

A BYZANTINE-PERIOD FUNERARY CHAPEL IN THE NEWE YAM DALET NEIGHBORHOOD IN ASHQELON

YULIA USTINOVA AND GREGORY SERIY

In July–August 2011, during salvage excavations in Ashqelon's Neve Yam Dalet neighborhood in the southeastern part of the city (map ref. 157783–8101/618964–9348; Fig. 1), a remarkable funerary chapel was unearthed (Seriya 2012).¹ Below is a description of the structure and its associated inscriptions; the pottery and glass finds from the complex will be published in the final report of the rest of the excavation.²

THE EXCAVATION

The funerary complex comprises a courtyard, a tomb and a roofed chamber (Plan 1; Fig. 2), located in Area A, southeast of two partially uncovered buildings that seem to have served as dwellings. It remains unclear whether the complex and dwellings were related. A number of graves were also discovered in the vicinity (Seriya 2012).

The courtyard (3.5 × 3.5 m) was entered from the northwest through a passage between the northern (W24) and western (W12) walls. The floor of the courtyard (L182, L930; 40.20 m asl) was of beaten earth; it was removed prior to photography and therefore not visible in Figs 2–4. Plastered pisé walls (W15, W24, W25), about 0.8 m thick, were constructed above foundations of unhewn stones and were preserved to a maximum height of 0.3 m. Pieces of white plaster were discovered on the courtyard floor. Two walls touching the tomb, W40 and W12, survive only as stone foundations (Plan 1; Figs. 3, 4). Their construction modified the original layout, as W12 became the western delineation of the courtyard and W40 reinforced the side of the tomb.

The tomb (L161; 1.0 × 1.2 × 1.7 m; Figs. 3, 4), located in the southwestern corner of the courtyard, was partially subterranean. Its sides were preserved to approximately 0.5 m above the beaten-earth floor, and the walls were built of large dressed *kurkar* blocks, with a vaulted ceiling of curved *kurkar* stones from which one or two courses survived for most of its length. Fills supported the walls of the tomb on its northern and southern sides. The entrance consisted of two stairs (L908); it was found covered by a marble slab. The slab, apparently in secondary use, bears an inscription (Fig. 5; see below, *Inscription 4*). The entrance and the stairs were constructed subsequent to the tomb (Fig. 3). Unfortunately, the contents of the tomb were only partially examined because

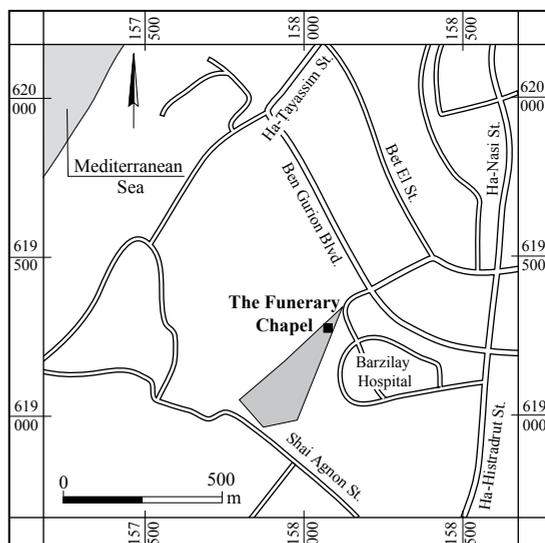
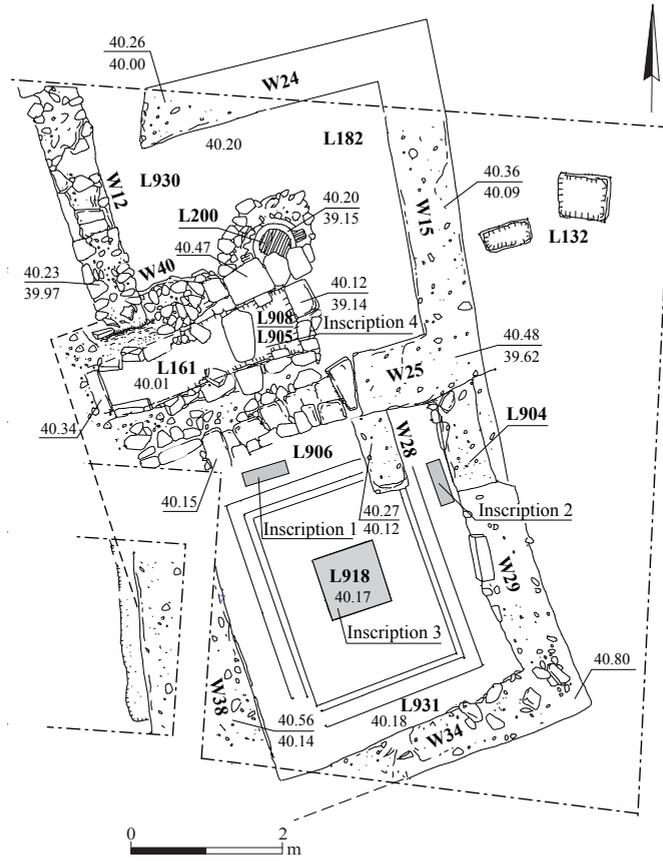


Fig. 1. Location map; the gray area shows the excavation's boundaries (Seriya 2012).



Plan 1. The chapel.



Fig. 2. Aerial view of the site, looking west.



Fig. 3. The tomb, in the foreground, and the chamber, in the background, looking south.



Fig. 4. The tomb, looking west.



Fig. 5. Marble slab bearing Inscription 4 *in situ*.



Fig. 6. Chamber with the mosaic floor, looking north.

the bones could not be removed. The excavated part of the tomb yielded no ceramic artifacts; however, a dolium jug (L200), which had been placed next to the wall prior to filling the area with earth and a top layer of small stones, was uncovered in the installation next to the tomb (Seriý, forthcoming).

The chamber was enclosed by c. 0.8 m thick plastered pisé walls (Walls 25, 29, 34, 38; extant height c. 0.5 m) supported by foundations of medium-sized fieldstones. The inner chamber (3.5 × 4.3 m) was accessed through two entrances, one in W25 in the north (L906; 1.5 m wide), and the other, in W29 in the east (L904; c. 1 m wide). The entire floor of the chamber was paved in mosaic with large white, red and black tesserae (2 × 2 cm; Fig. 6). At a later stage, the eastern opening (in W29) was concealed behind a short wall (W28; 1.4 m long, 0.5 m thick), which damaged the mosaic floor.

The mosaic includes three inscriptions (Plan 1). Two are in the outer area of the mosaic: Inscription 1 in the north, near W25 (Fig. 7), and Inscription 2 in the east, near W29 (Fig. 8). Inscription 3 is in the center of the room (Fig. 9). Inscriptions 1 and 3 are positioned to be read from the northern entrance (L906), while Inscription 2 can be read by a person standing inside the chamber, looking in the direction of the eastern aperture. This may indicate that the northern opening was used to enter the chamber, whereas the eastern opening served as an exit from the chamber and complex.

Pottery and glass fragments discovered in the building closely resemble materials from other sites in the area, and may be confidently dated to the second half of the sixth–early seventh centuries CE (Seriý 2012).

Summary

The construction of the funerary complex can be divided into several phases. The vaulted

tomb, which was the purpose of the complex, was constructed first. It was then surrounded by a courtyard. At a later stage, the chamber with the mosaics was built. It is likely that at this stage, the tomb was supplied with an entrance, partially covered by the marble slab (Inscription 4), which allowed easy passage from the courtyard to the chamber. Later, the wall obstructing the eastern opening in the chamber was added, perhaps in order to prevent entry through that access point.

THE MOSAIC PAVEMENT

The central carpet in the roofed chamber features a reticulate pattern consisting of diamonds with smaller inner diamonds. A mosaic with an inner field of similar design, also with an inscription at its center, was unearthed in a monastery dated to the sixth century CE in Shiqmona (Sha'ar Ha-'Aliya; Ovadiah and Ovadiah 1987: No. 220, Pl. 154.1). Slightly different patterns were found in the central church at Nizzana (Urman 2004: Fig. 91), in the synagogue at Bet She'an, and in the church outside the Third Wall in Jerusalem (Ovadiah and Ovadiah 1987: No. 30, Pl. 29.2; No. 114, Pl. 94.2).

The central carpet is surrounded by a border decorated with a two-strand guilloche design and an outer area of white tesserae. Similar border designs appear in the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem (fourth–fifth centuries CE; Ovadiah and Ovadiah 1987: No. 19, Pl. 18), the church at Khirbat Umm Zaqum (fifth–sixth centuries CE; Ovadiah and Ovadiah 1987, No. 171, Pl. 107), the Monastery of Lady Mary in Bet She'an (567 CE; Ovadiah and Ovadiah 1987: No. 26, Pl. 21), the north chapel at Kafr Kanna (second quarter of the sixth century CE; Ovadiah and Ovadiah 1987: No. 139, Pl. 101.4) and the synagogue at Ma'oz Hayim (fifth century CE; Ovadiah and Ovadiah 1987: No. 178, Pl. 120).

THE INSCRIPTIONS

Inscription 1 (Fig. 7)

ΕΤΟΥΣΣΜ
 Η
 ΧΜΔΕΣΙΟ
 ΥΑΚ

Ἔτους ζμχ' μη(νι) Δεσίου ακ'

Translation:

“In the year 646 on the 21st of the month of Daisios”

The first Σ is square, while the second is lunate. The O is drop-shaped, and the last letter of the inscription, possibly Κ, is unclear.

The inscription is probably dated according to the era of Ascalon, which began in the autumn of 104 BCE (Meimaris 1992:66). In the Ascalonian calendar, Daisios began on June 25 (Meimaris 1992:67); therefore, our inscription conveys the date July 15, 543 CE. The Macedonian month Daisios appears in many inscriptions discovered in Byzantine Palestine and Arabia, for instance, in mosaic inscriptions discovered at Abasan el-Kabir (Figueras 1996: No. 10, p. 277) and on tombstones from Moab (Canova 1954: Nos. 41, 310, 344, 380–382, 386, 388). Daisios is spelled Δεσίου—the same spelling used in Inscription 1—on the mosaic



Fig. 7. Inscription 1.

pavement of the chapel in Shivṭa (Negev 1981: No. 66) and on a tombstone from Khirbat el-Audsha (Alt 1921: No. 131).

Inscription 2 (Fig. 8)

ΦΟΣΚΥ

Φος κ(υρίο)υ

Translation:

“Light of the Lord”

Φῶς is spelt with an O instead of a Ω, which is very common in this period. The Σ is square, the O is drop-shaped.

The expression φῶς κυρίου occurs twice in the Septuagint. The first instance is in Proverbs 20:27: φῶς κυρίου πνοὴ ἀνθρώπων, ὃς ἐρευνᾷ ταμίεια κοιλίας, “The light of the Lord is the spirit of man, he who searches the hidden parts of the belly” (in Hebrew: נר יהוה נשמתו, אדם חפש כל-הדר-בתן). The second occurrence is in Ecclesiasticus (Sapientia Jesu filii Sirach, 50:29.2): εἰ γὰρ αὐτὰ ποιήσῃ, πρὸς πάντα ἰσχύσει· ὅτι φῶς κυρίου τὸ ἕλκος αὐτοῦ, “If he does that, he will prevail in everything, for the light of the Lord is his route.” In the New Testament, God is defined as light on multiple occasions, for example John (1:5): ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστίν, “the god is light.” The phrase Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουτῶν μοι ... ἔξει



Fig. 8. Inscription 2.

τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me... will have the light of life” (John 8.12; 12.46) is attributed to Christ.³

Expressions comprising the word φῶς and alluding to certain New Testament passages referring to Christ as light, are common in inscriptions (Felle 2006: Nos. 52, 118, 131, 323, 336, 369, 389). In Syria, the words φῶς and ζωή are sometimes incised on a cross or denoted with only the initial letters, representing the traditional blessing of Christ to the believers (IGLSyr 2:502, 671; 4:1682, 1701, 1726, 1751, 1862, 1869; 5:2176, 2479, 2632). In Palestine, the words φῶς ζωή were inscribed on a column drum of a church at Nizzana (Figueras 2004: No. 9). A plaster fragment from Hebron bears the painted inscription Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς καὶ ἡ ζωὴ κ(αὶ) ἄλ[φα καὶ ὦ], “I am the light and the life and *alpha* and *omega*” (Lifshitz 1970: No. 17; Felle 2006: No. 164). A mosaic inscription in the cave monastery of St. George in Wadi Qelt contains a very similar expression, φῶς ζωῆς ΑΩ, “Light of life *alpha omega*” (Patrich 1988:66, Fig. 27; Felle 2006: No. 195). The mosaic floor at Ḥorbat Bet Loya features a similar text based on Proverbs 13:9, Φῶς δικέοις διὰ παντός, “Light to the righteous in all” (Patrich and Tsafirir 1993:270; *SEG*

35:1541; Felle 2006: No. 175). Expressions like Φῶς Χριστοῦ φαίνει πᾶσιν, “The light of Christ enlightens everybody” or “shines to everyone” (John 1:9) occur on many fourth–sixth century CE clay lamps,⁴ including some from tombs (Loffreda 1989:192–200).

Expressions equating God to light are common in Christian epigraphy, including in Palestine, usually citing or alluding to New Testament texts. However, the phrase used in the Ashqelon chapel may have been borrowed from the Septuagint, rather than from the New Testament; it is unclear whether this phrase was intended to allude to an Old Testament text, as for instance in the inscription in Ḥorbat Bet Loya, or φῶς κυρίου was simply a variation of a popular expression, for instance φῶς Χριστοῦ (“the light of Christ”).

Inscription 3 (Fig. 9)

ΑΥΤΗΗΠΙΥΑ
ΗΤΟΥΚΥΔΙ
ΚΑΙΟ...
ΕΛΕ...ΝΤ
ΑΙΕ...ΥΤΗ

Αὕτη ἡ πύλη τοῦ κ(υρί)ου, δίκαιο[ι εἰς] ελε[ύσο]νται ἐ[ν α]ὐτῇ



Fig. 9. Inscription 3.

Translation:

“This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter by it.”

The inscription features a square E and a drop-shaped O. The text is a quotation from the Septuagint version of Psalms 117:20, Αὔτη ἡ πύλη τοῦ κυρίου, δίκαιοι εἰσελεύσονται ἐν αὐτῇ (in Hebrew: זה השער ליהוה צדיקים יבאו בו).

Psalms are often quoted in mosaic inscriptions in churches. In early Christian epigraphy, Old Testament quotations were more common than New Testament ones, and the book of Psalms was the most popular source. Psalms 117:20 is frequently quoted in church inscriptions, especially in Syria,⁵ Arabia,⁶ and Palestine. Felle (2006:507) cites 49 inscriptions containing this verse. These inscriptions are usually placed close to church doors on their lintels, or on side columns (Feissel 1984:225). The most famous example is a late Byzantine wooden lintel over the main entrance to the St. Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai (Séjourné 1897:108; Felle 2006:234; for a granite lintel from the same location with the same verse, see Felle 2006:236).

In Palestine, fifth- and sixth-century CE inscriptions citing this psalm were discovered in several churches, often on mosaic floors: in Bet She’an (Tsori 1974; *SEG* 37:1533; Felle 2006: No. 180 [the first half of the fifth century]), in the Golan Heights (*SEG* 46:1967.4; Felle 2006: Nos. 207, 232 [529 or 539 CE]), at Herodium (*SEG* 40:1472; Felle 2006: No. 165), Jerusalem (Jalabert 1924: No. 106; Felle 2006: No. 202 [fifth century]) and Bethlehem (*SEG* 8:235; Felle 2006: No. 160 [sixth century]). In Hebron, two inscriptions contained this verse (Bagatti 1952–1953:116; Felle 2006: Nos. 166, 167).⁷ In the Negev, it appears in inscriptions unearthed in Be’er Sheva’ (Abel 1903:428; Alt 1921: No. 9; Felle 2006: No. 196 [sixth century]), Abu Ḥof (Figueras 1996: No. 8, 274–275; *SEG* 46:2028; Felle 2006: No. 172) and near Kibbutz Magen (*SEG* 35:1549; Tsiferis 1985:25, Fig. 15; Felle 2006: No. 187 [late fifth–early sixth centuries]). Inscriptions from Abu Ḥof and the mosaic

pavement in Bethlehem, as well as some Syrian inscriptions (e.g., IGLSyr 4:1947), feature two verses, Psalms 117:19–20.

In Ashqelon, mosaic pavements in the Barne’a neighborhood church, dated to about half a century earlier than our Inscription 3, feature two quotations from Psalms 92(93):5 and 22(23):1. One of them dated to 493 CE (Tsiferis 1967; 1968: Fig. 49; Ovadiah and Ovadiah 1987: No. 7, Pl. 3–5; *SEG* 37:1472 B and C; Felle 2006: Nos. 169–170); the date of the other is not indicated.

Inscription 4 (Figs. 5, 10, 11)

EYTY
XΩΣ
THΠO
ΛEI

Εὐτυχῶς τῇ πόλει

Translation:

“Good fortune to the city”

The inscription, framed by an olive-branch wreath, was carved in relief on a marble slab, which was found in secondary use at the entrance to the tomb. The letters E, O, Ω and Σ are round-shaped.

Honorific inscriptions and simple blessings with the word *eutuchos* (εὐτυχῶς) were popular in Syria and Palestine from the first to the fifth centuries CE.⁸ They were addressed to mortals (IGLSyr 4:1269, 1883; *SEG* 36:1296c, Syria, third century, inscribed on a ceramic vessel; *SEG* 37:1270, Cilicia, on a mosaic floor, third century; *SEG* 29:1607, Gaza, first–third centuries), as well as deities, including the Jewish god (*SEG* 17:781, Bet She’arim, third–fourth centuries). Inscriptions with εὐτυχῶς occur in diverse contexts, such as a scale (*SEG* 29:1616) and a mosaic floor in a church in Haifa (*SEG* 37:1487), as well as the previously mentioned ceramic vessel from Syria. They commemorate various events, such as marriage (*SEG* 29:1607), manumission, like the inscription from third-century CE Edessa



Fig. 10. Inscription 4.



Fig. 11. Detail of Inscription 4.

(*SEG* 36:616, 619), or the erection of a wall, as in fifth–sixth century Sicily (*SEG* 40:297). The marble slab bearing our inscription possibly originated as part of a chancel screen, and was reused for the construction of the entrance to the Byzantine tomb.

DISCUSSION

The Ashqelon complex cannot be unequivocally understood. The tomb was too prominent to have just been a simple burial, yet too small to serve as a collective grave. Burials in churches and monasteries were very common in Byzantine Palestine (Goldfus 1997), but the location of a massive vaulted tomb within a tiny courtyard of a small chapel is unique. No indication of the name

or status of the buried person is extant, but such anonymity was quite common (cf. the memorial churches at Shellal and Rehovot; Goldfus 1997:36, 57). The individual was clearly held in high esteem, warranting the enclosure of the tomb within a courtyard, and the addition of a chamber with a mosaic floor, inscriptions, and perhaps, decorated walls.

The building is not located next to a church or a cemetery; perhaps the place had special significance for the people who constructed the tomb and frequented the site. The chapel resembles crypts that required one-way movement: visitors were meant to enter the courtyard, perform cultic activities at the tomb, proceed to the chamber with mosaics, and exit via a second opening. This layout suggests that a considerable number of people visited the site. The epigraphic evidence endorses the interpretation of the site as a cultic complex. Therefore, the complex seems to have been a private memorial site of an individual venerated by the community.

Given these considerations, it may be hypothesized that the tomb complex was a *martyrium* or *memorium*. Such edifices evolved in accordance with architectural and funerary traditions—they were usually erected above a tomb, relic, or memorial place of a martyr, but sometimes could be burials of persons considered to be endowed with special sanctity, not necessarily related to martyrdom (Grabar 1943–1946).⁹ In some cases, the building could even be called *heroon*, a pagan term meaning ‘hero’s shrine’, and used in Byzantine times to designate a simple chapel erected above a tomb or mausoleum (Papalexandrou 2007:168; Ousterhout 2010:345). Eusebius refers to modest cultic buildings constructed in Palestine as *προσευκτήρια* (*proseukteria*, literally ‘houses of prayer’, Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 8:1.5.5; Grabar 1943–1946:1.66; de Blaauw 2008:294).

Pilgrims to the Holy Land described *martyria* and *memoria* in Jerusalem and elsewhere (Grabar 1943–1946:1.68, 242–243, 322–327; Maraval 1985:267–268). *Martyria*

became so popular that in the beginning of the fifth century CE, new ones were built even where no new martyr was available—for instance, in Egypt (Maraval 1985:82–83; Papaconstantinou 2007:356). In northern Jordan, a late fifth–early sixth century CE church was designated a *martyrium* (Turshan 2010). A mosaic inscription from Antiochene, Syria, dated to 515/16 CE, commemorates the construction of a *martyrium* (*SEG* 40:1750). Worth mentioning is an inscription on a tombstone in the South Church of ‘Oboda, referring to the burial place as ‘the *martyrium* of St. Theodore’ (Negev 1981: No. 17), although no relics of a martyr have been discovered. The suggestion that the site at Ashqelon was considered to be a *martyrium* or *memorium* explains both the funerary and cultic features of the place. However, in the absence of an inscription identifying the buried person, or an established architectural pattern allowing

the definition of the building, the proposed interpretation remains hypothetical.

CONCLUSIONS

The funerary complex uncovered in Ashqelon was built in several stages. Inscription 1 indicates that the chamber with the mosaics was constructed in 543 CE. Since the tomb and the courtyard seem to have been in existence for at least a short time prior to the chamber, they were probably built in the first half of the sixth century CE. The complex still functioned in the early seventh century. Its *raison d’être* was the tomb, and the mosaic-floor inscriptions in the chamber attest to its cultic function, perhaps as a memorial site. Thus, the chapel in Ashqelon affords an exceptional glimpse at an unpretentious cultic place that, despite its modest layout, played an important role in the religious life of local believers.

NOTES

¹ The excavations (Permit No. A-6201) were financed by the Ashkelon Economic Corporation, and directed by Gregory Seriy, with the assistance of Aleks Fraiberg, Ilan Peretz, Yigal Radashkovsky, Anna Filin and Dmitry Yegorov (area supervisors), Yaser Al-‘Amor (administration), Vadim Essman and Yakov Shmidov (surveyors), Hamoudi Khalaily and Natalia Zak (plan drawing). Photographs are by Gregory Seriy and Aleks Fraiberg (field photographs), Yael Yolovitch (artifacts photographs) and Paskal Partush (Sky View Company, aerial photographs).

² We would like to thank Peter Fabian and Haim Goldfus for their valuable comments and counsel. We are also grateful to the anonymous readers for their remarks. All remaining errors are our responsibility.

³ For the theological interpretation of this idea, see Peterson 1926:38.

⁴ Clermont-Ganneau 1898:2: Nos. 89–91; Thomsen 1921:130–133, Nos. 223–225, 227, 232. There are Byzantine coins with abbreviations of this expression (Rosenthal and Sivan 1978:119, Nos. 494–497). Loffreda (1989) cites versions of this phrase on the majority of lamps from Groups A (1.1–6.4), B and D

(1.1–2.3). For the significance of this expression, see Loffreda 1989:221–222, 226–229.

⁵ In Syria, this verse appears in several churches in Apamene (IGLSyr 4:1673 [577/8 CE], 1682 [559 CE], 1683, 1688, 1700, 1744, 1841, 1844, 1947 [598–599 CE], 1966, 1982 [577 CE]; Felle 2006: Nos. 302–305, 308, 317–319, 321, 323, 335, 381, 390), Emesene (IGLSyr 5:2524; Felle 2006:272), and Chalkidike (IGLSyr 2:271, Felle 2006: No. 282 [606/07 CE]). Only a few inscriptions were placed in fortresses, i.e., secular buildings (IGLSyr 4:1673, 1682; 5:2524; Feissel 1984:226).

⁶ In Arabia, this verse occurs in Ma’in (de Vaux 1938:238–240, Pl. 14; Felle 2006: No. 74), Salcha (Felle 2006: No. 111; 497 CE), Mothana (*SEG* 7:1186; Felle 2006: No. 93 [sixth century]), Hauran (*SEG* 7:1167; Felle 2006: No. 97 [early fifth century]), near Bostra (Felle 2006:117), Megreh in Wadi Hesa (Canova 1954: No. 427; Felle 2006: No. 104), and elsewhere (Felle 2006: Nos. 258, 260, 313). The ‘topographic border’ around the inscription at Ma’in features landscapes and names of several cities, including Ashqelon, where our complex is located.

⁷ One was incised on an architrave of a cultic building; the other on a marble fragment discovered in secondary use.

⁸ A similar slab, with an inscription ἀξί(ι) Ἀσκαλ(ών) ἀξί(ι) Ῥώμη, ‘Advance, Ascalon! Advance, Rome!’ was discovered in the vicinity of a late second–early third century basilica in Ashqelon (Fischer 1995:147, Fig. 28).

⁹ The comprehensive study by A. Grabar (1943–1946) remains the most fundamental publication on the subject; see also Ward-Perkins 1966; Grabar 1968; Deichmann 1970; Saxer 1980:296–308; Lamberigts and van Deun 1995; de Blaauw 2008:316–336.

REFERENCES

- Abel M. 1903. Inscriptions grecques de Bersabée. *RB* 12:425–430.
- Alt A. 1921. *Die griechischen Inschriften der Palaestina Tertia westlich der ‘Araba* (Wissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen des deutsch-türkischen Denkmalschutz-Komandos 2). Berlin–Leipzig.
- Bagatti B. 1952–1953. Espressioni bibliche nelle antiche iscrizioni cristiane della Palestina. *LA* 3:111–148.
- Blaauw S. de. 2008. Kultgebäude (Kirchenbau). In G. Schöllgen ed. *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* XXII. Stuttgart. Pp. 227–393.
- Canova R. 1954. *Iscrizioni e monumenti protocristiani del paese di Moab*. Rome.
- Clermont-Ganneau C. 1898. *Recueil d’archéologie orientale* II. Paris.
- Deichmann F.W. 1970. Märtyrenbasilika, Martyrion, Memoria und Altargrab. *MDAIR* 77:144–169.
- Eusebius. *Historia ecclesiastica*. Eusèbe de Césarée. *Histoire ecclésiastique* (G. Bardy ed. and transl.; Sources chrétiennes 31, 41, 55, 73) (4 vols.). Paris 1952, 1955, 1958, 1960.
- Feissel D. 1984. La Bible dans les inscriptions grecques. In C. Mondésert ed. *Le monde grec ancien et la Bible* 1. Paris. Pp. 223–231.
- Felle A.E. 2006. *Biblia epigraphica: La sacra scrittura nella documentazione epigrafica dell’orbis christianus antiquus (III–VIII secolo)*. Bari.
- Figueras P. 1996. New Greek Inscriptions from the Negev. *LA* 46:265–284.
- Figueras P. 2004. Greek Inscriptions from Nessana. In D. Urman ed. *Nessana Excavations and Studies* I (Beer-Sheva XVII). Be’er Sheva’. Pp. 222–242.
- Fischer M. 1995. The Basilica of Ascalon: Marble, Imperial Art, and Architecture in Roman Palestine. In J.H. Humphrey ed. *The Roman and Byzantine Near East: Some Recent Archaeological Research* (JRA Suppl. S. 14). Ann Arbor. Pp. 121–150.
- Goldfus H. 1997. *Tombs and Burials in Churches and Monasteries of Byzantine Palestine (324–628 AD)*. Ph.D. diss. Princeton University. Princeton, N.J.
- Grabar A. 1943–1946. *Martyrium: Recherches sur le culte des reliques et l’art chrétien antique* (2 vols.). Paris.
- Grabar A. 1968. Martyrium ou «vingt ans après». *Cahiers archéologiques* 18:239–244.
- IG: *Inscriptiones graecae*. Berlin 1873–.
- IGLSyr: L. Jalabert, R. Mouterde and P. Mondésert eds. *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*. Paris 1929–.
- Jalabert L. 1914. Citations bibliques dans l’épigraphie grecque. *DACL* 3.2. Paris. Pp. 1731–1755.
- Lamberigts M. and Deun P. van. eds. 1995. *Martyrium in Multidisciplinary Perspective: Memorial Louis Reekmans* (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum lovaniensium 117). Leuven.
- Lifshitz B. 1970. Notes d’épigraphie grecque. *RB* 77:76–83.
- Loffreda S. 1989. *Lucerne bizantine in Terra Santa con iscrizioni in greco* (SBF Collectio Maior 35). Jerusalem.
- Maraval P. 1985. *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d’Orient: Histoire et géographie des origines à la conquête arabe*. Paris.
- Meimaris Y.E. 1992. *Chronological Systems in Roman-Byzantine Palestine and Arabia: The Evidence of the Dated Greek Inscriptions* (MEΛETHMATA 17). Athens.
- Negev A. 1981. *The Greek Inscriptions from the Negev* (SBF Collectio Minor 25). Jerusalem.
- Ousterhout R. 2010. Constantinople and the Construction of a Medieval Urban Identity. In P.

- Stephenson ed. *The Byzantine World*. London–New York. Pp. 334–351.
- Ovadiah R. and Ovadiah A. 1987. *Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine Mosaic Pavements in Israel* (Bibliotheca archaeologica 6). Rome.
- Papaconstantinou A. 2007. The Cult of Saints: A Haven of Continuity in a Changing World? In R.S. Bagnall ed. *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700*. Cambridge. Pp. 350–367.
- Papalexandrou A. 2007. Echoes of Orality in the Monumental Inscriptions of Byzantium. In L. James ed. *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*. Cambridge. Pp. 161–187.
- Patrich J. 1988. Judean Desert, Survey of Caves—1985/1986. *ESI* 6:66–70.
- Patrich J. and Tsafrir Y. 1993. A Byzantine Church Complex at Horvat Beit Loya. In Y. Tsafrir ed. *Ancient Churches Revealed*. Jerusalem. Pp. 265–272.
- Peterson E. 1926. *Eis Theos: Epigraphische, formgeschichtliche und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 24). Göttingen.
- Rosenthal R. and Sivan R. 1978. *Ancient Lamps in the Schloessinger Collection* (Qedem 8). Jerusalem.
- Saxer V. 1980. *Morts, martyrs, reliques en Afrique chrétienne aux premiers siècles: Les témoignages de Tertullien, Cyprien et Augustin à la lumière de l'archéologie africaine* (Théologie historique 55). Paris.
- SEG: Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden. 1923–.
- Séjourné P.-M. 1897. Chronique: Le Sinaï. *RB* 6:107–133.
- Septuaginta*. A. Rahlfs ed. *Septuaginta, id est, Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (2 vols.). Stuttgart 1935.
- Seriy G. 2012. Ashqelon, Neve Yam Dalet. *HA-ESI* 124 (December 31) http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/Report_Detail_Eng.aspx?id=2164&mag_id=119 (accessed March 22, 2017).
- Thomsen P. 1921. Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem und ihrer nächsten Umgebung. *ZDPV* 44:1–61.
- Tsaferis V. 1967. Notes and News: Ashkelon-Barnea. *IEJ* 17:125–126.
- Tsaferis V. 1968. Ashkelon-Barnea. *RB* 75:414–415.
- Tsaferis V. 1985. Mosaics and Inscriptions from Magen. *BASOR* 258:17–32.
- Tsori N. 1974. A Greek Inscription from Tell Basul. *IEJ* 24:227.
- Turshan N. 2010. The Magi: A Rare Mosaic Floor in the Ya'amun Church (Jordan). *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 50:616–624.
- Urman D. 2004. Nessana Excavations 1987–1995. In D. Urman ed. *Nessana Excavations and Studies I* (Beer-Sheva XVII). Be'er Sheva'. Pp. 1*–118*.
- Vaux R. de. 1938. Une mosaïque byzantine à Ma'in. *RB* 47:227–258.
- Ward-Perkins J.B. 1966. Memoria: Martyr's Tomb and Church. *Journal of Theological Studies* 17:20–37.