

Eilat Mazar

THE OPHEL EXCAVATIONS to the South of the Temple Mount 2009–2013

FINAL REPORTS VOLUME II



Eilat Mazar

THE OPHEL EXCAVATIONS to the South of the Temple Mount 2009–2013

FINAL REPORTS VOLUME II

With contributions by

*Gerald Finkielsztein, Asher Grossberg, Liora Kolska Horwitz, Tzachi Lang,
Omri Lernau, Reut Livyatan Ben-Arie, Hagai Misgav, Jonathan R. Morgan,
Alla Rabinovich, Orit Shamir, Naama Sukenik*



CONTENTS

Preface	ix
-------------------	----

PART I. THE HERODIAN PERIOD

CHAPTER I.1	The Herodian Period in the Ophel in Light of the New Excavations of 2009–2013 <i>Eilat Mazar</i>	7
CHAPTER I.2	Area E2011(1994, 2009): Architecture and Stratigraphy <i>Eilat Mazar and Tzachi Lang</i>	19
CHAPTER I.3	Area A2012: Architecture and Stratigraphy <i>Eilat Mazar and Tzachi Lang</i>	43
CHAPTER I.4	Area A2013: Architecture and Stratigraphy <i>Eilat Mazar and Tzachi Lang</i>	73
CHAPTER I.5	Area Upper A2013: Architecture and Stratigraphy <i>Eilat Mazar and Tzachi Lang</i>	91
CHAPTER I.6	Areas B2012–2013 and C2013: Architecture and Stratigraphy <i>Eilat Mazar and Tzachi Lang</i>	103
APPENDIX A	The Herodian Pottery from Areas A–C2012 of the New Ophel Excavations <i>Eilat Mazar and Sonia Pinsky</i>	135
CHAPTER I.7	The Large Ophel Pool and the Question of its Use as a Ritual Bath (<i>Mikveh</i>) <i>Asher Grossberg</i>	149

PART II. THE IRON AGE IIB

CHAPTER II.1	The Rule of King Hezekiah in Light of the New Ophel Excavations of 2009–2013 <i>Eilat Mazar</i>	175
CHAPTER II.2	Area A2009: Architecture and Stratigraphy <i>Eilat Mazar and Tzachi Lang</i>	187
APPENDIX B	The Pottery from the Ophel, L09-421b (Area A2009) <i>Eilat Mazar and Jonathan R. Morgan</i>	225
APPENDIX C	Ostraca from the Ophel, Area A2009 <i>Hagai Misgav</i>	243
CHAPTER II.3	Hebrew Seal Impressions (bullae) from the Ophel, Area A2009 <i>Eilat Mazar and Reut Livyatan Ben-Arie</i>	247
CHAPTER II.4	Fabric imprints on the Reverse of Bullae from the Ophel, Area A2009 <i>Naama Sukenik and Orit Shamir</i>	281
CHAPTER II.5	Iron Age IIB Faunal remains from The Ophel, Area A2009 <i>Liora Kolska Horwitz and Omri Lernau</i>	289

PART III. THE EARLY IRON AGE IIA1–2: THE “FAR HOUSE” AT THE OPHEL

CHAPTER III.1	The Fortified Enclosure dated to the Early Iron Age IIA1–2: The “Far House” <i>Eilat Mazar</i>	315
CHAPTER III.2	The Fortified Enclosure at the Ophel — The “Far House”: Architecture and Stratigraphy <i>Eilat Mazar and Tzachi Lang</i>	325

CHAPTER II.1

THE RULE OF KING HEZEKIAH IN LIGHT OF THE NEW OPHEL EXCAVATIONS OF 2009–2013

Eilat Mazar

When King Hezekiah was crowned as king of Judah, in 727 BCE, he maintained the policy of his father Aḥaz, who had asked the Assyrian king to come and save him from Pekah ben Remaliyahu King of Israel and Rezin King of Aram–Damascus. These two kings had attacked Judah in concert and sieged Jerusalem (2 Kgs 15:36–37). Hezekiah stayed loyal to the Assyrian king Sargon II (727–705 BCE), who ruled during most of Hezekiah’s reign, while the surrounding kingdoms of Hamat, Israel and the Philistines, one after the other, rebelled and became Assyrian vassals. It is only after Sargon II’s death, in 705 BCE, that Hezekiah rebelled fully against Assyria. Still, according to the Assyrian annals, Hezekiah, too, had been involved in a rebellion against Sargon II, in 712 BCE, resulting in the conquest of Ashdod which became an Assyrian vassal. However, only a heavy tax payment was imposed on Hezekiah, who probably arrived to pay in time, thus saving himself and his kingdom from a similar fate. Subsequently, Hezekiah led regional preparations for a rebellion against Assyria, which eventually broke out after Sargon II’s death.

The policy of Hezekiah, during most of his reign, of avoiding confrontation with Sargon II and as a result enjoy relative freedom by not becoming an Assyrian vassal, enabled him to focus on Judah’s internal affairs. Under his rule, Judah became a center for all the people of Israel, including the inhabitants of the former Kingdom of Israel, and the temple in Jerusalem played a major role as the holiest place for all. Hezekiah is described in 2 Kings as the greatest king, second to King David, “his father:” “There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him” (2 Kgs 18:5).

In Hezekiah’s time, two palaces had been already functioning in Jerusalem for over two hundred years: The Lower House of the King in the City of David (Neh 12:37), and the Upper House of the King in the Ophel (Neh 3:25). These palaces served as comprehensive complexes and were used both as the residence of the king and his extended family and for the multiple activities related to the kingdom and the king. The Upper House of the King was built in the open area of the Ophel, to the south of the Temple Mount and about 250 m to the north of the fortified City of David. King Solomon had surrounded the areas of the temple and the new palace-complex at the Ophel with a massive city wall (1 Kgs 3:1; Mazar 2011).

It is reasonable to assume that both palace-complexes went through multiple changes and renovations since their construction. However, a major reinforcing enterprise, undertaken by King Hezekiah in the Lower House of the King, also known as the House of Millo (2 Kgs 12:21 and 2 Chr 24:25; Mazar 2009:67), was particularly worth mentioning in the Bible (2 Chr 32:5) due to its sophisticated and extensive nature (Mazar 2015). This complex functioned as a



Photo II.1.1. General view of the Ophel site, looking northwest. The arrow shows Area A2009 where the bullae of King Hezekiah's and Yesha'iyah(u) were found. Photo courtesy of Andrew Shiva.

palace-fortress, reinforced under Hezekiah's orders as part of his defense preparations towards the upcoming Assyrian attack (2 Chr 32:5).

Iron Age remains were revealed only in an area about 100 m long and 10–25 m wide in the northeastern outskirts of the Ophel (Photo II.1.1). These remains consist, mainly, of a section of the fortification wall built by King Solomon (10th century BCE), with a city gate and parts of large and small towers and sections of royal buildings that were integrated within the fortification line. Due to the steep slanting of the bedrock in this area facing the Kidron Valley, the fortification wall and its integrated buildings were built on particularly massive foundations set straight on bedrock. Remains of these structures were preserved to a height of 4–5 m, only 1–2 m beneath the present surface level.

One of these buildings, adjacent to the city gate on the northeast, was discovered during the 1986–1987 excavations (Mazar E. and Mazar B. 1989:29–48; Mazar 2011:53–100). The building's ground-floor, preserved to a height of about 4 m, was last used by the Royal Bakers, up to its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. The sophisticated administration of the Royal Bakery required a high official in charge and a well-organized supply system of high-quality food products, such as flour, oil, and sweetening agents such as bee-honey, date-honey, fig-honey, and fresh and dry fruits. It also needed a well-organized storage place and baking spaces. Within the ground floor of the building, named the Building of the Royal Bakers, were found some large containing jars (pithoi). On the shoulder of one of these Jars, an incised inscription in ancient Hebrew indicates that it belonged to the high official in charge of the bakery (the end of the word *bakery* is missing, but its reconstruction in this manner is quite certain). On another large jar, which most likely contained date-honey, a palm tree design was incised. That the building was used by the royal bakers at the end of the First Temple period is quite evident, and it may have had the same use at the time of Hezekiah.

Some idea of the building's function in Hezekiah's time is provided by the many finds revealed during the 2009 excavations at the foot of its outer, southern wall (Photo II.1.2). There, two small, undisturbed areas (Patches A and B, each 1×1 m and about 1m high), parts of the piled debris accumulated outside the building (Photos II.1.3a–b; 4a–b), were excavated. Within this debris were found fragments of pottery vessels, ivory inlays, and two kinds of anthropomorphic

Photo II.1.2. Area A2009, showing the Iron Age walls of the Small Tower (left), the Building of the Royal Bakery (center) and the Straight Wall (right), all built on bedrock, with the Byzantine City Wall and the Herodian period Vaulted Room built in-between. View to the northwest.



figurines, one with a pinched face and the other with a prominent bosom of clear fertility significance (Fig. II.1.1). Also were found zoomorphic four legged figurines. All figurines have traces of a white paste that covered them as a clear sign of their cultic significance. Rarely preserved is the red and black paint on the white paste used to show hair, eyes, cloth and other ornaments. The assemblage at the Ophel clearly shows that this addition of a white paste had a cultic significance, also added to various pottery vessels such as cooking pots, bowls, juglets, jugs, jars and even large jars (Fig. II.1.2).



Photos II.1.3a–b. Patch A in Area A2009, during excavations. Undisturbed lower layers were found adjacent to the outer wall of the Building of the Royal Bakers and the Straight Wall, both dated to the Solomonic construction period at the Ophel. A: view to the north. B: view to the northwest.





Photos II.1.4a–b. Patch B in Area A2009, during excavations. Undisturbed lower layers of accumulated debris that had been thrown from the Building of the Royal Bakers were found at the foot of the outer wall of the Small Tower. A: view to the southeast. B: view to the south.

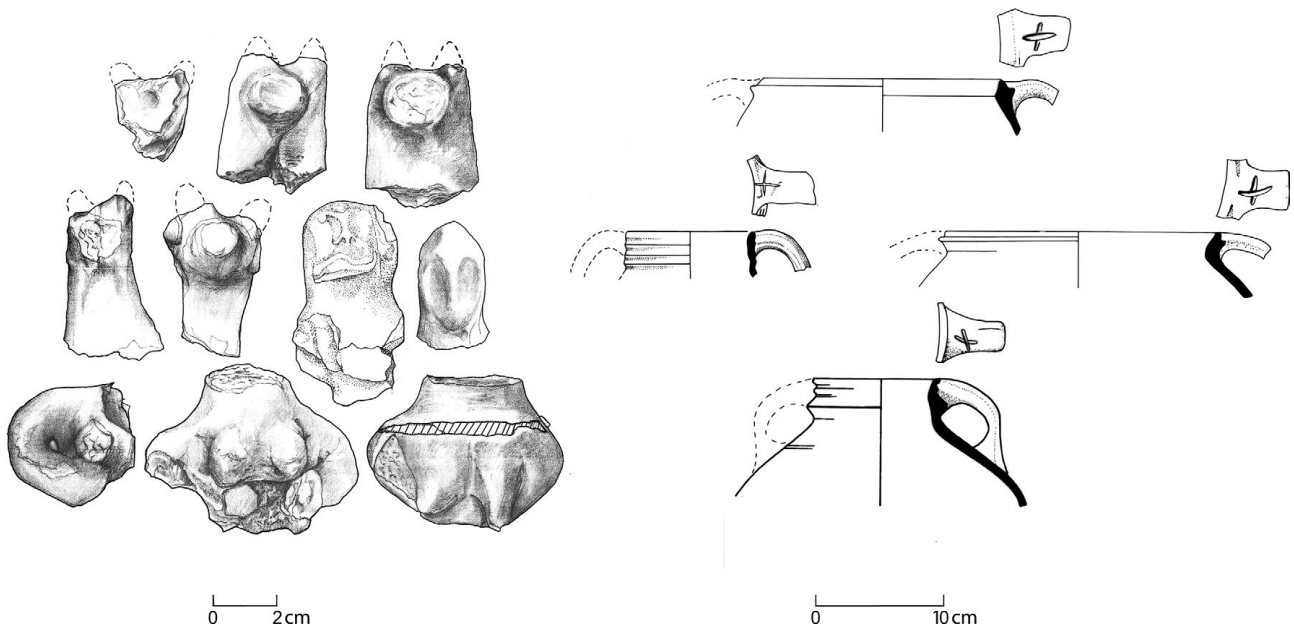


Fig. II.1.1. Anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines and incised cooking pots from the Ophel found together with King Hezekiah's bulla.



Fig. II.1.2. Pottery vessels covered with dense white paste found together with Hezekiah's bulla.

Such anthropomorphic and zoomorphic figurines are commonly found in Iron Age II Jerusalem. In the Ophel assemblage were also present *lmlk* four-winged and two-winged seal impressions on jar handles; thirty-four bullae, most bearing Hebrew names;¹ and free-standing bulla (Fig. II.1.3) that were used as receipts. These and many other finds attest to the wealth of finds lost in the other parts of the piled debris that were disturbed by the Herodian and Byzantine constructions.

Many of the Hebrew seal impressions found within the debris had been stamped on soft-clay bullae about 1 cm in diameter with an inscribed seal bearing the name of its owner. The seal was impressed against the soft clay which, in turn, was impressed against the tide ligature and the linen sack whose negative impressions are clearly seen on the bulla's reverse side. These negatives, some made by coarsely woven linen and thicker cords and some by finer linen and thin cords, are entirely different from those seen on the reverse side of bullae impressed on papyri documents, which were also sealed with tight ligatures and stamped bullae. Among the bullae found in the debris, only five have papyrus negative impressions on their reverse. One of these is the bulla impressed with the personal seal of King Hezekiah (Fig. II.1.4; see discussion below).

Seven of the bullae found in the debris, all with coarsely woven linen negative impressions on their



Fig. II.1.3a–b. A free-standing bulla with the name Aḥiḥur and a winged uraeus symbol at the top. This kind of bullae was used as receipts.



1. The study of the Hebrew bullae from the Ophel excavations was carried out jointly with Reut Livyatan Ben-Arie.



Fig. II.1.4. King Hezekiah's seal impression (bulla) mentioning the names of the king and his father Aḥaz (upper register), as well as Hezekiah's title as king of Judah (lower register). The symbol of the two-winged sun disc flanked on both sides by that of the ankh extends over the full length of the bulla's central part. On the back of the bulla is seen the imprint of the papyrus on which the bulla was impressed.

reverse, belong to the family of Bes (Fig. II.1.5). Three of these belong to one of Bes' grandsons named "Yerahmiel son of Naḥum," and one to a second grandson named "Aḥimelech son of Pel[]." Another son of Bes, whose full name was not preserved, appears on a fifth bulla. The names of the owners of another two bullae, although clearly belonging to sons/grandsons of Bes, could not be identified. That all the bullae of the Bes family mention three instead of the usual two generations, emphasizes the status of Bes as the head of the family, most likely well known in the manufacture of the products held within these coarse linen sacks, or known in the administration associated with it. Although only five names of the Bes family were deciphered, including the name Bes itself, it is clear that none is Yahwistic, pointing, perhaps, to the non-Judaist origin of the family. That these bullae belonged to one family that is linked to coarsely woven linen sealed sacks held within one of the royal buildings at the Ophel, which included a sealed document of the king himself, revives a small but enlightening aspect of the royal administration at the time of King Hezekiah.

Alongside the bullae of Hezekiah and the Bes family, twenty-two bullae with Hebrew



Fig. II.1.5. Seven bullae representing three generations of the Bas family found together with the bulla of King Hezekiah. The Bas family was seemingly involved in the royal administration or were suppliers themselves, and their seal impressions stamp the linen bags held in the Building of the Royal Bakers.

Fig. II.1.6. The bulla of Yeshayah(u) showing the grazing doe, a blessing symbol, at the top, his name in the central register and the letters *nyy* in the lower register. The completion of an additional letter, most likely *an alef*, at the damaged left end of the lower register, completes the word to *nyy(ʿ)* (a prophet) and suggest the bulla belonged to the Prophet Yeshaya(u).



names were found. Among these is the bulla of “Yeshayah[u] Nvy[?]” (Fig. II.1.6),² strongly suggested, but not confirmed, to belong to the prophet Isaiah. The bulla is divided into three registers. Its upper part is missing and, on the left, the lower end is slightly damaged. In the top register is depicted a grazing doe, preserved only on its lower end. This doe is a blessing and protection motif found in Judah, particularly in Jerusalem (present also on another bulla from the debris), incised on luxurious seals (Ornan 2016:291). The middle register reads *leyeshayah[u]*, where the damaged left end most likely included the letter *w*; and the lower register reads *nyy*, where the totally damaged left end may have included the letter *ʿ* (*aleph*) of the occupation *navy* (a prophet).

The word *nyy*, without an aleph at the end, is most likely just a name. Although it does not appear in the Bible, it still appears on three seals and a seal impression on a jar handle, all from private collections (Avigad 1997, nos. 227, 379, 693; Deutsch 2011, no. 434). It also appears, most likely as a name, as *bn nvy* (“son of *nyy*”) on two bullae originating in the same seal, both found within the same juglet in Lachish Stratum II (Aharoni 1975:19–22, nos. 6–7).

If we were to add the letter *aleph* (ʿ) at the end, the occupation describing noun *would then read: navyʿ*, leading to a question regarding the lack of the definite article “h” (“the”) at the beginning of the word, as seen for example on the bulla of “the healer” from the City of David (Shoham 2000:35–36). No other bullae with the definite article “h” at a beginning of a title were found in excavations, but a few, such as “the scribe” or “the priest” (Avigad 1997: nos. 21–23, 28, 417), are known from private collections. With that said, no seals or bullae with a single-worded title like prophet, scribe or priest, lacking the definite article “h” at the beginning, are known either from excavations or private collections. Nevertheless, it is still plausible that such single-worded titles born the additional definite article while some did not. Examples for this are present in the Bible, where the title “secretary,” belonging to one person, appears both with and without a definite article (2 Sam 20:24, 8:16); and the title “scribe” appears with and without the definite article “h” (Isa 37:22, 2 Sam 8:17).

A very recent discovery from Jerusalem demonstrates the inconsistent use of the definite article *h* in both titles and professions on inscribed texts. A new bulla, dating to the end of the First Temple period, was uncovered during the IAA excavations conducted opposite the Western Wall of the Temple Mount and published (Ornan, Weksler-Bdolah and Sass 2017). The bulla depicts two figures standing opposite one another, with the writing *lśrʿr* (Hebrew: לשרעיר; *lesarʿir*) below them in Hebrew, indicating that the bulla belonged “to the governor of the city,” most likely that of Jerusalem. This discovery contributes greatly to the known assemblage of

2. We would like to thank Prof. Shmuel Ahituv and Dr. Haggai Misgav, profound and erudite epigraphists with whom we consulted and shared our thoughts about the bulla of Yeshaʿiyahu.

bullae with professional titles inscribed on them and is of special interest to us since it is missing the Hebrew definite article *h* (“the”) before the word *‘ir* (“city”). This is significant since two similar bullae, made with one seal, are known from the antiquities market, bearing two figures standing opposite one another and with the same title but with the definite article *h* before the word *‘ir*, i.e., *śarha‘ir* (Hebrew: שַׂרְהָעִיר). This title, with the definite article *h*, appears several times in the Bible, where it is also present in the plural form “governors of the city,” as in 2 Chr. 29:20 which relates events from Hezekiah’s reign. This new information further strengthens our argument that the presence of the Hebrew definite article *h* placed before titles and professions on bullae was neither indispensable nor consistent in that period, but was subject to the discretion of the author.

Prophets used to call themselves navy³, as did the prophet Amos who refused to be recognized as one: “I am no prophet nor a prophet’s son ...” (Amos 7:14). In light of the titles, which do appear on seals and bullae with the definite article, it will not be unexpected for the title navy³ to occur either with or without the definite article. It would seem that there is no strict presentation rule for a title or a persona, as seen in Isaiah’s case, who, in merely two chapters in 2 Kings 19–20 is mentioned as: “Isaiah,” “Isaiah the prophet,” “Isaiah the prophet the son of Amoz,” “Isaiah the son of Amoz” and “Isaiah the son of Amoz the prophet.”

Whether or not the *aleph* was present at the end of the lower register is speculative as the meticulous examinations made on that damaged part of the bulla could not trace any remnants of additional letters. Nevertheless, finding the seal impression of the prophet Isaiah next to that of King Hezekiah seems only logical. It will not be the first time that seal impressions of two Biblical personas, mentioned in the same verse in the Bible, are found in an archaeological context. In our city of David excavations (2005–2008) the seal impressions of Yehukhal Ben Shelemiyahu ben Shovi and Gedaliyahu ben Pashhur, high officials in King Zedekiah’s court were found only a few meters apart (Mazar 2009:66–71). Thus, finding together the seal impressions of King Hezekiah and the prophet Yesha‘iyahu is not less expected. According to the Bible, as detailed in 2 Kgs 19–20 and Isa 37–39, their names are mentioned in one breath 14 out of the 29 times the name of Isaiah is recalled. No other figure is closer to King Hezekiah than the Prophet Isaiah. Could it therefore be even possible that here, in an archaeological assemblage found within a royal context dated to the time of King Hezekiah, right next to the King’s seal impression, another seal impression was found which clearly reads Yesha‘iyah[u] Nvy[], and yet, it belonged NOT to the prophet Isaiah(!?), but just to one of the king’s officials surnamed nvy??

The seal impression of Isaiah is unique, and all the suggested options for its reading still leave questions open. However, the close relation of Isaiah with King Hezekiah, as described in the Bible, and the fact the bulla was found next to that of Hezekiah, seem to overcome the difficulties arisen by the bulla’s damaged part. Thus, the chances of it belonging to any other but the known prophet Isaiah are extremely slim.

Eight *lmlk* jar handles were also found in the debris, five with a four-winged *lmlk* seal impression, three with a two-winged *lmlk* seal impression, and one stamped with a round Hebrew seal about 13 mm in diameter. In this Hebrew seal, a single horizontal line separates between the upper and lower registers of the impression. The upper register reads Menahem and the lower Yvneh. The letter *l*, which commonly appears on Hebrew seals at the beginning of the first name to indicate the genitive *belongs to*, is not present. Three additional seal impressions of the same person, most likely made with the same seal as the impression from the Ophel, are known: one from Tell el-Judeideh and two unprovenanced (Avigad 1997:248–249). Ten rounded seal impressions on *lmlk* type jar handles, with double dividing lines and bearing the same name — this time spelled “Menahem Yovneh” and with the additional letter *l* at the beginning

of Menaḥem — all of them made with the same seal (Avigad 1997:249), were found in contexts dated to Hezekiah's time, such as in Lachish Stratum III and in a robber's pit of the Broad Wall in the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem, as well as in Ramat Raḥel, Gibe'on, Tel Sokho and Tel 'Adullam. The third known seal of Menaḥem (Avigad 1997:248–249) reads Menaḥem Yehobanah. It is an elliptical seal, with double dividing lines and without the letter *l* before the name Menaḥem. Two such seal impressions were found in Bet Shemesh and Ramat Raḥel. The letter *h* after the first letter *y* in the first name, as seen in this seal, does not seem to be part of the original name Yvneh and was inserted later on, probably following the acknowledgment of its importance by its owner, who wished to have a Yahwistic theophoric name. This phenomenon is of special interest when examining the names of the Bes family and the additional letter “*h*” in the name “Yehobana” on the seal of Menaḥem Yivneh, in connection to the role played by non-Judaists in the Royal administration.



Fig. II.1.7. The seal impression of Menaḥem Yivneh on a jar handle of the *lmk* type found together with the bulla of King Hezekiah. Two additional seal impressions of the same seal and many other seal impressions of two similar seals of this official were found in Judean sites from the same period.

Much information is also provided by other items from the debris. Besides the regular pottery vessels, such as cooking pots with potter's(?) marks, some pottery vessels like bowls, cooking pots, a jar, and a juglet were found covered with a dense white paste similar to the one that characterizes the following anthropomorphic and zoomorphic clay figurines found within the debris: a large number of four-legged animals (horses?), three female figurines with prominent bosoms, and two pinched human faces (Fig. II.1.1). The same phenomenon, i.e., an ensemble of a large number of bullae, white-coated clay figurines and pottery vessels covered with dense white paste, and cooking pots with potter's marks was also found in an Iron Age IIB assemblage at the summit of the City of David (Mazar 2015:53–54, Figs. I.38, I.41–44). The correlation between those items and the bullae is yet unclear and requires further study.

Considerable information can be retrieved from King Hezekiah's bulla, which is especially remarkable when taking into consideration it was made of an about 1 cm in diameter piece of clay, on which the king's seal was impressed. The Hebrew text on the bulla clearly reads “Hezekiah [son of] Aḥaz, King of Judah,” with dots separating between the words. Given the fact that this seal impression was stamped by the king himself with his personal seal, this is it the closest we can get, until today, to a personal item of one of the kings of Israel or Judah ever found in scientific archaeological excavations, only the king's actual seal being able to get us closer.

No other personal item, like a crown or precious jewels, can provide such a definite and closely connected element to the king himself, as close as it can be to his actual signature, bearing not only his name but also his father's name and his royal title. But there is more.

This impression originated in the personal seal of the king, who carefully and meticulously chose to incise on it decorations and symbols significant to him: the two-winged sun disk and the two *ankhs* which occupy the whole horizontal central area of his seal. Hezekiah's name and his father's name are incised above the symbols, while his title as King of Judah is below them. The sun disk, in the center of the seal, has three sunbeams on both the upper and bottom sides. To its right and left sides extend two long feathered wings bending downwards which appear

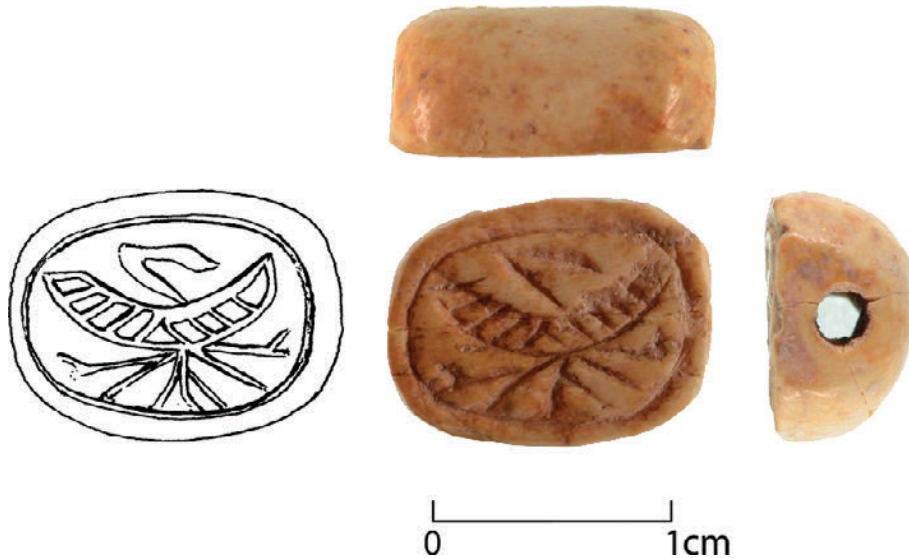


Fig. II.1.8. An ivory seal found in the same context of King Hezekiah's bulla, showing a falcon with outspread wings, a symbol also associated with royalty.

to protect the title "King of Judah." An *ankh*, the symbol of life, is incised at the end of each wing.

The presence of these symbols on Hezekiah's private seal represents a total shift from the symbolism of the upraised, feathered, two-winged scarab which appears on Hezekiah's seal impressions known from private collections (Deutsch 2002), as well as from the symbol of an upraised feathered two-winged Falcon (Fig. II.1.8; Keel 1997:26; 1998:251–253) found on an ivory seal in the same assemblage as King Hezekiah's bulla (Keel 2015:505, no. 56). This change in symbols, as seen on the bulla from the Ophel, may have occurred only in the last years of Hezekiah's reign (below).

The same change is seen in the symbols of the royal administration where, besides the four-winged scarab stamped on the handles of the *lmlk* jars, the two winged sun disk is added and, eventually replacing it. The four-winged scarab symbol on Hezekiah's *lmlk* jars is found by the hundreds on *lmlk* jar handles at the sites of Lachish, Jerusalem, and Ramat Rahel, and by the dozens in many other sites of the Kingdom of Judah (Barkay and Vaughn 2004:2166–2167). The late introduction of the two-winged sun disk symbol in Hezekiah's personal seal, most likely only a few years before Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BCE, would explain the late appearance of that symbol on the *lmlk* jars as well. This chronology of events is strengthened by the relatively small percentage, in Lachish Stratum III, until its destruction in 701 BCE, of two-winged impressions — only 15%, four-winged impressions making for the remaining 85% — as compared to Jerusalem, which was not destroyed by the Assyrians and where the vast majority of the impressions bear the two-winged motif and may have continued to be used in the 7th century BCE (Barkay and Vaughn 2004:2168). The many changes seen in the two-winged sun disk design of the *lmlk* impressions on *lmlk* jar handles are indicative of the process of changing from the four-winged scarab to the two-winged sun disk which occurs on *lmlk* jars. In some cases, the impressions still show the body of the four-winged scarab or parts of it but with only two wings removed from the front of the body and emerging from its middle part and in some, the sun disk is more of a hint than a prominent component of the symbol.

It is thus suggested that, sometime after the last campaign of Sargon II to the region, in 712 BCE, a definite change was made in the symbol of Judah's Royal administration, i.e., from four wings to two wings spreading to the sides. The reason for this change may have been political: by imitating the spread wings of the Assyrian king ruling over Judah, now Hezekiah takes the

same rule for himself. From this point forward, the two-winged symbol on *lmlk* impressions underwent various changes, until it reached its final form as a two-winged sun disk, the symbol King Hezekiah used as his own, personal symbol.

The shift from the symbol of the scarab to that of the sun disk, as emphasized by their appearance on the *lmlk* administration seals and the king's personal seal, seems to reflect a change in the king's view of authority. If the first, earlier symbol was meant to emphasize the power of the king, the later was meant to emphasize that it is the mighty God that provides the power and protection to the kingdom and its king. This perception seems to have strongly influenced Hezekiah, a faithful believer in the God of Israel, especially after the last campaign of Sargon II to the region which left Judah as the only kingdom in the region who did not become an Assyrian vassal.

Although the scarab motif originally represented the Egyptian sun-god Ra, it lost its specific religious significance during the Iron Age II (first half of first millennium BCE), being used by the royalty of the Ancient Near East as a symbol of royal authority and power. The symbol of the sun-disk was also a motif originally representing the Egyptian sun-god Ra. This symbol lost its specific religious significance and became widespread throughout the Ancient Near East as a motif that embodied God's protection over the sovereignty of the king and his rule. The sun disk symbolized for each nation its own supreme deity, e.g., the God Baal for the Phoenicians (Mazar 2013:214–219), the God Ashur for the Assyrians and the God of Israel for the Judaists. The changes made by Hezekiah most likely reflected both his desire to emphasize his political, grown sovereignty by showing the spread wings — like the spread wings of the symbol of the Assyrian kings — and his profound, religious awareness of the patronage of the mighty God of Israel over his reign, by using the symbol of the sun disk.

The final change in Hezekiah's personal seal most likely happened right after he was miraculously saved from the illness of Shehīn (2 Kings 20:1–8). The awareness that this was God's will found expression in the two-winged symbol no longer extending to the sides — as they appear in the two-winged *lmlk* jar handles — but rather bending down, as if providing protection, and with the inclusion of the two *ankhs*, symbols of life, flanking the sun's wings.

The discovery of the royal structures and finds from the time of King Hezekiah at the Ophel is a rare opportunity for vividly revealing this specific time in the history of Jerusalem, leading us to an almost personal "encounter" with some of the personas that took part in the life of the Royal Quarter of the Ophel at the time, including King Hezekiah and maybe also the Prophet Isaiah.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Avigad N. 1997. *Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*. Jerusalem.
- Aharoni Y. 1975. *Lachish V: Investigations at Lachish. The Sanctuary and the Residency*. Tel Aviv. Pp. 19–22, nos. 6–7.
- Barkay G. and Vaughn A.G. 2004. The Royal and Official Seal Impressions from Lachish. In D. Ussishkin. *The Renewed Archaeological Excavations at Lachish (1973–1994)*. Vol. IV. Tel Aviv. Pp. 2148–2173.
- Deutsch R. 2002. New Bullae Reveal Egyptian-Style Emblems on Judah's Royal Seals. *BAR* 28/4:42–51, 60–63.
- Deutsch R. 2011: *Biblical Period Hebrew Bullae, The Josef Chaim Kaufman Collection*. Vol. 2. Tel Aviv.

- Keel O. 1997. *The Symbolism of the Biblical World, Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms*. Winona Lake, Indiana.
- Keel O. 1998. *Gods, Goddesses, and Images of God in Ancient Israel*. Minneapolis.
- Keel O. 2015. Glyptic Finds from the Ophel Excavations 2009–2013. In E. Mazar. *The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount 2009–2013. Final Reports Vol. I*. Jerusalem. Pp. 475–530.
- Mazar E. 2009. *The Palace of King David. Excavations at the Summit of the City of David, Preliminary Report of Seasons 2005–2007*. Jerusalem. P. 67.
- Mazar E. 2011. *Discovering the Solomonic Wall in Jerusalem*. Jerusalem.
- Mazar E. 2013. *The Northern Cemetery of Achziv (10th–6th centuries BCE), the Tophet Site*. (Cuadernos de Arqueología Mediterránea 19–20). Barcelona.
- Mazar E. 2015. The Stepped Stone Structure. In E. Mazar E. *The Summit of the City of David Excavations 2005–2008*. Jerusalem. Pp. 169–188.
- Mazar E. and Mazar B. 1989. *Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount, the Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem* (Qedem29). Jerusalem. Pp. 29–48.
- Ornan T. 2016. The Beloved Ne’ehvet, and Other Does: Reflections on the Motif of Grazing or Browsing Wild Horned Animals. In B. Sass. *Alphabets Texts and Artifacts in the Ancient Near East*. Paris. Pp. 279–302.
- Ornan T., Weksler-Bdolah S. and Sass B. 2017. A “Governor of the City” Seal Impression from the Western Wall Plaza Excavations in Jerusalem. *Qadmoniot* 154:100–103.
- Shoham Y. 2000. Hebrew Bullae. In D.T. Ariel. *The City of David Excavations, Final Report VI*. Jerusalem. Pp. 29–57.

From 2009 to 2013 renewed archaeological excavations were carried out at the Ophel under the directorship of Dr. Eilat Mazar on behalf of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

This volume, the second in a multi-volume series of the final reports of the renewed excavations' results, includes the final report of the Herodian (First century CE) buildings, many of which were planned to satisfy the needs of the large and growing number of pilgrims that arrived to the magnified newly constructed Temple and its breathtaking compound. These buildings, crowdedly built in the Ophel, included a large number of Purification Baths (*Mikva'ot*), ranging from single-sized baths to the "Jerusalemite" type, where a multitude of pilgrims could immerse at the same time, thus enabling easy access to the nearby gates and their underground passageway directly leading into the sacred area of the Temple. By the end of the Second Temple period, as stated by Josephus, the Ophel area also served as a hiding place for the rebels against Rome, and this is corroborated by the findings within the buildings unearthed during the excavations.

The volume also includes reports on the impressive remains First Temple Period buildings discovered at the Ophel's Solomonic Royal Quarter, together with the large amount of pottery vessels, glyptic finds, weaponry, cultic objects, ivories and figurines discovered within them, many of which attesting to the far reaching international contacts Jerusalem enjoyed at that time.

This volume includes the report of the unique Fortified Enclosure, the earliest structure ever found in the Ophel, dating from the time of King David (early tenth century BCE) and most likely identified with the "Far House," a structure he used while escaping from Avshalom (2 Samuel 15:17).

This volume also includes the report of a stratified assemblage dumped from the Building of the Royal Bakers, which included the bulla (seal impression) of King Hezekiah himself, and maybe also the bulla of the prophet Isaiah, as well as dozens of finds found with them.

The Ophel discoveries dramatically alter previously held conceptions of the development of ancient Jerusalem and provide striking tangible evidence for its Biblical and Second Temple period narratives.

