

THE HYPOCORISTIC FORMS OF THE NAME JOSEPH (YEHOSE, YOSE) IN THE LATE SECOND TEMPLE PERIOD, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TALPIYOT TOMB A

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Note: This article consists of edited extracts from a much longer study of the name Joseph in the Late Second Temple period (not yet published). I am making this version available now in view of the recent on-line articles by Eldad Keynan and James Tabor, already discussed on Mark Goodacre's NT Blog, and the imminent publication of the collection of essays on Talpiyot Tomb A (edited J. H. Charlesworth).

I begin with a summary of the occurrences of the short forms of the name Joseph in the relevant sources, based on my own collection of the data, which is now the fullest and most up-to-date available.

The name Yehose/Yose in Jewish Palestine: Statistics¹

330-100 BCE (persons mentioned in rabbinic literature):

יהוסי/יוסה² 2

100 BCE – 135 CE (excluding rabbinic literature):

יהוסה	1 (ossuary CIIP 352a)
יהסה	1 (ossuary CIIP 107)
יוסה	2 (ossuary CIIP 475; papyrus Mur 46)
יסה	1 (ossuary CIIP 116)
Ἰωσῆς	3 (ossuaries CIIP 231, 583a+b; Josephus)
Ἰωσή	3 (ossuary CIIP 573; 2 NT)
Ἰωσε	1 (ossuary CIIP 46)
Ἰοσε	1 (ossuary CIIP 81)
Ἰωσίας	2 (papyrus Mur 89; Josephus)
Ἰωσίς	1 (Epiphanius)

¹ I have corrected and expanded the data in Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Antiquity: Part I: Palestine 330 BCE – 200 CE* (TSAJ 91; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), by looking for myself at most of her sources and by making full use of *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae, Volume I: Jerusalem; Part 1: 1-704*, ed. Hannah M. Cotton et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010) (CIIP; my references are to the inscriptions by number). I have not yet had the opportunity to work through the Addenda to her *Part I* in Ilan's most recently published volume (*Palestine 200 – 600 CE*).

² For the spelling in rabbinic literature, see below.

Ioses 1 (Eusebius)

100 BCE – 135 CE (persons mentioned in rabbinic literature):

יֹסֵי/יֹסֶה ³ 8

135-200 CE (persons mentioned in rabbinic literature):

יֹסֵי/יֹסֶה ⁴ 19

Total short forms, 330 BCE – 200 CE 46

[For comparison: Western diaspora, 100 BCE – 135 CE]

Ἰωσή 5, Ἰωσῆ 2

The name Yehose/Yose in Jewish Palestine: Discussion

Yehose/Yose is the short form (hypocristic) of the common name Joseph (biblical and rabbinic Yôṣēf [יֹסֵף], but in 2nd Temple period usually Yehôṣēf [יהוֹסֵף]). Hypocristic forms of Hebrew and Aramaic names do not necessarily reduce the number of syllables, but may just replace a final consonant with a final long vowel. The final ה in יהוֹסֵה, יהסֵה, יוסֵה and יסֵה (the forms on ossuaries and papyrus) is not a consonant following a short vowel (e.g. Yehôṣēh or Yôṣēh) but a vowel-letter (*mater lectionis*). In Hebrew, of course, one would normally expect it to carry a long a, so that the name would be vocalized as Yehôṣâ or Yôṣâ, but in this case the vowel must be a long e (Yehôṣê or Yôṣê). This is both because of the long e in the full forms of the name (Yehôṣēf, Yôṣēf) and because the Greek versions, both on ossuaries and in the New Testament (Ἰωσῆς [3], Ἰωσή [3], Ἰωσε [1], Ἰοσε [1], Ἰωσίας [2], Ἰωσίς [1]), as well as from the diaspora (Ἰωσῆς [5], Ἰωσή [2]), never have α and most often have η. The use of final ה to represent a long e sound is best understood as Aramaic spelling.⁵ (Aramaic spelling of names is not uncommon on ossuaries.⁶) When the form יֹסֵי is used in rabbinic literature (see below), this is simply the Hebrew spelling of יוסֵה. Both were pronounced Yôṣê.⁷

³ For the spelling in rabbinic literature, see below.

⁴ For the spelling in rabbinic literature, see below.

⁵ For this use of final ה in Aramaic, see Franz Rosenthal, *A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic* (Porta Linguarum Orientalium 5; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1961), 8; Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Grammar of Qumran Aramaic* (Ancient Near Eastern Studies Supplement 38; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 24.

⁶ Ilan, *Lexicon*, Part 1, 25-26.

⁷ Some rabbinic scholars and translators (e.g. Jacob Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70*, 3 vols. [Leiden: Brill, 1971]) distinguish the two spellings as, in English, Yosa or Yosah and Yosi. This is incorrect. Some other people seem to have been misled by the common use of the name Yossi in modern Israel.

We are fortunate to have several cases in which an individual is designated by both a full and a short form of the name. These prove (if proof were needed) that יהוסי/יהוסי/יוסי/’Ιωσής/’Ιωσή (and variants) are indeed hypocoristic forms of יהוסי/יהוסי/’Ιωσήφ/’Ιώσηπος (and variants).⁸ But they also prove (as we would expect) that the same individual could be known by both a full and a short form of the name:

(1) An ossuary found in a burial complex in the Kidron Valley has the inscription יהוסי on the lid and the inscription יהוסי on one side (CIIP 352; Ilan no. 94).

(2) The brother of Jesus who is called ’Ιωσή in Mark 6:3 is called ’Ιωσήφ in Matthew 13:55. (See the discussion of the text of these passages below.)

(3) Probably Josephus calls the same man ’Ιώσηπος in *Vita* 185 (where he instigates the revolt of Gamla against Agrippa II and Rome) and ’Ιωσής in *BJ* 4.18, 66 (where he is one of the town’s two leaders at the time of the siege).⁹ Most manuscripts have ’Ιώσηπος in *BJ* 4.18, 66, but manuscript L¹ has ’Ιωσής in both places, supported by the Latin version at 4.66.¹⁰ This is very likely original, since it is easy to suppose that scribes would change ’Ιωσής to the more familiar ’Ιώσηπος, which is the form of the name almost everywhere else in Josephus,¹¹ and hard to imagine why they should make the reverse change.¹² We cannot be quite sure that the ’Ιώσηπος of *Vita* 185 is the same man as the ’Ιωσής of *BJ* 4.18, 66, but it seems likely.¹³

(4) R. Yose the Priest (Ilan no. 46), one of the five disciples of Yohanan ben Zakkai, is called יהוסי in *m. ’Abot* 2:8-9, 12 in the oldest and best manuscript of the Mishna (the Kaufman manuscript, see below) and יהוסי in his only other appearance in the

⁸ See also the evidence in Ilan, *Lexicon*, Part 1, 159 n. 96, showing that the later rabbis treated יהוסי and יהוסי/יהוסי as forms of the same name.

⁹ He is Ilan no. 14, but she does not note the variant reading ’Ιωσής at *BJ* 4.18, 66.

¹⁰ Benedictus Niese ed., *Flavii Josephi Opera*, vol. 6 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1894), 349, 355.

¹¹ The only exception is ’Ιωσίας in *BJ* 6.148, where there is a variant reading ’Οσαίας.

¹² The case is not comparable with Acts 4:36, where the reading ’Ιωσής is probably a scribal alteration of ’Ιωσήφ. The latter has the non-Greek ending -φ, for which scribes would prefer the more properly Greek ending -ς.

¹³ Abraham Schalit, *Namenwörterbuch zu Flavius Josephus (A Complete Concordance to Flavius Josephus)*, ed. Karl Heinrich Rengstorf; Leiden: Brill, 1968), 68, treats them as identical. He notes Adolf Schlatter’s suggested correction of τῆς ἰατρίνης (*Vita* 185) to ’Ιάριος (son of Jair), which is attractive (cf. Steve Mason, *Life of Josephus: Translation and Commentary* [Leiden: Brill, 2003], 94 n. 800), but this does not affect the issue. Shaye J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 166-169, discusses the discrepancies between *Vita* 177-178, *Vita* 185-186 and *BJ* 4.18, 68, noting in passing that the Josephus of *BJ* 4.18, 68 is ‘presumably’ the same as the ‘Josephus’ of *Vita* 185. For an argument from archaeology for the general reliability of Josephus’ account of the siege and battle of Gamla, see Danny Syon, ‘Gamla: City of Refuge,’ in *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*, ed. Andrea M. Berlin and J. Andrew Overman (London/New York: Routledge, 2002), 134-153, who judges that Josephus must have been an eyewitness of these events.

Mishna, *m. 'Ed.* 8:2,¹⁴ in the same manuscript (see further below).¹⁵ He is also called יהוסי in *y. Hag.* 2.1, but elsewhere Yose.¹⁶

Only in case (1) can we be absolutely sure that the individual was known by both forms of the name during his lifetime. The other cases are at least evidence of the equivalence of the full and short forms of the name, but they may well preserve authentic memories of the way the individual was known to his contemporaries. Matthew (if we assume Markan priority) may have known that the brother of Jesus was actually known as Ἰωσήφ as well as Ἰωσή (since the brothers of Jesus were well known in the early church),¹⁷ but, if not, he knew Jewish names and simply preferred the more formal form of this brother's name to the more informal short form, taking it for granted that anyone known as Ἰωσή could also be called Ἰωσήφ.

Finally, in the case of R. Yose the Priest, we should note that tractate *Avot* is of later origin than the rest of the Mishna, and could well preserve an independent memory of what this rabbi was called. We cannot, of course, be sure. But to the evidence we have adduced for full and short forms of the name Joseph used of the same individual, we can add the same phenomenon in the case of other names. We find both ישוע and ישו

¹⁴ On this text, see Alexei M. Sivertsev, *Household, Sects, and the Origins of Rabbinic Judaism* (JSJSup 102; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 252-253.

¹⁵ Note this person is not the same as Yosef the Priest (*m. Hall.* 4:11; *m. Miqw.* 10:1), who is not called Rabbi.

¹⁶ Four other possible examples could be added to this list: (1) Joseph Barnabas, called Ἰωσήφ in the best manuscripts of Acts 4:36, is Ἰωσής in the Byzantine tradition (Textus Receptus), but Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart: UBS, 1989), 326, is surely right to call the latter 'a spelling that reflects the tendency to replace a non-Greek ending (-φ) with one more congenial to Byzantine scribes.' (2) In most editions of the Greek New Testament the individual called Ἰωσής in Mark 15:40, 47, is called Ἰωσήφ in Matt 27:56, but in my view (argued below) Ἰωσή is the better reading in Matt 27:56 as well as Mark 15:40, 47. (3) R. Yose the Galilean (Ilan no. 37) is called 'Ioseph Galilaeus' in Jerome's Latin translation of a passage from the third-century Nazarene Christian commentary on Isaiah (quoted in Ray A. Pritz, *Nazarene Jewish Christianity* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988], 58 n. 56), but this is not reliable evidence that the commentary itself (written in Hebrew or Aramaic) had יהוסי rather than יהוסי/יהוסה. (4) The Jerusalem bishops list is known in three forms and the 14th name on the list occurs thus: Ioses (Latin translation of the *Chronicon* of Eusebius, presumably reflecting Ἰωσής in the original Greek), Ἰωσήφ (in Eusebius's *Historia ecclesiastica*) and Ἰωσίς (Epiphanius). However, it is likely that the form of the name that Eusebius found in his source for the list was Ἰωσής, which he himself changed to the more familiar form Ἰωσήφ in the *Historia ecclesiastica*. See my essay on the Jerusalem bishops list elsewhere in this volume.

¹⁷ Matthew has also changed the order of the last two names of the four brothers of Jesus (Mark: Judas, Simon; Matthew: Simon, Judas), perhaps because he thought he knew better than Mark the actual order of the brothers in seniority; cf. Richard Bauckham, *Jude and the Relatives of Jesus in the Early Church* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990), 7.

on one individual's ossuary (CIIP 547¹⁸), while on another we find Ἀσουβος (written twice) and the short form Ἀσους (written five times) (CIIP 120). We find the same person called both אלעזר and ליעזר on ossuary inscriptions.¹⁹ The Hasmonean king Alexander's Hebrew name is יהונתן on his coins, but he is known by the short form ינאי in Josephus (*AJ* 13.320: Ἰανναῖος) and rabbinic literature.²⁰ This last example, incidentally, like the rabbi known as Yose, shows that the hypocoristic forms of names were not confined to use by family and friends, but could be in use by the general public. Another example of an individual known (evidently to the general public) by both the full and the short forms of his name is the father of the high priest Jesus son of Gamaliel. Josephus calls him both Γαμαλίηλος (his full Hebrew name גמליאל) (*Ant.* 20.213, 223) and Γαμάλας (the hypocoristic form גמלא) (*BJ* 4.160; *Vita* 193; he is also called גמלא in *m. Yebam.* 6:4; *b. Yebam.* 61a).

It is notable that the short forms of the name are never found in legal documents. However, they do occur on ossuaries, where the range of spellings is also indicative of writing by people other than professional scribes: יהוסה (1), יהסה (1), יוסה (1), יסה (1), יוסה (1), יוסה (1), יוסה (1), יוסה (1), יוסה (1), יוסה (1), יוסה (1). In general, hypocoristics are comparatively infrequent on ossuaries, but they certainly do occur: e.g. Lazar (CIIP 251), Liezer (CIIP 342, 502), Mattai (CIIP 481, 489), Nittai (CIIP 242), Salo (CIIP 134, 589), Shammai (CIIP 87), Yehud (43, 55, 450), Yeshu (547). Ossuary inscriptions did not share the formality of legal documents, no doubt because they would normally be seen only by family members and served primarily to identify the ossuaries. Short forms of names could be used presumably if the deceased was well known by that form of their name within the family circle, but full forms of names were generally preferred. Patronymics without personal names, though commonly used in ordinary life, do not appear on ossuaries.

The short form (יוסה and יוסי) in rabbinic literature

Ilan lists 36 persons named יוסי in rabbinic literature who lived before 200 CE. This figure breaks down to two before 100 BCE, eight in the period 100 BCE – 135 CE, and nineteen in the period after 135 CE. In addition, Ilan lists three persons named יוסף who lived before 135, seven of this name after 135, and five persons with the special form of the name אסי/איסי who lived after 135. I see no reason to reduce or increase these numbers. Some of these persons are well known figures mentioned frequently in rabbinic literature and their existence is not to be doubted. Others are more obscure, but names of prominent persons are among the facts that are most reliably remembered in traditions over time. Often the name is reliably remembered when what it said about the person is mistaken or legendary. However cautious we

¹⁸ This is Ilan, *Lexicon*, Part 1, 127 no. 43.

¹⁹ It is not certain whether the ליעזר of CIIP 342 is the same person as the אלעזר of CIIP 334 or the הלעזר of CIIP 335, but he is very probably one of these and may also be the אלעזר of CIIP 340 (cf. Ilan, *Lexicon*, Part 1, 76 n. 168).

²⁰ Ilan, *Lexicon*, Part 1, 147 n. 41.

may be about accepting the attributions of sayings to particular rabbis, we can justifiably be much less doubtful about the names.²¹

Unfortunately, we are on less sure ground when it comes to the forms of the name, especially the spellings of the short form. Ilan lists the form יוסי in 36 cases, 15 of them in the Mishna, the earliest of the works in question, and 11 of them in the Tosefta, the next oldest. But Ilan is largely dependent on the concordances to the literature produced by C. Y. Kasovsky (to the Mishna and Tosefta), M. Kosovsky (to the Talmud Yerushalmi) and B. Kosovsky (to other rabbinic works). These are based on printed editions that do not necessarily reflect the best manuscript readings. In the case of the Mishna, the Kaufman manuscript²² is the oldest manuscript and the one whose readings are now generally preferred, though we still lack a critical edition of the whole Mishna recording all variant readings.²³ The Kaufman manuscript almost always reads יוסה, not יוסי.²⁴ R. Yose the Priest (Ilan no. 46) appears as יוסף in this manuscript at *m. 'Abot* 2:8-9, 12 (where other manuscripts attest יוסי and יוסה),²⁵ but as יוסה in his other appearance in the Mishna, *m. 'Ed.* 8:2. This is the only example in the Mishna of the use of יוסף and יוסה/יוסי for the same individual.²⁶

A sampling of Saul Lieberman's edition of the Tosefta²⁷ shows that the Vienna manuscript, on which he bases his text, often has יוסה but not infrequently יוסי, and sometimes has the two forms in close propinquity. Where it has יוסה, the other two manuscripts usually have יוסי. Because of such widespread manuscript variation in the

²¹ See William Scott Green, 'What's in a Name? – The Problematic of Rabbinic "Biography",' in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice*, ed. William Scott Green (BJS 1; Missoula, Montana: Scholars Press, 1978), 77-96, here 88-90.

²² The Kaufman manuscript is available on-line at <http://kaufmann.mtak.hu/>. Its text of tractate 'Abot is conveniently printed, with English translation, in Amram D. Tropper, *Wisom, Politics and Historiography: Tractate Avot in the Context of the Graeco-Roman Near East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 253-274.

²³ The series *Die Mischna: Textkritische Ausgabe mit deutscher Übertsetzung*, ed. Michael Krupp et al. (Jerusalem: Lee Achim Sefarim) is appearing tractate by tractate.

²⁴ The Kaufman ms. has יוסי at *m. 'Abot* 6:9, but chapter 6 is a very late supplement to tractate 'Abot.

²⁵ See Frank Ueberschaer, *Avot [Aboth]* (Die Mischna: Textkritische Ausgabe mit deutscher Übersetzung; Jerusalem: Lee Achim Sefarim, 2003), ad loc.

²⁶ Otherwise in the Mishna יוסף is used only for Yosef the Priest (Ilan no. 41: *m. Ḥal.* 4:11; *Miqw.* 10:1; not to be confused with R. Yose the Priest) and for the father of Rabbi Aqiva (Ilan no. 40: *m. Ma'aś. Š.* 5:9; but the name is lacking in the Kaufman ms.). The use of יוסף for R. Yose the Priest in the Kaufman manuscript at *m. 'Abot* 2:8-9, 12 could possibly result from confusion with Yosef the Priest, but this is not very likely, since in *m. 'Abot* 2:8-9, 12 it is clear that one of the disciples of Yohanan ben Zakkai is named, whereas Yosef the Priest lived before 70 (*m. Ḥal.* 4:11). The former was well known, the latter obscure. Moreover, R. Yose the Priest is also called Yosef in *y. Hag.* 2.1. Each of the 'pair' Yose ben Yo'ezer and Yose ben Yohanan is sometimes called Yosef in rabbinic literature (cf. Neusner, *Rabbinic Traditions*, vol. 1, 61-81), but not in the Kaufman ms. of the Mishna.

²⁷ Saul Lieberman, *The Tosefta* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1955)

spelling of this form of the name, I have recorded all instances of the short form in rabbinic literature as סיי/יוסה.

Although it would take a much more complete survey of the textual evidence to confirm this judgment, it looks probable that יוסה, rather than יוסי, is the form that occurred originally in the rabbinic literature of Palestinian provenance (*Mishna, Tosefta, Yerushalmi*) because this was the spelling long used in that area,²⁸ and that later scribes (less familiar with this Aramaic spelling) tended, though inconsistently, to replace it with יוסי. This would, of course, be consistent with our other (non-rabbinic) evidence for the period that concerns us, where the spelling יוסי never occurs. Certainly the rabbinic references cannot count as evidence that any of the persons in question who lived in the period 330 BCE – 200 CE actually used the spelling יוסי. Of course, some of them might have used other spellings attested for the period (יהוסה, יהסה, יסה), since there is no reason to suppose that the spelling of such names was stable. Their names could have been standardized as יוסה by the compilers of the Palestinian rabbinic literature. What does seem likely is that all persons for whom the short form of the name is attested in our period by any of the sources used a version of the Aramaic spelling with final *hē*.

Yosef and Yose in Talpiyot Tomb A (the alleged ‘Jesus Family Tomb’)

The tomb I am calling Talpiyot Tomb A (originally excavated and published by Amos Kloner in 1996²⁹) became widely known in 2007 through a film called *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*, made for television by Simcha Jacobovici, a film maker who specializes in sensational claims related to Palestinian archaeology. The film claimed that this tomb contained the ossuary of Jesus of Nazareth, along with those of several members of his family. The claims were also published in a book by Jacobovici and Charles Pellegrino, *The Jesus Family Tomb: The Discovery, Investigation, and the Evidence That Could Change History*.³⁰ The claims were and have continued to be supported by New Testament scholar James Tabor.³¹

The basis of the claims is the inscriptions on six of the ossuaries found in the tomb. These read: (1) Yehuda the son of Yeshua’ (CIIP 473), (2) Yeshua’ (?) son of Yehosef (CIIP 474), (3) Yose (יוסה) (CIIP 475), (4) Maria (CIIP 476), (5) Mariame

²⁸ It is also found in Palestinian synagogue inscriptions from the third and fourth centuries CE: Joseph A. Fitzmyer and Daniel J. Harrington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts (Second Century B. C.- Second Century A. D.)* (BibOr 34; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 254-266: nos. A4, A9, A22 (*bis*), A25, A27, A29, A33, A36, A38.

²⁹ Amos Kloner, ‘A Tomb with Inscribed Ossuaries in East Talpiyot, Jerusalem,’ *Atiqot* 29 (1996) 15-22.

³⁰ San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2007.

³¹ James D. Tabor, ‘Testing a Hypothesis,’ *Near Eastern Archaeology* 69 (2006): 131-137. See also James D. Tabor and Simcha Jacobovici, *The Jesus Discovery: The New Archaeological Find That Reveals the Birth of Christianity* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012), where these authors argue that a second tomb, Talpiyot Tomb B (featured in another film), corroborates the identification of Talpiyot Tomb A as the Jesus family tomb.

and Mara *or* Mariame who is also (known as) Mara³² (CIIP 477), (6) Matiya (CIIP 478).³³ The argument is that because so many of these names coincide with the names of Jesus' family – Yeshua', Yeshua' (?) son of Yehosef, Yose (cf. Jesus' brother of this name), Maria (cf. Jesus' mother) and Mariame (cf. Mary Magdalene, alleged by Jacobovici to be Jesus' wife) – this must actually be the tomb of Jesus and his family. In the intensive discussion to which these claims have been subjected the response of most scholars has been that these names were all very common names at the time.³⁴ Statistical arguments, based on reckoning the proportion of the population that would have borne each of these names and the consequent probability of this degree of coincidence between the names on the ossuaries and those of Jesus' family, have been deployed.³⁵ However, apart from the issue of appropriate statistical calculations, statistical arguments are only as good as the facts and assumptions about the names with which they work.³⁶ In the present context, our discussion is limited to the name Yose and its relationship with the name Yehosef.

Increasingly, the name Yose has emerged from the discussions as the most important factor in determining whether the degree of coincidence between the names on the ossuaries and those of Jesus and his family is unsurprising or unusual. Referring to a point they originally made in 2007 and again in 2008, Kevin Kilty and Mark Elliott have recently said,

³² This second reading is proposed by Stephen J. Pfann, 'Mary Magdalene has left the room: A suggested new reading of ossuary CJO 701,' *Near Eastern Archaeology* 69 (2006): 130-131.

³³ I have published a full study of the names: Richard Bauckham, 'The Names on the Ossuaries,' in *Buried Hope or Risen Savior: The Search for the Jesus Tomb*, ed. Charles L. Quarles (Nashville, B & H, 2008), 69-112.

³⁴ Of course, other issues have also been discussed, such as whether the socio-economic status of the family of Jesus precludes ossuary burial, a preserve of the wealthy.

³⁵ Sandra Scham, 'Trial by Statistics,' *Near Eastern Archaeology* 69 (2006): 124-125; Kevin T. Kilty and Mark Elliott, 'Probability, Statistics and the Talpiot Tomb' (June 2007):

www.lccc.wy.edu/Media/Website%20Resources/documents/Education%20Natural%20and%20Social%20Sciences/tomb.pdf (accessed most recently 28 June 2012); Kevin T. Kilty and Mark Elliott, 'Inside the Numbers of the Talpiot Tomb' (March 2008): <http://www.bibleinterp.com/PDFs/tomb2.pdf> (accessed most recently 28 June 2012); William A. Dembski and Robert J. Marks, 'The Jesus Tomb Math,' in *Buried Hope*, ed. Quarles, 113-151. This article by Dembski and Marks is much the most thorough discussion by mathematicians, but, so far as I am aware, advocates of the 'Jesus family tomb' hypothesis have ignored it.

³⁶ Andrey Feuerverger, the statistician on whom Jacobovici relied, based his work on premises given to him by Jacobovici and his colleagues, but which are highly debatable: see, e.g., Scham, 'Trial,' 125; Christopher A. Rollston, 'Inscribed Ossuaries: Personal names, statistics, and laboratory tests,' *Near Eastern Archaeology* 69 (2006): 125-129, here 129.

We have always maintained that "the key to calculating the probability of the Talpiot tomb belonging to the family of Jesus of Nazareth is the inscribed ossuary located in the tomb containing the name Yoseh."³⁷

Their argument is that their critics, those who argue that all the names on the ossuaries were very common at the time, are wrong to include Yose in a general statistic for the frequency of the name Joseph (in all its variants), thus treating it merely as an instance of the second most common Jewish name in the period. Rather it should be treated as a highly unusual 'nickname', of which only nine instances are to be found in Tal Ilan's list (these are the occurrences of יוסה, יסה, Ἰωσή, Ἰωσή, Ἰωσῆ). They argue that the many instances of יוסי that Ilan lists from rabbinic literature should not be included because יוסי is a different name, Yosi. James Tabor, on the other hand, while stressing the rarity of the 'nickname' Yose, admitted, already in 2007, that יוסה and יוסי were pronounced the same and are the same name. He pointed out (as I have above) that the Kaufman manuscript of the Mishna has יוסה in all the instances Ilan cites as יוסי. He contends, however, that Yose was really quite rare in 2nd Temple times, in Hebrew or in Greek. Even when it does become more common in the much later 3rd century CE sources, such as the Mishnah, the sages with this nickname are almost always mid-late second century CE and beyond.³⁸

My detailed examination of all the evidence for the name Joseph in all its variants and short forms (above) enables me to make the following points in response.

- (1) Yose (יוסה, יסה, Ἰωσή, Ἰωσή, Ἰωσῆ, Ἰωσῆ, Ἰωσίας, Ἰωσίας) is a short form of the name Yehosef/Yosef. Moreover, the rare Hebrew form Yehose (יהוסה, יהוסה) cannot really be treated separately, since there is no way of knowing whether the recorded Greek instances reflect Hebrew/Aramaic Yose or Yehose (the distinction cannot be made in Greek letters), and there may have been little difference in pronunciation between Yose and Yehose. In all there are sixteen instances of the short form of the name from the period 100 BCE – 135 CE in sources other than the rabbinic sources.
- (2) יוסה and יוסי are respectively Aramaic and Hebrew spellings of the same short form of the name Joseph, pronounced identically (Yôse). The original spelling throughout the Mishna was probably יוסה, and this may well have been true of the earlier Palestinian rabbinic literature generally. So there is not even a difference of spelling between what the Mishna calls persons of this name and the short form as recorded in Second Temple period sources.
- (3) Despite Tabor's claim that 'the sages with this nickname are almost always mid-late second century CE and beyond', in fact there are eight persons of the name in rabbinic literature who lived between 100 BCE and

³⁷ Kevin Kilty and Mark Elliott, 'On Yoseh, Yose, Joseph, and Judas son of Jesus in Talpiot,' published in April 2012 on the blog *The Bible and Interpretation*: <http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/kil368024.shtml> (accessed most recently 28 June 2012).

³⁸ James Tabor, 'The Name Yoseh on the Talpiot Tomb Ossuary,' published in September 2007 on the TaborBlog: <http://jamestabor.com/2007/09/02/the-name-Yoseh-on-the-talpiot-tomb-ossuary/> (accessed most recently 28 June 2012).

135 CE. So occurrences of the short form Yose in that period total 24 (including two of Yehose).

- (4) There are several attested instances of the same person being known by both the full and the short form of the name, as there are also in the case of other names. There seems no reason why anyone with the name Yehosef/Yosef should not have also been called Yose, while anyone called Yose would undoubtedly also have used the full form of his name in certain contexts, notably legal ones. If the same man can be called both Yehosef and Yehose even on his own ossuary (CIIP 352), then it is entirely possible that the Yose of one ossuary in Talpiot Tomb A (CIIP 475) is the same person as the Yehosef of another (CIIP 474).³⁹
- (5) Analysis of the evidence shows that, as in the case of other names, the short form of this name was never used on legal documents and tended not to be used on ossuaries, though it could be. In fact, the short form occurs on nine ossuaries, which makes the instance in Talpiyot Tomb A an unusual but not at all remarkable case.
- (6) Evidence for the everyday use of the short form includes the eight rabbinic instances, the two New Testament instances, and five others: fifteen in all. Given that so much of our evidence for names in this period comes from legal documents, ossuaries and Josephus (who also evidently prefers the formal, full form of the name), this is quite strong evidence for the quite common use of Yose in everyday life.

I am not competent to make a statistical argument based on these observations, but, given the interchangeability of the full and short forms of the name, I think it is legitimate to use an overall figure for all forms of the name Joseph in arguments of that type. I have restricted these observations to the period 100 BCE – 135 CE, because advocates of the ‘Jesus family tomb’ hypothesis tend to dismiss the relevance of chronologically more distant evidence. However, one point with regard to statistical arguments needs to be made. All statistical arguments have worked with the total figure of 2826 named persons or 2509 named male persons. These are Ilan’s figures for the whole period 330 BCE – 200 CE. They are at present the only figures available for statistical use. Anyone who wishes to know what percentage of Palestinian Jews were called Yehosef or Yosef or Yose in specifically the period 100 BCE – 135 CE will have to calculate the total number of valid named persons there are in Ilan’s *Lexicon*, Part 1, *from that period* – no mean task.

Appended Note on Eldad Keynan, ‘Yoseh/Yosey – Heavyweight Names at Talpiot’

(<http://www.bibleinterp.com/articles/key368019.shtml>)

The data and discussion above make Keynan’s discussion of יוסה and יוס׳ in rabbinic literature out of date and show his conclusions to be erroneous. He relies on Ilan for occurrences in the Mishna and takes no account of textual variants in the Mishna and other Palestinian rabbinic literature, even though James Tabor had already pointed out that the Kaufman MS of the Mishna has יוסה in (almost) all instances. He relies on global figures for large bodies of rabbinic literature. His conclusion that ‘the earlier the rabbinic sources, the less the Yoseh form occurs’

³⁹ The CIIP editors (Jonathan Price and Hannah Cotton) also think this possible.

appears simply untrue when the data is examined more carefully. The real distinction is between the Palestinian sources and the Babylonian sources. In the latter יוסה is rare. But in the best manuscript of the Mishna it is the norm. This is coherent with the ten cases of יוסה on Palestinian synagogue inscriptions from post-200 CE.

I need to make some comments on Keynan's claim that both names would always be used in funerary contexts. The real point here is that birth names would tend to be used in *formal* contexts, which explains why hypocoristics are rare in legal documents (I have cited the evidence above). On ossuaries hypocoristics are relatively rare, but above I have given 13 examples (besides Yehose/Yose), and explained this by the fact that ossuary inscriptions do not share the formality of legal documents, because they would normally be seen only by family members and served primarily to identify the ossuaries. Keynan inexplicably relies only on Rahmani's now incomplete collection of ossuaries and discusses nicknames, not hypocoristics. Nicknames and hypocoristics are not the same phenomenon. Of course, a nickname will accompany a birth name, but a hypocoristic (short form) will not accompany the full form; it will substitute for it. Keynan has not noticed the examples of hypocoristics on ossuaries.

Keynan's evidence that birth names were required in funerary contexts is late rabbinic evidence and in any case is not relevant to names on ossuaries, which had nothing to do with land ownership but were simply intended to identify whose bones were in the box for the information of other family members. (Moreover, ossuary inscriptions include women and children who certainly did not own the tombs.) This evidence cannot count against the clear evidence that hypocoristics do occur on ossuary inscriptions. It is entirely implausible that Lazar, Liezer, Mattai, Nittai, Salo and Yeshu were ever used as birth names. Moreover, we have one ossuary on which the same person is called both יהוסף and יהוסה (CIIP 352), as I have noted above. Finally, Keynan seems to think the synagogue inscriptions from post-200 CE are funerary inscriptions. If my memory serves, they record donors.

I do not think one can correlate the Hebrew and Aramaic spellings of names with the linguistic context in which they were used. The textual variation between יוסה and יוסי in rabbinic literature is clear evidence of this. Since the usual spelling in the period up to 200 (indeed, perhaps the only spelling) was יוסה, it would not be surprising if this spelling was used in Hebrew contexts. It would be worth checking whether bar is always used with Aramaic spellings of names in ossuary inscriptions, ben with Hebrew spellings of names. I doubt this is the case.

Finally, Keynan entirely ignores the Greek examples of the name. This is indefensible, since they are most certainly simply transliterations of Hebrew/Aramaic forms. If he wishes to make any use of NT examples of Yose (which are Greek!) – and there is no way of making any connexions with the relatives of Jesus without doing so – then he must take the Greek examples on ossuary inscriptions and other 2nd Temple sources into account.