

The Titanic Claims of a Sinking Theory* Refuting the "Jesus family tomb"

1 "Jesus family tomb" claims:

- a) Tomb in which 10 ossuaries were found (ossuaries are boxes used to store the bones of a dead person after internment).
- b) Six ossuaries were inscribed with names
 - i) Yeshua bar Yosef + "+" = Jesus, son of Joseph \approx Jesus (fig. 1)
 - ii) Maria = Mary \approx Jesus' mother, Mary
 - iii) Mariamene e mara = Mary \approx Mary Magdalene, Jesus' wife
 - iv) Matia = Matthew \approx Matthew-disciple (and relative?) of Jesus
 - v) Yose = Joseph \approx Jesus' father, Joseph
 - vi) Yehuda bar Yeshua = Judah (or Jude), son of Jesus \approx Jesus' son, Judah (fig. 2)
- c) The probability that this cluster of names associated with Jesus' family is claimed to be 600 to 1.
- d) DNA "evidence" shows that "Mariamene" was not related to Jesus, and hence she "must" be the wife of Jesus (only relatives were buried in family tombs).



Fig. 1 Jesus son of Joseph w. "+"



Fig. 2 Judah son of Jesus

2 Counter evidence

- a) This is nothing new: the Talpiot tomb was discovered in 1980; its details published in the 1990's and the publishing archaeologists denied the possibility that this was Jesus' family tomb.
- b) Tom, Dick & Harry Smith: the names on the ossuaries are very common names at the time, as were many names from Old Testament characters like Joseph, Miriam (Mary) and Joshua (Jesus):
 - i) Out of 2,265 named males among Palestinian Jews in 1st c.
 - (1) 2nd most common: Joseph - 218 (45 on ossuaries)
 - (2) 4th most common: Judah - 164 (44 on ossuaries)
 - (3) 6th most common: Jesus - 99 (22 on ossuaries)
 - (4) 9th most common: Matthew - 62 (17 on ossuaries)
 - ii) Out of 328 named women, 70 were named Mary (42 on ossuaries) = 21%
 - iii) Why would Jesus' followers (who revered him as God) scratch his name so sloppily?
 - iv) Cross (+) = stone carver's direction mark (Fig. 3).

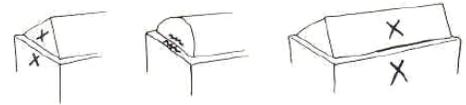


Fig. 3 Stone carver's marks

c) Fudged numbers & facts:

- i) Beatles bigger than Jesus? The documentarians claim that if another tomb was found 2,000 years from now with the names John, Paul and George on the coffins it would not necessarily mean that they found the Beatles. BUT, if the name "Ringo" was found as well, then the tomb would be a dead ringer (pun intended).
- ii) "Mariamne" is considered the "Ringo," based on DaVinci Code-esque evidence (*Acts of Phillip* supposedly states that Mary is Jesus' wife)! But:
 - (1) The *Acts of Phillip* is dubious, late and unreliable for 1st c. history.
 - (2) The *Acts of Phillip* actually equates Mary Magalene with the Mary of "Mary, Martha and Lazarus" (so it is betrayed as an unreliable source of history).
- iii) Statistics are off.
 - (1) If one factors in the low probability that Jesus' family has a tomb, and that this tomb is one of the 1,000 already excavated, then the odds are not "600 to 1," but rather 10%! Of course, one does not produce documentaries based on a 10% chance!
 - (2) Statistics do not take into account names that don't "fit" (e.g. Matthew or Judah the son of Jesus) as the "expert" consulted in the film has publically verified.
- iv) That the "Jesus son of Joseph" and the "Mary" of the ossuaries did not have the same mother really proves nothing, and it does not take into account possible sample contamination, etc.
- v) The inscriptions were written in Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew (causing some scholars to conclude that this is a multi-generational tomb dating after A.D. 70).
- vi) Jesus was never known as "son of Joseph." In fact, that Jesus was *not* the son of Joseph gave his enemies the ammunition they needed to accuse him of being the illegitimate son of Mary!
- vii) Why would Jesus' disciples build a decorated tomb to hide the bones of a man they claimed to have been resurrected? Did they die for a poorly covered lie? Wouldn't they cover up the evidence better if they were trying to pull off a hoax?

* The title is shamelessly ripped from Ben Witherington's blog post: "[The Jesus Tomb? 'Titanic' Talpiot Tomb Theory Sunk from the Start](#)".

The information above is culled from the blog entries of several New Testament scholars and bibliobloggers. If you are interested in more, see the following sites especially:

- [Mark Goodacre](#) – NT Gateway
 - [Darrell Bock](#) – Bock’s Blog
 - [Ben Witherington](#) – benwitherington.blogspot.com
 - [Richard Bauckham](#) – Chris Tilling’s blog, Chrisendom
 - [James Davila](#) – Paleojudaica
 - [Tyler Williams](#) – Codex
 - [Andreas Köstenberger](#) – Biblical Foundations
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- Keep an eye on the “Jesus family tomb” buzz with Google Blog Search ([RSS/ATOM](#)).
 - Take a look at the “[official site](#)” of the “Jesus family tomb” documentary ([dvd](#), [book](#), etc.). The site is put together well, and is quite stunning. I *do not* endorse its claims, of course.
 - Of particular interest is [Amos Kloner’s original report on the Talpiot tomb](#) (or at least a few snippets of the article) housed on the Jesus family tomb site.