

## Interlinear Transliteration and Reconstruction of Plate 538 in 3 Fragments of Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever Dead Sea Scrolls

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### ABSTRACT

Interlinear Transliteration of Plate 538 in 3 Fragments of Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever (Dead Sea Scrolls) based on the original text in 1st or 2nd Century Greek (Roman Period). The original manuscript is written on parchment in Uncial Greek Script is a translation of the Zechariah from Hebrew and was discovered in the “Cave of Horror”. Plate 538 is of special significance for translators and Bible scholars in that while being a translation written in Greek, the text preserves the Tetragrammaton in its Paleo-Hebrew (Pre-Babylonian Exile) script. The preservation of the Tetragrammaton within the Greek text gives archeological and linguistic proof that the Tetragrammaton was not only known but also in use among the early Christians and in the early Christian congregation. This paper is designed to provide a reconstructed text as a template for Biblical translations with a greater level of accuracy and has been cross referenced with existing Greek and Hebrew manuscripts in order to establish an authentic reading.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Plate 538 of the Greek Minor Prophets is part of the collection of Dead Sea Scrolls currently under the masterful care of the Israel Antiquities Authority. The scroll is common of the era being parchment with Greek Uncial script and is a translation of Hebrew Masoretic texts for either personal use or for the sake of proselytising. It is part of a collection of 981 texts which have been excavated in the areas surrounding Khirbet Qumran (خربة قمران/قومران) from 1946 onward.

Plate 538 is comprised of three fragments containing portions of Zechariah chapters 8 and 9. An interesting feature of these scrolls is the retention of the Tetragrammaton in its Paleo-Hebrew form  corresponding to the English letters YHWH. The Tetragrammaton will be rendered in its modern

equivalent Jehovah as will other terms which may have more archaic equivalents. The reasons for rendering the Tetragrammaton as Jehovah are discussed in great detail in “*A study of the translation of the Tetragrammaton יהוה : its phonetics, phonology, semantics and argument for rendering in vernacular languages*”.

Another interesting feature is that the Book of Zechariah was completed in 518 (B.C.E/BC) and foretold the coming destruction of Tyre. This was finally accomplished by Alexander the Great in 332 (B.C.E /BC) , about 186 years after the prophecy and hence Christians and Jews alike would have found its fulfilment significant and strengthening.

It is sincerely hoped that this transliteration of Plate 538 will assist in the understanding of ancient Near-East literature and history. Painstaking work has gone into creating a clear, concise and accurate rendering of the original.

Numbers correspond to modern numbers in Standard Bible Translations and letters appearing in brackets are reconstructed from other texts so as to complete the text and provide a definition, the original being too fragmented.

The basic method of reconstruction followed a direct technique for firstly ascertaining the original root text in a three stage process. In this case, the original text from which it was translated was Hebrew which allowed for a semantic cross comparison (the Hebrew

Aleppo Codex). After this cross comparison to validate the authenticity and accuracy of the translation, a second cross comparison was done, in this instance a cross comparison of existing Greek codices/ manuscripts (Apostolic Bible Polyglot).

For clarity of readings Strong's Concordance was consulted in correspondence with trusted English translations in order to affirm usage (American Standard Version, New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, Young's Literal Translation).



**Plate 538 full picture - Original picture by Shai Halevi, 2013**

**Plate 538, Frag 2 B-365056 Photo By Shai Halevi, 2013**

This fragment contains too few letters to locate within the rest of the verses. Possibly lines 2,3 of Zechariah 8:20 & 1st line of verse 21 based on relative position of letters.



ελ

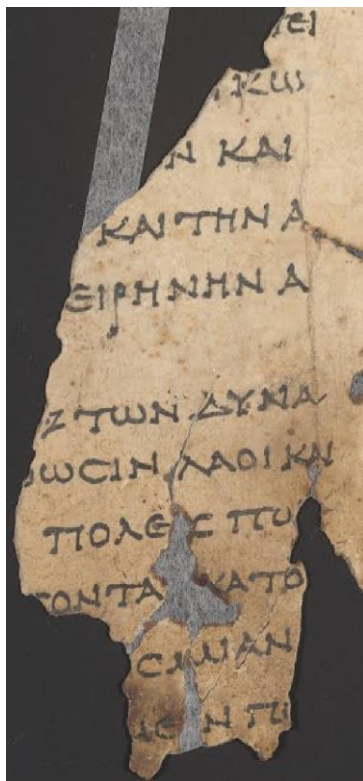
ον

Line 3 Indecipherable due to damage.

ε-

**Plate 538, Frag 1 B-370936 Photo By Shai Halevi, 2013**

**Zech 8:19 line 4 start**



(νησ)τει

fasting

(ο)ικω

House

(ευφροσυνη)ν και

gladness and

και την α(ληθειαν)

and the truth

ειρηνην α(γαπησατε)

peace love

(20) ~~ελε~~ των δυνα(μεων)

Jehovah of/the armies/power

(ελ)θωσιν λαοι και

There shall come people and

πολεις πο(λ)

The cities city/village

21 (ελευ)σοντα(ι) κατο(ικουντες)

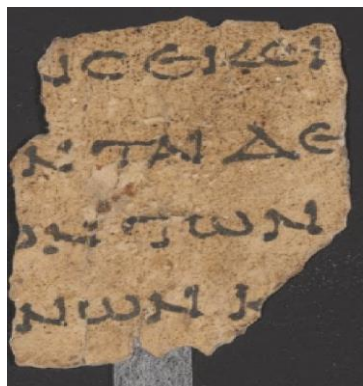
will come inhabit/ settle

(προ)ς μιαν

Towards/ with one

(πορευθω)μεν πο(ρευομενοι)

Travel/ journey move along/go



**Plate 538, Frag 3 B-365058 Photo By Shai Halevi, 2013**

Zech 8:23

(ημερ)αις εκει(νας)

Day (day time) yonder

(επι)λαβ(ω)νται δε(κα)

Take hold of            ten

(πασ)ων            των

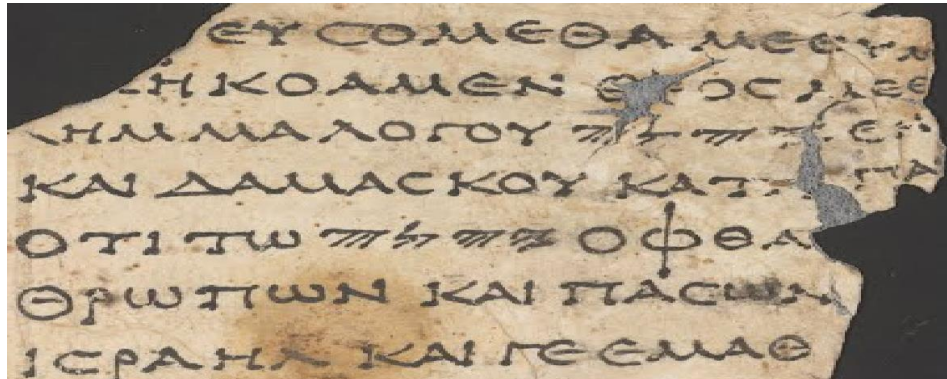
Whole/ all            the

(εθ)νων            κ(αι)

Races (ethnic groups) even

**Plate 538, Frag 1 B-370936**

**Photo By Shai Halevi, 2013**



(πορ)ευσομεθα μεθ υμ(ων)

will go with you

(ακ)ηκοαμεν θεος μεθ (υμων)

Listen to God with you

9:1 Λημμα λογου **ⲉⲃⲉⲏ** εν

Assuming word of Jehovah in

και δαμασκου καταπαυ(σις)

also Damascus rest/dwell

οτι τω **ⲉⲃⲉⲏ** οφθαλ(μος αν)

Because the Jehovah's eyes on

θρωπων και πασων φ(υλων)

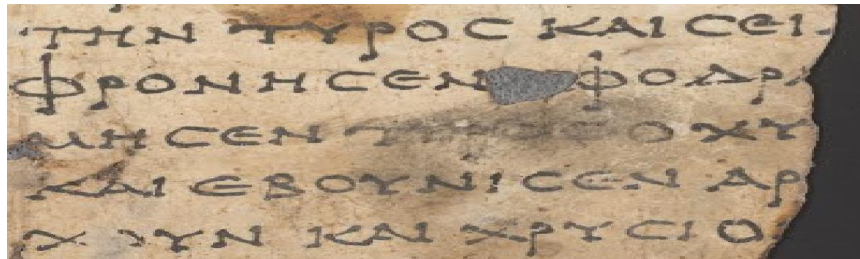
beings/mankind(?) and every tribe

ισραηλ (2). και γε εμαθ(οριζει)

Isreal (2) and which borders

Plate 538, Frag 1 B-370936

Photo By Shai Halevi, 2013



την τυρος και σειδ(ων)

the Tyre also Sidon

Φρονησεν (σ)φοδρ

wise exceedingly

(3) (ωκοδο)μησεν τυρος οχυ(ρωματα)

build Tyre a fortress

και εβουνισεν αρ(γυριον)

also/and having silver

χουν και χρυσιον(ως)

Dust even gold that

Plate 538, Frag 1 B-370936 Photo By Shai Halevi, 2013

Continuing from Zechariah 9:3



εξοδων (4) ιδου **ⲉⲓⲉⲓⲓ**

Street (4) Look! Jehovah

(κληρονο)μησει αυτη και π(αταξει)

Will inherit Her (referring to Tyre) even smite

θαλασσαν δυναμι(ν)

Sea/lake forcefully

αυτη εν πυρι κ(α)ταν(αλωθησε)ται.

her in fire consume-utterly

## 2. CONCLUSION

The Dead Sea Scroll provide a treasure trove of linguistic and spiritual value, Plate 538 is no exception. It provides historical, linguistic and archaeological evidence of Christian worship in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Centuries and is an irrefutable testament to the use of the Tetragrammaton. By implementing the three step textual reconstruction as utilized for the transliteration and reconstruction of this plate, high quality and authentic translations can be produced which increase Biblical understanding and that of Koine Greek.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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