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Archaeological remains of the Bar Kokhba Revolt in the Te'omim Cave (*Mŭghâret Umm et Tûeimîn*), Western Jerusalem Hills

BOAZ ZISSU, RO'I PORAT,
BOAZ LANGFORD & AMOS FRUMKIN
BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY AND HEBREW UNIVERSITY, JERUSALEM

In loving memory of our friend, teacher and colleague Professor Hanan Eshel z"l.

ABSTRACT The Te'omim Cave is a large natural cave, located in the Jerusalem hills. The article presents the results of an archaeological survey in the hard-to-reach section of the cave. Archaeological finds, as hoards of coins, weapons, fragmentary human bones, pottery and oil lamps from the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt were discovered *in situ*. The finds attest that the cave served as the last place of refuge for rebels who met there their death. The highlights of the survey were three hoards of coins. 'Hoard A' included 83 silver coins restruck by the Bar Kokhba administration. It is the only hoard of silver Bar Kokhba coins discovered thus far by archaeologists. 'Hoard B' included nine silver coins and a bronze *perutah*. 'Hoard C' included five Roman gold coins, 15 silver coins and four Roman bronze coins of Ascalon. The article discusses various numismatic and archaeological aspects of the finds.

THE TE'OMIM CAVE is a karst (natural) cave located on the northern bank of Nahal Hame'ara, on the western edge of the Jerusalem hills (see location map).[1] This article will present the results of an archaeological survey which focused on the hard-to-reach inner section, where archaeological finds from the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt were discovered.[2]

1. The cave is situated at coordinates 152049/126028, about 1.5 km east of the juncture of Nahal Hame'ara and Nahal Zanoah. Nahal Zanoah flows through this section of the Telem (known also as the Marzeva – or 'Gutter' Valley). This is the natural boundary between the Judean Hills and the Judean Shephelah.

2. The survey was carried out by the authors (permit S-133/2009) during 2009, on behalf of the Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University together with the Cave Research Unit at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, with assistance from the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) and the Jeselsohn Epigraphic Center of Jewish History at Bar-Ilan University. Vladimir Buslov, Mika Ullman, Uri Davidovich, and Jonathan Goldsmith took part.

Research history

The cave was named Mŭghâret Umm et Tûeimîn – 'the cave of the mother of twins' – by local residents of the region in the nineteenth century.[3] The first comprehensive study of the cave was carried out by C.R. Conder and H.H. Kitchener on 17 October 1873; their report included a verbal description and a fairly detailed map.[4] At the northern tip of the cave the explorers encountered a deep pit, which they described as follows:

> The second gallery, entered behind a sort of screen of stalagmite, is 80 feet long, and some 20 feet wide. At the further end is a pit some 60 feet deep and 15 feet across; for 20 feet there is a steep slope; for 40 feet the sides of the pit are sheer.

The explorers did not descend into the pit; nor did they notice the continuation of the cave north of point E (see figs 1 and 2). Their description of the cave provides information about traditions and customs of the local *fellahin*, who attributed healing properties to the spring water that flowed in the cave.[5] The *fellahin* even told the surveyors a story about throwing unfaithful wives into the pit.[6]

In the late 1920s, René Neuville, the French consul in Jerusalem, excavated the bottom of the main hall and found ceramic, wooden, and stone vessels.

The coins and metal objects were cleaned by Marina Rassovsky in the Israel Museum laboratories. The pottery was restored by Andrei Wainer of the Israel Museum laboratories. We are grateful to Dr. Zvika Tsuk, Menachem Fried, and On Valensi of the INPA, and to Dr. Zvi Greenhut of the Israel Antiquities Authority, for their help. Dudi Mevorach, Daniel Ein-Mor, Yinon Shivtiel, Amos Kloner, Guy D. Stiebel, Deborah Stern and Nili Graicer also provided assistance. The archaeological assemblage found in this survey in the main hall of the cave will be described elsewhere.

3. This name was documented by the Survey of Western Palestine: H. C. Stewardson, *The Survey of Western Palestine, A General Index* (London, 1888), p. 129.

4. See C. R. Conder and H. H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine: Memoirs,* vol. 3: *Judaea*, London (1883), pp. 148–149; Victor Guérin visited the region and reported briefly on the existence of 'a fairly large cave, partly filled with water', in the wall of Wadi el-Maghara (Nahal Hame'ara), but it doesn't seem that he visited the cave: V. Guérin, *Description Géographique, Historique et Archéologique de la Palestine*, Judee, III (Paris, 1869), p. 322.

5. Regarding the special qualities of the spring water, the British explorers briefly mentioned: 'The water is supposed to have certain medicinal qualities.' A legend that 'a barren woman drank the water dripping into a niche from the cave ceiling and had twins; hence the name of the cave' is reported by Zev Vilnay, 'Me'arat Ha'Teomim', in: Z. Vilnay, *Ariel, An Encyclopaedia for the Study of the Land of Israel* (Tel-Aviv 1978; Hebrew), col. 4580. A version of the legend is mentioned by Menahem Marcus, *Jerusalem Hills, A Landscape Survey and Trails* (Jerusalem, 1993; Hebrew), p. 144, site 130: 'The name Te'omim Cave comes from the legend that the spring water deep inside the cave not only causes pregnancy in barren women who drink it, but gives them twins.'

6. Conder and Kitchener, *The Survey*, p. 149 (as in no. 4 above) reported: 'This pit is used by the neighbouring peasantry for the execution of women charged with immorality, who are thrown down it.'

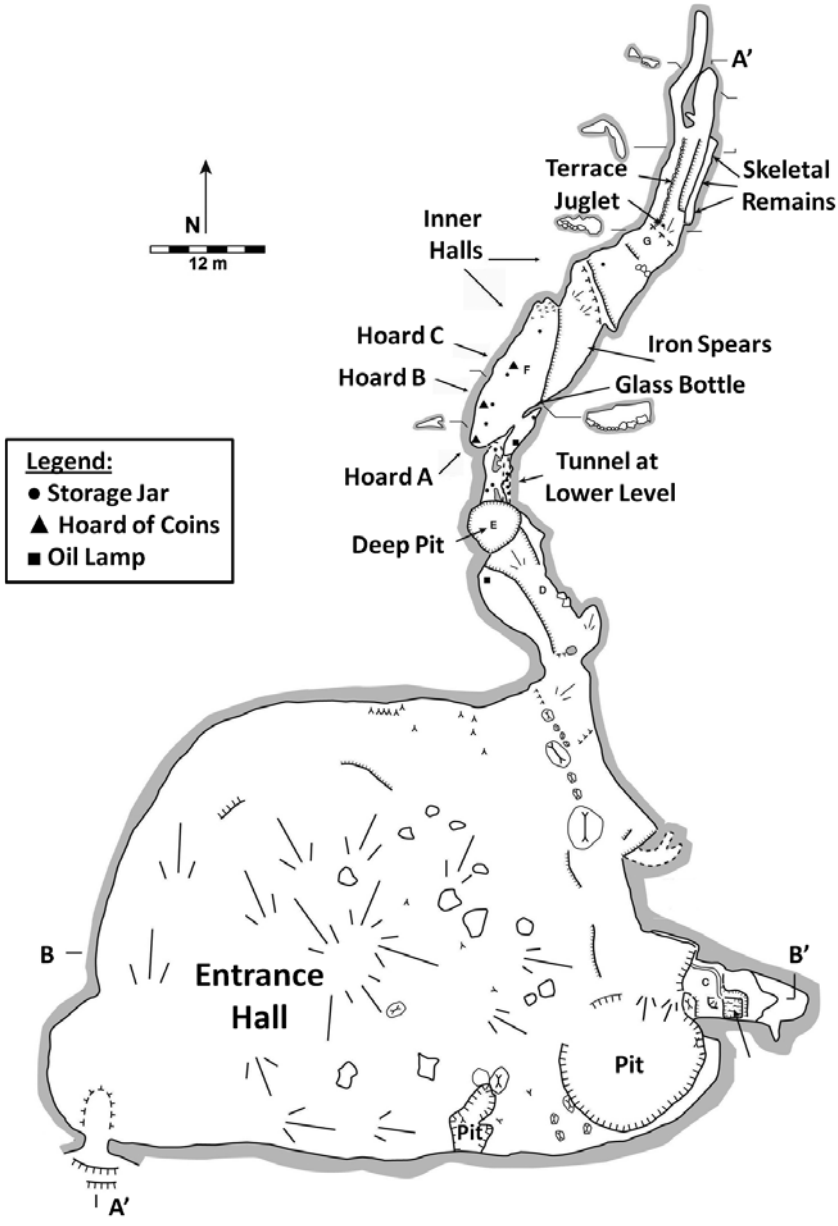

FIG. 1 Plan of cave (B. Langford and M. Ullman)

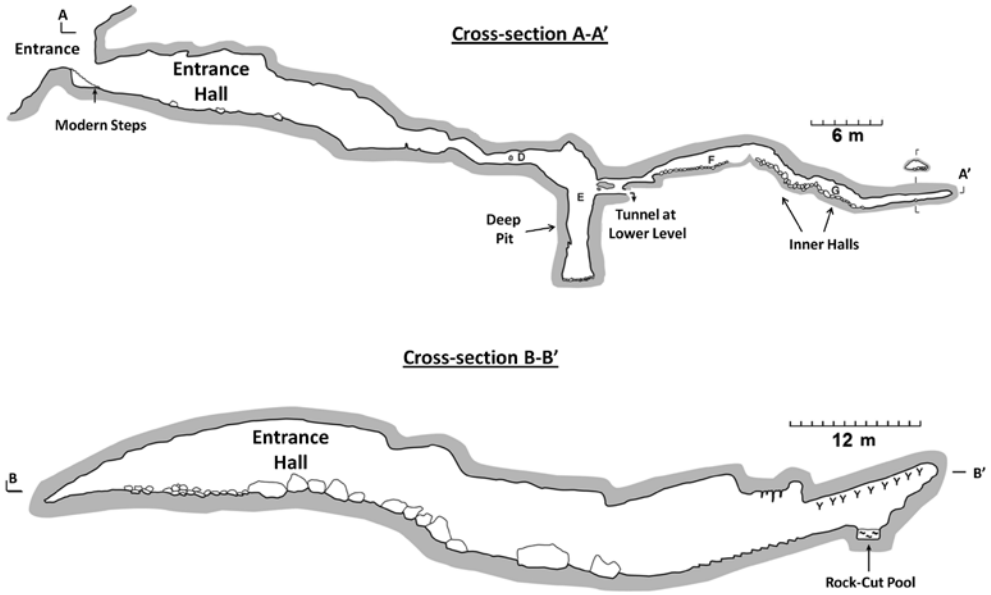

FIG. 2 Cross-sections of cave (B. Langford and M. Ullman)

The finds were dated to the following periods: Neolithic, Chalcolithic (Ghassulian), Early Bronze I(?), Middle Bronze II(?), Iron, Roman, and Byzantine. Neuville concluded that the debris on the cave floor had piled up in prehistoric times, before the Neolithic period.[7]

From 1970 to 1974, the cave was studied by Gideon Mann on behalf of the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel. Mann focused on mapping cavities beneath the big pile of debris in the hall and examining the large pit (point E in fig. 1). In the wall of the pit he found passages leading to halls F and G. Mann mapped the section and discovered various items, including ceramic and glass vessels.[8]

7. See R. Neuville, 'Notes de préhistoire palestinienne: La grotte d'et-Taouamin' *JPOS* 10 (1930), p. 65. We are grateful to Uri Davidovich, who referred us to this publication and assisted us analyse the findings of Neuville's excavations.

8. See G. Mann, 'On a Rope – Into the Pit of Me'arat Ha'Teomim', *Teva Va-Aretz* 20 (1978), pp. 161–4 (Hebrew). Mann mentioned that the inner complex of halls [i.e., halls F and G and passages J and K] is full of rocks and dirt. Numerous potsherds were found in tunnels leading from the deep pit to this inner system. These vessels were identified in the 1970s by Amos Kloner as typical storage jars from the Byzantine period – apparently the sixth century CE. Also found was a ceramic lamp typical of the Late Byzantine period and a fragmentary glass vessel. Mann mentioned that additional material seems to be buried in the tunnels, and even more so in subsequent parts of the cave, underneath the debris of rocks and dirt. In the new survey of Section E–F–G, all the finds

Description of the cave

The cave entrance is located about 4 metres above the channel of the wadi. The natural opening was widened by hewing into the cavity that serves as an entrance and vestibule; from there one descends northward into the interior of the cave. At the front of the cave is a spacious hall (measuring approximately 50 × 70 metres, with a maximum height today of about 10 metres) created by karst dissolution processes in limestone of the Weradim formation. Most of the area of the hall is covered with a huge pile of rocks originating in a collapse of the ceiling; on the rocks is an accumulation of soil, pigeon droppings, and bat guano. Stalactites and stalagmites have formed at various spots in the cave. Several passages within the pile of rocks lead under the rubble.

The cave was formed in massive Cenomanian dolomite of the Weradim formation, on the western flexure of the Ramallah anticline. The strata are tilted 22 degrees to the west. Similar caves in similar geological settings are known north of the Te'omim Cave, on the lower slopes of Nahal Soreq (the Soreq and Shimshon caves). The morphology of the cave (smooth walls and ceiling, solution domes) attests that it formed as a completely enclosed hypogenic cave (not open to the surface) beneath groundwater level.[9] Water apparently rose from a great depth through the large pit (E) and spread from the top of it in two directions, towards the entrance hall and towards the inner, 'refuge' section. The rocks in the debris, smoothed by dissolution, indicate that a massive collapse occurred when the hall was still filled with groundwater. Large stalagmites on top of the debris also attest to the antiquity of the debris. The groundwater all drained out of the cave following the uplift of the Judean Hills, after which speleothems (chemical sediments) deposition began, mostly in the entrance hall. The cave was opened to the surface when Nahal Hame'ara cut through the hall on its southwestern edge. The absence of archaeological finds predating the Neolithic period suggests that the opening formed at the end of the Pleistocene or that the cave entrance was initially vertical, preventing people from getting in.

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discovered were typical to the first third of the second century CE – the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt. It may be that Kloner was brought pottery from other parts of the cave as well, where there are numerous Byzantine-period vessels. Moreover, the Byzantine-period dating could be wrong due to lack of familiarity in the early 1970s with ceramic types from the second century CE. We extend our thanks to Kloner, with whom we consulted on this issue.

9. A. Frumkin and I. Fischhendler, 'Morphometry and Distribution of Isolated Caves as a Guide for Phreatic and Confined Paleohydrological Conditions', *Geomorphology* 67 (2005), pp. 457–71.

In the southeastern corner of the hall, a small karst cavity was found that had been enlarged by hewing (C). Its floor is higher than the present-day floor of the hall, and it contains cave sediments. A square pool (2 × 2 metres, 0.5 m deep) was hewn in the hall, and water drips into it from speleothems. The water then flows out through a rock-cut canal leading westward. Today the water is absorbed by the ground, but in the past it collected in a built, lower pool.[10] From point C northward, the eastern wall of the cave was straightened by hewing for a total length of 18 metres and a maximum height of 4 metres. A channel hewn in this wall carried water to the upper pool, but it was sealed over time by speleothem deposits. Additional channels a few metres long and 5–10 cm wide and deep were hewn in various spots in the entrance hall (marked with a double line on the cave map) to collect the dripping water in pools or storage vessels.

On the northern side of the hall, among the stalagmites and columns, an easily traversed path leads to passage D, a wide, high passage leading northward.[11] About 20 metres to the north, the passage is blocked by a deep karstic pit/shaft (E); the diameter of the shaft ranges from 4 metres at the top to 6 metres at the bottom. Its floor is about 15 metres below the floor of passage D, its upper part forming a dome about 3 metres above the ceiling of the passage. The height difference between the ceiling and bottom of the shaft reaches 23 metres.

On the northern side of pit E, a little lower than floor level of passage D, there are three narrow, hard-to-reach openings; to get to them one has to cross the pit secured by a rope (fig. 3). People looking today from passage D to the northern wall of the pit will not discern the two openings in front of them (leading to passages K and L).[12] The entrance to passage J is hidden from the eye because of the shape of the pit wall. Pottery vessels (described in appendix 1 and figs 12–15) were discovered in all three of these passages: large fragments of four or five storage jars were found in passage J (b. 108;

10. Conder and Kitchener, *The Survey*, p. 148 (as in no. 4 above), note that the lower pool was filled up; they marked it on their plan. The remains of this pool could still be seen in the early 1970s, See: Mann, 'On a Rope' (as in no. 8 above), p. 162: 'At the bottom of the slope the remains of construction of another ruined pool are clearly visible'.

11. Ceramic oil-lamps and coins from the Late Roman period were found in this area and will be published in the future.

12. Even with modern lighting, the openings are invisible. Perhaps the people hiding in the cave in ancient times knew this. This fact, combined with the difficulty of access, kept the inner halls (F and G) safe from antiquities looters.

FIG. 3 Crossing the karst shaft (E), view to the north (photo: B. Zissu)

fig. 12); fragments of two storage jars (b. 110/1), a cooking pot (b. 110/2), and a 'round Roman' lamp (b. 504) were found in passage K.

North of the three openings is a narrow, winding karst passage with two levels that leads to halls F and G. Fragments of a storage jar (b. 109) were found in the entrance to hall G, and remains of charcoal were discovered in several spots along these passages. One of the stones in this area has a greenish stain on it, perhaps from corrosion of coins (or other bronze artifacts) that were once there but decayed over time.

Halls F and G have an elongated shape and are oriented from south to north. Access from hall F to hall G is through a wide passage whose floor slants to the northeast and is covered with rubble, mud and bat guano.

Hall F is oval-shaped (maximum length 19 metres, maximum width 8 metres). It is more humid in the centre and contains active cave deposits, as well as dripping water that could be stored for later use by people in the cave. The southern edges of hall F, near the openings of the passages leading into it, are slightly higher than its centre; they are also dryer, and the dryness helped preserve the archaeological finds in this part of the cave. Large fragments of two or three storage jars (b. 100 and 101) were found on the southern edge of the chamber, and nearby, inside a hole in the rock, a group of coins were found *in situ* (Hoard A; figs 4 and 5). They included 83 silver

coins restruck by the Bar Kokhba administration and a fragment of silver jewelry (A85). These coins were found stuck together, apparently because they had been kept in a pocket or case made of some organic material that did not survive. The coins show little signs of wear. Nearby, on a fragment of a storage jar lying on the surface, a bronze coin of the city of Ashkelon from the days of Hadrian was discovered. About two metres north of there, fragments of a storage jar (b. 102), fragments of a Judean ('Darom') oil lamp (b. 505), and the lower portion of a candlestick-shaped glass bottle (b. 103) were found. Next to them, in a crack between fallen ceiling rocks, another group of ten coins (Hoard B; nine silver coins and a bronze perutah; figs 6 and 7) – six Roman and four Judean (from the Second Temple period to the Bar Kokhba Revolt) – were discovered *in situ*, along with a bronze needle (b. 502). Between two pieces of rock adjacent to the western wall of the hall and about a metre and a half to the north, another group of 24 coins (Hoard C; figs 8 and 9) – five Roman gold coins, 15 silver coins (13 Roman – Imperial and Provincial coins and two Bar Kokhba *denarii*), and four Roman bronze coins of the city of Ascalon – were found *in situ*, along with an elongated object made of iron (probably another needle). Next to them fragments of a storage jar were found (b. 104).

As stated above, finds in fairly good condition survived on the edges of the cave. Perhaps due to the relative dryness of the elevated area along the walls, the fugitives preferred to sit near the edges of the hall and also kept their money and belongings there. Another storage jar, probably used for the collection of water, was found near one of the spots where water drips from the cave ceiling (b. 105).

Next to this hall's eastern wall, in a narrow gap between the fallen stones and the wall, two iron shafted weapons were found *in situ* (b. 106 and 107; fig. 10). One is a typical Roman *pilum* – a heavy javelin that probably was part of the booty captured by the rebels (fig. 11A). The other, which is much rarer, is a spear manufactured by the rebels (fig. 11B). It is very similar to the one found in the 'Cave of the Spear' in the Judean Desert. Both weapons were kept out of sight but in a place where they could be grabbed and used without delay.

Aside from the finds described above, which had been brought to the site by fighters and refugees at the end of the Bar Kokhba Revolt, hall F was empty. No remains – for instance, of a large pottery assemblage, organic materials, charcoal or soot on the walls and ceiling – was found in it to

FIG. 4 Hoard A *in situ* (photo: B. Langford)

FIG. 5 Hoard A after cleaning (photo: B. Zissu)

indicate that the rebels stayed in halls F and G for long. It seems that this hall served as the last hidden, very-hard-to-reach place of refuge, at a time of extreme distress, for a group of people who were very familiar with the secrets of the cave.

From the inner (northern) part of hall F one descends to hall G, which has a different character, fairly dry and almost devoid of cave sediments. An elongated path (maximum length 24 metres and average width 4 metres) leads to hall G. In its northern section there are signs of the removal of stones from the eastern wall to the western wall and of the construction of a sort of terrace, perhaps by the people hiding in the cave. The removal of stones created a narrow north-south pathway next to the eastern wall of the hall. Hall G is almost completely devoid of archaeological finds, other than an intact small flask preserved in a crack between two pieces of rock in the western wall of the hall (b. 506) and the bottom of a storage jar. Also discovered were five concentrations of crumbling human bones.[13] The bones had been placed in a natural crack at a low level on the northeastern edge of hall G (point H), and in the top level along the cleared access path (from which the stones had been removed) leading to the crack.

The geology of halls F and G does not seem to have changed much since the Bar Kokhba Revolt. The finds were discovered on the hall floor and between rocks, and there does not seem to have been a major collapse or massive sedimentation in this section of the cave since the revolt. However, the high humidity and the dripping of water, together with small physical shifts and activity of animals, apparently prevented the preservation of organic materials and caused some damage to the inorganic finds.

There is no way to determine why the stones in hall G were moved: to create a path to an inner area, to bring the bodies to burial, or perhaps in a desperate attempt to get out of the cave. In any case, the discovery of bones and hoards of coins suggests that the fugitives met their death in the cave.

Discussion

The survey of the inner section of the Te'omim Cave indicates that it was used for refuge purposes. Fighters – as evidenced by the weapons – fled

13. An examination of the teeth indicates that they belong to at least three individuals: two men and a woman, aged around 40–50.

FIG. 6 Hoard B *in situ*, partly covered with dirt (photo: B. Zissu)

FIG. 7 Hoard B after cleaning (photo: B. Zissu)

to the cave at the end of the Bar Kokhba Revolt, perhaps bringing along additional refugees from a nearby Jewish village.

The fugitives were familiar with the secrets of the cave and the advantages of the inner section, which is hard to reach, is hidden from the eye, and has a constant water supply. Presumably, the refugees lived in a nearby village: several ancient sites from that period have been found nearby.[14] For now, there is no way to determine precisely where the Jews who fled to the cave came from.

So far we have encountered the use of natural caves in the Judean Desert cliffs for refuge purposes[15] and the hewing of underground hiding complexes beneath sites, located in the settled parts of Judea.[16] The Te'omim Cave is unusual in that it is a natural cave situated in the heart of Judea. Archaeologists have discovered in recent years, few natural caves situated in the settled part of the country, which were used as places of refuge during the Bar Kokhba War. The circumstances of the discovery demonstrate that the hoards were deposited intentionally by their owners, towards the end of the Bar Kokhba War.

Hoard A is the only hoard of silver Bar Kokhba coins discovered thus far in a controlled archaeological exploration (*vs*. illegal excavations). In his remarkable study, Leo Mildenberg documented 29 Bar Kokhba coin hoards that appeared on the antiquities market from 1889 to 1982. He noted that antiquities thieves found two hoards that resemble Hoard A in terms of the number of coins: one in the village of Beit Umar in 1976, and the other near Dahariyeh in 1980.[17]

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14. For instance, north of Nahal Hame'ara, at Hurvat Jerash West (map coordinates 15138/12646), a settlement was surveyed that included buildings, various facilities, and rock-cut caves. Next to the buildings were two stepped, plastered facilities identified as Jewish ritual baths (miqveh). See: B. Zissu. 'Identification of Gerasa in Judea', in: Y. Eshel (ed.), *Judea and Samaria Research Studies* 16 (Ariel, 2007), pp. 225–228 (Hebrew); D. Weiss, B. Zissu and G. Solimany, *Archaeological Survey of Israel, Map of Nes Harim (104)* (Jerusalem 2004), pp. 46–7; The remains of a settlement surveyed in Hurvat Assad, south of the wadi, included a building made of large hewn stones and two ritual baths, one of them with a double entrance For a description of the site, see Weiss et al., *Archaeological Survey*, pp. 60–61. The baths were identified only recently.

15. See H. Eshel and D. Amit (eds), *Refuge Caves of the Bar Kokhba Revolt* (Tel Aviv 1998; Hebrew); H. Eshel and R. Porat (eds), *Refuge Caves of the Bar Kokhba Revolt*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem 2009; Hebrew).

16. See A. Kloner and Y. Tepper, *The Hiding Complexes in the Judean Shephelah (*Tel Aviv 1987; Hebrew); A. Kloner and B. Zissu, 'Hiding Complexes in Judaea: An Archaeological and Geographical Update on the Area of the Bar Kokhba Revolt', in P. Schäfer (ed.), *The Bar Kokhba War Reconsidered: New Perspectives on the Second Jewish Revolt against Rome* (Tübingen 2003), pp. 181–216.

17. L. Mildenberg, *The Coinage of the Bar Kokhba War*, Aarau, Frankfurt, 1984, pp. 49–57.

FIG. 8 Hoard C *in situ* (photo: B. Zissu)

FIG. 9 Hoard C after cleaning (photo: B. Zissu)

Hoard A includes one *sela'* (tetradrachm) from year 1 of the 'Redemption of Israel', six *sela'im* from year 2 of the 'Freedom of Israel', and 13 *sela'im* from the third year of the revolt. This hoard does not contain any *denarii* from the first year of the revolt. Four *zuzim* (*denarii*) in the hoard have the name Shim'on in abbreviated form (Shim') on one side, and the inscription 'Eleazar the Priest' on the other. It is generally assumed that these *denarii* were struck in the second year of the revolt. Aside from these four *denarii*, the hoard contains another thirteen *denarii* struck in the second year of the revolt, and forty-six *denarii* struck in the last year of the revolt and bearing the inscription 'For the Freedom of Jerusalem.' The three *sela'im* struck with previously undocumented dies (nos. A 16, 17, 18) and two *sela'im* struck with a pair of dies never before documented on the same coin are important from a numismatic standpoint. One of the *denarii* (no. 77), which belongs to the series of irregular coins, is important as well.

A hoard can be defined as 'a group of coins or other valuables which was concealed as a unit'.[18] There are many different types of hoards; two common categorizations are the 'savings' hoard and the 'emergency' hoard. But, as we shall see, these distinctions are quite blurred.

A 'savings' hoard is created by gradually accumulating coins over a period of time. The coins in such a hoard tend to be of high denomination, in good condition and covering a wide range of dates. Such a hoard is concealed for safety, and if the owner dies suddenly the hoard is left buried for future generations to discover. An 'emergency' hoard typically represents the coins the owner was able to gather and hide when under threat of robbery or looting, and it thus reflects the proportions of current coin types. Occurrences of such hoards can frequently be related to periods of disruption and upheaval, like the Bar Kokhba War, that prevented the owners from returning to recover their possessions.

The long life-span of Hoard B and Hoard C may indicate that they were initially 'savings' hoards, but due to the vexed times they were taken away to the cave and hidden, and therefore they turned to be 'emergency' hoards.

The second group of coins (Hoard B) is quite heterogeneous. It is significant in that it is the first Bar Kokhba coins ever discovered, to include Jewish coins from the Second Temple period (a shekel minted in the second year

18. P. Grierson, *Numismatics*, Oxford, 1975, p. 125.

FIG. 10 The weapons *in situ* (photo: B. Zissu)

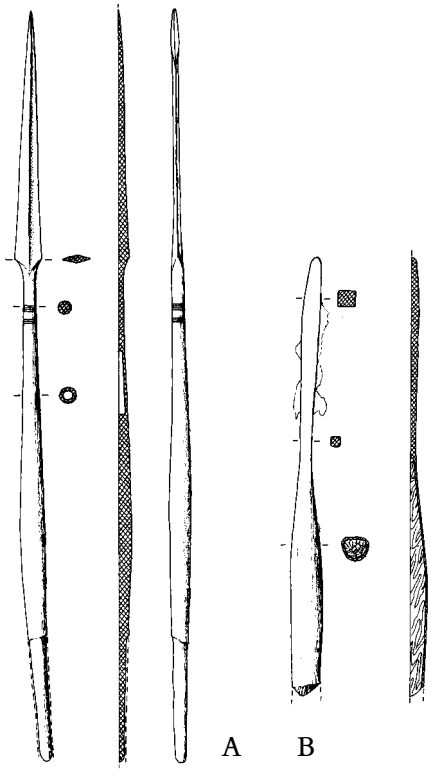

FIG. 11 Drawings of the weapons (Esther Stark)

FIG. 12 Fragments of storage jars *in situ*, in a niche on the side of the access passage (photo: B. Zissu)

of the Jewish War (67/8 CE) and a *perutah* of John Hyrcanus). In general, 'bad money', i.e. coins with a low percentage of the valuable metal (Roman imperial silver coins were just 70 per cent silver and 30 per cent bronze), puts 'good money' out of circulation, since the people who have the 'good money' keep it for themselves instead of spending it.[19] Because the shekels minted during the Jewish War were 99 per cent silver, the owners of 'Hoard B' presumably kept the shekel due to its monetary value. But the presence of a bronze perutah from the time of John Hyrcanus cannot be explained in a similar manner. Therefore, we have to consider the possibility that they kept both of these coins for nationalistic reasons.

Hoard C contained five 'old' *aurei*, four *denarii* and three tetradrachms struck during the first century CE (Tiberius to Domitian). It also contained four *denarii*, two tetradrachms, two *denarii* (*zuzim*) of the rebels and four bronze coins of Ascalon minted during the second century (Trajan and Hadrian). Presumably, the older and more precious coins (the *aurei*) were kept

19. On hoarding as a habit and Gresham's Law, see L.R. Laing, *Coins and Archaeology*, London, 1969, pp. 52–4.

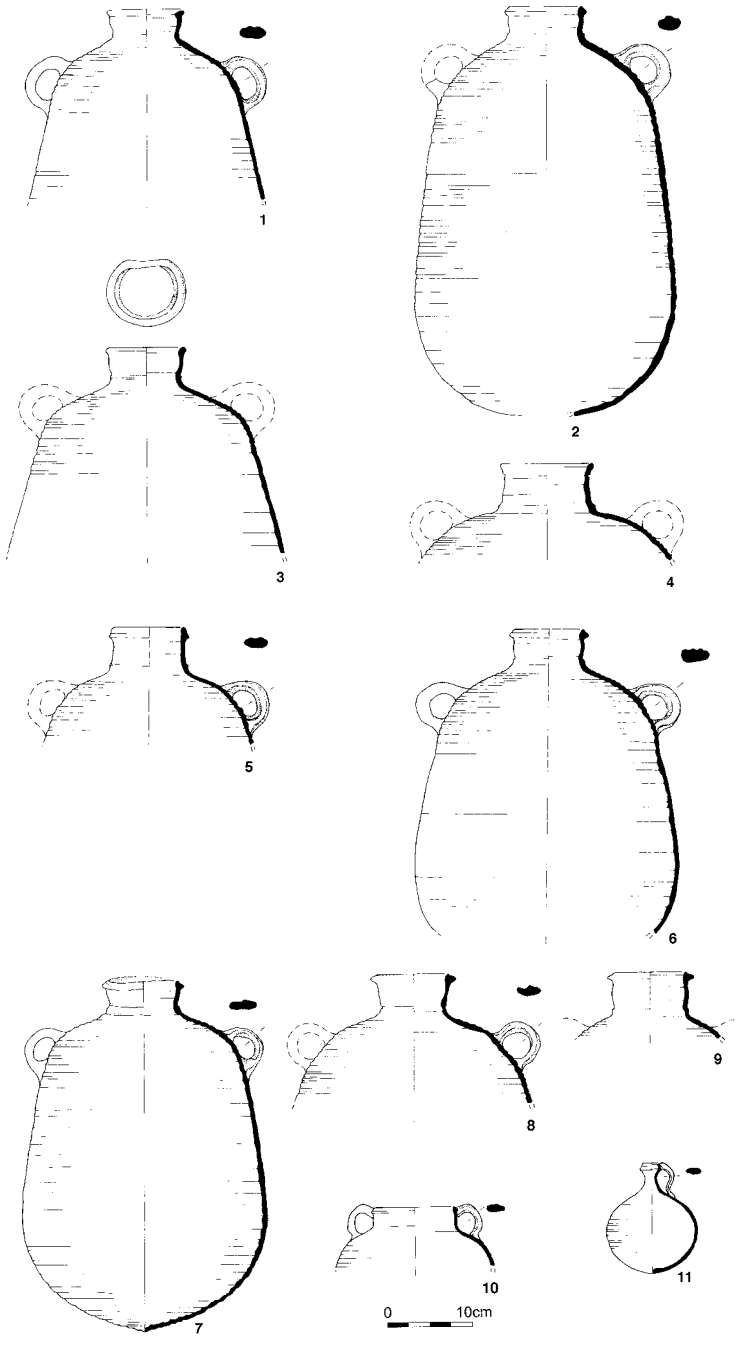

FIG. 13 Pottery drawings, nos. 1–11 (J. Rudman)

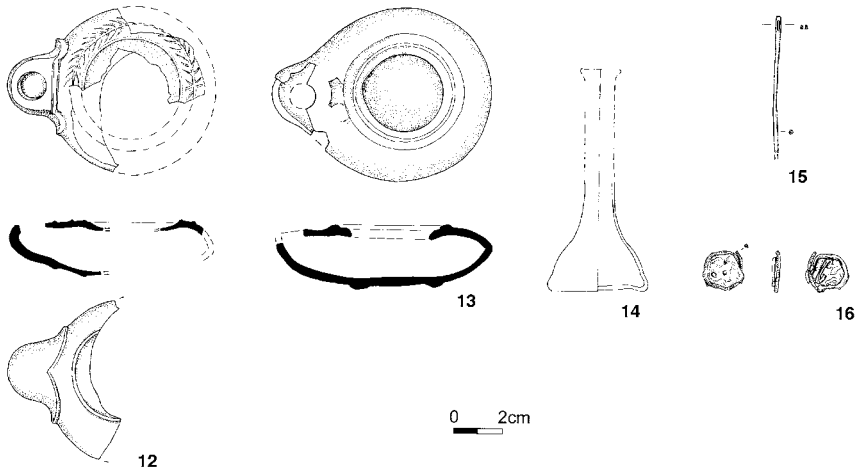

FIG. 14 Oil-lamps, glass, varia; drawings, nos 12–16 (J. Rudman)

by a family that later fled to the cave, and were passed down from generation to generation with the rest of the family's assets. This is the second hoard from this period combining gold and silver together ever to have been found in a controlled excavation in Israel. (The first one was uncovered at Kh. Badd 'Isa, and consisted of 146 coins, all of them silver except for two gold *aurei*.) G. Bijovsky has stressed that gold Roman coins are very rare; she mentioned only 7 *aurei* which were recorded in the past in Israel.[20]

It should be stressed that with the exclusion of the few bronze coins minted at Ascalon, the coins included in Hoards B and C are large denominations, usually kept for larger transactions. They include mostly Imperial coins (*denarii*) and Provincial *tetradrachms* and *drachms*, the prevalent silver currency issued in the East and dated from the reign of Vespasian onwards.[21] They do not represent typical coins used for daily payments. Since a gold *aureus* was worth twenty-five silver *denarii*, Hoard C, containing twenty-four coins,

20. G. Bijovsky, The Coins from Kh. Badd-'Isa – Qiryat Sefer; Isolated Coins and Two Hoards Dated to the Bar Kokhba Revolt, In: N. Haimovich-Carmin (ed.), *The Land of Benjamin*, Jerusalem, 2004, pp. 243–300.

21. Bijovsky (above) has shown that Julio-Claudian *denarii* are missing from Bar-Kokhba period' hoards – they were apparently removed from circulation because their silver contents were higher.

exceeded Hoard A (of eighty-three coins) in value. Hoard C was worth 155 silver *denarii*, whereas Hoard A was worth only 143.

We should keep in mind that rather than mint new coins, the rebels' administration overstruck Roman ones, a blatant declaration of sovereignty – as clearly shown by all coins found in Hoard A. Presumably, the owners of this hoard supported the revolt, since they submitted the Bar Kokhba minting authorities all the coins in their possession in order to be overstruck. In contrast, the two other owners were more cautious; they decided to have only few of their coins overstruck, since such insurgent' coins were valid tender only in areas controlled by the rebels. The same phenomenon is noticeable in other insurgent-hidden hoards found in other contexts of the Bar Kokhba War, e.g. at the 'Cave of the Sandal', near Jericho.[22] The occurrence of groups of 'original' (not overstruck) Roman silver coins in these contexts, may indicate that some residents preferred to keep the Roman coins that could always be used for obtaining provisions from areas beyond the rebel's control. Apparently such hoards were concealed against the eventuality of the revolt's failure.

The examination of Hoard B and Hoard C shows that all Roman coins pre-date 132 CE. The same picture emerges from other insurgent-hidden hoards, apparently demonstrating a situation of economic isolation of the rebels' 'state' from neighbouring areas.[23]

Usually hoards are dated according to the instance at which the hoard was closed. The burial date of the hoard is most probably not much later than the latest datable coin in the hoard. The condition of the latest coin may be an additional indicator for the date of closure of the hoard. Since the latest coins – *denarii* of Hadrian and *zuzim* and *sela'im* overstruck by the rebels – show little sign of wear, it appears that the hoard was buried soon after the date of the latest coin. The latest Roman coin is a denarius of Hadrian minted in Rome (128–132 CE); The latest rebels' coins are *zuzim* and *sela'im* from 134/5 CE. Therefore, it seems safe to assume that the hoards were hidden towards the end of the war. We assume that these precious coins were never retrieved, since their owners didn't survive the war.

22. H. Eshel and B. Zissu, 'Roman Coins from the "Cave of the Sandal" West of Jericho', *Israel Numismatic Journal* 13 (1994–99), pp. 70–77.

23. See: H. Eshel and B. Zissu, above, pp. 72–73, and n. 27; H. Eshel, The Bar Kokhba Revolt 132–135, in: S.T. Katz (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period, Cambridge, 2006, pp. 113–14.

APPENDIX 1 Potsherds, fragments of oil-lamps, and pieces of glass and metal objects from the inner section of the Te'omim Cave (see figs 13 & 14, drawings 1–16)

No.	Object	Record no.	Description	Parallels	Dating
1	Storage jar	b.108/1	Light brown clay; white grits	Hiding complex in Ahuzat Hazan[1] and in Rasm er-Rusum;[2] L4142 at Horvat 'Ethri[3]	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
2	Storage jar	b.100/1	Crumbly, sandy reddish clay; gray core; white grits	Hideout complex in Ahuzat Hazan;[4] Masada[5]	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
3	Storage jar	b. 104	Sandy orange-gray clay; large bits of white grits; uneven firing; misshapen rim	Variant of no. 2 above; see parallels there.	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
4	Storage jar	b.109/1	Yellowish clay; white grits	Masada, Garrison 2[6]	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
5	Storage jar	b.105	Orange clay; red and black grits	Variant of no. 4 above; see parallel there	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
6	Storage jar	b.110/1	Gray-brown clay; white grits	The Cave of the Tetradrachm;[7] Hiding complex in 'Ain 'Arrub[8]	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
7	Storage jar	b.100/2	Yellowish-orange clay on the exterior, orange clay on the interior; levigated	Variant of no. 6 above; see parallels there	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
8	Storage jar	b.108/2	Brown-gray clay; white grits	The Cave of the Tetradrachm[9]; Hiding complex in Ahuzat Hazan[10]	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
9	Storage jar	b.102	Orange clay; white and red grits	Variant of no. 8 above; see parallels there	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
10	Cooking pot	b.110/2	Reddish-brown clay; white grits	Hiding complex 20 in Horvat Midras;[11] Horvat 'Ethri, L4142[12]	1st–first third of 2nd century CE

No.	Object	Record no.	Description	Parallels	Dating
11	Cupmark rimmed juglet	b.506	Gray-brown clay; white grits	Masada, type M-JT1;[13] Hideouts in Ahuzat Hazan[14]	1st century BCE–first third of 2nd century CE
12	Mould-made oil-lamp with, rounded mouth, decorated with a schematic palm frond encompassing the filling hole – variant of the Judean oil-lamp	b.505	Light brown clay; a little red grits	Ahuzat Hazan hideout complex;[15] Schloesinger collection;[16]	Late 1st–first third of 2nd century CE
13	Oil-lamp – local variant of the disc lamp or 'round Roman' lamp	b.504	Gray-brown clay; brown slip; a little white grits; signs of soot	Cave of the Sandal in Ketef Yeriho;[17] Complex 1 at Kh. Gedor.[18]	Late 1st–2nd century CE
14	Small, candlestick-shaped glass bottle	b.103	Transparent greenish glass	Cave of Letters;[19] Hiding complex in 'Ain 'Arrub.[20]	Late 1st–2nd century CE
15	Bronze needle	b.502	Covered with green patina; two fragments totaling 5.6 cm in length (point missing)	El-Jai Cave[21]	1st–2nd century CE
16	Fragment of silver jewellery	A85	Small ring or earring; setting missing; destroyed in antiquity and crushed in order to reuse the metal; weight 1.08 g (approximately a third of a denarius)	Earrings made with a similar technique were found in a Bar Kokhba–period hoard, allegedly found in the area of Beth Govrin.[22]	1st–2nd century CE

NOTES

1. A. Kloner, 'Pottery and Miscellaneous Finds in the Hiding Complexes', in: A. Kloner and Y. Tepper, *The Hiding Complexes in the Judean Shephelah* (Tel-Aviv, 1987), p. 352, fig. 166: 7 (Hebrew).

2. Kloner, *Pottery* (as in no. 18 above), p. 344, fig. 161: 2.
3. B. Zissu and A. Ganor, 'Horvat 'Ethri – A Jewish Village from the Second Temple Period and the Bar Kokhba Revolt in the Judean Foothills', *JJS* 60 (2009), fig. 17:12.
4. Kloner, *Pottery* (as in no. 18 above), p. 352, fig. 166: 13.
5. R. Bar-Nathan, 'The Pottery of Masada', in: J. Aviram, G. Foerster and E. Netzer (eds), *Masada IV, The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965, Final Reports* (Jerusalem, 2006), pp. 74–5, pl. 16:100.
6. Bar-Nathan, *The Pottery* (as in no. 22 above), pp. 74–75, pl. 16:102–4.
7. D. Amit and H. Eshel, 'Bar Kokhba Period Finds from the Tetradrachm Cave', in: H. Eshel and D. Amit (eds), *Refuge Caves of the Bar Kokhba Revolt* (Tel-Aviv, 1998; Hebrew), pl. 3:46.
8. A. Tsafrir and B. Zissu, 'A Hiding Complex of the Second Temple Period and the Time of the Bar-Kokhba Revolt at 'Ain-'Arrub in the Hebron Hills', in: J. Humphrey (ed.). *The Roman and Byzantine Near East*, Vol. 3, [*Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplement*, 49] (Portsmouth, 2002) fig. 13:10.
9. Amit and Eshel, Bar Kokhba (as in no. 24 above), pl. 3:49.
10. Kloner, *Pottery* (as in no. 18 above), p. 352, fig. 166: 5.
11. Kloner, *Pottery* (as in no. 18 above), p. 342, fig. 160: 13.
12. Zissu and Ganor, '*Horvat 'Ethri* (as in no. 20 above), fig. 17:6.
13. Bar-Nathan, *The Pottery* (as in no. 22 above), pp. 190–193, pl. 33:1–14.
14. Kloner, *Pottery* (as in no. 18 above), pl. 5:13
15. Kloner, *Pottery* (as in no. 18 above), pl. 5:19
16. R. Rosenthal and R. Sivan, *Ancient Lamps in the Schloesinger Collection*, [*Qedem* 8] (Jerusalem, 1978), p. 84, no. 346. For a discussion of the dating of the Judean (Darom) oil-lamps, see D. Barag and M. Hershkovitz, 'Lamps from Masada', J. Aviram, G. Foerster and E. Netzer (eds), *Masada IV, The Yigael Yadin Excavations 1963–1965, Final Reports* (Jerusalem, 1994), pp. 72–78.
17. H. Eshel and B. Zissu, 'Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Caves at Ketef Jericho', in: H. Eshel and D. Amit (eds), *Refuge Caves of the Bar Kokhba Revolt* (Tel-Aviv, 1998; Hebrew), pl. 4:7.
18. Kloner, *Pottery* (as in no. 18 above), pl. 4:7; See discussion by S. Hadad S., *The Oil Lamps from the Hebrew University Excavations at Bet Shean*, [*Excavations at Bet Shean* Vol. 1; *Qedem Reports* 4] (Jerusalem, 2002), type 7, pp. 16–20.
19. Y. Yadin, *The Finds from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of the Letters* (Jerusalem, 1963), fig. 38:3
20. Tsafrir and Zissu, *A Hiding Complex* (as in no. 25 above), p. 28, fig. 17:12.
21. H. Eshel, B. Zissu, and A. Frumkin, 'Two Refuge Caves in Wadi Suweinit', in: H. Eshel and D. Amit (eds), *Refuge Caves of the Bar Kokhba Revolt* (Tel-Aviv, 1998; Hebrew), p. 98, pl. 2, and other parallels mentioned there.
22. J.N. Svoronos, 'Κοσμηματα χρισα εκ του ανωτερω περιγραφεντος ευρηματος της Ελευθερουπολεως', *Journal International d'Archéologie Numismatique* (1907), p. 12, 13, 14, 16, fig. 12:9; On the coins in this hoard, see: J.N. Svoronos, 'Ευρημα Ελευθερουπολεως Παλαιστινη', *Journal International d'Archéologie Numismatique* (1907), pp. 230–48.