

# **Jewish Views of the After Life and Burial Practices in Second Temple Judaism Evaluating the Talpiot Tomb in Context**

**January 13-16, 2008  
Mishkenot Sha'ananim, Jerusalem**

The Third Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins

**Steering Committee:**

J. Charlesworth, D. Mendels, M. Aviam, G. Mazor, S. Gibson, Dan Bahat



This conference was made possible in part  
through the generosity of George Blumenthal

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 13, 2008

**15:00**

Registration and check-in

**18:00-19:30**

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Opening Address "Jerusalem's Tombs During the Time of Hillel and Jesus" -  
James H. Charlesworth

**19:30-21:00**

Reception

## MONDAY, JANUARY 14, 2008

Brief lectures of twenty minutes each, followed by open discussions.

**08:00-09:30**

### **Panel Discussion: Ancient Beliefs About the Afterlife and Burial Customs: Session I**

Presiding: James H. Charlesworth

Choon-Leong Seow "Views of the Afterlife in Job"

F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp "Love as Strong as Death": A Reading of Song 8:5-8, with  
Special Attention to the Imagery of Death and the Afterlife"

Geza Vermes "The Afterlife in Jewish Apocryphal Works and the Dead Sea  
Scrolls"

What were the major views of death and the afterlife among Hebrews, Israelites,  
Jews, or "Christians" in these periods?

**09:30-10:00**

Coffee Break

**10:00-11:30**

**Panel Discussion: Ancient Beliefs About the Afterlife and Burial Customs:  
Session II**

Presiding: **Oded Newman**

**Casey Elledge** "Views of the Afterlife and Post-70 Judaism: Josephus"

**Alan Segal** "Views of the Afterlife and Post-70 Judaism: Rabbinics"

**Israel Knohl** "By Three Days, Alive: Messiahs, Resurrection, and Ascent to Heaven in Hazon Gabriel"

**Arye Edrei\*** "Burial customs and Rabbinic Law"

**11:30-11:45**

**Amos Kloner** "The Characteristics of the Necropolis of Jerusalem in the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Period".

**Sessions:**

All participants will present a ten-minute overview of the question raised, the method used to answer it, and the most likely conclusion. When all panelists have presented succinctly their research, the panel will discuss among themselves and then the floor will be open for general discussion.

**11:45-13:30**

**Panel Discussion: Tombs, Ossuaries, and Burial Practices:  
The Archaeological Evidence**

Presiding: **Adolfo Roitman**

**Dan Bahat**

**Jodi Magness**

**Eric Meyers**

**Motti Aviam**

- When, where, and why were ossuaries used in Jewish burials?
- To what degree are ossuary and cave burials a sign of wealth and status?
- How typical are ossuaries for the Jews in and near Jerusalem?
- What do we learn from the ossuaries: markings, decorations, inscriptions?
- What are the broad burial and cemetery patterns around Jerusalem?
- What was typical about burial customs in the Galilee?
- What were the different types of Jewish burial in the period?
- What does the Church of the Holy Sepulcher inform us about Jesus' burial?

**13:30-14:30**

Lunch

**14:30-16:00**

**Panel Discussion: Burial Beliefs and Practices:  
The Architectural and Textual Evidence**

Presiding: **Choon-Leong Seow**

**Eldad Keynan**

**Rafi Lewis**

**Konstantinos Zarras**

**Eli Shai**

**Shimon Gibson**

- Focus on ideology and texts
- How do texts inform our understanding of material evidence?
- Burial facades and monuments as markers of political ideology, religious beliefs and prestige.
- How are Hellenistic burials related to views of the afterlife?
- What do we learn about Jewish burial customs from the classical Jewish sources and from the archeology of the Shroud Tomb?

**16:00-16:30**

Coffee Break

**16:30-18:00**

**Panel Discussion:  
Onomastics and Prosopography in Second Temple Judaism**

Presiding: **Emanuel Tov**

**Christopher Rollston**

**Rachel Hachlili**

**André Lemaire**

**Claude Cohen-Matlofsky**

- How and when can we match inscriptional names with known historical figures?
- How representative is our surviving onomastic data?
- Attempting prosopography with the Talpiot inscriptions? What are the issues and potential results?

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 15, 2008**

**09:00-10:30**

**Panel Discussion: The Talpiot Ossuaries and their Epigraphy**

Presiding: **F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp**

Jonathan Price

Stephen Pfann

Eldad Keynan

James Tabor

Claude Cohen-Matlofsky

- Reading the “Yeshua bar Yehosef” inscription.
- Issues related to the names: Yose, Mariah, Matya, and Judah bar Yeshua
- How is the Greek inscription ( Mariamenou/Mara) to be read and understood?
- What is the significance of Greek inscriptions in Jewish tombs?

**10:30-11:00** Coffee Break

**11:00-12:30**

**Panel Discussion: Forensic Anthropology and Paleo-DNA and their Archaeological Applications**

Presiding: **John Hoffmann**

Joe Zias

Mark Spigelman

Chuck Greenblatt

- What is the history of the use of DNA on skeletal remains from tombs?
- What are the value and limitations of Mitochondrial and Nuclear results?
- The results from the Akeldama “Tomb of the Shroud” as a test case
- What was learned from the tests on the “Yeshua” and “Mariamene” ossuary remains?
- What future prospects remain for learning more about the Talpiot materials?

**12:30-14:00** Lunch

**14:00-15:30**

**Panel Discussion: The Landscape of Tombs - New Methods of Research and Archaeological Applications**

Presiding: **Motti Aviam**

Howard Feldman

Aryeh Shimron

Charles Pellegrino\*

Boaz Zissu

- What are the scientific methods for the study of a necropolis?
- Patterns of tombs and their significance
- What can we learn from patina on stone surfaces?
- What do preliminary tests tell us about the patina of the Talpiot tomb ossuaries?
- What are future prospects for this area of research?

### **15:30-16:00**

Coffee Break

### **16:00-17:30**

#### **Panel Discussion: The Talpiot Tomb in March 1980**

Presiding: **Gabi Mazor**

**Shimon Gibson** "Interpreting Archaeology and the Talpiot Tomb"

**Gabi Barkay**

"Skeletal Remains from the Talpiot Tomb: What do we know?"

- An overview of the March, 1980 excavation and its wider contexts
- A description of the tomb and its contents
- What records and photographs remain of the excavation?
- What do we know about the skeletal remains?
- How were skeletal remains typically studied and handled in 1980?
- How and when were the finds catalogued and studied?
- What do we not know that we wish we knew?
- What would be done differently today with more time and refined methods?

### **17:30-19:00**

#### **Panel Discussion: Mary Magdalene in Early Christian Tradition**

Presiding: **V. Hemingway**

**Ann Graham Brock**

**Jane Schaberg**

**April DeConick**

- What do we know about the historical Mary Magdalene?
- How valuable historically are the later Coptic and other non-canonical traditions?
- What are the arguments pro and con regarding Jesus being married or having children?
- Would early Jesus' followers have called Mary Magdalene "Master"?
- Was Mary Magdalene a woman of means with a Hellenistic cultural background?
- Does the presence of a "Judah son of Jesus" ossuary in the Talpiot tomb necessarily disqualify it as being the tomb of Jesus of Nazareth?

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2008**

**09:00-10:30**

**Panel Discussion: Relating Tomb Archaeology with Historical Figures: Possibilities and Problems Discoveries**

Presiding: **Moshe Zimmerman**

**Dino Politis** "Relating sites to historical figures: Lot's Cave"

**Joe Fitzmyer\*** "The James Ossuary"

**Ehud Netzer** "The Discovery of Herod's Tomb"

**André Lemaire** "The Ossuary of Simon and Alexander"

**Zvi Greenhut** "The Caiaphas Tomb and Priestly Families"

What methodologies help us discern Herod's Tomb at the Herodium?

- Evaluating the Caiaphas, Shimon bar Jonas, and Alexander/Simon of Cyrene inscriptions: What are the methods and presuppositions involved?

**10:30-11:00**

Coffee Break

**11:00-12:30**

**Panel Discussion: The Burial of Jesus, the Empty Tomb, and the Jesus Family**

Presiding: **Tom Oates**

**Petr Pokorný**

**James Tabor**

**Lee McDonald**

- Exploring the Palestinian Jesus Movement and Jesus' Clan
- A discussion of the family movement, from the Baptizer to James and beyond
- What are the basic theories on the Jesus family: brothers, sisters, paternity
- What is known of the death of Jesus' brothers?
- The empty tomb and resurrection theology.
- What is our best historical evidence on Who's Who and what happened in history? James, Shimon bar Clophas, the brothers Yose and Judah
- Are the roles of James and Jesus' brothers crucial to understanding pre-70 CE Christianity?
- What were the major parties and politics involved: Peter, Paul, James?

**12:30-14:00**

Lunch

**14:00-15:00**

**Panel Discussion: Statistics and the Talpiot tomb**

Presiding: **James Joyner**

**Andrey Feuerverger**

**Camil Fuchs**

- What can statistics potentially tell us? What are the limitations involved?
- What are some of the different statistical models and methods that might be employed with relation to Talpiot?
- Evaluating Feuerverger's results
- Statistical methods of evaluating the cluster of names in the Talpiot Tomb
- Are historical identifications crucial to historical analyses?

**15:00-15:30**

General Discussion

**15:30-16:00**

Coffee Break

**16:00-16:30**

How to prepare publishable papers: **James H. Charlesworth**

**16:30-18:30**

**Lifetime Achievement Award Joseph Gat**

**Panel Discussion: Summing Up - What Have we Learned?**

Presiding: **I. Gruenwald**

Panel: **James Charlesworth, Eric Meyers, James Tabor, Israel Knohl and Shimon Gibson**

**18:30**

Closing Reception

\*= Scholars who cannot appear but will send a paper

Sponsored through the generosity of many including George Blumenthal and the Foundation on Judaism and Christian Origins.