

CHAPTER 8

IRON AGE, PHOENICIAN AND ARAMAIC INSCRIPTIONS

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Introduction¹

The following 39 inscriptions found in Subterranean Complex 57 include one X-shaped marking on a vessel, dated to the Late Iron Age, and one Phoenician inscription, dated to the 5th century BCE. The other 37 inscriptions are written in Aramaic, dated to the 4th–2nd centuries BCE. These inscriptions include dated dockets (or parts of them); a group of sherds of a storage jar with a personal name inscribed on them, probably of its owner; a list of names; small parts of what might be letters or notes and some unidentified inscriptions.

The first group of ostraca found in Maresha were published in 2010 (Eshel), including 65 Persian and Hellenistic inscriptions written in the Aramaic language and paleographically dated to the 5th–2nd centuries BCE (Nos. 2–66); two fragments of Persian inscriptions written in Phoenician script (Nos. 67, 68); one Edomite inscription written in Aramaic script (No. 69), dated to the Persian and Hellenistic periods; and three inscriptions in Jewish script dated to the 1st or 2nd century CE (Nos. 70–72). Altogether, more than 2,000 Aramaic ostraca and inscriptions dated to the Persian and Hellenistic periods have been found at various sites throughout Israel. Some came from licensed excavations and others from illegal digs, which, nevertheless, have ended up in museums and collections (see a summary in Eshel 2010:35–36). All are to be published by Porten and Yardeni.

In the excavations at Maresha, parts were found of four bowls with 16 inscriptions written on both the interior and exterior. The first two bowls (Bowls A and B), including seven inscriptions written by different hands and thus identified as scribal exercises, were published in 2007 (Eshel, Puech and Kloner 2007). The inscriptions on Bowl A, written in cursive Aramaic of the late 3rd or the beginning of the 2nd century BCE, include parts of a wisdom text, a registration of a daily harvest, and an account, while those on Bowl B include the blessing of a wise man and parts of a marriage contract. The other two bowls will be published in the near future.

Since the year 2000, during the excavations conducted by Ian Stern and Bernie Alpert at Maresha, more than 360 Aramaic ostraca found in nearby SC 169, adjacent to SC 57, have been retrieved, dating to the 3rd century BCE. Among them a group of close to 100 share a common formula of הַן ...הַן, that is “If X...if/thus Y”, as well as לֹא הַן, “if not”. Some include the words: הַן מִן אֱלֹהִים, “Thus, it is from the gods”. This group of texts is not homogeneous in content, and is to be sub-divided into various genres, which remain to be determined. We tentatively suggest two possible identifications. The assembly of ostraca might originally have been part of a scribal school’s curriculum. Another, more credible theory is that they were connected with a temple. In that case, the ostraca would be identified as texts recording divination and similar activities. The inscription written on Bowl A that we have identified as part of a wisdom text shares the same formula and thus might be part of the new group of texts mentioned here.

Cooking pot with ‘X’-shaped marking on handle

1. Inv. No. 57-12-100 S1

Permit No. 3941/03

Dimensions: 5.5 x 4.0 cm

Description: Cooking pots with an X-shaped marking incised on the handle before firing, are well-known and are dated to the Late Iron Age. They have been documented in a large number of sites in Judah; most were discovered in Jerusalem (for distribution, see Maeir 2010:43, n. 2, for the map of the site see Fig. 2 there). Many interpretations for this phenomenon have been suggested, most recently by Maeir, who argued that “the marked cooking pots from late Iron Age Judah are very likely related to the biblical cultic practice of *tērûmâ*”. He further suggested: “In all likelihood, specific vessels (in this case cooking pots) were marked before production as receptacles for the *tērûmâ*, and after firing were used either to give foodstuffs (generally cooked foods) to the priests at various locations throughout Judah, or were given to priests in the vicinity of cultic sites and then taken to various locations, or perhaps were delivered to a cultic site, whether in Jerusalem or at other sites in Judah” (Maeir 2010:54). The new X-shaped marking from Maresha is a welcome addition to this collection.

¹ Thanks are due to Dr. A. Yardeni and Rivka Elitzur-Leiman for their help reading some of the inscriptions. The author bears full responsibility for the reading and interpretations.



Fig. 8.1 Potter's mark – Ze'ev Radovan



Fig. 8.2 Phoenician inscription – Ze'ev Radovan

Phoenician Inscription from the Persian Period

2. Inv. No. 57-22-142 S1

Permit No. 4099/04

Dimensions: 10 x 18 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1.]בחש]

2.]וֹבִי]

The shape of the letters *bet* and *het* are of the cursive Phoenician script. They can be compared with the Elephantine ostraca dated to the 5th century BCE (Peckham 1968:110–111; Pl. X, lines 5–6; Pl. XI, line 1), and can be dated to the same period.

Two other Phoenician inscriptions were found in Maresha, dated to the 5th–4th centuries BCE (Eshel 2010:76–77, Nos. 67, 68). Phoenician inscriptions of the same date come from Sidon and Tyre, as well as from Phoenician cities in Palestine: Gaza (Naveh 1987:26–30; see also Avi-Yonah 1977:28–31); Ashqelon (Rahmani 1976; Cross 1996:64–65); Khirbet el-Kôm (Lemaire 2002: Nos. 393, 394); Bat Yam (Peckham 1966); Jaffa (Avner and Eshel 1996); Eliachin on the central Sharon Plain (Deutsch and Helzer 1994:69–73); Tel Anafa and Tel Dor (Naveh 1987:25–26); Shiqmona (Cross 1968; *Israel Museum* 1973:21: No. 11); and 'Akko (Dothan 1985). To these should be added the inscription from Mizpe Yamim, engraved on a *situla* (Frankel and Ventura 1998:46–49), and the *bullae* from Kedesh (Ariel and Naveh 2003), both sites in the Upper Galilee.

]בחש]—This word might be incomplete, starting with the preposition *bet*, or else a word from the root *בחש*. If it is a complete word, it might be the Persian name *בחש*, Buxša, written on a ceramic sarcophagus from Elephantine, reading: *לבחש*, '(belonging) to Buxša' (*TAD* IV: 245; D18.12).

Aramaic Inscriptions

The following 40 Aramaic inscriptions, dated from the 4th to the 2nd centuries BCE, include various types. Among them are dockets or parts of them; a personal name, probably the owner of the vessel; lists of names and some remains of what might be parts of letters or notes.

Dated Dockets (Nos. 3–5)

Many of the Aramaic ostraca dated to the Persian and Hellenistic periods served as dockets attached to sacks or vessels, indicating taxes paid to the Persian and Macedonian authorities at the end of the 4th century BCE. In Maresha 13 ostraca were discovered that bear dates, personal names, produce types and quantities (Eshel 2010:38–47, Nos. 2–14). These ostraca can clearly be identified as having been placed in sacks of wheat or barley to record the date on which taxes were paid on the items. The taxes seem to have been paid by individuals who grew produce in fields around Maresha. Ostraca of a similar nature were found in Be'er Sheva' (Naveh 1973; 1979), Khirbet el-Kôm (Geraty 1975), Tell Jemmeh (Naveh 1992) as well as from the antiquities market, now held in various private collections (Eph'al and Naveh 1996; Lemaire 1996, 2002).

The following two ostraca seem to be of the same type. Both start with the formula 'PN under the authority of PN', followed by a date, indicated only by the year, mentioning a transaction of X number of loads of straw. The last phrase is unclear, probably referring to the straw (perhaps: 'which are not prepared/ready').

3. Inv. No. 57-53-416 S1

Permit No. 5574/09

Dimensions: 4.7 x 5.5 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. זבדאדה עלִיד

2. תנחום לשנת י' (?)

3. תבן טעון 4 זי לא

4. מעתון

Translation:

1. ZBD'DH, by the hands of
2. Tanhum; to year 12 [or: 13 (?)]
3. loads of straw: 4
4. which are not
5. prepared/ready (?)

Line 1

זבדאדה – A name found in other Idumean ostraca (e.g., Eph'al and Naveh 1996: 50, No. 87).

עלִיד – this term is frequently used in the Idumean ostraca, meaning 'by the hand of', usually followed by a personal name.

Line 2

תנחום – The name תנחום is found on two Hebrew jar-handle impressions (WSS Nos. 707-8); this name is also found in inscription found in Jaffa (Frey 120-121, No. 893), and is popular among names mentioned in Midrash Genesis Rabbah (e.g., Chapter 1:3; see Ilan 2002:417).

Line 3

תבן טעון, 'loads of straw', this terminology is unique, as the usual combinations in such Idumean ostraca is either תבן פחלץ 'sacks of straw', or תבן משחלץ, 'baskets of straw' (see Eph'al and Naveh 1996:12). Cf. the Words of Ahikar: נשאית תבן, "I have carried straw" (TAD III: 46-47; C1.1.160), and וטעון גמלא יטעננה, "and (or: then) the load of the camel one will load (on) him" (48-49, line 186).

Line 4

מעתון – The third letter can be either ח or ת; followed by a large yod or a resh. If we read מעתון, it might be from the



Fig. 8.3 Dated docket – Clara Amit

root עתד; meaning 'to be prepared' (Sokoloff 2002: 422; cf. Syriac *m'tdwt*, 'preparation', Sokoloff 2009:805).

4. Inv. No. 57-01-04 S1

License No. 3/00

Dimensions: 5.4 x 8.8 cm טעון

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. כִּסְמָה סלסלסלסל תנחום

2. לשנת י' תבן טעון יי

3. זי לא מעתון

Translation:

1. PN [...by the hands of (?)] Tanhum'
2. To the year 12, loads of straw: 6
3. which are not prepared/ready (?)

Line 1

Most of this line is unclear, but the last word of the name תנחום, also mentioned in the previous ostrakon. Based on their parallel, one might assume that here it also starts with a name (maybe with his father's name followed), then perhaps we can tentatively read: עלִיד תנחום 'by the hands of (?) Tanhum'

מעתון – The *dalet* is unclear, and might be read as a *yod* or *resh*; see discussion in No. 3 above.

5. Inv. No. 57-20-120 S5

Permit No. 4099/04

Dimensions: 3.2 x 3.7 cm

Description: Cooking pot sherd

Reading:

1. רמתא]

2. בִּרְ לֹאֲדָר]



Fig. 8.4 Dated docket – Ze'ev Radovan



Fig. 8.5 Dated docket – Ze'ev Radovan

Translation:

1. The height / Ramta [...]
2. On the 10th of Adar [...]

This ostrakon includes the beginning of two lines, which includes a place of origin and a date, and thus seems to be part of a docket.

Line 1

רמתא – This word is mentioned few times in the *ISAP*, No. 1253 רמתא מן עבור רמתא, “from the grain of the hill/height (?)” As noted by Eph'al and Naveh (1996:15); it might be a toponym: Ramta, but “This toponym is very common... and it cannot therefore be of much help in locating the place of provenance of our ostraca”. Accordingly, רמתא can be derived from the noun רמה, meaning ‘hill, height’ (Sokoloff 2002:525; see רמתא in Syriac), thus here it might specify the origin of the grain (which did not survive in this inscription) from ‘the hill’, or ‘the height’.”

Line 2

בָּרָא לְאֶדָר – Generally, taxes were paid in the form of wheat and barley at harvest time, during the months of Sivan, Tammuz and Ab (Eph'al and Naveh 1996:18; Lemaire 1996:143), while in Adar other products, like oil, are given (e.g., Eph'al and Naveh 1996: Nos. 83; Lemaire 2002: No. 19, cf. ‘Second Adar’ in No. 11). Since line 2 is incomplete, it might have originally been אֶדָר אַחֲרִי, ‘Second Adar’ as well.

Undated Dockets (Nos. 6–20)

Another group of ostraca found at Maresha was identified as consisting of dockets without dates (Eshel 2010:47–59, Nos. 15–44). On these ostraca, including incomplete ones, the names of individuals are followed by product designation, sometimes with the quantity. As the inscriptions are fragmentary, it is difficult to ascertain their function. However, it is reasonable to assume that this group represents dockets that originally included a complete formula or were written in an abbreviated form, without a date. The following ostraca can be added to this group.

6. Inv. No. 57-26-197 S4

Permit No. 4361/05

Dimensions: 3.7 x 6.6 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. עבדא שסו]

2.] ם ם ם

3. ...]ל[...]

Translation

1. ABD', barley: 2 seah [...]

This ostrakon is probably part of a docket similar to many found in Idumea. The legible portion reveals a personal name and an amount of barley, but might have also included the date of delivery.

עבדא — A Nabatean name (Negev 1991:46, No. 783), documented in Idumean ostraca (Lemaire 2002: 82, No. 142:2). Another possible reading is עבדאשו, where אשו is a popular Nabatean name (mainly in Safaitic; see Negev 1991:15, No. 154).

7. Inv. No. 57-20-146 S1

Permit No. 4099/04

Dimensions: 2.5 x 4.2 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

Side A

1. בעליתן]

2.] ש ח ט



Fig. 8.6 Undated docket – Ze'ev Radovan



Fig. 8.7 Undated docket – Clara Amit

Translation:

1. BALYTN 1 [...]
2. barley: 1, wheat: 2 [...]

Line 1

בעלנתן – Another form of the more popular name בעליתן (ISAP: No. 2425).

Line 2

ח – Short for חנטיץ, wheat, followed by the amount, 2.

Side B

Reading:

1. ִּוּוּ
2. ִּוּ שִׁוּ

Translation:

1. [...]
2. sheqel: 1

The last two signs of line 2 might be read as: ִּוּ, the numeral 2.

8. Inv. No. 57-22-154 S3
Permit No. 4099/04

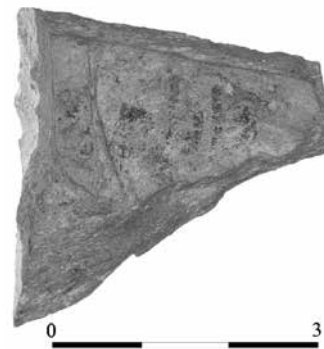


Fig. 8.8 Undated docket – Clara Amit

Dimensions: 3.5 x 3.5 cm

Description: Rhodian amphora sherd

Reading:

כלכל ס

Translation:

KLKL, seah: 1

The reading is not clear. Both *kaphs* can also be *bets*.

כלכל — The name כלכל is known from the Bible (1 Kings 5:11; 1 Chron. 2:6), as well as from three Hebrew seals, among them לכלכל מנחם, “belonging to Kalkol (son of) Menaḥem (WSS: No. 217; see Nos. 348, 489), meaning ‘sustain’, probably a hypocoristicon, see the Hebrew name כלכליהו (WSS: No. 218); and the woman’s name כלכליה, mentioned in the Elephantine papyri (TAD I:40–41; A3.7.3).

9. Inv. No. 57-40-348 S1

Permit No. A4687/06

Dimensions: 3.4 x 4.5 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. נבו בר זבד

2. אִמְנוֹ חִי

Translation:

1. NBW son of ZBD
2. 'MNW (?), wheat: 1(?) [*kor*]

The reading is unclear. The letter following the *mem* can also be a *bet* or *pe*, and the *waw* can also be a *resh*.

Line 1

נבו—A Babylonian deity also worshiped by the Arameans. It is therefore known as a proper name (Lemaire 1996: Nos. 75, 96), included as a theophoric element in Aramaic names such as נבואלה (Naveh 1973: No. 7) and נבורעי (Eshel 2010:68, No. 64, Col. A:4). It also appears in the

Nabatean names נבומא and עבדנבו (Negev 1991: 43, 47: Nos. 714, 813; Lemaire 1996: No. 86).

זבד—The element זבד, meaning ‘the gift’ is found in the Nabatean name זבדא (Negev 1991: 25, No. 367), as well as in other names, e.g., זבדאל and זבדאדה and זבדי.

Line 2

אִמְנוֹ

Before the letter *’aleph* there are some traces of another sign that does not seem to be a letter. After the *waw* there is a clear *het* followed by a long vertical line. One possible reading is one word, אִמְנוֹחַן, or even with an additional letter before the *’aleph*, which might be a name, unattested, with the predicate חן meaning ‘favor, grace’), found in the West Semitic onomasticon of the 2nd millennium BCE (Zadok 1988:46). Another possibility is to separate the words, tentatively reading it as: אִמְנוֹ ח, to be interpreted as the proper-name אִמְנוֹ, hitherto unattested, but from its ending it might be a Nabatean name, probably close to אִמְינוֹ (Negev 1991: 13, No. 97). In this case, the ח is the short form for the well-attested חֲנֹטֶן, ‘wheat’. Nevertheless, one would expect it to be followed by its dry measure, e.g., כ for *kor*, e.g., ח כ “wheat: 1 kor” (cf. Eph’al and Naveh 1996:22, No. 2).

10. Inv. No. 57-20-120 S4

Permit No. 4099/04

Dimensions: 2.7 x 4.9 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

שָׁפַל וְ אִמְּ

Translation:

ŠPL: 2 [...]

A very unclear reading, the sign for the numeral 2 might also be read as two letters.

שָׁפַל — The name שָׁפַל, Shapal, is documented on a Hebrew seal (WSS: No. 324).

11. Inv. No. 57-26-231 S1

Permit No. 4361/05

Dimensions: 5.6 x 6.9 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. ... חזי שׁ

2. מרצעת ס ר ג

Translation:

1. ... HZY, Barley [X]

2. MRŠ‘T (?) S(eah): 10; G(riv), 4 [...]



Fig. 8.9 Undated docket – Clara Amit

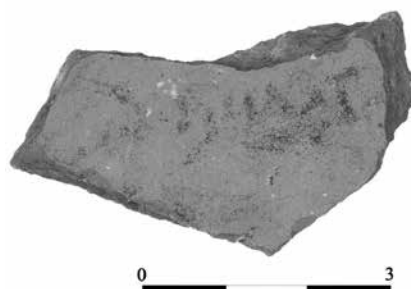


Fig. 8.10 Undated docket – Ze’ev Radovan

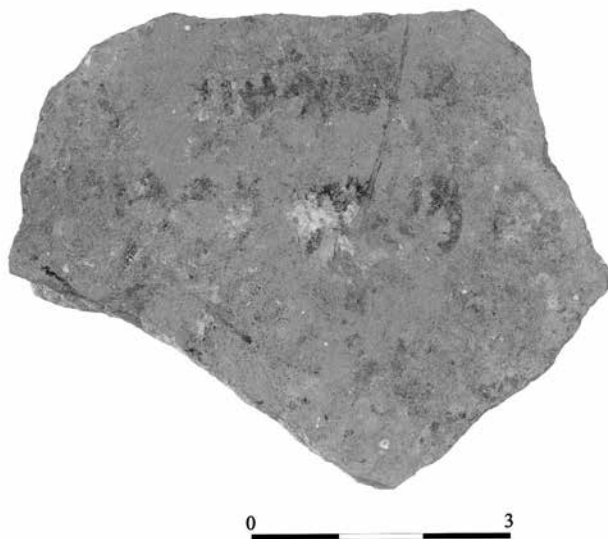


Fig. 8.11 Undated docket – Ze’ev Radovan

A very unclear reading.

Line 1

חזי — A proper name, known from ostracon No. 34, Col. B:8, found in Be'er Sheva' (Naveh 1979: 186; Yardeni 2000:365; cf. Lemaire 2002, No. 214:3).

Line 2

מרצעת — The name מרצעת is well attested (e.g., Eph'al and Naveh 1996: 38, 74, Nos. 49, 159; Lemaire 1996:84, Nos. 8, 109). מרצע means 'an awl' both in Hebrew (Exodus 21; Deuteronomy 15:17) and Aramaic (Sokoloff 2002:332); see the Safaitic name MRŠ'T (Harding ICPIANI: 541).

ⲙ ⲁ ⲙ — Although the first letter seems more like a ⲙ, a short form for מעה, *ma'ah* (obolos); from the combination of ⲙ with ⲁ it seems more probable to be read as ⲙ, a short for סאה (plural: סאן), *seah*.

ג — The ג was interpreted by Lemaire (1996:18, No. 4) as a short form of the Aramaic גרב, meaning "a type of vessel or jar used mainly for storing liquids" (Sokoloff 2002:135); it is also documented in the Aramaic Ostraca from Egypt, dated between the 4th and the 2nd centuries BCE. It might also be interpreted as a short form of: גרגר, well attested in the ostraca from Idumea, although unattested in the short form (Eph'al and Naveh 1996:60, No. 114; Lemaire 1996:55, No. 56). While Eph'al and Naveh mark it as "meaning unknown" (1996:95), Lemaire interprets it as "baies" (=berries), or "olives bien mûres" (=ripe olives), connecting it with the Hebrew גרגר mentioned in Isaiah: "Only gleanings shall be left of him, As when one beats an olive tree: Two berries or three on the topmost branch..." (17:6), translated in the Targum as: גרגרין. The same meaning is found in Ben Sira 50:10 (Ms B), as the description of the Simon, the High Priest: כזית רענן מלא גרגר.

Finally, the most probable explanation is as follows: ג can found 13 times in the Aramaic ostraca and papyri from Egypt, as a short form of גריו, a Persian term, used for measure of grain, which is 1/3 of an *ardab*. See, for example, Segal No. 45, A Fragmentary Account re Grain and Oil, dated to the end of the 5th century BCE, which reads:

[...] ברת פסמשך כא ג יח ו ו ו

"[... P]N daughter of Psamshek: e(mmer), 1 a(rdab), 1 g(riv), 5 h(andfuls)" (TAD III: 236-8, C3.18: 4);

See also the Account of Contribution of Grain, dated to the 3rd century BCE (?), reading:

[יהב] אנה בשם אלהא א... [ל]ספריא ס [ל]... [עסן ג ק ו ו]
[לי]הדת במכלי ג ק

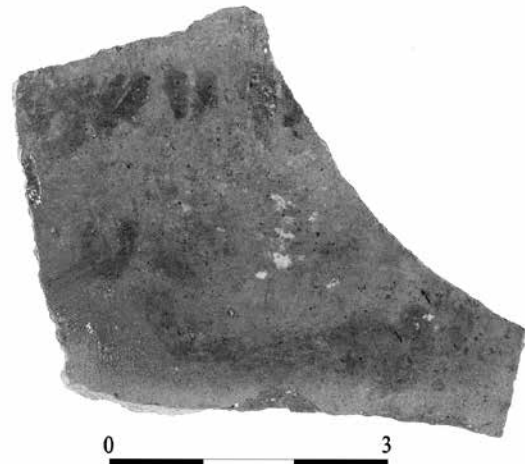


Fig. 8.12 Undated docket – Clara Amit

"I [give?] in the name of the God...[to/for] the scribes: S(eah)1; ...[to/for ...] 'sn: G(riv) 1: Q(abs) 3; 1; [to/for Yeh(u)]dith, for my food: G(riv) 1, Q(abs) [...]" (TAD IV: 201, D.8.8: 3-4).

12. Inv. No. 57-40-290 S2

Permit No. A-4687/06

Dimensions: 4.3 x 4.8 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. [ק ו עבד]

2. [ⲙⲁⲙ]

3. [ⲙⲁⲙⲁ]

Translation:

[...] *qab*: 2, 'BD[...]

This docket mentions 2 *qab*, followed by a name starting with the element 'BD (see עבדא in No. 6 above, and עבדאח in No. 26 below). It is followed by two unclear lines.

13. Inv. No. 57-10-89 S5

Permit No. 3941/03

Dimensions: 3.0 x 4.4 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. חזר

2. ⲙⲁ

Translation:

1. HZR

חזר — A defective form of the name חזיר (for which see ISAP: Nos. 423, 2406); c.f. חזירו (Eph'al and Naveh



Fig. 8.13 Undated docket – Ze'ev Radovan

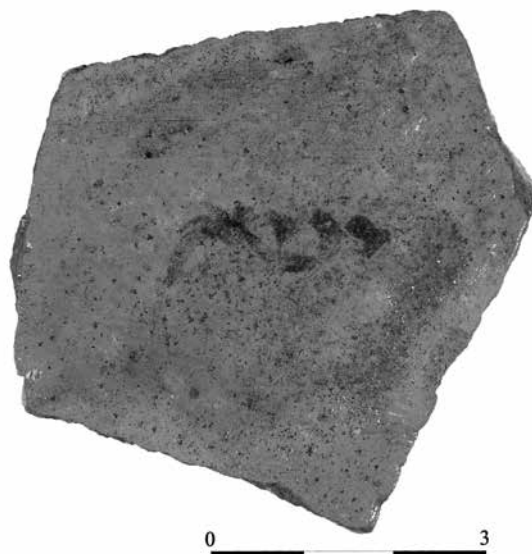


Fig. 8.14 Undated docket – Clara Amit

1996:82, No.182:4) and חזירא (Eph'al and Naveh 1996:50, No. 88:1).

14. Inv. No. 57-45-358 S1

Permit No. 4997/07

Dimensions: 5.0 x 5.5 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

דכרא

Translation:

The ram

דכרא – The ram, cf. Eph'al and Naveh 1996: 36, No. 46:3.

15. Inv. No. 57-40-341 S1

Permit No. A-4687/06

Dimensions: 4.0 x 5.0 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. בִּיד (?)

2. כֶּתֶם

3.]ֶּוּ

Translation:

1. In the hand of (?) [...]

The reading is very unclear, to the left of line 2 there are some traces of ink.

בִּיד— The reading is unclear, but if correct, 'in the hand of', is a well-attested formula e.g., לִיסְפָּה בִּיד זָבוּד (ISAP: No. 1598); or זָבוּדֵאל בִּיד קֻצִּי (ISAP: No. 778).

16. Inv. No. 57-02-16 S7

License No. 3/00

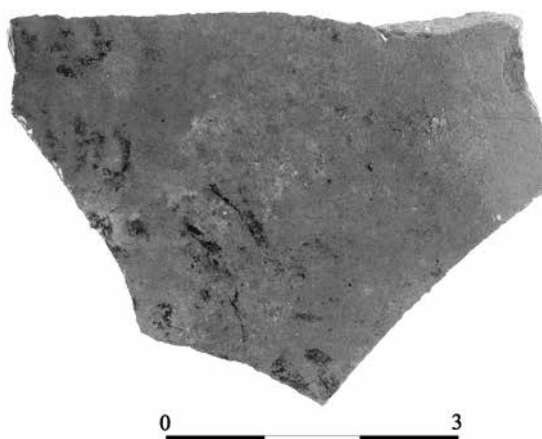


Fig. 8.15 Undated docket – Clara Amit

Dimensions: 6.3 x 10.5 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

חמר בת]

Translation

Wine [...]

חמר – wine, is usually measured by ס, short for סאה (plural: סאן), *seah*. חמר also means 'ass', or 'ass driver' as well as 'homer' (dry measure)' (Porten and Lund 2002:138).

17. Inv. No. 57-40-345 S2

Permit No. A-4687/06

Dimensions: 3.0 x 3.5 cm

Description: Jar sherd



Fig. 8.16 Undated docket – Clara Amit

Reading:

1. פחלץ

The reading is unclear. A tentative reconstruction would be: פחלץ, which means ‘sack (of straw)’ frequently mentioned in the ostraca from Idumea (e.g., Eph‘al and Naveh 1996:28, No. 19; see discussion on p. 12 there).

18. Inv. No. 57-01-02 S1

License No. 3/00

Dimensions: 2.3 x 4.2 cm

Description: Bowl sherd

Reading:

1. מ/פ גרש א

2. דברא

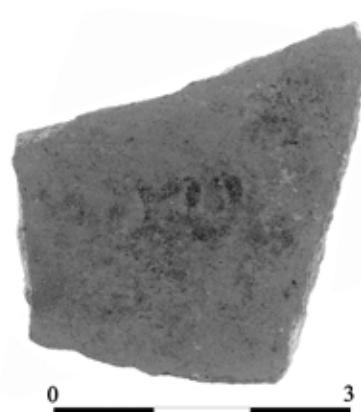


Fig. 8.17 Undated docket – Clara Amit

Translation

[...]

Ram [...]

Very unclear reading

19. Inv. No. 57-41-301 S2

Permit No. A-4687/06

Dimensions: 3.7 x 4.5 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. נחלא עלי

2. אכלנק

3. בול א/סוד



Fig. 8.18 Undated docket – Clara Amit

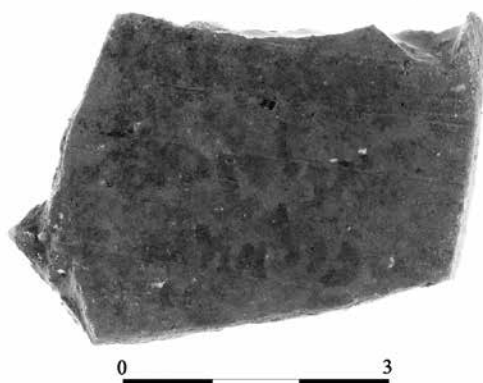


Fig. 8.19 Undated docket – Clara Amit

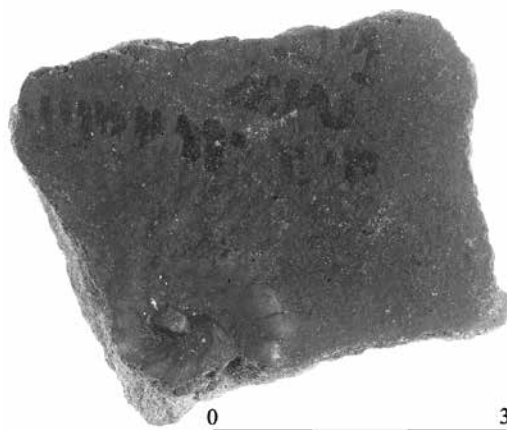


Fig. 8.20 Undated docket – Clara Amit

Translation

1. [...] by the hand of
2. [...]
3. all [...]

The reading is very unclear.

Line 1

על־יד – this term is frequently used in the Idumean ostraca, meaning ‘by the hand of’, usually followed by a personal name. See No. 3 above

20. Inv. No. 57-40-318 S2

Permit No. A-4687/06

Dimensions: 3.7 x 4.7 cm

Description: Cooking-pot base

Reading:

1. מִסְפָּסִים]

2. נָגְרָא

3. קוּסְעָדֶר עֶסֶן שִׁי]

Translation

1. [...]
2. the carpenter
3. QWS‘DR ‘SN (?): 3 [...]

Line 3

קוּסְעָדֶר – The third letter is unclear. In any case, it starts with the Edomite theophoric element QWS.

עֶסֶן – This reading is tentative. If accepted, it might be a Safaitic name, which comes from Arabic, ‘Asan, meaning ‘elegance’, ‘beauty’ (*ICPIANI*: 421), followed by the quantity of “3” of the now-lost goods.

Inscriptions with a Personal Name (Nos. 21-29)

Included in this group are personal names inscribed on sherds of storage jars. The names are of various origins, such as Edomite, Arabian (sometimes Nabatean) and Greek. As no product is cited next to the names, it is likely that they signify ownership of the jars. Inscriptions that were not preserved in their entirety might have contained a date and the quantity of an agricultural product. In that case, they should be included in the previous group of dockets. Similar groups of personal names are known from Maresha (Eshel 2010:59–64; Nos. 45–62).

The following two ostraca bear the same name, and probably belong to the same person. The script is similar but not identical. Taking into consideration variations in handwriting, it was probably written by the same scribe.

21. Inv. No. 57-25-206 S1

Permit No. 4361/05

Dimensions: 4.7 x 5.8 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

אפֿלֿוֹנוֹס

Apollonius

22. Inv. No. 57-53-416 S2

Permit No. 5574/09

Dimensions: 4.2 x 4.3 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

אפֿלֿוֹנוֹס

Apollonius

The Script

The *aleph* is made with 3 strokes; the left stroke is drawn almost horizontally. The *waw* is written without lifting



Fig. 8.21 Inscription with a personal name – Ze'ev Radovan



Fig. 8.23 Inscriptions with a personal name – Clara Amit

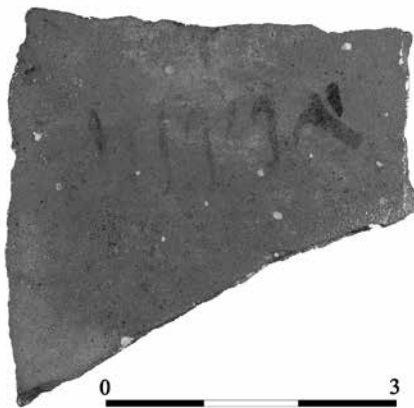


Fig. 8.22 Inscription with a personal name – Clara Amit

the hand, with a relatively large 'roof'. The *lamed* has a very long 'mast' going to the left, which seems to have an addition on its top, a short horizontal part and a 'tail', known since the 4th century BCE (Yardeni 2000:190–191 Type 2). In the *samekh* the upper ends of the 'roof' and the down-stroke meet, creating the 'loop' type of this letter (Yardeni 2000:196–197, Type 1). The upper and down strokes of the *pe* join at the top in a narrow curve, the down-stroke descends vertically, and the base is horizontal (Yardeni 2000:200–201, Type 2c). Based on the shape of the letter, especially that of the *samekh*, the inscription can be dated to the 3rd century BCE.

Discussion

אפלוניס—The Greek name Apollonius (Ἀπολλώνιος) also used by Jews e.g., Apollonius, son of Alexander, who came as with other Jews in a delegation to Rome in 132

BCE (Josephus, *Ant.* 13:259–260; see Ilan 2002:266). A variant orthography, אפלוניס or אפלוניס is documented in three Elephantine papyri:

1. An account of sales, income and inventory, dated to the 3rd century BCE reads: אפלוניס יסן, "Apollonius (son of) Jason" (Cowley No. 81; *TAD* III: No. C3.28, Recto, Col. 1:5);
2. The name אפלוניס is mentioned as the one "who is over [the] epistles", on instructions regarding sale of grain, written on an ostracon dated to the late 3rd century BCE (*TAD* IV: 191, D7.56:9, convex);
3. The name אפלוניס was engraved on a limestone tombstone, found in Alexandria, dated to the late 3rd or early 2nd centuries BCE(?) (*TAD* IV: 262, D21.6:2).

23. Inv. No. 57-04-69-S2

License No. 52/01

Dimensions 2.5 x 2.9 cm

Description: Jug sherd

Reading:

דמתריס

Demetrius

דמתריס – The Greek name Δημήτριος (Pape 1911:289–290), which derives from the Greek goddess Demeter, is mentioned by Josephus as the son of Andromachus (*Ant.* 16:243; see Ilan 2002:271). This name appear as a graffiti in Tomb I, No. 4 from the necropolis of Maresha: "(Grave) of Demetrios, son of Meerbal" (Peters and Thiersch 1905:41; see also 51, no. 21).

Its short form, דמתר is documented as an epitaph written in Aramaic script, dated to the 3rd century BCE from Alexandria, Egypt (Horbury and Noy 1992:7–9,

No. 5, Pl. IV; Ilan 2008:240–241). Although ת is the usual transliteration of θ, there is some confusion in transliterations of names, as noted by Ilan, where τ is transliterated with ת, to be compared with נותוס for Νότος (Ilan 2002:21).

24. Inv. No. 57-11-105 S2

Permit No. 4099/04

Dimensions: 4.2 x 4.2 cm

Description: Bowl rim

Reading:

זבד

ZBD

זבד – A biblical name זָבֻד Zavad (e.g., Ezra 10:27). During the Greco-Roman period this name was not only associated with Judeans but with other Semitic peoples as well. Various forms in Palmyra (Stark PNPI, 85-86) and in Idumea (AOFCI, 99; c.f. זבדו, זבדא, Negev 1991: 367–370, 372). The form ZBD is recorded for Arabs (Harding, ICPIANI, 294).

25. Inv. No. 57-22-130-S1

Permit No. 4099/04

Dimensions: 2.8 x 3.4 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

חנינת

ḤNYNT

The second and fourth letter might also be read as *bet*. The *yod* and the *taw* are clear, the last ends with a loop.

חנינת – No such name is known. It is probably the name of a woman, to be compared with the Egyptian name חנונית, Henuneit, documented in an Elephantine papyrus dated to the 5th century BCE (*TAD* III:236–238, C3.18:5); may also be compared with the male name חנינה/א, which according to Ilan (2002:106, note 41), is “an Aramicized version of the name חנינה”.

26. Inv. No. 57-20-171 S1

Permit No. 4099/04

Dimensions: 3.0 x 3.0 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

עדרי

ʿDRY

עדרי – This name is known from other Idumean ostraca (e.g., Ephʿal and Naveh 1996: No. 106:2; Lemaire 2002: No. 210:1; *ISAP*: No. 2637). This name also occurs in a papyrus of the Memphis shipyard journal from Egypt (C3.8, *TAD* III:197, Column IIIA:8; *ISAP*: No. 949).

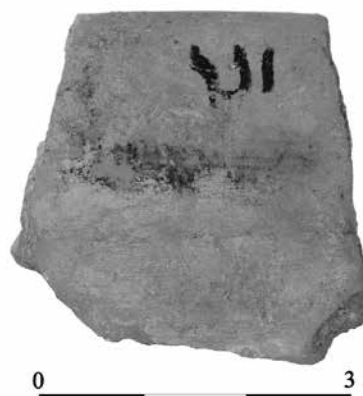


Fig. 8.24 Inscriptions with personal names – Ze'ev Radovan

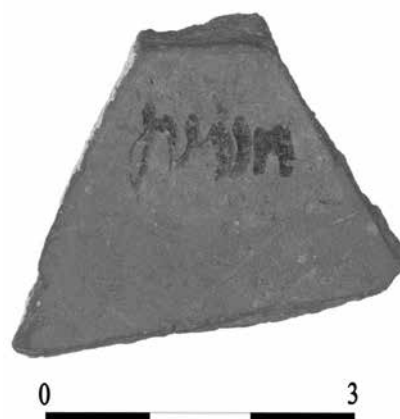


Fig. 8.25 Inscriptions with personal names – Ze'ev Radovan

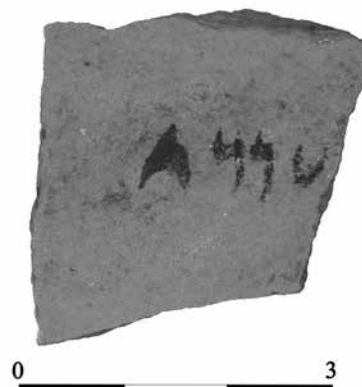


Fig. 8.26 Inscription with a personal name – Ze'ev Radovan



Fig. 8.27 Inscription with a personal name – Clara Amit

27. Inv. No. 57-26-270 S5
Permit No. A-4687/06
Dimensions: 5.0 x 6.5 cm
Description: Iron bowl base
Reading:

ענני

‘NNY

- ענני A man of the House of David bore this name (1 Chron. 3:24), which is common in the Elephantine papyri, and is also found at ‘Arad (Naveh 1981: No. 38; see *ISAP*: No. 10).

28. Inv. No. 57-48-401 S1
Permit No. 5343/08
Dimensions: 2.5 x 5.5 cm
Description: Jar sherd
Reading:

קוסגבר

QWSGBR

קוסגבר – An Edomite name; see 7th-century seal from Umm el-Biyara a site excavated by C. Bennett (See Oakshott 1983:62); see the 8th–7th BCE bullae קוסגבר מלך אדם, ‘Qausgabri the King of Edom’ (*WSS* 388–389; Nos. 1048–1049, and discussion there).



Fig. 8.28 Inscription with a personal name – Amitai Stern

29. Inv. No. 57-41-312 S1
Permit No. A-4687/06
Dimensions: 4.0 x 5.3 cm
Description: Jug sherd
Reading:

רם

RM (?)

The reading is very unclear, the first letter can also be *waw*, the second can be a similar letter, such as a *nun* or *waw*. If the reading רם is accepted, it is a biblical name (Job 32:2; 1 Chron. 2:9).

Inscriptions with Lists of Names (Nos. 30–37)

The following lists of names, include some unclear words might be read differently. Two lists of names were found in Maresha (Eshel 2010:65–70 Nos. 63, 64): The first includes 11 different names of various ethnic groups and the second has 16, among them Edomites (e.g., קוסגבר, קוסגבר), and Nabateans (e.g., אבאוש, זבדי, ובהי). These lists could have served various purposes.

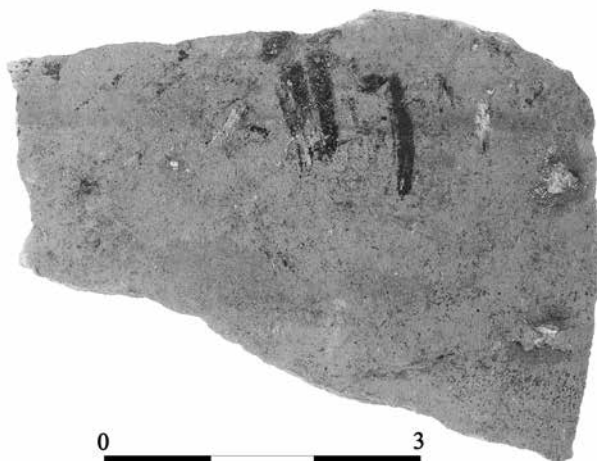


Fig. 8.29 Inscription with a personal name – Clara Amit

30. Inv. No. 57-20-115 S1
Permit No. 5343/08
Dimensions: 3.8 x 4.2 cm
Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. עֲבֹדְקוֹס

2. זבדבעל

3. קוסברך בר

4. עבדאח

1. 'BDQWS

2. ZBDB'L

3. KWSBRK son of

4. 'BD'H

Line 1

עֲבֹדְקוֹס – An Edomite name (Eph'al and Naveh 1996: No. 84; *ISAP*: Nos. 2423, 2643).

Line 2

זבדבעל – A combination of זבד and the theophoric element בעל, See Eph'al and Naveh 1996: No. 47; *ISAP*: Nos. 2480, 2510).

Line 3

קוסברך – An Edomite name, also attested (e.g., *ISAP*: Nos. 132+135; 431, 752).

Line 4

עבדאח – a combination of the element עבד with that of אח, 'brother', which might also be a theophoric element. The element אח also appears in names such as אחאב, and אחמלך. See רבואח (Lemaire 2002:83, No. 145, corrected by Yardeni, *ISAP*).

As to the supposition that "KWSBRK son of 'BD'H" imply inter-ethnic relationships, see Stern 2007. It is yet another example of the cosmopolitan ethnic makeup of Maresha in the Hellenistic period.

The following ostraca, while incomplete, might also belong to the name-list group. They also provide further insight via these personal names, some with theophorics, into the ethnic make-up of the city and, to a limited extent, the interactions of these ethnoi.

31. Inv. No. 57-23-173 S3

Permit No. 4361/05

Dimensions: 3.3 x 4.8 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. ק[וסבנה

2. קוסנתן



Fig. 8.30 Inscription with personal names – Ze'ev Radovan



Fig. 8.31 Inscription with personal names – Ze'ev Radovan



Fig. 8.32 Inscription with personal names – Clara Amit

1. [...Q]WSBNH
2. QWSNTN

The names in Line 1 and Line 2, קוסנתן , [ק]וסבניה , respectively, are both Edomite names, also attested in Greek inscriptions found in the Sidonian Tombs I of Maresha: The name Qosbanos is the Edomite name QWSBNH, appears in the Greek inscription No. 12 (Peters and Thiersch 1905:46), while Qosnatanos, the Edomite name QWSNTN, appears in Nos. 1, 9-11 (Peters and Thiersch 1905:37-40; 44-45).

32. Inv. No.57-45-385 S2

Permit No. 4997/07

Dimensions: 3.6 x 4.5 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. עדרי

- ## 2. זיהוי

1. 'DRY
2. WHB'L

עָדְרִי – For this name see No. 8 above.

תִּבְּאֵל – A popular Nabatean name (Negev 1991: No. 336), known from other Idumean ostraca (e.g., Eph'al and Naveh 1996: No. 176:6; *ISAP*: Nos. 763, 1081).

Fig. 8.33 Inscription with personal names – Clara Amit

*Fig. 8.34 Inscription with personal names – Clara
Amit*

33. Inv. No. 57-47-392 S1

Permit No. 4997/07

Dimensions: 2.0 x 4.0 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. קוֹס בר ענוי

- ## 2. בְּנוֹהֵי

1. [...] son of 'NWY
2. [...] his sons

The first word is unclear, probably of a personal name. A tentative reading would be: עמקוס (cf. Eph'al and Naveh 1996: No. 144, as corrected by Yardeni, *ISAP*).

עָנוּי – see *ISAP*: No. 2524.

34. Inv. No. 57-40-282 S2

Permit No. A-4687/06

Dimensions: 5.0 x 5.2 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

- ## 1. עזרי

- ## 2. קורס

3. $\psi \circ \phi$

- ၀.၄ ကံ

Translation

1. Ezri
2. QWSP[...]

Very unclear inscription.

עזרי – A biblical name עֶזְרִי, Ezri (1 Chron. 27:26).

◦◦ קוֹסֶפֶּ – Another name with the Idumean element QWS-. A tentative reconstruction is: קוספדה, although unattested, the element פדה is known in other theophoric names.

35. Inv. No. 57-40-353 S3

Permit No. 4997/07

Dimensions: 3.4 x 4.2 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. חֲבִיבִי

- ## 2. קוסוסה



Fig. 8.35 Inscription with personal names – Clara Amit



Fig. 8.36 Inscription with personal names – Clara Amit

Line 2

קוסׁה – Might tentatively reconstructed as: קוסבנה, with the Edomite theophoric element QWS.

36. Inv. No. 57-04-63 S1

Permit No. 52/01

Dimensions: 3.2 x 6.5 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. קוסאׁלׁ

2. חׁׁׁ

Translation

1. QWS'[...]

Line 1

קוסאׁלׁ - The letters following the א and ל are not clear. A name with the element קוס followed by another element starting with א is קוסאלף.

37. Inv. No. 57-40-282 S1

Permit No. A-4687/06

Dimensions: 2.6 x 3.7 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. קוסנתן

2. קוסיתע

Translation

1. QWSNTN

2. QWSYT'

Two well-documented Edomite names.

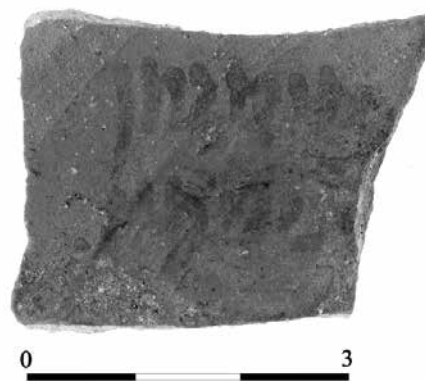


Fig. 8.37 Inscription with personal names – Clara Amit

Aramaic Letters or Note (?) (Nos. 38–39)

The following two ostraca are very fragmentary, but what remains seem to indicate they were part of letters or notes. The second might well belong to the same group, as it includes the second personal suffix.

38. Inv. No. 57-26-190 S1+57-41-315 S2

Permit No. 4361/05 + A-4687/06

Dimensions: 2.5 x 4.2 cm+4.0 x 4.7 cm

Description: Jar sherd

Reading:

1. [מאתכה יתב

2. [ושלם הו והן

3. [מחר ואחרן

4. [מטה חדו ברעה

1. [...] from you, (he) dwell/settle

2. [...] and complete it (?). And if



Fig. 8.38 Aramaic letter or note A (left) – Clara Amit; Aramaic letter or note B (right) – Ze'ev Radovan



Fig. 8.39 Aramaic letter or note – Clara Amit

3. [...] tomorrow (?). Another one
4. [...] rejoice in pleasure

This is a very fragmentary text, including a collation of two ostraca found separately. The right side of the inscription did not survive, as well as its beginning and end. It seems that the left margin survived.

Based on the shape of the *bet* and *he*, the script can be dated to the 3rd or 2nd century BCE.

Line 2

וּשְׁלָם הוּ – the combination: הוּ+שְׁלָם is well attested, especially as greetings in letters; from the Elephantine letters to those of Bar Kokhba. See also Isaiah 54:13 וְרַב בְּנֵיךָ וְסִגְיָהּ שְׁלָם בְּנֵיךָ “And great shall be the happiness of your children”.

Line 3

אֲחֵרָהּ - This word, meaning ‘another one’, is a term frequently used in 1st-century CE ostraca. It designates the beginning of a new subject and may be translated ‘another matter’.

39. Inv. No. 57-43-339 S1
Permit No. A-4687/06
Dimensions: 1.8 x 3.9 cm
Jar sherd
Reading:

Translation

1. [...] your [...]

The letters are large, the *nun* long.

קִנְךָ - Probably a noun with second person suffix.

Discussion

Few letters are known from this period, and most of those are only partly preserved. Another such letter was found in Maresha, (Eshel 2010:70–71, No. 65). Two other ostraca published by Eph'al and Naveh also originated in Idumea, dated to the 4th century BCE. The first ostrakon (No. 199) is a letter mentioning a note concerning a debt (Eph'al and Naveh 1996:90). The second ostrakon (No. 196) comprises a short note (Eph'al and Naveh 1996:88–89). In addition, two partly preserved letters, written by the scribe of ostrakon No. 196, are addressed to Qausmalak (Eph'al and Naveh 1996: Nos. 197, 198); ostrakon No. 198 mentions ‘a servant in your hand’ (Eph'al and Naveh 1996:88–89). A. Yardeni collated these three ostraca (Nos. 196+197+198) into one letter of 13 lines (*ISAP*: No. 1974+1975+1976). Her reading is an important addition to the corpus of letters. Another group of four ostraca, also from Idumea and dated to the same period, were identified by Lemaire (1996:77; Nos. 96–99).

Seventy-nine Hebrew and Aramaic letters were published by Lindenberg (2003). The letters originated in Syria-Palestine before and during the Babylonian invasions and prior to the fall of Judah and Philistia half a century later, and in Egypt in the earlier part of the Persian period c. 500–400 BCE (Lindenberg 2003:3). This corpus includes a report by an Assyrian officer from Ashur, dated c. 650 BCE, as well as two letters found in southern Palestine, dated to the end of the Persian period. The letters concern various issues, among them diplomatic-military correspondence, business and family affairs, petitions and royal orders. The majority of these letters are written on papyrus, a dozen on leather and only eight on sherds. They comprised between

1. קִנְךָ

2. קִנְךָ

four and a dozen or more short lines of writing. Sometimes only one surface is inscribed, while in other cases the letter is written on both sides.

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