The Future of Early Christianity

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between what I have called the spare economy of the Genesis narrative and Josephus’s expansion, in this case particularly in erotic details. That this is a test of character becomes clear early on (Ant. 2.4.2 §42) in the editorial observation that Potiphar’s wife was viewing Joseph as a slave—the slave to do her bidding—rather than observing his character. Joseph urges her to get control of her passion (Ant. 2.4.2 §43) and turn it toward reason (Ant. 2.4.5 §53). He resists the promise of special favors, should she submit, and stands firmly on his responsibility to his master. He appeals to conscience and the superiority of living well over wrongdoing (Ant. 2.4.4 §52). Finally he endures the humiliation of false charges for the sake of maintaining his virtue and self-control (Ant. 2.5.2 §69), trusting in the providence of God (Ant. 2.5.1 §60).

Judging the quality of life by character rather than social status, controlling passions with reason, exercising self-control, trusting the providence of God—these constituents of the virtuous character of Joseph and finally of his brothers as well, which Josephus accents in his revision of the Genesis narrative, were commonplace in the moral world of his Hellenistic/Roman audience, whether one labels them Stoic in the narrower sense or not. Josephus makes the case that the Jewish people exhibit the highest ideals of character in that world, all the way back to their very ancient beginnings. They are a people worth attending to.

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The Jewish Inscription from Aphrodisias

The principal Jewish inscription from ancient Aphrodisias in Caria is inscribed on a marble block on two faces; faces a and b are from different hands. Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, who have provided the scholarly world with an exemplary edition of and commentary on the inscription date both faces to the third century. They transcribe face a of the inscription as follows:

Col. (i) Θείας Βουλής, πατέλλα Ὑ δη(.1 or 2.)
Οἱ ὑποστηρικτὲς
νοῦ τοῦ ἑαυτῶν(ας)
tῶν φιλομαθῶν[
5] tῶν ἐκ παντελῶν(των)
eἰς Ἀπειθεῖαν
tῷ πλήθει ἑκουσίαν[
4] ξ ἔως μικῆς
Σμύρνης.
10 Παντῆς ὑποστήριξις
μέλα
Παντῆς ὑποστήριξις
τῆς ὑποστήριξις
15 Σμύρνης ὑποστήριξις
γενομένης
Γενομένης
20 Σμύρνης ὑποστήριξις

Reynolds and Tannenbaum give a tentative translation of lines 1–8:

God our help, [Givers to Give to Gift to Building for] the soup kitchen. Below (are) listed the (members) of the deceny of the [students/disciples/sages] of the law, also known as those who [fervently] praise God, (who) erected, for the relief of suffering in the community, at their personal expense, (this) memorial (building). Following the commentary of Reynolds and Tannenbaum, I offer the following tentative translation of lines 9–27:

(Margin.)
Samuel, Iael, [president/patron];
envoy(?), 10 with (her) son losouas, archon (?);
from Theodotos, former court employee (?), with Perge (his) son Hilarianos;
Samouel, head of the deceny (?), proselyte;
Ioses, son of Ieesos;
15 Beniamin, psalm-singer (?);
good-tempered Ioudas;
Ioses, proselyte;
Sabbattios, son of Amachios,
[pious Emmonios/Emmonios, God-Fearer];
20 [pious Antonines/Antoninos, God-Fearer];
Samouel, son of Politianos;
Eioseph, proselyte, son of Euchios;
and Eioudas, son of Theodoros;
and Antipeos, son of [Hermes/Hermes];
25 and sweet Sabathios;
and (?) Samouel, envoy (?), priest.

1 Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum, Jews and God-Fearers at Aphrodisias: Greek Inscriptions with Commentary (Cambridge Philological Society, Supp. 12. Cambridge: The Cambridge Philological Society, 1987). The dimensions of the marble block are as follows: faces a and b, 45–43 cm. [w] x 250 cm. [h]; face b, 48–42.5 cm. [w]. Faces a and b are from different hands; the editors date face a only slightly later than face b and both to the third century (pp. 3–5, 20–24).

2 Reynolds and Tannenbaum, Jews, 5. For face b, which contains another list of names, see pp. 6–7.

3 Reynolds and Tannenbaum suggest an alternative for line 1: "God help the jizers to gift to building for the soup kitchen" (Jews, 41).

4 Reynolds and Tannenbaum give an alternative for lines 6–8: "for the alleviation of grief in the community. (this public) tomb" (Jews, 41). Reynolds and Tannenbaum deserve congratulations for their care in presenting and explaining several alternative translations.

5 Reynolds and Tannenbaum, Jews, 41.
Iael appears first in this list (line 9). The sons of only two persons are mentioned, Isosou, archon (?) and son of Iael (lines 9f.), and Hilarios, son of Theodotos (lines 11f.). The titles of Jewish leadership (president or patron, archon [?], head of the decany [?], and envoy (?) are clustered together at the beginning. These two facts – namely, the listing of only two persons’ sons (and these at the beginning) and the clustering of Jewish leadership titles at the beginning – make it probable that the head of the list was a place of special honor. Notice that although Iael has a son, a spouse is not mentioned. Perhaps the spouse had died or was not as active as Iael in the leadership of the Jewish community.

Reynolds and Tannenbaum first state that the name Iael could be feminine and that the title is not an obstacle in this case, since other Jewish women of the diaspora bore “titles of high synagogue or community office,” but they then suggest that the name is more probably a masculine name. They have argued elsewhere that they have adduced no convincing evidence to read Iael as a masculine name. Their only stated argument is that “the lists here are otherwise demonstrably and consistently masculine.” This argument does not hold, since women in leadership positions are by definition in the minority in male-dominated religions and societies. As evidence that a masculine form of the name Iaλ existed, Reynolds and Tannenbaum refer to several Septuagintal manuscripts that have Iaλ as a masculine name in I Esdr 10:26, 43. Against this interpretation, I argue that the Septuagintal manuscript variants inform us about practices of scribal transliteration but not about actual Jewish naming practices. The transliteration of Hebrew names in the Septuagint is extremely varied and often outright chaotic. For more, see also 248. He speaks of the true state of affairs as having “superintendence and guardianship” (προστάσια και επιμήκα) (On Joseph 67). Philo says that some governors at the time of Tiberius and his father Caesar reverted their office of “guardianship and superintendence” (προστάσια και προστάσια) into domination and tyranny (Flaccus 105). A Jewish inscription from the Via Appia in Rome refers to a holy προστάτης, and another inscription from the Via Portuensis in Rome speaks of a προστάτης.

The Meaning of προστάτης

Several readings of προστάτης make sense. The term has three general meanings: (1) leader, chief, president, presiding officer; (2) guardian, champion; (3) one who stands before a deity to entreat him or her, a supplicant. Jewish sources are quite in line with normal Greek usage, as a few examples can demonstrate. Josephus describes Solomon as προστάτης over the construction of the temple and over the kingdom (Antiquities of the Jews 7.14.10 §376). Philo says that Joseph had taken over the “guardianship and superintendence” (ἐπιμήλα και προστάσια) of Egypt (On Joseph 157; see also 248). He speaks of the true state of affairs as having “superintendence and guardianship” (προστάσια και επιμήλα) (On Joseph 67). Philo says that some governors at the time of Tiberius and his father Caesar reverted their office of “guardianship and superintendence” (προστάσια και προστάσια) into domination and tyranny (Flaccus 105). A Jewish inscription from the Via Appia in Rome refers to a holy προστάτης, and another inscription from the Via Portuensis in Rome speaks of a προστάτης.
of the Agrippians. Another Jewish inscription, probably from Alexandria, employs what may be an abbreviation for προστάτης. These Jewish examples confirm the plausibility of Reynolds and Tannenbaum’s suggestion that προστάτης could mean either “president” of a community or “patron,” as in the patrons and patronesses of Hellenistic religious societies.

The editors make the intriguing proposal that the πάξαλλα of line 1 (loan-word from Latin patella, “dish,” “plate,” or “pan”) here refers to a soup kitchen. They note that the Mishnaic Hebrew word for “dish,” פיסח, can carry the extended sense of “charitable institution.” The inscription could be the donative inscription set at the entrance to this soup kitchen. This can be a help in interpreting προστάτης. Iael could have been the president or patron of the soup kitchen or its governing board. If Iael was the president of the board (the decany?), then the one who administered the soup kitchen, like don, could have included raising funds, arranging for food to be donated, seeing to its preparation, overseeing the volunteer or paid staff, identifying the persons in need, and carrying out the daily work and organization of the soup kitchen. Alternatively, she could have presided over the board (again, possibly the decany?) that donated the building (if the πάξαλλα of line 8 denotes a building), in which case her work could have consisted of fund-raising, negotiations concerning the plot of land (her own land?), and arrangements with the builders. If Iael was a patron, she could have donated a significant amount of money, building materials, or labor (if we are speaking of a building), or could have agreed to contribute agricultural goods or labor for the daily running of the πάξαλλα. If the inscription were to refer to a tomb (the more common meaning of πάξαλλα), rather than to a soup kitchen, Iael’s presidency or patronage would imply slightly different functions.

Cf. 365: “Here lies Iaikis (= Caelis), president/patron of the Agrippians. May (Kaiikis) rest in peace.” Ἐνδύκε κυρίε / Χαίλις προστάτης / Άγισθαι ζωήν. Ἐν εἰρήνῃ καὶ ἀιωνίῳ.

Cf. 1447: B. Lifshitz, Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives (Cahiers de la Nouve Biblique 7; Paris: Gaballat, 1997) no. 98: “Avromen, (πατριάς) of Nikou, president/patron, the eleventh year, to the synagogue...” / Ἀρνοσ Νίκου προστάτης... τῆς... (πατριάς) / ἀνάμνησις... / ἐν εἰρήνῃ. (Cf. 1447 has πατριάς) G. H. B. Horsley gives three further examples of Jewish inscriptions with the terms προστάτης or προστάτης. 1. Berenike II (24-32) (2005) – honoring a Jewish patron, SEG E103 (Lairon) – a Jew who was an “advocate and patron”; SEG 969 – epitaph for a Jewish man from the area of Naples, who, Horsley suggests, was either a patron or the equivalent of a garoustaich (Neu Document 4:242).

Cf. 967: Reynolds and Tannenbaum, Jews, 41. For examples of associations, see Brice (Cracco Ruggini, “Stato e associazioni professionali nell’età imperiale romana”) in Aktionen des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für Griechische und Lateinische Epigraphik, München 1972 (Vestigia 7; Munich: Beck, 1973) 271–311; Gisela Clemente, “Il patrocinio nel collegio dell’Impero Romano,” Studi Classici e Orientali 21 (1972) 142–220 (both articles include some references to religious associations). Reynolds and Tannenbaum, Jews, 206; on παξαλλα, see, e.g., m. Pesah 10:1; m. Pesah 8:7.

These meanings of προστάτης would still hold, μακάτοι μακάτοι, πάξαλλα did not mean soup kitchen.

Perhaps one might object that the inscription lists Ἰαίλικη as a member of “the decany of the [students/disciples/sages] of the law,” also known as those who [fervently/continually] praise God,215 and that a woman could not be called φίλωματις within Judaism. Reynolds and Tannenbaum propose four possible meanings for φίλωματις of καὶ παραπτώματι (“lines 4f.); (1) the pious name of the synagogue, in which case the decany could be the governing body; (2) those attending weekly public lectures at the Beth Midrash or who study in the evenings there, the decany being the governing body or association; (3) a yeshiva; (4) a private study group, with the decany as the private association itself.216 At this point, the commentary of Reynolds and Tannenbaum so strongly presupposes the norm of rabbinic Judaism as to preclude historical interpretations that are plausible for diaspora Judaism. Although the variety of possible meanings of the two Greek terms is well laid out and documented (including from nonrabbinic sources), rabbinic institutions of higher learning are presented as if they were normative for the diaspora. Although the language of their commentary at times seems to include women,217 it focuses primarily on rabbinic institutions of learning for men.218 An example of a nonrabbinic Jewish institution for the study of the Torah is the community of the Therapeutids and Therapeutai described by Philo of Alexandria. This group of ascetic women and men, a group which, according to Philo, existed not only in Egypt but in many other places as well, devoted itself to the contemplative life and the allegorical interpretation of the law (On the Contemplative Life 21). Philo describes the Therapeutids as having a “zeal and yearning for wisdom” (ζηλος καὶ θέλως ψυχας), as spurring the pleasures of the body and desiring no mortal offspring in order to behold the doctrines of wisdom, and as having the same same zeal and sense of purpose as the men (On the Contemplative Life 68, 32).219 I do not mean to suggest that the Jews listed in the Aphrodisias inscription were members of this group, but only to point to it as a nonrabbinic group promoting female love of study. Since the Greek-language Jewish literature from Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy is far less extant than the rabbinic literature of Palestine and Babylonia, it may seem reasonable to interpret an
Women's Civic and Religious Leadership in the Surrounding Culture

The inhabitants of Asia Minor were accustomed to seeing women in positions of religious and civic leadership. Inscriptions from Aphrodisias contain ample evidence that Aphrodisian women functioned as leaders in the Roman period. Attalis, daughter of Menekrates, is a good example. Inscriptions attest to the seventh, ninth, eleventh, thirteenth, and sixteenth years of her functioning as σταυροφόρος of Aphrodisias. She probably flourished at


29 See Brooten, Women Leaders, 157–65, for a collection of these documentary inscriptions (discussion, pp. 141–45).

30 Monumenta Asia Minor et antiqua (= MAMA), ed. Sie William A. Calder and J. M. R. Cornick (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1962). On the seventh year, see MAMA VIII, 413 (pl. 22); Théodore Reinaud, REG 19 (1908) nos. 138–41, pp. 231–43; and J. M. R. Cornick. On the ninth year, see MAMA VIII, 512a (pl. 27); Théodore Reinaud, REG 19 (1906) nos. 168, pp. 272–74; and Philippe Le Bas and W. H. Waddington, Voyage archéologique en Grèce et en Asie Mineure (pts. 1–4 in 7 vols.; Paris: Didot, 1870–87) 3 (1870) (= Le Bas) no. 1854. On the eleventh year, see MAMA VIII, 543 (pl. 33). On the thirteenth year, see MAMA VIII, 554 (pl. 20); CIG 2920 and p. 1115; Le Bas 1850. On the sixteenth year, see MAMA VIII, 555 (pl. 19); Reinaud, REG 19 (1906) no. 169, pp. 274–76; cf. Louis Robert, BCH 52 (1928) 411; see also MAMA VIII, 596b (pl. 27); Reinaud, REG 19 (1906) no. 175, pp. 280–81. In the latter inscription the number of the term of office as σταυροφόρος is missing.

the turn of the second to the third century and was thus a contemporary of Iaēl. The office of σταυροφόρος (literally, “bearer of a crown”) included religious and political functions. Epithymia, or having the year named after oneself, was associated with the office. In the case of Attalis, official inscriptions were dated by the year of her functioning as σταυροφόρος. Typical inscriptions in which this occurs are grave markers in which the owners identify themselves and prohibit anyone else from burying someone in their grave. A typical closing to such an inscription is the following:

A copy of this inscription has been deposited in the office in which the registry of public debtors is kept, in the eleventh term of office of Attalis, daughter of Menekrates, as σταυροφόρος, in the fifth month. Thus, the official act was dated according to the term of the officiating σταυροφόρος, in this case a woman, Attalis. Tatas, a leading woman of Aphrodisias involved in philanthropic activity and the support of religious and cultural events, presents a particularly interesting case. Following is an inscription honoring her:

The council and the people and the senate have granted first honors to Tatas, daughter of Diodorus, son of Diodorus (by adoption), son of Leon by birth; holy priestess of Hera for life; mother of the city; who became and remained wife of Attalus, son of Pythies, σταυροφόρος; (who is) also herself of foremost and illustrious stock, who served as priestess of the emperors for the second time; who twice supplied oil most abundantly for small vessels running from the hasting tubs even for the greater part of the night; who functioned as σταυροφόρος; who sacrificed during the course of entire years for the health of the emperors; who sponsored feasts for the people which were both frequent and involved reclining dinners for the whole populace; who primarily on her own maintained the top performances in Asia in both musical and theatrical competitions and who offered to (her) native city for the neighboring towns to assemble together for the display of the performances and to celebrate (the festival) together, who spared expenses on no one’s wife, having glory; adorned with virtue (and) prudence.


33 MAMA VIII, 553 (pl. 33). In a field below Eunyme. Marble sarcophagus. Lines 12–18—την την θερμοκράτησαν αυτήν κάθεν εν τῷ χρυσόμαχον ἵνα σταυροφόρον τῷ Ἰαδίῳ τῇ Μηνακεοῦ μετὰ (scroll) σάρκων (leaf). The other Attalis inscriptions of this type are MAMA VIII, 554, 555, 559a, 556b, Le Bas 1824.

34 Inscription b: MAMA VIII, 492 (pl. 35); Le Bas 1860; CIG 2820a. Geyre, Stadium north wall. Marble block (138 x 112 cm.) with one complete inscription (b) and two fragmentary inscriptions (a and d). Additional marble fragment (52 x 17 cm.) contains the ends of the first
Through Tata’s financial support of religious and other civic activities, she gained power and prestige. As was the case with men, Tata’s family ties and wealth gave her access to power, but she functioned as a civic leader in her own right, not simply as a daughter or a wife. The very constellation of the three inscriptions attests to this. The only stated connection between Tata’s husband, Attalos (probably inscription a), and Tata herself, Diodorus (inscription c), is Tata herself: Tata’s father, Diodorus, was probably (the lacunae are rather large) a member of the council, a high priest for life in the emperor cult, a gymnasiarch, and a chief magistrate: he is honored for a public largesse similar to that of Tata. Tata is thus in the tradition of the priestly wealth and power of her father. The inscription emphasizes that she does not merely receive her honor from her husband but is “also herself of foremost and illustrious stock.” Women and men living in the city of Aphrodisias would have seen and experienced these public displays of benefaction and power. Jews would have had sufficient opportunity to know of Tata as a religious official ("holly priestess of Hera for life"); who served as priestess of the emperors for the second time; who sacrificed... for the health of the emperors) and as a civic official (σταυροφόρος). They may have

seven lines of c. The fragmentary inscription to the left (a) seems to honor Tata’s husband, Attalos, while the fragmentary inscription to the right seems to honor her father, Diodorus. The inscription is probably to be dated to the late second or possibly the early third century. 


For a fuller discussion of the Roman imperial cult, see S. R. F. Price, Rituals and Power: The Roman imperial cult in Asia Minor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984). He mentions this inscription (in a later edition of his book, price on p. 21). Price argues for a complex interpretation of the imperial cult as a secular practice, as well as a religious and political practice. However, it is important to note that the imperial cult was not simply a religious practice, but also a political practice supported by the power of the emperor. Women, such as Tata, were recognized for their contributions to this cult, and their participation in its rituals and ceremonies demonstrated their status as important members of the community. This inscription, like many others, highlights the role of women in supporting and promoting the cult of the emperor, and emphasizes their importance in the religious and political life of the city. 

Attended the musical and theatrical events sponsored by her, and they may have even participated in the feasts, such as by partaking only of the vegetarian parts of the meal. In any case, this example of Tata makes it apparent that a woman could be a leader in the community.

Nor does Tata stand alone in this respect. In addition to the Aphrodisian women who bear the title σταυροφόρος, a number bear the title "high priestess" (ἡ ἑρμαίες τῆς Ἑρμαίης): Apphia, high priestess for life of the ἡ ἑρμαίες τῆς Ἑρμαίης; Philha (i.e., Flavia) Apphia, high priestess of Asia; the wife (name broken off) of Neokamochos, high priestess (presumably in the emporium) of the Ionia Paula; high priestess, Aristinole, high priestess, and σταυροφόρος; and Aelia Laibila (i.e., Aelia Laevilla), high priestess of Asia. Scholars have disagreed on whether or not high priestesses of the emperor cult gained their titles as the wives of high priestesses and, if so, whether they actually had public functions? A. R. Kearsley has convincingly demonstrated...
(1) that the ἕγγοπασ of Asia had religious functions, as was the usual Greek practice for priestesses (including priestesses of male deities), and (2) that the term "asiarch" was not coterminous with "high priest" (as assumed by those who argue that a high priestess's asiarch husband was actually a high priest, whence she derived her title). Steven J. Friesen, on the basis of a comprehensive survey of the extant epigraphic and numismatic evidence for high priestesses, also concludes that the title was functional.99

Women and men who attended religious and civic office were usually members of elite families who married into other elite families and who displayed their wealth through public benefactions. We cannot separate their official duties from these elite family ties and public benefactions. The Tata of the inscription above would probably have been incredibly, not to say irritated, at the question of what functions she actually had, since a woman's place is expressly mentioned. We know both her family of origin and her husband were illustrious, and in this Tata is probably typical of female title-holders. Rather than manifesting modern Western concepts of individual merit or public duties, the Tata inscription

priestesses whose husbands were priests, those whose husbands were not priests, and those whose husbands' social status is unknown (La culture impériale dans la péninsule égyp. d'Auguste à Dioclétien [Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Antibes et de Rome 191; Paris: De Boccard, 1958] 106–75). See also J. Toutain, who points out that the (voir la fin de l'inscription) have particular obligations and privileges. Toutain notes that the documents do not imply that the wife of a provincial priest was forced to be a provincial priestess, but that she sometimes was. He suggests that provincial priestesses were probably appointed by the provincial councils (Les cultes païens dans l'Empire romain [1 pt. in 3 vols., Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études, Sciences Religieuses 20; Paris: Léonard, 1907–20] 1:144–68). The question of scribal errors is not laid to rest even in these cases in which a high priestess is the wife of a high priest. Ramsay MacMullen addresses himself to the problem of female religious functions: "Pierres écrites qui parlent, écrits qui parlent, if a public position actually did very much. That is a real question, it is not easily answered for male magistrates and liturgists, either ("Women in Public in the Roman Empire," Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte 26 [1980] 215). MacMullen is referring to the extensive study of Pierre Paris, Quamquam femineae res publicae in Asia Minor, Romanus superstites, attigitur (Paris: Thorin, 1981). See also Anthony J. Marshall, "Roman Women and the Provinces," Ancient Society 6 (1975) 109–27, esp. 125–27 (epigraphical evidence cited on p. 133) and Otto Brauning, Die östliche Wirkung der griechischen Frau.98

98 R. A. Kearley, "Astarcha," 183–92. Kearley points to instances in which the wife bears a title while the husband bears no title or a different title, and in cases in which the husband bears a title while the wife does not. Kearley shows that the name does not strictly answer to the Asiarchs. The Asiarch woman is ἑγγοπασ and her husband is only a municipal ἕγγοπασ ("Astarcha," 188f.).

99 Steven J. Friesen, "Ephesus, Twice Neokoros" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1990) 106–16; see also 119–24. Friesen's original contribution to the study of high priestesses of the imperial cult is his thesis that women were admitted to the high priesthood around the second quarter of the first century CE. and others like it bear witness to elite women and men who gained honor and prestige through skillfully using their complex webs of family wealth and connections. Riet Van Bremen suggests that the important public roles played by elite women in Greek urban society from around the second century BCE through the third century CE are to be seen "as a result of the social and ideological components of the system of euergetism."60 Families gained and held power through their public benefactions.

Iael's office is not comparable in every respect to those of the non-Jewish Aphrodisian women described above. Nevertheless, the connection between philanthropic activity and public office may be common to both. To be sure, Tata's sponsorship of musical events and large public meals involved great sums of money and/or agricultural products, while Iael's presidency or patronage of a Jewish soup kitchen (or a burial institution) was probably related to her status. Further, Tata's religious offices, especially her office in the emperor cult, were tied into the official public life of the city, while Iael's activities would have been restricted to the Jewish community (although the beneficaries of a soup kitchen surely included non-Jews). Nevertheless, despite the different scale, philanthropic activity and religious recognition are common to both. But would not the Jewish community have done everything possible to avoid any commonalities with a pagan priestess of Hera and of the divinized emperors? And how is a Jewish soup kitchen, harking back to such ancient Israelite traditions as helping the orphan and the widow, in any way similar to the self-aggrandizing efforts of an Aphrodisian elite seeking the recognition of the Roman rulers? Perhaps the philanthropy of elite Aphrodisian women and men was not only self-aggrandizement. And perhaps the Jewish community sought to be part of and to gain the recognition of Aphrodisian society, including its more prosperous parts. The presence of nine city councillors among the θρονοί listed on face b tries to put good relations between leading people of the city and the Jewish community or to Jewish representation in the city's leadership.61
Conclusions

Several plausible historical reconstructions of Iael’s role in the Jewish community of the Aphrodisian inscription have emerged. (1) She served as president of the governing board that built a soup kitchen (or possibly a tomb) and/or of the board that administered it; (2) she served as patron to the governing board that built a soup kitchen (or tomb) and/or of the board that administered it; her patronage included economic support. Iael was not an anomaly as a female religious leader involved in philanthropic activity; a number of leading Aphrodisian women were cultically and philanthropically prominent in this period. Nor was Iael anomalous in the Jewish community at large, since Jewish women elsewhere both held office and made donations to the synagogue.43

43 A separate study is required to elucidate the implications of the use of ποιεῖσθαι for Rom 16:2, in which Paul calls Phoebe ποιεῖσθαι. See n. 15 above.

IN 1902, ADOLF HARNACK1 (1851–1930) published his Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten (in English: The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries). The book added to the already immense prestige of the author and went through four editions, the last of them published in Leipzig by J. C. Hinrichs in 1924. English translations of the first and second editions were published in England and the United States in 1904–5 and 1908.5 In many respects the book still dominates the field: it was the first modern detailed study of its subject and has not yet been replaced.6 The opening chapter of the book, a study of the expansion of Judaism in the diaspora, deserves attention because it well illustrates how Christian theology can sometimes govern the interpretation of Jewish history.7

3 In 1984 the fourth German edition was reprinted by VMA-Verlag in Wiesbaden.