

## A NEW TOPONYM IN SOUTHERN SAMARIA

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Some years ago, in spring 1989, two Arab peasants presented themselves at the Flagellation Convent in Jerusalem and showed Father Michele Piccirillo a piece of cardboard on which they had carefully copied a Greek inscription which they had found and wished to sell. Father Piccirillo duly copied the text, and asked the men to let him examine the stone itself. The peasants promised to come back and bring it for his inspection, but were never seen again, and all efforts to locate them failed. In all likelihood the stone found its way into the flourishing antiquities market of the Old City and possibly illegally left the country. It is therefore impossible to check the reading of the text, faithfully but unskillfully copied by the discoverers, or to verify any details, except those that appear in Piccirillo's copy.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, it will be useful to present the available data, in the hope that the stone may one day turn up in some private collection. It should be noted that Father Piccirillo himself made a provisional reading and interpretation of the text, which he generously put at my disposal.

The inscription was engraved on a small slab – measures unknown – which was reported to have been found at Kafr ed-Dik (map ref. 158 163), in Southern Samaria. Since the transcription of most of the text presents no serious faults, in spite of its having been executed by untrained persons with no knowledge of Greek, seemingly the surface of the stone was in fair condition and the letters were easily legible. The characters were round or lunate, with uncial *sigma* and *omega*. The seven-line text reads as follows:

· ΕΟΙΣΟΛΥΜΠΙΟΙΣΥΠΕΡΣΩΤΗΡΙ  
· ΣΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΟΣΚΑΙΣΑΡΟΥΤΡΑΙΑ  
ΝΟΥΑΔΡΙΑΝΟΥΣΕΒΑΚΤΟΥ  
4 ΠΑΤΡΟΣΠΑΤΡΙΔΟΣΤΟΥ  
ΣΩΤΗΡΟΣΚΑΙΕΥΕΡΓΕ  
ΤΟΥΚΩΡΩΝΚΑΙΚΩΜΗΣ  
ΣΚΑΠΑΘΑΗΔΙΑΣ

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1. My thanks are due to Father Piccirillo who gave me permission to publish his copy of the inscription.

Although nothing is indicated in the copy, it is quite clear that ll. 1 and 2 lack one letter at the beginning. At l. 2 the copy has ΚΑΙ ΑΡΟΥ, but this may well be a mistake made in the transcription: we must keep in mind that the text was copied twice, once by the discoverer, and a second time by Father Piccirillo, working on their copy.

In l. 6 the word tentatively transcribed ΚΩΡΩΝ presents difficulties. Piccirillo's copy registers two rather clumsy ligatures, of *omega* and *rho* and of *omega* and *nu*. As ΚΩΡΩΝ does not make sense, Piccirillo inclined to view it as a misspelling of χωρῶν, and suggested to interpret εὐεργέτου χωρῶν in the sense of 'benefactor of the countryside', an allusion to Hadrian's interest in fostering agriculture.<sup>2</sup> However, I know of no example of such a title; on the other hand, one of the epithets commonly given to Hadrian in inscriptions is σωτήρ τοῦ κόσμου or τῆς οἰκουμένης, or εὐεργέτης τοῦ κόσμου or τῆς οἰκουμένης.<sup>3</sup> If the stone surface in this place was in poor condition, the word ΚΟΚΜΟΥ can have been misread ΚΩΡΩΝ. No gap is indicated at the end of l. 5, and the first three letters of l. 6 can be taken as the desinence of the word εὐεργέ|του; in this case the epithet would be εὐεργέτου κόσμου with no article. However, I prefer to read εὐεργέ|του (του) κόσμου with haplography or, less likely, εὐεργέ(του) |τοῦ κόσμου with suspension.

L. 7 is even more problematic. The sixth letter appears in the copy as a *theta* of the square alphabet, quite unexpected in this inscription which is all composed of round characters. The ninth letter is transcribed as a *lambda*, but traces of a possible bar are indicated in the drawing, so that it might be an *alpha*. Steering his course as best as he could among these difficulties, Father Piccirillo suggested to isolate the name of a dedicator, Ἡλίας, at the end of the line, and to make up the village name with the remaining letters: ΚΚΑΠΙΑΘΑ. This name has a most un-Greek appearance, and must be con-

2. P.J. Alexander, "Letters and Speeches of the Emperor Hadrian", *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 49 (1938) 164-7; S. Applebaum, "Judaea as a Roman Province; The Countryside as a Political and Economical Factor", *ANRW* II, 8 (Berlin-New York 1977), 393-5; L. Miltenberg, *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War* (Tylos Band VI, Frankfurt am Main 1984) 103, n. 287.

3. E. De Ruggiero, *Dizionario epigrafico di antichità romane* (Roma 1895-1922) III, 615-6; and see for instance *IGRom* III, nos. 311, 752, 756-771; *IG* VII, no. 2497. Σωτήρ and εὐεργέτης appear also, severally or together, without the addition 'of the world', and sometimes they are followed by the mention of the city that dedicated the inscription (σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργέτης τῆς πόλεως Λαπηθίων, *IGRom* III, no. 934; σωτήρ τοῦ σύμπαντος κόσμου καὶ τῆς πατρίδος τῶν Φασηλιτῶν, *IGRom* III, no. 759; εὐεργέτης τῆς πόλεως Μιλησίων, *AE* 1909, no. 89).

sidered a transliteration of a Semitic place-name, as indeed one would expect in this area. Piccirillo suggested to recognize here the ancient name of Qabatiya, a village south of Jenin on the road to Tubas.

However, Qabatiya is very far from the area where the inscription is reported to have been found: in fact, it is almost at the opposite end of Samaria. Can the stone have wandered so far from its original place? Moreover, its name is plausibly interpreted by Palmer as ‘The Copts’ place’,<sup>4</sup> which makes it a new toponym, not earlier than the Arab period. An additional difficulty is that a toponym beginning with CK- is an impossibility in Aramaic or Hebrew. The initial *sigma*. can be put down to a mistake committed either by the stone cutter who duplicated the last letter of ΚΩΜΗC, or by the person who copied the inscription, and perhaps mistook a wedge functioning as word divider or a decorative motif for a letter. If we ignore this sign, the remaining letters of l. 7 can be read as a perfectly good Aramaic place name in the genitive: ΚΑΠΠΑΝΑΙΑC. The *nu* in inscriptions of this period is often traced with a low, almost horizontal bar, so as to resemble an *eta*.

The text of the inscription can thus be tentatively restored as follows:

[Θ]εοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις ὑπὲρ σωτηρί-  
 [α]ς αὐτοκράτορος Καίσαρος<S> Τραια-  
 νοῦ Ἀδριανοῦ Σεβαστοῦ  
 πατὴρ πατρίδος τοῦ  
 4 σωτήρ καὶ εὐεργέ-  
 του <τοῦ> κόσμου καὶ κώμης  
 Καπαρναίας.

*To the Olympian gods, for the preservation of the emperor Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Augustus, father of the motherland, the saviour and benefactor of the world and of the village of Kefaranaia.*

The text makes sense also without the name of a dedicator, which could be easily deduced from the mention of the village name; or else one can suppose that the inscription originally had one more line, mentioning οἱ κωμηῆται, or some of the prominent villagers by name. Clearly a village in the area set up this text in honour of Hadrian, probably in occasion of his

4. E.H. Palmer, *The Survey of Western Palestine. The Arabic and English Names* (SWP VI, London 1881) 187.

visit in Palestine in AD 130. The name *Καπαραναία* is not known from literary sources, either in the Greek transcription or in any variant the original Aramaic or Hebrew form may have assumed. However, its elements are known: *Καπαρ* is the usual Greek transcription of Kefar (village), and *Ἀναία* is the name of a double village in Southern Judaea;<sup>5</sup> we have also a Batanaia, Beth Anaia or Beth Anath, a site in Galilee mentioned in the Zenon papyri<sup>6</sup>. There are two sites in southern Samaria whose Arab name, Kafr 'Ana, may have preserved an ancient toponym Kaparanaia: one is the site of ancient Ono, east of Bené Beraq, the other is located east of Jifna. Both are too far away from the site where the inscription was discovered; the nearest of the two, Ono, is also excluded because its ancient name is well documented in this form both in Aramaic and in Greek.<sup>7</sup> But 4 km as the crow flies south-east of Kafr ed-Dik there is a village called Kafr 'Ain (map ref. 161 161). The name was interpreted by Palmer<sup>8</sup> as 'Village of the Spring', but this is not exact: in Arabic it would rather mean 'village of a spring', and while there is indeed a spring there, one wonders why it is not explicitly mentioned in the village name. Conceivably Kafr 'Ain is only an Arabicized form of the ancient toponym, and this may very well have been Kaparanaia – whatever that name meant.

In the inscription Hadrian is given his basic titulature, including the title of *pater patriae* which he officially accepted in 128.<sup>9</sup> The dedication 'to the Olympian gods' is not very common: several known cases connect such address to the imperial cult. Either the 'Olympian gods' are the living emperors themselves – e.g. Caracalla and Geta in a dedication from Ancyra of Galatia<sup>10</sup> – or the dedicators are priests of the imperial cult, and the dedication seems to be addressed to the dead and deified emperors: in one case a group of honorary priests give thanks 'to the *domus divina* and to the Olympian gods'.<sup>11</sup> Whether the villagers meant to petition the gods of the Greek pantheon for Hadrian's welfare, or the emperor's deified predecessors, they

5. Y. Tsafir, L. Di Segni and J. Green, *Tabula Imperii Romani. Iudaea-Palaestina*, Jerusalem 1994, 62, s.vv. Anaea I-II.

6. PSI VI, 595; PCairo 59004; PLond. Zen. 1948 (Skeat VII, 37); see *Tabula Imperii* 80, s.v. Beth Anath.

7. *Tabula Imperii* 98, s.v. Ono.

8. Palmer, *SWP* VI 230.

9. De Ruggiero, *Dizionario epigrafico* III, 617-8.

10. *IGRom* III, no. 163.

11. Οἴκῳ θεῶν καὶ τοῖς Ὀλυμπίοις : *IGRom* I, no. 682, from Sardica in Thrace; see also *IGRom* III, nos. 909, 911, 912.

certainly were not Jews or Samaritans, but pagans; unless we give credit to the allegations insistently made by rabbinic sources of the late Roman period, about contemporary Samaritanism being tainted with pagan practices.<sup>12</sup> As a matter of fact, Samaritans had not developed a spiritual leadership equivalent to the Jewish Sages, that could keep the people in line, and simple folks may have let themselves be influenced by their pagan neighbours. It cannot be excluded, therefore, that Samaritan villagers may have adopted the exteriorities of imperial cult – in this case, the ceremonial address to the deified emperors – without feeling that it was contrary to their ingrained monotheism, but only as a token of their loyalty to the empire and out of gratitude to the reigning emperor. On the other hand, when Hadrian is concerned, one may argue that he can hardly have been more popular with the Samaritans than he was with the Jews: it was Hadrian who broke off with the former tolerance by banning circumcision – a decree that exposed the Samaritans as well as the Jews to persecution, and had a more lasting effect on the former, for the ban remained in force for them even after Antoninus Pius permitted circumcision to the Jews.<sup>13</sup> But the date and circumstances of this edict are uncertain, and even if we accept the statement of the *Historia Augusta*, that the ban on circumcision was the direct cause of the Bar Kokhba

12. See E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ II* (A New English Version Revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Black, Edinburgh 1979) 15-20. On the whole the revisors reject the Jewish allegations, including the one about the worship of a dove image on Mount Gerizim (p. 20, n. 64), but the origin and meaning of this tradition are not entirely clear, and it may have contained a grain of truth. See J. Fossum, "Dove Worship", in A.D. Crown, R. Pummer and A. Tal, eds., *A Companion to Samaritan Studies* (Tübingen 1993) 77; and for a mixture of pagan and Samaritan beliefs and imagery on coins of Neapolis (Shechem), see Y. Meshorer, "On Three Interesting Cults in Neapolis in Samaria", *Eretz-Israel* 19 (Michael Avi-Yonah Volume, Jerusalem 1987) 92-6 (Hebrew). Biblical and mythological elements are also mixed in the writings of Hellenized Samaritans, like pseudo-Eupolemos, attesting to the existence of less-than-orthodox currents of thought in Samaritanism: see P.W. van der Horst, "Hellenism", *Companion* 117-8. Last, but not least, Epiphanius mentions heretical sects in fourth-century Samaria, at Neapolis and Sebaste, whose beliefs appear to be a mixture of biblical faith and pagan lore (Jephthe's daughter worshipped as Kore: Haer. 55, PG 41, 973; Haer. 78, PG 42, 736: cf. B. Bagatti, *Antichi villaggi cristiani di Samaria* [SBF Collectio minor, no. 19, Jerusalem 1979] 52, 64). Seemingly in the late Roman period, especially before Baba Rabba's religious reform, the border between orthodox Samaritanism and 'paganizing' Samaritan streams was not clearly marked, which could also explain the ambivalent attitude of the Jewish Sages.

13. *Historia Augusta*, Vita Hadriani 14, 2; Modestinus, Dig. XLVIII, 8, 11; Cf. J. Justetr, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire romain I* (Paris 1914), 263-71; Schürer, *History* I 536-40 (esp. p. 539, n. 111, for the persecution of the Samaritans on this account); A.M. Rabello, "The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire", *ANRW* II, 12 (Berlin-New York 1980) 699-703; R. Pummer, "Circumcision", *Companion* 57; P.L. Stenhouse, "Germanus", *ibid.* 103.

revolt (132-135), still it can be questioned whether the tidings of the emperor's decision had already reached the Samaritan countryside, or indeed, if the decision itself had already been taken, when Hadrian travelled through Palestine in AD 130.<sup>14</sup>

Were these villagers pagan or Samaritan, we may wonder if the inscription was a genuine vow of thanks for a real benefit granted by the emperor to the village, or just a formal gesture born from the need of joining the general wave of homages paid to Hadrian along the route of his journey. In fact, epigraphical collections count a very large number of dedicatory inscriptions of this kind, offered to the emperor wherever he passed through: sometimes the dedications set up by several cities are concentrated in one place, indicating that some ceremony was carried out there in which the emperor received homages by representatives of a number of communities in the neighborhood.<sup>15</sup> In this case, the inscription in question may have been set up not in the village itself, but somewhere in its vicinity, where Hadrian was expected to pass. However, to my knowledge this is the very first Greek dedication to Hadrian found in western Palestine, so we can at least suppose that the setting up of such a monument was not a matter of general fashion, as it can be truthfully described in Asia Minor. It is possible, therefore, that the villagers really saw themselves indebted to the emperor for some actual boon. Possibly they had benefited from Hadrian's *Lex de rudibus agris*, which had accorded permanence of occupation to tenants who had proved themselves good farmers in the plots tilled by them.<sup>16</sup>

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14. For the different opinions about this matter see Rabello, "The Legal Condition" 700, n. 158.

15. E.g. at Phaselis in Lycia: *IGRom* III, nos. 756, 757, 759.

16. *CIL* VIII, 4, nos. 25943, 26416, and cf. Applebaum, "Judaea as a Roman Province" 395.