

THE SITUATION OF THE JEWS IN ROMAN SPAIN

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1) The Beginning

Many legends are told about the beginning of Jewish settlement in Spain. Some of these attribute the beginning of this diaspora to the days of Nebuchadnezzar. There were families who claimed that they could trace their genealogy to the families Titus brought from *Iudaea capta*¹

1. E.g. the *Aibalia* family has a tradition that one of their ancestors, Baruch - who had a post in the Temple of Jerusalem - accepted an invitation to visit Spain at the time of Titus; see especially A. De Castro, *The History of the Jews in Spain*, London, 1857 (repr. 1972); S. Applebaum, "The Diaspora of the Mediterranean coast in the Hellenistic - Roman age" (in Hebrew), in *The Mediterranean: its place in the History and Culture of the Jews and other nations*, Jerusalem, 1970, p. 54.

after the conquest. It is obvious that we cannot verify these legends which were partly spread in order to "purify" families of Jews and Marranos from the suspicion that their ancestors were associated with the killing of Jesus. There were some who tried to explain the great wisdom of the Sefardic Jews by the tradition according to which the tribe of Judah was exiled to Spain after the destruction of the First Temple.² It is probable that a Jewish settlement already existed there at the end of the Second Temple period or immediately after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. Paul in his *Epistle to the Romans* says:

" I shall come to you on my way to Spain...." (15.24), and

" I shall cross your land to get to Spain" (15.28).

Even if scholars today believe that Paul never reached Spain, it may be deduced from his intention to visit there that Jewish communities existed in Spain, and that it was in those communities that Paul wished to preach Christianity.³

In the Talmudic sources we find several references to Spain (*Aspamia*), and even if these sometimes point to a distant place and no more, it would seem that the Sages referred to Ispamia as a land in

In general on the Jews in Roman Spain see: L. Garcia Iglesias, "Los Judíos en la España Romana" , *Hispania Antiqua*, 3, 1973, pp. 331 ff: J. Juster, *The Legal Condition of the Jews under the Visigothic Kings* (brought up-to-date with a Tribute by A.M. Rabello) Jerusalem, 1976.

2. J.F. Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. 1, Philadelphia, 1961, p.3 ff. ; see also: H. Beinart, "Two *Shalom al Israel* inscriptions from Spain", *Eretz Israel*, 8, 1967, pp. 298 ff. (In Hebrew; English summary p. 78).
3. S. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, vol. 1. New York, 1952, p. 170, vol. III,p. 33 f. ; H. Beinart, "Cuándo llegaron los Judíos a España", *Estudios del Instituto Central de Relaciones culturales Israel-Iberoamerica, España Y Portugal*, III, 1961, 1, ff.; M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden, 1976, p.122.

which Jews lived. In the *Mishnah (Bava Batra, 3,2,)* we read:

"R. Judah said: They have prescribed a limit of three years only that if the owner was in Spain (Ispamia) ..." and in the *Babylonian Talmud, (Yevamot 63a)*:

"Even vessels which come from *Gallia* to *Ispamia* are not blessed but for the sake of Israel..."; and again, *Bab. Talmud Nidda, 30, b)*:

"A man sleeps here and sees a dream in *Aspamia*. "

Finally, in *Midrash Vayikra Rabbah (3, 6)* we read:

"He brought his offering from *Gallia* and from *Ispamia*..."⁴. And again: "God said to him : "Do not fear my servant Jacob, and do not let Israel fear because I am going to save you from far away (Jeremiah, 30, 10): *from Gallia and from Ispamia and from her friends*."

In the book of Ovadiah it is written:

"...and the diaspora of Jerusalem which is in *Sefarad*⁵ will inherit the towns of the Negev" (1, 20);

in the *Targum Yonatan* they interpret *Sefarad* as Spain.

4. It is clear that we cannot determine from these quotations whether in the name *Aspamia* the sages referred to *Spain* or perhaps to other nearer places, such as *Apamia* in Syria. On this issue see especially: A. Neubauer, *La Géographie du Talmud*. Paris, 1868, p. 304, 417; P. Neeman, *Encyclopedia of the Geography of the Talmud*. Tel-Aviv, 1972 (1), p. 118 ff. (in Hebrew), and also notes of the editor in ³*Aruch Hashalem*, entry *Aspamia*, on what the Midrash says in *Vayikra Rabbah*.

Nevertheless, it seems quite clear that sometimes the name *Aspamia* refers to Spain itself. See M. Margalio's note concerning *Vayikra Rabbah, 70, 68-69*, in which he emphasizes that the names *Aspamia* and *Gallia* actually refer to present day Spain and France, and not to other places nearer to Israel, "for the main aim of the Midrash is to stress the great trouble and pain endured in travelling a long distance in order to bring a sacrifice".

5. *Sefarad* is the name generally used in Hebrew for Spain, see S. Krauss, "The names Ashkenaz and Sefarad", *Tarbitz* 3, 1932, pp. 423 ff. (in Hebrew), and also I.N. Epstein's important note in "On the name Spain", *ibid*, p. 435.

We may note here that the status of the Spanish Jews was generally no different from the status of Jews elsewhere in the Roman Empire, especially in the western part of the Empire.

Judaism was considered *religio licita*, a *nation* with its own privileges permitting the free exercise of the Jewish cult and exemption from public duties in conflict with the monotheistic faith of the Jews. It is especially important to point out that after the grant of Roman citizenship to all the inhabitants of the Empire by Antoninus Caracalla (*Constitutio Antoniniana de Civitate*) in 212, all the Jews of Spain became Roman citizens. Thus on the one hand we see that the Jews enjoyed Roman citizenship and everything that it involved, and on the other hand it enables us to understand the continuity of the Roman laws which relate to the Jews.⁶

2) The council of Elvira and the Jews

The first reference of the Catholic Church to the Jews of Spain is found at the Council of Elvira. It was the first Church Council in the world to regulate the relationship between Christians and Jews.

Elvira is the name of a place, or more precisely, the name of two towns in Spain: One in the province of Narbona and the other in the Baetic province, today Andalusia, not far from the present site of Gerona. It is most probable that it was in this latter town that the Bishops' council took place. In the opinion of some scholars, the council was held between the years 300-303; others say it took place between 306-312.⁷

6. This is not the place to give a full bibliographic list. It is sufficient to refer the reader to: J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, Paris, 1914; L. Garcia Iglesias, "Los Judíos en la España Romana", *Hispania Antiqua*, 3, 1973, pp. 331 ff.; A.M. Rabello, The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire, *ANRW*, II, 15, 1980, pp. 662-762; A.M. Rabello, *The Jews in Visigothic Spain in the Light of the Legislation* (in Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1983.
7. On the Elvira Council see: C.I. Hefele - H. Leclercq, *Histoire des Conciles d'après les documents originaux*, II, Paris, 1908; G. Bareille, "Elvire",

From the decisions taken at the council which concerned Jews, at a time of syncretism for the Spaniards, we may learn about the influence the Jews had on the Christians (there was probably influence in the other direction too !). The Spanish Church, like other churches, was afraid of too much contact between Jews and Christians. It decided not to permit mixed marriages (*Can. 16*),⁸ and to forbid adultery with a Jewish woman (*Can. 78*),⁹ which presumably meant a prohibition on taking a Jewish concubine. It also prohibited dining with Jews (*Can.*

Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, 4,2, 2378-2392; A.M. Rabello, *Giustiniano, Ebrei e Samaritani alle luce delle fonti storico-letterarie, ecclesiastiche e giuridiche*, vol. II, Milano, 1988, pp. 497 ff. In general, see: A. Momigliano, *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the Fourth Century*, Oxford, 1962.

8. *Can. 16: "Women believers are forbidden to marry non-believers.*

If heretics refuse to join the Catholic Church, it shall be prohibited to give them Catholic girls. The reason for prohibiting an attachment with Jews or heretics is that there cannot be any kind of a partnership between a believer and a non-believer. If parents will not follow this prohibition they will be excluded for five years from the *communio*". Cf. P. Lombardia, "Los matrimonios mixtos en el Concilio de Elvira (a. 303 ?)", *A.H.D.E.*, 24, 1954, pp. 543 ff.; A.M. Rabello, "Il problema dei matrimoni fra Ebrei e Cristiani nella legislazione imperiale e in quella della Chiesa (IV-VI secolo), in *Atti della Accademia Romanistica Costantiniana*, VII, Napoli, 1988, pp. 213 ff.

9. *Can. 78: "About the loyal married men who commit adultery with a Jewish or a Pagan woman. If any believer who has a wife commits adultery with a Jewish or a Pagan woman, he shall be expelled from the communio; if someone else catches him in the act (and accuses him), he shall be allowed to return to the holy communio after five years of penitence" (poenitentia).*

The aim of the Canon forbidding the possession of Jewish or Pagan mistresses is to prevent the believer from being influenced by foreign customs. The Canon does not relate to non-married men, but the issue will be dealt with by the non-religious legislation.

50).¹⁰

Canon 49, which states that a Christian must not ask a Jew to bless his crop, shows that the Jews were landowners at the time and that they enjoyed good relations with their neighbours.¹¹

Canon 26, prevents the Christians from keeping Saturday as a holy day (Exodus, 20, 8; Deut. 5, 12)¹². At that period and also for some

10. Can. 50: "*About the Christians who dine with the Jews.*

If anyone from the clergy or a believer eats his food in the company of a Jew, a decision will be taken to suspend him from the *communio* so that he can repent". see B. Blumenkranz, "Judaeorum convivium: à propos du Concile de Vannes (465), c. 12, in *Études du droit canonique dédiées à Gabriel Le Bras*, II, Paris, 1965, pp. 1055 ff. (= *Juifs et Chrétiens. Patristique et Moyen Age*, London, 1977, n. XX)

11. Can. 49: "*That the Jews shall not bless the fruit of the believers.* We think landowners ought to be warned not to let Jews bless their fruit, fruit which is a gift from God, so that our blessing will not seem a false and unimportant blessing. If anyone continues in this way after the prohibition, he shall be expelled from the Church".

12. Can. 26: "*That they shall fast every Saturday.* Whoever wishes to make amends for a sin, must keep all the fasts which were established every Saturday".

It seems that the aim is to prevent the Christians from keeping Saturday as a day of joy. It should not be forgotten that for a long period of time there were Christians who continued keeping Saturday as a holiday and a rest day, while there were other Christians who used to keep two days as a holiday, both Saturday and Sunday. On the concurrence between Saturday and Sunday in the Church, see: J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, I, p.280; P. Cotton, *From Sabbath to Sunday*, Bethlehem, 1993; M. Simon, *Verus Israel: Étude sur les relations entre chrétiens et Juifs dans L'Empire Romain (135–425)*, Paris, 1948 pp. 374 ff., 383, 422., S. Bacchiocchi, *A Historical investigation of the Rise of Sunday observance in Early Christianity*, Roma, 1977,; A. Weiss, "The Sabbath-observance of Gentiles", *Bar-Ilan Annual* 1963, pp. 143 ff. (Hebrew); Y.D. Gilat, "On Fasting on the Sabbath",

time afterwards, there were many Christians influenced by the Bible and by the Jews who wanted to keep Saturday as a day of solemn rest, or both days (Saturday and Sunday) combined.

*Canon 36*¹³, at a later period of time, was the cause of very strong controversy, and until this very day Christian theologians differ in their opinions about its precise meaning. This Canon forbade pictures in Church. Some assume that by taking this action, the council wanted to prevent the contempt and mockery of the Jews, but it would be logical to think that the conference was aiming at a ritual of a more spiritual nature.¹⁴

Finally, another item, *Canon 61*, is aimed at preventing Christians

Tarbiz, 52,1,1982. pp. 1 ff. (Hebrew); R. Bonfil, "Tra due mondi: prospettive di ricerca sulla storia culturale degli Ebrei nell'alto medioevo", *Italia Judaica*, Roma, 1983, pp. 135 ff.; A.M. Rabello, "L'observance des fêtes hébraïques dans l'Empire Romain", *ANRW II*, 21, 2, Berlin-New York, 1983, pp. 1288 ff.

13. Can. 36: "*That there will be no pictures in church.* The decision to forbid any kind of picture in church was taken in order that what is to be worshipped and honoured should not be painted on the walls." On the prohibition of pictures in church see also E.E. Urbach, "The Rabbinical Laws of Idolatry in the Second and Third Centuries in the Light of Archaeological and Historical Facts", *Israel Exploration Journal*, 9, 1959, pp. 149 ff. More generally see: E.J. Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy*, London, 1930.
14. Can. 61: "*That a man shall not marry two sisters.* If a man, after the death of his wife, marries her sister, and even if she is a believer, it has been decided that they shall be excluded from the *communio* for five years unless, in case of a disease, it will be necessary to ease their conscience at an earlier stage and enable them to return to the *communio* before the five years are over". See *Babylonian Talmud, Mo'ed Qatan* (tractate on intermediate days of a festival), 23a; *Jerusalem Talmud. Yevamot*, 84, 11, and *Masekhet Semahot* (tractate on mourning laws and manners), 87. See also discussion on this issue: R. Yaron, "Duabus sororibus coniunctio". *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquité*, 10, 1963, pp. 115 ff.

Finally, another item, *Canon 61*, is aimed at preventing Christians from adhering to the Jewish custom by which the unmarried sister of a deceased woman was expected to marry her brother-in-law and take care of the sister's little orphans. In any case, Judaism did not consider this kind of marriage as defective.

From these Canons we can learn that Spanish Jews were considered by the local Church to be of great importance in the area, thus the Church passed laws against them in order to limit their influence on Christians.

3) The Incident of Minorca

In this discussion of the relations between Jews and Christians in Spain it is important to mention an incident which occurred in Minorca, one of the Balearic islands. In an epistle from the year 418, *Epistula de Judaeis*, Severus, the bishop of Majorca and Minorca, gives us a report on Christianity's victory over the Jews on the island, and tells us about their conversion.¹⁵

15. Severus Majoricensis, *Epistula de Judaeis* (=Migne, P.L.,20, 731 ff.) 41, 822, ff.; G.G. Segni Vidal, *La carta enciclica del Obispo Severo. Estudio critico de su autenticidad e integritad con un bosqueio Historica del cristianismo balear anterior al siglo VIII*, Palma de Mallorca, 1936. In this study the author sets out to prove the authenticity of the document. He argues with scholars who do not accept his theory.

Blumenkranz has since claimed that the *epistula* attributed to Severus reflects the reality of the seventh century and not the fifth. This claim is based on literary grounds: B.Blumenkranz, *Les auteurs Chrétiens latins de Moyen age sur les Juifs et le Judaïsme*, Paris, 1963, p. 106, ff.: Blumenkranz, *Juifs et Chrétiens dans le monde occidental (430-1096)*, Paris, 1963. p. 76 n. 34, pp. 263-284, but his claim does not seem fully proven.

Among the many scholars who accept Severus' letter as an historic document are: Juster, *Juifs*, 1, 464, nt. 3, 500; 2, 200-201, 253, 261-262; Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, 1, 17, 382, n. 2; Garcia, *Judíos*, 17 ff., 20 ff., 32 ff.; Baron, *Social and Religious History*, I, 370 and III, 33 ff.

then in 415 Orosius brought over the bones of Stephan, a saint of Church. He had been put to death by the Jews in the Land of Israel. The act of bringing over his bones inflamed the Christians who wanted to take vengeance on the Jews of the island.¹⁶ Riots erupted. The Jews, headed by their leader Theodorus, gathered at the synagogue. The Christians were convinced that the Jews were armed and ready for battle. Therefore, they asked for a debate to take place.

Here we find of of the first examples of a theological debate in Spain, one of those debates in which our forefathers proved the might of their wisdom in spite of the obstacles facing them. And so also here, Theodorus "spoke with great wisdom about the Torah until he made a total mockery of all the objections he confronted." When the Christians realised they could not win this debate, they asked for a miracle from heaven. But Severus could not hide his treacherous activities: even while saying how ugly it is to have a war between brothers, he was trying to find out how much truth there was in the rumours that the Jews were carrying weapons. Once he became aware that there was no reason to doubt that the Jews were in fact unarmed, he himself organized the treacherous attack: "Even the Jews, taking their example from the period of the Maccabees, wished for the deaths of their relatives." The women, in particular, were willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of martyrdom; the synagogue was burnt, but in the end, five hundred and forty Jews converted to Christianity in four days.¹⁷

This story mentions several Jewish characters who held public positions, such as Lectorius for example, who was the governor of the

16. G. Rinaldi, "Stefano", *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, vol. XI, col. 1928 f.; G. Madoz, "Severo di Minorca", *Enc. Cattolica*, XI, col 465f.; "Saint Stephan", *Hebrew Encyclopedia*, (in Hebrew) vol. 25, p. 722 ff.

17. See E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, (ed. by J.B. Bury), London, 1909, vol. 3, p. 224 n. 91.

Balearic islands,¹⁸ and Caecilianus, considered "an honest man, not only in the eyes of the Jews, but also in the city where until now he occupied a leading position, so that he had just been elected defender of the town (the civilians)... (*defensor civitatis*)".¹⁹ Theodorus is also described as knowledgeable in the Torah, and a landowner who was greatly respected by both Jews and Christians, and who officiated as mayor of the town Mahon in Minorca.

18. *Arthemisia siquidem, Lectorii, qui nuper hanc provinciam rexit et nunc comes esse, dicitur, filia...* (cap. 17), Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 20, 744; cf. Juster, *Juifs* 2, pp. 250, 261 ff. The position of *comes* occupied by a Jew is also mentioned in an inscription from Sepphoris dated to the first half of the fourth century. See the context of the inscription and discussion about it in: Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, 2, 1991; B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les Synagogues Juives*, Paris, 1967, n. 74.
19. *Ibid*, chapter 14; Attention should be paid to the fact that in the year 409 anyone who was not a Christian was forbidden to hold the position of defender of the town (*defensor civitatis*). This position was considered very important, especially in the Land of Israel (*Codex Justinianus* 1.55.8). Parkes considers that an explanation can be found in the fact that the command did not reach the island for nine years, or that the facts are not true, and this is simply an example of the literary tradition of telling about the wonders of heroes of a particular story (J. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue*, Cleveland, 1961, p. 204). In my opinion, it is possible that in places where good relations were achieved between Jews and Christians, the law was ignored. It is also important to note that Caecilianus probably held the position after his conversion to Christianity, and that Theodorus also held other positions, so that it is not clear whether he was the *defensor* after 409. That the Jews were prohibited from holding this position may be understood from the third Novella of Theodosius II (436) and from the constitution of Justinian *C.J.1.9.18*.

We do not intend to go into further details on this epistle.²⁰

The main facts to be deduced from this document are as follows: in the island of Minorca, at the beginning of the fifth century there were many Jews who maintained good relations with the Christians of the island. Among the Jews there were some who managed to reach high public positions. The Jews had a synagogue and among them there were learned people, but it seems that the women had stronger faith. The relations between Jews and Christians started to crumble following the hostile activities of the Catholic Church on the island.

4) The Epigraphic evidence: The Jewish inscriptions from Spain.

Attention must be paid to the Jewish inscriptions which come from Spain.²¹ These inscriptions tell us about the community life of the Jews in Spain, and this is very important since most of the information

20. For more particulars see: A.M.Rabello, "Gli Ebrei nella Spagna romana e ariana-visigotica", *Atti dell'Accademia Romanistica Costantiniana*, 40, Perugia, 1981, pp. 807 ff. ; idem, *The Jews in Visigothic Spain in the light of the Legislation*. (in Hebrew), Jerusalem, 1983.
21. Bibliography and main abbreviations: Cantera-Millas, *Inscripciones* = F. Cantera-Burgos-Millas, *Les Inscripciones hebraicas de España*, Madrid, 1956;
- Ferrua, *Inscripciones* = A. Ferrua, "Inscripciones griegas y judias", in J. Vives, *Inscripciones cristianas de la España Romana y visigoda*, Barcelona, 1942, 2e ed., 1969;
- Frey, *C.I.J.* = J.B. Frey, *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum. Recueil des inscriptions juives qui vont du IIIe siècle avant J.C. au VII siècle*, vol. I, Europe, Città del Vaticano, 1936 (reproduction with Prolegomenon by B. Lifshitz, New York, 1975);
- Garcia, *Judíos* = L. Garcia Iglesias, "Los judíos en la España romana," *Hispania Antiqua*, 3, 1972, pp. 331 ff.;

we have about the Jews in that time comes from laws passed against them.²²

From these inscriptions we learn that the Jews settled mainly in coastal towns, such as Tarragona, Tortosa, Elche and Adra. Nevertheless, there is also evidence that Jews lived inland, for instance, in the town of Merida "a town which resembled Rome more than any of the big cities of Spain".²³

The inscriptions are written in the following languages: Hebrew, Latin, Greek,²⁴ and sometimes there are even expressions taken from the Jewish liturgy: among the typical Jewish symbols we find the *Menorah*, the Star of David (*Magen David*) and the palm-branch (*lulav*). Among the community roles which appear in the inscriptions we find the *Archisynagogus*.²⁵ The use of Latin and Greek in Spain shows that the Jews who spoke those languages came from distinguished and highly cultured families.

We shall discuss the inscriptions in geographical order: Hispania Tarraconensis; Hispania Carthaginensis; Hispania Baetica; Hispania Lusitanensis. (Fig. 1).

Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols* = E Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, New York, 1953–1968;

Hubner - Mommsen, *CIL* = Th. Mommsen, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, vol. 2, *Inscriptiones Hispaniae Latinae*, ed, A. Hubner, 1869;

B. Lifshitz, *Prolegomenon* = B. Lifshitz, "Prolegomenon" to Frey, *CIJ*.

22. J. Juster, *The legal Condition of the Jews under the Visigothic Kings*, (brought up to date by A.M. Rabello), *Jerusalem Israel Law Review*, 1976.

23. Albertini, "Les étrangers residents en Espagne à l'époque romaine", *Mélanges Cagnat*, Paris, 1912, p. 313

24. See: V. Colorni, "L'uso del greco nella liturgia del Giudaismo ellenistico e la Novella 146 di Giustiniano", *Annali di Storia del Diritto*, 8, 1964. pp. 15 ff. with special attention to Jewish inscriptions from Spain.

25. See below, inscription N.1, nt.3.

HISPANIA TARRACONENSIS

This is the name of the region in the north-east of the Spanish peninsula: to its east lies the Mediterranean sea and to the north - the Pyrenees. The capital was Tarragona (Tarraco), a port about one hundred kilometers south of Barcelona. The town was also important economically on account of the linen and wine trades. It would seem that there was a Jewish settlement in Tarragona already in the Roman era.

In 1955 an inscription was found in Tarragona (Fig. 2), which was later published by Cantera Burgos.²⁶ The inscription is written in three languages: Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The dating of this inscription is very similar to the dating of the three-language inscriptions from Tortosa: either the sixth century or, at least, the seventh.²⁷ It is possible that this could be a dedicatory inscription in a synagogue. In Hebrew we read:

שלום על ישראל
ועלינו ועל בנינו אמן

"Shalom al Israel ve-aleinu ve-al baneinu amen."

["May there be peace on Israel and on us and on our sons, amen"]

There are pictures of a *Menorah* and of the tree (the tree of life ?) , and of a *shofar* and two peacocks. These may present the idea of resurrection. In Latin we read: *Pax Fides*.

The expression *pax* is an attempt at translating the expression *shalom* into Latin. The second expression, *fides* - "faith" is not common in either Jewish or Christian inscriptions, and may be used here to emphasize that the place is dedicated to the faith of Israel.

In Greek there are a number of signs which are not comprehensible:

26. F. Cantera-Burgos, "Nueva inscripcion trilingue tarraconense?", *Sefarad*, XV, 1955, pp. 151-156.

27. This is the opinion of Cantera-Millas; but Beinart and others think it might belong to the IInd Century: "Two Shalom al Israel Inscriptions from Spain", *Eretz Israel*, 8, 1967, p. 298 f.

"TAH" or "πAHE" (according to the reading suggested by Cantera): some other letters in Latin and Greek can not be read. The expression *ve-aleinu ve-al baneinu amen* - "and on us and on our sons, amen"²⁸ reminds us of similar expressions we find in the book of Psalms, 115, 14: "G-d will add to you, to you and to your sons" as in prayers like the "Kaddish": "On Israel and on its teachers and on their pupils and on all the pupils of the pupils..."²⁹

H. Beinart thought that it was likely that this inscription was engraved on a sarcophagus: "the only Jewish sarcophagus ever found in Spain and outside the Land of Israel up till now";³⁰ however, in my humble opinion, it is more probable that the inscription was engraved on a laver-basin which was placed at the entrance to the synagogue in Tarragona, as Cantera-Burgos suggested.³¹

28. "Which seems uncommon in Jewish inscriptions" says Cantera-Burgos ("que nos parece exceptional en lapidas hebraicas"). On the expression שלום על ישראל - "shalom al Israel" - "peace on Israel " see discussion below on the trilingual inscription from Tortosa.

29. On this see now M. Weinfeld, "The Inscriptions of the Synagogues and the Jewish Liturgy", *An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies*, IV, 1980, pp. 288 ff. (in Hebrew); J. Yahalom , "Synagogue Inscriptions in Palestine - A Stylistic Classification" *Immanuel*, 10, 1980, pp. 47 ff.

30. H. Beinart, op. cit

31. Cantera-Millas, *Inscripciones*, n. 243, pp. 350-354 with a drawing and three photographs. This opinion is shared by B. Lifshitz, *Prolegomenon*, n. 650 c., p. 55 f.; J. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic. The Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Ancient Synagogues*, Jerusalem, 1978, n. 111. p. 148 (in Hebrew).

For other dedicatory inscriptions engraved on laver-basins see :

Frey, *CIJ*, 2, 754; B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les Synagogues Juives*, Paris, 1967, p. 31, n. 28; M. Ben Dov, "Fragmentary Synagogue Inscriptions from Tiberias", *Qadmoniot*, 9, 1967, p. 79 f. (in Hebrew); L.

Fig. 2: Tri-lingual inscription on a laver – basin from Tarragona



An inscription from Tarragona in Latin and Greek probably dating back to the fourth century³²

<p>IN NOMINE [DOMI NI REQVIESCI[T IN IS TA INQVISO[NE RAB LASIES .S. NE[POS ? ?)</p> <p>5 DIDASCALI R[EQVIES (?) CIT CVM PAC[E ENΘA KATAK[EITAI PAB AATOYE[Σ ΠΑ PA TOY MAKΑ[PIΣ</p>	<p>10 TOY KY ? ? [?? APXHΣYN [ATΩTOY KYZHKE [NOΣ ΔΗΚΕΩ [Σ ΓΗΑΝΗ [Α</p> <p>15 ΚΕΥ ΔΩ [ΒΗΖ ΚΕΥΡΠΗ ΤΕΘΝΕ</p>
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Roth-Gerson, "On the Donation of a Laver-Basin to a Synagogue", *Qadmoniot*, 10, 1977, p, 79 (in Hebrew).

32. J.M. Millas Vallicrosa, "Una nueva inscripcion judaica bilingue en

[In the name of G-d - in this grave rests Rab Lasies, the grandson of the teacher (?) rests in peace [Greek text] here rests Rab Latoyes, by the pious Archisynagogus. He was from Cysicus, a righteous....from Hell (will keep him ?) will rest in peace (in ?) G-d].

The inscription is written in Latin and Greek. Its style resembles the inscription in three languages from Tortosa which is nearby. It ought to be mentioned that the Latin always appears first. Many Jews from that area came from the east and spoke more than one language, and this is also the reason for their lack of fluency in all the languages and especially Latin; for instance, they use the term *inquisio* (= *incisio*) instead of *tumba*.

The above is an inscription concerning a Rabbi or a sage by the name of Lasies (or Latoyes) who came from Cysicus which is in Asia Minor.³³ It seems that this is the correct interpretation of the inscription since it is not logical that the head of the congregation, who laid the stone, would mention his own place of origin. The position of *Archisynagogus* was well known in the Jewish congregations of the Roman empire.³⁴ Thus we have evidence that the Jewish congregations in Spain were organized similarly to other Jewish congregations

Tarragona", *Sefarad*, 17, 1957, p. 3 f. (from which the text of the inscription is taken); Garcia, *Judíos*, p. 13 f., 35.

33. J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, Paris, 1914, I. p.190; M. Stern, "The Jewish Diaspora", *Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, Sect. I: *The Jewish People in the First Century*, vol. I (ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern), Assen, 1974, p. 120 f., 143 ff.
34. This title usually indicated the head of the Jewish congregation . See: J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, Paris, 1914, I, 450 ff.; H.J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, Philadelphia, 1960, p. 171 ff. : M. Floriani Squarciapino, "Plotius Fortunatus Archisynagogus", *Scritti Milano, La Rassegna Mensile di Israel*, 1970, p. 184 ff.; S. Applebaum, "The Organisation of the Jewish Communities in the Diaspora", *Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, ed. Stern-Safrai, I, 1, pp. 429 ff.

elsewhere in the empire. As mentioned above, the writer knew Greek better than Latin. Here we have remnants of evidence about the life of the large Jewish congregation at Tarragona.

This congregation was probably founded by immigrants from east of the Mediterranean sea. Arab historians called Tarragona *Madinat-il-Yahud* which means the town of the Jews.^{35,36}

Another inscription, which is currently to be found in the Archeological Museum of Tarragona, was found in Pallaresos (Fig. 3), not far from Tortosa.³⁷ In the opinion of several scholars, it belongs to the first century, but others think that the Latin which is used in the inscription suits the style of the third century. Nevertheless, it seems that it is apparently from the sixth century, a time in which the important families in the area spoke both Latin and Greek.³⁸ The father holds a Jewish name, the mother a Greek name and the daughter's name is in Latin:

35. Cfr. J.M.Milla Vallicrosa, "Els textos d'historiadors musulmans referents a la Catalunya carolingia". *Quaderns d'Estudi*, 14, 1922, pp. 125 ff.
36. On the short form "Ku" instead of "Kuriou" see below, inscription N. 4, nt. 9; alas, we cannot be sure that this is also a shortened form.
37. See: Ferrua, *Inscripciones*, n. 430; A. Ferrua, "Addenda et corrigenda al *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaicarum*", *Epigraphica*, 3, 1941. pp. 30 ff.; Goodenough, Jewish Symbols: Cantera-Millas, *Inscripciones*, n. 290; B. Lifshitz, *Prolegomenon*, n. 660 d (from which the text of the inscription is taken).
38. Goodenough thinks the lettering is excellent and appropriate to the first century; but the use of *bone* instead of *bonae* seems to Hendrikson (quoted by Goodenough) a sign that we are in the third century, so Goodenough himself is prepared to compromise: "Though it might have been written in the second century".

HI CEST
 MEMORIA BONE RE
 CORDATIONIS ISID
 ORA FILIA BENE ME
 MORII IONATI ET AX
 IAES PAVSET ANI
 MA EIVS IN PACE CV
 M OMNE ISRAEL
 [AM] EN AMEN AMEN

[This is the grave of Isidora, of blessed memory, the daughter of Jonathan, of blessed memory, and Axia: rest her soul in peace with all Israel amen, amen, amen.]

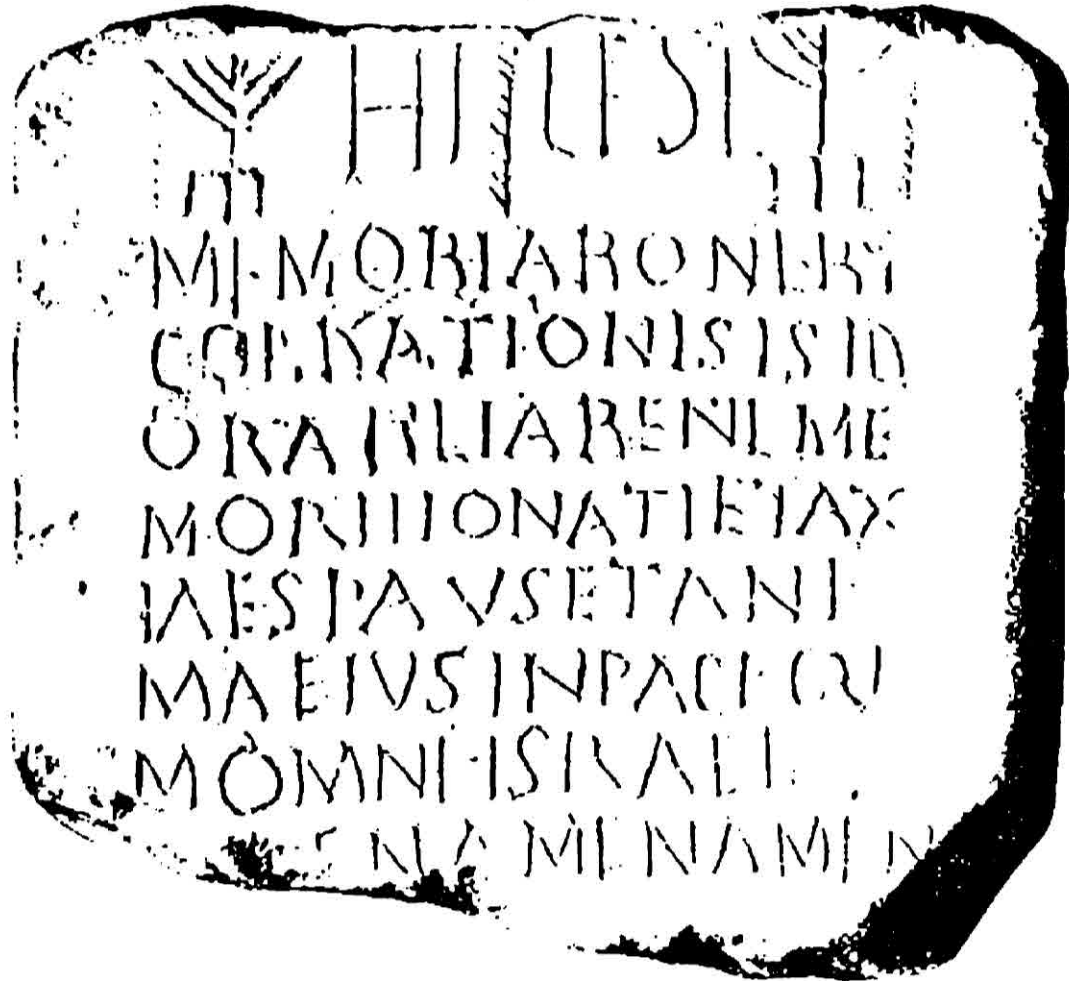
At the top of the inscription there are two lamps and three palm-tree branches, which could either be Lulavim or a reference to the Psalms: צדיק כחמר יפרח³⁹. The name Isidora⁴⁰ was given to both Jews and Christians, and it probably tells of some Byzantine influence. The name Jonati is the genitive of Jonatus (Jonathan) according to the paradigm *Juda - Judanti*, Cantera reads: *Jonati et Axiaes*; Ferrua does not agree and suggests: *Jonatie Taxiaea*. In Cantera's opinio, it is the mother of Isidora who carries a Greek name. Ferrua claims that the expression *cum omne Israel* (with all Israel) is "new", but it is a well known expression in the Jewish liturgy.⁴¹

39. Psalms, 92, 13: "The Righteous will blossom like a palm-tree".

40. On this name see M. Cassuto Saltzman, "Greek Names among the Jews" *Eretz Israel*, 3, 1954, pp. 1 f.; on Jewish names in general, see N.G. Cohen's Ph.D. thesis, *Jewish Names and their significance in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods in Asia Minor*, Jerusalem, 1969.

41. See e.g. the text of the *Kaddish*. Cf. L. Zunz, *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, Cap. 4: "Das Godaechniss des Gerechten" pp. 304 ff.; M. Weinfeld, "The inscriptions of the Synagogues and the Jewish Liturgy", *An Annual for Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies* (in Hebrew) IV, 1980, pp. 280 ff.

Fig. 3: A burial inscription from Pallaresos



From Tortosa (Dertosa) , another town in the north-east, south of Tarragona, a very interesting inscription has come down to us, written in three languages: Hebrew, Latin and Greek. At the beginning of the Hebrew there is a five-pointed star or what may be "Solomon's seal" : at the end there is a *Menorah* and the same star appears.⁴² /

42. See Fig. 4. On this inscription see: Frey, *CIJ*, n.661; Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 2, p. 58 f. ; Ferrua, *Inscripciones*, n. 428; H. Beinart, "Cuando llegaron los judíos a Espana ?", *Estudios del Instituto Central de Relaciones culturales Israel - Iberoamerica, España y Portugal*, III, n. 3, 1962, p. 19 ff.; Cantera-Millas, *Inscripciones*, p. 198; Garcia, *Judíos*, p. 13. ; V. Colorni, "L'uso del greco nella Liturgia del Giudaismo Ellenistico e la Novella 146 di Giustiniano" *Annali di Storia del Diritto*, 8, 1964, p. 19 f. We have quoted the inscription following Ferrua's reading which is similar to Frey's. The reading is identical.

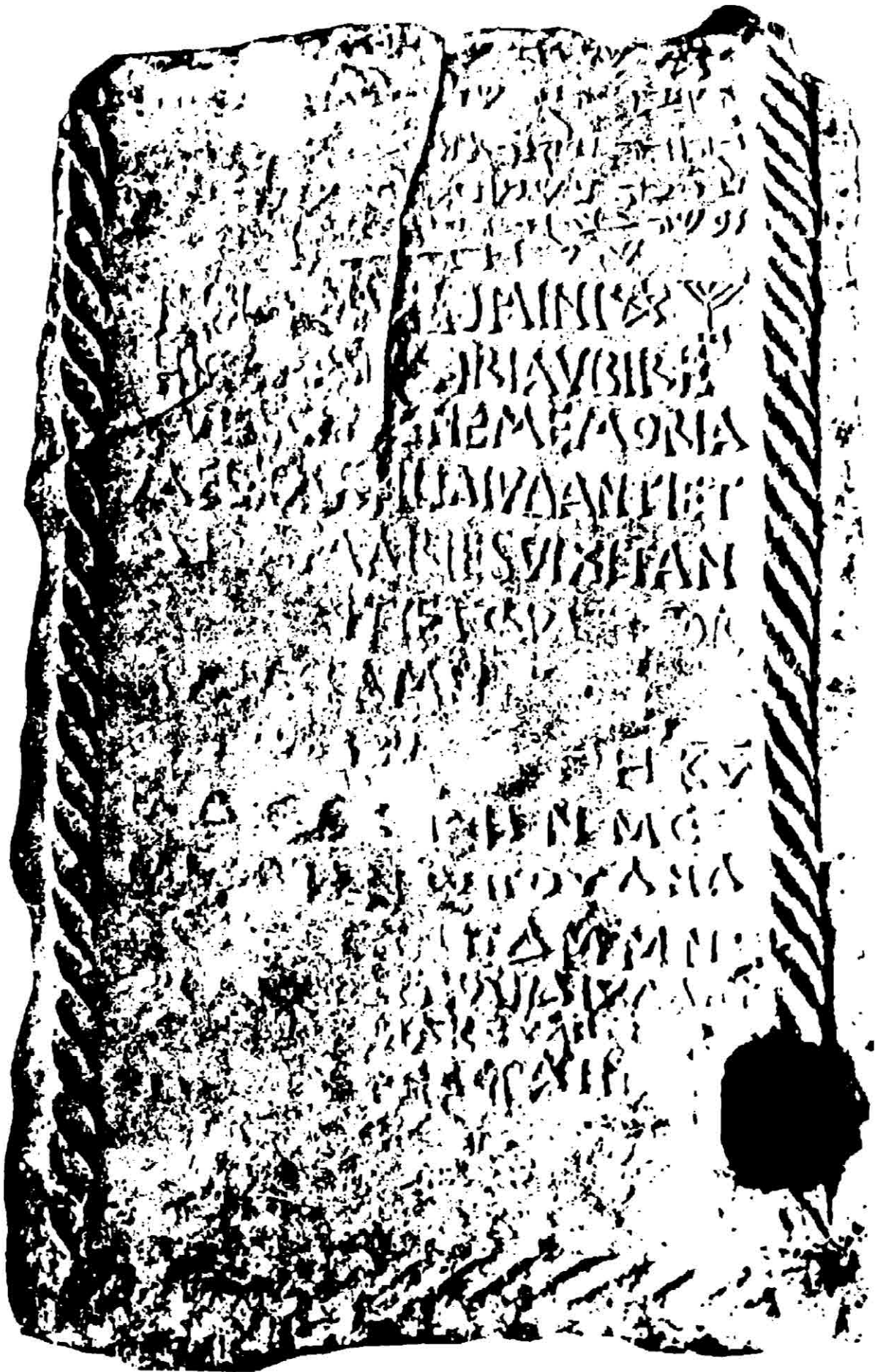
☆ שְׁלוֹם עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל
 הַקֶּבֶר הַזֶּה שֶׁל מַלְלֵי וְשֵׁא⁴³ בַּת⁴⁴
 יְהוּדָה וְלִקִּירָא מַרִּים⁴⁵ זְכוּרֹנָה תְּהִי⁴⁶
 לְבִרְכָה נִשְׁמַתָּה לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבֵּא⁴⁷
 נַפְשָׁה בְּצַרּוֹר הַחַיִּים אֲמֵן⁴⁸
 שְׁלוֹם
 ☆

IN NOMINI ΔΟΜΙΝΙ
 HIC EST MEM[O]RIA VBI RE
 QVIESCIT BENEMEMORIA
 MELIOSA FILIA IVΔANTI⁹ ET
 CYR[I]A¹⁰ MARIES VIXIT AN [NOS]
 [VIGI]NTI ET QUATTOR
 OUM PACE AMEN

[έν] ὠνώ[μα]τη Κ(υρ(ο)υ. | ὠδε ἔστην μεῖν[εῖο]ν δπου
 ἀνάπ[αυ]σαν πάμνη[στος Μελιώσ]α Ἰούδαντι⁹[ος καὶ κυρίας
 Μά]ρες, ζήσ[ασα ἴετη ἔικοσι] τέσ(σ)ερα(ς). ἦν | [εἰρήνη.
 ἀμῆν].

43. Cantera-Millas read מיללאשא
44. Cantera-Millas read ברת ר instead of בת. The use of Aramaic is odd in a inscription which is written wholly in Hebrew.
45. Cantera-Millas read מארים or מארים. This reading is interesting since it suits the Latin writing of the name (*scriptio plena*).
46. Cantera-Millas read צרקת [זכר]
47. Cantera-Millas read תנוח
48. On the expression בצרור החיים, see the book of *Samuel* I, 25, 29. See also this expression in an inscription from Merida, of the Visigothic period, in A.M. Rabello, *The Jews in Visigothic Spain in the Light of the Legislation*, Jerusalem, 1983 (in Hebrew), p.120. no. 30, nt. 3.

Fig 4. A three language inscription (Hebrew, Latin, Greek) from Tortosa



[In the name of G-d. Here lies the memory in which Meliosa rests, may her memory be blessed, the daughter of Juda⁴⁹ and Lady⁵⁰ Maria. She lived twenty-four years in peace, amen]

(The Greek translation is identical to the Latin)

The inscription is clearly a Jewish one. The Hebrew text is typical of Jewish grave inscriptions. The star is "Solomon's seal" which was common among the Jews of Persia in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E..⁵¹ Can we detect a reference to the days of Solomon, with which the Jews of Spain were trying to find a connection? Finally, beside another star appears the *menorah* with five branches.⁵²

The expression שלום על ישראל "Peace on Israel" appears very often

49. On the name Judas in the Jewish and Christian world see: A.M.Rabello, "Sui rapporti fra Diocleziano e gli Ebrei", *Atti della Accademia Romanistica Costantiniana*, Perugia, 1976, pp. 186 ff. See also the remarks of Cantera-Millas, above.
50. Ferrua reads *Quira*. Cantera-Millas read *cura* or *cuirra*. This name which means "lady" appears in several other Jewish inscriptions: see B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs*, 70. On the shortened form *Ku* instead of *Kuria* see Beinart, "Two inscriptions", pp. 302 ff.
51. On "Solomon's seal" see: N. Avigad, "Seal", *Biblical Encyclopedia*, 3, 81, ff.; "Star of David", *Hebrew Encyclopedia*, 22, pp. 149 ff (in Hebrew).
52. Probably according to the Talmudic tradition which forbids the making of a *Menorah* with seven branches, like the one which was placed in the Temple: "Said Abaye: The Torah forbade the making of ritual articles that can be made identical a *Menorah* opposed to a *Menorah*: the making of a *Menorah* with five, six or eight branches is permitted, but not seven..." (*Babylonian Talmud, Rosh Hashana*, 24a-b; see also *Menahot*, 28b, and *Avoda Zara*, 43a). The prohibition was interpreted with reference to a three dimensional *Menorah*, so that we usually find a seven-branched *Menorah* in inscriptions. Nevertheless, there are other examples of *Menorot* with five branches, e.g. in

in Jewish inscriptions.⁵³ Here it is used to show the loyalty of the family to the tradition of their forefathers. The blessing "Peace on Israel" can be interpreted as an expression of prayer and a wish concerning the fate of the nation following the death of the deceased, rather than a hint about the afterworld or the words of the deceased! The feeling of leavetaking from the deceased is combined with a prayer for the welfare of the small community of which the deceased was a member, and for all Israel.

The inscription was found in the town of Tortosa, in 1771. As to date of inscription, some scholars consider it goes back to the second or third century; most scholars think it belongs to the sixth century, and maybe Beinart was right in fixing the date at the end of the fourth century or beginning of the fifth. It should be noted that the family compiled the inscription in the vernacular, so as to be understood by the Christian families in the neighbourhood, while using the Hebrew language to give expression to its faith.

HISPANIA CARTHAGINENSIS

In the south-east region of Spain, an area which includes Toledo, three inscriptions belonging to the same building were found in the

inscriptions from Narbona, or the house of Kyrios Leontis in Scythopolis (VI century) ; See: Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, IV, pp. 71 ff. ; N. Zori, "The House of Kyrios Leonthis, *Israel Exploration Journal*, 19, 1966, p. 130 and nt. 15. Alas, it is possible that sometimes it occurs not from loyalty to the Talmud, but as the result of ignorance on the part of the artist. This assumption is brought forward by A. Negev, "The Chronology of the Seven-Branched Menorah". *Eretz Israel*, 8, 1967, p. 196 nt. 55.

53. On the expression **על ישראל שלום** see Psalms, 125, 5, and 128, 6; the expression often appears in inscriptions found in Israel and in the diaspora, as can be seen in Frey's *Corpus*. In the Monteverde catacomb in Rome, the expression appears with *alef mater lectionis* after the *shin* in **שאלום**. See A.M.Rabello, "Catacombs", *Enc. Judaica*, 5, 1971, pp. 294 ff.

town of Elche (Alicante), not far from the sea. At first, scholars assumed that they relate to a Christian basilica, but later most of them were convinced that they are Jewish inscriptions. Albertini even published a second article in which he withdrew from his first assumption, and explained that the text of these inscriptions does relate to a synagogue (Fig. 5). In any case, even if we accept the assumption that the inscriptions do belong to a synagogue and to the Jews, this does not rule out the possibility that the synagogue was later turned into a church. This was Schlunk's assumption. The inscriptions date to the fourth and fifth centuries, the time of Byzantine rule in the area, and the sixth century when the Visigoths ruled. But in Melida's opinion, the art seems to be Decadent-Roman.

The three inscriptions are written in Greek:⁵⁴

The first is written in black letters on a white background:

πρ[οσ] ευχη λαο[ῶ]

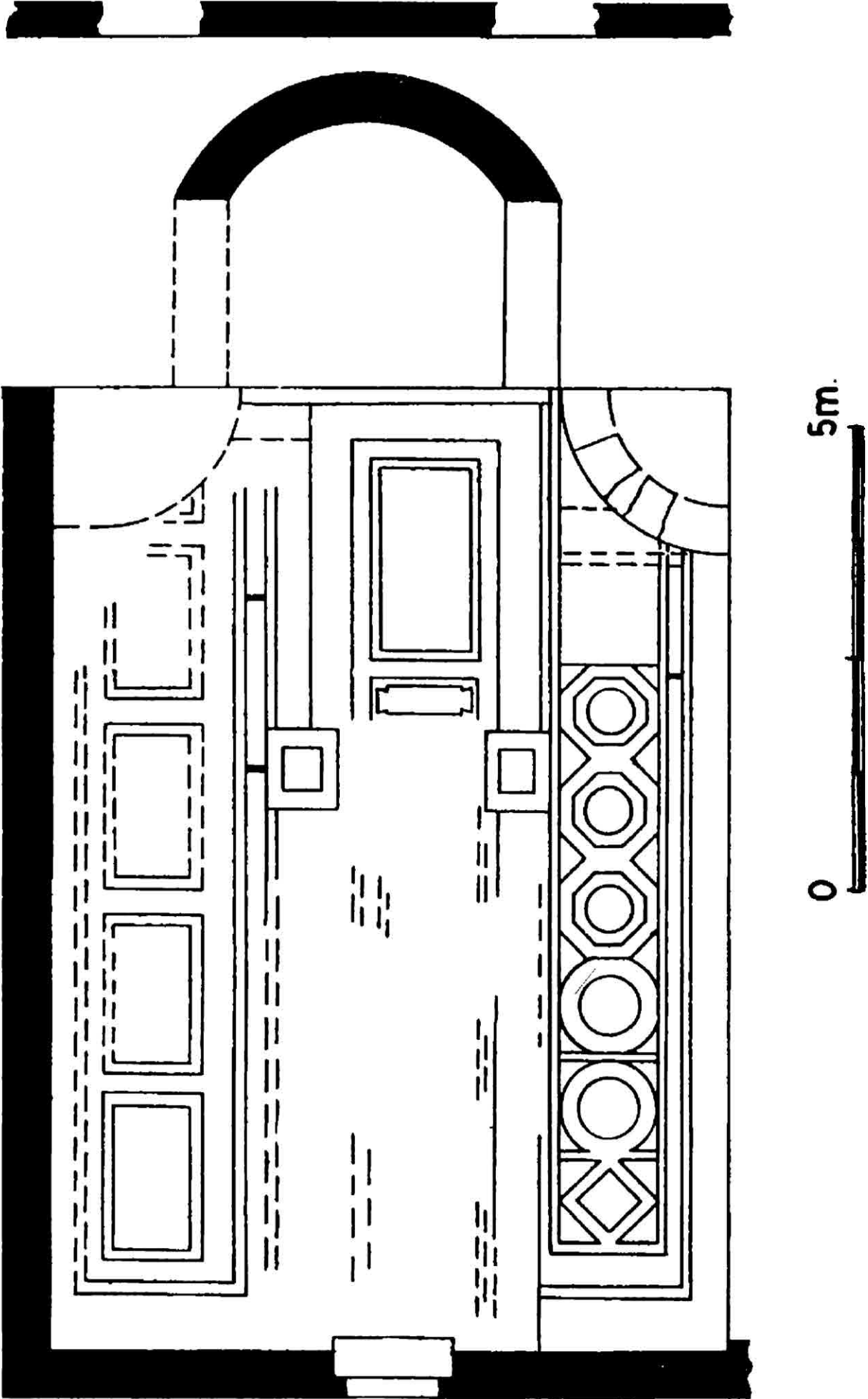
(Frey) which means "the Synagogue of the people of...." or "the Synagogue of L....." The name προσευχή together with συναγωγή is the most common expression for a synagogue or a Community.

The leaf design, in the eyes of Frey, seems to be a citron (*ethrog*), a motif which was popular on inscriptions from the ancient period.

54. On these inscriptions see: Juster, *Juifs*, 1, p. 183; 446 nt. 1; Hubner, *CIL*, 2, 515; Frey, *CIJ*, nn. 662-664; Goodenough, *Jewish Symbols*, 7, p. 177; Ferrua, *Inscripciones*, nn. 431-433; Cantera-Millas, *Inscripciones*, nn. 284-286; Garcia Iglesias, *Judíos*, pp. 11, 16 f., pp 34, VI, 36; B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fondateurs dans les synagogues juives*, Paris, 1967, n. 101.

On the synagogue of Elche see: F. Cantera Burgos, *Sinagogas Españolas*, Madrid, 1955, pp. 212 ff.; Don E. Halperin, *The Ancient Synagogues of the Iberian Peninsula*, U. of Florida 1969. p. 27; Garcia Iglesias, *Judíos*, pp. 11, 34.

Fig. 5: The Synagogue of Elche: Sketch by Ibarra



The second inscription is placed at the north of the Synagogue and it reads:

ΧΡΟΧΟΥΤΟΝ (ΧΗΣΧΟΥΤΩΝ)ΚΕ ΠΡΕΒΥΤΕΡΩΝ (Ibarra)
 ραρ]χόντων (?) κε πρε[σ]βυτέρων (Albertini, Ferrua)

It tells of the members of the committee, some who were *Presbyteri* and other special members who were *Archontes*.

The third inscription may be read like this:

εὐπυγολα(ν) θ συγχ[ώρησον ρεμῆ] εὐχῆ

(Ferrua) (.....a pleasant voyage.....)^{55,56,57,58,59,60,61}

55. The word προσευχή to indicate a synagogue appears early on and is used continuously. See, for example, inscriptions from the middle of the third century B.C.E. in *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae*, ed. W. Dittenberger, Leipzig, 1903, v. i, p. 96, v. 2, p. 726; Frey, *CIJ*, No. 683) from the first century B.C. (and No. 684; Lifshitz, *Prolegomenon* No. 683b from the second century. On this matter see S. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertumer*, Berlin-Vienna, 1922, pp. 11 ff. ; Lifshitz, *Donateurs*, index, p. 91.
56. H. Schlunk, "El arte de la época paleocristiana en el sudeste español. La Sinagoga de Elche y el 'martyrium' de la Alberca", *Cronica del III Congreso Arquelogico del Sudeste Español*, Murcia, 1947, pp. 335 ff.
57. J. Ramon Melida, "El arte romano cristiano", in R. Menendez Pidal, *Historia de España*, vol. II, *España Romana*, Madrid, 1935, p. 721 f.
58. On this term see: J Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, I, pp. 413 ff.; A.M. Rabello, *The Legal Condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire*, op. cit., p. 720, nt. 214.
59. H.J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome* , Philadelphia, 1960, p. 196.
60. J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, pp. 440 ff.
61. See Schlunk, *op. cit.*; see also Cantera-Millas, *Inscripciones*, p. 409.

Albertini⁶² is almost certain that it tells of a metaphorical voyage, which means that it is either a voyage in our present world (on earth) or a voyage of the soul to the afterworld. In my opinion, Frey is right in suggesting that the subject in question is expressing gratitude (maybe in the dedication of the synagogue itself ?) following a successful voyage, or even perhaps expressing a wish for a successful voyage. In this matter many speculations can be made, and maybe we can detect a hint that some of the Jews of the congregation earned their living through trade, and therefore used to travel to countries across the sea.

We must not forget that the town was close to the sea, and that it was not very far from Africa.⁶³ Schlunk reckons that underneath the inscription there must have been a drawing with marine elements but that the drawing was damaged when the inscription was revealed.

HISPANIA BAETICA

Another inscription which was found in Adra (or Abdera) in Baetic Spain brings us back to the beginning of the third century (Fig. 6). This inscription is one of the most ancient pieces of evidence about the Jews of Spain. Baetic Spain is the name of the most southerly province of the peninsula. The name was derived from the name of the river Baetis which crosses the land. The use of Latin was widespread all over Baetic Spain as were many Roman customs. The area was known as very rich, and this was one of the reasons many merchants settled there. The inscription which was found in the area reads

[AN]NIA SALO
[MO]NVLA AN I
MENS IIII DIE I
IVDAEA

62. E. Albertini, "Rapport sommaire sur les fouilles d'Elche (Espagne), *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres*, 1905, pp. 619 ff.

63. See, in general, H.Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, vol. I, *From Antiquity to the Sixteenth Century*, London, 1974.

[Annia (or Yunia or Licinia) Salo(mo)nola one year, four months, one day (old). Jewish].⁶⁴

It is possible that the girl's name was Hanna, and it is interesting to see that in such a small inscription (which suits a little girl) her religious identity is mentioned in the bottom line: *Iudaea* (Jewish). Adding *Iudaeus* to the name was very common, especially in a period in which Christians also used Jewish names.⁶⁵ According to García Bellido, the name *Salomonula* indicated a maidservant.⁶⁶

Fita reckons that at the beginning of the inscription there was a drawing of a *menorah*. This view is shared by Cantera-Millas.

In the first, second and third lines of the inscription there are three leaves (perhaps a sign that the little girl passed away like a leaf?) or, according to another interpretation, three citrons.⁶⁷

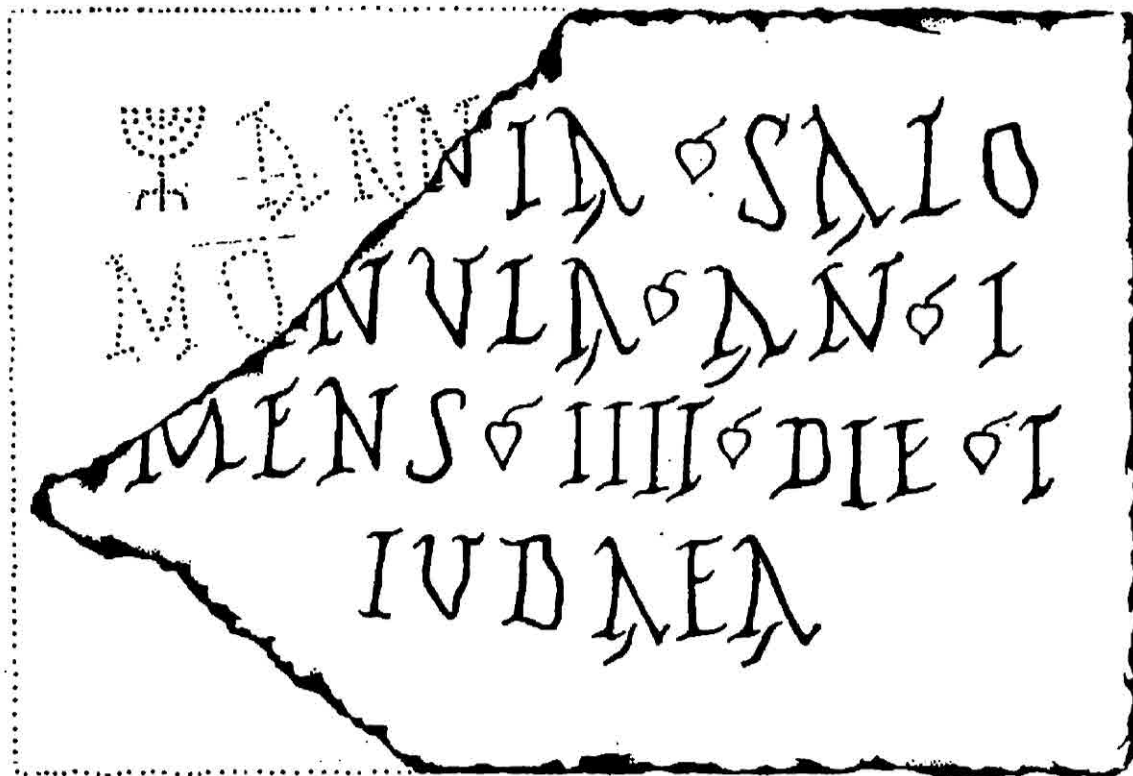
64. T. Mommsen, *CIL*, 2, n. 1932; J.B. Frey, *CIJ*, n. 665; Ferrua, *Inscripciones*, n. 429; Cantera-Millas, *Inscripciones*, n. 283, (pp. 405-406); F. Fita, "Epigraphos romanos de la ciudad de Adra", *BRAH*, LXXX, 1917, pp. 142-144.

65. On the custom of writing IUDAEUS in inscriptions next to the name, see J. Juster, *Les Juifs dans l'Empire Romain*, I, p. 172 ff.; II, p. 233 f. To Ferrua the matter seems "very rare" in Hebrew inscriptions.

66. A. Garcia, Y. Bellido, "El elemento forestero en Hispania Romana" *BRAH*, 144, 1959, p. 142; Garcia-Iglesias, *Judíos* p. 35.

67. The citron was a Jewish symbol, used together with the *lulav* at the festival of Succot.

Fig. 6: An inscription from Adra with the reconstruction by Cantera



HISPANIA LUSITANENSIS

Lusitania is in the south-east region of the Iberian peninsula. Its capital, founded by Augustus in the year 25 B.C.E. was called *Emerita Augusta*. The area was not directly influenced by Roman culture. The river which crosses the town and reaches the sea had a significant importance for trade, since the town was already known as an important agricultural centre. This is the reason many foreigners settled there, and among them there were also many Jews.⁶⁸ From *Emerita Augusta* we have a number of inscriptions. The most ancient one is probably the inscription of Justinus which is from the second century.⁶⁹

IVSTINUS. MENANDRI. FILIUS
FLAVIVUS. NEAPOLITANVS. ANNO

68. E. De Ruggiero, "Hispania", *Dizionario Epigrafico*; E. Albertini, *Les divisions administratives de l'Espagne Romaine*, Paris, 1923.

69. Hubner, *CIL*, 2, 525; Garcia, *Judíos*, p. 11, 34 (from which the text of the inscription is taken).

LVI.H.S.E.T.T.L.⁷⁰ SABINA. MARITO
 OPTIMO. ET.MERENTISSIMO.ET
 MENANDER FILIVS CVM.SERORIBVS
 SVIS.RECEPTA.ET. SALVINA
 PATRI PIISIMO [
 P[⁷¹

[Justinus, son of Menander, Flavius Neapolitanus in his forty sixth year. This is where he was buried. May the earth be light for you. Sabina (a tombstone) was placed for the fine and highly privileged husband, and Menander, the son, with his sisters Recepta and Salvina for the very pious father].

In order to identify this inscription as a Jewish one, it ought to be mentioned that the name Justinus which comes from Iustus (Zaddok) is a name which often appears in Jewish inscriptions from the Roman era. Stating the place of origin is also typical of Jews. Flavius Neapolitanus means from the town of Nablus (Flavia Neapolis, the Jewish Shkhem):⁷² in this place there was also a strong Samaritan group....

5. Conclusions

In this article we have discussed the special conditions of the Jews in Roman Spain as reflected in general historical sources, Church sources and Jewish inscriptions.⁷³

The picture we get is of a society which leads a good way of life.

70. *Hic Sepultus Est* (=is buried here) ; *Sit Terra Tibi Levis* (=may the earth be light for you).

This version, like שלום עפרך "peace on your ashes" appears sometimes on tombstones. Compare, for example, with the tombstone of Clandia, *CIL*, 12 1211.

71. *Posuerunt* (= [they] placed).

72. A. Garcia, Y. Bellido, "El elemento forestero en Hispania Romana", *BRAH*, 144, 1959, p. 142

73. The numismatic sources will be checked by Dr. Kindler in the appendix.

This society is loyal to the forefathers' traditions, but also has good relations with its Spanish neighbours, also Christians. Because of this good relationship between the Jews and the Christians the Church became worried and held its first conference relating to the Jews in Spain, in order to separate Jews and Christians.

Realisation of these intentions took place in Spain when Christianity ruled in the Roman Empire (303). As a result, the Jews' legal status worsened, even though at the beginning Imperial legislation passed against the Jews was not applied with full rigor in distant provinces.

However, the basic tenets of the Theodosian Code (438) towards the Jews were applied in Spain.⁷⁴

Two chapters of the *Codex Theodosianus* deal particularly with the Jews: Book XVI. chapter 8: "On Jews, Caelicolae and Samaritans" , and chapter 9: "A Jew may not own a Christian slave". Chapter 8 contains twenty-nine statutes: chapter 9 - four. Laws relating to Jews, sixteen in number, are, however, found also in other chapters, while in other places mention is made of statutes which have not come down to us. Alas, it is important to note that the Code was applied not only in Spain but also in other parts of the Roman Empire, and from a legal point of view, the status of the Jews in Spain was no different from their status elsewhere in the Empire.

The Theodosian Code was cancelled in the year 506 in favour of the *Breviarium Alaricianum* or *Lex Romana Visigothorum*,⁷⁵ but this takes us away from Roman Spain to Visigothic Spain.⁷⁶

74. Cf. L. De Giovanni, *Chiesa e Stato nel Codice Teodosiano, Saggio sul libro XVI*, Napoli, 1980; A. Linder, *Roman Imperial Legislation on the Jews*, Jerusalem, 1983.

75. J. Juster, *The Legal Condition of the Jews under the Visigothic kings* (brought up-to-date with a Tribute by A.M. Rabello) Jerusalem 1976.

76 For more on this subject, see A.M. Rabello, *The Jews in Visigothic Spain in the light of the Legislation* (in Hebrew), The Zalman Shazar Centre for the Furtherance of the Study of Jewish History, Jerusalem, 1983.