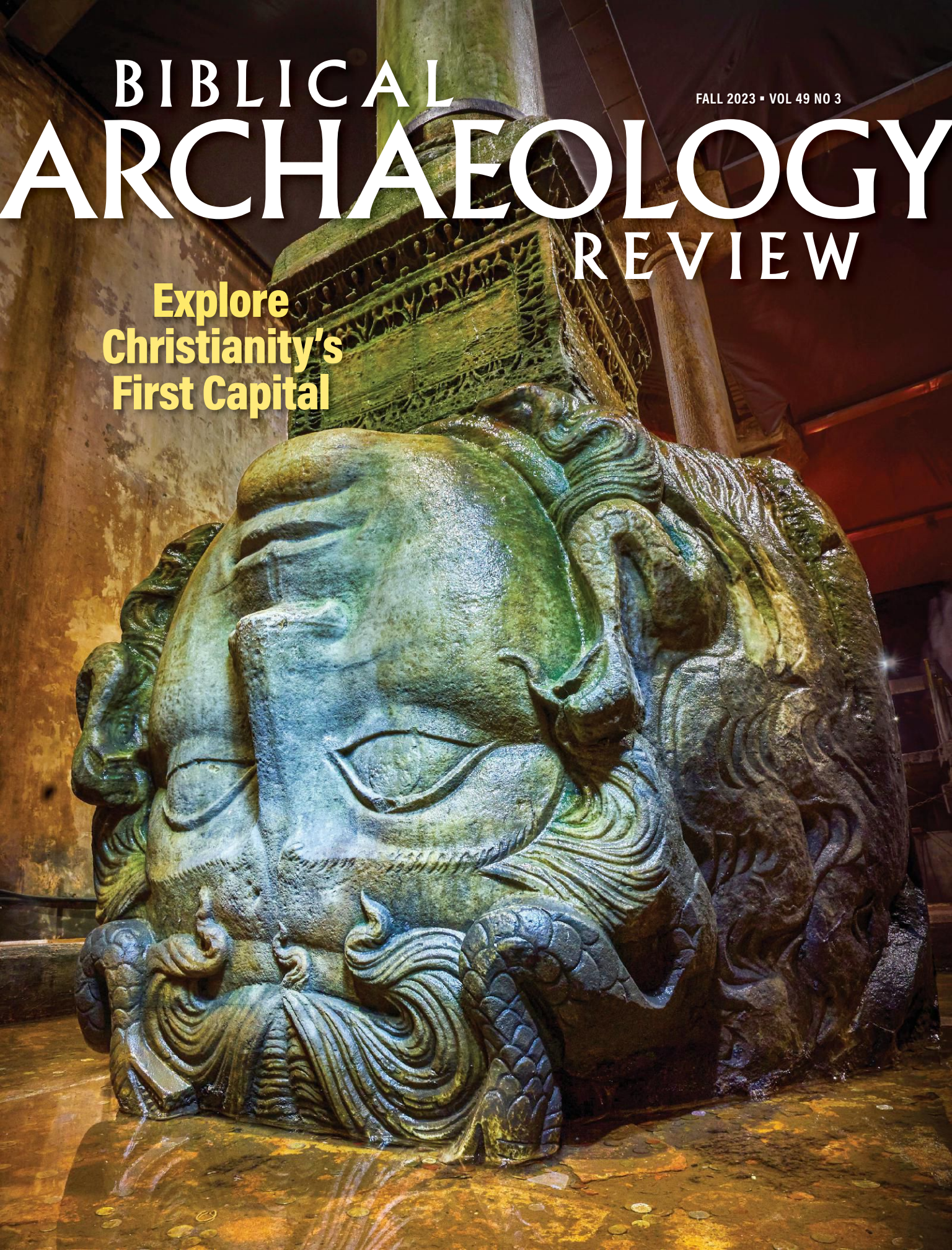
FALL 2023 ▪ VOL 49 NO 3

BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY REVIEW

Explore Christianity's First Capital



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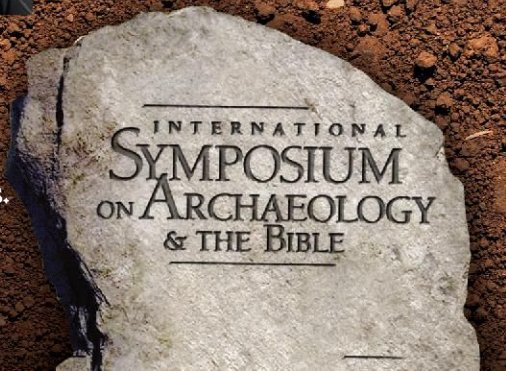

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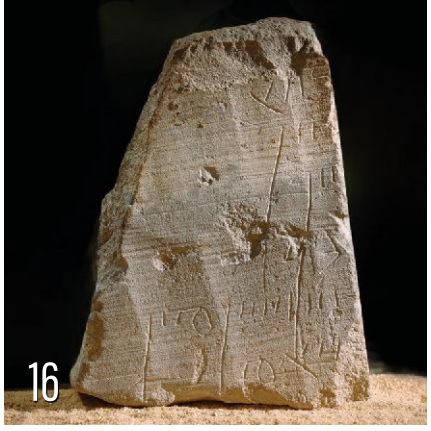
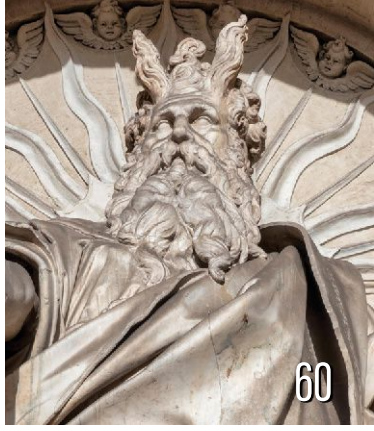
FALL 2023

ON THE COVER: Medusa gazes out from the depths of the first Christian capital. The Byzantine emperor Justinian I built the Basilica Cistern to supply water to his capital, Constantinople, in the sixth century. He recycled architectural elements from earlier Roman buildings, including two blocks that feature Medusa, a monster from Greek mythology, as column bases.

PHOTO: JAN WLODARCZYK / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

FEATURES





STRATA

EPISTLES

PLUS

WEB EXCLUSIVE

Unearthing Jerusalem's Millo

biblicalarchaeology.org/millo

According to the Hebrew Bible, the Millo is one of the most important structures in Iron Age Jerusalem, so where was it? Join **BAR** as we dive deeper with archaeologists Chris McKinny and Joe Uziel into the new theory that identifies the Gihon Spring Tower with this enigmatic structure.

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THE CONTENT YOU ENJOY in each issue of **BAR** is the work of a small team of editors dedicated to making the latest in archaeology and biblical scholarship available to all. In addition to meticulously editing each issue, our editors work to develop and curate our feature articles, select and caption the beautiful images that accompany each story, and research and write the news, profiles, and quizzes that make **BAR** a truly popular magazine.

As such, it is never easy to say goodbye to one of our own. The Fall 2023 issue is the last for **BAR** Managing Editor Megan Sauter, who, after a decade serving the magazine, is moving on to other new and exciting adventures. As with each issue she has managed, Megan's hard work, professionalism, and attention to detail can be found throughout.

Glenn Corbett and Megan Sauter

In "The Millo: Jerusalem's Lost Monument," leading archaeologists identify the ancient fortifications around Jerusalem's Gihon Spring as the Millo, a mysterious biblical structure whose exact location has long puzzled scholars. In his article, "Yahweh or Baal," biblical scholar Michael Stahl examines the biblical and archaeological evidence for the religion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and finds that its infamous rulers may not have been the heathen Baal worshipers portrayed in the Bible. Archaeologist Dennis Mizzi then looks at the enigmatic jar burials from Qumran's cemetery and postulates that this unusual practice reflected the religious views of the sectarian Jewish community responsible for the Dead Sea Scrolls. And in "Constantinople: Christianity's First Capital," **BAR** Contributing Editor Sarah Yeomans explores the deep history of Istanbul and the magnificent monuments that still give an impression of the city's glorious Christian past.

This issue's Strata brings you the latest news from the world of biblical archaeology, including an update on the recently published Mt. Ebal curse tablet that continues to stir controversy among scholars. Aaron Demsky takes a fresh look at a short Hebrew inscription from Second Temple Jerusalem and the meaning behind its apparent reference to Daedalus, the master craftsman of Greek mythology. Reflecting on her own recent travels abroad, Megan guides you through the Catacomb of Priscilla in Rome, an underground labyrinth of ancient burials that preserves some of the world's earliest Christian art. We also hear from Steed Davidson, the new Executive Director of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), who shares his exciting plans for the organization's future.

In Epistles, Gary Rendsburg reexamines the symbolism behind the "horns of Moses" and argues that the writers of Exodus gave the prophet horns—and other unique qualities—to make him the equal of the Egyptian pharaoh. Rodney Caruthers explores the biblical concept of inspiration and its meaning to ancient writers, from Plato to the authors of the New Testament. And Hanna Tervanotko recovers the complex figure of Miriam in the Hebrew Bible, an important woman in the life of Moses and early Israel but one that Jewish and Christian traditions have rarely evaluated on her own terms.

So as we say goodbye to Megan and wish her well, I also offer my thanks and appreciation to a colleague and friend who has not just been a joy to work with but has been essential to making **BAR** the magazine that it is today. Thank you, Megan, for everything.—**GLENN J. CORBETT**

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A NOTE ON STYLE: BCE (Before the Common Era) and CE (Common Era), used by some of our authors, are the alternative designations often used in scholarly literature for BC and AD. Biblical citations come from the NRSV, unless otherwise specified.

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Thank you for sharing your thoughts and comments about our Spring 2023 issue. We appreciate your feedback. Here are a few of the letters and responses we received. Find more online at **biblicalarchaeology.org/letters**.

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I FIND YOUR CONTENT unique and informative. Unlike other popular publications in archaeology, **BAR** articles are written by actual researchers, not by people summarizing or interpreting studies carried out by others. This is invaluable. In a world where information is often manipulated to achieve the desired effect, reading the primary sources and expert interpretations is of paramount importance.

JOSE M. PAREDES
FLOSSMOOR, ILLINOIS

Jesus in the Synagogue

AS I READ JORDAN RYAN'S "Jesus in the Synagogue," it occurred to me that ancient synagogues, with their sections facing each other across an empty square, were not just for debate and discussion; perhaps a main purpose of this seating arrangement was to facilitate singing.

TOM KANE
FLORESVILLE, TEXAS

JORDAN RYAN RESPONDS:
I wouldn't rule out the possibility that synagogue architecture facilitated singing. The challenge is that we do not have much evidence for singing practices in the early Roman period. We do, however, have quite a few references to congregational discussion in synagogue settings (see pp. 40–41 of the article). Architectural parallels are also important to consider, since synagogue seating plans are similar to public buildings designed for discussion in the Hellenistic world, especially the ekklesiasterion *and the* bouleuterion*. It is then reasonable to connect the architectural form to discussion and possibly other things that went on in synagogues, including singing.*

LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

Write us at letters@bib-arch.org or **BAR** Editorial, 5614 Connecticut Ave NW #343, Washington, DC 20015. Please include your full name, city, and state. While we welcome all reader comments, we are unable to reply to or publish every letter we receive. Published letters may be edited for length, clarity, and readability.

David in the Mesha Stele

LOOKING AT THE ARTICLE "Set in Stone? Another Look at the Mesha Stele," by Matthieu Richelle and Andrew Burlingame, I see something all have overlooked. The *dalet* that forms the first letter of *dwd* is there, but not the long line that Lemaire and Delorme think is its bottom piece. Instead, in Image C (p. 57), there is a triangle on its side that represents that *dalet*. This triangle is tilted, as the final *dalet* and all three letters show a consistent upward angle. While I agree the *tav* in the preceding word *bt* ("house") is speculative, what remains is still about David. Given this context, "House of David" still makes the most sense.

ANDREW GABRIEL ROTH
WOODSTOCK, GEORGIA

RICHELLE AND BURLINGAME RESPOND:
The dark shape to the bottom right of the waw *actually has the shape of a small* bet *and is a "ghost" letter (one that looks like it's there but actually isn't). It was likely created by a stain or deterioration affecting the squeeze or the stone, but it is too far beneath the line of writing to reflect an engraved sign.*

I READ BOTH ARTICLES on the Mesha Stele carefully, and I have a question for Richelle and Burlingame: If the letters in question do not translate to "House of David," how else would they translate the text?

WILLIAM SIEG
MONUMENT, COLORADO

RICHELLE AND BURLINGAME RESPOND:
The focus of our article was the epigraphic readings (i.e., what can be deciphered on the stela), not possible reconstructions and translations. Several reconstructions are possible, including "House of David," but we argue that there

To follow the ongoing debate regarding the "House of David" in the Mesha Stele and to view the relevant images and evidence, visit **www.biblicalarchaeology.org/mesha**.

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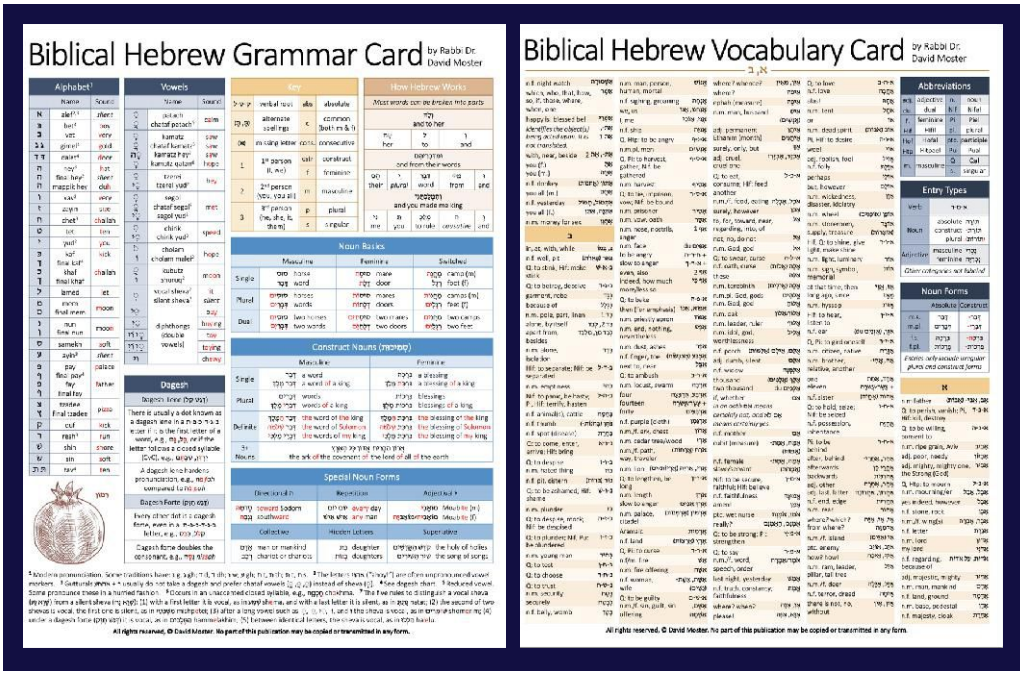

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is simply insufficient evidence to confirm the reading, which leaves considerable room to debate other possibilities.

SORRY, BUT THE AUTHORS of "Set in Stone?" get it all wrong. The *tav*, though faintly preserved, is uncontestable. Lemaire and Delorme draw the left diagonal of the X-shape (in red) in Photo A too vertically, though it is pretty clear in Photo B (p. 57). And the dot on the left is just that: a second word divider. So I'd go with Lemaire and Delorme's expertise—and my own eyes—to read *btdwd*. Long live the king!

ROY D. KOTANSKY
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

RICHELLE AND BURLINGAME RESPOND:
Images like Photo B may give the impression that a stroke is present, but this does not hold up under direct examination of the stone or the new digital images, which is why our colleagues rightly did not use the line that you see. Our arguments about the dot are available in our article, but we are happy to agree to disagree. Long live the debate!

Ancient Bathtubs

LAURA MAZOW'S ARTICLE on the use of bathtub-shaped ceramic containers for fulling was very interesting ("Why All Tubs Are Not Bathtubs"). But such ceramic tubs, with the same thick squarish rim, rope band decoration, and handles at both ends, were also used for coffins, as attested by finds in funerary contexts. Such tub coffins (including some in metal) are best known from Mesopotamia. Their use as burial receptacles likely spread west with the arrival of the Assyrians in the Levant in the latter part of the eighth century BCE.

JEFFREY R. ZORN
ADJUNCT ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
CORNELL UNIVERSITY
ITHACA, NEW YORK

LAURA MAZOW RESPONDS:
Funerary contexts probably represent secondary uses of these vessels, similar to the way storage jars were often reused for burials. Bath-shaped vessels appear together with a wide variety of other burial practices in both the southern Levant and Mesopotamia. Of the vessels I examined, an almost equal number were found in burial and non-burial contexts. Significantly, at sites that have these vessels in both contexts, non-burial examples typically predate those found in burials. Additionally, the Mesopotamian non-burial ones, just like those in the southern Levant, are often found with weaving tools.

Similarly, although it is assumed that metal vessels were considered too valuable to have a technological use, observations of early 20th-century village life suggest that copper tubs were used in laundry, fulling, and tanning, and that metal tubs may have been preferable.

Paul and Prostitutes

BARBETTE STANLEY SPAETH, in her article "Paul, Prostitutes, and the Cult of Aphrodite in Corinth," states that Paul in 1 Corinthians 6 would more likely have been talking about consorting with prostitutes rather than women associated with Aphrodite's cult, who, Spaeth argues, likely were

not involved in sexualized ritual activities. However, the term "prostitution, fornication" (*porneia*) is often used as a metaphor for idol worship, even when this *porneia* did not involve sex. The Book of Ezekiel uses many sexual metaphors in this way, while "adultery" is also often used to imply idol worship. Revelation 17:15 states that the kings of the earth committed fornication (*porneia*) with Rome. Surely these kings weren't having sex with Rome. Perhaps, then, Paul was talking about some kind of idolatrous behavior.

DAN WAGLE
DECATUR, GEORGIA

BARBETTE STANLEY SPAETH RESPONDS:

Since there was no sacred prostitution in Corinth, I suggested that when Paul referred to porneia*, he meant common prostitution. Although the Septuagint and New Testament may sometimes use* porneia *to mean "fornication" or even "idol worship," the Corinthians without a Jewish background would have understood the term in its original meaning as prostitution. When Paul notes the Corinthian Christians had been "bought for a price," he makes a comparison between the prostitute's body and the Christian's, which only makes sense if we take the terms literally: The prostitute's body is sold for an immoral sexual purpose; the Christian's body is bought through Jesus's suffering for the purpose of salvation.*

The Horns of Moses

IN HIS ARTICLE "The Horns of Moses," Lee M. Jefferson cites the earliest visual representation of Moses with horns in the 11th-century Old English Illustrated Hexateuch. In my book, *Moses the Egyptian in the Illustrated Old English Hexateuch* (2017), I proposed that a likely source for Jerome's Latin translation of the Hebrew text of Exodus 34:29 as "*cornuta esset facies sua*," and its association with radiance and light, was his familiarity with the image of the Roman god Pan described in Servius's fourth-century commentary on Virgil's *Second Eclogue,* where Servius says of Pan that "his horns are like the rays of the sun and the horns of the moon." Servius, like Jerome, had been a student of Virgil's commentator, Donatus, and thus Jerome would likely have been familiar with this metaphoric equation of horns with light, a widespread visual attribute of ancient Near Eastern deities, Egyptian gods and pharaohs, and Hellenistic kings such as Alexander the Great.

HERBERT R. BRODERICK
PROFESSOR
LEHMAN COLLEGE/CUNY
BRONX, NEW YORK

LEE M. JEFFERSON RESPONDS:

Although the Pan connection is interesting, I prefer to think that Jerome was less influenced by polytheistic connections and more by the larger history of textual interpretation through his training in Hebrew and study of the Alexandrian interpretive tradition of the Septuagint.

For more on the origins of the "horns of Moses," see Gary A. Rendsburg's article on p. 60.—ED.

Gold earrings

COURTESY EMIL ALADJEM, ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

Jerusalem's Golden Tomb

NEARLY 2,000 YEARS AGO, a young girl was laid to rest in a tomb on Jerusalem's Mt. Scopus. She was buried inside a lead coffin with a trove of gold jewelry, which archaeologists with the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) are just beginning to investigate.

Among the items found within the girl's coffin were golden earrings, a hairpin, gold, carnelian, and glass beads, and a gold chain bearing a *lunula* pendant named after the Roman moon goddess Luna. The burial dates to the later part of the Roman period when, following the Roman destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE, the city was rebuilt and renamed Aelia Capitolina. During this period, people from all over the Roman Empire came to settle in the city. They brought with them new cultures, traditions, and religions, including the popular cult of the goddess Luna.

The valuable *lunula* pendant likely served as a protective talisman during the girl's lifetime and was included with her burial to protect her in the afterlife as well.

Although the young girl's tomb was discovered more than 50 years ago, its contents went unstudied and unpublished following the death of the original excavator—a common problem within archaeology. To address the issue, the IAA launched its Publication of Past Excavations Project. Through the project, unpublished excavations are being reexamined and made available to scholars and the public.

WHO DID IT?

Which Egyptian archaeologist worked on and helped supervise a dozen excavation projects in Egypt, Palestine, Transjordan, and Turkey during the early 20th century?

ANSWER ON P. 30

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Evidence of Solomon and Sheba?

THE STORY OF KING SOLOMON and the Queen of Sheba is one of the more intriguing accounts found within the narrative of Solomon's reign (1 Kings 10). Yet the lack of clear evidence for early trade or political connections between ancient Judah and South Arabia has led many scholars to question the account's reliability. Now, one scholar believes a small inscription from the Ophel excavations in Jerusalem may provide the missing proof.

Discovered in 2012, the small inscription, which includes just seven letters, has puzzled scholars for years. Although most have assumed the inscription is written in Canaanite, Daniel Vainstub of Ben-Gurion University believes it is written in an ancient South Arabian script known as Sabaic, the language of the ancient kingdom of Saba (biblical Sheba) in the area of modern Yemen.

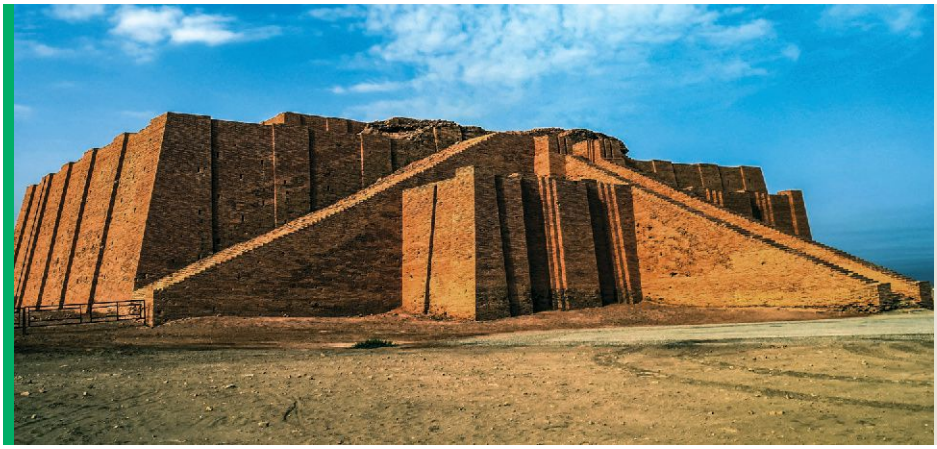
Dated to the tenth century BCE—the time of the biblical King Solomon—the inscription could provide evidence of trade connections between ancient South Arabia and Jerusalem during this early period. According to Vainstub, the inscription contains three full or partially preserved words: [ ]*šy ldn* 5. (Vainstub believes the South Arabian letter *ḫ* was used to designate the number 5.) Intriguingly, the second word, which Vainstub reads as ladanum, is a type of resin possibly to be identified with onycha, one of the ingredients used to create incense burned at the tabernacle (Exodus 30:34).

COURTESY OF THE ESTATE OF DR. EILAT MAZAR / PHOTO BY OURIA TADMOR

This seven-letter inscription may be evidence of trade between ancient Israel and Sheba.

The inscription was engraved on a large Judahite storage jar that probably held around 30 gallons, or 5 ephahs, the standard volume measure in ancient Judah. According to Vainstub, this suggests that the number 5 in the inscription indicates the amount of resin that was held by the jar. Given that the Sabaic inscription was made before the jar was fired, it was likely written by a native Sabean, perhaps a merchant living in Jerusalem.

Not everyone is convinced by Vainstub's reading or interpretation. But if his interpretation is correct, the small inscription—discovered just 300 yards from the presumed location of Solomon's Temple—could offer important evidence of early trade connections between Judah and South Arabia and, therefore, the historicity of the biblical story of Solomon and Sheba.



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WHERE IS IT?

1. Beersheba, Israel
2. Ur, Iraq
3. Susa, Iran
4. Hattusa, Turkey
5. Amman, Jordan

ANSWER ON P. 25

Controversial Curse: Mt. Ebal Tablet Published

IN EARLY 2022, a research team led by scholars from the Associates for Biblical Research (ABR) announced the discovery of a small lead tablet from Mt. Ebal that they claim contains the oldest extant Hebrew inscription.* Now, more than a year later, a peer-reviewed article presenting one part of the inscription has been published.[1] Yet, even with this long-awaited publication, serious questions remain. Many scholars are dubious about whether the tablet features an inscription at all, while others continue to highlight the problematic circumstances surrounding its recovery.

The research team dates the tablet inscription to the Late Bronze Age II period (c. 1400–1200 BCE) and identifies it as a legal text and curse invoking the Israelite deity Yahweh. They connect it directly to the covenant renewal ceremony on Mt. Ebal, described in Deuteronomy 27 and Joshua 8. Moreover, they believe the inscription predates the earliest known Hebrew inscription by several hundred years and proves that certain books of the Hebrew Bible could have been written hundreds of years earlier than previously thought.

Although the tablet's publication has made headlines around the world, the inscription continues to be met with skepticism from many scholars.

"I wish this were a 13th-century Hebrew inscription, but it is not," said Christopher Rollston from George Washington University. "Anyone can look at the images of this 'inscription' and discern that there is no real connection between the published images and the authors' drawing of the inscription. The published images reveal some striations in the lead and some indentations, but there are no actual discernible letters."

In response, Pieter van der Veen, an epigrapher with the team and professor at Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, stated, "I can assure you, what we see are NOT mere striations. Rather what we see is manmade and incised with a pen or stylus. The bulges seen on the back of the tablet prove that those letters are true letters indeed. They precisely match the signs on [the inside] and must be incisions to be actually visible on the back."

Since only the inside of the tablet has been published, it is difficult for other scholars to evaluate such evidence. "Supposedly, the outer inscriptions are easier to read," said Aren Maeir of Bar-Ilan University. "If the outer texts were easier to decipher, and assist in deciphering the inner texts, the fact that these outer texts were not published here, to demonstrate the validity of the very difficult reading of the inner text, is hard to fathom."

There are also serious questions about the tablet's discovery. It was not found during an excavation but rather while the ABR team was sifting the soil dumps from the late Adam Zertal's excavations of Mt. Ebal, which took place in the 1980s. As such, the find does not come from a datable, stratified context, though the ABR team says it was able to associate the dump material where the tablet was found with Zertal's excavation of an altar, which he dated to the time of Joshua.

Perhaps even more significant is the fact that Mt. Ebal is located in a part of the West Bank where archaeological sites fall under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority. As the excavators did not request a license from the proper authorities, some observers consider the ABR's actions to be illegal. Members of the publication team assert, however, that their dump excavations fell under the original excavation license of Adam Zertal.

* Strata: "Cursed by Yahweh?" **BAR**, Fall 2022.

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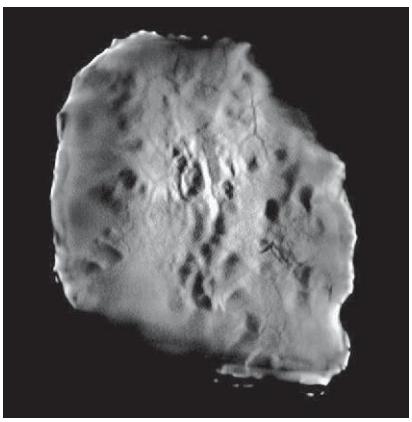

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Researchers have scanned the folded lead tablet (top) from Mt. Ebal. The digital scan (bottom left) shows the tablet's interior, and the drawing (bottom right) shows the team's reconstruction of the tablet's interior text.

[1] Scott Stripling et al., "'You Are Cursed by the God YHW': An Early Hebrew Inscription from Mt. Ebal," *Heritage Science* 11.105 (2023). https://doi.org/10.1186/s40494-023-00920-9.

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Mediterranean Crossroads

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THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN Gallery at the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia (commonly known as the Penn Museum) opened in November 2022.

Titled *Crossroads of Cultures*, this new permanent exhibit explores the eastern Mediterranean as a hub of ideas, art, and technologies, covering the geographic area of modern Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Palestinian Territories, and Cyprus. Its ambitious scope spans from the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000 BCE) to the late Ottoman period (c. 1900 CE), highlighting connections between the region's past and the contemporary world.

The exhibit presents some 400 artifacts arranged around three major themes: coexistence and connection, creativity and change, and power and conflict. It makes use of interactive, multi-sensory elements, such as animated reconstructions, replicas to touch, and burning incense to smell.

Thanks to the museum's rich history of archaeological work in the region, the exhibit also showcases Penn's excavations, including stories of local laborers, whose vital role has been historically overlooked.

Exemplifying the multi-layered history of the eastern Mediterranean, the entrance to the gallery presents visitors with an Egyptian stela of Ramesses II (13th century BCE), found in 1923 during the museum's excavations at Beth Shean in Mandate Palestine. The two Corinthian capitals from the same site were originally made for the Roman temple of Zeus but later reused in a Byzantine church built over the ruins of the temple in the fifth century. ◙

HOW MANY?

How many foreign dynasties ruled ancient Egypt?

ANSWER ON P. 22

Shimon's Receipt

DURING A SALVAGE EXCAVATION in the City of David, archaeologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority discovered a fragmentary inscription dating to the first century BCE or CE. Written on the lid of an ossuary (burial box), the inscription might be a receipt connected to the ossuary itself or a sales record by the craftsman.

The small inscription measures 3.5 by 2.5 inches and contains just seven lines of text, written in the cursive Aramaic script used in Judah during the first century.[1] It lists a man named Shimon, one of the most common Jewish names of the Second Temple period, preceded by the letter *mem*, a shorthand form of the Hebrew word *ma'ot* ("money"). It was not carved by a trained scribe, but perhaps by a local businessperson.

The slab was recovered from an old tunnel created in the 19th century that is now part of the City of David's Pilgrimage Road project. The controversial excavation, which tunnels beneath a modern Jerusalem neighborhood, follows the path of the city's ancient pilgrimage road that connected the Siloam Pool to the gates of the Temple Mount. ◙

[1] Esther Eshel and Nahshon Szanton, "A Second Temple Period Inscription on a Stone Ossuary Lid from the City of David, Jerusalem," *'Atiqot* 110 (2023), pp. 83–88.

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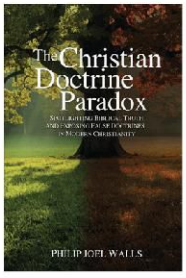

By Philip Joel Walls

Truth is exclusive. There cannot be multiple truths. And yet, Christian theology is hopelessly divided. Why are there so many divisions among professing Christians? The answers are so painfully taboo, they can only be articulated honestly by an unaffiliated, unbiased believer and researcher such as Walls.

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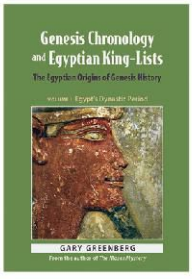

by Gary Greenberg

In this landmark study on Genesis's literary origins, Greenberg, author of *The Moses Mystery*, makes a compelling case for a precise alignment between the Genesis birth-death chronology and Egypt's first 18 dynasties and many of its most important kings. Based on a detailed examination of Egypt's chronological records, Greenberg examines the historical meaning of such matters as Adam's death date, Enoch's 365 years, Methuselah's long life, and the identity of Joseph's pharaoh.

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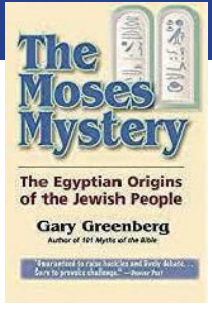


The Moses Mystery

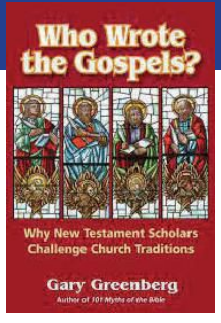
The Egyptian Origins of the Jewish People

What do history and archaeology *really* say about the origins of ancient Israel? Based on extensive research into biblical and Egyptian history, archaeology, literature, and mythology, Greenberg argues that the first Israelites were Egyptians, followers of the monotheistic teachings of Pharaoh Akhenaten.

"Mr. Greenberg seems to delight in a game of scholarly 'gotcha.'"
~ THE NY TIMES

Who Wrote the Gospels?

Why New Testament Scholars Challenge Church Traditions



Early Christians had no idea who wrote the Gospels. They were written anonymously. Guesses in the late second and third centuries became tradition, and tradition became dogma. Greenberg takes you inside the complex and poorly understood world of Gospel source and text criticism and provides a simple easy-to-follow guide to the many difficult issues faced by New Testament historians concerned with the origins of the gospels.

Available from Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and other booksellers

COURTESY CONNIE GROH

Dennis E. Groh (1939–2023)

DENNIS GROH died on April 22 at age 83. He never wanted to be just one thing, and he never was.

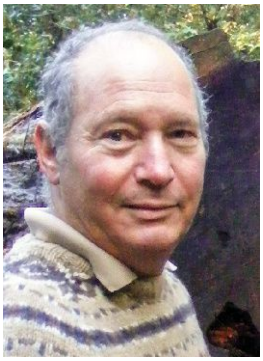
Born in Chicago in 1939, he became a high school and college athlete. At the time of his death, he was an honored patristics scholar, a retired university chaplain, and professor of humanities and archaeology at Illinois Wesleyan University. He was also my friend.

When we began digging at Shikhin in 2012, I wanted him at the pottery table because of his knowledge of imported wares. It turned out that we would find little of it at the site, but he generously gave us everything else he had to offer—especially teaching and encouragement.

Groh earned his Ph.D. in 1970 from Northwestern University, where he specialized in patristics, Hellenistic and classical studies, and Roman history and archaeology. His fascination with the Roman and Byzantine worlds led him to digs in Cyprus, Italy, Israel, Tunisia, and Turkey, and to staff positions at Caesarea Maritima, Meiron, Sepphoris, Tel Nessana, and Shikhin. Along the way, he garnered the many honors narrated in the foreword to *Studies on Patristic Texts and Archaeology: If These Stones Could Speak … Essays in Honor of Dennis Edward Groh* (2009).

Groh leaves behind his wife of 25 years, Dr. Connie Groh, children, and grandchildren. But many of us still envision him at a picnic table at Kibbutz Ha-Solelim in the 1990s, a glass of something resting at his elbow and smoke curling from the cigarette in his fingers, commenting in his smooth baritone on flowers, people, weather, architecture, and something he called "the new aesthetic."—**JAMES R. STRANGE**

Ilan Sharon (1953–2023)



COURTESY S. MATSKEVICH

ILAN SHARON, the former Nahman Avigad Chair of Biblical Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Institute of Archaeology, passed away at his home in Mevaseret Zion, Israel, on February 24 at the age of 69.

In 1980, Professor Ephraim Stern invited Sharon to join him in his excavations at Tel Dor on the Carmel coast of Israel. Sharon agreed and never looked back. He took pride that Dor was the most thoroughly excavated and published

Phoenician site in the world. Sharon devoted great attention to the development of the site's excavation, recording, and publication methodologies and was the driving force behind efforts to publish the great amount of data accumulated over many dig seasons. He even inaugurated a series of semiannual study seasons that took place in various locales around the world, such as Boston and Jerusalem.

In addition, Sharon published on traditional topics in the archaeology of the southern Levant (e.g., stratigraphy, architecture, and ceramics). Many of his publications involved the interface of archaeology and science, especially radiocarbon dating. These studies provided crucial data for ongoing debates over Iron Age chronology.

Besides his many academic accomplishments, Sharon was a wonderful family man, colleague, friend, lover of good wine and large dogs, an excellent cook, and a teller of long and amusing stories. He was unpretentious and took himself with a good deal of humor and humility.—**JEFFREY R. ZORN**

Weston Fields (1948–2023)

WESTON FIELDS, a prominent Dead Sea Scrolls scholar, passed away at his home in Bear Island, Alaska, on May 25.

Fields attended Faith Baptist College in Omaha, Nebraska, and then earned M.A., M.Div., and Th.D. degrees from Grace Theological Seminary in Winona Lake, Indiana.

COURTESY HERMAN FIELDS

In 1985, Fields moved to Jerusalem to pursue a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible at the Hebrew University, where he studied with Shemaryahu Talmon and Emanuel Tov, among others. His Ph.D. thesis, on literary motifs, was titled *Sodom and Gomorrah: History and Motif in Biblical Narrative*. After his graduation in 1991, Fields was invited to become the Executive Director of the newly created Dead Sea Scrolls Foundation, formed to raise funds for the publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He was very successful in this endeavor; his fundraising efforts made possible the final publication of the scrolls in the series *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*. The foundation also worked with the Israel Antiquities Authority to mount scroll exhibitions throughout the world.

Fields's work, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A Full History*, volume 1, is an invaluable, thoroughly researched account of the early history (1946–1960) of the discovery, purchase, and publication of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He was nearing completion of volume 2 when he passed away; it is hoped that the volume will be published posthumously.

Fields will be sorely missed by his many friends and colleagues around the world.—**SIDNIE WHITE CRAWFORD**

Catacomb of Priscilla
Location: Rome, Italy
www.catacombepriscilla.com

Rome's Queen Catacomb

MEGAN SAUTER

A SHORT WALK THROUGH ROME confirms the richness of its history. From the Pantheon to the Colosseum, the city boasts magnificent architecture and art. Yet it might surprise that some of the city's most significant art lies beneath its surface.

Rome has more than 40 catacombs scattered around its ancient perimeter, often along major roads, that date from the second through fifth centuries CE. These underground burial sites consist of halls and chambers with burial niches. They also contain funerary inscriptions and art that provide insight into the city's ancient pagan, Jewish, and Christian inhabitants.

For the intrepid traveler who wishes to see some of the earliest Christian art—from not only Rome, but also the entire world—a visit to the Catacomb of Priscilla is essential. Sometimes called the Queen Catacomb because of the many martyrs and popes buried there, the Catacomb of Priscilla has miles of subterranean tunnels spread across two main levels. Walking through the catacomb in the dim light gives the feeling of being in a labyrinth. Fortunately, you're never unescorted, so you won't get lost!

The catacomb sits along the Via Salaria in the Trieste neighborhood of Rome, about a 20-minute drive from the city center. Access is by guided tour only, and reservations tend to fill up quickly, especially during the spring and summer. I'd recommend booking your tour at least a week beforehand. If your schedule is not flexible, you would want to book it even earlier, to secure your desired tour time. Just a note that the Catacomb of Priscilla is closed on Mondays, so be sure to plan accordingly.

Tours are available in three languages: English, Italian, and Spanish. Tickets are about $10—or a little more if booked online, as booking fees apply. Children under age 6 can enter for free. You can make a reservation directly through their website (www.catacombepriscilla.com) or find a third-party tour that will take you through several catacombs. The latter would be a better option for those who wish to see both Jewish and Christian funerary art.

Your tour of the Catacomb of Priscilla begins at the ticket office and gift shop, located in a cloister of the convent of the Benedictine Sisters of Priscilla. After meeting your guide and

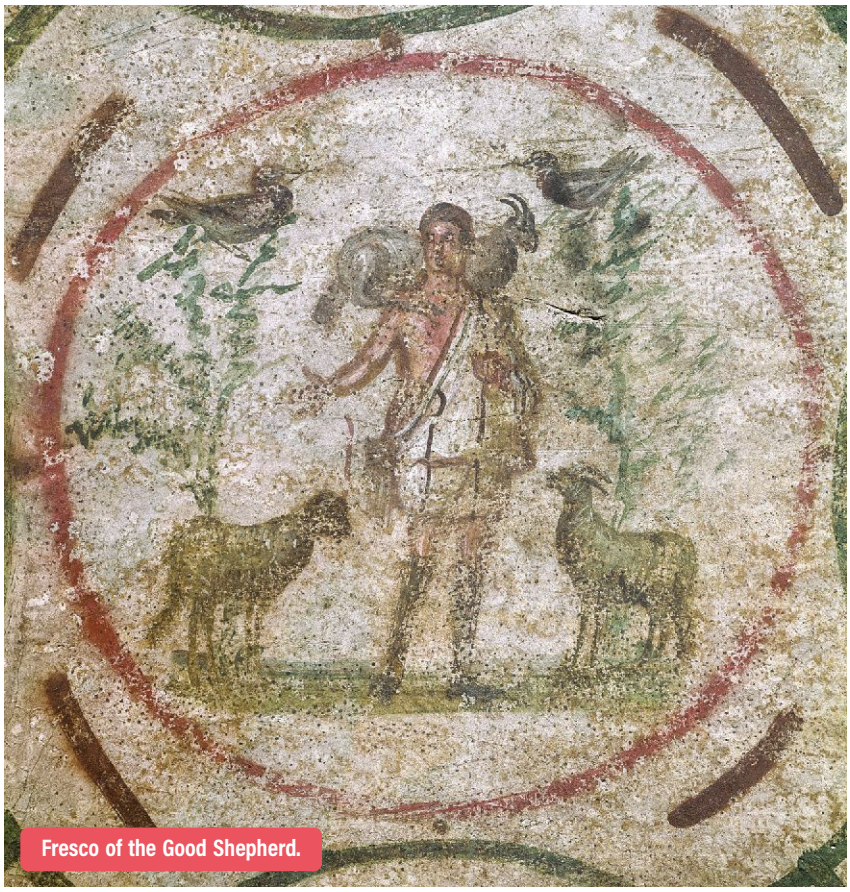
the rest of your group, you descend together into the catacomb via a staircase. It is significantly colder in the catacomb than outside. I'd suggest bringing a long-sleeved layer, such as a light jacket or sweater.

They advise arriving 15 minutes before the time of your reservation, which is wise considering the irregularities of traffic in Rome. The tour will not wait for latecomers, and it's not always possible to slip into a later time slot, as they are often full. However, if you are late, not all is lost. Someone at the ticket office may escort you to join up with the rest of the group.

Tours last 30 minutes and take visitors on a partial route of the vast catacomb. Highlights include third-century frescoes of the magi with Mary and Jesus as an infant (Matthew 2:11) and of the Good Shepherd (John 10:11). The scene of the magi is the earliest extant depiction of the magi, or three wise men. It also competes as being the earliest depiction of Mary—and maybe even Jesus.* The catacomb contains numerous scenes and figures from the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) as well, including Noah, Jonah, and Daniel.

SCALA / ART RESOURCE, NY

Fresco of the magi, Mary, and Jesus.



SCALA / ART RESOURCE, NY

Fresco of the Good Shepherd.

On your tour, you will likely be shown two more frescoes that supposedly depict Mary: a scene of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26–38) and of the Madonna and Child next to a prophet pointing at a star (Numbers 24:17; Matthew 2:9), but these may not be biblical. Prior to modern restorations, they resembled traditional Roman funerary scenes.

Photography is not permitted in the catacomb, as exposure to light damages the delicate frescoes. However, for those who wish to remember their visit, postcards and books are available in the gift shop.

After exploring the most famous portions of the catacomb, the guide leads you back through the winding passageways to the gift shop, where the tour ends. Before continuing on your exploration of Rome, you may wish to use the lavatories at the rear of the gift shop or rest in the connecting shaded courtyard.

Rome is a special city, as its past is intertwined with its present. This is especially apparent with the catacomb, whose tunnels sprawl beneath the Villa Ada Park, which sits across the street from cafés, restaurants, and shops. The catacomb entrance itself is connected to a functioning convent. And both the convent and the catacomb bear the name "Priscilla," probably the patroness who donated the land for the burials nearly 2,000 years ago. She and those buried in the catacomb certainly left their mark on a city that has served as a political, commercial, and religious capital for millennia.

* For more on the earliest Christian art, including frescoes from Dura-Europos in eastern Syria, see Mary Joan Winn Leith, "Earliest Depictions of the Virgin Mary," **BAR**, March/April 2017.

ARCHAEOLOGY ARGOT

Rhyton

Throughout the ages, people have raised their glasses to celebrate victories, confirm treaties and unions, and honor memories. On certain occasions, some used a ryhton, a special drinking horn. These conical vessels have a spout at the bottom through which liquid could pour. In fact, the name rhyton comes from the Greek *rheo*, meaning "flow" or "stream."

Drinking horns—often made from actual horns—abound from prehistoric Eurasia. The earliest rhyta come from Crete and date to the Bronze Age (second millennium BCE), with spectacular examples shaped like bull's heads from the Heraklion palace. As the vessel spread throughout the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds, the variety of animals—both real and mythical—depicted on the spouts increased. Rhyta became especially popular in Persia (ancient Iran).

Used in feasts and religious ceremonies, rhyta slowly dispensed liquids, such as wine and oil. Because they were not freestanding, they required at least two hands—if not two people—to fill: one to pour and another to hold the vessel and cover its second opening. Rhyta were made of various materials, including horn, metal, ceramics, stone, and even glass. This example of a silver griffin, which measures 9 inches tall and dates to the fifth century BCE, reflects Persian style and comes from eastern Turkey—when the region was under Achaemenid Persian control.

HOW MANY? (SEE QUIZ ON P. 16)

Answer: Six

According to the tradition codified by the third-century BCE Egyptian priest and historian Manetho, ancient Egyptian kings and queens belonged to 30 distinct dynasties. Out of the 30, four dynasties were foreign: the Hyksos (Dynasty 15: 16th century BCE), Libyans (Dynasty 22: tenth–eighth centuries), Nubians or Kushites (Dynasty 25: eighth–seventh centuries), and Persians (Dynasty 27: sixth–fifth centuries, and again in the fourth century).

Manetho did not count the contemporary, Ptolemaic rulers of Egypt as a distinct dynasty. However, since Alexander the Great and his successors presented themselves as true pharaohs, two more dynasties can be added to this list. The first is the Macedonian dynasty of the Argeads (or Temenids) that conquered Egypt in 332 BCE, and the second is the Ptolemaic dynasty of Alexander's successors that held Egypt until 31 BCE, when Cleopatra VII and Marc Antony lost to Octavian, who then became the first Roman emperor to rule Egypt. Although early Roman rulers of Egypt were honored and portrayed as pharaohs, modern scholars consider their dynasties to be outside of Egypt's pharaonic history.

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Daedalus in Jerusalem

AARON DEMSKY

A UNIQUE HEBREW INSCRIPTION discovered in 2018 continues to excite epigraphers and historians of the Second Temple period. Dated to the Herodian period (late first century BCE–first century CE), it provides one of the first archaeologically attested full spellings of the name Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) as it is pronounced in Hebrew to this day.[1] However, it is not the only remarkable thing about the inscription.

The short, three-line inscription, which is incised on a limestone column, reads *hnnyh br dydlos myrwšlym*, "Hananiah son of Daedalus, from Jerusalem." Who was this Hananiah? And even more intriguingly: Why did this Jewish man identify his lineage with the name Daedalus, the famous inventor and artisan from Greek mythology?

The salvage excavation that uncovered the inscription, less than 2 miles northwest of Jerusalem's Old City,* also identified the remains of a pottery workshop that operated from the second century BCE to the second century CE. Following the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, the facility was supervised by the Tenth Roman Legion and produced both vessels and building materials such as roof tiles and bricks. According to archaeologists, local Jewish craftsmen, artisans, and potters continued the production, preserving the requisite technology and sources of raw materials.

The inscription is written in square Hebrew script in a formal, commemorative style, and the fine execution indicates that it was produced by a master engraver using a thin chisel. The subject of the inscription bore one of the most common Hebrew names of his time, Hananiah. He further identified himself by his relationship (*bar*, "son of") to a father (the patronym *Dydlos*, "Daedalus"), and his place of origin or residence (*m-Yrwšlym*, "from Jerusalem"). These four words reflect linguistic traits of the three languages current in Jerusalem prior to the destruction of the Temple, namely Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

Perhaps signaling his personal or professional status, the writer chose the formal "Hananiah" instead of any of the abbreviated forms or nicknames (e.g., Hanan, Hanina) of this Hebrew name. The term "son of" is then expressed in Aramaic (*bar*) rather than Hebrew (*ben*), followed by the Greek patronym *Dydlos*, which is the most interesting aspect of the inscription.

Having a Greek name, even one known from Greek mythology, is not in itself unique during this period. We know of other individuals bearing a Hebrew name with a non-Hebrew

Daedalus prepares the wings of feathers for his son Icarus and himself to escape from Crete.

* See Robin Ngo, "2,000-Year-Old Jerusalem Inscription Bears City's Name," *Bible History Daily*, October 9, 2018 (blog).

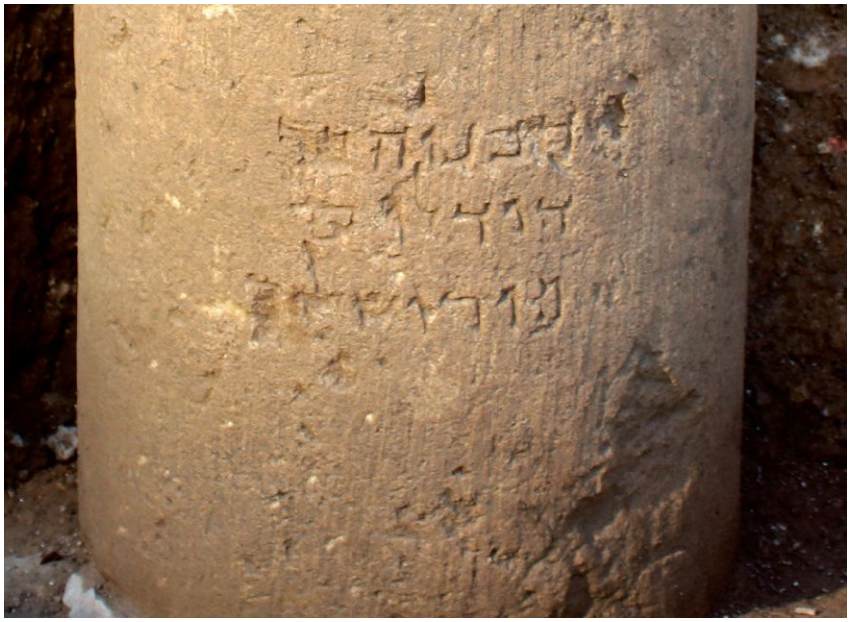

PHOTO BY DANIT LEVY, ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY

The Hananiah Inscription associating the artisan with mythical Daedalus.

patronym, such as the later rabbis Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Yonatan ben Abtolmos. As such, the patronym *bar Dydlos* can be interpreted in two ways: Daedalus was either the name of Hananiah's biological father or a nickname related to Hananiah's trade or craft. If Daedalus was indeed the father, he was probably a Jew living in the Herodian period who was influenced (or his parents were) by Greek culture. Alternatively, he could have been one of the period's many proselytes,* or perhaps a "Godfearer" who believed in a single deity and observed the commandments relating to interpersonal matters.

If, on the other hand, Hananiah himself adopted the patronym Daedalus, it was a symbolic nickname denoting affiliation or identification with a prestigious profession—perhaps a master craftsman in the potters' workshop excavated at the site. In Greek lore, Daedalus appears in the *Iliad*, where he is a royal architect and creator of wings for himself and his son Icarus (18.590–593). But it was otherwise a rare name, borne by only five people in the Greek onomasticon of non-Jewish names. Notably, three of them are designated as artisans.

* Jodi Magness, "Journey to Jerusalem: Pilgrims and Immigrants in the Time of Herod," **BAR**, Fall 2022.

Similarly, there was a family of Greek poets from the isle of Chiros called Homerides, "the sons of Homer" (or "admirers of Homer") who traced their descent from the ancient bard and recited his poems.

Hananiah likely adopted the name to strengthen his affiliation with a professional cadre, which was a practice known to various occupations in Jewish life in antiquity. In the late Second Temple period, "families" or "guilds" of craftsmen were charged with various kinds of labor needed in the Temple and were sometimes referred to by the name of an ancient patron. In the Mishnah, for example, the sons of Phineas were over document seals, the sons of Petahiah over bird offerings, the sons of Gever over gate security, and the sons of Arza over cymbals (*Sheqalim* 5:1; *Tamid* 1:4, 3:8). Other guilds were designated by their "house," such as "the house of Garmu over the making of the showbread" and "the house of Avtinas over the preparing of the frankincense" (*Sheqalim* 5:1; *Yoma* 3:11).

We may therefore conjecture that the use of the patronym Daedalus indicates that Hananiah adopted the name of the mythic Greek master craftsman to mark his affiliation with a group of artisans named for the legendary hero. To further strengthen his identity, Hananiah declares that he is from Jerusalem, which serves as another status symbol—he was not a villager but a cosmopolitan citizen of Jerusalem.

This simple four-word inscription thus affords a glimpse into the complexities of identities of Jews living in Judea at the end of the Second Temple period, when its metropolis was a place of contact with the Hellenistic world.

[1] See my fuller discussion in Aaron Demsky, "The 'Hananiah Bar Daedalus from Yerushalayim' Inscription," *Eretz-Israel* 34 (2021), pp. 67–72 (in Hebrew).

WHERE IS IT? (SEE QUIZ ON P. 13)

Answer: 2 Ur, Iraq

Towering above the ruins of one of the oldest cities in the world, the Great Ziggurat of Ur stands 100 feet tall with a base of 210 by 150 feet. It is located on the plain of Chaldea in southern Iraq, some 200 miles southeast of Baghdad. Built in the 21st century BCE, the ziggurat served as a temple platform. Unfortunately, the temple itself, which was dedicated to Nanna, the Sumerian moon god and Ur's patron deity, has not survived.

Made of a mudbrick core encased by burnt bricks, the ziggurat deteriorated over time. In the sixth century BCE, the Babylonian king Nabonidus, who took a great interest in Mesopotamia's ancient past, restored the ziggurat. Its present condition reflects a restoration by Saddam Hussein in the 1980s.

Ur was a center of Sumerian civilization and was also known to the biblical writers as the birthplace of the patriarch Abraham (Genesis 11:31).

SBL Creates Space for New Voices

Steed Davidson is the new Executive Director of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), the largest and oldest academic society devoted to critical biblical studies. He previously served as Professor of Hebrew Bible, Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Dean of the Faculty at McCormick Theological Seminary. **BAR** had a chance to talk with Davidson about his vision for SBL—and biblical studies.

1 2 3 4 5

As SBL's new Executive Director, how will you navigate the current challenges in biblical studies?

DAVIDSON: The current time presents many challenges for the relevance of biblical studies, but these challenges also provide opportunities to innovate the field. This is a time where we see diminished attendance in organized religious communities as well as diminishing support for the humanities in higher education. Biblical studies must face these headwinds and adapt to reach audiences that still seek the knowledge and insights produced in them.

1 2 3 4 5

How do you hope to achieve SBL's mission in the coming years?

DAVIDSON: SBL's mission is to "foster academic scholarship in biblical studies and cognate areas across global boundaries." Biblical studies requires an inflow of new scholars, researchers, and writers. The formation of those new entrants to work in a changed discipline means increasing conversations in graduate programs, resourcing career development, and providing opportunities to design entrepreneurial ventures for adventurous thinkers. Almost a third of SBL members live outside of the United States, and a number who live in the U.S. were born outside of the country—myself included. This global membership presents opportunities to broaden the range of biblical knowledge that pays attention to voices long ignored, to recover practices around engagement with Bibles in different parts of the world, and to influence the direction of the field.

1 2 3 4 5

Why is it important to engage the public in biblical scholarship?

DAVIDSON: The Bible has been critical for the development of Western civilization and, therefore, most parts of the world. Engaging the public with innovative biblical scholarship is a form of good community education with many benefits. Quite often, without saying it, public figures use biblical knowledge to support their positions. Even more, artists creatively engage with biblical material to produce useful insights that support meaningful dialogue. The consumption of biblical things at various levels has always happened in public spaces, sometimes with biblical scholars and quite often without. As the venues for biblical scholarship continue to shift, public spaces, both in person and digital, serve as generative locations where good scholarship can thrive.

1 2 3 4 5

You're originally from Trinidad and Tobago. How does that background influence your scholarship?

DAVIDSON: I grew up in the early stages of the end of the colonial period when the country was still trying to understand its place in the world. Political independence from a waning imperial power has been both a gift and burden. The British released many of its former colonies because it was advantageous to do so, not because the British Empire had suddenly become generous. An independent nation in that context enters the world scene without the resources needed to develop itself and figure out how to exist in a world constructed in favor of larger powers.

When I speak in this way, I could easily be speaking of ancient Israel during the Persian period. If I go further into the histories of Trinidad and Tobago or other Caribbean territories, I could also be speaking of ancient Israel during the Assyrian or Babylonian period. Similarly, to speak of the independent Caribbean in the shadow of the United States resembles ancient Israel in the shadow of many ancient empires. I received a critical education in history that helped me to analyze these political realities, and their implications inevitably influenced my faith and ultimately my scholarship around the Bible.

1 2 3 4 5

What are some of the similarities and differences you notice between biblical studies in the U.S. and other parts of the world?

DAVIDSON: Unfortunately, there are too many similarities between the U.S. and other parts of the world. While this makes it easy to translate scholarship and engage in intelligent conversations without too much difficulty, the sameness is not generative. Fortunately, there are growing spaces and commitments that pay attention to local realities and to read through those realities. For instance, scholars in Oceania who pay attention to their context as more water than land pursue biblical studies attentive to storytelling and reading practices that are framed by that liquid existence. And there are scholars in Africa that use wisdom and other knowledge traditions to stand alongside biblical texts. Even more, some Asian scholars who recognize sacred texts that predate the Bible pursue a different pathway for biblical scholarship. The expansion of these possibilities provides exciting opportunities for the future.

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What New Testament Women Were Really Like

REVIEWED BY **T.J. WRAY**

Finding Phoebe
What New Testament Women Were Really Like
By Susan E. Hylen
(Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2023), x + 188 pp., 4 b/w photos; $21.99 (paperback)

I HAVE SPENT much of my career researching, writing, and speaking about the lives of women during biblical antiquity. Here in this review, I focus on women living under the Roman occupation of Judea during the first and second centuries AD, the historical period covered in Susan E. Hylen's book *Finding Phoebe*. Hylen explores the varied roles of women like Phoebe, a member of the early Christian community who lived near Corinth. While Paul refers to Phoebe as "sister," "deacon," and "benefactor" (Romans 16:1–2), Hylen admits that these designations may not carry the same meaning as they do today. Phoebe's role, therefore, is open to interpretation and may range from "church leader" to perhaps someone who served Paul in a more informal capacity.

The various ways in which we interpret Paul's references to Phoebe serve as the backbone of Hylen's book, as she challenges readers not only to explore New Testament women in their historical context, but also to set aside assumptions about them and to imagine what their lives were like.

In our quest to explore the lives of New Testament women, we must first note that the Roman Empire was controlled by powerful men. This included the emperor, who enjoyed a divine status (cf. the Latin title *Augustus*, or "Venerable"), an all-male senate, various appointed local leaders, and a professional military. Roman citizenship was based largely on wealth and social status, thus making it an elite and exclusionary privilege. Roman citizens could vote, hold public office, own property, and enjoy many other perks that non-citizens might have envied. Unlike their male counterparts, women who held Roman citizenship could not vote or hold public office, but they did have many other rights, including the right to conduct business, own property, and divorce.

It is generally assumed that Jews in Judea also operated under a patriarchal system. Although it is true that men created laws, maintained order, and led religious life and Temple worship, the Jewish system was not as restrictive as we once imagined. For instance, there is ample evidence to support the notion that women maintained a literacy rate comparable

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to men. Hylen rightly asserts that many women occupied a variety of jobs beyond their expected roles as wife and mother. For example, some women worked as shopkeepers, teachers, and midwives, professions that required some level of education and record-keeping skills.

The New Testament cites many examples of Jewish women circumventing the status quo to assume roles comparable to men. Mary Magdalene, along with several other women, helped finance the Jesus movement (Luke 8:1–3); Herodias, the wife of Herod Antipas, manipulated events to arrange the execution of her nemesis, John the Baptist (Mark 6:17–28); Tabitha operated a charitable organization for the widows and orphans of Joppa (Acts 9:36–42); and Lydia was a wealthy, influential merchant and a leader in one of the movement's many "house churches"—private homes that were used for early Christian worship (Acts 16:11–15, 40).

After Jesus's death, women became central figures in the post-resurrection community. The Acts of the Apostles relates the communal life of Jesus's followers in the immediate aftermath of his death as an egalitarian utopia, where everyone sold their possessions, and everything was distributed equally among men and women (Acts 2:42–47). Over time, small house churches began to emerge, and (mostly) wealthy women presided over them, as Christians met, broke bread, prayed, and remembered Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:11; Acts 12:12). These early church leaders likely included Phoebe but also Mary the mother of John Mark who led services in her home in Jerusalem (Acts 12:12–17), Nympha in Laodicea (Colossians 4:14), and Apphia in Colossae (Philemon 2). Women often worked alongside men as missionaries, notably Prisca and her husband, Aquila. The efforts of countless other women filled the seats in house churches from Judea to Asia Minor and Greece with new converts (Philippians 4:2–3; Romans 16:1–7).

Sadly, the era of the inclusive house churches was short lived, only to give way to larger, more ornate buildings, complete with a hierarchal system of all-male clergy. The fair and equal treatment of women that so characterized Jesus's ministry gradually dissolved, as women were nudged to the sidelines. The egalitarian utopia described in Acts 2:42–47 was replaced with a form of exclusionary sexism, where women were no longer active missionaries and presiders, but instead were expected to sit down and be quiet (Ephesians 5:22–24; 1 Timothy 2:11–15).

In addition to the New Testament, new archaeological data and ancient documents attest that some ancient women owned property, participated in community life, and even assumed leadership roles and acted as patrons. Hylen's book does a great job showing that the old model of women as passive figures, wholly subservient to men and necessarily limited only to the roles of wife and mother, must be discarded in favor of a much broader understanding of their complex, dynamic, and multifaceted lives.

WHO DID IT? (SEE QUIZ ON P. 12)

Answer: Labib Sorial

Labib Sorial was a Coptic Christian from Luxor. In 1917, he graduated from Assiut College in Egypt, and he was soon hired by Clarence S. Fisher, an archaeologist with the Penn Museum, to assist him in excavations at Dendereh and Memphis. Fisher had been seeking someone versed in both Arabic and English, and Sorial came highly recommended. Eventually, Fisher began to train him in surveying and drafting, skills he would employ on many later excavations.*

In 1921, Fisher moved to work in Palestine, and Sorial joined him. Between then and 1935, Sorial worked at Beth Shean, Megiddo, Tell en-Nasbeh, Beth Shemesh, Jerash (in Jordan), Tell Beit Mirsim, Beth Zur, Tell Abu Hawam, and Antioch (in Turkey). He also worked for a few years with Fisher at Dra Abu el-Naga in Egypt and for a season with a German team at Hermopolis. In total, Sorial helped excavate a dozen sites over 18 years.

Sorial was a skilled surveyor who created site contour maps, laid out excavation grids, and drew architectural plans and sections. He could draw pottery when needed and also mend it. He drew hieroglyphs on at least one occasion. At times, he supervised excavations while directors were away and served an as invaluable intermediary between local residents and dig directors.

COURTESY OF THE BADÉ MUSEUM OF PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Labib Sorial at his drafting table at Tell en-Nasbeh in 1932.

Sorial left archaeology in 1935 on the death of his father. He felt obliged to take up his father's teaching position at the Luxor Mission School for Boys. He hoped to return to archaeology at some point, but a combination of factors such as the Great Depression and the advent of World War II seems to have scuttled this hope. The last known information about Sorial places him in Cairo in 1948, with his wife and two daughters.—**JEFFREY R. ZORN**

* To learn more about Labib Sorial's archaeological career, see Jeffrey R. Zorn, "Labib Sorial—A Forgotten Figure in Biblical Archaeology," *Bible History Daily* (blog), May 24, 2023.

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Although the hoard showcases the skilled craftsmanship of the region's prehistoric peoples, its purpose remains a mystery. Theories abound regarding its origin, function, and deposition in the cave. Some scholars think the objects were originally used during rituals at the nearby Chalcolithic temple of Ein Gedi and were then brought to the cave for burial once they were no longer in use.

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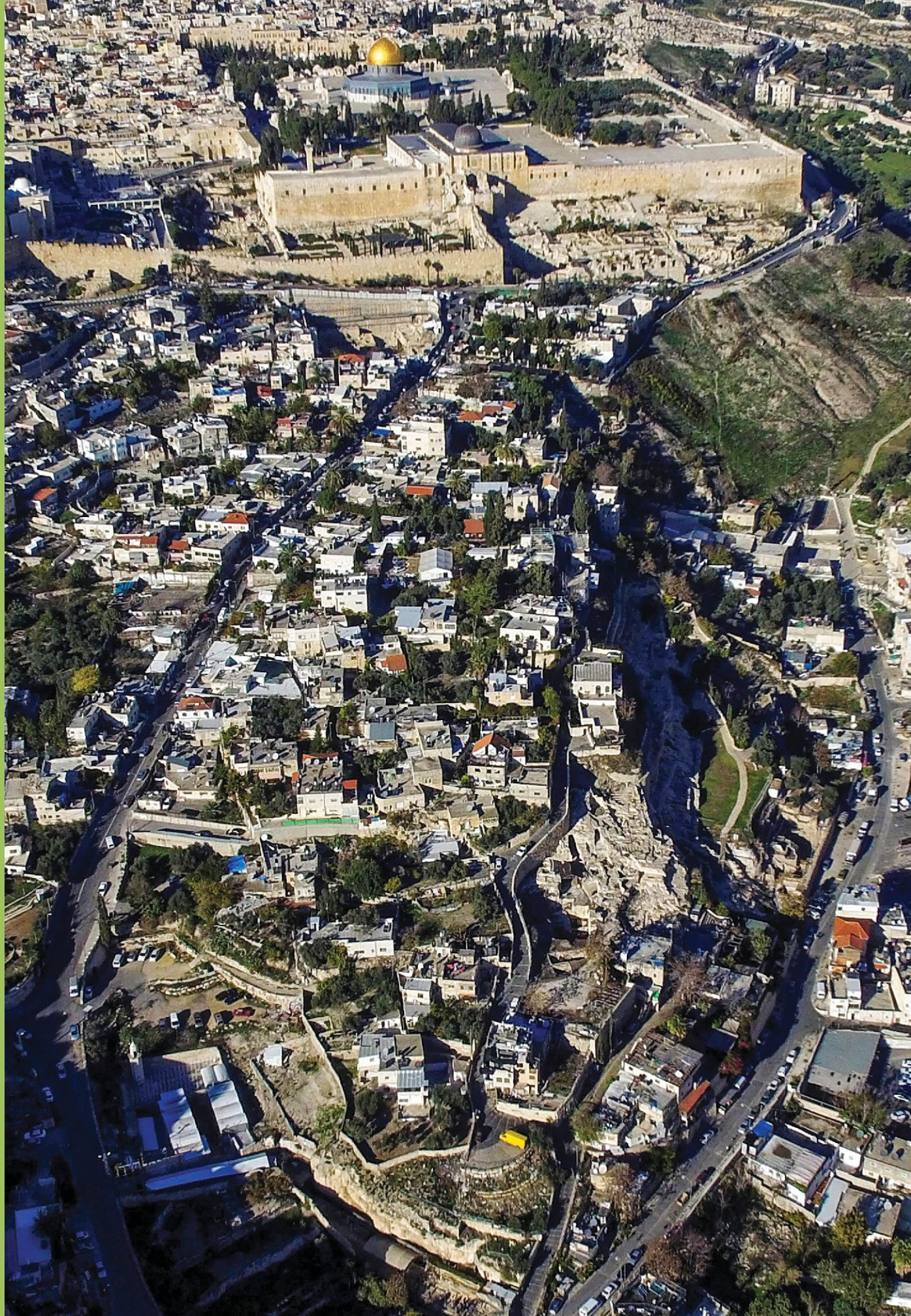

The Millo
Jerusalem's Lost Monument

CHRIS McKINNY, AHARON TAVGER, NAHSHON SZANTON, AND JOE UZIEL

HAVE ARCHAEOLOGISTS BEEN LOOKING in the wrong place for the Millo, one of Jerusalem's most important and ancient biblical monuments? We believe the Millo—a structure that the Bible lists alongside the Temple of Yahweh and the royal palaces of David and Solomon (1 Kings 9:15)—was not a constructed foundation or massive retaining wall, as many scholars have argued, but rather a monumental fortification that guarded the city's most precious resource: water.

Indeed, the biblical writers credit some of Judah's most famous kings, including David, Solomon, and Hezekiah, with building and renovating the Millo. It was also the setting for the assassination of King Joash of Judah in 796 BCE.

But what exactly was the Millo, and where was it located?

The Bible gives us some important clues: First, it was a significant, imposing, and apparently enclosed royal structure (2 Kings 12:20) located along the periphery of the City of David that was somehow associated with but distinct from Jerusalem's fortifications (2 Samuel 5:9; 1 Kings 11:27). Second, though it may have already existed prior to Jerusalem becoming the capital of the Judahite kingdom (2 Samuel 5:8–9), the Millo was periodically repaired and renovated by various kings of Judah through the late eighth century (2 Chronicles 32:5), after which it appears to have gone out of use. Third, the monument was closely related to the meaning and significance of its somewhat unusual Hebrew name, the Millo.

CITY OF DAVID. The eastern hill of Jerusalem—a narrow ridge that extends just south of the ancient Temple Mount and is known to archaeologists as the "City of David"—is the location of the city's oldest settlement and its source of fresh water, the Gihon Spring. It was here that the kings of Judah built palaces, fortifications, and the mysterious Millo (a name derived from the Hebrew verb *mil'*, "to fill"). Scholars have long debated the Millo's function and location, but new research suggests it was where Jerusalem's residents routinely came to "fill" their water containers.

PHOTO BY BILL SCHLEGEL / BIBLEPLACES.COM

DAVID'S JERUSALEM. The inhabitants of ancient Jerusalem built a massive tower (bottom right of above drawing) to protect the Gihon Spring. Located just outside the city's walls, the spring was accessed via a fortified stepped passageway that led down to the cave on the eastern slope of the ridge where the waters emanated. This reconstruction envisions Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE during the time of King David, before the city had expanded north to include the Temple to Yahweh built by King Solomon. The Spring Tower, together with the Fortified Passage, may be the "Millo" mentioned in the Bible.

"Millo" comes from the Hebrew word *mil'*, which means "to fill." Even before modern times, interpreters understood that the Millo had something to do with a "filling" (see sidebar, opposite). As such, some suggested that the Millo was a large religious area "full" of people or an ancient meeting hall "filled" with crowds. Neither view proved correct, but the growth of modern archaeology focused attention on other types of "filling" that may have been designated by the term Millo.

Starting in the early 20th century, scholars began to realize that the City of David was the ancient core of Canaanite and Judahite Jerusalem. Although not as elevated or defensible as Jerusalem's western hill, the City of David possessed the perennial Gihon Spring. In the search for the biblical Millo, scholars began to assume that the "filling" had something to do with the stone or earthen "fills" that supported the walls and fortifications of the City of David. Buttressing their claims, they argued the term is similarly used in Assyrian, where it can refer to a filled depression or the construction of a terrace wall. With this assumption in hand, some scholars began to connect the Millo with specific segments of Jerusalem's fortifications.

Kathleen Kenyon's excavations of Jerusalem in the early 1960s revealed a large wall along the eastern slopes of the City of David that led down to the Kidron Valley. Kenyon suggested that this terrace wall—which fortified Jerusalem's steep eastern slope—was the biblical Millo.[1] This suggestion was accepted by many scholars, and it seemed that a final consensus had been reached.

Then, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, Yigal Shiloh's excavations in the City of David exposed portions of the "Stepped Stone Structure"—a large stone-filled revetment wall along the upper slopes of the Kidron, likely built in the 11th century BCE. Shiloh's discovery prompted archaeologist Lawrence Stager to argue that the Stepped Stone Structure was actually the biblical Millo. Stager's suggestion remains accepted by many.[2]

Yet the assumption that the Millo has something to do with the stone and soil "filling" of fortifications leaves a dirty taste in one's mouth. Indeed, if one searches the Hebrew Bible for things that are "filled," there are numerous examples of people filling things with water or other liquids (e.g., Exodus 2:16; Judges 6:38; 1 Kings 18:33), but only two occurrences of something

being "filled" with soil (Genesis 26:15; 2 Kings 3:25). Perhaps more important, why would biblical Jerusalemites get excited about one of their great kings building a retaining wall, even one as nice as the Stepped Stone Structure? Why would a king brag about constructing something that would have been buried and covered over with vegetation or even other buildings?

We believe it is much more likely that the Millo relates to "filling" with water, which, in turn, supports a new and more plausible identification for the monument.[3] In Akkadian, the term *malu* or *malum* usually refers to filling containers or canals with water. In Ugaritic, the same term is used in the *Epic of Kirta* when women are "filling" (*mmlat*) jars from a spring. Similarly, when Rebecca meets Abraham's servant at the well in Haran, the Bible says she went down to the spring and "filled (from *ml'*) her jar" (Genesis 24:16). Finally, Song of Songs 5:12 reads, "His eyes are like doves beside streams of water, bathed in milk, sitting beside a pool full of water" (authors' translation)—the "pool full of water" (*ml't*) is from the same root as Millo.

If we take these examples together, it seems probable

Jerusalem's "Filling" Traditions

CHRIS MCKINNY

Early 19th-century explorers of Jerusalem had many theories for identifying the Millo. Intriguingly, they often associated the Millo with a pool of water, such as the Mamilla Pool, Pool of Hezekiah, or Siloam Pool. The Mamilla Pool, located just west of the wall of the Old City, is particularly interesting, as Murj al-Din, the late 15th-century historian who lived in Jerusalem, notes that local Jews referred to the pool as "Beth Millo."[1] Mamilla and Millo certainly sound similar, and the former likely derives from "waters of Millo" in Hebrew.

It is worth remembering that for most of the last two millennia, key monuments from the time of the biblical kings—David's palace (the "Tower of David"), David's tomb, and Mt. Zion itself—were thought to be located on Jerusalem's western hill, the area now commonly identified with the Old City's Christian, Armenian, and Jewish Quarters.

With the advent of modern archaeology, however, these traditional identifications proved to be off the mark, as excavation revealed the City of David (the eastern hill) to be the core of the Bronze and Iron Age city, not the western hill. Nevertheless, the long-standing traditions that associated the Millo with prominent pools of Jerusalem still seem to hold water.

[1] Aubrey Stewart, trans., *Palestine Pilgrims' Text Society*, vol. 2.21 (London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1897).

Mamilla Pool

BALAGE BALOGH / ARCHAEOLOGYILLUSTRATED.COM

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that the biblical Millo refers to a fortified location within the City of David where the inhabitants of Jerusalem filled their water containers. Fresh spring water was one of the most important assets for any ancient city. A protected spring would obviously have been a place of major significance for its inhabitants.

But did Iron Age Jerusalem have such a location for safely securing water? Recent archaeological evidence shows that it did.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron excavated a massive "Spring Tower" with an accompanying "Fortified Passage" that guarded and enclosed the waters of the Gihon Spring.* The archaeologists originally determined that the tower was constructed during the Middle Bronze Age (c. 2000–1550 BCE) and that its purpose was to protect and allow safe access to the spring's source—a small cave at the base of the hill from which water naturally flowed. Much of this system remained in use throughout the Iron Age, although it did undergo a variety of changes, especially with the construction of Hezekiah's Tunnel in the late eighth century.

Around a decade after the Spring Tower's discovery, additional excavations by Joe Uziel and Nahshon Szanton exposed some of the tower's lower courses, along with abundant evidence for building activity in the ninth and eighth centuries, during the time of King Joash of Judah (c. 836–796 BCE). The archaeologists also exposed the tower's northeastern corner and, based on radiocarbon evidence, found that it, too, dated from the ninth century, almost a millennium later than the Middle Bronze Age!

This suggests that the Spring Tower was either initially built in the Middle Bronze Age and then rebuilt during the ninth century, or that it was first constructed only in the Iron Age to strengthen the spring's ancient

* Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron, "Light at the End of the Tunnel," **BAR**, January/February 1999.

MISTAKEN MILLO? The Stepped Stone Structure (seen in the center of the photo) served as a large retaining wall for the City of David and possibly as a foundation for the city's royal palaces. It extended some 60 feet on the eastern side of the city and comprised a series of terraces. Some scholars have argued that the Stepped Stone Structure should be understood as the biblical Millo.

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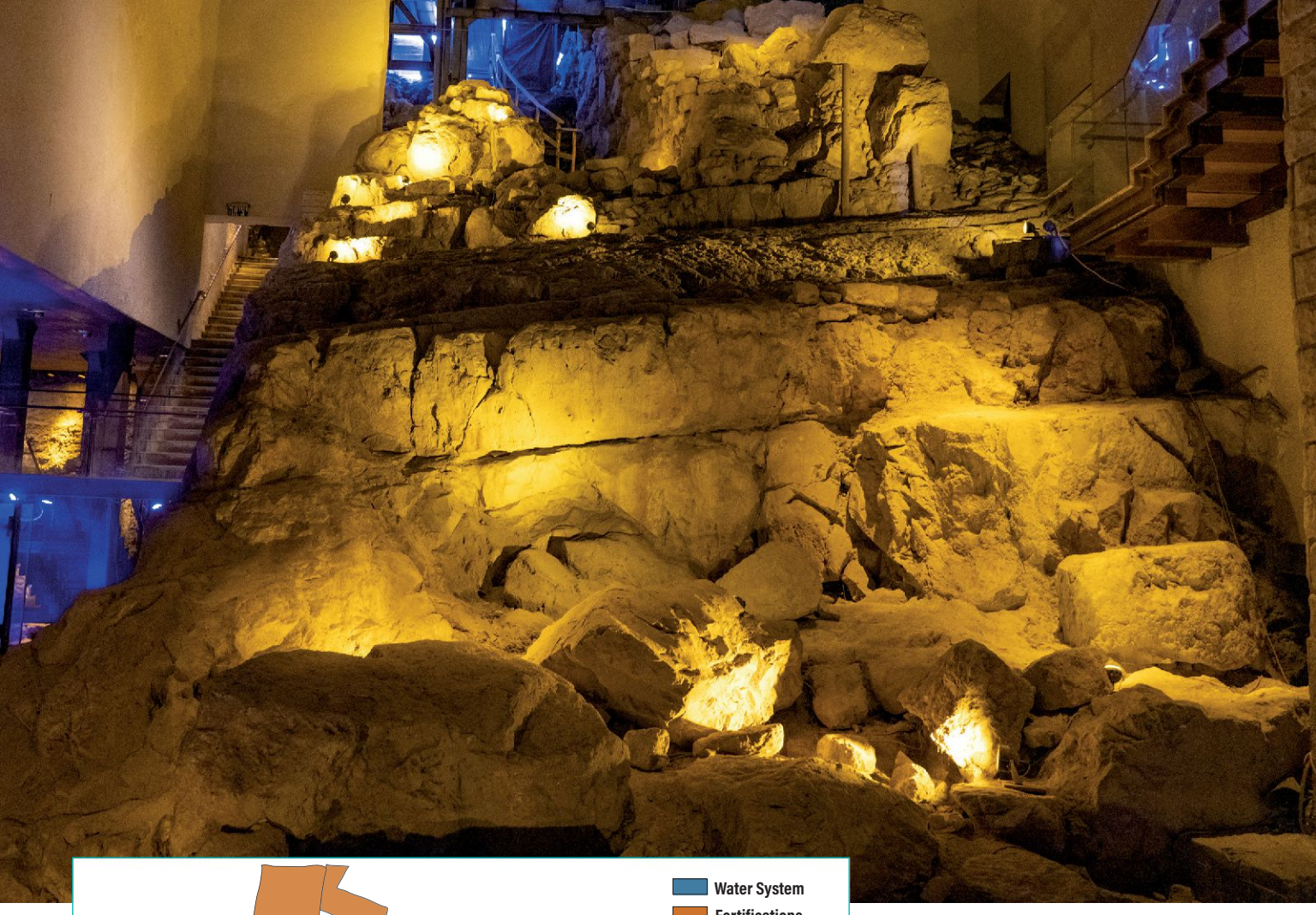
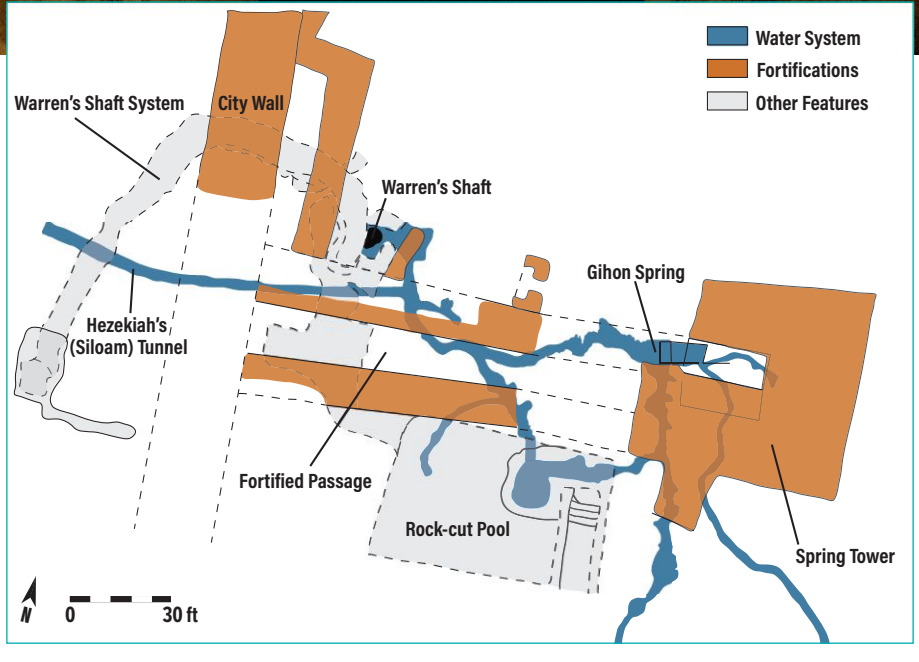




MAGNIFICENT MILLO. For millennia, people have found innovative ways to access the Gihon Spring, Jerusalem's main water source. During the Middle Bronze Age, the system consisted of tunnels and fortifications leading from the walled city to a pool and the spring, protected by a tower. The system underwent renovations in the ninth century BCE and more renovations and extensions in the eighth century. The above photo shows the Spring Tower, originally built by Jerusalem's Canaanite inhabitants in the Middle Bronze Age and renovated by the Israelites in the late ninth century. The plan (left) identifies the various features associated with this complex water and fortification system.

fortifications.[4] In any event, it appears that the Gihon Spring's fortification system was built and rebuilt over the course of several centuries until the construction of Hezekiah's Tunnel in the late eighth century.

The Spring Tower and its accompanying fortifications are by far the most monumental structures yet found in the City of David that predate the Roman period. This massive complex is the type of construction worthy of any Judahite king's boast. The biblical writers would not have blushed in putting the Spring Tower (understood as the Millo) in the same list as the Temple of Yahweh and the palace of King Solomon (1 Kings 9:15). The complicated archaeology of the Gihon's fortifications indicates that there was need to regularly repair the walls

that gave access to and protected Jerusalem's water supply. Repairs are clearly visible in several locations along these fortifications.

Interestingly, the construction (or reconstruction) of the Spring Tower as an enclosed building in the ninth century fits nicely with the "House of Millo" that is mentioned as the setting for the assassination of King Joash (2 Kings 12:20). During this period, Jerusalem was visited by several outside threats, most notably the Aramean king Hazael who, on the heels of conquering the powerful Philistine city of Gath, extracted a huge tribute from the king of Judah (2 Kings 12:18). Perhaps the construction or complete renovation of the Spring Tower during the late ninth century was meant to protect against these threats.

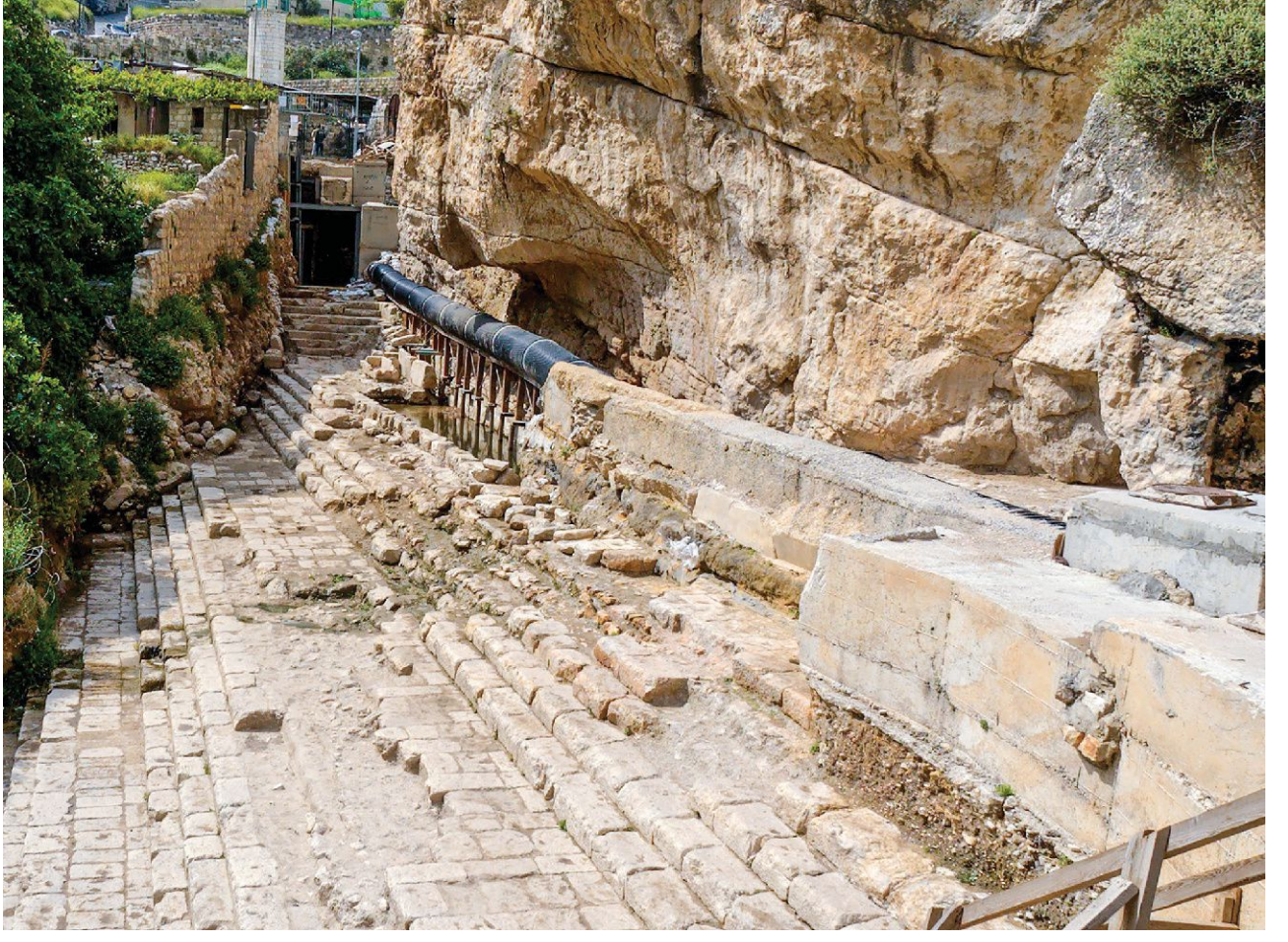
Finally, there is the connection between the Gihon Spring and the "filling" meaning of the name Millo.

JERUSALEM'S TAP. The Gihon Spring is accessed through a small cave at the base of Jerusalem's eastern hill. The rhythmic waters bubbled up and filled the cave. Those who lived in ancient Jerusalem guarded these waters and, at times, redirected them to pools. Notably, they built the massive Spring Tower—perhaps the biblical Millo—to protect the spring.

From the time of Canaanite Jerusalem to the construction of Hezekiah's Tunnel in the late eighth century, Jerusalemites would have been intimately familiar with the spring fortifications, regularly visiting the Gihon Spring to fill their water containers. In our view, the Gihon Spring's fortifications—namely the Spring Tower and the Fortified Passage—are the Millo, the place of the filling of water containers.

When we combine the monumentality of the Gihon's fortifications with the common need of people to access the spring's water, we see that the Millo was one of Jerusalem's most iconic settings during the time of the kings of Judah. The writers of the books of Samuel and Kings did not waste this setting in the tales of their favorite kings. They claimed that David included the Millo in Jerusalem's fortifications (2 Samuel 5:9) and that King Solomon was anointed and coronated there, amid the uncertainty of an attempted coup (1 Kings 1:38–39). During his reign, Solomon finished his father's job of building the Millo (1 Kings 9:15, 24), a monumental project that would have proclaimed the king's prestige to every water carrier.

Writing centuries later, the Chronicler indicates that King Hezekiah strengthened the Millo and built



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HERSHEL SHANKS

HEZEKIAH'S WATERWORKS. In the eighth century BCE, King Hezekiah commissioned a tunnel to connect the Gihon Spring to the Siloam Pool. Anticipating an Assyrian siege, he sought to protect Jerusalem's water supply by directing the water to a pool well within the city's fortifications. Located at the southwestern edge of the City of David, the Siloam Pool provided water to those who lived on Jerusalem's western hill. Hezekiah's Tunnel can still be traversed (see left). Today it empties into a pool from the Byzantine period, but, to the southeast, archaeologists found a pool dated to the Roman period (see above). The eighth-century BCE Siloam Pool has yet to be found, but it likely is beneath the Roman pool or nearby.

the water tunnel that we now call Hezekiah's Tunnel (2 Chronicles 32:4–5). However, after the reign of Hezekiah, the Millo is not mentioned again in the Bible. Instead, the Pool of Shiloah (or Siloam) became the main source of water for the city (Isaiah 8:6; Nehemiah 3:15; John 9:7–11).* Perhaps the Millo lost its significance with the emergence of the Pool of Siloam via Hezekiah's Tunnel—one royal building project eclipsing another.

According to the Bible, the Millo was one of Jerusalem's most recognizable monuments. For most of the last two centuries, explorers and archaeologists have been searching for it, filling books and journals with their theories. In light of new evidence, we believe the search has finally ended—at the Spring Tower, the place where ancient Jerusalemites found a secure source of water during the time of the biblical kings.

* Hershel Shanks, "The Siloam Pool," **BAR**, September/October 2005.

[1] Kathleen M. Kenyon, *Digging Up Jerusalem* (New York: Praeger, 1974), pp. 94–103.

[2] Lawrence E. Stager, "The Archaeology of the East Slope of Jerusalem and the Terraces of the Kidron," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 41.2 (1982), pp. 111–121.

[3] For further discussion, see Chris McKinny et al., "The Setting of the Assassination of King Joash of Judah: Biblical and Archaeological Evidence for Identifying the House of Millo," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 140.4 (2021), pp. 643–662.

[4] For detailed discussions of the dating evidence, see Johanna Regev et al., "Absolute Dating of the Gihon Spring Fortifications, Jerusalem," *Radiocarbon* 59.4 (2017), pp. 1171–1193; Johanna Regev et al., "Middle Bronze Age Jerusalem: Recalculating Its Character and Chronology," *Radiocarbon* 63.3 (2021), pp. 853–883.

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Yahweh Who Was the God

MICHAEL J. STAHL

THE HEBREW BIBLE presents King Omri of Israel and his heirs (the Omride dynasty) as devotees of the Phoenician storm god Baal, whose name literally means "lord." Whereas King Omri's son Ahab and his Tyrian queen Jezebel sponsor Baal's worship and seek to exterminate Yahweh's prophets (1 Kings 16; 18–19), the prophet Elijah, whose own name means "My God is Yahweh," promotes the exclusive worship of Yahweh and stands opposed to Baal's invasion of Israelite religion (1 Kings 18:17–40). The biblical narrative even claims that Yahweh brings down Omri's dynasty because of its support of Baal over Yahweh (1 Kings 19:14–18).

But were the Omrides of the ninth century BCE really committed followers of Baal and hostile enemies of Yahweh? Is there any historical evidence to corroborate the biblical claims? What if the Omrides did *not* champion Baal, but actually elevated Yahweh to the position of Israel's patron deity—a religious revolution that would fundamentally shape biblical religion in the centuries to come?

Importantly, the earliest indisputable evidence for Yahweh's worship outside of the Hebrew Bible dates to the time of Israel's Omride kings. The Mesha Stele, an ancient stone monument from Jordan now located in the Louvre Museum, contains the longest extant Northwest Semitic inscription and the first indisputable reference to Yahweh in the historical record.[1] The inscription celebrates how King Mesha of Moab, the ruler of a small kingdom east of the Dead Sea, supported by his patron god Chemosh, expelled Omri's royal heir (who is unnamed) from Moabite territory after a generation of Israelite domination (2 Kings 3).

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or Baal of Northern Israel?

In this context, Mesha reports:

> Chemosh said to me: "Go! Seize Nebo from Israel!" I went in the night and fought against it ... I seized it and slew all (of it): seven thousand men and boys, women and girls, and pregnant women. It was to (the god) Ashtar-Chemosh (that) I devoted it to destruction. I took from there Yahweh's vessels and I dragged them before Chemosh.

The Mesha Stele indicates that the Omrides supported a Yahwistic shrine east of the Jordan River in territory disputed between Israel and Moab. The Moabite king's victory over the Israelites at Nebo included the capture of religious objects dedicated to Yahweh, which Mesha placed before Moab's god, Chemosh. The political implications of this act are clear: Mesha and the Moabite deity Chemosh had defeated the Omride king and the Israelite god—who is notably identified as Yahweh, not Baal!

Not coincidentally, the Mesha Stele complements other biblical and non-biblical lines of evidence that the Omrides officially endorsed

BATTLE OF THE GODS. In the Bible, the Omride kings of the Northern Kingdom of Israel are frequently condemned for casting aside Israel's God Yahweh in favor of the Phoenician storm god Baal. A particularly dramatic episode is found in 1 Kings 18, where the prophet Elijah challenges the royally supported priests of Baal to a contest of burnt offerings on Mt. Carmel to determine which god—Yahweh or Baal—is the true God, a scene depicted in this wall painting from the third-century CE synagogue at Dura-Europos in eastern Syria. A closer look at the biblical, historical, and archaeological evidence, however, indicates that far from abandoning Yahweh, the Omrides were devoted followers of their patron deity.

Yahweh as Israel's patron god. Importantly, the Omrides were the first Israelite dynasty to use names that honored and showed devotion to Yahweh. Ahab named his two sons Ahaziah and Joram (aka Jehoram), meaning "Yahweh has seized (in protection)" and "Yahweh is exalted," respectively (1 Kings 22:40; 2 Kings 3:1). Historical confirmation of Joram's name comes from the ninth-century Tel Dan Stele, in which an unnamed Aramean king claims victory over "Joram son of Ahab, king of Israel." The Bible also informs us that one of Omri's female descendants was named Athaliah—the oldest female Yahweh-name in the Hebrew Bible—meaning "Yahweh is eminent" (2 Kings 8:26).

While such indications of Omride worship of Yahweh may seem surprising given the biblical account, several stories that likely predate the material polemicizing against Baal actually recognize that the Omrides revered Yahweh. For example, 1 Kings 21:17–29 portrays Ahab humbling himself before Yahweh after Elijah delivers an oracle of judgment—not for Ahab's alleged worship of Baal, but because he illegally seized Naboth's vineyard. As a result, a placated Yahweh postpones his judgment of Ahab's royal house until after his death (v. 29). Another story shows Ahab gathering the kingdom's prophets to consult Yahweh before going to war against the Arameans (1 Kings 22:5–12).

Inscriptional evidence and Israelite personal names, though circumstantial, confirm that Yahweh was the most popular deity in ninth- and

ISRAEL'S ANCIENT CAPITAL. King Omri of Israel moved his capital to Samaria, where his son and successor, Ahab, reportedly "erected an altar for Baal in the house of Baal that he built in Samaria" (1 Kings 16:32). Administrative texts written on potsherds (ostraca) recovered from the site's acropolis (see below), however, frequently attest Israelite personal names that honor or express devotion to Yahweh. Far fewer personal names honor other deities, including Baal. Although dating from after the demise of the Omride dynasty, these Yahwistic names likely reflect the Northern Kingdom's traditional devotion to Yahweh.

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Biblical Bias

MICHAEL J. STAHL

If Samaria's kings were devoted worshipers of Yahweh—as historical sources show—why then did the biblical writers come to view them as foreign Baal worshipers?

We gain some insight from the eighth-century prophet Hosea, who provides us with the Hebrew Bible's earliest criticism of Baal—a criticism that shows that Yahweh's translatability with Baal was well established by the prophet's time (Hosea 2:16–17). Interestingly, Hosea's polemic says nothing of Omri's royal house or its alleged importation of the Phoenician Baal cult a century earlier. Rather, Hosea's critique belongs to the post-Omride era, following Jehu's coup, and likely targets local Israelite veneration of Baal that was traditional to the region. From Hosea, there is no indication that Baal worship was understood to have been introduced by foreign elements under the Omrides, nor that Jehu—who overthrew Ahab of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah but later became subject to Assyria (see him kneeling before King Shalmaneser III, on the Black Obelisk, above)—sought to cleanse the Northern Kingdom of Baal worship (as reflected in 2 Kings 10:18–28).

The polemics against Baal found in the Second Book of Kings, therefore, must reflect the work's composition during the post-monarchic period, when Judean scribes were seeking to promote the exclusive, monotheistic worship of Yahweh (1 Kings 18). The biblical writers attempted to delegitimize traditional Israelite worship of Baal by creating a myth that ascribed the god's foreign origins to Ahab's marriage to Jezebel—whose father's Phoenician name, Ethbaal, explicitly contains the divine element Baal (1 Kings 16:31).

eighth-century Israel, although other deities, including Baal, were undoubtedly worshiped as well (e.g., Hosea 2:16). Israelite inscriptions dated to c. 800 BCE from Kuntillet ʿAjrud, a royally sponsored Israelite waystation in the Egyptian Sinai, mention Yahweh more often than any other deity, and one epigraph even refers to the worship of "Yahweh of Samaria," the capital city of the Northern Kingdom founded by Omri (1 Kings 16:24). The Samaria Ostraca, a group of administrative records dating to the early eighth century found among the ruins of the royal palace at Samaria, frequently mention men with Yahwistic names, while there are substantially fewer personal names that honor other deities. Although this evidence dates to the century following Jehu's coup in 841 BCE, the recorded names likely reflect traditional Israelite devotion to Yahweh that extended back to the Omride period.

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The biblical texts also make clear that Yahweh came to be associated with the language, imagery, and traditions of Baal worship, perhaps as part of a deliberate attempt to elevate Yahweh's profile and status as the patron deity of the Northern Kingdom. Judges 5:2–11, which twice calls Yahweh the "God of Israel," depicts Yahweh marching from his mountain home in the deep south (called Seir and Edom) as a warrior storm god much like Baal.[2] Similarly, Habakkuk 3:3–15 imagines Yahweh as a storm god who comes to the aid of his king from the south (here named Teman and Paran), but it also draws on the tradition of Baal's defeat of Yamm, the ancient Levantine god of the sea, as known from the *Baal Myth* found at Late Bronze Age Ugarit.

Psalm 29, in turn, celebrates Yahweh's divine kingship manifest in the storm as it moves eastward from the Mediterranean into the coastal mountains, north of Israel. The psalm's geography and its description of Yahweh's powerful storm theophany likely relate back to Baal (2 Samuel 22:8–16; Psalm 18:7–15). Psalm 68:4 and Psalm 48:2 also use terminology and traditions that clearly originate with Baal, the former adapting the storm god's stock epithet "rider on the clouds" for Yahweh, and the latter identifying Yahweh's holy mountain, Zion in Jerusalem, with Baal's sacred mountain, Zaphon (Jebel Aqra), north of Ugarit. These and other biblical texts appear to have appropriated more prestigious traditions associated with Baal to aggrandize Yahweh and legitimate his royal representatives in Samaria and Jerusalem.

Iconographic sources from ancient Israel complement the biblical evidence, suggesting that Samaria's kings officially promoted Yahweh as Israel's patron god using imagery and motifs drawn from Baal. For instance, Israelite seals and other objects from the time of the northern and southern kingdoms carry Yahwistic names and portray the deity as either a young four-winged god in stride with blossoms in his

RIDER ON THE CLOUDS. Measuring almost 5 feet tall and dating from the late 13th century BCE, this stela was discovered at the site of Ugarit in northwestern Syria. It depicts the storm god Baal, with his right hand raised and holding a club or mace, and his left hand stretched in front of him holding a thunderbolt. The smaller figure in front of him may represent a king of Ugarit. His hands clasped in prayer, the king is likely receiving divine protection from Baal. A number of biblical passages suggest that when Yahweh became Israel's patron deity under the Omrides, he took on many of Baal's features, including being a storm god and appropriating Baal's frequent epithet "rider on the clouds."

LORD OF HEAVEN. The winged figure engraved on this eighth-century bone handle from Hazor shows a fair-faced, four-winged deity in stride, holding in each hand a bough from a small stylized tree (not visible here). Reflecting Phoenician and Egyptian influence, this imagery may depict the solarized weather god Baal-Shamem, "Lord of Heaven." As evidenced by royal seal impressions, the kings of northern Israel appropriated such traditional Baal imagery to enhance the status of their patron god Yahweh. The fragment is 7 inches tall.

hands or a youthful sun god kneeling upon a plant—images that reflect Phoenician and Egyptian influence. These images may depict the solarized weather god Baal-Shamem, "Lord of Heaven," who came to be widely worshiped in the ancient Near East during the first millennium BCE.[3] The Israelite elites who used such objects seem to have conceptualized Yahweh's divinity on the model of Baal-Shamem (Psalm 104:2; Hosea 6:3; Zephaniah 3:5).

Biblical and extra-biblical sources further associate Yahweh with the bull or bull-calf (Hosea 8:5–6, 10:5–6, 13:2), an animal closely identified with Baal in the Ugaritic texts.[4] For example, two Iron Age IIB scaraboids from Samaria likely depict Yahweh standing on top of a bovine, while an engraved bronze plaque from ninth-century Tel Dan presents a winged deity riding on a bull. Although the head of the plaque's divine figure has not survived, the bull and winged god motifs may suggest an identification with a weather god—either Yahweh or Hadad, depending on the political context one reconstructs for the find. Scholars often consider Yahweh's association with the bull to have been a traditional aspect of Israelite religion. However, it may be that Yahweh only acquired such imagery during his assimilation to Baal in the ninth and eighth centuries.

To sum up, the inscriptional, biblical, and iconographic evidence suggests that, beginning with the Omrides, Samaria's kings officially promoted Yahweh as Israel's patron god and used Baal language, imagery, and traditions to enhance Yahweh's status for their own political gain.

It is in this context that the Northern Kingdom of Israel emerged as a regional power in the ninth century. Non-biblical sources from the southern Levant, such as the Mesha Stele and Tel Dan inscription, show that Israel first expanded its borders north of the Jezreel Valley and east of the Jordan River in the ninth century, under the Omrides. Israel's Omride kings also established Samaria as Israel's capital city

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MIGHTY BULL OF ISRAEL. The bull-mounted deity engraved in this ninth-century bronze plaque from Tel Dan in northern Israel represents a winged storm god, possibly Yahweh, whom early Israelites called and even depicted as a mighty bull (Exodus 32; Hosea 8:5–6). In front of him, a human figure stands in adoration. The deity is enthroned on a bull, his left arm stretching out as if in blessing and the right arm holding a round object. The imagery evokes the biblical story of Jeroboam's construction of a royal shrine at Dan, where Yahweh was worshiped as a golden calf or bull (1 Kings 12:25–33). The original intact plaque measured about 4 by 3 inches.

through the kingdom's end (1 Kings 16:24, 28). Archaeological evidence, in turn, paints a picture of significant territorial and economic growth under the Omride dynasty. It is perhaps no wonder, then, that Assyrian records identify Omri—not David or Solomon—as the defining political leader from Israel's past.

More broadly, the ninth and eighth centuries saw the rise of other small kingdoms in the Levant, each with its own royal patron god who, at the head of a small pantheon, provides protection and prosperity for its people (1 Kings 11:33). Chemosh, for example, emerges as Moab's royal patron and divine warrior, with little evidence for the worship of any other major Moabite deity. Like Yahweh, several of these gods are largely unknown in earlier periods (e.g., Milcom among the Ammonites, Qaus in Edom), though others have a long history in the region (e.g., Hadad in the Aramean kingdoms, Baal and Astarte among the Phoenicians, etc.). Many of these deities are manifestations of, or come to take on attributes and characteristics associated with, the Levantine storm god Baal, particularly in his celestial capacity as the "Lord of Heaven."

The Omride dynasty's elevation of Yahweh as Israel's patron deity and Yahweh's image as a warrior storm god (like Baal) is to be situated in this broader historical context. Ironically, then, not only did the Omrides *not* seek to bring Israelite worship of Yahweh to an end, but they laid the Yahwistic foundation for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, only to be accused by the later authors of 1 and 2 Kings of being ardent worshipers of Baal.

[1] There are no references to the god Yahweh, or personal or place names with the divine element Yahweh, in Late Bronze Age sources or early alphabetic texts from the early Iron Age. The name *yhw* in Egyptian topographical texts from Amara West and Soleb does not refer to a deity but a people group, the name of which cannot be clearly linked to the god Yahweh.

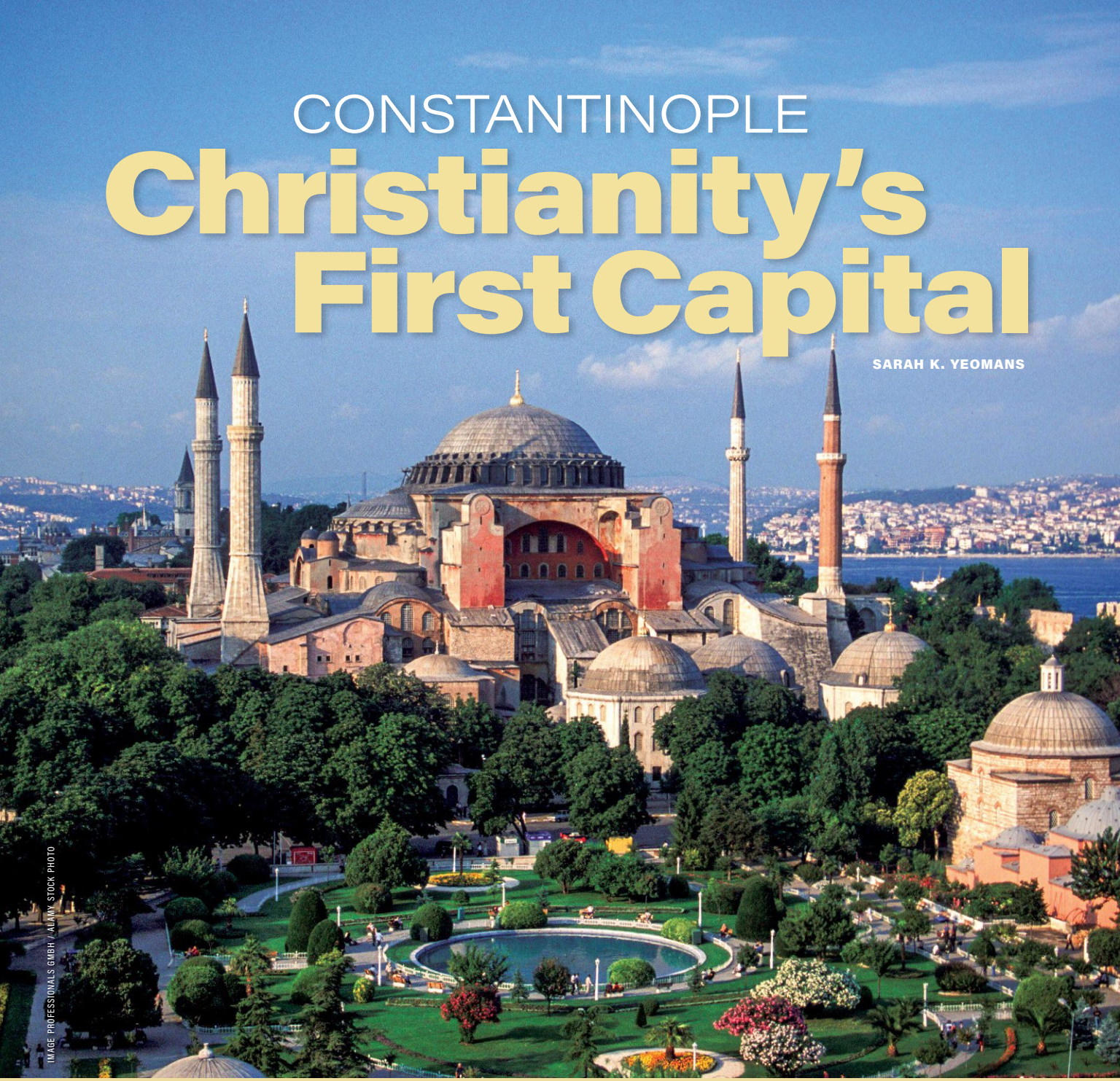
[2] This text seems to promote the political interests of the Northern Kingdom during its expansion in the ninth century BCE, when we find inscriptional references to "Yahweh of Teman" at Kuntillet 'Ajrud. See Michael J. Stahl, *The "God of Israel" in History and Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2021), pp. 52–144.

[3] Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger, *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998).

[4] For further discussion, see Michael J. Stahl, "God's Best 'Frenemy': A New Perspective on YHWH and Baal in Ancient Israel and Judah," *Semitica* 63 (2021), pp. 45–94.

CONSTANTINOPLE
Christianity's First Capital

SARAH K. YEOMANS



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ISTANBUL IS TURKEY'S LARGEST CITY and one of the only cities in the world to straddle two continents: Europe and Asia. It is also one of the only cities in the world that served as the seat of two major civilizations: the Byzantine Empire (330–1453 CE) and the Ottoman Empire (1423–1922). The name Istanbul, however, is a relatively modern moniker, officially bestowed upon the city in 1930 following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in the wake of World War I. Until then, for much of its long and distinguished life, the city was known as Constantinople, eponymously named for Constantine I, the Roman emperor responsible for, among other things, legalizing Christianity in 313 CE.

Settled by sea-faring Greeks as early as the seventh century BCE, the colony of Byzantion, as it was known, would later lend its Latinized name, Byzantium, to the late antique Christian civilization that arose in the east during the waning days of the once-mighty Roman Empire. Ideally situated for trade by both sea and land, it quickly became a thriving port city. Though Byzantion came under Roman control in the second century BCE, it was not until 324 CE that Constantine, in search of a new, more strategic and defensible location from which to administer the empire, turned his eye eastward and

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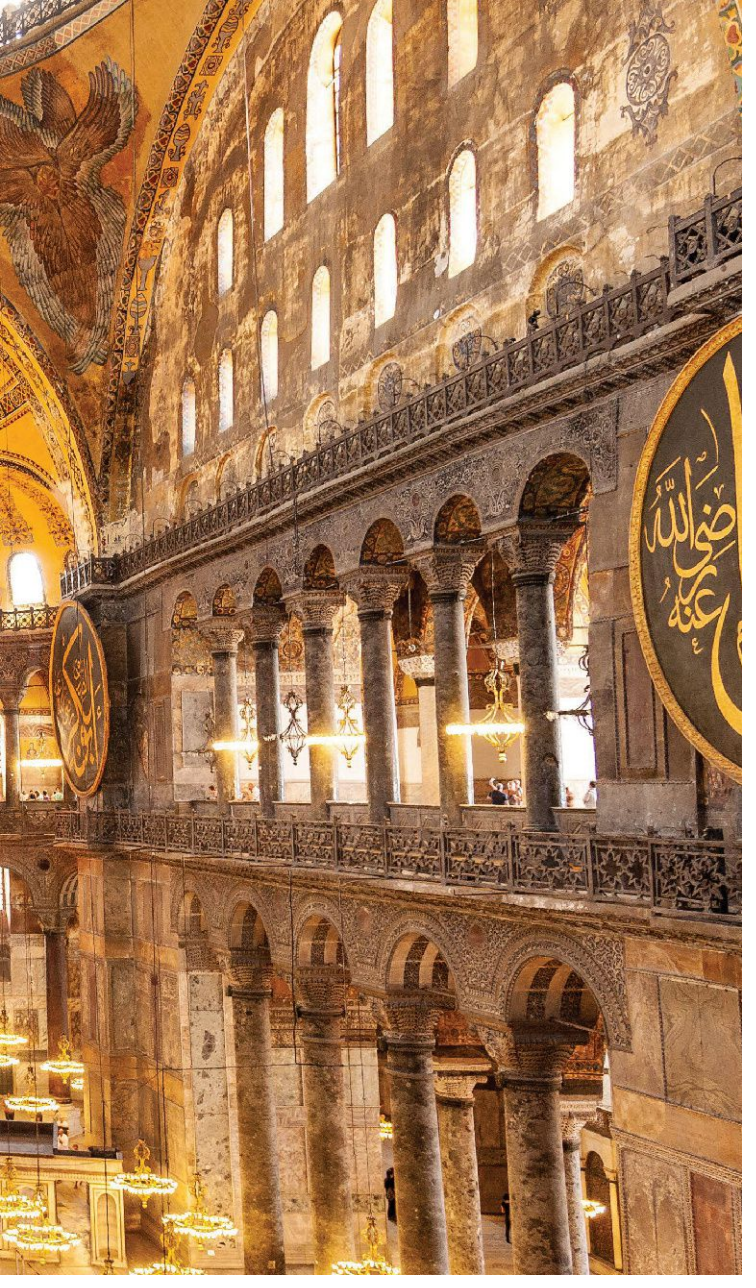
settled upon the ideally situated Greek colony as his new imperial seat.

The next six years would see the port city undergo an intensive building program modeled upon the urban design of Rome. Constantine was deliberate and thorough in his quest to establish the prestige and authority of his new city. He lured Rome's elites eastward using gifts of land as incentive and transferred many of the finest of Rome's artworks and architectural ornaments from Italy to adorn its monuments, streets, and public spaces. On May 11, 330 CE, the now much-enlarged city was inaugurated with a series of lavish ceremonies and processions.

As the empire's new capital and the seat of the emperor himself, the city was outfitted with all of the infrastructure and architectural hallmarks of imperial Rome on a grand scale. The construction of aqueducts, bath complexes, public forums, temples, a new hall for the senate, an imperial palace, and a significant expansion of the Severan-era circus (known to modern visitors as the "hippodrome") are just some examples of the projects undertaken as part of Constantine's building plan for his new capital.

Though Constantine can certainly be credited for paving the way for the "Christianization" of the new capital, it was over the course of the next two centuries that

PREVIOUS PAGE. Overlooking the Bosphorus, the Hagia Sophia (which means "Holy Wisdom" in Greek) sits across from the Blue Mosque and Sultanahmet Square in the historic center of Istanbul. The Hagia Sophia has served many communities since its original construction. It was first built in 360 by the emperor Constantius II and then rebuilt, after two burnings, in 415 and 537. The last rebuilding by the emperor Justinian I left the church with its current form. After the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the church was transformed into a mosque, with minarets added during the 15th and 16th centuries. It remained a place of worship until 1935 when it became a museum. It was named a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985. Then, in 2020, it was converted back into a mosque.



the city would acquire the magnificent monuments that have come to characterize the city's Christian landscape. Constantine's successors were, with the exception of the short-reigned Julian (361–363 CE), less ambivalent about Christianity than the city's founder. While Constantine had to maintain a delicate balance between the empire's polytheistic citizens and its growing Christian population, later emperors had no such concerns. In 380, Emperor Theodosius I issued the Edict of Thessalonica, effectively making Christianity the official religion of the empire. In so doing, he set the stage for the resultant proliferation of the magnificent Christian art and architecture we associate with Byzantine Constantinople today.

One such monument is perhaps the city's most famous and recognizable: the Hagia Sofia. Originally constructed and consecrated as a church in 360 by Constantine's son, Constantius II, the structure was destroyed by fire and subsequently rebuilt twice over the ensuing 200 years. The current version of the Hagia Sofia was inaugurated during the reign of Justinian I in 537. However, much like the city itself, the august building has taken on various roles during

INSIDE THE HAGIA SOPHIA. The Hagia Sophia was the world's largest church for nearly a thousand years, and the grandeur of its interior matched that of its exterior. Its plan is unique; it combines elements of a basilica and a square church. From the outside it looks almost square, but from the inside its structure—vaults, semidomes, and a central dome of more than 100 feet—causes it to feel rectangular. Detailed frescoes and mosaics covered its walls. These include winged angels on the corners of the central dome (see left) and a panel of Christ Pantocrater ("ruler of all") flanked by his mother Mary and John the Baptist (see below). During the Ottoman period, these were covered, and large calligraphic roundels with the names of Allah, Muhammad, and other notable Muslim figures came to dominate the decoration.

MANUEL COHEN / ART RESOURCE, NY

the course of its long life. The Ottoman conquest of the city in 1453 saw the church converted into a mosque, with its distinctive minarets being added over the course of the following century. In 1935, the structure was again converted, this time into a museum by Mustafa Kemal "Atatürk," founder of the modern Turkish Republic. In 2020 amid much controversy, the ancient basilica was once again designated as a mosque by the current Turkish government.

As a result of its fortuitous geography, Constantinople remained unrivaled in wealth and commerce for almost a thousand years. At this western terminus of the "Silk Roads" network, exotic goods from Africa and Asia flowed westward over land into its shops and warehouses before being shipped to Europe, where there was great demand for the luxuries of the east. The continuous flow of commodities such as silks, perfumes, and precious stones along with less prestigious but nevertheless important staples such as oil, timber, and cereals through its markets ensured a steady stream of taxation income for the city's coffers. Where people and commodities travel, so too do new ideas, technologies, literature, and culture, all of which flowed through the city in abundance. Constantinople, the "gateway between East

Istanbul's Underworld

SARAH K. YEOMANS

Istanbul's historic center is a tapestry of the past and present, with ancient buildings, plazas, roads, and aqueducts woven into each successive iteration of the city's urban fabric. Yet while there are visible pockets of the past to be found in the city above ground, the majority of the city's past lies—quite literally—beneath its present. Istanbul's various historical epochs are represented in its now-subterranean architectural layers, the buildings of one era frequently serving as the foundations for the next generation of structures.

The ongoing discoveries of Roman and Byzantine structures are frequently made as a result of modern construction. Projects such as building renovations, road repairs, and the laying of new pipes and power lines all have the potential to help archaeologists render a clearer map of Istanbul's ancient layers. Sometimes ancient structures come to light simply through the efforts of archaeologists who are working to document those subterranean structures known to locals but that have not yet been properly surveyed and mapped.

Through a combination of serendipitous discoveries and diligent archaeological documentation, more of Istanbul's ancient past is being brought to light. A Roman bathhouse that serves as the boiler room of a modern apartment building, an ancient church beneath a hookah bar, and an ancient water cistern that has found a second life as a jeweler's workshop are just a few examples of the ways in which Istanbul's past intersects with its present below the surface.

ALWX SEGRE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

DAVID PEARSON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

SUBTERRANEAN CISTERN. A jungle of 336 marble columns, the Basilica Cistern lies beneath Istanbul's streets and holds up to 20 million gallons of water. Justinian I built the cistern in the sixth century. It supplied water to major structures of Constantinople, including Justinian's palace and the Hagia Sophia. To build the cistern, Justinian recycled architectural elements from other buildings, including two blocks that feature Medusa, a monster from Greek mythology, as column bases (see cover).

OFF TO THE RACES. Today, Sultanahmet Square is a bustling tourist destination in Istanbul's historic center. In ancient times, this area was also bustling, but for a different reason: horse and chariot racing. The square was originally a hippodrome built by Emperor Septimius Severus in 203 and renovated by the founder of Constantinople, Constantine I, in 324. Various Byzantine emperors adorned the hippodrome with impressive monuments from across the ancient world, including a red granite obelisk from the Temple of Karnak in Egypt that dates to the time of Thutmoses III (15th century BCE), and a fifth-century BCE bronze column (popularly known as the Serpent Column) that was removed from the Temple of Apollo at Delphi in Greece.

and West," would reign as the strongest and most prestigious center of commerce and culture in the Mediterranean world—until the rise of the Italian maritime states in the Middle Ages.

But Constantinople's long reign as the seat of the Byzantine Empire was not without its challenges. The arrival of bubonic plague in the mid-sixth century, which came at the height of the city's power and prestige, decimated the population. A contemporaneous series of natural disasters, in conjunction with administrative missteps, left the empire vulnerable to the ongoing hostilities of its enemies, including the Huns, Ostrogoths, and Persians.

Subsequent centuries would see the city besieged by various aggressors, including the Umayyads, Slavs, and, in an event that would prove to be immediately controversial throughout the Christian world, the Latin Crusaders. Thwarted from their original intent of recapturing Jerusalem, the Roman Catholic crusaders instead besieged, captured, and sacked Constantinople in 1204, securing for the Catholic west this most lucrative of port cities, weakening and rendering it even more vulnerable to the subsequent aggressions of the rising Ottoman Empire. Finally, in 1453, after a 53-day siege, the Ottomans successfully captured Constantinople, marking the beginning of the next chapter of its life as the capital of the Ottoman Empire.

Today, the palimpsest of the city's remarkably long and dynamic history is easily discernable to even the most casual of visitors. The monuments, art, and architecture of Constantinople's Roman, Christian, and Islamic pasts are woven into the fabric of the modern city. In the stunning collections of the city's museums or on a stroll through the Sultanahmet district, where the Hagia Sofia gazes serenely cross the square at the remains of the ancient hippodrome, today's visitors can easily discern the echoes of ancient Constantinople, capital of the great Byzantine Empire, that still resound through this most long-lived, dynamic, and resilient of cities.

Were Temple Offerings Buried at Qumran?

DENNIS MIZZI

WE TYPICALLY THINK of cemeteries as places where people bury deceased family members and loved ones. But in the first century BCE, the inhabitants of Qumran, the famous site associated with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, also buried something else in their cemetery: sealed pottery jars. At least two graves at Qumran contained storage jars once filled with date honey but no human remains!

What is behind this strange custom, which is unique to Qumran?[1]

The Qumran cemetery is located about 150 feet to the east of the main settlement and includes more than a thousand shaft graves arranged in parallel rows, mostly oriented north–south. The typical grave consists of a vertical shaft, about 2 to 6 feet deep, with a lateral burial chamber at the bottom, hewn along one of the shaft's long sides. On the surface, each grave was marked by a heap or outline of stones. Given its proximity to the settlement and the artifacts retrieved from its tombs, the cemetery is generally dated to Qumran's main period of occupation, between the early first century BCE and the Roman destruction of the site in 68 CE.

The buried jars were found in the southeast part of the cemetery by Yitzhak Magen and the late Yuval Peleg during their excavations at Qumran between 1994 and 2004.[2] They came from two graves, each marked by a heap of stones. Instead of a human burial, one grave contained five jars; the other held ten.

Nearly all of the jars were found sealed with a stopper and lime, though small holes had been drilled through their bodies. They were deposited upright at the bottom of the graves, then buried and covered over with earth, like human burials. The jars date to the first century BCE, and residue analysis revealed they were once filled with date honey.

What do we make of this phenomenon? Why were the jars filled with date honey and then sealed and buried in Qumran's cemetery, in graves remarkably similar to ones used for human burials?

Magen and Peleg propose that the jars were buried because they had come into contact with human

QUMRAN'S CEMETERY. Dotting the desert landscape near Qumran are nearly 1,200 stone circles that mark the graves of many of the site's ancient inhabitants. Two of the graves, however, contained not human remains but carefully buried storage jars once filled with date honey. Scholars have several theories as to why the jars were buried in the cemetery. Archaeologist Dennis Mizzi takes a fresh look at the evidence to see what these intriguing jar burials suggest about the religious beliefs of the Qumran community.

GARO NALBANDIAN

ZEV RADOVAN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

DESERT LIFE (AND DEATH). This aerial view over Khirbet Qumran shows the excavated features of the main settlement, which dates to the first century BCE/CE, perched on a low ridge overlooking the Wadi Qumran where some of the caves that held the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. About 50 yards east of the settlement is the Qumran cemetery that includes more than a thousand graves. Two of the excavated graves contained mysterious jar burials.

corpses. According to biblical legislation, sealed vessels cannot become impure (Numbers 19:14–15), but the Temple Scroll—one of the Dead Sea Scrolls found in the vicinity of the Qumran settlement—stipulates that everything within a house where someone has died, including sealed vessels and anything in them, shall be deemed impure for the "pure man" (i.e., one who strictly adheres to purity practices) (11QT[a] 49:5–10). In this light, archaeologist and Qumran expert Jodi Magness has argued that the practice of burying sealed jars reflects a specifically sectarian ritual custom.[3]

The problem with this interpretation is that the Book of Leviticus and the Temple Scroll underline that impure ceramic pots cannot be purified and must be broken (Leviticus 11:33–35; 15:12; 11QT[a] 50:17–19). Later rabbinic literature espouses the same view (*m. Kelim* 2:1). None of these sources prescribes that impure pottery vessels must be buried whole. Therefore, this interpretation fails to account for the Qumran jar burials.

Magen and Peleg also offer a more mundane explanation: The jars were buried to keep away scavengers and pests, such as birds, bees, and flies. However, this does not explain why the phenomenon is attested only at Qumran. If this were an ordinary method for dealing with pests, one would expect the practice to materialize more frequently in the archaeological record. Moreover, this explanation does not address why other pots and food remains were simply discarded in rubbish dumps around the site.

I propose a different explanation for this phenomenon. The high degree of care and attention invested in the burial of these jars indicates that they were considered special. I argue that they were set apart and buried because they were deemed sacred and thus proscribed from use.

To unpack this idea, we must first understand how property in first-century Judea could be sanctified. Objects, animals, and food items were rendered sacred through their transfer to the Jerusalem Temple or its priesthood. Certain domesticated animals were deemed sacred when offered as sacrifices, while agricultural produce could be consecrated through tithing and offerings of firstfruits. Land, crops, and livestock could also acquire sacred status through vows and dedications. Once property had been consecrated (technically, becoming the deity's possession), restrictions were imposed on who could consume or benefit from it.

But what happened if offerings could not be delivered to the Temple or a priest? What if there was no Temple to receive them?

Rabbinic literature—which addresses the situation after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple

in 70 CE, when the Temple was no longer available for sacrifices and offerings—provides some answers: coins were to be thrown into the Dead Sea or some other body of water to ensure they remained permanently out of circulation; animals were to be locked up and left to die; agricultural produce could be left to rot; and clothes and vessels were to be burned or left to decay (*y. Shekalim* 8:6; *b. Yoma* 66a). Moreover, the Mishnah envisions special cases necessitating the burying or burning of dedicated animals as well as foodstuffs, such as leavened bread on Passover, mixed seeds, and the mixture of meat and milk (*m. Temurah* 7:1–6). Although we must be cautious not to project later rabbinic views onto the first century, it is not implausible that comparable methods were employed to dispose of sacred property that, for some reason or another, could not be delivered to the Jerusalem Temple or to trusted priests.

I believe the buried Qumran jars are a material manifestation of such practices. The date honey in the jars may have been consecrated because it was set aside as a tithe or a first-fruits offering. This view is particularly compelling given that one of the primary sources of revenue at Qumran was the date industry, and thus date honey was likely a product of the site. The jars, then, were buried to ensure that no one and nothing violated sacred property, not even by accident. Burning the produce might not have been enough if the jars themselves were also consecrated. In fact, the holes in the bodies of the jars may have been drilled on purpose to make them unusable but perhaps also to mark the jars as ritual deposits. A similar practice of drilling holes in cooking pots and other vessels is attested in second-century BCE Maresha and first-century CE Jerusalem and may represent a process of ritualization that marked out the disposal of vessels that had been used in sacrificial or other ritualized meals. By marking the burials with a heap of stones, paralleling human graves, the Qumran inhabitants ensured that the buried jars were not disturbed by later activity in the cemetery.

So, why did the jars remain undelivered? It is possible that the produce was never transferred to the Jerusalem Temple due to the

POT CEMETERY. While excavating the Qumran cemetery, archaeologists found two graves that, though nearly identical to the graves containing human burials, were used to bury more than a dozen storage jars. The jars were carefully sealed and placed upright in the bottom of the tombs, but were also pierced with small holes that would have rendered them useless as containers (see right). This unusual treatment suggests the jar burials were ritual or sacred deposits intentionally left by Qumran's inhabitants.

BOTH PHOTOS: STAFF OFFICER OF ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION IN JUDEA AND SAMARIA

PETER VAN DER SLUIJS, CC BY-SA 3.0, VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

HEAVENLY DATES. One of the earliest domesticated fruit trees and one well suited to the dry climate of the Dead Sea, date palms produce a delicious fruit rich in energy and vitamins. The people of ancient Qumran grew dates and likely produced date honey or syrup, which would have been a key source of revenue for the isolated desert settlement. Given its importance to the Qumran community, date honey was also likely consecrated as a firstfruits offering to Israel's God and then buried in pierced jars that marked the contents as sacred.

inhabitants' reluctance to participate in a religious system they deemed impure and corrupt, a view one finds in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls (e.g., *Damascus Document*; 4QMMT; 1QS). Moreover, the scrolls, echoing biblical legislation, underline that tithes and firstfruits should go directly to priests, perhaps in response to Hasmonean innovations that directed these offerings to the Temple (e.g., 4QMMT; 11QT[a]; 4Q251; 4Q270). If the Qumran inhabitants held this position, it is possible that they believed there were no trustworthy priests—presumably from within their same sectarian circles—to whom the tithed date honey could be transferred. This could imply that, contrary to what many scholars think, the population at Qumran did not necessarily have a priestly component, at least not throughout the entirety of its existence.

The jars are all of the same type, which suggests that the practice of burying jars was discontinued by the end of the first century BCE. This may be indicative of a change in the social structure of Qumran's inhabitants, with priests now making up part of the local population, or the creation of new social networks, which brought the inhabitants into contact with priests to whom consecrated items could be delivered. Alternatively, the evidence may indicate a change in custom. For example, the inhabitants may have decided to stop setting aside offerings altogether or else to participate anew in the Jerusalem Temple.

In any case, the evidence reflects a dynamic picture and serves as a pointed reminder to avoid static reconstructions of daily life at Qumran.

ZEV RADOVAN/BIBLELANDPICTURES.COM

THE TEMPLE SCROLL. Discovered in Cave 11, the Temple Scroll is the longest non-biblical scroll among the Qumran texts. Its modern name reflects the fact that most of its content relates to the Jerusalem sanctuary. In its prescriptive presentation of purity laws and ritual practices, it echoes the biblical legislation of the books of Numbers and Leviticus. With them, it states that impure ceramic vessels cannot be purified and must be broken, but it also says that firstfruits were to go directly to priests. If Qumran's inhabitants saw the Jerusalem Temple as corrupt, it would explain why the already tithed date honey would not be transferred to the Temple but rather buried at Qumran.

[1] For more detailed discussion, see Dennis Mizzi, "The Burial of Sealed Jars in the Qumran Cemetery: Disposal of Consecrated Property?" in Dennis Mizzi, Tine Rassalle, and Matthew J. Grey, eds., *Pushing Sacred Boundaries in Early Judaism and the Ancient Mediterranean: Essays in Honor of Jodi Magness* (Leiden: Brill, 2023), pp. 349–373.

[2] Yitzhak Magen et al., *Back to Qumran: Final Report (1993–2004)*, JSP 18 (Jerusalem: IAA & Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria, 2018), pp. 59, 100, 123.

[3] Jodi Magness, "Qumran, the Site of the Dead Sea Scrolls: A Review Article," *Revue de Qumran* 22 (2006), pp. 641–664.

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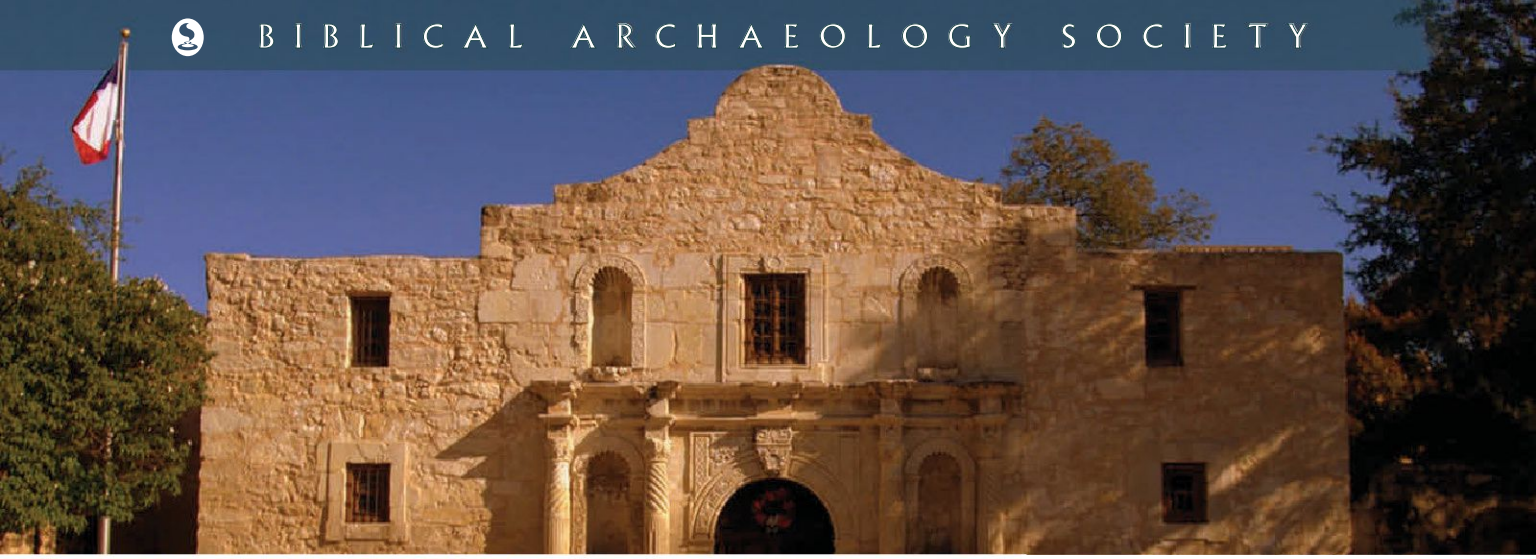

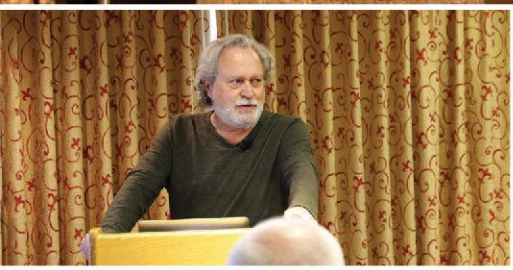

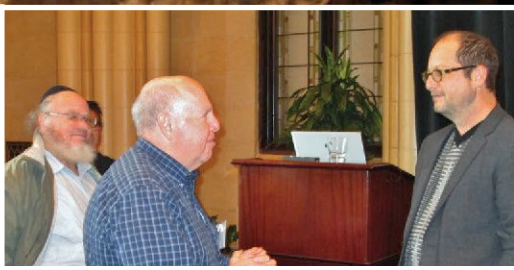

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Moses as Pharaoh's Equal—Horns and All

GARY A. RENDSBURG

IN THE SPRING 2023 ISSUE of **BAR**, Lee M. Jefferson provided an excellent survey of how the horns of Moses (see Exodus 34:29–30, 35) were reinterpreted over the centuries in his article, "The Horns of Moses." Whereas earlier readers, including Jerome, who translated the Bible from Hebrew and Greek into Latin, understood the phrase "the skin of his face was horned" in a positive light, perhaps even exhibiting the presence of God, with the passage of time, many later readers, especially Christians of the Middle Ages, began to view the horns negatively, often with dire consequences for the Jews who lived within Christendom.

I would like to travel further back in time, to the original setting of Exodus 34. In that context, "horned" should be understood as having actual horns. This curious description relates to one of the main objectives of the Book of Exodus: to present Moses as Pharaoh's equal.[1]

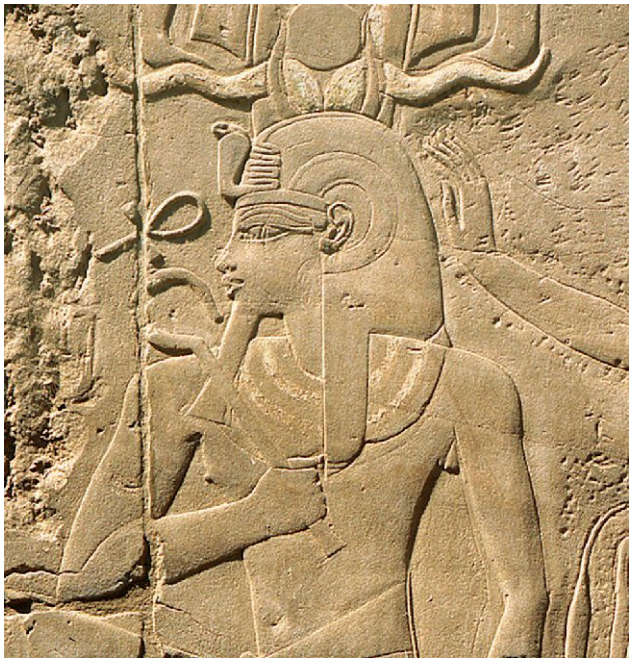
First, contrary to everything that the Bible professes—in which no person can achieve divine status—in this instance, Moses is elevated to the level of deity:

> "And it will be, he [Aaron] will be to you as a mouth, and you will be to him as a god."
>
> (Exodus 4:16)

> "Look, I have set you as a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron your brother will be your prophet."
>
> (Exodus 7:1)

In my experience, most readers of the Bible have not paused sufficiently to ponder these extraordinary statements. In

Fountain of Moses, Rome, 16th century.



SCALA / ART RESOURCE, NY

Amenhotep III (r. 1386–1348 BCE), with the ram horn on his head and cheek, from a wall relief at Karnak Temple.

both verses, Moses is called an *elohim* ("god"), in the former instance vis-à-vis his brother Aaron and in the latter instance vis-à-vis Pharaoh.

In these two passages, Moses, the prophet par excellence, is elevated to the level of deity, while Aaron, the first high priest, is elevated to the level of prophet. The exigencies of the moment, namely the impending summit with Pharaoh (Exodus 7:10–12), require that Moses meet with his opposite as equal. And since the pharaoh in Egypt was considered divine, God promotes Moses to the level of deity, for this singular occasion. Indeed, these passages are remarkable, for they indicate the extent to which the biblical author was willing to reflect the Egyptian background of the story. Thus, literary flavor overrides biblical theology.

Second, the closest parallel to Moses's birth story (Exodus 2:1–10) is the account of the birth of the god Horus, one of the foundational myths of ancient Egypt, which first appears in Old Kingdom texts. Both infants are hidden by their mothers (Isis and Jochebed)[2] in papyrus baskets among the reeds of the Nile Delta to protect them from the machinations of those who seek their death (Seth and Pharaoh, respectively). In both stories, an emphasis is placed on the mother nursing the child. This is stated explicitly in the case of Moses's mother in Exodus 2:7–9, and there are numerous statuettes of Isis suckling baby Horus from ancient Egypt.

Horus is the god of kingship, and Pharaoh was considered the living embodiment of Horus. So whatever story was told about Horus essentially applied to whichever pharaoh sat upon the throne. Hence, the goal of the birth story of Moses, akin to that of Horus, is to portray the future leader of the Israelites as the equal to Pharaoh.

Most significantly, in crafting the narrative of Exodus 2, the biblical author has subverted and undermined the core belief of ancient Egypt. As indicated, Moses has become the equivalent of Pharaoh, and Pharaoh, the guarantor of order in Egyptian society, has been transformed into Seth, the deity of chaos and disorder.

Third, in Exodus 4:4 God commands Moses to hold the staff-turned-snake by the tail, an action to be compared with the many portrayals of the young Horus holding snakes (and other animals) by the tail. Once again, so Horus, so Moses, as the latter becomes the equal to the former (and, by extension, to Pharaoh).

All of the above serves as the foreground for our analysis of *qaran 'or panaw* ("the skin of his face was horned") in Exodus 34:29–30. To be sure, many modern Bible translations render the verb *qaran* not as "was horned," but rather as "shone" (RSV, NRSV) or "was radiant" (NIV, NJPSV). The noun *qeren*, from which the verb is derived, means both "horn" and "ray," as in the rays of the sun. But the former meaning clearly predominates in the Bible, with only one possible instance of "ray" attested (Habakkuk 3:4). When we look at the verbal forms of *qaran*, we note that in the only other instance of this verb in the Bible, namely, *maqren* in Psalms 69:31, the meaning is clearly "be horned" (i.e., "have horns"). In fact, not until the middle of the first millennium CE (i.e., perhaps 1,500 years after Exodus 34 was written) do we find the Hebrew verb *qaran* manifesting the meaning of "shine, be radiant."

Support for understanding Exodus 34:29–30 as "the skin of his face was horned" derives from ancient Egyptian artwork. Wall reliefs at Luxor Temple and Karnak Temple depict two different pharaohs with ram's horns on the skin of their cheeks—or more accurately, given the Egyptian penchant for profiles, a single ram's horn on the one

DEFINE INTERVENTION

What are Pseudepigrapha?

1. Texts with false attributions
2. Forged Moabite artifacts
3. Anonymous sculptures
4. A collection of Greek curses
5. The fear of plagiarism

ANSWER ON P. 67

visible cheek. Both Amenhotep III (r. 1386–1348 BCE) and Ramesses II (r. 1290–1224 BCE) are portrayed in such fashion, with the ram's horns no doubt representative of the power of the god Amun, who was associated with the ram in Egyptian iconography.[3]

Once again, the Bible wishes to portray Moses as Pharaoh's equal. Just as the facial skin of Egyptian kings was horned, so was the facial skin of the leader of the people of Israel. So Pharaoh, so Moses. At every turn, the biblical narrative directs the reader to understand Moses as the equal to his Egyptian counterpart—from the birth story in Exodus 2 to the horns in Exodus 34.

We end this essay where we began: Jerome's translation of the Bible into Latin, known as the Vulgate. Although Jerome (c. 345–420 CE) probably was unaware of the Egyptian parallels, he was guided by his fine sense of the Hebrew language. Thus he rendered *qaran ʿor panaw* ("the skin of his face was horned") from Exodus 34:29–30 quite literally—and to my mind accurately—as *cornuta esset facies sua* ("his face was horned"), notwithstanding the slight change of "the skin of his face" to the simpler "his face."

Western Christians throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance read the Bible in Latin, with the expression *cornuta esset facies sua* well known to them. So it was only natural for the great artists to portray Moses with horns, as an indication of the ancient prophet's honor and prestige.

[1] Gary A. Rendsburg, "Moses as Equal to Pharaoh," in Gary M. Beckman and Theodore J. Lewis, eds., *Text, Artifact, and Image: Revealing Ancient Israelite Religion* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2006), pp. 201–219.

[2] The mother of Moses is not named in Exodus 2, though we learn her name from Exodus 6:20.

[3] See Lanny Bell, "Luxor Temple and the Cult of the Royal *Ka*," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 44 (1985), pp. 251–294.

WHENCE-A-WORD?

Alpha and Omega

The Greek alphabet, in which the New Testament was first written, starts with the letter *alpha* (A or α) and ends with the letter *omega* (Ω or ω). Sayings that use the phrase "alpha and omega," therefore, imply the beginning and the end, and everything in between. In the Christian Bible, Jesus proclaims to be the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 1:8). In clear reference to the qualities ascribed to Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12), Jesus is thus characterized as the eternal and omnipotent God.

Although the phrase has entered our parlance through the Greek New Testament, its Hebrew equivalent appears in rabbinical oral traditions that may date back to the second century BCE. It was common for rabbis to use the first and the last letters of the Hebrew alphabet (*alef* and *tav*) to denote the whole of anything. The Mishnah (*Sanhedrin* 64a:4–5; *Yoma* 69b:6–9) also inserts the middle letter of the alphabet, *mem*, thus creating the word *emet* "truth," which it explains is "the seal of God," expressing that in God, truth dwells absolutely and fully. The first-century CE Jewish historian Flavius Josephus then defines Yahweh as "the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things" (*Against Apion* 1.190).

In today's usage, accordingly, the phrase signifies totality or the sum of things. However, the animated film franchise *Alpha and Omega*, which features two young wolves, playfully reuses the expression to imply the main characters' respective position at opposite ends of their pack's social order ("alpha" used with its better-known meaning, denoting the dominant individual at the top of the social hierarchy).

Visual representations of the phrase "alpha and omega" abound in Christian art, mostly in scenes of Christ enthroned, where A and Ω appear inscribed either above Christ's shoulders, within his halo, or in the open book he is holding on his left knee. It also appears in this vault mosaic (left) from the Galla Placidia Mausoleum in Ravenna, Italy, created between 425 and 450 CE. The combination of A and ω with the christogram (monogram of the name Christ, in Greek) and the victory wreath was a common motif in early Christian funerary art.

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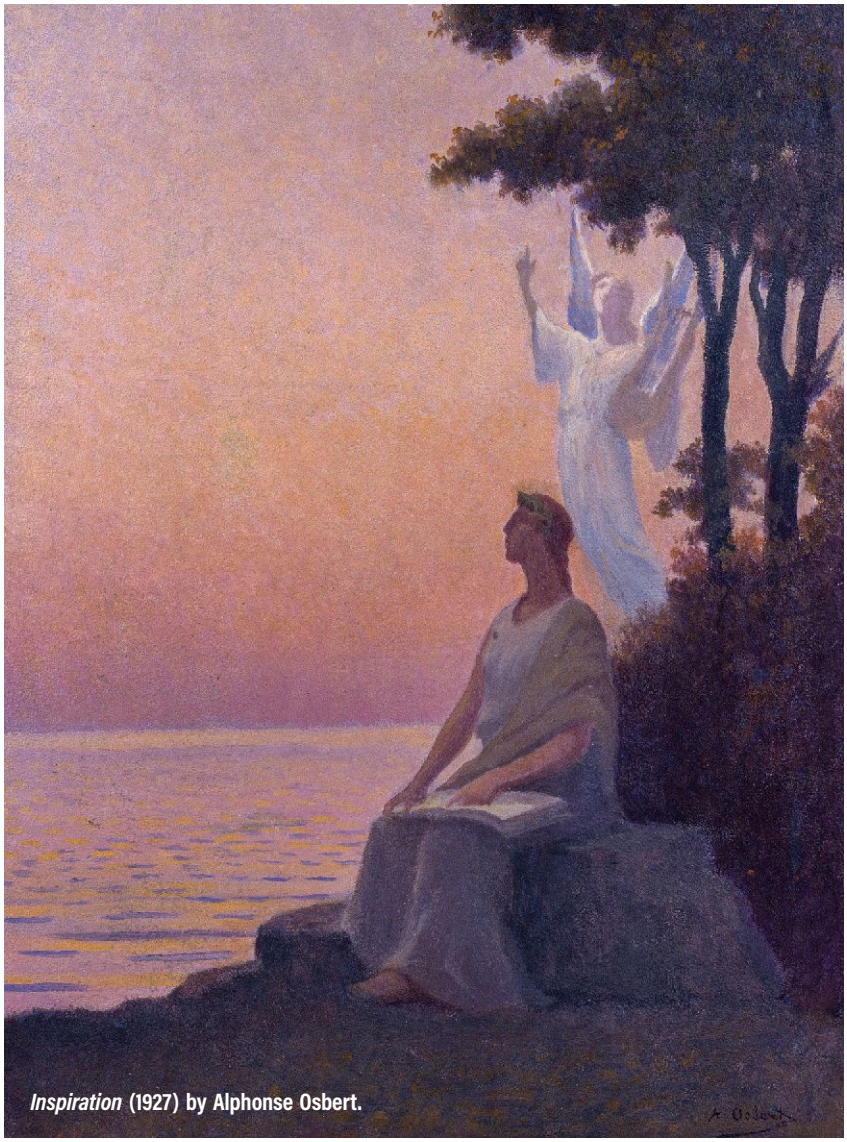
Inspiration in Biblical Times

RODNEY CARUTHERS II



Inspiration (1927) by Alphonse Osbert.

MODERN NOTIONS OF INSPIRATION often evoke images of writers, artists, and musicians who experience moments when their creative powers are at their zenith. The artist appears to be operating beyond normal human capacities in terms of uniqueness, innovation, and spontaneity. Modern concepts of inspiration, however, are sometimes anachronistically applied to ancient texts.

The concept of biblical inspiration is classically captured in 2 Timothy 3:16: "All scripture is inspired by God (*theopneustos*) and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work." Yet this verse also raises some questions. What does "inspired by God" mean, and what did it entail? How did ancient writers and readers understand it?

"Inspired by God" is one translation of the Greek word *theopneustos*, which is a compound word that uses *theos* ("God") and *pneuma* ("breath" or "spirit"). The word is variously translated as "inspired by God" or "God-breathed." Both translations attempt to render a distinctive quality of certain writings and indicate some sort of divine attribute.

Although the precise meaning of *theopneustos* is not explained elsewhere (indeed, the word only occurs in 2 Timothy 3:16), some biblical texts and other ancient writings offer descriptions of inspiration which allow insight into the many ways it was understood.

The Hebrew Bible does not use a specific word for inspiration, but instances of prophecy are later associated with it.[1] Prophets are described as having an encounter with the spirit (*ruah*) which enables them to speak the words of God (e.g., Numbers 11:25, 29; 1 Samuel 10:5–6). The Hebrew word for spirit (*ruah*) can also mean "breath" and indicates that which enters the human to incite prophecy. One who speaks "by the spirit" speaks the words of God.

Prophecy in the Hebrew Bible has some similarities to Greek concepts of inspiration. Writings by Hesiod (750–650 BCE), Plato (428–347 BCE), and Philo (20 BCE–50 CE) demonstrate the continuity of thought around inspiration and its similarity to biblical occurrences.

The early Greek poet Hesiod describes elements of inspiration and its effects on poets and song writers:

> So spoke great Zeus' ready-speaking daughters … and they breathed a divine voice into me, so that I might glorify what will be and what was before, and they commanded me to sing of the race of the blessed ones who always are, but always to sing of themselves first and last.
>
> (*Theogony* 31)

Hesiod's description of inspiration connects the human to the divine. The daughters of Zeus (Muses) inspire him by breathing a divine voice into him, which enables him to sing about the future and past. The Muses' act of breathing into (*empneo*) can also mean "inspire," and the divine voice (*aude thespis*) can be translated as a "word

from god," which indicates the divine nature of his speech. Hesiod's description of inspiration is akin to prophets who received God's words through the spirit.

According to the Greek philosopher Plato, inspiration took place when humans were possessed by a divine entity, had a divine word breathed into them,[2] and entered a frenzied state:

> The third kind of possession and madness comes from the Muses, seizing a delicate, virginal soul, rousing and exciting it to Bacchic frenzy in lyric and other forms of poetry, and by embellishing countless deeds of men of old it educates their successors.
>
> (*Phaedrus* 245a)

For Plato, the process of inspiration first involves the poet being possessed and inspired by a divine being. The inspiration is a divine filling (*entheos*) and a "frenzied" state. The Greek word for frenzy is *mania*, which is where the modern word maniac comes from (but often with a negative connotation). Plato explains how the poet's mania is like what the Bacchus undergoes. The Bacchi, initiates of the cult of Dionysius (god of wine and ecstasy), were known for shouting during their manic state.[3]

The most significant part of mania was that the Bacchus and poet were out of their minds. In this state, the poet is possessed by the divine and thereby able to create inspired works that are superior to those composed using their own faculties. This extends not only to poets, but also to prophetic characters, such as the Delphic oracle. For Plato, mania is an elevated state above normal human cognition and viewed as a gift from god.

Inspiration in Hesiod and Plato is also similar to prophecy. For the combined descriptions of Plato and Hesiod, the writer is possessed, inspired, and in a state of mania. Each of these has a corollary in biblical literature. Possession by the spirit of God and prophetic utterance are mentioned with Saul, the first king of Israel (1 Samuel 10:9–12). Saul meets a band of prophets, is possessed by the spirit of God, and immediately begins to prophesy.

Hesiod's depiction of a divine voice being breathed into the poet is close to how prophets, such as Balaam and Jeremiah, have a word put into their mouths by Yahweh (Numbers 23:5; Jeremiah 1:9). The poet and prophet are given a message to proclaim by a divine agent (Muse and Yahweh). The inspiration or filling of the poet with the divine is comparable to the spirit of God coming upon someone to induce prophecy.

Hesiod's depiction of a divine voice being breathed into the poet is close to how biblical prophets have words put into their mouths by Yahweh.

Plato's description of mania corresponds to biblical prophecy. Prophets, such as Ezekiel, were expected to have ecstatic moments (e.g., dreams and visions) as part of receiving divine revelation (Numbers 12:6; Ezekiel 37:1).

What about the connection to inspired writing? For Hesiod and Plato, the poet's divine utterance leads to inspired written works. David and Jeremiah are two biblical examples of divine words becoming "inspired" texts. Jeremiah speaks the words of God by the spirit, while Baruch transcribes them onto a scroll (Jeremiah 36:4; 45:1). His recorded prophecy (words of God) equates to inspired writing (scripture). Hesiod's description of inspiration, as a poet and writer, is analogous to David as a prophet and psalmist. David is a prophet who has the capacity to speak by the spirit of the Lord and even has God's words on his tongue (2 Samuel 23:1–2; Acts 2:29–30). His divine words, like Hesiod's, are also recorded. Jesus, in the Gospel of Mark, quotes Psalm 110:1 and attributes its wording to David speaking by the Holy Spirit (Mark 12:36). David, Hesiod, and Jeremiah speak by the spirit, and records of their speech are considered inspired because they contain divine words.

The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria merges the Hebrew and Greek conceptions of inspiration with more precision in his *Life of Moses* and *Who Is Heir?* He recounts how Moses was inspired to speak to the Israelites before crossing the Red Sea (Exodus 14). He is inspired by God (*entheos*) and is breathed on by the spirit; he then speaks divine words and begins to prophesy (*Moses* 2.175). The combination of being breathed over by the spirit and speaking divine words (*thespizo*) evokes Hesiod's description of breathing a divine voice into the poet.

Philo also explains how prophets, such as Noah and Abraham, enter a trance (*ecstasis*), are filled with the divine (*entheos*), are possessed, and then experience a state of mania (*Heir* 259–264). He adds that the prophet's mind (*nous*) leaves as the divine spirit (*theios pneuma*) enters and controls his vocal cords and mouth (*Heir* 265–266). The divine spirit (*theios pneuma*) entering the prophet is the closest to *theopneustos* in 2 Timothy 3:16.

Hesiod, Plato, and Philo's descriptions of inspiration demonstrate the numerous ways this concept circulated in antiquity. *Theopneustos* ("God-breathed") in 2 Timothy 3:16 may be best understood in this historical context, as a conflation of the longer and more explicit descriptions of inspiration in Greek writings. This conflated rendering could convey to the audience that each writing contains the prophetic words of someone who was filled with the divine spirit, without needing to elaborate on the encounter.

[1] Hebrew words such as *ruah* and *neshamah* are used to refer to God's spirit or breath.

[2] For more on Plato's description of inspiration, see *Ion* 533e–534b.

[3] Prophetic moments were sometimes accompanied by musical instruments, which implies a more demonstrative experience (e.g., 1 Samuel 10:5).

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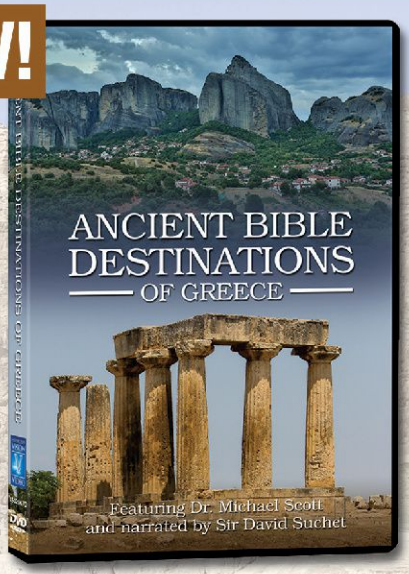

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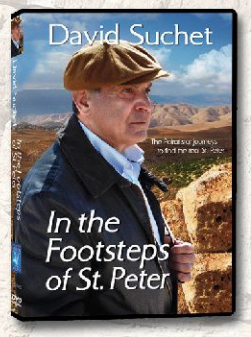

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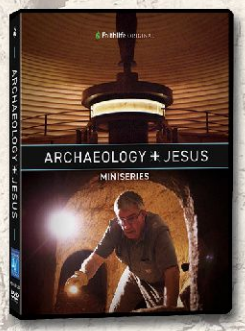

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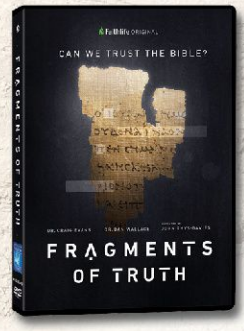

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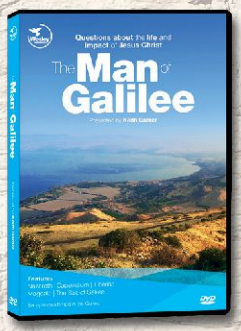

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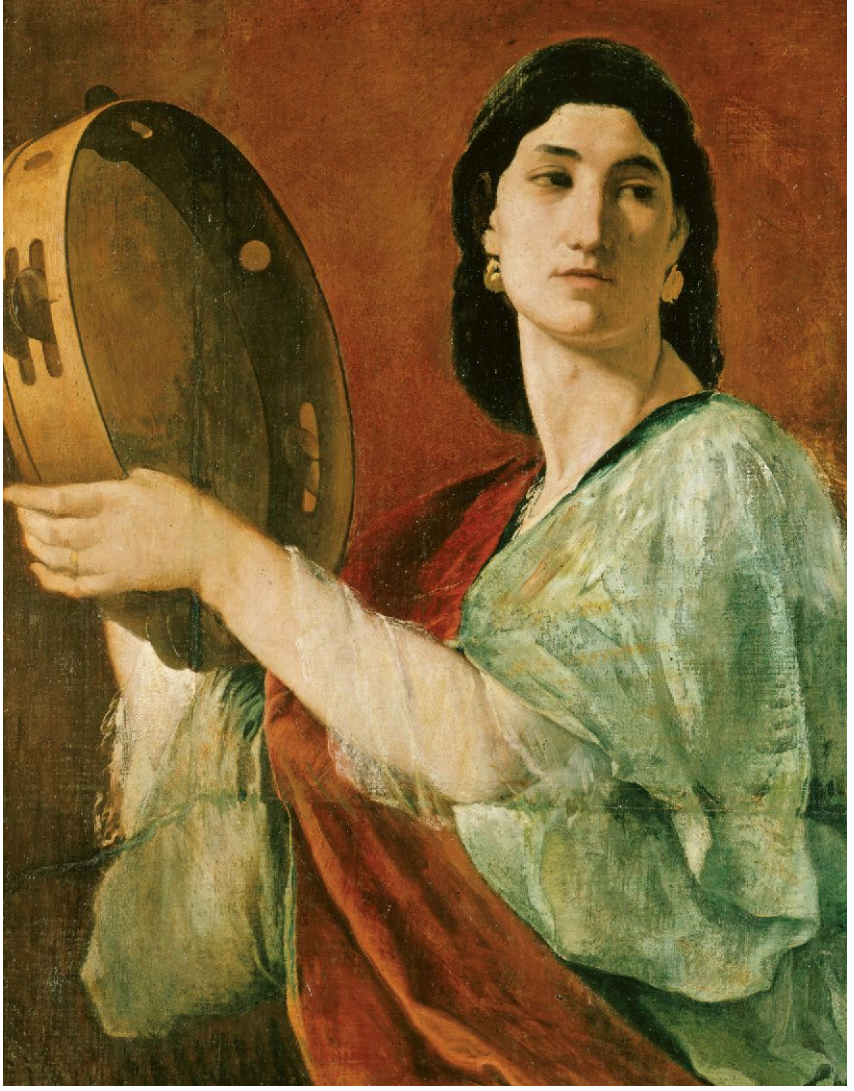

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***Mirjam* (1862) by Anselm Feuerbach.**

MIRIAM is one of the most prominent female figures in the Hebrew Bible. Whereas women typically function as wives and mothers in biblical texts, Miriam is an independent figure—not connected to a husband or children. She serves as a prophet (Exodus 15:20–21) and leader (Micah 6:4), and she even challenges Moses (Numbers 12).

These early traditions about Miriam situate her alongside the figures of Moses and Aaron during the Exodus era. However, their exact relationship is not explicit. Exodus 15:20 refers to Miriam as "Aaron's sister." Interestingly, though, Numbers 12 and Micah 6 do not mention their kinship at all. Perhaps trying to correct this, the writers of the family genealogies of Numbers 26:59 and 1 Chronicles 6:3 place her in Moses and Aaron's lineage.

There were other Jewish traditions about Miriam that circulated in antiquity, but these were not included in the biblical canon.[1] They appear in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the writings of the first-century CE Jewish authors Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus. These writings expounded on Miriam's prophecy and family relationships.

Understandably, ancient authors wanted to clarify Miriam's role as a prophet and the content of her prophecy. As one of only four named female prophets in the Hebrew Bible, Miriam is special. She is also the only female figure in extrabiblical literature who is connected with *raz,* an Aramaic term that applies to secret knowledge that is revealed only to select individuals, such as Enoch and Noah. The author of the *Visions of Amram*, part of the Dead Sea Scrolls, describes Miriam's prophecy as *raz* (4Q546 12.4). Unfortunately, the text is fragmentary, and we do not know what the ancient author wrote about the contents of her prophecy, her secret knowledge.

The author of the pseudepigraphic text *Biblical Antiquities* writes that Miriam had a dream before Moses's birth, which predicts his birth and significance (9:10). This tradition may, at least partly, have been inspired by the Exodus 2 narrative, where Moses's unnamed sister stays to see what would happen to baby Moses, hidden in a basket on the river bank (Exodus 2:4). This verse suggests that Moses had an older sister who took an interest in him.

Although she is not named in the biblical text, later Jewish texts associate the sister of Exodus 2 with Miriam. Authors of the apocryphal Book of Jubilees[2] and the pseudepigraphic text *Exogage* identify the sister as Miriam (Jubilees 47:4; *Exogage* 18–26). The tradition is also present in the writings of Philo (*Life of Moses* 1.12) and Josephus (*Antiquities* 2.221–226). So, many people—at least in the late Hellenistic era and possibly earlier—connected the figure of Miriam with the sister of Exodus 2.

Ancient Jewish writings also elaborated on Miriam's marriage and children. According to the *Visions of Amram*, Miriam married her uncle Uzziel, her father's brother (4Q543 1.6). This tradition is of interest as several other ancient Jewish texts denounce such a close kinship union (e.g., 4QHalakhah A, from the Dead Sea Scrolls). Josephus writes that Miriam married Hur (*Antiquities* 3.54), a character from Exodus 17 who fought with Moses, Aaron, and Joshua to defeat the Amalekites. Later rabbinic literature names Miriam's husband as Caleb (*b. Sotah* 12a).

These varying narratives about Miriam's marriage show that people in

antiquity were interested in her family life. Yet, unlike her role as a sister, upon which the authors agreed, there was no dominant tradition about her husband.

These later Jewish traditions about Miriam's prophecy and family life add to the biblical narratives. Miriam is more closely associated with the figures of Moses and Aaron and their lineage in the later accounts. Both her dream about Moses and her identification as the anonymous sister of Exodus 2 emphasize her presence in Moses's life from the beginning.

We can only speculate why the ancient authors were keen on strengthening Miriam's family connections. It is possible that Miriam's status as an independent female figure—nowhere in the Hebrew Bible referred to as mother or spouse—was puzzling and prompted clarification. Or perhaps they aimed to bring disparate traditions together, thus creating a more unified and coherent story.

DEFINE INTERVENTION (SEE QUIZ ON P. 61)

Answer: 1 Texts with false attributions

Pseudepigrapha are texts whose named authors are not the real authors. They are usually attributed to famous or authoritative figures of a distant past, such as Enoch from the Bible. In the realm of biblical studies, Pseudepigrapha also carries the more specific meaning of Jewish writings of anonymous or dubious authorship that date to a period of about 400 years (c. 200 BCE–200 CE) and that are excluded from the biblical canon.

Apocryphal (or deuterocanonical) texts, on the other hand, are related to the Apocrypha, a defined group of Jewish and Christian religious writings excluded from the Hebrew canon but found in many Christian canons. For example, the Book of Judith is apocryphal, whereas the Book of Enoch is pseudepigraphic, as the latter is not included in most Jewish and Christian Bibles.

Regardless, these Jewish texts add nuance to Miriam's literary persona and highlight her significance. Yet, by making her a dreamer about Moses, they make her a facilitator of Moses's importance rather than her own. Indeed, they do not provide more details about her independent role. Thus, Miriam remains the unexplained figure next to Moses and Aaron, whose own story cannot be deciphered.

[1] Hanna Tervanotko, *Denying Her Voice: The Figure of Miriam in Ancient Jewish Literature* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016).

[2] The Book of Jubilees belongs to the canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church but is also known as a pseudepigraphic writing.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

מִרְיָם

Miriam (Mary)

Mir-yām

mr(y) = "beloved" | *yām* = "sea"

The name Miryām, rendered in English as Miriam and Mary, was rare among Jewish women during most of biblical history, and only Aaron and Moses's sister bears that name in the Hebrew Bible (Exodus 15:20). It became exceedingly popular in the Roman period, and the New Testament introduces several women named Mary, including Jesus's mother, through whom it became one of the most common names for Christian women. Yet the origins and meaning of the name Miryām remain uncertain.

The biblical Hebrew name likely combines the Egyptian verb *mrj* (to love) with the Semitic theophoric element *yām* (sea), possibly referencing the Cannanite sea god, Yamm. The particular verbal forms "beloved" (passive participle) and "loving" (active participle, albeit both without the feminine ending, *t*) produce the meanings "Beloved of Yamm" and "Lover of Yamm." But it is also conceivable that the name Miryām comes solely from an Egyptian noun of agent *mr* "the one who loves", reformulated into Northwest Semitic. A different etymology links the name to the identically spelled phrase "their rebellion" (*miryām*) found in Nehemiah 9:17. In the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) and the New Testament, the name is spelled Μαριάμ and Μαρία.

The unvocalized written form of the name—which is how the Hebrew Bible circulated before vocalization marks were added in the ninth century CE—offers several interesting wordplays in the books of Exodus and Numbers, where during their desert wanderings the Israelites rebel against their leaders. In Numbers 20:10, some scholars see the prophet's name echoed in the word "water" (*mayim*), while the word "rebels" (*morīm*) and the name "Miriam" appeared identical in the pre-Masoretic text. In Exodus 15:22–23, following Miriam's victory song, her name may echo in the words "days" (*yāmīm*), "water" (*mayim*), and "Marah" (*mārāh*), while the word "bitter" (*mārīm*), again, looked identical in the unvocalized text.

Model Memento

Regular travel is a luxury of the modern world, thanks in part to advances in technology and infrastructure. It would be incorrect, however, to say that historical peoples did not also enjoy widespread travel. Famous examples of ancient tourists and pilgrims abound, including Pausanias, who chronicled his explorations of Greece in the second century CE; Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, who made pilgrimages to various sites in the Holy Land; and Ibn Hawqal, who traveled to the Mediterranean, Asia, and Africa in the tenth century.

Much like today, ancient travelers brought home souvenirs from their journeys. One such example is illustrated here. Dating to the 17th century, this model of Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulchre can be taken apart for easy transport. The pieces are marked with letters to facilitate reassembly. The model was likely created in Jerusalem or Bethlehem. Carved from olive wood with mother of pearl and bone inlay, it measures 12 by 20 by 23 inches.

Some 30 such models exist, though of varying size. The large models open to reveal a sculpted interior detailing the inside of the church. Pilgrims could point out to friends and family the spots where they had visited and prayed.

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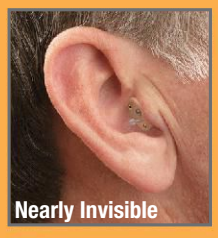

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Jeffrey R. Zorn (p. 18 and p. 30) is Adjunct Associate Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Cornell University. He has worked extensively at Tel Dor.

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— D., Houston, Texas

Not shown actual size.

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"Goodness gracious, great Baals of fire!"

TRENTON R. FERRO
SHOREWOOD, ILLINOIS

Thank you to all those who submitted caption entries for our Spring 2023 cartoon (left), based on 1 Kings 18:38: "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dust and even licked up the water that was in the trench." We are pleased to congratulate Trenton R. Ferro of Shorewood, Illinois, who wrote the winning caption, and our runners-up:

RUNNERS-UP

"Whoa! Where's the beef?"

BRUCE B. BEACH
CROSSVILLE, TENNESSEE

And God said, "Let there be s'mores!"

FERN NISSENBAUM
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

HONORABLE MENTIONS

"We'd better Baal!"

WALTER MARLOWE
LEUVEN, BELGIUM

"But I wanted it medium rare!"

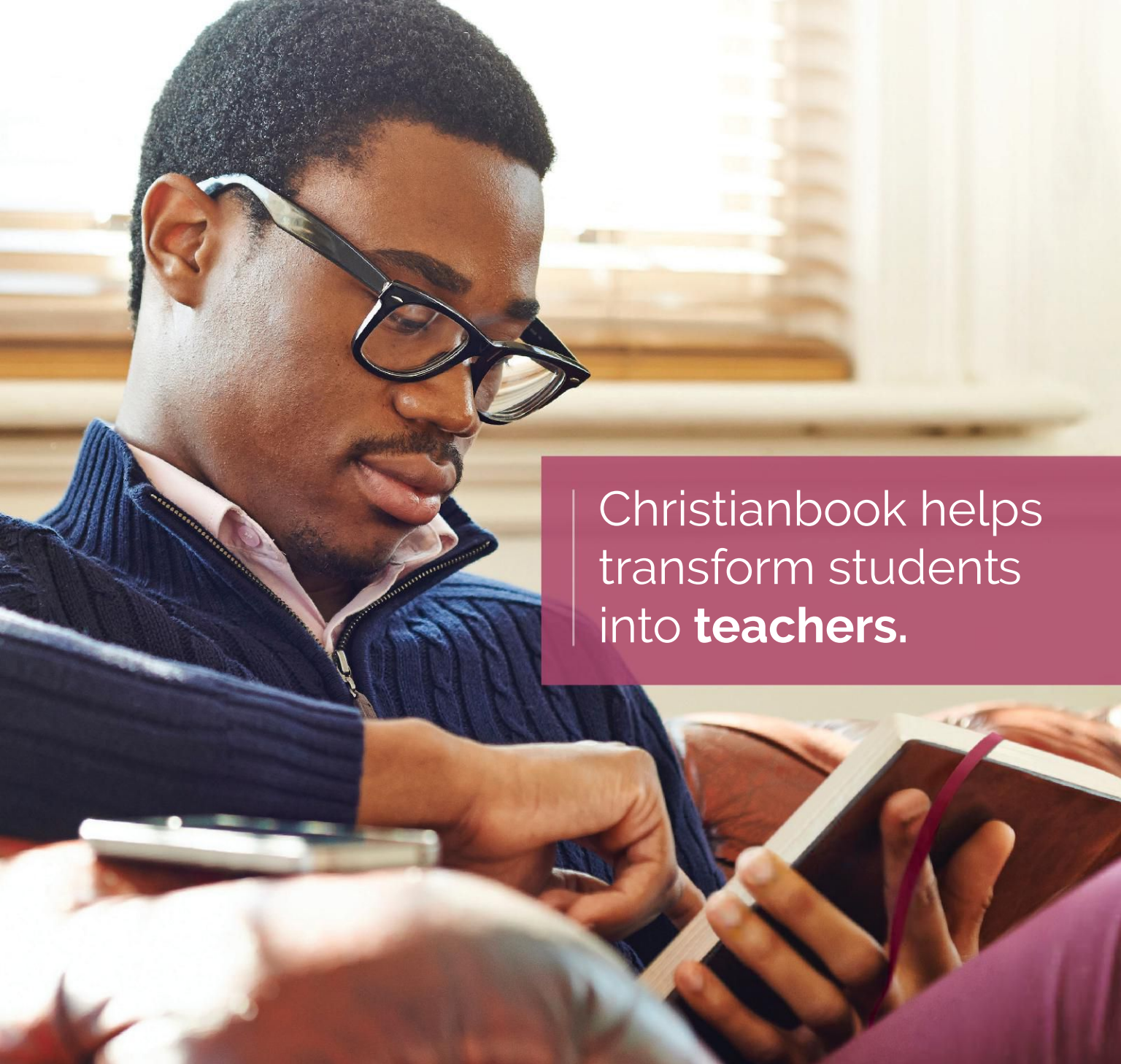
OWEN CAMP
CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

For additional caption entries, as well as past cartoons and captions, please visit **biblicalarchaeology.org/captioncontest**.

Write a caption for the cartoon (right) based on Acts 2:3–4: "Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability." Submit it via our website at **biblicalarchaeology.org/captioncontest**.

Please include your name and address. The deadline for entries is November 15, 2023. The author of the winning caption will receive a BAS All-Access membership and three gift subscriptions to give **BAR** to friends. Runners-up will receive an All-Access membership and two gift subscriptions for friends.

Acts 2:3–4



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