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CORPUS INSCRIPTIONUM JUDAEAE/PALAESTINAE

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## CORPUS INSCRIPTIONUM JUDAEAE/PALAESTINAE

Anyone involved in the study of ancient Judaea/Palaestina and its vicinity has felt the need for a comprehensive work containing the published inscriptions in various languages found in the region. *CIL* III contains a mere fraction of the total number of Latin inscriptions now known. Numerous texts in Greek, Latin and various Semitic languages have been published over the years, some of them in well-known and easily accessible works, but many in obscure or hardly accessible periodicals. *SEG* and *Année Epigraphique* cover only part of the period in which inscriptions from the region were published. Numerous inscriptions have been discovered or excavated, but never published properly. Again, many texts have been edited in exemplary manner with all the accompanying information available, but others have not been published satisfactorily at all. Consequently, scholars who need such material spend much time searching for texts that should be easily available. They miss important information and make errors because the necessary editorial work has not been carried out for the inscriptions they use.

For the neighbouring countries French scholars have long been working on a corpus of Greek and Latin inscriptions, and their endeavours have resulted in an impressive series of volumes. For Judaea/Palaestina there was, so far, not even a concrete plan to fill the gap. This was all the more regrettable, as the material concerns not only those regionally interested, but students of a great variety of related subjects, such as the history of the ancient Near East, ancient Jewish history and early Christianity, and, of course, historians of the Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine periods.

A start has now been made towards the publication of a comprehensive corpus of all inscriptions from the Hellenistic, Roman and Early Byzantine periods, found in the area. The territory covered is the strip between the Mediterranean and the river Jordan, the Negev, and the Golan heights. The geographical range is determined by practical considerations such as the accessibility of inscriptions in musea and in the field, although the area does not coincide with any ancient Roman or Byzantine province. Unlike traditional corpora of inscriptions it is intended to include inscriptions in all languages represented: not only Greek and Latin, but also Semitic languages, primarily Hebrew, Aramaic, Samaritan, Nabataean, Syriac, Thamudic and Safaitic. Arabic inscriptions are excluded since these are being collected and edited in a separate work. Clearly, the inclusion of inscriptions in a variety of languages will complicate the production and editing of the work. The advantages, however, are obvious: many inscriptions are bilingual and the publication of one part only has disadvantages which need not be spelled out. Individual sites have produced inscriptions in several languages and scripts and the combined publication of all ancient texts is essential. The corpus will contain the usual categories: inscriptions on stone, such as altars, statue-bases, buildings, gravestones and ossuaries, graffiti on rocks and plaster, inscriptions on metal (weights, jewellery), and also ostraca. In accordance with usual practice, coins and papyri are excluded, since these are best treated in specialised works.

Roman milestones are included as a separate category. Many milestones found in the area are anepigraphic, either because the inscription is no longer visible, or because the stones never were inscribed. Since such stones if found *in situ* are essential for the reconstruction of the Roman road-network in the area, they will all be listed in the present work. Thus the corpus will include part of the material that has been collected over the past two-and-a-half decades for eventual inclusion in *CIL* XVII. The format for this part of the corpus will be that adopted by the editors of *CIL* XVII.

Another project that will be partially incorporated in the present endeavour is the production, currently being prepared, of a totally revised and updated version of the Palestinian section in Vol. 2 of J.-B. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum. Recueil des inscriptions juives qui vont du IIIe siècle avant Jésus-Christ au VIIe siècle de notre ère* 2 vols. (Rome 1936-52, rev. edn. B. Lifshitz, New York, 1975).

Clearly the quantities of material represented by the various categories of inscriptions differ widely and more work has been carried out on some parts than on others. As a first step photocopies of all relevant published material are being prepared and collected in two separate locations (Cologne and Jerusalem). The Israel Antiquities Authority is generously assisting in providing photographs of inscriptions in the archives of the Authority. A uniform database has been prepared for the use of all contributors to the corpus. The programme employed is FileMaker which allows the use of cross-platform operating systems (Macintosh and Microsoft Windows) as well as the insertion of texts in Latin, Greek and Semitic alphabets.

Given the variety and quantity of the material, the work will be carried out by a group of specialists in the relevant fields from several universities: The Hebrew University, Tel Aviv University and the University of Cologne. They are, in alphabetical order: Hannah M. Cotton, Leah Di Segni, Werner Eck, Benjamin Isaac, Jonathan Price, Israel Roll, Alla Stein, Vasilios Tzaferis, Nurit Tsafrir, Yoram Tsafrir, Ada Yardeni. The project is supported by a grant from the German Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development (GIF).

The published work will have the usual format of a modern corpus of inscriptions. It will offer brief introductions on all the relevant sites and find-spots, diplomatic transcriptions and/or full illustrations, in so far as these are available, edited text and English translation, and brief comments. The work will be arranged on a geographical and topographical basis. It is envisaged to publish the corpus both as a traditionally printed book and in electronic form.

Any scholars interested in contributing to or in being associated with the work of this project are invited to get in touch with [corpus@h2.hum.huji.ac.il](mailto:corpus@h2.hum.huji.ac.il).

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