

JUST PUBLISHED

Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University

VOLUME 38 NUMBER 2 2011

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***Tel Aviv* is an international peer-reviewed journal published by the Maney Publishing Group of the UK for the Emery and Claire Yass Publications in Archaeology of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University. Subscriptions are available at www.maney.co.uk/journals/tav**

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The Date of the Siloam Tunnel Reconsidered

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The Siloam Tunnel and the inscription incised on its rock wall have, since the inscription's discovery in 1880, been considered the work of King Hezekiah, and have served as a chronological anchor for the late Iron Age in Judah. The authors' recent excavations in the City of David near the Gihon Spring and the northern end of the tunnel have yielded new archaeological data that bear on the date of the construction of the tunnel and the incising of the inscription. Their evaluation of these data suggests that the completion of the tunnel should be set back several decades to at least the early part of the 8th century BCE, which would mean that the tunnel predates Hezekiah's reign.

Keywords Siloam Tunnel, Siloam Inscription, City of David

The Pottery Assemblage from the Rock-Cut Pool near the Gihon Spring

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The paper provides a preliminary discussion of the pottery found by Reich and Shukron in the Rock-Cut Pool near the Gihon Spring. This pottery has far-reaching implications for the dating of various parts of the Jerusalem water systems, including the Siloam Tunnel (Reich and Shukron, see this issue *Tel Aviv*, pp. 3–13). The authors date the pottery from the pool to the Iron IIA, probably not late in this period, at the end of the 9th century BCE.

Keywords Jerusalem, City of David, Gihon Spring, Iron Age IIA pottery

The Meaning of the Term *‘îr dāwīd* in Samuel and Kings

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When the term *‘îr dāwīd* appears in the Books of Samuel and Kings, most commentators and translators interpret it as referring to Jerusalem or a part of it, i.e., the southeastern hill (cf. the common translation, ‘City of David’). A few scholars (Yeivin 1948: 40–43; Knauf 2000: 79; Barkay 2006: 8; 2008: 54; Keel 2007: 63; Zevit 2008: 207), however, note parenthetically that the term in Samuel and Kings sometimes or always (Keel) relates to a ‘fortress’, a ‘citadel’ or ‘inner citadel’. This paper systematically re-examines the occurrences of the term *‘îr dāwīd* in Samuel and Kings and ends in agreement with the minority scholarly position. Since 2 Sam 5:7–9; 6:16; 1 Kings 3:1; 9:24 indicate that *‘îr dāwīd* served as a residence of David, Michal and the Egyptian wife of Solomon, it may be argued that the burial formulae for the Judahite kings that mention *‘îr dāwīd* may refer to a royal palace that also functioned as a place of burial. The paper then presents several instances in Samuel and Kings where the noun *‘îr* (unspecified) probably designates a stronghold or a tower rather than a town or a section of a town and thus is consistent with the semantic meaning ‘fortress’ of the lexeme *‘r* in Old South Arabic.

Keywords *‘îr dāwīd*, *‘îr*, Jerusalem, City of David, Polysemic meaning, Palace burial



An Archaic *Ba^cl* Inscription from Tel Beth-Shemesh

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Two adjoining fragments of a storage jar bearing an archaic alphabetic inscription were found during the renewed excavations at Tel Beth-Shemesh. Analysis indicates that, though found in separate contexts, the two sherds derived from a common source of predominately Late Bronze II and early Iron I materials. A date of 1150–1100 BCE for the provenance of the inscription is most likely. The inscription consists of six or seven alphabetic signs incised on the jar before firing. Though only the word or name element *b>l* is unequivocally recognizable, the original inscription

seems to have included a statement of ownership and an indication of the contents of the vessel. A paleographical analysis of the letter signs shows the writing to be characteristic of the mid-12th century BCE or slightly earlier and a date of ca. 1150 BCE, in accordance with its archaeological context, is entirely plausible. The use of the divine name *Ba>l* may hint at the cultural background of the Iron Age I population of Beth-Shemesh.

Keywords Tel Beth-Shemesh, Archaic alphabetic inscription, Iron Age I, Ba^l, Canaanites

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Observations on the Layout of Iron Age Samaria

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The article deals with the topography, extent and layout of Iron Age Samaria. It raises the possibility that the 9th century BCE city covered an area of ca. 8 hectares, and comprised two main components: an upper platform that consisted of a royal compound on the summit and a lower platform that surrounded it on all sides. Both were created by constructing massive support walls and laying fills behind them.

Keywords Samaria, Omride dynasty, Northern Kingdom

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Negebite Pottery beyond the Negev

Amit Dagan

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A salvage excavation conducted at the site of Orvat Shimon in the western Sephelah uncovered a rural site dating to the 8th century BCE. The excavation revealed a unique mudbrick structure that contained a rich pottery assemblage with typical wheel-made pottery alongside a large quantity of handmade vessels similar to 'Negebite vessels'. The discovery of this assemblage of handmade vessels calls into question existing interpretations of the importance of this family.

The paper suggests that the ‘Negebite vessels’ were not a regional phenomenon, but rather a functional product of rural life.

Keywords Handmade vessels, Negebite pottery, Shephelah, 8th century BCE

The Dating of the *lmlk* Storage Jars and Its Implications: Rejoinder to Lipschits, Sergi and Koch

David Ussishkin

Tel Aviv University

*Everything must be taken into account. If the fact will not fit the theory—let the theory go (Hercule Poirot, in *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, Agatha Christie, 1921)*

In two recent issues of *Tel Aviv*, Oded Lipschits, Omer Sergi and Ido Koch (2010, 2011) suggested a new chronological scheme for the *lmlk* stamped storage jars in Judah. They divided these, as well as the storage jars with concentric circle incisions and rosette stamp impressions into five stages of manufacture and use, from ca. 730 BCE to 587/6 BCE. Based on this chronological scheme Lipschits, Sergi and Koch presented various historical conclusions with regard to Judah. The present paper argues that all the *lmlk* and ‘private’ stamps, as well as the concentric circle incisions, were applied concurrently to the storage jars shortly before Sennacherib’s campaign in 701 BCE, while the rosette stamped storage jars date to shortly before the Babylonian conquest of Judah in 587/6 BCE. Hence, the chronological scheme of Lipschits, Sergi and Koch as well as the various historical conclusions based on it cannot be accepted.

Keywords *lmlk* stamps/seal impressions, *lmlk* storage jars, Sennacherib’s campaign, Judah, Lachish

The Babylonia–Elam Connections in the Chaldaean and Achaemenid Periods (Part Two)

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The paper discusses the political and economic connections between Babylonia and Elam during the periods of the Neo-Babylonian and Achaemenid empires (626–539 and 538–332 BCE respectively). It is based on both published and unpublished sources in Neo-/Late-Babylonian as well as in Neo-Elamite and Royal Achaemenid Elamite. These are mostly implicit, as pertinent chronicles and royal inscriptions are rare. Therefore, the evidence for political history is minimal whereas the socioeconomic information is much more detailed. Nevertheless, even this information is chronologically uneven as most of it refers to the Chaldaean and early Achaemenid period with very few sources about the late Achaemenid period (483–332 BCE). An appendix is devoted to workmen from upper Mesopotamia and Syria ('Assyrians') in Elam including Arabians. They were—at least partly—subjects of the Neo-Babylonian empire before its demise.

Keywords Elam, Babylonia, Workforce mobilization