

Historical and Biographical, V (1983), V, 475, 13; A.H. Gardiner, *Ramesseide Administrative Documents* (1948), 8a.

p. 271: The determinative ‘lotus flower’ after ‘šnb’, ‘health’, may foreshadow the development in Demotic.

p. 272: for the textile ‘bnš’ cf. A.H. Gardiner, *Hieratic Papyri in the British Museum, Third Series, Chester Beatty Gift* (1935), p. 57 n. 8; F. Daumas, *Les Mammisis de Dendera* (1959), p. 417 n. 4.

p. 318: the translation of ‘tm.tw m ḏ.t=s’ should read ‘who is whole in her body’.

The book presents a convincing and thorough study. The philological challenges are mastered very well. The length of the commentary is fully sufficient. The volume can be recommended without hesitation.

Bonn

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GRAFFITI FROM SMYRNA

BAGNALL (R.S.), CASAGRANDE-KIM (R.), ERSOY (A.), TANRIVER (C.) (edd.) *Graffiti from the Basilica in the Agora of Smyrna*. With a contribution by Burak Yolaçan. Pp. xii + 488, figs, b/w & colour ills, b/w & colour maps. New York: Institute for the Study of the Ancient World/New York University Press, 2016. Cased, US\$85. ISBN: 978-1-479864-64-5.

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This volume contains the publication of the graffiti discovered during the excavation of the basement level of the Basilica in the Agora of ancient Smyrna since 2003. The introduction offers shorter contributions on the history of excavations in Smyrna since the 1930s (by E.); a description of the Basilica and its phases (B. Yolaçan); the general characteristics of the graffiti (by B.); the pictorial graffiti (by C.-K.); dating the graffiti (B.); palaeography (B.); language (B.); ‘healing of eyes’ (B.); ‘Baite’ (B.); Christianity (B.); civic pride (B.); isopsephisms of desire (B.); and word-play (B.). The graffiti and drawings are presented on pp. 55–462. The book closes with a bibliography, index of Greek words, index of subjects and motifs of drawings, general index and concordances (*SEG* 61¹ with the volume, piers and bays with the volume). Black-and-white and/or colour photographs document each inscription and drawing in the catalogue.

The Basilica stands on the northern side of the Agora, and measuring 161.4 m by 29.3 m, it is one of the largest basilicas in Asia Minor. It has a cryptoporticus with four galleries and three naves on the ground level, the middle one larger than the side ones. Integrated with two stoas (eastern and western ones), it creates a continuous covered space around the open area. The main hall is surrounded by piers, with arches in between on three sides. A tribunal occupied its western end; there was a second story over both side aisles,

¹*SEG* 61, 952–76 = R.S. Bagnall, *Everyday Writing in the Graeco-Roman East* (2011), pp. 7–26 (a selection of graffiti from the Basilica).

while the main hall supported a clerestory. The Basilica succeeded a stoa building constructed in the second century BC. At the end of the first or the beginning of the second century AD the existing two-gallery stoa was widened to four galleries for a probably one-story building (cf. *ISmyrna* 697: the first mention of the βασιλική, in AD 124–138). After the major earthquake of 177 AD (cf. *ISmyrna* 628: the inscription on the architrave) the Basilica took its final form and, with minor interventions, remained in use until its abandonment in the seventh century AD.

The cryptoporticus with four galleries contains 73 smaller rooms in the third and fourth galleries facing the north of the building, while there are no rooms in the first and second galleries not separated from each other with any walls. Most of the graffiti were found on the walls and piers (especially the bays between the piers on the northern wall of the second gallery) in the first and second galleries.

The 177 written graffiti from the Basilica contain both inscriptions incised in plaster (or stone) and those written with pen or brush (*dipinti*). Some are unintelligible, while others, both verbal and pictorial, fall in the following categories: sex, love, gladiators and games, ships, word games, thanksgiving to gods and civic pride. Of the 155 extant pictorial graffiti, two-thirds were painted in black and the remaining third incised onto dry plaster, starting in AD 177 and ending in the fourth/fifth century AD. It is generally difficult to identify a possible relation between texts and images. They were probably created by skilled and trained professionals, not simple passers-by, especially the gladiatorial combat scenes concentrated in Bay 28 and Bay 29. The most common themes among the pictorial graffiti are gladiators, ships, decorative motifs, portraits of individuals, phalli, animals and architecture.

The palaeography of the ink graffiti suggests a date range from the last quarter of the second century to the early part of the fourth, while the incised graffiti seem to fall to the earlier part of this range.

Because of their bad state of preservation, most of the inscribed graffiti from the Basilica present unsurmountable difficulties of decipherment and understanding. It is rare to get some sense from the preserved letters, so that the end-result of the serious work invested in this volume is somewhat disappointing. The most notable exceptions are the acclamations featuring Ephesos, Sardeis and Tralleis (T.9.1, T.13.1, TP.105.1), the dedications recording the healing of eyes (T.16.1 and T.27.1–2 are completely preserved), a greeting of one Ἐλάτινος (so edd. pr., but probably to be understood as Ἐλενος) (TP96.2) and good wishes for Sabinus and Eustathius (TP.128.1). Especially intriguing are the three graffiti featuring the mysterious βαίτη (T.8.1, T.9.5, T.27.1). According to the editors, the Smyrnaean *baite* seems to refer to the spring at the west end of the basement of the Basilica, possibly personalised or divinised. We propose to suspend judgement on this until more evidence surfaces in Smyrna itself or elsewhere in the ancient world.

This new volume on the graffiti discovered at the basement level of the Basilica in the Smyrnaean Agora is the result of serious efforts on the part of its authors to decipher these interesting but much damaged inscriptions and drawings. The authors deserve praise for their patience and persistence in compiling this well-organised volume that will be much appreciated by all researchers interested in ancient graffiti.

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