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Mission at Palmyra, IGLS XVII (October 2008): Report

Jean-Baptiste Yon, Walid Al-As'Ad, Khalil Al-Hariri

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CHRONIQUE ARCHÉOLOGIQUE EN SYRIE

SPECIAL ISSUE DOCUMENTING THE ANNUAL EXCAVATION REPORTS
CONCERNING THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES IN SYRIA

EXCAVATION REPORTS OF 2008

AL-BASSEL CENTRE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING
THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF ANTIQUITIES AND MUSEUMS
MINISTRY OF CULTURE
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC

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ARABE COVER PICTURE

From left to right:

- Mishirfeh, royal tomb.
- Tell Gindaris, remains of building.
- Kherbet Al-Mataroon, stone relief.
- Dja'de el mughara, wall painting.
- Tell Hassake, part of cathedral.

ENGLISH COVER PICTURE

From right to left:

- Tell Shir, area L-O 20-21.
- Palmyra, area of tomb.
- Tell Chuera, area K.
- Qasr al-Hayr al-sharqi, secteur E.
- Tell Afis, area of temples.

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MISSION AT PALMYRA, IGLS XVII (OCTOBER 2008) : REPORT

J.-B. YON, W. AL-AS'AD, and Kh. AL-HARIRI

HiSoMA, CNRS, Maison de l'Orient, Lyon, DGAM

The mission in Palmyra (programme Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie [IGLS]), from October 8th to 13th 2008, was highly successful. The IGLS are a programme of the team HiSoMA (CNRS-Université Lyon II, Maison de l'Orient), heir to the Institut F.-Courby. It is under supervision of Dr. J.-Cl. Decourt and Dr. P.-L. Gatier.

Jean-Baptiste YON would like to thank the Direction générale des Antiquités et les Musées de Syrie, its Directeur Général, Dr. Bassam Jammous, its Directeur des fouilles, Dr. Michel Maqdissi. Thanks to the permission liberally granted to me, field work could take place and be successful.

In Palmyra, archaeological institutions, represented by Walid As'ad, Director of Antiquities of Palmyra, have offered a lot of help. M. Khaled As'ad, former Director of Antiquities of Palmyra gave me useful informations. The Museum Team was a great assistance too.

As for most of French archaeological programmes in the Near East, the IGLS are greatly indebted to the Institut Français du Proche-Orient (IFPO), for its help and support.

This year's mission was a very short one, mostly for a last checking of some inscriptions, before the final redaction of volume XVII/1 of *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Palmyra). It was thus possible to work in the depot and to do some photographs of inscriptions : Inv A 805, A 1127 and A 1405. The last two should be compared as they most certainly refer to the same official, a Roman soldier, called Titus Flavius Priscus, but they do not belong to the same console. On the site, some verifications were made on particular objects, permitting to complete the documentation on the epigraphy of Palmyra.

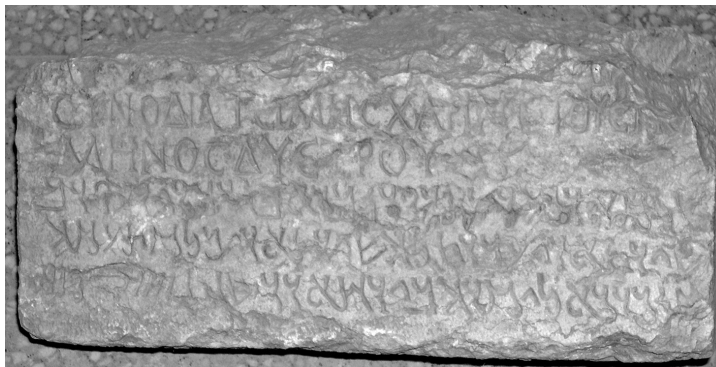
The field work has permitted as well, in collaboration with Prof. M. Gawlikowski, to make some new copies and photographs of Aramaic texts discovered on the Northern wall by the Syrian Mission in 2002 and the years before. M. Khaled As'ad, then Director of Antiquities of Palmyra,

had the kindness to show them to me at the time and to propose me a joint publication (Khaled As'ad, M. Gawlikowski and J.-B. Yon), of some 60 new inscriptions (mostly short epitaphs).

In the Museum was also seen a new bilingual caravan inscription, discovered by chance in the sector south of Agora. The Greek text is destroyed (the last two lines excepted).

The text is the following :

[Αδδουδανον Αβγαρου τοῦ - - -]
 [συνοδιάρχην ἢ ἀπὸ Χαρακὸς συναβάσα]
 συνοδία τειμῆς χάριν ἔτους ΓΚ[Υ]
 μηνὸς Δύστρου.
 šlm' dnh dy ḥdwdn br 'bgr [- -] rb
 šyrt' dy 'bdt lh šyrt' dy slqt 'mh
 mn krk' lyqrh byrh 'dr šnt 423.



« This statue of Haddûdan, son of Abgar - - -, head of caravan, which was made by the caravan which came back from Karka with him, in his honour, in the month Adar, year 423. » (Aramaic)

The Greek text should have been written mostly along the same lines. The date (in Greek)

has been restored accordingly. Adar 423 of the Seleucid era is March 112 AD. We have here one of the earliest caravan inscription and the earliest occurrence of the word for caravan (synodia). The significance of this discovery to the chronology of the agora (the stone itself may come from this area) is another matter, but it surely belongs to this discussion. The caravan leader Haddûdan does not seem to be known otherwise.