



# JUDAISM AND ROME

## *Re-thinking Judaism's Encounter with the Roman Empire*

<http://judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr>

### The Project

Scholars have studied the history of the relationship between Rome and the Jewish people in Antiquity from many angles. Traditionally, they have focused mainly on the political and military confrontation between the two, on legal aspects of Jewish life in the Roman empire, and on the image of Rome in Jewish literature. In the last decade, scholarship has turned to a new research agenda less focused on conflict, along two intertwined lines of enquiry: 1) the Romanness of the Jews who lived in the Roman empire, and, in particular, that of the Palestinian Rabbis; 2) the impact of Roman values, norms and institutions upon Judaism, mainly through the study of Jewish literary texts. The ERC project “Judaism and Rome” builds upon this new trend of scholarship. Its starting point or fundamental hypothesis is that Roman imperialism represented a particular challenge for the Jews, even if the history of Israel was already rich in episodes of imperial domination. The project focuses on three sub-themes: Power, Law and Citizenship (or membership with a given group), and examines the Jewish responses to the challenge of Rome in these three areas. However, the project is not limited to the study of Jewish perspectives alone, and does not explore the Judeo-Roman relationship in a vacuum. In order to better comprehend the specificity of the Jewish responses to Rome, we use a comparative approach, comparing the Jewish responses with those of the Greeks and other peoples dominated by Rome, as well as to those of the Christians until the 4<sup>th</sup> and even the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE.

### The Team

Prof. Katell Berthelot currently leads a group of 5 post-doctoral researchers contracted by the *CNRS* and based at the *Maison Méditerranéenne des Sciences de l'Homme*, Aix-Marseille Université. Under her supervision, each member of the team produces entries for the website related to his/her fields of specialisation. Caroline Barron is in charge of the Latin inscriptions, Aitor Blanco Pérez focuses on the Greek epigraphic sources of the eastern Mediterranean, Kimberly Fowler works on Christian writers, Marie Roux is specialised in Late Antiquity and Roman historiography, and Yael Wilfand works on the rabbinic sources. Previously, Samuele Rocca also belonged to the project and studied Greek literary sources, architecture and numismatics. In addition to these contracted researchers, “Judaism and Rome” has established an interdisciplinary network of international scholars that collaborates with the organisation of workshops, conferences and the publications resulting from them. Since 2015, the project has organised scientific meetings in Oxford, Aix-en-Provence, Israel, London and Rome. Administration is currently handled by Sabrina Hanks and, previously, Jérôme Assier.

### The Website

It is conceived as a useful tool for studying Roman imperial ideology and discourses in literary records, epigraphy, numismatics, as well as through monuments, statues and other material artefacts. There is a particular focus on sources connected to the three sub-themes of the project. You will also find Jewish, Greek, Egyptian and Christian sources documenting the responses of some of the provincials of the Roman empire to the challenge of Roman domination. The website “Judaism and Rome” aims to give access to some important sources, providing as much information as possible, original text, translation, images and, most importantly, an original and detailed commentary of each source, a service that is very rarely offered on the internet, and which makes this website comparable to a rich sourcebook promoting interdisciplinary discussion between Roman History, Jewish Studies, Epigraphy, Numismatics, Classics, Patristics, or History of Christianity, among others.

### Epigraphic Sources

The project's website contains a section specifically devoted to epigraphic sources. This is, however, not a collection of inscriptions produced in Judea or by the Jewish Diaspora. Such materials will naturally be included when appropriate, but the project primarily seeks to contextualise Judaism's encounter with Roman imperialism. Inscribed stones shed crucial light on the impact of Rome on other provincial societies and religious groups and, therefore, two full-time researchers have been contracted to study this evidence. By the end of the project, we plan to have more than two hundred epigraphic entries uploaded and freely accessible to everyone signing up. While the number may seem modest, the approach is not that of an epigraphic *corpus*. Instead, inscriptions are carefully chosen as a sort of sourcebook illustrating the three key elements on which the project is focused: Power, Law and Citizenship. This high degree of selectivity results in the inclusion of iconic texts such as the dedication of the Arch of Titus, chapters of the *Res Gestae*, Nero's freedom of Greece speech, Hadrian's letters to Ephesus or the preamble of Diocletian's Edict of Prices – among many others. Nevertheless, not only grand epigraphic monuments are featured; brief inscriptions such as the honours for Haterius Nepos in Gerasa (SEG 48.2058), which illuminates the end of the Bar Kokhba revolt, have already been uploaded.

The interface of the website seeks to be user-friendly and intuitive. Each file contains technical information about the inscription (provenance, materials, measurements), the original text, translation (either new or existing) and, most important, an original commentary prepared by the members of the team. Updated bibliography, a list of keywords and images (whenever possible) are also included, as well as links to other entries on the website related to the file. By virtue of this interconnectivity, readers will be able to directly associate inscriptions with other types of material evidence and literary sources. The website is also making use of additional online resources such as *EAGLE*, *Pleiades*, *papyri.info*, *I.Aphrodisias2007* or the *Roman Provincial Coinage* projects at the moment. We are looking forward to establishing more collaborations!

*Judaism-and-rome.cnrs.fr* is still a work-in-progress and new epigraphic files are uploaded almost every week. REGISTRATION is required to access the original texts and translations due to copyright issues. However, all the finalised entries can be found not only on the website but also through usual search engines such as Google. Given its online character and interface, we believe that this website will prove helpful not solely to scholars in the different fields of Antiquity, but especially to students with more limited access to bibliographical resources. While academic and research-based, our entries try to make this material accessible to the wider public, in clear English and translating/transliterating terms from ancient languages. We welcome all comments at this developing stage and truly hope to see many of you, your colleagues and students on our website soon!

*Shalom, Salve, Χαίρε*  
שלום



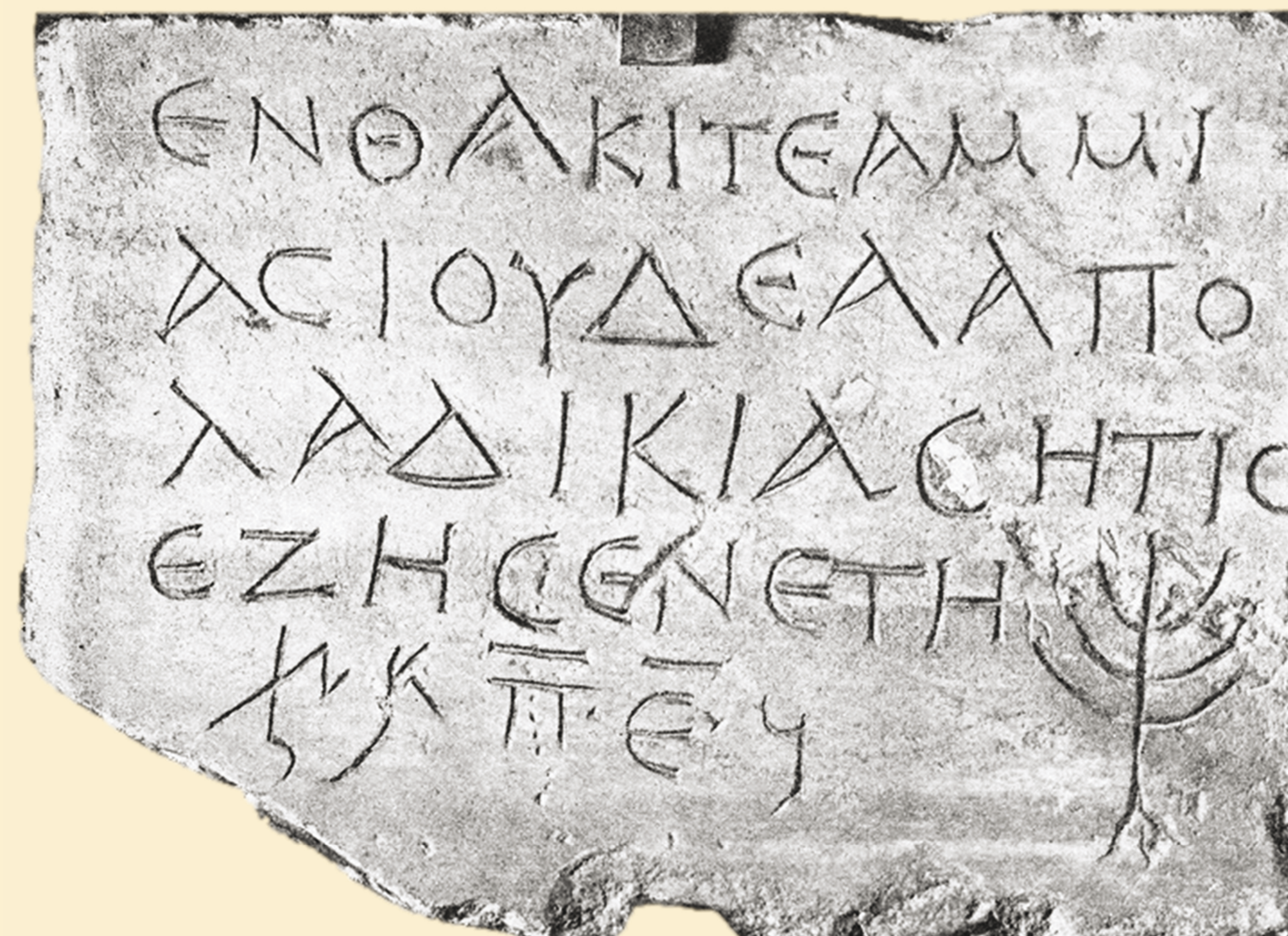
Fortress of Masada

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b6/Aerial\\_view\\_of\\_Masada\\_%28Israel%29\\_01.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/b6/Aerial_view_of_Masada_%28Israel%29_01.jpg)



Arch of Titus

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7d/Arch\\_of\\_Titus\\_Menorah.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/7d/Arch_of_Titus_Menorah.png)



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[http://www.edr-edr.it/foto\\_epigrafi/immagini\\_uso/140/140560.jpg](http://www.edr-edr.it/foto_epigrafi/immagini_uso/140/140560.jpg)



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