

A CHAPEL OF ST. PAUL AT CAESAREA MARITIMA? THE INSCRIPTIONS

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Area KK yielded a considerable harvest of epigraphic finds. These included inscribed artifacts (bullae, weights, inscribed pottery) possibly related to the commercial activities that took place in the storerooms on the ground floor of the building, as well as many fragmentary inscriptions on stone (mostly marble) and a number of more unusual finds: pieces of plaster decorated in paint with religious images (crosses, haloed figures) and inscriptions, and an eulogia stamp. The inscription on the stamp mentions St. Paul, and by a remarkable coincidence, a fragment of platter found in the same spot is inscribed with this name.

A bread stamp is a movable object, and therefore its discovery in this area could not be given any special significance in itself, but for the fact that a notable number of architectural elements of a kind usually associated with a church or chapel were also discovered here (see Patrich, above). If we add to this combination of data the striking number of paintings and inscriptions on fresco, all of religious character, we reach the conclusion that these remains belonged to some sacred space, probably a chapel: this must have been located on the upper storey of the building, since the fragments of fresco were found atop the debris of the ground floor.¹ The discovery of the eulogia of St. Paul and of the platter bearing the same name — perhaps part of a set of ware belonging to the chapel? — lends weight to the hypothesis that this sacred space was dedicated to St. Paul, or at least hosted a cult of the saint.

Was this a private chapel or did it belong to the community? The compound in which it is found is interpreted by the excavators as a private building. Moreover, the location of the chapel on an upper storey, with no direct

1. Unlike stone, that can travel far without suffering damage, plaster is rather brittle and liable to go to pieces if disturbed. Some of the fragments were large, which seems to show that they had not been submitted to much displacement. It must be stressed that the religious character of the painted images and inscriptions would not provide sufficient grounds for the existence of a chapel: figures of saints were painted on the wall of a vaulted passage, north of Area KK, which probably had no sacred function at all. However, the association of all the finds — architectural elements, pieces of ecclesiastical furniture, religious paintings and the eulogia stamp — can hardly be ascribed to mere chance.

access from the street, makes it reasonable that it was privately owned and used. This does not exclude, however, that it may have been opened to the public in special occasions — for instance, for the festival of the patron saint — or that it could be used for sacred ceremonies not only by the owner and his household, but also by employees and clients (both in the Roman and in the modern sense) who frequented the house for social and economical reasons. To all these people would the bread stamped with St. Paul's blessing be distributed, after they had taken part in the holy rites in the place.

In the debris in Area KK two sarcophagi were discovered, and three epitaphs can be identified among the many fragmentary inscriptions on stone scattered in the area. Can this be taken as evidence that the chapel had a funerary function? It seems unlikely. The location of the chapel on an upper storey rendered it unfit for this use,² and its situation in the very heart of the city made burial in it unlawful. The Roman law which forbade burial within the cities was re-enacted in the 6th century (*CJ* III, 43, 12) and it is hard to believe that it would be violated in the capital of Palaestina Prima, under the very nose of the governor whose palace was nearby. John Chrysostom opens a homely on the dedication of a cemeterial chapel with the rhetorical question, why is the community meeting outside the city? The answer is a reminder to his listeners that the sacred building they have come to consecrate is intended for burial, and therefore could not be erected within the walls.³ In his study on burial in churches in Byzantine Palestine, Goldfus comes to the conclusion that churches used for burial in cities and villages were located outside or at most on the fringe of the inhabited area.⁴ His survey refers only to Western Palestine, but the situation appears to have been similar also beyond the Jordan. The so-called Mortuary Church in Gerasa — rather a mortuary chapel attached to the Church of SS Peter and Paul — was indeed destined for burial, but though it was technically located within the city wall, it is tucked into the rocky hillside on which

2. This location naturally prevented deposition of the dead in graves under the floor, as well as the disposition of sarcophagi anywhere but in the small side room to the south of the suggested area of the chapel, which lay on a fill of earth. But this would have required carrying the cumbersome and heavy sarcophagi up a narrow wooden staircase (there is no place for any other means of ascending to the second floor), and arranging them in a space hardly large enough to hold them, and certainly unsuited for the activity required in order to lay bodies in them (e.g., removing and replacing the stone lids). Even the carrying of the corpse upstairs would have been a painfully undignified business.

3. *De coemeterio et cruce*, PG 49, col. 393.

4. H. Goldfus, *Tombs and Burials in Churches and Monasteries in Byzantine Palestine*, UMI Dissertation Services, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1997, pp. 238-239, cf. p. 97.

the wall itself stands, at the fringe of the city and in the midst of an uninhabited area.⁵ In Madaba, the Church of the Holy Apostles could well have been a funerary church too: at least, it is located in a cemeterial area and had a memorial chapel attached to its northern side (the chapel of Priest John, built as an addition to the main building). But the area is at the south-eastern edge of the town, and it is by no means certain that there was a city wall marking the limits of the urban area.⁶

Three epitaphs were admittedly discovered in this area. However, they are only three out of 32 inscriptions on stone found in Area KK.⁷ Though they catch the eye, for two of them are almost whole while all the others inscriptions are fragments,⁸ the epitaphs form only 9% of the entire group. The remaining inscriptions are difficult to locate because of their sorry state: nevertheless, at least seven can be recognised as fragments of public dedications, of which four at least belonged to civil buildings,⁹ and two

5. C.B. Welles, "The Inscriptions", in C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis*, New Haven 1938, p. 486, nos. 333-334 (the dedicatory inscription is open to more than one interpretation, and does not prove that the parents of the dedicator were buried in the vault attached to the chapel, or indeed that they were dead when the chapel was dedicated); R. Khouri, *Jerash, A Frontier City of the Roman East*, London and New York, 1986, pp. 130-132. The case of the so-called Mortuary Church is similar to that of the Kyria Maria monastery in Beth Shean (G.M. Fitzgerald, *A Sixth Century Monastery at Beth Shan (Scythopolis)*, *Beth-shan Excavations IV*, Philadelphia 1939). The church of this monastery, though not properly a funerary church, had burial places reserved for the use of the donor's family and of other privileged persons. The monastery itself was attached to the city wall, at some distance from the residential quarters of Byzantine Scythopolis.

6. M. Piccirillo, *Chiese e mosaici di Madaba*, Jerusalem, 1989 (SBF Collectio Maior 34); id., "Iscrizione imperiale e alcune stele funerarie di Madaba e di Kerak", *Liber Annuus* 39 (1989), pp. 105-117. The imperial inscription is evidence of the existence of gates at Madaba under Elagabalus, but gates and towers do not necessarily imply the existence of a wall, as the examples of Gerasa and Scythopolis clearly show. I wish to thank Fr M. Piccirillo for discussing the issue of funerary churches with me.

7. I do not count several fragments of a large inscription on marble, giving a list of tariffs for clerical services in the court of justice, which were found in Area KK. More fragments of the same inscription were found in Area CC, where the palace of the governor was located, and those discovered here evidently came from there.

8. There is nothing remarkable in the fact that two of the three epitaphs were comparatively whole: tombstones in Caesarea are usually small, 20 cm across or less, and 3-5 cm thick, and thus rather sturdy. Dedications, on the other hand, were usually inscribed on large slabs, which were more liable of being broken, either by accident or intentionally, in order to be reused. The third tombstone was cut and reused as a stopper, perhaps in the very storerooms where it was found.

9. One of the fragments perhaps refers to a βασιλική (civil basilica), another may contain the word ἀκρόπολις: if these readings are true, the stones must have reached this spot from a place some distance from Area KK. The term acropolis can only refer to the platform on which the Temple of Augustus had once stood, and the octagonal church was later built.

seemingly to sacred ones. Three other fragments can be recognised as private dedications. It would be wrong, therefore, to single out the epitaphs and to ascribe a special significance to their presence here. Though the possibility that they belonged to the chapel cannot be completely ruled out, it is more likely, in my opinion, that the slabs were brought from a cemeterial area out of town, to be reused as building material; or perhaps to be burnt for lime, since all are made of marble. Several lime kilns were found in the near vicinity.¹⁰

Thus, the inscriptions presented here are only those which most likely did belong to this spot. Several of the inscriptions painted on plaster were still attached to building stones which apparently had fallen from the upper floor of the building. Some fragments of plaster may come from the walls of the ground floor, on which traces of plaster and paint were observed by the excavators. The bread stamp and the inscribed platter are also presented here, though we cannot be absolutely sure that they belonged to the chapel whose existence we postulate.

Inscriptions painted on plaster

1 a-e. 12/25 KK 22 L. 625 B. 0171 (Fig. 1). Five fragments composing a large *crux gemmata*, about 1 meter high — one of at least three such crosses whose remains were found among the debris of Building I. Above the horizontal bar of the cross the letters $\overline{\text{IC}} \overline{\text{XC}}$ are painted in red, ca. 9 cm high; below are an A and an W, also in red and slightly larger. The characters are elegantly shaped, with curling ends; the *alpha* and *omega* have decorative serifs. The formula $\text{I}(\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma) \text{X}(\rho\iota\sigma\tau\omicron)\varsigma \alpha\lambda\phi\alpha \ \omega\acute{\omicron} (\mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha)$ refers to Ap. 1:8, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord”, as well as to Ap. 21:6 (“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end”) and 22:13 (“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end”).

At the foot of the cross a red-painted inscription ran, of which only the letters $\Lambda\text{WNKAYXHM}$ (7-8 cm high) remain. The first three letters seem

10. Epitaphs are the most common class of inscriptions in Caesarea (and in Palestinian epigraphy in general). All were found out of context, scattered among the ruins or reused in later buildings; many were discovered within the boundaries of the Byzantine city, where they had been brought from the cemeterial areas. See C.M. Lehman and K.G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions from Caesarea Maritima*, Boston, Ma., 2000 (The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima Excavation Reports, no. 5, The American School for Oriental Research), p. 24.

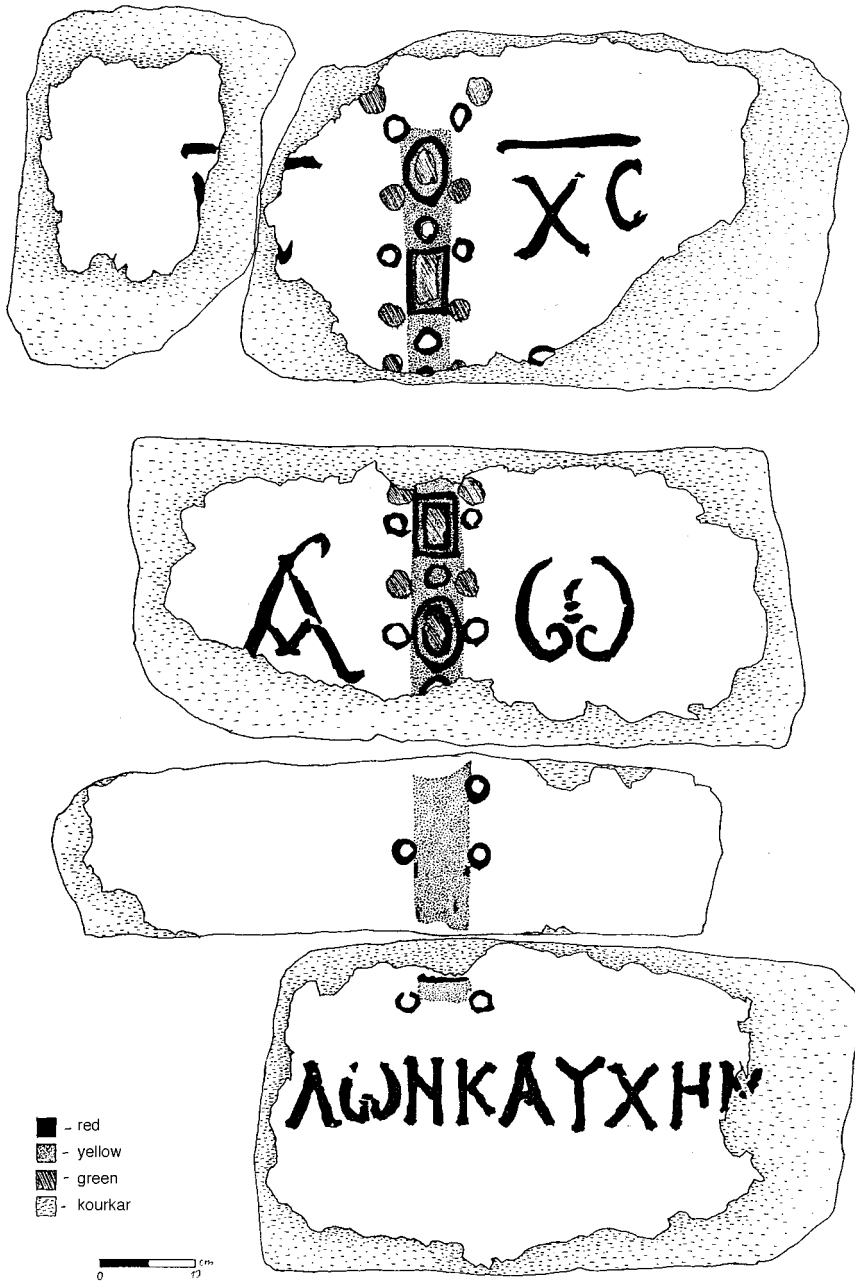


Fig. 1 Inscriptions 1 a-e.

to be the desinence of a noun ending in $\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, in the genitive plural; the rest belong to the word $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$, meaning “pride”, or “boast”. The use of such a word seems to indicate that the fragment does not belong to a dedicatory inscription, but to some less prosaic text, a quotation of some kind. The term occurs both in the Old and in the New Testament, but the surviving letters do not match any quotation from either. In the Gospel we find also the verb $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\hat{\alpha}\sigma\theta\alpha\iota$, “to boast, to exult”, both in a negative and in a positive sense (e.g., in phrases like “to exult in the Lord”). Some forms of this verb could match the last six letters of the fragment, but no quotation matches the whole fragment.

Even if the fragment belongs to a quotation from a literary text which has come down to us, its identification is close to impossible, given the scanty remains of the inscription. The term $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ is used hundreds of times by the Church Fathers, whose writings are the most likely source of this text. However, some tentative suggestion might be supplied by the accompanying word and by the representation of the crosses. Though the ending in $\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ is very common, the context favours a term connected with holiness, like $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ or $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\varsigma$.¹¹ $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ can be found coupled with one or the other of these words in several homelies of John Chrysostom on the cross. For instance, in *Sermo in venerabilem crucem* the cross is exalted through a long series of epithets, among which $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\delta\varsigma$ $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\omega\upsilon\upsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\tau\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\epsilon\lambda\mu\alpha$, $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\delta\varsigma$ $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\upsilon\rho}\omega\upsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ (“cross, the proclamation of the apostles; cross, the pride of the martyrs”: PG 50, col. 819).¹² In another homely ascribed to the same Church Father, *In adorationem verae crucis*, again the cross is praised with a series of appellations, among which $\pi\rho\omicron\beta\lambda\eta\tau\omega\rho$ $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\sigma\tau\omicron\lambda\omicron\omega\upsilon$, $\kappa\acute{\eta}\rho\upsilon\gamma\mu\alpha$ $\pi\rho\omicron\phi\eta\tau\omega\upsilon$, $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\upsilon\rho}\omega\upsilon$... $\mu\omicron\nu\alpha\zeta\omicron\nu\tau\omega\upsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ (“promoter of the apostles, message of the prophets, pride of the martyrs... pride of the monks”: PG 62, col. 748). In a third homely ascribed to Chrysostom, *In venerandam crucem*, the litany of praises of the cross includes the expressions $\tau\omicron$ $\tau\omega\upsilon$ $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omega\upsilon$ $\acute{\alpha}\rho\rho\eta\tau\omicron\upsilon$ $\theta\acute{\epsilon}\alpha\mu\alpha$, $\tau\omicron$ $\tau\omega\upsilon$ $\beta\rho\omicron\tau\omega\upsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ (“the ineffable vision of the angels, the

11. Tamar Avner suggested $\xi\upsilon\lambda\omega\upsilon$, but the restoration $\xi\upsilon\lambda\omega\upsilon$ $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ seems unlikely. $\Xi\upsilon\lambda\omicron\nu$, “wood” or “tree” is sometimes used as a synonym of the life-giving cross, but the use of the plural in this sense is infrequent, albeit not unknown (e.g. Theophanes, *Chron.*, ed. de Boor, pp. 272, 273). A connection between $\xi\upsilon\lambda\alpha$ as synonym of $\sigma\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\delta\varsigma$ and $\kappa\alpha\upsilon\chi\eta\mu\alpha$ might be plausible, but not in the grammatical relationship that appears in the fragment.

12. This homely, though ascribed to John Chrysostom as early as the 7th century, may in fact be spurious. Some ascribe it to John of Jerusalem: see *CPG* 4525. If this is indeed the text that was quoted in our inscription, its authorship is of no importance, so far as it was a well-known text ascribed to some orthodox Church Father.

pride of the mortals”: PG 59, col. 675). Another of Chrysostom’s homelies, *De coemeterio et cruce*, pronounced at the consecration of a funeral chapel, contains a long exaltation of the cross: τὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς θέλημα, ἡ τοῦ Μονογενοῦς δόξα, τὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἀγαλλίαμα, ὁ τῶν ἀγγέλων κοσμός, τῆς Ἐκκλησίας ἡ ἀσφάλεια, τὸ καύχημα Παύλου, τὸ τῶν ἀγίων τεῖχος, τὸ φῶς τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπάσης (“the will of the Father, the glory of the Only-begotten, the exultation of the Holy Ghost, the ornament of the angels, the security of the Church, the pride of Paul, the fortification of the saints, the light of the whole world”: PG 49, cols. 396-397). Allowing for some slight change in the order of the words, any of these phrases could be the one quoted in our inscription. The cross is called καύχημα in several homelies of the same author (who seems to have had a particular liking for this word¹³) and especially καύχημα Παύλου, with reference to a saying of St. Paul in Gal. 6:14: “But far be from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world”.¹⁴ The reference to the cross as “Paul’s pride” appears in Chrysostom’s homely *In Math. 26:39*, together with other laudatory epithets of the cross similar to those quoted above: Σταυρός, τὸ τοῦ Πατρὸς θέλημα, ἡ τοῦ Υἱοῦ δόξα, τὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος ἀγαλλίαμα, τὸ Παύλου καύχημα; “Cross, the will of the Father, the glory of the Son, the exultation of the Holy Ghost, the pride of Paul”: PG 51, col. 35). The association of the term καύχημα to St. Paul may be significant, if the chapel decorated by this inscription and the crosses was indeed dedicated to St. Paul.

2 a-b. 12/25 KK 22 L. 625 B. 0170 (Fig. 2). Two fragments, the first with the letters $\overline{\text{IC}}$, under which are the remains of the left arm of a *crux gemmata*, the other with an A under the left arm of such a cross. The let-

13. John Chrysostom uses this term no less than 153 times (data from *TLG*), and mostly as his own original expression, not in quotation or in a paraphrase of the Scripture. This is a very large number even on the face of this author, exceptional prolificness. For comparison, Theodoretus uses καύχημα 24 times, and mostly in quotations, almost never as an expression of his own. For the cross as καύχημα in Chrysostom’s homelies, see for instance *Adv. Judaeos hom. III*, PG 48, col. 868; *De confessione crucis*, PG 52, col. 842; *In exaltationem venerandae crucis*, PG 59, col. 679.

14. The cross is called καύχημα, with explicit reference to St. Paul and to his saying in Gal 6:14, also in a homely by Athanasius, *De passione et cruce Domini*, PG 28, col. 245, but his words do not match the fragment. For the sake of completeness, we shall note that Athanasius’ homely *De virginitate*, ch. 24, PG 28, col. 280, contains a phrase in praise of continence which might match our fragment: ὦ ἐγκράτεια, χαρὰ προφητῶν καὶ ἀποστόλων καύχημα (O continence, joy of the prophets, pride of the apostles...). However, in no way could this quotation fit the circumstances, namely, the depiction of the crosses.

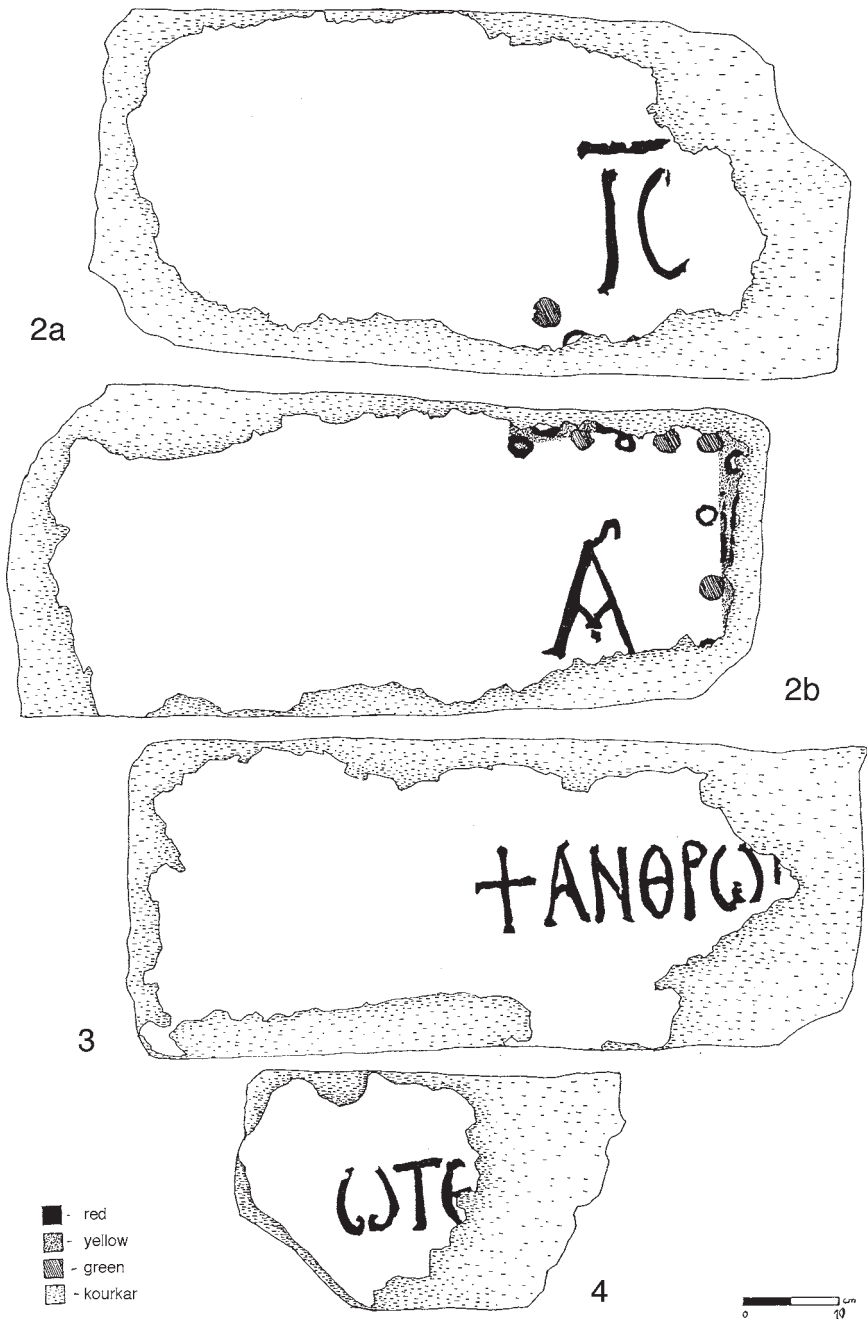


Fig. 2 Inscriptions 2-4.

ters, ca. 13 cm high, are painted in red and have decorative curls and serifs. Clearly they belonged to the same formula as no. 1 and were attached to a second cross.

3. 12/25 KK 22 L. 625 B. 0170 (Fig. 2). A fragment with a small cross and the beginning of an inscription, that may have run under the foot of a large cross like in no. 1. Possibly the inscription was associated to the same cross to which no. 2 was attached, since the fragments were found in the same spot. The letters, ca. 8 cm high, are elegantly shaped in red paint. Only the letters ANΘPWII can be read. They must belong to the word ἄνθρωπος, case and number unknown, standing at the beginning of a sentence.

As in no. 1, clearly we have no prosaic dedication here, but a quotation of some kind. Ἄνθρωπος without article and at the beginning of a sentence is not very common, and one is forcefully reminded of Luke 10:30, the beginning of the parable of the Good Samaritan (Ἄνθρωπός τις κατέβαινε ἀπὸ Ἰερουσαλήμ εἰς Ἰεριχώ, “A man was coming down from Jerusalem to Jericho...”). Some commentaries to this passage by John Chrysostom and Basilus of Caesarea begin with the same phrase (CPG 3073, 4855). However, if this quotation was inscribed at the foot of a cross, the parable of the Good Samaritan does not seem especially relevant. Other patristic works beginning with the word ἄνθρωπος are either later than the probable date of this chapel and its inscriptions (e.g., two works by John of Damascus and Andreas of Crete: CPG 8087, 8187) or unlikely to be used in such a context (a polemic work against heretics by Athanasius, CPG 2242).

There is however no reason to take for granted that the quotation was the opening sentence of a patristic work: it is much more likely to be the beginning of a sentence within such a work. If so, the chances of identification are practically nil. All the same, it is worth noting that in one of Chrysostom’s homilies mentioned above as possible source of the quotation in no. 1, immediately before the series of laudatory appellations of the cross, we find the following sentence: Ἐκλήθη ἄνθρωπος, ἵνα σε θεὸν καλέσῃ· ἐκλήθη υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα σε υἷον θεοῦ καλέσῃ (“He [Jesus] was called a man, so that you could be called a god; he was called son of man, so that you could be called son of God”: *Sermo in venerabilem crucem*, PG 50, cols. 818-819). With only a slight change in the order of the first two words, this sentence might match the quotation: it certainly fits the circumstances, for the cross was the instrument of man’s redemption and of the opening of the reign of heaven to human kind.

4. 12/25 KK 22 L. 625 B. 0170 (Fig. 2). A fragment with a blank, followed by the letters ΩTE, painted in red, ca. 7 cm high. It was clearly the beginning of a line, but not necessarily the beginning of a sentence. ΩTE means “so that” or “because”, and there is no way to link it to any definite quotation.

5 a-b. 05acx—figxx5; 05bcx—figxx2 (Figs. 3). Two fragments, one showing a *sigma*, 9 cm high, surmounted by a horizontal stroke, the typical abbreviation mark of the *nomina sacra*, and the other of an *alpha*, ca. 11 cm high. Both letters are decoratively traced in red paint. Underneath the *sigma* are coloured remains of the right arm of a *crux gemmata*, and to the right of the *alpha* are the remains of the stem of the cross. Again we have the formula: [Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς Χ(ριστὸ)ς ἄλφα [ῶ]].

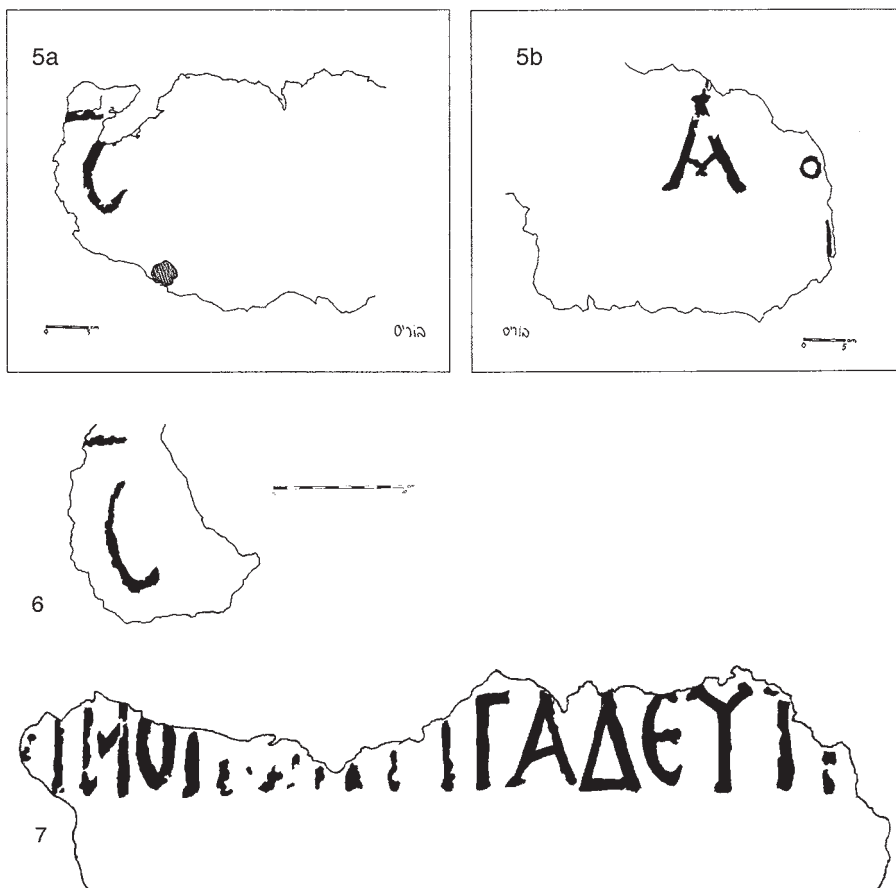


Fig. 3 Inscriptions 5-7.

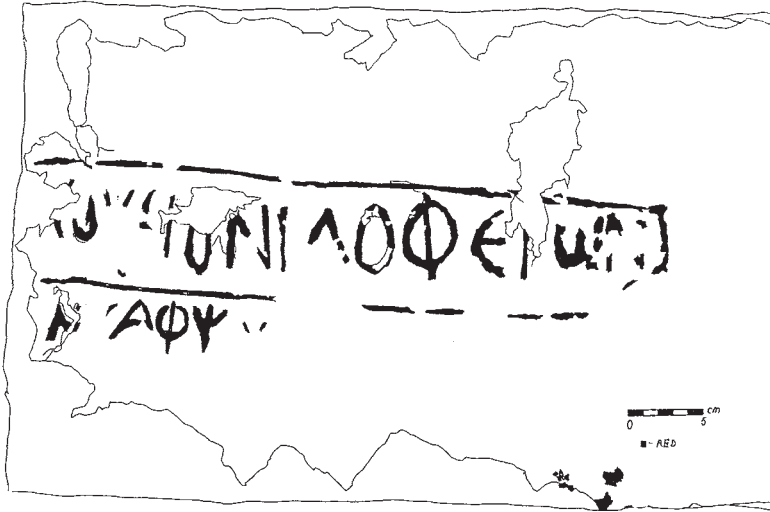


Fig. 4 Inscription 8.

6. cx—xxx2 (Fig. 3). A fragment of plaster showing a *sigma* painted in red, 9 cm high, surmounted by a horizontal stroke. No doubt it was part of either Ἰ(ησοῦ)ς or Χ(ριστό)ς of the usual formula flanking a cross. Considering the size of the letter, it must have been a large cross and probably a *crux gemmata*, like nos. 1, 2 and 5.

7. cxx (Fig. 3). A large fragment of plaster, with a line of script in red paint. The characters are 7-8 cm high. Many of the letters are unreadable.

-- ΙΜΟΙΙΑΙΙΙΓΑΔΕΥΠΙ --

I can make nothing of it.

8. cx—x-xbx (Fig. 4). A large fragment of plaster, with two lines of script in red paint. The characters are ca. 5 cm high. The first line is enclosed in a red frame; probably the whole inscription was framed and the lines of script were separated by a horizontal stripe. Several of the letters are unreadable.

-- ΚΟΥΝΟΝΙΑΟΦΕΡΩΝ
 -- Α . ΑΦΨ ---

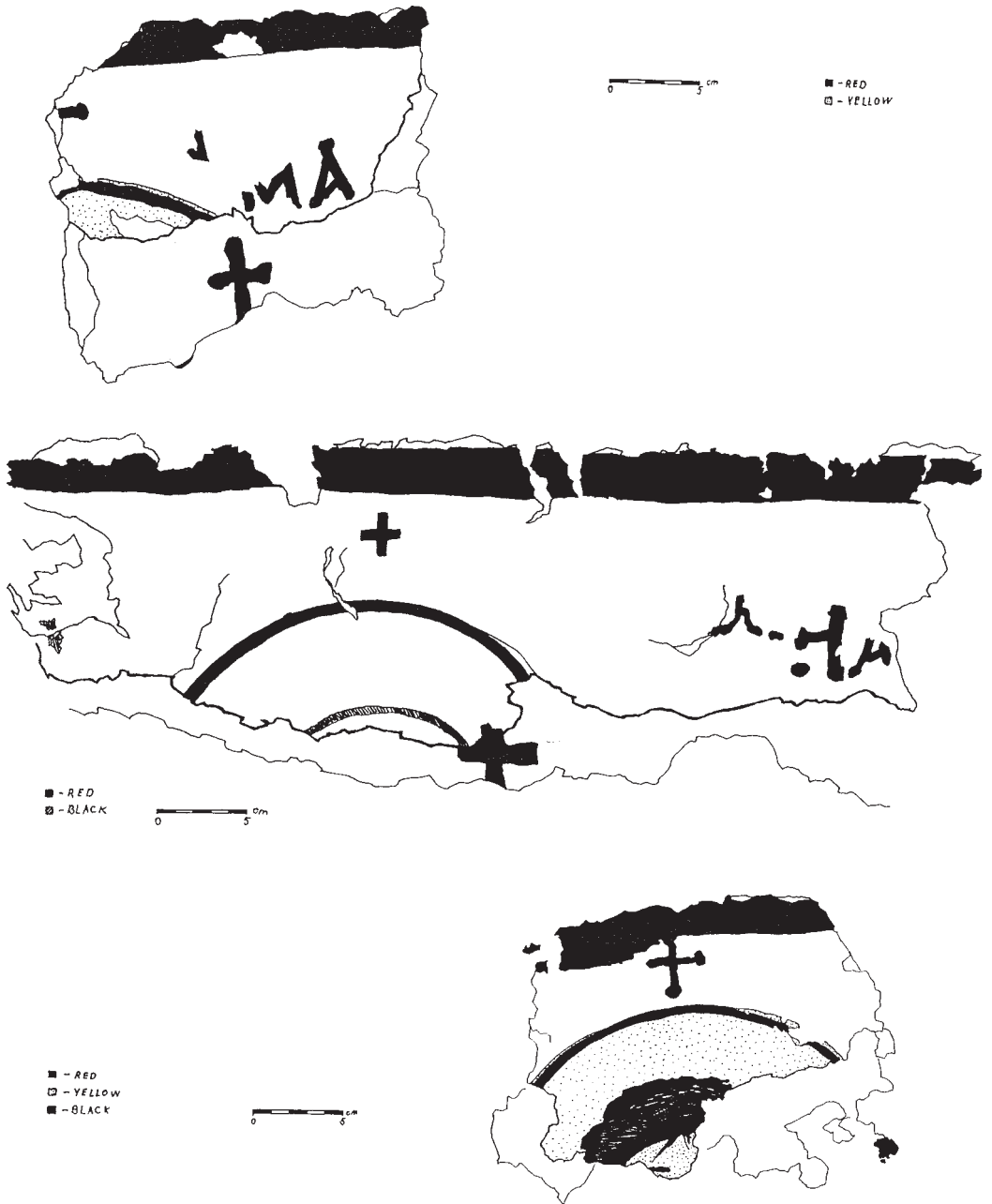


Fig. 5 Inscriptions 9 a-c

---- ΚΟΥΝΟΝΙΑ ὁ φέρων
 -- Α . ΑΦΨ ---

Could the first legible word in l. 1 be *κοινωνία*? However, it makes no special sense in conjunction with the following word, which is clear enough: “He who brings..” or “bears”. In l. 2, the sequence ΦΨ is impossible in Greek: perhaps the letter after *phi* is not *psi* but *hypsilon*: in this case, the line may contain a word like *κ[α][τ]αφύ[γιον]*, “refuge”, or *ἀ[ν]αφυ[γή]*, “retreat”, or *ἀ[ν]αφύ[ησις]*, “growth”. The inscription cannot be deciphered, but it clearly is not a dedication. It may well be a quotation, certainly not from the Septuagint or the New Testament, but perhaps from some ecclesiastical writer.

9. 7/95 KK9 L. 039 B. 0058 (Fig. 5). Fragment of plaster, bearing two letters, ΔΗ, and part of a cross, painted in red. The letters are 10 cm high. Other fragments of plaster with undecipherable marks in red paint were discovered nearby (7/95 KK 9 L. 045 B. 0074).

10. 7/95 KK 25 L. 086 B. 0001 (Fig. 6). Fragment of red-coloured plaster, ca. 4x4.6 cm, bearing a horned cross and remains of writing. An *alpha* can be faintly made out above the right arm of the cross. Perhaps part of the formula *N(ικ)α* or *N(ικ)ᾱ* written across the stem of a cross, meaning “Win (o cross)!”, or “(the cross) wins”.¹⁵

11 a-e. 7/95 KK 29 L. 046 B. 0138 (Fig. 7). Five fragments of plaster with remains of decoration and writing in red paint.

- a. Large piece of plaster, with remains of three letters, preserved height ca. 7 cm; originally they must have been at least 10 cm high: - ΟΠΠ followed by a blank. Undecipherable.
- b. Large piece of plaster, with remains of decoration and a letter, or a cross, preserved height 8 cm.
- c. Piece of plaster, 12x8 cm, with two letters 8 cm high: ΚΑ or ΚΧ, perhaps part of the formula *[Χριστὸς νικᾷ]*, or possibly *Κ(ύριος) Χ(ριστός)*.
- d. Piece of plaster, 3.5 x4 cm, with remains of Θ or Ε.
- e. Piece of plaster, 4x3 cm, with remains of Λ.

15. See for instance *SEG* XL, no. 1460 (H. Qastra); J. Clédat, *ASAE* 16 (1916), p. 20, fig. 11 (Ostracina); *IGLJ* V, no. 2116 (Syria).

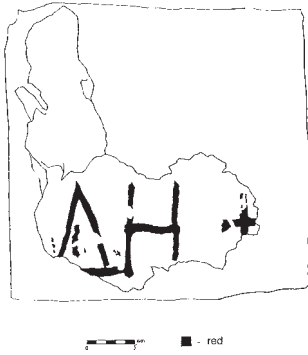


Fig. 5 *Inscription 9.*

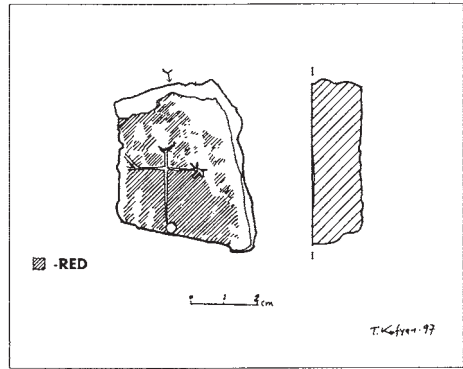
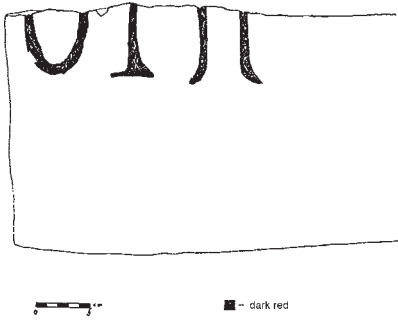
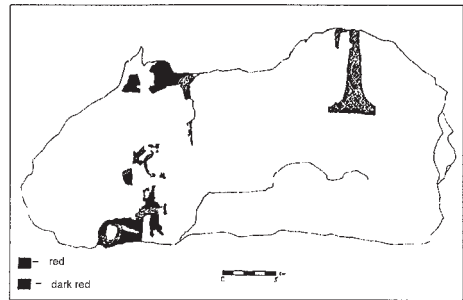


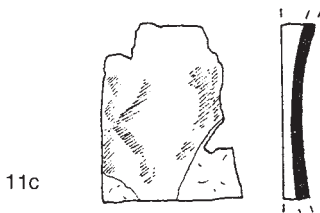
Fig. 6 *Inscription 10.*



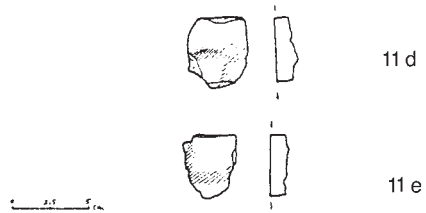
11a



11b



11c



11d

11e

Fig. 7 *Inscriptions 11 a-e.*

Bread stamp

12. 10/94 KK 17 L. 012 B. 0086 (Fig. 8). Circular stamp, 10.4 cm in diameter, 1 cm thick, with knob handle on the back. Part of the stamp is missing. The flat surface is decorated with an arch surmounting a cross, with two smaller crosses at the sides. See description by Patrich, above.¹⁶ A Greek inscription apparently went all around the disk, since the first word is almost exactly centred above the arch and on top of the cross within. The extant part of the script is 19 cm long, and about 13.5 cm of inscribed text are missing. The letters are 0.5-0.7 cm high. The text reads:

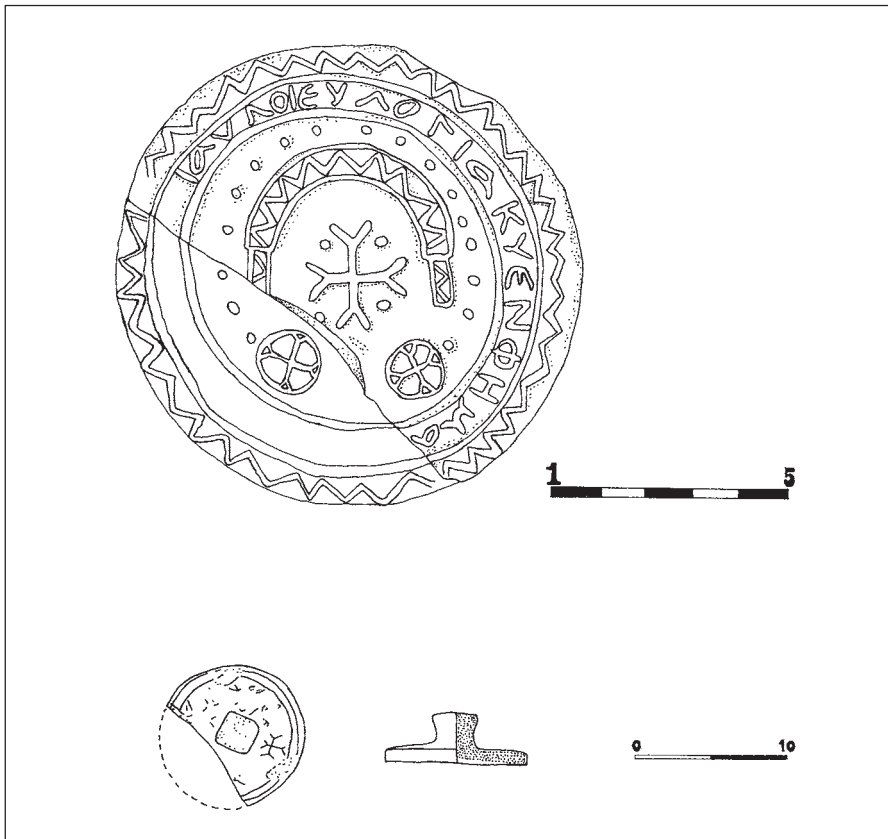


Fig. 8 *Inscription 12.*

16. This stamp and its inscription have also been discussed at length by J. Patrich and by myself in a joint article in *Israel Museum News* (forthcoming).

-- ΑΥΛΟ/ΕΥΛΟΓΙΑΚΥΕΠΦΗΜΑ --

Εὐλογία Κυρίου ἐ(π)φ' ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ ἀγίου Παύλου.

Blessing of the Lord upon us, and of Saint Paul.

The last letter of Παύλο(υ) is replaced by a diagonal stroke which serves as an abbreviation mark or a word divider. The restored text counts 13 characters, giving an average of one character for each cm of available space, exactly as in the extant fragment.

The artefact is a bread stamp for making εὐλογίαί. Its function was to impress a sacred name or symbol over loaves of bread baked for a church. These loaves would then be consecrated and distributed to the faithful at the eucharist (προσφορά), or blessed and given out after the liturgy as alms, or as tokens of goodwill and Christian love.¹⁷ Not only bread, but other eatables were given out in the same spirit, and pilgrims would get them from priests or monks in the holy places they visited.¹⁸ The mention of a name of saint in addition to the simple “Blessing of the Lord upon us” may mean that the bread was given out at a church dedicated to this particular saint, or that it was distributed in any church on the feast of that saint.¹⁹

Beside St. Paul the apostle, two martyrs by the name Paul are known, both from Caesarea. The first was martyred together with the famous teacher Pamphilus and other Christians on February 16, year 309 or 310, and is commemorated in the Jerusalem Calendar on February 6.²⁰ Another Paul was

17. See for instance Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Cyriac*, ch. 16, ed. E. Schwartz, Leipzig, 1949, p. 232 (Texte und Untersuchungen 49 ii); John Moschus, *Leimonarion*, ch. 42, PG 92, col. 2896. In this story Moschus uses both terms, προσφορά for the eucharistic bread, and εὐλογία for the bread given in charity. According to G. Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy. The Symbolism of Early Christian Bread Stamps*, Madison, Milwaukee-London, 1970, p. 141, the phrase Εὐλογία Κυρίου ἐφ' ἡμᾶς, which echoes the dismissal of the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, means that the bread with this stamp was distributed at the end of the liturgy.

18. See for instance *Itinerarium Egeriae*, chs. III, 6, XI, 1, XV, 6, XXI, 3, ed. E. Franceschini and R. Weber, in *Itineraria et alia geographica*, Turnhout, 1965 pp. 40, 51, 56, 65 (CCSL 175); *Antonini Placentini Itinerarium*, chs. 27, 46, ed. P. Geyer, *ibidem*, pp. 143, 152; Cyril of Scythopolis, *Life of Sabas*, ch. 39, ed. E. Schwartz, p. 130. On blessings of water and oil in ampules, see *Antonini Placentini Itinerarium*, chs. 11, 20, 39, 42, CCSL 175, pp. 135, 139, 149, 151. On all kinds of eulogiae — eatables and objects - obtained in holy places of Palestine, see B. Bagatti, “Eulogie palestinesi”, *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 15 (1949), pp. 126-166; P. Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient*, Paris, 1985, pp. 237-241.

19. Galavaris, *Bread and the Liturgy*, pp. 141-153.

20. Eusebius, *De martyribus Palaestinae* XI, 1-28, ed. E. Schwartz, Leipzig, 1908, pp. 931-945 (GCS 9 ii); G. Garitte, *Le Calendrier Palestino-Géorgien du Sinaiticus 34 (Xe siècle)*, Bruxelles, 1958, p. 152. On February 6 Paul is mentioned by name, and he is commemorated again, though not by name, among Pamphylus' companions on February

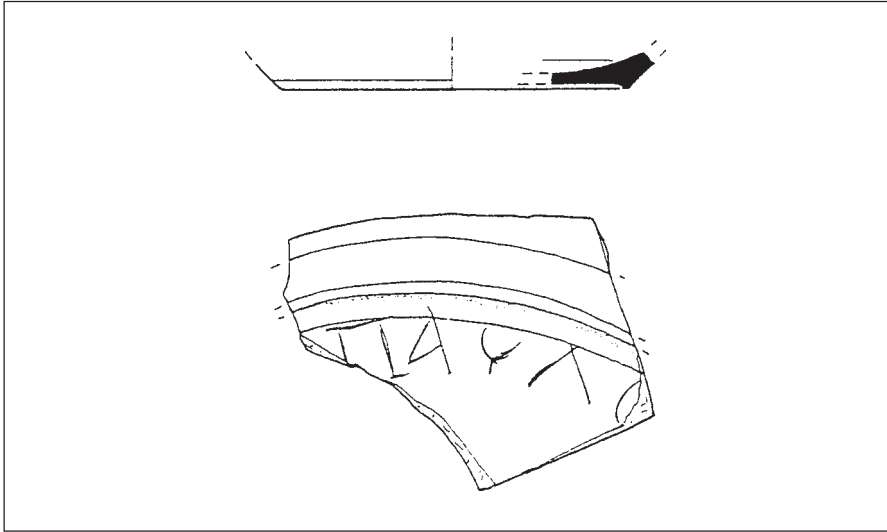


Fig. 9 *Inscriptions 13.*

martyred with two virgins, one called Valentina, the other Ennatha or Manatha, on July 16, 308.²¹ It is possible that one or the other is meant in an invocation to Paul and Germanus (Ἁγίε Παῦλε καὶ Γερμανέ) on a roof tile in a 6th-century church in Umm er-Rasas, which may have been dedicated to the Caesarean martyrs, possibly having some relics of them under its altar.²² However, the hint to Paul the apostle implicit in the description of the cross as καύχημα, and the greater importance of the apostle in the calendar of the saints, all point to him as the patron of the chapel, or at least the subject of the festival in which cakes stamped with his name were given out to the faithful.

16 and on November 28: Garitte, *ibidem*, pp. 157, 397 (Subsidia hagiographica 30). The Georgian Calendar of Jerusalem was compiled in the 10th century, but reflects the liturgical use in the Holy City also in earlier centuries. For the year of Pamphilus and Paul's martyrdom — 310 rather than the traditional 309 — see *Bibliotheca Sanctorum* X, Rome, 1968, col. 98.

21. Eusebius, *De martyribus Palaestinae* VIII, 5-12, pp. 926-927; *Martyrologium Hieronymianum*, July 16, PL 30, cols. 466-467; on the same date in the Greek synaxaries.

22. M. Piccirillo, "La chiesa di San Paolo a Umm al-Rasas", *Liber Annuus* 47 (1997), pp. 389-390: here Paul is taken for the apostle, but it is much more likely that he was a Caesarean martyr, for Germanus was another martyr of Caesarea. He was killed on November 13, 308, together with other three or four martyrs, among which is again mentioned Ennatha or Manatha (Eusebius, *De martyribus Palaestinae* IX, 4-8, p. 929; Garitte, *Calendrier Palestino-Géorgien*, p. 382): possibly the two groups, martyred in the same year, were mixed together in the cult.

Inscribed platter

13. 10/94 KK 17 L. 000 B. 0096 (Fig. 9). Fragment of a shallow bowl or platter. Remains of inscription incised around the outer base, in letters 1 cm high.

- ΠΑΥΛΟ -

- Παύλο[υ - -

Perhaps part of a longer inscription mentioning Saint Paul and possibly attesting that the platter belonged to a church named after the saint.²³

Conclusions

Considering the epigraphical finds in Area KK, the most striking feature is the large number of inscriptions on fresco, all of which — or at least those that can be identified — have a religious character. This, together with the discovery of many pieces of ecclesiastical furniture, points to the existence of a sacred space in this area. The location of some of the fragments, atop the debris of the ground floor, indicates that such space was located on an upper storey. The finding of the eulogia stamp and the platter, both bearing the name of St. Paul, confirms the impression that a chapel dedicated to this saint may have stood here. The presence of some epitaphs among the many fragments of inscriptions on stone from this area cannot be taken as evidence that the chapel was used also for burial.

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23. A similar case perhaps in the sanctuary of Moses on Mount Nebo: L. Di Segni, "The Greek Inscriptions", in M. Piccirillo and E. Alliata (eds.), *The Memorial of Moses. The Results of the Excavations (1949-1995)*, Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior 27, Jerusalem, 1998, p. 437, no. 28.