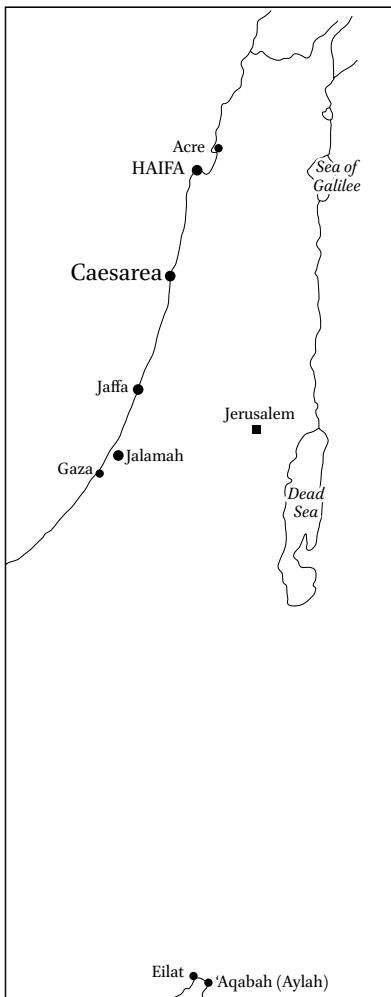


## JALAMAH (KH.)

Is. Gr. 114 106 N. Is. Gr 164 606



Khirbat Jalamah (colloq. Jalameh), as its name indicates is a ruined site near the southern bank of Wādī al-Ḥasī (Modern: Nāḥal Shiḡmah) 16 Km Northwest of Gaza. The site is better known as Bīr Jalamah (Jalamah Cistern. Modern Hebrew Name: Be'er Gluma. Cf. Kadmon 1994:23). The ancient remains are scattered over a large area of about 40,000 sq. m. and include 3 cisterns, remnants of a wine press, broken pieces of marble and basalt, and dressed as well as undressed building stones of limestone and kurkar (mixture of lime and sandstone). The pottery finds represent the Roman, Byzantine, early Islamic and late medieval period.

Guérin visited the site in June 1863 (Guérin 1869, *Judée*, 2:292–293). He describes it as debris of a completely ruined village. Only two cisterns were preserved in fairly good condition. He was told that the name of the place was Khirbat Jalāma (with a long a).

A fragment of the column with Arabic inscriptions was found at the end of the 1980s during road works in the area. (Information supplied by Jacob Huster of the IAA on 16 October 2001).

Inscriptions, which can be clearly identified, and very little unreadable scribbled graffiti cover the lower half of the column (1.58m long shaft) that was probably still standing on its base at the time

of the writing, for there are signs of another inscription just at the line of the break at the bottom of the fragment.

The gray marble column must have come from an important building. The diameter of the lower side of the present fragment is 0.45m, the marble and the method of its construction are excellent. The Muslim conquerors, who found these ancient columns, either standing or lying, used them for their inscriptions.

In places where professional engravers were hired to prepare inscriptions, ancient columns were carefully cut into slabs on which the inscriptions were then engraved. This practice was followed on a large scale in Caesarea, a city with great abundance of marble remains of various objects, particularly columns. (See *CIAP* 2, s.v. “Caesarea”).

#### THE INSCRIPTIONS

The following four inscriptions were engraved from about the middle of the broken column and downwards. The longest and most rewarding inscription which I numbered 1 is the third in the order of the inscriptions from top to bottom. The order in which the inscription were numbered on the column is 2,3,1,4. Fig. 46.

50

Invocation

c. 23/644

A long inscription 1.35 × 0.29m, almost encircling the whole column, was engraved about 0.50m. from its bottom. 4 lines shallow, angular early Islamic graffiti in good hand. No points, no vowels; incised. The letters were produced first by delineating them by knocking points on the marble and then filling the space and creating the body of the letters. Line 1 was badly produced, as if the writer gave a hint of the *Basmalah* and then went on to the main inscription with its message. The word الله stands above the inscription and seems not to belong to it. Figs. 47, 47a, 47b, 47c.

١) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم ٢) محمد ٣) [!] اللهم اغفر لمحمد بن ابراهيم مولا (!) عثمان بن عفان  
٤) بن عفان ولوالدو (!)

Basmalah. Muḥammad. O Allah forgive Ḥamd b. Ibrāhīm the client (*mawlā*) of ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān b. ‘Affān and (forgive also) his father.

Ll.1–2: Only the name of Muḥammad from the *shahādah* was engraved.

L.3: The name حمد can be pronounced in a few ways: Ḥamd, Ḥumad, Ḥummad, as well as Jamd and Jumad (Ibn Mākūlā, *Ikmāl*, 1411/1990, 2:541; cf. Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 1:2004)

L.4: (!) ولوالدو The mistake is clear, but it may be explained as representing a colloquial pronunciation: *wa-liwāldo*.

Ibn ‘Affān is repeated in this line, as if the writer forgot that he had already inscribed the two words in l.3. It is very possible that he started the inscription and left it for a while, and when he resumed it he repeated, without paying attention, the last words of the previous line.

As far as I know, this is the first time that the name of the third Caliph ‘Uthmān (644–656) appears on an inscription. This is very valuable information for it enables the dating of the inscription to the first half of the first century (middle of the 7th century CE). The sources do not mention a *mawlā* of ‘Uthmān bearing any of the above names.

51

Invocation

Middle 1st/7th century

0.70m. from bottom. 1 line 0.69m., height of letters 0.05m. Angular ancient graffiti; no points, no vowels; incised. Fig. 48.

اللهم اغفر [ل] احمد بن جحاف

O Allah forgive Aḥmad b. Jaḥḥāf.

For the name Jaḥḥāf see Ṭabarī, *Ta’rīkh*, 2:918, 3:1606.

52

Invocation

Middle 1st/7th century

0.54m from bottom. 3 lines 0.25 × 0.16; length of letters, 0.04. Fine small angular script, which seem more professional than the other inscriptions on the column. No points, no vowels; incised. Fig. 49.

اللهم [اغفر لنجمي] (٢) بن (١) جحاف ولوالديه (٣) ولما ولدا

O Allah forgive Najmī b. Jaḥḥāf and his parents and whom they begot.

Aḥmad and Najmī (or Najm) no doubt were brothers who commemorated their names and the name of their father on the stone. It is possible that Najmī was more skillful than his brother, or he asked a better engraver to write this invocation for him.

53

Invocation

0.24m from the bottom. 3 lines, 0.38 × 0.20m, length of letters: 0.05. Bad graffiti, no points, no vowels; incised. Fig. 50.

الله همّ (!!!) اغفر (٢) لتميم بن [عبد] (٣) الله

O Allah forgive Tamīm b. ‘Abdallah.