

## REJOINDER OF: STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF AN ARCHEOLOGICAL FIND

BY ANDREY FEUERVERGER

*University of Toronto*

I thank all the discussants for their many critiques and comments, and for their considerable efforts. Many of the points raised are ones with which I (at least in part) agree. It therefore seems easiest to first deal with a number of points with which I don't agree.

First, Fuchs states (and Bentley appears to assume) that my analysis is documented in a book and in a movie, neither of which I have authored. In fact, it is documented *only* in my paper which references neither of these, and neither does it reference any developments which occurred subsequent to my work. Although I will need to comment on one such development below, I otherwise confine this reply to the contents of my paper and to those comments of the discussants which appear within this issue of the *Annals*. In particular, I avoid being drawn here into discussions concerning representations made elsewhere by others, or to any matters alluded to by discussants that are peripheral to the central and substantive statistical issues of the problem. Nothing in this work was ever intended to cause offence to anyone. In my view, the statistical problems here are of methodological interest, and the subject matter is one of historical and archeological significance. If this tomb is not that of the NT family (as indeed it may not be) then archaeological work could still one day unearth a tomb that is and the question of what statistics might then contribute toward such a pursuit could then become important.

I also want to say that my paper does not—as some discussants intimate—claim that the Talpiyot tomb “is most likely that of the NT family.” What it tries to do is develop tools to assist subject matter experts in their work of gauging the veracity of any such claims. The function of statistics here is to help out in the difficult historical and archeological work. The critical role which historical assumptions play here means that such calls are not ours to make; and like Fuchs, I too refrain from passing judgment on the subject matter issue of whether this is or is not the NT tombsite. Of course, after the fact, it is easy to gain a sharpened appreciation for the safety of a “nihilistic” approach, one that—as Höfling and Wasserman put it—provides no answers. However, the intellectual temptations posed by a problem of this nature are surely too great to simply set aside.