

The Muse

The Newsletter of the Museum of Biblical & Sacred Writings

LA MIRADA, CA

AUGUST 2014

VOLUME 4

THE MYSTERY OF THE TRIGLYPH

By WILLIAM WELTY

The logo for the International Standard Version of the Bible (ISV) is a triglyph of three historic symbols.

The upper symbol is the *Menorah* of the ancient Jerusalem Temple, which was used by the Israel of antiquity as a symbol of the nation.

The center symbol is the *Magen David*, often called the “Star of David.” This also became a common symbol of Israel, especially after Israel and the Jerusalem Temple were destroyed as the result of the Roman-Jewish War, from 66-72 CE. Today the *Magen David* is the official national symbol of the State of Israel. It appears as a symbol for a number of Israeli organizations, and, most notably, is seen on Israel’s national flag. Some scholars believe that the *Magen David* was not commonly used as a symbol of the Jewish people before the 12th Century CE. However, that view may be changing.

The lower symbol, the *ICHTHUS*, is an image of a fish. This symbol was used by the early Christians to represent Christian believers. In the Greek language the word “fish” (*ichthus*) is an acrostic that stands for the title, “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.”

The ISV triglyph is a combination of all three historic images, symbolizing the historic roots from which the Church developed. In the Spring of 1996 while visiting Israel, the ISV Foundation’s Executive Director, William Welty, observed the logo at a Christian gift shop in Tiberias, Israel. The owners of the gift shop claimed that the logo was discovered in a cave on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. So how old is the triglyph?

During the early 1980’s, George Giacomakis, Director of the Museum of Biblical & Sacred Writings, was Director of the Institute of Holy Land Studies (now Jerusalem

University College) on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. The triglyph came to his attention through his friendship with several Greek Orthodox monks who were associated with the Greek Orthodox Seminary & Monastery on Mt. Zion. These monks stated that during informal and unofficial archaeological searches by a Greek Orthodox monk, who had since passed away, several clay and stone artifacts inscribed with the triglyph were found in a Mt. Zion cave. Other artifacts in the cave seemed to date back to at least the Byzantine period (5th Century CE to the Middle Ages). If this is accurate, then the *Magen David* existed as a Jewish symbol and part of the triglyph almost a thousand years prior to the traditionally accepted date for the first attestations of it.

Because the triglyph is a historic symbol, it is in the public domain. Accordingly, the ISV Foundation claims no copyright ownership of the generic logo, as it exists on various archaeological artifacts. However, the ISV Foundation has registered the rendering that appears on the website as a trademark to indicate the ISV Foundation’s



exclusive rights to to utilize the image of the triglyph for use in Bible translations and study tools produced by various organizations.

George Giacomakis, Director
Jessica Resha, Editor

12625 La Mirada Boulevard, Suite 101, La Mirada, CA 90638 | 562.944.0351 x 5160 | www.sacredwritings.org