

STRATA

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Editorial

As in previous years, in 2023 the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society has kept up its longstanding grants programme, supporting British archaeology students who wish to participate in excavations in Israel. This year, we were delighted to be able to offer a series of special awards, funded through generous donations made to our Diamond Jubilee Appeal, which saw a productive collaboration with the Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition. Five students were sent to participate in this project; their reports are included in this issue. The Society also continued to present regular lectures by leading experts on the archaeology of Israel and surrounding areas. This year, we launched a dedicated YouTube channel to host our lecture recordings (<https://www.youtube.com/@Anglo-Israel>); lectures can also be accessed via the AIAS website (<https://aias.org.uk/>). Summaries of the 2023 lectures may be found in this volume, as can another *Strata* staple, academic reviews of the latest books concerning the scope of the Society's wide-ranging interests, compiled by our Reviews Editor, Dr. Rebekah Welton of the University of Exeter.

Of course, it is original papers that form the backbone of any scholarly journal such as this, and the present issue of *Strata* contains contributions covering the Hellenistic period down to the 20th century CE. In this issue, three papers focus on Jerusalem. Yosef Spiezer uses Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to trace its Roman-period city walls and to consider sites adjacent to them, while two contributions explore the history of archaeological investigation in and near the city. Joshua and Stephen Errington reconsider the early explorers of Jerusalem's 'Tomb of the Kings,' and Yana Tchekhanovets and Doron Ben-Ami discuss the re-excavation of one of Dame Kathleen Kenyon's trenches. In addition to its specific conclusions, the latter paper is of significance for being among the few examples of 21st-century excavation being used to re-examine earlier archaeological work to take place in Israel, and is, therefore, of a much wider relevance to archaeological methodology than to the archaeology of Jerusalem or understanding Kenyon's techniques alone.

However, other areas are also represented by important papers, including new evidence from much-studied Masada, identified and analysed by Leah Di Segni, and a substantial contribution on Horvat Qasra and the Christian chapel of Salome by two internationally renowned scholars — Joan Taylor and Boaz Zissu. Their paper, and that by Greg Jenks on the coins from Et-Tell near the Sea of Galilee, offer insights into controversial sites, the interpretation of which has wide-ranging implications for the archaeology of early Christianity from the 1st to the 6th century and beyond. In the case of Et-Tell, it feeds into the current debate over the site of the Gospels' Bethsaida, for which Et-Tell and El-Araj are perhaps the prime contenders.

Both Et-Tell and El-Araj have attracted very considerable international media coverage. This, of course, is typical of excavations, and even archaeological surveys, in Israel and surrounding areas which might possibly have implications for the credibility and interpretation of the Bible. The confused messages frequently resulting from such media coverage, especially where journalists misunderstand or sensationalise evidence or interpretations, can distort perceptions of the studies concerned and the character or motivation for archaeological research in the region.

This situation is made much worse, of course, if scholars take what is reported in the media as fact, rather than reading what the archaeologists directly involved in these projects themselves have said. I know this phenomenon very well from international reporting of my own work at Nazareth and elsewhere in Galilee, and indeed I wrote the ‘popular archaeology’ book *Archaeology of Jesus’ Nazareth*, published this year by Oxford University Press, specifically to counter media distortion of the evidence and my interpretation of it.

The papers in this issue of *Strata* also highlight the fact that much of the archaeology and many of the archaeological controversies of Israel and adjacent areas remain of much wider geographical and theoretical or methodological importance than might at first appear. For example, the papers included in just this one issue of *Strata* have implications for Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine archaeology more generally than simply for the sites they concern or the landscapes surrounding them, and for the history of archaeological investigation and the re-analysis of older archaeological data.

The importance of this region to the archaeology of the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East is, of course, enhanced by its religious significance in three world religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and for the centrality of these religions in the wider study of whole historical periods, for example, in almost any discussion of the world of Late Antiquity.

Of course, this highlights again the global importance of the archaeology of Jerusalem, which thanks to ongoing and longstanding work by both local and overseas archaeologists has also become one of the most extensively excavated ancient settlements in the world. Indeed, Jerusalem is probably the most excavated ancient urban centre of its size in the whole of the Mediterranean.

Consequently, this issue has something for a wide range of our readers, from students to world experts, and even for archaeologists working on other parts of the world or on other periods than those investigated here. In this respect, *Strata 41* maintains the established tradition of both this publication and the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society as a whole.

KEN DARK
Editor-in-Chief

Obituary: Amnon Ben-Tor (1935–2023)



Figure 1. Amnon Ben-Tor. Photograph by Gabi Laron.

Amnon Ben-Tor, Professor Emeritus at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, passed away in Jerusalem on 22 August 2023, at the age of 88 (**Figure 1**).

Amnon was born in Jerusalem on 26 November 1935 to German Jewish parents. His father, Yaakov Ben-Tor, was a renowned professor of geology at the Hebrew University. Amnon grew up in Jerusalem during the British Mandate and lived in the city during the 1948 siege. Following his military service and trips abroad he began studying archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and graduated with three degrees: a B.A. (1958), M.A. (1962) and a doctorate (1969).

In 1963, while still a student, Amnon conducted a small salvage excavation at Khirbet Uza in the Acre Valley. Then from 1963–1965 he worked as an area supervisor on the Masada excavations, directed by Prof. Yigael Yadin. The field seasons were long, and the living conditions in the remote area of the Judean Desert were particularly difficult, but there was great excitement and enthusiasm in these excavations. He later wrote that those were the best years of his life.

Amnon also excavated for several seasons with Ruth Amiran at Arad (1962, 1965–1966) and became deeply interested in the Early Bronze Age. He chose this period for his doctoral research, which dealt with the international relations of the Land of Israel during the 3rd millennium BCE and subsequently published a book on the cylinder seals of the period (1978).

Upon completion of his Ph.D., he gained employment at the Department of Archaeology (later the Institute of Archaeology) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he taught until his retirement. Amnon Ben-Tor served as head of the Institute of Archaeology from 1974–1977 and then again from 1992–1996. He continued to excavate until 2020, and was still conducting research right up to the last weeks of his life. Over the years, he was engaged in teaching and research at other universities including Harvard University, Yale University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University in the United States, at Cambridge University in England, and at the Sorbonne in France.

In his early years at The Hebrew University he conducted small-scale excavations at Early Bronze Age sites, in the fortified city of Tel Yarmuth (1970) and in burial caves at Azor (1971). The results of these excavations were published in a final excavation report in 1975. Together with Trude Dothan, Amnon also excavated at the site of Athienou in Cyprus (1971–1972), one of the few excavations conducted by Israeli archaeologists abroad.

For around 15 years Amnon conducted a regional archaeological project in the western Jezreel Valley, collaborating in the first few years of the project with Dr. Yuval Portugali. This work included a surface survey and excavations at three sites: Tel Qiri (1975–1977), Tel Yoqne'am (1977–1988) and Tel Qasis (1978–1987). My summer field school at the end of my first year at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem was at Tel Qasis (1979) under Amnon's direction. This regional project creates a comprehensive picture of the settlement sequence in this area from the 4th millennium BCE to the Ottoman period. Detailed excavation reports were published shortly after the end of the excavations. It is noteworthy that the Achilles heel of archaeological research: the long delay, or non-publication, of final excavation reports, was something that Amnon meticulously avoided, creating a standard that most archaeologists find difficult to maintain.

Upon the death of Yigael Yadin in 1984, Amnon assumed the task of publishing final excavation reports for three field seasons at Tel Hazor, conducted in 1957, 1958, and 1968. Together with Dr. Shulamit Geva he completed the excavation report of *Hazor III–IV* (1989). The final report of the 1968 field season was published later as *Hazor V* (1997). My own contribution to that volume is the chapter on Area L, where Hazor's impressive underground waterworks were uncovered.

Amnon excavated at Tel Hazor for approximately six weeks every summer from 1990 until 2020. These excavations are regarded as his greatest scientific achievement. Over the years, hundreds of archaeology students and thousands

of volunteers from around the world have participated in the Hazor excavation project. The excavations focused on the high mound of Hazor, uncovering a large area of the Canaanite acropolis. Important finds include a Middle Bronze Age open cult area with standing stones, a Late Bronze Age temple, and a large structure that Amnon interpreted as a ceremonial palace. A wealth of special finds was discovered here, including basalt and bronze statues of extraordinary size. The building underwent massive conservation and a protective roof was constructed over it; it is now open to the public as part of the Hazor National Park. In 2005 Tel Hazor was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Dr. Sharon Zuckerman, who was Amnon's right-hand person at Hazor for many years, proposed to interpret the large structure as a temple rather than a ceremonial palace. Though Amnon did not accept her interpretation, they continued working together without allowing the scientific debate to interfere with their successful collaboration. Either way, the structure is the largest monumental building excavated in Israel from the Canaanite era, emphasizing Hazor's greatness, as stated in the Book of Joshua: 'The head of all those kingdoms' (11:10). Amnon published the results of the excavations in additional volumes: *Hazor VI* (2012) and *Hazor VII* (2017). Hazor volume VIII is currently being prepared for publication.

Amnon was a great teacher: charismatic, bright, clear, eloquent and confident. Over the years, he taught thousands of students in a variety of courses: an introduction to the archaeology of the Land of Israel, a pottery course, archaeology of neighbouring lands such as Syria and Anatolia, and various seminars. He trained the next generation of scholars in the field of archaeology of the Land of Israel in the Bronze and Iron Ages. Amnon was my Ph.D. supervisor, together with Prof. Naama Goren-Inbar (1988–1992). His comments and extensive knowledge contributed to the successful completion of my doctorate.

Amnon also published popular books for students and the general public. He edited a book on *The Archaeology of Ancient Israel*, published first in Hebrew (1989) and then in English by Yale University Press (1992), a book on the Masada excavations (2009), and a book on the Hazor excavations (2017). An updated edition of the latter was published only a few days before his death (2023).

In the 1990s, a heated debate began in the field of Near Eastern Archaeology about how much history is embedded in the Hebrew Bible. Amnon became the leading figure of the more conservative group of scholars in this debate. He saw the destruction of the Canaanite city of Hazor as evidence of the tradition of the conquest of the land by the Israelites, as written in the book of Joshua. He also held the opinion that the six-chamber gates of Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer were built by King Solomon, as written in 1 Kings. He expressed his opinions, which were sometimes decisive, in articles, lectures at scientific conferences, and at conferences for the general public. He was an excellent and dramatic lecturer who kept the audience captivated by his words.

Amnon was involved in many public activities, which included serving for many years on the Archaeological Council of Israel, on the executive committee of the Israel Exploration Society and on the scientific committee of the Bible Lands Museum, Jerusalem. He held the Yigael Yadin Chair for the Archaeology of Israel (1988), received an honorary doctorate from the Complutense University in Madrid (1999), was awarded the Israel Museum Percia Schimmel Prize for research in archaeology (2000), the Irene Levi-Sala award for best final excavation report (2006) and the Israel Prize for archaeological research (2019). Volume 30 of the *Eretz- Israel* series of publications of the Israel Exploration Society was dedicated to Amnon Ben-Tor (2011).

Amnon was married to Daphna, who studied archaeology and excavated at Hazor, where they met. Daphna specialises in Egyptology and served as the curator of the Egyptian collection of the Israel Museum for several decades. They built their home together in Jerusalem and have two daughters, Anat and Tamar, along with five grandchildren.

Amnon was a prominent scholar with an international reputation as one of the greatest Israeli archaeologists of his generation, with over 100 articles and some 20 books to his name. He will be missed by the archaeological community and by his many good friends. May his name be a blessing.

YOSEF GARFINKEL
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The Hellenistic and Early Roman Coins from Et-Tell

GREGORY C. JENKS

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Three decades of excavations at et-Tell have produced more than 600 coins from the site. Around two thirds of these coins are from the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, including 60 Jewish coins issued by Hasmonean and Herodian authorities. The coin record from et-Tell reveals first Ptolemaic, then Seleucid authority coinage being used, followed by a distinct transition to Jewish coins issued by the Hasmoneans. This pattern is sustained through to the middle of the 1st century of the common era and suggests that et-Tell was the location of a Jewish community through the Hasmonean and Herodian periods. The coin data indicates that the elevated site of et-Tell was abandoned towards the end of the Early Roman period, with just three Late Roman/Byzantine coins being found there.

Keywords

Galilee, Bethsaida, et-Tell, Hellenistic, Early Roman, Hasmonean, Herodian, mints, numismatics

1. INTRODUCTION

The archaeological site of et-Tell ('The Mound' in Arabic) is located 2 km north of the Sea of Galilee, and close to the point where the Jordan River flows into the lake. The mound is oval-shaped, 400 m in length and 200 m wide; and rises c. 30 m above the alluvial plan of Beteiha (Arav and Freund 1995: 3). In 1838 Edward Robinson suggested that et-Tell may be the remains of the New Testament town of Bethsaida (Robinson and Smith 1856: 413). However, its distance from the edge of the lake has always been problematic for this identification. In 1888 Gottlieb Schumacher proposed that two other sites close to the lake might better be identified with ancient Bethsaida: el-Araj and Masudiyeh (Arav and Freund 1995: xiv). The identification of et-Tell as Bethsaida has been contested over the intervening years and especially by those who propose that el-Araj is the better location for biblical Bethsaida (Notley 2007; 2022; Notley and Aviam 2020).

In addition to its distance from the current edge of the lake, the town at et-Tell has been presumed to have been a Hellenistic (non-Jewish) community. This partly reflects an emphasis on Hellenistic materials in the earliest reports from

the excavations, but is not sustained by a closer examination of the data from the Hasmonean and Herodian periods. The debate continued in a special session on the identification of the ancient site of Bethsaida/Julias at the 2022 ASOR annual meeting. During that session Mordechai Aviam, the principal archaeologist at el-Araj, conceded that ‘it is obvious ... we both have a Jewish village from the 1st century beside the Sea of Galilee.’

Regardless of the debate over its possible identification as Bethsaida, the site was clearly a significant settlement at the northern edge of the Sea of Galilee from the 2nd millennium BCE onwards. Excavations at et-Tell began in 1987 and soon revealed massive Iron Age fortifications as well as a residential area from the Hellenistic period (Arav 2009). The stratigraphy of the site is presented in **Table 1**.

Stratum	Period	Date
1	Medieval to Modern	c. 500 CE – present
2	Early Hellenistic – Early Roman	333 BCE – 67 CE
3	Babylonian – Persian	586 – 333 BCE
4	Iron Age IIC/III	720 – 586 BCE
5	Iron Age IIB	925 – 720 BCE
6	Iron Age IIA	1000 – 925 BCE
7	Early Bronze Age	3050 – 2700 BCE

Table 1. The stratigraphy of et-Tell (Arav and Freund 1995: 6).

Excavations at et-Tell have produced over 600 coins ranging in date from the Hellenistic period down to the present (Meier 1995; Kindler 1999a; Arav and Savage 2011; Ariel 2019; Jenks 2014a; 2014b; 2015; 2019). I will present a brief overview of this assemblage, before exploring a subset of coins dating from the 4th century BCE through to c. 100 CE. The coin sequence reflects other archaeological evidence for continuous occupation at the site in the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods (Savage 2011). The coins also reflect marked changes in political authority and the cultural identity of the resident population throughout the 2nd century BCE, supplementing archaeological evidence for changes in use of the site over time.

I will then narrow my study further to focus on seventy coins from the final part of this period, 100 BCE – 100 CE, as they encompass much of the Hasmonean period and all of the Herodian period, as well as the beginning of the Early Roman period. The aim of this paper is to use this assemblage to test the proposal, suggested by other archaeological evidence from the site, that the population of the site during the Hasmonean and Herodian periods was distinctively Jewish and culturally attached to the Temple in Jerusalem. This is not the same as establishing et-Tell as the location of an ancient village known as Bethsaida. In the following discussion, the site will therefore only be referred to as et-Tell and the question of its name in antiquity will be set aside.

2. EXPECTATIONS

Before looking at the data in detail, it is appropriate to consider what kind of information coins could provide to explore the nature of the community at et-Tell. What would count as meaningful data for considering questions about political authority and cultural identity at the site?

First, the coin record should include a good number of coins from the periods under study. A single coin is not sufficient to establish either the presence or the character of a settlement. There may be better explanations for its location than an otherwise unattested village or town. The larger the sample size, the more secure the conclusions to be drawn from an analysis of the coins.

Secondly, the coin data should demonstrate a clear transition between different ruling powers. In the case of et-Tell, the sequence would begin *c.* 300 BCE and include the transition from Ptolemaic to Seleucid rule around 200 BCE, then from Seleucid control to autonomous Hasmonean rule *c.* 125 BCE. This was followed by the imposition of Roman authority from the mid-60s BCE and then Herodian rule under Roman delegation from *c.* 40 BCE. While the conquest of Palestine by the Seleucids in *c.* 200 BCE predates our particular focus by 100 years, that transition was a precursor for the successful cultural resistance by the Maccabees and their Hasmonean successors. Such transitions would be seen not only in the issuing authority of the coins, but also the locations of the mints from which the coins were issued. We might also anticipate that coins would reflect regional politics, such as the rivalry between Antipas and Philip as they each pursued recognition by Rome as king in their father's place, rather than as Tetrarchs ruling just a portion of their father's previous domains (Jenks 2014b).

Thirdly, the coin data should assist in clarifying the ethnic and religious identity of the population at et-Tell during the Herodian period, especially in the first three decades of the Common Era. The territory assigned to Philip after the death of Herod had a higher proportion of Gentiles than the other areas under Herodian control and also hosted the *Augusteum* erected by Herod at Caesarea Philippi (Josephus, *BJ* 1.404–406; *AJ* 15.356, 363–64). Josephus (*AJ* 18.4.6) also notes the mixed population ruled by Philip and applauds his moderation and good governance. Since Philip — unlike his father or his brothers — issued coins with the image of Tiberius (and even his own face on his first coin issue), we might expect a more mixed set of coins at et-Tell, near the southern edge of his territory. In this context, a coin repertoire from et-Tell that is mostly aniconic would be even more significant than a similar repertoire from Antipas.

Finally, the coin data should be consistent with what we know of the economy in Galilee during the Herodian period, and particularly the limited range of low value bronze coins minted for local use within the jurisdictions of Antipas and Philip (Aviam 2013; Fiensy 2013; Syon 2012). This would include appropriate cultural

objects for that time and place being recovered as related finds from *loci* where coins were discovered.

As will be demonstrated, the Hellenistic and Early Roman coins from et-Tell satisfy all four of these criteria. This multiple attestation makes for a powerful argument, based on the coin data, for et-Tell as a Jewish community during the Hasmonean and Herodian period.

3. THE COINS FROM ET-TELL

3.1. Overview

Period	Category	Quantity
Classical	Hellenistic (Alexander the Great)	3
	Autonomous Hellenistic Cities	22
	Uncertain Hellenistic	19
	Ptolemaic	58
	Seleucid	142
	Hasmonean	38
	Herodian	22
	Early Roman	57
	Autonomous Roman Cities	9
	Uncertain Roman	33
	Early Byzantine (before 500 CE)	3
	Late Byzantine (after 500 CE)	4
Medieval	Islamic (Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid)	6
	Crusader	2
	Islamic (Zangrid, Ilkhanid, Ayyubid, Mamluk, early Ottoman)	49
	Medieval European (before 1700 CE)	4
	Islamic (Late Ottoman)	98
Modern	Modern European (after 1700 CE)	3
	Syrian Arab Republic	7
Unidentified	Coins not assigned to any period, ruler or mint	31
Total coins		610

Table 2. The coins from et-Tell by period.

A total of 610 coins were excavated at et-Tell between 1985 and 2016.¹ While much of this assemblage is outside the chronological focus of this article, it has been included here for completeness. The distribution of coins by period is summarised in **Table 2**. This comprises 406 coins dating to the classical period (before 500 CE), 65 coins from the medieval period (500–1700 CE), and 108 coins from the modern era (after 1700 CE), of which 98 are Late Ottoman coins. A further 31 coins could not be identified due to their poor state of preservation, and have been excluded from consideration in this analysis.

The overwhelming majority of these — 526 examples — are made of bronze, with just 82 silver and two gold coins found. While silver coins are well represented for the Ptolemaic and Seleucid periods, all 60 of the Hasmonean and Herodian

coins discovered are bronze, as are the ten Roman coins issued prior to 100 CE (**Figure 1**).

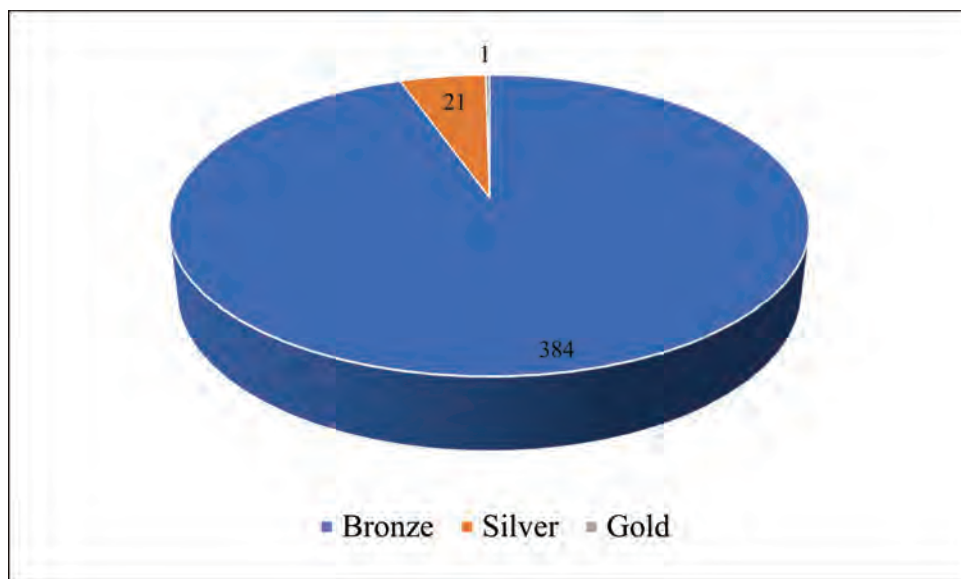


Figure 1. Classical coins (pre-500 CE) by metal.

During the classical period there were significant changes in the mints which issued coins. Prior to 100 BCE, the coin data from et-Tell reflects first Ptolemaic (**Figure 2**), and then Seleucid authorities (**Figure 3**), with a clear transition between the two *c.* 200 BCE. The assemblage is consistent with a network of regional commercial relationships, with the mints of Tyre, Antioch, Ptolemais and Damascus being dominant (**Table 3**). There was a significant change in mints during the Hasmonean period, with all of the coins being minted in Jerusalem. During the Herodian period the Jerusalem mint still dominates the coin data at et-Tell, but we now see coins from Philip's own jurisdiction (Pnias) and a similar number of coins from the nearby mint of Antipas at the recently-founded (18 CE) city of Tiberias. The mint data demonstrates strong links between et-Tell and the various Jewish mints, particularly Jerusalem, after 125 BCE (**See Table 3**).

The coin record also points to periods of decline at et-Tell, if we can interpret gaps in the coin record as indications of smaller populations and reduced commercial activity. One such collapse occurred in the Late Roman–Byzantine period. While beyond the scope of this discussion, the unpublished coin data from el-Araj suggests impressive urban development at el-Araj at exactly the same time that et-Tell was in decline (see **Figures 4 and 5**).² There was a second collapse in the Early Islamic

THE HELLENISTIC AND EARLY ROMAN COINS FROM ET-TELL

Mint	Ptolemaic	Seleucid	Hasmonean	Herodian	Roman	Totals
Ako-Ptolemais	4	11	0	0	3	18
Alexandria	24	0	0	0	0	24
Antioch	0	23	0	0	2	25
Beth-Shean	0	0	0	0	4	4
Bostra	1	0	0	0	4	5
Caesarea	0	0	0	0	5	5
Damascus	0	0	0	0	4	4
Gadara	0	0	0	0	2	2
Hippos	0	0	0	0	2	2
Jerusalem	0	2	38	9	0	49
Paneas	0	0	0	6	1	7
Rome	0	0	0	0	9	9
Sebaste	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sepphoris	0	0	0	0	1	1
Shechem	0	0	0	0	1	1
Sidon	3	1	0	0	2	6
Tiberias	0	0	0	5	10	15
Tyre	33	93	0	0	19	145
Other Mints	15	13	0	0	0	28
Uncertain	20	9	0	1	25	55
Totals	100	152	38	22	94	406

Table 3. Mints represented in the Et-Tell coin assemblage (333 BCE– 500 CE).

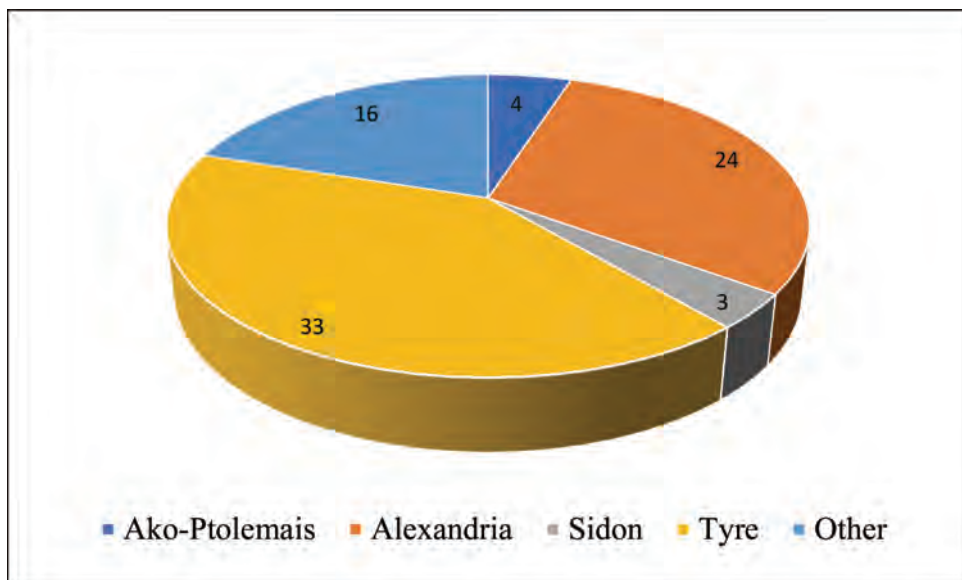


Figure 2. Ptolemaic mints represented in the coins at et-Tell.

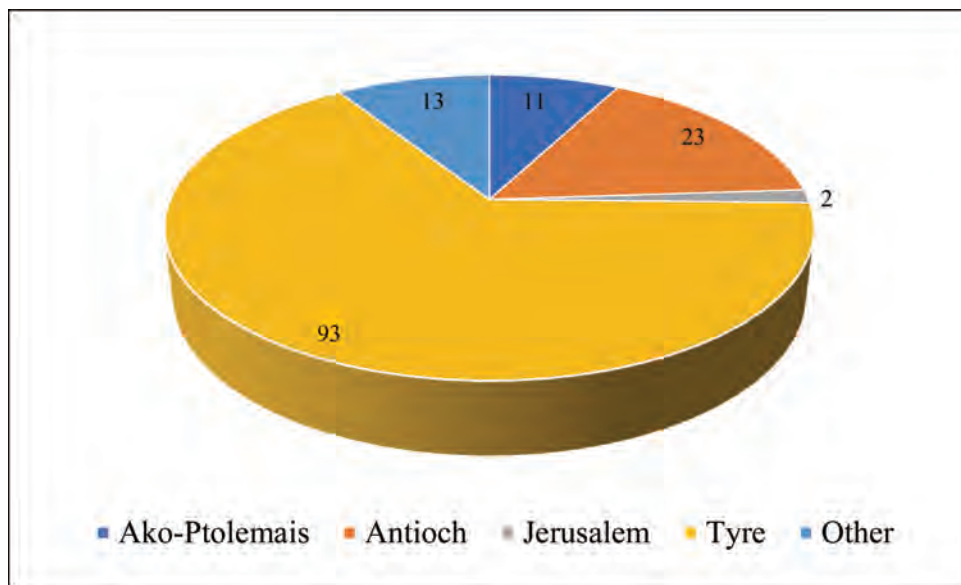


Figure 3. Seleucid mints represented in the coins at et-Tell.

period, when the location and topographical features of et-Tell no longer made it an attractive site. There are almost no coins at et-Tell from that time. The coin data suggests a modest resurgence in the Mamluk period, followed by a substantial increase in the population after 1850 CE, when the Galilee region acquired fresh geopolitical significance for the Ottomans after the *de facto* independence of Egypt under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Pasha.

3.2. The Hasmonean and Herodian Coin Assemblage

Seventy of the coins discovered at et-Tell date between 100 BCE to 100 CE; a catalogue is presented in Appendix 1. These include Hasmonean coins minted at Jerusalem (38), as well as Herodian coins minted at Jerusalem (9), Paneas (6), Tiberias (5), and Sebaste (1) (**Figure 6**), and Early Roman coins from Ptolemais (1), Caesarea (2), Beth-Shean (1), Sidon (2), Tiberias (3) and Tyre (1) (**Figure 7**). While the presence of some Roman provincial coins at the site through the Herodian period might be expected, these data show that all but five of the coins between 100 BCE and c. 70 CE came from local and distinctively Jewish mints. These five coins include a Mark Anthony and Cleopatra coin issued by Tyre in 35/34 BCE and then — after a gap of several decades — four Roman provincial coins minted in the time of Claudius (41–54 CE). This was a time when Roman administration of Palestine was more direct following the death of Philip in 34 CE and the dismissal of Antipas in 39 CE.

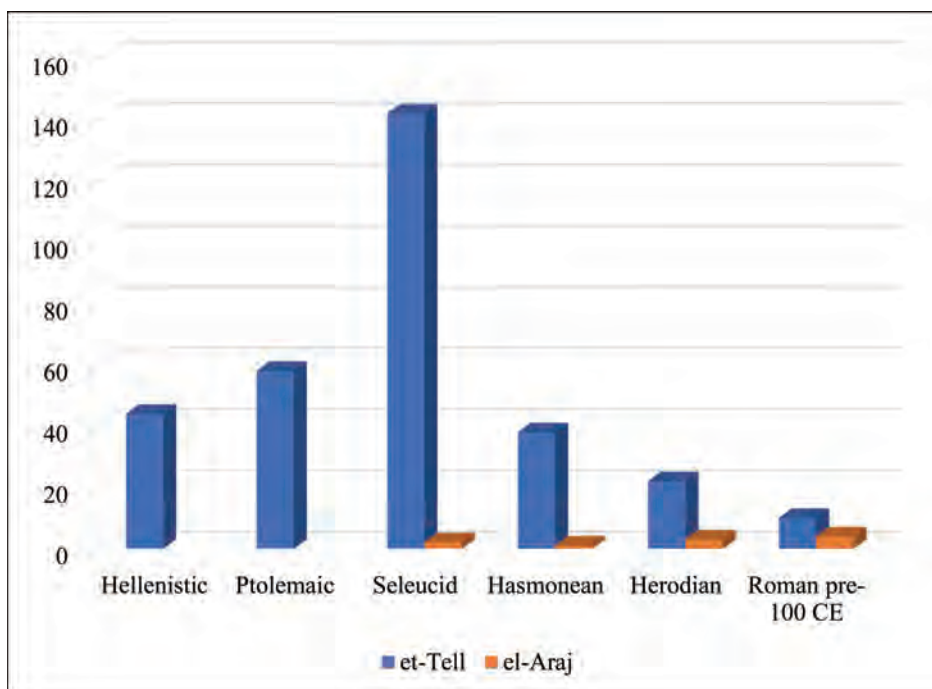


Figure 4. Hellenistic and Early Roman coins from et-Tell and el Araj.

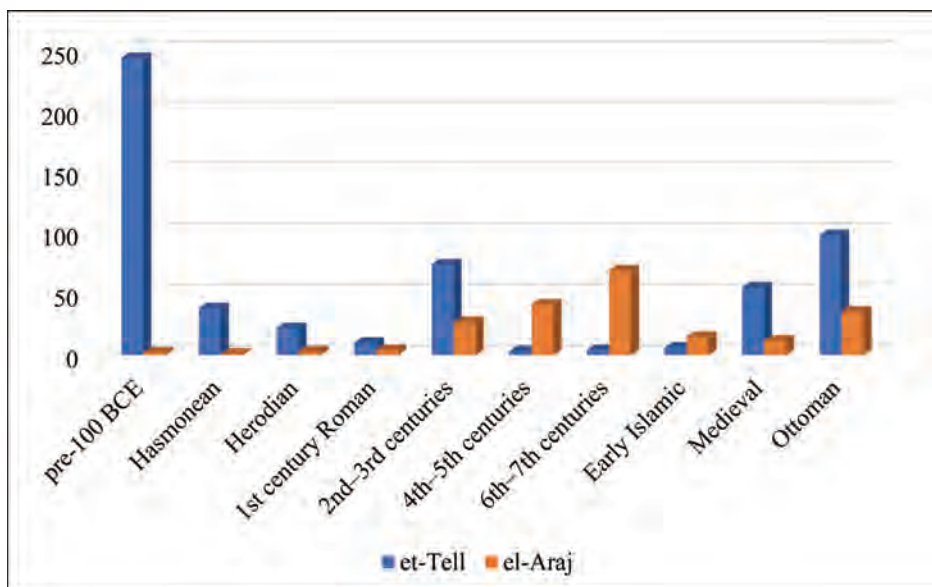


Figure 5. Total coins from et-Tell and el Araj.

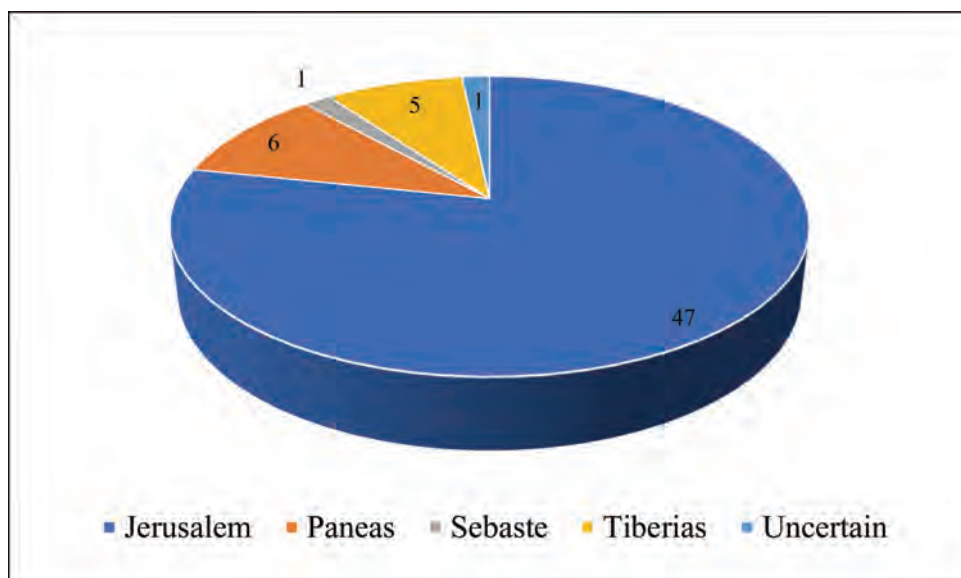


Figure 6. Hasmonean and Herodian mints represented in the coins at et-Tell.

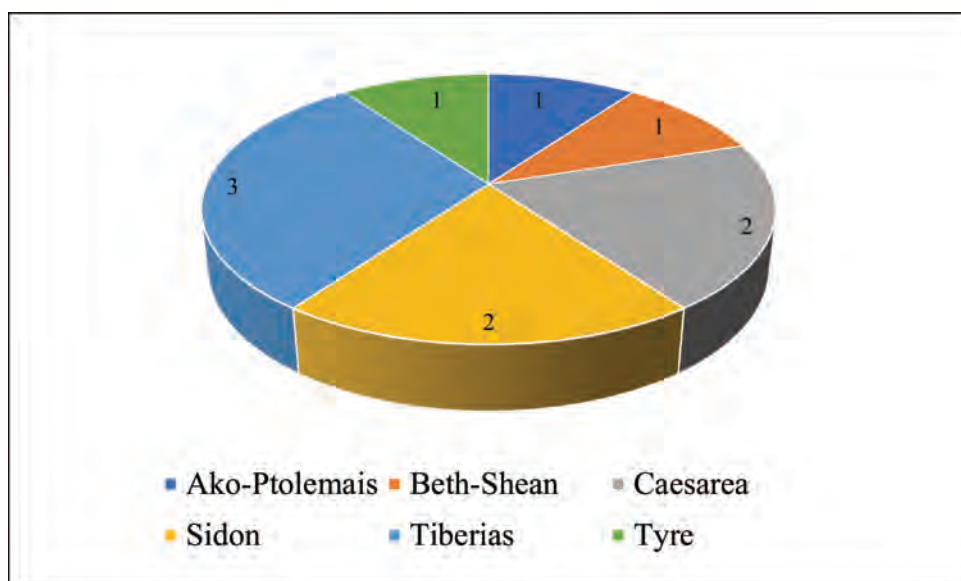


Figure 7. Roman mints at et-Tell before 100 CE.

The coins in the Hasmonean and Herodian group reflect a dramatic transition from Seleucid to Hasmonean rule at around the beginning of the 1st century BCE. It is significant that we do not have a single Seleucid coin later than 125 BCE, and the formerly influential mints at Antioch (in Syria), Tyre and Ako-Ptolemais disappear from the coin record after 100 BCE and only begin to re-appear in the final decades of the 1st century CE after the end of Herodian rule.

The distribution of mints and the limited variety of low value bronze coin types issued is consistent with a Jewish settlement at et-Tell in the Hasmonean and Herodian periods. The 38 Hasmonean coins include 15 issued by Alexander Jannaeus and five by John Hyrcanus I. A further 18 coins cannot be assigned to a particular ruler. The coins from John Hyrcanus I date to the Hasmonean conquest of Galilee and reflect the end of Seleucid control there.

This would suggest that et-Tell was a Hasmonean Jewish site from about 125 BCE. It remained under local Jewish rule until around 100 CE as Agrippa II supported Rome during the Jewish War and retained his title as King of the Jews with a court in Caesarea Philippi until his death during the 90s CE.

There are no coins found at et-Tell that were minted by Roman procurators in Jerusalem after 6 CE, and only two coins issued by Antipas were found at et-Tell. Both of those Antipas coins were minted at Tiberias. Despite being close to the boundary between Philip's area and the Galilean territory of Antipas, there was almost no use of Antipas' coinage at et-Tell. This suggests that the region ruled by Philip was a separate economic and currency zone from the territories ruled by Antipas or the areas of Judaea and Samaria that were under direct Roman administration after the dismissal of Archelaus in 6 CE.

The relative monetary isolation of Philip's territory contrasts with the situation during the Hasmonean period. Conversely, as **Figure 8** shows, we find coins from a wider range of mints in the decades after Philip's death as the economic relations revert to more natural regional patterns with Tyre as the dominant mint. The diversity of regional economic relations after the Jewish War (66–73 CE) is reflected in the variety of mints whose coins are found at et-Tell, including nine mints each represented by a single coin: Ako-Ptolemais, Arelatum, Gaza, Lydda, Orthosia, Paneas, Sepphoris, Shechem and Sidon.

3.3. Internal Distribution of Coins Within the Site

A study of the internal distribution of coins within the excavated areas at et-Tell is also instructive, as it reflects changes in the occupation and use of different parts of the site over time. For this section, I will consider coins dating from the 4th century BCE to the 1st century CE, as this most effectively demonstrates diachronic change. **Table 4** summarises the comparative number of Hellenistic, Ptolemaic, Seleucid, Hasmonean, Herodian and Early Roman coins across areas

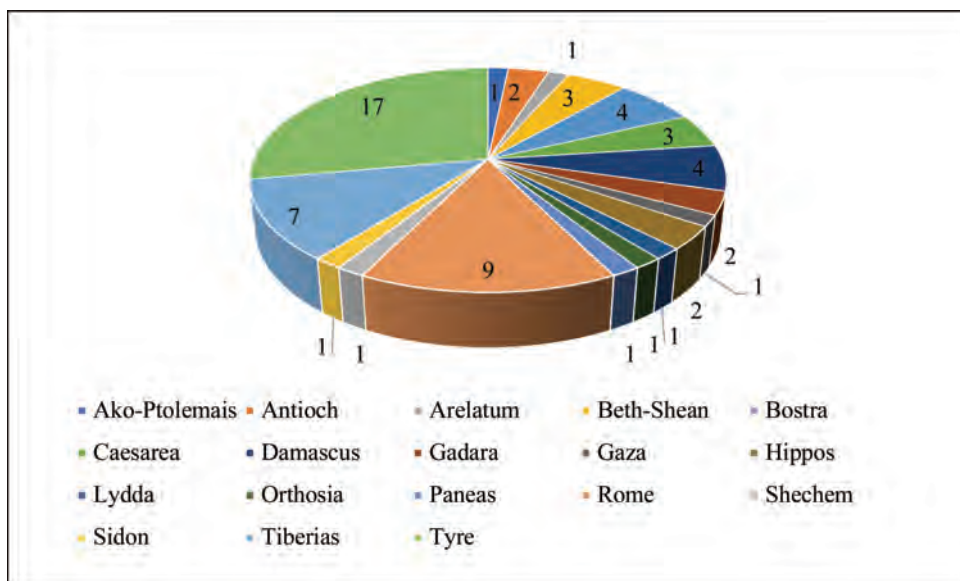


Figure 8. Roman mints at Et-Tell after 100 CE.

Period	Area A	Area B	Area C	Unknown	Totals
Hellenistic	30	2	12	0	44
Ptolemaic	32	7	14	5	58
Seleucid	41	42	53	6	142
Hasmonean	24	10	3	1	38
Herodian	17	4	1	0	22
Roman (before 100 CE)	7	2	0	1	10
Totals	151	67	83	13	314

Table 4. Coins from Et-Tell by authority and distribution.

A, B and C. It should be noted that an additional 13 coins from this period have no record of the area where they were found, while Areas E and T (both on the slope below Area A) each produced only one coin from the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods.

Area A is located in the southern part of the tell. In the period under consideration it featured a small Hellenistic shrine which may have been rededicated by Philip as a temple for Livia/Julia in 30/31 CE (Arav 2020: 47; Savage 2011: 145–58). There is also evidence of repairs to the Iron Age eastern wall under Philip. See **Figure 9** for comparative frequencies of coins within this area.

Area B extends northward along the ridge of the mound. This contains fragmentary Hellenistic remains, but very few identified structures. See **Figure 10**.

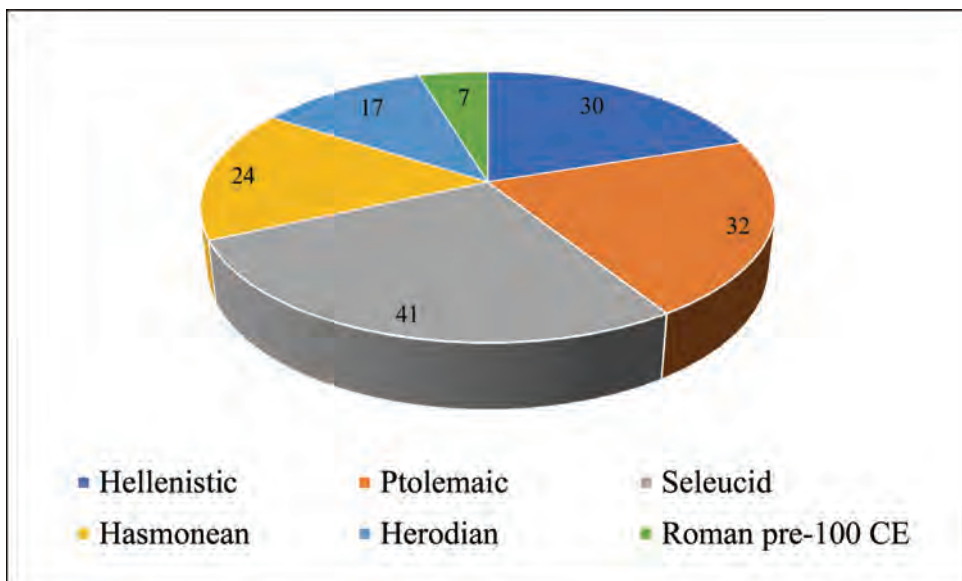


Figure 9. Hasmonean and Herodian Coins from Area A (100 BCE to 100 CE).

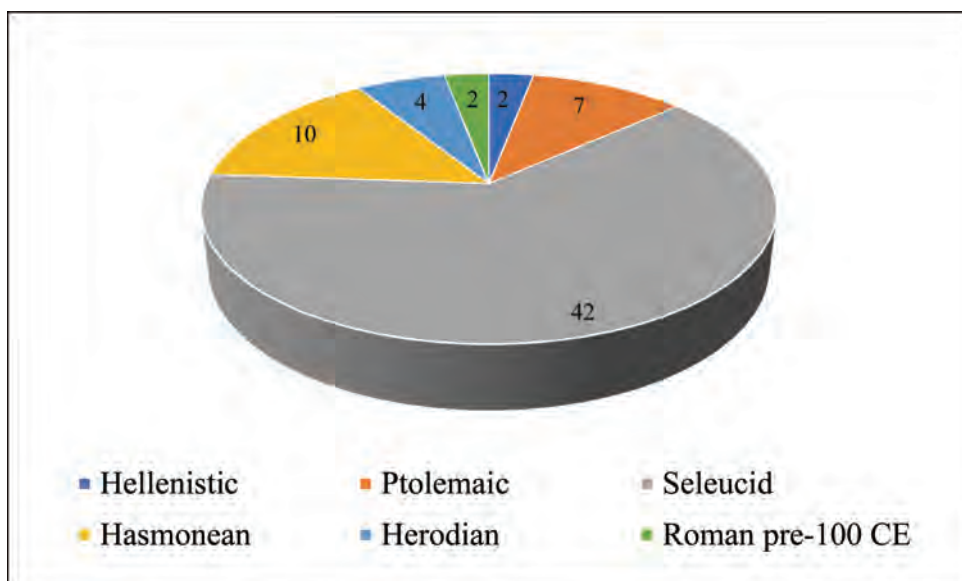


Figure 10. Hasmonean and Herodian Coins from Area B (100 BCE to 100 CE).

Area C is in the most northerly portion of the tell and is bounded by the remains of the Iron Age walls. It includes several large courtyard houses and a small portion of paved road that leads to a modest stone-paved plaza and, down a slope,

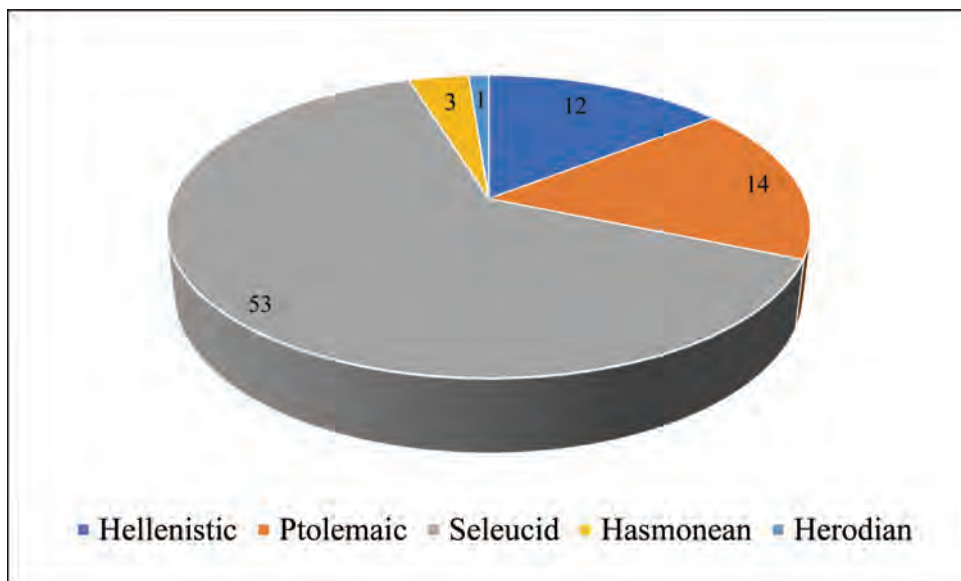


Figure 11. Hasmonean and Herodian Coins from Area C (100 BCE to 100 CE).

towards the lake. It is possible that the primary entry to the site in the Ptolemaic and Seleucid period was in Area C rather than the Iron Age access road on the eastern side of the mound.

Even if the paved plaza continued to serve as the entry point in the Hasmonean and Herodian period, the coin data presented in Appendix 1 suggests that Area C may not have been integral to Jewish use of the site at that time. The variation in the distribution of Hasmonean and Herodian coins across et-Tell may reflect a population decline as well as an economic downturn following the transition from Hellenistic rule to Jewish control. See **Figure 11**.

The preponderance of Ptolemaic and especially Seleucid coins in these three areas prior to the Hasmonean period, and their total absence from the same areas of the site after 125 BCE, when they are replaced entirely by Hasmonean coinage suggests a transition from Hellenistic imperial authority to local Jewish rulers *c.* 100 BCE. The large courtyard houses from the earlier Hellenistic phase may represent a more prosperous period of occupation at et-Tell, followed by a decline in the population or a reduction in economic activity after the Hasmoneans took control of the town.

4. CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning of this paper, I outlined several conditions that would need to be met by et-Tell coin assemblage, in order to make it a suitable dataset for answering

my research questions. The first was that it should provide a substantial number of coins from the Hasmonean and Herodian periods for analysis. We have 60 such coins from et-Tell, which satisfies this criterion. The second was that it should supply evidence for the ethnic and religious identity of the population at et-Tell in the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. The preference shown at et-Tell for coins issued at Jewish mints (Jerusalem, Tiberias, Paneas and Sebaste) provides this, and is entirely consistent with a Jewish presence oriented towards Jerusalem. The third condition was that it might reflect the transition of political power from the Ptolemies to the Seleucids and then to the Hasmoneans, Herodians and Romans. This is exactly what has been observed in the coins from et-Tell, with not a single Ptolemaic or Seleucid coin dating from after 125 CE and only a single Roman coin issued before 50 CE. In addition, the scarcity of coins from the Tiberias mint of Herod Antipas is consistent with the political rivalry between Antipas and Philip. Finally, it was suggested that the coin data should be consistent with what is known about the economy in Galilee during the Herodian period. This condition is met at et-Tell, where solely low value bronze coins were in use at this time, suited for circulation only within the sphere of the Hasmonean and Herodian rulers.

The coins from et-Tell indicate a continual presence on the site from the early Hellenistic period through until at least the Early Roman period. This was a revival of occupation after a period of abandonment during the Assyrian and Persian periods when the earlier Iron Age city was destroyed and abandoned. While no coins are to be expected for the Assyrian period or the early Persian period, the absence of coins from the late Persian period suggests that et-Tell only acquired geopolitical significance for the distant imperial capitals due to its proximity to the contested frontier between the Ptolemaic and Seleucid dynasties.

Tyre was the most influential commercial centre in the wider region through this whole period, as the coin records from et-Tell show (**Table 3**). However, Jerusalem displaces Tyre as the principal mint for coins at et-Tell from around 100 BCE, with Tiberias — founded only in 18 CE — later emerging as an alternative local mint, along with Pnias (Caesarea Philippi) which was Philip's capital city. The coin data therefore reflects the local autonomy of the Hasmonean and Herodian authorities: Hasmonean coins completely displace the earlier Seleucid coins, and — with the single exception of the Mark Anthony and Cleopatra coin minted at Tyre in 35/34 BCE — Jewish coins dominate until *c.* 50 CE. From this it can be concluded that during the early decades of the 1st century CE et-Tell was the location of a Jewish community with strong connections to Jerusalem, although the Temple was beyond the immediate jurisdiction of the local Herodian ruler, Philip.

Although a history of the settlement at et-Tell after 100 CE is beyond the scope of this paper, the later coin data supports the idea that et-Tell continued as a modest village, integrated into the regional economy centred on Tyre. Excavations suggest that the site was abandoned in the 4th century CE after a major earthquake

(Shroder 2013: 35). The coin data from el-Araj also indicates that as et-Tell was declining there was a corresponding rise in settlement on the edge of the lake. By the Byzantine period, el-Araj was the recognised location for the New Testament village of Bethsaida, while et-Tell had disappeared from local memory.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge the research by my colleagues in the Bethsaida Excavations Project at et-Tell for more than 30 years under the leadership of Prof. Rami Arav. As coin curator for the project, I have privileged access to the diligent scholarship of successive numismatists, including Dr. Donald Ariel of the Israel Antiquities Authority. I am especially grateful to Dr. Carl Savage, Director of Excavations et-Tell, for his advice at various points, including the information on related finds from the loci where coins were found.

Notes

- 1 While other areas of the site have been excavated, the coins from the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods are found almost exclusively in Areas A, B and C. Recent seasons have focused on Iron Age areas of the site and have not produced any further coins, while the coins from Area T are mostly from the Medieval and Late Ottoman periods.
- 2 I would like to thank Prof. Mordechai Aviam, the lead archaeologist for the excavations at el-Araj, for providing us with this data prior to the 2022 ASOR Annual Meeting.

APPENDIX 1. CATALOGUE OF HASMONEAN, HERODIAN AND EARLY ROMAN COINS FROM ET-TELL REFERENCES

IAA No.	Stratum	Area	Locus	Basket	Identification	Mint
Hasmonean						
49989	2	B	302	1217	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
95585	unstratified	B	612	5922	John Hyrcanus I (134–104 BCE)	Jerusalem
95586	2	C	911	9100	John Hyrcanus I (134–104 BCE)	Jerusalem
95587	2	A	817	2848	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
115972	2	C	569	16109	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
115973	2	C	572	16127	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
115977	2	A	2006	18062	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
116288	2	B	314	—	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
116289	2	B	303	1220	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
116312	unstratified	B	364	4143	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
116313	2	B	524	1643	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
116344	1	A	831	2945	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
116375	unstratified	B	surface	6331	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
116414	2	B	588	6412	John Hyrcanus I (134–104 BCE)	Jerusalem
116417	2	A	150	2521	John Hyrcanus I (134–104 BCE)	Jerusalem
116428	2	A	164	2677	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
116430	2	A	171	2711	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem

THE HELLENISTIC AND EARLY ROMAN COINS FROM ET-TELL

IAA No.	Stratum	Area	Locus	Basket	Identification	Mint
116458	2	A	373	5345	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
116500	unstratified	A	surface	5794	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
116503	2	A	1515	16384	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
116516	unstratified	B	225	3547	John Hyrcanus I (134–104 BCE)	Jerusalem
116520	unstratified	A	237	3894	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
116532	unstratified	A	surface	—	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
116534	unstratified	A	surface	—	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
125055	2	A	2069	18667	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
125056	2	A	2069	18670	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
125057	2	A	2069	18707	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
125059	2	A	2069	18710	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
137121	2	A	2213	23188	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
137122	2	A	2215	23272	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
138127	1	B	2205	23438	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
138128	1	B	2205	23444	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
138730	1	AW	2241	23479	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
138733	2	AW	2246	22558	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
143574	1	AW	2263	23613	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
143575	1	AW	2263	23623	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
143576	1	AW	2263	23631	Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 BCE)	Jerusalem
143577	1	AW	2263	23636	Hasmonean	Jerusalem
Herodian						
95588	6	A	410	5898	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Sebaste
95589	unstratified	A	784	2479	Philip (4 BCE–34 CE)	Paneas
95591	2	B	403	5755	Agrippa I (37–44 CE)	Jerusalem
95592	unstratified	A	surface	5794	Agrippa II (53–92 CE)	uncertain
104759	2	AW	2082	21619	Philip (4 BCE–34 CE)	Paneas
104762	2	AW	2150	21658	Antipas (4 BCE–39 CE)	Tiberias
114626	5	AS	1199	11464	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Jerusalem
116291	2	B	301	1235	Philip (4 BCE–34 CE)	Paneas
116292	unstratified	B	436	5320	Agrippa II (53–92 CE)	Tiberias
116314	unstratified	C	550	1738 1792	Philip (4 BCE–34 CE)	Paneas
116316	unstratified	B	424	5200	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Jerusalem
116398	unstratified	A	858	8384	Antipas (4 BCE–39 CE)	Tiberias
116405	unstratified	A	858	8429	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Jerusalem
116469	2	A	354	5238	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Jerusalem
116494	2	A	433	6575	Philip (4 BCE–34 CE)	Paneas
116507	unstratified	A	surface	3584	Agrippa II (53–92 CE)	Tiberias
125058	2	A	2069	18709	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Jerusalem
125060	2	A	2069	18711	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Jerusalem
137119	2	A	2206	23077	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Jerusalem
138736	2	AW	2249	22564	Agrippa II (53–92 CE)	Paneas
143572	1	AW	2262	23647	Herod (37–4 BCE)	Jerusalem
144627	2	AW	2265	23706	Agrippa II (53–92 CE)	Tiberias
Roman						
95590	2	A	405	5732	Claudius (41–54 CE)	Tiberias
104761	2	AW	2150	21658	Claudius (41–54 CE)	Tiberias
104763	2	AW	2150	21658	Claudius (41–54 CE)	Tiberias
116429	2	A	164	2706	Autonomous (44/45 CE)	Sidon
116490	2	—	491	5708	Claudius (41–54 CE)	Nysa- Scythopolis

IAA No.	Stratum	Area	Locus	Basket	Identification	Mint
116530	5	B	365	3586	Domitian (81–96 CE)	Caesarea
116531	unstratified	A	surface	82	Autonomous (87/88 CE)	Maritima
125062	2	A	2070	18697	Domitian (81–96 CE)	Sidon
138729	2	AW	2230	23508	Mark Antony/Cleopatra (35/34 BCE)	Caesarea
144629	2	AW	2266	23705	Autonomous (84/85 CE)	Maritima
						Ako-Ptolemais
						Tyre

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GIS Re-Mapping the Course of Jerusalem's Third Wall and the Northeastern Sites Along it

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Dedicated to the late Prof. Amos Kloner

Scholarly opinion has been divided for some 180 years over the course of the three walls that surrounded Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple period, with views primarily based on textual evidence, especially the works of Flavius Josephus. In this article, I survey the physical remains of the Third Wall, as discovered in archaeological excavations, and re-examine the various proposals for the course of this wall that have been raised over the years. I then attempt to connect these excavation results and related discoveries by re-examining historical maps and excavation plans, and combining this information with Geographic Information System (GIS) information based on historic landmarks. This has resulted in a new series of maps that more clearly and accurately present the contiguous course of the wall. They reveal the size of the city on the eve of its destruction in 70 CE and demonstrate the importance of the city's northern fortification at the time of the Great Revolt. Augmented by GIS, these maps coordinate and reveal a great deal of information, the lack of which has impeded past attempts to identify the course of the Third Wall.

Keywords

Roman, Second Temple period, Jerusalem, Bar Kokhba revolt, GIS, siege of Jerusalem, Third Wall

1. INTRODUCTION¹

On the eve of Jerusalem's destruction in 70 CE, the city covered *c.* 1800 *dunams* (180 ha) and featured palaces, wealthy quarters, markets, public and cultural structures, water reservoirs, public ritual baths, and inns. The city was surrounded by three fortified walls with towers rising to impressive heights. Josephus called the earliest wall the 'First Wall,' and the wall built after it the 'Second Wall.' He called the last and newest wall the 'Third Wall' (*BJ* V.136–48).

According to Josephus' description:

The third [wall] began at the tower Hippicus, whence it stretched northwards to the tower Psephinus and then descending opposite the monuments of Helena (queen of Adiabene and daughter of King Izates), and proceeding past the royal caverns it bent round a corner tower over against the so-called Fuller's tomb and joining the ancient rampart terminated at the valley called Kidron (*BJ* V.147–48).

Construction of the Third Wall was begun by King Agrippa I (41–43 CE) in the final years of his life, during the reign of Emperor Claudius (40–54 CE) (Schwartz 1987: 47–147). It was built to protect the new quarter of Bezetha, which had begun to rise on the hill outside Jerusalem's northern wall opposite the Antonia Fortress.

One of the first scholars to study the Third Wall was Edward Robinson, who in an 1838 survey discovered the remains of a large wall, north of the Old City, in the area of the present-day Russian Compound (1841: 464–67). Robinson drew a map of the then-visible surface remains, proposing that they were part of Jerusalem's Third Wall (Robinson 1841: map). Over the years, these remains disappeared and are not mentioned in later reports. However, his survey launched a debate over the course of this wall that is still ongoing today. Several subsequent excavations attempted to resolve the issue.

Further commentary on the Robinson's Third Wall was added by Charles Wilson, who conducted an archaeological survey of Jerusalem for the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1864–1865. In this, Wilson mentions a course of stones north of Nablus Gate, which featured Herodian stone-dressing. He believed that these stones were part of the line of the wall that Robinson had identified as the Third Wall (Wilson 1865: 72).

In his book *Topography of Jerusalem*, Wilhelm Ludwig Kraft included a map of Jerusalem, sketches and other information. He proposed that the remains that Robinson had identified as the Third Wall were in fact ruined structures from various periods, and that they had never belonged to the wall of any large city (Krafft 1846: 33).

Lewis Bayles Paton subsequently surveyed the finds from the area of the northeastern corner of the Old City walls to the deep depression east of the road leading northwards from the Damascus Gate (1905: 195–211). In Paton's opinion, all the stones that Wilson described as having Herodian stone-dressing were simply worked bedrock. He concluded that this worked bedrock formed the foundations of an opulent building, questioning the possibility that they were part of the foundations of the Third Wall because of their sharp turn to the north (Paton 1905: 195–221).

In these previous studies, the line of the Third Wall was tentatively identified through use of topography and recording of visible remains north of the Old City of Jerusalem, producing maps that were generally schematic and imprecise. Over the years these visible remains have been gradually lost, and are now almost impossible

to see on the surface, while stratigraphic complexities and rapid construction in the area have further impeded understanding of its course.

This current study aims to address this problem by re-examining the archaeological evidence for Jerusalem's Third Wall, remapping it using GIS technology. This involved locating anchor points from historical maps, presenting the line of the remains documented by Robinson. Using coordinates based on the Israel Transverse Mercator (hereafter ITM), these remains have now been located at Helene HaMalka Street (coordinates 221090 6632208) near and to the west of the Church of St. Paul (coordinates 221184 632196), Shivtei Israel Street (coordinates 221385 632334), and HaHoma HaShlishit Street (coordinates 221383 632423). The results are presented in **Figures 1–2**.

This information has also been combined with the results of more recent archaeological research to create fresh maps, presenting a contiguous — and more accurate — line for the Third Wall. As will be shown, these maps also help visualise the location of various landmarks in northern Jerusalem mentioned in historical descriptions, explain how pilgrims accessed the Temple Mount,

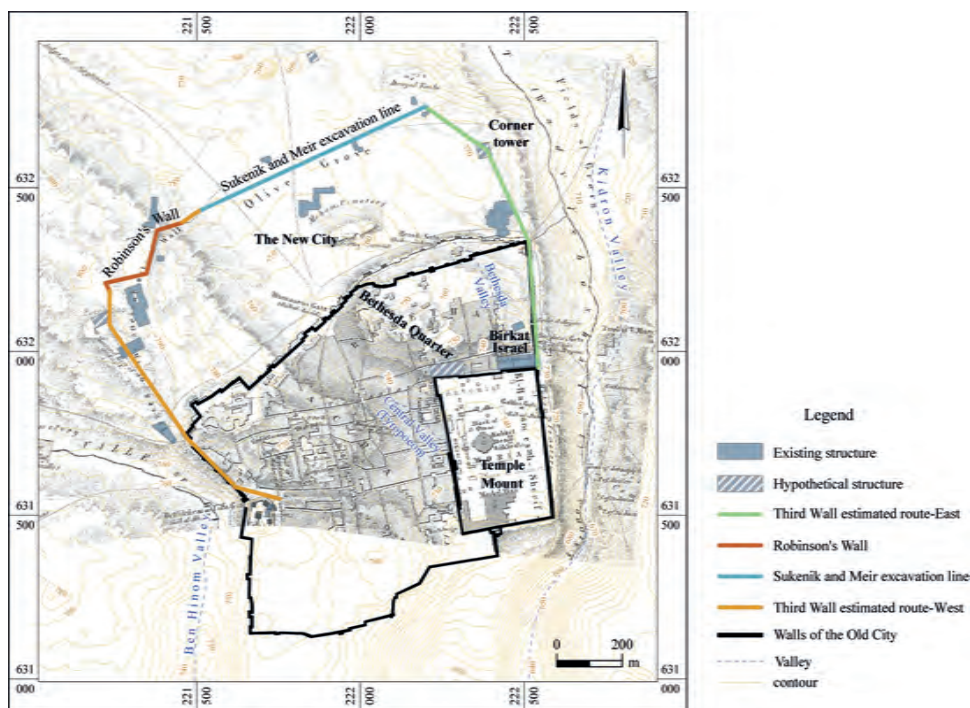


Figure 1. Topographical map with the route of the Third Wall of Jerusalem superimposed over Robinson's 1841 map numbers (*after* Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 12–33, figs. 3–4). The coordinates represent the westernmost point in every segment (ITM Grid).

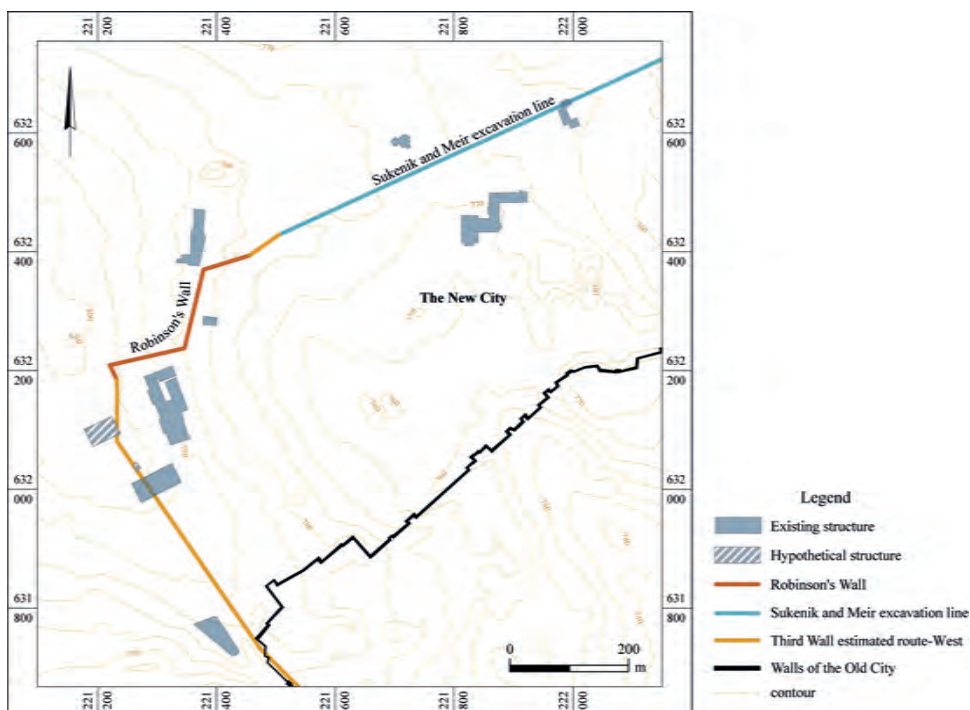


Figure 2. Topographical map depicting the northwestern corner of the Third Wall route, as proposed by Robinson.

and demonstrate both the size of the city on the eve of its destruction and the importance of its northern fortification during the revolts. The following discussions will consider the archaeological evidence for the northern, western and eastern portions of the Third Wall, and explore the varying hypotheses proposed for its route.

2. THE NORTHERN ROUTE OF THE THIRD WALL

2.1 The Excavations of Eliezer Lipa Sukenik and Leo Aryeh Mayer

I shall begin my discussion with the northern section of the Third Wall because most of the information we have about it derives from excavations in that area. In the winter of 1925, labourers building Nablus Road encountered stones with drafted 'Herodian' margins typical for Herodian monumental construction of late Second Temple times. This discovery reignited the issue of the line of Jerusalem's Third Wall.

Because the area between the neighbourhood of Mea She'arim and the Albright Institute was completely devoid of structures, the Jewish Palestine Exploration

Society decided to excavate the area before it could be covered by new buildings. The Department of Antiquities granted an excavation permit to Eliezer Lipa Sukenik and Leo Aryeh Mayer on 15 June 1925 (Mayer 1925), and the first excavation season was between June and September that year. The excavators discovered numerous remains west and east of Nablus Road, including a solid wall foundation, tower bases, and a wall of dressed stone. They identified these as part of the Third Wall (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 8).

Their second excavation season began in 1926, and continued the area of the first excavation, west of the American Consulate (**Figures 3–4**). Additional portions of the wall were uncovered, along with Byzantine tombs built and dug into the wall's foundations and other remains from various periods. Tops of stones with drafted



Figure 3. View of Sukenik and Mayer's excavation from the Italian Hospital (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 1).

margins were also unearthed in the area of the Albright Institute (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 9), a discovery which led to a third excavation season.

The third excavation season took place from mid-November 1926 to the end of March 1928 (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 11). During this season the continuation of the wall was unearthed, along with a remnant of another tower found west of the Albright Institute fence on Nablus Road. It turned out that the large stones uncovered during the paving of the road had been used to block the opening of a gate at this point (**Figures 5–6**). This excavation season ended in the area of the

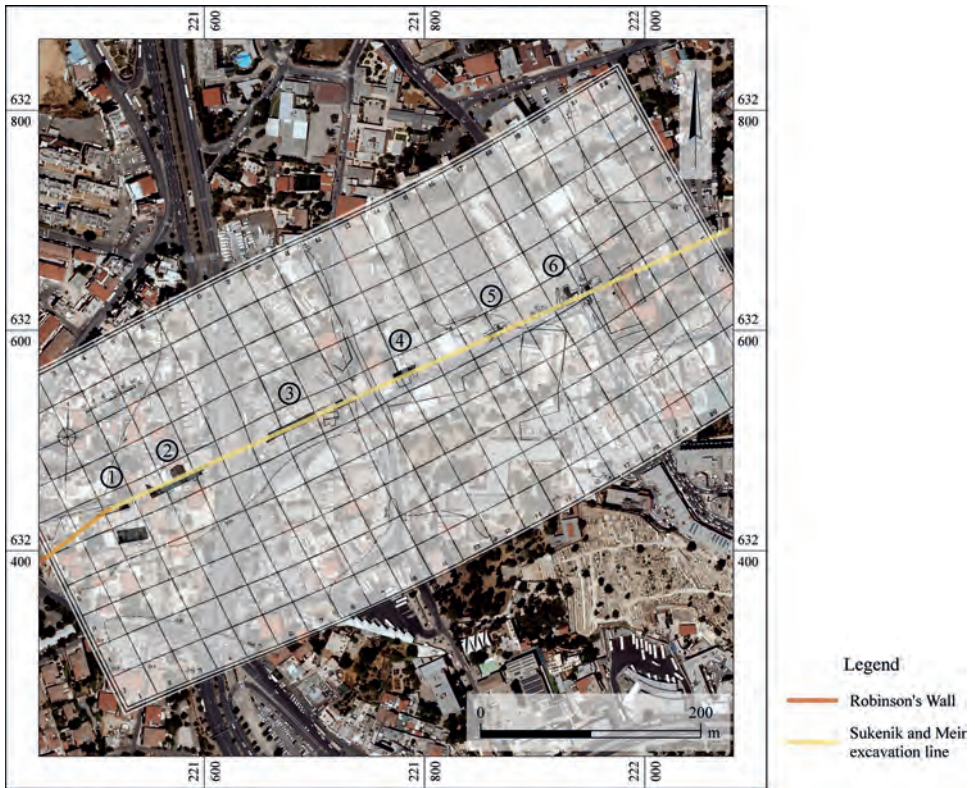


Figure 4. Route of the Third Wall superimposed over a plan of Sukenik and Mayer's excavation Segments 1–6 (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 1, Map 2).

Albright Institute courtyard in 1928, with the discovery of the gate and tower to the west (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 19).

In August 1940, excavations were renewed to clarify the situation and seek additional remains of the wall to the east (Sukenik and Mayer 1944: 145–51), especially the point where the wall turned southwards (Sukenik and Mayer 1942: 24–28). These excavations uncovered the intermittent line of a wall 275 m long. One portion was excavated in the Albright Institute courtyard (Area 7) and another was excavated 150 m east of there (Area 8). This portion revealed not only a small part of the wall and a foundation 4.8 m wide, but also the remains of a tower 7.5 m wide and 20 m long. The eastern boundary of the tower could not be determined due to limitations at the site. The excavators noted that the tower unearthed was larger and more impressive than the other towers uncovered in the excavation and that this point was near the turn in the wall (Sukenik and Mayer 1944: 145–51; **Figures 7–8**).



Figure 5. View of Segment 6 of Sukenik and Mayer's excavations, showing the base of the tower in front of the Albright Institute (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 27).



Figure 6. View of segment 6 of Sukenik and Mayer's excavations, showing the dressed stones of the gate with the fence of the Albright Institute in the background (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 30).

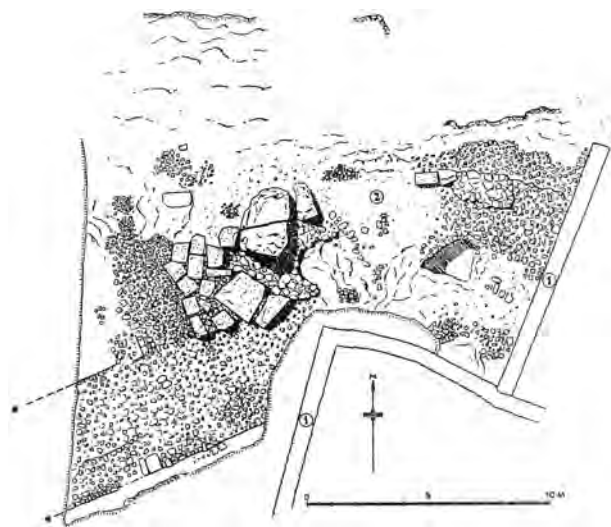


Figure 7. Plan of the corner tower uncovered in Segment 8 of Sukenik and Mayer's excavations (Sukenik and Mayer 1942: 28).

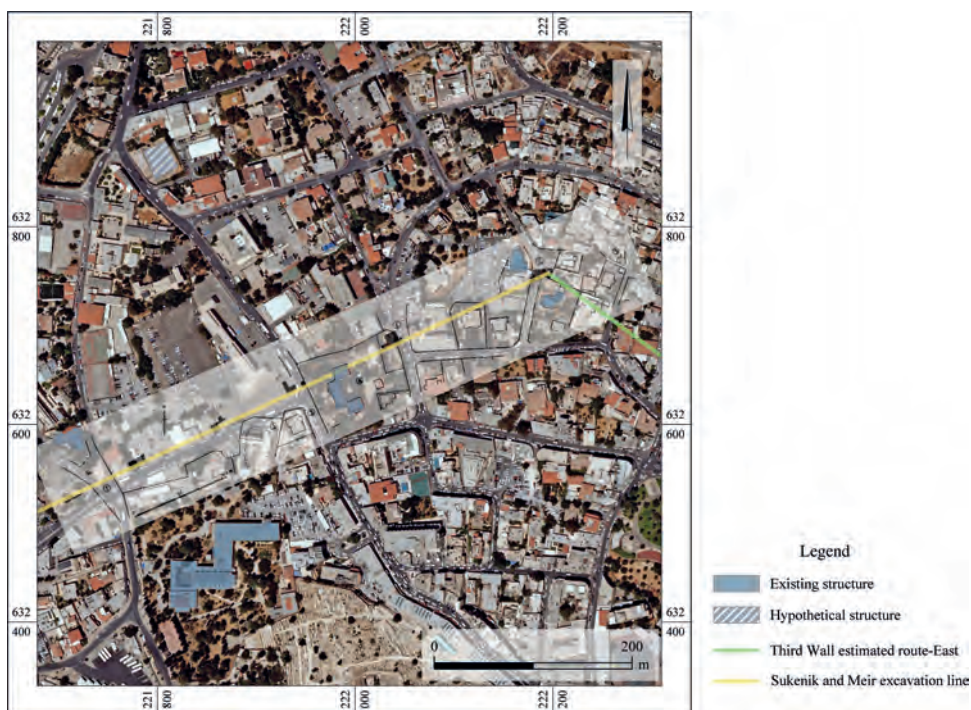


Figure 8. Plan of Segments 4–8 of Sukenik and Mayer's excavation (Sukenik and Mayer 1942: 25).

During this excavation season, remains were found of a wall that proceeded north of the Old City wall, from east to west, for a total length of *c.* 500 m. The remains were not contiguous due to physical and topographical obstructions. According to the excavators, the direction of the wall and the type of construction indicate that these non-contiguous portions were part of the same wall, although in some places only the foundation was found, and in many places it was very damaged. Most of the areas uncovered consisted only of the bottom course; only at some points were parts of additional courses found, for example in Area 6 (see below). Fragments of stones with drafted margins were scattered along almost the entire length of the wall; at some points, stones from the wall were found in secondary use. Clear remains were found of four towers protruding northwards from the wall, 9–12 m wide. According to Sukenik and Mayer, the course of the wall provided a strategic advantage in protecting the northern part of the city, because it was built on a ridge (Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 9). These finds led to the excavators' conclusion that this wall was the Third Wall of Second Temple times (Sukenik and Mayer 1944:151).

Sukenik and Mayer published plans of excavation Areas 1–8 but without providing any spatial context. A summary of the wall segments they uncovered is provided in **Table 1**. It is nearly impossible to match the line of the wall as they published it to the topography and the present-day situation, as the area has been subjected to massive construction work and development since their project was completed. For example, Areas 1 and 2 now lie to the west of Bar-Lev Boulevard (Road 1) on HaHoma HaShlishit (The Third Wall) Street, and any remains here have now completely disappeared from the surface. However, using GIS, the line of the wall they excavated between 1925 and the 1940s can now now be pinpointed and overlaid onto aerial photos and maps of the region.

Several scholars agreed with the identification proposed by Sukenik and Mayer, including William Foxwell Albright (1941: 6–10), Michael Avi-Yonah (1968: 98–125), and Amos Kloner (1984: 204–209). In contrast, others proposed identifying the Third Wall with the line more or less following that of the present-day northern wall of the Old City (Sukenik and Mayer 1942: 25). This included Father Louis-Hugues Vincent, who proposed that the remains of the fortifications uncovered by Sukenik and Mayer were in fact remains of the wall the rebels built to defend Jerusalem during the Bar-Kokhba Revolt (132–136 CE) (Vincent 1954). However, his argument is not convincing, as it contradicts the archaeological evidence found in Jerusalem with regard to this period (see Eshel and Zissu 2015: 125–26).

Kathleen Kenyon, on the other hand, concluded that the Sukenik-Mayer wall was constructed by the 10th Legion after the siege of Jerusalem (1966: 88). She subsequently changed her mind and proposed that this was the siege wall built by the Roman army during the siege (Kenyon 1967: 168–172).

Segment	New Israel Grid	Wall Details	Other Features	Fig. No.
1	221469/632454	Wall remains, L. 30 m		4
2	221569/632484	Wall remains, L. 56 m	Tower protruding on western side, 9 m north of wall line.	4
3	22171/863256	Wall remains, L. 81.7 m	Tower protruding 12.4 m north of the line of the wall. Remains found in front of the American Consulate at the top of Nablus Road.	4
4	221784/632561	Wall remains, L. 8.8 m		4–8
5	221884/632609	Wall remains, L. 16.10 m	Remains of tower protruding northwards.	4–8
6	221960/632624	Wall remains, L. 15 m	Tower protruding 7.5 m north of wall line; east of tower, remains of a gate 6 m wide, found blocked with stones. Wall segment continues a further 5 m eastwards.	4–8
7	222024/632674	Wall remains, L. 23 m	Tower; façade L. 12 m protruding 9 m from wall line.	8
8	22200/632752	Wall turns southeast	Tower W. at least c. 20 m, protruding c. 7.5 m from wall line.	8

Table 1. Wall segments uncovered by Sukenik and Mayer according to excavation area numbers (*after* Sukenik and Mayer 1931: 12–33, figs. 3–4). The coordinates represent the westernmost point in every segment (ITM Grid).

Many of these previous studies appear to have been influenced by theological concerns. For example, Father Louis-Hugues Vincent opposed identifying the course of the Third Wall as the one discovered by Sukenik and Mayer partly for theological reasons. If that wall was the Third Wall, then presumably the wall of the present-day Old City must be the Second Wall. However, the Second Wall was said to be built before the time of Jesus — and yet it encompassed the Church of The Holy Sepulchre and the place identified as the Tomb of Jesus. This would mean that the church could not mark the site of Jesus' tomb since according to the Gospels, this lay outside the wall of the city (Avi-Yonah 1956a, 305–20; Shanks 1987) — a conclusion that Vincent was not prepared to make.

2.2 Subsequent Excavations

In 1965, Emmet Willard Hamrick (1966) conducted a series of tests along the wall uncovered by Sukenik and Mayer, between Nablus Road and Saladin Street. He believed that Sukenik and Mayer's excavation was flawed because they excavated

a long, narrow line, and did not take stratigraphic data into account. In trial trenches excavated by Hamrick, parts of the southern face of the Sukenik-Mayer wall were found: stones with marginal dressing, *c.* 1.55 m long and *c.* 1.35 m wide (Hamrick 1966: 21). The test trenches also revealed sherds and coins dated to the 1st century CE, including a coin from the time of Emperor Claudius from 54 CE, and another coin from 58–59 CE (Hamrick 1966: 24). Based on these findings, Hamrick concluded that Sukenik and Mayer's fortification was actually the line of the 'Fourth Wall' of the city, while he identified the line of the Third Wall as following that of the present-day northern wall of the Old City, as had others before him (Hamrick 1981: 262–65).

Additional excavations, by Sarah Ben-Arieh and Ehud Netzer (1974) from 1972 to 1974 on the line of the wall of Sukenik and Mayer's Area 3, supported the identification of the wall as having north-facing towers, as well as supporting their suggested Second Temple period date. On the other hand, Jodi Magness (2000) proposed that the line of the Sukenik-Mayer wall (dubbed the 'Third Wall'), which is situated *c.* 400 m north of the Old City, was the northern wall of Aelia Capitolina.

Recently, the Dominican Friar Dominique-Marie Cabaret (2020) published a comprehensive study of Jerusalem's topography between the 2nd century BCE and the 2nd century CE. He proposed that the Psephinus Tower, which according to Josephus' description (*BJ* V.147–48) was located at the northwestern corner of the wall, stood east of the present-day Sergei Courtyard (coordinates 221184 632196) adjacent to the Russian Compound, and that from there the wall turned at a right angle eastwards (Cabaret 2020: 208–209). However, Cabaret's theory did not take into consideration the line of the wall in this area published by Robinson in the 19th century. According to my GIS study (**Figures 1–2**), the wall turned eastwards from its northwestern corner, following the local topography, and descended eastwards via Helene HaMalka, Shivtei Israel, and HaHoma HaShlishit Streets.

3. THE WESTERN ROUTE OF THE THIRD WALL

In 2016 an excavation took place in the Russian Compound, following plans to build the new campus of the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design there. This was directed by Rina Avner and Kfir Arbiv (Avner and Arbiv 2016: 85; Arbiv 2023). It revealed a remnant of a large, solid foundation, the core of which was 13 m long and 6.7 m wide. The foundation was built of a row of large, carelessly-dressed stones interspersed with bonding material, and according to the excavators served as a foundation for a tower (Arbiv 2003: 107). In probes beneath the bonding material, sherds were found dating to the end of the Second Temple period (Avner and Arbiv 2016: 85). West of the foundation, 79 ballista balls were unearthed (Arbiv 2023: 109). According to the excavators, this was the first area ever uncovered of the western course of the Third Wall.

In light of the location of the finds and their dating, Ronny Reich (pers. comm. 2023) noted a number of difficulties he believed arose from Avner and Arbiv's conclusions regarding their finds in the Russian Compound. According to Reich, construction using bonding material more closely resembles Roman rather than local methods. Additionally, the dense cluster of ballista balls uncovered in Avner and Arbiv's excavation showed the location of the catapult rather than the target, which would mean that the foundation belonged to a siege tower on which a catapult had been installed to shoot directly at the city wall. Reich noted that according to Josephus, the Romans built a siege wall around the city, which included 13 forts along a length of 39 furlongs, i.e., c. 7 km (*BJ* V.507). He therefore proposed that this find should be associated with the Roman siege wall.

However, in his recently published final excavation report, Arbiv describes the remains of the foundation of a wall, identified as a section of the Third Wall; these were dated to the second half of the 1st century CE. This discovery, together with the concentration of ballista balls, weapons and a burnt level, constitutes tangible evidence of a battlefield from the time of the Great Revolt (Arbiv 2023: 103–108). If we accept Avner and Arbiv's theory that the remains uncovered in the Russian Compound are part of the Third Wall, then, indeed, this would be the only evidence of the western course of the wall. However, as noted, this theory is still under debate.

4. THE EASTERN ROUTE OF THE THIRD WALL

The eastern course of the Third Wall is not yet clear. An illustration from Sukenik and Mayer's excavation (**Figure 7**) reveals that one face of the tower that Sukenik and Mayer exposed in Area 8 looked to the southeast, which led scholars to mark the turn in the wall towards the city at this point. The GIS map (**Figure 9**), indicates that according to topographical logic, the wall continued eastwards to the top of the northeastern hill (estimated coordinates 222429 632756) to a corner tower, from there to the 'old' wall (as Josephus calls it, *BJ* V.142) of the Temple Mount, and from there towards the Kidron Valley. It should be noted that the 2018–2019 excavations directed by Amit Re'em and David Yeager in the area adjacent on the east to the present-day Old City wall, between Lions' Gate and the 'Sheep Market' revealed mainly remains from the Middle Ages (Re'em *et al.* 2021: 245).

A study published by Eilat Mazar *et al.* (2011) on the walls of the Temple Mount clearly shows that the only remains from the time of the Second Temple today of the northern wall are to be found in the northeastern corner of the Temple Mount enclosure. It is, therefore, possible that this was the location of the connection point between the eastern course of the Third Wall and the Temple Mount wall (**Figure 10**).

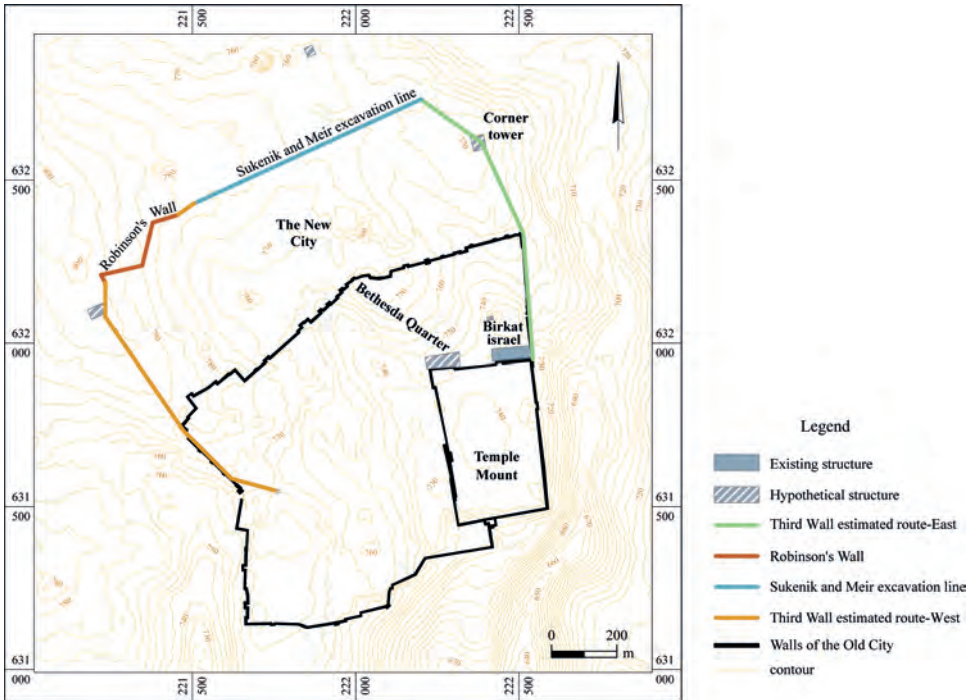


Figure 9. Topographic map showing the proposed route of the Third Wall.

5. MODERN GIS MAPPING OF THE THIRD WALL

We have seen how over the years rapid development led to knowledge being lost of the precise location of the Third Wall. Most scholars of ancient Jerusalem depended on maps that showed the general course of the wall, but these did not usually take Robinson's finds into consideration, nor did they precisely relate to the course of the wall as revealed in Sukenik and Mayer's excavations.

It is now possible, through the application of GIS technology, to visually map the evidence discussed above onto the current topography of Jerusalem. The plan of excavated areas of the wall can be plotted precisely in reference to important elements on the ground, for example the location of the northern gate of Jerusalem in the late Second Temple period, the location of the angle of the wall to the southeast, the relationship of the wall to the main road ascending north and to the nearby Tombs of the Kings.

The results of this work, and my proposed route of the Third Wall, is presented in **Figures 9 and 11**.

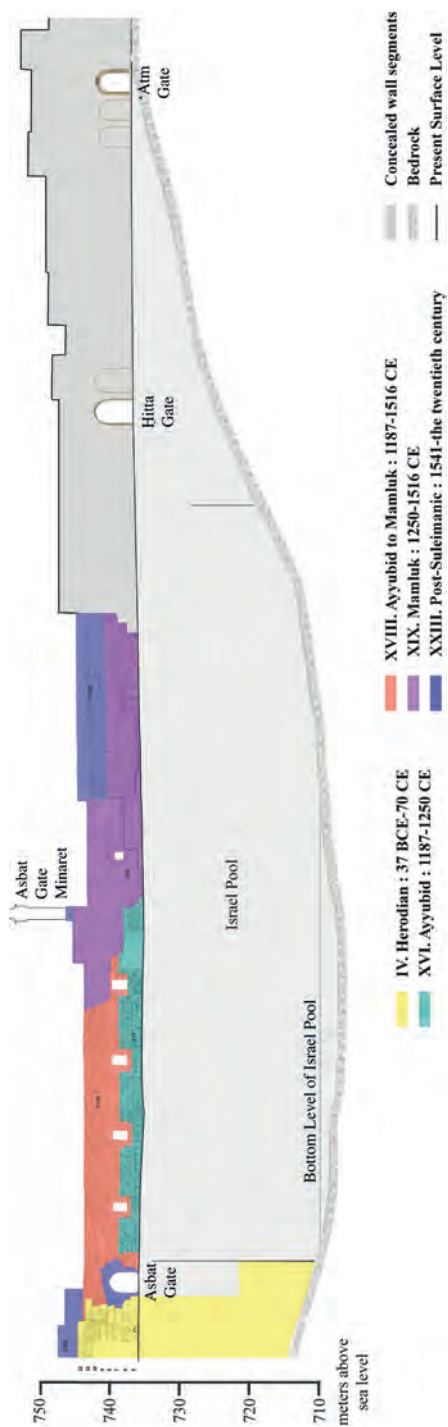


Figure 10. Section of the northern wall of the Temple Mount, as published by Eilat Mazar. Yellow marks the remains from the end of the Second Temple period (Mazar *et al.* 2011). Remains from this period were observed in the northeastern corner of the Temple Mount, at the possible connection point between the Third Wall and the wall of the Temple Mount.

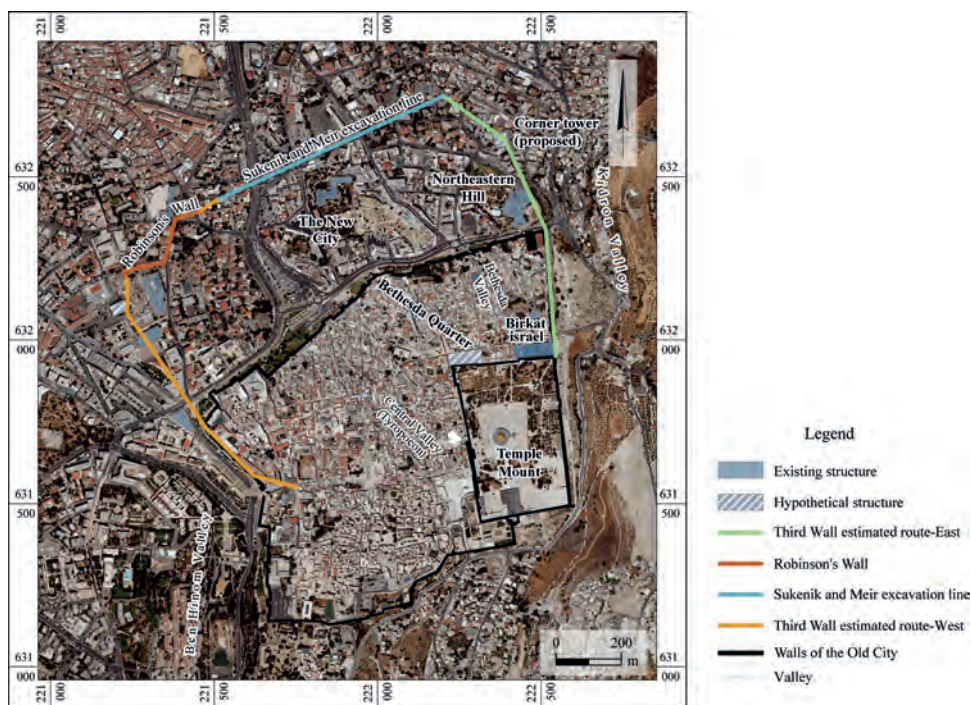


Figure 11. Proposed route of the Third Wall on a satellite photograph.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS AND PILGRIMS' CAMPS IN THE BEZETHA QUARTER

Archaeological research has uncovered only meagre remains of construction in the northeastern part of Jerusalem dating to the late Second Temple period, making it difficult to assess the extent of development of this area. The following discussion surveys such evidence as has been found to date, alongside textual evidence, to determine the possible reasons that may have led King Agrippa to build the Third Wall surrounding the Bezetha Quarter.

6.1. Remains of Settlement in the New Quarter of the City

In his description of northern Jerusalem during the late Second Temple period, Josephus mentions two place names: the 'New City,' and Bezetha (*BJ* V.146–55). According to Levine, these areas were limited to the fourth of the series of hills north of the Temple Mount (Levine 2002: 337–40).

In describing the riots in Jerusalem on Passover of 4 BCE on the rise of Archelaus to power, Josephus notes that the riots increased when large numbers of pilgrims came to Jerusalem. Archelaus sent his army to strike the rebels, dispatching the

cavalry to prevent those staying in tents north of the city from coming to the aid of those inside the city. '... [Archelaus] let loose upon them his entire army, the infantry advancing in close order through the city, the cavalry by way of the plain' (*BJ* II.12). We are also told that this encampment was near the city (*Ant.* XVII.217; Safrai 1965: 134). Ullman suggested that Josephus was referring to the area outside the walls of the city north of the Temple Mount (2009: n. 12). One assumes from Josephus' description that the encampments were in the plain (*BJ* V.212). This may have been the beginning of the building of what became a more permanent settlement outside the walls in the northern part of Jerusalem, which continued to develop until King Agrippa decided to surround the area with a wall (*BJ* V.147).

Scant archaeological finds from the late Second Temple period in the northern part of the city suggest that this area remained sparsely populated during the 1st century CE (Geva 2010: 102; Baruch and Avni 2001: 51–63; 2002: 96–102). This contrasts sharply with the situation in the densely-populated Lower and Upper City to the south. It also seems likely that much of the land in northern Jerusalem would have been under cultivation at this time. All of this supports the theory that settlement in this area began with the pilgrims' encampments on the hill of Bezetha and from there spread to the northwestern hill (Wightman 1989: 102; Geva and Bahat 1998: 223–29).

7. INSTALLATIONS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE CITY

7.1. Pools

The main construction efforts in northeastern Jerusalem were invested in water installations. Most of these were filled by surface runoff from streams in the valleys during the rainy season, with their location dependent mainly on topography (Gurevich 2015: 145). The largest of these pools filled up to create artificial reservoirs (Gurevich 2015: 170).

No other city in the Hellenistic–Roman world at the time of the Second Temple has revealed as many pools as Jerusalem. This abundance of pools had to do with the unique needs of the city — they were a logistical solution intended first and foremost to ensure the comfort of visitors for the three pilgrimage holidays (Gurevich 2015: 170). Most of them apparently encamped in the northern part of the city. Among these pools are the Pools of Bethesda, now adjacent to the Church of St. Anne and the Pool of Israel (Birket Israil). These pools were usually constructed both by quarrying and the building of walls. The Pool of Israel was the largest of these pools. It lies on an east–west axis and measures c. 110 × 38 m, and is 24 m deep (Warren and Conder 1884: 122). Their most important built element was a wide dam that stopped the flow of surface runoff (Warren and Conder 1884: 123).

7.2. The Sheep Gate

The Sheep Gate of the early Second Temple period is mentioned in Nehemiah's description of Jerusalem (Neh 3:1). According to Joseph Braslavi's analysis, based on the descriptions in the book of Nehemiah, the gate was located in the northern part of Jerusalem, where it served mainly for the sale of sheep to pilgrims who could not bring their sacrifices with them from afar, as well as a point of sale for sheep and wool for more everyday needs (1969: 3–13).

The location of the gate may have moved because of the building projects on the Temple Mount. Avi-Yonah identified it with the northern gate of the Temple Mount called the Tadi Gate (Avi-Yonah 1956b: 414; 1968: 161–67). This gate may have been the northern gate of the Temple Mount, which Josephus mentions once: '... Cestius led a large force of picked men with the archers to an assault on the north side of the Temple ... the soldiers with immunity undermined the wall and prepared to set fire to the gate' (*BJ* II.535–37).

In the New Testament, the Sheep Gate is mentioned as follows: 'After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches' (John 5:1–2). This source identifies the Sheep Gate (προβάτικη in the Greek original) with the pool better known as Bethesda (also called the Sheep's Pool or Piscina Probatica). Christian tradition may have preserved the memory of a gate in the northern wall of the Temple Mount enclosure at the beginning of the 2nd century CE (Lincoln 2005: 18; Hendricks 2007: 147).

Avi-Yonah has proposed that at the time of Jesus there was a sheep market in the northern part of the city that provided sacrifices for the Temple, and that the animals may have been corralled north of the Temple Mount (Avi-Yonah 1968: 161–67). In his opinion, the tradition of a market area in the northern part of Jerusalem existed throughout the late Second Temple period. Gurevich proposes that a large enough area to corral sheep and cattle could only be found outside the city limits, and, therefore, presumably such corrals were near the place where the pilgrims encamped, outside and close to the city (Gurevich 2015: 145). Ronny Reich and Yuval Baruch are also of the opinion that that animals were probably not brought for sacrifice daily through the narrow alleyway that cut through the residential areas, much less a huge flock before Passover (Reich and Baruch 2014: 181). Thus, the main entrance to the Temple Mount intended for sheep and other offerings may have been, as I propose, in the northern wall of the Temple Mount enclosure.

8. CONCLUSIONS

This article has explored a number of issues regarding the likely course of the Third Wall, using GIS to pinpoint known landmarks to help visualise its path and

contribute to some long-standing debates. It provides a series of updated maps that show the course of the Third Wall according to excavated data and local topography. **Figures 1–2** show the line of the wall proposed by Robinson in the 19th century. Over the years his exact line became unclear, and therefore it was not drawn on most of the maps of the city. **Figures 4** and **7** include the portions of Sukenik and Mayer's wall, which in their original publication did not take into account the spatial context, and following years of rapid development in the area, could no longer be found. Among the other finds that disappeared were the northern gate in the wall and the point where the wall turned south towards the Temple Mount. In **Figures 9** and **11** the course of the Third Wall can be distinguished both on the topographical map and in the updated aerial photograph.

These maps contribute to our understanding of the line of the wall and its topographical context. They show where the wall emerges in the area of the towers Herod built (near the present-day Jaffa Gate), the presumed continuation of the wall to the northwest, via the remains of the wall and tower uncovered in the Russian Compound excavation, and the point where the wall turns east, including the line Robinson marked. The maps clearly indicate the line of the wall descending Helene HaMalka Street and continuing via Shivtei Israel Street, and the portions of Sukenik and Mayer's excavations on HaHoma HaShlishit Street, as far as the Albright Institute. It also shows the corner tower uncovered in excavation. From this point, the continuation of the line of the wall can be seen until it apparently reaches its highest point near the northeastern hill, and that from there it turned south to the Temple Mount.

When Josephus mentions the pilgrims' encampment (*BJ* II.70), he may have been referring to the area outside the walls of the present city on the north (*BJ* V.212; Ullmann transl. 2009: n. 12) and in fact the Third Wall surrounded it. Apparently, these areas served as encampments because they were convenient, topographically speaking. The northern gate in the Third Wall, called the Women's Gate, was apparently the main gate by which pilgrims coming from the north entered the city. It is also possible that the Pool of Israel and the Sheep's Pool (Bethesda), which were situated in the northern part of the city near the encampments, served various needs of the pilgrims and the animals intended for sacrifice.

I propose that the gate known as the Sheep Gate (or Tadi Gate), which was apparently situated in the northern wall of the Temple Mount and convenient for pilgrims and sacrifices because of its moderate, step-free access to the enclosure and the Temple, was surrounded at a later time by a wall built by King Agrippa around the northern part of Jerusalem — the Third Wall.

The conclusions presented here offer a new perspective on the course of the wall and the sites in the northern part of Jerusalem. It is hoped that the maps and the insights they offer will provide a useful tool to help scholars re-examine the nature and role of Jerusalem in the late Second Temple period.

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Notes

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A *Dipinto* on Bone from Masada

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In 1964 a two-line inscription written in ink on a goat tibia was discovered in excavations at Masada. It was subsequently published in the Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, but declared undecipherable by its editors. This paper re-examines this inscription, proposing a new reading and offering an interpretation that places it within the wider framework of Archelaus' removal from power in 6 CE and the passage of the country from a client ethnarchy to a Roman province.

Keywords

Archelaus, Judaea, Masada, administrative practices, cursive writing, Greek inscriptions

1. INTRODUCTION

On 20 March 1964 a two-line inscription was discovered in Yigael Yadin's excavations at Masada. This was found in the frigidarium of the eastern bathhouse, which was the royal bathhouse in the lower level of Herod's Northern Palace. Although eight volumes about these excavations were published between 1969 and 2007 (*Masada. The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965: Final Reports*), this find was not included in any of them. It was finally registered by the Israel Antiquities Authority in 1991, and is now housed in the collections of the Israel Museum (accession no. 1991-3607). The full context details of the object were only recently identified, in the course of research for this article.

The inscription was written in black ink on the concave side of a goat's tibia some 8.5 cm long and 3.2 cm wide (**Figure 1**).¹ It was published by Avner Ecker and Hannah Cotton in 2018. In this edition, the editors marked as illegible two of the nine characters in the first line and concluded their short commentary with the words: 'No clear reading or interpretation of this inscription can be offered' (*CIIP* IV, 2: 1463, no. 3903). In this paper, I will explore the unusual choice of bone as a substrate for the text, and propose an alternative identification of several letters and a new reading of the inscription. The purpose of the text will then be considered within its wider setting of administrative practices in Judaea in the transition from client ethnarchy to a Roman province.

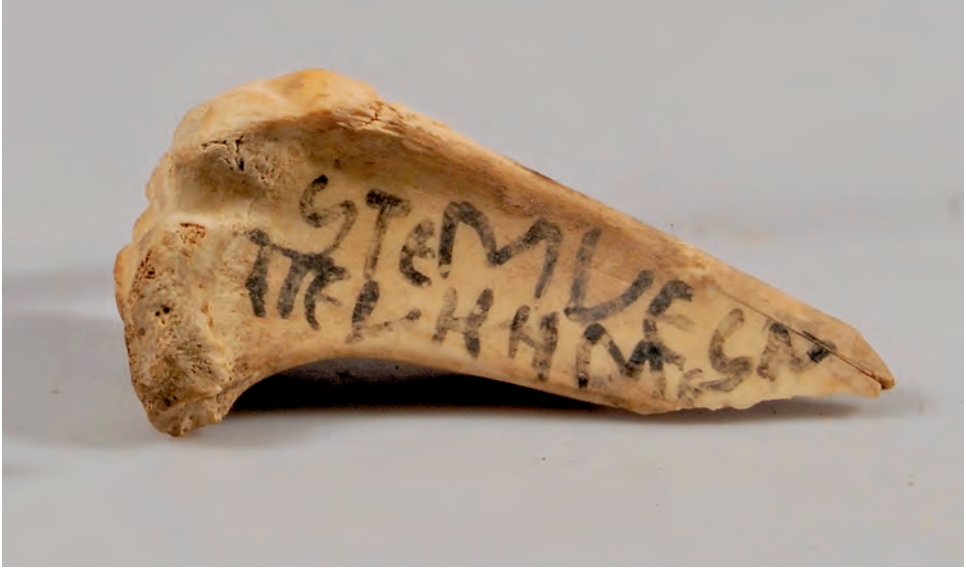


Figure 1. Bone with *dipinto* inscription from Yadin's excavations at Masada (L. 1090, B. 282). Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

2. THE ARTEFACT BENEATH THE TEXT

The choice of bone as a substrate for this inscription is worth comment. While inscribed astragali, game counters and tokens made of bone are not uncommon,² accounts or lists on bone, in which the bone plays the part of the more common ostrakon, are rather rare. This may be simply because, unlike ceramics, the surface of bone deteriorates, so writing on bone is more liable to disappear than writing on sherds. Moreover, sherds were probably preferred as a medium because of their generally smooth surfaces and ready availability, while the majority of animal bones present curved, uneven surfaces that are more difficult to write on.

Despite this, several examples of animal bones bearing utilitarian notations are known, and it may not be a mere chance that these were discovered in the kind of dry-climate areas where papyri were also preserved. Sijpesteijn (1986 = *SEG* 36: no. 1458) published a list of names engraved and painted on a bone from Egypt, whose meaning is uncertain, which he dated to the Byzantine period, based on the evident Coptic influence on the Greek; Gallazzi and Sijpesteijn (1992) published four *dipinti* on bone from Oxyrhynchus, containing lists of names and sums of money, and an account of expenses, all dated between the 2nd and the 4th centuries. A few more examples in Greek and Coptic from Egypt are mentioned in both articles.

Negev (1977: 28) reported the discovery of a camel bone bearing a Greek inscription in black ink, in a 4th-century farmhouse at ‘Avdat in the Negev. The inscription was only partly deciphered and was not published; according to Negev, it dealt with payments to members of the local Semite population for the rent of camels that transported the product of a vineyard. The bone had a perforation for hanging, a hint that it functioned as a board for notations. Negev (*ibid.*) also mentions a similar artefact discovered by the Colt Expedition to Nessana in 1935–1937.³ Although the papyri and other inscriptions from these excavations were subsequently published, this bone inscription was not amongst them (Casson and Hettich [eds.] 1950; Kraemer 1958; Kirk and Welles 1962). Further excavations at ‘Avdat in 1999–2000 recovered two additional *dipinti* written in black ink on camel bones, found in a small storeroom or pantry in a house of the late 2nd to early 3rd century CE (T. Erickson-Gini pers. comm. 2023). Neither has been deciphered. The smaller bone was inscribed partly in Greek, partly in Nabataean script; the larger one bore several lines in Greek and had a perforation for hanging, suggesting that it was used at the actual place where it was found, probably to inventory the goods stocked in the pantry.⁴

The specimens described above belong to the Late Roman period, but a fragment of what seems to be a magical text found at Marisa (*CIIP* IV, 2: no. 3730) indicates that bone was also an option as a medium for writing in the Hellenistic period. Camel bones were particularly suited to this purpose, for the skeleton of this animal includes several large bones with a flat, even surface. The goat bones used at Marisa and Masada were, in contrast, much less suitable — but camels were not as easily available there as in the Negev. This was especially true for Masada, where the large clumsy beasts could not climb the narrow path to the top of the site, and where the meat that could have provided bones for writing on was not brought to the Jewish fortress, as camels were considered impure (Lev 11:4).

3. THE INSCRIPTION

In the diplomatic copy in *CIIP* the editors marked as ‘sign’ the characters they were unable to identify. Their reading follows:

(sign)TEMYE(sign)IY	or	ATEMYEAN
ΠΕΥΚΗΜΕ	or	ΠΕΥΗΗΜΕ

Writing on a small and uneven surface can easily result in misshapen letters or in disrupted ductus of a character, in which the stroke is interrupted by the edge of the bone, or alternates bolder and paler sections because of the unequal pressure of the brush on the concave surface. In addition, as we shall see, the writer’s level of literacy in Greek was very low, which is reflected not only in his spelling and

grammar but also in his handwriting skills. The lines are not straight, the letters are irregular, and a mix of literary and cursive forms is used.⁵

Despite the difficulty in identifying some of the characters, there is no doubt about the first ‘sign’ in Line 1: it is a clear *qoppa*, the archaic letter signifying the number 90. Of the following letters, the fourth is a cursive *upsilon* (so read also by the editors in *CIIP*), but the sequence (sign)IY or AN after the *epsilon* is simply an *omicron* ligated with a *nu*; the *omicron* is slightly incomplete on top due to the edge of the bone, and appears to have a ‘tail,’ which is actually the raised middle bar of the *epsilon* in Line 2. In Line 2, the third and fourth letters are not YK or YH, as suggested in *CIIP*, but a cursive *mu* whose right leg is very faint, and a cursive *pi*. We shall therefore read:

ⲛTEMUEON
ΠΕΜΠΗΜΕ
ϣ τ<α>μ<εῖ>ον
πέμπ(τ)η με

The spelling is atrocious and there is no attempt to decline the noun and the pronoun. However, the writer was able to convey a message, since the sense of the text seems clear enough: ‘90 (for) the treasury, one fifth (for) me.’

In the Roman period the Greek term ταμεῖον or ταμειῖον indicated either the state treasury (*aerarium*) or the emperor’s treasury (*fiscus*).⁶ If the suggested reading is right, the amount at the beginning of Line 1, appearing in connection with the treasury, must refer to money or to the assessed value of property. As assessments were done for the purpose of taxation, for a census, or for confiscation, the inscription may represent an informal record written by an agent visiting Masada for one of these three purposes.

There are two objections against this being a taxation assessment: the nature of Masada — a royal palace and later a fortress — and the method of collecting taxes. As we see in Line 2, a proportion of the assessed sum, one fifth, is assigned to the writer, conceivably the agent himself; in other words, it is a commission charged on the amount allocated to the treasury. Taxes in the Hellenistic and Roman periods were farmed out to contractors by auction, and the sale of collection was not preceded by assessments of the single tax-payers’ property. The text of the *dipinto* is also not applicable to the case of a census. In a census, the land-owners of the province where the census was taken had to register their property and declare their taxable value; then taxes would be farmed out and collected in the usual way. For an example of this in practice, see Babatha’s registration of her property in the 127 CE census of Arabia (P.Yadin 16).

On the other hand, in the case of confiscation, the property registered in the censors’ archive would be seized and put up for sale by state officials.⁷ The final act of the confiscation process — the sale of seized property by auction — would

entail a commission, as the auctioneer was entitled to a cut of the profits. This would seem to fit our reading of the text — except for the fact that auctions were held in a public place where prospective buyers could convene — which is not a scenario consistent with Masada (for a discussion of the mechanisms of auction in late Republic and early Empire, see Garcia Morcillo 2008).

So how do we explain both the text and its appearance at Masada? A possible background for this inscription may perhaps be found in an historical event in which Masada must surely have played a part. As Josephus relates, Herod's son Archelaus, who had been recognised by Augustus as ethnarch of Judaea, Samaria and Idumaea, was deposed by the emperor in 6 CE, after ten years of harsh and turbulent rule, and his property in Judaea forfeited (*AJ* 17.342–43; *BJ* 2.111–13). The judgement on Archelaus took place in Rome, where he had been summoned by Augustus to respond to the complaints of his Jewish and Samaritan subjects. Archelaus was deprived of the title of ethnarch and banished to Vienne in Gallia Narbonensis, where he travelled from Italy, no doubt with a sufficient provision of money he had taken for his expenses in Rome, which must have included generous gifts and sweeteners. He had no chance of going back to empty his coffers in Judaea and all his valuables there were therefore subject to the confiscation process.

Archelaus' territory was incorporated in the province of Syria, and on this occasion Quirinius, who had been sent to Syria to conduct a census, came to Judaea to conduct a census in the new province and 'to dispose of Archelaus' property' (τὸ Ἀρχελάου ἀποδωσόμενος οἶκον, Josephus, *AJ* 17.355; ἀποδωσόμενος τὰ Ἀρχελάου χρήματα, Josephus, *AJ* 18.2).⁸ Most translations and paraphrases of these passages translate this sentence 'to sell the estate of Archelaus,' but 'to sell' is only one of many meanings of the verb ἀποδίδωμι in the medium mode. What Josephus describes is a process of confiscation which in this case would have involved an inventory of Archelaus' property, the seizure and sale by auction of personal possessions, household goods and slaves, as well as the seizing of silver and gold, presumably in large quantities as Archelaus had a very substantial income from his dominion. As to real estate, it is unlikely that Archelaus' property was treated as that of a private citizen. Farms, if he owned any, might perhaps have been sold, but royal palaces and fortresses and crown lands were surely seized by the state or put into the emperor's hands.⁹

The whole operation must have gone through several stages: locating Archelaus' scattered property throughout his domain, then inventorying, evaluating and directing different items of movable and immovable property to different destinations. Immovable property such as land and palaces would be put up for sale or have imperial stewards appointed to manage it; moveable valuables would be transported and then sold; coined and uncoined silver would be transferred to Roman treasury houses or mints. The entire process had to be completed rapidly, within the time frame of Quirinius' mandate for the census.

As Judaea had only just become a Roman province, it still lacked a Roman bureaucratic network; nor could the job be left to the army. One might expect that Quirinius would have required Archelaus' stewards to inventory, assess and deliver into his hands the property entrusted to them, thus leaving only the sale to be arranged. However, the behaviour of the royal stewards ten years earlier may have dissuaded the Roman authorities from taking this course of action. As Josephus reports, after Herod's death, when Archelaus sailed for Rome to solicit Augustus' ratification of Herod's testament, which assured his succession as king of Judaea, the procurator of Syria Sabinus came to Jerusalem, occupied the royal palace and summoned the commanders of the forts and the stewards of Herod's property. He ordered them to deliver into his hands the fortresses and to give him access to the accounts, but all refused and kept custody of everything for Archelaus (Josephus, *AJ* 17.221–23; *BJ* 2.16–19). Plausibly Quirinius, forewarned by this incident, employed local entrepreneurs for the job, as was normally done for the collection of taxes; however the method of compensation normally adopted for tax farmers may have been deemed unpractical in this case. It is conceivable, therefore, that agents contracted for this operation were paid by commission, that is, by the grant of an agreed-upon cut of the property they delivered to the treasury. This reward system is well known in the early Principate, when professional accusers made huge fortunes, taking advantage of the law that granted them a portion of the property of the accused; but *delatores*, who gave information about money due to the treasury or about offenders liable to financial penalties (e.g. fines), already existed under the Republic.¹⁰

What amount was involved in the business attested by the inscription? If the destination was the ταμείον, the figure 90 must represent a sum of money, and a large rather than a modest one if the scenario suggested above is correct. Speaking of large sums of money Josephus uses two standards, drachms and talents, and from some passages in *Jewish Antiquities* it appears that he refers to Attic drachms, ten thousands of which made up one talent. This was clearly a Tyrian talent of 3000 shekel (Tyrian tetradrachms) or 12,000 Tyrian drachms, for the weight of this unit was less than the weight of an Attic drachm.¹¹ The combined use of two currencies universally recognised throughout the Empire and beyond was very convenient and it is likely that the account attested in our inscription was done in the same way; if so, the figure 90 would refer to talents.

Might 90 talents of coined or weighed silver have been found in Masada at a given time? Considering that this was Herod's main fortress, inherited by his son, and that Archelaus' yearly revenue from his dominion was 400 talents (Josephus, *BJ* 2.97, or 600 talents as reported in the parallel passage in *AJ* 17.320), it is by no means unimaginable that such a portion of his wealth could be stored in Masada in cash. Nor would it take much space: as silver weighs 10,497 g or roughly 10.5 kg per cubic decimetre, 90 talents of 42 kg, together weighing 3780 kg, would occupy

360 cubic decimetres; in ingots, they would make a square cuboid 60 cm long, 60 cm wide and 100 cm high. In coined silver the volume of 90 talents, though greater, would still have been quite manageable.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Summing up, the reading of the *dipinto* suggested above seems justifiable, in consideration of the difficulty of writing on this particular medium and of the low level of literacy of the writer, which can well be expected from a native Aramaic speaker. If the reading is accepted, the interpretation of the text as a registration of accounts by a person working for the treasury on a commission basis follows. Whether the scenario is the liquidation of Archelaus' property on his deposition and banishment remains hypothetical. Still, it is reasonable to surmise that local entrepreneurs profited from the enactment of this liquidation by providing all kind of related services, including those of investigation and accounting. We are left to wonder what function this bone fulfilled and why it was found at Masada. In the suggested scenario, an official report would have been sent to the treasury together with the money, and it would not have taken the form of a slatternly notation on a small bone, or be deposited locally. It seems more reasonable to imagine that the agent made this notation for himself, to help his memory toward the preparation of the official report, which might have included a number of different assignments, each of which the agent may have recorded on a different artefact. In the present case he used a goat bone for this service, most likely not by a considered choice but because this was the first thing he happened to snatch out of a trash dump — the same place that might have provided him with potsherds to use as ostraca. Then, once its usefulness had ended, the object was either discarded or lost.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Dr. Yoav Farhi, who drew my attention to the inscribed bone from Masada, the editors of the next Masada Report (in preparation) for their patient help in my search for the origin of the artefact, and last but not most certainly not least, Dr. Yael Max of the IAA, through whose efforts its true provenance was disclosed.

Notes

- 1 Mr. Ariel Shatil of the Israel Antiquities Authority, who is working on the bone artefacts from Masada, informs me that this bone is a fragment of the diaphysis and the proximal epiphysal joint of a right side tibia from a sheep or a goat. It is more likely to be the latter, as sheep are not commonly found in the desert.
- 2 Examples from Palestine and its vicinity include astragali (*CIIP* IV, 2: nos. 3671–70 = *SEG* 60: no. 1741 [Marisa]; *CIIP* V, 1: no. 6901 [Western Galilee]), game counters from

- the Herodian and Roman periods (*CIIP* I, 2: no. 1115 [Jerusalem]; *CIIP* II: no. 2145 [Dora]; *CIIP* III: no. 2687 [Ascalon]; *CIIP* V, 1: no. 6862 [Sepphoris]; *SEG* 34: nos. 1535–39 and *SEG* 64: nos. 1886–88 [Egypt]). The function of other similar artefacts is uncertain: they may be magic texts, or tags (see for instance *CIIP* IV, 2: nos. 2741 [Tell en-Nasbeh] and 3730 [Marisa]; *SEG* 31: no. 1571; *SEG* 65: no. 1907 [Egypt]).
- 3 I wish to thank Dr. Tali Erickson-Gini for drawing my attention to this find.
 - 4 I owe this information to Dr. Erickson-Gini, who excavated the ‘pantry’ in 1999–2000 under Israel Antiquities Authority license number A3141/1999. Radiocarbon analysis of the bone has confirmed the late 2nd–early 3rd century date suggested by associated pottery; a report on this material is in preparation by T. Erickson-Gini and G. Bar-Oz.
 - 5 I do not intend to address the issue of literacy in this period and region or in general. Between the totally illiterate, those only able to sign their name, and the elite who could read expeditiously and write correctly, there must have been many whose writing skills cannot be graded based on the single specimen we possess for each of these writers or scribblers. The author of this notation was obviously one of them.
 - 6 The term is also found in the Byzantine period with reference to the *sacrae largitiones* or to the *res privata*. It also appears in rabbinic literature as תמיון (ṬMYWN) in reference to the state treasury and to the imperial tax collectors (גבאי תמיון, GB’Y ṬMYWN: Jastrow 1926: 539. It figured in the life of Palestinian Jews in such a grim way that it passed into the Talmud, and hence into modern Hebrew, especially in the expression ירד לטמיון, *yarad latimyon*, ‘to go down the drain.’
 - 7 On the procedure and agents of a confiscations, see Bats 2016. Piacentin (2021: 153–74) also deals with confiscation, specifically of Cicero’s property after his condemnation to exile, but she focuses mostly on the aspect of *consecratio bonorum* (the dedication of seized property to a deity), which is not relevant to our case. Confiscations in Rome were carried out by the quaestors on the praetor’s instructions; in Cicero’s instance both the seizure and the sale of his property were conducted personally by his accuser, the tribune Clodius, with the help of his followers. The phenomenon of professional accusers, who were entitled to a portion of the property of the accused, came later, in the early Principate.
 - 8 This was the second census of Quirinius, which he conducted not as a governor, as he did in the first, mentioned in the Gospel of Luke (2: 1–3), but as a censor: see the discussion in Di Segni 2005: 32–34; and 2013.
 - 9 Lands that had belonged to the Hasmonaeans and then to Herod are later part of the *patrimonium* of the Roman and Byzantine emperors (*saltus*), but this is also true of some small properties, like the plantation ‘of the Lord Caesar’ that abutted one of the fields owned by Babatha at Maoza (P.Yadin 16).
 - 10 Rewards could be a fixed sum, as in the case of the proscription edict issued by Lepidus, Mark Antony and Octavian after Caesar’s death, or proportional; for instance, it was one fourth in accusations of treason (*maiestas*). See Chilton (1955: 78–79) and Piacentin (2021: 62, 151).
 - 11 This results from the comparison of three parallel passages where Herod’s bequests to Augustus and Livia are expressed alternatively in drachms and talents (Josephus, *AJ* 17.146, 189–90, 321–23; see also Schürer 1979: 63, n. 194). In another passage

Josephus explains to his Roman readers that the standard called *kikkar* or talent by the Jews corresponded in weight to 100 *minae* (*AJ* 3.144). In fact, a *kikkar* of 3000 Tyrian shekels weighed about 42 kg, close to 100 Attic *minae* of 420 g. Revenues in the Herodian dominions were calculated in talents (see Josephus, *AJ* 17.317–21).

ABBREVIATIONS

- CIIP* I, 2 Cotton, H. M., Di Segni, L., Eck, W., Isaac, B., Kushnir-Stein, A., Misgav, H., Price, J., and Yardeni, A., 2012. *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae I: Jerusalem. Part 2: 705–1120; Appendix 1*–54** (Berlin).
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Horvat Qasra and the Chapel of Holy Salome: Features, Identity and Archaeological Context

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Horvat Qasra is located on a hilltop in the southern Judean Foothills near the ancient road connecting the plains and foothills with Hebron. The site consists of a central building, with a tower and rooms built around an inner courtyard, and a hiding complex cut into the rock below. Additional cavities were carved into the soft chalk of the slopes: underground quarries, two cross-shaped columbaria installations and some cisterns.

In the southern part of the site, a Jewish rock-cut burial complex from the 1st–2nd centuries CE was excavated. This had a monumental entrance, with a roofed vestibule and cliff walls faced with ashlar. In front was a large courtyard. During the Byzantine period (5th c. CE), the burial complex was transformed into a Christian chapel, dedicated to Holy Salome. Numerous inscriptions and graffiti incised on its walls, in Greek, Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Arabic, attest that Holy Salome was venerated here until the Abbasid period (8–9th centuries CE). A Christian structure was erected outside the chapel, in the former courtyard of the tomb, and probably functioned as a monastic compound.

Given the long veneration of Salome in this cave, there is a question about her identity. It has been assumed that she was the 'doubting midwife' of an apocryphal story. We suggest instead that another Salome was remembered as being buried here — Salome the disciple and Myrrhophore.

Keywords

Saint Salome, Horvat Qasra, Second Temple period, Byzantine, cave chapels, columbaria, cult of saints, hiding complexes, manor houses, monasteries

1. INTRODUCTION

In 1982 an intriguing cave chapel came to light in a remote, rural area south of Beth Guvrin, Israel, in the Judean foothills. The archaeologist Amos Kloner discovered that a tomb complex from the Second Temple period had been turned into a Christian shrine in the Byzantine era. Crosses painted on the walls were in a remarkable state of preservation. But the most remarkable feature was that the walls were covered with graffiti in Greek, Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Arabic, languages showing long use of the site through a critical time of cultural change (see Kloner 1982; Di Segni 1986; Tsafir, 1989: 1763–65; Zissu and Kloner

2019: 128–30). The graffiti indicate that this was a holy place and memorial site, dedicated to Holy (or Saint) Salome. But this makes the site mysterious, because it is not clear who this ‘Salome’ was, and nothing was known from the written sources about this chapel and its veneration.

The Chapel of Holy Salome was a sizeable place of devotion. The cave chapel is associated with exterior masonry that shows that a Christian structure existed outside, from which the chapel descended. New excavations were conducted by the Israel Antiquities Authority (hereafter IAA) in 2022–2023, and have revealed the lower level of this structure, along with hundreds of clay lamps used by those who participated in ceremonies in the darkness of the cave (Shimshon-Paran 2023; Steinmeyer 2023). Soot from the burning of these lamps can still be seen in the wall recesses. Excavations show that the tomb was originally adjacent to a 1st – 2nd century fortified manor house with a ramified hiding complex hewn underneath and two underground columbaria cut nearby. This paper aims to correlate this new evidence with the previously excavated and investigated material, to present an interpretation of the site, and consider the identity of the figure venerated here.

2. THE LOCATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ḤORVAT QASRA

Ḥorvat Qasra (NIG 193156/605565, OIG 1053/1431) is located geographically at 31.53878 north and 34.926748 east, and the road access is from Highway 6 or 38 from Jerusalem, east on the 3415. This route follows the old road up to Eliav and then loops south, but originally it continued to Idna. At a small roundabout by Moshav Amatzia one takes Route 358, stopping just before Eliav. The site lies about 1.5 kilometres northeast of Amatzia, just north of Eliav, 8 km south–southeast of Beth Guvrin and 8 km southeast of Lachish. There is a flat hill 370 m high, in an area of private land largely planted with vines, very close to the security fence with the Palestinian National Authority. The area of ruins extends over 30 *dunams*, or 7.5 acres (**Figures 1–3**).

The Palestine Exploration Fund’s *Survey of Western Palestine* draft map of 1864 and final printed version (1880: sheet 20; **Figure 4**) show a village named Dawaimeh (or Dawayima) lying *c.* 1 km southwest of the ruins around the cave chapel, on the road that is now route 3415. The map shows this ruin as named Khirbet el-Kusr, meaning ‘ruin of the house or palace’ (Palestine Exploration Fund 1880: 115), in recognition of the wider ruined structures around the cave, hence Ḥorvat Qasra in Hebrew. Khirbet el-Kusr is one of several identified ruins in the area to the northeast of Dawaimeh; the surveyors also noted the presence of cisterns and caves.¹ Dawaimeh (as Dawayima) is also shown on the Survey of Palestine map (1945; **Figure 2**), but does not now exist. Instead, there is the *moshav* of Amatzia nearby. A number of remains from the Roman and Byzantine periods have been found in this area, indicating that there was a small settlement here at



The evidence of documented Roman milestones and other remains suggest that an ancient road ran through this area from the city of Eleutheropolis (Beit Jibrin/Beth Guvrin; see Tsafrir, Di Segni and Green 1994: 118) to Hebron, connecting with the road that led south from Bethlehem to Hebron. The Roman milestones as found along this stretch of road are shown on Avi Yonah's *Map of*

Figure 1. Location of Horvat Qasra.
Illustration by B. Zissu.

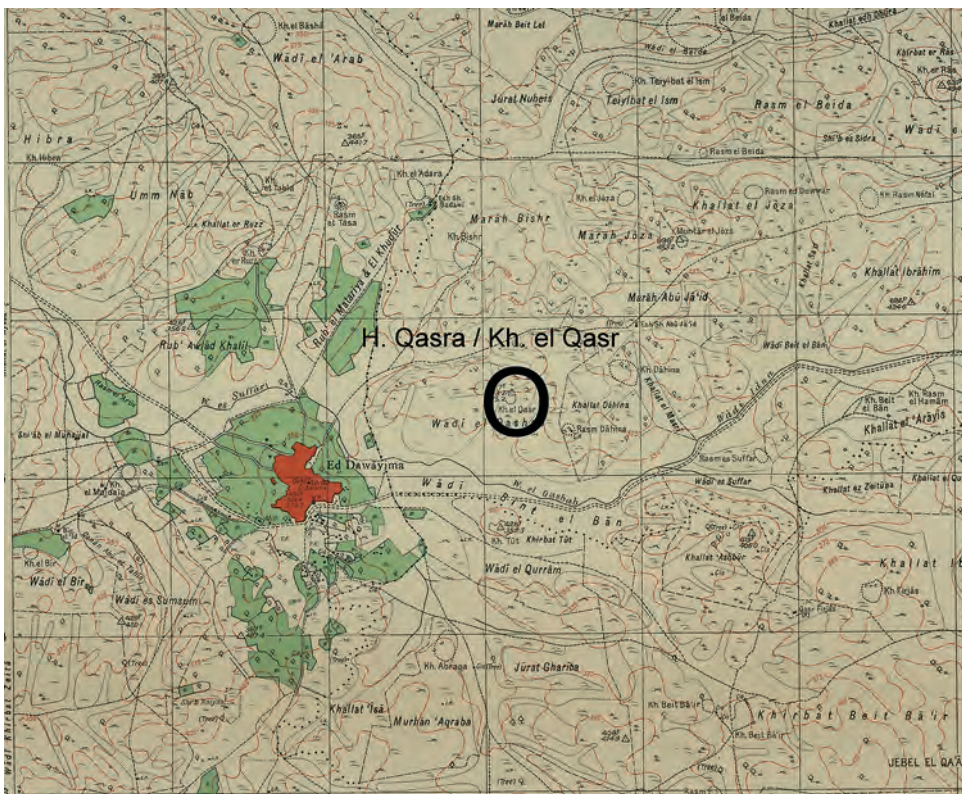


Figure 2. Detail from the 1945 Survey of Palestine map.



Figure 3. Aerial photo of Ḥorvat Qasra before the IAA excavations, looking northeast. 1: The manor house. 2: The tomb/courtyard and Christian monastic complex. Photograph by B. Zissu.

Roman Palestine (1936), and the *Tabula Romani Iudaea-Palestina* map (Tsafrir, Di Segni and Green 1994), as well as in Freeman-Grenville, Chapman and Taylor (2003: Map 7). The cave lies just to the east of the Roman road. The Palestine Exploration Fund surveyors themselves traced this road running due north to Beit Jibrin (ancient Eleutheropolis).

The ancient road here was not a pilgrim route. The pilgrim road usually led from Jerusalem to Nikopolis and then the port of Jaffa, via Diospolis, or less commonly from Jerusalem to Eleutheropolis and then to the coastal road towards Gaza and Egypt (see Wilkinson 2002: 40–44), but it would not have taken pilgrims south to the Ḥorvat Qasra area (**Figure 5**). Thus, it is probably not surprising that the Chapel of Holy Salome is not mentioned in any surviving pilgrim account. However, as a trade route the road between Eleutheropolis and Hebron was the most direct way of travelling from Hebron to the coastal road connecting with Ascalon and Gaza and then Egypt. Travellers from Hebron could turn west, just north of Ḥorvat Qasra, to go on to the coastal highway via Lachish (Roman Lacheis). It was also the way of going from Bethlehem to the southern coast.

This region was identified by Eusebius in his *Onomasticon* as part of the territory of the city of Eleutheropolis and as lying within a geographical sub-region known



Figure 4. Detail of the Survey of Western Palestine map of 1880 showing the area of Khirbet el-Kusr (Palestine Exploration Fund 1880: Sheet 20).

as the Daromas, a term from the Hebrew or Aramaic word (דרום; דרומא) for ‘south’ (Avi-Yonah 1962: 111). This designation continued in use for a long time, as is evidenced by the 10th-century Arab geographer al-Muqaddasi, in reference to the region south of Beth Guvrin (see Magness 2003: 93).

At the time Eusebius wrote his *Onomasticon*, at the very beginning of the 4th century, the Daromas was a thriving Jewish region, and had been for centuries. Eusebius attests that there were large Jewish villages at Eremmon (Horvat Rimmon,



Figure 5. Roads of Byzantine Palestine. Illustration by J.E. Taylor, after Freeman-Grenville, Chapman III, and Taylor 2003: Maps 6-7.

Khirbet Umm er-Ramamin, *Onom.* 88.17–18), Anaea (Ḥorvat ‘Anim, Khirbet Ghuwein et-Tahta or el-Gharbiyya, *Onom.* 26.8–9), Eshtemo‘a (es-Samu, *Onom.* 86.29), Iethan (Yutta, *Onom.* 108.8), Thella or Thalcha (Ḥorvat Tillah, Khirbet Khuweifa, *Onom.* 98.26), and Chermela (Carmel; Khirbet Kirmil, *Onom.* 92.19–22). Eusebius also identified that (Jewish-) Christians existed in the Daromas at another Anaea (Khirbet Ghuwein el-Fauqa or esh-Sharqiyya), ‘near the first,’ lying to the east of it, ‘which now happens to be entirely made up of Christians,’ (*Onom.* 26.13–14). They were also at Iethira (*Onom.* 108.1–4; 110.18, cf. 88.3; Taylor 1993: 62). From Anaea came a young man, Peter also known as Absalom (a Jewish name), who was martyred in Caesarea (Euseb., *Mart. Pal.* 10.1–2; see Taylor 1993: 50 map. 2).

This area appears to have been quite thick with settlements in the late Roman and Byzantine periods. In the near vicinity at Ḥorvat Beit Loya or Khirbet Beit Lehi there is another Byzantine church (Patrich and Tsafirir 1993), with various rock-cut underground cavities (Gutfeld and Ecker 2012) and tombs, initially explored by R. A. S. Macalister (1901). The site is located at 31.563611 and 34.828036, just 2.6 km due north of Ḥorvat Qasra, and 5.5 km southeast of Beth Guvrin.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SITE

The site of Ḥorvat Qasra extends over 7.5 acres on a hilltop overlooking the nearby agricultural areas and the ancient road passing through the Lachish valley (see **Figure 3**). Its remains have been briefly listed in the survey of Amatzia published by Dagan (2006: 240–241, no. 326). The following examination updates the results of the excavations of Kloner (Kloner 1990) and Zissu and Kloner (Zissu and Kloner 2019; Kloner, Zissu and Graicer 2015), before proceeding to evaluate the most recent works. The various components of the site will be listed and placed in their wider regional context.

3.1. Fortified Manor House

On the top of the hill are ruins of a fortified manor house, likely dating initially from the Hellenistic period. This consists of a central building (c. 20 × 20 m) with built-up areas and Early Roman courtyards. In places the walls survive to a height of five courses. A well-built fortified tower stands at the northern edge of the architectural complex. Its foundations are protected on the outside by a sloping wall built of large stones (**Figures 6–7**). This feature – known as a *protechisma* – was a Hellenistic fortification element, designed to block tunnels dug by the enemy against the foundation of a building or a wall. It provided protection against siege machinery (Lawrence 1979: 277).

This structure has been defined as a fortress (Dagan 2006: 240). However, Dagan already noted two cruciform columbaria, two bell-shaped cisterns, and



Figure 6: The fortified manor house at Horvat Qasra. Photograph by B. Zissu.



Figure 7: Tower with sloping wall, looking south. Photograph by B. Zissu.

another smaller, 4×4 m building to the southwest (326.1), as well as a lime kiln on the southern slope (326.2), a further rock-hewn bell-shaped cistern (326.4), agricultural terraces (326.5), and another lime kiln north of the settlement (326.6). Collectively, these features suggest that the structure was built as a rural manor house at the centre of agricultural production (Dagan 2006: 240–41).

Ancient settlements having similar features have been recorded elsewhere in Judaea — at Rujum Hamiri, Rujum ed-Deir, Khirbet al-Qasr, Nahal Eshtamoa, Rujum al-Qasr, Rujum Abu Hilal, Khirbet Qumran, 'Ofarim, Khirbet Canaan, Ḥorvat Tsalit and 'Aroer (Zissu 2002: 260–62). These sites control their immediate surroundings and access roads. Scholars have differed in their interpretations as to their purpose: whether they served as forts, fortresses, fortified settlements, or fortified manor houses (Hirschfeld 1998; 2000). The paucity of excavations and the scarcity of publications about these sites do not make it possible to determine with certainty their function and exact chronology (Zissu 2002: 255–61; Taylor 2012: 254–56), but their strategic positioning close to roads may be a significant factor. In the case under discussion, the proximity of rock-cut features such as the hiding complex, two columbaria and, especially, the monumental tomb complex, support the identification of the site as a fortified manor house of the Hellenistic period. Surveys of the ruin have noted pottery dating to the Early Roman (1st century CE), Late Roman (3–4th centuries CE), Byzantine and Early Islamic periods (5–8th centuries CE; Dagan 2006: 240).

3.2. The Hiding Complex

A rock-cut hiding complex was discovered under the central building, accessed from the central courtyard (**Figure 8**). During the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods three underground cavities hewn out of rock (A, B, C), served the residents of the building. Each had its own stepped corridor and entrance and functioned independently. Cavity A is a storage hall (2×3.2 m) at the centre of the building. A1 is a water storage installation and A2 apparently functioned as a ritual immersion bath. Cavities B and C lie outside the building on the slope south of the settlement and originally served as limestone quarries for the extraction of building material. At a later stage A, B and C were connected by narrow, low, winding tunnels, converting them into a hiding complex, while some square chambers (as D, F, H, K) were hewn in the walls of the tunnels, apparently for hiding and storage. Unfortunately, an absence of datable archaeological material makes it difficult to establish the date of these modifications on internal evidence alone.

The Ḥorvat Qasra complex, however, has similar characteristics in common with other hiding complexes found in the Judaeen Foothills that were created in the 2nd century CE during the Bar Kokhba Revolt, when the Jews of Judaea rebelled against Roman rule and established independent enclaves. Approximately

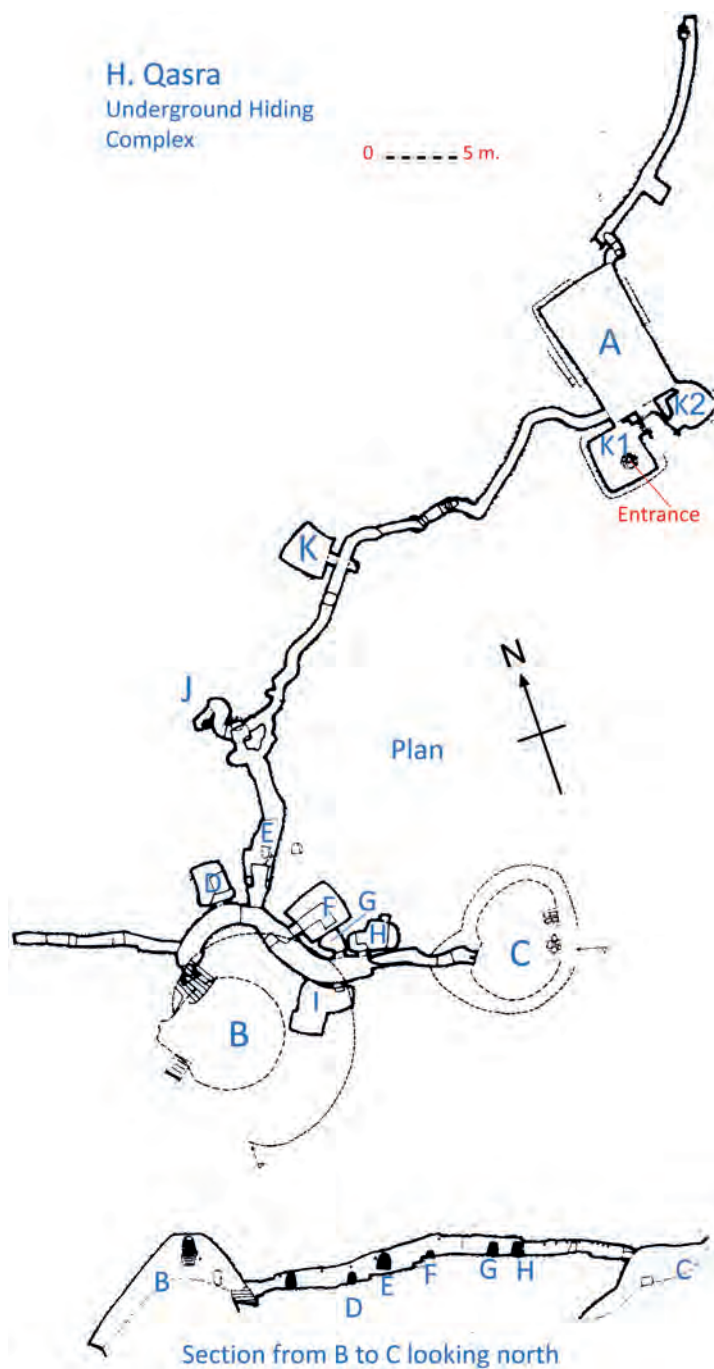


Figure 8. Plan and sections of the underground hiding complex. Illustration by A. Kloner.

440 subterranean hiding settlement-complexes have been found at 252 sites in the Judaeen Foothills, Hebron Mountains and Bethel region, with archaeological evidence indicating Jewish presence in Judaeen settlements at this time.

These types of complexes were hewn artificially under or near residential buildings in ancient settlements. They include several rock-cut chambers connected to each other by a maze of tunnels. Passage through these low tunnels requires one to kneel down, crawl and sometimes even to creep. They are the typical feature that identifies a rock-cut system of underground cavities as a hiding complex. The openings into chambers are always small, and require one to kneel down in order to enter. Underground chambers, storerooms, halls and tunnels could be sealed from the inside. Thus, the complexes were designed so that the occupants could defend themselves from within, against an enemy attempting to enter. These tunnels were accessed via shafts carved into the floors and courtyards of houses. The shafts were most probably blocked with stone slabs that could be camouflaged. Some underground systems had escape openings located outside the settled area (Kloner and Zissu 2003; 2009; Zissu and Kloner 2014; Klein *et al.* 2021).

Based on the architectural and typological parallels from other Judaeen sites, we suggest that the Ḥorvat Qasra hiding complex also served the residents of the settlement during the Bar Kokhba Revolt. As preparations for this, pre-existing underground installations beneath the buildings of the fortified manor house/estate were modified to create a hiding place for local residents by blocking the original entrances, and creating low, narrow tunnels to connect the various chambers. This revolt is little documented in the literary record (though see Dio Cass., *Hist. rom.* 69.14; Tert., *Adv. Jud.* 13; Justin, *Dial.* 16; Justin *Apol.* 1.77; Euseb., *Hist. eccl.* 4.6; Midrash Lamentations Rabbah 2.2), and therefore archaeological data has played a major part in understanding what took place, and the extent of Jewish resistance (Eck 1999; 2007; Kloner and Zissu 2003; Eshel and Zissu 2019). Archaeological evidence also confirms the catastrophic consequences of the Roman suppression of the revolt, as indicated by the literary sources (Raviv and Ben David 2021).

3.3. Columbaria and Additional Rock-Cut Cavities

As noted, additional rock-cut cavities were carved into the soft limestone chalk of the slopes surrounding the architectural complex: underground limestone quarries (now partly collapsed), lime kilns, three bell-shaped water cisterns, and in fact *two* cross-shaped columbaria installations (or dovecotes), one lying 10 m east of the building and the other lying 100 m to the south (**Figure 9**). The former had a 1.4 m wide opening in the ceiling and an entrance in the south, while the latter had an opening of 1.3×1.4 m in the centre, and 415 niches (Dagan 2006: 240).

The cross-shaped design of these columbaria is an indication that they were originally hewn to serve specifically as dovecotes. The cross-shaped layout was



Figure 9. Columbarium no. 2, looking east. Photograph by B. Zissu.

chosen by ancient masons who possessed the knowledge of the optimal width for the arms of the cross to guarantee the stability and longevity of the structure, eliminating the necessity for supplementary support. This stands in contrast to the prevailing trend among underground columbaria installations to improvise by adapting an existing space, hewn for some other use.

Pigeon-raising dates back as far as the 3rd century BCE, flourishing during the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine and Early Islamic periods. Hundreds of rock-cut, underground columbaria have been discovered in Israel, with most of them located in the Judean foothills, where they reached a peak of technological sophistication (Tepper 1986). This large number may be due to the ease of hewing the soft limestone. They have survived owing to the structures' durability, even when subjected to secondary use in later periods. Above-ground built columbaria did not generally survive, however, and archaeological excavations in Israel have uncovered only few of these (Zissu 1995; Hirschfeld and Tepper 2006; Ramsay *et al.* 2016).

Archaeological and artistic evidence, ancient classical and rabbinic sources, and the practice of pigeon-raising today, all attest to the crucial role played by pigeon-raising in ancient farming (Tepper 1986). A great deal of research has been devoted to ascertaining the purpose of these columbaria, and numerous explanations have been offered. Today, most researchers tend to agree that these structures served for the production of both meat and fertiliser (Tepper 1986; Zissu and Rokach

1999; Kloner 2003); the latter would have been used on the agricultural terraces surrounding the site.

3.4. A Rock-Cut Jewish Burial Complex and Forecourt

In 1981 a monumental burial complex situated on the southern outskirts of the ancient site was broken into and looted, and the site was vandalised. After the looting, it was excavated by Amos Kloner in 1982 and again in 1984–1985. While a report was published, it concentrated on the inner parts of the complex, in the chapel itself (Kloner 1990; Zissu and Kloner 2019: 128–29). His findings from the soundings in the courtyard and other parts of the exterior are presented here for the first time.

Two periods of use were observed: an initial phase from the 1st and 2nd centuries CE in which there was a Jewish tomb complex with monumental entrance and forecourt and a second phase dating to the Byzantine–Abbasid periods when this was a Christian complex, and the tomb was turned into a cave chapel.

In the first phase the tomb was hewn out of the rock and used for burial — apparently serving the Jewish residents of the site, whose elite social status is indicated by the sizeable dimensions and features of this tomb. Unevenness of the rock cutting makes it possible that the site was originally dug out for stone quarrying, and then subsequently turned to use for burials. The tomb complex as a whole consisted of a monumental entrance forecourt, sunk into the slope of the hill, leading into a roofed vestibule via a possibly Doric decorated façade on its north side. We assume that the façade was supported by a *distylos in antis* architectural feature, with two columns providing three entrances. Some fragments found by the new IAA excavation, such as a frieze with plain metopes and triglyphs (e.g. The Associated Press 2022; Shimshon-Paran 2023) hint that a Doric-style frieze surmounted the original facade. Such Doric friezes decorate façades of monumental Early Roman tombs in Jerusalem, Western Samaria and the Southern Hebron Hills (e.g. Peleg-Barkat 2012). Additional architectural features decorated with a branch bearing three pomegranates and acanthus leaves perhaps belonged to the same decorative scheme (Shimshon-Paran 2023). Kloner uncovered various architectural details as well (**Figure 10**).

Remains of an arch visible on the central and western side of the exterior northern wall of the entrance vestibule (**Figure 11**) indicated that a barrel vault surmounted the top, providing the roof. This would then have run the entire 15 m width. Photographs released of the new IAA excavations also show remains of this barrel vaulting on the eastern side (Kahana 2022). These photographs also show the full extent of the fine Second Temple ashlar running along the width of the tomb entranceway, and the typical door features of frame moulding in the jambs and extended lintel, carved in relief.



Figure 10. Architectural element found by A. Kloner in the courtyard. Photograph by B. Zissu.



Figure 11. Barrel vaulting on the western side of the façade. Photograph by B. Zissu.

The entrance to the tomb complex lies some 125 m south of the fortified manor house and such proximity indicates that the tomb complex can be understood to have served the inhabitants of this building (**Figure 12**). Kloner determined that the doorway to the tomb complex was blocked with a rolling stone built between

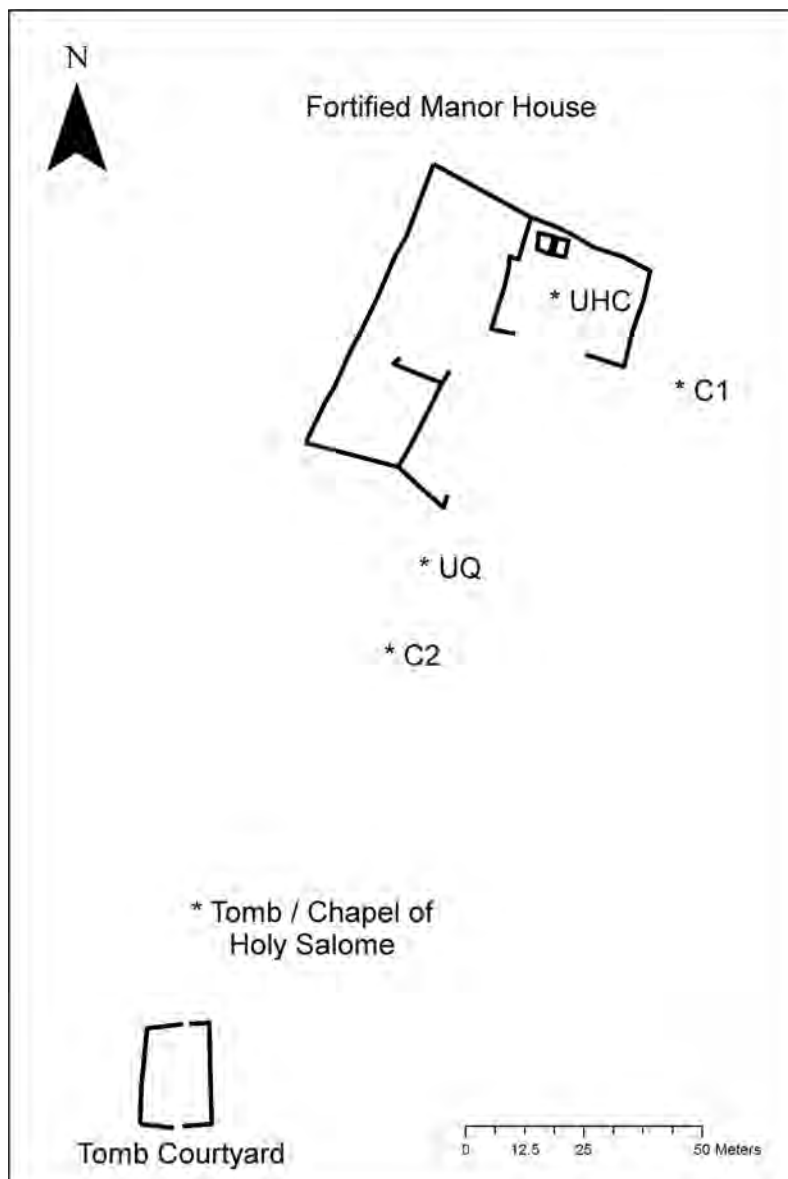


Figure 12. Plan of the fortified manor house and tomb courtyard. Illustration by A. Kloner and B. Zissu.

the northern wall of the vestibule and cliff wall facing, and led down steps into a rectangular antechamber (I), with openings into three of its walls (**Figures 13–14**). This led to three inner chambers (II–IV). Rooms II and III contained seven arched *kokhim* (elongated burial niches, see **Figures 15–16**) while Room IV, which underwent extensive alterations in the later phase, appears to have initially served for storage of ossuaries. Finds from the first period of use included fragments of four red-painted ossuaries decorated in carved geometric patterns, 1st and 2nd century CE oil lamps, and a limestone ‘measuring cup’ of a similar date.

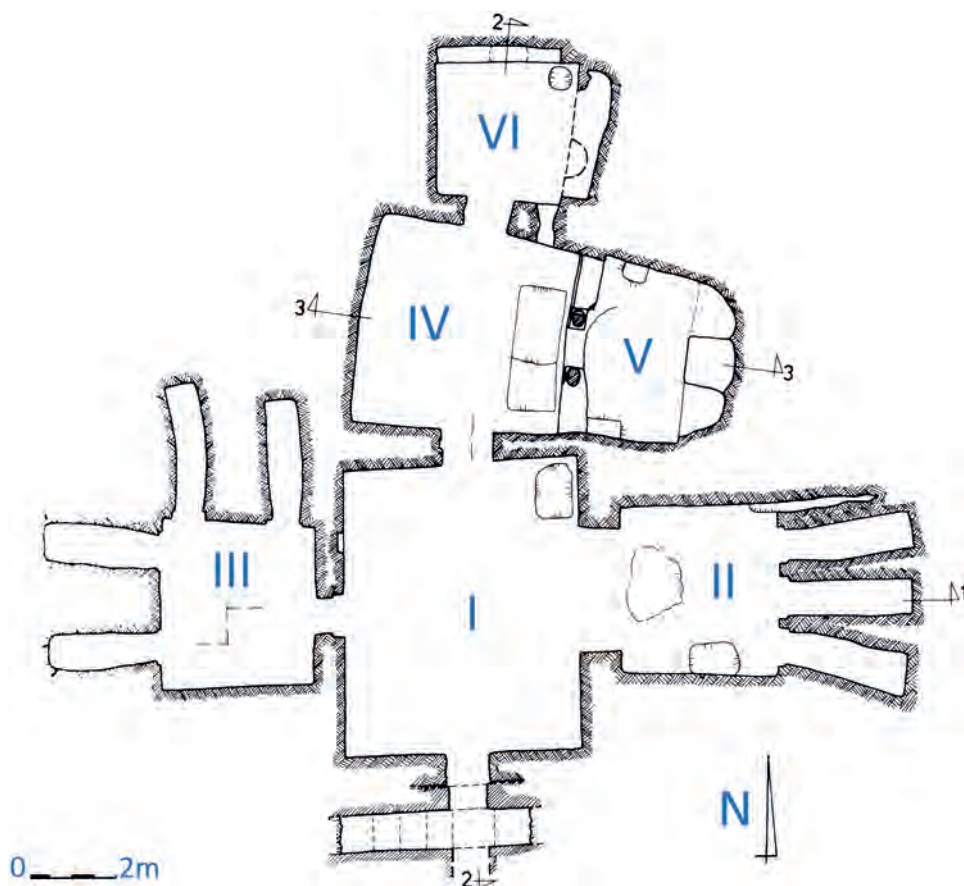
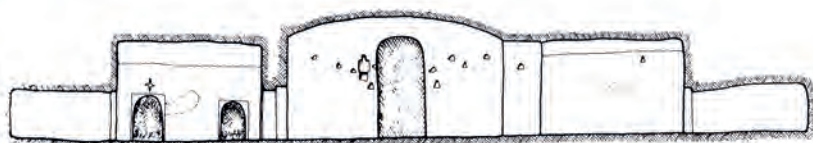
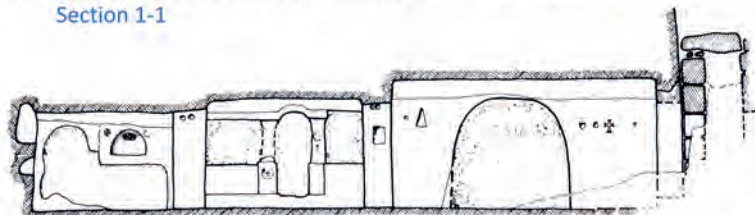


Figure 13. Plan of the tomb/chapel. Illustration by A. Kloner, courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

0 — 2m



Section 1-1



Section 2-2



Section 3-3

Figure 14. Sections of the tomb/chapel. Illustration by A. Kloner, courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.



Figure 15. View inside the tomb, looking from Room I (the antechamber) to Room II. Photograph by B. Zissu.



Figure 16. View inside the tomb, looking from the antechamber to Room III. Photograph by B. Zissu.

3.5. The Chapel of Holy Salome and The Christian Monastic Complex

In the second phase — the Byzantine period (from the 5th century CE) — the Second Temple period courtyard was converted into a Christian cave-chapel (see below), the forecourt enlarged by further hewing, and the rock-cut walls around the edges further covered with ashlar, though some of these appear to have been repairs, since the line between the original Second Temple and later Byzantine ashlar facing seems to be uneven. The large space thus created measured at least 15×23 metres.

From Kloner's excavations it was possible to distinguish two parts of a Christian complex built into the former tomb forecourt: a large area in the south and a smaller one in the north, the latter roughly corresponding to the area of the previous tomb vestibule. The southern boundary of the complex was a substantial wall, *c.* 1.2 m wide (**Figure 17**).

The large area can now be seen to comprise a central courtyard with rooms around the outside, entered through a single large door in its southern wall. It is possible that the large lintel decorated with a rosette in its centre (**Figure 18**), found by Kloner nearby, belonged to this door. A water cistern was cut in the floor of the eastern area. Its mouth was covered with a large stone, and crosses were incised in the plaster covering its walls. The recent excavations of the Christian



Figure 17. Southern wall of the monastic complex, before the recent IAA excavations. Photograph by B. Zissu.



Figure 18. Lintel with six-petalled rosette found by the A. Kloner expedition. Photograph by B. Zissu.

complex uncovered a monolithic cross-shaped baptismal font. This implies that one part of the Christian building was used as a baptistery.

As reported, the recent IAA excavations discovered five rooms along the western wall (Steinmeyer 2023; Shimshon-Paran 2023). Four of these were paved with white tesserae. The mosaic pavement was laid against the foundation of an earlier wall, parallel to the western wall. This earlier wall may be dated to the initial phase in the Byzantine period. The recent excavations have also uncovered equivalent rooms running the length of the eastern wall, meaning that both sides of the enclosure had rooms and the central space served as a courtyard.

In total, this layout strongly suggests a small *coenobium* monastery. Such monasteries could be established beside a memorial church to commemorate the memory of a holy person. As defined especially in the work of Yizhar Hirschfeld (1992), monasteries could be of many sizes and have diverse layouts, but the small ones are characterised by being roughly square, surrounded by a strong outer wall, and they are invariably arranged around an inner courtyard (Hirschfeld, 1992: 16, 33, 45–46). Examples include the Monastery of Gabriel (Qasr er-Rawabi), Khirbet el-Quneitra, Khirbet et-Tina, Castellion, the Monastery of Severianus and el-Qasr. Such criteria for identifying monastic complexes has enabled the definitive identification of Khirbet es-Suyyagh (Phase II) in the borderlands of the Judaeen Foothills as a rural monastery (Taxel 2008: 62–63; 2009: 24–68; 200–209). In this case identifying features include a thick wall with main and subsidiary gates, two inner courtyards, living quarters (cells), a tower (found mainly in Judaeen desert monasteries), and a church complex. There was also an adjacent complex comprising a dining room and kitchen and agricultural installations, including two wine presses, outside the monastery. The average number of monks living together in such monasteries is estimated to be about 20 (Taxel 2009: 202).

Jacob Ashkenazi and Mordechai Aviam (2012: 273–74) have noted that researchers have hesitated to identify rural monasteries. However, greater awareness of elements that constitute monasteries can lead to some re-evaluations of previously excavated structures. For example, a ruin on Tel ‘Afar (Tell al-Akhdar) on the Via Maris south of Caesarea was initially identified as a Byzantine villa (Porath 1988), but excavations revealed a perimeter wall, a cluster of rooms/cells and industrial installations suggestive of a monastery (Peilstöcker 2009), and now indeed the ‘villa’ has been re-interpreted as a basilical church serving this monastic complex (Barkai, Ratzlaff and Taxel 2023: 159–60). Ashkenazi and Aviam (2012) identify six key features that can aid archaeologists in making this identification:

1. The site is no larger than 1.25 acres.
2. The plan of the complex is nearly rectangular, with a surrounding wall.
3. There is a chapel or church.

4. There is a complex of rooms (mainly for monks' cells) around a central courtyard or along an alley.
5. Remains of agricultural installations (wine or oil presses) are present.
6. The pottery dates to the Byzantine period.

In the case of Ḥorvat Qasra all these criteria are present. The site is quite compact and four-sided, with an exterior wall, mainly comprised by the ashlar-faced cliffs, but with a thick wall on the south. There is a chapel, and a complex of rooms around a central courtyard. These rooms were windowless, and thus particularly suitable as monks' cells. We think it extremely unlikely then that such rooms should be interpreted as 'shops,' as suggested in the IAA media releases (Steinmeyer 2023).

It is not clear what agricultural installations may appear, but the Byzantine date of the earliest pottery was noted in Kloner's excavations. Kloner's soundings uncovered an assemblage of nine complete oil lamps and several additional fragments (**Figure 19**). All lamps are mould-made and pear-shaped, with a high tongue handle and pear-shaped base. The body is decorated with vegetal motifs in schematic medallions or within a set of arches. The filling hole is surrounded by a double ridge that forms a deep narrow channel connected with a broad channel,



Figure 19. Oil lamps found in the excavations by A. Kloner. Photograph by B. Zissu.

often decorated, that stretches along the nozzle towards the wick-hole. Similar lamps were found at Beth She 'an and at many other sites in the region, and are dated to the 8th–9th centuries CE (for a detailed discussion and parallels see Hadad 1997: 174–78 [Type 3]; Hadad 2002: 95–106 [Type 37]). Hundreds of similar oil lamps and fragments thereof were found in the renewed IAA excavations (Steinmeyer 2023; Shimshon-Paran 2023). This demonstrates a continuing Christian occupation of the monastery and veneration of the cave chapel over many centuries, until the Abbasid period (on this phenomenon see Patrich 2011).

Monasteries associated with holy sites can overlap in purpose with small rural monasteries that were centred on agricultural production, mainly olive oil and wine (Hirschfeld 1997: 64–65; Taxel 2008; Aviam and Ashkenazi 2014: 560). The complex at Horvat Qasra is contained within the prior cutting of the southern hill of the site and is not apparently directly related to a village, and investigations in its immediate vicinity have already uncovered agricultural or industrial installations with survey notes indicating Byzantine and early Islamic pottery (see above). Precise analysis and identification of particular rooms within this complex and its full contextualisation using landscape archaeology praxis within the region must be left to the most recent excavators, but the likelihood of this being a monastic complex seems to us to be extremely high.

In the northern area of the enclosure, where the vestibule of the Second Temple tomb was located, there was a space which became the *narthex* (entrance) of the cave chapel. We suggest that in the initial Byzantine phase (5th century), a wall with six piers and five openings in between gave access from the southern area of the complex to the *narthex*. The southern face of the piers had decorative pilasters on moulded bases, some of which survived. The piers may have held up what remained of the barrel-vaulted roof structure.

From photographs of the new excavations made available online by the IAA, one can see that the *narthex* was paved with stone slabs, which may be original to the Second Temple phase. In a later phase when additional rooms were built along the western and the eastern side of the courtyard, it appears that two of the five openings located between the piers were blocked, additional parts were filled in and a large wall was created, similar in thickness to the southern wall of the complex. In this phase three doorways led into the *narthex* area, but in the east and west the doorways served only two rooms respectively. The main entry was in the centre.

The interior tomb complex was converted into a subterranean chapel. Within this complex, Rooms I–III retained their original form of an antechamber and burial place, which suggests that the tomb itself was important in terms of the memory attached to this location. There was a modification to the door with new stones resting above it, replacing a feature of the Second Temple. These were visible where the 1982 entry was made into the underground area (see **Figure 20**),



Figure 20. View of the tomb entrance after Kloner's excavations. In the foreground are large stones lying above the Byzantine entrance to the tomb/chapel complex; in the background lies the curving wall of the Second Temple barrel vault. Photograph by B. Zissu.

between the sloping vault and the original door. It appears that these Byzantine stones have been removed in the course of the IAA excavations.

Modifications to the interior included widening of the passage into Room II and the carving of an inscription on its right doorpost, the installation of iron lamp hooks in the ceiling of Room I, the creation of several niches for lamps, and the carving of a cross over *kokh* no. 6. Rooms IV and V constituted the centre of the chapel in terms of its liturgical use and veneration. The entrance from Room I to Room IV was remodelled as an archway (**Figure 21**), adorned with Greek inscriptions underneath the arch (Di Segni and Patrich, 1990), as well as Arabic and Christian Palestinian Aramaic graffiti on the doorpost. These inscriptions indicate that the chapel was dedicated to the memory of Holy/Saint Salome, as discussed further below.

Room IV was also adorned with various graffiti and inscriptions, including further mentions of 'Holy Salome,' and was further modified by the hewing of a cist tomb in the floor (2.6×1 m, with a depth of c. 1.2 m) and the addition of an adjoining apsed chancel (V) to the east (**Figure 22**). The entrance to the chancel was flanked by rock-cut columns, only one of which on the south survives *in situ*,



Figure 21. Archway between Room I (antechamber) and Room IV. Photograph by B. Zissu.



Figure 22. View inside the chapel, showing the chancel screen with two pillars, looking from Room IV to Room V. Photograph by B. Zissu.

and a chancel screen; these too bore inscriptions in Greek and Arabic, as well as crosses and other graffiti.

A stone ledge at the centre of the apse within this chancel area (V) served as an altar, and two similar slabs along the south and north walls were apparently used as benches for clergy. Inscriptions in Greek and Arabic were carved in the apse, and the remaining walls of the chancel also bore inscriptions in Greek, Arabic and Christian Palestinian Aramaic. The cist tomb in Room IV would have had a flat roof aligned with the floor, since it lies directly in front of the central entrance to the chancel area, requiring those entering this zone to walk over it. Its form parallels cist tombs found within monastic compounds of the Judaean desert (Hirschfeld 1992: 130–43). The Monastery of Gabriel at Qasr er-Rawabi included cist graves in the central room (Hirschfeld 1992: 45). Such tombs were used for the founders of *coenobia* or other esteemed persons.

At the far northern end of the complex is what appears to be a place of veneration (Room VI). This room was originally furnished with a small apse in the east and an elongated niche in the northern wall, above which lay a smaller niche. In the centre of the apse an encircled cross was carved in relief (now much destroyed), and was flanked by two smaller encircled crosses, equal-armed and flaring towards the circle (**Figure 23**). The three similar crosses were all painted red, as is common in

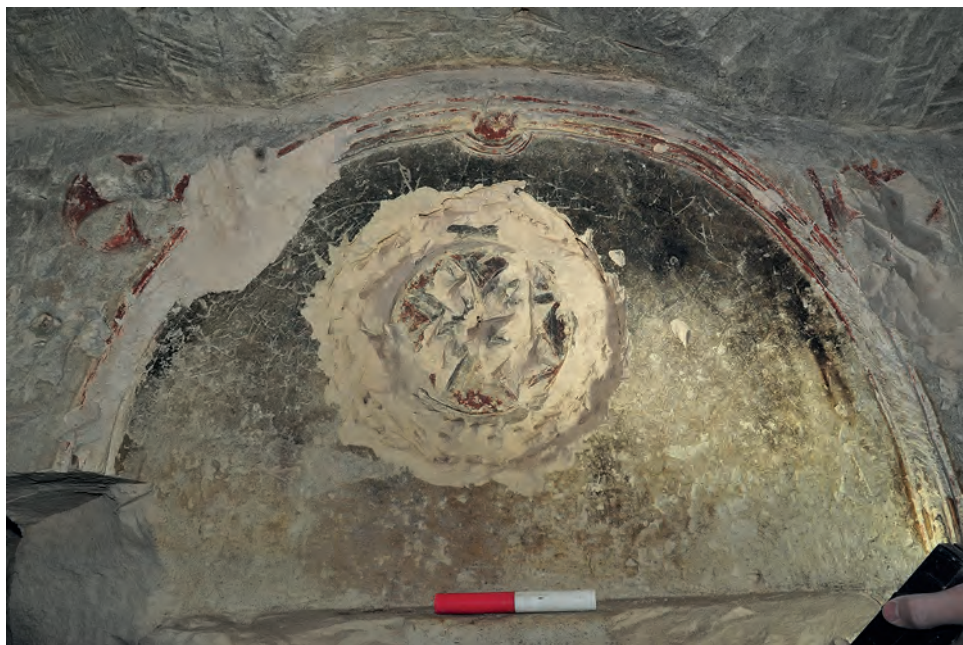


Figure 23. View inside the chapel, with detail of the red-painted encircled cross and other equal-armed crosses in Room VI. Photograph by B. Zissu.

Christian tombs, monastic cells and venerated spaces from the 5th century onwards (Taylor 1993: 185–86, fig. 16). A ledge at the base of the apse may originally have extended to the end of the wall. The elongated niche in the north wall (**Figure 24**) was probably used at least in part to accommodate oil lamps, as testified by the thick layer of soot on the wall above. The upper niche was also used for lamps, creating a focus, very likely on relics lying below it. This area would have been ablaze with light. At a later phase, a deep recess was cut into the northern part of the east wall, likely also for lamps and sacred artefacts. Additional Greek inscriptions and graffiti were incised in the walls of this chamber.



Figure 24. View inside the chapel, showing the western and northern walls with niches in Room VI. Photograph by B. Zissu.

Finds from the subterranean Chapel of Holy Salome include ceramic fragments of Byzantine date. The abandonment of the monastery and chapel likely followed destruction. An earthquake clearly buried a store of newly-made lamps beneath collapse. In the mid 8th century there were a series of destructive earthquakes (Kallner-Amiran 1950–1951: 226; Russell 1985: 39; Karcz 2004: 778–87) but the most likely one to have wrecked major damage was that of 748 CE. Recorded in Theophanes' *Chronographia* (c. 810–815 CE) it is stated that 'a great earthquake occurred in Palestine ... to such an extent that many innumerable and countless people perished in its power, and churches and monasteries collapsed, and all

around the greatest of holy places were deserted cities' (quoted in Russell 1985: 47; Niebuhr 1839: 651).

3.6. Inscriptions in The Chapel of Holy Salome

The walls of the cave chapel are covered with inscriptions in Greek, Christian Palestinian Aramaic and Arabic (see Di Segni and Patrich 1990; Drori 1990; Naveh 1990; CII/P IV/1), all local languages. There are also deeply-cut cross designs and staurograms, some painted red, clearly indicating a Christian use, and dozens of lightly inscribed cross markings. Sometimes, the inscriptions appear densely concentrated, featuring overlapping scripts that render them either indecipherable or difficult to read. However, the collection comprises over 30 separate pieces of legible or semi-legible writing.

As a result of the difficulties of reading, only the most readable of these inscriptions have thus far been published. The full range has been documented by students on field trips from the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University, under the direction of the second co-author, Boaz Zissu, and the late Amos Kloner. With the first co-author, work continues on the reading, translating and interpretation of the inscriptions, which will be published elsewhere. However, it may be noted here that many follow a standard pattern of calls to the Lord for remembrance and mercy, typical of Christian appeals to saints and to the divine, along with names. All the names are male, which would be consistent with these being written by monks. Inscriptions are located densely behind the chancel screen, in the chancel area used by clergy.

Notably, several inscriptions are addressed directly to 'Saint/Holy Salome,' *Hagia Salome*, ΑΓΙΑ ΣΑΛΩΜΗ (Di Segni and Patrich 1990: nos. 2A, 2B, 3, 5; CII/P IV/1: 1267–70, nos. 3792–94, and 1272–74, nos. 3797–98). On the underside of an arch between the two chambers I and IV is an inscription within a *tabula ansata* reading: ΑΓΙΑ ΣΑΛΩΜΗ ΕΛΕΗΣΟΝ ΖΑΧΑΡΙΑΝ Υ[ΙΟΝ] ΚΥΡΙΑΛΛΟΥ ΑΜΗΝ, 'Saint Salome, have mercy on Zacharias, [s]on of Cyrillos. Amen (Di Segni and Patrich 1990: no. 2A; CII/P IV/1: no. 3792; **Figure 25**). This seems to ask the saint for intercession, and possibly healing. The adjective ἅγιος is used widely in early Christianity, particularly for saints. It is found as an adjective attached also to a member of the clergy, an ascetic or to a martyr (Lampe 1961: 18–19).

The sentiment is replicated in another inscription just above the *tabula*, which reads in another hand ΚΥΡΙΑ [ΕΛΕΗΣΟΝ ΖΑΧΑΡΙΑΝ] ΤΟΥ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥΣ [ΚΥΡ] ΙΑΛΛΟΥΣ, 'Lady, [have mercy on Zacharias] of the brother [Cyr]illos' 2B/3793). This inscription was read by Di Segni and Patrich (1990: 31, 143) as ΚΥΡΙΕ [ΕΛΕΗΣΟΝ] ΤΟΝ ΑΔΕΛΦΟΥΣ [ΚΥΡ]ΙΑΛΛΟΥΣ, 'O Lord [have mercy upon] brother Cyril,' denoting an appeal to Christ as Lord (masculine), but the final

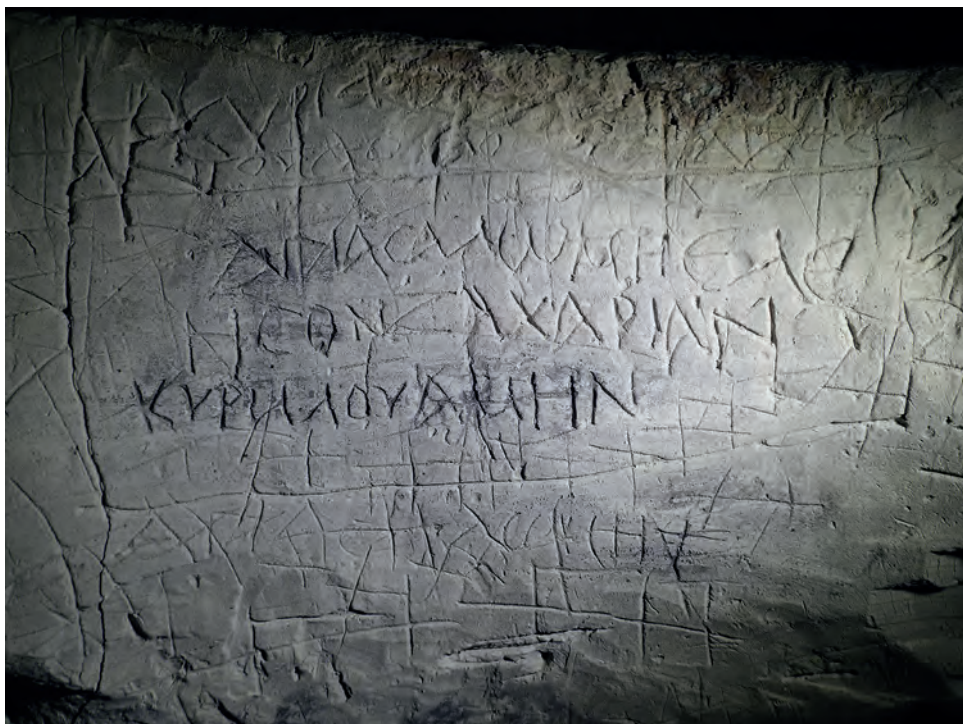


Figure 25. Greek inscriptions inside an arch between Rooms I and IV testify to Holy Salome, venerated and directly addressed in prayer. Inside the *tabula ansata*, the inscription reads ‘Saint Salome, have mercy on Zacharias, of Cyrillos. Amen.’ Above it, another reads: ‘Lady, have mercy on [Zacharias], of the brother [Cyr]illos,’ and below: ‘Holy Salome.’ Photograph by B. Zissu.

letter of the first word is *alpha*, not *epsilon*, and thus it should read ‘Lady.’² The available space requires the insertion of the name of Zacharias found in 2A, and the final letter of the definite article is *upsilon*, not *nun*. Both readings require an ungrammatical formulation which does not continue the case of the definite object, but incorrect grammar is not unusual in graffiti, and the genitive rather than accusative case relates well to 2A, which suggests Zacharias is the son of ‘brother Cyril.’ To address Salome as ‘Lady’ clearly indicates she is a saint. Underneath the *tabula* there are the words ΑΓΙΑ ΣΑΛΩΜΗ surrounded and overlaid with many crosses. In another inscription (Di Segni and Patrich 1990: no. 3a; CII/P IV/1: no. 3794) there is mention of a ΙΕΡΟΝΤΙΣ, *hierontis*, a word otherwise not known but possibly suggesting a ‘holy place’ (ἱερόν).

One may note here also that referring to ‘brother Cyrillos’ is typical of monastic terminology, as those who lived together in *coenobia* referred to each other as ‘brothers,’ overseen by a ‘father’ (abbot). In this case Zacharias is the

son of a man who had perhaps become a monk later in life. In another inscription (Di Segni and Patrich 1990: no. 4; CII/P IV/1: 1271–72, no. 3796), there is an identification of someone named Agapis (or Agapēs) who is the ‘deacon of Saint Salome,’ which appears to give the name of the chapel and monastery. Monastic language is also used in an unpublished inscription (we now term Greek 13) from the chancel area, in reference to ‘Pantos your holy one,’ since people could refer to an abbot of a monastery in this way (CII/P IV/1: 1453, no. 3896; **Figure 26**). This inscription reads in total: Κ[ΥΡΗ]Ε ΕΛΕΗΣΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΔΟΥΛΟΝ ΣΟΥ ΟΠΥΜΕΝΟΝ ΚΕ ΗΟΣΗΦ Τ[ΙΟΥ] ΔΗΚΕΟΥ ΚΕ ΠΑΝΤΟΝ ΤΟΝ ΑΓΗΟΝ ΣΟΥ: ‘Lord, have mercy on your servant Opumenos and Joseph [son] of Dikaïos and Pantos your holy one.’



Figure 26. Previously unpublished inscription (Greek 13) from the chancel area. Photograph by B. Zissu.

Given the use of lamps in the recesses of the walls, it is likely that monks came down here to venerate the place where Saint Salome’s remains were believed to lie, in line with practices common in the Christian cult of the saints. Relics of saints were thought to be able to effect cures, and saints were believed to be able to intercede for the faithful (Wilson [ed.] 1984). Hence, they could be appealed to directly in prayer, as today.

That there were venerated remains makes sense of the layout of the chapel, in which there is a liturgical space divided into a chancel on the eastern side (Room V), a central ‘nave’ space (IV), and a *martyrium* in the north (VI) (see **Figure 13**).

The bones of Salome would have lain in a receptacle on the elongated niche within Room VI, where many lamps were burning.

Early Byzantine sources afford numerous accounts of *inventiones*, which refer to miraculous revelations of tombs of biblical figures or Christian saints. This phenomenon was not confined solely to the Holy Land; its occurrences are also documented across the Christianised Roman Empire. While in various regions of the Empire, *inventiones* were predominantly associated with Christian martyrs, in the Holy Land, the emphasis leaned toward biblical figures. It appears that only tombs possessing unmistakable antiquity could be confidently linked to personages known from the Scriptures. Typically, these were tombs or other rock-hewn structures dating back to the Second Temple era, and occasionally even to the Iron Age (Di Segni 2007). These tombs were subsequently reconfigured and integrated into commemorative churches. Sometimes, these memorial churches were closely connected to a monastic compound, for example at the Georgian monastery at Bir el-Qut and at Khirbet el-Haniya/Horvat Hani (Di Segni 2007: 391; Dahari 2003). As such, the Chapel of Holy Salome and accompanying monastery would fit within this known rubric of miraculous discoveries leading to the establishment of a memorial site with associated monastery. It is very likely that there was at least one ossuary with the name 'Salome' in the Second Temple tomb. A large number of women in the 1st century were called either Mary or Salome; from her study of inscribed names Tal Ilan determined that 46.5% of females were called Maria/Mariam (Mary), Salome or Shelamzion (1995: 55; 2002: 9, 249–53).

It was common for pilgrims to visit sacred sites within or in association with monasteries (Aviam and Ashkenazi 2014: 568–73). The pilgrim nun Egeria, who visited Palestine between 381 and 385 CE, mentions monasteries or anchorite cells associated with holy sites (e.g. *Itin.* 3.4; 5.10; 16.3; 23.4) and she was often shown the sites by monks (see Wilkinson 1981: 22–26, e.g. *Itin.* 3.1–5.12; 10.9–11.4). A monastic life at a sacred site could mean providing food and lodging for pilgrims: in his *Life of Peter the Iberian* (66), John Rufus describes how monks in 5th-century Jerusalem 'were receiving and refreshing pilgrims and the poor who were coming from everywhere to worship at the holy places' (Horn and Phenix 2008: 97). Such pilgrims would be housed in hospices (*xenodocheia*) and fed in dining halls. One such possible *xenodocheion*, including a bath-house and an olive oil factory, has been found in the village of Khirbet Zikhrin (Fischer 1989: 1792–96; and for these in Syria see Tchalenko 1953: 19–28). Others have been identified in Horvat Hani (Dahari 2003; Taxel 2008: 59) and Khirbet es-Suyyagh (Taxel 2008: 62–63; 2009: 24–68, 200–209).

However, we cannot assume that this was necessarily a pilgrimage site, at least one that drew pilgrims from far afield. It was not on a pilgrim route (see above) and is not mentioned in any surviving pilgrim account. The language of the inscriptions are the local languages of the area through the centuries (Greek,

Aramaic and Arabic), and there are no foreign languages present. There is not the range of languages evidenced in graffiti of pilgrim sites such as Nazareth, for example (see Bagatti 1969: 127–28, 148–69, 197–200; Taylor 1993: 258–64), which includes Armenian and Georgian (see Tchekhanovets 2018: 41–200), and likely Latin, as well as male and female names. Given the behaviour of pilgrims in writing not only their own names but those of their loved ones (e.g., the Piacenza Pilgrim wrote the name of his parents in Cana: *Itin.* 4:5) the entirely male names found in the corpus of inscriptions in the chapel is quite striking, as is the location of the many of the inscriptions behind the chancel screen, in the chancel itself (also called the *hierateion*, ‘sanctuary,’ so Procop., *Aed.* 1.4.13), which was reserved for clergy. This is not an area pilgrims had access to.

As Gideon Avni notes, the Arabic in use in the cave demonstrates the ‘penetration of the Arabic language into the Christian communities of Palestine’ (Avni 2014: 252). The Arabic language is distinctive in having local Aramaisms such as the use of ‘bar’ rather than ‘bin’ on a number of readable inscriptions (Mina Monier pers. comm.). This also speaks against the inscriptions being scratched by pilgrims from far away. Therefore, while members of this monastic community may well have welcomed the wider regional community of Christians to the site, and certainly other monks, the venerated remains could have had more to do with their own life of piety.

The Chapel of Saint Salome and the associated monastery are then best understood within the wider study of Palestinian monasticism (see Chitty 1966; Binns 1994; Hirschfeld 1992; Horn and Phenix 2008: xlviii–liii; Taxel 2008; Ashkenazi and Aviam 2012; Aviam and Ashkenazi 2014; Hay 1996). It is also an interesting site to consider in terms of the important period of cultural change in Palestine from the 5th to 8th centuries (Kennedy 1989; Taxel 2013; Avni 2011; 2014).

4. THE IDENTITY OF SALOME

After the recent IAA excavations, press releases announced their further discoveries at the site once venerated as the tomb of ‘Jesus’ midwife’ Salome (e.g. Associated Press 2022; Yoder 2022; Steinmeyer 2023). This identification goes back to the original publication following the discovery of the chapel. Kloner asked the epigraphist Leah Di Segni and Joseph Patrich to examine the inscriptions and identify the Salome of the site. In their opinion, the most likely identification for this Salome was a woman found in an apocryphal work: the *Protevangelium of James* (Ehrman and Pleše 2011: 31–71; Zervos 2019/2022) dating from the later 2nd century.

In this tale the focus is on the holiness of Mary the mother of Jesus, and her perpetual virginity. It tells of Jesus’ birth in a cave outside Bethlehem, and includes an episode involving a midwife named Salome (*Prot. Jas.* 18–19), but Salome does

not *deliver* the baby Jesus. Instead, Salome arrives from Jerusalem after the birth. Another unnamed ‘Hebrew’ midwife, fetched by Joseph, is first on the scene, but she herself does not deliver Jesus. In early Christianity, Jesus’ birth was believed to be miraculous in that there were no attendants. The Christian scholar Jerome stated (*Against Helvidius* 10 [8a]): ‘There was no midwife present; women’s attendance did not intervene. She (Mary) wrapped him in swaddling clothes with her own hands. She herself was both mother and midwife.’

In the *Protevangelium*, when Salome arrives, the first midwife testifies to Mary still being a virgin, but Salome doubts this. Salome examines Mary, and finds that her hand is then struck with pain and dried up. Horrified, she appeals to God. An angel tells her to touch the baby Jesus and she will be cured. The miracle happens, and she praises God. She is therefore the first of many people to be healed by Jesus. But such people are not esteemed as saints.

This story was re-told in numerous different translations and versions (see Trautman 1983; Terian 2008), and is represented also in early Christian art, with a reclining Mary and kneeling Salome painfully holding up her enlarged, withered hand (see Van Loon 2006). While saints are shown with haloes, other figures are not; the best Salome the doubting midwife gets in early Christian art is a square halo, showing her as a significant (but not holy) figure, in a painting from Chapel LI in the Monastery of Apa Apollo in Bawit. As Gertrud Van Loon has noted, in her detailed examination of the square *nimbus*, Salome ‘is not a saint in her own right’ (2006: 99).

At the same time that Salome is depicted in art with her withered hand (from the 5th–6th centuries), Christian artists also involved midwives in the adoration scene, with magi and shepherds and angels. This continued on for many centuries; there is a 10th-century ivory now in the British Museum (accession no. 1885,0804.4), where a single midwife is shown bathing the baby Jesus. The bath of baby Jesus continued on as a subject through the centuries in the art of Orthodox churches and in icons, until it was eventually considered inappropriate, being unbiblical. So, in a 12th-century fresco in the ‘Dark Church’ at Goreme, Cappadocia, the older seated midwife is named Emea (from Greek *hē maia*, meaning ‘the midwife’) and her younger assistant is named Salome. This image has often accompanied news reports of the IAA excavations (e.g. Yoder 2022). But neither Emea nor her assistant Salome are indicated as saints in this art, any more than the shepherds in the same scene. Iconographically, the two midwives balance the shepherds as female and male worshippers of the newborn infant.

The Salome venerated in the Horvat Qasra cave chapel was hailed as a saint, but the doubting midwife was not, and therefore we must look to different identities. There was of course the ‘Salome’ who danced for Herod Antipas, in the story of the death of John the Baptist (see Kraemer 2006). Though only referred to as the daughter of Herodias in the Gospels (Mark 6:14–29; Matt 14:1–12), she was later

identified as Salome on the basis of Josephus (*AJ* 18.137). However, she was never a saint; quite the opposite.

Then there was Salome who was a companion to the holy family in Egypt, as mentioned in a 6th-century work known as *The History of Joseph the Carpenter* (8; Ehrman and Pleše 2011: 157–93). She comes with them, but she is not identified specifically as Jesus' midwife, or nurse (because Mary breastfeeds Jesus herself). In the *Vision of Theophilus*, attributed to a Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria (384–412 CE), though likely coming from the 6th century, the holy family, including Salome, stops at numerous sites in Egypt, and she is mentioned several times (Mingana 1931).

Salome the companion appears also in another work from Egypt, likely written in Greek or Coptic but surviving only in Arabic manuscripts (Garshuni, written in Syriac characters), and dated perhaps to the 6th century. Published by Alphonse Mingana as 'A New Life of John the Baptist' (Mingana 1927: 438–91), it tells of how when John's mother Elizabeth died, the seven-year-old Jesus asks his mother to 'call Salome and let us take her with us,' so they go via a miraculous cloud to deceased Elizabeth in the wilderness, where Jesus then commands his mother and Salome to wash the body. They weep over Elizabeth, and are then taken by cloud to Nazareth (Mingana 1927: 449). Salome here just appears as someone with the Holy Family in Egypt, subject to the child Jesus' command, but she ends up in Nazareth.

It is likely that the companion Salome derives from the modification of the doubting midwife story. In this modified story, as told in the so-called *Arabic Infancy Gospel*, there is just one single midwife, named Salome, who does not doubt Mary's virginity (Bauckham 1991: 250–51; 2002: 231):

And she (Salome) saw the Virgin, her face bright from the Holy Spirit. She ran and came outside, and cried out with a loud voice to all the borders of Bethlehem, Come, and see this great wonder! A virgin has born a child, and has not known a man, being a virgin. And through the great wonder she believed in him, that he was the Son of God. And she did not cease following the Virgin and the Saviour until he was crucified, and rose from the dead and went up to the heavens' (transl. based on Robinson 1896: 197).

However, yet again, this midwife-companion Salome was not known as a saint in the Byzantine period, and therefore it is unlikely she should be identified with the Salome venerated at Horvat Qasra.

There is another tradition that held Salome to be Jesus' older (half-) sister, simply called a 'sister' in the ancient world. This sister Salome is attested by the 4th-century scholar Epiphanius, a converted Jew who founded a monastery in his home town of Besanduk, somewhere (still unidentified) also near Eleutheropolis

(see Sozom., *Hist. eccl.* 6.32). He even identifies his source as scriptural, possibly referring to Mark 6:3, but here only the names of Jesus' brothers are in the texts we know, the names being James, Joseph, Judas and Simon. However, the crowd questioning Jesus in Nazareth do ask: 'Aren't his sisters here with us?' Epiphanius affirms that they were daughters of Joseph by his first wife (*Pan.* 78.8.1, 78.9.6; cf. *Anacoratus* 60.1, where they are Anna and Salome).³

In a pseudonymous letter purportedly from Clement of Alexandria to Theodorus, quoting a 'Secret Gospel of Mark,' which is actually a product of late antique Palestinian monasticism (Smith and Landau 2023, cf. Bauckham 1991: 268–75; 2002: 247–54), there is an additional section after Mark 10:46, deriving from John 11 (the raising of Lazarus): 'Then he came into Jericho. And the sister of the young man whom Jesus loved was there with his mother and Salome, but Jesus would not receive them.' This recalls Mark 4:31–35, when the mother of Jesus came to him in Capernaum, along with his brothers and sisters, and stands outside his house asking for him, but it also recalls the companion Salome traditions.

Nevertheless, when Salome is truly identified as a saint in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, her identity is biblical, not apocryphal. She could be identified as the mother of the apostles James and John, sons of Zebedee (Matt 27:56, and see 20:20), but at core she was one of the myrrh-bearing women, the *Myrrhophores*, as she is found in icons to this day. Salome is identified in the Gospel of Mark as one of the women who dutifully came to the tomb where Jesus was laid, with perfumed oil, in order to complete the burial rituals for the dead (Mark 16:1–2). Salome is also listed as one of Jesus' many female disciples who followed and served him in Galilee, who came with him to Jerusalem, and stayed to witness his crucifixion (Mark 15:40–41).

Salome the disciple was widely remembered, in diverse ways (Bauckham 1991; 2002: 234–37; Bond and Taylor 2021: 37–43). From what is said by the anti-Christian writer Celsus, writing c. 170 CE, she was known as a teacher: there were 'Marcellians, so called from Marcellina, and Harpocratians from Salome, and others who derive their name from Mariamme, and others again from Martha' (Origen, *C. Cels.* 5.62). Mary (Magdalene) and Salome appear together as foremost female disciples of Jesus in literature of the 2nd–4th centuries that spans both mainstream and heterodox types of Christianity, from the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Gospel of the Egyptians*, the *(First) Apocalypse of James*, the *Pistis Sophia*, the Manichaean *Psalms of Heracleides*, the *Secret Gospel of Mark*, and other works. In an orthodox Syrian work titled the *Testament of Our Lord* (1.16), from the early 4th century, she appears with other women disciples asking questions of Jesus after he is raised. In the influential 4th-century *Apostolic Constitutions* (3.6), another work from Syria, she is listed among the women 'with us' (i.e. the male apostles), a group who include 'the Mother of our Lord and his sisters.'

Epiphanius himself — refuting a sect who worshipped Mary the mother and promoted female priesthood — retorts that ‘God did not agree to this being done with Salome, or with Mary herself’ (*Pan.* 79.7.3). It seems he thought of this Salome as different from the sister, but it is not absolutely clear. At any rate, it implies that there was a memory of Salome as highly esteemed. Epiphanius knew the *Protevangelium* (*Pan.* 79.5.4–5, 7.1), but, in comparing Salome with Mary the mother of Jesus, he simply cannot be referring only to the doubting midwife, but rather someone who was linked with Mary in terms of honour. He goes on to mention other women at the cross.

To clinch this identification of Saint Salome’s veneration in Palestine, there is the Church Calendar of a 10th-century Georgian monk, Ioane Zosime, preserved in Saint Catherine’s monastery, Sinai. Ioane spent his life in Mar Saba monastery in Palestine. His calendar is based on 5th–7th century calendars from Palestine, and he lists 25 April as a commemoration for: ‘Mark the Evangelist, and commemoration of the holy mothers, Mary the Mother of God and Mary Magdalene and Mary of Jacob and *Salomea* and Ioanna and the sisters of Lazarus’ (Aleksidze 2021). Thus, Salome was one of the ‘holy mothers,’ and a saint. It is therefore absolutely clear that it was the *Myrrhophore* Salome who was venerated in Palestine by monks in the period the chapel of Holy Salome in Ḥorvat Qasra was used. No mention is made in the calendar of the doubting (or believing) midwife Salome who was, as noted, not a saint.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This examination provides for the first time a holistic view of the archaeology of Ḥorvat Qasra as comprising multiple sites, with two important phases: firstly, the Hellenistic–Second Temple fortified estate and tomb complex and, secondly, the Byzantine–Abbasid cave-chapel of Salome and monastic complex. In identifying the Salome venerated here, we emphasise the importance of working carefully with texts in order to make precise identifications of archaeological material, especially when there are ramifications in terms of contemporary religious sensibilities. While we hope both the identity of Salome and the archaeological evidence is made clearer from our examination, it must be said that, in terms of actual materiality, the woman whose bones were venerated in the niche of Room VI at Ḥorvat Qasra was most likely one of the Jewish residents of the fortified manor house on top of the hill, whose name was Salome, if the (presumed) ossuary defining her did hold her own bones. Whether by some curious circumstance the disciple Salome did eventually end up here will never be known. Whatever the case, Jewish Salome had a remarkable afterlife.

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Notes

- 1 Abel (1933: 261) suggested that Dawaimah was biblical Basekath (Josh 15:39; 2 Kgs 22:1; Euseb., *Onom.* 50.14, 56.25), but this identification is not generally supported.
- 2 In CII/P IV/1: 1269, however, the reading of Κόρτια is not entirely excluded.
- 3 This first wife is elsewhere actually recorded as being called Salome too, according to Anastasius of Sinai (*Quast.* 153; *Patrologia Graeca* 89.812), who claims to quote Epiphanius.

ABBREVIATIONS

CII/P IV/1. Ameling, W., Cotton, H. M., Eck, W., Ecker, A., Isaac, B., Kushnir-Stein, A., Misgav, H., Price, J., Weiß, P., and Yardeni, A., 2018. 'CXXXII. H. Qazra.' Pp. 1265–81 in *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae: Volume IV, Iudaea/Idumaea: Part 2* (Berlin).

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Early Explorers at Jerusalem's 'Tombs of the Kings'

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The work of Louis Félicien de Saulcy at the 'Tombs of the Kings' is often cited as the first archaeological excavation at Jerusalem. This paper re-examines three forgotten explorations at this site that pre-date de Saulcy's dig, demonstrating their role in the development of early archaeology in the region. These include the work of William John Banks, Charles Leonard Irby and James Mangles in April 1818; the investigation by Edward Robinson and Eli Smith in 1838; and that of Samuel Wolcott and William Tipping in 1842. These were clearances rather than excavation in any modern sense, conducted without official permission, and focused on understanding the architectural plans of the complex. After also looking at de Saulcy's 1863 expedition, the paper concludes by re-evaluating the plans produced by these teams, and presenting an updated version.

Keywords

Jerusalem, William Banks, Louis Félicien de Saulcy, Giovanni (Mahomet) Finati, Charles Irby, Thomas Legh, James Mangles, Edward Robinson, Eli Smith, William Tipping, Samuel Wolcott, Tombs of the Kings, history of archaeology

1. INTRODUCTION

It has frequently been claimed that the first excavation in Jerusalem was undertaken by Louis Félicien Caignart de Saulcy in 1863, when he began clearing the monument known as the Tombs of the Kings, a rock-cut tomb complex of the 1st century CE, located just to the north of the Old City (de Saulcy 1865a: 345–410; 1865b: 188–89, 309–11; Lawler 2021a: 3–19; Avi-Yonah 2007; Silberman 1982: 70–71).¹ Despite extensive research, two major reassessments of his work failed to note digging at these tombs prior to de Saulcy's time (Kon 1947; Vincent and Steve 1954: 346–62), the latter even state that the tombs were earlier described by Robinson prior to any 'clearance' (Vincent and Steve 1954: 347: n. 1). It is sometimes even erroneously reported that de Saulcy's excavation had been the first to be undertaken in the Holy Land, but this neglects the 'brief but memorable' 1815 archaeological exploits at Ashkelon of Lady Hester Stanhope (Meryon 1846: 152–87; Silberman 1982: 24–27; 1984).

As this paper will demonstrate, de Saulcy was not the first to 'break ground' in Jerusalem, nor even at the 'Tombs of the Kings,' as three separate parties had previously worked to partially clear the entrance to the monumental tombs. These tombs are laid out to the south of the entrance, and each of these parties speculated that further chambers existed to the north, putting spade to soil to test their respective theories. This paper therefore aims to correct the record, by examining these forgotten 'digs' and their contribution to the early history of research in Jerusalem. We will first look at the British party led by William Bankes, Charles Irby and James Mangles in 1818, followed by the 1838 investigation of Edward Robinson and Eli Smith, and then the 1842 explorations of Samuel Wolcott and William Tipping, before returning to de Saulcy's work at the site, as the culmination of this previous research. Our investigation will conclude by comparing the plans of the tombs drawn-up by each expedition, and presenting a new, amalgamated plan of the site.

In the following discussion, the terms 'archaeological exploration,' 'clearance' and 'dig' have been used in place of 'excavation,' as the work of these early pioneers differs to what is understood of excavation in the modern sense. They made no attempt to distinguish between different layers or strata amongst debris, and did not appreciate that this material could contain dateable finds. Of these terms, 'archaeological exploration' has been reserved for the work of those explorers who used the removal of soil to expose standing remains and better investigate the architectural complex in its ancient form.

2. THE INVESTIGATIONS OF BANKES, IRBY AND MANGLES

William John Bankes (1786–1855) appears to have been key in instigating early research into the Tombs of the Kings. The son of Henry Bankes MP, and brother-in-law of Viscount Falmouth, he served in the House of Commons between 1810 and 1812, representing the borough of Truro in Cornwall (Gordon 1885: 124–25; Seyler 2015: 17–18, 47–48). He then decided to travel abroad, spending some time as aide-de-camp to his father's friend, the Duke of Wellington, during the Peninsular War. His desire to travel to Palestine was kindled through befriending the Swiss explorer, Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, whom he met in Egypt (Gordon 1885: 110).

As part of his first visit to Palestine, Bankes visited Jerusalem and made a preliminary examination of the Tombs of the Kings in January 1816 (Finati and Bankes 1830: 134–35). He was assisted in this work by Italian interpreter and 'janissary' Giovanni Finati (b. 1787), who went by the name of Mahomet. Finati subsequently accompanied Bankes and his travelling companions on a trip to investigate Petra, Jerash and other Decapolis cities. Two years later, both men returned to the Tombs of the Kings, this time accompanied by Charles Irby, James

Mangles and Thomas Legh. Together, they undertook an illicit, partial clearance of the site, until the work was stopped by the local authorities.

Even before Bankes' visit, the Tombs of the Kings was a well-known local feature in the Jerusalem landscape. It featured prominently in a popular travelogue, written by the Reverend Henry Maundrell as an account of his pilgrimage from Aleppo to Jerusalem in 1697, by then in its seventh edition (Maundrell 1749). In his book, Maundrell records visiting the 'Sepulchres of the Kings.' His description — almost comparable in length to that of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre — emphasised enigmatic features of the complex and described many of its features. In particular, he gave a long description of the carved, stone chamber doors and published a drawing of a single example which at that time remained *in situ* (Maundrell 1749: 77).²

While Maundrell can be credited with publishing the earliest drawing of a feature from the Tombs of the Kings, the earliest plan of the complex was published by Richard Pococke after visiting the site in 1738; this was accompanied by a brief description describing their layout (1745: 20–21, fig. opp. 21). Pococke was the first to suggest that the Tombs of the Kings should be identified as the burial place of Queen Helena of Adiabene (Pococke 1745: 20; cf. Clarke 1813: 324).³

Bankes refers to the works of Maundrell in particular in his unpublished notes, and Irby and Mangles refer to the works of both Maundrell and Pococke in their book about their Middle Eastern adventures (Irby and Mangles 1823: 14). They were later criticised for reproducing Pococke's plan without crediting him as the source (Schick 1897: 182–83; cf. Irby and Mangles 1823: 332).

Bankes should be considered as more than a biblical tourist, as he kept meticulous records of the places and monuments that he encountered during his extensive travels in the Near East. While this material remained unpublished in his lifetime, some of his personal memoirs are now available, beginning with his departure from Jerusalem in May 1818 (Lewis 2007). There are also numerous publications exploring his life and work (Lewis 1997; 2007; 2008; Bowsher 199; Boyer 2015; Usick 2002; Sebba 2009; Seyler 2015), some of which briefly reference his visits to the Tombs of the Kings (e.g., Usick 2002: 65–66; Seyler 2015: 132–33).

Bankes toured the Holy Land at the end of a time that may be called the 'first great wave of Palestinian exploration.' When Bankes first visited Jerusalem in 1816, it had been only 18 years since Napoleon invaded Egypt, inaugurating the first scientific and artistic exploration in the Ancient Near East, and 17 years since British Admiral Sir Sidney Smith assisted in the defeat of Napoleon's forces at Acre and marched with his men into Jerusalem (Clarke 1813: 327–28; Howard 1839: 301; Silberman 1982: 17, 27).

With a permanent British presence established along the coast of Palestine and a Christian population at home in Britain with a growing appetite for information about the geography of the Bible and antiquities to illuminate the scriptures, a

new period of exploration began. It was at this time the Palestine Association was founded in London.⁴ Some of the better-known explorers of this era include Edward Daniel Clarke, Ulrich Seetzen and Johann Ludwig (John Lewis) Burckhardt, all of whose works were either written in, or translated into, English and published in Britain (Clarke 1813; Seetzen 1810; Burckhardt 1822). There was, at this time, already interest in the Tombs of the Kings. De Châteaubriand tells us he 'scraped away the dust a little' in his own investigation of the tomb doors (De Châteaubriand 1812: 104). Similarly, Clarke (1813: 322–26) described his visit to the 'extraordinary burial place erroneously called the "Sepulchres of the Kings of Judah"'. His discussion presented a concise yet detailed history of scholarship on the monument, citing Josephus, Eusebius, Valesius and Pausanias, noting the work of Maundrell, and repeating the conclusions of both Pococke and De Châteaubriand that the tombs were constructed for Helena, Queen of Adiabene.

It was also at this time that the excavations of Lady Hester Stanhope at Ashkelon were undertaken. Motivated by a search for hidden treasure, rather than historical curiosity — but finding none — Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope's two-week excavation was not considered a success (Silberman 1984: 68). It is plausible that rumours of stolen treasures from her expedition contributed to Bankes' 1818 requests for a *firman* to excavate at the Tombs of the Kings being denied (cf. Schloen 2008: 144; Meryon 1846: 166–67).

2.1. The 1816 Investigations of William Bankes

Bankes' initial 1816 exploration of the Tombs of the Kings appears briefly in the autobiography of his associate, Mahomet Finati, where we learn that Finati assisted Bankes in taking measurements of the tomb complex (Finati and Bankes 1830: 134–35, 230). It does not seem that this involved clearing away any soil from the structure. We also learn from this account that, after leaving the site, Bankes gradually came to believe that the tomb must have contained further entrances and chambers, not visible in its current state (Finati and Bankes 1830: 230). This sowed the seeds for future investigation.

Bankes himself never published an account of this visit, but many of his research notes and drawings of the site are now housed at the Dorset History Centre archives in Dorchester, England. Their collection of Middle Eastern and European drawings (catalogue reference D-BKL/H/J/7/1), contain ten entries pertaining to the Tombs of the Kings. These encompass drawings of architectural motifs and tomb elevations, along with pages of handwritten notes. Perhaps of greatest value within this group is a plan bearing Bankes and Finati's measurements of the complex (**Figure 1**). Along the base of this plan is a small yet beautifully illustrated elevation drawing (**Figure 2**) depicting the downward slope leading to the entryway of the 'sunken court' (cf. Schick 1897: pl. 1). Also of interest is the elevation drawing of the

entryway to one of the tomb chambers, entering through which is the unmistakable figure of Finati in local dress (**Figure 3**).

While these archives do not contain a written account of the later, 1818 'dig,' they do include some of Banks' observations of the monument, which were probably recorded some months after his first visit. For instance, regarding the portico of the tombs, he wrote:

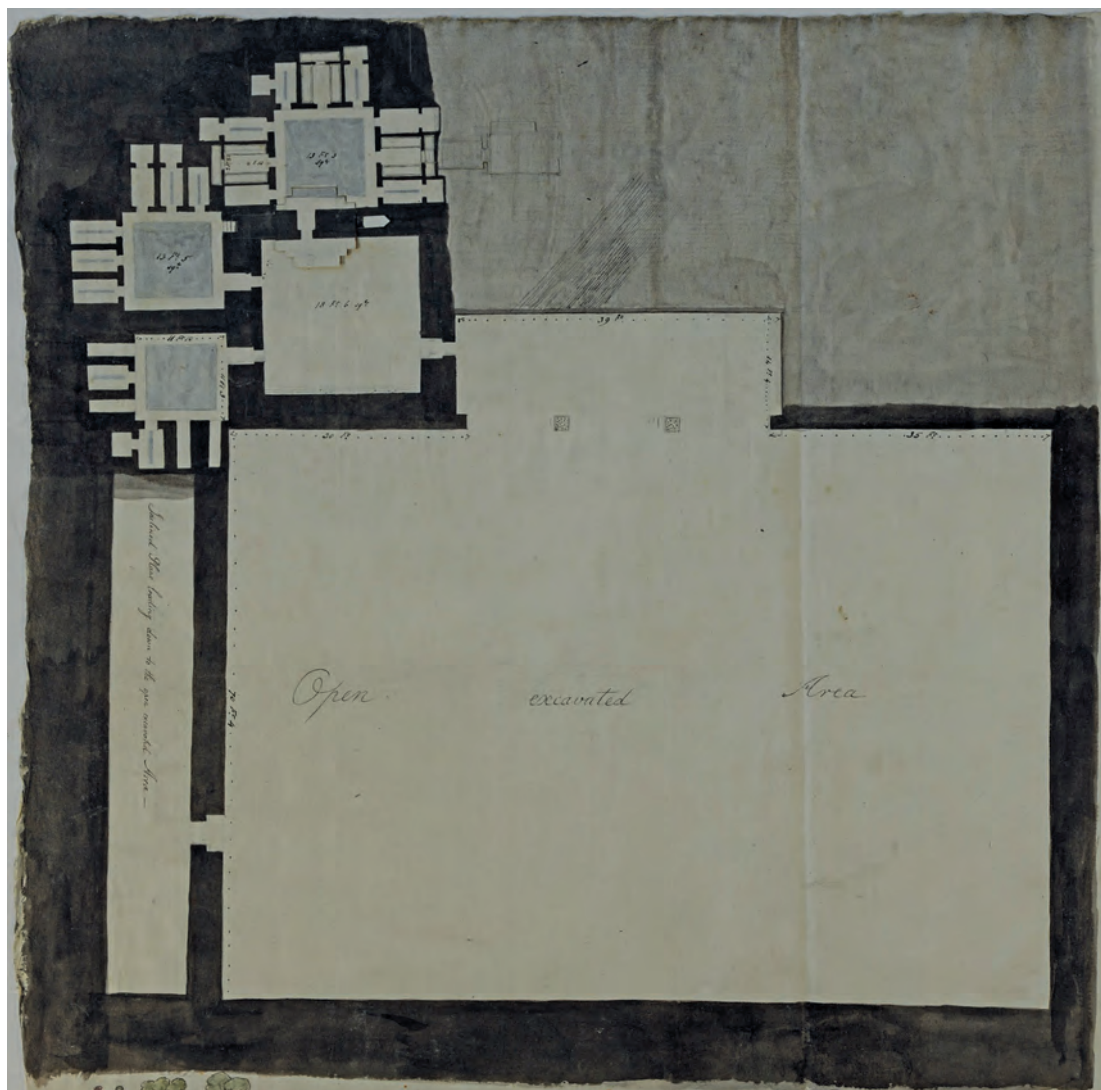


Figure 1. Top plan of the Tombs of the Kings prepared by Banks c. 1816. Reproduced by kind permission of the National Trust/ Digital image © Dorset History Centre (D-BKL/H/J/7/1/1).

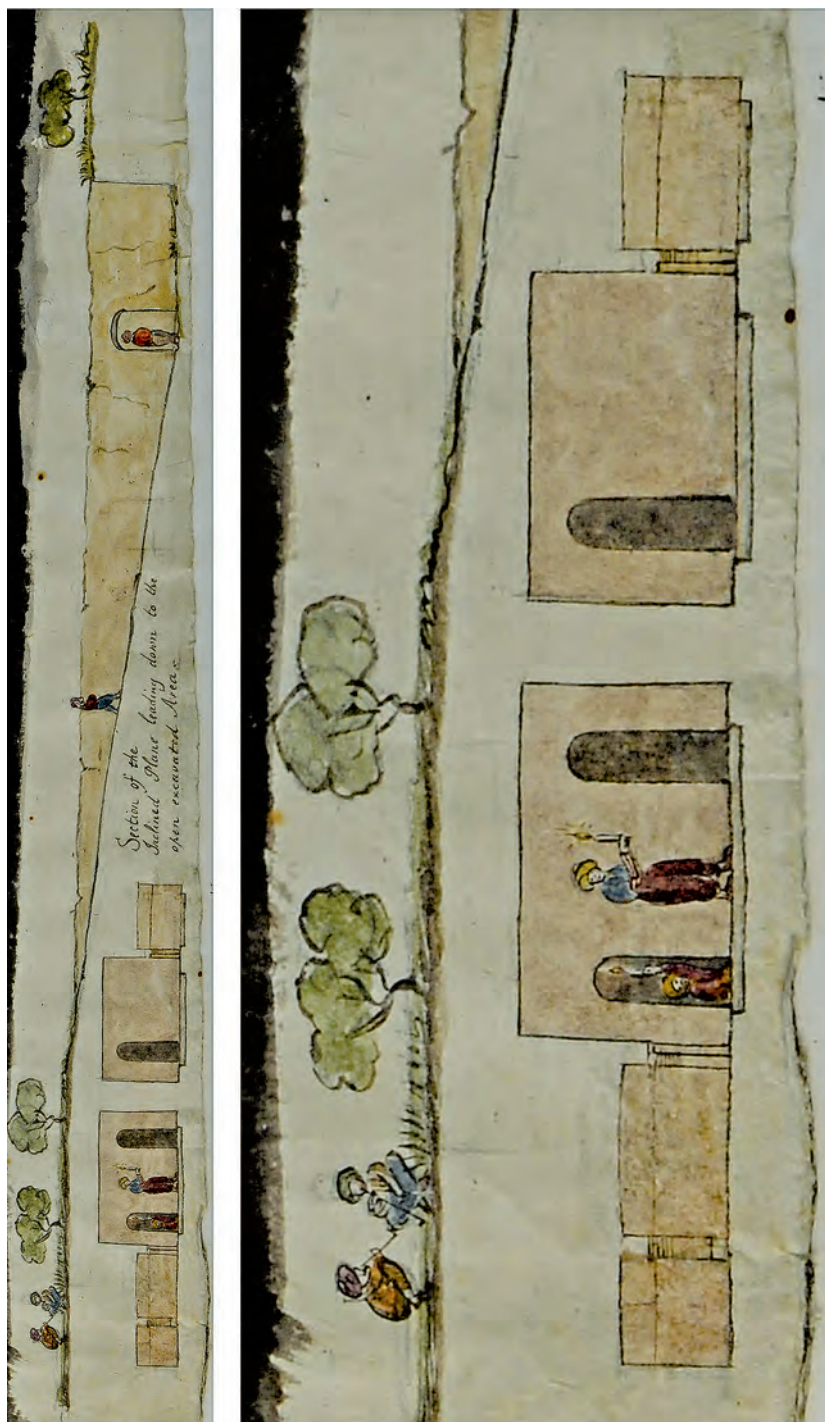


Figure 2. Bankes' elevation drawing of the pathway down to the 'sunken court,' from his 1816 investigation of the site, with enlarged detail of the tomb chambers below. Reproduced by kind permission of the National Trust/ Digital image © Dorset History Centre (D-BKL/H/J/7/1/1).



Figure 3. Bankes' drawing of the interior of a tomb during his 1816 visit, depicting Mohamet Finati holding a lighted candle. Reproduced by kind permission of the National Trust/ Digital image © Dorset History Centre (D-BKL/H/J/7/1/5).

... it might be possibly ascertained by clearing the earth below and possibly other discoveries made for it is observable that the entrance is almost filled up with earth and rubbish as it is and as the earth is higher on the other side it is very possible there may be other entrances stopped up. Which is the more likely as it seems very strange and awkward that in so large a vestibule there should be but the one door at one of its ends and none in the centre where one would expect to find it (Dorset Local History Centre Archives: D-BKL/H/J/7/1/11c).

A drawing made by Bankes of the portico entrance shows a rising mound of earthen debris, concealing everything that lay beneath (**Figure 4**). This seems to match with a description of the tomb published only three years earlier, where the entrance is described as being 'so near to the floor of the cave as barely to admit the passage of a man's body' (Clarke 1813: 323).

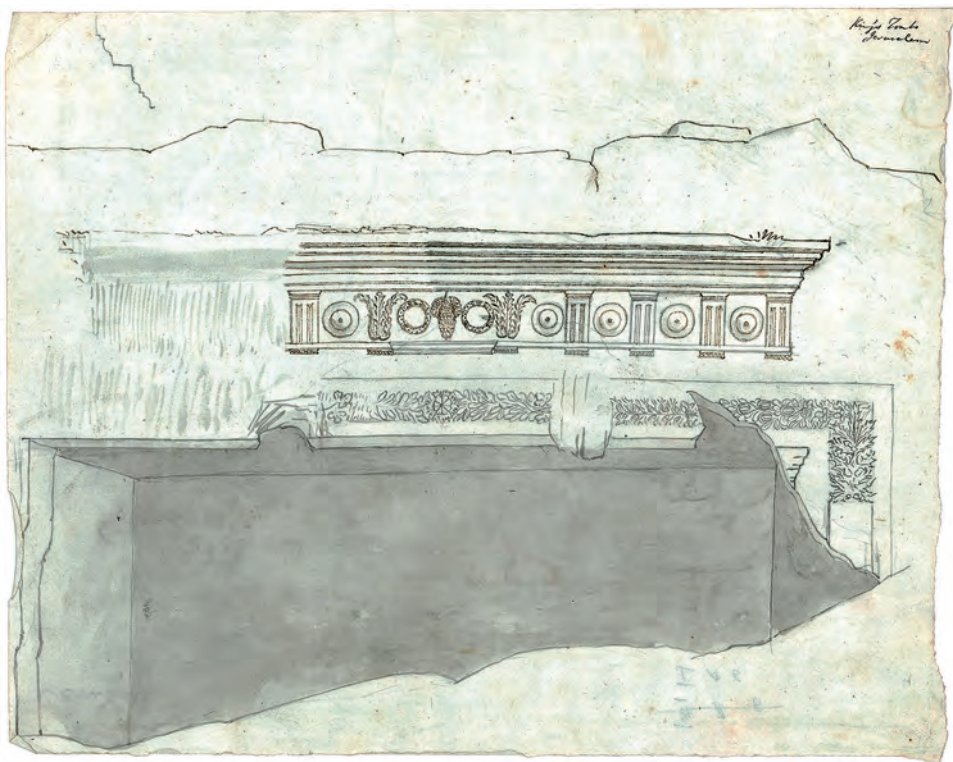


Figure 4. Banks' drawing of the portico, c. 1816. Reproduced by kind permission of the National Trust/Digital image © Dorset History Centre; D-BKL/H/J/7/1/6).

2.2 From Travelling Companions to Nocturnal Excavators: The 1818 Dig Party

Banks clearly felt that his work on the Tombs of the Kings was unfinished, and so in 1818 he determined to enlist some of his friends to join him in Jerusalem for a renewed investigation of the site. In the days before Jerusalem had any hotels, European travellers usually lodged at the Franciscan Convent not far from the Jaffa Gate. This was variously referred to as the Latin Convent of Saint Salvador, the Roman Catholic Convent, the Latin Convent of Terra Santa and, in modern times, the Terra Santa Monastery (Gibson, Shapira and Chapman 2013: 27). It was here that a trio of young, well-connected Englishmen joined Banks, now 31, to carry out a small 'dig' to try and answer the queries posed by his initial investigations at the Tombs of the Kings. This trio comprised two of Banks' friends, the Hon. Charles Leonard Irby (1789–1845) and James Mangles (1786–1867), along with new acquaintance Thomas Legh (1793–1857). They had just travelled to Jerusalem together, having first explored parts of Transjordan and the Dead Sea (Irby and

Mangles 1823: 296–331). Each had previously been involved in examining sites in Egypt, but this was the first time the three had come together to explore Palestine (Irby and Mangles 1823: 329–31; Finati and Bankes 1831: 224–25; cf. Macmichael 1819: 188).

Irby and Mangles were both Commanders in the Royal Navy, retained on half-pay (O'Byrne 1849: 567, 718). Irby was the same age as Bankes, Mangles some three years younger. They had left England in August 1816 with the intention of taking a limited tour on the continent, eventually returning at the end of 1820 and publishing a book on their travels (Irby and Mangles 1823: iii). This took the form of six detailed letters, largely transcribed from their own personal correspondence to their families back in England.⁵

It is their fourth letter which is of relevance here. This records their time in Jerusalem, from their arrival on 19 March 1818 until their departure on 2 May (Irby and Mangles 1823: 329). In it, they note that they kept Maundrell's account of his 1697 pilgrimage to hand: 'we took his book in our pockets, and visited every place which he mentions, most of them three different times' (Irby and Mangles 1823: 329). The perceived relevance of this volume to Irby and Mangles, despite its age, says something of the limited exploration and study of Palestine in the decades prior to their expedition. Maundrell's travels in Jerusalem were exhaustive to the point he was offered *diplomata*, presented by a 'father guardian,' to certify his having visited 'all the holy places' (Maundrell 1749: 110). Irby and Mangles obtained similar certification for themselves (Irby and Mangles 1823: 334).

It is worth noting that prior to their work in Jerusalem, Irby and Mangles had participated in an earlier, larger-scale archaeological exploration or clearance at the 'Great Temple of Ebsambal/Abousambul' (Abu Simbel) in Egypt (Irby and Mangles 1823: 37–91, pl. opp. 80). Engaging up to 64 labourers for 22 days, this work had been conducted in 1817 by Giovanni Belzoni, who published his own account of the expedition (Belzoni 1822: 318–33). Mahomet Finati, who had assisted Bankes in his explorations the previous year, was also a part of their team (Finati and Bankes 1830: 201; Spackman 2011). The purpose of that undertaking was to expose a doorway to the subterranean chamber (Irby and Mangles 1823: 72–76). It seems that Irby and Mangles were both involved in measuring the monument, while their companions produced drawings (Irby and Mangles 1823: 78). This work would have introduced Irby, Mangles and Finati to the techniques and logistics of contemporary archaeological clearances, and prepare them for their future endeavours in Palestine. Mahomet Finati, who was once again acting as Bankes' associate, was also to join them in their Jerusalem endeavour.

Despite being only 25 at the time, Legh was a Member of Parliament for the borough of Newton in Lancashire. He had first arrived in Jerusalem from Constantinople on a journey with William Macmichael (1819: 184–88). Legh has been credited as the first Briton to travel in Egypt just to see the sites, that is, 'not

pretending to be a scholar or explorer contributing to the knowledge of the world' (Anderson 2012: 267; Finati and Bankes 1830: 225). Curious and adventurous, he was nonetheless a worthy peer and addition to the party.

Also staying in Jerusalem at this time were Irish aristocrats the Earl of Belmore, his wife Lady Belmore and Lord Belmore's brother, Captain Armar Lowry-Corry, another Royal Navy commander. They had been journeying around the Eastern Mediterranean together for the last two years, collecting antiquities, inscribing the name 'Belmore' on ancient sites, and supporting Giovanni Belzoni's expedition in Egypt; now they were in Jerusalem. Women were not allowed to visit the all-male monastery, let alone stay there, so the presence of Lady Belmore as well as Mrs Belzoni, meant that the whole party was accommodated in a house built across the street. Its successor, the Casa Nova still welcomes pilgrims today. As Finati later wrote of the party assembled in April 1818, 'perhaps there had seldom or never been at Jerusalem, at any one time, so large an assemblage of Europeans' (1830: 225).

The Belmores were accompanied by Lord Belmore's companion and physician, Robert Richardson, who would later publish an account of their travels (Richardson 1822a; 1822b). Curiously, while he describes the Tombs of the Kings in Jerusalem (Richardson 1822b: 360–61), he makes no reference to the clandestine 'dig' that took place during their stay. He does however mention Irby and Mangles, who he had already met in Cairo, Bankes, 'whose researches all over the Levant have been of the most interesting and extensive nature,' and Thomas Legh, 'already well known to the public by his interesting travels in Nubia' (Richardson 1822b: 238–39). The different parties were therefore known to each other. Indeed, Captain Corry aided in clearing the soil and debris away from the Tombs of the Kings, along with two sailors lent to them from Lord Belmore's ship, while Lord Belmore would advise on techniques for breaking up a large stone block that was hindering their progress (Irby and Mangles 1823: 333).

2.3. Clandestine Work at the Tombs of the Kings

In Irby and Mangles' Letter IV we encounter the earliest description of their joint archaeological exploration of the Tombs of the Kings, accompanied by a plan (**Figure 5**). In a portion of the letter composed on 6 May 1818, reflecting on a late April 'adventure' in Jerusalem, they wrote:

I [Mangles] cannot, however, quit Jerusalem without mentioning a singular adventure we had here. There is amongst the sepulchres which travellers have designated as 'the Tombs of the Kings,' an excavated vault with an oblong portico, thus [image]:

[T]he only visible entrance to this tomb is at one end of the portico, while from its construction there is every reason to suppose that a corresponding entrance would

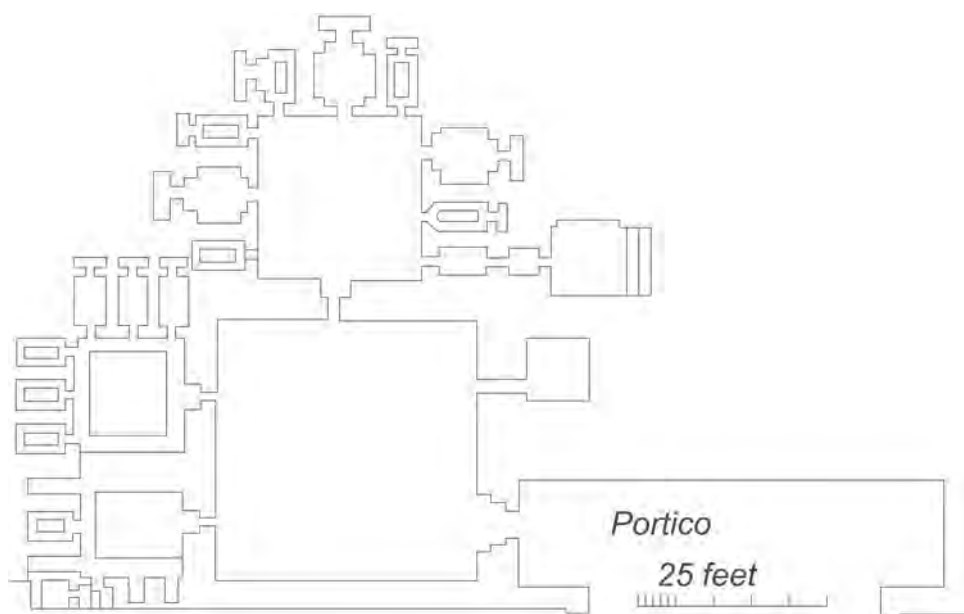


Figure 5. The Tombs of the Kings as redrawn from Pococke's 1745 plans by Irby and Mangles (after Irby and Mangles 1823: 332).

be at the other end, which is now filled with rubbish. Mr. Bankes was so thoroughly convinced of this, that when at Constantinople he used every exertion to procure a firman authorizing him to excavate and ascertain the fact, but in vain. We now endeavoured to obtain permission from the governor of Jerusalem to dig there ourselves; but failed also in this instance.

Now, as we could not procure any legal authority to commence our labours, we determined on prosecuting the undertaking secretly in the night, and accordingly purchased privately some pickaxes and implements of husbandry. Late in the evening we quitted the town singly, from different gates, to avoid suspicion, and assembling at the rendezvous after dark, found we mustered a working party of ten persons, viz. — Messrs. Bankes and Legh, Captain Corry and ourselves, together with five servants [including Finati], including two of Lord Belmore's sailors, whom his lordship had allowed to assist us. We divided our party into two watches, and worked hard four hours at a spell during the whole night, digging and clearing away the rubbish. We were obliged to spare one of the servants as a centinel [sic] near the road side, to apprize us of the approach of any one. In the morning we had got down about ten feet, when we came to an immense block of stone, apparently in the very spot where we expected to find the entrance to the tomb. As we were unable even to move this mass, we returned to the city tolerably fatigued, having been obliged, for want of spades, to clear away the rubbish with our hands. The next day Captain Corry, Mr. Bankes, and Mahomet his janissary, by the advice of Lord Belmore,

succeeded in breaking the stone by heating it, and pouring cold vinegar on it; but shortly after this was done, our proceedings were discovered by some Turks, and reported to the governour [sic], who put a very effectual stop to our exertions, by ordering the whole of the portico to be walled in (Irby and Mangles 1823: 332–34).

While the description of their 'dig' is brief, its purpose, logistics and progress can easily be determined — and that those involved were fully aware of its illegal nature and the need for secrecy. It also makes it clear that Bankes was the one who conceived the research question, initiated the venture and most likely took the lead. However, he must also have been very grateful for the participation of Irby, Mangles, and Finati, who had prior experience in exposing large-scale architecture from their time working alongside Belzoni in Egypt.

Bankes was later responsible for translating and editing Finati's personal biography, which includes Finati's account of the same event:

In my first account of Jerusalem, in a former chapter, I think I mentioned the large excavation, a little without the walls, which is called the Tomb of the Kings ... It was upon his [Bankes'] turning to this, many months afterwards (for the conjecture had not struck him, at least so strongly, on the spot), that he deduced a strong presumption of the existence of other entrances and more chambers besides those which are known; and he had determined on a search, should he ever revisit it. His reasons for this supposition had now so much weight with his countrymen, that all took an interest in it; and I was directed to apply to the Aga for a permission to excavate, but this was refused or evaded. After which, the travellers resolved to take the task upon themselves; but this was done with great secrecy, some going as far as to the valley of St John to purchase a few spades and baskets, and all dropping separately at the different gates about nightfall, in order to meet afterwards at the tomb, where a lantern also had been provided, and a water-skin.

When assembled, there were — Captain Corry, Mr. Legh, Captains Irby and Mangles, and Mr. Bankes; and three or four attendants assisting and bearing part in the toil, as well as myself. It was singular enough that three out of our number should have been among the excavators of Abousambul; but the present was a very different kind of labour, almost the whole mass to be removed consisting of stones, of larger and smaller size, some heavy, and all very rough, so that our nails were soon worn down to the quick: however, by relieving each other at stated intervals, we worked through the whole night, and before daybreak had cleared out a hole much more in depth than the height of the tallest man; but, though it seemed probable that we must be near the supposed opening, a great stone interposed, and we could proceed no further.

Next day, stealing quietly back in the afternoon, some of us heated a pile of charcoal upon the great stone, and throwing on it first vinegar and then water in quantities from the neighbouring tank, succeeded in cracking it all to pieces.

But before night, by some means, the rumours of what was going on had got abroad, and the governor, it was said, had given orders for filling up the place: what was yet more unlucky, the party was dispersed that evening, and could not be got together in sufficient strength to complete the task, much to the vexation of some who were ready and very anxious to resume it, which certainly was then still in our power (Finati and Bankes 1830: 229–33).

A third author was present at the April 1818 dig — Thomas Legh — but he elected not to write about it. He had previously published an account of his travels in Nubia (Legh 1816) but, in 1819, when presented with an opportunity to contribute to Macmichael's book of travels, he chose to brief Macmichael principally on his visit to Petra, and of his month in Jerusalem only mentioned that they had 'employed our time in examining the curiosities of the city and neighbourhood' (Macmichael 1819: 190).

Bankes' expedition was therefore unsuccessful in its aim to determine if his 1816 plan of the Tombs of the Kings was complete, or if there were undiscovered chambers and entrances to be added to it. With the conclusion of their thwarted archaeological explorations at the Tombs of the Kings, Bankes, Irby, Mangles and Legh departed Jerusalem for a tour of Petra and other ancient sites, before parting ways in July (Irby and Mangles 1823: 335–486).

3. THE 1838 CLEARANCE OF ROBINSON AND SMITH

Some 20 years after Bankes, Irby and Mangles' 'adventure,' American explorers Edward Robinson (1794–1863) and Eli Smith (1801–1857) visited the site and coincidentally raised the same question of whether there were hidden chambers to the north. Robinson, a graduate of Hamilton College, and Smith, a graduate of Yale, met at Andover Theological Seminary and, united in an interest in biblical geography, went on to tour the Holy Land together in 1838 and 1852, documenting their travels in the *Biblical Researches Series* (Albright 1935a; 1935b; Robinson 1856a: 1).

It would appear that they visited the Tombs of the Kings several times. One such visit was recorded on 27 April 1838, with Robinson inspecting the progress of 'some excavations' they had initiated (Robinson 1841: 355; 1856a: 240). He described the site as follows:

The four chambers ... connected with the present entrance, are all situated at the south end of the portico; and only the lower vault belonging to the westernmost extends northwards for a distance behind it. Thus all the rock around the northern part of the portico remains apparently unexcavated. The question naturally arose in our minds, whether a work of such magnificence, and such labour and expense, would probably have been left thus incomplete; and it occurred to us, whether

another like entrance to similar chambers might not exist at the other end of the portico, or in the middle, where the area has been filled up with stones and rubbish apparently for ages (Robinson 1856a: 360).

It seems that the wall blocking the entrance of the portico Irby and Mangles feared was to be constructed was never built; this supports the idea that their earlier work at the site had been backfilled. Robinson — who noted it was not until after his own dig that he became aware of the work of Irby and Mangles (Robinson 1841: 533, n.1; 1856a: 360, n.1) — continued:

We accordingly set men to work under the direction of active servant Komeh, to clear away the accumulated rubbish from the northern end; and frequently visited the spot ourselves. They laboured for several days, and laid bare the floor of the rock at the bottom; but without finding the slightest trace of any entrance. Yet I would not aver that such an entrance may not after all actually exist; having been perhaps purposely concealed ... (Robinson 1856a: 360).

Unlike their predecessors, Robinson and Smith never applied for permissions to undertake their clearance at the tombs. The pair acknowledged, however, that 'times had changed' (Robinson 1856a: 360 n. 1). This change had occurred in 1821. Frustrated that a fleet sacrificed for the Sultan had not been appropriately compensated, Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt instead wrested the territories of Syria and Palestine away from Constantinople (Silberman 1982: 36). This inaugurated a period more approving of tourists, travellers and explorers, giving Robinson and Smith greater freedoms than those who had visited the site before them.

Robinson included a plan of the tombs in his volumes (1841: 531; 1856a: 359), but despite noting that they 'took the measurement of them' (Robinson 1856a: 240), they ended up publishing a plan provided to them by Frederick Catherwood (Robinson 1841: 532, n.1; Schick 1897: 182–83).⁶ Robinson's description of this plan is interesting, as he notes that Catherwood had based it on his own measurements made in 1833; and that Irby and Mangles merely copied the earlier plan of Pocock, which he suggests had been drawn 'from recollection.' Oddly, Robinson (and thereby Catherwood), was later incorrectly accused of likewise reproducing Pococke's work (Schick 1897: 182–83).

4. THE 1842 CLEARANCE OF WOLCOTT AND TIPPING

Following the brief 'dig' by Bankes, Irby and Mangles in 1818, Finati had lamented:

I have always, therefore, regretted that no further attempt was made [to investigate], feeling quite convinced that some aperture existed very little below the level at

which we left off, and so I believe is everyone in his own mind who took part in the undertaking (Finati and Bankes 1830: 233–34).

In 1842, this pursuit was taken up once again by Samuel Wolcott (1813–1886), an American missionary (Teetor 1889: 627–28), and William Tipping (1816–1897), an English topographical artist and future railway magnate and MP (Malchow 2018: 207). They aimed to determine if the tomb had additional, undiscovered chambers and a second entrance (Robinson, Smith and Wolcott 1843: 35). It is not clear if they had any kind of permissions for their work. A report was published the following year, in which they speculated:

... there might be another set of apartments connected with the tomb, and another entrance. Mr. Tipping accordingly hired two workmen to clear away the rubbish again from the opposite side of the portico, assisted by our man Yûsuf, who was also with ... [Robinson and Smith's] party ... The work was done in a few hours. We found the block which the first party describe, over the supposed entrance. On reaching its upper surface, Yûsuf said this was as far as ... [Robinson and Smith] excavated. It is an irregular stone, three or four feet square, and seems to have been broken away from the front of the portico. We removed it, but found no opening beneath it; and laid bare the rock for several feet, without discovering any trace of a passage. None probably ever existed. This supposition is confirmed by the appearance of the rock, which on this side is less firm and compact, and less suitable for excavation, than the opposite portion; as is apparent from the face of it, both in the portico and in the court (Robinson, Smith and Wolcott 1843: 35–36; see also Robinson 1856b: 251).

Thus, 24 years following their departure from Jerusalem, Bankes' initial research question was finally answered. There was no second set of chambers to the north of the portico, and the monumental stone they had reached likely derived from the front of the portico. Bankes, Irby and Mangles were all alive at the time that Wolcott and Tipping's findings were published so one might like to suppose that news of these results reached them.

The amount of earth removed from the portico during Wolcott and Tipping's brief clearance can be visualised by comparing two early paintings of the Tombs of the Kings. The first, by English artist David Roberts, who travelled the region in 1839, depicts the portico not long after Robinson and Smith's clearances, but before that of Wolcott and Tipping (**Figure 6**; Roberts and Croly 1842). The second, published by Barclay in 1855, shows the portico following Wolcott and Tipping's more complete clearance and examination (**Figure 7**). It would seem that the 1816 and 1838 explorations either left the portico filled with debris at its northern side or had been subsequently backfilled, while Wolcott and Tipping cleared this area entirely.



Figure 6. David Roberts' *Entrance to the Tomb of the Kings*, following Robinson and Smith's excavation (after Roberts and Croly 1842; coloured lithograph by Louis Haghe under CC BY 4.0 license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



Figure 7. Entrance to the Tomb of the Kings, following Wolcott and Tipping's excavation (Barclay 1857: fig. op. 179). A 'Messr. Dick' prepared steel engravings for Barclay's work on behalf of publisher James Challen and Sons (Barclay 1857: iv, vii). The original artist is not named here, but elsewhere we are told that Barclay's daughter Sarah was the uncredited artist for most of his publications (Barclay 1857: 629).

It is possible that at least one further 'dig' (or perhaps tomb robbing) took place after Wolcott and Tipping's clearance and prior to that of de Saulcy. A local legend states that in 1847 rumours of a hidden treasure reached the attention of the Ottoman governor of Jerusalem, who ordered a search of the site; however nothing was found (Goren 2015: 44–45). It has additionally been suggested that two robbed sarcophagi, one removed in 1831 and the other around 1835, may have originated from within the Tombs of the Kings (Kon 1947: 18–19).

5. THE 1863 EXCAVATIONS OF LOUIS DE SAULCY

Louis Félicien Caignart de Saulcy (1807–1880), began his first exploration of the Tomb of the Kings in early 1851. De Saulcy was an artilleryman turned numismatist and museum curator, whose interest in archaeology eventually took him on two tours of the Holy Land (Bitard 1878: 1054–55). Prior to visiting the Tombs of the Kings, de Saulcy hypothesised that they should be identified as the sepulchres of the Davidic dynasty (de Saulcy 1854b: 163; *contra* Pococke 1745: 20). Although he soon attracted considerable criticism from his peers (e.g. Rochette 1852; Quatremère 1852a; 1852b),⁷ his interest was piqued, and he spent two chapters of the account of his 1850–1851 travels advancing this hypothesis (de Saulcy 1854b: 111–54, 155–93). Here, he expressed frustration that no one, himself included, possessed the knowledge or permissions required to excavate (de Saulcy 1854b: 112). As part of his exploration of the site on 4 February 1851, and apparently without permission, he removed the lids of a number of sarcophagi for relocation to the Louvre (de Saulcy 1854a: 460; 1854b: 119).

Motivated by a desire to prove his hypothesis, de Saulcy returned to this monument in 1863 and systematically cleared the site, excavating at a scale not seen in the region since the time of Lady Hester Stanhope (de Saulcy 1865a: 345–410; 1865b: 188–89, 309–11; see also Silberman 1982: 70–71; 1984). His most noteworthy find was a sarcophagus containing the remains of a woman's skeleton dressed in a gold-adorned garment, the lid of which bore the Aramaic inscription *צדן מלכתה* (de Saulcy 1865a: 377–80, 385; 1865b: 309–11), translating as 'Queen Tsadan' (an Aramaic name). Ironically, the finds and dating evidence he unearthed, in addition to the tomb's location, scale and grandeur, appear to support the idea that this was the burial place of Queen Helena of Adiabane. However, there are problems in this identification when these finds are compared with the ancient descriptions (Marciak 2014: 155–62), and alternatives have been suggested (Kokkinos 2015; Humbert 2018; Lawler 2021b). Irrespective of this, de Saulcy maintained his conviction that he had identified the royal burials of Iron Age Judah (de Saulcy 1865a: 386–98).

From de Saulcy's reports of his travels and excavations, it is evident that he was aware of the published works of Irby and Mangles, Robinson and Smith,

and Wolcott and Tipping, and yet he never refers to their prior clearances at the Tombs of the Kings. In his 1854 volumes, for instance, he summarises Irby and Mangles' 1818 exploration of the Dead Sea area and Transjordan (de Saulcy 1854a: 395–99).⁸ He also refers to the work of Robinson on many occasions, including once specifically in relation to the Tombs of the Kings (de Saulcy 1854b: 123). However, his purpose in this instance was only to refute Robinson's support of their connection with Helena of Adiabane. He also mentions Wolcott and Tipping only once, with reference to their exploration of Amman (de Saulcy 1865a: 247).

While de Saulcy was not the first to clear away debris from the tombs, his work drew the attention of Jerusalem's residents in a major way not previously seen. His apparent desecration of a sacred site and mishandling of human remains caused resentment in the Jewish community that extended to the Diaspora (Goren 2015: 44–46). At home, this was of little concern to de Saulcy's patron, Emperor Napoleon III, and finds from this latest clearance were soon installed in the Louvre (Lawler 2021a: 336–39). However, a Jewish Parisian named Berthe Amélie Bertrand was sufficiently moved by the affair that, intending to protect the monument indefinitely, she managed to purchase the site; it later passed to the French government and it remains under their control to the present day (Goren 2015: 46–53).

Following de Saulcy's excavation, one source mentioned that the excavations at the Tombs of the Kings were completed by Clermont-Ganneau (Avi-Yonah 2007), but this claim could not be verified by the authors. Clermont-Ganneau did however suggest that the provenance of the head of 'an imperial or royal statue' may have derived from the tombs or nearby (Clermont-Ganneau 1899: 259–65).

6. DISCUSSION

It could be argued that both the scale and authorised status of de Saulcy's work by official *firman* mean that he should continue to be credited with the first legitimate archaeological exploration in Jerusalem. However, his work is still regarded as a clearance (Silberman 1982: 70). Neither de Saulcy's efforts nor those of his predecessors meet modern criteria of archaeological excavation. Additionally, de Saulcy lacked the 'scientific scepticism' possessed by his predecessors, uncritically insisting without evidence that these were Iron Age Judahite royal tombs until the day he died (cf. Silberman 1982: 71–72).

The various investigators of the site prior to de Saulcy should not be dismissed as mere treasure hunters, as all of the concerned parties had shown scientific curiosity, and there is no evidence they were simply looking to extract souvenirs or antiquities. It is fortunate that records of Bankes' measurements and drawings have survived, as the attention to detail they record attest to his genuine scientific curiosity about the site. He was clearly engaged in a comparative study of tombs of the region, with his notes and drawings describing the workmanship and

decorative features of the Tombs of The Kings in considerable detail. As for his contemporaries Irby and Mangles, they were guided in their travels by following in the steps of Maundrell, had already assisted in an excavation in Egypt and, when their paths crossed, helped Bankes record many of the monuments they encountered, suggesting they shared his scientific interest (Irby and Mangles 1823: 311–12, 165, 314, 476). Robinson and Smith, on the other hand, came from an academic background, documenting the region on behalf of Andover Theological Seminary and producing work that had considerable scholarly impact. The investigation of Wolcott and Tipping should similarly be seen as having scientific intent, completing the work started by others, with their findings being published in a scholarly journal (Robinson, Smith and Wolcott 1843: 35–36; cf. Silberman 1982: 37–47).

7. TOWARDS A REVISED PLAN OF THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS

A final question that we wished to explore was the relationship between the different plans produced of the site, as well as their accuracy. Irby and Mangles only provided one image to accompany the description of their work, a sketch plan, which was published without any credit (**Figure 5**). Robinson suggested that this was merely a copy of Pococke's earlier plan (1841: 532, n. 1). To determine the truth of this, both the 1738 and 1823 plans were digitised and drafted in CAD software, and then compared against each other. This demonstrated very clearly that the later plan was indeed a tracing of the earlier one. Working by night, and forbidden to complete their clearance, it is assumed Irby and Mangles were never given the opportunity to create a plan of their own, although it is still curious that they did not use Bankes' 1816 plan in place of Pococke's. Perhaps they refrained in the expectation that Bankes would be using it for one of his own publications. For further discussion of the possible reasons why Irby and Mangles were unable to publish drawings prepared by Bankes, see Lewis (2007: 6).

To assess the reliability of each plan, we drew on the work of Captain Charles Wilson. In 1865, he produced a carefully surveyed plan of the Tombs of the Kings as part of his work on the Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem (Wilson 1866: pl. XXV). The authors used this as a base map, with the plans drawn up by Bankes in 1816, Pococke in 1738, and Catherwood in 1833 overlaid upon it. Our comparison demonstrated that Bankes' plan represents the most accurate record of the layout of the tombs prior to the Jerusalem Ordnance Survey; this version may be seen in **Figure 8**.

Like Pococke and Catherwood before him, even Wilson's ordnance survey plan was met with some criticism. Writing in 1897, Schick noted, '[a]ll the plans hitherto published ... include only the group of tombs, leaving out the surroundings and things directly connected with them.' To rectify this, Schick consequently

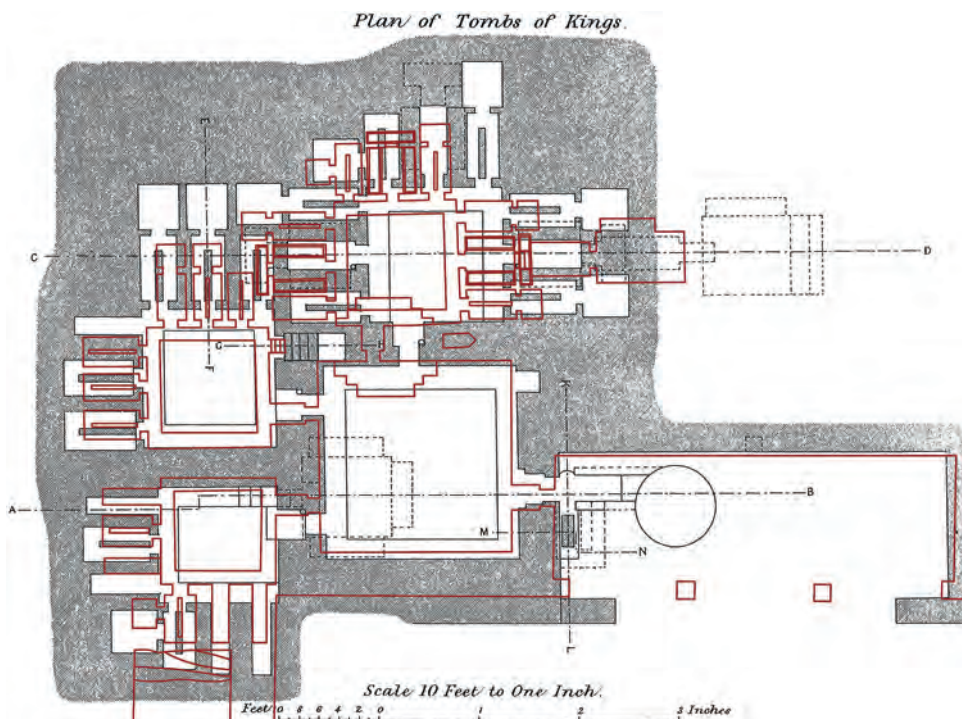


Figure 8. Bankes' top plan from 1816 (see **Figure 1**) overlaid in red over Wilson's 1865 plan of the Tombs of the Kings (*after* Wilson 1866: pl. XXV).

published a ground plan of the outer complex (Schick: 183, 185 plan 1).⁹ Had Bankes published his own plans of the monument, he would have been the first to graphically document the descent from the surrounding gardens towards the courtyard and tomb complex (see **Figures 1–2**).

As a result of our research, we can now present a new plan of the Tombs of the Kings, amalgamating the plans by Wilson and Schick with reference data from the 1:10,000 scale plan of Jerusalem from the 1865 ordnance survey.¹⁰ The results may be seen in **Figure 9**, which shows a georectified reconstruction of the entire Tombs of the Kings complex on based upon aerial photography.¹¹ Using the scale measurements of the portico as a basis, we note that Wilson and Schick plans are accurate to each other within 10 cm; however the southwestern extent of the court has been modified from Schick's published plan as his reconstruction was found to be untenable when compared to the layout of Salah ad-Din St (resulting from changes made to the road layout after 1933; cf. Goren 2015: 50–51). The boundaries depicted on the 1:10,000 scale plan only partially conform to that of the garden. Additionally, while the explorations of these early parties almost certainly extended across the entire complex, there is no evidence that

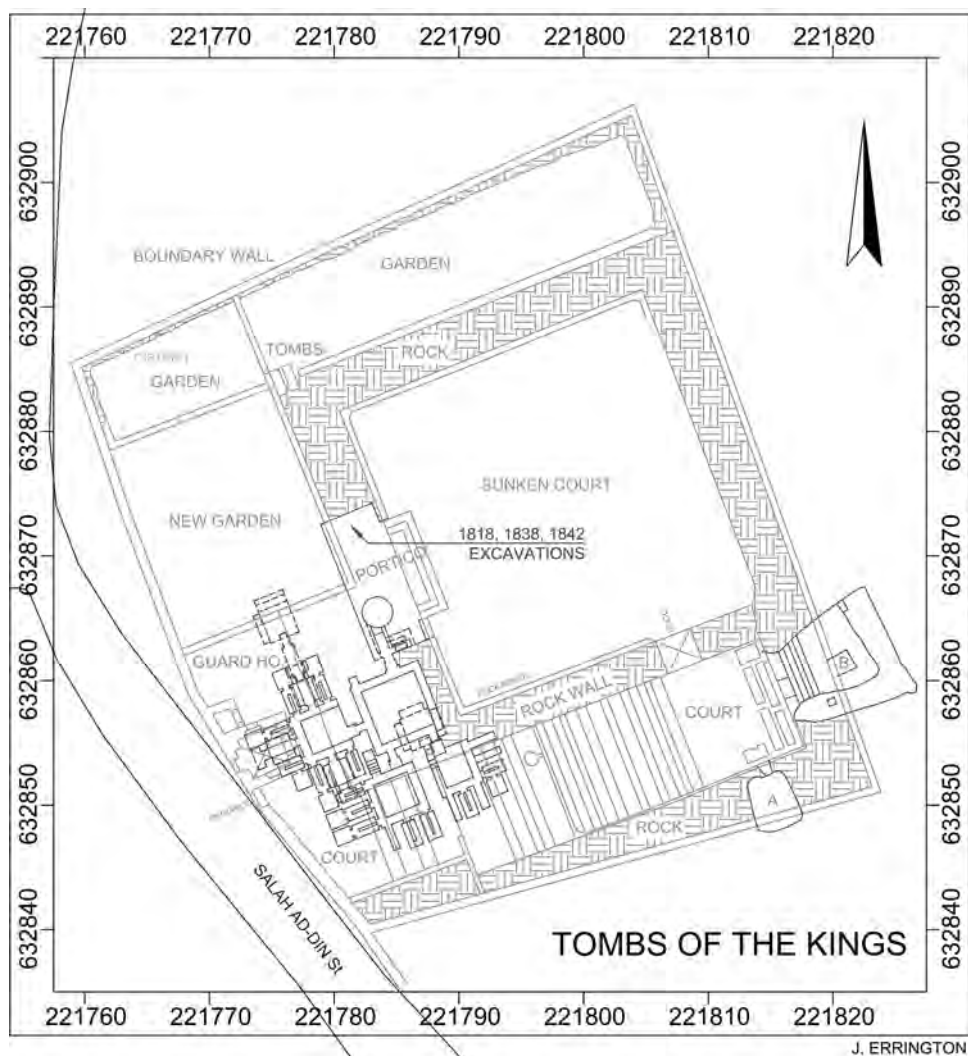


Figure 9. Location of the 1818, 1838 and 1842 clearances at the Tombs of the Kings with reference to the New Israeli Grid/Israeli Transverse Mercator co-ordinates (after Wilson 1866: pl. XXV and Schick 1897: 185 plan 1).

the clearances extended beyond the northern (right-hand) alcove of the vestibule as shown.

While Bankes, Irby and Mangles' initial question of whether there were hidden northern chambers was eventually answered by Wolcott and Tipping, a further question emerges: why didn't the original design of the tomb include a second set of chambers at the northern end of the portico? Wolcott and Tipping suggested that

northward construction might have been avoided because of geological concerns (Robinson, Smith and Wolcott 1843: 35–36). However, the present authors propose two further possibilities. Constructed only decades prior to the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, it is possible the tombs were ‘never finished,’ being laid out in a way that would permit further expansion and additional capacity for future interments. Alternatively, as access to the sunken court leading to the portico was from the south, the entrance to the tombs may have been designed to be initially out of sight to the visitor, who would have to approach the portico for the entrance to come into view.

8. CONCLUSIONS

To the present authors’ knowledge, the accounts of Irby and Mangles and of Finati record the earliest documented archaeological ‘dig’ in Jerusalem, and these pioneers should be regarded as the first practical explorers of Jerusalem’s ancient monuments. Regardless of whether evidence of earlier ‘digs’ or clearances emerge in the future, this work, for which the research questions, boundaries, extent, methodology, timeline, team and findings (or lack thereof) were recorded, predates the work of de Saulcy by 45 years. Furthermore, two further clearances were conducted at the site prior to his time, motivated by the same research question. While the clearing of the portico of a monumental tomb could only ever contribute to our understanding in a limited way, these clearances were undertaken to test the hypothesis that a second complex of chambers lay hidden beneath. Archival records, and the popular and scientific publications that report on activity at the site combine to show that all three parties were led by scientific curiosity of their day, and their work cannot be dismissed as mere treasure hunting. Although their respective efforts did not deliver tangible results, nor increase knowledge of the ancient city, it can be argued that this work was — quite literally — ground-breaking as the first research-driven, archaeological exploration in the city, and should be recognised as such.

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Notes

- 1 Bieberstein (2017: 9) by contrast, traces Jerusalem's earliest excavation to de Saulcy's earlier expedition to the Holy Land back in the winter of 1850–1851.
- 2 A later description by Clarke indicates that the door was no longer *in situ* by the time of Bankes, Irby and Mangles' exploration (1813: 322–26).
- 3 According to Josephus, Helena had been interred in a royal tomb located three furlongs north of the city (*BJ* 5.4.2; *AJ* 20.4.3).
- 4 Not to be confused with the Palestine Exploration Fund, the Palestine Association was active from about 1805–1810 before being formally subsumed into the Royal Geographical Society in 1834 (Silberman 1982: 21; Kark and Goren 2011).
- 5 Mangles seems to be the primary author, referring to 'Mr. Irby' in several instances within the text (Irby and Mangles 1823: 72, 314, 331, 339).
- 6 Catherwood was an English artist, architect and explorer who went on to complete a detailed survey of Jerusalem, amidst broader travels in Greece, Turkey, Egypt and Palestine, as well as later in Central America (Ben-Arieh 1974).
- 7 For de Saulcy's response, see 1852a and 1852b.
- 8 Additionally, he referred to them elsewhere (de Saulcy 1854b: 388, 398; 1865a: 130, 212, 215, 249), although not with regard to their exploration of the Tombs of the Kings.
- 9 Wilson's plan did however include all primary subterranean structures.
- 10 For a similar amalgamated plan by Flower, albeit with lesser detail, see Prag 1989: 273.
- 11 This data derives from a Jerusalem mapping project conducted as part of Joshua Errington's doctoral dissertation at Macquarie University (Errington 2021), where the 1:10,000 plan of Jerusalem was digitised and georectified in OGIS according to modern aerial photography.

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To Fill the Void: Re-exposing Kathleen Kenyon's Trench M in Jerusalem

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This short note is dedicated to the re-discovery of a trench that was excavated in the City of David, Jerusalem, by the expedition of the Joint Project of the British School of Archaeology, directed by Kathleen Kenyon in the 1960s. The re-exposure of this excavation area c. 50 years after the completion of the archaeological work of our scientific predecessors, naturally raised questions regarding the accuracy of their archaeological and chronological conclusions, but it also offered a rare opportunity to illuminate episodes from Jerusalem's recent past.

Keywords

Jerusalem, Kathleen Kenyon, excavation methods, historical archaeology

1. CONTEXT

The Givati Parking Lot excavation site is located along the eastern fringe of the Tyropoeon Valley, some 30 m south of the Ottoman wall surrounding the Old City of Jerusalem, in the area known today as 'The City of David.' The excavation at the site was conducted by the authors between 2007 and 2016 (Ben-Ami 2013; Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2019; 2020), in an area totalling 0.5 hectares. It revealed a broad stratigraphical and chronological sequence, with architectural remains dating from the Iron Age (9th century BCE) up to the Abbasid period (9th–10th centuries CE); later periods, including the Medieval, Ottoman and modern periods, were represented by sporadic finds (Ben-Ami 2020: table 1.1).

The Givati Parking Lot is traversed by a trench (Area M) excavated by Kenyon (1964: 13). This trench cut through the architectural remains of many strata, with wall stubs and floors abruptly terminating on either side of it (**Figure 1**). The excavations in the Givati Parking Lot enabled us to accurately locate Kenyon's Area M, to identify and delineate its borders, and to distinguish between the trench excavated by Kenyon and subsequently refilled, and the undisturbed contexts at our larger Givati site (**Figure 2**). The eastern edge of Kenyon's trench was eventually discovered close to the Givati Parking Lot, during a salvage excavation at the



Figure 1. Kathleen Kenyon's Area M trench, traversing the Givati Parking Lot excavations. View to the west. Photo courtesy of *SkyView*.

entrance to the City of David's Visitors Centre (Dan Goor and Tchekhanovets 2020).

2. RE-EXPOSED ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS

The earliest archaeological remains we found in Kenyon's trench consisted of a small assemblage of Iron Age II–III pottery sherds, bearing the expedition's inked numbers and discarded there for some unknown reason. However, the earliest architectural remains exposed by Kenyon and still visible in her trench were walls and installations dating from the Hellenistic to the Early Roman periods (**Figure 3**). It now seems that some walls described by Kenyon as part of a city wall of the Early Roman period (Kenyon 1966: pl. IX) likely belong to the Hellenistic-period Acra, part of which was excavated by that same British expedition in Kenyon's Area A. Our exposure of a larger area of these early remains provided them with a more accurate stratigraphic and chronological context, that led to the suggested reconstruction of a Hellenistic citadel (Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2015; Zilberstein 2021).

Kenyon's trench also encompasses some 1st century CE rock-hewn installations, identifiable as part of Jerusalem's 'Lower City' construction boom of that time

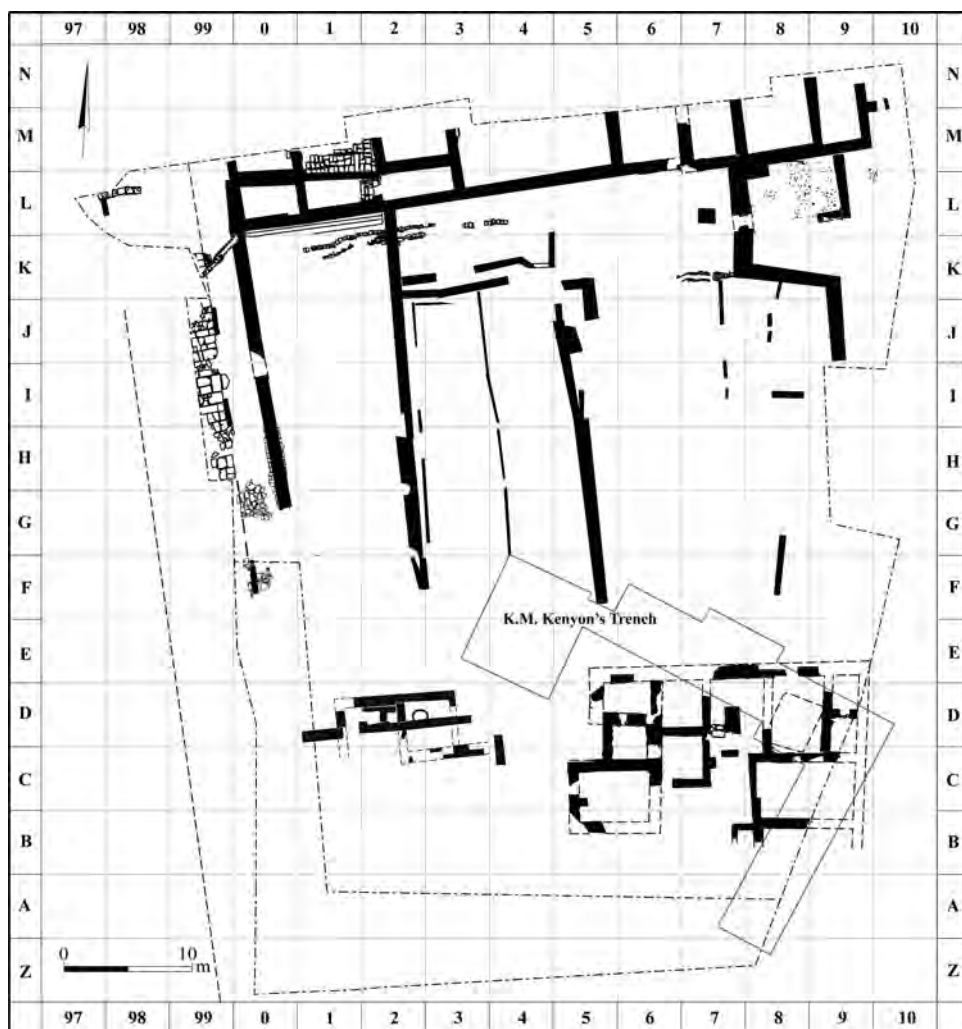


Figure 2. Plan of the Givati excavations, showing the Byzantine structures traversed by Kenyon's Trench M. Surveying by Vadim Essman and Yakov Shmidov, plan by Natalia Zak and Elena Dilerson, courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority.

(Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2011; Zilberstein and Szanton 2015). One such installation is an Early Roman *miqveh* hewn into bedrock, which was later quarried during the Late Roman period, and reused as a cistern under a Byzantine house (Ben-Ami 2020: plan 2.30, section 8–8; Kenyon 1964: pl. VIA; Prag 2008: 312–15, figs. 197–200; 2018: 64, fig. 4:1). Once the area was cleaned, the line of the rock-hewn *miqveh* steps was clearly visible (**Figure 4**). Late Roman remains that were re-exposed in the trench include two rooms of the large early 4th-century



Figure 3. Givati excavations: to the left, the Late Roman mansion walls; to the right, part of the Hellenistic fortifications; in the lower foreground, the Hellenistic walls, partly exposed by Kenyon's expedition. View to north. Photo courtesy of *SkyView*.



Figure 4. Givati excavations: the Early Roman period *miqveh*, transformed into a water cistern during the Byzantine period, and exposed by Kenyon's expedition. View to west. Photo by Assaf Peretz, courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

mansion that was fully unearthed by our expedition (Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2013; see also Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets, *forthcoming*). The walls that Kenyon saw in the 1960s form the southern enclosure of this impressive architectural complex, including the southern entrance to the mansion and part of the complex's courtyard.

Some remains of the Byzantine structures excavated by us had been partly exposed in the 1960s (Kenyon 1964: pl. VIA; Prag 2008: 43–72; 2018: 81). Apart from the cistern already mentioned, they include two rooms with well-preserved thresholds, built directly above the levelled bedrock surface (Ben-Ami 2020: 32–38, figs. 2.36–41).

The architectural finds that were re-discovered in Kenyon's trench are only briefly presented in our final excavation reports, as they are currently under scientific analysis by Kay Prag. Eventually, one hopes that the final publication of Kenyon's excavations will provide us with the missing evidence and thus will help complete the larger picture of the strata at the Givati site.

3. THE REFILLING OF THE TRENCH

Following the ordinary practice of the time, the trench made by the British expedition was refilled after the excavations, and therefore its re-exposure led to the discovery of many modern finds from that time, including 20th century bricks and tiles, sewage pipes and plumbing supplies, floor slabs, and polished stones. It seems that the trench was refilled with debris brought there from different locations.

A remarkable group of finds discovered in these fills consist of Armenian potsherds, all dating to the mid-20th century. Judging by the producers' trademark, the vessels were manufactured by the Armenian masters Neshan Balian and Megerditch Kirakoshian between the mid-1940s and 1964, at the local workshop known initially as 'Palestinian Pottery' and later as 'Jerusalem Pottery' (**Figure 5**). Armenian pottery manufacture, established in Jerusalem a century ago at the initiative of the British administration of Mandatory Palestine, developed over time into a significant sector of local souvenir production, becoming one of Jerusalem's hallmarks (Kenaan-Kedar 2002; Olenik 1986). In the 1960s, Armenian pottery production was extremely popular in eastern Jerusalem under Jordanian rule, as also manifested in the city waste dumped into Kenyon's trench.

Among the curious finds discovered in the western part of the trench were numerous limestone floor-slabs, most of them probably originating from some local residence dated to the 19th–20th centuries. One of these slabs, apparently used as a paving stone, appeared to be inscribed with an ancient Armenian graffito. The Armenian informal inscription of three lines, dated on the basis of its palaeographic characteristics to the 10th–11th centuries, was badly damaged. However, the name of a certain Karapet is still clearly visible (Stone, Ben-Ami and



Figure 5. The 20th century 'Armenian pottery' production from the trench. Photo by Clara Amit, courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

Tchekhanovets 2014). The pavement stone was possibly inscribed by an Armenian pilgrim and later reused in a modern house.

Of special interest is an impressive assemblage of 42 Ottoman ceramic glazed tiles, discovered in the eastern part of the trench, mainly in the fill covering the *miqveh*/cistern, described above.¹ It was possible to identify the origin of this debris thanks to the parallels to the ornamental patterns in the present-day ceramic tile décor of the Dome of the Rock, located *c.* 300 m uphill to the north.

The tile décor was introduced to the Dome of the Rock in the mid-16th century under the patronage of the Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent. The tiles were reported to have been produced in Jerusalem, in the vicinity of the Haram al-Sharif, by Abdullah Tabrizi (St. Laurent 2016: 348). Some preserve inscriptions dated to AH 952 (1545 CE) and AH 959 (1551/2 CE). Most tiles were square, 20 × 20 or 25 × 25 cm, ornamented with under-glaze decoration (**Figure 6**).

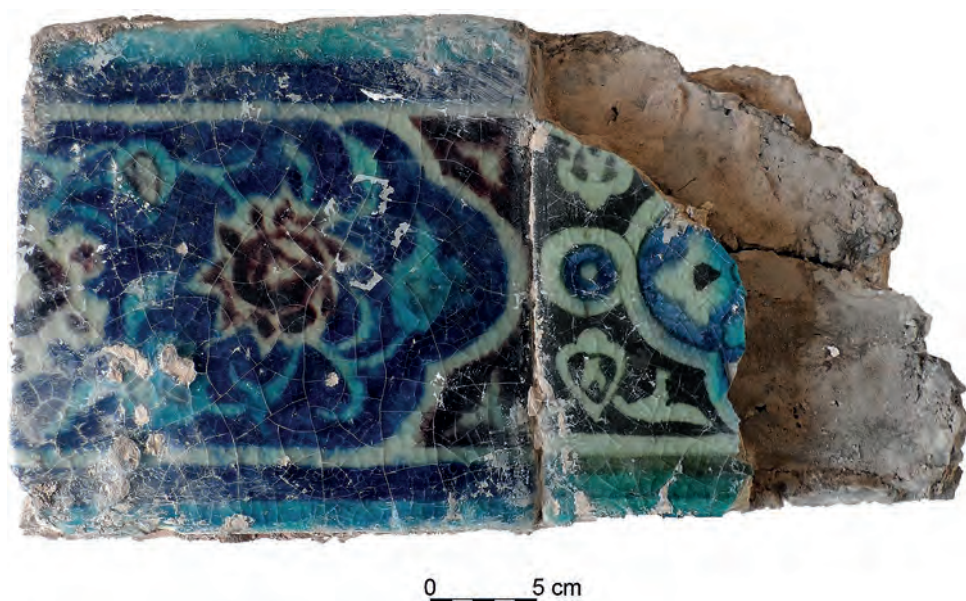


Figure 6. Concrete block with Dome of the Rock tiles from the trench. Photo courtesy of the Givati expedition.

The decoration scheme included calligraphic, geometric, and floral ornaments: palmettes, lotus flowers, and interlaced tendrils painted with cobalt, turquoise, green, and blue colours, outlined in black, on a white or turquoise background (Porter 1995: 103). The windows of the building were decorated with flower-shaped tile-frames with black floral decoration on a white, turquoise, green, and

yellow background (**Figure 7**). Additional materials were the monochrome, narrow, elongated bricks that were used to delineate architectural forms and create borders between various ornaments and around the windows. They were covered with

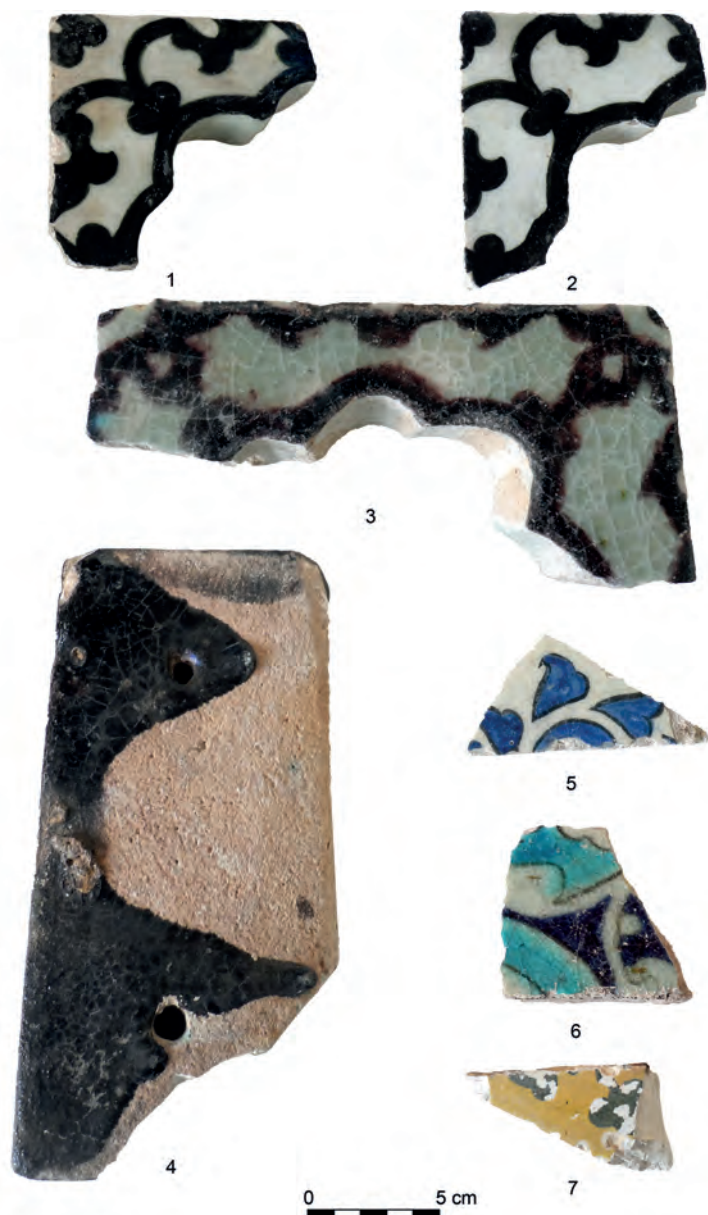


Figure 7. Fragments of Dome of the Rock tiles from the trench. Photo courtesy of the Givati expedition.

turquoise, cobalt, and black lead glaze, and were laid horizontally and vertically in conjunction with glazed tiles. During the Ottoman period, the building was restored many times, and the original tiles were continuously replaced (St. Laurent 2000; St. Laurent and Ridlemayer 1993).

The British administration made special efforts to renovate the Dome of the Rock complex in 1918, almost immediately after the conquest of Jerusalem. The Pro-Jerusalem Council, responsible for various development and cultural projects in the city, found suitable artisans to manufacture the new tiles: an Armenian master David Ohannessian, who discovered in The Haram the original 16th-century kilns used for tile production and began experimenting with local clay to reproduce the tiles of the Dome of the Rock (Ashbee 1921: 8–10, 32). Ohannessian also went to Kütahya to bring skilled workers and the necessary materials to Palestine. In 1919, the new workshop, 'Dome of the Rock Tiles,' presented its first products, and the 'Armenian Pottery of Jerusalem' was born. However, in spite of all the efforts, and the appeal of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem for the necessary funds, the Dome of the Rock restoration project was not achieved for various reasons. The work was finally carried out in the 1960s, under Jordanian patronage, and the new tiles were produced in Kütahya (St. Laurent 2016: 352–53). All the tiles were removed and replaced with new ones (**Figure 8**). As we have learnt from our excavations, some of the damaged, discarded tiles found their way into the refill of the trench of the British archaeological expedition.

A similar origin could likewise be ascribed to a group of nearly 400 marble fragments found together with Ottoman tiles in the eastern part of Kenyon's



Figure 8. Modern tiled decoration of the Dome of the Rock. Photo by Yana Tchekhanovets.

trench. The vast majority of the marble in this context comprises large fragments of Byzantine wall-veneer, of white greyish Proconnesian marble, and green *cipollino* and *verde antico*. This discarded marble accounts for almost one-third of the total marble fragments discovered during all the excavation seasons at the Givati Parking Lot. It differs significantly from the rest of the marble assemblage found, which consisted of mainly small fragments (Tchekhanovets 2016). The unequivocal Byzantine dating of the marble fragments seems to indicate that they were used as *spolia* in the early Islamic structures of Haram al-Sharif (St. Laurent 2022). During the 20th-century renovations, they were partly removed and ended up in the fills that covered Kenyon's trench. Many Ottoman tile-fragments and a few similar marble finds were also discovered on the easternmost side of Kenyon's trench, in the excavation area located to the east of the Givati Parking Lot area (Dan Goor and Tchekhanovets 2020).

4. DISCUSSION

The scientific exploration of the ancient city of Jerusalem began with the establishment of the Palestine Exploration Fund in the 19th century, and has continued uninterrupted until today. Dozens of archaeological expeditions excavated extensively in the city over the past 150 years, and Jerusalem is widely acknowledged as one of the world's most excavated sites (for selected bibliography, see various entries in Galor and Avni 2011; Gurevich and Kidron 2018). Excavating within the boundaries of the city today confers a feeling of close intimacy with the work of its pioneering archaeologists.

Reassessing the results of previous expeditions is common in archaeological publications worldwide, and Jerusalem is no exception. Nonetheless, physical remains of past archaeological works *per se* are rarely of interest to modern archaeologists. In the research literature dedicated to Jerusalem in the last decades, only a couple of examples can be mentioned: from the excavations of the Palestine Exploration Fund explorers Frederick Bliss and Archibald Dickie on Mount Zion, parts of the trenches still survive, and some of their equipment is left, as well as their wine and beer bottles (Zelinger 2007: 101–102, fig. 2; Arbel and Zelinger 2022). There are similar remains from the City of David, derived from Captain Montagu Parker's expedition (Reich 2011: 154). Needless to say, these footprints are of great importance in reconstructing site-formation processes, which are especially complicated in Jerusalem, with its complex stratigraphy and millennia of continuous human habitation. The experience gained during our excavations at the Givati Parking Lot demonstrates the significance of meticulous documentation and the study we made of the 1960s trench, with its architectural remains still *in situ* as the excavators left them, as well as the importance of the study of the abundant material, modern and ancient alike, that was found dumped into the trench upon its conclusion.

The 20th-century city rubbish that found its way into the trench after it was refilled is particularly interesting for the study of the city's consumption habits. It represents a wide range of modern building materials and supplies, as well as the pottery and glass repertoire used in Jerusalem up to the 1960s. It also adds significant data to the finds from the British Mandate period that were previously discovered at the Givati Parking Lot (Zilberstein and Shatil 2013). The picture of Jerusalem as the 'city of *spolia*' is seen also in the modern waste, where reused Byzantine marble veneer and early Medieval Armenian inscriptions, all spoliated, were discovered together with late Ottoman glazed wall-décor, Marseille-type roof tiles, and modern ashtrays, produced for the city hotels.

The study of the recent past is rarely considered in the archaeological reports, but the number of such publications is constantly growing. Among the recent works to be mentioned are papers dedicated to the 'late layers' in Jerusalem (Finkielsztejn, Nagar and Bilig 2009; Re'em 2018; Tchekhanovets, Arbiv and Vach 2022); Jaffa (Arbel 2017; 2021; Re'em 2010), the country's hinterland in the Ottoman and British Mandate periods (Boas 2000; Tsuk, Bordowicz and Taxel 2016; Saidel and Erickson-Gini 2014; Kislevitz *et al.* 2021; Eisenberg-Degen and Levi Hevroni 2021), burial complexes (Toombs 1985; Eakins 1993) and military campaigns (Peretz 2018; Peretz and Betzer 2022). Without a clear understanding of the site formation processes, the refill in Kenyon's trench would probably be misinterpreted and disregarded as simply 'later disturbance.' The fragments of marble and ceramic tile décor from the Dome of the Rock would be especially difficult to interpret. Perhaps in years to come someone will initiate an alternative sifting project, based on the early finds discovered at the Givati Parking Lot, in order to reconstruct the early Islamic buildings. The archaeological research of Jerusalem has already been introduced to such a methodology, with the project sifting the Temple Mount's relocated dumps (Barkay and Dvira 2012; Snyder, Barkay and Dvira 2016; Dvira and Barkay 2022).

The re-exposure of the archaeological trench that was excavated during the 1960s by Kathleen M. Kenyon at the northwestern side of the hill of the City of David manifests the importance of setting scientific methodology in such cases where an earlier excavation area that was fully covered is buried at the heart of a new, more extensive excavation site. Prior awareness of its approximated location, isolation of the previously excavated area within the larger site, a search for the boundaries of that area and identifying the very top level to its full extent, should be combined with the meticulous excavation of the backfill material to a substantial depth prior to excavating its surroundings. These are all fundamental actions necessary to securely separate the backfill material from the site's non-excavated parts. These precautions proved worthwhile in the experience gained at the Givati Parking Lot, because they enabled us to understand many peculiarities that could otherwise have resulted in the loss of critical archaeological data. Fortunately, the

meticulous excavation of the backfill, and its scientific processing in the same way as all the other archaeological loci, has contributed to a better understanding of the site formation and brought to light some vital material that directly concerns one of the prominent historical and archaeological religious structures in Jerusalem.

The time that passed notwithstanding, Kenyon's footprints were easily detected in the field thanks to her cleanly cut, vertical sections, one of her famous scientific hallmarks. We can only hope that future archaeologists excavating in the City of David, may view our own work with the same appreciation, and consider it as no less valuable contribution to the study of ancient Jerusalem.

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Notes

- 1 Our deep gratitude is given to Beatrice St. Laurent, Bridgewater State University, who kindly examined the Ottoman tiles discussed here.

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Book Reviews

Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis, *Archaeology, Nation, and Race: Confronting the Past, Decolonizing the Future in Greece and Israel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. Pp. 218 + 25 illustrations. £25.99. ISBN 9781009160254.

This volume originated as a series of video discussions between the authors during the covid lockdown to review the results of a seminar on archaeology and the national imagination in Israel and Greece, which they had co-taught at Brown University in the spring of 2020. Hamilakis' book *The Nation and Its Ruins* (2007) inspired Greenberg to consider similarities in the ways that Greece and Israel, as contemporary nation-states, had emphasised links with antiquity, and to propose that they co-teach a course. The book is an underlying presence throughout the conversations in this volume.

The preface and conclusion (Chapter 7) are traditional prose; Chapters 1–6 are extended dialogues. After brief intellectual autobiographies in Chapter 1, the following chapters focus on the colonial origins of national archaeologies (Chapter 2); archaeology in the crypto-colony (Chapter 3); archaeology as purification (Chapter 4), whitening Greece and Israel: nation, race, and archaeogenetics (Chapter 5); and decolonizing the imagination (Chapter 6). Hamilakis opens each discussion and sets the agenda.

The introduction to Chapter 2 reports that it addresses the origins of Greek and Israeli archaeology in the 19th century in the context of European colonialism, archaeology's connection with Hellenic and Zionist nationalisms, and the continuing influence of 'imperial structures' (p. 8) in 20th century national archaeologies. Hamilakis recounts the complicated series of interactions between non-Greek Europeans seeking to establish themselves as heirs to a western civilization founded in ancient Greece ('Western Hellenism,' p. 11), their consequent tendency to ignore the land's contemporary inhabitants ('monumentalization,' p. 15), and the inhabitants' efforts to construct their own, imagined Hellenic identity by constructing a narrative that linked them to the classical era via Byzantium and ancient Macedon, and the important role 'archaeologization' of country (p. 23) played in their efforts. By contrast, Greenberg notes that the experience of Palestine/Israel was very different and the impact of archaeology 'uneven and indirect' (p. 26). Archaeology was not central to the labour-based part of the Zionist project, partly because it was more interested in the future than the past —

although it glorified the Hasmonean state and the (failed) rebellions against Rome — and partly because extant monuments and ruins were not Jewish.

Chapter 3 focuses on ‘the role of archaeology in the constitution of Greece and Israel as contemporary crypto-colonized states’ (p. 42). Hamilakis cites Herzfeld’s definition of a crypto-colonised country as one that serves as buffer zone between already colonised and untamed lands, that acquires political independence only by means of great economic dependence, and that hides that dependence by means of an aggressively national culture. Hamilakis notes that Greek expansion into Macedonia and Thrace (1912–1913) and in Anatolia (1919–1922) was accompanied by archaeological excavations in order to demonstrate the Hellenic character of those areas. Hamilakis also discusses the privileged roles and influence of foreign schools in Greece and how they perpetuate conservative (Greek) nationalist narratives. Greenberg notes that Israel has superimposed colonialisms, including crypto-colonialism, and observes that the idea of Israel as a crypto-colonial country has gained little acceptance in the country despite its meeting Herzfeld’s definition. This is principally because Israel asserts its exceptionalism and masks its economic dependence on Germany as ‘reparations’ and on the US as due to ‘a shared ethos’ (p. 58). Yadin’s excavation of Masada in the 1960s began the internationalization of Israel’s archaeology, as compared to the post-1948 era of statehood, whose legacy is the increasing dependence of Israeli archaeology on foreign volunteers, largely evangelical Christians, who discover ‘Judaean-Christian foundations’ via work in excavations.

Chapter 4 considers purity and purification in archaeological and nationalist contexts. As Greenberg notes, anything on the (unexcavated) surface in Israel is Ottoman, Mamluk, Crusader, or Mamluk, while anything below the surface is ancient, potentially Jewish, and possibly evidence of a prior claim to the land. The excavations of the supposed ‘King’s Garden’ in the al-Bhustan neighbourhood of Silwan, which have removed Palestinian houses and gardens of long-standing, demonstrate how a 10th century BCE claim eclipses the 21st century CE reality of the current Palestinian inhabitants, who represent a foreign accretion to an originally Jewish site. A similar dynamic has played out in Greece, according to Hamilakis: modernist archaeology in Greece, which embodies Western Hellenism, clashed with pre-existing indigenous practices which incorporated antiquities into the matrix of ordinary life by displaying them in houses and centres of worship, and argued that they should be re-housed in museums, which have become sacred space for their veneration (no loud talking allowed!). The Acropolis has similarly been made-over to conform to a racialised, modern vision of whiteness by removing, for example, a mediaeval tower on the Propylaea, and cementing the plateau and adding a monumental staircase — thus purifying the site and removing barbarous accretions.

Chapter 5 aims to explore ‘the inherently racialised premises of colonial-national modernity and of imperial and national archaeologies’ (p. 109), to compare them with fluid modern ‘Greek’ and ‘Israeli’ identities, and ends with a scathing critique of ancient DNA studies. Hamilakis emphasises that (contemporary) Greece is an imagined territory mapped onto the south Balkan peninsula made real in part through the remains of classical archaeology. Greece’s whiteness and Europeaness, Hamilakis argues, stems from a nationalism defined in opposition to oriental backwardness and barbarity, which linked its whiteness — with the support of classicists and archaeologists — to the white marble remains of classical antiquity, including, for example, Bronze Age Cycladic figurines. Greenberg notes the conflicted self-identity of Israel, which views itself and as both European and ‘White’ (p. 110) and as Levantine/Middle Eastern — and thus partly indigenous. Greenberg argues that archaeology was used to demonstrate Jewish indigeneity both by selective citation of finds to show Jewish continuity in the land and that non-Jews were latecomers, and indirectly via archaeological praxis, which showed that modern Israeli archaeologists equalled or excelled the skills of local Palestinians. An alternative vision of Israelis as ‘Mediterraneans’ (p. 137) motivated an interest in marine archaeology and the excavation of coastal sites and harbours. Both Greenberg and Hamilakis criticise ancient DNA studies which assume the reality of sociobiological groups transmitting an essential ‘culture’ such as Minoans and Mycenaeans — conceptual inventions of the 19th C — and try to link them with contemporary population groups, themselves assumed to have a self-evident identity (e.g. ‘Ashkenazi Jews,’ p. 140; ‘Modern Greeks,’ p. 147). Rather than offer a ‘neutral’ approach to ethnic characterisation (p. 144), such studies embed a range of preconceptions and lend themselves to racialised interpretations.

Chapter 6 explores decolonizing one’s archaeological and social imagination, and reframing archaeology as ‘decolonizing action’ (p. 151). Hamilakis observes that this entails addressing colonialising ideas — including binaries such as subject/object, nature/culture, and past/present — as well as institutions and structures — including the national archaeological service, foreign archaeological schools and archaeological laws which tie objects to the Greek national narrative. As an alternative, Hamilakis proposes ‘archaeological ethnography,’ which would be ‘a shared space of multiple, transcultural encounters, involving things, beings, and humans of diverse background’ (p. 168). Examples could include involving local inhabitants near a site and valorising their local and affective embodied knowledge, and, more concretely, recognising a Muslim tombstone in discarded rubble on the Acropolis, perhaps fashioned from a classical fragment, as an example of multi-temporal fragments of a multi-temporal archaeology. Greenberg comments that a new definition of archaeology could focus on demonstrating how practitioners construct worlds out of memories in assemblages of things, places, and non-human actors from many times. As an instance of this, Greenberg reports on a project to

recognise the former Palestinian/Lebanese village of Qadas, depopulated in the 1948 war, as a space of memory by examining how the war transformed it, how it was abandoned, looted and made invisible, and how to reintroduce it to view. Such a project fulfils Greenberg's goal of finding a locus of archaeological passion which has a palpable effect on the community, colleagues, and oneself.

Chapter 7 reverts to traditional prose to justify the book's focus on Greece and Israel — states produced by the condition and premise of coloniality, and subsequently themselves colonisers — as two 'Holy Lands' whose ruins sustained the 'racialised, modernist colonial order' (p. 180). Hellenism and Judaism were both central to the modernist European project, with Hellenism linked to modern bourgeois morality, political consciousness, property, capital, and the rationale of citizenship; and Judaism helping conceptualise universal European modernity and providing it with a biblical ethos and *telos*, shared with Christianity. Greece and Israel were whitened at the same time as their glorious pasts were Europeanised and racialised. The material remains cared for and valorised by archaeology have revolutionary potential to unsettle chronometry, and challenge the linearity and teleology of progressivism.

The conversations in the book (held with an eye on a future readership) are interesting and introduce a range of important ideas to a reader unfamiliar with archaeological theory and history, or with colonialism. The format prevents each participant from exploring the issues in depth, but the references provide a guide for further reading. Hamilakis' *Nation and its Ruins* appears to lie behind his comments about the origins and goals of modern Hellenism which recur in nearly every chapter; an interested reader will go there for a full account. Greenberg often notes differences between Greece and Israel, while Hamilakis pushes back and emphasises the similarities, although not always addressing Greenberg's points of difference. Definitions of terms such as 'whiteness,' 'whitening,' and 'race' are absent and would have been helpful — although a few lines in Chapter 5 refer to Foucault's definition of race. The book would benefit from more detailed examples and analysis of 'colonised' archaeology, and a specific discussion of what it would mean to decolonise the archaeology of ancient remains that have already been excavated and how decolonised archaeology would approach an unexcavated site with ancient remains, especially given the importance of ancient remains for both Greece and Israel.

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Jens Kamlah and Achim Lichtenberger (eds.), *The Mediterranean Sea and the Southern Levant: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives from the Bronze Age to Medieval Times*, Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins 48. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2021. €58. Pp. vi + 366 + 118 B/W illustrations + 6 maps + 5 tables. ISBN 9783447117425.

The core of the volume consists of essays presented at a conference on ‘Palestine and the Mediterranean’ at Mainz on December 9–11, 2016, organised by the German Society for the Exploration of Palestine (DPV), supplemented by a few studies by special invitation. Braudel’s famous work (1949) that emphasised the distinctive unity of the Mediterranean was shattered a half century later by Hordern and Purcell’s *Corrupting Sea* (2000) that argued for a fragmented topography, with the area surrounding the sea broken up into heterogenous, complex and diverse micro-regions and environments. The major task is to expose the niches of connectivity by exchange and trade (as in Leidwanger 2020).

The volume is neatly divided into two parts, ‘Concepts’ and ‘Coastal Sites,’ with five essays in each section.

The first essay on ‘Concepts’ is by Joanna Töyräänvuori (‘Divine or Demonic? Mythological Aspects of the Mediterranean Sea in the World of the Old Testament,’ pp. 7–28) who interprets the Ugaritic mythological texts of the victory of the Storm God over the chaos of the Sea God as legitimizing the king of the city, the application of which to ancient Israel is rather opaque.

The second essay by Rachael Thyrsa Sparks (‘Historical Methods and Mishaps: Flinders Petrie’s Views on Interconnected *Tell el-‘Ağūl* and the ‘Middle Sea’.’ pp. 29–57) corrects Petrie’s misidentification of the site with Gaza (8 km to the north) and his efforts to identify painted wares from the site with a wide range of regions from Greece to Mesopotamia, which is now remedied by fabric analysis and the recent ceramic studies that indicate Cypriot wares were the primary imports and Mycenaean wares present in more minimal quantities, diminishing the wider Aegean connectivity of the site.

The third essay is by Jesse Michael Millek (‘Just What did they Destroy? The Sea Peoples and the End of the Late Bronze Age,’ pp. 59–98) offers an analysis of the Medinet Habu reliefs and Year 8 inscriptions of Ramses III to demonstrate that only Amurru is mentioned in the Levant; there is no mention of sites along the coastal areas of Lebanon and Canaan. Furthermore, it is argued that excavations indicate that none of the coastal sites in the southern Levant were destroyed at the time. Reference could perhaps be made here to the neo-Hittite texts that mention the ‘King Taita’ of the ‘land of Palistin’ at Tell Ta’yinat in the Plain of Antioch (Emanuel 2015).

The fourth essay by Gil Gambash (‘Continuity Beyond Change: Mediterranean Connectivity in the Ancient South Levant,’ pp. 99–120) shifts the focus from large

harbours and ports like Akko, Caesarea and Gaza to shallow nautical anchorages for small- and medium-sized ships that skirted the coasts. For example, he points out the substantial number of shipwrecks at Dor, where there are over a hundred sites in its vicinity.

The last essay under 'Concepts' is by Achim Lichtenberger ('Thoughts on Mediterranean Studies and the Study of the Graeco-Roman Holy Land,' 121–40), who rightly points out the neglect of the Levant by Braudel (1949) and Horden and Purcell (2000). He then illustrates the connections of the South Levant with the west by the number of Attic pottery imports in the Holy Land in the classical period and the marble imported from the Aegean during the early Roman imperial period. As for Braudel's *longue durée*, he observes that Gustav Dalman operated with a similar methodology in exploring Palestine even before the French scholar. But in contrast to earlier Mediterranean studies, he suggests the southern Levant was primarily influenced by Egypt and Mesopotamia, not the Graeco-Roman west. In my opinion, this vastly underestimates the impact of Hellenistic and Roman rule.

The second section on coastal sites consists of a series of case studies. Peter Fischer ('The Last Expedition at *Tell el-'Ağūl*, Gaza and the City's Final Destruction,' pp. 141–84) summarises the 1999 and 2000 Palestinian-Austrian excavations at *Tell el-'Ağūl*, 8 km southwest of Gaza, forming an important companion to Petrie's excavations at the site in the 1930s. The additional scarabs found add to Petrie's abundant corpus, the largest in Palestine, and lend to the identification of the site with the Hyksos stronghold of Sharuhen. The ceramic analysis concludes that the 'vast majority of imported material is of Cypriote provenance,' with scattered representation from the rest of the Levant, Egypt and Mycenae (p. 177). Neutron activation analysis indicates that 56% of pumice found at the site came from the Thera eruption in Middle Bronze II. The site flourished in the Middle Bronze Age until its eclipse in the Late Bronze Age, coterminous with the Egyptian 18th Dynasty.

Jean-Baptiste Humbert ('À Gaza, une archéologie abandonnée [1994–2012],', pp. 185–244) provides a summary of the recent French-Palestinian Project at Gaza, a site neglected since 1967. Three areas were selected for excavation: the area adjacent to the refugee camps near the seashore; Khan Yunis further south; and the southern border. Humbert highlights a medley of finds ranging from the Iron Age to the Byzantine period: magazines for the storage of goods at a settlement of the classical period with Greek pottery; a Hellenistic maritime village with Rhodian amphora and a reused Hellenistic inscription; a possible Herodian wall, Nabatean painted pottery of c. 20 BCE; a sanctuary with mosaics and funerary chambers, a basilica, and monasteries. Not mentioned is the large hoard discovered in 2012 and 2017 at Gaza of an estimated 8000 Alexander decadrachms and tetradrachms, scattered over the sand and seashore (Thévenin and Bauzou 2019).

The essay by Joseph Patrich ('Caesarea on the Sea: Herod's Mediterranean Metropolis,' pp. 245–68) offers a survey of Caesarea Maritima, focusing on the port city as a product of 'Herod's Building Project.' The brief synopsis includes municipal administration, the theatre and Tiberium, Herod's palace and the *praetorium* of the Roman governors, the hippo-stadium, the Temple of Augustus and Roma, the harbour, the city walls and towers, the aqueduct and necropolis. This unconventional sequence of subjects is followed by a short bibliography. No reference is made to the impressive final report on the construction of the harbour (Brandon *et al.* [eds.] 2014) or Alföldy's re-interpretation of the *Tiberium* inscription (2001) now generally accepted (CIP II, no. 1277).

The final two essays emphasise the resilience of the local population. Antonio dell'Acqua ('Roman Ascalon between Land and Sea: A Brief Overview through Literary Sources and Archaeological Evidences,' pp. 269–336) lists first the modern visitors to the site and then the architectural remains including the Severan basilica and the theatre and odeon. The remains of the sculpture of the Graeco-Roman pantheon are then discussed. It appears Ascalon remained a pagan city until the end of the 4th century. Absent in the discussion is the evidence that its famous wine trade may even have originated prior to late antiquity (Eck and Zissu 2001), attesting its connectivity with sea trade.

The last essay is a report by a German collaborative project composed by A. Zeischka-Kenzler, H. Yohanan, H. Kenzler, T. Harpak, E. Yehuda, B. Schlolkmann and O. Tal ('The Crusader Fortress at Arsur by the Sea: A German-Israeli Collaborative Project (2012–2016),' pp. 337–60). The investigation is of the crusader fortress at Apollonia-Arsur, 17 km north of Tel Aviv. After five seasons investigating three areas of the town and fortress at Arsur, it appears the Early Islamic buildings of the town remained intact with little if any alteration, leaving the European castle isolated. The editors' suggestion that the project is 'a remarkable example of the colonizers adapted to the colonized' (p. 5) may be too far-reaching.

The volume ends with a helpful index of persons and places. The essays bristle with important information and interpretations. The relations with the Greek and Roman world could have received more emphasis, especially with the current interest in connectivity of harbours and ports with the wider Mediterranean. There are also unfortunately signs that the volume was assembled somewhat in haste. The numerous illustrations lack an index, and only a few of the essays contain abstracts. Cross-references to other related essays in the volume are occasionally lacking, especially to Humbert's Gaza report. Nevertheless, the collection represents an important contribution to integrating the southern Levant into current Mediterranean Studies.

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Ted Kaizer (ed.), *A Companion to the Hellenistic and Roman Near East*. Blackwell Companion to the Ancient World. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2022. Pp. xxvi + 530 + 99 illustrations + 6 maps. £159. ISBN 9781444330826.

In this ambitious volume, the editor Ted Kaizer has brought together 37 contributions from acknowledged authorities in their respective fields to critically review different facets of the Hellenistic and Roman Near East. To provide a foretaste of this publication, I shall briefly run through the section headings. In his introduction, Ted Kaizer points out that, with the increasing attention devoted to it by scholars, the Near East can no longer be considered a mere 'appendix' to the classical world. The introductory section is followed by Part I, 'Sources,' which assesses the documentary legacy, encompassing the corpus of classical and scribal texts, inscriptions, artistic expressions in different media, architectural remains, and numismatics, but surprisingly not pottery, glass and other crafts. Part II, 'Regions, Places and Peoples,' provides surveys of regions close to the Mediterranean littoral which enjoyed close and continuous contact with Greece and Rome as well as those further afield where vernacular culture tended to remain more entrenched, such as Nabataea, the Euphrates basin and intervening desert. Part III, 'Themes' concludes this publication with a miscellany of essays on diverse topics. These examine the Roman armies in the Near East (Oliver Stoll), roads and harbours (Benjamin Isaac), trade (Michael Gawlikowski), local and regional economics

(Kurt Ruffing), and indigenous law (John Healey). Three of these essays deal with aspects of religious practice in the region, largely skewed to the period of Roman domination (Lidewijde de Jong, Alison Ewins, Eric Ewins, Eris Williams Reed and Lucas van Rompoy). In addition, Andreas Kropp furnishes what is to all intents a brief summary of his earlier publications on the eastern client states of Rome. Michael Macdonald offers here a short piece on the Arab peoples of the Near and Middle East, which might have been more suitably integrated with his contribution in Part II on 'The Desert and its Peoples.'

Contributions that stand out as especially interesting and insightful, in my opinion, are Maurice Sartre's fresh and insightful historical overview of the Near East, and Robert Hayward's review of Jewish sources, especially his balanced assessment of the value of rabbinic literature as historical evidence. Kevin Butcher considers the importance of coins as a historical and archaeological resource, with several well-chosen illustrations. The chapter on Air Photography by David Kennedy includes a rather fascinating account of some of the exciting discoveries that have been revealed from the sky and the prospects offered by this powerful surveying tool. Apostolos Bousdroukis has contributed an erudite review of the Graeco-Roman cities of northern Syria, including the Seleucid capital and Roman metropolis of Antioch. This author points out that 'scholars and intellectuals from southern Syria far outnumber those from the north' (p. 212), and concomitantly we know more about the southern Levant than the northern Levant. The lesser attention paid by modern scholars and archaeologists to the north of Syria has served to perpetuate this imbalance. In his chapter on the Nabataeans, David Graf clarifies the dynastic succession in Nabataea, over which there has been some confusion in the past. He briefly considers the relationship between the client states of Judaea and Nabataea, a topic that he has developed more substantially in an article published in *Strata* 40.

Each chapter or essay includes a concluding section entitled 'Further Reading,' as a useful steer. In addition, this volume contains an impressive bibliography of more than 1600 selected references, which fills 60 full pages. There are also short biographies of the contributors, provided mainly for the non-experts in the respective areas of scholarship, for whom this Wiley Blackwell Companion Series is primarily intended.

One of the most obvious deficiencies in this collection of review articles is the almost consistent under-representation of material evidence from the Hellenistic period, which accounts for roughly the first half the chronological span that is mostly treated by the respective authors, namely *c.* 350 BCE to *c.* 400 CE. This situation, though, hardly applies to coins and pottery. Referring to buildings, in her article Rubina Raja points out that a significant assortment of architectural remains from the Hellenistic period have come to light, but much of this has not yet been published (pp. 127–28), which reminds us that a book such as this can only hope

to provide a snapshot of what has been published to date and the picture is likely to continue to evolve with new archaeological discoveries being made, evaluated and published. I fear that this somewhat hopeful dynamic risks being undermined by the extensive looting and destruction of sites that is, if anything, accelerating at an alarming rate throughout the Near East, largely due to political instability and conflict, exemplified by the campaign of destruction wrought on Palmyra in recent times.

Despite the omission of some important topics, such as those mentioned earlier, which I suppose is inevitable in a single volume anthology, this publication accomplishes the purpose of this series, in this case providing a gateway to researchers seeking critically reviewed up-to-date information about different aspects of the ancient world in a nutshell, backed by an authoritative bibliography. Without doubt, this publication offers a wealth of knowledge on the Hellenistic and Roman Near East in a convenient format.

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Haim Gitler, Catharine Lorber and Jean-Philippe Fontanille, *The Yehud Coinage: A Study and Die Classification of the Provincial Silver Coinage of Judah*. Numismatic Studies and Researches 12. Jerusalem: Israel Numismatic Society, 2023. Pp. xi + 533 + numerous illustrations and tables. £118.28. ISBN 9789655982299.

This publication is a comprehensive monograph on the provincial silver coinage of Judah in the late Persian and Early Hellenistic periods. The corpus addressed is called the Yehud coinage because most of them bear that name in Aramaic or palaeo-Hebrew letters, referring to the district (*medina*) of Judah, where they were produced or associated with, which constituted an administrative subdivision of the Persian satrapy of ‘Abar Naharā (‘across the river [Euphrates]’) of the Persian Empire. These coins are miniscule. Most are 8 mm or less in diameter and weigh just 0.2 to 0.5 g. They are easily overlooked in archaeological excavations, which helps to explain why most of them have only been identified and given a proper synthesis relatively recently. The first comprehensive classification was undertaken and posted online in 2002 by Jean-Philippe Fontanille as part of the Menorah Coin Project that he initiated (www.menorahcoinproject.com).

A unique Yehud coin specimen that is believed to be one of the largest and oldest in the corpus, being attributed to around 400 BCE, entered the collection of the British Museum sometime before 1814, when it first appears in an early catalogue. In 1877, a Dutch scholar, J. P. Six, read the Aramaic inscription on the

reverse as YHWH, the ineffable name of God. That created a stir which has still not completely abated, because that inscription accompanies an image of a deity seated on a winged wheel (representing a chariot). In partial mitigation, it has been established to the satisfaction of most scholars, that this quarter-sheqel along with another recently discovered example displaying a facing female head resembling that of the Egyptian goddess Hathor, were minted in Philistia for a commission from Judah.

This magisterial study is a mine of valuable information. The historical background to this early coinage of Judah is succinctly reviewed, with appropriate references provided for further reading. Non-specialists may be surprised to learn that the period of Achaemenid-Persian rule in the Near East was disturbed by considerable political upheaval and intrigue, against the background of a resurgent Egypt.

The next chapter is on 'Methodology and Classification.' It is pointed out that this study is based on the examination of a sample of 1960 coins held in the Israel Museum, private collections and from a single excavation, that of Khirbet Qeiyafa. The 44 coin types are separated into three chronological groups, Persian (17 types), Macedonian (15 types) and Ptolemaic (12 types). From a careful metrological analysis, the authors have determined that these small coins belong to weight systems that change several times through their century or so span of issues. The first one used was the Phoenician/Philistian sheqel of 14.3 g, the Judahite sheqel of c. 10 g and its 1/24-th fractional, the *gerah*, the Attic drachm of 4.2 g and, finally, the lighter Ptolemaic drachm 3.6 g, both with their 1/6-th fractional, the *obol*. The reasons for some of the seemingly abrupt changes in the units employed for the Yehud coinage are not entirely clear. The chronological sequence of these coins has been ingeniously deduced from an examination of iconographic associations in conjunction with die links. Coin hoards have also helped to determine their relative chronology and a special chapter deals with them.

A substantial chapter is devoted to the iconography of these coins. It is an eye-opener into the cultural and artistic influences that were manifested in Judah during the early Second Temple period. Conspicuously, the Yehud coins all bear images of human or animal subjects. Regarding religious content represented, there is the evocation of the Judahite deity by a Philistian hand mentioned earlier (coin type 1). Of course, we do not know whether that representation was endorsed or not by the client in Judah — the unique specimen was said to have turned up in Gaza. Four of the other images on Yehud coins from the late Persian period have been interpreted as bearing on religion. One of these is a striated ram's horn (coin type 12) which the authors associate with the *shofar* blown to appeal to the deity in the Temple ritual. Another of the coin types (no. 13), which is unique in the repertoire of ancient coins depicts a human ear, symbolising God's attentiveness to the invocations of worshippers. The third coin type depicts a stylised lily, that has

been connected to the Jewish high priesthood. A fourth coin image said to convey a religious theme is one of a bird, believed to be a dove that is shown perched on an object which may conceivably be a sacrificial basin. It is known from the Bible and other ancient Jewish sources that the dove was the preferred sacrificial animal in the Jerusalem Temple. However, ambiguities attach to these images. First and foremost, none of them explicitly refer to a monotheistic cult. We cannot be sure that the blowing of a ram's horn did not form part of religious rituals in polytheistic communities in the Levant. As for the ear, the authors demonstrate that it symbolised divine attentiveness in ancient Egyptian religion. In addition, it is anthropomorphic, thereby blatantly violating the biblical proscription of graven images. Of course, the bird, like the other animate subjects on the Yehud coins, contravenes Mosaic Law regarding images. In terms of ambiguity, it is known that doves played an important role in the cult of Aphrodite, especially at Ascalon.

As the authors compellingly demonstrate through their comparative iconographic analysis, Judaea was open to the cross-cultural influences that percolated into the southern Levant from Greece, Anatolia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Persia. In this respect, Judah was hardly different from its neighbouring regions, Philistia and Samaria, whose coin images reflect a similar range of influences that encompass religious imagery, albeit involving a larger repertoire of motifs in both cases.

André Lemaire contributes a chapter to this volume on palaeography of the Yehud coinage. An allied chapter to the previous two follows, detailing the artistic and technical qualities of the coins and the dies that produced them. Included in this section is consideration of the effects of coin striking and progressive die wear. The organisation and operations of the Yehud mint, and its likely location, are examined in a separate chapter.

A chapter on 'The Archaeological Provenances and the Circulation of the Yehud Coins' reports on the finding that the coins of Yehud, like those of Samaria, are rarely found outside their respective territories. For Judah, these limits are Bethel in the north, 'Azeqa in the west, Beth Zur in the south, and the environs of Jericho in the east. In comparison, Philistian coins circulated much more widely, covering both the areas of Judah and Samaria. Not surprisingly, the most monetised part of Judah was the area nearest the Philistian coast, followed by the district of Jerusalem. Yoav Farhi, who found 28 Yehud coins at Khirbet Qeiyafa, 'Azeqa, Ramat Raḥel and elsewhere with the aid of a metal detector, provides a tailpiece in which he argues for metal detection forming an integral part of excavation programmes.

The distinguished French Numismatics scholar, François de Callataÿ, is the author of an essay describing a statistical analysis based on the known number of coin dies which he used to determine the total number of Yehud coins minted. He arrived at a figure of 3 million coins, assuming an average productivity of 10,000 coins per obverse coin die as an upper limit of the entire output. Half that number is likely to be more realistic. Bearing in mind that the average weight of 92% of

this output, consisting of gerahs, half-gerahs, hemiobols and quarter obols, is just 0.31 g, the total monetary value is not at all large. Based on a production total of 1.5 million total of these coins, the authors of this volume point out this figure is equivalent to 125,000 Attic drachms, or about half a tonne of silver, spread over a period of a century or more. They point out that it would correspond to just two months' worth of monetised silver generated by the average Seleucid king!

These data prompt several intriguing questions, in particular the purpose of the Yehud coinage. It could not possibly have represented the pay of even the lower echelons of the Judahite administration, who might be expected to earn around an obol a day, as attested by papyrus records. At that rate, I have estimated that the entire Judahite coin output could not have supported more than two employees in total over its duration! The proposal that a unit of Yehud currency represented the basic day wage is counterintuitive to the frequent change in weight standard of that coinage and hence its monetary value. Nevertheless, this purpose is assumed and reiterated in the concluding chapter, albeit tentatively. Along with the unsolved mystery of the main function of the Yehud coinage, the highly unusual phenomenon of generally only one denomination being struck at any one time awaits a convincing explanation.

The concluding sections of the book consist of connection tables between the coin types and their various dies, which is a particular forté of Fontanille, and a definitive catalogue of the 44 Yehud coin types. There are also a couple of appendices. One of these reports the non-destructive metallurgical analysis of two of the early quarter-sheqels in the Israel Museum collection and the other a list of the sources of the coin specimens covered in the current study: these exclusively refer to commercial sales and communications from private collectors, but, sadly, do not include find provenance. Finally, there are the ample bibliography and indexes.

All the authors of this new monograph are to be congratulated for producing a work of high standard and utmost importance for all those engaged in biblical studies and interested in the history, culture, and economy of the ancient Near East, as well as for numismatists. Without doubt, it should be an essential addition for any library covering these fields. The technical quality of this large format publication is outstanding, too, in terms of the paper used, the typeface, layout and illustrations. All in all, it represents a major publication achievement.

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Shahal Abbo and Avi Gopher, *Plant Domestication and the Origins of Agriculture in the Ancient Near East*. With a contribution by Gila Kahila Bar-Gal and translated by Halo (Hilla) Ben Asher. Forward by Simcha Lev-Yadum and Paul Gepts.

Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2022. Pp. 270 + 61 illustrations + 10 tables. £75. ISBN 978-69364-2.

‘Don’t you know / Talking about a revolution? / It sounds like a whisper’ (Chapman 1988).

When released, the politically aware ‘Whisper’ by Tracy Chapman made quite a noise in the music charts. ‘Talking ‘bout a revolution’ is still making noise, having become a popular soundtrack to various social revolutions and political campaigns. The ‘revolution’ discussed in the book by Shahal Abbo and Avi Gopher, originally written in Hebrew and now translated into English, is that of the quiet and cyclical growth of plants. This revolution, however, has been more significant and ‘noisy’ to those living on Earth than any other occurrence since humanoids first started to roam the land.

Cambridge University Press has brought to the English-reading audience one of the most important works published in recent years on the agricultural/Neolithic revolution. Though the book could also easily be presented as a textbook (with the addition of proper references), Abbo (an agronomist and plant geneticist at The Hebrew University) and Gopher (an archaeologist at Tel Aviv University) aim it at ‘... a wider intellectual readership of knowledge-seekers’ (p. 4), and rightly so. Indeed, the two authors offer a holistic and intellectual approach to the domestication of plants from a broader perspective. The agricultural revolution involved the singling out of products 10,500 years ago; and these products have, since then, become a significant part of the diet of both humans and livestock. As the two authors point out, this revolution has influenced much more than our dietary habits, in having led to changes in nature, landscapes, our self-perception and views as humans, and our social structure, all of which have brought us to our present human state and to the current digital revolution.

The English publication is a revised and extended version of the book previously published in Hebrew by ‘Resling’ in 2016 as part of the publication house’s ‘History series.’ The most significant addition to this version is the new chapter, written by Gila Kahila Bar-Gal, on Animal Domestication in the Near East (pp. 199–228), an important input to the overall holistic approach taken in the book. Before jumping to the concluding chapters, however, it should be pointed out that the writers are seeking to communicate such complex matters as plant genetics on the one hand and Neolithic material culture on the other, in a fluent, accessible, yet professional language. The book’s translation into English by H. Ben Asher has successfully retained the user-friendly yet serious tone of the work. The fact that it was written by an archaeologist and an agronomist can be felt throughout the book, as the two communicate their expertise in a way that provides the readers with the feeling that they are receiving a professional and well-synchronised overview of both disciplines. Those readers who might be interested in obtaining greater

detail regarding specific aspects or in having a general summary of the specific archaeological sites mentioned, will find these in the 21 ‘boxes’ accompanying the writing. The glossary on basic concepts in genetics, botany, ecology, agronomy, and zoology is also helpful (pp. 254–64).

The book opens with an essential introduction that lays out before the reader the subject of plant domestication and the agricultural revolution, as well as the main questions to be addressed in this work, related to the location and the time in which the domestication of plants took place, how this happened, and why. Chapter 1 reviews the time frame of plant domestication and the agricultural revolution in the Near East through the long continuum of revolutions that had led to it. Chapter 2 is dedicated to the material culture of the Fertile Crescent through a short historical review of the different cultures found in this region from the Epipaleolithic (ca. 23,000–12,000 BP) to the Neolithic period (ca. 11,800/11,700–6500 BP), during which plant domestication took place, and the hunter-gatherer economy developed into a ‘farming economy.’ This summary of the periods involved is both clear and comprehensive and will indeed be helpful to those unfamiliar with the periods and their cultures. Chapter 3 deals with different research models that explain the agricultural revolution. As a landscape archaeologist myself, Chapter 4 held particular interest for me. In it the writers describe the environmental arena in which plant domestication took place. The next three chapters (5–7) are dedicated to the differences between wild and domesticated plants, between traditional and modern agriculture, and to how traditional and modern agriculture have influenced crop evolution.

The remaining chapters address issues such as the difference between cereal and legume crops in the Near East, and the choice of particular plant species for domestication following agronomic and dietary considerations. Chapter 10 discusses the three most important questions that lie at the foundation of this work: where, when, and how did Near Eastern plant domestication occur? While the authors seriously address the first two questions, the question of ‘how,’ at least as far as I see it, has been left unsolved. My following cynicism derives from the fact that I have not yet met the researcher who has been able to demonstrate convincingly how plant domestication happened; and the way(s) in which humans were involved in the selection of seeds that led to these seeds’ morphological changes. Nor has anyone yet indicated the tools that might have enabled them to do so, assuming that 10,500 years ago in the Levant, people probably didn’t examine every single seed to see if it featured the minor morphological characteristics that would eventually lead to its genetic alteration.

The key to answering the ‘how’ question probably lies in broadening future approaches to involve specialists from other archaeological disciplines, starting with landscape archaeology and experimental archaeology. Chapter 11 widens the perspective of the book to include the domestication of fruit trees or, in other

words, to the origin of horticulture. Chapters 12 and 13 discuss plant evolution under domestication, and global views of plant domestication. Chapter 14, as noted above, is a highly significant addition to the English version of this publication and, unfortunately, the only one that is accompanied with proper academic references. The lack of such references in the other chapters constitutes the only real, but significant, problem that I find in this work, in departing from the excellent approach taken in other leading academic publications by Cambridge University Press. It is to be hoped that this will be corrected in future editions of this book, which would make it a true asset in elucidating one of the most important steps in plant evolution and in the human cultural evolution.

Rafael Y. Lewis
University of Haifa

Lecture Summaries 2023

The Society hosted 14 lectures between January and December 2023, including a lecture tour of selected UK universities in honour of our Diamond Jubilee. The majority of lectures were held online, with recordings available for viewing on the AIAS YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@Anglo-Israel>).

THE ORIGINS OF JUDAISM: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL- HISTORICAL REAPPRAISAL YONATAN ADLER

In this lecture, Yonathan Adler explored how ancient texts can be used alongside archaeological discoveries to reveal the earliest evidence of Torah observance among ordinary Judaeans. He demonstrated how animal bones, purification pools, chalk vessels and figural representations provide clues to the lived experience of these earliest observers. This presentation was framed around his recent book, *The Origins of Judaism: An Archaeological-Historical Reappraisal* (Yale University Press 2022).

FORTY YEARS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK ON MOUNT ZION IN JERUSALEM — INSIGHTS AND REFLECTIONS SHIMON GIBSON

This presentation explored the fascinating history of excavations at Jerusalem and Mount Zion, from the work of 19th-century pioneers such as Wilson, Warren, Vincent and others, through to the more scientific approach taken by Kathleen Kenyon and Doug Tushingham in the 1960s, Magen Broshi in the 1970s, all the way up to the present-day project, directed by the speaker.

Different theories regarding the extent of Iron Age Jerusalem were explored, and it was shown how understanding of the site and its fortifications has evolved over the course of the 20th century, as each piece of new evidence has come to light.

This flying history of archaeology through the lens of a single site concluded with a special preview of the key research questions for the coming Mount Zion field season.

HERODIAN JERUSALEM IN LIGHT OF NEW FINDS FROM THE WESTERN WALL TUNNELS

SHLOMIT WEKSLER-BDOLAH

In this lecture, AIAS members were treated to an account of recent discoveries made in tunnels at the foot of the Herodian Temple Mount in Jerusalem. We learned about the intensive construction undertaken in this area during the late Second Temple period (1st century BCE–1st century CE), and how archaeological finds support historic accounts of the civic nature of this part of the city.

These major construction works were designed to shape the urban topography of ancient Jerusalem — draining the area, and adorning it with impressive buildings. This raises the question: who was behind this work? City leaders? Or perhaps even the king?

THE JEWISH CHARACTER OF JERUSALEM OF THE EARLY ROMAN (SECOND TEMPLE) PERIOD AS ATTESTED BY THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

RONNY REICH

Jerusalem of the late Second Temple period was the ‘Temple City.’ The Jewish faith permitted the existence of a single temple, which led to the

development of pilgrimages to the people’s single place of worship as a phenomenon which characterised the city.

Prof. Reich’s lecture explored the many archaeological remains which characterise the peculiar nature of the Jewish temple-city, with highlights including:

- The extreme abundance of *miqwa’ot* (ritual baths).
- The existence of large open water pools, fed by aqueducts, to supply water to pilgrims.
- The total lack of pork bones in the contemporary waste found in private houses, public areas and the city-dump.
- The drastic decline in the import of wine in Rhodian amphorae from the Aegean region.
- The peculiar spatial distribution in the city of cooking pots (the most abundant type of vessel found), including the concentrations of used pots abandoned intact at the city’s perimeter.
- The abundance of stone (chalk) vessels.
- The peculiar burial practices *liqut* and *pinui* (clearing of burials for city development).

Most of these features clearly relate to the Jewish religious rules (*halakha*) and are absent from non-Jewish settlements in the country.

JESUS IN GALILEE: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

ERIC M. MEYERS

Recent archaeological discoveries in Galilee have shown that the region was overwhelmingly Jewish in the time of Jesus, with only a handful of sites that may be identified as gentile or non-Jewish. In addition, the identification of early synagogues from this period has allowed us to better understand the many references in Josephus and the New Testament to purpose-built centres, such as Magdala.

In this lecture, Prof. Meyers presented evidence to suggest that Jews at most these early Roman sites were practicing purity laws based on the Torah. He then went on to draw a more nuanced and accurate picture of Jewish Galilee in the most recent quest for the historical Jesus.

FROM HERE TO ETERNITY: FACT AND FICTION IN THE EMPRESS HELENA'S TRAVELS TO THE HOLY LAND

JULIA HILLNER

Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, is perhaps best known today as a venerated saint and the alleged discoverer of the 'True Cross.' The aim of this lecture was to go beyond the legend to learn more about the historical Helena. It retraced her famous journey through through the Eastern provinces of the Roman

empire — culminating in her visit to biblical sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and elsewhere.

Prof. Hillner compared the two extant sources for Helena's presence in the East — the work of Eusebius of Caesarea, and Athanasius of Alexandria, and showed how their accounts give us contrasting views of the travelling empress.

Helena's trip to Jerusalem, a relative backwater at the time, is thought to have been because Constantine was building a church there, now known as the Holy Sepulchre. The question of whether Helena could have herself discovered relics of The True Cross is explored, and arguments presented against this. The lecturer concluded that, while Helena may not have been a pilgrim herself, she can still considered the originator of the practice of Christian pilgrimage to Palaestina.

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF JESUS' NAZARETH

KEN DARK

Prof. Ken Dark shared with the Society some of the material presented in his latest book on the archaeology of this most iconic of sites, Nazareth. Rather surprisingly, it turns out that Nazareth was rarely mentioned in written sources until the Crusader period. However, recent archaeological research has helped bridge the gap, by building up a picture of the appearance, culture and

economy of Roman-period Nazareth — the Jewish village that provided the physical context for the childhood of Jesus of Nazareth. Cut by a wadi, which provided a seasonal river, the settlement was supplied with water by several springs, the most productive and famous of which was St Mary's Well.

Prof. Dark's work has involved new survey and artefact-based research, and re-investigating previous excavations and surveys of Nazareth that revealed Roman period features such as rock-cut refuge tunnels beneath the Church of the Annunciation site, installations for agricultural processing, as well as early structures discovered at the Sisters of Nazareth site.

He also conducted a new field-walking survey of the valley between Nazareth and Sepphoris, discovering a series of small contemporary farms and settlements. The material culture of the sites closest to Nazareth appear to consist of material produced and used in Jewish contexts, lacking the multiculturalism of normal provincial Roman assemblages. The explanation does not seem to be one of a wealth differential between Nazareth and Sepphoris, but a question of their degree of integration with Roman provincial culture. This may reflect an active policy of resistance to Roman influence by the community at Nazareth.

THE BEGINNINGS OF JUDAEAN COINAGE

DAVID JACOBSON

This lecture provided a fascinating insight into Judaeen coinage, which Prof. Jacobson presented as having two separate 'beginnings.' The first occurred when the earliest Judaeen coins were minted in the late 5th century, towards the end of Achaemenid Persian rule in the Levant. This run of production was brought to an end in the mid 3rd century BCE. There was then a fresh start under Hasmonaeen rule, with the patronage of Antiochus VII Euergetes (Sidetes), with production lasting till the overthrow of Antigonus Mattathias by Herod the Great in 37 BCE.

Issues from these two periods of coin production display marked differences in character, which Prof. Jacobson tied to their different sources of inspiration and the historical contexts in which they were produced.

THE SCHOOLING OF A SCRIBE IN ANCIENT ISRAEL

CHRISTOPHER ROLLSTON

In our last lecture of the year, Professor Rollston examined the literary and epigraphic evidence for scribal education in the First Temple period. He challenged the perception that the Hebrew alphabet could have been quickly mastered in antiquity, noting that literacy was a much valued,

specialist skill that was practised by elites.

The scribes of ancient Israel wrote with sophistication in a neat script that used a consistent orthography. They were well-versed in legal and epistolary formulae, and had mastered the use of hieratic numerals. The cumulative evidence suggests that they received a standardised, formal education.

THE ODED LIPSCHITS LECTURE TOUR

In 2023, Prof. Oded Lipschits was invited to the UK to give a series of special lectures in honour of the AIAS Diamond Jubilee. These were delivered in February and March 2023 at a range of venues around the country in London, St Andrews, Oxford and Southampton.

Director of the Sonia and Marco Nadler Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University, Prof. Lipschits directed the Ramat Rahel Archaeological Project from 2004–2010, and is currently co-director of the Lautenschläger Excavations at Azekah and excavations in the temple of Tel Moza. He was awarded the prestigious EMET Prize for the field of Archaeology in 2022. We were delighted to have him share the results and wider implications of these

ground-breaking projects with the Society and its members.

This tour was supported by a generous legacy from the late Dr. Mike Sommers, former AIAS Vice President and Committee Member, who is very much missed by us all.

THE SOUND OF SILENCE: ABOUT PALACES, ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRES AND TEMPLES NEAR JERUSALEM COMPLETELY IGNORED BY THE BIBLICAL TEXT

In a generously illustrated lecture, Prof. Lipschits introduced us to some of the rich archaeological discoveries that have been made around Jerusalem in recent years — a magnificent palace, temple, and villa overlooking Jerusalem from the south, dated to the end of the First Temple period (late 8th–early 6th century BCE).

Despite their opulence and evident importance to the politics, economy and administration of Judah, these structures were omitted from biblical descriptions of this period. Prof. Lipschits explored the reasons why.

This lecture was co-hosted by the UCL Institute of Archaeology and held in-person at UCL.

ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE LAND OF THE BIBLE: NEW METHODS AND NEW DISCOVERIES THAT CHANGED OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLICAL PERIOD

Archaeology is a powerful research tool for uncovering the secrets of the past in general, and those of the biblical period in particular. New methods that have developed in the last ten years enable a wealth of new information and insights that were not known before about the world where the biblical descriptions were written, about the people who wrote these descriptions, and about the people who read them.

In this lecture, Prof. Lipschits presented some of these methods, alongside new and exciting discoveries from recent years that have changed the way we understand the biblical period.

This lecture was co-hosted by the University of St Andrews.

JUDAH UNDER THE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE: NEW INSIGHTS FROM ARCHAEOLOGY

The Assyrian Empire's takeover of the Levant and Judah's transformation into a vassal kingdom in the later 8th century BCE were the most defining and important events in its history. This had major consequences for the administration of its economy, impacting all areas of life.

In this lecture Prof. Lipschits explored the characteristics of these changes in the material culture of Judah. He argued that these went on to become the hallmark of its archaeology under the rule of Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and the Ptolemaic and Seleucid kingdoms — until the establishment of the Hasmonean kingdom in the second half of the 2nd century BCE.

This period was doubly important, as it also bore witness to the editing and writing of much of the Old Testament, the shaping of Second Temple Judaism, and the foundations for the religion and cult that characterises Judaism in later generations. So it was fascinating to learn more about the contribution made by archaeology to our understanding of the development of Judah at this time.

This lecture was jointly hosted by the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Kings College London.

NEW LIGHT ON JERUSALEM AND ITS SURROUNDINGS DURING THE REIGN OF KING MANASSEH

In this presentation, we learned how discoveries from excavations in and around Jerusalem have shed new light on the reign of King Manasseh, the longest-ruling king of Judah.

At this time there was unprecedented prosperity both in, and around Jerusalem — and yet none of

this is reflected in the Book of Kings. Indeed, there we see King Manasseh being defined as the greatest sinner of all Judah's kings, who caused the destruction of Jerusalem.

The mismatch between the archaeological and biblical records was discussed in some depth, concluding that the political realities on the ground were ignored by the biblical authors and editors to aid presentation of their own, theologically-driven agendas.

This lecture was co-hosted by the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies.

A NEW IRON AGE TEMPLE DISCOVERED NEAR JERUSALEM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CULT AND RELIGION IN JUDAH

In his final public lecture of the tour, Prof. Lipschits turned to the site of

Tel Moza, where roadworks led to the discovery of a Judaeon Temple only 7 km from Jerusalem.

Initially excavated by a team from the Israel Antiquities Authority, the current project, directed by Prof. Lipschits and Shua Kisilevitz, began in 2019, and is still ongoing.

We heard how an industrial zone, initially used to house numerous domed granaries, developed into an important cultic area — with a small temple constructed in the early 10th century, replaced by a more impressive structure some 100 years later, which was in use until Persian times.

This was clearly an important site, and yet many questions remain unanswered. Who was the deity worshipped? What was the relationship of the temple to cult in Jerusalem? And why do we hear nothing of the Moza temple in biblical texts about this period?

This lecture was co-hosted by the University of Southampton.

GRANT REPORTS 2023

Introduction

In 2022 the Society inaugurated an initiative to raise funds for a series of special grants in honour of our Diamond Jubilee. While the jubilee itself occurred in 2021, the rigours of a national lockdown and reduced excavation opportunities caused by the covid pandemic meant that our Jubilee Appeal was delayed until such a time as we could provide suitable field placements for our grant recipients.

In 2023, the opportunity arose to develop a collaboration with The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition, directed by Prof. Oded Lipschits of Tel Aviv University, Prof. Manfred Oeming of Heidelberg University, and Dr. Sabine Kleiman of Tübingen University. Thanks to generous donations from our supporters, we were able to offer substantial grants to cover the costs of travel, accommodation and field training. Grants were awarded to five students in total; their reports are presented below.

BOUDICCA BELL

Independent Researcher

I graduated from the M.A. Archaeology programme at the UCL Institute of Archaeology in 2021, having completed a Masters dissertation exploring the sensory aspects of cult practices in Middle Bronze Age temple precincts. Thanks to the generous support of a special AIAS grant and Prof. Oded Lipschits I was able to excavate at Tel Azekah for a fifth season in 2023 (**Figure 1**). Having worked at this fascinating site since 2016, I feel a deep connection to it, and was eager to return and further develop my field skills. For the latest season I served as Assistant Supervisor in Area S1, which I had first excavated as a volunteer in 2018. This was my second year in this role, and I was excited to have the chance to build on my previous experience under tutorship of the incredible dig staff. It was exciting to return to S1 after an absence of four years and see what fascinating finds had been excavated during that time.

Tel Azekah is in the Shephelah valley and has a rich history stretching from the Byzantine period to the Early Bronze Age. The settlement was resettled after multiple destructions throughout its 3500 years of occupation. In previous seasons I have excavated Late Bronze Age destruction deposits, Middle Bronze fortification walls and Iron Age production sites. Various areas are being excavated across the



Figure 1. Boudicca Bell registering a find in Area S1. Photograph courtesy of The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition.

tell, including two new areas, G and A, which have revealed more of the later periods of occupation.

This season, there were three primary aims for Area S1. The first was to continue excavation of the Middle Bronze destruction level discovered in 2022. The second was to investigate the Middle Bronze Age tower and determine how it connects to the larger Middle Bronze Age fortifications of Azekah. Our final objective was to gain a better understanding of the first phase of the EB settlement that had been exposed in previous seasons. This including excavating a square adjacent to a sacrificial donkey burial beneath an EB III structure that was exposed back in 2012 (*see* Greenfield, Shai and Maeir 2018; Sapir-Hen, Gadot and Lipschits 2017). During the season, we were able to expose the foundations of our tower and better understand its construction. Having previously excavated the Middle Bronze fortification wall in Area W1, I was excited to discover how this tower related to the Middle Bronze architecture discovered in S1.

Throughout the season I was able to develop not only my knowledge of Bronze Age material culture, but also of the techniques needed to excavate and process destruction layers. I was able to expand my practical knowledge of Middle Bronze settlement practices, adding to the knowledge I'd acquired about cultic contexts from my previous studies. I learned how to extract different types of samples, and

how to excavate and register a variety of artefacts. Throughout the four weeks of my time on the dig many fascinating finds were discovered. These included many large complete pottery vessels, an intact miniature vessel (**Figure 2**), and a flint arrowhead from the Middle Bronze Age Tower.



Figure 2. Middle Bronze Age miniature vessel found in the Area S1 destruction level. Photograph courtesy of The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition.

It was exciting to explore such a range of periods and contexts, and to expand both my material knowledge and experience as an assistant in such a multifaceted area as S1. Under the excellent guidance of my supervisor Daniel Nam and directors Oded Lipschits and Sabine Kleiman, I had an intellectually fulfilling and extremely enjoyable season. It was also incredible to work with such a wonderful team of volunteers, who each brought their own experiences and personalities to the team. I would like to say thank you once again to the AIAS for their generous support which made my fifth season at Tel Azekah possible.

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MAX BENSTER

University of Oxford



Figure 3. Max Benster articulating a wall in the Hellenistic acropolis, area A1 South. Photograph by Tilmann Gaitzsch.

I am an undergraduate student at the University of Oxford, currently in my final year of a B.A. degree in Theology and Religion at Oxford University. I applied for an AIAS Diamond Jubilee Grant in order to learn more about the material and cultural background of the biblical texts through hands-on experience in the field. Having never studied archaeology, nor participated on an excavation before, I didn't know quite what to expect going into Azekah. Now that I have returned home and had time to reflect on the month, I have increasingly realised how much I enjoyed and learnt from the whole experience. I am deeply grateful to AIAS for their generous support which enabled me to participate in the dig.

For the first three weeks, I worked in Area E3, which is located on the eastern side of the tell, looking out over the Shephelah. This was very special. E3 had the best view on the tell, which meant the most beautiful sunrises — making getting up at 4:00 am all the more worthwhile. I spent the majority of my time excavating a Middle Bronze destruction layer. I was very lucky to have had the opportunity to work on this type of deposit, as we uncovered a vast amount of pottery — very exciting for someone more used to reading texts than handling artefacts. We also found shells (which is interesting as Azekah is not located near the coast), bone tools, and even a fully intact earring. I found it interesting to think about what these objects might tell us about the lived experience of ancient peoples, and humbling to think about all that has happened in the well over 3000-year period these objects remained hidden and buried in the ground, before we took them out of the dirt.

After the third week it was decided all our target research questions had been answered and Area E3 — after seven years of excavation — was finally closed. I was then moved to Area A1 South, where I spent the next week working in a very deep square, tasked with articulating a wall on the Hellenistic acropolis (**Figure 3**). This was very different work to the 'boutique excavation' of E3 (our brushes and trowels were exchanged for their significantly larger equivalents), but I valued the opportunity to work somewhere so different. On the last day, I exposed the top of what the supervisors think is a probable wall, which was a nice way to round off my time on the excavation. Hopefully next season the excavators will be able to determine how this wall relates to the other features in the area.

One of the main things that my Azekah experience has brought to my own studies is a much deeper understanding of the material culture of ancient Judaism, and a profound appreciation and acknowledgment for the huge amount that archaeology can contribute to biblical studies. Coming from the perspective of an undergraduate theology student who focuses primarily on the Hebrew Bible, I was delighted that the season's lecture series (organised by Prof. Manfred Oeming) was entitled 'The Bible and Archaeology: reciprocal use or misuse?' This included some truly fascinating talks from a range of illustrious speakers.

In many ways, Azekah felt like the perfect place to dig for the first time, as alongside this lecture series there was also an introductory course into the

theoretical and practical aspects of field archaeology, as well as talks on a wide range of topics, from an introduction to archaeomagnetism to the politics of the Israel Antiquities Authority. We also went to visit a different archaeological site every week (Tel Hadid, Lachish, Gezer, and Khirbet Qeiyafa) which often helped to contextualise what was happening contemporaneously at Azekah. Additionally, I was able to visit places of particular academic interest on the weekends. Qumran and Masada were the main highlights, along with the Israel Museum, where I was very excited finally to have the chance to visit the Shrine of the Book.

As I head into the final year of my B.A. and look forward to hopefully continuing with postgraduate studies in the Hebrew Bible, I am now better equipped to incorporate archaeology into my thinking about Jewish antiquity, building on everything I have learnt at Azekah. Digging at this site was an incredible experience in which I met some amazing people, learnt a huge amount about archaeology, and developed a real interest in its diverse implications and applications for the study of the Hebrew Bible. I really hope that one day I have the chance to work on an excavation again, and I am sincerely grateful to AIAS for providing the funds to participate in the 2023 season at Azekah.

ANDREW MCNEY

University of Oxford

Thanks to the generous support of the Anglo Israel Society, I was able to join the The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition for its 2023 excavation season (**Figure 4**). The Azekah Expedition has been yielding exciting new discoveries since it began in 2012, and this year proved no different.

Situated in the Shephelah (the Judaeans Lowlands) Tel Azekah is an intriguing site that was occupied from the Early Bronze Age to the Byzantine period. The site is particularly well documented during the campaign of King Sennacherib in 701 BCE. A cuneiform tablet describes the site as ‘... located on a mountain ridge, like pointed iron daggers without number reaching high to heaven [...],’ (Na’aman 1974: 27) a possible reference to the towers of the site against the skyline. Lachish Letter 4 depicts the doom that was to befall much of Judaea; ‘... we are watching for the signals of Lachish ... for we cannot see Azekah’ (Lipschits, Gadot and Oeming 2012: 198, fig. 4).

In my first two weeks I joined the Area A1 North excavations. Having revealed a fortification wall in the previous season, the area was expanded and divided up for investigation by a ‘northern’ and ‘southern’ team. We began by opening two brand new squares and were set the challenging task of working through the tough topsoil layers. The finds from these layers were unsurprisingly limited and consisted mostly of trash build up from recent years.



Figure 4. Andrew McNey preparing the fortification tower in Area S1 for aerial drone photography. Photograph courtesy of The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition.

As we dug deeper, we uncovered a bizarre mix of pottery sherds from Middle Bronze to Iron Age that were situated within the same stratigraphical layers. The reason for this was that we were doing, as we termed it, ‘the archaeology of archaeology.’ During the years 1898–1899, with support from the Palestine Exploration Fund, F. J. Bliss and his assistant R. A. S. Macalister undertook what is now understood as an extremely destructive programme of excavation as part of the Shephelah project. Utilising a substantial local workforce, the two men set about excavating the site by digging a series of trenches. The goal seems to have been to dig through as much ground as possible, uncovering as many ‘significant’ finds as they could. The dirt from the next trench was then used to backfill the previous trench.

Our suspicion was that what we were uncovering in Area A1 North was this earlier fill from the trench projects of Bliss and Macalister. But we could not be

sure, until we had some kind of proof. This eventually appeared in the form of a metal nail. The nail was uncovered below the topsoil layer, and had a 19th century form that was consistent with ‘modern’ material from the Bliss and Macalister excavations. Additional finds of the same nail type within both squares substantiated our suspicions that this was probably Bliss and Macalister’s fill. Working under this new assumption, it would appear that all the material we were to uncover was not in its original, ancient context. Consequently, the most important goal of the A1 North team became investigation of the ancient fortification wall, which was still very well preserved. The A1 North and South teams will continue to uncover more of these walled structures on the acropolis of the tell, and I look forward to seeing what new conclusions can be drawn from their discoveries.

Area G proved to be a particularly exciting area for me personally. This was a new area of investigation, that held a great amount of potential. The work began by digging a series of 1 x 1 m squares set out across the area in a sectioned format. The goal was to dig through the topsoil to see what lay immediately below. An aerial drone then took pictures of the area to be investigated with the goal of refining the focus upon the most promising areas. These initial weeks of excavation revealed many interesting finds. Among them were a large collection of tesserae which are believed to be related to an industrial installation of the Byzantine period. It is possible that this installation is a press of some sort, and promises to contribute significantly to ongoing scholarly debates on the nature of wine production in the region during the 4–6th centuries AD.

I am very grateful for the support from the Anglo Israel Archaeology Society and the The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition team. The work that is being conducted by this project is incredibly exciting and I was very fortunate to be able to take part. I look forward to seeing this project progress in the future, and eagerly await the publication of their vast and diverse array of finds.

References

- Na’aman, N., 1974. ‘Sennacherib’s “Letter to God” on His Campaign to Judah,’ *BASOR* 214: 25–39.
- Lipschits, O., Gadot, Y. and Oeming, M., 2012. ‘Tel Azekah 113 Years After: Preliminary Excavations of Renewed Excavations at the Site,’ *Near Eastern Archaeology* 75.4: 196–206.

ROBERT NOLAN

University College London



Figure 5. Area A1 at the end of the 2023 season. The thinner wall on the left dates to the Iron Age, the thicker wall on the right to the Hellenistic period. Photograph by Robert Nolan.

During the Tel Azekah excavations I worked in Area A1 South, location of the acropolis and the Hellenistic citadel (**Figure 5**). The aim of our investigations here was to re-expose the Hellenistic-era fortifications, in an attempt to confirm the proposed dating of the area, and to outline any surrounding structures. This work will continue over the next few seasons, to enable a better understanding of the structure of the citadel and the layout and purposes of the surrounding structures.

As with Area A1 North, mentioned in McNey's report above, parts of this area had previously been excavated by Frederick Bliss and Robert Stewart Macalister, creating a *c.* 4 m deep trench that uncovered part of the Hellenistic wall, before being backfilled. During the excavations on the acropolis, metal finds dating from the 1890s were found amongst the stones of the Hellenistic wall, confirming that we were working in the area of this original trench. Although they only partially cleared the citadel, Bliss and Macalister produced a plan which we were able to

compare to the structures now being exposed. This season we uncovered a stretch of wall and dug down through the topsoil into Hellenistic and Iron Age deposits.

Bliss and Macalister's previous work had not been done to modern archaeological standards and the fill left in their trench reflected this, as it contained sherds and other ancient artefacts that had been either missed or ignored by the excavators. These were of limited stratigraphic value, as they had been displaced from their original contexts. A mechanical digger was therefore employed to clear much of this fill. This allowed us to take the area down to undisturbed deposits faster than traditional methods of excavation by hand would allow.

The aim of the current work on the Azekah acropolis was to investigate the Hellenistic fortifications on the site, and the Iron Age fortifications below, which are thought to date from the time of the Assyrian king Sennacherib. There was a particular focus on clarifying the stratigraphy of the area, especially in relation to the Iron Age IIB and IIC structures. Our work also provided an opportunity to better understand the impact of the Bliss and Macalister excavations on the integrity of the site.

Although no destruction layers were found on the acropolis in my area, I assisted, along with the other volunteers, with the process of sieving the soil from destruction layers elsewhere on the site. The first step was to remove large stones and any significant finds. The fine dust was discarded, and sifted soils then transported to the office on the *kibbutz* to be washed and picked through for botanical and faunal remains, and any finds that had not been detected in the trench (**Figure 6**).

Sieving enabled us to recover small objects that might otherwise be missed (see **Figure 7**). Recovered material was removed and sorted by type — pottery, bone, charcoal, seeds, beads and seals, glass, metal, flint, shell, and miscellaneous finds. The most interesting and striking discoveries from this process were carved bone objects, seals, and beads. Such finds provide insight into the tell at the time of a destruction. The faunal remains illustrate the diets of Azekah's inhabitants, while imported materials such as flint or semi-precious stones, used in the production of beads, can be used to increase our understanding of trade networks and the origins of materials accumulated and used at the site.

My intention with the above description has been to highlight the site, and the intentions of the excavation especially in the area in which I worked. I also wished to describe the 'picking' activity — a small part of the wider archaeological process which in my experience is not often discussed. In joining the excavations at Azekah, I had hoped to deepen my understanding of archaeology in the field. I hope that this report has provided others with some small insight into what this involves. Finally, I would like to thank the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society for their grant, which covered the excavation, transport and many other expenses involved in this trip, and made my time at Azekah possible.



Figure 6. The sifted soil was washed and left to dry at the kibbutz before sorting. Washing is essential as it makes small finds more visible where they may otherwise have been obscured by dust. Photograph by Ava Garfinkel.



Figure 7. Fish vertebra recovered during sieving, with a 1 sheqel coin as scale. Photograph by Dari Leibin Graiver.

JACK PIACENTINI

University of Glasgow



Figure 8. Early Bronze foundation in Area S1. Photograph courtesy of The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition.

I have been studying for an M.A. in the archaeology of the Near East and Eastern Mediterranean, and have previously excavated in Scotland and Cyprus. Joining the Azekah team in 2023 gave me the opportunity to widen my field skills and dig in Israel for the first time.

For much of the dig, I was assigned to Area S1 (= South 1) of Tel Azekah (**Figures 8–9**). Cut into the slope of the tell, this area offers the deepest trench of the site. I worked here as part of a two-person team at the earliest end of the sequence, from the Early Bronze Age (c. 3300 BCE) down to the bedrock on which the first human activity was established. My teammate and I were given the strenuous but satisfying task of using pickaxes and mattocks to dig two sections through the stratigraphy to levels where more delicate work was to be conducted. Here, constant brushing revealed multiple layers of plaster floors, built one on top of another, with each being recorded and then removed, as we continued down through the sequence of occupation.

As we went down, we kept sharp-edged sections, allowing us to identify the numerous periods of accumulated habitation at the site. One of these sections provided insights into the construction of an Early Bronze Age structure at the base of the tell, and its sequence of repairs. An adjacent area, excavated in previous seasons, revealed two decapitated donkeys lying beneath a floor, in what was presumed to be a sacrifice. We widened the excavation area by removing the



Figure 9. Jack Piacentini excavating in Area S1. Photograph courtesy of The Lautenschläger Azekah Expedition.

adjacent baulk. Three additional layers of plaster flooring were built on top of the original floor in what appears to be attempts to stabilise the sinking floor of the building.

Fieldtrips were organised by the expedition to other fortified settlements of the Judaeen Kingdom including Lachish, Tel Hadid and Gezer, allowing us to understand human activity across the Bronze and Iron Ages and draw comparisons between sites. We were also shown how archaeology compared to the biblical narrative, which depicts these centres as fortified cities of the Kingdom of Judaea after its separation with the Kingdom of Israel.

Our trips were supported by a wide range of lectures from Tel Aviv University and (for the difference of opinion) The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, along with talks from external commercial organisations about settlement practices of these periods. Practical exercises were given in the use of tools, measuring, and archaeological illustration, all of which are fundamental skills for anyone aspiring to a career in archaeology. Overall, I can highly recommend Tel Azekah to anyone considering taking part in a fieldwork project in the region.

I would like to extend my thanks to the 2023 Tel Azekah Expedition for being excellent hosts and supervisors, and to the Anglo-Israel Archaeology Society for enabling myself and my fellow grant recipients to excavate at one of the most materially context-rich sites I have ever encountered.

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