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FROM WORK ON THE PETRA PAPYRI: ARABIC ON A GREEK OSTRACON FROM ROMAN EGYPT AND THE NAME OF THE CHURCH FATHER SOZOMEN


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In P. Petra inv. 10,1 written probably in the 520’s or 530’s AD, three brothers divide among themselves a large amount of land and dwellings and a small number of slaves. In line 38, the name of one of the slaves is [Ca]λαμάνιος. The reading and restoration seem certain in view of the name of the mosaicist of the 6th-century Church of the Apostles at Madaba in Jordan. At the center of the mosaic that paves the nave of this church is an emblem depicting personified Sea (Θάλασσα) surrounded by a border containing a short prayer: *IGLSyri*e XXI.2, 142 Κ(ύριε) ὁ Θεός ὁ πατής τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ τῆς γῆς, δός ζωήν Ἀναστασίαν καὶ Θεόδωρος καὶ Θεοδώρους καὶ Αλαμάνθου (r. -νη) ψήφισθαι.2 There is also the support of a tombstone from the Golan Heights, *SEG* XLVI 1983.12 μνημίου Σαλαμανκιού. Furthermore, the spelling Σαλαμάνις in *IG Syrie* IV 1935 and *SEG* XLIV 1434 may be for Σαλαμάνιος (see below with notes 4 and 8).

The personal name Salamanios grecizes Semitic *slmn*, from the root *slm* meaning ‘safe’, ‘healthy’, ‘unimpaired’, etc.3 It is a by-form of Σαλαμάνης (rarely Σαλαμάνος), a name that is widespread in inscriptions and papyri from the area of modern-day Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel and Lebanon.4 To this documentation may be added: the first name of the church father Sozomen from the area of Gaza as transmitted by Photius (on this, see below); a Palestinian monk named Salamanes mentioned by Sozomen (*Hist. eccl.* VI 32. 5; VIII 15. 2); and another monk of the same name from the village Kapersana on the west bank of the Euphrates (Theodoretus, *Hist. rel.* 19).

The many attestations of the name Salamanes may support what is regarded to be one of the three names borne by the fifth-century church father Sozomen from Bethlelea near Gaza in Palestine. Now that Σαλαμάνιος is well attested, however, the evidence for Sozomen’s full name should be looked at again. Photius, *Bibl.* I 36 gives it as Σαλαμαμάνον Ἰερομιχεῖον Σαλμανίου. So modern editors give Sozomen’s name in his *Ecclesiastical History* – relegating all manuscript readings to the *apparatus criticus* – in keeping with the advice of the 17th century humanist Henri de Valois (Valesius).5 The name as

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1 Also called Papyrus Petra Khaled & Suha Shoman in honor of its adoptive parents. [The papyrus is to be published by T. Gagos, O. al-Ghul, L. Koenen and the undersigned together with the collaboration of others.] The present article lightens the commentary to that text of a digression into matters that are tangential to it and that may be of interest to scholars in other fields. For a brief description of and select bibliography on the Petra papyri, see *ZPE* 122 (1998) 195–196.

As with all matters pertaining to our work on the Petra papyri, the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities, the University of Michigan, and the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman is gratefully acknowledged. In the preparation of the present article I profited from consultation with W. Diem, O. al-Ghul and F. Kaltz in matters pertaining to Semitic languages. Thanks also go to G. Azzarello, K. Maresch and F. Reiter for useful remarks.

2 Σαλαμάνιος for Σαλαμαμάνος, probably a confusion of φ and ου (see Gignac, *Grammar* I, 208–210; see also J. Humbert, *La disparition du datif en grec* [Paris 1930], 162–184). L. A. Hunt suggested ψηφισθαι (see also below with note 8); see Gignac, *Grammar* II, 25–29. The evidence for Σαλαμάνης adduced here does not pretend to be complete, nor has evidence for other Greek forms of Semitic names based on *slm* been included (e.g., common Σαλαμάνης and rarer Σαλαμή).


4 Cf. *IGLSyri*e XXI.2, 96b (= *SEG* XXXIV 1510); Le Bas – Waddington VI 2262; 2412i; *PASEyria* IIIA 724; 727; *Iscr. Moab* 123; 147; 150; 272; 320; 325; 326; *Iscr. Ness* 82; *Iscr. Negev* 50t; 65; *SEG* VII 1126; XXXI 1428; 1443; XXXVI 1334; XXXVIII 1658; 1659; XLII 1490d; XLVI 1927; 1995; *P. Dura* 21.8. In *IGLSyri*e IV 1935 Σαλαμάνης may be a iotaacist spelling of Σαλαμάνης, but Σαλαμάνης cannot be ruled out (see above; see also below with n. 8); see Gignac, *Grammar* II, 25–29. The evidence for Σαλαμάνης adduced here does not pretend to be complete, nor has evidence for other Greek forms of Semitic names based on *slm* been included (e.g., common Σαλαμάνης and rarer Σαλαμή).

5 The pertinent part of his *Annotationes* is given in Migne, *PG* 67, coll. 853–854. In basic agreement with de Valois’s conclusion that Σαλαμάνιου (and variants) is to be rejected in favor of Σαλαμάνου as transmitted by Photius: J. Bidez, *La
transmitted by Photius is close to some of the variant readings in Sozomen’s work: 6 Καλαμάτου (I tit.) and Καλαμάνου (IX tit.), both preceding ’Ερμείου Σαξομενοῦ. However, an important group of manuscripts grecizes the Semitic name differently and sets it at the end of the series: ’Ερμείου Σαξομενοῦ Καλαμάνιου (Ded. tit. and I tit.). In some of these manuscripts Καλαμάνιον is corrected to Καλαμάνιου, which looks like a scribal attempt to make the former sensible to the Greek ear and eye. It is the latter form that de Valois knew and rejected in favor of Καλαμάνου with Photius. He could not know and later scholars might hardly know that Καλαμάνιος, with the η emended to α,7 yields the now well-attested name Καλαμάνιος as in the mosaic at Madaba, the Petra papyrus and the Golan tombstone all referred to above. Since the variant reading is defensible, the issue regarding the name of this church father is not as clear-cut as it was thought to be till now.

Whereas the name Salamanes is well-attested in texts from the Roman and Byzantine Near East, to my knowledge there are at most only two instances of it in the much greater quantity of Greek documents from Greco-Roman Egypt. A possible one is on an inscription that was excavated at ’Abu Sha’ar on the Red Sea coast. The text is a Christian prayer that was first published by R. S. Bagnall and J. A. Sheridan in JARCE 31 (1994) 163–164 (= SEG XLIIV 1434), who date it on palaeographic grounds to the 4th–6th centuries and give its text as follows: ἡκύριε Ἡ[πείρων] Ἡ[πειρίτε, ε]κόσον κ[αὶ] ἐπλησον τὸν (τ. ἐλέσθον τὸν) δοῦλον σου Κα[λ]αμάν[ι[ο[ν, ] ], οὐ[. The editors suggested that Καλαμάνιος may be a variant Καλαμάνης8 and that, since the name is typical of Syria and Palestine, the person probably “came from that region, perhaps via a Sinai port.”

A certain occurrence of the name in Greco-Roman Egypt is on an ostracoon containing a message dealing with a shipment of vegetables. The text, which was published with a photograph and commentary by Edda Bresciani in La Parola del Passato 14 (1959) 140–141 (= SB VI 9610), is of interest not only for the name that is rare in Egypt, but also because it contains a much stranger word:

Πέμυφον τα λάρχανα οληττα | α Ἰστια, τὸ κατὰ τὸν τόν τῶν | έκπολλέσεις ἀρβῆναι | ὡς τῷ οὔν καὶ ἀμελήσεις | μὴ ἴνα ἐξελθῶν εμπαίζῃ | έκερακο. | Αμεθόν | τὸ ὀμπακο | κάταταξον.

Τύχη Καλαμάνης χ(αίρετων). Πέμυφον τα λάρχανα οληττα | α Ἰστια, τὸ κατὰ τὸν τόν τῶν | έκπολλέσεις ἀρβῆναι | ὡς τῷ οὔν καὶ ἀμελήσεις | μὴ ἴνα ἐξελθῶν εμπαίζῃ | έκερακο. | Αμεθόν | τὸ ὀμπακο | κάταταξον.

Variants are cited according to the edition of Sozomen by J. Bidez – G. C. Hansen (GCS, NF 4, Berlin2 1995).

6 Scribal miscopying is a sufficient explanation of α > η, although one might consider the possibility of the influence of an Arabic pronunciation of the name. The phonetic phenomenon known as ‘inala, i.e. long and short a pronounced as long and short e and i, was and is widespread in many Arabic dialects; see C. Brockelmann, Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen I (Berlin 1908), 141–142; W. Wright, A Grammar of the Arabic Language I (Cambridge 1933), 7, 9, 10; J. Cantineau, Études de linguistique arabe (Paris 1960), 96–99. For evidence of ‘inala in Arabic as transliterated in Coptic, Coptic-Arabic and Greek-Arabic papyri, see J. Karabacek, MPER V (1892) 59–62.

7 If so, it is undeclined. The same would apply to undeclined Κα[λ]αμάνιος, see n. 4 on IGLSyrie IV 1935. Also possible: Κα[λ]αμάνΩν (cf. Namentbuch, s.v. ΚαλαμάνΩ) and then, e.g.: Ικ[α]δόπου or Ικ[α]δότου.

8 Ict...: the first editor gave Ικίδι... έκερακο, though the dots under ή are only in her commentary. She suggested Ικίδι... (or Ικίδι...) but the fourth letter is more likely an o open at the top (cf. 9 τόν) or an ω with a flat bottom (closest would be the ω in 6) than a δ, which should be more angular (unfortunately, the text has no other δ for comparison). Between this letter and τό is hardly enough space for 4 letters. The photograph shows traces of two letters of normal size: first, the foot of a vertical (e.g., the lower left of η, γ or π); then two verticals that might suit η or ω. A correction seems to be involved in the letter that the editor regarded as the τ of τό. The last letter might be ο or α. A possible reading is Ικίδι... (or Ικίδι...) έκερακο. However, both variants of the woman’s name are rare, vs. common Ικίδι... and Ικίδι... in the next sentence suggests a man’s name. If Ικίδι... (or Ικίδι...) is correct, the subject of the following sentence is not expressed. If Ικίδι is read, the next three letters are a problem. Thanks go to F. Maltomini for checking the ostracoon which E. Bresciani kindly put at his disposal. He reports that the original at this place now shows less than the published photograph.

9 Εμπαίζῃ: the first editor gave Εμπαίζῃ, but the ζ is made as in 6 Εξελθῶν. It is not ζ as in 9 χρήζων.
“Tyche greets Salamanes. Send the vegetables olgitta which Isi—-wrote today that you prevented from being picked up. See to it that you are not negligent lest he leave and make a fool11 of you. For it is not without precedent that he at times needs more vegetables. Farewell. After you receive this ostracon, have them brought down12.”

There can be no doubt that ολγιττα was correctly read and little doubt concerning the sense expected. As the editor suggested, the word or words ought to refer to a kind of vegetable. The sequence of letters, however, does not yield Greek or Latin even if one allows for phonetic interchanges in this part of a text that elsewhere has standard Greek spelling only.

Another language should provide an explanation. Egyptian comes into question given the virtually certain provenance of the ostracon,13 but the distinguished Egyptologist who edited it would have remarked on this possibility if it could be entertained seriously. Fortunately, the name Salamanes invites consideration of another group of languages. The editor already noted that it might reflect the Aramaic name Ṣlmn14, but in the present case (see below) it may just as well grecize the equivalent name in Arabic, i.e. Ṣlmn.

If one looks to possibilities in a Semitic language to explain ολγιττα, one may consider Arabic al-qitta` ‘the cucumbers’, which falls squarely in the semantic category expected and which corresponds fairly closely with the Greek letters, even if one would normally expect Arabic al-qittā‘ to be rendered by the Greek letters ολ-κιτθωβα.

In classical Arabic, qittā‘ (collective singular, also vocalized qittā‘a’) denotes cucumbers in general (also called ḥiyār) or snake-cucumbers in specific.15 In the Arabic translation of Dioscurides’ Materia medica and in Arabic commentaries on it, the cultivated cucumber, cīwās ʿāμ箬ς, is translated as al-qittā‘ al-hustānī (‘the garden cucumber’) and the wild cucumber, cīwās ʿāμ箬ς, as al-qittā‘ al-barri (‘the wild cucumber’) as well as qittā‘ al-himār (‘the donkey cucumber’).16

Many roots and words are common to all Semitic languages. In the case of γιττα, however, if I have hit on the correct root, it almost certainly transliterates Arabic qitta‘17 and not a cognate. The Greek letters are closer to the Arabic word than to Semitic equivalents with the same meaning such as Aramaic qattitā (sg.), qaṭṭajjā (pl.).18 The preceding letters ωλ, then, would seem to be the definite article al-, which is distinctively Arabic,19 as opposed, e.g., to Hebrew ha- and Aramaic (affixed) -ā.

11 Or “defraud” or “cheat”.
12 κάτακον: normally ‘bring down’, but here the word seems to be roughly synonymous with πέμψων in lines 1–2 and hence to be used causatively. The prefix κατ- probably indicates movement northwards, i.e. ‘down’ the Nile, or possibly movement from a city to an outlying village; see H. C. Youie, HThR 41 (1948) 15 n. 36 (= Scriptaunceiae I 493).
13 It was acquired in Cairo, though no further details as to its provenance are known.
14, but in the present case (see below) it may just as well grecize the equivalent name in Arabic, i.e. Ṣlmn.
15 See E. W. Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon (London 1863–1893), 2487b. Today in the Levant the word qitta‘ denotes specifically the snake-cucumber, as opposed to ḥiyār, which is used of cucumbers in general. This agrees with what was reported on the terms some 70 years ago by G. Dalman, Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina II (Gütersloh 1932), 283.
16 For the Arabic translations of cīwās ʿāμ箬ς and cīwās ʿāμ箬ς (Diosc., Mat. med. II 135 and IV 150), see A. Dietrich, Dioscurides triumphans. Ein anony mer arabischer Kommentar (Ende 12. Jahrh. n. Chr.) zur Materia medica. 2. Teil: Übersetzung und Kommentar (Göttingen 1988), II 117 and IV 139. F. Kaltz kindly brought this work to my attention.
17 For η as regarded as rendering Arabic ʕ, see Sartre, op. cit. (note 3), 181 s.n. ηυμός, 185–6 s.n. ήυθος, 192 s.n. ης φαντατος. The only instance that I have found for a γ as rendered as possibly rendering Arabic q is Lidzbarski, op. cit. (note 14) II 339.
18 For other cognates, see L. Koehler – W. Baumgartner, Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament II (Leiden 19953), 1073b.
19 For the Arabic definite article al- in late Nabataean texts roughly contemporaneous with the ostracon, see J. Cantineau, Le Nabatéen (Paris 1930–32) I 61 and II 61. That al- is spelled ωλ on the ostracon seems negligible. I have not come across an example of the Arabic article rendered by Greek ωλ, but it may be noted that Αλέφως, Ολάφως, Αλεπως and Ολαπως are all regarded as rendering Nabataean Hλfω or related Semitic names; see Sartre, op. cit. (note 3), 172–3. For α>ο in Greek as pronounced in Egypt, see Gignac, Grammar I, 286–287.
Tyche’s instructions to Salamanes may now be given as Πέμψον τὰ λάχανα, ολ-γιττα, where the presumably Arabic word for ‘the cucumbers’ stands in apposition to τὰ λάχανα. The detail may add to evidence provided by papyri and inscriptions for pre-Islamic Arabic in Greek transliteration.

Since the text is of linguistic interest, it is important to know roughly when it was written. The editor assigned its handwriting to the 2nd century AD, but the 3rd century seems likelier to me, and diaeresis placed over initial ı favors such a later date.\(^{20}\) Palaeographical comparison may allow one to come even closer. The writer made the thick, mainly unconnected, roundish letters in a way that so closely resembles the second hand of \(P.\) \(Oxy.\) XIV 1646 of A.D. 270\(^{21}\) that it does not seem too hazardous to date the ostracon to the second half of the 3rd century.\(^{22}\)

Cologne/Amman

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**Corrigendum: No Arabic on a Greek Ostraca**

When writing on the ostracon SB VI 9610 in this journal (Vol. 131 [2000] 173–176), I proposed that ολ-γιττα in line 2 may be Arabic \(al-qi˚˚\) ‘the cucumbers’. As J. Cowey kindly informed me, however, I had overlooked A. Bülow-Jacobsen’s article “Ghost-Vegetable: A re-edition of SB VI 9610” (this journal, Vol. 110 [1996] 124–126), where it is convincingly suggested that ολ-γιττα should be read as \(Cαγίττα\), the Latin personal name in the dative. Sagitta, then, must be the masculine subject of the ostracon’s lines 9 ff. \(εξελθων\ \epsilonιπαι\ ικλ\) κтλ. (see footnote 9 of my article), and so Ὠ Ἰσόνη (or Ἰσώνη) τὸ εἴμερον seems to be a plausible reading of line 3 (see the same footnote).

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\(^{20}\) The ostracon has in 3 ἵκτ- and in 6 ἴκτα. Referring to a few isolated examples of diaeresis in dated texts of the 1st and 2nd centuries, H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat (*Fragments of an Unknown Gospel* [London 1935], 5) remarked: “Later instances are too numerous to be worth collecting.” For a few other early examples, see Turner – Parsons, *Greek Manuscripts*, 2, 10 n. 46.

\(^{21}\) J. R. Rea discussed the date of this papyrus in \(ZPE\) 26 (1977) 227–229; photograph after p. 230.

\(^{22}\) The hand is also similar to \(BGU\) XIII 2280a of A.D. 276 (see plate X).