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THE GENDER OF לָאָף IN THE JEWISH INSCRIPTION
FROM APHRODISIAS

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The primary purpose of this paper is to ascertain whether לָאָף in line 9 of the principal Jewish inscription from ancient Aphrodisias in Asia Minor is a feminine or a masculine name. I argue that no convincing evidence has been adduced to read it as a male name and that the female biblical figure of Jael was well known among both Greek- and Aramaic-speaking Jews of the Roman period and probably inspired this use of the name. While arguing the case of this specific name, I propose the methodological principle that Sephunintal manuscript variants of personal names are not a reliable source for Jewish onomastics, i.e., that such variants help us to understand scribal transliteration policies, but not actual naming practices among Greek-speaking Jews. A certain overlap between the biblical names occurring in the inscription and the biblical figures mentioned in a synagogue prayer preserved in the Apostolic Constitutions raises the question whether there is a more general correlation between Jewish naming practices and synagogue liturgy, i.e., the cycle of readings and synagogue prayers. Further research on this point is required.

The Inscription

Joyce Reynolds and Robert Tannenbaum have provided an invaluable service to the scholarly world with their publication of the principal Jewish inscription from Aphrodisias in Asia Minor. The cooperation between an epigraphist and a historian is a great accomplishment.

* Thanks are due to those who have assisted me in various ways with this project: Denise Buell, Ruth Clements, Sara Hazel, John Lanci, and Laurel Schneider. My deepest gratitude goes to John Strugnell, my teacher and mentor, from whom I have learned the philological and historical methods employed in this piece. May he learn through this volume how important he has been to a generation of scholars.

† 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 principal question to date that has engaged scholars studying this inscription has been that of the God-Fearers. In line 34 of face b of the inscription, the phrase “and those who are God-Fearers (or pious)” (Kai deis de Theologoi) occurs after a blank and is followed by a list of Greek and Latin names (pp. 61). See esp. Robert S. MacLennan and A. Thomas Krabel, “The God-Fearers—A Literary and Theological Invention,” BAR 12:5 (1986) 46-53, 64;
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5 τῶν κρ παντεσπονεῖ—ον
eis ἀνειγόμεν
τῷ πλῆθῳ ἐκτόσον
ἐξ ἱστομένων μνημα

Σ ἀν·
μ. ὑπ. 10
μ. ὑπ. ἑαυτοῦ ἡμῶν ἀποκλαμον;
Π ἡ
Θεότοκος Παλαιάντας
Π ἡ
ν. ὑπ. ἑαυτοῦ ἀποκλαμον
Β ἡ
Σαμωνίλ Προφήται κ.π.;
Π ἡ
ὁ ὑπ. ἱεράς ἡ θεσσαλία;
Π ἡ
15
Βενεμένων ἠλιομάθους;
γ. ἡ
Τοῦδες ἐκεῖνος νασαί
ξ. ἡ
ὁ ὑπ. προφήται;
Σαμωνίλ

20
Ἀρτεμίδος θεοφήτη
Σαμωνίλ Παλαιάντας

Εἰατῷ Ἐξηθείᾳ προφήται
καὶ[1] Ἐξηθείᾳ Θεοφήτη
καὶ Ἀρτεμίδος Ἐξηθείᾳ;

25 καὶ Σαμωνίλος νασαί;

καὶ[2] Σαμωνίλος νασαί;

Ῥεῦτος ἱερᾶς.

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.11 Below (are) listed the (members) of the decany of the students / disciples / sages of the law, also known as those who (fervently / continually) praise God, (who) erected, for the relief of suffering in the community,12 at their personal expense, (this) memorial

Reynolds and Tannenbaum suggest an alternative in line 1: “God help the givers to / gift to / building for” the soup kitchen.”

For lines 6-8 Reynolds and Tannenbaum give as an alternative: “for the alleviation of grief in the community ... (this public) tomb.” Reynolds and Tannenbaum are to be congratulated for their care in presenting and explaining several alternative translations.

Reynolds and Tannenbaum, Jews, 5. For face b, which is another list of names, see Reynolds and Tannenbaum, Jews, 6f.

The Gender of Iaël

Following the commentary of Reynolds and Tannenbaum, I offer the following tentative translation of lines 9-27:

(Margin):

Samouel, envoy(?), 10
from Perga
Iaël, (president / patron),
with (her) son Isoussas, archon (?);
 THROW:
his) son Hilarianos;
Samouel, head of the decany (?), proselytēs;
loses, son of Iesseas;
15 Beniamin, psalm-singer (?);
good-tempered Iousas;
loses, proselytēs;
Sabbathos, son of Amachios;
[pious Emmonios / Emmonios, God-Fearer];
20 [pious Antonios / Antonios, God-Fearer];
Samouel, son of Politianos;
Eioseph, proselytēs, son of Eusebias;
and Eioudas, son of Theodoros;
and Antipson, son of [Hermes / Hermeas];
and sweet Sabathios;
and (?) Samouel, envoy (?), priest14

Iaël occurs first in this list of names. Only Iaël, in line 9, and Theodotos, in line 11, have their sons' names listed. The titles of Jewish leadership (president or patron, archon (?), head of the decany (?), and envoy (?)) occurred clustered at the beginning. Lines 26f. were erased; Reynolds and Tannenbaum suggest that Samouel's name may have been moved up from lines 26f. to the margin of lines 9-17 because of his status as a leader or because he was not a regular member of the community, i.e., either he was moved up to accord him greater honor or he was moved to the margin because he

13 Reynolds and Tannenbaum, Jews, 41.
14 While I have left the names in their Greek form, a number are, or may be, biblical. The following may be equivalences: Iaël = Iaël; Samouel = Samuel; Isoussas = Joseph; loses = hypocoristic form of Joseph; Iesseas = Isaiah; Beniamin = Benjamin; Iousas/Eioseph = Judith; Eioseph = Joseph; Hermeas = Jeremia (possible, given that the rough breathing was no longer pronounced and that the etο was pronounced as an iota; otherwise this name could be a theophoric name from Hermes).
well have been a feminine minority of one. Women with leadership positions have been rare in Western religious and civic history. The question is, how many women does an inscription honoring leaders and respected community members have to contain before there can have been one?22 The same would apply if Iael were a patron. Women have less often had sufficient economic power to be able to make major donations or serve as patrons, but individual wealthy women certainly served such functions in the ancient world.23

As to the philological argument based on the LXX, a closer look at 2 Esdras and at Judges is required. 2 Esdras 10:26, 43 is a translation of Ezra 10:26, 43. These verses are part of a list of male returning exiles who had married foreign women and were now repudiating them. Therefore, all the names in the list are by definition masculine. A number of theophoric names appear in Ezra 10. Those which end in 66- include: 6666 (10:2, 21, 26 and 6666, 10:43; see also 8:13). The Septuagintal manuscripts treat the name as a whole includes many variants among transliterated Semitic names, and the names of 2 Esdras 10 are no exception. The level of chaos may even be a little higher here than usual; see, e.g., the note by

1452; Phoebe, uddow (Rom 16:1).


23 Female leaders in the company of all-male groups occur in antiquity as well, e.g., Nikippe, προσεταφεσταφης of a cultic club of Sarapis worshipers, is named first in a list of men, the first three of whom are also office-holders (Athens, 215-216 B.C.E., Ladiusus Vidman, ed., Syllage inscriptioon religionis Isiaeae et Sarapiacae [Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten 28, Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969] 4-6, no. 2).


25 For other theophoric in 66-66, see Ezra 10:15, 22, 30, 34, 41, 43. Shmuel Safrai drew my attention to the number of 66- names in this chapter. Note that these differ from the 66- of Judges, which has 2, rather than 6 in its root. The Greek cannot distinguish between the two.

The Greek of 66-66

Rahlfs at 10:30: “multa nominia proprria in miss. falsa distincta sunt.” At 10:26 some manuscripts have 66-66 (BdhpEthiopic) 26 for 6666. At 10:34, some have 66-66 (BdhpEthiopic) for 6666. The manuscripts are not even internally consistent; they may transliterate the same Hebrew name differently within the space of a few verses. Thus, while BdhpEthiopic have 66-66 for 6666 at 10:26, BScdhp* have 66-66 for 6666, at 10:2, and BSdhm have 66-66 for 6666; at 10:21, A (= Alexandrinus, mid fifth century) has 66-66 for 6666 at 10:2, 66-66 at 10:21, and 66-66 at 10:26; while for 6666 at 10:43 it has 66-66 and at 8:13 it seems to have 66-66. B (= Vaticanus, mid fourth century) has two different transliterations of 6666: 66-66 at 10:2, 21 and 66-66 at 10:26. B also has two different transliterations of 6666: 66-66 at 10:43 and Euseb at 8:13. Note that 66-66 in B is the transliteration of both 6666 (10:26) and 6666 (10:43). Looking just at the two verses upon which Reynolds and Tummenbaum base their case, one finds the following variants: 6666, 66-66 (BdhpEthiopic), 66-66 (S), 66-66 (De), 66-66 (A), 66-66 (N and the others); 10:43, 6666, 66-66 (BdhpEthiopic), 66-66 (A), 66-66 (De; the 66 was added by a corrector), 66-66 (the others). In sum, the individual manuscripts often transliterate the same name in different ways and different names in the same way, and this within the space of a few verses. The manuscript tradition as a whole is chaotic in the transliteration of these and other Semitic names.

A general methodological principle follows from this. The forms 66-66, 66-66, 66-66 or 66-66 as male names in 2 Esdras do not constitute documentation that male, Greek-speaking Jews ever bore these names. Finding a particular form of a name in the LXX is qualitatively different from finding an inscription or a papyrus document which a Jewish man or woman bears a particular name. Inscriptions and documentary papyri constitute evidence that at least one historical person bore a particular name. In contrast, the LXX constitutes evidence as to what Vorlage translators and scribes may have had, as to how they functioned in their work, and occasionally as to how they pronounced Hebrew and Greek.

In the case of names, one can never say never. There may be a boy named Sue or a man named Maria. Take the latter example. Was not Rainer Maria Rilke a man? Yes, but surely this usage is a matter of modern Catholic Marian piety, rather than of ancient Jewish onomastics. But consider 2 Esdras 10:42. There BSh have Mapa as a transliteration of 6666. The weight of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus (= S, fourth
The Golden Book of the twenty-first century
could hardly be complete without a consideration of how it was produced and distributed. The documents in this book are intended to provide a comprehensive overview of the development of the Golden Book, from its origins in the first century CE to its current role as a central text in Jewish and Christian traditions. The book is divided into three parts: the historical context, the transmission of the text, and the impact of the Golden Book on later Jewish and Christian thought.

The historical context of the Golden Book is explored in the first part, which includes chapters on the origins of the text, its transmission through manuscript traditions, and its role in the development of Jewish and Christian thought. The transmission of the text is the focus of the second part, which examines the various manuscript traditions that have shaped the Golden Book over the centuries and the role of the scribes in preserving and transmitting the text. The impact of the Golden Book on later Jewish and Christian thought is discussed in the third part, which includes chapters on the Golden Book's influence on the development of Jewish and Christian theology and its role in the formation of the Jewish and Christian canon.

The book concludes with a chapter on the future of the Golden Book, which considers the challenges facing its preservation and transmission in the modern era. The Golden Book is a rich and complex text that has played a central role in the development of Jewish and Christian thought, and this book provides a comprehensive overview of its history and impact.
The Gender of Ira

sources refer to Iael both by name and indirectly. The discussion focuses on the assumption of some that Sisera had sexual intercourse with Iael. Ruth Rabbah 1:1 contains the suggestion of R. Huna that the “judges” of Judg 2:17 refers to Deborah, Barak and Iael.

Jews in the late Roman period may also have invoked the name of Iael in synagogue services. The Christian Apostolic Constitutions contain prayers which several scholars have identified as Hellenistic Jewish prayers taken over with only slight Christian interpolations. The reasons for this identification are similarities to known synagogue prayers and the striking absence of peculiarly Christian content. Where references to Christ occur, they are usually in discreet units only loosely connected to the surrounding material. Apost. Const. 7:37.1-3 is such a prayer. The only explicitly Christian material is a brief christological formula at 7:37.1 which bears great resemblance to Rom 1:3 and another reference to Christ at the end. The prayer is an invocation to God to receive the prayers of God’s people, even as God has “received the gifts of the righteous in their generations” (7:37.1). There follows a list of well-known biblical figures: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, etc. The list is roughly in chronological order. For this reason it is surprising to find “Barak and Deborah, in the days of Sisera” at 7:37.2 and “Iael (Iap) in praise” at the very end of the list (7:37.4). Samuel, which occurs five times in the Apostroisic inscription (Σαμουήλ), a, lines 9-11 left margin, 13, 21, 26; b, line 30), appears in the prayer (Σαμουήλ, 7:37.2), as does Manasseh (inscription: Μανασης, b, line 5; Apost. Const. 7:37.3: Μανασης). There may be two further cases of overlap: Joshua (inscription: Ἰωσήφ, a, line 10; Apost. Const. 7:37.2): Jepunw, the son of Naue in Galgal) and Jonah (inscription: Ιωνι, b, line 43; Apost. Const. 7:37.4: Ιωνι), but the

35Cf., e.g., b. Nazir 23b; b. Hor. 10b; b. Sanh. 165b; b. Meg. 15a; Gen. Rab. 48b; Exod. Rab. 4.2; Lev. Rab. 23.1; Num. Rab. 10.2; Ruth Rab. 1.1.
36Cf., e.g., Sipre Deut. 55: Mak., Ps. 17:130-34 (ed. Lauterbach); b. Yebam. 103a; b. Nid. 55b; b. Menah. 36b; b. Sanh. 105a; Exod. Rab. 15.22.
37Cf., e.g., b. Yebam. 103a; b. Nazir 23b; b. Hor. 10b; b. Sanh. 105a;b. Lev. Rab. 23.10.
38This may be the R. Huna who was a second-generation Babylonian Amora (died 297) and was himself a judge (b. Sanh. 7b). See also Ercl. Rab. 2.8, 1, which contains a reference to male and female judges.

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spelling divergences make these uncertain.

David A. Fiensy dates these prayers to between 150 and 300 CE, thus roughly contemporaneous with the Apostroisic inscription. The provenance is uncertain, but since the Apostroisic Constitutions are generally thought to have been compiled in Syra, the prayers were probably in liturgical use there. The significance for Jewish onomastics of this and of the other prayers containing lists of biblical names is that worshipers presumably repeated these names on a regular basis, which made the names more familiar. While the actual biblical narratives of Iael, Samuel, Manasseh and the others may have been read or referred to in the sermon infrequently, a prayer recalled their names to memory on a regular basis. Perhaps the overlap between the Greek prayer with biblical names and the Greek inscription with biblical names is not accidental. The cumulative significance of the references to the biblical Iael in Josephus, Pseudo-Phil, rabbinic literature and the prayer in Apost. Const. 7:37.1-5 is that they make clear that post-biblical Jews discussed and disputed the biblical accounts of Iael. This held true within rabbinic circles and among Greek-speaking diaspora communities.

Thus it becomes evident that the Iael of Judges is a well-known biblical figure, mentioned by name six times in Judges and referred to in post-biblical Jewish literature as well, while the Jehel of Ezra 10:26 and the Iezel of Ezra 10:43 are obscure figures in whatever form or language. The male biblical names of the Apostroisic inscription tend to be of illustrious figures: Samuel, Benjamin, Judah, Joseph, possibly Isaiah and Jeremiah. The female Iael of Judges is by far the best known Iael of the bible and of post-biblical Judaism. Reynolds and Tannenbaum have not given sufficient explanation why the obscure should take precedence over that which is near at hand.

42Aaron Hyman (Sefer Torah ha-ketuvot veha-mesubot [2d ed., rev. and enl. by Arthur Hyman; 3 vols.; 1938-39; Tel-Aviv: Dvir, 1979] 3:237) gives no references to Ezra 10:26 or 10:43 in all of the rabbinic literature he has surveyed. Nor does the companion volume to this work, compiled by Arthur Hyman, give references to these verses (Sefer ha-Haftanimot [Jerusalem: "Peri ha-Aretz"] 194).