
Julien Aliquot, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, Tome XI, *Mont Hermon (Liban et Syrie)*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, Tome 183, Institut Français du Proche-Orient, Beirut (2008)

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Compte rendu

Julien ALIQUOT, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie, Tome XI, Mont Hermon (Liban et Syrie)*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique, Tome 183, Institut Français du Proche-Orient, Beirut (2008), 157 p. + 10 p. of Arabic.

Julien Aliquot has rapidly won great respect for his work on near eastern Greek epigraphy and culture in a series of excellent articles, in which he unites a sovereign command of texts, geography, and history with exceptionally clear arguments and persuasively original ideas. His comprehensive approach to the documents of his chosen region, Lebanon and Syria, reminds me of Louis Robert during his early expeditions to Asia Minor. The Graeco-Roman antiquity of an entire region is brought back to life through meticulous research and infinite curiosity. Aliquot made a spectacular *début* with his long and wide-ranging paper, « Les Ituréens et la présence arabe au Liban du II^e siècle a.C. au IV^e p.C. », *MUSJ* 56 (1999-2003), p. 161-290. A searching analysis of the cults of Leucothea in relation to local cults on Mt. Hermon reinforced the initial impression of a powerful new scholar at work : « Cultes locaux et traditions hellénisantes du Proche-Orient : à propos de Leucothéa et de Mélicerte », *Topoi* 14 (2006), p. 245-264. Aliquot's volume in the *IGLS* series is equally strong and sets a very high standard for a corpus of Greek inscriptions.

What makes this volume so authoritative is Aliquot's profound knowledge of the terrain in which he works. He has conducted epigraphic surveys in the region from September 2002 through September 2006. This means that he can not only produce nineteen *inedita* but provide valuable commentary on texts that are already known. He has also had the inestimable advantage of access to the files of Père R. Mouterde, one of the founders of the *IGLS* series (along with L. Jalabert). Until his death in 1961 Mouterde maintained a careful record of publications of the Greek and Latin inscriptions of Mt. Hermon, and J.-P. Rey-Coquais, to whom this material had been entrusted, generously turned it over to Aliquot. The reader knows that he is in good hands when Aliquot begins this new volume with a detailed description of the geography of the region. It is fortunate that through his recent surveys he can bring together the topography of villages on both the Lebanese and the Syrian sides of Mt. Hermon into a single study. Aliquot demonstrates that this was a coherent culture in antiquity. It was regrettable, if inevitable, that he did not have access to the southern end of the mountain, including the great city of Caesarea Panias (Caesarea Philippi), which lies in the contested zone administered by Israel. But for this area Aliquot is able to provide a substantial commentary on the basis of published texts, especially R.C. Gregg and D. Urman, *Jews, Pagans and Christians in the Golan Heights* (1996). At many points he is able to improve texts previously edited by S. Applebaum, L. Di Segni, and Z. U. Ma'oz.

But of course the richness of the new *IGLS* volume lies in Aliquot's contributions to the epigraphy of Lebanon and Syria, where he has been accorded full access to the sites on Mt. Hermon. He has divided his texts into separate sections on the western and eastern sides of the mountain (*Hermon occidental* and *Hermon oriental*), but in fact the division is more political than geographical. He seems clearly to be aware of this when he writes at the end of his introduction on p. 26 : « Les sites sont répartis selon un ordre géographique qui distingue les zones de la montagne d'après leur appartenance aux territoires libanais et syrien ». The somewhat surprising result is that Halwa begins the section of inscriptions from western Hermon, and Jdeidat Yabus begins the section for eastern Hermon. Yet paradoxically, because of the undulating national frontiers, Halwa lies well to the east of Jdeidat Yabus. In fact, on p. 5 Aliquot not unreasonably ascribes Jdeidat Yabus to the western slope of Mt. Hermon, but it happens to be inside Syria (very close to the frontier crossing).

Among the fruitful results of assembling these scattered texts into a single volume is the light shed upon the territories of Sidon and Damascus. This is the result of a painstaking determination of the most plausible era for the dated inscriptions of the various villages in the region. Aliquot gives a comprehensive summary in his introduction on p. 17-25, including treatment of the southern end of the mountain as well (where the eras and territories of Tyre and Pnias are also represented). Most of the western towns, such as Deir al Ashayer, Kfar Quq, and Ain Hirsha, used the era of Sidon and must therefore have been part of its territory. But the substantial town of Rakhle, which is on the eastern side and inside Syria today, used the Sidonian era as well. Yet to the southeast, not far from Rakhle, Burqush shows the Seleucid era, which betokens the territory of Damascus. The territorial division seems to have passed along the mountain between the two.

A similarly unexpected consequence of the identification of eras is the revelation that Halwa used the era of Sidon and hence must be assigned to its territory, whereas Jdeidat Yabus, to the northwest of it, shows the Seleucid era and must accordingly be reckoned a part of the Damascene territory. This would seem less of an oddity on the ground for those who travel on the main road from Damascus to Beirut, since it passes directly through Jdeidat Yabus. By contrast the town of Hammara (now called Manara), which had close relations with Yabus, used the Sidonian era, and so did Halwa, to the southeast of Yabus. The disposition of territories, with the signal exception of Rakhle, is not much different from the modern frontiers between Lebanon and Syria, and this tells us something about the natural contours of the mountain.

As Aliquot has shown, the cult of Leucothea turns up in several places on Mt. Hermon. There was clearly a temple to the goddess at Rakhle, where she is explicitly named in some texts, such as nos. 21 and 23, although in others she is simply « the goddess » or, in one instance, « the goddess of Moithos, son of Raios » (no. 20). Her remarkable presence at Halwa emerged from an inscription that Aliquot himself first published a few years ago and now registers as no. 1 in his corpus. An ordinance (διαταγή) of the holy god of Remalas, a name that

Aliquot believes reasonably to be a toponym and possibly the ancient name for Halwa, is carried out κατὰ κέλευσι[ν] / θεοῦ ἀγγελ[ου] / Μελικέρτ[ου]. The rare appearance of Leucothea's son Melikertes, known elsewhere (notably at Corinth) as Palaemon, in the guise of a god-angel negotiating the intermediate space between a great local god and the town itself, brings the cult of Leucothea into direct contact with local cults of the region. Aliquot mentions, but does not waste much time on, the discussion launched long ago by Cumont about the fallen angels in the Book of Enoch. The combination of angel and god is well illustrated in the Jerash inscription with Zeus-angel published by Pierre-Louis Gatier in *ADAJ* 26 (1982), p. 269-270, no. 1. There was at least one other temple of Leucothea apart from Rakhle, as emerges from Aliquot's no. 39 : θεᾶ Λευκο / θεᾶ Σεγειρων. We still do not know where Segeira is, but since her cult there is mentioned in an inscription (no. 39) from Ain al-Burj the site might well be in that general area of eastern Hermon. Aliquot suggests Qalaat Jendal but prudently leaves the question open. I will return to this mystery at the end.

A puzzling group of texts invokes the language of heroes in a funerary context : nos. 8, 9, and 11 (Aaiha on the western side, τὸ ἡρώϊον), no. 36 (Burqush on the eastern side, ἡρώϊ(σ)α κ/αὶ χρηστή), and no. 39 (Ain al Burj, on the eastern side, ἀποθεωθέντος). Annie Sartre-Fauriat has already pointed out how rare this terminology, which is familiar from Asia Minor, is in the Near East : *Des tombeaux et des morts* (Beirut, 2001), vol. 2, p. 28-29, with a thorough discussion of ἡρώϊον. In commenting on the conjunction ἡρώϊ(σ)α κ/αὶ χρηστή in no. 36, Aliquot refers to Louis Robert's well known opinion that the term « hero » in such a funerary context means nothing more than « dead » (in J. DES GAGNIERS *et al.*, *Laodicée du Lycos* [1969], p. 266), but it would be reasonable to ask whether the conjunction « dead and good » really makes any sense at all. Christopher Jones explores this problem at length in his forthcoming book *New Heroes in Antiquity*, which the Harvard University Press will publish in early 2010. Something beyond mere death seems to be at issue here.

This problem arises much more seriously in what is perhaps the most notorious of all the inscriptions in this new *IGLS* volume, no. 39 from Ain al Burj. The stone, which was acquired by Franz Cumont and transported to Brussels, is the dedication to Leucothea of Segeira, mentioned above, and it is offered for the security (σωτηρία) of the emperor Trajan. The spelling of the emperor's titlature is mangled as υἱὸς Σεβαστὸς Γερμανικοῦ Δακικὸς, in which three of the four required genitives appear in the nominative case. The name of the dedicant is Μεννέας Βεελιαβου τοῦ Βεελιαβου πατρὸς Νετειρου τοῦ ἀποθεωθέντος ἐν τῷ λέβητι. This Neteiros is most plausibly the antecedent of the immediately following phrase connecting him with a festival : δι' οὗ αἱ (ἐ)ορταὶ ἄγονται. It would be tedious to rehearse all the explanations that have been proposed for the apparent divinization of Neteiros in a cauldron, from human sacrifice to being accidentally boiled alive. Aliquot provides a complete bibliography for the numerous attempts to solve the mystery of this text. His own interpretation is resolutely pedestrian, and this is certainly an improvement on some of the more fanciful scenarios. In much the

same way as interpreting a hero as no more than a deceased person, he understands the apotheosis of Neteiros as nothing more than the placing of his remains in a receptacle after his death. The λέβης thus becomes the urn in which he has been deposited.

But even this unsensational reading of the text has insuperable problems, not least because Neteiros could only be placed in the urn if he had been cremated, and cremation is a most unlikely way of disposing of a corpse in this region. Annie Sartre-Fauriat has no example at all among her tombs in the Hawran. Furthermore, the very idea that the verb ἀποθεώω, which means primarily « divinize », could be a periphrasis for « bury » is based on a misinterpretation of inscriptions in Asia Minor. None of the texts adduced by Marc Waelkens in proof of this meaning will stand up to scrutiny : M. WAELKENS, in R. DONCEEL and R. LEBRUN (ed.), *Archéologie et religions de l'Anatolie ancienne. Mélanges en l'honneur du professeur Paul Naster* (1983), p. 301-302, note 192. Waelken's claim that the apotheosis simply means *Begrabung* is clearly belied by an inscription from Aphrodisias (MAMA VIII. 570 ; McCabe 403) that distinguishes burial, indicated by κηδευθῆναι, from death (μετὰ τὸ ἀποθεωθῆναι). In any case, putting ashes into an urn is not *Begrabung*. Apotheosis as an honorific periphrasis for death is clearly what we find in a remarkable inscription from Ariqa in the Leja' (SARTRE, *Syria* 70 [1993], p. 65) : ὅτε ἡ κεραυνοβολία ἐγένετο καὶ ἀπεθεώθη Αὐσος Ἀμελαθου. Aliquot's attempt to salvage the meaning of « burial » here in the verb after the thunderbolt struck is clearly a desperate measure : « la mort accidentelle peut simplement avoir été suivie de l'inhumation de la victime ». Apotheosis as a death with honorific implications has appeared recently in a new inscription from the Kilbian Plain in southwestern Lydia : P. HERRMANN and H. MALAY, *New Documents from Lydia* (2007), no. 96, l. 29. The honorific sense of the word – a god or gods in the family (cf. J. and L. ROBERT, *Bull. épig.* 1964, 596) – seems in this new instance to be related to the placing of a painted portrait of the deceased in a ἡρώων (l. 21). For a good discussion of apotheosis in this text, see Christopher JONES, *Chiron* 38 (2008), p. 201, citing the Roberts.

If we have to rule out ashes in an urn as well as human sacrifice, sudden death by drowning (or boiling), first proposed by Maurice Sartre in *Syria* 70 (1993), p. 64, cannot be so easily eliminated. I owe to Jones, whose interest in this subject I have cited at the end of the previous paragraph, an astonishing and hitherto unnoticed parallel in section 112 of the *Life of Theodore of Sykeon*, ascribed to George of Sykeon. Sartre had emphasized the banality of scenes of water boiling in urns in the near eastern countryside. The passage in the *Life* that introduces a miracle wrought by the saint confirms Sartre's point and furnishes an example of a child accidentally running towards an urn, called a λέβης, and falling into the boiling water :

καὶ πολλῶν ὄχλων καταχυθέντων, ἦν ἐστὼς πρὸ καταφόρου ὁ τοῦ θερμοῦ λέβης ἐν ὀρυκτῷ τόπῳ ὑποκαίόμενος παρ' αὐτὴν τὴν στράταν. Γενομένης δὲ τῆς λειτουργίας καὶ τῶν ὄχλων εὐωχηθέντων καὶ ἐτοιμαζομένων ἐξελεῖν τοῦ μοναστηρίου, ἐξῆλθε παιδίον ἐκ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ ἁγίου μάρτυρος Γεωργίου καὶ

ἔτρεχεν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀπόθεσιν τῶν πραγμάτων αὐτοῦ. Οὔσης δὲ τῆς ὁδοῦ αὐτοῦ ἔγγιστα τοῦ λέβητος, ἐξ ἐνεργείας τοῦ διαβόλου τρέχον ἐνέπεσεν ἐν τῷ λέβητι τοῦ θερμοῦ.

The frantic parents pluck out the child and take him to the shrine of George the martyr, where they lay him down half-dead and bewail the deadly accident. But Theodore cures him. The remarkably close similarity to what is described in the inscription of Ain al Burj gives powerful support to Sartre's interpretation. Obviously there was no saint to restore the child to life at Ain al Burj, but it appears that a festival was established to commemorate him (διά with the genitive in a causal sense).

We must also ask whether the dedicant Menneas might be the father of Neteiros, since this « apotheosized » person is accorded recognition in the inscription through the foundation of a festival. He might, of course, have been Menneas' uncle, but, in view of the egregious errors in Trajan's titlature on this inscription, it is difficult to accept Aliquot's statement, « on peut exclure l'idée selon laquelle Mennéas serait le père de Neteiros, car cette hypothèse suppose de manière abusive une confusion entre le génitif (πατρός) et le nominatif (πατήρ) ». It is worth pointing out that the filiation of Menneas proceeds correctly without the definite article in the genitive before the father's name and then *with* the article before the grandfather's name. After this a nominative to signal the special claim of the dedicant would be an attractive correction.

The onomasticon of Mt. Hermon is full of interesting items, and Aliquot has segregated all the names in an « Index onomastique commenté » at the end of his corpus, just as Maurice Sartre had done in his study of Bostra (1985). The following observations follow the alphabetical order in which the names appear.

– Ἀδριανός : (Ιούλιος). Aliquot notes that the *cognomen* Hadrianus occurs in the Hauran, and he refers back to Sartre. But what Sartre says about this name is that it must go back to the time after the annexation of Arabia. A Julius Hadrianus is exceedingly odd. One would expect an Aelius, and it is worth asking whether the gentilicium was misread in the 19th century. The stone, no. 38, is now lost, but it is clear from other errors in Fossey's transcription, such as YAYNOY for ΜΑΓΝΟΥ, that there is room for doubt.

– Ἀουίδιος. Aliquot notes only « gentilice latin *Avidius* », which is certainly right, but we need to be told that the name entered the region through the presence of the general and rebel Avidius Cassius, who threatened Marcus Aurelius in his last years. The inscription that displays an Avidius (A/4) is dated to 178/9, only a few years after the general's usurpation and death.

– Μουνάτιος. Once again we need to understand how this name entered the region. L. Munatius Plancus was the governor of Syria on behalf of Marcus Antonius in 35 B.C., and this explains why, as Aliquot writes, the gentilicium « est attesté ponctuellement comme nom unique au Proche-Orient ».

– Οκβεός. This interesting name appears both in Jdeidat Yabus (no. 18) and in Hammara (Manara), as Aliquot has astutely observed, and he notes a few slight variants elsewhere (including Ο(κ)βαας in no. 20 here). See his excellent re-edition of the Hammara inscription in *Tempora* 18 (2007-9), p. 73-79. Relying on WUTHNOW's outdated *Die*

semitische Menschnamen in griechischen Inschriften und Papyri des vorderen Orients (1930), and citing, if not fully absorbing, A. CAQUOT in *Syria* 39 (1962), p. 248, Aliquot states that the name is formed on the root 'qb, « to protect or guard », and evokes the idea of a god protecting a child. But this will not do. The meaning « protect » or « guard » only attaches to this root in Ethiopic and Sabaeen, and it is not found in either Aramaic or Arabic, where the meaning is « follow ». Caquot recognized the problem and confined himself to theophoric examples. He recognized the difficulty in supposing a subterranean existence for a meaning that disappeared altogether from Aramaic and Arabic, only to survive in Sabaeen and Ethiopic. Aliquot is certainly right about the root of the name but not about its meaning in the absence of any theophoric element. Caquot believed that the name was not found in the Nabataean onomasticon, but it is duly registered in J. CANTINEAU, *Le nabatéen* (1932) II, p. 134 'qbw (with the usual Nabataean nominal termination), where a comparison is made with Arabic 'aqaba (steep track, mountain pass, *vel sim.*). This would not be an inappropriate sense for persons dwelling on Mt. Hermon. The name is also registered in A. NEGEV, *Personal Names in the Nabataean Realm* (1991), p. 54, no. 936. Emma Gannagé has pointed out to me that one of the Companions of the Prophet bore the name 'Uqba ibn 'Āmir.

– Σακιδιανός. Aliquot says of this clearly Roman name, « Je ne connais pas d'autre attestation de ce nom qui semble dériver du gentilice Sacidius ». That is certainly correct as far as it goes, but there is more to be said. The gentilicium is rare, but it has a special role in the history of the Near East. A Latin ex-voto inscription from Carnuntum (*CIL* 3. 4418) reveals a centurion, C. Sacidius Barbarus, of the legion XV Apollinaris. The stone bears the erasure of an imperial name, either that of Nero or Domitian, and the ex voto must be dated before 114 when XV Apollinaris was moved to Satala. In the last years of Nero, this legion had been sent from Pannonia to support Corbulo in Armenia before his ultimate disgrace, and after his death it was transferred first to Alexandria and then to Jerusalem to serve under Titus in the fateful war against the Jews. For details see Ritterling in *PW* XII.2 (1925), 1753-1754. Obviously the legion had to march overland from Armenia into Egypt, when the centurion Sacidius would have crossed the mountain barrier between Syria and the coast. Since the name is so infrequent, we can have little doubt that the centurion we know from Carnuntum bestowed his gentilicium upon one or more families in the region of Mt. Hermon.

Aliquot's volume is no less rich in toponymy than onomastics. The survival of place-names is conspicuous at Rakhle, which bears exactly the same name today as appears on the ancient inscriptions (Rakhla). As Aliquot notes (p. 50), the god of Rakhle may have been the consort of Leucothea, whose cult is established there, and he turns up in Palmyra as *du-rahllūn*, « the One of Rakhle ». A lintel at the site showing the outspread wings of an eagle may well allude, as Aliquot suggests, to « un grand dieu semblable aux seigneurs divins omniprésents sur l'Hermon ». A bilingual inscription from the Baalshamin temple at Palmyra refers to the resident divinity jointly as Baalshamin and *du-rahllūn* in the Palmyrene text, but in Greek only as the single god Zeus. J. Teixidor has plausibly assumed that Arabs from Rakhle had brought their god with them to Palmyra, where he was accommodated as an avatar of the Lord of Heaven, Baalshamin (*The Pantheon of Palmyra* [1979], p. 21-22). The meaning of the name Rakhle is unclear, but its persistence across millennia is impressive. The second half of the name looks like a reference to the

local god (*'lh*), but *rah* is puzzling (odor?) and unlikely to represent *rūh* (spirit, breath).

Not far to the west of Rakhle is Deir al Ashayer, where inscription no. 4 reveals a high priest of the « gods of Kiboreia ». Aliquot rightly infers that this suggests Kiboreia as the ancient name for the site, and presumably it is formed from Aramaic *kbr*, implying a place of great abundance. The name of the priest, Beeliabos, ὁ καὶ Διόδοτος, is a perfect illustration of Semitic-Greek nomenclature, in which the Greek provides a precise calque of the Semitic name. Since the text refers to a δίφρος of the gods, rather than a θρόνος, Aliquot persuasively argues this object is a mobile throne for liturgical use. He compares Lucian, *de dea Syria* 34, on a throne without any statue. As such the Kiboreia throne would have parallels with Sidonian coins, as Aliquot points out, but also perhaps with the notorious Ptolemaic δίφρος seen at Adulis by Cosmas Indicopleustes (*Topogr. Christ.* 2. 54).

The inscription at Hammara (Manara) recently re-edited by Aliquot, as mentioned above, records nine ἐπιμεληταὶ ἀπὸ κώμης Αἰνκνιας. Since their names conspicuously overlap names from the inscription at neighboring Jdeidat Yabus (no. 18) and since that site is close to a spring called today Ain Qaniya, it seems inevitable, as Aliquot observed, that the ancient name for Jdeidat Yabus was Ainkania – a name preserved to this day in the name of the spring, the spring of rushes (reeds). The word following Ain (spring) is a survival of the Syriac *qanyā*. As Aliquot observes, it is a mistake to attribute the toponym to Hammara.

The village nomenclature of the Hermon region shows two cases of a name, in Lebanon and in Syria, that appear to preserve an ancient toponym with no obvious meaning in modern Arabic. The name is Qūq, and it can be readily explained as a survival of the Aramaic word for a clay pot. It is so explained in Anis Freiha's online repertorium of Lebanese place-names at <http://www.geocities.com/barkoosh/kaf.htm>. The designation presumably reflects a geological setting that evoked a pot or basin. It is tempting, therefore, to look for the site of the ever elusive Segeira in a similar survival, and the Syriac root *sgr* (enclose, confine) in a passive participial form would be attractive. But unfortunately I am not aware of any town in the region called Sajir or Sajira. The old suggestion, which Aliquot renews on p. 70, that Leucothea of Segeira might have been the consort of Zeus Megistos attested at Qalaat Jendal (no. 38), remains the best hypothesis. The modern name, « Jindal's fort », cannot be ancient. The possibility that the ancient name for this site might have been a word for « enclosed » or « confined » gains credibility from its location, « bâti en amphithéâtre sur des pentes ensoleillées au-dessus d'un vallon arrosé » (quoted by Aliquot on p. 65 from R. THOUMIN, *Géographie humaine de la Syrie centrale* [1936], p. 271). That is as far as one can venture, perhaps farther.

Scholars are much in debt to Julien Aliquot for his splendid work, and we must also remember, as he would surely wish us to do, the prior work of Père Mouterde on many of these inscriptions. The richness of this exceptionally fine

corpus will, I am certain, stimulate and enrich research on the entire region of Mt. Hermon in the Graeco-Roman period for decades to come ¹.

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