Dana Murray

May 20, 2014

*Voluntary Associations and Judaean Identity Expressed in Synagogue Art*

**Sites:** Beit She’an (c. 4-7th century), Beth Alpha (5-6th century CE), Ein Gedi (3-6th century CE) and Hamat Tiberias (4th century CE) synagogues

**Readings:**

*Primary:*

Judith; Josephus, *Vita* 276-81, 290-303; Matt 4:23; Luke 4:14-15; *m. Ned.* 5:5; *m. Shebu.* 4:10; *m. Neg.* 13:12; Josephus, *B.J.* 2.289; Beth Alpha Inscription; Ein Gedi Inscription.

*Scholarly:*   
Hachlili, Rachel. “[The Zodiac in Ancient Jewish Synagogal Art: A Review](http://carletonu.summon.serialssolutions.com/2.0.0/link/0/eLvHCXMwXZ1LCgIxEESDeAJBb5Ghk578ljI6uBQccZ3uTi-9_9IEXIiXqEctqp4x6Cewf5nguAAyVh91vK_Uji2qIHMjokg8xsmvxd-f_nHGy0_Arweza--j2dbrttzs1w9guXPRckBVjVw4g1JK4LKQQlJhdMoScptb9iIMQ7DbHNaoGKuUoqGQuJPZ94rdPhttLP0).” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 9.3 (2002): 219-258.

Magness, Jodi. “Samson in the Synagogue.” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 39.1 (2013):

32–39, 66–67.

Fine, Steven. “Iconoclasm.” *Bible Review* 16.5 (2000): 32-43, 55.

Dvorjetski, Estee. “Healing Waters.” *Biblical Archaeology Review* 30.4 (2004): 16-27, 60.

**Key Terms:**

*Aramaic:* Script adapted from Phoenician alphabet during 8th century BCE, read right to left.

*Bet ha-kneset:* “synagogue,” may refer to the building or place of meeting for worship/religious instruction, or the congregation of people for the purpose of worship/religious instruction.

*Bema/Bimah:* Raised platform in the synagogue on which the Torah is read on the Sabbath and festivals.

**Mosaic themes and images:** *Ancestors* (i.e. Adar, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Hananiah, Mishael, and ‘Azariah), *Ethrog* (yellow citron), *Helios* (personification of the sun), *Lulav* (palm branch), *Menorah, Odysseus, Quadriga* (Chariot drawn by four horses), *Shofar* (ram’s horn),and *Zodiac* (derived from Greek ζῳδιακὸς κύκλος, or “circle of animals”).

**Outside Research:**

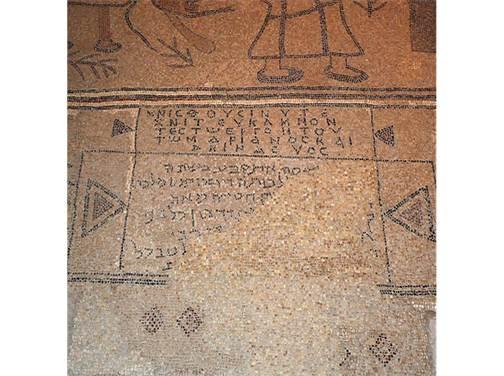
Magness, Jodi. “Heaven on Earth: Helios and the Zodiac Cycle in Ancient Palestinian Synagogues.” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 59 (2005): 1-52.

Rogoff, Mike. “The Hammat Tiberias' synagogue floor mosaic.” *Haaretz.*

Accessed on May 3, 2014. [http://www.haaretz.com/travel-in-israel/tourist-tip-of- the-day/.premium-1.554419](http://www.haaretz.com/travel-in-israel/tourist-tip-of-%20%09the-day/.premium-1.554419)

Shanks, Hershel. “First Person: The Sun God in the Synagogue.” *Biblical Archaeology Society*. Accessed April 29, 2014. [http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/ancient-israel/first- person- the-sun-god-in-the-synagogue/](http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/ancient-israel/first-person-the-sun-god-in-the-synagogue/).

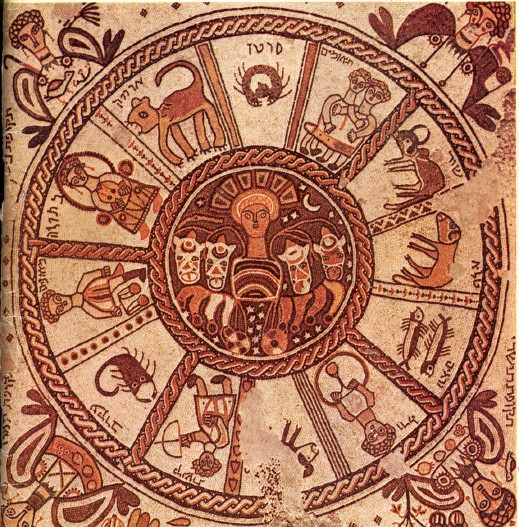
Zanger, Walter. “Jewish Worship, Pagan Symbols.” *Biblical Archaeology Society*. Accessed April 29, 2014. [http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient- cultures/ancient-israel/jewish-worship-pagan-symbols/](http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/ancient-cultures/ancient-israel/jewish-worship-pagan-symbols/).

**Images:**

****

*Ein Gedi inscription Beth Alpha inscription*

****

****

*Beth Alpha mosaic Hamat Tiberias mosaic*