A New Jewish Epitaph Commemorating Care for Orphans

Lincoln H. Blumell
Brigham Young University
210F JSB, Provo, Utah 84602
lincoln_blumell@byu.edu

Abstract

This article presents an edition of a previously unpublished Greek epitaph in the J. Willard Marriot Library at the University of Utah. The inscription commemorates a woman by the name of Helene who is identified as a Ἰουδαία and who was remembered for showing love to orphans. While Helene is identified as a Ἰουδαία she is also styled as an Ἄμα, a title that otherwise only occurs for certain Christian women in late antique Egypt. Thus, this inscription appears to resist a straightforward classification as it employs terminology that straddles religious categories.[1]

Keywords

Inscriptions – epitaphs – Egypt – Roman period

In 1989 the J. Willard Marriot Library of the University of Utah was bequeathed a Greek inscription from the collection of the late Aziz Atiya.[2] Regrettably, the catalogue record by Atiya is very sparse and only mentions the date of acquisition by the library and provides a very brief (inaccurate) description and analysis of the piece.[3] While the provenance of the inscription is not given, it almost certainly comes from Egypt where Atiya, a native, frequently visited and procured various Arabic, Coptic, and Greek artifacts.[4] Though the inscription is fairly small and only contains a six-line epitaph for a woman named Helene, there are a number of interesting features about the epitaph that make it significant: (1) the deceased, Helene, bears the epithet "Jew" (Ἰουδαία) so that this inscription is one of only a handful of funerary inscriptions that attest this designation;[5] (2) the epitaph commemorates Helene's love for orphans, a noteworthy feature of this inscription that is not attested elsewhere; and (3) Helene is given the title "Ama" (ἄμα). This last point is especially significant because the title is otherwise only used for Christian holy women or monastics (i.e., nuns) in late antique Egypt where it appears with some frequency in Greek and Coptic inscriptions and papyri. Thus, while

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2   Atiya (1898-1988) joined the faculty at the University of Utah in 1959 as a professor of Languages and History and was instrumental in establishing its Middle East Center.

3   The catalogue record reads as follows: "Coptic inscription in a number of lines on an antique stone slab, divided into two sections but complete. Dating from the dawn of the use of Greek alphabet instead of the difficult ancient Egyptian Demotic script. Could not be earlier than the second century but not later than the third century. Very few like it in the famous museum libraries such as the British Museum in London, the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris and the Coptic Museum in Cairo. Unique inscription and unpublished." The fact that Atiya incorrectly identified the piece as a "Coptic inscription," although it is actually Greek, reveals that Atiya almost certainly procured it in Egypt.

4   During the course of Atiya's tenure at the University of Utah he made numerous visits to his native Egypt and procured various artifacts for the University of Utah as well as other institutions; in fact, the large Arabic papyrus and parchment collection at the University of Utah is the direct result of Atiya's efforts. It may also be noted here that the modest Coptic collection at nearby Brigham Young University was acquired entirely from Aziz Atiya. See L. H. Blumell and T. A. Wayment, "Coptic New Testament Fragments in the Brigham Young University Collection," *JCSCS* 6 (2014): 59-88, esp. 59; L. H. Blumell, "Two Coptic Ostraca in the Brigham Young University Collection," *ChrEg* 88 (2013): 182-87, esp. 182.

5   There are at present only two other inscriptions from Egypt where individuals bear the epithet Ἰουδαία/Ἰουδαῖος: CPJ III 1537 (= JIGRE 12; II BCE ?; Thebaid) and CPJ III 1538 (= JIGRE 122; II BCE ?; Thebaid); see also *NewDocs* 4 (1987): 113-17 (no. 26). Neither inscription, however, is an epitaph. R. S. Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," *HTR* 82 (1989): 35-53, at 37, noted that of the nearly 1,700 Greco-Roman inscriptions deemed "Jewish" only 34 contained the epithet Ἰουδαία/Ἰουδαῖος.
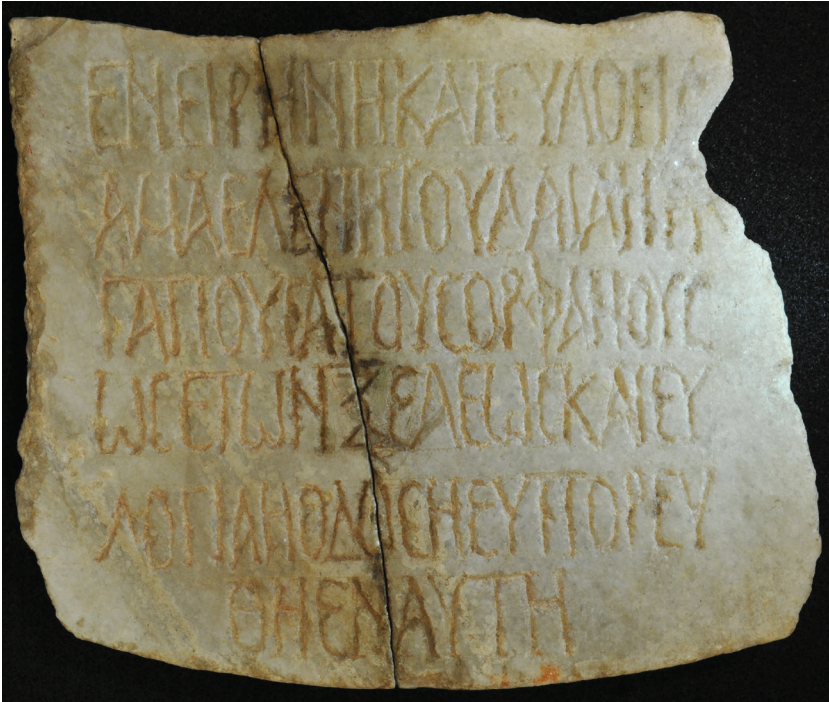
FIGURE 1

Helene is identified as a "Jew" she is also identified with a title that only appears in Christian contexts, complicating what otherwise could be a straightforward assessment of this epitaph.

I   Inscription

The inscription is broken down the middle and preserved in two halves, nevertheless, it is fully intact. When fitted together it measures 18.7 cm × 22.5 cm × 2.3 cm (H × W × D) and is inscribed on limestone that has been polished.[6] The lines have been scored and are uniform with an average line height of 2.83 cm. The backside of the inscription is not polished and is abraded with a number of striations; it contains two lines of text in a rather crude hand that does not directly relate to the inscription on the front side. The text of the inscription on the front side still preserves faint traces of red paint in the inscribed letters.

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6   I thank Ron Harris, professor in the Department of Geological Sciences at Brigham Young
    University for identifying the type of stone.

The letterforms of the inscription on the front side may be described as a tall narrow script; average letter width is 1.1 cm and average letter height is 2.5 cm. The text employs the lunate sigma (C instead of Σ), the fully formed pi (Π instead of Γ), the cursive omega (ω instead of Ω), mu (μ instead of M), and xi (ξ instead of Ξ) which all establish that the inscription is not earlier than the Roman period and likely comes from the later Roman period.[7] Furthermore, the use of a tall and narrow script probably suggests that the inscription is unlikely to be any earlier than the second century CE, when this epigraphic style emerges; however, it is worthy of note that this style persists into subsequent centuries, thus, a third- or even fourth-century date cannot be ruled out.[8] On this front, the formation of the alpha is noteworthy as it is consistently written with a diagonal crossbar that ascends from the bottom of the left leg to the middle of the right leg (Λ instead of A or Α); though this is an archaic form, it sees a reemergence in the later Roman period. Additionally, the consistent use of the lunate epsilon (ε instead of E) points to a later Roman date.[9] Therefore, the paleography of this inscription points to a date of the third or possibly even the fourth century CE.[10]

> ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ εὐλογίᾳ
> Ἄμα Ἑλένη Ἰουδαία ἡ ἀ-
> γαποῦσα τοὺς ὀρφανούς·
> ὡς ἐτῶν ξ ἔλεως καὶ εὐ-
> 5 λογία⟨ς⟩ ἡ ὁδός· ἡ εὐπορευ-
> θῇ ἐν αὐτῇ.

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2. inscr. ϊουδαια. 5-6. *l.* εὐπορηθῇ.

7   B. H. McLean, *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great down to the Reign of Constantine* (*323 BC-AD 337*) (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2002), 41.

8   C. B. Welles, "The Inscriptions," in *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis*, ed. C. H. Kraeling (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938), 360-65.

9   P. Gorissen, "Litterae Lunatae," *AncSoc* 9 (1978): 149-62.

10   Taking a third- or fourth-century date for this inscription is significant because inscriptions mentioning "Jews" or "Jewish" inscriptions from Egypt are virtually non-existent at this time. Of the 134 inscriptions in JIGRE (= *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt*) there is only one inscription that dates to the fourth century (JIGRE 135: incense burner "4th/5th century AD") and one other inscription dated to the third century or later (JIGRE 132: epitaph "3rd century AD or later (?)"); all others are either Ptolemaic or early Roman.

Backside
Text written perpendicular to text on the front.

⟨m2⟩ ἐν εἰρήν[ῃ] κὲ
      εὐλογίᾳ.

      ─────────
      1. *l.* καὶ

Translation

In peace and blessing Ama Helene, a Jew, who loves the orphans, [died]. For about 60 years her path was one of mercy and blessing; on it she prospered. (Backside; ⟨m2⟩) In peace and blessing.

Notes

1   ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ εὐλογίᾳ. The prepositional phrase ἐν εἰρήνῃ is widespread in both Jewish and Christian epitaphs; it is also attested in Latin (*in pace*) and some Jewish epitaphs use the Hebrew "shalom" (שלום). On this phrase in Jewish epitaphs see L. H. Kant, "Jewish Inscriptions in Greek and Latin," *ANRW* II.20.2 (1987): 671-713, esp. 679-80; J. S. Park, *Conceptions of Afterlife in Jewish Inscriptions: With Special Reference to Pauline Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 87-106; P. W. van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs: An Introductory Survey of a Millennium of Jewish Funerary Epigraphy* (*300 BCE-700 CE*) (Kampen: Pharos, 1991), 115-17. The phrase can probably be taken as a wish that the deceased might have a peaceful afterlife and should be primarily understood in the sense of a future eschatological salvation: E. Dinkler, "Schalom—Eirene—Pax: Jüdische sepulkralinschriften und ihr Verhaltnis zum frühen Christentum," *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana* (1974): 121-44, esp. 131-34. The phrase ἐν εἰρήνῃ occurs frequently in the LXX in a variety of contexts and only seven times in the New Testament: Luke 2:29, 11:21; Acts 16:36; 1 Cor 16:11; Jas 2:16, 3:18; 2 Pet 3:14. In the context of finding "peace" in the grave LXX Isa 57:2 is particularly noteworthy: ἔσται ἐν εἰρήνῃ ἡ ταφὴ αὐτοῦ ("his burial shall be in peace").

Use of the term εὐλογία is far more common in Jewish inscriptions than Christian inscriptions. See Park, *Conceptions of Afterlife in Jewish Inscriptions*, 135-43; M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim II: The*

Greek Inscriptions (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1974), 159-60. L. Robert, *Hellenica* XI-XII (1960): 394-96 regarded certain epigraphic phrases involving εὐλογία as exclusively Jewish. The phrase ἐν εὐλογίᾳ is first attested in Tob 11:17.

2   Ἄμα Ἑλένη Ἰουδαία. For analysis of Ἄμα and Ἰουδαία see discussion below (sec. II). The use of the name Helene (Ἑλένη) in Jewish inscriptions is elsewhere attested: CIJ I 219.2-3 (= JIWE II 279; 3rd-4th c. CE; Rome); IJO I Thr 5.1-2 (= IGBulg III.1 1432; 2nd c. CE or later; Thrace); CIIP I.1 30.1 (1st c. BCE-1st c. CE; Jerusalem; הלני); see also P.Mur. II 120 FrC.7 (2nd c. CE; Murabbaat): ἑλληνιστί where the editor suggested the female name Ἑλληνίς; Josephus *J. W.* 5.55 and *Ant.* 20.17.

In Egypt the name Helene is not frequently attested before the first century CE, it sees a significant rise in the second and third centuries, remains well attested in the fourth and fifth centuries before experiencing a decline in the sixth and subsequent centuries[11] In inscriptions from Egypt the name is attested a handful of times in the first and second centuries CE: SEG VIII 500.1 (= SB V 7813; 58 CE; Egypt); IFay III 169.3 (1st-2nd c. CE; Narmouthis); Akoris 105.5 (= SB I 88; Roman imperial period; Egypt); Akoris 124.2 (= SB I 106; Roman imperial period; Akoris); *Graffites d'Abydos* 131.1 (date ?; Egypt).

2-3   ἀγαποῦσα τοὺς ὀρφανούς. For analysis of this phrase see discussion below (sec. II).

4   ὡς ἐτῶν ξ̅. In both inscriptions and papyri age is frequently expressed in relative terms with the use of ὡς ἐτῶν or ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν. Cf. Luke 3:23: καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν Ἰησοῦς ἀρχόμενος ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν τριάκοντα ("Now Jesus himself began to be about thirty years old"). It has been noted that in Greek epitaphs from Egypt there seems to be a tendency to round off ages in intervals of five years. See B. Boyaval, "Quelques remarques sur les épithètes funéraires grecques d'Egypte," *ZPE* 23 (1976): 217-41, esp. 225-30. R. S. Kraemer, "Non-Literary Evidence for Jewish Women in Rome and Egypt," *Helios* 13 (1986): 85-101, at 92, notes that in the Jewish epitaphs from Leontopolis the median age at death for women was 26.

4-5   ἔλεως καὶ εὐλογία⟨ς⟩ ἡ ὁδός. The normal genitive termination of ἔλεος is ἐλέους or less frequently ἐλέου. The genitive form ἔλεως is a later form only attested a handful of times: 4 Bar. 9.4: περὶ τοῦ ἔλεώς σου παρακαλῶ ("for your mercy I plead"); IEgChr 663.9 (late Byzantine; Nubia); SEG

XXXVI 928.A6 (ca. 772 CE; Italy). In this phrase the genitives are "of quality" and have a predicate function; see H. W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 1320.

The phrase ἔλεως καὶ εὐλογία⟨ς⟩ ἡ ὁδὸς (*vel sim*) is not attested elsewhere, although the constituent phrases ἡ ὁδὸς ἔλεως (*vel sim*) and ἡ ὁδὸς εὐλογίας (*vel sim*) are attested: LXX Ps 24:10a: πᾶσαι αἱ ὁδοὶ κυρίου ἔλεος ("All the ways of the Lord are mercy"); 1 Clem. 31.1: αἱ ὁδοὶ τῆς εὐλογίας ("The paths of blessing"); Cyril of Alexandria, *ador.* (PG 68.772) Χριστὸς δὲ τῆς εὐλογίας ἡ ὁδὸς ("Christ is the path of blessing").

5-6   εὐπορευθῇ. The intended reading is εὐπορηθῇ and the medial interchange of η > ευ could be the result of dittography. Directly above the ευ at the end of l. 5 is the ευ (from εὐ|λογία⟨ς⟩) that ends l. 4. It seems possible therefore that this may have influenced the inscriber in this mispelling. On the other hand, it may also be noted that η > ευ interchanges are attested, e.g., P.Oxy. II 267.37 (36 CE) where μή is written μευ. When εὐπορέω appears in the passive voice, as it does here, it often has an active meaning when there is no direct object; see LSJ s.v. εὐπορέω where examples are given. The very form εὐπορηθῇ is only attested a handful of times: Lev 25:26, 28 and in Galen *De methodo medendi libri xiv* 10.450.18.

Backside

1-2   On the backside of the inscription there is another inscription written perpendicular to the text on the front that simply parallels the first line of the epitaph. It is inscribed with different letterforms that are less practiced and lack signs of proficiency and the transcriber spelled καί phonetically as κέ. This spelling and phonetic interchange is well-attested: F. T. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods: Volume I, Phonology* (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1976), 191-93. It is difficult to explain the writing on the back and hard to determine whether it predates or postdates the inscription on the other side. In any case, it was written by a different hand and does not directly relate to the inscription on the front side.

II   Analysis of ἄμα, Ἰουδαία, and ἀγαποῦσα τοὺς ὀρφανούς

Of primary importance for establishing the religious provenance of this inscription is the use of ἄμα and Ἰουδαία in l. 2. The use of the title ἄμα complicates matters somewhat because while it might be possible that the Greek title

ἄμα is derived from the Hebrew אם, which literally means "mother,"[12] or possibly אמה, which means "maid" or "handmaid,"[13] in Egypt the term is overwhelmingly employed in a Christian context and most often referred to a respected Christian holy woman or "spiritual mother" (nun) beginning in the fourth century.[14] When the title ἄμα is employed in both the epigraphical and papyrological records from Egypt it appears almost exclusively in Christian contexts.[15] For example, aside from the present inscription the only other female named Helene who is also styled an ἄμα in Egypt is a nun.[16] Furthermore, there is no definitive evidence in Greek that the title was used with regularity (if at all) in a Jewish context.[17] Thus, the use of the title ἄμα, notwithstanding the fact that Helene is identified as a Ἰουδαία, complicates somewhat a straightforward assessment of the religious provenance of this epitaph.

Notwithstanding the nature of the extant evidence, it may be possible that ἄμα is not being employed as a Christian title in the present inscription as it

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12   The term ἄμα is the feminine counterpart of the masculine ἄβα (usually spelled ἄββα or often ἄπα or ἄππα) that is derived from the Hebrew אב "father." See H. Leclercq, "Apa," *DACL* 1 (1907): 2494-2500; P. Chantraine, "Les noms du mari et de la femme, du père et de la mère en grec," *REG* 59 (1946): 219-50, esp. 242-44.

13   BDB 519 where the principal meanings include "maid" and "handmaid"; see also Jastrow p. 75.

14   The most detailed discussion of the term "Ama" is still H. Leclercq, "Ama (or Amma)," *DACL* 1 (1907): 1306-23 where Leclercq surveys the evidence and shows that in Greek (ἄμα, ἄμμα or ἀμμάς), Coptic (ама, амма), and Latin (*abbatissa*) the title is a thoroughly Christian one; see also S. Elm, *Virgins of God: The Making of Asceticism in Late Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 245-46; M. Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 68-69; Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* 34.6: Λέγει αὐταῖς πάσαις ὁ Πιτηροῦμ· Ὑμεῖς ἐστὲ σαλαί· αὕτη γὰρ καὶ ἐμοῦ καὶ ὑμῶν ἀμμᾶς ἐστίν—οὕτως γὰρ καλοῦσι τὰς πνευματικάς—καὶ εὔχομαι ἄξιος αὐτῆς εὑρεθῆναι ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως. ("Piteroum said to all of them: 'you are silly, for she is an *Amma* both of me and you'—for thus they call the spiritual women—'and I pray to be found worthy of her on the Day of Judgment'").

      Lampe, PGL s.v. ἄμμα: "Mother; title given to (1) a head of a convent; (2) any nun; (3) a woman, not a nun."

15   See appendices I and II for a survey of the Greek epigraphical and papyrological evidence.

16   P.Cair. III 67314 IIv.4 (539-545 CE; Aphrodito). See also Appendix II.

17   Aside from the present inscription I have yet to locate another instance where a female Jew (Ἰουδαία) is also styled as an ἄμα. I have, however, found two Aramaic ossuaries where the deceased is given the title "mother": L. Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collection of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1994), no. 71 (date ?) "Mother Shlamzion" (אמא שלמציון) and no. 351 (mid 1st c. CE) "Mother Maryam" (אמה מרים). I am not attempting to infer homogeneity between these two Aramaic references and the use of ἄμα; I am simply trying to note any potential comparanda.

might simply be an alternative spelling of the Greek ἄμμα (or ἀμμάς) whose principal meanings include "mother," "nurse," and "foster-mother."[18] For example, when ἄμμα or ἀμμάς first appear in the Greek papyri of the second and third centuries CE, the most conspicuous meaning is "nurse."[19] Similarly, while there are no other epigraphical attestations of either ἄμμα or ἀμμάς in inscriptions from Egypt,[20] when the term is attested elsewhere (albeit rarely)

18   LSJ s.v. ἄμμα: "mother"; "foster-mother"; or "nurse"; F. Preisigke and E. Kiessling, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden, mit Einschluss der griechischen Inschriften, Aufschriften, Ostraka, Mumienschilder usw. aus Ägypten* I (Berlin, 1925), 68 where the principal meaning given for ἄμμα and ἀμμάς is "Amme" ("nurse"). When Clement of Alexandria employs the term ἀμμάς (*Strom.* 5.8.47.5) the meaning is more along the lines of "foster-parent."

19   P.Mich. III 208.8-9 (2nd c. CE; Egypt, exact provenance unknown): ἀσπάζε[τε ὑμᾶς πάν] τες κατ' ὄνομα Ἡραΐσκος καὶ ἀμμάς αὐτοῦ ("Heraiskos salutes you all by name, as does also his nurse"); P.Mich. VIII 488.18-20 (2nd c. CE; Karanis): καὶ πότε θέ[λεις] γένητ[αι] ἀμμάς [πρὸ]ς σέ; ("And when do you want the nurse to come to you?"); SB XIV 12042.7-8 (2nd c. CE; Latopolis Magna): ἀσπάζεται σε ἀμμάς μου ("my nurse greets you"); P.Oslo. III 153.16-17 (ca. 100-125 CE; Egypt, exact provenance unknown): ἐπισκοπούμεθ[α] ἀμμάν μου Πτολέμαν ("we observed my nurse, Ptolemas"); BGU II 449.11-12 (2nd-3rd c. CE; Egypt, exact provenance unknown): ἀσπ[ά]ζεμαι ὑμᾶς κατ' ὄνομα Σωτηρὶς καὶ ἀμμάς αὐτῆς ("I greet you by name, Soteris and her nurse"). Even in two later papyri, which are clearly Christian, the term can still carry the meaning of "nurse": P.Oxy. LVI 3862.15-16 (4th-5th c. CE; Oxyrhynchus): ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ Μηνᾶ καὶ Ἐπιφανία καὶ ἀμμάς μου Προσφορία ("from the mother of Menas and from Epiphania and from my nurse Prosphoria"); BGU III 948.15-16 (4th-5th c. CE; Heracleopolis): προσαγορεύει σε ἄμμα σ[ου] ("your nurse greets you"). For the meaning of ἄμμα in BGU III 948 as "nurse" see R. S. Bagnall and R. Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt, 300 BC-AD 800* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 224; M. Naldini, *Il Cristianesimo in Egitto: Lettere private nei papiri dei secoli II-IV* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1968), 361 n. 17 (no. 93); cf. J. G. Winter, *Life and Letters in the Papyri* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1933), 154 n. 4.

     There are also a few attestations of the letter combination αμμα (or αμμας) where they carry a different meaning. When αμμας appears in P.Dub. 16.8 (2nd-3rd c. CE; Egypt, exact provenance unknown) and SB III 6663.27 (date ?; Egypt, exact provenance unknown), and αμμα in P.Bingen 76.2.9 (2nd c. CE; Egypt, exact provenance unknown), it is merely the personal name "Ammas" (Ἀμμᾶς). In P.Mich VIII 493.13 (2nd c. CE; Karanis) and BGU II 615.31 (2nd c. CE; Arsinoite) αμμα is simply a misspelling of the preposition ἅμα; when it occurs in P.Oxy. XIV 1684.15 (4th c. CE; Oxyrhynchus) it is a misspelling of ἄμιος. Finally, the appearance of αμμα in P.Dub. 16.21 (2nd-3rd c. CE; Egypt, exact provenance unknown) is unclear as the text is too fragmentary in this section to determine the meaning and context of this reference.

20   Colosse de Memnon 29.15 (130 CE; Thebes) ἄμμας is attested, but it is taken as a misspelling of "blood" (αἷμα).

in the Roman period the most apparent meaning is "nurse."[21] If either "nurse" or "foster-mother" is the intended meaning in the present inscription it contextually fits well with the reference that follows on the epitaph that Helene "loves the orphans" (ll. 2-3: ἀγαποῦσα τοὺς ὀρφανούς). Nevertheless, while this interpretation is distinctly possible it is not without some problems: (1) the title ἄμα is morphologically differentiated from both ἀμμάς and ἄμμα[22] (2) and when either ἀμμάς or ἄμμα is used it often appears without a proper name or patronymic and thus seems to emphasize the professional nature of the term, whereas in the present inscription it appears as a title that immediately proceeds the name—exactly as it appears when it is used as a Christian epithet.[23]

If ἄμα is therefore to be taken as a Christian title, is Helene a Jewish-Christian—ethnically Jewish but religiously Christian? While this is not impossible, it certainly appears somewhat strained; if Helene were a Christian, why then would the inscriber add Ἰουδαία? Perhaps, then, it is worthwhile to consider the possible meaning and nuance of this term. As has been previously noted, when the term Ἰουδαία (or the masculine Ἰουδαῖος) occurs in Greek and Latin inscriptions it can have a range of meanings.[24] One of the most obvious, and most common, meanings of the term (so it seems) is as a religious indicator signifying that the person so identified was a "Jew" (i.e., affiliated with the Jewish religious community whether or not they were actually ethnically Jewish).[25] On the flipside, the term could also be taken, at times, as a geographic or ethnic marker so that a better translation than "Jew" would be

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21   Iscr. Di Cos 140.1-6 (Roman Imperial period; Cos): Θέτι ἀμμὰ χαῖρε. ζήσασα ἔτη […] ("For Thetis, nurse, farewell. She lived … years"); IEph VI 2231.3 (cf. SEG XXIX 1116; 1st-2nd c. CE; Ephesus): Χελειδὼν ἡ ἄμμα ("Cheleidon the nurse"); Smyrna 553.7 (1st-2nd c. CE; Smyrna): ἀμμὰς δ' Εὐτυχία ("nurse Eutychia").

22   For example, Preisigke and Kiessling, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden I*, make a deliberate morphological, and therefore interpretive, distinction between ἄμμα and ἀμμάς (p. 68 "Amme"; see n. 18 above) and ἄμα (p. 64 "siehe Abschn 21 [*christi cultus*]); see also Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*, 68.

23   Elm, *Virgins of God*, 68.

24   Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," 35-53; van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*, 68-71 provides a useful review of Kraemer's work.

25   Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," 35-48; cf. H. Solin, "Juden und Syrer im westlichen Teil der römischen Welt. Eine ethnisch-demographische Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der sprachlichen Zustände," *ANRW* II 29.2 (1983): 687-789, esp. 647-51, notes that the term is used most often in inscriptions to denote membership in a Jewish religious community and rarely denotes ethnic or geographic origin. On this front van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*, 70 suggests that the epithet "Hebrew" (Ἑβραῖος/*Hebraeus*) is most often used as an "ethno-geographical designation."

"Judean."²⁶ Another possibility is to take Ἰουδαία/Ἰουδαῖος as a personal name.²⁷ In the present inscription Ἰουδαία cannot be taken as a name²⁸ and it seems unlikely that it is to be taken strictly as a geographic or ethnic marker (i.e., "Helene the Judean"). On this latter point it is worth noting in general that in epitaphs from late antique Egypt the deceased are rarely (if ever) identified by reference to their ethnicity (i.e., "Greek," "Egyptian," etc.). It therefore seems that the most likely rendering of Ἰουδαία in the present inscription is "Jew" and that it should be understood to denote a member of the Jewish religious community.²⁹ As a result, the use of the title "Ama" must be taken as an exceptional case where it does not have any distinctly Christian overtones and

26   A. T. Kraabel, "The Roman Diaspora: Six Questionable Assumptions," *JJS* 33 (1982): 445-64, at 455, argues that the reference in SEG XXII 1203.30 (2nd c. CE; Smyrna) to οἵ ποτε Ἰουδαῖοι is best rendered "immigrants from Palestine"; Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," 45-46 also suggests that the reference to Ῥουφεῖνα Ἰουδαία in CIJ 741.1 (= IJO II 43; IGRR IV 1452; 3rd c. CE or later; Smyrna;) should be taken as a geographic indicator: "Rufina, the Judean." See also S. Mason, "Jews, Judaeans, Judaising, Judaism: Problems of Categorization in Ancient History," *JSJ* 38 (2007): 457-512, who argues that until late antiquity Ἰουδαῖοι are best understood as "Judeans"—i.e., an ethnic group comparable to other ethnic groups like Greeks, Egyptians, Romans, etc.

27   The attestations of Ἰουδαῖος as a name are documented but rare: CIJ 710.4-5 (= IJO I 42; SGDI II 1722; 2nd c. BCE; Delphi;): ὧι ὄνομα Ἰουδαῖος τὸ γένος Ἰουδαῖον ("whose name is Ioudaios, by race a Jew"); CIJ 711.1, 5 (= IJO I 44; 2nd c. BCE; Delphi;). See also Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," 48-51.

28   If it were a name it would have to be a matronymic and one would expect the genitive Ἰουδαίας not Ἰουδαία; granted that the inscriber fails to write the terminal sigma on εὐλογία(ς) in l. 5 it still seems like a stretch to assume that the inscriber intended Ἰουδαίας.

29   Van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs*, 68-70 argues that when the epithet Ἰουδαία/Ἰουδαῖος appears in epitaphs this is the most common meaning. In a single 2nd c. CE Greek epitaph from the Beth Sheʿarim cemetery the epithet Ἰουδαία is used: ὧδε κῖτε Σάρα Ἰουδέα ὁσία ("Here lies Sara, the pious Jew"). Noting the peculiarity of the epithet Ἰουδαία the editors, M. Schwabe and B. Lifshitz, noted: "The use of the adjective Ἰουδέα [sic] is unique at Beth Sheʿarim. Two inscriptions from Rome in which the term is used apply to women proselytes, who perhaps chose this way to proclaim their adopted faith." See Schwabe and Lifshitz, *Beth Sheʿarim II: The Greek Inscriptions*, 137, commenting on inscription no. 158.

      Here it is also worth noting that the epithet Ἰουδαία/Ἰουδαῖος appears in Greco-Roman inscriptions far more for women than men and has caused some to speculate whether the term could often designate someone who was ethnically a non-Jew but who had adopted some degree of Jewish observance: see Kraemer, "On the Meaning of the Term 'Jew' in Greco-Roman Inscriptions," 43. Is Helene then a member of the Jewish community but not an ethnic Jew?

may simply mean "mother" or perhaps even "foster-mother."[30] Here the use of ἀμμάς in SB VIII 9882, a personal letter of the third century CE, may prove helpful.[31] Toward the end of this letter the writer sends greetings to a number of individuals and reports that the following individuals are also sending salutations (ll. 5-6): ἀμμάς Θαυβάριν καὶ ἄππας Δῖος. In this case, the translation "nurse" or "foster-mother" for ἀμμάς does not seem to fit the context very well given the use of ἄππας that immediately follows. Therefore, it is probably best to take both ἀμμάς and ἄππας as hypocoristics, "mommy Thaubarin and daddy Dios."[32] What SB VIII 9882 could therefore be a witness of is the semantic development of ἄμα (ἀμμάς or ἄμμα) and its use as a maternal title before it eventually came to be used as an honorific title for certain Christian women in late antique Egypt. Thus, the present use of "Ama" should probably be taken as belonging to this transitional period when "Ama" could be used as a maternal title but was not yet exclusively Christian.

Turning now to the rather tender reference to "loving the orphans" (ἀγαποῦσα τοὺς ὀρφανούς) that immediately follows, it may be noted that in epitaphs such memorials are quite rare.[33] While some epitaphs lament that the deceased is leaving behind children who are now orphans, grieve the unfortunate death of an orphaned child, or pronounce imprecations upon would-be grave robbers that they may leave behind orphaned children, memorials about the actual care of orphans are not common.[34] While there are some Jewish inscriptions

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30   Given that the twelfth-century compiler of the *Etymologicum Magnum* still knew of the term as an affectionate epithet for a nurse or a mother suggests that this usage persisted for some time (84.26): Ἀμμά: Ἡ τροφὸς καὶ ἡ μήτηρ, κατὰ ὑποκόρισμα. καὶ ἡ Ῥέα δὲ λέγεται καὶ ἀμμάς, λέγεται καὶ ἀμμία ("Amma: Nurse and mother according to hypocorism. Rhea is also called Amma; it is also said Ammia").

31   This letter was first published by A. Swiderek, "Two Michigan Papyri," *JJP* 15 (1965): 135-38.

32   Swiderek, "Two Michigan Papyri," 137.

33   For a public inscription detailing care for orphans, see R. S. Stroud, "Greek Inscriptions Theozotides and the Athenian Orphans," *Hesperia* 40 (1971): 280-301. For the subject of *orphania* in Greek and Roman society, see T. S. Miller, *The Orphans of Byzantium: Child Welfare in the Christian Empire* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 22-48; for a useful overview of the term ὀρφανός in inscriptions and papyri, see *NewDocs* 4 (1987): 162-64.

34   IG II² 9898.5-6 (late 2nd c. CE; Attica): παῖδα λιπὼν μηνῶν δέκα ὀρφανόν, οἴμμοι ("Leaving an orphan child of only ten months, Alas!"); IG II² 11907.4 (late 4th c. CE; Attica); SEG I 470.3-4 (3rd c. CE; Phrygia): ὀρφανὰ τέκνα λίπη βίον ἔσχατον οἶκον ἔ[ρ]ημον τὴν δ' ἄλοχον χήραν ὀδυρομένην περὶ τέκνων ("May he leave orphaned children, a desperate estate, a desolate house, and his wife widowed and weeping for her children"); CIG 4000.12-14 (date?; Lycaonia).

that mention orphans, they tend to mention them in the context of the death of parents.[35] One inscription, however, that provides a parallel and is worth mentioning because it commemorates care for orphans, and it has been alleged that it is Jewish, is SEG XX 468, a Greek epitaph from Lydda[36] (Λύδδα; Palestine) that is broadly dated to the "Roman period" (second through fourth century CE).[37] The epitaph commemorates a man named Jethro who acted as a "guardian of the orphans": οὗτ[ο]ς ὁ τόπος Ἰητρο Θίνου φροντιστοῦ ὀρφανῶν ("This is the place of Jethro, son of Thinos, guardian of the orphans"). While M. Schwabe argued that the epitaph had to be Jewish given the use of the name "Jethro" (Ἰητρο),[38] this is not a decisive indicator and others have questioned this classification, arguing instead that it could just as easily be Samaritan or potentially even Christian depending on the date.[39] Therefore, this epitaph

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35   CIJ II 1524 (= SEG VIII 487; JIGRE 93; CPJ III 1524; 1 BCE; Leontopolis): Δωσθίων Σαββαταίου ὀρφανὲ μεικρὲ τραυματία χαῖρε. ὡς ἐτῶν τριῶν, (ἔτους) κθ΄ Παχὼν ις΄ ("Dosithion, son of Sabbataios, orphan, little one, wounded one, farewell. About three years old. In the twenty-ninth year, Pachon 16"); CIJ II 1489.2 (= SB III 6235; SEG VIII 374; cf. JIGRE 114; early Roman; Leontopolis): παῖδ(?)]ας ἐν ὀρφαν[ί]ῃ ("Children in orphanhood"); SEG XL 1569.5-6 (2nd-3rd c. CE; Leontopolis): ὅς μεικρὰ παιδία ἔχων ὀρφανὰ ἀφῆκε αὐτῶν ("Who had small children and left them orphans"); CIJ II 1510.5-7 (= SB III 6647; SEG I 570; JIGRE 33; 5 BCE ?; Leontopolis): ὀρφανικὴ λείφθην γὰρ ἐγὼ{ι} μεικρὰ περ ἐοῦσα μη{ι}τρός ("I was bereaved of my mother when I was a little girl").

       There is one other inscription worth mentioning because it potentially mentions both Jews and orphans: SEG XLIX 1266 (= SEG XLIII 618; CIJ I² 654a; JIWE I 160; 4th-5th c. CE; Agrigentum [Sicily]). The epitaph is extremely fragmentary and so much of the reconstruction is hypothetical, but it might have contained a reference to "orphans of the Jews" (ll. 3-6): [ἐγὼ] ἐπικαλοῦμ[αι τὸν λαὸν — —] | [ἐκ τ]ῆς · ἐμῆς π[ροικὸς(?) βοηθεῖν] | [τοῖς] πένησι · κα[ὶ ὀρφανοῖς(?) τῶν] | Ἰουδ[αίων] ("I call upon the people . . . from my bounty to render help to the destitute and the orphans of the Jews"). Given the date of the inscription it is often read against the background of a letter of Gregory the Great to the *defensor* Fantinus dated May 598 (*Ep.* 7.23). In this letter reference is made to an apparently impoverished Jewish community at Agrigentum who is collectively seeking baptism and Gregory is ordering that Fantinus make arrangements for baptismal vestments to be provided to those unable to procure them for themselves.

36   Acts 9:32-38; 1 Macc 11:34; Hebrew לֹד: 1 Chr 8:12; Neh 2:33, 7:37, 11:35.

37   The inscription was first published in I. Ben-Zvi, "A Graeco-Samaritan Inscription from Lydda," *BIES* 8 (1941): 18-20 [Hebrew]. For the argument that it is Jewish see M. Schwabe, "A Greek-Jewish Inscription from Lydda," *Tarbiz* 12 (1941): 230-33 [Hebrew].

38   It may be noted that the spelling Ἰητρο ("Jethro") does not occur in the LXX or other Greek Translations; the Hebrew יתרו is typically rendered in Greek as Ἰοθορ.

39   Ben-Zvi, "A Graeco-Samaritan Inscription from Lydda," 18-20; Z. Safrai, "Samaritan Synagogues in the Roman Byzantine Period," *Cathedra* 4 (1977): 84-112 [Hebrew], esp. 86 n. 15; R. Pummer, "Samaritan Material Remains," in *The Samaritans*, ed. A. D. Crown

merely provides a general parallel for the present inscription since it similarly commemorates a deceased person whose memorial included their guardianship of orphans.[40]

The use of the Greek verb ἀγαπάω to describe Helene's feeling for the orphans is noteworthy and the use of the present active participle could suggest that this manifestation of "love" continued right up until Helene's death. While this verb is often used in Christian contexts, it is likewise well attested in the LXX, Old Testament pseudepigrapha, Josephus, and Philo.[41] Epigraphically the use of ἀγαπάω is not very common; in Egypt the earliest inscriptional use of ἀγαπάω appears in the context of expressing the "love" various deities (Isis or Ptah) had for certain Ptolemaic rulers.[42] It appears variously in Christian inscriptions to express "love" for the Lord or for fellow Christians, and the adjective ἀγαπητός (-ή) is widely used in Christian epitaphs for those who were "beloved."[43] But Christians were not the only group to use ἀγαπάω in epitaphs as it appears in religiously neutral contexts primarily to express "love"

(Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989), 154; Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part II: Palestine 200-650* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 140.

 Schwabe also contested that the title "guardian of orphans" (φροντιστοῦ ὀρφανῶν) was exclusively Jewish; however, there is nothing explicitly Jewish about this title. The Greek phrase φροντιστὴς ὀρφανῶν (*vel sim*) does not appear in the LXX or anywhere else for that matter; the most common identification for a "guardian of orphans" of sorts is ἐπίτροπος ὀρφανῶν that is widely attested (esp. Plato, *Leg*. 926E-928C). That there is nothing distinctly Jewish about φροντιστὴς ὀρφανῶν, see Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part II*, 17-18.

40 Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part II*, 17-18 wonders whether the title φροντιστὴς ὀρφανῶν ("guardian of the orphans") was an official one and Jethro's professional duty was to oversee the care and maintenance of orphans.

41 For a useful though somewhat dated survey and analysis of the verb ἀγαπάω in a variety of contexts (Jewish, Christian, and other) see *TDNT* 1:21-55; for a useful discussion of the use of the verb ἀγαπάω in Greek papyri see Choat, *Belief and Cult in Fourth-Century Papyri*, 88-94.

42 IEgSyene 2.6 (ca. 217 BCE; Touphion): ἠγαπημένου ὑπὸ τῆς Ἴσιδος ("the one beloved by Isis"); SEG VIII 504a (= SB I 4244; ca. 217 BCE; Memphis); IEgSyene 241.5 (196 BCE; Elephantine): ἠγαπημένωι ὑπὸ τοῦ Φθᾶ ("the one beloved by Ptah"); OGIS I 90.4, 8-9 (196 BCE; Bolbitine); SEG XVIII 634.16 (196 BCE; Leontopolis).

43 RiChrM 208.4-5 (5th-6th c. CE; Macedonia) where it is used on a Christian epitaph that quotes LXX Ps 25:8a; SEG XXXIII 489.1 (early 6th c. CE; Illyria) where it is used as part of a quote of LXX Ps 83.2; IG II² 13308.2 (5th-6th c. CE; Athens); SEG LI 736.1-2 (Byzantine; Thessaly); IK Prusa ad Olympum 214.5-6 (Byzantine; Bithynia).

for family and friends.[44] In decidedly Jewish contexts the use of the adjective ἀγαπητός (-ή) for family is evidenced, and the verb ἀγαπάω appears at least once.[45] Presently there exists no parallel inscriptional evidence for "loving the orphans," and the nature of the phrase possibly suggests that Helene was not simply fulfilling some official duty or obligation by caring for orphans but was perhaps carrying out a purely voluntary act of charity (i.e., ἀγαπάω).[46]

On this final point it is worthwhile to briefly consider Jewish stipulations regarding care for orphans. In the Law of Moses there are various injunctions that deal specifically with orphans (Heb. *yatom* [יתום]) and warnings are given about mistreating or abusing them;[47] likewise, elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible there are various other injunctions regarding their care and treatment.[48] In post-biblical Jewish sources references to care for orphans are disparate and scattered.[49] Josephus claims that Essenes provided care for orphaned children

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44 IScM II 365.5 (2nd-3rd c. CE; Scythia Minor); Corinth VIII¹ 136.1-3 (Byzantine; Corinth); IEph 2421.4 (date ?; Ephesus). The use of the adjective ἀγαπητός (-ή) is also attested for family: Perinthos-Herakleia 90.2 (1st-2nd c. CE; Thrace); Asdracha, Inscr. Byz. 323,150.2-3 (6th c. CE; Thrace).

45 CIJ I 43.4 (= JIWE II 490; 3rd-4th c. CE; Rome); CIJ I 125 (= JIWE II 344; 3rd-4th c. CE; Rome); CIJ I 137.1-2 (= JIWE II 222; 3rd-4th c. CE; Rome); IG X² 1 789.9 (= IJO I Mac17; 4th c. CE; Macedonia) a Jewish inscription that quotes LXX Num 6:22-27 and precedes and concludes the LXX text with Hebrew and Aramaic followed by a dedication by the patron's family. When the inscription quotes Num 6:25b it employs ἀγαπήσει instead of the LXX ἐλεήσαι; this textual variant is not otherwise attested. B. Lifshitz and J. Schiby, "Une synagogue samaritaine à Thessalonique," RB 75 (1968): 368-78, at 373-74, note that the rendering ἀγαπήσει instead of the LXX ἐλεήσαι is a better translation of the Hebrew חנן in Num 6:25b.

46 In the LXX ἀγαπάω is never used with ὀρφανός and the closest collocation of these two terms occurs in LXX Deut 10:18: ποιῶν κρίσιν προσηλύτῳ καὶ ὀρφανῷ καὶ χήρᾳ καὶ ἀγαπᾷ τὸν προσήλυτον δοῦναι αὐτῷ ἄρτον καὶ ἱμάτιον. The only other instance where "love" (ἀγαπάω) is employed in the context of an orphan is in Plato, Leg. 928A: μὴ χεῖρον ἀγαπάτω τῶν αὑτοῦ τέκνων τὸν τῆς ὀρφανικῆς μετειληφότα τύχης ("A man [i.e., guardian] should love the child whom fate has made an orphan as if he were his own child").

47 Exod 22:22-23; Deut 10:18; 14:29; 16:11; 24:17-21; 26:12-13; 27:19. In most of these injunctions orphans are mentioned alongside widows. So too in the only explicit injunction in the New Testament about orphans (Jas 1:27) they are mentioned alongside widows.

48 Ps 10:18; 68:6; 82:3; 94:6; Isa 1:17-23; 10:2; Jer 5:28; 7:6; 22:3; Zech 7:11; Mal 3:5.

49 In post New Testament Christian sources of the second and third centuries, references to orphans are similarly somewhat disparate and scattered. Justin Martyr (1 Apol. 67) reports how bishops oversaw funds for orphans and others (widows, sick, imprisoned, etc.) and in Lucian's Peregr. 12 he explicitly points out how Christianity incorporated orphans into its program of charity (see also Polycarp, Phil. 6.1; Herm. Vis. 2.4.3; Barn. 20.2; Aristides,

and trained them up in their sect.[50] In the Mishnah, care for orphans is intermittently mentioned and the term used for the person who acted as a guardian is *epitropos* (ἐπίτροπος) and could imply that this was a somewhat official responsibility.[51] While the Talmud is a little more explicit with respect to care for orphans,[52] there is still nothing overly official or necessarily programmatic,[53]

Apol. 15.8). In the third century it seems that a more programmatic approach was taken by the church as clergy were charged with the task of collecting funds for orphans and were to bring up some orphans at the church's expense (Tertullian, *Apol.* 39.6; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.43.11; Const. ap. 4.2).

50   *J. W.* 2.120.

51   m. Pesaḥ. 8:1; Giṭ. 5:4. P.Yadin 12 (Oct. 125 CE; Naḥal Hever) is also worth noting here because it contains a deposition of an orphan's legacy for a child named "Jesus, son of Jesus, a Jew" (ll. 6-7: Ἰασσούου Ἰουδαίου υἱοῦ Ἰασσούου). In the council meeting it was decided that two guardians (ἐπιτροπή) were to be appointed to look after the orphan.

52   b. Ketub. 50a, details how a person who brings up an orphan and enables them to marry has performed "a righteous act"; see also Ketub. 67a; Sanh. 19b.

53   Miller, *The Orphans of Byzantium*, 47 states, "Neither the Old Testament nor any ancient sources provide evidence that traditional Jewish communities in Palestine or in the Diaspora supported groups homes for orphans such as those described in early Christian texts." The *EncJud* 15.484 (2nd ed.) notes that Jewish orphanages were not established until the early Middle Ages.

     The fourth century witnessed a rather drastic transformation with the church's care for orphans when it received imperial backing. Eusebius alleges that Constantine took a very proactive approach and created a support program for both orphans and widows (*Vit. Const.*, 4.18.1, 43.2). From these actions the first orphanage—*orphanotropheion* (ὀρφανοτροφεῖον; "place for the nourishment of orphans")—began operating in the middle of the fourth century in Constantinople and was primarily run by members of the clergy (Cod. justin. 1.3.34-35; T. S. Miller, "The Orphanotropheion of Constantinople," in *Through the Eye of a Needle: Judeo-Christian Roots of Social Welfare*, ed. E. A. Hanawalt and C. Lindberg [Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1994], 83-104). Evidence for similar institutions, albeit on a smaller scale, are likewise attested in Egypt in the middle of the fourth century as is evidenced by Athanasius: Athanasius, *Fug.* 6; Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 2.28.4: ὀρφανῶν καὶ χηρῶν ἡρπάζοντο οἰκίαι τε καὶ ἄρτοι ("and the dwellings of orphans and widows were forcibly entered and provisions pillaged"). Additionally, with the rise of monasticism in the fourth century, monasteries became a haven for orphans and in certain monasteries monastic rules were even put in place regarding their proper care and education: Basil, *reg. fus.* 15 (PG 31.952): τὰ μὲν ἔρημα γονέων ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν προσλαμβανόμενοι, ὥστε γενέσθαι κατὰ τὸν ζῆλον τοῦ Ἰὼβ ὀρφανῶν πατέρας ("and thus such children as have lost their parents we adopt of our own free will, being desirous, after the example of Job, to become fathers to the orphans"). For the care and treatment of orphans in Pachomian monasteries as well as the White Monastery of Shenoute see A. T. Crislip, *From Monastery*

and it seems that by and large that Jewish care for orphans was principally a matter of personal religious duty. In the present epitaph neither the circumstances surrounding Helene's care for orphans is manifest nor how exactly her "love" was shown toward them. In the ancient world there was certainly no shortage of orphans, and it may therefore be wondered if Helene provided care for any orphans or whether perhaps there might be a specific context behind her love for them.[54]

Appendix 1

The use of ἄμα as a title in Greek inscriptions from Egypt[a]

Inscription	Date	Provenance	Religious context	Reference with line number
IEgChr 86	?	Fayum	Christian	l. 4: ἄμα Εἶς ("Ama Eis")
IEgChr 94	?	Fayum	Christian	l. 2: ἄμα Πάεις ("Ama Paeis")
IEgChr 106	?	Fayum	Christian	l. 4: ἄμα Πάεις ("Ama Paeis")
IEgChr 495	?	Hermonthis	Christian	ll. 1-2: ἄμα Ἰουστίνα ("Ama Justina")
IEgChr 662	?	Egypt	Christian	ll. 2-3: ἄμα Μαρία, ἄμα Σιβίλλα ("Ama Maria, Ama Sibylla")
IEgChr 806	?	Egypt	Christian	l. 4: ἄμα Εἶσι ("Ama Eisi")
SB III 6200	?	Lycopolis	Christian	l. 8: ἄμα Λῶ ("Ama Lo")

a If this appendix were to include Coptic inscriptions from Egypt the number of attestations of ⲁⲙⲁ would be greatly increased. Only the attestations of the title αμα (not spelled either αμμα or αμμας), were included in the table. However, only one additional reference is added with either of these spellings: IEgChr 751.1 (date ?; Oxyrhynchus): ἡ ἁγία ἄμμα Χριστίνα ("The holy Amma Christina").

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to Hospital: Christian Monasticism and the Transformation of Health Care in Late Antiquity (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 134-35.

54 Clement, *Paed.* 3.4.30 briefly mentions the orphans of Alexandria and how they were largely ignored by the rich and prosperous much to the shame of the city. While this is mere speculation it may be wondered if Helene's charity towards orphans could be connected to the aftermath of the Jewish Revolt of 115-117 CE that devastated the Jewish community in Egypt and doubtless left many Jewish orphans. If such were the case the inscription would likely have to be dated to the earlier part of the possible chronological limits (i.e., second century CE).

Appendix II

The use of ἄμα as a title in Papyri[a]

Papyrus	Date	Provenance	Religious context	Reference with line number
P.Herm. 38	5th c. CE	Egypt	Christian	l. 9: Ἄμα Ταραοῦ ("of Ama Taroys")
CPR V 26	ca. 450-500 CE	Skar	Christian	l. 472: ἄμα Λένη ("Ama Lene")
BGU XII 2149	470 CE	Hermopolis	Christian	l. 12: τῆ[ς] ἀγίας Ἄμα Εὐφημίας ("of St. Ama Euphemias")
P.Oxy. LXVII 4620	5th-6th c. CE	Oxyrhynchites	Christian	ll. 24-25: εἰς τὸ μοναστήρ(ιον) Ἄμα Ἰουλιανῆς ("for the monastery of Ama Juliana"); ll. 27-28: εἰς τὸ μοναστήρ(ιον) Ἄμα Μαρίας ("for the monastery of Ama Maria")
SB XXII 15272	5th-6th c. CE	Egypt	Christian	l. 4: εἰς τὸν τόπ(ον) ἄμα Εὐφημίας καὶ Ἰουλιανοῦ ("for the place of Ama Euphemia and [Ama] Juliana")
P.Cair.Masp. III 67313	6th c. CE	Aphrodito	Christian	l. 36: Ἄμα Ταπολλῶ[τος] ("of Ama Tapollo")
P.Cair.Masp. III 67325	6th c. CE	Aphrodito	Christian	l. II.v.4: π(αρὰ) Ἄμα Ἑλένης ("from Ama Helene")
P.Oxy. XXIV 2419	6th c. CE	Oxyrhynchite	Christian	l. 6: εἰς τὸ μοναστήριον Ἄμα Ἰουλιανῆς ("for the monastery of Ama Juliana")

The use of ἄμα as a title in Papyri

Papyrus	Date	Provenance	Religious context	Reference with line number
P.Wash.Univ. I 6	6th c. CE	Oxyrhynchites	Christian	l. 5: [τ]ῆς ἁγί[ας] ἐκκλη[σ]ίας τῆς Ἄμα Μαρίας ("of the holy church of Ama Maria")
P.Bad. IV 95	early 6th c. CE	Hermopolite	Christian	ll. 73, 162: Ἄμα Μαρίᾳ ("to Ama Maria")
P.Flor. III 297	525 CE	Aphrodito	Christian	ll. 42, 98: δ(ιὰ) Ἄμα Ῥαχή[λ] ("through Ama Rachel"); ll. 92, 242: ἐκκλ(ησία) ἡ ἁγία Ἄμα Μαρίας ("The holy church of Ama Maria")
P.Michael 45	540 CE	Aphrodito	Christian	l. 33: Ἄμα Μαρίας ("of Ama Maria")
P.Cair.Masp. I 67061	mid 6th c. CE	Aphrodito	Christian	l. 3: πρὸς τὴν μεγάλην ἄμα Μαρίαν ("to the great Ama Maria")
P.Lond.Herm. 1	546/47 CE	Hermopolis	Christian	Fol. 1 r.29, Fol. 5 v.7, Fol. 19 r.18: Ἄμα Τασοῦ ("of Ama Tasis")
P.Cair.Masp. II 67283	547 CE	Aphrodito	Christian	pg. 2 l. 7: τῆς ἁγίας ἐκκλησίας ἄμα Μαρίας ("of the holy church of Ama Maria")
P.Cair.Masp. III 67302	555 CE	Aphrodito	Christian	l. 4, 18-19: Αὐρηλία Ἄμα [Ῥαχ]ὴλ ("Aurelia Ama Rachel")
P.Cair.Masp. II 67141	late 6th c. CE	Egypt	Christian	l. Fol2v.17: Ἄμα Ῥεβέκκα μοναχ(ῆ) ("for Ama Rebecca a nun"); Fol5r.12: εἰς τὸ ὄ[ρος] ἄμα Μαρίας ("to the monastery of Ama Maria")

The Use of ἄμα as a Title in Papyri (cont.)

Papyrus	Date	Provenance	Religious context	Reference with line number
BGU I 317	580/81 CE	Arsinoite	Christian	l. 4: μητρὸς ἄμα Ἡραΐδος ("mother Ama Herais")
P.Bodl. I 80	6th-7th c. CE	Egypt	Christian	l. 5: τῆς ἁγίας ἄμα Ἡραείδος ("of St. Ama Herais")
O.Sarga 369.9	6th-8th c. CE	Egypt	Christian	l. 9: Ἄμα Μουσ[. .]ς ("Ama Mous[. .]s")
P.lond. V 1758	612/13 CE	Hermopolite	Christian	l. 2: δ(ιὰ) τοῦ μοναστηρίου Ἄμα Ἄννας ("through the monastery of Ama Annas")
P.Sorb. II 69	618/19 CE	Hermopolis	Christian	l. 11.1.23: Ἄμα Κύρ[ας] ("Ama Kyra"); l. 15.1.24: Ἄμα Σαχο ("Ama Sacho")
BGU II 551	ca. 642 CE	Arsinoite	Christian	l. 4: τῇ ἄμα Θεοδώρᾳ ("to Ama Theodora")
SB XXIV 16117	7th-8th c. CE	Egypt	Christian	l. 8: δ(ιὰ) ἄμα Ἴσιδος ("through Ama Isis"); l. 10: δ(ιὰ) ἄμα Θαισαριδί[ου] ("through Ama Thaisarion")
P.Lond. IV 1419	716/17 CE	Aphrodito	Christian	l. 66: μ[έρ(ους) τόπ(ου) Ἄμ]ᾳ Μαρίας ("of the part of the monastery of Ama Maria")
P.Clackson 48	8th c. CE	Titkois (?)	Christian	l. 12: ἄμα Θεοδ(ώρα) ("Ama Theodora")

a   Only the attestations of the title αμα (not spelled either αμμα or αμμας), were included in the table. However, only three additional references are added with either of these spellings: P.Köln II 111.4-5 (5th-6th c. CE; Egypt, exact provenance unknown): [ἡ] ἀμμά ("the abbess"), this translation is given in Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters from Ancient Egypt*, 230; PSI VIII 953.9 (567/68 CE; Oxyrhynchus): ἄμμα Βης( ) ("Amma Bes( )"); P.Oxy. XVI 1874.12 (6th-8th c. CE; Oxyrhynchus): ἄμμᾳ Εὔ⟨ᾳ⟩ ("Amma Eve").