

## Another Document from the Archive of Salome Komaïse Daughter of Levi\*

Hanan Eshel

The Babatha archive has been known since 1962.<sup>1</sup> Not so the archive of Salome Komaïse daughter of Levi, who, like the famous Babatha, lived in Maúoz Eglatain (Maúoza), a village near Zoar, at the southern tip of the Dead Sea in what used to be the Nabataean Kingdom and in 106 became the Roman province of Arabia. She too departed from Arabia during the Bar Kokhba revolt, and she too hid her documents in the Cave of Letters in Naúal Hever. Salome's archive became known only in 1995.<sup>2</sup> In the final publication the archive comprises seven documents,<sup>3</sup> one in Aramaic (*P.Hever* 12) and six in Greek (*P.Hever* 60-65). The seven documents range from 29 January 125 CE (*P.Hever* 60) to 7 August 131 CE (*P.Hever* 65). On the other hand, the Babatha archive contains, in addition to documents in Greek (*P.Yadin* 5, 11-36) and Jewish Aramaic (*P.Yadin* 4, 7-8, 10) documents in Nabataean Aramaic (*P.Yadin* 1-3, 6 and 9) as well, and ranges from 10 September 94 CE (*P.Yadin* 1) to 19 August 132 CE (*P.Yadin* 27).

There is no doubt that the Salome archive comes from the Cave of Letters, although like the rest of the so-called Seiyâl Collection II — and unlike the Babatha archive — it was not found in the course of controlled excavations.<sup>4</sup> In fact Yigael Yadin's expedition to the 'Cave of Letters' in 1961 discovered Salome Komaïse's marriage contract (*P.Hever* 65) in the passageway between hall B and hall C, where the Beduin are likely

---

\* I should like to thank the editors for improving my text.

<sup>1</sup> Y. Yadin, 'Expedition D — The Cave of the Letters', *IEJ* 12, 1962, 235ff. Final publication: N. Lewis, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters: Greek Papyri (Aramaic and Nabatean Signatures and Subscriptions)*, edited by Y. Yadin and J.C. Greenfield, Jerusalem 1989; Y. Yadin, J.C. Greenfield, A. Yardeni, and B. Levine. *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Hebrew, Aramaic and Nabatean Aramaic Papyri*, Jerusalem 2002. All the papyri are designated *P.Yadin*.

<sup>2</sup> H.M. Cotton, 'The Archive of Salome Komaïse Daughter of Levi: Another Archive from the "Cave of Letters"', *ZPE* 105 (1995), 171ff. Final publication in H.M. Cotton and A. Yardeni, *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Documentary Texts from Nahal Hever and other Sites: The Seiyâl Collection II. Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVII*, Oxford 1997. All the papyri are designated *P.Hever*. Despite the designation *P. Hever*, it is clear that not all the papyri included in DJD XXVII come from the Cave of Letters, and some did not even originate in Nahal Hever.

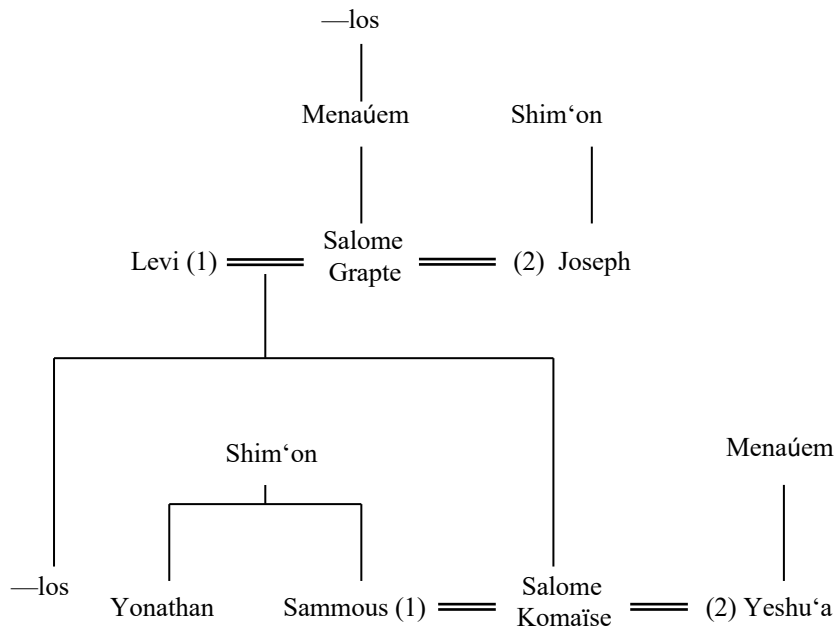
<sup>3</sup> In Cotton-Yardeni (n. 2), 158, n. 1, it is suggested, with reservations, that the fragmentary *P.Hever* 32 which reads  $\text{ד}[\text{ך}] \text{ב} \text{ר} \text{ח} \text{ל} \text{ו} \text{י}$  — dated to year eight (of the province of Arabia?), i.e. 113/114 CE — may be part of the archive.

<sup>4</sup> In general on the nature of the Seiyâl Collection II see Cotton-Yardeni (n. 2), 1-6; for corrections see H. Eshel, *JJS* 52, 2001, 132-5; idem, *Leshonenu*, 63, 2001, 43-52 (Hebrew). For a detailed discussion of the antecedents of each of the documents in the archive and its contents see Cotton-Yardeni, 158-62.

to have dropped it.<sup>5</sup> It is likely that the archive of Salome Komaïse was concealed in hall C of the ‘Cave of Letters’, not far from where the letters of Yonathan son of Be‘ayan and the Babatha archive were hidden.

In the final publication it has already been observed that ‘there is a certain inaccuracy in describing this archive as belonging to Salome Komaïse daughter of Levi’.<sup>6</sup> *P.Hever* 60 (125 CE) and 62 (December 127 CE) belong to Sammouos son of Shim‘on, Salome Komaïse’s first husband; *P.Hever* 61 (May 127 CE) belongs to Salome’s brother (whose name is missing). *P.Hever* 63 belongs to the mother, Salome Grapte daughter of Menaúem; it was made in her favour. By the time it was written (late 127 CE), her first husband, Levi, father of Salome Komaïse, was dead. The other three documents belong to Salome Komaïse herself: *P.Hever* 64 of 129 CE, a deed of gift written by her mother, Salome Grapte, who is accompanied there by her second husband, Joseph son of Shim‘on, on behalf of her daughter; *P.Hever* 12, a receipt for dates from 131 CE; and finally *P.Hever* 65 of 131 CE, her marriage contract to Yeshu‘a son of Menaúem.

A family tree helps to make the relationships clearer:



<sup>5</sup> See Y. Yadin, ‘Expedition D — The Cave of Letters’, *IEJ* 12, 1962, 235. It was published by Naphtali Lewis as *P.Yadin* 37 together with the Greek part of the Babatha archive. Lewis was of course aware that it did not belong to the Babatha archive, and rightly inferred ‘that other families from Maúoza also sought refuge in the cave’, *Documents* (n. 1), 130.

<sup>6</sup> Cotton-Yardeni, 160.

I believe that a Nabataean papyrus published recently for the first time by Ada Yardeni should also be assigned to this archive.<sup>7</sup> This papyrus, designated *X̱evSe* 2, was found together with four or five other Nabataean papyri.<sup>8</sup> One of them was published for the first time in 1954 by J. Starcky and has been known as *P.Starcky* ever since.<sup>9</sup> Two small fragments of *P.Starcky* found by Yadin in the Cave of Letters in 1961 incontrovertibly establish that not only *P.Starcky*, but the whole batch of Nabataean papyri found together with it originated in Naʿuál ʿiver.<sup>10</sup>

*X̱evSe* 2 is a Nabataean deed of sale. Although the date is missing, the reference to the Nabataean king in line 22, in a formula known from other Nabataean contracts: כּוּת כּוּת אַבּוּלְלָא רַבּוּלְלָא רַבּוּלְלָא (‘[and to our Lord, Rabael the ki]ng in like manner’) dates the document to the regnal period.<sup>11</sup> A woman called Shalom (שׁלום) sells a piece of land in Maúoz Eglaltain (l. 4) to a man with the Nabataean name of ʾÚdlhy (ʾוּדְלְחַי) for the sum of seventy-five *slʿyn*. Yardeni reads the name Menaúem in line 7. We recall that Salome Grapte’s father in *P.Hever* 63 (l. 3) and *P.Hever* 64 (l. 3) is called Menaúem. The seller can be no other than Salome Grapte, Salome Komaise’s mother. *X̱evSe* 2 is the earliest document which belongs to the archive, which now looks more likely to be a family archive than that of the daughter alone.<sup>12</sup>

The identification of a Nabataean *X̱evSe* 2 as part of the so-called archive of Salome Komaise daughter of Levi reinforces the similarity of this archive to that of Babatha the daughter of Shimʿon:<sup>13</sup> the Nabataean language and the royal period are now represented in the smaller archive as well. Furthermore, it is not unlikely that the other Nabataean papyri found together with *X̱evSe* 2, including *P.Starcky* of between 58 and 67 CE — the earliest date found on a papyrus in Naʿuál ʿiver — belonged originally to this archive. Had the Beduin not tampered with Salome’s archive, we should have had an intact archive of another family from Nabataea/Arabia. We can only wish for expeditious publication of the still unpublished Nabataean documents found together with *X̱evSe* 2 and *P.Starcky*.

Bar Ilan University

<sup>7</sup> A. Yardeni, *A Textbook of Aramaic, Hebrew and Nabataean Documentary Texts from the Judaean Desert and Related Material* (Jerusalem 2000) 1, 290-1 (see vol. 2, 95 for English translation).

<sup>8</sup> Cf. J. Starcky, ‘Un contrat Nabatéen sur papyrus’, *RB* 61, 1954, 161.

<sup>9</sup> A new arrangement of its fragments, with a new interpretation, was published in this journal by A. Yardeni: ‘The Decipherment and Restoration of Legal Texts from the Judaean Desert: A Reexamination of *Papyrus Starcky* (*P. Yadin* 36)’, *SCI* 20, 2001, 121-37.

<sup>10</sup> See Cotton-Yardeni (n. 1), 3. Of course the authors were mistaken to follow G. Bowersock (‘The Babatha Papyri, Masada and Rome’, *JRA* 4, 1991, 340) in assigning *P.Starcky* to the Babatha archive.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *P.Yadin* 1, ll. 9-10 = ll. 42-3; 2, l. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Various reasons could be adduced for the deed’s remaining in the family’s possession.

<sup>13</sup> In addition to their similar fate: Babatha and Salome, mother and daughter, lived, married, and owned property in Maúoz ‘Eglatain, moved to Ein-Gedi after the Bar-Kokhba revolt had broken out, and fled to the Cave of Letters in Naʿuál ʿiver once it failed three years later. See Cotton-Yardeni (n. 2), 160-1, for the assumption that Babatha and Salome Komaise were acquainted with each other.