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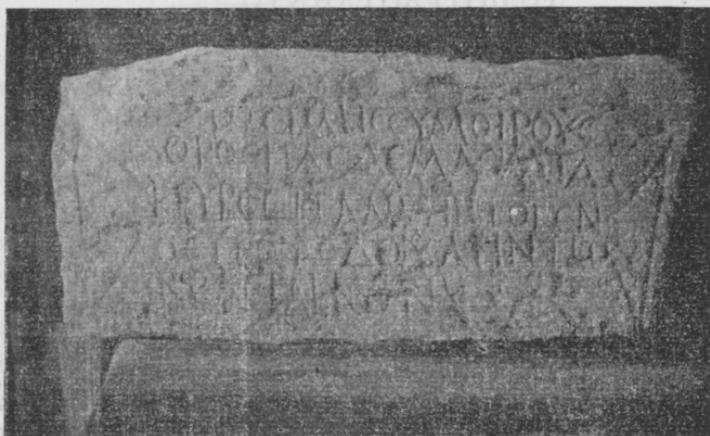
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A NEW GREEK EPITAPH FROM PALESTINE

The collection of Mr. Alexander Rosh in Haifa contains a noteworthy Greek inscription. Mr. Rosh was kind enough to allow me to examine and copy it; he also placed at my disposal the reproduced photograph (see fig.), and permitted its publication, for which kindness I hereby beg to express my gratitude.



Greek inscription, Coll. Rosh, Haifa.

The inscription is carved in white marble stone which Mr. Rosh defined as Brescia or pudding-stone. The slab is 72 cm. long, 33 cm. wide and 14 cm. thick, the size of the letters varying from 3,5 to 4 cm. It was acquired in 1944 and, according to information received by Mr. Rosh, the stone comes from Caesarea¹.

¹ There is, of course, no absolute certainty that the information about the provenance of the inscription is correct. Mr. Rosh's particular interest in Caesarea and its relics is well known, so that the seller of the stone may have had special reasons for attributing it to Caesarea. But at least it is certain that it comes from the neighbourhood of Caesarea.

The stone was not too carefully dressed at its sides, as may be seen from the photograph. The writing surface was not too well polished either, and shows marks of hits sustained after the inscription had been incised.

The inscription was carved in the middle of the stone and some space was left on the right and left sides. And in that space the mason, quite coarsely, cut the ears of the *tabula ansata*.

The inscription reads as follows:

ΖΩΣΙΜΗΣΕΥΜΟΙΡΟΥΣ
 ΟΡΟΣΗΔΕΔΕΜΑΣΚΑΤΑ
 ΚΡΥΒΕΙΤΑΛΙΚΗΝΤΟΓΕΝ
 ΟΣΠΟΤΕΔΟΥΛΗΝΤΩ
 ΝΒΑΣΙΛΗΩΝ

Ζωσίμης εὐμοίρου σορὸς ἦδε δέμας κατακρύβει,
 Ἴταλικὴν τὸ γένος, πότε δούλην τῶν βασιλῶν.

This tomb holds the body of Zosime, the blest, Italian by origin, formerly slave of the kings.

L. 1 Ζωσίμης: The name of the deceased was deliberately placed at the beginning of the epigram. The name appears as a feminine form of Ζώσιμος which was used in Rome as a Jewish name; the Head of the Jewish Community of the Ἰαγριππήσιοι was called by this name². A Jew by the name of [Σαββ]άτεις υἱὸς Ζωσίμου was found in the catacomb of the Via Nomentana³ in Rome. Another Jew by the same name was found in Larissa, Thessaly: Ζώσιμος Φιλιππᾶ⁴. The form Ζωσίμη is not usual, as it happens, among European Jews, but in Egypt, on a potsherd of the year A. D. 108, a name of a Jewess Ζωσίμη δούλη υἱῶν Πεσουρίου⁵ appears in a list of payers of the Ἰουδαίων τέλεσμα in Edfu. A Christian woman bearing this name died a martyr's

² See Frey, *Corpus* I No. 503: ἐνθάδε κείτε Ζώσιμος διὰ βίου συναγωγῆς Ἰαγριππησίων.

³ *Ib.* No. 51.

⁴ *Ib.* No. 702.

⁵ See *Fouilles Franco-Polonaises, Tell Edfou* I (1937) No. 114.

death in Italy, in A. D. 275⁶. A Christian woman of Caesarea bearing this name is mentioned in the inscription: + θήκη + Κάρπου οἰνοπρ(άτου) καὶ Ζωσίμης γαμετῆς⁷. The name is also used by non-Jews and non-Christians. This form of the name appears in the papyri⁸. Considering the usage of this name in different places we can make no conclusions as to whether the deceased woman was Jewish; she might have been Jewish but not necessarily so.— εὐμοίρου: this expression of praise appears twice in the Beth Shearim inscriptions, Nos. 15 and 287. The most usual form in the Beth Shearim cemetery is εὐμοίρει, whose meaning was successfully interpreted by S. Lieberman by means of Talmudic and Midrashic analogies⁹. This combination was also used by Christians.¹⁰ Since it was common among Greek people in general

⁶ Kaufmann, *Handb. d. altchristl. Epigraphik*, p. 199 quoting CIL XIV n. 1938 l. 3: *Zosime sancta soror*. It is unknown whether she is of Jewish origin. The inscription was discovered at Ostia. The Jewish name is perhaps a translation or substitute of the name Eve (*Hawa*). Similarly, in Ζωτικὴ the same change can be seen. Also such masculine names as Ζωτικός, Ζωσᾶς, Ζωσιμιανός may be considered equivalents of the names *Chija* or *Chaim*.

⁷ Published by the author in *Tarbiz* XIV p. 214. Also see my remarks on the name. For Christian women by the same name see Diehl, *ILCV* index s. v.

⁸ See Preisigke, *Namenb.* s. v.

⁹ See his work *Greek in Jewish Palestine* p. 72 sqq. — εὐμοίρει so far appears in Beth Shearim 15 times (particulars to follow in my book on Beth Shearim vol. II in the notes to inscription no. 2). The word εὐμοῖρος is an ancient form and appears in ancient poetical language, cf. Bacchylides 5, 1 (Snell): εὐμοῖρε, Συρακοσίων ἵπποδινήτην στραταγέ; and no wonder that Agathon in Plato's *Symposium* 197 d plays on this word and its opposite ἄμοῖρος. Cf. also Kallimachos' *Delian Hymn* 295: εὐμοῖροι δ' ἐγένοντο and the epigram of Rhianos (*A. P.* 6, 278 verse 4): εὐμοῖρον λευκὴν ἄχρις ἐφ' ἡλικίην. Lucian plays with this word in relation to the Μοῖραι which appears in *Iup. conf.* chapter 19: οὐκ εὐμοῖρον... δοκοῦσι βιοῦν τὴν βίον. Josephus (*Ant.* VIII 314) says of King Asa: εὐμοῖρος ἀπέθανε. Whether he expressed by this phrase a Jewish conception or was influenced by Greek usage it is hard to ascertain. Appian (*Hannibal's War*, 29) similarly uses: ὡς εὐμοῖρότερον ἀποθνήσκοντας. Philon very frequently uses the expression εὐμοῖρος φῦσις which man attains (*καρχάνειν*): vol. II 70, 10; III 171, 21; V 90, 19 (in the *editio maior* of Cohen-Wendland). Also the word εὐμοῖρία appears there. An interesting explanation of the conception is given in Marcus Aurelius 5, 36, 4. The formula εὐμοῖρος βιώσασαν was found — IG 12(5)319 — in an inscription from Paros. For εὐμοῖρίτης in the sense of μακαρίτης see IG 14, 555; 2300. Also cf. my remarks in *BOPES* V p. 92 and *ib.* XI p. 27.

¹⁰ Cf., for example, G. Lefebvre, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques chrétiennes d'Égypte*, Cairo 1907, Nos. 671, 581, 595.

its use is no evidence that the deceased was Jewish, though such a possibility should not be excluded.

L. 1/2 σορός ἤδε: This expression already appeared in the *Iliad* (Ψ 91) in a similar sense and is very common in epitaphs, especially in the vicinity of Palestine¹¹. — δέμας κατακρύβει: the author might have found this phrase in Euripides¹². A similar expression appears in a first century A. D. Jewish epitaph of Leontopolis (Tel-el-Yahudije) in Egypt, καὶ τάφος ἐν κόλποις κρύπτει τὸ ἐμὸν δέμας οὗτος¹³. The verb κατακρύβειν is apparently new. The composite formed from the weak form of the passive aorist is rare¹⁴.

L. 3/4 Ἰταλικὴν τὸ γένος: a common expression applied to people of Italy. Cf., for example Ἰταλικῆς Ἀδάης παῖς ἡμερος ὄντως¹⁵. This merely states that she was born in Italy; the grammatical relation of the accusative is quite arbitrary serving as a complement to Ζωσίμης... δέμας, and the author continues the sentence as if Ζωσίμην had been written before.

L. 4/5 πότε δούλην τῶν βασιλέων: the meaning of these words is that Zosime had been a servant at one time i. e. during a certain period of her life, but she died a free woman. The words πότε δούλη should therefore be understood as equivalent to *liberta*. Who are the βασιλεῖς? We know that the Emperor of Rome was called so in several documents¹⁶. The expression is widely used in a fragment of the documents known as *The Acts*

¹¹ Cf. Kaibel, *Epigrammata*, for example No. 445 (between Bosra and Edr'ei) from the 3rd cent. A. D.; No. 440 (from Namara in the Batanaea) from the 2nd or 3rd cent. A. D.; No. 460 (from Trachona). In all of them σορός is feminine. However, this word is also masculine, see ib. No. 336 (from the Troas). In the new edition of Liddell-Scott-Jones the masculine form has not been given.

¹² Euripides, *Trojan Women* 777: κρύπτει ἄθλιον δέμας. Cf. Sophocles, *Ant.* 1039 τάφος δ' ἐκείνον οὐχὶ κρύψετε. It would be advisable to compare with the Beth Shearim inscription No. 63: εἰς γῆν ἔσω κρήπτῃ; see *Sefer Hayishuv* I p. 169 No. 11.

¹³ Cf. Preisigke, *Sammelb.* No. 6647 and Edgar, *Ann. du Serv. des Ant. de l'Egypte* 22 (1922) p. 9.

¹⁴ In L.-S.-J. it is missing, whilst ἀποκρύβω has been given. Particulars as to the form of the *simplex* can be found in Abel, *Grammaire du Grec Biblique* p. 69 sq. It appears in LXX, in the papyri and in Josephus.

¹⁵ See Kaibel, *Epigr.* No. 502 b. l. 4 The epigram is from the 3rd or 4th cent. A. D.

¹⁶ Cf. L. Robert, *Etudes épigraphiques et philologiques* p. 84.

of *Pagan Martyrs*¹⁷: Ἀυτοκράτωρ εἶπεν. „Νῦν οὐκ οἶδας, τίνι λαλεῖ“. Ἀππιανός, Ἐπίσταμαι. „Ἀππιανός τυράννω“. Ἀυτοκράτωρ. „Οὐκ ἀλλὰ βασιλεῖ“. In an epigram from the Trachonitis of the 2nd or 3rd cent. A. D. we read πιστοτάτου [βασι]λεῦσιν and then of the deceased brother: ἐὼν βασιλῆος ἀμύμονος ἐλὸς ὀπάων¹⁸. Undoubtedly the Emperors of Rome are meant here¹⁹. This expression is also common in the time of the Ptolemies who used to be called βασιλεῖς²⁰. Consequently, considering the period to which our epigram belongs (see below), it is to be presupposed that it refers to Roman Emperors, and seems to be a familiar formula previously used in epigrams, but the meaning of which slightly changed. The Emperors take the place of the Ptolemies in the application of this title and if it is the Emperors who are referred to here, then we may recognize in this inscription a sort of modification of the formula which is popular in the inscriptions Κάισαρος δοῦλος or Καισάρων δοῦλος²¹, and so it follows that the deceased had been set free by Imperial order.

But still another possibility ought to be considered. The Jewish kings were also called βασιλεῖς and the expressions used by Josephus are very similar to those of our epigram. Josephus *Ant.* II 57 reports: Σίμων τις τῶν βασιλικῶν δούλων εὐμορφία σώματος πεποιθὼς περιτίθησιν ἑαυτῷ διάδημα. At the corresponding place (*Ant.* XVII 273) he is described as δοῦλος... Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως²². We might therefore regard the plural form

¹⁷ Mitteis-Wilcken, *Chrest. der Papyrusk.* I 2 No. 20 col. II 3 sq.

¹⁸ See Kaibel, *ib.* No. 441 l. 4 and on the brother line 8.

¹⁹ Cf. the epigram of the 4th cent. Milne, *Catal. gén. des ant. Egypt. du Musée du Caire* p. 16, Greek inscription No. 9290 l. 3; also cf., e. g. the epigram from Terenuthis from the Roman period in Preisigke, *Sammelb.* No. 5829, 15.

²⁰ This should be compared with another epigram (Milne *ib.* p. 69 sq. No. 9203 l. 25) from the 2nd half of the 2nd cent. B. C. It is worth mentioning the παλαίπλουτοι βασιλῆες in an epigram from Gaza, which appeared in *Q. D. A. P.* vol. I p. 155, from the 3rd cent. B. C. I dealt with this in *JPOS* vol. XIII (1933) p. 84 ff.

²¹ All the material concerning this formula was collected and arranged by M. Bang, *Caesarea servus*, *Hermes* LIV (1919) p. 174 sq. *ib.* p. 176 the author remarks: by way of exception the Emperor appears there also in plural, hence the individual meaning allegedly disappeared within the general meaning of *kaiserlich*.

²² For the use of the word βασιλεύς in Josephus see the *Lexicon to Josephus* by Thackeray-Marcus s. v. There it is emphasized that οἱ βασιλεῖς refers both to the king and to his sister; cf. e. g. the *Life of Josephus* 49, where reference is made to Agrippa and Berenike; cf. *ib.* 181.

used in our epigram as referring also to kings of the House of Herod and to the members of their family, in accordance with Josephus' terminology, if we could antedate the inscription as far back as to the end of the Herodian period²³.

But here the question arises, whether the palaeographic data of our inscription justify such an early date. A comparison of the forms of the most characteristic letters of the inscription with the forms of the letters in the tables of Welles in the *Gerasa of Kraeling* permits to fix the time as the middle of the second century A. D. or, perhaps, even somewhat earlier. If so, then there is no reason to reject the possibility of Herodian kings being referred to in our epigram, namely — Agrippa the Second and his descendants.

Looked upon from a purely aesthetic point of view the epigram appears successful and simple. The verse contains the deceased's name in the first place, followed by an ordinary poetical periphrasis of the popular formula ἐνθάδε κεῖται, a specification of the deceased's origin²⁴, and one detail of her life story. The inscription may therefore be considered a successful extension of a very ordinary epitaph formula. Its simplicity reminds us of the simplicity of the Attic epigrams. As far as metre is concerned, it is faultless, except for the proper name, but this usually allows for free adaptation and does not constitute a metric defect. The vocabulary and verse construction do not prevent us from fixing its time as the first century A. D.

But is this a Jewish epigram? As we have seen, there is no ground to suppose that Zosime²⁵ was Jewish, nor to the contrary.

²³ See the material mentioned in the preceding note. It is worth mentioning, in this connection, the epigram of Crinagoras of Mytilene *A. P.* VII 645, addressing the Academic Philostratos ποῦ σοι ἐκεῖνα σκῆπτρα καὶ αἱ βασιλέων ἄφθονοι. According to Cichorius, *Römische Studien* p. 317 sq., the plural form refers to different kings, viz. to two kings, that is to say, Philostratos was employed at Cleopatra's Court, and at a certain time, also at Herod's court, exactly like Nicolaus of Damascus, see Cichorius *ib.* p. 317. Cichorius' comment and amendment has excellently advanced the explanation of this document. We learn here of Herod's attempts to convert his Court into a *Musenhof*.

²⁴ A simple form, also appearing in Josephus, see *Life of Josephus* 126: νεανίσκοι τινές..... Δαβαριττηνοὶ γένος. However, no conclusions can be drawn from this customary expression.

²⁵ I may add that the name Zosime also appears in the *Talmud*, cf. Yerushalmi, *Shvi'ith* p. 38, a, l. 26. Krauss in *Lehnwörter* vol. II s. v. Zosime is not sure whether in the above passage Ζώσιμος or Ζωσίμη is the form.

The word δέμας which belongs to the commonplaces of epigrammatic art is in no contradiction to her being Jewish. Thus, we may believe it to be a new Jewish inscription, though this cannot be proved with certainty. Zosime — in case the inscription is Jewish and pertaining to the ex-servant of Jewish kings — might have met Agrippa II in Rome, or she might have been his servant there. Apparently, Agrippa, too, was educated in Rome and was there²⁶ after the death of his father, Agrippa I, in the year 44. It is believed that Agrippa had still been in Rome in the year 52 B. C. and it was only in the following year that he came to Palestine. One cannot obviously know whether or not Zosime came with him, but the facts mentioned in the epigram can be understood in connection with the life of Agrippa II, who died in the year 100²⁷. If Zosime died in the middle or in the first quarter of the second century A. D. — i. e. a short time after the death of Agrippa, she might possibly have had some connection with his Court in Palestine. But all these are mere possibilities to be considered, and we are unable to prove them by means of the material at hand. But whether this epigram is Jewish or non-Jewish, it enriches us with a new specimen of versification of Palestine epitaphs.

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²⁶ See Schürer, 15 p. 586.

²⁷ *Ib.* p. 599.