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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| <i>AASOR</i> | Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research |
| <i>ADAJ</i> | Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan |
| <i>AJA</i> | American Journal of Archaeology |
| <i>AfO</i> | Archiv für Orientforschung |
| <i>ANET</i> | Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament ³ , ed. J.B. Pritchard, Princeton, 1969 |
| <i>BA</i> | The Biblical Archaeologist |
| <i>BASOR</i> | Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research |
| <i>BT</i> | Babylonian Talmud |
| <i>CAD</i> | Chicago Assyrian Dictionary |
| <i>CIS</i> | Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum |
| <i>DJD</i> | Discoveries in the Judaean Desert |
| <i>DSD</i> | Dead Sea Discoveries |
| <i>EI</i> | Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical and Geographical Studies |
| <i>ESI</i> | Excavations and Surveys in Israel |
| <i>IAA Reports</i> | Israel Antiquities Authority Reports |
| <i>IEJ</i> | Israel Exploration Journal |
| <i>JAOS</i> | Journal of the American Oriental Society |
| <i>JBL</i> | Journal of Biblical Literature |
| <i>JCS</i> | Journal of Cuneiform Studies |
| <i>JEA</i> | Journal of Egyptian Archaeology |
| <i>JNES</i> | Journal of Near Eastern Studies |
| <i>KAI</i> | W. Donner and W. Röllig: <i>Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften</i> 1–3, Wiesbaden, 1962–1964; 1 ^s , 2002 |
| <i>NEAEHL</i> | The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land (English Edition), Jerusalem, 1993 |
| <i>PEQ</i> | Palestine Exploration Quarterly |
| <i>PT</i> | Palestinian Talmud |
| <i>QDAP</i> | Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine |
| <i>RA</i> | Revue d'Assyriologie et d'Archéologie Orientale |
| <i>RB</i> | Revue Biblique |
| <i>RE</i> | Pauly-Wissowa's Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft |
| <i>RQ</i> | Revue de Qumran |
| <i>VT</i> | Vetus Testamentum |
| <i>ZA</i> | Zeitschrift für Assyriologie |
| <i>ZDPV</i> | Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins |

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

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A Late Iron Age Inscribed Sherd from the City of David

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ABSTRACT: Along the lower eastern slope of the City of David, Jerusalem, a thick layer of late Iron Age debris, likely dating from the destruction of the city in 586 BCE, has been extensively excavated, overlying and burying the earlier fortifications surrounding the Gihon Spring. This layer, labelled Str. 7, yielded many seventh-century BCE finds, including lamps, figurines, pottery and a sherd of a bowl inscribed with a personal name. This paper deals with the inscription and the possibilities of its reading.

INTRODUCTION

RECENT excavations along the eastern slope in the City of David, Jerusalem, have continued to unveil Iron II remains in the area between Kenyon's Iron Age fortification wall (Wall 1; Steiner 2001: 89–91) and the Gihon Spring (fig. 1). These Iron Age remains include a series of structures built alongside the Middle Bronze Age fortifications, as well as a thick layer of debris, sealing these structures and dating from the terminal phases of the Iron Age. Within this accumulation, just south of the MB 'fortified passage' (Reich and Shukron 2010), a rim fragment of a bowl bearing a nine-letter Hebrew inscription was discovered (B135212; fig. 2).¹

THE INSCRIPTION IN CONTEXT

The debris layer covering the lower eastern slope of the City of David, in which the inscription was found, was excavated in several areas, sealing earlier Iron II

¹ The 2013 excavations continue previous excavations in the area, conducted by E. Shukron and R. Reich (e.g., Reich 2011), expanding on their finds. The 2013 excavations were directed by J. Uziel and N. Szanton, on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority; they were funded by the Elad Foundation and were conducted in conjunction with the National Parks Authority. Assisting in the excavation were: N. Sanduka (area supervisor); V. Essman and Y. Shmidov (surveying and drafting); V. Neichin and C. Amit (photography); N. Mizrahi and G. Berkowitz (foremen); M. and D. Shukron (excavation supports); and S. Adallah (metal detection). Wet sifting was carried out at the Emek Tsurim National Park. We thank everyone who worked on the excavation, due to whose great efforts the findings were uncovered. The sherd was discovered during pottery washing by A. Sanduka, to whom we are very grateful.

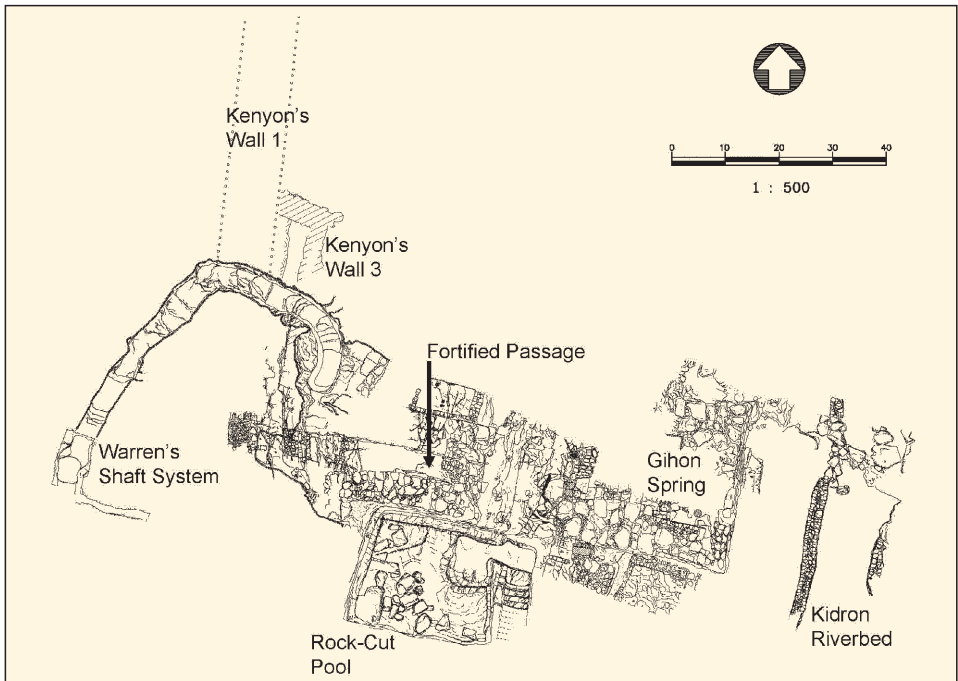


Fig. 1. Location of excavations (prepared by V. Essman and Y. Shmidov)



Fig. 2. The inscribed sherd: drawing by A. Karasik, photo by C. Amit

remains, as well as the MB fortifications (fig. 3; see also, e.g., Reich 2011; for a discussion of the use of the Middle Bronze Age fortifications throughout the Iron Age II, see Uziel and Szanton 2013). In certain areas, this layer was subsequently sealed by boulders that had fallen off the MB fortifications (fig. 4; Shukron, Uziel and Szanton 2012; Uziel, Shukron and Szanton 2013). This layer was labeled L13026 where it overlays W109 of the fortified pathway (fig. 5; for further discussion on the function and date of the fortified pathway, see Reich and Shukron 2010) and L13029 to the south of the wall. Both these loci yielded many finds, including large amounts of eighth–seventh-century BCE pottery (figs. 6–7), fragments of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic figurines typical of the period and *lmlk*-stamped handles (fig. 8).² Particularly prominent among the finds — other than the figurines — is the large number of complete or almost complete lamps

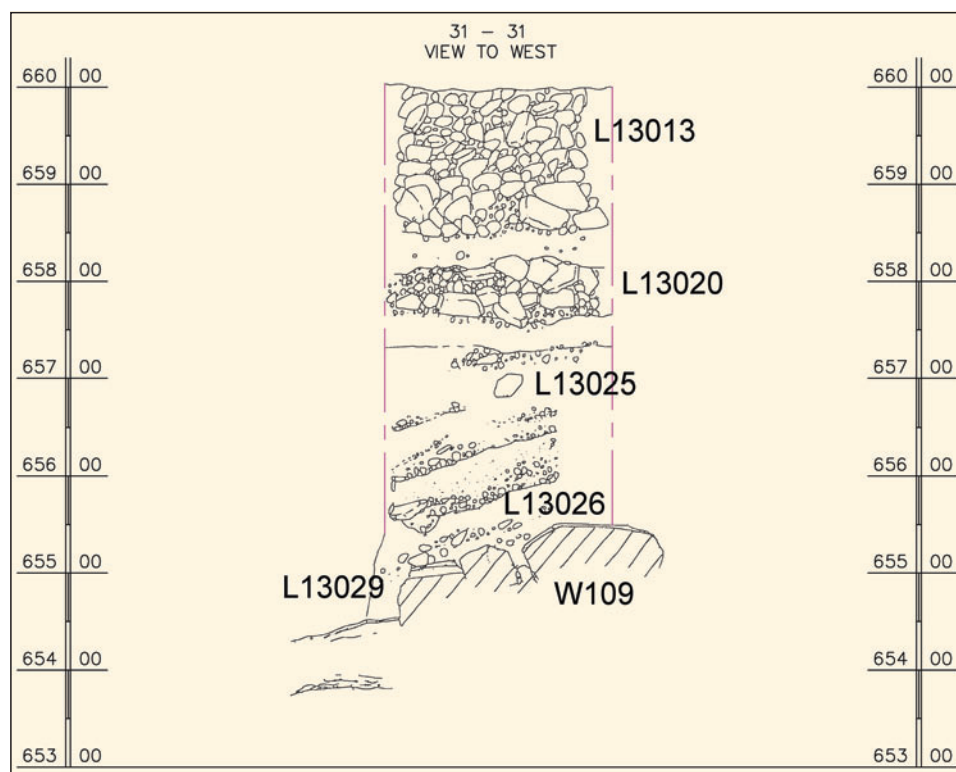


Fig. 3. Section of Iron Age debris sealing W109, the southern wall of the fortified passage (prepared by V. Essman and Y. Shmidov)

2 Note that while most of the finds seem to date from the seventh century BCE, the locus also includes eighth-century BCE finds. Therefore, the presence of *lmlk*-stamped handles does not support either side of the recent arguments on the dating of these artifacts (see, e.g., Lipschits, Sergi and Koch 2010; Ussishkin 2011).

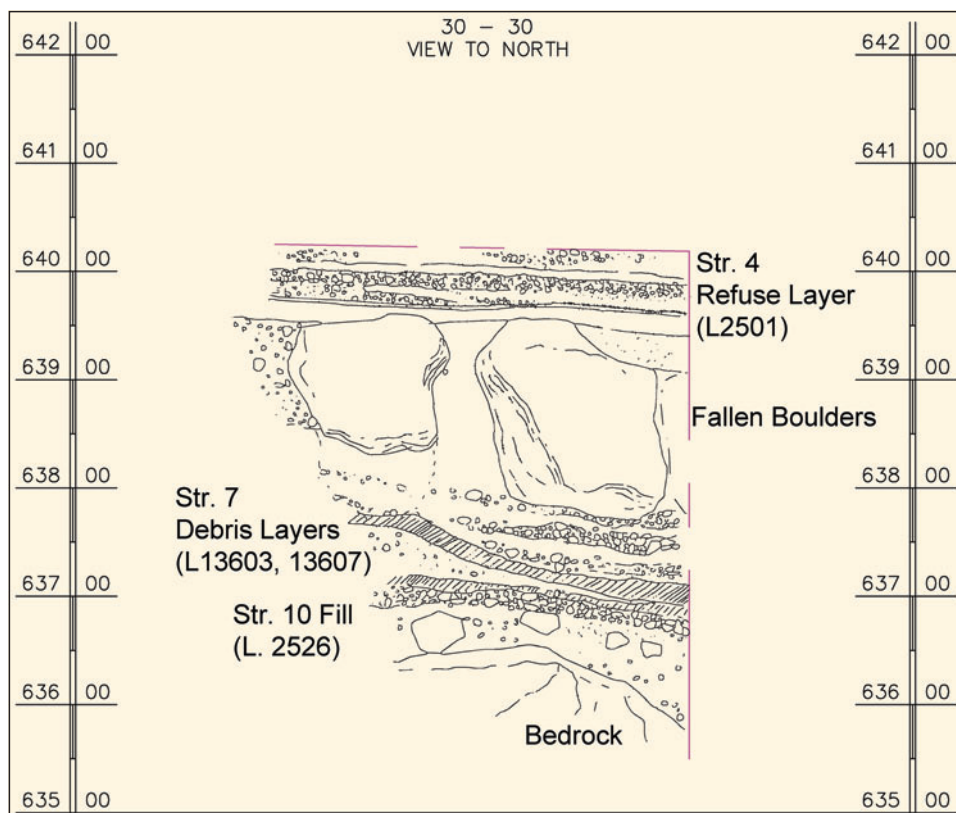


Fig. 4. Section near the Kidron Valley, showing the fallen boulders of the MB Spring Tower sealing the debris of the terminal stages of the Iron Age (prepared by V. Essman and Y. Shmidov)

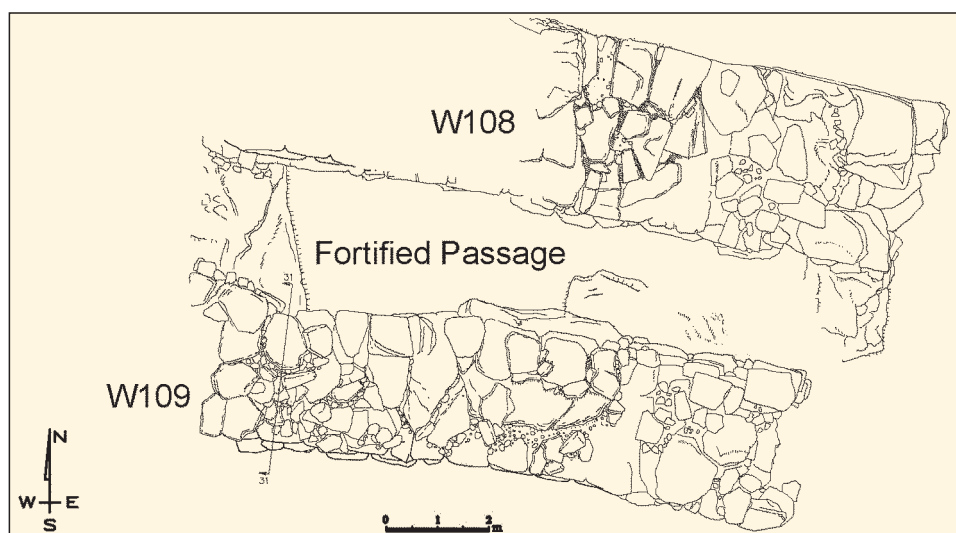


Fig. 5. Plan of the area surrounding W109, where the inscription was found (prepared by V. Essman and Y. Shmidov)

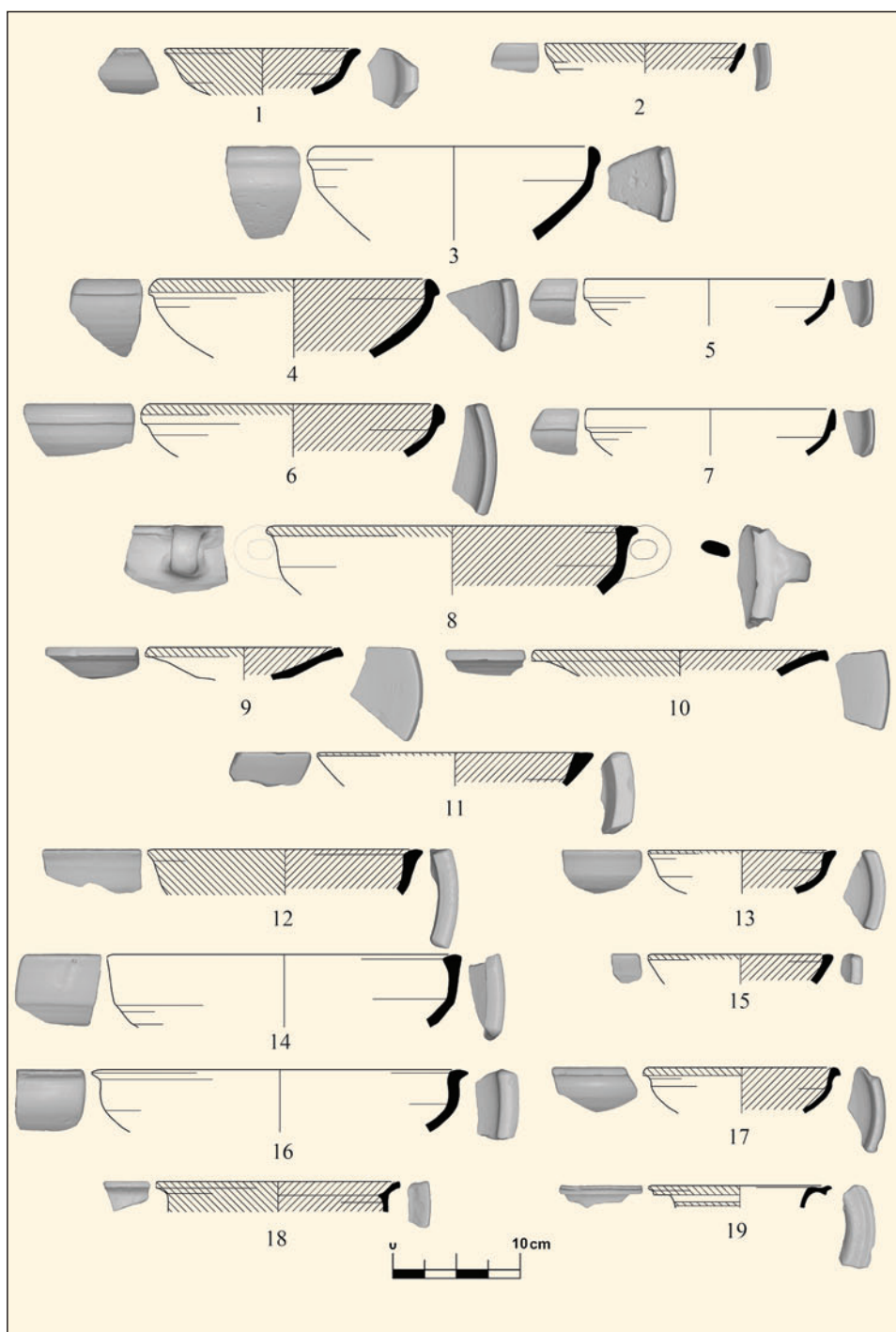


Fig. 6. Pottery from Stratum 7, Loci 13026 and 13029 (prepared by A. Karasik)

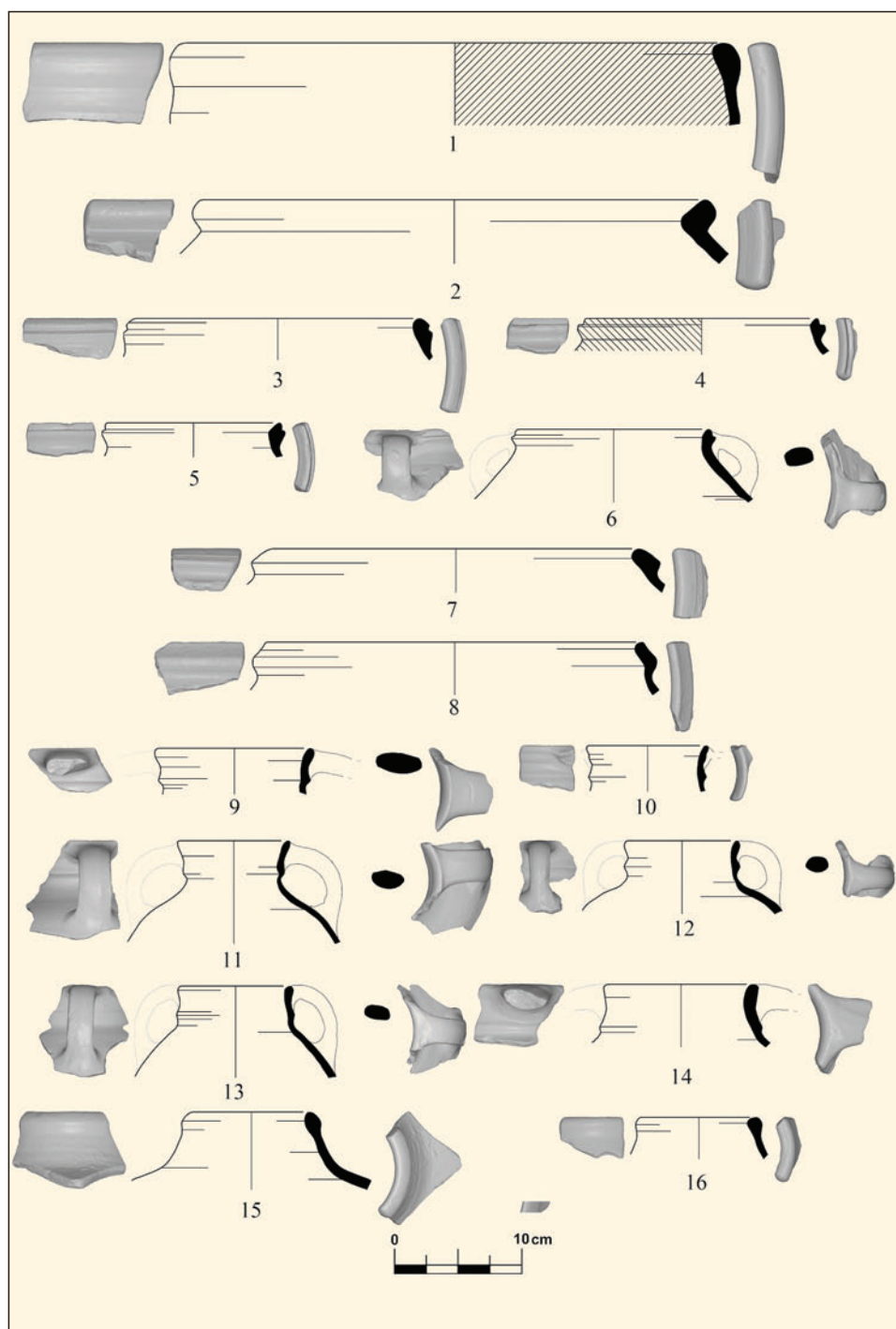


Fig. 7. Pottery from Stratum 7, Loci 13026 and 13029 (prepared by A. Karasik)



Fig. 8. Finds from Loci 13026 and 13029 (C. Amit)

found in this debris. This may be due to the nature of the layer, or perhaps the preservation of this vessel makes it seem more prominent than other vessels.³ Regardless, the lamps are all of a similar type, with pinched rim and pedestal base, typical of the seventh century BCE. The inscription under discussion was retrieved from the area south of W109 (L13029).

THE INSCRIPTION

The inscribed sherd (fig. 2 on p. 168) is part of the rim of an open bowl with a thickened rim and with red slip and wheel burnish on the interior. Such bowls are typical of the Iron Age II, particularly the seventh century BCE, with parallels found in the City of David, Str. 12–10, Type B3 (De Groot and Bernick-Greenberg 2012: 58–59, figs. 4.1:4, 4.21:14), and Lachish, Level II (Zimhoni 2004: 1887, fig. 26.55:21).

The bowl was engraved, prior to firing, on its exterior. On the fragment uncovered nine letters were inscribed, eight of which are very clear, reading:]יהו בנ בנה[. This inscription is incomplete. Preceding the first letter, י, is a portion of another letter, only the edge of which survived. The triangular shape of its edge suggests that it is a ד or a ר (and not a ב, as the line at the base of the letter would most likely appear on our fragment). If this is the case, the name before us reads]ד/ריהו בנ בנה[, '*d/ryhu bn bnh*'.

³ This question must await the statistical analysis of the finds from this layer, to be undertaken in the final publication.

י. — The letter has a low horizontal line, typical of the seventh century BCE. Probably due to the hard surface, it crosses the vertical line.

ה. — The ה has three almost parallel lines, including a rightward extension of the upper horizontal line (Naveh 1989: 93, type 12). The downstroke is almost completely horizontal. In the second occurrence of the ה, the second and third horizontal lines slant upward to the left at their end, to be compared with Renz (1995: pl. XXXI.6).

י. — This letter is not well written, as noted in the head, which is almost circular.

ב. — In the first occurrence, the head of the ב is slightly rounded, while in the second it is triangular. The downstroke slants leftward and then turns to a horizontal base.

נ. — The legs of both occurrences of נ are quite long, curving to the left at the end with a short line. In both occurrences the line crosses that of the preceding ב.

From a palaeographic perspective, the inscription is clearly not of a very ‘elegant’ script, although this may be a result of the hard surface on which it was inscribed. The palaeographic evidence coincides well with the typological dating, clearly dating the find to the seventh century BCE.

The theophoric component יהו- is very common in names in Judah, both in the Bible (e.g., Hezekiah, Jeremiah, Josiah) and in Judaeans inscriptions (see, e.g., index in Avigad and Sass 1997). Names with the suffix יהו- were also found amongst the bullae in Y. Shilo’s excavations in the City of David, Str. 10B, e.g., לגמריהו בן שפן ‘to Benayahu son of Hoshayahu’ and לביניהו בן הושעיהו ‘to Gemaryahu son of Shaphan’ (Shiloh 1984: pl. 35:2,3; Shoham 2000). יהו-suffixed names define their bearers as Judaeans, as opposed to the use of יו-suffixed names, which reflect more northern traditions (Ahituv, Eshel and Meshel 2012: 128, 135–136).

As mentioned above, the first letter of the inscription is broken, but the traces that survive suggest a ד or ר. Several names may be suggested as possible reconstructions. If we read a ד, names such as עדיהו, פדיהו, or עבדיהו come to mind. If we read a ר, one might suggest זכריהו, גריהו, שריהו, אמריהו, or some similar name. Inscription 3 from Ḥorvat ‘Uza also features a name ending with ריהו (Beit-Arieh 2007: 129).

בן (‘son of’) is followed by בנה. All three letters are quite clear, and בנה is complete (as there is an empty space on the sherd following the final ה). Its meaning, however, requires some clarification:

- בנה may be interpreted as ‘the son of’, with the ה as the marker of the 3rd

person singular possessive suffix (Gogel 1998: 155–156), leading to the combination בנה בן meaning ‘son of his son’, i.e., ‘grandson’ (cf. Gen. 11:31: ויקח תרח את אברם בנו ואת לוט בן הרן בן בנו ‘Terah took his son Abram and his grandson Lot the son of Haran’; and Jer 27:7: ועבדו אתו כל הגוים ואת בנו ואת בן בנו ‘All nations shall serve him, his son and his grandson’). However, the name of the grandfather is lacking, whereas epigraphic sources that mention a grandfather include the names of both the father and the grandfather; thus, no epigraphic source known to date provides a parallel for this scenario.

- בנה may be interpreted as a component of the name, such as in the name בנזכר on a bulla from the City of David: ‘to Tobshalom son of Benzakkur’ (Shiloh 1984; Aḥituv 1992: 130–131). In such a case, however, the ה would be the beginning of the second component, whereas the space appearing after the ה indicates that this is the end of the word, ruling out this interpretation.
- בנה could be interpreted as a title ‘(the) builder’. In this case, the person is being referred to as the son of the builder or founder of a certain monument. Such occurrences, where an individual is defined by his title/position, are attested in several cases, such as in the well-known inscription אדניהו אשר על הבית [...] (Avigad 1954: 9–17; see also the bullae of אדניהו אשר על הבית ‘Adoniyahu who is over the house’ [Avigad 1986: 21–22, nos. 1–2; Ussishkin 1993]; למאש בן מנח הספר ‘Belonging to Ma’ash son of Manoaḥ the scribe’ [Avigad and Sass 1997: 57, no. 22] and others) and in the Bible (e.g., יונתן בן אביתר הכהן ‘Jonathan the son of Eviyatar the priest’ [1 Kings 1:42]). An inscription on a Second Temple period ossuary from Giv’at ha-Mivtar reads: סמון בנה הכלה ‘Simon, builder of the Sanctuary’ (Naveh 1970: 33–34). In this case, the now lost continuation of the inscription might have included the object of his building. However, if this is the end of the inscription, such cases would require the definite article, whether in Hebrew or Aramaic.
- בנה may be interpreted as בניה, with a scribal omission of the י. The name Benayahu/Benayah is known from the Bible, for example, בניהו בן-יהוידע (1 Kings 1:8; 1 Chron. 11:22) and זכריהו בן-בניה (2 Chron. 20:14). It is also known from Hebrew inscriptions, although in all instances spelled with a י, e.g., לבניהו בן הושעיהו ‘to Benayahu son of Hoshayahu’ on a bulla from the City of David (Shiloh 1984: pl. 35:2; Shoham 2000: 45, no. B.31), once in the list of payment (Aḥituv 2008: 186–187) and in the ‘First Letter’ (Aḥituv 2008: 202), both from the Judaean Shephelah. While letters may sometimes be omitted, we have never encountered the name בניהו written without a י (בנהו ‘Benahu’ in the recently discovered stone seal from the City of David [Shukron 2012: 21*, fig. 22] should most probably be restored as הו[שע]ן, or some other name beginning with הו-, e.g., הודיהו). As mentioned above, י- suffixed names define their bearers as Judeans, as opposed to י- suffixed names, which reflect more northern traditions. While this would

suggest that the reading is not בניהו in its full form, the name בנה would seem to be a hypocoristic of בניהו, such as פדה (*Padah*) of פדיהו (Avigad and Sass 1997: 143, nos. 320, 322) and דלה of דליהו (Avigad and Sass 1997: 89, nos. 126, 127). Based on the parallel with פדה and דלה, we might also consider the possibility, although unattested, that בנה is a name (without a scribal omission). The latter two interpretations are the preferred options.

CONCLUSIONS

The inscribed sherd from the final phases of the Iron Age found in the recent excavations in Area C of the City of David is a welcome addition to the corpus of names from Jerusalem of the Judaeen Monarchy. The inscription was carved on the bowl prior to firing, suggesting that it indicated possession or that the bowl was used for an offering or as a gift to the individual mentioned. Such inscriptions are well known in this period. An example is the inscription לצפן בן נסס 'to Ṣaphan son of Nassas', found at Moza (Brandl, Greenhut and Vainstub 2009: 137–141), where Nassas is a standard-bearer (i.e., '[Belonging] to Ṣaphan son of <the> standard-bearer', see Aḥituv 2008: 219).

A bowl bearing a list of personal names was found in Arad (no. 49). It was uncovered in Stratum VIII (the late eighth century BCE), but was assumed to have originated in an earlier phase, and was interpreted as a 'list of donations or issuances' (Aḥituv 2008: 146–148).

Based on this evidence, it seems that the preferred reading is] ד/ריהו בן בנה [, with the hypocoristic בנה. Our inscription adds another name to the ever-growing corpus of individuals who have come to be known through archaeological excavations of the City of David.

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