

## EPIGRAPHIC NOTES ON TWO BILINGUAL INSCRIPTIONS IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF BANAT (IDR III/1 170 AND 178)

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(Abstract)

There have been six inscriptions exhibiting Palmyrene Aramaic script discovered in Romania (Roman Dacia). This article surveys all six, focusing on two fragments of bilingual inscriptions that were unearthed at the Roman-period site of Tibiscum (IDR III/1 170 and 178). This article provides a line-by-line analysis of both texts, offering a detailed analysis of the scripts of both and offering a new reconstruction of IDR III/1 170. We argue that the revised reading of Aramaic line 1 as *br tym* ['] ("son of Taym[ē]") requires a reevaluation of the Latin portion of individuals named in the inscription. The deceased individual remains unnamed, but his father was named Taymē' (according to the Aramaic portion). This was not, however, the same *Themhes* who dedicated the inscription (according to Latin line 3') and was the brother of the deceased. Our detailed analysis of both epigraphs' scripts demonstrates that they belonged to two different inscriptions.

### *Introduction:*

#### *Palmyrene Inscriptions in Dacia*

It is widely known that men from Palmyra, Syria, were among the many soldiers who served in the Roman army in Dacia.<sup>1</sup> The testimony extends from archaeological materials and iconographic sources (such as Trajan's Column in Rome<sup>2</sup>) to epigraphic texts. The earliest epigraphs mentioning Palmyrene soldiers were discovered in Porolissum (near modern Zalău, Sălaj County),

in Cășeu (ca. 40 km east of Porolissum, in Cluj County), and in Tibiscum (near modern-day Jupa and Caransebeș, Caraș-Severin County). Three, perhaps four, military diplomas dating 120–126 CE record the names of certain *Palmyreni Sagittarii (ex Syria)* ("Palmyrene archers [from Syria]") who had fulfilled their obligations to military service and were being granted citizenship as a result.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent to the inscription of these diplomas, Palmyrene soldiers and veterans left dozens of inscriptions scattered across the Dacian countryside, largely concentrated in the army forts where they served (Tibiscum, Porolissum)<sup>4</sup> and in the civilian-populated cities where they retired afterward: Potaissa (modern Turda, Cluj County) and, in greater numbers, the *colonia* Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa (modern Sarmizegetusa, Hunedoara County).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., Piso 1985; Piso-Țentea 2011; 2014; Țentea 2011; 2012a; 2012b; Crețulescu-Mureșan 2013, 55–58.

<sup>2</sup> This evidence, though, is subject to alternate interpretations. Some (e.g., Haynes 2013, 292–296) have pointed out that without clear captioning, it is hazardous to assume a definitive correspondence between the archers portrayed in several panels and the Palmyrene archers who were recruited under Trajan and Hadrian in the early 2nd c. CE (101–102, 105–106, 117–118 CE) to serve in the army's auxiliary forces.

<sup>3</sup> See IDR I, 5 (120 CE, from Cășeu in Cluj County); IDR I, 8 and 9 (126 CE, from Tibiscum); and likely IDR I, 6 (from Porolissum, also 120 CE), where only *Sylria* is preserved; see also Russu 1969, 173; Petolescu 1979; and Le Roux 1986, 358–360.

<sup>4</sup> Reuter 1999, 394–398, esp. 394.

<sup>5</sup> For evidence from Potaissa, see, e.g., CIL 3.907 = 3.7693; see also Russu 1969, 173–174; and Reuter 1999, 556 no. 198: the inscription was set up by *BOLHAS BANNAEI VET(eranus) EX N(umero) PALMVR(enorum)* and his wife *AE(ia) DOMESTICA* for members of their household. For

For the most part, the surviving epigraphs commemorating these individuals were written in Latin. Analysis of the monolingual Latin inscriptions commemorating Palmyrene soldiers and their families, recording dedications to deities, and celebrating public munificence would outstrip the limitations of the current venue. Instead, in the present study we concern ourselves with the epigraphs that exhibit Palmyrene Aramaic script and language. Only six such inscriptions clearly exhibiting Palmyrene language and script (two monolingual Aramaic and four bilingual Latin-Aramaic) have been discovered in Dacia.

Of these six epigraphs, two are monolingual Aramaic, and contain only Palmyrene script. The first of these was published in Romanian by Maria Petrovsky and Volker Wollmann in 1979.<sup>6</sup> Silviu Sanie offered an analysis in French in 1981, without a definitive registration number, calling it only “Fr.” (which Adrian Ardeț has identified to us as meaning “Fragment”; see fig. 1).<sup>7</sup> The small fragment contained portions of two lines of Aramaic script, although it may originally have been part of a bilingual Latin-Aramaic inscription; if it was, any sign of the accompanying Latin text is missing. This fragment is not currently held in either the National Museum of Banat’s holdings, nor is it located in the collection of the Museum in Caransebeș.<sup>8</sup> We have been unable to discover its current location. The second monolingual Palmyrene inscription from Dacia was discovered at Porolissum in 2002. It went unidentified as such until Dr. Dan Deac, a Researcher at the Muzeul Județean de Istorie și Artă (County Museum of

History and Art), came across the ostrakon while performing an inventory of pottery sherds from Porolissum in the museum’s inventory (inv. no. MJIAZ CC 799/2002; see fig. 2). He contacted Hutton with photographs of the sherd on which the inscription appears. The reading, [...] *gnx*<sup>9</sup> (probably meaning “crater,” “symposium,” followed by an unidentifiable grapheme) would seem to point toward the religious celebrations that must have remained in practice in the context of the *Numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensis*.<sup>9</sup>

Two other epigraphs of this small collection are well known among both Classicists and Semitists. These are the bilingual Guras inscription (*IDR* III/1 154; see fig. 3),<sup>10</sup> discovered in Tibiscum during the 19th century, and the Neses inscription (*IDR* III/1 167; see fig. 4),<sup>11</sup> deriving from the same locale, but discovered only in 1967. The latter, like the first inscription discussed below, was likely found in secondary context in the *principia* of the large fort.<sup>12</sup> J. M. Hutton and N. E. Greene inspected and photographed both of these bilingual inscriptions during a visit to the National Museum of Banat (Timișoara, Romania) on June 10, 2016. They performed Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) on *IDR* III/1 154, which resulted in an emended reading of the inscription’s Aramaic portion. Instead of Torma’s original reading,

*gwr’ ydy hptyn*  
Gurā’ (son of) Yadday, Optio

Hutton and Greene read the final word as *hptyw*.<sup>13</sup> Although this rereading produces the same translation, its import lies in the conclusion that the Palmyrene inscription was reproducing the phonology of the Latin loanword *optio* rather than the Greek pronunciation ὀπτίων, to which previous interpreters had traced the Aramaic spelling,

<sup>9</sup> Hutton 2019.

<sup>10</sup> *IDR* III/1 154 = *PAT* 0251 = *CIL* 3.7999 = *CIS* 3906 = *HNE*: 482 d. γ4. *Editio princeps*: Torma 1882, 120–122, no. 72; see also Nöldeke 1890; Moga-Russu 1974, 59–60, no. 30; Sanie 1981, 361 and photograph in fig. 1/1; Țeposu Marinescu 1982, 175 no. 58; Reuter 1999, 534 no. 164; Adams 2003, 255–256 no. 7; Kaizer 2004, 565; Hutton-Greene 2016.

<sup>11</sup> *IDR* III/1, 167 = *PAT* 0994. *Editio princeps*: Sanie 1970a; see also Sanie 1970b, 240; Moga-Russu 1974, 70–73 no. 37; Sanie 1981, 360–361 and photograph in fig. 1/4 (*IDR* III/1 167 is incorrectly labeled in the caption); Țeposu Marinescu 1982, 134 no. 132; Reuter 1999, 533 no. 156; Adams 2003, 258 no. 11; Kaizer 2004, 565–566; Benea-Regep 2016, 340 no. 24; Hutton-Greene 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Benea-Regep 2016, 327 and n. 39.

<sup>13</sup> Hutton-Greene 2016, 297–299.

Sarmizegetusa as a planned *colonia*, see Haynes 2013, 349. Palmyrene veterans are recorded at Sarmizegetusa: In particular, we note the multiple mentions of *P(ublius) A(elius) THEIMES*, who was involved in the civic and religious life of the city (*IDR* III/2 18; 152; 369–370). This Theimes was a *VET(eranus)* from a century of the *C[OH(ortis)] I] VINDEL(icorum)* (*IDR* III/2 369, see also 370), based in Tibiscum. Haynes (2013, 349 n. 75) notes that Apulum (modern Alba Iulia, Alba County) has also yielded record of a *VET(eranus)* from the decurione of the *AL(ae) II PANN(oniorum)* who served as a *DEC(urio)* in *COL(oniae) DAC(icae)* (i.e., Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa), among other polities (*CIL* 3.1100 = *IDR* III/5.1 253).

<sup>6</sup> *Editio princeps*: Petrovsky-Wollmann 1979, 261–262 no. 9, fig. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Sanie 1981, esp. 359–360; photograph and copy in fig. 1/5a, 5b; see also Petolescu 2005, 118 no. 226. We thank Dr. Adrian Ardeț for his personal communication in April, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Greene and Hutton (Hutton-Greene 2016, 294) mistakenly identified its location in Caransebeș in an earlier publication; subsequent searching with Ardeț did not turn up the inscription.

putatively with a final *nun*. Accordingly, they showed that the Palmyrene soldiers were working with the Latin loanword without the mediating influence of Greek.

Hutton and Greene's investigation of *IDR* III/1 167 (also performed on June 10, 2016) led to a similarly detailed rereading of the Aramaic in that inscription. Although they did not perform RTI on that inscription, their photography revealed a new reading on line two. They were able to fill in the earlier reading of Sanie,<sup>14</sup> who read:

*lnš' [.] w [.] w n*  
For Nēšā' [.] × [x] × x

Hutton and Greene found conclusive proof supporting Sanie's reading, adding a *he* in the third-to-last position, and justifying the reading:

*lnš' [']<sup>c</sup> h' whwn*  
For Nēšā', their [br]other

Again, a relatively minor rereading with the benefit of technical photography yielded disproportionate results: Greene and Hutton concluded that the Aramaic portion of the inscription mirrored the information contained in the Latin portion much more closely than was traditionally understood. As a result, it is possible to identify the abbreviation *FBMP* in Latin line 6 as indicating the dative singular *F(ratri)* (thus, "for their brother, well-deserving, they placed [it]") rather than as the nominative plural *F(ratres)* ("[His] brothers ... placed [it]").

These advances in reading the Aramaic portions of the Latin-Aramaic bilinguals found in Dacia through the use of more developed technical photography fuel the present article. In the following two sections, we treat the two remaining Palmyrene bilingual inscriptions, both of which were found during excavations at Tibiscum. We offer a new reading of the Aramaic portion of *IDR* III/1 170, along with making some observations regarding the layout of the stele's Latin portion. Finally, we summarize previous scholarship on *IDR* III/1 178, and make a few epigraphic observations concerning its script and layout.

### *IDR III/1 170: The Present Condition of the Themhes Bilingual*

Sometime before 1974, when this inscription was first published, the object was discovered

during excavations conducted by Marius Moga. Doina Benea and Simona Regep have suggested that it likely was discovered in 1969–1970; they have identified its likely find spot as the *principia* of the army fortress.<sup>15</sup> The inscription on this object contains four distinct lines of Latin text, followed by one visible line of Aramaic (*IDR* III/1 170; see fig. 5);<sup>16</sup> the remaining text indicates that the epigraph was originally part of a somewhat larger funerary plaque. The extant fragment measures approximately 30 cm in width × 24 cm in height. Because we do not have an edge or border of the original text's frame, we are unable to ascertain the object's original dimensions or the size of the panel containing the text. Lightly incised ruling lines across the top and bottom and through the middle of each line provide evidence for the professional manufacture of the inscription. So too do the relatively even spacing between both lines and individual letters and the stylized serif font used to print the inscription. There are at least seven and up to nine distinct words visible in the Latin portion of the inscription, most of which are separated by interpuncts (word dividers). The photograph published in *IDR* makes the object's state immediately upon excavation hard to determine. Our detailed photography of the stele permits researchers much greater access to the current state of the fragment. Therefore, it is imperative to provide a new reading of the object, as well as more accurate measurements of the text's graphemes. Further, based on the damage that has occurred, as well as the questions raised by earlier treatments of the inscription, a new reading is necessary to clarify the extant letters and potential reconstructions of the text.

The reconstructed text on the drawing of the object in *IDR* reads as follows:

[PALMYREN]ORVM . VIX[IT]  
[ E]XEIS . MILI . ANNIS  
[ T]HEMHES . FRATRIBI  
[NE MEREN]TI POS

Although all of the extant lines of text have suffered damage at each end, the top line of the Latin portion and the single (remaining?) line of

<sup>15</sup> Benea-Regep 2016, 327 and n. 39.

<sup>16</sup> *Editio princeps*: Moga-Russu 1974, no. 43; see also Petolescu 1975, 427; Sanie 1976, 402 no. 4 (photo: 400 no. 3); Petolescu 1980, 118–119; Sanie 1981, 360 fig. 1/3 (the photo has been mislabeled); Petolescu 1981, 611 no. 71. Besides *IDR*, the text has been catalogued in Reuter 1999, 534 no. 162; Kaizer 2004, 566; Petolescu 2005, 116 no. 218; Yon 2013, 341 no. 17; Benea-Regep 2016, 341 no. 26.

<sup>14</sup> Sanie 1981, 360.

the Aramaic co-text (see below) have endured the most significant damage. Yet, this version of the text elides the distinction between those letters that are actually present on the object and those that must be reconstructed on the basis of parallel texts. The drawing may also misrepresent the spacing and kerning of certain letters.<sup>17</sup> We attempt to rectify this problem in our own computer-assisted reconstruction of the stele below.

Alongside the hand-drawn copy, Ioan Russu includes a separate transcription. It differs from the autograph in the letters it presents as reconstructed (i.e., the *IX* of *vixit* in the first line, the *S* of the second line) or as being visible on the inscription (i.e., the *N* of *merenti*):

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 -----  
 [ex *N(umero)* *Palmyren*] *orum v[ix(it) ann(is)* ---  
 [-----?] *EXEIS mili(tavit) anni[s* ---  
 [-----] *T]hemhes fratr[i pient.?*  
 ----- *benemere]nti pos(uit)*

Even this more reserved transcription suggests that Russu was able to identify several more letters than are preserved today (even if there remain traces of several of them). Based on new photographic evidence of the object, we can state minimally that the following letters remain visible within the Latin portion of the inscription:

*ORVM . V*  
*EXEIS . MILI . ANNI*  
*HEMHES FRAT*  
*TI POS*

We offer here a line-by-line discussion of the traces remaining on the inscription. Following our epigraphic analysis, we propose a reconstructed reading of the Latin.

**Line 1': ] 'O'RVM . 'V[**

The Latin letters in this line are almost exactly uniform in height: all three fully extant letters in the first line measure 39 mm tall. At the left edge of line 1', the bottom half of an *O* can be seen. Following this letter, substantial trances of an *R* appear, missing only the top portion. There follow a clear *V* and an *M*, separated from the following letter by an interpunct. The following letter may be identified as a *V*: Nearly the entire left arm of the letter is preserved, although its deepest point

of incision forms the left edge of the broken surface extending rightward to the edge of the fragment. The bottom of the right arm is also visible, as marked by the arrow on fig. 6. Beyond this letter, nothing remains to the right.<sup>18</sup>

**Line 2': ] 'E'XEIS ANN'I[**

The letters of the second line begin at a smaller height of 30.5 mm, and gradually increase to 31 mm and then 31.5 mm in height before returning to the original height of 30.5 mm. The leftmost letter on this line is a narrow *E*; the width of this letter is consistent with the other *E*'s of the inscription. To its left may be the right portion of an interpunct (marked with an arrow in fig. 7), but this may simply be a chip in the stone. To the right of this *E*, we see a clear *XEIS . MILI . ANN*, followed by the upper third of a vertical segment on the right edge of the fragment. Contextual indicators suggest that this is in fact an *I*, as reconstructed in *IDR*'s drawing.

**Line 3': ] 'H'EMHES . FRAT[**

The letters in the third line maintain a uniform height of 28.5 mm (with the exception of the *M* at 29 mm, due to a larger serif at the top right of the letter), until the *F*, at which point the ruling lines begin to grow uneven. The letters in *FRAT* gradually decrease in height as the bottom ruling line moves upward. The reading of this line is clear: Situated directly below the *X* of line 2', there is a mostly-complete *H*; only the bottom left of the letter has broken away. Following this, the rest of the preserved line reads *EMHES . FRAT*, with nothing preserved to the right of *T*. The reading of this line is indisputable. As noted above, the transcription given in *IDR* III/1 records an *R* here, but none is currently visible on the inscription, and the original photograph does not seem to indicate the presence of a letter to the right of *T*.

**Line 4': ] TI POS**

<sup>18</sup> In contrast to our reading here, the photograph of the stele published in *IDR* shows a complete *V* at the right end of line 1'. If the relative completeness of the letter preserved in *IDR*'s photograph is representative of what Russu found on the stele, then the condition of the text has degraded significantly since its discovery. However, this and other inconsistencies between the previously published photograph and the present state of the text as represented in our own photographs would suggest that the earlier photograph had been enhanced (possibly through the use of a pen). In addition to the letter at the right edge of line 1', the hand-drawing of the inscription in *IDR* supplies a significant amount of text that is now absent on the inscription.

<sup>17</sup> Russu 1977, 201.



The fractured left edge of line 4' cuts across the left end of the top-bar of *T*. Nothing is visible to the left of the letter, despite the testimony offered by Russu's transcription. An *I* follows closely. A slight space separates the following *POS*, to the right of which the line remains uninscribed.

**Aramaic Line 1: ]br ty'm[**

Beneath the more prominent—and perhaps more carefully executed—Latin inscription is what remains of its Aramaic counterpart. The style of the script employed for the Aramaic generally comports with the common Palmyrene monumental style.<sup>19</sup> Although some Palmyrene inscriptions exhibit a Syriac-type style, there are no such readily discernible features in this inscription. As far as the execution of the inscription is concerned, it is possible, although difficult to state conclusively, that the Aramaic portion also utilized ruling lines to ensure a level text. Under certain lighting environments, one could perhaps sense the presence of an abraded ruling line running along the uppermost extreme of some of the Aramaic graphemes. Unfortunately, closer analysis of the RTI sequence compiled by Greene and Hutton under both diffuse gain and specular enhancement filters has proven inconclusive (see fig. 8). Ruling lines in Palmyrene inscriptions were somewhat common, although not always employed (contrast, for example, the Aramaic/Greek bilingual inscription from Dura Europos [*PAT* 1089], where the ruling lines are evident and obvious). Despite the uncertainty surrounding the potential ruling line, the Aramaic is written fairly evenly, exhibiting only a slight downward departure from horizontal at the end of the extant line.

The Aramaic portion of the inscription contains at least traces of 5 graphemes. We read it as follows:

[...] *br ty'm* [...] ...]

Only two graphemes—*reš* and *taw*—are fully preserved. Breakage and surface wear to the object have damaged at least part of every remaining letter. The rest of the graphemes are represented by various amounts of traces. A brief paleographic analysis of the Aramaic follows.

*bet*: The *bet* of IDR III/1 170 is only partially preserved. Part of the heel and foot of the grapheme has been lost to surface abrasions. However, what remains of the letter comports with the well-known Palmyrene monumental style (e.g., *PAT*

0523, one of the inscriptions on the lintel of the Tomb of the Three Brothers in the Palmyrene Necropolis). The cupped head of the grapheme is symmetrical and measures approximately 10 mm in height by 7.5 mm in width.<sup>20</sup> At first glance, the spine of *bet* seems to curve back and to the right as it descends from the letter's head (fig. 8). This appears, however, to be a feature of the break and not an intentional incision on the part of the scribe. The vertical segment originally curved downward at a slight angle. When the head is measured against the extant portion of the foot that extends to the left, the letter stands at a stout 20 mm in width. *Bet* joins to the left with the *reš* that follows using a non-structural ligature (i.e., the two letters are joined, but do not share a segment that does “double duty,” as in, e.g., the Latin grapheme *Æ*). This non-structural ligature is yet another feature common within monumental Palmyrene—particularly with graphemes that have segments that naturally extend horizontally in either direction.

*reš*: The *reš* of our inscription, which exhibits a cupped head and slightly curved spine, also comports with monumental Palmyrene style. The *reš* features the diacritical dot that distinguishes it from *dalet* (fig. 8).<sup>21</sup> With the aid of the diffuse gain filter—a filter that aids in discerning *depth* within the surface shape and texture of an object—one can see that this mark is not a result of abrasion over time. Instead, this mark was placed intentionally in the head of *reš*, as the depth to which this mark was incised is similar to that of every discernible grapheme segment in the Aramaic portion of the inscription. Though the diacritical dot appears inconsistently within the Palmyrene corpus, it is ultimately unsurprising to find it here. The head of the grapheme is wider than that of its neighbor *bet*. The head measures approximately 10 mm high by 12.5 mm wide, with the diacritical dot nestled just below the uppermost terminus of the head. The leg of the *reš* descends from the base of the head slightly back and to the right for about 10 mm where it meets with the leftmost end of the foot of *bet*. The reconstructed context of the inscription

<sup>20</sup> Measurements of grapheme segments were taken from the center line, understood here as the deepest point of each incision.

<sup>21</sup> The presence of this feature might indicate a date sometime after ± 200 CE. There are some extant inscriptions dating prior to 200 CE that utilize this feature (e.g., *PAT* 0523); see Klugkist 1983, 61; and Greene et al. 2012, 100 n. 31. This feature may be used to narrow the 2nd c. CE date suggested by Sanie (1976, 402) on the basis of the “vertical” *yodh* (but cf. our discussion below).

<sup>19</sup> E.g., Klugkist 1983.

allows us to read *bar* ("son of") with a relatively high degree of certainty.

*taw*: Standing just over 20 mm tall at its highest point, *taw* consists of two oblique segments. The first to be incised was most likely the one that produced the right shoulder of the grapheme, followed by the segment comprised of the upper left arm and left foot. The former is about 15 mm in width and meets the latter about 5 mm above the base of the letter. It slopes upward and to the right for about 8 mm and takes a downward turn, curving back to the left until it flares back out to the right as it ends. It is possible that this small tick at the bottom right extremity of the letter is actually a pock mark on the surface of the inscription, but the depth and width of segment are consistent with those of the other graphemes (fig. 9). The second segment of *taw* begins about 10 mm above the highest point of the upper right shoulder. It curves gently to the left and then back to the right where it meets with the first segment, continuing down another 5 mm until the left foot is lost in the break. At its widest, the grapheme is about 20 mm wide, though this measurement is uncertain due to the lack of observable data.

*yod*: Though only partially preserved, the *yod* of our inscription is read with confidence. No other graphemes in the monumental Palmyrene script series would fit the traces of the curved segment visible in the epigraph (fig. 10). At its widest, this *yod* is 17 mm in width. Its true height is impossible to determine due to the lower third of the letter being lost in the break. However, it appears that it matches the preceding *taw* in height at about 20 mm. Interestingly, this particular *yod* appears to be somewhat unique among the corpus of extant Palmyrene inscriptions. Normally, *yod* is much smaller than the graphemes that surround it. Furthermore, its vertical position is usually determined by its letter environment. That is to say, *yod* will "float" up or down in its line depending on which grapheme comes before it. In such cases, it will appear closer to the top of the line when the previous letter has segments running along the bottom of the line, such as *bet* or *taw*, but it will appear closer to the bottom of the line after *dalet* or *reš*, where the leftmost portions of the preceding grapheme occupy the space in the upper half of the line. *Yod* will also oftentimes vary in its stance. The opening of its semi-circular form will face various angles either between west (i.e., true left) and south

(straight down).<sup>22</sup> The *yod* under present consideration faces entirely to the west, as a backwards "C".

*mem* (or *qop*?): The final grapheme of the Aramaic portion of the inscription contains only traces of what appear to be two segments (fig. 10). A vertically oriented oblique segment curves down and to the left, where it meets the traces of a small horizontal segment; it then curves back to the right as it descends further. The vertical segment is about 13 mm high and the adjoining horizontal segment is about 7 mm wide. Previous readings of the inscription have typically read these traces as the remains of a *bet*.<sup>23</sup> However, closer consideration of the morphology of the extant *bet* earlier in the line renders this reading improbable. The head of *bet* is much more tightly curled than the traces at the end of the line. Because the head of *bet* is about 10 mm in width, we would expect to see the left half of the head just before the break, as the traces of the upper right arm are just over 10 mm away from the break. The lack of traces of a possible head for *bet* on the leftmost portion of the Aramaic thus forces us to consider other readings. The more likely candidates are *mem* and *qop*, both of which have comparable features making up the upper-right-most portion of the grapheme. In most cases, *qop* is generally wider than *mem*. We are unable to distinguish between the two possibilities on paleographic grounds, however, due to the broken nature of the letter and the lack of any comparanda in this particular epigraph. Thus, we must rely on possible readings to make our determination. J. K. Stark lists no personal names beginning *TYQ*-. On the other hand, there are several possible personal names that begin with *TYM*-. A handful of examples should suffice: *TYM'*, *TYMW*, *TYMH'*, *TYMY*, *TYMYMD*, *TYMLT*, *TYMN'*, *TYMS'*, etc.<sup>24</sup> Thus, we feel confident in reconstructing a *mem* for the final letter, as neither *qop* nor *bet* are viable readings of the extant traces.<sup>25</sup> This reading was first proposed (but declined) in 1976 by S. Sanie; the first person to maintain the rectitude of

<sup>22</sup> For additional discussion of the paleographic peculiarities of *yod*, see Greene et al. 2012, 102; Hutton et al. 2018, 288. Compare also the *yods* of *PAT* 1094–1096, held at the Yale University Art Museum, for several examples of the grapheme facing straight down. Finally, compare the *yods* of *PAT* 0910, which vary slightly in their stances between lines 1 and 2 of the epitaph.

<sup>23</sup> Moga-Russu 1974, 81 no. 43 (crediting Sanie); Sanie 1976, 402; Russu 1977, 200.

<sup>24</sup> Stark 1971, 54–55; also Piersimoni 1995, 497–518.

<sup>25</sup> For further discussion on the differences and similarities between *mem* and *qop* in monumental Palmyrene, see Greene et al. 2012, 103–105 and figs. 7–9.

this reading was T. Kaizer, in 2004.<sup>26</sup> Our photographic evidence confirms his reading.

### *IDR III/1 170: Reconstructed Reading*

For the most part, previous reconstructions of the inscription's missing text have assumed that the epigraph followed the basic formulae for Latin funerary inscriptions. J.-M. Lassère has outlined the conventional components of such inscriptions: a dedication to the Manes; the name of the deceased, in the nominative, genitive, or dative; the longevity of the deceased; the name(s) of the dedicant; and a closing formula (e.g., *ossa bene quiescant*).<sup>27</sup> In many military commemorations, the inscription also lists the time the deceased spent in the army, and any pertinent ranks that he achieved.

In the inscription under present investigation, the traditional opening dedication to the Manes (*Dis Manibus*) is no longer extant, nor is the name of the commemorated individual himself. However, the remaining portions of the inscription contain indications that the other essential components were present. The first extant line (line 1') appears to provide an indication of the army unit in which the deceased served, the [*N(umero)* PALMYREN]ORUM, and would seem to introduce the age of the deceased, apparently reading *V[IXIT]*. In the second line, the deceased's military service is mentioned, using the common abbreviation *MILI(tavit)*; see below. The dedicant's name or patronym appears in the third line, along with his relationship to the deceased (his brother, *FRAT[RI]*). The formula [*BENE MEREN*]TI POS(*uit*) concludes the inscription.<sup>28</sup> With the formulaic nature of most military funerary inscriptions from Dacia in mind, a line-by-line discussion of our reconstruction yields additional observations:

**Line 1':** [*N(umero)* PALMYREN] O' RVM .  
V[IXIT]

Russu plausibly reconstructs [*EX N(umero)* PALMYREN]ORVM in the lacuna to the left of line 1'. This reading has much to recommend it: in the two other adequately preserved bilingual inscriptions from Tibiscum commemorating a Palmyrene soldier, we seem to find the army unit indicated immediately following the name of the deceased. In *IDR III/1 154*, line 3, the unit is clearly

indicated as *EX N(umero)* PALMVR(enorum) (see fig. 3). In *IDR III/1 167*, line 3, the left edge of the text is missing, leaving only *PAL* (see fig. 4). But given the spacing of the centered *D(is)* *M(anibus)* in line 1, there is enough space to accommodate *EX N(umero)* to the left of the break.<sup>29</sup> Even the few remaining monolingual Latin inscriptions commemorating Palmyrene soldiers at Tibiscum preserve the unit formula:

*IDR III/1 155*, lns 3–4: *MIL . E(x)/[N<sup>e</sup> PA]L*<sup>30</sup>  
*IDR III/1 160*, lns 5–6: *MIL EX PA/LMYR*  
*IDR III/1 176*, ln 2: *[E] X . N . PAL*

The reconstruction of *EX N(umero)* or *E N(umero)* also works in light of the width measurements necessary for such a reading. It is possible to estimate the size of the missing letters based on other places they appear within the same inscription. Line 2 provides an *EX* sequence, which in total spans approximately 22 mm. It also provides two *N*s, one of which (the first) is fully extant. This *N* takes up 15 mm; together, then, we can assume that *EX N* would be between 35 and 38 mm, plus any additional space or interpuncts separating the words.<sup>31</sup> Based on measurements taken of other letters, it is also possible to estimate the space occupied by *PALMYREN* on line 1.<sup>32</sup> We estimate that this string of letters would have spanned somewhere between 119.5 mm and 138 mm.<sup>33</sup> According to these measurements, *EX N* would fit in the first extant line, as Russu argues, if the text area of the object can be assumed to have been at least 299 mm wide, with additional spaces

<sup>29</sup> See Hutton-Greene 2018 and literature cited there for the damage done to the inscription during excavation.

<sup>30</sup> We concur with Russu's reconstruction (1977, 180) of *N* in the lacuna preceding [*PA*]L.

<sup>31</sup> There are multiple *E*s throughout the inscription. While the *E* next to the *X* on line 2 is 7 mm across, elsewhere it is between 5 and 8 mm wide. Thus, we have provided a range of possible measurements in our estimation.

<sup>32</sup> We assume here the use of *Y* in the spelling of *PALMYRE-NORUM* rather than *V*. A survey of orthography at Tibiscum suggests that both spellings were current, but the one with *Y* (*IDR III/1 134* ln. 1; the exemplar in ln. 5 is no longer legible at this spot, but Russu [1977, 155–155] reconstructs the spelling with *Y*; 160; 181; *IDR III/2 20*; *IDR III/5.2 559*) was slightly more frequent than the one with *V* (*IDR III/1 154*; *CIL* 3.907 = 3.7693 [see above, n. 5]). Unfortunately, most of the extant inscriptions abbreviate the word as *P* (*IDR III/1 153*), *PAL* (*IDR III/1 136*; 152; 155; 167; 176; 212<sup>3</sup>), or *PALM* (*IDR III/1 135*; 164).

<sup>33</sup> Estimated measurements are as follows: *P*, 15–18.5 mm (based on the top curve of the available *R*s); *A*, 15.5 mm; *L*, 14 mm; *M*, 21 mm; *Y*, 20 mm (based on likely width of *V* in line 1); *R*, 16.5–26 mm; *E*, 5–8 mm; *N*, 12.5–15 mm.

<sup>26</sup> Sanie 1976, 402; Kaizer 2004, 566.

<sup>27</sup> Lassère 2005, 230–231.

<sup>28</sup> It is not entirely clear that *BENE* ever actually occurred in the inscription, however. See further discussion below.



between letters. Alternatively, a non-abbreviated *EX NVMERO* could have begun in the previous line, with the *NVMERO* spilling over into the next line (e.g., *EX NVM / ERO PALMYRENORVM*). But perhaps the best reconstruction would position *EX* on the preceding line, with *N* beginning line 1'. This spacing assumes both that [*BENEMEREN*]*TI* of line 4' was fully spelled and that it immediately abutted the left margin of the writing space (see fig. 11 for our reconstruction).

To the right of the extant remains of line 1' there is enough space to include the entire word *VIXIT* (roughly 60 mm). This is calculated using the width of the other *V* in the same line, the *I* from *EIS* in line 2', the *X* from line 2', and the *T* from line 4'. As depicted in our reconstructed drawing, there remains ample space left over at the end of the line to accommodate the full spelling *VIXIT*, if we assume the full spellings of *ANNI*[*S*] (line 2') and *FRAT*[*RI*] (line 3'). Thus, given the width requirements of subsequent lines, we tentatively hypothesize that the full line 1' originally read: *N PALMYRENORUM VIXIT*.

**Line 2':** [*AN(nos) ##*] *EX EIS MILI(tavit) ANNI*[*S*]

The second line of the inscription contains twelve mostly complete letter forms, as well as the top half of a thirteenth letter, an *I*, just visible at the right-hand edge. There are two clear interpuncts, separating letters five and six (*S . M*) and letters nine and ten (*I . A*), which suggests—but does not definitively indicate—that there are three separate words in this line. The beginning of this line is somewhat difficult to interpret, because there is no visible separation or interpunct between *EX* and *EIS*. This is somewhat surprising, since there is a word divider between nearly all other words in the inscription. However, we should treat the non-use of interpuncts in formulae with caution. There is no visible interpunct in line 4' between the second and third letters (*I P*), but the *P* clearly begins a new word (see further discussion below). This suggests that the presence of an interpunct is not a decisive indication of a word break. In addition to usage and non-usage elsewhere in the inscription, linguistic factors can aid in our understanding of this structure. These five letters (*EXEIS*) do not occur together in this position in any known Latin words, and it therefore seems unlikely that they are part of the same word. Petolescu correctly identified here two lexemes (*ex*

and *eis*), with the meaning “out of those.”<sup>34</sup> This reading supports the natural assumption that an indication of the deceased soldier's lifespan would have followed *VIXIT*. If we are correct in assuming that the right edge of the inscription lay just to the right of the current fragment's right edge, then the word *ANNOS* or the abbreviation *AN(nos)*<sup>35</sup> or *ANN(os)*<sup>36</sup> likely appeared at the left edge of line 2', followed by some combination of numbers. This reconstruction, then, means that the extant text of line 2' denoted the portion of the deceased's life spent serving in the military. The abbreviation *MIL(esl-itavit)* (e.g., *IDR III/1 153; 154; 155; 160; 164*) is relatively common, as is the emphasis in a brief inscription on the deceased's military role or other form of public service. Given that no rank in the military—such as *OPT(i)O*<sup>37</sup>, *DEC(urio)*,<sup>38</sup> or *ARMORUM CUS(tos)*<sup>39</sup>—or indication of veteran status (*VET*; e.g., *IDR III/1 137*) is preserved, the deceased likely did not occupy any such position of honor. Nor is there any mention of public office. Nonetheless, his service in the military ties him to the Roman community and indicates his broader participation in civic life. Russu does not supply anything following *ANNI*[*S*] in his drawing of the object. Out of spatial considerations, we also see no reason to assume anything followed to the right of *ANNI*[*S*]. With an *S* spanning only 75% of the width of the other *S* in this line, *ANNI*[*S*] would still project further to the right than the reconstructed *V[IXIT]* of line 1' and *FRAT*[*RI*] of line 3'. For this reason, it is likely that the text

<sup>34</sup> Petolescu (1975, 427), admitted that this construction is difficult. Yet, Russu initially dismissed his reading: “a totally unusual construction and without analogy (*construcție total insolită și fără analogii*)” (1977, 201). Petolescu (1980, 119; 1981, 611) rebutted by listing two parallels, and there can be no question as to its meaning. (We have been dependent on Google Translate for our understanding of the Romanian here and elsewhere.)

<sup>35</sup> Compare, e.g., *IDR III/1 153; 155; 160; 164; 167* (reconstructed).

<sup>36</sup> Compare, e.g., *IDR III/1 154*.

<sup>37</sup> For *OPT(i)O*, see *IDR III/1 154; 162*; and, from Porolissum, *AE 1960, 219* (= *AE 1960, 219* = Reuter 1999, 530 no. 150; Petolescu 2005, no. 690, and further bibliography there).

<sup>38</sup> *DEC(urio)* is plausibly reconstructed in *IDR III/1 135*. See also *AE 1933, 36*, from El-Kantara (= Le Bohec 1989, 151 = Reuter 1999, 523 no. 132); and *CIL 2787* (= Le Bohec 1989, 85), from Lambesis. Several more exemplars from Numidia are found in Le Bohec 1989, 30–31, 52 nn. 33–36.

<sup>39</sup> For *ARMORUM CUS(tos)*, see *IDR III/1 134*; and compare the same inscription identified in n. 38, from Lambesis, Numidia: *ARMoRUM(CIL VIII 2787)*; for a note on the reading, see *CIL VIII sup. II, p. 1739*. See also Le Bohec 1989, 85, 108 nn. 199, 206–207.



pane—and perhaps the object as a whole—did not extend far beyond the end of this word. It seems likely, then, that the number of years would have been given at the left end of the following line. Accordingly, we reconstruct the most likely original reading of this line as: *AN(nos) ## EX EIS MILI. ANNIS.*

**Line 3': [## ... T] H EMHES FRAT[RI]**

As noted above, there is some variability in letter height towards the end of the line, due to a slight narrowing of the guidelines. We consider this as possible evidence that as the scribe began to reach the end of the text area, it was felt necessary to economize space in order to accommodate the remaining letters in the line. Furthermore, the final *RI* of *FRAT[RI]* seems likely to have occupied something between 20.5 and 23.5 mm. In contrast, the inclusion of the first two letters (*BE*) of the following formula (*BE/NE MERENTI*), as posited by Russu, would have added approximately 23.5–34 mm. This would have extended the line well beyond the ends of lines 1' and 2', contrary to what Russu's drawing suggests.<sup>40</sup> Based on this evidence, we find it unlikely that *BE* would have appeared on this line; we thus take the conclusion of *FRATRI* as the end of this line (see further discussion of *BENE MERENTI* below).

In *IDR*, Russu correctly concludes that an “anonymous soldier lived an unknown number of years (*anonimul ostaș a trăit un număr necunoscut de ani*).”<sup>41</sup> The name of the deceased is typically found immediately after the formulaic *D M (Dis Manibus)*, while the dedicant's name typically follows the age of the deceased and precedes the final formula.<sup>42</sup> At Tibiscum, this arrangement is evident, for example, in *IDR* III/1 152; 154; 156; 160; 161; 165; 166; 167; and 171. Accordingly, the name of the deceased in this inscription would likely have been located in the lines above the break. Therefore, in our view, it is more likely that *THEMHES* was the name of the dedicant rather than of the deceased.<sup>43</sup> In this interpretation, the dedicant Themhes (Palmyrene *tym* ') is the subject

of *POS(uit)* in the following line, with the dative *FRAT[RI]* identifying his relationship to the deceased. Below, we discuss the relationship of this individual to the individual mentioned in Aramaic line 1.

**Line 4': [BENE MEREN] TI POS(uit)**

The letters in the final line of Latin text gradually become taller as the line progresses, from 27.5 mm (*T*) to 28.5 mm (*S*). From this letter to the outermost right edge of the broken stone, we measure ca. 99 mm; we estimate that the full field of the inscription may have extended as much as ca. 128 mm to the right of the *S*. The significant block of empty space might indicate that the stonemason simply failed to utilize all available space, or it might have been left open for future additions. Rather than extend the final word to its full form (*POSVIT*), for which he had the space, the mason chose to leave this space available. The word break that Russu posits, with *BE-* in line 3' and *-NE* in line 4', is unnecessary. There is adequate space for the full phrase in the final line, especially if line 1' contained *EX* (in which case there likely would have been space before *BENE*). The letters [*BENE MEREN*] *T-* take up a similar amount of space as the missing letters [*PALMYREN-*] in the second line. We include the extant *T* in this estimate because it is in line with the final missing *N* in *PALMYREN*. Thus, assuming that each line is relatively uniform on the left and right edges, *BENE MERENT-* and *PALMYREN-* would be roughly equivalent in width. Based on the average width of extant letters, we estimate *BENE MERENT-* to require 121.5–149.5 mm. As previously noted, *PALMYREN-* would be approximately 119.5–138 mm in width. These two measurements are reasonably similar, suggesting that the full phrase *BENE MERENTI POS(uit)* occupied the fourth line.

**Aramaic, line 1: [ ... ] br ty' m' [ ]**

Our reading of this line assumes that the name of the deceased individual was contained in the lacuna to the right of the extant letters. We are unable to reconstruct the name, since it has also been omitted from the Latin text above. The deceased individual was the *br tym* [ ], “son of Taymē’.”<sup>44</sup> If we have correctly adduced the rela-

and the prevalence of the graphically similar (and far more frequent) name *tymš'* complicate the reading.

<sup>44</sup> We vocalize the name on the basis of the many Greek attestations of the spelling Θαιμη (e.g., *IGLS* XVII.1 73; 87 [= *PAT* 0294]; 90; 257 [partly reconstructed = *PAT* 1417];

<sup>40</sup> Reuter (1999, 534 no. 162) suggests that [*PIENT(issimī)?*] may have followed to the right of *FRAT[RI]*. This reconstruction seems difficult given the special configuration in the other lines of the stele.

<sup>41</sup> Russu 1977, 201. Russu's conclusion has been picked up by Crețulescu-Mureșan 2013, 57.

<sup>42</sup> Lassère 2005, 234–241.

<sup>43</sup> Yon (2002, 93) points to a bilingual Aramaic-Safaitic inscription containing the name *tymh'*. If this reading is accurate, it may point to a different understanding of the Latin *THEMHES*. However, Yon admits that textual difficulties

tionship between the brothers mentioned in line 3 of the Latin inscription, then the surviving brother who dedicated the stele was also named Taymē' (cf. Latin *THEMHES*). Although papponymy (i.e., an individual being named after his grandfather) is the more predominant pattern observable in the Palmyrene epigraphic corpus, it is not unusual for a son to be named after his father as well.<sup>45</sup>

### Full Reconstruction:

Our reconstructed reading and translation follow:

Latin:

-1' [ *D M* ]  
 0' [ ----- *EX* ]  
 1' [ *N PALMYREN* ] *ORVM V[IXIT]*  
 2' [ *AN(nos) ##* ] *EX EIS MILI(tavit) ANNI[S]*  
 3' [ *## --- T* ] *HEMHES FRAT[RI]*  
 4' [ *BENE MEREN* ] *TI POS(uit)*

Aramaic:

1. [ ... ] *br tym* [ ' ]

Latin:

[<sup>1</sup>To the departed gods: <sup>0</sup>PN ..., from <sup>1</sup>the *numerus* of the Palmyren]es. He lived  
 [<sup>2</sup>## years]; out of those years, he served as a soldier  
 [<sup>3</sup>##. ... T]hemhes <sup>4</sup>set up (this monument) <sup>3</sup>for  
 (his) [<sup>4</sup>well-deser]ving <sup>3</sup>broth[er.]

Aramaic:

[<sup>1</sup>... ] the son of Taym[ē ... ]

### *IDR III/1 178: Bilingual Inscription Commemorating an Unknown Individual*

Like *IDR III/1 170*, the small fragment published as *IDR III/1 178* is part of what must have been a significantly larger bilingual inscription (fig. 12).<sup>46</sup> It too was likely discovered during excavations conducted by Moga between 1964 and 1974, but Benea and Regep have traced its find spot to rubble that had been used to patch a section of dilapidated or destroyed wall on the northeastern

side of the fort.<sup>47</sup> The extant stone fragment measures approximately 138 mm × 90 mm. Unlike *IDR III/1 170*, however, this epigraph does not appear to have experienced significant damage since its initial publication. We provide a new drawing of the object in its current state (fig. 13).

Fortuitously, the preserved fragment spans the division between the Latin inscription—of which is preserved only a single Latin *M*—and a small portion of the Aramaic text below it. There are visible hatch marks to the left and top of the *M*, as well as underneath the letter itself. These marks are not all parallel, and we interpret them as evidence for the preparation of the tablet before the engraving took place. The *M* has clear serifs and is quite cleanly inscribed. It measures 56 mm in height, and approximately 66 mm of width is preserved on the fragment (measuring from the leftmost extent of the serif at the bottom of the left vertical). A ruling line across the top of the *M* is lightly visible. The diagonal segment intersects its vertical segment at the upper terminus of the latter; this is to be contrasted with the *M*s of *IDR III/1 170* (see above). The internal angles at this intersection is ca. 37°, which is less acute than those of the *M*s in *IDR III/1 170*. The midpoint, where the diagonal segments intersect one another, stands 12 mm above the lower floor of the letter, with an internal angle of 70°. Although the letter is incomplete, if we assume that the angle of the right diagonal and vertical segments was the same as the preserved angle, we can estimate the full letter to have been approximately 88 mm in width. The overall shape of the *M* in *IDR III/1 178* suggests that two different hands inscribed this epigraph and the Latin inscription of *IDR III/1 170*.

Russu suggests that the *M* was part of the larger formula *B(ene) M(erenti) P(osuit)*, which frequently closes Latin funerary dedications. We consider this reading likely, given that the Aramaic text begins directly below this line.<sup>48</sup> However, given the hatch marks in the empty space to the left of the letter, if a *B* preceded the *M* in the formulaic abbreviation *BMP*, it must have been spaced out rather than written compactly. Because the inscription is not preserved to the right of the *M*, we cannot know with certainty whether it was followed by additional letters. Moreover, it is possible that the *M* is part of a different formula, perhaps beginning with an *M* rather than containing an *M* in the middle of other letters. It is possible that the line read only

260; 346; 463 [= *PAT* 2817]; 28 [= *PAT* 0266]), Θαιμει(ς) (*IGLS* XVII.1 255 [= *PAT* 1395]; 513 [par. to Aram. *TYMY*; = *PAT* 0023]). For further study of the name, see especially Yon 2002, 54, 119, 147, 167, 270; and 2018, 32, 40, 41, 44, 49, 57, 63, 99, 208.

<sup>45</sup> E.g., *TYMY br TYMY*—*PAT* 2730.

<sup>46</sup> This fragmentary text has been catalogued in Moga-Russu 1974, no. 43; Sanie 1976, 402 no. 5 (photo: 400 no. 2); 1981, 360, fig. 1/2; Kaizer 2004, 566; Yon 2013, 341 no. 17; Benea-Regep 2016, 341 no. 31.

<sup>47</sup> Benea-Regep 2016, 322, 325 and n. 19.

<sup>48</sup> Russu 1977, 210.

*MERENTI POSUIT* or some abbreviation thereof (either omitting the *BENE*, or placing the *BENE* on the preceding line), or that *M* appeared here as abbreviation for *monumentum*, which could form part of the formula *M(onumentum) P(osuit)* or *M(onumentum) D(edit)*.

The extant portion of the Aramaic inscription features two complete graphemes (*yod* and *samekh*), one partial grapheme (*lamed*), and traces of a fourth grapheme that cannot be identified with certainty. The line measures 2.6 cm in height and stretches the entire width of the fragment (roughly 7.5 cm). We treat the letters here in the order in which they appear.

*Lamed*: Only the upper left segment of the *lamed* is visible in this fragment. This segment begins in the upper left corner of the form, 8 mm above the ceiling of the surrounding letters, and descends 17 mm to the right at an angle of 70° from horizontal. At the base of this descent, the segment meets a second segment at an acute angle. This second segment ascends to the right for at least 3 mm at an angle of 65° from horizontal until it reaches the edge of the fragment. Assuming that the grapheme reflects the typical monumental form of the Palmyrene *lamed*, the ascending line likely intersected with a third segment that would have descended toward the letter's base and curved to the left once it reached the floor of the form. Unfortunately, no portion of this segment remains.

*Yod*: The *yod* measures 17 mm in height and 13 mm in width. The form appears as a roughly symmetrical cup shape that is angled down toward the bottom left of the inscription so that the right extreme of the cup touches the base of the grapheme. It thus resembles a reverse "C" shape that has been rotated 45° counter-clockwise. The cup itself measures 15 mm in width and has a maximum depth of 10 mm.

*Samekh*: The *samekh* measures 18 mm in height and 25 mm in width. It is composed of three segments: a spine, a foot, and a kinked head. The kinked head segment intersects with the spine at its upper extreme and descends 11 mm to the left at a 45° angle below horizontal. It then turns sharply upward and ascends 10 mm to the left at an angle 65° above horizontal, extending 2 mm above the upper extreme of the spine. Finally, the segment turns sharply downward again, descending 5 mm at a 35° angle below horizontal. The vertical spine at the right end of the letter is a slightly concave vertical line that begins at its intersection with the head and descends 17 mm at a slight angle to the right (ending at an angle ca. 10° off vertical). The

foot segment is a straight horizontal line. It begins at its intersection with the spine at the lower right corner of the letter and extends to the left for the entire width of the form. At its left extremity the foot flares sharply outward, giving the segment a serif approximately 5 mm high.

Because these first three extant graphemes stand somewhere in the first (or only?) line of the Aramaic portion of the bilingual, it is likely that they form the conclusion of the name of the individual commemorated in the inscription, or of a member of the deceased individual's chain of patronymics. The *-lys* ending most likely indicates an Aramaic transliteration of a Latin praenomen such as Aurelius ('*urlys*'), as noted by Russu.<sup>49</sup> However, the name could be any one of a number of names: Aelius ('*lys*'),<sup>50</sup> Iulius (*ywly[w]s*),<sup>51</sup> Alpius ('*lpys*'),<sup>52</sup> or Publius (*pplys* or *pplws*)<sup>53</sup> would all conform to the traces on the inscription. Although the name Publius seems to be infrequent at Palmyra,<sup>54</sup> both Aelius and Publius are both frequently attested among the votive and funerary inscriptions associated with the Palmyrene and other contingents at Tibiscum (*IDR* III/1 134: *AE[L(ius) Z]ABDIBOL*; 142: *P(ublius) A[EL(ius)]*; 143: *AEL(ius) V[...]*; 145: *P(ublius) AEL(ius) MARI*; 152: *AEL(ius) BORAFAS*; 153: *P(ublius) AEL(ius) CLAUDIANUS*; 154: *AEL(ius) GURAS IDDEI*; etc.).

*The Fourth Letter*: At the left margin of the Aramaic line, we see a small portion of the upper right corner of a fourth letter. The head of the segment is roughly level with the ceiling of the two previous graphemes. About 11 mm of the vertical segment remains. It is joined at its upper terminus by about 7 mm of a segment approaching from the southwest, forming a 50° angle with the vertical segment. This is unlikely to be *nun*, as Sanie read,<sup>55</sup> but must be another letter such as *beth*,

<sup>49</sup> Russu 1977, 210. See, e.g., *IDR* III/1 133 (reconstructed); 137; see also *IGLS* XVII.1 58 (= *PAT* 0290); 63 (= *PAT* 0283).

<sup>50</sup> E.g., *IGLS* XVII.1 307 (= *PAT* 1063); see also Yon 2018, 188, 203.

<sup>51</sup> E.g., *IGLS* XVII.1 102 (= *PAT* 1548); 209 (= *PAT* 1397); 226 (= *PAT* 1423); 551 (= *PAT* 0761); see also Yon 2018, 186, 194, 209. The name is combined with '*urlys*' in, e.g., *IGLS* XVII.1 53 (= *PAT* 0278) and several others.

<sup>52</sup> E.g., *IGLS* XVII.1 209 (= *PAT* 1397).

<sup>53</sup> Suggested by Kaizer 2004, 567, citing several occurrences of the name.

<sup>54</sup> The name Publius (and its Greek and Aramaic counterparts) does not appear in the Greek, Latin, or Aramaic indices of *IGLS* XVII.1, but we do find scattered attestations in a few Aramaic texts originating in Palmyra: e.g., *pplys* (*PAT* 1786:1, 2); and *pplws* (*PAT* 1153:2).

<sup>55</sup> Sanie 1976, 402; accepted by Russu 1977, 210.



*waw*, *pe*, *taw*, or, less likely, *daleth*, *kaph*, or *resh*. Without further comparanda available in this distinctive script style, our measurements are somewhat useless.

Although the identification of this grapheme is speculative, the traces conform most directly to *beth*.<sup>56</sup> Context might support this: We frequently see the word *br*, “son (of),” following a personal name in the first lines of funerary inscriptions (and see the discussion of *IDR* III/1 170 above). However, Palmyrene funerary inscriptions do occasionally omit the lexeme in their patronymic formulae. It is unclear, moreover, that a Palmyrene would identify himself by an adopted Latin praenomen in a Palmyrene inscription *unless* he had taken it on as his official name. We only have two exemplars from which to make comparisons (*IDR* III/1 154 and 167). The latter does not use any Latin praenomina, but the former identifies the deceased with the praenomen in the Latin inscription *AEL(ius) GURAS II DEI*.<sup>57</sup> Only his Palmyrene name occurs in the accompanying Aramaic inscription (*gwr' ydy*), though. If the patronymic (*br* ...) is to be read here, that would signal full adoption of the Latin name. Alternately, the letter may be the first in a cognomen. This could just as easily be [']*lys b[wrp]* (cf. *IDR* III/1 152) or any other number of Palmyrene names beginning with a *br-* or *bwl-/bl-* theophoric element.

Our reading of *IDR* III/1 178 must therefore remain:

1. (Latin): *M*
2. (Aramaic): [...]*lys 'b'*[?...]

### Conclusions

Developments in imaging techniques over the last two decades have permitted reanalysis of two Latin–Aramaic bilingual inscriptions in the collection of the National Museum of Banat (*IDR* III/1 170 and 178). Benefitting from these more sophisticated imaging techniques, we have been able to confirm, refine, or emend the readings of previous interpreters with respect to the Latin portions of the inscriptions. Our analysis has produced two new readings of the Aramaic portions. Although the damaged state of both inscriptions means that valuable data has been lost, precluding certainty with respect to some of the new readings, our investigation has raised new questions regarding

practices of naming and onomastics among the Palmyrene soldiers stationed at Tibiscum.

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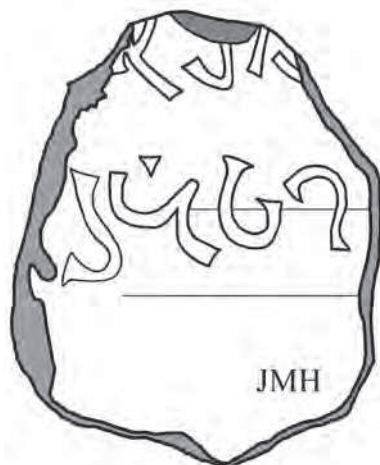
<sup>56</sup> Moga and Russu 1974, 82–83.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. *AEL(ius) HABIBI* in the same inscription.

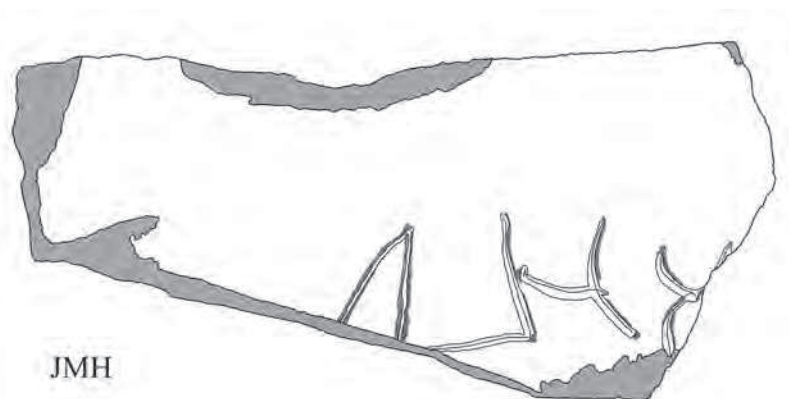


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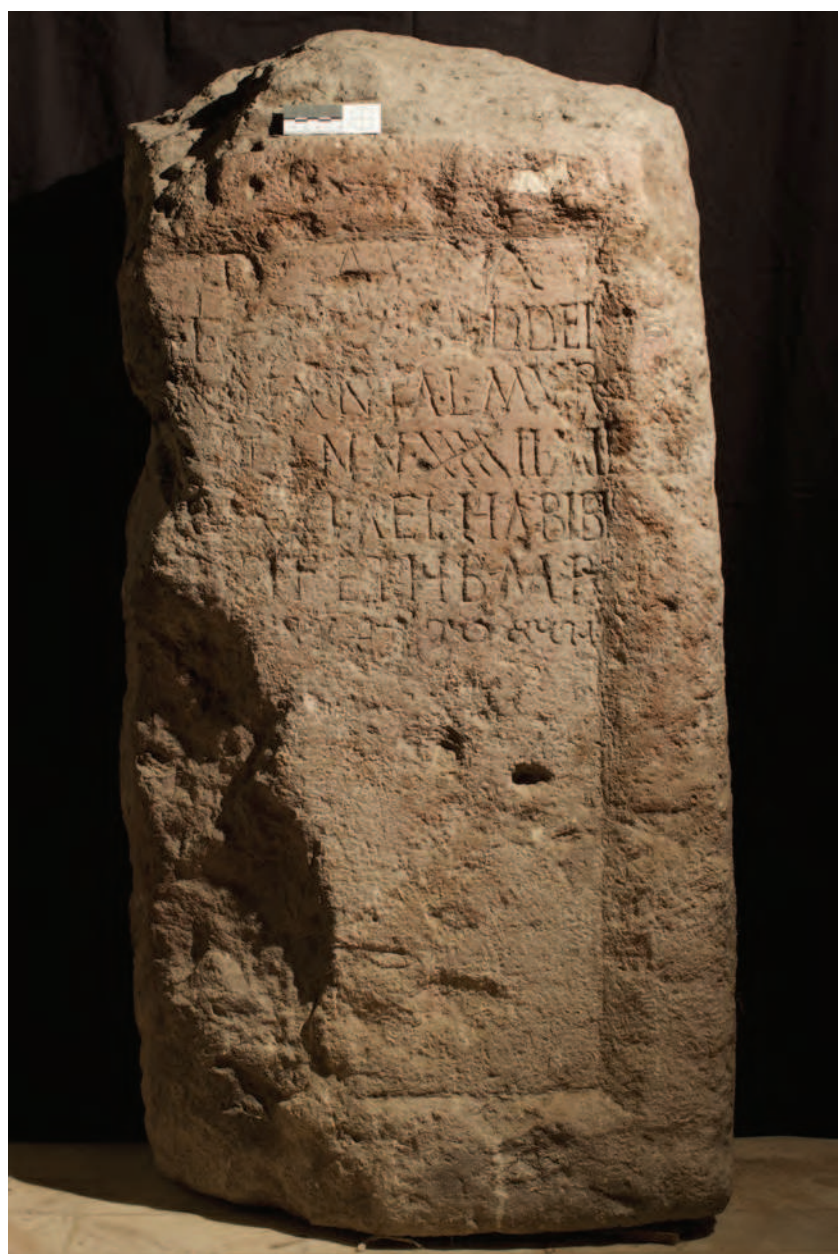
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**Fig. 1.** *Computer-Assisted Drawing of Sanie 1981, Fr.* © J. M. Hutton

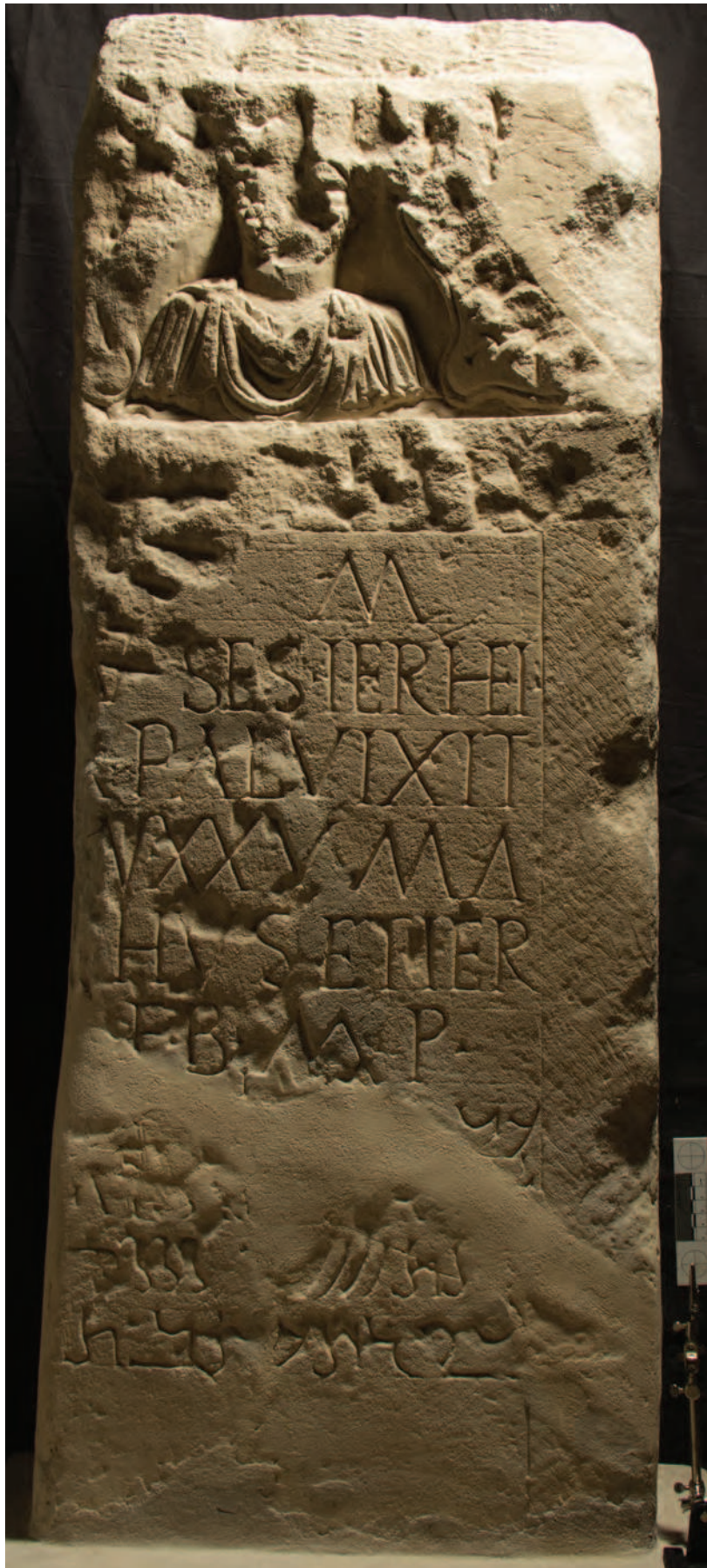


**Fig. 2.** *Computer-Assisted Drawing of MJIAZ CC 799/2002.* © J. M. Hutton



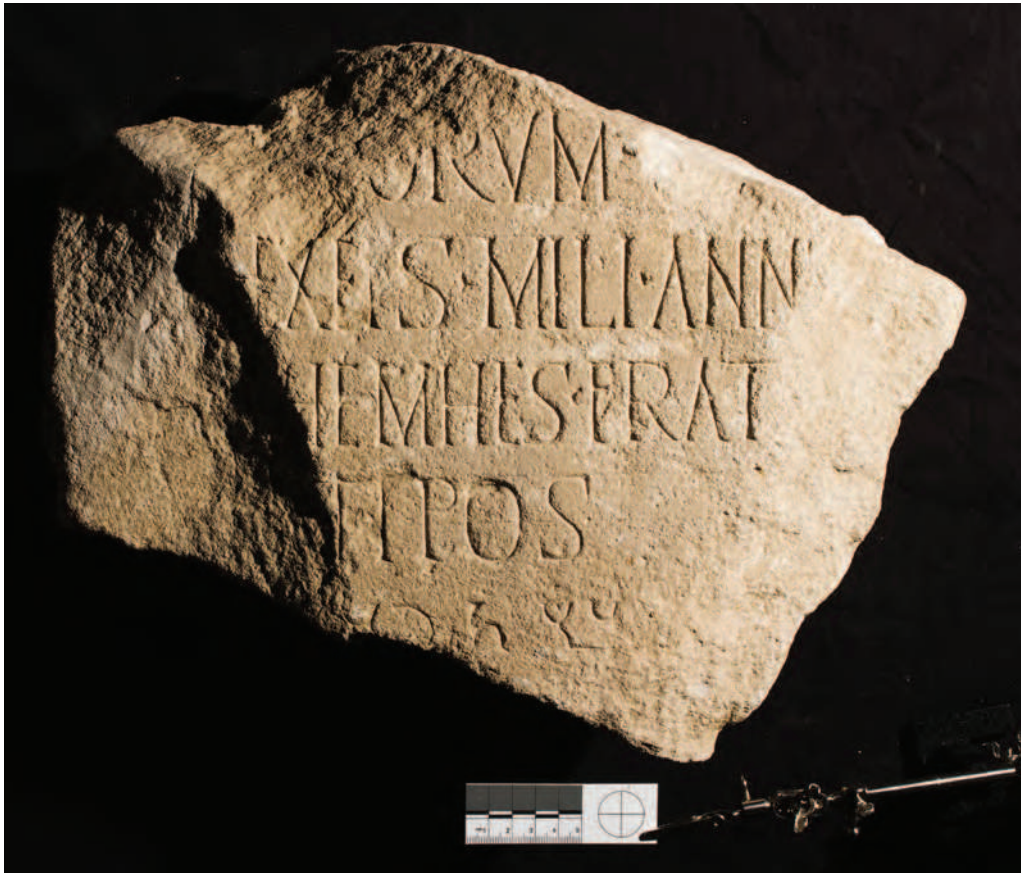
**Fig. 3.** *Full Image of IDR III/1 154 (= PAT 0251).* Photo © 2016, N. E. Greene and J. M. Hutton, WPAIP



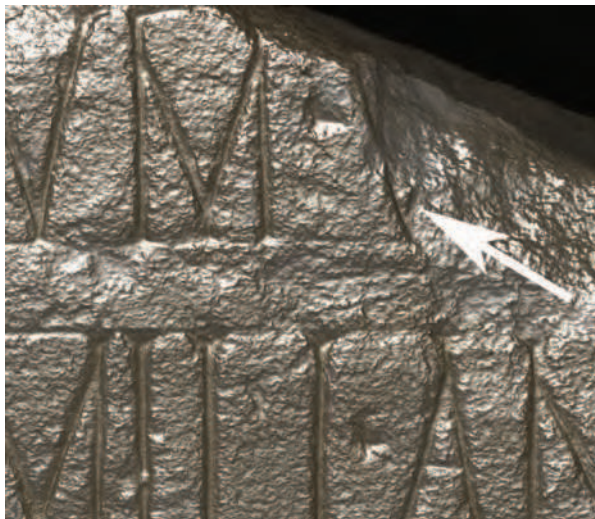


**Fig. 4.** Full Image of IDR III/1 167 (= PAT 0994), Repaired Subsequent to Inspection by J. M. Hutton and N. E. Greene in 2016. Photo © 2018, J. M. Hutton and R. J. Pruett, WPAIP





**Fig. 5.** Full Image of IDR III/1 170 Photo © 2016, N. E. Greene and J. M. Hutton, WPAIP



**Fig. 6.** Detail of IDR III/1 170, Latin Line 1': Showing Remaining Portion of "V" Photo © 2016, N. E. Greene and J. M. Hutton, WPAIP Image Adjustment with Specular Enhancement by J. M. Hutton



**Fig. 7.** Detail of IDR III/1 170, Latin Line 2': Showing Interpunct before EXEIS Photo © 2016, N. E. Greene and J. M. Hutton, WPAIP Image Adjustment by J. M. Hutton

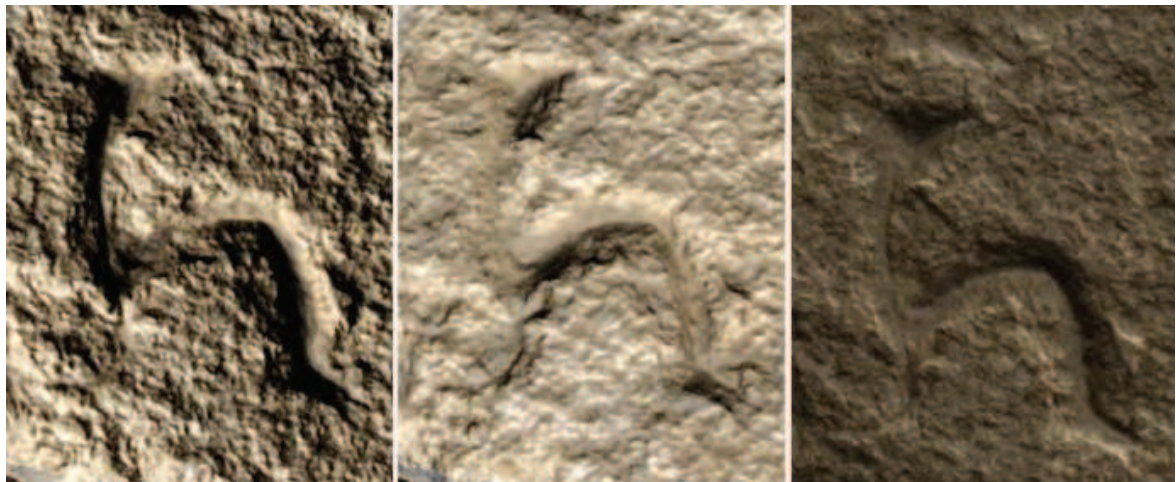




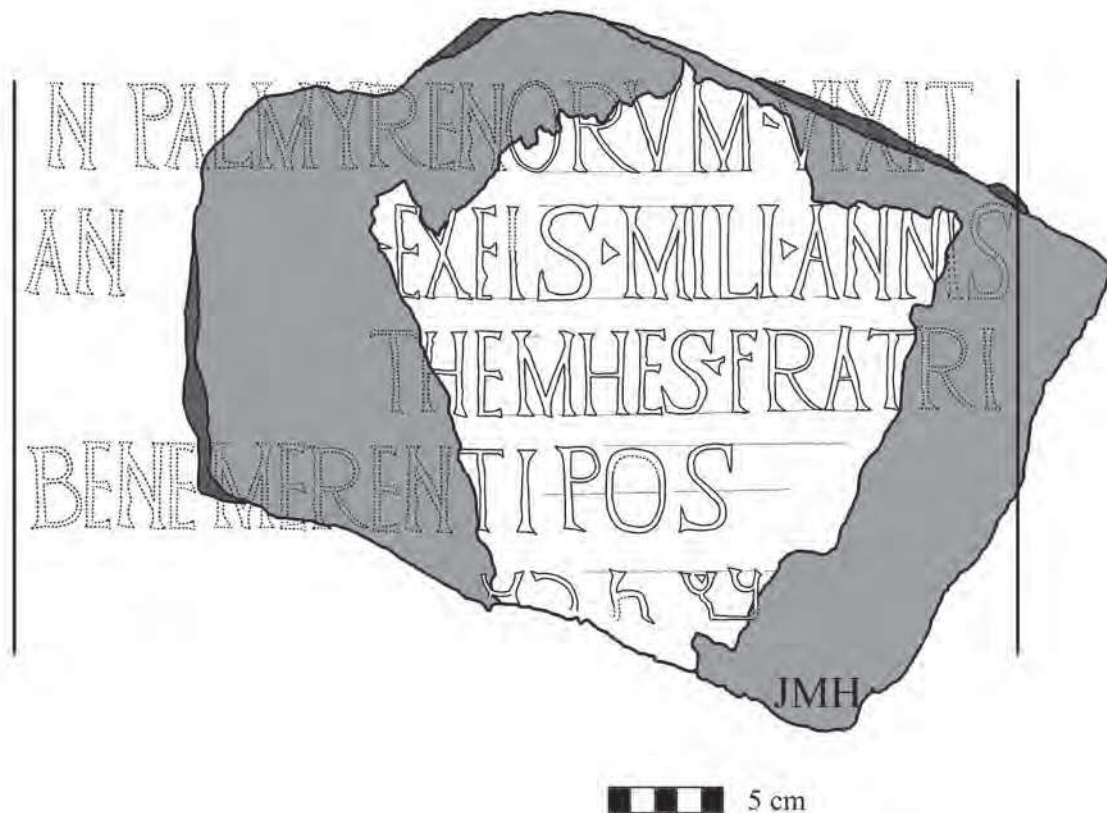
**Fig. 8.** Detail of IDR III/1 170, Aramaic Line 1: Showing Remaining Portion of *br*. Photo © 2016, N. E. Greene and J. M. Hutton, WPAIP Image Adjustment with no filter (top) and diffuse gain filter (bottom) by N. E. Greene



**Fig. 10.** Detail of IDR III/1 170, Aramaic Line 1: Showing Remaining Portion of *ym* Photo © 2016, N. E. Greene and J. M. Hutton, WPAIP Image Adjustment with specular enhancement (top) and diffuse gain (bottom) by N. E. Greene



**Fig. 9.** Detail of IDR III/1 170, Aramaic Line 1: Showing *t*. Photo © 2016, N. E. Greene and J. M. Hutton, WPAIP Image Adjustment with diffuse gain filter (left, center) and no filter, northeast light (right) by N. E. Greene



**Fig. 11.** *Computer-Assisted Drawing of IDR III/1 170, with Reconstructed Text.* © J. M. Hutton



**Fig. 12.** *Full Image of IDR III/1 178* Photo ©2018, J. M. Hutton and R. J. Pruett, WPAIP



**Fig. 13.** *Computer-Assisted Drawing of IDR III/1 178* © J. M. Hutton