

## FOREWORD

Rabbinic sources mention the existence of a *castra* (קצרה, קצטרה, קסטרא, נסטרא, “military encampment”)<sup>1</sup> at Sepphoris. Unfortunately, no other sources use this term in relationship to Sepphoris.<sup>2</sup> The rabbis, furthermore, only mention the *castra* in passing; they were not interested in the institution itself. The context of the references, therefore, assumes an importance of its own and must be carefully examined if anything is to be gleaned concerning the *castra*. The following study analyzes the passages in which the references occur in order to determine the meaning and historicity of the *castra shel-Zippori* (*castra* of Sepphoris).

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<sup>1</sup> All of the Semitic forms have been understood as variants of Latin *castra*. S. Krauss, in his *Griechische und lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum* (1898-9), I, 129, suggests that the emphatic sound of צ compensated for the elision of T in the form קצרה. Another example would be כצרה for Bostra. For the interchange of כ for צ and נ for ק in both western and eastern Aramaic, see G. Dalman, *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch und aramäische Dialektproben* (1960), pp. 99, 104 and J. N. Epstein, *Diqduq 'Aramit Bavlit* (1960), p. 19. G. Preisigke, in his *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden* (1925-58), III, 205, has documented the form γαστρησ for Greek γαστρησών which is the equivalent of Latin *castrensis*, a word derived from *castra* (see P. G. W. Glare, ed., *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (1968-), II, 283). Thus the same G for K phenomenon occurs in the Greek form κάστρα.

The word קצרה meaning *castra* should not be confused with a similarly spelled word denoting “a fuller.” For general definitions of the Semitic forms, see the appropriate entries in J. Fuerst, *Glossarium Graeco-Hebraeum* (1890); A. Kohut, *'Arukh Ha-Shalem* (reprinted, 1970); Krauss, *Lehnwörter*, and J. Levy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* (1883).

On *castra* as a “military encampment” see Glare, p. 282. Cf. E. A. Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (1914), p. 632.

For the sake of consistency, the Latin form, *castra*, is used throughout this chapter as the transliteration of the Semitic word.

<sup>2</sup> According to F. Lebrecht (*Bether, die fragliche Stadt im Hadrianisch-juedischen Kriege* (1877), p. 40), the *Sabure siue Veterocariare* mentioned in the *Notitia Dignitatum* (ed. O. Seeck (1876), p. 73) is equivalent to *Vetera* (“old”) *Castra-Saphurei*, i.e. the old *castra* of Sepphoris. Lebrecht also identifies the city of Bether with Vetera making Bether and Sepphoris one and the same! These views, although widely repeated (see, for example, Kohut, *'Arukh Ha-Shalem* II, 89; 123 and S. Krauss, *Antoninus und Rabbi* (1910), pp. 118f.), cannot stand up to criticism. See S. Klein, “*Zippori*,” p. 53, n. 6. Cf. *idem.*, *Beiträge zur Geographie und Geschichte Galiläas* (1909), p. 34, n. 3.