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The Hebrew Name "YONAH" Embedded in the Image of the Fish on the Talpiot Tomb Ossuary

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Prof. James H. Charlesworth of Princeton Theological Seminary has just announced a rather startling observation regarding the controversial "Jonah and the Fish" ossuary that has been the subject of such controversy since the publication of the book, *The Jesus Discovery* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011). His announcement was made today from Princeton and is the subject of a article written by Michael Posner in the *Toronto Globe and Mail*:

http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/ancient-ossuary-hints-at-earliest-reference-to-jesus/article2399269/

According to Prof. Charlesworth the tiny little "stick figure" that has been interpreted as a "Jonah" image by some, appears to be ingeniously formed so that its lines spell out the name YONAH in Hebrew—*Yod, Vav, Nun, Hey*—as illustrated here in this series of photos on the following pages. First, the unmarked image; second the lines of the stick figure of "Jonah" with arms body, and legs, and the "eye" of the fish; and finally, the clear Hebrew letters spelling out "YONAH."

Since the publication of the photographs of this image in late February, 2012, scholars have debated its significance with suggestions of a *nephesh*, or funerary monument, a perfume flask, an amphora, or a krater-vase being suggested as alternatives to the "Jonah and the fish" interpretation.

Since the name YONAH appears to be quite clearly written in Hebrew letters in a style common on ossuaries from this period this new observation by Prof. Charlesworth promises to significantly advance our discussion of this important find. Although it might be possible the engraver would write "Jonah" on a vase, amphora, perfume flask, or pillar, it seems more likely his or her intent was to represent the image of resurrection through Jonah and the fish, a symbol known in this period only in the gospel of Matthew.





