

οἶκος αἰώνιος

PROF. J. N. BAKHUIZEN VAN DEN BRINK has sent to Dr Darwell Stone, as editor of the *Lexicon of Patristic Greek*, a very valuable and kind communication (in reference to my article αἰών, *J. T. S.* xxxvi 265-283, 390-404) on the phrase οἶκος αἰώνιος which occurs in sepulchral inscriptions, both pagan and Christian, through the study of which I have compiled the following statement:

A. (1) Christian.

(a) C. Bayet *de tit. Atticae Christ. antiquissimis* no. 107 οἶκος αἰώνιος Ἀγάθωνος ἀναγνώστου καὶ Εὐφημίας ἐν δυσὶ θήκαις, ἰδίᾳ ἐκάστῳ ἡμῶν. εἰ δέ τις . . . τολμήσῃ σῶμα καταθέσθαι ἐνταῦθα παρ᾽ ἐτῶν δύο ἡμῶν, λόγον δόξῃ τῷ Θεῷ καὶ ἀνάθεμα ἦτω μαρὰν ἀθάν (cf. 1 Cor. 16. 22) [4th or 5th cent. A.D.].

(b) *Inscr. Gr.* vii. 1646 Λουκιανοῦ οἰκοδόμου οἶκος [αἰ]ών[ε]ιος οἶκος (οἶκος αἰώνιος sepulchri appellatio in eo genere frequentissima).

(c) *ib.* xiv. 463 (videtur Chr. tit.) Δυρῆλις . . . νῦν ἐνθάδε κείμει Κόσμου πλάνην προλιπὼν εἰς αἰώνιον οἶκον ἀνελθὼν Μηδένα λυτήσας ὁμαλὸν βίον ὦδε διάγω.

(2) Pagan or indeterminate.

(a) *Princeton Univ. Arch. Exped. to Syria in 1904-1905 and 1909* Div. iii. Sect. A Pt. 4 Παλλαδίῳ νύῳ μήτηρ Θεῖ ἀνέθηκα Ἐξ ἰδίων οἶκον αἰώνιον (οἶκος αἰώνιος, like *sedes aeterna*, a euphemism for tomb, is found frequently in late inscriptions. In Egyptian and Semitic inscriptions 'house of eternity' is used in a like fashion).

(b) *Inscr. Gr.* xiv. 1464 Δυρῆλιος . . . ἰππεὺς Ῥωμαίων ζῶν [ἐποίησα] ἐμαντῷ καὶ Σαλβίῳ . . . συμβίῳ μου τὸν αἰώ[νιον] οἶκον καὶ . . . ἀπελευθέρους . . .

B. οἰκητήριον αἰώνιον also occurs

(2) Pagan.

W. K. Prentice *Pt. iii of Publications of an American Arch. Exped. to Syria 1899-1900* no. 317 Χέρ(ε)τε μοι, φίλε τόπε (*Hail, beloved place* or perhaps *Farewell, loved places*) (Ἐ)χθρῶν χαρά, τέκνων λύπη, γερόντων προσδοκία, πόνων ἰατρέ, πλουσίων ἀγωνία, ἀθ(λ)ίων εὐχή, ἀπροσωπόλη(πτ)ε, πάντας ἰσ(σ)άζων, σὲ φυγῖν ἀμήχανον. Οἰκητήριον αἰώνιον Θαλάβαθος . . . εἰαντῷ κὲ τέκνοις κὲ ἐπιτηδίοις. Θάαρσι, ψυχῇ, οὐδὶς ἀθάνα[τος].

C. αἰώνιος οἰκήσεως (? -ως) τόπος also occurs

(1) Christian.

Princeton Univ. Arch. Exped. to Syria in 1904-1905 and 1909 Div. iii.

Sect. B Pt. 2 p. 106 no. 1043 Αἰώνιος . . . οἰκήσεως τόπος, τοῖς δέ γε εὐσεβῶς ζήσασιν ἱεροῦ προπόλεια (-αία) παραδίσσου (-εῖσου).

The phrase οἶκος αἰώνιος *seems* to imply that the grave is man's home for ever. This appears most clearly in no. 317 *sup. B* (2), but it may be doubted whether this was the meaning of αἰώνιος even here. The epitaph referred to is a rhetorical comment in the manner of epitaph-writers on a common phrase: αἰώνιος does not mean, at the date of these epitaphs at all events, eternal in the strict sense. It is otherwise with αἰδιος, and the only two passages which speak in clear terms of the grave as man's everlasting home use αἰδιος, not αἰώνιος—Xen. *Ages.* II. 16 (Ἀγησίλαος) εἰς τὴν αἰδιον οἶκῃσιν κατηγάγετο and Diod. Sic. I. 51 of those living near Memphis τοὺς . . . τῶν τετελευτηκῶτων ταφὰς αἰδίου οἴκου προσαγορεύουσιν, ὡς ἐν ἄδου διατελούντων τὸν ἄπειρον αἰῶνα.

Let us examine the usage of both words.

D. οἶκος means not only *house* or *home*, but a *room* in a house, *public building*, e.g. *temple*, a *treasury* at Delphi, *household goods*, in Attic law an *estate*, *inheritance*. Among other things a *tomb*.

Bulletin de correspondance hellénique vol. 2 p. 610 no. 29 (1) Ὀνήσιμος . . . κατεσκεύασε τὸν οἶκον ἑαυτῷ ζῶν καὶ . . . τῇ γυναικί.

(2) Ἀρτέμων κατεσκεύασε τὸν οἶκον . . . ἑαυτῷ καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις: cf. no. 30 p. 611.

so οἰκητήριον.

Corp. Inscr. Gr. Boeckh vol. 4 no. 9298 μήτις τολμήσι ἀνῦξαι οἰκητήριον τοῦτο: cf. C. Bayet *de tit. Attic. Christ.* nos. 9, 29, 30, 34, 62.

E. αἰώνιος is used on tombs not only with οἶκος, οἰκητήριον, but with μνημεῖον, κτίσμα, τιμή, γέρας.

with μνημεῖον.

Princeton Univ. Arch. Exped. to Syria in 1904-1905 and 1909 Div. iii. Sect. A Pt. 2 no. 164 ὁ δεῦνα . . . οἰκοδόμησεν . . . αἰώνιον μνημεῖον . . . οἱ θεοὶ ἀ|θ(ά)νατο(ι).

with κτίσμα.

Le Bas and W. H. Waddington *Inscr. Gr. et Lat.* vol. 3 no. 2003 Εἰς κτίσμα αἰώνιον ἔκτισεν (*Princeton Univ. Arch. Exped. to Syria 1904-1905 and 1909* Div. iii. Sect. A Pt. 2 no. 158 κτίσμα αἰώνιον ἠρέκτισεν) Σόλεος (? tomb or other building).

τιμή.

Le Bas etc. *Inscr.* vol. 3. 2618 τὸ κτίσμα τοῦτό ἐστιν αἰώνιος τιμή, τάφος: cf. 2621.

γέρας *ib.* 2614 μνημεῖον, αἰώνιον γέρας, ὠκοδόμησεν κτλ.

For its use with *τιμή* and *γέρας* there are plenty of examples (v. *αἰώνιος* iv 3 and 4); with these, as with their opposites, it means, in a quite loose sense, *ever-memorable, undying, indelible*.

But it is not only with words such as these that *αἰώνιος* means something less than everlasting. It is used of the covenants and promises of God, which, though themselves unchanging, may be affected by the disobedience of men (*ib.* iv 5); of something which will last to the end of the world, e.g. *Const. Apost.* 5. 19. 7 of the Sacrifice of the Altar; and, what is particularly to the point here, of the long sleep of death, in the mouth of an author who believes in immortality, *test. xii Patr. Iss.* 8. 9 *ὑπνωσεν ὑπνον αἰώνιον*. *Pallad. Hist. Laus.* ch. 104 M. 34. 1210 D (not in Butler) (Adolius) *τὸν αἰώνιον ὑπνον κοιμᾶται ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις, καὶ θάπτεται*. Here the sense is *for all time to come, for an indefinite time*. It is this sense which *αἰώνιος* bears in the phrase *οἶκος αἰώνιος* which we are considering.

N.B. *αἰώνιος* used of the holder of an office means *for life, perpetual Corp. Pap. Hermopolitanorum* Pt. i ed. C. Wessely ap. *Stud. zur Palaeogr. und Papyruskunde* Leipzig 1905 no. 62 (ii) line 27 *αἰωνίου γυμνασιάρχου*.

F. Sometimes there occurs on tombs an inscription with *αἰών* instead of *αἰώνιος*—

Princeton Univ. Arch. Exped. to Syria Div. iii Sect. B Pt. 2 no. 943 (Christian inscr.) † “Κ(ύριο)ς φυλάξι” *τὸν οἶκον τοῦτον, καὶ “τὴν εἰσοδὸν καὶ ἐξοδο(ν) αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος”* † : (from Ps. 120 (121), 8 LXX) cf. 930. Here *αἰών* has the sense of a long but definite period, *as long as the world lasts, till the end of the world* (v. *αἰών* vi. 4 a) e.g. *Test. xii Patr. Dan* 6. 10 *ἔσται τὸ γένος ὑμῶν εἰς σωτηρίαν ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος*.

This may be compared, as Leclercq points out (*Dict. d'Archéol. Chrét. et de Liturgie* vol. 1¹ Pt. 1 pp. 339, 340), with *Corp. Inscr. Gr.* Boeckh vol. 4 9439 *Καλόκερος . . . τοῖς γλυκντάτοις γονεῦσιν τὸ κομ[η]τ[ή]ριον ἕως ἀναστάσεως* (3rd or 2nd cent.) and another inscr., also Ante-Nicene—*Κάλλιστος . . . ἐποίησεν τὸ κομητήριον τοῦτο ἐαυτῷ καὶ τῇ συμβίῳ . . . ἅμα θυγατρὶ ἕως ἀναστάσεως*: cf. another cited by him of the same date (p. 340) *θέτο σῶμα δὲ γαίῃ Εἰσόκαι ἀναστάσεως εὐάγγελον ἡμαρ ἔκητε*.
E. C. E. OWEN.

THE NAME לֵוִי?

THE etymology of the word לֵוִי 'Levite' has been a long-standing problem. The prevailing view to-day seems to be that it is connected with the Minaean לֵוִי 'priest';¹ but even this arresting comparison does not

¹ Cf. Hommel, *Aufsätze und Abhandlungen*, pp. 30 ff.

settle the question of derivation. It is therefore perhaps permissible to attempt yet another solution of the puzzle.

In several South Arabian inscriptions, recently discussed by Höffner and Rhodokanakis,¹ there occurs a word שחר with the meaning of 'priest'.² As those scholars have pointed out, the term derives from the well-known root סחר (Acc. *saḥāru* Qatab. שחר, &c.) 'to go round', and refers in the first instance to the ritual circumambulation of the altar, as in the Arabic rite known as the *tawāf*. The שחר is thus primarily 'the circumambulator'.

The antiquity of the rite in question is attested by the presence in the South Arabian vocabulary of the words קיה and מקף in the sense of 'altar', i.e. a circumambulated table-stone.³ Analogous is the Arabic نل, deriving from the root رور 'to go round', whilst in the Ras Shamra texts a similar meaning attaches to a word ער, which connects with the Arabic عار and Ethiopic ያደ 'to go round'.⁴ The rite is mentioned, moreover, in the Old Testament in יְהוָה וְאֶת־מִזְבְּחֵךְ יְהוָה (Ps. xxvi. 6), as already observed by Wensinck.⁵

Now is it not possible that in this South Arabian שחר or 'ritual circumambulator', we have a direct counterpart to the Hebrew לָוִי and the Minaean לוֹא ?

The term לוֹא, as has in itself long been observed, admits of ready derivation from the root לָוָה, לָוִי, the primary meaning of which is 'to go round, encircle'. It is therefore an exact parallel to שחר, and would originally have borne the same specific and technical meaning.⁶

It should be observed that no originality is here claimed for the association of לוֹא with the root לָוָה, לָוִי. This has already been proposed times beyond number. The object of the present note is merely to strengthen that view by reference to the analogy of the South Arabian שחר and to the known place of the rite of circumambulation in early Semitic cultus.

THEODOR H. GASTER.

¹ In *W.Z.K.M.*, 1936, p. 216 ff.

² Exact references to inscriptions will be found in the article cited.

³ Cf. Mortmann-Mittwoch, p. 33. The root is קיה, as in Heb. מִקְיָה, cognate with נקה II.

⁴ Cf. *O.L.Z.* 1936, p. 400.

⁵ In *Theol. Tijdschr.*, 1919, p. 103.

⁶ If so, the form must be like that of תָּוִיר, a proper name meaning the same thing as תָּוִיר 'boar', namely a *qitil*-form with the active sense usually associated with the *qitil*-form; cp. Bauer and Leander, *Hist. Gr. d. Hebr. Spr.* i. 470-471 [G.R.D.].