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## THE CARAVAN-GODS OF PALMYRA

BY M. I. ROSTOVITZ

(Plates xxv-xxviii)

No ruins of the ancient world outside Italy are more famous than the beautiful romantic remains of Queen Zenobia's city—the desert-city of caravans. No city of the Near East has yielded such an abundance of inscriptions, sculptures and fragments of painting. For more than a century and a half collectors and dealers have found in Palmyra a happy hunting ground; almost every museum has its Palmyrene bust or Palmyrene inscription or some small object such as the common clay *tessera*. A considerable number of the antiquities found at Palmyra have been published—most of the inscriptions in the Palmyrene dialect of Aramaic or in Greek, numerous sculptures, and many paintings found in tombs. The most important Palmyrene texts have been translated and will shortly be available to those historians who are not acquainted with Semitic languages.<sup>1</sup> But the history of Palmyra has been neglected by students, particularly her economic and social evolution, the history of her caravan-trade, her religious development.<sup>2</sup> In histories of the Roman Empire, Palmyra is mentioned almost exclusively in connection with the short-lived Palmyrene Empire of Odenath, Vahaballat and Zenobia. Of the few general accounts the best is still that by Wood, published in 1757, containing the well-known description of the ruins together with a very meagre sketch of the city's history. Even Mommsen in the wonderful fifth volume of his *Roman History* has little to say about Palmyra. Something will be found in M. J.-B. Chabot's excellent sketch and in the appendices to his *Corpus* of Palmyrene inscriptions.<sup>3</sup>

Everything is peculiar in the peculiar city of Palmyra. Her creation as a buffer state between Rome and Parthia, the rapid development of her caravan trade, her political, social and economic organisation, and last, but not least, her cults and religions. In this

<sup>1</sup> All the inscriptions found at Palmyra are to be published in the forthcoming volume of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum* (referred to hereafter as *CIS*), vol. ii, 3, which will also contain an excellent up-to-date (to 1926) bibliography. I am indebted to the generosity of its editor, M. J.-B. Chabot, for his kind permission to use the volume and to quote from it before publication. Cf. also the same author's excellent book, *Cboix d'inscriptions de Palmyre* (Paris, 1922), and my

forthcoming work on *Caravan Cities: Petra and Jerash, Palmyra and Dura* (Oxford, Clarendon Press).

<sup>2</sup> Since the above was written, two essays by M. J.-G. Février have appeared—*Essai sur l'histoire politique et économique de Palmyre* and *La religion des Palmyréniens*. (Paris: Librairie J. Vrin, 1931). I have not been able to consult either of these works.

<sup>3</sup> *CIS* ii, 3.

short paper I propose to discuss one point in the religious life of Palmyra, a point which also illustrates her economic and military history.<sup>1</sup>

The gods worshipped at Palmyra were numerous, and included various and heterogeneous elements, of which—strange to say—none is local. All the gods of Palmyra are aliens. The Great God who appears between two other figures—probably his two acolytes, Jarhibol (perhaps identical with Malakbel), the sun-god, and Aglibol, the moon-god—in the half-Babylonian, half-Greek ‘Haram’ of Palmyra is Bel, the good and merciful master of Palmyra, who no doubt came from Babylon perhaps even with the first settlers, members of the age-old merchant class of Babylon. With him came other Babylonian gods, especially Šamaš, Nanaia, and Ištar. From North Syria there migrated to Palmyra—probably with merchants from Damascus and the neighbourhood—the divine pair Hadad and Atargatis, as well as other gods; from Phoenicia (also brought by merchants), Baalshamin, Astarte, Eshmun, Melqart; from Arabia, Allat, etc. Though the images of these gods assumed in Palmyra Greek features and even sometimes were given Greek names, yet no evidence of a Greek cult has ever been discovered there. Purely Iranian gods are equally absent.<sup>2</sup> Likewise neither Parthians nor Romans, the two patrons of Palmyra, were able to impose on their client or vassal their gods or their cults.

Though all the gods mentioned above were protectors of rich Palmyra’s most important activity—her caravan-trade, there must have been in addition special gods whose main duty was the guardianship of caravans. These gods were two companions, ‘Arsu and ‘Azizu. The first definite information about them came from a curious relief discovered by Moritz Sobernheim in 1899, now in the Damascus Museum (pl. xxv).<sup>3</sup> Earlier interpreters wrongly joined this relief to another found in the same place which, according to E. Littmann,<sup>4</sup> represents four figures: a boy, nude, in profile, seated on a throne or altar, turned to the right, and raising some object to his mouth; three (?) women reclining on a couch, also turned to the right, but with heads to the front. Ingholt first

<sup>1</sup> Being unable to contribute a paper on Roman Britain, I thought that perhaps a short article on a subject of provincial history might interest one who has done so much for the history of a Roman province, though that province is at the opposite end of the Empire to Palmyra, and has nothing in common with Palmyra beyond the fact that they both formed part of the Empire and similar duties were demanded of each—see, for example, the tombstones of a Palmyrene soldier and his British wife found in Britain (at Corbridge and South Shields respectively). The last, which was discovered first, was thought to refer to the wife of a Palmyrene merchant until the second tombstone (of the man) was dug up at Corbridge in 1911.

*CIL* vii, 496, 497; *Ep. Ep.* iv, p. 212, no. 718a, ix, 1153a; *CIS* ii, 3, 3901.

<sup>2</sup> Satrapes is a deity of Irano-Phoenician origin.

<sup>3</sup> This inscription has been often discussed. A bibliography will be found in *CIS* 3974; cf. also Chabot, *Cboix d'inscriptions de Palmyre*, p. 68; H. Ingholt, *Studier over Palmyrensk Skulptur* (Copenhagen, 1928), p. 42 ff., pl. vii; F. Cumont, ‘Un dieu syrien à dos de chameau,’ in *Syria*, 1929, p. 30 ff. (Relief from Ras-el-Ain (anc. Resaina) in Mesopotamia); H. Ingholt, *Syria*, 1929, p. 179 ff. (a relief showing three camels on their knees and the body of a horse).

<sup>4</sup> *Princeton Expeditions to Syria*, iv, *Semitic Inscriptions; Palmyrene Inscriptions*, no. 8, p. 77 ff.

pointed out that this second relief has nothing to do with the other representing the gods 'Arsu and 'Azizu, but he failed to recognise that the figures on the second are a commonplace of Babylonian terracottas of the Parthian period. For instance, some ten examples of the nude boy seated on a throne or altar are to be found among the terracottas in the Louvre, the British Museum and Baghdad Museum. The male or female figure, divine or mortal, reclining on a couch, is not less common among the so-called Parthian terracottas.<sup>1</sup> The same figures occur on many a Palmyrene *tessera*. They represent either deified mortals (the deceased as hero) or gods, sometimes in groups of three. The four persons on the Palmyrene relief may all be gods or one (the boy) may be a god and the reclining figures worshippers partaking of a sacred meal.

To return to the other relief representing two gods (pl. xxv), the first god is seated on a camel, turned to the left, with head facing front; he wears a cuirass of Roman type, trousers and shoes; in his right hand he holds a heavy spear, in his left possibly the hilt of a sword or dagger. He sits on a saddle covered with an embroidered rug or cloth, the edge of which seems to be ornamented with a series of round metal plaques. The saddle is attached to the body of the camel by a strap which is also covered with metal plaques; an embroidered and fringed camel-bag hangs down from the saddle; to the saddle is fastened a small circular shield. The second god, behind the camel-rider, is on horseback, turned to the left, the head facing front; he wears a civil, not a military, dress; in his right hand he holds a spear; his left arm and hand have been broken away. He sits, apparently, not on a saddle, but on a richly ornamented rug or cloth; to the croup of his horse is attached a small circular shield decorated with a rosette in repoussé. Before the two gods there stands a priest, turned to the right, offering them a sacrifice of incense over a burning altar of the usual Palmyrene type. An inscription of four lines in Palmyrene runs beneath the relief, which may be translated: 'To 'Arsu and 'Azizu, the good gods who reward, Ba'lai has made [this], son of Jarhibôlê, priest of 'Azizu the good and merciful benevolent god, for his safety and that of his brothers; month Tisri, the year xxv. Let Iarhai, the sculptor, be remembered.' The date is probably A.D. 113, the hundreds in the date being omitted.<sup>2</sup>

It is evident that the gods mentioned in the dedication are our camel-rider and horseman, while the man who makes the incense offering is Ba'lai. The camel-rider no doubt is 'Arsu, the first-named in the inscription, the horseman 'Azizu. The cults of 'Arsu and

<sup>1</sup> E. Douglas Van Buren, *Clay Figurines of Babylonia and Assyria* (Yale Univ. Press, 1930), p. xlvii ff., pls. xvi, xxx fig. 146, xxxi fig. 147. Mrs. Van Buren unfortunately has not included in her useful catalogue the figures of the seated boy.

<sup>2</sup> The hundreds of a date are very commonly omitted in Palmyrene inscriptions.

'Azizu were well established at Palmyra; a place sacred to 'Arsu is mentioned on an altar dedicated to him;<sup>1</sup> a cult of 'Azizu is attested by Ba'lai being his priest.

'Arzu and 'Azizu are well-known figures of Syrian mythology. 'Azizu is no doubt one of the many names for the rider-god of North Syria, one of whose other names was Genneas,<sup>2</sup> but 'Azizu was as well known as Genneas. The Emperor Julian knew him as one of the *πάρεδροι* of the sun-god<sup>3</sup> (the other being Monimos) at Edessa. Dedications to him are found in the Hauran.<sup>4</sup> His cult was even carried by Syrian soldiers as far as Apulum in Dacia, where it was well established in the time of Valerian and Gallienus. It seems that the god had his own sanctuary at Apulum and was called *deus bonus puer Phosphorus Apollo Pythius*.<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt, therefore, that 'Azizu, the rider-god, the protector of horses—Syria was the famous 'mother of horses' of the Near East—reached Palmyra from Syria and became there the companion and associate of 'Arsu.

As to the latter, Dussaud<sup>6</sup> suggested the 'Arsu was another name for the camel-god, Roudha or Radhou, whose name often appears in Safaitic inscriptions; it seems, however, that Roudha originally was a goddess, not a god. I do not doubt that 'Arsu really came from Arabia. We know that both camel and horse were worshipped in Arabia; votive offerings to Dusares, Wadd, and Dhât Badani in the form of gold and bronze camels and horses bear eloquent testimony to it; for instance, two Petraean merchants dedicated two statuettes representing camels to Dusares at Puteoli in A.D. 111.<sup>7</sup> Again, a little bronze statuette of a camel dedicated to the god Wadd in the British Museum bears an inscription in Sabaeen which Professor Ryckmans reads and interprets as follows:—<sup>8</sup>

“𐩀𐩣𐩪𐩠𐩪𐩠𐩪𐩠 Wadd - Ab  
𐩀𐩣𐩪𐩠 Wadd est père.

“Le nom divin *Wadd* accompagné de l'épithète *Ab* se retrouve fréquemment sur des amulettes. Cf. *CIH* 33, 97, 470, 471, 474, 483, 484, 485, 486, 589. Il est employé comme nom propre d'homme dans *CIH* 589. Voir aussi des amulettes portant ce nom dans *Gl.* 1424, 1425, 1426 (Grohmann, 'Göttersymbole,' in *Denksch. K. K. Wiss. Wien, ph.-hist. Kl.*, 1914, pp. 40-41). Voir aussi Hommel, *Ethnologie*, p. 702, no. 1. Nielsen, *Handbuch*, i, p. 216.”

<sup>1</sup> *CIS* 3975.

<sup>2</sup> I have discussed this god and given bibliographical details in *Excavations at Dura-Europos, Prelim. Report II* (Yale Univ. Press, 1931), p. 199 f.

<sup>3</sup> *Or.* iv, pp. 150, 154 (Sp.); cf. Clermont-Ganneau, *Rec. d'arch. or.*, iv, 165.

<sup>4</sup> Le Bas-Waddington, *Inscr. grecques et latines* 2314; *CIG* 4619 (bust, on the top of which sits an eagle).

<sup>5</sup> *ILS* 4345-48; cf. 7142. Syrian cults are common in Dacia, especially in cities. We have dedications to Sol Hierobolus (*ILS* 4344), and to the Palmyrene Malakbel (*ILS* 4341; cf. *CIL* iii, 7955, 7956) and there were two temples to Palmyrene gods at Sarmizegetusa (cf. my book *Gesellschaft u. Wirtschaft im röm. Kaiserreich* i,

p. 338, n. 78). It is well known that Palmyrene inscriptions have been found in Dacia and Moesia (*CIS* ii, 3, 3906, and 3907). Twin gods closely resembling 'Azizu were also worshipped at Petra; I cannot help thinking that the two Disocuri of the famous El Khazne at Petra are caravan-gods, the two stars who lead caravans in the desert, the Petraean version of 'Arsu and 'Azizu being more like the latter than the former. See my forthcoming book *The Caravan Cities: Petra and Jerash, Palmyra and Dura*.

<sup>6</sup> *Les Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (Paris, 1907), p. 142 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *ILS* 4350; *CIS* i, no. 137.

<sup>8</sup> *Brit. Mus.* 102, 480. Prof. Ryckmans intends publishing it in the *RES*.

A similar but uninscribed figure of a bronze camel found in South Arabia is in the Louvre. Finally, a beautiful little statuette of a votive horse, also from South Arabia, in the Ottoman Museum, inscribed in Sabaeen 'Equus Dhât Ba'dani. Consecratio Lahy'athai,'<sup>1</sup> was evidently a votive offering to the god exhibited in one of his sanctuaries. Dhât Ba'dani was a solar god; the horse was no doubt his sacred animal.<sup>2</sup>

Camels and horses, especially camels, are frequently depicted on desert rocks all over Arabia and the Sinai peninsula. Figures are often accompanied by inscriptions in Safaitic, Thamuddaeen or Nabataean, and are no doubt dedications or recommendations to preserve the camels from all harm.<sup>3</sup>

The popularity of 'Arsu at Palmyra is attested by a series of clay *tesserae* on which his figure or sometimes his name appears. These curious *tesserae*, thousands of which have been found, form an important source for the study of the religious beliefs of Palmyrene inhabitants. Though some have been published, a complete catalogue, fully illustrated, is needed for the proper understanding of Palmyra's religious history. The *tesserae*, little lumps of clay of various shapes, are adorned with figures in low relief and sometimes are inscribed in Palmyrene. Probably they were originally used as tickets of admission to sacred or funeral banquets in honour of the gods and deified deceased. Some of them were issued by priests of the various religious *thiasoi*, probably by the symposiarchs (those of Bel are well known), some by the heads of the families of the deceased who were being honoured. It is probable that other associations also issued tickets for common banquets and distributions. Very few of the *tesserae* can be dated; those which provide any evidence at all belong mostly to the second century A.D., some to the first and third centuries. Those which bear the figure of 'Arsu, who is sometimes shown with 'Azizu as well as with other gods, illustrate admirably the character of the god and his cult, and for this reason I venture to present here a selection of them, by no means, it must be understood, a Corpus.<sup>4</sup>

To judge from the following list of representations of the two gods ('Arsu and 'Azizu) and their attributes, 'Arsu was certainly the more important at Palmyra, and it will be remembered that he occupies the first place on the relief mentioned above. His nature is evident. He is the divine star (and perhaps the moon also) who leads caravans in the desert by night, while Šamaš and perhaps Bel (another form of Šamaš) does the same by day. For caravans, however,

<sup>1</sup> See *CIS* iv, 2, no. 504 bis, and pl. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Mordtmann, *Zeitschr. der deutsch. morgenl. Gesellsch.* xxxix (1885), 235; cf. Osiander, *ibid.* viii (1857), 474.

<sup>3</sup> See Dussaud, *Les Arabes en Syrie avant l'Islam* (Paris, 1907): cf. A. Kammerer, *Petra et*

*la Nabatène* (Paris, 1930), p. 267, fig. 21; *CIS* i, p. 349 ff.; Ch. Huber, *Journal d'un voyage en Arabie 1883-1884* (1891), p. 287.

<sup>4</sup> Not having examined all the collections of Palmyrene *tesserae*, I am not in a position to produce a Corpus.



the night is more important than the day, and the stars and moon are more likely to be regarded as divine protectors of caravans. The sacred animal connected with 'Arsu, his 'alter ego' in animal form, is the camel. This poor sufferer of the desert not only represented a merchant's capital, but also was the very means of transport; it was, therefore, this animal's power of endurance and patience which brought success and wealth, while his failure spelt ruin. No wonder that the camel, the divine camel, was a *hypostasis* of 'Arsu worshipped in the same way as when the god was shown in human form.

In Indo-European religions the gods of the divine stars, the 'lucida sidera' of the sky, leaders of travellers and of merchants by land and by sea, are always represented in pairs. And because the Arabian 'Arsu, perhaps originally a woman, had neither companion nor brother, it is probable that at Palmyra and Petra the god of the caravans, the star and moon of the desert sky, was doubled. At El Khazne in Petra 'Azizu is shown both as Castor and Polydeukes; at Palmyra the camel-god became connected with the corresponding god of Syria, the horse-god 'Azizu—a characteristic example of Palmyrene religious syncretism.

'Arsu and 'Azizu, and especially 'Arsu, besides being the night-lights of the desert sky and the sacred means of transport across the desert, were also powerful protectors of caravans against all the forces of evil, especially brigands and raiders, who might attack the clever organisers of the complicated machine the ancient caravan was. Among mortals such protectors and organisers were the leaders of the caravans, the synodiarchs, in whose honour many a statue was erected at Palmyra and within the Palmyrene boundaries of the Parthian Empire.<sup>1</sup> Among the gods, the synodiarchs, 'Arsu and 'Azizu, are shown, as in life, riding in the caravans on a swift camel or a fiery horse. Though no monument exists which portrays the figure of a synodiarch, it is obvious that he looked exactly like the 'Arsu on camel-back, or the 'Azizu on horseback of the Palmyrene relief (pl. xxv), or the armed 'Arsu of the *tesserae* in his characteristic half-Parthian, half-Roman, military dress. For it must be remembered that the synodiarch's commander-in-chief had both civil and military power; he was the commander of an armed force, probably hired and organised by the synodiarch, and as such 'Arsu and 'Azizu, when represented in human form, are sometimes shown.

PLATE XXVI.

1. *Obv.* Camel moving r., his driver riding on his back holding the reins. From the r. side of the camel a large object—bag or quiver—hangs down. The rider is probably 'Arsu. There does not seem to be another figure behind the camel.

*Rev.* Two rams' heads (?) in heraldic disposition facing one another; between

<sup>1</sup> On these inscriptions see my article, 'Les inscriptions caravanières de Palmyre,' in the forthcoming *Mélanges Glotz*.

them a star (?) between two dotted-lines. Below, a line of Palmyrene letters which Mordtmann read **𐤏𐤓𐤕** and transliterated as *Theima*.

Fragmentary: the r. part missing. Square; 0.015 by 0.012 m.

Berlin, Staatliches Museum, Vorderasiatische Abteilung 311 (formerly in the Mordtmann Coll.); A. D. Mordtmann, 'Neue Beiträge zur Kunst Palmyras' in *Sitzungsb. d. Münch. Akad.* 1875, ii, suppl. no. 58; *RES*, no. 1762. For the rev. cf. no. 5 below.

2. *Obv.* Camel walking l., before him his driver, in front view (?), leading him by the rein. Above, over the camel's head, a bird turned l.

*Rev.* Man on galloping horse l. Below, between the horse's feet is a bird.

The dies used were both of them larger than the *tessera*, resulting in the cutting off of the lower part of the figure of the camel-driver, and the hind legs of the camel on the obverse, and the upper part of the body of the rider and the hind legs of the horse on the reverse.

Circular; 0.008 m. in diameter.

Louvre (formerly in the collection of Col. Allotte de la Fuye). Cf. no. 4 below.

The camel-driver is probably 'Arsu and the god on horseback—'Azizu; the latter wears a civil dress, not military like the rider shown on pl. xxv. For the eagle on both sides, cf. the relief from the Hauran mentioned above (Le Bas-Waddington 2137).

3. *Obv.* Man standing in front view wearing a helmet (?), a long belted cuirass reaching to the ankles, pleated trousers and shoes. The pleated sleeves may belong to his tunic or to his cuirass, which may be of leather or of scale-armor. With his r. hand he is leaning on a spear, with his l. on an oval shield. To the l. a line of Palmyrene letters which both MM. J.-B. Chabot and J. Cantineau read **𐤏𐤓𐤕**, i.e. 'Arsû or 'Arsô.

*Rev.* Bust of a youthful god, in front view, with long curled hair. Beneath, a bull jumping to the r. and between his feet a Venus-star.

Rectangular oblong; 0.031 by 0.023 cm.

Paris, Cabinet des Médailles (formerly in the Fröhner Coll.).

The inscription suggests that the figure on the obverse is 'Arsu. Note the half-Roman, half-Parthian, dress of the warrior-god. It is uncertain whether he wears a beard or not. It is impossible to guess the god shown on the reverse. All the gods of Palmyra are youthful and all have curled hair. The bull looks like a sign of the zodiac. The combination of bull and star suggests a horoscope—Venus in Taurus (?).

#### PLATE XXVII.

4. *Obv.* God standing in front view wearing a long leathern (?) cuirass, a *paludamentum* (?), trousers, shoes and a helmet apparently of the Roman type; he holds in his r. hand a long spear with the point downwards and in his l. the hilt of his sword. To the l. below, a bull's head in front view. To r. and l. Palmyrene inscriptions read by M. J.-B. Chabot as follows:—

**..𐤏..𐤏𐤕** (?)  
**𐤏𐤓𐤕** Ya 'ut (?)

*Rev.* Laden camel standing r. Before him a man or a god standing in front view holding in his r. hand the camel's reins. Above and below his r. hand indistinct objects (a camel-bag or purse and a branch (?)).

Rectangular oblong; 0.023 by 0.019 m.

British Museum, no. 102751.

Comparison with nos. 2 and 3 above suggests that the armed god is 'Arsu, who is also represented on the reverse as the camel-driver. It is possible, however, that the bull's



head behind the armed figure indicates that he is Hadad, to whom the bull was sacred. If this is so, then the armed figure on the obverse of no. 3, which is identical with this, is also Hadad, the bust on the reverse (of no. 3) representing 'Arsu. The armed god also appears on no. 5, and a god, similarly arrayed, occurs on the reverse of a *tessera* in the Paris Cabinet des Médailles, the obverse of which bears the figure of Atargatis. Lastly, the collection of Mme. la Vicomtesse d'Andurain at Palmyra contains a *tessera* with Atargatis on the obverse, and a figure holding a hammer in his r. hand on the reverse. On Hadad and Atargatis see P. V. Baur in *Excavations at Dura-Europos, Prelim. Report III* (Yale Univ. Press, 1932), p. 100 ff.

5. *Obv.* A god standing in front view wearing a cuirass and *caligae*, holding in his r. hand a spear, and in his l. the hilt of his sword. To the l. a Palmyrene inscription which M. J.-B. Chabot reads יתליכר Iamliku.

*Rev.* Palmyrene inscription of three lines which M. J.-B. Chabot reads as follows:—

L.1. [יתליכר] very probably, Iamliku.  
 L.2. . . . . } almost illegible.  
 L.3. ע . . . . }

Rectangular oblong; 0.020–0.015 m.

British Museum. Cf. nos. 3 and 4 above.

6. *Obv.* Bust of a young god with long hair, in frontal view, placed inside a crescent whose points are stars. Below, a laden camel on its knees, turned r.

*Rev.* Palmyrene inscription in two lines:—

⸎⸏⸌⸎  
 ⸎⸏⸌⸎

and below, heads of two rams facing one another and between them the Venus-star.

Rectangular oblong; 0.019 by 0.013 m.

British Museum, no 102853. Both MM. J.-B. Chabot and J. Cantineau transliterated the second line as 'Aršô or 'Aršû, the first line being probably a proper name. M. Chabot suggests the reading ארעו.

The camel suggests that the youthful god is 'Arsu, whose symbols also are the star and the crescent. The rams' heads may represent sacrificial animals.

7. *Obv.* Camel on its knees turned r. Above, a Venus-star, followed by one line of Palmyrene script which M. J. Cantineau reads ⸎⸏⸌⸎ i.e. 'Arsô or 'Arsû.

*Rev.* Inscription of three lines which M. J. Cantineau translates . . . *les fils de Ba'eltai le Grand.*

Square; 0.018 by 0.016 m.

Damascus Archaeological Museum (given by M. J. Cantineau). J. Cantineau, 'Inscriptions Palmyréniennes,' *Rev. d'Assyr.* xxvii (1930), p. 45 (of the offprint).

The god is represented by his symbols, the star and the camel.

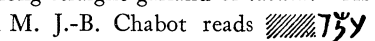
PLATE XXVIII.

8. *Obv.* Two busts of youthful gods with long, curled hair in front view. Above, the Venus-star. Between them indistinct objects.

*Rev.* Laden camel on its knees, turned r. The straight line represents the ground. Circular; 0.017 m. in diameter.

British Museum, no. 102744.

Note the same symbols (Venus-star and camel) as on no. 6. One of the two busts certainly represents 'Arsu, the other perhaps 'Azizu.

9. *Obv.* Laden camel, standing, turned r. Above, to the l., the Venus-star. A similar star is represented in the space between the camel's legs. A priest stands in front view before the camel, making a libation or pouring incense over a low, smoking rock-altar. In his l. hand he holds a long straight garland or *taenia*. Above and below, two lines of Palmyrene script which M. J.-B. Chabot reads  probably *עלוישא* 'Olaiša or 'Alīšê (proper name). The second line has almost disappeared.

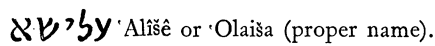

*Rev.* A priest or a god in front view, wearing a tiara, which is worn by Palmyrene gods and priests, a long tunic and a cloak, one end of which falls down from his l. shoulder. In each hand he holds a standard resting on the ground. The standard to the l. consists of a pole with a kind of square capital of two vertical bars and two ovoid objects above them. The second standard is exactly similar. To r. and l. a vertical row of three stars. If the figure on the reverse is a priest and not a god, the divine being of the *tessera* is the camel who is the god 'Arsu himself. It is an interesting instance of late totemism. It is well known that all gods of the Orient had their own standards—those of the Sumerian and Babylonian gods are examples. There are two standards on our *tessera* because 'Arsu, like the Ašvins, the Dioscuri, the Cabiri and the like, appears regularly in the company of his twin, the god 'Azizu.

Square; 0.020 by 0.019 m.

The collection of Mme. la Vicomtesse d'Audurain at Palmyra.

10. *Obv.* Bust of a youthful god in front view with curled hair, the long locks falling down on each side of the head; he wears a necklace and a cuirass (?). Beneath is a camel on its knees, turned to the r. To r. and l., a standard with ovoid top.

*Rev.* Two lines of Palmyrene script in a frame of dots. The inscriptions have been copied by MM. J.-B. Chabot and J. Cantineau as follows:—

  
 'Alīšê or 'Olaiša (proper name).  



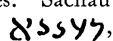
The second word seems to be also a proper name, 'ŠMN (or ZIA), according to M. J. Cantineau.

Rectangular oblong; 0.018 by 0.014 m.

The collection of Mme. la Vicomtesse d'Andurain at Palmyra,

Compare no. 9, on the obverse and reverse of which the priest, worshipper of the camel, may be the same 'Alīšê whose name appears on both nos. 9 and 10.

11. *Obv.* Bust of a youthful god with curled hair, wearing a radiate crown and a kind of *paludamentum* fastened by a circular brooch on his r. shoulder. Above, a star; to the r. and l. a standard.

*Rev.* Inscription in two lines. Sachau and M. J.-B. Chabot read the first line  i.e. 'Arsu; of the second, the , the transliteration and meaning are not clear to M. J.-B. Chabot. Sachau thinks it is a personal name. Below, a camel on its knees, turned to the l. To the r., crescent and star.

Rectangular oblong; 0.024 by 0.020 m.

Vogüé Coll. Vogüé (*Syrie centrale, Inscriptions sémitiques: Palmyre*, p. 83, no. 139 and pl. xii) does not recognise a camel in the figure on the reverse; he thinks it is a bull's head. This *tessera* is mentioned by A. D. Mordtmann, 'Neue Beiträge,' *Sitzungsb. der Münch. Akad.*, 1875, II Suppl. p. 59, no. 67. Cf. Sachau, 'Palmyrenische Inschriften' in *Zeitschr. d. deutsch. morgenl. Ges.*, xxxv (1881), p. 745, no. 14 (I owe this reference to the kindness of M. J.-B. Chabot).

12. *Obv.* Bust with radiated head, in front view, of the god Šamaš. Below, a line of Palmyrene script which Vogüé and M. J.-B. Chabot read as 'Šamaš.'

*Rev.* Camel on its knees, turned to the l. Above, a palm-branch; below, inscription which Vogüé and M. J.-B. Chabot read as 'Ogilou and Malikou.'

Circular; 0.024 m. in diameter.

Formerly in Vogüé's collection. I have not succeeded in finding it in any of the Paris collections. Another copy of the same *tessera* is, according to M. J.-B. Chabot, in M. Prost's collection at Beirut.

Vogüé, *Syrie centrale, Inscriptions sémitiques: Palmyre*, p. 83, no. 138; J.-B. Chabot, *Choix d'Inscriptions de Palmyre*, p. 136.

Note the combination of Šamaš, the sun-god, and the camel, the animal of 'Arsu.

13. *Obv.* Bust with radiated head in front view. Below, a star. Surrounding the bust a Palmyrene inscription which M. J.-B. Chabot reads hesitatingly as '. . . o Bel give joy to Š . . .'

*Rev.* Saddled horse standing to the l. Above, a five-pointed star; before him, on the l. a protuberance, probably the sun or the Venus-planet. Below, the sign usually recognised as the sign of Bel.

Olive-shaped; 0.023 by 0.019 m.

H. H. Spoer's collection. H. H. Spoer, 'Notes on some Palmyrene tesserae,' in *J. of the Amer. Or. Soc.*, xxvii (1906), p. 399, no. viii, and plate; *RES*, no. 1689.

14. (Not illustrated.) *Obv.* Bust of a god or goddess in front view. Below, an inscription of two lines which Euting reads as 'Taimresu Habibi' and M. J.-B. Chabot as 'que Bel protège.' If Chabot is right, the bust is that of Bel.

*Rev.* Bust of a god in front view. Euting's drawing shows a bust with helmeted head, which I am inclined to think is that of 'Arsu, between the usual two standards. Below, a camel, standing (?) or kneeling (?) turned to the r. (?).

Rectangular oblong; 0.019 by 0.014 (?) m.

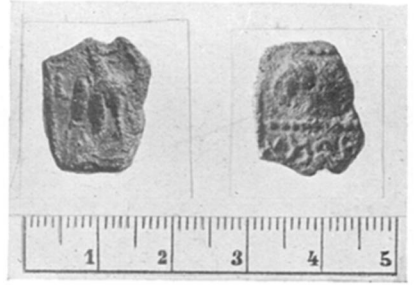
Euting's Coll. 'Epigraphische Miscellen,' *Sitzungsb. d. Berl. Akad.*, 1885, ii, p. 678, no. 40 and pl. ix.



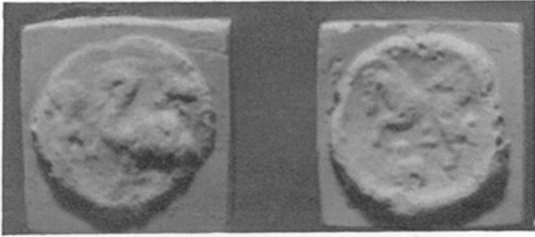
RELIEF (0.55 M. WIDE) REPRESENTING PALMYRENE GODS, IN THE DAMASCUS MUSEUM (see p. 108).



I



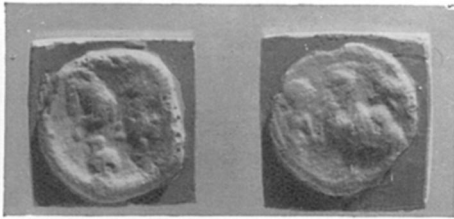
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2



2



2



3



3

PALMYRENE *TESSERAE* (see p. 112 f.).





4



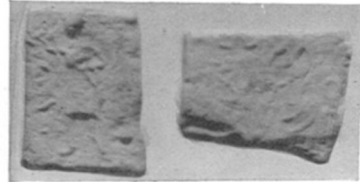
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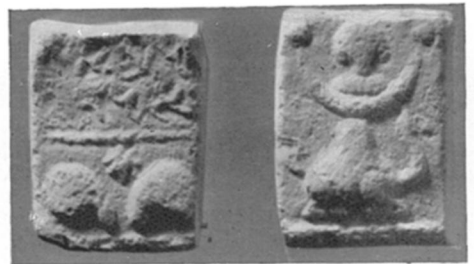
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6



7



6

PALMYRENE *TESSERAE* (see p. II3 f.).





8



8



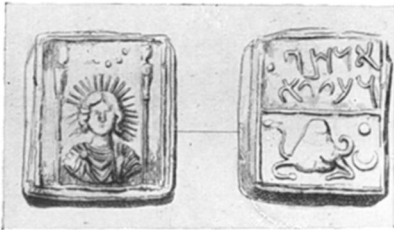
9



9



10



11



10



12



13

**PALMYRENE TESSERÆ (see p. 114 ff.).**