

ROBERT WALTER DANIEL

TOPONOMASTIC MAL IN P. NESSANA 22 AND P. PETRA INV. 10 (PAPYRUS  
PETRA KHALED & SUHA SHOMAN)

aus: Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik 122 (1998) 195–196

© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn



TOPONOMASTIC MAL IN P. NESSANA 22 AND P. PETRA INV. 10 (PAPYRUS  
PETRA KHALED & SUHA SHOMAN)

The Papyrology of the Roman and Byzantine Near East has gained a sizable increment in the recently discovered sixth-century Petra papyrus archive.<sup>1</sup> It consists of carbonized Greek documentary texts that were discovered in December 1993 during the excavation of a Byzantine church in Petra conducted by Zbigniew T. Fiema for the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman under the direction of Pierre Bikai.

Conservation and study of the texts has been assigned to two teams of papyrologists, one of them based at the University of Helsinki under the direction of J. Frösén, the other at the University of Michigan under the direction of L. Koenen. The opening of the rolls and the first most important stages of their conservation were carried out by the Finnish team in the course of 1994-95. Now study of the texts, which entails considerable additional conservatorial work, is proceeding. A first volume of edited documents should appear in the next years.

Closest to the Petra papyri in time and place are the sixth / seventh century Nessana papyri. Not surprisingly the new find from Petra is shedding light on obscurities in the published texts from Nessana. The following note presents just one such small example. It may also serve as a preview of an interesting and characteristic detail in Papyrus Petra Khaled & Suha Shoman (Inv. 10),<sup>2</sup> a division of inherited property between three brothers which the Michigan team plans to publish in this journal in the near future.

P. Petra Inv. 10 contains a wealth of Semitic, for the most part Arabic,<sup>3</sup> toponyms and names of houses and parts of houses written in Greek letters. Since Inv. 10, like all other Petra papyri, is of the sixth century, it provides valuable evidence for otherwise poorly-documented pre-Islamic Early Arabic. It is about to occupy a proud place in the history of the Arabic language. Also the Nessana papyri contain some Semitic toponyms, and in this respect the Petra and Nessana texts can shed light on or complement each other.

In P. Nessana 82. 4, a plot of land is named *Μαλακκάνι*. The editor suggested that this be articulated *Μαλ αλ-Κάνι*, which he explained as 'the property of al-Kani'. He supplied no support for this, but the suggestion is entirely plausible. Aramaic and Arabic *māl* means 'livestock', 'money', 'possession(s)', 'property', etc.<sup>4</sup> The personal name *αλ-Κάνι* (meaning 'the short man' according to the editor) may be based on *kn<sup>c</sup>* which can denote a person with short or lame legs or arms.<sup>5</sup>

Papyrus Petra Inv. 10, line 150 presented the following, at first very puzzling toponym: *τό(του) μάλαμαραλαρούα*, 'the place (called) *Malamaralsaroua*'. Thanks to the parallel from Nessana, it was

<sup>1</sup> For forthcoming editions of the Petra papyri, the nos. 376-425 have been reserved in: H. M. Cotton - W. E. H. Cockle - F. G. B. Millar, "The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey," *Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995) 233.

For descriptions of the find and the nature of the archive, see L. Koenen, *Michigan Quarterly Review* 35 (1996) 513-531; *idem*, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 9 (1996) 177-178; Z. T. Fiema - L. Koenen - F. Zayadine, "Petra Romana, Byzantina et Islamica," in: T. Weber - R. Wenning (edd.), *Petra: Antike Felsstadt zwischen arabischer Tradition und griechischer Norm* (Mainz 1997) 145-162.

<sup>2</sup> Inv. 10 is named "Papyrus Petra Khaled & Suha Shoman" in honor of its "adoptive" parents. Yet other Petra papyri have been "adopted" by generous individuals who so have supported work on the papyri currently housed at ACOR.

<sup>3</sup> The undersigned gratefully acknowledges the help of Omar al-Ghul in matters Arabic.

<sup>4</sup> J. Hoftijzer - K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions II* (Leiden - New York - Köln 1995) 603 s.v. *mwl<sub>3</sub>*; E. W. Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon* (London 1863-1893) 3026a; H. Wehr - J. M. Cowan, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Wiesbaden 1979<sup>4</sup>) 1093.

<sup>5</sup> M. Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (i.e. 'The Arabic Language') (Beirut <sup>2</sup> 1980) VIII 314-316.

possible to recognize the first element as being *māl* 'property'. What follows then ought to be a personal name. Αμαρ, in any case, presents no problem. It is in all likelihood common Semitic *cAmr* or *cĀmir*.<sup>6</sup> The following αλ-Καρουα is not so obvious, but an attractive possibility is that *al-Sarwa* is a nickname meaning 'the generous one' or 'the manly one'.<sup>7</sup> So the phrase should be articulated Μαλ Αμαρ αλ-Καρουα 'the property of Amar al-Sarwa'.

With these two instances of toponyms consisting of *māl* + personal name, i.e. 'property of NN', in mind, it is possible to approach the hitherto unexplained name of a piece of property in P. Nessana 82. 11: Μαλζημαρχε. If the element *māl* is regarded as independent, remaining ζημαρχε ought to be a personal name. However, as opposed to al-Kani and Amar al-Saroua in the two examples discussed above, Ζημαρχε is not Semitic, but either a Greek name or a name in another European language other than Greek or Latin. *Zēmarchus* is relatively well attested in the sixth century, as shown by the six notable individuals bearing this name that are listed in Martindale, *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* II 1196; IIIB 1416-17. A less distinguished man of the same name is attested in P. Oxy. XVI 1903, a list of supplies of meat to foreign *bucellarii*, mentioning in line 9 a distribution to a Ζήμαρχος Βέκκος. The ethnic Bessus (see *Der Kleine Pauly* I 872) shows that this *Zēmarchos* was of Thracian stock, and indeed the name seems to be typically Thracian, whether it reflects a Thracian pronunciation of Greek Δήμαρχος<sup>8</sup> or has a specifically Thracian etymology.<sup>9</sup>

The Greek ending of Ζήμαρχος has been reduced to an undeclined -ε in Ζημαρχε. This is natural in light of the fact that it has become part of a Semitic name-phrase. In Aramaic, for example, the Greek ending -ος can be transliterated as *ws* or *s* or rendered as a mere ' or dropped altogether.<sup>10</sup>

Cologne

Robert Walter Daniel

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Preisigke, *Namenbuch*, coll. 1, 24, 503, 505, *s.nn.* Ααμερ, Αμερ; J. K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions* (Oxford 1971) 69 *s.n.* 'mry; M. Sartre, *Bostra. Des origines à l'Islam* (Paris 1985) 175 f., *s.n.* ΑΜΕΡΟΣ; A. Negev, *Personal Names in the Nabataean Realm* (Jerusalem 1991) no. 916; F. al-Khraysheh, *Die Personennamen in den nabatäischen Inschriften des Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* (Diss. Marburg 1986) 144 f. *s.n.* *camrw*.

<sup>7</sup> G. L. Harding, *Index and Concordance of Pre-Islamic Names and Inscriptions* (Toronto - Buffalo 1971) 316 *s.n.* *srw*.

<sup>8</sup> D. Detschew, *Die thrakischen Sprachreste* (Vienna 1957) 185-188.

<sup>9</sup> V. I. Georgiev, "Thrakische und dakische Namenskunde," *ANRW* II.29.2 (1983) 1201-2; I. Duridanov, *Linguistique Balkanique* 34.3/4 (1991) 33-37; cf. *SEG* XLI (1991) no. 584.

<sup>10</sup> For 'Αθηνόδωρος, Κέλευκος and Θεόδωρος transcribed as 'TNDWR', SLWQ' and TYDWR', see Stark, *cit.* (note 6), 137. For the reduction of -ος to -ε and similar phenomena in the Coptic rendering of Greek personal names, see G. Heuser, *Die Personennamen der Kopten* (Leipzig 1929) 90.