

Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae

Volume I: Jerusalem

Part 1: 1–704

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43. Ossuary of Yehud with Hebrew and Aramaic inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Limestone ossuary, façade and two short sides with unfinished decoration, tracings of rosettes; red wash; flat lid. Inscription in cursive Jewish script incised shallowly on smoothed back side, in a wavy line; apices and serifs ornament some letters; medial instead of final *nun*.

Meas.: h 31, w 60, d 27 cm.

Findspot: Ammunition Hill.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1969-162. Autopsy: 1987.

יהוד בר שבט מין בת אלון

Translit.: yhwḏ br
šbt myn
bt 'lwn

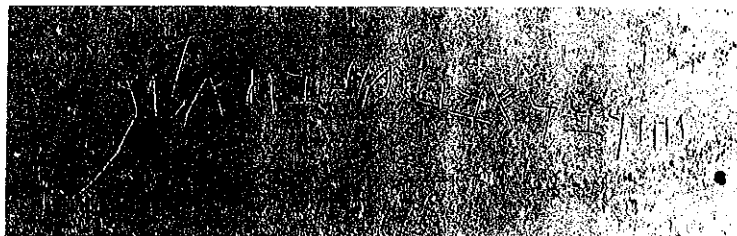


fig. 43

*Yehud son of
Shevat(?) from Beth Alon.*

Comm.: This is apparently the only inscribed ossuary from 20 recovered in 1969 and 1971 from two adjacent tombs northeast of Shmuel Ha-Navi Street (17145/13380), never properly published. The inscription mixes Aramaic and Hebrew. The first name is a hypocoristic of Yehuda; see parallels at nos. 55, 450, 543. The father's name is so far unparalleled in the Jewish onomasticon, and even its pronunciation is uncertain; Ilan, *Lexicon* I 413 thinks that it is a nickname, based on the Hebrew word *shevet*, "rod, staff". The final three words indicate the origin of the deceased, with *myn* spelled with a *yod*, and *b(y)t* without. The place is not known.

Bibl.: Rahmani, CJO no. 293 (ed. pr.). – HA 30, 1969, 22 (Hebr.); ESI 12, 1994, 58f.; Hachlili, *Funerary Customs* 196f., 210; Kloner - Zissu, *Necropolis* 433.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

44.-49. Rock-hewn loculus tomb in Giv'at Ha-Mivtar, near 53 Midbar Sinai Street

A single-chambered rock-hewn loculus tomb was discovered in 1971 during construction work near 53 Midbar Sinai Street in Giv'at Ha-Mivtar. The chamber is organized around a central pit surrounded by ledges, with nine loculi in three of the walls; other loculi were destroyed by the construction work. Sixteen ossuaries were discovered, 10 inside loculi, most of which were still sealed. Six of the boxes

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fig. 42.1



fig. 42.2

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(ed. pr.).
59, 1936,

AY/JJP

are inscribed, four in Jewish script and two in Greek. The bones of more than 50 people were found inside the ossuaries (Kloner - Zissu contra ed. pr.), in the pit and in the loculi. Kloner - Zissu estimate that as many as five generations were buried in the cave. Finds in the tomb date its use to 1 c. BCE–1 c. CE.

44. Ossuary of Avshalom with Hebrew/Aramaic inscription, 1 c. BCE–1 c. CE

Limestone ossuary, façade decorated with two six-petaled rosettes separated by lily plant on pedestal of five steps; zigzag frame; ornamentation apparently unfinished. Inscription in formal, carefully executed Jewish script above right rosette.

Meas.: h 31, w 50.5, d 27 cm; l. 14.5 cm, letters 2.5–4 cm.

Pres. loc: Exhibited at Yad Ha-Sh'mona, IAA inv. no. 1970-197. Autopsy: 3 February 2009.

אבשלום

Translit.: 'bšlwm

Avshalom.



fig. 44.1

Comm.: The biblical name Avshalom, while not common in this period, is found in no. 347, in Josephus, in 1-2 Maccabees and in documents from the Judaean Desert (see Ilan, *Lexicon* I 60 for references).

Bibl.: A. Kloner, in: *Second Temple Period 191-224 at 201f. C* (Hebr.) (ed. pr.). – Id., *Qadmoniot* 19/20, 1972, 202f. (Hebr.); id., in: *Jerusalem Revealed* 69f.; Rahmani, *CJO* no. 411; Kloner, *Survey of Jerusalem*, 2001, 63*, site 74c; Peleg, *Archaeology* II 178-83; Kloner - Zissu, *Necropolis* 439.

Photo: A. and N. Graicer.

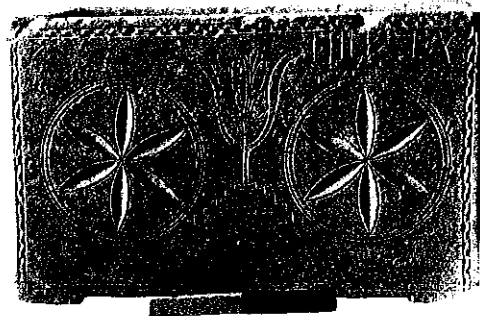


fig. 44.2

JJP/HM

45. Ossuary with "House of David" inscription in Hebrew and Aramaic, 1 c. BCE–1 c. CE

Limestone ossuary with flat lid, façade decorated with two six-petaled rosette panels, zigzag frame. Inscription (a) in crude Jewish script above right rosette. A second, tiny inscription (b) in formal script on right rim.

Meas.: h 61, w 68, d 28 cm.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1971-410. Autopsy: 1987.

(a) שלם הלל
(b) שלבידוד

App. crit.: שלם/חננ Rahmani.

Translit.: (a) šlm hll
(b) šlbydwd

(a) *Shalom. Hillel(?)*.
(b) *Of the House of David(?)*.



fig. 45.1 (a)



fig. 45.2 (b)

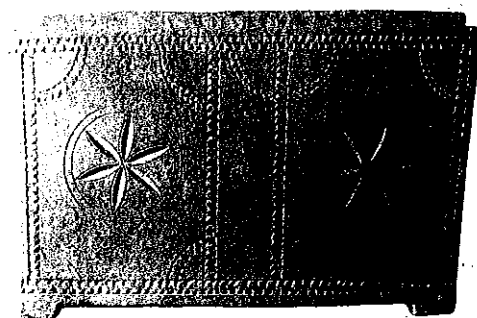


fig. 45.3

Comm.: This ossuary contained the bones of a male ca. 25 years of age. The inscription (a) on the front, above the rosette, is hard to make out. The text offered here is tentative. Shalom is a common woman's name for the period (if the word is not a greeting). The second name, if it is Hillel, the name of the famous rabbinic sage, is found, outside of rabbinic literature, only on a few documents from the Judaean Desert (see Ilan, *Lexicon* I 88f. for references). But this word could also be דלל *dll*. Rahmani read, hesitantly, חננ *hnn*. By contrast, the inscription (b) on the rim is easy to decipher but difficult to interpret. Certainly *šl*, translated here "of", was not a separate word in the period, but proclitic, the equivalent of Hebrew *š* *l-*. The next two letters, *by*, can mean either "son of", as in the expression *byrby* (cf. Avigad, *Beth She'arim* III 179 no. 16), or more likely, "house of", the final *tav* having been dropped, as commonly in Aramaic (Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. *בי*). Thus this text combines Hebrew and Aramaic. Yet everything depends on the interpretation of the last three letters, *dwd*, which can be taken as "uncle", or as "David". Kloner (ed. pr.) favors the former, citing the possible parallel from the Babylonian Talmud *דבי דודי dby dwdy* (Yeb. 21b), which is however much later than the date of this ossuary. Yet if "David" was intended, the reference would be to "the house of David", i.e. descent from the biblical king (David as a personal name is otherwise unattested for this period). There seem to have been in this period families claiming such descent (Flusser). The "sons of David" had a special role in bringing wood to the Temple, according to the Mishna (M. Ta'an, 4,5). Yet a

claim of Davidic descent would have had particularly poignant significance in the 1 c., when Judaea witnessed many competing messianic figures and movements. A later, unreliable talmudic tradition connected the sage Hillel to the David line (cf. J. Liver, in: *Encyclopaedia Judaica* V 459-63; this article has not been updated in the 2007 edition to include the present ossuary); note also the name Avshalom in no. 44, the name of one of King David's sons; but the connection of both of these names to David is probably a coincidence in the present context. The fact that this small inscription was placed on the rim, a rare phenomenon (parallels in nos. 80, 104, 400, 454), indicates that it was not meant to be seen without unusual effort or special knowledge.

Bibl.: A. Kloner, in: *Second Temple Period, 191-224 at 205ff. M (Hebr.)* (ed. pr.). – D. Flusser, *Israel Museum Journal* 5, 1986, 37-40; H. Geva, *NEAEHL* 2, 755; Rahmani, *CJO* no. 430; D. Flusser, *Jesus*, 1997, 180-6; Kloner, *Survey of Jerusalem*, 2001, 63(e), site 74c; Evans 103f.; see bibl. no. 44.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

④6 Ossuary of Iose with Greek inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Plain limestone ossuary, flat lid. Greek inscription written vertically, descending, on right edge of one of long sides; surface is rough-finished. Letters insecurely formed; middle stroke of *epsilon* is disproportionately long, at an oblique downwards angle; lunate *sigma*, w-shaped *omega*.

Meas.: h 28, w 76, d 37 cm; l. 9.5 cm, letters 2-3 cm.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1971-424. Autopsy: 14 June 2007.

ΙΩΣΕ

App. crit.: Ιωσσε Kloner.

Ἰωσέ

Iose.

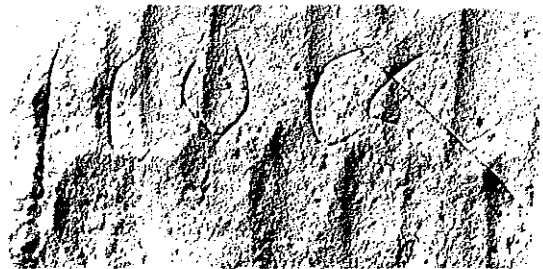


fig. 46

Comm.: One variant spelling of the common name Joseph, see Ilan, *Lexicon* I 150-68.

Bibl.: A. Kloner, in: *Second Temple Period, 191-224 at 202 D (Hebr.)* (ed. pr.). – Rahmani, *CJO* no. 444; see bibl. no. 44.

Photo: IAA.

JJP

47. Ossuary of Kyria with Hebrew/Aramaic inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Plain limestone ossuary, flat lid. Inscription in formal Jewish script, poorly executed, on one of the short sides, under the rim, in a slightly ascending line.

Meas.: h 26, w 39, d 23 cm.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1970-200. Autopsy: 1987.

קריה

Translit.: qryh

Kyria.

Comm.: Kyria is a name here, not a title, given the small size of the box, intended for a child. The box contained the bones of three children, all aged one year or less, and Kyria could be one of them. Alternatively, Kyria could be the name of the mother of one or more of the three unfortunate infants.

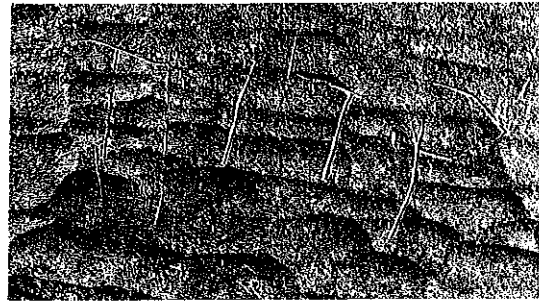


fig. 47

Bibl.: A. Kloner, in: Second Temple Period 191-224 at 203 J (Hebr.) (ed. pr.). – Rahmani, CJO no. 414; see bibl. no. 44.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

48. Ossuary of Mares with Greek inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Plain limestone ossuary with flat lid. Greek inscription finely incised to medium depth in center of underside of lid, which is smoothed; lunate *sigma* and *epsilon*.

Meas.: h 29, w 47, d 24 cm; l. 12 cm, letters 3-5 cm.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1970-199. Autopsy: 14 June 2007.

ΜΑΡΕΣ

Máres

Mares.

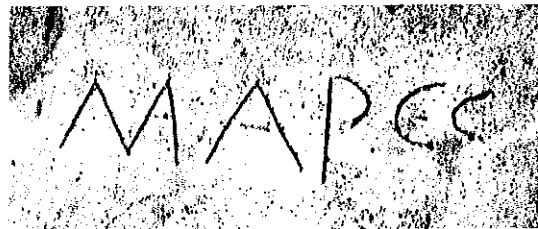


fig. 48

Comm.: The inscription records a known male Jewish name, *Máres*, here spelled with *epsilon* instead of *eta*, as no. 241; cf. the name also in nos. 262, 571, and see

comm. at no. 241 for further instances and bibliography. It is unnecessary to suppose, with the ed. pr., a name derived from $\mu\epsilon\rho\acute{\iota}\varsigma$ = Hebrew *hlq*, thus an abbreviation of the Hebrew name *hlqyhw*.

Bibl.: A. Kloner, in: Second Temple Period 191-224 at 202f. (Hebr.) (ed. pr.). – Rahmani, CJO no. 413; see bibl. no. 44.

Photo: IAA.

JJP

④9. Ossuary of Maria with Hebrew/Aramaic inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Limestone ossuary, façade decorated with two panels with 12-petaled rosettes, separated by branch on pedestal, double zigzag frame. On back side (smoothed), one name written in formal script, a second name written in cursive script, scratched out with several strokes.

Meas.: h 34, w 66, d 26.5 cm.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1971-408. Autopsy: 1987.

מריה [שמעון]

App. crit.: קריה Kloner, Rahmani.

Translit.: mryh [šm'wn]

Maria. Shim'on.

Comm.: "Shim'on", written in a different hand, has been scratched out: apparently the ossuary was originally intended for him, then used for Maria. But the bones of two people of indeterminate sex, ages ca. 40 and ca. 15, were found in the box (Kloner 209). Both names are highly common.

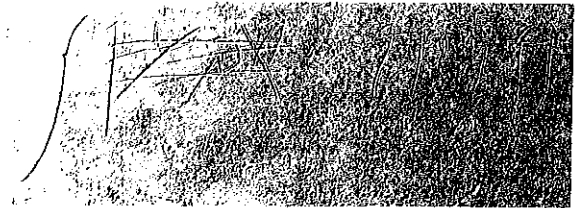


fig. 49.1

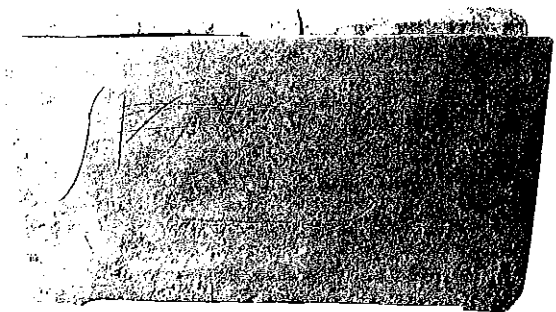


fig. 49.2

Bibl.: A. Kloner, in: Second Temple Period, 191-224 at 207ff. N (Hebr.) (ed. pr.). – Rahmani, CJO no. 428; see bibl. no. 44.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

50.-54. Burial complex in Giv'at Ha-Mivtar

Five inscribed ossuaries, all in Jewish script, were among the eight recovered from a rock-hewn burial cave complex discovered in 1968. The cave, whose entrance was sealed, consisted of two chambers, the first organized around a standing pit surrounded by ledges, with four loculi found sealed with slabs or rough stones, containing skeletons; the second, reached by two passages separated by a collection pit, had eight loculi (two in each wall), two of which were found sealed; all the ossuaries were found in this room. A total of seventeen skeletons, including one with signs of crucifixion (no. 50), were found in the ossuaries and the cave.

50. Ossuary of Yehoḥanan with Hebrew inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Plain ossuary with flat lid, smoothed surfaces. Inscription in formal Jewish script incised on one of the long sides. First word seems to have been incised in different hand from rest of inscription; fourth letter in l.3 has many erasure marks.

Meas.: h 32, w 57, d 24 cm; l. 14 cm, letters 1-8 cm.

Pres. loc: Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IAA inv. no. 1968-679. Autopsy: 26 January 2009.

יהוחנן
יהוחנן
בן חזקיל

App. crit.: l.3 הגקול *ed. pr.*; העקול Yadin.

Translit.: yhwḥnn | yhwḥnn | bn ḥzqyl

Yehoḥanan. Yehoḥanan son of Hezekil.



fig. 50

Comm.: The ossuary contained the bones of two adult males (one skeleton partial) and a 3-4-year-old child. One of the adult males had been crucified, the nail still in his heel; this, together with the ambiguous, heavily erased fourth letter in l.3, and the assumption (not impeccable) that the inscription refers to the crucified man, has given rise to different interpretations seeking to fit the inscription to the fact of the crucifixion. But it seems that the intended letter is *zayin*, thus *ḥzqil* after *bn* = "son of Ḥezkil", the father's name being a form of the biblical name Yeḥezkel (Ezekiel); this is the interpretation offered by Naveh in his commentary in the *ed. pr.*, but he printed the reading *hgqwl*; as Puech argued decisively, the inscriber incorrectly incised *gimel* and tried to change it to *zayin*. The first Yehoḥanan is incised more shallowly, with a slightly different style of letters, than the second, thus possibly by a different hand.

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abbrevia-

ii, CJO no.

JJP

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ttes, sep-
ned), one
cratched

fig. 49.1



fig. 49.2

nani, CJO

JJP/HM

Bibl.: J. Naveh, IEJ 20, 1970, 33-7 at 35 no. 4; id., EI 10, 1971, 188ff. at 189 oss. 4 (edd. prr.). – HA 27, 1968, 1f. (Hebr.); V. Tzaferis, RB 76, 1969, 568f.; N. Haas, IEJ 20, 1970, 38-59; V. Tzaferis, IEJ 20, 1970, 18-32 at 28 no. 4; Syria/BES 1971 no. 92; PEQ 103, 1971, 66f.; Y. Yadin, IEJ 23, 1973, 18-22 at 18ff.; Syria/BES 1974 no. 100; K. Speidel, Das Urteil des Pilatus, 1976, 131f.; H. Kuhn, in: C. Andresen - G. Klein eds., Theologia Crucis - Signum Crucis. Festschrift E. Dinkler, 1979, 301-34 at 304ff., 312-9; L. Y. Rahmani, The Biblical Archaeologist 45, 1982, 43-53 at 51f.; E. Puech, RB 90, 1983, 481-533 at 505ff. no. 11; V. Tzaferis, BAR 11, 1985, 44-53; Rahmani, CJO no. 218; A. Millard, Pergament und Papyrus, Tafeln und Ton, 2000, 120ff.; Kloner, Survey of Jerusalem, 2001, 62(e), 72(h) no. 171; Evans 98-103; Peleg, Archaeology II 172-5; Hachlili, Funerary Customs 221ff., 240ff.; Kloner - Zissu, Necropolis 436.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

51. Ossuary of Yehonatan the potter(?) with Aramaic(?) inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Limestone ossuary, façade ornamented with two six-petaled rosettes, zigzag frames, and fluted frieze on top; three semi-circles in zigzag frame on left side; six-petaled rosette inside zigzag frame on right side; gabled lid ornamented on front with three semi-circles inside zigzag frame and on back with line frame. Inscription in cursive Jewish script on façade between rosettes; looped *tav*.

Meas.: h 40, w 65, d 35 cm.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1968-683. Autopsy: 1987.

יהונתן קדרה

Translit.: yhwntn qdrh

Yehonatan the potter(?).

Comm.: The second word may mean "the potter", with the Aramaic definite article represented at the end with *he*. As Naveh points out in the ed. pr., the common word for potter in all Aramaic dialects is *phr'*, but *qdr* is still possible. The word could also be Hebrew "pot", indicating a characteristic of the man, called a "pot" because he was round and fat; on nicknames see Hachlili, EI 17, 1984, 188-211 (Hebr.); ead., Funerary Customs 205-11; Naveh, IEJ 40, 1990, 108-29.

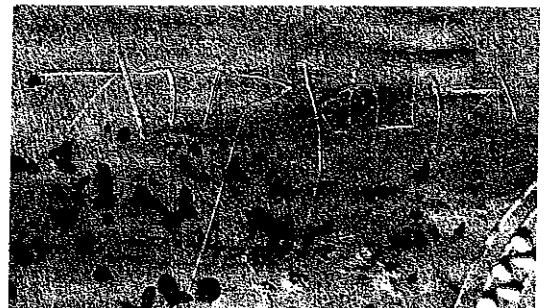


fig. 51.1

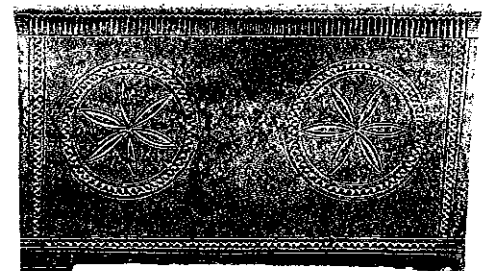


fig. 51.2

orr.). – HA
aferis, IEJ
, 1973, 18-
ahn, in: C.
1979, 301-
E. Puech,
O no. 218;
erusalem,
rary Cus-

Bibl.: J. Naveh, IEJ 20, 1970, 33-7 at 34f. no. 2 (ed. pr.). – V. Tzaferis, IEJ 20, 1970, 18-32 at 28 no. 2; Syria/BES 1971 no. 91; J. Naveh, EI 10, 1971, 188ff. at 189 no. 2 (Hebr.); MPAT 172f., 227f. no. 86; Beyer, Aramäische Texte 345 no. yJE 26; R. Hachlili, EI 17, 1984, 188-211 (Hebr.); H. Kuhn, Northwest-Palästina in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit, 1987, 62f.; J. Naveh, IEJ 40, 1990, 108-129; van der Horst, Ancient Jewish Epitaphs 99ff.; Rahmani, CJO no. 222; R. Horsley, Archaeology, History and Society in Galilee, 1996, 165; E. Regev, PEQ 133, 2001, 39-49 at 43, 47; Y. Peleg, BASOR 325, 2002, 65-73 at 70; Hachlili, Funerary Customs 216-9; Kloner - Zissu, Necropolis 207f., 436; see bibl. no. 50.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

JJP/HM

(52) Ossuary of Martha with Hebrew/Aramaic inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Limestone ossuary, façade ornamented with 54 discs inside a checkerboard pattern; left and right sides with discs in lattice pattern; flat lid also ornamented with rows of discs; yellow wash. Inscription in formal Jewish script on the back side, centered near the top rim.

Meas.: h 34, w 52, d 26 cm; l. 14 cm, letters 3-5 cm.

Pres. loc: Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IAA inv. no. 1968-681. Autopsy: 6 October 2008.

מרתא

Translit.: mrt'

Martha.



fig. 52.1

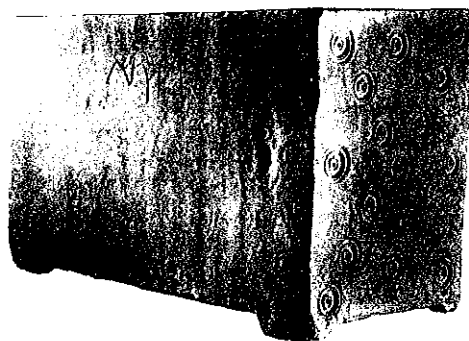


fig. 52.2

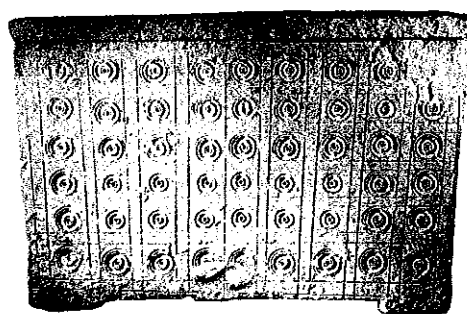


fig. 52.3

Comm.: The inscription marks a name, not a title.

g frames,
-petaled
with three
a cursive



fig. 51.1



fig. 51.2

Bibl.: J. Naveh, IEJ 20, 1970, 33-7 at 35 no. 3 (ed. pr.). – V. Tzaferis, IEJ 20, 1970, 18-32 at 28 no. 3; J. Naveh, EI 10, 1971, 188ff. at 189 no. 3 (Hebr.); MPAT 172f., 228 no. 87; Rahmani, CJO no. 220; Hachlili, *Funerary Customs* 199, 312f.; see bibl. no. 50.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

53. Ossuary of Shallum with Hebrew/Aramaic inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Limestone ossuary, façade and right and left sides ornamented with ashlar-brick design surrounded by double line frame, back has double line frame; flat lid; yellow wash. The word *šlwm* is inscribed six times in cursive Jewish script: twice inside one ashlar and again in another ashlar on the façade (a); twice on the back (b) and once on the lid (c).

Meas.: h 34, w 63, d 30 cm.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1968-678. Autopsy: 1987.

- (a) שלום שלום שלום
(b) שלום שלום
(c) שלום



fig. 53.1 (a)

Translit.: *šlwm*

Shallum(?) (6 x).

Comm.: The same word is written six times by at least three different hands: 1) the "ashlar" with the double instance on the façade + possibly the lid + possibly the first instance on the back; 2) the second instance on the façade; and 3) the second instance on the back. The multiple repetition, especially on the same side, could have no practical purpose, and may well be a sign of grief, cf. Rahmani, CJO p. 12, and note David's lament, repeating "my son, Absalom", 2 Sam 19,1,5. It is assumed by Rahmani that the inscription is not the name of the deceased but a greeting, since Shalom is a fe-

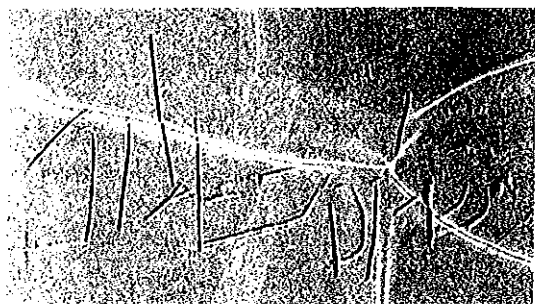


fig. 53.2 (b)

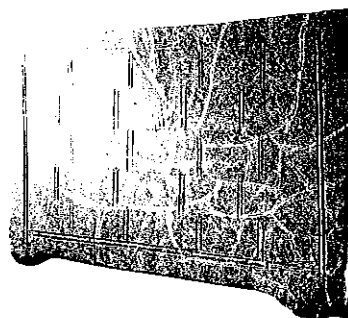


fig. 53.3

male name and the bones of only one male were found in the ossuary; but the male biblical name Shallum could be intended (2 Kings 15,10; Ilan, Lexicon III 160f.); and there is no other unambiguous instance of the greeting "shalom" on an ossuary (cf. Hachlili, Funerary Customs 193).

Bibl.: J. Naveh, IEJ 20, 1970, 33-7 at 36 no. 5 (ed. pr.). – V. Tzaferis, IEJ 20, 1970, 18-32 at 28f. no. 5; J. Naveh, EI 10, 1971, 188ff. at 189 no. 5; E. Dinkler, RAC 50, 1974, 121-44 at 124f.; Rahmani, CJO no. 217; see bibl. no. 50.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

54. Ossuary of Simon, builder of the sanctuary, with Aramaic inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Limestone ossuary, each side framed by carved lines; polished surfaces; flat lid. An inscription deeply incised in formal Jewish script on one of the long sides (a) and on the short side to the right of that (b). Medial instead of final *nun* in both inscriptions.

Meas.: h 33, w 59, d 28 cm; (a): l. 23 cm, letters 1-2 cm; (b): l. 20 cm, letters 2-4 cm. Pres. loc: Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IAA inv. no. 1968-441. Autopsy: 16 July 2008.

(a) סמון בנה הכלה
(b) סמון
בנה הכלה

Translit.: (a) smwn bnh hklh
(b) smwn | bn' hklh

(a) and (b) *Simon, builder of the sanctuary.*

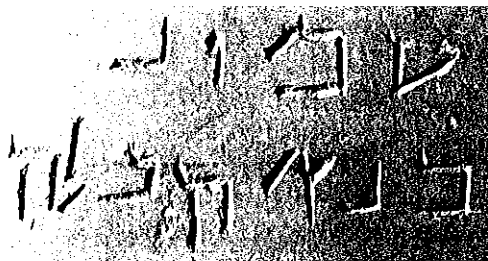


fig. 54.2 (b)

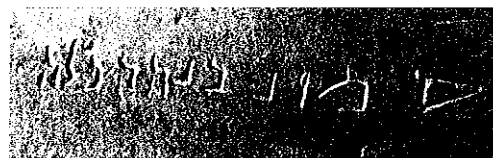


fig. 54.1 (a)

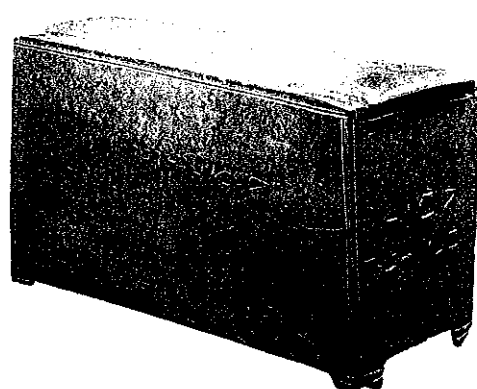


fig. 54.3 (a) and (b)

it 28 no. 3;
O no. 220;

JJP/HM

CE

lar-brick
d; yellow
ce inside
c (b) and



fig. 53.1 (a)



g. 53.2 (b)

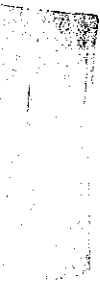


fig. 53.3

Comm.: The name of the deceased here = Hebrew Shim'on in its Greek form Σίμων written twice by the same hand in Jewish script (defective, without *yod*), reflecting how he must have been known in life; yet neither the Greek form of the name nor the Jewish script indicates what language the deceased or inscriber spoke in life. There is no question that the letters after the name should be parsed as suggested in the ed. pr.; for if *bn* were to be construed as the Hebrew word for "son", the following letters make no sense. *bnh* and *bn'* are the Aramaic active participle of *bny* "build", and *hklh* = Aramaic הִכְלָא *hykl'*, "the sanctuary" with the definite article, defective spelling. The exact identity of the sanctuary referred to is unclear, but the widespread assumption is that it was the Temple in Jerusalem, *hkl* referring not specifically to the inner sanctum but to the Temple complex in general; it is not usually assumed, however, that this Simon was the main architect but a master craftsman or engineer who helped build the structure. Naveh in the ed. pr. notes Safrai's opinion that Simon may have been a priest, which is not however mentioned in the inscription. Note also Nicanor, who contributed gates to the Temple (no. 98). It is unusual to find a profession recorded on an ossuary; it seems that this Simon was so highly regarded for his work that he became known by it; or possibly Simon himself arranged the wording of this inscription before he died, even though very few people would see it. The ossuary contained the bones of a male, a female and a dog.

Bibl.: J. Naveh, *IEJ* 20, 1970, 33-7 at 33 no. 1 (Hebr.) (ed. pr.). – V. Tzaferis, *Qadmoniot* 1, 1968, 137f. (Hebr.); J. Finegan, *Archaeology*, 237f. no. 263; *Syria/BES* 1971 no. 90; J. Naveh, *EI* 10, 1971, 188ff. at 188 no. 1; V. Tzaferis, *IEJ* 20, 1970, 18-32 no. 1; *IMC* no. 170; V. Tzaferis, in: *Jerusalem Revealed*, 71f.; *MPAT* no. 85; B. Mazar, *Der Berg des Herrn*, 1979, 207; Figueras, *Ossuaries* 13f.; Beyer, *Aramäische Texte* 344 no. yJE 25 a,b; H. Kuhnen, *Nordwest-Palästina in hellenistisch-römischer Zeit*, 1987, 62f.; van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* 99ff.; Rahmani, *CJO* no. 200; Jaroš, *Inschriften* 328, no. 215; E. Regev, *PEQ* 133, 2001, 39-49 at 43, 47; Y. Peleg, *BASOR* 325, 2002, 65-73 at 70; Evans 92f.; Hachlili, *Funerary Customs* 97ff., 173, 216-9; Küchler, *Jerusalem* 1011 fig. 591, 1073; see bibl. no. 50.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM

55. The Abba Inscription, Aramaic, 2-1 c. BCE

Seven lines of a peculiar, late palaeo-Hebrew script, incised on the wall above a loculus of a burial cave within a square frame. The lines are separated with incised, horizontal lines. There are no spaces between the words. Second and fifth lines painted dark red; frame and grooves of letters in other lines painted same red.

Meas.: Frame: h 65, w 80 cm.

Findspot: Giv'at Ha-Mivtar, between Midbar Sinai and Sheshet-Hayamim streets.
Pres. loc: Israel Museum, Jerusalem, IAA inv. no. 1971-330.

אנה אבה בר כהנה א
 לעז בר אהרן רבה אה
 ה אבה מעניה מרד
 פה די יליד בירושלם
 וגלא לבבל ואסק למת
 י בר יהוד וקברתה במ
 ערתה דזבנת בגסה

Translit.: 'nh 'bh br khnh 'l'z
 br 'hrn rbh 'n|h 'bh
 m'nyh mrd|ph dy ylyd
 byrwšlm | wgl' lbbl
 w'sq lmtt|y br yhwd
 wqbrth bm|'rth dzbnt
 bgth

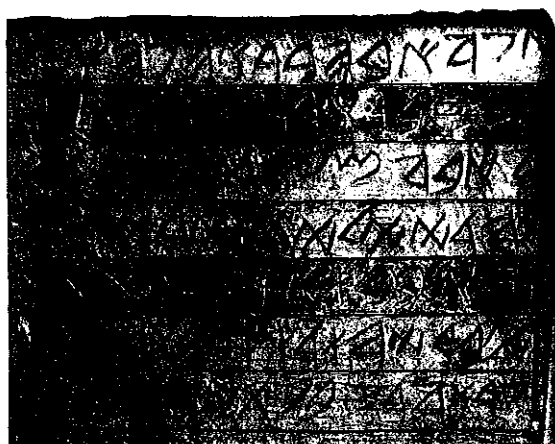


fig. 55

I, Abba, son of the priest El'az(ar), son of Aharon the elder/teacher, I, Abba, the afflicted (and) the persecuted, who was born in Jerusalem and exiled to Babylon; and he brought (lit. raised) Matatai son of Yehud and buried him in the cave which I bought by a deed.

Comm.: The rock-hewn burial complex discovered in 1971 during construction on Giv'at Ha-Mivtar consisted of two rooms joined by a narrow passageway, each room with an entrance onto a courtyard. The caves had apparently been looted at some time previously. An ossuary was found in a sealed loculus in the first, larger room; the second room had a standing pit and one sealed loculus, over which was incised the present inscription. A text above a loculus would represent the deceased inside, yet first investigations discovered nothing in this loculus. The ossuary found in the adjacent cave contained mainly the bones of a woman (Smith), yet later, in 1983, a richly decorated hard limestone ossuary with a vaulted lid "was accidentally discovered in a sunken trough in the floor of the inscribed tomb chamber; local conditions prevented excavation or photography" (Rahmani). This box contained the bones of a 30-40-year-old male and a 3-4-year-old child.

The technique and script of the inscription are peculiar. Each row contains a continuous line of letters with no breaks or marks between words; words are broken at all line-breaks except that between ll.4 and 5. The script reflects a late stage of evolution of the ancient Hebrew script, with some features, e.g. the *alef*, reminiscent of the Samaritan script. Naveh (ed. pr.) considered the question of Samaritan authorship on the basis of the script, concluding: "The Paleo-Hebrew script of this Aramaic inscription, the cursive feature and the forms of some letters may support the suggestion that we have here a Samaritan inscription from the end of the 1 c. BC or the 1 c. AD. This assumption can be based only on extant epigraphic material, and on an hypothesis derived from this scanty evidence. In our judgment, however, we must take into consideration the findspot and the contents of the inscription. These speak in favour of a Jewish origin of the Abba Inscription". Among these telling "contents" are the facts that Abba was a Jerusalem native, and that someone named Mattatai son

of Yehud is likely to be Jewish. Moreover, it should be noted that, in addition to Hasmonean coins and stamps, as well as the coins of the two Jewish rebellions, palaeo-Hebrew script is also found in inscriptions nos. 13 and 138, from the 1 c. BCE, and also on ossuaries from the 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE, as in nos. 62, 207 and possibly no. 242. In any case, the use of the script here probably reflects patriotic religious sentiment.

The syntax is also peculiar. The whole text is one sentence, with the subject "I, Abba" repeated twice (ll.1 and 3), but it lacks a finite verb, consisting rather of relative clauses (Rosenthal). The "sentence" starts out in first person, the first verbs being two passive participles in the pa'el conjugation in ll.3-4 (*m'nyh*, *mrđph*), unconnected by *vav*-consecutive and serving as adjectives to the preceding personal name. Then the sentence switches to third-person verbs in ll.4-5 (*gl'*, *'sq*), the latter being in past tense 'af'el, which has a causative function; the *lamed* prefixed to *mtty* marks the direct object, as is regular in Aramaic. Finally, in ll.6-7, after *vav*-consecutive the verbs switch to first person (*qbrth*, *zbnt*), emphasizing Abba's personal initiative in burying the deceased in a cave which he himself bought by a deed (the last two letters of *gth* are damaged but the restoration is quite certain).

Abba himself and the circumstances of his life are the main subject of the inscription. He came from an apparently distinguished priestly family. The word *rbh*, "elder, teacher", was interpreted by Rosenthal and Naveh as "high (priest)", indicating high priestly descent (and not an actual high priest Aaron who was his grandfather). There is no inscriptional or archaeological evidence that Abba was buried in this cave, which he purchased. His relationship to Mattatai is unknown, and the hypothesis first proposed by Grntz that Mattatai was none other than Matitiyahu Antigonus, the last of the Hasmonean kings (cf. also Naveh, ed. pr. 91 n. 48 for a related hypothesis by Flusser) is insupportable. *Mtty*, pronunciation in fact uncertain, is a form of Mattitiah, which like his father's name Yehud(a) was one of the Hasmonean names popular in the period (Ilan, *Lexicon* I 191-6).

It is notable that Abba describes immigrating to Jerusalem as ascending and emigration as descending. Moreover Abba, a priest, incurred ritual impurity by carrying the bones of a dead person, unless he means by *'sq* in causative 'af'el that he had the bones transported without ever touching them himself.

The expression of person's suffering and misery on an epitaph is highly unusual for this period, see also nos. 58 and 621.

Bibl.: E. S. Rosenthal, *IEJ* 23, 1973, 72-81; J. Naveh, *ibid.*, 82-91 (edd. pr.). – RB 78, 1971, 428f.; HA 37, 1971, 21 (Hebr.); IMC no. 263; J. Naveh, *Qadmoniot* 6, 1973, 115-8 (Hebr.); J. M. Grntz, *Sinai* 55, 1974, 20-3 (Hebr.); Syria/BES 1974 no. 138; V. Tzaferis, *Atiqot* 7, 1974, 61-4 (Hebr.); P. Dion, *Biblica* 56, 1975, 416-9 at 418f.; J. Naveh, in: *Jerusalem Revealed* 73f.; N. Avigad, *EAEHL* 2, 1976, 627-41 at 641; M. Cassuto Salzmänn, *B&O* 19, 1977, 27ff.; P. Smith, *IEJ* 27, 1977, 121-4; MPAT no. 68; B. Mazar, *Der Berg des Herrn*, 1979, 204, 207; M. Sokoloff, *Immanuel* 10, 1980, 38-47; L. Rahmani, *Biblical Archaeologist* 45, 1982, 51f.; Beyer, *Aramäische Texte* 346f. no. yJE 80; R. Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, 1988, 97ff.; van der Horst, *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* 67f.; H. Geva, *NEAEHL* 2, 1993, 754f.; J. McCulloch, *BAR* 19, 1993, 46-53; Rahmani, *CJO* no. 350; Millard, *Pergament und Papyrus* 94ff.; B. Bar-Kochva, *Cathedra* 100, 2001, 121-64 at

129 (Hebr.); Hezser, *Jewish Literacy* 370f.; E. Regev, *Cathedra* 106, 2002, 35-60 (Hebr.); Evans 86; Hachlili, *Funerary Customs* 166f., 213-6, 223ff., 305ff.; D. Goodblatt, *Elements of Ancient Jewish Nationalism*, 2006, 67f.; Kloner - Zissu, *Necropolis* 442; Küchler, *Jerusalem* 1011f. fig. 592.

Photo: Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

AY/JJP

56. Ossuary of Ramon with Hebrew/Aramaic inscription, 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE

Plain ossuary with flat lid; on one of the long sides, inscription in formal Jewish script near the top, slightly to the right; letters deeply but finely carved, red color within lines of letters; smoothed surface. Letters have apices, the *resh* is much longer than the rest, the *mem* in the middle of the word has the final form, whereas the *nun* at the end has medial form.

Meas.: h 37.5, w 88, d 30 cm.

Findspot: Giv'at Ha-Mivtar, near 45 Midbar Sinai Street.

Pres. loc: Beth Shemesh, IAA inv. no. 1970-189. Autopsy: 1987.

רמון

App. crit.: יסון Bahat; דמון Rahmani.

Translit.: rmwn

Ramon.



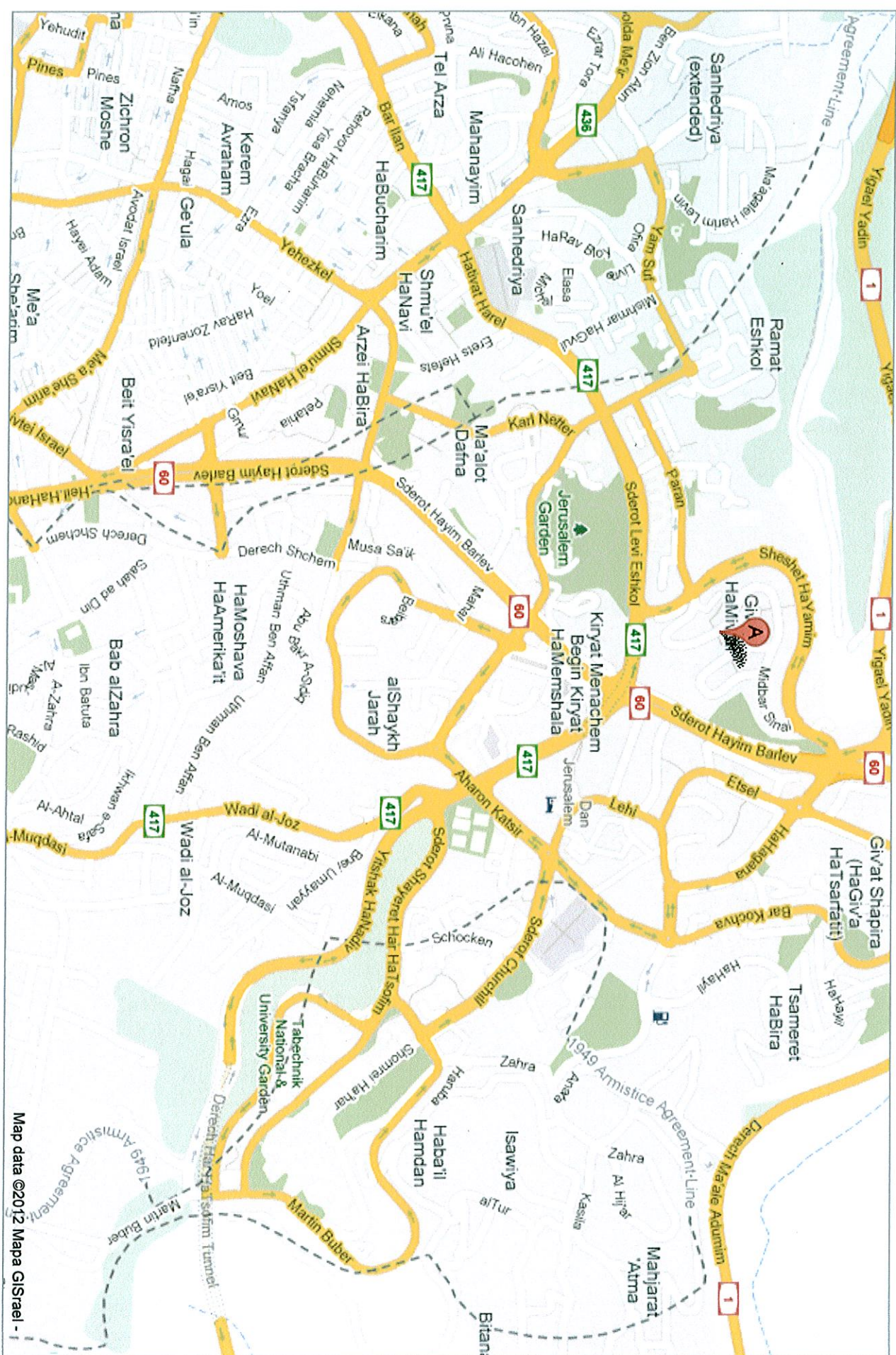
fig. 56

Comm.: This is one of two ossuaries found in a two-chambered rock-hewn cave excavated in November 1971. The entrance to the first chamber, entered from the west, was found sealed by a blocking stone; in the first chamber were two partially finished loculi; a passage led to the second square chamber, which had a pit surrounded by ledges in the center. Finds in the cave date its use to 1 c. BCE-1 c. CE. The other ossuary discovered there (Rahmani, CJO no. 549) was not inscribed. The name Ramon is so far unique in Jewish epigraphy; Puech, who first deciphered the letters correctly, suggested interpreting it as Rimmon, as in 2 Sam 4,2, 5, 9, spelled without the *yod*. A symbol incised on the lid, more elaborate than the standard mason's marks guiding the correct placement of the lid, is interpreted by Rahmani as representing a lock and he concludes (comm. ad loc.): "this representation seems to signify that the ossuary had been closed or sealed to prevent its being reopened".

Bibl.: D. Bahat, *HA* 41/42, 1972, 20 (Hebr.); id., *Atiqot* 8, 1982, 35-40 (Hebr.) 4*f. (E.S.) (edd. prr.). - E. Puech, *RB* 90, 1983, 481-533 at 511f. no. 14; Rahmani, CJO no. 403; Kloner - Zissu, *Necropolis* 441.

Photo: IAA.

JJP/HM



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