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THE JEWS IN NORTH AFRICA. FIVE NOTES. ¹

JAIME CURBERA

1. The text of this inscription is known from three copies made between 1830 and 1850 in Cuicul (today's Djemila, Algeria), ca 60 km from the sea in the fertile mountains of Eastern Numidia. All are reproduced in different volumes of the *CIL VIII* – one by the Prussian officer von Grabow (left), another found in a "manuscrit d'inscriptions africaines" owned by Charles Lenormant (middle), and a copy made by A. H. A. Delamare² (right). The last is the best one, as it not only transcribes the words, but also the shape of the individual letters. The text has been republished by Hans-Georg Pflaum, *Inscriptions latines de l'Algérie* II 3 (2003) no. 7828.

ΣΑΛΛΟΥΣ
Σ ΑΦΡΙΚΑΝ
ΠΑΤΡΡΠΑ
ΙΟΝΥ · Κ · ΗΜΗΔΙ
ΗΟΝΣΕΥΑΟΡΙΑ.

CIL VIII 1 p. 708

ΣΑΛΛΟΥΣ
Σ ΑΦΡΙΚΑΝ
ΠΑΤΡΡ ΠΑ
ΙΟΝΝΝΗΜΗΔΙ
ΗΟΝΙΣΕΥΟΛΟΡΙΑ

CIL VIII 10895

ΣΑΛΛΟΥΣ
Σ ΑΦΡΙΚΑΝ
ΠΑΤΡΡΠΑ
ΙΟΝΜΝΗΜΗΔΙ
ΗΟΝΙΣΕΥΟΡΙΑ

CIL VIII 20140

¹ Critical overviews on the Jews of North Africa can be found in: Y. Le Bohec, "Inscriptions juives et judaïsantes de l'Afrique romaine", *AntAFr* 17 (1981) 165-207; id., "Juifs et judaïsants dans l'Afrique romaine. Remarques onomastiques", *ibid.* 209-29; id., "Bilan des recherches sur le judaïsme au Maghreb dans l'Antiquité", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 6 (1993) 551-66; H. Solin, "Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt", *ANRW* II: 29.2 (1983) 770-79, and "Gli Ebrei d'Africa: una nota", *L'Africa Romana* VIII (1990) 615-23; J.-M. Lassère, *Ubique Populus*, Paris 1977, 413-26, and "Judaïsme", *Encyclopédie Berbère* XXVI (2004) 3939-951.

² Adolphe Hedwige Alphonse Delamare (1793-1861); on him see now M. Dondin-Payre, *Le capitaine Delamare. La réussite de l'archéologie romaine au sein de la commission d'exploration scientifique d'Algérie*, Paris 1994.

Theodor Mommsen integrated line 3 as πατρὶ πατρίδος and concluded that this was the inscription of a Roman emperor; the name Ἀφρικανός in the second line made him think either of Gordian I or his son and colleague Gordian II, emperors for 20 days in 238 AD.³ That is very unlikely, if only because (as we know today) *Sallustios* was not one of Gordian's names. Mommsen's view has been nevertheless accepted by Pflaum ("il s'agit des deux Gordiens père et fils, qui portent ici le gentilice *Salloustios* au lieu de *Sempronios* et son qualifiés de pères de la patrie"), but it was doubted by Arthur Stein, *PIR*² A 833 ("vehementer dubito"). In fact this is a different kind of inscription. In line 4 editors of *CIL* VIII recognized the word μνήμη. With a small change in l. 5 (Γ instead of P) we can read the following text:

Σαλλούσ[τιο]-
 ζ Ἀφρικαν[ός]
 πατήρ πα[τέ]-
 ρον· μνήμη δικ-
 ήον ἰς εὐλογία[ν].

The formula μνήμη δικαίων εἰς εὐλογίαν (Prov. 10, 7) and the office of πατήρ πατέρων are well-documented in Jewish inscriptions of the Diaspora (cf. *JJWE* I pp. 328 and 332; II 538 and 540) leave no doubt that this is the epitaph of a Jew. The date cannot be determined with certainty, but the lettering, language (η = αι, ι = ει, ο = ω) and the onomastics are compatible with the third or fourth cent. AD. To find a Greek Jewish epitaph in Cuicul, a city where Latin, Punic and probably also a native Libyan language were the spoken languages, is remarkable, but does not lack parallels in Africa. In Tripoli (Oea) we have the Greek epitaph of the local Jewish presbytera Μαζαυζαλα, a Libyan or Berber name,⁴ and in Volubilis (Mauretania Tingitana) we have the Greek epitaph of a pater synagogae (III-IV AD): ὧδε κοιμᾶτε Καικιλιανός ὁ προτοπολίτες πατήρ τῆς συναγωγῆς τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἡτῶν με' μένας ἡ' ἐμέρας γ' (*AE* 1969-70, 748). Due to the use of Greek some scholars have thought Caecilianus to be a foreigner,⁵ but ono-

³ Th. Mommsen, "Die Namen des Kaisers Balbinus", *Zeitschr. Num.* 8 (1881) 26-28.

⁴ K. Jongeling, *North African Names from Latin Sources*, Leiden 1994, 83-91 and XIII: "normally this element (*mas-*) is explained as a noun to be compared to Touareg *mess*, master".

⁵ Thus E. Gonzalbes Gravioto, "Los judíos en Mauritania Tingitana", *Studi Magrebini* 11 (1979)

mastics contradict this, for the names *Sallustius*, *Africanus* and *Caecilianus* are common in the African provinces.⁶ Contrary to what scholars once believed, Latin was not the only language of African Jews.⁷ Interestingly enough, these three Greek inscriptions (from Oea, Cuicul and Volubilis) are the only epitaphs of local Jewish officials in Africa we know of.⁸ Although Latin (judging from the inscriptions) was the everyday language of African Jews, Greek was the language of the cult and liturgy. As a sacred language, it was more prestigious than Latin and it is only natural that the epitaphs of Jewish local officials were written in Greek. A practical implication is that the use of Greek in Africa may indicate Jewishness. Thus, I would not be surprised if the inscriptions from Thuburnica (Numidia) *CIL* VIII 25739 T. Σαλλούστιος (same family name as the πατήρ πατέρων of Cuicul) and the intriguing 25736 πόλεως εὐχή ἐπὶ Διφίλου ἀρχάρχοντος (sic) turned out to be Jewish as well.⁹

2. This epitaph from Carthage, found "vers la mer dans le quartier du Forum", was first published by Alfred-Louis Delattre, *Cosmos* 159 (1888) 297 n. 159 (= *AE* 1888, 38; *Dict. Arch. Chr. Lit.* VIII 231) and *L'épigraphie chrétienne à Carthage* (Paris 1891) 11 n. 5, and later on by J. Schmidt, *CIL* VIII 14191 (Diehl, *Incr. Lat. Chr. vet.* 4947A) and by A. Merlin, *Inscriptions Latines de la Tunisie* (Paris 1944) n. 948.



151; H. Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa* I, Leiden 1974, 68.

⁶ Cf. *CIL* VIII Suppl. 5 p. 80; A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas-Empire I: Afrique*, Paris 1982, 165-80. *Sallustius* is documented for Jews in Rome: *JJWE* II 553 *Sallusti Libianus et Iuda*.

⁷ Cf. J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain* I, Paris 1914, 367: "en Afrique, à l'époque chrétienne (...) les Juifs parlent tous latin et leurs inscriptions sont toutes en latin sans aucun mélange de grec."

⁸ An *archosynagogus* and a *pater synagogae* are mentioned in the Latin epitaphs of their sons: *CIL* VIII 12457 b (Naro) and *CIL* VIII 8423 (Setifis).

⁹ On these inscriptions see also Lassère, *Ubique Populus* 67 and 124. On 25736 cf. H. Dessau's comment in the *CIL*'s edition: "mira omnia, tam πόλεως εὐχή, quo votum publice a Thuburnicensibus significare vix credi potest, quam ἀρχάρχοντος vocabulum, hoc fortasse e Punico versum."

Despite its brevity, the text has caused difficulty – "non intellego" (Diehl), "explicatio prorsus incerta" (*CIL* VIII Suppl. 8, 5 p. 109), "cura parentium?" (Heraeus, *ThLL* X 1, 96), "sens mystérieux" (Merlin). The right interpretation was suggested by Jean Juster (II 231), who saw here a translation of Hebrew *Malkha* (= Lat. *Regina*)¹⁰ and compared it to the name Κυραπαντώ in the Jewish inscription from Arcadia *IG* V 1, 1349 Κυραπαντώ θυγάτηρ Μαρωνίου. Indeed, *Quira* is only a transcription of Greek κυρία / κυρά (for Latin *qui* = Greek κυ, cf. *Anquira*, *quimum*, *Quirilus*, etc.),¹¹ whereas *Painton* is most likely a scribal error for Greek Πάντων. One can compare misspellings such as *probaimus*, *curaivit*, *nuntiaibat*, *taim* or *pastrum* in Livius' Codex Vindobonensis (late 5th cent. AD).¹² We have therefore the epitaph of a woman called Κυρὰ Πάντων or Κυραπάντων, 'Mistress of all'. This name is not only documented in Arcadia but also in six Greek papyri from Egypt ranging from the 5th to the 7th cent. AD.¹³ Interestingly, there is an exact parallel of this name in a later period. The Genizah of the Synagogue in old Cairo (founded AD 882) has preserved a vast collection of documents (most of them written in Arabic with Hebrew characters) that have shed light on the life of the Mediterranean Jewry from the 10th until the 13th centuries. In his discussion of the names of women in the Geniza documents, Shlomo D. Goitein draws our attention to a curious phenomenon: "The third, and most surprising aspect of the female Geniza nomenclature is the prevalence in it of the ideas of ruling, overcoming, and victory. Most of these names are composed with the word *sitt*, "mistress", "female ruler", originally an honorary title added to a name, which became the personal name of a girl given to her at birth (...) A most common female name in the Geniza is *Sitt al-Kull*, "She who Rules over Everyone," paralleled by *Sitt al-Jamī*, which means the same, *Sitt al-Nas*, "Mistress over Mankind", *Sitt al-Zamān*, "Mistress of her Time", and *Sitt al-Aqrān*, "Ruling over her Peers."¹⁴ The names *Sitt al-Kull* and

¹⁰ For the Hebrew names of these meaning see J. J. Stam, "Hebräische Frauennamen", in *Hebräische Wortforschung. Festschrift W. Baumgartner*, Leiden 1967, 326-27.

¹¹ F. Biville, *Les emprunts du latin au grec: approche phonétique* I, Louvain 1990, 279-83.

¹² Collected by Hugo Schuchardt, *Der Vocalismus des Vulgärlateins* I, Leipzig 1866, 191*.

¹³ See H. Cadell, "Papyrologica", *CdE* 42 (1967) 192-193, and J.-L. Fournet and J. Gascou, "À propos de PSI IX 1061 descr.", *ZPE* 135 (2001) 147-48.

¹⁴ S. D. Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society. The Jewish Communities of the Arab world as Portrayed in the Documents of the Cairo Geniza* III, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1978, 316.

Sitt al-Jama, one can see, correspond literally to Greek Κυρία Πάντων and confirm a certain Jewish predilection for this name. But the name was used also by Christians (*PSI* 183, *P. Harris* I 88, *POxy* 1042, *PLond* 113), just as *Sitt al-Kull* and *Sitt al-Jamī* were used by Muslims. We note that the feminine Πάντων in the Christian epitaph *SB* IV 7321 (Κ(ύρι)ε ἀνάπαυσσον τὴν δούλην σου Πάντωνα) originated after the first part of the name was interpreted as a title (as in κυρὰ Μαρία, κυρὰ Ματρώνα, etc.) and the last part (originally a plural genitive) as a simple name. This is a known phenomenon. Thus *Sitt* is often omitted in the Geniza texts and strange forms of female names result, such as Muluk, "Kings", or names of countries, cities, or peoples. The same phenomenon is documented for Spanish female names such as (*María de los*) *Reyes* or (*María de los*) *Dolores*.

3. An ethnic Νευθηνός is documented in an 3rd – 4th cent. epitaph from Carthage (Jewish necropolis of Gammarth), published by Jean Ferron, *Cahiers de Byrsa* 6 (1956) 116: Ἀγάπης υἱὸς Ἄννιανοῦ Νευθηνοῦ. Because of the use of Greek and the ending -ηνός (as in Περγαμηνός, Λαοδικηνός, etc.), the first idea is that the deceased's father came from the East (even if so far no candidate is available),¹⁵ but this not the only possibility. On the one hand, the use of Greek among African Jews does not necessarily point to a foreign origin, as we have seen. On the other hand, although Greek ethnics in -ηνός are characteristic for the Greek East, a similar suffix is also documented for Africa. The ethnic of *Byzacium* is *Byzacenus*. That of *Sabrata* is usually *Sabratensis*, but *Sabratenus* for a bishop of c. 450 AD;¹⁶ that of *Thabraca* (Numidia), normally *Thabracensis*, is documented as Θαβρακένος in Rome (*JWE* II 508); In some cases we may have a rendering of the Italic suffix -īnus (cf. *Hadrinetinus*, *Thevestinus*, etc.), but in other cases it is doubtless a different suffix, cf. App. Probi 48 *byzacenus non byzacinus*. There is no African place name in Νευθ- (or Νεφθ- in late Greek pronunciation) from which an ethnic Νευθηνός can be regularly derived, but, interestingly, two are vaguely similar. Present-day Nefta, ancient Nepte, is an oasis settlement and a caravan centre on the way from Thelepte to Tacapa. The known ethnics so far are *Neptensis*, *Neptitanus* and *Nebbitanus* (Mesnage

¹⁵ Cf. J. and L. Robert, *Bull.ép.* 1962 n. 372: "nous ne serions pas trop étonnés si l'ethnique Neuthénos se retrouvait en Syrie ou Palestine."

¹⁶ J. Mesnage, *L'Afrique Chrétienne*, Paris 1912, 136.

op. cit. 125) but Νευθηνός (for **Neptenus* or *Neptinus*?), could be a further variant.¹⁷ The second possibility is that this is the ethnic of Leptis Magna. The Chronicle of Hippolytus (§ 216) and works that rely on Hippolytus mention the Νεβδηνοί as one of the five Ἄφρων ἔθνη. The *Liber Generationis*, also relying on Hippolytus, has *Lebdeni* (v.l. *Lepdini*, *Lepteni*), an indication that in all these cases the ethnic of Leptis was intended.¹⁸ The form Νεβδηνοί is probably not a corruption, but rather a vulgar variant of *Lebdeni*, as shown by the similar case *leptis* (for *neptis*, fem. of *nepos*) at CGL V 307 and 370. Thus, Νευθηνός in Carthage could be a testimony of the different local forms of the place name Leptis. Until a clear solution is found for the homeland of Ἀννιανός, the possibility that he was from Africa should remain open.

4. The Acta Marcianae (*Acta SS Ian.* I 569) tell us how, during the reign of Diocletian (284 - 305), an archisynagogus from Caesarea (today's Cherchel, Algeria) called *Budarius* incited the mobs against the Christian Marciana – and how he was punished by God. The name *Budarius* (v.l. *Bindarium*, *Baudarium*) is new but it is correctly formed on *buda*, which means a kind of sedge (*Typha augustifolia* L.) and mats made with it (CGL V 212, 39; 586, 39). Augustine (*ep.* 88, 6 and *ep.* 105, 3) mentions a rough garment of *buda* (*buda vestitus*) in which the catholic Restitutus was dressed after he had been beaten by Donatist clerics (in another version of the same story Augustine uses the expression *amictus iunceus*).¹⁹ This is an African loanword in Latin, as indicated by the fact that it is mainly used by African authors; it is present in African place-names such as *Tabuda* (Tab. Peut.) and Ἰαβουδίς (Ptol.); and is still used today in Northern African dialects.²⁰ *Budarius* is the term (missing from our dictionaries) denoting

¹⁷ On *Nepte* / *Nefta* see A. Pellegrin, *Essai sur les noms de lieux d'Algérie et de Tunisie*, Tunis 1949, 122, and P. Troussel, "Nefta", *Encyclopédie Berbère* XXXIII (2012) 5378–5380. In 1931 Nefta had a Jewish community of 154 members: R. Attal – C. Sitbon, *Regards sur les Juifs de Tunisie*, Paris 1979, 294.

¹⁸ *MGH* aa IX 109 § 211. Cf. R. Helm, *Hippolytus Werke* IV, Berlin 1955, 36 ad loc. ("das richtige ist Λεβδηνοί, Lebda ist die arabische Aussprache für Leptis"); J. Desanges, *Catalogue des tribus africaines*, Dakar 1962, 129.

¹⁹ On Restitutus see A. Mandouze, *Prosopographie chrétienne du Bas Empire* I, Paris 1982, 972.

²⁰ On *buda* see the discussion by H. Schuchardt, "Zur Wortgeschichte", *ZRPh* 33 (1909) 347-51; V. Bertoldi, "Metodi vecchi e nuovi nella ricerca etimologica", *Arch. Glott. Ital.* 36 (1951) 15-20; S. Lancel, "La fin et la survie de la latinité en Afrique du Nord", *REL* 59 (1981) 293; J. N. Adams, *The*

the maker of garments or mats of *buda*, here used as personal name. A related term *budinarius* found in a letter of Cyprian (*ep.* 42), the 3rd cent. bishop of Carthage, is formed on the adjective **budinus* ('made of buda'), just as *porcinarius* is formed on on adjective *porcinus*, *-a*, *-um*. Reed-manufacturing has been an important industry over the centuries in the African marshlands. These products (which are mentioned in the documents of the Cairo Genizah) are still made today.²¹ The name of the unlucky archisynagogus Budarius is a further testimony for this industry.

5. We know very little about the leader (βασιλεύς) of the Jewish revolt of 115-117 AD in Cyrene and Egypt.²² Eusebios of Caesarea (c. 260-339 AD), the main source for the revolt, gives Λουκούας as his name. Authors relying on Eusebios have banalized the name as *Luca* (Rufinus) or Λούκιος (Nikephoros). At Dio Cassius (Xiphil.) 68,32 his name is Ἀνδρέας, probably because (as Ulrich Wilcken pointed out) he had a double name – Ἀνδρέας ὁ Λουκούας or something similar. Wilcken's short comment is telling: "Der Name Λουκούας ist jedenfalls ungriechisch. Wahrscheinlich ist er semitisch. Freilich wird sich, wie Hr. College S. Fränkel²³ mir freundlichst mittheilt, eine schlagende etymologische Ableitung aus einer semitischen Wurzel kaum finden lassen. Der Möglichkeit sind mehrere".²⁴ Unfortunately no indigenous name (Punic or Libyan) comes even remotely close.²⁵ A purely formal explanation is that Λουκούας could be based on the stem of Latin *Lucius* with the same ending as Ἀγαθούας in Scythia or Ἀφοούας in Egypt (expanded forms of Ἀγαθοῦς and Ἀφοῦς), but this is perhaps pushing Greek morphology a little too far: this ending (a suffix conglomerate) is not at all common, it has so far not been found with Latin stems, and is not documented in Cyrene. An alternative, as yet unconsidered, possi-

Regional Diversification of Latin, Cambridge 2007, 522-28.

²¹ Goitein, *I.c.* IV (1983) 127; A. Trutter, *Flora economica della Libia*, Roma 1925, 123 with plate 58 ("capanna-telaio per l'intreccio delle stuoie di giunchi").

²² Eusebios, *hist. eccl.* IV 2, 3-4 (p. 302 Schwarz). Cf. A. Stein, *RE* XIII (1927) 1802-1803, and M. Pucci Ben Teev, *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil 116/117 CE*, Leuven 2005, 143-90.

²³ The Semitist Sigmund Fränkel (1855-1909).

²⁴ U. Wilcken, "Ein Aktenstück zum jüdischen Kriege Trajans", *Hermes* 27 (1892) 464-80 esp. 480.

²⁵ For indigenous names in Roman Africa, see G. Camps, "Liste onomastique libyque", *AntAfr* 38-39 (2002-2003) 211-57.

bility is to see the adaptation of a Latin name, a case similar to Ἀγρικόλαος (= *Agricola*), Κράτιος (= *Claudius*), Τραγιανός (= *Traianus*), or Σατορνίλος (= *Saturninus*).²⁶ Λουκούας may indeed be a mangled form of Latin *loquax*, 'talkative' (also 'eloquent'). The stem was at some point identified with that of *Lucius* ~ Λούκιος (Λουκᾶς, Λουκιανός, etc.), a widespread name (cf. Λούκιος ὁ Κυρηναῖος *Act. Apost.* 13, 1), but this was a false etymology by someone who did not know the Latin word – either the copyists of Eusebios or the Cyrenaean and Egyptian rebels. The ending has been adapted to Greek morphology, but the change was probably favoured by the shift *-x* > *-s* in spoken Latin, as in *mordas* < *mordax* or *simples* < *simplex*.²⁷ The same spelling, in any case, is found in Αὔδαξ = *Audax* at Diod. Sic. 33,21 (acc. Αὔδακα at Appian., *Hisp.* 74 § 313). Despite these differences the overall shape of Λουκούας still hints at Latin *loquax* rather than a Greek or a Latin name. This hypothesis assumes that Λουκούας ~ *Loquax* was born or grew up in a Latin-speaking environment and supports Wilcken's idea that his official name was Ἀνδρέας and Λουκούας a nickname. It could also give weight to Wilcken's attempt to identify Λουκούας, the king of the Jews, with a person mocked as "the king of the stage and the mime" (τὸν ἀπὸ σκηνῆς καὶ ἐκ μείμου βασιλέα) in an edict of Marcus Rutilius Lupus, the prefect of Egypt during the Jewish uprising.²⁸

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²⁶ See Th. Eckinger, *Die Orthographie lateinischer Wörter in griechischen Inschriften*, Munich 1900, passim.

²⁷ Cf. V. Väänänen, *Le latin vulgaire des inscriptions pompéiennes*, Berlin 1966, 65. For the examples from African inscriptions see *CIL* VIII 5, p. 312 (*innos* = *innox*, *Simples* = *Simplex*, *subornatrix* = *subornatrix*, *Felis* = *Felix*).

²⁸ H. Musurillo, *Acta Alexandrinorum*, Leipzig 1961, IX col. I = *CPJ* II nr. 158 a I (with the editors' commentary).