

Epigraphical Evidence for Pilgrimage to the Holy Places

Like any movement of individuals outside their home space, pilgrimage leaves all kind of signs, from the ashes of bivouacs and sand trodden by many feet on paths leading to a solitary holy place, to travelogues and mementos of a sanctuary, themselves sanctified by proxy, that are discovered many miles from their source. A notable part of such signs falls within the realm of epigraphic evidence, and this in turn is split into diverse categories. The most prominent, and the largest, is that of graffiti, sometimes only names, often accompanied by a religious symbol, sometimes invocations, more rarely full sentences, left by visitors at a holy place as a *proskynema*, or by travellers on their way to one as a testimony of their passage. Another category is that of inscribed mementos obtained at sanctuaries – *ampullae*, lamps, *eulogiae* and tokens – whose contribution is double: the inscription on the artefact, often together with the image it features, identifies a sanctuary, and by studying the find spots of these objects we can trace routes of pilgrimages¹. A third category consists of inscriptions that identify a complex as a hospice, namely, a house of shelter and rest for travellers. Of course, not all travellers were pilgrims. Officers and public servants travelling on official business, or traders accompanied by their merchandises, were offered different arrangements², which will not be discussed here. Private individuals compelled to move over distances by some personal motivation or external agency might turn to inns, or just rough it, as did the couple of Galilean travellers in Luke 2,7. But pilgrims naturally attracted the attention of religious foundations,

which endeavoured to provide them with shelter not only at their destination but also along their journey. Hospitality was Abraham's virtue³, and as such the Church inherited it from the Jews. Indeed, the oldest inscription attesting to the provision of hospitality in Jerusalem comes from the synagogue of Theodotus, a priest and third-generation *archisynagogos* from the Second Temple Period who built a synagogue »for the reading of the Law and teaching of the commandments«, with an attached hospice (ξενών), as well as »the rooms and the water installations«, perhaps to be understood as latrine and washing facilities, including a mikveh, »for the lodging of those who are in need of it from abroad«⁴. It is not unlikely that other similar foundations offered shelter to visitors in Second Temple Period Jerusalem, while during the yearly mass pilgrimages, especially that of Passover, many Jews obtained private hospitality or were content with staying outdoors⁵. Most of the available evidence, however, originates from Late Antiquity, when Jerusalem became the main focus of Christian pilgrimage, after Constantine's time.

Pilgrims who came to Jerusalem did not stay for just one or two days, in which case they might have been content with spending the night in the narthex or atrium of a church⁶. After a long journey, their stay was extended for weeks, sometimes for months, during which period they made trips to different parts of the Holy Land, like Egeria in the late fourth century or Theodosius in the early sixth⁷. Some, particularly monks, spent years in Jerusalem or its vicinity before going back to their homeland, like Rufinus in the late fourth cen-

1 For some studies of this general subject see Lambert/Pedemonte Demeglio, *Ampolle devozionali*; Sodini/Blanc/Pieri, *Nouvelles eulogies*; Vikan, *Pilgrimage Art*, and for lamps Loffreda, *Lucerne*.

2 See below n. 18. 41. 42.

3 Many Church Fathers praise Abraham's φιλοξενία. Here we give only a few examples: Clemens Romanus, *Epistula I ad Corinthios* 10,7 (116 Jaubert); Clemens Alexandrinus, *Stromata IV* 17,105 (294 Stählin/Früchtel); Theodoretus, *Historia religiosa* 1,1 (II 1,160 Canivet/Leroy-Molinghen); Barsanuphius et Ioannes, *Quaestiones et responsiones* 457 (II 546 Neyt/de Angelis-Noach).

4 CLIP I/1 no. 9. The inscription was discovered in a cistern south of the Temple Mount.

5 As we learn from the Gospels, a week before Passover Jesus and his disciples came to Jerusalem and lodged near the city, in the village of Bethany on the Mount of Olives, possibly in the house of Simon the Leper: Matthew 21,17; 26,6-7; Mark 11,11-12; 14,3. Luke 21,37 simply says that Jesus taught in the Temple during the day and lodged at night on the Mount of Olives. The synoptic Gospels, according to which the Last Supper was the Passover sacrifice, have Jesus send Peter and John into Jerusalem to find a house that will host the meal

(Matthew 26,17-19; Mark 14,12-16; Luke 22,7-13), and while the ready acceptance of their request by the house owner can be represented as his miraculous understanding of who was his prospective guest, a more prosaic explanation may be also suggested. Josephus, *De bello Iudaico VI* 423, explains that the Passover sacrifice could only be eaten in a company of not fewer than ten males, and on this occasion many companies gathered of double the number. One can surmise that not many households in Jerusalem counted the required number of males; therefore, playing host even to total strangers could be considered not only a good deed but one helpful to the host. Such hospitality could easily extend also to sleeping accommodations, though at the end of the meal Jesus with his disciples turns again to the Mount of Olives, »as was his custom« (Luke 22,39), apparently ready to spend the night in the open.

6 See the case of the holy man lying in the narthex of the Nativity Church in Bethlehem: Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Joannis Hesycheatae* 17 (214f. Schwartz).

7 *Itinerarium Egeriae* (35-90 Franceschini/Weber); Theodosius, *TS* (115-125 Geyer). Theodosius' itinerary does not necessarily reflect his own journey but it seems to be rather a guide for pilgrims. If so, it pointed them to this particular way of touring the Holy Land by separate trips.

tury, or Hilarion the Iberian in the ninth century, or moving on to a new destination like Cassianus⁸. Though remaining aliens, they became for a time part of the cultural and ethnic mosaic of the Holy City. However, if a funerary inscription identifies the deceased as Armenian, Bessian, German or any other nationality, it still cannot be regarded as evidence of pilgrimage; for how are we to know in what circumstances had the man or woman arrived here? Perhaps as a soldier, a merchant, a servant? Or was he or she perhaps a second or third generation national, but born here, with a domicile and a position in Jerusalem?

Reverting to »real pilgrims«, we know from the literary sources that they found a variety of accommodations in the Holy City. Some stayed as guests of fellow-countrymen, as young Theodosius did when he arrived in Jerusalem under Emperor Marcian (450-457) and was received by a fellow Cappadocian, Longinus, a *spoudaios* of the Anastasis who lived in a cell near David's Tower⁹. Young Sabas too on arrival was received by a fellow Cappadocian, who was a member of the monastery of Passarion¹⁰, and young Cyriac, from Corinth, was received by Eustorgius in the monastery the latter had just founded near the Holy Sion; most likely Eustorgius was a fellow-countryman, as is indicated by the fact that he commended Cyriac to two Corinthian monks in Euthymius' monastery¹¹. Travelling monks as a rule lodged in monasteries or in guesthouses belonging to monasteries, some of which were expressly reserved for them: so was one of the two hostelries Sabas acquired near the Tower of David¹². From the Life of Porphyrius of Gaza we learn that also the ξενών, which Empress Eudoxia ordered to be built beside the church that superseded the Marneion at Gaza, was meant to receive travelling monks and give them free hospitality for three days¹³. Hospitality could also be obtained in charitable institutions, as in the case of John, bishop of Colonia, who stayed for some time in St. George's old-age home founded by Eudocia before Jerusalem¹⁴. Most likely alms-houses and hospitals were open to pilgrims, the latter at least for those who arrived sick or

weakened by the hardships of the road. Hospitality in private dwellings was surely practiced too: strangers could find accommodation with acquaintances, as might have been the case of a businessman from Africa and his friend, a silversmith in Jerusalem¹⁵; but it is more likely that wealthy pilgrims who planned to spend time in the Holy City rented houses in the city itself or in its vicinity. This is perhaps the case of the »palace of Eudocia in Bethlehem« where citizens of Jerusalem came to protest against the outrages committed by Barsauma and his fanatic followers, if the chronological framework of the episode is Eudocia's first visit to Jerusalem in 438, when she could hardly have had already a palace of her own¹⁶. And last but not least, there were inns: we have indirect evidence of one in the Greek epitaph of John, an Armenian *stabularius* (inn-keeper)¹⁷. But even if we surmise that John's inn was in Jerusalem, inns would hardly have provided the kind of long-term accommodation a pilgrim to Jerusalem would require.

It is hardly surprising that, unlike literary evidence, no epigraphical evidence can be found of private hospitality, hospitality in charitable institutions and hospitality of single monks or laymen in monasteries or in the hostelries kept by the monasteries of the desert in Jerusalem, which surely offered only a limited number of beds and little stabling space within the walls of the crowded Holy City. If some epigraphical evidence may be found, it can only be in large ecclesiastical hospices, where the main function of the permanent residents (monks and/or lay servants) was serving the guests; that is, not monasteries with an attached hostel but rather hostels with an attached residence for the staff. This is sometimes visually apparent when a major portion of a complex can be identified as dedicated to the needs of guests: sleeping and dining halls, stabling space, a bathhouse, a cemetery area for burial of persons with no family ties in the city.

There are several terms in literature to describe lodgings for travellers. The most frequently used are ξενοδοχείον and ξενών¹⁸. Ξενοδοχείον and ξενών are synonymous, as it appears from the fact that the same establishment can be called by

8 Rufinus lived in Jerusalem from 380 to 397, then he embarked for Rome, whence he returned to his home city, Aquileia. He left Aquileia ca. 408, because of the Visigothic invasion. John Cassianus arrived from Scythia to the Holy Land and stayed about three years in a monastery near Bethlehem in the early 380s; thence he moved in succession to the Egyptian desert, to Constantinople, Rome, and finally to Gaul where he founded a monastery near Marseilles; there he spent the last twenty years of his life, 415-435; see Amidon, Rufinus; Stewart, Cassian. Hilarion, the abbot of a monastery in Georgia, came to the Holy Land as a pilgrim in 847 and stayed until 854, spending seven years in a hermitage of the Laura of Saint Sabas; see Tchekhanovets, Early Georgian Pilgrimage 455 f.

9 Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Theodosii 1 (236 Schwartz).

10 Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Sabae 6 (90 Schwartz).

11 Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Cyriaci 3 (224 Schwartz).

12 Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Sabae 31 (116 Schwartz). Also one of the hostels in the coenobium of Theodosius was reserved for monks: Theodorus, Vita Theodosii 13 (34 Usener), and so was apparently the hostel built by Jerome beside his monastery in Bethlehem: Jerome, Ep. 66, 14 (54, 665 Hilberg). For evidence of hostels belonging to monasteries and destined especially for monks or postulants see Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Sabae 31 (116 Schwartz); id., Vita Jo. Hesychastae 20 (217 Schwartz); id., Vita Abramii 3 (245 Schwartz). However, there is also evidence that laymen too stopped at hostelries belonging to a monastery see Jo. Rufus, Vita Petri Iberi 66-67 (9699 Horn/Phenix); Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Euthymii 59 (81 f. Schwartz); id., Vita Sabae 46 (136 Schwartz).

13 Marcus Diaconus, Vita Porphyrii 53 (44 Gregoire/Kugener).

14 Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Jo. Hesychastae 4 (204 Schwartz). It is likely that also the *ptocheion* founded by Passarion in the early fifth century outside the eastern gate of Jerusalem (Jo. Rufus, Vita Petri Iberi 53 [72-73 Horn/Phenix]) offered hospitality to stranger, since Cyril of Scythopolis calls Passarion »Abraham-like« (Vita Euthymii 16 [26-27 Schwartz]), and at the site, which was beside the church of St. Hesychius, *peregrini* as well as the poor were fed in the sixth century (An. of Piacenza 27 [143 Geyer]).

15 Vita Joannis Eleemosinarii (48 Delehay).

16 Histoire de Barsauma (122 f. Nau). For the chronology see Sivan, Palestine 215 f.; *contra* Holum, Theodosian Emperresses 217 f., who dates the episode to the first years of Eudocia's exile in Jerusalem (ca. 443-460).

17 Tchekhanovets, Epitaph.

18 Καταγώνιον can also be found in this sense, but its meaning is general, »lodgings«, and can be understood in the sense of »hostel« only through the context; e.g. Gregory of Nazianzum, Or. 4, 111 (648 Migne). Travellers could spend the night on the road in *burgi*, walled enclosures kept by public servants: on *burgi* and *burganin*, where merchants and caravans could stop in security, see Isaac, Limits of Empire 178-186. *Burgus* and βούργος appear also in inscriptions at Umm el-Jimal (in Latin: PAES IIIA no. 233) and at Caesarea (in Greek: CILP II no. 1261), but its meaning is not clear: perhaps a military outpost at Umm el-Jimal, more likely a kind of khan at Caesarea. Πανδοχεία, μητῆρα, ἀπαντητήρια were public hostels for travelling officials and do not belong to this discussion.

either name even in the same text¹⁹. The choice of one or the other term is left to the whim of the writer, though it may be significant that those writing on Palestine in Palestine – Cyril of Scythopolis, John Moschus, the Latin Anonymous pilgrim of Piacenza – always call the hospice *ξενοδοχεῖον/xenodochium* – except, of course, our good *Ciceronianus*, Jerome, who calls it *diversorium*²⁰ – while Procopius of Caesarea, mainly working in Constantinople, uses only *ξενών*, the preferred term also in Justinian's Novels.

Ξενῶνες/ξενοδοχεῖα, and other charitable foundations, were considered juridically and fiscally religious establishments like churches and monasteries, in Justinian's Novels; but this was no novelty, when we consider that Emperor Julian, in ordering to erect *ξενοδοχεῖα* in all the cities of Galatia, addressed the order to the high priest of the province and seemingly referred the management of those *ξενοδοχεῖα* to the pagan priests²¹. Julian's foundations were supposed not only to provide hospitality for travellers but also to feed beggars and the local poor, and most likely also hospices of the Byzantine period, especially those attached to monasteries, doubled as almshouses, at least in festive occasions. The classic example is the monastery of Theodosius south of Jerusalem, which had three hostelries (Theodosius' biographer, Theodore bishop of Petra, calls them *καταγώγια*): one was for foreign monks, one for laypeople of the upper and middle classes, one for the poor, who were provided with food, clothing and medical care. Local paupers were fed on a daily basis, and pilgrims on the great pilgrimage feasts, at tables that must have been set up in the dining room of the *καταγώγιον* of the poor²². Though he does not call these lodgings *ξενοδοχεῖα*, the hagiographer calls the function *ξενοδοχία* and the action *ξενοδοχεῖν*²³.

But feeding the poor was not the only additional function of the *ξενοδοχεῖον* or *ξενών*. John Chrysostom, in his *Adhortationes ad Stagiriam*, urges Stagiriam to visit a *ξενών* in order to observe the sick and become acquainted with all kind of diseases: clearly the *ξενών* was a hospital, or included one²⁴. Procopius of Caesarea, in his description of the two *ξενῶνες* in front of the Nea Church in Jerusalem, explains that »one was a shelter for visiting strangers, while the other was a resting place for paupers suffering from diseases« (*ἀναπαυστήριον*

νοσοῦσι πτωχοῖς)²⁵. Also elsewhere in *De aedificiis* he uses *ξενών* sometimes for a poorhouse and hospital²⁶, sometimes for a public hostel²⁷.

A variant of *ξενών*, *ξενεών*, seems to be more specifically linked to the meaning of »hospital«²⁸. In fact, the dictionary of Liddell and Scott sets down a clear distinction between the two. *Ξενών* is regarded as synonymous of *ξενοδοχεῖον* and translated »guest-chamber«, while *ξενεών* is assigned two different meanings: »guest-chamber«, based on a Hellenistic inscription from Delphi²⁹, and »alms house, hospital«, based on sixth-century papyri. The connection between *ξενεών* and a state of sickness is clear, for instance, in the seventh-century Life of Theodorus of Sykeon, where the context – expulsion of demons from possessed persons – points to an asylum for mental sickness³⁰. An even clearer picture of the medical function of the *ξενεών* is revealed in the memorandum against Dioscorus addressed by Ischyriion, an Alexandrian deacon, to the Council of Chalcedon. The deacon complains of persecution suffered at the hands of Dioscorus, who had him imprisoned in a »hospice of the mutilated«, *ἐν ἐνὶ ξενεῶνι τῶν λελωβημένων*, a term referring particularly to persons maimed by leprosy³¹. This hospice is most likely the same described as *πτωχεῖν τῶν λελωβημένων*, or *ὀσπίτιον*, in Alexandria, by Palladius in *Historia Lausiaca*³²; in a word, it was an establishment for paupers affected by leprosy. But the part it played in the episode of Ischyriion throws a shadow on this charitable foundation: it could be used also as a prison.

Summing up, in late antique usage *ξενεών* seems to mean »hospital« rather than »hospice«, but *ξενών*, »hospice«, can also mean »hospital«. Can *ξενεών*, in reverse, be used simply in the sense of hospice? The answer to this question is crucial to the understanding of the meagre epigraphical evidence for this institution in the Holy Land.

Literary sources and papyri name a number of *xenodochia* in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Caesarea, Ascalon, Gaza, Petra, Jericho, Hammath Gader, at the site of the Baptism on the Jordan and in the Negev and Sinai³³. To my knowledge, however, neither *ξενοδοχεῖον* nor *ξενών* appear in inscriptions in the Holy Land³⁴ – only *ξενεών* does, and this in very few instances. One is on a block discovered in secondary use at Silwan, a squeeze of which was published in 1884 in the Jerusalem

19 The *ξενοδοχεῖα* whose foundation is ordered by Julian (Julian Caesar, Ep. 84 [145 Bidez]) are called *καταγώγια καὶ ξενῶνες* in Gregory of Nazianzum, Or. 4,111 (648 Migne). *Ξενοδοχεῖον* and *ξενών* are interchangeable also in Chron. Paschale (535 f. Dindorf) and in Justinian's Novels, where, moreover, the person in charge of a *ξενών* is called *ξενοδόχος*.

20 Jerome, Ep. 66,14 (54,665 Hilberg); Ep. 108,14 (55,325 Hilberg).

21 Julian Caesar, Ep. 84 (145 Bidez).

22 Theodorus, Vita Theodosii 13-15 (34-37. 39 Usener).

23 Theodorus, Vita Theodosii 13, 15, 40 (34,1,16; 39,1,21; 98,1,18 Usener).

24 Jo. Chrysostom, Ad Stagiriam III,13 (490 Migne).

25 Procopius, De Aedificiis V,6 (165 Haury/Wirth).

26 Procopius, De Aedificiis I,2,14-17 (19 Haury/Wirth).

27 Procopius, De Aedificiis IV,10,20-21; V,4,17 (142,158 Haury/Wirth).

28 Note that *ξενών* has an acute accent, that is, it is not a contracted form of *ξενεών*.

29 FD III, 1 no. 358.

30 Vita Theodori Syceotae 161 (143 f. Festugière).

31 ACO II (I,2,19 Schwartz).

32 Palladius, Historia Lausiaca 6 (24 Butler).

33 For Jerusalem, see Procopius, De Aedificiis 5,6 (165 Haury/Wirth); Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Sabae 31 (116 Schwartz); id., Vita Abramii 3 (245 Schwartz); Anonymous of Piacenza 9 (133 f. Geyer); Vita Gregorii P. II, 52 (110 Migne); for Bethlehem, Jerome, Ep. 66,14 (54,665 Hilberg); Ep. 108,14 (55,325 Hilberg); for Ascalon, John Moschus 189 (3068 Migne); for Caesarea and Gaza Marcus Diaconus, Vita Porphyrii 14,53 (13,44 Gregoire/Kugener); for Petra P. Petra 2, l. 21; for Jericho Procopius, De Aedificiis V,9,4 (169 Haury/Wirth); Cyril of Scythopolis, Vita Sabae 46 (136 Schwartz); id., Vita Joannis Hesyachastae 20 (217 Schwartz); John Moschus 6,101 (2857. 2960 Migne). *Xenodochia* are mentioned also at the medicinal waters of Hammath Gader (Anonymous of Piacenza 7 [132 Geyer]), at the site of Jesus' baptism, on the western bank of the Jordan (Anonymous of Piacenza 12 [136 Geyer]), and on the pilgrimage route to Sinai and between Sinai and Egypt, at Mizpe Shivta and in the oasis of Wadi Gharandal on the western coast of Sinai (Anonymous of Piacenza 35. 41 [146. 150 Geyer]).

34 At least not unless we extend the concept of Holy Land to the farthest boundaries of Provincia Arabia: but on this, see below.

volume of the Survey of Western Palestine. Several readings were suggested, but the relevant one, which also seems to me the correct one, was proposed by Mentzou-Meimaris almost a century later, in 1982³⁵. She read:

Μνήμη|α [ξ]ενεώ|νος νέου | κὲ τοῦ ἐν | αὐτῷ νοσ|οκομίου | διακ[ειμένου]

»Tomb of the new hospice and of the hospital located therein«.

According to Mentzou-Meimaris, the epithet would indicate that the hospice belonged to the Nea Church; in other words, this ξενεών would be identical to the ξενώνες described by Procopius, one of which was a hospital. The inscription would imply that they formed a unit under a single administration, and would also suggest a date in the mid-sixth century. The identification with the hospices of the Nea is not certain: any foundation can be dubbed »new« in comparison with a well-known older one. The important point, however, is that the ξενεών in this inscription, though including a hospital, was not identical to it but must have fulfilled the function implicit in its name, namely, the reception of guests, the ξενοδοχία. And being located in Jerusalem, there can be no doubt that it was mainly intended for pilgrims.

The second occurrence of the term ξενεών is in an inscription from Ma'in in Jordan, southwest of Madaba, published by Piccirillo in 1985 and included by Gatier in IGLJ II³⁶. The inscription, set in the mosaic pavement of a room adjoining the Western Church – room and mosaic are lost – read: [Ἐγ] ένετο ὡ ξενεώ[ν] ἔτι υλγ' - -, »The hospice was built in year 493 [of the era of Arabia]«, corresponding to 598/599. Gatier ascribed the presence of a ξενεών there to the proximity of Ma'in to Mount Nebo and the transit of pilgrims, while Piccirillo explained it with the location of Ma'in on the ancient road from Madaba to the hot springs of Zerqa Ma'in, ancient Baaru, and of Callirhoe near the Dead Sea, both curative waters visited by sick people. The latter explanation seems more likely, for Ma'in is not on a pilgrim route. Already a very large village in the Late Roman period, and later an episcopal see, ancient Beelmaus, biblical Ba'al Ma'on, was important enough to have an ecclesiastical hostel for the receptions of travellers³⁷. It is impossible to exclude, however, that pilgrims travelling on the Esbus–Livias road on their way to the Jordan and thence to Jerusalem, or vice-versa, might have made a detour southwards to Madaba and Ma'in to avail themselves of the healing properties of Baaru, if one of their company was sick. This was exactly what the party from Piacenza did

elsewhere: coming back from visiting the sources of the Jordan along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, on their way to Scythopolis, they crossed the Jordan south of the lake on the sole purpose of reaching the thermae at Hammath Gader, where one of their number died. Back on the western bank, after a journey through Samaria, they crossed the Jordan again at the place of the Baptism and visited more healing waters near the Jordan and the Dead Sea. Both at Hammath Gader and at the other places the Piacenza Pilgrim mentions *xenodochia* where the sick and lepers were hosted at public expenses³⁸. The ξενεών of Ma'in may therefore have fulfilled a double function, as a hostel for people from the area going down to the hot springs of Baaru, and as a hospice for pilgrims detouring from the main route to recover from sickness and the hardships of the journey. If so, the ξενεών at Ma'in would probably have offered also some kind of medical care.

A third occurrence of the term ξενεών is in an inscription from Suweida (Dionysias) in the Hauran: [Ἐπὶ τοῦ] ὄσιωτ(άτου) Πέτρου ἐπισκ(όπου) κτίζεται ὁ ξενεών τοῦ ἁγίου Θεοδώρου, »Under the most holy bishop Petrus the hospice of Saint Theodorus is built«³⁹. Here there is no reason to interpret ξενεών as anything but a house of rest for travellers, since Suweida was located on an important thoroughfare, the Roman road across the Trachon that connected Damascus to Bostra. The Hauran, and especially the Trachon, is rich in Late Roman inscriptions commemorating the building of πανδοχεῖα⁴⁰ and δημόσια or κοινά, or δημόσιοι or κοινοὶ οἶκοι by village officials⁴¹. It is at the northern end of the road crossing the Trachon, at Mismiye, ancient Phaene, that Julius Saturninus, governor of Arabia in 186-187, had his epistle to the people of Phaene set up in stone to proclaim that no soldier or civil servant could claim hospitality in the homes of the citizens, as they had built a ξενών for this purpose⁴². The need of resting places for travellers in that wild and inhospitable region could obviously prompt the Church to erect its own hostelry, but we can hardly view this road, so far to the east, as a main route for pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Yet Damascus was both a goal of pilgrimage and a station of the itinerary of those pilgrims who, on the way from Europe or Asia Minor to Palestine, or on the way back, chose the inland route across Syria rather than the coastal road. Even pilgrims from eastern Cappadocia, Armenia, Georgia, the upper and lower Euphrates, would pass through Damascus on their way to the Holy City. The Piacenza pilgrim went

35 Warren/Conder, Jerusalem 412. 427 no. 28; Mentzou-Meimaris, Ἐπαρχικά 284f. Full bibliography in CIIP I/2, no. 1008.

36 Piccirillo, Antichità 350; IGLJ II no. 163.

37 On Baaru, Beelmaus and Callirhoe see Avi-Yonah, Gazetteer 34-35. 45; Schmitt, Siedlungen 77f. 86f. 200f.

38 *Xenodochium* at Hammat Gader: Anonymous of Piacenza 7 (132 Geyer); near the lower Jordan and the Dead Sea Anonymous of Piacenza 9-10 (134 Geyer).

39 Waddington no. 2327; IGLS XVI no. 339.

40 IGLS XIV nos. 263-264 (Harran); XVI no. 59 (Busan). The building at Harran is dated 397/398, and because of its date Sartre considers it a Christian votive building, though it was erected by village officials. However, the inscriptions

bear no Christian symbols and I see no reason to regard the building as any different from all other public hostels mainly intended for persons travelling on official business. The fact that it was in the vicinity of the church – if the inscriptions were in situ, which is not certain – is natural, for public buildings in a village would occupy a central spot. Moreover, the church may well be later than 397.

41 IGLS XIII/2 no. 9692; XV/1 no. 73, and see list at p. 126; XVI nos. 883. 1015. It is not clear, however, if these were hostels like the πανδοχεῖα, or meeting houses for the village administration.

42 IGLS XV/1 no. 13. A similar text, very fragmentary, was also found at Suweida: IGLS XVI no. 533a.

from Jerusalem through the Galilee, Damascus, Heliopolis, Emesa and Apamea to Antioch⁴³. The Gallic bishop Arculfus too visited Damascus, where he arrived from Mount Tabor in only seven days, as he told his reporter, Abbot Adamnan. He must have taken the shortest route, up the Jordan Valley and joining the Tyre-Damascus road at Paneas⁴⁴. This was the most likely route from northern Palestine to Damascus. Some pilgrims, on leaving Jerusalem, preferred to cross the Jordan before travelling north, probably choosing the ancient King's Highway, at that time a Roman road leading to Adraa (Dar'a), Naveh (Nawa) and Aire (eş-Şanamein), and hence to Damascus⁴⁵, rather than moving farther east to take the Via Traiana, a detour through Philadelphia and Bostra that would have prolonged the journey through areas of no religious interest, and then forced them to cross the Trachon or skirt its eastern border. In the northernmost portion of the Adraa–Damascus road we have epigraphical evidence of an inn and changing post (στάβλον και ἀλλαγὴ) at Kafr Shams, erected by a member of the clergy⁴⁶; at Mutbin, a village near the road, though not on it, a block above a door bears the inscription: Τοῦτο τὸ ξενοδοχίον τῆς καθολικῆς ἐκκλησίας⁴⁷.

Summing up, of the inscriptions pertaining to lodgings for travellers, only one, the ξενεῶν νέον in Jerusalem, is firm evidence of pilgrimage to the holy places. The two ξενεῶνες at Ma'in and Suweida are not located along pilgrimage routes, though the former may mark a detour towards a destination visited by pilgrims for reasons other than proper religious ones. The στάβλον at Kafr Shams and the ξενοδοχίον at Mutbin were indeed established by the Church along a route used by pilgrims, but there is no evidence that they were planned particularly for them.

Hostelries can be identified, at least tentatively, on archaeological grounds, especially when these are supported by literary sources. This is the case, for instance, of the complex excavated by Avi-Yonah at Sheikh Bader (today's Biniyané ha-Umah) in 1949. Not much was published about the excavation, but an invocation to Saint George in the mosaic floor of the chapel lead Avi-Yonah to identify the complex with the »gerontocomium with a chapel of St. George« founded by Eudocia before Jerusalem, where John bishop of Colonia stayed in 491 before joining the laura of Sabas. The inscription, however, disappoints us: it gives no hint of any specific

function of the establishment and could fit any sacred place⁴⁸. A little more help do we get when we consider the building excavated in the Nineties on the northern side of the Byzantine street leading out of the western gate of Byzantine Jerusalem towards Bethlehem and Hebron. The excavation has not yet been published, but the excavators tentatively identified the building as a hostel, as it was divided into rooms that seem to have been used as living quarters⁴⁹. In this case, the epigraphic yield may support this identification. An Armenian inscription incised on a fragment of marble slab was found in the building; it contains an invocation for mercy and remembrance to the Lord and to the Holy Anastasis, and most likely points to the presence of a pilgrim from Armenia⁵⁰. The mosaic floor of one large room bears quotations from the Psalms, some of them quite common in churches and monasteries (Ps. 45,8,12; 117,6-7; 120,8), but one is unique, a combination of Ps. 94,6 and Odes 14,6,10: »Come, let us worship and prostrate ourselves before him, Christ our king; come, let us worship«⁵¹. This text is suggestive of pilgrimage, and together with the Armenian inscription it strengthens the identification of the building as a hostel.

A recent find has raised the possibility that another hospice may have been located in Jerusalem, north of Damascus Gate, in an area where several remains of buildings have been tentatively identified by archaeologists as hostels. In the present case there are almost no architectural remains but only an expanse of white mosaic floor in which a six-line inscription was set within a tabula ansata. The inscription faced south and related to no wall, stylobate or threshold in its vicinity, both indications that it was not laid in a church. Yet the building belonged to a monastery, for the inscription reads: »In the time of our most pious emperor Flavius Justinian Constantine, the most God-loving priest and abbot, established and raised also this entire building, in the fourteenth indiction«. This was most like the hegumen of the Nea mentioned in a rather similar inscription on the southern wall of the great cistern in the foundations of the Nea Church, tentatively dated to 549/550. The newly discovered inscription is dated 550/551 and indicates that the abbot wished to enlarge the available hospitality and so the influence of his monastery – or perhaps that in 550/551 the hospice of the Nea on the cardo was not yet functional⁵².

43 Anonymous of Piacenza 46–47 (152 f. Geyer). The pilgrimage of the Piacentine party took place ca. 570.

44 Adamnan, *De locis sanctis* 2,28–29 (220 f. Bieler). Arculfus' pilgrimage took place ca. 681–684 and was narrated by the Scottish abbot Adamnan at the end of the seventh century.

45 This was the route followed by Simeon, later nicknamed the Fool, his friend John and their families, on their way back to Emesa from a pilgrimage to the holy places: Leontius, *Vita Symeonis Sali* (58 f. Festugière/Rydén).

46 IGLS XIV/2 no. 534. The remains of an ancient paved road were observed between Kafr Shams and eş-Şanamein: Ewing, *Journey* 358. See also Isaac, *Limits of Empire Maps III, IV*.

47 IGLS XIV/2 no. 592a. I confess, however, that I do not have complete confidence on the genuine antiquity of this inscription, which Sartre had no opportunity to check properly but could only photograph from a distance.

48 Cyril of Scythopolis, *Vita Joannis Hesychastae* 4 (204 Schwartz). For the few available details and references on the excavation see Ovadhia, *Corpus* 81–82 no. 70a, and for the inscription CIIP I/2 no. 846.

49 Reich/Shukrun, *Western Extramural Quarter*.

50 CIIP I/2 no. 810a.

51 CIIP I/2 no. 810.

52 For the inscription of the Nea, see CIIP I/2 no. 800, and for the new discovery Di Segni/Gellman, *Justinian Inscription*.

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Epigraphische Belege für die Pilgerfahrt zu den Heiligen Stätten

Dieser Beitrag befasst sich mit epigraphischen Belegen für die Pilgerfahrt zu den Heiligen Stätten, nämlich Inschriften, in denen Hospize für Reisende auf dem Weg nach und von Jerusalem genannt sind. Der erste Teil sammelt Belege aus literarischen Quellen, in denen Unterkünfte für Reisende entlang der Straßen und an den Reisezielen beschrieben werden. Die griechischen und lateinischen Begriffe, die von den Quellen für diese Unterkünfte verwendet werden, werden identifiziert und es werden einige Beobachtungen zu den von diesen Institutionen angebotenen Einrichtungen und den verschiedenen Funktionen, die sie erfüllen konnten, angestellt. Der zweite Teil stellt die epigraphischen Belege für Hospize im Heiligen Land vor, die im Gegensatz zu der Fülle der literarischen und papyrologischen Dokumentation spärlich sind, und untersucht die Verbindung der wenigen Belege mit dem Netz der Pilgerwege.

Epigraphical Evidence for Pilgrimage to the Holy Places

This paper deals with one particular type of epigraphical evidence for pilgrimage to the Holy Places, namely, inscriptions identifying hospices for travellers on the routes leading to and from Jerusalem. The first part of the article collects evidence from the literary sources describing lodgings for travellers along the roads and at their destinations. The Greek and Latin terms used by the sources for these accommodations are identified, and some observations are offered about the facilities provided by these institutions and the different functions they could fulfil. The second part of the paper presents the epigraphical evidence for hospices in the Holy Land – which is scanty, in contrast to the wealth of literary and papyrological documentation – and examines the connection of the few occurrences to the network of pilgrimage routes.

Témoins épigraphiques du pèlerinage aux Lieux saints

Cet article traite d'un type particulier de témoins épigraphiques du pèlerinage aux Lieux saints, c'est-à-dire des inscriptions mentionnant les hospices pour les voyageurs en route vers ou venant de Jérusalem. La première partie de cet article rassemble les témoignages de sources littéraires qui décrivent des gîtes sur la route et aux destinations respectives des voyageurs. On a identifié les termes grecs et latins utilisés pour ces gîtes et fait quelques observations sur les aménagements offerts par ces institutions et les différentes fonctions qu'elles pouvaient remplir. La deuxième partie présente les preuves épigraphiques de la présence d'hospices en Terre sainte, qui sont rares contrairement aux quantités de documents littéraires et papyrologiques, et examine les liens existant entre les quelques témoins et le réseau des chemins de pèlerinage.

Traduction: Y. Gautier