

## SOME CLASSICAL LOANWORDS IN RABBINIC LITERATURE \*

1 \*Σικωσις and \*Ἐκσικωσις

In Genesis Rabba 10.1 (ed. Theodor p.74) we read (in an anonymous text probably from the later third or fourth cent. c.e.) that everything has *sikosim* (or *sikosin* in some versions, an alternative, Aramaic, plural termination), the heavens, the earth, everything except the *Torah* (=the Law), which has no *sikosim*. Most of the dictionaries explain the word as the plural form of *sikos* = σηκός, which, they say, equals σήκωμα, meaning a measure<sup>1</sup>. However, never among all the many meanings of σηκός does it equal σήκωμα. Indeed, all its meanings are quite different<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, it is a little strange to find this plural form applied to singular nouns too, such as *Torah*<sup>3</sup>.

Now in a Geniza fragment of this text, cited by M. Sokoloff,<sup>4</sup> we find that the reading is *sikosis*, with a *samekh*, and not a final *mem*<sup>5</sup> This clearly represents the Greek σηκωσις, a noun in the singular, which can indeed be the equivalent of σήκωμα, and mean a measure<sup>6</sup>.

\* This study continues the author's series on the subject of classical loanwords and loan-translations in Rabbinic literature. See *Tarbiz* 33(1967) 99–101; *Ibid.* 40 (1971) 444–9; *Leshonenu* 31 (1967) 183–8; *Ibid.* 33 (1968) 74–5; *Ibid.* 33 (1969) 320; *Ibid.* 36 (1972) 257–62; *Sinai* 66 (1970) 272–4; *Bar-Ilan* 7–8 (1969–70) 133–7, (all in Hebrew), and *Classical Quarterly* 19 (1969) 374–78.

<sup>1</sup> Thus S. Krauss, *Griechische und Lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum* (Berlin 1898–9) (hereafter *LW*) 2.391b, s.v. *sikos*; M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (New York 1886–1903) 986a, s.v. *sikosim*; J. Levy, *Neuhebräisches und Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* (Leipzig 1876–89), 3.517b, s.v. *sikos*; J. Schönhak, *Ha-Mashbir* (Warsaw 1858) 38b, s.v. *sks* 2. See also A. Kohut, *Aruch Completum* (Wien 1878–92) 6.119, s.v. *sks*. Menachem de Lonzano (flor. Constantinople and palestine, c. 1550–1624), in his *Ma'arich* (ed. A. Jellinek, Leipzig 1883) 73, explains that the word means to raise or lift. This is in accordance with the Byzantine and later Greek usage of σηκώω, which has just this sense. See Sophocles, *Lexicon*<sup>2</sup>, 985, s.v. σηκώω.

<sup>2</sup> Liddell & Scott & Jones 2 (hereafter *LSJ*), 1592a, s.v. σηκός. It means “pen, fold, sacred enclosure, sepulchre, stump of olive tree”, etc.

<sup>3</sup> V. below note 5, that Löw already noted this difficulty.

<sup>4</sup> In his (as yet unpublished) doctoral thesis entitled *The Geniza Fragments of Genesis Rabba and Ms. Vat. Ebr. 60 of Genesis Rabba*, Hebrew University, June 1972. I am extremely grateful to Dr. Sokoloff for giving me a copy of this very valuable study.

<sup>5</sup> Sokoloff, *ibid.* 65 and 169. The final *mem* and the *samekh* look very much alike in Hebrew.

<sup>6</sup> V. I. Löw, *apud* Krauss *LW* 2, 391b. s.v. *sikos*, who felt this difficulty and noted that in Cod. Paris of Genesis Rabba the reading is *sikosis*. However, Theodor does note this in his

Furthermore, there is in the text, as preserved in the Geniza fragment, an additional word, which does not appear in our editions, nor in any of the manuscript versions registered by Theodor in his apparatus (ibid.). The Geniza fragment reads as follows: "...except for one thing *iksiksis*<sup>7</sup> which has no *sikosis*. And what is that? It is the *Torah*". This strange word *iksiksis*, which is thus far unregistered in any dictionary, appears to be a *hapax legomenon*. Sokoloff rightly points out that the words following it "which has no *sikosis*" were probably an explanatory gloss, which entered the body of the text (from the margin?) while the word itself dropped out. It is a known phenomenon that sometimes words which were not understood were completely omitted by copyists, and, in some cases, a blank space was even left to indicate where they had been.<sup>8</sup> The gloss tells us that the word means "without measure", and indeed so does the context. *Iksiksis* represents the Greek \*ἐκασηκωσις,<sup>9</sup> ἐκ – here meaning "without",<sup>10</sup> (or perhaps "beyond").<sup>11</sup> This word, thus far unknown to us from classical sources, has by rare fortune been preserved for us in this Geniza fragment.

## 2 תלמי – Θέρμαι

In *Tosefta Mikva'ot* 4.9 (ed. Zuckerman, p. 656 lines 28–29) we read:

A spring [whose waters] go out into the *Tlmi* (תלמי), and from the *Tlmi* to the first cistern,<sup>1</sup> the [waters of the] first cistern are invalid, because they are "drawn".

S. Lieberman(n) in his discussion of this text in *Tosefeth Rishonim* 4 (Jerusalem 1939) 18–19, shows that the reading *Tlmi* is certain, and that the *Tlmi* must be some kind of a "vessel" (*keli*)<sup>2</sup> through which the waters pass, thus making

apparatus criticus ibid. On the character and nature of the terminations – σις (dental) and – μα (nasal), see C. D. Buck & W. Petersen, *A Reverse Index of Greek Nouns and Adjectives*, (University of Chicago Press 1945) 221–222. Examples: ῥάκωμα – ῥάκωσις; χαράκωμα – χαράκωσις; θρίγκωμα – θρίγκωσις, etc.

<sup>7</sup> For *siksim(s)*, without the *vav*, cf. Leviticus Rabba 12.4, ed. Margulies, p.261.

<sup>8</sup> See S. Lieberman's remarks in Krauss Festschrift (Jerusalem 1936, Hebrew) 304.

<sup>9</sup> e = i; see Krauss *LW* 1, p.17.

<sup>10</sup> Like ἐξω. Note that ἐκασκευος = ἄσκαευος, Sophocles 443a, s.v. ἐσκαευος.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *LSJ*<sup>2</sup> 498b, s.v. ἐκ 5.

<sup>1</sup> Thus according to Zuckerman's text which reads: *bereichat rishonim*, ברכה ראשונים. However, other versions have *bereichah*, ברכה, (see Lieberman, ibid.), which should be followed by a comma, and then comes: *rishonim rishonim*, ראשונים ראשונים, i.e. ... and from the *Talmi* to a cistern, the first waters...etc.

<sup>2</sup> All the commentators agree on this point, which is determined by the halachic context. There is indeed in Syriac a word תלמא (*talma*), which means an earthenware pot (Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*<sup>2</sup>, Göttingen 1928, 825b, s.v.; Payne Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, Oxford

them ritually invalid, “drawn” in halachic terminology. However, he rejects outright Jastrow’s explanation that *Tlmi* = Θαλάμη, meaning here a kind of “snout, tube”.<sup>3</sup> Instead he suggests that it is some manner of washing tub kept in the women’s quarters, and hence called Θάλαμος.

Lieberman’s interpretation seems quite as unlikely as Jastrow’s since Θάλαμος may mean a woman’s chamber, but not the utensils in, or belonging to, that chamber.<sup>4</sup> We would therefore suggest that *Tlmi*, תלמי, equals the Greek Θέρμαι,<sup>5</sup> here meaning a hot bath. The change from L to R is all too common in Rabbinic loanwords. The waters from the spring passed into some kind of warm tub, which was a raised “vessel” (rather than a sunken bath); hence, the waters in it became invalid for ritual use. Thence, they passed on into other cisterns, as indeed was usual in Roman baths. The *Tosefta* is probably referring here to a small private bath, rather than one of the great public *balneae*.

### 3 תלמא – τέλμα

A little further on in the same *Tosefta* (Zuckerman *ibid.*, lines 30–31) we read:

Waters which float on כל שהן, one may immerse in them [even] to the depth of a garlic’s skin.

Liebermann points out (*ibid.*, 20) that this reading is defective, and quotes the Agur of Samuel (b. Jacob Ibn Jama (12 cent.) who reads: <sup>1</sup>

A *telem* (תלם) — normally translated “furrow” — and a valley which has water floating over them (i.e. inundating them), one may immerse in them [even] to the depth of a garlic’s skin . . . etc.

1899–1901 4448 s.v.). But this meaning would hardly fit our context, according to which the waters run freely from the spring to the cistern via the *tlmi*.

<sup>3</sup> M. Jastrow, *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Babli*, etc. 1673a, s.v. *Tlmi*, תלמי.

<sup>4</sup> See *LSJ*<sup>2</sup>, 781b, s.v. Θάλαμος. There is a word Θαλαμιός, which means “of or belonging to the Θάλαμος” (*LSJ*, *ibid.*, s.v.), but this does not correspond with the *Tosefta*’s *Tlmi*.

<sup>5</sup> The Θ can become a ת in Rabbinic loanwords. See Krauss, *LW* 1, pp.4, 40. See also S. Lieberman, *Greek and Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (Jerusalem 1962, in Hebrew) 143. Note also the Rabbinic loanword תורמסר *tormsr* Θερμοσάριος, and S. Lieberman, *Tosefta kifshutah* 2 (New York 1955) 26. On R—L, ρ—ל, see S. Krauss, *LW* 1.99. It is not altogether clear whether תלמי = θέρμαι as I have suggested, or Θέρμη as Dr. D. Rokeah suggests to me. It is true the plural form is more suitable from the point of view of its meaning, but it may be that the singular also had this meaning though it does not appear in the dictionaries. What we have here is an adjective serving in the function of a noun, a phenomenon which finds parallels in other classical rabbinic loanwords, eg. δημόσια, βαλανεία.

<sup>1</sup> Ed. S. Buber, published in H. Graetz, *Jubilschrift* (Breslau 1887) 47.

Ibn Jama explains that “a *telem* <sup>2</sup> is a broad declivity <sup>3</sup> in the ground, like a valley, into which the waters run from the spring, collecting themselves together there up to the cistern. Then he removes the barrier between the *telem* and the cistern, and the waters flow into the cistern”. Liebermann, basing himself on Ibn Jama’s version of this text, suggests that perhaps instead of the strange *כל שהן* found in Zuckermann’s text we should read *תלמי*. The original *תלמי*, he conjectures was corrupted into *כל שי* (the *מי* joining together to form a *ש*), and then this was interpreted to be an abbreviated form of *כל שהן*.<sup>4</sup> This suggestion is rather far-fetched, and furthermore it does not account for the absence of the valley found in Ibn Jama’s version. It seems, therefore, far more likely that two words have dropped out of the printed edition’s version and the correct reading may be restored on the basis of Ibn Jama’s evidence as follows:

Waters which float over (i.e. inundate) [a *telem* and a valley] *כל שהן*, i.e. of minimal depth, one may immerse in them [even] to the depth of a garlic’s skin.

As to the word *telem*, it is clear that it is something similar to a valley, and indeed as Ibn Jama rightly explains, it is a “broad declivity” of shallow depths. That it is something shallow is clear from the continuation that one may immerse in it even to the depth of as little as a garlic’s skin. The normal meaning “furrow” hardly fits here. I would therefore suggest that we have here a loan-word from the Greek *τέλμα*,<sup>5</sup> meaning here “low land subject to inundation”,<sup>6</sup> “marsh, swamp”, hence very shallow water. The original reading in the Tosefta text was probably *תלמא*<sup>7</sup> or even *תלמי* (= *תלמא*). As this word was not known, it was altered to the common Hebrew word *תלם*, meaning “furrow”.

<sup>2</sup> He also explains *talmi* of the previous lines (discussed above) in the same way, seeing them both the same word.

<sup>3</sup> So I translate:... *מקום מרווח ועמוק כמעט בארץ*

<sup>4</sup> The Wilna ed. has *כל שהוא*. This bears out to a certain extent that originally there was an abbreviated form, which could be variously interpreted (Liebermann’s suggestion). See also Buber’s note in Agur *ibid* 47, note 409.

<sup>5</sup> T can become a ת. See S. Krauss, *LW* I, pp. 10–11, sect. 17, 2–3, (supra part 1, note 1).

<sup>6</sup> See *LSJ*<sup>2</sup> 1772b, s.v. *τέλμα*, who gives this meaning to the plural form.

<sup>7</sup> Following along the lines of Liebermann’s suggestion, cited above, we could say that originally the reading was *תלמא*, which was corrupted into *כל שהוא* ... etc. However, this approach appears to me somewhat unlikely.

4. קסטריינוס — *castrianus*

In *Leviticus Rabba* 35.5, ed. Margulies, 822–823, we read as follow:

Said R. Levi (fl. c. 257–310): [It is like] unto a desolate place — אירימון = ἔρημος — which riddled with marauding bands. What did the king do? He placed there one קוסטריינוס to guard it . . . .<sup>1</sup>

Among the variants to the word קוסטריינוס that Margulies records in his apparatus, we find: קסטריינוס,<sup>2</sup> קסטריינוס,<sup>3</sup> כוסטריינוס.<sup>3</sup> Margulies (p. 823) writes that this is the Latin word *castrenses*,<sup>4</sup> i.e. those who dwell in a *castra*, referring to S. Krauss, *Paras ve-Romi ba-Talmud u-ba-Midrashim*, (Jerusalem 1948) 199. In fact this is only one of two alternative explanations that Krauss offers, his first suggestion being to emend the R to a D, thus arriving at κουστροδιανοι — *custodiani*, the guards of a fort.<sup>5</sup> While this suggestion takes account of the “vav” that follows the “qof” in some of the readings, it does not take account of the fact that in not one of the variants found in manuscripts etc. — Margulies registers eight! — is such a D to be found. (It should, however, be noted that in Hebrew manuscripts the difference between the letters D and R is very slight indeed.) Furthermore, it is highly doubtful whether such a word as *custodianus* ever existed in Latin, be it classical or Byzantine, (and, needless to say, not in Greek).<sup>6</sup> Presumably this is what led Margulies very rightly to reject this suggestion. However, the second alternative, *castrenses*, which he does accept, is also somewhat unsatisfactory. For while it takes into account the meaning of the word, it does not take into account the very different forms of the Midrashic and the Latin words.

Levy writes:<sup>7</sup> pl. (neugr. καστριστοι, *castrensis*, mit gr. Pl. End.). However, we have seen that the Midrash speaks of *one* קוסטריינוס; hence, it must be singular.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, this explanation too evades the basic problem of morphology.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Tert. *Apol.* 2.8.

<sup>2</sup> Probably one should emend to קסטריינוס.

<sup>3</sup> On ק-כ interchanges, see Krauss, *LW* (supra part 1, note 1) 1, pp. 31–33. Other variants omit the R. eg. קוסטיינוס, קוסטיינוס. In one case the “nun” and the following “vav” have joined together to form a “tet”, thus - קוסטייטס (Margulies, *ibid.*).

<sup>4</sup> In the parallel text in *Canticles Rabba* 6.12.1, we find: כוסטריינים This should obviously be corrected to קוסטריינוס. Since *Cant. Rab.* gives a (mistaken) plural form, it also is obliged to omit the word “one”, which appears in *Lev. Rab.* However, the more correct version in *Lev. Rab.* teaches us that we are speaking of a *singular* word, and not a plural one. Hence, Margulies and Krauss, should have written *castrensis* or *custodianus*, etc.

<sup>5</sup> So also I. Ziegler, *Die Königsgleichnisse des Midrasch beleuchtet durch die römische Kaiserzeit* (Breslau, 1903) 97.

<sup>6</sup> It is not recorded in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, (nor in the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*).

<sup>7</sup> J. Levy, *Neuhebräisches u. Chaldäisches Wörterbuch* 4 (Leipzig 1889) 345b–346a, s.v. קוסטריינוס.

<sup>8</sup> V. note 4 supra.

Jastrow,<sup>9</sup> on the other hand, suggests emending to קוֹסְטְרִיָּוּס = *quaestionarius* translating: “he appointed an executioner to be the governor of the district (disturbed by rebellious hoards)”. While this takes into account the U found in some of the readings,<sup>10</sup> the metathesis — found in no variants — is as arbitrary as the meaning is forced.

At this point it should be pointed out that the “vav” coming after the “qof” (or “kaf”) in some of the readings, and which would appear to have misled both Krauss and Jastrow, does not necessarily indicate that the original word had a U or O in it, (or OU or Y, for that matter). For all too frequently we find a “vav” standing for an A, as Krauss himself already long ago pointed out.<sup>11</sup> For example, קופסא = κάψα, קולמוס = κάλαμος.<sup>12</sup> The variant readings קוֹסְטְרִיָּוּס, קוֹסְטְרִיָּאוּנו suggest that the initial vowel was probably an A, and that consequently the initial element of the word was *castr-*, (and not, for example, *quaest-* as Jastrow suggested, or *cust-* as Krauss suggested, see above).

Now there seems to be little doubt that both Krauss and Levy were correct in their interpretation of the *meaning* of the word. Such a meaning makes excellent sense in the context. It is just that they did not pay sufficient attention to the precise morphology of the word, as it appears on the basis of several good manuscript readings. A reconstruction of the word on the basis of these readings would give us KASTRIANOS or CASTRIANUS- — יי — (“yod yod”) here representing IA.<sup>13</sup> And, indeed, just such a word, *castrianus*, exists in fourth century Latin, (just shortly after R. Levi’s time). It is found in the Script. Hist. Aug., Vopisc. *Aurelian.* 38.4.14. Its meaning there is a soldier of a troop placed in a permanent garrison in the *castra* on the frontier.<sup>15</sup> It is further found in *Cod. Iust.* 12.34.4, according to Cod. Ja.<sup>16</sup> In Greek of the later sixth century we find the form καστρηνός, (Theophilus of Byzantium 4.337c).<sup>17</sup> We see then that in Palestine of the late third or early fourth century

<sup>9</sup> *Dictionary*, 1339b, s.v. קיסטיוּר.

<sup>10</sup> On “qu” in Rabbinic loanwords see Krauss, *LW* (supra part 1 note 1) 1, pp. 33–35.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid* 87–88, 121. “Vav” also stands for η,ε,ι,αι, (Krauss, *ibid.*).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.87, sect. 125.

<sup>13</sup> This takes account of the reading [ס] קסטייאנו (v. note 2 supra). יא=IA, as does יי. Cf. for example: אדריינוס = ἀδριάντος (*LW* 2, p. 14a); אמיינטן = ἀμινάντος[v] (*ibid* 60a); בטחיר = βεστιάριος (*ibid.* 162b); ברבייר = βραχιάλιος (*ibid.* 162b); גוליר = γαλιάριος (*ibid.* 168b), etc.

<sup>14</sup> *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (London, 1961, LCL) 3.270

<sup>15</sup> Thus, A. Souter, *A Glossary of Later Latin* (Oxford 1949) 41b, s.v. D. Magie, in his translation of the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* (supra previous note) translates “Camp-troops”, and *ibid* note 4 explains the term in greater detail in its fourth century meaning. His explanation is more convincing than that of A. Souter, *A Glossary of Later Latin* (Oxford, 194) 416 s.v., who translates a “soldier of the Castleguard”. (My thanks to Dr. D. Rokeah for clarifying the point to me.)

<sup>16</sup> See *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* III, 346 line 28.

<sup>17</sup> Sophocles, (Memorial edition, Harvard 1887) 632b, s.v.

the word *castrianus* was already in common usage.<sup>18</sup> The word, though later little known, was faithfully recorded by several manuscripts. It entered into classical literature shortly afterwards, but apparently remained very rare.

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY

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<sup>18</sup> Since it appears, in a parable in a homily no doubt preached in a synagogue before a popular assembly, it must have been commonly understood. Most likely it belongs to the popular-vulgar stratum of the language.