

Names from a tomb at Ain es-Selmani, Benghazi

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In *Libyan Studies* 19 (1988) 87-94 D. M. Bailey published some interesting papers from the British Museum archive relating to "Crowe's tomb", found at Ain es-Selmani, near Benghazi, in 1860. They include Crowe's previously unknown transcripts of inscriptions on the internal walls of the tomb, which he described as "very difficult to read in the bad light"; his transcript of an inscription on the facade of the tomb was already known¹, but acquires new meaning from the new information. There is no doubt that Crowe had misunderstood his texts at a number of points; some of them can be interpreted with reasonable confidence, however, even if others remain problematic to me (*Figgs. 1-3*).

If my interpretations are right, or on the right lines, the inscriptions consist only (or almost only) of names, and the tomb belonged, at the time when they were cut, to a family in which at least one name, Aripachthis, which seems likely to be of Libyan origin (so O. Masson in a letter), was used alongside Greek ones, surely reflecting the mixed ethnic roots and traditions of the city to which it belonged; it preserved Doric forms in its names by and large (cf. the masculine genitive singular in -ω in nos. 10, 12, perhaps 2) but shows signs of *koine* infiltration (cf. the masculine genitive singular in -ου in no. 8). The date is not very clear. I think

that it would be rash to base any conjecture on the letter-forms as drawn by Crowe; and the dates of the tomb-goods range from fifth-fourth centuries B.C. to middle second century A.D.² The impression is of names in the Hellenistic tradition; and given the *koine* form in no. 8 I would think it more probable that the family belonged to Berenice than to Euhesperides. But the Hellenistic features need not rule out a date as late as the early Roman principate. There is indeed a possibility that there was a Roman element in the names of nos. 2 and 11; and we should remember that an inscribed funerary portrait for Poplios son of Kallimachos, of Trajanic date, was found within the tomb³.

Cyrenaican practice in inscribing tombs was variable, but it is not uncommon to find at least one inscription on the facade, above or beside the entrance to the chamber, and a number on the internal walls, above and/or beside the individual *loculi* (which often held more than one body). The pattern can be easily illustrated at Cyrene⁴. The inscriptions usually consist of names alone; and these may be in the nominative or the genitive case, with or without patronymics, and written out in full or abbreviated. Some were neatly cut, with good alignment, and others very rough and without alignment, especially on the internal walls. It is usually quite clear that, as

¹ D. N. BAILEY, *ABSA* 67 (1972) 1-11.

² *Loc. cit.* in n. 1.

³ E. ROSENBAUM, *Cyrenaican Portrait Sculpture* (1960)

no. 202.

⁴ For an informative survey of the Cyrene cemeteries see J. CASSELS, *PBSR* 23 (1955) 1 f.