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BABATHA'S *PATRIA*: MAḤOZA, MAḤOZ 'EGLATAIN AND ZŌ'AR

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BABATHA'S PATRIA:
MAḤOZA, MAḤOZ 'EGLATAIN AND ZO'AR*

Partial citations in various publications of the as-yet unpublished Nabataean and Aramaic documents from the Babatha archive¹ have led people to assume that Babatha's village — Maḥoza, מַחְזָא — belonged under Nabataean rule to the larger unit of Maḥoz 'Eglatain. The word *maḥoz* in this phrase was taken to mean “district”, as it does in modern Hebrew,² and the phrase as a whole was understood to mean “the administrative district of 'Eglatain”. In the Semitic documents, which begin in 59-69 CE, both names Maḥoz 'Eglatain³ and Maḥoza⁴ occur, whereas in the Greek part of the Babatha archive⁵ the name Maḥoz 'Eglatain never turns up, only the name Maḥoza (Μαωζα), which belongs here to the larger unit of Zo'ar.⁶ Since the Greek documents begin after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom (the first one is dated to 110, *P.Yadin* 5a and 5b), it seemed very natural to assume that Zo'ar replaced Maḥoz 'Eglatain as the administrative district to which Maḥoza belonged.

The argument was first put in these terms by Yadin: “It is interesting to note that this term [i.e. Maḥoz 'Eglatain] which does not appear in the Greek documents, possesses a parallel in the words ἐν Μαωζα περι Ζοάραν, hence it is to be concluded

* My friend and colleague, Professor Jonas Greenfield, died suddenly on the 13th of March 1995 before he could see the last draft of this paper. I sorely miss his friendship and learning. תגנב”ה.

I am much indebted to Professor Simon Hopkins for his generous help with the Semitic material. I alone am responsible for the mistakes which still remain. — H.M.C.

Because of the lack of a single authoritative and accepted scheme for transliteration of Semitic words into Latin script, and also because of citations from a variety of secondary sources, there will appear to be some slight inconsistencies in the transcription of these words below.

¹ E.g. Y. Yadin, ‘Expedition D — The Cave of the Letters’, *IEJ* 12, 1962, 238-246; ‘The Nabataean Kingdom, Provincia Arabia, Petra and En-Geddi in the Documents from Naḥal Ḥever’, *Phoenix. Ex Oriente Lux* 17, 1963, 229-234.

² This is not insignificant, as will be seen below.

³ For Maḥoz 'Eglatain see *P.Yadin* 36 = J. Starcky, ‘Un contrat Nabatéen sur papyrus’, *Revue Biblique* 61, 1954, 163-5 (59-69 CE), Frag. A, l. 2: ‘l šqy’ (אִשְׁקַי) *bmḥwz* ‘*gltn*’; Frag. C, l. 5: *dy bšwk mḥwz* ‘*gltn*’. Dr. Ada Yardeni kindly showed me her reconstruction of the text, where these are now ll. 8 and 35 respectively (another contract from 43 CE is mentioned in the papyrus). Maḥoz 'Eglatain occurs also in the following unpublished papyri: *P.Yadin* 2 (99 CE), ll. 2-3 = ll. 20 + 22; *P.Yadin* 3 (99 CE), ll. 22-24; *P.Yadin* 6 (119 CE), l. 4; *P.Yadin* 7 (120 CE), l. 2 = l. 32; *XḤev/Se Nab.* 2 (c. 100? CE), ll. 4-5.

⁴ Maḥoza occurs only once in the Semitic documents — in *P.Yadin* 7, l. 3 = l. 33, see below.

⁵ N. Lewis, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek Papyri*, 1989; henceforth ‘Lewis’.

⁶ E.g. *P.Yadin* 5, ll. 4-5: ἐν Μαωζοις τῶν περι Ζοάραν.

that מחרו עגלתין [Maḥoz 'Eglatain] is the Nabataean and perhaps also the ancient Moabite administrative term — later thus modified after the Roman conquest”.⁷

Bowersock, in his review article of Lewis (n. 5),⁸ simply makes Yadin's equation of Zo'ar with Maḥoz 'Eglatain more explicit: “Babatha's village of Maoza appears as Maḥôz in the Semitic documents. The district to which it belongs is the well-known Zoar in Greek, but — as we knew from the Starcky text as long ago as 1954 — it was called 'Egaltein in Aramaic”. The nickname “Eglas” in the name of Joseph Eglas, father of one of the guardians of Babatha's son “is transparently a local hypocoristic of a man from Zoar-'Egaltein”.⁹ The “moschantic estate of our Lord the Emperor” in *P.Yadin* 16, l. 24— μοςχαντική κυρίου Καίσαρος — “is simply an imperial estate in 'Egaltein, which is Zoar south of the Dead Sea”, since the μοςχ-element translates the element 'Egla (she-calf — עגלא; עגלתין) in the place-name 'Eglatain.

As early as 1970 Y. Kutscher disputed the interpretation given by Yadin on purely linguistic grounds, but his protest seems to have remained unheeded: he proves beyond doubt that the original meaning of *maḥoz* in Aramaic is “port” or “city” or “market” — “district” is an altogether later accretion.¹⁰ The meaning “district” so prominent in the modern Hebrew word *maḥoz* seems to have imposed the anachronistic translation of Maḥoz 'Eglatain as “the district of 'Eglatain”. It may still be maintained, however, that the construct state Maḥoz 'Eglatain could mean “the port (in the district) of 'Eglatain”: “The name Maḥôza or 'port' reflects the area of the district in which the village was located. ... The determinative word 'Egaltain most probably is a regional name referring to the northern part of the peninsula.”¹¹

⁷ *Phoenix*. 17, 1963 (n. 1), 231; cf. *idem*, *IEJ* 12, 1962 (n. 1), 251: “in ‘The Greek Documents’ ... as already noted, Maḥoza (in the Nabataean and Aramaic documents part of ‘the coastal district of 'Agaltain'[sic]) is included in the region of Zoar”.

⁸ G.W. Bowersock, ‘The Babatha Papyri, Masada and Rome’, *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 4, 1991, 340-1.

⁹ Note though that it is Ἰωάνης Ἰωσήπου τοῦ Ἐγλα “Yohanes son of Joseph Egla” only in *P.Yadin* 14, l. 23 and 15, ll. 3-4 = l. 18 whereas elsewhere the nickname replaces the name completely: Ἰωάνης Ἐγλα, “Yohanes son of Eglas”, *P.Yadin* 12, l. 8; 13, ll. 21-22; 27, l. 6, as well as in the Aramaic subscription of *P.Yadin* 15, l. 33: יוהנה חברי בר עגלא “my colleague, Yohanna son of Eglā”. See now Борк.. Ἰγλα ἐπιτρόπ[ου] in *XHev/Se Gr.* 2, l. 4 in H. Cotton, ‘A Cancelled Marriage Contract from the Judaean Desert (*XHev/Se Gr.* 2)’, *JRS* 84, 1994, p. 69.

¹⁰ ‘On Ugaritica V’, *Leshonenu* 34, 1970, 5-19 (Hebrew); see now J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the North-West Semitic Inscriptions (Handbuch der Orientalistik)*, II, 1995, 611. See end note.

¹¹ S. Mittmann, ‘The Ascent of Luhith’, *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan I*, ed. A. Hadieh, Amman, 1982, 178. It is not relevant to the argument presented here that he locates Maḥoza in the al- Lisān (see map).

Now that the Greek part of the archive has been published, and more is known about the Semitic documents,¹² it is possible to prove what Kutscher merely stated,¹³ namely that Maḥoza and Maḥoz ‘Eglatain are one and the same locality and that there was no region called ‘Eglatain, just a village¹⁴ variously called Maḥoza and Maḥoz ‘Eglatain. The element ‘Eglatain in the construct state Maḥoz ‘Eglatain is no longer a partitive genitive which describes the whole of which Maḥoz is part, i.e. “Maḥoz in the district of ‘Eglatain”; rather ‘Eglatain here determines the word Maḥoz, i.e. it has become part of the name,¹⁵ as *forum* is in Forum Clodii and Forum Sempronii, and *be’er* (i.e. “well”) in Be’er-Sheva and *‘ein* (i.e. “spring”) in ‘Ein-gedi.¹⁶ Maḥoz ‘Eglatain, “the Port (or City) of ‘Eglatain”, is sometimes abbreviated to Maḥoza, i.e. “the Port” or “the City” (the suffix *aleph* — א — at the end of a word stands for the definite article in Aramaic) by a process of *antonomasia*, as for example in *urbs Roma* becoming *Urbs*; *Glil Goyim* becoming *HaGalil* (Galilee), *Portus Traiani* becoming *Portus*.¹⁷

In the Greek documents the definite article “the” (i.e. the Aramaic suffix, *aleph* — א — after Maḥoz — מַחֲזֵ) has become part of the name, and is no longer felt to be the definite article. Hence Μαωζα rather than ὁ Μαωζ.¹⁸ In other words, the Greek transliterates the Aramaic rather than translates it.¹⁹

The identity of Maḥoza and Maḥoz ‘Eglatain is established by (1) the text of the Aramaic *P.Yadin 7* and (2) simple logic:

1) *P.Yadin 7*, a deed of gift by Babatha’s father to her mother, is the only document in which both Maḥoz ‘Eglatain and Maḥoza occur. Here, therefore, we must look for the clue: the context itself must tell us whether or not these are two different locations or one and the same. First, however, it should be pointed out that although we are already in 120 CE, that is to say fourteen years after the annexation of the Nabataean kingdom, the name Maḥoz ‘Eglatain still occurs, and Ζο‘ar — which had already appeared in the first Greek document²⁰ — is not mentioned here at all.

¹² For *P.Yadin 10* (Aramaic) see Y. Yadin, J.C. Greenfield and Ada Yardeni, ‘Babatha’s Ketubba’, *IEJ* 44 (1994), 75-101; *P.Yadin 7* will be published by J.C. Greenfield and Ada Yardeni in *Eretz Israel* 25 (forthcoming).

¹³ *Ibid.* (n. 10), 8-9; 11.

¹⁴ That it was a village we know from *P.Yadin 12*, l. 7: καὶ Ἰακκούου Ἰουδαίου υἱοῦ Ἰακκούου κώμης Μαωζα Ἀβδοβδασ Ἰλλουθα καὶ Ἰωάνης Ἐγλα.

¹⁵ The distinction is well illustrated in English by the difference between “the City of Oxford” (i.e. the city that is Oxford) as against “the City of David” (i.e. the city that David built).

¹⁶ Cf. “port” in Port-Sa’id, “cape” in Capetown and “mouth” in Portsmouth.

¹⁷ See J.-L. Maier, *L’épiscopat de l’Afrique Romaine, Vandale et Byzantine*, 1973, 102ff. for other examples of *antonomasia*, e.g. *Aquae* (125ff.), *Castellum* (153ff.), *Horrea* (240ff.).

¹⁸ In the Greek documents Μαωζα, as pointed out by Lewis (p. 20), is usually “treated as a feminine singular”, apart from *P.Yadin 5* and 16 where “it is treated as a neuter plural”.

¹⁹ See on Bagalgala in Lewis, p. 70 and below, n. 24.

²⁰ *P.Yadin 5a*, ll. 4-5: ἐν Μαωζοῖς τῶν περὶ Ζῶαρον.

The papyrus begins with the date and place: “In the consulship of Lucius Catilius Severus for the second time and of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, in the third year of the Emperor (Autokrator) Caesar Traianus Hadrianus Augustus, and according to the era of the province on the twenty-fourth of Tammuz year fifteen in **Maḥoz 'Eglatain**” (ll. 1-2 = ll. 30-32),²¹ immediately followed by: “I, Simeon son of Menaḥem who lives in **Maḥoza** (סחממ) gives you Miriam my wife, daughter of Joseph, son of Menashe, all that I own in **Maḥoza**” (l. 3 = l. 33).²²

The run of the sentences and the context both show clearly that in the transition from line 2 (=32) to line 3 (=33) Maḥoza i.e. “The Maḥoz” replaces Maḥoz 'Eglatain i.e. Maḥoz of 'Eglatain. In other words the definite article *aleph* (ס) at the end of Maḥoza (סחממ) has replaced the determinative 'Eglatain; Maḥoz becomes Maḥoza, “The Port” or “The City” and there is no longer any need to use 'Eglatain.

2) In the Nabataean document *P.Yadin* 3 of 99 CE a date grove bought by Babatha's father is said to be situated in Galgala which in turn is located in Maḥoz 'Eglatain: “a date grove which belongs to 'Abi'adan called Gh... in the Galgala in Maḥoz 'Eglatain”, (ll. 2-3 = ll. 23-24).²³ Among the date groves which Babatha declared in the census of 127 CE, there was one said to be located in Galgala — this time said to be in Maḥoza: κῆπον φοινικῶνος ἐν ὀρίοις Μαῶζων λεγόμενον Βαγαλαγαλά²⁴ (*P.Yadin* 16, ll. 24-25). There is no reason to deny that the Galgala of *P.Yadin* 2 and 3 is the same as the Galgala of *P.Yadin* 16; consequently Maḥoz 'Eglatain must be identical with Maḥoza. If so, why should Maḥoz 'Eglatain and Maḥoza stand for two different places in *P.Yadin* 7?

²¹ 'l hḥtyt lyqys qṭwlys swrs tnynt' wmrqs 'wrllys 'ntwnyns šnt tlt l'wtqrṭwr qsr ṭryns ḥdryns sbsts w'l mnyṇ hprkyh d' b'šryn w'rb'h btmwz šnt 'šr wḥmš **bmḥwz 'gltyn**'. And again in ll. 12-13 = l. 48: Simeon adds: “and also —[inner text: another gift] — all my dates and trees scattered in Maḥoza ... and also — another gift — my courtyards and houses in Maḥoza”.

²² 'n' šm'wn br mnḥm dy 'mr **bmḥwz**' lky 'nty mrym 'ntty brt ywsf br mnšh yt kl mh dy 'yty ly **bm ḥwz**'. The outer text, l. 33, does not have “all that I own in **Maḥoza**”.

²³ gnt tmry' dy l'by'dn d' dy mtqryh gh..' dy bglgl' dy bmḥwz 'gltyn; see also *P.Yadin* 2 (Nabataean), l. 3 = l. 22, of the same year: “a date grove in the Galgala in Maḥoz 'Eglatain”.

This same grove, now part of Babatha's property, reappears in the Greek *P.Yadin* 16 of 127. There is no doubt that we are dealing here with the same date grove since it is abuted by the same properties. It is one of the first two groves mentioned there: (1) κῆπον φοινικῶνος ἐν ὀρίοις Μαῶζων λεγόμενον Αλγιφιαμμα ... γείτονες ὁδὸς καὶ θάλασσα, (2) κῆπον φοινικῶνος ἐν ὀρίοις Μαῶζων λεγόμενον Αλγιφιαμμα ... γείτονες μοσχαντικὴ κυρίου Καίσαρος καὶ θάλασσα. See in detail H. M. Cotton and J.C. Greenfield, ‘Babatha's Property and the Law of Succession in the Babatha Archive’, *ZPE* 104, 1994, 211-224.

²⁴ Bagalgala — בגלגל — means literally “in the Galgala”: the preposition “in” (*beth* — ב), as well as the definite article “the” (the suffix *aleph* — ס) have become part of the name in Greek, see Lewis, p. 70. *P.Yadin* 6 (Nabataean), l. 4 reads “which you have in Galgala in ...” (*dy lk bglgl' dy ...*), but Dr. Ada Yardeni tells us that there is no room for Maḥoz 'Eglatain in the gap which follows.

Given that Maḥoza and Maḥoz ‘Eglatain are one and the same in the documents, and given also that Maḥoza is a village (κώμη *P.Yadin* 12, l. 7), we face the problem that the village of Maḥoza/Maḥoz ‘Eglatain seems to contain several units within it.²⁵ Galgala is not the only unit located there. In one of Bar Kokhba’s Hebrew contracts two men who now reside in ‘En-gedi are said to come originally from the Luḥit in Maḥoz ‘Eglatain: “Teḥinnah son of Simeon and Alma son of Judah both of the Luḥit in Maḥoz ‘Eglatain now resident in ‘En-gedi”.²⁶ What kind of village is Maḥoza/Maḥoz ‘Eglatain which contains both Galgala and Luḥit, and perhaps other units as well?²⁷

It could be suggested that Maḥoza/Maḥoz ‘Eglatain was an important regional centre, or an agglomeration of once independent villages. But this explanation is somewhat hard to reconcile with Maḥoza/Maḥoz ‘Eglatain’s obvious inferiority vis-à-vis Zo‘ar in whose territory it is subsumed.²⁸ In fact everything about the phrasing suggests that Maḥoza/Maḥoz ‘Eglatain was subordinate to Zo‘ar in much the same way as a village in Judaea was subordinate to the capital village which gave its name to the toparchy to which it belonged. Even if the term *toparchia* never appears in the Babatha archive or in the province of Arabia,²⁹ one cannot help noticing the striking resemblance between ἐν Μαωζα περὶ Ζοορων of *P.Yadin* 14, l. 20 for example and the locutions describing the hierarchical relationship between a capital village and a subordinate one in Judaea: ἐν Βαιτοβαϊσσαιας ... τοπαρχείας Ἡρωδείου[ς] ... ἀπὸ κώμης Γαλωδῶν τῆς περὶ Ἀκραβατῶν οἰκῶν ἐν κώμῃ Βαιτοάρδοις τῆς περὶ Γοφνοῖς of *DJD* II, no. 115, ll. 2-3;³⁰ and in the Babatha archive itself: κώμης Ἐνγαδδῶν περὶ Ἱερειχοῦντα of *P.Yadin* 16, l. 16; and in the so-called *P.Se’elim*: ἐν Ἀριστοβουλιάδι τῆς Ζειφηνῆς ... τῶν ἀπὸ κώμης Ἱακείμων τ[ῆς Ζειφηνῆς] of (*XHev/Se Gr.* 2, ll. 3-5).³¹ We cannot be sure of what is implied by the subordination

²⁵ This difficulty, too, had been pointed out by Kutscher (n. 10), 11-13, but his solution does not seem convincing to us.

²⁶ *Yadin IEJ* 12, 1962, pp. 251-2, no. 44 (134 CE): *tḥnh bn šm‘wn w’lm’ bn yhw dh šnyhm mhlwḥit šbmḥwz ‘gltn ywšbym b’yn gdy*. *Yadin* suggests cautiously that Teḥinnah son of Simeon could be θεαννας Σιμωνος of the Greek part of the Babatha archive, who no doubt resided in Maḥoza, for he is the scribe of many of the documents written there: *P.Yadin* 5 (110); 15 (125); 17 (128); 18 (128).

²⁷ I suspect that Βηθφααραία — Bethphaaraia — of *P.Yadin* 16, l. 30 may be another one.

²⁸ Above n. 6, and see also *P.Yadin* 14, l. 20; 15, l. 3 = 16-17; 17, ll. 2-3 = 19-20; 18, l. 3 = 32: ἐν Μαωζα περὶ Ζοαραν; *P.Yadin* 25, l. 28 = 64; ἐν Μαωζα περὶ Ζοορων; *P.Yadin* 19, ll. 10-11; ἐν Μαωζα τῆς περὶ Ζοαρα; *P.Yadin* 20, ll. 22-23; 21, ll. 5-6; 22, ll. 5-6; 26, l. 18; 27, ll. 3-4; ἐν Μαωζα περιμέτρῳ Ζοορων; *XHev/Se Gr.* 1, l. 3 in H. Cotton, ‘The Archive of Salome Komaise Daughter of Levi: Another Archive from the ‘Cave of Letters’’, *ZPE* 105, 1995, 183, l. 3; ἐν Μαωζα τῆς περὶ Ζ[ο]αρων.

²⁹ As N. Lewis reminds us in ‘The Babatha Archive: A Response’, *IEJ* 44, 1994, 244. For toparchies in Judaea see E. Schürer, G. Vermes and F. Millar, *History of the Jewish People at the Time of Jesus Christ* II, 1979, 184-198.

³⁰ “at Bethbassi in the toparchy of Herodion ... from the village of Galoda of Akrabatta, but is an inhabitant of Batharda of Gophna”.

³¹ “in Aristoboulias of the Zephene ... from the village of Yaqim [of the Zephene]”, see Cotton (n. 9), 67, and discussion there, 73-77.

of villages to each other (or to a city),³² nor do we know the functions performed by central villages such as Zo'ar, Gophna, Akrabatta, Herodion, Jericho and Zif vis-à-vis their subordinate villages, Maḥoza, Bethbassi, Galoda, Batharda, Yaqim and Aristoboulias respectively, but there can be no doubt that something more than a merely geographical relationship is intended.³³

Conclusion:

We have thus eliminated the non-existent district of 'Eglatain, and the assumption that it was re-named Zo'ar under Roman rule. However, we cannot be sure that the inclusion of villages — like Maḥoza/Maḥoz 'Eglatain — in the district of other villages — like Zo'ar — originated only with the Roman re-organization of the new province: although the subordination of Maḥoza to Zo'ar is recorded for the first time after the annexation of Arabia (*P.Yadin* 5, 110 CE), it does not appear in the Aramaic *P.Yadin* 7, written in 120 CE. It may be argued that the convention of attributing a village to the district is tied up with the language of the document — Semitic or Greek.

The exact location of Maḥoza also remains a puzzle. Whether *maḥoz* means “a port” or “a city”, Maḥoza/Maḥoz 'Eglatain lay by the sea shore.³⁴ The proof is in the documents themselves which mention two date groves in Maḥoza named Algiphiamma, which is a Greek transliteration of Aramaic *l gif ym* “on the sea shore”: κῆπον φοινικῶνος ἐν ὀρίοις Μαωζων λεγόμενον Αλγιφιαμμα ... γείτονες ὁδὸς καὶ θάλασσα, κῆπον φοινικῶνος ἐν ὀρίοις Μαωζων λεγόμενον Αλγιφιαμμα ... γείτονες μοσχαντικὴ κυρίου Καίσαρος καὶ θάλασσα (*P.Yadin* 16, ll. 17-24).³⁵

³² Petra is mentioned three times as the centre to which both Zo'ar and its subordinate village, Maḥoza, belonged. See *P.Yadin* 16, l. 13-14: Βαβθα ... Μαωζηνη τῆς Ζοαρηνῆς περιμέτρου Πέτρας; *P.Yadin* 37, ll. 2-3: ἐν Μαωζα τῆς Ζοαρηνῆς τῆς πῆρὶ Πέτραν; cf. N. Lewis, 'A Jewish Landowner from the Province of Arabia', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 8-9, 1985/88, 134, l. 12: Σιμωνίωις Μαωζηδὸς τῆς Ζοαρηνῆς περιμέτρου Πέτρας.

³³ See B. Isaac, 'The Babatha archive', *IEJ* 42, 1992, 67-70.

³⁴ Thus an identification with Kh. Galgul (cf. A. Musil, *Arabia Petraea: I Noab*, 1907, 365 and 381, n. 1) or with Kh. el-Gillime (cf. F.-M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* II, 1938, 310, s.v. Eglāim) is impossible since both are located inland. See the illuminating discussion of biblical 'Eglat (עִגְלַת — Isaiah 15:5; Jeremiah 48:5) in A. Schalit, 'Die Eroberungen des Alexander Jannäus in Moab', *Theokratia. Jahrbuch des Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum* I, 1967-69 (1970), 12ff. (an earlier version of this article appeared in Hebrew in *Eretz Israel* I, 1951, 104-121).

³⁵ Since Luḥit is explicitly said to be in Maḥoza/Maḥoz 'Eglatain, it should be located by the sea shore. Any attempt to identify it with one or another of its namesakes must start from this fact. Biblical “ascent of Luḥit” (Isaiah 15:5 and Jeremiah 48:5) is identified by Eusebius as a village lying between Areopolis and Zo'ar; καὶ ἔστι μεταξὺ Ἀρεωπόλεως καὶ Ζοορῶν κώμη νῦν καλουμένη Λουεθά (*Onomasticon* 122, 28, Klostermann). A commander of an army camp in Lhytw (*rb mšryta dy blhytw*) is mentioned in a Nabataean inscription from 37 CE (of which two identical copies were found: *CIS* II.i, no. 196 = *RES* no. 674). See R. Savignac and J. Starcky, 'Une inscription nabatéenne provenant du Djōf', *RB* 64, 1957, 200-203; W. Schottroff, 'Horonaim, Nimrim, Luḥith und der Westrand des "Landes Ataroth"' *ZDPV* 82, 1966, 196ff.; A. Schalit (n. 34), 40-41 and n. 4 there; Mittmann (n. 11).

And indeed the sea, or rather the sea shore,³⁶ is said here to be one of the abutters of these date groves. Another clue to the location of Maḥoza/Maḥoz ‘Eglatain is that dates constitute the main, if not the only, product of the area: they are mentioned in census declarations,³⁷ deeds of gift³⁸ and tax receipts.³⁹ Hence we must look for a place with climatic and water conditions similar to those prevailing in Zo‘ar⁴⁰ and ‘Ein-gedi. The Ghor al-Ṣafi, south of the Dead Sea, with Wadi al-Ḥasa nearby, would fit Maḥoza/Maḥoz ‘Eglatain admirably.⁴¹

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³⁶ In the Nabataean *P.Yadin* 3, where one of these two groves is mentioned, the word used is *rqq'* (l. 5 = l. 27), i.e. “shoals”, a word used elsewhere for the shallow water near the shore of a lake or sea, cf. *bShabbat* 100b; *b'Erubim* 43a.

³⁷ *P.Yadin* 16 and Lewis, *SCI* 8-9, 1985/88, 134, l. 12.

³⁸ *P.Yadin* 7 and *XHev/Se Gr.* 1 (n. 28).

³⁹ *XHev/Se Gr.* 5, see H.M. Cotton, ‘Rent or Tax Receipt from Maoza’, *ZPE* 100, 1994, 547-557 = *ZPE* 105, 1995, no. I, 174-5; *XHev/Se* 12 (Aramaic), see A. Yardeni, *The Naḥal Ṣe'elim Documents* (Hebrew, forthcoming); for an English translation of this document see *ZPE* 105, 1995, no. V, p. 204.

⁴⁰ Zo‘ar is “the city of palms”, see *Mishnah, Yebamot*, 16.7; see M. Broshi, ‘Agriculture and Economy in Roman Palestine: Seven Notes on the Babatha Archive’, *IEJ* 42, 1992, 233: “The heat, the extreme low humidity and the abundant water are prerequisites for cultivating the date palm. The salinity ... is no hindrance”, cf. *ibid.* 231-2. Note that in the two biblical passages mentioned above (n. 34) ‘Eglat is mentioned together with Zo‘ar.

⁴¹ See map. The “big river” — *nhr' rb'* — mentioned in *P.Yadin* 7, l. 8 = l. 42 and the “water from the Wadi” — *my wdy'* — mentioned in l. 43 may point to Wadi al-Ḥasa. Note also the “desert” — *mabr'* — as one of the abutters in l. 5. Cf. Nelson Glueck’s first impression of the Ghor al-Ṣafi area: “...We pushed on to Ghōr eṣ-Ṣāfi, near the south-eastern end of the Dead Sea. The waters of the Seil el-Qurāḥi, as the lower end of the Wādī el-Ḥesā is called, irrigate an extensive area, part of which is in a swampy state [cf. above, n. 36, the “shoals” — *rqq'*] ... The large green fields of eṣ-Ṣāfi were a welcome relief after the waste stretches traversed from the time we left the plantations of the el-Mezra‘ah”, *Explorations in Eastern Palestine* II (*AASOR* 15, 1935), 7.

END NOTE:

Even if *maḥoz* does mean “district”, the identification of Maḥoza and Maḥoz 'Eglatain remains unaffected; even then the word *maḥoz* in Maḥoz 'Eglatain cannot mean “district” literally. My colleague Simon Hopkins kindly supplied a similar example: the town Siirt in Southern Turkey is the capital of Siirt Province (*vilayet* in Turkish = Arabic *wilāya(t)*), but in the local Arabic *al-walāye*, i.e. “the province” is used for the town Siirt itself, *not* “the province”; see O. Jastrow, *Die mesopotamisch-arabischen qeltu-Dialekte* I, 1978, 16; II, 1981, 217; 220, n. 16; 274, n. 20. A good example is II, 226 § 1 *qaza alwalāye* which means literally “the district of the province”, i.e. “the district of Siirt”.

Concordance of the papyri mentioned in this article (with the exception of those published by Lewis, n. 5) with H. Cotton, W. Cockle and F. Millar, ‘The Papyrology of the Roman Near East: A Survey’, *JRS* 85, 1995:

P.Yadin 2 = no. 182.

P.Yadin 3 = no. 183

P.Yadin 6 = no. 186

P.Yadin 7 = no. 187

P.Yadin 12 - no. 175.

P.Yadin 36 = no. 180.

Lewis, *SCI* 8-9, 1985/88 = no. 179.

Yadin IEJ 12, 1962, pp. 251-2, no. 44 (n. 26) = no. 303.

XHev/Şe Gr. 1 = no. 204.

XHev/Şe Gr. 2 = no. 292.

XHev/Şe Gr. 5 = no. 191.

XHev/Şe 12 = no. 205.⁴²

XHev/Şe Nab. 2 = see E. Tov with the collaboration of S.J. Pfann, *The Dead Sea Scrolls on Microfiche: a Comprehensive Edition of Texts from the Judaean Desert, Companion Volume* (1993) p. 66. (I am grateful to Dr. Ada Yardeni for giving me the information cited above in n. 3, on ll. 4-5 of the papyrus).

⁴² The Greek and Aramaic papyri said to come from Naḥal Şe'elim and designated *XHev/Şe* will be published in a final form by H. Cotton and A. Yardeni, *Aramaic and Greek Texts from Naḥal Hever (The Seiyāl Collection II), Discoveries in the Judaean Desert XXVII*, 1996.

Map: The Locations mentioned in the article

(Reproduced with some additions from N. Lewis, *The Documents from the Bar Kokhba Period in the Cave of Letters. Greek Papyri*, 1989 by permission of the publishers)

