

background of Eleutherius' dossier, we can recognise in Anthia a woman's name very popular among the Arab nobility, Hind (هند).

The name Hind is represented in the *Book of Himyarites* as Hint; Shahîd explains this form as reflecting an Arabic dialect of Yemen in which /d/ is pronounced as /t/.¹⁶¹ The expected form of this name in Syriac would be either Hind or Hint; the latter is possible due to a common phenomenon, the devocalizing of the consonant at the end of the word.¹⁶² Thus the Syriac Hint (ܗܝܢܬ), clothed in Greek dress and provided with a Greek feminine ending, becomes Anthia.

This reconstruction is corroborated by the facts of Arabic onomastics. The name of the mother was often used by the Arabian nobility instead of the name of father, e.g., 'Amr III ibn al-Mundir, the king of the Lakhmid Arabs (554–569), was often called ibn Hind after his mother, Hind bint al-Harîṭ. Eleutherius, as a saint accompanied by his mother (which is not a very usual situation), was another ibn Hind.

2.9.3. Eleutherius

The Arab hagiographic substrate of Eleutherius' dossier authorises us to look for an Arabic prototype of the Greek name "Eleutherius." Of course, it is possible that this name reflects the hagiographer's main agenda, that of creating a personification of the "liberty in Christ." But this purpose does not exclude the possibility that there was a real prototype for the name Eleutherius, although, at first glance, we see no such prototype in the Arabian pre-Islamic milieu.

However, let us examine the Naḡrānite onomasticon without paying attention to the modern scholarly etymologies of the names but, instead, trying to look at them through the eyes of a contemporary Syrian armed with the lens of popular etymology. Ḥarîṭ is one of the most popular Naḡrānite names; in addition to St Arethas

¹⁶¹ Shahîd, I. "The Martyresses of Najrān." In Zanetti, U., et E. Lucchesi, eds. *Ægyptus Christiana. Mélanges d'hagiographie égyptienne et orientale dédiés à la mémoire du P. Paul Devosollandiste*, 123–33, here 129. Cahiers d'orientalisme, 25. Genève, 2004.

¹⁶² See above, note 88.

of Naḡrān, the best known bearer of this name, the *Book of Himyarites* alone enumerates eight other Naḡrānite martyrs with this name.¹⁶³ The name Ḥarîṭ can be comprised as a derivate of the root ḥr "to be free" (in both North and South Arabic). In Syriac, it becomes ܗܪܝܬ "Ḥarîṭ" (and "Arethas" in Greek) due to the lack of the phoneme *t* in Syriac, where /t/ is the post-vocal allophone of /t/. Let us recall that Naḡrān was a zone of coexistence of both North and South Arabic languages. The Syriac form of this name can then be "etymologised" (with a violation of modern scholarly principles, of course) as a South Arabic proper name composed from the root ḥr and the suffix of proper names -t specific to South Arabic,¹⁶⁴ which results in an interpretation of "Ḥarîṭ" as "a free one" (substantivated as a proper name).

Although I am not necessarily completely convinced of this proposed explanation, it is tempting to interpret the name Eleutherius, the son of Anthia, as Ḥarîṭ ibn Hind. At any rate, this interpretation does not affect the possibility of identification of the historical prototype of Eleutherius. It is very probable that Eleutherius is merely a generalised character and a symbolic figure.

PART THREE: ELEUTHERIUS AND FRIDAY

3.1. Friday Veneration in Bostra: St Parasceve and Baḥîrā

3.1.1. St Parasceve's Dossier: Introduction

The hagiographical dossier of St Parasceve of Iconium has not been studied properly to date, although this saint was extremely popular in certain countries during the mediaeval period (especially in the Slavic world).¹⁶⁵ The critical edition of the mediaeval recensions of her *Martyrium* (nine recensions in the Greek original and several in Latin, Slavonic, and Romanian from Slavonic versions)

¹⁶³ See the references in Moberg, *The Book of the Himyarites*, xci.

¹⁶⁴ Beeston, A. F. L. *A Descriptive Grammar of Epigraphic South Arabian*, 30. London, 1962 (§ 25:1).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Scharpé's thesis (see next note), vol. I, p. 14–21. 01 Temmuz 2021