The Katoikia of Jews Inhabiting Hierapolis

A funerary inscription sets fines to the community of Jews residing in Hierapolis (Phrygia). A copy was to be deposited in the archive of the Jews.

**Typology** (Honorific / Funerary / etc.): Funerary

**Original Location/Place:** North necropolis of Hierapolis

**Actual Location (Collection/Museum):** In-situ at the UNESCO world heritage site of Hierapolis-Pamukkale (Turkey)

**Date:** 212 CE to 250 CE

**Physical Characteristics:** Sarcophagus with a triangular shaft and the text inscribed on one of the faces.

**Material:** Limestone

**Measurements:** 188 centimetres high, 56 wide. Letters are 5 centimetres tall.

**Language:** Greek

**Category:** Roman, Greek, Jewish

**Commentary:** This sarcophagus provides us with one of many funerary texts carved in the eastern Mediterranean during the Roman imperial period. The inscription records its owners, people entitled to be buried in it and the fines to be paid if the grave was not respected. The most remarkable feature is that one of these fines was to be transferred to the group of Jews residing in Hierapolis. A copy of the text also had to be deposited in an archive belonging to the Jews, so this testimony allows us to assess the degree of integration and distinction of Diaspora communities in Greek civic contexts under the rule of Rome.

The presence of Jews in Hierapolis, an important city of the central Anatolian region of Phrygia is not surprising. Traditionally, their arrival is attributed to Antiochos III who contacted Zeuxis, the Seleukid representative in Asia Minor, concerning the transfer of Jews from Mesopotamia and Babylon to Lydia and Phrygia. According to the letter reported by Flavius Josephus (Jewish Antiquities XIV. XII.147-153), these new contingents of men with their families were to provide security and occupy strongholds where they were allowed to keep their own laws. In comparison to Sardis, the Phrygian evidence for the late Hellenistic and early Roman ages is virtually non-existent. However, in the high imperial period, the region has provided us with one of the richest epigraphic material of Jews in the Diaspora (see Ameling, Inscriptiones, p. 342-448). These testimonies are not homogeneous. For example, Deuteronomy curses, Hebrew and Septuagint texts are not uncommon in Acmonea (see Trebilco, Jewish Communities, p. 60-78). In Apamea – beside inscriptions – even a representation of Noah’s arch appeared on the local coinage (Thoenemann, The Maeander Valley, p. 88-97). The Jewish evidence from Hierapolis is likewise very abundant but it is restricted to funerary texts. Their typology mostly resembles the inscriptions carved on the sarcophagi populating the extra-urban necropolis of the city where Jewish visual symbols are exceptional (see Miranda, “La comunità,” p. 132-133). In this case, Aurelia Augusta, the daughter of Sotikos, did not identify herself as a Jew or ??????/Ioudaia, an adjective which is attested in other funerary texts of Hierapolis (Miranda, “La comunità,” p. 133-136). Moreover, the owner of the sarcophagus (?????/soros) and the plot of land (?????/topos) surrounding it shows a nomenclature sequence that is typical of provincials in the Greek East granted Roman citizenship as a result of the Constitutio Antoniniana. Her husband Glykonianos does not show the nomen Aurelius which might indicate that he died before 212 CE and the sarcophagus was prepared soon thereafter (see Blanco-Pérez, “Nomenclature and Dating”). The nickname ??????/Agnos probably refers to a chaste-tree so these onomastic patterns contrast with the abundance of Biblical names that can be found in later Diaspora inscriptions, especially the subscription list mentioning God-fearers in Aphrodisias (see Williams, “Semitic Name-Use”). For these reasons, the Jewish identity of the people buried in our sarcophagus is not certain. Their support for the community of Jews residing in the city should remain undoubted, nonetheless.

Funerary inscriptions usually record fines against grave robbers that could be paid to different institutions (Harter-Uibopuu and Wiedergut, “Kein anderer soll”). In the imperial period, the Roman fisc was the most common beneficiary and this is also the case in Hierapolis, even among individuals identifying themselves as Jews (see Ritti, “Iura sepulcrorum”). A pecuniary reward for the one who denounced (?????????/ekzétēsas) the sarcophagus transgression was customary. However, the sequence recorded in lines 4 and 5 of our inscription is unique. Jews residing in Hierapolis are referred to as a ??????????/katoikia. After Alexander the Great, this was
the technical term for the colonies that Hellenistic rulers established for their veterans, normally made of specific ethnic groups such as Macedonians or Thracians (Schuler, *La?ndliche Siedlungen*, p. 33-36). This denomination would therefore fit well with the fact that Antiochos III allegedly sent a group of Jews to settle Phrygia. In the Roman imperial period, however, *katoikia* had a more general usage to refer to communities in rural contexts or minority groups in cities (see Cohen, “Katoikai, Katoikoi”). Probably the most interesting detail about the appearance of this word in our inscription is that the Jews of Hierapolis constituted a recognisable ethnic-religious group which was capable of receiving funerary fines. This organisation would be confirmed by the fact that a copy (*antigraphon*) of the document needed to be deposited in an archive (*archion*) belonging to the Jews. Furthermore, a “very sacred” synagogue is known to have existed in the city (*IJO II.191*; cf. *IJO II.49*), and another inscription instructs a payment to the Jewish people (*laos tôn Ioudaiôn*:*IJO II.206*).

The analysis of this epigraphic testimony from Hierapolis shows, on the one hand, individuals without Semitic names, who displayed their Roman citizenship, and followed the trend of setting up sarcophagi in the imperial period. Their Greek funerary text was largely formulaic in a city which was famous for nourishing sophisticated intellectuals and administrators such as P. Aelius Zeuxidemus Ariston Zenon. On the other hand, the Jewish community of Hierapolis constituted a recognisable entity who was aware of the importance of keeping records under Roman rule and maintained its own archive. This combination of interaction and distinction is perhaps best represented by the inscription of P. Aelius Glycon Zeuxianos Aelianus, who left funds not only for the festival of the Unleavened Bread and the Pentecost, but also for the Roman Kalends fest after having collaborated with the strong local guild of purple-dyers (*IJO II.196*; see Harland, “Acculturation and Identity”). The religious life of Hierapolis was consequently more multifarious than the Greek civic structures of the *polis*. Indeed, it should be no coincidence that the city providing us with 3rd century CE sarcophagi of Jews and Jewish sympathisers also tolerated just before Late Antiquity the tomb of bishop Abercius, one of the earliest surviving attestations of Christian public monuments.

Keywords in the original language:

- ????? [3]
- ???? [4]
- ???? [5]
- ?????? [6]
- ?????????? [7]
- ?????????? [8]
- ?????????? [9]
- ????????????? [10]
- ????? [11]

Thematic keywords:

- Jews [12]
- Jewish community [13]
- Diaspora [14]
- Hierapolis [15]
- Phrygia [16]
- name [17]
- funerary practice [18]
- fines [19]
- archive [20]
- public records [21]
- family [22]
- Constitutio Antoniniana [23]

A God-Fearer and the Menorah of Sardis [34]

A god-fearer called Aurelius Hermogenes donates a menorah to the synagogue of Sardis in response to (the gifts of) providence.

- Read more about A God-Fearer and the Menorah of Sardis [34]

Inscription

The Jews, Proselytes and God-fearers of Aphrodisias [35]

Subscription list of an organised group of Jews in Aphrodisias (Asia Minor) including proselytes and god-fearers.

- Read more about The Jews, Proselytes and God-fearers of Aphrodisias [35]

Inscription

Donation of Claudius Tiberius Polycharmus to the synagogue of Stobi [36]

A Roman citizen is considered “father of the synagogue” in Stobi (Macedonia) and donates rooms after conducting his life “according to Judaism.”

- Read more about Donation of Claudius Tiberius Polycharmus to the synagogue of Stobi [36]

Inscription

Inscription of Abercius [37]

- Read more about Inscripton of Abercius [37]
Hierapolis and a Greek Sophist in the Roman Administration [38]

Honours for a member of a prominent and cultured family from Hierapolis which was given Roman citizenship and participated actively in the Roman administration.

- Read more about Hierapolis and a Greek Sophist in the Roman Administration [38]

Provincial Edict and the Market Days of Mandragoreis (Asia) [39]

Edict responding to a village in the Maeander valley that petitioned for market days. The legal procedure concerning the reproduction of this official document is also detailed.

- Read more about Provincial Edict and the Market Days of Mandragoreis (Asia) [39]

Baetocaece / Baitokaike: Valerian and the Ancestral Privileges of a Temple in Syria [40]

Epigraphic dossier confirming the privileges of the sanctuary of Zeus in Baetocaece (Syria) in 258-260 CE. Seleucid and Augustan precedents are used to back the worshippers' petition.

- Read more about Baetocaece / Baitokaike: Valerian and the Ancestral Privileges of a Temple in Syria [40]

A Jewish Vow for the Salvation of the Severans from Qazion [41]

A group of Jews dedicates a vow to the salvation of Septimius Severus, Caracalla, Geta and Iulia Domna. It belongs to a building project of controversial nature.

- Read more about A Jewish Vow for the Salvation of the Severans from Qazion [41]

Hadrian and Zeus in Aizanoi [42]

Hadrian restores the ancient lands of Zeus in Aizanoi using Hellenistic precedents and members of his administration.

- Read more about Hadrian and Zeus in Aizanoi [42]
Nomenclature and Constitutio Antoniniana in Aphrodisias [43]

A funerary text inscribed on a sarcophagus of Aphrodisias records the change of nomenclature caused by the *Constitutio Antoniniana*.

- *Read more about Nomenclature and Constitutio Antoniniana in Aphrodisias* [43]

Papyrus

P.Giss. 40 and the Constitutio Antoniniana [44]

An edict issued by the emperor Caracalla records a universal grant of citizenship as an expression of magnificence and gratitude to the immortal gods.

Language English

- *Read more about P.Giss. 40 and the Constitutio Antoniniana* [44]

Inscription

An Augustan governor on the freedom of Chios [45]

The provincial governor settles a dispute concerning the freedom of Chios and describes the use of previous official documents.

- *Read more about An Augustan governor on the freedom of Chios* [45]

Inscription

Letter of Octavian to Ephesus concerning Aphrodisias [46]

Octavian requests the Ephesians to return a statue of Eros dedicated by his father Julius to Aphrodite in the city of Aphrodisias.

- *Read more about Letter of Octavian to Ephesus concerning Aphrodisias* [46]

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