**English Abstracts of the Hebrew Section's Papers**

**Yigal Levin**

Kiriath-jearim: In Judah or Benjamin?

The town of Kiriath-jearim, identified as Deir el-ʿAzar, above the village of Abu-Ghosh, has recently come to scholarly attention due to the renewed excavations led by Israel Finkelstein and Thomas Römer. Based on their preliminary findings and reading of the biblical texts, they have interpreted the Iron Age II B-C site that they have begun to expose on the summit as a northern Israelite fortified compound, ‘aimed at dominating the vassal kingdom of Judah’. This paper reexamines the position of Kiriath-jearim on the border between Judah and Benjamin according to both the biblical texts and the site’s geographical location, within the context of ongoing discussions on biblical tribal territories, that of Benjamin in particular, the ‘ark narrative’, and other texts that mention Kiriath-jearim; thus, challenging the excavators’ interpretation of the character and purpose of this site during the Iron Age II.

**Keywords:** Kiriath-jearim, ark of the covenant, Judah, Israel, Benjamin, Gibeonites

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**Yair Almakiyes and Aharon Tavger**

An Iron Age II Underground Winery from Khirbet el-Hammam

A system of pits was recently discovered in Khirbet el-Hammam, northern Samaria, which apparently meets the accepted definition of “Gibeon Pits”. These pits were used to store wine in the late Iron Age and early Persian period, indicating a developed local agriculture and the centrality of the site. The location and identification of these pits in the ruin of Kh. el-Hamam may shed new light on the size and centrality of the city during the Iron Age.

**Keywords:** Gibeon Pits, Iron Age II, Kh. el-Hammam, Aruboth, Narbatha, The Northern Kingdom

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**Zeev H. Erlich (Zhabo) and Meir Rotter**

Four Samaritan Menorahs from the Village of Haja, Samaria

This paper describes the discovery of four ancient menorahs inscribed on stone that were discovered during a tour conducted by the authors in the village of Haja, Samaria. These four menorahs join another that was previously discovered here, published by Yuval Peleg, bringing the total number to five. This paper combines analyzes of the known history of Haja and the ancient menorahs inscribed on stones with information from historical sources on the village and its surroundings during the Byzantine and early Muslim period, expanding our knowledge on both the locality and use of these artifacts during the Roman-Byzantine period.

**Keywords:** Haja village, seven-branched menorah, Samaritan menorahs, menorahs frame

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**Gershon Bar-Cohcva**

The Process of Yusufiya’s Development in the Machpela Edifice

The Yusufiya compound, adjacent to the northwestern wall of the Machpela Edifice in Hebron, is a complex structure. Integrated within it are elements extending from Roman times to the present day. In 2016, subterranean radar mapping was carried out to pinpoint hidden cavities and structures. When the results of the mapping had been deciphered, it became clear that a reservoir with arches from the Roman period had been constructed inside a karstic fissure below the ground floor. This reservoir played a role during the compound's construction, impacting its shape. It appears that karstic fissures in the Machpela Field were among the factors that led to the Machpela Compound's construction at an unconventional angle. These fissures were used as reservoirs during the period preceding the building's construction, with Herod planning to use them to supply water to those entering the compound.

**Keywords:** Herod, reservoir, Roman period, Crusader period, Mamluk period, escape tunnel

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**Mordechay Lash, Yossi Goldstein and Itzhaq Shai**

Archaeological Research in the West Bank, 1948–1967:

Management, Complexity, and Israeli Involvement

The outcome of the 1948 war in Palestine resulted not only in the country’s partition between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan but also in the division of its archaeological research. The Jordanian Department of Antiquities, which was responsible for administering archaeological research in the West Bank until 1967, began to prioritize research in the East Bank as a function of broader Jordanian government policy. The bulk of the research in the West Bank during this period was conducted by foreign institutions and researchers, who were forced to choose between researching in either Israel or Arab countries; those who chose to research in Israel were denied the ability to simultaneously research and excavate in the West Bank. In this way, the choices of the foreign researchers divided them, placing them on different sides of the Green Line.

Excavations in the West Bank piqued the curiosity of the Israelis, however, and they endeavoured to acquire information about the researchers and their findings. These efforts included secret meetings with foreign academics, attempts to acquire the Qumran scrolls, and the secret transfer of artifacts to Israel for private research. For many years, most of their studies remained classified in archives; they are shared here for the first time.

**Keywords:** Archaeology, Judea and Samaria, West Bank, Dead Sea Scrolls, The Jordanian Department of Antiquities

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