

# JAMES BROTHER OF JESUS

*The Forgery Trial of the Century*



with **Hershel Shanks**  
editor, *Biblical Archaeology Review*

# James, Brother of Jesus

*The Forgery Trial of the Century*

with Hershel Shanks, editor, *Biblical Archaeology Review*

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## About Hershel Shanks

Hershel Shanks is the premier figure in communicating, through his magazines, books, documentaries and conferences, the world of Biblical archaeology to general readers. Hershel Shanks is "probably the world's most influential amateur Biblical archeologist," declares *New York Times* book critic Richard Bernstein. Shanks was also a leading figure in making the complete Dead Sea Scrolls available to the world.



He is editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review* and was editor of *Bible Review*, *Archaeology Odyssey* and *Moment*. He is the author and editor of several major books on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Jerusalem and Biblical archaeology, including *Understanding the Dead Sea Scrolls*, *The Mystery and Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, *Ancient Israel: From Abraham to the Roman Destruction of the Temple*, *Christianity and Rabbinic Judaism*, *The Search for Jesus*, *Recent Archaeology in the Land of Israel*, *Archaeology and the Bible*, *Jerusalem: An Archaeological Biography*, *Jerusalem's Temple Mount: From Solomon to the Golden Dome*, *The Copper Scroll and the Search for the Temple Treasure*, and *Freeing the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Adventures of an Archaeology Outsider*. He lives in Washington, D.C.

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## About This eBook

The artifacts presented in this eBook have a long history that extends from their origins in the Biblical past to the recent verdict in the “forgery trial of the century.” If authentic, these artifacts hold immense cultural and historical value. The James Ossuary, with its inscription reading “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus,” may be the only extant artifact from the family of Jesus. The Jehoash (or Yehoash) inscription would be the only known royal Israelite inscription. And a tiny, inscribed ivory pomegranate could be the only artifact that remains from Solomon’s Temple. While these artifacts have become famous for the light they may shed on Biblical events, they have also been declared forgeries by the Israel Antiquities Authority. And although the forgery trial recently came to an end, with a Jerusalem judge acquitting defendants Oded Golan and Robert Deutsch on all counts of forgery, the debate over the authenticity of these important Biblical artifacts will continue to rage.

**BAR** editor Hershel Shanks’s introduction to this eBook provides a comprehensive guide to the trial’s history, results and politics. As an investigator, publisher and analyst, Shanks played a central role in the case, and his insights illuminate the trial’s key issues.

The eBook then presents informative articles on the three objects at the heart of Biblical archaeology’s forgery crisis. **BAR** featured the first popular, English-language publication of each artifact, and in each case the **BAR** article remains an authoritative guide for understanding the object’s Biblical significance, as well as the key issues involved in judging its authenticity. This eBook compiles these essential articles (and their associated sidebars) for the first time, while also supplying updated information where necessary.

**BAR** and the Biblical Archaeology Society have followed the “forgery trial of the century” from start to finish. We are proud to present this useful introduction to the artifacts that were at the heart of the case, together with a review of the important scholarship that has sought to evaluate their authenticity.

Biblical Archaeology Society Staff  
March 15, 2012

# The Forgery Trial of the Century—The Verdict Is In

By Hershel Shanks

After a trial of more than five years with 138 witnesses, more than 400 exhibits and a trial transcript of 12,000 pages, Judge Aharon Farkash of the Jerusalem District Court has cleared the defendants in the “forgery trial of the century” of all forgery charges. His opinion in the case, handed down on March 14, 2012, is 474 pages long.

Of the five defendants originally indicted in 2004, only two remained in the case: Oded Golan, an antiquities collector with one of the most important collections in Israel (he was found guilty of the minor charge of trading in antiquities without a license); and Robert Deutsch, the most prominent antiquities dealer in Israel who has also taught at Haifa University, served as a square supervisor at the archaeological excavation of Megiddo and written scholarly books on his own and with other scholars of international repute.

The most famous of the objects charged to be forgeries is an inscription on an ossuary (or bone box) that reads “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.” It received its first publication in **BAR**—on October 21, 2002. The next day it was on the front page of almost every newspaper in the world, including the *New York Times* and *Washington Post*.

A second allegedly forged inscription is engraved on a little ivory pomegranate for which the Israel Museum paid \$550,000. If authentic, it may be the only relic surviving from Solomon’s Temple. That, too, received its first English announcement in **BAR**.

A third alleged forgery is the so-called Jehoash (or Yehoash, in Hebrew) inscription, a 15-line text describing repairs to the Temple. If authentic, it would be the first royal Israelite inscription.

The indictment also charges several other inscriptions to be forgeries, including the “Three Shekels” ostrakon and the “Widow’s Plea” ostrakon (writings on pottery sherds), sold by Deutsch to famous, colorful, wealthy collector Shlomo Moussaieff.

The judge cleared the defendants of all charges of forgery.

As Matthew Kalman, the only journalist to cover the trial on a daily basis, wrote last fall: “The criminal, scholarly and scientific implications of [the judge’s] verdict are immense ... An acquittal would be a severe setback for the Israel Antiquities Authority ... It would also be an acute embarrassment for the isotope experts at the Israel Geological Survey and Professor Yuval Goren of Tel Aviv University.”

When the indictment was filed in 2004, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) claimed the defendants were part of large forgery conspiracy. This is just “the tip of the iceberg,” charged IAA director Shuka Dorfman. Among the IAA’s suspects were even leading academic writing experts André Lemaire of the Sorbonne and Ada Yardeni of the Hebrew University. (The government’s chief witness in the case, Tel Aviv University Professor Yuval Goren claimed that I, too, played a “pivotal role” in the forgery conspiracy. My participation, he asserted, was “evident.”)

Perhaps most damaged by the judge’s decision is deputy IAA director Uzi Dahari who chaired the IAA committee that found the ossuary inscription and the Yehoash inscription to be forgeries. He led a bevy of scholars by the nose to accept an allegedly unanimous committee decision finding that the two inscriptions were forgeries. (See below.) At a **BAR**-organized forum, Dr. Dahari accused me of being the “catalyst for a series of forgeries.” He continued: “Mr. Shanks, you are playing with fire when you continually publish finds of this nature.” He referred to “solid proofs” that these two inscriptions were forgeries.<sup>a</sup>

Let’s consider the evidence regarding the three objects with inscriptions that have received the most attention.

The first is the ossuary inscribed “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.” All agree that the ossuary itself is authentic and ancient. The question is whether the inscription is forged—or more specifically whether the phrase “brother of Jesus” was added in recent times to an ancient inscription that simply read “James, son of Joseph.”

The first stop in any investigation of this question would be at the door of paleographers, scholars who can date and authenticate inscriptions of particular periods based on the style and stance of the letters. In this case, the inscription has been authenticated by two of the greatest world authorities on the paleography of this period, as referred to previously, André Lemaire of the Sorbonne and Ada Yardeni of the Hebrew University.

What is even more significant is that no paleographer of any repute has even suggested that this inscription might be a forgery. There is no other side paleographically.

Scientifically, however, there is. Yuval Goren found what he called “James Bond” covering the inscription, supposedly put there to hide evidence of forgery. The James Bond was, he said, a mixture of ground-up limestone and hot water that formed a fake patina. But it turned out there was no way to make the mixture Goren hypothesized stick to the surface of the ossuary without the addition of an acid, traces of which would be found—and it wasn’t there. This so-called James Bond could be removed with a toothpick; it was hardly “bonded.” Goren even admitted that his “James Bond” could be the result of cleaning the ossuary (something dealers customarily do to make inscriptions stand out).

More important, after treatment, original *ancient* patina could be seen in several letters of the inscription, including one of the letters of the word “Jesus.” Before the trial, Goren had denied that there was *any* ancient patina in the inscription. When he was presented on cross-examination with new pictures taken by one of the defendant’s experts, Professor Goren became flummoxed and asked for a recess to allow him time to examine the box itself, rather than the pictures. He returned the next day and admitted in court that there was indeed original ancient patina in some of the letters. However, he sought to explain this, suggesting that the forger had incorporated ancient scratches with naturally formed patina as strokes of the forged letters of the inscription. (If anyone believes that, I have a bridge I’d like to sell them—very cheaply.)

Actually, this original ancient patina had been observed much earlier by Orna Cohen, one of the members of the IAA committee that examined the ossuary before the trial, but no one paid any attention to this; the IAA knew where it wanted to go.

There are other, simpler reasons why I believe that the inscription is not a forgery. Oded Golan has owned the ossuary since the late 1970s; he proved this with old photographs authenticated by an ex-FBI agent who verified that the paper the photographs are printed on is no longer in use. And Golan never tried to sell the ossuary or publicize the inscription. He claims, quite believably, that he didn’t even know the New Testament mentions James as the brother of Jesus, or as he put it, “I never realized God could have a brother.” Even more understandably, he had no idea the name Ya’acov from the ossuary (Jacob to any Israeli) is translated as James in English New Testaments.

The prosecution claims it found forgers’ tools in Golan’s apartment. Golan claims they were used in restoring antiquities from his collection, not for making forgeries. None of these

tools, however, could be used to engrave the inscription on this ossuary. Even if he is a forger, that doesn't mean everything in his vast collection is a forgery.

The second item alleged to be a forgery is a little ivory pomegranate inscribed “[Belonging] to the House (Temple) of [Yahwe]h, holy to the priests.” If it is authentic, it is probably the head of a small priestly scepter from Solomon’s Temple. We have other ivory scepters like this with rods still in them but without inscriptions. There is a hole in the bottom of this pomegranate for a rod to be inserted. Although the indictment alleges the inscription is a forgery, it was not included in the individual counts, so the judge did not deal with it in his opinion.

All agree that the ivory pomegranate itself is ancient. Again, it is only the inscription that is in question. After careful consideration of the matter, the inscription was authenticated by the late Nahman Avigad, one of Israel’s most highly respected and prominent paleographers, before his death in 1992.

Again, like the ossuary inscription, no one seriously questions the paleography of this inscription. The question is again scientific—but simpler this time. As indicated above, only part of the inscription has survived. Some of the pomegranate containing the inscription was broken off in antiquity. The question is whether any of the surviving letters go into this ancient break; that is, when part of the pomegranate was broken off in ancient times, was the inscription already there? If so, the inscription is authentic.

A group of us got together at the Israel Museum to examine the pomegranate under a microscope to see whether any of the letters of the inscription went into the ancient break. If it did, the inscription was there before the break and was therefore ancient. If it stopped before the break, a forger was afraid to complete the letter for fear of breaking off more of the pomegranate. If a letter goes into the break it forms a little “v” on the side of the break, where part of the pomegranate had broken off long ago.

The group that gathered at the Israel Museum included Yuval Goren, who led the “forgery” clique, as well as two other pro-forgery scholars (and wonderful human beings and my friends), Professors Shmuel Ahituv and Aaron Demsky. Others included André Lemaire and me. Ahituv took charge of organizing the meeting once it was agreed to. I urged Ahituv to allow Ada Yardeni to attend the meeting, but he adamantly refused.

In the end, it all came down to a single letter—a *heh*. Does it go into the ancient break, thereby indicating it pre-existed the break? Is the little “v” there on the side of the pomegranate

where part of it had broken off? Both from our visual inspection and from the microscope photographs, it is clear that the *heh* does go into the ancient break. The little “v” is there. So the letter was there in ancient times before the break occurred.

Each side published its report of the meeting in the *Israel Exploration Journal (IEJ)*. But the report by Goren, Ahituv and Demsky arguing for forgery entirely fails to mention the *heh* that goes into the break, even though Lemaire heavily relies on this in his report. I wrote a letter for publication to *IEJ*, of which Ahituv was then editor, noting this glaring omission in their published report. I was told by return mail that *IEJ* does not print letters to the editor. (But this is not true. There are indeed examples of such letters.)

Now, whenever I see my friends Shmuel Ahituv and Aaron Demsky, I simply say to them, “What about the *heh*, Shmulik?” “What about the *heh*, Aharon?” They respond that they are through with this matter and don’t want to discuss it. Maybe some reader will be successful in eliciting a response from them that addresses this question.

The third artifact discussed here is a 15-line inscription on a black stone plaque, the text of which parallels a similar Biblical description of repairs to Solomon’s Temple by King Yehoash in the ninth century B.C.E. (see 2 Kings 12:5–17) If authentic, it could well have hung in Solomon’s Temple.

When this inscription first surfaced, Yuval Goren quickly opined that it was a forgery because the black stone on which the inscription was carved was not native to Israel and probably came from “the Troodos Massif in Cyprus.” This was soon shown to be absurd. The plaque is made of simple arkosic sandstone, very common in Israel near the Dead Sea, as well as in Sinai.

The most serious claim that the Yehoash inscription is a forgery is philological. Some words in the inscription, these scholars contend, were not in use in the ninth century B.C.E. or not used in the same way at that time. Other scholars take the opposite position.

Because serious scholars rely on the philological infirmities of the inscription to declare it a forgery, I cannot confidently say they are wrong and that the inscription is authentic. But I do tend to think so. Here’s why.

The scientific evidence strongly points in this direction. The plaque had a deep crack running through four lines of the inscription. After the police confiscated the plaque, it

(accidentally) broke in two along the crack. The crack could then be seen from the side. Part of the crack had ancient patina in it, proving that the crack was ancient. Would a forger choose to work with a stone that had a crack in it, where a slip of his engraving tool might break the stone in two, ruining all his careful work? Hardly. But even if he decided to take the chance, how did he manage to engrave four lines *across the ancient crack*?

In addition, the patina on the inscription contains minute globules of gold. Was the plaque once plated with gold? These gold globules are so small (one or two millionths of a meter) that they are not available on the market. They can be created, however, in an intense fire such as might have occurred in the conflagration that accompanied the destruction of the Temple—the First Temple in the sixth century B.C.E. or the Second Temple in 70 C.E. All this is explained in an article in a peer-reviewed journal (the *Journal of Archaeological Science*) authored by five experts from Israel and the United States who defend the authenticity of the inscription.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, I personally think there are psychological reasons that provide evidence of authenticity. As I often put it, the first thing they teach you in forgery school is, “Make it short.” This vastly reduces your chance of getting caught. The Yehoash inscription, however, at 15 lines, flagrantly violates this basic principal of forgery. Many forgeries have been exposed in modern times, but none so long as this.

Despite all that I have said, the inscriptions I have discussed will be considered forgeries in the public mind for at least a generation—never mind the acquittal of the defendants and the evidence of authenticity. The reason is that these inscriptions have been declared forgeries, supposedly unanimously, by two committees of the IAA.

The fact is that these committees chaired by deputy IAA director Uzi Dahari were set-ups. The IAA knew where it wanted to go—and it got there. It enlisted Yuval Goren to lead a pack of scholars who “went along.” Father Joseph Fitzmyer, probably the world’s leading expert on ancient Aramaic (the language of the Jesus inscription) provides the details. The committees included people who had *previously* said the inscriptions were probably forgeries, but not anyone on the other side. So, for example, André Lemaire was not included. Neither were the geologists from the Geological Survey of Israel who had found the inscriptions authentic. Many of the IAA committee members conceded that their expertise was not in areas that would allow them to opine on authenticity, but the IAA treated their demurrers as votes for forgery. The demurrers were treated as “yes” votes when the IAA announced the “unanimous” decision of their committee.

The IAA tried “to give the impression that the committees were unanimous, and it’s not unanimous at all,” Fitzmyer said.<sup>b</sup>

Worse yet, committee members sometimes based their “yes” vote on Yuval Goren’s scientific evidence, not on their own expertise. For example, highly respected archaeologist Ronny Reich had reported to the committee that “in my opinion [the Jesus inscription is] authentic.” In the end, however, he said he was “forced” to change his mind as a result of Goren’s geological expertise. He was not the only committee member to cast his vote on the basis of someone else’s expertise, not his own.

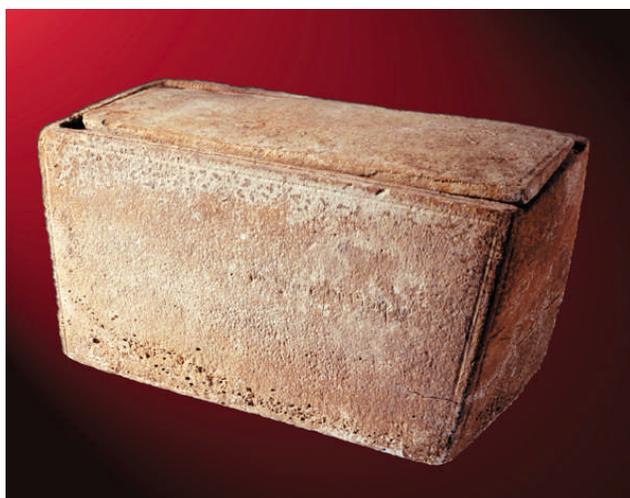
Since the ivory pomegranate was in its collections, the Israel Museum sent an observer to the committee that judged the pomegranate inscription. This observer was counted as a “yes” vote. The committee report published in *IEJ* listed her as an author, although she had never seen the report. One final telling point: The *IEJ* report lists all the members of the committee as authors. Normally in such a situation, they would be listed in alphabetical order, as they are in this case—all except one. Yuval Goren leads all the rest.

The judge’s decision doesn’t mean that the inscriptions are authentic. It only means that the prosecution failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that they are forgeries. But at least the discussion can now proceed on a more academic basis. And perhaps the IAA has learned some lessons that can be applied in the future.

## Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus

*Earliest archaeological evidence of Jesus found in Jerusalem*

By André Lemaire



*Courtesy André Lemaire*

A relatively plain, 20-inch-long limestone ossuary (a box for bones widely used in first-century C.E. Jerusalem) bears a significant Aramaic inscription that reads “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.” (See detail and drawing of inscription, p. 11.)

Author André Lemaire thought the inscription clearly dated between 20 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.—but, to make certain, he had it analyzed by geologists. As shown in the sidebar “Epigraphy—and the Lab—Say It’s Genuine,” they concluded that the box has no modern elements, was worked by no modern tools—and does seem to be authentic. Could this box have held the bones of the James who was the brother of Jesus of Nazareth? Lemaire concludes that it likely did, making this ossuary the earliest archaeological attestation of Jesus yet found.

Amazing as it may sound, a limestone bone box (called an “ossuary”) has surfaced in Israel that may once have contained the bones of James, the brother of Jesus. We know this because an extraordinary inscription incised on one side of the ossuary reads in clear Aramaic letters: “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus.”

But is this the same James who was the brother of Jesus of Nazareth, or was this another James, whose father happened to be called Joseph and who happened coincidentally also to have a brother named Jesus?

The ossuary is one of many now in a private collection in Israel. I have been permitted to study and photograph it. Very likely, it was found in Jerusalem or its environs. We know of hundreds of such ossuaries that have been recovered in the Holy City. Unfortunately, as is almost always the case with ossuaries that come from the antiquities market rather than from a legal excavation, it was emptied. What happened to the bones that were once inside it we do not know.

For a relatively short period—from the first century B.C.E. to 70 C.E., when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and burned the Temple—the practice of ossilegium, as it is called, was widespread among the Jewish population. A corpse would first be laid in a niche carved into the wall of a burial cave; about a year after this primary burial, when the corpse's flesh had decayed, the bones of the deceased were gathered together and placed in a box or chest, usually made of Jerusalem limestone, called an ossuary. Sometimes the bones of more than one person were placed in the same ossuary. The practice of ossilegium thus made room for additional primary burials inside the burial cave.

This two-part burial practice is described in a rabbinic treatise, in the words of a sage, probably of the late first century B.C.E.:

Rabbi Eleazar bar Zadok said: "Thus spoke father at the time of his death: 'My son, bury me first in a grave [fosse]. In the course of time, collect my bones and put them in an ossuary; but do not gather them with your own hands.' And thus did I watch him: Johanan entered, collected the bones, and spread a sheet over them. I then came in, rent my clothes for them, and sprinkled dry herbs over them. Just as he attended his father, so I attended him."<sup>1</sup>

The newly revealed ossuary with the startling inscription bearing the name of James is unadorned, unlike numerous ornately carved ossuaries. The only decoration is a line forming a frame about 0.5 inch (1.2 cm) from the outer edges. Many ossuaries have little feet. This one does not. However, scarce decoration does not indicate a lower social status of the dead, as a leading authority on ossuaries has observed.<sup>2</sup>

## James, Brother of Jesus

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This ossuary is not exactly rectangular, but that is true of most of the ossuaries we know. It is 20 inches long (50.5 cm) at the base and flairs out to almost 22 inches (56 cm) at the top. Although one of the short sides is perpendicular to the base, the other is slanted, giving the box a trapezoid shape. The ossuary is 10 inches (25 cm) wide and 12 inches (30.5 cm) high.



Detail of the inscription on the ossuary.



*Ada Yardeni*

**Drawing of the inscription on the ossuary. (The drawing was made by Ada Yardeni, one of the world's leading specialists in Hebrew and Aramaic writing and the author of *The Book of Hebrew Script*.)**

The stone lid is essentially flat (very slightly convex, to be exact) and rests on a small (0.24 inch, or 0.6 cm) ledge running inside the rim of the long sides of the ossuary.<sup>3</sup>

The 20 Aramaic letters of the inscription appear on one of the long sides.<sup>a</sup> They reveal a classical script carefully incised. There is no space between the words. The inscription is 7.5 inches (19.5 cm) long and about 0.33 inches (0.9 cm) high and reads:

יעוב בר יוסף אחוי דישוע

Ya'akov bar Yosef akhui diYeshua

James (Ya'akov/Jacob), son of Joseph (Yosef), brother of Jesus

(Yeshua)<sup>4</sup>

All three of the personal names in the inscription were common during this period, although they may be spelled in various ways. For example, "Jacob" (English "James") can be written either with a *waw* (יעקוב), as it is here, or without (יעקב).<sup>5</sup> "Joseph" can be written "Yosef"

(יהוסף) as it is here, or as “Yehosef” (יהוסף) with a *heh* following the initial consonant.<sup>6</sup> “Jesus” can be written “Yeshua” (ישוע), as it is here, or “Yeshu” (ישו)<sup>7</sup> or “Yehoshua” (יהושע).<sup>8</sup>

A word about the equivalency of Jacob and James: Jacob (Ya’akov) of course is the name of the Biblical patriarch. In Latin translations of the Bible, the Biblical patriarch became *Jacobus* and the New Testament apostle of the same name became *Jacomus*. They are simply variants of the same name.<sup>9</sup> The English forms are clearly derived from the Latin.

Returning to the ossuary, this type of bone box is generally to be dated between about 20 B.C.E. and 70 C.E.<sup>10</sup> The classical shape of the letters of the inscription also fits this approximate date. None of these letters displays the developments typical of the following period.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the cursive shape of three of the letters (*dalet*, *yod* and *aleph*) indicates an even narrower span of time: the last decades before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 C.E.—the exact period when James, the brother of Jesus, would have died.

But who is “James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus”? In one sense, this question asks who was James in Christian tradition—in what way was he Jesus’ brother? In another sense, it asks whether the Jesus of the inscription is the Jesus of Nazareth we know from the New Testament.

Jesus’ family is mentioned several times in the Gospels—for example, in Matthew 13:55–56: “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?” (see the parallel text in Mark 6:3 and also Matthew 12:46). Thus James appears to be the first brother of Jesus, who was himself the son of Joseph and Mary (Luke 4:22 and John 6:42 both indicate Joseph was the father of Jesus).

James is also mentioned several times in Paul’s letters. In the Letter to the Galatians, which Paul wrote in the late 50s C.E., he states: “Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord’s brother” (Galatians 1:18–19). Paul seems to present James as the first leader of the Jerusalem church: “When James and Cephas and John who were acknowledged pillars, recognized the grace that had been given to me, they gave to Barnabas and me the right hand of fellowship, agreeing that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised” (Galatians 2:9).

James was also the first of the apostles to whom the resurrected Jesus appeared (1 Corinthians 15:7). James's importance in Paul's eyes is all the more remarkable because they disagreed about the role of Jewish law as applicable to gentiles (Galatians 2:11–14).

James's importance in the early church is also confirmed in Acts. It is James who suggests the compromise between the Jerusalem church and those preaching to the gentiles—gentiles who become Christian need only refrain from fornication and from eating meat sacrificed to idols or from animals that have been strangled; they are not obligated to keep other Jewish dietary (kosher) laws or to be circumcised (see Acts 15:12–29). In this way, unity between Jewish Christians and gentile Christians was maintained.

When Paul comes to Jerusalem in about 58 C.E. he visits James, “and all the elders were present” (Acts 21:18); James appears to be the leader of the Jerusalem church.

The first-century Jewish historian Josephus dates James's death to 62 C.E. when the high priest Ananus had “one James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ/Messiah” brought before the Sanhedrin.<sup>12</sup>

James's place as the leader (or bishop) of the Jerusalem church is recognized in early Christian literature—for example, in the *Church History* of Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 324), which quotes the tradition of the Christian writer and historian Hegesippus and the church father Clement of Alexandria. In this tradition James was known as “James the Just” or “James the Righteous.” According to this tradition he was buried in Jerusalem. Hegesippus (c. 180), as quoted by Eusebius, tells us that “He [James] was buried on the spot, by the Sanctuary, and his headstone is still there by the Sanctuary” (see the sidebar “The Last Days of James, p. 22”).<sup>13</sup>

According to the *Protevangelium of James*, a late apocryphal gospel, James, as Joseph's son, led the she-ass upon which Mary rode (while Joseph followed) on their way to Bethlehem.<sup>14</sup> The text then postulates that as James was older than Jesus, he was the son of an earlier marriage of Joseph's. From the New Testament, however, there is no reason to think anything but that Jesus and his brothers and sisters were children of Joseph and Mary. The apocryphal tradition is doubtless a sign that the idea of Jesus having blood brothers faced some opposition. The tension between this view and an affirmation of Mary's continued virginity also led to a re-interpretation of “brother” as “cousin.”

Thus, there are three different Christian traditions regarding the “brothers” of Jesus. The first is that James was the blood brother of Jesus, the son of the same mother and father as Jesus. This seems to be the view of the canonical New Testament, as well as of the second/third-century church father Tertullian, Hegesippus and others. This interpretation is dominant in Protestant scholarship.

A second tradition regards James as a son of Joseph by a previous marriage. This is the view not only of the *Protevangelium of James*, but also of the second/third-century church father Origen, the third/fourth-century church historian Eusebius and others. This interpretation is dominant in Orthodox circles.

Finally, it is said that James was only a cousin of Jesus, being the son of Clopas and the Mary who stood near the cross. This interpretation was held by St. Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin (late fourth/early fifth century), among others. This tradition tends to predominate in Roman Catholic exegesis, though some Catholic scholars accept the first view.

All agree, however, that James was a leading figure in the Jerusalem church. But the question remains: Can we identify this James with the James whose bones were once encased in this ossuary?

It certainly seems reasonable that a leader of the Jerusalem church would be buried in Jerusalem and his bones later collected in an ossuary like this. Whether Jewish Christians (or, perhaps more correctly, Christian Jews) were re-interred in ossuaries is a matter of some debate. It is true that no inscription or symbol has been found indicating that this was a Jewish Christian custom, in addition to a Jewish custom, but even such cautious scholars as L.Y. Rahmani<sup>15</sup> and Simon Mimouni,<sup>16</sup> who are properly critical of some speculative interpretations, recognize it as a distinct possibility. The fact that James was familiar with the Pharisees,<sup>17</sup> as opposed to the Sadducees, may be an argument in favor of Christian Jewish ossuaries, as this practice is well attested in Pharisaic tradition.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, nothing in this ossuary inscription clearly confirms the identification. James is not called “James the Just” (or “James the Righteous,” as he was known in Christian tradition). Jesus is not called “Jesus of Nazareth” or “Jesus the Messiah.”

The names of James (Jacob), Joseph and Jesus were all fairly common among Jews at the turn of the era. Rahmani’s catalogue of ossuaries in Israel lists 233 inscriptions. All three names are among those that appear the most frequently. Joseph is found 19 times, Jesus ten

times and James/Jacob five times. Rachel Hachlili has studied names used at this time in all types of inscriptions. Joseph appeared in 14 percent, Jesus in 9 percent and James/Jacob in 2 percent of the cases.<sup>19</sup>

Based on these percentages, we can conclude that about 0.28 percent (a little more than a quarter of a percent) of the male population were named either “James/Jacob, son of Joseph” or “Joseph, son of James/Jacob.” So about 0.14 percent were named “James/Jacob, son of Joseph.” Of these people, how many would also have a brother “Jesus”? Assuming that each male had approximately two brothers, this would mean that about 18 percent of the men named “James/Jacob, son of Joseph” had a brother named Jesus. Accordingly, over two generations, 0.05 percent of the population would likely be called “Jacob son of Joseph brother of Jesus.”

The estimated population of Jerusalem at this time was about 80,000,<sup>20</sup> which means that about 40,000 of the people were male. In Jerusalem during the two generations before 70 C.E., there were therefore probably about 20 people who could be called “James/Jacob son of Joseph brother of Jesus.” It is, however, impossible to estimate how many of these 20 people were buried in ossuaries and how many of these ossuaries would be inscribed.

Does the fact that the inscription on this ossuary mentions not only the father of the person whose bones are enclosed but also the brother help us in our identification? It is common to mention the father in this context, but mention of the brother is very unusual, although it does happen (we have only one other example in Aramaic, in a similar formula).<sup>21</sup> The mention of the brother probably means that the brother had a particular role, either in taking responsibility for the burial, or more generally because the brother was known, and the deceased had a special connection with him.

When we take into account that this “James/Jacob, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus” had a brother who was by this time well known and that the “James/Jacob, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus” had a special relationship with this brother as the leader of the Jerusalem church, it seems very probable that this is the ossuary of the James in the New Testament. If so, this would also mean that we have here the first epigraphic mention—from about 63 C.E.—of Jesus of Nazareth.

## Epigraphy—and the Lab—Say It's Genuine

By André Lemaire

*Sidebar to: Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus*

When an inscription appears on the antiquities market or in a private collection, as in the case of the extraordinary inscription discussed in the accompanying article, the first question an epigrapher (a specialist in ancient inscriptions) must answer is: Is it genuine or a fake?

To establish authenticity, we start with the object itself and then the inscription on it. Do they together and separately fit what we know from excavations and from other inscriptions?

Also, after more than 30 years of working with Hebrew, Phoenician and Aramaic inscriptions, one develops a "feel," a first reaction when inspecting a new inscription. Does it fit what we already know from many other inscriptions or is it problematic?

This first feeling is important but of course needs to be checked by a detailed examination of the object and of the inscription, both with a magnifying glass (with a magnifying power of at least 10) and, if possible, with a binocular microscope (with a 50 to 100 magnifying power). Does the engraving have any signs of modern edges? Is the patina, the thin covering on the surface caused by age, firmly attached?

The inscription itself must also be studied in detail. Sometimes, although not with the James Ossuary, it is difficult to read, especially if it is a graffito or a cursive inscription with partly worn-off ink. Details in the shape and stance of the letters are exceptionally important. A mixture of letter shapes from different periods or from different scribal traditions is a dead giveaway that an inscription is a fake. The inscription must also be studied from the viewpoint of language and the historical context; the content must cohere with the style of the inscription. A purported eighth-century B.C.E. ostrakon (an inscribed potsherd), for example, cannot be written with the Herodian script of the first century C.E. Finally, all similar inscriptions already published must be checked because forgers are often tempted to copy from genuine, published inscriptions.

All this has been done with the James Ossuary inscription, and I am pleased to report that in my judgment it is genuinely ancient and not a fake.

However, with such an important inscription, caution requires that it be checked in a laboratory.

## James, Brother of Jesus

The inscription and the ossuary were examined in the laboratory of the Geological Survey of Israel. Both were studied with a binocular microscope to identify the stone and to observe the patina. Six samples of the chalk (soft limestone), six samples of the patina and two samples of the attached soil were studied with a SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope) equipped with EDS (Electron Dispersive Spectroscopy).

In a letter to **BAR** editor Hershel Shanks (see p. 18), the scientists concluded: “[T]he patina does not contain any modern elements (such as modern pigments) and it adheres firmly to the stone. No signs of the use of a modern tool or instrument was [sic] found. No evidence that might detract from the authenticity of the patina and the inscription was found.”

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17/9/2002

To Mr Hershel Shanks Editor of **BAR** Magazine.

**Re: SEM-EDS analyses of patina samples from an ossuary of "Ya'akov son of Yossef brother of Yeshua".**

A chalk (limestone) ossuary was brought to the Geological Survey of Israel for studying the authenticity of its patina. The following Hebrew inscription appears on one of the outer walls of the ossuary:

יעקוב בן יוסף אחיו דישוע

The use of chalk (limestone) was extensive during the Second Temple period in Jerusalem, primarily for the manufacture of stone vessels and ossuaries.

Chalk is a sedimentary deposit, comprised mainly of marine microorganism skeletons made of calcium carbonate. All chalks in the Jerusalem area belong to the Menuha Formation of Mount Scopus Group sequence of the Senonian period. Generally the lower part of the Menuha Formation was exploited around Jerusalem during the 1st and 2nd centuries CE and several chalk stone quarries were discovered from that period in the Jerusalem area. The studied ossuary is made of this chalk. Based on its dimensions, this ossuary was used to store bones of an adult.

The stone and the patina were examined by magnifying lenses (binocular). We observed that the patina on the surface of the ossuary has a gray to beige color. The same gray patina is found also within some of the letters, although the inscription was cleaned and the patina is therefore absent from several letters. The patina has a cauliflower shape known to be developed in a cave environment.

Remains of soil were found attached to the bottom of the outer side of the ossuary. Six samples of the chalk, six samples of the patina from various places on the external wall of the inscription and two samples of soil, were studied with a SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope) equipped with EDS (Electron Dispersive Spectrometer).

Analytic results:

The EDS analyses of the SEM laboratory showed that the chalk of which the ossuary is composed mainly of CaCO<sub>3</sub> (97%) and contains Si -1.5%; Al - 0.7%; Fe - 0.4%; P - 0.3% and Mg - 0.2%.

The patina is composed mainly of CaCO<sub>3</sub> (93%) and contains Si -5.0%; Al - 0.7%; Fe - 0.3%; P - 0.4% and Mg - 0.2%.

The soil is composed mainly of CaCO<sub>3</sub> (85%) and contains Si -7.4%; Al - 2.5%; Fe - 1.7%; P - 1.0% and Mg - 0.7% and Ti - 1.0%.

The patina is enriched with silica (about 5.0%) relative to the original stone (about 1.5%).

The soil in which the ossuary laid is of Rendzina type, known to develop on chalks of the Mount Scopus Group.

It is worth mentioning that the patina does not contain any modern elements (such as modern pigments) and it adheres firmly to the stone. No signs of the use of a modern tool or instrument was found. No evidence that might detract from the authenticity of the patina and the inscription was found.

Sincerely,

*Amnon Rosenfeld, Shimon Ilani*

Dr Amnon Rosenfeld and Dr Shimon Ilani  
The Geological Survey of Israel, Jerusalem.

Letter from the Geological Survey of Israel to Hershel Shanks.

## The Right Man for the Inscription

By Steven Feldman

*Sidebar to: Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus*



**André Lemaire**

The James Ossuary may not have come to light had it not been for a series of fortunate events. André Lemaire, one of the world's leading epigraphers (specialists in inscriptions), was in Jerusalem from April to September, 2002 at Hebrew University's Institute for Advanced Study. The Institute hosts scholars from abroad and allows them to interact with each other and with their Israeli colleagues on areas of specialized research; Lemaire's field of study is Hebrew during the Biblical period in the broader context of Northwest Semitic languages.

As on previous stays in Jerusalem, Lemaire learned of important ancient objects either recently found in excavations or new to the antiquities market. Because of his expertise, Lemaire is often asked to examine such "fresh" finds. The Israel Antiquities Authority, for example, asked him if he thought a badly damaged seal from the end of the First Temple period is genuine (he thinks it is).

Sometimes Lemaire is also shown objects owned by antiquities collectors, either recently acquired or long held. During his most recent stay in Jerusalem, Lemaire happened to meet a certain collector by chance; the collector mentioned that he had some objects he wanted Lemaire to see. One of them was the James Ossuary.

## James, Brother of Jesus

Lemaire was first shown photos of the ossuary and its inscription. Even on a photograph the inscription was easy to read. “I recognized its significance right away,” Lemaire told **BAR** in his heavily French-accented English. Lemaire later checked the ossuary firsthand. Based on his knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic and of the shape and stance of Herodian-era letter forms, he concluded that the James inscription was genuine. Not wishing to rely solely on his own epigraphic expertise, however, Lemaire had the ossuary checked by geologists to see whether the inscription showed signs of having been made in modern times. As we report in the sidebar “Epigraphy—and the Lab—Say It’s Genuine,” it didn’t.

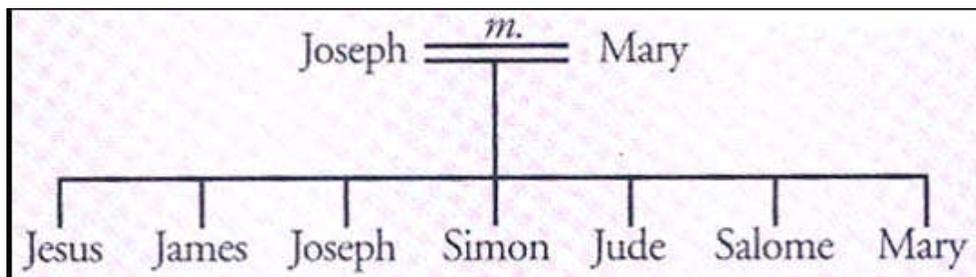
The James Ossuary passed one other, perhaps even more crucial, test. Beyond the rigors of epigraphic analysis and scientific testing, there was Lemaire’s gut feeling. “When I see an inscription, either I feel at home or I don’t feel at home,” Lemaire told us. “With this inscription, I felt at home.”

## Three Versions of the Family Tree of Jesus

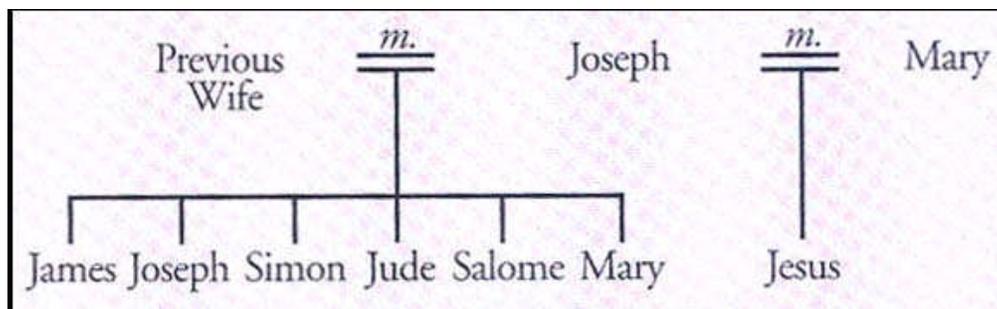
By Nancy E. Roth

*Sidebar to: Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus*

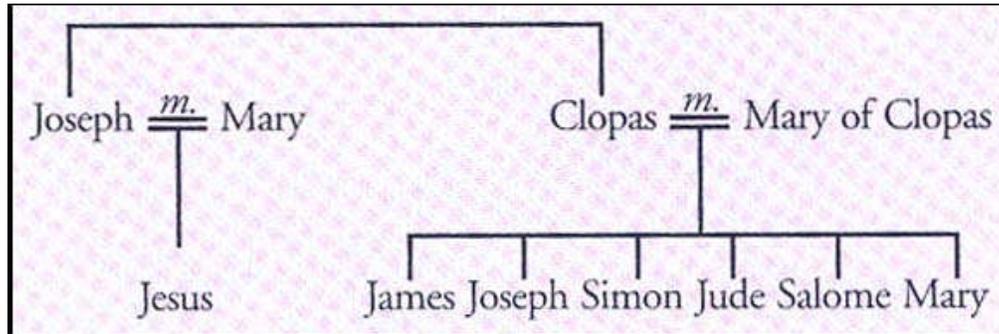
### 1. James as Full Brother of Jesus



### 2. James as Half-Brother of Jesus



3. James as Cousin of Jesus



Three separate traditions coexist within Christianity regarding the familial relationship between James and Jesus. In one tradition James and the other siblings of Jesus are the children of Joseph and Mary; James is therefore seen as a full brother of Jesus (upper diagram, p. 20). This view is widely accepted in Protestant Christianity.

A second tradition sees James and the other siblings as a product of an earlier marriage of Joseph: Only Jesus came of Joseph's marriage to Mary (lower diagram, p. 20). James in this version is a half-brother to Jesus. This view is dominant in the Orthodox Church.

A third tradition, that of the Roman Catholic Church, believes James and the others to be the children of Joseph's brother Clopas and Mary of Clopas, who later witnessed the crucifixion (above). The word "brother" is understood in this version as a general term for relative or kin as well as sibling. James would thus be a cousin of Jesus in this view.

If the James Ossuary does refer to the holy family, it would seem to refute the notion that James is only a cousin of Jesus, because it proclaims that Joseph, not Clopas or someone else, is James's father.

Whether James was a full brother, a half-brother or a cousin of Jesus, the significance of the James bone box is not diminished. It likely held the remains of the leader of the early Church in Jerusalem, known in the Gospels as "James, the brother of Jesus."

## The Last Days of James

By Amanda Kolson Hurley

Sidebar to: *Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus*



Photo by Ritter/Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC

**James's gruesome death is depicted in sequence on a 13th-century mosaic in St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. From left to right, James is shown standing before a crowd of Jews; he is then pushed from the top of the Temple and beaten to death by the fuller while several Pharisees look on; finally, he is buried beneath the Temple.**

An extended description of the death of James, brother of Jesus, appears in the *Ecclesiastical History* of the church father Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–339). Eusebius quotes a passage from a now-lost work by Hegesippus, a Christian writer who lived in Palestine in the second century. Hegesippus said that James was holy “from his mother’s womb,” never drinking wine, eating meat or bathing himself and kneeling in prayer so often “that his knees became hard like those of a camel.” He was therefore called “the Just” and, in Greek, *Oblias*, “Bulwark of the People.”

Following the crucifixion of Jesus, James became leader of the early Christians in Jerusalem. Preaching that Jesus was the Christ, or Messiah, he won many converts, including some from the ruling classes. According to Hegesippus, his preaching alarmed the scribes and Pharisees, who ordered him to stand at the Jerusalem Temple before a large crowd and retract his statements. James went to the top of the Temple, but instead of recanting, he confirmed that Jesus was indeed the Christ. Then, writes Hegesippus,

## James, Brother of Jesus

They [the scribes and the Pharisees] went up and threw down the just man, and said to each other, "Let us stone James the Just." And they began to stone him, for he was not killed by the fall, but he knelt down and said, "I entreat thee, Lord God our Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And one of them, who was a fuller, took the club with which he beat out clothes and struck the just man on the head.

And thus he [James] suffered martyrdom. And they buried him on the spot, by the temple, and his monument still remains by the temple.

James's gruesome death is depicted in sequence on a 13th-century mosaic in St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. From left to right, James is shown standing before a crowd of Jews; he is then pushed from the top of the Temple and beaten to death by the fuller while several Pharisees look on; finally, he is buried beneath the Temple.

Hegesippus's account of James's demise, though dramatic, is not entirely reliable. His claim that James's knees were as hard as a camel's, for instance, sounds like an exaggerated detail rather than an historical fact. A similar, but pithier, account appears in the *Antiquities of the Jews* by the first-century historian Josephus. Josephus writes (*Antiquities* 20.9.1) that a hot-headed high priest named Ananus accused James and others of breaking the law and summarily sentenced them to death by stoning. When citizens protested at the men's execution, King Agrippa stripped Ananus of the high priesthood.

Although brief, Josephus's account is important in two respects. First, Josephus refers to James as "James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ/Messiah." This reference, which clearly identifies James as Jesus' brother, is one of only a few ancient allusions to Jesus. Josephus also mentions Jesus elsewhere in his *Antiquities*, in a controversial passage known as the *Testimonium Flavianum* (*Antiquities* 18.3.3), which scholars believe contains a number of later Christian interpolations. The Roman historian Tacitus also refers to Jesus, recording his execution by Pontius Pilate (*Annales* 15.44.3).

Second, Josephus dates James's death to the administration of the Roman procurator (governor) Festus, who held office in the year of 62 C.E. If Josephus's dating is correct, then James's death would have occurred within the 90-year period (20 B.C.E.–70 C.E.) during which ossuaries like the one André Lemaire describes in the accompanying article were in common use in Israel.

## The Ultimate Test of Authenticity

By Hershel Shanks

*Sidebar to: Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus*

To forge the James inscription, a forger would need to be able to imitate Aramaic letter forms of the first century C.E. and also to avoid any errors in first-century Aramaic usage.

Before publishing the inscription, we showed it to Father Joseph Fitzmyer, formerly of the Catholic University of America and one of the world's leading experts in first-century Aramaic and a pre-eminent Dead Sea Scroll editor (he edited a number of the Aramaic texts among the scrolls). Father Fitzmyer was troubled by the spelling in the James inscription of the word for "brother;" it is spelled *aleph, het, waw* and *yod*. In Hebrew it is spelled simply *aleph het*. Only after hundreds of years would the spelling on the James inscription appear in Aramaic, and then it would be plural, not singular.

However, after doing some research, Father Fitzmyer found the same spelling of "brother" in the Dead Sea Scroll known as the Genesis Apocryphon. In addition, he found another example in which the same form appeared—in an ossuary inscription in which the deceased was identified as someone's brother, just as James is here. "I stand corrected," said Father Fitzmyer.

Either a putative forger had to know first-century Aramaic better than Father Fitzmyer or the inscription is authentic.

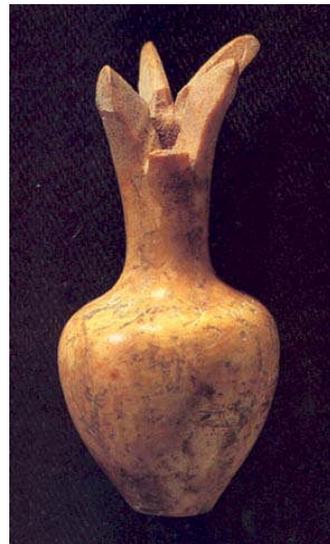
To my mind this is one of the strongest arguments for the authenticity of the James inscription.

## Probable Head of Priestly Scepter from Solomon's Temple Surfaces in Jerusalem

*Inscription containing name of God incised on ivory pomegranate*

By André Lemaire

Inscribed ivory pomegranate from the late eighth century B.C.E., the time of Solomon's Temple. This unique artifact may once have topped a scepter carried by the Temple priests. If it was not part of a scepter, perhaps it was a Temple ornament, an altar decoration or a finial on a throne or cultic box. Carved from one piece of precious ivory, the pomegranate is only 1.68 inches high and 0.83 inches in diameter. Cut into the base is a hole 0.39 inches (10 mm) deep and 0.23 inches (6 mm) in diameter.



*Courtesy André Lemaire*

*[Editor's Note: This article appeared in **BAR** in 1984, shortly after the ivory pomegranate was first discovered in a Jerusalem antiquities shop. To follow the story of the pomegranate since, see "The Ivory Pomegranate: Is the Inscription Fake?" p. 33.]*

**BAR** recently published a fascinating article by Gabriel Barkay reporting on his excavation of a small rolled silver amulet, dating from the seventh or sixth century B.C.E. When the amulet was unrolled, it was found to contain the tetragrammaton—the four Hebrew letters *yod, he, waw, he* that form the unpronounceable name of God, sometimes transcribed in Latin letters as Yahweh or Jehovah. (See "The Divine Name Found in Jerusalem," **BAR** 09:02.)

This truly sensational discovery is said to be the first time God's name has been recovered in an archaeological excavation in the Holy City of Jerusalem.

The claim is technically accurate. However, another artifact containing the divine name, or at least a part of it, has recently surfaced in Jerusalem. Not only does this artifact predate the rolled silver amulet by at least 100 years in the First Temple period, but it is also all the more remarkable because it was probably used in the Temple service itself! If so, this is indeed a rare find; for of no other artifact may we say that it was probably used in the Temple service in the Solomonic Temple.

The artifact I refer to is a small inscribed pomegranate fruit made from a single piece of fine ivory; this pomegranate is 1.68 inches (43mm) high and 0.83 inches (21mm) in diameter, with a flat base into which a small hole was cut. The pomegranate consists of a central ball, or grenade as scholars prefer to call it, and a thin neck that expands into what were originally six petals, four of which have survived. Part of one side of the grenade is broken off. An inscription in paleo-Hebrew letters is incised around the shoulder of the grenade, just below the neck.

One important distinction between the occurrence of the divine name on the silver amulet previously reported in **BAR** and the occurrence of the name on this small ivory pomegranate is that the silver amulet was excavated in a scientifically controlled, professionally directed excavation. The pomegranate was not.

I first saw the pomegranate in July 1979. I had come to Jerusalem to work on a long-term project, a book on the corpus of inscribed northwest semitic seals. Many of these seals are written in paleo-Hebrew script, the ancient alphabet used by the Israelites until after they returned from the Babylonian exile and adopted the so-called square Aramaic script still in use today (see "The Evolution of Two Hebrew Scripts," **BAR** 05:03). I had come to Jerusalem to check the reading of some paleo-Hebrew inscriptions in the Israel Museum and in the Rockefeller Museum.

As I usually do when I visit Jerusalem, I made the rounds of the antiquities dealers. They know me, and they know what I am looking for—inscribed seals and seal impressions from the First Temple period. Sometimes they even allow me to take pictures of their wares without buying.

One of the dealers I visited reported that, although he had neither inscribed seals nor seal impressions, he knew someone who had an ivory object with an old Hebrew inscription on it. Of course I was excited about seeing any new paleo-Hebrew inscription, but trying not to appear too eager, I simply told my friend that I would be pleased to look at the object.

Later he called me, and we fixed a time when I would return to his shop to look at the object. I arrived on time. I was invited to the back of the shop where we drank the obligatory tea and chatted about other things. Finally, he took down a box and removed a small ivory pomegranate, which he handed to me. There, incised into the ivory around the neck in a continuous circle, without word separation, was a paleo-Hebrew inscription. Unfortunately, several letters were missing where the grenade had been broken off, but the remaining letters were easy to identify.

The inscription on the shoulder of the eighth-century B.C.E. ivory pomegranate. The inscription begins at the upper left, where three letters can be seen separated from the others by a space, and continues around the pomegranate clockwise, interrupted in the back where the pomegranate is broken. The author reads the inscription as follows (bracketed letters are assumed to fill the broken area in the shoulder): *lby't [yhw]h' qdš khnm*, which he translates as "[Belonging] to the Temple of [Yahwe]h, holy to the priests." The shape of the letters provides the most important clue to the date of the pomegranate. The letters are very similar to the script of the so-called Siloam inscription, which was cut into the wall of a tunnel King Hezekiah built in about 705 B.C.E. to bring water from the Gihon Spring inside the walls of Jerusalem.



*Courtesy André Lemaire*



*Courtesy André Lemaire*

Two more views of the inscription on the shoulder of the eighth-century B.C.E. ivory pomegranate.

I immediately noticed that the shape of the letters was very similar to the letters in the famous Siloam inscription, which was found in the tunnel King Hezekiah of Judah built in about 705 B.C.E. in preparation for Sennacherib's siege. The tunnel brought water from the Spring Gihon, outside the city wall, to a pool inside the walls of Jerusalem. The inscription on the ivory pomegranate was easily datable on paleographic grounds to the late eighth century B.C.E.

Since the pomegranate had not been excavated in a scientifically controlled excavation, I knew that I had to be careful: Was it a fake? The ivory pomegranate itself looked genuine. But perhaps the inscription had been incised by a modern forger. To find out, I examined the writing very carefully under a magnifying glass, paying special attention to the edges of the incision. I noticed traces of new incisions at the bottom of some letters, as if someone had tried to clean out caked earth from the incised letters with a small needle. Sometimes a calcic deposit forms on artifacts found in tombs and excavations; perhaps a needle was used to remove calcium deposits from the incised letters. The needle also removed most of the ancient patina from the incised letters, but traces of the same patina that covered the surface of the pomegranate could still be seen in the original incisions. The trace incisions were clearly added after the letters had been incised. This fact and the presence of patina in the incisions confirmed the paleographic evidence that both the inscription and the artifact were genuine.

I photographed the pomegranate and left the shop. When the photographs were developed, I examined the inscription more closely. Despite the lack of word dividers in the inscription, I easily recognized the Hebrew word for holy, *qdš* or *kodesh*.<sup>a</sup> This was followed by the word for priests, *khn̄m* or *kohanim*. Then came a blank space. Perhaps this was the end of the inscription and what followed after the space was the beginning of the inscription. After the space were three letters, *lby*. Then came the broken part. It looked like about four letters were missing. Then I dimly saw traces of a Hebrew *he*, followed by the word for holy, as described above. If the space between the *m* and the *l* marks the beginning of the circular inscription, then it reads like this:

*lby [xxxx]h̄ qdš khnm*

I knew of several paleo-Hebrew inscriptions on vases from Hazor, Arad and Beer-Sheva that contained the word *qdš* or "holy." More significant, however, was an ostrakon (No. 18) from Arad that contained the phrase *být yhw̄h*, "Temple of the Lord."

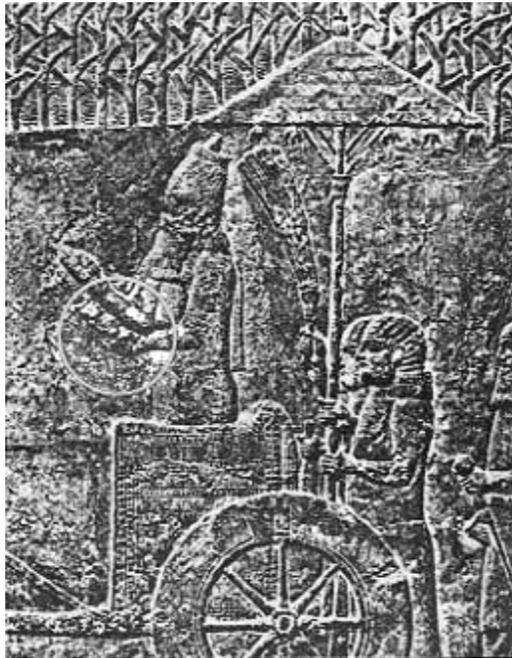
Thus, it was very tempting to restore the missing letters as follows:

*lby[ʔt yhw]h̄ qdš khnm*

“[Belonging] to the Tem[ple of the Lor]d [Yahweh], holy to the priests.”

To anyone familiar with ancient Hebrew inscriptions, this restoration makes eminent good sense and is indeed in many ways obviously correct.

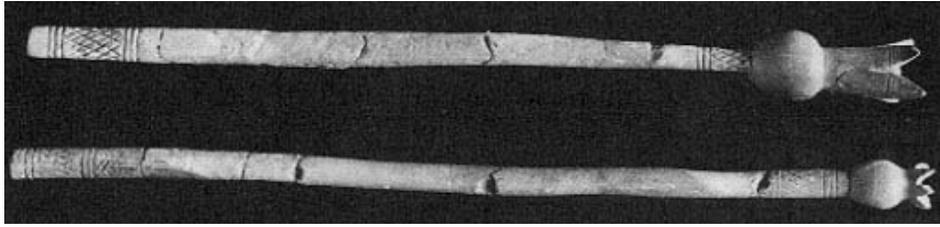
For what purpose was the pomegranate used? Although we cannot be sure, a small hole in the base provides a clue. This hole is about 0.23 inches (6mm) in diameter and 0.39 inches (10mm) deep. Apparently, a small rod—about 12 inches (30 cm) long—probably also in ivory, or less likely in wood or metal, was placed in the hole to provide a shaft for a small scepter. In two Assyrian reliefs from Nineveh, we see King Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.E.) standing in his chariot, holding in his left hand what seems to be a similar small scepter, the head of which is in the shape of a pomegranate.<sup>1</sup> Similar scepters with pomegranate heads were found in the 1930s by the British expedition working at Lachish. These scepters date to the Late Bronze Age, more precisely to about the 13th century B.C.E. So the pomegranate as the head of a scepter is not uncommon.



*Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum*

**Assyrian King Sennacherib holds a pomegranate scepter in his left hand, as he rides in his chariot. This royal procession was carved onto a wall of Sennacherib’s palace at Nineveh, where reliefs depicted the events of his reign (704–681 B.C.E.).**

Why is this ivory scepter so small? The answer lies in the fact that it is ivory; that is, the pomegranate was made from a single piece of ivory, which obviously limited the size.



*Courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority*

**Ivory scepters with pomegranates. Part of a cache of objects found in a temple at Lachish in the 1930s by the Wellcome Marston Archaeological Expedition, these scepters are approximately 9.50 inches long and date to the 13th century B.C.E.**

**The ivory pomegranate described in this article may also be part of a scepter; if so, its rod was probably 1 foot long and the result would have looked much like these graceful scepters.**

Despite my efforts to learn from the dealer something of the provenance of the ivory pomegranate, I was unsuccessful. The object belonged to someone else, he told me, who himself did not know where it had come from. I could learn no more. Worse, I do not know where the object is today. [For more, see *"The Ivory Pomegranate: Is the Inscription Fake?"* p. 33.]

However, from the object itself and the inscription around it, we can conclude that it was probably used by the priests in the service of the Jerusalem Temple at the end of the eighth century B.C.E.

Where was the object found? Probably not far from Jerusalem, either accidentally or in an illicit excavation. It is possible that it was found in one of the many tombs carved in the limestone hills all around Jerusalem. But this is just a guess.

We should not be at all surprised that a pomegranate was used in the Temple in Jerusalem. Pomegranates, along with grapes and figs, are the best-known fruits of the Holy Land. These three fruits are mentioned together in several Biblical passages. In Numbers 20:5, God is asked "Why did you make us leave Egypt to bring us to this wretched place [the Wilderness of Zin], a place with no grain or figs or vines [grape] or pomegranates?" And in Deuteronomy 8:8, it is said that the "Lord your God is bringing you into a good land ... a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs and pomegranates."

Several inscribed seals decorated with pomegranates surrounding the name of the owner have been found. These seals date to the eighth to seventh centuries B.C.E.<sup>2</sup>

Inscribed carnelian seal with pomegranates. Two stylized pomegranates lying on their sides with their three petals facing outward decorate this seal at either end of double curved lines. Above and below the lines is an inscription that reads: "Belonging to 'Eliyahu [the son of] Yaqimyahu." (The letters on the seal were purposely reversed so that when the seal was pressed into wet clay, the letters would appear in their proper orientation.) The script closely resembles the script on the ivory pomegranate and on the Siloam inscription; most likely this half inch-long seal was manufactured about 700 B.C.E. This date precludes the possibility that the 'Eliyahu [Elijah] of the seal is the Biblical prophet, who lived more than 150 years earlier. The seal probably came from Gezer; it was purchased from a Bedouin who lived nearby and claimed it was found at Gezer.



*Tsila Sagiv, courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority*

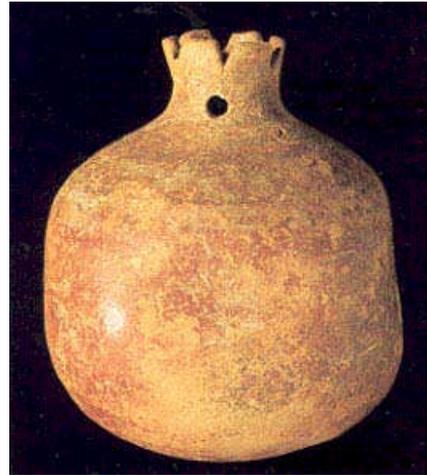
In the past few years, several pomegranate-shaped pottery vessels have been found in excavations in Israel. At Tell Halif (Lahav), Professor Joe D. Seger excavated an Israelite tomb, probably from the eighth century B.C.E., in which he found a bowl with a raised pomegranate in the center. Two pottery vessels in the shape of pomegranates, dating to about 1000 B.C.E., were found in a Philistine temple excavated by Amihai Mazar at Tell Qasile. These pottery vessels confirm the popularity of pomegranate decorations in the Judahite kingdom.



*Patti O'Connor-Seger/Designhouse*

"Rimmon" bowl from Tell Halif in southern Judea. "Rimmon" is the Hebrew word for pomegranate, the central feature of this red-burnished, 7-inch-diameter bowl dating from the tenth to eighth centuries B.C.E. The pomegranate motif occurs frequently in the Near East where the fruit is well-known, but this bowl is the only one of its kind so far discovered. It suggests that the site where it was found may be ancient Rimmon.

From a Philistine temple, this pomegranate-shaped pottery vessel resembles the inscribed pomegranate shown to the author in Jerusalem. The Philistine vessel dates to about 1000 B.C.E. and was discovered at Tell Qasile, a site within the city limits of Tel Aviv.



*Courtesy Amihai Mazar*

One reason the pomegranate was so popular is that it was probably a symbol of fecundity because of the multitude of seeds contained in the fruit.

According to the Bible, the hem of Aaron's vestment was decorated with pomegranates (Exodus 28:33–34). Four hundred pomegranates decorated the capitals of the two freestanding bronze columns named Boaz and Joachin in front of the entrance to the Temple (1 Kings 7:42; 2 Kings 25:17; 2 Chronicles 4:13 [in some references the number of pomegranates is 100, e.g., 2 Chronicles 3:16 and Jeremiah 52:23]). So we should hardly be surprised that the pomegranate was used in the Temple service.

Thus, archaeological parallels confirm the popularity of the pomegranate, and the Biblical references confirm its association with the Israelite Temple and the priests.

This ivory pomegranate is unique, however, because it was probably used by the priests in the service at the Jerusalem Temple in the late eighth century B.C.E. If that is true, it is the only sacred object (*qdsû* or *kodesh*, holy) that survives from the Temple built by Solomon.

## The Ivory Pomegranate

### *Is the Inscription Fake?*

*Sidebar to: Probable Head of Priestly Scepter from Solomon's Temple*

The ivory pomegranate inscribed around the shoulder "Belonging to the Temple of [Yahwe]h, holy to the priests" first surfaced in a Jerusalem antiquities shop, probably that of Kando, the same antiquities dealer who handled the Dead Sea Scrolls. It was there, in East Jerusalem, when it was seen in 1979 by Sorbonne epigrapher André Lemaire. Kando (or whoever) allowed Lemaire to take it to the antiquities shop of Rafi Brown, across from the King David Hotel, where he could examine it with a microscope. Regarding it as authentic, two years later, in 1981, Lemaire published a short report on the tiny (only a little over 1.5 inches high) pomegranate and its inscription in a scholarly French journal.

At Shanks's request, in 1983 Lemaire wrote a more popular account of the pomegranate and its inscription for **BAR**. At this time, the pomegranate was apparently still in Israel because, at **BAR**'s request, Lemaire was able to arrange to have a color photo taken of it to accompany his article.

A short time after the publication in **BAR**, the pomegranate turned up in France in the collection of a wealthy Paris collector (perhaps Paul Altman), who reportedly paid only \$3,000 for the artifact. Obviously it had been smuggled out of Israel. In 1985 it was displayed in an exhibition at the Grand Palais. After the exhibit, it again disappeared.

Then in 1987 tour guide Meir Urbach, son of Ephraim Urbach, one of Israel's most distinguished scholars and author of the much admired *The Sages—The World and Wisdom of the Rabbis of the Talmud*, and a Talmudic scholar in his own right, approached the Israel Museum offering it for sale (although not disclosing the owner). A purchase price of \$550,000 was negotiated, which was financed by a gift of a million Swiss francs (then \$675,000) from a Basel benefactor whose name is supposedly unknown even to the museum.

Since 1988 it has been on display in the Israel Museum and touted as the only relic from the Solomonic Temple. There has been some scholarly debate about whether in fact it comes from Solomon's Temple. It could come from another Israelite temple, some scholars argued. Moreover, only the last letter of the word Yahweh (the personal name of the Israelite God) is there. The rest is missing. Apparently three or four letters broke off. Some scholars have argued that the inscription originally referred not to Yahweh, but to the Canaanite goddesses Asherah or

Baalah, both of which end in the same letter as Yahweh. But there was little question about the inscription's authenticity—until 2004.

The rumors were rife that the inscription was a fake. When they reached print, **BAR** contacted Israel Museum director James Snyder, who had also heard the rumors, but he had no idea on what they were based. The pomegranate had never been out of its vitrine, so it had not been examined (except through the glass) by those spreading the rumors.

Then a day or two before the forgery indictment was handed down in late December 2004, the Israel Museum announced that a committee had been appointed in conjunction with the Israel Antiquities Authority to study the pomegranate inscription and that the committee had found evidence that it was a modern forgery.

In 2005, **BAR** offered to buy the pomegranate for the amount the museum had paid for it, but Snyder declined the offer. In a letter to Shanks, Snyder wrote that while “the Ivory Pomegranate no longer carries the historical significance which it was previously thought to have, it remains for us an important story of museological process.” Today, the pomegranate remains the possession of the Israel Museum.

## Is It or Isn't It?

*King Jehoash Inscription Captivates Archaeological World*

By Hershel Shanks



*Geological Survey of Israel*

### **The Jehoash inscription**

Mystery, politics, Biblical implications, gold—a newly surfaced inscription purporting to be by King Jehoash has it all. And it may be a forgery!

If authentic, it would be the first royal inscription ever found of an Israelite king.

If authentic, it may provide evidence for Israel's claim to the Temple Mount. If a forgery, some Israeli may be trying to manufacture evidence of Israel's claim to the Temple Mount. Or some Palestinian may be trying to plant an obvious forgery in order to undermine supposed evidence of Israel's claim to the Temple Mount.

If authentic, it would support the historicity of the Book of Kings.

If authentic, it might even show that the First Temple—Solomon's Temple—was decorated with gold.

If authentic, it would cast doubt on the ability of epigraphers and philologists and Biblical scholars to detect a forgery. If a forgery, it would cast doubt on the ability of geologists to detect a forgery.

The inscription first surfaced—as far as we know at this point—in the summer of 2001, when it was shown to Israel's leading paleographer, [the now late] Joseph Naveh of Hebrew University. According to a *Jerusalem Post* report, Naveh was contacted by an anonymous caller who asked him to verify the authenticity of the inscription. Naveh agreed to look at it, and a photograph of the inscription was subsequently sent to him. After examining the photograph, he asked to see the stone itself. Naveh appeared at a Jerusalem hotel at the appointed time and was met by an Israeli and a young Arab who did not speak during the meeting. According to the Israeli, the stone had been found by Arabs outside the eastern wall of the Temple Mount. Some speculate that when in recent years the Waqf, the Muslim religious trust that controls the Temple Mount, illegally excavated a monumental entryway to the underground area known as Solomon's Stables, their bulldozer dug up this inscription, which was then dumped out unknowingly with the rest of the excavation debris into the Kidron Valley, just east of the Temple Mount. Whatever the truth, Naveh had ample opportunity to examine the stone.

The 15-line text is inscribed in pre-Exilic Hebrew letters on a blackish sandstone plaque almost 11 inches long, a little over 9 inches wide and about 3 inches thick. As is common for this time, dots serve as word dividers. The top of the inscription has been broken off. Only part of one as-yet-unidentified letter of the first line remains. The name of the Judahite king Jehoash (Yehoash in Hebrew), who ruled from about 835 to 801 B.C.E., does not appear at all. His identification is clear only from the fact that the name of his father, minus the first letter (Hazyahu in this inscription; Ahazyah in Kings and Ahaziah in English), appears quite clearly in the second line. The missing first line presumably contained the name Yehoash followed by *ben* (son of) followed by the A of Ahazyah. Hence, the inscription has become known as the Jehoash inscription.

A forger would never have knowingly taken the plaque for authentication to the most prominent epigrapher in Israel. Both the Arab and the Jew who brought the plaque to Naveh at

the hotel (and anyone who sent them) must have thought that the inscription was genuine. If the inscription is a forgery, it was probably out of the forger's hands by this time.

In any event, Naveh concluded from his examination that the inscription was very probably a forgery (he has since become even more convinced of this).

That fall the plaque was taken for authentication to the Geological Survey of Israel (GSI). At some point, the owner came to be represented by one of the most prominent law firms in Israel, Herzog, Fox and Neeman. The Herzog is Issac Herzog, a member of the Knesset (Israel's parliament) and an adviser to former Prime Minister Ehud Barak. The lawyers will not disclose the name of their client, however, or anything else concerning the finding or present ownership of the plaque.

The GSI made a thorough study of the plaque, its inscription and the patina (the film or crust that, after many centuries, forms over an ancient object) in both cracks in the stone and in the inscription, and declared the inscription authentic.

The geologists at the GSI—Shimon Ilani, Amnon Rosenfeld and Michael Dvorachek—decided to publish their report in the GSI journal. It is very difficult to keep a secret in Israel, and the existence of the inscription soon became known.

Thus began a debate among scholars and scientists as heated as any in recent memory.

Harvard's Frank Moore Cross finds that orthographically (in terms of spelling) the forger "errs catastrophically in at least two cases." Spelling in ancient Hebrew gradually changed. To know when this happened requires expert knowledge. The watershed is the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. For example, Biblical texts composed before the destruction spell David as *DVD*; after the destruction, it was spelled *DVYD*. The spelling errors that Cross found in the inscription are much more complicated than that example and require much more expertise to detect. But Johns Hopkins professor Kyle McCarter calls one of the errors Cross detected "a real howler." McCarter added, "I thought the bad guys had become a lot more sophisticated." Naveh is now quoted as saying, "It is not just that I have serious doubts about its authenticity, but I believe it is a fake." Naveh notes that "numerous details do not coincide with [supposed] dates [of the letters]." Robert Deutsch of Haifa University (a paleographer and an antiquities dealer) finds it "a very poor forgery," "a hybrid chimera," combining Moabite, Phoenician and Hebrew letters. Christopher Rollston, of Emmanuel School of Religion and editor of the scholarly journal *Maarav*, also finds the inscription "not difficult to

expose as a forgery because it wasn't particularly well done ... The script of The Jehoash Inscription deviates so substantially from all provenanced Iron Age Hebrew inscriptions (in terms of mixtures of forms from different periods and languages) that it cannot, in my opinion, be seriously considered ancient."

Other scholars, however, express themselves more cautiously: It may be a fake. Or it may be authentic. According to an article in *Ha'aretz*, these fence-sitters include Gabriel Barkay of Bar-Ilan University, Shmuel Safrai of Hebrew University, Chaim Cohen of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Ada Yardeni, a leading Israeli paleographer, and André Lemaire of the Sorbonne. We have so little material from early Iron Age II, when this inscription purports to have been written, that the seeming errors may be authentic variations that we don't yet know about—and indeed would prove the authenticity of the inscription.

The royal inscription apparently speaks in King Jehoash's name of "men in the land and in the desert and in all the cities of Judah" who gave much "consecrated silver" to the Temple, to buy "quarry stone and juniper wood and Edomite copper." The money was also used to pay the workmen. Thus were repaired "the Temple [House], and the encircling walls, and the storied structure, and the lattice works, and the spiral staircases and the recesses and the doors." The plaque would be a testimony to the workers' craftsmanship. The inscription ends with an awkwardly phrased (according to Cross) divine invocation: "May Yahweh ordain his people with blessing." Yahweh is the personal name of the Israelite God.

This text closely parallels a passage in 2 Kings 12. Jehoash tells the priests to collect sacred money to repair the Temple (2 Kings 12:5–6). In the Biblical text, the priests apparently failed to make the repairs. But then they collected money that was used to repair the House (Temple), specifically "to pay the carpenters and the laborers who worked on the House of Yahweh, and the masons and the stone-cutters. They also paid for wood and for quarried stone with which to make the repairs on the House of Yahweh, and for every other expenditure that had to be made in repairing the House" (2 Kings 12:12–13).

If the inscription is authentic, it is a remarkable confirmation of the Biblical text. Neither the inscription nor the Biblical text seems to read easily. Both have an archaic feel. Nadav Na'aman, of Tel Aviv University, analyzed this Biblical passage in a Dutch journal in 1998. Although Kings is part of the Deuteronomistic History compiled in the late seventh century B.C.E., the compiler had earlier sources that he incorporated into the text. Na'aman speculated in his article that the source of this Biblical account was a royal inscription. When Na'aman later saw

the text of the Jehoash inscription, he exclaimed, "Either I hit the nail on the head, and my theory is confirmed, or the forger read my theory and decided to confirm it."

So which is it?

According to the geologists, science proves the authenticity of the inscription. They paid particular attention to the patina. They found brown ochreous patina both in the incisions of the inscription and in a central crack in the stone. The patina also formed on the broken upper edge of the plaque. The crack descends diagonally from the right margin near the eighth line to the last letter in the 11th line. It crosses ten letters in four lines. "Clearly," say the geologists, "the crack developed after the engraving and before the formation of the patina." Moreover, "It would be virtually impossible to engrave a large number of [the] letters ... after the formation of the crack [which contains the patina] without causing breakage to the plate."

As for the patina, "It contains about the same silica content as the rock itself, and supports the conclusion that the patina formed naturally on the plate. The patina is enriched in the elements Ca [calcium] and Fe [iron] and diluted in K [potassium] and Al [aluminum], relative to the rock. Accordingly, the chemical composition of the patina was influenced not only by the composition of the rock itself, but was also affected by the burial setting. It is suggested that the tablet was buried within a wet soil, rich in lime and iron."

No adhesive materials or any other artificial substances were found in the patina (these were looked for just in case the forgers might have taken patina from a different stone and applied it to the inscription and the plaque).

Particles of carbon were detected in the patina (perhaps a result of burning wood from a fire in which the plaque burned). A carbon-14 test was conducted on the carbon particles in the patina by a laboratory in Florida. The result: a date of about 400 to 200 B.C.E. with a 95 percent chance of accuracy.

Most intriguingly, the patina also contains tiny globules of pure gold that can be formed by intense burning. It is difficult not to wonder whether the plaque was in the Temple with its gold and was burned in 586 B.C.E., when the Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem. The carbon particles in the patina may also have come from the fire, say the geologists.

How smart could the forger be? Did he plant the microscopic globules of pure gold in the patina just to fool us? Did he consciously add the gold to lead us into thinking that this dark stone plaque once hung in the Temple on a white limestone wall decorated with gold, as the Bible says? Did he purposely add the carbon molecules to the mix, using some ancient burnt wood? Was he also able to fake patina in a way that would fool the geologists?

Or are the script scholars wrong?

Or is there some third possibility that we haven't thought of?

For Victor (Avigdor) Hurowitz of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, the answer is clear: "If the epigraphers—the specialists in the writing itself or the philologists who are experts in the text—say that the inscription is bogus, this means that the geologists have been duped and that the forgers have invented methods of bypassing them."

For other equally distinguished observers, it's the other way around. "Salvation will not come from archaeologists or epigraphers," says Na'aman. "There is no difficulty today in creating an inscription with writing appropriate to the period, such as the writing on what is called the King Jehoash inscription. This is especially true since archaeologists and epigraphers have no precedent for this kind of inscription, such an ancient Judahite royal inscription." Therefore the deciding factor in the debate will be the scientific one, rendered by the geologists.

Avi Hurvitz, of Hebrew University, agrees: The geologists "are outside the debate of stylistic, linguistic, Biblical and historical similarities. They are entirely objective." About the geologists who performed the tests on the inscription, Hurvitz says, "They are first-rate. I have heard good things about them."

Nevertheless, both Hurvitz and Na'aman would like to see the scientific tests replicated by others. Just as the forgers are apparently getting so sophisticated that they can produce a text that will fool the philologists and paleographers, they may also be so scientifically sophisticated that they can fool the geologists.

What should we make of all this? Some would conclude that we must simply ignore all unprovenanced finds. For me, this is an entirely unjustified conclusion. It is certainly true that unprovenanced finds always come to us with the suspicion of forgery. We are properly skeptical. Sometimes, however, our investigation leads us to conclude that the find is almost certainly

authentic. In other cases, we are convinced that a find is almost certainly a forgery. And sometimes the conclusion is uncertain, as it seems to be in this case—at least for the moment.

Uncertainty is by no means an unusual characteristic in the study of ancient history or in archaeology. Dates are sometimes uncertain because of varying understandings of stratigraphy or the dates of parallels. Interpretations of the evidence also often widely differ, as do reconstructions of inscriptions, buildings and other artifacts. And in some cases the issue of authenticity of unprovenanced objects will add another element of uncertainty.

What the profession should do is hone its skills in detecting forgeries. A major program is needed to determine whether and how patina can be faked. Are there other tests for detecting a forgery of various kinds of artifacts and inscriptions? What should be the protocol for testing for forgery? The profession should be at least as smart as the forgers—and certainly better organized.

## Jehoash Inscription

Sidebar to: *Is It or Isn't It?*

Hebrew Transcription	Transliteration	Translation
	Line a. ['nky yhw' š bn ']	[I am Yeho'ash son of A-]
חזיהו (מלכ) . . . . . [י]	Line 1. ḥzyhw . m[lk . y]	hazyahu king of Judah,
הדה ואעש את ה . . . . .	Line 2. hdh . w's . 't . h'[gr]	and I made the collection (of silver).
ה כאשר נמלאה [ה]	Line 3. h . k'sr nml'h . n[d]	When it (the collection) was fulfilled, the generosity
בת לב אש בארץ ובמד	Line 4. bt . lb š . b'rš . wbmđ	of heart of men in the land and in the desert,
בר ובכל ערי יהודה ל	Line 5. br . wbkl . 'ry . yhdh . l	and in all the cities of Judah
תת כסף הקדשם לרב	Line 6. tt . ksp . hqdšm . lrb	giving consecrated silver abundantly
לקנת אבן מחצב ובר	Line 7. lqnt . 'bn . mḥšb . wbr	to buy quarry stone and juniper
שמן ונחשת אדום לעשת	Line 8. šm . wnhšt . 'dm . l'st	wood and Edomite copper, performing
במלאכה באמנה ואעש	Line 9. bml'kh . b'mnh . w's	the work in good faith. And I made the
את ברוך הבית והקרת ס	Line 10. 't . bdq . hbyt . whqrt [.] s	repair of the Temple, and the encircling walls,
בב ואת היצע והשכב	Line 11. bb . w't . hys' . whšbk	and the storied structure, and the lattice works,
מ והלולמ והגרעת וה	Line 12. m . whlwl m . whgr't . wh	and the spiral staircases, and the recesses,
דלתת והיה היום הזה	Line 13. dltt . whyh . hym . hzh	and the doors. And this day will become
לעדת כי תצלה המלאכה	Line 14. l'dt . ky . tšlh . hml'kh	a witness that the work will prosper.
יעי יהוה את עמו בברכה	Line 15. ysw . yhw . 't . 'mw . bbrkh	May Yahweh ordain his people with blessing.

Brackets indicate reconstructed letters. Transcription by Christopher Rollston, Emmanuel School of Religion; transliteration and translation by Frank Moore Cross, professor emeritus, Harvard University.

## Notes

### The Forgery Trial of the Century—The Verdict Is In

a. “Dahari: J’Accuse, Mr. Shanks,” **BAR**, 31:02.

b. “Fitzmyer Calls for Ossuary Restudy,” **BAR**, 30:03.

1. Shimon Ilani, Amnon Rosenfeld, Howard R. Feldman, Wolfgang E. Krumbien and Joel Kronfeld, “Archaeometric Analysis of the ‘Jehoash Inscription’ Tablet,” *Journal of Archaeological Science* 35 (2008), pp. 2966–2972.

### Burial Box of James the Brother of Jesus

a. Aramaic was the everyday language of Palestine and Syria at the turn of the era; Aramaic script widely displaced paleo-Hebrew script during the Babylonian Exile in the sixth century B.C.E.

1. Semahot 12:9. See Dov Zlotnick, *The Tractate “Mourning” (Semahot): Regulations Relating to Death, Burial and Mourning* (New Haven/London: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), p. 82.

2. Levi Yizhaq Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collections of the State of Israel* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 1994), p. 11: “The choice of cheaper types should not be regarded as a sign of comparative poverty or of parsimony.”

3. See type 2 in Rahmani, *Catalogue*, p. 5.

4. The letters are generally very clear. The last letter of the name Joseph is a typical final *pe*. At the end of the upper stroke of the *dalet* is a lowering on the right. The following *yod* is slightly slanted and nearly as long as a *waw*. These two features appear from time to time in inscriptions from this period, especially on ossuaries. See Rahmani, *Catalogue*, number 801 for the *dalet* and numbers 125 and 218B for the *yod*.

The writing of the preposition *dalet* without a *yod* is also well known. Here it may be because the following name begins with a *yod*. Finally, one notes the cursive shape of the *aleph*, the shape of which is close to a Y. See Rahmani, *Catalogue*, numbers 256 and 455; cf. also, for instance, Yigael Yadin and Joseph Naveh, *Masada I* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1989), pp. 24–26, notes 420–421; Ada Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic, Hebrew and Nabataean Documentary Texts from the Judaean Desert and Related Material. A. The Documents. B. Translation, Paleography, Concordance*, (Jerusalem: Hebrew Univ., 2000), see esp. B, pp. 168–169.

5. See Rahmani, *Catalogue*, numbers 104, 396 and 678 (with *waw*) and numbers 290 and 865 (without *waw*).

6. See Rahmani, *Catalogue*, numbers 9, 12, 15, 16 (with *heh*) and number 573 (without *heh*).

7. See Rahmani, *Catalogue*, numbers 9, 121, 140, 702 and 704.
8. See Rahmani, *Catalogue*, number 9.
9. See John Painter, *Just James: The Brother of Jesus in History and Tradition* (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1999), p. 3.
10. See Rahmani, *Catalogue*, pp. 21–23. However, this dating may need to be shortened a little: c. 10–70 C.E., according to the excavations in Jericho: See Rachel Hachlili, “A Second Temple Period Jewish Necropolis in Jericho,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 43 (1980), pp. 235–240, esp. 239.
11. For the paleography of this period, see Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic*.
12. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 20.197–203.
13. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Church History* 2, 23, 18. For the later tradition, see F.M. Abel, “Mélanges II. La sépulture de saint Jacques le mineur,” *Revue Biblique* 28 (1919), pp. 480–499.
14. *Protevangelium of James* 17:2.
15. Rahmani, *Catalogue*, p. 27.
16. Simon Mimouni, *Le judéo-christianisme ancien* (Paris: Patrimoines, Cerf, 1998), pp. 409–428, esp. 412, 417, 428.
17. See Acts 15:13–21. Saul/Paul himself was a Pharisee (Acts 23:6; cf. 22:3; 26:5; Galatians 1:14).
18. Semahot 12:9, supra; and Emile Puech, *La croyance des Esséniens en la vie future: immortalité résurrection, vie éternelle?* Etudes Bibliques 21 (Paris: Gabalda, 1993), pp. 192–197, 220, 310; L.Y. Rahmani, “Ossuaries and Ossilegium (Bone Gathering) in the Late Second Temple Period,” in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Hillel Geva (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), pp. 191–205, esp. p. 193. On the possibility of the use of an ossuary for James, see also F.M. Abel, “Jacques,” *Revue Biblique* 28 (1919), p. 499.
19. See Rachel Hachlili, “Names and Nicknames of Jews in Second Temple Times,” *Eretz-Israel*, vol. 17 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1984), pp. 188–211 (Hebrew) and 9\*–10\* (English), esp. 194.
20. See Magen Broshi, “Estimating the Population of Ancient Jerusalem,” *BAR* 04:02; Joachim Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus* (London: SCM Press, 1967) [= *Jerusalem zur Zeit Jesus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1962)], p. 83, note 24: “... about 55,000 to 95,000. The smaller figure is the more probable ...” and, with a different calculation, p. 84: “This figure, of from 25–30,000, must be the upper limit.”
21. See Rahmani, *Catalogue*, number 570.

## Probable Head of Priestly Scepter from Solomon's Temple

a. Hebrew is written without vowels. The second spelling indicates how the Hebrew is pronounced.

1. See A. Peterson, *Assyrian Sculptures, Palace of Sennacherib, Plate 29*; E. F. Weidner, "Die Reliefs der assyrischen Könige III," *Archiv für Orientforschung* 11 (1936/7), pp. 289–325, esp. pp. 308–312.

2. See D. Diringer, *Le iscrizioni antico-ebraice palestinesi* (Florence, 1934), Table XIX, 24, p. 184, lhnnyhw/bn 'zryhw, "Belonging to Hananyahu son of Azaryahu," *Vorderasiatische Abteilung der Staatlichen Museen* (East Berlin), VA 32; C. Graesser, "The Seal of Elijah," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 220 (1975), pp. 63–66, now Rockefeller Museum, IDAM 74–1888 (probable origin: Gezer), l'lyhw/yqmyhw, "Belonging to Eliyahu (son of) Yaqimiyahu"; N. Avigad, "The Chief of the Corvee," *Israel Exploration Journal* 30 (1980), pp. 170–173, lpl'yhw mttyhw, "Belonging to Pela'yahu (son of) Mattityahu," private collection; P. Bordreuil and A. Lemaire, "Nouveaux sceau hébreux et araméens," *Semitica* 32 (1982), pp. 21–34, no. 3 lyknyhw // bn hkl, "Belonging to Menasseh (son of) Hakal" and no. 5, lmnšh mlkyhw, "Belonging to Menasseh (son of) Malkiyahu," (private collection).