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7. The Adiabene Dynasty and their Royal Dwellings in Jerusalem

7.1. Introduction

In addition to royal euergetism and exemplary pious conduct attributed to Helena and Munbaz by Josephus and the Rabbis, there is yet another important feature of the royal image of the Adiabene dynasty that appears in ancient literature – monumental buildings in Jerusalem to which we will now turn our attention.

7.2. Helena's Mausoleum

7.2.1. Introduction

In chapter 7.2, we will present and discuss a number of ancient sources that refer to Helena's *mausoleum*. These sources can be regarded as having a twofold use. First, their meaning can reveal another feature of Helena's royal image in ancient literature – her legitimate presence in Judean social memory. Secondly, they refer to a once-existing structure and consequently information gleaned from them can be useful in interpreting archaeological remains. Therefore, our examination of the sources will take two steps (7.2.2 for Josephus and 7.2.3 for non-Jewish sources) – first we will present and discuss them in their literary and historical context, and secondly, we will glean all possible geographical and topographical, as well as architectural details from them. This second step will lead us to another level of reflection - a discussion of the archaeological context where we will first present the topographical and archaeological data on *Le Tombeau des Rois* (7.2.4.1-4.), a most-frequently suggested candidate for Helena's mausoleum, and then compare the data with our knowledge previously gained from the literary sources and consequently attempt the archaeological identification of this structure (7.2.4.5.).

7.2.2. Helena's Mausoleum in Josephus

Josephus mentions the mausoleum of Helena four times in all his writings, once in *Antiquitates Iudaicae* (Ant. 20:95) and three times in *De Bello Judaico* (Bell. 5:55; 5:119; 5:147).

In Ant. 20:95 Josephus states that both Izates and Helena were buried “at the pyramids (ἐν ταῖς πυραμίσι) located three stadia from the city of Jerusalem (τῆς Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν πόλεως)”. The pyramids are said to have been erected beforehand on Helena's behalf.

As far as the literary context of Ant. 20:95 is concerned (see chapter 2.4.), the reference to the burial and the tomb serves to round off the Adiabene narrative (Ant. 20:17-96) which as a whole is crafted as a biography for Izates, and contains a lot of biographical data for her mother too. Thus, the reference to the resting place of Helena (and Izates) fits well a classic topos of great heroes who have deserved a noble resting place after their full lives. What is more, building a grand monument can serve as a means to express one's ideological presence in a society; accordingly, the Adiabene royalty chooses to be buried in their homeland of Jerusalem among the Jewish people (whose way of life they adopted) rather than back in Adiabene where they originally came from.

As for the architectural and topographical information provided by Josephus in the Adiabene narrative, we can find two important details in Ant. 20:95. First, the terminology used by Josephus to name the resting place is highly remarkable. Namely, in Ant. 20:95 it is *πυραμίς*, a very rare term in Josephus used only here and in two more places. Namely, in Ant. 2:203 Josephus recalls Egyptian pyramids, and in Ant. 13:211 refers to the tomb of the Maccabees crowned with seven pyramids. A pyramid as a crowning element of graves (known also as the *nefesh*) was a common feature in Hellenistic-Roman architecture of sepulchral places built by the local elite around Jerusalem; some tombs, such as *Zechariah's Tomb*, *Absalom's Tomb*, *Jason's Tomb*, still preserve

these architectonic elements⁶²⁷. Accordingly, in the light of Ant. 20:95 Helena's resting place is crowned with three pyramids. Another detail given by Josephus is a distance between Helena's mausoleum and Jerusalem – three stadia. A Greek stadion counted ca. 600 Greek feet, and about 1/8 of a Roman mile⁶²⁸. Thus, three stadia account for ca. 555 m⁶²⁹.

When it comes to the references in *Bell.*, neither of them is directly devoted to Helena's mausoleum, instead, they have their focus on the Roman's military activities during the siege of Jerusalem, and in reporting the fighting between both sides, they locate it on the map of Jerusalem. Such localizations are given with regard to some landmarks of the city of Jerusalem and its surroundings. Helena's mausoleum happened to be just such an eye-catching feature of Jerusalem's architecture and so fortunately we get some references to it⁶³⁰. The fact that Helena's mausoleum could be so frequently used by Josephus for the sake of his topographical descriptions makes us aware of the role that this structure played not only in the archaeological landscape of Jerusalem, but also in the socio-religious context of the 1st c. CE Judea⁶³¹. Namely, the word Josephus employs in *Bell.*, *μνημεία*, can be used for graves, but its basic meaning goes beyond a narrow sense of sepulchre. Instead, it points to a place whose function is to preserve, even proclaim, one's memory for contemporaries and future generations⁶³². Indeed, building a grand tomb was a well-recognized way of legitimizing one's presence in a social memory⁶³³. The monumental Maccabean family tomb in Modein (1 Macc. 13:25-30) was a demonstration of Simon's power to Jews and to non-Jewish neighbours alike⁶³⁴. It clearly aimed at recalling the achievements of the family and consequently showing its importance⁶³⁵. Herod also understood the symbolic significance of monumental sepulchres, since he erected not one, but two monumental buildings commemorating his life: a *cenotaphium* in Jerusalem and a monumental tomb at Herodium⁶³⁶. In fact, Jewish-Hellenistic rulers could easily find very good examples to follow among other rulers in the Hellenistic and Roman period. Especially Augustus' construction of the Mausoleum on Campus Martius was clearly a means to claim and assert his legitimate leadership, since he built it next to the tomb of Romulus, the legendary founder and first king of Rome⁶³⁷.

Likewise, Jerusalem's landscape in the Hellenistic and Roman period was in fact saturated with grand sepulchral monuments which shows that Jewish elites in the Hellenistic-Roman period developed a taste for such displays of social prominence⁶³⁸. The tombs of Jewish heroes and ancestors could also attract visitors and pilgrims⁶³⁹. Such pilgrimages in the Second Temple period served primarily "to reaffirm and express relationships of kingship and national identity"⁶⁴⁰, and consequently played an important role in forming and strengthening Jewish identity⁶⁴¹. In this context, as we can judge from Josephus' incidental remarks, Helena's resting place was one of the most eye-catching monuments around Jerusalem and consequently occupied a very prominent

⁶²⁷ Hachlili 2005: 340-353. Such pyramids are also known from Petra (and Nabatea has in fact been suggested as the origin of the Judean nephesh, see Littmann 1914: XI-XII, Gawlikowski 1972: 6); what is more, *the Obelisk Tomb* in Petra (dated to 40/44-70 CE) features four pyramids in one row, while preserved tombs in Jerusalem have only one pyramid each. For the *Obelisk Tomb*, see J. Mackenzie 1990: 34, 52, 156-157.

⁶²⁸ Liddell/Scott/Jones 1968: 1631.

⁶²⁹ Avi-Yonah 1968: 121; Barish 1983: 186.

⁶³⁰ S. Schwartz 2009: 85.

⁶³¹ S. Schwartz 2009: 85.

⁶³² Liddell/Scott/Jones 1968: 1139.

⁶³³ S. Schwartz 2009: 84.

⁶³⁴ Sievers 2000: 107-108.

⁶³⁵ Sievers 2000: 107-108.

⁶³⁶ Rocca 2008: 354-357; Schwartz 2009: 84.

⁶³⁷ Hesberg/Pancieria 1994: 55-56.

⁶³⁸ Richardson 2004: 331; S. Schwartz 2009: 88.

⁶³⁹ Kerkeslager 1998: 139-142.

⁶⁴⁰ Kerkeslager 1998: 139.

⁶⁴¹ Kerkeslager 1998: 222-225.

place in that socio-religious dimension⁶⁴². Thus, Josephus' references in *Bell.* reflect a well-established tradition of Helena's mausoleum as a resting place of a good Jewish queen among her people.

The first relevant text is *Bell.* 5:55 that appears in the context of Josephus' reporting in *Bell.* 5:54-66 of the first approach of the Roman forces towards Jerusalem from the north (see pl. VI). According to *Bell.* 5:55, some Jewish defenders took the advancing legions by surprise when they suddenly dashed out of the city at the spot called the Women's Towers "through the gate opposite the Monuments of Helena" (διὰ τῆς ἀντικρὸ τῶν Ἑλένης μνημείων πύλης). Thus, we can infer from *Bell.* 5:55 that the Monuments of Helena were situated opposite one of the city gates that belonged to the section of the wall marked by the Women's towers; but we cannot state a specific distance between this point of the northern wall and Helena's monuments based solely on the evidence of *Bell.* 5:55, because the Greek preposition ἀντικρὸ ("opposite") can be used for both long and short distances⁶⁴³.

Secondly, *Bell.* 5:109-119 describes one of the Jewish raids out of the wall up to the Roman camp. The Jewish raid is said to begin at "the Women's Towers" (*Bell.* 5:109) and to have finished "as far as the Monuments of Helena" (*Bell.* 5:119). The vocabulary Josephus uses, namely μέχρι ("as far as"), can be used equally for long and short distances⁶⁴⁴. The contribution of *Bell.* 5:109-119 to the topography of Helena's mausoleum is then very similar to that made by *Bell.* 5:55 in that it gives us a general impression of where the mausoleum of Helena laid, but does not allow us to pin down its exact location based only on *Bell.* 5:109-119.

Thirdly, the monuments of Helena are mentioned once more in *Bell.* 5:136-183, where Josephus delivers a detailed description of Jerusalem's three defensive walls. Part of the description of the third, outer wall is relevant to the monuments of Helena. The extension of the third wall is described as running alongside well-known structures of Jerusalem and its outside surroundings (*Bell.* 5:147). To be precise, the third wall started at the tower of Hippikos and stretched further northwards till it reached the tower of Psephinos where it bent eastwards till it reached the Kidron Valley. Of relevance to us is the northern section of the wall between the tower of Psephinos and the Kidron Valley. This part of the wall is characterized by Josephus through his references to the following landmarks alongside its extension: the tower of Psephinos, the monuments of Helena, the Royal Caverns, and Fuller's tomb (where the wall bends around a corner tower opposite this tomb). Thus, the monuments of Helena are clearly described as located outside Jerusalem and alongside the most-northern wall. Further, they are mentioned as located east of the tower of Psephinos and west of the Royal Caverns.

All in all, Josephus' four references to Helena's mausoleum show us the great importance of this building both for the architectural landscape of 1st c. CE Jerusalem (it was a well-known reference point for structuring landscape) and for the socio-religious life of 1st c. CE Judea. Further, Josephus' texts provide us with the following topographical and architectural clues concerning the structure (see also pl. VI):

1. The mausoleum was of an eye-catching size (*Ant.* 20:95; *Bell.* 5:55, 5:119, 5:147).
2. It was crowned with three pyramids (*Ant.* 20:95).
3. The mausoleum was located north of the city of Jerusalem (*Bell.* 5:55, 5:119, 5:147).
4. It was located three stadia from the city of Jerusalem (*Ant.* 20:95).
5. The mausoleum was located opposite 'the Women's Towers' (*Bell.* 5:55, *Bell.* 5:119).
6. As one follows the extension of the most-northern wall from west to east, the mausoleum of Helena was located east of the Tower of Psephinos and west of the Royal Caverns (*Bell.* 5:147).

⁶⁴² S. Schwartz 2009: 85.

⁶⁴³ Avi-Yonah 1968: 120-121; Hamrick 1985: 228.

⁶⁴⁴ Avi-Yonah 1968: 120-121.

7.2.3. Helena's Mausoleum in Non-Jewish Sources

The resting place for Helena is also referred to by non-Jewish ancient sources. Those are Pausanias (*Graeciae descriptio*, 8.16.4-5), Eusebius of Caesarea (*Historia ecclesiastica* 2.12.3) and Jerome (*Epistulae*, 108, pl. 22, col. 883).

Pausanias was a 2nd c. CE native of Asia Minor⁶⁴⁵. Pausanias' magnum opus, *Graeciae descriptio*⁶⁴⁶, as the title suggests, is naturally devoted to the land of Greece. Yet, Pausanias traveled widely, also to the lands of the East, and, among others, visited Palestine⁶⁴⁷. Pausanias' intention in writing his book was to produce an interesting travel guide that would catch the interest of its readers, and that is why he so frequently focuses on miraculous details to impress his audience⁶⁴⁸. In *Descr.* 8.16.4-5⁶⁴⁹, Pausanias describes what he considers to be the two most magnificent (ἄξιοι) graves of the world⁶⁵⁰. Those are, namely, the *Mausoleum*, the grave made for Mausolos, king of Halicarnassos, and the *grave* of Helena in the city of Jerusalem. Thus, Pausanias puts both structures on the same level of significance. However, the question arises: what is so special about them? In accordance with the aims of his travel guide, Pausanias gives some attractive details of both structures. Namely, whereas Pausanias finds the size and the ornamentation of the Mausoleum to be extremely admirable, one secret mechanism of the grave of Helena attracted his attention in particular. Namely, the stone doors to the grave unlocked on their own once a year, always at the appointed time, and also locked again in the same way. Otherwise, it was not possible to open them on any other day without damaging the whole opening system. Thus, though it is likely that the grave of Helena was elaborately ornamented and its size may have been extraordinary too: it caught Pausanias' attention because of the miraculous mechanism in the first place.

The question arises as to whether Pausanias personally saw the mechanism. It is generally accepted that he in fact visited Palestine⁶⁵¹, especially due to his phrase καὶ αὐτὸς οἶδα⁶⁵². Yet, on his visits to different countries, he managed to see some things, but only to hear about others, and there is indeed a distinction in his writings between λόγοι and θεωρήματα⁶⁵³. In the first case, Pausanias is a transmitter of written or oral traditions, in the second, he acts as a witness to what he saw in person⁶⁵⁴. As a transmitter, Pausanias relies on literature or local spoken traditions⁶⁵⁵. In the case of spoken information, Pausanias relies on guides (referred to as ἐξηγήται in Pausanias and as περιηγήται elsewhere), attested many times in his writings and other ancient literature⁶⁵⁶. Pausanias' report on Helena's grave does not make it explicit, whether or not he personally *saw* the wondrous mechanism or only *was told* about it. However, taking into account the fact that the mechanism is said to work only once a year, it is more likely that Pausanias has never had a chance to see in person the mechanism working; especially that, to take his statement literary, he must have witnessed this event twice, during two consecutive years. Further, in-between he must also

⁶⁴⁵ M. Stern 1980: 191.

⁶⁴⁶ The text and translation used here is that of M. Stern 1980: 191-200.

⁶⁴⁷ Frazer 1913: XX-XXI; Habicht 1998: 17.

⁶⁴⁸ Habicht 1998: 21.

⁶⁴⁹ M. Stern 1980: CVIII, 196.

⁶⁵⁰ Let us remark here that the Mausoleum has been later recognized as one of the "seven wonders" of the ancient world. See Clayton/Price 1988 on "the seven wonders", especially Waywell 1988:100-123 on the Mausoleum at Halicarnassos.

⁶⁵¹ Frazer 1913: XX-XXI; M. Stern 1980: 194; Habicht 1998: 17.

⁶⁵² M. Stern 1980: 194-195, no. 356. But see Liddell/Scott/Jones 1968: 483: "pf., οἶδα I see with the mind's eye, i.e. I know, used as pres."

⁶⁵³ Habicht 1998: 21.

⁶⁵⁴ Habicht 1998: 21.

⁶⁵⁵ Habicht 1998: 21.

⁶⁵⁶ On the role of guides that Pausanias met on his travels, see Frazer 1913: LXXVI-LXXVII and C.P. Jones 2001: 33-39.

have made sure that the entrance does not open on its own, and cannot be opened otherwise. Thus, it is much more likely that he indeed saw the grave, but as for its mysterious opening mechanism, he relies on local tradition.

Furthermore, it is interesting to see what vocabulary Pausanias uses. First, he employs the term *τάφος*, while referring both to the Mausoleum and to the grave of Helena. It is a very broad category in ancient writings that encompasses a wide range of types of burial places⁶⁵⁷. Further, he describes the location of the tomb of Helena as first [belonging] to *Ἑβραῖοι* (the *Hebrews*) and secondly by the mention of the city of Jerusalem. Pausanias' never uses the names *Judea* or *Jews* in his work, he instead employs the terms *Ἑβραίων ἡ γῆ* (the *land of the Hebrews*) and *Ἑβραῖοι* (the *Hebrews*) respectively⁶⁵⁸. Thus, the name of *the land of the Hebrews* is equivalent to what other ancient writings interchangeably (though often not very precisely) call *Iudaea* or *Palaestina*⁶⁵⁹. Consequently, Helena is called *ἐπιχώρια*, a native of the land of the Hebrews. Interestingly, M. Stern remarks that "Helene can hardly be considered *ἐπιχώρια* in *Judaea*, since she was the wife of the king of Adiabene, and became a proselyte..."⁶⁶⁰. However, it is exactly how Helena is regarded by Pausanias. Of course, Pausanias is an outsider to Judean affairs, but the text undoubtedly informs us about his knowledge. Accordingly, Helena does not stand out among other Hebrews (in terms of foreign descent) and consequently Pausanias does not perceive Helena as coming from *Adiabene* or being a *proselyte*. What is more, it is quite obvious that Pausanias is dependent on the local tradition for such knowledge. Therefore, it is not only Pausanias himself but the local Judean tradition of the 2nd c. CE according to which Helena is perceived as a *native heroine* resting among *her* people. Furthermore, it is striking that Helena's grave is still recalled as a landmark of Jerusalem in the 2nd c. CE, especially after the Jewish-Roman War of 66-73 CE which brought a vast destruction to the city of Jerusalem. Despite it, Helena's resting place is still noteworthy and serves as an expression of local pride.

Another very brief reference to the resting place of Helena is made by Eusebius in his 4th c. CE *Hist. eccl.* 2.12.1-3. Generally speaking, we can discern two stages in Eusebius' narrative on Helena's mausoleum. In the first stage, Eusebius only draws on his sources, but in the second he starts to make connections and refers the data gained from literary sources to the setting of his own time⁶⁶¹. To be precise, in *Hist. eccl.* 2.12.1 and 2 Eusebius is dependent on Josephus' *Ant.* 20:101 and *Acts* 11:29-30, his main sources in that part of *Hist. eccl.*, whose content he merely quotes at first. Namely, in *Hist. eccl.* 2.12.1 Eusebius recalls the great famine in *Judea* and Helena's benefactions (following *Ant.* 20:101). Next in *Hist. eccl.* 2.12.2 he explicitly identifies that famine with the famine described in *Acts* 11:29-30 and quotes the appropriate passage from *Acts* about relief sent by the Christian community of Antioch to Jerusalem. Thus, both passages are recalled for the purpose of Eusebius' chronological narrative, at the same time, his interest in describing such events is for its social-communal aspect (the theme of charity). However, though at first Eusebius heavily draws on Josephus (references to Helena's mausoleum and to the fact that she was queen of the people of Adiabene⁶⁶²), in the second step (*Hist. eccl.* 2.12.3) he refers this data

⁶⁵⁷ Liddell/Scott/Jones 1968: 1761.

⁶⁵⁸ M. Stern 1980: 161 and 191. By way of illustration, he does so when he mentions the revolt under Hadrian of 132-135 when, in his words, *Ἑβραῖοι* rebelled. As for *Ἑβραίων ἡ γῆ*, he uses that term to locate there the city of Joppa (M. Stern 1980: 192-193, no. 354), the river Jordan alongside Lake Tiberias and the Dead Sea (M. Stern 1980: 194-195, no. 356), production of fine flax (M. Stern 1980: 194, no. 355), and the grave of Silenos (M. Stern 1980: 195-196, no. 357).

⁶⁵⁹ Pausanias' land of the Hebrews equals the territory gained by the Hasmoneans. See M. Stern 1980: 191.

⁶⁶⁰ M. Stern 1980: 197, n. 5.

⁶⁶¹ This is to say in contrast to those (e.g. Tobler 1854: 300 and n. 3) who expressed doubt as to whether we can treat Eusebius as an eyewitness and saw him as being entirely dependent on Josephus. To the contrary, both levels are present in Eusebius but one can clearly discern them. Likewise Barish 1983: 175.

⁶⁶² This may be the only literary text that sets Helena apart from the Jewish *ἔθνος* by pointing to her foreign (Adiabenean) descent. Here the term "Adiabenean" is clearly referred to as an attributive of the other *ἔθνος*.

to his own setting. This is in accordance with Eusebius' usual practice - he exhibited a great deal of interest throughout his writings in "holy places" that could be seen in his own times⁶⁶³. In *Hist. eccl.* 2.12.3 he goes on to say that *στῆλαι* mentioned by Josephus are still shown in the suburbs of the city now called Aelia⁶⁶⁴. Lastly, Eusebius makes use of the term *στῆλαι* while pointing out to the physical appearance of Helena's mausoleum. *Στήλη* is also a broad term that can be used of graves made of stone blocks⁶⁶⁵, but remarkable is the plural form used here by Eusebius like the plural form in Josephus. Taking this description literary, Helena's resting place had at least two or more stone blocks that caught the attention of its observers in the 4th c. CE.

The last ancient source referring to Helena's resting place is Jerome in *Epistula* 108.9 in the second half of the 4th c. CE⁶⁶⁶. In describing Paula's journey to Jerusalem, Jerome recalls that she had "left Helena's mausoleum on her left and entered" Jerusalem. Afterwards, Jerome goes on to mention the help delivered by Helena to the Jewish people in time of famine. What can be inferred from this brief reference? First and foremost, since Paula's last stop before Jerusalem is said to be Gibeah⁶⁶⁷, we can pretty safely state that Paula approached Jerusalem from the north through the Mount of Scopus⁶⁶⁸. Furthermore, if the present Nablus road follows the path close to that used in ancient times⁶⁶⁹, then Paula's left side of the road means "the eastern side of the road" and consequently Helena's mausoleum, in the light of Jerome's evidence, can be located somewhere east of the Nablus road⁶⁷⁰.

In summary, non-Jewish sources are very telling about Helena's mausoleum in two ways – as witnesses of its importance in the socio-religious memory after 70 CE and as sources of archaeologically relevant information.

As far as the ideological dimension is concerned, non-Jewish sources confirm the very prominent place occupied by Helena's mausoleum on the socio-religious scene of Jerusalem. This development could already be seen in Josephus where Helena's mausoleum appeared to be a means of proclaiming its legitimate ideological presence in the present and of preserving the memory of her leadership for future generations. This tradition survived much longer and even became enriched and reinterpreted in two subsequent steps by non-Jewish sources. Pausanias' testimony also goes along with the tradition present in Josephus. Here, however, another aspect appears. The tomb is not only a landmark recalling a local hero (not specifically a queen!), but is additionally enriched by a story on a fantastic mechanism. It is indeed a commonplace in ancient literature that, broadly speaking, miraculous things accompany burials or tombs of great heroes⁶⁷¹. This fact shows that Helena's resting place has in fact entered the realm of popular lore. Next, the last stage in the development of the topos of Helena's mausoleum belongs to Christian writers who can still see an eye-catching place preserving Helena's memory. The memory of Helena reminds them of the idea of charity in the first place. Thus, Eusebius and Jerome in fact recall in Helena's image what was important to Christian-orientated writers themselves, that is charity⁶⁷². Thus, the notion of charity and that of the Greek euergetism, though not identical, were close enough to each other to make Helena an important figure for Christian writers⁶⁷³.

As far as archaeologically relevant information is concerned, non-Jewish sources provide us with two clues. The first important piece of information is provided by Jerome and is fairly specific

⁶⁶³ D.S. Wallace-Hadrill 1960: 202-203.

⁶⁶⁴ For basic information on Aelia Capitolina, see E. Stern 1993: 759-766; Isaac 2011: 18-26.

⁶⁶⁵ Liddell/Scott/Jones 1968: 1643.

⁶⁶⁶ The edition used here is that of Hilberg 1996: 314.

⁶⁶⁷ Identified as Tell el-Ful – see E. Stern 1993: 445-448.

⁶⁶⁸ Barish 1983: 184 and 222, n. 76; E. Stern 1993: 446.

⁶⁶⁹ Robinson 1841: 362; Barish 1983: 184, 222 n. 76; Kloner 2003: 46*.

⁶⁷⁰ Barish 1983: 184 and 222, n. 76.

⁶⁷¹ Frickenschmidt 1997: 341-350.

⁶⁷² J.W. Drijvers 1992: 154-155.

⁶⁷³ For a difference between both notions, see Kraabel 1996: 75-96.

– the mausoleum of Helena was located east of the northern road leading from Jerusalem. Secondly, all three non-Jewish sources pertaining to Helena’s resting place are extremely important in that they all confirm that Helena’s tomb despite all devastation wrought by the Jewish uprising against Rome could still be seen outside Jerusalem in the 2nd and 4th c. CE. Even more, since Pausanias puts Helena’s resting place and the Mausoleum in Halicarnassos on the same level, Helena’s mausoleum did not only survive but still evoked admiration after two wars in Judea. In 4th c. CE Christian sources they still appear as landmarks of Jerusalem and its surroundings in that they function as places shown to visitors (Eusebius) and worthy of recalling (note Jerome’s remark that he shall only mention places on Paula’s journey that are of special character – *Epist.* 108.8).

7.2.4. The Description of *Le Tombeau des Rois* in Jerusalem

7.2.4.1. Introduction

Since we have already gathered all geographical and topographical information, as well as some architectural details from the literary sources referring to Helena’s mausoleum, it is time to discuss the archaeological context. Our aim is to present all available topographical and archaeological data on *Le Tombeau des Rois*, the structure most frequently suggested as Helena’s resting place, before we attempt any comparison of this structure with our knowledge gained from the literary sources (see chapters 7.2.2. and 7.2.3.). The presentation of *Le Tombeau des Rois* will include the following: the general description of the structure (since it happens to be a large burial complex), the presentation of important portable objects found by the excavators (since it can be important for identifying the structure), and finally, a separate presentation of the most famous and important artifact – the only intact sarcophagus (and the inscription on it) found in *Le Tombeau des Rois* (see also plates IV-V).

7.2.4.2. General Description of the Structure

The structure is located north of the present day Old City of Jerusalem, about 700 meters from the Damascus Gate, on the northern edge of the es-Sâhireh valley, on the present Nablus Road⁶⁷⁴. This tomb has been mentioned by several explorers and travelers since the 16th c. CE⁶⁷⁵, but was explored only in 1863 by F. de Saulcy who received permission from the Ottoman government to enter the burial place and explore its surroundings⁶⁷⁶. In the 19th c. CE the tomb was known as “Qobour es-Salâṭīn” or “Qobour Molouk” in the local Arabic tradition (both meaning the “tombs of the kings”)⁶⁷⁷. The present and most frequently employed name of the complex, *Le Tombeau des Rois*, goes back to de Saulcy who thought that he had found the resting place of the kings and queens of Judah from the First Temple Period. This theory has been widely rejected⁶⁷⁸, but the name remains until today⁶⁷⁹.

⁶⁷⁴ Vincent/Steve 1954: 346.

⁶⁷⁵ The most extensive and up-to-date presentation of these early “archaeological adventures” can be found in Caillou 2008: 39-89.

⁶⁷⁶ De Saulcy 1865: 345-410. For the subsequent fate of the site (the purchase by the French government from the Jewish family Pereire, see Yellin 1935 and Press 1941.

⁶⁷⁷ De Saulcy 1865: 345; Schick 1897: 182; Minos 1911: 19.

⁶⁷⁸ See the earliest discussion between de Saulcy and his opponents in the *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*: Rochette 1852: 22-37; de Saulcy 1852a: 229-240; de Saulcy 1852b: 398-407; Quatèmère 1852a: 92-113; Quatèmère 1852b: 157-169; and Brunet de Presle 1866: 105-138.

⁶⁷⁹ An extensive report of the archaeological examination of the site can be found in Kon 1947. However, de Saulcy’s reports from his exploration are still relevant as to the context of findings; similarly, the site interpretation by Vincent/Steve 1954 is equally indispensable. Modern short introductions can be found in Küchler 2006: 985-995 and Kloner/Zissu 2007: 231-234. Pre-Kon descriptions of the structure include Schick 1897: 182-188; Pfenningdorf 1904:173-187; Minos 1911: 19-25. Other literature aims at specific issues and will be referred to in the course of

The structure is in fact a large complex hewn into the rock⁶⁸⁰ below the surrounding surface area and consists of a number of distinct elements (see pl. V). The structure opens with a rock-cut staircase that descends from southwest to northeast down to a small forecourt with two cisterns whose openings are cut in its southern and eastern side-walls⁶⁸¹. The staircase is nine meters wide and 30 meters long, including the forecourt up to the cisterns⁶⁸². There are 25 steps⁶⁸³. The cistern facing the front of the staircase (A) is considerably larger than the other one (B) located in the side wall of the staircase. Cistern A is stepped and plastered, and has two openings⁶⁸⁴. Their system of water supply starts with two gutters in the steps that are later conducted through channels cut in the rock side-wall into the cisterns⁶⁸⁵. The channels collect runoff water from the stairs and direct it into the cisterns⁶⁸⁶.

The entrance to the main courtyard leads through an arched opening in the southern wall at the bottom of the stairway⁶⁸⁷. The courtyard (26 by 27 m) is hewn into the rock to a depth of 8.5 m⁶⁸⁸. All walls but the eastern one are also equipped with hewn benches⁶⁸⁹. There is a pit in the northwestern corner of the courtyard, close to the vestibule, which is interpreted differently, either as a simple collection pit for rainwater⁶⁹⁰ or another ritual bath⁶⁹¹.

The entrance to the burial complex itself is preceded by a vestibule that is cut into the centre of the western face and a monumental façade⁶⁹². The façade (*distyle in antis*) is 27.5 m long⁶⁹³. The vestibule can be accessed by three steps⁶⁹⁴. The entablature is richly decorated and still contains traces of two pillars that once supported it⁶⁹⁵. As far as it can be judged from their remains, still to be seen today, both columns were Ionic⁶⁹⁶. This type of façade is called *distyle in antis* (portico with two columns between antae)⁶⁹⁷. The architrave contains a decoration of interlaced leaves and fruit with a rosette in the center⁶⁹⁸. The Doric frieze above has interlaced

chapter 7.2.4. A modern archaeological examination of the site has been conducted by French archaeologists in 2008 and 2012 and is planned to be published in 2013 by J.-S. Caillou.

⁶⁸⁰ According to Vincent/Steve 1954: 346-347; Küchler 2007: 985-986, 990, numerous visible cuts in the rock suggest that the place, before having been turned into the burial complex, was used as a quarry producing malaky stone. If so, the courtyard would originate from the main quarry, while the staircase would develop from the ramp which gave access to the place and which the stone blocks were transported up (the total amount of quarried stone material is estimated at ca. 10 000 m³).

⁶⁸¹ See Pfenningdorf 1904: 177-178; Minos 1911: 19; Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁸² Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁸³ So Schick 1897: 184; Pfenningdorf 1904: 176; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁸⁴ According to some scholars, cistern B seems to be a simple water retainer, while only cistern A can be identified as a ritual immersion bath. See Küchler 2007: 990. See also Pfenningdorf 1904: 177-179; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁸⁵ See Schick 1897: 184; Pfenningdorf 1904: 177-179; Minos 1911: 20; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁸⁶ See Schick 1897: 184; Pfenningdorf 1904: 177-179; Minos 1911: 20; Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232. What is more, according to e.g. Minos 1911: 20 and Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232, there could also be a natural water source in the cisterns, probably a spring.

⁶⁸⁷ So Schick 1897: 185-186; Pfenningdorf 1904: 179-180; Minos 1911: 20; Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁸⁸ Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁸⁹ So Schick 1897: 186; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁹⁰ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁹¹ Minos 1911: 20; Vincent/Steve 1954: 348; Küchler 2007: 990.

⁶⁹² Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁹³ Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁹⁴ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁹⁵ Schick 1897: 186; Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁶⁹⁶ Fedak 1990: 146; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232; Hachlili 2005: 36, 50. Minos 1911: 20 considered the entablature to be of Corinthian design and columns to be “quasi Doric”.

⁶⁹⁷ Fedak 1990: 146; Hachlili 2005: 36, 50.

⁶⁹⁸ Fedak 1990: 146; Jacoby 1998: 460; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

triglyphs and discs, and in its center there is a bunch of grapes flanked by two wreaths and two three-leaved acanthuses on either side⁶⁹⁹. Finally, the cornice has projecting ledges⁷⁰⁰.

The actual entrance to the burial complex is located on the southern side of the vestibule⁷⁰¹. It consists of a rock-cut stepped trench that descends towards the inside of the burial system beneath the southern wall of the vestibule⁷⁰². The trench can be sealed with a large rolling stone that otherwise rests in a deep transverse channel located on the left side of the trench⁷⁰³. The channel for the rolling stone is orientated south-east⁷⁰⁴. The first explorers also found remains of an additional stone door⁷⁰⁵. Lastly, still visible are signs of grooves into which the slabs covering the whole entrance were put⁷⁰⁶. Thus, the entrance to the chambers was covered by the pavement of the vestibule⁷⁰⁷. M. Kon suggested the existence of a complicated mechanism responsible for opening the passage to the burial chambers⁷⁰⁸. According to Kon, the stone slab closing and concealing the whole entrance could not be raised from the outside (from the vestibule side) since it was impossible to get hold of the slab only from one side; on the other hand, there was a space of some 35 cm between the slab and the second step of the trench on which the slab was resting⁷⁰⁹. This, according to Kon, meant that a special mechanism must have existed that would have functioned with the force of gravity⁷¹⁰. However, Kon's reconstruction is very speculative, since the remains are not enough sufficient for an exact reconstruction of such a complicated mechanism⁷¹¹. Furthermore, J. Fedak suggested that the rolling stone could simply be operated by a system of ropes and pits from the courtyard⁷¹². Thus, we conclude that apparently no 'miraculous' mechanism has to be postulated to understand the opening system of the burial complex⁷¹³.

The burial system (see plate IV) consists of two levels housing eight burial chambers and one central chamber⁷¹⁴. As far as the upper level is concerned, there is a central hall (chamber A)⁷¹⁵ that leads to four other chambers (B, D, F and H) through separate entrances in its southern, western and northern walls⁷¹⁶. Entrances to both chambers B and D are located in the southern wall of chamber A, both being slightly off the central axis of the wall⁷¹⁷. The entrance to chamber F is located in the center of the western wall, while the entrance to chamber H is located in the northwestern corner of chamber A, but the passage runs perpendicular to the northern axis⁷¹⁸.

⁶⁹⁹ Fedak 1990: 146; Schick 1897: 184; Dussaud 1912: 42; Jacoby 1998: 460; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232; Hachlili 2005: 36, 50.

⁷⁰⁰ Fedak 1990: 146; Jacoby 1998: 460; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁷⁰¹ See Schick 1897: 186-187; Pfenningdorf 1904: 180-181 and 186-187 („Nachschrift von Dalman"); Kon 1947: 54-62; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁷⁰² Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁷⁰³ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁷⁰⁴ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁷⁰⁵ Schick 1897: 187; Pfenningdorf 1904: 180-181.

⁷⁰⁶ Schick 1897: 187; Pfenningdorf 1904: 180-181; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 232.

⁷⁰⁷ Jacoby 1998: 460.

⁷⁰⁸ Kon 1947: 54-62. See also Barish 1983: 192-198 for his summary and assessment of Kon's reconstruction.

⁷⁰⁹ Kon 1947: 56.

⁷¹⁰ Kon 1947: 56-57.

⁷¹¹ See also that Kon 1947: 60-62 tentatively resorts to Heron of Alexandria, *Pneumatica* 1.38-39 (his description of temple doors opening by steam power) as to a distant parallel to enforce the possibility of the existence of a similar mechanism in *Le Tombeau des Rois*.

⁷¹² Fedak 1990: 146.

⁷¹³ A similar conclusion is drawn by J.-S. Caillou in his forthcoming study of this site (personal communication on 3 February 2012).

⁷¹⁴ Jacoby 1998: 462-462; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷¹⁵ There are two main systems of counting/naming chambers in the burial complex. The first comes from Vincent/Steve and is followed here (so does Jacoby 1998), the second was suggested by Kon 1947 and is later used by Kloner/Zissu 2007.

⁷¹⁶ Jacoby 1998: 462-462; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷¹⁷ Jacoby 1998: 462-462; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷¹⁸ Jacoby 1998: 462-462; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

The chambers are equipped with various numbers of the two common types of burial installations cut into the rock – *kokhim* and *arcosolia*. Chamber F has burial installations cut on two levels in the southern, western and northern walls⁷¹⁹. On the upper level, there is a tall entrance in the center of each wall that leads to a room wherein three *arcosolia* are cut into each of the three walls⁷²⁰. On both sides of each tall entrance, on the lower level, there are two smaller shafts, usually called *kokhim*⁷²¹. At the bottom of the middle northern *kokh* of chamber F, there is a shaft descending to chamber G. Chamber G contains one *arcosolium* in the western wall and two shelves in the northern wall⁷²². Chamber B has six *kokhim* in its southern and eastern walls, three in each wall⁷²³. In the northwest corner of the floor of Chamber B there is a stepped passage descending to Chamber C that contains three *arcosolia*, one in each wall⁷²⁴. Chamber D also contains six *kokhim* in its southern and western walls, three in each wall, its narrow stepped passage leading to Chamber E is located at the bottom of the northern wall⁷²⁵. Chamber E is likewise provided with three *arcosolia*, one in each wall⁷²⁶. Chamber H is most irregular in that it lacks any burial installations⁷²⁷. Lastly, chambers G and H are architecturally unfinished⁷²⁸.

In the floor of all chambers of the upper levels, standing pits surrounded by ledges can be found, similarly, in most *kokhim* attached to these chambers, depressions are hewn in their floors⁷²⁹. In both cases, they are apparently created to drain water seeping through the rock⁷³⁰. Besides this, smaller *kokhim* were cut in the walls of some *kokhim* of chambers B, D, and F⁷³¹. They were probably used as ossuary repositories⁷³². All in all, a spacious complex like *Le Tombeau des Rois* was clearly intended for the burial of many corpses whose number can be approximately estimated between 40 and 50⁷³³.

There are two different ideas of how to interpret the overall layout of the burial complex. According to Vincent/Steve, chambers G and H are later additions, and hence chamber F was the central chamber⁷³⁴. In contrast, Kon and others following him suggested that chamber G was the central chamber since it is located in the depth of the rock and exactly on the axis created by the center of the ornamented façade⁷³⁵.

7.2.4.3. Objects Found by the Excavators

De Saulcy's exploration of the burial complex unveiled a number of objects: fragments of ossuaries, pottery vessels, oil-lamps, glass and alabaster vessels, fragments of gold jewelry, coins, a figurine, jars containing cremated bones, and finally several decorated sarcophagi together with additional sarcophagus lids and other sarcophagus fragments. Let us first turn to the artifacts whose

⁷¹⁹ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷²⁰ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷²¹ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷²² This is following Jacoby 1998: 462: the northern niche is not shaped to the form of an *arcosolium* (autopsy 3rd February, 2012). Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233, however, sees two *arcosolia* in its western and northern walls, one in each wall.

⁷²³ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷²⁴ Jacoby 1998: 461-462; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷²⁵ Jacoby 1998: 462; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷²⁶ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷²⁷ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷²⁸ Vincent/Steve 1954: 348; Küchler 2007: 994.

⁷²⁹ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷³⁰ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷³¹ Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

⁷³² Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233; Minos 1911: 22 suggested that they were designed for the deposits of children's bodies.

⁷³³ Barish 1983: 166 suggests "forty", Kloner/Zissu 2007: 234 in turn speaks about "fifty" primary burial places.

⁷³⁴ Vincent/Steve 1954: 346-362.

⁷³⁵ Kon 1947: 68; Jacoby 1998: 462; Kloner/Zissu 2007: 233.

interpretation can be of direct importance for our understanding and identification of the whole burial complex.

1. Generally speaking, the ceramic objects are said to represent the Herodian style of art⁷³⁶. There is especially one remarkable object. It is a jar handle bearing the Hebrew inscription הלניא . This object was discussed by Euting in 1885⁷³⁷, and even at that time its provenience was not very clear⁷³⁸. It was claimed to come from de Saulcy's excavations, but de Saulcy did not list it among his findings. What is more, after the publication of Euting, the object has never been reported again, and it seems to have disappeared as mysteriously as it appeared at the beginning. The script is definitely a later development of Hebrew, but looks like an attempt to imitate the archaic Hebrew. Taking account of the late form of script and the suspicious appearance of the object, we consider the object as not authentic⁷³⁹. It is rather a forgery being itself an early witness for the interpretation of the burial complex as belonging to Queen Helena of Adiabene, created as a result of the renewed interest in the tomb in the 1880s during negotiations over the purchase of the complex between the Ferraræ family and the French state⁷⁴⁰.

2. The excavations unveiled a number of coins found at different locations in the whole complex. Of special importance to us are the coins found inside the burial chambers. It is in fact a group of 13 pieces of coinage, the oldest being the coin struck by Herod and the latest coins come from the 3rd year of the Jewish uprising, that is 68/69 CE⁷⁴¹. This finding sets the general context for the last stage of the Jewish occupation of the site before the Roman siege of Jerusalem, but, because the inner chambers did not remain intact for centuries, and its archaeological substance witnessed many subsequent intrusions, we cannot say anything precise about the latest moments of the structure and of its only intact sarcophagus⁷⁴².

3. The deposit in the central hall of the chamber complex contained a number of artifacts of indisputably non-Jewish cultural background. In the first place, those are a small figurine of triple Hecate and urnae containing cremated bones. Hecate is a Greco-Roman chthonic goddess, being regarded as queen of the underworld⁷⁴³, while cremation of bodies is a rare phenomenon in Greco-Roman Palestine even among the non-Jewish population and is usually connected to Roman soldiers⁷⁴⁴. Both finds show that the burial complex was used by non-Jews as a sacred burial place at some point after 70 CE.

4. De Saulcy unearthed a number of sarcophagi or their parts. Thus, in this category we have the following objects (all stored in the Louvre Museum now⁷⁴⁵): (1) a decorated sarcophagus with a vaulted lid (no. 5036)⁷⁴⁶; (2) a fragment of a semi-circular lid (no. 5046, perhaps it belongs to the previous sarcophagus chest (the same kind of ornamentation)⁷⁴⁷; (3) a vaulted sarcophagus lid (no. 5057)⁷⁴⁸; (4) a semi-cylindrical sarcophagus lid (no. 5045)⁷⁴⁹; (5) fragments of a

⁷³⁶ Vincent/Steve 1954: 352; Küchler 2007: 987.

⁷³⁷ Euting 1855: 679, no. 44.

⁷³⁸ This item is also mentioned by Schürer 1909: 122 but ignored by Vermes/Millar/Goodman 1986: 164, n. 66.

⁷³⁹ Vincent/Steve 1954: 361-362.

⁷⁴⁰ Vincent/Steve 1954: 361-362.

⁷⁴¹ De Saulcy 1865a: 315.

⁷⁴² By contrast, see Vincent/Steve 1954: 350, 354-355, 360 who points to the fact that the passage to the secret chamber was filled with ossuary fragments and partial human remains (de Saulcy 1865b: 375-376) and that the sarcophagus lid was mutilated at its edges. Vincent/Steve thinks that these circumstances testify to a great deal of haste on the side of those who transferred the coffin of Queen Zedah/Zadan to the secret chamber. Consequently, he suggests that the final moment for transferring the Zadan coffin to the secret chamber and closing it was on the eve of the arrival of Roman forces.

⁷⁴³ Berg 1974: 128-140.

⁷⁴⁴ See Kloner/Zissu 2007: 234; Rocca 2008: 261-262; Kloner 2003: 44*.

⁷⁴⁵ Artifact numbers given below refer to the Louvre catalogue.

⁷⁴⁶ Hachlili 2005: 120, no. 6; Dassaud 1912: 55-56, no. 3.

⁷⁴⁷ Hachlili 2005: 121, no. 7; Dassaud 1912: 43, no. 27.

⁷⁴⁸ Hachlili 2005: 122, no. 11; Dassaud 1912: 42, no. 26.

sarcophagus (no. 5978)⁷⁵⁰. The decoration of sarcophagi consists mainly of motifs of rosettes, discs and blocked-out panels. Only one sarcophagus (no. 6) bears an inscription (no. 5029). It is the most well-known object among de Saulcy's findings, and therefore we shall devote more attention to it soon.

What is more, Hachlili identifies three other sarcophagi as derived from *Le Tombeau des Rois*: a sarcophagus chest, today situated in front of the Islamic museum on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem⁷⁵¹; an unfinished sarcophagus now used as the water trough of the fountain in Hai-Gai Street in Jerusalem⁷⁵²; and finally a sarcophagus chest now part of the Qayat-Bay fountain on the Temple Mount⁷⁵³. However, we are unable to accurately trace the origin of these artifacts, and no references to them can be found in de Saulcy's publications. Consequently, despite a general resemblance in decoration motifs between them and the objects stored in the Louvre, we cannot identify them as deriving from *Le Tombeau des Rois*.

Stone sarcophagi are rare in the Second Temple period (compared to the number of preserved ossuaries), previously only about 20 were discovered in the Jerusalem area⁷⁵⁴, and recently the excavations in Herodion revealed (fragments of) three more sarcophagi⁷⁵⁵. The ornamentation of all the sarcophagi found in *Le Tombeau des Rois* is similar to that used in other funeral arts of the Second Temple Period (especially in other ossuaria and sarcophagi), and consequently it confirms a general dating for the primary use of the structure in the pre-70 CE period.

7.2.4.4. Sarcophagus no. 5029 and its Inscription

The sarcophagus no. 5029 is made of stone, its length is 2.05 m, and the height is 0.57 m⁷⁵⁶. A gabled plain lid is also preserved, it is 0.35 m high⁷⁵⁷. The sarcophagus has sunken panels with six blocked-out discs on all sides of the chest, two on the front and back and one on each side⁷⁵⁸. No other ornamentation than the discs is present⁷⁵⁹. At the moment of its discovery, the sarcophagus was still sealed⁷⁶⁰. After having removed the lid, a skeleton 1.60 m long could be seen inside, its head was laid upon a pad, the corpse laid on a background of soil with both hands crossed on the womb⁷⁶¹. After a while, the skeleton vanished into dust with only a few jewelry objects and remains of vestment left⁷⁶². On the basis of the anthropological analysis (conducted in the 19th c. on very fragmentary remains), as well as the character of findings (jewelry and remains of vestments), the skeleton was identified by the first excavators as female⁷⁶³. Finally, a two-line inscription was found on the front of the sarcophagus between two discs⁷⁶⁴:

⁷⁴⁹ Dussaud 1912: 46, no. 31.

⁷⁵⁰ Dussaud 1912: 46, no. 32.

⁷⁵¹ Hachlili 2005: 120, no. 7.

⁷⁵² Hachlili 2005: 122, no. 9.

⁷⁵³ Hachlili 2005: 122, no. 10.

⁷⁵⁴ Hachlili 2005: 115.

⁷⁵⁵ Netzer/Kalman/Porath/Chachy-Laureys 2010: 93.

⁷⁵⁶ Dussaud 1912: 44.

⁷⁵⁷ De Vogüé 1889: 178; Dussaud 1912: 44.

⁷⁵⁸ Hachlili 2005: 123.

⁷⁵⁹ De Vogüé 1889:178; Dussaud 1912: 44.

⁷⁶⁰ De Vogüé 1889: 178; Dussaud 1912: 44.

⁷⁶¹ De Vogüé 1889: 178; Dussaud 1912: 44.

⁷⁶² De Vogüé 1889: 178; Dussaud 1912: 44.

⁷⁶³ De Saulcy 1872: 316-322 (who publishes the analysis of doctor Pruner-Bey); Dussaud 1912: 44-45.

⁷⁶⁴ The transcription according to Renan 1865: 551-552; Chwolson 1882: 72; de Vogüé 1889: 179; Dussaud 1912: 43; Schürer 1909: 170-171, n. 65; Frey 1952: 321; Vermes/Millar/Goodman 1986: 164, n. 66. A good picture that, at least to some extent, enables us to verify the transcription can be found in Frey 1952: 321.

צדן מלכתא
צדה מלכתה

In both cases, the language seems to be Aramaic, but engraved in two different scripts⁷⁶⁵. The first line is said to be written in a script close to Syriac (*Estrangela*), while the second line is acknowledged as a Palestinian form of Aramaic⁷⁶⁶. The reading of the second letter in both lines is problematic, since *daleth* and *resh* are hardly distinguishable⁷⁶⁷. However, most scholars read *daleth* and not *resh*⁷⁶⁸. It was especially W.F. Albright who came forcefully in favor of reading *resh* instead of *daleth*⁷⁶⁹ and was followed by N. Avigad⁷⁷⁰.

The inscription is variously dated. Lenormant dated the inscription to the first half of the 1st c. CE⁷⁷¹, Avigad dated the inscription to around 50 CE⁷⁷², and finally Pirenne thought that the early 3rd c. CE is the most probable setting⁷⁷³. Although Pirenne's dating is the latest and most thorough, her analysis is mainly based on three out of eight letters contained in the inscription. The comparable material for the other five letters is either much later or absent⁷⁷⁴. Thus, we conclude that the paleographical dating does not give us a definite answer and in the present state of our knowledge on the early Syriac script cannot be decisive.

The personal name on the sarcophagus provided a great deal of scholarly discussion. It is female and apparently Semitic, but its precise meaning and provenance is disputed. Renan and de Vogüé were the first who suggested that the name could be best understood in the light of Semitic parallels, especially Punic and Syrian names⁷⁷⁵. The closest parallel is a Punic female name - צדן found in the ruins of Carthage⁷⁷⁶. Other parallels are the following⁷⁷⁷: two names rendered in the Greek language: ΣΑΔΔΑ (from the vicinity of Damascus)⁷⁷⁸, ΣΑΔΔΑΘΟΣ (from Hauran)⁷⁷⁹, a certain Nicolaus Saddane from the monastery Deir el-Qala'a⁷⁸⁰ and finally Punic compound names containing a theophoric element צד like צדמלקרת צדיתן, צדתנת, עברצר, נרצר⁷⁸¹.

⁷⁶⁵ There is actually a lot of terminological confusion in the literature that first consists of mistaking (or ignoring the difference between) language for script or reversely, and secondly different names are given to describe both scripts: Beyer 1984: 342-343 speaks of the lines in "ostmesopotamisch" and "alt-judäisch" (but see also Beyer 2004: 28: „die der syrischen und palmyrenischen (aber nicht der ostmesopotamischen oder parthischen!) ähnliche Schrift..."); Altheim-Stiehl 1965:69-70 speak about the Aramaic language expressed in "einheimischem Alphabet" (in the case of the upper line) and in "hebräischen Zeichen" (when it comes to the lower line). Hachlili 2005: 121 – "two inscriptions are engraved in Aramaic and Syriac", however the names in both lines are mistakenly interchanged in Hachlili's transcription. Some scholars tend to call the lower script/language Hebrew: Albright 1937:159, n. 41 calls the second line "Hebrew transcription" - so do Chwolson 1882:72; Clermont-Ganneau 1884/1885: 91; Lidzbarski 1962: 171.

⁷⁶⁶ Renan 1865: 551-552; de Vogüé 1889: 179; Dussaud 1912:43; Schürer 1909:170-171, n. 65; Naveh 1975: 122; Vermes/Millar/Goodman 1986: 164, n. 66; Fitzmyer/Harrington 1978: 132. Take notice that while Schürer 1909: 170-171, n. 65 still could write of "echt Syrisch (Estrangelo)", there is nowadays a tendency to underscore some variety in early Syriac scripts labeled as *Estrangelo* – see esp. Naveh 1975:122-124; Drijvers/Healey 1999: 1-21. Consequently, it is more appropriate to interpret the first line of the inscription as "close to Estrangelo" like in Vermes/Millar/Goodman 1986: 164, n. 66.

⁷⁶⁷ Renan 1865:559; Chwolson 1882:72; Beyer 1984: 343.

⁷⁶⁸ Pirenne 1963: 102.

⁷⁶⁹ Albright 1937: 159, n. 41; Naveh 1975:122.

⁷⁷⁰ Avigad 1958: 78.

⁷⁷¹ Lenormant 1872b: 8.

⁷⁷² Avigad 1958: 78. However, as he puts it himself, "on historical grounds". This expression is not explained later, and Avigad seems to be Rahmani's source of dating, since she too has the date of around 50 CE – Rahmani 1982: 48.

⁷⁷³ Pirenne 1963: 101-115.

⁷⁷⁴ Altheim/Stiehl 1965: 69-70.

⁷⁷⁵ Renan 1865: 550-560.

⁷⁷⁶ Renan 1881: 348-349 (no. 273).

⁷⁷⁷ De Vogüé 1889: 178-180 (no. 156).

⁷⁷⁸ Boeckhio/Franzius 1853: no. 4519.

⁷⁷⁹ Wetzstein 1864: 283, no. 65.

⁷⁸⁰ Clermont-Ganneau 1888: 106-108; Clermont-Ganneau 1898: 256-257 and n. 1.

⁷⁸¹ Renan 1881: 122-124 (no. 102).

W.F. Albright, who reads צרן instead of צרין, thinks that the name goes back to the middle-Iranian *čârân from the stem čahâr, čâr meaning “four”.⁷⁸² In turn, Altheim/Stiehl find the name to be of Arabic origin meaning “das Dürsten, der Durst”. Altheim-Stiehl point to a Nabatean name quoted by Cantineau: אל-צריי⁷⁸³. According to Cantineau, its closest Arabic parallel is šudayyun, šudā’un⁷⁸⁴. Consequently, this Arabic version would be corresponding to the Greek name of Izates’ mother since the latter means “beautiful and seducing” and the former – “thirst” in the erotic sense⁷⁸⁵. To enforce the idea of the Arabic origin of צרין, Altheim-Stiehl point to the fact that two other Adiabeneans bear Arabic name: first, Nabataios (Chagiras’ father) in Bell. 5:474⁷⁸⁶, and secondly, Mār Uḫba, one of the Talmudic scholars from Arbela⁷⁸⁷.

All in all, the provenance of the name צרין/צרה is not entirely clear, but it is likely of Semitic rather than of Iranian origin, since the closest parallels come from a range of Semitic (Punic and Syrian) names. The paleographical resemblance of the first line to Estrangela and the linguistic resemblance of the name to Semitic parallels (as well as the fact that Palestinian speakers preferred to reread it in the second line by adding the suffixes more familiar to them) suggest Syria and the Upper and Middle Euphrates and Tigris region as its most likely geographical and cultural background. This does not, however, mean that it helps us pin down the very specific ethnic origin of its holder; even less does it enable us to suggest the specific identity of the person interred in the sarcophagus.

7.2.4.5. The Identification of *Le Tombeau des Rois*

Last of all, we set to answer the question whether *Le Tombeau des Rois* can be identified with the mausoleum of Helena mentioned in ancient sources⁷⁸⁸. Here, however, two issues have to be considered separately. The first is the identity of the structure itself; the second is the identity of the female remains found in the sarcophagus. The positive identification in the first case does not necessarily mean that the only intact sarcophagus found in *Le Tombeau des Rois* housed the body of Queen Helena. Since the tomb was a spacious burial complex designed for many family members, and several sarcophagi or their remains were found inside the chambers, the sarcophagus could well belong to any member of the Adiabene royalty.

As far as the identification of the burial complex is concerned, three issues will be considered: the location, the pyramids and the entrance to the burial chambers. Especially the last two features are described by Josephus and Pausanias as most eye-catching and as a result can provide a decisive criterion for our identification. Lastly, as for the identity of the female remains, the interpretation of the sarcophagus inscription in its historical context will be of primary importance.

7.2.4.5.1. The Location

Most of our knowledge on the location of Helena’s mausoleum comes from Josephus (both *Bell.* and *Ant.*), but one detail is supplied by Jerome. Jerome’s evidence is as straightforward as it is non-decisive – Helena’s mausoleum was located east of the present Nablus Road and this is true for *le Tombeau des Rois*, but is also true for a number of archaeological remains of sepulchral character in today’s Jerusalem (*Tomb of Simon the Just*, tombs in *St Stephen’s Church*, *Garden*

⁷⁸² Albright 1937: 159, n. 41.

⁷⁸³ Cantineau 1932: 139.

⁷⁸⁴ Cantineau 1932: 139.

⁷⁸⁵ Altheim-Stiehl 1965: 69.

⁷⁸⁶ Altheim-Stiehl 1965: 69.

⁷⁸⁷ Altheim-Stiehl 1965: 69.

⁷⁸⁸ Thus, we focus on the most frequently suggested identification leaving aside other identifications such as the *Royal Caverns*, *the tomb of the family of Herod*.

Tomb). Thus, Jerome's contribution alone is not decisive; it can be useful but only in addition to other arguments.

As for Josephus' references in *Bell.*, he gives us a few important clues, but all of them are weakened by one factor – they are referred to the most-northern wall of Jerusalem (known as the third wall or Agrippa's wall) which has not been preserved well enough and whose identification is a notorious archaeological problem⁷⁸⁹. In short, we have two main theories as to where this wall was located. One option suggests that the third wall was located beneath the present northern wall built by Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th c. CE (also called the Turkish wall). This identification has been advanced by, among others, L.H. Vincent, J. Simons, K. Kenyon and G.J. Wightman⁷⁹⁰. The other option maintains that the third wall can only be identified with another structure, uncovered by archaeologists in the 1925 and 1927 seasons about 450 m north of Suleiman's wall. This wall was named the Sukenik-Mayer wall, after its earliest excavators⁷⁹¹. It includes a line of wall remains for a total length of some 800 m running west-east. The advocates of the first option suggest that the Sukenik-Mayer wall was e.g. the siege wall or circumvallation wall (Kenyon) built by the Roman legions during the siege of Jerusalem⁷⁹², or a barrier wall built by the insurgents (Hamrick)⁷⁹³. It seems that the Sukenik-Mayer theory currently prevails, though the debate is not completely settled⁷⁹⁴.

Since the location of the third wall is not entirely clear, even less certain are the locations of its individual parts – “the Women's Tower” and “the Tower of Psephinos”. “The Women's Tower” is mentioned by Josephus only with regard to “the Monuments of Helena” (5:15 and 5:519). Of not much help are the prepositions Josephus employs to describe the relation between the two structures, as we have seen above (p. 109), both ἀντικρῦ (“opposite”) and μέχρι (“as far as”) employed by Josephus in *Bell.* 5:55 and 5:119 respectively can be used for both long and short distances⁷⁹⁵.

The tower of Psephinos is somewhat easier to deal with in the sense that this structure is clearly located by Josephus at the NW bend of the third wall. Consequently, a few locations have been suggested, most frequently accepted is that by Avi-Yonah⁷⁹⁶, who (in accordance with the Sukenik-Mayer theory) locates the Tower of Psephinos at the rock quarry along the present day Monbaz street, since it is probably the only place in Jerusalem (an elevation of ca. 798 m) from where a ca. 35 m high tower could overlook the Romema Hill (829 m the highest point in the Jerusalem area west of the Kidron Valley)⁷⁹⁷, and so do justice to Josephus' statement that from that tower one could see both Arabia and the Sea (Mediterranean)⁷⁹⁸. However, since the wall apparently ran a few hundred meters eastwards from that point on, the structure located at its very beginning is not very helpful in locating other structures located alongside such a long extension⁷⁹⁹. There might be quite a space between the Tower of Psephinos and another landmark worthy of recalling (which happens to be Helena's mausoleum in Josephus' *Bell.*).

⁷⁸⁹ For a short introduction, see E. Stern 1993: 744-746.

⁷⁹⁰ Simons 1952: 282-343; Vincent/Steve 1954: 114-174; Kenyon 1967b: 155-186; Wightman 1989: 35-43, 100-103.

⁷⁹¹ Though it was Robinson in 1838 who as the first identified on his travel some remains of that structure. See Sukenik/Mayer 1930 and others who have followed this identification, especially Avi-Yonah 1968, Ben-Arieh/Netzer 1974; Kloner 1986.

⁷⁹² Kenyon 1974: 250-255.

⁷⁹³ Hamrick 1985: 225-226, 230-232.

⁷⁹⁴ Especially that the Sukenik-Mayer wall lacks remains of returns to the south and there can hardly be found any traces of the 1st c. CE settlement north of the Turkish wall. For that problem, see e.g. Shanks 1987: 54-57.

⁷⁹⁵ Avi-Yonah 1968: 120-121; Hamrick 1985: 228.

⁷⁹⁶ Avi-Yonah 1968: 107.

⁷⁹⁷ Avi-Yonah 1968: 107. By contrast, Benoit 1976: 113 and Hamrick 1985: 228 consider Josephus' description as hyperbolic.

⁷⁹⁸ Likewise Barish 1983: 194.

⁷⁹⁹ Likewise Hamrick 1985: 228 who points out that Helena's mausoleum happened to be the only really significant landmark north of Jerusalem.

Finally, the third structure mentioned by Josephus in Bell. with regard to “Helena’s Monuments” is σπήλαιον βασιλικόν. The Greek term σπήλαιον means a grotto, cave, cavern, not necessarily of sepulchral character⁸⁰⁰. Unlike the two previous towers, σπήλαιον βασιλικόν is not an integral part of the third wall, but a landmark referred to by Josephus as located alongside the wall. Its identifications so far referred to a number of places: *Le Tombeau des Rois*⁸⁰¹, the tombs in the *Monastery of St. Etienne*⁸⁰², and *Solomon’s Quarry* (also called *the Cave of Zedekiah*) with its northern continuation, *Jeremiah’s Grotto*⁸⁰³. The last hypothesis is most widely held⁸⁰⁴. Here, however, the subtleties of the Greek of Bell. 5:147 have to be recalled again. Literally, the wall is said to descend opposite the monuments of Helena ... and to proceed διὰ the royal caverns”. The preposition διὰ can be understood as either “past” or “through”⁸⁰⁵. If the reading “through” is to be preferred, then either the *Royal Caverns* cannot be identified with *Solomon’s Quarry* and *Jeremiah’s Grotto*, or the third wall could indeed follow the line of the Turkish wall⁸⁰⁶. Nevertheless, both readings of Bell. 5:147 are equally possible (“past” or “through”), and so the decisive argument for the identification of *Royal Caverns* and the third wall (and consequently Helena’s mausoleum) cannot be found here.

Since Josephus’ data in Bell. is not going to give us the final say on the matter, perhaps this can be achieved thanks to Josephus’ Ant. 20:95 where he delivers only one, but very specific detail, not present elsewhere - Helena’s mausoleum is located three stadia from the city of Jerusalem. A Greek stadion counted ca. 600 Greek feet, and about 1/8 of a Roman mile⁸⁰⁷. Thus, three stadia account for ca. 555 m⁸⁰⁸. Therefore, if one measures the distance between *Le Tombeau des Rois*, and the Sukenik-Mayer line, the distance is only 250 m., and this is definitely too close⁸⁰⁹. However, if one assumes that the third line is below the present northern wall, it is then around 700 m. (counting from the Damascus Gate), but this is too far⁸¹⁰. Of course, one should notice that there were several different lengths of ancient “feet”⁸¹¹, but in the case of a distance of only three stadia, this would not make a lot of difference. Remarkably, M. Kon found a point at the north-eastern extension of the present Turkish wall, past the Damascus Gate, where he measured only 580 m to *Le Tombeau des Rois*⁸¹². This is quite close, but, we must notice that the ancient course of the wall below today’s Turkish wall is not well known to modern archaeologists either⁸¹³, thus, a place chosen for such measurements relative to the Turkish wall can only be a matter of conjecture.

Yet, perhaps it is not the third wall from which three stadia should be counted since Josephus speaks of the distance from the city of Jerusalem (τρία στάδια τῆς Ἱεροσολυμιτῶν πόλεως ἀπεχούσας). In the 1st c. CE Jerusalem expanded north and the third wall was built only by king Herod Agrippa I in 41-44 CE (Bell. 2:219, 5:151-152; Ant. 19:326). Therefore, Josephus may have been inclined to count from the city of Jerusalem itself, which meant the older part of Jerusalem excluding the northern suburbs enclosed only by king Agrippa I⁸¹⁴. Indeed, Josephus happens to distinguish between the “City of Jerusalem” (within the Second Wall) and the “New City” (Bell.

⁸⁰⁰ Liddell/Scott/Jones 1986: 1627.

⁸⁰¹ Clarke 1938: 84-104. See also Guerin 1889: 263-265.

⁸⁰² Kloner 1986: 121-129.

⁸⁰³ Simons 1952: 13-14; 461 and n. 1; Avi-Yonah 1968: 121; Benoit 1976: 114; Hamrick 1985: 228.

⁸⁰⁴ Simons 1952: 13-14; 461 and n. 1; Avi-Yonah 1968: 121; Benoit 1976: 114; Hamrick 1985: 228.

⁸⁰⁵ Avi-Yonah 1968: 120-121.

⁸⁰⁶ Avi-Yonah 1968: 120-121.

⁸⁰⁷ Liddell/Scott/Jones 1986: 1631.

⁸⁰⁸ Avi-Yonah 1968: 121; Barish 1983: 186.

⁸⁰⁹ Avi-Yonah 1968: 121; Hamrick 1985: 228; Barish 1983: 185.

⁸¹⁰ Avi-Yonah 1968: 121; Hamrick 1985: 228; Barish 1983: 185 (who counts 730 m from the Damascus Gate).

⁸¹¹ Grafman 1970: 60-66; Broshi 1982: 379, n. 1.

⁸¹² Kon 1947: 5.

⁸¹³ J.J. Price 1992:292; E. Stern 1993: 736.

⁸¹⁴ Clarke 1938: 93-94; Kon 1947: 2-4; Simon 1952: 57-59; Barish 1983: 185-186.

2:320; 2:530; 5:149-151; 5:246; 5:504)⁸¹⁵. The language of Ant. 20:95 clearly points to the “City of Jerusalem”, and consequently, it is probable that Josephus gave the distance measured from that point and not from the third wall⁸¹⁶. If so, the second wall could be a reference point⁸¹⁷. Yet, the identification of the second wall is not beyond doubt either⁸¹⁸. In the first place, its location is connected with the discussion on the third wall, and so it is located either below the present Turkish Wall, or much further south⁸¹⁹. However, in either case, its precise course is barely documented⁸²⁰.

Finally, as far as we can verify Josephus’ geographical and topographical knowledge in other cases, he is sometimes correct, but can also be badly mistaken. Thus, Josephus cannot be expected to deliver absolute accuracy when it comes to geographical and topographical details including numbers⁸²¹. Therefore, not only do we not consider the problem of the distance of Helena’s mausoleum from Jerusalem to be definitively solved, but we do not think either that it has the potential to deliver the final say on the matter, since Josephus might have been simply imprecise in his measurements. Thus, we must remain with the conclusion that available geographical and topographical evidence provided by ancient sources allows only an approximate location of Helena’s mausoleum, and that *Le Tombeau des Rois* is located in the general vicinity of that approximate location.

7.2.4.5.2. The Pyramids

Secondly, the most prominent feature ascribed by Josephus to Helena’s resting place is its ornamentation in the form of three pyramids (Ant. 20:95). The problem is that *Le Tombeau des Rois* in the present shape lacks any sort of such ornamentation and de Saulcy has not reported any remains of such structures during his excavation either. This has been justified by some scholars who claimed that the pyramids must have been dismantled, e.g. by the Roman forces when they decided to move the Roman camp from Mount Scopus closer to the walls (Bell. 5: 106-108)⁸²². Before the Romans could do that, they had to clear and level the area between Scopus and the walls (Bell. 5:106-108, 130). Some support for this idea could perhaps be found in Pausanias who uses the terminology that at first sight seems to be at variance with Josephus’ terminology. Namely, Pausanias’ τᾶφος is remarkable since it is a singular form while Josephus always uses plural forms to name Helena’s resting place. Thus, in Josephus’ times Helena’s mausoleum featured three pyramids, but after 70 CE they may have been gone for good and that is why Pausanias uses τᾶφος - the singular form to refer to Helena’s mausoleum. However, three arguments are weighed against this theory. First, the term τᾶφος is a very general term used for many types of sepulchral places, and can in fact refer to the sepulchral nature of a place rather than to its architectural characteristics⁸²³. Secondly, the same singular term τᾶφος is used by Pausanias for *Mausoleum* in Halicarnassos that is otherwise known to be a multiple-pyramidal structure⁸²⁴. Pausanias clearly does not see any problem in calling such structures with a very general and singular in form term. Thirdly, in Eusebius in the 4th c. CE, we again find a plural form in the description of Helena’s resting place - στήλαι which suggests at least two pieces of stone block, or

⁸¹⁵ Simon 1952: 57-59.

⁸¹⁶ Barish 1983: 185.

⁸¹⁷ Barish 1983: 185.

⁸¹⁸ E. Stern 1993: 736.

⁸¹⁹ Avi-Yonah 1968: 115-125.

⁸²⁰ J.J. Price 1992:292; E. Stern 1993: 736.

⁸²¹ See Broshi 1982.

⁸²² Clarke 1938: 88-89.

⁸²³ Liddell/Scott/Jones 1986: 1761; Barish 1983: 189.

⁸²⁴ Mansel 1969: 923-924, Volkmann 1969: 1100.

even more⁸²⁵. Thus, to fit the identification with Helena's mausoleum, one cannot easily dismiss the necessity for *Le Tombeau des Rois* to have such architectural elements, or at least one has to be able to reasonably explain their absence.

Indeed, some archaeologists claimed to have found remains of pyramidal structures in *Le Tombeau des Rois*. The first publication that contains such a statement was that by Warren and Conder who claimed that remains resembling the pyramid over the *Tomb of Zechariah* were found during the excavations. Yet, the authors do not support this statement by any documentation (drawings or photos), nor do they acknowledge the source of their information⁸²⁶. In turn, Schick even described briefly several stones that, according to him, could belong to the upper parts of pyramids resembling *Absalom's Tomb* in particular⁸²⁷. Unfortunately, Schick has never published his sketches referred to in the paper. It was only Kon and Vincent⁸²⁸ who backed up similar ideas by a thorough discussion and publication of sketches, including photographs. Both scholars turned attention to stones that are conical in shape and so could well fit a conical structure like that atop *Absalom's Tomb*⁸²⁹. Secondly, there is a number of preserved parts of columns that are of Doric style and as such do not fit the columns of Ionic style clearly employed in the vestibule. Therefore, they had to be placed elsewhere in the burial complex, and Kon and Vincent suggest that their place was in the structure supporting the pyramids like in *Absalom's Tomb*⁸³⁰. What are we to make of Kon's and Vincent's contributions? On the one hand, we must notice that they relied on material whose provenance in the 1940s and 1950s could not be definitely verified (since it was almost a century after de Saulcy's excavation of the complex), and that was simply left alone afterwards and access to the area was not restricted. On the other hand, no other structure known nowadays in that vicinity has pyramids, and the deposits on which Kon and Vincent were working indeed allow a tentative reconstruction of conical structures⁸³¹. Thus, Kon's and Vincent's suggestions have some merit. Therefore, one cannot reject the identification of *Le Tombeau des Rois* with Helena's mausoleum simply on the ground that it lacks a pyramidal structure in its current shape.

7.2.4.5.3. The Entrance

Thirdly, Pausanias speaks of the existence of a special mechanism opening the entrance to the tomb of Helena. At the same time, the text suggests that Pausanias did not see the mechanism himself, but rather he relies on local tradition when it comes to the secret mechanism. This makes all efforts to confirm the existence of a secret mechanism in *Le Tombeau des Rois* a little redundant. If the access to the tomb was thought by its designers to be limited, which is most likely to be the case, it must have been secured by some means. The archaeological evidence confirms that the entrance could be blocked by a stone and, what is more, was concealed by stone slabs. Perhaps, the presence of stone slabs leveled with the pavement could make (a false) impression to outsiders, like Pausanias, that it is not possible to get inside on one's own. According to Kon, the

⁸²⁵ The only problem with this wording is that Eusebius does not use Josephus' terminology, although he clearly knows Josephus' narrative. This may be, however, due to Eusebius' stylistic needs, since earlier in the sentence he used the phrase ὁ συγγραφεὺς ἐνποιήσατο μνήμην ("the writer has commemorated") and as a result the term μνημείου/μνημεία could be stylistically superfluous in the subsequent part of the sentence (Barish 1983: 173). At any rate, Eusebius' use of the plural form of στήλη fits Josephus' choice of the other plural term, and Eusebius' term can be referred to many types of graves, including those with a pyramidal element.

⁸²⁶ Warren/Conder 1884: 405.

⁸²⁷ Schick 1897:187-188.

⁸²⁸ I do not find any reference to Kon's publications in Vincent/Steve 1954, and so I believe they followed the same procedure and reached similar conclusions independently from each other.

⁸²⁹ Kon 1947: 20-23, 74-79; Vincent/Steve 1954: 353.

⁸³⁰ Kon 1947: 75; Vincent/Steve 1954: 353, 356-358.

⁸³¹ Some stones conical in shape are still preserved in the courtyard of the burial complex. Autopsy, 3rd February 2012.

tomb could not be opened from the outside by the use of human force, this could suggest the existence of a special mechanism. Yet, Kon seems to imply that it was the only way to get inside. However, Pausanias did not say that the entrance was not possible otherwise, but that such attempts would lead to the destruction of the opening system. Further, the fact that the tomb had been looted centuries ago confirms that human force could be used to open it. What is more, the archaeological evidence in the form of deposits of Roman cultural background suggest that at some point in its history, still in the Roman period, the opening system ceased to restrict access. Unfortunately, the Roman deposits cannot be precisely dated, and the only way to reconcile its data with Pausanias' testimony is to assume that the deposit is later than Pausanias' evidence and consequently the tomb lost its opening mechanism at some point after 175 CE. All in all, Pausanias' evidence is riddled with problems, and Kon's reconstruction of the opening system is very speculative. This means for us that the issue of the entrance to the tomb cannot have the final say on the matter of its identification.

To summarize, the monuments of Helena were located in the general vicinity of *Le Tombeau des Rois*, secondly, the monuments of Helena were decorated with three pyramids, and the existence of this architectural detail can be tentatively suggested in *Le Tombeau des Rois*. Making the best of Pausanias' testimony, the entrance to the tomb of Helena was carefully restricted by means of an appropriate closing, and, very generally speaking, this is true for *Le Tombeau des Rois* too. All in all, the identification of *Le Tombeau des Rois* with the monuments of Helena is definitely likely, though far from beyond question. That said, we still face the other question – did the only intact sarcophagus discovered by de Saulcy belong to Queen Helena?

7.2.4.5.4. A Female Corpse in Sarcophagus no. 5029

According to popular opinion, the only intact sarcophagus discovered by de Saulcy belonged to Queen Helena⁸³², since the monuments were erected on her behalf and no other Jewish queen of Syrian background is known from the 1st c. CE. Therefore, the name Zadan/Zadah would be Semitic, while Helena was the Queen's Greek name, perhaps in accordance with the Hellenistic custom of holding two names – one Greek and one Semitic. However, there are a number of issues that contradict all the assumptions underlying this almost universally accepted idea. First of all, the Queen is known from Josephus under her Greek name, Ἑλένη, and the only Semitic tradition that certainly refers to her uses the name זדנה, which is apparently the Hebrew adaptation of the Greek name (the same goes for the later Syriac which likewise follows the Mishnaic Hebrew by adopting the Greek name into its own vocabulary ('ylyny, 'lny / 'ln', hlly, hl'ny, hl'n', hln', hlly)⁸³³; likewise, the name זדנה is attested in the Hebrew/Aramaic corpus of inscriptions from the 1st c. BCE-CE Jerusalem area⁸³⁴). But, the Aramaic female name carved on the sarcophagus does not represent an Aramaic equivalent of the Greek name, Ἑλένη⁸³⁵. Theoretically, there does not have to be a semantic relationship between the Greek and Semitic names of the same person, although such a relationship is attested in many cases⁸³⁶. And yet, if Helena used two names, one Semitic and one Greek, both could be expected to appear in the inscription; instead, we have two Semitic versions of the same name which is very unusual. The fact remains that the only name of Izates II's mother (Ἑλένη in Greek and זדנה in Hebrew) which we know about does not appear in the inscription, and there are no other grounds to suggest that the name Zadan/Zadah is connected to Queen Helena in any way.

⁸³² Vincent/Steve 1954: 350.

⁸³³ Payne Smith 1879: 154, 211, 233, 1001, 1016.

⁸³⁴ Cotton/Di Segni/Eck/Isaac/Misgav/Kushnir-Stein/Price/Roll/Yardeni 2011: 326, no. 303.

⁸³⁵ Chwolson 1882: 72-73 (no. 8); Vogüé 1889: 178-180 (no. 156); Frey 1952: 320-321 (no. 1388); Fitzmyer/Harrington 1978: 243-244 (no. 132).

⁸³⁶ Hengel 1973: 114-120; Victor 2010: 91-93. By contrast, see Ilan 1992: 11.

Furthermore, the Aramaic term מלכתא does not necessarily have to denote one main queen; it can also refer to any female member of royal family that nowadays would be called a princess in English (e.g. *Mekilta Beshalach* 3.8 (*Ex.* 15:2)⁸³⁷, see also Dan 5:10-11 and Song 6:8-9 for a Hebrew parallel)⁸³⁸. This simple observation opens a wide range of possibilities. Namely, Parthian harems were rich in women that bore numerous progeny to rulers. This was clearly the case in the Adiabene royal family. Helena was not the only wife of Monobazos I (*Ant.* 20:20), Izates is said to have had more than one wife (*Ant.* 20:85 and 89). Further, at least three distinctive groups of the Adiabene royalty came to live in Jerusalem. One of their female members is even known by name – Grapte who had her own palace in Jerusalem. This means that the only intact sarcophagus discovered by Saulcy could belong to any female member of the Adiabene royal family⁸³⁹. Of course, the question can be posed as to why it was the only sarcophagus that was purposefully hidden in a lower burial chamber. However, this question can be reversed by asking what happened to the other prominent member of this royal family, Izates, if *Le Tombeau des Rois* is indeed the resting place of the Adiabene royalty. In any case, the linguistic and archaeological evidence we have does not allow us to identify the interred woman in any specific way. To us, she remains an otherwise unattested female member of the Adiabene royalty if, as is likely, *Le Tombeau des Rois* can be identified with Helena's mausoleum in the first place.

7.3. The Palaces of the Adiabene Royalty

7.3.1. Introduction

In addition to Helena's *Mausoleum*, there are four places in Josephus' *Bell.* where he recalls other landmarks connected with the Adiabene royalty in Jerusalem – their palaces (see pl. VI). What is more, we have witnessed two scholarly attempts so far to identify Adiabenean palaces in the archaeological record of Jerusalem. Therefore, our present aim is two-fold. First, we will present and discuss Josephus' references, and this will be again done in two consecutive steps. For a start, we will take account of the literary and historical context of Josephus' references, and then we will attempt to glean all possible topographical and architectural data provided by Josephus. Secondly, we will present and evaluate two archaeological identifications of Adiabenean palaces suggested so far.

7.3.2. The Palaces of the Adiabene Royalty according to Josephus

The palaces of the Adiabene royalty in Jerusalem are mentioned by Josephus in a way very similar to his references to Helena's mausoleum. That is, none of these structures is described as such, but they are recalled in passing while Josephus reports on military activities during the Great Revolt⁸⁴⁰. Thus, what can be learnt from them is little more than the terminology used for the description and an approximate location (see pl. VI).

⁸³⁷ Horowitz 1970: 128.

⁸³⁸ So Lenormant 1872a: 262-263; Lenormant 1872b: 8; Barish 1983: 202 and 232, n. 121.

⁸³⁹ This conclusion is rare, but not unprecedented. To my knowledge, those who have also reached it in the 20th c. are Klein 1920: 26 and Barish 1983: 205. However, some participants of the earliest discussion were not very specific about the very identity of the interred woman (a member of the Adiabene royalty) and as such can be seen as the forerunners of such a conclusion – see e.g. Renan 1865: 550-560; Geiger 1866: 274; Chwolson 1882: 72-73. It was apparently Clermont-Ganneau 1888: 106-108 (esp. 107) and 1898: 256-257 and n. 1 who as the first made a switch from an otherwise unattested member of the Adiabene royalty to Queen Helena herself.

⁸⁴⁰ Most systematic treatments of literary evidence can be found in Vincent/Steve 1954: 235-236 and Bieberstein/Bloedhorn 1998b: 397. The second publication contains a very good bibliography.

7.3.2.1. Grapte's Palace

First, according to Bell. 4:566-569, during the siege of Jerusalem the Idumaeans broke away from the faction around John of Gischala, joined a group of high priests and turned against their former allies, driving away John and the Zealots from their positions. The Zealots are said to have been pushed away first into the palace built by “Grapte, a relative of Izas, the king of Adiabene”⁸⁴¹ (εἰς τὴν βασιλικὴν αὐλὴν κατασκευασθείσαν ὑπὸ Γραπτῆς συγγενῆς δὲ ἦν αὕτη τοῦ τῶν Ἀδιαβηνῶν βασιλέως Ἰζᾶ) and then into the Temple compound (Bell. 4:567). A name used here for the building, αὐλή can encompass a wide range of different buildings in ancient literature including an open courtyard, a farm house and a palace⁸⁴². Indeed, since this particular Adiabeneans αὐλή is referred to as βασιλική, it is no doubt a palace⁸⁴³. This is the most frequent usage of αὐλή in Josephus' writings. Josephus employs αὐλή 49 times in all his writings. Although αὐλή can be used for courtyards (within a palace): “broad spaces for camps” within Antonia (Bell. 5:241), open spaces within Hyrkanus' palace where water basins and gardens were situated (Ant. 12:231-233), or inner courts of the Temple in Jerusalem (Bell. 5:227), it is most often a royal palace. Furthermore, Josephus uses αὐλή for places where royal courts were held or even as a synonym of the king's justice itself (Ant. 10:91; Ant. 11:222,244,246,251,252,256; Ant. 12:47, 12:106, 12:185, Ant. 13:53). Αὐλή is also used as a synonym of the social life in a palace (Ant. 12:215; 16:133, 16:241, 16:295 Bell. 1:568). Above all, this term is used for the main palace of Herod the Great in Jerusalem (Ant. 15:292; Ant. 16:189; Bell. 2:328; Bell. 2:312; 2:328; 2:429; 2:431; 2:441, 2:530, 2:557, 5:176, 6:376; Vita 1:46; 1:295, 1:407) and for Herod Antipas' palace in Tiberias (Vita 1:66)⁸⁴⁴. Interestingly, αὐλή can be used for Herod's palace without the adjective βασιλική (or τοῦ βασιλέως) like in Ant. 15:73, 15:292 and Bell. 2:429, 2:431.

What else can be said about the palace of Grapte based on that short reference in Bell. 4:567? In fact, a few other observations can be made. First, the use of αὐλή can suggest a building structured around a central open-air court⁸⁴⁵. This is actually quite natural, since most royal palaces had at least one central courtyard and/or a few side courtyards⁸⁴⁶. Secondly, αὐλή can be of some defensive military significance⁸⁴⁷; especially since Herod's αὐλή in Ant. 15:292 is said by Josephus to be built as a means of protection in the case of open rebellion against him in Jerusalem. Indeed, Grapte's palace was apparently used as a stronghold by both fighting sides (Bell. 4:567-569). Thirdly, Grapte's palace, despite war-like conditions in the city, did not lose all its conveniences typical of a royal dwelling. That is why it was still used by John of Gischala, the leader of the Zealots who was accordingly criticized by Josephus as indulging in all his mundane desires. At the same time, it becomes clear to us that the royal Adiabeneans did not dwell in Grapte's palace during the siege since it was occupied by the group of John of Gischala who used it also for the secret storage of his wealth. This fact could either suggest close relations between the Zealots and the Adiabeneans (note Bell. 5:474: Chagiras the Adiabenean belonged to the other radical group) or more likely (and to the contrary) that the revolt forced the royal Adiabeneans to leave that palace and restrain themselves to other properties. Finally, as for the site of Grapte's palace, it was located in the nearest vicinity of the Temple Mount, south of it and close to the eastern slope of the *Ophel*⁸⁴⁸.

⁸⁴¹ For the name, Grapte, see chapter 11 and see below (pp. 206-207) on the title συγγενῆς.

⁸⁴² Danker 2000: 150.

⁸⁴³ Danker 2000: 150.

⁸⁴⁴ On Herod's palaces, see Nielsen 1994: 181-208; Netzer 1999:32-127; Rocca 2008: 96-127.

⁸⁴⁵ Liddell/Scott/Jones 1986: 276.

⁸⁴⁶ Nielsen 1994: 23-24; Rocca 2008: 97-98.

⁸⁴⁷ Nielsen 1994: 13-26, esp. 14, 24, 26; Rocca 2008: 119-122.

⁸⁴⁸ Vincent/Steve 1954: 236; Bieberstein/Bloedhorn 1998b: 397.

7.3.2.2. Monobazos' and Helena's Palaces

In describing the districts controlled by the sectarian groups of Simon and John, Bell. 5:252-253 mentions two other palaces of the Adiabene royalty⁸⁴⁹. Namely, the possession of Simon's fraction is said to have reached as far as the extension of the old wall, from the point where it bent eastward at Siloam to its descent to "the palace of Monobazos, the king of Adiabene beyond Euphrates" (τῆς Μονοβάζου κατέβαινε ἀλλῆς βασιλεὺς δ' οὗτος ἦν τῶν ὑπὲρ Εὐφράτην Ἀδιαβηνῶν). Further, Simon is said to be in control of part of the lower city (here also called Acra) "as far as the palace of Helena, mother of Monobazos" (μέχρι τῶν Ἑλένης βασιλείων τῆς τοῦ Μονοβάζου μητρὸς). The same palace of Helena is again mentioned in Bell. 6:355. The context of Bell. 6:355 is about the destruction of the Lower City of David by putting the fire to it by the Roman troops (Bell. 6:354-355). In Bell. 6:355 the fire is said to reach "as far as the palace of Queen Helena, which was in the middle of Acra (μέχρι τῶν Ἑλένης βασιλείων ἃ δὴ κατὰ μέσην τὴν ἄκραν ἦν). In both cases, that is Bell. 5:253 and Bell. 6:355, the structure is called βασιλείον and not ἀλλή, and its location is put as "in the middle of Acra".

While both the palace of Grapte and the palace of Monobazos in Bell. 5:252 are named ἀλλή, the palace of Helena is referred to by a term denoting a royal dwelling per se⁸⁵⁰, namely βασιλείον in both Bell. 5:253 and Bell. 6:355. That two structures (Monobazos' palace and that of Helena), seemingly of the same royal character rendered with an English word - palace, are called by Josephus with different terms within one sentence: Bell. 5:252-253, suggests that there is a difference. We are then tempted to suggest that out of the three Adiabenean palaces in Jerusalem, that of Helena was of more significance than the other two. However, a certain degree of caution is called for. Namely, Josephus may be using these terms with little consistency. This is the case with Josephus' description of Herod's palaces in Jerusalem. Herod the Great built two such structures, one a palace that was his main residence, another was the fortress Antonia that functioned as a palace too. As for Herod's main palace in Jerusalem, Josephus uses interchangeably ἀλλή and βασιλείον to name it. ἀλλή is used in Bell. 5:176, while βασιλείον appears in Bell. 5:182-183⁸⁵¹. Again, Josephus mentions that palace again in passing in Bell. 5:245 but this time as τὰ Ἡρώδου βασιλεία. Thus, in general, Josephus uses ἀλλή and βασιλείον interchangeably.

To conclude, as far as the number and location of the palaces of the Adiabene royalty are concerned, the following can be stated. First, we can find four references to palaces connected with the Adiabeneans in *Bell.* However, two of them, that is Bell. 5:253 and Bell. 6:355, refer to the same palace of Queen Helena. Thus, we have no more and no less than three different palaces of the Adiabene royalty in Jerusalem, namely the palace of Grapte, that of Monobazos and that of Helena. Second, neither is very precisely located by Josephus. Despite this, we can still get some impression about their place on the map of Jerusalem. The palaces were located within the City of David. Helena's palace was placed in the midst of the Lower City of David, whereas the palace of Monobazos was located somewhere alongside and close to the old wall. Further, the palace of Grapte was located on the Ophel too, and in the nearest vicinity of the Temple mount, more precisely south of it and close to the eastern slope of the Ophel. Lastly, although Josephus' usage of terminology concerning palace-like structures is not uniform, there may be a difference in elaborateness and significance between various Adiabenean palaces. If so, the palace of Helena was more eminent than those of Grapte and Monobazos.

⁸⁴⁹ Vincent/Steve 1954: 235-236; Bieberstein/Bloedhorn 1998b: 397.

⁸⁵⁰ Nielsen 1994: 11; Liddell/Scott/Jones 1968: 309.

⁸⁵¹ Though the switch from ἀλλή to βασιλείον for the description of that particular palace may be connected with the fact that Herod's palace was a bit unusual (see Netzer 1999: 115-124; Rocca 2008: 98) in that it did not have one central courtyard but many peristyle courtyards what could consequently make the impression of many palaces (βασιλεία) within one palace (ἀλλή).

What can Josephus' references to the palaces tell us about the Adiabene royal family itself? The palaces of the royal Adiabeneans had their own well-defined owners. Josephus is precise in naming them. One palace belonged to Grapte who is associated with Izates' royal line. Another was owned by the current king of Adiabene, Monobazos. The most eminent palace belonged to Queen Helena. This all makes us aware of the internal diversity of the Adiabene royalty that consisted of at least three distinctive groups that all had their own dwelling places in Jerusalem. What is more, the number of palaces itself, especially compared with the two palaces (only) of Herod in Jerusalem and with one of the Hasmoneans, is striking. In this respect, the Adiabeneans clearly outperformed the Hasmoneans and the Herodians who were *actual* political rulers of Judea unlike the Adiabene dynasty who lived at the time of the Roman direct rule over Judea. Yet, the question arises as to what is so special about having palaces in Jerusalem?

In the ancient world kings were known to build and live in palaces⁸⁵². Especially the Hellenistic palaces played a very special *social* role. Namely, Hellenistic palaces had not only residential functions for the royal family, but occupied an important place in the *public* sphere⁸⁵³. Accordingly, they were centers of administration, king's judiciary and ceremonial seat and even as focal points of cultural and religious life⁸⁵⁴. Surely, not all functions could be played by a palace belonging to the Adiabene royal family under the Roman rule in Judea⁸⁵⁵. Nevertheless, even building a palace itself was in fact an act of royal euergetism that provided people with work, and contributed to the architectonic landscape, and created a place for a king among *his* people to exercise his royal duties⁸⁵⁶. Further, a palace can be seen as significant not only from the point of view of royal subjects, but was also important for displaying a ruler's royal image⁸⁵⁷. Building a palace, a dominant feature of landscape, was a good way of displaying one's legitimate political leadership. Thus, a palace served as a symbol of one's royal status. Taking into account this streak of the Hellenistic royal ideology, we can conclude that Josephus' references to three palaces of the Adiabene dynasty in Jerusalem, a city of many kings, add another feature to the image of that royal family. Namely, they show the deeply legitimized presence of the Adiabene royal house in the Jewish tradition Josephus conveys to us⁸⁵⁸.

7.3.3. The Adiabenean Palaces and the Archaeology of the Lower City of David

So far archaeologists working in the City of David have suggested twice that a newly unearthed structure could be identified as one of the Adiabenean palaces. The first such claim was made by B. Mazar in 1978, the second in 2007 by D. Ben-Ami.

Mazar's attempt to identify an Adiabenean palace was based on the results of a series of archaeological excavations in Jerusalem, south and south-west of the Temple Mount, conducted since 1968. Mazar suggested that a two-storey structure located on the eastern edge of the Ophel and south of the Temple Mount can be identified as one of Adiabenean palaces⁸⁵⁹. Mazar did not specify which palace out of the three belonging to the Adiabene royalty he might have found, but the approximate location given by Josephus could perhaps best fit the palace of Grapte⁸⁶⁰. However, Mazar put it clearly that his identification is only "hypothetical" and this is indeed the

⁸⁵² Nielsen 1994.

⁸⁵³ Nielsen 1994: 25.

⁸⁵⁴ See Nielsen 1994: 13-26 and her discussion of 9 functions of Hellenistic palaces.

⁸⁵⁵ E.g. Jewish palaces do not include shrines or temples. Nor could the Adiabeneans perform some judiciary roles among Jews of the 1st c. CE Roman Palestine, since such prerogatives belonged either to the Romans or specific Jewish institutions.

⁸⁵⁶ Nielsen 1994: 13-26.

⁸⁵⁷ Geertz 1983:121-146 on the social mechanism and Rocca 2008: 22-52, 96-127 on its implementation by Herod the Great.

⁸⁵⁸ Likewise briefly S. Schwartz 2009: 86.

⁸⁵⁹ Mazar 1978: 236-237.

⁸⁶⁰ Biberstein 1994b: 397.

problem we face when dealing with the archaeological data in the City of David. Attempts like that of Mazar operate on very limited archaeological data, and if we should follow this kind of methodological approach, virtually any structure of significant size in the City of David could be suggested as an Adiabenean palace. Thus, we think that there is no real evidence to back up Mazar's hypothesis⁸⁶¹.

The claim made by Ben-Ami has its origin in the excavations supervised by himself and Y. Tchekhanovetz in the Givati Parking Lot in Jerusalem, south of the Dung Gate of the Old City⁸⁶². The project started in 2007 and is planned to be multi-annual and to explore the entire excavation area⁸⁶³. In 2007 the excavation area was divided into two parts (M1 and M2). Area M1 comprises of the southwestern quarter of the Givati Parking Lot, while the area M2 includes the space between the end of Area M1 in the south and the present road alongside the Old City wall in the north. Initially, Ben Ami suggested that the building excavated in M1 can be identified with the palace of Queen Helena⁸⁶⁴.

Area M1 was excavated in 2007 and the first results were published in 2007⁸⁶⁵ and 2008⁸⁶⁶, and again presented in two papers in 2011⁸⁶⁷. The 2007 survey unearthed the Second Temple Period structures exactly below a large Late Roman complex of buildings with impressive foundations⁸⁶⁸. Among the Second Temple Period remains two main units, southern and northern, can be distinguished⁸⁶⁹. The southern unit comprises of remains of a two-storey structure that Ben-Ami identifies as "a large impressive edifice"⁸⁷⁰. In fact, what has been unearthed so far is the northeastern corner of this structure⁸⁷¹. It contains the eastern and northern walls of the building, and parts of the interior consisting of at least three elongated halls orientated northwest-southeast (and perhaps another hall to the south)⁸⁷². There is some evidence (pottery⁸⁷³ and coins⁸⁷⁴) that the building had two levels and was destroyed in 70 CE⁸⁷⁵. The halls continued westwards beyond the limits of the excavation area⁸⁷⁶. In turn, the northern unit of the area M1 ("a large purification annex"⁸⁷⁷) preserves a number of plastered water installations north and next to the building: three ritual baths (*miqwa'ot*), a rectangular bath, and a large water cistern⁸⁷⁸. As in the southern unit, the western extension of the northern unit could not be exposed due to the limits of the excavation area.

The work on Area M2 started in 2008, continued in 2009, and a preliminary report was published in 2010⁸⁷⁹. However, it included so far excavated strata ranging only from the Early Islamic to Early Roman period⁸⁸⁰. However, there is little evidence of the Early Roman Period

⁸⁶¹ So also Barish 1983: 206, n. 3.

⁸⁶² An initial excavation was conducted by Shukron and Reich in 2005. See Shukron/Reich 2005.

⁸⁶³ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011a: 231.

⁸⁶⁴ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2007: 23-24.

⁸⁶⁵ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2007.

⁸⁶⁶ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2008a.

⁸⁶⁷ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011a; Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b.

⁸⁶⁸ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011a: 233-234; Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b: 61.

⁸⁶⁹ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011a: 231.

⁸⁷⁰ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b: 61 and likewise in Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2007: 19.

⁸⁷¹ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b: 61-63.

⁸⁷² Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011a: 234; Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b: 63.

⁸⁷³ See Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b: 69-75.

⁸⁷⁴ See Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b: 78.

⁸⁷⁵ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011a: 235.

⁸⁷⁶ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011a: 231-232.

⁸⁷⁷ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b: 61.

⁸⁷⁸ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2008a; Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2011b: 63-64, 66-67.

⁸⁷⁹ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2010.

⁸⁸⁰ Very spectacular findings like the largest hoard of golden Byzantine coins ever found in Jerusalem (Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2010), a Greek abecedary fragment (Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2008b: 195-202) or a late Roman bust of a boxer (Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2010).

remains, since most of the excavation area has not reached these archaeological strata yet. So far, the Early Roman remains include a ritual bath and an adjacent cistern that join the system of water installations from Area M1⁸⁸¹. Apparently, the water installations from Area M1 are part of the wing for ritual bathing that occupied a much greater space than initially assumed based only on the not yet finished exposure of structures present in Area M1 but expanding beyond its borders⁸⁸².

What are we to make of Ben-Ami's identification? First of all, the excavation has not been finished yet, and consequently it is not possible to arrive at a final conclusion. This reservation does not only refer to the whole campaign in the Givati Parking Lot, but above all to the building in the M1 area since its parts still remain to be excavated. Secondly, there are no tangible proofs whatsoever (e.g. inscriptions) that could support this identification⁸⁸³. Thirdly, the size of the building alone cannot be a reason to proclaim a structure to be a palace, the less so the palace of a specific owner. Following this line of reasoning, every structure of significant size in the Lower City of David could be identified so. It would be a different matter if we knew more about the archaeological landscape of this part of 1st c. CE Jerusalem⁸⁸⁴. Then one could pick up the three most elaborate buildings and, with some deal of likelihood, call them the Adiabenean palaces. This is, of course, not the case and might in fact never happen. All in all, in the present state of Ben-Ami's excavations, as well as in the present state of our knowledge of the archaeological landscape of the Lower City of David (especially on its crest as opposed to its eastern slope having been better explored), there is no possibility of confirming Ben-Ami's and Y. Tchekhanovets' hypothesis⁸⁸⁵.

⁸⁸¹ Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2010.

⁸⁸² Ben-Ami/Tchekhanovetz 2010.

⁸⁸³ Likewise Reich 2011: 325.

⁸⁸⁴ The closest excavations took place east of the excavation area in 1923-1925 (Macalister/Duncan 1926), south of it in 1927 (Crowfoot 1929; Crowfoot/Fitzgerald 1929) and northeast of the Givati Parking Lot in 1961-1967 (Kenyon 1964; Kenyon 1965; Kenyon 1966; Kenyon 1967a; Kenyon 1974).

⁸⁸⁵ Likewise Reich 2011: 325.

