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NOTES ON THE INSCRIPTIONS FROM THE MUNCHERJEE COLLECTION AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ADEN¹

CSAI I, 809=RES 3902 n. 28=Ja 70: a misknown *m^cmr* stela



¹ *m^cmr* [...]–
² ʔ

This fragmentary alabaster stela with figure in relief is reproduced here for the first time. Nevertheless, it was well known by the literature, and scholars have differently interpreted either the text or the figurative representation.

Jaussen (1926: 556-557) believed the figure is a woman, but however, as Jamme also maintained (1952: 104), the subject is likely a man, representing the deceased. He is depicted as a warrior, wearing a suit of armour with pleats on the shoulders and holding a weapon, probably a dagger or a sabre.

Concerning the inscription, Jaussen and Jamme both read: *M^cmrʔ*, thinking that the stela was inscribed only on the right side and that the text was complete. This reading was also followed by Avanzini (2004: 450). The signs visible on the opposite side next to the figure's head were explained by Jaussen as being “signes nabatéens”.

However, other scholars, such Mordtmann-Mittwoch (1932: 117) and Höfner-Rhodokanakis (1936: 224), did already question this interpretation, which is indeed hardly maintainable.

In fact, the text is an example of the widespread formula *m^cmr* + proper name, inscribed on different kind of funerary objects.

At l. 2, ʔ must be analysed as the end of a proper name, of which the beginning, inscribed on the left side of the stela, has gone lost.

Regarding the odd signs on the left, they are probably related to the portion of the representation which is lost. However, they could even be simple fractures of the stone that were traced in modern times with a pen, as it happened for whole figure and the text.

¹ The inscriptions were catalogued in 2008 by the project CASIS “Cataloguing and Fruition of South Arabian Inscriptions through an Informatic Support” (<http://arabiantica.humnet.unipi.it>).

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