

*Lycian Zemure ‘Limyra’ and the Aramaic inscription from Limyra:  
a new reading*

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*Abstract*<sup>1</sup>

The Aramaic inscription from Limyra constitutes a precious exception among the inscriptions from Lycia. It is the only Aramaic inscription from Limyra, the only funerary Aramaic inscription from Lycia, and one of the few Aramaic inscriptions from Asia Minor. This inscription, which together with a Greek inscription constitutes a peculiar bilingual, has been partially damaged and, since its first publications by Fellows (1840) and Kalinka (1901), scholars have proposed different readings. With the exception of Kalinka and Hanson, no other scholar examined the inscription personally. It is my purpose to provide a new reading of it, based on a direct analysis of the inscription, by assuming that the sequence that precedes the break, which I reconstruct as *zym[wr...*, could be the Lycian place name of Limyra, *Zēmure-*, in Aramaic. This paper will also reconstruct the Greek inscription on the basis of the new Aramaic reading. Lastly, I will explain the peculiar characteristics of its syntax in the light of a possible epichoric influence.

*1. Introduction*

The Aramaic funerary inscription from Limyra is located in Tomb No. 46 of Limyra’s Necropolis CH V (Borchardt 2012: 420), in the midst of other Lycian tombs, which contain Lycian inscriptions. This tomb is the only one bearing two inscriptions, written in Aramaic and Greek respectively. It is dated from ca. the 5th-4th centuries B.C.E. (for more details, see §3). It consists of a wide double cut-rock tomb with the characteristic protruding timber beams of the Lycian funerary architectonic style and without pediment. It is situated very close to the modern roadway, about three kilometers beyond Limyra. The Aramaic inscription is engraved in a single line on the lintel of the tomb’s left entrance. Above the Aramaic inscription, on the frieze,

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Martin Seyer (Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut) for accepting Prof. Eichner and me for a week as members of the archaeological team at the Austrian archaeological camp in Limyra led by him, during the summer of 2012, 2013 and 2015. This paper was written thanks to a ‘Ramón y Cajal’ postdoctoral Fellowship from the Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (Convocatoria 2014) and to the research project *Los dialectos lívicos del grupo antolio en su contexto lingüístico, geográfico e histórico* (FFI2015-68467-C2-1-P) conceded by the same organism. I am also indebted to Prof. Eichner for his comments on this article: any errors herein are, of course, my own fault and responsibility.

there is another inscription written in Greek that spans both doors and occupies a single line. According to scholars, the Aramaic inscription seems to be older than the Greek one (see §2). The information from Hula reported by Kalinka (1901: 94), according to which ‘Buchstaben abwechselnd rot und blau’, is today hardly appreciable. The hypothesis upheld by some scholars, that this tomb would have been a Zoroastrian Astodan, is controversial.<sup>2</sup>



Fig.1. Double cut-rock tomb No. 46 from Necropolis V of Limyra containing the Aramaic-Greek Inscription TL 152 (photo by M. Vernet).

## 2. First copies and editions of the Aramaic-Greek inscription

The Aramaic inscription was first discovered and published by Fellows (1841: 209), but his copy was not accurate enough to be able to read and understand it. Some decades later, Sachau (1887: 2), made a better copy of the Aramaic inscription. He also published the Greek inscription:

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<sup>2</sup> The hypothesis upheld by some scholars that the tomb would have been a Zoroastrian Astōdān, a place where the disarticulated bones of the exposed dead were placed, has been disputed among scholars. Recently, Shahbazi 2011 defended that ‘the purely Iranian religious term *astōdāna* was retained in the Aramaic text because it denoted a particular type of funerary place for which a suitable equivalent could not be found’. Shahbazi argues the fact that ‘the pits inside the tomb-chambers are too small to accommodate full-grown bodies’ and therefore it should be considered an Astōdān. According to my examination of the tomb, however, what one can observe is that the two tombs could have accommodated a dead body and that its size is similar to the other Lycian tombs at Limyra, where the dead body was engraved. According to other scholars, indeed, the word Astōdān, which appears for the first time in the Aramaic inscription from Limyra, should be interpreted as an ‘ossuary’, but as a mere synonym of ‘tomb’, and without any other religious implication (Zeyneb 2012: 83). It would correspond to Gr. τάφος, which appears widely in the Greek inscriptions from Limyra. Accordingly, this neutral and general meaning of ‘ossuary’, which is also documented in Iran although some time later, in Sassanid times, should be applied in the case of the Aramaic inscription (for the discussion, see Zeyneb 2012: 83; for the etymology of this Iranian loanword in Aramaic see footnote 5).



- 1)  $\overline{\text{PT}} \frac{1}{2} \text{ } \overline{\text{0}^{\circ} 9}$   $\overline{\text{0}^{\circ} 22}$   $\overline{\text{0}^{\circ} 22}$   
a b
- 2)  $\overline{\text{0}^{\circ} 22}$   $\overline{\text{0}^{\circ} 22}$   
c
- 3)  $\overline{\text{0}^{\circ} 22}$

Fig. 2. Sachau Edition 1887: 2

Finally, Kalinka (1901: 94), in his canonical edition of Lycian Inscriptions, published an even more accurate version of the Aramaic inscription, based on the plaster casts he made for the Lycian inscriptions. In his edition, Kalinka took into account, for the first time, the last two letters of the Aramaic inscription (which he reconstructs as *ra*), situated at the extreme end of the framed area on which the Aramaic inscription is carved. This discovery was confirmed decades later by Hanson (1968: 5-7) who, during a tour of Lycia, was able to see the brief Aramaic inscription, and who ignored Kalinka's edition. Kalinka also discovered a fragment of a letter after *mēm* which precedes the break:

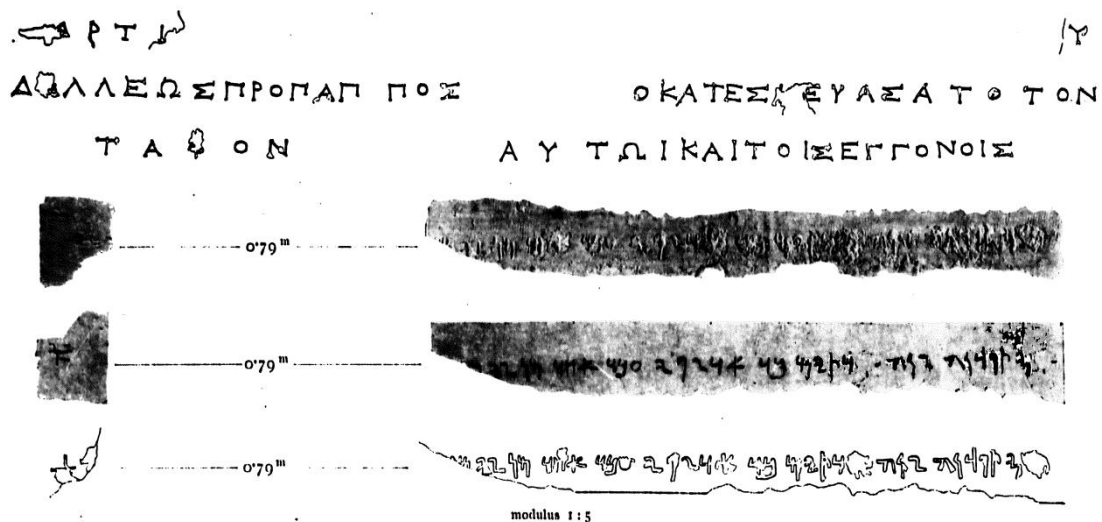


Fig. 3. Kalinka Edition 1901 (TL 152)

In his commentary on the Aramaic inscription, Kalinka (1901: 94) reports:

‘D. H. Müller a me rogatus de titulo Aramaeo summa cum comitate haec exposuit:

[א]סתודנה זנה [א]רתים בר ארזפי עבד אחד מן זי מד'ינתא לימורה ..... לנפשה וולדה ואח'ה

Dieses Grab, Artim Sohn des Arzapi hat es gemacht, einer von den (Einwohnern) [der Stadt Limyra ..... für sich und seine Kinder un seine Nachkommen].'

And later, commenting on the lacuna in the inscription, he adds:

'In gleicher Weise darf zu Anfang des fehlenden Stückes entsprechend der griechischen Ergänzung Λιμυρεύς vermuthet werden: מד'ינתא לימורה.'

Kalinka made these comments on the basis of the observations suggested by Petersen, and these were also followed by Donner-Röllig some decades later (1973: 310): 'Petersen titulum Graecum ita supplevit: Ἀρτί[μας Ἀρσάπιος Λιμυρεὺς Ἀρτίμου δ' Κορ]υδ[α]λλέως πρόπαππος [...πρ]οκατεσ[κ]εῦάσατο τὸν τάφον [τοῦτον ἐ]αυτῶι καὶ τοῖς ἐγγονοῖς et haec addidit: "So wäre das Griechische die Übersetzung des Aramäischen, ausgenommen die genaueren Angaben über die Nachkommen und was aus deren Übersiedlung nach Korydalla sich ergab..... der Urgroßvater hatte dem Grabe, welches er im fünften Jahrhunderte erbaut, eine Aufschrift in eigener Sprache gegeben. Etwa ein Jahrhundert später gab dem Urenkel vielleicht gerade die Übersiedlung nach Korydalla Veranlassung, das Anrecht auf das Erbbegräbnis durch eine neue, nunmehr griechische Inschrift festzustellen'.

According to Petersen's explanation, the Greek inscription would have been engraved after the Aramaic inscription (one century or four generations later) and it would be a new version of the original Aramaic inscription. This assumption makes sense when one considers that the Greek inscription gives us information that does not appear in the Aramaic inscription: the Greek inscription mentions the descendant of the builder of the tomb (Artimas, the 'great-grandfather' πρόπαππος), and, indirectly, the removal of the great-grandson from Limyra to another place, Korydalla, a town situated ten kilometers east of Limyra. According to Petersen, it was precisely this moving to another town that made it necessary to write another inscription on the tomb, making it clear that the great-grandson, although living in Korydalla, was still the heir owner of the tomb of Limyra, because his great-grandfather was from Limyra and was buried there (Aramaic inscription).

According to this, the Greek reconstruction carried out by Petersen and followed by Kalinka and Donner-Röllig, which presupposes that the adj. Λιμυρεύς referred to the great-grandfather, makes sense when one considers that the family would have wanted to make it clear, that they came from Limyra. Moreover, in my opinion, the adj. Λιμυρεύς reconstructed by Petersen is suitable and credible in this context since it would not be an isolated phenomenon: it is documented in other Greek inscriptions from Limyra (Tomb 13/17 of Necropolis III and Tomb

N38 of Necropolis III; for the edition of the Greek inscriptions of Limyra, see Wörrle 1995: 398 and 401 respectively):

*Tomb 13/17 of Necropolis III*

Τὴν σορὸν κατεσκεύασεν Σοί-  
 λος Αἰχμῶνος **Λιμυρεὺς** ἑαυτῷ  
 καὶ τῆ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ Μονίμῃ  
 4 ἢ καὶ Σποροῦ ὅτι καὶ τῷ πενθε-  
 ρῷ αὐτοῦ Ἀρτείμα δις καὶ τέκνοις  
 τοῖς γεγεννημένοις αὐτῷ  
 ἐκ τῆς προδηλουμένης γυναι-  
 8 κός μου Μονίμης. (...)

*The sarcophagus was raised by Zoilos,  
 Son of Aichmon, of Limyra, for himself  
 and his wife Monime,  
 alias Sporus, and his father-in-law  
 Artimas II and for the children  
 born to him  
 from the abovementioned  
 Monime, my wife.(...)  
 (my translation)*

*Tomb N38 of Necropolis III*

Τὸν τά[φ]ον [τ]ο[ῦ]τον κατεσκευάσατο  
 Σώπατρος Πυρρίου **Λιμυρεὺς** ἑαυτῷ  
 καὶ Ἀρτεμιδώρωι καὶ τῆι γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ  
 4 Ἀρinnaσῃ καὶ τοῖς ὑ[ί]οις αὐτῆς. (...)

*This tomb was built by  
 Sopatros, son of Pyrrias, of Limyra, for himself  
 and Artemidoros and his wife,  
 Arinnase, and her sons. (...)  
 (my translation)*

As mentioned above, in the second line of both inscriptions, the adjective *Λιμυρεὺς* ‘of Limyra’ appears.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, in the fifth line of the first inscription, the PN of Artemas II (*Ἀρτείμα δις*) is documented. According to some scholars, PN *Ἀρτεμας* could be a variation of the PN *Artimas* that appears in the Aramaic-Greek inscription (Aram. *Artim*, Gr. *Ἀρτίμας*), although in my view it must be of Iranian origin (see M. Vernet 2016).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This adjective is also documented in a non-funerary bilingual Lycian-Greek inscription from Létôon, both, in Greek (*Λιμυρεὺς*) and in Lycian (*Zemuris*) (N 312; see Melchert’s edition of 2001: 14):

1 Δεμοκλ[ει]δῆς Θε[ρ]βεσιος	1. Democles, son of Therbese,
2 <b>Λιμυρεὺς</b> ἀγαθῆι τυχηι	2. of Limyra, to good fortune,
3 Ἀρτεμιδι ἀνεθηκεν	3. to Artemis has dedicated it.
4 <i>ñtemuxlida krbbe[s?]</i> eh	4. Democles, son of Krbbe[s]e (see Melchert 2004:97)
5 <b>zemuris</b> ertemi	5. of Limyra, (gave) to Artemis
6 <i>xruwata</i>	6. these votive offerings.
	(My translation)

<sup>4</sup> The origin of PN *Artimas* (Aram. *ʔrtym*, also seen in Gr. *Ἀρτίμας* from the same inscription) has been disputed among scholars. Some of them consider that *Artimas* was presumably built on the basis of a Greek-epichoric name *Ἄρτεμυς/Ertemi* (Lipiński 1975: 164 and ff.; Wörrle 1995: 407). However, an Iranian origin (from OIran. *\*R̥tima-*) has been defended by others (Sachau 1887: 7; Darmesteter 1888: 508-510; Zgusta 1964: 101; Donner-Röllig 1973: 310; Schmitt 1982: 30). *\*R̥tima-* was extended into other ancient languages: Elam. *Ir-ti-ma*, Bab. *Ar-ti-im*, f. (*\*-imā*, f.), Aram. *ʔrtym* (in the Aramaic inscription from Limyra and on a cylinder seal from Asia Minor, see Bivar 1961: 119). Moreover, to some scholars, PN *Ἀρτίμας* and *Ἀρτεμας* are probably a variation of the same PN (Wörrle 1995: 407). According to Wörrle (ibid.), the spelling *Ἀρτίμας* should be considered as the old orthography, and *Ἀρτεμας*, a later variation widely used in Lycia (Zgusta 1964: 99-100). The discussion remains still open. To my opinion, if *Ἀρτίμας*, Aram. *ʔrtym*, would have been built on the basis of the Greek-epichoric name *Ἄρτεμυς/Ertemi*, as Lipiński suggests, in Aramaic one would expect a different form. Lipiński bases his hypothesis on the fact that Aram. *ʔrtym* would be an epichoric Loanword borrowed from the name of the native goddess *Artemu-* ‘Artemis’. But in the Trilingual Lycian-Greek-Aramaic Stele of Létôon, the

### 3. The Aramaic Inscription

Although Kalinka (1901: 94) dated the Aramaic inscription to the 5<sup>th</sup> century, or between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> centuries B.C.E (as also did Donner-Röllig 1973: 309), Lipiński (1975: 163), arguing paleographic grounds, preferred to date it later, to the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E., during the period of Persian domination. In this case, it could be considered as an isolated proof of the ‘nach dem Ende des Perikles auch in Ostlykien wiedererreichte persische Herrschaft’, although caution should be exercised (see Wörrle 1995: 407 and Zimmermann 1992: 27-48). Since, as I have explained, the Greek inscription was engraved four generations later, one should admit the possibility that it was carved at the end of the fourth or the beginning of the third century B.C.E. The Aramaic inscription from Limyra, as well as the inscription from Keseçek Köyü, Sardis and Daskyleion, all of them from Asia Minor, are written in an Eastern form of Imperial Aramaic (Lipiński 1975: 170).

More than half of the Aramaic inscription is missing. The preserved part of the text is 63 cm. long (see Figs. 4 and 9), while the lacuna is 79 cm. long. According to what we have seen in §2, the transliteration of the Aramaic inscription of Kalinka (1901), following Müller, is as follows (N.B.: Kalinka only edited the Aramaic inscription with the Hebrew-Aramaic print letters, whereas I provide the corresponding transliteration in the Latin alphabet):

[?]stwdnh znh [?]rtym br ʔrzpy ʔbd ʔhd mn zy md[yntʔ lymwrh ..... lnpšh wwldh wʔh]rh

‘Dieses Grab, Artim, Sohn des Arzapi hat es gemacht, einer von den (Einwohnern) [der Stadt Limyra ..... für sich und seine Kinder un seine Nachkommen].’ (translation of Kalinka).

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Aramaic word for Artemis is ʔrtmwš, which is different from the Aram. PN ʔrtym attested in the Aramaic inscription from Limyra and in a cylinder seal from Asia Minor. In my opinion, and according to this observation, whereas in the first case, the Aramaic word for Artemis ʔrtmwš comes clearly from epicchoric *Artemu-* ‘Artemis’, in the second case, the PN ʔrtym ‘Artimas’ shows another different origin, presumably Iranian. The same occurs in Lydian PN *Artimas* ‘Artimas’ (attested in Xenophon An. 7, 8, 25: Ἀρτιμας was an ἄρχων Λυδίας) and GN *Artimus* ‘Artemis’.

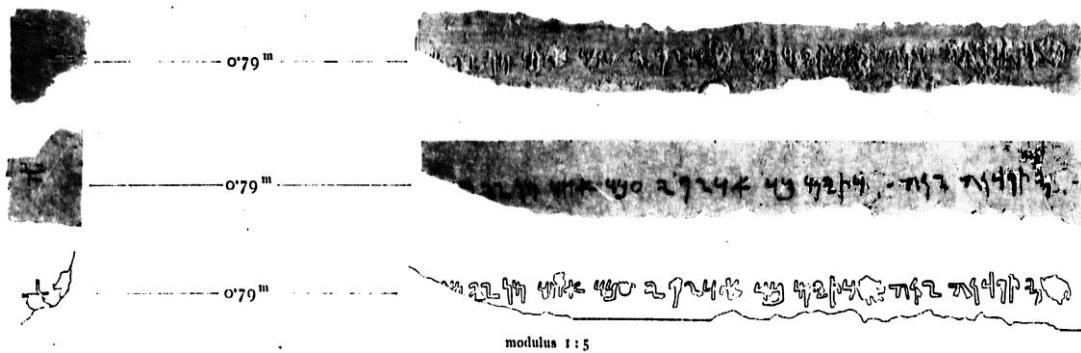


Fig. 4. Kalinka Edition 1901(TL 152)

According to the Kalinka's edition, the reading of the letters <sup>?</sup> (from <sup>?</sup>rzpy), *d* (from <sup>?</sup>hd), *d* (from *mā[ynt<sup>?</sup>]*) and *r* (from *w<sup>?</sup>h]r<sup>?</sup>h*) are not completely certain (they are marked with an upper dot), but provable. The fragmentary letter which precedes the break was read as *d* by D. H. Müller, in the Kalinka's edition.

The edition by Donner-Röllig (1961: 50) followed the Kalinka's edition substantially, although he did not take into account the two letters (*r<sup>?</sup>h*) at the end discovered by Kalinka, nor the fragmentary letter (*d*) which immediately precedes the lacuna, which Kalinka also discovered for the first time:

[א]סתודנה זנה ארתים בר [א]רזפי עבד אחד מן זי מ [ ]  
 [?]stwdnh znh <sup>?</sup>rtym br [?]rzpy <sup>?</sup>bd <sup>?</sup>hd mn zy m [ ]

‘Dieses [G]rabmal hat [?]RTM, der Sohn des <sup>?</sup>RZPJ gemacht. Wer immer v[on [ ]’  
 (translation of Donner-Röllig 1961: 50)

According to Donner-Röllig (1973: 310), ‘Der Schluß des erhaltenen aram. Textes ist unsicher, die Zahl der fehlenden Buchstaben unbestimmbar’. And he continues: ‘Der letzte erkennbare Buchstabe ist jedoch *m*; vielleicht zu ergänzen *m[n]* ‘von’. Das vorausgehende Wort <sup>?</sup>hd ist unklar. Da jedoch *d* und *r* in den aram. Inschriften Kleinasiens paläographisch oft nicht zu unterscheiden sind, könnte auch <sup>?</sup>hr gelesen werden’.

Some years later, Lipiński (1975: 163) proposed another reading for the Aramaic inscription, incorporating new changes with respect to the Kalinka's and Donner-Röllig's editions. Lipiński based this new reading on the examination he made of the plaster casts made by Kalinka and Wörrle. The transcription of the Aramaic inscription (TL 152) proposed by Lipiński (1975: 163) is the following:

*ʔstwdnh znh ʔrtym br ʔrzpy ʔbd ʔhr mn zy m[ʔrtʔ zʔ -ca. 35— zy] lh.*

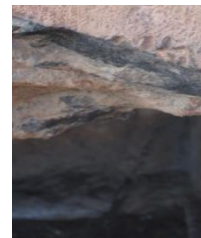
‘Artima, son of Arzapiya, made this ossuary. And whoever [this] c[ave...that (belongs)] to him’ (translation of Lipiński 1975: 163).

According to this, the changes suggested by Lipiński with regard to the Kalinka’s and Donner-Röllig’s editions are in three letters: the *r* from *ʔhr* (*ʔhd* in Kalinka and Donner-Röllig), the *ʔ* from *m[ʔrtʔ* (*mđ[yntʔ* in Kalinka and *m[ ]* or *m[n]* in Donner-Röllig) and, finally, the *l* in *zy] lh* (*wʔh]řh* in Kalinka and not reconstructed by Donner-Röllig). The Lipiński edition also corroborates the reading of the damaged letters marked with an upper dot in the Kalinka’s edition, interpreting them as certain letters.

Regarding the three changes proposed by Lipiński, as well as the readings carried out by Kalinka and Donner-Röllig, for the moment, I would like to make the following observations:

*a)* the *r* from *ʔhr* proposed by Lipiński is possible, but not one hundred per cent reliable, since it could be equally interpreted as *d* (which is the reading offered by Kalinka and Donner-Röllig). Moreover, this observation is verified by the fact that *a)* this sign is very similar to the letter *d* seen in the words *ʔstwdnh* and *ʔbd* from the same inscription, which are certain, yet, at the same time, *b)* this sign is very similar to the *r* that appears in the words *ʔrtym*, *br* and *ʔrzpy*, which also offer a certain reading. Consequently, it should be concluded, for the moment, that both words, *ʔhd* and *ʔhr*, are equally possible.

*b)* The *ʔ* from *m[ʔrtʔ* refers to a minute fragment of a letter that can be seen following the *mêm* which precedes the break. It is visible only in its uppermost part:



Figs. 5, 6 and 7: a minute fragment of the letter preceding the lacuna (fig. 5: Kalinka Edition; figs. 6 and 7: photos by M. Vernet)

Kalinka, as I have mentioned, interpreted this sign as a *d* (in *mđ[yntʔ* ‘city’) of uncertain reading (with a dot on the top). Donner-Röllig preferred not to reconstruct it, although he comments on the possibility of reconstructing an *n*. Lipiński considered including this sign, which he interprets as *ʔ*, as forming part of the reconstructed part of the inscription. In my opinion, it



could certainly be interpreted as a *d*, as Kalinka did, as an *n*, as proposed by Donner-Röllig, or as a <sup>ς</sup> as did Lipiński, but also as *w*, *r* and *b*, because all these signs share the characteristic of having a vertical stroke on the right side of the letter, and this vertical stroke is always immediately next to the preceding letter. Letters such as *t* (as seen in the word <sup>?</sup>*stwdnh* or <sup>?</sup>*rtym* of the same inscription, for instance), which show a vertical stroke, but on the left side of the letter, should not be considered in this case. In consequence, this fragmentary letter should be taken into account with caution, as having multiple possible values. Nevertheless, although this sign shows different possible values, it is also true that this sign is at least restricted to a few values and consequently not all the letters of the alphabet are valid for it, since it shows two indicative characteristics: it follows immediately after the preceding *m*, leaving hardly a gap between both letters, and it shows a vertical stroke on the right side of the letter. Consequently, this letter could be reconstructed only as *d*, *n*, <sup>ς</sup>, *w*, *r* or *b*.

c) The penultimate letter of the Aramaic inscription, which Kalinka interpreted as *ṛ* (in *w<sup>?</sup>h]ṛh*), which Donner-Röllig surprisingly did not take into account, and which was reconstructed by Lipiński as *l* (in *zy]lh*), could be interpreted, for the moment, as an *ḷ* or *ṛ*. The option chosen by Donner-Röllig in this case should be rejected, since, according to my personal examination of the Aramaic inscription, one can easily confirm that there are two letters at the end of the inscription (see figs. 12 and §3). Another question is the value one should give to these letters, which will be discussed below (see §4).

#### 4. The Aramaic inscription from Limyra: a new reading

In accordance with these observations, I would now like to present my own reading and interpretation of the Aramaic inscription, which is based on a personal examination of this inscription:

<sup>?</sup>*stwdnh*<sup>5</sup> *znh* <sup>?</sup>*rtym* *br* <sup>?</sup>*rzpy* <sup>?</sup>*bd* <sup>?</sup>*hd* *mn* *zym[wr –ca. 3l— w<sup>?</sup>hry zy] lh.*

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<sup>5</sup> <sup>?</sup>*stwdnh* ‘ossuary’ is a loanword of Iranian origin (see Darmsteter 1888, who was the first who suggested it; Donner-Röllig 1973: 310, Lipiński 1975: 164; Shahbazi 2011). This word was borrowed from the Pers. *astō-dāna*, which designates an ‘ossuary’, ‘bone-container’. It is a compound formed by *ast-* ‘bone’ and *dāna-* ‘container’. We do not know the antiquity of this word, since the first attestation of this substantive is the Aramaic inscription from Limyra. However, this Pers. loanword could have had an Avestic origin, as the *-ō* of the ending of the first term of the compound would indicate. The Old Iranian word *daxma* (from *\*dafma* from PIE. *\*d<sup>h</sup>mb<sup>h</sup>*) ‘bury’ would indicate that Iranians originally practiced inhumation (Shahbazi 2011). Later, exposure of the dead became widespread among Central Asians and East Iranians, and was adopted by the Avesta. According to the *Vendidad* (*Vd.* 7.1-9, 25-27, 54-59), the corpse (*nasu*) is possessed by the death-demon (*druj-nasu*), and is impure. It must be carried to the highest places

‘This ossuary was made by Artima, son of Arzapiya, the one from Lim[yra ... and the descendants of] him’.<sup>6</sup>

What is new in this transliteration is the new reinterpretation of the sequence *mn zym[wr* ‘from Lim[yra’. It was traditionally interpreted as being formed by three words: *mn zy md[ynt?* ‘of the city’ in Kalinka’s version or *mn zy m[ʿrt? z?* ‘of this cave’ according to Lipiński. Consequently, scholars interpreted a gap between letters *y* and *m*, which in my reading does not appear. After a careful and directly examination of the inscription, I realised that this gap could be interpreted simply as being non-existent for the following reasons I will explain below.<sup>7</sup>



Fig. 8. The Aramaic inscription from Limyra. The first fragment of the inscription before the lacuna (photo by M. Vernet).



Fig. 9. The Aramaic inscription from Limyra. The first fragment of the inscription before the lacuna (photo by M. Vernet)

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(i.e., the *daxmas* of later periods), where corpse-devouring birds may swiftly remove all that is corruptible, from the body, leaving only the cleaned bones (for more information, see Shahbazi 2011).

<sup>6</sup> On a word by word basis this could be translated as “This ossuary, Artima, son of Arzapiya, made it, the one from Lim[yra ... and the descendants of] him.”

<sup>7</sup> In fact, König (1936: 50, fn. 3), in a brief footnote reached a similar conclusion. He wrote: “D. H. Müller las die betreffende Stelle (TAM I Nr. 152, p. 94) MN ZI MD(?) usw., es ist aber einfach *min zim[u ...]* “von Limyra” zu lesen”. This information was not quoted by Lipiński and was also unknown to me at the time I was writing this article, and hence, it corroborates the hypothesis I am defending here. I would like Prof. Schürr for having informed me about it.



Fig. 10. The Aramaic inscription from Limyra. The last sequence before the lacuna (photo by M. Vernet)



Fig. 11. The Aramaic inscription from Limyra. The last sequence before the lacuna (photo by M. Vernet)



Fig. 12. Aramaic inscription from Limyra. Last sequence before the lacuna (photo by M. Vernet)

As can be observed (fig. 12), the gap between *y* and *m* is aprox. 0,5 cm. The gap that divides the words *ʔhd mn*, on the contrary, is 1 cm. (see figs. 11 and 12). It is true that the gap between the words *mn zy* is also 0,5 cm., but it is also true that inside a word, one can find a gap bigger than 0,5 cm, as in the case of *ʔstwdnh*, where the gap between *s* and *t* is 1 cm. (see fig. 9), also, considerably bigger than the gap between *n* and *z*. Moreover, initially, during the first studies on the Aramaic inscription, this fact led scholars to interpret the sequence *ʔstwdnh* (which is now interpreted unanimously as an entire word, see §4) as consisting of two different words (Sachau

1887: 4).<sup>8</sup> Consequently, since there are gaps inside a word bigger than the gap between *y* and *m* (which supposedly divides two words), and since several gaps that divide the words in the inscription are bigger than the gap between *y* and *m*, one must conclude, that the gap between *y* and *m* does not necessarily divide a word, but on the contrary, could be interpreted as being a gap between two letters of the same word. According to this observation, my reading, which interprets the sequence *zym[wr* as a single word, appears to be just as possible and legitimate as the other interpretations.

According to this interpretation, *zym[wr* could be the Lycian word for Limyra, represented as *Zēmure*. This epichoric place name appears on some Lycian coins (Nom. sg. *Zēmure* M125; Loc. sg. *Zēmuri* M145a; Gen. sg. *Zēmuh*∞! (< \**zēmurihe*) M142a,b; M145b). It is also documented with the abbreviations *zēm* (M 144 a-b) and *zē* (M 144 c) (see Zgusta 1984: §322-1; Melchert 2004: 89; Neumann 2007: 433).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the name of the inhabitants of Limyra, Lyc. *Zemuris* (with *e* and without the nasal *ē*), Gr. Λιμυρεὺς, is also seen in a Greek-Lycian bilingual inscription (N312,5, see Footnote 3; Neumann 1979: 29; Melchert 2001: 14; Neumann 2007: 432). This place name seems to be attested for the first time by the Hittite sources from the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium B.C.E: *Zimuriya* (an adjective from a formal point of view) and, according to Eichner (oral communication) and other scholars, *Zumarra* (Maduwatta-Text) (for more details, see Neumann 2007: 433). The correspondence between *Zēmure* and Λιμυρα still remains unclear among scholars (Zgusta 1984: §322-1; Hajnal 1995: 23).

In my opinion, in Aramaic, the word *zym[wr* would be the epichoric transliteration of Lyc. *Zēmure* in the Aramaic alphabet. With regard to the phonetic correspondences between Lycian and Aramaic, regarding the first letter of this name, the Aramaic <z> represents a voiced alveolar fricative /z/, which comes from PS \**z* and has also been preserved in the rest of the Semitic languages: Arab. *zar*<sup>ʕ</sup>, Eth. *zar*<sup>ʔ</sup>, Hebr. *zēra*<sup>ʕ</sup>, Syr. *zar*<sup>ʕā</sup>, Assy. *zēru* ‘seed’ (Brockelmann 1961: 128-129; Moscati 1964: 33 and ff.). The Lycian <I> *z* in at least some cases represents a voiceless affricate /t<sup>s</sup>/ (e.g., *hr-zze/i-* “upper” with suffix *-zze-* < Proto-Anatolian \**-t<sub>s</sub>yo-* < PIE \**-tyo-*, see Melchert 1994: 314-315). In other cases, however, a number of plausible examples have been made for a voiced alveolar fricative /z/. Gusmani (1964b: 48 and 1992: 227), Oettinger (1976/1977: 132<sup>8</sup>) and Hajnal (1995: 22-23) interpret the following cases as voicing of /s/ to [z]: *izr-* ‘hand’; \**mizre* ‘bright, shining’ in the name *Mizretije-* and

<sup>8</sup> ‘Die einzelnen Wörter sind durch einen leeren Raum von einander getrennt. Am wenigsten ausgesprochen ist diese Trennung zwischen den beiden ersten Zeichen *s* und *t*’.

<sup>9</sup> Neumann (2007: 433) prefers to analyse *Zēmuri* as Nom. sg. and not as Dat.-Loc. sg., as does Melchert (2001: 89), and the form *Zēmure* as the Dat.-Loc. pl., on the basis of the fact that in Greek ‘Λιμυρα mehrfach als plur. tantum ntr. bezeugt’ (for the discussion, see Neumann *ibid.*). But the fact that in Greek the name place Limyra is seen in sg. and in pl. does not implicitly signify that the same situation would have to be applied in the case of Lycian.

Lyc. (Nom.) *Izraza* (TL 24, 26.6) (in the three cases < \*-sr-). To these scholars, the same phenomenon is to be seen in Milyan, where secondary \*-sn- yields -zn-: acc. sg. -izñ̄ < \*-isñ̄ < \*-isom < \*(i)s̄kom, and Mil. *zri* ‘upper’ < \*sri- < \*seri-. Although it is true that the Lyc. *z* normally corresponds to the Gr. Σ(Σ), and that the Gr. <Σ> usually corresponds to the Lyc. <I> (see Hajnal 1995: 21-22), the aforementioned examples showing a possible voicing of *s* in some voiced contexts, should not be neglected. All these examples share the feature of being in contact with the sonorants *r* and *n*, which would be the reason why *s* becomes [z] in these specific contexts. In my opinion, in the case of *Zēmuri*, since *z* is in contact with a liquid sonorant *m*, it could be interpreted as another case of a voiced <I>.

Moreover, regarding the correspondence between Lycian and Greek, since in Gr. the word for *Zēmure* shows an initial alveolar lateral approximant /l/, which is voiced, and since one would expect the Lyc. *z* and Gr. *l* to share at least one distinctive phonological feature, it is reasonable to think that it was at least the alveolar feature (since the lateral is a feature not present in /z/), the feature(s) shared by Lyc. *z* and Gr. *l*; moreover, since in this case, the alveolar feature of *z* and *l* is always voiced, one should conclude that they also share the voiced feature. Consequently, since Lyc. *z* and Gr. *l* share two phonological features: alveolar and voiced, it is reasonable to think that the Lyc. *z*, in this place name, represents a voiced alveolar fricative /z/, which, as I have explained, is provably that also occurs in some cases in Lycian. Consequently, it would be reasonable to say that the correspondence between the Lyc. <z> and the Aram. <z> would be justified because in both cases we are dealing probably with a voiced alveolar fricative /z/.

In the second position, Lycian and Aramaic show the correspondence Lyc. <ē> vs. Aram. <y>. Aramaic has no nasal vowels and therefore no letter that can represent this sound. Moreover, as I have explained two paragraphs previously, Lyc. *Zēmure* is also represented with the non-nasal *e* in the case of the Lyc. adj. *Zemuris*, corresponding to Gr. Λιμυρεὺς, which shows an /i/. In the case of Aram. *zym[wr]*, the letter *y* is a *mater lectionis*, indicating that there was a timbre *e* sound (as in the case of Lycian) or *i* (as in the case of Greek). In Imperial Aramaic, *y* was certainly used as *mater lectionis* for *i* and *e* (Rosenthal 1968: 8), as well as *w*, for *u* and *o*. This fact is not an isolated phenomenon. On the contrary, in the Aramaic inscription from Limyra, a similar case appears: PN *ʔrtym* ‘Artimas’, which also shows a *mater lectionis* *y* indicating in this case a vowel *i*. In the same inscription there appears another interesting instance of *mater lectionis* *w* in the case of *ʔstwdnh* ‘Astodan’, indicating a vowel *o*. Although theoretically in Aramaic it is not essential to write the *mater lectionis*, in the case of the Aram. *zymwr*, the presence of this letter *y* makes sense and is understandable when one considers that *a*) *Zēmure* was a foreign place name, not seen in Aramaic, and *b*) the scribe would presumably have wanted to leave no

doubt about the name, writing a *mater lectionis* in order to make its reading easier and more certain. Moreover, in the Aramaic inscription from Limyra, as we have already seen, one observes that curiously the loanwords and names of non-Aramaic origin show *mater lectionis* in order to ensure the reading: *ʔstwdnh* ‘Astodan’, *ʔrtym* ‘Artimas’ and *zymwr* ‘Zemure’. Consequently, the correspondence between the Lyc. <ẽ> and the Aram. <y> is perfectly justifiable and legitimate. For the same aforementioned reasons, I reconstruct a *mater lectionis* w in the penultimate position (*zym[wr]*), indicating and making clear that there was a u sound. As I have explained, a similar case appears in the name *ʔstwdnh* ‘astodana’, although in this case with the timbre o, which, as mentioned above, is the other possible vowel of a *mater lectionis* w. Lastly, I reconstruct *zym[wr]* and not *zym[wry]*, with a *mater lectionis* y in final position, which would also be theoretically possible, since in Aramaic (as in the north-western Semitic languages), the ending -y was very frequently associated with the Nisba suffix that formed adjectives. In my opinion, the scribe would have preferred not to write another *mater lectionis*, in order to avoid confusing this place name with a Nisba. In this case, moreover, the presence of a *mater lectionis* in the final position was not indispensable because the reading had been already ensured by the two previous *matres lectiones*.

One could might why the Aramaic *Zymwr* follows the epichoric place name *Zẽmure* and not the Greek name Λιμυρα. Theoretically both spellings could have been adapted in the Aramaic loanword. However, in the Aramaic inscriptions in Asia Minor, I have observed that there is a tendency to adopt epichoric names over the Greek place names. In the Lẽtõn Trilingual (N 320),<sup>10</sup> for instance, Lyc. *Arĩna* (l. 3-4), corresponding to Gr. Xanthos (Ξάνθος, l. 4), is adapted into Aramaic according to Lycian as *ʔwrn* (N 320, l. 3; see Molina 2005: 1011).<sup>11</sup> In the same inscription, in l. 5 of the Aramaic version, there appears the place name *Trmyl* ‘Lycia’, which follows Lycian *erttimeli* (l. 5), rather than the Gr. Λυκία.<sup>12</sup> In the Bilinguis Lydian-Aramaic of Sardis (No. 260 according to the 1969 Donner-Röllig Edition: 50), the Aramaic version shows ספרד *sfrd* ‘Sardis’, which seems to come from the Lyd. *Šfar(i ?)*, *šfarda-* ‘inhabitant of Sardis’ and *šfardẽti-* ‘of Sardis’ [s. Gusmani 1964, s.v.], and not from the Gr. Σαρδεĩς. This tendency again speaks in favour of reconstructing the epichoric word *Zemure* (and not Limyra) for the Aramaic inscription.

In Aramaic, *ʔhd mn zym[wr]* ‘the one from Limyra’ (preposition + place-name) would be parallel to the Gr. Λιμυρεὺς, which as I have explained above (§2), appears in other Greek inscriptions

<sup>10</sup> For the Aramaic edition, see Lamaire 1995 and Dupont-Sommer 1979.

<sup>11</sup> The presence in Aramaic of w, which at first sight seems inexplicable in Lycian, has been explained thanks to the Yalburt inscription, where HLuw. *awarna* referring to *Lukka*-land is seen. The same place name is documented in Heth. *awarna*, *auwarna* (Molina 2005: 2013).

<sup>12</sup> In the Lẽtõn Trilingual there appears the Lyc. name Ἀρτεμηνίυ.

of Limyra. Accordingly, the presence of the name Limyra in this inscription would not be an isolated phenomenon; on the contrary, it is supported by other inscriptions from the same area as well.

According to my reconstruction, the intuition of Petersen, followed by Kalinka, based on the reconstruction of the Greek inscription (Ἀρτί[μας Ἀρσάπιος Λιμυρεὺς), according to which, in the Aramaic inscription, one should reconstruct *mdynt<sup>2</sup> lymwrh* (מד[ינתא לימורה) ‘city of Limyra’, was substantially correct, while the only thing that they failed to take into account, was that the Aramaic inscription had the epichoric name place of Limyra, and not the Greek one. As already seen, this preference for the epichoric name places is observable in the other Aramaic inscriptions of Asia Minor.

As for the interpretation of the penultimate letter, after my personal examination, the reading made by Lipiński seems to be the correct one: *l*, and not *r*, as suggested by Kalinka. In the inscription this sign shows a clear vertical stroke which occupies more than a half of the sign and is followed by the letter *h* as can be seen in the photograph:



Fig. 13. The last two letters of the Aramaic inscription (photo by M. Vernet)

If the penultimate letter had been *r*, as Kalinka suggested, the vertical stroke this sign shows would not have been longer than half the size of the sign. The reconstruction of the prep. *zy* that precedes *lh*, which was first proposed by Hanson (1968: 6) and followed by Lipiński, on the basis of the Aramaic Gözne inscription, seems to my opinion reasonable, for the reasons I will explain below.<sup>13</sup>

##### 5. The reconstruction of the Greek inscription

According to this reading and taking into account that the Greek inscription was engraved four generations later on the basis of the Aramaic inscription, my reconstruction of the Greek inscription is:

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<sup>13</sup> For the reconstruction of the Aram. ‘descendants’ based on the Greek inscription, see below §5.

Ἀρτί[μας Ἀρσάπιος Λιμυρεὺς Ἀρτίμου δ' Κορυδ[α]λλέως πρόπαππος [...πρ]οκατεσ[κ]εῦάσατο τὸν τάφον [τοῦτον ἐ]αυτῶι καὶ τοῖς ἐγγονοῖς

‘Artimas, son of Arsapios, from Limyra, great-grandfather of Artimas from Korydalla, ... erected this tomb for himself and for (his) descendants.’

In the Greek inscription, I have reconstructed the reflexive personal pronoun with an initial ἐ (ἐ]αυτῶι). This reconstruction had been made by Kalinka and was followed by Donner-Röllig. Even Wörrle (1995: 406) reconstructs an ε with a dot, assuming in consequence a visible fragmentary letter in the Greek inscription. Yet even in the case where one considers this letter to be impossible to reconstruct (as I assumed after my examination), and although one could also read this dative as αὐτῶι, without ἐ (as Lipiński 1975: 163 proposed),<sup>14</sup> as a mere variant of this pronoun, I still prefer to reconstruct it with ἐ because of certain relevant statistical data. In the Greek inscriptions of Limyra, the form ἐαυτός (used as a pronoun) occurs in 14 inscriptions,<sup>15</sup> whereas the shortest form (αὐτός) only appears in three, two of which present unceratin letters (with a dot on the top) in the initial letter ἄ.<sup>16</sup> Although this is not a definitive proof for the reconstruction of ἐ]αυτός, is at least indicative and speaks in favour of reconstructing the form ἐ]αυτῶι. Lipiński’s reconstruction of ἄγιον (as ‘sacred place’) in the gap before πρ]οκατεσ[κ]εῦάσατο (see Footnote 14), has no foundation and to my opinion should be rejected.

At the end of the Greek inscription ἐ]αυτῶι καὶ τοῖς ἐγγονοῖς ‘for himself and (his) descendants’ appears. The Aramaic inscription shows *lh* ‘to him’. In Aramaic this construction is also used as *dativum possessivum* (see §6), and therefore this sequence would match the Greek one. In Aramaic, the sequence *zy]lh* ‘that (are) to him’, also ‘of him’, could be dealing with the possessive implicit in the Greek sequence ‘ἐ]αυτῶι καὶ τοῖς ἐγγονοῖς ‘for himself and (his) descendants’. It is possible that before the Aramaic sequence *zy]lh* there would have been the name for ‘descendants’ in Aramaic, as Kalinka reconstructed, although with the 3d person sg. m. suffix *h* suffixed directly to the word for ‘descendants’, *w<sup>2</sup>hry-h* ‘and his descendants’. Since I have explained that *l* was the correct reading (and not *r* as suggested Kalinka), instead of *w<sup>2</sup>hrh* ‘his descendance’, I propose to reconstruct *w<sup>2</sup>hry zy] lh* ‘and the descendants of him’, which in Aramaic signifies the same although with other words.

<sup>14</sup> Lipiński 1975: 163 reconstructs the following: Ἀρτί[μης Ἀρσάπιῶ ὁ ... about 17 letters... Κορυδ[α]λλέως πρόπαππος [ἄγιον πρ]οκατεσ[κ]εῦάσατο τὸν τάφον [τοῦτον] αὐτῶι καὶ τοῖς ἐγγονοῖς.

<sup>15</sup> Necr. II: Tomb 48, 49, 85, 187; Necr. III: 13/17, 20, 38, 48; Necr. V: 7, 17, 43, 51, 60.2, 121.

<sup>16</sup> Necr. II: tomb 11; Necr. V: tomb 51 and 52, both of them uncertain according to Wörrle’s 1995 reconstruction.



In my opinion, as I have explained, the Greek inscription would have been an ‘updated’ translation of the Aramaic inscription, and therefore, this inscription would be a peculiar bilingual, in the sense that the Greek version, engraved four generations later, would have incorporated new information, although at the same time preserving, the information in the Aramaic inscription.

#### *6. Epichoric influences on the Aramaic inscription from Limyra and linguistic features of the inscription*

Since its first edition and commentaries, scholars have commented on the unusual syntactical order of this Aramaic inscription, which shows OD + subj. + verb, instead of the expected Subj. + verb + OD. Some scholars have seen Acadian influence in it (Lipinski), but in my view, it may be also possible to explain it through Lycian influence, especially regarding the position of OD at the beginning of the sentence. Many inscriptions of Limyra (and of Lycia), indeed, begin with the same syntactical construction: *ebēñē kupā me ti prñawatē X* (Subj. of the sentence) ‘this tomb (it) made X’.<sup>17</sup> It is the same syntactical construction that appears in the Greek inscriptions of Limyra as well, influenced also by Lycian inscriptions.<sup>18</sup> If we again examine the beginning of one of the two Greek inscriptions mentioned above in more detail, one will notice that the Aramaic inscription shows the same structure, the only difference being the position of the verb, which in the case of the Greek inscription, is immediately after the OD, whereas in the case of the Aramaic inscription appears after the subject of the sentence:

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<sup>17</sup> See, among the epichoric inscriptions of Limyra, TL101, 102, 103, 105, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 129, 120, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 142, 144, 145, 146, 147.

<sup>18</sup> Necropolis II: tombs 11, 85, 110, 187; Necropolis III: tombs 12, 38 and 48; Necropolis V: tombs 7, 17, 43, 52, 60.2, 121; for the edition of Gr. inscriptions in Limyra, see Wörrle 1995.

*Tomb 38 of Necropolis III*

Τὸν τά[φ]ον [τ]ο[ῦ]τον κατεσκευάσατο Σώπατρος Πυρρίου Λιμυρεὺς  
‘This tomb built Sopatros, son of Pyrros, of Limyra’

TL 152

*ʔstwdnh znh ʔrtym br ʔrzpy ʔbd ʔhd mn zym[wr]*

‘This tomb was made by Artimas, son of Arzapy, the one from Limyra’

This epichoric and Gr. influence to the Aramaic inscription could also speak in favour of reconstructing Aram. *ʔbd* ‘made’ (and not *ʔbd* ‘servant’) because it has its exactly corresponding equivalent in Gr. κατεσκευάσατο ‘made’ (which appears in the Gr. version of the same inscription), and would correspond to Lyc. *prñawatē* which, as we have already seen, is one of the most widely used verbs in Lycian inscriptions. In the case of the Aram. reconstruction of *ʔhr* ‘thus, in sum’, one could finally argue that the same equation could be applied between *ʔhd (mn Zm[wr])* ‘the one (of Limyra)’ and Λιμυρεὺς ‘of Limyra’ (in the sense, not in the form, of course).

## 7. Conclusions

Since its first publication by Fellows and Kalinka, the Aramaic inscription from Limyra, which is not complete and has an important gap in the middle, has resulted in a number of different readings and proposals by scholars. With the exception of Kalinka and Hanson, no other scholar has examined the inscription personally and no photograph of the Aramaic inscription has been published (only the casts made by Kalinka). A personal examination allowed me to verify the reading of some letters discussed among scholars and let me realize that another reading of the inscription was possible. What is new in my reading is the new reinterpretation of the sequence *mn zym[wr]* ‘from Lim[yra]’. This sequence was traditionally interpreted as being formed by three words: *mn zy mđ[ynt]ʔ* ‘of the city’ in Kalinka’s version, or *mn zy m[ʔrt]ʔ zʔ* ‘of this cave’ according to Lipiński. These scholars interpreted a gap between letters *y* and *m*, which in my reading does not appear. After a careful and directly examination of the inscription, I realised that this gap could be interpreted simply as being non-existent. Consequently, I propose the new reading *zym[wr]...* This word would be precisely the Lycian place name for Limyra, *Zēmure-*, written in Aramaic. As I have explained in this paper, this reading would not be an isolated phenomenon, on the contrary: in some Greek funerary inscriptions of Limyra the corresponding Gr. form Λιμυρεὺς also appears. Moreover, this hypothesis matches the hypothetical reconstruction of the Greek inscription made by Petersen without having known this new interpretation. According to my reading, the Greek inscription should be interpreted as an ‘updated’ translation of the Aramaic inscription, and therefore, TL 152 should be considered as a peculiar bilingual inscription, in the sense that the Greek version would have incorporated new

information, while at the same time, preserving the information in the Aramaic inscription. If this hypothesis is correct, *zim[wr* would be the only place name for Limyra seen in Aramaic. In this paper I have also reconstructed the Greek inscription on the basis of the new Aramaic reading and I have attributed some unusual phenomena of this Aramaic inscription to epichoric influences, such as the presence of OD in the first position of the sentence.

## 8. Abbreviations

acc.: accusative	Lyc.: Lycian
adj.: adjective	Lyd.: Lydian
Aram.: Aramaic	Mil.: Milyan
Arab.: Arabic	OIran.: Old Iranian
Assyr.: Assyrian	PIE: Proto-Indo-European
Bab.: Babylonian	pl.: plural
dat.: dative	PN: personal pronoun
Elam.: Elamite	prep.: preposition
Eth.: Ethiopic	pron.: pronouns
gen.: genitive	sg.: singular
Gr.: Greek	Syr.: Syriac
Hebr.: Hebrew	suf.: suffix
HLuw.: Hieroglyphic Luwian	

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