The full texts of articles within Strata are available online through Academic Search Premier (EBSCO). This periodical is indexed in the ATLA Religion Database®, published by the American Theological Library Association, 300 S. Wacker Dr., Suite 2100, Chicago IL 60606, Email: atla@atla.com; website: www.atla.com

Cover: Beth Alpha synagogue mosaic, NASA image

© 2013 The Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society, 2nd floor, Supreme House 300 Regents Park Road London N3 2JX

ISSN Series 2042-7867 (Print)

Typeset by 3DWM, Switzerland Printed and bound in Great Britain by 4word Page & Print Production Ltd.
Strata: Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society

Editor: David Milson

Reviews Editor: Sandra Jacobs

Editorial Assistant: Rupert Chapman III

Editorial Advisory Board: Rupert Chapman, Shimon Dar, Yossi Garfinkel, Shimon Gibson, Martin Goodman, Sean Kingsley, Amos Kloner, David Milson, Rachael Sparks, Fanny Vitto

Please send correspondence and books for review to:

The Executive Secretary
The Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society
2nd floor, Supreme House
300 Regents Park Road
London N3 2JX
UK

Please format material according to the ‘Notes for Contributors’ found at the back of this volume and submit articles to the editor electronically at: editor@aias.org.uk. Book reviews should be sent to the book reviews editor at strata.reviews@aias.org.uk

Strata is published annually. To subscribe, please consult the Society’s website at www.aias.org.uk or use the form at the back of this volume.
The Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society

HONORARY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Honorary President
Rt Hon. The Viscount Allenby of Megiddo

Chairman
Prof. Martin Goodman, DLitt, FBA

Vice-Chairman
Prof. H. G. M. Williamson, DD, FBA
Mr Mike Sommer

Vice-Chairman (Israel)
Prof. Amihai Mazar

Hon. Secretary
Dr Nick Slope

Hon. Treasurer
Dr Paul Newham

Committee
Mrs Barbara Barnett
Prof. George Brooke
Dr Simcha Shalom Brooks
Dr Rupert Chapman III
Dr Irving Finkel
Prof. Shimon Gibson
Mrs Roberta Harris
Dr Sandra Jacobs
Dr Sean Kingsley
Dr David Milson
Dr Stephen Rosenberg
Dr Joan Taylor

Executive Secretary
Sheila Ford
Contents

EDITORIAL 5

GERSHON GALIL
‘yyn ḫlq’ The Oldest Hebrew Inscription from Jerusalem 11

NAVA PANITZ-COHEN, ROBERT A. MULLINS AND RUHAMA BONFIL
Northern Exposure: Launching Excavations at Tell Abil el-Qameḥ (Abel Beth Maacah) 27

DAVID M. JACOBSON
Military Symbols on the Coins of John Hyrcanus I 43

YEHUDAH RAPUANO
The Pottery of Judea Between the First and Second Jewish Revolts 57

MICHAEL J. DECKER
The End of the Holy Land Wine Trade 103

OREN TAL, ITAMAR TAXEL AND RUTH E. JACKSON-TAL WITH AN APPENDIX BY LIDAR SAPIR-HEN
Khirbet al-Ḥadra: More on Refuse Disposal Practices in Early Islamic Palestine and Their Socio-Economic Implications 117
Appendix: The Faunal Remains 145

STEPHEN GABRIEL ROSENBERG
Charles Warren at Airaq Al-Amir in 1867 149

AYALA ZILBERSTEIN AND ARIEL SHATIL
New Finds Dating from the British Mandate from the Tyropoeon Valley: the Givati Parking Lot Excavations near the Dung Gate 153

Book reviews 163
Summaries of Lectures 240
Reports from Jerusalem by Stephen Rosenberg 245
Grant Report 264
Notes for Contributors 267
Reviews

Yohanan Aharoni, Michael Avi-Yonah, Anson Rainey, Ze’ev Safrai and
and Revised (Adrian Curtis) 163

Avraham Faust, Judah in the Neo-Babylonian Period: The Archaeology of Desolation
(Graham Davies) 165

Yardenna Alexandre, with contributions by Guy Bar-Oz, Ariel Berman and
Noa Raban-Gerstel, Mary’s Well, Nazareth: The Late Hellenistic to the
Ottoman Periods (Richard Freund) 166

Mayer Gruber, Shmuel Aḥituv, Gunnar Lehmann, and Zipora Talshir (eds.),
All the Wisdom of the East: Studies in Near Eastern Archaeology and
History in Honor of Eliezer D. Oren (Lester L. Grabbe) 169

Meir and Edith Lubetski (eds.), New Inscriptions and Seals Relating to the
Biblical World (John F. Healey) 176

Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming (eds.), Judah and
the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context
(Sandra Jacobs) 178

Eilat Mazar with Y. Shalev, P. Reuven, J. Steinberg and B. Balogh, The Walls
of the Temple Mount (2 vols.) (David M. Jacobson) 182

Jack Green, Emily Teeter, and John A. Larson (eds.), Picturing the Past: Imaging and
Imagining the Ancient Middle East (Janice Kamrin) 186

Chad S. Spigel, Ancient Synagogue Seating Capacities. Methodology, Analysis
and Limits (Lee I. Levine) 188

Mordechai Cogan (ed.), Hayim Tadmor: “With My Many Chariots I have
Gone Up the Heights of Mountains: ” Historical and Literary Studies on
Ancient Mesopotamia and Israel (Peter Machinist) 192

Cynthia Shafer-Elliott, Food in Ancient Judah: Domestic Cooking in the
Time of the Hebrew Bible (Carol Meyers) 197

Jens Kamlah (ed.), with the assistance of Henrike Michelau, Temple Building
and Temple Cult Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant
of the Institute of Biblical Archaeology at the University of Tübingen
(28th-30th of May 2010) (William Mierse) 199

Mordechai Cogan, Bound for Exile. Israelites and Judeans under Imperial Yoke:
Documents from Assyria and Babylonia (Alan Millard) 204
Martin Worthington, *Principles of Akkadian Textual Criticism* (Alan Millard) 205


Hannah M. Cotton, Leah Di Segni, Werner Eck, Benjamin Isaac, Alla Kushnir-Stein, Haggai Misgav, Jonathan Price, Israel Roll and Ada Yardeni (eds.), *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae: Volume 1, Jerusalem, Part 1: 1–704. Part 1 The Hellenistic Period up to the Destruction of the Temple in 70; Part 2: The Roman Period from 70 to the Reign of Constantine; Late Antiquity from Constantine to the Arab Conquest* (Tessa Rajak) 209

Hannah M. Cotton et al., with contributions by Robert Daniel and assistance of Marfa Heimbach, Dirk Kossmann and Naomi Schneider, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae Vol. II Caesarea and the Middle Coast, 1121–1260* (Tessa Rajak) 209

Avraham Faust, *The Archaeology of Israelite Society in Iron Age II* (Gary A. Rendsburg) 215

Katerina Galor and Gideon Avni (eds.). *Unearthing Jerusalem, 150 years of Archaeological Research in the Holy City* (Stephen Gabriel Rosenberg) 219

Gershon Galil, Ayelet Gilboa, Aren M. Maeir, Dan’el Kahn (eds.), *The Ancient Near East in the 12th–10th Centuries BCE. Culture and History. Proceedings of the International Conference held at the University of Haifa, 2–5 May, 2010* (Jack M. Sasson) 222

Joan E. Taylor, *The Essenes, the Scrolls, and the Dead Sea* (David Stacey) 225

Anthony Frendo, *Pre-Exilic Israel, the Hebrew Bible, and Archaeology: Integrating Text and Artefact* (Joan Taylor) 230

Jodi Magness, *The Archaeology of the Holy Land from the Destruction of Solomon’s Temple to the Muslim Conquest* (Joan Taylor) 233

Lester L. Grabbe and Oded Lipschits (eds.), *Judea Between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400–200 BCE)* (H.G.M. Williamson) 235
‘ynn ḫlq’

The Oldest Hebrew Inscription from Jerusalem

GERSHON GALIL
University of Haifa

This article offers a new reading of the inscription unearthed in 2012 at the Ophel in Jerusalem. It reexamines its script, language, and vocabulary, as well as its historical and cultural context. In my opinion this text was written in the late Canaanite script, in Hebrew, and it indicates that there were scribes in Jerusalem who were able to write texts as early as the second half of the 10th century BCE. Here is my new transliteration and translation of this inscription: [...] rm
‘ynn ḫlq m[...]: [in the ... year], wine of inferior quality, (sent) from GN. The inscription is divided into three categories: (a) a date formula; (b) classification of wine; and (c) provenance. The form yyn indicates that the language of this inscription is Hebrew, written in the southern dialect. In Ugaritic, Old Canaanite, Phoenician, Ammonite, and even in Israelite Hebrew as attested in the Samaria Ostraca, wine was typically written with only one yod (yn; ye-nu; indicating the reduction of the diphthong). Yet, in (southern) epigraphic Hebrew at Lachish, Arad and other sites the form is always yyn. Similarly, this form appears in Biblical Hebrew without exception, Ben Sira, Qumran, and even in the Rabbinic sources.

Introduction

A new inscription was unearthed during the 2012 excavations in Jerusalem, ca. 80 m south of the southern wall of the Temple Mount by Eilat Mazar and her team, during the archaeological excavation under the auspices of the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The inscription was incised below the rim of a pithos while the clay was still moist. Two potsherds of this pithos were discovered and were joined by Mazar’s team. These two fragments were found under a wall of a large building constructed on bedrock. Where the bedrock featured a slight depression, a group of large pottery fragments from seven pithoi including these two inscribed potsherds was placed to stabilize the earth under this section of the building. The inscribed pithos dates to the 10th century BCE.

A week after the July 10, 2013 Hebrew University press release on the subject (with two excellent photographs of the inscription, Smith 2013) a scientific article appeared (Mazar, Ben-Shlomo and Ahituv 2013). Several days later, Galil, Rollston
and Demsky presented alternative readings of the inscription (Galil 2013a; 2013b; Demsky 2013; Rollston 2013), and three weeks later Lehman and Zernecke’s paper was published (Lehman and Zernecke 2013). On August 15, 2013, I examined the original inscription at the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University in Mount Scopus, Jerusalem. The number and speed of these studies is one indication of the importance of this new find.

**Critical Review of Previous Readings**

**Ahituv’s reading**

The *editio princeps* of this inscription was published by Ahituv (*cf.* Mazar, Ben-Shlomo and Ahituv 2013: 45–47). Since the letters tend to the left, he reads the following letters from left to right: *mem, qop* (less likely *reš*), *pe, het, nun, lamed* (or two broken letters), and *nun*. Ahituv points out that the inscription was incised before firing, and written in a Proto-Canaanite/Early-Canaanite script. He proposed that it may refer to the name of the owner of the *pithos*, its addressee, or contents, but was unable to present any meaningful reading and claimed that it is enigmatic. He dates the letters to the 11th–10th centuries BCE, without determining its precise language. However, the press release points out that the language is not Hebrew, and may be Jebusite.

Ahituv’s proposal raises a number of difficulties, primarily that the reading direction is not clear. In this period it was indeed possible to write from left to right (dextrograde) or from right to left (sinistrograde), yet the slant of the letters can not indicate reading direction. While some letters in this inscription tend to the left, the letter *het* tends to the right. In other inscriptions the slant of the letters is not consistent and does not match the reading direction: for example, several letters in the Qeiyafa inscription tend to the right, although it was certainly written from left to right. For example, the *šin* at the beginning of line two; the letter *bet* in the first three lines; and others; some letters are straight and others tend to the right. Similarly, in the Gezer inscription, written from right to left, some letters tend rather to the left. For example, the writing direction of the letter *reš* in lines six (twice) and seven. These inscriptions show that the slant of the letters can not be used as an indicator for reading direction.

Ahituv suggested that the sixth letter is a possible *lamed* (or two broken letters), but he is not sure about the meaning of the long vertical line which appears below the break. He mentioned that it might be a tail of a letter, but in any case it is not a continuation of the left line above it, the left side of his reconstructed *lamed* (Mazar, Ben-Shlomo and Ahituv 2013: 45). He claims, furthermore, that it is not a casual incision.
Rollston’s reading

Rollston, following Ahituv, also reads the inscription from left to right, but sees the following letters: mem, qop, lamed, het, nun, reš, [dalet?], šin, and translates the inscription as: ‘Pot belonging to Ner’ (mqlh nr). He identifies mqlh with Biblical qlh (‘pot’ or ‘cauldron’), an Egyptian loan word, attested in 1 Sam 2:14 and Micah 3:3. His alternative reading is: mqlh nr[d], but he prefers nr; an attested personal name (cf. 1 Sam 14:50, Abner son of Ner), pointing out that ‘I would certainly not propose an identification of these biblical and epigraphic figures on the basis of the evidence at hand, especially since the reading ‘Ner’ is not certain’. He dates the inscription to the 11th century BCE, and defines the script as an ‘Early Alphabetic script, (that is Proto-Canaanite)’. In his opinion the language is probably Canaanite.

Rollston’s proposal is problematic for several reasons. The term qlh or mqlh is not attested in any Ancient Near Eastern text. BH qlht is an Egyptian loan word (the original word in Egyptian is qrḥt). Athas pointed out that ‘It would be unusual for a loanword of this kind to come prefixed with a noun-making mem’ (Athas 2013). Moreover, qlht in BH is a cooking pot, as in Micah 3:3: ‘you shared them like flesh into a pot (sir) / like meat into a cauldron (qlḥt)’ or 1 Sam 2:13–15: ‘…the priest’s servant would come while the flesh was stewing and would thrust a three-pronged fork into the kior or the dud or the cauldron (qlḥt).’ However, this inscription was inscribed on a large storage vessel, not a cooking pot. Why should anyone write on a cooking pot that it is a cooking pot—especially if it is not a cooking pot but a large storage vessel?

Moreover, Petrovitch has already remarked critically that the reading of a reš after the nun (‘Ner’) is untenable: ‘the name, ‘Ner’, is quite dubious here, because it was demonstrated that the sixth letter almost certainly cannot be a resh. The reading of this letter seems far too forced and perhaps even driven by this possible connection with a known Hebrew name’ (Petrovitch 2013).

Dating the inscription to the 11th century is impossible: the archaeological data completely rule this out since the inscription has been incised under the rim of a Type B pithos. This type is dated by archaeologists not earlier than the late 10th–9th century BCE.

Rollston’s alternative reading mqlh nr[d] (‘pot of nard’) is also impossible since the capacity of this pithos would be rather large for this precious commodity (for the term NRD see Brown 1969: 160–161). Furthermore, Rollston does not suggest any explanation for the right-most letter which he believes is a Šīn.

Demsky’s reading

Demsky (2013) reads the following letters (from left to right): [het], mem, reš, lamed, het, nun, [nun], [?], nun, namely: ‘[ḥ]mr lḥn[n]’ = ‘[wi]ne belonging to
Han’an’ (Deut. 32:14; Isa. 27:2); or ‘[Ho]mer belonging to Han’an’ = Homer is a dry measure (=10 eiphah, of wheat or barley, see Num. 11:32; Lev. 27:16). Hanan reminds Demsky of ‘the early clan of Bene Hanan located in the vicinity of Beth Shemesh and Timnah’; in his opinion, ‘This family seemingly was part of Solomon’s local administration’ (1 Kgs. 4: 9).

Demsky’s proposal is untenable for several reasons: first, the reconstructed nun (sixth letter) is unreasonable, and it is clear that the right-most nun has nothing to do with the personal name Hanan. Demsky does not suggest any explanation for the vertical line between the unreasonable nun and the right-most nun. This is not a space but the tail of a letter, clearly not related to the unreasonable nun. The second letter on the left is a qop not a reš. For these reasons the reading ‘[ḥ] m[r] lḥn[n]’ is unsound. Moreover, Beth Hanan in 1 Kings 4; 9 is a toponym not a family name. In addition to all these Demsky does not suggest any explanation for the right-most letter, which he believes is nun.

Lehman and Zernecke’s reading

These scholars (2013), reiterated Ahituv’s readings, with only two slight differences (see Table 1). They reconstructed two letters (6–7: mem and šade) without suggesting any meaningful reading. There is little point in reconstructing letters if they do not yield a meaningful interpretation. One may present endless speculations, especially since the stances and forms of the letters are not yet fixed.

Transliteration and Translation

In my opinion this inscription reads from right to left, as follows: […][r]m[ n y n h]lq m[…] , namely: ‘[in the … year], wine of inferior quality, (sent) from GN’ (see Figure 1). The inscription is divided into three categories: a) a date formula; b) classification of wine; and c) provenance. This structure is similar to the information attested in the Egyptian wine jars labels (ca. 448 texts), dated to the 15th–12th centuries BCE (see Wahlberg 2012; and Guach Jané 2008; 2011; Poo 1995). These jar labels are divided into categories, presented usually in the following order: date; classification of the wine; provenance (place of production); and ownership, see e.g., ‘Year 5, Sweet wine – from the estate of Aton,’ etc. (Černý 1965: 22, no. 12). In the Samaria Ostraca a similar order is attested: most inscriptions open with a date formula: bšt. hts’t / h’srt / 15, etc. (see Ahituv 2008: 258–310, with earlier bibliography). In Judah the formula is similar but the spelling of the word ‘year’ is different: šnh or šnt instead of št, see e.g. ‘bšnh hššt’, ‘In the sixth year,’ (see Ahituv 2008:180). Similar jar labels were found at other sites including Shiqmona, Gaza, and others (cf. below and the information attested in over 2,000 Aramaic ostraca found in Nisa, the Partian capital, dating to the 1st century BCE, which
also includes date formulae, and the wine’s quantity, quality and provenance, Diakonoff and Livshits 1976).

**Script**

This issue was discussed in detail in earlier studies (mainly Ahituv’s), so there is no need here to repeat arguments already presented in research. I refer the
reader to the comprehensive discussion on this issue in my study of the Qeiyafa inscription (Galil 2009 [2010]: 199–207, and Tables 2–3, 239–242). The similarity between this prominent inscription and the new Ophel inscription is already well attested. Therefore, the following discussion will focus on the letter *yod*.

The sixth and the seventh letters are in my opinion two *yods*, similar in form to the *yod* attested in the Qeiyafa inscription (second line, second letter from the right). The reading of this letter in the Qeiyafa inscription as a *yod* was first proposed by Ada Yardeni (2009; 259).

Two lines of the sixth letter survived on the potsherd, an upper and a lower one, whereas from the seventh letter only the upper tail is attested on the pot. Both letters are similar in form and stance, though the sixth letter inclines southwest. The angles of upper tails of the letters are different: the tail of the seventh letter is vertical and faces south, while the tail of the sixth letter turns southwest, and this is also the general direction of the bottom line of this letter which was preserved. So it is likely that these letters are not identical, since the seventh tends to the south, and the sixth to southwest (see Figure 1). These *yods* are mirror images of the regular letter attested in other inscriptions from this period in form/stance, and turned 90 degrees. In the Qubur el-Walaida bowl and in the ‘Izbeth Ṣarṭa ostracon (line 3) the *yod* is in the form of the Latin ‘F’.

These two letters are similar in form to the archaic forms attested in Late Bronze inscriptions, e.g., the Lachish ewer and the Gezer jar inscriptions, and cf. also the Wadi el-Hol inscriptions, dated to the 18th century BCE (Hamilton 2006: 108–111, 324–326, with earlier bibliography, see also Galil 2009 [2010]: Table 3, 240–242).

The forms and stances of the letters in this inscription, as well as in the Qeiyafa inscription are not yet fixed: the left-most and right-most letters are *mems* but their stance is different. If the right-most letter is a *nun*, it is wholly different from the fifth letter, which is clearly a *nun*. The forms of the two *yods* are also different, as suggested above.

**Vocabulary and Language**

**Date Formula**

The right-most letter is a *mem* or a *nun*; both readings are possible, but I prefer the first. This is probably the final letter of a date formula, whose reconstruction is unclear. Therefore I will present four possible options below, the first two with the right-most letter *mem*, the last two with the right-most letter *nun*.

**First option:** \[bšnt \ldots m, \text{or } [bšn(h) h\ldots]m \text{ or } [b\ldots]m\], namely, ‘In the \ldots year’. Only a few years end with a *mem*, e.g., 20, 30, etc.: \[bšnt 'sr]m \text{ or } [bšnt šš]m, \text{ or } [bšn(h) h 'sr]m \text{ or } [bšn(h) hšš]m \text{ or } [b 'sr]m \text{ or } [bšš]m. Since the inscription was unearthed in the Ophel (between the City of David and the Temple Mount), an
area which was not inhabited before the reign of Solomon, and since Rehoboam and Abijah/m ruled less than 20 years, the only two possibilities are Solomon’s 20th or 30th year, namely ca. 950 or 940 BCE. The reading ‘in (Solomon’s) 40th year’ is less likely since it is not clear if King Solomon actually reigned 40 years or whether this number is rounded (Galil 1996; 2004; 2012a). The short formula [bšš] m, not [bšn(h) hšš] m is attested in the Arad inscriptions (no. 20): bšš (Ahituv 2008: 122), and on a jar from Lachish II: brb’t (Lemaire 2004: 2123–2124).

**Second option:** [bšnt …, byrḥ ’tn] m, or [b…, byrḥ ’tn] m, namely ‘[In the … year, in month Ethan]im’. See e.g., Arad inscriptions, no. 20: bšš [b/yrḥ šah, ‘In the third year, in month Ṣah’ (according to Aharoni 1975: 42–43); or: bšnh hššt, bšš’y, ‘In the sixth year, in seventh month’ (Ahituv 2008: 180). Month Ethanim (yrḥ h’tnym) is mentioned in 1 Kgs 8:2 (see Galil 2012b), as well as in three Phoenician inscriptions from Cyprus, dated to the 4th–3rd centuries BCE (yrḥ ’tnm – see KAI, nos. 37, 41, 289).

**Third option:** [bšn(h) ħr’s] n, or [br’š] n, namely ‘In the first year’ (without vowels or suffixes), cf. the form ’lmn (instead of ’lmnh), in the Qeiyafa inscription (Galil 2009 [2010]: 211). If this option is preferred, the date of the inscription will supposedly be the first year of the following kings of Judah: Rehoboam (931/30 BCE), or Abijah/m (914 BCE), or Asa (911 BCE), (see Galil 1996: 147).

**Fourth option:** [bšn(h) ... br’š] n, namely, ‘In the … year, in the first month,’ cf. bšnh hššt, bšš’y, ‘In the sixth year, in seventh month’ (Ahituv 2008: 180); or bšnh hššt, bššy, ‘In the sixth year, in the sixth month’ (Ezekiel 8:1), and others. This reading is less probable since in the 10th century the months were probably enumerated by their names (Ethanim, Bul, Živ, etc.) and not by their number (the first, the second, etc.).

The exact date of this inscription can not be fixed precisely. The ‘Late Canaanite’ script may indicate that it should be dated to the first half of the 10th century BCE, but the archaeological context points to a later date (late 10th – 9th century BCE?). The Biblical sources fit well with the second half of the 10th century BCE; this could be a satisfactory compromise, well-suited to both the paleography and the archaeology.4

**Wine Classification**

yyn

The form yyn indicates that the language of this inscription is Hebrew, written in the southern dialect: in Ugaritic, Old Canaanite, Phoenician, Ammonite, or even in Israelite Hebrew (attested in the Samaria Ostraca) wine was always written with
only one yod (yn; ye-nu; indicating the reduction of the diphthong). However, in (southern) Hebrew the form is always yyn, in Epigraphic Hebrew (Lachish, Arad and more), Biblical Hebrew (without any exception), Ben Sira, Qumran, and even in the Rabbinic sources.

The form yn appears in Ugaritic texts dozens of times (see KTU, passim; HALOT 409–410; Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 2003: 968–971; Halayqa 2008: 376). In Old Cannanite the form ye-nu is attested in a Tri-Lingual cuneiform fragment from Tel Aphek: [GEŠTIN].MEŠ : ka-ra-nu: ye-nu (see Rainey 1983: 137; Izre’el 1998: 425). In Israelite Hebrew the form yn is attested dozens of times in the Samaria Ostraca, dated to the 8th century BCE (see Ahituv 2008: 258–310). In Ammonite the form yn appears in an administrative ostracon from Heshbon, dated to the late 7th or early 6th century BCE (see Aufrecht 1989: 807–8; Ahituv 2008: 370–374). In Phoenician the term yn appears on two jar inscriptions from the 4th century BCE. One of them was found in Shiqmona, near Haifa in the north, and the other was bought in Gaza (see Cross 1968: 226–233; 2003: 286–289; Naveh 1987: 27; 2009: 324).

The form yyn is attested in Lachish Ostraca, nos. 25 and possibly also 9; and in the Arad Ostraca, nos. 1–4, 8, 10–11 (see Aharoni 1975: 12–20, 26–27; Ahituv 2008: 84, 88–89, 92–103, 109–112). It also appears on a jar from the Hebron area (Idna, Tell ‘Aitun or Khirbet el-Qom?): ‘Belonging to Yahzeyahu, blue (dark?) wine, E’ (see Avigad 1972: 1–5; Demsky 1972: 233–234; Paul 1975: 42; 2005: 71); and compare also the jar inscription: lmtnyhw. yyn.nsk. rb’t, ‘Belonging to Mattanyahu, libation wine – (one) quarter,’ published by Deutsch and Heltzer (1994: 23–26).

yyn ḫlq

The term yn ḫlq is attested only once in an Ugaritic text (RS 16.127 = UT 1084 = KTU 4.213). This administrative text enumerates quantities and qualities of wine and records its storage places (in ll. 1–23). Its second part (ll. 24–30) lists the quantities of wine consumed by various officials and priests for different purposes, including wine used during the offering of sacrifices, wine for messengers who left for Egypt and for other military personnel, and more. In Heltzer’s opinion this text enumerates ca. 24,000 litres of wine of various qualities (Heltzer 1993: 49). The term yn ḫlq appear only in the first paragraph of this text (ll. 1–3): ‘15 (jars of) good wine (yn.tb), and 90 heavy jars of second quality wine (kdm.kbd.yn.d.l.tb), and 40 (jars of) inferior quality of wine (yn ḫlq) – (all jars are stored at) Gath–SKNM’.

It is clear that wine quality is presented in this paragraph in descending order: good wine, second quality wine, and inferior quality wine. Second quality wine,
GEŠTIN.UŠ is attested in the Mari tablets [ARM 9 17:12, 186:1], and may be a synonym for yn.d.l.tb (Powell 1996: 113–114; CAD, K, p. 205; and recently Chambon 2011: passim).

On the one hand, most scholars translate yn ẖlq as bad wine, wine of poor/inferior quality, emphasizing that the term ẖlq in Ugaritic means lost, missing, destroyed or spoiled (see Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín 1996: 192). This is also the meaning of the Akkadian adjective halqu (CAD, H: 192). Virolleaud in his editio princeps of RS 16.127, published in 1957, translated yn ẖlq as ‘mauvais vin’ (Virolleaud, 1957: 107, 208). This interpretation was accepted by Gordon in 1965 (UT: 402, 410), and Delavault and Lemaire reached a similar conclusion in 1975. They suggested the following translations: ‘vin abîmé, vin perdu, mauvais vin’ (Delavault and Lemaire 1975: 36). In 1984, Aartum devoted a special discussion to this issue and presented similar results: he translates yn ẖlq as verdorbener Wein (Aartum 1984: 26). This is also the suggested translation of Del Olmo Lete and Sanmartín in their excellent dictionary (2003: 394, 969): ‘ḥlq = Ruined, spoilt, said of wine turned sour with time: yn ẖlq = spoilt wine (sour with time)’.

On the other hand, Xella (1979: 837, note 12), suggested that yn.ḥlq refers to lost jars of wine, and not to the quality of the wine. His proposal is unreasonable for two reasons. First, it is clear that all jars are stored at Gath-SKNM. If the author wished to point out that these 40 jars of wine were lost, he would surely have enumerated first the jars stored at Gath-SKNM and then the lost wine, e.g.: ‘15 (jars of) good wine, and 90 heavy jars of second quality wine (are stored at) Gath-SKNM; 40 (jars of) of wine – are lost’. But this is not the wording of this text. One cannot indicate in one sentence that the wine was lost and immediately assert that it was stored (...wʾrbʾm yn – ḫlq, bgt sknm = ‘...and 40 jars of wine are lost, stored at Gath-SKNM’). The author might say either that they are lost or that they are stored but not both. Each of the first 12 paragraphs of this text (ll. 1–23) ends with a GN which defines the storage place of the wine. Furthermore, if 40 jars of wine were indeed lost, one would expect the scribe to specify the quality of that lost wine, which he does in other cases as wine is classified in this text 25 times.

The Akkadian word ḫalqat is attested in a Canaanism found in one the El-Amarna letters sent by the scribe of Abdi-Hepa, king of Jerusalem, to his lord the king of Egypt (EA 288: 52): ‘ḥal-qa-at // a-ba-da-at’= she has been lost (the king’s land). Akkadian ḫal-qa-at and Canaanite a-ba-da-at are presented as synonyms, indicating that the Akkadian words ḫalqat, ḫalqu were known to the Canaanite scribes of Jerusalem in the LB (cf. Knudtzon 1915: 872; Hoftijzer and Jongeling 1995: 4; Izre’el 1998: 424; and Moran 1992: 331–332).
**ynn ḫlq: Synonyms and Related Terms**

ynn ḫlq is similar to other related terms attested in the HB, the Arad inscriptions, and in Greek, Roman, and Rabbinic sources. Two of these possible synonyms are ḫmṣ ynn and ḫmṣ. The term ḫmṣ ynn appears in the regulations for a Nazirite in Num 6:3:

מִיַּיִן וְשֵׁכָר יַזִּיר, חֹמֶץ יַיִן וְחֹמֶץ שֵׁכָר לֹא יִשְׁתֶּה; וְכָל מִשְׁרַת עֲנָבִים לֹא יִשְׁתֶּה

He (the Nazirite) shall abstain from wine and any other intoxicant; he shall not drink vinegar of wine (ḥmṣ ynn) or of any other intoxicant, neither shall he drink anything in which grapes have been steeped, nor eat grapes fresh or dried.

It is clear that these regulations refer not to raw vinegar, but to a sort of drink based on vinegar heavily diluted with water (see below) or a mixture of water with wine which turned sour with time. A synonym for ḫmṣ ynn is probably the term ḫmṣ which appears in the Arad inscriptions, no. 2, ll. 7–8: ‘And if there is more vinegar (ḥmṣ, left in stock) – then give it to them’ (to the Kittiyim, the Cypriot mercenaries). Aharoni identified ḫmṣ in the Arad inscriptions, with Biblical ḫmṣ ynn (1975: 17, 143, no. 2; ‘Bad wine sent in bulk during an emergency’). Lemaire expressed a similar opinion two years later: ‘ḥmṣ = a cheap wine made by mixing water and grape residue and allowing it to ferment… this is a usual drink of rural workers and soldiers’ (1977: 163). Recently Ahituv also identified both ḫmṣ with ḫmṣ ynn with the well-known Roman drink posca: this ‘mixture of vinegar and water, sometimes sweetened with honey, was a popular beverage of the Roman legionaries. It is very likely that the Kittiyim too were fond of such a beverage. Perhaps the prohibition on drinking vinegar in the Nazarite regulations refers not to raw vinegar but to a similar beverage’ (Ahituv 2008: 98; for the term posca see also Roth 1999: 37–38, 40; and Dalby 2003: 270, with earlier bibliography).

Another synonym attested in ancient Near Eastern texts is the Sumerian term GEŠTIN-BÍÁ-LÁ = Akkadian, ṭābātu = vinegar, but it also refers to wine which turned sour with time (see CAD, ‘ТЬ’: 5: ina GEŠTIN.MEŠ-em-ṣi u A.GEŠTIN.NA talâš = you knead [the ingredients] in sour wine or vinegar’). The term GEŠTIN emsu = sour wine (CAD, E: 152–153), is also attested in Rabbinic literature (ynn ḥḥmyṣ, or ynn kwss).5

Dalby summarized recently the information about other inferior quality wines from Greek and Roman texts: ‘Cheap wines, typically for farm workers, were made in several ways… Latin lora, lorea, Greek thamna (θάμνα) was a secondary wine made from the maceration of newly pressed marc… Greek deuterios (δευτέριος) was made by diluting the must and then cooking it…’, (Dalby 2003: 353; cf. Ramsay 1875: 1203; Kruit 1992). All these sorts of inferior wine were usually served to workers, soldiers, and other common people.
Provenance of the Wine

The left-most letter is clearly a *mem*, and therefore the meaning of this reading is: *m[...] = ‘from …’*. The *mem* was probably followed by a toponym, which was unfortunately lost, since the potsherd is broken at this point. A similar category is attested in Egyptian jar labels dated from the 15th–12th centuries BCE, in the Samaria Ostraca, and elsewhere.

Historical and Cultural Context

The new inscription unearthed in 2012 at the Ophel in Jerusalem is extremely important and fascinating, even though only a few letters survived on these two potsherds. It is written in late Canaanite script, in (southern) Hebrew, and should be dated to the second half of the 10th century BCE. It is therefore the oldest Hebrew inscription ever found in Jerusalem, perhaps even 250 years earlier than other Hebrew inscriptions from there. Although it is impossible to fix the inscription’s exact date, any attempt to understand its historical context must be restricted to the chronological framework presented above, namely the second half of the 10th century BCE which opens with the third decade of Solomon’s reign. The controversy over the historicity of the biblical descriptions of the kingdom of David and Solomon is well known and this short article is not the place to re-examine this complicated issue. The following scenario is based on my judgement that the Kingdom of David and Solomon was a real historical phenomenon, and that the biblical description of its formation and consolidation is reasonable (see Galil 2007; 2009 [2010]; 2012a; 2012d, and forthcoming).

In his third decade, Solomon completed his monumental building projects in Jerusalem including the Temple and his palace. In a recent study I have pointed out that it is within reason to suggest that the Temple was built in the days of Solomon, and the building story was composed by Solomon’s scribes, since no king in the Ancient Near East caused his scribes to compose a building story or inscription in honor of another king. It is even less plausible that a king would build a temple or a palace and say that it was the work of one of his predecessors (see Galil 2012b). These projects, the Temple and the palace, were started in Solomon’s fourth year, and were completed *ca.* 20 years later, in the third decade of his reign (1 Kgs 6, 38; 7:1; 10:24; 11, 26–27, 40). Only a few years later, in 944/3 BCE, Shishaq became king of Egypt, and this fact probably accelerated the process of a popular uprising against Solomon, headed by Jeroboam who was in charge of the forced labour of the house of Joseph. Jeroboam’s revolt and escape to Shishaq, king of Egypt, is related to the project of the building of the Millo. Whether one accepts the identification of the Millo with the Ophel or not, it is reasonable that Solomon was the king who inhabited the Ophel and it was he
who built the wall of Jerusalem which united its three main quarters: the Temple Mount, the Ophel and the city of David (1 Kgs 3:1; 10:15).

The new inscription suggests, in my opinion, that large quantities of inferior wine were used in Jerusalem. This cheap wine was certainly not served at Solomon’s table or used in the Temple. So one could suppose that it was served to the manual laborers who were engaged in the large-scale building projects in Jerusalem and perhaps also to the soldiers who served there. The food needed for these forced laborers (barley, water, cheap wine, and more) was probably held in the Ophel. Inferior wine was also served to the Cypriot mercenaries in Arad and in later times to workers and soldiers in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

The inscription also indicates that there were scribes able to write texts in Jerusalem as early as the second half of the 10th century BCE. These scribes may have been Canaanites or other non-Israelites since David and Solomon employed non-Israelites in their government, even in very senior positions, including the office of the Chief Scribe. David’s scribe was Shisha, and his sons were appointed as Solomon’s chief scribes (Mazar 1986: 111–138). So it would not be surprising that this inscription was written in the ‘Late Canaanite script’ (as was the Qeiyafa inscription), and that it indeed reflects the southern Hebrew dialect; but it also uses archaic technical terms like ḫlq to define this inferior wine.

The forms and stances of the letters in this inscription (as well as in the Qeiyafa inscription) are not yet fixed – a phenomenon typical of pictographic scripts. But this inscription is written from right to left, while the Qeiyafa inscription runs from left to right. This fact may indicate that it is the beginning of the regulation of the reading direction.

Scribes who were capable of writing administrative texts are also able to compose literary and historiographic texts (as clearly demonstrated recently by the Qeiyafa inscription). This fact is of major importance for reconstructing the process of the crystallization of the Bible, and even more for the understanding of the history of Israel and Jerusalem in Biblical times.
The Oldest Hebrew Inscription from Jerusalem

Notes

1 I thank Eilat Mazar for her permission to examine the inscription, and for the detailed and interesting conversation about its historical and archaeological context.
2 For the term qlḥt see Kelso 1948: 31, no. 76; Lambdin 1953: 154.
3 cf. Petrovitch’s critical remark: ‘As for Demsky’s proposal that the owner was named Hanan, this reading completely fails to account for the presence of the sixth letter… as well as the potentially non- incidental space that follows the sixth letter. It would be better to risk identifying this letter than to pretend a space is to be read for it and merely ignored. For this reason, in no scenario whatsoever does ‘Hanan’ appear to be an acceptable interpretation of the last word (Petrovitch 2013).
5 See: m. B. Qam. 9, 2; m. B. Bat. 6, 3; b. B. Bat. 97b; y. Pesah 2, 7, 29c; for this classification of wine see Paul 2005: 73; and cf. Powell 1996; Chambon 2011; for the term GEŠTIN emṣu in Hittite texts see Gorny 1996: 150.

Bibliography

Heltzer, M., (1993). ‘Olive Oil and Wine Production in Phoenicia and in the Mediterranean
‘yyn ḫlq’ The Oldest Hebrew Inscription from Jerusalem

Trade’. Pp. 49–54 in M-C Amouretti and J-P Brun (eds.), Oil and Wine Production in the Mediterranean Area (Paris).


