

The Supposed Lost Tomb of Jesus

I do not have cable, so I haven't seen the program on T.V. However, I did go to the Discovery Channel Web Site Above and read what was there concerning the supposed lost tomb of Jesus. When I had some free time, I read what was there as well as some of the sensational claims that were made there. Here is a link:

<http://dsc.discovery.com/convergence/tomb/tomb.html?dcitc=w99-502-ah-1024>

Here just some of the problems I found.

Immediately, there are some glaring problems. It appears that they have completely ignored the Biblical account except for the names listed there, and even then they have ignored some important details.

1. Jesus was not from a rich family. Typically only the wealthy had family tombs. Otherwise, people were buried in the ground in burial trenches, much like we bury our dead here.

2. Jesus was from Nazareth. His hometown was not Jerusalem, so why would his family tomb (if they had one) have been in Jerusalem? According to the Biblical accounts, Joseph of Arimathea had to loan his tomb for Jesus. Why would he do this if the family tomb was in Jerusalem?

3. One of the names in the tomb is from a "Matiah" (Matthew). Jesus did not have any brothers named Matthew.

4. According to an article by Jodi Magness a Jewish Archaeologist from the Biblical Archaeology society, a catalog of ossuary inscriptions from Israel Archaeologist L.Y. Rahmani from Jerusalem reveals that the typical practice is to indicate the place of origin only for those who were not native to Jerusalem. In other words, if this was the family tomb of Jesus of Nazareth, then the inscriptions would have indicated it - "Jesus, son of Joseph of Nazareth." Being from Jerusalem, it only has the name of the deceased and perhaps the father's name as it does in this tomb - "Judah son of Jesus." Therefore, the family buried in this tomb is not from Nazareth, but Jerusalem.

5. Are these all from the same generation or successive generations? A family tomb is used for generation after generation. There is no indication that the names on the ossuaries were from successive generations. Therefore, the Maryah, may not have been the mother, she could have been the grandmother or the great grandmother, an aunt. etc.

There are a few other problems, such as the supposed DNA testing (nothing to compare them against), statistical analyses (do we have a census of names from that time period from which to make a probability statement of odds of these

names appearing together?), and other such problems. There are also some problems with the inscriptions themselves. Keeping in mind that I am not an epigrapher, nor am I an expert on Palestinian inscriptions (but am much, much more qualified than the Hollywood filmmaker that produced this so-called documentary), here is my take on the inscriptions:

1. The "Mary" Ossuary

According to this web site, the name is "Maria," which is the Latin form of "Mary." In Hebrew/Aramaic the name is "Miriam." The script on the ossuary is Aramaic -- מריח

a. First issue - The last letter on the ossuary is a consonant, not a vowel, so the letters are M R Y CH (the last letter is a het, pronounced "ch" as in the German "ach"). Therefore it would probably be something more like "Maryach," which is not "Miriam" מריים or "Mary" at all. *IF* this were indeed supposed to be a Latin form of Miriam (the spelling says it is not), then why not write it in Latin?

Another question I have is this - Does the name "Maria" in Latin end in a vowel or consonant? The name as we have it on the ossuary ends in the consonant "ch"

b. Second issue - I am not an epigrapher, but I don't think I have ever seen the final form of "Mem" מ used at the beginning of a word. If you will notice the first letter on the Matthew Ossuary, you will see what the mem should look like מ.

This looks more like a samek ס "s." In fact, the samek on the James Ossuary (in the name Joseph) is written almost the same way. If this is a samek, then the name is not "Maryach" but "Saryach" But I may be wrong on this.

2. The "Matthew" Ossuary

a. The letters, מתיח M T Y H - "Matyah" or "Mattiah," a Hebrew name meaning "Gift of Yahweh" The obvious issue is that there is no Matthew in Jesus of Nazareth's immediate family

b. The assumption is made in this "documentary" is that Luke's genealogy is traced through Mary, but the jury is still out on whether this is the case. Scholars are not in agreement as to whether this is the case.

3. The "Jose, Joseph" Ossuary

a. The letters are יוסה Y O S H. hence, Joseh.

b. Is this really a diminutive of Joseph as they claim??

c. According to the web site, they are claiming this to be Joseph junior. But Jesus of Nazareth did not have a brother named Joseph.

4. The mysterious missing "James" Ossuary

a. One of the ten ossuaries removed from the tomb went missing. Jacobovici wants to make the case that the famous James Ossuary is the missing one, which would add more weight to his theory that this is the family tomb of Jesus. No one knows for sure where the James Ossuary originally came from, it was not

retrieved by archaeologists from a dig, but was purchased from an antiquities dealer, which is why all the controversy surrounding its authenticity.

b. According to this article: <http://news-info.wustl.edu/news/page/normal/8914.html> Only six out of the ten ossuaries removed from this tomb had inscriptions, which means that the missing ossuary did not have anything on it. So much for the famous James Ossuary belonging to this tomb!

c. In an article that appeared in *Haaretz*, there is a photo from 1970 of the James Ossuary in Golan's home. The FBI authenticated that the photo is from 1970. Therefore, it is *highly* unlikely that this ossuary came from a tomb that was discovered in 1980! <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/823215.html>

5. The Judah Ossuary

It reads in Aramaic יְהוּדָה בֶּר יֵשׁוּעַ - Yehudah bar Yeshua - "Judah son of Jeshua"

a. Once again, there is no evidence anywhere that Jesus of Nazareth was married or that he had a son.

b. Jeshua or "Joshua" was a very, very common name. It would be like "Mike" "Bob" "George" or "Jack" today. "Judah" was also a very common name. A modern day equivalent of this find would be "Jack the son of George." If you were to find this on a tomb, would you conclude that this was Jack the step son of George Washington? Both are common names, and there have likely been many, many George's over the last several hundred years who had a son named Jack.

6. The Mariamne Ossuary

a. It is hard to make out this inscription. It is apparently written in Greek, which they claim is MAPIAMENE E MAPA I can make out "Maria" but then there is a raised dot after this, which in Hebrew and Aramaic usually indicates a new word. After "Maria" it gets very hard to make out. After "Maria" there is what looks like another mu, but it is upside down, then there are three, maybe four letters that I cannot make out, then a mu, alpha, rho, and alpha, very poorly written. There is no MENE or E.

b. This is obviously someone else named Mary, but is it really Mary Magdalene? There is no evidence of this, except for a late fourth century heretical Gnostic Gospel (which Dan Brown also used in his *Davinci Code*) that tells of a Mariamene that Jesus was fond of (but not married to her). If so, why is the inscription written in Greek when the other inscriptions in the tomb are all in Aramaic?

c. The assertions that this "documentary" makes about Mary is more of the Dan Brown hype. It is based on heretical Gnostic documents, much of which are fragmentary, and which, unlike the Biblical documents, dates long after the Biblical period.

7. The supposed "Jesus son of Josphe" Ossuary

- a. It is interesting that this is the most garbled inscription in the tomb. Matya, Yehuda, and Maryach are all written in good Aramaic. The Aramaic of Yehudah is beautiful. However, the Jesus inscription is so garbled, it is hard to make any sense of it at all. Supposedly, it says, "Yeshua Bar Yoseph." I am not sure how they got this from the scratches on this ossuary. I am almost certain that whatever it says it is not "Yeshua." I can only make out the final pe and samek, but it definitely does not have the letters for Jesus, ישוע (other spelling is, יהושע). Even an untrained eye looking at the inscriptions (reading right to left) can see that the inscription bears no resemblance to this whatsoever.
- b. According to Stephen Pfann, a scholar at the University of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, this inscription probably says "Hanun." Here is a reference to the quotations: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,254669,00.html> I am not sure how he got this from the inscription either since it is so garbled.

It is interesting how few experts were involved in this so-called documentary. I didn't see any of the well-known experts names appear on this project. It is not because this find was unknown, it has been around for over 25 years, yet virtually ignored by all the true experts as having little significance. For those who respond to this by saying they ignored it because it would destroy their faith, then consider this: Some are Jews, some are Christians, others have little faith if any at all.

In my opinion, the only reason this even got the attention it did is because of the recent Dan Brown hype. It is more of the same sort of sensationalist fluff. The only problem is that many people are being duped by this trash. Stories and movies are powerful for communicating a message. Some people are accepting some or all of this as fact.

I offer this piece to all as a way to answer those who have swallowed this garbage. Hope it helps.