

# A Corpus of Iron Age II Inscriptions from Jerusalem: The Background for the Writing of Biblical Texts

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*In Memoriam* Eilat Mazar and Yair Shoham

## Abstract

Of the numerous Iron Age II (First Temple period) ancient sites across the southern Levant, none has yielded as many inscriptions as Jerusalem. This abundance manifests in numbers as well as diversity of forms, media, and subjects. They include personal names and titles of kings, princes, governors, scribes, priests, sons, daughters, fathers, wives, and grandfathers (approximately a dozen names are biblically attested) and feature content of a general historical, geopolitical, financial, commemorative, and religious nature. These inscriptions broadly span from the Iron Age IIA to the fall of Jerusalem, ca. 586 BCE. Here, we review the corpus of provenanced Iron Age II inscriptions from Jerusalem and conclude that its size and quality demonstrate a significant literary capacity, the background for the writing of biblical texts.

**Keywords:** First Temple period; epigraphy; literacy

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. History of research

Iron Age II epigraphic remains from Jerusalem have been studied at length since the second half of the 19th century, gaining considerable momentum with the 1880 discovery and decipherment of the Siloam Inscription (Sayce 1881) and the discovery and preliminary decipherment of the Silwan necropolis inscriptions (Clermont-Ganneau 1871; 1899). Since these initial efforts, excavations over the last century and a half have produced numerous additional Iron Age inscriptions.

Most of these inscriptions have been documented and published (1) on a case-by-case basis, (2) in comprehensive corpora of specific inscription types, and (3) as part of a wider collection of inscriptions from the southern Levant. The second category includes corpora of seals and seal impressions (Avigad and Sass 1997; Barkay 2009; Keel 2017; Mendel-Geberovich 2023; [CSSL](#)) and compilations of storage jar handle impressions (Vaughn 1999; Grena 2002; 2004; Lipschits 2021). The third category includes Davies' (1991; 2004) publication of all Hebrew inscriptions dating from between 1000 and 200 BCE, Renz and Röllig's (1995) and Dobbs-Allsopp's (2005) corpora of 9th–6th-century BCE Hebrew inscriptions, and Ahituv's (2008) collection of significant south Levantine inscriptions.

Other notable publications include the eight-volume *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique* (published between 1900 and 1968 as a subset of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*), the three-volume *Kanaanäische und Aramäische Inschriften* (published between 1960 and 1964 followed by updated editions), and collections of inscriptions highlighted in various onomastica (Golub 2023; Levy 2024). Several publications (Reich and Sass 2006; Garfinkel and Mendel-Geberovich 2020) have highlighted the quantitative significance of certain epigraphic genres (such as seals, bullae, and monumental inscriptions) in Jerusalem, underscoring the considerable scope of the scribal activity and the capital city's administrative importance during the First Temple period. Many of the earlier studies are by now sorely outdated. Some feature only a limited selection of epigraphic finds, and (for our purposes) many contain a lot of “noise”: finds that are unprovenanced, date to periods other than the Iron Age, or are potentially confusing for different reasons.

Much like ourselves, Vainstub (2000) studied a corpus of provenanced First Temple-period inscriptions from Jerusalem. However, in the 24 years since, the application of wet sieving resulted in a windfall of new inscriptions. While these new inscriptions have been published individually or collectively, they

are sufficiently numerous to call for an updated corpus that encompasses all provenanced Iron Age II (First Temple period) Jerusalem inscriptions.

Two major research questions guided our efforts:

- 1) How do the Jerusalem inscriptions testify to the use and development of writing in the Kingdom of Judah?
- 2) Do the inscriptions from Jerusalem provide an adequate background for the writing of biblical texts?

## 1.2. Methodology

While we seek to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date corpus of Iron Age II inscriptions from Jerusalem, we also acknowledge that a total and final compilation encompassing every inscription fragment discovered over the past century and a half is next to impossible, particularly considering the underreporting of more minor inscriptions. Additionally, as soon as such a corpus is published, it almost immediately becomes out of date; such is life with the continuous discovery and publication of new epigraphic artifacts from Iron Age Jerusalem. Therefore, this necessarily remains a “working” document, and the present authors welcome the inclusion of additional information in future updates and iterations.<sup>1</sup>

In order to draw optimal conclusions, such a corpus requires well-defined parameters and standards. First and foremost, the artifacts here assembled must be of known provenance; nothing from the antiquities market is to be included. To this end, geographic boundaries must also be defined. How should we define *Jerusalem*, geographically? The sprawling modern city, including suburbs, is the largest in Israel. For this corpus, we must be more selective, confining ourselves to the Iron Age city. We thus restrict our corpus to items deriving from the immediate vicinity of the City of David, the Ophel, the Temple Mount, the Old City, and adjacent valleys (i.e., Hinnom and Kidron).<sup>2</sup>

Secondly, the inscriptions must be cited in an academic publication, ideally a primary source (press releases, news reports, and popular reports notwithstanding). The inscriptions have been compiled from several sources (some mentioned above), such as corpora featuring Jerusalem’s most substantial inscriptions (e.g., Ahituv 2008) and seal stamps and impressions (e.g., Avigad and Sass 1997; Keel 2017), as well as excavation reports and scholarly articles.

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<sup>1</sup> The bulk of this corpus was assembled in early 2023 and subsequently augmented with additions and corrections until the end of February 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Nearby sites with significant epigraphic remains directly related to the city’s functioning—e.g., Armon Hanatziv, Arnona, and Ramat Rahel—are discussed below (Section 3.1).

Close to twenty different inscription types have been found in Jerusalem, including (1) monumental inscriptions, (2) funerary inscriptions, (3) amulets, (4) seals, (5) private bullae, (6) public bullae, (7) fiscal bullae, (8) private jar handle seal impressions, (9) *lmlk* seal impressions, (10) ostraca, (11) pre-fired inscriptions, (12) post-fired inscriptions (chiseled and incised), (13) stone vessel inscriptions, (14) stone object inscriptions, (15) weights, and (16) various perishable writing media (papyrus, parchment, wood, leather).<sup>3</sup> The present article discusses most of these inscription types. However, it excludes the (predominantly numerically inscribed) stone weights and the enigmatic, ubiquitous “single-letter” (character or digit) inscriptions, sometimes called “potter’s marks.” We consider them more broadly in the discussion (Section 3.1); we hope that a future iteration of this corpus will include these numeric and individual-character inscriptions.

Below, we compile the inscriptions in 14 tables corresponding to the first 14 categories in the list above. We begin with the large and text-rich monumental and funerary inscriptions, proceed to amulets, seals, and bullae, continue with pottery-related inscriptions (jar handle seal impressions, ostraca, pre- and post-fired inscriptions), and conclude with stone varia. In each table, the inscriptions are ordered according to the date of their discovery or the excavation that found them. Where applicable, we provide the name of the excavation director, area, and years. Dating is also provided for each inscription, according to the source text, as well as any additional pertinent details.

Given the numerous sources and authors, some variation in documentation is inevitable (e.g., transliteration and dating formats). Also, unless otherwise stated, each text is reproduced only in Hebrew. We do so for the sake of simplicity and brevity and to maintain overall conformity with sources that do not include an English transliteration or translation.

While this corpus strives to paint a complete picture of the inscriptions so far uncovered in Jerusalem, we have no intention of replacing the previous publications. Thus, we offer no English transcriptions or discuss questionable letters. Nor do we analyze each inscription, suggest alternative readings, or engage the rich literature published on some inscriptions. Such a scope would have required a whole book.

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<sup>3</sup> This final category is inferred rather than observed. It is based on the sizeable quantity of bullae bearing impressions of the perishable material they were attached to, primarily papyrus, thus indicating that these were the most common forms of inscribed media. Wood is listed, given the possibility of wooden writing boards (Van der Veen, Deutsch, and Barkay 2016). We address these perished items below (Sections 3.11–3.12).

## 2. The Inscriptions

### 2.1. Monumental inscriptions

We have four monumental inscriptions from Jerusalem (for a possible fifth, see Section 3.2). These four inscriptions, one nearly complete (No. 1) and three fragmentary (Nos. 2–4), have a combined total of 16 registers of text, 73 preserved words, and 221 preserved letters.

**Table 1.** Monumental inscriptions.

|   | Name/<br>Excavation                          | Text   | Face             | Dating                                   | Reference                    |
|---|--|--|------------------|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | Siloam<br>Inscription, 1880                  | [ הנקבה. וזה. היה. דבר. הנקבה.<br>] בעוד<br>הגרזן. אש. אל. רעו. ובעוד. שלש.<br>אמת. להנן ]ע. קל. אש. ק<br>[א. אל. רעו. כי. הית. זדה. בצר. מימן<br>ומ] [אל. וביס. ה<br>נקבה. הכו. החצבם. אש. לקרת. רעו.<br>גרזן. על ] [רזן. וילכו<br>המים. מן. המוצא. אל. הברכה.<br>במאתי] [אלף. אמה. ומ]<br>ת. אמה. היה. גבה. הצר. על. ראש.<br>החצב] | 132 ×<br>24 cm   | Late 8th–<br>early 7th<br>century<br>BCE | Ahituv 2008:<br>19–25        |
| 2 | Shiloh, City of<br>David, 1978               | [ צבר. הכן<br>] בשבע. עשר]<br>[רבעי. ו]<br>[ב]   | 12 × 8<br>cm     | ca. 700<br>BCE                           | Ahituv 2008:<br>25–26        |
| 3 | Ben-Dov, Ophel,<br>1982                      | [ מתחת. לזן]<br>[ר?ד. המין]<br>[ בירכתי ה]<br>[נסח. הכס]   | 27 ×<br>24 cm    | Early 7th<br>century<br>BCE?             | Ahituv 2008:<br>30–32        |
| 4 | Reich and<br>Shukron, City of<br>David, 2008 | ]קיה]<br>[כה. ב]   | 13.5 ×<br>9.5 cm | 8th century<br>BCE                       | Reich and<br>Shukron<br>2008 |

### 2.2. Funerary inscriptions

Four funerary panel or lintel-form inscriptions have been discovered in Jerusalem, all within the Silwan necropolis on the east side of the Kidron Valley. They have a combined total of eight registers of text, 27 preserved words, and 84 preserved letters.

**Table 2.** Funerary inscriptions.

|   | <b>Tomb</b>                                | <b>Text</b>  | <b>Panel</b>  | <b>Dating</b>             | <b>Reference</b>                                  |
|---|--|--|---|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | No. 35 Longer<br>(Clermont-Ganneau, 1870)  | זאת [ יהו אשר על הבית.<br>אין פה כסף. וזהב<br>[ ] אם [ ועצמת אמתה אתה.<br>ארור האדם אשר<br>יפתח את זאת | 132 × 22–27 cm                                      | ca. 700<br>BCE            | Avigad 1953;<br>Ahituv 2008:<br>44–47             |
| 2 | No. 35 Shorter<br>(Clermont-Ganneau, 1870) | חדר בכתף הצרן]   | 132 × 14 cm<br>(10–12 letter<br>original)           | ca. 700<br>BCE            | Avigad 1955;<br>Ahituv 2008:<br>47–48             |
| 3 | No. 3 (Clermont-Ganneau, 1881)             | ד/ק/רר   | 80 × 23 cm (20<br>letter original?)                 | 8th–7th<br>century<br>BCE | Ussishkin 1993:<br>241–242                        |
| 4 | No. 34<br>(Reifenberg,<br>1946)            | [ קברת. זא(?)<br>אשר יפן<br>...  | No sunken panel,<br>74 cm long<br>inscription face? | 8th–7th<br>century<br>BCE | Ussishkin 1993:<br>243–246; Ahituv<br>2008: 48–49 |

### 2.3. Amulets

Two silver amulet scrolls were discovered in the Ketef Hinnom tomb complex on the west side of the Hinnom Valley. They feature a total of 30 registers of text, containing 44 preserved or restorable words and 162 preserved and restorable letters.

**Table 3.** Silver Amulets.

|   | <b>Excavations</b>            | <b>Text</b>  | <b>Size</b>   | <b>Dating</b>      | <b>Reference</b>  |
|---|-------------------------------|--|---------------|--------------------|---|
| 1 | Barkay, Ketef<br>Hinnom, 1979 | ... יהו ...<br>...<br>גד[ל שמר]<br>הברית ו<br>[ה]חסד לאהב<br>ו[ ושמרי [מצ<br>... ותו]<br>ת הלם].<br>ה[ברכה מכל [פ]<br>ח ומהרע<br>כי בו גאל<br>ה כי יהוה<br>[מ]שיבנו [ו]<br>צור יבר<br>ך יהוה [ו]<br>י[שמרך י]<br>א[ר יהוה<br>... פנ[י] ... | 27 × 97<br>mm | 7th century<br>BCE | Yardeni 1991; Barkay et al.<br>2004: 55–61; Ahituv 2008:<br>50–53 |

|   | Excavations                | Text  | Size  | Dating             | Reference   |
|---|----------------------------|---|-------|--------------------|---|
| 2 | Barkay, Ketef Hinnom, 1979 | ה'ו ברך ה<br>[א] ליהו[ה]<br>העזר ו<br>הגער ב<br>[ר]ע יברך<br>יהוה י<br>שמרך<br>יאר יה<br>[ו]ה פניו<br>[א]ל[ך] וי<br>שם לך ש<br>[ל]ם | 11 mm | 7th century<br>BCE | Yardeni 1991; Barkay et al. 2004: 61–68; Ahituv 2008: 54–55 |

## 2.4. Seals

Thirty-five provenanced epigraphic seals have thus far been found in Jerusalem. These seals have a combined total of at least 63 text registers, comprising at least 74 words and 258 preserved and restorable letters. The seals manifest a temporal development. The earliest items were decorated but lacked writing and, therefore, are not included in the present corpus. Later, seals bore both decoration and writing. Finally, the latest seals featured writing but no decoration. When a new type of seal was introduced, the older type was not immediately eliminated but gradually declined in popularity.

**Table 4.** Seals.

|   | Excavation                             | Text               | Material                  | Dating                      | Reference                 |
|---|--|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Warren, Ophel, 1867                    | להגי ב<br>ן שבניהו | Black stone               | Late 8th–7th<br>century BCE | Keel 2017: 278,<br>No. 2  |
| 2 | Bliss and Dickie, City of David, 1897  | ישמעאל<br>נריהו    | Carnelian                 | 7th century<br>BCE          | Keel 2017: 280,<br>No. 4  |
| 3 | Kenyon, Ophel, 1961                    | להגי<br>ישאל       | Grey stone<br>(steatite?) | 700–650 BCE                 | Keel 2017: 288,<br>No. 25 |
| 4 | Kenyon, City of David, 1961–1967       | לשלמ[יהו?]<br>...  | Limestone                 | ca. 730–600<br>BCE          | Keel 2017: 290,<br>No. 28 |
| 5 |  | ...<br>...         | Artificial<br>material    | Unspecified,<br>Iron Age II | Barkay 2009:<br>103–104   |
| 6 | Mazar, Temple Mount (Ophel), 1968–1978 | ת[?]ת?             | Black hematite            | 9th century<br>BCE          | Keel 2017: 294,<br>No. 35 |

Table 4 (continued)

|    | Excavation   | Text                 | Material                  | Dating                                   | Reference                                |
|----|--|----------------------|---------------------------|--|--|
| 7  | Amiran and Eitan, Jerusalem Citadel, 1969                            | למתניהו<br>עזריהו    | Carnelian                 | 7th century<br>BCE                       | Avigad and Sass<br>1997: 127, No.<br>261 |
| 8  | Davis and Kloner, Tomb A (Mount Zion western slope), 1975            | לחמיאהל<br>בת מנחם   | Bone                      | 7th century<br>BCE                       | Kloner and<br>Yezerki 2020: 17           |
| 9  | Edelstein, Tomb B (Mount Zion western slope), 1975                   | Undeciphered         | Faience                   | Unspecified                              | Barkay 2009: 105,<br>113                 |
| 10 |  | Undeciphered         | Faience                   | Unspecified                              | Barkay 2009: 105,<br>113                 |
| 11 | Barkay, Ketef Hinnom, 1975   | יש[עיהו]<br>א[מר]יהו | Composite<br>material     | 7th–early 6th<br>century BCE             | Keel 2017: 298,<br>No. 44a               |
| 12 |  | ...<br>...           | Blue glass                | Probably<br>7th–early 6th<br>century BCE | Keel 2017: 298,<br>No. 44b               |
| 13 | Barkay, Ketef Hinnom, 1979   | פלוטה                | Brown limestone           | Late 7th–early<br>6th century<br>BCE     | Avigad and Sass<br>1997: 144, No.<br>326 |
| 14 | Shiloh, City of David, 1978–1985                                     | לאליקים<br>מכא       | Ivory                     | 8th–7th<br>century BCE                   | Shoham 2000d:<br>81                      |
| 15 | Reich and Shukron, Mamilla tombs, 1994–2002                          | לחנניה[ו]<br>בן טבש  | Limestone<br>scaraboid    | 7th century<br>BCE                       | Reich and Sass<br>2006: 313–320          |
| 16 |  | לטבשלם<br>יהוכל      | Bifacial bronze<br>plaque | Late 7th–early<br>6th century<br>BCE     | Reich and Sass<br>2006: 313–320          |
| 17 |  | ליהוהחן<br>בת פקעת   | Limestone                 | Late 7th–early<br>6th century<br>BCE     | Reich and Sass<br>2006: 313–320          |
| 18 | Reich and Shukron, City of David, 1995–2010                          | לרפאיהו<br>שלם       | Limestone                 | 7th century<br>BCE                       | Keel 2017: 410,<br>No. 290               |
| 19 |  | לשאל<br>לריהו...     | Ivory or bone             | Late 7th<br>century BCE                  | Keel 2017: 412,<br>No. 292               |
| 20 |  | למל...               | Whitish stone             | Late 7th–early<br>6th century<br>BCE     | Keel 2017: 418,<br>No. 310               |
| 21 | Temple Mount Sifting Project (Dumps from “Solomon’s Stables”), 2004– | ...<br>...           | Lapis lazuli              | Iron Age II                              | Barkay and Zweig<br>2007: 38             |



Table 4 (continued)

|    | Excavation  | Text                      | Material             | Dating                         | Reference  |
|----|---|---------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 22 | Temple Mount Sifting Project                                | ?...<br>...               | Black stone          | Iron Age II                    | Barkay and Zweig 2007: 38–39                       |
| 23 | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn, Western Wall Plaza, 2005–2010       | להגב                      | Black phosphorite    | 7th–early 6th century BCE      | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn 2019: 156                   |
| 24 |   | לנתניהו<br>בן יאש         | White limestone      | 7th–early 6th century BCE      | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn 2019: 156                   |
| 25 |   | לידעיהו<br>אושא           | Bone                 | 7th–early 6th century BCE      | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn 2019: 156                   |
| 26 |   | לנורא                     | Limestone            | 7th–early 6th century BCE      | Ornan et al. 2012: 5–8, No. 5                      |
| 27 |   | לע...<br>...              | Ivory                | 7th–early 6th century BCE      | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn 2019: 156                   |
| 28 |   | לבנ...<br>...             | Ivory                | 7th–early 6th century BCE      | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn 2019: 156                   |
| 29 |   | ...<br>בן ...             | Hippopotamus task    | Iron Age II                    | Ornan et al. 2012: 8–9, No. 6                      |
| 30 | Mazar, City of David, 2007–2008                             | שלמת                      | Black stone          | 7th century BCE                | Winderbaum 2015: 366–368                           |
| 31 | Shukron, Robinson's Arch, 2011                              | למתניהו<br>בן הון<br>בן ] | Lapis lazuli         | Late First Temple period       | Shukron 2012: 23                                   |
| 32 | Uziel et al., City of David, 2013–2020                      | למאסיה<br>ו אליקים        | Gray stone scaraboid | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Mendel-Geberovich, Chalaf, and Uziel 2020: 163–165 |
| 33 | Ben-Ami, Tchekhanovets, and Cohen, Givati Parking Lot, 2016 | לעליהנה<br>בת גאל         | Black stone          | Late 8th–early 7th century BCE | Ben-Ami and Misgav 2016: 106–108                   |
| 34 |   | לסעריהו ב<br>ן שבניהו     | Black stone          | Late 8th–early 7th century BCE | Ben-Ami and Misgav 2016: 105–106                   |
| 35 | Gadot and Shalev, Givati Parking Lot, 2018                  | לאכר בן<br>מתניהו         | Agate (chalcedony)   | Late 7th century BCE           | Mendel-Geberovich et al. 2019: 158–161             |

## 2.5. Private bullae

A total of 172 private epigraphic bullae belonging to specifically named individuals have been found in Jerusalem.<sup>4</sup> These bullae feature at least 338 registers of text, comprising at least 413 words and 1,259 preserved and restorable letters. Where available, the table below specifies the imprints on the items' rear.<sup>5</sup> Of these bullae, the majority bear papyrus impressions (n=78), followed by fabric (n=14), wood (n=8), parchment (n=4), and leather (n=2).<sup>6</sup>

**Table 5.** Private bullae.

|    | Excavation                  | Text                       | Reverse | Dating                         | Reference               |
|----|-----------------------------|----------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | Shiloh, City of David, 1982 | לבגיי ב<br>ן דליה[ן]       | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 32, B1    |
| 2  |                             | לגמריהו<br>[ב]ן שפן        | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 33, B2    |
| 3  |                             | לחנמלך<br>ישמעאל           | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 33–34, B3 |
| 4  |                             | לטבשלם<br>בן זכר           | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 34, B4    |
| 5  |                             | לטבשלם בן<br>בנזכר         | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 34–35, B5 |
| 6  |                             | [לטבשלם]<br>בן זכר<br>הרפא | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 35–36, B6 |
| 7  |                             | לאלשמע ב<br>ן סמכיה[ן]     | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 36, B7    |
| 8  |                             | למכני[הו]<br>בן חצי        | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 36, B8    |
| 9  |                             | לאפרה<br>אחיהו             | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 36–37, B9 |
| 10 |                             | לאפרה<br>[א]חיהו           | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 37, B10   |

<sup>4</sup> Many more iconographic bullae were also found in Jerusalem; together, all bullae found in the city amount to nearly four times the number cited here. We addressed this below (Section 3.6).

<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, for many bullae, no information is provided about reverse impressions. Often, this is due to bullae's fragmentary nature, as only part of their face is preserved.

<sup>6</sup> Note that the identification of the last three categories is questionable, as noted in the corpus with a question mark.

Table 5 (continued)

|    | Excavation                  | Text                      | Reverse | Dating                         | Reference                |
|----|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11 | Shiloh, City of David, 1982 | להושע[יהו]<br>[ ]יה[ ]    | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 37–38, B11 |
| 12 |                             | לידיעהו<br>בן משלם        | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 38, B12    |
| 13 |                             | לגדיהו<br>בן עור          | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 38, B13    |
| 14 |                             | לשמע[יהו]<br>מחסי[הו]     | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 38–39, B14 |
| 15 |                             | [ל]שמעיהו<br>בן יאזני[הו] | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 39, B15    |
| 16 |                             | לנתנ[יהו]<br>[ב]ן רח[ם]   | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 39–40, B16 |
| 17 |                             | לרפאיהו<br>בן אפרה        | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 40, B17    |
| 18 |                             | לאלשמע<br>בן יהואב        | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 40, B18    |
| 19 |                             | לגמריה[ו]<br>בן מגן       | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 40–41, B19 |
| 20 |                             | [ל]אלנתן<br>בן בלגי       | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 41, B20    |
| 21 |                             | לאלנתן<br>[ב]ן בלגי       | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 41, B21    |
| 22 |                             | [ ל ]<br>[ ]              | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 41–42, B22 |
| 23 |                             | לשמעיהו<br>[ב]ן פלטיהו    | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 42, B23    |
| 24 |                             | לענמ[די]ה[ו]<br>אשיהו     | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 42, B24    |
| 25 |                             | לדלי[הו] בן<br>הושעיהו    | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 42–43, B25 |
| 26 |                             | לעזיהו<br>אל[שמע]         | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 43, B26    |
| 27 |                             | לעזריהו ב<br>ן חלקיהו     | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 43, B27    |
| 28 |                             | לאחימה<br>חנניה           | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 44, B28    |
| 29 |                             | לאליקים<br>בן אוהל        | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Vainstub 2022            |

Table 5 (continued)

|    | Excavation                                  | Text                    | Reverse | Dating                         | Reference                |
|----|---|-------------------------|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 30 | Shiloh, City of David, 1982                 | לאליקם<br>בן אוהל       | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Vainstub 2022            |
| 31 |   | לבניהו ב<br>ן הושעיהו   | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 45, B31    |
| 32 |   | לעזרקם<br>מכיהו         | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 45, B32    |
| 33 |   | לברכיהו<br>בן מלכי      | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 46, B33    |
| 34 |   | לחנניה[ן]<br>בן אחא     | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 46, B34    |
| 35 |   | לסילא ב<br>ן אלשמע      | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 46–47, B35 |
| 36 |   | לנריהו<br>דמליהו        | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 47, B36    |
| 37 |   | לאחיאב<br>בן יהואב      | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 47–48, B37 |
| 38 |   | לין ]<br>בן עזריה[ן]    | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 48, B38    |
| 39 |   | לשפטיהו<br>בן צפן       | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 48, B39    |
| 40 |   | לברכינהו]<br>בן ען ]    | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 48–49, B40 |
| 41 |   | ליאזניהו<br>[בן] מעשיהו | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 49, B41    |
| 42 |   | לעזרינהו]<br>בן אחא[א]  | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 49, B42    |
| 43 |   | ליהן ]<br>בן בן ]       | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 49, B43    |
| 44 |   | לשפטיהו<br>בן דמלינהו]  | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 50, B44    |
| 45 |   | [ל]נחם בן<br>שאלה       | Papyrus | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE | Shoham 2000b: 50, B45    |
| 46 |   | [ ]<br>[ ]              | Papyrus | 8th–7th century BCE            | Brandl 2000: 65–67, B49  |
| 47 | Reich and Shukron, City of David, 1995–2010 | לראן<br>]שלמן[          |         | Late 7th century BCE           | Keel 2017: 410, No. 288  |

Table 5 (continued)

|    | Excavation  | Text                          | Reverse       | Dating                    | Reference                                     |
|----|---|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|---|
| 48 | City of David,<br>1995–2010   | [...]                         |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 410, No. 289                       |
| 49 |   | לירח[...]<br>[...]            |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 412, No. 291                       |
| 50 |   | ניהו[...]<br>יהו[...]         |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 412, No. 293                       |
| 51 |   | יריהו[...]<br>נהם             |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 412, No. 294                       |
| 52 |   | ברת[...]                      |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 414, No. 296                       |
| 53 |   | לא[...]<br>י[...]             |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 414, No. 297                       |
| 54 |   | לם[...]<br>הוקם[...]          |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 414, No. 298                       |
| 55 |   | אתהב ל<br>ח[...]              |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 414, No. 299                       |
| 56 |   | [...]<br>[...]                |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 416, No. 300                       |
| 57 |   | לפלט[...]<br>שלמ[יהו]         |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 416, No. 301                       |
| 58 |   | ל[...]<br>עש[...]             |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 416, No. 302                       |
| 59 |   | פנ[?]                         |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 416, No. 303                       |
| 60 |   | ל[...]<br>ם   פ[...]          |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 416, No. 304                       |
| 61 |   | לסעד[...]<br>אמר[...]         |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 418, No. 305                       |
| 62 |   | [...][...]<br>ב[...]          |               | Late 7th century BCE      | Keel 2017: 418, No. 306                       |
| 63 | Temple Mount Sifting Project, 2005 (Dumps from “Solomon’s Stables”) | ל[...][יהו]<br>בן[ ]אמר       | Woven textile | 7th–early 6th century BCE | Dvira and Barkay 2021                         |
| 64 | Mazar, City of David, 2005–2008                                     | [א]ח[?]ימעץ<br>ב<br>ן[א]חמעץ? | Freestanding  | 7th–6th century BCE       | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 304–305, B1 |

Table 5 (continued)

|    | Excavation                      | Text                                   | Reverse      | Dating              | Reference                                      |
|----|---------------------------------|--|--------------|---------------------|--|
| 65 | Mazar, City of David, 2005–2008 | [אחזמעץ ב<br>? ]אחמע[ען]?              | Freestanding | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 306, B2      |
| 66 |                                 | א(?)לישע<br>יאוש                       | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 306–307, B3  |
| 67 |                                 | לגדליהו<br>בן פשחור                    | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 307–308, B4  |
| 68 |                                 | ל(?)דליהו<br>[ב]ן גדליהו               | Freestanding | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 308–309, B5  |
| 69 |                                 | דשאת<br>[...]                          |              | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 309, B6      |
| 70 |                                 | [...]ש<br>חלקיהו                       | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 309–310, B7  |
| 71 |                                 | ליהוכל ב<br>ן אחמלך                    | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 310–311, B8  |
| 72 |                                 | ליהוכל ב<br>ן שלמיהו<br>בן שבי         | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 311–312, B9  |
| 73 |                                 | [י]ד(?)עיה(?)<br>ו (?)<br>[...].ל(?)די | Wood?        | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 312, B10     |
| 74 |                                 | ליתם<br>עבד המלך                       | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 312–314, B11 |
| 75 |                                 | [...]לצ<br>[ב]נ(?)לפ(?)<br>יה          | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 314, B12     |
| 76 |                                 | לנר<br>י / הו י<br>[...]<br>[...]      | Parchment    | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 315, B13     |
| 77 |                                 | לסלא בן<br>אלירמ[ה]                    | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 315–316, B14 |

Table 5 (continued)

|    | Excavation                      | Text                     | Reverse | Dating              | Reference                                      |
|----|---------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------------------|--|
| 78 | Mazar, City of David, 2005–2008 | [לסלוא(?)<br>ן אלירמ ]   | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 316–317, B15 |
| 79 |                                 | לסמכיה(?)<br>כל[...]     | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 317–318, B16 |
| 80 |                                 | [...פניהו(?)<br>[...]    |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 318, B17     |
| 81 |                                 | [...]<br>[בן(?) פסח      | Fabric  | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 318–319, B18 |
| 82 |                                 | [...טלן(?)<br>[בן(?) שבי | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 319, B19     |
| 83 |                                 | לשמעיה(?)<br>גחמ[...]    | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 319–320, B20 |
| 84 |                                 | לדי<br>[...]             |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 320, B21     |
| 85 |                                 | [...]<br>בן ה[...]       |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 321, B22     |
| 86 |                                 | [...]<br>בן י[...]       | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 321, B23     |
| 87 |                                 | [...לית]<br>[...]        | Leather | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 321–322, B24 |
| 88 |                                 | [...]<br>ל[...]          | Wood    | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 322, B25     |
| 89 |                                 | [...מ(?)ג(?)             |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 322–323, B26 |
| 90 |                                 | [...מע]<br>בן [...]      | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 323, B27     |
| 91 |                                 | [...ס(?)<br>[...]        |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 323–324, B28 |

Table 5 (continued)

|     | Excavation                      | Text   | Reverse | Dating              | Reference                                      |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|---------|---------------------|--|
| 92  | Mazar, City of David, 2005–2008 | [...]<br>[...]                                       |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 324, B29     |
| 93  |                                 | [...]<br>ו עזו[...]                                  |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 324, B30     |
| 94  |                                 | [...]<br>לעשי[...]<br>[...]                          | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 324–325, B31 |
| 95  |                                 | [...]<br>פ[...]                                      |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 325, B32     |
| 96  |                                 | [...]<br>ל(?)ש[...]<br>[...]                         | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 325, B33     |
| 97  |                                 | [...]<br>לשב(?)<br>[...]                             | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 325–326, B34 |
| 98  |                                 | [...]<br>שר(?)<br>[...]                              | Papyrus | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 326, B35     |
| 99  |                                 | [...]<br>תב[...]                                     |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 326–327, B36 |
| 100 |                                 | [...]<br>יהו ב<br>[...]<br>יהו ב<br>[...]<br>הו[...] | Wood?   | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 327, B37     |
| 101 |                                 | [...]<br>ה(?)<br>י<br>[...]                          |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 327, B38     |
| 102 |                                 | [...]<br>יהו<br>[...]                                |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 328, B39     |
| 103 |                                 | [...]<br>ה(?)<br>[...]                               | Wood?   | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 328, B40     |
| 104 |                                 | [...]<br>ה(?)<br>[...]                               |         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 328–329, B41 |



Table 5 (continued)

|     | Excavation                      | Text                   | Reverse      | Dating              | Reference                                      |
|-----|---------------------------------|------------------------|--------------|---------------------|--|
| 105 | Mazar, City of David, 2005–2008 | זב(?) [...] יהו[...]   |              | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 329, B42     |
| 106 |                                 | ה(?)י(?) [...] סס[...] | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 329, B43     |
| 107 |                                 | זב [...] יהו(?) [...]  |              | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 330, B44     |
| 108 |                                 | [...](?)ב[...]         | Parchment    | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 330, B45     |
| 109 |                                 | ד(?) [...] ב(?)ע[...]  | Wood         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 330–331, B46 |
| 110 |                                 | ה[...] צת(?)           | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 331, B47     |
| 111 |                                 | ל[...] דד(?)ע[...]     |              | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 332, B48     |
| 112 |                                 | א[...] כל[...]         | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 332, B49     |
| 113 |                                 | [...] שנס[...]         | Papyrus      | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 332–333, B50 |
| 114 |                                 | גל[...] [...]          |              | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 333, B51     |
| 115 |                                 | ס[...] ל[...]          |              | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 333, B52     |
| 116 |                                 | [...] ה[...]           | Freestanding | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 333–334, B53 |
| 117 |                                 | [...] [...]            | Leather?     | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 334, B54     |
| 118 |                                 | [...] [...]            |              | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 334, B55     |

Table 5 (continued)

|     | Excavation   | Text              | Reverse       | Dating              | Reference                                      |
|-----|--|-------------------|---------------|---------------------|--|
| 119 | Mazar, City of David, 2005–2008                            | [...]<br>[...]    |               | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 335, B56     |
| 120 |  | [...]<br>[...]    |               | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 335, B57     |
| 121 |  | [...]<br>[...]    | Freestanding? | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 335, B58     |
| 122 |  | לנאהבת            | Wood?         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 336–337, B59 |
| 123 |  | [...]ה            | Parchment     | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 338, B62     |
| 124 |  | ה(?)[...]         |               | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 338, B63     |
| 125 |  | [...]             |               | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 339, B64     |
| 126 |  | ,                 | Papyrus       | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 339, B65     |
| 127 |  | [...]             | Wood?         | 7th–6th century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 339–340, B66 |
| 128 | Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets, Givati Parking Lot, 2007–2010   | לשאלה ב<br>ן משלם |               | 7th–6th century BCE | Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets 2010: 70–71          |
| 129 | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn, Western Wall Plaza, 2008           | --<br>[...]       |               | Iron Age II         | Ornan et al. 2012: 9–10, No. 7                 |
| 130 | Shilov, Kidron Valley, 2009 (Temple Mount Sifting Project) | --<br>[...]       |               | Iron Age II         | Dvira, Zagdon, and Shilov, 2011: 84            |

Table 5 (continued)

|     | Excavation                 | Text                                      | Reverse | Dating                            | Reference  |
|-----|----------------------------|---|---------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 131 | Mazar, Ophel,<br>2009–2010 | לחזקיהו.<br>אנח<br>ז. מלך.<br>יהד[ה]      | Papyrus | ca. 703 BCE                       | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>254–256, B1  |
| 132 |                            | [ל]ירחמ<br>[א]ל   בן  <br>נחם<br>[בן   בס | Fabric  | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>258–259, B2  |
| 133 |                            | לירחמ<br>אל   בן  <br>נחם<br>בן   בס      | Fabric  | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>259, B3      |
| 134 |                            | [ל]ירחמ<br>אל   בן  <br>נחם<br>[בן   בס   | Fabric  | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>259–260, B4  |
| 135 |                            | לאחמל<br>ך   בן  <br>פל[ן]<br>בן   בס     | Fabric? | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>260–261, B5  |
| 136 |                            | [...]<br>[...]<br>ה בן בס                 |         | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>261–262, B6  |
| 137 |                            | [...]<br>[...]<br>[בן   בס                | Fabric  | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>262, B7      |
| 138 |                            | [...]<br>[...]<br>[בן   בס                |         | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>262–263, B8  |
| 139 |                            | לעדיהו<br>ישעיהו                          | Papyrus | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>263–264, B9  |
| 140 |                            | ליקמיהו<br>חלציהו                         | Fabric  | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>264–265, B10 |
| 141 |                            | לאח<br>חר                                 | Fabric  | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>265–266, B11 |
| 142 |                            | לישעיהו[ן ה]<br>[בניא]                    | Fabric  | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>266–268, B12 |

Table 5 (continued)

|     | Excavation                           | Text                          | Reverse   | Dating                            | Reference  |
|-----|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 143 | Mazar, Ophel,<br>2009–2010           | [...]<br>יהוקם                |           | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018: 268,<br>B13     |
| 144 |                                      | [...]אחא                      | Papyrus   | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018: 269,<br>B14     |
| 145 |                                      | [...]להוש[...]<br>[...]עבד    | Fabric    | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>269–270, B15 |
| 146 |                                      | [...]למלכ[...]<br>[...]       | Fabric    | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>270–271, B16 |
| 147 |                                      | [...]לשא[...]<br>[...]        | Fabric    | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018: 271,<br>B17     |
| 148 |                                      | [...]לבצ[...]<br>[...]אר[...] | Papyrus   | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018: 272,<br>B18     |
| 149 |                                      | [...]<br>מר/דא                |           | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>272–273, B19 |
| 150 |                                      | [...]הו<br>[...]ה             | Fabric    | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018: 273,<br>B20     |
| 151 |                                      | [...]ה<br>[...]י              | Parchment | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>273–274, B21 |
| 152 |                                      | [...]כ<br>[...]               |           | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018: 274,<br>B22     |
| 153 |                                      | [...]ל?<br>[...]ה             |           | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018:<br>274–275, B23 |
| 154 |                                      | [...]ש/תב[...]                | Papyrus   | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mazar and Livyatan<br>Ben-Arie 2018: 275,<br>B24     |
| 155 | Mazar, Ophel,<br>2012                | א?                            |           | ca. 900–830 BCE                   | Keel 2015: 507,<br>No. 59                            |
| 156 | Shukron,<br>Robinson's<br>Arch, 2013 | לאדניהו<br>אשר על<br>הבית     | Papyrus   | 7th–early 6th century<br>BCE      | Vanderhooft,<br>Richey, and Shukron<br>2022          |

Table 5 (continued)

|     | Excavation                                   | Text              | Reverse     | Dating                            | Reference   |
|-----|--|-------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| 157 | Uziel et al.,<br>City of David,<br>2013–2020 | אמ ]<br>[ ק ]     |             | Late 8th century BCE              | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 165, No. 1         |
| 158 |  | לעשין[הן]<br>ע[א] | Wooden box? | Late 7th century BCE              | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 165–166,<br>No. 2  |
| 159 |  | ל-א-<br>ענ-       |             | 8th–6th century BCE               | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 166–167,<br>No. 3  |
| 160 |  | לעשי[הו]<br>ע[א]  |             | 8th–6th century BCE               | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 167, No. 4         |
| 161 |  | סביב              |             | 8th–7th century BCE               | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 167–168,<br>No. 5  |
| 162 |  | חנניהו            |             | 8th–6th century BCE               | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 168, No. 6         |
| 163 |  | ל[--ריהו<br>]חמ ] |             | Late 8th–mid 7th<br>century BCE   | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 168–169,<br>No. 7  |
| 164 |  | [ ]<br>ב[ן בנה    |             | Mid-7th–early 6th<br>century BCE  | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 169–170,<br>No. 8  |
| 165 |  | לאחיאב<br>בן מנכם | Papyrus     | Late 8th–late 7th<br>century BCE  | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 170, No. 9         |
| 166 |  | ל-צ ]             |             |                                   | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 170–171,<br>No. 10 |
| 167 |  | כ/מ/נפ<br>צ[פנא   |             | Late 8th century BCE              | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf and Uziel<br>2020: 171–172,<br>No. 11  |
| 168 |  | לר ]<br>גב ]      | Papyrus     | Late 8th–early 7th<br>century BCE | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 172, No. 12        |
| 169 |  | י ]<br>מ ]        |             | 8th–6th century BCE               | Mendel-Geberovich,<br>Chalaf, and Uziel<br>2020: 172–173,<br>No. 13 |

Table 5 (continued)

|     | Excavation                                 | Text                | Reverse | Dating               | Reference                              |
|-----|--|---------------------|---------|----------------------|--|
| 170 | Gadot and Shalev, Givati Parking Lot, 2018 | לנתנמלך<br>עבד המלך | Papyrus | Late 7th century BCE | Mendel-Geberovich et al. 2019: 161–174 |
| 171 | Uziel and Chalaf, City of David, 2019      | לרפאיהו<br>בן צפניה |         | Iron Age IIB         | Vukosavović and Chalaf 2020: 37–38     |
| 172 |  | למשלם<br>מקניהו     |         | Iron Age IIB         | Vukosavović and Chalaf 2020: 38–39     |

## 2.6. Public bullae

One bulla with a title of public office rather than a private name has been discovered in Jerusalem.<sup>7</sup> It bears a single register of text and contains two words and five letters.

Table 6. Public bullae.

|   | Excavation                               | Text   | Reverse         | Dating                    | Reference                            |
|---|--|--------|-----------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Weksler-Bdoloh, Western Wall Plaza, 2016 | לשר ער | Smooth (docket) | 8th–early 6th century BCE | Ornan, Weksler-Bdoloh, and Sass 2019 |

## 2.7. Fiscal bullae

Four “fiscal bullae” have been discovered in Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> They pertain to matters of taxation or shipments and cite a year, a city, and the phrase “to the king.” These four bullae feature eight preserved registers of text, eight preserved words, and 36 preserved or restorable letters.

<sup>7</sup> Given the item’s smooth back, the *editio princeps* classified it as a docket instead of a bulla (Ornan, Weksler-Bdoloh, and Sass 2019). How such seal impressions should be categorized is debatable; Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie categorize them as “free-standing bullae” (2015: 357–358; see bullae 2.5.64–65, 2.5.68, 2.5.116, 2.5.121). For the sake of simplicity and brevity, we have elected to go with the general categorization as “bulla.”

<sup>8</sup> The *editio princeps* interpreted the fourth bulla on our list as a fragment of a two-register private bulla (Gadot, Goren, and Lipschits 2013). Later, Barkay and Deutsch (2017) redefined it as a three-register fiscal bulla. Mendel-Geberovich (2023: 124) favors the original interpretation; she considers the item’s upper lip part of the oval frame edge, thus making it a two-register bulla. We prefer the fiscal identification, believing that the upper edge element is not part of the mirrored elliptical frame and thus follow Barkay and Deutsch. Nevertheless, if this bulla were to be removed from the list of fiscal bullae, it would simply lower our total of fiscal bullae to three and increase our total of private bullae to 173.

**Table 7.** Fiscal bullae.

|   | Excavation                              | Text                         | Reverse   | Dating          | Reference                   |
|---|---|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | Shilov, Kidron Valley, 2009             | [...ב]<br>[ג]בען<br>למלך     | Papyrus   | 7th century BCE | Barkay 2015                 |
| 2 | Reich and Shukron, City of David, 2009  | בשבעת<br>[ב]יתלחם<br>[ל]מלך  | Container | 7th century BCE | Reich 2012                  |
| 3 | Shukron, Western Wall Foundations, 2012 | [<br>למלך                    |           |                 | Mendel-Geberovich 2023: 122 |
| 4 | Gadot, City of David, 2013              | [...ב]<br>[א]לת[קן<br>[ל]מלך |           | 7th century BCE | Barkay and Deutsch 2017     |

## 2.8. Private jar-handle seal impressions

Seventeen private jar-handle seal impressions are known from excavations in Jerusalem. They have a combined total of at least 31 registers of text consisting of at least 33 words and 125 preserved and restorable letters. Paleomagnetic research has contributed considerably to the dating of these seal impressions, demonstrating that they and the *lmlk* seal impressions (below) first appeared as early as ca. 760 BCE. This is a much earlier date than previously suggested, associating them with Assyrian activities (Ben-Yosef et al. 2017; Vaknin et al. 2022).

**Table 8.** Private jar handle seal impressions.

|   | Excavation                             | Text              | Dating              | Reference                 |
|---|--|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | Kenyon, Jerusalem, 1961–1967           | ליהוהיל<br>שחר    |                     | Vaughn 1999: 202, No. 44  |
| 2 |  | כרמי<br>יפיהו     |                     | Vaughn 1999: 203, No. 55  |
| 3 |  | Illegible         | 8th century BCE     | Vaughn 1999: 217, No. 240 |
| 4 | Mazar, Temple Mount (Ophel), 1968–1978 | הושעם<br>הגי      | 8th century BCE     | Nadelman 1989: 130        |
| 5 |  | לנחם<br>חצליהו    | 8th century BCE     | Nadelman 1989: 131        |
| 6 | Mazar, Temple Mount (Ophel), 1976      | לחנה ב<br>ת עזריה | ca. 7th century BCE | Nadelman 1989: 131        |

Table 8 (continued)

|    | Excavation                           | Text                   | Dating          | Reference  |
|----|--------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------|--|
| 7  | Avigad, Jewish Quarter, 1969–1982    | לנרא<br>שבנא           | 8th century BCE | Avigad and Barkay 2000: 247–248, No. 51                      |
| 8  |                                      | לנרי ב<br>ן שבניו      | 8th century BCE | Avigad and Barkay 2000: 248–249, No. 54                      |
| 9  |                                      | לצפן. א<br>במעץ        | 8th century BCE | Avigad and Barkay 2000: 249, No. 52                          |
| 10 |                                      | למנחם<br>יובנה         | 8th century BCE | Avigad and Barkay 2000: 249–250, No. 53                      |
| 11 |                                      | Illegible              | 8th century BCE | Avigad and Barkay 2000: 250, No. 55                          |
| 12 | Broshi, Western City Wall, 1972–1973 | Illegible              | 8th century BCE | Vaughn 1999: 217, No. 239                                    |
| 13 | Shiloh, City of David, 1978–1985     | ל[חשי<br>אלשמ[ע]       | 8th century BCE | Shoham 2000d: 82, P2   |
| 14 |                                      | ל[שלם<br>א[חא]         | 8th century BCE | Shoham 2000d: 82–83, P3                                      |
| 15 |                                      | ל[סמכי]<br>צפניהו      | 8th century BCE | Shoham 2000d: 83, P4; Avigad and Sass 1997: 253–254, No. 689 |
| 16 |                                      | [...] ב(?)<br>ן ר(?) א | 8th century BCE | Shoham 2000d 83, P5; Vaughn 1999: 216                        |
| 17 | Mazar, Ophel, 2009                   | מנחם<br>יבנה           | 8th century BCE | Mazar 2018: 182–183  |

## 2.9. *Lmlk* seal impressions

A total of ca. 340 *lmlk* (“to the king”) seal impressions have been found in Jerusalem. The names of the four city locations associated with these inscriptions are indicated wherever possible. Altogether, 112 impressions are identifiable by city, 40 of which are Hebron, 24 *mmšt*, 15 Socoh, and 33 Ziph (for *mmšt*, see Vainstub 2024).

Table 9. *Lmlk* seal impressions.

|   | Excavation                             | Quantity | City cited                               | Reference  |
|---|--|----------|--|--|
| 1 | Warren, Ophel, 1869                    | 8        | 2 × <i>mmšt</i><br>1 × Socoh<br>1 × Ziph | Vaughn 1999: 186, A;<br>Clermont-Ganneau 1883: 129–132 |
| 2 | Clermont-Ganneau, Jerusalem, 1873–1874 | 1        | 1 × Hebron                               | Vaughn 1999: 186, B                                    |



Table 9 (continued)

|    | Excavation   | Quantity | City cited                                       | Reference                       |
|----|--|----------|--|---------------------------------|
| 3  | Parker, Jerusalem, 1909–1911                         | 6        | 1 × mmšt   | Vaughn 1999: 186, C             |
| 4  | Weill, City of David, 1913–1914                      | 1        | 1 × Hebron                                       | Vaughn 1999: 186, D             |
| 5  | Macalister and Duncan, City of David, 1923–1925      | 8+       | 3 × Hebron<br>3 × mmšt<br>1 × Socoh              | Vaughn 1999: 187, E             |
| 6  | Crowfoot and Fitzgerald, Tyropoeon Valley, 1927      | 1        | 1 × Hebron                                       | Vaughn 1999: 187, F             |
| 7  | Johns, Jerusalem Citadel, 1934                       | 1        | 1 × mmšt   | Vaughn 1999: 187, G             |
| 8  | Kenyon, City of David, 1961–1967                     | 107      | 3 × Hebron<br>2 × mmšt<br>1 × Socoh<br>4 × Ziph  | Vaughn 1999: 187, H             |
| 9  | Mazar and Mazar, Temple Mount (Ophel), 1968–1987     | 21       | 3 × Hebron<br>4 × Socoh<br>9 × Ziph              | Nadelman 1989: 131–139          |
| 10 | Avigad, Jewish Quarter, 1969–1982                    | 42       | 8 × Hebron<br>7 × Ziph<br>7 × mmšt<br>1 × Socoh  | Avigad and Barkay 2000: 251–252 |
| 11 | Bahat and Broshi, Armenian Garden, 1970–1971         | 11       |  | Vaughn 1999: 188, M;<br>189, R  |
| 12 | Lux and Vriezen, Redeemer Church, 1970–1974          | 3        | 1 × mmšt<br>1 × Socoh                            | Vaughn 1999: 187, I             |
| 13 | Broshi, Western City Wall, 1972–1973                 | 19       |  | Vaughn 1999: 188, K             |
| 14 | Ben-Arieh and Netzer, Third Wall, 1972–1974          | 1        |  | Vaughn 1999: 188, J             |
| 15 | Broshi, House of Caiaphas, 1973                      | 1        |  | Vaughn 1999: 189, S             |
| 16 | Davis and Kloner, Mount Zion, 1975                   | 1        |  | Vaughn 1999: 189, P             |
| 17 | Pixner, Chen and Margalit, Essene Quarter, 1977–1979 | 1        |  | Vaughn 1999: 189, Q             |
| 18 | Shiloh, City of David, 1978–1985                     | 46       | 13 × Hebron<br>4 × mmšt<br>1 × Socoh<br>9 × Ziph | Shoham 2000c: 75                |
| 19 | Maeir and Bahat, Russian Compound, 1989              | 1        | 1 × Socoh  | Vaughn 1999: 189, T             |
| 20 | David's Citadel                                      | 1        |  | Vaughn 1999: 189, U             |

Table 9 (continued)

|    | Excavation   | Quantity | City cited  | Reference   |
|----|--|----------|---|---|
| 21 | Reich and Shukron, City of David, 1995–2010        | 4        | 2 × Hebron<br>1 × Ziph                              | Mendel-Geberovich and Bocher 2021: 512–513                |
| 22 | Re'em, Qishle Compound, 2000–2001                  | 8        | 1 × Hebron<br>2 × mmšt<br>2 × Ziph                  | Kletter 2018: 212–213                                     |
| 23 | Temple Mount Sifting Project, 2004–                | 1        |   | Barkay and Dvira 2012: 70–71                              |
| 24 | Solimany, Mamilla Pool, 2005–2006                  | 3        | 1 × Hebron<br>1 × mmšt                              | Amit 2019: 145  |
| 25 | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn, Western Wall, 2005–2009    | 11       | 1 × Hebron<br>2 × Socoh                             | Weksler-Bdolah et al. 2012<br>Lipschits 2021: 41          |
| 26 | Arbel, Mount Zion, 2007–2009                       | 3+       |   | Arbel 2009: 425   |
| 27 | Mazar, Ophel, 2009–2013                            | 8        | 2 × Hebron<br>2 × Socoh                             | Mazar 2018: 182<br>Mazar and Lang 2018: 209–210, 214, 216 |
| 28 | Szanton and Uziel, Area C (City of David), 2013    | 12       |   | Lipschits 2021: 41  |
| 29 | Chalaf and Uziel Area U (City of David), 2018–2020 | 9        |   | Lipschits 2021: 41  |
|    | Totals   | 340      | 40 × Hebron<br>24 × mmšt<br>15 × Socoh<br>33 × Ziph |   |

## 2.10. Ostraca

Twenty-two ostraca have been found in Jerusalem. They include 68 text registers with at least 120 identifiable words (excluding visible but illegible lines) and 360 preserved and restorable letters (excluding digits).

Table 10. Ostraca.

|   | Excavation   | Text  | Add. Details  | Dating                                       | Reference   |
|---|--|---|---|--|---|
| 1 | Macalister and Duncan, Ophel (City of David), 1924 | ח[ז]קיהו בן קראה בשדה<br>ש[ר] [?] בקיהו<br>אחיהו בן השרק בעמק ידת<br>[ג]מר[י]הו בנקדי בעמק ידת<br>[שר] [?] [י]ה[ו] לעתל...<br>אוריה [ו] ו | Administrative, personal name list (first four and last lines separated by three illegible registers) | Very late<br>7th–early<br>6th century<br>BCE | Ahituv 2008: 32–34;<br>Faigenbaum-Golovin et al. 2015 |

Table 10 (continued)

|   | Excavation                              | Text   | Add. Details  | Dating                                   | Reference   |
|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| 2 | Kenyon, Ophel, 1961                     | ש[דה ]<br>ה.ם. והנה רן<br>ד.ם. לע.ם. לכרן<br>ם. העזב. ה]<br>ה. וערו. על ]<br>שדה. ון<br>את. נבל ]<br>צא]<br>נבל]             |   | Late 7th–<br>early 6th<br>century<br>BCE | Lemaire 1978:<br>156–158,<br>No. 1; Aḥituv<br>2008: 34–35 |
| 3 | Kenyon, Ophel, 1964                     | 57 שמנם<br>4 שברם  | Hieratic numerals   | Late 8th<br>century<br>BCE               | Lemaire 1978:<br>158–159,<br>No. 2; Aḥituv<br>2008: 36    |
| 4 |   | 200<br>מנו. 18<br>לעשר   | Hieratic<br>numerals, tithe<br>document?  | Late 8th<br>century<br>BCE               | Lemaire 1978:<br>159–160,<br>No. 3; Aḥituv<br>2008: 37    |
| 5 |   | [ שמנם.<br>[ שמנם.<br>[ שמנם<br>5 שמנם<br>8<br>גת. פרה   | Hieratic<br>numerals,<br>double-sided<br>(last line on the<br>sherd's reverse). | Late 8th<br>century<br>BCE               | Lemaire 1978:<br>160, No. 4;<br>Aḥituv 2008:<br>37–38     |
| 6 | Avigad, Jewish<br>Quarter,<br>1969–1982 | [בך על]  |   | 6th century<br>BCE                       | Eshel 2006a:<br>301, IN 1                                 |
| 7 |   | [יהו. אבר[יהו<br>ב]ן מכיהו בן ]<br>[<br>אל [קנארץ<br>[ ]   | Includes “Creator<br>of Earth” epithet<br>(Gen 14:19, 22)                       | Late 8th–<br>early 7th<br>century<br>BCE | Eshel 2006b:<br>389–390,<br>IN. 1; Aḥituv<br>2008: 40–42  |
| 8 |   | [ פתרי   |   | 7th century<br>BCE                       | Eshel 2006b:<br>391, INS 3                                |
| 9 |   | [רח. שלו[...אלן]<br>[ן. ולבקר ]<br>[אל בקי. בית ]<br>[חב. ול[...לא]<br>[ מס. [... לבקר ]<br>[ ]<br>[צה והגת. ]<br>[ ח. משא ] | Brown ink,<br>double-sided<br>(last two lines<br>on the sherd's<br>reverse)     | Early 6th<br>century<br>BCE              | Eshel 2006b:<br>392–394,<br>IN. 7; Aḥituv<br>2008: 42–44  |

Table 10 (continued)

|    | Excavation                          | Text   | Add. Details  | Dating                          | Reference                                 |
|----|-------------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------|---|
| 10 | Shiloh, City of David, 1978–1985    | ס.בן.אחיאל.הסרט.סחבת.].<br>י[הו.בן.חסדיהו.הכנס.<br>כס[.ף].<br>י[הו.בן.י[דעיהו.הכנס]. | Name list with descriptions   | 7th century BCE (Stratum 10C-B) | Naveh 2000: 2–3, IN 2; Aḥituv 2008: 26–27 |
| 11 |                                     | לבנן<br>דעואנל<br>אחיקנס<br>אחיאל<br>קרבאנור   | Name list   | Not given (Stratum 10B)         | Naveh 2000: 3, IN 3; Aḥituv 2008: 28      |
| 12 |                                     | ל – אשת.].<br>ל – אשת.].<br>ל – אשת.].<br>ל – חש[ביהו?<br>נ – [ ]                    | Name list with quantities of wheat/barley (symbol ל), female recipients | Not given (Stratum 9)           | Naveh 2000: 3–4, IN 4; Aḥituv 2008: 28–29 |
| 13 |                                     | [ ]<br>[ ]   | Two lines of illegible writing  | Not given (Stratum 10C-B)       | Naveh 2000: 4, IN 5                       |
| 14 |                                     | לבת.יעמא ט   | Jar shoulder, female owner  | Not given (Stratum 10)          | Naveh 2000: 4–5, IN 6                     |
| 15 |                                     | עמסיהו[  |   | Not given (Stratum 10B)         | Naveh 2000: 5–6, IN 7                     |
| 16 |                                     | ה/ה  |   | Not given (Stratum 10B)         | Shoham 2000a: 22, IP 25                   |
| 17 |                                     | --   | Red ink, two illegible letters  | Not given (Stratum 7)           | Shoham 2000a: 22, IP 26                   |
| 18 | Temple Mount Sifting Project, 2004– | מ  |   |                                 | Barkay and Zweig 2005: 6, 20              |
| 19 | Mazar, Ophel, 2009–2013             | ג[ל]בלפ[...]   | Possible digits at the end of the line                                  | Iron Age IIB                    | Misgav 2018: 243–244, No. 2               |
| 20 |                                     | בר[כיהו  |   | Iron Age IIB                    | Misgav 2018: 244, No. 3                   |
| 21 |                                     | משמ/נ/פ  |   | Iron Age IIB                    | Misgav 2018: 244, No. 4                   |
| 22 |                                     | אנה.ח. בן  |   | Iron Age IIB                    | Misgav 2018: 244, No. 5                   |

## 2.11. Pre-fired inscriptions

Ten pre-fired inscriptions on vessel walls have been found in Jerusalem. They amount to 12 registers of text, 19 preserved words, and 46 preserved letters.

**Table 11.** Pre-fired inscriptions.

|    | Excavation                             | Text                  | Medium/<br>Details                                | Dating                         | Reference                      |
|----|--|-----------------------|---|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1  | Kenyon, Ophel, 1966                    | נקם   גדל             | Jar handle  | 7th century BCE                | Prignaud 1970: 50–59, I.       |
| 2  | Mazar, Temple Mount (Ophel), 1968–1978 | יהו [...]             | Cooking pot shoulder                              | Late 7th century BCE           | Nadelman 1989: 130             |
| 3  | Avigad, Jewish Quarter, 1969–1982      | אהגדן<br>רע ח(?)      | Jar body sherd                                    | First Temple period            | Eshel 2006b: 391, INS 4        |
| 4  | Shiloh, City of David, 1978–1985       | נהם                   | Jar handle  | Not given (Stratum 12)         | Naveh 2000: 7, IN 11           |
| 5  |  | נהם                   | Jar handle  | Not given (unstratified)       | Naveh 2000: 7, IN 12           |
| 6  |  | גר-                   | Bowl rim  | Not given (Stratum 12)         | Naveh 2000: 7, IN 13           |
| 7  |  | ם<br>אס               | Body sherd  | Not given (Stratum 12)         | Naveh 2000: 7–8, IN 14         |
| 8  | Mazar, Ophel, 2009–2013                | לק                    | Body sherd  | Late 8th–early 7th century BCE | Misgav 2018: 243, No. 1        |
| 9  |  | ]šy ldn h<br>]n       | Pithos rim, South Arabian (single line, two part) | Iron Age IIA                   | Vainstub 2023; Kleiman 2021    |
| 10 | Uziel and Szanton, City of David, 2013 | ן ד/יהו בן<br>] בנה ] | Open bowl rim                                     | 7th century BCE                | Uziel, Eshel, and Szanton 2015 |

## 2.12. Post-fired inscriptions

Sixty-seven post-fired (chiseled or incised) inscriptions have been uncovered in Jerusalem.<sup>9</sup> They feature a combined total of 68 registers of text, containing 74 preserved words and 172 preserved and restorable letters (excluding digits).

<sup>9</sup> Note that one inscription's attribution to this list (No. 60) is questionable, for we cannot exclude the possibility that it was applied before firing. We nevertheless include it on probabilistic grounds. If proven otherwise, it would simply lower our post-fired count of inscriptions to 66 and increase our pre-fired count to 11.

**Table 12.** Post-fired inscriptions.

|    | Excavation  | Text                  | Medium/<br>Details      | Dating                            | Reference                        |
|----|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1  | Kenyon, de Vaux, and Tushingham, Armenian Garden, 1961–1967 | ח                     | Sherd                   | 8th century BCE                   | Lemaire 1985: 251, A             |
| 2  |   | לשן                   | Sherd                   | 8th century BCE?                  | Lemaire 1985: 251 (Note, A.D.T.) |
| 3  |   | כ                     | Cooking jar rim         | Late 7th century BCE (or earlier) | Tushingham 1985: 21              |
| 4  | Kenyon, Ophel, 1966   | לישמעאל               | Body sherd              | Late 8th–early 7th century BCE    | Prignaud 1970: 59–67, No. 2      |
| 5  | Kenyon, Cave I (Ophel), 1967                                | צפן.                  | Juglet body sherd       | ca. 700 BCE                       | Prignaud 1978: 136, No. 127      |
| 6  |   | שבעת                  | Juglet body sherd       | ca. 700 BCE                       | Prignaud 1978: 136–137, No. 757  |
| 7  |   | לאליהו                | Complete juglet         | ca. 700 BCE                       | Prignaud 1978: 137–139, No. 213  |
| 8  |   | ל[א]שא[...]<br>ק/ש(?) | Storage vessel shoulder | ca. 700 BCE                       | Prignaud 1978: 139, No. 175      |
| 9  |   | חב                    | Storage vessel shoulder | ca. 700 BCE                       | Prignaud 1978: 143, No. 1097     |
| 10 |   | ל                     | Storage vessel shoulder | ca. 700 BCE                       | Prignaud 1978: 143, No. 1199     |
| 11 |   | ל[...]<br>גה          | Body sherds             | ca. 700 BCE                       | Prignaud 1978: 143, No. 1099     |
| 12 |   | לזפנן                 | Body sherd              | ca. 700 BCE                       | Prignaud 1978: 143, No. 1098     |
| 13 | Mazar, Temple Mount (Ophel), 1968–1978                      | לישעיהו               | Storage jar shoulder    | Late 8th–early 7th century BCE    | Nadelman 1989: 129               |
| 14 |   | לאש[...]              | Decanter                | Late 8th century BCE              | Nadelman 1989: 129–130           |
| 15 |   | ל[...]<br>ה[...]      | Jug fragment            | Late 7th–early 6th century BCE    | Nadelman 1989: 130               |
| 16 |   | ל[?].                 | Bowl fragment           | Late 8th–7th century BCE          | Nadelman 1989: 130               |
| 17 |   | א                     | Jar fragment            | 7th century BCE                   | Nadelman 1989: 130               |

Table 12 (continued)

|    | Excavation                        | Text       | Medium/<br>Details                                | Dating                    | Reference                   |
|----|-----------------------------------|------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 18 | Avigad, Jewish Quarter, 1969–1982 | אָו?       | Jar body sherd                                    | 8th–6th century BCE       | Barkay 2003: 54, B4         |
| 19 |                                   | יְהוֹהָנָן | Rim and shoulder of storage jar                   | 8th–6th century BCE       | Barkay 2003: 55, B5         |
| 20 |                                   | ל 20       | Jar body sherd, hieratic numeral                  | First Temple period       | Eshel 2006b: 390–391, INS 2 |
| 21 |                                   | דן<br>מן   | Jar body sherd                                    | First Temple period       | Eshel 2006b: 391–392, INS 5 |
| 22 |                                   | הָהָ       | Jar body sherd                                    | First Temple period       | Eshel 2006b: 392, INS 6     |
| 23 | Shiloh, City of David, 1978–1985  | למחמם 7?   | Jar shoulder, hieratic numeral and unknown symbol | Not given (Stratum 11)    | Naveh 2000: 6, IN 8         |
| 24 |                                   | לשמען      | Jar shoulder                                      | Not given (Stratum 12)    | Naveh 2000: 6, IN 9         |
| 25 |                                   | ליתם       | Inner face of sherd                               | Not given (Stratum 7)     | Naveh 2000: 7, IN 10        |
| 26 |                                   | בשלן       | Jug shoulder                                      | Not given (Stratum 10)    | Shoham 2000a: 17, IP 1      |
| 27 |                                   | לעבן       | Storage jar fragment                              | Not given (Stratum 12)    | Shoham 2000a: 17–18, IP 3   |
| 28 |                                   | הוהוה      | Storage jar fragment                              | Not given (Stratum 12)    | Shoham 2000a: 18, IP 4      |
| 29 |                                   | לטן        | Storage jar fragment                              | Not given (Stratum 12)    | Shoham 2000a: 18, IP 5      |
| 30 |                                   | לשבן       | Storage jar fragment                              | Not given (Stratum 11)    | Shoham 2000a: 18, IP 6      |
| 31 |                                   | לאן        | Krater interior                                   | Not given (Stratum 10C)   | Shoham 2000a: 18–19, IP 7   |
| 32 |                                   | להדן       | Lagynos shoulder                                  | Not given (Stratum 6)     | Shoham 2000a: 19, IP 8      |
| 33 |                                   | ל--        | Storage jar shoulder                              | Not given (Stratum 10C)   | Shoham 2000a: 19, IP 9      |
| 34 |                                   | לאן        | Storage jar shoulder                              | Not given (Stratum 12)    | Shoham 2000a: 19, IP 10     |
| 35 |                                   | להל        | Bowl interior                                     | Not given (Stratum 11–10) | Shoham 2000a: 19, IP 11     |

Table 12 (continued)

|    | Excavation                   | Text   | Medium/<br>Details                              | Dating                          | Reference                     |
|----|------------------------------|--------|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 36 | Jewish Quarter,<br>1969–1982 | אָל    | Krater interior                                 | Not given (Stratum<br>12)       | Shoham 2000a:<br>19–20, IP 12 |
| 37 |                              | ןן     | Bowl interior                                   | Not given (Stratum<br>11)       | Shoham 2000a: 20,<br>IP 13    |
| 38 |                              | ן-ל(?) | Lagynos<br>shoulder                             | Not given (Stratum<br>11)       | Shoham 2000a: 20,<br>IP 14    |
| 39 |                              | ב-?    |   | Not given (Stratum<br>11)       | Shoham 2000a: 20,<br>IP 15    |
| 40 |                              | ן-?    | Bowl interior                                   | Not given (Stratum<br>8–7?)     | Shoham 2000a: 20,<br>IP 16    |
| 41 |                              | ן(?)   | Storage jar<br>fragment                         | Not given (Stratum<br>14? –10C) | Shoham 2000a: 20,<br>IP 17    |
| 42 |                              | ן      | Jug fragment                                    | Not given (Stratum<br>12)       | Shoham 2000a: 21,<br>IP 18    |
| 43 |                              | ן      | Storage jar or<br>jug fragment                  | Not given (Stratum<br>7)        | Shoham 2000a: 21,<br>IP 19    |
| 44 |                              | ן      | Jug fragment                                    | Not given (Stratum<br>10C)      | Shoham 2000a: 21,<br>IP 20    |
| 45 |                              | ן.ל    | Bowl exterior                                   | Not given<br>(unstratified)     | Shoham 2000a:<br>21–22, IP 22 |
| 46 |                              | ען     | Storage jar<br>fragment                         | Not given (Stratum<br>12)       | Shoham 2000a: 22,<br>IP 23    |
| 47 |                              | ן      | Storage jar<br>shoulder                         | Not given (Stratum<br>12)       | Shoham 2000a: 22,<br>IP 24    |
| 48 |                              | ב      | Body sherd                                      | Not given (Stratum<br>10C)      | Shoham 2000a: 22,<br>IP 27    |
| 49 |                              | --     | Storage jar<br>fragment                         | Not given (Stratum<br>12)       | Shoham 2000a: 22,<br>IP 28    |
| 50 |                              | א(?)   | Storage jar or<br>jug neck                      | Not given (Stratum<br>12)       | Shoham 2000a:<br>22–23, IP 29 |
| 51 |                              | ע-     | Bowl exterior                                   | Not given (Stratum<br>11)       | Shoham 2000a: 23,<br>IP 30    |
| 52 |                              | פ(?)   | Krater interior                                 | Not given (Stratum<br>10)       | Shoham 2000a: 23,<br>IP 31    |
| 53 |                              | ג-     | Storage jar<br>fragment,<br>numeric<br>symbols? | Not given (Stratum<br>6)        | Shoham 2000a: 23,<br>IP 32    |
| 54 |                              | ג      | Storage jar or<br>jug shoulder                  | Not given (Stratum<br>12)       | Shoham 2000a: 23,<br>IP 33    |



Table 12 (continued)

|    | Excavation  | Text                 | Medium/<br>Details                                      | Dating                    | Reference                                  |
|----|---|----------------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| 55 | Avigad, Jewish Quarter, 1969–1982                     | <i>h(?) / hll(?)</i> | Cooking pot sherd, South Arabian script                 | 9th century BCE?          | Höfner 2000: 26, IP 46                     |
| 56 |   | <i>hly(?)</i>        | Body sherd, South Arabian script                        | Not given (Stratum 10)    | Höfner 2000: 26–27, IP 47                  |
| 57 |   | <i>dd(?) / q(?)</i>  | Closed vessel sherd with a handle, South Arabian script | Not given (unstratified)  | Höfner 2000: 27, IP 48                     |
| 58 |   | <i>bg(?)</i>         | Cooking pot shoulder, South Arabian script?             | Not given (Stratum 10C-B) | Höfner 2000: 27, IP 49                     |
| 59 | Mazar and Mazar, Ophel, 1986–1987                     | לשדה או ...          | Pithos shoulder   | 7th–early 6th century BCE | Nadelman 1989: 128; Vainstub 2022: 125–127 |
| 60 | Reich and Shukron, City of David, 1995–2010           | י                    | Body sherd, unclear if incised post- or pre-firing      |                           | Mendel-Geberovich 2021: 563a               |
| 61 |   | י                    | Body sherd  |                           | Mendel-Geberovich 2021: 563b               |
| 62 | Temple Mount Sifting Project, 2004–                   | הע                   | Body sherd  | Late Iron Age             | Barkay and Zweig 2005: 6, 20               |
| 63 | Weksler-Bdolah and Onn, Western Wall Plaza, 2005–2009 | נקם. הן              | Handle  | 7th century BCE           | Vainstub 2012: 2–5, No. 1                  |
| 64 |   | יהו הן               | Body sherd  | 8th century BCE           | Vainstub 2012: 5–6, No. 2                  |
| 65 |   | רי                   | Handle  | 7th century BCE           | Vainstub 2012: 6, No. 3                    |
| 66 | Beeri and Zilberbod, Ras al'Amud, 2009                | ל(?) מ ונחם          | Handle  | 8th–7th century BCE       | Beeri and Zilberbod 2011: 77               |
| 67 | Uziel, Shukron and Szanton, City of David, 2012–2013  | יהו פדה משרע         | Storage jar fragment                                    | 8th century BCE           | Eshel, Szanton and Uziel 2018              |

### 2.13. Stone vessels

A single Iron Age II inscription on a stone vessel has been found in Jerusalem. It bears a single register of text with two words and two preserved letters.

**Table 13.** Stone vessels.

|   | Excavation                             | Item       | Text  | Details | Dating           | Reference               |
|---|--|------------|-------|---------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 | Mazar, Temple Mount (Ophel), 1968–1978 | Stone bowl | ]א ב[ | Incised | 7th century BCE? | Mazar 1971: 28, Pl. XXb |

### 2.14. Stone objects

A sizeable, unusual stone object was discovered during Shiloh’s excavations in the City of David. The purpose of this item (and thus its categorization) is somewhat difficult to ascertain.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, the inscription bears one clear, primary register of text (though part of it is repeated at an angle), containing four words made up of 17 letters.

**Table 14.** Stone objects.

|   | Excavation                       | Item                      | Text                                     | Details    | Dating          | Reference            |
|---|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Shiloh, City of David, 1978–1985 | Weight? Scribal exercise? | לבִּלְטָה לִבְלִטָּה לִי<br>  לִיעֵלִי . | 38 × 14 cm | 8th century BCE | Naveh 2000: 8, IN 15 |

## 3. Summarizing the Data

### 3.1. Totals and limitations

Altogether, our corpus comprises 680 Iron Age II (or First Temple-period) inscriptions. Still, it is important to emphasize once again that this is a minimum count. As stated above, we excluded the numerous inscribed stone weights, the hundreds of “potters’ marks,” and other single-character inscriptions.<sup>11</sup> Shoham (2000e: 109) recorded 304 incised handles of this type in Shiloh’s City of David

<sup>10</sup> Initially, it was described as an ashlar bearing two personal names (לִפְלִטָּה לִסְעִילִי) found with other ashlars in the debris of the “House of Ahiel,” implying that it could have been part of a monumental inscription (Shiloh 1984: 18). A subsequent study of the item revised the translation and identification, suggesting that it be identified as a stone weight (Naveh 2000: 8). More recently, it has been suggested that it may represent a form of scribal or student exercise, as an item “that definitely is the work of two hands. ... [I]t is plausible to suggest, albeit with caution, that it is a product of scribal education” (Rollston 2010: 119).

<sup>11</sup> Many of these single-character inscriptions consist of x, +, n, or v symbols and jar handles bearing a e or p, the latter suggested as signifying *korban* (Maier 2010).

excavations alone, and Vainstub (2012: 11) noted around 100 potters' marks and other similar signs from Weksler-Bdolah and Onn's 2005–2009 Western Wall Plaza excavations. Similar large quantities have been found in many of the other Jerusalem excavations. These could justifiably be added to the above totals, and we hope that a later version of this corpus will do just that, raising the number of Iron Age II inscriptions from Jerusalem well into the thousands.

These totals by themselves highlight the administrative significance of First Temple-period Jerusalem. But our purview is still extremely limited. As mentioned, we have geographically restricted this corpus to Jerusalem itself. As a result, several nearby First Temple-period administrative buildings, the function of which was directly connected to Jerusalem, remained outside our compilation. One such example is Ramat Raḥel, a site that produced 224 *lmlk* and 19 private seal impressions (Lipschits 2021), as well as two inscribed seals (Garfinkel and Mendel-Geberovich 2020: 156). Another administrative compound is situated at nearby Arnona, where recent excavations have produced a trove of 124 *lmlk* impressions and 17 private jar-handle seal impressions (Sapir et al. 2023: 1). First Temple-period Jerusalem, the administrative capital of the Kingdom of Judah, was not an isolated center, as outside its walls were subsidiary administrative support structures, which should be considered jointly when assessing the capital's significance and strength.

Below, we review our results for the main inscription types and make some broader observations.

### 3.2. Monumental inscriptions

No other site in Judah produced monumental inscriptions (Garfinkel and Mendel-Geberovich 2020: 167–168). In Jerusalem, we have evidence of four and a possible fifth discovered in 1972 during Mazar's Temple Mount (Ophel) excavations (1968–1978). This two-line paleo-Hebrew inscription on a fragmentary polished marble plaque (10 × 9.5 × 2.5 cm, letters 3 cm) reads as follows (Renz and Röllig 1995: 189),

]ר[ .בן. א  
?ר[ א]ד/מב?

The inscription's date is uncertain. Mazar initially preferred a Second Temple-period date (Mazar 1972: 90), Ben-Dov proposed that it be assigned to the First Temple period (Ben-Dov 1986: 6), and Renz placed it in his list of 8th-century BCE inscriptions (Renz and Röllig 1995: 189). Given the uncertainty concerning this particular object, we only mention it in passing.

The relative abundance of monumental inscriptions in Jerusalem—at least four and possibly as many as six, depending on how one interprets Stone Object 2.14.1—also stands in sharp contrast to northern Israelite kingdom, where only one fragment is known from Samaria (Ahituv 2008: 257).

### **3.3. Funerary inscriptions**

What could justifiably be classed as four additional “monumental” inscriptions in their own right are the four sizeable (or, once-sizeable) First Temple-period funerary inscriptions from Jerusalem. The most famous (and most complete) of the four is the Tomb of the Royal Steward Inscription (Item 2.2.1) housed in the British Museum in London (together with Item 2.2.2). Although the name was almost entirely effaced, this inscription, which features the title of “royal steward” (אשר על הבית) and an associated curse, has long been recognized for its link to Isa 22:15–19 and “is seemingly the tomb of Shebna” (Franklin 2003: 1). Franklin notes that “Judahite burials are ... numerous in comparison to the burials found in the Northern Kingdom of Israel” (Franklin 2003: 1–2). While she identified a royal Iron Age necropolis in Samaria, the capital of the Israelite Northern Kingdom, funerary inscriptions are notably absent.

### **3.4. Amulets**

Of the epigraphic finds from Jerusalem, arguably the most significant are the silver Ketef Hinnom scrolls. They contain the earliest portions of biblical text ever discovered: Ketef Hinnom I contains a text identical to Num 6:24–25 and Deut 7:9, while Ketef Hinnom II features the text of Num 6:24–26. Barkay submits that these silver scrolls may have fulfilled a talismanic function, comparable to phylactery Torah text excerpts (Barkay et al. 2004: 41–71).

### **3.5. Seals**

Seals are another consequential item, attesting to individual wealth as well as administration. To appreciate the significance of the Jerusalem seal assemblage, it is worth recalling Reich and Sass’s (2006: 318) nearly 20-year-old summary: “Jerusalem, with nine seals, is the site with the largest number of seals found in excavations, whether inscribed with Hebrew or another language. This phenomenon coincides with the fact that in Iron Age II, Jerusalem was the capital city of Judah, the seat of the royal court and the Temple of Yahweh, and the seat of all institutions with extensive enough administrative needs to require the use of inscribed personal seals.”

If nine seals were cause enough to exalt Jerusalem's administrative importance over and above other regional sites, this is almost quadruply so today, when our current total amounts to 35. Since excavations in Judah as a whole have produced ca. 55 seals in total (see Garfinkel and Mendel-Geberovich 2020: 166), it follows that the seals from Jerusalem comprise two-thirds of the entire Judahite corpus, followed far behind by Arad (n=5) and Lachish (n=4).

As aptly summarized by Ornan et al. (2012: 10\*), "The number of seals and bullae from excavations in Jerusalem, inscribed in Hebrew as well as uninscribed, has increased manifold in recent years. It was long thought that only the privileged possessed personal seals, but the introduction of wet sieving has taught us otherwise. Paraphrasing Herodotus on the Babylonians ['Everyone carries a seal,' *Histories* 1.195], we may now say that in Jerusalem, too, every head of a family had a seal in his pocket."

### 3.6. Bullae

Bullae are another marker of administration. Our corpus includes 177 private, public, and fiscal bullae with epigraphic remains (Sections 2.5–2.7). Particularly interesting are bullae of biblical figures such as Jehucal son of Shelemiah (Jer 37:3, 38:1; Item 2.5.72), Gedaliah son of Pashhur (Jer 38:1; Item 2.5.67), Gemariah son of Shaphan (Jer 36:10; Item 2.5.2), Azariah son of Hilkiah (1 Chr 9:11, Ezra 7:1; Item 2.5.27), Hezekiah son of Ahaz, King of Judah (Item 2.5.131), and possibly Nathanmelech, Servant of the King (2 Kgs 23:11; Item 2.5.170).

Regarding fiscal bullae, it is notable that a total of 35 have been recorded to date (Barkay and Deutsch 2017: 118). However, most of them (n=31) derive from the antiquities market, and the provenanced fiscal bullae derive solely from Jerusalem (Items 2.7.1–2.7.4).

Again, even from our abovementioned 177 epigraphic bullae, we only gain a rather skewed, narrow picture of the Jerusalemite administration. A far greater number of primarily iconographic bullae (including bullae bearing hieroglyphs and "pseudo script") has been uncovered, as were numerous unidentifiable bullae fragments. For example, our corpus lists 57 epigraphic bullae from Mazar's City of David excavations (Area G), while her complete count, including iconographic bullae, comprises 256 items (Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 299). Similarly, we cite 25 epigraphic bullae from her Ophel excavation (Area A), while she counts 34 (Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2018: 247). From Shiloh's "House of Bullae," we list 45 epigraphic bullae of the 53 documented in the excavation report (Shoham 2000b: 32). Reich and Shukron's excavations at the City of David recovered over 170 bullae (Reich, Shukron, and Lernau 2007: 156), while we mentioned only 14. From the City of David's eastern slope excavations by Uziel et al., we list 13 of 68

items (Mendel-Geberovich, Chalaf, and Uziel 2020: 162), and from the Temple Mount Sifting Project, we cite 2 of 31 (Dvira and Barkay 2021: 43).

Although not epigraphic, iconographic bullae likewise speak for administrative operations. As such, notwithstanding their substantial number (n=177), the provenanced epigraphic bullae provide only a blinkered picture. Considering all bullae from the abovementioned excavations and projects alone, we would reach a total of well over 600 specimens. This becomes even more significant when we consider that most identifiable reverse impressions on these bullae are attributed to papyrus (see Section 3.12).

Additionally, numerous bullae still await publication. These are highlighted, for example, by Mendel-Geberovich (2023: 115–134) and include 10 fragmentary bullae from the Givati Parking Lot excavations, 14 from the City of David, Area C excavations, five from the Wilson’s Arch excavations, several bullae fragments from the Western Wall Plaza excavations, and around a dozen bullae from the excavations of the Western Wall foundations.

### 3.7. Jar-handle seal impressions

Three hundred fifty-seven jar-handle seal impressions have been discovered in Jerusalem (not including rosettes), 17 private and 340 *lmlk*. Unfortunately, an accurate total for *lmlk* inscriptions is hard to arrive at, as they are not as thoroughly documented and published as seals, bullae, and private handle seal impressions. Our figures certainly underestimate the phenomenon’s scale.

*Lmlk* seal impressions have been found in significant quantities in various Judean sites. Jerusalem is no exception, second only to Lachish, which produced 413 seal impressions (Lipschits 2021: 42). Notably, in his exhaustive analysis, Lipschits counted the *lmlk* seal impressions from Jerusalem and Ramat Raḥel together, arriving at a total of 564 specimens as part of the same proximate regional operation. These numbers should now be augmented with an additional 124 *lmlk* seal impressions from Arnona.

### 3.8. Ostraca

Unlike most inscription types, ostraca are noticeably infrequent in Jerusalem, occurring in smaller numbers comparable to those found in other Judean sites, like Lachish and Arad. Garfinkel and Mendel-Geberovich (2020: 165–166) addressed this peculiarity:

*Prima facie*, this situation is paradoxical: do marginal sites actually contain more evidence for writing than the kingdom’s main centers?

....

Evidently, most of the bullae come from Lachish and Jerusalem. . . . We argue that the distribution of ostraca and that of bullae are mutually complementary and compensatory. It was in the two major centers of the kingdom, Jerusalem and Lachish, that the holders of the highest bureaucratic positions were active. They wrote on expensive papyrus and used their seals to seal them. On the other hand, at minor sites and in the kingdom's periphery papyrus was harder to come by and therefore minor officials working there wrote on potsherds, available in abundance in any ancient site. This explains the prevalence of inscriptions in ink on ostraca at minor sites and of bullae in the major centers.

As such, rather than ostraca representing administrative power and significance, a case can be made that the opposite is true. Depending on the context, a predominance of ostraca within an administrative center or capital may signify administrative poverty, contrary to the centralized seal-stamped, papyrus-based administration.<sup>12</sup>

### **3.9. Female representation**

Four seals in our corpus are attributed to women (Items 2.4.8, 2.4.17, 2.4.30, and 2.4.33). None are known from other sites (Garfinkel and Mendel-Geberovich 2020: 170–171). To put this piece of data in perspective, while Lachish is occasionally cited as Judah's "second city," Jerusalem features as many female seal holders as Lachish features seals! Furthermore, women are mentioned on at least one bulla (Item 2.5.122), one private jar-handle seal impression (Item 2.8.6), and two ostraca (Items 2.10.12 and 2.10.14).<sup>13</sup> As highlighted by Garfinkel and Mendel-Geberovich (2020: 170), "It should be noted that, like seals belonging to women, the only list of women was found in Jerusalem. Our conclusion is that the wealthiest women and those playing some part in the economy resided in the largest cities."

Additionally, Biermann (2024) believes this female representation (particularly on seals and bullae) to be an undercount, critiquing the implicit premise of "male until proven otherwise." He indicates several additional individuals in the Jerusalem corpus whose gender is less certain and may prove to be female. The presence of high-ranking women in Jerusalem is supported by the biblical account

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<sup>12</sup> At the same time, we ought to bear in mind that the ostracal evidence demonstrates a high level of literacy in elite circles in the Judean kingdom, even in the most peripheral Judean sites (e.g., Arad; Faigenbaum-Golovin et al. 2021).

<sup>13</sup> The latter ostrakon features a list of wheat or barley to be supplied to a female recipient.

that mentions individuals like Huldah, the prophetess (2 Kgs 22:14), and the unnamed prophetess and wife of Isaiah (Isa 8:3; cf. Meyers 2014: 23).

### **3.10. Answering potential objections**

The observations made above lead us to conclude that Iron Age II Jerusalem was a powerful administrative and literary center of a quality and scale evidentially unparalleled in the southern Levant. Here, we address some hypothetical objections to this conclusion. One objection is that the relatively frequent application of wet sieving to Iron Age strata at Jerusalem (including the Temple Mount Sifting Project) results in numerous epigraphic finds. However, wet sieving is also practiced elsewhere and is by no means limited to Jerusalem. While this practice has substantially increased the number of bullae and seals discovered, its impact should not be exaggerated. Thus, around half of the corpus's 35 seals and approximately 50 bullae were found without wet sieving. Indeed, wet sieving is only responsible for a fraction of our total corpus.

Another conceivable objection is that the size of the corpus is due to the numerous excavations conducted in Jerusalem. While the city has seen a copious number of excavations over the past century and a half, most of them uncovered remains of the Second Temple or later periods. It is also notable that excavation in such a densely populated, politically- and religiously-sensitive city is highly challenging. Compared to other regional sites, Iron Age remains in Jerusalem can only be revealed piecemeal. Further, it should go without saying that the very heart of the ancient city—the Temple Mount area—is impossible to excavate. When viewed in this light and given these limitations, the size of the Jerusalem corpus appears all the more remarkable.

### **3.11. Scribal activity and administration—when?**

Notably, the majority of our inscriptions are dated to the 8th–early 6th centuries BCE. Does this mean that writing, scribal activity, and significant administration emerged in Jerusalem only at this time? Rollston devotes significant space to this question, highlighting the Ophel Pithos Inscription (our Item 2.11.9): “The fact remains that this inscription is reflective of the presence of scribalism in Jerusalem and its environs during Iron Age IIA” (Rollston 2017: 15). Addressing this and other such early, regional Iron Age IIA inscriptions, he summarizes (*ibid.*, 16),

At this time, it is clear that the verdict is in. There was writing and reading in Jerusalem and its environs in Iron IIA. ... I wish that we had more pieces of the puzzle. The future will certainly bring more stunning finds. But even at this time, the number of inscriptions, the



general quality of the inscriptions, and the persistence of the scribal output in the southern Levant through the centuries all converge so as to demonstrate nicely the presence of scribalism in Iron IIA. ... Thus, I think that the best conclusion, based on the actual data, is this: there was writing in Jerusalem and its environs in Iron IIA. We know this. We have texts to prove it.

At this juncture, we would like to submit another “piece of the puzzle” of scribal activity in Jerusalem, in general, and the Iron Age IIA, in particular. We have seen above that most epigraphic remains from Jerusalem are comprised of seals and seal impressions. It is now clear that the administrative method of epigraphic sealings came into force only in the 8th century BCE. However, this does not mean that sealing documents was not practiced earlier. On the contrary, administrative documents circulated widely, but they employed *iconographic* seals.

This is not the place for a detailed treatment of this subject, but drawing on Keel (2017: 282–511), we may state the following. Some 65 glyptic seals have been found in Jerusalem, spanning the mid-11th and 8th centuries BCE, primarily the 10th–9th centuries BCE. Some of these seals feature hieroglyphs and “pseudo script,” but most are strictly iconographic. These seals decreased in frequency during the 8th century BCE and disappeared by the 7th century BCE, when seals were exclusively epigraphic. Keel traces a similar temporal pattern for the seal impressions. Of some 176 bullae spanning the mid-11th and 8th centuries BCE, the majority was iconographic and attributed to the 10th–9th centuries BCE.

Even more consequential, however, are the reverse impressions on these bullae. Although the impressions on the backsides of many bullae are either unidentifiable (due to damage) or otherwise unstated, the majority of those identifiable bear papyrus impressions, suggesting that a significant body of written material circulated at the time and was facilitated by a substantial literate administration.

Certainly, most text-based seals and bullae originated in the latter half of the First Temple period in Jerusalem. However, this does not imply that the city was illiterate or administratively dysfunctional before this time. What is evident is that sometime during the 8th century BCE, the Judean administrative method shifted from largely iconographic seals and sealings to epigraphic ones. Whether this was done for religious or political reasons remains to be determined.

### **3.12. Jerusalem's papyri**

The original documents comprised papyri and, to a lesser extent, parchment, leather, and wood and surely carried the bulk of the capital's textual materials. Unfortunately, these organic writing media continue to elude us in Jerusalem, as in virtually all other south Levantine Iron Age sites outside of the Judean Desert. Only the ghosts are observable in the form of reverse impressions on hundreds of bullae spanning the 10th–6th centuries BCE. The few First Temple period papyrus fragments found in the Judean Desert reinforce the premise that papyrus was indeed used in the kingdom (Ahituv 2023).

## **4. The Development of Writing in the Kingdom of Judah**

### **4.1. Iron Age IIA**

At least one inscription from Jerusalem is dated to the Iron Age IIA (Item 2.11.9), and two more may be tentatively dated to the same period (Items 2.4.6, 2.12.55). The dating of the Ophel Pithos Inscription has been the subject of significant discussion. The sherd was dated on stratigraphical and typological grounds to the 10th century BCE (Mazar, Ben-Shlomo, and Ahituv 2013; Mazar 2015; Winderbaum 2022). More recently, Vainstub (2023) identified the inscription as South Arabian while upholding the original date. Contrarily, others have argued that the sherd should be dated to the 9th century BCE (Kleiman 2021).

In addition to the Iron Age IIA inscription(s) from Jerusalem, several have been found elsewhere in other Judahite sites. These include two 10th-century BCE inscriptions uncovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa, indicating that a tradition of writing in the proto-Canaanite script was at work in the kingdom (Misgav, Garfinkel, and Ganor 2009; Garfinkel et al. 2015). Similar inscriptions are known from Bet Shemesh (McCarter, Bunimovitz, and Lederman 2011; McCarter 2016), which was fortified at the time (Garfinkel 2023). Additionally, an Iron Age IIA abecedarium from Tel Zayit demonstrates that the Phoenician/Hebrew script was in use (Tappy et al. 2006).

Significant for the discussion about early writing and correspondence in Judah are ca. 160 bullae and 20 seals found in a rock-cut pool near the Gihon Spring (Reich, Shukron, and Lerna 2007). They lack inscriptions (and hence are not included in the present corpus) but bear various Egyptian, Canaanite, and local Iron Age decorative motifs, many of which were dated by Keel (2017) to the 10th–9th centuries BCE. Similar 10th-century BCE seals were recovered from Khirbet Qeiyafa, continuing an earlier Late Bronze Age tradition (Schroer 2018; 2021).

The Gihon pool assemblage was retrieved from construction fills, rendering its date uncertain. An 8th-century BCE building constructed above the fill provides a *terminus ante quem*. The fills contained a large amount of red-slipped and irregular hand-burnished pottery typical of the 10th–9th centuries BCE (De Groot and Fadida 2011) but also a few red-slipped and wheel-burnished sherds characteristic of the 8th century BCE (Singer-Avitz 2012). Accordingly, we assign the assemblage to the end of the Iron Age IIA and the beginning of the Iron Age IIB (but before ca. 760 BCE; see below), containing a significant quantity of discarded seals and bullae.

Three aspects of the rock-cut pool assemblage are significant:

- 1) None of the items bears writing, although traces of papyrus on the reverse of several bullae indicated that they sealed documents;
- 2) The assemblage's size indicates that seals and bullae were widely used in Jerusalem before epigraphic seals were introduced; and
- 3) The seals' decorations do not include Assyrian motifs, which is chronologically significant since Assyrian motifs appear on seals and bullae later (Winderbaum 2015). Hence, the assemblage from the rock-cut pool predates the Assyrian influence on the Levant.

## 4.2. Iron Age IIB

Recent paleomagnetic studies indicate that the *lmlk* jars appeared in the Kingdom of Judah around 760–750 BCE (Ben-Yosef et al. 2017; Vaknin et al. 2022). This insight revolutionizes our understanding of these jars, which hitherto had commonly been dated to the end of the 8th century BCE on historical grounds. The new date of ca. 760 BCE precedes the Assyrian control over Judah, which began only around 730 BCE. It now turns out that the *lmlk* jars were part of a Judahite administrative system developed for its own local needs. Indeed, “pre-*lmlk*” jars appeared as early as the 9th century BCE, albeit without seal impressions on the handles (Shai and Maeir 2003; Gitin 2006).

Seals of two major types were used to impress the *lmlk* jars:

1. *Lmlk seals*. These seals bear two words: *lmlk* (to the king) and one of four territorial/administrative labels: Hebron, Ziph, Socoh, and *mmšt*. It has recently been suggested that *mmšt* is the term used for a special type of tax, not a city (Vainstub 2024). The decoration on these seals consists of one of two motifs: the Egyptian four-winged scarab or the Mesopotamian winged sun disk (Ornan 2009). Compared to the rock-cut pool assemblage, the *lmlk* seals differ in two significant ways: They feature

writing alongside figurative decoration, and they include a Mesopotamian motif. These features emerged around 760 BCE, concurrent with the increasing Assyrian influence on the Levant. The assemblage from the rock-cut pool, therefore, precedes 760 BCE.

- 2) *Private seals.* The second group of seals impressed on the *lmlk* jars bear personal names, apparently of the owners, usually without any decoration (Garfinkel 1984; 1985). According to Lipschits (2021: 49–55), the 45 private seals known to date belonged to 32 individuals, some of whom owned more than one.

An assemblage of 34 bullae was found in the Ophel excavations in 2009–2010 and dated to ca. 700 BCE (Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2018). Four of the bullae bear decoration but no writing; six bullae bear both writing and decoration, and 24 bear only writing. The contemporaneous bullae and seals from Tel ‘Eton, Hebron, and Lachish all bear both decoration and writing (Faust and Eshel 2012; Vainstub and Ben-Shlomo 2016; Klingbeil et al. 2019). Most bullae have papyrus impressions on their reverse, evidence of legal documents or letters.

Compared to seals typical of the Iron Age IIB, which combine writing and decoration, the private seal impressions on *lmlk* jars stand out for featuring writing alone. In this capacity, they resemble the 24 aniconic bullae from the Ophel. How can one explain this phenomenon, which did not become standard until much later in the Iron Age IIC? Perhaps the private seals represent a particular group of officials skilled in reading and writing and, therefore, refrained from decorations on their seals. Their strictly textual seals became status symbols, reflecting their education and high social ranking. A similar situation is seen in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, where most inscribed seals bear both writing and decoration, while seal impressions on the handles of jars from Tel Dan bear only a name (Avigad and Sass 1997: 255). Finally, we should note the impressive inscriptions carved in stone during the second half of the 8th century BCE, including the Silwan necropolis, the Siloam Tunnel inscription, and three other fragments (Tables 1, 2). These inscriptions express complex social or historical messages.

### 4.3. Iron Age IIC

Several hundred seals, bullae, and impressed jar handles are known from this era. At this time, a few seals bear a decoration (Brandl 2000; Winderbaum 2015) or both writing and a decoration (Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 336–340), but most feature only writing (Shoham 2000b; Mazar and Livyatan Ben-Arie 2015: 229–335). Most bullae have papyrus impressions on their reverse, indicating the production and circulation of legal documents or letters, while their substantial number speaks for this being a widespread practice.

Only a handful of small Iron Age IIC ostraca have been found in Jerusalem. In contrast, the number of ostraca from peripheral sites in the Beersheba Valley is considerable (Aharoni 1981; Beit-Arieh 2007: 122–187). It seems that papyrus was a relatively rare commodity and was not available for widespread use in the periphery, where pottery sherds were used for writing (Garfinkel and Mendel Geberovich 2020: 166).

It is interesting that all of the women's seals known from the Kingdom of Judah were found in Jerusalem. Likewise, an ostrakon bearing a list of women was found in the city (Naveh 2000: 3–4; Garfinkel and Mendel-Geberovich 2020: 170–171; Golub and Mendel-Geberovich 2024). These finds suggest that the women of the social elite in the kingdom's capital were both educated and economically influential.

## 5. Conclusion

Jerusalem presents the largest corpus of Iron Age inscriptions uncovered so far in the Levant. It also features the greatest diversity of inscription types and media. Jerusalem demonstrated an impressive literary capacity, which provided the background for texts in the Hebrew Bible. If the question is whether it was at all possible to write biblical texts in Iron Age Jerusalem, the answer is definitely *yes*. Indeed, the silver amulets from Ketef Hinnom, the earliest biblical text, were uncovered in Jerusalem.

## Postscript

While this article was in the layout stage, an additional seal from Jerusalem had been published: ליהוה בן הושעיהו (Baruch, Reich, and Bocher 2024: 39–53).

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