

## THE ARAD OSTRACA

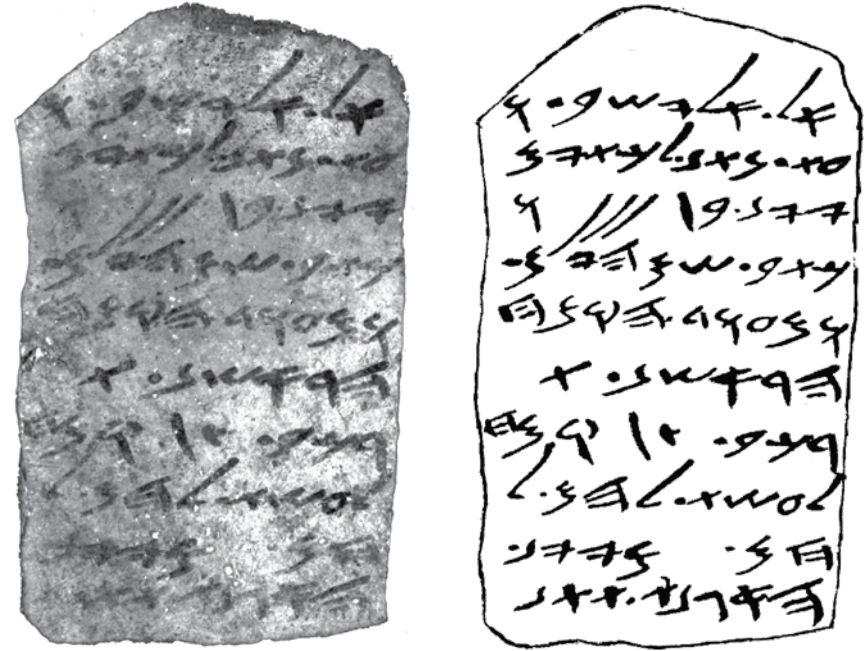
Ninety-one Hebrew ostraca were found at Arad, most of them in a stratigraphic excavation. Aharoni arranged the ostraca according to the strata in which they were found and thereby related them to their respective periods. No other excavation has produced a series of six distinct strata dating to the Judaean Monarchy. (Hazor represents just such a series in the north.) D. Ussishkin, "The Date of the Judaean Shrine at Arad," *IEJ* 38 (1988), pp. 142–157, has sought to discredit Aharoni's archaeological analysis. In his opinion Arad Strata X–VIII are really phases in one stratum in the second half of the eighth century BCE. As his basis for this argument, Ussishkin is dependent upon his own pottery analysis and his own historical assumptions with regard to Lachish. As is well known, smaller sites such as Arad often go through more phases than larger sites such as Lachish. When the stratigraphy of both Arad and Lachish are published in final form, it will be possible to make a more balanced evaluation. The palaeography of the stratified ostraca will be a factor to be reckoned with alongside the ceramic typology (very conservative in the ninth–eighth centuries BCE in Judah) and historical considerations.

At Arad, the largest single collection of ostraca came from one room in Stratum VI. It is known by the name of the recipient of most of the letters, <sup>2</sup>Elyāšîḇ son of <sup>2</sup>Iššîyāhû. More recent analysis of the stratigraphy by Z. Herzog has shown that Stratum VI is indeed a rebuild and reuse of Stratum VII. The floors in the house are distinctly higher than those of Stratum VI, though the seals of <sup>2</sup>Elyāšîḇ were found on a floor of Stratum VII. It is clear, therefore, that Strata VII and VI were not widely separated in time; <sup>2</sup>Elyāšîḇ was serving in Arad during the life of both strata, near the end of the seventh and the early sixth centuries BCE.

The most important of the Arad ostraca will be treated here.

### ARAD No. 1

אָל אֶלְיָשִׁיב. וְ	אל. אלישב. ו
עַתָּה: נָתַן לְכַתְּיִם	עתה. נתן. לכתים
יָיִן בִּ (ת) 1, (היין) 3, ו	יין. ב \ / \ \ ו
כָּתַב שֵׁם הַיָּיִן.	כתב. שם היין.
וּמַעֲוֹד הַקֶּמַח	ומעוד. הקמח
הָרֵאשֶׁן פ	הראשן. ת



רָכַב 1 קֶמַח  
לְעֵשֶׂת לָהֶם לְ  
חֵם. מֵיִין  
הָאֲגָנָת תַּתֵּן.

רכב 1. קמח  
לעשת. להם. ל  
חם. מיין.  
10 האגנת. תתן

To <sup>2</sup>Elyāšîḇ: And now, give to the Kittîyim 1 bath and 3 (*hin*) of wine and write the date (lit. "name of the day"). And from the surplus of the best (lit. "first") flour you shall load 1 kor (?) to make bread for them. From the wine of the amphorae you shall give.

**אל אלישב** — A direct opening phrase without blessings of any kind. The sender was of higher rank than <sup>2</sup>Elyāšîḇ and he was located somewhere other than Arad. Note the typical First Temple orthography of the personal name, without the *mater lectionis* for the long vowel; in the Bible, אֶלְיָשִׁיב is a priestly name (1 Chr 24:12). The letter proceeds directly to the issuance of commands.

**ועתה** — This adverbial introductory particle is discussed at length under Lachish No. 2 (*supra*, pp. 60–62).

**נתן** — This form is obviously the absolute infinitive (the imperative would lack