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Nearly two hundred years have passed since August Böckh launched the first comprehensive, academically standardized corpus of Greek inscriptions – the *Corpus inscriptionum Graecarum* – in 1815 (although the first volume was not published until 1828). The Eastern Mediterranean, originally seen as the less important periphery of the Roman world, has also claimed its epigraphic corpora – Syria’s *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie*, for example, started appearing in 1929. Now, remarkably late if one considers the centrality of this region in Christian and Jewish consciousness, it is the turn of Roman Judaea, known since the second century CE as Syria Palaestina or simply Palestine, with the *Corpus inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae* (CIIP). Modern Middle Eastern politics has hindered the project: it does not include inscriptions from the region’s central hill or from the southern seashore plains, part and parcel of the political and cultural textures of the area’s past, but now separated by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Academic intrigue caused the leading Greek epigraphist of Judaea/Palaestina – Leah Di Segni – to depart from the team working on the inscriptions, a professional and collegial loss. Only the high quality of the series makes these hurdles somewhat more tolerable.

Werner Eck, a German epigraphist with Mommsenian authority, and Hannah Cotton, a prominent Israeli papyrologist, have assembled an impressive international team to carry out this endeavor. They plan a nine-volume series; the first, a two-book volume on Jerusalem, was published in 2010/12. The current tome, volume II in the series, offers over a thousand inscriptions from the northern parts of the Israeli seashore, a sixty-mile stretch between modern Tel Aviv and Mount Carmel. Caesarea Maritima, the central port city of Roman Palestine and the seat of its governor, dominates the region and its epigraphical output with a total of 952 inscriptions, many of which were already published and discussed in earlier corpora.¹ Along with Caesarea the current volume showcases a host of other smaller cities and towns in which inscriptions survived (including Apollonia/Arsuf, Castra Samaritanorum, Dora/Dor, and Sycamina).

The editors boldly deviate from the common practices in similar scholarly editions, and incorporate inscriptions from all existing languages. As a result, side by side with Greek (surely the bulk of the material) and Latin, this volume contains material in Hebrew, Samaritan, Aramaic, and even Phoenician (nos. 2139 and 2152). This is one of many great assets offered by CIIP. Each inscription receives a labeled entry, a short description, and an indication of the find spot, current location, and autopsy (when it was possible). Following these preliminaries, the authors present a diplomatic (i.e., exact) transcription, an apparatus criticus summarizing alternative readings of earlier publications, an edited text, and an English translation. For the Semitic inscriptions the authors also provide a transliteration into

English. Save a few exceptions, every entry, even the smallest of fragments, includes a photograph or a drawing, at times both, thus eliminating the frustrating task of jumping back and forth to plates and addenda. Entries conclude with meticulous, if succinct commentary and a comprehensive bibliography. The inscriptions are organized according to the various sites to which they belong and each such sub-section opens with a thorough geographical and historical introduction as well as a general bibliography, penned by Benjamin Isaac, a renowned Roman historian. The volume concludes with an index of personal names, covering both this volume and volume 1 (an earlier promise of the editors to offer more detailed general indices on the Internet has not been fulfilled, yet), and a series of five maps. All this amounts to a research tool of extraordinary value, a feat of scholarship, and a treasure trove for anyone interested in any aspect of the Roman Mediterranean or life in Judaea/Palaestina.

By their very nature, inscriptions offer partial and unpredicted snippets into the lives of the people and the communities who produced them. At times their contribution lies in the cumulative value of the data. Such is the case in this volume regarding the colony turned metropolis of Caesarea Maritima, which emerges here in all its beauty and stature, as befits a provincial capital. Though the hundreds of statues that adorned its streets and plazas have been lost, for the most part, the engraved dedications that survived testify to their wide array of subjects – emperors, governors, military commanders, and other prominent citizens. The inscriptions bear witness to the city’s cosmopolitan society – locals with Greek and Semitic names intermingle with the Latin of Roman army veterans who decided to settle there (e.g., nos. 1228 and 1248), and they all rub shoulders with Jews, Samaritans, Christians, Egyptians, and Phoenicians. The inscriptions also bring to life the urban layout, laden with imperial governmental buildings, entertainment and leisure establishments (like the hippodrome and the public baths), religious institutions (temples to a variety of deities, churches, and synagogues), shops and markets, as well as other structures never known before to exist in the city (like the orphanage referred to in no. 1168). Caesarea Maritima benefitted from scholarly attention for a long while, resulting in a long list of archaeological reports, monographs, and edited volumes.² With its thoroughness and inclusiveness, CIIP II adds another layer to this splendid scholarly output.

Other than utilizing the texts of the inscriptions and their translation, scholars beyond epigraphical circles will engage this volume mainly through its commentary. Although the editors humbly minimize its significance (p. vii), the different entry writers have carried out a difficult task with fastidious dexterity. In short paragraphs they shower the reader with abundant information, meant to unpack the details squeezed into the texts and to contextualize its information. Thus we learn about the funding of horse races (pp. 118-9), funerary banquets (p. 402; some bibliography would have been useful here), or the phenomenon of proselytes in the Roman world (p. 405; here with ample bibliography), not to mention provincial bureaucracy (e.g., pp. 126ff.), church organization (pp. 70-114), and magic (pp. 559-604), to offer just a few nuggets. In addition, the authors cautiously discuss and, when necessary, reject many speculative readings and interpretations of earlier scholars. So, to mention one example, they settle once and for all that the Tiberieum, whose restoration an inscription assigns to the infamous first century CE prefect of Judaea, Pontius Pilate, “has nothing to do with the emperor cult” (p. 229). On a different level, the volume offers numerous interesting disagreements, such as the construal of the term *vicus*, which previous publications understood as part of a name, but which Werner Eck argues represents the Latin for “neighborhood” (p. 177).

One aspect of the commentary that could still be much improved relates to the use of local Jewish material in the elucidation of the various inscriptions. As mentioned above, the editors of CIIP should be commended for including Hebrew and Aramaic as well as other Semitic material in their corpus. By doing so they recognize that any artifact, textual or not, embodies the full spectrum of cultural nuances within its milieu, and that the modern academic dichotomy between languages that leads to the divide between Graeco-Latin and Semitic materials is not only superficial but also undermines the very essence of

understanding the ancient world. This volume therefore is a first step in the right direction. Indeed, the commentaries refer to and explain Jewish issues when the inscriptions mention them explicitly, such as the proselytes mentioned above and numerous other titles and institutions. The next phase would be for the editors to incorporate experts in ancient Jewish literature, so that the huge potential of this rich material can be exploited for other issues as well. This is especially true in regard to the vast corpus of texts known as "rabbinic literature," written in Hebrew and Aramaic by the Jewish scholars we identify today as "rabbis," which dates to the same period as much of the epigraphical material in this volume – the high and late empire – and overlaps with its geographical setting. For example, Eck's argument for *vicus* as a neighborhood in Caesarea would have been enhanced by reference to the parallel rabbinic term – *shekhunah* – used by these ancient Jewish scholars to signify the same urban phenomenon. To mention another example: when explicating the greeting formulas inscribed at the entrance to the baths as associated with demonic anxieties (no. 1345 and again in 1420), the commentator casts his net wide to find parallels from other parts of the Mediterranean world, but fails to recognize that at his own doorstep the exact same proclivities resonate in rabbinic material and manifest themselves in similar benedictions and formulas.³ In addition, the references to Jewish material in the Introductions are quite a mess – three consecutive footnotes (p. 29, notes 89-91), for example, utilize three different bibliographical methods (!), making the material, especially for the uninitiated, practically inaccessible.

Finally, carrying out a multi-member project of such magnitude makes consistency an endless challenge, which falls mainly on the shoulders of the editors. In general, they have done an exquisite job, but there is room for further consideration and improvement.⁴ A couple of examples: *Memorion* is translated once as a "tomb" and elsewhere as a "memorial" (see nos. 1456, 1480, 1513, and 1554); similarly, *thēkē* is translated differently in a span of two pages (pp. 468-9); Josephus is spelled normally with a "j" but at times with an "i" (e.g., p. 229). Of greater significance are the titles selected for each entry. Lacking a subject index (see above), these titles are the only navigating tool available to search for a specific topic for those who do not wish (or more commonly have no time) to read the entire volume. Better attention to what the titles reveal about the content of the inscriptions and an effort to make them consistent throughout the volume would have resulted in a more accessible research tool that would be more useful for a wider audience. For example, some titles reveal the occupation of the person mentioned in the inscription, be it a slave (no. 514), a priest (no. 1504), or a variety of other officials. But other titles keep silent about this important information (e.g., nos. 1491, 1513, 1534, and 1536). Another lack of consistency in the titles regards the identification of minority groups – Jews, Samaritans, etc. Many titles include this information (such as no. 1602), which will prove invaluable for scholars who study those groups, but again others do not (for example no. 1525).

All in all, none of the quibbles above can even slightly detract from the stupendous achievement of the current volume, and even more so of the project as a whole. We are indebted to the editors and authors for carrying out this laborious and complicated task on such a high level and eagerly await the appearance of future volumes.

Notes:

1. Bradley H. McLean, "The Inscriptions of Caesarea and Their Relation to the Physical Remains of the City: Part I – The Ancient City and Its Harbor," *The Ancient World* 28 (1997), 184-216; 30 (1999), 3-28; Clayton Miles Lehmann and Kenneth G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima* (The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima Excavation Reports 5; Boston, MA: The American Schools of Oriental Research, 2000). On the latter, see the review of this author in *JAOS* 124:2 (2004), 414-6.

2. See, for example, Lee I. Levine, *Caesarea Under Roman Rule* (Leiden: Brill, 1975); Kenneth G. Holum et al., eds., *King Herod's Dream: Caesarea on the Sea* (New York:

Norton, 1988).

3. On rabbinic benedictions meant to mediate magical and demonic anxieties in the baths, see Yaron Z. Eliav, "A Scary Place: Jewish Magic in the Roman Bathhouse," in Leah Di Segni et al., eds., *Man Near a Roman Arch: Studies Presented to Prof. Yoram Tsafir* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2009), 88-97.

4. The nature and extent of this review does not allow a scrupulous discussion of detail. Naturally, despite the impressive editing job, typos and mistakes occur from time to time. See for example no. 1494, where the Greek letter pi reflects the conjecture of the author and should be marked with a subscript dot or a correctional bracket. The tilted separating line there, presumably to mark alternative reading possibilities, is also not in practice throughout the volume and not listed in the editorial sigla on p. xxiii.

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