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ANOTHER ROMAN INSCRIPTION FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF CAESAREA.

By ZEV VILNAY, Tel Aviv.

IN June, 1927, a Roman inscription in the aqueduct of Caesarea came to my notice, about which I reported in the last issue of the *Q.S.* This inscription reads: IMPERATOR CAESAR TRAIANVS HADRIANVS AVGVSTVS FECIT PER VEXILLATIONEM LEGIONIS X FRETENSIS.¹ On February 1st, I found another inscription about 20 metres further west, which shows a greater degree of art in its formation. It was fixed in the wall of the same aqueduct, between two arches, facing north, and was covered by a layer of clay with stones imbedded therein. Only after some hours' cleaning its full beauty and meaning appeared.

The inscription is carved on a large hewn stone. Its measurements are: 187 cms. by 78 cms. by 35 cms. On the face of the stone a large frame is cut out (78 cms. by 71 cms.), and on either side of this is a triangle. It has the shape of a *tabula ansata*. The borders of this *tabula* are raised 7-9 cms. above the face of the stone. In each triangle a rose is cut out. On either side of the *tabula* figures are sculptured representing Roman images. Each figure stands with its feet on a round ball, resting on a three-stepped base, each step being smaller than the one above. The faces of the figures are broken. But one may recognize the clothing, the breast, and the wings. On one figure the right hand, which appears to have been holding something, can still be seen.

Within the square borders of the *tabula* is carved a round wreath of broken flowers, forming below a symmetrical bow of which

¹ Recently I visited the village Kiriath Abu-Gosh, on the Jaffa-Jerusalem road. In the monastery there, a monk showed me a stone with the inscription: VEXILLATIO LEG X FRE. In this village another stone was found, with the same inscription. (*Revue Biblique*, xi [1902], p. 730; xxxiv [1925], p. 580.)



ROMAN INSCRIPTION IN THE AQUEDUCT OF CAESAREA.

one-half has been broken off. Within the wreath, which has a diameter of 50 cms., is inscribed the Latin inscription of four lines :

IMP(erator) CAE(sar)
 TR(anianvs) HAD(rianvs) AVG(vstvs)
 VEXIL(latio) LEG(ionis)
 VI FERR(atae)

Hence this new inscription is of the same age as the first—*i.e.* of the reign of Hadrian (A.D. 117–138). The Legion Ferrata which is mentioned here is well known in Palestine; it participated in the suppression of the revolt of Bar-Kokhba.¹ Apparently this legion, or a section of it, was encamped in the region of Megiddo at the place where nowadays is to be found the village Lejjon, which is a corruption of the word “Legion.” Near this village the remains of a Roman camp have been found. Also in a close field a tile has been found bearing the stamp LEGVIF, the initials of LEGIO VI FERRATA.² There has also been discovered, in 1909, during the excavations at Samaria (Sebastia), a stone bearing the words VEXILLATIO LEG VI FERR.³ From the new inscription found in the aqueduct of Caesarea, we learn that not only the detachment of the Xth Legion Fretensis was engaged in its construction, but a detachment of the VIth Legion Ferrata as well.

February 27th, 1928.

¹ E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes* (1901), I, p. 688.

² G. Schumacher, *Tell el-Mutesellim* (1908), I, p. 175.

³ G. Reisner, C. Fisher and D. Lyon, *Harvard Excavation of Samaria* (1924), I, p. 251; II, pl. lix.