

A Dated Greek Inscription from Gadara - Um Qeis

(Pl. XLIX)

This Greek inscription is engraved on a basalt lintel of 1,50 by 0,50 m. lying near the south-eastern corner of the mausoleum which was surveyed and described by Dr. Bert De Vries (supra Pl. XLVII-XLVIII). Most probably, the lintel belongs to the ruined mausoleum, since the inscription is obviously funerary. Inside a tabula ansata of 1,50 m. by 0,31 m. is the main text, while the date and the word "year" are incised on the right and left top of the lintel, outside the frame itself (Pl. XLIX, 2).

The main text consists of three lines of rounded letters, 6-8 cm. high, with one ligature on the third line (NH). Smaller letters occur at the end of lines 1 and 2, and on both sides of the main inscription.

Greek Text:

ΕΤΟΥΣ	COIΛEΓΩΤΩΔIEPΧOMENΩ	HIY
ΑΡΑ ΒΙΟΥ	ΟΙΟCEIΗΜΗΝ ΟΙΟCEIΜΕΙΕCE ΧΡΗCAITΩΒΙΩΩCΘΗΤOC	ΤΕΧΝΙ ΤΟΥΕΡ ΓΟΝ

ἔτους

Αρα-

βλου

Σοὺ λέγω τῷ δειρχομένῳ·

οἶος εἶ ἡμῶν, οἶος εἶμεῖ ἔσε.

Χρῆσαι τῷ βίῳ ὡς θνητός.

HIY

τεχνί-
του ἔρ-
γῶν.

Translation:

"To you I say, passer-by:

As you are, I was; as I am you will be.

Use life as a mortal".

Work of Arabios, the artist.

Year 418 = 355-356 A.D.

Dr. S. Mittmann, who first published the inscription in his survey of Northern Jordan,¹ failed to notice the word "year" which is rather worn but which could easily be restored as shown on Pl. XLIX, 2. He considered the letters "HIY" to be marks of the stone cutter.²

The date should be calculated on the basis of the Pompeian era, as is indicated by the coins of the city³ and by the many inscriptions of the Decapolis.

The inscription, though not in verse, is a typical Graeco-Roman epigram, and thus the word "τεχνύτης" may refer to one of the famous poets or comedians of Gadara whose origin, as indicated by his name (Arabios), may have been oriental. But it could also refer to the architect who built the tomb.

F. Zayadine

The Department of Antiquities

(1) Beiträge zur Siedlungs Und Territorialgeschichte des Nördlichen Ostjordanlandes, Wiesbaden, 1970, p. 176-177.

(2) Ibid. p. 177.

(3) See H. Seyrig, *Antiquités Syriennes*, VI p. 47-48.