

## Salome also called Grapte\*

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The archive of Salome Komaïse, dated to the reign of Hadrian, reveals that her mother Salome had a second name, Σαλωμη ἢ καὶ Γραπτή.<sup>1</sup> Reviewing Cotton and Yardeni's publication of this archive, Glen Bowersock points out that the name is much more common than Cotton's commentary suggests, and continues: 'Above all, she has missed the brothers Theodoros and Theophanes, who were born in the mountains of Moab in the late 8th century A.D. Both men bore the sobriquet Graptos because each had been tattooed with 12 lines of iambic verse on their foreheads ... It is worth thinking about whether the names Graptos and Grapte implied body markings and whether Salome Komaïse's mother bore a tattoo that was used to individuate her from her homonymous daughter'. In the following I will argue that a connection with tattooing is unlikely, and that there is a better explanation.<sup>2</sup>

It is best to begin by recalling some aspects of ancient tattooing. In current western practice it is usually decorative, and consists of designs; letters when used at all are subordinate to the design, for example when the name of a boy- or girl-friend is written beneath a pierced heart. In antiquity, by contrast, decorative tattooing is associated with peoples regarded as barbarian. Thus in the third century Herodian says of the Britons that they 'tattoo (στίζονται) their bodies with various designs (γραφαί) and with pictures of all kinds of animals'. The only type of tattooing customary within the

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<sup>1</sup> H.M. Cotton and A. Yardeni, *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Hever and Other Sites*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVII (Oxford, 1997), nos. 63, 64 (where it appears as Γροπτή); the elder Salome appears simply as 'Shalom' in a Nabataean document of about 100 C.E., A. Yardeni, *A Textbook of Aramaic, Hebrew and Nabataean Documentary Texts from the Judaean Desert and Related Material* (Jerusalem, 2000) 1.290-91; 2.95. On second names in general: M. Lambertz, 'Zur Ausbreitung des Signum oder Supernomen im römischen Reiche', *Glotta* 4 (1913) 78-143; 5 (1914) 99-170; in Egyptian papyri, R. Calderini, 'Ricerche sul doppio nome personale nell' Egitto greco-romano', *Aegyptus* 21 (1941) 221-60; 22 (1942) 3-45; among the ancient Jews, J. Naveh, 'Nameless People', *IEJ* 40 (1990) 108-23, especially 122.

<sup>2</sup> G.W. Bowersock, *JRA* 14 (2001) 659-60. On tattooing in classical antiquity: C.P. Jones, 'Stigma: Tattooing and Branding in Graeco-Roman Antiquity', *JRS* 77 (1987) 139-55 (henceforth 'Jones 1987'); Chr. Schäfer, 'Zur Σφραγίς von Sklaven in der lex portorii provinciae Asiae', *ZPE* 86 (1991) 193-8; M. Gustafson, 'Inscripta in fronte: Penal Tattooing in Late Antiquity', *Classical Antiquity* 16 (1997) 79-105 (henceforth 'Gustafson 1997'). Revised versions of both Jones 1987 and Gustafson 1997 appear in Jane Caplan, ed., *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History* (Princeton and London, 2000) 1-31. On the two saints, *Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium* 3 (New York, and Oxford 1991) 2042, 2062; on Theophilus, *ibid.* 2066 (cf. Jones 1987, 148-9; Gustafson 1997, 85).

Hellenistic and Roman worlds consisted of letters, and was usually placed on slaves as a punishment, to mark them as degraded even among their own kind. Thus a scholiast on Aeschines explains the phrase, 'tattooed runaway', 'Runaway slaves were tattooed on the forehead, that is, inscribed (with) "Hold me, I'm a runaway"' (οἱ φυγάδες τῶν δούλων ἐστίζοντο τὸ μέτωπον, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐπεγράφοντο· κάτεχέ με, φεύγω). So also in Herondas an angry woman threatens to have her slave Gastron tattooed with an inscription (ἐπίγραμμα), which is not spelled out. A related function is the tattooing of letters to mark a person as the 'slave' or devotee of a god: thus a second-century papyrus mentions a runaway slave from Hierapolis (Bambyke) 'tattooed with two barbarian letters', probably in honor of the local gods Atargatis and Hadad.<sup>3</sup>

Now the names 'Graptos' and 'Grapte' are only found in the Roman imperial period, mainly in the second and third centuries, but during that time they are common. The four volumes so far published of the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names* contain 12 Graptoi and 7 Graptai; the computer-generated concordance of *CIL* VI has 18 Grapti and 47 Graptae; Heikki Solin's dictionary of Roman slave-names has 8 Grapti and 17 Graptae.<sup>4</sup> Apart from those in Solin's list, some of the bearers are slaves or freedpersons, but others are of higher status. Thus a Panhellene at Acraephia in Boeotia is honored by about thirty friends, among whom are two Roman citizens and a Graptos son of Eutychos. An ephobic list of 212 or later from Tanagra includes a Graptos son of Graptos. At Puteoli, one L. Memmius Graptus and his wife Julia Felicula set up a tombstone for themselves and their freedmen and -women.

Among freedmen called Graptus, some hold positions of high trust or possess great wealth. One was a freedman of Tiberius, *usu et senecta domum principum edoctus*, whom Nero employed to bring down the aristocrat Cornelius Sulla. Another freedman of the same name built a sumptuous mausoleum at Nemausus, planted all around with trees. It seems very unlikely that either of these could have ever been tattooed slaves.<sup>5</sup>

Now the verbal adjective γραπτός does occasionally mean 'written' or 'marked with writing', but in Hellenistic and Roman times by far the commonest sense is 'painted'. This is the usual sense in epigraphy, where it appears in honorific decrees to designate a painted portrait (εἰκῶν γραπτή) as opposed to a gilded one (εἰκῶν χρυσή).<sup>6</sup> There seems to be no passage in classical Greek in which γραπτός means 'tattooed', though γράφειν and derivative forms such as ἐπίγραμμα are used to refer to the process and its results. In Byzantine Greek, by contrast, it seems that the original and technical term,

<sup>3</sup> Herodian: 3.14.7 (Jones 1987, 146). Scholiast: Schol. Aesch. 2.79, 75 line 455 ed. Dilts (Jones 1987, 148). Herondas: 6.65-67, 77-79 (Jones 1987, 140). Slave from Bambyke: PPar. 10.8-9 (Jones 1987, 144).

<sup>4</sup> H. Solin, *Die Stadtrömische Sklavennamen. Ein Namenbuch* (Stuttgart, 1996) 2.544-45.

<sup>5</sup> Acraephia: P. Roesch, *Etudes béotiennes* (Paris, 1982) 184 no. 30, line III 16. (In the same list, the alleged ΕΠΑΛΙΚΟΣ, III line 8, must be an Εἰταλικός, and does not belong in the *Lexicon of Greek Personal Names*, where it is the sole example.) Tanagra: *IG* VII 2450, line 2; on the provenance and nature of this text, L. Robert, *Opera Minora Selecta* 3 (Amsterdam, 1969) 1390-3. Puteoli: *CIL* X 2727. Freedman of Tiberius: Tac. *Ann.* 13.47, cf. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 347. Freedman at Nemausus: *CIL* XII 3637.

<sup>6</sup> E.g. J. and L. Robert, 'Bulletin épigraphique' 1973, 426 no. 13 = *REG* 86 (1973) 164 (now W. Blümel, *Die Inschriften von Iasos* [Bonn, 1985] no. 85).

στίζω, sometimes needed to be glossed; hence the scholiast on Aeschines says ‘tattooed, that is, inscribed’. This may be why the two Byzantine saints acquired the surname ‘Graptoi’ rather than ‘Stiktoi’. But it should be remembered that they had been cruelly punished for their devotion to the cult of images, the penalty being a tattoo that may well have covered all of their faces. The name may therefore have designated them as walking documents of a tyrant’s cruelty.

Beside the fact that the adjective γραπτός does not customarily refer to writing but to painting, and never in the classical period refers to tattooing, there is perhaps another argument against tattooing in the particular case of the Jewish Salome. The Torah forbade the practice, using an expression which the Septuagint renders as γράμματα στικτά.<sup>7</sup> The rabbis debated whether this ban applied to all body-marking, or only to tattoos containing the name of an idol, such as that on the runaway slave from Bambyke. Certainly, it is unclear how far the prescriptions of the Torah, or rabbinic interpretations of them, influenced the conduct of daily life in the second century of our era. Nonetheless, we can hardly imagine Salome acquiring a tattoo with the insouciance of present-day youth, let alone adopting a second name which drew attention to it.

A different meaning which the name might conceivably seem to suggest is that of ‘made-up’, ‘painted’, as in the old-fashioned expression, ‘painted woman’. But make-up in a woman could imply an intention to disguise old age, to attract lovers or (in the case of *hetairai*) clients, while in men it was a sign of effeminacy.<sup>8</sup> ‘Made-up’ therefore seems even less likely than ‘tattooed’ to be the implication of ‘Graptos’ and ‘Grapte’.

By contrast, ‘painted’ or ‘sculpted’, or ‘fit to be painted or sculpted’ (since the -τός suffix can imply possibility as well as completion), gives excellent sense. Comparisons of young and beautiful persons to a picture or a statue go far back in classical literature. In Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, Iphigeneia awaiting sacrifice is described as ‘conspicuous as in pictures’ (πρέπουσα τῶς ἐν γραφαῖς, *Agam.* 242). Socrates in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicos* says, ‘It would give me much more pleasure to learn about the virtue of a real woman than to have Zeuxis show me a beautiful portrait of a woman that he’d painted’ (εἰκάσας γραφῆ, *Oec.* 10.1, transl. S. Pomeroy). In Plautus, a lover hugging his girl-friend says, ‘Ah Apelles! Oh painter Zeuxis! Why did you die too soon to make this scene your subject? As for other painters — I want none of them handling scenes of this sort’ (*O Apella, O Zeuxis pictor, quor numero estis mortui, hoc exemplo ut pingere-tis? nam alios pictores nil moror huiusmodi tractare exempla, Poen.* 1271, transl. P. Nixon). Propertius says of Cynthia, ‘If anyone wishes to surpass ancient pictures in renown, let him take my lady for a model in his art’ (*si quis uult fama tabulas anteire ue-tustas, / hic dominam exemplo ponat in arte meam, 2.3.41-42*). Similar comparisons are frequent in the Greek novel, which flourished particularly in the second century. Thus in Chariton’s *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, which may date to the early part of the century, the hero on his first appearance looks ‘the way sculptors and painters portray Achilles, Nireus, Hippolytus, and Alcibiades’ (οἶον Ἀχιλλέα καὶ Νιρέα καὶ Ἴππόλυτον καὶ Ἀλκιβιάδην πλάσται τε καὶ γραφεῖς ἀποδεικνύουσι, 1.1.3). When Callirhoe nurses

<sup>7</sup> Lev. 19.28 (Jones 1987, 144 with n. 26).

<sup>8</sup> Women: e.g. Lysias 1.14 with C. Carey’s note; Xen. *Oec.* 10.2-8 with S. Pomeroy’s notes; Athen. XIII 568 A = Alexis fr. 103 Kassel-Austin (*Poet. Com. Gr.* II 75). Men: Petr. 23.5; Luc. *De merc. cond.* 33.

her baby, she is a 'wonderful sight, such as no artist painted or sculptor formed' (οἶον οὔτε ζωγράφος ἔγραψεν οὔτε πλάστης ἔπλασεν, 3.8.6). Lucian's *Eikones*, in praise of the beautiful Pantheia of Smyrna, is entirely based on this conceit: thus 'it is not in the power of words, especially of mine, to convey so wonderful a picture' (θαυμασίαν οὔτως εἰκόνα, *Imag.* 3). Such comparisons, it may be suggested, underlie not only the names 'Graptos' and 'Grapte', but also other names recalling works of art, 'Agalma', 'Eikon', 'Glypte', 'Toreute'. Salome 'also called Grapte' was perhaps 'as pretty as a picture'.

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