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SBL/ASOR: Archaeology of the Ancient World III
Theme: Special Session on *The Jesus Discovery: The New Archaeological Find that Reveals the Birth of Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012)

I want to thank Ralph Hawkins and his associates for organizing this special public session in an effort to put before both colleagues and the more general public an opportunity for the kind of critical debates that often emerge from interpretations of the textual and historical evidence related to archaeological finds. I am also pleased to have as respondents to my paper today Professors Chris Rollston and Mark Goodacre.[1]

Today our discussion centers on the contents of two tombs in the neighborhood of East Talpiot (Armon ha-Naziv), south of the Old City of Jerusalem, discovered in April 1980 and 1981 respectively. Both were exposed accidentally, by construction blasts in the course of condominium building projects.

The History

The first tomb, which I call here for purposes of reference, Tomb A, was cleared in a salvage excavation by the late Joseph Gat and his colleague Shlomo Gudovitch in behalf of the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (today IAA) under the supervision of district archaeologist Amos Kloner and with the assistance of Shimon Gibson as surveyor. The first official publication of this tomb was done only 16 years later, in 1996 in *'Atiquot* (XXIX, 1996: 16-22), after the tomb came to the attention of the international media in a *London Sunday Times* front page story titled "The Tomb that Dare Not Speak its Name." In late 1995 a BBC film crew working on an Easter special had stumbled across a reference to the tomb in Rahmani's *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries* published the previous year, 1994. Of the ten ossuaries removed

from the tomb, five decorated and five plain, six were inscribed with names—a rather high ratio (compare Rahmani 227 of 897 (.25%) inscribed as of 1989 in the Israeli State Collection). The Aramaic inscription that initially caught the eye of the BBC producers was *Yeshua bar Yehosef* but when they learned the tomb also contained a cluster of five other names—namely *Yose*, *Mariamene* aka *Mara*, *Marya*, *Matya*—as well as a *Yehuda bar Yeshua*—names they associated with the "Holy Family," their entire Easter story took a new and tantalizing twist. Could it possibly be that this hitherto unknown tomb in Talpiot was the final resting place of Jesus and Nazareth and his family? The near universal response of academics and theologians interviewed at the time was that these names were extremely common and there was no evidence suggesting that this particular "Jesus son of Joseph" was anyone we could identify specifically among 1st century males of the period—and certainly not with the main character in our New Testament gospels.

Ironically, there was one lone dissenting voice—that of Joe Zias, then curator for the Israel Antiquities Authority at the Rockefeller, who had served as a guide to the film crew. Zias called for further investigation, asserting that the cluster of names, considered together, was so significant that had he not known they were from a licensed IAA excavation he would have been certain they were forged. He also commented that the notion of Jesus being married or having a child was a theological problem but in the context of Jewish social life at the time would be expected rather than surprising. Joe has since changed his mind, to put it mildly.

Like others, I was highly skeptical. Although none of us had the benefit of Tal Ilan's monumental work, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity*, published in 2002, it seemed to me to be intuitively the case, just from my reading of the New Testament gospels and related sources, that such names as found in this tomb were among the *most common* in the culture at the

time. Had anyone predicted that I would someday publish a book arguing for a historical connection between Jesus of Nazareth and this Talpiot tomb I would have considered it ridiculous. I now am convinced that Joe's first instincts were correct, honed from his decades of experience in serving as the "bone man" for the IAA. Whether Talpiot Tomb A is the family tomb of Jesus or not, of the 900 cave tombs known to us from this period, as surveyed by Kloner and Zissu, *there is no other for which one could even make an argument of association with Jesus of Nazareth.* In retrospect I consider Zias's call for "further investigation" to have been a wise one.

The second tomb, referred to here as Tomb B, was similarly exposed by a construction blast almost precisely one year later. It is located approximately 60 meters west of Tomb A, one of three tombs that were located on an ancient estate complete with a large cistern, wine press, and ancient agricultural walls. The tomb was blown open from the top, so its entrance remains sealed with a blocking stone to this day. Amos Kloner and other IAA officials briefly investigated the tomb, removing one small ossuary, now in the Israeli State collection, but they were prohibited from carrying out a full rescue excavation by protests from the *Heredim*.[2] Tomb B was covered over by the builders and today is located under a large three-story condominium building. It still contains seven ossuaries inside, four of which are inscribed.

In 2010 Rami Arav and I obtained an excavation license to examine both Talpiot tombs A and B, under the auspices of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, in partnership with filmmaker Simcha Jacobovici whose company, Associated Producers of Canada, provided funding and logistical support in connection with the production of a Discovery Television documentary on our exploration. Our initial objective was to enter and explore Tomb B through drill holes in the basement of the condo building using a sophisticated robotic arm and cameras.

The book under discussion today, *The Jesus Discovery*, published in February 2012, written by me with my colleague Simcha Jacobovici as co-author, offers a documented account of the initial discovery of both tombs, our more recent investigation and analysis, and a comprehensive overview of our position, namely that there is a *high likelihood that both tombs were associated with Jesus of Nazareth, his family, and his early followers*.

In reviewing the various discussions of these tombs there have been four main objections to its likely or probable connection to Jesus of Nazareth, namely:

1. The names found in this tomb are quite common. There is no reason to associate this particular "Jesus son of Joseph" and its cluster of names, with Jesus of Nazareth.

2. The gospels uniformly report that the tomb into which Joseph of Arimathea placed Jesus' corpse was found empty.

3. The Jesus son of Joseph in this tomb evidently has a son, Judah, and there is no evidence Jesus of Nazareth was married or had a child.

4. Jesus and his followers were too poor to have a rock-hewn tomb and Jesus was more likely put in a shaft tomb, the location of which was long ago forgotten.

Objections 3 and 4 I will not address in this paper for lack of time. The case for a married Jesus we have laid out in chapter 5 of our book and the suggestion he was put in a shaft tomb I have addressed in published exchanges with Professor Jodi Magness.[3] I have not included the oft-unacknowledged *theological* objection that lies behind so much of the more vehement opposition to our hypothesis, namely that Jesus was raised from the dead and taken up bodily into heaven.

Objection 2 raises the question as to what we know of the disposition of Jesus' corpse? What our sources uniformly report is that an otherwise unknown figure, Joseph of Arimathea,

took charge of the burial of Jesus under authorization Pontius Pilate, the Roman *prefect* of Judea. Jesus died just a few hours before sundown with the Sabbath and Passover approaching. His body was hastily put in a rock-hewn tomb that happened to be near the site of the crucifixion, until he could be given a more permanent burial after the festival. To quote Amos Kloner:

> I would go one step further and suggest that Jesus' tomb was what the sages refer to as a "borrowed (or temporary) tomb." During the Second Temple period and later, Jews often practiced temporary burial. . . A borrowed or temporary cave was used for a limited time, and the occupation of the cave by the corpse conferred no rights of ownership upon the family. . . Jesus' interment was probably of this nature. [4]

Although one might consider any claim to have identified this permanent burial tomb of Jesus to be a sensational one, given the building boom in the Jerusalem area since 1967, especially to the east and south where Kloner and Zissu have mapped a vast Jerusalem necropolis containing over 900 known cave tombs, the chances of such a find are not probabilistically remote.

Tomb A: The Names

By far the most frequently heard objection to this tomb being identified as that of Jesus of Nazareth and his family is that the names found therein, particularly the generic names "Jesus" "Joseph" and "Mary," are extremely common, making any specific identification, even of the cluster, impossible.

The Name Yeshua

The name Jesus is known but hardly *common*. The definitive *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* includes *all* named references to Jewish males in Hebrew or Greek from 330 BCE to

200 CE in the land of Israel.[5] Based on that hard data we can say that approximately 3.9% were named Jesus. This is a valid statistical sampling that compares the name Jesus with all other known male names and their frequencies in all our sources—literary as well as epigraphic. 3.9% means that in a sampling of 100 Jewish males of the time only four would have the name Jesus. One would hardly call this common.

If we take all known inscribed ossuaries there are only twenty-one out of approximately 650 that have any form of the name Jesus, whether *Yeshua* in Hebrew or *Iesous* in Greek. Two of these are in the Talpiot Jesus tomb—"Jesus son of Joseph" and "Judah son of Jesus," and a third, the controversial "James son of Joseph brother of Jesus," we are convinced refer to Jesus of Nazareth. Beyond these we are left with eighteen others to consider.[6] We have argued that at least six of these eighteen likely refer not as the name of the deceased in the ossuary but as a devotional reference to Jesus of Nazareth. This would include the Figueras "Yeshua" in a fish-like circle, the Sukenik tomb off Hebron road, and several others.[7]

"Jesus son of Joseph" is precisely the ossuary inscription we would expect for the Jesus of the New Testament. Individuals are usually identified by their names alone, but sometimes one's parents, or in the case of a wife, the name of her husband is included, or more rarely, one's brother.[8] Jesus is legally known as the "son of Joseph" in our New Testament gospels (Luke 3:23; 4:22; Matthew 13:55; John 1:46; 6:42). Based on the Jewish tradition, ancient and modern, of designating the father to identify an individual, this is the name we would expect to see for him.[9]

The Rare Name Yoseh

Yoseh is a shortened form of the more popular name Joseph (*Yehosef* in Hebrew). While the name Joseph is the second most common male name in the period after Simon, the truncated form Yoseh is exceptionally rare.[10] The common name Joseph represents 8.6% of male names while Yoseh, only occurs *seven* times on ossuary inscriptions and only *once* in Aramaic—here in the Talpiot Jesus tomb.[11] The remaining five ossuaries have the name in Greek, written as *Ioses* or *Iose*—or translated in English Joses or Jose. That means Yoseh represents only .003% of male names found on ossuaries, making it *exceedingly* rare.

The obvious question, in considering whether this Talpiot tomb might be that of Jesus and his family is to ask whether there is anything in the New Testament gospels about anyone with this rare shortened name *Yoseh*.

Everyone familiar with the New Testament gospels knows of two Josephs—Joseph the husband of Mary, and Joseph of Arimathea, who took charge of Jesus' burial. They both go by the common full name Joseph, but what about the rare shortened name Yoseh? Few are aware that Jesus had *four* brothers. Their names listed twice in the gospels—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. This gives us a *third* New Testament Joseph, besides Jesus' father and Joseph of Arimathea. James was the eldest and the second of the four was called Joseph. We know nothing about him other than his name, whereas we have an abundance of historical sources on Jesus' oldest brother James, who assumed leadership of the Jesus movement following Jesus' death.[12]

Rahmani was the first to publish the Talpiot tomb inscriptions in his 1994 catalogue of ossuaries. He suggested that the Yoseh in the tomb was most likely the father of the Jesus buried there since the Jesus inscription says "Jesus son of Joseph." That is certainly possible but one

would expect that the ossuary would simply have the name Joseph—not the rare shortened form Yoseh. According to Mark, *Joses*, or as some manuscripts have it—*Yoseh*—was the rare shortened form of the name of Jesus' second brother Joseph (Mark 6:3).[13] Apparently this form of the name was something Mark knew since Matthew, in listing the four brothers, seems to know only the full formal name Joseph, though a few manuscript copies of Matthew also preserve the form *Joses* (Matthew 13:55).

What this means is that we now have a linguistic parallel between the earliest New Testament gospel tradition about the brothers of Jesus and their name and this rare form of the name Joseph on an ossuary from the Talpiot tomb. Add to this that of Jesus' four named brothers—James, Yoseh, Simon, and Jude the one we know the least about—and who might most likely be buried in a pre-70CE Jerusalem "Jesus family" tomb, would be Yoseh. He drops completely out of our historical record beyond the reference in Mark. One of the things one tries to do in archaeology, when possible, is combine textual or literary evidence with the archaeological material evidence. One is always cautious that the text not be used to over interpret the archaeological evidence or vice-versa. In this case, where there appears to be a possible "fit" between text and artifact, we are in a good position to attempt to draw some reasonable hypothetical conclusion.

Of course it is possible that there was another Yoseh in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, and that he was related to some *other* Jesus with a father named Joseph. As we will see below, when you run the statistics on the odds of that being the case, it is extremely unlikely.

Mariamene (Mariamenon) Mara

The inscription *Mariamenou Mara* is even more fascinating with regard to the assertion that the names in the Jesus tomb are exceptionally common. Clearly it is some form of the common name Mary or Mariam/Mariame in Hebrew—but what about its strange ending? And what is the significance of Mara?

Of the six inscriptions from the tomb this is the only one in Greek. In contrast to the ossuaries of Jesus, Maria, and Yoseh, which are plain, this woman was buried in a beautifully decorated ossuary. The venerable expert, Levi Rahmani had first deciphered her inscription in his *Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries* published in 1994. For most of us Rahmani has become the "Bible" for the study of ossuaries and their inscriptions. His keen eye and uncanny ability to decipher some of the most obscure inscriptions is legendary.

Rahmani read the inscription as *Mariamenou Mara*. No one questioned his judgment for thirteen years—until the publicity about the Talpiot "Jesus tomb" hit the headlines. Suddenly everyone was scrambling, it seemed, to come up with arguments *against* those Simcha Jacobovici had put forth for the first time in his 2007 Discovery Channel documentary, "The Lost Tomb of Jesus." There he had suggested, based on Rahmani's reading, which no one had disputed at the time, that Mariamene was a unique form of the name Mary that was used by Jesus' first followers when referring to Mary Magdalene.

Several scholars have subsequently suggested that Rahmani misread the Greek, and that it should read *Mariame kai Mara*—Mary *and* Martha, referring to *two* individuals, perhaps even two sisters buried together in this one ossuary.[14] Since Mariame (without the final stem ending "n") is the *most* common form of the name Mary in Greek, any argument about uniqueness

would thus evaporate. The Mary in the tomb might have been any Mary of the time and she would be impossible to identify further. And her sister Martha would be equally unknown.[15]

We find this new reading unconvincing and remain impressed with Rahmani's original transcription, that is also supported by Leah Di Segni. The inscription itself appears to be from a single hand, written in a smooth flowing style, with a decorative flourish around both names—pointing to a single individual who died and was placed in this inscribed ossuary. According to Rahmani, *Mariamenou* is the genitive of *Mariamenon*, which is a diminutive or endearing variant of the name Mariamene or Mary.[16] Mariame*n*e—spelled with the letter "n" or *nu* in Greek, is quite rare—only one other example is found on an ossuary.[17] There are no other examples from this period, either literary or inscriptional.

Significantly, *two* later Greek texts use Mariame*n*e—with this rare "n" stem ending and *both* texts apparent refer specifically to *Mary Magdalene*. The first is a quotation from Hippolytus, a third century Christian writer who records that James, the brother of Jesus, passed on secret teachings of Jesus to "Mariame*n*e," i.e., Mary Magdalene.[18] According to tradition Hippolytus was a disciple of Irenaeus, who was a disciple of Polycarp, who was a disciple of the apostle John—who of course knew both Mary Magdalene and Jesus. Perhaps it is this link of oral teaching, through three generations, that somehow had preserved this special name for Mary Magdalene. Its diminutive ending makes it a term of endearment—like calling someone named James "Jimmy," or an Elizabeth "Betty." The second text that has the name Mariamene is a rare 4th century CE Greek manuscript of the *Acts of Philip*, dated to the 3rd or 4th century CE. Throughout the text Mary Magdalene is called *Mariame*n*e*—again the precise form of the name found on the Talpiot tomb ossuary.

Some critics have argued that one has to jump to the third or fourth century to find a parallel to a 1st century name on an ossuary in order to try and argue it belongs to Mary Magdalene. Quite the opposite is the case. What the ossuary preserves is a rare endearing form of the common name Mariame. What should surprise us is that it shows up, out of the blue, in Hippolytus and the *Acts of Philip*—two centuries later, when referring to Mary Magdalene. They could not know anything about the ossuary or these inscriptions—so where did they get this tradition of the rare form of the name? That this rare form appears in these later sources strengthens rather than diminishes the argument here. If Mariamene is a late form of the name, only found in these 3rd and 4th century texts, as some have asserted—what is it doing on the Talpiot tomb ossuary?

It strains any credibility to imagine that Rahmani, who was unaware of any association whatsoever between his transcription of this ossuary inscription and identifications with Mary Magdalene in these later texts, would have *mistakenly* come up with this exceedingly rare form of the common name Mary. It seems clear to us that Rahmani's keen eye and years of experience have unwittingly provided us with one of the most important correlations between the names in this tomb and those we might expect, hypothetically, to be included in a Jesus family tomb—a name uniquely appropriate for Mary Magdalene. Does it make any sense to think a *misreading* of the name in this inscription would end up producing two hits for Mary Magdalene? The force and implications of this evidence is so strong that a few scholars have even suggested that the text in Hippolytus somehow got corrupted. Again, it strains all credulity to maintain that mistakes, misreadings, and scribal errors would just happen to produce a match for an ossuary inscription in a 1st century Jerusalem tomb.

The second word in the inscription—*Mara*—Rahmani understood as an alternative form of the more common name Martha and many scholars agree.[19] He translated the full inscription:

[the ossuary] of Mariamemon also known as Mara

His understanding was that this Mariamne was also called Mara—a variant of the more popular form Martha.

In looking through all 650 ossuary inscriptions that are extant we discover that *Mara* is also quite rare, with only five examples other than the two in the Talpiot tombs.[20]

We are convinced that Mara as used here is an honorific title not a proper name per se.[21] Mara and Martha are related; they both come from the Aramaic masculine word *Mar*, which means "Master" or "Lord" in English.[22] This is true still in Modern Hebrew today. One can address a man formally as "Mar," meaning "Sir" or "Mister." It is a title not a name. If you add the feminine ending to *Mar* in Greek you get *Mara*. Even though some have observed that מרא is a masculine name in ancient Aramaic, and thus *Mara* might well be the name of the husband of *Mariamene* in this ossuary, it is clear that all our examples of MAPA in Greek refer to women, probably as an attempt to represent מרה. Furthermore, several of these appear to be used as titles not proper names.[23]

The problem is we have no good word in English to translate the feminine for "Master" or "Lord." If we try "Mistress" there are negative connotations. "Lordess" sounds awkward, and "Madame" surely will not work. English simply has no good alternative for the feminine, while we use the masculine constantly. The followers of Jesus called him "Lord" or "Master," but how would we translate that title for a woman in English—perhaps one they also honored as his companion, partner, and wife? Probably our best equivalent in English is "the Lady," which is the formal feminine form of the masculine Lord. When Catholics speak of "Our Lady," referring

to Mary the mother of Jesus, they are preserving and echoing this very honorific title—they just don't use it for Mary Magdalene. She was vilified as a whore or as mentally unstable, or both, and was finally written out of any dominant version of the rise and development of Christianity. Fortunately we can pick up her muted and forgotten story as we attempt to do in chapter 5 of our book, *The Jesus Discovery*.

There are two other ossuary inscriptions that are relevant to a proper understanding the *Mariamenon Mara* inscription. The first refers to two males, a Matthew and a Simon, who are called "masters" of their tomb—meaning they own it. The word there for master is the plural of *Mar*. It is obvious that when it comes to males there is no hesitation to read *Mar* as a title. Even Jesus was referred to as *Mar* in the New Testament, in the early Christian Aramaic prayer—*Mar-na-tha*—meaning "our Lord come (1 Corinthians 16:22)."[24] The second inscription names a woman named Alexa, who is called Mara—just as in the Mariamene inscription. Rather than a second name, we take it as a title, so the inscription would read: "this is the ossuary of Alexa, [the] Lady." It is a title of honor. Her name is given in the possessive case—showing the ossuary belongs to her, but her title is nominative—indicating it is not part of her proper name.

What we can say at this point is that the assertion that the names in the Jesus tomb are common simply does not stand up to scrutiny. Two of the inscriptions turn out to be quite rare and unique; Yoseh and Mariamenon Mara, and they both appear to have linguistic links with the names of individuals close to Jesus—namely his brother Joseph and Mary Magdalene. These linguistic links alone do not constitute proof that the bones of these individuals were in those ossuaries but it certainly opens the case for further consideration.

Tomb A: The Numbers

There have been some sophisticated attempts to do statistical analysis on the cluster of names asking the question of the likelihood, given the frequencies of occurrence of each of these names, that they would appear in a tomb together. It is one thing to ask what are the odds of finding a "Jesus" in a tomb of this period, but quite another to ask—what about a "Jesus son of Joseph"? Each time we add a name, or a relationship, the odds change, based on how rare or common a particular name might be.

The most formidable study is the peer-reviewed paper by Professor Andrey Feuerverger of the University of Toronto with a set of six responses. Since that paper there have been a series of further papers and responses with wildly differing results.[25] It has become clear that statistical results will differ according to the assumptions one uses in running the numbers. We have the data in terms of the name frequencies of both males and females during the time of Jesus. What is impressive about this database is that the wider sample by Professor Tal Ilan, that includes all references, literary and inscriptional, from 200 BCE to 200 CE in the land of Israel, compares favorably with the name frequencies we find on the much smaller random sample of 650 inscribed ossuaries from tombs around Jerusalem in this period. Based on this data, we can say with confidence that 3.9% of males had the name Jesus, 21.9% were called Mary, 6.5% were named Judah, and so forth. These numbers include all the forms of the names lumped together. For example, the count for Mary would include all Greek and Hebrew variants such as *Mariame, Maria, Mariam, Marias*, and so forth. The count for Jesus would include *Yeshua, Yehoshua, Yeshu, Iesous*, and other minor variants.

Some have charged that the statistical calculations of Feuerverger and others are flawed. Unfortunately these individuals have not kept up with the advances in the discussion since 2007, particularly by Kevin Kilty and Mark Elliott, that are available on-line.[26] The most reasonable informed summary of the various studies, their variables, and the main issues at stake is the work of statistician Jerry Lutgen. His two papers, "The Talpiot tomb: What are the Odds?" and "Did the Set of Names from the Talpiot tomb Arise by Chance?" set these statistical studies in their proper context.[27]

What the statistical studies are asking is how often this set of names would occur by chance if they were drawn randomly from the entire set of names in use during the period of time in question. As the probability of this set of names occurring by chance goes down the probability that this is the family tomb of the New Testament Jesus goes up.

What Lutgen shows, based on the work of Kilty and Elliot, is that the numbers will vary significantly depending on how the names Jesus son of Joseph, Mariamene, and Yoseh are treated. If the latter two are taken as generic names for Mary and Joseph, two of the most frequent male and female names of the period then the probability comes out quite low.

For example, if Yoseh is taken as just another generic Joseph you get a probability of only 3%, but if it is taken as the rare form discussed above, the probability rises to 47%. If you then add a rare Mariamene, with a generic Joseph you get 81%. Finally if you count *both* names as rare—which we believe they are—factoring in their rarity, the probability rises to 99.2%. This high percentage might not be intuitive, but it is mathematically sound, given the data we have on name frequencies.

We do not believe that statistics alone *prove* one way or the other that the Talpiot Jesus tomb is that of Jesus of Nazareth but what the statistics do show is that the oft repeated assertion

that lots of tombs in Jerusalem, either discovered or undiscovered, have, or would likely have, a similar sets of names is false.

Approximately 1000 cave-tombs have been opened in the Jerusalem area in the past 150 years with over 2000 documented ossuaries.[28] The latest catalogue of inscriptions from Jerusalem lists nearly 600 inscribed ossuaries, or approximately 30% of the total.[29] Of the 2000 or more known tombs that have been opened and examined in Jerusalem over the past 100 years *there is not a single of them, other than this Talpiot tomb, that one could even make an argument might be the family tomb of Jesus.* It is not as though there are a half-dozen or so other possible tombs that might fit Jesus and his family, and we have chosen to focus on this one. *There are no others*. Invariably the other tombs that have a Jesus inscription of any kind are clustered with names like Shelamzion, Chananiya, Shapira, Dositheos, Daniel, Menachem, or Sara, that have no known association with Jesus of Nazareth in our texts. That does not prove the Talpiot tomb belongs to Jesus but it certainly shows that the assertion that there is nothing special about this tomb, making it worthy of discussion and consideration, is patently false.

Tomb B: The Iconographic Image and the Inscription

Of the many fascinating features revealed in our robotic camera probe of Tomb B two in particular stood out. First, on ossuary 6, on the front left panel, there is an iconographic image that we interpret as representing "Jonah and the great fish." Second, on ossuary 5, squeezed into the middle front panel between two rosettes, is a four line Greek inscription that we read as an affirmation of resurrection of the dead. We argued that both of these ossuaries, found in a tomb less than 60 meters from the "Jesus" family tomb, most likely represented expressions of faith in "resurrection of the dead" on the part of followers of Jesus. The icon we relate to the "sign of

Jonah" elaborated in Matthew 12:40. The four line Greek inscription we understood as a précis of the prayer of the Prophet Jonah from the belly of the fish found in Jonah 2:2-6.

Our elaborated arguments for both interpretations were published as "A Preliminary Report of an Exploration of a Sealed 1st Century Tomb in East Talpiot, Jerusalem" now archived at the *Bible and Interpretation* web site. This lengthy report was done with critical input from a group of scholars representing various fields of expertise.[30] For the month following this publication numerous colleagues offered their critical evaluations of our analysis of both the Jonah image and the Greek inscription—for the most part sharply dissenting from our interpretations—on both the ASOR Blog and the *Bible and Interpretation* web sites.[31]

The Iconographic Image

A half-dozen scholars initially argued that our ossuary image was a funerary monument or *nephesh*, an interpretation we had considered in our preliminary study and rejected on a number of grounds, not the least of which would be that such a "tower" would be portrayed up-side-down—a most unlikely possibility in our view.[32] With a week or so the winds of interpretation seemed to shift toward seeing the image as an *amphora* or vase of some type—a view we had also considered and rejected.



A precise replica of the face of ossuary 6

We see no reason to change our initial interpretation of "Jonah and the fish" and James Charlesworth's observation that the markings in the lower part of the image clearly spelled out the word יונה we find most convincing:[33] Robert Deutsch and Rachil Hachlili, both of whom have a keen eye and wide experience in such materials, agree.



The Hebrew name YONAH/Jonah etched across on the face of the Fish

Beyond posts and comments on various blogs and web sites the only two peer-reviewed published articles I have seen dealing with our iconic image are by Prof. Peter Lampe and Prof. William Tabbernee respectively, both of whom support our "Jonah" interpretation.[34]

The Four-Line Greek Inscription

We connect the inscription to the story of Jonah and his cry from the belly of the great fish that early Christians interpreted as symbolically representing Jesus being raised up from death (Jonah 2:2, 5-6; Matthew 12:40). We translated the inscription as: *O Divine IAIO [Yahweh], Raise up! Raise up!* or perhaps, *I, Divine IAIO [Yahweh], raise up! Raise up*! We found the symmetry of the inscription quite impressive: four lines made up of four words, alternating in Greek, Hebrew, Greek, and Hebrew.



A precise replica of the face of ossuary 5 with the Greek inscription

Other than the Jewish followers of Jesus we know of no examples of Jonah as an iconic image among Jews in the late 2nd Temple period, nor is the story of Jonah related to the idea of resurrection of the dead. In contrast, followers of Jesus seize on the motif, relate it to Jesus' resurrection after three days, and it becomes *the* most ubiquitous funerary symbol for later Christians (Matthew 12:39-40 which is elaborated Q). Accordingly, we connect this unique symbolism, both in the image and the inscription, with Jonah, and thus with early followers of Jesus expressing their resurrection faith. We are convinced that its close proximity to tomb A, or the "Jesus family" tomb is thus significant and the two tombs are related both by their location on the same wealthy estate and their contents.

Since our publication Richard Bauckham and Chris Rollston have made various counter-proposals as to possible translations. Bauckham's original analysis was published on the ASOR blog March 8, 2012, which you can find read the inscription possibly as: *I, Hagab, exalt (you) Zeus IAIO*, but more probably, in his view: *Belonging to Zeus IAIO/I, Hagab, exalt (him/you)*. IAIO he took to be a Greek transliteration of the divine Name YHVH/Yehovah. Bauckham took the rather enigmatic final three letters of the inscription: A G B as the post-Exilic name Hagab/Hagabah, or "Locust," (Ezra 2:45-46) but written in Greek letters, and thus equivalent to the New Testament name of the early Christian prophet Agabus (Acts 11:28: Ἄγαβος).[35]

Subsequently, Chris Rollston, who had accepted Bauckham's Hagab reading as a proper name, published his own take on the ASOR blog, rejecting any reference to IAIO/YHVH, and proposing instead the translations: *Here are bones. I touch them not, O Agabus*, or, *Here are (my) bones. I, Agabus, crumble not away*," with several possible grammatical variations.[36]

Rollston's reading depended on taking the first letter of line two as a Tau rather than an Iota, which we have continued to disagree about. Greg Snyder, in response, continued to read the inscription as some kind of magical incantation invoking Zeus-IAIO but had not settled on a translation of the whole.[37] In all these cases Rollston took ΔΕ to be short version of words like ωδε and ενθαδε, used in Greek burial inscriptions. The verb ψαω (contracted ψω) means (used intransitively) 'to crumble away,' 'to disappear', and has lexical overlap with ψαυω, which means 'to touch'. The plural of οστεον is often contracted to οστα, and Rollston argues that the additional ε can be understood as a dialectal or orthographic variant or as a simple misspelling of οστεα. Although Rollston's readings might be plausible they don't seem to make much sense and are dependent on a rather obscure verb ψαω with an unclear meaning in this context, as well as misspellings and other questionable variables.

READINGS

(1)Tabor-Bauckham-Snyder	ΔΙΟΣ | ΙΑΙΟ | ΥΨΩ | ΑΓΒ
(2) Rollston 1	ΔΕΟΣ | ΤΑΕΟ | ΥΨΩ | ΑΓΒ
(3) Rollston 2 (Hull)	ΔΙΟΣ | ΤΑΕΟ | ΥΨΩ | ΑΓΒ
(4) Bauckham 2	ΔΙΟΣ | ΤΑΙΟ | ΥΨΩ | ΑΓΒ

Bauckham's second contribution, published on Larry Hurtado's blog, reviewed all the proposals to date, accepted Rollston's reading of "*Here are bones*" rather than "*Zeus IAIO*" and added: *On account of (the) bones, alas, I Hagab, am crumbling away*, but noted that this really does not make much sense. Most recently Bauckham has a radical new interpretation published at Mark Goodacre's blog in which he proposes the inscription is two, or possibly even three, rather obscure names: Δυ(ο)σταιου Ψω/αγβ, or *of Dostai Psw/agb*, taking the latter term either some form of an Egyptian name that uses the Egyptian god Shu (and possibly the god Geb) or simply the names of three individuals: *Dostai*, *Psw*, and *Hagab*, going back to his original proposal for the final three letters.[38] He has more recently suggested that we have here an apotropaic alphabet cipher.[39]

These various attempts to translate this fascinating inscription are most welcome. Though they are a bit technical, in the end, once you understand the basic issues over which there are disagreements, I believe there is an elegantly simple solution. I remain convinced of the main elements of our initial transliteration and readings and I am particularly convinced that the close parallels between the Greek inscription, the cry or plea in the book of Jonah (2:2, 5-6) asking Yahweh to "lift up" from Sheol, and the image of the fish with YONAH written across the mouth are quite compelling.

[1] The special session consisted of my summary of this paper (40 minutes) with responses from Chris Rollston, George Washington University (20 minutes) and Mark Goodacre, Duke University (20 minutes), concluding with my response to both (20 minutes).

[2] There are three published reports on the tomb, each tantalizingly sparse in details with some differences between them: Amos Kloner, *Excavations and Surveys in Israel 1982*, vol. 1, 78-81 (October 1982), p. 51; Amos Kloner, *Survey of Jerusalem: the Southern Sector* (Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, 2000), p. 84; Kloner and Zissu, *Necropolis of Jerusalem*, pp. 342, which contains a map by Kloner. The IAA files contain one single memo dated August 2, 1981 plus some photographs. An April 17, 1981 memo that Kloner wrote right after his team finished their work is referenced in the August 2nd memo but nowhere to be found. Kloner's recollections, now revised, are forthcoming in Amos Kloner and Shimon Gibson, "The Talpiot tomb Reconsidered: The Archaeological Facts," in *The Tomb of Jesus and His Family? Exploring Ancient Jewish Tombs Near Jerusalem's Walls: The Fourth Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*, eds. James H. Charlesworth and Arthur C. Boulet (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013). The ossuary Kloner removed is now catalogued as IAA 81-505. See Rahmani, *CJO* #741, p. 229 and plate 106. Curiously, the Rahmani catalogue lists this ossuary from a nearby site, the Mount of Offense, east of the Old City of Jerusalem, and calls it as a "chance find," but Kloner has

identified it as the one he removed and the IAA files show it was examined and photographed at the Rockefeller Museum.

[3] See James D. Tabor, "Two Burials of Jesus of Nazareth and The Talpiot Yeshua Tomb," SBL Forum , n.p. [cited March 2007]. Online: http://sbl-site.org/Article.aspx?ArticleID=651. The additional objections that a Jesus family tomb, if such ever existed, would likely be located in Nazareth in the Galilee, not in Jerusalem; a Jesus ossuary inscription would likely be elegant on a highly decorated ossuary; and that Jesus and his followers were too poor to have a rock-hewn tomb and Jesus was more likely put in a shaft tomb, the location of which was long ago forgotten we also address in our book but I will not discuss in this paper.

[4] Amos Kloner, "Did a Rolling Stone Close Jesus' Tomb?" *Biblical Archaeology Review* 22:5 (1999): 23-29, 26. Kloner cites several rabbinic texts to support his assertion. Compare his fuller academic treatment "Reconstruction of the Tomb in the Rotunda of the Holy Sepulchre According to Archaeological Finds and Jewish Burial Customs of the First century CE," in *The Beginnings of Christianity. A Collection of Articles* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2005), pp. 269-278.

[5] Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part I, Palestine 330BCE-200CE*, Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism 91 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002).

[6] Below is a list of all known ossuary inscriptions with any form of the name "Jesus" cited with reference numbers from Cotton, *et. al. Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palestinae, Volume I: Jerusalem. Part 1:1-704* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010):

#36. Iesus, father of Simonides: Ιησους πατηρ Σιμονιδου
Faint charcoal, red wash
Sanhedria
Beth Shemesh, IAA 1981-525 (Rahmani 751)

#109. Yeshu'a son of Dositheos (Dostas): ישוע בר דוסתס
Mt Scopus, west of Augusta Victoria
Israel Museum, IAA 1946-183 (Rahmani 121)

#139. Yehoshua: יהשוע
Kidron Valley (Shiloah)
Rockefeller Museum, IAA 1936-913 (Rahmani 63).

#195. Yeshu'a: ישוע
Name written twice, same hand. Above names: בה
Dominus Flevit, Mt of Olives, Chamber 437:120
**N.b. 9 ossuaries of 22 found in chamber 437. Other names were [Hebrew/Aramaic]:'Azariya son of Zekhariya; Hananiya son of Shimon and Maria daughter of Agra; Yehosef son of Agra; Yehuda;, Martha; Shalom wife of Shapir; Tuvia son of Agra; [Greek] Zechariah, Mariame, Elazar and Simon.
SBF Museum, no inventory number

#206. Yeshu'a: ישוע
Dominus Flevit, Mt of Olives, Trench 425:93
Found with one other ossuary in a trench: Abaskanotos in Greek.
SBF Museum, SF 1109

#239. Shim'on Yeshu'a: שמעון ישוע
Mt of Olives, Cave 38, near new Jewish cemetery, 1946.
Hebrew University Institute of Archaeology, #8165

#247. Jesus, Jesus: IECOYC IECOYC
Mt of Olives, Mt of Offence (Jebel Batn el-Hawa), 1873
Drawings by Dr. Thomas Chaplin, published by Clermont-Ganneau (PEF Archives)
Cross/X mark to left of first instance.

#267. Of Ioanes (son of) Iesous: IΩANHOYIHΣIOY
Slope of Mt of Offense, discovered 1937. Two of 13, the other Ezra
Unclear Hebrew: אבלחן? Abraham?
Rockefeller Museum, IAA 1937-1141 (Rahmani 89)

#295. Yeshua Iesoua: ישועה IEΣOYA
Bilingual, one name over another, end of ossuary, spelling with final ה is unusual as is spelling of Jesus, normally Ιησους but this known from Syria.
Akeldama Cave 2, Chamber B, ossuary 15 (found 1989, part of three cave complex, possibly large clan from Syria, Greek names predominate: Chares, Eiras, Erotas, Doras, Megiste, Ariston, Helena,)

Beth Shemesh, IAA 1993-1694.

#320. Yeshu'a: ישוע
Kidron Valley, Wadi Yasul or Wadi Beth Sachur, published by Clermont-Ganneau (along with #152, 318, 319. Provenance unclear. Name based on drawing.
Present location unknown

#425. Iesous: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ
Lid of ossuary, badly worn, provenance unknown
École Biblique, no inventory number.

#473. Yehuda son of Yeshu'a: יהודה בר ישוע
East Talpiot, 1980
Israel Museum, IAA 1980-501 (Rahmani 702)

#474. Yeshu'a (?) son of Yehosef: ישוע בר יהוסף
Unskilled hand, difficult to read, large X mark to right of inscription
East Talpiot, 1980
Beth Shemesh, IAA 1980-503 (Rahmani 704)

#479. Iesous Aloth(?): ΙΗΣΟΥΣΑΛΩΘ
Cross-like symbols in charcoal on all four sides
Aloth(?) possible nickname
Hebron Road, 1945 by Sukenik
Rockefeller Museum, IAA 1946-174 (Rahmani 114)
*(2/28/2011 lid not located, misplaced or missing)

#480. Iesous son of Iou[das]: ΙΗΣΟΥΣΙΟΥ
Rahmani read: Jesus son of Juda; Sukenik: Iesous woe! (ΙΟΥ)
Hebron Road, 1945 by Sukenik
Rockefeller Museum, IAA 1946-173 (Rahmani 113)

#489. Yeshu'a bar Mati: ישוע בר מתי
*Written twice on side and lid, very cursive script
Malcha, reported by Clermont-Ganneau
Present location and provenance unknown

#546. Yeshu'a: ישוע
Fragment of an ossuary, name in a "circle" (Figueras "fish"), see #87 (Rahmani 856) for another example, CIIJ also mentions #477—Mariamene from the Talpiot tomb!
Provenance unknown
Israel Museum, IAA 1953-1223 (Rahmani 140)

#547. Yeshu and Yeshu'a son of Yehosef: ישו ישוע בר יהוסף
Found by Sukenik in basement of DAP.
Israel Museum, IAA S-767 (Rahmani 9)

#531. Ya'akov son of Yosef brother of Yeshu'a; (יעקוב יוסף אחוי דישוע
Surfaced in 2002 from collector Oded Golan, supposedly from Silwan
Currently in IAA possession, uncatalogued

#548. Iesous, son of Iesous, of Iesous: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΙΗΣΟΥΥΟΣ ΙΗΣΟΥ
Provenance unknown
SBF Museum, SF 7605

#583. Iesous: ΙΗΣΟΥΣ
With names Popeli and Ioses, all three names in nominative
Provenance unknown
Rockefeller Museum, IAA 1934-7753 (Rahmani 56)
(3/1/2011 finger bone]

[7] See Pau Figueras, *Jewish and Christian Beliefs of Life After Death in the Light of the Ossuary* Decoration, Ph.D. Hebrew University Ph.D. Dissertation, 1974. His more comprehensive work is *Decorated Jewish Ossuaries* Documenta Et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui 20 (Leiden: Brill, 1983) and E. L. Sukenik, "The Earliest Records of Christianity," in *American Journal of Archaeology* 51 (1947): 351-65 as well as our complete analysis in *The Jesus Discovery*, pp. 94-103.

[8] See Rahmani, *COJO*, pp. 15-16.

[9] Even today in Israel if one fills out a legal document (visa application, court forms, contracts, etc.) the name of one's father is given. The custom also prevails in Jewish prayers and liturgy, where individuals are identified as "so-and-so, the son-of or daughter-of, so-and-so."

[10] In later rabbinic texts the nickname Yosi becomes quite popular but it never occurs on any ossuary in this period and it is decidedly different from Yoseh. See the comprehensive study of Eldad Keynan, A Critical Evaluation of the Occurrences of Common Names, Rare Names, and

Nicknames: The Name YOSEH (יוסה) from the Talpiot tomb as a Test Case," in *The Tomb of Jesus and His Family? Exploring Ancient Jewish Tombs Near Jerusalem's Walls: The Fourth Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*, eds. James H. Charlesworth and Arthur C. Boulet (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, forthcoming, 2011).

[11] Cotton, *et. al., CIIJ* no. 116 suggests a reading of "Maria Yoseh" for one additional ossuary but this is unlikely, see Rahmani, *COJO*, no. 8. According to Tal Ilan, Joseph is represented as 217 out of a total of 2538 named males. *Yoseh* in Aramaic does show up in two other non-ossuary sources, making a total of three known occurrences:

#46. Iose: IΩΣE
Giv'at Ha-Mivtar (same tomb as Avshalom & Hillel son of David)
Near 53 Midbar Sinai Street
Bet Shemesh, IAA 1971-424 (Rahmani 444)

#81. Iose, Leazaros: IOΣE ΛEAZ APOΣ
Both in nominative, maybe two people or Iose is "son of" Lazarus/Eleazar
Mt Scopus
Beth Shemesh, IAA 1975-675 (Rahmani 576)

#116. Maria Yose?: מריהיסה (Naveh: Mar Yehose)
Mt Scopus, western slope
Rockefeller Museum, IAA S-765 (Rahmani 8)

#231. Ioses (of Ioudas of Phaidros): IΩΣHΣ
Sisters of Zion, Mt of Olives, southern slope
Found 1902, location today?

#475. Yose: יוסה
East Talpiot, 1980
Beth Shemesh, IAA 1980-504 (Rahmani 705)

#573. Iose: IOΣH
Provenance unknown, with Martha and Mocheros
Museum École Biblique, no inventory number

#583. Ioses: IΩΣHΣ
Inscribed twice, with Popeli and Ioses

Providence unknown
Rockefeller Museum, IAA 1934-7753 (Rahmani 56)
(Finger bone 3/1/2011)

[12] See James Tabor, *The Jesus Dynasty*, pp. 243-304 for a survey of what is known about James the brother of Jesus.

[13] Several manuscripts of Mark have *Yoseh* (Ιωση), which is much closer to the Aramaic, but Joses (Ιωσης) is the preferred reading.

[14] See S. J. Pfann, "Mary Magdalene Has Left the Room. A Suggested New Reading of Ossuary CJO 701," *Near Eastern Archaeology* 69: 3-4 (2006): 130-131. Pfann's reading is accepted by Jonathan Price and others, see Cotton, *et. al., CIIP*, no. 447.

[15] Even though we do not accept the reading "Mariam and Martha" it is worth pointing out that those two names come up in the gospels for two sisters who live in Bethany, near Jerusalem, along with their brother Lazarus (John 11:1). According to our records Jesus is quite close to this family, so ironically, the names "Mary and Martha" are not alien to the Jesus tradition of intimates. Some have even suggested that the Mary of Bethany is Mary Magdalene.

[16] See Rahmani, *COJO*, no. 701 as well as his introductory comments, p. 14. The Greek is in the genitive case, a diminutive form of Μαριαμηνη. This form of the name is rare and is found also on one other ossuary, Rahmani #108. Di Segni supports Rahmani's reading (as per private e-mail correspondence with the author in 2007).

[17] See Rachmani, *COJO*, no. 108. It is interesting to note that Jonathan Price, who disputes Rachmani's reading of the Talpiot tomb as Mariame*n*e, accepts tentatively his reading of this second ossuary as Mariame*n*e—and yet the inscriptions are almost identical, see Cotton, *et. al., CIIP*, no. 133 as well as the representations in Rahmani of the inscriptions themselves.

[18] Hippolytus, *Refutation of All Heresies* 5.7.1.

[19] See Cotton, *et. al., CIIP*, no. 97.

[20] Cotton, *et. al., CIIP*, nos. 97, 200, 262, 517 and 563. We do not accept that no. 543 is using Mara for a male named Joseph. A close examination shows a line break that would indicate this man is being called Mar—*the* son of Benaya, son of Yehuda. See the limited examples of the use of Mar/Mara in Aramaic and Greek in Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in late Antiquity,* pp. 422-423.

[21] See Cotton, *et. al., CIIP*, no. 262 where Jonathan Price writes that although Mara is short for Martha it can be a title.

[22] *Mara*, which comes from the Aramaic masculine word *Mar* is the absolute feminine, whereas "Marta" (Martha) is the emphatic feminine. They both come from the same masculine noun and mean the same thing, but Martha evolved more into a name and is common (18 examples on ossuaries), whereas Mara functions more as a title and is rare.

[23] #97. Mara Martha: מרתא מרה
Shulamit Garden, Mt Scopus
> on lid with no matching mark on body
Beth Shemesh, IAA 1971-669

#200. Mara: MAPA ? Maybe Maria?
Name *Storgé*/ΣΤΟΡΓΗ just below Mara, possible same person, with Chresimos father of Demarchia
Dominus Flevit, Mt of Olives, Chamber 452:61
SBF Museum, SFB 00432

#262. Mara: מרא (? פרא פדא) Note two other Marthas in tomb: #252, 253 below.
Mt of Olives, Mt of Offence (Jebel Batn el-Hawa), 1973
Drawings by Dr. Thomas Chaplin, omitted by Clermont-Ganneau (PEF Archives)

#477. Mariame and Mara or Mariam (known as) Mara: MAPIAMHKAIMAPA
Rahmani: of Mariamene known as Mara: MAPIAMHNOY|MAPA

Written in one hand, sweeping bulging circle around name. Compare: #133. Mariamnou: μαριαμνου (Genitive, cf. #477/Rahmani 701). This form along with Mariame, three "fish" on the front over the rosettes, one with X inside, not mentioned in CIIP. Kidron Valley, Wadi el-Ahmadiye, Rockefeller Museum, IAA 1942-159 (Rahmani 108)

#517. Alexa Mara: ΑΛΕΞΑΣΜΑΡΑΜΗΤΗΡ
Below, separate lines: Iouda; Simon her son
Chance find, no details
Beth Shemesh, IAA 1983-570 (Rahmani 868)

#563. Mara daughter of Levi: מרה ברת לו
Provenance unknown
Collection of Arnold Spaer, Jerusalem

[24] Paul translates the Aramaic into Greek as *maranatha*.

[25] Andrey Feuerverger, "Statistical Analysis of an Archaeological Find," *The Annals of Applied Statistics* 2 (2008): 3-54; followed by six discussion papers in response and a final rejoinder by Feuerverger, pp. 66-73; 99-112.

[26] Since Feuerverger's publication the statistical discussion and its variables has been considerably advanced by Kevin Kilty and Mark Elliott, "Probability, Statistics, and the Talpiot tomb,"
http://www.lccc.wy.edu/Media/Website%20Resources/documents/Education%20Natural%20and%20Social%20Sciences/tomb.pdf and "Inside the Numbers on the Talpiot tombs,"
http://www.lccc.wy.edu/Media/Website%20Resources/documents/Education%20Natural%20and%20Social%20Sciences/tombNumbers.pdf.

[27] "The Talpiot tomb: What Are the Odds?"
http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/tomb357926.shtml and
http://talpiottomb.com/common_names_v4.3b.doc.

[28] The reason these numbers are imprecise is that many of these tombs have been destroyed or were never recorded and hundreds of the estimated ossuaries have disappeared or been lost over time. See Hannah M. Cotton, and others, eds., *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae*, vol. I.1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), p. 8-9, and Amos Kloner and Boaz Zissu, *The Necropolis of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period*, Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 8 (Leuven-Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2007), pp. 30-31. Zissu was able to locate 793 cave-tombs within two miles distance from the Old City of Jerusalem. Cotton's *Corpus* is abbreviated *CIIP* with specific ossuaries designated by number.

[29] Cotton, *CIIP*, pp. 65-609. Most of these inscribed ossuaries are in the Israeli State Collection though various ecclesiastic institutions and even private individuals in and around the Old City of Jerusalem have their own collections. Rahmani's older catalogue of ossuaries in the Israel State collection up through 1989 lists 227 inscribed ossuaries of a total of 897, or 25%, see *CJO*, p. 11. Typically 60% are Hebrew/Aramaic, 30% are Greek, and 10% are mixed with Greek and Hebrew.

[30] See http://bibleinterp.com/articles/tab368028.shtml. Those scholars consulted were Richard Bauckham (Emeritus, St. Andrews), James H. Charlesworth (Princeton Theological Seminary), John Dominic Crossen (Emeritus, DePaul University), Steven Fine (Yeshiva University), Robin Jensen (Vanderbilt University), Eric Meyers (Duke University), Chris Rollston (Emmanuel Seminary, now George Washington University), and H. Greg Snyder (Davidson College).

[31] See subsequent individual posts at the ASOR site beginning here: http://asorblog.org/?p=1608, and *Bible and Interpretation* under search term "Talpiot" at http://bibleinterp.com.

[32] Eric Meyers, Steven Fine, Chris Rollston, Robin Jensen, Jodi Magness, Bob Cargill as published at the ASOR blog during early March 2012.

[33] http://jamestabor.com/2012/05/18/professor-james-h-charlesworth-on-the-jonah-image-and-talpiot-tombs/

[34] Peter Lampe, "Jona in der Jesustradition des ersten Jahrhunderts auf der Grundlage literarischer und archäologischer Zeugnisse," P. V. Gemünden, D. Horrell, M. Küchler (eds.), *Jesus—Gestalt und Gestaltungen: Rezeptionen des Galiläers in Wissenschaft, Kirche und Gesellschaft* (Festschrift for Gerd Theißen), (NTOA 93), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2013, pp. 335-360; William Tabbernee, "Material Evidence for Early Christian Groups During the First Two Centuries," in *Annali di Storia dell' Esegesi* (April, 2013, forthcoming).

[35] http://asorblog.org/?p=1848#more-1848

[36] http://asorblog.org/?p=1989. His suggested variations were: *Here are bones. I touch (them) not. Agabus; Here are bones: I, Agabus, touch (them) not; Here are bones: May I not touch (them), O Agabus; Here are bones: May I, Agabus, not touch (them); and Here are (my) bones, may I not crumble away.*

[37] http://asorblog.org/?p=2037

[38] http://ntweblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/07/a-new-interpretation-of-greek-ossuary.html

[39] http://markgoodacre.org/TalpiyotB%20Yet%20Again.pdf