

Old and New Readings in the Samaria Ostraca

By

Matthieu Richelle

Université catholique de Louvain

More than a century after the discovery of the Samaria ostraca, these inscriptions remain a subject of debate among scholars. This concerns the interpretation of these texts¹ and their dating², but also their decipherment. Long after the *editio princeps* was published by Reisner³, at least three scholars have devoted part or all of their doctoral dissertation to reviewing the entire corpus and have suggested a number of new readings: Kaufman⁴, Lemaire⁵, and myself⁶. In addition, the collections of Paleo-Hebrew inscriptions written by Gibson⁷, Donner and Röllig⁸, Davies⁹, Renz and Röllig¹⁰, Dobbs-Allsopp *et al.*¹¹,

¹ See e.g. SURIANO 2007; DEMSKY 2007; NIEMANN 2008; AMAR 2009; NAM 2012; SURIANO 2016; NA'AMAN 2019.

² RAINEY 1988; DIJKSTRA 2000.

³ REISNER, FISCHER, LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 227-246.

⁴ KAUFMAN 1966. See also KAUFMAN 1963; 1992. Another notable work is DIRINGER 1934.

⁵ LEMAIRE 1973 ; 1977, p. 21-81, 245-250.

⁶ RICHELLE 2010, vol. 1, p. 24-206.

⁷ GIBSON 1971.

⁸ DONNER, RÖLLIG 1972 (inscriptions 183-188).

⁹ DAVIES 1991, p. 39-64.

¹⁰ RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. I/1, p. 79-110, 135-144; vol. 3, 5-13, Taf. 6, 9, 10, VI, VII, VIII, XII, XIII.

¹¹ DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 423-497.

and Aḥituv¹², include some or all of these ostraca. Rollston's doctoral dissertation discusses in detail the paleography of these ostraca (among others)¹³, and Faigenbaum-Golovin *et al.* recently applied algorithmic handwriting analysis to them¹⁴. In spite of all this research, epigraphists disagree on a number of readings, with direct implications for the data we collect from these ostraca, especially the anthroponyms and toponyms.

In this article, I focus on the ostraca found by Reisner in 1910, which form a coherent collection of texts using similar formulas, leaving aside those discovered by the "Joint expedition" in 1931-1935¹⁵. I summarize my own findings by publishing the readings I adopt for the whole set of ostraca (see the Appendix¹⁶) and by offering epigraphical notes on a selection of them. Indeed, based on the photographs available on the online database Inscriptifact¹⁷, I have examined every ostrakon afresh and this enables me to make decisions in some debated cases and sometimes to propose a new reading. I am not claiming to be able to make more than limited improvements compared to the previous studies (assuming I am correct in my readings): there is only so much that the available photographs can yield, and it is to be hoped that multispectral images will be taken in the future, as this will certainly further the decipherment. It is an honor and a pleasure to offer this study to Jean-Claude Haelewyck, a pillar of Ancient Near Eastern studies at the Université catholique de Louvain. His vast erudition is illustrated by his numerous and important contributions to various fields, from comparative Semitic grammar to Syriac philology to the Old Latin version of the Bible.

1. *Epigraphical notes on selected ostraca*

This section contains notes on a selection of 21 ostraca because I limit myself to the most interesting cases where I am able to make a contribution by pointing out overlooked features (for instance by identifying palimpsests), deciding between competing readings, and proposing a few new readings. Section 2 summarizes the most interesting results. The Appendix contains the readings I adopt for the entire corpus, and a table that summarizes the information contained in it. While I offer images to justify a number of readings, I can only emphasize that a sustained and close examination of the images, helped by enhancement and variation of the contrast, is necessary to correctly decide what is ink and what is not, and to discern the faint shapes of many letters. All the images are courtesy of the Harvard Museum of the Ancient Near East; they are referred to, in this article, by their Inscriptifact number.

Sam 4

It has not been noted in previous publications, but this ostrakon seems to be a palimpsest. There are numerous dark areas outside of the three lines of the current text that seem to be remnants of letters, notably in the interlinear space between the end of line 1 and the end of line 3, that is, below MQ and above L and a word divider. The traces may correspond to a M (see Figure 1).

¹² AḤITUV 2008, p. 258-310 (the English translation was edited by A. Rainey).

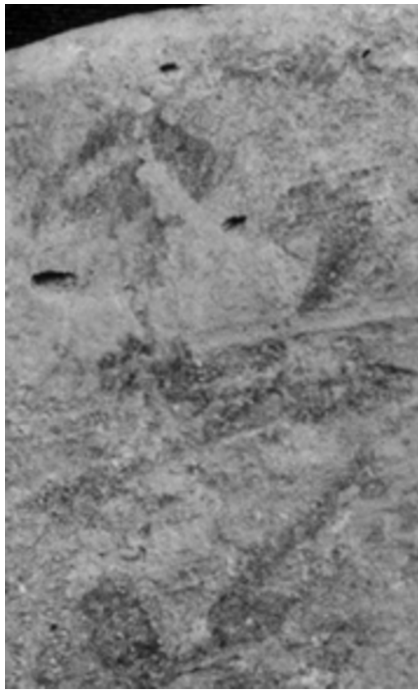
¹³ ROLLSTON 1999.

¹⁴ FAIGENBAUM-GOLOVIN *et al.* 2020.

¹⁵ Some of them remain unpublished, see MENDEL, GROSMAN 2013.

¹⁶ There are a couple of differences compared to RICHELLE 2010 since I made a few corrections.

¹⁷ However, for some words that are altogether illegible on the images because the ink has faded, one has to rely on Reisner's drawings and on previous studies.



End of line 1: MQ

Interlinear space: M?

End of line 2: L.

Figure 1 (detail of ISF_DO_06800)

Sam 8

- 1) [BŠT.H]TŠ‘T.MRB[]
- 2) [L‘DN]‘M.NBL.
- 3) [YN.YŠ]N.

- 1) [In the] ninth [year], from RB[]
- 2) [to ‘Adoni]‘am, a jar
- 3) [of old wine]

At the end of line 1, virtually all the scholars read GB¹⁸ (after the preposition M)¹⁸. However, the letter they read G is in fact a R, as noted by Lemaire in 1973¹⁹. Figure 2 enables us to confirm this reading. The other scholars overlooked a third stroke that is horizontal and constitutes the lower side of a triangle, which is the head of R. This horizontal stroke can easily be mistaken for a groove of the shard but it is actually ink: indeed, this stroke protrudes to the right of the downstroke, and this little breakthrough, better preserved, is clearly made of ink. This breakthrough is not part of the preceding M but is separated from it by a thin gap.

As a result, the toponym mentioned here is not Geba¹, identified with the village of Jeba near Samaria, as most scholars believe, but a place whose name begins with RB. One may think of the village named Rabbah²⁰, which some²¹ identify with Rabbith mentioned in Josh 19:20²². However, the surface surveys did not find any sherd that would be earlier than the Persian period²³. Zertal himself writes that “there is no archaeological basis for this identifica-

¹⁸ E.g. LEMAIRES 1977, p. 30; DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 437.

¹⁹ LEMAIRES 1973, p. 24.

²⁰ ZERTAL 2004, vol. 2, site 34.

²¹ As noted by ABEL 1962, vol. 2, p. 425, although he preferred the reading of LXX^B (Δαβρθων) in Josh 19:20 and identified it with Daberath.

²² ZERTAL 2004, vol. 2, p. 105.

²³ ZERTAL 2004, vol. 2, p. 172-174.

tion. On the other hand, name preservation may indicate an Iron Age site in the vicinity²⁴. He suggests that Ras es-Salmeh (32°22' N, 35°22' E) might be identified with Rabbith. Pottery from Iron II was found there during a surface survey²⁵.



B R M
Figure 2: Sam 8, end of line 1 (detail of ISF_DO_06924)

Sam 9

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.HTŠ 'T.MY | 1) In the ninth year, <i>from Ya-</i> |
| 2) ŠT.L'DN'M | 2) -šit, to 'Adoni'am |
| 3) [N]BL.Y[N.]YŠN. | 3) [a ja]r of old wi[ne] |

In line 2, after ' , Reisner²⁶ suggested reading H, but also mentioned B and R; on his facsimile, he drew only two strokes, which form an angle. The preserved strokes (see Figure 3) are incompatible with H. A reading R is unlikely as well because the vertical shaft does not extend downwards; this is not due to the break of the sherd, because the shaft clearly stops before it. One may hesitate between B²⁷ and D²⁸. However, D is to be preferred. First, the size of the head is too small (compared, for instance, to the head of the well-preserved instance of B in line 1). Second, although one may get the impression that there is a foot (horizontal basis) parallel to the baseline of the head, it is most probably a dark area at the surface corresponding to a groove of the sherd. Indeed, this horizontal dark area extends to the right of the break that is situated immediately to the right of the letter. Third, the stance of the right-hand side of the head is top-left, that is, the letter leans to the left, which fits a D not a B (the stance of B is consistently top right in the Samaria ostraca). It should be noted that the downstroke, below the head, seems to be thicker than the right side of the triangle. The downstroke of D in the Samaria ostraca was generally the last component of the letter to be penned, after the head; while it often started at the right of the top stroke of the head²⁹, here it seems that the scribe added the leg after the rest.

²⁴ ZERTAL 2004, vol. 2, p. 106.

²⁵ ZERTAL 2004, vol. 2, p. 190-191; see also p. 106.

²⁶ REISNER, FISCHER, and LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 233. He was followed by DIRINGER 1934, p. 25.

²⁷ RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. III, p. 6; DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 438.

²⁸ LEMAIRE 1973, p. 24; AHITUV 2008, p. 270. POULTER, DAVIES 1990, p. 238-239, hesitate between B and D, with a preference for D; similarly, see DAVIES 1991, p. 41.

²⁹ ROLLSTON 1999, p. 46.

As a result, the proper name that appears in line 2 is 'Adoni'am ('DN'M) not 'Aboni'am ('BN'M).

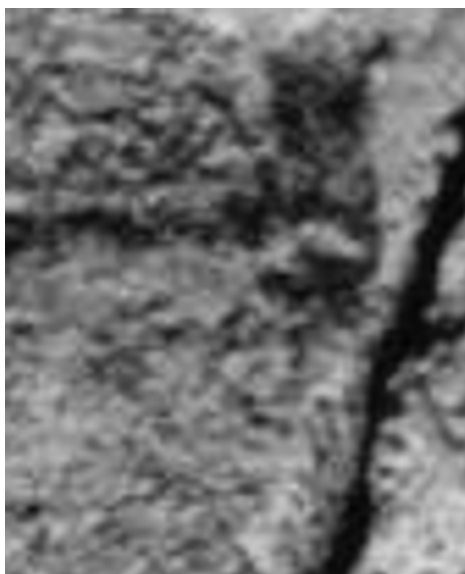


Figure 3 (Detail of ISF_DO_06850)

Sam 10

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.HTŠ T.M | 1) In the ninth year, from |
| 2) YŠT.L'DN' | 2) Yašit, to 'Adoni'- |
| 3) M.NBL.YN. | 3) -am, a jar of wine |
| 4) YŠN. | 4) old |
| 5) -[]- | 5) ?- ? |

In line 2, one encounters a similar issue as that mentioned above concerning Sam 9. After ' , it is not possible to read Ḥ³⁰; one may hesitate between R³¹, B³², and D³³. Indeed, the preserved strokes form a triangle (see Figure 4). But the stance of its right-hand side is top left, that is, the letter leans to the left, which does not fit a B. In addition, the same stroke does not extend below its junction with the baseline of the head. Some dark area below the letter might give the impression that there is some ink there, but that is not the case: on close inspection, it corresponds to some darkening of the surface of the ostracum, which diffuses to the left; moreover, it is clearly disjointed from the head of the debated letter. The same kind of darkening of the surface can also be seen below the preceding letters. Therefore, the debated letter is to be read D.

As a result, the anthroponym that appears in line 2 is 'Adoni'am ('DN'M).

³⁰ *Contra* DIRINGER 1934, p. 25; GIBSON 1972, p. 9.

³¹ Possibilité évoquée par REISNER, FISCHER, LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 233.

³² POULTER, DAVIES 1990, p. 238-239 (with hesitation); RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. III, p. 6; DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 439.

³³ KAUFMAN 1966, p. 135; LEMAIRE 1973, p. 24; AḤITUV 2008, p. 271. DAVIES 1991, p. 41, hesitates between B and D.

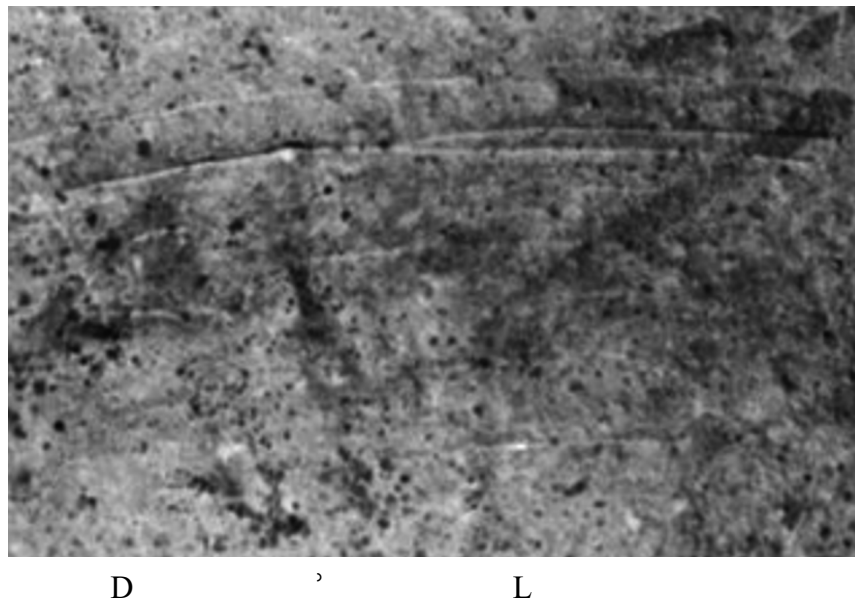


Figure 4: sequence L'D in line 2 (detail of ISF_DO_067244)

Sam 12

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------------------|
| 0) YN | 0) wine |
| 1) BŠT.HTŠ'T. | 1) In the ninth year, |
| 2) MŠPTN.LB'L. | 2) from ŠPTN, to Ba'al (son of) |
| 3) ZMR.NBL.YN. | 3) Zamar, a jar of wine |
| 4) YŠN | 4) old |

Above the relatively well-preserved lines 1 to 4, one can see traces of a Y and possibly the downstroke of a N³⁴, although it could also be a M or a K. The ostrakon may be a palimpsest³⁵ or, perhaps more likely, a previously “unwritten part of a larger sherd, broken off for use”³⁶; the original sherd contained another text that ended with the expression YN.YŠN.

At the end of line 2, Figure 5 confirms that there is a word divider³⁷, although a number of publications do not record it³⁸. It is a small oblique stroke with a top left orientation, as is common in the Samaria ostraca. As a result, we should not read one anthroponym B'LZMR but two, B'L and ZMR. B'L is a personal name attested in the Hebrew Bible³⁹, and it was the name of a king of Tyre. It appears on Phoenician seals⁴⁰ that are unprovenanced (so their authenticity is unclear), and on some Idumea ostraca⁴¹. It is also attested in Safaitic⁴². It is to

³⁴ DIRINGER 1934, p. 25; LEMAIRE 1973, p. 24; RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. III, p. 6.

³⁵ LEMAIRE 1973, p. 24; I also mentioned this hypothesis in RICHELLE 2010, vol. 1, p. 36.

³⁶ DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 440 (following REISNER, FISCHER, LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 233).

³⁷ LEMAIRE 1973, p. 24; RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. III, p. 6.

³⁸ REISNER, FISCHER, LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 233; DIRINGER 1934, p. 25; KAUFMAN 1966, p. 241; DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 440-441.

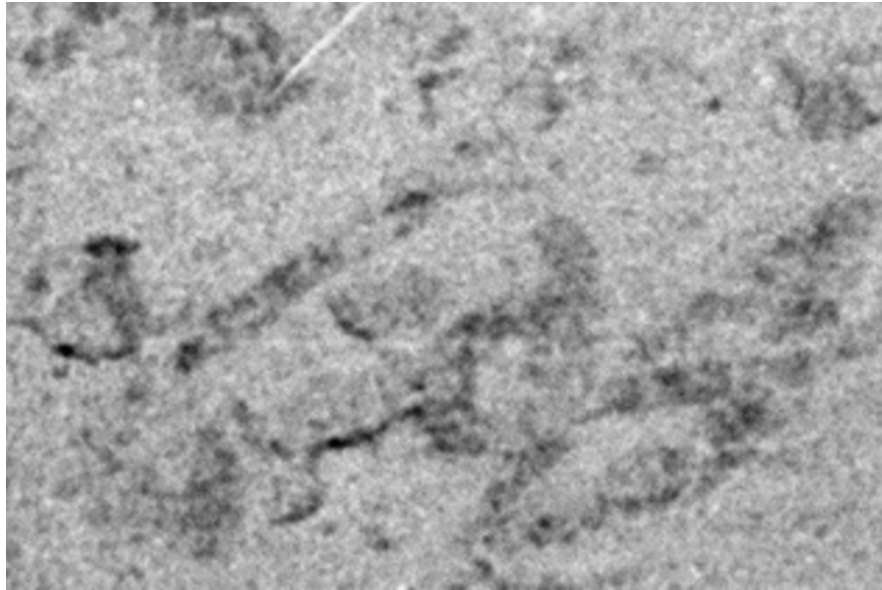
³⁹ 1 Chr 5:5, etc.

⁴⁰ WSS 729; DEUTSCH, HELTZER 1995, No 51, and DEUTSCH, LEMAIRE 2003, No 8. See also WSS 725, but the reading is uncertain.

⁴¹ LEMAIRE 1996, No 24, 121, 122 (provided one reconstructs B).

⁴² HARDING 1971, p. 111.

be compared to the hypocoristicon Ba‘ala’ attested in the Samaria ostraca (B‘L’; Sam 1.7, 3.3, 27.3, 28.3, 31a.3). ZMR is a hypocoristicon meaning “DN is strong” or “DN has protected”⁴³.



divider L ‘ B
Figure 5: sequence B‘L and word divider (detail of ISF_DO_07250)

Sam 19

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H‘ŠRT. | 1) In the tenth year, |
| 2) MYŠT.NBL. | 2) from Yašit, a jar |
| 3) ŠMN.RHŠ.L | 3) of oil refined, to |
| 4) ‘DN‘M | 4) ‘Adoni‘am |

In line 4, we encounter a similar problem as already noted in the case of Sam 8 and 9. After ‘, the preserved traces make the reading D⁴⁴ more likely than H⁴⁵. The latter reading is probably due to the impression that there is a breakthrough of a left-hand downstroke below the junction with the bottom horizontal parallel, but the letter is partly covered by a large deterioration of the surface or a “stain” (as are many other places on this ostrakon) and this possible breakthrough might be part of it (see Figure 6). It is noteworthy, however, that in the hypothesis of a H, what would be the top horizontal is quite thin; this fits better with the top stroke of a D. More importantly, the angle made by the right-hand stroke fits a D better. Rollston notes that the vertical downstrokes of H in the Samaria ostraca were “penned at angles averaging approximately eighty to eighty-five degrees”⁴⁶. By contrast, the downstroke of D “descends at an angle of approximately fifty to sixty-five degrees”, “visually causing the form

⁴³ It is attested in Punic epigraphy (BENZ 1972, p. 109).

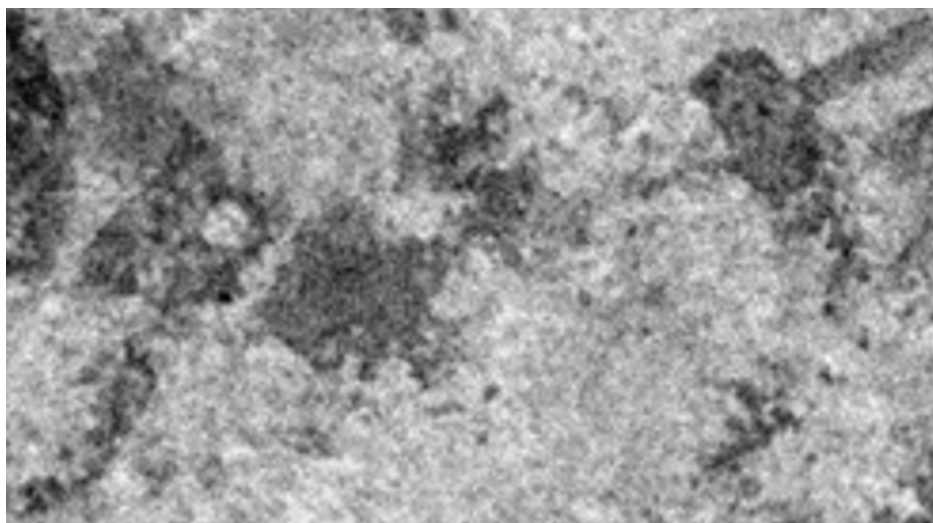
⁴⁴ KAUFMAN 1966, p. 136; LEMAIRE 1973, p. 26.

⁴⁵ REISNER, FISCHER, LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 234; POULTER, DAVIES 1990; DAVIES 1991, p. 43; DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 448.

⁴⁶ ROLLSTON 1999, p. 66.

to appear to be leaning decidedly to the left”.⁴⁷ The latter situation corresponds to what we can observe here.

As a result, this ostrakon mentions ’Adoni’am (’DN‘M), like Sam 8 and 9, not Aḥinoam (’ḤN‘M).



N D ’

Figure 6: sequence ’DN (detail of ISF_DO_07309)

Sam 20

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1) BŠT.H [ŠRT.Y] | 1) In the te[<i>nth</i> year, wi-] |
| 2) N.KRM.HT[L.NBL.Š] | 2) - <i>ne</i> from the vineyard of Te[<i>ll</i> , a jar of o-] |
| 3) MV.RḤ[Š.] | 3) - <i>il</i> refin[ed] |

The beginning of line 2 has been read MKRM⁴⁸ or N.KRM⁴⁹. As is apparent on images (see Figure 7), the latter is to be preferred. The head of the debated letter only has one “check”; actually, this head was penned in a single, continuous movement. The shoulder is vestigial or non-existent. It seems that a word divider was written after the letter, so close to the head that it seems connected to it. By contrast, the assured M in the same line (the fourth character from the right) clearly has two strokes situated above the horizontal basis of the head. In light of parallels (*Sam* 53, 54, 72), one may read the sequence [Y]N.KRM.HT[L.], by reconstructing a Y at the end of line 1.

⁴⁷ ROLLSTON 1999, p. 46-47.

⁴⁸ REISNER, FISCHER, LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 234; DIRINGER 1934, p. 27; DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 448.

⁴⁹ KAUFMAN 1966, p. 137, 142; LEMAIRE 1973, p. 26; RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. III, p. 7 (although they do not mark the word divider).

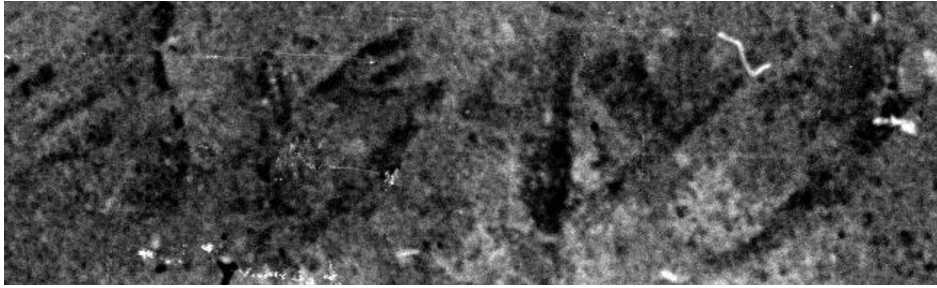


Figure 7: sequence N.KRM.H (detail of ISF_DO_07311)

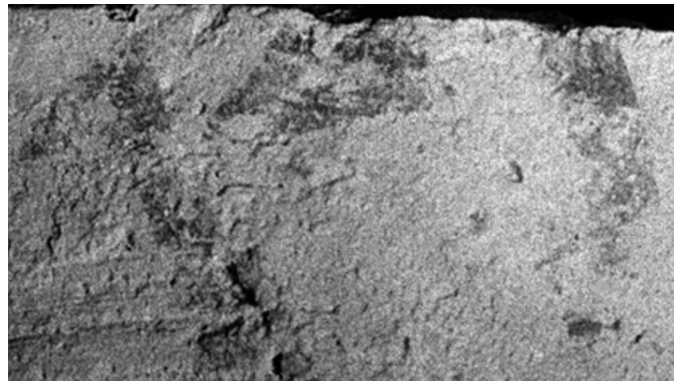
Sam 29

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1) BŠT. 10 5 MŠ[MYD‘.L]’Š’ | 1) In the 15th year, from Še[mida‘, to] ’Aśa’ |
| 2) ’HMLK. | 2) (son of) ’Aḥimélèk |
| 3) ’DR.MSPR. | 3) ’Adar, <i>from</i> Sépher |

The beginning of line 3 has been read QDR⁵⁰, GMR⁵¹, ’MR⁵², or ’DR⁵³. Figure 8 allows us to decide and corroborate the latter reading:

- Only a thick downstroke remains of the first debated letter. Were it Q, one would expect to see some trace of the lower part of the head, at least to the right of the downstroke, where the junction with the circular form of the head was generally the lowest. Were it G, one would see at least part of the top stroke. In addition, as Lemaire notes⁵⁴, the lowest part of the downstroke is curved leftwards, which happens with ’. The most probable reading is ’;
- The second letter is a triangle, without any downstroke or leg, so it is D.
- The third letter is clearly R, as read by all scholars.

As a result, this ostracon mentions the name ’Adar (’DR). It is a hyporisticon meaning “DN is powerful”. ’DR is a component of the Ammonite anthroponym ’BD’DR⁵⁵.



R D downstroke of ’

Figure 8 (detail of ISF_DO_07344)

⁵⁰ REISNER, FISCHER, and LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 235.

⁵¹ KAUFMAN 1966, p. 142; AHITUV 2008, p. 288.

⁵² LEMAIRE 1973, p. 33; RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. III, p. 97.

⁵³ DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 455.

⁵⁴ LEMAIRE 1973, p. 28.

⁵⁵ WSS 959; this name has also be read ’BD’DD (CAI 131).

Sam 34

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1) [BŠ]T.H 10 5 M[Š]MY[D] | 1) [In] the 15th [ye]ar, <i>from</i> [Še]mya[da'] |
| 2) []-[G]DYW -.ŠD[Q.] | 2) []?[Ga]ddiyaw [] ŠD[Q] |

In line 2, after a lacuna, we can see the end of a Yahwistic name finishing with YW. Of the preceding letter, only a stroke that looks like an angle remains, which could belong to B, P or R. Because the name GDYW is attested in several Samaria ostraca, it can be tentatively reconstructed here. More interestingly, after a word divider, a Š appears, followed by a vertical stroke that could belong to B, P or ' according to Lemaire⁵⁶. However, the stroke does not extend downwards (this is not due to the following break), so B and P are unlikely (it also leans slightly to the left, which does not fit B); in addition, the stroke is rectilinear and does not fit '. Such a short rectilinear stroke, with this stance, could, however, be the right-hand side of a D that would have a vestigial or non-existent leg (as, for instance, in Sam 36).

Therefore, I suggest reading here an anthroponym that begins with ŠD, which, within the realm of Hebrew personal names, could only be a name based on the root ŠDQ; it could be the hyporisticon ŠDQ or ŠDQ + a divine name. This could be a hypocoristicon meaning "DN is just", or an anthroponym of the form ŠDQ + divine name, the latter being lost in a lacuna. The hypocoristicon ŠDQ⁵⁷ and the variant ŠDQ'⁵⁸ are attested in Paleo-Hebrew sigillography.



Figure 9 (detail of ISF_DO_07359)

Sam 45

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1) BŠT[.]H 10 5 MḤGL[H] | 1) In <i>the</i> 15th year, from Ḥogl[ah], |
| 2) LḤNN.B 'R'[] | 2) to Ḥanan, Ba'ara'[] |
| 3) YW.NTN MYŠ[T] | 3) -yaw (son of) Natan, <i>from</i> Yašit |

In line 3, Reisner saw a word divider after YW⁵⁹ but most subsequent studies did not follow him on that point⁶⁰. Figure 10 vindicates Reisner: there is a short vertical stroke to the left of W; it is a word divider. As a result, we should not read YWNTN but two personal names,

⁵⁶ LEMAIRE 1973, p. 29. In RICHELLE 2010, vol. 1, p. 59, I hesitated between these three possibilities.

⁵⁷ WSS 29 (unprovenanced), 694 (provenanced).

⁵⁸ WSS 601 (provenanced).

⁵⁹ REISNER, FISCHER, LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 236.

⁶⁰ LEMAIRE 1977, p. 31; KAUFMAN 1966, p. 138; RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. I/1, p. 101; DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 467; AHITUV 2008, p. 298.

NTN preceded by a Yahwistic name whose beginning was written in line 2 but is now lost due to a lacuna. NTN is a hypocoristicon meaning “DN has given”.

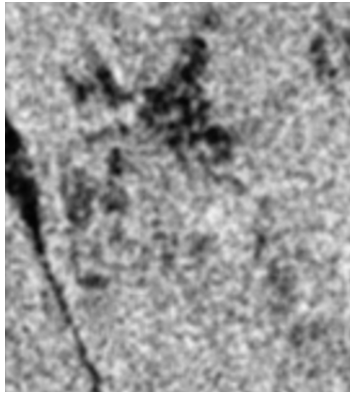


Figure 10: L.3: W and a word divider (detail of ISF_DO_07404)

Sam 49

1) BŠ[	]	1) In the ye[ar	]
2) ‘.LHL[Š	]	2) ‘, to Hele[š	]
3) MG/R Y[	]	3) from G/R Y[	]
4) MKWR-		4) from Kur-	

In line 3, after M, one may hesitate between G and R, but it is clear that the letter is neither Z⁶¹ nor H⁶² (see Figure 11). Then follows a Y not a Š⁶³. Hence I read MG/R Y. As a result, the ostracon mentions a toponym beginning with G/R Y. It is difficult to pinpoint a precise site with any degree of certainty, but it could be mentioned that Tell er-Ra‘yan (to the South-East of Tel Rehov) was inhabited during the Iron Age II⁶⁴.

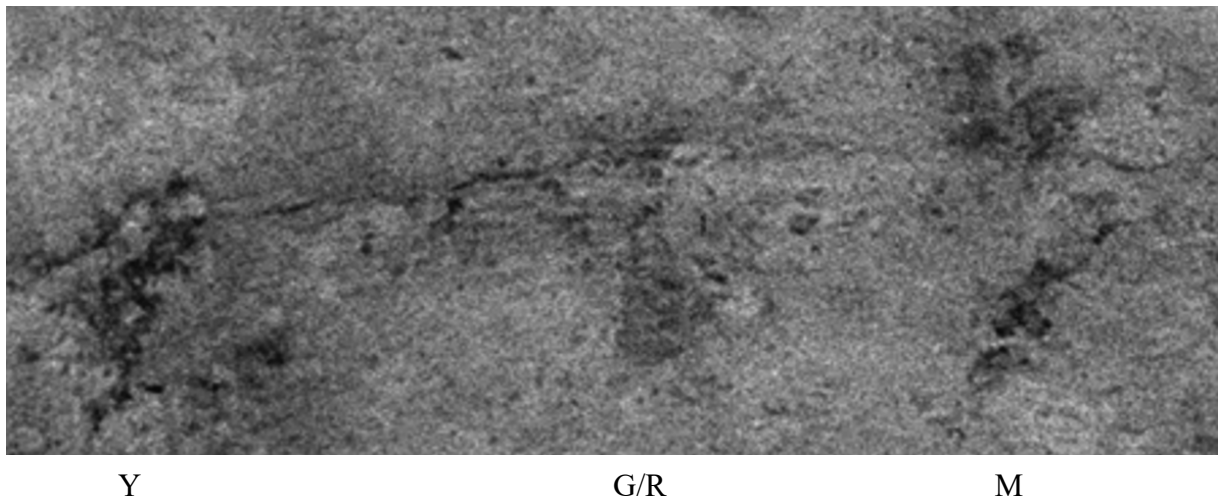


Figure 11 (detail of ISF_DO_07427)

⁶¹ REISNER, FISCHER, LYON 1924, vol. 1, p. 237; LEMAIRE 1977, p. 31; RENZ, RÖLLIG 1995, vol. I/1, p. 102.

⁶² DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 469.

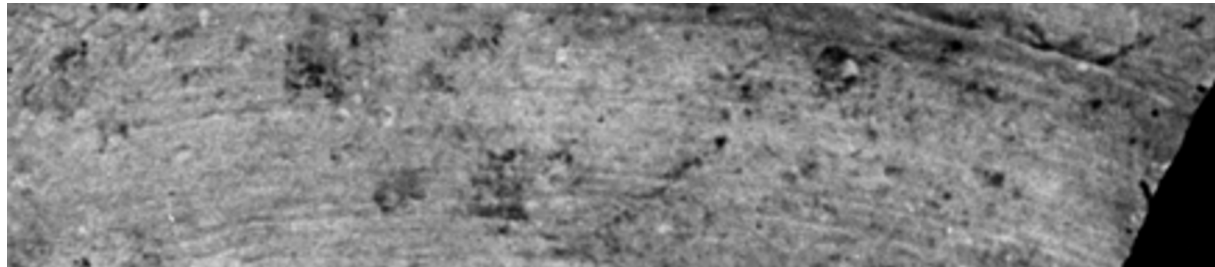
⁶³ *Contra* DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 469.

⁶⁴ BERGMAN, BRANDSTETER 1940-41, p. 89; DORSEY 1991, p. 114.

Sam 51

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H'ŠRT.L[] | 1) In the tenth year, to [] |
| 2) L-T MTWL--- | 2) L-T, from Tawil |
| 3) 'H' .HYHD | 3) 'Aḥa' (son of) Hayehud(y) |

Nobody has read anything in line 2 until now, but while it is very difficult, it seems possible to identify some letters (see Figure 12), including the toponym TWL (already attested in Sam 21).



traces L W T M T traces L

Figure 12 (detail of ISF_DO_07433)

Sam 59

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| 0) []---- | 0) [] ???? |
| 1) NBL. ŠMN.R[HŠ.] | 1) a jar of re[finē] oil |
| 2) BŠT.H[] | 2) In the year [] |
| 3) L[] | 3) to [] |

What is preserved of this ostracon comprises two fragments. Dobbs-Allsopp *et al.* write: “There is no question that the first line on these fragments is also the first line of the inscription; nothing is written above line 1.”⁶⁵ Yet some images available on Inscriptifant show some traces of ink that are remnants of letters in a line preceding line 1. What we see on this ostracon is remains of two different texts: line 1 is actually the end of a text (it corresponds to the last expression in a stereotyped formula), while line 2 contains the date that marks the beginning of another text. This is very interesting as it shows that two texts could sometimes be written on the same sherd. The same phenomenon seems to occur in Sam 12 and 61.

In addition, Reisner’s drawing records a Š at the beginning of line 2⁶⁶ (see Figure 13). Clearly, it is not part of line 2 since the latter begins with the usual dating formula (BŠT...). It may be the last letter of the last word of the preceding text (R[HŠ]), although one wonders why a scribe would have begun the next text immediately afterwards, on the same line. Perhaps this ostracon was used as a sort of palimpsest.

⁶⁵ DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 477-78.

⁶⁶ It is also noted by AHITUV 2008, p. 309.

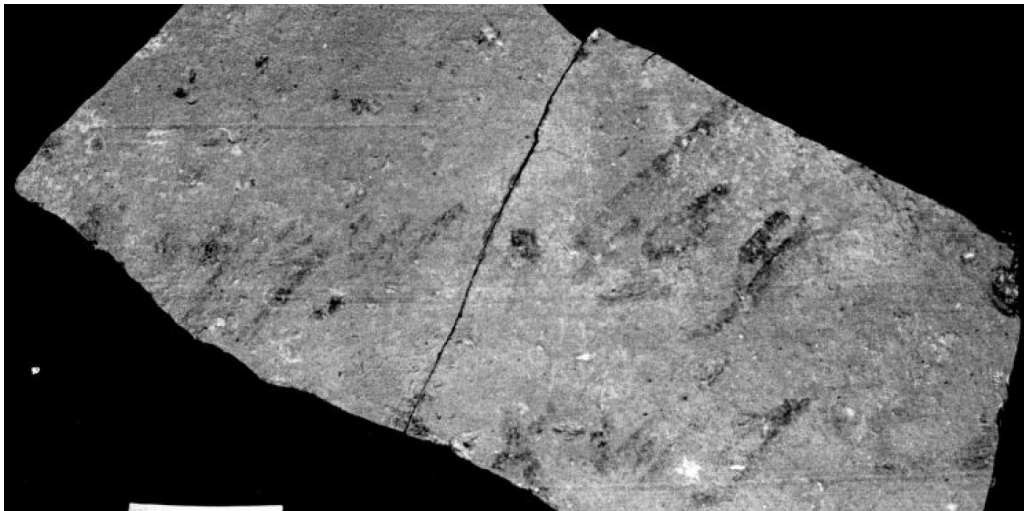


Figure 13 (detail of ISF_DO_7450)

Sam 64

- 1) MN^h H.LYW[Q]M-
- 2) Y[W]YŠ[']

- 1) From No^h ah, to Yaw[qi]m-
- 2) Ya[w]yaša[']

On the images available on Inscriptifant, more letters can be seen compared to the readings proposed in previous studies. The fading of the ink and the presence of dark areas at the surface make the task very difficult, however, and the readings remain very tentative.

In line 1, Lemaire reads MN^h H.L, which seems plausible (see Figure 14). The downstroke of M and traces of the two checks of its head of M are visible. The next letter may be a N since one can see a downstroke and one check corresponding to the head, but that is uncertain. The ^h, a triangle, is relatively well preserved. The next letter is very difficult to read but one can perhaps see traces of two parallel, oblique strokes that might belong to a H. While some of these letters are very uncertain, N^h H is the only toponym beginning with N attested in the Samaria ostraca, and it remains the best working hypothesis here.

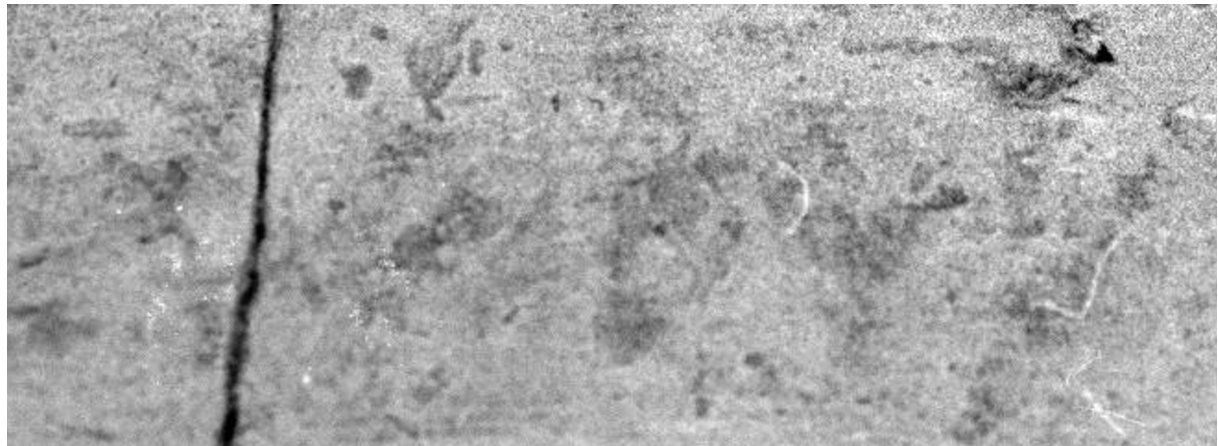
After this name, remnants of the main stroke of a L seem present. Then (see Figure 15), very tentatively, I suggest reading a Y (very uncertain), then a W (traces of the head are visible, as well as the downstroke), and a M (with traces of two checks and a downstroke). Several personal names could correspond to these traces, for instance YWQM, attested in the Hebrew Bible⁶⁷. The name appears on Paleo-Hebrew seals and bullae⁶⁸, like its Judean equivalent YHWQM⁶⁹, but they are unfortunately unprovenanced and their authenticity is unclear.

In line 2, I suggest, very tentatively, reading Y[W]YŠ['] (see Figure 16). The first visible trace is a horizontal stroke that slightly descends leftwards and could be the top stroke of a Y. Traces of the two parallels and of the tail of a second Y seem visible, although this is uncertain. After the break, a Š made of two Us seems present. Hence the possible presence of the name YWYŠ^h, already attested on Sam 36 and 85.

⁶⁷ 1 Chr 4:22.

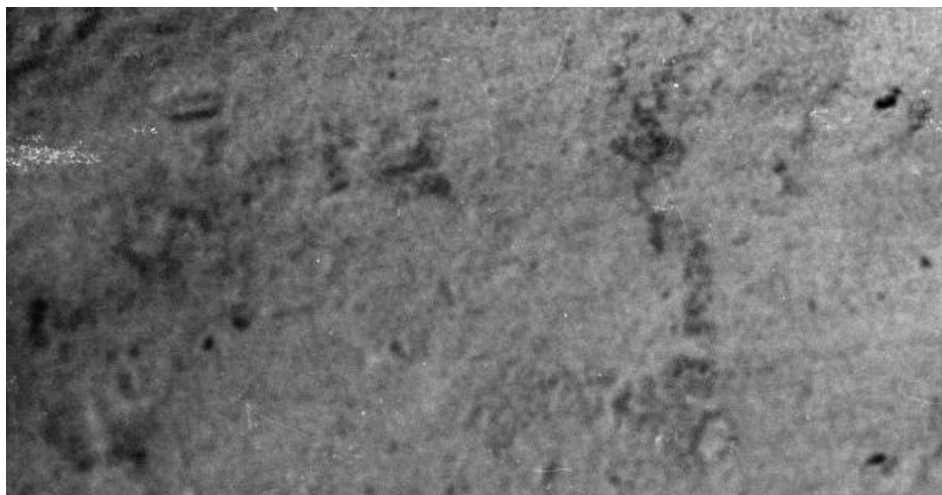
⁶⁸ DEUTSCH, HELTZER 1995, No 75; DEUTSCH, LEMAIRE 2000, No 6.

⁶⁹ DEUTSCH 2003, No 120, 154, 176a-b, 1933, 194, 195a-d, 401.



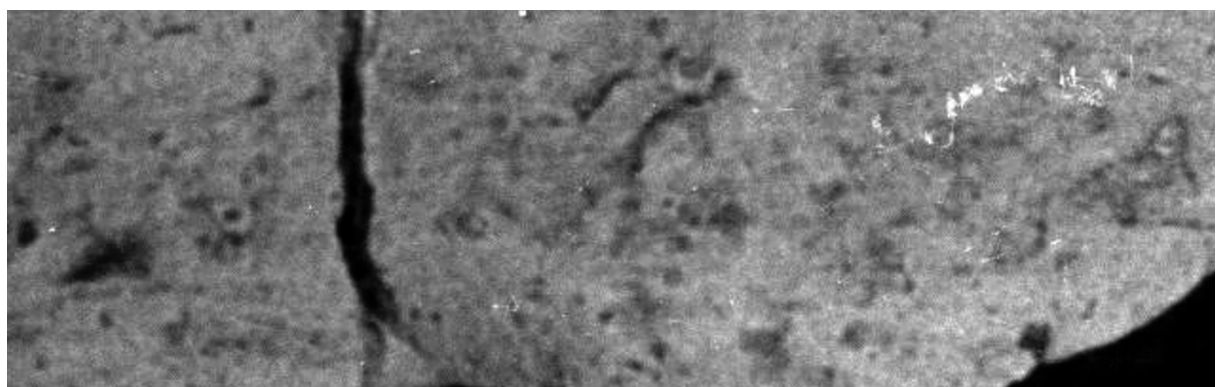
L H ' N M

Figure 14 (detail of ISF_DO_07466)



M traces W Y ?

Figure 15 (detail of ISF_DO_07466)



Š ? Y ? traces Y ?

Figure 16 (detail of ISF_DO_07466)

Sam 65

[]M[]B[]	1) M[]B[]
[]Š[]	2) []Š[]
[]-R/HŠK[]	3) []-R/HŠK[]

This ostrakon has been regarded as illegible by previous studies. It seems possible to propose some readings, although they remain tentative. Unfortunately, they do not form any complete word.

Sam 74

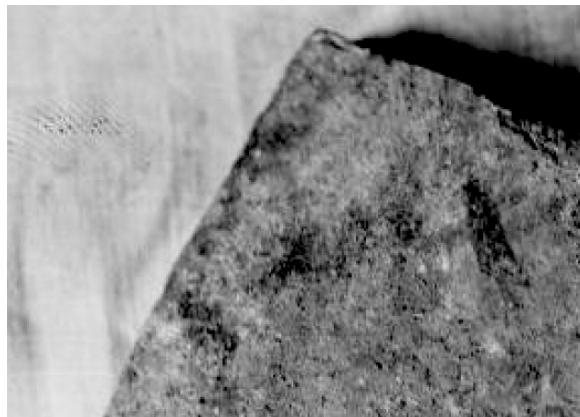
B/R

A triangular head and downstroke are visible⁷⁰, hence B or R; the latter seems more likely to me. Unfortunately, that is all that can be seen on this ostrakon.

Sam 78

1') --[]	1) --[]
2') []RG'.ŠR[]	2) []Rega' (son of) ŠR[]

While some read the second name SR[]⁷¹, I read ŠR[]. This could be, for instance, the hypocoristicon ŠR⁷², or ŠRYW, the equivalent of the Judean name ŠRYHW attested on seals⁷³.



R Š . ' ,

Figure 17 (detail of ISF_DO_06907)

Sam 80

BŠT[] In the year []

Kaufman reads Š⁷⁴ but BŠ seems more likely to me. There is one additional stroke that could not be accounted for if one read Š but can be a middle stroke in Š.

⁷⁰ On ISF_DO_07475, with enhancement of the contrast.

⁷¹ KAUFMAN, p. 146; LEMAIRE 1977, p. 38; DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005, p. 483.

⁷² WSS 1183.

⁷³ WSS 289, 389, 390, 462, 645.

Sam 86

- 1) *R*
- 2) *M/N*

Here again, a couple of letters appear on this ostrakon, but they do not yield any complete word.

Sam 91

BŠT. 10 5[] 15[]

Lemaire⁷⁵ reads *BŠH*. While *B* seems to me plausible, I read the following two signs as *Š* and *T*, followed by the hieratic numerals 10 and perhaps 5. Hence the typical chronological formula attested in many other ostraca.

Sam 95

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) <i>ŠT 5/G MN</i> [] | 1) [<i>ŠT 5/G MN</i> [] |
| 2) <i>LP</i> -[] | 2) <i>LP</i> -[] |
| 3) []-[] | 3) []-[] |

Here again it may be possible to suggest a few more readings than in previous studies, but there is, above, all, a puzzling issue in line 1. Lemaire⁷⁶ suggests reading 10 5 *M*-. But at the very beginning of the line, there appears a zigzag that seems to be a *Š*, then what seems to be a *T* drawn very close to the *Š*. If so, there may be here the dating formula [*B*]*ŠT*. But the following sign would be the hieratic numeral 5, and this would be the sole ostrakon dated to year 5. Note, however, that Sam 63 also contains an unclear dating formula: the hieratic numeral 10 is followed by a sign that is much debated; for instance, Lemaire reads 12⁷⁷; if so, then we should be open to the possibility that the 9th, 10th and 15th years are not the only ones to be represented in the corpus. Then we would have the preposition *M* followed by a toponym beginning with *N*, and the only such toponym in the other Samaria ostraca is *NʿH*. Another possibility would be to read *G* instead of 5, and to read the sequence *ŠTGMN*. The rightward extension at the top of the letter fits *G* well, but it also occurs on hieratic numerals (see Sam 37, 39, 56). This ostrakon remains enigmatic.

2. Summary

Firstly, a few ostraca seem to be palimpsests or remnants of several texts written on the same jar (see the discussions on Sam 4, 12, and 59). Secondly, I propose above new readings in 7 cases (Sam 34, 49, 51, 64, 65, 74, 78, 80, 86, 91, and 95), including on three ostraca that were previously deemed altogether illegible (Sam 65, 74 and 86). This does not always yield new words, but a few new names can be noted, as well as a new attestation of a name:

⁷⁴ KAUFMAN, p. 146.

⁷⁵ LEMAIRE 1973, p. 37.

⁷⁶ LEMAIRE 1973, p. 37.

⁷⁷ See a brief review of the opinions in RICHELLE 2010, p. 81.

- Sam 34: I suggest reading a new personal name ŠD[Q].
- Sam 49: I suggest reading a new toponym G/R Y, after the preposition M; it can tentatively identified to Tell er-Ra‘yan;
- Sam 51: there seems to be a new mention of the toponym TWL, already attested in Sam 21;
- Sam 64: I suggest reading a new anthroponym YW[Q]M.
- Sam 78: I suggest reading a new anthroponym ŠR or perhaps ŠRYW.

Thirdly, the available images enabled me to decide between competing readings in a number of cases, the most interesting being the following:

- Sam 8: I prefer reading RB[], rather than GB[]; this toponym can tentatively identified with Rabbith.
- Sam 9, 10 and 19 mention the anthroponym ‘DN‘M.
- Sam 12: images confirm the presence of a word divider in B‘L.ZMR, as noted by Renz in contrast to most other scholars. As a result, I read here two proper names, B‘L and ZMR, not one (B‘LZMR).
- Sam 20: N.KRM should be read, not MKRM.
- Sam 29: against the other scholars, Dobbs-Allsopp *et al.* are correct in reading ‘D; as a result, it is not the name ‘Amar but ‘Adar that is mentioned.
- Sam 45: images confirm the presence of a word divider in YW.NTN, as noted by Reisner alone. Therefore, the name YWNTN is not attested here, but the name NTN is mentioned.

For other readings, I refer the reader to the Appendix.

According to my own readings, the ostraca contain around 51 distinct personal names⁷⁸. See Table 1 for a classification.

	personal names	total
Yahwistic names	‘Abyaw, ‘Adonyaw, Badyaw, Gaddiyaw, ‘Uryaw, Yada‘ yaw, Yawyaša‘, Yaw[qi]m, ‘Abdyaw, ‘Egelyaw, Šamaryaw	11
ba‘alist names	‘Abiba‘al, Ba‘al, Ba‘ala‘, Ba‘alme‘ony, Meribba‘al (?)	5
Names with ‘El	‘Ela‘, ‘Elyša‘, ‘Eliba‘ (?)	3
Name with ‘LY	Yuḥaw‘aly	1
Name with Adon or ‘Am	‘Adoni‘am	1
hypocoristics	‘Adar, ‘Aḥaz, ‘Aḥazy, ‘Aša‘, ‘Ešḥor, Ba‘ara‘ (?), Gomer, Gera‘, Dalah, Zakkur, Zamar, Ḥeleš, Ḥanan, Ḥanna‘, Ya‘aš, Nimši, Natan, ‘Abda‘, ‘Uzza‘, ŠLL, Rega‘, Rapha‘, Šeba‘	23
Egyptian names	‘NMŠ, QDBŠ	2
Incomplete	‘RP-, GL[], ‘D[], ŠD[Q], ŠR[]	5

Table 1: Personal names in the Samaria ostraca

⁷⁸ DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005 provide an appendix (p. 583-622) devoted to the personal names appearing in the inscriptions they study, including the anthroponyms of the Samaria Ostraca. See also RICHELLE 2010, vol. 1, p. 147-175.

As for the toponyms, Zertal's surface surveys in the Manasseh territory, and his discussion of many possible identifications of ancient toponyms with archaeological sites, prove very helpful⁷⁹. In my dissertation, I make a few new proposals in light of this work⁸⁰. Figure 17 is a map created on this basis, using Google Maps.

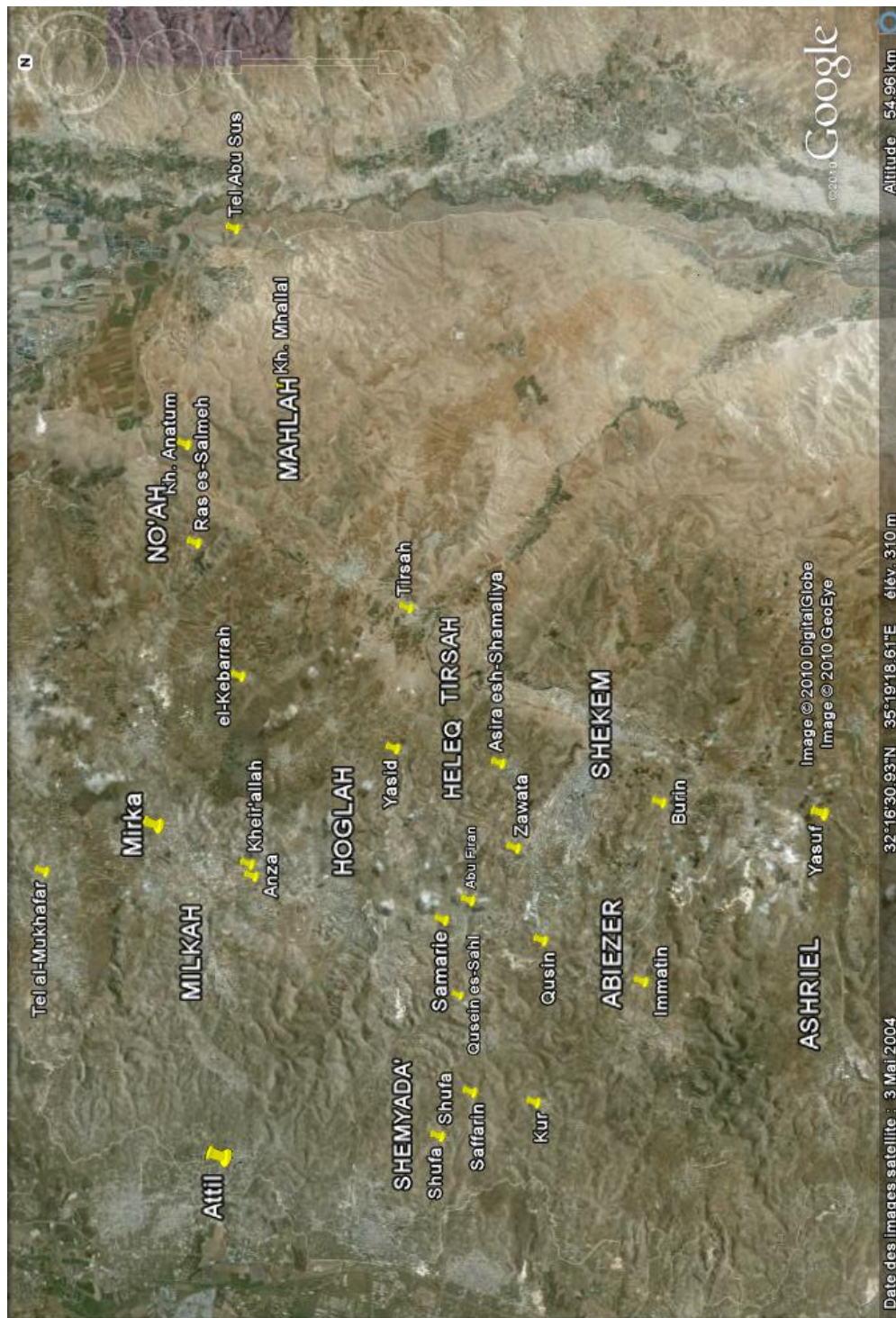


Fig. 18: Toponyms of the Samaria ostraca

⁷⁹ ZERTAL 2004; see also ZERTAL 2001.

⁸⁰ RICHELLE 2010, vol. 1, p. 176-191.

APPENDIX: Texts and translations of the Samaria ostraca⁸¹*Sam.1*

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1) BŠT.H ŠRT.LŠM | 1) In the tenth year, to Šhama- |
| 2) RYW.MB'RYM.NBL[YN] | 2) -ryaw, from Bi'ryam, a jar [of wine] |
| 3) YŠN. | 3) old. |
| 4) GR'.LYŠ'. 2 | 4) GR' (son of) 'Eliša' 2 |
| 5) 'Z'.QDBŠ 1 | 5) 'Uzza' (son of) QDBŠ 1 |
| 6) 'LB'. 1 | 6) 'Eliba' 1 |
| 7) B'L'.LYŠ['] | 7) Ba'ala' (son of) 'Eliš[a'] |
| 8) YD'YW | 8) Yada'yaw |

Sam.2

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H Š | 1) In the year ten- |
| 2) RT.LGDYW. | 2) -th, to Gaddiyaw, |
| 3) M'ZH. | 3) from 'Azah, |
| 4) 'BB'L. 2 | 4) 'Abiba'al 2 |
| 5) 'HZ. 2 | 5) 'Aḥaz 2 |
| 6) ŠB'. 1 | 6) Šeba' 1 |
| 7) MR(['])/(B')L | 7) MR[']l / Meribba'al |

Sam.3

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H ŠRT.L[] | 1) In the tenth year, to [] |
| 2) '.MŠMYD'.NBL[.YN.Y] | 2) ', from Šemida', a jar [of wine] |
| 3) ŠN.LB'L'. [] | 3) old], to Ba'ala', '[] |

Sam.4

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) [B]ŠT.HTŠ 'T.MQ | 1) [In] the ninth year, from Qo- |
| 2) [ŠH.]LGDYW.NBL. | 2) [-seh], to Gaddiyaw, a jar |
| 3) [YN.YŠN.] | 3) [of old wine] |

Sam.5

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.HT[Š'T] | 1) In the nin[th] year |
| 2) MQŠH.L[]'/G/W/Q/RG/H/W/Q/R ⁸² | 2) from Qoṣeh, to ? |
| 3) NBL.YN.YŠN. | 3) a jar of old wine |

⁸¹ The vocalizations used in the proper names do not amount to a claim to be able to reconstruct the actual, historical vocalizations. They are mostly a practical way to simplify the readability of the translations. For the French translations in Richelle 2010, I followed Lemaire's vocalization; here, I generally follow DOBBS-ALLSOPP *et al.* 2005. The reconstructions, indicated in brackets, are relatively conservative as I find it precarious, for instance, to presuppose that ostraca mentioning the same places or the same people should necessarily bear the same date.

⁸² I do not think the traces here are compatible with GDYW, as a number of scholars believe, so I do not see Sam 5 as containing the same text as Sam 4. See RICHELLE 2010, p. 33-34.

Sam 6

- 1) BŠT.[HTŠ‘T.MQŠ]
- 2) H.LGDY[W.NBL.YN.Y]
- 3) ŠN.

- 1) In the [ninth] year, [from Qoş-]
- 2) -eh, to Gaddiya[w, a jar of wine]
- 3) old

Sam 7

- 1) BŠT.HTŠ‘T.
- 2) MQŠH.LGD
- 3) YW.NBL.YN.
- 4) YŠN.

- 1) *In* the ninth year,
- 2) *from* Qoşeh, to Gaddi-
- 3) -yaw, a jar of wine
- 4) old

Sam 8

- 1) [BŠT.H]TŠ‘T.MRB[]
- 2) [L‘DN]‘M.NBL.
- 3) [YN.YŠ]N.

- 1) [In the] ninth [year], from RB[]
- 2) [to ‘Adoni]‘am, a jar
- 3) [of ol]d [wine]

Sam 9

- 1) BŠT.HTŠ‘T.MY
- 2) ŠT.L‘DN‘M
- 3) [N]BL.Y[N.]YŠN.

- 1) In the ninth year, *from* Ya-
- 2) -šit, to ‘Adoni‘am
- 3) [a ja]r of old wi[ne]

Sam 10

- 1) BŠT.HTŠ‘T.M
- 2) YŠT.L‘DN‘
- 3) M.NBL.YN.
- 4) YŠN.
- 5) -[]-

- 1) In the ninth year, from
- 2) Yašit, to ‘Adoni‘-
- 3) -am, a jar of wine
- 4) old
- 5) ?- ?

Sam 11

- 1) []-
- 2) [N]BL.YN.[YŠN.]
- 3) [L‘D]N‘M.

- 1) []?
- 2) [a ja]r of [old] wine
- 3) [to ‘Ado]ni‘am

Sam 12

- 0) YN
- 1) BŠT.HTŠ‘T.
- 2) MŠPTN.LB‘L.
- 3) ZMR.NBL.YN.
- 4) YŠN

0) *wine*

- 1) In the ninth year,
- 2) from ŠPTN, to Ba‘al (son of)
- 3) *Zamar*, a jar of wine
- 4) old

Sam 13

- 1) BŠT.H‘ŠRT.M‘B‘
- 2) ZR.LŠMRYW.NBL.
- 3) YN.YŠN.L‘Š
- 4) ḤR[].MTWL

- 1) In the tenth year, from ‘Abi‘e-
- 2) -zer, to Šamaryaw, a jar
- 3) of old wine, to ‘Eš-
- 4) ḥor[], from Tawil

Sam 14

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.HTŠ[‘T.]MG | 1) In the nin[th] year, from Ga- |
| 2) T.PR’N.LŠMRYW | 2) –t Pir’an, to Šamaryaw |
| 3) NBL.YN.YŠN. | 3) a jar of old wine |

Sam 15

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1’) [MH]ŠRT.L/’[] | 1’) [from Ḥa]šerot, to |
| 2’) [N]BL.Y[N.YŠN.] | 2’) a jar of old wine |

Sam 16a

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H’ŠRT.MS | 1) In the tenth year, from Se- |
| 2) PR.LGDYW.NBL. | 2) -pher, to Gaddiyaw, a jar |
| 3) ŠMN.RHŠ. | 3) of refined oil |

Sam 16b

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H’ŠRT.MS | 1) In the tenth year, from Se- |
| 2) PR.LGDYW.NBL. | 2) -pher, to Gaddiyaw, a jar |
| 3) ŠMN.RHŠ | 3) of refined oil |

Sam 17a

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H’ŠRT.M’Z | 1) In the tenth year, from ‘Az- |
| 2) H.LGDYW.NBL.ŠM | 2) –ah, to Gaddiyaw, a jar of oi- |
| 3) N.RHŠ. | 3) –l refined |

Sam 17b

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1) [BŠT.H’]ŠRT.M’ZH[] | 1) [In the te]nth [year], from ‘Azah[] |
| 2) []W.NBL.ŠMN. | 2) [Gaddiya]w, a jar of oil |
| 3) [RH]Š. | 3) (refi)ned |

Sam 18

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H’ŠRT.MHŠRT | 1) In the tenth year, from Ḥašerot |
| 2) LGDYW.NBL.ŠMN. | 2) to Gaddiyaw, a jar of oil |
| 3) RHŠ. | 3) refined |

Sam 19

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H’ŠRT. | 1) In the tenth year, |
| 2) MYŠT.NBL. | 2) from Yašit, a jar |
| 3) ŠMN.RHŠ.L | 3) of oil refined, to |
| 4) ‘DN’M | 4) ‘Adoni’am |

Sam 20

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| 1) BŠT.H [ŠRT.Y] | 1) In the te[nth year, wi-] |
| 2) N.KRM.HT[L.NBL.Š] | 2) -ne from the vineyard of Te[ll, a jar of o-] |
| 3) MV.RH[Š.] | 3) –il refin[ed] |

Sam 21

- 1) BŠT.H ŠRT.LŠMR
- 2) YW.MTWL.NBL.Š
- 3) MN. RHŠ

- 1) In the tenth year, to Šamar-
- 2) -yaw, from Tawil, a jar of o-
- 3) -il refined

Sam 22

- 1) BŠT. 10 5 MḤ
- 2) LQ.L'Š'. 'H
- 3) MLK.
- 4) ḤLŠ.MḤŠRT

- 1) In the 15th year, from Ḥe-
- 2) -leq, to 'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥi-
- 3) melek
- 4) Ḥeleş, from Ḥašerot

Sam 23

- 1) BŠT. 10 5 MḤLQ.
- 2) L'Š'. 'HMLK.
- 3) ḤLŠ.MḤŠRT

- 1) In the 15th year, from Ḥeleq
- 2) to 'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥimélèk
- 3) Ḥeleş, from Ḥašerot

Sam 24

- 1) BŠT.H 10 5[MḤ]LQ.L'Š' .] 'HML[K]
- 2) RP'. 'NMŠ.M[H]ŠRT

- 1) In the 15th year, [from Ḥe]leq, to 'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥimelek
- 2) Rapha' (son of) 'Animeš, *from* [Ḥa]šerot

Sam 25

- 1') []K/M/N--
- 2') [L'Š'. 'HMLK
- 3') []'ḤZY .M
- 4') [ḤLŠ.M]ḤŠRT

- 1') [] K/M/N ??
- 2') [to 'Aša' (son of) 'A]ḥimelek
- 3') [] 'Aḥazy, from
- 4') [Ḥeleş, from]Ḥašerot

Sam 26

- 1') [MḤL]Q.L'Š' ['HMLK]
- 2') [ḤL]Š.HYN.MḤ[ŠRT]

- 1) [from Ḥele]q, to 'Aša' [(son of) 'Aḥimelek]
- 2) [Ḥele]š, the wine, from Ḥa[šerot]

Sam 27

- 1) BŠT. 10 5 MḤLQ.L'Š'.
- 2) 'HMLK.
- 3) B'L'.B'LM'NY.

- 1) In the 15th year, from Ḥeleq, to 'Aša'
- 2) (son of) 'Aḥimelek,
- 3) Ba'ala' (son of) Ba'alme'ony

Sam 28

- 1) BŠT 10 5 M'B'ZR.L'Š'
- 2) 'HMLK
- 3) B'L'.M'LMTN.

- 1) In the 15th year, from 'Abi'ezer, to 'Aš-
- 2) -a' (son of) 'Aḥimélèk
- 3) Ba'ala', from 'Almiton

Sam 29

- 1) BŠT. 10 5 MŠ[MYD'.L]'Š'
- 2) 'HMLK.
- 3) 'DR.MSPR.

- 1) In the 15th year, from Še[mida', to] 'Aša'
- 2) (son of) 'Aḥimélèk
- 3) 'Adar, *from* Sépher

Sam 30

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT 10 5 MŠMYD‘ | 1) In the 15th year, from Šemida‘ |
| 2) LHLS.GDYW. | 2) to Ḥeleş (son of) Gaddiyaw |
| 3) GR‘.HN‘. | 3) Gera‘ (son of) Hanna‘ |

Sam 31a

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.H 10 5 MŠMYD‘. | 1) In the 15th year, from Šemida‘, |
| 2) LHLS.‘PŠH. | 2) to Ḥeleş (son of) ‘Apšah, |
| 3) B‘L‘.ZKR. | 3) Ba‘ala‘ (son of) Zakkur |

Sam 31b

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 1) BŠT[] | 1) In the year [] |
| 2) ‘/L.L-[] | 2) ‘/L.L ? [] |
| 3) ---[] | 3) ???[] |
| 4) [Y]ŠT[] | 4) [Ya]šit [] |

Sam 32

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.10 5 MŠ<M>YD‘. | 1) In the 15th year, from Še<m>ida‘ |
| 2) LHLS. | 2) to Ḥeleş |
| 3) ‘HM‘. | 3) ‘Aḥima‘ |

Sam 33

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) [BŠT]/5 MŠ[MY] | 1) [In the] /5th [year], from Š[emi] |
| 2) [D‘L]HLS.GDYW. | 2) [da‘, to] Ḥeleş (son of) Gaddiyaw |
| 3) []-WT | 3) []-WT |

Sam 34

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1) [BŠ]T.H 10 5 M[Š]MY[D] | 1) [In] the 15th [ye]ar, from [Še]mi[da‘] |
| 2) []-[G]DYW -.ŠD[Q.] | 2) []?[Ga]ddiyaw [] ŠD[Q] |

Sam 35

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT. 10 5 MŠ[MYD‘] | 1) In the 15th year, from Šemida‘ |
| 2) LHLS.GD[YW] | 2) to Ḥeleş (son of) Gaddi[yaw] |
| 3) YW | 3) -yaw |

Sam 36

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1) MŠ[MYD[‘] | 1) from Šemida‘ [] |
| 2) [] | 2) [] |
| 3) [G]R‘. YWYŠ‘.- /B- | 3) [Ge]ra‘ (son of) Yawyaša‘.- /B- |

Sam 37

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1) BŠT.10 5 MŠMYD‘. | 1) In the 15th year, from Šemida‘ |
| 2) L‘HM‘. | 2) to ‘Aḥima‘ (son of) |
| 3) ‘Š‘.B‘L‘ZKR ⁸³ | 3) ‘Aša‘, Ba‘ala‘ (son of) Zakkur |

⁸³ Probably a scribal mistake for B‘L‘.ZKR, that is, Ba‘ala‘ (son of) Zakkur, cf. Sam 31a.

Sam 38

- 1) BŠT.10 5 MŠMY
- 2) D' .L' ḤM'.
- 3) DLH.'L'.

- 1) *In the 15th year*, from Šemi-
- 2) -da', to 'Aḥima'
- 3) Dalah (son of) 'Ela'

Sam 39

- 1) BŠT.10 5 MŠMYD['].
- 2) [L]'[H]M'.
- 3) -' -

- 1) *In the 15th year*, from Šemida[']
- 2) [to] 'A[hi]ma'
- 3) ??

Sam 40

[M]ŠMYD' .L' []

[] from] Šemida, to '[]

Sam 41

[]K/M/N/PŠ' .GLYW

[]K/M/N/PŠ' (son of) 'Igliyaw

Sam 42

- 1) [B]ŠT.10 5[M]ŠR'L
- 2) [L]YD' YW.
- 3) 'DNYW.G--
- 4) M'[Š]RT

- 1) [In] the 15th year, [from] Ašri'el
- 2) [to] Yada'yaw,
- 3) 'Adonyaw (son of) G...
- 4) *from* 'A[ša]rot

Sam 43

- 1) BŠT.H--[]
- 2) ḤNN.-[]
- 3) 'L[]

- 1) *In the year* []
- 2) Ḥanan, ?[]
- 3) 'El[]

Sam 44

- 1) [BŠT.]H 10 5 MŠKM.
- 2) [] MHP'R
- 3) -.HYN

- 1) [In] the 15th [year], *from* Shechem,
- 2) [] *from* HP'R
- 3) ?, the wine

Sam 45

- 1) BŠT[.]H 10 5 MḤGL[H]
- 2) LḤNN.B'R'[]
- 3) YW.NTN MYŠ[T]

- 1) *In the 15th year*, from Ḥogl[ah],
- 2) to Ḥanan (son of) Ba'ara'[]
- 3) -yaw (son of) Natan, *from* Yašit

Sam 46

- 1) BŠT. 10 5 []
- 2) LḤNN.B[R']
- 3) '[]

- 1) *In the 15th year* []
- 2) to Ḥanan (son of) Ba'ara' []
- 3) '[]

Sam 47

- 1') []ḤGLH.LḤNN B'R'[.]M
- 2') []MYŠT.

- 1') []Ḥoglah, to Ḥanan (son of) Ba'ara', ?
- 2') [] *from* Yašit

Sam 57

- 1') [] 'BD'.YW-[]
 2') [R]P'.ŠM<Y>D' []
 3') []YG.

- 1') [] 'Abda' (son of) Yaw[]
 2') [Ra]pha', Šem<i>da' []
 3') []YG

Sam 58

- 1) BŠT.10 5.LBDYW[.YN]
 2) KRM.HTL.

- 1) In the 15th year, to *Badyaw*[,wine of the]
 2) *vineyard* of the Tell

Sam 59

- 0) []----
 1) NBL. ŠMN.R[HŠ.]
 2) BŠT.H[]
 3) L[]

- 0) [] ???
 1) a jar of re[fin]ed oil
 2) In the year []
 3) to[]

Sam 60

KRM YH̱W'L[Y]

vineyard of Yuḥaw'al[y]

Sam 61

- 1) KRM.HTL.
 2) BŠT 10 5

- 1) *vineyard* of the Tell
 2) In the 15th year

Sam 62

-.YN.ŠMYD[']

-, wine, Šemida'

Sam 63

- 1) BŠT 10 + x --[]
 2) MŠMYD'

- 1) In the 10 + x year --[]
 2) from Šemida'

Sam 64

- 1) MN'H.LYW[Q]M-
 2) Y[W]YŠ[']

- 1) From *No'ah*, to *Yawqim*-
 2) *Ya[w]yaša*[']

Sam 65

- 1) []M[]B[]
 2) []Š[]
 3) []-R/HŠK[]

- 1) M[]B[]
 2) []Š[]
 3) []-R/HŠK[]

Sam 66

]B/D/R'L[

Sam 67

[BŠT]10 5 MYŠ[T]

[In the] 15th [year], *from* Yaši[t]

Sam 68

illegible

Sam 69

-- ' --

Sam 70

M/PR

Sam 71

illegible

Sam 72

1) BŠT H'ŠRT.YN.KRM

1) In the tenth year, *wine of the vineyard*

2) HTL.BNBL.ŠMN.RHŠ.

2) of the Tell, in a jar of refined oil

Sam 73

1) BŠT.[]

1) In the year []

2) YN.KR[M.HTL.BNBL.]

2) wine of the *viney*[ard of the Tell, in a jar]

3) ŠMN.[RHŠ.]

3) of [refined] oil

Sam 74

B/R

Sam 75

1')]' [

2')]L [

Sam 76

1') -

2') Y P

Sam 77

1) BŠ[T]

1) In the yea[r]

2) L' []

2) L' []

3) 'L []

3) 'L []

Sam 78

1') --[]

1) --[]

2') []RG'.ŠR[]

2) []Rega' (son of) ŠR[]

Sam 79

H[]-

Sam 80

BŠT[]

In the year []

Sam 81

[]ŠLL[]

Sam 82

1') [NBL.]ŠMN.RH

1') [a jar] of oil *refi-*

2') Š.

2') -ned

Sam 83

-W.M'

Sam 84

M L'

Sam 85

1') --W/Q/R

1) ???

2') YWY[š']

2) Yawya[ša']

Sam 86

1') R

2') M/N

Sam 87

illegible

Sam 88

1')]L[

2') G[

Sam 89

[] .MBL.Y[N.YšN.]

[] a jar of [old] wi[ne]

Sam 90

1) []-šMYD'[]

1) []-šemida'[]

2) []-'PšH[]-[]

2) []-'Apšah[]-[]

Sam 91

BšT. 10 5[]

En l'an 15[]

Sam 92

1') LW'

1) ???

2') L'G[LYW]

2) to 'Ege[lyaw]

3') B-

Sam 93

1') M---Y

2') š-----

3') 'RP-

Sam 94

illegible

Sam 95

1) šT 5/G MN[]

1) šT 5/G MN[]

2) LP-[]

2) LP-[]

3) []-[]

3) []-[]

Sam 96

1') -

2') GL[

Sam 97

illegible

Sam 98

LB -

Sam 99

[YN.KRM.]HTL B[NBL.ŠMN.RḤṢ]

[wine of the vineyard of] the Tell *in* [a jar of refined oil]**Sam 100**

1) BŠT.HTŠ['T.]

1) In the nin[th] year []

2) []L[]

2) []L[]

Sam 101

1') []--M[]

1) []--M[]

2') [NBL.]YN.YŠN.

2) [a jar] of old wine

Sam 102

LŠ

Sam 103-107

illegible

The following table summarizes the data contained in the ostraca.

	year	places preceded by the preposition M	clans	personal names preceded by the preposition L	other personal names	commodities
1	tenth	Bi'ryam		Šamaryaw	GR' (son of) 'Eliša' 'Uzza' (son of) QDBš 'Eliba' Ba'ala' (son of) 'Elya[ša'] Yada'yaw	jar of old wine
2	tenth	'Azah		Gaddiyaw	'Abiba'al 'Aḥaz Šeba' MR'[]L / Meribba'al	
3	tenth		Šemida'	Ba'ala' (son of) []		jar of [old wine]
4	ninth	Qoṣeh		Gaddiyaw		jar [of old wine]
5	nin[th]	Qoṣeh		?		jar of <i>old</i> wine
6	[ninth]	[Qoṣ]eh		Gaddiyaw		[jar of] old [wine]
7	ninth	Qoṣeh		Gaddiyaw		jar of old wine
8	ninth	RB[]		['Adoni]'am		jar [of ol]d [wine]
9	ninth	Yašit		'Adoni'am		[ja]r of old wi[ne]
10	ninth	Yašit		'Adoni'am		jar of old wine
11				['Ado]ni'am		[ja]r of [old] wine
12	ninth	ŠPTN		Ba'al (son of) Zamar		jar of old wine
13	tenth	Tawil	'Abi'ezer	Šamaryaw 'Ešhor		jar of old wine
14	nin[th]	Gat Pir'an		Šamaryaw		jar of old wine
15		[Ha]šerot				jar of old wine
16a	tenth	Sepher		Gaddiyaw		jar of refined oil
16b	tenth	Sepher		Gaddiyaw		jar of refined oil
17a	tenth	'Azah		Gaddiyaw		jar of refined oil
17b	[te]nth	'Azah		[Gaddiya]w		jar of [refin]ed oil
18	tenth	Ḥašerot		Gaddiyaw		jar of refined oil
19	tenth	Yašit		'Adoni'am		jar of refined oil
20	te[nth]					[jar] of refin[ed o]il [wine of] the vineyard of the Te[11]
21	tenth	Tawil		Šamaryaw		jar of refined oil
22	15	Ḥašerot	Ḥeleq	'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥimélek	Ḥeleš	
23	15	Ḥašerot	Ḥeleq	'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥimélek	Ḥélèš	
24	15	Ḥašerot	[Ḥe]leq	'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥimelek	Rapha' (son of) 'Animeš	
25		Ḥašerot		['Aša' (son of)] 'Aḥimelek	'Aḥazy [Ḥeleš]	
26		Ḥa[šerot]	[Ḥe]leq	'Aša' [(son of) 'Aḥimelek]	[Ḥele]š	wine

27	15		Ḥeleq	'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥimelek	Ba'ala' (son of) Ba'alme'ony	
28	15	'Almiton	'Abi'ezer	'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥimelek	Ba'ala'	
29	15	Sepher	Še[mida']	'Aša' (son of) 'Aḥimelek	'Adar	
30	15		Šemida'	Ḥeleş (son of) Gaddiyaw	Gera' (son of) Ḥanna'	
31a	15		Šemida'	Ḥeleş (son of) 'Apšah	Ba'ala' (son of) <i>Zakkur</i>	
31b		[Ya]sit				
32	15		Še<mi>da'	Ḥeleş	'Aḥima'	
33	15		Še[mida']	Ḥeleş (son of) Gaddiyaw		
34	15	?	[Še]mi[da']	[Ga]ddiyaw	ŠD[Q.]	
35	15		Šemida'	Ḥeleş (son of) <i>Gaddi</i> [yaw]		
36			[Še]mida'	[G]R' (son of) Yawyaša'		
37	15		Šemida'	'Aḥima' son of 'Aša'	Ba'ala' (son of) Zak- kur	
38	15		Šemida'	'Aḥima'	Dalah (son of) 'Ela'	
39	15		Šemi[da']	'A[h]i'ma'		
40			Šemida'	[]		
41				[]K/M/N/PŠ' (son of) 'Igliyaw		
42	15	'A[ša]rot	'Ašri'el	Yada'yaw	'Adonyaw (son of) G...	
43					Ḥanan 'L[]	
44	15	HP'R	Shechem			the wine
45	15	Yašit	Ḥog[ah]	Ḥanan (son of) Ba'ara'	[] yaw] (son of) Natan	
46	15			Ḥanan (son of) Ba['ara']		
47		Yašit	Ḥoglah	Ḥanan (son of) Ba'ara'		
48	15	Yašub	'Ašri'el	Yada'yaw (son of) 'Aḥimelek	Ya'aš	
49		G/R[Y[] Kûr		Ḥele[š]		
50	15		No'ah	Gomer 'Uryaw	'Abdyaw	
51	tenth	Tawil			'Aḥa' the Judahi[te]	
52	15				'Abyaw	
53	tenth					wine of the vineyard of

						the Tell (in) jar of re- fined <i>oil</i>
54	tenth					wine of the vineyard of the Tell (in) jar of re- fined <i>oil</i>
55	tenth	(vineyard of Yuḥaw‘aly)				<i>jar</i> of refined <i>oil</i>
56	15	the Te[ll]		Nimši	[] ‘D[]	
57			Šem<i>da‘		‘Abda‘ (son of) Yaw[] [Ra]pha‘	
58	15			<i>Badyaw</i>		[wine of the] <i>vineyard</i> of the Tell
59						jar of re[<i>fin</i>] <i>oil</i>
60		(vineyard of Yuḥaw‘al[y])				
61	15	(vineyard of the Tell)				
62			Šemida‘			wine
63	10 + x		Šemida‘			
64			<i>No‘ah</i>	<i>Yaw[qi]m</i>	Yawyaša‘	
67	15	<i>Yašit</i>				
72	tenth					wine of the <i>vineyard</i> of the Tell, in a jar of refined <i>oil</i>
73						wine of the <i>viney</i> [ard of the Tell, in a jar] of [refined] <i>oil</i>
77				‘[]	‘L[]	
78				Rega‘ (son of) ŠR[]		
81				ŠLL		
82						[jar of] re[<i>fin</i>] <i>oil</i>
85					Yawya[ša‘]	
89						<i>jar</i> of [old] wi[ne]
90			Šemida‘	‘ <i>Apšah</i>		
91	15					
92				‘Ig[liyaw]		
93					‘RP [] ?	
95	?		?	P-[] ?		
96					GL[] ?	
99						[wine of the vineyard of] the Tell in [a jar of refined <i>oil</i>]
100	nin[th]					
101						[jar of] old wine

Table 2: Data contained in the Samaria ostraca

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ABEL, F.-M., 1967: *Géographie de la Palestine*, 2 vol. (Études bibliques 35), 3rd ed., Paris.
- AHITUV, S., 2008: *Echoes from the Past. Hebrew and Cognate Inscriptions from the Biblical Period*, Jerusalem.
- AMAR, Z., 2009: “Šmn Raḥuṣ”, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 141, p. 18-26.
- BENZ, F.L., 1972: *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions* (Studia Pohl 8), Rome.
- BERGMAN, A., BRANDSTETER, R., 1940-41: « Exploration in the Valley of Beth-Shean », *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society* 8, p. 85-90 (Hebrew).
- DAVIES, G.I., 1991: *Ancient Hebrew Inscriptions. Corpus and Concordance*, Cambridge.
- DEMSKY, A., 2007: “Šmn Rḥṣ – Bath Oil from Samaria”, in S.W. CRAWFORD *et al.* (ed.), “Up to the Gates of Ekron”. *Essays on the Archaeology and History of the Eastern Mediterranean in Honor of Seymour Gitin*, Jerusalem, p. 333-336.
- DEUTSCH, R., 2003: *Biblical Period Hebrew Bullae. The Josef Chaim Kaufman Collection*, Tel Aviv.
- DEUTSCH, R., HELTZER, M., 1995: *New Epigraphic Evidence from the Biblical Period*, Tel Aviv/Jaffa.
- DEUTSCH, R., LEMAIRE, A., 2000: *Biblical Period Personal Seals in the Shlomo Moussaieff Collection*, Tel Aviv.
- 2003: *The Adoniram Collection of West Semitic Inscriptions*, Geneva.
- DIJKSTRA, M., 2000: “Chronological Problems of the Eighth Century BCE. A New Proposal for Dating the Samaria Ostraca”, in J.C. de MOOR and H.F. VAN ROOY (ed.), *Past, Present, Future. The Deuteronomistic History and the Prophets*, Leiden, Boston, Köln, p. 76-87.
- DIRINGER, D., 1934: *Le iscrizioni antico-ebraiche palestinesi*, Florence.
- DOBBS-ALLSOPP, F.W., *et al.* 2005: *Hebrew Inscriptions. Texts from the Biblical Period of the Monarchy with Concordance*, New Haven, London.
- DONNER, H., RÖLLIG, W., 1972: *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*, vol. 1, 3rd ed., Wiesbaden.
- DORSEY, D.A., 1991: *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel* (The ASOR Library of Biblical and Near Eastern Archaeology), Baltimore.
- FAIGENBAUM-GOLOVIN, S., *et al.* 2020: « Algorithmic Handwriting Analysis of the Samaria Inscriptions Illuminates Bureaucratic Apparatus in Biblical Israel », *PLoS ONE* 15(1). e0227452. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0227452> (accessed 12/22/2021).
- GIBSON, J.C.L., 1971: *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, vol. 1: *Hebrew and Moabite Inscriptions*, Oxford, Clarendon Press.
- HARDING, G.L., 1971: *An Index and Concordance of Preislamic Arabian Names and Inscriptions*, Toronto.
- KAUFMAN, I.T., 1963: “A Note on the Place Name *Spr* and the Letter *Samek* in the Samaria Ostraca”, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 172, p. 60-61.

- 1966: *The Samaria Ostraca. A Study in Ancient Hebrew Palaeography*, PhD dissertation, Harvard University.
- 1992: “Samaria (Ostraca)”, in FREEDMAN, D.N., *et al*, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5, New York, p. 921-926.
- LEMAIRE, A., 1973: *Les ostraca hébreux de l’époque royale israélite*, 2 vol., PhD dissertation, Université de Paris III.
- 1977: *Inscriptions hébraïques*, vol. 1: *Les ostraca* (LAPO), Paris.
- MENDEL, A., GROSMAN, L., 2013: “Unpublished Hebrew and Other Northwest Semitic Inscriptions from Samaria Studied with a 3-dimensional Imaging Technology”, *Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt* 15, p. 171-88.
- NA’AMAN, N., 2019: “A New Appraisal of the Samaria Ostraca”, *Ugarit Forschungen* 50, p. 259-271.
- NAM, R., 2012: “Power relations in the Samaria Ostraca”, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 144, p. 155-63.
- NIEMANN, H.M., 2008: “A New Look at the Samaria Ostraca. The King-Clan Relationship”, *Tel Aviv* 35, p. 249-266.
- POULTER, A.J., DAVIES, G.I., 1990: “The Samaria Ostraca. Two Onomastic Notes”, *Vetus Testamentum* 40, p. 237-240.
- RAINEY, A.F., 1988: “Toward a Precise Date for the Samaria Ostraca”, *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 272, p. 69-74.
- REISNER, G.A., FISCHER, C.S., LYON, D.G., 1924: *Harvard Excavations at Samaria, I, Text, II, Plans and Plates*, Cambridge.
- RENZ, J., RÖLLIG, W., 1995: *Handbuch der althebraïschen Epigraphik*, 3 vol., Darmstadt.
- RICHELLE, M., 2010: *Le royaume d’Israël durant la première moitié du VIII^e s. av. n.è. Analyse critique des sources épigraphiques, bibliques et archéologiques*, 2 vol., PhD dissertation, Paris, EPHE.
- ROLLSTON, C.A., 1999: *The Script of the Hebrew Ostraca of the Iron Age: The 8th-6th Centuries BCE*, PhD dissertation, Baltimore, John Hopkins University.
- SURIANO, M., 2007: “A Fresh Reading For ‘Old wine’ in the Samaria Ostraca”, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 139, p. 27-33.
- 2016: “Wine Shipments to Samaria from Royal Vineyards”, *Tel Aviv* 43, p. 99-110.
- ZERTAL, A., 2001: “The Heart of the Monarchy. Pattern of Settlement and Historical Considerations of the Israelite Kingdom of Samaria”, in A. MAZAR (ed.), *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament, Supplement 331), Sheffield, p. 38-64.
- 2004: *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey, vol. 1: The Shechem Syncline*, (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 21.1), Leiden, Boston.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article fournit le texte et la traduction des ostraca de Samarie trouvés en 1910, ainsi que des notes épigraphiques concernant un choix de 21 inscriptions parmi eux, et une carte du territoire de Manassé avec les toponymes pour lesquels une localisation peut être proposée.

ABSTRACT

This article provides the texts and translations of the Samaria ostraca found in 1910, together with epigraphical notes on a selection of 21 of these inscriptions, and a map of the Manasseh territory with the toponyms for which a localization can be proposed.

MOTS-CLEFS

1. Ostraca de Samarie
2. Paléo-hébreu
3. Epigraphie
4. Israël ancien
5. Géographie historique

KEYWORDS

1. Samaria ostraca
2. Paleo-Hebrew
3. Epigraphy
4. Ancient Israel
5. Historical Geography