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1 The Israel Exploration Society: 100 Years of Archaeological Activity

6 TALLAY ORNAN, STEVEN ORTIZ and SAMUEL WOLFF: A Newly Discovered Neo-Assyrian Cylinder Seal from Gezer in Context

ABSTRACT: The article discusses an Assyrianized cylinder seal found in 2007 in Gezer and its affinities to other Assyrian or Assyrianized cylinder seals made of hard semi-precious stones from Israel/Palestine and Jordan, and examines it in relation to other glyptic items found at Gezer in an effort to shed light on the role of Gezer during the period of the Assyrian conquest.

26 MITCHELL BORNSTEIN: The Jerusalem Ostrakon אלקנארץ Reconsidered

ABSTRACT: An ostrakon, discovered by N. Avigad in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem in 1971 and dated by the excavator to the late eighth/early seventh century, contains three lines of writing. Avigad read the phrase אלקנארץ in the last line, although this reading is disputed. The purpose of this article is to adduce palaeographic and philological evidence confirming Avigad's reading.

39 EILAT MAZAR, DAVID BEN-SHLOMO and SHMUEL AHITUV: An Inscribed Pithos from the Ophel, Jerusalem

ABSTRACT: During the 2012 excavations at the Ophel, a large building was partially revealed; it is broadly dated to the early (?) Iron Age IIA (it is hoped that a more accurate dating will be obtained after the study of its finds has been completed). A pile of large pottery fragments (L223C) from seven pithoi was used as a stabiliser for the earth fill under the second floor of the building. All the pithoi belong to the neckless, folded-out rim type that is most likely the successor of the Collared-Rim Jar of the Iron Age I. The inscribed pithos was analysed by thin section petrography. The results indicate that the vessel was made of clay sourced to the central hills region, as were several other pithoi found with it. However, a certain variability in the so-called Moza clay formation used for these vessels was identified. Similarly-shaped pithoi from southern Israel that were analysed have the same provenance. The inscription is incised in a Proto-Canaanite/Early Canaanite script of the eleventh--tenth centuries BCE. It reads from left to right, but a

combination of the letters *m, q, p, h, n, l', n* yield no meaning in west-Semitic. The inscription remains, for now, enigmatic.

- 50 IRIT YEZERSKI: Typology and Chronology of the Iron Age II–III Judahite Rock-cut Tombs

ABSTRACT: More than 300 rock-cut tombs dating from the Iron Age II–III are known from throughout Judah. This article proposes a new typology of rock-cut tombs on the basis of their plans and demonstrates their regional distribution and chronology. Such tombs are divided here into two main typological groups: 1) bench tombs, found throughout the kingdom, albeit in very small numbers in southern Judah; and 2) benched-niche tombs, found in southern Judah only. Local sub-divisions in southern Judah are discernible. Most of the tombs are relatively securely dated to between the second half of the eighth century BCE and the end of the Judahite kingdom (587/6 BCE), while only a few are dated to earlier times.

- 78 ZVI URI MA'OZ: A Note on Pharax Antiochus

ABSTRACT: 'The Ravine of Antiochus', or Pharax Antiochus, captured *c.* 81 BCE by Alexander Jannaeus, was the north-westernmost point of his conquests in the Golan - the northern limit of his kingdom. Previous identifications tended to place the site at Baniyas or its environs. This, in my view, created a grave error in the period's maps. The present suggestion locates it on the steep hill of Me zad 'Ateret, 5 km. south of the Hulah Lake, Mishnaic 'Hulath Antochia'.

- 83 YOEL ELITZUR: The Abba Cave: Unpublished Findings and a New Proposal Regarding Abba's Identity

ABSTRACT: Prof. Y.M Grintz's hypothesis that the magnificent ossuary found together with the Aramaic inscription of Abba son of Eleazar the priest belonged to Mattathias Antigonus, the last Hasmonaean king, received compelling scientific corroboration in a TV programme. On the programme, broadcast in December 1974, Prof. Nicu Haas, the anthropologist who analysed the bones, presented a sketch of a decapitated skull that in his view had belonged to a tall 25-year-old man, who was tortured until he lost consciousness, after which he was beheaded - a description consistent with the execution

of Mattathias Antigonus, as described by Josephus and Dio Cassius. These findings, however, were not published in a recognised academic forum and were forgotten. Hass suffered a head injury a month after the broadcast and never regained consciousness. The bones, left in cardboard boxes in his office, were reexamined by Prof. Patricia Smith, who maintained that the decapitated skull had belonged to a short old woman. In light of her findings, a general consensus rejecting Grintz's hypothesis, took root in the scholarly world. The current paper has three aims: 1) to provide an historical survey of the matter, including the unpublished comments made on the TV programme, and to argue that Hass' conclusions are to be preferred; 2) to provide information as yet unpublished, or unpublished in scholarly forums; and 3) to advance an hypothesis that Abba the priest and his family are to be identified with a family mentioned in Josephus Flavius' *Antiquities*.

- 103 RENATE ROSENTHAL-HEGINBOTTOM: Reconsidering the Rock-Cut Cave at Beit Nattif:
A Response to Zissu and Klein

ABSTRACT: Objects found in burial caves may serve as indicators for the ethnic affiliation of the deceased. On the basis of lamp identifications Zissu and Klein (2011) suggested two phases of burial for the rock-cut burial cave at Beit Nattif: a pre-70 CE Jewish phase and another Late Roman phase of ethnic Romans. In the current article, the definition of the two lamp fragments related to the early burials is challenged, and they are re-attributed to the local Beit Nattif workshops. This does not invalidate the Late Second Temple period phase; tombs constructed and used originally by the local Jewish population were later taken over by foreigners. The Latin names associated with the third- and fourth-century burials were used by both ethnic-religious groups. Consequently, Zissu and Klein's conclusion of 'the pagan character of the Late Roman inhabitants of Beit Nattif' should be reconsidered.

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