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Three New Sidewalk Inscriptions from Caesarea Maritima¹

Rivka Gersht and Peter Gendelman

Abstract: The three tessellated sidewalk inscriptions were exposed by the Israel Antiquities Authority archaeologists between 2008 and 2023. Two of the inscriptions, dating from mid-5th–early 6th century CE, are fully preserved; of the third inscription, dating from 3rd–4th century CE, the first seven letters preserved. Both Late Antique inscriptions mention an individual named Elias who built a construction, probably at his own cost. The differences between the two inscriptions—in style, technique and the title *comes* mentioned in only one—raise questions regarding the dating of the inscriptions, the identity and status of Elias in each inscription, and the kind of constructions built. With regard to the Roman Period inscription, in spite of its state of preservation, and the fact that only a section of the sidewalk was excavated and almost nothing of the adjacent construction, it may be assumed that Sillios/Sillius, the individual whose name is mentioned in the inscription, constructed the sidewalk or the structure which faced the inscription. While studying the three inscriptions we looked for similar sidewalk formulas and for the prevalence, forms and origin of the names mentioned in the inscriptions among Jews, Pagans and Christians in the region and beyond.

Keywords: Caesarea Maritima, *Comes*, Elias, Greek inscriptions, Mosaic, Roman and Late Antique inscriptions, Sidewalk, Sillios/Sillius

INTRODUCTION

Three tessellated sidewalk inscriptions were exposed at Caesarea Maritima between 2008 and 2023. All three inscriptions are written in Greek letters; two are fully preserved, and of the third only the first seven letters remained. The intact inscriptions share affinities; in both, the letters consist of black tesserae laid into a white background, each referring to an individual named Elias who is credited with a construction. Both are situated in front of an entrance, one of a Late Antique mansion; the function of the other structure is unknown since the space behind the threshold was not excavated. The differences between the two inscriptions—mainly in style and technique, and the title *comes* mentioned in only one—raise questions regarding the dating of the inscriptions, the identity and status of Elias in each inscription, and the kind of constructions owned or built.

The third inscription is of red tesserae on white background; in spite of the state of preservation and the fact that only a small section of the sidewalk was excavated and almost nothing of the adjacent construction, we wonder if like Elias, also Sillios/Sillius, the individual whose name is mentioned in the fragmentary inscription, was in one way

¹ The inscriptions were first presented at the 52nd Annual Conference of the Israel Society for the Promotion of Classical Studies, held in the Bar Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, on June 19–20, 2024. We are grateful to the two anonymous readers for their invaluable comments; responsibility to any remaining inaccuracies and errors are ours.

or another involved in constructing the sidewalk or the structure which faced the inscription.

The two Elias inscriptions are later than the Sillios/Sillius inscription. Nevertheless, since they are intact and provide full information, they were chosen to be the first to deal with.

ELIAS 1 (MID-5TH – EARLY 6TH CENTURY CE)

Elias 1 inscription was found during a trial excavation conducted in 2013 within insula E1S6 (Fig. 1:1) by Peter Gendelman and Uzi ‘Ad on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) (Gendelman and ‘Ad 2020). The insula is situated east of the theater built by Herod in the southern part of Caesarea. In Late Antiquity the insula occupied a large mansion with a triconch triclinium, garden, a large bath unit (caldarium, frigidarium, praeforium), and several rooms (Fig. 2); all were luxuriously ornamented with mosaics and wall revetments. The mansion was built, according to the stratigraphic evidence and related finds, sometime between mid 5th and early 6th century CE;² unfortunately, most of its units are still waiting for exposure. The Elias 1 inscription was found embedded into a tessellated pavement of the east sidewalk of *Cardo 0*, in front of the entrance leading from the *Cardo* into the mansion (Fig. 3).



Fig. 1. Findspot of the inscriptions: (1) Elias 1, (2) Elias 2, (3) Sillios/ Sillius.

² The final report by Peter Gendelman and Uzi ‘Ad was submitted for publication.



Fig. 2. *Insula E1S6, 2013 excavation, view from above. Aerial photo by Skyview ltd.*



Fig. 3. *Elias I inscription (mid-5th – early 6th century CE). Photo by the authors.*

The two lines inscription with letters, 20 cm high and maximum 12 cm wide, was laid within a simple grid pattern of white squares and rectangles, framed by simple black bands. In contrast to the simplicity of the mosaic, the inscription is not as simple as it seems. It informs us that this too is the building/establishment of Elias the *comes*.

ΚΑΙΤΟΥΤΟΗΛΙΟΥ
 ΚΟΜΗΤΟΚΤΙΜΑ
 καὶ τοῦτο Ἡλίου
 κόμητος κτίσμα

Who was this Elias and what was it that he built; was it the sidewalk or the mansion, or maybe both? When exactly Elias became *comes* is unknown; nor how this title was acquired, to which *comitiva* he belonged, whether he held an office or if his title was merely honorary. In favor of an honorary title is the fact that Elias is not graded with an attribute, which would have been expected to be if Elias as *comes* held an office (Cf. Feissel 2017, 487 and note 96). Including this one, there are now three inscriptions mentioning *comites* at Caesarea; the other two are Euelpidius (Lehmann and Holum 2000, 80–82, No. 58; *CIIP* II 1262) and Iulittus (*CIIP* II 1265).

In a mid-5th–early 6th century inscription engraved on a pillar, certain Elias of *clarissime* (λαμπρότατος) rank and πατήρ τῆς πόλεως (*pater civitatis*; father of the city), is mentioned together with *comes* Flavius Euelpidius. The inscription informs that the two constructed a basilica along with the revetment, mosaic floor, and the steps of the Hadrianeum (Lehmann and Holum 2000, 80–82, No. 58; *CIIP* II 1262).³ Elias' responsibilities, as can be deduced from his title—father of the city—were to look after the city's finances and be in charge of civic revenues and public constructions.

That in Caesarea the father of the city was involved in building activities, is also evinced from a tessellated inscription located at the foot of the stairs leading to the so-called Byzantine Esplanade complex. The inscription reports that Flavius Strategius, the most admired/ respected (περίβλεπτος), father and the first man (of the city, built) the arch together with the wall and the staircase with public funds (Holum 1996, 624–25; Lehmann and Holum 2000, 82–84, No. 59; *CIIP* II 1263).⁴

Were Elias the father of the city and Elias the *comes* from insula E1S6 the same person? Theoretically Elias, after fulfilling his post as the father of the city, could have become *comes*; a title which is by definition higher than that of the father of the city, even if being merely honorary. Yet, although the two inscriptions date between the mid-5th and early 6th century CE, there is still substantial difficulty in proving that they were written in reasonable proximity of time to make possible a reference to the same individual.

³ Lehmann and Holum noted that the honorific title *clarissimus* (λαμπρότατος) could be inherited, so Elias might have had it from his father (Lehmann and Holum 2000:9). Ameling read the name with rough breathing (δασεῖα / *spiritus asper*) Ἡλίου / Helius (*CIIP* II 1262). We follow the interpretation of Lehmann and Holum (2000), 81, No. 58.

⁴ On the status and responsibilities of the πατήρ τῆς πόλεως / *pater civitatis* based on evidence from other sites, see Laniado (2002), 94, (2005), 231–35; Curchin (2014), 283–84; Feissel (2017), 483–88, 492–97. We thank Professor Avshalom Laniado for his willingness to read the interpretation of the inscription and for directing our attention to his 2005 study and Feissel's article.

ELIAS 2 (MID-5TH – EARLY 6TH CENTURY CE)

Elias 2 inscription was found during the 2023 IAA trial excavation directed by Peter Gendelman (see Fig.1:2). Nearly 14 m of Decumanus S3 had been exposed in this excavation, in the area between Insula E1S3 on the north and Insula E1S4 on the south. The street, 3.5–3.7 m wide, was flanked by elevated porticoed sidewalks, of which the southern was between 2.8 and 3 m wide. Remains of 3 shops, opened to the southern sidewalk, were found west of the 3 lines inscription of Elias 2, which was laid in front of an entrance of an unexcavated complex. According to the data gleaned from the excavation, now in final processing, the sidewalk pavement is contemporaneous with that of Elias 1.

Like the Elias 1 inscription, Elias 2 was laid within a simple grid pattern of white squares and rectangles, framed by simple black bands (Fig. 4). But not only the layout of the mosaic is similar, also the formulation of the inscription is similar.

ΚΑΙΤΟΥΤΟ	καὶ τοῦτο
ΗΛΙΟΥ	Ἡλίου
ΚΤΗCΜΑ	κτῆσμα

This too is the building / establishment of Elias



Fig. 4. *Elias 2 inscription (mid-5th – early 6th century CE). Photo by S. Emmanuilov, IAA.*

Similar but not identical; the title *comes* is lacking and the last word is differ. Instead of κτίσμα the mosaicist wrote κτῆσμα. This is not necessarily a mistake, but rather a case of *iotacism* in which eta (η) was pronounced like iota (ι).⁵ That iotacism was acceptable in

⁵ For other Caesarea examples of the interchange of iota (ι) and eta (η), see Lehmann and Holum (2000), 27.

late antiquity is evinced from a 6th century CE inscription reported from the region of Jerusalem (Karjet or Kuryet es-Sa'ide 'Ain Kārim: *SEG* 8, 231; Conder and Kitchener 1883, 134–35; Alt 1924, 95–96, No. 5). Like the Caesarea inscription it opens with the *καὶ τοῦτο* formula; but *κτίσμα* is located before the name of the builder and not at the end: *κ(αὶ) τοῦτο κτίσμα Ἰ Μαρτίνου διακό(νου)*. Another example is reported from Jordan (*IGLSyr* 21.2.53; *SEG* 34, 1517), and although of a later date—early eighth century—it reinforces the assumption that spelling *κτίσμα* with eta (η) was a common practice at least for Late Antique Greek speakers.⁶

WERE THE ELIAS 1 AND ELIAS 2 INSCRIPTIONS REFERRING TO THE SAME PERSON?

The opening formula—*καὶ τοῦτο*—in each of the inscriptions indicates that other constructions took place under Elias, whether one individual or two. The *καὶ τοῦτο* opening formula is familiar from four other Iudaeae/Palaestinae inscriptions. One is the 6th century CE inscription from the region of Jerusalem, mentioned above. Two other 6th century CE inscriptions were found in Beth Shean (Nysa, Scythopolis), of which one was embedded into the mosaic floor of the western portico surrounding the *palaestra* of the western bathhouse (*CIIP* V 2, 7657); the second was incised into a plaque of limestone (*CIIP* V 2, 7662). Unlike the Elias 1 and 2 inscriptions, the Beth Shean examples specify the work done; in one a mosaic was laid, in the other a wall revetment was laid. Even more detailed is the fourth inscription with *καὶ τοῦτο* opening formula, which was found, as part of a mosaic floor of a 6th century CE church dedicated to St. Elias, in the fields of Kibbutz Kissufim in June 1977 (*CIIP* III 2543).

The similarities between the Caesarea Elias 1 and Elias 2 inscriptions, in layout and formulation, suggest that the same Elias was responsible for both; yet the mosaicist, who laid the tesserae of Elias 2 inscription, was less qualified or just careless. In Elias 1, two rows of white tesserae separate the text lines from each other and from the frame; on the lateral sides, three lines of white tesserae separate the text from the frame. In Elias 2 the letters are less meticulous and the asymmetry is prominent (letters height is between 15.5 and 19 cm, their maximum width is 17 cm). The distance between the text lines varies from one to three white tesserae, and on the left side of the inscription, the first and third lines touch the frame.

If, despite of the workmanship, the two inscriptions were ordered by the same Elias, why is the title *comes* not mentioned in Elias 2 inscription? A reasonable explanation is, that the Elias 2 inscription was laid after Elias of *clarissimate* (*λαμπρότατος*) rank was released from his post as the father of the city (Lehmann and Holum 2000, 80–82, No. 58; *CIIP* II 1262), and before he gained the title *comes*; yet this explanation is valid only if Elias the father of the city and Elias the *comes* were the same person. In case Elias the father of the city was somebody else, and only Elias 1 and 2 were the same person, the Elias 2 inscription preceded the Elias 1 inscription. The third possibility is that the three Elias were three different people.

We could perhaps offer a more conclusive argument regarding Elias 1 and 2 identity providing that the inscriptions were a little bit more informative, as is the case of three 6th

⁶ Thanks are owed to Professor Rachel Zelnick-Abramovitz for directing our attention to these inscriptions.

century CE inscriptions from the so-called “Monastery of Lady Mary” at Tell Izṭabba, Beth Shean (Nysa, Scythopolis), mentioning an individual named Elias, a priest and hermit (Starr 1937, 86–89; *SEG* 8, 38; *CIIP* V 2, 7601, 7604, 7605). Unlike the Caesarea Elias inscriptions, all three Beth Shean inscriptions came from the same complex, and in all three, Elias is identified as a hermit. In this case, there is no doubt that the same person is involved.

PREVALENCE, FORMS AND ORIGIN OF THE NAME ELIAS

J.R. Martindale, in his *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* 2 and 3, listed about 20 individuals named Elias, all of high social standing; among them κόμητες, a philosopher, a *scrinarius*, and a *chartularius*, and, of course, Elias the father of the city from Caesarea (*PLRE* II, 390–91, Elias 1–8; III, 437–39, Elias 1–14). But, the name was also popular among ordinary males, as evinced by the large number of examples of individuals named Elias, reported from the region⁷ and beyond.⁸ In late antiquity, Elias was given to Jews and Christians alike. The name probably derived from אֵלִיָּהוּ (Elijah) the prophet, whom the Christians adopted as early as the 4th century.⁹ T. Ilan, in her *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*, Part 2 (2012), 62, listed ten examples of Jews named Elias, of which eight are accompanied with a question mark (Nos. 1, 4–10).¹⁰ No. 1 in her list is the Caesarea father of the city whose Jewishness, in our mind, is most unlikely. The remaining two are epitaphs of two Jews from Caesarea. Their indisputable Jewishness is attested by

⁷ For some other Elias examples in inscriptions from the region, see mid-6th century CE inscription from Heshbon (*SEG* 29, 1609); 531 CE inscriptions from Mt. Nebo, Siyagha (*SEG* 27, 1019, 1020); 528/529 CE inscription from Beth Yerah (*SEG* 37, 1474), 6th century CE Church of St. Elias, Kissufim (*SEG* 30, 1688; *CIIP* III 2542); 6th–7th century CE signature of Elias the craftsman [written with an ε] who carved the beam for the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem (Schwabe 1949, 93–95; *CIIP* I 2, 1021); Christian funerary inscription from Gaza, early 7th century CE (*CIIP* III 2495); Fragmentary Christian inscription from Sheikh Raschid (*CIIP* III 2534); Christian inscriptions—mostly funerary, dating to 6th–7th century CE—from Choziba (Wadi el-Kelt, mod. Deir Mar Jiryis; *CIIP* IV 1, 2860, 2873, 2912, 2994, 3025, 3041, 3068); 6th century CE lid of marble reliquary from Bezeth (*CIIP* V 1, 5984); Mosaic from 6th century Basilical Church at Suḥmata (*CIIP* V 1, 6080); 528 CE tessellated inscription from Philoteria / Beth Yerah church (*CIIP* V 1, 6915); 5th century CE inscribed commemorations from Ḥammad Gader (Di Segni 1997, 207–08, 222–23, Nos 23, 38; *CIIP* V 2, 7391–92); Amphora—probably a burial urn—from Alexandria, inscribed with crosses (Lefebvre 1907, [33] 7, No. 32). Several other Late Antique Elias inscriptions, mainly funerary, are known from Egypt, e.g., Lefebvre (1907), Nos 121, 263, 351, 619, 686; three of these are accompanied with crosses (Nos 263, 619, 686).

⁸ E.g., a late 5th or early 6th tombstone from Corinth, Greece. A cross which opens the epitaph indicates that Ἡλίας (written in nominative) was a Christian (Wiseman 1967, 422–24, Pl. 88h; *IG* IV 2.3, 1523).

⁹ For the discourse concerning the formula Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἡλίου inscribed on Christian oil lamps from Byzantine Jerusalem, of whether the inscriptions refer to the prophet Elijah or to another person named Elias, see Loffreda (1989), 128, C3.1, C3.1a, Pl. 23:2; Magness (1996), 40*–42*; *CIIP* I 2, App. 54*.

¹⁰ Likewise doubtful are 3 (Nos 1, 2, and 4) out of 7 examples listed in Ilan’s *Lexicon* Part III (2008), 76; No. 5 in this list is Idumean.

the *menorah* and *shofar* symbols. In one of these epitaphs, the name in the genitive case Ἐλέου is of a priest (Lehmann and Holum 2000, 144–45, No. 167; *CIIP* II 1504). J. Price, who wrote the entry in the corpus, notes that Ἐλέου is genitive of Ἐλέας, Ἡλίας, etc. = biblical אֵלִיָּהוּ = Elijah'. In the other epitaph, it is Ἡλία (Lehmann and Holum 2000, 145–46, No. 169; *CIIP* II 1466).

As in the case of Elias, the father of the city, so the Jewishness of Elias 1 and 2 is unlikely. It is more than likely—despite the absence of Christian manifestation, not even a cross which often opens, sometimes also ends inscriptions of this period—that Elias was (if the same person) or were (if two or three persons) Christian/s.

SILLIOS / SILLIUS (3RD – 4TH CENTURY CE)

The Sillios / Sillius inscription is no less challenging than the two Elias inscriptions. It was uncovered in 2008 by Peter Gendelman during an IAA rescue excavation (see Fig.1:3). During the 3rd or 4th century CE—according to the stratigraphic context—a tessellated pavement, along with the inscription, was laid into the northern sidewalk of Decumanus Maximus, the main east-west street of Roman and Late Antique Caesarea. In the 5th or early 6th century CE, when a new mosaic floor was laid above the Roman one, the inscription was damaged. A trench, dug for laying a lead water pipe, destroyed the right side of the inscription, which, as the plain mosaic patch to the right indicates, could have reached the maximum length of 130 cm (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Northern sidewalk of Decumanus Maximus, 2008 excavation. Photo by the authors.

Seven letters—CΙΛΛΙΟΥ—in red tesserae survived from this inscription (Figs 6, 7). The one *tessera* wide red border on the left side of and below the letters indicates that Σιλλίου was the first word of a single line inscription. The fact that there is no border above Σιλλίου suggests that the inscription was located at the front of an entrance; but since the area north of the inscription was not excavated, we have no clue how the building

that the inscription led to was functioning. Σιλλίου is likely the genitive case of the name of the person who sponsored either the sidewalk along with the mosaic, the structure facing the supposed entrance, or both. Two alternative forms can be offered for the nominative case of Σιλλίου: Sillios and Sillius.



Fig. 6. *Sillios / Sillius inscription (3rd – 4th century CE). Photo by the authors.*



Fig. 7. *Sillios / Sillius inscription. Drawing by the authors.*

PREVALENCE, FORMS AND ORIGIN OF THE NAME SILLIOS / SILLIUS

The name Σίλλιος with double λ is unusual.¹¹ The usual form, with one λ, is familiar from several inscriptions—all earlier than the Caesarea inscription—dating from the 1st century

¹¹ The form Σιλλίου or Σιολίου appears in an inscription engraved on a 2nd- or 1st-century BCE large exedra base from Thespieae in Boeotia, Greece (Plassart 1946, 486 No. 12 C; Roesch 2007, 44 no. 119). In another Boeotian inscription dated to the mid-3rd–early 2nd century

BCE to the 2nd century CE. A late 1st century BCE or early 1st century CE epitaph uncovered in Elaia, Greece mentions Γ. Σίλιος Μελλεΐτος (Kearsley 2001, 8 No. 4). One Σίλιος (Γαίου Σιλίου Πολυκρίτου) is mentioned in an inscription engraved on a 37–41 CE base statue from Attica (*IG* II 2, 3266); the same individual was likely also mentioned in a fragmentary inscription engraved on a fragment of a Pentelic marble plaque from the Athenian Agora (Geagan 2011, 364 No. X737). A comic actor bearing the name Γάιος Σίλιος Βάθυλλος Ἀζηγιεύς (of the deme Azenia) is mentioned in a 1st century CE grave marker from Attica (*IG* III 2, 1488; Geagan 2011, 364). And yet another Σίλιος, son of Aphrodisios (Σίλιος Ἀφροδεισίου), is listed in an ephobic catalogue from Attica, dated between 112 and 115 CE (*IG* II 2, 2023, line 41; Geagan 2011, 364).

Three of the 1st and early 2nd century CE inscriptions mentioning Σιλίου or Σιλίω came from Taucheira-Arsinoe, Asia Minor; all three are epitaphs and considered Jewish (Lüderitz 1983, 121–22 No. 59.d, 143 No. 67.e; Reynolds 1983, 208–9 No. 21; Ilan 2008, 679 Nos 4–6 under סִילָּוּ – *Silas*).

Also common in Roman period inscriptions—apparently even more common—is the form Σεΐλιος. In the aforementioned 1st century CE grave marker from Attica (*IG* III 2, 1488), for example, the name Σεΐλιος appears along with Σίλιος and Σεΐλία: Γάιος Σίλιος | Βάθυλλος | Ἀζηγιεύς. | Διονυσᾶς. | Σωτιμᾶς. | Σεΐλία. | Σεΐλιος. | Ἐρῶ|τιν. Likewise, in an edict of the poet Silius Italicus (Τιβέριος Κάτιος Α[σ]κῶ | νιος Σεΐλιος Εἰταλικὸς ...), who served as proconsul of Asia probably in 77/78 CE, Silius is written with diphthong (ει).¹²

A glimpse into Paulys Real-Encyclopaedie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft (*RE* Second series [R–Z], Halbband 5 Silacenis–Sparsus) and the New Pauly online (<https://referenceworks.brill.com/display/entries/NPOE/e1112940.xml>), makes clear that Silius (with one L) was the name of a Roman plebeian family, which under Augustus attained the consulate, but left no trace after the end of the first century CE. The name, however, continued to appear in Latin inscriptions;¹³ sometimes written with double L—Sillius—(e.g., *CIL* 8 2, 10829; *CIL* 9 5159; *CIL* 9 5450; *AE* 1981, 300; *AE* 2005, 1361; Schulze 1933, 232).

Can all these forms—Σίλιος, Σίλλιος, Σεΐλιος (in Greek) and Silius, Sillius (in Latin)—be considered one and the same? Phonetically they are the same. In Greek, diphthongs involving iota, as in Σεΐλιος, iota dominated; this is another case of iotacism in which Σίλιος, Σίλλιος, Σεΐλιος are similarly sound. The gemination feature of doubling semivowels, as in Σίλλιος, explains the similitude between Σίλιος and Σίλλιος. The aforementioned bilingual epitaph of Gaius Silius Mellitus from Elaia, Greece (Kearsley

BCE, the name ΣΙΛΑΙΟΣ or ΣΙΛΛΙΟΣ is inscribed on the lower part of a marble herm (*IG* VII 2, 3183; Lauffer 1976, 42–43, No. 54).

¹² For some additional examples, see Σεΐλιου in a 45 BCE inscription from Knidos (*SEG* 57, 1097); Σεΐλιον | Πονηίου | Κωρυκιώτης | ναύκληρος, an undated inscription from Puteoli / Pozzuoli, Italy (*IG* 14 854); ... Γ Σεΐλιου Ὀτακιλιανῶ... Γάιος Σεΐλιος Μάξι[μ—], Σεΐλιος Πωλλιανός, all are second century CE inscriptions from Pergamon (*IGRom* 4 353, 386, 479); A market weight issued at Bithynia bears the name of Silius Messala (... Σεΐλι[ου] Μεσσάλα ... [if read and interpreted correctly]), a previously unattested consular legate of the early part of the reign of Septimius Severus, 194/197 CE (Dönmez-Öztürk et al. 2008, 244–47, No. 17).

¹³ Reynolds, while referring to the Taucheira-Arsinoe inscriptions notes that Silius is a Latin *nomen* used as a personal name (Reynolds 1983, 209 No. 21).

2001, 8 No. 4) validates that Silius (Latin) and Σίλιος (Greek) is the same name. Likewise, can Σύλλιος and Sillius—as the above mentioned examples of Sillius indicate—be considered the same name.

Given that Σίλιος and Σείλιος are phonetically the same, the appearance of the two forms in the above-mentioned 1st century CE grave marker from Attica (*JG* III 2, 1488), calls for consideration. The only explanation one can offer is that since all the names mentioned in the inscription are of members of the same family, the different spellings were meant to distinguish one individual from the other. Unless in spite of the phonetic resemblance Σίλιος and Σείλιος did not share an origin.

What is, then, behind the name Σύλλιος from Caesarea? Was the Latin name Sillius transliterated into Greek?; or if a Greek name was it originated from Σύλλιον / Σύλειον, a Greek city near Attaleia in Pamphylia?; or, if of a Caesarean Jew, could the name perhaps originate from שִׁילֹה / Shiloh / Σηλώ, a city at Samaria?. The probability that Σύλλιος was a Jew is as good as he was a Pagan or Christian. Obviously, as the rest of the inscription is lost the identity of the individual mentioned will remain an enigma.

IN CONCLUSION

Of the three sidewalk inscriptions discussed above, the Elias 1 and Elias 2 inscriptions make it possible to conclude that Elias—whether one individual or two—financed the construction of the sidewalk/s along with the mosaic/s, perhaps also the building/s that the mosaic/s led to. Unfortunately, it is impossible to corroborate that the same holds for Sillios / Sillius.

The study of the three inscriptions also showed that the name Elias was ordinary in the region; Sillios / Sillius was less popular and is mainly known from inscriptions from Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor. The prevalence of the name Elias in the region is not only corroborated by inscriptions but also by documents written on papyri. Three 4th century CE letters from Kellis in Egypt, for example, mention individuals named Elias. One letter was sent to son (υἱός) Elias by Psais (Ψάις), the other was sent to son Elias by Sabinus (Σαβεῖνος). Worp notes that not too much importance should be attached to the word υἱός ‘son’, which might have been used in these letters as an affectionate word; and that, in fact, both letters were addressed to the same Elias (Worp 1995, 179–81, No. 68; 204–05, No. 81); another Elias sent greetings to Strategios (Στρατήγιος) in hope to embrace him soon (Worp 1995, 195–97, No. 75).

In a 559 CE document of division of property from Petra at Jordan, Elias, son of Isakios (Ἰσάκιος), is mentioned three times: in genitive (Ἡλίου) in lines 16 and 18, in dative (Ἡλίῳ) in line 21 (Arjava et al. 2007, 95, No 28). The cross that opens the document indicates that Elias was Christian. In a 5th century CE tax document from Hermopolites in Egypt, a person named Elias is mentioned in Recto col. I line 10 (Pintaudi et al. 1995:53, No. 139). Another Elias, a landowner, is listed among others in a 6th century invoice of 112 *nomismata* (Pintaudi et al. 1995, 148–50, No. 180).

Although nothing points to the communal identity—Pagan, Christian, or Jewish—of each of the individuals referred to in the Caesarea sidewalk inscriptions, it seems reasonable to suggest that Sillios / Sillius mentioned in the Roman period inscription was a Pagan in spite of the Taucheira-Arsinoe Jewish epitaphs. Obviously, funerary inscriptions and sidewalk inscriptions are not the same. It also seems reasonable to suggest

that Elias (1 and 2) mentioned in the Late Antique inscriptions belonged to the Christian community and that the two inscriptions relate to the same person.

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