

Tombstones bearing Hebrew inscriptions in Aden

Inscriptions on tombstones provide us with information about the family and society of the deceased. Through a reading of these inscriptions the individual is no longer anonymous. In addition to names, grave inscriptions often contain information on an individual's status and profession, offering us insights into the life of a community which include different classes and professions. The information emphasised in grave inscriptions reveals the values of a society and its traditions. This study investigates the corpus of Hebrew inscriptions on tombstones in Aden.

Keywords: Hebrew, epigraphy, Aden, calendrics, Judaism

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Introduction

Graveyards and tombstones provide us with an insight into the life of people who are no longer alive. Tombstones tell us the name and age of the deceased person, and about when and where the deceased person lived. Sometimes the name of the deceased person gives an indication of family origins. The style of the characters, the order of the words, and sentences in the inscription tell us of the funeral traditions and the culture of this specific community. The size of the tombstone, its shape, and the style of its decoration reflect the social status of the person it was made for. The shape of the stone and the way it was cut tell us about the manual skills of the masons.

Jewish cemeteries in Aden

Four Jewish cemeteries are known to have existed in the Aden area. Two of them were ancient and were closed to funerals before the nineteenth century. The third one was in the centre of the city in the 'Crater' area, so-called by the British (Fig. 1). This cemetery was still in use at the time of British occupation. The Ma'alâ cemetery is the new cemetery. In addition to these cemeteries there is a memorial tomb in the Holkat-Bay area (1).

The common Hebrew words for cemetery are: *bêt-qēbārôt*, the house of the burials, *bêt-'almîn* or *bêt-'ôlām*, the everlasting house and *bêt-ha-hayyîm*, the house of the living (2). Among the Jews of Aden and in Yemen the word for cemetery is *mē'ārâ* (pl. *me'arôt*) which means cave. In Aden the ancient cemetery was called *mē'ārâ yešanâ*, old cave (3). The ancient cemeteries were situated on the cliffs surrounding the Crater. The cemeteries had been abandoned for many generations by the time the British arrived. The cemetery in the Crater was situated near the Jewish quarter (Fig. 2) and was in use for many generations. There were many tombstones with Hebrew inscriptions scattered all over the area. Despite their relocation to a new quarter the Jews continued to use the Crater cemetery until approximately 1860. After the Crater cemetery was closed to burials, the British Administration granted the family of Menahem Messa, then head of the Aden Jewish community, special permission (Fig. 3) to continue to use the cemetery in the Crater for their family members until the middle of the twentieth century (4).

The cemetery at Ma'alâ was used by the Jewish community of Aden from 1860 until 1967, when the Jewish community was dissolved. Today there are hundreds of graves with tombstones of different

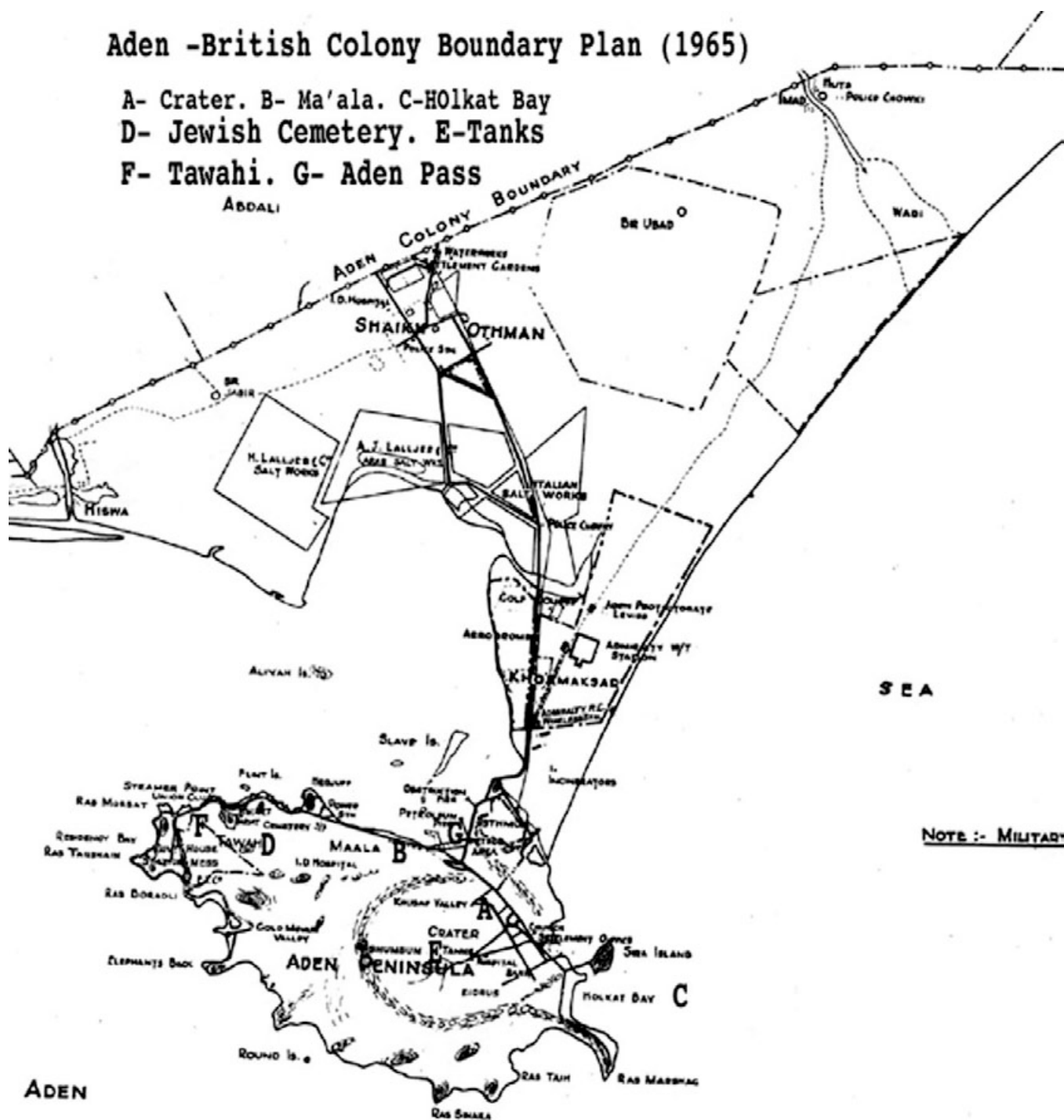


Fig. 1.
British Colony Boundary Plan of Aden, 1965.

shapes and sizes at this cemetery. The earliest date of burial found in the Ma'alâ cemetery was from the year 1863 CE (תלג) (*tav, reš, lamed, gimel*). The latest date was from 1967 CE (תשכז) (*tav, šin, kap, zayin*) (5).

An overview of the discoveries of epitaphs under British rule

During building works under the British Administration, hundreds of Hebrew epitaphs were discovered and collected, but not all of them were

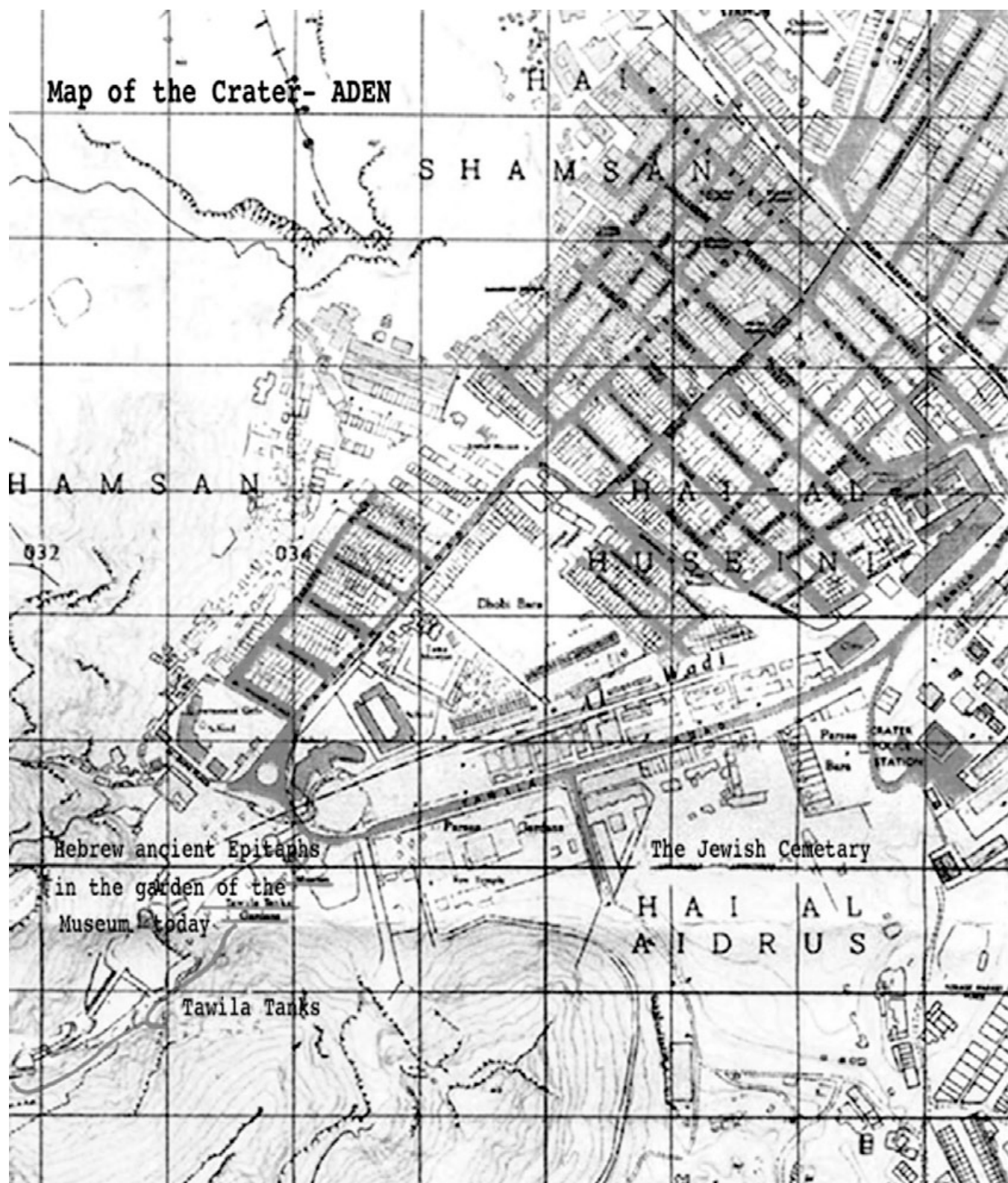


Fig. 2.
Aden Crater map, 1965.

No. 2887

The Residency,
Aden, 5 May 1934.

To

Mr. Menahem Meza,
Aden.

Memorandum.

The Chief Commissioner has granted permission
for the burial of Salem Awad Ishaak in the old Jewish
Cemetery at Crater, as a special case.

Sd. T. Hickinbotham,
Civil Secretary.

No. 2888

The Residency,
Aden, 5 May 1934.

Copy forwarded to the Chairman, Aden
Settlement, for information.

OC. 1934
Civil Secretary-
1934

Fig. 3.

Burial permission for the Meza family, 1934.

documented. The discovered tablets were often taken and kept by private individuals, and many of those slabs were consequently lost. Seven tablets were transferred to the British Museum (6).

Slabs were also discovered in the Crater outside the border of the Jewish cemetery. The slabs discovered outside the cemetery were similar to the tombstones in the cemetery, suggesting that the cemetery had originally been larger and that this area had probably once belonged to the cemetery.

A fire which broke out in the Crater in 1852 resulted in significant renovation work in the city. The reconstruction work was carried out under the supervision of Brigadier Playfair. Houses of mud and stone replaced the straw huts destroyed by the fire. During the digging further discoveries of Hebrew epitaphs were made. Many of the stones discovered

were badly damaged, and some of the inscriptions were so corroded that their texts were illegible.

Hebrew epitaphs were also discovered during reconstruction work at the water reservoir which was located on the hill, in the area called the 'Tanks' (7). The discovery of Hebrew epitaphs in the Tanks area suggests that there had been a cemetery earlier which, in turn, implies that there must have been a Jewish settlement nearby. Hebrew epitaphs were also discovered during the reconstruction works in the 'Aden Pass' (8). They were set deeply into the walls and secured with mortar. Slabs were also found in the caves in this area (9).

The calendars used by the Jews of southern Arabia

Until the middle of the twentieth century the Jews of southern Arabia used four different calendars. Whereas three of the calendars were common, the fourth was rarely used. All four dating systems are present in the inscriptions. The Seleucid calendar is related to the rule of the Seleucid dynasty and is called *šētārôt* in Hebrew, the Calendar of the Contracts or the Era of the Documents (10). The calendar begins with the first day of the month of *tišrê* of the year 312 (or 311) BC (11). *La-yešîrâ* is the Calendar Beginning with the Biblical Creation of the World. The CE calendar was often used after the British occupation began (12). In two epitaphs the dates are stated in relation to the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Among the Jews of southern Arabia, the Calendar Beginning with the Dates of the Destruction of the Temples was rarely used to give an indication of time (13).

In the calendars of *la-šētārôt* and *la-yešîrâ* the date is expressed by Hebrew letters. The numerical value of the letter is implied: 'alep = 1, bêl = 2, yod = 10, qop = 100, taw = 400, taw + taw + reš = 1000. In the Hebrew epitaphs from Aden the Hebrew letters are also used to indicate the day of the week or the day of the month. In some inscriptions the letters expressing the date are integrated into words which form the sentences of the text. In those cases these letters perform dual functions. The letters that are related to the date are marked above the words by a bold font, by a dot or by special symbols to differentiate them from the other letters. The CE date is expressed numerically.

To convert dates into the CE calendar it is necessary to subtract 312 years from the Contracts Calendar, and 3761 years from the Creation Calendar (14).

Discoveries of Hebrew epitaphs by travellers

Jacob Saphir was the first to copy Hebrew inscriptions in Aden's ancient cemeteries and to publish ten of them. Looking for physical evidence supporting the legends of the Jews' arrival in southern Arabia in biblical times, Saphir felt that he had made an important discovery (15). In his opinion the ages of the inscriptions which he had copied corresponded to the time referred to in the legends. The earlier dates among the inscriptions copied by Saphir fell between the first and the sixty-first year of the Contracts Calendar. Saphir believed that these dates related to the third century BC (16). He also documented other epitaphs from the end of the first millennium CE and from the beginning of the second millennium CE. He noted that there were inscriptions written in different styles, despite the fact that those inscriptions gave closed dates and the epitaphs were found side by side in the same area. Saphir discovered a group of epitaphs from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries CE, which belonged to one family clan of Ḥalfon, Bûndār and Maḍmûn. According to Ben-Zvi and Goitein, Maḍmûn in Hebrew means Šēmāryâ (17). Saphir's discoveries indicated that the cemetery was used by the community for many generations throughout the centuries and that individuals could own part of the cemetery for use by their families (18).

As a member of an Austrian scientific delegation, Heinrich David Müller travelled to southern Arabia at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1889 Müller brought to Vienna approximately 100 squeezes of Hebrew inscriptions. Among these was a group of inscriptions from Aden's Jewish cemeteries. Most of them date to the years between 20 and 54 in the Calendar of the Contracts (19).

Izhak Ben-Zvi travelled to Aden in January, 1950 (20). He visited the ancient cemeteries, the local state archaeological museum and a private museum, belonging to Mr. Kaiky Muncherjee, an Indian merchant residing in Aden. Ben-Zvi claimed that there were hundreds of sepulchral slabs in the ancient cemeteries. The deeper he entered into the ancient cemetery the earlier were the dates on the epitaphs. He mentioned that many people had

epitaphs in their homes and added that it would be difficult to estimate how many slabs with Hebrew inscriptions there were in total. All the inscriptions he examined were dated in relation to the Seleucid Era. For the first time, photographs of four of them were published (21).

In 1951 Father A. Jamme rediscovered thirteen tombstones bearing Hebrew inscriptions in the courtyard of the Archaeological Museum of Aden. Jamme heard from J. J. Gunn, then director of the museum, that the tombstones had been found one hundred years earlier in the Crater. Jamme made latex squeezes of the inscriptions and passed them on to Eli Subar for publication (22).

Problems estimating the ages of the Hebrew epitaphs

Saphir's publication of the first inscriptions provoked intense discussion among scholars. The contents of the inscriptions and their possible ages sparked controversy about their age and the subject of the first arrival of the Jews in southern Arabia (23). Saphir's opponents thought that he had misinterpreted the dates; they believed that the dates given in inscriptions must have been incomplete, as masons might have contracted the dates—called *p''q* (*perat qatan*)—and engraved only the decade and the current year of the date (24).

According to Joseph Halévy, who visited Aden and Yemen in 1869–70, the earliest inscription was related to 1816 of the Contracts Calendar, which is 1504 CE. Halévy's opinion was not only based on the analysis of his records from Aden, but also on his examination of the four slabs at the British Museum (25). The dispute between Saphir and Halévy ended when it turned out they were each referring to different slabs from different cemeteries (26). Saphir had felt offended and hurt because he was accused of falsifying the inscriptions and dismissed the accusation by saying: 'Who would invent so many names, dates and other details to falsify hundreds of inscriptions, and from where would one get so many old stones for this?' (27) Saphir's opponents also claimed that some expressions, forms of eulogy and abbreviations in the text of the epitaphs were modern and were not attested in Europe before the tenth and thirteenth centuries CE: examples such as (תמק) (*tav, mem, kap*), *tehî menûhātah* or *tehe menûhātô kâbôd* (Isaiah 11:10 and 58:8), may her or his rest be in honour; and (ר ית) (*reš, yod, tav*),

rûah ha-Šem tanihennû (Isaiah 63, 14), may the Spirit of the Lord lead him (Fig. 4-6). Saphir provided many examples of the use of such abbreviations in biblical times and in the Talmudic Era. Harkavy also mentioned that the expression *TMK* **תמכ** (*tav, mem, kap*) was in use in the Crimea in the first and the second centuries CE (28). On tombstones from the third century discovered at Beit Se'arim the expression **זצנ** (*zayin, šade, lamed*), *zeḳer šaddîq li-berakâ* (Proverbs 10:7), blessed be in memory the righteous, was used. Furthermore Saphir pointed out that the use of the name of the month instead of its number was a tradition among the ancient Babylonian Jewish Diaspora (29). He emphasised that in the inscriptions from the first century of the Seleucid Era, which his opponents considered to belong to a considerably later time, there were no rabbinical expressions, such as *môrenû*, our teacher,



Fig. 4.
Epitaph of Ahron, son of Yešû'â, from the year 32 of the Contracts calendar (courtesy David Birnbaum, director of the S. Birnbaum Z/L archive).



Fig. 5.
Epitaph of Hasya, daughter of Šemaryâ, from the year 5472 (1712 CE) of the Creations calendar (courtesy D. Birnbaum).



Fig. 6.
Epitaph of Yešû'â, son of Ahron, son of Yešû'â, from the year 5565 (1805 CE) (courtesy D. Birnbaum).

rabbi or *ge'ônenû* (30). Saphir was unexpectedly supported by Dr. Rabbi Eli'ezer Mordechei Halevi from London who examined the Hebrew epitaphs in the British Museum. Dr. Halevi wrote a letter to Yehi'el Brill, the editor of the newspaper *ha-Libanon* which was published with the title: 'Let us admit that Jacob (Saphir) is saying the truth' (Fig. 7). His opinion was that the dates given on the epitaphs were not contracted and should be read as written and as interpreted by Saphir (31).

The study of tombstone inscriptions from Aden provides us with more than just a possible time horizon for the presence of the Jews in southern Arabia. The letter forms used in the inscriptions are an important asset for Hebrew palaeography. A number of inscriptions use some of the oldest known styles of Hebrew characters. Furthermore, a few epitaphs from the same cemetery and seemingly from the same period exhibit styles of letters that are either inconsistent or completely different (32).

Almost eighty years after Saphir's publication of the inscriptions from Aden, Birnbaum undertook a palaeographic study of sixty-two Hebrew inscriptions from Aden (33). He attempted to ascertain the age of the inscriptions in accordance with the theory of the development of the Hebrew alphabet. Birnbaum concluded that although the epitaphs were written in a unique, local style, most of them could not have been written earlier than the fourteenth century CE. According to his theory the way the letter *dalet* was written did not appear before the fifteenth century and the way the letter *qop* was

בית ערו

8 (ד) מצבות עדן

(הסוף סתומה 3)

[illegible]

27.1.04-2b: Saphir-Libanon

JOURNAL HÉBREU

N° 9

שנה שלישית

במשפחת רוסית
18 פרחים,
לחצי שנה 9 פ'
לחצי שנה תחומי
חץ 15 לשנה.
כל חץ יכול
להשיג פרחי חץ
המסומני שלי.

שני פעמים בחדש
הלבנון ובדודו ירחו.
מחירו לבנה, עם
הפארט, בעומק
לרבות 14 פראנק.
בעד חריטה 7 פ'.
בשאר חריטות 16
פ', לחיטה 8 פ'.

הלל בנח

لها البانون

LIBANON

מבשר ומזרע כל דבר הנדרש לאיש יהודי לדעת
באשר הוא יהודי.

בבזד קלבנו

י. חורבן מקדש וניאווה

בואוסף מחדושי תורה מחבמי וגאוניםחומן ומכ"י אשר
בבתי עקד הספרים המפורסמים .

תעמל למד ע"י יחידה ברו"ל.

שאלו שלום ירושלם שליו אודבך .

בֵּית עֵדֶן.

ממני יעקב הלוי ספיר

(הפסד סט' 7)

וראשית אומר שאין לחשוש אותו שמלכי בתי המצות האלה, כי הגה ער
 והוא לא יבשם, והובית הקברות לא מעבר ללי שם, האם
 שבעה ימים מספרם לעד אבית הקטור ועבריה ושבים דרך עליה אלה
 שם, מספרם, מהדור, סכנה, ומאוסטראל, מכל לשונות הגוים, קרוב
 שם לכל עובר ושב בדרך הנה מעיני לראותם ויבדו להחשיקם ויכריזו לעין השמים
 וסבת הגתיה אם לא? אם אבית אלה לספר בריבם שקר כזה הנה בעלי לעני
 שם יהודים מאותו החשיב בעל הנה, האמת, הרעתי שמתחם בזה ואיך
 ספיר זה יגיע שם אלהם, ולא יכתיבו עני? כי אין לחשוש המצבות
 הנה נעשו ביד זרים מאחרים? כי מי הוא זה אשר שיקום איש ועיבול לזה
 צוב לזה ולזה ולזהק מצבות רבות אשר רבות הנה מאד על פני הבקעה הנה,
 יהיה שמת, הארים, המנים לא תעלה אלה עני? ואם נשים מקום כלבכנ
 חשבת פגול כאלה לא נשאר לנו שם ואלה דהתי כולו ילדי יום, אם
 היה ראשון לא ראנו, ואת אמנו לא נדע, ואת אדתי לא בכר? אין זאת?
 ש? ואין כלל איש משיב על דבר אמת בדעה ישרה לחזק לבקש מאמתן,
 קטן עתה רק לדעת מתי ה' חזק הנה ושאר הקריות לתחזק על רשעים.

(ההפוך עליו)

ד' כבר בימים ההם נהגו לכתוב ראשי היות, כאשר הראויים באלה
המקומות: ר"ה — רוח ה' הניחו, — נע"ז — נשמתו עזן גן, — וז"ה —
זוכה לחייה, — ול"ב — זכור לברכה; — ח"ט"ב — הלא מנחמו כבוד
י"ב, ומתנו קדמון הוא ללשון יהודה לכתוב ר"ה לעתים דיעים ורגילים
או לסמינים וצוותים. וכן מצענו (שקל"פ ש"ה) נכתב על ידי המקדש א' ב'
(וכב"ב י' קס"ז) ספל למלטה ופסל למטה, ר"ה סאה ופלטנו, קב
ופלטנו. ע"י מפרשי' — (ובכ"ה אח"ע ס' ק"ב) מביא בשם שו"ג שלמד
מהו שהיו רגילים לכתוב ר"ה כשטרות) וכפ"ד דמ"ע: המציא כלי ונחבו
עליו ק' קרבן מ' מעשר ד' דמאי, ו' טבל ח' חומה ר' וסאי אומר וסוף שמות
אנשים הן ק' קרח ק"מ משה ר' דוד ט' טוביא ח' חרד וסאי ר' יוסי האומר
שבה' ב' בהנה ... לא חיבו שתי אדוות אל משה דמשן שכן דיו סורחין
על קרשי המטבח לדע' אזהר ב'ז; ואלו השמות חול' באגדותיהם לדרוש כמה
פסוקים בתנ"ך על דרך נחרקין וגיטטר', כמו ר' ד' שמה (בראש' מ"ב, ב')
סימן לרד' שנה שישנו אבותינו במצרים, וכן גושנתם בארץ (דברים י'
סימן שישנו בא' מים שנחנכו בה עד גלות המקד' יצחק. כמנן וגושנתם שהם
החמ"ב שנה (כ"ה הרמב"ם ז"ל באגרת היטון). ועי' במד"ר פ' מטעי כמה
נחרקין שנה נחם כצאן עמר, ע"ד ר"ה. ונסמך דמים והלכות הוציא חול'

תתן אמת ליעקב.

מאת דר' לעזי.

נצ"ה ה"ק קרייטשטאן א' חדר התכונ' לבר' ע'. לכבוד ... מוה' יחזקאל ברי' שלום וברכה.
על דבר אחת וענות נדק שתי דבריו להדיק הדברים הנזכרים בספר בית עדן (לפני
נו 8) כי זה שנים רבות אשר נדפסתי זאת הארון בירושלם Samuel Birch Esq.
העמיד על שמירת אחי אבני קדש ומצבת עולים בבית אולם הספרים הרועה גם כיום
ממונהאם בלגדארן קבריטש Museum אנשיקה לא תעמיך על הדברים המוזכרים על ארבע מצבות
סדוקאו מעיר עדן, ה"ה המציאות בספרם

47	47	47	47
4	23	4	23
4	23	4	23
2	3	2	3
1		1	

ועמודות בין אחי קדש ומצבת עולים
לפיכך כל הדפים להחמש עשר עם
סמות הקדומות המביאים סדר לבד — על המצבה המציאות בספר אר צע בזכר שנת
אתרכה (לשורות) ולורת האות אל"ף משונה מצוות האות הרועה לנו היום —
ויזהו כוח [כחו' מאורות] ועל המצבה קו וילא נוסדה ליחין] או בקר' למעלה
כנ' ובסוף רגל הפיגור יחלק קו מחץ פניה], וזורה הי"ן כוח [בשמי זרח]
יזכרה ה' היותו בעצרת מקורו

Fig. 7.

Extracts from articles by J. Saphir-Halevi and M. Halevi in the newspaper 'Libanon', 1866.



Fig. 8.

Epitaph of Maštā', daughter of David, from the year 29 of the Contracts calendar (BM 132702, by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum).

written—open on two sides—did not appear before the end of the seventeenth century or the beginning of the eighteenth century (34). Birnbaum believed that the dates in the inscriptions were contracted and the letters, which were supposed to have indicated the millennium, were omitted. Birnbaum argued that it could not be a coincidence that the dates were short in so many inscriptions. The masons must have intentionally omitted part of the date (35). As a result, Birnbaum added 2000 years to the date of the inscription of Masta's slab (Fig. 8) from the British Museum and also to the inscriptions copied by Saphir.

Fifteen years after Ben-Zvi's publication, Shmu'el Yavne'elli told him that while visiting Aden in 1911 he had also copied a few Hebrew inscriptions from the ancient cemetery. Yavne'elli was familiar with Saphir's publications (36). Ben-Zvi published fourteen inscriptions from Yavne'elli's collection of thirty-two. At the same time as Ben-Zvi obtained Yavne'elli's notes, Ben-Zvi received photographs of Hebrew epitaphs from Aden from Mori Salem. These he published with Yavne'elli's notes and issued another edition of his previous publication. Ben-Zvi was now convinced that the dates were contracted and revisited his theory on the age of the inscriptions in a new palaeographic study. In the revised article, in place of the letter *'alep* he added the letter *bêt* (2000 years) to the dates given. On one of the inscriptions from Mori Salem, the location of the letters of the date was changed. At the beginning there should be *taw* and not *gimel*. Alterations in the

letters of the date was not unusual among Yemeni Jews (37). The inscriptions from Mori Salem from the years 26 and 32 according to the Contracts Calendar, were dated 1715 CE and 1721 CE, respectively (38). Eli Subar followed the same reasoning as Ben-Zvi, adding the letter *bêt* to the given dates and estimating the ages of the inscriptions accordingly.

While the letter indicating the millennium in a Contracts date could be (*א*), *'alep* or (*ב*), *bêt* (one or two), the letter indicating the century could be any letter from: (*א*), *'alep* to (*ט*), *tet* (one to nine). The date in an inscription could be anything over the last two thousand years. Let us assume, for instance, that the letter one, indicating hundreds and/or thousands, was omitted. The date mentioned in one of the inscriptions as the first year of the Contracts Calendar (311 or 312 BC), could be, for instance, the year 101, 1001 or 1101 in Contracts Calendar terms, which would mean 210 BC, 690 CE, or 790 CE, respectively. However, if the omitted millennium letter was two, then the dates for the first year of the Contracts Calendar could be, for instance, the year 2001, which brings us to 1690 CE (39).

The theory that the masons consciously left out the letters indicating the millennium is not applicable in all cases. We read a full date in inscription No. 132703 in the British Museum (*אתרכה*) (*'alep, taw, reš, kap, he*) which is 1313 CE (Fig. 9). Moreover, in the Ben-Zvi publications there were four inscriptions giving full dates. Inscription No. 3 has the date (*ארק*) (*'alep, reš,*



Fig. 9.

Epitaph of Perah from the year 1625 (1317 CE) of the Contracts calendar (BM 132703, by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum).



Fig. 10.
Epitaph of Miryam from the year 1475 (1163 CE) of the Contracts calendar (photograph by the author, Aden, 2004).

he) which gives 1205 according to the Contracts, or 894 CE. Inscription No. 4 gives the date of (אֶתְעֵה) (*alep, taw, 'ayin, he*) which is 1475 ($1000 + 400 + 70 + 5$) according to the Contracts, or 1163 CE (Fig. 10). Inscription No. 132705 from the British Museum gives the date of (אֶתְרֵמֶה) (*alep, taw, reš, mem, he*) which is 1333 CE. Inscription No. 6 gives the date of (אֶתְרֵסֶה) (*alep, taw, reš, samek, he*) which is 1665 according to the Contracts, or 1353 CE. Inscription No. 9 gives the date (אֶתְעֵה) (*alep, taw, 'ayin*), 1470 according to the Contracts, or 1158 CE (Fig. 11).

The inscriptions published by Saphir, Ben-Zvi and Subar include a number of names from the same family clan of Halfon, Maḏmûn and Bûndâr, who lived in Aden between the eleventh and thirteenth century (40). Ben-Zvi published an epitaph with a date which was given relative to the Destruction of the Temple: 'From the time the Temple was destroyed and until her death seven hundred and sixty four years passed and her age is seventeen' (Fig. 12) (41).

Common terms and abbreviations used in the inscriptions

Covering the dead with a stone slab and writing an inscription on it with information about the deceased has been a tradition among Jews since



Fig. 11.
Epitaph of Maḏmûn, son of Rav Halfon Bûndâr, from the year 1470 (1158 CE) of the Contracts calendar (photograph by the author, Aden, 2004).



Fig. 12.
Epitaph of Le'â, from the year 764 (834 CE) of the destruction of the Temple (after a photograph published by Y. Ben-Zvi).

the Talmudic Era (42). There are no rules stipulating what the tablet should include. In some epitaphs the details are given in a different order: the date of death, the verb and the name (43). It is thought that the order in which the information is given in the epitaph does not indicate the period in which the epitaph was written. Differences in style and content of epitaphs reflect differences in local cultural traditions and sometimes indicate the origin of the family. The text and the style can provide us with information about the community. From what was emphasised about the quality of the dead we learn about the values of society and how people lived as a collective (44). Furthermore, we find inscriptions with eulogies of different lengths. However, it is still possible to speak of a number of patterns which are common to many inscriptions.

Most of the texts include a verb, giving the date of departure from life, the name of the dead, the name of the father of the deceased and the date of death. There are a few epitaphs (Fig. 6), mentioning not only the father of the dead but also his grandfather (45). In some epitaphs the details are given in a different order: first the date of death, then the verb and the name (46). One inscription by Ben-Zvi, the epitaph of Halfon ben Bûndar (47), was undated. However, information from other sources can be used in dating this inscription. Because this name is mentioned and documented in many fragments in the Cairo Genizah, the epitaph can be placed in the twelfth century.

Very often the verb appears in the first section. It is normally an expression of the departure from life: *ne'ṣap le-bêt 'ôlāmô* or *ne'esēpâ le-bêt 'ôlāmāh* (Figs 4, 5, 8, 13, 14, 17), he or she was gathered to the eternal home or God's world (48). Also attested are the expressions *nip̄tar* or *nip̄terâ*, he or she departed (Figs 9, 12, 24), *naḥat*, she came to rest and *naḥat nap̄šô*, his soul came to rest (Fig. 10) or *tānûḥî*, rest (Figs 15, 16, 18) (49).

Other expressions include *nistallēqâ*, she left or *nithbaqqeš mi-le-ma'lâ*, he was asked from (heaven) above. An expression which very often follows is: *nišddaq dīnô w-yiṣar pō'alô*, His (God's) sentence is right and His deed is correct, or *nilqāḥ mē'al 'amô* or *nilqēḥâ me'al 'amāh*, he or she was taken from her or his nation (Figs 19, 20, 25).

After the statement about departure from life there follows the name of the deceased. Interest-



Fig. 13.

Epitaph of Abraham Hakohen, son of Šelomoh Hakohen, from the year 2020 (1708 CE) of the Contracts calendar (courtesy D. Birnbaum).



Fig. 14.

Epitaph of Ribeqâ, daughter of Yosep, son of Yešû'â, from the year 1830 (1518 CE) of the Contracts calendar (courtesy D. Birnbaum).

ingly, the Hebrew form was mostly used for male names, while the Arabic form was most often used for female names. If the deceased was a woman, then her father's name was given, but not that of her husband (50).

Male names: Ahron (Fig. 4) (51), Abraham (Figs 10, 13, 18) (52), Barḥan, Bûndār (Fig. 10) (53), David (Fig. 8) (54), 'Ezra (55), Ḥoter (56), Halfon (Fig. 11) (57), Ḥanûn, Ḥayyîm (58), Kessar (59), Maḏmûn (Figs 11, 23) (60), Menahem (Figs 21, 25), Mordekay, Moše or Mûsâ (Fig. 16) (61), 'Ôded (62) or Me'odad (Fig. 17, 20) (63), Peraḥ (Fig. 9) (64), Pinḥas (65), Salôm or Salem (Fig. 15) (66), Se'adeyâ or Said



Fig. 15.
Epitaph of Hanun, daughter of the *dayyan* Abraham, from the year 1851 CE (courtesy D. Birnbaum).



Fig. 16.
Epitaph of Ya'aqôḥ (?), son of the taftar Moše bar Haḇa, son of Šelomo, from the year 1792 CE (courtesy D. Birnbaum).

(Fig. 20), Sassôn (67), Šelomoh (Fig. 13), Šemaryâ (68), Šemû'el (69), Šilôh (70), Šim'ôn (71), Tôḥ (72) or Tôbi (Fig. 21), Ya'aqôḥ (Fig. 5) (73), Yašîḇ (74), Yehô'aš (75), Yešû'â (Figs 4, 6, 14) (76), Yehezqel (77), Yisra'el (78), Yišḥaq or Izaak (Fig. 19) (79), Yosep or Jôsep, Zekaryâ (Fig. 22) (80).

Female names: 'Imanâ (81), Baiyṭî (82), Galyâ (83), Gezâ (84), Giyarâ or Gûwarâ or Goharâ (85), Ḥalati (86), Ḥamame (87), Ḥannâ or Hanun (Fig. 15), Ḥasînâ (88), Ḥasya (Fig. 5), Hoglâ (Numbers 26:33) (89), Kedayâ, Le'â (Fig. 12), Lûlû or Lûlwe (90), Malkâ or Malûk (91), Maštâ' (Fig. 8) or Maštah (92), Mazal, Melaḥi (93), Miryam (Fig. 10) (94), Qazal (95), Raḥel, Ra'yâ (96), Riḇeqâ (Fig. 14), Sarâ (97), Sarîr, Sarûr or Surûr (Fig. 17) (98), Sipôrâ, Sedaqâ.

The terms for describing the Place of Rest are: *qeber*, the tomb, or *bêt 'olām*, the eternal place

(Fig. 23) (99). After the place of rest follow the expressions: *ḥelqô 'im ṣaddîqîm wa-ḥasîdîm*, with the righteous and the pious is his portion (Figs 10, 11, 18, 23, 24), or *miškabô 'im ṣaddîqîm*, he is resting with the righteous. This appears also in abbreviation (נצח) ('*ayin, ṣade, waw, het*) (100). Other terms include *be-Gān 'Ēden 'im ṣaddîqê 'El*, in the Garden of Eden (paradise) with the righteous, and *nišmatô 'Ēden Gān*, may his soul be in paradise, or the abbreviation (נצח) (*nun, 'ayin, gimel*), his soul in the Garden of Eden (Figs 4, 5, 6, 12, 15, 17, 20). A variant of the same expression is *be-'Ēden Gān Elôhîm*. Eden means garden of God (Ezekiel 28:13) (101). The expression: (עפר) '*afar*, dust (To dust you shall return, Genesis 3:19) is very rare (Fig. 18).

Words were often chosen from the Bible or the Talmud for describing the personal qualities of the



Fig. 17.
Epitaph of Sarûr, daughter of 'Ôded, son of Sahali, from the year 1804 CE (courtesy D. Birnbaum).

deceased. Men or women are often described as humble, pious, honourable or God-fearing, e.g. *ha-'iš ha-tôb* *he-ḥasîd ha-yēre'* *šamayîm*, the good man, the pious, the God-fearing (Genesis 17:6) (102). In addition to these common expressions other words are used, such as *šaddîq be-kol mā'asayw*, pious in all his deeds. And *ha-zaqen*, the aged man or *ha-yāšar*, the righteous or *he-'aṇāw*, the humble (Numbers 13:3), or *ha-nāḥôn*, the reasonable man, *he ḥākām*, the wise man, *ha-me'ûššar*, the happy one, and also *ha-meḥkûbād* or *ha-nikḥad*, the respectful man and *ha-meḥlūmmād*, the learned man (Figs 4, 5, 8, 15-17, 20-21) (103).

In an epitaph for a woman, her father rather than her husband is mentioned (104): *ha-'iššâ ha-yēšarâ û-šenû'â ha-šaddeqet*, the humble, the pious woman, or *ha-'iššâ ha-kēšerâ*, *ha-ḥašurwa*, *ha-šadeqqet*, *ha-ṭēhôrâ*,



Fig. 18.
Epitaph of ?, daughter of Se'adeyâ, son of Abraham, from the year 1332 CE (BM 132706, by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum).

ha-tāmmâ, the perfect woman, the pure one (Figs 5, 8, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21, 25).

The social status of the dead is also mentioned. If he was a prominent individual a few characteristic notes on him or his title were mentioned: *negîdênû*, our chieftain (as in Fig. 23) (105), or if he belonged to the *kôhanîm*, the priestly families (Figs 13, 14). Sometimes the profession of the dead is also mentioned, e.g. *ha-dayyan*, the judge, *ha-taptar* and *ha-sôper*, the scribe (Fig. 15, 16) (106).

The date of his or her departure from life was usually indicated after the place of rest: the day of the week, the week of the month and the year, for instance, Thursday night, the 6th of *Marḥeswan*, the year (טפן) (*taw, pe, dalet*), 1484 CE (107). If the deceased person passed away on a Saturday, the weekly portion of the Torah was written. If the person passed away on a Friday evening the day of



Fig. 19.
Epitaph of Yiṣḥaq, son of (?), son of Yiṣḥaq, from the year 1853 CE (courtesy D. Birnbaum).



Fig. 20.
Epitaph of Hannâ, daughter of Me'odad, son of Sa'id, from the year 1959 CE (courtesy D. Birnbaum).



Fig. 21.
Epitaph of Sedaqâ, daughter of Menahem, son of Tòb, from the year 1833 CE (courtesy D. Birnbaum).



Fig. 22.
Epitaph of Zekaryâ, son of David, from the year ? CE (BM 47-4-23-1, by kind permission of the Trustees of the British Museum).

death was indicated as *'ereḥ šabbat*. The age of the deceased is very rarely mentioned in the epitaphs (Fig. 24) (108).

In a few epitaphs there are three words or their abbreviation (three letters) in the first line: *barûk dayyan 'emet*, BDH (*bêt, dalet, he*), blessed be the true Judge (109). Another expression is: *ha-sûr tamîm po'alô*, or HTP (*he, taw, pe*), Sur is a synonym for God. When both appeared, the first row BDH (in abbreviation) often appeared first. Other abbreviations would be placed near the name of the deceased



Fig. 23.
Epitaph of *negidenû*, son of Maḏmûn, from the year 1470 (1159 CE) of the Contracts calendar (with thanks to Merilyn Hywel-Jones for the photograph, taken in the courtyard of the Aden Museum, and for permission to publish it).

while some appeared at the beginning of the inscription, and some at the end: RYT (*reš, yod, taw*) (110) and TMK (*taw, mem, kap*) (Figs 4-6, 8, 11, 15, 19, 21) (111).

Another group of abbreviations included ZL (*zayin, lamed*), *zakûr la-tôh* and *zikrôn li-berakâ*, he will be remembered well, or his memory will be blessed (Psalms 11:6; Proverbs 10:7) (112), and ZLT (*zayin, lamed, taw*), *zikrô li-teḥiyyâ*, his memory will stay alive (113). Other abbreviations used are ZSL (*zayin, šade, lamed*) (114), and ZQL (*zayin, qop, lamed*), *zeḳer qaddôš li-berakâ*, the holy will be blessed in memory (Figs 6, 17, 21) (115). The expression KGQ (*kap, gimel, qop*), *Qēbôd Gēdûllat Qedûšatô*, the Honour of the Great Holiness, also of His Mighty Holiness (Psalms 145:3; 1 Chronicles 17:19, 29:11) appeared in the twelfth-century inscriptions (116).

Two standard closing expressions, either a sentence or a contraction, appear in the last line: (תנצור) *tišmor*



Fig. 24.
Epitaph of Sa'el (?), from the year 1489 (1177 CE) of the Contracts calendar (photograph by the author, Aden, 2004).

(*taw, nun, šade, bêt, he*), *tēhe nišmâtô* or *tēhî nišmātāh šerûrâ bi-šerôr ha-ḥayyîm*, may his soul be bound up in the bundle of (everlasting) life (1 Samuel 25:29) (117), which may also be interpreted as, may the spirit of the Lord place him with the living ones. Sometimes this expression appears together with: (עצו) *'im šaddîqîm va-ḥasîdîm*, with the righteous and the pious (Figs 11, 15, 23, 24) (118).

Conclusions

Approximately 200 Hebrew epitaphs have been discovered in Aden during the last 150 years and some of these have been studied by more than one scholar. Approximately seventy epitaphs predate the nineteenth century.



Fig. 25.
Epitaph of Le'a, daughter of Yiṣḥaq, son of Selomoh, from the year 1845 CE (courtesy D. Birnbaum).

The inconsistencies in the structure of the texts and the dating systems used has been a source of confusion. In a few inscriptions documented by Saphir, Ben-Zvi, Yavne'elli and Mori Salem the word *li-šetārôt* was attached to the date. Surprisingly, inscriptions in which the dates consist of more than two letters do not contain the word *li-šetārôt*. There are also different versions of the same expression. In a few inscriptions the expressions are given in full, while in the others they are in a contracted form. If the dates are interpreted as they are written, then some of the inscriptions may be nearly two thousand years old. However, if we accept the hypothesis that letters, indicating thousands or hundreds, were omitted, then the age of the epitaphs is reduced dramatically. Adding one thousand or two thousand years to the given date puts the age of the epitaphs to between the eighth and the eighteenth centuries CE. One inscription

does not fit into this pattern: this is the one in which the date is given according to the destruction of the Temples. The person mentioned in that inscription died in the ninth century CE.

Sometimes information from other sources is helpful for determining the age of certain inscriptions. Inscription No. 9 in Ben-Zvi's publication gives no date but it carries the family name, which is known to us from the Genizah archive. The names Halfon, Maḏmûn and Bûndâr are documented in many fragments and can be dated to the twelfth or thirteenth century. Hence, Birnbaum dated the epitaph from the 29th year of the Contracts Calendar (British Museum No. 132702) to the eighteenth century. The available historical evidence at this point is not sufficient to ascertain the relationship of the woman Mašta' with the family which lived in the seventeenth century in Yemen.

The suggestion that certain expressions, abbreviations and elegies were not in use before the tenth and the thirteenth centuries may also be debated, as European traditions may not provide an accurate timescale for the customs of oriental Jewry, which is known to have preserved ancient Jewish rites and traditions directly from Palestine and Babylon. As shown by Saphir and Harkavy, some of the same abbreviations and expressions used in the Aden inscriptions are attested in Talmudic times.

The data currently available do not allow us to accept the letter omission theory. Today, after almost 150 years of debate, scholars continue to disagree on how to date the inscriptions. Any decision on whether the letters for thousands or hundreds were omitted will be inconclusive and arbitrary and will lead to inconsistencies. Neither one nor two thousand, if assumed to have been omitted for the thousands, offers a uniform solution suitable to all dates and conforming with all the other facts. Further research with modern methods may solve the problem of the age of the Hebrew epitaphs from Aden, and the conclusion Birnbaum drew from his analysis will probably be the subject of renewed debate.

Studying inscriptions on tombstones may help us to improve our knowledge of the history of the country of the deceased. The Hebrew epitaphs from Aden provide precious historical evidence and unique confirmation of the Jewish contribution to the history and culture of southern Arabia through the ages.

References

1. This is the common grave of the eighty-seven Jews who were killed in the pogrom between 2nd and 5th December 1947, on which see Ahroni R. *The Jews of Aden – A community that was*. Tel Aviv: Afikim, 1991: Chapter 13 (in Hebrew); Tobi J. *West of Aden*. Natanya: Association for Society and Culture, 1994: 98–109.
2. This name is used for the place for the dead (Talmud Yerushalmi, Beraḳot 18a). According to Zunz this symbolised the honour beyond life which the living give to the dead who are destined to stay (in memory) near their relatives, see Zunz L. *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*, 2nd ed. Hildesheim: Olms, 1976: 318.
3. The Jews of Yemen pronounced it 'ha-mē'ōroh'. It is known that in the past the Jews buried their dead in caves, but they continued to use the word *me'arā* to mean cemetery in later times, when they buried their dead in open graveyards. Abraham Tabib describes his childhood experience in the late nineteenth century when he discovered many skeletons wrapped in Torah scrolls in a deep cave near Sa'da. See Tabib A. *The Diaspora of Yemen*. Tel Aviv: Omanut, 28: 1931: 17 (in Hebrew); cf. Saphir-Halevi J. Beit 'Eden. *Ha-Libanon* 3/4: 1866: 62 (in Hebrew; the title was written *Ha-Libanon*, even though *Ha-Lebanon* is correct) and Saphir J. *Eben Saphir*, II/2. Lyck: Mekitzei Nirdamim, 1866: 9. The names Saphir-Halevi and Saphir refer to the same person. He published in the newspaper under the name Saphir-Halevi, and in the revised account which was published in two volumes his name appears as Saphir.
4. This family enjoyed special status under British administration. They were the main suppliers of food and water to the British army. Members of this family served as heads of the Jewish community throughout the entire period of British rule. Permission to continue using the cemetery was considered confirmation of the family's title to the land, as we see in the Memorandum from 1934 (Fig. 3) signed by Sir Keith Stewart, IO, vol. R/20, Minutes 305, slip no. 7; see also in IO, vol. 1417, slip 1, file 63/3, slip M; cf. Saphir-Halevi, Beit 'Eden 1: 45; Almaliyah A. A journey of Yom-Tov Semach to Yemen (1911). In: Yesha'yahu & Zadok, eds. *Sebut Teman*. Tel Aviv: Mi-Teman le-Zion, 1945: 294 (in Hebrew); Mahalal-Ha'adani R. *Between Aden and Yemen*. Tel Aviv: 'Am 'Oved, 1947: 261 (in Hebrew); Klein-Franke A. The Jews of 'Aden in the 19th century. *Pe'amim*: 1981: 54 (in Hebrew); Ahroni, *The Jews of Aden*: 67, 87; Tobi, *West of Aden*: 59; Goldsmith D & Messa U. *Aden – A profile of a Jewish community, 1839–1967*. Tel Aviv: Catalogue of the exhibition in the synagogue 'Qol Yehudah', 1995: 26 (in Hebrew).
5. The material on the Ma'alā cemetery was collected during my fieldwork in Yemen between 1997 and 2001. The Ma'alā cemetery and the Hebrew epitaphs will be presented in detail in another paper. On the Jews of Aden under early British rule, see Playfair RL. *A history of Arabia Felix or Yemen*. Bombay-St. Leonards: Ad-Orientem, 1859: 159, 164; Bräunlich E. *The well in ancient Arabia*. Leipzig: Asia Major, 1926: 34; Agronsky G. *Notes on a visit to Aden on behalf of the immigration department of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, March 1929–April 1930*. Jerusalem: Central Zionist Archive, S 6/5409; Almaliyah, A journey: 294; Yavne'elli Sh. Notes on the account of Yom-Tov Sémach to Yemen. In: Yesha'yahu & Zadok, eds. *Sebut Teman*: 318 (in Hebrew) and Yarne'elli Sh. *A journey to Yemen*. Tel Aviv: 'Ayanot, 1963: 77 (in Hebrew); Mahalal-Ha'adani, *Between Aden and Yemen*: 13, 16, 432; Hickenbotham T. *Aden*. London: Constable, 1958: 62; Hunter FM. *An account of the British settlement of Aden in Arabia*. London: Cass, 1968: 45; Waterfield G. *The Sultan of Aden*. London: Murray, 1968: 80; Schechtman JB. The Jews of Aden. In: Tobi Y, ed. *Yehudei Teman ba-'Et ha-Hadashah*. Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1974: 217 (in Hebrew) (originally published in *JSS* 13: 1955); Gavin RJ. *Aden under British rule (1939–1967)*. London: Hurst, 1975: 60; Tobi Y. *The Jews of Yemen in the 19th Century*. Tel Aviv: Afikim, 1979: 300 (in Hebrew); Abir M. International commerce and the Yemenite Jewry 15th–19th Centuries. *Pe'amim* 5: 1980: 26 (in Hebrew); Klein-Franke, *The Jews*: 43–44; Ahroni, *The Jews of Aden*: 67; Meisner R. Note on a journey. In: Tobi Y, ed. Mahalal-Ha'adani, *Between Aden and Yemen*, 3. Kiryat Ono: Afikim, 1991: 430.
6. Levy MA. Jüdische Grabsteine aus Aden. *ZDMG* 21: 1867: 156; Osiander E. Zur himjarischen Sprach- und Altertumskunde (Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. MA. Levy). *ZDMG* 19–20: Saphir, *Eben Saphir* 1/2: 11. The seven Hebrew epitaphs from Aden at the British Museum were presented at different times by different people. Four were presented in 1847 by H. Hopley White. Two more were presented in 1886 by Thomas Hordsworth Newman. The seventh inscription (which mentions the woman Mastā', with the date as year 29 of the Contracts Calendar, BM card No. 132702) was discussed and published in the British Museum Guide of 1890: 96, 98 and in the Guide of 1908: 31. The slabs were also published by Chwolson and by Haibi, who also published three photographs from the British Museum collection. See Chwolson D. *Corpus Inscriptionum Hebraicarum*, 2nd ed. Hildesheim: Olms, 1974: 131; Levy, Jüdische Grabsteine: 156; Haibi A. *The Jews of Arabia and Islam*. Jerusalem: Sha'er, 1992: 30, 35–39 (in Hebrew). I would like to thank Dr. Julian Reade and Mrs. Sarah Collins of the Department of the Ancient Near East at the British Museum who were very helpful to me when studying the files and who gave me permission to photograph the epitaphs. I would also like to thank Mrs. M. Hewlet-Jones who helped me locate the Jewish cemetery in the 'Crater' and provided me with recent photographs of tombstones; my thanks also to Anya Ackerman who assisted me in my research in Yemen and London.

TOMBSTONES BEARING HEBREW INSCRIPTIONS IN ADEN

7. At that time the relationship between the British Government and the local tribes was unstable. Fresh water and vegetable supply depended on the co-operation of the sultan of Lahej. To free themselves from the dependency on these unreliable relationships, the British decided in 1846 to clean and repair the ancient water reservoir, called 'Tanks'. The security that the British provided and the fresh supply of food and water encouraged merchants from the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean to establish agencies in Aden, and the port turned into a flourishing harbour. See Playfair, *A history*: 6, 8; Hunter, *An account*: 129; Saphir, *Eben Saphir*, I: 8; Schechtman, *The Jews of Aden*: 217; Ha'adani, *Between Aden and Yemen*, I: 432; Abir M. Jewish communities in the Arabian Peninsula between the end of the 18th and the middle of the 19th centuries. *Sefunoth* 10: 1966: 639; Gavin, *Aden under British rule*: 60; Klein-Franke, *The Jews*: 44, 55.
8. The narrow natural pass through a canyon connected the city to the seaside and the port. The police used to check people and vehicles moving from the port to the city and guards observed the traffic from the bridge over the pass. Today this pass no longer exists. The bridge was demolished and the narrow pass was enlarged for the construction of a multilane motorway.
9. Neither near the 'Tanks' nor the 'Pass' had the Jews of Aden heard of any Jewish settlement in the area. However, according to local legend, there were Jewish settlements on the tops of the surrounding hills and cliffs. Those settlements were probably dismantled during the first Ottoman occupation (1515–1638). See Sasson DS. The history of the Jews in Yemen. *Ha-Sopeh le-Hokmat Yisrael (Quartalis Hebraica)* 15: 1931: 5–6 (in Hebrew); Ha'adani, *Between Aden and Yemen*, I: 89; Kafih J. The San'a' Community in Yemen. *Mahanayim* 119: 1968: 38 (in Hebrew; both Kafih and Qafih were used in the translations of the author's work); Tabib, *The Diaspora*: 3; Qorah 'A. *A Storm of Yemen*. Jerusalem: Greidi, 1954: 3 (in Hebrew); Tobi Y. *Studies in the Scroll of Yemen*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1986: 27, 34, 64–65.
10. As Goitein called it. See Goitein SD. Yemenite Jewry and the Jewish India trade. In: Yesha'yahu Y & Tobi Y, eds. *Yahadut Teman*. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1976: 60 (in Hebrew). Cf. Goitein SD. The age of the Hebrew tombstones from Aden. *JSS* 7: 1962: 83; Saphir-Halevi, *Beit 'Eden* 3/4: 63 and Saphir, *Eben Saphir* 10; Qorah, *A Storm*: 93 More on the subject also by Mahler E. *Handbuch der jüdischen Chronologie* (2nd ed.). Hildesheim: Olms, 1967: 159.
11. The term 'Contracts' for dating was not in use in the beginning of the Seleucid Era. It was in use in the Greek calendar and was called *le-minnyan ha-Yyewanim*. In Jewish history the beginning of this calendar is related to the beginning of the joint rule of the High Priest and King Shimon the Hasmonian. This date is also related to the year in which Alexander the Great entered Jerusalem. The month of *Tisre* was originally the seventh month of the year, while the month of *Nissan* was the first month (Exodus 12, Nehemiah 8). See Saphir-Halevi, *Beit 'Eden* 3/8: 124; Saphir J. *Eben Saphir* II/2. Magenza (Mainz): Mekitzei Nirdamim, 1874: 22–27 (in Hebrew); Goitein, *The Age*: 83; Wright W, ed. *Facsimiles of Manuscripts and Inscriptions*. London: Clowes, 1875–1883: XXIX. On the custom of using numbers instead of names for indicating the month of the year, see Händler GH. Lexikon der Abbraviaturen. In: Dahlman GH. ed. *Aramäisch-Neu Hebräischen Wörterbuch: Targum, Talmud u. Midrasch*. Frankfurt/M: Kauffmann, 1901: 3; Levy J. *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midrashim* (2nd ed.), 4 vols. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1963. On the history of the development of the Jewish calendar, see Mahler, *Handbuch*: 137–149, 195, 402 and his article *Kalender in the Jüdisches Lexikon* 1929: 554, 558–561; Basnizki L. *Der jüdische Kalender, Entstehung und Aufbau*. Königstein: Jüdische Verlag-Athenäum, 1986. The date of death was very important because the deceased was remembered by his relatives each year on that day. Among European Jewry it is known as 'Yorzeit'. See Muneles O, ed. *Epitaphs from the Ancient Jewish cemetery of Prague* (2nd ed.). Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1988: 25.
12. The regulation which was published by Rabbi Shrirah Gaon and later repeated by David Ben-Zimra (in Egypt) in the sixteenth century, stipulating that the Calendar of Creation should be used instead of the Calendar of the Contracts, was known to be effective only in Egypt. Cf. Mahler, *Handbuch*: 155. According to Saphir, by the time of his arrival to Aden (1859), the Jews had been using the calendar of the Common Era for approximately 200 years. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 9–10; Chajes HP. *Jüdische und jüdisch-indische Grabinschriften aus Aden*. Vienna: Sitzungsberichte der Philosophisch-Historischen Klasse der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 147/3: 1903–1904: 15; Goitein, *The age*: 81–84; Ben-Zvi I. Sepulchral Tablets from the Cemetery of Aden. In: Shazar Z & Benayahu M, eds. *Mehqarim u-Meqorot—Studies and Documents*. Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1966: 416.
13. Yemeni Jews used to mention in their prayers each year on the 9th of the month of *Ab* the date of the destruction of the Temples of Judea. In 2004 the prayer was as follows: 'we remember today the day of the destruction of the Temple, which our leader Ezra had built one thousand nine hundred and thirty four years ago, and to the First Temple and the expulsion we count here today two thousand five hundred and ninety years.' Sasson DS. The Scroll of Yemen. *Ha-Sopeh le-Hokmat Yisrael (Quartalis Hebraica)*: 7: 1923: 1 (in Hebrew); Qorah, *A Storm*: 3; Chajes, *Jüdische* 21–23. The use of the destruction of the Temple in dates on epitaphs was also discovered at Beith Še'arim. See Naveh J. *On Sherd and Papyrus: Aramaic and Hebrew inscriptions from the Second Temple, Mishnaic and Talmudic Periods*. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992: 204–205 (in Hebrew) and in Brindisi, see Chwolson, *Corpus*: 119, 163, 176, 267, and Bernheimer C. *Paleografia Ebraica*.

- Florence: Olshki, 1924: 157; Mahler, *Handbuch*, 152–158; Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 24; Kafih J. *Jewish life in Sanaa*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1961: 45.
14. Mahler, *Handbuch*: 159.
15. While waiting in Aden for a ship to take him to India, he surveyed the city and travelled to the interior of Yemen. His description of the life of the Jewish communities was a real revelation for many in the Jewish world. He published the account of his journey in a series of articles in the Hebrew newspaper *Ha-Libanon* and subsequently in a two-volume book in which he also included Hebrew inscriptions from tombstones he had examined in Aden. See Saphir, *Eben Saphir* I/2: 88–89 and II/2: Kafih J. The contacts of the Jews of Yemen with Jewish Centers. In: Yesha'yahu & Tobi, eds. *Yahadut Teman*: 6, 27, 57; Tobi, *Studies*: 27, 57.
16. The Jews of Aden themselves also used to say that the ancient slabs in the caves are proof of their early settlements in Aden. See Saphir-Halevi, Beit 'Eden 3/7: 109. The earliest proof of the presence of the Jews in southern Arabia that is known today is the third-century Jewish tombs from Himyar, which were discovered in 1936 in a cave in Beit Še'arim. See Hirschberg HZ. The Himyarite Tombs in Bet-Še'arim. *Yedi'ot*: 11: 1–4 and *Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society*. Jerusalem: 1943–1945: 25, 31 (in Hebrew); Hirschberg HZ. *Israel in Arabia*. Tel Aviv, 1946: 53–57 (in Hebrew) and also Hirschberg HZ. The Jewish Kingdom of Himyar (Yemen). In: Yesha'yahu & Tobi, eds. *Yahadut Teman*. 19–27; Mahalal-Ha'adani *Between Aden and Yemen*: 89; Ahroni, *The Jews of Aden*: 18; Naveh, *On Sherd*: 33.
17. Ahroni, *The Jews of Aden*: 20, 31; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414, inscription 12; Goitein, *Yemenite Jewry*: 56.
18. Saphir, who examined the fragments, published his discovery in the newspaper *Ha-Libanon* in 1866. Members of this clan occupied important positions in the Aden administration and occupied the office of the head of the Jewish community as well. They were nominated to be Yemeni representatives to the Babylonian academies and were granted the title of *naggid*. See Saphir, *Eben Saphir* I/2: 9–10; Ben-Zvi I. Hidden in the sand—Tombstones from Persia and Aden. *Tarbiz*: 1950: 199, inscriptions 9, 10 (in Hebrew); Baron SW. *A social and religious history of the Jews*, vol. 5 (2nd ed.). New York: Columbia University, 1965: 51. The role of the Jewish community and the family clan of Būndār, Halfon and Madmūn in the flourishing Aden economy between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries is well attested in many documents discovered in the Ibn Ezra synagogue in Fustat, old Cairo. According to Goitein, the name Būndār is Persian and the origin of this family may be Persia rather than Yemen. According to Goitein, over 350 fragments from the Cairo Genizah deal with the trade with Yemen and India and c.1000 Yemenis are mentioned. See Goitein SD. *Letters of Medieval Jewish Traders*. Princeton: University Press, 1973: 47, 56, 58 and Goitein, *Yemenite Jewry*. 55. Goitein brilliantly illuminated this period of Jewish history in his six-volume work, *A Mediterranean society: The Jewish communities of the Arab world as portrayed in the documents of the Cairo Geniza*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1967–1993. See also Kafih, *The contacts*: 34; Ahroni, *The Jews of Aden*: 25; Cohen M & Stillman Y. The Cairo Geniza and the Custom of the Geniza among Oriental Jewry – An Historical and Ethnographic Study. *Pe'amim*: 1985: 3 (in Hebrew); Beit-Arye M. The Contribution of the Genizah in Fustat to the Hebrew Palaeography. *Pe'amim*: 1990: 34 (in Hebrew); Reif SC. *The Jewish Archive from Old Cairo. The History of Cambridge University's Genizah Collection*. Richmond: Curzon, 2000: 9, 183; Reif SC. *The Cambridge Genizah Collections, Their Contents and Significance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Library Geniza Series, 1: 2002. A family who hired ground in a cemetery is mentioned also in Salonica. See Emmanuel IS. *Precious Stones of the Jews of Salonica*, I-II. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute and the Hebrew University, 1993: 15; Subar E. Medieval Jewish Tombstones from Aden. *Jewish Quarterly Review* 49 (New Series): 1958–1959: 305, inscription 5.
19. Müller gave his material on the epitaphs from Aden to Chajes for publication. See Chajes, *Jüdische*: 4. For more on his mission see Janata A. Österreichischer in Jemen, Personen und Aktionen. In: Janata A, ed. *Im Land der Königin von Saba*. Vienna: Museum für Völkerkunde, 1989: 33.
20. The purpose of his journey was to visit the Yemeni Jews in the refugee camp in Hashed, 15 miles north of Aden. He spent four days in Aden. Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 200.
21. The photographs were taken by Dr. Jacob Finkerfeld, who accompanied Ben-Zvi on his journey to Aden. From his Notebook in Ginzak ha-Medinah (the archive of the State of Israel), file 1898, 4/pe. See also Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 198–201 and Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 411. Other photographs of epitaphs from Aden were published by Haibi and in the catalogue of Goldsmith & Messa. See Haibi, *The Jewry*: 35–39; Goldsmith & Messa, *Aden*: 3. Dani Goldsmith mentioned to me that there are many photographs of Hebrew epitaphs by the Jews of Aden.
22. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 301. Father Jamme was in Aden as a member of the archaeological expedition to Aden and Yemen headed by Wendell Phillips, which excavated at Marib and in Wadi Baihan.
23. Montgomery JA. *Arabia and the Bible*, 2nd ed. New York: Ktav Publications, 1969: 105; Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/9; Goitein, *The age*: 83; Schechtman, *The Jews*: 216.
24. Dahlman, *Aramäisch-Neu Hebräisches Wörterbuch*: 4. Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 24–25.
25. According to Chwolson, *Corpus*: 131, Dr. Samuel Birch, Keeper of the British Museum, asked Halévy to examine the four Hebrew epitaphs from Yemen.
26. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* I/2: 163; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 4; Chwolson, *Corpus*: 131.
27. Saphir-Halevi, Beit 'Eden 3/4: 63–64, 3/6: 90, and 7/8: 122–123. See also Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 159; Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 323, 345; Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 199; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 306.

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- Chwolson summarised the various theories and opinions on the age of the epitaphs, see Chwolson, *Corpus*: 125–127. On Chwolson, see Slutsky Y & Nemoy L. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 5: 1971: 558.
28. Harkavy A. *Altjüdische Denkmäler aus dem Krim mitgeteilt von Abraham Firkowitsch (1839–1872) und geprüft von Albert Harkavy*. Vaduz-Lichtenstein: Sändig Verlag (reprint of the 1876 ed.), 1991: 136; Händler, *Lexikon*: 99, 111.
 29. The month *Tisre* as the first instead of the seventh month. Rabbinical expressions and abbreviations appeared in the texts of epitaphs from the twelfth century, Meisel J. *Krim. Jüdisches Lexikon* 3 (2nd ed.): 1929: 899–901; Niv D. Aden. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 1: 1971: 260–264; Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2:9; Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 320–332, 345, 355, 394; Naveh, *On Sherd*: 200; Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 198; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 304; Chwolson, *Corpus*: 126, 127; Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 159.
 30. Muneles, *Epitaphs*: I:30.
 31. Rabbi M. Halevi In: *Ha-Libanon* 3/3: 1866: 90; Saphir-Halevi, *Beit 'Eden* 3/4: 63–64, 6: 90 and 8: 122–123.
 32. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414–415.
 33. Birnbaum studied the seven epitaphs in the British Museum and obtained fifty-five photographs from J. J. Gunn, Director of the Antiquities Department of the Government of Aden. I owe many thanks to the Birnbaum family and especially to the director of the Birnbaum archive, Mr. David Birnbaum, for providing me with copies of the photographs and allowing me to use them for my publications.
 34. Saphir-Halevi, *Beit 'Eden* 3/7: 110; Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 159; Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 199, inscription no. 6; and Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 411; Birnbaum SA. *The Hebrew Script*. Leiden: Brill, 1971: 249–251.
 35. Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*: 246. Levy was also convinced of the contracted letters in the date. He mentioned F.W. Madden as the father of this idea. Madden examined the slabs from Aden in the British Museum and was the first to suggest the possibility of contracted letters in the dates. See Madden FW. *History of Jewish coinage and of money in the Old and New Testament*. London: Quaritch, 1864: 318. According to Levy, Madden also mentioned in his book that the scripts on the slabs resembled the letters on ceramic bowls from Babylon. See Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 156, 157. The Yemeni Hebrew script is slightly different from other styles, especially the letters 'alep, dalet, he, het, lamed, qop and sin. Saphir-Halevi, *Beit 'Eden* 7: 110; Qorah *A Storm*: 93; Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 198. See also Ratzabi I. The Unique Letters in the Torah Manuscripts from Yemen. In: *Levi-Naḥum Y. Selective Literatures from Yemen*. Holon: Mi'āl Hasifat Ginzei Teman, 1981: 160–167 (in Hebrew).
 36. Yavne'elli reported to Ben-Zvi that, when visiting the ancient cemetery, he did not copy the inscriptions discussed by Saphir, but he recorded the dates of the epitaphs that Saphir had copied, described their locations and noted their positions in relation to the inscriptions copied by Saphir. He added that some of the slabs, although standing close to each other, were dated many years apart, with dates stretching over centuries. Yavne'elli also told Ben-Zvi that the cemetery had been looked after by the family of the president of the Jewish community, Menahem Messa, see Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414–415.
 37. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417, inscription No. 27. Mori Salem, a former Aden resident, handed over the photographs to the archaeologist Prof. Yevin, who forwarded them to Ben-Zvi for publication. For another example from the year 1881 of changing the location of the letters of the date from *taw, reš, mem, bêt*, to *bêt, taw, mem, reš*, see Nini Y. *Yemen and Zion—The Jews of Yemen 1800–1900*. Jerusalem: Hassifriyah ha-Zionit, 1982: 180 (in Hebrew).
 38. Since the discovery of the tombstone in Beit Še'arim in 1936–1937 in which the Jew 'Menahem from Ḥimyar' is mentioned, there is no doubt that Jews lived in southern Arabia in the third century. Ben-Zvi himself was also convinced that Jewish settlement in Yemen began before the fifth century BC, but he rejected the idea that the inscriptions on the tombstones from Aden could have belonged to an earlier period. See Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417–418; Schechtman, *The Jews*: 216; Hirschberg, *The Ḥimyarite Tombs*: 1–4; Hirschberg, *The Jewish Kingdom*: 22. On Beit al-Ashwal, see Goitein SD. *Bi-Lingual Inscription in Hebrew and Sabaic*. *Tarbiz* 41: 1972: 151; Naveh, *On Sherd*: 200. Dawn W, *James – 300 Jahre Kunst und Kultur des glücklichen Arabiens*. Innsbruck and Frankfurt/M., 1987: 227.
 39. Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 198–199 and Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417–418.
 40. Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 199; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 305, inscriptions I–VII; Goitein, *Yemenite Jewry*: 55. The text in the epitaphs resembled the biblical style. See Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 38.
 41. The date refers to the second Temple, which was destroyed in 70 CE. This means that the girl passed away in 834 CE. See Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417. This is the oldest Hebrew epitaph with full date discovered in Aden, whereas in Europe, the earliest Hebrew epitaph is from the sixth century. See Chwolson, *Corpus*: 267; Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 24.
 42. Chwolson, *Corpus*: 39, 131; Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 367; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 5; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*: 249.
 43. Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 37.
 44. Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*: 250; Baron SW. *A social and religious history of the Jews*, vol. 18. New York: Columbia University, 1983; Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 21, 23; Brocke M. *Der Alte jüdische Friedhof zu Frankfurt am Main. Unbekannte Denkmäler und Inschriften*. Neue Börneplatz. Frankfurt am Main: Jan Thorbecke, 1996: 60.
 45. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 12–17, inscriptions A4–A16. In Birnbaum's list there are twenty-two inscriptions from the period between 1517 and 1859 using the Contracts Calendar, in which three generations are mentioned. See Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*: 250. Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 23; Hüttenmeister

- FG. *Abkürzungsverzeichnis Hebräischer Grabinschriften*. Frankfurt am Main: Gesellschaft zur Förderung Judaistischer Studien in Frankfurt am Main, 1996: 77.
46. Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 198–199, inscriptions 4, 5, 9.
 47. Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 199.
 48. 2 Kings: 22. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II: 9–10, inscriptions Nos. 2–8, 10; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 11–15 inscriptions Nos A-1, A-2, A-3, A-4, A-5, A-9, A-14 and No. B-6; British Museum inscription No. 132702; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*, inscriptions Nos 1–4, 10–20, 22–27, 411–420; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 306–308, inscription Nos IX, XI, XII, XIII; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*: 249 and see Birnbaum's list, inscriptions Nos. 81, 3927, 3930–3933, 3935, 3936, 3939, 3940, 3943; Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 231, 331, 442.
 49. The word is an Aramaic form. The Hebrew form would be *naḥa*. Such a formula is found on the slabs Nos 132703, 132705 and 13706 in the British Museum; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412–413, inscriptions Nos 4, 5, 7; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 303–304, inscriptions Nos II, IV, VI, XI and XIII; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*: 249. See also inscription No. 22 in Birnbaum's list. Chwolson, *Corpus*: 182, drew our attention to a slab with this formula for a woman from Worms from the eleventh century. See also Bernheimer: *Paleografia*: 155.
 50. Saphir-Halevi, *Beit 'Eden* 7/8: 123; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 11, 13 16–17, 19, inscriptions Nos A-1, A-3, A-9, A-10, A-13, A-15, B-1, B-6; Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 319.
 51. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417, inscription 26; Ahroni: 21, photograph from the archive of Yehuda Levi-Nahum.
 52. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscriptions 7, 9; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412–415, inscriptions 2–4, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17.
 53. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412, inscription 4; British Museum, slab No. 132706.
 54. British Museum, slab Nos 47-4-23-1 and 132702 (63-2-24-2); Chajes, *Jüdische*: 11, inscription A-1.
 55. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 416, inscription 23.
 56. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 8, inscription A-10.
 57. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 305–306, inscriptions IV, V, VII.
 58. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417, inscription 27.
 59. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417, inscription 27.
 60. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 304–306, inscriptions II, IV–VII; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414, inscription 9.
 61. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscriptions 5, 8; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 307–308, inscriptions XI, XII; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412, inscription 1. Mussa is the Arabic form of Moses.
 62. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 15–16, inscription A-11.
 63. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414, inscription 12; Goldsmith & Messa, *Aden*: 7.
 64. British Museum, Slab No. 132703; Chwolson, *Corpus*: 129.
 65. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412, inscription 1.
 66. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscription 1.
 67. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 9, inscription 9.
 68. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414, inscription 12.
 69. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 11, inscription B-6.
 70. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscriptions 6, 10; Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 160.
 71. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 415–416, inscriptions 14, 24.
 72. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 8, inscription A-14.
 73. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 415, inscription 13.
 74. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscriptions 2, 6, 9; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 416, inscription 20.
 75. British Museum slab no. 132703; Chwolson, *Corpus*: 129.
 76. The Jews of Aden avoided pronouncing names bearing the two letters representing the name of God: the *Yod* and the *He*. To avoid using these letters when they are placed next to each other, it was common to say Yešû'â instead of Yehošû'â. This name was popular among the Jews of Aden until the middle of the twentieth century. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscription 9; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417, inscription 26; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 305, inscription VI.
 77. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 11, inscription B-1, B-5.
 78. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417, inscription 25.
 79. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscriptions 3, 5; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 413, 416, inscriptions 8, 20, 23.
 80. British Museum slab No. 47-4-23-1; Chwolson, *Corpus*: 130.
 81. Birnbaum SA. A New Eight Century Hebrew Epitaph from Aden. *JSS*6: 1971: 95.
 82. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscription 2.
 83. British Museum slab No. 132704; Haibi, *The Jewry*: 37.
 84. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 306, inscription VIII.
 85. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 7, inscription A-5. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 308, inscription XIII. Meaning pearl in Persian as *lîlû* in Arabic, Subar referred to M. Steinschneider in *Jewish Quarterly Review* 11. See also Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 416, inscription 22; Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 160.
 86. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412, inscription 2.
 87. Meaning 'dove', see Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 63, inscription 4; Chwolson, *Corpus*: 128; Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 160; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 8.
 88. Meaning 'pretty', see Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 63, inscription 10; Chwolson, *Corpus*: 128; British Museum slab no. 132703; Haibi, *The Jewry*: 39. Meaning 'Margarita' according to Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 160.
 89. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 63, inscription 8; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 14, inscription A-9.
 90. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 63, inscription 7; Chwolson, *Corpus*: 128; Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 160.
 91. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 305, inscription III.
 92. British Museum slab No. 132702 (63-2-24-2); Saphir, *Eben Saphir* I: 80; Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 199, inscription 6; Haibi, *The Jewry*: 39. Mašta' as a woman's name is not known among the Jews of Yemen. Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*: 249–251

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- refers to the second inscription (No. 3932 in his collection) from the year 1705 and bearing the name Maštâ. This time the word ended with *h* not with *a*. According to Chajes, *Jüdische*: 8, inscription A16, Maštâ' is the feminine form of Moses. However Maštâ' is also the name of a village near Ta'izz. There was a well-known Jewish family by this name in the south of Yemen. The Maštâ' family lived in San'a' and Ta'izz in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The most important Yemeni Jewish poet, Salem Šabezzi (fl. seventeenth century), belonged to the Maštâ' family on his mother's side. See also Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 157. The meaning of the word Maštâ' in the Yemeni tradition is *ma-šatâ'*, which refers to what was given to a newborn male or female baby. See Goitein, *The age*: 83; Sasson, *The history*: 7, 19.
93. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 417, inscription 25; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 14, inscription A-10.
 94. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412, 415, inscriptions 3, 4, 14, 19.
 95. Saphir-Halevi 1966, 8: 123; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 7.
 96. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 303, inscription I.
 97. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II/2: 10, inscription 6; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 413, inscriptions 5, 7; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 19, inscription B-6.
 98. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414, inscription 11.
 99. According to Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 390, the slab which covered the grave was called *nefes* in the second century, which means soul. See also Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 302, inscriptions V, IX.
 100. This term appeared in full words, see Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 199, inscriptions 7, 8; see also Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414, inscription 9; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 302, 304, 305, inscriptions II, IV; see also Harkavy, *Altjüdische*: 138.
 101. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 413, inscription 5; Ahroni, *The Jews of Aden*: 21; Goldsmith & Messa, *Aden*: 7. According to Zunz, the deceased entering the Garden of Eden is expected to see the face of God as did Adam and Eve. This style of inscription was not used in an epitaph until the fourteenth century. See Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 356, 388; Händler, *Lexikon*: 79.
 102. Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 30, 34–35.
 103. Saphir-Halevi, *Beit 'Eden* 8: 123; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412–417, inscriptions 1–4, 8, 10–20, 22–27; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Script*: 249. According to Zunz, this expression was known from the fifth century but rarely used before the sixteenth century. See Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 331, 442. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 305–308, inscriptions IV, VII, IX, XI–XIII.
 104. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412, inscription 2, 3; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 303, 306, 308, inscriptions I, VII, XIII; see also examples in Wachstein B. *Die Inschriften des Alten Juden Friedhofes in Wien*. Vienna and Leipzig: Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutsch-Österreich, 4: 1912: 14, 34; Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 35–36, 38.
 105. This is an honorific title for a leader and an educated person. Subar translates it as 'prince', Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 303, 305, inscriptions IV, V, VII.
 106. Chajes, *Jüdische*: 12–13, inscription A-6.
 107. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 305, inscription V; Baron, *A social and religious history*: 51.
 108. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 413, inscription 7; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 305, inscription IV.
 109. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II: 9–10. See also Alkalai R. *The Hebrew English Dictionary*. Tel Aviv: Hemed, 1996.
 110. According to Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 355, this abbreviation, which was used for the first time in the tenth century CE, was sometimes used together with the term (אין) ('ayin, šade, waw, het) Cf. Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 159; Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II: 8–10, inscriptions 2–6; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 413, 414, 417, inscriptions 4, 9, 19, 25, 26; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 306, inscription VII; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Scripts*: 250; Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 31.
 111. Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II: 10, inscriptions 2, 7; Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 198–199, inscriptions 1–2, 4 and Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414; inscriptions Nos 15, 20, 24–26: Ahroni, *The Jews of Aden*: 21.
 112. Zunz translated ZL, 'seiner sei zum Guten gedacht.' Zunz relates the use of this phrase to the thirteenth century among Spanish Jews, particularly for women, and he translated ZLT, 'des gerechten Name bleibt ewig und sein Andenken ist ein Segen', Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 304, 308, 318, 323; Saphir, *Eben Saphir* II: 10, inscriptions 6, 9, 10; see also Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 160.
 113. Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 414, inscriptions 10, 12. The name of the dead was added in the formula. According to Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 234, 308, it is important to the living peoples to memorialise the righteous ones who passed away. This abbreviation was not used before the twelfth or thirteenth century, see Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 31.
 114. According to Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 327–328, this expression together with the word *hasîd* or *qaddôš* appeared for the first time in the eighteenth century. However, we find this expression already in the third century in an inscription on epitaphs from Beit Še'arim, see Navah, *On Sherd*: 200, and according to Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 30, the use of this expression spread during the thirteenth century.
 115. Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 34. According to Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 325 this expression was in use between the ninth and sixteenth centuries. The expression *qaddôš* was used for martyrs before the fourteenth century. See Landau A & Wachstein B. *Jüdische Privatbriefe aus dem Jahre 1619 Wien*. Leipzig: Braumüller, 1911; Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 30.
 116. Levy, *Jüdische Grabsteine*: 107; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 304, 306, inscription VII; Ben-Zvi, *Sepulchral Tablets*: 412, 415, 417, inscriptions 2, 17, 25; Birnbaum, *The Hebrew Scripts*: 249; Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 345.
 117. Händler, *Lexikon*: 79; Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 32.
 118. Ben-Zvi, *Hidden in the sand*: 199, inscription 7–8. According to Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*: 355, these expressions did not exist in Europe before the

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twelfth century CE, appearing in Spain in the fourteenth century and in the Orient not before the fifteenth century. Chwolson cited a slab of the fourth century from Tbilisi with this expression which appeared in abbre-

vation. See Chwolson, *Corpus*: 135, 309, 314; Chajes, *Jüdische*: 137; Subar, *Medieval Jewish Tombstones*: 304–306, inscriptions II, V. VII; Harkavy, *Altjüdische Denkmäler*: 137–138. This expression already appeared in the

Crimea in the sixth century; Muneles, *Epitaphs*: 11, 32; Naveh, *On Sherd*: 200–201. Such an expression appeared in the second century on the slab of Rabbi Gamliel's daughter.