

XXXIV. Deir el-Balah

2536. Greek mosaic building inscription of a church, 586 AD

Mosaic inscription in the central nave of a church inside a tabula ansata (Saliou 281 fig. 1 for the general layout). For the text black tesserae were used, for the tabula ansata pink and brown tesserae. Ligatures, superscribed letters, abbreviation marks. Meas.: letters l.1: 7.5-8 cm; l.2: 6.5-7 cm.

Findspot: Abu Baraqeh (Deir el-Balah), 16 km south of Gaza.

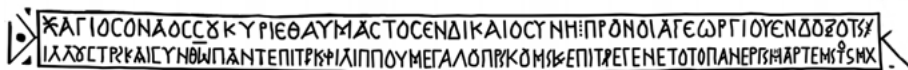


fig. 2536

(star) ΑΓΙΟΣ ΟΝΑΟΣ ΣΟΥ ΚΥΡΙΕ ΘΑΥΜΑΣΤΟΣ ΕΝ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗ ΠΡΟΝΟΙΑ ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ ΕΝ ΔΟΞΟΤΩ | (sprig)
ΙΛΛΟΥ ΣΤΡΥΚΑΙ ΣΥΝΘΩ ΠΑΝΤΕ ΠΙΤΡΚ ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ ΜΕΓΑΛΟ ΠΡΚΟΜΩ ΕΠΙΤΡΕΓΕΝΕ ΤΟΤΟ ΠΑΝΕΡΓΩ ΜΗΑΡΤΕΜΙ ΤΟΣ ΜΧ

Ἅγιος ὁ ναός σου, κύριε, θαυμαστός ἐν δικαιοσύνη. Προνοία Γεωργίου ἐνδοξοτ(άτου) | ἰλλουστρ(ίου) καὶ - σὺν Θε(ε)ῶ - παντεπιτρ(όπου) κ(αὶ) Φιλίππου μεγαλοπρ(επεστάτου) κόμ(η)τος κ(αὶ) ἐπιτρ(όπου) ἐγένετο τὸ πᾶν ἔργ(ον) μ(η)νὶ Ἄρτεμ(ισίῳ) <ἔ>το(υ)ς ζμχ'

Holy is your temple, o Lord, admirable in justice. By the providence of Georgius, the most glorious and illustrious and – with the help of god – supercurator, and of Philippus, the most magnificent count and curator, the whole work was finished in the month Artemision in the year 646 (= April/May 586 AD).

Comm.: l.1: Ps 64,5 (LXX); cf. SEG 7, 875 (Gerasa); 44, 1406 (Madaba); Felle, *Biblia epigraphica*, nos. 79, 87. The quotation is separated from the rest of the inscription by a word divisor. – l.1ff.: “Leur titulature développée associée des titres sénatoriaux élevés à des fonctions des gestionnaires ... ces dignitaires avaient probablement pour ressort les domaines impériaux du Saltus Constantinianus, dont la frontière avec Gaza devait donc passer au Nord du site” (Feissel [BE]).

l.2: παντεπίτροπος is new, but Feissel (BE) believes that it can be found also in PG 114, 1429 D (πεντεπιτρόπου συζύγου). The fact that the inscription does not refer to the saltus in question might give rise to the idea that the church was erected

on the saltus itself. If the year 646 refers to the era of Gaza, the church was built in 586 AD in the month Artemision = between 26 April and 25 May.

Bibl.: C. Saliou, RB 115, 2008, 275-86 pl. 2 (ed. pr.). – AE 2008, 1550; SEG 58, 1757. – Cf. M. Piccirillo, in: Haldimann et al., Gaza 178f.; BE 2009, 522.

Photo: D. Licher (dr.).

WA/WE

2537. Greek funerary inscription (?)

Two pieces of marble, found near to each other. As far as can be seen from the drawing, they do not match. However, since the stones are of the same height and the same lettering, Abel suggested that they form parts of a single text (Bagatti still speaks of two inscriptions).

Meas.: (a) h 45, w 78 cm; (b) h 45, w 63 cm; letters 3.75 cm.

Findspot: Fragment (b) was found in the pavement of the mosque of el-Khader Abu'l Abbas; fragment (a) comes from the cover of a small cistern in the court of the mosque; the last one has a hole in its middle (ø 10 cm). Abel 69 believes that the stone must have come from the necropolis of Darum (Darum is the name the pilgrims used for this place).

Pres. loc.: Abel 68 mentions a squeeze “conservé aux Archives du Musée de Jerusalem”, but calls this squeeze as unhelpful as Conder’s drawing.



fig. 2537 (fragm. a and b)

(a) ΕΤΕ[--]ΝΤ[.]Ο[--]

ΜΑΥΡΕ[--]ΑΡΑΒΙΑΝΟ[--]

ΑΠΟ[--]+ΝΗΣΙΟΥΛΙΘ[--]

(b) [--]ΙΤΙΩΕΙΣΑΚΑΤΟΙΚΩ

[--]ΥΑΜΑΑΠΟΛΛΟΔΩΡΩ

[--]ΟΥΕΚΤΩΝΙΔΙΩΝΕΥΧΑ

(a and b) ΕΤΕ[--]ΝΤ[.]Ο[.]ΙΤΙΩΕΙΣΑΚΑΤΟΙΚΩ

ΜΑΥΡΕ[--]ΑΡΑΒΙΑΝΟΥΑΜΑΑΠΟΛΛΟΔΩΡΩ

ΑΠΟ[--]+ΝΗΣΙΟΥΛΙΘ[--]ΟΥΕΚΤΩΝΙΔΙΩΝΕΥΧΑ

(a and b) ἐτέ[λεσεν τὸ]ν τ[ῶ]πι[ο]ν Τ[ι]τίω Εἰσᾶ κατοίκω | Μ. Αὐρ. Ε[--] Ἀραβιανοῦ
ἄμα Ἀπολλοδώρω | ἀπὸ [χειρὸς] Νησίου λιθ[ουρ]γοῦ ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων
εὐχα(ριστοῦντες)

This place was perfected for Titius Isas, katoikos, by Marcus Aurelius E... (son of??) Arabianus together with Apollodorus, by the hand of the stonemason Nesius, with their own money, in thanksgiving.

Comm.: The reading text printed is Abel's. l.1: Conder 1875: "The first line is almost obliterated by the feet of visitors"; he read on (b): ITIΨΘΙΣΛΡΑΣ...Ω; Abel: "Le début de la première ligne demeure conjectural ..., mais il doit comporter l'érection d'un monument funéraire"; ἐτέ[λεσαν--] Abel, perhaps rightly; l.2: Αὐρέ[λιος --] Clermont-Ganneau; ΑΡΑΡΙΑΝΟ Conder; l.3: ΙΝΗΣΙΟΥΑΤΘ Conder; ἀπό [--]Ινης τοῦ λιθ[οστρώτ]ου εὐχα[ριστοῦντες] Clermont-Ganneau; [--Αι]νησίου? Abel; this would at least fit with the vertical bar Conder noted before the *nu*.

Date: according to the names, the inscription belongs at least to the late 2 c. – perhaps even to later times.

l.1: PAES III A 2, 185: ὁ τόπος [{τοῦ δεῖνα} ἐτ]ελέσθη; IGLS IV 1523: σ<υ>νετέλεσ(αν) τὸν μνημίον; 1529: ἐ<τέ>λεσεν τὸ κοιμητήριν; 1539: ἐτελέσθη τὸ ἡρόειον; none of these provides a perfect parallel. – Ἴσαῖς is surely the hypocoristic of Ἰσίδωρος – even though Wuthnow, Semitische Menschennamen 45 has Εισας (cf. this vol. no. 2193). Abel refers to Oertel and concludes: "le défunt, comme les dédicants, pourrait avoir appartenu à un groupe de militaires établis comme tenanciers de l'oasis". This interpretation would emphasize the connection of Titius Isas to Egypt – and it would be, it seems, a very late date for a *κάτοικος* in Oertel's sense. Does the word relate to the inhabitant of the grave? Cf. SEG 47, 1110 (unknown provenance) with the quotation of Ps 131,14: [νῦ]ν ἐνταῦθα ἤρετ[ίσατ]ο κατοικεῖα; ICUR n.s. VIII 22815 (play on words on a prominent Christian motif): παροικήσας ἔτη τεσσεράκοντα κατοικῶ τὸν ἐῶνα.

l.2: Wuthnow, Semitische Menschennamen 25 places Arabianus among the Semitic personal names, but it is difficult to believe that people were aware of this linguistic connection. But there may have been a certain lacuna between the *omicron* and the *upsilon* of the name (cf. the drawing).

l.3: There seems to be no parallel for this supplement, and εὐχα(ριστοῦντες) is no common term in funerary inscriptions, either (but see CIIP II 1456 [Caesarea], where the term is not really explained: μεμόριον τῆς προσσυλήτου Ἄστη και Παρηγορίου, εὐχαριστοῦσα). One can form no hypothesis on the links between Aurelius E[--], Apollodorus and Titius Eisas.

Bibl.: C. Conder, PEQ 7, 1875, 159f. nos. 3-4; Conder - Kitchener, SWP 3 Judaea 247f. (drs.) (ed. pr.). – C. Conder, PEQ 26, 1894, 202 no. 20; Clermont-Ganneau, ARP II 419 no. 27; Meyer, History 141f. nos. 13-14 (after Conder 1875); F. Abel, RB 49, 1940, 68f. – Cf. F. Oertel, RE XI 1, 20; Bagatti, Judaea 186.

Photo: Conder - Kitchener, SWP 3 Judaea 248 (two drs., rearranged here).

WA

2538. Crosses with Greek letters

Slab of stone, decorated with two squares, each square containing a (Maltese) cross; under the arms of the crosses the letters.

Meas.: h ca. 76, w ca. 183 cm (preserved).

Findspot: From the same place as no. 2537. "The mosque in the village is called Jamia el Khudr and stands, traditionally, on the site of a large monastery. The building was entered from a courtyard on the south. It proved to be a Christian chapel" (Conder - Kitchener). The stone was on the floor of the chapel.

- (a) A Ω
- (b) A [Ω]

(Christ is the) *alpha* (and the) *omega*.

Comm.: Conder - Kitchener believe this to be a tombstone.

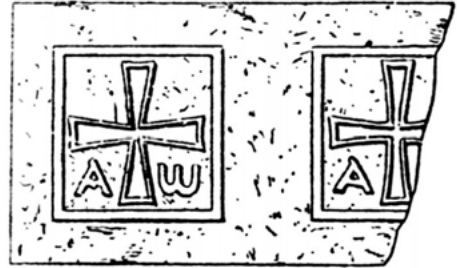


fig. 2538

Bibl.: C. Conder, PEQ 7, 1875, 160; Conder - Kitchener, SWP 3 Judaea 247f. (dr.) (edd. prr.). – Bagatti, Judaea 181 fig. 2 (dr.), 185f. – Cf. F. Abel, RB 49, 1940, 69.

Photo: Conder - Kitchener, SWP 3 Judaea 248 (dr.).

WA