

*For Nelle Morton  
and Jane Dempsey Douglass,  
in gratitude.*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS . . . . . ix  
 INTRODUCTION . . . . . 1

PART ONE  
 THE INSCRIPTIONAL EVIDENCE

I. WOMEN AS HEADS OF SYNAGOGUES . . . . . 5

    A. The Inscriptional Evidence for Women  
     as Heads of Synagogues . . . . . 5  
     EXCURSUS: What is an Honorific Title?

    B. The Meaning of "Head of the Synagogue" . . . . . 15

        1. Literary References to the Title

        2. Inscriptional References to the Title

        3. Reconstruction of the Office of Head  
         of the Synagogue

        4. The Role of Women Synagogue Heads

II. WOMAN AS LEADER . . . . . 35

    A. The Inscriptional Evidence for a  
     Woman as Leader . . . . . 35

    B. Archēgos in Ancient Literature and  
     Inscriptions . . . . . 36

    C. The Meaning of archēgissa/archēgos  
     in Jewish Inscriptions . . . . . 37

III. WOMEN AS ELDERS . . . . . 41

    A. The Inscriptional Evidence for Women as Elders . . 41

    B. The Meaning of "Elder" . . . . . 46

        1. Literary References to the Title

        2. Inscriptional References to the Title

        3. Reconstruction of the Office of Elder

        4. The Role of Women Elders

IV. WOMEN AS MOTHERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE . . . . . 57

    A. The Evidence for Mothers of the Synagogue . . . . 57

        1. The Inscriptional Evidence

        2. The Literary Evidence

    B. The Meaning of "Mother/Father" and  
     "Mother/Father of the Synagogue" . . . . . 64

        1. The Received Scholarly Opinion

        2. Further Literary References to the Title

        3. Further Inscriptional References to the Title

        4. Possible Non-Jewish Parallels