

The Jerusalem Temple Warning Inscription



Temple Warning Inscription
 Photo from: [Frey](#) (1936-52) Vol. 2

DESCRIPTION

The two copies of this inscription seem to have been identical—with the exception of a couple letters. The first copy (discovered in 1871) is virtually complete, with a few damaged letters—see the photo above. The second copy (discovered in 1935) is a fragment from the center of the inscription, showing partial words on six lines.

Language:	Greek
Medium:	limestone(?)

<i>Size:</i>	33.5cm long 22.5cm high 14.5cm thick
<i>Length:</i>	<i>1st copy:</i> 7 lines of writing <i>2nd copy:</i> 6 lines
<i>Genre:</i>	Warning Inscription
<i>Approximate Date:</i>	1st century CE
<i>Place of Discovery:</i>	Jerusalem
<i>Dates of Discovery:</i>	<i>1st copy:</i> 1871 <i>2nd copy:</i> 1935
<i>Excavators:</i>	<i>1st copy:</i> C. S. Clermont- Ganneau <i>2nd copy:</i> J. H. Iliffe
<i>Current Locations:</i>	<i>1st copy:</i> Imperial New Museum, Istanbul <i>2nd copy:</i> Palestine Archaeological Museum
<i>Inscription Numbers:</i>	<i>CIJ 2.1400</i> <i>(Corpus Inscriptionum</i> <i>Judaicarum)</i> <i>OGIS II.598</i> <i>(Orientis Graeci</i> <i>Inscriptionis Selectae)</i>

GREEK TEXT

*(The SYMBOL font is required
to display this as Greek)*

TRANSLATION

*by K. C. Hanson & Douglas E.
Oakman*

ΜΗΘΕΝΑ . ΑΛΛΟΓΕΝΗ .
ΕΙΣΠΟ-
ΡΕΥΕΣΘΑΙ . ΕΝΤΟΣ . ΤΟΥ . ΠΕ-
ΡΙ . ΤΟ . ΙΕΡΟΝ . ΤΡΥΦΑΚΤΟΥ .
ΚΑΙ
ΠΕΡΙΒΟΛΟΥ . ΟΣ . Δ . ΑΝ . ΛΗ-
ΦΘΗ . ΕΑΥΤΩΙ . ΑΙΤΙΟΣ . ΕΣ-
ΤΑΙ . ΔΙΑ . ΤΟ . ΕΧΑΚΟΛΟΥ-
ΘΕΙΝ . ΘΑΝΑΤΟΝ

No outsider shall enter
the protective enclosure
around the sanctuary. And
whoever is caught will
only have himself
to blame for the
ensuing death

Note: Since HTML tends to crowd letters (as did many ancient scribes!), I have inserted periods between the words for clarity. Furthermore, the original does not include hyphens to show word-breaks.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. To what enclosure does this inscription refer?

2. What do we learn about this warning from Josephus? See Josephus, *War* 5.193-194; 6.124-126; *Antiquities* 15.417-418.

3. How does this inscription relate to Israelite purity standards? How many zones of purity were observed in the Jerusalem temple? Read Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.410-420.

4. What does this inscription explain about the anger directed at Paul in Acts 21:27-36?

5. What sort of "law enforcement" was available in the temple?

6. Do we know anything about the purity concerns at temples elsewhere in the Mediterranean world? Compare the article by [Bickerman](#).

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