

*Did Roman Jews Read (and Pray) in Hebrew? The case of
Akmoneia in Phrygia (Ahat, Turkey)*

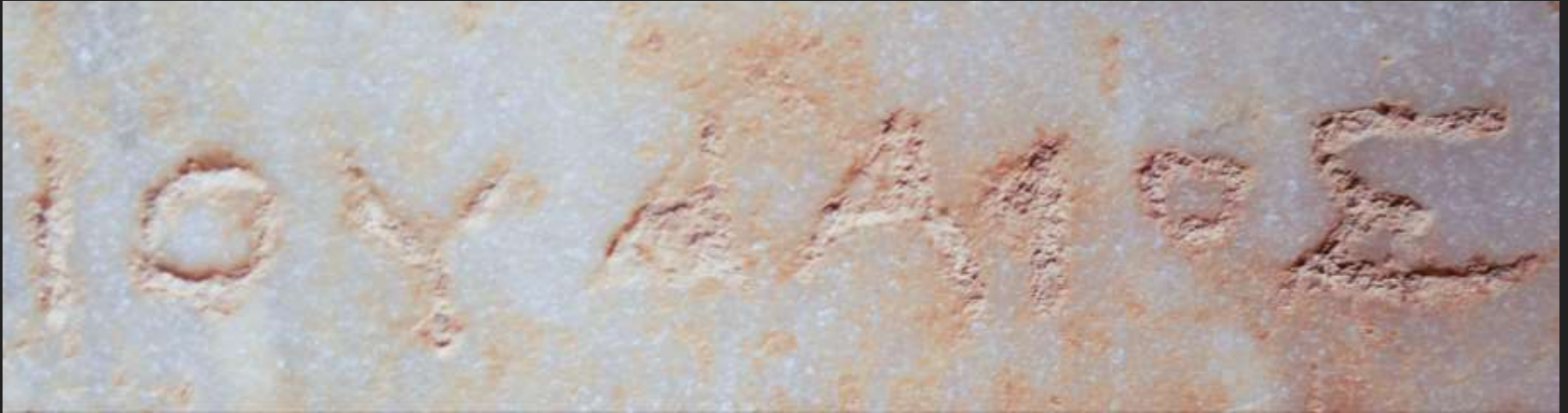


David Slager Jewish Student Centre
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[http://mama.csad.ox.ac.uk/monuments/
MAMA-XI-128.html](http://mama.csad.ox.ac.uk/monuments/MAMA-XI-128.html)

Jewish Inscriptions in Greek: The Second Temple Diaspora



Moschion, the *Ioudaios*, from Oropos, Sanctuary
of Amphiaraos, near Athens (ca. 300 BCE)

Some linguistic data on Hebrew in Hellas

1. From ca. 300 BCE–ca. 640 CE, we know of c. 3–4,000 Jewish inscriptions in Greek from across the ancient world
2. From the core of the Greek-speaking world, very little Hebrew accompanies them. A handful from Greece. For Asia Minor, 10–15, a portion of which are in fact migrants from Palestine, many consisting of just a single word, out of 253 total inscriptions identified as Jewish.

From *Inscriptiones Judaicae Orientis*

Ach366fs. Epitaph(?)

Unpublished. The inscription will be published by Jonathan Price, and details are included here with his permission.

Found at Athens. Now: Athens, Agora Museum, inv.no. I 6852.

Details: Fragment of a plaque of Pentelic marble, broken above, below, on left and behind; right side preserved with fluting just behind the corner. 14.2 (right) – 15 (centre) – 15.3 (left) x 9.5 x 4.5 cm. (3.1 cm without the fluting). Height of letters: Greek, 1.2 cm (ω); 1.8 cm (B,N); Hebrew, 2.2 cm (ש); 3.4 cm (ך); 2.3 cm (ד). Distance between lines: 2.6 cm (between N & כ); 3.3 cm (between ω & ד). All Greek letters with serifs.

Language: Greek and Hebrew. Date: 4th century CE or later.

Text (follows personal inspection):

[- -]ων Β+[- -]
[- -]+דש

There are traces of letters after Β, probably Π; after ד and possibly between ω & ד.

Discovered on 20 April 1959 built into a late wall (perhaps a house), no.V19, section EA 28 of the Agora excavations (the lower north slopes of the Acropolis). The Hebrew letters in 1.2 are most probably part of a personal name like שלמיה (Shlamiah)³⁷ or שלמזיון (Shelamzion). It could be the acclamation על שלום (or just שלום) which was often added to otherwise Greek or Latin inscriptions, but the spelling without ω would be unusual.³⁸

Three other Greek and Hebrew inscriptions are known from the Balkans: #Dal5, #Mac17, #Ach49. The use of Hebrew suggests a date for the inscription not earlier than the 4th century CE, but it could also be substantially later.



What's at stake? The nature of diasporic Judaism and its relation to early Rabbinic Judaism

A Split Diaspora Again— A Response to Fergus Millar

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Abstract

In this article the attempts made by Fergus Millar to undermine the authors' thesis concerning the 'split diaspora' are discarded altogether. Millar, who has elsewhere criticized the split diaspora thesis, has, the authors argue, contributed nothing that would change the view that Rabbinic lore in its different genres was not created by and did not exist in the Greek- and Latin-speaking Jewish Diaspora. On the contrary, he is found to be in agreement with the authors concerning the divide of the Jewish Diaspora in the first centuries of the Common Era into an eastern Hebrew/Aramaic and a Greek and Latin western one (with a third section in between that was more of a mixture of the two).

IJO Phrygien 170 from Akmoneia (3rd or 4th century CE?)

] ΧΑΣΤΙΡΟ [

ישראל ועל ירושלים ו

קע

.. *es sei Friede über Israel und Jerusalem und diesem Ort*



334. Ahat. In a house wall (in 1934 in the Museum at Afyon Karahisar). Fragment of bluish limestone, complete with moulding above and below; broken to r. and l. H. 0'165, w. 0'175; letters (Greek) 0'025 (Pl. 58).

I. - - - - XAIPO - - - -
 II. 1. - - - - ישראל ועל ירושלים ו' - - - -
 2. - - - - קץ - - - -

I. Restoration would seem to be mere guesswork. If this line introduced, as it were, the lines below, such a phrase as [- πρεσβυ]χαις πρεσ[βυ]χου] (cf. *Psalm vi, 10*) may have been appropriate, but whether the Greek and the Hebrew were in any way connected is not known.

II. The transcription above and the translation and note below have kindly been communicated by E. L. Sukenik:

"The inscription may be restored approximately as follows:
 קץ ירושלים ועל ישראל ועל ירושלים ועל המקום הזה עד עתה קץ"

'May there be peace upon Israel and upon Jerusalem and upon this place to the time of the end.'

"The blessing upon Israel and upon Jerusalem is reminiscent of a passage in the evening prayer for Sabbath and for festivals. The phrase preceding the word קץ in the second line may be a quotation from *Daniel xii, 4, 9, or xi, 35*. But if the

MAMA VI 334



William Moir Calder

2nd blessing after Shema, Sabbath Evening Prayer

Ashkenaz

הַשְּׂפִיבֵנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם. וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ לְחַיִּים וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ
סִפְתָּ שְׁלוֹמְךָ. וְתִקְנֵנוּ בְּעֶצֶה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ. וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ מִהֲרָה לְמַעַן
שְׁמֶךָ. וְהִגֵּן בְּעַדְנוּ: וְהִסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ אוֹיֵב דָּבָר וְחָרָב וְרָעַב וְיָגוֹן. וְהִסֵּר
שָׂטָן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ. וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ. כִּי אֵל שׁוֹמְרָנוּ
וּמְצִילָנוּ אַתָּה. כִּי אֵל מְלֶךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה: וּשְׁמֹר צִאתָנוּ וּבֹאֵנוּ
לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם: וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סִפְתָּ שְׁלוֹמְךָ. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה ה' הַפּוֹרֵשׁ סִפְתָּ שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם:

2nd blessing after Shema, Sabbath Evening Prayer

Sefard

הַשְּׂפִיבֵנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְשָׁלוֹם, וְהַעֲמִידֵנוּ מִלְּפָנֶיךָ לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים
וּלְשָׁלוֹם, וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ, וְתִקַּנְנוּ בְּעֵצָה טוֹבָה מִלְּפָנֶיךָ,
וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנו מִהֲרָה לְמַעַן שְׂמֶךָ, וְהִגֵּן בְּעַדְנוּ, וְהִסֵּר מֵעָלֵינוּ אוֹיֵב, דָּבָר,
וְחָרֵב, וְרָעַב וְיָגוֹן, וְהִסֵּר שָׁטָן מִלְּפָנֵינוּ וּמֵאַחֲרֵינוּ, וּבְצֵל כְּנָפֶיךָ
תִּסְתִּירֵנוּ, כִּי אֵל מְלֶךְ חַנוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה. וּשְׁמַר צְאִתְנוּ וּבּוֹאֵנוּ לְחַיִּים
טוֹבִים וּלְשָׁלוֹם מֵעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם. וּפְרוֹשׁ עָלֵינוּ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹמְךָ. בְּרוּךְ
אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַפּוֹרֵשׁ סִכַּת שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל
יְרוּשָׁלָּיִם:

Significance of the inscription

- Jewish languages, diglossia, and Hebrew literacy: More than just a few words...
- Readership and context – could it be from an ancient synagogue?
- Genre - and if it's prayer, what *was* prayer in Greek-speaking diaspora in the Amoraic period? (ca. 200-500 CE, the formative period of production of Talmud)

The Synagogue of Julia Severa in Akmoneia (fl. 54-68 CE)

“P(ublius) Tyrronios Klados, archisynagogue for life, and Loukios son of Loukios, archisynagogue, and Popilios Zotikos, archon, restored the assembly hall (or “house”—oikos) constructed by Julia Severa, both from their own and from collected funds, and they painted the walls and the ceiling, and made the windows secure and made all the remaining ornamentation. These very men also the community (sunagoge) honored with a gilt shield due to their virtuous disposition and their goodwill and diligence on behalf of the community (sunagoge).”

Date? For
Greek? For
Hebrew?



History of the Jews of Phrygia (ca. 200 BCE -

Josephus, AJ 12

^[147] He also testified in writing to our piety and loyalty when, on the occasion of his being in the upper satrap his governor, and one of his close friends, to send some of our people from **Babylonia** to **Phrygia**. He then wrote as you are in good health, it is well. I also am in sound health. ^[149] Learning that the people in Lydia and **Phrygia** are attention on my part, and, on taking counsel with my friends as to what should be done, I determined to transport t and **Babylonia** to the fortresses and most important places. ^[150] ¶ For I am convinced that they will be loyal guard that they have had the testimony of my forefathers to their good faith and eagerness to do as they are asked. It is m should be transported and, since I have promised it, use their own laws. ^[151] And when you have brought them to t house and land to cultivate and plant with vines, and shall exempt them from payment of taxes on the produce of t the soil, let them have grain measured out to them for feeding their servants, and let there be given also to those en through receiving kind treatment from us they may show themselves the more eager in our cause. ^[153] And take as molested by anyone." Concerning, then, the friendship of Antiochus the Great for the Jews let the testimony here g



Prosabbaton = Friday Evening (“Before the Sabbath”)

[ἔϋ]χὰς προ[σαββάτου]

1. Where’s the verb?
2. Why the plural, “prayers?”

προσάββατον, -ου⁺ N2N 0-0-0-1-1=2

Ps 92(93), 1; Jdt 8, 6

eve of the sabbath; neol.

CIIP 1.1.5: The issues of a) signage and b) time (Jewish vs. Roman)

5. Sign marking “the place of the trumpeting” in Hebrew, 1 c. CE

Large ashlar stone finished on three sides, niche on its inner face, left edge broken. Elegant square Hebrew letters incised deeply on the face; near the left break appears what may be a small supra-linear letter.

Meas.: h 31, w 86, d 26 cm; l. 44,5 cm; letters 6 cm.

Findspot: Herodian pavement below the southwestern corner of Temple Mount.
Pres. loc: Israel Museum, Jerusalem (replica in situ), IAA inv. no. 1978-1439. Autopsy: 12 September 2000.

לְבֵית הַתְּקִיעָה לְהַכּ [--]

App. crit.: להב|ל Mazar; להב|הן] App. crit.:
Yadin (cited by Demsky 1986);
להב|דיל בין קדש וחול Demsky;
להב|רזח השבת Ben-Dov.

לְבֵית הַתְּקִיעָה לְהַכּ [ריז--]

Translit.: lbyṯ ḥtqyḥ
lhk[ryz--]

To the place of trumpeting for (announcing?).

Comm.: This stone was found in a pile of stones and rubble on the Herodian pavement



fig. 5

Greek (Jewish) name?

Μοσχᾶς Προκλῆ

Moschas son of Prokles

Jonathan Price on the name, but in Israel at this time:

Moschas.

fig. 254

Comm.: This name, certainly in the nominative, may be either Greek or Semitic. The Greek name Μοσχᾶς is well attested (35 instances in the five published volumes of LGPN; and cf. also the instances listed by Foraboschi, s.v.), as well as derivatives such as Μοσχιανός (LGPN, s.v.), Μόσχιος (Pape, WGE, s.v.), etc.; for a Jewish Μόσχος and Μοσχίων, cf. Noy, IJO I Ach45; the Greek name Μοσχᾶς is based on the word μόσχος, calf, like the Hebrew/Aramaic name מִשְׁכַּח, מִשְׁכַּח ('gl, 'gl'). On the other hand, the name here may represent the biblical name מִשְׁכַּח *mšḥ* (Gen 10,2; Hez 27,13, 32,26, 38,2, 39,1; 1 Chron 1,5; 17), which is transcribed Μοσχας, Μοσεχα, Μοσεχαθη, etc. (Wuthnow, Semitische Menschnamen 79, 150).

But Moschas is also good Jewish (and non-Greek, generally) name for this time and place - and Prokles is perfectly acceptable, too, as more *LGPN* research has shown.



Can the Hebrew be explained by any restoration or interpretation of extant text that *isn't* prayer?

Andriake, Lycia (S. Coast) - Architectural date of
Synagogue, 5th century CE

An inscription in six lines on the front side of a marble panel - possibly reused, otherwise should be the inscription of those who commissioned the floor pavement - in the floor of the southwestern auxiliary room. Panel H: 0.26 m. W: 0.37 m. Th: n/a Letter H: 0.023–0.037 m.

εὐχὴ θεο<ι>δοσίου
καὶ Ιουσουα υἱὸν (sic) Σαμου-
ήλ τοῦ μακαρ(ίου?) ΓΕΡΙΑΜΠΡΑ
4 ΣΙ τὸν (sic) Ἑλίχονος καὶ
τὸν (sic) αὐ[τ]ὸν (sic) παιδίων
ἐρήνη ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραήλ.

1 ΘΕΟΙΔΟΣΙΟΥ lapis || 2 καὶ = καί || 4 καὶ = καί || 5 παιδίων = παιδίων

Translation: Votive offering of Theodosios and Iusua, sons of Samuel, son of (?) ..., of Helikonos and his children. (May there be) peace onto Israel!



Fig. 26. Fragment 2.



Can't it be a cursing epitaph?

Twice Ezekiel 21:

ואתה חלל רשע נשיא ישראל אשר-בא יומו בעת עון קץ:

} ס{

And to you, O dishonored wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come—the time set for your punishment—

בחרזות לה שוא בקסם-לה קזב לתת אותך אל-צוארי חללי רשעים

אשר-בא יומם בעת עון קץ:

Because they have prophesied falsely about you and have divined deceitfully concerning you, you shall be wielded over the necks of the dishonored wicked ones, for their day has come, the time set for their punishment.

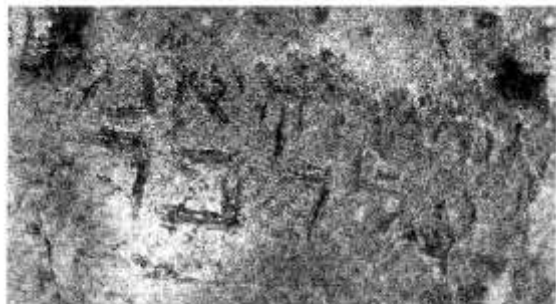
IJO II 1 174 from Akmoneia calls down the curses on those who would violate the tomb, “(γεγραμμένοι ἐν τῷ Δευτερονομίῳ, “those curses written in Deuteronomy,” viz. Deut 27 and 28)



Conclusion: If prayer, which prayer? The uniqueness and mystery of the utterance...

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Appendix 1: probably medieval inscriptions



App3. Hebrew inscription from Larissa with biblical text (1Sam 1.13) (unpublished. Now: Larissa, Ancient Theatre A.
Text (from personal inspection):

(bearded human face) רחנה היא מן דברתה
על לבה

Now Hannah, she spoke in her heart

This graffito is scratched at the back of the top side of a marble seating block in the penultimate row of seats in Theatre A of Larissa. It appears that the graffito is a citation of the beginning of 1Sam 1.13, which continues: רַק שִׁפְתֶיהָ נִעוּה וּכְרַלָּהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע וּרְחִנָּהּ עַלֵי לִשְׁכַרָּהּ ("only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard"), an important text in Hebrew prayer. It is not known under what circumstances and when the graffito appeared on the stone seat. The most likely explanation is that this seat was one of those moved to the Jewish cemetery of Larissa (see p.107), and the graffito was added there. It is therefore unlikely to be earlier than medieval. The aleph has a typically Byzantine form, but the other lettering

d. Prayers, blessings, thanksgivings, invocations

Blessing: εὐλ(ογία)	Pan1	εὐλωγητῶ	Thr5
εὐλογία	Mac17, BS3	Invocation of God: ἐπικαλοῦμαι	καὶ
εὐλογία πᾶσιν	Thr1, Thr4?	ἀξιώ τὸν Θεὸν τὸν Ὑψιστον	
εὐλογία πᾶσιν ταῖς		Ach70-71	
εἰς[ε]ρ[χ]ο[μ]ένους	Ach59	Κ(ύρι)ε βοήθη	Ach72
εὐλογήσθη	BS3	ἐπὶ ὀνόματος Θεοῦ ζῶντος]	
[ךך]	BS2	Ach73	
Farewell to the people: τῷ λαῷ χαίρειν		One God: εἶς Θεός	Pan2
	Ach1-4,	εἶς Θεός	Mac17
	Ach10, Ach13-14, Ach16	God's peace: ἐν [εἰρήνῃ Θεοῦ	Dal4
λαῷ χαίρειν	Ach4, Ach8,	God's power: τὰς θείας καὶ μεγάλας]	
	Ach11-12	δύναμις τὰς τοῦ Θεοῦ	Ach51
λαῷ χαίρειν	Ach25	τὸν Κύριον τῶν πνευμάτων καὶ	
[χ]χαίρειν	Ach9, Ach16?	πάσης σαρκὸς	Ach70-71
Mercy to the people: ἔλεως τῷ λαῷ		God with us: Κύριος μεθ' ἡμῶν	Mac13
	Ach57	God watching: ἐνορῶντος Θεοῦ	Ach16
Honouring of an individual:		Κόριε ὁ πάντα ἐφορῶν	Ach70-71
ἐτίμησαν αὐτόν	Ach66	Blessing on God: εὐλογοῦντες	Mac17
[ἐστεφάνωσαν] χρυσοῦ στεφάνῳ	Ach66	Mac17	
στεφανοῦσιν χρυσοῦ στεφάνῳ	Ach67	Worship of God: τὴν τιμὴν τῆς	
	Pan3	λατρίας τῆς γιγνομένης ἐφ' ἐκάστης	Ach51
Θεῷ Ἀγιῷ	Mac5	ἡμέρας τῷ Θεῷ	
Θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ	Ach60, Ach63	Blessing on Neapolis: αὖτις Νεάπολις	Mac17
Θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ	Ach62	μετὰ τῶν φιλοῦντων	
Ὑψίστῳ	Ach61	Law: τὰς] δύναμις τοῦ νόμου	Ach51
Θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ ἐπηκόῳ	BS4	Angels: οἱ ἄγγελοι Θεοῦ	Ach70-71
Θεῷ Ὑψίστῳ παντοκράτορι		Amen: ἡ̅ן̅ ἡ̅ן̅ ἡ̅ן̅	Cre3
εὐλωγητῶ	BS20, BS21?, BS22, BS27?		