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'AKKO III

THE 1991–1998 EXCAVATIONS

THE LATE PERIODS

PART 2: THE KNIGHTS' HOTEL SITE,
THE MESSIKA PLOT AND MISCELLANEOUS STUDIES



DANNY SYON AND AYELET TATCHER

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DANNY SYON AND AYELET TATCHER

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Back Cover: The sea at 'Akko (photographer, Daphna Stern); inset: ampulla and molds from the Crusader-period pilgrim-souvenir workshop (photographer, Danny Syon)

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THE KNIGHTS' HOTEL SITE

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ABBREVIATIONS

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ABSA	<i>The Annual of the British School at Athens</i>
ADAJ	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan</i>
AIHV	Association internationale pour l'histoire du verre
AJPA	<i>American Journal of Physical Anthropology</i>
'Akko I	E.J. Stern. 'Akko I: <i>The 1991–1998 Excavations; The Crusader-Period Pottery</i> (IAA Reports 51). Jerusalem.
'Akko II	M. Hartal, D. Syon, E. Stern and A. Tatcher. 'Akko II: <i>The 1991–1998 Excavations: The Early Periods</i> (IAA Reports 60). Jerusalem.
ANSMN	<i>American Numismatic Society Museum Notes</i>
ARCE	American Research Center in Egypt
BAIAS	<i>Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society</i>
BAMA	British Academy Monographs in Archaeology
BAR Int. S.	British Archaeological Reports (International Series)
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BMMA	<i>Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>
BSAE	British School of Archaeology in Egypt
BSAJ	<i>British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem</i>
CIEPO	Comité International des Études Pré-Ottomanes et Ottomanes
DAFI	<i>Cahiers de la délégation archéologique française en Iran</i>
DOC 3	P. Grierson. <i>Catalogue of the Byzantine Coins in the Dumbarton Oaks Collection and in the Whittemore Collection 3: Leo III to Nicephorus III. 717–1081</i> . Washington, D.C. 1973
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers</i>
ESI	<i>Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i>
HA	<i>Ḥadashot Arkheologiyot</i>
HA–ESI	<i>Ḥadashot Arkheologiyot–Excavations and Surveys in Israel</i> (from 1999)
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IGLSyr	<i>Inscriptions Grecs et Latines de la Syrie</i>
IJNA	<i>International Journal of Nautical Archaeology</i>
INJ	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>

<i>INR</i>	<i>Israel Numismatic Research</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JAS</i>	<i>Journal of Archaeological Science</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JEMAHs</i>	<i>Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies</i>
<i>JERI</i>	<i>Journal of Excavation Reports in Israel</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JGS</i>	<i>Journal of Glass Studies</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JRA</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>
<i>JSOT</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
<i>LA</i>	<i>Liber Annuus</i>
<i>MA</i>	<i>Mediterranean Archaeology</i>
<i>MDAIA</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Athenische Abteilung</i>
<i>MDAIK</i>	<i>Mitteilungen des deutschen archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>
<i>NC</i>	<i>The Numismatic Chronicle</i>
<i>NEAEHL</i>	E. Stern and A. Lewinson-Gilboa eds. <i>The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> 1–4. Jerusalem 1993.
<i>NNM</i>	<i>Numismatic Notes and Monographs</i>
<i>OIP</i>	<i>Oriental Institute Publications</i>
<i>PAS</i>	<i>The Portable Antiquities Scheme</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>QDAP</i>	<i>Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities of Palestine</i>
<i>RDAC</i>	<i>Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus</i>
<i>SAOC</i>	<i>Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilization</i>
<i>SBF</i>	<i>Studium Biblicum Franciscanum</i>
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum epigraphicum graecum</i> . Leiden 1923–
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>

CHAPTER 31

GREEK, LATIN AND ARABIC INSCRIPTIONS FROM 'AKKO

DANNY SYON

This chapter presents nine inscriptions from three different excavations in 'Akko: three on or near the surface in the Hospitaller Compound (see Chapter 7), five from Crusader contexts in the Knights' Hotel Site (see Chapter 16) and one from the site of the Templar Tunnel (see Chapter 1: Fig. 1.2:13). They include two Greek inscriptions attributed to the Roman period, five Latin inscriptions of the Crusader period, one Arabic inscription probably of medieval date, and a second Arabic inscription of uncertain date. They are presented below according to excavation site and language.¹

THE INSCRIPTIONS

The Hospitaller Compound

The three inscriptions from this excavation were retrieved from Ottoman-period fills on or close to the surface, and were not assigned locus numbers; the Ottoman context of these three inscriptions suggests that they were brought to the compound as raw material for lime production.

No. 1. Marble fragment with a Greek inscription; surface; 23 cm high, 13 cm wide, 4 cm thick (Fig. 31.1).

This fragment may preserve the smooth original upper edge of the stone slab, although the smoothing may also be the result of reworking. The back is roughly worked. At the bottom of the fragment is a raised part that could be traces of a relief. Signs of reworking around the edges, especially chipping, suggest that it had been in secondary use. A single word of what appears to have been a one-line inscription is preserved near the top of the slab. The letters are 15 mm high and the workmanship is of medium quality.

TOYI 5 [--- του ι / *haedera* / [---

The tops of the letters were damaged by the reworking of the slab, possibly erasing abbreviation marks. The T undoubtedly represents the beginning of a word, although no such word as TOYI exists. The letter I may be an abbreviation, perhaps for *ierou* (sacred)

¹ I am grateful to Denys Pringle for reading a draft of the manuscript and providing useful suggestions, especially in regard to inscription Nos. 2 and 9, and to Estelle Ingrand-Varenne for her helpful suggestions with regard to inscription Nos. 2, 5, 6 and 9.

or a name (Iouliou?). The fragment may have been the top right side of a funerary or dedicatory inscription from the Roman period.

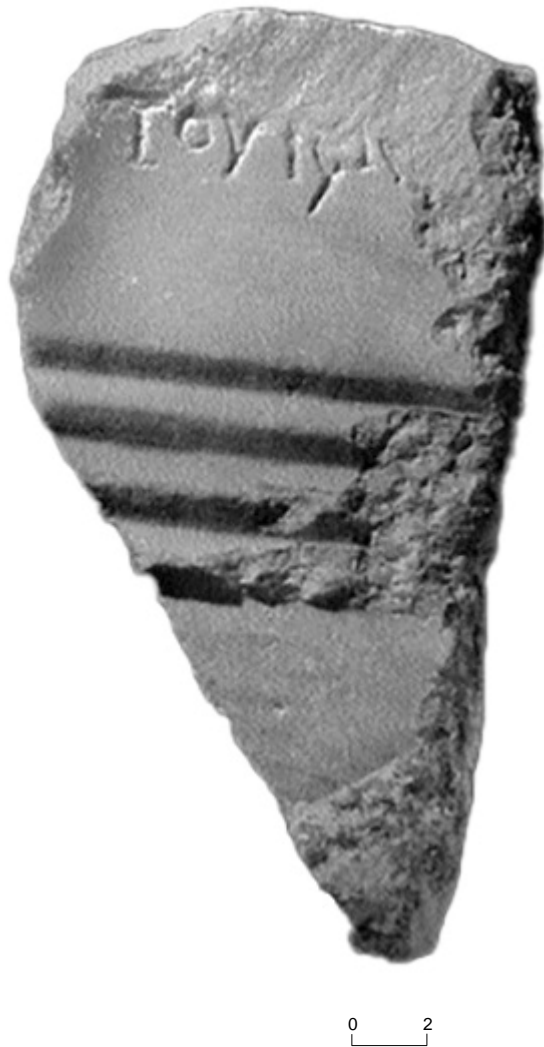


Fig. 31.1. A Greek funerary or dedicatory inscription from the Early Roman period.

No. 2. Marble fragment with Latin funerary inscription; surface; 16 cm high, 14 cm wide, 3.3 cm thick (Fig. 31.2).

This fragment bears the left side of a five-line inscription. The letters of the first four lines are 25 mm high, while those of the fifth line are 10–13 mm high and appear to have been added as an afterthought. The letters are neatly executed, very shallow, and filled with what appears to be plaster, possibly a result of secondary use. The back is smoothly worked.

HICIACE	Hic iace[t Gau]
FRID':dæ	frid(us) : de [---
R:dæPOR	R : de Poꝛ [----- cuius]
AIAIPAC	a(n)i(m)a i(n) pac[e requiesc]
AT	at

Translation: Here lies Godfrey of ...]R of Poꝛ [...May his soul rest in peace

The first four lines represent a rather standard funerary inscription of the Crusader period, but the fifth line raises questions as to its provenance. Local Crusader inscriptions typically employed the phrasing '*requiescat in pace*' (e.g., De Sandoli 1974: Nos. 74, 200, 406), while the alternative order '*in pace requiescat*' was in common use in medieval Europe. The artisan could have used a standard abbreviation for the word *requiescat* between the words *anima* and *in pace*, and may in fact have placed the small letters AT where he did because he forgot. If, however, the letters were meant to be at the end of the inscription, this raises the possibility that the inscription was carved in Europe.

The use of the abbreviation AIA for *anima* is attested on another tombstone from 'Akko, mentioning the name of Peter of Villebride, a grandmaster of the Hospitaller Order in the mid-thirteenth century (De Sandoli 1974: No. 406). Based on paleographic considerations, especially the long descender of the letter P and the closing of the letter E—but not the C—by a thin stroke, the inscription was probably carved at the end of the first half of the thirteenth century. The Godfrey mentioned in the present inscription



0 2

Fig. 31.2. A Latin funerary inscription from the Crusader period.

remains unidentified. The second occurrence of 'de' in the inscription may indicate that the person was of the nobility, although it is just as likely that it represents the deceased's place of origin or profession. If the second 'de' is part of the name, Por̄ [... may indicate an association with the Porcelet family, originally of Toulouse (see Rey 1869); members of this family are mentioned several times in Crusader-period documents, although no individual by the name Godfrey is known. An individual of the name Gaufridus de Portu appears in twelfth-century documents from Jerusalem (*RRH*:60, No. 237; 148, No. 556), and perhaps the present inscription refers to one of his descendants.

No. 3. Marble fragment of monumental Arabic inscription; surface; 32 cm high, 21 cm wide, 5.5 cm thick (Fig. 31.3).

This fragment bears one complete letter and remains of two or three others, and was part of the uppermost line of a very large, monumental panel, formed of several slabs placed side-by-side. The fragment, which was the upper edge of one such slab, includes part of the frame of the inscription. A round notch on its right side probably enabled joining it to another slab and/or the wall to which the inscription was affixed. The back is smoothly worked. The single fully preserved letter, *lam* (ل), is 24 cm high. Although this inscription cannot be dated precisely, it must be medieval.



Fig. 31.3. A monumental Arabic inscription of uncertain medieval date.

The Knights' Hotel Site

No. 4. Roman epitaph in Greek on a hard-limestone colonnette; Area G, L921, B4304; 48 cm high, 16 cm diam. (Fig. 31.4).

This colonnette has small depressions in the center of its top and bottom faces, suggesting production on a lathe. The upper and lower thirds of the colonnette were originally of larger diameter than its central part and later chipped to more-or-less the same diameter, as indicated by different tool marks on these parts of the colonnette than those on the central part, which are of the original production. This Roman limestone colonnette was found together with two Crusader-period marble colonnettes and a Byzantine marble capital (see Chapter 17: No. 11), which all apparently collapsed from an upper story (see Chapter 16). The Roman colonnette and the Byzantine capital were clearly in secondary use in the Crusader construction.

The inscription was carved in the central third of the colonnette (Fig. 31.4a), in a register bounded by three incised lines at the top and bottom; the height of the letters is 2–3 cm.

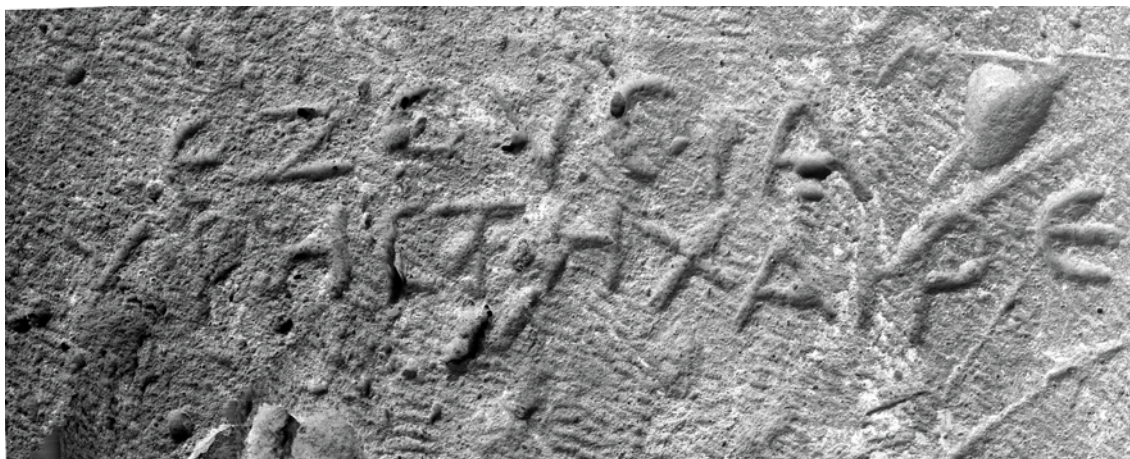
EZOVCIA	Ἐξουσία
XPHCTHXAIPE	χρηστή χαῖρε

Translation: Exousia, the worthy, farewell

Note that in the inscription's first word, the letter Y is rendered as V, and the letter Ξ is replaced by Z (Fig. 31.4b),



a



b

Fig. 31.4. A Greek epitaph from the Roman period on a hard-limestone colonnette (a); a straightened projection of the inscription (b).

which is rare (e.g., *SEG* 39: No. 664; *IGLSyr* XIII,1: No. 9233 [Mazimos for Maximos]). The female name Exousia is also rare; one example is attested in an inscription from Cyprus (*SEG* 38: No. 1532).²

The colonnette most probably originated from the northern, Hellenistic–Roman cemetery of ‘Akko (Fortuna 1966; Tzaferis 1986; Feig and Eisenberg 1991), or the eastern, Roman-period cemetery located at the foot of Tel ‘Akko (Tepper 2014), where many tombs of Roman veterans were uncovered.

No. 5. Marble fragments with Latin inscription; Area F, L841, B3513; together c. 0.53 × 0.59 m, 5.4 cm thick (Fig. 31.5).

These three adjoining fragments represent the top left corner of a large inscription with an elaborate frame, bearing the beginning letters of the inscription, 3 cm high and very carefully cut. The back is coarsely worked. The fragments were found on the plaster floor of a residential Crusader building (see Chapter 16).

[NO:AB:IN:CARN[[An]no ab incarn[atione]
]M:CC:XX[[domini] MCCXX[...

Translation:In the year of incarnation [of the Lord] MCCXX[...

The dots above the M and above the space between the two Xs in the date represent small Os, commonly placed above different parts of a date for abbreviating the Latin ending of the ablative O.

This phrase is one of the commonest opening formulae on medieval documents, known from several Crusader-period inscriptions uncovered locally; for example, an inscription in the church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, commemorating the grant of rights to the Genoese in ‘Akko, following the city’s capture in 1104 CE (De Sandoli 1974: No. 32); a plaque from Jaffa (De Sandoli 1974: No. 347); and several tombstones from various sites (De Sandoli 1974: Nos. 199 [Jerusalem], 405, 406 [‘Akko]).

As this formula was fairly standard, with the word *domini* following the word *incarnatione*, the latter must be the last word in the first row and the former the first word in the second row. The estimated space available for the word *domini* in the second row was sufficient for it to be spelled out in full rather than appearing in an abbreviated form, therefore it is likely that the word *incarnatione* was also spelled out in full. If so, the reconstructed width of the plaque is c. 90 cm. The intriguing break in the word *incarnatione* after the first syllable also appears in a French epitaph of Gautier de Meinneabeuf from ‘Akko, dated to 1278 CE (De Sandoli 1974: No. 412).

The presence of a second X in the date seems quite clear and hence, the earliest possible date is MCCXX (1220 CE) and the latest is MCCXXXIX (1249 CE), considering

² I wish to thank Leah Di Segni for providing the references for the parallels.

that the form XXXX sometimes replaced XL in medieval inscriptions (e.g., De Sandoli 1974: No. 417; on the same inscription, see also Prawer 1974).

To judge by the size of the fragment and its findspot within a residential building, No. 5 is unlikely to be a tombstone.

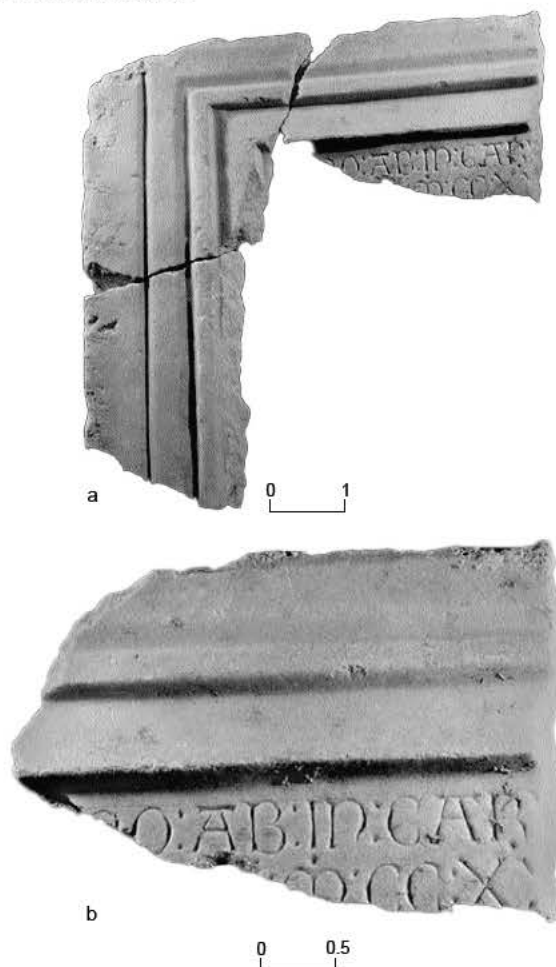


Fig. 31.5. A Latin inscription from the Crusader period (a); close up (b).

No. 6. Marble fragment with Latin(?) funerary(?) inscription; Area D, Surface, B1901; c. 9 × 10 cm, 3 cm thick (Fig. 31.6).

This fragment has no surviving edge; the height of the letters is 18–20 mm. The back is smooth and bears faint traces of an erased inscription, most likely in Latin.

RA:
LLO:



Fig. 31.6. A Crusader-period inscription written in Latin or French.

While the language of this inscription is most probably Latin, the possibility that it is French cannot be ruled out. The letters are well-cut, suggesting a formal inscription. Above the inscription, the presence of another line is faintly indicated by the bottoms of two round letters. To the left of the two rows is what appears to be a heraldic device dividing the inscription into two sides. The device could be a double or triple chevron (chevrony) or two or three stripes (bendy). The general layout of the inscription, on either side of a heraldic device, is known from several tombstones (e.g., De Sandoli 1974: Nos. 74 [Jerusalem], 412 [‘Akko]). The very long serifs on the two Ls, and the use of a heraldic device, suggest a date in the second half of the thirteenth century CE.

No. 7. Marble fragment with Latin funerary inscription; Area F, L809, B3346; c. 8.0 × 9.5 cm, 3 cm thick (Fig. 31.7).

This fragment has no surviving edge; the height of the letters is 30–35 mm. The back is coarsely worked. It was found on the plaster floor of a thirteenth-century room that was apparently used for food storage or preparation (see Chapters 16, 18); it may have fallen from an adjacent wall or an upper story of the building.



Fig. 31.7. A Latin funerary inscription from the Crusader period.

IACŒ [Hic] iace[t]

This appears to be the beginning of a Latin epitaph. Traces of a second row can be detected below the last two letters, but not below the first two, indicating that part of the plaque was empty.

No. 8. Marble fragment with Arabic inscription; Area D, L618, B2210/1; 8.5 × 8.5 cm, 3.2 cm thick (Fig. 31.8).

This fragment has no surviving edge. The back is smoothly worked. It was found in an accumulation of collapsed debris above Crusader-period floors. No legible words survive and its date is uncertain.



Fig. 31.8. A small fragment of an illegible Arabic inscription of uncertain date.

The Templar Tunnel

No. 9. Marble fragment with Latin inscription; L41005, B410035; 20 × 24 cm, 2.6 cm thick (Fig. 31.9).

This fragment is the top right corner of a high-quality marble slab, smooth and finely worked on the front and back. It was probably affixed to a wall, as evidenced by a rectangular recess on its back near the top and an iron peg still lodged in a bore just below the recess (Fig. 31.9b). The letters, 40–45 mm high, are carefully executed, although their interior is not as smoothly worked as the slab's surface. The fragment was found in 1998, during cleaning of the impressive tunnel discovered under the Templar and Pisan Quarters of Crusader-period 'Akko (see Chapter 1: Fig. 1.2:13).

---]FR : ROT	---] fr[ater] : Rot(bertus)
---]PL : FR	---] pl(us) : fr[ater]
---]R : P : Π' [-]	---] r : p(er) : n(os?) [-]



Fig. 31.9. A Latin inscription of uncertain type from the Crusader period (a); a rectangular recess on the back of the marble plaque, with an iron peg still lodged in a bore just below it (b).

The reading of *n* in the third line is uncertain, and a *D* is also possible. The inscription is a mix of uncials and capital letters. The two occurrences of the word *frater* leave little doubt that this inscription mentions members of a religious order or institution, although not much more information can be gleaned from it. The findspot of the fragment does not necessarily tie the inscription to the Templars, or to any specific religious institution. The reconstruction of the name Robert is plausible. If this is a memorial plaque to two deceased brothers, then conceivably the ending might have been [*ora*] *p(ro) n(obis)*, i.e., ‘pray for us’; although the very clear *R* preceding the *P* makes this problematic. If the letter *n* is indeed a *D*, the reading might be ...*p(ro) D(eus)*, i.e., for god. The paleography suggests a date in the thirteenth century CE.

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