

Rocky Mountain Mason

**TEMPLARS
AND THE
MASONS**

**MASONS
IN THE
WEST**

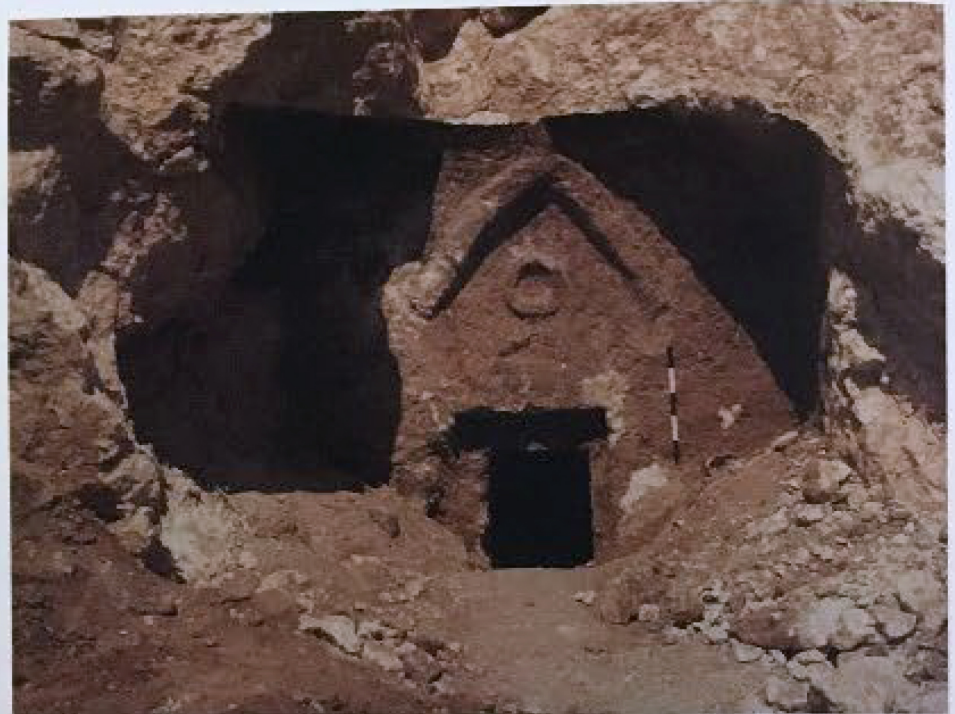
**TRADITIONAL
OBSERVANCE
SLIPPED IN
COLORADO**

**A CERTAIN
POINT
WITHIN A
CIRCLE**

**RECONSIDERING
A MARK ON THE LID
OF TALPIOT
TOMB'S JESUS
OSSUARY**

Reconsidering a Mark on the Lid of the Talpiot Tomb's Jesus Ossuary

RIGHT: 1980 photo of the Talpiot Tomb photographed by Amos-Kloner



By Scott F. Wolter P.G.

Abstract

The lid on the “Yeshua bar Yehosef” (aka Jesus, son of Joseph) ossuary from the First Century, C.E. “Talpiot Tomb” in Jerusalem, has a prominent mark that has received little attention. If mentioned at all, it is typically referred to as a star and usually dismissed as something insignificant, such as an alignment mark. A careful examination of the mark reveals that it is actually not a star. Rather, it appears to be a combination of two symbols, one resembling a Tau Cross and the other a so-called “Hooked X”. This paper will build a case for this interpretation and demonstrate why this is an important discovery.

Introduction

The so-called Talpiot Tomb was discovered when it was revealed during blasting of the bedrock comprised of a white calcareous chalk called *Nari*,¹ during construction of apartment buildings in March of 1980. Excavations of the tomb were performed under the supervision of archaeologist, Joseph Gath, and a plan diagram of the tomb with elevations was made by an assistant archaeologist and surveyor, Shimon Gibson. Gath discovered ten ossuaries within the six tunnels (called *kokhim*) during his excavations, but only nine were cataloged and entered into the collection at the Israeli

Antiquities Authorities (IAA, nee IDAM) storage facility. Recent geochemical testing has confirmed the so-called “James Ossuary” is also from the Talpiot tomb and is this missing tenth ossuary.²

Seven of the ten ossuaries are inscribed with names; six in Hebrew/Aramaic and one in Greek. The name inscribed in Greek (IAA no.

80-500) arguably translated as “Mariamene, who is Mara” may refer to the biblical Mary Magdalene. The six names carved in Hebrew/Aramaic are as follows:

- (IAA no. 80-501) “Yehuda, son of Yeshua” (Judah, son of Jesus)
- (IAA no. 80-502) “Marya” (Matthew)
- (IAA no. 80-503) “Yeshua, son of Yehosef” (Jesus, son of Joseph) (IAA no. 80-504) “Yosef (Jose/Joseph)
- (IAA no. 80-505) “Marya” (Maria)
- (IAA no. 80-509³) “Ya’aqob son of Yoseph, brother of Yeshua” (James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus)

This amazing cluster of names carved on burial ossuaries from a single tomb has led many (including the author of this paper) to conclude this is the family burial tomb of the biblical Jesus, other members of his family and potentially his wife Mary Magdalene. Much controversy and research on the inscriptions carved on the ossuaries has occurred in the wake of the discovery over the past 35 years, but very little has been said about the marks carved on the lids, including two marks on the lid of the “Yeshua bar Yehosef” ossuary. Although sketches of these two marks carved on the “Yeshua bar Yehosef” lid were published in 1994,⁴ photographs taken by Charles Pellegrino in 2005 are the first-ever photographs of the marks to be published (Figures 2, 3 and 4). This paper appears to be the first attempt to interpret the meaning of the mark that some had taken to be a simple star.

The Discovery

In May of 2014, a fellow independent researcher named Jerry Lutgen, introduced the author in an email that included five photographs taken by Charles Pellegrino, of a mark inscribed on the lid of the “Yeshua bar Yehosef” ossuary (Figure 1). In this email Pellegrino described the mark as, “...a seven pointed star with one of the points diverging into a “V.” Im-

Figure 1. Photograph of the front of the Yeshua (Jesus) ossuary (IAA accession no. 80-503). Its perimeter dimensions are 62.7-65.0 x 25.4-26.0 30.5-31.0 centimeters. (Internet)



mediately upon reviewing the photos the author saw not a single "star" mark, but two very familiar symbols intertwined into a single monogram and wrote the following in his response to Lutgen and Pellegrino:

"The "star" carving on the Jesus ossuary lid looks like a monogram to me of two separate symbols; a "T" and my Hooked X. Of course, I may be seeing what I want to see, but the top bar/line of the "T" is slightly below the intersecting lines in the middle of the X. What do you think?"

Soon after sending the email it occurred to the author this "T" was most likely a Tau Cross, so that the mark was actually the combination of a "Hooked X" and a Tau Cross. The rationale for reaching this conclusion is presented below.

Pellegrino pointed out there are actually two separate marks carved on the Yeshua ossuary lid, the Hooked X/Tau Cross monogram and a chevron. He also pointed out there are no known photographs of these marks on the lid other than Pellegrino's. The second mark carved on the lid, a low-angle (approximately 25 degrees) chevron, does appear faintly in one of the photographs sent by Pellegrino (Figure 4). The faintly visible chevron is confirmed by its position relative to the Hooked X/Tau Cross as drawn in a sketch that appears on page 223 of the L.Y. Rahmani's catalogue. The up-side down orientation of the Rahmani sketch confirms the lack of understanding of the meaning of the Hooked X/Tau Cross symbol. However, the author's drawing of the Hooked X/Tau Cross monogram (Figure 6) showing its centered positioning on the ossuary lid suggests the carver intentionally placed the symbol at the top end of the lid immediately adjacent to the short side of the ossuary with the inscribed name, "Yeshua bar Yehosef", and a large "X" symbol carved in front of it (Figure 7).

On March 18, 2015, the author personally viewed the Yeshua ossuary lid, while it was on display in the Dead Seas Scrolls exhibit in Los Angeles, California. The ossuary section of the exhibit included the Yeshua ossuary which was positioned with the Hooked X/Tau Cross symbol clearly visible only a few inches from the Plexiglas divider. However, the direct overhead lighting made viewing the chevron symbol very difficult although the more deeply carved Hooked X/Tau Cross was clearly visible.

"Mason's Marks" or "Maker's Marks"

One of the arguments sure to be made against the Hooked X/Tau Cross interpretation for this mark will be that it is a known practice to use marks, such as small X's or "star-like" marks on ossuaries as a way to align the placement of the lids onto the limestone burial boxes. On pages 19-21 of L. Y. Rahmani's *Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries*, he discusses these marks found on approximately 40% of the ossuaries listed in his catalogue. Rahmani states, "Most of the marks on ossuaries are incised or drawn with charcoal. They usually occur in pairs, one on the lid and the second on either the narrow side or rim of the chest or occasion-

ally on the chest's long side." The Hooked X/Tau Cross symbol does not have a corresponding mark on the rim or narrow side and looks to have been carved with considerably more care and skill than the aforementioned chevron as well as the name and "X" symbol carved on the narrow side of the chest. Nearly all the examples of paired or single direction marks in Rahmani's catalogue are rather crudely made. In Kloner and Gibson's article they termed the two marks on the Yeshua lid to be "maker's marks" writing in a footnote, "Indeed, some of the marks may have been made by family members at the same time they inscribed the names." In light of this it's possible the carver of the Hooked X/Tau Cross monogram could have been the maker of the ossuary, a family member at the time of interment, or even an intruder into the tomb at an unknown date. Further, because of the differences in the quality of the carvings it appears certain that whoever carved the Hooked X/Tau Cross was not the same person who carved the Yeshua name and the "X" on the ossuary.

Interpretations of the Hooked X Part of the Monogram

The upper symbol within the monogram is an "X" with an extra bar added to the upper right arm that forms a well-known and controversial symbol called a "Hooked X" (Outlined in red in figure 3).⁶ The author coined the term "Hooked X" in 2002, and has written extensively about the symbol which first became known to him during his examination of the Kensington Rune Stone (Figure 8), discovered in Minnesota in 1898, at his materials forensic laboratory, American Petrographic Services, Inc., beginning in July of 2000.⁷ The Hooked X symbol appears twenty-two times and is used for the letter "a" and "a" sound within the Kensington inscription that is carved using medieval Scandinavian runes. Since its discovery in 1898 scholars noted that the "Hooked X" symbol had never been seen used in a runic inscription (which led to their persistent belief it was a hoax). Subsequent research by the author, various scholars, and other researchers into various aspects of the artifact, including the geology, runes, language, dialect, grammar, dating and history of the discovery has provided voluminous evidence consistent with it being a genuine medieval artifact.⁸

Four more runic inscriptions were subsequently discovered in North America that included the Hooked X symbol.⁹ Three rune stones were found buried together at Spirit Pond, Maine, in 1971, and a two-line, nine character runic inscription with a Hooked X carved into a multi-ton sandstone boulder in Narragansett Bay that was documented as early as circa 1945. Two of the three Spirit Pond Rune Stones are dated to 1401 and 1402 (twice) using the medieval Easter Table dating method.¹⁰ The Kensington Rune Stone is dated to 1362, once using Pentadic numbers in Arabic placement, and 1362 again by plotting singled out characters within the inscription into the medieval Easter Table.¹¹ The Narragansett Rune Stone has no



Figure 2. The "Hooked X/Tau Cross" monogram carved on the lid of the Yeshua (Jesus) ossuary. (Photograph courtesy of Charles Pellegrino)



Figure 3. The Hooked X (red)/Tau Cross (yellow) are highlighted to show it's actually a monogram of two symbols. (Walter, 2014)



Figure 4. A second photograph of the "Hooked X/Tau Cross" monogram carved on the lid of the Yeshua (Jesus) ossuary that includes the faintly visible second symbol which is a low-angle chevron (circled in red). (Photograph courtesy of Charles Pellegrino)

1 Charlesworth, 2013, Page 32.

2 S Findings Reignite Debate on Claim of Jesus Bones
www.nytimes.com

3 Charlesworth, 2013, Page 43.

4 L.Y. Rahmani, *A Catalogue of Jewish Ossuaries in the Collection of the State of Israel, Jerusalem, 1994.*

5 Charlesworth, 2013, Footnote 25, Page 39.

6 The phrase "Hooked X" was trademarked (Register No. 4,380,468) by Scott E. Walter on August 6, 2013.

7 The details of the investigation into the geological aspects of the Kensington Rune Stone performed by Walter can read in his 2006 book listed in the bibliography.

8 Hundreds of articles, papers and books have been published about the Kensington Rune Stone since its discovery, but the geological findings led geologist, Newton H. Wischell, the first State Geologist of Minnesota (1875-1900), to conclude the artifact was genuine. On December 15, 1909, he wrote to the Museum Committee of the Minnesota Historical Society, "I have personally made a topographical examination of the place where the Kensington rune stone was found, and of the region northward to Pelican Lake where the sherris are located, in which the inscription refers, and I am convinced from the geological conditions, and the physical changes that the region has experienced probably within the last five hundred years that the said stone is not a modern forgery and must be accepted as a genuine record of an exploration in Minnesota at the date used in the inscription."

9 Walter, 2009, Pages 71-96.

10 Walter, 2009, Pages 76-78.

11 Walter, 2009, Pages 34-37.

12 Walter, 2013, Page 214.

13 Jones, 1957/1991, Page 235.

14 Mackey, 1921, Page 244-5.

15 At least five examples of the Triple Tau symbol were found by the author on early to mid-1600's era grave slabs in the ruined church in the St. Augustine Monastery (four examples), and in the St. Francis of Assisi Church (one example) in Old Goa, India, in May of 2015. Both churches and the monastery were built by the Portuguese Templars then called the Order of Christ.

16 Charlesworth, 2013, Pages 43-45.

discernable date within its inscription.

The author has written three books that chronicle his research into several controversial artifacts that include all five North American rune stones with the Hooked X, and numerous other examples of the Hooked X found in Europe. Based on the fact the Hooked X is found associated with *only* the Medieval Knights Templar order, the associated Cistercian religious order and modern Freemasonry, the author has concluded the symbol served a dual function in the known examples. Besides being used for the "a" sound, the symbol also occurs used as the Roman numeral ten.¹² In his 2009 book, the author proposed the Hooked X was also symbolic of a religious ideology called Monotheistic Dualism that dated back to at least circa 1350 B.C.E., and the time of Egyptian Pharaoh Akhenaten. The author also suggested a very early rendition of the Hooked X symbol was the crossed Crook and Flail (Figures 9 & 10).

The presence of the Hooked X symbol on the ossuary of what many scholars now accept as the First Century biblical Jesus could be evidence that is consistent with many researchers' belief in his Egyptian heritage. It could also provide an important clue to the true religious ideology that Jesus and his apparent wife, Mary Magdalene, and their followers were teaching.

Interpretations of the Tau Cross Part of the Monogram

The top horizontal bar of the "T" shaped Tau Cross appears to have been intentionally carved just slightly below the intersection of the two longest lines forming the Hooked X thus creating two separate symbols carved together into a single monogram. The Tau Cross also has Egyptian origins starting off as a large "T" shaped flood gauge for measuring the water level of the Nile River.¹³ The lifeblood of the people of Egypt was directly dependent on the rise and fall of the Nile. If the water in the spring was too low there would be drought and famine among the people. If too high, floodwaters would destroy their stores and homes leading to destruction of the people. The T-shaped flood gauge became an important symbol of life and later a talisman in Egyptian culture believed to avert evil and ward away sickness and disease. A loop was added to the Tau Cross making it one of the most common and important symbols in all of ancient Egypt – the *ankh*, symbolic of eternal life (Figure 11).

Curiously, the Tau Cross is one of the most important symbols in Royal Arch Freemasonry where three Tau Crosses are joined together where the bottom ends are joined at a central point to produce what is called the "Triple Tau." The Triple Tau is found within a Delta and a circle – both considered symbols of the Deity – in the top center of the flap on the Masonic apron of a Royal Arch Freemason (Figure 12). One can't help but notice both the Triple Tau on the Masonic apron and the Hooked X/Tau Cross on the Yeshua ossuary lid are both in the same relative position; centered at the top. The Royal Arch Degree of Freemasonry deals with the legend

of three zealous sojourners, returning from captivity in Babylon to assist in the noble and glorious work of rebuilding the house and city of God. During their work on the foundation of the original Temple, they found a curiously wrought stone, and, digging down nine levels under the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, they reportedly found treasure. This is mirrored in the legend of the Knights Templar, who we know also performed excavations on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Some rumors say the treasure found included gold, scrolls, maps, navigation instruments, the Ark of the Covenant, and the Delta of Enoch – a triangle of gold with the immutable name of the Creator inscribed in Hebrew letters, Yod, Hey, Vav, Hey, inside a cube of agate.¹⁴

The Triple Tau symbol dates back to *before* the official origin of English Freemasonry in 1717 (Figure 13).¹⁵ One can't help but wonder if the symbol is somehow connected to the Christian "IHS" symbol that began in the First Century as "IH" which is identical to the Triple Tau symbol. The original meaning of the symbol was the "T" over the "H" emblem which meant Templum Hierosolymæ, or the Temple of Jerusalem. The symbol can also be seen as "T" over "H" and a First Century Christogram of the Greek letters, I (iota) and H (eta), the first two letters for the name "Jesus." Reportedly, an "S" was added in the Second Century creating the well-known symbol of the Christian "IHS" (Figure 14).

Interpretation of the Monogram Taken as "Alpha-Omega"

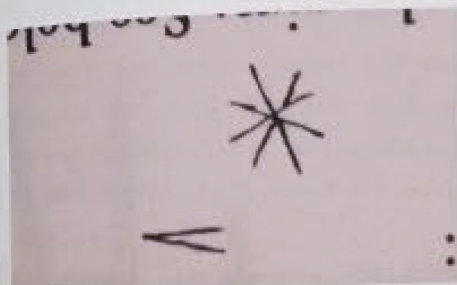
Many have speculated the Hooked X symbol is a carved-into-stone with straight lines version of the Hebrew "Aleph," the first character in the Hebrew/Aramaic alphabet. The Tau is the nineteenth character in the Greek alphabet, but it is also related to the Hebrew Tav (and Aramaic Tav) which would have been the last character of the Hebrew Alphabet (and the number 400). If so, the monogram on the lid could be equivalent to "Alpha-Omega, the beginning and the end." It's long been known in the Bible that Jesus said, "I am the beginning and the end." Perhaps this pre-C.E. 70 symbol is evidence that this biblical passage was accurately recorded, as spoken by Jesus.

Conclusions

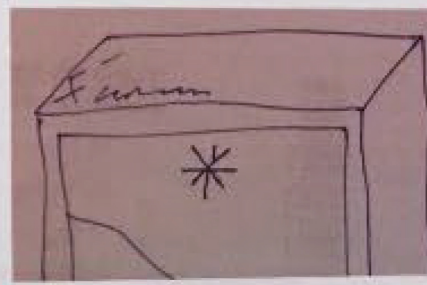
The discovery of the Hooked X/Tau Cross on the lid of the Yeshua ossuary from the Talpiot Tomb could turn out to be as historically important as the recent inclusion of "James" ossuary as a tenth ossuary discovered in, and looted from, the Talpiot Tomb.¹⁶ The author's fifteen years of research into who carved the Kensington, Spirit Pond, and Narragansett Rune Stones led him directly to the medieval Cistercians, the Knights Templar, and ultimately modern Freemasonry; to Jerusalem at the time of the Crusades, the biblical Jesus, and the evolving theory that Jesus was possibly married to Mary Magdalene. To find what appears to be the Hooked X carved on the lid of the Yeshua ossuary could be a major historical discovery that is consistent with much of the

speculative research the author has already published. The Hooked X/Tau Cross discovery and its apparent connection of the Hooked X to the American Rune Stones, the Cistercians/Knight Templar, and Freemasonry could also be interpreted as further evidence that the Talpiot Tomb was indeed the tomb of the Biblical Jesus, Mary Magdalene, and other family members. However, a lot more scientific work on the lid carvings needs to be done. Several important questions need to

be addressed. When were the carvings made? Were the symbols carved onto the lid at the time of interment or were they added later when the tomb was entered at some point after it was no longer used for burials as some have suggested? The author is hopeful of performing a number of scientific procedures, including three-dimensional digital microscopy on all of the ossuaries in the near future in order to shed more light on these and other questions. ❄️



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Figure 5. The drawing of the Hooked X/Tau Cross monogram (Page 223 in L. Y. Rahmani's book) shows the vertical line of the Tau Cross is slightly off to the right when compared to the actual carving with both carvings oriented upside down. However, the drawing shows the correct relative position of the chevron symbol that also appears on the lid.

Figure 6. Drawing showing the relative position of the Hooked X/Tau Cross symbol on the lid of the Yeshua (Jesus) ossuary as drawn by Scott Wolter after examining the ossuary while on display in the Dead Sea Scrolls exhibition in Los Angeles, California, on March 18, 2015.

Figure 7. The inscription carved in Aramaic on the narrow side of ossuary IAA #80-503 reads "Yeshua bar Yehosef", (Jesus, son of Joseph) and has a large

"X" carved at the beginning of the name as Hebrew and Aramaic are read right to left. (Internet)

Figure 8. The Hooked X symbol occurs twenty-two times on the Kensington Rune Stone; it is used for the "a" sound within the Old Swedish runic inscription discovered in Minnesota in 1898. This example is found in the second word on line 6. (Wolter, 2002)

Figures 9 & 10. Egyptian Pharaohs Tutankhamen and his father Akhenaten both have the crossed Crook and Flail across their chest which was the earliest known representation of the Hooked X symbol and the ideology of Monotheistic Dualism it represents. (Internet)

Figure 11. This example shows the Egyptian Ankh which is actually a Tau Cross with an egg-shaped handle. (Internet)

Figure 12. One of the most important symbols in Royal Arch Freemasonry is the "Triple Tau" found on this Masonic apron within the Delta and the circle, both considered symbols of the Deity within the Craft. (Wolter, 2015)

Figure 13. The Triple Tau symbol occurs twice on this mid-1600's era grave slab in the floor near the altar in the church of the ruined St. Augustine Monastery in Old Goa, India. (Wolter, 2015)

Figure 14. This stylized example of the Christian "IHS" symbol appears on the exterior of the "Bom Jesus" Basilica in Old Goa, India. This symbol dates back to the Second Century and could be origin of the Triple Tau symbol found in Royal Arch Freemasonry. (Wolter, 2015)