in the end they are extremely difficult to prove, and at this stage they must remain speculative.⁴¹ All we might note is that in the earliest Muslim Arabic sources we find Ghassan settled in a number of places in the province of Damascus.⁴²

36. Examples given in B. WARD-PERKINS, *The Fall of Rome and the End of Civilisation*, Oxford, 2005, pp. 54-57.

37. For the full citation (from Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, Ḥamza al-ʿIṣfahānī and Aḥmad al-Yaʿqūbī), references and some discussion, see R. HOYLAND, "Arab kings, Arab tribes and the beginnings of Arab historical memory in Late Roman Epigraphy", in H. COTTON *et al.* (eds.), *From Hellenism to Islam: cultural and linguistic change in the Roman Near East*, Cambridge, 2009, pp. 515-517.

38. Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives of the monks of Palestine*, ed. R.M. PRICE, Kalamazoo, 1991, pp. 14, 20.

39. F. VILLENEUVE, "L'économie et les villages de la fin de l'époque hellénistique à la fin de l'époque byzantine", in J.-M. DENTZER and J. DENTZER-FEYDY (eds.), *Le jebel al-ʿarab*, Paris, 1991, pp. 104-113 (on a house at Kafr Shams: "remarquable... par ses dimensions... par ses accès : une porte large... surmontée de trois grandes fenêtres... l'absence apparente d'étables.")

40. C. FOSS, "Syria in Transition" (*supra*, n. 10), pp. 249-251.

41. Good discussion of this issue is provided by D. GENEQUAND, "Some thoughts on Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi, its dam, its monastery and the Ghassanids", *Levant* 38 (2006), pp. 63-83, and G. FISHER, *Between Empires: Ghassanids, Lakhmids and others in Middle Eastern borderlands 400-600 AD*, Phd thesis, Oxford, 2008, ch. 3.

42. al-Yaʿqūbī, *Buldān* (*supra*, n. 25), p. 326 (Ghassan live in the Ghūṭa, the Jibal, the chief city of which is Arindela, and the Golan).

■ GHASSAN AND THE MONOPHYSITE CHURCH

Nöldeke does not state explicitly what he means by “Monophysite church province”. Presumably he simply intends the area in which the monasteries named in the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia are located, though he does acknowledge that there may have been some monasteries south of the River Yarmuk for whose archimandrites the conference, almost certainly convened near Damascus, was too far away to attend. Fergus Millar strongly defends the idea that “at least since the Council of Nicæa, the entire structure of the Church had been based on that of the civil provinces, each with one *metropolis*, namely the city which was the seat of the governor, and correspondingly of the metropolitan bishop (*metropolitēs*), who had a right to a voice in the election of bishops to the suffragan sees of the province and to summon provincial synods” (p. 108 in this volume). And this is certainly true for the imperial Chalcedonian church, but it is also the case that this letter of the archimandrites was penned at a time when Monophysite church authorities were trying to achieve their own organisational structure, one that was at least in some measure independent of the Chalcedonian hierarchy and, therefore, one that did not and could not (due to inevitable Chalcedonian opposition) follow the clear geographical arrangement of power found in the Chalcedonian church.

In the pursuit of their aim the Monophysite churchmen of Arabia involved the leaders of Ghassan in the hope that, as possessors of military and political power, they would be able to further these goals. The story begins around 542 AD with al-Hārith’s request to the empress Theodora for bishops for his subjects:

When a lack of (orthodox) priests had arisen in the countries of the east and west, and especially of bishops, then the glorious al-Hārith son of Jabala, the great king of the Saracens, with many others, asked the Christ-loving queen Theodora to give orders that two or three bishops might immediately be instituted by the orthodox in Syria. Since the believing queen was desirous of furthering everything that would assist the opponents of the synod of Chalcedon, she gave orders and two blessed men, well-trying and divine persons, whose names were Jacob and Theodore, were chosen and instituted, one for the camp (*hīrtā*) of the Saracens, that is, Theodore, and Jacob for the city of Edessa. While the blessed Theodore exercised authority in the southern and western countries, and the whole of the desert, and Arabia and Palestine, as far as Jerusalem, the blessed Jacob... extended his course over all the countries not only of Syria and the whole of Armenia and Cappadocia..., and besides these in the countries also of Cilicia and the whole of Isauria and of Pamphylia and Lycaonia and Lycia and Phrygia and Caria and Asia, and in the islands of the sea Cyprus

and Rhodes, and Chios and Mitylene, and as far as the royal city of Constantinople.⁴³

It was perfectly common for “barbarian” leaders to ask for bishops to look after the newly converted among their followers, and so neither the request nor its granting is unexpected. However, this new arrangement soon came to serve many other Christians besides the subjects of al-Hārith and for this reason it has been described as “the act that gave birth to the Monophysite church”.⁴⁴ Indeed it was the first step on the road towards the creation of a distinct Monophysite church network, since Jacob and Theodore used their position to appoint other bishops, going far beyond their initial remit to minister to the spiritual needs of the Ghassanids and their followers.

As noted above, this was no direct parallel to the Chalcedonian church with its hierarchy of patriarchs, metropolitans, bishops etc, all located in appropriately prestigious cities. The jurisdiction of these two men did not neatly correspond to the division of Roman provinces.⁴⁵ Yet there was perhaps some geographical thinking behind it. The vast territory that Jacob Baradeus had to cover was presumably meant to cater for the Chalcedonian patriarchates of both Antioch and Constantinople. And the sphere of authority of Theodore loosely corresponded to that of the Chalcedonian patriarch of Jerusalem and, interestingly, there was a substantial overlap with the realm of the phylarchates of the brothers al-Hārith ibn Jabala and Abū Kārib ibn Jabala in Arabia and Palestine respectively. Neither bishop resided in the city to which they were theoretically assigned, namely Bostra and Edessa, and this was true for many of the leaders of the Monophysite church in these early decades, when the Chalcedonian hold on the cities was very strong. Commonly they used monasteries as their base – thus Peter of Callinicum, patriarch of Antioch (581-591), stayed at the monastery of Gubba Barraya in northern Syria, and his successor, Athanasius Gammala (595-631) at the monastery of

43. John of Ephesus, “Lives of the Eastern Saints”, tr. E.W. BROOKS, *Patrologia Orientalis* 19 (1926), pp. 153-154. On Jacob and Theodore, see E. HONIGMAN, *Évêques et évêchés monophysites d’Asie antérieure au VI^e siècle* (CSCO 127 subsidia 2), Louvain, 1951, esp. pp. 158-177.

44. B. FLUSIN, “Église monophysite et église chalcédonienne”, *Settimane di studio* 51 (Spoleto, 2004), p. 675; I draw on this article for the rest of this paragraph and also the next one.

45. W. H. C. Frend goes so far as to say that “nothing in John of Ephesus’ account suggests that the Monophysite churches were destined to be organised on a regional basis” (W. H. C. FREND, *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*, Cambridge, 1972, p. 286).

Qenneshre – and this in part explains the prominence of the archimandrites of Arabia in the tritheist debate and their direct connection with the Ghassanids.

This bond between the Monophysite church and the Ghassanids was reaffirmed again and again over the coming decades. Al-Hārith ibn Jabala's energetic involvement in the tritheist controversy of the 560s is clear from the corpus of correspondence (outlined in Fergus Millar's article in this volume) in the reference to him as the "Christ-loving and glorious *patrikios*" and in the picture presented of his role in prosecuting the whole affair. His son Mundhir became similarly involved in a dispute in the late 560s and early 570s over the candidacy of the patriarchate of Alexandria, hosting discussions with many of the key church figures at his headquarters⁴⁶ and engaging in shuttle diplomacy at the very highest level:

When the two parties were mutually reviling and reproaching one another... Mundhir made a journey from Arabia to the capital, and there laboured zealously to bring about a peace... The illustrious Mundhir, who had been honoured with the title of patrician, on visiting the capital by invitation, and being magnificently received there by the king, set himself manfully and piously to abate all these evils, which he saw mutually practised by men who were members of the same faith and the same communion. He assembled therefore both sides, and scolded and admonished and reproached them for all the evils and schisms and quarrels which had sprung up between them: and advised them to cease from these strives, and he at peace with one another; and the more so, because they were all members of the same faith... This visit of the illustrious Mundhir to the capital took place in the year 891 (580 AD), on the eighth day of February; and he was received with great pomp, and endless honours conferred upon him by the merciful king Tiberius, who made him large presents and royal gifts, and did for him all that he desired, and gave him everything he asked, even bestowing military titles on the two sons, whom he had with him, and giving him leave to wear a royal crown.⁴⁷

46. E.g. Paul, ex-patriarch of Antioch, the recluse Sergius, Longinus, bishop of Nubia, and Jacob Baradeus. The usual word in the Syriac texts is *hirtā*, which need not be a reference to a fixed place, but could indicate wherever Mundhir had his camp/base. For references and thorough analysis see I. SHAHID, *BASIC*, 1.2.865-92.

47. John of Ephesus, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, tr. R. PAYNE SMITH, Oxford, 1860, 4.39. The point about permission for Mundhir to wear the crown is significant and is reiterated by John further on: "he (the emperor Tiberius) also gave him (Mundhir) a royal crown (*tāgā d-malkūtā*), the right of wearing which had never hitherto been conceded to any of the chiefs of the Arabs, but only leave to put on their heads a simple circlet (*klīlā*)" (4.42).

Finally, in the 590s, another member of the Ghassanid elite, the phylarch Jafna, was dragged into a fierce argument that broke out between the two leading men of the Monophysite church, Damian, patriarch of Alexandria, and Peter of Callinicum, patriarch of Antioch. The role of Jafna is alluded to in a letter of Peter to his compatriots in Alexandria. He relates that there was an initial meeting in a monastery and then a further one at the church of Mar Sergius at Gabitha, though that was as disorderly as the first, with the followers of both leaders being very vociferous:

The phylarch and his party were unable to impose order with the result that the discussion dragged on... The phylarch was in a hurry to return to his troops and said: "Are you content to return to a place determined by us? If not, let me leave". Then the patriarch (Damian) sought pretexts in who should attend. The phylarch replied: "It is not appropriate that you should be corrected by laymen such as us". As the patriarch did not allow himself to be persuaded and did not accept the written request about the meeting place, the phylarch departed in irritation.⁴⁸

Over at least half a century, then, we can observe a relationship developing between the Monophysite church and the Ghassanid leadership. It was a mutually beneficial one: the former got a powerful backer that could defend them from the imperial authorities and the latter gained a degree of legitimacy from this role as defenders of the faith.

■ LANGUAGE USE IN PROVINCIA ARABIA

As Fergus Millar observes in relation to the letter of the archimandrites, it is unexpected that it is in Syriac (even if not originally in Syriac, it was very quickly translated into Syriac, and the subscribers imply that they are more familiar with Syriac than Greek). Some 250-300 Aramaic inscriptions of the 1st century BC to 3rd century AD have been found in this area, testifying to the widespread use of Haurani and Nabataean Aramaic.⁴⁹ In the 13th century AD we are told by Gregory Abu l-Faraj (Bar Hebraeus), head of the Monophysites in the east at that time, that "the people of Damascus,

48. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, ed./tr. J.-B. CHABOT, Paris, 1899-1924, 2.368.

49. Useful overview given by M. C. A. MACDONALD, "Languages, scripts and the use of writing among the Nabataeans", in G. MARKOE and G. BOWERSOCK (eds.), *Petra Rediscovered: the lost city of the Nabataeans*, London, 2003, pp. 44-46, 54-56. And for an overview of the language situation in the Hauran, see R. CONTINI, "Il Hawran preislamico – ipotesi di storia linguistica," *Felix Ravenna* 133-134 (1987), esp. pp. 56-60 (Syriac in the Hauran).

of the mountains of Lebanon and of the rest of Inner Syria” spoke a dialect of Aramaic called *al-falasṭī-niyya*.⁵⁰ It is therefore pretty much certain that some form of Aramaic was widely spoken in this region in the sixth century as well. Yet for the dialect of Aramaic known as Syriac (“which is the dialect of the people of Edessa, Harran, and Outer Syria” says Bar Hebraeus) we have very little evidence in the Damascus region. Almost no Syriac inscriptions at all have been discovered in modern Jordan or southern Syria;⁵¹ in the fifth and sixth centuries Greek would seem to account for almost all epigraphic activity. And yet our Syriac letter is not totally on its own. A few texts written in Syriac in this region have survived, namely, religious works written in manuscripts.⁵²

1. 532 AD: Manuscript of the lives of Egyptian solitaries, Add. 17176 (W. Wright, *Cat*, 3.1072-3), fol. 97v: “In the year 427 of the province of Bostra this book was finished... in the holy monastery of [...] in the days of the excellent and God-fearing Mar [...], abbot and founder of the community”.
2. ca. 550s-560s AD: Commentary of John Chrysostom, Add. 14.559 (W. Wright, *Cat*, 2.468-9), fol. 107v: “This codex of Naṭṭā of Zagal, by Tadmūr (Palmyra) was carefully made at the expense of the goodly abbot Simon... in the days of the holy and true bishops Jacob and Theodore... and the king Abū Kārib”.⁵³

50. For some examples of this dialect, see P. MOUTERDE, “Inscriptions en syriaque dialectal à Kamed (Beq’a)”, *Mélanges de l’Université de Saint-Joseph* (= *MUSJ*) 22 (1939), pp. 73-106, and J. BARCLAY, “Melkite Orthodox Syro-Byzantine manuscripts in Syriac and Palestinian Aramaic”, *Liber Annuus* 21 (1991), pp. 205-219 (some as late as the thirteenth century).

51. M. DEBIÉ and A. DESREUMAUX, *Les inscriptions syriaques*, Paris, 2004, pp. 22, 50. The only exceptions are three sixth-century ones: one from southwest of Emesa and two from the region of Palmyra; P. MOUTERDE, in *MUSJ* 16 (1932), 25 (1942/1943), and IDEM, *Le Limes de Chalcis*, Paris, 1945, p. 225. There are also some signalled (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/collections/blurbs/394.cfm>), but not published, from the monastery of Mar Julian “in both estrangelo and serto peshitto”, next to Qaryatayn, 115 km NE of Damascus.

52. Besides those listed here, there are a couple of mss of uncertain provenance; e.g. Add. 12,158 (W. Wright, *Cat*, 2.555-7), which “was finished in the monastery of Mar Mkr/Mky” (fol. 127b), which might be the Dayr Makir of the letter of the archimandrites (see *Appendix* below, nos. 11 and 65).

53. A later note says that the ms belongs to the monastery of Mar Moses on the hill called “the great head, east of the village of Naṭṭā (?) subject to (*b-shūlṭānā d-*) the city of Damascus”. The “bishops Mar Jacob and Mar Theodore” are plausibly Jacob Baradeus (d. 578) and Theodore of

3. Late 6th/ early 7th c.: Manuscript of Gospel of John, Add. 17119 (W. Wright, *Cat*, 1.71-2), fol. 83r: “This book belongs to the holy convent of Silvanus which is subject to (*b-shūlṭānā d-*) the city of Damascus”.

4. 604 AD: Manuscript of works of Isaiah of Scetē, Add. 12170 (W. Wright, *Cat*, 2.458), fol. 135r: “This book was carefully made for the God-loving Mar Sha’dun, a recluse living in the region (*kūrā*) of Bostra on the margins of the village of Matan... in the year 915 of Alexander in the month Tammuz on the fifteenth of the month”.⁵⁴

5. 611 AD: Manuscript of the Thesaurus of Cyril of Alexandria, Add. 12,135 (W. Wright, *Cat*, 2.486-7), fol. 206r: “This book was written in 922 in the month of Ilul. This codex was written for the community of solitaries of the Star at Hīnā in the days of the revered and God-loving abbot Mar Paul of the community of the solitaries of the Star at Hīnā, at the expense of the priest Mar Elias of Hūlban”.⁵⁵

6. 633 AD: Manuscript of the four Gospels, Wolfenbüttel 3.1.300, fol. 284v: “In the year 945, indiction 7, on the 24th day of Kanun I there was fashioned with great diligence this holy book of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John... This cover of metal plates and gems is new, for it is wrought through the help of God and of those holy witnesses of Beth Ḥala... The priest and abbot Mar Sebani of the holy community of Beth Ḥala, which is in the region (*kūrā*) of Damascus, and the excellent among the God-chosen the priest Mar ‘Alos of Damascus, second to the abbot, together with the rest of all the priests and deacons and brothers of all the blessed and those preserved by God... carefully and diligently arranged the readings in it together with the aforementioned cover”.⁵⁶

Arabia. Note that T. NÖLDEKE, *Die ghassanischen Fürsten* (*supra*, n. 7), p. 26 (cf. I. SHAHID, *BASIC*, 1.2.846-50), emends Wright’s Naṭṭā to Nabak, which is indeed by a monastery of Mar Musa, which has recently been restored (70 km NNE of Damascus).

54. A later note says that the book belongs to the monastery of Mar Sha’dun and of the recluse Mar John who came after him, which is at Mt Hagan, east of Matan fort (*qaṣṭrā*); the city of Mothana (modern Imtān) had a fort and so is plausibly intended here (see also *Appendix* below, no. 33).

55. The mention of Hīnā and Hūlban together make it very likely that this is the Hīnā mentioned in the letter of the archimandrites (nos. 19, 75-8), which is quite close to Hūlban (no. 108).

56. This is plausibly to be identified with the Beth Ḥalā in the letter of the archimandrites (no. 13). I am very grateful to Dr Marlia Mango for giving me the text here, taken from her unpublished doctoral dissertation.

It is reasonable to connect this use of Syriac in the Damascus region with the rise of the Monophysite movement, the powerhouse of which was located in Mesopotamia and northern Syria, the heartlands of the Syriac language. A substantial proportion of all early Syriac manuscripts were produced at such monasteries as Ma'arret Mesren, Tel 'Ade and Gubba Barraya in northern Syria and Qennesheh and Speculos (the Watchtower) in Mesopotamia.⁵⁷ Many of their inmates went on to become clergymen in diverse parts, as far afield as southern Arabia and Central Asia, and their libraries and cloistered setting made an excellent headquarters for many a high Monophysite official (12 out of 16 Monophysite patriarchs of Antioch in the 6th-7th centuries used one of them as their base for a while). Whether fleeing from sporadic persecution by the Chalcedonian authorities or shuttling between communities to heal divisions and make ordinations, we see numerous Syriac-speaking clergymen traversing great distances in the 6th century (note our "ascetic from Edessa", *Appendix*, no. 17 below). Men like Simeon of Beth Arsham (d. ca. 540) and Jacob Baradeus (d. 578) seemed to be perpetually on the move. Of the latter William Wright said that "he visited in person and on foot almost every part of his vast diocese, consecrating deacons and priests, strengthening the weak and bringing back those who had erred from the true faith".⁵⁸ And of another Monophysite hero, John of Tella (d. 538), Arthur Vööbus says that he went "on a marathon run, from the Persian frontiers to Armenia, Cappadocia and Phœnicia, encouraging, instructing, examining candidates and performing mass ordinations".⁵⁹

This high level of shuttle diplomacy by these various Syriac-speaking church dignitaries is likely to have enhanced the status of the Syriac language. Syriac-speaking monks, fleeing persecution in their homeland, would seem to have capitalised on this and offered their services for the writing of Syriac texts. Good money was to be had for this work (Sha'dun above paid 4 dinars less 3 carats for his codex) and a number of Syriac manuscripts written in the Levant in the period 518-593 specify that they were the work of "Edessene scribes".⁶⁰ Possibly this explains why all

the manuscripts above bar one eschew the era of the province of Bostra in favour of the Seleucid era, which is the one "we Syrians (*suryāyē*) use", as a number of later Syriac Christian historians put it.⁶¹

If we wanted to be a bit bolder, we might postulate that the more bitter wrangling that set in after 518 between Chalcedonians and Monophysites made the use of Greek less palatable to the latter, and this, together with the heavy involvement of Syriac-speakers in the Monophysite church, meant that Syriac began to gain in currency and prestige among the Monophysites of the Levant in the course of the sixth and seventh centuries. Now whereas in northern Syria and Mesopotamia we have a situation of bilingualism, with Syriac and Greek co-existing on equal terms (both used as literary languages), in the provinces of Palestine and Arabia and southern Phœnicia we have a diglossic situation, with Greek the literary language for all and the spoken language for some, and various forms of (West) Aramaic the spoken language for many but the literary language for none (even when one dialect of it – Christian Palestinian Aramaic – begins to be written in the fifth century, it is not used for original compositions). This situation would make it relatively easy for the speakers of the (West) Aramaic dialects in this region to switch from Greek to Syriac for their literary language, just as later, under Muslim rule, they would quite quickly switch to Arabic (by the late eighth century Greek had here lost its place to Arabic as the chief literary language). Returning to northern Syria and Mesopotamia, we see that Arabic replaced Greek here too, but again in a bilingual context in which Syriac maintained its status as a literary language, now alongside Arabic rather than Greek.⁶²

It is also at this time that we begin to see inscriptions written in the Arabic language and in what we would recognise as the Arabic script. Two, found at Jabal Says and Harran (see figures 1 and 4; their location is given on fig. 2b), are dated to 528 and 568 AD respectively; a third, from Umm al-Jimal, is not dated, but usually assumed to belong to roughly the same time period. Fergus Millar has already alluded to this (and to the other possible use of the Arabic script, at Mt Nebo) and so I do not need to say much here. I would, however, like to underline the fact that both dated texts are connected with phylarchs, the Jabal Says one mentioning "king al-Hārith", almost certainly a reference to

57. M.M. MANGO, "The Production of Syriac Manuscripts 400-700 AD", *Scritture, Libri e Testi nelle aree provinciali di Bisanzio*, Spoleto, 1988, pp. 161-179.

58. W. WRIGHT, *A short history of Syriac literature*, 1894, pp. 86-87.

59. A. VÖÖBUS, "The origin of the Monophysite church in Syria and Mesopotamia", *Church History* 42 (1973), p. 20.

60. M.M. MANGO, "The Rabbula Gospels and other manuscripts produced in the Late Antique Levant", in M. BERNABO (ed.), *Il Tetravangelo di Rabbula*, Rome, 2008, pp. 116-117.

61. E.g. Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, 4.74/1.116.

62. I am much indebted to Professor Bas Ter Haar Romeny for interesting discussions on this subject. See also R. HOYLAND, "Language and Identity: The twin histories of Arabic and Aramaic (and: Why did Aramaic succeed where Greek failed?)", *Scripta Classica Israelica* 23 (2004), pp. 183-199.

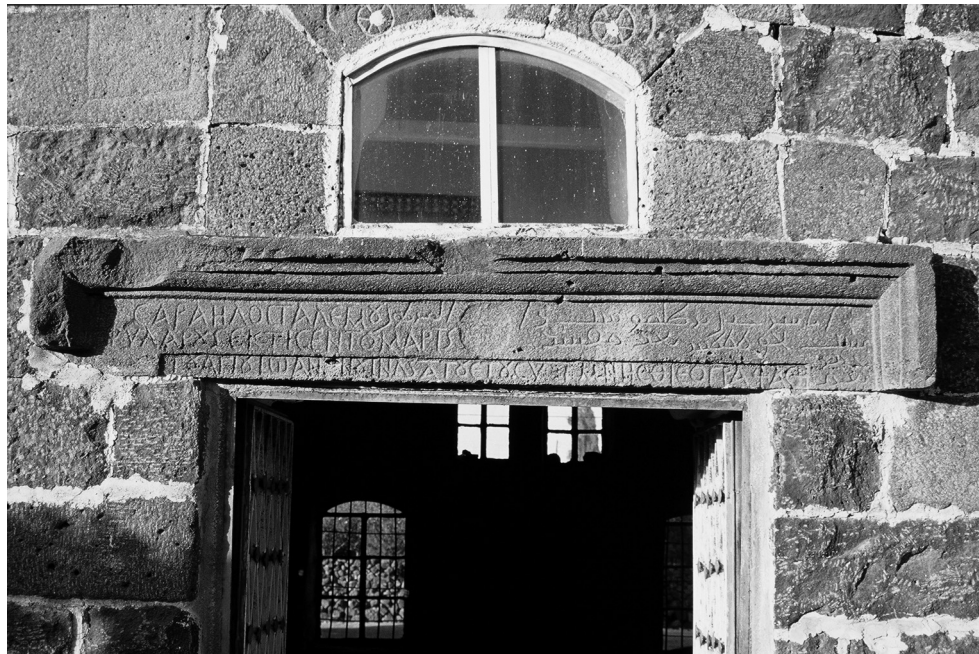


Figure 4 - Harran Inscription

the Ghassanid leader of that name, and the Harran one a certain Sharaḥīl son of Zālīm. Possibly, then, it was such Arab potentates who, because of a strong sense of their own identity and because of a need for at least a basic chancery system, stimulated this use of Arabic. It may also be that Christian missionaries to the Arabs wished to be able to teach them the scriptures in the Arabs' own language, necessitating the adaptation of the Aramaic script to this purpose (think of Cyrillic, Gothic, Coptic, etc; the Arabic script is just a modified Nabataean Aramaic script).

It was particularly Syriac Christian churchmen who were most heavily involved with an emergent Arab Christianity. For example, in the early fifth century CE Alexander, bishop of Mabbugh (northeast of modern Aleppo), built a church at Rusafa dedicated to St Sergius, to whom the Arab tribes of that region were much devoted, and both Jacob, bishop of Serug, and Severus, patriarch of Antioch, composed Syriac texts to celebrate this saint.⁶³ This involvement also holds good for Christianity in Arabia. Thus Philoxenus, bishop of Mabbug, consecrated the first two bishops of Najran in southwest

Arabia in the early sixth century CE; the south Arabian martyr Elias had been a monk at the convent of Mar Abraham of Tella (east of Edessa) and had been ordained a priest by John, bishop of Tella; and Jacob of Serug and John the Psalter from the monastery of Aphthonia at Qenneshre (east of Aleppo) both penned works in honor of the Christians martyred at Najran in the 520s.⁶⁴

CONCLUSION

In his article on the letter of the archimandrites of Arabia Nöldeke distinguished two phenomena: a "Monophysite church province (Kirchenprovinz)" and the "power of the Ghassanid phylarchs". The fact that a few of the monasteries in the letter are found outside of the boundaries of the province of Arabia led him to conclude that there was a coalescence of these two phenomena. As we have shown, he need not be right – there are alternative explanations. Nevertheless, it is a stimulating line of enquiry, since, even if wrong, it forces us to consider a number of difficult questions.

63. For these and other references, see E. KEY FOWDEN, *The Barbarian Plain. Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran*, Berkeley, 1999, pp. 22-29.

64. I. SHAHID, *Martyrs*, vi-vii/45-46 (ed./tr.); R. SCHRÖTER, "Trostschriften Jacobs von Sarug an die himjaritischen Christen", *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 31 (1877), pp. 361-405.

In particular, how far can we assume that the changes we see in the early Islamic period, with respect to administrative divisions, the establishment of autonomous religious communities, the demise of Greek as a *lingua franca* and the rapid assumption of power by the Arabs were already under way in the late sixth century. Inevitably, as an Islamicist, when I look at the Late Antique Middle East I always have one eye on what is coming. Yet I think this is to some degree justified, for if we are not to cling to the old idea of the total novelty of Islam and the Arab conquests, the Muslims arriving as primitive barbarians innocent of empire, we must accept that changes were already afoot in the period before the Arab conquests, that various Arab groups were already substantially involved in the fabric of the Empire, even if only on its periphery.

There is an inevitable problem with writing about what is happening on the periphery of a society, that is, one's sources for it will never be very good in comparison with the sources for what is going on at the centre. Moreover, those living at the centre will invariably view those living on the periphery with disdain and/or suspicion, and this in turn can shape the perspective of those brought up with these sources. Thus the translator of the early seventh-century bureaucrat and historian Theophylact of Simocatta, for whom "the Saracen tribe" are "most unreliable and fickle, their mind is not steadfast", spoke with much the same voice, deeming them of "no importance in contemporary wars and diplomacy".⁶⁵ When writing about marginal peoples and affairs, then, we need to be prepared to pay more attention to small isolated details, which might tell a bigger story than their paltry character would suggest. For example, at Andarin, a settlement on the margins of the Late Roman world, some sixty miles to the east of Hama, a survey led to the discovery of at least 70 Greek inscriptions, from which one might infer that this was the sole high language of the place. Yet excavations at a grand building designated a *kastron* by its foundation inscription revealed, in a room in the southwest corner, a fresco depicting the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, accompanied by a Syriac inscription.⁶⁶ Given that Greek is simply the default language for

writing inscriptions in the East Roman Empire, then the deployment of any other language for this purpose is highly significant, and we must read more into it than its statistical significance might appear to require.

To take another example, the aforementioned foundation text of the martyrion of St John at Harran (figure 4) is the only bilingual Greek-Arabic text that we know of for the whole Late Roman period, but that does not mean we should dismiss it as an anomaly, rather that we must try and understand the larger story that lies behind its composition. The letters are so well fashioned that behind it must lie a tradition of writing Arabic, perhaps, as noted above, a hint that its patron, the phylarch Sharaḥīl, and other Arab phylarchs before him, were already accustomed to using Arabic for certain purposes (if the Jabal Says inscription is anything to go by, issuing commands to troops would be one of these purposes). The arrangement of the whole text tells us that the Arabic was done first, implying that the Arabic was more important to the phylarch who commissioned the work, presumably in some way an important aspect of his identity. One is reminded of the proud insistence of the Qur'an on the "clear Arabic tongue" in which it is composed, as opposed to the foreign (most likely Aramaic) speech of the Jews and Christians of the region. The text is etched upon a lintel, placed above the doorway to the martyrion, presumably a Monophysite building, for, as the letter of the abbots of Arabia has shown us, the villages of this land were staunch supporters of this creed. Sharaḥīl is, therefore, making a strong declaration of his support for the Monophysite church, of his attachment to this area and his status in it, and of the importance to him and his followers of the Arabic language. He brings us, then, full circle to where we started this article, to the link postulated by Nöldeke between Monophysitism and Arab tribes in this part of the Roman province of Arabia, and stands at the forefront of an emergent Arab Christianity that was, however, surpassed by a new form of Arab monotheism only a few decades after Sharaḥīl's commission was completed.

St Andrews, Oxford

65. Theophylact Simocatta, *History*, M. and M. WHITBY (tr.), Oxford, 1986, p. 100 (3.XVII.7); the reference for the second quotation is given in n. 11 above.

66. C. STRUBE, "Androna/al-Andarin. Vorbericht über die Grabungskampagnen in den Jahren 1997-2001",

Archäologischer Anzeiger 2003; EADEM, "Eine Verkündigungsszene in Kastron von Androna/al-Andarin", in A. SCHMIDT, S. WESTPHALEN (ed.s), *Christliche Wandmalereien in Syrien*, Wiesbaden, 2005 – with reading of the inscription by Sebastian Brock.

■ APPENDIX

**The identification of the place names
in the Letter of the Archimandrites of Arabia**

The following identifications are in general those which are supported by Nöldeke, Dussaud, Shahid and Ma'oz,⁶⁷ and which would seem to be corroborated by archaeological evidence.⁶⁸ The '=' sign is followed by a modern name with which the toponym in the manuscript may reasonably be identified (or by '???' if it has not yet been identified at all). The modern name is given in bold when the identification seems very likely and in this case it will also be plotted on figure 2. For a full translation of the subscriptions see the article of Fergus Millar in this volume.

[Fol. 82r, col. 1]

1. The monastery of Abba Marcellinus on Mt Ḥartā⁶⁹ (cf. no. 4: an archimandrite of Mt Ḥartā signs for another) = **(Tall) al-Ḥāra** (T. Nöldeke, p. 430; R. Dussaud, p. 334, map I D2; *al-Mu'jam*, 3:9; I. Shahid, 825-6; Z. Ma'oz, p. 9, who links it with Ḥārith al-Jawlān of the Arabic sources [Yāqūt, *Mu'jam*, s.v.] and with Eutymia of the Greek sources [A. DEVRÉSSE, *Le patriarchat d'Antioche*, Paris, 1945, p. 214; M. Sartre, *Trois études* (cf. n. 2), p. 180]).⁷⁰
2. The great monastery of Gashmīn = **Jāsim** (T. Nöldeke, p. 429; R. Dussaud, p. 333, map II A2; *al-Mu'jam*, 2:602 [Roman and Byzantine remains including a monastery]; I. Shahid, p. 826; Z. Ma'oz, 10) = ancient Gasimea.⁷¹
3. The monastery of Abba Mar Maximus in Aṭw = ???

67. T. NÖLDEKE, "Zur Topographie" (*supra*, n. 1); R. DUSSAUD, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*, Paris, 1927; I. SHAHID, *BASIC* (*supra*, n. 2), 1.2.824-38; Z. MA'OZ, *The Ghassanids and the Fall of the Golan Synagogues*, Qazrin, 2008.

68. I.e. signs of late Roman settlement, as indicated by inscriptions and physical remains as noted in various publications, especially *Al-Mu'jam al-Jughrāfi li-l-quṭr al-'arabi al-sūrī*, Damascus, 1992, 5 vols, and from my own personal observation.

69. It is tempting to connect this with the camp (*hrt*) of the Ghassanids; the modern Arabic name ends with a tā' marbūṭa, so has the same form (*h'rt*).

70. M. SARTRE, "Les IGLS et la toponymie du Hauran", *Syria* 79 (2002), pp. 219-220, notes that IGLS, 14.522 records building stones brought to 'Aqaba' from Eutimē and connects this with the fact that he has found "une trentaine d'inscriptions grecques" at al-Ḥāra to argue that Eutimē = al-Ḥāra.

71. An inscription of Namr mentions *kōmēs Gasimmeas* (E. HONIGMAN, *Évêques* [*supra*, n. 43], p. 162 n. 5.) It is presumably the Gasymeos of N. BONWETSCH's "Antimonophysitischer Dialog" (*Nachrichten der kgl. Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 1909, pp. 123-124), which is *en tois hōriōis tēs Arabias tois*

4. The monastery of Bartāra' (signed by Thomas, priest of Mt Ḥartā) = ??? (probably not far from Mt Ḥartā since Thomas signs for Ḥabshūb or maybe Bartāra' was the name of another monastery on/around Mt Ḥartā; Z. Ma'oz, p. 10, identifies it with Ara, just south of Suweida, though this is a long way away from Mt Ḥartā. One might consider Bayt Arra near Der'a [*al-Mu'jam*, 2.396-7; R. Dussaud, map I D3], which is Schumacher's Beit Erry, Ritter's Bethirra and Josephus' Bathyra).⁷²
5. The monastery of the Ḥarīmāyē = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 439: a place in 'Ajlun or by a desert station; Z. Ma'oz, p. 10, suggests al-Hurīme south of the Yarmuk river).
6. The monastery of Beth Mar Stephen in 'Aqrab = **'Aqrabā'** (IGLS, 2413b-d; T. Nöldeke, p. 430; R. Dussaud, p. 327 [Mission, pp. 49, 298-299], map I D2; *al-Mu'jam*, 4:318-9; I. Shahid, p. 826-827) = ancient Akraba (features on Roman boundary stones; see M. Sartre, *Trois études* (cf. n. 2), p. 66).
7. The monastery of Kafr Sūgā = Umm al-Awsaj (Dussaud, map II; Umm el-Osidj; Z. Ma'oz, p. 10: "Umm al-Awsaj, 5 km southeast of 'Aqrabā', or Khirbet Dayr es-Sūg, 10 km west-northwest of Jāsim").
8. The monastery of Mar Shalman of Qūrdāyē⁷³ = **Tell Kurdi** (T. Nöldeke, p. 424; R. Dussaud, map IV A1; Z. Ma'oz, p. 10).
9. The monastery of Kafr Baṣṭas = **Bastas** (R. Dussaud, p. 335, map I D2, who spells it Fostas, though the villagers assured me it was Bastas; Z. Ma'oz, p. 11, notes that it is recorded in the 1596 Ottoman tax lists).

[Fol. 82r, col. 2]

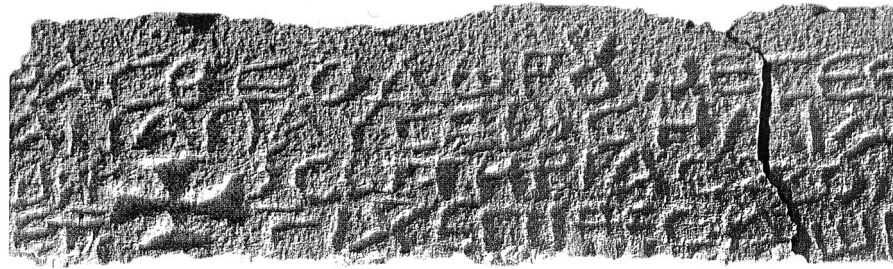
10. Gūfnat = **Jifna** (T. Nöldeke, p. 434; *al-Mu'jam*, 3:682 [Nabataean, Roman and Byzantine ruins consisting of buildings and collapsed towers]).
11. (the subscriber of no. 10 signs for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Makir = **Dayr Mākir** (T. Nöldeke, p. 440, just notes that a Syriac codex was written in 588 at a monastery of this, or very similar, name [W. Wright, *Catalogue*, 2.556]; R. Dussaud, map I D1; *al-Mu'jam*, 3:413-4; Z. Ma'oz, p. 11).
12. The monastery of Maṭallē = ??? (Nöldeke, p. 437, suggests a place just by Kiswa – followed by Z. Ma'oz, p. 11 – or a desert outpost of Damascus, but notes that "monastery of the tents" may have been applied to a number of locations, and certainly there are a number of places called *al-maṭalla* on the modern map of the region).

kata Damaskon kai Bostran diakeimenois and is "wholly of the heresy of the Jacobites".

72. *Antiquities* 17.2 (a fortress built by Herod in Batanea); for the references, see G. SCHUMACHER, *Across the Jordan*, London, 1886, p. 52.

73. T. Nöldeke takes this to be an abbreviation for Tall Qūrdāyē, as is found in no. 88 below.

13. The monastery of Beth Ḥalā (signed by priest of the monastery of Maṭallē) = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 437, links this to the Dayr Ḥalā which Ḥamza al-Iṣfahānī says was built by ‘Amr b. Jafna and, more tentatively, to the Dayr al-Khall noted by Yāqūt north of Yarmūk; R. Dussaud, p. 332; I. Shahid, p. 827; Z. Ma’oz, p. 11).
 14. The monastery of Bytlyā = ??? (R. Dussaud, p. 332, says it is in the area of Da’il, northeast of Muzeireb, but it is not marked on his map).
 15. (the subscriber of no. 14 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Būrgā Ḥawrā (“White Tower”) = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 426, followed by I. Shahid, p. 827, suggests either al-Burj near Dumayr, where a Ghassanid inscription was found [*IGLS*, 2562c], or Khirbat al-Bayda, a fort in the basalt desert south of Jabal Says; Z. Ma’oz, p. 11, suggests ‘Ayn al-Burj at the foot of Mt Hermon).
 16. The monastery of Artemīs = ??? (T. Nöldeke, pp. 436-437, suggests Tārmīs, one of the villages of Damascus according to Yāqūt; Z. Ma’oz, p. 12).
 17. An ascetic of Edessa.
 18. Tūbnīn = **Tibna** (T. Nöldeke, p. 431, equates it with the Tubnā mentioned in the poem, along with Jāsim, composed by Nābigha al-Ja’dī on the death of the Ghassanid leader Nu‘man ibn al-Ḥārith [Yāqūt, *Mu’jam*, s.v. “Tubnā”]; R. Dussaud, map II A2; *al-Mu’jam*, 2:440 [Roman remains]; I. Shahid, p. 827; Z. Ma’oz, p. 12. Today its inhabitants are principally Greek Orthodox).
 19. The monastery of Mar David at Ḥīnā = **Ḥīna** (T. Nöldeke, p. 428; R. Dussaud, p. 392, map I D1; *al-Mu’jam*, 3:192 [Byzantine remains and inscriptions]; Z. Ma’oz, p. 12).
- [fol. 82v, col. 1]
20. (the subscriber of no. 19 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Lūqad = ???.
 21. The monastery of Amīn = ???.
 22. (the subscriber of no. 21 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Luwon = **Lubin** (T. Nöldeke, p. 435, who notes that it is probably the same as Libonta in the *Notitia Dignitatis*; R. Dussaud, map II A2; *al-Mu’jam*, 5:118 [extensive Nabataean, Roman and Byzantine remains including a pagan temple and a church]; Z. Ma’oz, p. 12, who notes that it appears in an Ottoman census of 1596).
 23. The monastery of Beth Sabinian in Gashmīn (cf. no. 2) = **Jāsim**.
 24. (the subscriber of no. 23 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Beth Mar Sergius at Gabīta = **Khirbat al-Jābiya** (T. Nöldeke, p. 430; R. Dussaud, pp. 332-333, map II A2; *al-Mu’jam*, 2:599; I. Shahid, p. 827; Z. Ma’oz, p. 13).
 25. The monastery of Kafr Shemesh = **Kafr Shams** (T. Nöldeke, p. 429; R. Dussaud, p. 335, map II A1; *al-Mu’jam*, 5:55 [Roman and Byzantine remains including a monastery]; I. Shahid, pp. 828-829; Z. Ma’oz, p. 13).
 26. The monastery of Abba Titus in ‘Aqraba (cf. no. 6) = **‘Aqrabā**.
 27. Kafr Kumrē = ???
 28. The monastery of ‘Alqīn⁷⁴ = **‘Alqīn** (T. Nöldeke, p. 427; R. Dussaud, map II A1; *al-Mu’jam*, 4:327; Z. Ma’oz, p. 14).
- [Fol. 82v, col. 2]
29. Magdūlā = **Majdūliya** (thus Z. Ma’oz, p. 14, on the basis of proximity to nos. 26 and 30 and it is also very close to the Syriac name; *al-Mu’jam*, 5:158 [Byzantine and early Islamic remains]. T. Nöldeke, p. 437, suggests Majdal al-Shūr [*IGLS*, 2029-30]).
 30. The monastery of Namar = **Nāmīr** (this is the number one choice of T. Nöldeke, p. 437, and *al-Mu’jam*, 5:397, mentions a monastery there, and we have a Roman boundary stone naming the village [M. Sartre, *Trois études*, p. 67: Namr]; but Nöldeke also lists three other possibilities: cf. R. Dussaud, p. 341; I. Shahid, p. 832; Z. Ma’oz, p. 14).
 31. The monastery of Gashmīn (cf. no. 2) = **Jāsim**.
 32. The monastery of Zimrūn = **Zimrīn** (T. Nöldeke, p. 429; R. Dussaud, p. 346, map II A1; *al-Mu’jam*, 3:561 [“ancient ruin”]; Z. Ma’oz, p. 15).
 33. (the subscriber of no. 32 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Matanā = Matūna (*al-Mu’jam*, 5:151-2, mentions a monastery here) or Imtān, ancient Mothana [*IGLS*, nos. 2033-7], which is preferred by T. Nöldeke, p. 433, though it was a polis, and the list seems to comprise only minor settlements (though see n. 54); Z. Ma’oz, p. 15, suggests either Matūna or else Mumtana, but *al-Mu’jam*, 5:346, mentions no ancient remains there).
 34. The martyrium of Mar Theodore in Barūqiya = Bereika (R. Dussaud, p. 386, map I D2; T. Nöldeke, p. 434, and Z. Ma’oz, p. 15, suggest Būraq in the eastern Leja, commonly identified with ancient Constantia; also possible, though not suggested by anyone, is the *metrokomia* of Borecath [Sabaon], modern Breikeh, near Shabba. However, Bereika fits better with the locale of the surrounding monasteries and there is a Greek inscription from there mentioning Theodore, see figure 5).
 35. The monastery of Gashmīn (cf. no. 2) = **Jāsim**.
 36. The monastery of Gashmīn (cf. no. 2) = **Jāsim**.
 37. Beth Mar Phoca of Shūshanā = ??? (Z. Ma’oz, p. 15, suggests Swisah, 10 km west of Jāsim, though it is not particularly close to the Syriac name).
74. “Die Handschrift hat an der Stelle in dem Worte ‘Alqīn zwischen dem ersten und zweiten Buchstaben ein Loch, aber von ‘ayn wie von lam ist so viel übergeblieben, dass die Lesart völlig sicher steht”.



ἐκ προσφο[ρᾶς Θεοδώρου Μεγεθ[ίου
] ἀναπαύσεως Ἡλίας
]ον (καὶ) σωτηρίας Ζω[
ἔτ(ου)ς ΓΙΧ ἐπὶ Θεοδώρ[ου

*Gift of Theodore Megethios
...for the repose (of the soul) of Elias
...and the salvation of Zoi.
... in the year 613* under Theodore...*

(* =611 AD according to the era of Pameas,
see Aliquot, *IGLS*, II, 24)

Figure 5 - Theodore Inscription
(transcription by Arietta Papaconstantinou).

38. The village of Šūrmanīn = **Sūrman** (R. Dussaud, map I D2; Z. Ma'oz, p. 15).⁷⁵ This may be the Zeramena whose bishop, Nonnus, attended the Council of Chalcedon (see the article of Fergus Millar in this volume, p. 99) and is almost certainly the Sarmīn mentioned in a document about the consecration of bishops by patriarch Cyriacus in the 790s (Michael the Syrian, *Chronique*, 3.452, no. 51: "Ḥabīb, bishop of the region of Golan, from the monastery of Sarmīn").
39. Nahrā d-Qastra (cf. no. 46) = **(Nahr) al-Quṣayr** (T. Nöldeke, pp. 423-424, citing Yāqūt; R. Dussaud, p. 309, map IV A1; *al-Mu'jam*, 4:570; I. Shahid, p. 827; Z. Ma'oz, p. 16).

[Fol. 83r, col. 1]

40. The new monastery in the village of Kafr Tu'alat = **Tha'la** (*IGLS*, 2412ab; T. Nöldeke, p. 438, no. 1, though with four other suggestions, all quite near one another; R. Dussaud, map II A2; *al-Mu'jam*, 2:591 [Nabataean, Roman and Byzantine remains and inscriptions]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 16).
41. Shūrū = ??? (Z. Ma'oz, p. 16, suggests Shūrā next to Dayr Mākir; *al-Mu'jam*, 4:60).
42. (the subscriber of no. 41 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Zabīrat = **Zabīra** (*IGLS*, 2512-3; T. Nöldeke, p. 434; R. Dussaud, map II A1; *al-Mu'jam*, 3:543 [Roman and Byzantine remains]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 16).

75. R.C. GREGG and D. URMAN, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in the Golan Heights*, Atlanta (Ga), 1996, pp. 215-246, record 29 inscriptions found there.

43. Mount Maḥaggā (cf. no. 52) = **Maḥajja** (*IGLS*, 2413b; T. Nöldeke, p. 432; R. Dussaud, p. 336, map II A2; *al-Mu'jam*, 5:167 [extensive remains]; I. Shahid, p. 828; Z. Ma'oz, p. 16).
44. (the subscriber of no. 43 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Fādīn = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 433, suggests al-Fadayn in the southern Hauran, citing Yāqūt, s.v. [see n. 23 *supra*]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 16, suggests Tell 'Ayn Fada, as it is close to no. 43).
45. Laḥaf = Kafr (or Rimat) **al-Laḥf** (*al-Mu'jam*, 5:63 [extensive ruins from Nabataean, Roman and Byzantine period]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 17).
46. Nahrā d-Qastra (cf. no. 39) = **Nahr Qaṣīr/Khan al-Quṣayr**.
47. (the subscriber of no. 46 signs also for the archimandrite of) Mar Joseph in the village of Būṭa' = **Ubṭa'** (T. Nöldeke, p. 432; R. Dussaud, map II A2; *al-Mu'jam*, 2:4 [remains of "a monastery, church, buildings, columns, inscriptions, graves"]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 17, who notes that it appears in an Ottoman census of 1596).
48. The monastery of Kafr Shemesh (cf. no. 25) = **Kafr Shams**.

[Fol. 83r, col. 2]

49. The monastery of Bar Saprā = **Bayt Sābir** (T. Nöldeke, pp. 438-439; R. Dussaud, p. 391, map I D1; *al-Mu'jam*, 2:405 ["excavations of the houses uncovered tablets bearing Latin and Greek texts"]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 17).
50. The monastery of Galashā = ???.
51. The monastery of the village of Būsra'īl = **Buṣr al-Ḥarīr** (T. Nöldeke, p. 435; R. Dussaud, p. 373, map II A2; *al-Mu'jam*, 2:323 [remains of "monasteries, villas, fort, graves, wells"]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 17).

52. The monastery of Qūnītā (signed by the priest Mar Sergius of Mount Maḥaggā) = **al-Qanayya** (*al-Mu'jam*, 4:619 [many Roman and Byzantine remains]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 18).
53. The monastery of Mar Conon of the Zarūyē = **Ezra'** (*IGLS*, 2479-2504; Nöldeke, pp. 434-435; R. Dussaud, map II A2; *al-Mu'jam*, 2: 81-2 [extensive Roman and Byzantine remains, including the sixth-century churches of Mar George and Mar Elias; Z. Ma'oz, p. 18] = ancient Zoraua (Zurrā in medieval Arabic sources).
54. The monastery of 'Almat = **'Alma** (T. Nöldeke, p. 432; R. Dussaud, p. 335, map II A2; *al-Mu'jam*, 4:328 [Roman and Byzantine remains]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 18).
55. The Martyrium of Mar Sergius in 'Almat (cf. no. 54) = **'Alma**.
56. Sa'arī'ā'il = ???
57. (the subscriber of no. 56 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Gadīrtā = ??? (Z. Ma'oz, p. 18, reads *'ayn/ghayn* and suggests Ghadīr al-Bustā on the Ruqad river, but the tail of the *gimmel* is clear).

[fol. 83v, col. I]

58. The monastery of 'Ahirat = **'Āhira** (*IGLS*, 2437-2450; T. Nöldeke, p. 435; R. Dussaud, p. 372, map II A2; Z. Ma'oz, p. 19, who notes that it appears in an Ottoman census of 1596); = ancient Aerita.
59. The monastery of Būrgā d-Ḥaraf = **Ḥarfā** (Dussaud, map I D1; *al-Mu'jam*, 4:47; Z. Ma'oz, p. 19).
60. The monastery of 'Almat (cf. no. 54) = **'Alma**.
61. The monastery of 'Almat (cf. no. 54) = **'Alma**.
62. The monastery of Rū'af = ??? (Z. Ma'oz, p. 19, suggests Ra'āfa near Da'al; this does not appear on modern maps, but it is probably R. Dussaud's Rafé on map II A2, between Sheikh Miskin and Ezra'. Note that M. Kropp, "Dion of the Decapolis", p. 127, tentatively identifies it with the Decapolis town of Rafana).
63. Rū'af (cf. no. 62) = ???.
64. Aṭīmā = ??? (Z. Ma'oz, p. 19, says this name represents Eutymia and is the same as monastery no. 1).
65. The village of Makir (cf. no. 11) = **Dayr Mākir**.
66. Beth Mar Philip of Ūfaniā = **Ūfaniya** (R. Dussaud, p. 386, map I D1; *al-Mu'jam*, 2:193 [Greek inscriptions]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 19).
67. (the subscriber of no. 66 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Gūtar = ??? (Z. Ma'oz, p. 20, suggests Tell Abū Ghītār, 9 km west of Tsil).
68. The monastery of Kafr Gūzā = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 440, suggests 'Ayn Jawza near Shahba; Z. Ma'oz, p. 20, suggests Juwayza, 10 km south of Qunaytra, since it is near nos. 65-66, though G. Schumacher, *The Jawlan*, London, 1888, p. 169, says that "of antique remains little are to be seen").
69. The monastery of Namūl = ??? (Z. Ma'oz, p. 20, suggests Tell al-Mal, 3 km north of 'Aqrabā).

[Fol. 83v, col. 2]

70. The column of Kafr Nasig = **Kafr Nāsij** (T. Nöldeke, p. 429; R. Dussaud, p. 335, map I D1; Z. Ma'oz, p. 20).
71. The monastery of Amūnīn = ???
72. The monastery which is at Ḥinā and called Lycostoma (cf. no. 19) = **Ḥina**.
73. The monastery of Makir (cf. no. 11) = **Dayr Mākir**.
74. The monastery of Libūntā = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 435, suggests Lubīn or Dayr al-Laban, both in the Leja, and notes it is probably the same as Libona in the *Notitia Dignitatum*; Z. Ma'oz, p. 74, suggests Hilwet al-Baydah at the foot of Mt Hermon, wishing to find somewhere near to nos. 75-81).
75. The monastery of Beth Ṣalmā in the village of Ḥinā (cf. no. 19) = **Ḥina**.
76. The monastery of Mar Cyriacus in Ḥinā (cf. no. 19) = **Ḥina**.
77. The monastery of Ḥinā (cf. no. 19) = **Ḥina**.
78. The monastery of Mar Elias in Ḥinā (cf. no. 19) = **Ḥina**.
79. The monastery of Dūrbīl = **Durbul** (T. Nöldeke, p. 428; R. Dussaud, p. 392, map I D1; Z. Ma'oz, p. 21).

[Fol. 84r, col. I]

80. 'Ayn Garā (signed by a member of the monastery in the village of Dūrbīl) = **'Ayn al-Jarr** (T. Nöldeke, p. 441; R. Dussaud, map III C2; Z. Ma'oz, p. 80; there is no dot on the d/r, so one could also read 'Ayn Gadā).
81. The monastery of Kafr Ḥawar = **Kafr Ḥawar** (*IGLS*, 1890; T. Nöldeke, p. 428; R. Dussaud, p. 393, map I D1; *al-Mu'jam*, 5:48-9 [ancient remains]; Z. Ma'oz, p. 21).
82. The monastery of the village of Bytymn = **Bayt Tīma** (T. Nöldeke, p. 428; R. Dussaud, 391, map I D1; *al-Mu'jam*, 2:399; Z. Ma'oz, p. 22).
83. The column of Bytymn (signed by John of the monastery of Ḥinā, which is called the House of the Lady Mary; cf. no. 82) = **Bayt Tīma**.
84. The monastery of Parsīdīn (signed by Mar George of the monastery of the Ḥarīmāyē) = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 441, notes that the name probably reflects the word *praesidium*, a military post; Z. Ma'oz, p. 22, suggests Pardīs at the foot of Mt Hermon).
85. The monastery of 'Awdī/'Awdīn = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 441; Z. Ma'oz, p. 22; presumably near Talla d-Qūrdāyē, since Silvanus signs for someone from there in no. 88).
86. The monastery of Beth Ḳlānā of Darayyē = **Dārayyā** (T. Nöldeke, pp. 421, 427; R. Dussaud, p. 297, map III D3; *al-Mu'jam*, 3:299-300 [Roman to early Islamic remains]; I. Shahid, p. 829; Z. Ma'oz, p. 22).
87. The monastery of Darayyē (cf. no. 86) = **Dārayyā**.
88. The monastery of Talla d-Qūrdāyē (signed by Mar Solonos of 'Awdīn; cf. no. 8) = **Tell Kurdi**.

89. The new monastery of Kafr Sūsāyā = **Kafr Sūsya** (T. Nöldeke, p. 426; R. Dussaud, map III D3; *al-Muʿjam*, 5:54; Z. Maʿoz, p. 22; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, s.v. “Kafr Sūsiyya”).

[Fol. 84r, col. 2]

90. Beth Elias of Qūrdāyē (cf. no. 8) = **Tell Kurdī**.
 91. The monastery of Kafā (signed by the archimandrite of the monastery of Beth ʿĪlānā of Darayyē; cf. no. 86) = ???
 92. Nūsā (signed by Mar John of the monastery of Mar Shalman of Qūrdāyē, cf. no. 8) = ???
 93. The monastery of Mar Paul in Sakkayā (signed by the archimandrite of the monastery of Mar Shalman of Qūrdāyē) = **Sakkāʾ** (*IGLS*, 2562ab; T. Nöldeke, pp. 421, 425, noting a reference to it as a Ghassanid station in Yāqūt; R. Dussaud, map IV A2; *al-Muʿjam*, 3:634 [remains of a monastery]; I. Shahid, p. 830; Z. Maʿoz, p. 23. None consider Sakkāia, modern Shakka, in the Hauran, even though it is in Provincia Arabia proper; however, it was a polis, whereas the places in this list seem to be all minor settlements, and it is far from the numbers around it).
 94. The monastery of Sakkayā (cf. no. 93) = **Sakkāʾ**.
 95. The monastery of the Gūbāyē among the Qūrdāyē (cf. no. 8) = **Tell Kurdī**.
 96. The monastery of Būṣaʾ = **al-Buṣayʾ** (T. Nöldeke, p. 427, citing Yāqūt; I. Shahid, p. 830).
 97. The monastery of Mar Sergius in Būṣaʾ (signed by Mar Menas of the monastery of Gūbāyē; cf. no. 96) = **al-Buṣayʾ**.

[Fol. 84v, col. 1]

98. The monastery of Būṣaʾ (see no. 96) = **al-Buṣayʾ**.
 99. The monastery of Qūrdāyē (cf. no. 8) = **Tell Kurdī**.
 100. (the subscriber of no. 99 signs also for the archimandrite of the monastery of the village of Kūsītā = **Kiswa** (T. Nöldeke, p. 427; R. Dussaud, p. 321, map II A1; I. Shahid, p. 830; Z. Maʿoz, p. 23).
 101. The monastery of Būṣaʾ (cf. no. 96) = **al-Buṣayʾ**.
 102. The monastery of Ṣafrīn (signed by the archimandrite of the monastery of Darayyē) = **Dayr al-ʿAṣāfir** (T. Nöldeke, p. 425, noting that both mean “monastery of the small birds”; *al-Muʿjam*, 3:409; Z. Maʿoz, pp. 23-24).
 103. The monastery of Darayyē (cf. no. 86) = **Dārayyā**.
 104. The monastery of Darayyē (cf. no. 86) = **Dārayyā**.
 105. The monastery of Lūzē in the village of Darayyē (cf. no. 86) = **Dārayyā**.
 106. The monastery of Darayyē (signed by the same person as nos. 86 and 91) = **Dārayyā**.
 107. The monastery of Rīsh ʿĪlānā = **Dārayyā**? (the occurrence of Dārayyā in the previous five entries perhaps made the signatory feel it unnecessary to repeat it; possibly his monastery is connected with Beth ʿĪlānā).

[Fol. 84v, col. 2]

108. The monastery called of Ḥūlbūn = **Ḥalbūn** (T. Nöldeke, p. 436 – though noting that the expression “called of Ḥūlbūn” may mean that the monastery is not actually in Ḥalbūn; R. Dussaud, map III D2; *al-Muʿjam*, 3:109 [Latin inscriptions]; Z. Maʿoz, p. 24).
 109. (the subscriber of no. 108 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of the village of Kafr Sūsāyā (cf. no. 89 above) = **Kafr Sūsya**.
 110. The monastery of the Field/Camp of Darayyē (cf. no. 86) = **Dārayyā**.
 111. The monastery of Darayyē (cf. no. 86) = **Dārayyā**.
 112. The monastery of Mar Yūnan in Darayyē (signed by Mar John of Beth Mar Shalman of Qūrdāyē; cf. no. 86) = **Dārayyā**.
 113. The monastery of Gabtil = ??? (Z. Maʿoz, p. 24, suggests Jubbat al-Khashab in the Golan).
 114. The monastery of Gabtil (cf. no. 113) = ???.
 115. The monastery of Gabtil (cf. no. 113) = ???.
 116. The monastery of ʿAwīrā = ??? (Z. Maʿoz, p. 25, suggests Afra/ʿAfra at the eastern foot of the Anti-Lebanon range, north of Damascus).
 117. The monastery of Gūbīl = ??? (Z. Maʿoz, p. 25, suggests Jabā, 10 km northwest of ʿAqrabā).

[Fol. 85r, col. 1]

118. Ḥadṭā = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 425, observes that the name is too common to make a guess; Z. Maʿoz, p. 25, suggests Haditha al-Turkeman, south of Damascus).
 119. The monastery of Ḥaliyōrum = **Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī** (I. Shahid, p. 833; Ḥaliyōrum is evidently the Heliaramia of the Peutinger Table, which appears to be not far to the west of Palmyra, which would be right for Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī).
 120. The monastery of Gīglē = ???.
 121. The monastery of ʿŪqabtā (signed by Mar Eustathius of “the church of the glorious and Christ-loving patrician Mündir”) = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 427, tentatively suggests ʿAqabat al-Shahūra near Kiswa, supported by I. Shahid, p. 831; Z. Maʿoz, p. 25).
 122. Afā = ??? (Z. Maʿoz, p. 25, suggests ʿAyn ʿAfā 10 km west of Ghabaghīb, though *al-Muʿjam*, 4:405, knows of no Roman/Byzantine remains there).
 123. The column of the holy monastery Ḥagūn = ??? (possibly Ḥijāna, southeast of Damascus, designated Hixone on a Greek boundary marker: R. Dussaud, pp. 303-304, map IV B2).
 124. The monastery of Mītabīn = **Mūtabīn** (T. Nöldeke, p. 431; R. Dussaud, p. 340, map II A1; *al-Muʿjam*, 5:368 [Roman and Byzantine remains including church and inscriptions]; Z. Maʿoz, p. 25).
 125. (the subscriber of no. 124 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Beth Mar Isaac at Lūbīb = ???

(T. Nöldeke, p. 440, suggests Dayr ‘Ali, formerly Lebaba – see *IGLS*, 2558 – though notes it is “very uncertain”; R. Dussaud, p. 320, map II A1; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 26).

[Fol. 85r, col. 2]

126. The monastery of Maṣrīn = ???.

127a. (the subscriber of no. 126 signs also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Shamnīl... = **Samlīn** (T. Nöldeke, p. 429; R. Dussaud, p. 345, map II A1; *al-Mu‘jam*, 3:661 [Roman and Byzantine remains]; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 26; M. Sartre, “Les IGLS” (cf. n. 70), p. 219, notes a boundary stone from there).

127b. ...(and for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Gadayā = **Jadayā** (Yāqūt, s.v.; T. Nöldeke, p. 429; R. Dussaud, map II A1; *al-Mu‘jam*, 2:648, lists three villages of this name [Nöldeke *et al.* opt for this one because it is near 127a; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 26]).

128. The monastery of the village of Kafr Aushay (signed by the archimandrite of the monastery of the village of Gashmīn) = **Ashshah** (*al-Mu‘jam*, 4:306 [Roman and Byzantine remains]; suggestion of Z. Ma‘oz, p. 26, which seems plausible given its proximity to Jāsim).

129. The monastery of ‘Issaniyā (signed by Elias of the monastery of Ara‘bnayē) = **al-Ghassāniyya** (I. Shahid, p. 834 [followed by Z. Ma‘oz, p. 26], argues, plausibly, that one should read monastery of the Ghassanids and that it might have given its name to the place; there are a few places called al-Ghassāniyya, but if we assume it to be close to Ra‘abanā, then it would have to be the Tell al-Ghassāniyya 4 km south of Quneitra, next to the village of al-Mumsiyya, where *al-Mu‘jam*, 4:439, says there are columns, decorated cut blocks and Greek inscriptions⁷⁶).

130. The House of our Lady Maria in Afrā = **Ifra** (T. Nöldeke, p. 436; *al-Mu‘jam*, 2:120; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 26, suggests al-Furn 8 km northwest of Quneitra as part of his claim that nos. 128-137 are all found in the Golan).

131. The monastery of Saint Shalman = ??? (place not specified).

132. The monastery of the village of Mīsfar = **Musayfira** (*IGLS*, 2070c; T. Nöldeke, p. 432-433; R. Dussaud, p. 359, map II A2; *al-Mu‘jam*, 5:253 [ancient remains including inscriptions]; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 27, suggests Mshīrfēh 8 km east of Quneitra as part of his claim that nos. 128-137 are all found in the Golan).

133. The village of Mīsfar (cf. no. 132) = **Musayfira**.

134. The monastery of Ara‘bnayē = **Ra‘abanā** (*al-Mu‘jam*, 3:495; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 27).

135. The monastery of Kafr Za‘ūrā = Za‘ūra (*al-Mu‘jam*, 3:554-5; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 27).

136. The monastery of ‘Ayūn = ??? (T. Nöldeke, p. 433, suggests the ‘Ayūn near Salkhad, where there are Greek inscriptions – *IGLS*, 1984-8; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 27, suggests Marj ‘Ayūn 16 km northwest of Baniyas to fit in with nos. 134-135. With its meaning of “sources/springs” it is a very common name).

[Fol. 85v, col. 1]

137. (the subscriber of no. 136 signed also for the archimandrite of) the monastery of Rīshayyā = Rashayya (T. Nöldeke, p. 436; R. Dussaud, p. 394, map III C3; Z. Ma‘oz, p. 27, prefers Rashayyat al-Fuhhar 12 km north of Baniyas as it fits in with nos. 134-5).

76. R. C. GREGG and D. URMAN, *Jews, Pagans and Christians* (*supra*, n. 75), pp. 210-214, give three inscriptions, one recording the building of a church of St George (it is dated to year 535, which R.C. Gregg and D. Urman took

as 472 AD assuming the era of Pompey, but Aliquot, *IGLS*, 11, 24, shows that it is using the era of Baniyas, and should be read as 533/534 AD).

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