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## **ARCTOS – ACTA PHILOLOGICA FENNICA**

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## A FUNERARY INSCRIPTION FROM NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

MIKA KAJAVA & URPO KANTOLA\*

The following note concerns a seemingly unpublished inscription from northern Mesopotamia.<sup>1</sup> The exact provenance of the monument is unknown, as are the conditions of its discovery, but it is said to come from somewhere in the borderlands between Greater Armenia, Gordyene and Sophene in the modern province of Batman in south-eastern Turkey.<sup>2</sup> As the text is not completely without interest, it is perhaps worthwhile to record it briefly.

Funerary stele in limestone (reported height c. 50 cm) with bust in relief of a woman covered with a veiled headdress and holding a child in her arms. The text inscribed under the relief is as follows:

Μουμμηία  
Ἰουλία, φίλαν-  
δρε ἄλυπε χαίρε.

Regarding the nomenclature of the deceased, one may observe that while the second element with its derivatives is well known all over the ancient world, there seems to be only one further attestation of the gentile name *Mummeius* in the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>3</sup> The final phrase, ἄλυπε χαίρε (“causing no grief, etc.”,

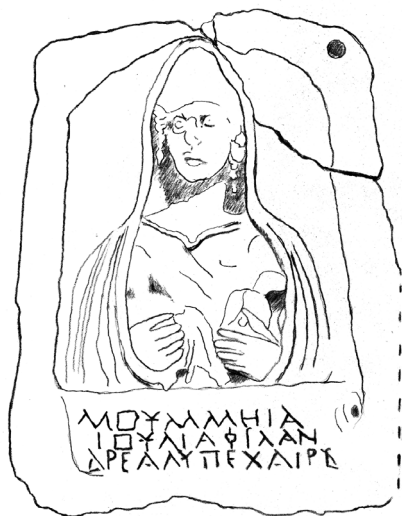
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\* Our thanks are due to an anonymous reader.

<sup>1</sup> The present whereabouts of the object is unknown. As the author of the photograph we have is anonymous, we enclose a drawing from it.

<sup>2</sup> This provenance is possible, though one feels that the formula used in the inscription might rather point to a more western region like that around Zeugma in Commagene, cf. nn. 4–5.

<sup>3</sup> L. Mummeius Ingenuus in a Severan dedication from Berytus (*CIL* III 158 = 6668 = 12095a).



frequently preceded by *χρηστὲ/ῆ καὶ*), is well attested in the language of Greek epitaphs, especially in the Aegean and, even more, in Greater Syria and elsewhere in the East,<sup>4</sup> the augmented version *φίλανδρε ἄλυπε χαΐρε* (or a variation) for deceased wives being hitherto documented only a couple of times, in Syria in particular.<sup>5</sup>

As for chronology, the double gentile name, with *Ἰουλία* probably functioning as the woman's cognomen, suggests the earlier part of the Principate, perhaps the latter half of the first through the second century AD, hardly much later. Unfortunate-

There is one *Μάγιος Μούμμεϊος Ῥούφος* from the late first century AD in *IAlexImp* 25, ll. 20–21 (= Bernard, *Prose sur pierre* no. 60), but the presence of both *Γέμειος* and of the names *Πομπηΐα* and *Πομπηΐου* in the same inscription suggests that the grapheme *ει* here probably stands for short */ii* (note that J. and L. Robert [*Bull. ép.* 1962, no. 353], and some others, have taken the gentile name as *Mummeius*; Kayser [*IAlexImp*] has both “Mummius” and “Mummeius”).

<sup>4</sup> The geographical diffusion of the formula is discussed by J.-B. Yon, *Syria* 80 (2003) 151–59. For more recent evidence from Zeugma, see R. Ergeç & J.-B. Yon, in C. Abadie-Reynal (ed.), *Zeugma III. Les fouilles de l’habitat. Fouilles de l’habitat (2): la maison des Synaristósai / Nouvelles inscriptions*, Lyon 2012, 159–90 (*passim*). Some examples are included in M. Blömer, *Steindenkmäler römischer Zeit aus Nordsyrien. Identität und kulturelle Tradition in Kyrrhestike und Kommagene*, Bonn 2014, 191–295 (Katalog, *passim*).

<sup>5</sup> *Φίλανδρε ἄλυπε χαΐρε*: *IGLS* V 2671 (Emesene); *SEG* XXXII 1466 (Hierapolis, inscr. *χῆρε*); *SEG* XXVI 1533 (= J. Wagner, *Seleukeia am Euphrat/Zeugma*, Wiesbaden 1976, 196, no. 41: *φίλανδρος ἄλυπε χαΐρε*). Cf. *SEG* LIII 1773 and LXII 1543 (= Ergeç & Yon [above n. 4], nos. 22, 25; Zeugma): *σώφρων καὶ φίλανδρε ἄλυπε χαΐρε*; *SEG* LXII 1544 (= Ergeç & Yon [above n. 4], no. 26; Zeugma): *ἀγαθὴ καὶ φίλανδρε ἄλυπε χαΐρε*; *SEG* XXVI 1538 (Zeugma): *φίλανδρε εὐσεβῆς ἄλυπε χῆρε* (= Wagner, *ibid.* 199–200, no. 47); *IGLS* V 2371 (Emesa): *σώφρο[να] καὶ φίλ[α](ν)δρον, [ἄλυ]πε χαΐρε*; *IPortes* 110 (Apollonopolis Magna): *ἄλυπε, χρηστή, φίλανδρε, φίλό[τεκνε (ἐτῶν)] κγ*; *JG* XII 3, 318 (Anaphe): *χαΐρε ἄλυπε καὶ φίλανδρε*. One may note, incidentally, that the omission of the copula between the vocatives (*χρηστὲ/ῆ, ἄλυπε*, etc.) preceding *χαΐρε*, is perhaps another typical feature of Syrian epitaphs.

ly, other features of the inscription do not offer much to narrow down the date any further. First, even though the use of Gr. *ou* to render Latin short /u/ (as in Μουμμήια) is the typical alternative during the second century AD, it becomes quite common already in the previous century and accordingly may not be used as effective evidence for excluding a first-century AD date. Second, considering the probability of local variation in contemporary letter styles, palaeography does not help very much here either, as the stele lacks an exact provenance and thus allows little more than vague comparisons. Moreover, a palaeographic feature like the omicron written in a square form, well attested in the East, could occur locally in one period and be replaced by the round version in another, only to re-emerge some decades or a century later. This is what seems to have happened in Zeugma in the first and second centuries AD, for example.<sup>6</sup> However, the upsilon with a horizontal bar might point to a date not earlier than the second century AD. In sum, considering that the style of the relief also seems assignable to the second century AD, this is altogether the most likely date for the stele.

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<sup>6</sup> Wagner (above n. 5) 166.