

## A New Look at Three Inscriptions from Jaffa, Jerusalem, and Gaza

Eran Lupu

The following notes are the product of work on the Hellenistic and early Roman Greek inscriptions carried out on behalf of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaee/Palaestinae*. They are not to be taken as the last word on the respective inscriptions nor are they intended to replace existing commentaries.

### 1. *SEG XX 467* (Plate 1)

Jaffa, The Antiquities Museum of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Inv. no. 93-2061  
217 BCE

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, J. Kaplan conducted excavations in three areas in Jaffa. Although a number of objects from these excavations have been published, the



*SEG XX 467*. Courtesy: Israel Antiquities Authority

excavations as a whole have never been published systematically.<sup>1</sup> Among the objects that have been published is a fragment of a marble stele with a Greek inscription honoring Ptolemy IV Philopator. The stone was found on September 9, 1961 in area C (now under Qedumim

Square) in debris in the courtyard of a structure described as a catacomb.<sup>2</sup> It was published in 1962 by B. Lifshitz from a photograph which appeared in a daily newspaper.

---

I am grateful to the Israel Antiquities Authority, to the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv, and to the Antiquities Museum of Tel Aviv-Jaffa and its director, Tzvi Shacham, for permission to study and publish the inscriptions. I received much help from Cecilia Meir, curator of the Kadman Pavilion of Numismatics and Zivah Simon, director of the registration and documentation department at the Eretz Israel Museum, Tel Aviv. I am also indebted to Benjamin Isaac, Catherine Keesling, Alla Stein and my anonymous referees.

<sup>1</sup> For a preliminary report see Kaplan 1964.

<sup>2</sup> Kaplan asserts (1964: 276) that the stone was found in the excavation of a catacomb. But, as Tzvi Shacham pointed out to me, the findspot could really be a house and, if so, it might be difficult to say whether its lower part was the first floor or the basement as the foundations

Lifshitz's text was included in *SEG XX* as no. 467 with a correction made by the editor and in *SB VIII* 10160. The inscription was studied twice by W. Huss<sup>3</sup> and included in Laura Boffo's collection with commentary and relevant bibliography.<sup>4</sup> The stone, which does not seem to have been consulted since its discovery, is currently on display in the Antiquities Museum of Tel Aviv-Jaffa where I studied it on two occasions in August 2001. As often happens, the readings of the stone differ somewhat from those made from a photograph, though not inevitably for the better. I present here a new text with a short discussion.

The upper part of a white slightly tapered marble stele. The stone is broken below. The left and right sides and the top are smooth-picked; the back is rough-picked. Beginning at line 3, part of the inscribed face is badly scratched, although an intentional *rasura* seems improbable. A number of letters could, nevertheless, be securely read by the application of charcoal; some appear in the squeezes I made.

Height 0.185.<sup>5</sup> Width 0.315 (top), 0.319 (bottom). Thickness ca. 0.05. Letter height ca. 0.012-0.013; O and Θ 0.009-0.01. Interlinear space 0.01-0.012. Upper margin ca. 0.008.

- Βασιλέα μέγαν Πτολεμαῖον  
 2 θεὸν Φιλοπάτορα τὸν ἐγ βασιλέως  
 Πτολεμαίου καὶ βασιλίσσης  
 4 Βερενίκης [θεῶν] Εὐε[ργ]ετῶν  
 καὶ Πτο[λεμαί]ου βασιλέως  
 6 [Φιλαδέλφου ἔκγον]ο[ν] Ἀναξικλῆς  
 [--- ca. 8-10 ---] ἱερεὺς τοῦ βασι-  
 8 [λέως - - - *vacat?* - - -]

Anaxikles [son of - - -], the priest of the king (honored) Ptolemy the god Philopator, the son of king Ptolemy and queen Berenice the gods Euergetai and [grandson] of king Ptolemy [Philadelphus].

Restored by Lifshitz. I have not noted all differences between this and the first edition with respect to brackets and dots. <sup>2</sup> The ἐγ which had been mistaken in ed. pr. for an abbreviation denoting υἱόν was first read by A.G. Woodhead (*SEG*). <sup>5</sup> καὶ Lupu: θεοῦ Lifshitz <sup>8</sup> ἀνέθηκεν. *vacat*] Lifshitz: see below.

A with a broken crossbar, Π with a shorter right vertical, smaller Θ and O, Σ with parallel outer strokes, closed Ω; occasional small serifs.

<sup>4</sup> Dotted epsilons: insecure traces

<sup>5</sup> τ: only a horizontal stroke

<sup>6</sup> Dotted N: lower part of the left vertical seems secure.

### *The Date*

The historical setting was established by Lifshitz and more cautiously approved by Huss.<sup>6</sup> It is only reasonable to assume that the installation of the stele was occasioned by

---

have not been excavated. Exact dating of this structure may have to wait for final publication.

<sup>3</sup> Huss 1976: 72-74 and 1977.

<sup>4</sup> Boffo 1994: 61-6 no. 4.

<sup>5</sup> All dimensions are in meters.

<sup>6</sup> Lifshitz 1962: 83-4; Huss 1976: 72.

the victory at Raphia on July 22, 217 and Philopator's subsequent stay in Syria-Palestine, which lasted until October of the same year.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Text*

Lifshitz's θεοῦ (line 5) gives reasonable sense but the space before the Π is too small for four letters and besides, the stone has different letters, namely KAI. The letters are faded, especially the alpha; they can be securely read by application of charcoal and also appear on the squeezes I made. In the following line there are traces before the secure omicron which are too ambiguous either to support Lifshitz's [ἐκγον]ο[ν] or to prove it wrong. If it is correct, the καί seems redundant as it disturbs the formulaic apposition resulting in what appears to me to be a somewhat awkward style. One hopes that a solution will be suggested.

Lifshitz's restoration ἀνέθηκεν (line 8) has, to the best of my knowledge, prevailed. The object dedicated would likely be a portrait statue.<sup>8</sup> But whereas statues are normally dedicated by an inscription on a base on which they stand, the present fragment appears to have belonged to a freestanding stele. The rough-picked back and the smooth-picked sides are typical of such stelae. The overall dimensions suggest that the original stone was around 0.60 m. or so in height. The inscription is likely to have occupied not much more than one half of the original stele and the rest was left blank. Calculation of the taper, standing presently at 0.005 m. per ca. 0.015 m., would suggest that the original overall taper was not considerable but is enough to rule out the possibility (had any ever existed) that the stone was originally built into a structure forming the base for the statue. Considering this, the inscription is more likely to have honored Ptolemy than to have dedicated his statue; ἐτίμησεν can be supplied<sup>9</sup> though a verb might not be mandatory.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. *SEG XXX 1695 (Plate 2)*

Tel Aviv, Eretz Israel Museum, Kadman Pavilion of Numismatics.  
saec. III-II BCE (?)

The inscription in question was first published by S. Applebaum in the *Festschrift* for Abraham Schalit in 1980.<sup>11</sup> The circumstances surrounding its discovery are somewhat obscure: the stone is said to have been found in a cart carrying rubble fill from the basement of an unidentified Arabic house in the old city of Jerusalem. It was bought by the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv where it is now kept in the Kadman Pavilion of Numismatics.

The first editor, who is to be commended for the publication of an extremely obscure document, interpreted it as an oath dedicated to Ares Athletes taken at the time of the

<sup>7</sup> For the dates see Huss 1976: 83.

<sup>8</sup> J. and L. Robert, *BE* 1964 no. 507, 1978 no. 88; E. Lanciers *APF* 34, 1988: 31; Boffo 1994: 66.

<sup>9</sup> I am grateful to the anonymous referee for pointing this out.

<sup>10</sup> E.g. *SEG* VIII 356. Some such formulaic phrase as εὐεργεσίας/εὐνοίας ἔνεκεν (τῆς εἰς ἑαυτὸν vel sim.) could have followed.

<sup>11</sup> Applebaum 1980. See also *SCI* 6, 1981/2: 108.



SEG XXX 1695

H. 0.225, W. 0.175, Th. 0.115. L. H. 0.006-0.008; O and Θ smaller and suspended 0.004-0.005. Interlinear space 0.005-0.007. Upper margin 0.06. Left margin 0.013.

“Ορκος· ἄρης αὐλητῆς τάδε[ε - - - ]  
 τας ἐπήγαγον ἐπὶ τὴν ΟΙ.[- - - - - ]  
 τούτων καὶ οὐκ ἐφάμην[ - - - - - ]  
 4 καὶ τοὺς ἱερεῖς μαστ[ - - - - - ]  
 ἤθελον καὶ οὐκ ἐλάθ[ - - - - - ]  
 ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν του[ - - - - - ]  
 μου ἀπώλεσαν [- - - - - ]  
 8 ἐνέβαλον κατ[ι - - - - - ]  
 σαν καὶ τα[- - - - - ]  
 ΕΜΠΥΟΝ[ - - - - - ]  
 [- - -]THE . [- - - - - ]  
 -----

Maccabean revolt by the Seleucid garrison stationed in the Akra in Jerusalem to protect Greek cults introduced under Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The text was included as no. 1695 in *SEG XXX* where this interpretation was severely criticized by H.W. Pleket.

I studied the stone in May and again in September of 2001. My studies resulted in some different readings and in an alternative, albeit incomplete and very tentative interpretation which I present here.

The upper left hand corner of a brownish limestone stele, broken below and on the right. Part of the left margin survives. Surviving back is rough-picked; the top and the left side are smooth-picked. The inscribed face is on the whole well preserved though not without occasional scratches. A fine line was inscribed above the first line of text, probably for alignment.

Oath; I (?), Ares, a flute player(?)  
 I led to/against the  
 and I did not say  
 and the priests  
 I wished and I/they did not  
 by the gods  
 they destroyed/lost  
 I/they threw in(?)

<sup>2</sup> οἰκ[ίαν(?) - - -] <sup>5</sup> ἐλαθ[όμην] or ἐλάθ[ον]; the voice and the translation would depend on the context. <sup>10</sup> ἔμπυον? See below. Ed. pr. text runs as follows: “Ορκος. ἄρης ἀθλητῆς. Τάδε. Ἐπειδὴ τὰς θεῶν τελε[ῖ] τας ἐπήγαγον ἐπὶ τὴν ἄκραν - - 5 - - ἀμυνῶ δὲ ὑπὲρ] τούτων καὶ οὐκ ἐφάμην [ἄλλοις ἐπιτρέψαι καταλείπειν] καὶ τοὺς ἱερεῖς μαστ[ροὺς ἐπικρινῶ ὅτι θύσαι οὐκ] || ἤθελον καὶ οὐκ ἐλάθ[οντο λείποντες τὰ ἐπιταχθέντα] | ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν. τοῦ[ς γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀκρα “Ἐλληνας διὰ πολέ]μου ἀπώλεσαν [- - -] ἐνέβαλον κα[- - -]σαν καὶ τα?[- - -] κτλ

Syllabic division seems to have been observed. A with a straight crossbar, Π with a shorter right vertical, smaller, suspended Θ and Ο, Σ with parallel outer strokes; no serifs.

<sup>1</sup> Υ: Clear vertical, right diagonal, and tip of left diagonal. The round incision to its left, taken by the first editor as an indication that the letter-cutter had intended to write a Θ, may well be damage to the stone. Pleket (*SEG*) prints a dotted epsilon.

<sup>2</sup> The second to last letter is in all probability an Ο with some damage below, although a rather irregular Ω might be read. It is followed by an iota. Traces of a vertical stroke seem to appear at the break. B. Isaac (*SEG*) reads ΟΙ' (or ΩΙ').

<sup>9</sup> I could not securely attribute traces to the right of the last faded Α to any intentional strokes. Any such traces may have resulted from the break.

<sup>11</sup> Last trace: The upper left corner of a square letter with the horizontal extending to the preceding Ε: Γ, Ε, or Π. Α Τ is less likely because its horizontal extends farther to the left elsewhere.

### *The date*

As we have it, this fragment does not date itself and seems to give no real clue for dating. With no archaeological context, one must resort to dating by letter-forms. This method is notoriously tricky, all the more so when comparable material is so scarce. Apart from some of the burial inscriptions from the caves at Marisa<sup>12</sup> with their distinct inclination toward cursive forms, only a handful of Greek inscriptions have reached us from Hellenistic Palestine.<sup>13</sup> All of these display some features noticeable in the present inscription without suggesting a close match. One major difference between this inscription and other Hellenistic inscriptions from Palestine is evident in the crossbar of the alpha — broken elsewhere but straight here. This, alongside the small, carefully executed letters, the complete lack of serifs, and the overall neat character of the lettering, might suggest a rather early date. The existence of such an inscription seems, however, to call for some Greek presence in its original provenance. If this is indeed Jerusalem, it is hard to see how the inscription could antedate the Hellenization of the city in the first part of the second century BCE. In this case, a date in the first part of the second century, as the first editor has argued for slightly different reasons,<sup>14</sup> is plausible.

<sup>12</sup> J.P. Peters and H. Thiersch, *Painted Tombs in the Necropolis of Marissa*, London, 1905; *SEG* VIII 247-261; *SEG* XXXIV 1477-1502; 'Atiqot 21, 1992: 37-47 nos. 1-14 (in Hebrew). Cf. the texts published by R. Wunsch in F.J. Bliss and R.A.S. Macalister, *Excavations in Palestine during the Years 1898-1900*, London, 1902: 158-87 (two longer ones in *SEG* VIII 245-246).

<sup>13</sup> The following inscriptions date themselves more or less securely: *SEG* XXIX 1613, Scythopolis, 199-195 BCE; *SEG* XX 467, Jaffa, 217 BCE (see no. 1 above); *PEFQS* 1900: 334-6, *ibid.* 1901: 54-7, Marisa, sometime after the battle of Raphia; *SEG* XLI 1556, Iamnia on the Sea, June/July 163 BCE; 'Atiqot 38, 1999: 51-64, Marisa, 143/2 BCE; *SEG* XIX 904, Acco, probably 130/29 BCE; *SEG* VIII 33, Scythopolis, second century BCE; *SEG* VIII 96, Samaria, second century BCE; *PEQS* 104, 1972: 59-63, Samaria, late second century BCE (before 108; for the date cf. J. and L. Robert, *BE* 1972 no. 571). Cf. also *SEG* VII 326, Qana, east of Tyre, probably 219 BCE (Huss 1976: 43-4; E. Lanciers, *APF*, 34, 1988: 31-2). From among the inscriptions dated to the Hellenistic era on the basis of letter-forms we may single out *SEG* XVIII 622, Acco (Kafr Yassif), and *SEG* XXVI, Tel Dan (found in a Hellenistic context); *SEG* VIII 269 is considered Hellenistic despite its tendency toward cursive forms (see R. Mouterde, *Mél. Un. St. Joseph* 16, 1932: 98-100). Cf. Applebaum 1980: 47-8.

<sup>14</sup> Applebaum 1980: 47-8.

It should be stressed, however, that the circumstances under which the stone was discovered urge caution in using the text for historical arguments.

### *The Text*

While the actual reading of the stone presents no particular challenges, the text does not lend itself easily to interpretation. The considerable thickness might suggest a sizeable stone but there is no way to calculate its size or the length of the lines. As if these difficulties were not enough, this document seems to have no immediate parallels; any attempt at restoration is accordingly confronted with formidable difficulties. Perhaps the most notable of these — a correct interpretation of which might provide some key to interpretation — is the identity of Ares.

Ares appears to be rare as a personal name;<sup>15</sup> the title Auletes for the god Ares is unheard of; the first possibility is therefore preferable. Ares may have been, as C. Habicht suggested,<sup>16</sup> a person, and thus a flute-player by profession. The syntax remains sketchy and the punctuation difficult.

A clue to the nature of the text may be the tenses of the verbs in lines 2, 3, 5, 7, and 8, namely aorist and imperfect. The endings of ἐπήγαγον, ἦθελον, and perhaps ἐνέβαλον (lines 2, 5, and 8) can all be understood as first person singular, making the subject of these verbs — probably the oath taker — the same as the subject of ἐφάμην (line 3). Not much can be said with certainty, but we seem to be dealing here with a narrative. This narrative might relate the events which preceded the taking of the oath, events in which the oath-taker was involved, and which might, in fact, have necessitated it in some way.

Further attempts at interpretation are particularly difficult. We will therefore confine ourselves to comments on ἐπήγαγον ἐπὶ τὴν ΟΙ.[ - - ] (line 2), ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν (line 6), and ΕΜΠΥΟΝ (line 10).

Although in the sense ‘bring/lead on’ and ‘against’, the verb ἐπάγω tends to take an accusative and dative in classical Greek,<sup>17</sup> it may be used with ἐπὶ and the accusative.<sup>18</sup> This construction is employed here and the events might have involved the oath-taker leading something against or to the word following τήν. Οἶκ[ιαν], i.e. household (vel sim.) is conceivable.<sup>19</sup> If the sense is hostile, this leading against might have constituted some offence. The combination ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν implies divine intervention of some sort and suggests that the events in question were somewhat extraordinary. In such a case, the reading ἔμψυον (suppurating), which would normally make little sense, appears less peculiar.

15 It is, however, attested. See s.v. in *LGNP* I p. 58; *LGNP* II p. 50 (= J.S. Traill, *The Persons of Ancient Athens*, III p. 21); *LGNP* IIIA p. 54 (two persons); F. Preisigke's *Namenbuch* and D. Foraboschi's *Onomasticon Alterum Papyrologicum* s.v.; cf. Pape-Benseler, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Eigennamen*, s.v. 4 (I p. 125).

16 To B. Isaac as reported in the *SEG* lemma.

17 But see *LSJ* s.v. 2b.

18 As in *LXX* Jer. 39:42.

19 Cf. *SEG* IX B 29-30 (the cathartic law from Cyrene) ἰκέσιος ἐπακτός· αἱ κα ἐπιπεμφθῆι ἐπὶ | τὰν οἰκίαν κτλ (A visitant *hikesios* (suppliant); if he has been sent against the household etc). Similar events need not be assumed here.

To sum up, the present document remains largely obscure. It seems possible, however, to determine at least that its general character is more private than public. It appears to be an oath taken by one Ares, a flute-player, who has possibly committed some offence. The events surrounding this occasion were significant enough to require him to take the oath and to have it and an account of the entire incident inscribed on stone.<sup>20</sup>

### 3. SEG XX 474 (Plate 3)



SEG XX 474. The squeeze

Jaffa, The Antiquities Museum of Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Inv. no. MHY 100.007.  
229/30 (or 34/35?) CE

The last inscription to be discussed here was first published by C.R. Conder in *PEFQS* 1875, p. 159 no. 1. It is inscribed on a granite column found marking the South-West corner of the Saracene race course, the Meidan ez Zaid, ca. five kilometers South-East of Gaza. Three other columns marking the remaining corners are not said to have been inscribed. A majuscule text was included in Conder and Kitchener's *Survey of Western Palestine*,<sup>21</sup> where the inscription was mistaken for an epitaph. This error was reproduced in

M.A. Meyer's work on Gaza,<sup>22</sup> although it had previously been corrected by Ch. Clermont-Ganneau<sup>23</sup> who recognized that the inscription was in fact dedicatory. In 1963 the inscription was republished by B. Lifshitz. Lifshitz's edition,<sup>24</sup> the first to include the first line, marked a great improvement in the study of the text. His text was reprinted in *SEG XX* as no. 474. It has been subsequently included in collections of Gaza inscriptions in the works of C.A.M. Glucker,<sup>25</sup> Y.E. Meimaris,<sup>26</sup> and L. Di Segni.<sup>27</sup>

The whereabouts of the stone following its discovery are somewhat mysterious. At one point it was brought, perhaps by the British, to Ramat Gan where it stood in front of

<sup>20</sup> Cf. in this respect *SEG XLII* 661.

<sup>21</sup> C.R. Conder and H.H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine*, III, London 1883, 250-1.

<sup>22</sup> M.A. Meyer, *History of the City of Gaza from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, New York, 1907, 112, 141 no. XI.

<sup>23</sup> *ARP* II: 407 no. 7B

<sup>24</sup> Lifshitz 1963: 90-2 with plate 7 in which the lower part of the column is cut off.

<sup>25</sup> Glucker, 1987: 120-1 no. 3.

<sup>26</sup> Meimaris 1992: 123 no. 104.

<sup>27</sup> Di Segni 1997: 510-1 no. 153 with the fullest commentary to date.

the military adjutancy. In 1978 it was removed to the Antiquities Museum of Tel Aviv-Jaffa where it stood in the courtyard<sup>28</sup> until it was placed inside where it can now be found near the entrance.<sup>29</sup> I studied it there in November and December 2001. I present here the results of this study.

A gray granite column chipped above and broken below. The stone shows distinct signs of weathering that has severely damaged line 1. During its wanderings, the letters were filled with white paint.

Height ca. 1.70. Diameter ca. 0.515 (top), ca. 0.458 (bottom). The inscription is placed ca. 0.77 from the top. The lettering is somewhat uneven and letter height varies considerably: line 1: ca. 0.043, line 2: ca. 0.035 (C) to 0.04, line 3-6: ca. 0.045-0.065 (Υ) with occasional smaller omicrons, ca. 0.004. Interlinear space ca. 0.045 to (between lines 3 and 4) 0.06.

Ἀμμών[ι]ος  
 2 Δομεστικοῦ  
 ὑπὲρ Δομε-  
 4 στικοῦ υ-  
 ίου ἀνέθη-  
 6 κεν ἴϛ ϛ'.

Ammonius son of Domesticus dedicated (this column) on behalf of his son, Domesticus. Year 290 (or 95?).<sup>30</sup>


<sup>1</sup> Ἀμμώνιος Lifshitz <sup>2</sup> ΔΟΜΕΣΤΙΚΟ[Σ] Conder-Kitchener: Δομεστικοῦ Lifshitz <sup>6</sup> KEM- - - E Conder-Kitchener (the μ is undoubtedly incorrect). Last two letters: μσ Lifshitz (μσ *SEG*).

A with a straight crossbar, lunate E and Σ, cursive M, Ω, and ϛ.

<sup>1</sup> υ: perhaps a top of the left vertical. The two last letters are somewhat smaller than the preceding ones and very worn but seem traceable on the stone. The distance between them (ca. 0.025) is greater than elsewhere. This and their size might be ascribed to a need to deal with a rough spot in the material.

<sup>2</sup> I could not ascertain that anything had ever been inscribed to the right of the omicron of which only the upper right part survives.

<sup>3</sup> Lifshitz dots the last two letters.

<sup>6</sup> ἴϛ i.e. ἔτους. ϛ: ; see below. Last letter: A tip of a horizontal bar seems to appear on the stone and more clearly on the two squeezes I made. Although it seems intentional and appears where a crossbar of an epsilon should be placed, the rest of the bar is shallow, somewhat winding, and does not seem to extend all the way inside. A sigma is thus possible. One might even assume that the letter-cutter had started to add the crossbar, only to realize his mistake and stop. Nevertheless, if a sigma were not considered to give better sense (see below), an epsilon would look less suspect.

<sup>28</sup> This was reported by S. Applebaum, B.H. Isaac, and Y.H. Landau in *SCI* 6, 1981/82: 111.

<sup>29</sup> I am grateful to Tzvi Shacham for details and for allowing me to check the stone's records. Lifshitz's assertion that it was found in 1951 is intriguing.

<sup>30</sup> Which gives 229/30 (or 34/35?) CE according to the era of Gaza; see below.



*The Text*

Besides some minor adjustments, my readings differ from previous editions in respect to the last two letters which follow the sign  $\angle$  i.e.  $\epsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ ,<sup>31</sup> and affect the date of the inscription, dated previously to 179 CE, i.e. 240 ( $\mu\sigma$ ) according to the era of Gaza. The second to last letter might at first look like a mu. Nevertheless, the missing left vertical was never inscribed and, moreover, the mu has a distinctly different shape here, namely  $\mathcal{M}$ . The letter in question is thus not a mu but, as Alla Stein pointed out to me, a cursive koppa. This form appears on a number of Hadrianic coins of Gaza in a ligature with rho or alone.<sup>32</sup> The last letter can, as has been said above, be either an epsilon or less likely a sigma.

Based on the new readings, the year would not be 240 but either 95 ( $\varphi\epsilon$ ) or 290 ( $\varphi\sigma$ ). The era here is likely to be that of Gaza, i.e. October 28, 61 BCE.<sup>33</sup> If the reading  $\varphi\epsilon$  is accepted, the date would be CE 34/5. Whereas such a date seems paleographically feasible — cursive forms infiltrate into the area by the early second century BCE<sup>34</sup> — it is objectionable on different grounds. One would note that while ascending order of numerals appears to be the norm in Gaza inscriptions,<sup>35</sup> the reading  $\varphi\epsilon$  shows a descending order of numerals. Nevertheless, ascending order is not necessarily the norm in Gaza when digits do not include hundreds, as is suggested by a number of coins of the city which show a descending order.<sup>36</sup> The appearance of the Hellenized name<sup>37</sup> Domesticus seems more problematic. It might suggest a more substantial Roman influence than that which can be assumed for contemporary Gaza a mere forty years after the death of Herod and its second subordination to the provincia Syria, and more than thirty years before the administrative reorganization under Vespasian following the Jewish revolt.<sup>38</sup> The problem is compounded by the fact that not only the dedicator's son, but also his father, was given this name. Finally, it should be noted that the import of granite seems to go hand in hand with the establishment of Roman rule in Palestine. While imported

<sup>31</sup> This sign seems to be a variant of the well known L for which see M. Avi Yonah, *Abbreviations in Greek Inscriptions*, *QDAP* Supplement to vol. 9, 1940: 114.

<sup>32</sup> There are many examples: see *British Museum Coins, Palestine*, 146-51. For a good photograph of the type representing Minos on the obverse see Y. Meshorer, *City-Coins of Eretz Israel and the Decapolis in the Roman Period*, Jerusalem 1985: 29 no. 55 (I owe this reference to Alla Stein). The era of Hadrian, commemorating the emperor's visit in 130, went out of favor following his death in 138. See Glucker 1987: 41. A somewhat similar B appears much later (504 or 505 CE) in a Christian epitaph from Gaza, Glucker 1987: 122 no. 5; Meimaris 1992: 126 no. 113; Di Segni 1997: 515-16 no. 157, lines 3 and 5.

<sup>33</sup> Glucker 1987: 38; Meimaris 1992: 118.

<sup>34</sup> See Mouterde (n. 13) 98-100; M. Avi Yonah, *QDAP* 8, 1939: 60-1.

<sup>35</sup> Di Segni 1997: 13; cf. Meimaris 1992: 30.

<sup>36</sup> For a few examples see A. Kushnir-Stein, 'Gaza Coinage Dated LIC — A Reappraisal', *Swiss Numismatic Revue*, 74, 1995: 49-55.

<sup>37</sup> Clermont-Ganneau's expression (*ARP* II: 407). The name is rarely attested; see commentaries ad loc. in Glucker 1987 and Di Segni 1997.

<sup>38</sup> See E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135)*, II, revised by G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Black, Edinburgh, 1979: 101-3; Glucker 1987: 38-41.

granite columns may be found in the first century, the bulk of the evidence comes from the second century onward.<sup>39</sup>

Taken individually each of these three factors — notation of the date, onomastics, and considerations pertaining to the import of granite — might not rule out CE 34/5 as the date entirely. Taken together, however, they seem to suggest that it is somewhat too early. The reading Ϟσ, that is 290, which might still not be considered entirely secure, appears, accordingly, to be more attractive. If it is accepted, according to the era of Gaza the date would be 229/30 CE. One way or the other, the reading M, dotted or not, becomes obsolete.

Tel Aviv University

### Bibliography

- Applebaum, S. 1980. 'A Fragment of a New Hellenistic Inscription from the Old City of Jerusalem', in A. Oppenheimer, U. Rappaport, M. Stern (eds.), *Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period. Abraham Schalit Memorial Volume*, Jerusalem: 56-9 (In Hebrew; English abstract on p. III).
- Boffo, L. 1994. *Iscrizioni greche e latine per lo studio della biblia*, Brescia.
- Clermont-Ganneau 1893. *ARP II: Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, Archaeological Researches in Palestine during the Years 1873-1874*, II, London.
- Di Segni, L. 1997. *Dated Greek Inscriptions from Palestine from the Roman and the Byzantine Periods*, Ph.D. Dissertation, The Hebrew University, Jerusalem.
- Glucker, C.A.M. 1987. *The City of Gaza in the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (BAR International Series 325), Oxford.
- Huss, W. 1976. *Untersuchungen zur Aussenpolitik Ptolemaios' IV.*, Munich.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1977. 'Der "König der Könige" und der "Herr der Könige"', *ZDPV* 93: 131-40.
- Kaplan, J. 1964. 'Jaffa's History Revealed by the Spade', *Archaeology* 17: 270-6. (reprinted in *Archaeological Discoveries in the Holy Land*, Compiled by the Archaeological Institute of America, New York, 1967: 113-8).
- Lifshitz, B. 1962. 'Beiträge zur palästinischen Epigraphik', *ZDPV* 78: 64-88.
- \_\_\_\_\_, 1963. 'Weitere Beiträge zur palästinischen Epigraphik', *ZDPV* 79: 90-7.
- Meimaris, Y.E. 1992. *Chronological Systems in Roman-Byzantine Palestine and Arabia*, Athens.

<sup>39</sup> See O. Williams-Thorpe and M.M. Henty, 'The Sources of Roman Granite Columns in Israel', *Levant* 32, 2000, 155-70, esp. 156, 164, table 1 (I owe this reference to Moshe Fischer). Although I have here taken Gaza as the original provenance, the authors point out (156) that columns could be re-used in antiquity.