

THREE RELIGIONS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO JERUSALEM AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL

MENASHE HAR-EL



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THE ARIEL CENTER FOR POLICY RESEARCH (ACPR)

P.O.B. 830, Shaarei Tikva 44810 Israel
Tel: 972-3-906-3920 Fax: 972-3-906-3905
Email: ariel.center@gmail.com
Internet Website: www.acpr.org.il

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TO JERUSALEM AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL**

MENASHE HAR-EL

Prof. **Menashe Har-El** is a scholar of the ancient historical geography of the Land of Israel and the Middle East. In the past, he lectured and trained teachers at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University and additional universities and colleges.

Four of his 13 books about the Land of Israel, geography and biblical geography received prizes: *Travels in Sinai*, Am Oved and The Ministry of Defense, 1969; *This is Jerusalem*, Am Oved, 1972; *Travels in the Judean Desert and the Dead Sea*, Am Oved, 1972; *The Historical Geography of the Land of Israel*, Zmora Bitan, 2001.

Prof. Har-El received the title "Personage of Jerusalem" for the year 1991; the Yigal Allon Prize for an outstanding act of pioneering in 2001, and he received the Israel Prize for "Research of the Knowledge of the Land of Israel" in 2002.



דעות הכותבים בניירות העמדה אינן מבטאות בהכרח את דעת **מרכז אריאל למחקרי מדיניות**.
מרכז אריאל מאפשר שימוש במובאות מן החומר שלעיל בתנאי שהמובאה תזכה לציון המקור.
עותקים נוספים של נייר זה וכן ניירות קודמים ניתן לרכוש במשרדי המרכז.

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FOREWORD

A large collective of people who share a single ethnic origin, a common language, a distinctive history, culture, heritage and tradition and at times even a unique religion – that is a nation. A nation resides in a defined territory that as a rule it constructed and maintained. Where is the land and homeland of the People of the Book? Where is the homeland of the Palestinian Arabs?

The ancient kingdoms and empires conquered and subjugated foreign lands, enslaved and banished its residents, damaged its property and compromised its freedom. The Land of Israel did not escape that fate. It was ruled heavy-handedly by seven powers: Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine, all of which abandoned it after exploiting it. The last among them, the Arab-Moslem power, forcibly holds on to it and continues to inflict damage upon it even today.

Conventional wisdom has it that Jerusalem is sacred to the three monotheistic religions. Below we will discuss the roots of this "sanctity" and its manifestations, by surveying the approach of the three to the Land of Israel. The discussion will comprise four chapters. We will begin with the names of the Land and of Jerusalem in the sources of the various religions, we will continue with a survey of the construction and design of the country's landscapes, Jerusalem's status as a capital city and finally – each religion's connection to Jerusalem. We will conclude with a question: Who is the occupier of the land of Israel? Which nation's land was occupied?

THE NAMES OF JERUSALEM AND THE LAND

Names of Jerusalem in Jewish Sources:

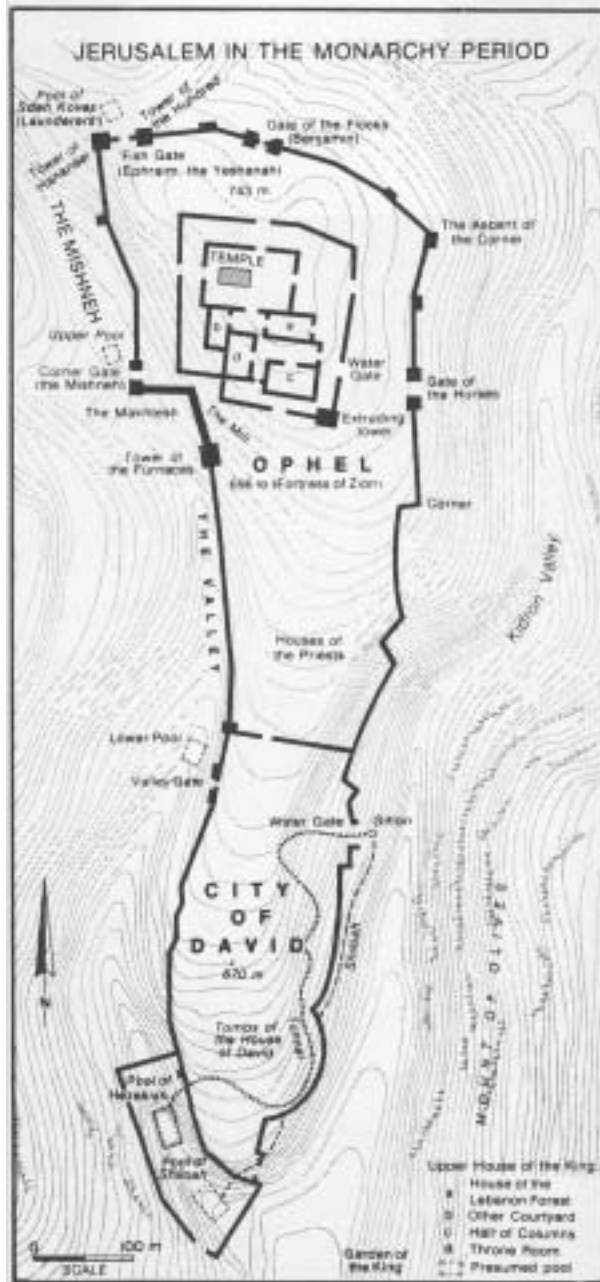
"Jerusalem" and "Zion" are mentioned 821 times in the Bible and 3,212 times in rabbinic literature, due to Jerusalem's religious and national significance to the Jewish people. In the Bible, it was also called the "City of David", and David himself, whose birthplace was Bethlehem in Judea, is mentioned 1,023 times. Similarly, the term "Holy City" is mentioned 37 times, as in "Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean" (Isaiah 52:1).

Names of the Land in Jewish Sources:

Judea is mentioned 800 times. That is the origin of the name "Jew". Therefore, the country was called "Jehud" or "Judea" during the eras of Persian, Hellenistic and Roman rule (538 BCE until 324 CE). "Israel" is mentioned in the Bible 2,512 times, among them "the people of Israel 1,880 times and in the religious sense – 636 times. The Jewish people are the only one in the history of the Land of Israel who survived in it by its name as well as its language, religion and culture.

The Name Jerusalem in Christian Sources:

The Romans and the Byzantines, who imposed their culture wherever they went, sought to uproot any vestige of the Jews and their culture from the Land. They called Jerusalem "Aelia" after Aelius Adrianus, the suppressor of the Bar-Kochva rebellion. The Byzantines characterized themselves as the "continuers of the Jews" and prohibited Jews from residing and living in



Jerusalem in the Monarchic Era; The City of David and Mount Zion (from south to north) (according to Benjamin Mazar).

Jerusalem. In the sixth century of the Common Era, the Byzantines went even further and obscured the existence of the Temple Mount, which existed at that time, as evidenced by the mosaic drawing of the Byzantine Madaba map.

The Name of the Land in Christian Sources:

The first Christians originated in the Land of Israel, but they referred to the land as "Syrio-Palestine". Throughout most of the Roman-Byzantine reign (37-638 CE), the religious center of the Christian sphere of influence moved first to Rome and during the years of Byzantine rule to Constantinople. The Crusaders (1099-1291 CE) called the land Terra-Israel. Israel is sacred to the Christians due to the fact that it is the birthplace of Jesus, as well as his burial site. However it serves them as neither an ethnic nor a national homeland.

The Name of Jerusalem in Moslem Sources:

Jerusalem too, is not mentioned in the Qur'an even once. Like the Christians, the Moslems also called it "Aelia" until the 10th century CE and it was engraved in their coins with that name. In sources from the Abbasids, who conquered the Land from their Umayyad brethren in 750 CE, it says: "Black flags [the color of their emblem] emerged from Hurasan [in Persia]. Nothing will stop them until they are stationed in Aelia".¹ Only in the ninth century was Jerusalem called "*Bet-El Makdis*", meaning holy city and in the 11th century "*al-Quds*", taken from the Jewish Holy Temple and Holy City. They also called it "*Zahyun*" after the biblical Zion.

The Name of the Land in Moslem Sources:

Throughout the reign of Moslem rulers over the Land of Israel, it was never given a distinct name, but rather it was considered part of Syria. It was named "Palestine" after the Philistine district on the Judean coastal plain and mountain. Those referred to as "Palestinians" today are Arabs whose homeland is the Arabian Peninsula. This is a Middle Eastern nation bearing the name of a different nation, a primarily non-Semitic nation. This attests



Map of a Geographical-Historical Economic Model (according to Atlas Carta).

to either fraud or the assumption of a foreign identity. Professor B.Z. Dinur, the renowned historian of the Jewish people and the first Education Minister of the State of Israel commented: "There never was a Palestinian people, in any shape, manner or form. However, if our Jews help it come into being – it will exist, but in that case, claims of ancestral or historical rights will be futile".²

Proof of this is the fact that there never was any Palestinian nation, neither by that name nor with any distinctive feature, in the Land of Israel in the past over the course of the more than a thousand years of Moslem rule there during all of the ruling dynasties: Umayyads, Abbasids, Fatimids, Ayyubids, Mamluks, Turks and on through Hussein, King of Jordan. The name "Palestine", a reference to the southern region of the Land of Israel, was never mentioned in the Qur'an. It is worth noting that "Philistine" was translated into Greek in the Septuagint as "*Alupilos*", which means "strange and foreign".

THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF THE JERUSALEM, MOUNTAIN AND DESERT LANDSCAPES IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The Design and Construction of the Land by the Jews:

The Jewish people were the only ones in the history of the Land of Israel that shaped its landscapes and laid the foundation for the settlement of Jerusalem and the mountain and desert regions. Preparation of the land was accomplished with originality, hard work and vision from the time of the settlement of the tribes and establishment of the City of David in Zion through the days of modern Zionism. This large-scale endeavor is mentioned in the prophecy of Isaiah: "And I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the land, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages" (Isaiah 49:8).

The great Jewish technologies, most of which were original and were even bequeathed to foreign nations, manifested themselves in five primary areas: Agricultural mountain terraces; storage and distribution of water; handicrafts and industry; architecture and magnificent buildings; building paths and ascents on mountain slopes.

All of these innovations were done systematically, with initiative, sophistication and innovation. We will investigate, therefore, what is the evidence of this pioneering shaping of the desolate landscapes of the Land.

Agricultural Mountain Terraces:

Mountainous terrace agriculture, which is among the most ancient in the world, was invented during the kingdoms of Judea and Israel in three regions: The rainy mountain – water supplied by rain, where they grew grain



Precipitation Map for the Land of Israel
(according to the Government Measurements Department).



Land of Wheat and Barley ("BaMa'aneh").

and fruit trees (Deuteronomy 8:8); in the vineyards of Ein-Gedi – irrigated crops, in which they grew incense and spices (Song of Songs 1:13-14), dates (Chronicles II 20:20), palm branches, willows and citrons;³ in the valleys of the Negev mountains – in crops watered by flash flood channels that they cultivated on their terraces and grew grain and fruits. According to Z. Ron, 56.4% of the Jerusalem Mountains are terraced with agricultural terraces, which are an Israeli invention.⁴

The initiative and innovation were manifest in the transformation of desolate mountains, rocky and forested to a fruitful, agricultural area, as it says in Isaiah: "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein" (5:1-2). According to A. Shmueli, preparation of one dunam of land for agriculture on a rocky mountain lasted between one and three years (!). Let's remember that all of the arduous labor involved in building terraces in the mountain was done manually with a hoe as it was impossible to reach



Threshing in the Galilee (photograph: Ami Erev).



Rugged mountains (photograph: Ami Erev).



Israeli Terraced Agriculture in the Jerusalem Mountains (photograph: Ami Erev).

the steep, narrow terraces with cattle and a plow, as it is written in Amos: "Shall horses run upon the rock? Will one plow there with oxen?" (6:12).⁵

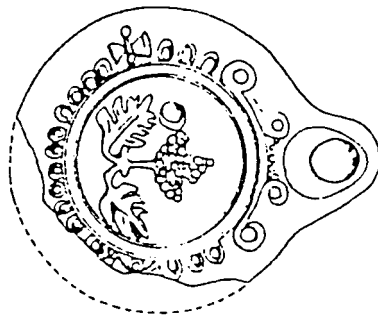
The structure of the terraces prevented drought on the slopes even when the plains, the basin and the valley suffered from it. That is because the little rain that fell on the mountain would flow from the upper terrace to the lower one and saturate it several times. Therefore the high-quality vineyards in the Land of Israel were planted in the extensions of the mountains and the tributaries of the Soreq Wadi.⁶ The choice red wine, used for export, was taken from the Israeli cities in the patrimonies of Judah and Benjamin that were established at the heads of the tributaries and along the Soreq Wadi. In some of them, handles of wine jugs with the royal seal "For the King" were



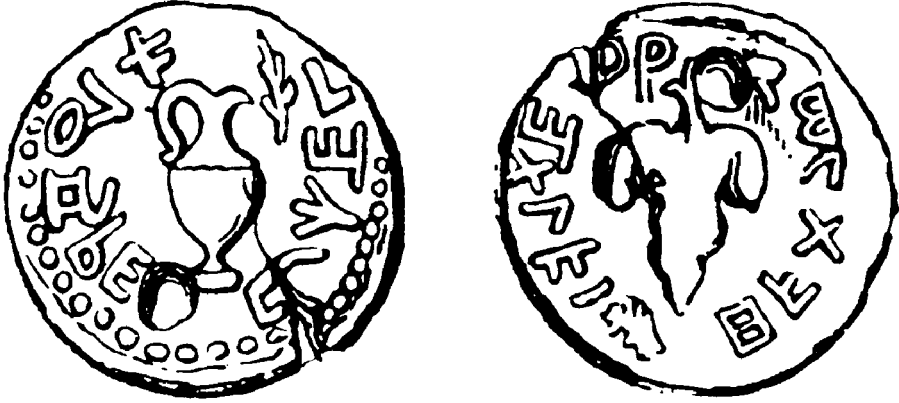
Grape Harvest and Pressing (according to J.B. Pritchard).

revealed – in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Givat Shaul, Ramah, Givon, Mizpeh (Nebi Samuel) and Moza.

This invention enabled the first concentrated Jewish settlement in the mountains and the deserts, led by Jerusalem, capital of the land and the people. Ever since, the Jewish people became a nation of farmers as Amos prophesied: "You only have I known of all the families of the land" (3:2); and it was said about Uziah King of Judea: "For he loved the land" (Chronicles 26:10).



An Earthenware Candle from the Roman Period, Adorned with a Cluster of Grapes and Grape Leaves. Found in the Temple Mount Excavations (according to Y. Meshorer).



Two Sides of a Coin from the Time of the Hasmonean, Elazar Ben-Shimon: A Cluster of Grapes and a Jug of Olive Oil (according to Y. Meshorer).



A Thousand-Year-Old Olive Tree in the Upper Galilee (photograph: Ami Erev).



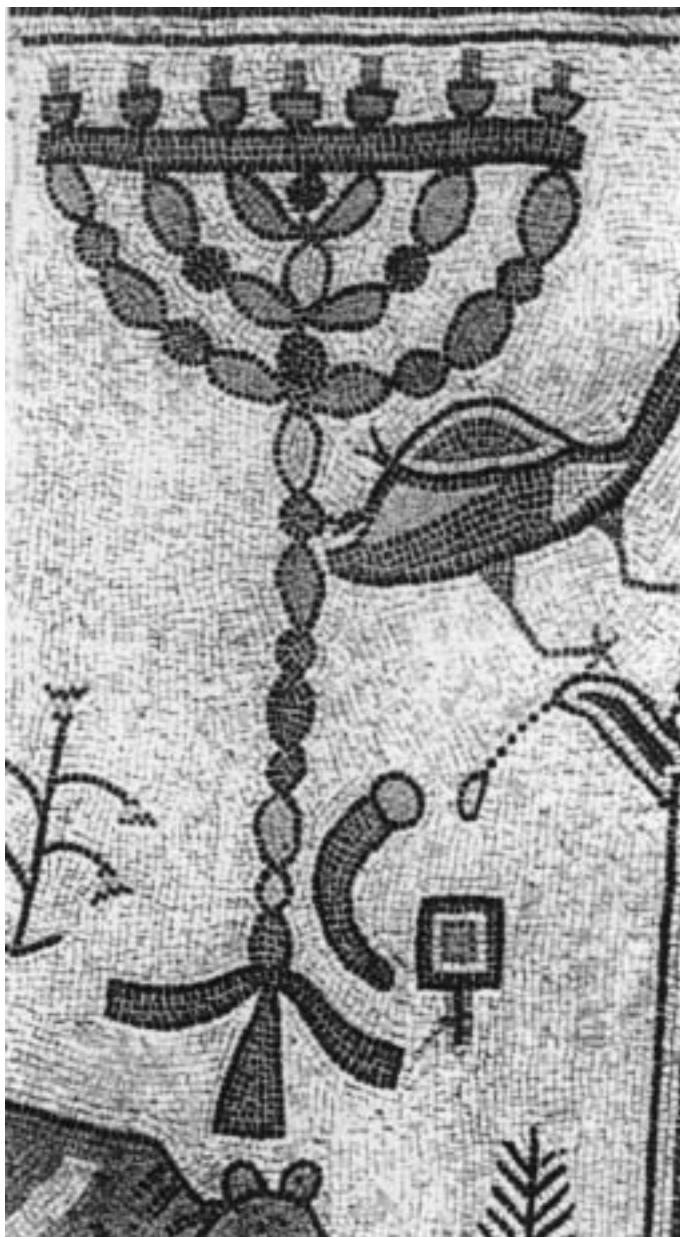
Olive Press – Using Screw Pressure – From the Second Temple Period. There are Crushed Olives in the Baskets (photograph: Ami Erev).



A Coin from the Time of the Bar-Kochva
Rebellion. Olive Jug and Palm Leaf
(according to Y. Meshorer).



A Roman Coin from the Time of Vespasian – "Judea
Capta" – Conquered Judea. In the Drawing, the Symbol
of Judea Crying (according to Y. Meshorer).



The Mosaic in the Talmudic Era Beit-Alfa Synagogue – A Seven-Armed Candelabra (according to A.L. Sukenik).

Storage and Distribution of Water:

The Land, located in a region with a sub-tropical semi-arid climate, is a drought-stricken expanse lacking in water sources. It was described as "land that is not filled with water" (Proverbs 30:16). Therefore the Jewish people struggled to find variegated and original solutions. Thus, the Jewish people invented and developed six water sources and facilities for water storage in the mountain and desert regions, and they are: **Pit, pool, spring, well, aqueduct and desert reservoir**, the first five exist together in Jerusalem and the last one exists in the Arava and in the desert. We will survey each of them below.

The Cistern: The cistern served as an alternative to the meager flowing springs in the Jerusalem Mountains. In order to dig the cistern, tools for excavating the hard limestone were required – and they found hard, sharp iron tools. In order to resolve the problem of the broken and cracked stones, which caused the water accumulated in the cistern to seep out, they invented plaster and whitewash, which were produced from a combination of ashes and olive waste, in order to seal the cracks. Thus, a cistern in which rain water accumulated could be found in every household in Israel (Kings II 18:31). On the Temple Mount, in the courtyard of the Temple, Herod excavated 36 cisterns whose total capacity was 40,000 cubic meters. One of them, 19 meters deep, had a capacity of 12,000 cubic meters. In addition they transported water from a distance by means of an aqueduct and thus they satisfied the needs of a million pilgrims who came on the holidays, a quantity of 3-4 liters per person per day.



Cistern on the Temple Mount (photograph: Ami Erev).

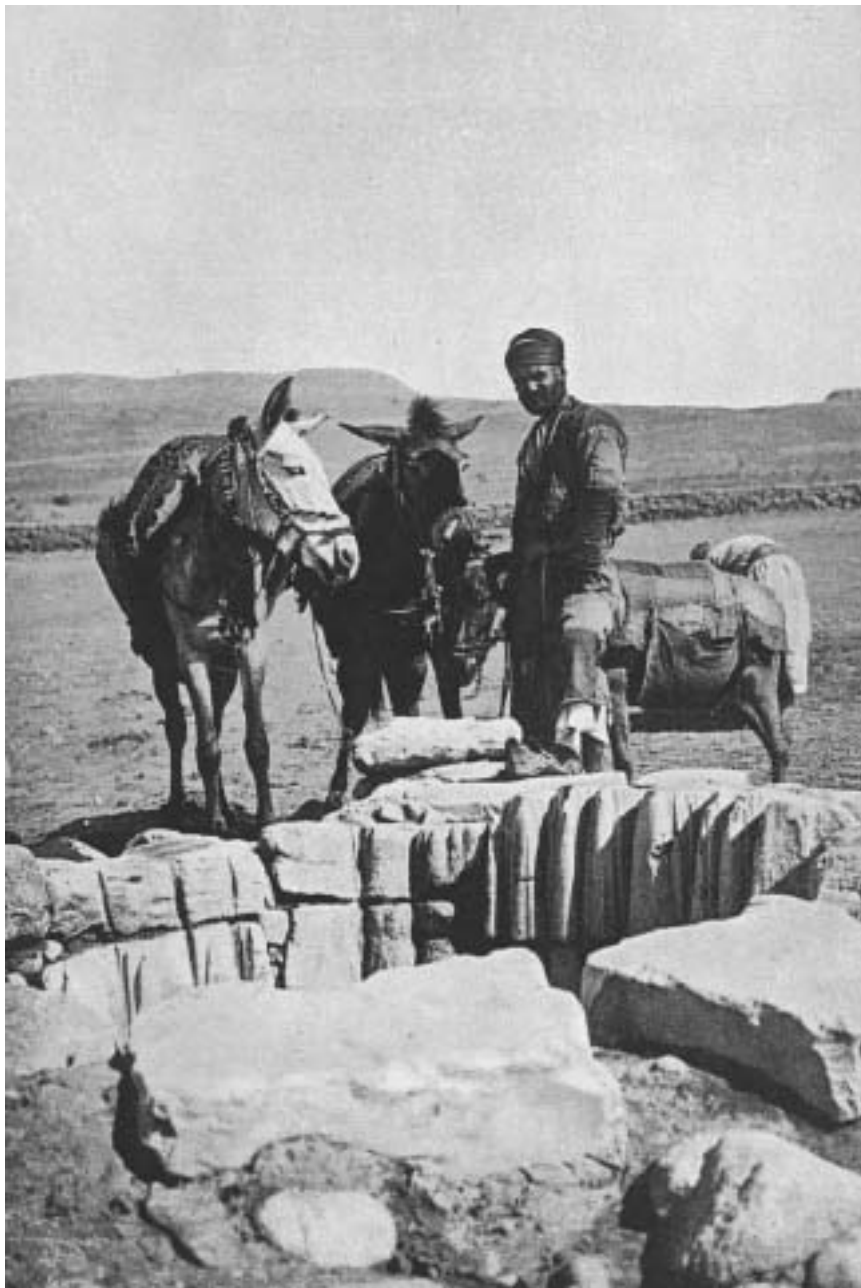
The Pool: The Jewish mountain dwellers required large quantities of water even if it wasn't purified: For cattle, bathing, laundry, handicraft and industry. One or two pools of water can be found in the ancient cities of Judea and Samaria, located in a low-lying site. In great and populated Jerusalem, 15 pools of water were constructed and dammed in its valleys.

The Excavated Spring: Most of the springs that we find in the Jerusalem Mountains do not flow naturally, but rather they are artificial excavated springs in which tunnels were dug – an Israeli invention. Their length ranges from several meters to 120 meters, they penetrate the interior of the mountain with its extensions. It was undertaken in order to increase the water production of the spring, if only by a small percentage. Most of the meager water from these excavated springs in the Jerusalem Mountains was excavated in order to irrigate the vineyard nurseries and provide water for the workers during the harvest.

The Well: In the mountains of Israel, most of which are made of hard limestone, wells were not dug in ancient times. Only in Jerusalem were wells dug in the area of the *Ein Rogel* spring (called *Bir Ayub*), 38 meters deep and it is a unique, exclusive phenomenon in the mountains of Israel. In our



An Israeli well in the Lakhish Lowland Judean Mountains (photograph: M. Har-El).



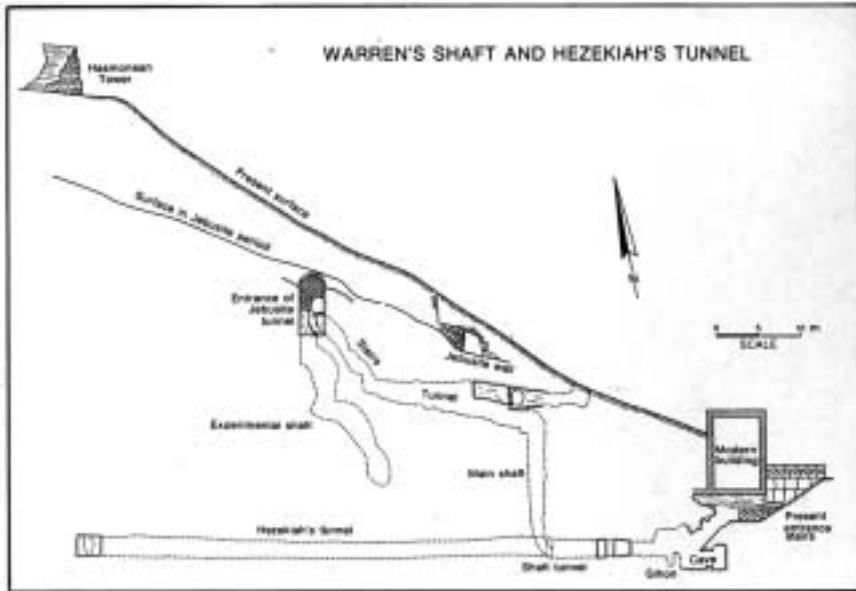
An ancient well near Beersheba in the Negev (according to A.A. Reifenberg).

estimation, this well was excavated after the Gihon Spring waters, which fed the source of *Ein Rogel* spring beneath it, were taken and directed into the city of Jerusalem through Hezekiah's Tunnel, and thus the waters of *Ein Rogel* disappeared (Kings II 20:20; Ben-Sira 48:17-18).

The Aqueduct: Seven tunnels and excavated springs were dug in the cities of the land of Israel during biblical times, in the mountains, the lowlands

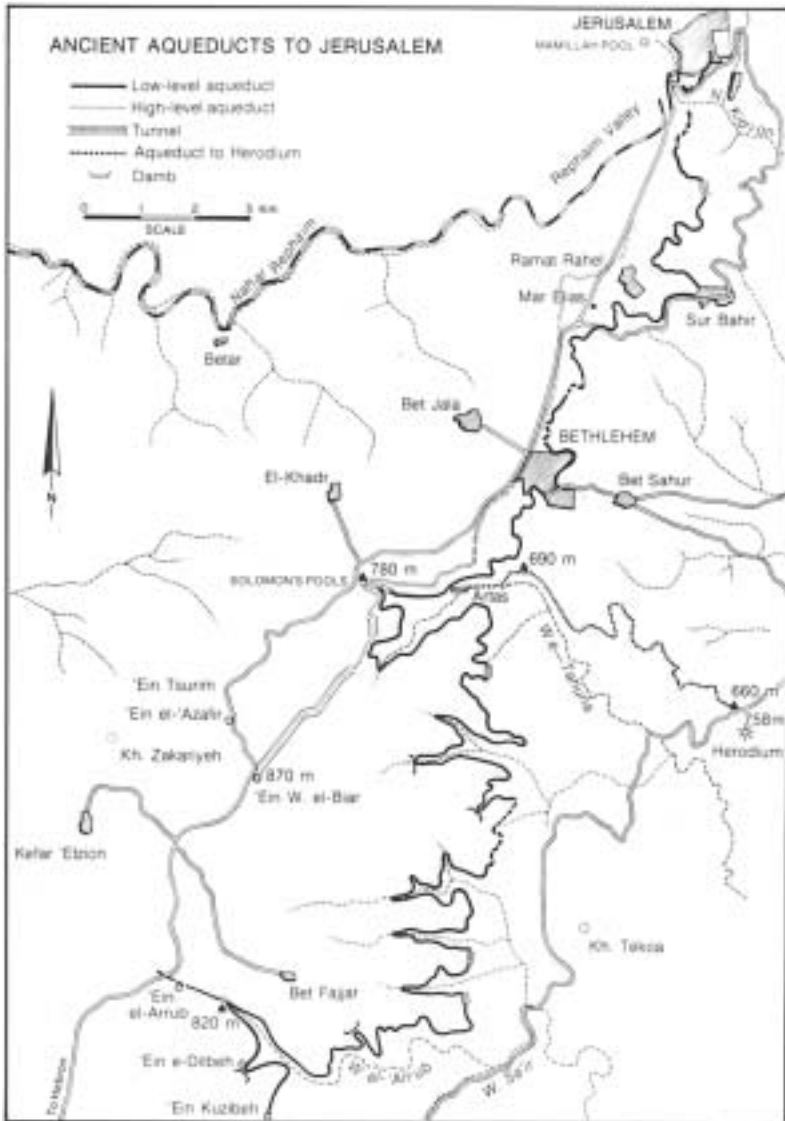


The Shiloah Tunnel in Jerusalem (photograph: Ami Erev).



An Eighth Century BCE Hebrew Inscription in Hezekiah's Tunnel in the Gihon (according to Warren).

and the valley, with the longest and most significant among them the Gihon Spring, in Hezekiah's Tunnel in Jerusalem (Chronicles II 32:2-4, 30). The length of the conduit and the tunnel is 533 meters with an incline of only 0.2 thousandths. It was excavated on both sides of the tunnel in order to divert the spring water that flowed outside the city into the city, and to prevent the Assyrian enemy from depriving the residents of Jerusalem of water in a time of war. 32 aqueducts were excavated and constructed in the land of Israel during the First and Second Temple periods and the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods. The crowning achievement was the aqueduct that flowed 68 kilometers from the *al-Aroub* springs in the Hebron Mountains to the Temple



A Map of the Ancient Aqueducts from the Hebron Mountains to Jerusalem (according to M. Hacker), (sketch: P. Grossman).



A Tunnel in the Ein-Aroub-Jerusalem Aqueduct (photograph: Ami Erev).



A Ventilation Shaft of the Tunnel in the Ein-Aroub Aqueduct (photograph: Ami Erev).



The Aqueduct from Ein-Aroub to the Western Wall and the Temple Mount
(photograph: M. Har-El).



Spice Bushes that were also Grown
in the King's Garden in Jerusalem
(according to N. Hepper).

Mount. Its elevation is 820 meters above sea level and the Temple Mount elevation is 745 meters; the implication is that the incline was one one-thousandth. This wondrous Hasmonean or Herodian project generated a plow of 60 cubic liters per hour and its waters served for purposes of worship, purity, and hygiene in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem for one million pilgrims who offered 255,600 sacrifices in the Temple,⁷ during each of the three festivals.

Desert Reservoir⁸: A cistern whose waters accumulated from flash floods in the valley channel in the aqueduct and filled the reservoir. The reservoir waters served the farmers who worked on the agricultural terraces of the Negev as well as shepherds and passersby who traveled in caravans.

In the wake of these hydrological inventions, the entire architectural landscape of Jerusalem became subservient to and dependent on water: Gutters were affixed on the roofs of the houses in order to collect and deliver the rain to the pit; the residents paved the streets with tiles through which the rainwater flowed to the city's pools (Proverbs 5:16); aqueducts were built in all of the city streets; subterranean tunnels were excavated proximate to the Temple Mount, which brought the waters from the *Ein Aroub* aqueduct to the lower city.

Thus prophesied the prophet Isaiah about the Jewish people: "They shall neither hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them" (49:10). This hydrological sophistication facilitated a revolution: During the Canaanite era, settlements were established exclusively alongside natural water sources, near springs and wells – the Canaanites went to the water sources; while during the Israeli reign, the Jews diverted the water sources to them, by means of their innovation and labor. Thus, cisterns were excavated everywhere that Jews wanted to settle, in the city and the desert; and aqueducts, which delivered water to every place and settlement, in cities and villages.

So it says: "Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3); "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose"; "for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert" (Isaiah 35:1, 6).



The King's Garden in Jerusalem
(Photo: Ami Erev)



The Ein-Gedi Waterfalls in the Judean Desert
(photograph: M. Har-El).



The Jordan River flowing into the Sea of Galilee (according to A.A. Reifenberg).

Handicrafts and Industry on the Lofty Expanses of the Land of Israel

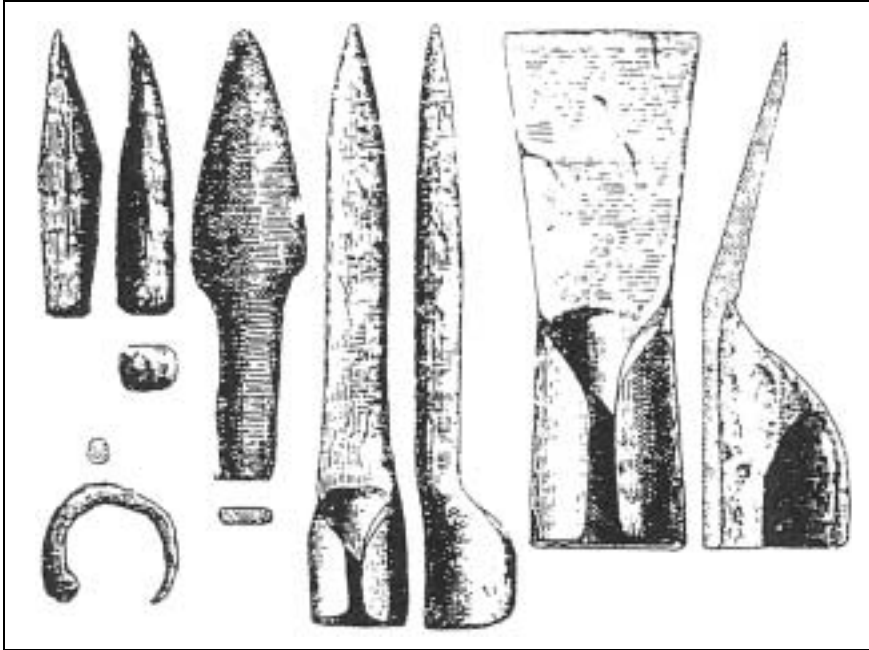
Wood, stone and iron craftsmen began engaging in their crafts during the period of the settlement, and continued even more intensively with the diverse metal industry during the era of David and Solomon in the kingdom of Judea, and during the era of Ahab and Omri in the kingdom of Israel (Isaiah 44:12). Apparently the primary catalyst for the wars between the Ammonites and David was the desire to gain control over the iron mines of Wadi Rajb, Regev of northern Gilead, in the area north of Wadi Yaboq. The mines were first developed by the Philistines and then taken over by the Ammonites.⁹ In those wars, it was said about David: "And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon; so David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem"(Samuel II 12:31). Regarding the Ammonite trespass to the north of Wadi Yaboq in Gilead, on their wars with



The Twists in the "Majesty of the Jordan" and the Gilead Mountains
(according to A.A. Reifenberg).



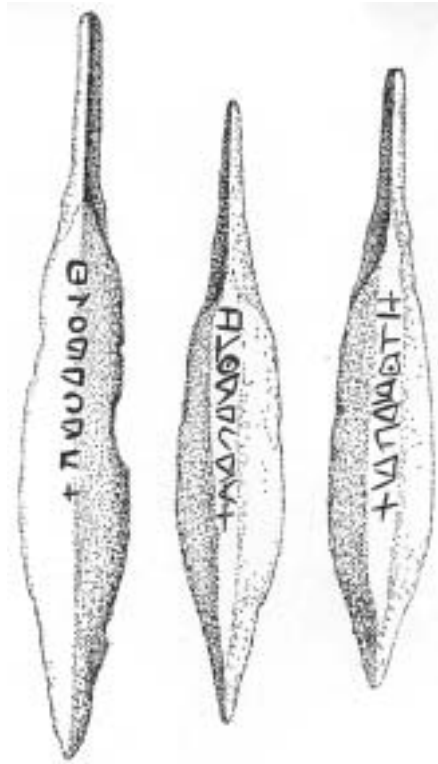
The Carmel Forest (photograph: "The Oriental Photographical Company").



Israeli Iron Tools in Tel-Megiddo (according to B. Mazar).

the Jewish residents of Yavesh Gilead and on the war fought by Saul against Ammon, Amos prophesied and excoriated: "because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border" (Amos 1:13; Zefaniah 2:8).

During the rule of King Solomon, the wood, stone and iron industries reached their peak, as it is written: "And Solomon had seventy thousand that bear burdens, and eighty thousand hewers in the mountains" (Kings I 5:29). Let us note that David prepared 540 tons of copper and 3,000 tons of iron for Solomon for construction of the Temple (Chronicles I 29:7; 22:14-16). Solomon traded horses and chariots with the four kingdoms and empires of the countries of the Middle East: Egypt, the Hittites, Aram and Kveh (Kings I 10:28-29).¹⁰ Solomon built the Philistine Tel-Kasilah north of the Yarkon River, apparently in order to also gain control of the huge Sharon Forest along the coast, which stretched all the way to Mount Carmel and whose trees were used for the melting of copper and iron dust (Isaiah 35:2). He also gained control over the Jordan plain and the Succot Valley and the Wadi



Israeli Arrowheads and a Hebrew Inscription "Arrow of a Servant of Bet Lebaot", from the 11th Century BCE (according to B. Mazar).

Yaboq estuary, the location of the only iron mines in the Land of Israel and the region where copper was cast for the Temple (Kings I 7:46). Solomon appointed three of his total of 12 economic governors – over the Gilead and Bashan regions. His objective was to rule over the Ramot Gilead forest, the iron mines, the areas where barley was grown and horses were raised in the Bashan and the incense and spices of the water-abundant Wadi Yaboq estuary, in the Succot Valley (Genesis 37:25).

At the time of the destruction of the First Temple, 10,000 exiles were banished to Babylonia, among them approximately one thousand metal-workers who produced weapons (Kings II 24:14, 16), in the tradition of Jewish iron craftsmanship. There was also the craft of dyeing fabric with blue and purple extracted from the shellfish found along the Mediterranean coast,

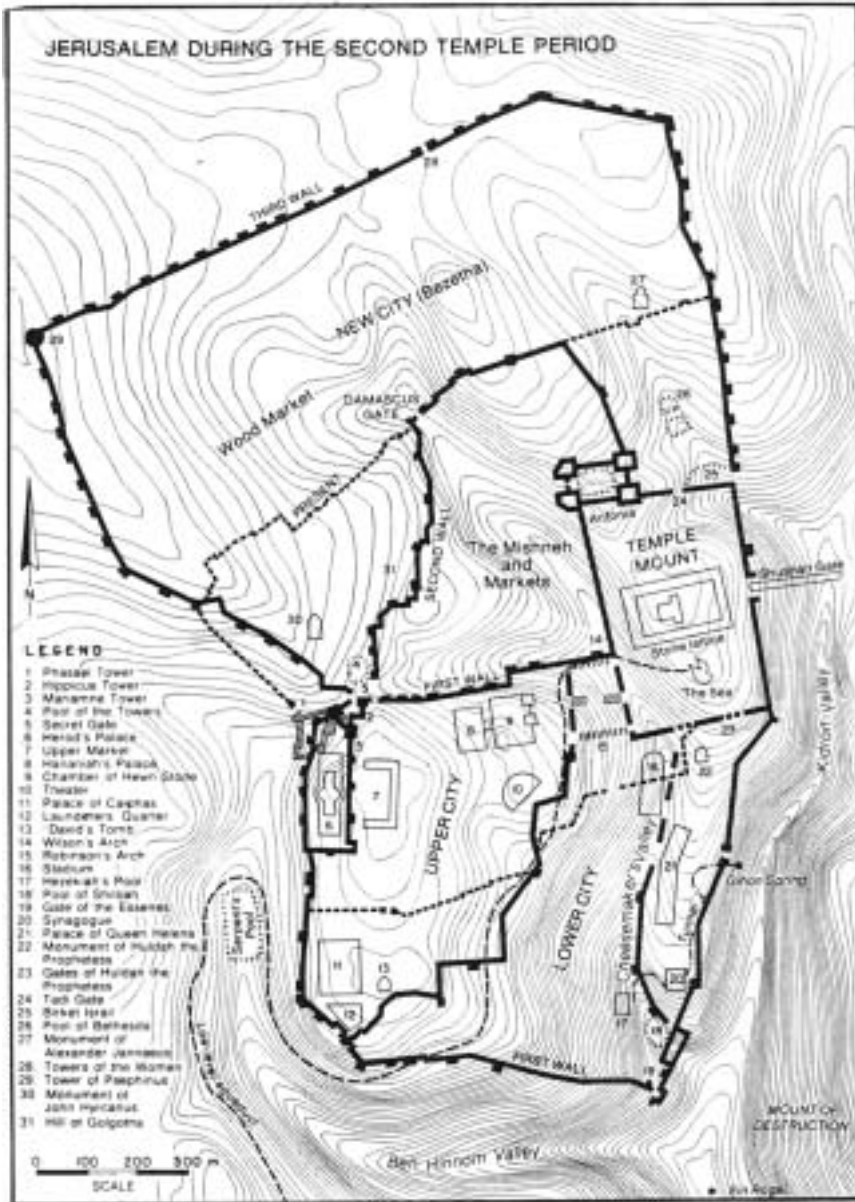
and the colors produced from plants like scarlet from the Kermes Oak, red from rubia, orange from the dyer's madder, blue from the indigo and yellow from the reseda – a craft that was Jewish since the days of Deborah the Prophetess and the Judges (Exodus 35:35; Judges 5:30-31). In Israel there was a union of weavers of fine linen in the lowlands (Chronicles I 4:21).

These crafts proved the Jewish skill of utilizing natural raw materials intelligently, consistently and precisely, as Isaiah said: "The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house" (44:13). So too with dyeing fabric, which was a uniquely Jewish craft until the end of the 19th century. Thanks to all these, the remote mountainous region of Israel, desolate and under-populated, changed its landscape and became an never-ending source of wood, stone and metal workers and a significant economic center for the export of military chariots during the reigns of Solomon and Ahab.

These crafts were undertaken with intelligence and knowledge, with forethought and resourcefulness, as it was said by Bezalel son of Hur, Moses' main craftsman: "Them hath he filled with wisdom of heart, to work all manner of work, of the engraver, and of the cunning workman, and of the embroiderer, in blue, and in purple, in scarlet, and in fine linen, and of the weaver, even of them that do any work, and of those that devise cunning work" (Exodus 35:35).

Architecture

While the Canaanites built a significant portion of their houses with clay bricks, the Jewish homes in the Land of Israel were built of magnificent hewn stone. Second Temple Jerusalem, which was constructed during the rule of Herod and his sons, was unique in its buildings adorned with the splendor of Jewish architecture throughout the entire ancient history of the Land of Israel. Jerusalem, which was the largest city in the Land of Israel, spread over 1,800 dunams in a mountainous region intersected by valleys, and was built over the course of 46 years (John 2:20). The area of the Temple Mount, which was among the largest of the ancient temples, was 144 dunams, twice the



Map of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period (according to M. Avi-Yonah).



Ancient Jerusalem, Its Walls and the Judean Desert (according to Pantomap).



The Temple Mount and its Surroundings during the Herodian Period (reproduction).
(Sketch: Lynn Rittmayer).

area of Jebusite Jerusalem. The height of the tower of Herod's palace in Jerusalem reached 45 meters.

10,000 workers labored for 10 years in constructing the Temple Mount and the construction of the Temple, by a thousand priests, lasted a year and a half. Jerusalem was the largest fortified city in the land of Israel. The thickness of the walls reached 5 meters and the length of the walls, whose height reached 10 meters, was 7,550 meters. There were 164 towers in the

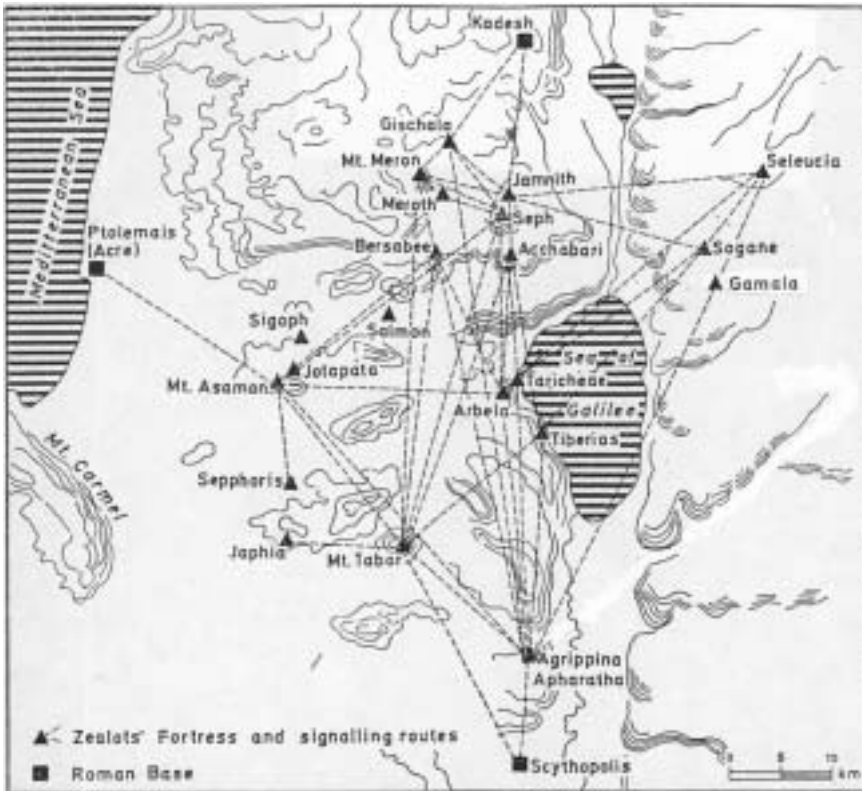


"David's Citadel in the Jerusalem Fortress on a Hasmonean and Herodian Base
(photograph: Ami Erev).



Model of Herod's palace and towers and the Temple Mount (Photo: Ami Erev).

three city walls; each one was ten meters high and 10 meters wide. The zenith of Jerusalem's strength was the Temple Mount walls, with the height of the southeastern wall – 48 meters – and the weight of one headstone in the Western wall – 600 tons.



The Signals between the Zealots' Fortifications in the Galilee by M. Har-El
(sketch: P. Grossman).

The Temple Mount could accommodate approximately one million pilgrims on each of the festivals. Not for naught was it said of the Temple Mount: "He who never saw the Temple intact never saw a magnificent building" (Succah 51b). Jerusalem was surrounded by about 70 fortresses in four circular rows, which defended it from all four directions: From the Dead Sea valley in the east to the lowlands in the west, and from Baal Hazor in the north to the Beersheba valley in the south.¹¹ Therefore it is said of Jerusalem: "and Judah hath multiplied fortified cities" (Hosea 8:14). And it was said about the Land of Israel: "And they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become



The Masada edifice in the Judean Desert (photography by Pantomap).

fortified, and are inhabited" (Ezekiel 36:35). These fortifications protected Jerusalem from enemies that attacked it from all of the paved roads surrounding it.

The Judean Mountains, with hundreds of agricultural terraces in all directions, prevented the enemy armies from easily penetrating Jerusalem. The enemy could only penetrate the capital by means of the slopes of the mountains, which were built and fortified by the Jewish people and were well defended. This sophistication led to a revolution in the lives of Judea and Israel, which resided securely under their vineyards and fig trees, in Jerusalem and in the cities of Judea and Samaria (Kings I 5:5).

The verse: "Honor and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary" (Psalms 96:6) describes this architectural construction of Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and the cities of Judea.



Tomb stone gate uncoverd in western Galilee decorated with candelabras
(Photograph: Ami Erev)

Paving Routes and Ascents on the Mountain Slopes

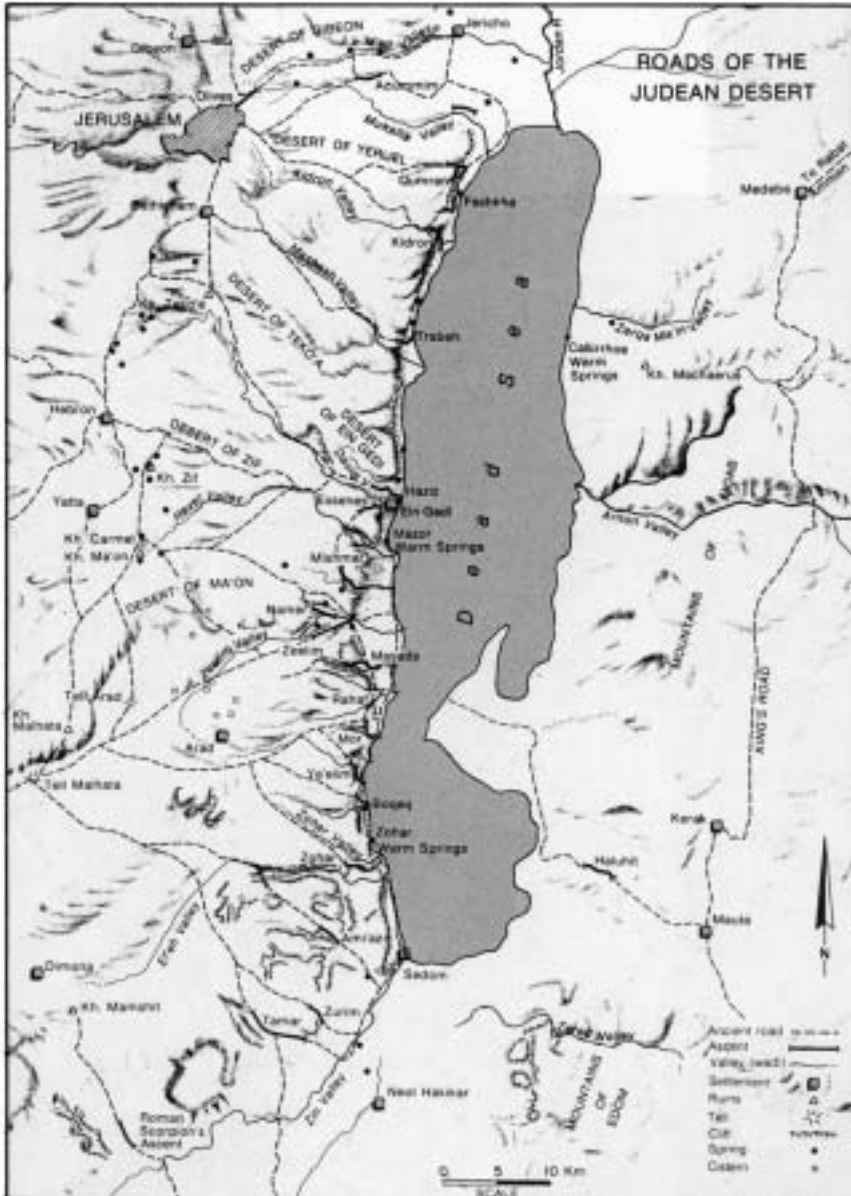
During the Canaanite period, the routes for the caravans and wagons were delineated everywhere that it was naturally convenient, that is, in the plains, valleys, plateaus and ravines. During the kingdoms of Judea and Israel, 8 ascents were excavated and paved in the mountains and deserts of the Land of Israel. These ascents were excavated in hard rock and on steep slopes, which shortened the routes and secured the settlements: Maale-Gur in northern Samaria, Maale-Heres in northern Gilead, Maale Beit Horon, Maale



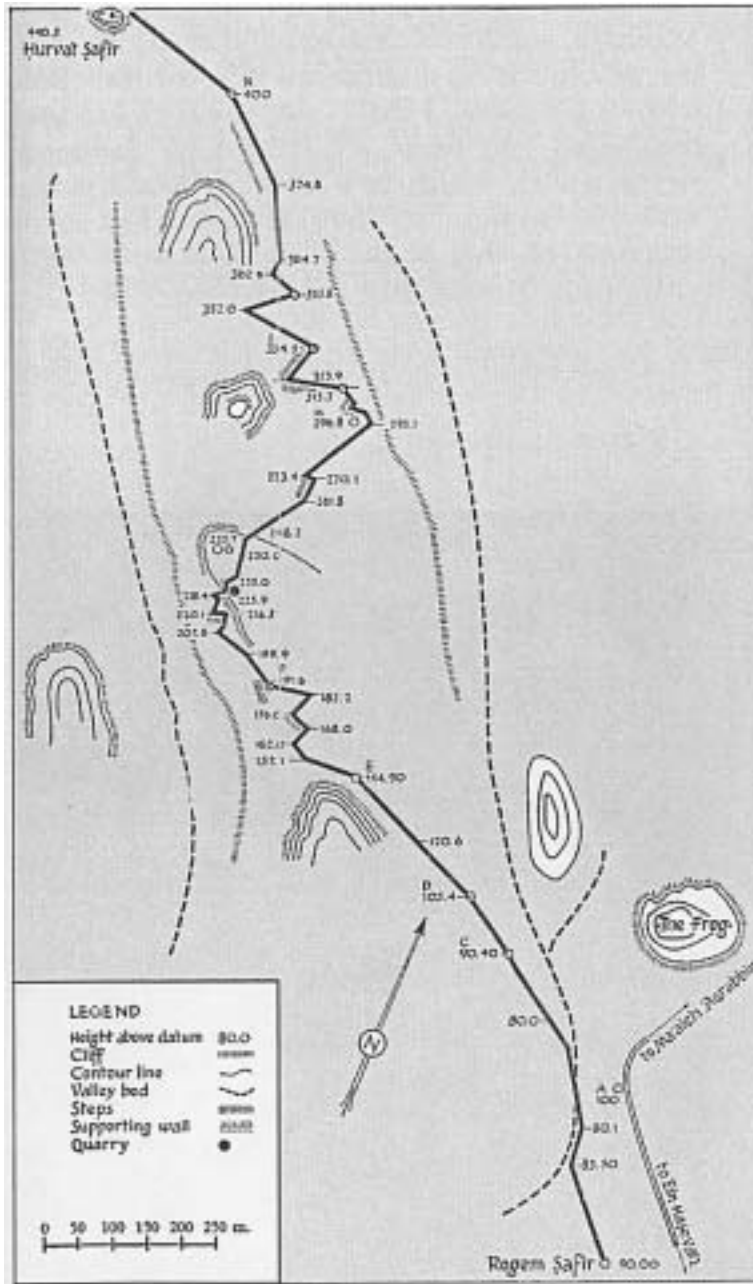
The Upper and Lower Beit-Horon Roads to Jerusalem
(photography by Pantomap).



"The Way of Holiness", and the Stairs along the Upper Beit-Horon Road
(photograph: M. Har-El).



The Six Judean Deserts and the Ascents to the Judean Mountains
(Plans by M. Har-El, sketch: P. Grossman).



A Diagram of the Roman Maale Aqrabim (sketch: P. Grossman).
Measurement by the Engineer, Y. Boneh, plans by M. Har-El.



Stairs of the Roman Maale Agrabim (photograph: M. Har-El).

Hazeitim and Maale-Adumim in the northern Judean Mountains, Maale Haziz in the Ein-Gedi Desert and Maale Haluhit and Maale Akrabim in the southwest Moab Mountains.¹²

It seems that David and Solomon's engineers were among the best in biblical times, as Solomon, who, as mentioned above, built Tel-Kasilah, also excavated and paved, according to our research, Maale Beit-Horon. The evidence for this is the fact that the settlements, Upper and Lower Beit-Horon (Kings I 9:18, Chronicles II 8:5), were constructed on the route taken by pilgrims en route to Jerusalem and the Temple from the Jaffa coast to the capital. This route was called the "way of holiness", as it is written: "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness" (Isaiah 35:8). Josephus called it the "way that carries the people" (Wars of the Jews 2, 12, 2), as a significant portion of the pilgrims to the Temple came from Jaffa to Modiin to Beit-Horon and to Jerusalem. This ancient route was recently uncovered by the scholar, Y. Roll.¹³ The length of the route was only about 60 kilometers, while the length of routes from Jaffa to Jerusalem these days is upwards of 65-70 kilometers. It seems to us that it was King David who first paved the route from Jerusalem to Jericho as he fled that way from

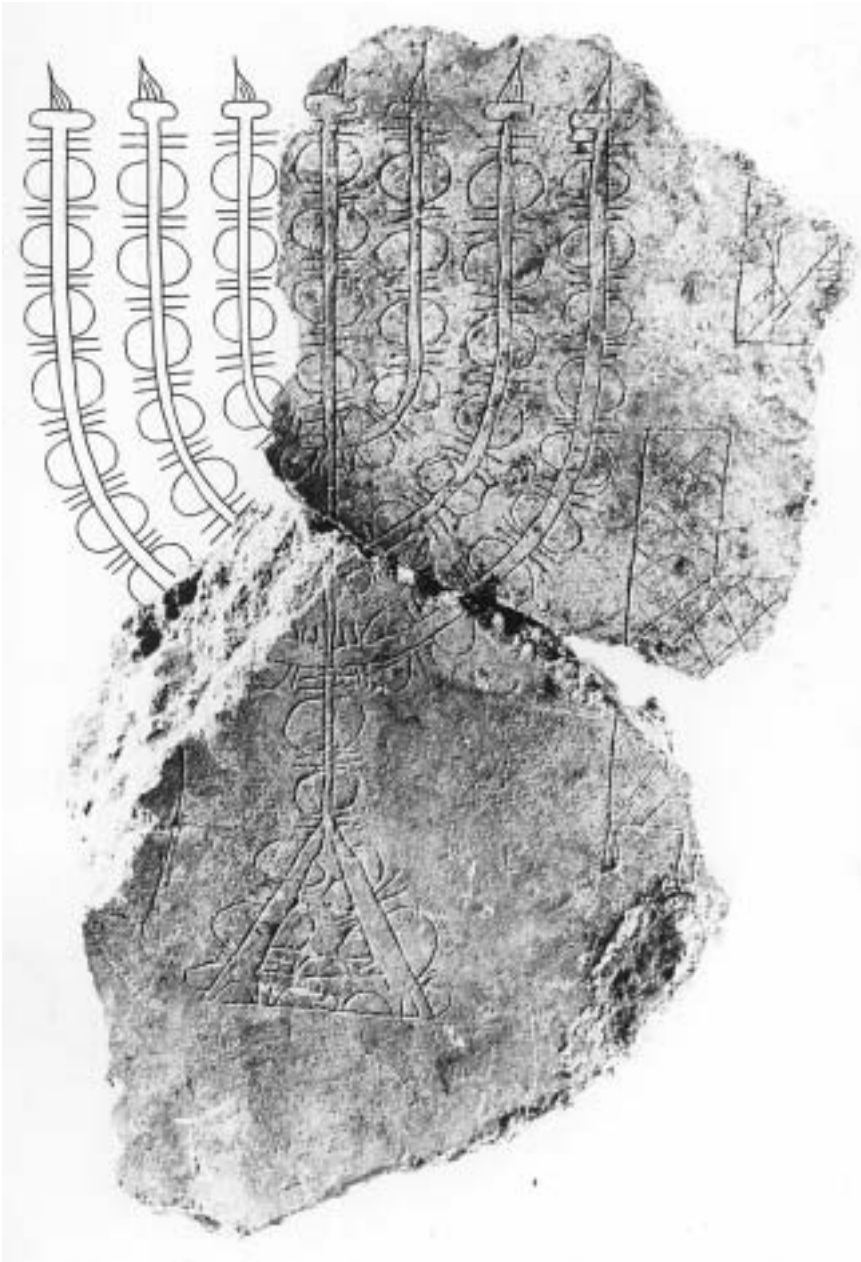
his rebellious son, Absalom. According to our measurement, the length of the route is 26 kilometers, and it is the shortest route to this day.¹⁴

During the first and second Temple periods and in the Roman and Byzantine periods, 40 routes and ascents were paved in Judea, half in the mountains and half in the desert. According to the studies by M. Gihon and Y. Roll and his colleagues, the experts on the ancient routes of the Land of Israel, most of the Roman-Byzantine roads in the mountains of the Land of Israel were paved on the Israeli foundation. Thus, the Jewish engineers during the first Temple period were among the best in the lands of the ancient world. They turned the crooked straight and paved paths and ascents in the mountains, as it is written: "And I will make all my mountains a way and my highways shall be exalted" (Isaiah 49:11). This engineering led to the Jewish people being the first in the history of the Land of Israel to pave routes and ascents in all the mountainous regions on both sides of the Jordan River, and the Jewish people bequeathed this technology to the other nations, as a connection and a bridge between cultures and commerce between nations residing in the mountains and the desert.

What were the Motives for the Jewish People to Establish Pioneering and Intensive Jewish Settlement in the Mountains and Deserts of the Land of Israel?

In our estimation, there were economic, settlement, political, security-defense and other motives for settling in the mountains. However the most significant motive was ideological-religious, stemming from the sanctity of the mountains to the Jewish people: Mount Moriah in Judea, upon which Abraham bound Isaac and which was referred to in the Bible as the "mountain of God", and Mount Sinai in the Sinai desert, which was called the "mountain of the Lord", which exclusively were sacred to the entire Jewish people.¹⁵

During the period of the Judges, there were mountains sacred to the tribes of Israel in the various regions of the Land of Israel: Mounts Se'ir, Paran and Teman in the Negev (Deuteronomy 33:2; Habakuk 3:3); Mounts Gerizim, Eval and Carmel in Samaria (Deuteronomy 11:29; Joshua 8:30;



The Seven-Armed Candelabrum that was uncovered in the Plaster of the "Mansion" in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem by Prof. N. Avigad (by his estimation, a candelabrum like that one was placed on the wall of the Temple).

Deuteronomy 33:19); Mount Tavor in the Galilee and Mount Hermon opposite Lebanon (Psalms 89:17), and Mount Bashan in the Bashan (Psalms 68:15). The mountains of the Land of Israel symbolize strength, might and fecundity from the blessing of God, as it is written: "He causes the wind to blow and the rain to fall in its season" (*Taanit* 1:1).

The Bible attests to the sanctity of the mountains in Israel and especially Mount Zion in Jerusalem in several of its books, as it is written: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it" (Isaiah 2:2-3); "And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Micah 4:2), among others. Let us emphasize that the sanctity of the mountain in the land of Israel was manifest in the bible numerous times, in designations: The "Holy Mountain", the "Mountain of My Sanctity" and the "Mountain of His Sanctity" – 23 times; "Mount of the Lord" and "Mount of God" -17 times; and the rest: "Mount Zion", "mountains of Israel", "Mount Moriah", "Rock of Israel" and the "Lord is my Rock" – almost a hundred times. The name "Shadai" is mentioned 48 times in the Bible, and "El Shadai", alongside which the name "El Elyon" (the most High God) appears, its meaning in Acadian is "God of the Mountain" or "God of the Great Mountain".¹⁶ According to another opinion, the Acadian "Shadu" means mountain, elevated, lord and rock.¹⁷ Zion and Jerusalem are mentioned 821 times in the Bible, and they attest to the fact that the land of Israel and Jerusalem belong to the Jewish people – who established them – and on the profound connection and the dependency of the Jewish people on Jerusalem and the Land of Israel, the crucible of the nation.



The Jewish people considered the mountain its natural home and drew most of its characteristics from the mountain to the point of identification and integration with it: Strength of character, courage of the spirit, natural vigor, frugality, persistence, tenacity, commitment and perseverance. Therefore the Jewish people invested their entire essence, their energy, their physical efforts and their technological thinking in the mountain and the desert. The nation adhered to the mountain and the mountain adhered to the people; it is there that its natural character crystallized and it is from there that it received its religious inspiration, as most of the actions and projects of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel were pioneering and original and were undertaken for religious and national motives, with the objective of causing the desolate areas of the land to flourish. The most significant motive for the Jewish people in developing and inventing the aforementioned five original technologies was **the sanctity of Jerusalem and the mountains of Israel**.

And indeed, the focal point of these crafts and the peak of their use was in Jerusalem and the Judean Mountains:

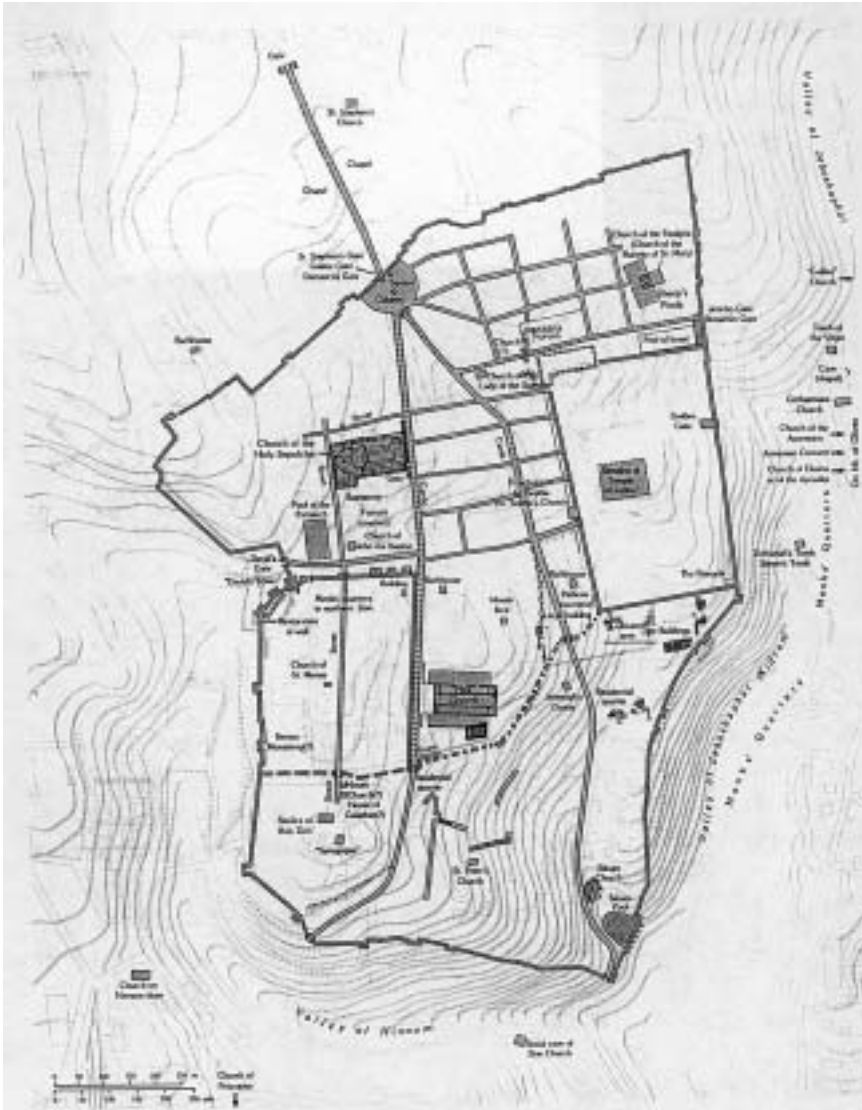
- From the agricultural terraces they brought the first fruits, meal offerings and sacrifices to the Temple in purity from the areas adjacent to Jerusalem: Grain from Emek Refaim (Isaiah 17:5) and from Shadmot Kidron (Kings II 23:4); wine from the estuaries of the Soreq Wadi (Genesis 49:11), olive oil from the Mount of Olives (Zechariah 14:4), sheep from the Judean desert adjacent to the Kidron Wadi, incense and spices from the King's Garden at the junction of the Ben-Hinom Valley and the Kidron Wadi (Jeremiah 52:7), **water** for purification, worship and hygiene were brought from the Gihon and Rogel springs (Kings I 1:33, Samuel II 17:17) and from the Ein-Aroub aqueduct, with the Gihon spring being sacred as it originated in the House of God (Yoel 4:18).
- **Wood, stone and iron craftsmen and fabric dyers:** The motive for whose employment was to settle the land's mountains, to construct the Temple in Jerusalem and to build the fortresses, the weapons and the fortifications to defend them. Solomon's artisans prepared the copper vessels for the sacred worship in the Temple: Pillars, pomegranates, bases, wheels, cherubs, lions, lavers and the sea (Kings I:7). The primary motive for the fabric industry and its blue, purple and scarlet dyeing was

religious, for purposes of worship: The priests dyed the curtains of the sanctuary, the Ark of the Covenant, the blue, purple and scarlet (Exodus 26), the ritual fringes blue (Numbers 15:38) and the vestments of the high priest blue, purple and scarlet (Exodus 28:4-5).

- **In architecture:** There was great interest in the construction of Jerusalem, its walls and its buildings and especially in the construction of Solomon's Temple and Herod's Temple, which was Jewish construction at its most magnificent through the ages, and relative to the temples of other nations as well.
- **The engineering of routes and ascents:** The engineers of the first and second Temples focused on paving routes in the mountains of Jerusalem and Judea. Evidence of this is the concentration of 40 paths, routes and ascents surrounding Jerusalem, the sacred capital of the Land of Israel and the Jewish people. All this was accomplished by means of the iron tools in their possession, which were produced in the iron mines in the Wadi Regev north of the Wadi Yaboq in Gilead.

The relationship of the Jewish people to the mountain in general and to Mount Zion (Mount Moriah) in particular is due to its sanctity to the people and its status as the only sacred capital of the Jewish people, as it says in the Song of Moses: "Thou bringest them in, and plantest them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thee to dwell in, the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established" (Exodus 15:17); and in the prophecy of Isaiah it states: "And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of My mountains; and Mine elect shall inherit it, and My servants shall dwell there" (Isaiah 65:9). The Jewish people was the only one in the history of the Land that shaped its landscape, with hard work and a willing soul; and the Land of Israel repaid it and shaped the unique qualities of the Jewish people: Its Torah was created and the spirit of the nation was formed in the desert; its physical and spiritual might crystallized in the mountain and its material, pioneering and original creations, that were bequeathed to the nations of the world, developed.

Shaping the Mountain and the Desert during the Christian Period in the Land



Jerusalem in the Byzantine Era (Atlas Carta)

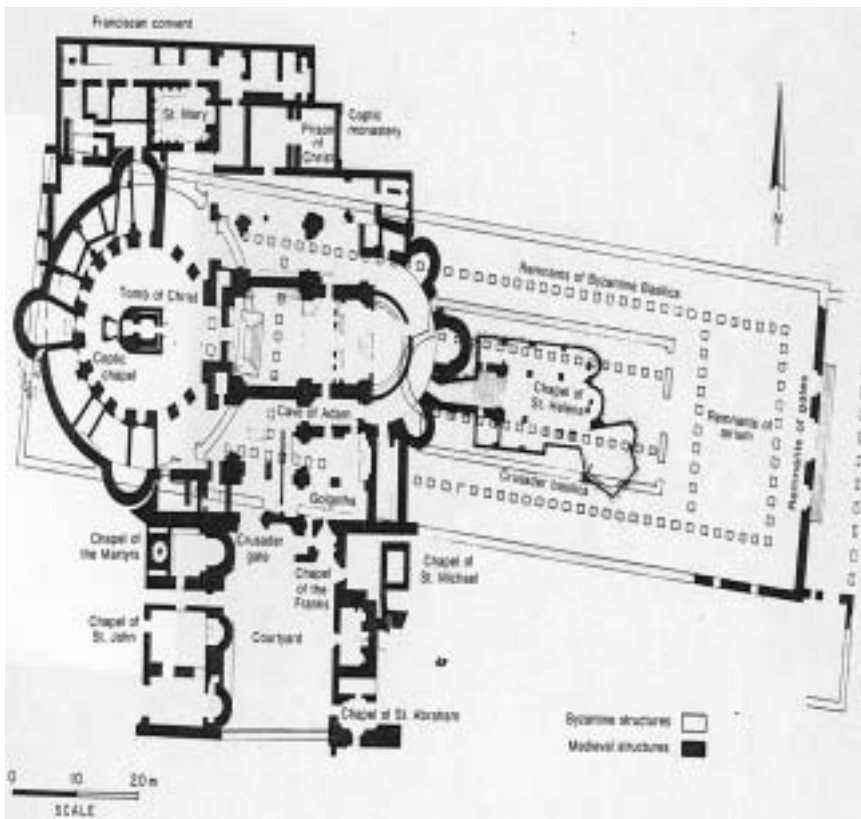
The rulers of the Byzantine Empire ruled the Land of Israel by "remote control" from their capital, Constantinople for 300 years (from 324 until 368

CE). Although they harassed the Jews and eventually banished them from Jerusalem, they appreciated the "People of the Book", and the Bible that is sacred to them as well. They sanctified the grave of Jesus, their messiah, in Jerusalem, his place of birth, according to their faith, in Bethlehem, Nazareth and the sea of Galilee, the sites of his first appearance, and the sites where Jesus and his apostles walked.



The Church Containing the Grave of Jesus in the Upper City of Jerusalem – 1882 (from the book *Palestina*, edited by George Ebers and Herman Gute).

The kings of the Persian Empire prevented the Byzantines from reaching China by means of the "Silk Roads" passing through their land and the Byzantines were forced to reach China by way of the Negev, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean. They constructed numerous settlements, primarily in the Negev, from which they set sail by way of the Red Sea, to India, land of the incense, spices and cotton, and from there to China, land of the silk fabrics, which served primarily for the magnificent garments of their emperors and the vestments of their many priests. During the Byzantine period, numerous churches were constructed in Jerusalem and around, although the city was one-third smaller than it was during the second Temple period. The Christian population in the Land grew, with the assistance of the rulers of the Byzantine Empire, who sought control over Eilat and the Red Sea with



Church of the Holy Sepulchre (sketch: P. Grossman)



The Church of the Holy Sepulchre (photo: A. Erev)

the objective of controlling the trade of luxurious goods from Southeast Asia.

During the time of the Crusader occupation of the Land, in the 12th and 13th centuries which controlled the entire east coast of the Mediterranean Sea, from the border of Asia Minor in the north to the Egyptian border in the south, an emphasis was also put on construction of churches and monasteries. The land was referred to by the Crusaders as Terra Israel¹⁸ and they ruled over it for 200 years. The Crusaders sanctified the Land because of the grave of their messiah in Jerusalem, and they nevertheless slaughtered the Jews and Moslems. They constructed numerous fortresses along the main thoroughfares of the Land and its borders in order to prevent the Moslems from infiltrating the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea where the center of their administration was located.

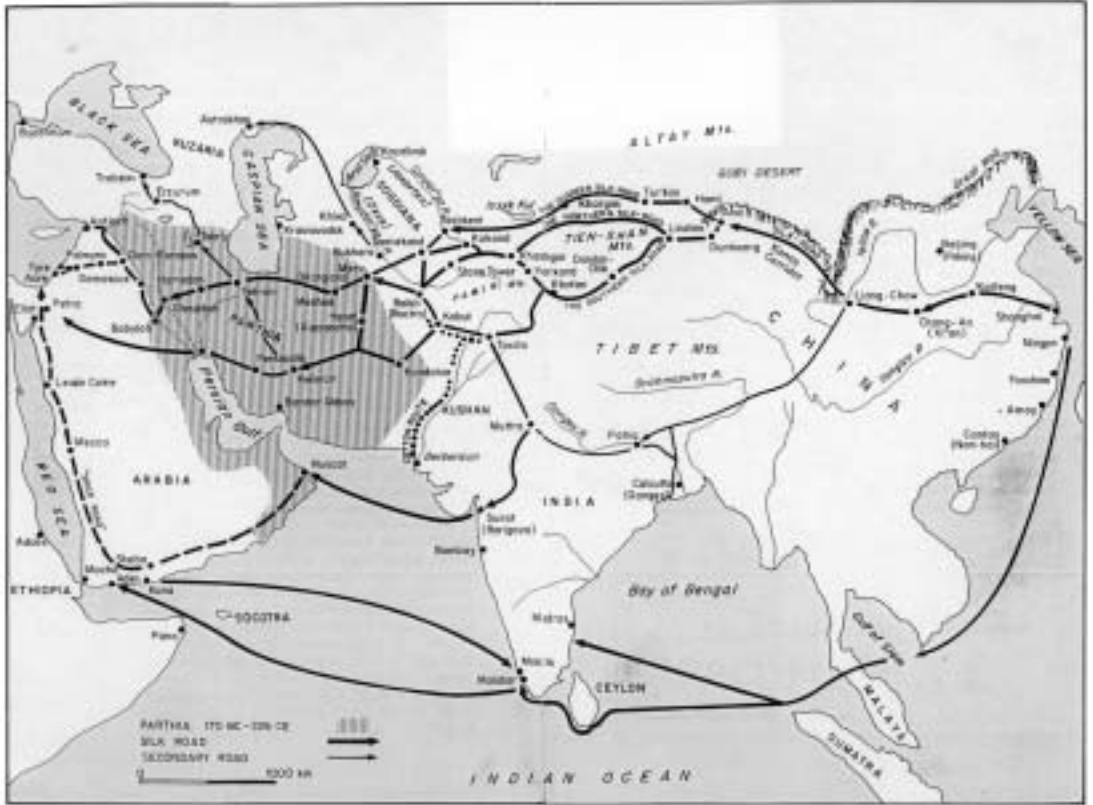
Shaping the Mountain and the Desert during the Moslem Period in the Land:

The Arabs, denizens of the desolate Arabian deserts, engaged primarily in raising cattle and in trade on the "Spice Trail", which originated in the Arab



The Church of All Nations (The Basilica of Agony) in Gat Shemanim in the Kidron Wadi of Jerusalem (according to A. Liron).

countries and in Yemen enroute to Mesopotamia. They also engaged in attacking caravans of Moslem pilgrims who arrived from their countries on the way to Mecca, their sacred city. They, therefore, neglected agriculture and settlement of the lands of their conquest, because they considered themselves soldiers and tax collectors. Over the course of more than a thousand years of Moslem rule over the Land, they did not construct even one new city where there had not been a settlement previously, with the exception of Ramle, the capital of the Palestine District. The main Moslem construction in the Land – the construction of the Dome of the Rock, the al-Aksa Mosque and the government compound in the southern Temple Mount – were undertaken during the Umayyad era, by Sunnis, who battled against



The Continental and Sea "Silk Roads" (Oxford Atlas and M. Har-El).

their enemies in Mecca, and acted for primarily political motives. Nevertheless, they never completed construction of their palace in Jerusalem.

According to the historian Moshe Gil,¹⁹ based on the Moslem Hadith traditions, the Arabs considered agriculture a lowly and despicable endeavor to be opposed and rejected, as it says: "Reside not in the villages, as a village dweller is as if he resides in a grave." The famous historian Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406) recounts²⁰ that the Prophet Mohammed saw the blade of a plow in the house of one of his supporters in Medina, and he said about the plow: "That never entered the home of people unless they underwent humiliation". Ibn Khaldun claimed that the distance of the nomads from the village centers was an advantage for maintaining their pure pedigree, "as working the land compromises the freedom of the nomad".

The Umayyads built the magnificent Damascus, the Mamluks built remarkable Cairo and the Abbasids built the enormous Baghdad, whose population numbered two million residents in the tenth century. Why did the Moslems not build Jerusalem and the other sections of the Land during their 1065 year rule? Because in the ancient Islamic Hadith, devoted to Jerusalem, it is said: "the construction of the Temple [in Jerusalem] will cause the destruction of Medina".²¹

It is worth noting that at the conclusion of Ottoman rule over the Land, Jerusalem had a meager population relative to Ramle, Gaza and Safed.

JERUSALEM'S STATUS AS A CAPITAL

Jerusalem the Capital during Jewish Rule:

The Jebusite city of Jerusalem stretched over 80 to 100 dunams of land; during the days of Hezekiah King of Judea, Jerusalem expanded to the upper city in the west over 650 dunams during the rule of David King of Israel, Jerusalem was the capital of the entire land of Israel for the first time in the history of the Land; in the time of King Solomon, the Temple of the entire Land of Israel was constructed, also for the first time in the history of the Land; during the second Temple period, Jerusalem stretched over 1,800 dunams and was the largest and most fortified city in the Land. Throughout its history, Jerusalem was the capital of the Jewish people exclusively.

Jerusalem as Capital during Christian Rule:

The capital of the Byzantine-Christians in the Land was never Jerusalem but rather Caesarea, constructed in the Herodian period. The primary objective of the Byzantines in the Land was political and economic, and their religious capital during the early days of Christianity was Catholic Rome known as the "Holy Capital" in their writings; Constantinople-Kushta was the sacred capital of the Greek-Orthodox. Jerusalem was fifth in the patriarchal hierarchy in the Byzantine Empire, after Constantinople, Rome, Alexandria and Antiocha.

Jerusalem was the capital of the Crusader Kingdom religiously, a kingdom that stretched from the Egyptian border to the Alexandrita Bay on the Syria-Turkey border; however it was subordinate to Catholic Rome. Actually, fortified Acre served as the main city politically, administratively and economically, especially in the second hundred years of their reign. The Crusaders were strangers in their language, their culture and their

Catholicism to most residents of the Land in their time, and the population of Jerusalem during their reign was the most limited in its history.

Jerusalem as Capital during Moslem Rule:

Jerusalem was never capital of the Land during the Moslem reign, and was not even a district capital. On the contrary, during the Ummayyad reign in the Land, Ramle was the capital of the Palestine District and their "sacred" Jerusalem was subordinate to Ramle.

THE SANCTITY OF JERUSALEM

The Sanctity of Jerusalem for the Jewish People:

Jerusalem is the only city sacred to the Jewish people and the Jews selected it and the rocky, forested and desolate Judean Mountains whose landscapes were shaped by the Jewish people because "their Lord is the Lord of the mountains" (Kings I 20:23). About the Lord it is said: "The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool; where is the house that ye may build unto Me? And where is the place that may be My resting-place?"(Isaiah 66:1). The tribes of Israel brought a tithe to the Temple from the fruits of their lands and made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times annually – customs unparalleled in other nations. Therefore, the Jews fortified Jerusalem with might and glory like no other nation in the ancient Middle East exalted its capital.

The Sanctity of Jerusalem for Christianity:

The Byzantine Christians made a conscious effort to eradicate the centrality of Jerusalem, the Temple and the Jewish religion. They did so to the extent that the Temple Mount – the biblical Mount Zion – disappeared from Jerusalem in their floor mosaics, as we noted in the Byzantine Madaba map. Furthermore, they transformed the Temple Mount into a garbage dump and they forcibly took the concept of the sanctity and history of the Jewish Temple Mount and transferred them to the Golgoltha (Calvary) Hill and the Church of the Resurrection (Jesus' grave), which they intentionally called "Mount Zion". The Byzantines also copied the Jewish traditions relating to the Temple Mount and the original Mount Zion and transferred them to the upper city and the Christian Golgoltha Hill. Adam, who according to Jewish tradition was created on Temple Mount Zion, was ostensibly born on the

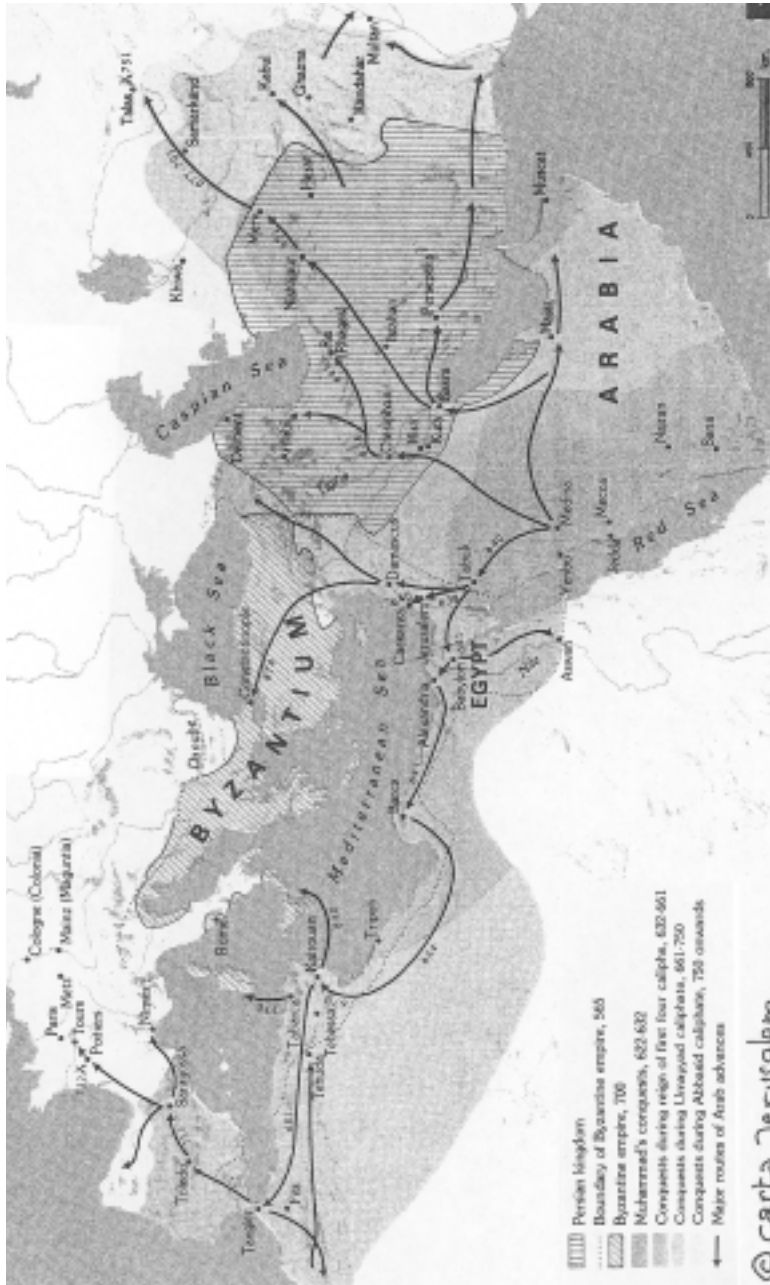
Golgotha; the binding of Isaac, that was on Mount Moriah-Zion, was transferred to the Golgotha; "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3), generally accepted in Judaism as referring to the Temple Mount, was directed to the Church of the Resurrection; the Byzantines claimed that the material, earthly Jerusalem – that was on the Temple Mount – was destroyed with the destruction of the second Temple, and exists no longer. In contrast, in their opinion, heavenly Jerusalem rests upon the Church of the Resurrection and not upon the Temple Mount. The same is true of the heavenly Mount Zion, which, according to the Christian faith, rests upon Rome and Constantinople. Thus the Christian religion gave preference to Rome, the Holy See, over Jerusalem.

It should be noted that in 1999, the then Prime minister Ariel Sharon visited Pope John Paul II, in the Vatican who taught Sharon a chapter in the Bible and said to him: "The Land of Israel is sacred to the three religions, however, it was only given to one religion – the Jews. And that is the difference between *Terra Sancta* – Holy Land – and *Terra Promessa* – the "Promised Land" (Exodus 33:1; Deuteronomy 34:4).

It is important to emphasize that most of the Church Fathers opposed the pilgrimage of their Christian adherents to Jerusalem.



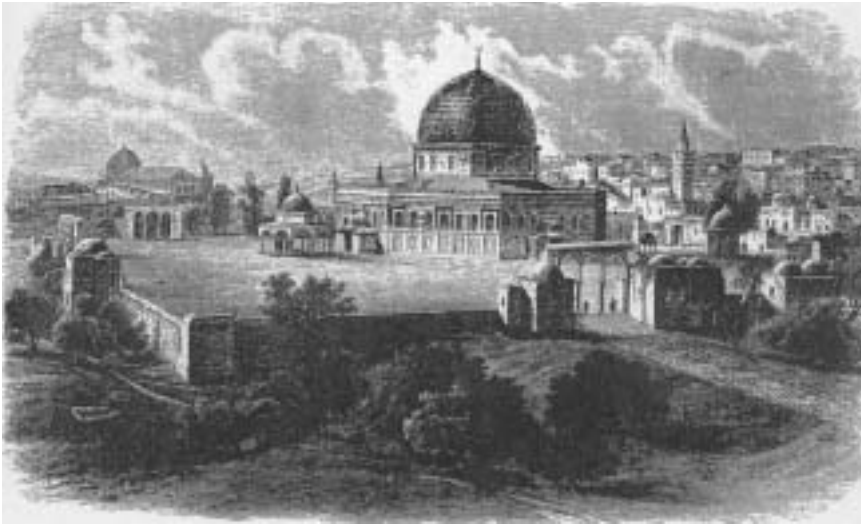
In contrast to the Byzantines, the Crusaders acknowledged the sanctity of the Temple Mount on the one hand, and opposed the Jewish religion on the other. They transformed every synagogue and mosque in the city into a church and massacred the Jews and the Moslems at every opportunity, even though they sanctified "Terra Israel" – the palace of the King and the Crusader ruler in Jerusalem – which was at first in the al-Aksa Mosque. The al-Aksa Mosque was called "Templum Solomonis" – Solomon's Temple – and was later moved to "David's Citadel" adjacent to Jaffa Gate. They called the building of the Dome of the Rock "Templum Domini", the Lord's Temple, which is the biblical Temple.



The map of the conquests of the Moslem Empire (Atlas Carta).

The Sanctity of Jerusalem for Islam – Fact or Fiction:

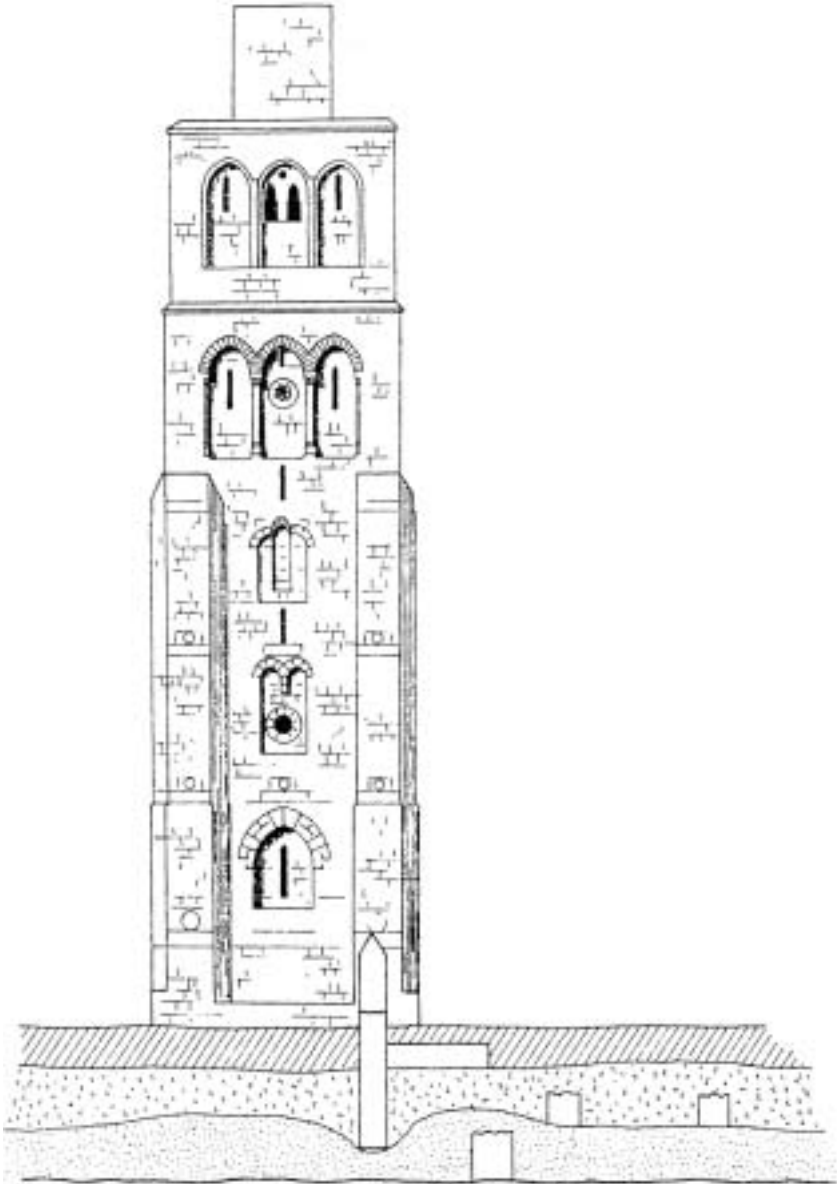
At the beginning of the Moslem rule over the Land, they ascribed no sanctity to Jerusalem and the Temple Mount. They believed that faith in that sanctity contravened Islam. The Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik, whose capital was Damascus, constructed the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem with splendor and magnificence, in an attempt to minimize the significance of the



Dome of the Rock (by G. Ebers and H. Gute, 1880)



The al-Aksa Mosque. Templum Solomonis according to the Crusaders
(according to A. Lior).



Ramle, Capital of the Palestine District: "Tower of the Forty" in the "White Mosque" that was Constructed by the Mamluk Ruler Kala'un (1318)
(according to M. Ben-Dov).

pilgrimage to Mecca, which was under the auspices of his rival, the Shiite Caliph, Abdullah Ibn al-Zubair and his adherents.

According to Prof. Meir J. Kister, the caliphs Ottoman and 'Omar, who engaged in the editing of the Qur'an, commanded the Moslems to pray in the direction of Mecca and Medina as per Mohammed's will, but not in the direction of Jerusalem. According to him, Mecca was mentioned as "Mecca Land of Zion" when Mohammed still sought to attract Jews to pray to it.²²

Prof. Bernard Lewis wrote about the famous caliph 'Omar Ibn al-Hatab (634-644) who informed his Arab countrymen that Arabia is the land sacred to Arabs, and only one religion – Islam – can be established there and he commanded the Jews and Christians to leave it.²³

According to the great Islamic law scholars, Jerusalem has no sanctity for Moslems and it is forbidden to pray in the direction of al-Aksa. The Shiite Imam Ja'afar a-Sadeq claimed in 765 that the al-Aksa Mosque mentioned in the dream of the Prophet Mohammed – is located in heaven.²⁴ It is important to emphasize that the al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem was apparently constructed in 705, approximately 40 years after the imam's claim. On the other hand, the great and famous Sunni Islamic law scholar, Taqiyy a-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) determined that there is no sanctity in the al-Aksa Mosque and that it is forbidden to encircle the Rock and the al-Aksa Mosque and to slaughter sacrifices in their proximity. Jerusalem has no special sanctity (*haram*) and Moslems may not face it in prayer. One who violates these prohibitions is a heretic who renounces Islam. He should be asked to repent. If he repents, all the better. And if not he should be executed. According to Prof. Y. Hason, "Ibn Taymiyya spoke out against all of the forms of worship practiced by the Jerusalem Moslems and he determined that they are considered innovations to be condemned".²⁵

Prof. Emanuel Sivan notes that the pilgrimage of Moslems to Jerusalem was always considered *ziara*, in other words, a visit and not a *haj*, which is a pilgrimage to a holy site.²⁶

The interesting thing is that the Qur'an also notes in "The Dinner Table" chapter (5:24) that the Land of Israel is sacred to the Jewish people. When Moses told the Children of Israel: "Proceed on your way to the Holy Land that He promised you". In chapter 5:133 it says: "Thereafter we settled the Children of Israel securely in their land".

According to Y. Hason,²⁷ Jerusalem does not have special holy status, only Mecca and Medina. In the Qur'an, the sanctity of Mecca is mentioned, while the sanctity of Medina is attributed to statements by Mohammed and is therefore not recognized by all Moslems. The sanctity of Jerusalem is not *haram*, but only the simple status of a place of prayer like any other mosque. The phrase "*Al-Haram al-Quds al-Sharif*" (the Honorable Jerusalem Temple) is in contravention of Islamic law, according to Ibn-Taymiyya, who unsuccessfully fought there in the 14th century. The construction of the Umayyad al-Aksa in Jerusalem was a tendentious political step, because originally, the al-Aksa Mosque mentioned in the Qur'an was in the Seventh Heaven of Mecca or Medina, not on Earth.

Shiite Imam Ja'afar a-Sadeq was asked about the sanctity of the mosques and answered: The Mosque of Mecca and the Mosque of the Prophet [Medina] are sacred". Regarding al-Aksa, he answered: "The Kufa Mosque in Iraq is better than the one in Jerusalem".²⁸

It is important to note that the al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem was constructed 60 years after Mohammed's dream and is not mentioned in the 240 meters of verses from the Qur'an that adorn the inner walls of the Dome of the Rock. The nocturnal journey of that mosque was first mentioned in the Ottoman inscription on the Dome of the Rock.

In the literature "The Praise of Moslem Cities", which began in the ninth century CE, pieces were written about Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Wasit, Marw, Homs and Qazawin but Jerusalem was not mentioned and nothing was composed about it. The first "Praises of Jerusalem" book was only written in the 11th century²⁹ and was written with a political agenda. Accordingly:

- A. The Fatimid conquest of the land in the ninth and tenth centuries and the oppression of the Sunni Moslems and the Christians in Egypt and the Land of Israel by the Egyptian ruler al-Hakem;
- B. The Crusader conquest of Israel, as beginning with the downfall of the Ummayyads, Jerusalem was gradually more and more neglected by the Moslems, who ceased to express interest in it because of its distance from their capitals. When the Fatimid Dynasty reigned in the Land of

Israel, Moslem interest in Jerusalem was renewed, due to its proximity to Egypt.

The geographer Yakut, who lived towards the end of his life in Mosul, Iraq, in Aleppo, Syria and in Egypt, noted the significance of the holy cities in his time (1179-1229): "The Indian city of Moltan was sacred to the residents of India and China, in the same way that Jerusalem was sacred to the Jews and to the Christians and Mecca to the Moslems."

Jerusalem, though "sacred" to the Moslems, was abandoned by them. In the more than a thousand years of their reign over the Land, they destroyed the city walls three times: In 745, in the days of the Umayyad Caliph Marwan the second, when his opponents, the Bedouins from Mecca laid siege to the city, he destroyed its walls lest they entrench themselves within the wall after conquering the city;³⁰ in 1187 in the days of the Ayyubid Saladin, in his war against the Crusader rulers of the city, he destroyed the walls in his conquest and left them destroyed lest the Crusaders retake the city and entrench themselves within it; and during the days of the Ayyubid ruler Mu'adam Issa in 1219, who built Jerusalem and then destroyed it, following in the footsteps of his uncle, Saladin.



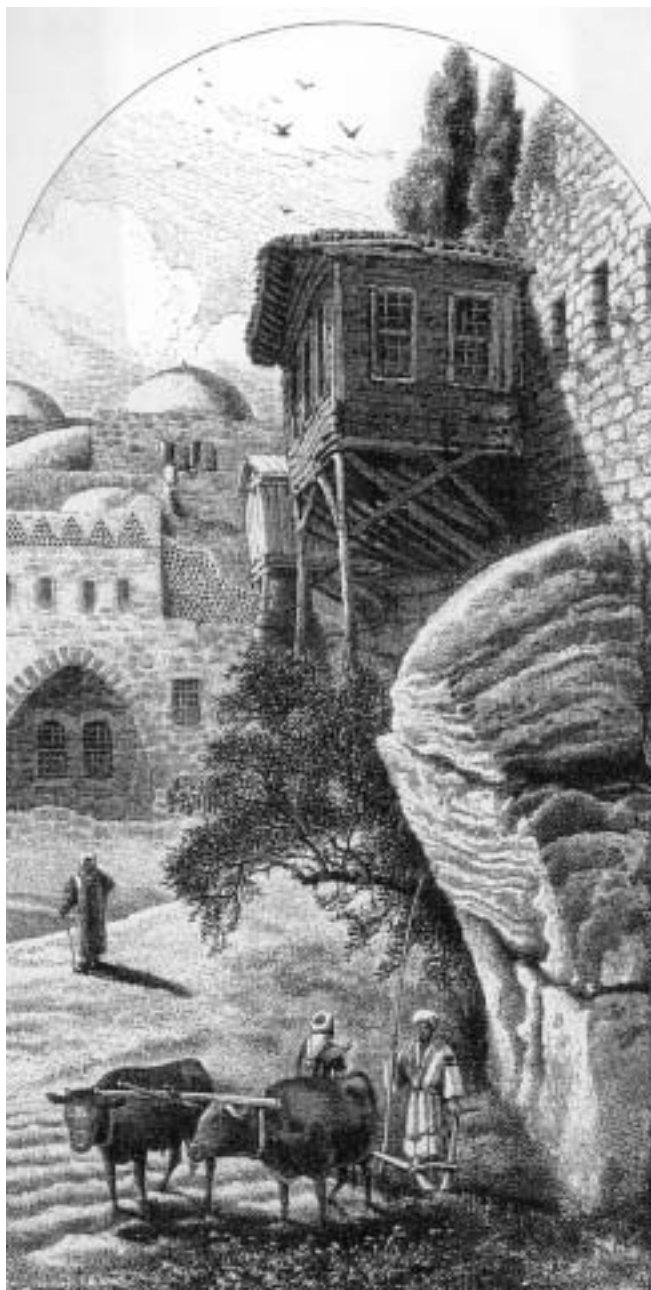
According to the historian J. Praver, in the sixth Crusade, Friedrich II battled against the enemies when he laid siege to their capital Cairo in 1229. The threatened Egyptians relinquished Jerusalem and the Judean Mountains, in exchange from the Crusaders' withdrawal from Cairo. Where, then, is the sanctity of "*al-Quds al-Sharif*" for the Moslems?

J. Praver continued: "In the wake of this devastation, Jerusalem was also destroyed. It is told that only the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Temple Mount mosques and the city citadel ("David's Citadel") remained standing. This city that was meticulously fortified became an unprotected city and a large number of its residents settled in other areas. One of the side effects of these destructions was the disappearance of the Jewish community from Jerusalem".³¹

Thereafter, the city remained without a wall for 320 years, until the



Jerusalem in the Crusader Period (Atlas Carta).



Plowing in the Biblical "Valley" Alongside the Western Wall in Destroyed Jerusalem (from the book *Palestina*, edited by George Ebers and Herman Gute), in 1880.



Acre and its port, Capital City during the Crusader Era (photograph: Ami Erev).

Turkish conquest. It was the first time in the history of Jerusalem, from the days of the Canaanites until the days of the Turks, that the city remained without a wall, and that was under three Moslem dynasties: The Umayyad, the Ayubid and the Mamluk.

WHO IS THE CONQUEROR OF THE LAND OF ISRAEL? WHICH NATION'S LAND WAS CONQUERED?

Conquest of the Land during the Days of the Patriarchs

When the Jewish people conquered the Land of Canaan in the time of Joshua, disparate tribes and nations resided there, most of whom were conquerors who invaded from other countries, like the Philistines, the Hittites, the Hivites, the Jebusites and the Amorites. These nations never united all of the regions and never developed the Land.

Already in the time of the Patriarchs, conquest of the Land by the tribes of Israel was ideological-religious. Their residence in the Promised Land was undertaken in accordance with a divine command. From the settlement through the destruction of the first and second Temples, the tribes of Israel and its kings inherited the Land and settled primarily, and for the first time, in the distant mountains and deserts, virtually empty of settlement and people, **which constitute the Land of Israel**, while the Canaanites resided in the plains, the lowlands, the valleys and the gorges, which were fertile regions and suitable for settlement and stretched over only 23% of the Land's area, **which constituted the Land of Canaan** (Genesis 10:19; Numbers 13:29; Joshua 17:16). The Jewish people were the only ones in its history who united all of the Land's regions as an independent entity, with one capital city, Jerusalem. They fortified the cities of the Land and its borders.

And so we reveal today the fruits of the initiative and resourcefulness and the hard labor of the Jewish people, which stand as everlasting monuments and eternal testimony to the deep-rooted Jewish creation, which is revealed to all who come to visit the Land's regions and Jerusalem.

Throughout the Land, there are no remnants, ruins or ancient settlements in the mountains or Judean Desert or Negev regions that were excavated in which vestiges of the first and second Temple eras or the *Mishnaic* and Talmudic periods were not found. Remnants of Jewish temples from biblical times were uncovered in Lakhish in the Judean lowlands and Arad in the Beersheba Valley, as well as more than a hundred ancient synagogues, primarily in the mountains from the second Temple, Mishnaic and Talmudic periods. Similarly, hundreds of cisterns and aqueducts, dozens of paved routes and ascents were revealed throughout the Land from the Golan Heights to Eilat, "For the stone shall cry out of the wall" (*Habakuk* 2:11). It is important to acknowledge that the pioneering Jewish creativity in achievement and industry is unprecedented in the ancient history of the Land of Israel.

As mentioned above, during the Canaanite period, the mountains were forested, rocky and neglected. However in the days of the kingdoms of Judea and Israel the Land flourished and prospered magnificently, as it is written in Psalms: "Thou visitest the earth and waterest it, thou greatly enrichest it; the river of God is full of water; thou providest their grain, for so thou hast prepared it. Thou waterest its furrows abundantly, settling its ridges, softening it with showers, and blessing its growth. Thou crownest the year with thy bounty; the tracks of thy chariot drip with fatness. The pastures of the wilderness drip, the hills gird themselves with joy, the meadows clothe themselves with flocks, the valleys deck themselves with grain, they shout and sing together for joy." (65:10, 14).

Conquest of the Land during the Arab-Moslem Reign

During the Arab-Moslem rule over the Land, trees were chopped down in the forests and were utilized for heat and for the coal industry, like the residents of Um al-Fahm (Mother of Coal) in Samaria, who provided coal for the residents of the land and to desolate Egypt, in the process destroying the Northern Samaria Forest.

The Bedouins of that time, who wandered across desolate expanses of the Land, together with the policies of the Turkish Government in the Land, obliterated the fruit trees in the mountains. As a result of the loss of the

trees, the terraces on the mountains eroded and were swept to the valleys and the lowlands, blocked the river beds and the estuaries and as a result, became malignant swamps. This swampy land spread the fatal malaria plague (Leviticus 26:16) and diminished the Land's population. The Zionist immigrations to the Land of Israel, in the years 1882-1948, exterminated malaria from the Land for the first time in its history.

During Talmudic times, Beit Shean and its valley was the largest and most magnificent irrigated field in the Land, about its fecundity it was said: "with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that coucheth beneath – that is Beit Shean" (*Genesis Rabbah* 98). The praise of Beit Shean is mentioned in the Talmud: "Resh Lakish said: The Garden of Eden, if it is in the Land of Israel, its entrance is Beit Shean" (*Eruvin* 19a). During the Arab-Moslem reign in the Land, Beit Shean became the netherworld of the country, because in our settlement on our Kibbutz Maoz Haim in the Beit Shean valley, 65% of our comrades suffered from malaria in the first two years from swamp mosquito bites, who made a shambles of our health and destroyed our lands. It is worth recounting that we, members of the kibbutz, settled in the Beit Shean Valley in 1937 in a "Tower and Stockade" settlement, much to the chagrin of the British mandatory government, in contravention of their malevolent laws against Jewish settlement. The surprising and joyous aspect is that in 1974, a Talmudic era synagogue with a spectacular mosaic floor was discovered in the courtyard of our kibbutz. The chain has not been severed.

The Arab-Moslem conquest of the Land of Israel was the conquest, by Moslem empires whose primary objective was imperialist, designed to convert the residents of the lands – Christians, Jews as well as pagans – to Islam and to gain control of the economic resources of the lands of Asia, Africa and Europe by sword. They referred to these conquests as "*Futuḥ*" – the plural of *Fataḥ*, which means "conquest", attesting to their character and aspirations from ancient times to the present. "Fatah" – conquest – is a symbolic name in Islam and the name of the movement of the enemy, Arafat, which conquers a land that does not belong to it. During the entire Moslem reign in the Land of Israel, the Land was never a separate independent political entity. It was always annexed to Syria or Lebanon, because the Umayyad dynasty established its capital in Damascus.



Residences of the Palestinian Refugees in Tin Shacks in the Old City of Jerusalem Prior to the Six-Day War (photograph: M. Har-El).



Tiferet Israel Synagogue (Rabbi Nisan Bek) in the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem (destroyed the end of the War of Independent by the Arabs) (according to Israel Department of Antiquities)



The Mosaic Floor of the Maoz Haim Synagogue, which Contains a Candelabra (Vasilius Zafiris).

The Moslems abandoned the mountain settlements in the Land and transformed them into dwellings for Bedouin shepherds, who invaded the Land from Egypt, Arabia and Syria, plundered and ruined its green covering, and bequeathed it to their nomadic descendants. Thus, the classic agricultural land from the time of the Jewish, Christian and Byzantine reigns remained denuded of all its natural and cultural assets, desolate and unpopulated.

Prof. Ben Zion Dinur said about the Arab rights to the Land: "The Arabs have all the rights in the Land of Israel but no right to the Land of Israel".

"Conquest" of the Land in the Present Vernacular

Behold, regarding the "Peace Now" members in the Land – degraders Israel who besmirch its name, the prophet Ezekiel prophesied: "the vile prophets, that follow their own spirit, and things which they have not seen", saying: "Have ye not seen a vain vision, and have ye not spoken a lying divination. Because ye have spoken vanity, and seen lies. Because, even because they

have led My people astray, saying: Peace, and there is no peace; and when it buildeth up a slight wall, behold, they daub it with whited plaster (Chapter 13).

These remote Jews ask us today, "What is the alternative"? Our forefathers, who were deep-rooted Jews and fought for the freedom, independence and existence of the Jewish people against the kingdoms and empires: Canaan, Philistine, Aram, Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, the Hellenists and the Romans did not ask what was the alternative. Because they knew quite well what was the fate of the seven nations of Canaan, who did not fight for their political existence and it is clear where they are today.

To these proponents of false peace, who want an immediate solution for our troubles, I will note that the original Land of Israel of biblical times stretched over both banks of the Jordan and the British received the mandate from the League of Nations to establish a national home for the Jews there. Despite that, the British arbitrarily tore the east bank of the Jordan, whose territory comprises 77% of the entire Land of Israel and annexed it to the Kingdom of Jordan. This area surrounding the capital, Amman, is an indivisible part of the Arab Palestine District. Is this not a rational and moral solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict for division of the Land? Is the foolish "Road Map" a solution or a catastrophe? And is it not ultimately a Rout Map – a panic-stricken flight?

THE CULTURES OF ISRAEL AND ARABIA

The question is asked, which nation in the Land of Israel established and built its homeland, culture, capital, Temple and citadel, with its paramount value being peace; and which nation foreign in its religion, culture, language and homeland, persistently conquered and totally destroyed every region in the Land of Israel, with its only desire being conquest and war and it despises peace. Proof for this is the international terrorism of the al-Qaeda gangs headed by Bin-Laden, Hezbollah and his contemporary cronies and the Fatah directive in our land: "Kill a Jew, merit Paradise".

It is worth emphasizing that peace in Israel is a vision and a dream, a national, cultural value, as it is mentioned in the bible 257 times (105 times just in Prophets) and 1,050 times in rabbinic literature, as it says: "Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it" (Psalms 34:15). According to Prof. Bernard Lewis, peace in the Arab countries is neither a moral nor a cultural nor a political value.³² And so it is written in the Book of Psalms: Woe is me, that I sojourn with Meshech [with the savages of the country's north], that I dwell beside the tents of Kedar [the Arabs of the country's southeast]! My soul hath full long had her dwelling with him that hateth peace. I am all peace; but when I speak, they are for war" (120: 5-7).

Lewis further pointed out that Islam has no connection to democracy, which violates their culture. I will note that there are 56 Moslem countries today and the overwhelming majority of them do not have a democratic regime. In contrast, democracy in Judaism is a divine command: "Follow the multitude" (Exodus 23:2) and "the voice of the many is like the voice of God" (*Mishnat Hakhamim* 277).

Untruth in Israel is despicable and negative, considered a sin, deceit, fraud, evil and wickedness and is mentioned 113 times in the Bible. In *Parashat Mishpatim* (Exodus 23:7) it is said: "Keep thee far from a false matter"; in Psalms it is written: "Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile" (34:14).



The great scholar of Islam, Prof. I. I. Goldziher (1850-1921) wrote about the arabs that they are "fabricators of Hadiths [traditions] based on biblical verses, rabbinic sayings, apocrypha, the new Testament, the "Our Father Who Art in Heaven" prayer, Greek philosophy, Persian and Indian wise idioms; all of those Hadiths are presented as if they were Moslem and sayings of the Prophet Mohammed".³³

In 1975, at the Fourth Academic Conference for the Study of Islam in Cairo, they revealed a genuine Hadith of the comrades of the Prophet Mohammed, in which it said: "lies are sins, unless they are said and serve the good and welfare of Moslems and their well-being". It said there further: "the time has come that the Moslems fight the Jews and kill them. The Jews will hide among the rocks and the trees that will cry out, O Moslems, servants of Allah, Jews are hiding among us, come and kill them".³⁴ This Hadith is being heard these days in the mosques of Iran, Iraq and Egypt, reminding us of the passage in Psalms: "Consider how many are mine enemies and the cruel hatred wherewith they hate me" (25:19).

In a letter written by Maimonides, who lived under Arab and Moslem rule in Spain, Morocco and Cairo, to the Jews of Yemen, he wrote about the Ishmaelites: "Never did a nation molest, degrade, debase and hate us as much as they did, although we were dishonored by them beyond human endurance, and had to put up with their fabrications. Similarly our sages instructed us to bear the prevarications and preposterousness of Ishmael in silence. We have acquiesced, both old and young, to inure ourselves to humiliation. All this notwithstanding, we do not escape this continued maltreatment which well nigh crushes us. No matter how much we suffer and elect to remain at peace with them, they stir up strife and sedition". It is interesting that nothing has changed over time and the injustice from Maimonidean times (1135-1204) continues today.³⁵

The duplicity, sanctimoniousness and pretense are well-known and accepted by the Arabs. There is a popular saying in Arabic, which means: "He struck me – and cried, he caught me in his race to court and sued me". Evidence of this are the criminal, despicable exploits of the Palestinians in

the intifada against Israel as they bomb Israeli public institutions and shell peaceful civilian settlements with barbaric cruelty and at the same time direct complaints to the "righteous" European countries and the "moral" United Nations.

It is well known that the nomadic Arabs from desolate Arabia are those that initiated their conquests when they invaded the three continents: Africa, Europe and Asia with malevolent despotism. In 640, the desert Arabs captured Egypt from the Byzantines, whose residents were Christian, among them Copts whose language of prayer was Egyptian mixed with Greek. The Copts were abused as they were forced to pay a head-tax in addition to the land tax. As the Arab-Egyptians discriminated against the Copts after their land was taken from them, the Copts revolted several times, and failed.³⁶ The Copts are discriminated against today and encounter great difficulty in preserving their religious worship.

In 709, the Berbers, the pagan rulers of the western North African countries, were conquered by the Arabs. After their revolt failed, the Berbers were forced to convert to Islam. Today, the discriminated against Berbers, maintain their language and traditions in the land of their fathers.

In 711, the Arabs conquered monotheistic-Christian Spain. The Moslems were expelled after 781 years of rule, some of which were years of coercion and abuse of its citizens.

Where in all of this is the reciprocity between nations sharing the principles of faith in one God?

In 636 Aramean and Christian Syria was conquered by the Umayyad Arabs, who were the rivals of Caliph Ali, one of the descendants of the Prophet Mohammed, whose capital was in Mecca. The Umayyad Caliph Mu'awiyah established his capital in Damascus, and ruled from there over the huge Arab empire, as competition to the rulers of Mecca. Prof. Moshe Gil wrote the following about the Umayyad civil war: In the 88 years of the Umayyad reign over the Land, the land was an arena of intra-Arab battles. There were so many fatalities in the civil war, that they used the arms and legs of the corpses as tent stakes".³⁷

In 661, the Umayyads conquered Babylonia, the capital of Mesopotamia and forced the Mesopotamians to accept their Moslem religion and their Arabic language. They called the land that they conquered Iraq, which



The Ark of the Covenant – a Relief on a Stone in the Capernaum Synagogue in the Galilee
(photograph: M. Har-El).

means "coast" in Arabic [of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers]. Afterwards the Iraqis abused their Kurdish Moslem brethren and the natives of the land who were descendants of the ancient Arameans, whom they continue to slaughter today resolutely and cruelly, with no pangs of conscience. All of this despite Saladin, the great Moslem general and the ruler of Egypt and Syria, was Kurdish. Isn't that genocide committed by Arab conquerors in a land that wasn't theirs?

In 651, the Umayyads conquered Persia, an empire that, during its glory days, stretched from India to Ethiopia. The Persians then were the typical tolerant, broad-minded Middle Eastern nation. They withstood the Roman and Byzantine Empires with resoluteness and courage and succeeded. It is surprising that so enlightened a nation surrendered and developed a zealous and extreme doctrine and faith of a culture of aggression, preventing progress, knowledge, love and tranquility (even though they rejected the Arabic language).

Beginning in 670, the lands of Middle Asia included in Turkmenistan by the Umayyads and the Abbasids (750-969). According to Prof. A. Ashtor, the Mongolian Timur-e Lang (1336-1405), who became a fervent, zealous



Marble Capitol and Candelabra Relief from the Caesaria Synagogue
(according to M. Avi-Yonah).

Moslem, entered Middle Asia and ruled over it. He was one of the great conquerors of all time and an arch-murderer in his wars and subjugated with horrific cruelty those who rebelled against him, including his Moslem brethren, and he made towers out of their skulls.³⁸ In his conquest of Moslem Damascus in 1400, Timur-e Lang gathered 30,000 of his co-religionists into the great mosque, including clerics and their families, women and children and then burned the building with them inside.³⁹ Where was the humanity of this monotheist? Is there any doubt who stole a land foreign to him and who is the cruelest conqueror of all the nations? The God of *Futuḥ* has the solution.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In light of the above evidence, testimony and proofs, it is incomprehensible where the malicious lie and libel that the Jewish people are occupiers in their own land originated, and what is the source of this slander, defamation and accusation that are unfounded and unsubstantiated?

The eminent historian, B.Z. Dinur, wrote: "Even when the Land of Israel was not actually in Israeli possession, Israel did not lack a homeland but rather it was a nation that others stole its land, as the Jews immigrated from the Diaspora to the Land of Israel".

In conclusion, I turn to our erudite brethren, constituents of the People of the Book, and ask: How did we reach the status of ignoramuses failing to



The Ark of the Covenant – see p.p. 86, 87.



A Date – one of the Seven Species (Honey and Symbol of Israel)
(drawing: Aharon Halevi).

understand what is written in the Book of Books and what is the significance of the Land of Israel? Where are the Bible, archeology, history and history of Islam scholars, the writers and the poets who remained silent and did not deign to visit the landscapes and structures of the homeland as the verse cries out, "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, to you have I given it" (Joshua 1:3), a creation of a selfish Jewish people! And they do not disseminate the values of the true Torah among the nations.

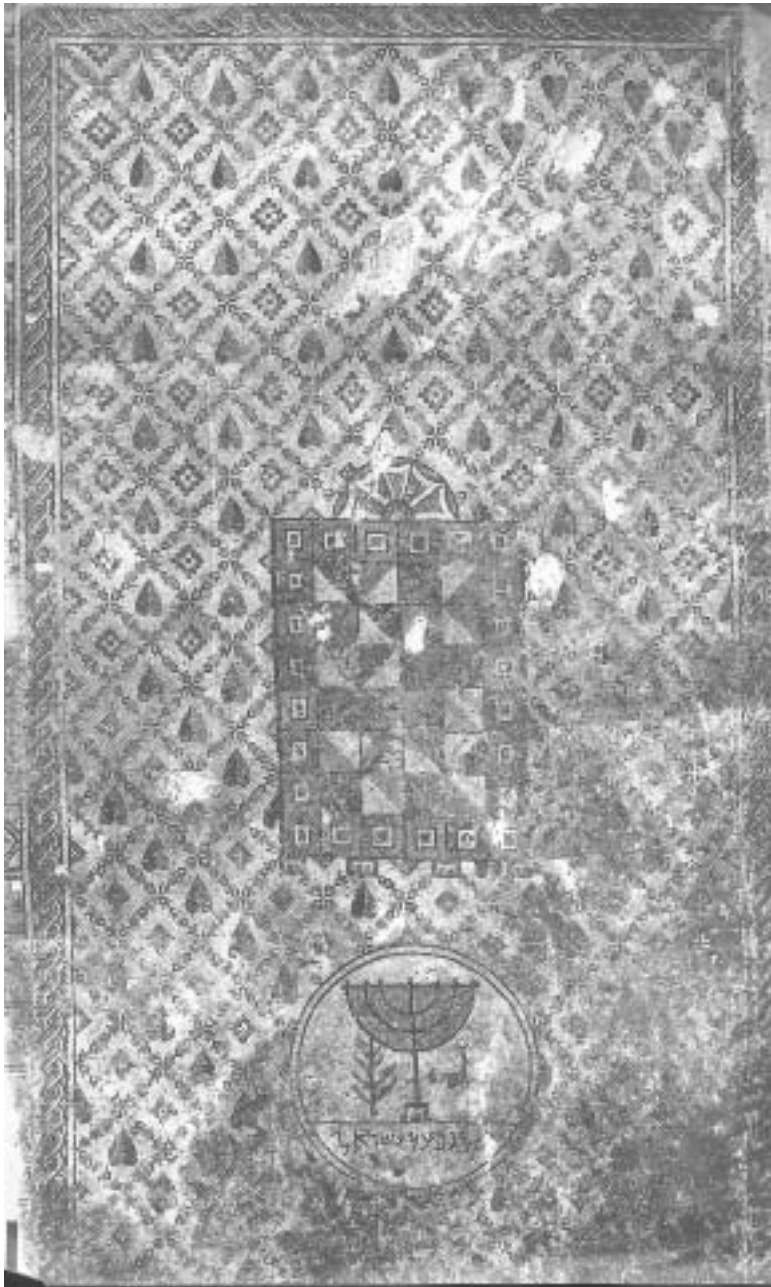
Where is the author, Amos Oz and the leader of a Zionist party – Yossi Sarid who announced to the nation in the "Haaretz" newspaper, that if there was an attempt to transfer an Arab settlement, they would lie beneath the

wheels of the tractors and the cars? Would they do the same in the case of a transfer of Jews from Gush Katif? After all, Judea and Samaria are the products of the hard labor of the Jewish people? Heaven forbid? Who today serves as the advocate for the nation that aspires to freedom and progress of its land, its homeland and the land of its fathers? Only a true Zionist.

Recently in a radio broadcast on Kol Yisrael, on the first day of Tishrei 5767 it was reported that the former Prime Minister of Spain reacted to the Moslem request that Pope Benedict XVI ask their forgiveness for his mid-September, 2006 statement denouncing the activities of the Moslem martyrs in world terrorism. Let me point out that this commandment of "Futuh" – conquest of Moslem terrorism around the world is mentioned in the Qur'an and in their Hadiths. The Spanish prime Minister claimed that the Moslems must first **ask the Christians for forgiveness** for invading and occupying Spain and ruling it over the course of 800 years.

The Jewish people has the right to ask the Moslems who conquered the Land of Israel by sword and ruled over it for more than a thousand years to ask for forgiveness and to vacate the Land of Israel just as they vacated Spain. During that period, unlike in Spain, they totally destroyed the land. They cut down all of the natural forests in the Land and turned the wood into coals and sold them to Egypt and Syria to the extent that there are no natural forests in Israel; they destroyed the most fertile regions in the Land as all of the palins, valleys and vales became malignant swamps; they destroyed the majority of the Israeli agricultural terraces by destroying the villages in the mountains and the desert; they caused the annihilation of all of the ancient routes paved by the Canaanites, the Israelites, the Romans and the Byzantines to the extent that until 1860 no carriage traveled in the Land because the Bedouin camel eradicated the cultured wheel from the Land and desolation spread in the Land of Israel just as it did in Arabia, the cradle and homeland of the world Moslems.

I turn to the honorable Zionists, the Prime Minister and Cabinet ministers, members of Knesset including former IDF generals, who cravenly and incessantly ask – "is there an alternative"? Gentlemen, in Parashat Shoftim (Deuteronomy 20:1, 8) it is written about the courageous and the cowardly: "When thou goest forth to battle against thine enemies, and seest horses, and chariots, and a people more than thou, thou shalt not be afraid



The Mosaic Floor in the Jericho Synagogue. At the Center of the Drawing – the Holy Ark with a Shell above it. Below a Candelabra, a Ram's Horn and a Palm Branch.

The Hebrew Inscription is "Peace over Israel" (according to S.Y. Schweig).



The Field trip with the author and his students in the Negev Desert
(photo. Ami Erev)

of them What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart melt as his heart".

We can conclude from this that if we have the will to live, there is no alternative to a determined, extended struggle for the existence of our nation and a strenuous, perpetual war against the destruction of our nation by those who wish to vandalize and destroy us. We must realize that the regrettable, offensive phrase "occupied territories" is foolish, ignorant prattle, vanity and futility of obtuse people with disturbed minds.

The leader of the United Kibbutz Movement, the late great socialist, Yizhak Tabenkin foresaw: "Our right to the land of Israel depends on its actualization". The settlers in Judea and Samaria devotedly act accordingly. He also said: "[Referring to] Jewish occupation of the territories of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip is a historical distortion and the perversion of our political image as the Six-Day War is a continuation of the War of Independence". Tabenkin went on: "The partition borders of the Green Line did not become peace borders over the course of the 20 years of their existence, because by their very nature they are war borders".⁴⁰

I will ask further: Where else in the world is there a clever, sane nation

that declares that it has no right to its country and homeland, the product of its labors? And where else will you find a smart, intelligent nation that defends its savage and violent enemies in times of war? Where else in the world is a nation that is not sovereign over its state and homeland? Where is the national, Zionist responsibility and loyalty of that segment of our people that is going astray, willing to relinquish our right to the Land and the Temple, and all this after we, with hard labor, laid the solid foundation for the construction of our wondrous country, while our malevolent enemies seek to crush and dismantle it and rise up against us to destroy us?

In my humble opinion, our country suffers from the lack of a basic education to love the Bible and feel affection for the Land of Israel, unlike the way our generation was educated during the British Mandate. Zionism is a unique national movement because its roots are in Zion – a name used for both Jerusalem and the Land of Israel. It drew its inspiration from the love of Zion and the vision of the return to Zion, as it is written in the sublime Psalms: "A Song of Ascents. When the Lord brought back those that returned to Zion, we were like unto them that dream" (126:1).

In the Bible, as a religious and national text, a period of approximately one thousand productive years in the material and spiritual history of the Jewish people are described. The significance of the Bible to the Jewish people and to the rest of the nations of the world is limitless, as illustrated by the cultural, pioneering accomplishment of the nation that serves as a symbol and model for the construction of a homeland with wisdom and action. It is not for naught that David Ben-Gurion, among the Founding Fathers of the nascent State of Israel said: "The Bible is our mandate over the Land of Israel. Our right to the Land, the entire land is eternal".⁴¹

In my opinion, it is incumbent upon our government to mandate the daily study of a select chapter from our Book of Books in the media. In addition, it is worthwhile and appropriate to teach the Bible and the history of the Land in kindergartens and schools several times a week. It is important to establish groups for the study of Bible in every settlement, quarter and neighborhood, to be taught primarily by pensioners as well as volunteers from among teachers in schools, colleges and universities as an educational national service and thus to pass on its content to future generations as well as to other peoples.

Endnotes

- ¹ M. Gil, "Political History of Jerusalem in the Early Islamic Period", *The History of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem, 1987, p.12.
- ² B.Z. Dinur, "Our Right to the Land of Israel" (Hebrew), *Studies in Zionist Theory*, The Youth and Pioneer Department of the World Zionist Organization, Jerusalem, 1947, pp. 1-3; M. Har-Eli, M. Har-El, *The Shaping of the Landscape of Jerusalem, the Hills and the Desert by the Israelites*, The Twelfth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 1999, pp. 149-171.
- ³ Y. Yadin, *Yediot*, *Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society* (Hebrew), Volumes 1-2, 1961, pp. 60-61.
- ⁴ Z. Ron, "The Distribution of the Agricultural Terraces in the Judean Mountains" (Hebrew), *Judea and Samaria*, Vol. 1, Tel Aviv, 1977, p. 210.
- ⁵ The hoe and hoeing are mentioned only twice in the Bible, in the Book of Isaiah, regarding a vineyard in the mountains.
- ⁶ The meaning of "*soreq*" in Hebrew is fruitful, or an outstanding variety of red grapevine, A. Even Shoshan, *Concordance* (Hebrew); M. Har-El, *The Ancient Water Supply of Jerusalem*, The 23rd International Geographical Congress, USSR, July-August 1976, pp. 36-53.
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