

A New Aramaic Dedicatory Inscription from Israel

Ada Yardeni and Jonathan J. Price

The Aramaic inscription published here is in the private collection of Dr. David Jeselsohn in Jerusalem. The authors wish to thank Dr. Jeselsohn for the opportunity to examine the stone and for permission to publish it.*

The stone is sandstone of uneven thickness and widens gradually towards the bottom. The left and right sides of the stone are broken but the text is fully preserved on those margins. The bottom has been worked and straightened, and the bottom margin of the text is preserved. The top of the stone also appears to have been straightened, although the content of the text indicates that there was at least one more line of text preceding the first line of text preserved on the present stone (see below); there are no traces of that first line on the present stone, nor would there have been enough room to fit a full line of text between the present first line and the straightened top edge; thus the present stone could have been reworked later for secondary use, or, less likely, the beginning of the inscription could have been contained on another stone. The back of the stone is rough, with traces of what appears to be white plaster.

The five narrowly spaced lines of square Hebrew letters are homogeneously engraved, the thickness of the lines being about 0.5 cm. The letters are highlighted with red paint. The text is aligned to the right. In lines 2, 3 and possibly 4, there are separations between words.

Measurements of the stone: 28 x 40 cm.

Average height of the letter *Bet*: 3 cm.

Autopsy: April 2002 and February 2004.



- .0 [?]
- .1 דבנה זייג
- .2 ריש צבורה
- .3 ד ר/ד י . בריה
- .4 דמרי ושלתי
- .5 ורבי ואתיה

* The authors would also like to thank the journal's anonymous reader for valuable comments and observations.

The letter-forms are typical of the third and fourth centuries, but see comments on dating below, in the discussion on 'Provenance'. Translation of the text has been postponed to the end of this article, after discussion of the considerable difficulties involved in reading and interpreting the stone.



PALAEOGRAPHY

The contours of the letters are somewhat damaged, but the form of the individual letters is emphasized with red paint, which is quite well preserved. *Alef* has wide open 'legs', its left down-stroke starting at the top of the diagonal and slanting down to the left. *Bet*, *dalet* and perhaps *resh* have small, vertical serifs. The top of *gimel* seems to bend backward. The right down-stroke of *dalet* starts above its 'roof' while *resh* is somewhat curved at its right upper corner. The left down-stroke of *he* is separated from the 'roof' of the letter. *Waw* and *yod* differ in form and length, *waw* being a plain down-stroke, somewhat bending forward, while *yod* is small and resembles a circumflex. *Lamed* drops below the line. The left part of *mem* is short and terminates high above the base-stroke. *Sadi* extends beyond the base-line. *Shin* is relatively small and triangular. *Taw* has an emphasized, large 'foot'. The base-strokes of *bet*, *mem*, *nun*, *sadi* and *taw* are somewhat slanting down to the left.

1. The *dalet* at the beginning of the line is quite clear and differs from *resh* in that it is more rectangular and its right down-stroke begins above the 'roof'. This excludes the alternative reading רבנה (*rbnh*) and, since the 𐤃 functions as a relative pronoun, syntactically requires a preceding line, of which there is no trace. בנה (*bnh*) in this context may perhaps mean 'initiated the building', rather than actually 'built'.

The first letter of the second word in this line is uncertain. The word should be a personal name, and the first letter looks like a *zayn*. Alternatively, the traces on the stone could have been rendered as a *het* or a *samekh*, but this is highly unlikely since there seems to be nothing erased or missing, and there is not much room for a larger letter; in any case, none of the three possible readings yields a familiar personal name (see discussion below).¹

3. The reading of the first word is doubtful. One possibility is דריחו (*dryhw* 'of {Je}richo'), which is attractive for the interpretation of the inscription, for it would mean that the stone commemorates the building by the 'head of the community of Jericho' (see below); but this has serious palaeographical difficulties. Although the first letter is clearly a *dalet*, the second letter looks more like another *dalet* than a *resh*, such as can be found in the second word of this same line, or in lines 4 and 5, although *resh* should not be ruled out. The fourth letter looks like *resh* attached to a following *waw* or final *nun*. However, there may perhaps be an additional down-stroke attached to the down-stroke of the last letter in the word, in which case the fourth letter could be a *het*, but the

¹ Our reader suggested reading קיא, which would require a very strange *alef* and does not seem likely to us.

ligature of a *het* with another letter is highly unusual, especially in this inscription where most of the letters are clearly and distinctly separated. The last letter may be *waw*, as indicated by the red paint, but the engraved line seems to continue below the base-line, in which case it could be a final *nun*. The top of the letter looks as if it continues the 'roof' of the immediately preceding letter (*resh* or *het*). If the correct reading is 'of Jericho' דריחו (*dryhw*), then the initial *yod* of the place-name has been omitted after the pronoun,² which is entirely possible. Alternatively, we should mention the possibility that the last letter is only *het*, albeit a most unusual one, with a very pronounced extension of the 'roof' and an elongated left leg. If דריח (*dryh*) is to be read, then the place-name referred to could be אריח Ariach, a Jewish settlement near Tiberias mentioned in rabbinic sources (see note 26 below); in this case, the initial *aleph* would have dropped off, much like the *yod* dropped from דריחו, the inscriber having carved the word as it actually sounded. Yet given the palaeographical difficulties of these two possible readings, the less problematic reading דדירן (*ddyryn*) should also be considered. This could refer to a place called Diran, otherwise unknown, or conceivably it could mean 'of our dwelling', from the root *dyr* 'to dwell',³ with the final *nun* representing the first person plural suffix; in this case, since it is connected to a public title *resh sibbura*, the 'dwelling' would have to mean a small community, perhaps of interconnected houses (see below).

4. The engraved down-stroke in the middle of the line looks like a *waw*, but unlike all the other letters in the inscription it has not been painted red. Nonetheless it is preferable to read it as an intended letter which somehow escaped the paintbrush.

DISCUSSION

This stone commemorates a financial contribution facilitating the construction of a building or an element of a building. What exactly was built, or even the location of the building, is unknowable from the contents of the inscription in its present condition (see discussion below, in 'Provenance').

On the basis of the language of the inscription and the presence of the word or name 'Rabbi' in the last line (see discussion below), we may assume that the inscription is Jewish and was displayed in a Jewish context, such as (but not definitely) a synagogue.

Syntax

The syntax of the inscription is problematic, but not entirely inscrutable. The missing first line would have named the building or element which the donors contributed. The

² The reading דריחו was suggested by Hannah Cotton. Compare, e.g., *bdkwn* instead of *bydkwn* (in your hand") in an ostracon from Masada (Y. Yadin and J. Naveh, *Masada I: The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963-1965 Final Reports: The Aramaic and Hebrew Ostraca and Jar Inscriptions* [Jerusalem 1989], no. 554, line 3), as well as *ldy* instead of *lydy* ('into my hand') in a Bar Kokhba letter = P. Yadin 50, line 9, see A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic, Hebrew and Nabataean Documentary Texts from the Judaean Desert and Related Material* (Jerusalem 2000) II, 166.

³ *Dir* meaning human dwelling appears in the Aramaic translations of the Bible, e.g., *direh* ('his dwelling') Targ. Mic. ii, 12; Targ. Prov. xxi, 20; and in the plural *dirin* in Targ. Y. Num. xxxii, 16; 24 etc.

first word of the first preserved line contains the verb ‘built’ in the third person singular, followed by the name of the (main) donor, his title, the place where he held his title, and apparently his patronymic: the word ברִיָּה (*bryh* lit. ‘his son’, written in *plene*) forms an asyndetic construct structure with דמרי (*dmry*) meaning ‘the son of Mari’, which can only refer to the bearer of the title *resh sibbura*. The separation of the donor’s patronymic by his title is not unparalleled,⁴ and perhaps can be explained by the desire to avoid confusion and emphasize that the son, not the father, held the title *resh sibbura*. Yet after these words (reading the unpainted *waw* in line 4 as an intended letter, and assuming that Mari is a name rather than a title, see below) come three more names, presumably indicating that they, too, contributed towards the construction. Lists of contributors towards the construction of parts of a building are not unusual in dedicatory inscriptions.⁵ The significance of the order of the names is unclear — was the *resh sibbura* given prominence because of his title or the amount of his contribution? Why would someone called Rabbi be listed last? There are no clear answers to these questions.

Names

Zygg. The first name, belonging to the main donor, is the oddest. זיג (*Zygg*) resembles no known Hebrew or Aramaic names from the period.⁶ There is similarly no Greek parallel, and the name here seems too dissimilar to any known Greek names, such as Zeuxis, to be a hypocoristic Greek form. The same problem attends the effort, which requires a certain stretch of the imagination, to understand *Zygg* as a Greek form of an originally Semitic name, converted back into Hebrew letters: there are instances of the Greek forms of Semitic names Ζαγος, Ζαχαλος, Ζαχεος and Ζακχαλος, but their Semitic equivalents (זוג, זכאי) — or even Zachariah — seem too distant from *Zygg* to be related.⁷ One possibility is that it is a nickname based on a personal trait or a profession: the name could describe the person’s complexion,⁸ or he could have been a glass-maker, אגג. These, however, are only suggestions.

Mari. The personal name Mari (lit. ‘my master’) is attested in both documentary texts and Talmudic literature, and thus is a name and not a title here, especially given the unpainted *waw* before the next name in the line. The latest published instance of this

⁴ E.g., the *parnas* from Na‘aran, J. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic: The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues* (Tel Aviv 1978), no. 63; or the ἀρχισυναγωγός from Caesarea, in B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives* (Paris 1967), no. 66.

⁵ E.g. the inscriptions at Ḥamat Gader: Naveh (previous note), nos. 32, 33, 34, 35. Other dedications could be added on, e.g. at Ein Gedi, see Naveh, no. 70.

⁶ The closest parallel we could find is the Amora Zuga (זוגא) in the Jerusalem Talmud, see the references in M. Kosovsky, *Concordance to the Talmud Yerushalmi: Onomasticon* (Jerusalem 1985), 209.

⁷ H. Wuthnow, *Die semitischen Menschnennamen in griechischen Inschriften und Papyri des vorderen Orients* (Lepizig 1930), s.v. An instructive parallel may be the Arabic זי and its Greek equivalents Ζαιδος, Ζηεδ, Ζειδ etc.

⁸ Note the examples listed by M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (repr. New York 1971), s.v. זי, esp. his citation of bKeth. 61b: ‘זי גז she got a greenish bilious complexion’.

name appeared in a recent issue of this journal,⁹ in a Jewish epitaph from Jaffa, and it is common enough in both the Jewish and the non-Jewish onomasticon.

Shalti. *Shalti* שַׁלְתִּי is also unparalleled, so far as we know. It cannot even be said definitely to be a man or a woman, although it would have been customary to identify a woman by more than her personal name. It is just conceivable that she is the wife of the *resh sibbura*. One possibility, however, can be ruled out: *Shalti* is not the wife of Mari and mother of *Zygg*, for while a person's metronymic is sometimes given, together with the patronymic, in epitaphs,¹⁰ this never occurs, so far as we know, in dedicatory inscriptions. If *Shalti* is a man, then the name could be a shortened form of the biblical name *Shaltiel* (e.g., Hag. 1:12),¹¹ which does not, however, occur otherwise in this period.

Rabbi. There seems to be no way around the uncomfortable fact that in the present inscription a person is referred to as *Rabbi* without any personal name attached; i.e., *Rabbi* seems to be the only appellation required to identify him, and thus functions like a personal name. Aside from the famous instance of *Rabbi* = R. Judah the Prince in rabbinic literature, we know of no clear or unproblematic parallels. There are more than sixty examples of 'rabbis' in inscriptions, but in every case 'rabbi' is a title followed by a personal name.¹² The appellation בן רבי 'ben rabbi', without any additional name, appears twice on an ossuary lid found on the Mount of Olives,¹³ and it indicates that the bearer of the name, or his father, had the formal or informal position of 'rabbi' in the community, but it does not necessarily mean that 'rabbi' was the sole name by which he was commonly identified. There is also the curious case of the word רבי scratched next to a painted Greek inscription of 'the son of Jose' (his personal name in the first line is effaced) at Beth She'arim, but this is intended merely to identify the father Jose as a 'rabbi', since in the same burial place we find the epitaph of Πιβεῖ Ἰωσῆ, i.e., the epitaph of the father himself.¹⁴ Thus who this *Rabbi* is, and whether he has a personal relationship with *Zygg*, remain unsolved problems.

⁹ J. Price, "Five Inscriptions from Jaffa", *SCI* 22 (2003), 215-31 at 222-3, and see the bibliography and parallels cited there.

¹⁰ Cf. J. Price, 'A Note on Jewish Metronymics in the Graeco-Roman Period', *Zutot* (2002), 10-17.

¹¹ And compare the name שַׁלְתִּי appearing twice in an account-list inscribed on the lid of an ossuary found on the Mount of Olives (now in the Louvre, no. AO 7487), first published by R. Dussaud, 'Comptes d'ouvriers d'une entreprise funéraire juive', *Syria* 4 (1923), 241-9 and reprinted, often with errors, many times since then; the text is utterly mangled in *CII* 1285; for a correct reading see Yardeni (above, n. 2) I, 220-1 and II, [78]. For full bibliography see H. Misgav, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Inscriptions on Ossuaries from the End of the Second Temple Period*, unpublished M.A. Thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (1991), 104-6 (Hebr.).

¹² On the problem of 'rabbi' in inscriptions, see S.J.D. Cohen, 'Epigraphical Rabbis', *JQR* 72 (1981), 1-17; the latest discussion, with up-to-date bibliography, is S. Miller, *JQR* 94 (2004), 27-76 at 39-48.

¹³ See above, n. 11.

¹⁴ M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim II: The Greek Inscriptions* (Jerusalem 1974), nos. 41 and 43 (Hebr.).

Resh Šibbura

Although the general meaning of this term seems clear — it must be something like ‘head of the community’ or ‘head of the congregation’¹⁵ — its precise significance has proven difficult to determine. While each of its elements, *rosh/resh* and *sibbur/sibbura*, is widely attested in other contexts, we have been unable to find this exact combination in any literary or documentary text of the period.¹⁶

As a term for ‘head’ or ‘leader’, *rosh/resh* commonly appears in combined expressions, the most relevant to the present inscription being *rosh ha-keneset*, which is usually taken to mean ‘head of the synagogue (community)’, such as the holders of the position of *rosh ha-keneset* (or *resh kenishta*) in Achziv, Nisibis and Bostra,¹⁷ as well as others not associated with a specific place. The Greek equivalent of *rosh ha-keneset*, ἀρχισυναγωγός, is widely attested, both in inscriptions — epitaphs and synagogue floors — throughout the Roman Empire, and in Jewish, Christian and Roman literary sources.¹⁸ The title indicated a leading figure in the synagogue and, apparently, in the community at large; *archisynagogoi* were often honored in inscriptions as benefactors, while the literary sources tend to focus on religious aspects of the position. The Hebrew or Aramaic expression does not appear in inscriptions,¹⁹ but it does appear in Hebrew letters on papyri dating roughly from the period of our inscription.²⁰

The term *sibbur/sibbura* is more varied and harder to pin down. It can, first of all, mean the public at large, i.e. the whole Jewish community of a certain area, or it can mean the people who are praying at any given moment in a synagogue, as in the

¹⁵ Note the *maiores cibitatis* in a sixth-century inscription from Venosa in Italy: D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe I* (Cambridge 1993), no. 86.

¹⁶ This includes the Cairo Geniza documents, where similar expressions can be found: *rosh kalla*, *rosh ha-qahal*, *rosh ha-qehillot*, and even *rosh ha-keneset*, see S.D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish Communities of the Arab World as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza II* (Berkeley, etc., 1971), esp. 75-7.

¹⁷ Tos. Ter. 2:13, Lam. Rabba 3:17, Shab. 29b, see also yBer. 6:1. Note ‘the head of Gadara’ ראשה של גדר at RH 22a. For full references and discussion of *archisynagogos* and *rosh ha-keneset*, see now L.I. Levine, *The Ancient Synagogue: The First Thousand Years* (New Haven 2000), 390-402.

¹⁸ See Levine (previous note), and for a list of ἀρχισυναγωγοί see T. Rajak and D. Noy, ‘*Archisynagogoi*: Office, Title and Social Status in the Greco-Jewish Synagogue’, *JRS* 83 (1993), 73-93, at 89-92; also G.H.R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity IV* (1987), 214-17.

¹⁹ The word רשא appears alone in an anomalous inscription from Beth She‘arim, but the relevance to the understanding of our present text is unclear: B. Maisler (Mazar) in *Yediot* 5 (1937), 49-71 at 62, and see the comments by S. Klein in the same issue, p. 111 (Hebr.). The personal name רישה appears as a signature on papyri from the Judaean Desert, see H. Cotton and A. Yardeni, *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Texts from Naḥal Hever and Other Sites with an Appendix Containing Alleged Qumran Texts (The Seiyāl Collection II)*. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVII (Oxford 1997), no. 60 l. 13 and no. 64 l. 44.

²⁰ C. Sirat, *Les papyrus en caractères hébraïques trouvés en Égypte* (Paris 1985), 95, 107, 118, 120, 121; texts reproduced with discussion by M. Mishor, ‘The Hebrew Papyri in the Geniza — Fragments of Letters’, *Lěšonénu* 55 (1991), 281-8 (Hebr.).

expression *sheliah sibbur*.²¹ One of the Hebrew letters mentioned above, from about the sixth century, mentions *rosh ha-keneset* near the beginning of the text and then refers to כל הציבור *kol ha-sibbur* 'all of the community/ congregation';²² but the letter is too fragmentary to be interpreted fully, and one cannot determine the relation between the words *sibbur* and *keneset* in this letter. Thus there is some semantic overlap between *sibbur* and *keneset*, but they are not exact equivalents, and *resh siburra* cannot be understood as precisely synonymous with ἀρχισυναγωγός. In our inscription, it could refer, on the one hand, to the head of the Jewish community in a city or specific area,²³ or on the other, to a delimited function within a specific synagogue or community building, different from the role of the ἀρχισυναγωγός. The question is rendered still more difficult by the lack of information regarding the building where the inscription was set up, or the location of the building. Nor can it be automatically assumed that the building was a synagogue.

Provenance

No certain information is available regarding the provenance of the inscription or its original archaeological context.²⁴ Dr. Benny Begin of the Geological Institute in Jerusalem examined the stone on 18 February 2004 and concluded that it is characteristic of stone from the Jordan Valley, although he discerned no petrological indications which would connect this particular piece with a high degree of certainty to the Jericho area; the absence of the 'oolites' or small grains characteristic of the stone quarried extensively near Jericho does not exclude provenance from that area, but reduces the certainty of that attribution, and allows other possible locations in the valley, up to the Kinneret. In any case, provenance from the coast is highly unlikely, and the inferior quality of the present stone means that it was probably not transported far from its original location.

The first word in the third line indicates the place where the *resh siburra* held his title. As we have indicated above, 'of Jericho' is a possibility, but not the most satisfactory rendering on palaeographical grounds. And there are further problems. The letter-forms indicate a date in the third or fourth centuries CE; palaeographically, at least, the stone could not have been inscribed much later than that. Yet Jericho was at that time a large and important Christian city with a small Jewish population which left no discernible trace in the archaeological record, though it is mentioned in rabbinic

²¹ For this expression in the two Talmuds, cf. B. Kosovsky, *Thesaurus Nominum quae in Talmude Babylónico Reperiuntur* III (Jerusalem 1977), and M. Kosovsky, *Concordance to the Talmud Yerushalmi (Palestinian Talmud: Onomasticon, Thesaurus of Proper Names)* (Jerusalem 1985), s.v. ציבור; older bibliography in E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. – A.D. 135)* II, rev. G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black (Edinburgh 1979), 429–31.

²² Sirat (n. 20), 107, ll. 6 and 25; A. Yardeni, *The Book of Hebrew Script: History, Palaeography, Script Styles, Calligraphy and Design* (Jerusalem 1997), pp. 74 and 198.

²³ Note, for example, the head of the Sidonian community in Maresha (OGIS 593): Ἀπολλοφάνης Σεσμαίου ἄρχας τῶν ἐν Μαρίση Σιδωνίων and the *archisynagogos* of Sidon at Beth She'arim: Schwabe-Lifshitz (above, n. 14), no. 221. We are grateful to our anonymous reader for pointing out also the parallel from Khirbet Zif of a bilingual inscription naming a πρωτοπολείτης / ראש עמרים (= ראש עמרים?), L.Y. Rahmani, *IEJ* 22 (1972) pp. 113–16 and Y. Yadin in the same issue, 235–6.

²⁴ The dealer, Lenny Wolfe, said that the stone was supposed to have come from Jericho.

sources.²⁵ The main Jewish population in the area at that time was in Na'aran, and the tensions between the Jews there and the Christians in Jericho are mentioned in both Jewish and Christian sources.²⁶ The synagogue floor at Jericho, although commonly dated to the late Roman period (fifth to seventh centuries), was most likely constructed only after the Jewish community revived in the city, i.e. after the Arab conquest, in the eighth century, as the original excavator of the pavement suggested and has now been strongly argued by H. Eshel, against the *communis opinio* of an earlier date.²⁷ This does not exclude the possibility that the present stone comes from Na'aran and that 'Jericho' was thought of as a district or region, but there is no way to verify this. Any connection between the synagogue floor at Jericho and the present stone is not likely, given the disparity in dating. Of course, if the reading 'of Jericho' is correct, as well as the title and the names, then this small inscription adds precious information to what little is known about the Jewish community in Jericho in the late Roman period.

We have also suggested reading Diran, which is the most plausible solution palaeographically but yields no known place-name; alternatively, we have noted that *diran* could mean 'our dwelling', possibly in an expanded sense of community (?). Finally, as we have indicated above, reading דריח (*dryh*) with a very unusual *het* as the final letter would yield the place-name אריח Ariach, a Jewish settlement, apparently near Tiberias, known only from literary sources.²⁸

²⁵ S. Klein, *Sefer Ha-Yishuv* (Jerusalem 1939), 88; G. Reeg, *Die Ortsnamen Israels nach der rabbinischen Literatur* (Wiesbaden 1989), s.v.; J. Schwartz, *A History of Jewish Settlement in Southern Judaea after the Bar-Kochba War until the Arab Conquest* (Ph.D. dissertation, Hebrew University, 1980), 295-8 (Hebr.).

²⁶ See Schwartz (previous note), and for the synagogue floor at Na'aran, Naveh (n. 4), nos. 58-67.

²⁷ D. Baramki in *QDAP* 6 (1938), 73-7. H. Eshel, in *Lifnei Efraim u-Vinyamin u-Menashe*, ed. H. Erlich (1985), 83-7. M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule: A Political History of Palestine from the Bar Kokhba War to the Arab Conquest* (Jerusalem 1984), 239-40, suggests that the synagogue inscriptions at Jericho and elsewhere indicate an economic decline in the late Byzantine period, yet this relies on his dating the text to around the sixth century CE.

²⁸ The Tosefta contains a reference to 'the area of Ariach' תחום אריח (Tos. Kil. 1:3), and this is repeated in the Jerusalem Talmud (yKil. 1:4 27a); and see S. Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-Fshutah: A Comprehensive Commentary on the Tosefta*, Order Zera'im II (Jerusalem 1992), 598. The Jerusalem Talmud also mentions a certain Menahem from אריח גופתא אריח (ySan. 10:2 28d). The association of Ariach with the Galilee derives from its inclusion in the *piyyutim* or liturgical poems from Israel, composed at the end of the Roman or beginning of the Muslim era, listing the priestly courses by geographical site and supposedly based on an ancient *baraita*; its specific association with Tiberias is deduced from the conjunction of אריח with חמת Ḥamat (= Ḥamat Tiberias). The *locus classicus* for a reconstruction of this is Klein (n. 25), 162-5 (Ariach is discussed at 164), and see also p. 8. A poem mentioning Ḥamat Ariach is discussed by E. Fleischer, 'Additional Data Concerning the 24 Priestly Orders', *Tarbiz* 55 (1985), 47-60 (Hebr.), and see his earlier articles on this and the other liturgical poems dealing with the priestly courses and mentioning אריח קריית אריח: *Dov Sadan Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem 1977), 256-84 (cf. 284); *Sinai* 61 (1967) 30-66, 62 (1968) 13-40 and 142-62, and 64 (1969) 176-84 (Hebr.). Not everyone links Ariach to Tiberias, see Reeg (above, n. 25), 58-9, 171, 256-7. We are grateful to Hanan Eshel for his suggestions regarding this point.

TENTATIVE TRANSLATION

Given all of the problems discussed above, we would translate the text as follows:

‘... which Zyyg, the son of Mari, the Head of the Community of ... (Jericho? Ariach? Diran? ‘our dwelling?’), had built, and [i.e., together with] Shalti and Rabbi and his wife.’

Jerusalem and Tel Aviv