

Εἰς Θεός in Palestinian Inscriptions

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The acclamation Εἰς Θεός, alone or in composition with various formulas, frequently occurs in the East. In an extensive study, E. Peterson¹ collected a large number of examples which he considered to be Christian, some as early as the late third century, from Syria (including Phoenicia, Palestine and Arabia) and Egypt, and concluded that Εἰς Θεός was a typical Christian formula. Peterson's conclusions were widely accepted and, not surprisingly, have become a self-fulfilling prophecy, inasmuch as any inscription that contains this formula is automatically classified as Christian, unless unequivocally proven otherwise. A more critical approach seems advisable, especially when dealing with Palestine, if for no other reason than the demographic diversity of this region, where Christians were still a minority at the beginning of the fifth century and possibly for some time later.²

While the material collected by Peterson from Egypt is indeed solidly Christian — mostly epitaphs with Christian symbols, many of them containing ecclesiastic titles³ — the examples of Εἰς Θεός from Syria include a sizable group of inscriptions that lack any positive identification. Of the dated material, a large majority of the unidentified Εἰς Θεός inscriptions belong to the fourth century, whereas the texts identified as Christian by the addition of specific symbols and/or formulas come from the late fourth and fifth centuries. This seems to mean that in Syria the Εἰς Θεός formula suffered a progressive Christianization, concomitant with the advance of Christianity in the province. In his collection of Syrian material, in fact, Prentice attributed the early specimens of Εἰς Θεός to

¹ E. Peterson, *Εἰς Θεός* (Göttingen 1926).

² On the demographic strength of the Jews and the Samaritans, and the menace they represented for the Christian population in Palestine in the late fourth century and in the first half of the fifth, cf. John Chrysostom, *Adv. Iudaeos et gentes* XVI, PG 48, col. 835; *Epistula synodi Hierosolymitani ad Theophilum Alexandrinum*, PL 22, cols. 769-70; Jerome, *In Esaiam* XIII, 48, 17-19, ed. M. Adriaen, 17-19 (Turnhout 1963), CCSL 73A, 531; F. Nau, "Résumé de monographies syriaques: Histoire de Barsauma de Nisibe", *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* Ser. II, 8 (1913), 274; G. Alon, *The Jews in their Land in the Talmudic Age I* (Jerusalem 1980), 6, 36; M. Avi-Yonah, *The Jews under Roman and Byzantine Rule* (Jerusalem 1984), 220-2.

³ On the Egyptian material see also G. Ronchi, *Lexicon Theonymon Rerumque sacrarum et divinarum ad Aegyptum pertinentium* (Milan 1974).

the Jews, on the assumption that Εἷς θεός was originally a Jewish expression used by Jewish-Christians and then adopted generally by Christians.⁴ As for Palestine, M. Avi-Yonah maintained that the Εἷς θεός acclamation was connected with Julian's struggle against Christianity, and A. Negev summarized his re-examination of the local evidence with the general conclusion that the formula was created in the latter part of the third century, possibly by Jews; it was soon picked up by Julian the Apostate's followers, and again by Jews and Christians in Syria, Palestine and Egypt, with Egyptian Christians using it most.⁵

I have had occasion to point out that in the Palestinian milieu a good percentage of the examples comes from a Samaritan context.⁶ Fresh evidence has since come to my attention that points in the same direction: the new discoveries, however, do not warrant new assumptions, but only make a re-examination of the whole issue more imperative and urgent. As a first step in this direction, it seems worthwhile to attempt a survey of all the occurrences of the Εἷς θεός formula in Palestine and vicinity, with particular stress on the ideological connections in each instance. The material is given in geographical order.

1a Gush Halav (Upper Galilee):⁷ two oval bronze amulets found in a *kokh* in a rock-cut tomb dated to the fourth or early fifth century. On the obverse, rider with *nimbus* spearing a fallen enemy; around the edge is the inscription Εἷς θεός ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά. It is the well-known type of the so-called "Solomon's amulets" of syncretistic usage, showing the 'helper', identified with Solomon, St. Sisinnius and later St. George, slaying the evil spirit.⁸ On the reverse, apotropaic symbols and the inscription 'Ιαὼ Καβαῶ(θ) Μ(ι)χ(αή)λ. 'Ιαὼ is one of the magic names by which the great solar syncretistic god was invoked, and it appears in many gnostic charms and gems.⁹

⁴ W.K. Prentice, *Publications of an American Archaeological Expedition to Syria III: Greek and Latin Inscriptions* (New York 1908), 18-19, 50-51 (no. 25), 221-223 (no. 263).

⁵ A. Negev, *The Inscriptions of Wadi Haggag, Sinai (Qedem 6)* (Jerusalem 1977), 62-64.

⁶ L. Di Segni, "The Church of Mary Theotokos on Mount Gerizim: the Inscriptions", in *Christian Archaeology in the Holy Land: New Discoveries*, edd. G.C. Bottini, L. Di Segni, E. Alliata, *Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior* 36 (Jerusalem 1990), 346.

⁷ N. Makhuly, "Rock-cut Tombs at el Jish", *QDAP* 8 (1939), 48, Pls. XXXI: 7; XXXII, 1: h 2.

⁸ Peterson (above, n. 1), 91-130; C. Bonner, *Studies in Magic Amulets* (Ann Arbor 1950), 174-5, 208-11; J. Naveh, S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls* (Leiden 1985), 111-22.

⁹ Bonner (preceding note), 29-31, 204. The use of names derived from Hebrew, like 'Ιαὼ, a transcription of the ineffable name IHYH, 'Αδωναί Καβαῶθ and the names

1b In the same tomb,¹⁰ a similar amulet with identical obverse. On the reverse, evil eye pierced by daggers and attacked by wild beasts, and inscription 'Iαώ Clαβαώ(θ) MιχIαήλ βοήθI.

1c Another amulet found in the same burial chamber¹¹ is identified as Christian, having the same obverse but showing on the reverse a blessing figure with cross and alpha-omega. Although Gush Halav (Gischala) is located in an area densely populated with Jews,¹² there is nothing to show that the tomb belonged to Jewish Christians.¹³

2 Nahariya:¹⁴ oval bronze amulet found in a Byzantine burial cave at Giv'ath Katzenelson. On the obverse, rider with *nimbus* spearing a fallen enemy; around the edge is the inscription [ΕΙς] θεός ό νικών τὰ κα[κά]. On the reverse, remains of apotropaic symbols and the word π(ε)ινώ. In the same tomb were an aniconic Samaritan amulet and several funerary offerings marked with crosses. Remains of a Roman-Byzantine village were discovered at Nahariya, and a sixth century church was excavated next to the burial cave.¹⁵ Nearby were several Jewish villages scattered in the territory of Tyre, as well as Samaritan communities in the Carmel area and in Tyre itself.¹⁶

3 'Evron:¹⁷ mosaic inscription in an intercolumnation between nave and southern aisle, in a fifth-century church; the pavement is dated by inscriptions to

of angels, does not mean that the users of these amulets were Jews, as the imagery had been wholly absorbed in such syncretistic cults. The solar association of 'Iαώ is indicated by its appearance with the figure of Helios and other solar types (e.g. Bonner [above, n. 8], 291, no. 226; 292, no. 231; 293, no. 241; *SEG* 29, no. 724) and in the formula ΕΙς Ζεύς ΣεράπIς 'Iαώ (e.g. *SEG* 31, no. 693; 32, no. 1082 ter).

¹⁰ Makhuly (above, n. 7), 49, Pl. XXXII, 1: h 1-2.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 49, Pl. XXXI, 5.

¹² A synagogue existed at Gush Halav itself, as indicated by an Aramaic inscription, *CIJ* no. 976 (the synagogue dates from the third to sixth centuries).

¹³ Moreover, one must remember that the pagan temples of Yarun ed-Deir, Qazyun, Qeren Naphtali, Qedesh are not too far away.

¹⁴ R. Reich, "A Samaritan Amulet from Nahariya", *RB* 92 (1985), 383-8, Pl. IX b; *SEG* 35, no. 1558. 37, no. 1524.

¹⁵ D. Barag, *NEAEHL* III, 1092-3; C. Dauphin, G. Edelstein, *L'église byzantine de Nahariya* (Thessaloniki 1984).

¹⁶ The spread of Jewish villages among the Gentile in the territory of Tyre is documented in the halakhic inscription of Rehov and in the parallel Talmudic texts: Y. Sussmann, "A Halakhic Inscription from the Beth-Shean Valley" (1973-74), *Tarbiz* 43, 88-158 [Hebrew]; *Tos. Shebi'it* 4:8-11; *Sifre Deut.* 51; *yDem.* 22 c-d; *ySheb.* 36 c. On the Samaritan presence in the coastal area see I. Ben Zwi, *The Book of the Samaritans* (Jerusalem 1970), 116-7 [Hebrew]; Antoninus Placentinus, *Itinerarium* 3, *CCSL* 175, 130; Symeon stylita jr., *Ep. ad Iustinianum*, PG 86, 3216.

¹⁷ V. Tzaferis, "The Greek Inscriptions from the Early Christian Church at 'Evron'", *Eretz Israel* 19 (1987), 46*, no. 9; *SEG* 37, no. 1518.

AD 443. The inscription reads: Εἷς θεὸς ἰὸ βοηθῶν | Οὐαλεν|τῖνον κα|ρποφορή|σαντα ν(όμισμα) ἔν· α' ν(όμισμα).¹⁸ The context is of course Christian; however, one of the inscriptions set in the pavement of the first building stage of the church, dated AD 415, opens with a thrice-repeated *yod* in old Hebrew script, a symbolic reference to God known from incantation texts and from gnostic amulets.¹⁹ The palaeo-Hebrew script may have remained in use for sacred texts and divine names as late as the fourth century;²⁰ however, its appearance in a Byzantine inscription must be viewed as exceptional. The characters may also have been preserved through the Samaritan script, itself a form of palaeo-Hebrew, well-known in this period. It is not inconceivable that the Christian community in 'Evron — many of whose members bore Semitic names — had Samaritan associations. However, if the repeated *yod* was simply another way of writing 'Ιαώ, as suggested by Bonner, the mosaics of 'Evron would reveal gnostic connections

4 Acco (vicinity):²¹ amulet featuring rider spearing a fallen enemy and inscribed Εἷς θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά.

5 Beth She'arim:²² painted inscription on the arch of a passageway in Catacomb 109. The inscription was in poor condition and only the first two words could be made out: Εἷς θεὸς β[οήθῃ ?]. Although the context is funerary, it should be noted that the inscription is not an epitaph.

6 Binyamina:²³ stone tablet with engraved *menorah*, *shofar* and *lulav*. The inscription is incised on both sides of the *menorah* and along the lower edge of the tablet. It reads Εἷς θεὸς | βο(ή)θῃ | Ιούδα | πρεσ(β)υτέρου | ἔτ(ου)ς | αου.²⁴

¹⁸ Ll. 5-7 my reading; ed.pr. καρποφορήσανταν ἕναν.

¹⁹ V. Tzaferis, *Eretz Israel* 19 (1987), 47*, no. 11, 50*; *SEG* 37, no. 1520. On a doubled *yod*, indicating the tetragrammaton, see Bonner (above, n. 8), 52-3; E. Testa, *Il simbolismo dei Giudeo-cristiani* (Jerusalem 1962), passim; Naveh-Shaked (above, n. 8), 12.

²⁰ Epiphanius, *De gemmis*, PG 43, cols. 357-8; *Tos.Sanh.* 4:7; *yMeg.* 1:8; J. Naveh, "An Aramaic Tomb Inscription Written in Paleo-Hebrew", *IEJ* 23 (1973), 82-91 (from the end of the Second Temple period).

²¹ O.M. Dalton, *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities* (London 1901), 112, no. 555. Non vidi: mentioned in P. Thomsen, "Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem", *ZDPV* 44 (1921), 122. Seemingly the same that is mentioned by Peterson (above, n. 1) 104, no. 13.

²² Frey, *CII*, no. 1135; M. Schwabe, B. Lifshitz, *Beth She'arim* (Jerusalem 1974), 89, no. 109.

²³ G. Herman, "A Jewish Tombstone from Binyamina", *SCI* 11 (1991/92), 160-1; L. Di Segni, "A Jewish Greek Inscription from the Vicinity of Caesarea Maritima", *'Atiqot*, 22 (1993), 133-6.

²⁴ Ed. pr.: Εἷς θεὸς βο(ή)θῃ. Ιούδα πρεσ(β)ε(υ)τ(ι)οῦ; "God is one. (This is the tomb) of Judah the presbyter". I see no reason to separate the name from the verb.

Year 471 is probably reckoned by a Pompeian era, perhaps the one adopted in nearby Dora. If so, the stone is dated between 408 and 410 AD. The inscription has been explained as a Jewish epitaph, but this tablet is not a tombstone. Such plaques were built in the facade of a building, which may have been a tomb or any other kind of structure: several examples are known from Jewish and Samaritan sacred buildings. On the other hand, as we shall see, Εἰς θεός is rare in a funerary context. Therefore I see no reason to consider this inscription anything but an acclamation, probably set up in a synagogue. The recent discoveries of 'Jewish' symbols in Samaritan synagogues²⁵ are a warning not to classify any find as Jewish on the strength of these symbols alone; but in the present case, the name Judah and the title πρεσβύτερος favour this conclusion.

7 Caesarea:²⁶ bronze bracelet worn as an amulet. The bracelet is a band 7 mm wide, broadening into medallions 14 mm in diameter. One extant medallion shows on the obverse a rider with *nimbus* spearing a fallen enemy; around the edge runs the inscription Εἰς θεός ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά. The same side of the band shows a lion running to left and the beginning of the inscription Εἰς θεός: for a parallel see below, n. 27. Both the bracelet band and the obverse of the medallion are stamped. On the reverse of the medallion the words *Ein ka-El Yeshurun* ("There is none like the God of Yeshurun") are incised in Samaritan script. Aniconic amulets with this acclamation and other biblical texts in Samaritan script are known: in this case, the bracelet was perhaps not worn by Samaritans, who were supposed to be scrupulous about the ban on images, but a Samaritan was employed to add an inscription of his own, in order to enhance the magical power of the amulet;²⁷ or else, the ancient script was used by a Jew with the same aim. Jews and Samaritans lived in Caesarea side by side as early as the third century.²⁸

8 Caesarea:²⁹ tin plaquette (phylactery?) featuring a standing male figure holding two *caducei*, and the legend Εἰς θεός.

In inscriptions βοηθεῖν is construed with dative and accusative as well as with genitive, so ἰούδα πρεσβυτέρῳ) is also a possibility.

²⁵ Y. Magen, "Samaritan Synagogues", *Qadmoniot* 25 (1992), 99-100, 61-90 [Hebrew]; also in F. Manns and E. Allists, ed., *Early Christianity Context. Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, Collectio Maior* 38 (Jerusalem 1993), 193-230.

²⁶ A. Hamburger, "A Greco-Samaritan Amulet from Caesarea", *IEJ* 9 (1959), 43-5, Pl.4 A-B; *SEG* 18, no. 625.

²⁷ R. Pummer, "Samaritan Amulets from the Roman-Byzantine Period and their Wearers", *RB* 94 (1987), 251-63 gives a full list of the known Samaritan amulets and concludes, not quite convincingly, that they were not used by Samaritans, but by Jews and Christians.

²⁸ S. Klein, *Sefer ha-Yishuv* I (Jerusalem 1939), 148, nos. 59-62 [Hebrew].

²⁹ B. Lifshitz, "Einige Amulette aus Caesarea Palaestinae", *ZDPV* 80 (1964), 81, no. IV.

9 Caesarea:³⁰ lead ring, aniconic, inscribed Εἰς θεῖός, βοήθῃ χερσὶ μέρην. There is nothing to show ideological affiliation. On the one hand, the lack of figurative ornamentation can be due to religious scruples — in which case the ring might have belonged to a Samaritan woman; on the other hand, it may be attributed to the extreme cheapness of the artifact: cf. n. 28, an aniconic bracelet with an invocation to Sarapis.

10 Caesarea:³¹ half of an oval gem, featuring a standing male figure with *nimbus* and the inscription: Εἰς θεός ΛΑΕΠΑΤΟΟ.

11 Caesarea:³² oval bronze amulet with legend Εἰς Ζεὺς Καράπις. Other pagan amulets discovered at Caesarea are published in the same article:³³ several bear gnostic formulas, e.g. Ἰαὼ Μιχαήλ and various magic names, as well as a mention of *Κολομών*, the 'helper' in gnostic charms. Sarapis-Helios, the great god of the solar cult, often appears in acclamations of the Εἰς θεός type.³⁴

12 Caesarea:³⁵ fragment of a column of white marble, 20 x 40 cm, inscribed Εἰς θεός | [ὁ] βοηθῶν | [Μ]αρίνω. The editor tentatively classified it as Jewish. There is no indication of a Christian association. The fragment comes from a sacred building, possibly a synagogue — whether Jewish or Samaritan is impossible to say — or perhaps even a pagan temple: beside the above-mentioned amulets (nos. 7-10), a fragmentary dedication to "the great Lord god" (Θεῶι μεγάλωι δεσ[πότη]ι)³⁶ hints at a local syncretistic-monotheistic cult.

13 Caesarea:³⁷ fragment of marble column with a fragmentary inscription: [Εἰς θεός βο[ήθῃ - -] or βο[ηθῶν]. Same possible background as above.

14 Caesarea:³⁸ fragment of marble column with the (fragmentary?) inscription Εἰς θεός. It was discovered in the remains of a Christian public building, but the square script seems earlier than the Byzantine period, and the column was probably in secondary use. Same possible background as above.

³⁰ Ibid., 81, no. V, Taf. 4 a.

³¹ Ibid., 81, no. VII.

³² Ibid., 81-2, no. VIII.

³³ Ibid., 80-4.

³⁴ CIG nos. 7041-42; E. Le Blant, "750 inscriptions de pierres gravées inédites ou peu connues", *Mémoires de l'Institut National de France* 36, 1 (1898), 80-4, nos. 211-6; L. Jalabert, "Inscriptions grecques et latines de Syrie, § 23: Vestiges du cult de Sérapis en Syrie", *Mélanges de la Faculté Orientale* 2 (1907), 311-2, no. 8; Peterson (above, n. 1), 227-53.

³⁵ B. Lifshitz, "Inscriptions de Césarée en Palestine", *RB* 72 (1965), 99, no. 3.

³⁶ A. Frova, *Scavi di Caesarea Maritima* (Roma 1966), 223, Fig. 276: 9; B. Lifshitz, "Inscriptions de Césarée", *RB* 74 (1967), 56, no. 1. The θεοὶ δεσπότες were worshipped in Syria: D. Sourdel, *Les cultes du Hauran à l'époque romaine* (Paris 1952), 54-5.

³⁷ Frova, *Caesarea Maritima*, 223-4, Fig. 276: 10; Lifshitz (preceding note), 57, no. 2.

³⁸ A. Negev, "Inscriptions de Césarée Maritime", *RB* 78 (1971), 256, no. 29, Pl. V: 29.

15 Beth She'an³⁹: oval bronze amulet, featuring on the obverse a rider spearing fallen enemy and the inscription Εἰς θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τ]ᾱ κακ[ά], with some letters omitted either by oversight or because of the crowded space; on the reverse, evil eye pierced by darts and attacked by wild beasts.

16 Belah (Northern Samaria):⁴⁰ slab with crude ornamentation and inscription, forming the door of a burial chamber. The inscription reads Εἰς θεὸς μόνος | ΧΜΓ. The last line is interpreted as a Christian formula. Conder proposed the reading Χ(ριστὸς) Μ(αρίας) γ(εννηθεῖς), while Bagatti preferred Χ(ριστὸς) Μ(ιχαήλ) Γ(αβριήλ), more in tune with the cultural background in Palestine. However, nowhere is the presense of crosses within the tomb itself mentioned; this is surprising if this was really a Christian burial. It must also be remembered that in this region Christianity had made little headway outside the cities and the countryside was solidly Samaritan until the sixth century.⁴¹ It is possible that the formula was not as patently Christian as we believe, or that it was added at a later stage.

17 Sebaste:⁴² inscription painted in red on a marble fragment which was found in a cistern in the stadium at Samaria-Sebaste. It reads: Εἰς θεὸς | ὁ πάντων | δεσπότης | μεγάλη κόρη | ἡ ἀνείκητος. The cult of Isis-Kore at Sebaste, with her counterpart Helios-Sarapis, is known in the Roman period from inscriptions and coins,⁴³ and a syncretistic pagan-Samaritan-Christian form of the Kore cult in the fourth century is reported by Epiphanius.⁴⁴ In the acclamation, Kore is viewed as the manifestation of one male/female god, the ruler of all. Flusser quotes a twin of this inscription, an acclamation found in a Mithreum in Roma and dating from ca. AD 200; it reads: Εἰς Ζεὺς Καράπις "Ἡλιος κοσμοκράτωρ ἀνείκητος. On the other side of the stone is written: Διὶ Ἡλίῳ μεγάλῳ Καράπιδι σωτῆρι πλουτοδότῃ ἐπηκῶ ἀνείκητῳ Μίθρα χαριστήριον.⁴⁵ This text establishes a link between the syncretistic-monotheistic cult in Sebaste and the cult of the only god Sarapis in Caesarea.

³⁹ Bonner (above, n. 8), 303, no. 303.

⁴⁰ C.R. Conder, H.H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine* II (London 1882), 172; C.R. Conder, *PEF* 1894, 201B. Bagatti, *Antichi villaggi cristiani di Samaria* (Jerusalem 1979), 136. For the abbreviation ΧΜΓ see M. Avi-Yonah, *Abbreviations in Greek Inscriptions*, *QDAP*, Supplement to vol. 9 (Jerusalem 1940), 111.

⁴¹ Procopius, *Anecdota* XI, 24-30.

⁴² D. Flusser, "The Great Goddess of Samaria", *IEJ* 25 (1975), 13-20.

⁴³ J.W. Crowfoot et al., *Samaria-Sebaste* III (London 1957), 36, no. 9, 41, no. 48; Y. Meshorer, *City Coins of Eretz Israel and the Decapolis in the Roman Period* (Jerusalem 1985), 44-5.

⁴⁴ Epiphanius, *Haer.* LV, PG 41, 973.

⁴⁵ Peterson (above, n. 1), 238-9; Flusser (above, n. 42), 16.

18 El Khirbe, south of Sebaste:⁴⁶ panels in the mosaic pavement of a synagogue oriented towards Mt. Gerizim. Three panels were inserted in the course of repairs, probably in the fourth century. All have the formula Εἷς θεός βοήθῃ, followed by the name of the dedicator.

18a Same place: half of a sculptured lintel of the synagogue, with fragmentary inscription: [Εἷς θεός. βοήθῃ Ἀννιαν(ού) κὲ Σεμέ[ου] τῶν ἀδελφῶν].

19 Neapolis-Shechem:⁴⁷ hematite amulet, aniconic. On obverse: Εἷς θεός βοήθῃ Μαρκιανήν; on reverse, in Samaritan script: *Ein ka-el Yeshurun*. The amulet was probably mounted on a metal frame and hung around the neck.

20-20a Mt. Gerizim:⁴⁸ several inscriptions engraved on stone slabs, probably built in a wall of a fourth- and early fifth-century Samaritan sacred place (*temenos* or synagogue) on the holy mountain. Many inscriptions are fragmentary; those that can be read contain the formulas Εἷς θεός βοήθῃ and Εἷς θεός μόνος ὁ βοηθῶν, followed by the name of the dedicator and mention of the members of his family.

21 Apollonia:⁴⁹ lintel of a tomb. The inscription, enclosed in a *tabula ansata*, reads: Εἷς θεός ὁ ζῶν (or <σ>όζων) Βάβας Μαξίμου | ἐγγόνην Κοσμάς ἐποίησεν τὸ μνημῖον ν(ε)κ(ρο)δ(όχον) Μαρκελλίνα Ἰουστᾶ. The editor translated: “Un seul Dieu vivifiant (or: qui sauve) la descendante de Baba Maxime. Kosmas a fait le monument (funèbre?) à Marcellina Justina”. I prefer: One is the living God. Babas (son) of Maximus, grandson (ἐγγόνι(ο)ν)⁵⁰ of Kosmas, made the burial monument for Marcellina Justina. Βάβας, Βάβαθα are Aramaic names used by both Jews and Samaritans.⁵¹ Samaritan lamps were discovered at Apollonia.⁵²

⁴⁶ L. Di Segni, “The Greek Inscriptions in the Samaritan Synagogue at el Khirbe”, in *Early Christianity in Context* (above, n. 25), 231-239.

⁴⁷ S: Raffaelli, “A Recently Discovered Samaritan Charm”, *JPOS* 1 (1920-21), 143-4.

⁴⁸ A.M. Schreiber, “Römische und byzantinische Bauten auf dem Garizim”, *ZDPV* 68 (1949-51), 228-31; *SEG* 8, no. 134; L. Di Segni (above, n. 6), 353-50. On the sacred place on Mt. Gerizim see Y. Magen, “Mount Gerizim — A Temple City”, *Qadmoniot* 23 (1990), 91-2, 70-96 [Hebrew].

⁴⁹ J. Germer Durand, “Épigraphie chrétienne”, *RB* 1 (1892), 247-8, no. X; 2 (1893), 213.

⁵⁰ For ἐγγόνιον, neut., instead of ἐγγονος, cf. *CIJ* 964.

⁵¹ References in E.D. Oren, U. Rappaport, “The Necropolis of Maresha-Beth Govrin”, *IEJ* 34 (1984), 144, to which add *SEG* 20, no. 466; 26, no. 1669. Baba Rabba was the name of the great Samaritan reformer in the third or fourth century.

⁵² V. Sussman, “Samaritan Lamps of the Third-Fourth Centuries AD”, *IEJ* 28 (1978), 238-50; ead., “A Samaritan Oil Lamp from Apollonia-Arsuf”, *Tel Aviv* 10 (1983), 71-96.

21a Apollonia:⁵³ lintel, possibly of synagogue, bearing the inscription Εἰς θεὸς ὁ ζῶν. Hüttenmeister considered it a funerary inscription. I have not seen the original publication: the inscription is possibly a duplicate of n. 21.

22 Lod (vicinity):⁵⁴ fragment of marble column inscribed: Εἰς θε(εὸ)ς β[ορήθι] | 'Ησυχ[ίω]. The exact provenance is unknown: Alt suggested a Byzantine church between Nebi Kifl and Deir Tarif: however, the column bears no Christian symbols. The traces of Christian presence nearby, at Deir Tarif or Kh. Jinnis, are either late or fragmentary.⁵⁵ On the other hand, a Samaritan tradition placed the tomb of Caleb at Nebi Kifl, so that a Samaritan holy place may have existed on the site.⁵⁶

23 Beth Hannan (west of Lod):⁵⁷ mosaic pavement, possibly of a private house: [Ε]ἰς θεός ὁ β[ορή]θῶν τῷ κυρῷ | 'Ρηγίνω (monogrammed cross) 'Επὶ | ΑCΛΑ ἐκτίσθη.

24 Na'ana (near Ramla):⁵⁸ two capitals were discovered together with a bronze plate decorated with a seven-branched candlestick and an ark of the Law. One of the capitals bears the inscription: Εἰς θεός in a semicircle, as in the Emmaus capital (no. 25).

25 Emmaus:⁵⁹ marble capital dated to the Late Roman period. On one side it has the inscription Εἰς θεός within a semicircle; on the other, within a tabula ansata, *Barukh shemo le'olam* ("blessed be His name forever") in Samaritan script. In Emmaus several other Samaritan inscriptions were found in the excavations.

⁵³ Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *Archives des missions scientifiques et littéraires*, Ser. III, 11 (1885), 202, no. 15; J. Euting, *Epigraphische Miscellen, Sitzungberichte der königlichen Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin, phil.-hist. Klasse* 35 (1885), 685, no. 80, Taf. XI: 80; S. Saller, "Ancient Synagogues in the Holy Land", *LA* 4 (1953-54), 223, no. 10; F. Hüttenmeister, *Die Antiken Synagogen in Israel I* (Wiesbaden 1977), 519.

⁵⁴ A. Alt, "Epigraphische Nachlese", *ZDPV* 47 (1924), 91-2, no. 1; Peterson (above, n. 1), 43, no. 88; *SEG* 8, no. 147.

⁵⁵ *Survey of Western Palestine* II, 265, 320; Bagatti (above, n. 40), 174-5.

⁵⁶ *Survey of Western Palestine* II, 379.

⁵⁷ M. Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine", *QDAP* 3 (1933), 50, no. 336, Pl. XIV; *SEG* 8, no. 278.

⁵⁸ Ch. Clermont Ganneau, *PEF* 1882, 18; id., *Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale* III (1900), 126; E.L. Sukenik, "Designs of the Torah Shrine in Ancient Synagogues in Palestine", *PEF* 1931, 21-3; G. Reeg, *Die Antiken Synagogen in Israel II* (Wiesbaden 1977), 621-2.

⁵⁹ L.H. Vincent, F.M. Abel, *Emmaüs* (Paris 1932), 235-7, Fig. 105, Tab. XXV; *SEG* 8, no. 165; Reeg (above, n. 58), 605-9.

26 Moza (Jerusalem area):⁶⁰ painted tomb featuring pairs of winged figures holding garlands. Within the garland on the northern wall was the inscription: Εἷς θεός καὶ ὁ Χρισ(τ)ὸς αὐτοῦ; in the wreath on the southern wall: Ὁς ζῇ | μνησθῇ | βαρώχης. The winged figures represent angels according to the type of the flying Nike of classic art. Although the mention of Christ identifies the tomb as Christian, there were no crosses in the burial chamber, and the Nike-type angels suggest a pagan convert. Moza, also called Colonia, was settled by Vespasian with 800 veterans of his army after the Jewish war and probably remained a pagan village until its christianization, attested by an early Byzantine basilica.⁶¹

27 Jerusalem area:⁶² bronze bracelet ending in a medallion. On the band, between a lion running to the left and a snake creeping to the right, is the inscription: Εἷς θεός, σῶσον φύλαξον τὴν δούλην σου Σευηρίαν. The medallion features a rider spearing a fallen enemy, and around the edge a badly preserved inscription: Ε(ἷς) θεὸς (ὁ νικῶν τὰ) κακά. Thomsen dated this amulet to the third century and connected it with gnosticism and the cult of Sarapis.

28 Jerusalem area:⁶³ bronze medallion, aniconic, inscribed Εἷς Ζεὺς | Καράπις | μέγας ὁ | ἐπῆκοος | Καράπις. The reverse is blank. The cult of Ζεὺς μέγας Σαράπις is well known in Jerusalem.⁶⁴

29 Bethlehem area:⁶⁵ bronze bracelet ending in a medallion. The medallion features a rider spearing a woman lying on the ground, a lion and cross, and the

⁶⁰ C. Schick, "Newly Discovered Rock-hewn Tomb at Kolonieh", *PEF* 1887, 51-5; C. Conder, "Notes from the Quarterly Statement 1886-87", *ibid.*, 105. Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *Recueil d'Archéologie Orientale* I (1888), 171 corrects [Φ]ῶς Ζ(ω)ή; J. Germer-Durand, "Épigraphie chrétienne de Palestine", *RB* 2 (1893), 206 links together the two inscriptions and translates: "Que le Dieu et son Christ se souviennent de Baruch pour qu'il vive". The plaster crumbled away and the paintings disappeared briefly after the vault was opened by Schick, and his sketch is the only surviving documentation of these frescoes. Schick dated the tomb to the third century, and his opinion is accepted by Bagatti (above, n. 40), 139-40; Conder, on the other hand, preferred a somewhat later date.

⁶¹ Jos., *BJ* 7.217; *Sukk.* 45a. On the church see A. Ovadia, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land* (Bonn 1970), no. 142.

⁶² E. Le Blant, *Mémoires de l'Institut national* 36, 1 (1898), 84-6, no. 220; P. Thomsen, "Die lateinischen und griechischen Inschriften der Stadt Jerusalem", *ZDPV* 44 (1921), 121-2, no. 207.

⁶³ F. Manns, "Nouvelles traces des cultes de Neotera, Serapis et Poseidon en Palestine", *LA* 27 (1977), 234-6; *SEG* 27, no. 1018.

⁶⁴ Thomsen (above, n. 62), no. 1; G.F. Hills, *Catalogue of the Greek Coins of Palestine* (London 1914), Pl. IX: 10, 15.

⁶⁵ M. Piccirillo, "Un braccialetto cristiano della regione di Betlemme", *LA* 29 (1979), 244-52, Pl. 25. The author lists ten similar bracelets of unknown provenance from Palestine, Syria and Cyprus.

legend Ι(ησοῦ)C ΑΩ; around the edge, the inscription Εἰς θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά. On the band we find engraved the first verses of Ps. 90 (91), the monograms Ι(ησοῦ)C and ΑΩ, and an invocation to Christ's blood.

30 Kh. Jiljiliah (near Beth Shemesh):⁶⁶ capital marked on both sides with crosses and inscribed: Εἰς | θεὸς | ὁ βορῆθῶν | τὸν δεσπότη | Ἀντωχ[ιαν]οῦ.

31 Ascalon:⁶⁷ acclamation engraved on the shaft of a marble column, later sawn lengthwise to be reused as a lintel; the right part of the inscription is therefore lost, but can be easily restored. It reads: Εἰς θεός | Νίκ[α] | Ἰουλι[ανέ] | (Ἔτους) ἐξ[υ]. Year 465 of the Ascalonian era corresponds to AD 361/2.⁶⁸ According to Avi-Yonah, this acclamation and the theological formula included in it were connected with Julian's struggle against Christianity; indeed, anti-Christian outbreaks occurred in Ascalon during his reign,⁶⁹ indicating that many Ascalonians supported the emperor's policy. The spread of acclamations in honour of Julian can also be connected with his preparations for the Persian campaign. Julian himself was devoted to the cult of the great solar god and his *Discourse to the king Sun*⁷⁰ contains the phraseology that is also expressed in this acclamation: thus there is no need to invoke his anti-Christian policy in order to explain why he promoted the solar cult.

32 Ascalon: rectangular lead plaquette, 2.5 cm long, 1.8 cm wide, unpublished. It was found in the sand dunes and belongs to the private collection of Dr. M. Lavi, who brought it to my attention. On the obverse, within a circle, Helios on his chariot drawn by horses, holding a globe in his right hand; on the reverse a stamped inscription: Εἰς θεὸς ὁ βορῆθῶ(ν) | Εὐλογία | ΠΑΕΙΝ (probably πᾶσιν: the last line is badly preserved). The Christian adoption of the term εὐλογία does not seem to apply here. On the other hand, εὐλογία in various connections and particularly the formula εὐλογία πᾶσιν often occur in Jewish monuments.⁷¹ Helios is freely represented in synagogue decoration and played

⁶⁶ J. Germer Durand, "Épigraphie chrétienne de Palestine", *RB* 2 (1893), 212-3, cf. 1 (1892), 262-3.

⁶⁷ M. Avi-Yonah, "Greek Inscriptions from Ascalon, Jerusalem, Beisan and Hebron", *QDAP* 10 (1944), 160-1, Pl. XXXV:1.

⁶⁸ Avi-Yonah was uncertain whether the first preserved letter of Ι.4 was Ζ or Ξ. The stone, now cleaned, shows clearly ΕΞ. Avi-Yonah read Ἔ(τους) Ζ[ε]υ but year 467 of the Ascalonite era began in November 363, five months after Julian's death.

⁶⁹ Ambrosius, *Ep.* 40, 12-15, *PL* 16, 1102-7; Theodoretus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 7, *GCS* 19, 182.

⁷⁰ In *Oratio in Solem regem* 5, Julian quoted an Orphic verse conveying the oneness of god beyond his manifold manifestations: Εἰς Ζεὺς. εἰς Ἀΐδης. εἰς Ἥλιος ἐστὶ Κάρατις.

⁷¹ Εὐλογία appears in Jewish epitaphs (Frey, *CIJ*, *passim*, to which add *SEG* 26, nos. 1171, 1175, 1205, 1206; 29, no. 1031, etc.) and in inscriptions connected with synagogues, both Jewish and Samaritan: *CIJ* 327, 515; B. Lifshitz, *Donateurs et fonda-*

an important role in Jewish magic in the Talmudic period;⁷² it is likely, therefore, that this artifact is a Jewish amulet. However, εὐλογία is also used in pagan texts, especially those influenced by Jewish thought,⁷³ as gnostic charms would be; it must also be noted that εὐλογία πᾶσιν appears here in an apotropaic sense quite alien to the usual Jewish-Samaritan usage. Thus this could be after all a gnostic phylactery.

33 Nessana:⁷⁴ lintel in the North Church. On the left: Εἰς θεός ὁ | β[οηθῶν]; on the right, separated by a cross: Ἀγίε Cτέφανε βοήθισον. The church was built in the mid-fifth century.

34 Avdat:⁷⁵ graffito in the South Church, on the jamb of the northern door leading from the atrium into the basilica. It reads: +Εἰς θεός | Ἀντωνῖνος+. The script was originally covered with plaster, and thus it was probably written by a mason during construction. The South Church was dated by A. Negev to the mid-fifth century.⁷⁶

teurs dans les synagogues juives. *Cahiers de la Revue Biblique* 7 (Paris 1967), nos. 30, 69, 76, 77b, 81; id., *CIJ Prolegomena* (New York 1975), no. 693a; *SEG* 27, no. 1021; cf. *SEG* 32, no. 1451. See also L. Roth Gerson, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Synagogues in Eretz-Israel* (Jerusalem 1987) [Hebrew], nos. 1, 7, 12, 16, 17, 18; and for the corresponding Hebrew or Aramaic formula in Palestinian and eastern synagogues, see J. Naveh, *On Stone and Mosaic* (Jerusalem 1978) [Hebrew], nos. 1, 9, 10, 12, 18, 26, 30, 31, 32, 35, 46, 76, 88. On the peculiarly Jewish character of the term cf. L. Robert, *Études Anatoliennes* (Paris 1937), 409-12. For εὐλογία πᾶσιν in epitaphs see *CIJ* nos. 173, 798; Lifshitz, *CIJ Prolegomena*, no. 692a; in synagogues at Egina and Apamea: *CIJ* no. 723; Lifshitz, *Donateurs*, nos. 2, 38.

⁷² Cf. M. Margalioth, *Sepher ha-Razim. A Newly Recovered Book of Magic from the Talmudic Period* (Jerusalem 1966), Introduction XV, 11-6, 98-9. I thank Dr. Gideon Foerster for drawing my attention to this book and for his help in studying this artifact.

⁷³ See L. Robert, "Malédiction funéraires grecques", *CRAI* 1978, 248-52; H.V. Pleket, in *Faith, Hope and Worship. Aspects of Religious Mentality in the Ancient World*, ed. H.S. Versnel (Leiden 1981), 152-92.

⁷⁴ G.E. Kirk, C.B. Welles, in *Excavations at Nessana I*, ed. H.D. Colt (London 1962), 145, no. 27.

⁷⁵ A. Negev, *The Greek Inscriptions from the Negev* (Jerusalem 1981), 38, no. 28, photo 29.

⁷⁶ A. Negev, "The Churches of the Central Negev. An Archaeological Survey", *RB* 81 (1974), 404-7, 412-7, 420-1. A revised dating to the early fourth century proposed by S. Margalit, "The Cathedral of Elusa and the New Typology and Chronology of the Byzantine Churches in the Negev", *LA* 39 (1989), 147-8 is not convincing.

35a Wadi Ḥaggag (Sinai):⁷⁷ graffito on rock no. 5: Εἷς θεὸς ἐμο(ῦ) | ὁ βορηθῶν Δ - - . No Christian symbols; the editor ascribed this and no. 35b, which is engraved on the same rock, to Jewish soldiers employed in the area in 299/300 AD.

35b Wadi Ḥaggag:⁷⁸ graffito on the same rock. It reads Εἷς θεὸς | ὁ βορηθῶν (palm branch) | Οὐαλέριος Ἀντιγόνοῦ στρατηγός (palm branch) γ' ἰνδικτ(ῖωνος). In the upper right corner, next to Εἷς θεός, are incised three letters, which the editor interpreted as two Greek characters: "Υ(ψιστος) θεός", flanking a Hebrew letter, *dalet*, which would be an abbreviation of *ehad* ("one"). However, the three characters can be best read as ΥΘ, giving the figure 499. It can hardly be a mere chance that 499 is the ψήφος or numerical value of Εἷς θεός: 215 + 284. Isopsephism was very popular in Egypt, among both Jews and Christians.⁷⁹ The absence of Christian symbols suggests that the writer was a Jew. Although a five-year indictional cycle was already in use in Egypt under Diocletian, I hesitate to accept the date proposed by the editor: a dating in the fourth century seems sounder.

35c Wadi Ḥaggag:⁸⁰ graffito on the same rock: Μνησθῆ ΟΑΒΟ- - ΑΛ- - ΝΟΥ. Εἷς θεὸς ὁ βορηθῶν. Below are incised some crosses, apparently not written at the same time as the rest of the text.

36 Wadi Ḥaggag:⁸¹ graffito on rock no. 3: Εἷς θεὸς | ὡ βορηθῶν | + (τοῦ δοῦλός + | σου θεωνῆ) μητὰ γυνηκὸς καὶ τήλκνον.

37 Sinai:⁸² "Solomon's amulet" with inscription Εἷς θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά. No further details.

38 Unknown provenance: several "Solomon's amulets", both pagan and Christian, with inscription Εἷς θεὸς ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά were purchased by collectors in Palestine and Syria, as well as in Egypt.⁸³ Information on their provenance is vague and therefore it is not worth listing here.

⁷⁷ A. Negev, "Inscriptions on Rock no. 5 in Wadi Haggag, Sinai", *Eretz Israel* 12 (1975), 134, no. 5, Pl. 30: 4 [Hebrew]; id. (above, n. 5), 68, no. 246, Fig. 187; S. Applebaum *et al.*, "Varia Epigraphica", *SCI* 4 (1978), 146, no. 25e.

⁷⁸ Negev (above, n. 75), 136, no. 9, Pl. 31: 4; id. (above, n. 5), 62-7, no. 242, Fig. 183; Applebaum, *ibidem*, 146, no. 25i.

⁷⁹ On the phenomenon see P. Perdrizet, "Isopséphie", *REG* 17 (1904), 350-60; F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet in Mystik und Magik* (Leipzig 1922), 98-104, 181-2.

⁸⁰ Negev, "Inscriptions on Rock No. 5", 134, no. 2, Pl. 30: 1; id. (above, n. 5), 69, no. 251, Fig. 192; Applebaum, *ibidem*, 145, no. 25b.

⁸¹ A. Negev, "New Graffiti from Sinai", *Eretz Israel* 10 (1971), 185, no. 37, Pl. 64: 2 [Hebrew]; id. (above, n. 5), 29, no. 86, Fig. 64; *SEG* 26, no. 1662.

⁸² W.F. Volbach, *Amtliche Berichte aus den Kgl. Kunstsammlungen* 39 (Berlin 1918), 123ff. (non vidi); Peterson (above, n. 1), 104, no. 14.

⁸³ A number are listed by Bonner (above, n. 8), 302ff.

39 Mt. Nebo:⁸⁴ pear-shaped seal of soft stone. On the upper side, the Greek letter H and a fish, both symbols of Christ; on the flat, oval bottom, 66 x 52 mm, inscription incised around the edge and in the centre. It reads: + [Εἷς] θεός ὁ βοηθῶν Ὁσείου or Ὁσειδα. Mount Nebo was occupied by Christians in the fourth century, when an existing building, perhaps a temple, was converted into a church. It is worth noting that fragments of Samaritan inscriptions were discovered on the site.⁸⁵

40 Gerasa-Philadelphia road:⁸⁶ milestone at the ninth mile south of Gerasa containing two Latin inscriptions — the main one of Trajan, dated AD 112, and a secondary one mentioning Constantius Caesar — and a Greek acclamation: Εἷς θεός: | Ἰουλιανός | βασιλεὺς νικᾷ.

41 Gerasa-Philadelphia road:⁸⁷ milestone at the eighth mile south of Gerasa containing a fragmentary Latin inscription of Constantinus and a Greek acclamation: Εἷς θεός Ν | εἷς Ἰουλιανός ὁ Αὐγουστός. Welles omitted the abbreviation Ν; Germer Durand interpreted it as νικῶν. I prefer νικᾷ, as a conscious challenge to the Christian formulas (cross) νικᾷ and Τοῦτο νικᾷ.

42 Gerasa:⁸⁸ slab in secondary use, set in the mosaic pavement of the nave in the church of bishop Isaiah. A fragmentary inscription reads - - τοῖου ἀνενώθη τὰ ῥῖδε - - Εἷς θεός. The stone surface is badly worn and bears scattered traces of letters. The church is dated to AD 559,⁸⁹ and the plaque itself may refer to later restoration works: however, the acclamation probably belongs to an inscription originally engraved on the stone. If so, it is much earlier and possibly pagan.

43 Gerasa:⁹⁰ on a fragment of a pottery bowl discovered on the site of the temple of Artemis and dated by the editor (on unclear grounds) to the fifth-sixth

⁸⁴ B. Bagatti, "Un sigillo inedito della regione del Nebo", *LA* 28 (1978), 145-6, Pl. 24. P. Bagatti read [Εἷς] θεός ὁ βοηθῶν (ν)όσω σου; correction by Bingen, *SEG* 28, no. 1441.

⁸⁵ Reeg (above, n. 58) 656-67.

⁸⁶ C.B. Welles in C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa, City of the Decapolis* (New Haven 1938), no. 346, cf. nos. 257, 264, 271. For no apparent reason Welles omitted the word νικᾷ in this as well as in the next inscription. However, νικᾷ was read by the ed. pr. on both milestones: see J. Germer-Durand, "Nouvelle exploration épigraphique de Gerasa", *RB* 8 (1899), 36-7, nos. 48-49.

⁸⁷ Welles (above, n. 86), nos. 265, 345; J. Germer-Durand, "Exploration épigraphique de Gerasa", *RB* 4 (1895), 393; id., "Nouvelle exploration épigraphique de Gerasa", *RB* 8 (1899), 36-7, no. 48.

⁸⁸ J.M.C. Bowsher in *Jerash Archaeological Project 1981-1983*, ed. F. Zayadine (Amman 1986), 320, no. 10, Pl. XIX: 36; *SEG* 37, no. 1543 G.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 319, no. 1; *SEG* 37, no. 1541.

⁹⁰ M.L. Lazzarini, "Iscrizioni dal santuario di Artemide 1984-87", *Syria* 66 (1989), 48-9, no. 9.

centuries. The inscription was incised before firing. It reads: [A] Ω | [Εἷς θεός] ὁ βοηθῶν Ἐξευρέσι (ἔτους) - - . As neither a transcription nor an illustration of the sherd is provided, the content of the inscription is unclear. Does the editor's reading (ἔτους) stand for the L sign that designates the year in Hellenistic and early Roman inscriptions? If so, the interpretation of the Ω as part of a Christian monogram is doubtful, as well as the dating of the bowl. Might not the first line have contained the name 'Ιαώ? If so, what we have here may be a fragment of a magic bowl.⁹¹

44 Deir el Meyas:⁹² long, fragmentary inscription commemorating the building of an αὐλή or sacred hall dedicated τῷ θεῷ. The inscription opens with the words: [Εἷς] θεός ὁ βοηθῶν. The personal names that are preserved are all Semitic. No Christian symbols.

45 Umm er Rumman:⁹³ fragmentary inscription: Εἷς θεός -]. No Christian symbols.

46 Umm el Jimal:⁹⁴ lintel inscribed Εἷς + θεός. Umm el Jimal also yielded another Christian inscription including elements familiar from gnostic amulets. The tower of the so-called barracks has in its upper part four projections, each inscribed with a cross and the name of one of the four archangels: Michael to the west, Gabriel to the east, Raphael to the south and Uriel to the north.⁹⁵

47 Bostra:⁹⁶ rectangular block, not *in situ*, bearing the inscription: Εἷς θεός | Ὑψου Πατρικί[ον]. Sartre, quoting Peterson, considered it a Christian invocation, but there is no reason why it could not be pagan. An acclamation from Murduk, ancient Μαρδόχα north of Bostra, reads: Ζεῦ ἀνίκητε ὕψου Οὐράνιν τὸν εὐσεβήν.⁹⁷ The epithet ἀνίκητος indicates that Zeus was invoked as the great god of the solar cult: see above, no. 17.

48 Bostra:⁹⁸ basalt block decorated with a circle and a *tabula ansata* underneath. On the left of the circle: Εἷς | [θ]εός; on the right: Ἀμήν | καλῶς. In the *tabula ansata* is the inscription: Κτίσμα | Ἀμαζονίου βιολόγ[ου]. Sartre dated

⁹¹ Εἷς θεός occurs on a fragment of a bowl found in Egypt: *CIJ* no. 1539a.

⁹² W.H. Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie* (Paris 1870), no. 2053b.

⁹³ Waddington, no. 2057.

⁹⁴ Waddington, no. 2066.

⁹⁵ Prentice, *PAES* (above, n. 4), nos. 245-248. Names of angels often appear on gnostic amulets: cf. Bonner (above, n. 8), 149, 171, 212-4. An amulet inscribed Ἰαὼ Μιχαήλ Γαβριήλ Οὐριήλ, reported to have come from the Golan or the Hauran, was published by P. Perdrizet, *REG* 41 (1928), 73-82.

⁹⁶ M. Sartre, *Inscriptions grecques et latines de la Syrie (IGLS)* XIII, 1 (Paris 1982), no. 9041.

⁹⁷ Waddington, no. 2390.

⁹⁸ *IGLS* XIII, 1, no. 9407; Waddington, no. 1918.

the inscription before the beginning of the legislation against actors in AD 367 (*CTh* XV, 7). Because of the use of Εἷς θεός, Sartre considered the mime Amazonius to have been a Christian; the building would be his tomb. I see no reason for either assumption: κτίσμα is a neutral term designating any building, not necessarily a tomb, nor has Εἷς θεός any funeral connotations in this region. As to the identity of the user, a Jew or even a Judaizing pagan would have been as likely as a Christian to use both Εἷς θεός and ἀμήν. Besides a Jewish community, Bostra had a local solar cult.

49 Tsil (ancient Θαρσιλα in Western Hauran):⁹⁹ lintel inscribed as follows: Εἷς θεός ὁ μόνος ὁ αἰώνιος. Κύ(ριε) φύλαξον τὴν ἴσοδ[ον] | καὶ τὴν ἑξοδον Εὐσεβίου. The phrase is taken from Ps. 120 (121): 8. Quotations from psalms in inscriptions are a Christian custom. Ewing's drawing shows no crosses or other Christian symbols on the stone: however, its lower right corner appears to be broken, and it is possible that a cross, no longer extant, marked the end of the text. In the late third and early fourth century Tharsila was known as a Samaritan village.¹⁰⁰

50 Tsil:¹⁰¹ two halves of a lintel decorated with a *tabula ansata*. Within is a six-line fragmentary inscription, which was tentatively restored as follows: Εἷς θ(ε)ός κ(ύρι)ος ὁ μόνος | ὁ τ' οὐράνιος τὸ[ν] νεῶν σ[τ]οῦ ?] φυλάξ(ει) ἐπὶ τέλους - | ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας κὲ νίκης | τῶν δεσποτοῶν Κονστ- | - . The last line is unreadable; probably Constantine and his sons were mentioned, The restoration is uncertain: from Ewing's copy one might guess [β]ιοθῶν C - instead of the dubious τὸ[ν] νεῶν.

51 Na'aran (Golan):¹⁰² lintels with Christian inscriptions: one has Εἷς θεός Χρ(ιστός) between crosses.

52 Kafr esh Shamsh (north of Nawa, Western Hauran):¹⁰³ arches of a monumental building, a temple according to Schumacher. On the springstone of one of the arches a *tabula ansata* is engraved: within is the inscription ΥC Θ|ΕΟC, to be read Εἷς θεός.

⁹⁹ W. Ewing, "Greek and other Inscriptions collected in the Hauran", *PEF* 1895, 42, no. 1.

¹⁰⁰ Eus, *On.* 102, 5; M. Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer of Roman Palestine. Qedem* 5 (Jerusalem 1978), 100.

¹⁰¹ Ewing, "Inscriptions from the Hauran", 43, nos. 3-4.

¹⁰² G. Schumacher, "Notes from Jedur", *PEF* 1897, 195. Jewish reliefs as well as a monastery were observed at Na'aran: C. Dauphin, "Golan Survey, 1980-1981", *IEJ* 31 (1981), 240.

¹⁰³ G. Schumacher, "Notes from Jedur", *PEF* 1897, 194; Ch. Clermont-Ganneau, *ibid.*, 306. Naveh was a Jewish town in the fourth and fifth centuries: Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer*, 82.

53 ed Dumeir (Damascene):¹⁰⁴ inscribed block. The text, full of spelling mistakes, reads: Εἷς θεὸς ὦ βοειθῶν· | μ(ν)ησθῆ Ἰανόμου καὶ Σεμουέλου υἱεῖ | Ἐσθρη | καλῶς ἐπήρσεν. Ἀντήλωμα (τῆς) ἡκοδομη[ς] | τοῦ(του) νωμίζματα ψ'. Schwabe emended the text and restored the Jewish names Θάνουμος, Tanhum, C<α>μουήλ, Samuel, and Ἐσ<δ>ρας, Ezri. Because of the large sum of money invested in the building — 700 solidi of gold was more than was needed to keep a hundred people for a year — Schwabe suggested that the building might have been a synagogue or an annex to a synagogue, a view accepted by Lifshitz.¹⁰⁵ However, there are not enough data in the inscription to warrant this conclusion.

54 Sala (near Namara in Batanea)¹⁰⁶: inscribed block: Εἷς θεὸς ὁ βοηθῶν - -] | - - καὶ [C]αλαμανο[ς] | υἱοὶ Γαδοῦ καὶ Γ - - | ος Καβίνου ἐξαδε[λφός] | οἰκοδ[όμησαν]. The names are Semitic; no Christian symbols on the stone.

55 Meliha Sharqiye (near Namara):¹⁰⁷ left side of a fragmentary inscription in a *tabula ansata*. The first line begins with Εἷς θεός and the second with μνήμα. It seems to be a metric epitaph, but there is no indication whether it was pagan or Christian.

56 Namara:¹⁰⁸ lintel marked with cross, alpha-omega and the invocation: Εἷς θεός: Χριστὲ βοέ[θει].

57 Namara:¹⁰⁹ lintel marked with cross and a fragmentary inscription. The editor tentatively suggested to restore: [Εἷς θεός καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς αὐ] τοῦ κ[αὶ τὸ ἄγ]λιον πν[εύμα] - - .

58 Danaba (ancient Danab):¹¹⁰ lintel with monogram rho-chi and the invocation: Εἷς θεός. Χρ(ιστὲ) ἐ(λέησον) or perhaps Χρ(ιστ)ὲ [βοήθει].

59 'Ezra (ancient Ζοραουα):¹¹¹ bronze bread stamp, rectangular, inscribed Εἷς θεός in mirror script. It was probably used to stamp the eucharistic bread.

¹⁰⁴ CIG 8945; Waddington, no.2562 I; R.E Brünnow, A. von Domaszewski, *Die Provincia Arabia* III (Strassburg 1909), 207, no. 37; M. Schwabe, "A Jewish Inscription from ed-Dumer near Damascus", *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 20 (1951), 265-77; cf. id., *Eretz Israel* 2 (1953), 151-5 [Hebrew].

¹⁰⁵ Lifshitz, *Donateurs*, no. 61.

¹⁰⁶ Waddington, no. 2262.

¹⁰⁷ M. Dunand, "Nouvelles inscriptions du Djebel Druze et du Hauran", *Archiv Orientalni* 18 (1950), 151, no. 331.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 160, no. 361; Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer*, 82.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 161, no. 363.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 164, no. 374; Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer*, 51.

¹¹¹ F.M. Abel, 'Chronique', *RB* 13 (1904), 265; Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer*, 104.

60 Damet el Aliah (between Aerite and Agraene):¹¹² inscription within a tabula ansata. The spelling is very bad: Εἷς ὁ θεὸς ὦ | βωηθὼν Τοβεῖλη εἰς τὴν οἰκοδομὴν | ἣν ἐξ ἰδίων οἰκοδόμησεν | κὴ ὁ βοθέσας ἐκ τὴν οἰκοδομὴν | βοηθήσῃ κὲ ἐ[ς] τοὺς γάμους | Γαδράθη. Gadrathe apparently was the name of the spouse to be. Tobias is not exclusively a Jewish name.

61 Murduk (ancient Μαρδόχα):¹¹³ lintel. The inscription reads: Εἷς θεός ἐξ οὗ τὰ πάντα καὶ | εἷς Κ(ύριος) Ἰ(ησοῦς) Χ(ριστὸς) δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα. The formula is derived from I Cor. 8:6.

62 Provenance unknown:¹¹⁴ a tablet measuring 28 x 19 cm, with letters 2-5 cm high. The inscription reads: Εἷς θεός | Μάξιμος Ἰανο(ῦ) | τῷ δεσπότῃ | εὐσεβίας ἔ(νεκα) | Πρισκίῳ | καὶ τέκν(οις) | ἐποίησα. I do not believe this to be an epitaph: rather it could be a votive inscription of the kind that was set up in a holy place in the name of a beloved one or a benefactor.

The data collected above are summed up in the table below. The formulas are defined according to the following key: simple: Εἷς θεός alone; simple A: Εἷς θεός + acclamations to Julian. Composite: A βοήθει; B ὁ βοηθῶν; C μόνος; D μόνος ὁ βοηθῶν; E ὁ νικῶν τὰ κακά; F ὁ ζῶν; G καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς αὐτοῦ; H Εἷς Ζεὺς Καράπις. Other composite formulas are not indicated by a code letter. As to the attribution, I have used gno(stic) for amulets, pagan for sacred buildings, but both refer to the syncretistic monotheism centring in one great god, generally identified as the Sun-god.

No.	Region	Formula	Context	Attribution
1a	Gush Halav	composite E	amulet	Gno.
1b	Gush Halav	composite E	amulet	Gno.
1c	Gush Halav	composite E	amulet	Gno.-Chr.
2	Nahariya	composite E	amulet	Gno. in Chr.-Sam. milieu
3	'Evron	composite B	church	Chr.
4	Acco	composite E	amulet	Gno.
5	Beth Shearim	composite A	catacomb	Jewish
6	Caesarea area	composite A	synagogue?	Jewish

¹¹² Waddington, no. 2451; W. Ewing, "Greek and Other Inscriptions Collected in the Hauran", *PEF* 1895, 141, no. 74; Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer*, 27.

¹¹³ M. Dunand, "Nouvelles inscriptions du Djebel Druze et du Hauran", *RB* 41 (1932), 561, no. 66; Avi-Yonah, *Gazetteer*, 78.

¹¹⁴ R. Savignac, F.M. Abel, "Chronique", *RB* 14 (1905), 606. The inscription belonged to the collection of Baron von Ustinow, and although the editors added it to a list of inscriptions from the Hauran, there is no reason to believe that this one came from there. Many of the antiquities collected by von Ustinow came from Palestine proper, mostly from the coastal plain.

7	Caesarea	composite ?		
		composite E	amulet	Gno.-Sam.
8	Caesarea	simple	amulet	Gno.
9	Caesarea	composite A	amulet	Sam.?
10	Caesarea	simple	amulet	Gno.
11	Caesarea	composite H	amulet	Gno.
12	Caesarea	composite B	sacred build.	Jew.? Sam.? pagan?
13	Caesarea	composite A	sacred build.	Jew.? Sam.? pagan?
14	Caesarea	simple?	sacred build.	Jew.? Sam.? pagan?
15	Beth Shean	composite E	amulet	Gno.
16	Northern Samaria	composite C	tomb	Chr. in Sam. milieu
17	Sebaste	composite	sacred build.	pagan
18	el Khirbe	composite A	synagogue	Sam.
19	Shechem	composite A	amulet	Sam.
20	Mt. Gerizim	composite A	holy place	Sam.
20a	Mt. Gerizim	composite D	holy place	Sam.
21	Apollonia	composite F	tomb	Sam.? Jew.?
22	Lod (vicinity)	composite A	synagogue?	Sam.?
23	Lod (vicinity)	composite B	private build.?	Chr.
24	Lod (vicinity)	simple	synagogue	Sam.
25	Emmaus	simple	synagogue	Sam.
26	Jerusalem area	composite G	tomb	Chr.
27	Jerusalem area	composite	amulet	Gno.
28	Jerusalem area	composite H	amulet	Gno.
29	Jerusalem area	composite E	amulet	Chr.
30	Judean Hills	composite B	church	Chr.
31	Ascalon	simple	public building	pagan
32	Ascalon	composite B	amulet	Gno.? Jewish?
33	Nessana	composite B	church	Chr.
34	Avdat	simple	church	Chr.
35a	Wadi Haggag	composite B	rock graffito	Jewish?
35b	Wadi Haggag	composite B	rock graffito	Jewish?
35c	Wadi Haggag	composite B	rock graffito	Jew.? Chr.?
36	Wadi Haggag	composite B	rock graffito	Chr.
37	Sinai	composite E	amulet	Gno.
38	Palestine	composite E	amulet	Gno.
39	Mt.Nebo	composite E	seal	Chr.
40	Gerasa road	simple A	milestone	pagan
41	Gerasa road	simple A	milestone	pagan
42	Gerasa	simple	?	?
43	Gerasa	composite B	bowl	Gno.?
44	Hauran	composite B	sacred building	pagan?
45	Hauran	simple?	sacred building?	?
46	Hauran	simple	public building	Chr.
47	Bostra	simple	building	pagan
48	Bostra	simple	building	Jewish?
49	Tsil	composite	private building	Chr.?

50	Tsil	composite	private building	Chr.? Sam.?
51	Na'aran	composite G	private building	Chr.
52	West Hauran	simple	sacred building	pagan
53	Damascene	composite B	synagogue?	Jewish?
54	Batanea	composite B	private building?	
55	Batanea	?	tomb?	pagan?
56	Batanea	composite A	building	Chr.
57	Batanea	composite G?	church?	Chr.
58	Batanea	composite A?	building	Chr.
59	Batanea	simple	bread stamp	Chr.
60	Batanea	composite B	private building	pagan? Jewish?
61	Batanea	composite	church?	Chr.
62	unknown	simple	sacred building?	Sam.? pagan?

Some general observations may be made regarding the above data.

1. Only four or five examples are found in a funerary context, and even those were not part of an epitaph. Amulets discovered in tombs were put there with the belongings of the deceased and do not themselves belong to the funerary context.

2. More than one third of the material, nos. 6-25 and perhaps also n. 62, come from Samaria. Of those, nine are Samaritan, six are gnostic, only one is Jewish; the rest are uncertain.

3. Of the seven examples from Galilee, five come from the Phoenician coast, only two from the much larger area that was inhabited by Jews. Only one, no. 5, is Jewish; all the others are gnostic or gnostic-Christian. One case, no. 3, possibly shows a Jewish or Samaritan influence.

4. From Judaea proper we have only five examples, not one of them Jewish: all are either gnostic or Christian from a gentile background.

5. From the south: two pagan examples from Ascalon (one showing Jewish influence), two Christian examples from the Negev — both considerably later than the average Εἶς θεός acclamation. The examples from Sinai are of uncertain background, and in any case they do not belong locally, but come from the variegated crowd of travellers and pilgrims that journeyed through the peninsula.

6. In Transjordan, I know of no examples south of Mt. Nebo. Five specimens come from Peraea, only one assuredly Christian; the others are mostly or all pagan.

7. From the Golan, a region inhabited by a Jewish majority well into the Byzantine period, only two examples: one Jewish, one Christian.

8. Hauran is the only region that yields a picture fitting in with Peterson's conclusion. Of the abundant material (16 examples), about half is patently Christian, the rest is uncertain, possibly pagan or Jewish.

9. Considering the total mass, two clearly defined groups emerge: a large assemblage of gnostic specimens connected to the cult of Helios-Sarapis, and a considerable core of Samaritan examples, mostly connected with Samaritan synagogues and holy places. The Samaritan usage is confirmed by the occurrence of an additional Εἰς θεός acclamation from a Samaritan synagogue in the diaspora.¹¹⁵

10. The number of Jewish specimens is very small, and the lack of material from areas specifically inhabited by Jews in the relevant period — like Galilee, Golan, the southern Jordan Valley and Southern Judaea — is conspicuous. No help comes from consulting the *CIJ*. The diaspora adds only two examples to those discussed above: one on a pottery bowl from Egypt, probably not Jewish at all;¹¹⁶ another from a tomb in Pannonia,¹¹⁷ which indeed features a *menorah* (or a palm branch?) and an inscription with one Jewish name, but is adorned with sculptured portraits of the deceased: an un-kosher mixture if ever there was one. What the Jews did use was an expression reminiscent of the Εἰς θεός βοήθει/ ὁ βοήθων formula, but substantially dissimilar, namely Θεός βοηθός, that appears in synagogues.¹¹⁸

11. Christian specimens occur only sporadically in Palestine proper: the only large concentration in our list belongs to the Syrian Hauran. The Christian examples in Palestine often come out of a pagan background, and in two cases, nos. 3 and 16 (to which can be added nos. 49-50 from the Western Hauran), they occur in a Samaritan milieu.

To conclude. In spite of the often repeated statement that the Εἰς θεός acclamation is of Jewish origin — on the assumption that it derived from the first verse of the *Shem'a* — there is not a shadow of proof that it was really so. True, Εἰς θεός expressed the idea of monotheism that was spread by Jewish proselytism, and became the slogan of Gnosis, which was influenced by Judaism, and to this extent, and only to this extent, it can be considered of Jewish origin. However, there is almost no evidence of independent Jewish usage to show that the Jewish proclamation of faith had passed into monotheistic-syncretistic propaganda through a Jewish-initiated translation into the Greek phrase Εἰς θεός. It is noteworthy that relevant Hebrew expressions passed into gnostic phraseology through transliteration, not translation: for instance, the Ineffable Name was ren-

¹¹⁵ B. Lifshitz, J. Schiby, "Une synagogue samaritaine à Thessalonique", *RB* 75 (1968), 368-77; Lifshitz, *CIJ Prolegomena*, no. 693a.

¹¹⁶ *CIJ* no. 1539a.

¹¹⁷ *CIJ* no. 675.

¹¹⁸ Cf. for example Lifshitz, *Donateurs*, nos. 84, 89, 90; J. Reynolds, R. Tannenbaum, *Jews and God-fearers at Aphrodisias* (Cambridge 1987), 5, no. 1; Roth-Gerson (above, n. 71), nos. 3, 25.

dered with κύριος by the Septuaginta, but entered gnostic folklore as ΙΗΥΗ. 'Ιαώ. The first verse of the *Shem'a* (Deut. 6:4) is translated by the Septuaginta κύριος εἷς ἐστι, not Εἷς θεός.

On the other hand, there is a clear link between pagan and Samaritan usage. At least, the connection is clear on the geographical level: for the rest, I am not yet prepared to say how or in which direction it worked. One might suggest as a working hypothesis that the Samarito-pagan theology of Kore, and perhaps the erection of a temple of Zeus Hypsistos on Mt. Gerizim — god “the most high”, an appellation of the Supreme Being in the Pentateuch¹¹⁹ — may embody a development that proceeded from the centre to the outskirts of Samaria and to the fringes of Samaritan expansion outside it.

Finally, the Christian usage in Palestine proper seems derived from gnostic and pagan imagery, in some cases through Samaritan conveyors, and appears utterly separated from the Jewish-Christian experience. This state of things is very different from the situation, for example, in Egypt, where the occurrence of Εἷς θεός is in step with the use of Jewish locutions and Biblical names¹²⁰. It is now imperative to check the provisional findings offered above and especially the apparent divergence from the Syrian and Egyptian patterns.

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¹¹⁹ Gen. 14:18-20; Num. 24:16.

¹²⁰ See L. Di Segni, “A Jewish Greek Inscription”, (above, n. 23), n. 2.