

The Decipherment and Restoration of Legal Texts from the Judaean Desert: A Reexamination of *Papyrus Starcky* (*P. Yadin 36*)*

Ada Yardeni

Among the documents from the Judaean Desert, ten or eleven are written in Nabataean:¹ six of them belong to the Babatha archive (*P. Yadin* 1-4, 6 and 9)² and four or five more belong to the so-called Seiyâl collection.³ Of the latter group only one has so far been published. It is called *Papyrus Starcky*, after its editor.⁴ This document is the outer (lower) version of a large 'double deed',⁵ written in an elegant cursive Nabataean script, and consists of three large fragments (A, B, and C), five small fragments which cannot be placed (a-e), and frag. f which contains the dating formula and thus must be the first line of the outer text (see figures 1-4). Starcky was vague about its provenance.⁶ However, two tiny fragments of this very document were found by

* I would like to thank my friend Professor Hannah Cotton for a thorough editing of my text.

¹ By Nabataean I mean the local Aramaic dialect in the 'Nabataean' script. The Aramaic of the Nabataean documents is mixed with Arabic words.

² To which one should add the Nabataean subscriptions to the Greek documents published in N. Lewis, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek Papyri* (with Aramaic and Nabatean Signatures and Subscriptions, edited by Y. Yadin and J.C. Greenfield), Judean Desert Studies II, Jerusalem 1989 (henceforth Lewis).

³ See General Introduction in H.M. Cotton and A. Yardeni, *Aramaic, Hebrew and Greek Texts from Naḥal Ḥever and Other Sites, with an Appendix containing alleged Qumran Texts. The Seiyâl Collection II*, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVII, Oxford 1997, 1ff.

⁴ J. Starcky, 'Un contrat nabatéen sur papyrus', *Revue Biblique* 61, 1954, 161-81.

⁵ I.e. a document which contains two copies — not always entirely identical — of the same text, an inner text (or upper text) and an outer text (or lower text); the inner (upper) version, which was legally binding, was rolled and tied with a string, and each one of the witnesses signed on the back of the document against one of the stiches.

⁶ Starcky (above, n. 4), 161.

Yadin in the Cave of Letters of Naḥal Ḥever in 1961:⁷ one of them (*P. Yadin* 36a) belongs to the inner (upper) version of *Papyrus Starcky* (the rest of the upper version has not been discovered so far), and the other (*P. Yadin* 36b) to its outer (lower) version. The Cave of Letters in Naḥal Ḥever is without doubt the source of this papyrus as well as of the other Nabataean papyri of the so-called Seiyâl collection. They had been removed by Beduin before Yadin's expedition reached the cave.

In the conclusion of his long and detailed article, in which he discusses each one of the three large fragments of this document separately, Starcky offers a short summary of its contents (p. 180), with his reservations: 'Mais en l'absence d'une traduction assurée et vu les lacunes du texte, l'intérêt de notre papyrus est surtout linguistique et paléographique'. The contents of the deed have thus remained somewhat obscure.

Shortly after the publication of this deed, Jacob J. Rabinowitz, in a short article published in 1955,⁸ suggested corrections to Starcky's translation and interpretation of several essential terms, as well as a reconstruction of the legal situation which served as the occasion for the writing of the document (p. 12). Rabinowitz' interpretation is based on the text as read and arranged by Starcky, but he was not unaware of the problems raised by that arrangement⁹

I should like here to offer an improved arrangement of the various fragments of this important papyrus. However, this ought to be prefaced with a brief explanation of the main principles which have guided me in studying this as well as the other documents written in Aramaic, Hebrew and Nabataean from the Judaeen Desert.¹⁰

It should be noted that except for the four Hebrew deeds of lease (*P. Yadin* 44-6 and *Mur* 24) and a few tiny fragments, all the Aramaic and Hebrew legal texts from the Judaeen Desert were written in cursive or semi-cursive scripts. The Nabataean texts, however, were written either in a formal or in a cursive handwriting. Three main characteristics of the cursive

⁷ Y. Yadin, 'Expedition D — Cave of Letters', *IEJ* 12, 1962, 228-9. The two fragments + *P. Starcky* are designated *P. Yadin* 36 in the Naḥal Ḥever collection (see Lewis, p. 21).

⁸ Jacob J. Rabinowitz, 'A Clue to the Nabatean Contract from the Dead Sea Region', *BASOR* 139, 1955, 11-14.

⁹ *Ibid.* 12-13.

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the palaeography of these scripts see A. Yardeni, *A Textbook of Aramaic and Hebrew Documentary Texts from the Judaeen Desert and Related Material*, Jerusalem 2000, I, Part 2, pp. 1ff. (Hebrew) = II, 147-277 (English).

script make its decipherment particularly difficult: 1) the many variant forms of each letter of the alphabet on the one hand, and the identical form of different letters of the alphabet on the other; 2) ligatures of letters or of whole words; 3) the omission of strokes or the change in their form. All these features are either the result of rapid or careless writing, or characteristic of the script style. Due to these difficulties, decipherment is often based on context. The correct reading of texts in cursive script requires experience and practice. A systematic analysis of the letter-forms as well as a thorough examination of their components may deepen our acquaintance with the forms and improve the reading.

The symbiotic inter-dependence between the understanding of a text and the identification of the letters in which it is written means that documents are always examined with a twofold purpose: the tracing of the letters makes it possible both to confirm their form and to identify them correctly, whereas the reading of the texts, the comparison of their formulae and the testing of problematic readings or word-forms with the help of dictionaries, help to confirm the identification of the letters. The two processes thus mutually inform each other.

Disagreements among scholars concerning different readings are not uncommon, and words or even whole texts in an extremely cursive or careless hand may sometimes remain without decipherment.

The vocabulary of the documents becomes part of the dictionaries of different languages; erroneous readings may introduce false forms and 'ghost-words', namely words that come into existence as the result of false readings. Scholars are not always aware of the problems involved in the reading of these ancient texts and rely too readily on transcriptions without independently checking the original documents or, at least, good photographs. Furthermore, scholars occasionally also ignore the dots and circles as well as the brackets marking damaged letters or restorations.

In addition to the decipherment of letters and words, missing parts of the text can sometimes be restored. Legal texts usually employ traditional formulae, and a damaged formula may often be restored on the basis of a parallel intact one. However, in the legal texts from the Judaean Desert the legal formulae had not yet become fixed in the forms known to us from later sources. Even scribes who were trained in writing the various legal deeds according to traditional instructions allowed themselves a certain freedom and flexibility in formulating and adjusting them to each individual case.

Thus, in spite of the general similarity in their structure, each of the damaged documents raises difficulties in its decipherment and restoration and

sometimes there may be more than one possible way of restoring a missing phrase.

Finally, some documents have fallen apart into separate pieces, and in such cases the arrangement of the fragments and the restoration of the original form of the document require attention to the physical features of the document as well as its palaeographical and textual features.

When I was preparing drawings of the documents for the 'Nabataean' part of my dissertation,¹¹ I made a drawing also of *Papyrus Starcky*, trying to reconstruct its original form. At the time I was unable to examine the originals.¹² For the tracing I used enlarged black-and-white photographs. In my first reconstruction I followed Starcky's order of placing the three large fragments: A, B, and C. Again like him, I took the small fragment (frag. f) bearing the remains of the date (line 7 of the outer text) to be the first line of the entire outer part, and therefore placed it above frag. A. I placed the fragment of the inner part found by Yadin (*P. Yadin* 36a) at the very top of the document (see more below).

After further struggle with the text I realized that changing the order of the large fragments could yield a clearer and more intelligible text. I placed Starcky's frag. C above his frag. A.¹³ The new order is: C, A and B (see figures 1-4). I confirmed the new arrangement by examination of the original with the kind help of Penina Shor and Lena Liebmann of the Israel Antiquities Authority, to whom I am extremely grateful for their help.

This document is physically the largest of the Judaeen desert legal documents.¹⁴ *Verso* and *recto* together contain a total of 37 lines, which I have numbered consecutively. Lines 1-6 belong to the inner text, and lines 7-37 to the outer text. However, the papyrus numbered many more lines of text now lost. The key to calculating its presumed length is *P. Yadin* 36a, a fragment of the inner text written on both sides: lines 1-3 are written on one side and lines 4-6 are written on the other. Lines 4-6 (inner text) are written across the

¹¹ A. Yardeni, 'The Aramaic and Hebrew Documents in Cursive Script from Wadi Murabba'at and Naḥal Ḥever and Related Material — A Palaeographic and Epigraphic Examination', unpublished PhD dissertation, the Hebrew University, Jerusalem 1991, 173-99; 359-70.

¹² The three fragments A, B, and C are located in the Rockefeller Museum and framed separately as nos. 654, 655 and 867 respectively.

¹³ The first line of frag. A is very well preserved and indeed gives the impression of constituting the beginning of the text.

¹⁴ *P. Yadin* 1 is almost as large physically, but contains more text. All the other documents are significantly smaller in size, though some contain more text.

fibres, like the outer text, and thus must be placed above the outer text on that side of the papyrus which I call *recto*.¹⁵ The space above line 4 at the top of the fragment indicates that no line preceded it.¹⁶ It thus represents the top edge of the entire document. Lines 1-3 (inner text) on the other hand run along the fibres and thus must belong to the *verso*. We are familiar with the practice of starting the inner text on the *verso* (towards its bottom), then turning the papyrus over, head to foot, and continuing with it on the *recto*.¹⁷ It is thus clear that lines 4-6 on the *recto* followed without interruption lines 1-3 of the *verso*. In other words *P.Yadin* 36a contains consecutive lines of the inner version on both its sides. This is confirmed by the fact that lines 1-6 are parallel to lines 21-26 of the outer text. Turning the papyrus over head to foot, rather than merely turning it sidewise from back to front, was the only way to keep both parts of the inner text (the beginning on the *verso* and its continuation on the *recto*) on the same part of the papyrus so that both could later be rolled and tied.

Lines 1-3 (inner text) are parallel to lines 21-24 (outer text), and lines 4-6 (inner text) are parallel to lines 25-26 (outer text). In other words, a fragment is missing: this fragment carried on its *verso* the beginning of the inner text, parallel to lines 7-20 of the outer text, and on its *recto* that part of the inner text parallel to lines 27-37 of the outer text and the lines following (since line 37 was not the end of the document). This fragment is that part of the papyrus missing on the *recto* between *P.Yadin* 36a and frag. f (line 7 of the outer text, bearing the date) which is the beginning of the outer text. The size of the missing fragment cannot be estimated for it is quite possible that the inner text was a much abridged version.¹⁸

Taking into account at least one missing line between frag. f and frag. C, as well as 2-3 cm between lines 26 and 28 (line 27, the last line in frag. A, is represented only as two traces under line 26), the length of the lower part alone measures ca. 75 cm. Together with the inner version, and the missing lines of the outer text after line 37, the original length would have come to more than 80 cm. The width varies between 18 and 18.5 cm.

The top part of the document with the inner version on both *recto* and *verso* was apparently rolled downwards and tied, whereas the rest, with the outer version on the *recto* and the signatures on the *verso*, was probably

¹⁵ It is common for the *recto* of legal documents from the Judaean Desert to be written across the fibres rather than along them.

¹⁶ It is 1 cm high, including the ascender of the lamed in the name of 'El'azar.

¹⁷ The practice, known from the Nabataean *P.Yadin* 2 and 3 and the Aramaic *P.Yadin* 7, was devised to prevent tampering with the text at a later stage.

¹⁸ For an abbreviated inner version see e.g. *P.Yadin* 1, also written in Nabataean.

rolled upwards, the size of the folds increasing towards the ties and reaching 3 cm. Only one join (*kollesis*) between the papyrus sheets could be located, 5 cm from the bottom on the *verso* of frag. B, but it could not be located on its *recto*, where it is naturally to be expected (about 3 cm from its bottom), because of the many tears at this place. Other joins may have been at the places where the fragments became separated from each other as a result of the pressure caused by the folding.

Papyrus Starcky is the earliest of the Nabataean documents from Naḥal Ḥever. Its date may be calculated from a reference (in line 10) to an earlier document written on 2 Ṭebet year 4 of Malichus the king of the Nabataeans, corresponding to 43 CE. The words '[E]lul year twenty[' are the only remains of the date in the first line and they probably refer to the same king. 'Twenty[' of course could be anything from twenty to twenty nine. Thus the present document was written at least fifteen and a half, and perhaps even twenty four years later, i.e., between 58 and 67 CE.

The earlier deed of the year 43 is referred to in the text as *štr 'dw'*. Starcky understood the words as 'deed of partition' whereas Rabinowitz showed that they have to be understood as a 'writ of seizure' (Talmudic *sheṭar ṭirpa*):

Under Talmudic law (BT Baba Bathra 169a) an unpaid creditor had the right to seize, through judicial process, as much of the defaulting debtor's property as necessary to satisfy the debt, and, after valuation (*šūmā*) and proclamation (*'akraztā*) made by the court, obtain satisfaction of the debt by occupying the property. A debtor whose property was so transferred by the court to his creditor had nevertheless the right to redeem the property from the creditor by paying him the amount of the debt for which it was seized. The right of redemption could be exercised not only by the creditor (read: debtor [A.Y.]) himself but also by his heirs (p. 12).

The rearrangement of the fragments gives us a more logical order of the various paragraphs with the entire deed terminating with the declaration by the writer of the document that the seized property has been redeemed and the debt paid off, so that no claims are left between the two parties. Further confirmation of the new arrangement is supplied by three references to a palm grove in Maḥoz 'Eglatain. In the new arrangement it is mentioned for the first time in line 14 — the last line in Starcky's frag. C which now precedes his frag. A — in the form *gnt tmry'*, i.e. 'a palm grove'. The same palm grove is mentioned for the second and third times in lines 15-17, the first lines of Starcky's frag. A, but this time in the form *gnt 'hy-*, i.e. 'that (same) grove'. We know from the other legal documents from the Judaeen Desert that when a person, an object or a place is mentioned for the first

time, it appears with its full name, whereas later it usually appears in an abbreviated form followed by a demonstrative pronoun. The place of frag. C before frag. A is thus vindicated.

The sequence of events as it appears from the fragments can only be tentatively reconstructed:¹⁹

Nikarchos and Bannai, respectively the father and uncle of 'El'azar, owed 'Isimilk 400 Sela's with interest. On 2 Tebet, year 43, the latter issued a writ of seizure on their property, which included two stores pledged by the debtors and a palm grove together with its irrigation ditches. Following the seizure, the grove was proclaimed (= put up for auction?) by 'Isimilk in a writ of proclamation. Presumably he was in need of cash and wanted to realise the value of the seized property; but later on he paid off its price and won it back. About fifteen and a half to twenty four years later, during which period both Nikarchos and Bannai had died, their legal heir 'El'azar came to 'Isimilk for the redemption of the writ of seizure and of the property. In the final calculation of the debt to 'Isimilk it is possible likely that the value of some houses belonging to 'El'azar and the rent from two shops leased by 'Isimilk's father were deducted from the total.²⁰ 'El'azar paid off what remained of the debt, redeemed the writ of seizure, and a document — the present document — was written in which it was stated that no claims remained on either side.

One signature and traces of another one²¹ have survived written across the fibres on the *verso* of the tiny frag. f bearing the remains of the date on its *recto*. The legible signature is written in the 'Jewish' cursive script and reads *yhwsp br yhw dh* ('Yehosef son of Yehuda'), followed by an unidentified letter, perhaps beginning the word *ktbh* ('he wrote/issued? it'). His name does not appear in other documents from the Judaean desert.

As already pointed out by Yigael Yadin, the palm grove redeemed by 'El'azar son of Nikarchos, together with the rest of the property seized by 'Isimilk from 'El'azar's father and uncle, should be identified with the γαρυθα Νικαρκος ('garden of Nikarchos') mentioned in two Greek documents of 130 CE (*P. Yadin* 21, l. 10; 22, l. 11) as the property of Yehuda son

¹⁹ The tentative nature of the proposed reconstruction must be stressed. In addition to the lacunae, the document contains some Arabic terms which so far defy precise translation.

²⁰ Some details of the transaction are now lost in the lacunae. Perhaps in order to redeem the property, 'El'azar had to let the shops to 'Isimilk's father, and to use the future rent to pay off his debt.

²¹ Of which only one, long down-stroke of an unidentified final letter is visible.

of 'El'azar, Babatha's second husband.²² There is no information about the way in which the grove came into Yehuda's possession, but there is no reason to believe that *P. Yadin* 36 is part of the Babatha archive, which as we know was found 'in a leather purse which was wrapped in sacking and tied with twisted ropes'.²³

***P. Yadin* 36 (*Papyrus Starcky* + *P. Yadin* 36a and 36b): Redemption of a Writ of Seizure (ca. 60 CE) (Nabataean)**

Measurements: ca. 81[+ ?] cm x 18-18.5 cm. (Frag. 36a: 2.5 x 3.8 cm; frag. 36b: 1.5 x 3.9 cm; frag. f: 2.5 x 3 cm). Six small fragments a-e and *P. Yadin* 36b (see fig. 3) have so far not been placed. Two more tiny fragments may or may not belong to this deed and have not been numbered (see figure 3). All the large fragments preserved the left margin, while only C and A have preserved parts of the right margin as well. Two tiny fragments which are now placed to the right of frag. B have also preserved part of the right margin,²⁴ as do two unplaced fragments (a and b).

NH 36+Papyrus Starcky

VERSO

Upper version (Frag. 36a)

(The beginning is missing)

1. א[לעזר דנה צדיק ב...־ת...ה.]
2. ד[ו] תנפס לי שטר עדוא הו ואקחב
3. שטר עדוא הו ואתקרי וערמת ותשבת

RECTO

4.]... לל ... [
 5.]שטר עדוא הו ... [
 6.]... [מנעלהם ומנסקהם
- (The rest is missing)

Lower version (Pap. Starcky)

7. ב] לאלול שנת עשרין למנכו מלכא מלך נבטו

(Perhaps lines are missing)

8.]אסמלך בר עבדי על ניקרכס אבי אנה אלעזר
9. דנה ועל בני דהי בך נביטא כסף סלעין ארבע מאה כספ ראש רבין מן דמנה כדי בה
10.]... [עשרין לסבת]שנת ארבע למנכו מלכא מלך נבטו די שטרא הו כתיב
11.]... [י. ובקצת משכוני שטר עדוא הו משכנו ניקרכס ובני
12. אנו תרתי חנותא ותוניא די גוא מנהבן]די בשוק מחוז עגלתין ומנעלהם ומנסקהם
13. כדי אנו נקיבין בשמהן ותחומין]בשטר עדוא הו זעזא מתנא]קמ...

²² 'Expedition D', *IEJ* 12, 1962, 242, n. 21.

²³ Yadin (see previous note), 235. G. Bowersock. 'The Babatha Papyri, Masada, and Rome', *JRA* 4, 1991, 340 suggests that 'El'azar son of Nikarchos was related to Babatha's second husband. However, the latter need not have inherited the palm grove; he could have bought it.

²⁴ I did not mention these two fragments before since they had already been placed there by Starcky with no identifying markers.

outer text, while the second half of line 1 has not been deciphered so far. The lines on the *recto* of this fragment are quite damaged, but certain words in lines 5 and 6 could, nevertheless, be deciphered.

Outer text:

Papyrus Starcky: The elegant script of this text, where it is preserved, leaves only single words which have not been deciphered.

L. 7 (frag. f) The remains of the dating formula, surviving on the *recto* of frag. f., contain part of the month's name: the two *lameds* undoubtedly imply the month of Elul, while the remains of the letter following the *resh* in the year's number imply the word *'sry/n* ('twenty') rather than *'sr* ('ten'). The conjectural restoration of the name of the king is based on l. 10, where Manku (= Malichus) the king is mentioned, with reference to an earlier deed written in year four of his reign (i.e. 43 CE). The dating of the deed thus depends on the restoration, which unfortunately cannot be verified.

L. 8. The long surviving down-stroke of the letter near the right tear apparently belonged to a final *kaf* of the name *'smlk* ('Isimilk'; corrected from Starcky's and others' readings of this name), which appears three more times in this document (ll. 17, 18, 22), always with his patronymic, *'bdy*.

L. 9. The name *ddy br nbym'*, is restored on the basis of its remains in l. 20, as well as in frag. a, l. 1. However, the *yod* is uncertain, being absent in l. 20 and being indistinguishable from *nun*, *kaf* or *bet* in frag. a.

L. 10. Only the upper diagonal stroke of *alef* is clear at the beginning of this line. The text at this place contained about 10-12 letters defying restoration.

L. 11. About 20 letters (including word spaces) at the beginning of the line are missing.

L. 12. About two letters are missing in the gap at the middle of this line, but the text does not seem to require an additional word in this place. It could be argued that the fragments have been wrongly joined, but in other places the restoration seems to be correct (e.g., in l. 13).

L. 13. The word following *'dw' hw*, at about the middle of the line, has not been deciphered. The first letter of the word, which looks like *mem*, could also be two letters in ligature. None of the alternative readings suggested here can be proved convincingly. As for the following word -- *mtn'* - if the reading is correct, it could be translated either as 'the gift' or as 'stipulated'. Thus, a possible reading of these two words together could be *b'dw mtn'* ('in the seizure of the gift' or 'the stipulated seizure'). However, as the following words are missing, it remains without context.

L. 17. The restoration of the text is conjectural.

L. 25. The middle of the line is missing. The letters *alef* and *samekh* near the tear should perhaps be restored as *'s/mlk*. In the second half of the line, the word *'gr* ('salary'/'hired'), may be read, but the absence of a context makes it difficult to

know its precise meaning here. At the end of the line, the two stores mentioned before (l. 12) are mentioned again (they are apparently mentioned also in frag. a, l. 1).

L. 27. Since, as seems certain, no line is missing between l. 27 and l. 28 we may restore the word *l'ʿ* ('no'/'neither') at the end of l. 27.

Ll. 28-9. The words *z'yr wl' sgy'*, beginning the text on the fragment placed to the right of Starcky's frag. B, continue the phrase which apparently began in line 27, creating the well-known formula *l' z'yr wl' sgy'* ('neither small nor large'). The restored end of line 28 continues nicely into the second line of the fragment, yielding the phrase *kl dy 'b 'y wdy [y]tb 'y bšmy 'lyk* ('whatever I shall request and [whatever] will [be] requested in my name at your expense').

Ll. 31-5. The *waw* consecutive, beginning most of the words in these lines, indicates a list, of which most of the words can be translated, but the meaning of the rest remains obscure. The intelligible words are the following: *wktbyn wkrwzyn* ('and writs and proclamations'; l. 31), *wbl 'wnyn wmtʿ whšb* ('and amounts(?)... and expe-dients(?)/... and account(?)'; l. 32), *whlyqh wnšwmh* ('and norm, and custom(?) [metathesis of *wnmwšh*?]; l. 34), *wšm' wqblt mlk wdyn wptwr w'srtg* ('[and] an-nouncement(?)/hearing(?) and complaint(?) (to) a king, or judge, or money-changer(?)/interpreter(?), or commander'; l. 35). In line 36 only the particle *dy* ('that'/'which'/'of') is certain, while l. 37 is too damaged.

Translation

Verso

Inner version

(Beginning missing)
 Redemption of bill ¹[... I,] this (same) [ʿE]l'azar is permitted (or: a legal heir), regarding...²... tha]t you will bring out for me that (same) 'dw' bill (= a writ of seizure entitling a creditor to seize goods of a debtor) and (that) I shall presen[t ...] ³that (same) 'dw' [bil]l, and it was read, and you acknowledged/approved and ca[culated ...]...

Recto

Discharge of debt? ⁴[...][... ⁵...]that (same) 'dw' bill...⁶... and]their (rights of) entering and going out ... [...]
 (Lines missing)

Outer version

Date ⁷[On the ... of 'Elu]l, year twent[y ... of *Mnkw* (= Malku) the king, king of *Nbṯw* (= Nabatea) ...
 (Lines missing)
 Parties ⁸[..., you, 'sm]k (= Isimilk) son of 'bdy to Nikarchos my father, I, ⁹this (same) ⁸El'azar, ⁹and to *Bny* (= Banni?/Bunni?)

	[my] uncl[e, s]on of <i>Nbym</i> [' ,
Sum	silver, <i>sl</i> 'yn four hundred — according to the part of the principal (investment) we received?/paid? interest of our price(?), accordingly.
Date of 'dw' bill	¹⁰ ...[...]twentieth of Tebet, [yea]r four of <i>Mnkw</i> the king, king of <i>Nbtw</i> (43 CE?) that that (same) b[i]ll was written ¹¹ [...]....
Pledge of the stores	And for some of the pledges of that (same) 'dw' bill ¹² these (same) ¹¹ Nikarchos and <i>Bny</i> pledged ¹² the two stores and the cells within them[...]which (are) in the agora of <i>Mhwz</i> 'gltn (= Maḥoz 'Eglatain) as well as their (rights of) entering and going out ¹³ as they are designated by their names and delimited [in] that (same) 'dw' bill, ... the gift?[...]... ¹⁴ [...] that (same) ['d]w' [bill],
Palm grove	a palm-grove and ...[...] ¹⁵ together with (its) irrigation-ditches/installations in <i>Mhwz</i> 'gltn (the same) as that grove and its boundaries are written in that (same) 'dw' bill.
Proclamation	And after ¹⁶ the time of that (same) 'dw' bill, tha[t] grove was proclaimed (for sale in auction?) [and a w]rit of proclamation ... of the writ of proclamation (or: who wrote the proclamation) and was issued (or: went out) ¹⁷ in the name of 'A[f]taḥ son of <i>Tym</i> 'lhy, and [in it]was written (the same way) as any writ. That (same writ of) proclamation has been written: 'smk son of 'bdy proclaimed ¹⁸ that (same) ¹⁷ grove ¹⁸ and paid off the price of that same (writ of) proclamation, and that which is with it/him [(he) p]resented accordingly. And wha[tever] I shall write (or: wh[oever] dictated) that (same) proclamation for/to you, you, ¹⁹ this (same) ¹⁸ 'smk ¹⁹ [... is/was w]ritten ...[...]...[...]
Father's + uncle's death	and N[i]karchos my father died, ²⁰ and <i>Bny</i> my uncle son of <i>Nb[y]m</i> ' died,
Heir's rights	and that I, this (same) 'El'azar, (am) a legal heir and an inheritor of Nikarchos my father. And <i>Bny</i> my uncle did not leave (an heir) ²¹ nor has he a child, and I, this (same) 'El'azar, (am) a legal heir and an inheritor of that (same) <i>Bny</i> my uncle.
Redemption of bill	And that on the day that ²² this (same) ²¹ bill has been written ²² was my coming, I, this (same) 'El'azar, to you, you, this (same) 'smk; and I asked you to bring out to me ²³ that (same) 'dw' ²² bill, ²³ and I offered that which you have with me (= that which I owe you) of a legal(?) payment (of debt), and (= in order that?) you will calculate my houses in the payment, and

I shall redeem from you ²⁴that (same) 'dw' ²³bill. ²⁴And you brought out th[at (same)]'dw' bill, and it was read, and you acknowledged/approved and calculated my houses, and you counted for me in that (same) payment (of debt) ²⁵all (= everything) that you received.

Payment of debt And 'bdy, your father, ...[...]. rented(?)/wages(?) ...[...]. the two stores ²⁶[...and their (rights of) entering and going out ...][...], and paid off (or: discharge of) everything(?) we shall calculate (or: being counted as nothing) between me and you; and you will free me ²⁷[...][... (= and I owe you nothing?),] n[either] ²⁸small nor large.

Clearing And that[... (= you, 'smk, are cleared by me?), I,]this (same) ['El'a]zar, from whatever I shall request and (whatever) [will] (be) requested ²⁹in my name at your expense, and all that...[... and anything s]mall and large, and concerning all that has been between you ³⁰[and me ...]and that (same) Bny, my uncle, ... of carrying/load/... ³¹[...]. and ... and deeds(?) and writs and proclamations ³²[...].and amounts(?)/... and expedients(?)/... and account ³³[...]. and... and ... and ... and... ³⁴[and ...]. and ... and ... and ... and ... and norm, and ... (= custom?) ³⁵[and]...[and] announcement(?)/hearing(?) and complaint (?) (to) a king, or judge, or money-changer(?)/ interpreter(?), or commander ³⁶[...]. which/who is in ... ³⁷[...].[...].
(The rest is missing)

Verso

Signatures

(line missing?)

³⁸[...][...]

Witnesses

³⁹Yehosef son of Yehuda w[rrote it? or issued it?]

(The rest is missing)

Fragments

Recto

Frag. a: ¹[... son of N]bym', and the cells of the two s[tores ... and their (rights of) entering] ²and going out, and ...[...]

Frag. b: ¹[...][...]. that (were) ... from them ...[... ²...][...]

Frag. c: ¹[...]and it is standing/established for him/the[m ... ²...][...]

Frag. d: [...][...]

Frag. e: [...]. 'b<d> 'bd[t ...]

Frag. P. Yadin 36b:]... this (same) ['Aftah son of] Tym 'lhy who ...[

Jerusalem

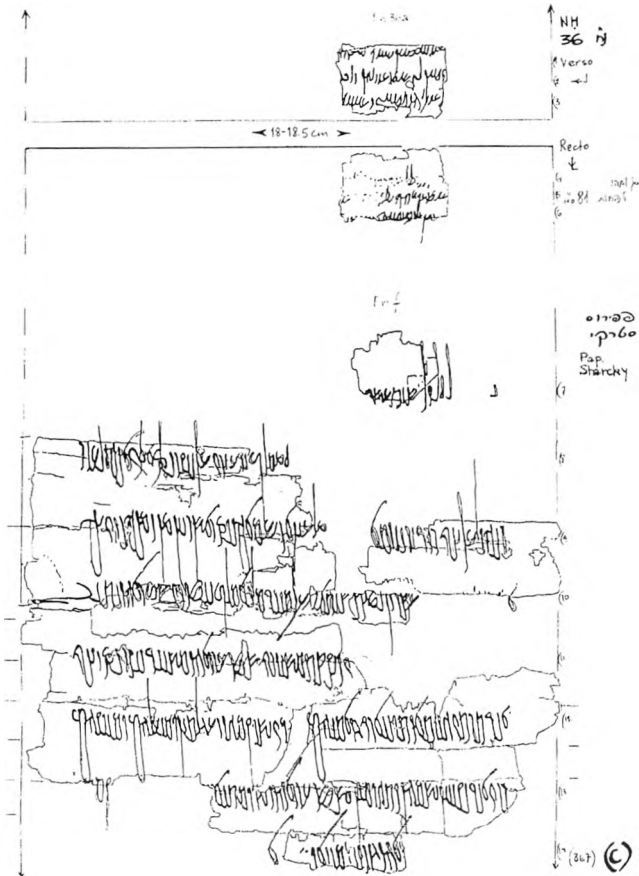
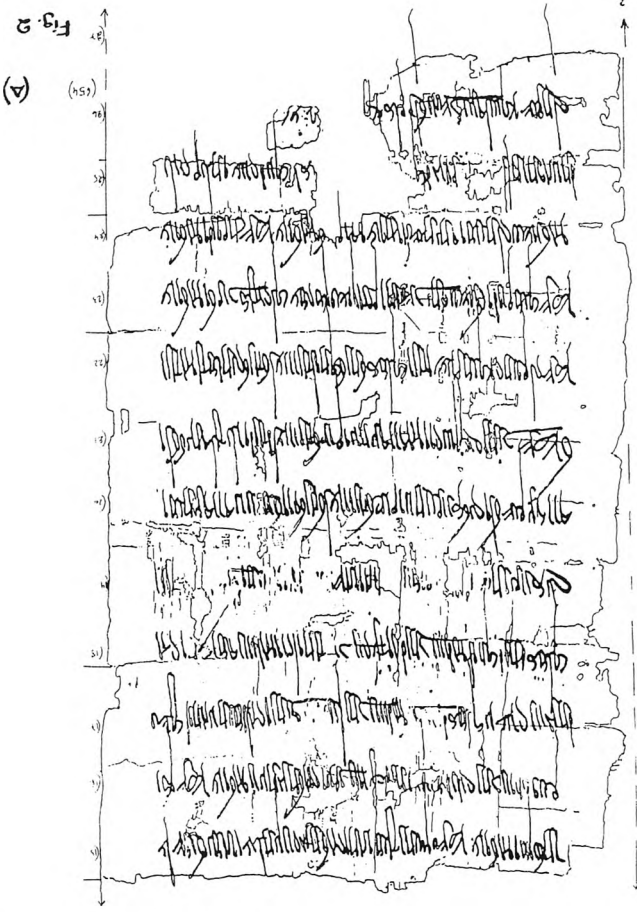
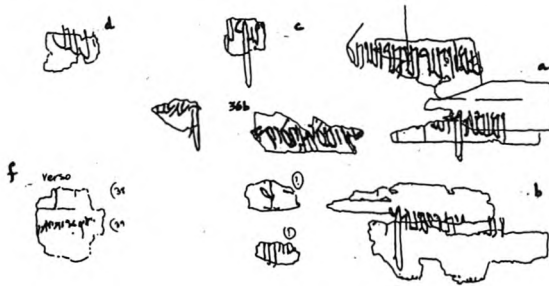
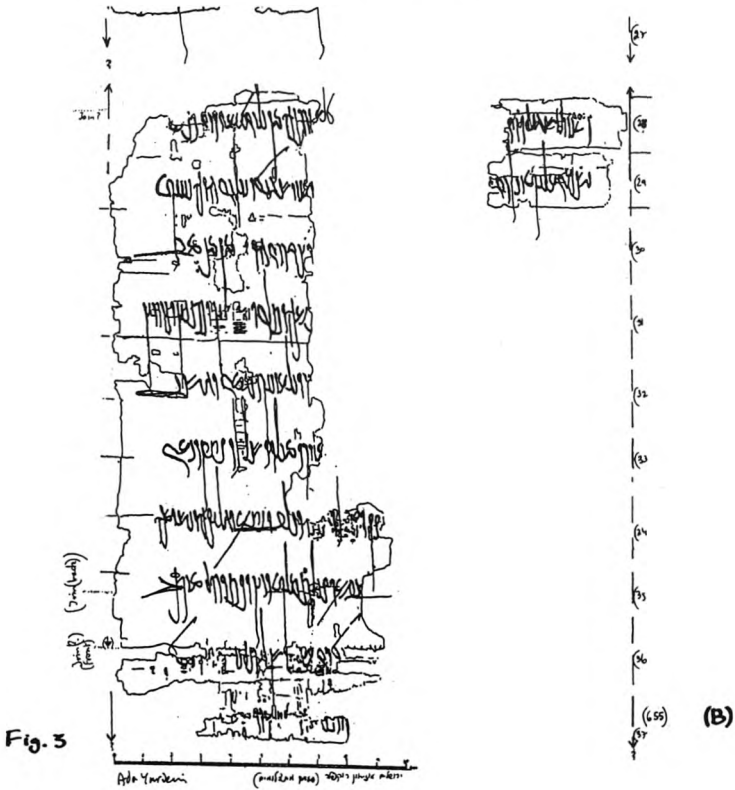


Fig. 1





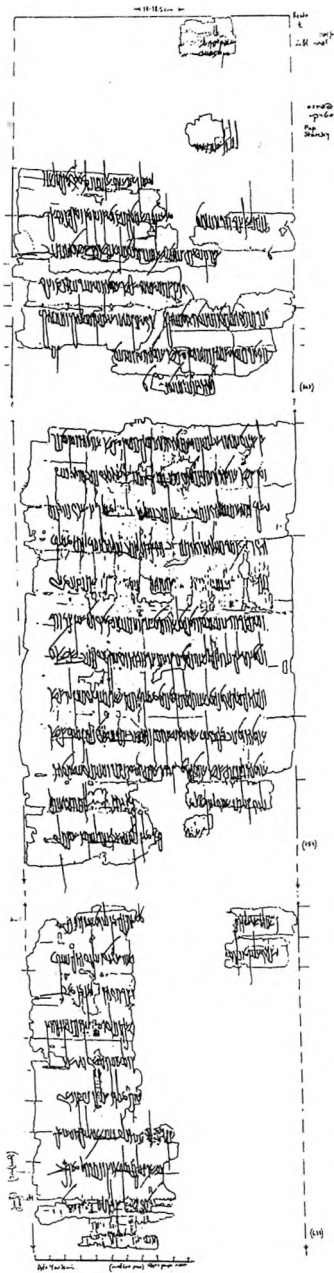


Fig. 4