SIGNIFICANT SILVER: THE KETEF HINNOM READINGS
AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO BIBLICAL STUDIES

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SIGNIFICANT SILVER: THE KETEF HINNOM READINGS
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Synopsis

This report will survey the archaeological background related to the discovery of two silver plaques with ancient Hebrew inscriptions and the process of their decipherment. These plaques are historically, linguistically, and sociologically significant for biblical and ancient Near Eastern studies. Controversy exists regarding the establishment of a proper historical date for these plaques and determining their precise function in ancient society. The silver scrolls of Ketef Hinnom make up one of the most remarkable archaeological finds in biblical studies. I will first present the background of this historic find, then discuss its significance and dissenting views.

The Discovery at Ketef Hinnom

In 1979 a team of archaeologists were working at a burial complex within sight of Jerusalem's Old City. The name Ketef Hinnom means “shoulder of Hinnom” based on a turn of topography in the Hinnom Valley where this site is located. The burial complex consists of various chambers branching off a central cave. Each chamber housed numerous bodies until the decomposed remains were collected and placed in a repository below the chamber.\(^1\) This type of burial complex is common from the Late Iron Age onward (7th–6th centuries B.C.).\(^2\) Most caves of this type have long since been raided and their treasures lost. Due to a partial cave-in some time in antiquity, chamber 25 remained unmolested and yet held significant surprises.

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Discovery of the Plaques

Chamber 25’s repository contained a host of artifacts from various historical eras. This fact alone points to the regular use of this complex as a burial place for Jerusalem's upper class. The team found among the artifacts two very small metallic cylinders which were later discovered to be miniature scrolls made of almost pure silver.\(^3\) “Ketef Hinnom One measures only 27 x 97 mm while Ketef Hinnom Two is a mere 11 x 39.2 mm. The letters themselves average about 5 mm in height on the former and just 3.5 mm on the latter.”\(^4\) When the scrolls were carefully unrolled and cleansed faint letters in an ancient Hebrew script appeared to be scratched on the surface of the silver. Due to the size and deteriorated state of the plaques much uncertainty surrounded the text inscribed on the silver. Creative lighting and high resolution cameras eased the decipherment process and revealed some paradigm shifting data.\(^5\)

Decipherment of the Text\(^6\)

Etched in Paleo-Hebrew script, the words of these plaques prove the necessity of silver for their production and use. The introductory lines of each plate contain similar evil averting content. Chief archaeologist Gabriel Barkay writes, “Thus, it is quite proper to classify the Ketef Hinnom artifacts as amulets having much the same apotropaic function as we find in


\(^4\)Gabriel Barkay, Marilyn J. Lundberg, Andrew G. Vaughn, Bruce Zuckerman, and Kenneth Zuckerman, “The Challenges of Ketef Hinnom: Using Advanced Technologies to Reclaim the Earliest Biblical Texts and Their Context,” Near Eastern Archaeology 66, no. 4, (2003), 163.—To put these figures in perspective, Ketef Hinnom #1 is approximately the size of two index fingers held side by side whereas Ketef Hinnom #2 is smaller than a pinky finger. Times New Roman 12pt font is approximately 35mm in height.

\(^5\)see Barkay, Lundberg, Vaughn, Zuckerman, and Zuckerman, “The Challenges of Ketef Hinnom,” for full details of the photography and lighting process which allowed for high resolution photos to be taken. These photos, published as an electronic companion to Barkay, Lundberg, Vaughn, and Zuckerman, "The Amulets From Ketef Hinnom," form the basis for scholarly research and review of this subject.

\(^6\)A reproduction of both texts is provided after the conclusion of this report based on the reconstruction provided by archaeologist Gabriel Barkay and his team (see Figure 1 & 2).
later amulets and incantations.” While the initial lines vary between plates, their final portion is an almost identical quotation of the Aaronic blessing:

Table 1. Aaronic Blessing in Comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ketef Hinnom 2</th>
<th>Ketef Hinnom 1</th>
<th>Numbers 6:24–26 [MT]</th>
<th>Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יברך יהוה</td>
<td>יברך יהוה</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ישמרך</td>
<td>ושמרכ</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יאר יהוה</td>
<td>יאר יהוה</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>פני אלך</td>
<td>פני אלך</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יהוה</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ישאר יהוה</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>פני אלך</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>וישמר לך שולם</td>
<td>וישמר לך שולם</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

... Text is broken at the end of the plaque
[ ] Text is reconstructed from partial strokes or contextual clues
**Line numbering is for ease of comparison, not to mimic the actual lines of the plaques.

These lines have undergone thorough paleographic, orthographic, and comparative examination.8

The initial conclusion by Barkay9 and his more recently reaffirmed position10 regarding the date

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of these plaques is late 7th century to early 6th century. This dating is squarely in the time of the Judean monarchy (c.930–586 B.C.) and sets these texts as pre-exilic confessions of Yahweh. While this conclusion has enjoyed widespread acceptance in the scholarly community there are significant voices of dissent that date these plaques anywhere from the Persian period of exile all the way to the Second Temple era.\textsuperscript{11} Whichever date is accepted, Barkay's statement still stands that “the Ketef Hinnom inscriptions are therefore the earliest known artifacts from the ancient world that document passages from the Hebrew Bible.”\textsuperscript{12}

**The Significance of the Plaques**

In 1963 W.F. Albright wrote that “…not a single piece of papyrus or ostracon containing a biblical fragment from pre-Maccabaean days has yet been found in Palestine.”\textsuperscript{13} That all changed with this discovery. Further, the discovery at Ketef Hinnom offers significant insights related to the historical linguistic understanding of Hebrew and the socio-religious practices of the Jerusalem population before the exile.

**Historical Significance**

The plaques of Ketef Hinnom contain the oldest written quotation from the Hebrew Bible. They show that this text was well known and well used long before the time these silver scrolls were created. Barkay writes, “The Ketef Hinnom inscriptions provide a *terminus ante quem* for the appearance of the Priestly Benediction, refuting the scholars who claim that consolidation of the Benediction took place only in the Post-Exilic period.”\textsuperscript{14} Accepting Barkay's dating of late 7th to early 6th century B.C., this text predates the Qumran texts by over 400 years.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Barkay, “The Priestly Benediction,” 176.
\item Barkay, “The Priestly Benediction,” 177.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Not only do these plates provide the oldest archaeologically verifiable use of this text from Numbers but they also serve as “the first discovery of the tetragrammaton from Iron Age Jerusalem.” Thus, Ketef Hinnom contains the oldest written portion of Hebrew scripture yet discovered and a significant ancient attribution to the divine name of Israel's God.

Nevertheless, there are some noticeable differences between the blessing recorded in these mini-scrolls and the text recorded in the Masoretic tradition. Three options exist for explaining these differences: 1) the Masoretic tradition is older and Ketef Hinnom was shortened; 2) Ketef Hinnom is older and the Masoretic tradition was expanded; 3) there were multiple versions of the blessing co-existing in antiquity. Barkay summarizes, “An accepted principle of research holds that a shorter text predates any expanded version. However, in our case the complete and consolidated structure of the Masoretic Priestly Benediction indicates that it is the earlier one.” In other words, there are better reasons to explain why the Ketef Hinnom plaques may have been shortened from a more complete blessing than to explain why the Masoretes would have expanded a shorter blessing. Thus, this text appears to be part of an established socio-religious context where it was well known, well loved, and well preserved.

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16 This summary of the differences assumes the priority of the Masoretic tradition (MT). The first difference is that Ketef Hinnom (KH) lacks a reduplication of the ש in line one. Thus the single ש is, in a sense, playing double duty. In line two KH2 lacks the ו of ושמרך while KH1 has room for the ו but it is lost in lacuna. But notice that this word does contain the final ש lending credence to the proposal about line one. Lines 3–4 offer a readings much like the MT. Lines 5–7 are clearly missing from KH2 since it skips to line 8. It is possible more of the blessing was contained by KH1. In line 8 it is likely that KH2 utilized defective spelling.


18 Some of the reasons for assuming Ketef Hinnom is an abbreviated text include: 1) the space constrains of these plaques and the cost of the material; 2) these plates would likely never be unrolled and read once they were inscribed; 3) the text of the Aaronic blessing offers somewhat of a parallelism and KH2 clearly cuts out the parallel portion but leaves the essence of the blessing intact; 4) the MT version uses terse language which results in a compact package.

19 Barkay writes further, “The appearance of these expressions (Mal 1:9; 2:9) is a positive proof that in Malachi’s time, the Priestly Benediction was an old, well-known text and that paraphrases of it were clear to the prophet’s audience.” (Barkay, “The Priestly Benediction on Silver Plaques From Ketef Hinnom in Jerusalem,” 178.)
Linguistic Significance

In addition to the historical dating of Hebrew scripture, the discovery at Ketef Hinnom offers significant historical linguistic considerations about the Hebrew language. Cross and Freedman summarize the historical situation,

The epigraphic evidence for Hebrew orthography indicates that before the 9th century, Hebrew was written in a purely consonantal script. ... Some time after the 10th century (but probably by the middle of the 9th), a system of final *matres lectionis* was introduced, and from that time on, all final vowels were indicated in the orthography (in both Northern and Southern dialects). ... The few exceptions where medial *matres lectionis* seem to appear, all date from the 6th century. Since internal *matres lectionis* already had appeared sporadically in Aramaic inscriptions more than 100 years earlier, the possibility of their use in Hebrew must be recognized.

Thus, with the Ketef Hinnom plaques being dated to the late 7th century, it is reasonable to expect to find readings that include final *matres lectionis*. Writing against those who date the scrolls much later, Aḥituv notes that “the use of internal *matres lectionis* must have been earlier than they assumed. We encounter words written in the *plene* orthography that were regularly written in a *defective* form.”

This reality holds true for both the introductory comments and the scriptural quotation (esp. פניו). Thus, the oldest written verse from the Hebrew Bible in our possession also employs the use of *matres lectionis*. Such a picture of the state of written texts in the late Iron Age bears important sociological considerations.

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20 This was a system that used the consonants ה-ו-י to indicate vowels instead of their normal consonantal sounds. This was both to disambiguate similarly spelled words and to aid in reading for less educated persons. (see Joel M. Hoffman, *In the Beginning: A Short History of the Hebrew Language*, (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2004), 24ff.)


22 Aḥituv, “A Rejoinder to Nadav Na’amon,” 225. (emphasis added)—Citing examples from the scrolls he writes further, “There is no problem with the *plene* orthography of the words ארוֹר and בֵּיתוֹ....The word יִשְׁבָּנוּ ‘cursed’ in the much earlier inscription of the ‘Steward of the Palace’ inscription from the Siloam cliff (c. 700 BCE)” (225).
Sociological Significance

The significance of the *matres lectionis* is more than linguistic in nature but also has a sociological component. One of the main functions of inventing and employing these vowel letters into the consonantal text was to aid non-specialists in reading.\(^\text{23}\) From the inception of Israel as a nation the command to write and read is woven into their divine constitution, “. . . and you shall write [these words] on your doorposts and in your gates” (Deut 6:9).\(^\text{24}\) Over 500 written texts from at least 47 locations have been uncovered from ancient Israel and this does not include all the seals and stamps. Richard Hess concludes from this data,

> Although state, cultic, administrative, and military concerns do appear, the presence of seals and impressions, as well as texts from small sites, suggests that writing was used for a variety of purposes. . . . Writing occurs at all periods of the Iron Age in Palestine. . . . It is not possible to limit those who wrote and read to specific classes or places. No site was too small or too large to possess written texts.\(^\text{25}\)

Israel was a literary and largely literate people on the most basic level. The use of the *matres lectionis* in the Hebrew language served to democratize reading all the more.\(^\text{26}\) The presence of such a linguistic device evidences a larger societal norm for reading and writing.

> Though these particular scrolls from Ketef Hinnom add to the evidence for societal

\(^{23}\)Hoffman, *In the Beginning*, 24.

\(^{24}\)Hoffman mentions the centrality of this verse in the religious life of Israel. He is not willing to take a firm stand on its priority due to historical dating issues with the book of Deuteronomy. This is unfortunate as he makes an excellent historical and linguistic case for Israel as a writing and reading people. (Hoffman, *In the Beginning*, 37.) The relevance of this to the Ketef Hinnom inscriptions is that many source critics attribute Deuteronomy, in some form, to the time of late Iron Age Jerusalem (cf. 2 Ki 22:8). Thus, either the central command in Deuteronomy has a long and oft neglected place in Israel from the time of Moses onward, or it comes into play during the religious reforms of Josiah. Either way, this command is relevant for what was being done with the Ketef Hinnom plaques.


\(^{26}\)Cross and Freedman understand the *matres lectionis* system as being borrowed from the Aramaeans sometime in the 9th century B.C. (Cross and Freedman, *Early Hebrew Orthography*, 57.). On the other hand, while the idea of *matres lectionis* may not be wholly unique to Israel, Hoffman makes the case that it was Israel may have developed such a system in tandem and dependence is not a necessary inference (Hoffman, *In the Beginning*, 35–37.).
literacy, they were not actually designed to be read more than once. The text inscribed on them would have been one already memorized by their owners and thus would have no need to be read and re-read. The scrolls must have served another societal purpose: “…and you shall bind [these words] for a sign upon your hand and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes” (Deut 6:8). The wearing of sacred scripture as jewelry had the effect of a religious reminder similar to the mezuzot and the tephilin which contained memorized scripture. But some scholars have even asserted that these silver scrolls are more than just religious reminders but cultic amulets. If this assertion is confirmed then it offers potential proof that some followers of YHWH at this time considered the text to not only be sacred but also possess apotropaic power.

In summary, the plaques of Ketef Hinnom preserve the oldest written copy of a biblical passage yet uncovered. The presence of the matres lectionis in this inscription offers another proof that the populous of Israel was more literate than has been previously understood. Further, these scrolls functioned as some type of reminder of the word of YHWH. It is possible that they were viewed as an amulet for averting evil which the owner would have worn on their body. This last assertion and late dating schemes remain to be examined.

**Dissenting Interpretive Views**

Gabriel Barkay's initial evaluation was largely reaffirmed by the more recent re-evaluation based on better photographs of the silver plates. His conclusions from examining the plaques in new light are threefold: (1) they come from a late preexilic period; (2) they contain the oldest known copy of a verse from the Hebrew Bible; (3) the scrolls were used to ward off evil as amulets worn on the body. His evaluation has largely been accepted by the scholarly community though not without significant dissent. Most criticized of these conclusions is the early date he assigns them due to complications it introduces to historical-critical theories.

Dating: Iron Age or Second Temple?

In arriving at a late 7th century dating of the scroll Barkay and his team utilized three avenues of analysis: archaeology, paleography, and orthography. The archaeology is fairly straightforward. The scrolls were uncovered in the lower and rear layers of a burial chamber repository that clearly dates back to the Iron Age. Thus, in a fair analysis, ignorant of their written contents, the plaques should be dated squarely in the late Iron Age. Yet, Nadav Na’aman repines that the failure to publish data on the other contents of the repository weakens the archaeological case for a late Iron Age date. Further, Na’aman, following Angelika Berlejung, argues that no silver amulets have yet been found from Iron Age Israel and thus must be dated later into the Persian period and beyond. What this argument fails to state is that only two gold or silver amulets have been found in Israel from the Persian period. Two amulets from another time period are hardly substantial evidence to critique two silver plaques being dated earlier. Thus, proponents of a late date focus on the written contents due to the weakness of their position archaeologically.

Evaluation of the written content is far more complex and divides into the practice of paleography (examining the shapes of letters) and orthography (examining grammatical and spelling conventions). Recent photography, using the techniques of light painting and contrasting lights, has revealed a great deal for paleographers and orthographers to consider. What these

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30 Barkay, Lundberg, Vaughn, and Zuckerman, “The Amulets From Ketef Hinnom,” 43. Barkay makes clear that layering in burial chambers is not the same as layering in tel sites. He offers a detailed explanation of where the artifacts were found and how they relate to other objects like Hellenistic pottery which was found only in the upper layers nearest the opening of the repository. In contrast, the scrolls were discovered much further back from the door at lower levels and surrounded mainly by objects dating from the 5th century B.C. and older. Thus, he takes it as safe to assume that the amulets had been placed in the repository long before any of the later Babylonian, Persian, and Greek artifacts were deposited.


33 Aḥitu, “A Rejoinder to Nadav Na’aman,” 223.

techniques have achieved is a set of extremely readable photographs of a text written in faint scratches that are otherwise clouded by corrosion. These techniques have even allowed evaluation down to the level of accurately identifying the order of strokes by which a letter was written. Establishing the actual visible text was an extremely important achievement. One of the most outspoken critics of Barkay's early date has been Johannes Renz. His paleographic evaluation was based on the original photographs of a much poorer quality. Thus, many of his strongest objections have been adequately answered simply by the sharper resolution and lighting of the newer photographs. In the end, nothing about the paleography cast doubt upon the initial archaeological date proposed.\textsuperscript{35}

Despite the revelation of the new photographs many letters are only visible in partial form or have been lost altogether due to corrosion of the silver plates. This has led to different reconstructions of the text which challenge some of the orthographic and interpretive conclusions of Barkay. One of the more contentious examples is the presence of the letter \textit{yud} in the word פנני of Ketef Hinnom 2. Following the prevailing orthographic theory this use of a \textit{mater lectionis} would push the dating of these scrolls to an exilic period,\textsuperscript{36} though it is not impossible to understand it as a late Iron Age reading.\textsuperscript{37} Barkay even proposes that there may have been some orthographic differences between the Northern and Southern kingdoms that could explain the use of internal \textit{matres lectionis} in the Iron Age.\textsuperscript{38} This spelling may be corroborated by letters from Lachish with spellings like ידיך (Letter 6) and אליהם (Kirbet Beit Lei inscription) and אליך (palimpsest papyrus from Wadi Muraba’at in the 7th C.) and לפניך from the Arad Letter no.7.\textsuperscript{39} It is difficult to make a conclusive case in either direction which points to the transitional nature of

\textsuperscript{35}Barkay, Lundberg, Vaughn, and Zuckerman, “The Amulets From Ketef Hinnom,” 52.

\textsuperscript{36}Na’aman, “A New Appraisal,” 187–188.

\textsuperscript{37}Cross and Freedman, \textit{Early Hebrew Orthography}, 57.

\textsuperscript{38}Barkay, Lundberg, Vaughn, and Zuckerman, “The Amulets From Ketef Hinnom,” 54.

\textsuperscript{39}Aḥituv, “A Rejoinder to Nadav Na’aman,” 226.
spelling in this time period. Thus, all three of these evaluation methods offer substantial reasons to understand that these writings come to us from the late 7th century B.C.

**Purpose: Religious or Superstitious?**

Having considered the time period that these plaques were written it is important to go on and consider how they were viewed and used by their owners. Based on the archaeological context and the content of the plaques Barkay labels these silver scrolls as amulets. An amulet is an “object worn or kept close to one’s person as a protection against evil, natural and supernatural....Amulet inscriptions [were] written either in full or in abbreviation.” The presence of amulets is widely attested in late Iron Age Israel. Theodore Lewis comments, Archaeological evidence has offered widespread proof that Iron Age Judeans did indeed know of and own amulets. A percentage of the owners of amulets assigned apotropaic power to them. . . . Nonetheless, it is true that we do not have the explicit presence of apotropaic incantations within the Hebrew Bible . . . .

Egypt seems to have been one of the main sources for such objects and religious practice. Many of these amulets were not text based but some do record incantations and blessings. Further, very often these late Iron Age amulets are found in tombs similar to Ketef Hinnom. Isaiah 3:20 mentions לחשׁים as part of a list of female jewelry which can be translated as "amulets" or "charms.” Thus, the archaeological context is ripe for seeing these scrolls as amulets.

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44Conservative dating for the book of Isaiah, based on its own attestations (Isa 1:1), would put his prophetic ministry in the late 8th century to early 7th century. Thus, if his reference here to the wearing of "amulets" is at all similar to what was found at Ketef Hinnom then the practice of wearing such items long precedes the artifacts we now possess. The word לחשׁ can also mean "whispering" (cf. Isa 26:16; Jer 8:17) which corresponds with the idea that what these women wore were likely inscribed amulets and not merely iconic.
The more decisive factor in determining the use of these plaques is the actual wording of the introductory material. The nature of the Aaronic Blessing “to bless and keep (protect)” can fit the general nature of an amulet inscription. It is also written in abbreviated form which allows more to be written on the tight space an amulet usually offers. But the mere presence of this blessing does not make it an amulet. It could be understood more in line with the tradition of mezuzot and the tephilin. Nevertheless, even these traditional practices have been skewed throughout history away from their original intended use as reminders of covenant loyalty. The introductory lines of the scroll mention Yahweh as the one keeping covenant love and as the warrior rebuking [E]vil. The title from KH1 is very common in the Hebrew Bible and a direct quote of Deut 7:9 (cf. 1 Ki 8:23; Dan 9:4; Neh 1:5). The title from KH2 can mean “helper” or often more specifically “a helper in war” or “warrior” (cf. 1 Ki 20:16; Isa 31:3; 1 Chr 12:1). The title from KH2 means “one who rebukes” and is used of YHWH in various grammatical forms (cf. Zech 3:2; Mal 3:11; Psa 9:5). Thus, there is ample parallel language in the text of the Hebrew Bible to explain the introduction as being written by a faithful Israelite.

Nevertheless, these introductory inscriptions bear language that could be interpreted as apotropaic such that they themselves are viewed as averting evil. But due to their close affinity with other biblical texts and their quotation of the cultic blessing it is also possible that they served as a more innocent reminder of Yahweh's protection from evil. As Berlejung writes,

45 The New Encyclopedia of Judaism states that “traditional Judaism does not consider tefillin or mezuzah to be amulets in this sense, but there were periods in which these ritual objects assumed talismanic importance among ordinary folk . . . .” (Amulet,” 61.)—In other words, in the long standing tradition of writing out scripture and binding them to people and places, some people have errantly viewed these items as amulets, talismans, and lucky charms.

46 This would be the position of Theodore Lewis, following Barkay, when he writes, "The ramifications of the Ketef Hinnom inscribed amulets for the subject at hand are quite significant. For the first time, we have clear Iron Age evidence of incantations using the power of the divine name Yahweh, as well as the power of the written word (i.e., using a biblical passage), for apotropaic purposes similar to the well attested practices of Late Jewish antiquity. In other words, we have found the ‘missing link’ that proves what we suspected all along: that incantations were indeed used by certain Yahwists in biblical times (at least in the pre-exilic period) even though they are not attested in our biblical texts." (Lewis, “Job 19,” 109.)
The wearers of KH 1/2 lived in a close relationship with their God Yahweh, under his blessing, and by means of the amulets they declared their loyalty to him. In their lifetime they were intent on experiencing God’s presence and nearness, and when they took the amulets with them to the grave, or rather were buried with them, the hope was expressed that they could continue to experience this presence of God in the grave, where there was nothing more to look forward to but much to fear. The protective patterns of life were thus prolonged in to the grave and up to (but not beyond) the gates of the underworld.\(^7\)

It is impossible from the archaeological and inscriptional evidences alone to discern the intention of these specific original bearers. From the historical context it is very likely that they did serve as some form of amulet to help avert evil. But it may also be that they were, as Berlejung put it, declarations of “loyalty” and expressions of “hope.”

**Conclusions**

The discovery of the silver scrolls at Ketef Hinnom is an incredibly significant archaeological find. They are now the oldest written text from the Hebrew Bible in our possession (Num 6:24–26). Standing up to criticism these plaques come down to us from the late 7th century of the Judean monarchy. They offer a glimpse into the status of literacy and written text in the late Iron Age. In them we also get a picture of Judean religious piety before the exile, whether of faithful or syncretistic Yahwism.

\(^7\)Her quotation in German: “Die Träger von KH 1/2 lebten in enger Beziehung mit ihrem Gott Jahwe, in seinem Segen und bekannten sich durch die Amulette zu ihm. Sie sind im Leben gespannt darauf aus gewesen, Gottes Gegenwart und Mitsein zu erfahren. Indem sie die Amulette ins Grab mitnahmen bzw. sie ihnen beigeben wurden, wurde für sie erhofft, dass sie in der Zeit im Grab, in der an sich nichts mehr zu erwarten, aber viel zu fürchten ist, weiter diese Gegenwart Gottes erfahren könnten. Die schützenden Strukturen des Lebens würden ins Grab und vor die Tore der Unterwelt, aber eben nicht hinein (!), verlängert.” (Berlejung, “Ein Programm Fürs Leben”, 230.)
This page contains a table of the Ketef Hinnom Scroll #1, including translations, Hebrew reconstructions, and notes on the text. The table includes columns for Translation*, Hebrew (Reconstructed)*, Inscription, and Line. The notes section provides additional context, such as the possibility of tetragrammaton, conjectures, and lacunae in the text. The translation provided is only approximate and may be subject to varying interpretations based on differing reconstructions of the text. The notes also mention that the translation is provided to offer a glimpse into the basic message and show the clarity of the quotation of the priestly blessing from Numbers 6:24–26.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Translation*</th>
<th>Hebrew (Reconstructed)†</th>
<th>Inscription</th>
<th>Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>[May (s)he (be) blessed]</td>
<td>†[ברךה(ו/ה)]</td>
<td>[א[ה ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>by YHWH</td>
<td>†[ליהוה[ה]]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>the warrior (-or- helper) and</td>
<td>[הנער ב]</td>
<td>[א[ו циф[ו]]</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>the one who rebukes</td>
<td>[העזרו וְהָעֹזֵר]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>[E]vil: May bless (you)</td>
<td>[ר[ע-[ו]]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>YHWH may</td>
<td>[יהוהי]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>(he) keep you</td>
<td>[שמשה]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>YHWH make shine</td>
<td>[יָאָר יִה]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>his face</td>
<td>[ה[ו פנִי]]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>upon you and</td>
<td>[ואֶל[ו]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>may he give to you</td>
<td>[שם[לך נ]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>peace</td>
<td>[ל[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>[א[ו ו/ו(ח)]]</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


*This translation is only approximate and other renderings may by possible based on differing reconstructions of the text. The translation is mainly provided to offer a glimpse into the basic message and show the clarity of the quotation of the priestly blessing from Numbers 6:24–26.

[ ] Conjecture based on incomplete strokes or contextual clues
--- Lacuna, incomplete text due to corruption of the silver plate
BIBLIOGRAPHY


