

From Ugarit to Nabataea



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From Ugarit to Nabataea

Studies in Honor of John F. Healey

Edited by

George Anton Kiraz

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PREFACE

This Festschrift is dedicated to our dear friend and esteemed colleague Professor John F. Healey, who will celebrate his 65th birthday at the beginning of 2013. Professor Healey was born on 10th February 1948 in Leeds, UK, and studied in Dublin and Cambridge before completing his doctorate on Ugaritic in 1977 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, under the supervision of the late Professor Donald Wiseman.

Professor Healey has been an active teacher and researcher since 1973, and for nearly four decades his teaching abilities and scientific publications have been appreciated by numerous students and scholars all over the world. He is one of the leading researchers in Nabataean and Semitic Studies, and one of the most cited researchers in Nabataean civilization as well as Syriac studies.

Professor Healey taught in several British universities including Birmingham and Cardiff, and in 1989 joined the University of Manchester. He was a Visiting Fellow at All Souls College, Oxford, and a Visiting Scholar at St John's College, Oxford. He is a Fellow of the British Academy.

Professor Healey taught countless students and has been a supervisor for M.A. and Ph.D. students of different nationalities at the University of Durham and the University of Manchester. Many of his students were from the Middle East.

He edited several books, and his immense contributions to scholarship are indicated by his record of publications. He is one of the editors of the *Journal of Semitic Studies*, as well as being on the editorial boards of a number of other academic journals.

Professor Healey is a scholar with an interesting and remarkable formidable research profile. He has been active in the following fields of research: Semitic languages; history of the alphabet; Ugaritic studies (including language and religion); Hebrew and the Hebrew Bible; Aramaic epigraphy and linguistics (especially Egyptian Aramaic, Nabatae-

an, Palmyrene and Hatran Aramaic) and Syriac. He has also contributed to research on the Middle East during the Greek and Roman periods, Mandaic and the Mandaeans, as well as legal history (pagan and early Jewish legal documents).

He shared his expertise and knowledge internationally through visiting positions within the UK and participation in dozens of cultural events in different parts of the world.

We, the editors and contributors of this volume, are delighted to dedicate this work to our friend, teacher, and colleague, John F. Healey. We congratulate him on an outstanding career and academic reputation, and research that has profoundly influenced many people throughout his decades of teaching and research.

We are proud to offer Professor Healey this volume of essays by so many scholars who are highly appreciative of his efforts. Our warmest thanks go to them and to for their stimulating essays and commitment to this publication, and to Melonie Schmierer for copy-editing the text.

Zeyad Al-Salameen and George Kiraz
Editors
March 2012

JOHN FRANCIS HEALEY

Born: 10th February 1948 Leeds, England

Parents: George Healey and Frances Clarke

Married: Elizabeth Anne Warman on 3rd June 1972

Two children: Kevin James Healey (born June 1974); Frances Anne Healey (born September 1975)

Interests: Travel in the Middle East, literature, walking, painting and model railways.

HONOURS

2011 Elected Fellow of the British Academy

EDUCATION

Secondary education: St Michaels College, Leeds

1970 BA (1st class) Honours School of Semitic Languages and Hellenistic Greek, National University of Ireland

1972 MA (by examination) Semitic Languages, National University of Ireland

1977 PhD School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London): thesis 'Death, Underworld and Afterlife in the Ugaritic Texts'

EMPLOYMENT

1973–74 Temporary Lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament, Department of Theology, University of Birmingham

1974–80 Lecturer in Semitic Languages, Department of Semitic Languages and Religious Studies, University College, Cardiff

1981–89 Lecturer in Hebrew, then Lecturer in Semitic Philology and Hebrew, School of Oriental Studies, University of Durham. Also Tutor, St Aidan's College, University of Durham

1989–96 Lecturer, Senior Lecturer (1992), Reader (1995) in Semitic Studies, Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Victoria University of Manchester

1997–to date Professor of Semitic Studies (*ad hominem*), Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Victoria University of Manchester (School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures in the new University of Manchester from 2004)

SHORT-TERM FELLOWSHIPS

2000 Visiting Scholar, St John's College, Oxford

2002–03 Leverhulme Research Fellow

2002–03 Visiting Fellow, All Souls College, Oxford

PUBLICATIONS

Books

1980, *First Studies in Syriac*, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, (186pp.) [Reprints Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome, 1981ff.; reprints with minor corrections: Birmingham, 1986, 1994]

1990, *The Early Alphabet*, British Museum Press/University of California Press, London/Berkeley, (64pp.) [Reprints London 1993, 1997; French translation as *Les Débuts de l'alphabet* (translation by Christiane Zivie-Coche), Le Seuil, Paris, 2005; Japanese translation as *Shoki Arufabetto* (translation by Shigeo Takeuchi and Fumio Yajima), Gakugei Shorin, Tokyo, 1996]

1991, *The Aramaic Targum of Proverbs* [part of a composite volume in the *Aramaic Bible* series], The Liturgical Press, Collegeville, Minnesota, (viii + 65pp.)

- 1993, *The Nabataean Tomb Inscriptions of Mada'in Salih* (Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 1), O.U.P., Oxford, (xiv + 298pp. + maps and plates + 55pp. in Arabic)
- 1999, *The Old Syriac Inscriptions of Edessa and Osrhoene* (Handbuch der Orientalistik I/42) [written jointly with H. J. W. Drijvers], E. J. Brill, Leiden, 1999 (xv + 280pp. + plates)
- 2001, *The Religion of the Nabataeans: a Conspectus* (Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 136), E. J. Brill, Leiden, 2001 (xvi + 242pp. + plates)
- 2005, *Leshono Suryoyo: First Studies in Syriac* (Gorgias Handbooks 2), Gorgias Press, Piscataway, NJ, (xxiii + 221pp.) [extensively revised version of 1980 publication above; German translation in preparation by Ahu Shemunkasho: Gorgias Press]
- 2009, *A Brief Introduction to the Arabic Alphabet* [written jointly with G. R. Smith], Saqi Books, London, (116pp.)
- 2009, *Aramaic Inscriptions and Documents of the Roman Period* (Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions IV), O.U.P., Oxford, (xvii + 369pp. + figures + plates) [This book received an 'honourable mention' in the assessment for the British-Kuwait Friendship Society/British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Book Prize in 2010: 'John Healey's book fills a long-felt need for a collection of representative texts from the different dialects during the Roman period of a language that was the common tongue of the Middle East for over a millennium before it was replaced by Arabic. The selection is first-class, and the introductions setting them in their contexts clear. The reviewer concludes that the work 'is likely to remain a standard work on the subject for many years.']
- 2011, *Law and Religion between Petra and Edessa: Studies in Aramaic Epigraphy on the Roman Frontier* (Variorum Collected Studies Series CS966, Ashgate/Variorum: Farnham/Burlington, VT)

Edited and Translated Volumes

- 1986, *The Aramaic Language* [translated from the German of K. Beyer], Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, (61pp.)
- 1989, *Back to the Sources: Biblical and Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Dermot Ryan* [edited with K. J. Cathcart], Glendale Press, Dublin, (191pp.)

- 1994, *Ugarit and the Bible. Proceedings of the International Symposium on Ugarit and the Bible, 1992* (Ugaritisch-Biblische Literatur 11) [edited with G. J. Brooke and A. H. W. Curtis], Ugarit-Verlag, Münster, (470pp.)
- 1999, *The Blackwell Dictionary of Eastern Christianity* [edited with K. Parry et al.], Blackwell, Oxford, (xxii + 581pp.) [Paperback revised edition 2001]
- 2002, *Studies on Arabia in honour of Professor G. Rex Smith* (Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 14) [edited with Venetia Porter], O.U.P., Oxford, (363pp.)
- 2004, *Biblical and Near Eastern Essays: Studies in Honour of Kevin J. Cathcart* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 375) [edited with C. McCarthy], T & T Clark, International, London/New York, (376pp.)
- 2005, *Studia Semitica: the Journal of Semitic Studies Jubilee Volume* (Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 16) [edited with P. S. Alexander et al], O.U.P., Oxford (303pp.)

Series and Journal Editorships

- Journal of Semitic Studies* and *Journal of Semitic Studies Supplements*, University of Manchester/O.U.P. [one of five/six editors 1992–to date]
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- Aram*, Peeters (Leuven) [member of Advisory Editorial Board 1989–to date]
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- British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem Monograph Series*, British Academy/O.U.P. [sole editor 1994–99, when the School was merged with the Amman Institute]
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Adumatu, Riyād (al-Sudairy Foundation) [Advisory Board, 2006–to date]

Articles (Books and Journals)

- 1975, 'Malku: mlkm: Anunnaki,' *Ugarit-Forschungen* 7, pp. 235–238
- 1976, 'The Underworld Character of the God Dagan,' *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages* 5, pp. 43–51.
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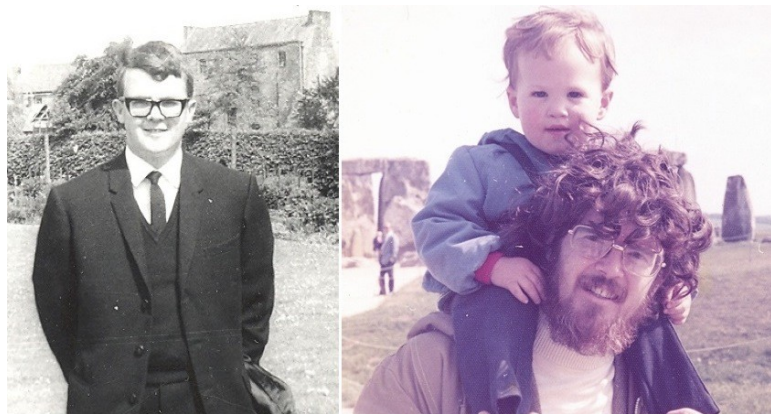
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- 2007, 'From Sapanu/Sapunu to Kasion: the Sacred History of a Mountain,' in W. G. E. Watson (ed), "*He unfurrowed his brow and laughed*". *Essays in Honour of Professor Nicolas Wyatt (Alter Orient und Altes Testament 299)* (Münster), pp. 141–51.
- 2007, 'Eastern Spirituality from Ephrem the Syrian to Isaac of Nineveh,' in J. C. R. Hill (ed), *The New Lion Handbook: the History of Christianity*, p. 112.
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- 2009, 'The Patriarch Isho'yahb III and the Christians of Qatar in the First Islamic Century,' in E. C. D. Hunter (ed), *The Christian Heritage of Iraq (Gorgias Eastern Christian Studies 13)* (Piscataway), pp. 1–9.
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JOHN HEALEY: A LIFE IN PICTURES



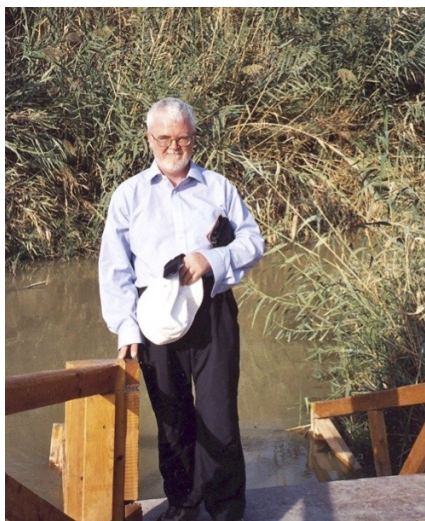
Photos of the young John Francis Healey, and (*bottom left*) with his parents



John Healey with his family: (*top left*) as a young student; (*top right*) as a young father; (*center*) with Elizabeth Anne Warman on their wedding day; (*bottom*) with his wife and children



Out in the field: (*top left*) with a friend at Ebla; (*top right* and *bottom right*): at Madâ'in Sâlih; (*bottom left*): recording an inscription at Sogmartar



At leisure: (*top left*) beside the river Jordan; (*top right*): fishing in the Gulf; (*bottom left*): walking in the hills; (*bottom right*): on holiday in Italy



(top): With friends and students; (center): with three former students (Zeyad, Hamad and Şinasi); (bottom right): on his 60th birthday; (bottom right): John Healey today

KAMKAM THE NABATAEAN PRIESTESS: PRIESTHOOD AND SOCIETY IN ANCIENT ARABIA

HATOON AL FASSI

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The inscribed tomb of the woman Kamkam has generated speculation ever since its discovery. Dated to 1 BCE (making it one of the earliest-known Nabataean inscribed tombs), the tomb is that of a woman of al-Ḥijr/Ḥegra who dedicated her tomb to her daughter and her daughter's offspring. Kamkam is an unusual figure, and this paper proposes that her genealogy and deities mentioned in her tomb inscription indicate that she was in fact a priestess.

PRIESTHOOD AND SOCIETY IN ANCIENT ARABIA

To explore the role that priests and priestesses played in ancient Arabia, we will first move forward in time to the pre-Islamic era, and a 5th century CE reference to the priestess of al-Ḥijr or Ḥegra (Madā'in Ṣāliḥ). According to this story,¹ Abdel Muttalib bin Hashim, the grandfather of the Prophet Muhammad, made a vow to Allah that if he was given 10 sons he would slaughter one once they had reached puberty in gratitude to Allah and as revenge for an earlier dispute with his tribe of

¹ Ibn Hišām, sirah 1: 199ff.; Ibn al-Athir, al-Kāmel 1: 454–456.

Quraysh about digging the historic and holy well of Zamzam. He was eventually granted ten sons, and set about fulfilling his vow. He met with each of his sons to tell them of his vow and asked that each write his name on a lot to be presented to the god Hubal. The priest or guardian of the god would then draw from the lots, and select the son for slaughter. The lot fell to Abdullah, the youngest son and future father of the Prophet. When the notables of his tribe, the Quraysh, heard of this, they insisted that he not fulfil his vow and that he find another solution so that slaughtering of sons would not become a tradition. They asked that he postpone the slaughter of his son until he could find a way to be excused from the vow, and offered their help with the ransom no matter what the cost might be.

The priestess of al-Hijr/Hegra was proposed as an arbitrator, and that the final decision on slaughter or ransom would fall to her. The unhappy Abdel Muttalib visited the priestess at Khaybar, and she agreed to leave and consult her medium *تَلِيح* whom she would ask for advice. When she returned the following day she told the men that she had an answer and asked them about the customary cost of blood money, *diyyah*. When Abdel Muttalib told her the *diyyah* was ten camels, The priestess said that he should go home and slaughter ten camels and then to draw lots *القداح* to choose between the camels and his son. If the lot should fall on Abdullah, Abdel Muttalib should add another ten camels and slaughter them. If the lot then fell on the camels, it would mean that the god was satisfied and his son would be saved. Returning to Makkah, Abdel Muttalib prayed to Allah and invited him to choose between his son Abdullah and the ten camels. The lot fell on Abdullah. He added a further ten and again the lot fell on Abdullah and this continued until the camels numbered one hundred, when the lot then fell on the camels and the god was satisfied. The happy father was prepared to slaughter the hundred camels as ransom for his son Abdullah, but to be certain he insisted on repeating the drawing of lots three times, and each time it pointed to the camels. He then slaughtered the camels and left them to God, not letting any person or animal eat them.

According to the version of the story related above, the priestess of al-Hijr/Hegra, was not based in al-Hijr/Hegra but in Khaybar, a town with a prominent Jewish community in the 7th century. However, the

earlier source for this story, Ibn Hišām, did not mention al-Hijr/Hegra, but al-Hijaz. According to him, Abdel Muttalib went to Yatrib (Madinah), but eventually found the priestess in Khaybar,² as in the story of Ibn al-Athir. It seems that the towns were similarly known for their oracle-givers, and the relatively short distance separating the two (approximately 100 km apart) may also have contributed to some confusion between them.

As far as I am aware, this story is not repeated in any other early Islamic source, but among the details agreed in its two versions are that there was a tradition of prediction and oracles-givers in Wadi al-Qura, in north-western Arabia (where the two towns lie), and this was a speciality exclusive to priestesses.

In antiquity, priestesses were typically associated with a ruling male relation. The first queens or wives of a king known to be high priestesses were Baranamtara of Lagash, the wife of Lugalanda, (ca. 2350 BCE)³, and Shag-Shag, the wife of Urukagina, also of the Early Dynastic Period in Ur.⁴ Enḫeduanna, the daughter of Sargon of Akkad (ca. 2371–2316 BCE), was the high priestess of the Moon-God Nanna of Ur and the temple of An, the supreme God of Heaven, at Uruk. Enḫeduanna is also the first known poetess, and left poetry and hymns to the goddess Inanna. She was followed by Enmenanna, daughter of Naram-Sin, who held the same position of Enḫeduanna and called herself 'wife of Nanna'. The tradition of appointing princesses as high-priestesses continued throughout the Sumerian and Akkadian periods.⁵

In ancient Egypt, a similar role was occupied by royal women. In the time of Ramesses II (1289–1224 BCE) and later, they served as the so-called 'God's Wife of Amun, a role that combines the divine with the human in her person'.⁶ Priestesses belonged to society's upper class, either by their connection to royalty or other elites. It seems that sacred

² Ibn Hišām, sirah 1: 201.

³ See for example this Akkadian proverb: 'Man is the shadow of a god and a slave is the shadow of a man; but the king is the mirror of a god' (Nemet-Nejat 1998: 217).

⁴ Woolley 1934: 33ff.

⁵ Batto 1974: 8, 30, n.2; Lerner 1986: 62-68; Frymer-Kensky 1992: 64-65; Nemet-Nejat 1998: 150.

⁶ Hollis 1997: 224.

marriage was not exclusive to the king or priestesses: we find that in southern Arabia Ma'in (Minaean) women were given in marriage to the God 'Aṭtar, who chose himself a woman on a certain day each year.⁷

Priests and priestesses were guardians of the gods and goddesses' interests, preservers of their temples, supervisors of the gifts offered and sacrifices presented, mediators between gods and worshippers, making known their oracles, supervising the fertility cult of sacred marriage (especially in Sumer and Akkad), and writers and readers of the appropriate hymns and poems.⁸ It is possible that the Nabataean king was also the high priest of Dushara, since Dushara is the dynastic god, 'God of (our) Lord',⁹ and that the queen was the high priestess of the mother goddess, Allāt-Isis.¹⁰

Nabataean priests appear under different titles, which may denote either a hierarchy or simply different linguistic derivations. Among these titles are *khn* (*kāhin*), *kmr* (*kamar*),¹¹ *rb* (*rabb*) and *'pkl* (*'afkal*) and others. John F. Healey has provided a comprehensive discussion as to their probable functions,¹² and it appears that reference to several of these titles for a particular god or goddess indicates a hierarchy rather than a mere linguistic difference. For Allāt, three priesthood titles are cited in two inscriptions from Wadi Ramm, which refer to a *khn 'ltw 'lht*(?), *kāhin* of Allāt the goddess,¹³ and an *'pkl*.¹⁴ A third, found in Ḥebran in Ḥawrān and dating from 47 CE, refers to a *kmr 'lt*, *kamar* of Allāt.¹⁵

Al-'Uzzā priests were given the title *kāhin* and appear frequently in Sinai.¹⁶ Savignac has noted that the word *khn* is unfamiliar in Aramaic and suggests that this word is a borrowing from Arabic,¹⁷ whereas Teixidor has regarded it as more relevant to the Canaanite culture than

⁷ RES 3306; Naim 2000: 710–713.

⁸ Frymer-Kensky 1992: 64.

⁹ al-Fassi, 2007: 28.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 32–35.

¹¹ Not found in Arabic.

¹² Healey 2001: 163–164.

¹³ Savignac 1932: No. 2.

¹⁴ Savignac 1933: No. 2.

¹⁵ CIS, II, 170.

¹⁶ CIS, II, 611.

¹⁷ Savignac 1932: 592–93.

Arabian.¹⁸ Her priests in pre-Islamic Arabia were from the tribe of banū Šaybān from Sulaym.¹⁹ In the early Arabic Islamic sources, the *kāhin* and *sādin* were those who predict, tellers of secrets of the past and present and utterers oracles, giving the exegesis of dreams with the aid of jinn, spirits or underworld creatures. There were famous *kāhins* at the eve of Islam, such as Saṭīḥ and Šiqq,²⁰ as well as priestesses, *kāhināt*, such as Sujāḥ and others. There is no information about Manāt's priests, although references to her appear equally in male and female tombs at Ḥegra. She is the deity referred to most often after Dushara (that is, six times in five tombs: H 8, 16, 19, 31, 34). In pre-Islamic Arabia, her priests could also be men, and the clan of 'Attāb son of Mālik from the tribe of Ṭaqīf were her servants or *sadanah* (pl. of *sādin*).²¹

Afkal, from Akkadian *apkallu*, means 'the wise',²² and this term is also found in Liḥyānite inscriptions (JS 277: *afkal* of Allāt). It is also found in many inscriptions from Sinai, in Tal al-Šuqāfiyyah, in Siḥ Sidrah and other places for different deities.²³ Savignac has suggested that *afkal* was probably the highest religious authority, since the builders of the sanctuary at Ramm called themselves 'lymw or ḡlymw, 'the servants', of the *afkal*, a term normally used in relation to the Lord, or the king.²⁴ Kmr, in Official Aramaic *kmr*³ (from Akkadian *kumru*) for 'priest'²⁵ appears twice in Nabataean. Once with Allāt in Ḥebzan²⁶ and once in the Temple of Winged Lions in Raqamū-Petra, which Hammond has argued belongs to Allāt.²⁷

¹⁸ Teixidor 1995: 121.

¹⁹ Ibn Hišām, sirah I: 78; Ibn al-Kalbi 22.

²⁰ Ibn Hišām, sirah I: 30–33; James 1955: 92–93.

²¹ Ibn al-Kalbi 16.

²² Teixidor 1995: 121.

²³ Littmann & Meredith 1954: No. 81; CIS, II, 526; 506, 526, 608, 766, 1236, 1748, 1885, 2491, 2665.

²⁴ Savignac 1933: 412.

²⁵ Hofijzer & Jongeling 1995 I: 516–517.

²⁶ CIS, II, 170.

²⁷ Hammond et al. 1986: 78, l. 2. For other priestly titles see al-Fassi 1993: 266–270; Teixidor 1995: 120–121; Healey 2001: 163–165.

The title *ptwr*²⁸ is attested twice in Ḥegra and Raqamū-Petra inscriptions (H 29),²⁸ which might mean, according to Healey, ‘diviner or perhaps a military augur advising on campaigns on the basis of entrails, dreams and astrology’,²⁹ a function possibly related to the early Arab tradition of divination by the flight of birds.³⁰

The word for ‘priestess’ is so far unattested in Nabataean. However, it is found in Liḥyānite as *ʿfkl* which could also be *ʿfkl* It (JS 64L) or the priest of Allat, where the *lām* is assimilated.³¹ Pre-Islamic priestesses were known in Arabia and a few references are given here. Among these priestesses, *kāhināt*, there was Faṭimah al-Ḥaṭʿamiyyah in Makkah, Zarqāʾ al-Yamāmah in Najd, *kāhinat bani Saʿd* in Wadi al Qura (mentioned above), Ḥadas, from the north Arabian tribe of Ḡanam, Ṭurayfah, *kāhinah* of Yemen, Zabráʾ, between al-Šiḥr and Ḥaḍramawt, and Salmā al-Hamdāniyyah al-Ḥimyarīyyah.³²

The priestess’ role was not merely as a functionary of the rituals or the oracle of a certain god or goddess, or to remove the spirits from a possessed person.³³ Her role also included what in modern classification would be listed under ‘health and trade’ or more generally, the ‘public sector’. Discrimination between the public (and the secular) and the sacred have been challenged by anthropological and social studies.³⁴ Here it is useful to point out some of the roles attributed to the temple and its functionaries that clarify how the ‘sacred’ system functioned.

The different roles played by priests and priestesses includes all of the following: supervision of different rituals, such as weddings, births, funerals, perhaps also circumcision; possibly the knowledge of different herbs making them expert healers; Possible involvement in ceremonies of procreation (what was known in ancient Sumer as the ‘sacred marriage’, usually conducted between the goddess Inanna-Ishtar - the love

²⁸ Parr 1967–68.

²⁹ Healey 2001: 164.

³⁰ al-Andalusī 2: 795; Healey 2001: 165; al-Fassi 2005: 474.

³¹ al-Fassi 1993: 264.

³² Ibn Hišām, *sirah* IV: 17; al-Suhailī 1:131-143; Zaydān 1967 III: 20.

³³ See, for example, the incantation text in Naveh 1979 with the detailed commentary by Healey, 2001: 165.

³⁴ See, for example, Mann 1986 I: 126; Beard & Crawford 1989: 25–39.

and fertility goddess - or her representative, and the king, the representative of Dumuzi, Inanna's husband, which has been interpreted in later Greek literature on Babylonia and Syria as 'temple prostitution').³⁵

Moreover, since the institution of the temple in most ancient societies functioned as a bank (for example in Mesopotamia).³⁶ In today's terms, priests and priestesses would be expected to be involved in financial arrangements. The temple collected tithes or taxes on silver, gold, offerings or provisions, as well as silver or bronze coinage. The percentage of such tithes collected is not clear in the inscription found on the inner wall of the Winged Lions Temple in Raqamū-Petra.³⁷ Similar arrangements are known in Jerusalem and Hatra for the setting up in public of religious rules,³⁸ and a share was to be given to the priest. Also included were fines collected on breaching tomb contract conditions, as found in Ḥegra. The inscription on the Kamkam tomb (JS 16; H 16) clearly specifies a fined sum to be paid to the priest. In addition to these sources of revenue, the temple was paid expiation. The Winged Lions Temple inscription has a reference to a condition of payment for acts of delinquency.³⁹ Although the meaning is not clear, as the slab on which the inscription is written is broken in half, one would expect such functions to take place in the temple, or that such money would be paid in to the temple. Similarly, southern Arabia has left us an abundance of expiation inscriptions.⁴⁰

The money that entered the treasury of the temple facilitated investment deals that priests and priestesses would have entered into, probably investment in the caravan trade in the main, but also lending money to the state or private individuals. Traces of the economic role of temples are found in early Sumer and later, where the temple was the commercial centre, and priests and priestesses were undoubtedly engaged in the commercial transactions that took place there.

Furthermore, the temple was also used as an archive centre or record house, as was noted twice in a Nabatean papyrus and on

³⁵ Frymer-Kensky 1992: 50–60.

³⁶ Mann 1986 I: 126; Driel 1999: 25.

³⁷ Hammond *et al* 1986: 77–78.

³⁸ Healey 2001: 164.

³⁹ Hammond *et al* 1986: 78, 1.2.

⁴⁰ See Al-Naim 2000: 106–111; Frantsouzoff forthcoming.

tombs.⁴¹ Therefore, the temple with its crew of priests, priestesses, servants, slaves, worshippers, perhaps ‘temple prostitutes’, and perhaps travellers who stayed there, was self-sufficient. The temple functioned as a home for its priests and servants, as well as all the other roles it probably played. It encompassed the *ḥaram* or sacred space that was protected by the sanctity of the temple’s god or goddess. Its premises would usually include a source of water (either a well, cistern or spring), as seen in Allāt’s temple of Wadi Ramm. A *ḥaram* would be expected also to include a cemetery. It can be supposed that the priesthood, similar to other professions, was hereditary within a family. Children were usually dedicated to the service of the god or goddess, and this is found in many traditions, including those of Arabia, Babylonia, Egypt and Syria. Priests and priestesses had special familial or marital arrangements that did not necessarily reflect common customs, and this might have included celibacy or giving birth to children from unknown men. More of these customs are discussed in the example below.

To summarize, any attempt in the study of ancient societies to separate the spheres of social life on the basis of a division between the religious and the secular, or the sacred and the political/social, will not prove useful or informative, and it can easily perpetuate the belief that a real distinction existed.

KAMKAM THE PRIESTESS

The owner of tomb B19 in Ḥegra, Kamkam daughter of Wā’ilah daughter of Ḥarām, is of particular significance here. Her tomb has interesting features that can allow speculation about her identity (see plate with courtesy to Prof Healey). Kamkam’s tomb has an early date (1 BCE), and in it she ordains a fine not to the king but to the priest, the *afkal*. She does not name him or the god(ess) to whom he ministers. This is the only inscription⁴² that refers to a priest and ordains fines for

⁴¹ Yadin 1963; 2002 doc 3; JS 36.

⁴² JS 16; H16; T205, B19: 1BCE/CE

dnh kpr dy ‘bdw kmkm brt w’lt brt ḥrmw

wklybt brth lnpšhm w’hrhm byrh tbt šnt

tš ḥrtt mlk nbṭw rḥm ‘mh wyl’n dwšr’

wmwth w’lt mn ‘mnd wmwtw wqyšh mn yzbn

kpr’ dnh ‘w mn yzbn ‘w yrhn ‘w yntn yth ‘w ynpq

him in addition to fines for the gods. It is expected that the fine that went to a deity went, in fact, to the temple. This case specifying the priest with a special fine shows, however, the important role that religion and the temple played in society at the end of the 1st century BCE. It is significant that Kamkam did not specify a fine for the king, and interestingly the other contemporary tomb (B6, which also dates from 1 BCE) also does not ordain any fines for gods or kings (JS 8; H 8). It is possible that fines paid to the king were in fact a later feature, copying an earlier allocation that directed fines to the priest. Another possibility is that in this period at the beginning of Nabataean rule over the city, the priest occupied a higher and more prestigious position in Ḥegran society than the king or his representative, the governor.

Another unusual aspect of Kamkam's tomb inscription relates to her matrilineal genealogy. It seems possible that Kamkam was associated with the type of temple where women were dedicated to the gods and might have undertaken sacred procreation rituals. It is possible on

*mnḥ gr 'w šlw 'w mn yqbr bh 'yr kmkm wbrth
w'hrtm wmn dy l' y'bd kdy l' ktyb p'yty 'mh
ldwšr' whbbw wlmnw w šmdyn 5 wlpkl' qns
sl'yn 'lq ḥrty bl'd mn dy ynpq bydh ktb mn yd
kmkm 'w klybt brth bkpr' hw p'gym ktb' hw
whb'lyy br 'bd'bd
'bd*

1. This is the tomb which Kamkam d. of Wā'ilah d. of Ḥarām 2. and Kulaybah, her daughter, made for themselves and their descendants. In the month of Tebet, the 3. ninth year of Ḥarīṭah, King of the Nabataeans, lover of his people. And may Dushara 4. and his throne and Allāt of 'Amnad and Manāt and her Qaysa curse anyone who sells 5. this tomb or who buys it or gives it in pledge or makes a gift of it or removes 6. from it body or limb or who buries in it anyone other than Kamkam and her daughter 7. and their descendants. And whoever does not act according to what is written above shall be liable 8. to Dushara and Hubal and to Manāt in the sum of 5 shamads and to the exorcist-priest for a fine of a 9. thousand Ḥareṭite sela's, except that whoever produces in his hand a document from the hand of 10. Kamkam or Kulaybat, her daughter, regarding this tomb, this document will be valid. 11. Wahaballāhi s. of 'Abd'Obadah 12. made it (Healey 1993b)

this basis, therefore, to explain why she dedicated her fine to the priest ḡpkl⁴³ and not to the king, since her first loyalty was to the gods and the head of the temple. Alessandra Avanzini has written of women who appear in some South Arabian inscriptions with matrilineal genealogies: 'il me semble opportun de les [polyandry and matrilineality] envisager comme des phénomènes propres à des femmes au statut spécial, probablement non-mariées, peut-être liées au culte'.⁴⁴ It seems probable, therefore, that Kamkam was, in fact, a priestess, member of the second or third generation of priestesses dedicated to the temple. Hereditary professions are known in the ancient world, and it is not inconceivable that there would be a family of servants of the temple. She would have belonged to a priesthood level below that of ḡpkl.

The question remains: in whose temple was Kamkam a hereditary priestess? Kamkam, in addition to the fines, invoked particular gods for certain curses. They include Manāt and her Qays, Allāt from 'Amnad, and Dushara's throne, in addition to Dushara proper, and the god Hubal, all receiving fines. Kamkam's inscription provides the names of five gods and two specific epithets. That is not particularly helpful in identifying which god or goddess she was priestess of, or which god the priest served, and this must remain an enigma until a temple is uncovered in Hegra and more inscriptions are found.

The exterior of her tomb is also interesting, and has an unusual design with a bas-relief of an eagle centred on the arch of the door. Curiously enough, this feature is not found in any other tomb in Hegra. Although one can relate the eagle to a solar god identified with Dushara,⁴⁵ this is not enough to establish the principal god for whom Kamkam served as priestess. The goddess Manāt, principle goddess in the Hijāz, is also a possible contender. A final and simple solution is that Kamkam was not a priestess of a specific god or goddess, but rather for all the gods known in Hegra and northern Arabia, both old and new. A dedication to all the gods also appears in the female Taymanite tomb of Waḏūh (JS 11-12; H 11-12).

⁴³ A partly similar situation is found in the Tal al-Šuqāfiyyah inscription, which is dated after the Ptolemaic king as well as the priest, ḡpkl (see Strugnell 1959: 31–2).

⁴⁴ Avanzini 1991: 161.

⁴⁵ Healey 1993a.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADAJ	Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental & African Studies
CIS	Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum.
IEJ	Israel Exploration Journal
JS	Jaussen A. J. & Savignac R., Mission Archéologique en Arabie
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
NAS	New Arabian Studies
RB	Revue Biblique
RES	Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique
T	al-Theeb, S., Nuqūš al-Ḥijr al-Nabaṭiyyah

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FIGURES



Al Fassi Plate 1: Tomb of Kamkam, the Priestess B19: JS 16; H 16 (photo J. Healey)