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Mehmet ÖZHANLI

 0000-0003-1417-2658

İnci TÜRKÖĞLU

 0000-0003-1865-7708

Nurşah ÇOKBANKİR ŞENGÜL

 0000-0002-5451-6198



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A Wandering Jewish Tombstone

Gezgin Bir Yahudi Mezar Steli

Mehmet ÖZHANLI* İnci TÜRKÖĞLU** Nurşah ÇOKBANKİR ŞENGÜL***

Abstract: The tombstone bearing Jewish symbols such as menorah, shofar, etrog and lulav, accompanied by a Hebrew inscription reading *shalom* and an ancient Greek inscription comprising two lines, was found in the garden of two buildings belonging to H. M. Aydoğdu, in the locality designated “Omarcı (Ömerci) Village” situated in the district of Şarkikaraağaç, Isparta. With the type of stone of the artefact it is an uncommon find for Şarkikaraağaç, Yalvaç and its surroundings. At the beginning of the research, it was noted that the tombstone was presented by T. Drew-Bear in 1993 at the “XIth Survey Results Meeting”, and it was determined that the original findspot of the tombstone was Afyonkarahisar / İscehisar. In 2004, the inscription was incorporated into a corpus by W. Ameling, which included Jewish inscriptions from Asia Minor. The studies that have been carried out thus far have not evaluated the reliefs and the iconography of the stele. Thus it would be beneficial to undertake a comprehensive revision of the work and present it to the scientific community in a more holistic manner, with a synthesis of both archaeological and epigraphic perspectives.

Keywords: Jewish Tombstone, Menorah, Hebrew, Ancient Greek Inscription, Phrygia, *Koimeterion*

Öz: Üzerinde menora, şofar, etrog ve lulav gibi Yahudi simgeleriyle İbranice *shalom* ve Hellence iki satırlık yazıt taşıyan mezar steli Isparta İli, Şarkikaraağaç İlçesi’nde “Omarcı (Ömerci) Köy” olarak adlandırılan mevkide, H. M. Aydoğdu’ya ait iki binanın bahçesinde bulunmuştur. Eser, Şarkikaraağaç, Yalvaç ve çevresinde rastlanmayan bir malzemedir. Çalışmanın başında stelin üzerindeki mezar yazıtının 1993 yılında T. Drew-Bear tarafından “XI. Araştırma Sonuçları Toplantısı”nda sunulmuş olduğu ve stelin orijinal buluntu yerinin Afyonkarahisar / İscehisar olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Yazıt 2004 yılında W. Ameling tarafından Küçük Asya Yahudi yazıtlarının bir araya toplandığı *corpus*’a da dahil edilmiştir. Şimdiye kadar yapılan çalışmalarda stelin kabartmaları ve sunduğu ikonografisi hakkında değerlendirmelerde bulunulmamıştır. Bu nedenle, çalışmanın kapsamlı bir revizyondan geçirilmesi ve hem arkeolojik hem de epigrafik bakış açılarının bir senteziyle daha bütüncül bir şekilde bilim camiasına sunulması faydalı olacaktır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Yahudi Mezar Steli, Menora, İbranice, Hellence Yazıt, Phrygia, *Koimeterion*

* Prof. Dr., Süleyman Demirel University, Archaeology Dept. Isparta. mehmetozhanli@sdu.edu.tr

0000-0003-1417-2658

** Assoc. Prof. Dr., Pamukkale University, Dept. of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, Denizli. inciturkoglu@hotmail.com | 0000-0003-1865-7708

*** Dr., Akdeniz University, Dept. of Tourism Guidance, Antalya. nursahsengul@akdeniz.edu.tr

0000-0002-5451-6198

The tombstone forming the subject of this article was found in the garden of two buildings belonging to Hacı Mehmet Aydoğdu, in the locality designated “Omarcı (Ömerci) Village” situated in the Cumhuriyet quarter of Çarıklar town in the district of Şarkikaraağaç in Isparta province. Apart from this tombstone, in that locality there can be observed an architectural block which was then turned into a trough and placed under the tombstone and some dressed brown blocks, 48 in total. Some of these blocks were used for the foundation of the modern building, while others were employed for the terracing behind the building and some for the terracing of the area where the stone bearing the menorah was placed. The type of stone used for carving the tombstone is not frequently encountered in Şarkikaraağaç and Yalvaç in Isparta province and their environs.

While working on this well-preserved tombstone, it was understood that the tombstone had been previously presented and published by Thomas Drew-Bear in the proceedings of the “XIth Survey Results Meeting” in 1993 under the title of “Dokimeion’dan Yeni Yazıtlar”¹. In the course of his research, Drew-Bear examined a number of inscriptions on marble quarries in the region. He paid particular attention to the inscription on this tombstone and provided the following brief account of the tombstone:

“...Bu ocaklardan Yahudi cemaatine mensup kişilerin de yararlandığını, İscehisar Kaymakamı Sayın Recai Akyel’in bize gösterdiği, kasabanın bir sokağında duran ve yazıtından bir Yahudi’ye ait olduğu anlaşılan mezar taşından öğreniyoruz (Resim: 11). Yazıt, hem Eski Yunanca, hem de kısaca Yiddiş dilinde barış anlamına gelen “şalon” sözcüğünden oluşuyor². Bu tip mezar stelinin maliyeti oldukça büyük olduğu için, bu mezarda yatanların sade işçiler olduğu düşünülemez, muhtemelen mermer işinden para kazanan bir tüccara ait olmalıdır”³.

Walter Ameling, who later analysed Jewish inscriptions from Anatolia, referenced Drew-Bear’s work and re-evaluated the inscription⁴.

Drew-Bear who initially discovered the tombstone, states that it was found in a street in the İscehisar District of Afyonkarahisar Province. However, it was subsequently relocated to Çarıksaraylar in the Şarkikaraağaç District of Isparta Province. Other blocks, besides this tombstone, were likely brought from various other locations⁵.

¹ Drew-Bear 1994, 114 and Resim 11.

² The word shalom here is Hebrew and means ‘peace, tranquillity’. This term is analogous to the Arabic word ‘salam’, which is also a Semitic language.

³ Translation: “...We learn that members of the Jewish community also derived benefit from these quarries from the tombstone situated on a street in the town and whose inscription indicates that it belonged to a Jew (Resim: 11), which was shown to us by Mr. Recai Akyel, the District Governor of İscehisar. The inscription bears the word “shalon”, which, in both Ancient Greek and Yiddish, signifies “peace”. Given the considerable cost of this type of tombstone, it is unlikely that the occupants were simple labourers; they were more likely associated with a merchant who profited from the marble trade”.

⁴ SEG 44, 1033 (read from the photo). Ameling 2004, 389 no. 183: The inscription is dated to the IVth century A.D. and later.

⁵ Residents of the neighbourhood in which the artefacts were discovered stated that the owner of the

Description of the Tombstone

The marble tombstone, depicting a seven-armed menorah with oil lamps, measures 120 cm in height, 123 cm in width and 50 cm in thickness. It is placed upon a limestone trough measuring 28 cm in height, 20 cm in depth and, as far as can be measured, 150 cm in length (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. The utilisation of the tombstone as a fountain stone



Fig. 2. Menorah composition (detail)

The lower side of the tombstone was originally designed to be placed on a stone. The rear side of the tombstone exhibits coarse workmanship. The tombstone is designed in the shape of a niche and features a rosette with six leaves on the pediment, which measures 15 x 13 cm. The profile of the arch is horseshoe-shaped and encircles the facade of the niche. It is framed by two narrow bands on the sides and a wide band in the centre, the right side of which is slightly damaged (Figs. 1-2). While the depth of the niche is 20 cm in total, the perception of width and depth was enhanced by the addition of a moulding at a distance of 12 cm from the base. At the lowest point of the niche, which has an internal height of 68 cm, an area of 14 cm was reduced to a depth of 2.5 cm. Within this space, two lines of an ancient Greek inscription were carved; the first line measures 65 cm in width, while the second line measures 63 cm in width. Letter height varies between 2-4 cm, depth 1-2 mm, width 4-5 cm, and line spacing between 2-3 cm. In the centre of the niche, which is 74 cm in width, is a seven-armed candelabra, *menorah*. The menorah is on a tripod and has a width of 36 cm and a height of 50 cm. The thickness of the arms of the menorah varies between 1-3 cm. The two external

garden has a truck and an excavator and had transported the aforementioned materials from various locations.

arms on the left side have been partially destroyed. The tripod pedestal, which supports the body, evokes the image of a lion-legged piece of furniture that was prevalent in antiquity. A supporting volute is present at the junction between the body and the outermost arms on both sides. The body of the menorah and its six arms connect to a horizontal bar at the top, on which a round oil lamp is positioned at the highest level of the arms. In the space to the left of the menorah is a *shofar* (ram’s horn) with three incised grooves at the centre of the body and one each at the rim and blowing end, while an *etrog* (citron) and a *lulav* (palm frond) are placed adjacent to each other in the space to the right.

On either side of the tripod there is an incised Hebrew inscription reading שְׁלוֹמִי (shalom = ‘peace’) (Fig. 2). The inscription is followed by an ancient Greek epitaph:

- | | | |
|------|----------------------|--|
| l. 1 | κυμητήριον Ιουσουα | “Tomb of Iousoua (=Joshua) |
| l. 2 | κὲ Σαμοηλ υἱῶν Ιακωβ | and Samoel [=Samuel], the sons of Iakob (=Jakob)”.
(=Jakob)”.
(=Jakob)”. |

L. 1: κυμητήριον = κοιμητήριον⁶ means “sleeping room” and “cemetery, burial ground”⁷. The use of this term is widely acknowledged as an unambiguous marker of Christianity⁸. McLean states that the term refers to a ‘family tomb’ in reference to the Christian tombs of Phrygia. However, Rebillard has demonstrated that this term does not pertain to a communal burial ground⁹. The designation of the tomb as a “sleeping room” reflects the Christian belief that the deceased repose until the resurrection¹⁰. It is an undeniable fact that the Christian belief in the resurrection is related to the Jewish belief¹¹. The use of this term in this inscription to designate the burial place indicates that κοιμητήριον was also common in Jewish epitaphs¹².

In lines 1 and 2, the names of the tomb-owners and their father are presented in their uninflected form: Ιουσουα, Σαμοηλ, Ιακωβ. It is worth noting here the purely Jewish names are borne by both father and sons. All three names are Biblical and are among the most popular male names¹³.

L. 2: κὲ instead of καί¹⁴. For the use of Σαμοηλ instead of Σαμουηλ, see *MAMA* III 679 and 684.

⁶ For the interchange of οι and υ, see Gignac 1975, 197–199. See also, Horst 2015, 89.

⁷ *LSJ*, s.v. κοιμητήριον. The dictionary cites a Jewish inscription that defines the term as “sleeping-room, burial-place”.

⁸ Robert & Robert 1970, 464 no. 601; For an analysis of the term ‘*koimeterion*’ as used in the Christian inscriptions in Nicaea and its application to Flavius’ tomb, see Tabbernee 2014, 307.

⁹ McLean 2002, 281–282; cf. Rebillard 1993, 975–980. See also, Paxton 2014, 22.

¹⁰ Endsjo 2009, 183. See also, Cleymans & Talloen 2024, 826–827.

¹¹ For a comprehensive account of the evolution of the belief in resurrection within and beyond Judaism, see Endsjo 2009, 122–130.

¹² Drew-Bear 1972, 203.

¹³ For popular names, see Ilan 2008, 63 Table 6. For Samuel, see Ilan 2008, 161–65, for this inscription see no. 38, for Jakob, see Ilan 2008, 121–127, no. 68; for Joshua, see Ilan 2008, 103–105, no. 17.

¹⁴ Gignac 1975, 192–193. See also, Horst 2015, 89.

Evaluation

The primary motif of the ornamental composition, i.e. menorah, is a seven-armed stand for oil lamps, the description of which is provided in the Book of Exodus in the Torah¹⁵. The menorah, crafted from pure gold and comprising three arms diverging from the central body, elevated on a pedestal, is distinctive in its design and has evolved into a prominent symbol of Judaism. The smooth workmanship of the relief depicted on the tombstone demonstrates that the original design crafted in gold was reflected in stone in a similar style. The tripod base that supports the body is analogous to the lion's feet motif commonly observed in architectural ornamentation. The two volutes located at the point of juncture between the body and the outermost arms are regarded as the Torah scrolls¹⁶. The shofar depicted in the leftmost space is a horn taken from a kosher animal, used on Rosh Hashanah (the Jewish New Year's Day), Yom Kippur (the day of Atonement) and on some other special occasions. The natural structure of the horn has been preserved; however, it has been enhanced through the addition of three incised grooves, one on the rim and one on the blowing end, and three in the centre of the body. The etrog depicted in the rightmost space is a citrus fruit, and the presence of three lobes is not a common feature in such representations. The lulav (palm/palm frond) adjacent to it, like the etrog, is used during the Feast of Sukkot (Tabernacles), the harvest festival. Similar to the depiction of the menorah, the fruit and palm frond are depicted in the stone according to their natural forms. In the Hebrew calendar, Rosh Hashanah comes first, followed by Yom Kippur about ten days later, and Sukkot about five days later, lasting 7-8 days. Accordingly, the sacred objects depicted on this tombstone are associated with the three autumnal festivals that occur in the months of September and October. The carvings on the tombstone attest to the fact that the deceased were devout individuals, committed to their religious and cultural traditions. These individuals, who espoused a belief that were distinct from those prevalent in Phrygia where they lived, exercised the freedom they had gained to the full, despite residing in the diaspora, and openly and fearlessly displayed the symbols of their faith. It can thus be proposed that the inhabitants of Phrygia, comprising individuals of diverse ethnicities and beliefs, exhibited a notable degree of tolerance and acceptance towards one another.

From an epigraphic point of view, the identification of Jewish identity in the inscriptions has been a controversial issue for researchers¹⁷. Pagan religions adopted Jewish characteristics and Jews tried not to compromise their identity. On the other hand, as the Jews in Asia Minor, in their efforts to explain their beliefs to the surrounding pagan environment, adopted practices that would enable them to establish a relationship with existing beliefs¹⁸, problems

¹⁵ Menorah (Hebrew מְנוֹרָה): The seven-armed stand for oil lamps described in the Torah. The nine-armed one is *hanukkiyah* used on Hanukkah. In modern Hebrew, menorah means "lamp, lampshade". The /h/ sound at the end is silent when the word is pronounced. See, Exodus 25:31-40; 37:17-24.

¹⁶ Hachlili 2001, 229-230.

¹⁷ In general, inscriptions are classified as either "Jewish" or "non-Jewish". Van Henten and Huitink (2003, 34) suggest that there is one other group: "possible Jewish inscription". Cf. Felle 2023, 11.

¹⁸ Parker 2013, 65.

arose in identification. In order to resolve the issue of identifying Jewish material, A. E. Felle establishes a set of criteria for the identification of epigraphic material as Jewish. According to these criteria, the tombstone examined in this study clearly reveals its Jewish identity through the Jewish motifs depicted on it, the distinct Jewish names in the inscription, and the use of Hebrew language spelling¹⁹.

The majority of the inscriptions of the Jews of Asia Minor are epitaphs²⁰. It should be noted at this point, not all tombstones belonging to Jews contain inscriptions, however, most of the epitaphs are significant data²¹. The utilisation of epigraphic texts was a costly practice in antiquity. Therefore, the use of inscriptions further indicates that the Jewish individuals in this community were members of the upper class. The epitaph presented here bears typical Jewish names: Iousoua (=Joshua) and Samuel, sons of Iakob (=Jacob). As for the onomastics of the Jewish communities of Asia Minor, several Jewish names have been identified. Additionally, Greek and local names are also documented²². Another noteworthy feature of this text in terms of names, is that neither the two children nor the father are given double names; instead, they are assigned distinctively Jewish names. Especially in antiquity, when Greek onomastics began to shift towards Christian naming conventions, Jews sought to emphasize their distinction from Christians through their choice of names²³. Here too, the proprietors of the tombs underscored their Jewish identity by incorporating Jewish nomenclature and emblems on the epitaphs. In the spread of Christianity, the fact that early missionaries like Paul began their preaching in local synagogues brought the Jewish community and early Christians into direct contact, making it inevitable for the Jews to emphasize their identity²⁴. The inscription of a Hebrew term such as “shalom” on this tomb stone, despite its brevity, represents a significant assertion of cultural identity²⁵.

What distinguishes this tombstone from other tombstones of antiquity is its detailed presentation of the beliefs and traditions of the Jewish people, who lived as a minority in

¹⁹ For the criteria defined by Felle, see Felle 2023, 11-13.

²⁰ Horst (1996², 15-16) asserts that the total number of Jewish inscriptions is approximately 2000, with approximately 1600 of these being funerary inscriptions. Latest publications corroborate this figure; see Felle 2023, 9-10. In Asia Minor approximately 260 inscriptions have been attested, the majority of which are in ancient Greek, and a few in Hebrew and other languages; see van der Horst 2015, 28. For the *corpus* see also Ameling 2004.

²¹ Ameling 2009, 204-205; Within the Jewish community, some members favoured the use of inscriptions on tombstones, while others reject the practice.

²² Ameling 2009, 215.

²³ Ameling 2009, 218. Some of the biblical names were preferred by both the Christian and Jewish communities. Wilhems (1992, 249-252) demonstrates that on two tombstones at Corycus, the spelling of biblical names differed between the two communities of the city, e.g., the Christians used the spelling “Samouelos” for the name Samuel, whereas the Jews spelled it in accordance with the correct form. For further insight into this distinctive and easily recognisable sense of self in Jewish epigraphic material, see Fell 2023, 32.

²⁴ Schnabel 2008, 262-263.

²⁵ Felle 2023, 26. The use of Hebrew expressions, even if only few, is significant in terms of preserving the traditions of the community. Hebrew inscriptions are rare in Asia Minor. However, the most prevalent expression is shalom, see Trebilco 1991, 82 fn. 119.

various parts of Anatolia. It is widely acknowledged that the first Jewish settlers arrived in western Anatolia sometime between the Persian invasion and the Hellenistic period²⁶. However, it was during the Hellenistic Period, particularly under the Seleucids, that they established themselves in the western cities, gained influence, and became more prominent. In his writings, the Jewish historian Iosephus (*Ant. Iud.* XII.3.1-4) provides clear evidence that during the rule of the Seleucid King Antiochus III (212-204 BC), nearly 2000 Jewish families were relocated to the cities of Lydia and Phrygia²⁷. The relocated families were granted privileged rights over the local population, such as houses, agricultural land, vineyards, exemption from taxation and military service. It is understood from epigraphic and archaeological sources that following this date, the Jews continued to reside in the lands where they had settled under the protection of the administrations²⁸. The Jews, who were granted rights by Iulius Caesar himself within the Roman State, were able to maintain these rights throughout the Imperial Period. The edict issued by Emperor Caracalla during his reign granted Roman citizenship to all Jews as well²⁹. The inhabitants of Phrygia, where the tombstone was discovered, were able to utilise these rights effectively, thereby establishing themselves in positions of influence within the administrative and economic spheres. The clear carving of the symbols of this faith on the tombstone displays this prosperity; the quality of the marble from which the tombstone was made and the care evident in the workmanship indicate that the owner of the tomb was in a well-resourced economic situation.

The stone artefacts depicting menorahs and other Jewish sacred objects found in Anatolia to date can be categorized into various groups, such as tombstones, balustrade slabs from synagogues, and altars. The menorah depictions on the tombstones and monumental tombs found to date are generally incised and quite simple. For instance, in the North Necropolis of the ancient city of Hierapolis, carved menorahs can be observed on both monumental tombs and sarcophagi, however, they are not specially carved with elaborate workmanship and composition. Another example is found in the Yalvaç Museum, where two tombstones from Sağır Village with unpublished Greek inscriptions are also decorated with carved menorahs with volutes (Fig. 3-4).

²⁶ Türkoğlu 2000, 16.

²⁷ Türkoğlu 2000, 16.

²⁸ Although Jews were not granted the same privileges everywhere in Asia Minor, they remained an integral part of Greek cities and received the protection of Roman rulers, see Parker 2013, 54-55.

²⁹ Irshai 1997, 62-65.



Fig. 3. Yalvaç Museum, Inv. no. 2630 (Archive of İ. Türkoğlu)

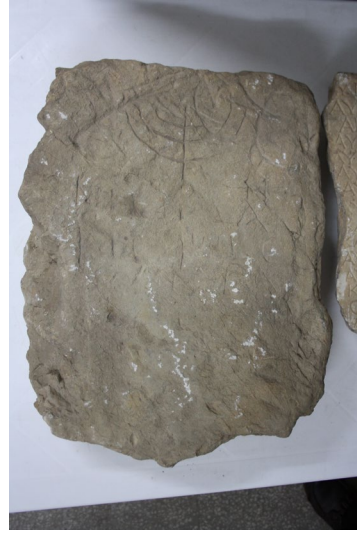


Fig. 4. Yalvaç Museum, Inv. no. 2631 (Archive of İ. Türkoğlu)

One of the two examples from Lydian Philadelphia is very plain and simple, bearing only the name and a nine-armed hanukkiah³⁰. The second artefact, formed from a table leg and repurposed as a Jewish tombstone, features a menorah on both the front and rear faces, an etrog on the left and a lulav on the right. Similarly, another tombstone discovered in the city of Chalcedon and preserved today in the İstanbul Archaeological Museum features a menorah crafted in an incised technique with a pitchfork-like base and no horizontal arm at the top. A lulav and etrog are seen on the right³¹ (Fig. 9). The tombstones recorded in the ancient city of Sebastopolis, located in the Sulusaray district of Sivas province, also bear ancient Greek inscriptions and menorahs (Figs. 5-8), however, only the tombstone of the *archisynagogos* Mouses is decorated in relief (Fig. 8). Nevertheless, the workmanship of Mouses' tombstone does not approach that of the tombstone analysed here. The example from Tavium in the Boğazköy Museum is a tombstone with a very crude carved menorah, with a stepped base and no sacred objects (Fig. 10). The tombstones presented here are likely to have belonged to ordinary Jews residing in rural areas. However, the tombstone under examination here is distinguished both by its quality and the attention to detail evident in its craftsmanship. It was initially documented in 1993 in İscehisar, in the province of Afyon, and has been identified by scholars as belonging to Jews who owned one of the personal marble quarries in Dokimeion³² (modern İscehisar).

³⁰ The artefacts are held in reserve at Manisa Museum for the purposes of further study. Ameling 2004 no. 50 and 51; for the image see, Ameling 2004, 569 Abb. 11-14; Bora 2017, 89 (after H. Malay).

³¹ Türkoğlu 2017, 474 Res. 38 (after Feissel 1987).

³² Drew-Bear 1994, 114.



Fig. 5. Tombstone of Lampetis, in Sulusaray (le Guen-Pollet & Rémy 1991 fig. 1)



Fig. 6. Tombstone of Sara, in Sulusaray (le Guen-Pollet & Rémy 1991 fig. 2)



Fig. 7. Tombstone of Despina, in Sulusaray (le Guen-Pollet & Rémy 1991 fig. 3)



Fig. 8. Tombstone of archisynagogos Mouses, in Sulusaray (Ful & Sørensen 2014, fig. 1)

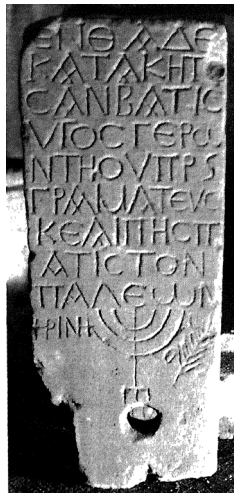


Fig. 9. Tombstone of Sanbatis from Kalkhedon (Istanbul Archaeological Museums Inv. nr. 3011) (Türkoğlu 2017 Res. 38)



Fig. 10. Tavium (Cappadocia), Boğazköy Museum (Photo by M. Çiftçi) (*INorth Galatia* 512)

However, an analysis of the materials, workmanship, and compositional features suggests that the owners of these tombstones were both knowledgeable about their religion and were affluent. In terms of decoration, they resemble the balustrade slabs found in synagogues more than traditional tombstones. Two menorah decorated slabs were recovered from Priene (Ionia) (Fig. 11a-b), Sardis (Lydia) (Fig. 12a-b) and Andriake (Lycia) (Fig. 13a-b) each. The decoration on the Sardis slabs is incised, whereas the Priene and Andriake samples are decorated in relief. In the Andriake examples, the arms of the menorah terminate in a horizontal bar, and no oil lamp motif is observed.



Fig. 11. a) Priene 1 (60x61,5x9 cm) (Archive of N. Çokbankir-Şengül) on the left; b) Priene 2 (77x61x9 cm) (Burkhardt & Wilson 2013, Fig. 18a) on the right.



Fig. 12. a) Sardis 1 (70x70 cm) on the left; b) Sardis 2 (45x49,5x7 cm) on the right (Photos retrieved from the website of Sardis Expedition)



Fig. 13. a) Andriake 1 (44x89x4 cm) (Archive of İ. Türkoğlu) on the left; b) Andriake 2 (41x38x6 cm) on the right (Çevik *et al.* 2010, Fig. 28)

In one of the Priene examples, the triangles on the horizontal bar are representative of oil lamps, whereas the horizontal bar and oil lamps are not depicted on the second slab. The first of the Sardis examples features a menorah with a horizontal bar and V-shaped lamps and light depictions. In contrast, the second example lacks a horizontal bar but exhibits U-shaped lamps with flames in lines on the arms. The Sardis 2 slab was unearthed in Field 55 in 2015 and is believed to be a *'funerary stela'*, though it bears no inscription³³.

According to Hachlili's classification system, the menorah under examination belongs to Type IV and is accompanied by liturgical objects³⁴. The etrog, one of the sacred objects, is depicted with three lobes on the Priene 1 slab; on the Andriake 1 slab, it can also be considered three-lobed, though not fully defined; and on the Sardis 2 slab, it has two lobes, resembling a pear. There is no etrog on the others. The shofar is depicted in an L-shape with an elbow on the Priene 1 and Sardis 1 slabs. However, on the Andriake 1 slab, the shofar has a curved shape that resembles that of the tombstone analysed in this article. The lulav is depicted on the Priene slabs with the myrtle branch, whereas on the Sardis slabs it is depicted alone. The Torah scrolls are depicted as volutes at the junction between the body of the menorah and its outer arms on the Priene 1, Sardis 1, and Andriake slabs. In the context of comparable examples, the menorah is observed on the impost of an Ionic column capital at Akmonia (Fig. 14). Sacred ritual objects such as the lulav, etrog and shofar are absent from this example.



Fig. 14. Akmonia (Phrygia) (TAM VI 347; from the Hatiblar [Hatipler] village. Marble column capital measuring 41x27x48 cm)

Dating and Conclusion

The quality of the material used, workmanship and comparison with similar artefacts of the period, as well as epigraphic data, are used to date artefacts not found *in situ*.

Regarding the inscription, Ancient Greek, the common language, was used. The use of

³³ Rautmann 2015.

³⁴ Hachlili 2001, 165-166.

Hebrew in the Diaspora also begins at the end of the IIIrd century A.D.³⁵. The interchange of *υ* for *οι* and *ε* for *αι* on the stone also seems appropriate for the IIIrd century A.D.³⁶. So far dated only by the inscription, it has been accepted by Ameling as late IVth century A.D., and besides, Vth-VIth century A.D. due to the unconjugated forms of the names³⁷. This dating is generally accepted as a reference by others³⁸.

The classical style of the drill is used in the bands framing the tombstone, in the decoration on the pediment, and in the menorah and other patterns. The use of the drill in the classical style of architecture and sculpture continued until the Severan period. After this period, the contours and details of ornamentation began to be made with deep gouges and fragmented, rough use of the drill. In the tombstone the subject to this study, there is no fragmentation in the contours and details. The craftsmanship, particularly in the depiction of the citrus fruit (etrog) and the date palm frond (lulav), vividly reflects on the stone the natural structure of the fruit and leaf. The structure and the ornamentation of the horn (shofar) are also depicted in a naturalistic manner. The six-petalled crocus blossom on the pediment also displays a skilful use of the drill; although the lines appear harsh because of the abrasions on the surface of the stone, the blossom retains its own natural quality. Similar examples of the craftsmanship applied to this tombstone and decoration can be seen on tombstones in the Aizanitis region.

These tombstones, which have been compiled in a doctoral dissertation, have been dated to between 125/150-200 A.D.³⁹. Although iconographically different subjects are depicted, there are many objects of similar craftsmanship to the stone with menorah in general. For this reason, and the fact that the drilling technique of the Severan period is not observed, it is suggested that the date for the artefact is the beginning of the IIIrd century A.D. At this point, in the light of the archaeological and epigraphic data, the beginning of the IIIrd century A.D. is the *terminus ante quem* for this tombstone.

İscehisar / Dokimeion, where the tombstone was first discovered, is a place that has been providing marble to the entire Mediterranean world from antiquity to the present day. The density of marble tombstones in the Phrygian region is due to the rich marble deposits of the region. The skilled craftsmen of the region also contributed to the quality of the craftsmanship exhibited. In terms of craftsmanship, the examples compared above show a craftsmanship compatible with the countryside, except for the example found in Andriake.

The artefact was made in the context of Phrygian art under Roman rule. The explicit use of Jewish names and elements reflecting the faith of the owner of the tomb not only demonstrates the cosmopolitan structure of the population of the region, but also documents the

³⁵ Felle 2023, 13.

³⁶ Gignac 1975, 192-193, 197-199.

³⁷ Ameling 2004, 388-389 nr. 183.

³⁸ İlan 2008, 161-165, for this inscription see, no. 38.

³⁹ Erdinç 2020, Kat. No. 203-240. Although the general assessment of the art of the region made by Waelkens and Lochman, who studied the motifs and other tombstones found in the Phrygian region, remains valid, the typology and chronology should be revised in the light of the new artefacts found in ongoing excavations and research.

understanding and freedom given to differences in a geography such as Phrygia, where local gods and goddesses are particularly prominent. In addition to the names and religious motifs, the design of the tombstone, the mouldings and the floral decoration on the pediment successfully reflect the regional art of the period.

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* Abbreviations of epigraphical editions and reference works follow the “Liste des abréviations des éditions et ouvrages de référence pour l’épigraphie grecque alphabétique (GrEpiAbbr – Version 02, Janvier 2022)” developed by the *Association Internationale d’Épigraphie Grecque et Latine*.

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