

D.3.2. The Mosaic of Abdu Family

Polychrome mosaic pavement on white, black, blue, yellow and red. A white square without picture into a black frame contains a three lines Syriac inscription with crosses in black tessellae. A destruction on the upper part has affected the beginning of line 1.

The dimensions of the white square: 59 × 67 cm;
length of the lines: 58 cm; interline: 8 cm; height of letters: 5 cm.

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Translation

"+ [I.....]son of cAbdu + son of Maryun have made this house of eternity + for me and for my children and for my heirs+"

Epigraphical notes

The writing is typical Edessenian Aramaic cursive of Roman period. Note dalath and riš of the same shape without dot; short lamadh of the same height as nun.

Line 2, in the 2nd word yudh is high like a middle nun; final nun has the form one finds in the parchments of Euphrat; at the

end, taw is drawn with an uncommon shape, maybe because of a mixing with the yudh?

line 3, the last word is now disturbed by repair, but legible on photo taken at the moment of the discovery: waw is present and there is no doubt about the formula, exactly the same as for example in the inscription of Rabbay (DRIJVERS & HEALEY 1999, As 7), of Aftūḥa or Bali at Samsat Gate (id., Am2, Am3).

Philological and historical notes

The formula is those of classical Edessenian Aramaic inscriptions in the tomb of the Roman period. But the inscription is clearly a Christian one. The patronym cAbdu is still unknown in the inscriptions of the Roman period, but appears in the Doctrina Addai, as one of the noble men in the Abgar royal courtyard. In the expression Bt 'lm°, bt is the old defective form of byt, as in the inscription DRIJVERS & HEALEY 1999, As 24.1 and As 56.2. The designation of the tomb as "house of eternity" is still that of the Roman period (inscriptions DRIJVERS & HEALEY 1999, As 7.3, 9.1, Am 2.4, 3.1, 5.9, 6.5, 7.4; inscription ÖNAL 2013, h4).

According to the writing and formula, the inscription should be dated from the first half or the second half of the 3rd century CE. This is without doubt the most ancient Christian Edessenian Aramaic inscription, prior to the birth of Syriac.

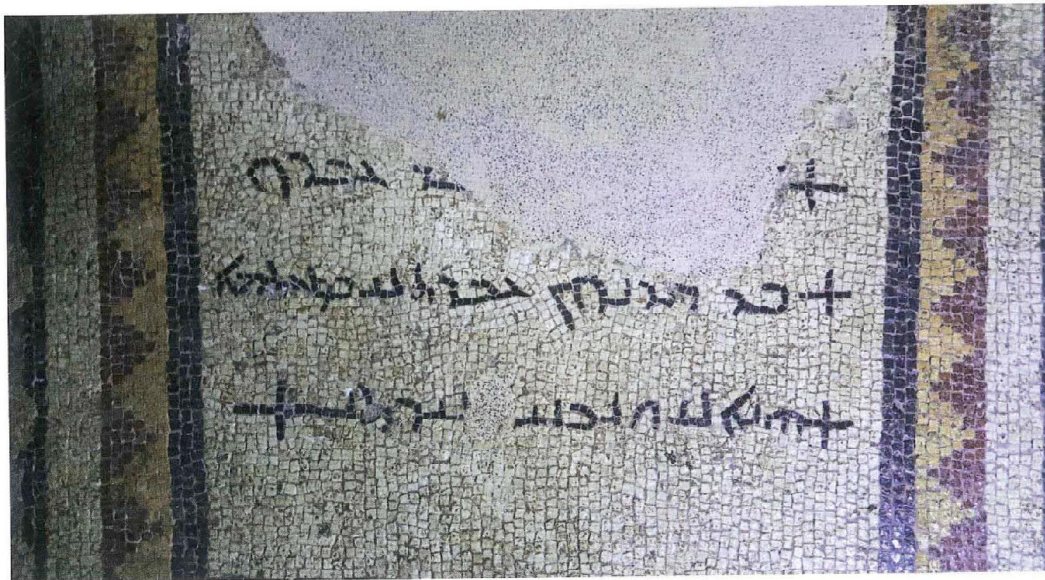


Photo 172