

- 129 DANIEL M. MASTER and ADAM J. AJA: The House Shrine of Ashkelon

ABSTRACT: In 2009, the Leon Levy Expedition to Ashkelon uncovered Building 572, a well-preserved, multi-roomed Iron Age mudbrick structure constructed in the twelfth century BCE, concurrent with the early settlement of the Philistines in Ashkelon. The building itself is an excellent example of Philistine domestic architectural traditions that would persist throughout the Iron Age I. At the centre of the building, an enigmatic four-horned installation was accompanied by an assemblage of artefacts that provide insight into Philistine cultic practice, while illustrating the eclectic and international nature of early Philistine settlement.

- 146 ELY LEVINE, SHLOMO BUNIMOVITZ and ZVI LEDERMAN: A Zebu-Shaped Weight from Tel Beth-Shemesh

ABSTRACT: In 2007, a bronze zoomorphic weight, shaped as a humped bull or zebu, *Bos indicus*, was found in a Late Bronze Age context in the renewed excavations at Tel Beth-Shemesh. The similarity of this object to other figurines and balance weights not only demonstrates commercial and cultural ties among Late Bronze Age sites, but also indicates familiarity with this sub-species of cattle, usually associated with South Asia. Despite its excellent state of preservation, this weight does not reveal much about its particular position in the Beth Shemesh economy because it was made with a hollow cavity used to modulate its mass. This zebu-shaped weight provides us with further evidence of the frontier status of Beth Shemesh and points to the site's connections with the Eastern Mediterranean trade network of the Late Bronze Age.

162 ODED LIPSCHITS: The Ivory Seal of *šlm* (Son of) *klkl*, Discovered at Ramat Rahel

ABSTRACT: This paper presents an ivory seal, discovered during the sixth excavation season at Ramat Rahel (August 2010), with a heretofore unknown name in the corpus of Judahite names: *šlm* (Son of) *klkl*. The name written on the upper register - Šallūm (or Šillēm) - is one of the most popular names in the Hebrew epigraphy, but the name in the lower register – Kalkōl - appears on only three other seal impressions and one bulla from the antiquities market; this is the first to be found in an excavation.

A careful study of the technical details of the seal may shed light on the scarcity of ivory seals in Judah and may suggest that the local Judahite artisans had difficulties with the unique characteristics of this expensive and infrequent raw material in the process of creating seals.

171 YOSEF GARFINKEL and HOO-GOO KANG: The Relative and Absolute Chronology of Khirbet Qeiyafa: Very Late Iron Age I or Very Early Iron Age IIA?

ABSTRACT: This article examines the suggestions by Singer-Avitz, Finkelstein and Piasezky that Khirbet Qeiyafa belongs in the very late Iron Age I, at the end of the third quarter of the tenth century BCE. A close examination of the various arguments presented by these scholars clearly indicates methodological failures and inconsistencies that do not meet their own criteria. The pottery assemblage of Khirbet Qeiyafa is a typological ‘bridge’ between two periods. It maintains the Iron Age I tradition, while introducing several characteristics that later became the classical markers of the Iron Age IIA.

The absolute chronology of Khirbet Qeiyafa is based upon radiometric datings of short-lived olive pits, collected from a destruction layer of a one-period site that existed for a very short time. Nothing at the site indicates a long occupation that lasted over hundreds of years. Khirbet Qeiyafa marks the beginning of a fresh cultural development, with new types of fortifications, city planning, pottery assemblage and administration. These advanced developments clearly marked the beginning of a new era - the Iron Age IIA.

184 NADAV NA'AMAN: A New Appraisal of the Silver Amulets from Ketef Hinnom

ABSTRACT: In the course of his 1979 excavations of a burial cave located at the site of Ketef Hinnom, Gabriel Barkay discovered two silver plaques with Hebrew inscriptions from the Bible. The inscriptions are the earliest biblical texts discovered to date. In an early publication (1989), Barkay deciphered portions of the two texts and dated the plaques to the late pre-exilic period. In a recent publication (2004), a team of scholars, using advanced photographic techniques and computer imaging technology, made considerable advances in deciphering the texts. Nevertheless, gaps remained in the text of plaque I and its meaning has not been entirely clear. In this article, I suggest decipherment of the missing section of plaque I and offer a new interpretation of the text. I further suggest that the amulets date from the early Second Temple period, possibly not many years after the construction of the Temple. The inscriptions reflect the hopes pinned on the newly erected Temple and the recent resettlement of the land and exhibit the belief that the Return to Zion and the redemption of the land was orchestrated by the God of Israel.

196 BOAZ ZISSU and EITAN KLEIN: A Rock-Cut Burial Cave from the Roman Period at Beit Nattif, Judaeen Foothills

ABSTRACT: This article presents a tomb excavated in 1945 at Beit Nattif in the Judaeen Foothills and discusses it in light of the history and archaeology of the site. The burial chamber was initially a rock-cut water cistern, and at a later date, the cistern was converted into a burial chamber with *kokhim*. The tomb was used during the first and third--fourth centuries CE, as attested by the typical oil lamps, pottery and inscriptions.

Three distinct phases were observed: in the first, a water cistern was cut in the bedrock and its side walls were covered with plaster. Probably in the late first century BCE or the early first century CE, the cistern was converted into a burial chamber. The pottery and the oil lamps represent two different phases (2 and 3) of use of the former cistern for burial. At first, during the Early Roman period (phase 2), 12 *kokhim* and three *arcosolia* were hewn into the walls of the cistern. In this period the burial cave was probably still used by Jews, residents of Pella/Betholetepha - the capital of the Judaeen toparchy. During the Late Roman period (phase 3), the chamber was reused by non-Jews for burial purposes. Names were incised on the plaster walls in this phase, and most of the oil lamps also belong to this phase.

Beit Nattif was still an important site in the Late Roman period. The place was now inhabited by Roman citizens and veterans, who settled the region as part of the Romanisation process that took place in the rural areas of Judaea after the Bar Kokhba War.

217 YOAV FARHI: The 'Modest Aphrodite' from Nysa-Scythopolis (Beth Shean) and Ptolemais (Akko)

ABSTRACT: This article deals with a remarkable resemblance between a statue of Aphrodite found at Beth Shean and a coin type from the mint of Ptolemais. This comparison reminds us of the realistic nature of statues appearing on city coins and highlights the importance of these coins in reconstructing the urban landscape of Roman cities.

- 223 KOSTA Y. MUMCUOGLU and GIDEON HADAS: Head Louse (*Pediculus humanus capitis*) Remains in a Louse Comb from the Roman Period Excavated in the Dead Sea Region

ABSTRACT: Two wooden louse combs, most probably from the Roman period, excavated in the ‘Cave of the Pool’, at the western end of Nahal David stream, in the ‘En Gedi oasis near the Dead Sea, were examined for the presence of head louse remains. In one of the combs, the head and the apical part (tarsus, tibia and femur) of one of the legs of a head louse were found. On the basis of measurements and a comparison to today’s head lice, this louse was identified as belonging to the first nymphal stage.

- 230 MICHAEL E. STONE, DAVID AMIT, JON SELIGMAN and IRINA ZILBERBOD: A New Armenian Inscription from a Byzantine Monastery on Mt. Scopus, Jerusalem

ABSTRACT: The remains of a large fifth–eighth-century monastery and pilgrim hostel, excavated on the eastern slope of Mt. Scopus, include agricultural facilities, stables, halls, a sophisticated water system, a large bathhouse and a church complex. The latter consists of church and a probable baptistery, both faced by an entry hall that covered an underground water cistern. Near the mouth of a cistern, an Armenian mosaic inscription was discovered. It is composed of the name Grigor

(i.e., Gregory), two mostly destroyed letters, and what is apparently the *nomen sacrum* 'Christ'. The cross at the beginning and the *nomen sacrum* at the end are in red; the other letters are black. On the basis of the coins, we date the inscription to the sixth century. It constitutes a significant addition to the information about Armenian presence on the ridge of Mt. Scopus and the Mount of Olives and to the corpus of early Armenian mosaic inscriptions from Jerusalem.

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247 HEBREW BOOKS AND PAPERS