

Robert points out that although archēgos is not attested elsewhere as a Jewish title, the Latin principalis, which occurs in an inscription from Moesia, could be a parallel:

CII 681.

Ioses arcisna
2 et principales
filius Maximini
4 Pannoni sibi et
Qyriae coiugi
6 sui vivo suo me-
moria dedica-
vit.

L. 1: read arcisynagogus (ἀρχισυνάγωγος).
L. 2: read principalis.
L. 5: read coniugi.
Ll. 6-7: read suae vivo se memoriam.⁷

Ioses, head of the synagogue and leader, son of Maximinus Pannonus, dedicated this monument, while still alive, for his wife and himself.

Thus, Robert considers the title archēgissa to be the female equivalent of archēgos, which occurs only once in the Jewish inscriptions, but has its Latin equivalent in principalis. Robert is in no way disturbed by an ancient Jewish woman bearing an official title; on the contrary, he refers to other Jewish women bearing titles in inscriptions.

Robert's suggestion that Peristeria is a proper noun and archēgissa a title is convincing. In order to interpret archēgissa in the context of ancient Judaism, a study of possible meanings is required. Since archēgissa is, to my knowledge, a hapax legomenon, the search for its meaning must concentrate on archēgos (m. and f.), the word from which it was derived.

The only other Jewish inscription found on this site, CII 696a, a stele with a seven-branched menorah, a lulav and a dove, does not provide further information about the organizational structure of the congregation:

Μνήμα Σαου-
2 λ καὶ τῆς αὐτοῦ
γαμετῆς Ἄννας.

The tomb of Saul and his wife Anna.

**B. Archēgos in Ancient Literature
and Inscriptions**

Archēgos appears both as an adjective, meaning "beginning," "originating," "primary," "leading," "chief," and as a noun,

meaning "founder" (as of a family), "ancestral heroine," "prince," "chief," "first cause," "originator" or "originating power."⁸ An archēgos could be a deity, and thus Plato reports that the Egyptians said that Neith was the founder of Sais in Egypt, while the Greeks said it was Athena,⁹ and the daughters of Ascopus (Salamis, Aegina, Thebe, Sinope, etc.) were considered to be the ancestral heroines of cities.¹⁰ Archēgos could also be the human ancestor of a tribe or family.¹¹ The word can also mean "leader," and it is in this sense that Eusebius calls his opponent Marcellus "leader of the godless heretics,"¹² and an inscription from Dijon, France refers to a man named Chyndonax as archēgos of the priests (CIG 6798).

In the LXX, archēgos translates a number of Hebrew words, but most often r'ōš, in the sense of military, political or clan leader (Exod 6:14; Num 13:3; 14:4; 25:4; Deut 33:21; Judg 9:44; 1 Chr 5:24; 8:28; 12:21; Neh 7:70-71; 11:16-17; Lam 2:10). Archēgos as a translation of qāšīn, "chief," "ruler" (Judg 11:6, 11; Isa 3:6,7) and šar, "prince," "official," "governor" (Judg 5:15; 1 Chr 26:26; Neh 2:9; Isa 30:4) is also relatively frequent. Josephus uses archēgos five times, three times in the sense "originator," "author" (of crimes: Ant. 7.9.3§207; of trouble: Ant. 20.6.3§136; of legal violations: Ag. Ap. 1.270), and twice in the sense of "ancestor," "founder of our race" (Ag. Ap. 1.71,130). Philo uses archēgos in the meaning "leader," "chief" (Leg. alleg. 3.175 [Num 14:4; Hebrew: r'ōš]; De somn. 1.89 [Num 25:4; Hebrew: r'ōš hā'am]); much more common in Philonic usage is the related archēgetēs, which refers to Adam as the founder of the human race (De opific. 79,136,142), Seth, "the head of our race" (De poster. 42), God, as the originator of the universe (De ebriet. 42), the twelve sons of Jacob (De fuga 73), etc.

In the NT Christ is the archēgos, i.e., originator of life (Acts 3:15), of salvation (Heb 2:10), and of faith (Heb 12:2), as well as archēgos kai sōtēr, i.e., leader and savior (Acts 5:31).

This survey has yielded three basic meanings of archēgos:

1. ancestral hero or heroine, founder;
2. originator;
3. leader, chief.

C. The Meaning of archēgissa/archēgos in Jewish Inscriptions

For the two archēgissa/archēgos inscriptions (CII 696b, 731g), the second meaning cannot apply, for one must be the originator of something, and in neither inscription is there a