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Notationes legentis

The Journal of Juristic Papyrology 33, 181-187

2003

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Adam Łajtar

NOTATIONES LEGENTIS

To the memory of Sarah Clackson

A VERY FINE AND RICHLY ILLUSTRATED catalogue of Greek, Latin and Coptic inscriptions kept in the Musée des Beaux-Arts and the Museum d'Histoire naturelle in Lyon was published recently thanks to the efforts of an international team of four scholars:¹ *Recueil des inscriptions lapidaires grecques, latines et coptes du musée des Beaux-Arts et du muséum d'Histoire naturelle de Lyon* [= *Bulletin des musées et monuments lyonnais* 1, 2001]. It contains 55 items among which four larger groups are distinguishable: (1) Greek epitaphs from the Syro-Phoenician area, mainly from Sidon; (2) inscriptions from Ptolemaic, Roman and Byzantine Egypt in Greek, Latin and Coptic; (3) Latin inscriptions from Carthage; (4) Latin inscriptions from the West. Below, I would like to comment on four inscriptions of Egyptian provenance.

1. No. 19 (a) and (b). Two marble plaques purchased in 1905 by S. de Ricci in Alexandria, possibly originating from this city. Plaque (a) has the left-hand and the bottom edges preserved. At the top the stone is broken, but one can be quite sure that there was no more text above the present line 1. This suggests that the text continued on the left-hand side on

¹ The edition of Greek inscriptions which concern us here is due to P.-L. GATIER. I would like to thank one of the authors, J. VAN DER VLIET, who presented to me a copy of this book.

another plaque. Plaque (b) preserves the left-hand and the top edges. Its inscription also must have continued on the left-hand side on another support. The texts read:

(a) [- - - ΛΕ]ΛΩ κ(αὶ) Σαμουήλ Ἄλ[- - -]
 [- - - ἔ]πικλή(ν) Βορζοχο[ρίας - - -]
 [- - -]ς τῶ θεῶ κ(αὶ) τῶ ἁγ[ίω τόπω - - -]

4 [- - - π]αἰδ(ων ?) θ' τὸ στι[- - -]
 [- - -]νω τούτω [- - -]

(b) [- - -]ΚΛΕΛΩ κ(αὶ) Σα[μουήλ - - -]
 [- - -] Νόννου ἐπ[ικλή(ν) - - -]
 [- - -]ριστ[- - -]
 [- - - - - - - - -]

The inscriptions were possibly identical or similar. They surely originate from the Jewish milieu as is indicated by onomastics (note the names Σαμουήλ and Βορζοχο[ρίας]). The terms ὁ θεός and ἅγιος τόπος used in them must refer to Jahwe and a synagogue respectively.

Inscription (a), better preserved and therefore easier to interpret, apparently had a votive or dedicatory character; see the datives τῶ θεῶ κ(αὶ) τῶ ἁγ[ίω τόπω. It mentioned at least two dedicants; cf. lines 1-2. In consequence, I suggest to read in line 3: [εὐχαριστοῦντε]ς τῶ θεῶ κ(αὶ) τῶ ἁγ[ίω τόπω]². εὐχαριστῶν τῶ θεῶ is a common formula of Jewish and Christian votive and dedicatory inscriptions.³ The reading of a form of the verb εὐχαριστῶ is further corroborated by inscription (b) which in line 3 has [- - -]ριστ[- - -]. The plural εὐχαριστοῦντες occurs in a Jewish inscription from Ascalon, *CIF* II 964: εὐχαριστοῦντες] προσφέρωμεν (...) τῶ θεῶ καὶ τῶ ἁγίω [τόπω.⁴ The object of the dedication was surely mentioned in line 5 which reads: τὸ στι[- - -]. Already S. de Ricci sug-

² A similar reading was already suggested by S. DE RICCI: εὐχαρι[στῶ θεῶ].

³ For that, see remarks of L. ROBERT, *Hellenica*, vol. X, Paris 1955, pp. 55-58 with an abundance of examples. Further examples in: L. ROBERT, *Anatolia* 3 (1958), p. 120 [= *Op. Min. Sel.* I, p. 419].

⁴ Cf. also *CIF* II 966 (between Jaffa and Gaza): εὐχαριστῶν [τοῦ θεοῦ κ(αὶ)] τοῦ ἁγίου τόπου; Frey read: εὐχαριστῶν [τῶ θεῶ ἐπὶ] τοῦ ἁγίου τόπου.

gested a reading τὸ στιβ[άδιον here⁵ and I share his opinion. It is known that στιβάδιον designates a dining bed in form of a half-circle (lat. *sigma*).⁶ The dedication of a dining bed by pious Jews to a synagogue cannot astonish. Ancient synagogues were not only prayer-houses of Jewish communities, but also had ancillary functions, those connected with dining among others. According to some literary sources synagogues were obliged to host Jewish pilgrims and travellers.⁷ Hospitable functions of a synagogue are referred to in the famous Theodotos-inscription which came into existence in connection with the Ophel of Jerusalem.⁸ Eating and drinking in synagogues is attested by rabbinic literature.⁹ One cannot even exclude the possibility of *seder* being held in synagogues.¹⁰ These dining functions of synagogues required special rooms with appropriate furnishings such as dining beds.¹¹ Στιβ[άδιον from our inscription might have been such a bed adorning one of Alexandrian synagogues.

No. 29. A stele of the Therenouthis type with a relief representation depicting a person laying on a bed to the right. A set table is visible in front of the bed. The one-line inscription is on the lower frame of the stele. P.-L.

⁵ W. HORBURY & D. NOY, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, Cambridge 1992, no. 127, suggested the supplement τὸ στιβ[άδιον].

⁶ Cf. e.g. K. M. D. DUNBABIN, "Triclinium and Stibadium" [in:] W. J. SLATER (ed.), *Dining in a Classical Context*, Ann Arbor 1991, pp. 121-148.

⁷ Cf. S. KRAUSS, *Synagogale Altertümer*, Berlin – Wien 1922 (reprint: Hildesheim 1966), p. 194-195.

⁸ *CIF* II 1404.

⁹ KRAUSS, *Synagogale Altertümer* (cit. n. 7), pp. 192-194, p. 206.

¹⁰ Cf. J. MÉLÈZE-MODRZEJEWSKI, *Les Juifs d'Égypte. De Ramses II à Hadrien*, Paris 1997, p. XXX. This author cites a Greek ostrakon of the 1st cent. A.D. originating from Apollonopolis Magna (Edfu) (O.Edfou 138368 = CPJ I 139) which contains the list of contributions by members of a Jewish club for a series of meals.

¹¹ Recent excavations in Jericho unearthed a building of the 1st cent. B.C. containing among others two *miqveh*, a large rectangular room with an internal colonnade and a *triclinium* adjoining it from the west. The building was interpreted by the founder as synagogue, but this interpretation is not quite obvious; cf. E. NETZER, "A synagogue from the Hasmonean Period Recently Exposed in the Western Plain of Jericho", *Israel Exploration Journal* 49 (1999), pp. 203-221; *contra*: H. SCHWARZER & S. JAPP, "Synagoge, Banketthaus oder Wohngebäude. Überlegungen zu einem neu entdeckten Baukomplex in Jericho/Israel", *Antike Welt* 3 (2000), pp. 277-288.

Gatier took the represented person for a woman and read the inscription accordingly as:

Κύριλα, εὐψύχι.

In my opinion, the scene shows a man, not a woman. This is indicated by the dress of the represented person, consisting of a long coat with a free ending thrown over the left shoulder. The above observation allows to read the inscription as follows:

Κύριλλε, <ε>ὕψύχι.

This reading is further corroborated by the fact that the sixth letter of the inscription looks on the photograph like *Λ* not *A*. The lack of *E* is to be explained through haplography committed either by the author of the inscription or the stonemason.

No. 39. P.-L. Gatier dates the inscription to the 5th-6th cent. This date is surely too early. The palaeography and particularly the letter *M* which has the form \sqcup borrowed from the Coptic written tradition indicates that the inscription came into existence in 8th-9th cent.

No. 41. An elongated slab of limestone broken at the bottom, the right-hand edge chipped out. The stone was purchased in Egypt by S. de Ricci before 1907, its provenance is unknown. The inscription was first published after a line drawing of S. de Ricci by G. Lefebvre, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes d'Égypte*, Le Caire 1907, no. 807 whose reading is followed by P.-L. Gatier. Here is as follows:

ἐν ἰρ-
 ἡνῆ
 ἀνα-
 4 παύ-
 ἠτ[αι]
 [- - -]

This reading is susceptible to serious objections of both palaeographical and grammatical nature. The third letter in line 3 is only partly preserved and should be dotted. It looks more like “O” than “A”. The partly preserved letter on the third position in line 4 does not look like “Y” at all. It has a rounded stroke on the left-hand side which at the top incurves towards the centre thus resembling the Coptic “ϣ”. The first letter in line 5 is “M” not “H” as observed by P.-L. Gatier himself.¹² A verb in the present tense used to express the fact of death is very strange in an epitaph which, after all, refers to past events; we would expect an aorist here. These objections lead to the following reading:

ἐν ἰρ-
 ῆνῆ·
 ΑΝΘ[Υ]-
 4 Π Αϣ-
 ΜΤ[ΟΝ]
 [ΜΜΟϣ]
 [- - -]

In peace. Anoup fell asleep [- - -]

The inscription is bilingual. The initial acclamation is in Greek, the information about the deceased is in Coptic. Such bilingual epitaphs were a common phenomenon in Christian Egypt. The acclamation ἐν εἰρήνῃ which is typical for the epitaphs from the Fayum suggests that the stone comes from this part of Egypt.

G. Lefebvre suggested that the stone may be the upper part of the vertical bar of a funerary cross. This suggestion was rejected by P. -L. Gatier, without good grounds, however. Inscribed funerary crosses made of stone or wood are attested in Egypt. An example is known from Polish excavations in Deir el-Naqlun on the south-eastern edge of the Fayum oasis.¹³

2. Year 2001 was declared by UNESCO “Year of Africa”. On this occasion, the Papyrussammlung of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek or-

¹² “Êta aux allures de mu”.

¹³ A. ŁAJTAR, “Two Greek inscriptions from Deir el-Naqlun”, *Nubica* III.1 (1994), pp. 265–269.

ganised in cooperation with the Museum of the city of Linz an exhibition which was shown first in Linz and then in Klagenfurt. The exhibition, entitled “Die Kopten - Nachbarn des Sudan”, mainly displayed objects of daily life originating from Late Antique Egypt. A great majority of the exhibits came from a private collection of Tamerit, which was ceded to the Papyrussammlung of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek for scientific elaboration shortly before the exhibition. The exhibition was accompanied by a fine catalogue: Ulrike Horak & H. Harrauer, *Die Kopten – Nachbarn des Sudan. Katalog zur Ausstellung der Papyrussammlung der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek im NORDICO – Museum der Stadt Linz. Linz, 1. April bis 19. August 2001, Klagenfurt, 22. Jänner bis 1. Mai 2002*, Katalogredaktion: E. M. Ruprechtsberger, Linz 2001.¹⁴ As no. 2 of this catalogue, we find a stele of the Terenouthis type. A roughly rectangular plaque of limestone, 29.5 cm high and 25.2 cm wide bears a scene executed in sunken relief which shows a man laying on a bed to the right and holding a cup in his right hand. Beneath the scene, there is an inscription which was read and translated by H. Harrauer as follows:

Ἡρᾶς Ἀειδήσης Λυσίδου ἀπὸ Μέμφιδ(ος)
[σὺ] φίλε χαίρει (ἐτῶν) νβ Παῦνι ιδ

*Heras, der 'Besserwisser', Sohn des Lysides, aus Memphis.
Du, Freund sei guten Mutes, etwa 52 Jahre alt, am 14 Pauni.*

The inscription as read by the *editor princeps* presents at least two features which are unusual for the Terenouthis stelai: the indication of the place of origin of the deceased,¹⁵ and the apostrophe [σὺ] φίλε directed to the dead. Equally uncommon is the double name of the deceased, the more so as the second element of this double nomenclature – Ἀειδήσης – looks awkward and has not been attested until now in the entire Greek world. Additionally, one should observe that the name of the father – Λυσίδης –

¹⁴ A copy of this catalogue entered the library of our Department of Papyrology of the Warsaw University as part of the legacy of the late Sarah Clackson.

¹⁵ This indication gave Ulrike HORAK, the principal author of the catalogue, the reason to suggest that the stone may originate from Memphis. This cannot be true already from a stylistic point of view. Stelai like this one originate from the mid-western Delta, precisely from Kom Abou Billou (ancient Terenouthis).

did not occur until now in Egyptian sources. These difficulties suffice alone to object to the reading presented above. What is more, this reading is difficult to follow on the stone. On the photo, I see:

Ἡρακλείδης . . . νείδου ἄτεκνε φιλ-
[όφ]ιλε χρηστέ· (ἐτῶν) νβ΄ Παῦνι ἰδ̄

*Herakleides son of [. . .]neides, without children, loving friends,
good one. (He lived) 52 years. (He died) on Pauni 14th.*

With this reading, we obtain a typical Terenouthis inscription constructed according to the pattern: name of the dead + his laudatory epithets + his age at death + date of death. χαίρε which we expect after χρηστέ was for some reason omitted.

1. The name of the father may be read *Μενείδου* (for *Μενίδου*). The name *Μενίδης* is well attested in Egypt.

For the epithet *ἄτεκνος* in funerary inscriptions from Roman Egypt, see e.g. W. Horbury & D. Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*, Cambridge 1992, no. 50 (commentary). It is not common in epitaphs from Terenouthis (one attestation besides this inscription), but is on record several times in Tell el-Yehoudieh (Leontopolis) in the south-east Delta.

- 1-2. For the term *φιλόφιλος* as funerary epithet, see e.g. A. Łajtar & A. Twardecki, *Catalogue des inscriptions grecques du Musée National de Varsovie [= Journal of Juristic Papyrology. Supplement 2]*, Varsovie 2003, no. 81 (commentary). It is well attested in epitaphs found in Kom Abu Billu or attributed to this site on the basis of formal criteria.

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