

## A NEW INSCRIBED WEIGHT: THE SHEKEL OF *HGM*

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The new weight presented here in this short note, currently in a private collection<sup>1</sup>, is a small bronze weight, a reverted flattened cone with a dome-shaped top and measuring 17 mm in diameter and 12 mm in height (Pl. I, 1-2). The weight is 14.36g. An inscription is engraved on the top. Its state of preservation is good. This weight is interesting from the points of view of metrology and toponymy, and because it enlightens the understanding of the Aramaic inscription CIS II, 113 and our knowledge of the pantheon of Taymā<sup>2</sup>.

The well-preserved inscription consists of six letters deeply incised around the circular convex surface on the top of the weight; as usual, it reads from right to left. The first letter is Š with the archaic saw-toothed form attested until the mid-seventh century B.C.<sup>2</sup>. The second letter is Q with oval head, pierced by the vertical shaft<sup>3</sup>. The third letter is L, its shaft is slightly curved with a pronounced rightward tilt and a short base<sup>4</sup>. The fourth letter is H: the three head lines are parallel, dipping down slightly to the left; the shaft is vertical and its length below the head lines is equal to its length through the lines<sup>5</sup>. The fifth letter is G, with two oblique legs of almost equal length<sup>6</sup>. The sixth letter is M with a slightly curved vertical shaft and the archaic saw-toothed form for the head<sup>7</sup>. The palaeographical analysis points to the 8th century. The inscription reads clearly: ŠQL *HGM*, “shekel of *HGM*”.

*HGM* is probably a place name as is shown by the parallel bronze weights mentioning three toponyms: ŠDN, *HMT* and *QRQR*. Two weights bear the toponym ŠDN. The first one, inscribed ŠQL ŠYDN / ‘ŠRTN, “shekel of Sidon. Twenty (or twentieth)”, is a tortoise-shaped weight of 11.7g<sup>8</sup>. The second one is a calf head(?) -shaped weight of 6.15g, inscribed ŠT SQL ŠDN, “fraction (half?) of the shekel of Sidon”<sup>9</sup>. Six weights

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1 I thank the collector for giving me the authorization of studying and publishing this object.

2 Cf. J.B. Peckham, *The Development of the Late Phoenician Scripts*, Cambridge 1968, pp. 104-107, pls VII, 1-9; VIII, 1.

3 *Ibid.*, pp. 104-105, pl. VII, 1, 3.

4 *Ibid.*, pl. VII, 1.

5 *Ibid.*, pl. VII, 3.

6 Cf. J. Naveh, “The Development of the Aramaic Script”, *PIASH* 5, 1971-1976, p. 44, fig. 1, 3.

7 Cf. Peckham, *op. cit.* (n. 2), pp. 104-105, pl. VII, 1.

8 J. Elayi and A.G. Elayi, *Recherches sur les poids phéniciens*, Paris 1997, p. 47, no. 3.

9 A.J. Evans, “Report of the Keeper of the Ashmolean Museum for the Year 1900”, *Jdl*, 1901, p. 165; F. Bron and A. Lemaire, “Poids inscrits phénico-araméens du VII<sup>e</sup> siècle av. J.-C.”, in *ACFP* I, Roma 1983, p. 765, no. II and pl. CXLV, 2-4; cf. Elayi-Elayi, *ibid.*, pp. 47-48, fig. 1 and pl. II.

bear the toponym *HMT*. The first one is a dome-shaped weight of 13.5g, inscribed *ŠQL HMT*, “shekel of Ḥamat”<sup>10</sup>. The second one is a square weight of 12.65g, also inscribed *ŠQL HMT*<sup>11</sup>. The third one is a sphinx-shaped weight of 26.6g inscribed *ŠQLY HMT*, “two shekels of Ḥamat”<sup>12</sup>. The fourth one is an animal (hare?)-shaped weight of 3.3g, inscribed *RB<sup>c</sup> ŠQL HMT*, “fourth of shekel of Ḥamat”<sup>13</sup>. The fifth one is a hare-shaped weight of 7.6g inscribed *ŠT ŠQL HMT*, “fraction (half?) of the shekel of Ḥamat”<sup>14</sup>. The sixth one is a dome-shaped weight of 7.6g, also inscribed *Š T ŠQL HMT*<sup>15</sup>. One weight is a recumbent fawn-shaped weight of 9.46g, inscribed *ŠQL QRQR*, “shekel of *QRQR*”<sup>16</sup>.

From this single 14.36g weight, it is impossible to know even the modified standard. Possibly the original standard followed the Phoenician standard of around 14g. For example, the modified standard of the Sidonian coins of Groups II, III and IV was of 14.01g<sup>17</sup> before the devaluation operated by king ‘Abd‘aštart I in 365 B.C.<sup>18</sup>. The Phoenician standard was also used by the city of Tyre in the first stage of her coinage from around 357; the modified standard was of 13.56 g<sup>19</sup>. The city of Byblos only adopted the Phoenician standard of *ca* 14g from the second half of the 5th century<sup>20</sup>, after having used a first standard of *ca* 9.5g in the first stage of her coinage<sup>21</sup>. The city of Arwad never used the *ca* 14g Phoenician standard in her coinage but the Persic

10 Elayi-Elayi, *ibid.*, p. 26 and pl. XXXIX, 6; P. Bordreuil, “Métropoles et métrologies poliades”, *Sem* 43-44, 1995, p. 13, fig. 2.

11 M. Heltzer, “Phoenician Trade and Phoenicians in Hamath”, in K. Van Lerberghe and A. Schoors (eds), *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East, Festschrift E. Lipinski*, Leuven 1995, pp. 101-105; cf. Elayi-Elayi, *ibid.*

12 P. Bordreuil and E. Gubel (eds), “BAALIM”, *Syria* 60, 1983, pp. 340-341; *Au pays de Baal et d’Astarté*, Paris 1983, p. 219, no. 251; Bordreuil, *loc. cit.* (n. 10), p. 13 and fig. 1; P.J. Riis and M.-L. Buhl, *Hama II/2*, Copenhagen 1990, pp. 65-66 and fig. 32; cf. Elayi-Elayi, *ibid.*, pp. 26-27.

13 Bordreuil, *loc. cit.* (n. 10), p. 14, fig. 3; cf. Elayi-Elayi, *ibid.*, pp. 26-27 and pl. XLI, 10.

14 Bron-Lemaire, *loc. cit.* (n. 9), pp. 763-764, no. 1; P. Bordreuil and E. Gubel (eds), “BAALIM”, *Syria* 62, 1985, pp. 174-175, no. II-2; Riis-Buhl, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 65-66 and fig. 30; Bordreuil, *loc. cit.* (n. 10), pp. 14-15, fig. 4; cf. Elayi-Elayi, *ibid.*, p. 27.

15 Bordreuil, *loc. cit.* (n. 10), p. 15 and fig. 5; cf. Elayi-Elayi, *ibid.*, p. 27.

16 Bron-Lemaire, *loc. cit.* (n. 9), p. 764; P. Bordreuil, in *Syrie, Mémoire et civilisation*, Paris 1993, pp. 266-267; cf. Elayi-Elayi, *ibid.*, p. 27.

17 J. Elayi and A.G. Elayi, *Le monnayage de la cité phénicienne de Sidon à l’époque perse (V<sup>e</sup>-IV<sup>e</sup> s. av. J.-C.)*, Paris 2004, pp. 586-587.

18 A.G. Elayi, J.-N. Barrandon and J. Elayi, “The Devaluation of Sidonian Silver Coinage in 365 BCE and the First Bronze Issues”, *AJN* 19, 2007, pp. 1-8.

19 J. Elayi and A.G. Elayi, *The Coinage of the Phoenician City of Tyre in the Persian Period (Vth-IVth cent. B.C.)*, Leuven 2009.

20 Cf. J. Elayi, “Byblos et Sidon, deux modèles de cités phéniciennes à l’époque perse”, *Trans* 35, 2008, p. 113 (with bibl.).

21 *Id.*, “L’ouverture du premier atelier monétaire phénicien”, *BCEN* 32, 1995, pp. 73-78; L. Sole, “Nuove considerazione sull’unità ponderale della prima serie monetale di Biblo”, *Trans* 20, 2000, pp. 61-72.

standard<sup>22</sup>. None of the other coinages of this area minted during the Persian period seem to have used the Phoenician standard: neither the ʾTR / Tripolis, Ashqelon, Gaza, Samaria or “Philistian” mints<sup>23</sup>. The Phoenician standard is attested by some weights that we have listed in our corpus of Phoenician weights<sup>24</sup>, but they are not numerous: small bronze square weights inscribed Š and dated from the 8th to the 4th centuries, two Aradian lead weights from the Hellenistic period and a few isolated weights<sup>25</sup>.

Based on the palaeographical analysis and on the parallel weights, a date in the course of the 8th century B.C. can be proposed<sup>26</sup>. At that time, Phoenician writing was used for both Phoenician and Aramaic languages and it is not possible to distinguish different palaeographic features in writing before the very end of the 8th century. Since the words ŠQL and HGM do not allow the two languages to be differentiated, it is impossible to say whether this weight was Phoenician or Aramaean. Only the location of HGM would give an indication as to whether it was a Phoenician or Aramaean city.

This weight belongs to the small series of nine (now ten) weights indicating the local standard of a city. The first one, ŠDN, “Sidon”, is clear. The second one, HMT, seems to be clear too since this is the name of the ancient city of Ḥamat (modern Ḥama). But the difficulty comes from the identification of the third toponym, QRQR. If QRQR was the name of the capital of the kingdom of Ḥamat, the weight inscribed ŠQL QRQR could be related to the main town and the weights inscribed ŠQL HMT to the land<sup>27</sup>. Another possibility would be that HMT designated the main city and QRQR a town in the same area since the two names are mentioned in the graffiti found in the excavations of Ḥama<sup>28</sup>. Until now, the location of QRQR at Tell Qarqur on the Orontes, 1km east of the modern village<sup>29</sup>, remains problematic<sup>30</sup>. The toponym HGM has to be searched for in the Western part of the Assyrian Empire: it was a city using Phoenician or Aramaic language, Phoenician standard and this type of weights. These weights were called “Phoenico-

22 Cf., for example, J. Elayi and A.G. Elayi, *Trésors de monnaies phéniciennes et circulation monétaire (V<sup>e</sup>-IV<sup>e</sup> siècles av. J.-C.)*, Paris 1993, pp. 24-82.

23 *Id.*, “La première monnaie de ʾTR/Tripolis (Tripoli, Liban)”, *Trans* 5, 1992, pp. 143-151; H. Gitler and O. Tal, *The Coinage of Philistia of the Fifth and Fourth Centuries BC: A Study of the Earliest Coins of Palestine*, Milano-New York 2006 (with bibl.).

24 Elayi-Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 8), pp. 323-324.

25 *Ibid.*, pp. 300, 311, 312, 314.

26 Probably not in the last part of this century.

27 H. Sader, *Les états araméens de Syrie, depuis leur fondation jusqu'à leur transformation en provinces assyriennes*, Beirut 1987, pp. 222-225; *ead.*, “Quel était l'ancien nom de Hama-sur-l'Oronte?”, *Berytus* 34, 1986, pp. 129-133; A. Lemaire, in *BiOr* 44/5-6, 2007, col. 719; cf. Elayi-Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 8), pp. 27-30.

28 E. Lipinski, *The Aramaeans. Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion*, Leuven 2000, pp. 264-266, 274-275; Riis-Buhl, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 266-318.

29 First proposed by R. Dussaud, *Topographie historique de la Syrie antique et médiévale*, Paris 1927, p. 242; see also J.-C. Courtois, “Prospection archéologique dans la moyenne vallée de l'Oronte (El Ghab et Er-Roudj – Syrie du nord-ouest)”, *Syria* 50, 1973, p. 88 and pls I-II.

30 Elayi-Elayi, *op. cit.* (n. 8), pp. 27-30.

Aramaic” by some authors<sup>31</sup>; this is true for the language but not when the location has been established: thus, the weight inscribed *ŠQL ŠDN* is Phoenician, those inscribed *ŠQL HMT* and *ŠQL QRQR* are Aramaean.

As far as we know, there are only three attestations of a toponym *HGM*. The first is a locality in Yemen, mentioned by Yaqut: al-Hajm<sup>32</sup>. Even if this Arabic toponym retains the form of an ancient toponym *HGM*, this type of weight does not correspond with the Yemenite material culture. The second attestation is an Arabic toponym mentioned by the Arab lexicographers: al-Hajm of the Baṅi Farzārah in Northern Arabia<sup>33</sup>. This attestation does not fit with our type of weight either. Only the third attestation must be taken into consideration, namely the Aramaic inscription *CIS II*, 113, which offers three occurrences of *HGM*<sup>34</sup>. This inscription, carved in relief covers the face of a stele which was found in 1880 in the oasis city of Taymā’ in Northern Arabia. Despite some lacunae and difficulties, the general meaning is clear. It records the introduction of a new cult of god Šalm from a place called *HGM* into Taymā’. It describes arrangements for the endowment and service of the temple, and confirms *ŠLMŠZB* son of *PṬSRY* in the service of Šalm of *HGM*. The priest had set up some object (*SWṬP*, l. 13) in the temple, possibly the inscribed stele<sup>35</sup>. A grant (*ŠDQT*, l. 15) of 21 palms was given to the new god by the gods of Taymā’ presented as a triad: Šalm of *MḤRM*, *ŠNGL*’ and *’ŠYM*’ (l. 16). This inscription probably occurred in a situation of conflict for the priest of Šalm of *HGM* as can be seen from the confirmation of his service and his descendants by the local gods (ll. 10-11) and from the malediction formulae against anybody who might eject them (ll. 12-15, 20-23).

The term *HGM* has always been considered by the different authors as a cult-place of the god Šalm, as was the case for *MḤRM* (l. 16). This term was identified with Maḥramah, mentioned by Yaqut in the area of Djebel Salmā to the east of Taymā’<sup>36</sup>, but *HGM* remains unidentified. However, this current interpretation was questioned by B. Aggoula who proposed interpreting *ŠLM ZY HGM* as “lord of the well” and *ŠLM ZY MḤRM* as “lord of the sanctuary”<sup>37</sup>. His arguments against identifying *MḤRM* with Maḥramah are that it is a city not a sanctuary and that it is 300kms from Taymā’: however a sanctuary could be designated by the name of its city and the distance was not a problem for Taymā’ who welcomed different foreign gods in her pantheon; moreover, the

31 See, for example, Bron-Lemaire, *loc. cit.* (n. 9); Heltzer, *loc. cit.* (n. 11).

32 Yaqut, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, Beirut 1957, II, 836.

33 Ibn-Manzur, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, Beirut 1968, I, 601; cf. B. Aggoula, “Studia aramaica II”, *Syria* 62, 1985, p. 63. On this tribe, see B. Lewis *et al.*, *Encyclopédie de l’Islam*, Leiden/Paris 1965, s.v. “Fazāra”, pp. 893-894.

34 In ll. 10, 12, 17; restored in l. 4. Cf. *CIS II*, 113 a, b, b bis (with bibl.); *NSE*, p. 447; *NSI*, pp. 195-198, no. 69; *KAI*, no. 228; J.C.L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions. Vol. 2: Aramaic Inscriptions*, Oxford 1975, no. 30.

35 Or “monument” (Gibson, *ibid.*, p. 150), “pillar” (Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 196), “incense altar” (Aggoula, *loc. cit.* [n. 32], p. 64).

36 Cf. Cooke, *ibid.*, p. 198, l. 16; Gibson, *ibid.*, p. 150, n.1; Yaqut, *op. cit.* (n. 32), XVII, s.v. “mahramah”.

37 Aggoula, *loc. cit.* (n. 33), pp. 71-74.

interpretation of *MHRM* from the Arabic religious word *ḥaram* is not put forward. As far as *HGM* is concerned, according to this author, it would be a common word, with an erroneous reading of the Arabic word ʿ*agm* / ʿ*agam* / ʿ*ugum*, “swamp, pool”, the same as *agammu* (Akkadian), ʿ*gam* (Hebrew), ʿ*ag<sup>e</sup>mā* (Judaeo-Aramaic), ʿ*agmā* (Syriac), *agma* (Mandean), and *gmwt* in a Palmyrenian inscription with the meaning of “cisterns, wells”<sup>38</sup>. He translated this word by “well” and tried to find a well in Taymāʿ<sup>39</sup>. This hypothesis cannot be accepted since it is based on the word ʿ*GM* instead of *HGM* and on a series of hypotheses. Therefore the generally accepted interpretation of *HGM* as a toponym remains the most likely.

The question is now whether the toponym mentioned in the Taymāʿ inscription is the same as the one mentioned on the weight? There is no agreement on the date of the Taymāʿ inscription but it is, in any event, later than the 8th century: it is dated from the 22nd year of a king whose name falls in the lacuna (l. 1). Some authors have proposed relating it with the neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus who lived in this oasis for ten years<sup>40</sup>. Others proposed the middle of the fifth century<sup>41</sup>, others the fifth or fourth centuries<sup>42</sup>, others the end of the fifth or the beginning of the fourth<sup>43</sup>. Whatever the date of the Taymāʿ inscription may be, the preservation of the same toponym after two or three centuries is not a problem. The next question is why the god Ṣalm of *HGM*, the tutelary protector of the town, was introduced into the pantheon of Taymāʿ. It could be justified by the presence in this site of an important community of people coming from *HGM*, wanting to worship their native god. The oasis of Taymāʿ was known as an important crossroads for caravans going to Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia or Yemen, mentioned in neo-Assyrian texts and in the Bible<sup>44</sup>; it was an obligatory halt, and hence had a cosmopolitan character. Moreover, the deity ʿ*ŠYM* mentioned in the inscription of Taymāʿ (l. 15) seems to correspond to the Ashima of Ḥamat mentioned in the Bible<sup>45</sup>.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 63.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 72-74.

40 Cf. J. Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen I*, Paris 1931, p. 11 («au moins à l'époque perse, sinon à l'époque néo-babylonienne»); C.J. Gadd, “The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus”, *AnSt* 8, 1958, p. 41; F.V. Winnett and W.L. Reed, *Ancient Records from North Arabia*, Toronto 1970, p. 92; J. Teixidor, *The Pagan God*, Princeton 1977, p. 71; *id.*, *Bulletin d'épigraphie sémitique (1964-1980)*, Paris 1986, p. 83, no. 47.

41 Cf. *NESE* II, p. 97; Gibson, *op. cit.* (n. 34), p. 148.

42 A. Livingstone *et al.*, “Taymāʿ: Recent Soundings and New Inscribed Material”, *ATLAL* 7, 1983, p. 111; *KAI*, no. 228.

43 Naveh, *loc. cit.* (n. 6), p. 67; A. Lemaire, “Sur les pistes de Teima”, in H. Lozachmeur (ed.), *Présence arabe dans le Croissant fertile avant l'Hégire*, Paris 1995, p. 67.

44 Job 6, 19; cf. Lemaire, *ibid.*, pp. 60-69; J.-P. Rey-Coquais, “L'Arabie dans les routes de commerce entre le monde méditerranéen et les côtesindiennes”, in T. Fahd (ed.), *L'Arabie préislamique et son environnement historique et culturel*, Leiden 1989, pp. 225-239; C. Edens and G. Bawden, “History of Taymāʿ and Hejazi Trade during the First Millennium BC.”, *JESHO* 32, 1989, pp. 48-103; A. Livingstone, “New Light on the ancient town of Taymāʿ”, in M.J. Geller *et al.* (eds), *Studia Aramaica*, Oxford 1995, pp. 133-149; *id.*, “Taymāʿ: a Nexus for Historical Contact and Cultural Interchange within the Desert Borders”, in *Languages and Cultures in Contact*, Louvain 1999, pp. 233-236.

45 II Kings 17, 30.

This would mean that there was already an important community of people from Ḥamat who had introduced the cult of their deity into the pantheon of Taymā'. The objection according to which Ḥamat was a tribe or town near Mesopotamia is not argued convincingly<sup>46</sup>. Therefore, Taymā' very probably had relations with West-Semitic traders coming both from Ḥamat and from other Western towns such as *HGM*.

Is it possible to locate the toponym *HGM* with any greater precision? The area of Ḥamat is not confirmed by the numerous graffiti found in the excavations or in vicinity, bearing several place names such as *RGM* for example<sup>47</sup>. The name of the priest in the service of Ṣalm of *HGM*, *ṢLMŠZB*, “Ṣalm has delivered”, is an Aramaic name equivalent to the Akkadian Ṣalmu-ušēzib<sup>48</sup>, suitable for a priest of this god. His father's name, *PṢRY*, is Egyptian (p'-dy-ws-ir, Greek Πετροσυρις)<sup>49</sup>. These two names are not helpful in locating *HGM*. Now we have to examine whether the two sculptured scenes represented on one small side of the Taymā' stele can provide any information<sup>50</sup>. Normally, these scenes, which show the influence of Assyrian art, should be related to the inscription. The lower register represents the priest as it is written at the bottom: *ṢLMŠZB KMR*, “Ṣalmšezib the priest”<sup>51</sup>. He is performing some ritual (sacrificing?)<sup>52</sup>, with his raised arms in front of an altar bearing a bull's facing head. His dress looks like a Syro-Phoenician one<sup>53</sup>. Since Ṣalmšezib is in the service of Ṣalm of *HGM*, the head of bull on the altar should represent a symbol of this god. The frequent association of bucrania with inscriptions mentioning Ṣalm suggests that he was a moon-god<sup>54</sup>. If it was a centre of moon-worship it would help to explain the attraction that Taymā' had for Nabonidus. Another altar with a bull's head is represented on a pedestal cube found with a stele mentioning the god Ṣalm of *RB*<sup>55</sup>. It would mean that this symbol was the same for the three gods named Ṣalm in Taymā': of *MHRM*, *HGM* and *RB*. The upper register of the stele *CIS* II, 113 is more difficult to interpret: it represents a human figure (king? god?) wearing the same kind of dress as the priest, but with a pointed headdress (lebbade?) and a staff, standing beneath a winged disk<sup>56</sup>. Among the different hypotheses

46 Cf. G.R. Driver, “Geographical Problems”, *ErIs* 5, 1958, pp. 18\*-20\*; R. Zadok, “Geographical and Onomastic Notes”, *JANES* 8, 1976, pp. 117-120; N. Na'aman, “Populations Changes in Palestine Following Assyrian Deportations”, *Tel Aviv* 20, 1993, p. 110.

47 Cf. Riis-Buhl, *op. cit.* (n. 12), pp. 266-318.

48 Cf. *KAI*, no. 228, p. 280, n. 8; Gibson, *op. cit.* (n. 34), pp. 133, n. 2; 151, n. 9 (with bibl.).

49 Cf. *KAI*, *ibid.* Without any reason, B. Aggoula, *loc. cit.* (n. 33), p. 62, proposed to read, instead of *PṢRY*, *ṢPSR'* attested in Hatra.

50 Cf. S. Dalley, “The God Ṣalmu and the Winged Disc”, *Iraq* 48, 1986, pp. 86-87 and fig. 1.

51 *KAI*, no. 228 B, p. 279.

52 According to F.V. Winnett and W.L. Reed, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 92.

53 Cf., for example, J. Heuzey, *Histoire du costume dans l'Antiquité Classique. L'Orient*, Paris 1935, pl. LVIII; E. Lipinski (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la civilisation phénicienne et punique*, Leuven 1995, pl. IIc and fig. 382.

54 Cf. Winnett-Reed, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 93, n. 29 (with bibl.).

55 Cf. Dalley, *loc. cit.* (n. 50), p. 87, fig. 2; Gadd, *loc. cit.* (n. 40), pp. 41-42; Teixidor, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 75.

56 Dalley, *ibid.*

proposed, this figure could be the “image” of Ṣalm of *HGM* being received by the gods of Taymāʾ, or Ṣalm is the winged disk, or a combination of the winged disk and the Apis bull<sup>57</sup>. This human figure has also been compared with the representation of Nabonidus on the reliefs of Ḥarrān<sup>58</sup>. For the moment, we have to consider that there is no clear explanation for the scene of the upper register; however the dress of this figure is also Syro-Phoenician.

Does the identity of the god Ṣalm provide any help in locating *HGM*? As a matter of fact, Ṣalm literally means “image” or “idol”. It is more or less the equivalent of the Phoenician and Aramaean *BʿL*, “lord”<sup>59</sup>. This would explain why *ṢLM* is related to different localities (*ṢLM* of *HGM*, *MḤRM* and *RB* worshipped in Taymāʾ) as we have *BʿL ṢDN* or *BʿL ṢR* in Phoenician<sup>60</sup>, and *BʿLḤRN* or *BʿLṢMYN* in Aramaic<sup>61</sup>. The god Ṣalm was well-known in Babylonia, North Arabia and Syria in the first millennium B.C.<sup>62</sup>, up until the Roman period, by inscriptions and theophoric names from Doura-Europos, Jawf and Palmyra for example<sup>63</sup>. This god was possibly the same as Σομλοϝ mentioned in a votive inscription of an altar at Oumm el-Djemal in Ḥauran<sup>64</sup>, and as Selamanes worshipped in the Djebel Sheikh Barakat in North Syria<sup>65</sup>. However, this last name could be related to a god *SLMN* attested at Sidon for example<sup>66</sup>.

Although in the present state of documentation it is impossible to locate *HGM* precisely, all the elements we have analysed show that it was a West-Semitic city with active trading activities, partly devoted in the 6th/5th centuries to caravanning through the crossroads of Taymāʾ. *HGM* was located in an area using the Aramaic or Phoenician language, West-Semitic bronze weights and the Phoenician standard, hence possibly in central or south Syria, or in Lebanon. Unexpectedly, this small object has provided interesting information: a fourth new toponym for these rare weights inscribed *ṢQL*, an attestation of the Phoenician standard of ca 14g as early as the 8th century B.C., a confirmation that the new god Ṣalm introduced into the pantheon of Taymāʾ was

57 *Ibid.*, p. 86; Teixidor, *ibid.*, pp. 74-75; Winnett-Reed, *op. cit.* (n. 40), p. 93.

58 Gadd, *loc. cit.* (n. 40), pp. 37-42.

59 Cf. Aggoula, *loc. cit.* (n. 33), p. 63.

60 Cf. E. Lipinski, *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique*, Leuven 1995, p. 508 (with bibl.).

61 Cf. Gibson, *op. cit.* (n. 34), p. 169 (with bibl.).

62 Cf. Dalley, *loc. cit.* (n. 50), pp. 85-101; E.A. Knauf, *Ismael*, Wiesbaden 1985, pp. 74-80; Lemaire, *loc. cit.* (n. 43), pp. 69-72; Lipinski, *op. cit.* (n. 60), p. 103.

63 Cf. H. Ingholt, “Inscriptions and Sculptures from Palmyra”, *Berytus* 5, 1938, p. 122 and n. 3; D. Sourdel, *Les cultes du Hauran à l'époque romaine*, Paris 1952, p. 87; J.K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions*, Oxford 1971, p. 21; G.W. Bowersock, *Roman Arabia*, Cambridge 1983, pp. 98-99.

64 Cf. Sourdel, *ibid.*, p. 87; M. Sartre, *Trois études sur l'Arabie romaine et byzantine*, Bruxelles 1982, pp. 20-21.

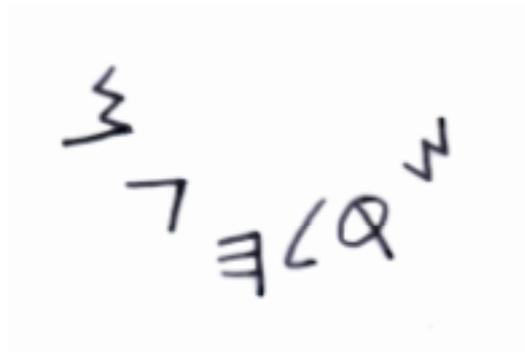
65 Dussaud, *op. cit.* (n. 29), p. 224; *IGLS* II, no. 465-475.

66 R. Dussaud, *RHR* 128, 1944, p. 153; *NSI*, p. 42, no. 7.

originally worshipped in a West-Semitic city called *HGM*, and that a community of traders from *HGM* was settled in Taymāʿ.



Pl. I, 1: Weight inscribed  $\check{S}QL HGM. 2,5:1.$



Pl. I, 2: Fac-simile of the inscription.