

**A HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE JUDEAN AND  
SAMARIAN HILL COUNTRY, 539 BCE–70 CE**

*Michael Economou*

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Figures: 3**

**Place Names, Translations, and Abbreviations: 4**

**Introduction: 5–21**

**Chapter 1: Production and Society in the Rural Hill Country: 23–57**

**Chapter 2: Dynamics of Exchange: Trade, Culture, Infrastructure: 58–90**

**Chapter 3: War, Power, and Identity: 91–116**

**Chapter 4: Ethnogenesis and Administration: 117–146**

**Chapter 5: The Sacred Landscape: 147–170**

**Chapter 6: Reassessing the Jerusalem Pilgrimage: 171–199**

**Conclusion: 200–204**

**Bibliography: 205–235**

## Figures

### Intro

*Figure 1: Map of the Judean and Samarian Hill Country (p. 6)*

### Chapter 1

*Figure 2: Climate map of Israel/Palestine (p. 24)*

*Figure 3: Rainfall map of Israel/Palestine (p. 25)*

*Figure 4: Soil Map of Israel/Palestine (p. 26)*

*Figure 5: Aggregated map of Persian-era sites (p. 35)*

*Figure 6: Aggregated map of Hellenistic-era sites (p. 36)*

*Figure 7: Aggregated map of Early Roman-era sites (p. 37)*

*Figure 8: Aggregated map of Persian-era sites in field surveys of northern Samaria (p. 38)*

*Figure 9: Aggregated map of Hellenistic-era sites in field surveys of northern Samaria (p. 39)*

*Figure 10: Map of mikva'ot which seem to have had agricultural uses (p. 53)*

### Chapter 2

*Figure 11: Roads network in Persian Palestine (p. 65)*

### Chapter 3

*Figure 12: Map of Persian Forts (red) near the city of Samaria (p. 101)*

*Figure 13: Map of Persian Forts (red) found in the Mansseh Hill Country surveys (p. 101)*

*Figure 14: Map of other significant fort and cave sites (p. 102)*

### Chapter 4

*Figure 15: Location of Gema (p. 118)*

### Chapter 6

*Figure 16: The Route of The Parthian Stations of Isidore of Charax (p. 187)*

*Figure 17: The Journeys of Paul (p. 192)*

*Figure 18: City plan of Caesarea Maritima (p. 195)*

*Figure 19: Stepped roads (p. 199)*

## Place Names, Translations, and Abbreviations

For the sake of consistency, I will refer to the region which is the focus of this thesis as the ‘Judean and Samarian Hill Country’ (or simply ‘the Hill Country’ for short). I will use ‘Iudaea’ when referring specifically to the Roman province by that name, and ‘Judea’ when referring to the smaller historical district. I will use ‘Samaria’ to refer to the district of Samaria, and ‘the city of Samaria’ to refer to the settlement by the same name. I will use the term ‘Palestine’ to refer to the wider historical region encompassing the modern state of Israel and the Palestinian Territories (and a little beyond), since this remains the most common term in Anglophone scholarship. I will use a mix of Semitic and Greek place-names and will provide transliterations in multiple languages where I believe it is helpful.

I have translated all ancient texts in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and Aramaic myself; for texts in Ge’ez I have used translations by other scholars. Where I abbreviate the authors and titles of ancient Jewish religious texts (such as the Hebrew Bible or Rabbinic literature), I have generally used the abbreviations in the *The SBL Handbook of Style*. For Greek and Latin texts, I have used the abbreviations provided in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. I have provided the names of scholarly journals in full in my bibliography.

# Introduction

## History and Geography

This is a historical geography of the Judean and Samarian Hill Country between 539 BCE and 70 CE. The Hill Country, as I am defining it, is a small region of Palestine, bordered by the Jordan Valley in the east, the Shephelah and the Coastal Plains in the west, the Negev in the south, the Jezreel Valley in the north, and the Carmel Range in the northwest (*Fig. 1*).<sup>1</sup> This area encompasses the majority of the historical territories of Judea in the south, and Samaria in the north.<sup>2</sup> I will investigate the ways the environment shaped (and was shaped by) the society, economy and culture of the local population, drawing on a selection of literary, epigraphic and material evidence.

I should acknowledge at once that this is not an entirely novel venture. The tradition of writing historical geographies of Palestine is at least 300 years old, and includes some of the most important works of Biblical history and Israeli archaeology. In the late 17th century as the commercial interests of Western powers spread through the Levant, a new genre of travel writing emerged which brought back rich descriptions of market-towns, landscapes, roads, and local customs to Europe.<sup>3</sup> Theologians immediately saw the value of these accounts, which moved the formerly exotic and mysterious world of the Bible into the realm of European scientific enquiry. The new travelogues, in particular *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter A.D. 1697* by English clergyman and academic Henry Maundrell,<sup>4</sup> inspired another Englishman, the Reverend Edward Wells, to publish two volumes entitled *An Historical Geography of the Old Testament* and *An Historical Geography of the New Testament* in 1708.<sup>5</sup> His hope was that geography could “illustrate the history of our Lord... giving as it were a plan of those places which made up the scene... especially if the geographical description be ranged after an historical method”.<sup>6</sup> In the course of the two volumes, he attempted to establish the location of major biblical stories, with a special focus on the life of Jesus.

---

<sup>1</sup> Measuring approximately 5,800 km<sup>2</sup> in all, around 20% of Palestine’s total area.

<sup>2</sup> The boundary between the two was not based on any geographical feature and moved several times in antiquity; nevertheless, we might cautiously place the dividing line somewhere around Biblical Bethel (the modern Israeli settlement of Beit El).

<sup>3</sup> Hayden & Matar (2014).

<sup>4</sup> Matar (2014).

<sup>5</sup> Wells (1708a) & (1708b), cf. Butlin (1988).

<sup>6</sup> Wells (1708a) ix.



Fig. 1: The Judean and Samarian Hill Country. The boundaries of the region correspond with the red, orange, and yellow areas within the boundary markers I have described<sup>7</sup> [Copyright image removed]

European knowledge of the region advanced again during the first half of the 19th century, particularly following the early Ottoman Tanzimat reforms which confirmed the right of Western powers to maintain consulates in Palestine. Travel became increasingly accessible for European missionaries, explorers, and academics, who were able to write from first-hand experience.<sup>8</sup> This coincided with the development of scientific geography, most famously by Germans Carl Ritter and Alexander von Humboldt, and the publication of increasingly sophisticated maps of Western Asia, in particular that of Dutchman C.W.M. van de Velde.<sup>9</sup> Several new historical geographies of the region were written during this period.<sup>10</sup> An illustrative example is A.P. Stanley's *Sinai and Palestine: In connection with their history*, published in 1856. Stanley's approach was strongly influenced by geographers, particularly Ritter, and is underpinned by both environmental determinism and a

<sup>7</sup> Map my own.

<sup>8</sup> Ben-Arieh (2007) Ch. 3.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 145-6.

<sup>10</sup> Beginning with John Kitto's 1841 *The Physical Geography and Natural History of the Holy Land*.

conviction that Sinai and Palestine had been deliberately designed by God as a physical framework within which sacred history and culture might develop.<sup>11</sup>

The tradition continued to advance over the following decades. Scottish theologian George Adam Smith's *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, first published in 1894, is the most well-known and accomplished work of this phase of the genre, written to offer a "vision of the land" through which readers would be able to hear "the sound of running history".<sup>12</sup> The work is filled with famously poetic descriptions of Palestine's diverse landscapes, interwoven with evocative quotations not only from the Old and New Testaments, but a wide range of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Arabic, and French texts. Smith's description of the region was so detailed and arresting that it became a favourite of the parade of British tourists, academics, and, more sinisterly, imperialists who visited the region over the following decades.

During the 20th century, a new breed of scholars began to reshape and reorient the genre. Perhaps the most influential was Yohanan Aharoni, a German-born Jew who emigrated to Palestine in 1933 aged 14. Aharoni attended an agricultural school and co-founded a kibbutz in the Lower Galilee, before embarking on a long career on the frontlines of Israeli archaeology.<sup>13</sup> In 1967, he wrote *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*. In his long introductory section, Aharoni describes the physical geography of Palestine and its place in communications networks, drawing on new scientific data and his considerable personal familiarity with the region. The second section is entitled 'Palestine During the Ages' and summarises the history of the region from its prehistory until the Persian conquest.

The foci of the historical geographies of Palestine have, then, evolved across time, partly as a result of the expansion of available evidence, and partly from the input of new and different kinds of scholars. This study is an attempt to continue this tradition and is written with the conviction that the time is ripe for a radical new contribution. For several methodological reasons (see below), I have decided to limit my investigation to only the Judean and Samarian Hill Country, and not to Palestine as a whole. However, the core aims of my study, to explore the relationship between region and its inhabitants, to identify how this relationship shaped cultural, social, and economic life, and to uncover long-term patterns which reveal themselves when adopting a broad chronological scope, are all echoed by the works of previous scholars.

## Space and Time

---

<sup>11</sup> Stanley (1856) xiv-xv.

<sup>12</sup> Smith (1894) ix.

<sup>13</sup> Rainey (1976).

I believe that the Judean and Samarian Hill Country constitutes a historically and geographically coherent unit of study. The region has been described as ‘the Hill Country’, or as a sequence of ‘Hill Countries’, from antiquity. In the *Book of Joshua*, probably written some time during the 8th or 7th centuries BCE,<sup>14</sup> multiple references are made to the הַר יְהוּדָה (*har yehudah*; “Hill Country of Judea”)<sup>15</sup> and the הַר אֶפְרַיִם (*har efrāyim*; “Hill Country of Ephraim”, i.e. Samaria).<sup>16</sup> The former also appears in 2 *Chronicles* 27:4 (4th c BCE), while the latter can also be seen in 1 *Samuel* 1:1 (8th-6th centuries BCE). Various other ‘Hill-Countries’ are also referenced in ancient Hebrew literature, including the הַר שֹׁמְרוֹן (*har shomrōn*; “Hill Country of Samaria”) at *Amos* 4:1 and 6:1 (8th c BCE).<sup>17</sup> The Septuagint usually translates these literally, with “הַר” (*har*) rendered directly as “ὄρος” (*oros*).

The Greek equivalent ὄρεινη (*oreinē*; ‘the Mountainous [Area]’), recurs in later Jewish texts. In the Gospel of Luke, for instance, Mary goes “εἰς τὴν ὄρεινήν” (“into the mountainous area”) at 1:39, and later, at 1:65, the baby John the Baptist spread amazement “ἐν ὅλῃ τῇ ὄρεινῃ τῆς Ἰουδαίας” (“in the whole mountainous area of Judea”).<sup>18</sup> The phrase also appears several times in the works of Josephus: in *Jewish War* 1.41, for example, he describes Antiochus IV Epiphanes, as marching “διὰ τῆς Ἰουδαίας εἰς τὴν ὄρεινήν” (“through Judea to the hill-country”). The ‘Hill Country’ was also an official designation for the region by imperial administrators: according to Pliny the Elder, writing in the 1st c CE, the toparchy in which Jerusalem was located was named ‘Orinen’ (*Nat Hist* 5.70). It seems that to both the local population and their imperial rulers, then, the region’s defining feature was that it was ‘hilly’ or ‘mountainous’.

This is unsurprising: the Hill Country is divided from neighbouring regions by clear physical borders. The mountains rise suddenly from the Shephelah to the west, extending around 40 km east before plunging into the Jordan Valley. To the north, the fertile Jezreel Valley separates the hills of the Lower Galilee and the mountains of northern Samaria, while roughly 130 km to the south, the Hill Country drops sharply 20 km or so south of Hebron (the modern Arab city of Al-Khalīl). The topography is highest in a central strip running north-south down the middle of the region, becoming shallower on the eastern and western edges. Geologically, the Hill Country is constructed from dolomite and above all limestone which, particularly in Judea and southern Samaria, has produced

---

<sup>14</sup> The dating is somewhat controversial, but the settlement pattern appears to reflect a date in this period—see Finkelstein & Silberman (2001) 92.

<sup>15</sup> *Jos.* 11:21, 20:7, 21:11.

<sup>16</sup> *Jos.* 17:15, 20:7, *Jud.* 2:9, 17:1, 18:2, and in many other places, particularly in the books of the so-called Deuteronomistic History.

<sup>17</sup> Often instead translated as ‘Mount Samaria’.

<sup>18</sup> *Jhn.* 1:39, 1:65.

fertile Mediterranean *terra rossa* soil, one of the most suitable soils for viticulture.<sup>19</sup> The rock has also eroded into a system of underground caves, creating a so-called ‘karst topography’. After water seeps into the ground and is carried through these underground caves, it often emerges overground again in one of the region’s several hundred springs. These springs have historically been crucial to the survival of the region’s human population since they preserve water from the wet months (October to May) to be used during the dry summer months (June-August). Since the springs are usually sustained only from local recharge areas, their output is highly sensitive to the region’s irregular rainfall, rendering them an unreliable friend in dry years: the German name for intermittent karst springs, *Hungerbrunnen*, is suggestive.<sup>20</sup>

The region is, in short, both a historical territory and a geographical unit which is an appropriate subject for a detailed environmental history. Hills and mountains are the defining geographical feature of the Hill Country and will be a recurring presence in every chapter of this study. I will investigate the meanings that were seen in them, the obstacles they posed to movement and exchange, and the adaptive strategies which were adopted by the peoples who lived in- their shadow. I will also, however, go beyond this one feature and attempt to construct a multifaceted picture of the relationship between people and environment in this historical region, considering other factors such as climate, soil quality, and availability of water.

In arguing for the coherence of my region, I do not wish to give the impression that it constituted a ‘closed’ or ‘complete’ unit. On the contrary I would like to stress that while I have defined the Hill Country using the firm boundaries listed above, the social, economic, and cultural world I am describing has somewhat mutable, blurred borders. Parallels can be drawn with the historical characterisation of other areas, in particular the Mediterranean, which has been variously described as a source of light which radiates out from a hypothetical centre,<sup>21</sup> and as an unstable, living entity which is constantly “pulsing, expanding and contracting to embrace adjacent zones”.<sup>22</sup> Historical areas, including the Hill Country, are abstractions with fluctuating, porous and obscure borders: as such, while the ‘cartographical’ Hill Country suffices as an approximate representation of the area I am describing, in practice my subject is a little more volatile.

It is worth noting that, while my region is described as the ‘Judean and Samarian Hill Country’, there is no clear topographical boundary between Judea and Samaria: the border between the two is

---

<sup>19</sup> Virtually wherever *terra rossa* appears, grapes have been cultivated, including in areas far removed from the Mediterranean. *Terra rossa* soil has made the Coonawarra wine region in Southern Australia a major producer of Cabernet Sauvignon.

<sup>20</sup> Peleg et al. (2012).

<sup>21</sup> Braudel (1949) 168

<sup>22</sup> Horden and Purcell (2006) 735.

historical, contested and ultimately arbitrary. The regions are climatically and geologically similar: Josephus himself recognised this, writing in *Jewish War* 3:

Its [Samaria's] nature is not at all different to Judea. Both regions feature hills and plains, bear a soft and fertile soil for agriculture, are thickly wooded, and are rich in fruits both wild and cultivated, since the land is not by nature parched, but it rains frequently.<sup>23</sup>

The precise boundary between the regions frequently changed in shape, location, and permeability during our period (see *Chapter 4: Ethnogenesis and Administration*), and it is often difficult to precisely delineate. The period we have the clearest evidence for is the late 1st century CE, thanks to the writings of Josephus. It may not be safe to assume, of course, that the Samaritans would have drawn the boundary-lines at the same place as Josephus, who might tell us no more than the Jewish understanding of where the border lay. This caveat aside, Josephus states that Samaria's northern border is "at the village of Ginea<sup>24</sup> in the Great Plain [of Esdraelon]" ("ἐν τῷ [μεγάλῳ] πεδίῳ κειμένης Γιναίας"), while its southern border is at "the toparchy of Akraetene" ("τῆς Ἀκραβητηνῶν τοπαρχίας").<sup>25</sup> Akraetene should not be identified with the 'Akraetene' (ἀκραβηττήνη) of 1 *Macc.* 5:3, which appears to be the same as the biblical 'Ascent of Akraetene' (מַעְלֵה עֲקֶרֶתַיִם) in Idumea (*Num.* 34:4), but is a separate region located south-east of Shechem. Josephus later states that the border between Judea and Samaria is the obscure village of "Anuath Borkaios" ("Ἀνουάθου Βόρκαιος").<sup>26</sup> Crucially, Samaria's southern border with Judea, unlike its northern border with Galilee, does not appear to have been based on any geographical feature but was marked by the boundary of an administrative region ("the toparchy of Akraetene").<sup>27</sup> The emergence of a cultural barrier between these two regions was a highly significant historical process with profound socio-economic implications, which I will explore further in Chapter 4, *Ethnogenesis and Administration*. Nevertheless, I have decided to study the Judean and Samaritan Hill Country together, partly because it constitutes a novel and coherent subject (see above), but also precisely to explore the tensions, conflicts, and cooperation which arose in a region which was not religiously or ethnically homogenous.

### *Chronology*

Having defined and justified my geographical boundaries, I will now do the same for my chronological boundaries.

---

<sup>23</sup> J. *BJ* 3.49–50.

<sup>24</sup> Modern Jenin.

<sup>25</sup> J. *BJ* 3.48.

<sup>26</sup> J. *BJ* 3.51.

<sup>27</sup> At least in Josephus' (presumably) Judeocentric understanding of the border.

In this study, I will primarily discuss the period between the Persian conquest of Palestine (539 BCE) and the fall of Jerusalem during the First Jewish Revolt against Rome (70 CE). This is almost coterminous with the ‘Second Temple Period’, which begins with the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple in 516 BCE and ends with its destruction in 70 CE. I decided not to simply focus on the Second Temple Period, which is commonly used in Anglophone and Hebrew scholarship, for two reasons. Firstly, this study is not a work of Jewish history. As such, it would be quite unusual for its chronological boundaries to be defined on the basis of the lifespan of an exclusively Jewish institution.

Secondly, and more importantly, as will become clear over the course of this thesis I believe that there is something distinctive about the precise period of history I have chosen. It begins with the integration of the Hill Country into the Persian imperial system, the basic structure of which was adopted by almost all the succeeding empires in our period. A recurring theme in subsequent chapters will be the transformative impact that this system had on the economic, cultural, and religious life of the region. The period ends with the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the defeat of the final Jewish rebel strongholds at the end of the First Jewish Revolt. While these events are significant milestones in the history of the Jews and Judaism, I am mostly interested in their disruptive effect on the social and economic life of the Hill Country. Many of the historical phenomena I will describe in the following chapters ended with, or at least were dramatically reshaped by, the immediate consequences of the First Jewish Revolt. As such, I believe that this constitutes a suitable terminus for my period of study.

### **Lines of Enquiry**

To seriously wrestle with such a complex and multifaceted subject, it will be necessary to observe my region from multiple vantage points, and to adopt a broad-based theoretical framework. The chapters of this thesis are deliberately thematically and methodologically wide-ranging, and I hope to develop a novel understanding of my subject by approaching it from different perspectives. It is not my attempt to produce any sort of ‘coherent whole’, or to devise a ‘unifying theory’ which allows us to draw all these disparate arguments together. That said, there are certain methodological strands which run through this study, connecting the various parts together and providing the thesis with its intellectual shape and direction. I would like to introduce the most important of these now, since they collectively form the theoretical framework through which I will be approaching my subject.

### **Landscapes and Perspectives**

In this study, I will frequently describe the Hill Country as a ‘landscape’ (or series of ‘landscapes’). The word has been endlessly theorised and re-theorised, particularly since the 1990s as the subdiscipline of landscape archaeology has grown in prominence.<sup>28</sup> Without becoming side-tracked by a lengthy theoretical excursus, then, I think it will be briefly helpful to outline what I shall mean by ‘landscape’ in this study, as well as to explain my understanding of how it is created and sustained.

In his well-known essay ‘Nature’, American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote:

The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of all these men's farms, yet to this their land-deeds give them no title.<sup>29</sup>

Emerson’s argument, in short, is that only the gaze of the poet can fuse an agglomeration of features into a landscape: something integrated, coherent, and beautiful.

The same passage is used by art historian W.J.T. Mitchell to begin a section of his provocative essay ‘Imperial Landscape’. Mitchell’s response is deliberately equivocal. On the one hand, he claims that landscape cannot truly be owned by anybody: it is always contested and in flux. On the other, he argues that landscape is also owned by *everybody*, since all of us have a responsibility for shaping and interpreting it.<sup>30</sup> For Mitchell, landscape is “a physical and multisensory medium... in which cultural meanings and values are encoded”. Landscapes are not waiting to be discovered, he suggests, but are *created* through a process of observing, analysing, interpreting, and feeling. While Emerson believes that the poet has a monopoly on this process, Mitchell persuasively argues that a range of viewers can form a landscape and read messages and values in it.

This multivalent quality of landscape is part of what makes it such a difficult concept to define. In his influential article entitled ‘The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene’, Donald Meinig argues that a landscape can be read in no fewer than ten ways: as nature, habitat, artifact, system, problem, wealth, ideology, history, place, and aesthetic. The way a landscape is read, he suggests, depends on the observer and their state of mind: whether they are principally, in a given moment, an ecologist, farmer, government representative, investor, artist, homemaker, or, indeed, a historian.<sup>31</sup> In all of these readings landscapes are extensions of our imaginations, with “imaginations” including collective imaginations such as ideologies and cultures.

---

<sup>28</sup> Anschuetz, Wilshusen, & Scheick (2001).

<sup>29</sup> Emerson (1836).

<sup>30</sup> Mitchell (2002).

<sup>31</sup> Meinig (1979).

If we accept this understanding of landscape, we might say that there are numerous different ‘landscape discourses’ operating concurrently over the same physical space. This observation is an important plank of my analytical approach in this thesis. Over the course of this study, I will attempt to uncover some of the ‘landscape discourses’ of the Hill Country during my period. This is central to three of the six chapters of this thesis. In Chapter 3, *War, Power, and Identity*, I will explore the region’s characterisation as a *military landscape*, adopting both local and imperial perspectives. In Chapter 4, *Ethnogenesis and Administration*, I will explore the relationship between the *administrative landscape* as it was constructed by states, and the *ethno-cultural landscape* which emerged as a symptom (and a cause) of the deepening rift between Judea and Samaria. In Chapter 5, *The Sacred Landscape*, I will attempt to reconstruct the *sacred landscape* of the Hill Country, describing the region as a network of sacred places developed by its different religious traditions. Landscape discourses will also feature in the remaining three chapters, though less prominently: in Chapters 1 and 2 I will consider the region’s *productive* and *commercial* landscapes, while in Chapter 6 I will explore its *pilgrimage* landscape. None of these discourses is self-contained: on the contrary, throughout this thesis I will aim to show how they evolved in parallel with each other, exposing the complex interrelationships between different perspectives on landscape across several centuries.

## Mobility

Another strand which runs through this study is *mobility*. An interest in mobility has spread through the social sciences and the humanities in recent years, and there is now a library of thought-provoking sociological studies which I believe can be productively integrated both with the ancient evidence and with theoretically inclined studies of ancient economies and acculturation.<sup>32</sup>

I will consider various aspects of ‘mobility’ in this thesis. The first, and most obvious, is the mobility of *people and goods* through the Hill Country. I am particularly influenced by recent studies investigating the ways that mobility can be shaped by natural and artificial barriers, which together create “mobility regimes that produce the securitized corridors, cocoons and bubbles through which certain ‘global’ flows travel, even as they evict, splinter, or slow other flows”.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, one of the most powerful historical-geographical threads which runs through this study is the study of the impact of geographical and cultural obstacles on the shape, structure, and scale of mobility both within the region, and between the region and the outside world. This is particularly important in Chapter 2, *Dynamics of Exchange: Trade, Culture, Infrastructure*, in which I will study trade networks and changes in material culture in order to explore the evolving relationship between the Hill Country and

---

<sup>32</sup> Sheller & Urry (2006).

<sup>33</sup> Sheller (2014), see also Graham & Marvin (2001).

surrounding areas. In Chapter 6, *Reassessing the Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, I will consider the movement of people to Jerusalem from Palestine and beyond, with an emphasis on the economic and logistical realities of pilgrimage. This type of mobility will also feature prominently in Chapter 4, *Ethnogenesis and Administration*, in which I will explore the ways that cultural barriers obstructed the movement of people.

I am also interested in large *systems of mobility*. The Hill Country was the central node in intra- and inter-imperial cultural and economic networks. Partly as a result of its long and varied sequence of imperial overlords, during my period Palestine produced a large diaspora which fanned out across the known world. There were Jewish communities throughout the Mediterranean (the largest of which was in Alexandria) and the Near East (particularly in Babylon).<sup>34</sup> We also have some evidence for a Samaritan diaspora, especially in Egypt, but also in Delos.<sup>35</sup> These diaspora communities retained connections to Palestine, partly as a result of the shared religious obligation to make pilgrimage. Jewish rulers in the region worked to strengthen these ties, establishing themselves as protectors and patrons of the diaspora. In 14 BCE Herod I, for instance, successfully intervened on behalf of the Ionian Jews, who claimed that the rights guaranteed to them by the Romans were not being respected, and through his reign appointed diaspora Jews from Babylon and Alexandria to the High Priesthood.<sup>36</sup> The Hill Country, then, sat at the centre of a vast network of Jews and Samaritans who directed theological and philosophical ideas, material goods, and religious feelings towards their religious sanctuaries on Mt. Zion and Mt. Gerizim respectively. This network can be productively conceptualised as a ‘mobility system’. Such systems are often structured around what were described in one paper as:

some exceptionally immobile platforms, transmitters, roads, garages, stations, aerials, airports, docks, factories through which mobilizations of locality are performed and re-arrangements of place and scale materialized...<sup>37</sup>

Flows of information and people around the Jewish diaspora were likewise facilitated by immobile platforms: not only docks and roads, but the long-established diaspora communities themselves (in cities such as Babylon, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Rome, and elsewhere) which constituted semi-permanent anchors in the global Jewish (and conceivably Samaritan) network. The role of the diaspora in the Hill Country is investigated further in Chapter 6, *Reassessing the Jerusalem Pilgrimage*.

---

<sup>34</sup> For Mediterranean Jews see Barclay (1996); for Babylonian Jews see Neusner (1969).

<sup>35</sup> Josephus claims that Alexander settled some Samaritans in the Thebaid in *J.A.* 11:345, and describes conflict between Jews and Samaritans in Egypt in *J.A.* 13:74-9. There was a village named Samareia near Krokodopolis in the Fayyum, which may have been named by or for a Samaritan community. Two inscriptions from Delos suggest the presence of a Samaritan community, see Bruneau & Bordreuil (1982).

<sup>36</sup> For the Ionian Jews see: *J. J.A.* 16.27–65. Diaspora High Priests included Simon son of Boethus, whose family were from Alexandria, and Ananelus, whom Josephus claims was from Babylon (*J.A.* 15.22).

<sup>37</sup> Hannam, Sheller, & Urry (2006) 3, Sheller (2014) 4.

Another aspect of mobility I will consider is the *mobility of the Hill Country itself*. This requires further explanation. The subject of ‘mobile’ places has attracted attention, particularly from sociologists, geographers, and anthropologists. In this concept “places themselves are seen as travelling, slow or fast, greater or shorter distances, within networks of human and nonhuman agents”.<sup>38</sup> Places can be mobile simply by virtue of their role as transfer points between different destinations: we might think of airports, or train stations, for instance. Such places are ‘mobile’ insofar as they are in a state of constant transition. This aspect of mobility maps quite neatly onto both ancient and modern characterisations of Palestine as a zone of transition between North Africa and Mesopotamia, and between the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds—as Aharoni writes in a characteristically biblical turn of phrase “a juncture of continents and a crossroads for the nations”.<sup>39</sup>

The Hill Country also often found itself (perhaps uncomfortably) culturally mobile and was host-to—as well as producer of—diaspora communities. During the Hellenistic Period, a Ptolemaic military colony was founded at the site of the ancient Semitic city of Beit Shean. The city was strategically located at the juncture between the Jezreel Valley and the road to the Jordan Valley, with a fertile, well-watered hinterland. The Hellenistic city, named Scythopolis and (from the 2nd c BCE) Nysa, continued to thrive under the Seleukids, under whom it became an administrative centre and possibly acquired polis status. John Hyrcanus conquered the city in the late 2nd c BCE and expelled the local inhabitants, but it was restored as a Greek city following the conquests of Pompey in 64/3 BCE. During the First Jewish Revolt, ethnic tension between the Greek majority and the Jewish minority in the city erupted into a massacre of local Jews in 66 CE. Material remains from the city indicate a Greek civic culture, with temples, a theatre, and a rich tradition of Greek-style local coinage. The city was also a member of the Decapolis, a loose association of 10 Greek cities scattered across the south-eastern Levant.<sup>40</sup> A similar, though less well-known example of a Greek colony in the Hill Country is the city of Samaria, which was turned into a fortified Graeco-Macedonian military outpost by Alexander the Great in 331 BCE following the expulsion of the rebellious local population. Excavations have revealed the presence of a cult of Sarapis Isis in the city, which endured well into the Roman period.<sup>41</sup> The region, then, was also intimately connected to the wider world of the Hellenistic East, and was a locus of interaction, cooperation and conflict between Graeco-Roman and Semitic culture, as well as a linguistic boundary-zone between Greek- and Aramaic-speaking communities. The cultural and economic impact of these communities is explored at various points in this thesis, but particularly in Chapter 2.

---

<sup>38</sup> Sheller & Urry (2006) 214.

<sup>39</sup> Aharoni (1967) 3.

<sup>40</sup> Fuks (1983), Barkay (2003).

<sup>41</sup> Magness (2001).

Another facet of the Hill Country's mobility is its place as a zone of transition between different climates. Northern and coastal Palestine have a warm Mediterranean climate, with hot dry summers and rainy winters. The eastern third and southern half of the country, however, have dryer, more arid steppe climates, fading into desert the further south and east one travels. The dividing line between these two climate systems runs through the Hill Country, with cooler, wetter weather pushing from the west and hot, dry winds sweeping in from the east. Sometimes, typically in late spring, hot North African winds also blow from the south, mixing with cooler Mediterranean breezes to form the 'sirocco' wind known across the Southern Mediterranean, drying up local flora. It may be this to which Josephus refers in *Antiquities* 14.28, where he writes that God sent a "πνεῦμα πολὺ καὶ βίαιον" ("a great and violent wind") to punish the Jews, destroying their crops and driving up the price of wheat. While some parts of the region were able to support thriving agricultural communities, the eastern Judean desert was a forbidding and perennially under-populated landscape. Being wedged between two climate zones also meant that the region was bordered by a diverse range of civilisations. On one side lay the Mediterranean coastlands, with regular rainfall and, in the far northwest (modern Lebanon), populated by cosmopolitan Phoenician trading cities. On the other side were the Syrian and Arabian deserts, inhabited by Bedouin tribes and, beyond, the vast Mesopotamian and Iranian Empires which would play such an important role in Palestine's early history.

Another way that places can be 'mobile' is via memories and memorabilia. Veronica Della Dora, for instance, has argued that 19th century Russian pilgrimage cards from Mount Athos served not only to promote the pilgrimage and advertise the pilgrim's own experience, but also to allow "Athos to travel through the circuits of Russian society", thereby becoming a "circulating sacred place".<sup>42</sup> Still others are mobile in a more literal sense. The power of charismatic religious leaders to attract followers from afar has been noted in a range of societies, from late antique Egypt to modern Sri Lanka. These figures become living, mobile sacred places, moving in, through, and out of historical regions, often leaving behind new sacred sites in their wake.<sup>43</sup> These perspectives are particularly important in Chapter 5, *The Sacred Landscape*, in which I will consider the importance of mobile sacred places within the Hill Country's wider religious framework.

## Comparative History

What did it mean to live in a hill country? The academic study of hills, mountains and, in particular, the communities which inhabit them, has undergone several changes of emphasis in recent years, and

---

<sup>42</sup> Della Dora (2011).

<sup>43</sup> Frankfurter (1998) 24–26.

scholars remain divided on fundamental methodological principles. An enduring difficulty is that there is no commonly agreed-upon definition for ‘hill’ or ‘mountain’, even among physical geographers.<sup>44</sup> While some have preferred ‘objective’ definitions based on altitude, slope, etc., others have suggested ‘subjective’ definitions, in which hills and mountains are defined by local communities as ‘high places’ in opposition to a presumed altitudinal norm. A scholar’s preferred definition is likely to be the one which best suits his or her own research: just as we might speak of the ‘physical landscape’ in opposition to the ‘art historical landscape’, so we have ‘geographical mountains’, ‘sociological mountains’, ‘historical mountains’, and countless others. As one scholar put it “everyone has his own perception of mountains!”.<sup>45</sup>

Despite this underlying analytical problem, historians and archaeologists have traditionally held clear ideas about how mountain people lived. Mountainous landscapes have repeatedly been imagined as isolated backwaters: impoverished, isolated, and lacking in interesting material and literary culture. Until recently, scholars tended to argue for a rather severe environmental determinism in these landscape types, stressing the obstacles the terrain posed to communication and trade.<sup>46</sup>

This has changed in recent years, with most studies now stressing the diversity of economic strategies and cultural practices which have emerged in mountain countries. Rather than emphasising the supposedly severe limitations mountains impose on local economies and societies, scholars have instead recast mountains as important and often unexpectedly vibrant components of wider regional networks, focusing on strategies of exchange and cooperation with lowland areas. These strategies are to a great extent determined by cultural, religious and social priorities as well as ‘practical’ economic concerns: different mountain communities, even those in topographically and climatically similar regions, might interact with and perceive the mountains in radically divergent ways.<sup>47</sup>

This illustrates an important feature of historical landscapes: that patterns of human habitation and culture are not solely determined by physical geography. As Thonemann put it in his historical geography of the Maeander Valley:

The landscape was, to a very great extent, culturally constructed; it could be, and often has been, radically reshaped by its inhabitants, depending on their particular cultural needs and priorities... The resources of the landscape are constant, but they are also socially contingent; so much so that it is

---

<sup>44</sup> The distinction between the two is itself vague: indeed, many would prefer to call the Hill Country itself ‘The Judaeian Mountains’, and there is no way to determine which name is ‘objectively correct’. It is telling that in Biblical Hebrew, the word הָר (hār), which appears over 500 times in the Hebrew Bible, can appropriately be translated as “hill”, “mountain” or “mountain range”. Another common word, גִּבְעָה (gib’ah), literally ‘rounded’, might more definitely be translated “hill”.

<sup>45</sup> Rudaz (2008) 148.

<sup>46</sup> See Chapter 2.

<sup>47</sup> Horden & Purcell (2000) 80–82, Cosgrove & Della Dora (2008).

helpful to think of natural resources primarily as cultural and economic appraisals by particular human groups.<sup>48</sup>

Acknowledging this does not mean that adaptive strategies are never repeated in similar environments, or that we must discard ethnoarchaeology and cross-cultural comparison as investigative or analytical tools. It is, rather, to stress that we should not expect different groups to *necessarily* respond to the challenges and opportunities of their physical environment in the same way. I am sceptical, for instance, about the value of studies which use the living patterns of modern Arab farmers to reconstruct a detailed picture of agricultural life or settlement in the ancient Hill Country<sup>49</sup>: we need only think of the relative importance of viticulture to the agricultural economies of the two groups—central to Jews in our period, virtually absent in Muslim Palestinian communities—to see how misleading this might be.

It is important to stress, then, that comparative history should not be a prescriptive exercise, and cannot lead to straightforward historical ‘laws’ into which our evidence can be slotted. In fact, it has precisely the opposite purpose: to illuminate new possibilities, allowing us to refine our often-imprecise inductive reasoning. To borrow from the title of Rebecca Scott’s comparative study of post-slavery Louisiana and Cuba, comparative history can help us to see the “degrees of freedom” for how human societies might develop, thereby helping to emancipating us from our own (often misplaced) preconceptions.<sup>50</sup> In the course of this thesis, then, I will use comparative history to break down deterministic assumptions, rather than to erect new ones. When deployed in this way, I believe that a comparative approach can yield valuable results.

The Annaliste historian Marc Bloch identified two types of comparative history, both of which I will deploy in this thesis. The first compares societies which are so far removed from one another that mutual influence is negligible or nonexistent. An example of this is the long tradition of comparing the Roman Empire and Han China, which has recently been re-energised by the publication of a collection of essays edited by Walter Scheidel, about state-formation in the two empires. The book’s blurb neatly sets out the perceived advantages of this kind of comparative history:

Separated by thousands of miles of steppe, mountains and sea, these powerful states developed independently and with very limited awareness of each other's existence. This parallel process of state formation served as a massive natural experiment in social evolution that provides unique insight into the complexities of historical causation. Comparisons between the two empires shed new light on the

---

<sup>48</sup> Thonemann (2011) 18.

<sup>49</sup> For instance, in Broshi and Finkelstein (1992), population estimates for Iron Age Palestine were reached by multiplying the size of inhabited area by a density coefficient, derived largely “by analogy with present-day settlements in traditional societies (the ethnoarchaeological method)”. See also discussion in Safrai (2010) 248.

<sup>50</sup> Scott (2008).

factors that led to particular outcomes and help us understand similarities and differences in ancient state formation.<sup>51</sup>

Here, comparative history is conceived of as an almost scientific exercise, with historians observing how human societies evolve when exposed to differing external conditions.

The second type of comparative history describes studies which compare neighbouring, contemporary societies. Bloch believed that this approach has more potential value than the first, as it leads to “conclusions of fact that are less hypothetical and much more precise”. Among the advantages of this approach, as outlined by Bloch, are an enhanced ability to explain historical change by considering the influence of neighbouring societies. Bloch uses the example of the religious imagery and rhetoric employed in the early Carolingian Empire, which seems to come from nowhere in the context of Gaul, but is, if compared with evidence in neighbouring areas, clearly following artistic movements in nearby Spain. This type of comparative history can also lead to a greater appreciation for the “originality” of a given society.<sup>52</sup> For example, in ‘Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society’, ancient historian Seth Schwartz compared Roman Palestine with other societies across the Mediterranean, and convincingly argued that Palestinian Jews were organised around regionally unique social institutions.<sup>53</sup>

Comparative history of both types is central to several chapters of this thesis. In Chapter 1, *Production and Society in the Rural Hill Country*, I will place our evidence for adaptive agricultural strategies in a wider historical context, comparing the rural economy of the Hill Country with that of other pre-industrial mountainous regions. In Chapter 5, *The Sacred Landscape*, I will use examples of both pre-modern and modern sacred spaces to build a theoretical framework for the study of a sacred landscape. Comparative history will also be an important analytical tool in Chapter 6, *Reassessing the Jerusalem Pilgrimage*, in which I will compare pilgrimage to the Second Temple to other historical global pilgrimages.

## **New beginnings**

Before concluding these introductory thoughts, I would like to return briefly to the relationship between this study and the tradition of historical geography in the region. Though I am influenced by past historical geographies of the region, there is a significant difference between my scholarly interests and those of my predecessors. I am an ancient historian, trained in Classics departments; they were mainly theologians or, in the case of Aharoni, biblical archaeologists. One consequence of this is

---

<sup>51</sup> Scheidel (2009).

<sup>52</sup> Bloch (1928).

<sup>53</sup> Schwartz (2010).

that the chronological and evidentiary centre of gravity of this study is not the Hebrew Bible or the New Testament, but the period of Hellenistic and Early Roman rule in the Hill Country. While these two timespans do, of course, overlap in places, I will not consider in depth the Monarchic and Exilic periods which were the focus of Aharoni's *The Land of the Bible*.

Moreover, I am fortunate to be writing in the wake of (and, indeed, during) a period of rapid growth in the quantity and quality of available evidence. Since the 1970s, new archaeological surveys have dramatically enhanced our understanding of the settlement history of the Hill Country.<sup>54</sup> Furthermore, new inscriptions, some of the utmost importance, have been published, including the so-called Heliodorus stele and a large corpus of Aramaic and Hebrew dedicatory inscriptions from Mount Gerizim. Advances in science have also opened exciting new possibilities which are only now being exploited. Optically stimulated luminescence, a way of measuring when quartz sediment was most recently exposed to sunlight, has recently been used to propose dates for terrace farms at Ramat Rahel and the Judean Highlands, with surprising and controversial results.<sup>55</sup> Evidence from the region is also more accessible and conveniently organised than ever: the published volumes of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae*, for instance, are an invaluable resource for historians, not least because they contain inscriptions written in Semitic languages as well as in Latin and Greek.<sup>56</sup> Finally, and perhaps most fundamentally, I am writing under a set of theoretical influences which are decisively 21st century (see below).

That said, I do see a continuity between the underlying intellectual philosophy of my study, and that of the previous historical geographies of Palestine. In 1896, a reviewer of Smith's *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* wrote:

Geography is an indispensable aid to history. Events happened, men lived — somewhere. That “somewhere” had much to do with the outcome of the events, the life of the men. The purpose of this book is to bring the event and the place, the man and his environment, together, and to show how much and what manner of illumination the one can give to the other.<sup>57</sup>

This statement of purpose is as appropriate for this study as it was for Smith's. A historical geographical approach can do more than tell us *where* human history took place: it can, if used deftly, radically change our understanding of *what* happened, *why* and *how*. In writing this study, I do not hope to supersede other works of the tradition, nor, of course, do I have any ambitions of ‘comprehensively’ describing the human-environment relationship in the Hill Country during my

---

<sup>54</sup> E.g. Dar (1986), Magen & Finkelstein (1993) Finkelstein et al. (1997), Zertal (2004), Zertal (2008), Zertal & Mirkam (2016), among many others.

<sup>55</sup> Davidovich et al. (2012), Gadot et al. (2016a), Gadot et al. (2016b). For further discussion, see Chapter 1.

<sup>56</sup> The volumes of the CII/P are organised by geographical area: particularly relevant to me are Volumes 1 (Jerusalem) and 4 (Iudaea/Idumaea).

<sup>57</sup> Goodspeed (1896) 75.

period. Rather, I hope to complement our understanding of this extraordinarily complex and important historical region by examining it through a certain set of methodological lenses and, secondarily, to encourage the rejuvenation of the long tradition of historical geography in the region.

# Chapter 1: Making the Mountains Bloom: Economy and Society in the Rural Hill Country

## Introduction

### *The Environment*

...we pressed on toward the goal of our crusade, renowned Jerusalem. The further we went the hotter the sun got, and the more rocky and bare, repulsive and dreary the landscape became. There could not have been more fragments of stone strewn broadcast over this part of the world, if every ten square feet of the land had been occupied by a separate and distinct stonecutter's establishment for an age. There was hardly a tree or a shrub any where. Even the olive and the cactus, those fast friends of a worthless soil, had almost deserted the country. No landscape exists that is more tiresome to the eye than that which bounds the approaches to Jerusalem. The only difference between the roads and the surrounding country, perhaps, is that there are rather more rocks in the roads than in the surrounding country.

(Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*)

This passage is one of many evocative descriptions of rural Palestine in Mark Twain's 1869 travelogue *The Innocents Abroad*. He paints a picture of an ugly and bare landscape, inhabited by starving goats and impoverished peasants who had been ground down by the brutal tax regime of the late Ottoman Empire. His accounts of the Hill Country are almost unremittingly bleak<sup>58</sup>, and have had an enormous influence on contemporary images of pre-1948 Palestine. Twain has frequently been quoted (sometimes misleadingly) to bolster the claim that the State of Israel renewed a barren landscape and "made the desert bloom".<sup>59</sup>

While mechanised agriculture, synthetic fertilisers, and pesticides have indeed enabled farmers to cover formerly inhospitable terrain with fruit groves and cereal crops, the idea that the region was uniformly barren before the modern era is a myth. Even sources roughly contemporary with Twain, including British government reports, indicate that he was exaggerating the uniformity of Palestine's landscape during this period: in truth, it appears to have comprised a mosaic of sub-regions, some unproductive and barren, others rich and fertile.<sup>60</sup> The Hill Country, despite only measuring around 5,800 km<sup>2</sup>, was (and still is) astonishingly climatically, topographically, and ecologically diverse.

---

<sup>58</sup> Twain (1896). His comments on the hinterland of Nablus are a notable exception to this trend (see below).

<sup>59</sup> As Mabie (2016) notes. Hebrew translations of *The Innocents Abroad* remain popular in Israel to this day and have been used for political purposes.

<sup>60</sup> Mabie (2016).

Despite this, it is possible to cautiously make some general observations about the region's suitability for agricultural production. On the whole, the region's uneven, mountainous terrain is difficult to cultivate intensively without the benefit of modern technology. Most crops grow best in flat fields: on sloped terrain, rain tends to run down the slope before it can be absorbed by the soil. As the water travels downwards it often carries nutrients with it, causing soil erosion. This problem can partly be ameliorated by constructing terraces, though this is back-breaking work and terraces require constant maintenance (see below).

A further complicating factor is the irregular water supply. While rainfall is usually sufficient to allow for agriculture, it is concentrated between November and March and droughts occur more frequently than in most other parts of the Mediterranean Basin. During the long, hot, dry summers, agriculture was more likely to depend on dew: indeed, in many versions of the second blessing of the *Amidah*, God is asked for rain in the winter and dew in the summer.<sup>61</sup> When rain does fall, it often drains away through the porous, karstic limestone of the Judean hills, leaving the land dry and empty. Water sometimes appears above ground again in springs, but their output is as irregular and unreliable as the rainfall. The further east and south one travels the drier the land becomes, rapidly fading into steppes and ultimately dry deserts. The region contains three climates as defined by the Köppen classification system: a hot-summer Mediterranean climate (Csa) in the western half, with a tiny band of a hot semi-arid climate (BSh) in the middle, and a hot desert climate (BWh) in the east (*Fig. 2*). The narrowness of the intermediary semi-arid zone reflects the rapid drop in rainfall as one moves towards the Jordan Rift Valley (*Fig. 3*).

The scorching desert winds which intermittently blow from the Sahara and Arabian deserts in the south pose another obstacle for farmers. Even today such winds can fell trees, destroy power lines, and start wildfires, and they would have withered or outright destroyed the fragile crops of pre-modern farmers. A famous passage from *Psalms* 103 is instructive: "as for man, his days are like grass. He blossoms like a flower of the field: then the wind passes over it and it is gone, and thereafter the place will not know of it".<sup>62</sup>

All that said, the Hill Country does possess some natural assets for farmers. Much of the western Hill Country is dominated by red soil, known as Terra Rossa in the Israeli system of soil classification<sup>63</sup>, which is highly fertile and particularly suitable for viticulture. The soil's red colouring is a result of

---

<sup>61</sup> The *Amidah* is a prayer which is central to traditional Jewish ritual.

<sup>62</sup> *Ps.*103:15–16

<sup>63</sup> Cambisols or phaeozems in FAO Classification.

the release of iron from minerals in the soil. It has been argued that Terra Rossa soils in this region are “relict soils” which developed in the Pleistocene and early Holocene. As the rainfall drops in the east,

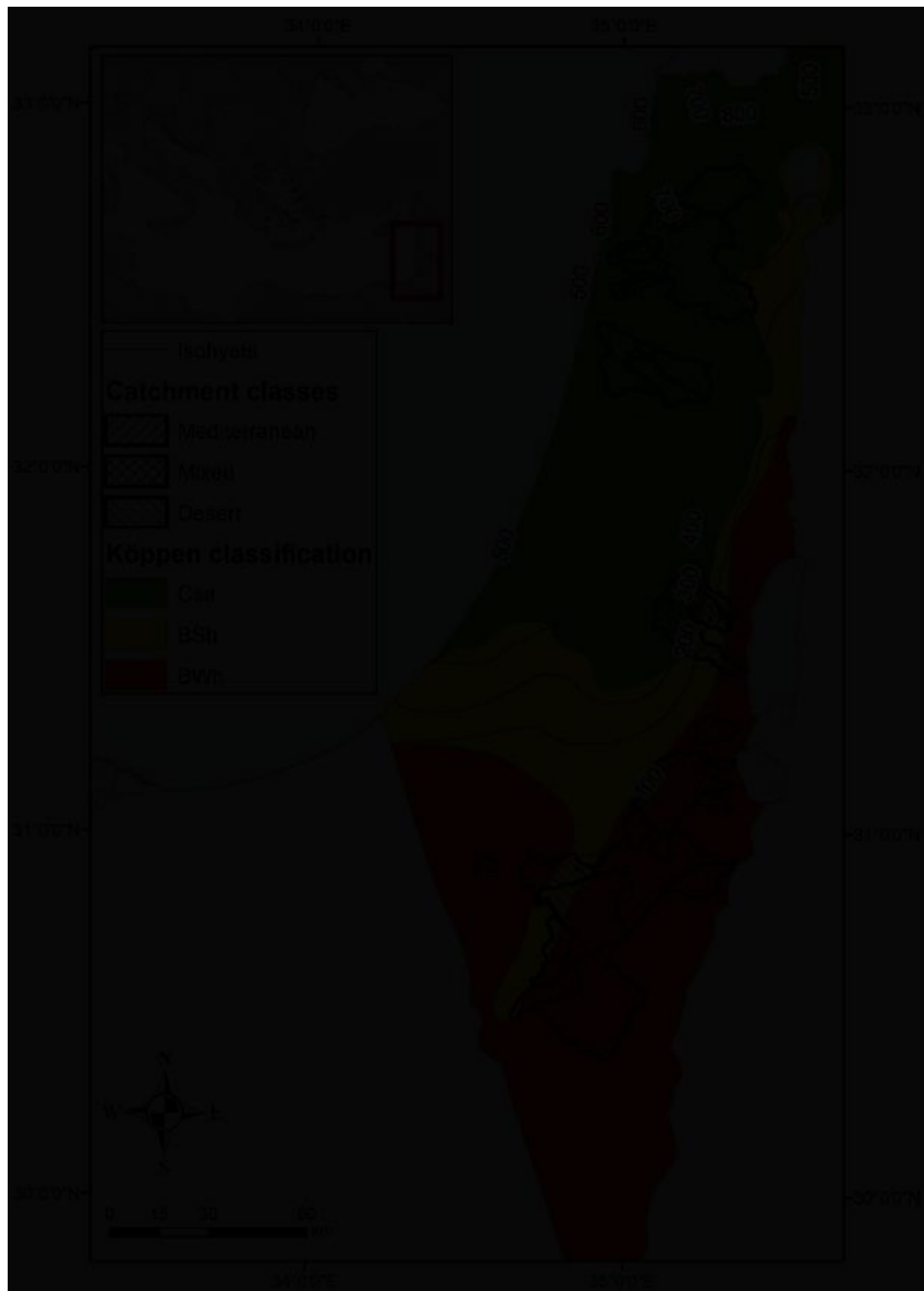


Fig. 2: Climate Map of Israel/Palestine [Copyright image removed]<sup>64</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Zoccatelli *et al.* (2018) 4.

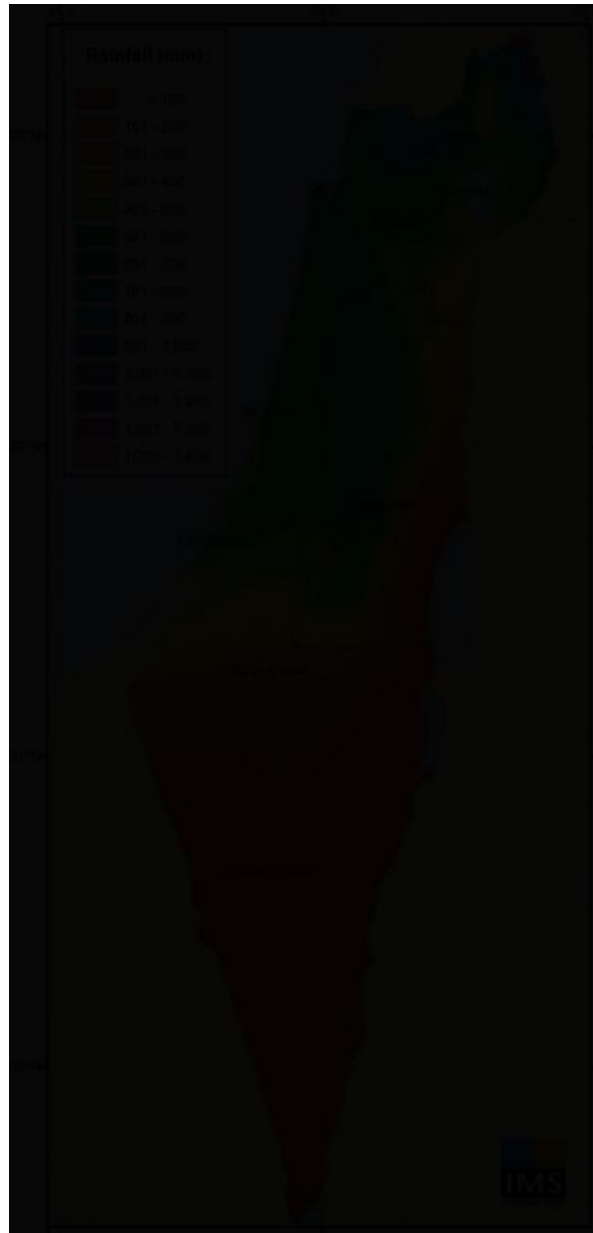
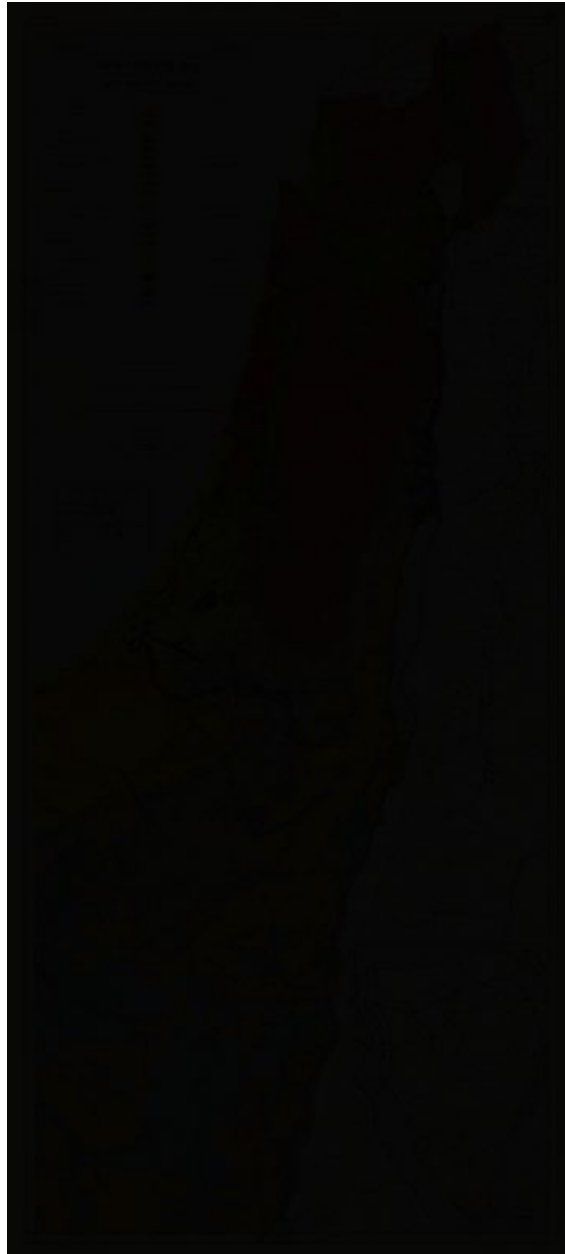


Fig. 3: Rainfall Map of Israel/Palestine<sup>65</sup>[Copyright image removed]

<sup>65</sup> Fuks *et al.* (2017) 7.



*Fig. 4: Soil Map of Israel/Palestine. Light red indicates Terra Rossa.<sup>66</sup> [Copyright image removed]*

Terra Rossa gives way to protogrumusols (shallow soils consisting of weathered rock fragments which are common on the mountainsides themselves), pale rendzinas (the product of weathered rocks, particularly limestone, a poor soil for agriculture), and ultimately sandy regosols and arid brown soils in the Jordan Rift Valley<sup>67</sup>. The disappearance of Terra Rossa in the dry east is because, according to most pedologists, it is a product of the chemical weathering of limestone, a process facilitated by the Mediterranean climate of the west (*Fig. 4*).<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Dan *et al.* (1975).

<sup>67</sup> These are all terms from the Israeli system of soil classification. In the FAO soil classification system (developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), protogrumusols are cambisols/lithosols.

<sup>68</sup> Haldar (2013) 173–174.

Rich soil, combined with relatively high rainfall, has made some of the valleys of Samaria lush, verdant, and (potentially) agriculturally productive. At *Jeremiah* 31:5, Yahweh marks out the “hills of Samaria” (“הַרֵי שָׁמְרוֹן”) as a suitable location for viticulture. Twain even remarks in *The Innocents Abroad* on the “exceedingly black and fertile” soil and “affluent vegetation” in Nablus (Biblical Shechem, renamed by Vespasian as Flavia Neapolis which is the origin of the modern Arab name), located in Samaria between Jabal ‘Aybāl (Mount Ebal) and Jabal et Tur (Mount Gerizim).<sup>69</sup>

Even pockets of the Jordan Rift Valley, which marks the eastern border of our region, are suitable for intensive agricultural exploitation. Jericho, which is located a few kilometres away from the river, was famous in antiquity for its balsam and dates, and was described by Josephus as the most fertile (“πρώτατον”) region in Judea.<sup>70</sup> The city lies a little north of the Dead Sea and is some 250 m below sea level. It has good soil and is watered by several productive springs including the Ain as-Sultan (Spring of the Sultan), known as the Ayin Elisha (Spring of Elisha) in Hebrew. The Hebrew name is a reference to a revealing passage in 2 *Kings* in which the prophet Elisha is described as throwing salt into the spring, which Yahweh then promised would regularly provide pure water. The dependence of Jericho’s agriculture on this spring is illustrated by the community’s complaint before Yahweh’s intervention that “the water is bad and the land is barren” (“וְהָאֵרֶץ מְשֻׁכָּלֶת”).<sup>71</sup>

That said, fertile microclimates like that of Jericho are the exception in the Hill Country, rather than the rule. Twain’s claim that central Judea was barren and desolate is supported by several of his contemporaries including those who, unlike Twain, considered this part of the world to be uniquely sacred and important. The English clergyman and theologian A.P. Stanley wrote in *Sinai and Palestine* (published in the same year as *The Innocents Abroad*) of the “scanty vegetation” and “grey hills” of “this wild country, more than half a wilderness”.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, George Adam Smith, writing in the 1890s, memorably described the landscape of the Judean plateau as “stony moorland, upon which rough scrub and thorns, reinforced by a few dwarf oaks, contend with multitudes of boulders, and the limestone, as if impatient of the thin pretence of soil, breaks out in bare scalps and prominences”.<sup>73</sup> Much of the region is indeed, forbidding, and unable to yield substantial agricultural rewards.

Despite environmental constraints, the Hill Country would become a regional demographic, cultural, and economic centre by the end of our period. At its 1st century CE peak the population of Jerusalem was probably between 20,000 and 30,000, a figure which was substantially inflated during pilgrim

---

<sup>69</sup> Twain (1896).

<sup>70</sup> J. B.J. 1.138.

<sup>71</sup> 2 *Kgs.* 2:19–22.

<sup>72</sup> Stanley (1868) 161–162.

<sup>73</sup> Smith (1894).

festivals.<sup>74</sup> This chapter is partly an exploration of how the agricultural economy of the Hill Country was warped by its unusual position at the centre of a vast cultural-religious network. It is also, however, a study of social change in a highly unstable part of the eastern Mediterranean, and the ways that this change shaped the rhythms of rural life. I also acknowledge and appreciate the intimate and indissoluble connection between country and city, and am therefore also interested in urban productive and political activity insofar as it impacted upon the agricultural economy.

### *Evidence and Methodology*

In his 1956 address at Bradley University, President Dwight Eisenhower quipped that “farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you’re a thousand miles from the cornfield”. While his barb was aimed at distant, controlling government officials, it applies disturbingly well to the work of ancient agricultural historians. Both groups often try to impose their own ideas of how a “rational” agricultural economy ought to work on distant landscapes which they might not understand and may never see for themselves. Indeed, our position is perhaps even more distant than modern policymakers: we are not just a thousand miles away from our fields but thousands of years away, trying to understand how farming worked in a world which was unimaginably different to our own. This often leads us to explanations which conform to our own (sometimes culturally specific and misleading) “common sense” intuitions.

It is not easy to break through this problem. One important step is to employ a broad but suitably focused evidence base. In this chapter, I will mainly use archaeological evidence (in particular from field surveys) and contemporary literature (both from Jewish religious literature and the works of Josephus).

There also exists a large body of Rabbinic evidence, most importantly, for our purposes, the *Mishnah*. There has been some debate about whether Rabbinic evidence is useful for the agricultural history of the Second Temple period. In the late 20th century, a series of scholars, in particular Jacob Neusner, argued that the *Mishnah* should not be taken as a reliable indication of how rural life or the agricultural economy functioned during the Second Temple period. Neusner characterised the *Mishnah* as a *Staatsroman* comparable to Plato’s *Republic*, in which “the critical problematic at the center always exercises influence over the peripheral facts, dictating how they are chosen, arranged, utilized”.<sup>75</sup> He contended that the aim of the *Mishnah*, which was compiled after the end of our period, is not to accurately describe life in Second Temple Palestine, but to develop a coherent legal

---

<sup>74</sup> See discussion of the population size in Chapter 6.

<sup>75</sup> Neusner (1990) x, 20–21.

system based on the Hebrew Bible. Other scholars have been more optimistic about the potential of Rabbinic evidence. Among the most influential is Yehuda Feliks, who published several studies of ancient Palestinian agriculture in Hebrew in which he made extensive use of rabbinic evidence.<sup>76</sup> Ze'ev Safrai, in his 1994 study of the economy of Roman Palestine, argued that Talmudic material “basically reflects the realities of the rural sector” and that it “serves as a tremendous source of information on the everyday life of the village and city in the Land of Israel, on agriculture and the crops cultivated there, and on a whole host of economic and technical problems”. He adds that information which is “*by the way* to the situation” (as is often the case) is more likely to be correct, as there would have been less reason for the example to be warped to fit a particular agenda.<sup>77</sup>

Most recent assessments appear to lie somewhere in between the extremes of Neusner and Safrai.<sup>78</sup> Few scholars would now argue that agricultural historians should side-line Rabbinic evidence for its ulterior religious and political motives: indeed, in almost all cases ancient authors have different motives and priorities to modern historians, and it is precisely our role to extract relevant information despite this. Rabbinic sources do, however, present a particular problem for *this* study, because it is tightly focused on specific region of Palestine during a defined period of time. The *Mishnah* reflects opinions collected over several centuries, including from long after 70 CE. According to tradition, the *Mishnah* was compiled by Rabbi Yehudah Ha-Nasi, who primarily worked Galilee during the 2nd century CE. It is extremely difficult to discern the extent to which Rabbi Yehudah Ha-Nasi meddled with previous traditions. The most important point is that the *Mishnah*’s final form was shaped in the cities of 2nd and 3rd century Galilee, and not in central Judea which had been devastated by the First Jewish Revolt and Bar Kokhba Revolt. Thus, while the *Mishnah* may be appropriate for general studies of ‘Roman Palestine’, I believe it is less useful for our study, which is firmly anchored in a particular time and space.

I will, then, primarily use Rabbinic evidence in two circumstances. Firstly, I will use it to complement general points about the Palestinian agricultural economy which are already well-supported by alternative evidence. Secondly, I will highlight passages which present a potential challenge to my arguments. As such, it is my intention to use Rabbinic evidence as a supplement to, rather than the basis of, this chapter.

None of this evidence—archaeological or literary, contemporary or Rabbinic—allows us to straightforwardly reconstruct agricultural life in the Hill Country. Over-reliance on our intuitions may always be problematic in history, but it is particularly unhelpful in studies of ancient agriculture given

---

<sup>76</sup> Feliks (1963), (1982), (1990), (1994), (1997).

<sup>77</sup> Safrai (1994) 2, 7.

<sup>78</sup> E.g. Harland (2002) 525, Hezser (2010) 10–13.

the ‘Eisenhower problem’ described above. One way of correcting this error is adopting a cross-cultural understanding of agricultural history. I shall, therefore, use comparison to advance some new suggestions for how the population of the Hill Country might have survived, while continuing to stress that I do not view comparative history as a prescriptive exercise (as outlined in my detail in the Introduction).

A study of this subject also requires a broader methodological underpinning. As may already be obvious, I am perhaps somewhat less positivist than some previous scholars of Second Temple agriculture. I do not believe that our evidence alone, historical or geographical, archaeological or literary, can lead us towards a detailed model for the agricultural economy or rural life. Agriculture is not a purely rational exercise in efficient exploitation of the land, but also a social and cultural activity: it should, I believe, be characterised as ‘embedded’ in the same way as ancient religion and the ancient economy.<sup>79</sup> On the one hand, therefore, my view of both individual sites and the results of archaeological surveys are shaped by the work of landscape archaeologists (particularly, of course, those working on this historical region), who have developed a methodological framework which positions space as the main object of study. On the other, I believe that this evidence can only be woven together with reference to economic history, anthropology, and even sociology. I believe that only through deployment of all the above can we begin to understand ancient agriculture and its place within the wider regional society, economy, and culture.

## **The View from the Ground**

### *Overview*

The significant climatic, pedological, and topographical diversity of the Hill Country means that, between different sub-regions, the region can support a variety of crops. Excavations and archaeological surveys have unearthed a great many wine and olive presses from our period, and some threshing floors (though these are more difficult for archaeologists to securely identify).<sup>80</sup> This suggests that the so-called ‘Mediterranean Triad’ of grapes, grain, and olives were important pillars of the region’s agricultural economy. The remains of an early Roman rubbish dump found around 100 m away from the Temple Mount further attest to the importance of these crops in the diet of Jerusalemites, as traces of all three plants have been found amongst the remains.<sup>81</sup> Literary evidence also indicates the importance of the triad in Palestinian agriculture. At 2 *Kings* 18:32, for instance

---

<sup>79</sup> See Chapter 5 in this dissertation for further discussion of embeddedness of religion.

<sup>80</sup> Attested in a wide range of excavations and surveys, such as: Dar (1986), Magen, Y. (2004b), Magen *et al.* (2004), Zertal (2004) 453–455, Zertal & Mirkam (2016) 93–94, 94–196, 264–266.

<sup>81</sup> Bar-Oz *et al.* (2007). There was, interestingly, a lack of fruit stones and nut remains, which tend to be well preserved.

King Sennacherib describes Judea as “a land of grain and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive oil and honey”, while at *Jeremiah* 31:12 Yahweh promises “grain and wine and olive oil” to Zion.<sup>82</sup> Wheat, barley, olives, and grapes are also mentioned frequently in Rabbinic literature, and appear to be the main crops the authors had in mind when imagining Palestinian agriculture.<sup>83</sup>

Fruit trees also appear to have been cultivated in Palestine. Among the ‘Seven Species’ of plants considered characteristic of Israel by the author of *Deuteronomy* are dates, pomegranates, and figs (the others are olives, grapes, wheat, and barley).<sup>84</sup> Dates were evidently considered a particularly characteristic local crop. They were not only represented in art, as on the Masada fresco, the coins of the First Jewish Revolt, and various ossuaries, but also in place names and the female name Tamar (meaning date in Hebrew).<sup>85</sup> Judean dates were famously sweet, and were connected with the region in sources as varied as Josephus, Strabo, Tacitus, Vergil, Horace, several books of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, and Vespasian’s infamous ‘Iudaea Capta’ coins.<sup>86</sup> Josephus repeatedly references date palm cultivation at Jericho (just outside the eastern border of our region), which appears to have been an important centre of production during our period.<sup>87</sup> Pomegranates are also a recurrent motif in Jewish art and functioned as another community symbol. As well as appearing on coinage and gemstones, they also decorated pottery lamps, wall paintings from Masada, frescoes from Jerusalem, the entrances of the Huldah Gates, funerary monuments, mosaics and reliefs.<sup>88</sup> Figs also appear repeatedly in the Hebrew Bible, and to own a “vine and a fig tree” was evidently considered a mark of wealth by the author(s) of 1 and 2 *Kings*.<sup>89</sup> Other fruits were grown in Palestine too, and trees such as apples and pears, which can be grown in colder temperatures, may well have been cultivated in the Hill Country during our period (though this is difficult to securely determine).<sup>90</sup>

The wide variety of crops which could be grown in the Hill Country would have allowed producers to diversify. For Jews and Samaritans, diversification may have been impeded by the prohibition against mixing two different crops in the same field in *Leviticus* 19:19 and *Deuteronomy* 22:9 (a law later reaffirmed by *Mishnah Kilaim*). It is unclear whether this law was actually followed during our period: if it was, it would clearly have reduced the efficiency with which the available land could be

---

<sup>82</sup> See also *Haggai* 1:11, *Neh.* 5:11, 2 *Chr.* 32:27.

<sup>83</sup> Safrai (1994) 108–127.

<sup>84</sup> *Deut.* 8:8.

<sup>85</sup> Goor (1967) 324.

<sup>86</sup> Op. cit. 333–4.

<sup>87</sup> E.g. J. *AJ* 4.100, 14.54, 15.96, *BJ* 1.138, 1.361.

<sup>88</sup> Hachlili (1988), p. 66, 70, 72; Meshorer (2001), pp. 118–9.

<sup>89</sup> 1 *Kgs* 4:25, 2 *Kgs.* 31, see also e.g. *Hos.* 2:12, *Hab.* 3:17, *Judg.* 9:10–11, *Jer.* 5:17, *Neh.* 13:15, *Song* 2:13, 1 *Chr.* 12:40, *Jub.* 13:6.

<sup>90</sup> Safrai (1994) 141.

exploited. We must be open to the possibility, however, that farmers may well have preferred to faithfully observe religious law than produce more crops.<sup>91</sup>

It is difficult to estimate the size of the average family plot. Gibson *et al.* point to a series of passages from the later Roman period which indicate that families could be forced to subsist on an extremely small territory. Eusebius claims that the two grandsons of Judah, the brother of Jesus, survived on 39 *plethra*, some 1.7 hectares for each of their families, while various passages of Rabbinic literature indicate that a large landholding was 30 *se'ah*, or 2.3 hectares.<sup>92</sup> As we shall see, however, there was likely considerable fluctuation in landholdings across time, with the emergence of enormous royal and elite estates particularly in the latter half of our period.<sup>93</sup>

It is also difficult to determine the extent to which the division of agricultural labour was determined by gender roles. As others have noticed, there is no mention in the Hebrew Bible or any other Second Temple Jewish literature of women using a plough, but this is far from decisive evidence that they were not involved in such activities: indeed, it seems inevitable that at least some were compelled to plough fields when the male workforce was depleted or otherwise occupied.<sup>94</sup> Evidence from the Hebrew Bible strongly indicates that women were involved in the production of bread and beer, and that grinding grain in particular was considered “women’s work”.<sup>95</sup>

### *Stability and Instability*

I will now briefly present the results of recent field surveys in the region and will consider how they might map onto its broader political history. As I will explore in more depth in subsequent chapters, the Hill Country was marked by a series of disruptions during our period as empires and local dynasties struggled for control of Palestine and political forces (including both state and non-state actors) attempted to reshape its cultural and economic life. Wars, rebellions, and imperial policies dramatically altered the balance of power in the region, causing its political and demographic centre to shift and stimulating cultural change.<sup>96</sup> Many of these historical events—for instance, the return of Judean exiles from Babylonia in the Persian period, the imposition of Greco-Macedonian colonists and ravaging of Samaria in the early Hellenistic period, the conquests and ethnic cleansing of the

---

<sup>91</sup> Safrai (2010) 259–260. The very fact that this law found its way into the Israelite sacred texts is a powerful illustration of the tendency of pre-modern peoples to make decisions which seem irrational (in economic terms) to modern observers.

<sup>92</sup> Gibson *et al.* (2007), Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* 3.20.4., *Mekh. Be-Shallah* 87–88.

<sup>93</sup> See evidence below.

<sup>94</sup> Meyers (2007), Adams (2014) 43–44.

<sup>95</sup> Adams (2014) 46.

<sup>96</sup> See Chapters 2 and 4 in this dissertation.

Hasmonean period, and the instability and political fragmentation of the Herodian and Roman periods—may also have had a severe impact on rural life.

Several archaeological surveys have been conducted in the Hill Country in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Sites are mainly identified as belonging to particular periods in these surveys by analysis of pottery. Not all the various surveys explain in detail how they date pottery. The authors of the Manasseh Hill Country Survey reports argue, without providing much detail, that there are quite pronounced differences between Persian and Hellenistic pottery and rather less pronounced differences between Hellenistic and Roman pottery.<sup>97</sup> By contrast, the Southern Samaria Survey report contains a detailed account of their methods of pottery recording and analysis.<sup>98</sup> They mainly identify Persian pottery on the basis of Ephraim Stern's 1982 *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian Period*, and rely heavily on Bar-Nathan's (Hebrew) study of Hasmonean and Herodian pottery for the Hellenistic and early Roman periods.<sup>99</sup> In contrast to the Manasseh Hill Country survey, the authors of the Southern Samaria Survey report express less optimism about whether or not Hellenistic shards can be securely identified.

The results of field surveys indicate that settlement patterns were reconstituted several times in different areas of the Hill Country during our period. It seems that the Hellenistic period ushered in dramatic changes in Samaria. In the western foothills of the region, a rocky and dry landscape between the mountains proper and the coastal plain, we see a proliferation of farmsteads in the Iron Age. Olive oil and wine production appear to have been the main activities in these farms, and presses (for wine or oil, and occasionally both) have been found at many sites. There is less evidence for cereal cultivation, but this may be because it is comparatively harder to detect in the archaeological record.<sup>100</sup> Most sites continue into the Persian period, and then drop off during the Hellenistic period, disappearing entirely in the 2nd century BCE.<sup>101</sup>

Similarly, the published volumes of the Manasseh Hill Country Survey suggest that there is a marked decline of sites in the Hellenistic period in northern and western Samaria. The Survey was first begun in 1978, and covered some 400 km<sup>2</sup> of the northern Hill Country. In the Shechem syncline (Vol I), a relatively well-watered region with over a hundred springs, the Persian period represents the apparent peak of settlement activity (137 sites), with a sharp drop off in the Hellenistic period (55 sites). Most

---

<sup>97</sup> They argue that rather crude yellow/grey bowls of the Persian period were replaced by pink/brown vessels with well-smoothed clay in the Hellenistic period, which were replaced in turn by dark brown Roman-era pottery. Few details are given on shape and design: Zertal (2004) 44–45.

<sup>98</sup> Finkelstein et al. (1997) 25–71.

<sup>99</sup> Stern (1982), Bar-Nathan (1988).

<sup>100</sup> Oleoculture and viticulture are usually identified through the presence of stone presses.

<sup>101</sup> Faust (2006); see also Yeivin & Edelstein (1970), Kochavi *et al.* (1973), Finkelstein (1981), Dar (1982). Farmsteads are generally identified as enclosures with olive or wine presses.

abandoned sites appear to have been rural settlements, and more continuity is seen in Tells. Those sites which do survive appear to shrink considerably. A similar (though less dramatic) picture is seen in the area from Nahal `Iron to Nahal Shechem (Vol III), a region with *terra rossa* soil and watered by small springs, which sees a drop from 87 sites in the Persian period to 67 in the Hellenistic period. Declining settlement density does not necessarily correlate with population collapse, and it is possible that these developments are partly a consequence of urbanisation rather than population decline. The most important point, however, is that there *does* appear to have been a significant change in settlement patterns in rural areas between these periods.

Other regions of Samaria show a different pattern. Volume II indicates that the 'Eastern Valleys and Desert Regions' area, a region with irregular rain which was unpromising for agriculture (particularly in the easternmost parts), experienced a dramatic decline in its population the late Iron Age, and remained underpopulated in the Persian or Hellenistic periods.<sup>102</sup> The Southern Samaria Survey, carried out under the leadership of Israel Finkelstein between 1980 and 1987 and covering 1050 km<sup>2</sup> of the central Hill Country, appears to show some growth between the Persian and Hellenistic periods. The Hill Country of Benjamin Survey, also carried out in the 1980s and covering northern Judea, shows substantial growth between the same periods.<sup>103</sup> These results indicate, it seems, that the demographic centre of the region rapidly shifted south during the Hellenistic period, perhaps brought on by the sequence of attacks against the Samaritan community beginning with Alexander the Great and culminating in the conquest of the region by John Hyrcanus I.<sup>104</sup>

Changes between the Hellenistic and Early Roman period are more difficult to discern, partly because some archaeological surveys simply identify material as coming from an extended 'Roman period' stretching from the end of the Hellenistic period until the Byzantine period. The Manasseh Hill Country Survey, which does differentiate between Early and Late Roman material, provides us with some indications. The number of settlements slightly decreases in the Shechem Syncline (Vol I) when compared to the Hellenistic period, though the settlements which remain seem more densely

---

<sup>102</sup> Zertal (2004), Zertal (2008), Zertal & Mirkam (2016).

<sup>103</sup> Southern Samaria Survey: Finkelstein et al. (1997); Hill Country of Benjamin Survey: Magen & Finkelstein (1993).

<sup>104</sup> See 'Ethnogenesis and Administration' in this dissertation for more details.

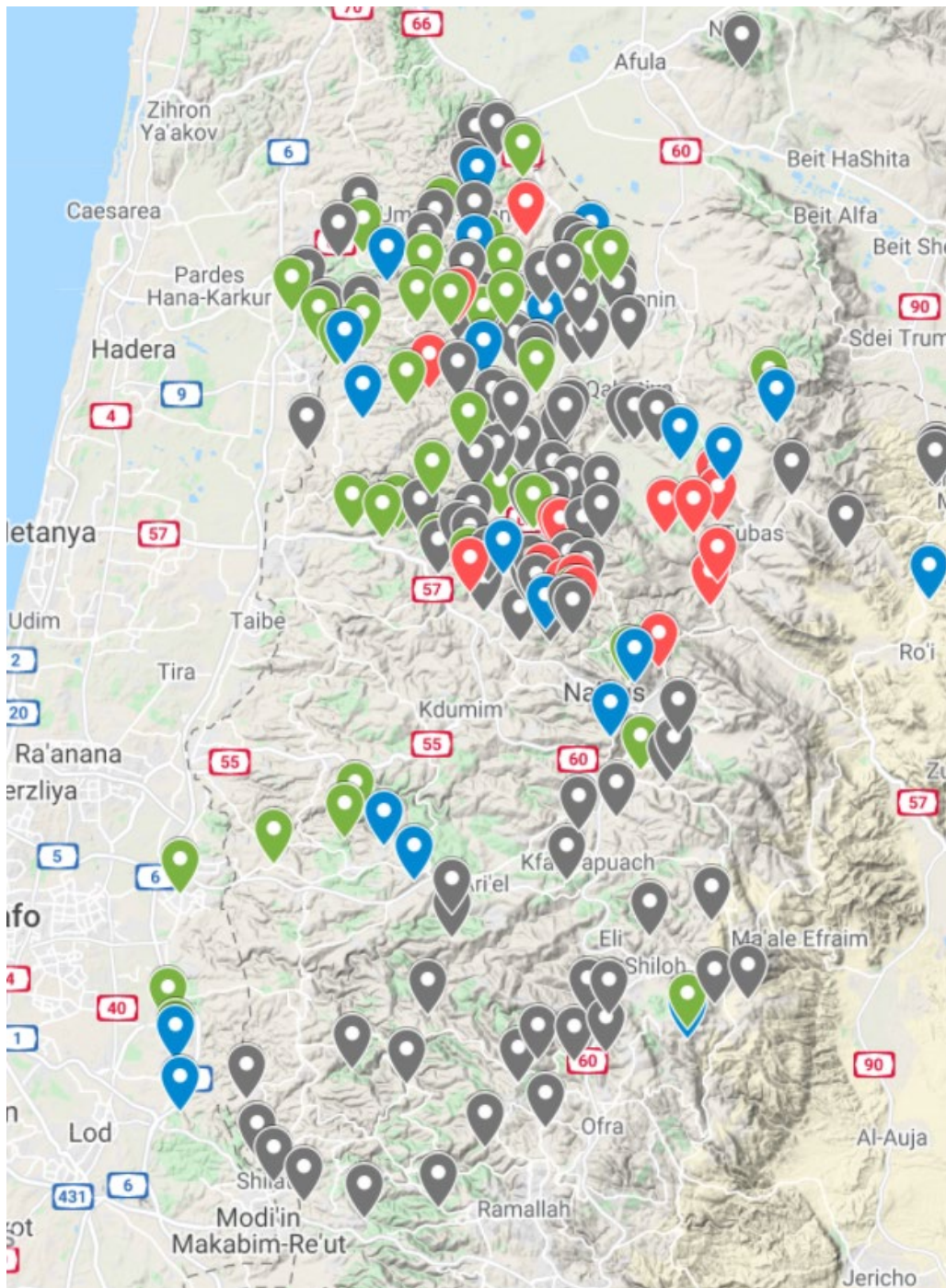
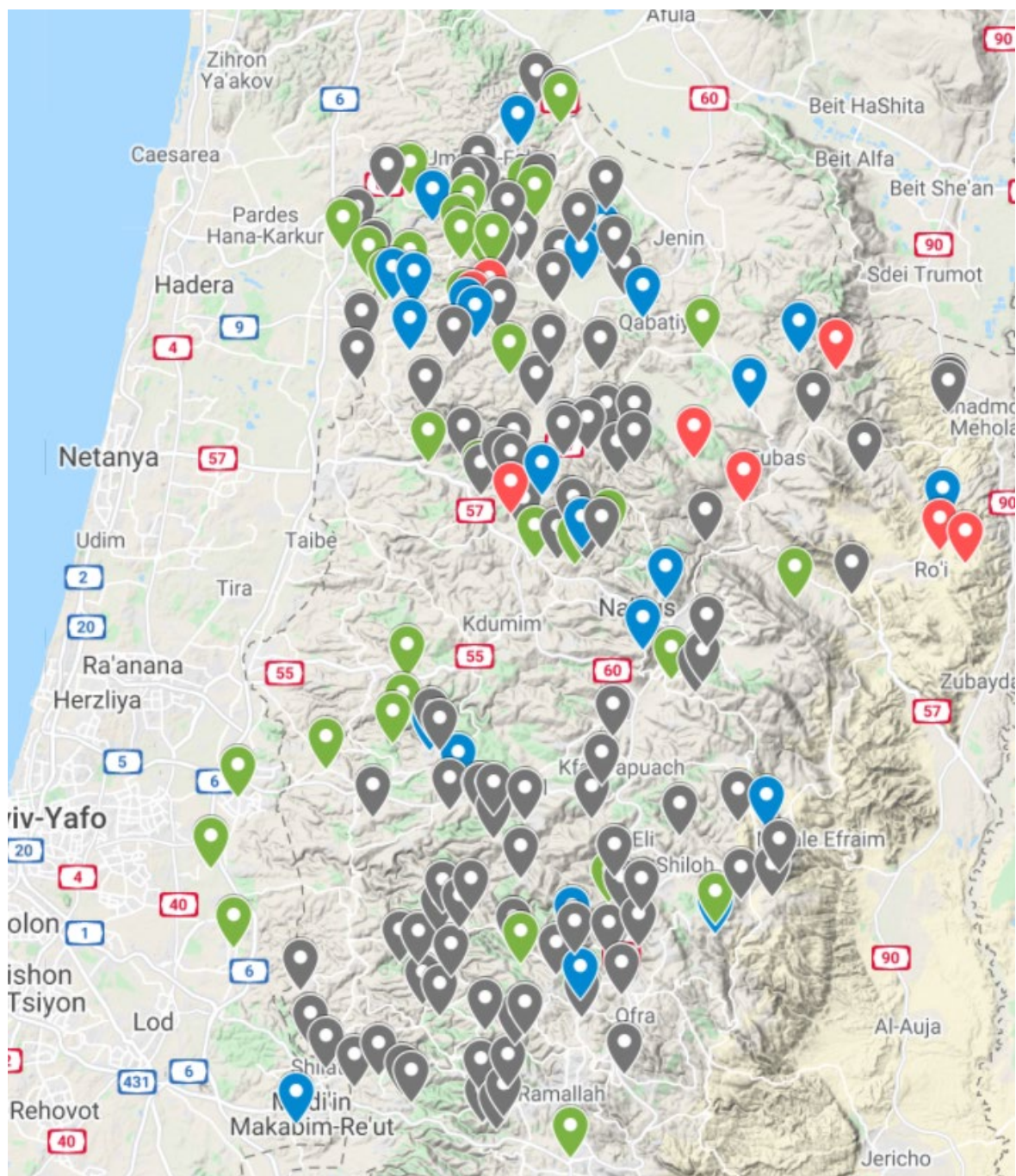


Fig. 5: Aggregated map of Persian-era sites in field surveys of the northern Hill Country (overlayed on a map of modern Israel). Green pins were identified by surveyors as agricultural sites, blue pins as residential sites, red pins as military sites, and grey pins as sites of unknown purpose (many identifications are tentative)<sup>105</sup>

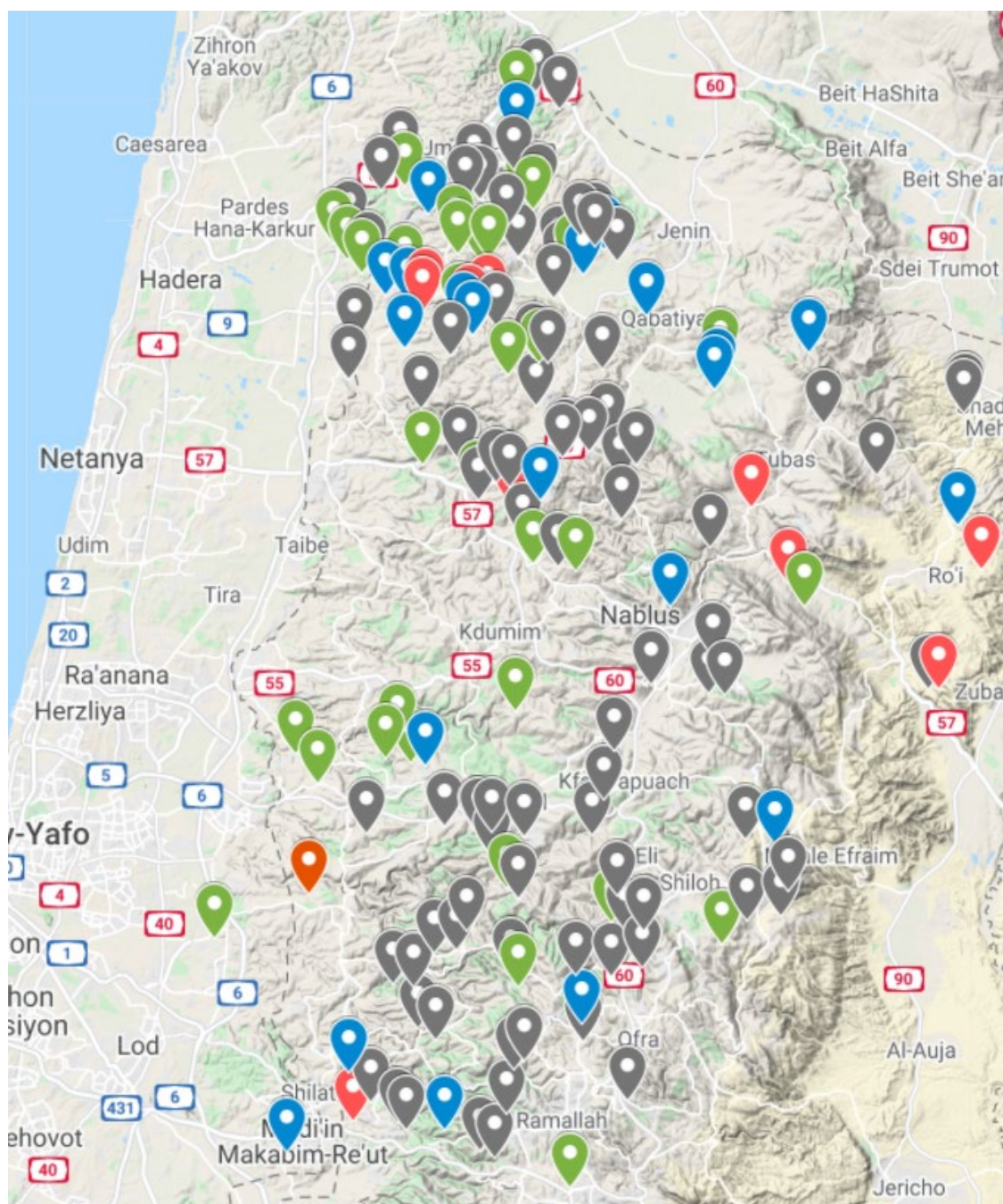
<sup>105</sup> Map my own.



*Fig. 6: Aggregated map of Hellenistic-era sites in field surveys of the northern Hill Country (overlayed on a map of modern Israel). Green pins were identified by surveyors as agricultural sites, blue pins as residential sites, red pins as military sites, and grey pins as sites of unknown purpose (many identifications are tentative)*

106

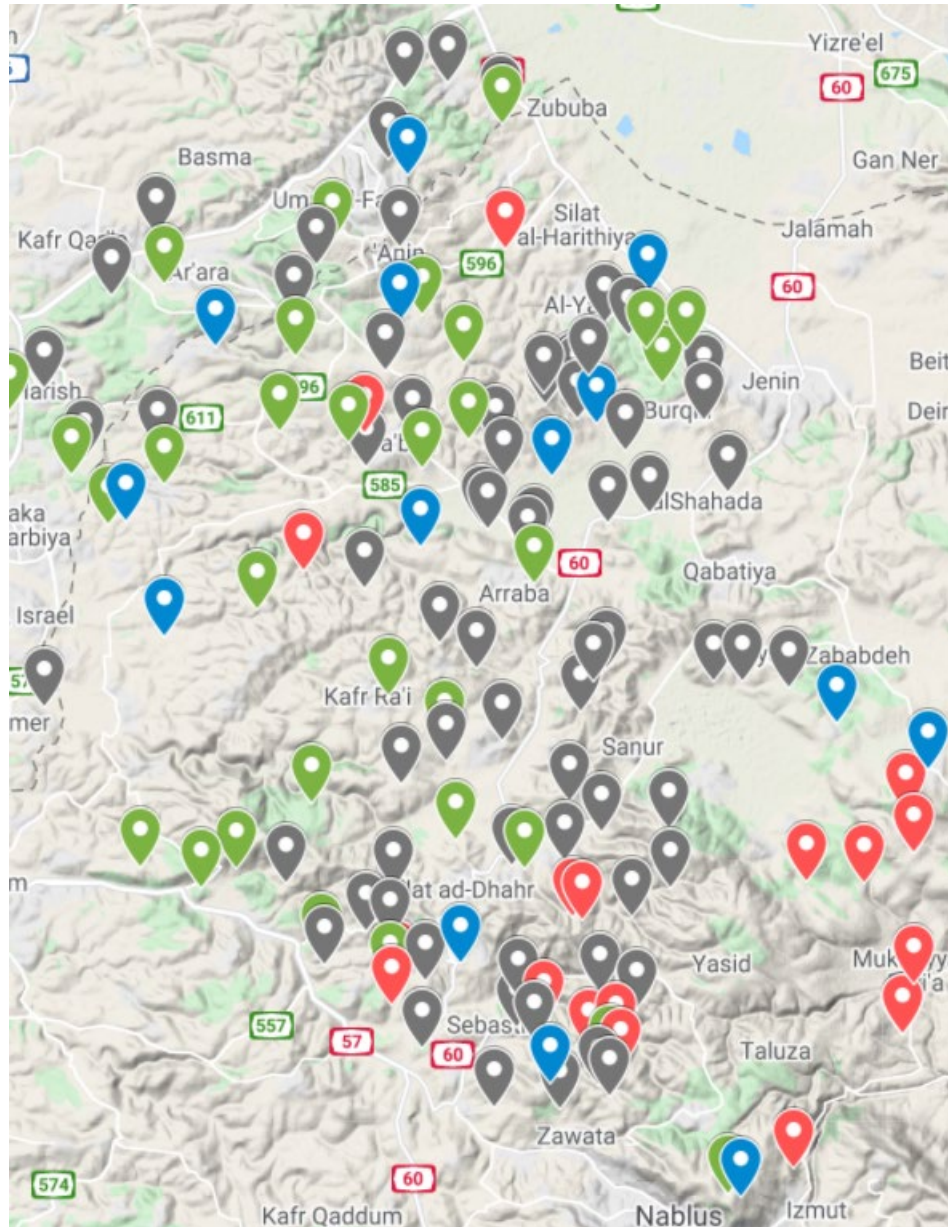
<sup>106</sup> Map my own.



*Fig. 7: Aggregated map of Early Roman-era sites in field surveys of the northern Hill Country (overlayed on a map of modern Israel). Green pins were identified by surveyors as agricultural sites, blue pins as residential sites, red pins as military sites, and grey pins as sites of unknown purpose (many identifications are tentative)*

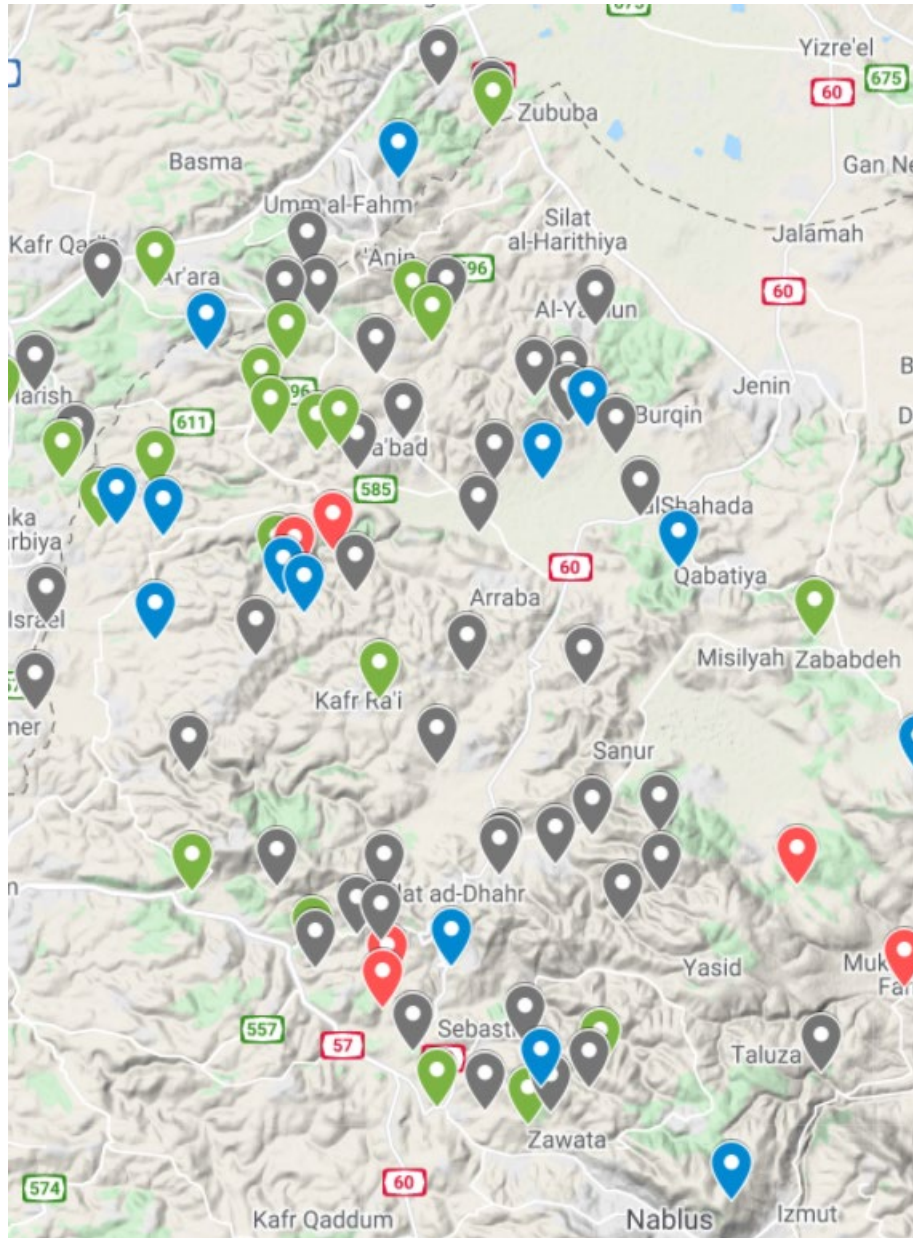
107

<sup>107</sup> Map my own.



*Fig. 8: Aggregated map of Persian-era sites in field surveys of northern Samaria (overlayed on a map of modern Israel). Green pins were identified by surveyors as agricultural sites, blue pins as residential sites, red pins as military sites, and grey pins as sites of unknown purpose (many identifications are tentative) <sup>108</sup>*

<sup>108</sup> Map my own.



*Fig. 9: Aggregated map of Hellenistic-era sites in field surveys of northern Samaria (overlayed on a map of modern Israel). Green pins were identified by surveyors as agricultural sites, blue pins as residential sites, red pins as military sites, and grey pins as sites of unknown purpose (many identifications are tentative). Note the sharp drop-off of agricultural sites in particular.<sup>109</sup>*

populated, and increases a little in the eastern deserts (Vol II) and the area from Nahal `Iron to Nahal Shechem (Vol III). In Judea, we see the growth of farmsteads and small villages clustered around Jerusalem in the 1st centuries BCE and CE, with evidence for olive oil and wine production (see more below).<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> Map my own.

<sup>110</sup> Amit (2007), Killebrew (2010) 196–197.

To summarise, imperfect as the results of field surveys inevitably are, when aggregated they do seem to indicate changes in rural settlement patterns. While these changes may partly be the result of processes which our literary sources do not describe, part can also plausibly be ascribed to war and political upheaval. It seems reasonable to connect the dramatic decline in settlement in the Hellenistic period to the series of invasions which ravaged the Samarian countryside from Alexander onwards. We should not, then, imagine that the agricultural economy of the Hill Country was static and unchanging, with dynasties of farmers rooted to the soil and barely noticing the parade of kings, emperors, and governors who held sway over the region. Of course, pockets were less affected, and even in periods of severe decline several sites always seem to have survived. It does seem, however, that overall one of the defining features of our region is significant *instability* during our period.

### **‘Intensification’ and Steep Slope Cultivation**

#### *Absence of Evidence: Terraces in the Literary and Archaeological Record*

The Mediterranean is wreathed by long strands of mountainous and hilly terrain. Many of these slopes are adorned with man-made terraces cut into or built against the slopes and used for agricultural purposes. There are often multiple terraces on a single slope, appearing like a series of ‘steps’. Such terraces consist of two parts: an artificially flattened surface covered with soil (which is then cultivated), and a protective wall. This both enlarges the area available for cultivation and protects against soil erosion (especially sheet erosion). It also redistributes sediment, which is useful when soil only appears in patches, and increases possible root penetration where the surface would otherwise be rocky and hard.

At various times, this practice has been used not only throughout the Mediterranean basin, but also in parts of sub-Saharan Africa, South and Central America, East Asia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It is particularly common on hard limestone and marl, and rather less common on schist and clay.<sup>111</sup> In the 20th and 21st centuries terraced farms have begun to decline in many regions, since modern technology has dramatically increased agricultural production and allowed for more-intensive exploitation of fertile lands (thereby reducing the need to cultivate inhospitable terrain) and workers (and their expertise) have migrated to cities.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>111</sup> Grove & Rackham (2003) 110.

<sup>112</sup> Arnáez *et al.* (2015) 123–124.

Terracing appears to have had a long history in the Hill Country, and has had a major impact on the landscape: it has been estimated that around 60% of the Judean highlands are covered by artificial terraces.<sup>113</sup> It is generally assumed that terracing was widespread by the Iron Age, with some even advocating for an Early Bronze Age origin.<sup>114</sup> Evidence for ancient terracing in this region, however, is slim. Let us first consider the literary evidence. In all the books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, ‘non-canonical’ religious texts, and the works of local writers like Josephus, there is not a single reference to terraced farming, nor is there any Hebrew word which means “terrace”. Various phrases in the Hebrew Bible are rendered as “terraced fields” by some translations, though this meaning is always highly doubtful and seemingly chosen *because* of the expectation that terracing would have been ubiquitous. The most plausible example is “עַל מְרוֹמֵי שָׂדֶה” in *Judges* 5:18, which is rendered “on the terraced fields” by the *New International Version* translation (*NIV*). It is, however, more literally translated “on the high places of the field” (which could have any number of meanings), and this is, indeed, how the Septuagint translates the phrase (“ἐπὶ ὕψη ἀγροῦ”). Similarly, the phrase “שְׂדֵי תְרוּמַת” in 2 *Samuel* 1:21 is translated as “terraced fields” by the *NIV*, though the meaning seems to be something like “fields of [products used for] offerings” (which is, again, how the Septuagint translates the phrase: “ἀγροὶ ἀπαρχῶν”). In all the countless passages of ancient Hebrew literature concerning agriculture or describing the landscape of the Hill Country, then, there is not one unambiguous reference to terraced farms.<sup>115</sup>

Indeed, it seems that the writers of at least parts of the Hebrew Bible were unaware of (or at least uninterested in) the potential of terraced farms to improve cultivation. In *Isaiah* 5:1–2, the so-called ‘Song of the Vineyard’, the writer describes the best way to farm grapes on a hill, but nowhere mentions terraces:

אֲשִׁירָה נָא לַיָּדַי, שִׁירַת דּוֹדִי לְכַרְמִי: כָּרַם הָיָה לַיָּדַי, בָּקְרוּ בֶן-שָׁמֶן.

וַיַּעֲזָהוּ וַיִּסְקָלְהוּ, וַיִּטְעֵהוּ שָׂרֵק, וַיִּבֶן מִגְדָּל בְּתוֹכֹו, וְגַם-יָקַב חֶצֶב בּוֹ; וַיִּקְוֵ לַעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים, וַיַּעַשׂ בָּאֲשִׁים.

I shall sing to my friend a song about his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard on a fertile hill: he tended it, threw out the stones, planted it with an excellent vine, built a tower in the middle of it, and also cut out a winepress. He expected it to yield grapes, but instead it brought out bad fruit.

The failure of the vineyard to yield good grapes is not because of anything the farmer has done (or failed to do). Indeed, as is made clear in verse 7, the passage is intended as a metaphor for Yahweh who has carefully tended the vine of Israel but has only seen conflict and misery grow. The point, on the contrary, is that the vineyard owner, like Yahweh, has done everything correctly.<sup>116</sup> We see the

<sup>113</sup> Ron (1966).

<sup>114</sup> Finkelstein (1988) 202, Gibson (2001).

<sup>115</sup> E.g. J. *BJ* 3.35–58.

<sup>116</sup> Gadot *et al.* (2016a) 440.

same absence of terraces in the many agricultural parables in the Gospels, such as the ‘parable of the tenants’.<sup>117</sup>

In the vast majority of Mishnaic texts, many of which deal with agriculture, there is no indication that terraced farming was known. In the eleven tractates (chapters) of *Seder Zer’aim*, the portion of the Mishnah dealing with agriculture, there is no evidence of terracing in ten of them. The closest we have to a reference is a passage from *Mishnah Shevi’it*, a tractate primarily concerning the laws related to so-called ‘sabbatical years’. During this year, agricultural work was supposed to be allowed to ‘rest’, without the sowing or gathering of crops. The following passage, at 3:8, presents a possible exception to the silence of our sources:

אין בונין מדרגות על פי הגאיות ערב שביעית משפסקו הגשמים, מפני שהוא מתקנן לשביעית. אבל בונה הוא בשביעית משפסקו גשמים, מפני שהוא מתקנן למוצאי שביעית. ולא יסמוך בעפר, אבל עושה הוא חיצו. כל אבן שהוא יכול לפשט את ידו ולטלה, הרי זו תנטל

There shall be no building of steps (מדרגות) on the sides of ravines during the year preceding the sabbatical year after the rains stopped, as this is preparing for the sabbatical year. He may, however, build them during the sabbatical year itself after the rains stopped, since this is preparing for the year after the sabbatical year. He should not block them with earth but he can use it as a divider. A stone which he can stretch out his hand and take may be removed.

There is a crucial ambiguity about what the “steps” are for. The word “מדרגה” seems to mean “stair” or “steep place” in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>118</sup> Classical commentaries on the Mishnah assume that the “steps” in this passage were an actual staircase used to provide a route to water sources. Modern scholars, however, have tended to argue that they were instead terraced farms.<sup>119</sup> The biblical meaning of the word does not necessarily provide us with a clear answer, since the word “step” could easily be a metaphor for “terrace” (especially as we know of no Hebrew word specifically meaning “terrace”). I remain agnostic: as this particular mishnah is not ascribed to any particular rabbi it is difficult to tell if the opinion expressed pre- or postdates the destruction of the Temple, or if it was referring to agriculture in the Hill Country or in Galilee (where the Mishnah was likely compiled). Even with this passage there remains, I suggest, no unambiguous indication in our literary sources that there were terraces in the Hill Country during our period.

Of course, this is far from decisive: it is possible, for instance, that terraces were not mentioned precisely because they were so common (and therefore not worth mentioning). To gain a fuller picture, we need to turn to the archaeological evidence. Unfortunately, however, terraced farms are notoriously difficult to date. In a 2005 article Price and Nixon proposed nine criteria which might be used to date terraces, in descending order of reliability:

---

<sup>117</sup> Mk. 12.1.

<sup>118</sup> Ezek. 38:20, Song 2:14.

<sup>119</sup> See discussion of 3:8 in Newman (1983).

- “1. Datable material in fill.
2. Age of trees on terrace.
3. Construction style of terraces.
4. Same construction style as adjacent ancient structures.
5. Terraces built against ancient structures
6. Extent and type of lichenization of terraces in relation to the extent of lichenization of adjacent structures.
7. Extent of degradation of terraces.
8. System of terraces in area with ancient sites and no later constructions: “relict landscapes”.
9. Antiquity likely on other grounds to be the (or a) period of greatest pressure on agricultural resources.”<sup>120</sup>

This list is a good general indication of the available methods. As the authors point out, however, we usually lack the necessary evidence to use Criteria 1 and 2, and in practice we are usually compelled to combine several factors to grope our way towards the most likely date. Furthermore, all of these methods are inconclusive. Take Criterion 1, supposedly the most reliable. In this method, the latest pottery found in the fill around the terrace wall is used to date the construction of the terrace.

However, this might well be misleading. We do not know where soil used for the fill originally came from: it is quite possible that it was already on the slope and contained remains from previous periods of habitation, or that it was brought in from elsewhere. This could mean that the sherds indicate a far earlier date than when the terrace was actually built. It is also possible that later sherds might penetrate the fill, pushing the date of the most recent artefact later—potentially much later—than the date of the terrace’s construction.<sup>121</sup> As one study put it, terraces are archaeological “palimpsests”, with various layers of habitation mixed by human and natural disturbances. All the other criteria are likewise deeply problematic: in the study of the Hill Country, at least, Criterion 3, “construction style of terraces”, has been found to be almost useless as modern terrace walls are built in much the same style as pre-modern ones.<sup>122</sup> It is also difficult to tell whether or not terraces were in fact used for agricultural, rather than simply architectural, purposes: retaining walls, after all, have a long and ancient history in the Levant.<sup>123</sup>

Sites identified as early (Bronze or Iron Age) terraces in ancient Palestine are generally dated using Criterion 8. Hence the terrace on the site of Sataf, located on a hill a little to the west of Jerusalem, has been dated to the early Bronze Age largely because a Bronze Age structure was found buried beneath it.<sup>124</sup> It is, however, odd to assume that later terraces were not built on top of earlier sites. Gibson has argued that the presence of *architectural* terraces in the Bronze Age strongly indicates that

<sup>120</sup> Price & Nixon (2005) 670. See also: Frederick & Krahtopoulou (2000).

<sup>121</sup> Davidovich *et al.* (2012) 194; see also Wagstaff (1992) 160, Borejsza *et al.* (2008).

<sup>122</sup> Gibson (2015) 307.

<sup>123</sup> Gadot *et al.* (2016a) 443–444.

<sup>124</sup> Gibson *et al.* (1991).

this practice would have been used for agricultural purposes.<sup>125</sup> This is not a safe assumption: the presence of a few terraced structures dating from the Bronze Age (mostly either large structures or groups of smaller ones) is not good evidence that a significant number of farmers would have had the time, resources, and expertise to construct their own terraces for agricultural purposes. The view of Finkelstein, Gibson and Lewis that terracing must have been widespread in the Middle Bronze period or earlier because settlement in the Hill Country would have been *impossible* without it (an extreme example of Criterion 9), is simply wrong (see below).<sup>126</sup>

Recently, technology has added a tenth criterion to the nine in Price and Nixon's list. Optically-stimulated luminescence (OSL) is a method of determining the last time that mineral grains (such as quartz) were exposed to sunlight. This technique has been used to date various types of site, and has been described as part of a "dating revolution" in archaeology.<sup>127</sup> Many archaeologists have championed the use of OSL in dating terraces, including a group of Israeli scholars who have conducted a number of studies on sites close to Jerusalem.<sup>128</sup> These scholars claim that OSL can decisively resolve the problem of dating terraces.<sup>129</sup> After taking and testing soil samples from either side of terrace walls, they have found that samples from individual sites produce remarkably consistent sets of results. These tend to indicate that terraces were constructed much later than archaeologists expected, with most dated to late antiquity or later, a few from the Second Temple Period, and none from earlier. Studies conducted on Mount Eitan, which is located around 10 km to the west of Jerusalem, suggest that all surviving terraces were built within the past 500 years, and that no historical terraces were earlier than the Hellenistic period (despite farming having been carried out in the study area long before that).<sup>130</sup> An OSL study of terraces in Ramat Rahel, an ancient agricultural village located in the east of the (modern) city of Jerusalem, dated no terraces earlier than the Late Byzantine/Early Islamic period.<sup>131</sup> If correct, this would completely disrupt the scholarly consensus, which usually insists that terracing occurred at a much earlier date.

In a 2015 article, however, Gibson identified several problems with these studies. Firstly, he pointed out that selecting soil adjacent to the terrace wall is a strange choice, as this soil would be most likely to be disturbed (since this was the part of the terrace more vulnerable to collapse). He suggested, instead, that it would have been better that samples were taken from the back of the terraces. Secondly, he pointed out that as terraces—as well as just the walls—are often repaired and

---

<sup>125</sup> Gibson (2001) 129–130.

<sup>126</sup> Finkelstein (1988) 202, Gibson & Lewis (2017) 261–262.

<sup>127</sup> Cochrane *et al.* (2013).

<sup>128</sup> Davidovich *et al.* (2012), Gadot *et al.* (2016a), Gadot *et al.* (2016b), Porat *et al.* (2017).

<sup>129</sup> A view mirrored by those working on terraces in other regions: e.g. Turner *et al.* (2018) in Catalonia.

<sup>130</sup> Porat *et al.* (2017).

<sup>131</sup> Davidovich *et al.* (2012).

reconstructed by subsequent generations of farmers (as is true of modern Palestinian *fellahin*), the most recent time that the quartz was exposed to sunlight might not tell us when the terraces were constructed, but rather when they last underwent a major reconstruction. He concluded that OSL alone could not provide decisive evidence for the dates of terraces and needed to be used as part of broad-based landscape archaeological studies.<sup>132</sup>

We are left, then, with a scattering of highly uncertain sites, dated by a set of methods which are (as we have seen) all subject to serious criticism. It is tempting to respond to this ambiguity by assuming that terraced farming must have spread through the Hill Country by the 1st century CE to support the region's large, dense population (an example of Criterion 9 on the Price and Nixon list). Hayim Lapin has recently suggested, on the basis of conservative population and land productivity estimates, that in the late Second Temple period the city of Jerusalem would have consumed the products of 156,000 hectares of farmland and pasture.<sup>133</sup> This would have far exceeded the resources of Jerusalem and its hinterland: therefore, as Lapin himself points out, there must have either been an intensification of production in the Judean Hill Country or an expansion of the area from which resources were pulled (or both). One might suppose, then, that as the population of Jerusalem grew through our period and pilgrim crowds became larger, terraced agriculture might have spread as a way of maximising the output of the land. Many historians and archaeologists, indeed, have assumed that the question of dating Palestinian terraces can be resolved by simply assuming that they appeared in periods of greater demographic pressure.<sup>134</sup> I believe that this is a mistake (and an example of the 'Eisenhower problem' outlined above). Horden and Purcell launched a persuasive critique of such "demographic determinism" in *The Corrupting Sea*, arguing that intensification of production in a particular region is more likely to have been the product of political and cultural concerns than the demands of a growing population, which was often met by redistribution of resources and increased inter-regional connectivity.<sup>135</sup> There is excellent evidence for this in the Second Temple Hill Country: in 47 CE, for instance, Queen Helena of Adiabene won popular favour in Jerusalem by importing food during a time of famine.<sup>136</sup> In general, this response appears to have been more common in ancient societies than initiatives to increase the efficiency of agriculture through intensification (though the two are by no means mutually exclusive).

The question at hand, to be clear, is not *whether* the slopes of the Judean Hill Country were agriculturally exploited, but *how*. Terracing is far from universal in inhabited hill countries, and

---

<sup>132</sup> Gibson (2015).

<sup>133</sup> Based on a regular population of 33,000, Lapin (2017) 244.

<sup>134</sup> Examples they have found include: de Geus (1975) 69. This problem was recently bemoaned in Gadot *et al.* (2015) 441, who assembled a number of examples.

<sup>135</sup> Horden & Purcell (2000) 266–268.

<sup>136</sup> J. *Ant.* 20.51–53

populations often use alternative agricultural strategies such as trenching, or even simple cultivation of slopes (a strategy made easier by the presence of ‘box fields’, natural depressions in the rock which provide a flatter surface).<sup>137</sup> In the highlands of Papua New Guinea, for instance, slopes have been cultivated without terraces for centuries, and soil erosion is prevented through the construction of barriers (of varying degrees of sophistication) across the slope and, more rarely, trenching. Not a single community uses terracing in the entire nation of Papua New Guinea, and yet steep slopes have been cultivated for centuries.<sup>138</sup> This is not to say that terracing does not provide substantial advantages: it certainly does, for all the reasons outlined above (and as demonstrated by its presence in mountainous regions around the world). It is, however, entirely possible for hill countries to be a valuable part of an inter-regional agricultural system without terracing.

I propose that the balance of probability is against terracing and in favour of these alternative strategies. There is, I freely admit, only a little more evidence for such techniques than there is for terracing. There is some indication that trenching occurred in the hinterland of Jerusalem in the 1st century BCE in Josephus’ *Jewish War* 5.57–58:

τῷ δὲ πρόσω ἦν χωρεῖν ἀδύνατον· ἐκτετάφρευτο γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ τείχους περὶ τὰς κηπεΐας ἅπαντα, τοίχοις τε ἐπικαρσίοις καὶ πολλοῖς ἔρκεσι διειλημμένα

He was unable to go on, because the area around the ramparts was covered in trenches for gardens, and divided up by sloping walls and many fences.

This corresponds well with Greek and Latin literature, where trenching is mentioned far more regularly than terracing (it is discussed in some detail by Columella in his work *De Arboribus*).<sup>139</sup> I believe, furthermore, that there are other reasons to suppose that methods other than terracing were used (see below). Rather than using the Price/Nixon criteria (plus OSL), which are useful for individual sites, I will be adopting an anthropological/sociological approach which I believe can provide more insights into the question of terracing on a large landscape such as the Hill Country.

### *Evidence of Absence? Terraces and Society*

Terraces are useful for farming on slopes, but they are also extremely time-consuming and labour intensive to create. It has been estimated that a terrace just 10m long and 5m high would take 1,500 donkey loads to fill.<sup>140</sup> They also require constant maintenance to avoid collapse or soil erosion. The terrace wall, which in pre-modern societies was often made from loose stones, might collapse (often from plants growing into the gaps between the stones) leading to a landslide. Other problems include

<sup>137</sup> Gibson & Lewis (2017) (though this paper was arguing that cultivation of box fields was a precursor for terracing).

<sup>138</sup> Bourke & Harwood (2009) 242–244.

<sup>139</sup> Foxhall (1996).

<sup>140</sup> Rozenson *et al.* (1994). See also Blanchemanche (1990) 169.

rapid soil crusting, which reduces water infiltration or, conversely, high infiltration leading to piping and internal soil erosion. All these issues (and many others) might emerge within just a few years of the terrace being abandoned or neglected.<sup>141</sup> In short, terrace agriculture requires a large investment of labour and time, which is only possible within a cooperative, stable community in which knowledge of the peculiarities of terrace agriculture is passed between generations. This is a case, to put it in terms of Marxist social theory, of base shaping superstructure: terraced farming fostering the formation of strong communities and strong families. The recent abandonment of terraces in the Mediterranean has been linked to the “enormous historic investment of human time, energy and skill” required to maintain them, which is no longer viable following the increasing migration of rural workers to cities.<sup>142</sup> These problems are compounded when water resources are scarce and need to be carefully shared amongst different landowners.

The peculiarities of terraced agriculture, therefore, is likely to shape patterns of habitation and culture. As the authors of a study of terracing in Sub-Saharan Africa wrote:

the intricacies of the system, social and cultural as well as technical, and the interdependence of its various facets, demanding with increasing force over time that the population be fixed, the fields and the attached settlements permanent, leading thus to cultural and physical introversion<sup>143</sup>

The authors of the same article pointed to several examples from Sub-Saharan Africa where the pressures of agricultural life in mountainous regions caused communities to develop complex, isolated cultures which are distinct from those in neighbouring regions. While we should not assume that *all* regions which use terracing followed this pattern, it would be wrong to ignore some of the compelling cross-cultural evidence.

Contrary to some traditional anthropological theories about agricultural intensification, these cultures are sometimes able to organise mass-cooperation without the support or encouragement of a state or other external body, as Acabado has argued regarding the case of the Ifugao people who tend the world-famous rice terraces in the northern Philippines.<sup>144</sup> Terrace agriculture does, however, require some system for managing labour and resources, whether externally imposed or internally devised: the Ifugao, for instance, self-organise on the basis of a complex conception of kinship and mutual obligations. We see similar modes of social organisation in other terraced landscapes, such as among the Hanis of southern Yunan.<sup>145</sup> In the Palestinian Arab village of Battir, located southwest of Jerusalem, elaborate irrigated terrace agriculture is sustained by close cooperation amongst the eight

---

<sup>141</sup> Freppaz *et al.* (2008), Arnáez *et al.* (2015) 125–131.

<sup>142</sup> Beaufoy (2001) 7.

<sup>143</sup> Grove & Sutton (1989) 114.

<sup>144</sup> Acabado (2010).

<sup>145</sup> Bouchery (2010).

local landowning clans, who divide water resources equally amongst one another.<sup>146</sup> Terraces also influence conceptions of property rights, as they create clear boundaries between different agricultural plots, often leading to the fragmentation and clearer delineation of territory.<sup>147</sup>

This has several implications for our study. Firstly, it suggests that the silence of our literary sources might be more revealing than we would initially suppose. If terracing was practiced on a large scale, it would have dramatically changed the rhythms of rural life and shaped patterns of settlement and labour. That it receives no mention is suspicious. Even if our literary sources are the product of an urban elite, I propose that a widespread system of terraces would make not only a strong visual impact but would influence even elite understandings of agriculture. The authors of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, however, show no knowledge of terraces at all. The one passage in which Josephus describes the rural landscape of the hinterland of Jerusalem (*BJ* 5.57–58; quoted above), indicates that trenching occurred, and that plots were divided up by sloped fences and walls, but makes no mention of terraces.

Secondly, and more importantly, it places the results of survey archaeology into a new light. As we have seen, a parade of intense ruptures repeatedly reshaped and upturned settlement and daily life in the rural Hill Country during our period as waves of colonists and conquerors displaced pre-existing populations. History, in short, repeatedly intervened to hamper the possibilities for agricultural terracing, as it prevented the transfer of expertise from one generation to another and impeded the development of modes of social organisation which fostered cooperation or the establishment of long-term state structures which could support terraced agriculture.

Indeed, historians and archaeologists are increasingly identifying the fragmentation of extended families and the degeneration of communal ties during the Second Temple period. Much of this scholarship has reacted against Joel Weinberg's influential application of the 'citizen-temple community' model to Persian Judea.<sup>148</sup> Weinberg argued that the community was divided into large extended families, the "houses of the fathers" (בְּתֵי אֲבוֹת; *batey avot*), which were the main *de facto* landholders even as the community adopted an ideal of *collective* ownership. Evidence for this model of land ownership, however, is desperately thin: indeed, as the period wore on, an ideal of communal ownership would have become increasingly meaningless as foreign empires and local powers colonised and expropriated land and imposed harsh tax regimes.<sup>149</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> Ron (1985) 161. The water is sourced from 7 nearby springs.

<sup>147</sup> Horden & Purcell (2000) 236, Blanchemanche (1990), 153.

<sup>148</sup> Weinberg (1992).

<sup>149</sup> Safrai (2003) 109–110, Adams (2014) 11–13.

Scholars have argued that high levels of taxation (especially in periods of crisis) and indebtedness accelerated the decline of small farmers in Second Temple Judea by compelling the poor to sell their land. A particularly revealing early passage is *Nehemiah* 5.1–4 in which the Judeans complain that they have been forced to borrow money against their fields and vineyards from their wealthier compatriots to pay “the king’s tribute”. This process continued in the Hellenistic and early Roman periods—as illustrated by a passage of Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* indicating that small farmers had difficulty paying their taxes in 25 BCE<sup>150</sup>—with land and wealth increasingly concentrated in the hands of well-connected elites who were able to use their wealth and their close relationships with imperial officials to increase their power and landholdings.<sup>151</sup>

Kings and queens owned the most land, including some of the most prosperous parts Palestine. The Zenon papyri provide evidence for extensive royal landholdings in Galilee (to the north of our region).<sup>152</sup> A Greek inscription dating from around 200 BCE from Hefzibah in the Jezreel Valley (which marks the northern border of our region) alludes to territories in the possession of an Egyptian military commander named Ptolemaios. These territories were presumably granted to him by the Egyptian king, and their status was confirmed by the conquering Seleukid Antiochus III.<sup>153</sup> The famously fertile region of Jericho (located in the eastern border of our region), known for its balsam and dates, was also royal land. Josephus describes how Mark Antony transferred control of the region from Herod to Cleopatra, who in turn leased it back to Herod.<sup>154</sup> Several passages of the *Mishnah* and *Babylonian Talmud* also speak of any extraordinarily prosperous area called the ‘King’s Mountain’, supposedly owned by King Alexander Jannaeus. In *B. Berakhot*<sup>155</sup> 44a the mountain is the home of an improbably vast fig orchard whose workforce required 600,000 bowls of sardines every week during harvest time, while in *B. Gittin* 57a 60,000 towns are squeezed within its borders. There has been

---

<sup>150</sup> J. A.J. 15.299–316. Another passage from Twain (1869) illustrates the same problem in more detail some 1,900 years later: “The Syrians are very poor, and yet they are ground down by a system of taxation that would drive any other nation frantic. Last year their taxes were heavy enough, in all conscience—but this year they have been increased by the addition of taxes that were forgiven them in times of famine in former years. On top of this the Government has levied a tax of one-tenth of the whole proceeds of the land. This is only half the story. The Pacha of a Pachalic does not trouble himself with appointing tax-collectors. He figures up what all these taxes ought to amount to in a certain district. Then he farms the collection out. He calls the rich men together, the highest bidder gets the speculation, pays the Pacha on the spot, and then sells out to smaller fry, who sell in turn to a piratical horde of still smaller fry. These latter compel the peasant to bring his little trifle of grain to the village, at his own cost. It must be weighed, the various taxes set apart, and the remainder returned to the producer. But the collector delays this duty day after day, while the producer’s family are perishing for bread; at last the poor wretch, who can not but understand the game, says, “Take a quarter—take half—take two-thirds if you will, and let me go!” It is a most outrageous state of things.

<sup>151</sup> A historical list of some major scholars who have argued for this is helpfully provided in Harland (2002) 520–1, including Grant (1926) 66, Kreissig (1970) 26–27, Applebaum (1976) 633–38, and in particular Fiensy (1991) 21–73 who identifies royal lands in various regions of Palestine, including several tracts in the Hill Country. See also Adams (2014) 128–182.

<sup>152</sup> Tcherikover (1937) 39–40, Tcherikover (1960) 60–73.

<sup>153</sup> Landau (1966).

<sup>154</sup> J. B.J. 1.362.

<sup>155</sup> Likely composed 5th–6th c.CE.

considerable debate about where the King's Mountain might have been, and even whether it existed at all. Joshua Efron has plausibly argued that the story is another example of traditions from later periods being erroneously connected to Alexander Jannaeus in the Babylonian Talmud.<sup>156</sup> Either way, suffice to say that the stories were at least highly exaggerated.<sup>157</sup>

Mechanisms to prevent the appropriation of land by a small elite did exist in the Hebrew Bible, in particular the rule of the Jubilee year in *Leviticus* 25:8–13, but these appear to have largely fallen dormant in the Second Temple period.<sup>158</sup> Moreover, the social institutions which structured the relationship between rich and poor in contemporary Greco-Roman societies—such as euergetism and the patron-client relationship—were absent in Jewish culture, in which the rich faced only moral (as opposed to social) incentives to redistribute their wealth.<sup>159</sup> Unsurprisingly, the share of land owned by the wealthy ballooned through our period, reducing many small farmers to being tenants. The lability of these social and economic conditions actively discouraged the formation of complex social structures, such as we see in Battir or amongst the Ifugao.

Furthermore, it appears that the importance of extended families diminished, and was replaced by the smaller nuclear family. Much scholarship has focused on changes in burial practices, tracking the movement from large family tombs in the First Temple period to individual and nuclear family tombs in the late Second Temple period.<sup>160</sup> The pressures of urbanisation, high-interest usury, and the fragmentation of family plots of land as the population increased in the 1st centuries BCE and CE may all have played a role in the diminution of the extended family.<sup>161</sup>

These broad changes in society and patterns of land tenure, sketched out in very general terms here, all shift the balance of probability against a widespread system of terracing. The instability indicated by our historical narratives and archaeological field survey, in particular the settlement and resettlement of large parts of the Hill Country and the concentration of land into royal and elite hands, suggests that the long-term expertise and close-knit communities required to form large systems of terrace farms might have been difficult to sustain. Indeed, complex, strong webs of kinship relations, which often play a vital role in managing the labour force and structuring economic relations in communities with terraced agriculture, appear to have weakened during our period. Ultimately, then, I would like to posit that we should not, in fact, imagine that terracing was widespread in our period.

---

<sup>156</sup> Efron (1987) 203–205. See also Kasher (1990) 168.

<sup>157</sup> See also *Mishnah Sheviit* 9:2–3, where the King's Mountain appears to refer to a distinct region of Palestine.

<sup>158</sup> Safrai (2003) 106–107.

<sup>159</sup> Goodman (1987) 51–75, Schwartz (2010).

<sup>160</sup> Hachlili & Killebrew (1983), Regev (2004).

<sup>161</sup> Goodman (1987) 58–63.

While some pockets may have escaped the upheaval and social fragmentation I have described and maintained terraces, I argue that, on the whole, terracing is unlikely to have been much used.

I tentatively suggest instead that trenching, for which we have literary evidence (see above), may have been the dominant strategy adopted to cultivate steep slopes. As Foxhall argued, even trenching is more likely to have been used by wealthy landowners with access to large pools of labour, as they required constant digging and re-digging throughout the year. Trenches are far easier to construct than terraces, however, and require less expertise. Trenching is particularly suitable for arboriculture and viticulture, which do not benefit from terraces as much as cereal crops: wealthy landowners, and in particular kings, would have been more likely to produce cereal crops in estates in the plains, which were easier to cultivate.<sup>162</sup> I propose that all of these features would make trenching well suited to the social and economic conditions of late Second Temple Hill Country, in which we have elite landowners, an unusually large labour force, and low levels of long-term stability and expertise.

All this begs the question: if not during our period, when *did* terracing become more widespread in the Hill Country? While this is not the place for an in-depth response to this question, I would suggest, following my reasoning in this chapter, that we should look to a period of long-term stability during which intergenerational expertise and complex cooperative social structures might have emerged. It is possible that the period between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries CE when, as Bar noted in his 2004 study of rural settlement in Late Antique Palestine), “the region witnessed a period of calm in which wars, plagues, and earthquakes were scarce” would be a strong candidate for such a development.<sup>163</sup> To assess the viability of this period more confidently, however, would require a thorough appraisal of the relevant literary and archaeological sources.

## **Cultural Intensification**

### *The Purity Economy*

The concept of ritual purity recurs in the Hebrew Bible and affected many aspects of ancient Jewish life.<sup>164</sup> During the Hellenistic and early Roman periods the influence of purity laws expanded, becoming an issue of concern in domestic, non-ritual contexts across Palestine (including in Samaritan contexts). This change, termed the “purity wave” by Jensen<sup>165</sup>, is richly attested in the literary record, from the documents at Qumran to other Jewish religious texts and the writings of

---

<sup>162</sup> Foxhall (1996).

<sup>163</sup> Bar (2004a) 316, see also Bar (2004b).

<sup>164</sup> The most important passages are *Lev* 11–15 and *Num.* 19.

<sup>165</sup> Jensen (2013) 8.

Josephus.<sup>166</sup> We also see the emergence of *mikvaot* (ritual bathing pools) around the turn of the 1st century BCE, the vast majority of which were built in Judea with a particularly heavy concentration in Jerusalem itself.<sup>167</sup>

The purity wave had a significant impact on the agricultural economy of Palestine in the 1st centuries BCE and CE. Our late Second Temple sources provide particularly rich evidence for concerns surrounding oil production. In *Judith*, as Hasmonean religious text, Judith is described as packing her own olive oil before entering the camp of the foreign general Holofernes (10:5).<sup>168</sup> During the First Jewish Revolt, John of Gischala bought up the supply of Galilean olive oil, and then sold it on to Syrian Jews at vastly inflated prices.<sup>169</sup> These Jews presumably would not have purchased this oil unless they had been compelled by purity concerns.<sup>170</sup> Ritually pure oil was more expensive to produce, as it required a large well-supervised labour force. Archaeological evidence complements our written sources. In a 2008 article, Yonatan Adler compiled evidence for *miqva'ot* (ritual bathing pools) near agricultural installations. He identified around 20 adjacent to wine and olive presses, the majority of which were in the Hill Country (particularly the area around Jerusalem and Jericho). Several more were identified near presses, but were also close to domestic residences and could not be securely linked to agricultural (as opposed to domestic) usage.<sup>171</sup> It has also been argued that the presence of scoops made from the scapulae (shoulder bones) of animals at many Second Temple olive oil production facilities reflects the perception that bone utensils were easier to ritually purify.<sup>172</sup> There is less corresponding literary or archaeological evidence for similar concerns about grain production: this might be because, as Rabbinic evidence seems to indicate, goods were only considered liable to become impure after they were harvested.<sup>173</sup>

The act of eating food also seems to have generated risks of ritual impurity. This is bluntly explained at *Mark* 7:3–4, which states that the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands and drinking vessels. Purity laws surrounding vessels are particularly interesting for our purposes. While some materials could be cleaned if they came into contact with sources of impurity (such as un-Kosher animals or dead bodies), earthenware vessels had simply to be broken according to *Leviticus*.<sup>174</sup> This led many

---

<sup>166</sup> Qumran: Regev (2003), Werrett (2007); New Testament & Josephus: Jensen (2013) 27–28, see also below.

<sup>167</sup> Adler (2014) 68.

<sup>168</sup> See Chapter 3 for discussion of the date of *Judith*.

<sup>169</sup> J. BJ 591–593; see also J Vit. 13.

<sup>170</sup> The rules for kosher oil production are also outlined at length at *Mishnah Taharot* 9–10.3, though by the time *Mishnah Avodah Zarah* was written this taboo appears to have disappeared (2.6). For further discussion of this change see Goodman (1990) and Rosenblum (2009).

<sup>171</sup> Adler (2008).

<sup>172</sup> Horowitz (2011).

<sup>173</sup> Adler (2008) 67. That said, at *Tob.* 1:10–11 Tobit refuses to eat non-Jewish bread (ἄρτοι).

<sup>174</sup> *Lev.* 11:33.

Jews to adopt stone vessels instead, which were apparently considered immune from impurity.<sup>175</sup>

Purity-conscious Jews who did use earthenware pottery would need to take special care to ensure that it remained out of the hands of gentiles: they were advised in the *Mishnah*, for instance, to watch their pots being fired at the kiln to ensure that no gentile came into contact with them.<sup>176</sup>

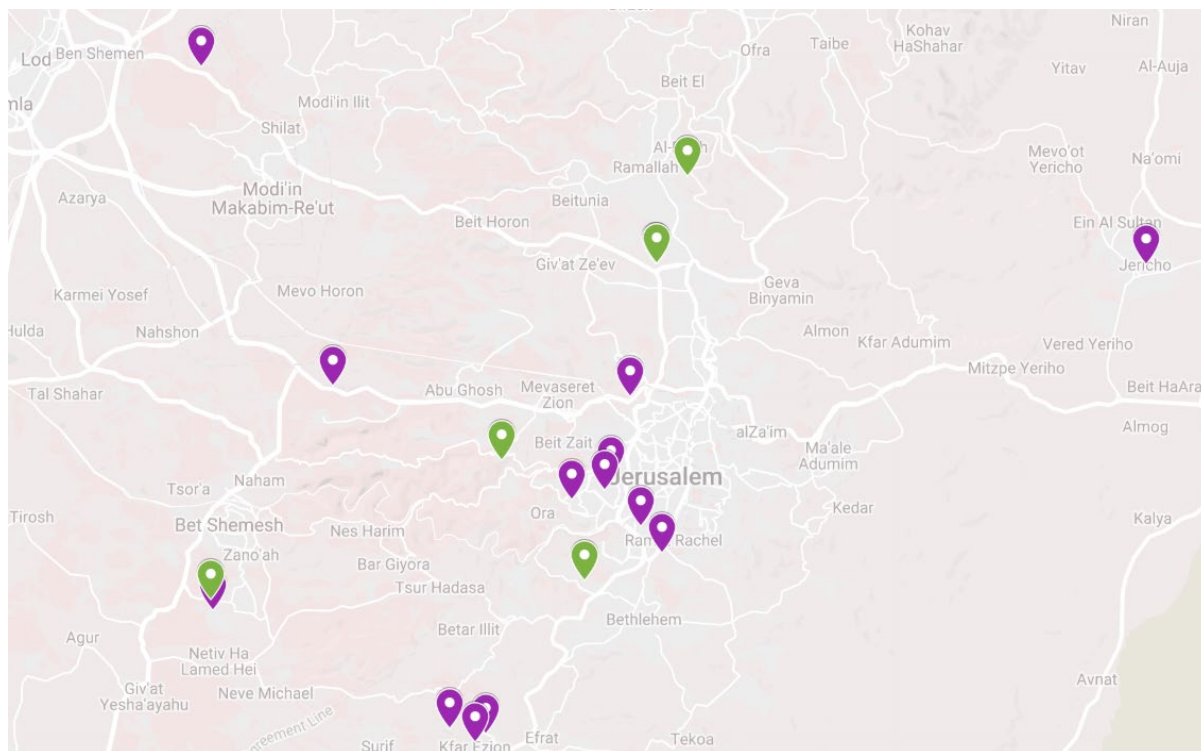


Fig. 10: Map of mikva'ot which seem to have had agricultural uses: purple pins indicate wine presses, green pins indicate olive presses.

These restrictions would appear to explain the sharp decline in imported eastern sigillata A (ESA) kitchenware in 1st century CE sites, and the proliferation of local pottery workshops in Palestine in the mid-1st century BCE (including one near Jerusalem at Binyanei Ha'uma, and another at Qumran close to the Dead Sea). These workshops were all in Jewish majority-areas, and all produced kitchen pottery. Their emergence is not readily explained by population growth, as the mid-1st century precedes the Herodian population boom. Andrea Berlin has connected the phenomenon to the emergence of a distinct rustic Jewish material culture, which she calls 'Household Judaism'. Several other elements of 'Household Judaism'—standardised storage jars, the spread of plain knife-pared lamps and stone vessels, etc.—can also plausibly be connected to growing concerns about purity. Again, then, purity concerns had a demonstrable impact on the rural economy and everyday life.

<sup>175</sup> The best literary evidence for this is again Rabbinic: *Mishnah Kelim* 6:2, 10:1, *Mishnah Oholoth* 5:5, *Mishnah Parah* 5:5, *Mishnah Beitzah* 2:3. Some scholars have argued that the Qumran sectarians believed that stone vessels were, in fact, susceptible to impurity, though this is controversial: see discussion in Adler (2010).

<sup>176</sup> *Mishnah Parah* 5.1

It is worth noting that stone vessels in particular do not seem to have spread to Samaria, and do indeed appear to have been a specifically Jewish phenomenon: thus the cultural-religious fault between the two communities (explored further in Chapter 4) also formed something of a material-cultural, and perhaps an economic, boundary. It is also interesting that Jerusalemite elites seem to have felt less constrained by these concerns, using decorated serving-dishes and Italian-style pans.<sup>177</sup>

It is difficult to determine why the purity wave occurred. By far the most influential scholar of purity, Mary Douglas, argued in *Natural Symbols* that a strong interest in purity was likely to emerge when groups felt under threat from outsiders, with ritual cleaning satisfying individuals' urge to cleanse their culture of outside threats.<sup>178</sup> In a 2002 article, Andrea Berlin places the rise of purity in Galilee in this context, arguing that it was a self-conscious reaction against 'Romanization'. Most scholars have argued along the same lines, suggesting that the 'purity wave' was a consequence of rising demand caused either by a rise in religious feeling or a desire to flaunt an ethnic identity.<sup>179</sup>

While not discounting such factors, I would like to suggest the economic factors might also have been at play. The rising interest in ritually pure goods and seasonal influxes of pilgrims created an enormous new market. We have already seen how John of Gischala conspired to maximise his profits by taking control of supply of olive oil. We should also imagine that peacetime producers were alive to the economic potential of the 'purity wave'. Some of the economic implications of the growing interest in purity is reflected in Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 12:119–120:

καὶ γὰρ Σέλευκος ὁ Νικάτωρ ἐν αἷς ἔκτισε πόλεις ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ καὶ τῇ κάτω Συρίᾳ καὶ ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ μητροπόλει Ἀντιοχείᾳ πολιτείας αὐτοὺς ἡξίωσε καὶ τοῖς ἐνοικισθεῖσιν ἰσοτίμους ἀπέφηνε Μακεδόσιν καὶ Ἑλλήσιν, ὡς τὴν πολιτείαν ταύτην ἔτι καὶ νῦν διαμένειν· τεκμήριον δὲ τοῦτο τοῦς Ἰουδαίους μὴ βουλομένους ἄλλοφύλῳ ἐλαίῳ χρῆσθαι λαμβάνειν ὠρισμένον τι παρὰ τῶν γυμνασιάρχων εἰς ἐλαίου τιμὴν ἀργύριον ἐκέλευσεν· ὁ τοῦ δήμου τῶν Ἀντιοχέων ἐν τῷ νῦν πολέμῳ λῦσαι προαιρουμένου, Μουκιανὸς ἡγεμὼν ὧν τότε τῆς Συρίας ἐτήρησεν

Thus Seleucus [I ] Nikator gave them [the Jews] citizenship in Asia, Lower Syria, and in his capital city Antioch. He granted them equal rights to the Macedonians and Greeks who inhabited these areas, and so that their citizenship remains now: the evidence for this is that he ordered that the Jews who would not use foreign oil should receive money from the *gymnasiarchs* to buy their own oil. When the people of Antioch tried to take this from them during the recent war, the governor Mucianus maintained it.<sup>180</sup>

---

<sup>177</sup> Berlin (2005).

<sup>178</sup> Douglas (1996).

<sup>179</sup> Berlin (2002), Deines (1996), Jensen (2013), 15–16.

<sup>180</sup> It is likely that it was in fact a later Seleukid monarch who introduced these privileges: Goodman (1990).

This passage indicates that money was specially allocated to purchase the—presumably more expensive, given the higher production costs—oil from Jewish producers.

Those goods which were sold to pilgrims must also (by definition) have been ‘surplus’ to the requirements of producers. In the case of olive oil, then, it is much more likely that these producers were a small number of elite landowners with large and diversified estates. It is possible, furthermore, that producers were not merely passive beneficiaries of this trend, but also played an active role in fostering its development. A religious prohibition on foreign goods would have had the same effect as a high tariff: that is, artificially inflating the price of local goods. This is not to say that the ‘purity wave’ should be characterised purely as a cynical con pushed by ruthless elites pursuing their own self-interest. I merely intend to stress that economic factors, as well as cultural and religious factors, may have played a role in stimulating this seismic change in material culture. Some of the economic implications of ritually pure olive oil were considered by Jordan Rosenblum in a 2009 article. Rosenblum argues that the prohibition on Gentile oil was established as a new boundary between Jews and non-Jews in the late Second Temple Period, and was lifted in *Mishnah Avodah Zarah* because the high price of oil was having a negative impact on poor Jewish consumers.<sup>181</sup> He points to a well-known similar case in *Mishnah Keritot*, in which Rabbi Shimon ben Gamaliel reduces sacrificial requirements to lower the price of a pair of birds in Jerusalem.<sup>182</sup> While Rosenblum’s arguments are persuasive, he does not arrive at the obvious complementary conclusion that local oil producers might have had a hand in pushing for the custom in the first place, which afforded them financial benefits.

Until recently there has been little scholarly exploration of ritual economies, in part because economists tend to see ritual as an impediment to ‘rational’ activity, while anthropologists have emphasised the “performative” social and political aspects of cultural practices.<sup>183</sup> Discussions of ritual purity in particular tend to focus on their role in sustaining or challenging pre-existing hierarchies and “power structures”. Hence the study of modern Islamic ritual purity (*taharah*) has focused on the ways laws control women or signal resistance to Westernisation and colonialism.<sup>184</sup> The groundwork for a study of ritual economies was laid by Douglas and Isherwood’s 1979 *The World of Goods*, in which the consumption of goods was characterised as a ritualised social process with deep cultural and social implications.<sup>185</sup> It is only recently, however, that economic anthropologists and historians have begun to develop a common theoretical framework within which

---

<sup>181</sup> Rosenblum (2009).

<sup>182</sup> *Mishnah Keritot* 1:7.

<sup>183</sup> Gudeman & Han (2015) 2.

<sup>184</sup> *Taharah* and women: Marcus (1984), Delaney (1988); recently challenged in Gauvain (2013). *Taharah* and Westernisation: Antoun (2008) 73–85.

<sup>185</sup> Douglas & Isherwood (1979).

the subject can be explored, a task which remains ongoing.<sup>186</sup> Central to this movement is the idea that, as one scholar put it, “ritual practice at its heart is economic practice; that is, it is another kind of production”.<sup>187</sup> In the case of ritually pure goods such as olive oil and stoneware in the late Second Temple Hill Country, this is particularly clear.

Furthermore, ritualising the production and consumption of goods has been observed to serve economic interests in various historical contexts. Freidel and Sabloff argued, for instance, that the Late Postclassic Maya used ritual to “cloak” their trade routes in sanctity, protecting merchants from hostile forces.<sup>188</sup> In the case of the ‘purity wave’, ritual would have maximised the value of certain goods. By producing olive oil under tightly controlled conditions an ordinary, everyday product was transformed into a luxury commodity which could be sold at an inflated price: thus the value of those goods produced on sloped terrain was dramatically increased. The economic self-interest of Palestinian oil producers were thus “cloaked” in religious and ethnic language. These elites, in particular the Hasmonean and Herodian kings, had intimate connections to the Temple and influential religious sects such as the Pharisees. It is striking, indeed, that while the curious (and not biblically mandated) prohibition on foreign olive oil was promoted in contemporary Jewish literature (such as *Judith*), laws which would have *disadvantaged* landed elites were not applied or much discussed. The most obvious example is the rule of the Jubilee year, which was stipulated in the same biblical book (*Leviticus*) as most purity laws. In this model, then, the commercialisation of Jewish ritual, as critiqued in the Gospels, may have similarly reshaped the agricultural economy.<sup>189</sup>

## Conclusions

In this chapter, I have explored the structure of the rural economy in the Second Temple Hill Country. My findings can be condensed into two broad observations.

Firstly, rural life in the Hill Country was unstable during our period. Political upheavals and waves of new colonists transformed patterns of habitation, as reflected in our literary evidence and the results of archaeological field surveys. Furthermore, significant social changes led to the fragmentation of larger kinship networks and the decline of the small peasant farmer. This instability hindered the maintenance of certain adaptive strategies, in particular terraced agriculture which requires a labour force with long-term expertise and a rural culture which fosters cooperation and organised resource management. I have suggested instead that trenching, an alternative strategy for farming steep slopes,

---

<sup>186</sup> E.g. Wells & Davis-Salazar (2007), McAnany & Wells (2008), Gudeman & Hann (2015).

<sup>187</sup> Sabloff (2008) 271.

<sup>188</sup> Freidel & Sabloff (1984) 192.

<sup>189</sup> E.g. *Jn.* 2:13–16, *Mt.* 21:12–13.

may have been more common. This has implications for how we envision the source of the grain supply to Jerusalem, as trenching is most suitable for arboriculture and viticulture. I propose that the majority of grain was produced in the plains and valleys, where such crops could be cultivated without the expense of constructing terraces. As such, this section of the chapter, through using the comparative historical principles described in the Introduction, explores a key aspect of the relationship between the local population and their environment.

Secondly, the rising power and expanding estates of wealthy elites, which partly arose as a consequence of oppressive taxation policies and royal expropriation of land, further contributed to social breakdown and reshaped rural life. I have suggested that the economic interests of these elites played a role in the development of a purity-based ritual economy in the Second Temple Period, a change which also had complex cultural-religious roots. The emphasis on ritual purity increased the value of those goods produced on slopes, particularly olive oil. Returning again to the theoretical framework outlined in the Introduction, we can see the complex co-evolution of sacred and productive landscape discourses, possibly driven by socio-economic processes.

Ultimately, I believe that Hill Country should be viewed as a particular type of productive zone in the late Second Temple Period. Its rural economy was not, I have suggested, organised to maximise the output of goods which were essential to supply the city of Jerusalem and its pilgrimage. Rather, I have argued that its place in the regional economy was determined by the interests of elites seeking to entrench their economic position.

## Chapter 2: Dynamics of Exchange: Trade, Acculturation, Infrastructure

### Introduction

#### *Trading in a Hill Country*

Ἡμεῖς τοίνυν οὔτε χώραν οἰκοῦμεν παράλιον οὔτ' ἐμπορίαις χαίρομεν οὐδὲ ταῖς πρὸς ἄλλους διὰ τούτων ἐπιμιξίαις, ἀλλ' εἰσὶ μὲν ἡμῶν αἱ πόλεις μακρὰν ἀπὸ θαλάσσης ἀνωκισμέναι, χώραν δὲ ἀγαθὴν νεμόμενοι ταύτην ἐκπονοῦμεν. μάλιστα δὴ πάντων περὶ παιδοτροφίαν φιλοκαλοῦντες καὶ τὸ φυλάττειν τοὺς νόμους καὶ τὴν κατὰ τούτους παραδεδομένην εὐσέβειαν ἔργον ἀναγκαιότατον παντὸς τοῦ βίου πεποιημένοι. προσούσης τοίνυν τοῖς εἰρημένοις καὶ τῆς περὶ τὸν βίον ἡμῶν ιδιότητος οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς παλαιοῖς χρόνοις ποιοῦν ἡμῖν πρὸς τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἐπιμιξίαν, ὥσπερ Αἰγυπτίοις μὲν τὰ παρ' αὐτῶν ἐξαγόμενα καὶ πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἰσαγόμενα, τοῖς δὲ τὴν παράλιον τῆς Φοινίκης κατοικοῦσιν ἢ περὶ τὰς καπηλείας καὶ περὶ τὰς ἐμπορίας σπουδὴ διὰ τὸ φιλοχρηματεῖν

We do not live in a coastal country, and we do not enjoy trade or the resulting mixture with other [peoples]: our cities are built far from the sea, and we work this fine country which we have been given. Above all we value raising our children and believe that the most important task in life is to protect the laws and pious practices which have been handed down to us. When you combine the strangeness of our way of life with the factors I have mentioned, there was nothing in ancient times that would have caused us to interact with Greeks, as the Egyptians did by importing and exporting goods to them, or the Phoenicians, who live by the sea, did by their greedy love of commerce and trade.<sup>190</sup>

In this well-known passage, Josephus describes Judea as disconnected from, and uninterested in, long-distance trade. It serves a polemical function in the text, providing an explanation for the absence of Jews in ancient Greek histories. It also, however, raises interesting questions about ancient Judea's relationship with the outside world. Josephus here argues that the region was cut off from networks of cultural and economic exchange, not only because their major settlements were located far from the Mediterranean Sea, but because the Jews are instinctively suspicious of commerce and the resulting 'corruption' of their culture.

---

<sup>190</sup> J. Ap. 1.60–62.

At first glance the region's terrain does indeed seem to naturally isolate its inhabitants from the outside world. The Hill Country was separated from the main arteries of Mediterranean trade by numerous inconvenient features. The mountains themselves were, naturally, an impediment to travellers approaching the region from any direction. The difficulty of traversing the Hill Country is reflected in a passage in *Isaiah*<sup>191</sup>, which Dorsey uses to begin the first chapter of his study of roads in Iron Age Israel:

פנו דרך יהוה; ישרו, בערבָה, מסלָה, לא־הינו. כל־גיא, ינשא, וכל־הר וגבעה, ינשפֹל; והיה העֶלְבִּי לְמִישׁוֹר, והרְכָסִים לְבָקְעָה  
Clear the way of Yahweh, straighten a highway for our God in the Arabah. Let every valley be lifted up and every mountain and hill be flattened, so that the crags are smoothed and the ridges become plains.<sup>192</sup>

The topography of the Hill Country not only impeded but directed trade flows. Travel was shaped by the erratic twists and turns of valleys, whose tendrils snake through the Hill Country in all directions. Broad valleys were preferred to narrow valleys, since the latter were far more susceptible to flooding and made travellers an easier target for surprise bandit attacks.<sup>193</sup> Even in the broad valleys, travellers tended to hug the edges of the valleys on slightly raised ground, which would avoid wet soil on the valley floor and make it easier to ford streams.<sup>194</sup> Stepped roads were also cut into the mountains themselves to facilitate travel, winding up steep slopes. These roads, termed ‘pilgrimage roads’ in a recent archaeologically-based study by Yigal and Yotam Tepper (but presumably also used for other purposes), were typically only around 2 meters wide and would have been difficult for large groups and pack animals to traverse.<sup>195</sup>

There were other natural obstacles to trade. In the west, the Palestinian coast had few good natural harbours. For much of its history, there were no major port cities along most of the coast between Joppa and Akko. This changed with the construction of the Sebastos harbour of Caesarea Maritima during the reign of Herod I, who built the city to better connect his kingdom to Mediterranean trade networks (see below). In the east was the Jordan River, and then the vast, forbidding Syrian desert. This isolated the Hill Country from long-distance routes of travel and exchange with Mesopotamia: indeed, the primary east-west route followed the Euphrates before turning south-west at Zeugma towards Syrian Antioch.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>191</sup> *Isaiah* is notoriously difficult to date and appears to have been the product of numerous phases of composition between the 8th and the 4th centuries BCE: see Groenewald (2009) 76–77, Beuken (2000) x, Sweeney (1996).

<sup>192</sup> *Isa.* 40:3–4, Dorsey (1991) 1. This is an example of what Donald Meinig termed landscape as problem: that is, the tendency of certain observers “to look at the landscape and imagine a different one: one they have redesigned” (Meinig (1979)). The author presents the terrain of the Hill Country as a logistical challenge, which can only be resolved by flattening out the mountains and valleys.

<sup>193</sup> Noth (1966) 88, Dorsey (1991) 40.

<sup>194</sup> Casson (1974) 167–168, Dorsey (1991) 41–42.

<sup>195</sup> Tepper & Tepper (2011).

<sup>196</sup> This is the impression given by several ancient authors, including Isidore of Charax, though Isidore appears to be primarily describing political and military routes: see Millar (2006). See Chapter 6 for further details.

Furthermore, if the region was likely to have been a relatively modest producer of agricultural goods (as argued in Chapter 1), then we must also consider the possibility that there was little surplus for the local population to trade. The region's unusual local cultures also produced purchasing habits which were quite different to surrounding regions. The most significant example of this tendency is the "purity wave", also explored in more detail in Chapter 1, which saw Jews prefer Jewish-made, ritually pure goods. These factors may well have combined to make trade in the Hill Country a distinctly unappealing trade destination, incurring high travel expenses to reach a poor population bound by a series of obscure and complex cultural constraints which prevented them from purchasing certain goods.

Some scholars, swayed by the accumulation of environmental and cultural barriers to trade, have adopted an essentially Josephan, isolationist model for Judea's relationship with the outside world. In his 1994 study of the economy of Roman Palestine, for instance, Ze'ev Safrai bluntly states:

During the Second Temple period the national Jewish economy was almost entirely self-sufficient within itself and there was very little exporting or importing.<sup>197</sup>

Others have adopted a less extreme, though still essentially minimalist, model for trade in ancient Palestine. Seth Schwartz, for instance, has argued that excessive reliance on rabbinic estimates for agricultural productivity, combined with a tendency to uncritically use pottery distributions to determine the existence and scale of trade, has led to overly optimistic estimates for the size of trade in Roman Palestine, which he believes to have been of relatively low intensity.<sup>198</sup>

So far, this picture conforms to the common modern characterisation of mountain communities as isolated, poor backwaters which were unable to participate in the richer economic and cultural life of surrounding regions. The genuine physical challenges associated with life in mountainous places—impaired mobility, more difficult cultivation, colder climates—were characterised as romantic hardships in 19th and 20th century travelogues, and mountain regions were reimagined as ideal theatres of self-discovery, human endeavour, and rugged masculinity.<sup>199</sup> This is mirrored by historical constructions of hill countries as rough, bleak areas inhabited by semi-barbarous peoples who were either too backward or too weak to move into wealthy neighbouring regions ("the half-wild mountains, where man has taken root like a hardy plant"<sup>200</sup>). This attitude has discouraged archaeological survey in mountainous regions, with scholars often more tempted by supposedly culturally and materially richer lowlands.<sup>201</sup>

---

<sup>197</sup> Safrai (1994) 125.

<sup>198</sup> Schwartz (2006) 40 n.54.

<sup>199</sup> Cosgrove & Della Dora (2008) 11.

<sup>200</sup> Braudel (1972) 29–30.

<sup>201</sup> Mientjes (2012) 250–251.

All that said, we might be sceptical of the isolationist model in the light of more recent studies of ancient trade. As Wilson and Bowman recently observed, the study of trade in the ancient Mediterranean has “changed radically” in recent decades.<sup>202</sup> In the mid-20th century, the minimalist view that trade played a small role in the ancient economy remained dominant. The poverty of ordinary workers, the perceived homogeneity of the agricultural products of the Mediterranean basin, and the apparent low status of traders, led scholars such as AHM Jones and Moses Finley to argue that trade was restricted to luxury goods, and was of little concern to most agricultural producers.<sup>203</sup> This view has been challenged in recent decades, partly as a result of the proliferation of archaeological evidence since the 1970s, and partly because of the emergence of new models which recontextualised our evidence and interpreted it in new ways. Among the most important studies was Horden & Purcell’s *The Corrupting Sea*, which emphasised the role of trade in sustaining communities which were undergoing periods of drought and famine.<sup>204</sup> Ultimately, the emerging consensus in the early 21st century has increasingly stressed the importance of inter-regional trade as a feature of ancient Mediterranean economies, particularly during the Roman period. Under this model, we would expect that the Hill Country was bound, perhaps quite intimately, to networks of trade with surrounding areas. This basic approach underpins some recent studies of trade in ancient Palestine.<sup>205</sup>

It is not simple to determine which of these models most accurately captures conditions in the ancient Hill Country. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to closely track volumes of ancient trade purely through a ‘bottom-up’ approach based on the prevalence of imported goods in the archaeological record. Firstly, there is the obvious point that only durable artefacts survive until the present day. For the most part, our strongest archaeological evidence for trade is pottery: this, however, might not correspond precisely with trade if the product most widely traded was, for instance, transported in wooden barrels. Furthermore, it is sometimes difficult to date pottery precisely, and is usually impossible to determine if an item was sold significantly later than it was made.<sup>206</sup> Our literary evidence is often no less problematic. Rabbinic sources, which have formed the core of most studies of the economy of Roman Palestine, contain a significant amount of information about production and exchange, but are still subject to the problems identified in Chapter 1: most significantly, a lack of chronological and geographical specificity which makes them difficult to use given the spatial and temporal boundaries of the present study.<sup>207</sup>

---

<sup>202</sup> Wilson & Bowman (2017).

<sup>203</sup> Finley (1973), Jones (1974).

<sup>204</sup> Wilson & Bowman (2017), Horden & Purcell (2000).

<sup>205</sup> Pastor (2010).

<sup>206</sup> Lapin (2001) 38–84. See also Pastor (2010) 288–299.

<sup>207</sup> Rabbinic sources are the core of, for instance, Safrai (1994), Rosenfeld & Menirav (2005), Pastor (2010).

In response to these issues, some scholars have adopted ‘top-down’ approaches which seek to apply sociological or economic models to the evidence. While this approach does not allow us to resolve the issue of quantifying the volume of trade in ancient Palestine, it can help to lead us to new, alternative questions which can illuminate features of the region’s ancient economy and culture. Hayim Lapin, for instance, has used central place theory to develop a hierarchy of markets in the region (though it should be noted that some historians have strongly questioned the value of central place theory in the study of the pre-modern world).<sup>208</sup> Other scholars of ancient trade have adopted comparative historical and ethnoarchaeological methodologies, interpreting ancient evidence in the light of better documented, more recent periods, in order to determine, for instance, the direction of trade routes.<sup>209</sup>

This chapter will involve a combination of ‘top-down’ methodological principles and close ‘bottom-up’ readings of the evidence to assess the significance of trade. As I have already indicated, it is difficult to state anything with confidence about the volume of trade in a historical region, and it is not my intention to attempt to produce statistics about the amount or value of different imports and exports. However, I believe that Pastor is excessively pessimistic when he argues that “all attempts at quantifying the trade of Roman Palestine—how large a portion it played in the general economy of the empire, or even its importance within Palestine itself—are doomed to failure because of the scattered nature of the evidence”.<sup>210</sup> While the remarkably sudden and dramatic shifts in the types of material culture we find in ancient Palestine, which occur at several junctions during our period, may not allow us to precisely quantify trade, they surely tell us *something* about the developing importance of exchange and emerging attitudes towards production and consumption of cultural artefacts. In the study of virtually every historical region in the ancient world, the evidence is “scattered” and unclear: it is our role as historians to make the best of limited sources.

In addressing these issues, I will pursue several closely related lines of enquiry. Firstly, I will attempt to determine the extent to which the Hill Country was integrated into local, regional, and inter-regional networks of exchange. I use the word ‘exchange’ as opposed to ‘trade’ deliberately, to stress that I am interested in the diffusion of material culture for ideological, cultural, and religious reasons as well as economic reasons. I will also attempt to relate this history of exchange to the broader social, political, and cultural history of the region, exploring issues such as the place of elites from the Hill Country within wider imperial power structures. Furthermore, to support this discussion I will attempt to sketch out a skeleton of some of the infrastructure networks which supported and facilitated exchange in the region (especially roads), primarily relying on reasonable assessments made by other

---

<sup>208</sup> Lapin (2001), c.f. Pastor (2010) 302. For a critique of central place theory, see Horden & Purcell (2000) 102–103.

<sup>209</sup> See Seland (2015) for an articulation of this approach.

<sup>210</sup> Pastor (2010) 304.

historians and archaeologists. I hope that, collectively, this chapter will constitute a basic history of cultural interactions, and attitudes to external peoples and goods, in the region over several centuries. Firstly, however, I would like to outline three of the ‘top-down’ methodological approaches which I will use to build my ‘bottom-up’ comments on smaller bodies of evidence into coherent historical arguments.

### *Acculturation and Material Culture*

There is a strong tendency to use the spread of non-local goods as evidence for an outward-looking, cosmopolitan culture. The author of a recent study of Attic pottery in Persian Palestine, for instance, claimed that “Attic pottery remains an indication of economic openness, a taste for foreign objects and wealth”.<sup>211</sup> Similarly, in a series of articles Andrea Berlin has argued that the use of simple, locally produced pottery in early Roman Palestine is a reflection of an increasingly inward-looking, exclusive, rustic Jewish identity and aesthetic (which she terms ‘household Judaism’), which she interprets as resistance to the spread of ‘Romanisation’.<sup>212</sup>

There are numerous problems with this approach. Firstly, it assumes that people’s habits of consumption are necessarily consistent with their political beliefs and cultural outlook. This is, however, rarely the case: far-right activists in the United States or Europe might well eat Indian food or drive Japanese cars, while committed anticapitalist revolutionaries might publicise the revolution on Apple iPhones or energise themselves before a protest march with a Starbucks coffee. This might not be the result of hypocrisy, or even the subordination of strongly held beliefs to convenience and necessity. The apparent contradictions may, crucially, simply go unnoticed by the consumers themselves who do not consider the goods they are purchasing to be particularly “foreign” or “capitalist”.

Even when changes in material culture are consciously adapted, we cannot necessarily associate this with either enthusiasm or hatred for a broader programme of cultural changes such as ‘Romanisation’ or ‘Hellenisation’. Indeed the term ‘Romanisation’, which was first coined at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when European imperialism was at its peak, has been intensely criticized by scholars since the 1990s, and has been perceived as a colonialist paradigm which denies the agency of local communities by presenting them as reactive recipients of cultural change.<sup>213</sup> In 1990, Millett attempted to re-purpose the term, moving away from a model of imposition from above, and towards

---

<sup>211</sup> Nunn (2014) 418.

<sup>212</sup> E.g. Berlin (2002), (2005), (2013).

<sup>213</sup> The term first appeared in Haverfield (1905–6).

a focus on how local elites willingly adopted aspects of Roman culture.<sup>214</sup> Others have proposed alternative terms which are completely free of the ideological baggage of Romanisation. These new models are often borrowed from sociolinguistics. In 2001 Webster, influenced by the archaeology of the New World, suggested the term 'creolisation' as a replacement. This model emphasises non-elite, 'bottom-up' change, with subject populations creating new subcultures from elements of both 'native' and 'colonising' cultures through a process of “resistant adaptation”.<sup>215</sup> More recently Wallace-Hadrill, adopting another linguistic term, proposed 'bilingualism' as an alternative. Here, rather than two cultures mixing or merging, distinct elements of each “can survive in plurality alongside each other”, with individuals and groups “code-switching” between both.<sup>216</sup> One of the most sophisticated and effective examples of the integration of the study of sociolinguistics and Roman imperial culture is Alex Mullen’s 2013 *Southern Gaul and the Mediterranean: multilingualism and multiple identities in the Iron Age and Roman periods*. Included within her complex theorisation of language use is the suggestion that we should take Wallace-Hadrill’s interest in bilingualism further: instead of only focusing on the ‘code-switching’ aspect of bilingualism, she argues, we should also “play with the two other main bilingual phenomena, interference and borrowing”. Interference describes when a feature from one language is unconsciously transferred into another, while borrowing describes a situation where a foreign loan-word has become fully integrated in the new language so that its use is no longer considered to be a code-switch (a classic example of borrowing which Mullen uses to illustrate the process is the word ‘pyjama’, which was introduced into English from Persian via Hindi). Both concepts, Mullen argues, might profitably be employed in the study of cultural change.<sup>217</sup> Numerous further alternatives have also been proposed over the last two decades.<sup>218</sup>

For our purposes, the most valuable observation is that models which simplistically interpret material culture in imperial territories as a struggle between imperialism and local ‘resistance’ have been problematised and complicated in the study of Greco-Roman antiquity. That said, as we shall see, this framework remains influential in the study of ancient Palestine, and I believe that this has obscured the complex interplay of factors which drive cultural change. Furthermore, perhaps because of many scholars’ specific interest in Jewish history, there is occasionally a tendency to operate as if there were only two cultures in the region, Jewish, and ‘imperial’ non-Jewish, obscuring both the diversity *within* those two broad groups, and the presence of other peoples (such as the Samaritans). While not discounting the work of the many brilliant archaeologists and historians who have adopted these approaches, I seek to further nuance their findings and suggest alternative explanations for change.

---

<sup>214</sup> Millett (1990).

<sup>215</sup> Webster (2001).

<sup>216</sup> Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 13.

<sup>217</sup> Mullen (2013).

<sup>218</sup> Including: métissage, Le Roux (2004); discrepant identities, Mattingly (2004); globalisation, Pitts & Versluys (2014).

### *Studying the Roads System*

The course of trade routes in the ancient world dramatically influenced the economic, cultural, and social development of communities which they passed or, indeed, bypassed.<sup>219</sup> As such, mapping out the roads networks has considerable historiographical importance. While this task is, in practice, extremely difficult, several scholars have developed frameworks which have allowed them to tentatively propose a general structure for the roads system of an ancient region.



*Fig. 11: Roads network in Persian Palestine as proposed by Roll and Tal. Coordinates are according to the Universal Transverse Mercator<sup>220</sup> [Copyright image removed]*

In their brief study of the route network in Persian Palestine, Roll and Tal describe five “essential constituents” that ought to shape discussion of this issue: the geography, topography, settlement patterns, economy and, in their view the most important of all, the priorities of the central authority.<sup>221</sup> This provides a convenient framework to study the roads of Palestine during the Second Temple period. As these factors indicate, any attempt to reconstruct the roads of ancient Palestine is dependent

---

<sup>219</sup> Seland (2015) 5.

<sup>220</sup> Roll & Tal (2008) 228.

<sup>221</sup> Roll & Tal (2008) 220–221.

on educated guesses and assumptions, though we occasionally have explicit evidence (such as Roman milestones) which allows us to more precisely date and map specific roads. Our literary sources are not principally interested in transport routes, but as we shall see it is possible to glean some information from scraps preserved in historical narratives.

Ultimately, the general structure of the roads system appears to have remained relatively consistent throughout the Second Temple period, with the most important and well-travelled road running north-south along the coast and occasionally branching east into the Hill Country. The roads network within the Hill Country consisted of a mix of major roads following the valleys and ridges, and smaller local paths snaking around the mountains. During the late Second Temple period the roads in Palestine seem to have increasingly led to Jerusalem, and we have evidence for major public roads built to facilitate travel to the city.<sup>222</sup>

It is worth considering what mode of transport roads were built to facilitate in the ancient Hill Country. Dorsey has found that most travel in the Hebrew Bible appears to have been by foot or by donkey (and occasionally by mule or camel) when transporting goods, while travel on horseback was very rare outside of military contexts.<sup>223</sup> This generally holds for the New Testament, too: horses are occasionally mentioned in military or state contexts (e.g. *Acts* 23:23–24) but never, to my knowledge, as an ordinary mode of transport for civilians. The 2-meter wide stepped roads found in the Second Temple Hill Country would have presented considerable difficulties for those with pack animals, since they would have to move slowly to prevent costly trips and injuries, and would have been doubly inconvenient for those with wheeled vehicles.<sup>224</sup> It is not completely clear whether these roads caused or responded to the lack of animal-based travel in ancient Palestine. The immense difficulty of travelling through the Hill Country with animals is reflected at Josephus *Jewish War* 2.546, in which Cestius Gallus orders his soldiers to kill all the mules, asses, and other pack animals to speed up his retreat from Jerusalem to the coast following his disastrous campaign of 66 CE. Travel with animals would have been considerably easier in the main roads in the valleys and plains of Palestine, which by the Roman period were usually much more level and were between 5 and 15 meters wide, or in the cities themselves, where streets were generally around 5.5 meters wide. The differences in road widths is also reflected at *Mishnah Bava Batra* 6:7, where the author states that a “private road” (“דֶּרֶךְ הַיְחִידִי”) is 4 cubits (1.8 metres) wide and that a “public road” (“דֶּרֶךְ הָרַבִּים”) is 16 cubits (7.2 metres) wide. The evidence, both archaeological and literary, then, gives the impression we might expect of an ancient roads system: that along with wide public highways there was a system of narrower,

---

<sup>222</sup> See discussion below.

<sup>223</sup> Dorsey (1991) 6–8.

<sup>224</sup> Kloner (1996).

sometimes private roads used at the local level.<sup>225</sup> Roads did not necessarily need to be maintained by the state, then, and could be plotted out by local communities or families for their own purposes. To state the obvious, local roads were not only built to facilitate long-distance trade, but a number of other activities including local trade and religious travel: indeed, the Hebrew Bible is filled with colourful stories of travel for both personal and economic activity.<sup>226</sup>

### *New Periodisations*

In this chapter, I have split the history of the Second Temple Hill Country into three phases. In short, I believe that the Hill Country became increasingly integrated with surrounding regions, and to a much lesser extent the Mediterranean world as a whole, during the Second Temple period, with each new phase establishing new commercial and cultural links with the outside world. As with any periodisation, the divisions are imperfect, and there were messy periods of transition between each of them. There were also continuities between each of the phases, which I intend to explore at length. Nevertheless, I believe that this approach is a useful heuristic device which enables us to identify major changes in the Hill Country's position in a rapidly changing world.

My first phase roughly comprises the era of Persian, Ptolemaic, Seleukid, and early Hasmonean rule in Palestine, stretching from the 6th century BCE until the expansion of the Hasmonean state in the 2nd century BCE. I will argue that during this period the Hill Country was a peripheral province of large empires which shaped and structured its relations with the outside world. Using both literary and material evidence, I will suggest that Judean and Samaritan elites were embedded in complex and (often) organised economic and political networks which ultimately connected them to the shifting imperial centres.<sup>227</sup> In short, empires created new opportunities for trade and exchange, which were seized upon by those with the means, education, and ambition to capitalise on them. While such figures were important and often played a vital intermediary role between imperial administrations and the interests of local populations, they represented a small and privileged stratum of globetrotting elites. Indeed, I will argue that, in general, the Hill Country appears to have been relatively isolated during this period, and was not a major centre of trade. This is not to suggest that the region was a “backwater”: on the contrary, there is evidence for sustained and transformative interactions with the outside world. While commercial and cultural connections were maintained and established during

---

<sup>225</sup> Dorsey (1991) 19–21.

<sup>226</sup> See the list at Dorsey (1991) 3.

<sup>227</sup> I will particularly focus on the so-called ‘Yehud’ coinage, the story of the Tobiads at Josephus’ *AJ* 12.154–236, and passages of *1* and *2 Maccabees*.

this period, however, the Hill Country was always a distant node in wider networks, only connected to major trade routes through lesser-known mountain roads.<sup>228</sup>

External influences were not uniformly accepted by the Judean population. Indeed, one of the recurring patterns of the Second Temple period, particularly following the conquest of Alexander the Great, is a divide between those who benefitted from and embraced the proliferation of economic and cultural connections, and those who resented and opposed them. Change stimulated political convulsions, which ultimately saw part of the region ruled by a hitherto obscure family of priests from the town of Modi'in, the Hasmoneans. The evolution of the Hasmonean state was gradual, and for the first four decades after the outbreak of the Maccabean Revolt it remained a small Seleukid vassal consisting of little more than the city of Jerusalem and its hinterland. Things changed, however, with the death of Antiochus VII in 129 BCE and the resultant collapse of Seleukid authority in the region. The Hasmonean state rapidly expanded, first under John Hyrcanus I, and subsequently under his sons Aristobulus and Alexander Jannaeus, and grew to dominate most of Palestine including the coastal plains, Galilee, Idumea, and various territories east of the River Jordan.

I will argue that the emergence of this small Hasmonean empire saw the beginning of the second phase of the Hill Country's material culture. Imports from the outside world did not cease during this period: indeed, most long-standing trade links are likely to have remained intact. The region's role as a cultural *exporter*, however, dramatically increased as a result of the dynasty's policy of Judaization. The Jews had the unusual experience of transitioning from being a minor province of vast empires to the rulers of their own state. This seismic change in status forced local cultural practices and laws, many of which were designed to preserve the ethno-cultural distinctiveness of a small community, to be adapted and repurposed.<sup>229</sup>

In 63 BCE Pompey the Great intervened in a Hasmonean dynastic dispute, ultimately reducing the Kingdom to a rump vassal state and beginning the third and final phase. As the Hill Country was gradually integrated into the Roman Empire, first as a client kingdom and subsequently under the direct control of Roman procurators, the region again found itself bound up in a series of vast transcontinental imperial systems of exchange. I do not believe that the socio-cultural revolution initiated by the Hasmoneans, however, was reversed by their reduced status and eventual destruction. Indeed, the new empire, coupled with an enterprising and ambitious client ruler, Herod the Great, created opportunities for those changes to be exported further afield. Connections between the Jewish

---

<sup>228</sup> Among the most arresting bodies of evidence for this isolation is the distribution of cuboid incense altars and clay figurines (see below).

<sup>229</sup> The key evidence for this period are the writings of Josephus, particularly books 13 and 14 of *Jewish Antiquities*.

diaspora (and possibly the Samaritan diaspora) and the Hill Country were facilitated by the unification of the Mediterranean under a single polity and the decrease in pirate activity. Roman attempts to stabilise relations between Greeks and Jews in cities across the Eastern Mediterranean created opportunities for local rulers to establish themselves as the leaders of a community spread across a large geographical area. In Palestine itself, the Hill Country retained and entrenched its position at the centre of religious, and increasingly cultural and economic, life.<sup>230</sup>

## **The Persian and Early Hellenistic Period**

### *The Evidence for Trade*

During the Persian period, the Hill Country was not the demographic, economic, or administrative centre of Palestine. This is reflected in the regional roads system. The most important international route during this period was the coastal road which passed along the major port cities of Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, and Jaffa. Another important road was the incense trade route. Indeed, it has been speculated that the string of Persian forts in the Beer Sheba Valley partly reflects Palestine's place at the frontier between the Empire and the Arab world, as well as its role in connecting Egypt to the rest of Western Asia.<sup>231</sup> The strategic importance of the Beer Sheba Valley had been recognised since at least the mid-8th century, when the Kingdom of Judah began to cooperate more closely with the Assyrian Empire and consequently played a larger role in Arabian trade routes.<sup>232</sup> The Valley, however, was slightly to the south of the boundaries of what I have defined as the Hill Country, and there are few indications that Arabian trade penetrated far into the mountains (indeed, it appears to have forked *around* them). The Hill Country was served by a crude grid of minor regional paths which travelled north-south and east-west along the ridges and valleys.<sup>233</sup> The main north-south road in the Hill Country generally followed the watershed, thereby avoiding streams and flooded terrain. The conquests of Alexander the Great caused a series of realignments in Palestine in general, and the Hill Country. Perhaps the most important for our purposes is the rapid depopulation of Samaria, perhaps prompted by the early Samaritan rebellions against Alexander recorded in some of our literary sources. Judea, meanwhile, appears to have increased in relative importance. Despite these changes inland, the main trade routes of the Persian period—the coastal road and the incense road from the South—retained their importance in the early Hellenistic period. This roads system was broadly the same in the Iron Age, and indeed earlier. The main coastal road in particular had ancient roots, stretching back as early as the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE.<sup>234</sup>

---

<sup>230</sup> I will deploy both Josephan and archaeological evidence in my study of this period.

<sup>231</sup> Lipschits & Vanderhooft (2006) 88 n.14.

<sup>232</sup> Finkelstein (2003) 82–83.

<sup>233</sup> Roll & Tal (2008).

<sup>234</sup> Dorsey (1991) 57–92.

This general picture is complemented by the results of survey archaeology, which indicate that while the coastal plains rapidly urbanised during the Persian period, cities declined in the Hill Country and were replaced by small rural settlements. Lipschits has argued that this was the result of deliberate population management from the imperial centre, which he believed wanted to foster a vibrant coastal economy fuelled by the crops of the Hill Country.<sup>235</sup> This is a tantalising possibility, though it perhaps seems doubtful given the Hill Country's natural limitations as a zone of agricultural production (see Chapter 1).

Nevertheless, the Hill Country did not exist in a state of complete isolation from its surroundings. Indeed, our earliest literary evidence attests to vibrant contacts with outside peoples and cultures. Chapters 25–32 of *Ezekiel*, likely written before the Persian period, are ostensibly a 'lamentation' for the various nations surrounding Judea, which the author contends will be punished by God for their ill-treatment of the Israelites. It also, however, provides us with a fascinating insight into the way the author imagined surrounding civilisations and regions, functioning in places almost as ethnography and geography. Tyre, for instance, is portrayed as a wealthy marine nation of tall towers, fine houses, wealthy princes in embroidered garments, wealth, noisy harp music, and terrifying naval power. There then follows an extraordinarily rich and detailed description of all the nations Tyre traded with to secure its wealth and what goods it would import from and export to them.<sup>236</sup> While it would be excessive to quote these enormous passages in detail, it is worth noting 27:17, which indicates that trade occurred between Tyre and Judea:

יְהוּדָה וְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל, הָמָּה רִכְלִיָּה; בְּחֹשֶׁי מִנִּית וּפְנֵי יָדְבֵשׁ וְשֶׁמֶן, וְצָרִי, נִתְּנוּ, מֵעֶרְבָהּ.

Judah and the Land of Israel were your [Tyre's] trading partners. They exchanged wheat from Minnith<sup>237</sup>, *panag*<sup>238</sup>, honey, oil, and balm for your goods.

Trade between Tyre and Judea appears again in 1 *Kings* 5:8–12, in which King Solomon sends vast amounts of wheat and olive oil to King Hiram of Tyre in exchange for cedar and juniper logs. These passages indicate the existence of interaction, and apparently trade relationships, with surrounding peoples.

Phoenician traders are also mentioned in the Persian (or possibly early Hellenistic) text known as *Ezra-Nehemiah*: once as couriers of Lebanese cedar logs whom the Israelites paid in "food, drink, and

<sup>235</sup> Lipschits (2006).

<sup>236</sup> *Ezek.* 26–28.

<sup>237</sup> As this is described as part of Judah and Israel, it is presumably not the same as the Ammonite settlement of Minnith referenced in *Judges* 11:33.

<sup>238</sup> The meaning of *panag* (פַּנָּג), is unknown.

olive oil”, and once as fishmongers in Jerusalem (though there is some doubt about whether these fishmongers really existed).<sup>239</sup> The latter passage is particularly intriguing:

וְתִשְׁבּוּ שָׁם, מִבְּיָאִים דָּאֵג וְכָל-מִקָּר; וּמוֹכְרִים בַּשַּׁבָּת לִבְנֵי יְהוּדָה, וּבִירוּשָׁלַם.

Tyrians lived there, bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling [them] on the Sabbath to the Judeans in Jerusalem.

The implication in this passage is that the merchants permanently resided in Jerusalem (as opposed to occasionally visiting). There is little more we can say about the precise nature of this community and their possible relationship with the local or imperial state: a detailed and learned article by Diana Edelman argues against offering firm answers to these questions. It is perhaps unsurprising that a handful of Phoenicians might have found their way to Jerusalem given the concentration of Phoenician goods and inscriptions at sites on the Palestinian coast.<sup>240</sup> The existence of a trade in fish from the Mediterranean during this period is, interestingly, attested in the archaeological record. The bones of Mediterranean fish, in particular gilt-head sea bream, have been found in Jerusalem from as early as the Middle Bronze Age, and appear to have been imported continuously up to and including the Second Temple period.<sup>241</sup> It may be that these fish were, as the above passage of *Nehemiah* indicates, brought by Phoenician traders.

Brendan Noonan has identified several additional pieces of evidence for Phoenician trade with Palestine during the Persian period. Numerous Phoenician-style jars have been found at 6th century (and earlier) sites in Palestine, including in settlements of the northern Hill Country such as Samaria and Taanach. These do indeed appear to have been manufactured in Phoenicia itself, suggesting a trade in food between the two regions. Metalwork, including bowls and candelabra, were also exported from Phoenicia to the cities of Samaria and Shechem.<sup>242</sup> It is telling that all of the sites in the Hill Country where Phoenician goods are found in significant numbers were in the region of Samaria, which was more agriculturally productive and populous than Yehud.

It is worth considering what exactly the Hill Country might have offered merchants from Phoenicia and other coastal regions in exchange for fish and other goods. The most obvious answer is the “food, drink, and olive oil” which the Judeans exchange for Tyrian and Sidonian lumber at *Ezra* 3:7. In addition to agricultural goods, the Hill Country also appears to have had a thriving internal slave market, as attested by the papyri from the Wadi Daliyeh in Samaria, several of which are conveyances

---

<sup>239</sup> *Ezra* 3:7, *Neh.* 13:16. For further discussion see Edelman (2006). Tyrian traders are also mentioned at *Isa.* 23:17–218.

<sup>240</sup> Grabbe (2004) 160.

<sup>241</sup> Lernau & Lernau (1992), Edelman (2006) 10.

<sup>242</sup> Bikai (1985), Noonan (2011).

for slave sales, as well as ostraca from Persian Idumea.<sup>243</sup> It is unclear, however, whether or not these slaves were exported in large numbers to surrounding regions.

Some long-distance trade also appears to have occurred during this first phase of the Hill Country's history. Greek ceramics were imported to Palestine even before the Persian period. These were mainly manufactured in Euboea, Corinth, and (from the late 7th century) the Aegean islands, and have mostly been found in coastal cities, Galilee, and Idumea, though they have also been found at a handful of sites in Judea and Samaria. In the Persian period, this picture generally remains the same. A recent study found Attic pottery imports in 108 sites in Palestine, only 15 of which were within the boundaries of Judea and Samaria (and only then in major northern settlements such as Samaria and Shechem). Imports of Attic ceramics spiked in the late 5th and early 4th century in most regions of Palestine, though Judea and Samaria again appear to have been an exception, with rates remaining continuous through the 5th century.<sup>244</sup> Imports continued in the Hellenistic period. Imported dishes have been found at various sites including some in Jerusalem and Samaria. There were also considerable imports of Rhodian wine, and over 1000 stamped amphora handles dating to this period have been found in Jerusalem.<sup>245</sup> Overall, then, it appears that while Greek goods penetrated the Hill Country, they did so much less than in surrounding regions. This indicates that the region was less integrated in wider networks of exchange than other parts of Palestine, and had a material culture which would have been distinct from neighbouring regions (including other inland areas, such as Galilee).

Palestine also appears to have been connected to Red Sea trading ports from an early date. It is believed that a road connected the Hebron hills in Idumea to the Red Sea as early as the Canaanite period.<sup>246</sup> The mysterious land of 'Ophir' is mentioned in numerous biblical texts as an occasional trading partner for Judea. It is described in *Kings* and *Chronicles* as a source of gold, precious stones, and exotic wood during the reign of King Solomon.<sup>247</sup> It is unclear where exactly this region is located, but according to 1 *Kings* 9:28 it was accessible by sea via the port of Ezion-Geber, located on the shore of the Gulf of Aqaba on the northern extremity of the Red Sea. Several views about its precise location were expressed in ancient Jewish and Christian sources. At *Genesis* 10:29, Ophir appears to be located in Arabia near Sheba and Havilah. Josephus, however, wrote that Ophir was in India (*A.J.* 1.147), while Eupolemus believed that it was an island in the Erythraean Sea (Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.30.7). Based on the exports associated with Ophir in the texts, some modern scholars have also argued that the region was likely located somewhere on the Horn of

---

<sup>243</sup> Gropp *et al.* (2001), Lemaire (2006) 58, Gurwin, Goren & Lipschits (2015) 90.

<sup>244</sup> Nunn (2014).

<sup>245</sup> Berlin (2013) 157–159.

<sup>246</sup> Har-El (1981) 10.

<sup>247</sup> 1 *Kgs.* 9:28, 10:11, 2 *Chr.* 8:18, 9:10.

Africa.<sup>248</sup> For our purposes, its precise location is perhaps less important than the fact that the Red Sea was understood as a source of trade goods. It is possible that some early consciousness of Indian Ocean trade also appears at *Enoch* 32, which describes a bountiful land beyond the Red Sea. It is extremely difficult to determine the magnitude of this trade in the Hill Country at this stage: there is certainly little archaeological evidence for a major influx of goods from the Red Sea and beyond. It is perhaps most likely that these references represent a vague understanding of the incense trade routes which brushed the southern edges of the Hill Country, but never plunged deep into it.

Non-Jewish literary evidence also indicates that the Hill Country was a peripheral node in Eastern Mediterranean trade networks. The quote of Josephus with which I began this chapter (*Against Apion* 1.60–62) is an attempt to justify the absence of the Jews in early Greek literature. This absence was not, as Josephus’ discussion indeed indicates, a fiction created by hostile anti-Jewish writers. In his *Histories*, written in the mid-5th century BCE, Herodotus does not appear to have heard of the monotheistic Yahweh cult of the Jews and Samaritans. He does mention Palestine, which he describes as a region of Syria, and reports that the local population practiced circumcision.<sup>249</sup> Josephus, as well as some modern scholars, believe that this is likely to have been a reference to the Jews.<sup>250</sup> The evidence, however, is far from decisive: circumcision was never a purely Yahwist practice in this region, and there is no mention of the region’s unusual monotheistic cult (the kind of peculiarity which Herodotus is likely to have included). At the very least, I believe that we should remain circumspect. While Palestine is referred to in several other pre-Hellenistic Greek texts, there is no hint that the writers knew of the Jews or the Samaritans.<sup>251</sup> The earliest clear reference to the Jews is in the writings of Theophrastus, a pupil of Aristotle, preserved in quotations referenced by other authors including Josephus.<sup>252</sup>

### *Embedded Elites and Cultural Shifts*

Even these sporadic contacts had a profound impact on the region’s culture. One important change which occurred during the Persian and Hellenistic periods was the apparent decline in Hebrew as a spoken and written language and its replacement by Aramaic. Aramaic was the primary administrative language of the Assyrian and Persian empires. Persian literary Aramaic was maintained by trained scribes using a common standard. This standard is reflected in the Biblical Aramaic of the books of Ezra and Daniel.<sup>253</sup> One indication of the penetration of Aramaic is the spread of the

---

<sup>248</sup> Hirsch & Benzinger (2007).

<sup>249</sup> Hdt. 1.105, 2.104, 7.89.

<sup>250</sup> J. Ap. 168–171; Safrai *et al.* (1988) 1103–1104.

<sup>251</sup> E.g. Aristot. *Meteorologica* 2.3, Pseudo-Scylax *Periplus* 104.

<sup>252</sup> J. Ap. 1.167, Euseb. *Praeparatio Evangelica*, 9.21; Safrai *et al.* (1988) 1104–1105.

<sup>253</sup> Naveh & Greenfield (1984) 116, Schniedewind (2006) 139.

Aramaic script, which generally supplanted the traditional ‘Paleo’-Hebrew script in most, but not all, contexts (see below). While there is a substantial body of Aramaic inscriptions from Persian and early Hellenistic Palestine (including in rural contexts in the Judean foothills), Hebrew epigraphy effectively ends between the 6th and 2nd centuries BCE with the exception of coins and seals.<sup>254</sup> All of this indicates that Persian imperial culture made a substantial impact on the supposedly isolated provinces of Yehud and Samaria, and in particular on literate elites. The significance of this change is reflected in the endurance (and continued spread) of Aramaic under the Ptolemaic and Seleukid empires.<sup>255</sup>

Outside influences can also be seen in the earliest Jewish coinage, the so-called ‘Yehud’ coins, which date from the mid-late Persian and possibly the early Ptolemaic period.<sup>256</sup> The Yehud coinage is named for its Paleo-Hebrew Aramaic inscription יהודה, ‘Yehud’, though some instead bear the Hebrew variant יהודה, Yehudah. Generally speaking, these coins are highly derivative of other coins from around the Eastern Mediterranean. The iconic Athenian motifs of an owl and the head of Athena, for instance, appear in the earlier Yehud coins. Curiously, the legends on the coins are also commonly written in the Paleo Hebrew script, which even by the time of the coins’ manufacture was no longer the alphabet of choice for most Hebrew writing (see above).<sup>257</sup> Why, then, was the script used in this context? I would like to return to an old suggestion of Kanael’s, actually made for Hasmonean coinage in a larger study of ancient Jewish coinage, that the use of the script might, in fact, have been a result of Phoenician influence.<sup>258</sup> Many Phoenician coins from this period have writing in the Phoenician script inscribed on them.<sup>259</sup> This script is virtually indistinguishable from Paleo-Hebrew, but is quite distinct from the square Aramaic script which was more often used for Hebrew by this period. This, I propose, is the inspiration for the use of Paleo-Hebrew in the Yehud coins: it does appear that the manufacturers of these first Jewish coins chose designs which imitated more prominent numismatic traditions, with a script close to that found on Phoenician coins. There is a certain logic to this pattern of writing habits, with the local population drawing on the dominant Aramaic scribal and epigraphic practice for texts and inscriptions, and the prevalent Phoenician numismatic practice for coins.

Elites were afforded particularly expansive opportunities to profit from outside contacts. The Persian and Hellenistic empires provided structured mechanisms for local elites to interact with the imperial centre, provided they were willing to adapt to the new (and ever-evolving) hegemonic culture. The

---

<sup>254</sup> Schniedewind (2006).

<sup>255</sup> Schniedewind (2006).

<sup>256</sup> For a basic description of these coins and their history, see Betlyon (1986).

<sup>257</sup> Coins using this script include: Hendin 426, Hendin 440.

<sup>258</sup> Kanael (1962) 44.

<sup>259</sup> E.g. from Tyre: Sear 5906, Rouvier 1815; from Sidon: Rouvier 1092, Sear 5934.

regions of Judea and Samaria were granted a large degree of autonomy during this period, minting their own coinage and establishing temples to Yahweh on Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim. These two regions began the process of developing distinct identities as Jews and Samaritans, though interaction between the two communities remained intense and the distinction between Jews and Samaritans was highly ambiguous and contested (see Chapter 4). The administrations of these provinces maintained some connections with nascent diaspora communities in other provinces of the Persian and Hellenistic Empires. The most revealing evidence from the Persian period is the papyri from Elephantine in Upper Egypt, which indicate that the local community (who refer to themselves as ‘Judeans’) sought support from the governors of Judea and Samaria. I discuss this evidence further in Chapter 4.<sup>260</sup> Perhaps the most famous example of such elites was the Tobiad family during the late Ptolemaic period, whose colourful history is relayed in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* 12.154–236. The passage is not only among the most entertaining and richly drawn stories in Josephus’ works, but it is also a fascinating insight into how provincial elites could be accommodated to imperial states. While the precise events are likely to have been heavily embellished by Josephus, there is little reason to doubt the basic facts: that during the Ptolemaic period in the 220s BCE the family was granted a tax-farming contract covering all of Syria and Palestine, and represented the Jewish community at the royal court in Alexandria.<sup>261</sup> The enormous wealth of the Tobiads is reflected in the fabulous Qasr Al-Abd, a marvellous Hellenistic palace east of the River Jordan in the valley of Wadi Seer which was likely built by the family.<sup>262</sup>

The accommodation of Jewish elites to a Hellenistic imperial culture is also indicated by the 1 & 2 *Maccabees*. It is claimed at 2 *Maccabees* 4, for instance, that a group of Hellenised Jews in Jerusalem adopted various aspects of Greek culture, including constructing a gymnasium and abandoning Jewish law. Passages such as this are, clearly, within the context of Hasmonean state propaganda and relate in particular to the Hasmonean claim to have restored traditional Jewish ethno-religious culture. More detailed analyses of these texts have, however, revealed that the ‘Hellenised’ elites in question may indeed have possessed a subtle and detailed understanding of the language of Seleukid administration. In particular, John Ma has compared passages in 1 & 2 *Maccabees* with corresponding epigraphic evidence from around the Greek world, arguing that the events of the ‘Maccabean Revolt’ were, in fact, simply a normal negotiation between a subject community and an imperial centre.<sup>263</sup> Among the most striking comparisons is between the passage I have just discussed (2 *Maccabees* 4) and the Letters of King Eumenes II of the Attalid Kingdom to the inhabitants of Toriaion (*SEG* 47.1745). In both cases, there is an attempt to make the city a *polis*, instigated by local elites and accompanied by a

---

<sup>260</sup> Granerød (2016) 41–42, see also Römer (2018) 81.

<sup>261</sup> For more on this story, see Chapter 4.

<sup>262</sup> Rosenberg (2006).

<sup>263</sup> Ma (2013).

request to construct a gymnasium. He similarly juxtaposes other passages with Hellenistic inscriptions.<sup>264</sup> Whether or not we accept Ma's general assessment of the Maccabean Revolt, the evidence he has compiled clearly shows—I would suggest, incontrovertibly proves—that a group of Jerusalemite Jews were conversant in the administrative discourses of the empires ruling over them.

It was not only Judea which was connected to the Greek cultural *koine*: there is evidence for Greek cultural influence in Samaria, too. In the past, discussion of Greek influence in the region has centred around the strategic adoption of Greek customs by the elite. In 1993, Schwartz suggested that a Hellenising faction had grown dominant in the Samaritan temple during this period, possibly resented by the wider Samaritan population. He points to 2 *Maccabees* 6.1–2, in which the inhabitants of Gerizim request that their temple should be rededicated to Zeus Xenios. Schwartz also uses a letter, quoted by Josephus in *Ant* 12.258–263 and believed by most scholars to be authentic, written by a group of Samaritans self-identifying as the “Sidonians in Shechem” to Antiochus IV. The authors ask that they be exempted from Antiochus' persecution of the Jews and are allowed to dedicate their temple to Zeus Hellenios.<sup>265</sup> Antiochus replied that since they did not follow the Jews “but choose to live according to the customs of the Greeks” he would consent to both requests. Parallels have been drawn with the voluntary ‘Hellenisation’ 1: *Macc.* 11–14 describes in Judea, though Ma has argued that this was in fact a defence against being absorbed into the polis of Antiocheia which was being formed in Jerusalem.<sup>266</sup>

The findings at the excavations on Mount Gerizim provide evidence for a different sort of adaption to Greek culture. The 2008 excavation report provided evidence for Greek influence on the architecture of Hellenistic Gerizim, and the presence of Greek stonecutters' marks suggests that Greek stonemasons were directly involved in the construction of the sanctuary.<sup>267</sup> Furthermore, the use of bathtubs “similar in shape to a Dutch shoe” in residences at Gerizim has no parallel in Palestine, but is known from the Greek islands.<sup>268</sup> Certain elements of the style of the Hebrew and Aramaic inscriptions from Hellenistic Mt Gerizim, including the preparation of the stones and the use of red paint in the letters of some inscriptions, also show Greek influence, and it has even been speculated that Greek stonemasons may have been involved in their production.<sup>269</sup> Furthermore, the presence of the phrase באתרא דנה (“in this place”) in some of the inscriptions has no obvious parallels in Semitic

---

<sup>264</sup> Ma (2013). Restriction of autonomy: 2 *Maccabees* 6:1–2; Statue base for Theophanes of Mytilene (*CRAI* 1969); Decree for Korraghos (*SEG* 2.663). Forced celebration of royal festivals: 2 *Maccabees* 6:7; 1 *Maccabees* 44–48; Crowns at Ilion (*I. Ilion* 32). Negotiation and shifting status: 2 *Maccabees* 11:16–38; Letters of Eumenes II to Toriaion (*SEG* 47.1745).

<sup>265</sup> Rappaport argues against the letter's authenticity but provides a bibliography of the general view in Rappaport (1990) 386–7 note 47. For a refutation of Rappaport's arguments see Schwartz (1993) note 35.

<sup>266</sup> Dušek (2012) 104–107, Ma (2013).

<sup>267</sup> Magen (2008) 5, 153–155.

<sup>268</sup> Magen (2008) 90–91.

<sup>269</sup> Dušek (2012) 50.

epigraphy, but may have been inspired by corresponding phrases in Greek epigraphy such as ἐν τῷ τόπῳ, ἐν τούτῳ τῷ τόπῳ and ἐπὶ τῶν τόπων.

### *Endogamy, Resistance, Cultural Introversion*

That said creation of a new cultural *koine* crossing long-established political borders, the flattening of differences between communities, and the accommodation of traditional customs to new cultural and ethical standards is often one of the most controversial and painful consequences of imperialism, as it can strike at the heart of deeply embedded beliefs and compromise social, ethnic, and religious boundaries. Indeed, not all exogenous cultural influences were absorbed with equal enthusiasm in the Hill Country, nor did all Judeans and Samaritans react to foreign influences in the same way. On the contrary, in the 5th century, we see a drive to expunge foreign influences from Judea. Exogenous marriages increasingly became taboo, as reflected in passages of *Ezra-Nehemiah*. The communal agreement in *Nehemiah* 10:30 states bluntly:

אֲשֶׁר לֹא-נָתַן בְּנֹתֵינוּ, לְעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ; וְאֵת-בְּנֹתֵיהֶם, לֹא נָקַח לְבָנֵינוּ

We [promise] we will not give out daughters [in marriage] to peoples of the [surrounding] land, nor shall we take their daughters for our own sons.<sup>270</sup>

It has been argued that the construction of a wall around Jerusalem in this period, which served no obvious military purpose in the context of Persian Yehud, was primarily intended as a visual representation of the community's isolation.<sup>271</sup>

We can perhaps see some evidence of the Hill Country's cultural difference and isolation in the archaeological record, though the issue is increasingly disputed. Cuboid incense altars, for instance, are found in numerous sites in southern and coastal Palestine, but rarely in the Hill Country (and only once in Yehud). This has traditionally been explained by invoking an imagined purge of 'pagan' ritual objects in the region. A recent study by Christian Frevel and Katharina Pyschny, however, have problematised this account, pointing out that there is little in their iconography, at least, which indicates that they were exclusively used in pagan rituals. They have suggested that one reason for their relative rarity in the Hill Country is the region's marginalisation in international trade routes: a picture which would fit in well with the roads system described above. The distribution of the incense altars does, indeed, appear to approximately map on to the incense trade route, a picture which is perhaps strengthened by the predominance of camel iconography.<sup>272</sup> There are potentially similar debates to be held about the spread of clay figurines, which were widespread in many regions of Palestine. Ephraim Stern's claim that "not a single cultic figurine has been found" in the Jewish areas

---

<sup>270</sup> See also *Ezra* 9–10.

<sup>271</sup> Grabbe (2004) 356.

<sup>272</sup> Frevel & Pyschny (2016).

of Persian Palestine has been refuted in recent years, and scholars have identified a small number of such figurines in Yehud. That said, it remains the case that far fewer have been discovered in Yehud and Samaria than elsewhere, a difference in material culture which demands some explanation. Stern argued that it was a consequence of a “religious revolution” in the Persian period which demanded strict adherence to the second commandment (against graven images). This hypothesis has been challenged on numerous grounds. There is no evidence that the figurines were used for cultic purposes, and it is not at all clear that, at this stage, they would have been considered in violation of the second commandment. Instead, it is equally possible that the discrepancy was a result of cultural (as opposed to religious) preferences, or weaker connections to trade routes. As we have already seen that connections between the region and Phoenicia persisted during this period, we must conclude either that cubic altars and clay figurines were distributed along different routes which did not penetrate the Hill Country, or that, in fact, a religious and/or cultural explanation is correct.<sup>273</sup>

The spread of Greek culture evidently also provoked conflict within the Hill Country. The most striking evidence for this is the cultural programme of the Hasmonean dynasty, which adopted a self-consciously distinct aesthetic even as they integrated certain aspects of Hellenistic royal ideology into their iconography. Their self-advertisement as defenders of traditional, non-Hellenistic Jewish culture indicates that there was a substantial audience for such a claim. This manifested itself not only in Hasmonean art and literature, but in the actions of certainly Hasmonean rulers. In 142 BCE, for instance, the Hasmonean Simon Thassi conquered the non-Jewish city of Gezer, located in the Judean foothills. According to 1 *Maccabees*, after he took the city he expelled much of the local population, ritually cleansed the territory, and parcelled out the land to Jewish settlers.<sup>274</sup> The brutality of the conquest is attested by a haunting graffito from Gezer which reads “Pamparas wishes that fire would fall on Simon’s palace”.<sup>275</sup> The coastal city of Joppa appears to have suffered a similar treatment (1 *Maccabees* 13:11). The violence accompanying this cultural revolution indicates the tensions which had built up as the community’s ethnocentric, exclusivist ideology came into contact with external cultural influences.

### **The Middle Hasmonean Period: Local Integration, Global Isolation**

#### *Structural Upheaval, Rapid Centralisation*

Following the expansion of the Hasmonean state in the late 2nd century BCE, the networks of exchange between the Hill Country and the outside world were radically reoriented. In the Persian and

---

<sup>273</sup> Stern (2006), Cornelius (2014), Schmitt (2014).

<sup>274</sup> 1 *Macc.* 13:47–48

<sup>275</sup> *CIJ* 2.1184.

Hellenistic periods, Palestine had been ruled by vast trans-continental empires which preferred to deal with small subdivisions and organised communities (see Chapter 4). The Hill Country had been split into different administrative units with varying degrees of independence, whose fate was largely determined by colossal forces directed from distant power centres. The rapid spread of the Hasmonean state, however, put the Hill Country, and specifically Judea, at the *centre* of a state.

This was in part an administrative revolution which profoundly altered the Hill Country's political relationship with surrounding cultures. The Hasmoneans preferred to source administrators from the pre-existing populations of the territories they had conquered. A talented local nobleman named Antipas, for example, was named *strategos* of Idumea by Alexander Jannaeus. He was eventually succeeded by his son, Antipater, who was succeeded in turn by his son, Herod.<sup>276</sup> Antipater's rival and eventual murderer was another important non-Judean called 'Malichos' who led a faction in the court of Hyrcanus II. The name Malichos indicates Nabatean Arabic ancestry, and it is likely that he originated in Idumea's sizeable Nabatean community. The prominence of Idumeans in the writings of Josephus' might be a consequence of his (or rather, his source Nicolaus of Damascus') interest in the Herodian dynasty. That said, there is scattered evidence for well-connected, prominent local elites operating in every region of the Hasmonean kingdom. In addition to Antipater, we also hear of two *strategoí* active during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus: Digaíos, the governor of Galilee who is known to us only from the writings of the Byzantine chronicler George Synkellos, and Demetrius, the ill-fated governor of various Transjordanian territories.<sup>277</sup> While we know nothing of Demetrius' background, Digaíos is described as 'the Galilean' which may indicate his non-Judean ethnic origins. We have, then a series of important non-Judeans operating in the court and in the provinces.

This facilitated the emergence of a network of elites within the boundaries of the Hasmonean state, not all of whom were invested with formal administrative power. Among the friends of Herod during his early career are Sohaemus the Iturean, a wealthy Syrian called Saramalla, and various Samaritans.<sup>278</sup> Herod even married a Samaritan woman, Malthake, indicating the presence of Samaritan elites with sufficient pedigree and importance to be worth making familial bonds with.<sup>279</sup> Elites cooperated not only with the ruling dynasty and with each other, but also with elites outside the kingdom. Antipas, Josephus claims, established connections with surrounding peoples, including the Nabatean Arabs, through gift exchange: given the historically close relationship between Idumea and Nabatea, it is likely that, in practice, long-standing relationships between Idumean elites and their neighbours were in fact renewed and repurposed for the benefit of both Antipas and the Hasmonean

---

<sup>276</sup> J. *AJ* 14.8–10.

<sup>277</sup> Digaíos: George Syncellus *Chr.* 559; Demetrius: J. *BJ* 1.105.

<sup>278</sup> Sohaemus the Iturean: J. *AJ* 15.185; Saramalla the Syrian: J. *AJ* 14.345; Samaritans: J. *AJ* 14.284, 408.

<sup>279</sup> J. *BJ* 1.562.

state.<sup>280</sup> His son Antipater would marry a Nabatean noblewoman named Kypros, cementing the good relations his father had established.<sup>281</sup>

That said, the co-option of local elites by the Hasmonean state was accompanied by a concurrent destruction of pre-existing administrative institutions: we may think of the Samaritan Temple at Gerizim, and the numerous cities which were stripped of their autonomy and purged of their non-Jewish cult sites. From both literary and archaeological evidence, it looks as though settlements such as Samaria, Shechem, Maresha, Pella, Gazara, and Adora were subjected to severe destruction, while Scythopolis and Tel Anafa were abandoned.<sup>282</sup> The fate of many other cities is unknown but we may suppose at least some suffered a similar fate.

The conquerors did not replace these cities with new foundations, and never granted an existing city anything approaching '*polis* status'. They were not, in the style of early Seleukid kings, seeking to replace an old political network with a new one, but rather to demolish that network entirely. The destruction of institutions is also suggested by the fact that, following the conquest of Palestine in 63 BCE, Pompey needed to reestablish the region's *poleis*. Similarly, in 57 BCE Gabinius needed to establish regional councils to administer the newly created subdivisions of Palestine.<sup>283</sup> Both of these actions suggest that there were not substantial pre-existing local administrative institutions which the Romans could use to manage their new territories.

The absence of such institutions had the effect of denuding cities in Palestine of local governments, and concentrating administrative authority at the Hasmonean court in Jerusalem. The Hasmonean state, then, replaced the pre-existing system of a vast overarching imperial state interacting with layered webs of provincial and local administrative officials with a highly centralised dynastic state focused on the royal centre. This itself dramatically reshaped the networks of elite exchange and shifted the political centre of the region from the sea to the mountains.

### *Judaism and Cultural Exchange*

These shifts were mirrored by a corresponding spread of Judean culture out to surrounding regions. Josehus writes that the people of Idumea were forcibly circumcised and compelled to obey Jewish law by the conquering Hasmoneans.<sup>284</sup> We see a similar account in the writings of Ptolemy the Historian, who wrote that the Idumeans were originally "Phoenicians and Syrians" before being subjugated by

---

<sup>280</sup> J. *AJ* 14.10.

<sup>281</sup> J. *AJ* 14.121.

<sup>282</sup> Safrai (2000).

<sup>283</sup> J. *AJ* 14.91; *BJ* 1.170.

<sup>284</sup> J. *AJ* 13.257–258.

the Judeans and “forced to undergo circumcision”.<sup>285</sup> Strabo, on the other hand, paints quite a different picture, claiming that the Idumeans were Nabateans who willingly decided to adopt Judean customs.<sup>286</sup> Other regions also appear to have been Judaised one way or another: Josephus claims that the Itureans were forcibly circumcised too, and it is clear from later history that Galilee had a large Jewish population by the end of the Hasmonean period. Scholars have questioned whether the same policy was applied to the Greek cities which fell under Hasmonean control. Much hinges on a passage of Josephus, in which it is stated, in a list of cities conquered by the Hasmoneans, that the city of Pella was destroyed because its inhabitants would not agree to adapt to the customs of the Jews (AJ 13.397).<sup>287</sup> Some, most recently Edward Dąbrowa, infer from this that all the Greek cities, therefore, were obliged to Judaise themselves to escape destruction. Most modern scholars, however, doubt for various reasons that the Hasmoneans would have made such a demand of Greeks.<sup>288</sup>

The spread of Judaism was accompanied by the development of a common material culture. Among the most striking demonstrations of this are the emergence of a locally-made pottery designed in a common style, and the spread of *mikva'ot* (ritual bathing pools) to Galilee and Golan. It would be wrong to imagine that Hasmonean conquest and subsequent wave of conversions marked the beginning of common cultural practices in Palestine. As I have already argued, exchange occurred during the Persian period (and earlier). There is, indeed, evidence for circumcision, aniconic art (albeit celebrating gods other than Yahweh), and perhaps even ritual bathing at the Idumean city of Maresha before the arrival of the Hasmoneans, practices which are often seen as characteristically Jewish.<sup>289</sup> Turning to Galilee, it seems there were already communities of Judeans settled before the arrival of the Hasmoneans, and thus the locals would have been well acquainted with Jewish customs.<sup>290</sup> The expansion of the Hasmonean state and the resultant spread of Judaism, however, dramatically accelerated and concentrated these pre-existing processes. It would be inappropriate to describe this change purely as ‘Judaisation’. A loose agglomeration of regions exchanging culture with each other had been consolidated into a state, which sought to fuse its provinces into a unified administrative, economic, and religious area. The spread of Jewish culture, to borrow from Keay and Terrenato’s description of Hellenization and Romanization, was “a process that reduced differences across a range of disparate phenomena”.<sup>291</sup>

---

<sup>285</sup> Ptolemy *apud* Ammonius *De Adfinium Vocabulorum Differentia* 243.

<sup>286</sup> Strab. 16.2.34.

<sup>287</sup> J. AJ 13.397.

<sup>288</sup> Dąbrowa (2006) 114, Dąbrowa (2010) 91–92, Kasher (1990) 156.

<sup>289</sup> Kloner (2006).

<sup>290</sup> As indicated by 1 *Macc.* 15–23, see also Aviam (2015).

<sup>291</sup> Keay & Terrenato (2016).

One consequence of this change was a redirection of resources to the Hill Country through tribute. While it appears that pilgrimage to Jerusalem was small during the Hasmonean period, the practice of all Jews paying a tax to the Temple was already well established (see Chapter 6). Ptolemy the Historian's comment that the Judaised Idumeans were compelled to "contribute to the nation" probably refers to payment of the Temple tax, as might the claim of the author of the late 2nd century BCE *Book of Jubilees* that the "Sons of Edom" had been forced to pay tribute to the Israelites "to this day".<sup>292</sup> Further evidence comes from a decree of Julius Caesar reported by Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities* 14, who wrote that the whole country of the Jews except Joppa pay a yearly tribute to the city of Jerusalem.<sup>293</sup> This is not to suggest that the imposition of tribute was purely a 'stealth tax' designed solely to squeeze Jerusalem's newly conquered provinces dry. It may represent, however, the reorientation of Judaism in this period from an exclusive ethnic law-code to an imperial ideology partly designed to serve the interests of a state.

It is also worth reflecting on what a radical departure the policy of conversion was from the introverted, endogamous Jewish community of the Persian period. There is no biblical obligation to convert conquered peoples and, in fact, nothing in the Hebrew Bible which suggests that mass-conversion in this way is legitimate or possible. The policy of conversion was, then, a conscious choice by the Hasmoneans which recentred economic life (through tribute and tithes) on Jerusalem and religious and political life (through their role as High Priests) on themselves.

### *External Connections*

The spread of the Hasmonean state had a profound impact on commercial relations with the outside world. During the mid-late 2nd century BCE, what we might term the early Hasmonean period, the import of foreign ceramics and foodstuffs evidently underwent a sudden and dramatic decline. As Andrea Berlin has pointed out this is not reflected in surrounding parts of Palestine, including Samaria, which had not yet been conquered and evidently maintained close commercial and cultural connections with the rest of Hellenistic West Asia.<sup>294</sup> By the early 1st century BCE when Hasmonean power was at its zenith following the conquests of John Hyrcanus and his sons, a common style of ceramics was spreading across Palestine, with identical shapes of jars, lamps, plates and bowls produced at workshops across the Hasmonean kingdom. The development of this new common aesthetic is termed "household Judaism" by Andrea Berlin. She writes:

---

<sup>292</sup> Ptolemy *apud* Ammonius *De Adfinium Vocabulorum Differentia* 243, *Jubilees* 38:14.

<sup>293</sup> Josephus *AJ* 14.203.

<sup>294</sup> Berlin (2013).

With its [household Judaism's] practice, Judeans live as one people – no matter where they actually reside within the Hasmonean kingdom. In effect, household Judaism is instrumental to the transformation from Judean to Jew.<sup>295</sup>

The decline in imported pottery, and the rise in standardised, locally made alternatives is interpreted by Berlin as another act in the construction of a new Jewish identity which is increasingly opposed to other cultural systems: though, as she herself notes, our interpretations of such changes are always precarious. We might posit a number of other potential explanations, including spreading purity taboos or economic factors which might have little to do with questions of identity (see Chapter 1). For our purposes, it might suffice to say that under the Hasmoneans a revolution in material culture spread out of the Hill Country and engulfed a large section of the southern Levant, resulting in a more market and a culture which was more closed to outside influences.

It is unrealistic to expect that trade and contact with the outside world ceased entirely during the turbulent middle Hasmonean period. There are some indications in Rabbinic evidence that grain was imported from Egypt to Palestine during the 2nd century BCE. A passage of *Tosefta Makhshirin* claims that the late 2nd century Rabbi Joshua ben Perachiah believed that wheat from Alexandria was impure on account of the Alexandrian's "*antliya*" (אַנטליַא), a word which likely corresponds to the Greek *antlia* (ἀντλία) meaning "the hold of a ship" or occasionally "bilge water".<sup>296</sup> It may be slightly optimistic to conclude, as other scholars have, that this quote (reproduced in a text compiled some 3 centuries after the speaker's death) is proof of a thriving trade in grain between Egypt and Palestine.<sup>297</sup> That said, it would be unsurprising if such contacts did exist at this stage, given the antiquity of the two regions' economic relationship and the evidence from later periods that Egyptian grain was used in times of crisis (see below).

It is possible that the reforms of the Hasmonean period also resulted in the emigration (voluntary or involuntary) of dissenting voices. Papyrological evidence seems to indicate the emergence of an Idumean community in Egypt during the late 2nd century BCE. Some have argued that these were refugees fleeing the religious proscriptions of John Hyrcanus. The case, however, is rather weak: the precise date for the establishment of the community is unclear, and it is perhaps excessively incautious to assume that migration to Egypt was motivated by a desire to escape conversion (after all, Egypt had large immigrant communities of various ethnicities).<sup>298</sup> The Idumean community of Egypt remains, I suggest, a tantalising mystery until fresh evidence emerges.

---

<sup>295</sup> Berlin (2013) 170.

<sup>296</sup> Sperber (1976) 117–119.

<sup>297</sup> Sperber (1976) 117–119.

<sup>298</sup> Rappaport (1969).

## Roman Period: Local and Global Integration

### *Dominating the Local Economy*

In 63 BCE, when Pompey the Great intervened in a Hasmonean dynastic dispute between two of Alexander Jannaeus' sons, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II. Pompey supported Hyrcanus but exacted a heavy price, stripping him of his royal title, demoting him to an 'ethnarch', and detaching most of his extra-Judean territories. Hyrcanus also found himself increasingly dominated and undermined by a family of Idumean nobles, one of whom, Herod, eventually became King in his own right in 37. The remaining Hasmoneans were gradually killed off by Herod, who recognised their enduring popularity and thus the danger they posed to his rule. Herod ruled a relatively large Roman client state comprising most of Palestine, and substantial chunks of territory east of the Jordan River. After his death in 4 CE, his kingdom was divided amongst his sons who ruled as tetrarchs. Over the following 40 years, Palestine was split between Herodian dynasts and direct Roman control, until the death of Herod Agrippa I at which point the entire territory was absorbed into the province of Iudaea (though a branch of Herodians continued to rule in the nearby Kingdom of Chalcis).

The Roman Empire would eventually build a significant network of roads in Palestine, but this occurred largely after our period in the wake of the First Jewish Revolt and Bar Kokhba Revolt. According to evidence from milestones, in 56 CE a road was built along the coast just to the north of Iudaea to connect the new veteran colony of Ptolemais-Akko with Antioch, but it does not appear to have extended along the Palestinian coast.<sup>299</sup> The road between the port-city of Caesarea and Scythopolis (strategically important for its position at the juncture between the fertile Jezreel Valley and the Jordan River Valley) was rebuilt in 69 CE by the Legio X Fretensis during a brief suspension in fighting in the First Jewish Revolt. Vespasian quartered legions at both Caesarea and Scythopolis at various points in 67, and troops were evidently moved between the cities during the war.<sup>300</sup> While this road was obviously constructed far too late to impact our understanding of trade in the Second Temple period, it provides an insight into the ways that military activity might reshape the infrastructure of a province. In addition to evidence from milestones, there are a few indications of major routes in the writings of Josephus. Josephus writes that a slave of Caesar was murdered "on the public road to Beth Horon" ("κατὰ γὰρ τὴν Βαιθωρὸν δημοσίαν ἄνοδον"), which led northwest of Jerusalem. He describes another road leading to the walls of Jerusalem as a "people carrier" ("λεωφόρος").<sup>301</sup> Ultimately, during our period, it appears that the basic road structure I have described in previous

---

<sup>299</sup> Isaac (1992) 322–323.

<sup>300</sup> Isaac & Roll (1976).

<sup>301</sup> Roll (2005) 108. The Beth Horon Road: J. *BJ.* 5.54; The "Public Carrier": J. *BJ.* 2.228.

periods was retained, with the major road running along the coast, with various other routes branching off east into the Hill Country, following valleys and ridges.<sup>302</sup>

During the late Second Temple period, the economy of the Hill Country became increasingly integrated with surrounding regions, a process stimulated by the demands of the pilgrim festivals, during which Jerusalem need a large supply of food, sacrificial animals, and other goods.<sup>303</sup> If (as I will argue) the numbers coming to the city were perhaps in the low tens of thousands, there would be a need for many thousands of animals to fulfil their needs. This change would have been particularly pronounced in the 1st centuries BCE and CE as Judaism spread throughout Palestine and ties between Jerusalem and diaspora communities intensified (see Chapter 6).

Some of the demand was met by the Hill Country itself. There is evidence for both intensification of animal husbandry in Jerusalem's hinterland, and increased trade in animals from outside the region (and, apparently, outside of the province). Nearby to Jerusalem, archaeological evidence indicates that there was a proliferation of columbaria caves in the Herodian period which is presumably related to increasing ritual activity in the Temple (largely stimulated by growing numbers of pilgrims).<sup>304</sup> That said, there are also indications for the widespread import of sacrificial animals from other regions. Archaeological evidence has recently provided us with an interesting insight into the sources of late Second Temple sacrificial animals. A recent study has investigated the origins of caprid (goat and sheep) bones from Early Roman Jerusalem using carbon and nitrogen isotope values. 52% of specimens were found to originate from steppe Mediterranean environments (likely from nearby areas to the east of Jerusalem), and 11% from mesic Mediterranean environments (perhaps from fertile neighbouring regions such as the western Judean hills, Galilee, and conceivably parts of Samaria). More surprisingly, between 37% and 50% of caprid remains were from animals in desert environments. The nearest such environment, the Syrian Desert, begins some 20 km to the east of Jerusalem. However, given the low capacity of desert environments to support herding, the authors conclude that if substantial numbers were sent to Jerusalem many must have originated from areas outside of the boundaries of the province of Judaea. This indicates, therefore, that the lines of supply for caprids must have been quite considerable during the early Roman period, likely stimulated by the pilgrimage.<sup>305</sup>

Another indication of trade with neighbouring regions is the presence of mollusc shells in a 1st century CE rubbish dump which was recently uncovered by archaeologists in the Kidron Valley near

---

<sup>302</sup> Isaac (2010) 151–152.

<sup>303</sup> See in particular the zooarchaeological evidence below.

<sup>304</sup> Kloner (2000), Lapin (2017) 249.

<sup>305</sup> Hartmann *et al.* (2013).

the Temple Mount. While 22% of shells were from local freshwater or land snails, the remainder were from species collected on the shores of the Mediterranean or the Red Sea. Their presence in the dump is mysterious, and it has been speculated that they were used for either decoration, lime plaster, or (in the case of edible species) food.<sup>306</sup> The crucial point, however, is that they indicate a trade in snails between the Hill Country and (presumably nearby) littoral regions.<sup>307</sup>

The common material culture which emerged in the Hasmonean period continued to crystallise in the late 1st century BCE and early 1st century CE. Among the most striking manifestations of this was the spread of stone vessels and locally manufactured, knife-pared lamps across Palestine, and the disappearance of imported red-slipped kitchenware and mould-made lamps. The vast majority of the new knife-pared lamps were made from clay local to the Jerusalem area, indicating that the Hill Country exported them to the other regions they are found. They were designed in a strikingly simple style, without any of the decorations seen on, for instance, the mould-made Phoenician lamps which had previously been imported in large numbers to Palestine. As such, Berlin has argued that this is another phase in the development of “household Judaism”, and that the lamps were “conspicuously austere and suggested a plain, unadorned lifestyle—a message that all Jews willingly sent, even if some actually lived otherwise”.<sup>308</sup> She associates these changes in material culture with a growing unease about Roman rule, and argues that foreign goods would have been associated with Roman power.<sup>309</sup> To the examples Berlin has assembled, we might also add the absence of marble, which was not widely used in Palestine until the 2nd century CE (and even then it was more common in coastal regions, not the Hill Country).<sup>310</sup>

I believe we must be careful before attributing these differences change solely to resistance to ‘Romanisation’. For one thing, it is not clear at all that Phoenician lamps, for example, would have been read as manifestations of encroaching Roman power. For another, it is possible that other factors were at play. For instance, duties were levied on goods crossing between Syria and Iudaea, which may have catalysed the development of local alternatives to imported ware.<sup>311</sup> We might also speculate that the foundation of the Roman colony at Berytus and the dramatic expansion of Caesarea Philippi (where red-slipped ware and imported lamps predominated in findings from this period) created major new markets which absorbed imported goods. The importance of economic factors is further indicated by the fact that, as Berlin herself notes, in villas and elite residences in the Upper City of Jerusalem,

---

<sup>306</sup> It is worth noting that snails are not considered kosher, and as such may have been eaten by non-Jews if this was their usage.

<sup>307</sup> Bar-Oz *et al.* (2007) 7.

<sup>308</sup> Berlin (2005) 434.

<sup>309</sup> Berlin (2002).

<sup>310</sup> Fischer (1998).

<sup>311</sup> Dinur (1990).

richly decorated kitchenware and elaborate artworks are common. Berlin believes that this demonstrates that the population was “sharply divided by cultural ethic”.<sup>312</sup> A simpler solution might simply be that wealthier people were buying more expensive goods (though the two explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive).

### *Global Networks*

There is more evidence for the participation of the Hill Country (and the rest of Palestine) in Mediterranean trade in the Roman period than previous periods. This may be a consequence of the greater amounts of literary evidence, though it may also reflect genuine increases in trade brought about by the political unification of the Mediterranean basin, Pompey’s successful campaign against piracy in 67 BCE, and ultimately the relative stability of the Julio-Claudian period.

Some scholars have posited that international trade remained extremely low even during the early Roman Period. Ze’ev Safrai, for instance, has pointed to a passage in which Josephus claims that Julius Caesar required John Hyrcanus II to pay a tribute of twenty thousand six hundred and seventy-five *modii* of wheat as a tax on the land, harbour, and exports of the coastal city of Joppa. Safrai describes this figure as “ridiculously low” for a major port city, and uses this passage to argue that little trade flowed through Palestine during this period.<sup>313</sup> This is surely an unsafe assumption to make, however: the tax is presented as a flat yearly rate, not as a percentage of the wealth generated by the city each year, so it would be wrong to use this figure to estimate the size of Joppa’s (let alone Palestine’s) trade. Indeed, it would perhaps be more helpful to read the tribute within the context of the treaty in question, which generally appears to have been designed to appear to be a generous settlement to Hyrcanus. As such, the low tribute may simply be an indication of Roman ‘leniency’.

There are, indeed, numerous indications that Palestine in general, and the Hill Country in particular, benefitted from the increased interconnectivity of the Roman era. Literary evidence strongly indicates that the construction of the harbour at Caesarea Maritima by Herod the Great was an attempt to plug Palestine into the new Roman trading economy. Josephus explains the rationale behind the placement, construction and design of the city at length in *Jewish War* 1.408–415. It is worth quoting a portion of this passage at length (409–410):

μεταξὺ γὰρ Δώρων καὶ Ἱόππης, ὣν ἡ πόλις μέση κεῖται, πᾶσαν εἶναι συμβέβηκεν τὴν παράλιον ἀλίμενον, ὥς πάντα τὸν τὴν Φοινίκην ἐπ’ Αἰγύπτου παραπλέοντα σαλεύειν ἐν πελάγει διὰ τὴν ἐκ λιβὸς ἀπειλήν, ἧ καὶ μετρίως ἐπαυρίζοντι τηλικούτον ἐπεγείρεται κύμα πρὸς ταῖς πέτραις, ὥστε τὴν

---

<sup>312</sup> Berlin (2005) 417–418.

<sup>313</sup> J. *AJ* 14.206, Safrai (1994) 125.

ὑποστροφὴν τοῦ κύματος ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐξαγριοῦν τὴν θάλασσαν. ἀλλ' ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῖς ἀναλώμασιν καὶ τῇ φιλοτιμίᾳ νικήσας τὴν φύσιν μείζονα μὲν τοῦ Πειραιῶς λιμένα κατεσκεύασεν...

For in the whole coast between Dora and Ioppa, between which the city lies, was harbourless, with the result that everybody who sailed between Phoenicia and Egypt had to ride at anchor in the sea because the south-west wind forced them. If the wind blew even moderately such a great swell would be stirred up against the rocks that as they retreat that the sea is made wild for a great distance. But the king,

through expenditure and ambition overcame nature and constructed a harbour larger than the Piraeus...

Josephus goes on to describe numerous features of the new harbour which were designed to enable a large number of vessels to safely dock at the city. Caesarea Maritima was also designed to be a visually impressive, outward looking city which would be appealing to traders from across the Roman empire. Josephus describes towers and statues which would greet ships as they sailed into the harbour. Visitors by sea would also be greeted with a large temple to Augustus constructed in the Greek style and placed (against the normal grid-plan of the city) to face out to sea. This (along with the name of the city) obviously served to honour Augustus, who had elected to keep Herod as a Roman vassal king despite his previous allegiance to Mark Antony. It also, however, acted as a radical statement intended for outside visitors that this city, and the kingdom it was attached to, was not a strange, alien land inhabited by a people with a peculiar monotheistic religion, but that it was a part of the wider Mediterranean cultural *koine*. This impression would have been strengthened by the presence of baths and a hippodrome. The city appears to have had a mixed population of Greeks and Jews who did not always live in harmony with one another. Indeed, Josephus claims that the chain reaction of unrest leading to the First Jewish Revolt was sparked by ethnic tensions in the city.<sup>314</sup>

One reason Herod might have been keen to boost connections with other regions of the Mediterranean was to protect his kingdom from the risk of famine, which became increasingly acute as the population of Palestine grew in the 1st centuries BCE and CE. In times of crisis, the city of Jerusalem in particular came to depend on foreign exports to feed its hungry population. One such incident is related by Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities* 15.305–316, in which Herod uses his close relationship with the new Roman governor of Egypt, Petronius, to secure an increased supply of grain during the famine of 24 BCE. Another appears later, at *Jewish Antiquities* 20.51, in which Helena of Adiabene purchases grain from Egypt and figs from Cyprus to distribute to the poor during another famine in 45–46 CE. It seems that Palestine also exported certain food products to other parts of the Mediterranean. As I have already indicated, it appears that dates were considered a particularly characteristic and valuable crop from Iudaea. The writings of Josephus particularly stress the importance of Jericho as a major date-exporting settlement.<sup>315</sup>

---

<sup>314</sup> J. *BJ* 2.284–292.

<sup>315</sup> See Chapter 1.

In addition to agricultural produce, it is possible that timber was exported to other parts of the Mediterranean. Harris speculated that a letter of Bar Kokhba encouraging the conservation of trees in Ein Gedi should be seen as a response to the long-term export of timber to Alexandria, though it is unclear if wood from the Hill Country was conserved in a similar way.<sup>316</sup> Palestine was also an importer of wood from elsewhere. Lebanon is commonly described as an important source of wood for building projects in Palestine, though sometimes administrators looked further afield: the timber used in the construction of the harbour at Sebastos was derived from species of tree which were not native to the Southern Levant, and may have originated in Amanos in southern Anatolia.<sup>317</sup> Given the different uses of different types of wood, it is not necessarily contradictory that a region should be both an importer and an exporter. Literary sources from later periods indicate that Palestine exported textiles, glass, wine, and olive oil, but given the seismic changes which overturned the rural economy of Palestine during the First Jewish Revolt, it is unsafe to assume that these were just as important in the Second Temple period.<sup>318</sup>

Relations between Palestinian and diaspora Jews also strengthened during the Roman period. This was partly a consequence of the increasingly international nature of the Jerusalem pilgrimage, though I shall argue that we should not imagine that a large percentage of diaspora Jews actually made the journey each year (see Chapter 6). Connections were perhaps at their most intense during the reign of Herod I, who used his money and influence to establish himself as a benefactor of Jewish communities across the Roman Empire (and perhaps beyond). In 14 BCE Herod I, for instance, successfully intervened on behalf of the Ionian Jews, who claimed that the rights guaranteed to them by the Romans were not being respected, and through his reign appointed diaspora Jews from Babylon and Alexandria to the High Priesthood.<sup>319</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to situate the Hill Country within its wider context, sketching out its commercial and cultural relationships with both surrounding regions and the Mediterranean world in general. I have suggested that the Second Temple period is marked by both striking continuities and dramatic changes, which together tell the story of the region's developing connections with the outside world.

---

<sup>316</sup> Harris (2017) 211–212; cf. *P. Yadin* 50.

<sup>317</sup> Votruba (2007).

<sup>318</sup> Alon (1980) 162, 189, Pastor (2010) 304.

<sup>319</sup> For the Ionian Jews see: *J. J.A.* 16.27–65. Diaspora High Priests included Simon son of Boethus, whose family were from Alexandria, and Ananelus, whom Josephus claims was from Babylon (*J.A.* 15.22).

I believe that the Hill Country never became a major destination for international trade. While some goods evidently did penetrate deep into the region, its material culture appears to have been less susceptible to major Mediterranean cultural movements than the coastal plains, or even Galilee and Idumea. This was partly a function of the geographical constraints I have described, but also a result of cultural and religious factors which may have made the local population less receptive to outside goods and peoples.

This continuity, however, masks extraordinary changes which occurred in Palestine itself. Over the course of the Second Temple Period the Hill Country moved from the periphery of cultural and economic life to the centre, exporting its people and its cultural taboos to surrounding areas. This was not a one-way process, but it was a change which appears to have been ultimately instigated and directed by Jerusalemite elites. This transformation was, I suggest, one of the most historically significant power shifts in history, since it paved the way for the spread of Judaism—and ultimately its successor religions—across the known world.

As such, in this chapter I hope to have demonstrated another aspect of the region's economic geography, while further exposing the complex relationship between the development of society, economics, and landscape discourses. I have also introduced, for the first time, an in-depth discussion of *mobility*, a core line of enquiry in this thesis which I will continue to explore in later chapters (especially Chapter 6).

## Chapter 3: War, Power, and Identity: Military Landscapes

### Military landscapes

In 1 *Maccabees* 10:70–71 Apollonius, the Seleukid governor of Syria and ally of the pretender Demetrius II Nicator, writes to the Maccabean leader Jonathan Apphus:

σὺ μονώτατος ἐπαίρη ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐγὼ δὲ ἐγενήθην εἰς καταγέλωτα καὶ εἰς ὀνειδισμόν διὰ σέ καὶ διὰ τί σὺ ἐξουσιάζῃ ἐφ' ἡμᾶς ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσι. νῦν οὖν εἰ πέποιθας ἐπὶ ταῖς δυνάμεσίν σου κατὰβηθι πρὸς ἡμᾶς εἰς τὸ πεδῖον καὶ συγκριθῶμεν ἑαυτοῖς ἐκεῖ ὅτι μετ' ἐμοῦ ἐστὶν δύναμις τῶν πόλεων. ἐρώτησον καὶ μάθε τίς εἰμι καὶ οἱ λοιποὶ οἱ βοηθοῦντες ἡμῖν καὶ λέγουσιν οὐκ ἔστιν ὑμῖν στάσις ποδὸς κατὰ πρόσωπον ἡμῶν ὅτι δις ἐτροπώθησαν οἱ πατέρες σου ἐν τῇ γῇ αὐτῶν. καὶ νῦν οὐ δυνήσῃ ὑποστῆναι τὴν ἵππον καὶ δύναμιν τοιαύτην ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ ὅπου οὐκ ἔστιν λίθος οὐδὲ κόχλαξ οὐδὲ τόπος τοῦ φυγεῖν

You alone have risen up against us, and I am ridiculed and reproached because of you. Why do you struggle against us in the mountains? Now, if you trust your own strength, come down to us in the plains and let us test our strength against each other, for the power of the cities is mine. Ask and learn who I am and who the rest are who are helping us, and they will tell you that you cannot stand before us, and that your ancestors were twice defeated in your own land. Now you will not be able to

withstand my cavalry and this kind of force in the plain, where there is not a stone, nor a pebble, nor a place to flee.

In the following passage Jonathan, enraged by this letter, assembles a large army in Jerusalem and marches on the coastal city of Joppa (modern Jaffa). After the frightened inhabitants open their gates to the rebel army, Apollonius retreats south to Azotus, leaving a contingent of cavalry north so that they might attack Jonathan's army from the rear as his main force meets them in battle. Jonathan ultimately survives the ambush, defeats Apollonius' army, and returns victorious to Jerusalem (10:74–87).

The obvious message of the story is that Jonathan avenged Apollonius' insults against the Jewish people, redeeming past defeats and striking a blow for the cause of independence. More interesting for our purposes, however, is the characterisation of the Maccabean forces as being based in the mountains, with the Seleukids primarily operating in the more heavily urbanised coastal plains. This is partly, as the passage suggests, a comment on military tactics: Apollonius accuses Jonathan of relying on hiding places in the mountains, and claims that he would be unable to succeed in open battle on flat ground. This speaks, as we shall see, to a long tradition of mountain warfare and using the Hill Country as a refuge from imperial power, a habit which is attested in our earliest Hebrew literary sources. I believe it also, however, alludes at another theme of Hebrew literature: the self-definition of the Jews (and perhaps Samaritans) as a hardy 'mountain people'.

These themes may be seen as two interrelated *military landscape discourses*<sup>320</sup>: a *strategic discourse* produced by military actors (e.g. armies), and a *mountain identity discourse* produced by the authors of religious literature. Military landscape studies is a small but lively and increasingly interdisciplinary field traditionally focused on "the interplay between military strategy and landscapes".<sup>321</sup> In recent years, archaeologists, historians, and geographers have successfully used studies of military landscape to address a range of issues, such as the complex relationship between military and civilian space (including the 'militarisation' of the latter), the role of military landscapes in identity formation, and best practices in preserving military heritage. Studies also operate at different geographical and chronological scales, ranging from highly detailed analyses of individual battlefields to regional studies exploring an area's evolution over several years.<sup>322</sup>

In this chapter, I will primarily adopt the latter, wider scale, considering the military landscape of a large area (the Hill Country) across several centuries. Recent studies of this kind have exposed

---

<sup>320</sup> For a discussion of landscape discourses as a concept, see the Introduction.

<sup>321</sup> Woodward (2013) 41.

<sup>322</sup> For a general overview of major scholarly trends, see Woodward (2013). Examples of battlefield studies: Pollard (2009), Harrison & Passmore (2008), Masson & Harden (2009). Examples of regional studies: Keller (2009), Clayton (2012), van Dinter (2013), Mathis *et al.* (2017).

interrelations between the military landscape and discourses of ethnic identity, class, and gender. In his study of the Alpine military landscape during the First World War, for instance, Tait Keller explored the region's transformation from a romanticised destination for bourgeois tourists, to an idealised theatre for masculinity and military heroism and an impregnable physical barrier against foreign invaders in the German and Austrian imagination.<sup>323</sup> Other regional studies of military landscapes have used archaeological and geographical data to illuminate hitherto obscure connections between landscape and military installations. Marieke van Dinter's study of the Roman fortification network in the Lower Rhine Delta, for example, used a paleogeographic reconstruction of the region to explain the spatial distribution of military constructions.<sup>324</sup> In short, through an interdisciplinary combination of analytical approaches including military history, archaeology, and geography, we may be able to better understand the ways that landscapes were used and reimagined for military purposes.

I believe that the Hill Country during our period is a particularly promising subject for such an analysis. As we have already indicated in other chapters, the region changed hands numerous times, often following imperial wars or local insurrections. Over the course of these conflicts, its terrain was successfully used for strategic purposes by various military actors. As the quote from 1 *Maccabees* with which I begin indicates, and as I will explore further in this chapter, the Hill Country developed a distinctive reputation over the course of these wars as a uniquely defensible region.

My discussion in this chapter is structured around three different perspectives on the military landscape. Firstly, I will consider the utility of the mountains to rebel groups, defined broadly as those fighting against established states and empires. Secondly, I will explore the ways that empires and states themselves adapted the military landscape of the Hill Country to serve their own strategic and ideological purposes. Finally, I will consider the development of a militaristic 'mountain identity' in religious literature, focusing primarily on the *Book of Judith*. Broadly speaking, the core of the first two perspectives will be *strategic* discourses, and the core of the third perspective will be an *ideological* discourse. However, in practice throughout this chapter I also hope to continually expose how the *strategic* and *ideological* military landscapes were intertwined, shaping and reshaping one another over several centuries.

## **Rebel Mountains**

### *Mountain Warfare*

---

<sup>323</sup> Keller (2009).

<sup>324</sup> van Dinter (2013).

The mountains provide a critical context for Jewish rebellions against imperial rule throughout the Second Temple period. In *Judith*, the leaders of Edomites and Moabites advise Holophernes not to attack the Jews directly, saying (7:10):

ὁ γὰρ λαὸς οὗτος τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ οὐ πέποιθαν ἐπὶ τοῖς δόρασιν αὐτῶν, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τοῖς ὕψεσι τῶν ὀρέων αὐτῶν, ἐν οἷς αὐτοὶ ἐνοικοῦσιν ἐν αὐτοῖς· οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν εὐχερὲς προσβῆναι ταῖς κορυφαῖς τῶν ὀρέων αὐτῶν

This race descended from the sons of Israel do not trust in their weapons, but in the height of the mountains in which they live, for it is not easy to go up to the peaks of the mountains.

As this quote indicates, the local population's local knowledge of the terrain could afford them an enormous advantage against foreign aggressors. In *Judith*, the eponymous heroine manages to trick her way into the camp of the invading Assyrian army by promising that she could show their general "a path, through which he can march and rule all the Hill Country" ("ὁδόν, καθ' ἣν πορεύσεται καὶ κυριεύσει πάσης τῆς ὀρεινῆς"): her bargaining chip, in short, was her superior knowledge of the local mountain passes. Mountainous terrain literally added an extra dimension to warfare, as soldiers needed to constantly remain wary that they might be attacked from above, especially if they were travelling through valleys.

We have numerous examples of savvy local armies making the most of the opportunities afforded by these conditions. For one thing, high places were naturally excellent lookout points: we might think, for example, of the troops sent up into the mountains by Antigonos II to watch corn collectors in the hinterland of Jericho.<sup>325</sup> Caves, tunnels, and high places were also good places for armies to hide before unexpectedly striking the enemy while they were in an awkward position. Josephus writes that Herod's brother Joseph, for instance, was killed after being attacked by Antigonos II's forces "in the mountains and difficult ground" ("ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ ταῖς δυσχωρίαις").<sup>326</sup> Shortly afterwards, Herod himself was ambushed and nearly killed by Antigonos' forces in the Hill Country near Jericho:

καὶ τῶν ἐναντίων εἰς ἑξακισχιλίους ἀπὸ τῶν ὀρέων κατατρέχοντες ἀπεπειρῶντο τῶν προτεταγμένων, κατὰ χεῖρα μὲν συμπλέκεσθαι τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις οὐ σφόδρα θαρροῦντες, πόρρωθεν δὲ χερμάσιν καὶ παλτοῖς ἔβαλλον, ὥστε συχνοὺς κατατιτρώσκειν. ἐν ᾧ καὶ αὐτὸς Ἡρώδης παρελάνων παλτῷ κατὰ τὴν πλευρὰν ἀκοντίζεται

Around 6000 enemies ran down from the mountains and tried his vanguard. They did not dare to attack the Romans at close quarters but threw stones and javelins from a distance, wounding many of them. In this maneuver, Herod himself was hit in the side with a javelin as he rode by.<sup>327</sup>

Perhaps the most famous example of local armies adopting this tactic during our period was the Battle of Beth Horon in 66 CE (during the First Jewish Revolt), in which the rebel Jewish forces ambushed

<sup>325</sup> J. BJ 1.300.

<sup>326</sup> J. BJ 1.324.

<sup>327</sup> J. BJ 1.332.

Cestius Gallus and the 12th Legion as they were withdrawing from Jerusalem to the coastal plains.

Once again, we rely on Josephus to describe the scene:

οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι κατὰ μὲν τὰς εὐρυχωρίας ἦττον ἐπέκειντο, συνειληθέντων δὲ εἰς τὰ στενὰ καὶ τὴν κατάβασιν οἱ μὲν φθάσαντες εἵργον αὐτοὺς τῆς ἐξόδου, ἄλλοι δὲ τοὺς ὑστάτους κατεώθουν εἰς τὴν φάραγγα, τὸ δὲ πᾶν πλῆθος παρεκταθέν ὑπὲρ τὸν ἀγένην τῆς ὁδοῦ κατεκάλυπτε τὴν φάραγγα τοῖς βέλεσιν. ἔνθα καὶ τῶν πεζῶν ἀμηχανούντων προσαμύνειν ἑαυτοῖς ἐπισφαλέστερος τοῖς ἵππευσιν ὁ κίνδυνος ἦν· οὔτε γὰρ ἐν τάξει κατὰ τῆς ὁδοῦ βαδίζειν ἐδύναντο βαλλόμενοι, καὶ τὸ πρόσαντες ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμίους ἱππασίμων οὐκ ἦν· τὸ δὲ ἐπὶ θάτερα κρημνοὶ καὶ φάραγγες, εἰς οὓς ἀποσφαλέντες κατεφθείροντο, καὶ οὔτε φυγῆς τις τόπον οὔτε ἀμύνης εἶχεν ἐπίνοιαν

The Jews did not press upon them much while they were out in the open, but when [the Romans] were crowded together in the narrow places and the descent some [of the Jews], having arrived there before, blocked them from leaving, while others pushed the stragglers down into the ravine, and the whole mob spread themselves out over the narrow point of the passage and covered the [Roman] ranks with their darts. The infantry did not know how to help, so the danger for the cavalry was greater, for they could not march on the road in formation and it was so steep that it was not suitable for cavalry against the enemies. They stumbled into the crags and ravines on either side of them and were destroyed, and there was no place for them to escape or any plan for them to defend themselves.<sup>328</sup>

This was a stunning victory for the rebels, and an important morale boost which contributed to the continuing escalation of the conflict. The story demonstrates the horror of being ambushed in the Hill Country, and the ways that an organised local force with knowledge of the terrain was capable of overwhelming large, elite armies.

Mountains were also naturally defensible positions, and as such states and empires installed forts and fortified palaces in strategic locations throughout the Hill Country. I will consider these sites in more detail below: for now, it is worth noting that rebel armies occasionally managed to seize these forts for themselves. These symbols of royal power and imperial domination were transformed into formidable rebel forts, capable of being held by a relatively small garrison. Perhaps the most famous ‘rebel mountain’ in ancient Palestine is Masada, located near to the Dead Sea in the arid deserts on the southern fringes of the Hill Country. The mountain was chosen as the location of a spectacular Herodian palace-fortress in the late 1st century BCE, but is best known for being a particularly stubborn rebel stronghold during the First Jewish Revolt. The site was, in fact, one of a number of mountain fortresses which continued to resist Roman dominion after the fall of Jerusalem: other sites included Herodium (the modern Jabal al-Fureidis), located a short distance south of Jerusalem, and Machaerus on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea (obviously outside our region).<sup>329</sup> Masada’s particular notoriety is largely a result of the famous mass-suicide of the majority of the garrison once Roman victory became certain. The grizzly end of the rebels, however, somewhat obscures the success of the

---

<sup>328</sup> J. *BJ* 2.547–549.

<sup>329</sup> See the account in J. *BJ* 7.163–209. I consider the siege of Machaerus in more detail below.

fortress and its garrison in holding back the Romans and compelling them to break the siege with extraordinary feats of engineering (see below).

Josephus presents the Jewish Revolt as an irrational action which was doomed to failure: a small, disorganised group of rebels facing the world's most formidable military force.<sup>330</sup> This view has influenced modern historians, who have sought to explain why the Jews felt they could defy the Roman Empire. McLaren suggests that the war was fundamentally a political decision based on a flawed calculation that victory would be swift, and adds that wars usually begin with a flurry of unrealistic optimism (he points to the famous initial expectations that the First World War would be concluded within months). Other scholars have been drawn to religious explanations, such as the hope of divine intervention or 'messianic expectations'. Tomasino, for instance, writes that

...a sense of God-ordained timing, disseminated by various prophetic figures, undoubtedly contributed to the idea that victory was certain. In the face of impossible odds and numerous setbacks, the rebels continued to believe that the time of their deliverance had come.<sup>331</sup>

I do not seek to discount the idea that the rebels were optimistic or were driven by religious factors. I dispute, however, the notion that the Jewish hope to defeat the Roman Empire was irrational and, therefore, I believe that we do not *necessarily* need to rely on religious or emotional explanations for their decision to go to war.

The Roman war machine struggled nowhere more than on mountainous terrain. This is true not just in our Hill Country, but in hill countries across the Roman Empire. It is no coincidence that the last region of the Iberian Peninsula to fall to Rome was the mountainous north-east. It is worth quoting Cassius Dio's description of one phase of the so-called Cantabrian War, the conflict (lasting from 29–19 BCE) which ultimately led to Roman annexation of the region:

αὐτὸς δὲ ὁ Αὐγούστος πρὸς τε τοὺς Αστυρας καὶ πρὸς τοὺς Καντάβρους ἅμα ἐπολέμησε, καὶ ἐπειδὴ μήτε προσεχώρουν οἱ ἅτε ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐρυμνοῖς ἐπαυρόμενοι, μήτε ἐς χεῖρας διὰ τε τὸ τῷ πλήθει ἐλαττοῦσθαι καὶ διὰ τὸ ἀκοντιστὰς τὸ πλεῖστον εἶναι ἦσαν, καὶ προσέτι καὶ πράγματα αὐτῷ πολλὰ, εἴ που κινηθεῖν, τὰ τε ὑπερδέξια αἰεὶ προκαταλαμβάνοντες καὶ ἐν τοῖς κοίλοις τοῖς τε ὑλώδεσιν ἐνεδρεύοντες παρεῖχον, ἐν ἀπόρῳ παντάπασιν ἐγένετο. καὶ ὁ μὲν ἔκ τε τοῦ καμάτου καὶ ἐκ τῶν φροντίδων νοσήσας ἐς Ταρράκωνα ἀνεχώρησε καὶ ἐκεῖ ἡρώσκει: Γάιος δὲ Ἀντίστιος προσεπολέμησέ τε αὐτοῖς ἐν τούτῳ καὶ συχνὰ κατειργάσατο, οὐχ ὅτι καὶ ἀμείνων τοῦ Αὐγούστου στρατηγὸς ἦν, ἀλλ' ὅτι καταφρονήσαντες αὐτοῦ οἱ βάρβαροι ὁμόσε τε τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις ἐχώρησαν καὶ ἐνίκηθησαν

Augustus waged war against the Asturians and Cantabrians at the same time, but these [tribes] would not approach him since they were raised up in their fortified positions, nor would they engage at close

---

<sup>330</sup> McLaren (2011) 129 contains a list of relevant citations from Josephus' works: Josephus' description of the Roman army at *BJ* 3.79–109; the speech of Herod Agrippa II at *BJ* 2.345–401; expressions of fear from various characters at the beginning of the war at *BJ* 2.414–416, 556, etc.

<sup>331</sup> Tomasino (2008) 111.

quarters because they were fewer in numbers [than the Romans] and most of them were javelin-throwers. They also caused a great annoyance to him by always seizing the high ground and lying in wait in the ravines and woods, and he was completely at a loss. Having fallen sick from the stress and worry, he retreated to Tarraco and was ill there. Gaius Antistius then waged war against them and achieved many things, not because he was a better general than Augustus, but because the barbarians thought little of him, fought the Romans in open battle, and were defeated.<sup>332</sup>

The tactics of the Asturians and Cantabrians are clear: harass the Roman forces from high ground, and ambush them in valleys and woodland. It is striking, but perhaps unsurprising, how closely this resembles the tactics we see used in Palestine at the other extremity of the Roman Empire. This was evidently enormously successful, and Augustus was subjected to one of the most humiliating defeats of his career. Indeed, the Romans only managed to make progress after the local forces abandoned their primary strategy and met the Romans in open battle. The Cantabrian Wars are rarely considered in detail in modern narrative histories of the early Principate, but they constituted a major and frustrating sequence of conflicts lasting a full decade. A revealing passage of Florus' *Epitome of Roman History* describes Augustus's actions after the war, claiming that, "fearing their trust in the mountains in which they would withdraw themselves" ("fiduciam montium timens in quo se recipiebant"), he ordered that the population should subsequently reside in the plains and establish their administrative centre there.<sup>333</sup>

Numerous mountain peoples have been able to defy, and in certain cases even destroy, great empires. The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, a ruthless, brutal, and often brilliant general commanding vast forces, was unable to crush the Maratha rebellion which sprung up in Maharashtra, a mountainous region of western India replete with highly defensible hilltop forts. In his study of the Marathas, Stewart Gordon describes how a group of ill-supplied rebels defied one of history's richest empires at the zenith of its power and size:

The Maratha strategy, throughout, was to hold a fort as long as possible, then escape with as much treasure and as many men as possible. Meanwhile, largely independent bands continued to raid the settled Mughal areas of Khandesh and Malwa.<sup>334</sup>

This slowly sapped the strength of the Mughal forces, which moved from siege to pointless siege as their supply lines and local tax base were cut to ribbons.

There is, I suggest, no reason to assume that the Jews stumbled into an unwinnable war, blinded by religious fervour: inland Palestine, and the Hill Country in particular, was eminently defensible. Nor should we assume that the apparently spectacular rebel victories were won through religiously inspired passion or any peculiar martial qualities of the Jewish people. They were won, I suggest,

---

<sup>332</sup> Dio 53.25.5–8.

<sup>333</sup> Florus 2.13.59.

<sup>334</sup> Gordon (1993) 101.

through the Jews' deep understanding of the military potential of their own country, and an extraordinary tactical discipline in the early stages of the war.

This is not to say that religion did not play a significant role during the war. I would suggest, indeed, that Judaism and Samaritanism played a key role in hastening the defeat of the rebels. As the Second Temple period progressed, these religions increasingly stressed the importance of the cult centres of Jerusalem and Mount Gerizim. The advantages of mountain warfare were often not capitalised upon by rebel groups, who tended to be drawn to defend—and, just as importantly, to control—these places. If the opposing troops were suitably well-resourced and patient, they could simply surround these sites and wait for the garrisons to starve or die of thirst. This prospect is explored in *Judith*, where the natural defensibility of the mountain city of 'Bethulia'—which may be fictional, but in the narrative appears to overlook the Jezreel Valley—is subverted when Holophernes, on the advice of his commanders, decides to set up camp around the city and block the springs.<sup>335</sup> Turning to the First Jewish Revolt, rebel groups increasingly poured into Jerusalem as other regions fell to the Romans, including a large contingent of Idumeans and various Galilean groups. When the Romans besieged Jerusalem in 70 CE, they simply surrounded the city and waited for its enlarged population to starve, weakening the garrison until they were able to seize the city by force.

The Samaritans apparently had a similar instinct. Josephus records that the Samaritans assembled at Mount Gerizim during the First Jewish Revolt and “remained in that place” (“κατὰ χώραν μὲν ἔμεινον”). Despite the fact that the region of Samaria was largely subdued and garrisoned with Roman legions, Vespasian considered this gathering threatening. He duly dispatched Sextus Vettulenus Cerealis, a tough Sabine military commander who had rapidly risen through the ranks of the army, to eliminate the problem. Cerealis' strategy followed the precise pattern I have been describing. Judging that a direct assault on the mountain might be dangerous, he decided simply to surround the mountain and wait until the garrison surrendered. This did not take long: the Samaritans were ill-provisioned, and they had been caught during a harsh summer heat wave. The garrison quickly started disintegrating, with some dying of thirst and others surrendering themselves as slaves to the Romans. Eventually, Cerealis simply seized the mountain, swatting away the weakened but stubborn defenders who remained.<sup>336</sup>

I suggest that, had the Jews and Samaritans not been attracted to their cult centres and clustered themselves together in one place, they might at the very least have been able to prolong the rebellion for several years. The Maratha style of war—seizing forts, abandoning them before they could be

---

<sup>335</sup> *Jud.* 7.

<sup>336</sup> *J. BJ* 3.307–315.

fully encircled, harassing the enemy with guerilla warfare and targeting their supply lines—was an extraordinarily effective tactic against numerically and technologically superior forces attempting to subdue a rebellious hill country, and might have served the inhabitants of our Hill Country well during the First Jewish Revolt. As it was, they were drawn to walled cities and fortresses, and allowed themselves to be starved into submission. This was not purely a result of intense attachment to cultic sites: as I have already acknowledged, certain Jewish rebels did hole themselves up in fortified positions with little religious significance. However, I suggest that cult centralisation prompted particularly large concentrations in Jerusalem and Gerizim.

### *Running to the hills*

Perhaps partly as a result of the successes of rebel groups in the region, literary and archaeological evidence from the Hill Country is filled with examples of individuals or groups disappearing into caves, hiding in rocky ground, or watching unseen from the hilltops. The tendency of defeated enemies to flee into the mountains is an ancient trope of West Asian conquest narratives, and Younger has identified a number of examples from Mesopotamian and Egyptian literature.<sup>337</sup> The Judean Mountains (and particularly caves) recur in ancient Jewish literature as a place of refuge from hostile forces. In *Joshua*, a text of uncertain date but usually believed to have largely been written in the early Second Temple Period, Israelite spies go “to the mountain [or hill country]” (“הַהָרָה”) to evade the pursuing soldiers sent by the King of Jericho (2:22).<sup>338</sup> In *Judges*, the Israelites used “the caves which are in the mountains, and the caverns, and the fortresses” (“אֶת-הַמְּגִדּוֹת וְאֶת-הַמְּעֵרוֹת וְאֶת-הַבְּרִיגִים, וְאֶת-הַמְּצָדוֹת הַבָּרְאָה”) to protect themselves against the Midianites (6:2). We can see similar examples in 1 *Samuel*, *Jeremiah*, and *Ezekiel*.<sup>339</sup>

Turning to the Second Temple Period, we see these themes reappear in *Isaiah*, where it is prophesied that people will flee to “caverns in the rocks and to the overhanging crags” to escape Yahweh’s judgement (2:21), and that the righteous shall find refuge in “the mountain fortress” (33:16). In the *Song of Songs*, which likely dates to the 3rd century BCE, the author describes the “hiding places of the mountain” (2:14).<sup>340</sup> In 1 and 2 *Maccabees*, Jewish rebels are often found hiding in the mountains. In addition to the quote with which I began this chapter (1 *Macc.* 10:70–71), we might consider 1 *Macc.* 2:28, in which Mattathias and his sons “fled into the hills” (“ἔφυγεν... εἰς τὰ ὄρη”) as the first

<sup>337</sup> Younger (1990) 220–222.

<sup>338</sup> *Joshua* is a difficult book to date, as scholars have identified features which might allow it to be placed with both the Pentateuch and the Deuteronomistic History. Over the past 15 years or so, however, scholars have tended to favour a postexilic date; see: Dozeman (2017) 271–273. for a summary of the scholarship.

<sup>339</sup> 1 *Sam.* 13:6, 22:1, 23:14, 23:29, 24:1–3, *Jer.* 4:29, *Ezek.* 7:16.

<sup>340</sup> The Hebrew of the text indicates a Hellenistic date: Segal (1962) 478, Davis (2000) 231. A small number of scholars have suggested alternative dates, but these all cluster in the Second Temple Period. For a Persian date, for instance, see: Dobbs-Allsop (2005).

act of their rebellion after murdering a royal official, or 2 *Macc.* 5:27 in which Judas Maccabee “retreated into the wilderness and lived like beasts in the mountains” (“ἀναχωρήσας εἰς τὴν ἔρημον θηρίων τρόπον ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν διέζην”) to escape the oppression of the harsh Seleukid administration. Similarly, the mountains are also regularly used by the Jewish forces in *Judith* (see below), and appear as the final refuge of King Arphaxad from the megalomaniacal Assyrian Nebuchadnezzar (1:15). At *Matthew* 24:16, Jesus predicts the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and says: “let those who are in Judea [at that time] flee into the mountains” (“οἱ ἐν τῇ ἰουδαίᾳ φευγέτωσαν εἰς τὰ ὄρη”).<sup>341</sup>

Numerous groups and individuals flee into the mountains in the writings of Josephus. Sometimes, particularly in passages based on the Hebrew Bible, Josephus restates the accounts of some of the earlier authors I have just discussed.<sup>342</sup> Elsewhere, however, we see new stories of mountain refugees. During the war between Herod and Antigonus II, for instance, Herod arrives at Jericho to find the city deserted, with 500 families having fled high up in the mountains.<sup>343</sup> The mountains could also be a refuge for brigands fleeing from the law. Numerous such groups and individuals appear in the writings of Josephus, such as the ill-fated Eleazar son of Dineas, described as “a bandit who had lived in the mountains for many years” (“ληστής δ’ οὗτος ἦν ἔτη πολλὰ τὴν διατριβὴν ἐν ὄρει πεποιημένος”).<sup>344</sup>

Archaeological evidence complements our literary sources. One of the most chilling archaeological sites dating to the Second Temple Period is the Mughâret Abū Shinjeh cave in the Wadi Daliyeh, located 14 km north of Jericho, best known for its rich cache of late-Persian Period papyri found by Bedouins in the early 1960s. The remains of over 200 humans, however, have also been found at the site, and scholars have plausibly suggested that the cave was the refuge of a group of Samaritans unsuccessfully fleeing the avenging army of Alexander the Great.<sup>345</sup>

### **Imperial Mountains: Building Forts, Destroying Forts**

Throughout the Second Temple Period, however, imperial and state actors attempted to harness the power of the mountains for their own purposes. One obvious strategy was to construct forts and other installations on strategically valuable hilltops. Ancient hilltop forts and palaces are scattered throughout the Hill Country and were built in the region long before our period.<sup>346</sup> They have remained a constant feature of life in the Hill Country throughout history, including today: the modern

<sup>341</sup> See also the corresponding passage at *Lk.* 21:21.

<sup>342</sup> E.g. *BJ* 1.37 (corresponding to 1 *Macc.* 2:28)

<sup>343</sup> *J. BJ* 1.301.

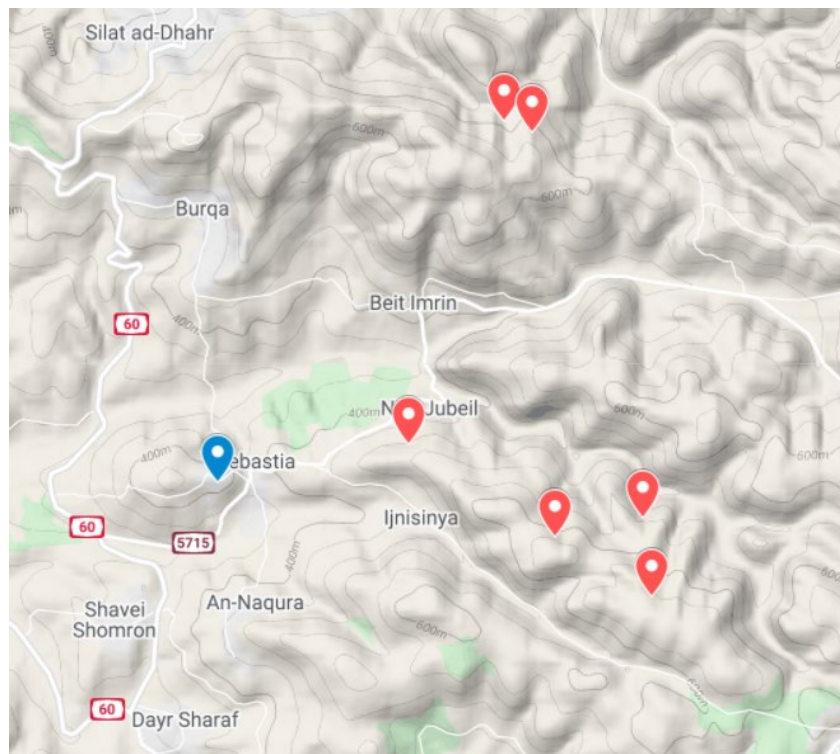
<sup>344</sup> *J. AJ* 20.121.

<sup>345</sup> Cross (1974), Dušek (2020).

<sup>346</sup> Rocca (2010).

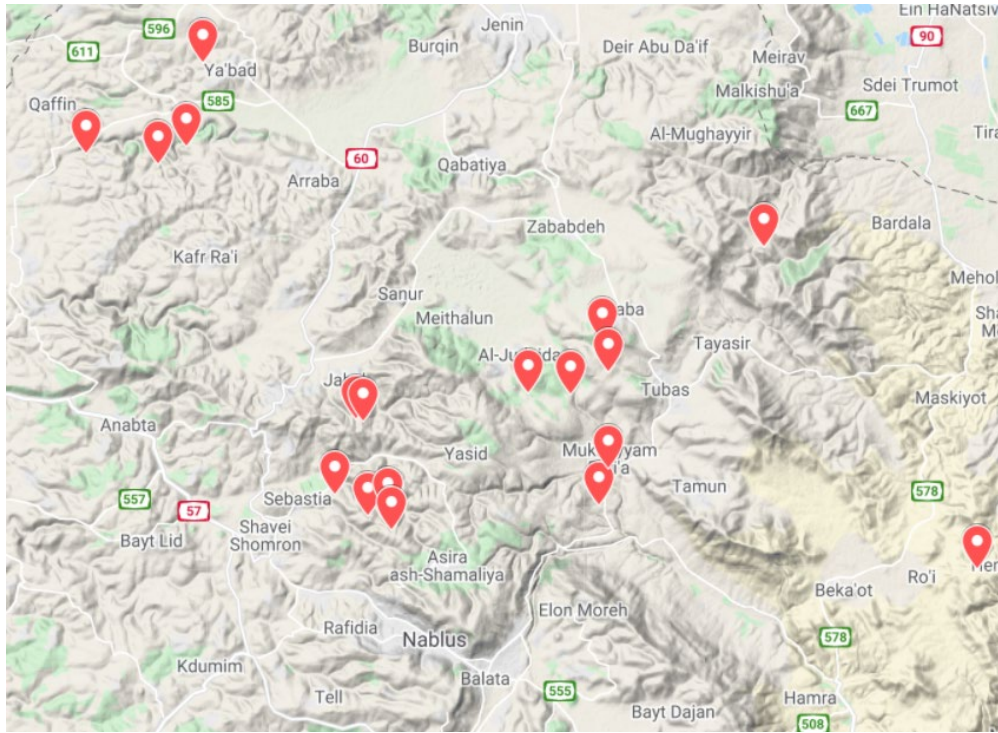
West Bank is bristling with Israeli military installations and lookouts on the hilltops, particularly around roads and major settlements. Hilltop forts and palaces serve obvious military purposes and are located on naturally defensible ground. They also, however, possess an ideological function. Hilltops both literally and figuratively overshadow the surrounding landscape, and are visible from far away: as such, they are ideal places to illustrate the power, strength, and wealth of kings, emperors, and states.

The Persians constructed a string of fortresses through the Hill Country, dominating strategically important thoroughfares and making use of natural defensive positions. I have already mentioned, for instance, how the proliferation of Persian forts in the southern Hill Country may reflect an attempt to protect Arabian trading routes (see *Chapter 2*). A number of Persian forts have also been discovered in the Manasseh Hill Country Survey (covering northern Samaria), invariably located on hilltops or occasionally mountain passes. Sites appear to cluster around important settlements, particularly the city of Samaria which appears to have been flanked by a row of fortresses in the north (*Fig. 12*):



*Fig. 12: Map of Persian Forts (red) near the city of Samaria (blue) found in the Manasseh Hill Country surveys<sup>347</sup>*

<sup>347</sup> Sources: Zertal (2004), (2008), Zertal & Mirkam (2016). Map my own.



*Fig. 13: Map of Persian Forts (red) found in the Mansseh Hill Country surveys<sup>348</sup>*

<sup>348</sup> Sources: Zertal (2004), (2008), Zertal & Mirkam (2016). Map my own.

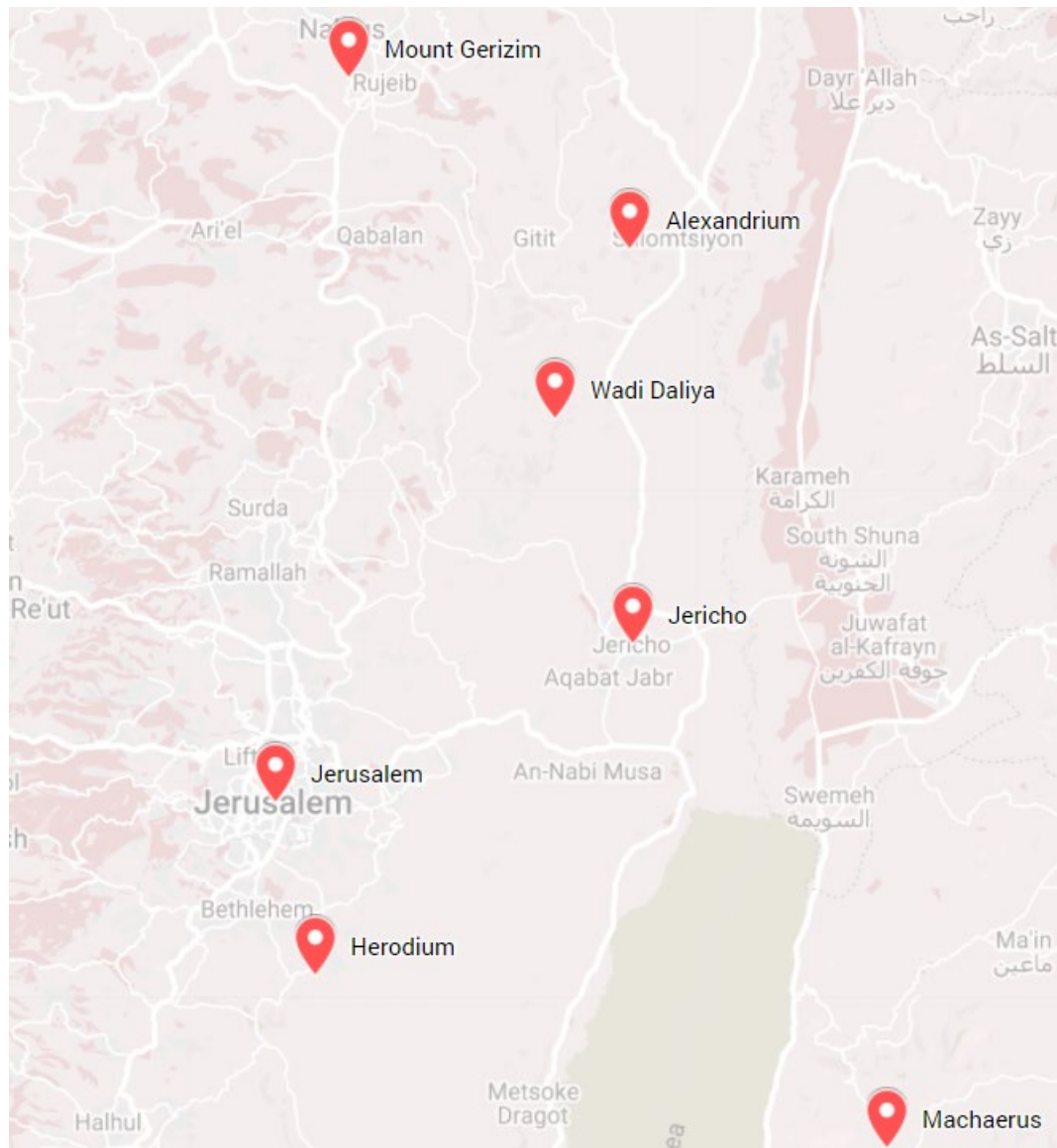


Fig. 14: Map of other significant fort and cave sites mentioned in this chapter<sup>349</sup>

This created a highly visible imperial defensive landscape localised around a local settlement. This had the twin effect of providing a practical defensive network guarding against hostile forces, and ideologically dominating the region by creating a hypermilitarised landscape. As Mathis and Mathis wrote about *la ville citadelle* in the 19th and 20th centuries, the presence of both military structures and armies can act as “un marquage symbolique et visuel, traduisant la puissance et l'appropriation de l'espace: c'est l'affichage de la souveraineté”.<sup>350</sup>

<sup>349</sup> Map my own.

<sup>350</sup> Mathis & Mathis (2015) 2.

The combination of ideological and military domination of the landscape continued in later periods and became interwoven with conceptions of sacred and historical landscapes. The Hasmoneans built a number of hilltop palaces and forts in strategic locations. Curiously, it seems that new forts were almost invariably in the state's Judean and Samarian heartland, as opposed to Galilee, Idumea, and the coastal plains where they appear to have re-used Ptolemaic, Seleukid, and local fortifications. This was, as Rocca suggests, partly an attempt to protect the state's political centre and the ruling dynasty's palaces in Jericho.<sup>351</sup> I propose that this also, however, represented the Hasmonean domination of the Judean landscape. The Hasmoneans focused their construction projects on Judea in an attempt to ideologically dominate the sacred landscape, and to further entrench their position as leaders and chief patrons of their ethno-religion (see Chapter 5).

In the later years of the Hasmonean state, the dynasty began constructing fortified palaces in remote, isolated, highly defensible sites.<sup>352</sup> We might think, for instance, of the fortress of Alexandrium located between Scythopolis and Jerusalem and described by Josephus as “a very lavishly decorated fort situated on a high mountain” (“φρούριον τῶν πάνυ φιλοτίμως ἐξησκημένων ὑπὲρ ὄρους ὑψηλοῦ κείμενον”).<sup>353</sup> The fortress was a treasury of Queen Salome Alexandra and later a refuge of Aristobulus II and his son Alexander from the armies of Rome, after which it was destroyed by the Romans. Alexandrium was restored by Herod's brother Pheroras but was later destroyed, likely in the wake of the First Jewish Revolt.<sup>354</sup> Another highly significant set of fortifications constructed by the Hasmoneans were, of course, those surrounding Jerusalem. 1 *Maccabees* describes how Jonathan Apphus “began to build and repair the city, and told the workers to construct walls and to encircle Mount Zion with square stones for fortification” (“ἤρξατο οἰκοδομεῖν καὶ καινίζειν τὴν πόλιν καὶ εἶπεν πρὸς τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὰ ἔργα οἰκοδομεῖν τὰ τεῖχη καὶ τὸ ὄρος Σιών κυκλόθεν ἐκ λίθων τετραπόδων εἰς ὀχύρωσιν”).<sup>355</sup>

After Herod I came to the throne in 37 BCE, a new wave of building projects spread across Palestine. These included fortified hilltop palaces which were often intended, as with their earlier Hasmonean counterparts, to demonstrate the power of the ruler as well as to serve military or economic functions. The subtle ways that these palaces were designed to dominate, control, and even beautify the landscape is perhaps best illustrated by the palace-fortress of Herodium, probably constructed by Herod the Great in the late 20s BCE. The original small hill was substantially heightened and enlarged by Herod, and it became both a formidable military redoubt and one of the most architecturally

---

<sup>351</sup> Rocca (2013) 23.

<sup>352</sup> Rocca (2013) 32.

<sup>353</sup> J. *BJ* 1.134.

<sup>354</sup> Salome Alexandra's treasury: J. *AJ* 13.417; Refuge of Aristobulus II: J. *AJ* 14:49; Refuge of Alexander and destruction by the Romans: J. *BJ* 1.167–168; Restoration by Pheroras: J. *AJ* 14.419.

<sup>355</sup> 1 *Macc* 10:10–11.

impressive and politically important palaces in Iudaea. Josephus claims that the site was selected because it was the location of a battle during which Herod triumphed over the forces of the Hasmonean pretender Antigonus II Mattathias in 40 BCE (J. *AJ* 15.323). Herodium was also, however, ideally situated to function as a symbolic monument, sitting 12 km from Jerusalem and 5 km from Bethlehem (which according to *Micah* 5:2 would be the home of a future ruler of Israel), placing it at the centre of political power and between two of the most important nodes in the Jewish sacred landscape. The palace is clearly visible from numerous other locations in Judea, including Jerusalem itself. While it lacked its own water supply, Herodium was provisioned by a 6 km long aqueduct which brought water from Solomon's Pools to the city.<sup>356</sup> The palace was probably occupied by the Romans after Herod's death, and was subsequently used as a rebel stronghold during the First Jewish Revolt and the Bar Kokhba Revolt.<sup>357</sup>

Empires also possessed the power to reshape the terrain in order to *destroy* fortresses (including many of the sites I have just discussed). During the siege of Machaerus (a mountain fortress east of the Dead Sea) in the final stages of the First Jewish Revolt, the Roman general Lucilius Bassus apparently filled in the valley to the east of the mountain in order to make the siege easier.<sup>358</sup> Though this site is obviously located just outside the bounds of our region, it provides an indication of how a well-resourced, organised aggressor could overcome the defensive advantages of elevated places. Similarly, the rebel fortress of Masada (discussed above) was eventually overwhelmed through Roman engineering genius, patience, and ruthlessness. The remains of the Roman siege camps at Masada, justly described by Magness as "probably the best-preserved examples anywhere in the Roman world", clearly illustrate the Roman strategy.<sup>359</sup> The mountain was surrounded by a wall and eight camps designed to prevent anybody from escaping or entering the fortress. The Romans then constructed a large ramp leading up the western side of the hill, facilitating the transport of siege engines to destroy the rebel fortifications. Needless to say, these enormous and complex siegeworks would have been impossible for a smaller, poorer force to construct.

One fortress which illustrates different state uses of the landscape is the mysterious Akra, built on a tall hill in the City of David. The fortress was designed to consolidate Seleukid control of the city following the disturbances of the early 160s BCE. The site looms large in ancient literary accounts of the Maccabean Revolt, which present the fortress as a potent, even offensive symbol of Seleukid power and a strategically crucial military installation. The demoralising effect of this strand of imperialism is reflected in an extraordinary passage of Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* in which he

---

<sup>356</sup> Netzer (1987) 8.

<sup>357</sup> Netzer (1987) 9–10.

<sup>358</sup> J. *BJ* 7.190–191.

<sup>359</sup> Magness (2002) 189.

describes the destruction of the Akra fortress by Simon Thassi. Once the structure itself was destroyed, Josephus claims, Simon declared that he would level the hill it was standing on so that nothing should be higher than the Temple again.<sup>360</sup> Curiously, the levelling of the citadel hill is not mentioned in 1 *Maccabees*, in which Simon seizes the fortress for himself (13:52). Josephus mentions it again, however, at *BJ* 5.139, in which he claims that the Hasmoneans both levelled the Akra hill and filled in the ravine between that hill and another lower hill, “wanting to connect the city with the Temple” (“συνάψαι βουλόμενοι τῷ ἱερῷ τὴν πόλιν”).

Archaeological evidence might help to explain the discrepancies between these accounts of the Akra’s fate. Ben-Ami and Tchekhanovets believe that they have identified the archaeological remains of the Akra in their excavations of the western slope of the southeastern ridge. The site in question comprises an enormous fortifying wall and a large defensive tower, dating to the early 2nd century BCE. It was strategically located to overlook what might have been a main route to the Temple (if we assume, as is reasonable, that the path along the Central Valley was in use by this period). The tower collapsed after a few decades, but fortifications were rebuilt and the site remained in use during the 130s and 120s BCE, before the fortress was demolished and levelled. As Zilberstein has argued, if this is the site of the Akra then it would indicate that the events Josephus describes did in fact occur, but over a much longer time period than he suggests, with the final levelling of the hill occurring several decades after the death of Simon. While the precise location of the Akra remains a matter of debate, this site constitutes perhaps the strongest candidate.<sup>361</sup> If we accept that there is a kernel of truth in Josephus’ story, the Akra constitutes a telling example of both the *constructive* (in the literal sense) power of states to take advantage of the defensive potential of terrain and ‘enhance’ it for their own purposes, and their corresponding *destructive* power to level both fortresses and even hills to overcome their enemies and erase them from the landscape.

### *Mountains and Power*

Perhaps partly as a result of the use of mountains by states and empires, the connection between mountains and power is striking throughout the Hebrew Bible and other ancient Jewish texts. Yahweh’s power is often illustrated by claiming he has the ability to manipulate mountains. 1 *Enoch*, a collection of apocalyptic Jewish texts compiled between the 3rd and 1st centuries BCE which is only wholly extant in Ge’ez, contains some of the most poetic and beautiful examples of this trope. In 1 *Enoch* 1:3–6, the author predicts that when Yahweh walks upon the earth “the high mountains will be shaken and fall and break apart, and the high hills will be made low and melt like wax before the fire”. Later (51:4), he claims that “in those days the mountains will leap like rams, and the hills will

---

<sup>360</sup> J. *AJ* 13.215–217.

<sup>361</sup> Ben-Ami & Tchekhanovets (2015), (2016), Zilberstein (Forthcoming).

skip like lambs satisfied with milk; and the faces of all the angels in heaven will be radiant with joy.”

In another passage (83:3–4):

I was lying down in the house of Mahalalel, my grandfather, (when) I saw in a vision. Heaven was thrown down and taken away, and it fell down upon the earth. And when it fell upon the earth, I saw how the earth was swallowed up in the great abyss. Mountains were suspended upon mountains, and hill sank down upon hills; Tall trees were cut from their roots, and were thrown away and sank into the abyss.<sup>362</sup>

Sometimes similar metaphors are used to illustrate the power of mortal rulers. In *Judith*, a text I will consider in more detail shortly, the Israelites are so intimidated by the vast Assyrian army that they fear “neither the high mountains, nor the valleys, nor the hills will support their weight” (“οὔτε τὰ ὄρη τὰ ὑψηλὰ οὔτε αἱ φάραγγες οὔτε οἱ βουνοὶ ὑποστήσονται τὸ βάρος αὐτῶν”).<sup>363</sup> Occasionally, authors use a claim to control the mountains to illustrate the foolhardiness of proud rulers. According to 2 *Maccabees* 9:8, Antiochus’ arrogance apparently caused him to “believe he could command the swell of the sea and weigh the high mountains on scales” (“τοῖς τῆς θαλάσσης κύμασιν ἐπιτάσσειν... πλάστιγγι τὰ τῶν ὀρέων οἰόμενος ὕψι στήσειν”).

The prevalence of this imagery is, presumably, partly a consequence of the fact that many though clearly not all ancient Jewish writers were based in Jerusalem, nestled in the heart of the Hill Country: the mountains, quite literally, ‘loomed large’ around them and their primary audience, and were an obvious image to use for metaphors and similes.<sup>364</sup> They were also something seemingly immovable and, consequently, eternal.<sup>365</sup> In Jewish culture, as in so many historical human cultures, height was evidently associated with power, prestige, and security. This is not, as my discussion so far has indicated, purely an irrational, primitive instinct: mountains were excellent observation points and defensive redoubts. As an ancient Jew or Samaritan gazed at them, it might have seemed self-evident that only Yahweh himself had the power to place, destroy, manipulate, and control them.

## Mountain Identities

“This royal throne of kings, this scepter’d isle,

This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,

This other Eden, demi-paradise,

This fortress built by Nature for herself

---

<sup>362</sup> All translations from 1 *Enoch* are from Nickelsburg & VanderKam (2012). See also some comparable passages of *Isaiah*: 40:4, 42:11, 42:15, 55:12.

<sup>363</sup> *Jud.* 7:4.

<sup>364</sup> This obviously does not directly apply to 2 *Maccabees*, based on the writings of Jason of Cyrene.

<sup>365</sup> This, naturally, makes the achievement of levelling a hill (as the Hasmoneans, for instance, allegedly did) all the more impressive.

Against infection and the hand of war,  
This happy breed of men, this little world,  
This precious stone set in the silver sea,  
Which serves it in the office of a wall,  
Or as a moat defensive to a house,  
Against the envy of less happier lands  
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England”<sup>366</sup>

With these words, uttered by the dying John of Gaunt in the pivotal opening scene of the second act of *Richard II*, Shakespeare presents England as defined, rendered coherent, and protected by the waters around it. This passage, among the most quoted of English literature, represents an important strand of Elizabethan English self-definition: that England is an ‘island nation’, surrounded by a sea which both safeguards and produces its independence of thought and action.<sup>367</sup> This idea, born during a time of conflict and relative diplomatic isolation, has proven long-lasting. A similar sentiment was evoked some 400 years later by Prime Minister David Cameron in his 2013 ‘Bloomberg Speech’ about the British relationship with the European Union:

We have the character of an island nation: independent, forthright, passionate in defence of our sovereignty. We can no more change this British sensibility than we can drain the English Channel. And because of this sensibility, we come to the European Union with a frame of mind that is more practical than emotional.

The British people, Cameron suggests, have an ‘island mentality’, which apparently is characterised by independent-mindedness and pragmatism (in contrast, he implies, to more idealistic continental Europeans).<sup>368</sup> According to Cameron, the geography of Britain has not only strategic but psychological consequences for its population.

In this section, I am going to suggest that a similar association between territory and ethnic character existed in certain ancient Jewish texts, especially *Judith*. Several Jewish authors describe Jewish territory as a Hill Country, even in periods when Jewish culture had spread to coastal and lowland areas of Palestine (and, indeed, beyond). The idea that Jewish territory only consists of the inland regions of Palestine, for instance, appears the passage of Josephus with which I began Chapter 2. He writes:

μεῖς τοίνυν οὔτε χώραν οἰκοῦμεν παράλιον οὔτ’ ἐμπορίαις χαίρομεν οὐδὲ ταῖς πρὸς ἄλλους διὰ τούτων ἐπιμιζίαις, ἀλλ’ εἰσὶ μὲν ἡμῶν αἱ πόλεις μακρὰν ἀπὸ θαλάσσης ἀνφοκισμέναι, χώραν δὲ ἀγαθὴν νεμόμενοι ταύτην ἐκπονοῦμεν.

---

<sup>366</sup> Shakespeare, *Richard II*, 722–732.

<sup>367</sup> See Shrank (2004), which contains several examples of the development of the ideology of the ‘island nation’ during this period.

<sup>368</sup> Wodak (2016) 18.

We do not live in a coastal country, and neither trade nor the mixture with others which results from it pleases us: our cities are built far from the sea, and we work this fine country which we have been allotted.

Here, Josephus clearly conceives of his “country” (χώρα) as being remote from the sea: in other words, as consisting of the Hill Country (as we have defined it), with the possible addition of inland Galilee. Traces of this attitude can be seen in earlier texts. At *Deuteronomy* 11:11, Moses says:

וְהָאֶרֶץ, אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ--אֶרֶץ הָרִים, וּבְקָעוֹת

The land which you are crossing [the Jordan] to possess is a land of mountains and valleys

Perhaps the most revealing examples of this tendency, however, is found in *Judith*, a Jewish text likely written in the Hasmonean period. It survives in Greek, though some believe that it was originally composed in Hebrew. It describes the invasion of Israel by an Assyrian king named Nebuchadnezzar, his army’s siege of the city of ‘Bethulia’, and the heroic actions of a young Jewish woman, Judith, who infiltrates the Assyrian camp and kills their general, Holofernes. The story is unhistorical and appears not to be set in any specific time. As such, there has historically been considerable debate about the precise date of the text: writing in 2020, scholarship has settled on the Hasmonean period, mainly because it seems clear that the author had knowledge of *Daniel* and 2 *Maccabees*. It is difficult, however, to determine whether the text is from the early or late Hasmonean periods, and dates range from the 160s to the 70s BCE.<sup>369</sup>

*Judith* has attracted enormous scholarly interest for over a century.<sup>370</sup> The text has been analysed in numerous academic traditions, from the feminist to the Jungian psychoanalytic, and has been pulled in numerous directions by a frenzy of interest.<sup>371</sup> One scholar, in a statement made almost 20 years ago but still valid today, turned to chaos theory to describe “the proliferation of interpretive strategies” which characterises recent *Judith* scholarship.<sup>372</sup> The peculiarly unspecific chronological setting of the story has generated debates about authorship, context, and meaning. Some scholars have worked to identify the “real meaning” of *Judith*, associating each of the major characters with a historical figure, while others have tried to connect the text with a particular Jewish religious sect. There have also been live debates about the extent to which *Judith* is pro- or anti-Hasmonean. Eckhardt, for instance, argued in 2009 that *Judith* is responding to official Hasmonean propaganda, and presents the work as a subversive literary critique of Hasmonean attempts to appropriate biblical literature for their own political purposes.<sup>373</sup> The text is also one of a small handful of ancient Jewish texts which centre on a woman, and the text and its strikingly brave, independent, violent, and self-confident heroine have

---

<sup>369</sup> Eckhardt (2009) 243–244.

<sup>370</sup> For a summary of the scholarship up until 2003, see Craven (2003).

<sup>371</sup> A Jungian psychoanalytic approach: Efthimiades-Keith (2004).

<sup>372</sup> Craven (2003) 209–210.

<sup>373</sup> Eckhardt (2009).

attracted the attention of gender historians and feminist academics. Discussion has particularly centred around the extent to which Judith broke with dominant ideals of femininity, the tension between her use of her sexuality to seduce Holophernes and her presentation as a morally ideal Jewish woman, and, in general, the ways the text can inform our understanding of women in Second Temple Jerusalem.<sup>374</sup> The text is also an important source for discussions of Jewish ethnicity and identity. Scholars have focused on the unusual frequency of the words “Israel” and “Israelite”, as well as the conversion of Achior, an Ammonite, to Judaism and his subsequent acceptance into the Jewish community.<sup>375</sup>

All of these lines of investigation have contributed enormously to our understanding of this difficult and fascinating text, with different scholars reading *Judith* through the lens of their own interests and theoretical perspectives. For my own part, I would like to suggest that an unexplored dimension of *Judith*’s discourse on ethnicity is the construction of a Jewish identity which is deeply rooted in the mountains. One way that the text achieves this is by redrawing the boundaries of Judea to correspond with the Hill Country. The territory of Judea is expanded to incorporate the Samaritan Hill Country:

καὶ ἦλθε κατὰ πρόσωπον Ἑσδρηλὼν πλησίον τῆς Δωταίας, ἣ ἐστὶν ἀπέναντι τοῦ πρίονος τοῦ μεγάλου τῆς Ἰουδαίας, καὶ κατεστρατοπέδευσεν ἀνὰ μέσον Γαβαὶ καὶ Σκυθῶν πόλεως, καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ μῆνα ἡμερῶν εἰς τὸ συλλέξει πάσαν τὴν ἀπαρτίαν τῆς δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.

He came towards Esdraleon, close to Dotan, which is opposite the great ridge of Judea, and he set up camp between Geba and Scythopolis, and he was there for a whole month to collect all the supplies of his forces.<sup>376</sup>

Esdraleon, also known as the Jezreel Valley, forms the border between Galilee and Samaria, but is described as being opposite ‘the great ridge of Judea’: the boundary between Judea and Samaria is, therefore, erased. We see this again at 4:4–7:

καὶ ἀπέστειλαν εἰς πᾶν ὄριον Σαμαρείας καὶ Κωνὰ καὶ Βαιθωρὼν καὶ Βελμαῖν καὶ Ἰεριχώ καὶ εἰς Χωβὰ καὶ Αἰσωρὰ καὶ τὸν αὐλῶνα Σαλήμ καὶ προκατελάβοντο πάσας τὰς κορυφὰς τῶν ὀρέων τῶν ὑψηλῶν καὶ ἐτειχίσαντο τὰς ἐν αὐτοῖς κόμας καὶ παρέθεντο εἰς ἐπισιτισμὸν εἰς παρασκευὴν πολέμου, ὅτι προσφάτως ἦν τὰ πεδία αὐτῶν τεθερισμένα. καὶ ἔγραψεν Ἰωακὶμ ὁ ἱερεὺς ὁ μέγας, ὃς ἦν ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκεῖναις ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ, τοῖς κατοικοῦσι Βαιτυλούα καὶ Βαιτομεσθαίμ, ἣ ἐστὶν ἀπέναντι Ἑσδρηλὼν κατὰ πρόσωπον τοῦ πεδίου τοῦ πλησίον Δωθαίμ, λέγων διακατασχεῖν τὰς ἀναβάσεις τῆς ὀρεινῆς, ὅτι δι’ αὐτῶν ἦν ἡ εἵσοδος εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν καὶ ἦν εὐχερῶς διακωλύσαι αὐτοὺς προσβαίνοντας, στενῆς τῆς προσβάσεως οὔσης ἐπ’ ἄνδρας τοὺς πάντας δύο

They sent out to all the territory of Samaria, Kona, Bethhoron, Belmain, Jericho, Choba, Aesora, and to the valley of Salem. They occupied all the tops of the high mountains and fortified the villages on them. They also set aside provisions to prepare for war, since their fields had just been harvested.

<sup>374</sup> E.g. Milne (1993), Sawyer (2001), Efthimiades-Keith (2010). There has been considerable debate about whether Judith is a positive or a negative feminist role model.

<sup>375</sup> E.g. Roitman (1992), Eckhardt (2009), Venter (2011).

<sup>376</sup> *Jud.* 3:9–10.

Joakim the High Priest, who was in Jerusalem in those days, wrote to the inhabitants of Bethulia and Bethomestham, which is opposite Esdralion facing the plain near Dothan, saying that they should occupy the mountain ascents because they were the entrance to Judea. It was easy to prevent those coming up, because the passage was narrow and [only wide enough] for two men.

It is tempting to consider the apparent annexation of Samaria as a simple expression of Jewish imperialism in the wake of the Hasmonean conquests and, perhaps, another act in the long dispute between the inhabitants of Judea and Samaria (see Chapter 4). I do not believe, however, that this is the case, since coastal areas are presented as being separate parts of the country. I would suggest, rather, that this is part of an attempt to describe the boundaries of Jewish territory as roughly coterminous with what I have called ‘the Hill Country’ and to define the Jews as a ‘mountain people’ (just as Josephus defines the Jews as an ‘inland people’).

There are other indications of this in the text, particularly in the interaction between Holophernes and his generals in Chapter 5. In 5:1–3, Holophernes assembles the leaders of Moab, Ammon, and the coastal plains together, and bluntly asks:

τίς ὁ λαὸς οὗτος ὁ καθήμενος ἐν τῇ ὀρεινῇ,  
Who is this people who live in the Hill Country?

Achior, leader of the Ammonites, begins his reply by saying (5:5):

ἀκουσάτω δὴ ὁ κύριός μου λόγον ἐκ στόματος τοῦ δούλου σου, καὶ ἀναγγελῶ σοὶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν περὶ τοῦ λαοῦ, ὃς κατοικεῖ τὴν ὀρεινὴν ταύτην...  
Listen, Master, to this speech from the mouth of your servant, and I will tell you the truth about the people, who live in this Hill Country...

It is striking that in both Holophernes and Achior define the Israelites with reference to their mountainous territory. Later in his speech, Achior explains how the Israelites came to inhabit this country (5:14–15):

καὶ ἐξέβαλον πάντας τοὺς κατοικοῦντας ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, καὶ ᾤκησαν ἐν γῇ Ἀμορραίων καὶ πάντας τοὺς Ἑσβεωνίτας ἐξωλόθρευσαν ἐν τῇ ἰσχύϊ αὐτῶν. καὶ διαβάντες τὸν Ἰορδάνην ἐκληρονόμησαν πᾶσαν τὴν ὀρεινὴν  
They drove out all those living in the wilderness, they inhabited the land of the Amorites, they destroyed the people of Heshbon in their strength. Then, crossing over the Jordan, they took over the entire Hill Country.

He then claims that the Israelites had previously been defeated in battle because they abandoned their god’s commandments and were forced into exile by the victors (presumably a reference to the Babylonian captivity). He adds, however (5:19):

καὶ νῦν ἐπιστρέψαντες ἐπὶ τὸν Θεὸν αὐτῶν ἀνέβησαν ἐκ τῆς διασπορᾶς, οὗ διεσπάρησαν ἐκεῖ, καὶ κατέσχον τὴν Ἱερουσαλήμ, οὗ τὸ ἅγισμα αὐτῶν, καὶ κατοίκησθαι ἐν τῇ ὀρεινῇ, ὅτι ἦν ἔρημος  
Now, having turned back to their god they have come back from the places they were scattered to and occupied Jerusalem, where their temple is, and have settled the Hill Country, for it was desolate.

The idea that the Israelites are a mountain people is repeated in Holophernes' greeting to Judith, in which he refers to "your people who inhabit the hill country" ("ὁ λαός σου ὁ κατοικῶν τὴν ὄρεινὴν").<sup>377</sup> These passages, combined with the passages redrawing the territory of Judea and describing mountain warfare (see above), have the effect of repeatedly, indeed almost obsessively, locating the Israelites in the mountains. I believe that this serves a precise purpose in the text, constituting an attempt by the author to describe the Jews as a "mountain people" and, therefore, to suggest that the Jews have a particular national character.

What might ancient readers have thought of when they imagined a "people who live in the hill country"? There was a strong strand of environmental determinism in Greek ethnography.<sup>378</sup> The author of the Hippocratic text *Airs, Waters, Places* believed that the habits and personality of a people was largely determined by the climate and terrain in which they lived.<sup>379</sup> At section 24, he considers those who live in mountainous regions in particular:

ὁκόσοι μὲν χώραν ὄρεινὴν τε οἰκέουσι καὶ τρηχεῖαν καὶ ὑψηλὴν καὶ ἔνυδρον, καὶ αἱ μεταβολαὶ αὐτοῖσι γίνονται τῶν ὥρέων μέγα διάφοροι, ἐνταῦθα εἰκὸς εἶδεα μεγάλα εἶναι καὶ πρὸς τὸ ταλαίπωρον καὶ τὸ ἀνδρεῖον εὖ πεφυκότα, καὶ τό τε ἄγριον καὶ τὸ θηριῶδες αἱ τοιαῦται φύσεις οὐχ ἥκιστα ἔχουσιν. Those who live in a mountainous, rugged, elevated, and well-watered country where the changes of the seasons bring about great differences are likely to have large bodies, and are naturally well adapted for hardship and courage, and possess not a little fierceness and savagery.

The harshness of hill countries, so the logic goes, produces a strong, brave, and fierce population. A similar attitude can be seen in the final passage of Herodotus' *Histories*, in which the Persians suggest to Cyrus that they should move from the bleak mountains of Persia and into a more comfortable country. He responds that they would become slaves if they did, "for soft people tend to come from soft countries" ("φιλέειν γὰρ ἐκ τῶν μαλακῶν χώρων μαλακοὺς γίνεσθαι"). The Persians are persuaded and decide to remain in Persia, since "they chose to rule in a poor country rather than to be slaves to others sowing flat lands" ("ἄρχειν τε εἶλοντο λυπρὴν οἰκέοντες μᾶλλον ἢ πεδιάδα σπεύροντες ἄλλοισι δουλεύειν").<sup>380</sup>

Similar ideas appear in texts post-dating Judith. The 1st century geographer Strabo, in a discussion of European geography, writes:

ὑπάρχει δὴ τι καὶ πρὸς τοῦτο εὐφυὲς τῇ ἡπείρῳ ταύτῃ: ὅλη γὰρ διαπεποίκιλται πεδίοις τε καὶ ὄρεσιν, ὥστε πανταχοῦ καὶ τὸ γεωργικὸν καὶ τὸ πολιτικὸν καὶ τὸ μάχιμον παρακεῖσθαι... διὰ τοῦτο δὲ καὶ πρὸς πόλεμον αὐταρκεστάτη ἐστί: καὶ γὰρ τὸ μάχιμον πλῆθος ἄφθονον ἔχει καὶ τὸ ἐργαζόμενον τὴν γῆν καὶ τὸ τὰς πόλεις συνέχον

<sup>377</sup> *Jud.* 11:2.

<sup>378</sup> See examples in Egin (2008).

<sup>379</sup> Hippoc. *Airs, Waters, Places* 12.

<sup>380</sup> Hdt. 9.211

The continent is favoured in this respect: it is interspersed with mountains and plains, so that agricultural, civilised people live alongside the warlike... Therefore [Europe] is self-sufficient both in war [and peace]. For it has a plentiful warlike population, as well as a population suited to working the land and holding the cities together.<sup>381</sup>

Strabo evidently believes, as is even clearer from the full passage, that mountainous regions are naturally inhabited by warrior races. There are numerous occasions when Strabo identifies specific examples of this tendency, as compiled by Pierre Briant in his 1982 study of pastoralism in the Middle East. He points, for instance, to passage 11.3.3 concerning the Iberians of the Caucasus:

τὸ μὲν οὖν πεδίον τῶν Ἰβήρων οἱ γεωργικώτεροι καὶ πρὸς εἰρήνην νενευκότες οἰκοῦσιν ἄρμενιστί τε καὶ μηδιστί ἐσκευασμένοι, τὴν δ' ὄρεινὴν οἱ πλείους καὶ μάχιμοι κατέχουσι Σκυθῶν δίκην ζῶντες καὶ Σαρματῶν, ὧν περ καὶ ὁμοροὶ καὶ συγγενεῖς εἰσιν: ἄπτονται δ' ὅμως καὶ γεωργίας

Those of the Iberians who live in the plain are rather agricultural, incline towards peace, and dress in the Armenian and Median styles. The warlike majority, however, inhabit the hill country, living like Scythians and Sarmatians who are their neighbours and kin; however they also farm.<sup>382</sup>

There is also a moral dimension to the mountains stereotype I have described. In her influential study of the people of the Appenines, Emma Dench explored the tension between depictions of mountain communities as rough and uncivilised on the one hand, and tough and morally upright on the other. Livy's description of the Sabines as "mountain-dwellers and rustics" ("montani atque agrestes") (11.13), for instance, is clearly meant pejoratively. Yet there are indications in numerous Latin texts that the mountains were imagined to be an ideal theatre for producing masculine, moral men: from Cato's upbringing among "Sabine rocks" ("saxis Sabinis") to Horace's idealised "masculine descendants of rustic soldiers" who farmed with "Sabellian [Sabine] hoes" amid the "mountain shadows" ("montium umbras").<sup>383</sup> Dench argues that this ambiguity is comparable to the general Roman ambivalence towards "rustici".<sup>384</sup>

There are good reasons to believe that the author of *Judith* was familiar with Greek historiography. Several scholars have pointed out, for instance, resonances between the presentation of locations and characters in *Judith* and Herodotus' *Histories*.<sup>385</sup> Jeremy Corley has identified numerous additional resonances between Greek historiography and passages in *Judith*.<sup>386</sup> The author of *Judith* also deploys some strikingly Hellenic imagery, such as "titans" and "giants" (16:6–10; for further discussion of this passage see below). As such, it is likely that the author of *Judith* was familiar with the Greco-Roman mountain stereotypes outlined above (excluding, of course, those specific to later texts).

---

<sup>381</sup> Strab. 2.5.26.

<sup>382</sup> Briant (1982) 13. Other passages Briant references are 11.10.2, 15.3.1, and 16.1.18

<sup>383</sup> Cato *ORF* (4) no. 8, 128; Horace *Odes* 3.6.37–44.

<sup>384</sup> Dench (1995) 126–127.

<sup>385</sup> The most widely accepted parallels between Herodotus *Histories* and *Judith* are between Thermopylae and Xerxes in the former, and Bethulia and Holophernes respectively in the latter: see Caponigro (1992), Corley (2012) 24.

<sup>386</sup> Corley (2012).

*Judith* also emerged from a broadly Near Eastern, and specifically Jewish, literary tradition. It is possible to detect similar themes in ancient Mesopotamian art and literature, though admittedly there is much less evidence of the kinds of complex pseudoscientific environmental determinism which we see in Greco-Roman literature. In particular, mountainous environments are connected to “wild” individuals or peoples. The late third/early second millennium BCE Sumerian poem *The Marriage of Martu*, for instance, appears to describe a savage community living in the mountains and foothills. The community are portrayed as ignorant of culture, civilization, and proper religious practice, but also highly physical and able to endure their harsh environment.<sup>387</sup> In her excellent study of the history of the ancient inhabitants of the Zagros Mountains, Silvia Balatti has assembled numerous Assyrian sources describing mountain peoples, who are characterised as dangerous, threatening, and cruel. In the 8th century Assyrian text *Letter to the God Ashur*, produced by Sargon II of the Neo-Assyrian Empire, “highlander” is applied to various characters as part of lists of insults designed to illustrate a figure’s impiety, harshness, and cruelty. Balatti also shows that dwelling in the mountains also implies rebelliousness and natural strength in Assyrian literature. King Maniye of Ukku, for instance, is called an “unsubmissive mountain dweller” in the early 7th century BCE *Sennacherib’s Annals*, while the desert and mountain-dwelling Medes of Dast-e Kavir are regularly described as “dannuti”, a word which implies fierceness and strength.<sup>388</sup> She adds that this stereotype is also reflected in depictions of mountain people in art from a wide range of periods. In various Assyrian reliefs, for instance, mountain peoples are depicted as having long hair and wearing the skins of wild animals, a characteristic of barbarism and savagery. In Neo-Babylonian texts, the mountain people are depicted as a horde of savages sent to by the gods to wreak havoc on the civilised lowlands.<sup>389</sup>

The concept of the fierce mountain barbarian evidently permeated the Hebrew Bible, too. Mobley has argued that Elijah is an example of “the wild man as shaman”. In addition to his shaggy hair, a key aspect of this characterisation is that he chose to live in a mountain cave. Mobley also considers the figure of Samson at length, arguing that his long hair, aggression, physical strength, and command of animals mark him out as a wild man in the Mesopotamian tradition.<sup>390</sup> Most importantly for our purposes, he also points to Samson’s choice to live in a rock crevice as an aspect of his savage characterisation. After slaughtering numerous Philistines, the author notes that “he went down and lived in a cave in the rock of Etam”.<sup>391</sup>

---

<sup>387</sup> Mobley (1997) 225.

<sup>388</sup> Balatti (2017) 115–118. On the word “dannuti”, see Lanfranchi (2003) 90–92.

<sup>389</sup> Balatti (2017) 328–338.

<sup>390</sup> Mobley (1997) 227–233. Elijah in the cave: 1 *Kgs.* 19.9.

<sup>391</sup> *Judg.* 15:8.

As this discussion indicates, there was a certain ambiguity in these cultural systems about whether mountain people should be viewed as backward, stupid, cruel, and animal-like, or fierce, strong, even admirable warriors. Given that mountain people could, then, be understood both positively and negatively in both Greco-Roman and West Asian culture, there was perhaps a certain danger in characterising one's own community as a "mountain people". What unites these various traditions, however, is that in all cases the inhabitants of hill-countries are the objects of fear on account of their fierceness and martial prowess. It is easy to speculate about the reasons behind this extraordinarily long-lived and cross-cultural trope. Mountains are, firstly, more difficult to travel through than surrounding regions, often resulting in the development of cultural practices which seem unusual to the plain dwellers below. Secondly, and more importantly, the mountains have (as I have argued) a substantial impact on the dynamics of ancient warfare and imperialism. The difficulties which even large empires with vast armies and resources faced when conquering these regions made them appear unconquerable, and their inhabitants seem exceptionally warlike and strong. This, I suggest, is the purpose of the mountain themes in *Judith*. The passages I have discussed are designed to illustrate the security of the Hill Country, and to redefine the Jews as a mountain people possessing the martial prowess considered characteristic of the inhabitants of such regions.

This is reflected repeatedly in the text. The city of Bethulia is ultimately saved by the actions of a single woman, the eponymous Judith. The ideal which Judith represents (in contrast to the ineffectual community leaders she outshines) incorporates many elements of the 'noble mountain savage' stereotype, including some of the tensions I have described. When she is introduced, she is described as living in a tent on top of her house and dressing only in sackcloth (8:5). While this is presented as a consequence of her widowhood, this unusual detail also has the effect of giving Judith the costume and living habits typical of a 'savage'. Furthermore, in order to break the siege, she acts with extraordinary courage, cunning, and brutality, sneaking into the enemy camp, seducing the enemy general, and sawing his head off. That she discards her sackcloth and wears the finest clothes and jewellery to accomplish her deception is ironic: even as she wears the seductive clothes of an elite woman, she is capable of decapitating an Assyrian general, thereby preserving and reaffirming her characterisation as tough and deadly. This irony is made explicit at 16:9:

τὸ σανδάλιον αὐτῆς ἤρπασεν ὀφθαλμὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς ἤχμαλώτισε ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ, διῆλθεν ὁ ἀκινάκης τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ

Her sandal caught his eye, and her beauty captured his mind, and her shortsword passed through his neck.

The fact that Judith is a woman does not undercut this message at all: on the contrary, that even a young Jewish woman, as opposed to a man of fighting age, could accomplish these extraordinary things indicates the fearsomeness of the Jewish people. This point is hammered home at 16:6–10.:

οὐ γὰρ ὑπέπεσεν ὁ δυνατὸς αὐτῶν ὑπὸ νεανίσκων, οὐδὲ υἱοὶ τιτάνων ἐπάταξαν αὐτόν, οὐδὲ ὕψηλοι γίγαντες ἐπέθεντο αὐτῷ, ἀλλὰ Ἰουδιθ θυγάτηρ Μερὰρι ἐν κάλλει προσώπου αὐτῆς παρέλυσεν αὐτόν... ἔφριξαν Πέρσαι τὴν τόλμαν αὐτῆς, καὶ Μῆδοι τὸ θράσος αὐτῆς ἐρράχθησαν

The mighty [Holofernes] did not fall at the hands of the young men, the sons of the Titans did not slay him, nor did tall Giants set upon him, but Judith the daughter of Merari paralysed him in her beauty... The Persians shuddered at her daring, and the Medes were intimidated by her courage.

Indeed, Judith's actions serve not only to save the Israelites from conquest, but also to restore them to their true 'mountainous' nature: savage, ruthless, and capable of terrorising their enemies. This is foreshadowed in Chapter 9, where she recalls the brutality with which the Israelites of old avenged the rape of Dinah by the Shechemites.<sup>392</sup> The Israelites of Judith's time enthusiastically return to this character in Chapter 15. When the army of Holofernes heard about Judith's actions, the author claims, "fear and trembling fell upon them" ("ἐπέπεσεν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς φόβος καὶ τρόμος") and they "fled through every path of the plain and the Hill Country" ("ἔφενγον ἐπὶ πᾶσαν ὁδὸν τοῦ πεδίου καὶ τῆς ὄρεινῃς"). This prompts the Jewish leader Uzziah to mobilise the Israelites, who pursue the enemy army and slaughter as many as they can catch, before taking thirty days to plunder the Assyrian camp of all its goods (15:11).

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explored some of the military implications of the Hill Country's terrain. I have argued that the territory was highly defensible, particularly for those willing to engage in a long, brutal, dispiriting campaign of guerrilla warfare. The Jews and Samaritans were culturally disinclined to commit to this style of fighting, however, as they had an interest in protecting sites of religious significance (particularly the cult centres of Jerusalem and Gerizim). The Hill Country was also filled with caves and other places in which brigands could hide themselves away. This, I suggest, made the Hill Country an extremely difficult territory to fully subdue.

I also argued that empires sought to harness the region's defensive sites for their own advantage. Every state and empire which held control over the Hill Country made their own mark on its military landscape, constructing forts and fortified palaces in high places. As empires succeeded each other, older sites were usually either appropriated or destroyed, depending on the needs of the new power.

I have suggested that discourses of identity and power developed alongside these strategic, practical military landscapes. I have explored the emergence of literary connections between the mountains and divine power, for instance, as well as the ways that the development of networks of fortifications on the Hill Country served to reinforce imperial ideology. In the final section of this chapter, I focused on

---

<sup>392</sup> A reference to *Genesis* 34.

*Judith's* 'mountain obsession'. I have argued that the text is consciously presenting the Jews as rooted in the mountains and is engaging with a long tradition of stereotypes about 'mountain peoples'.

## Chapter 4: Ethnogenesis and Administration

During the procuratorship of Ventidius Cumanus (48–52 CE), a Jewish pilgrim on his way to Jerusalem was murdered in Gema, a small village marking the frontier between Galilee and Samaria

(Fig. 15).<sup>393</sup> Josephus writes that outraged mobs of Galileans immediately began organising with the intention of waging war on the Samaritans, as various prominent citizens pleaded in vain with Cumanus that he should arrest those responsible for the murder. As tensions rose, news of the conflict reached Jerusalem, prompting a group of Judean Jews to march into Samaria and massacre the population of Acrabatene (near Shechem). Cumanus, attempting to regain control of the situation, dispatched a unit of cavalry which killed many of the rioters and captured their leaders as Jerusalemite officials begged the vigilantes to return home. Despite these efforts the spree of violent unrest continued to spread unabated, until Jewish and Samaritan leaders directly appealed to the governor of Syria, Ummidius Quadratus, for justice. After executing several rebel leaders, Quadratus sent Cumanus to the Emperor Claudius to explain his conduct, along with representatives of the Jewish and Samaritan communities. The Emperor ultimately banished Cumanus, condemned his tribune Celer to be dragged around Jerusalem in chains, and ordered that several Samaritans should be executed.<sup>394</sup>

This story illuminates three features of the divide between Judea and Samaria in the mid-1st century CE. Firstly, and most obviously, large numbers of the inhabitants of these regions evidently regarded each other with immense hostility and mistrust. A single murder in an obscure village was immediately interpreted as an act of ethnic terrorism, provoking an escalating, deadly exchange of violence. Secondly, the border between Jewish and Samaritan land appears to have been a hard line rather than a nebulous zone of transition: the Jewish pilgrim was not murdered in Shechem or the city of Samaria, but in a border village. Thirdly, to cross this border was extremely dangerous for Jews. This was not the consequence of a freak spike in tension. Around 20 years earlier, a heterodox Jewish-Galilean religious leader had received an icy response from the inhabitants of a Samaritan village when they discovered that he was *en route* to Jerusalem.<sup>395</sup> Around 20 years later, Josephus would dispatch 500 guards to defend an embassy of Galileans as they travelled through Samaria to Jerusalem, while at the same time writing to his acquaintances in the region to secure their safe passage.<sup>396</sup> The sharp divide between these regions, in short, was clearly an important feature of the

---

<sup>393</sup> J. *AJ.* 20.118; for the location of Gema (also known as ‘Ginae’ and ‘Ginea’ in Greek and ‘En-gannim’ in Hebrew), see J. *BJ.* 2.232. The incident is also mentioned by Tacitus at *Annals* 12.54.

<sup>394</sup> J. *BJ.* 2.232–249.

<sup>395</sup> *Lk.* 9:51–6.

<sup>396</sup> J. *Vita* 52.

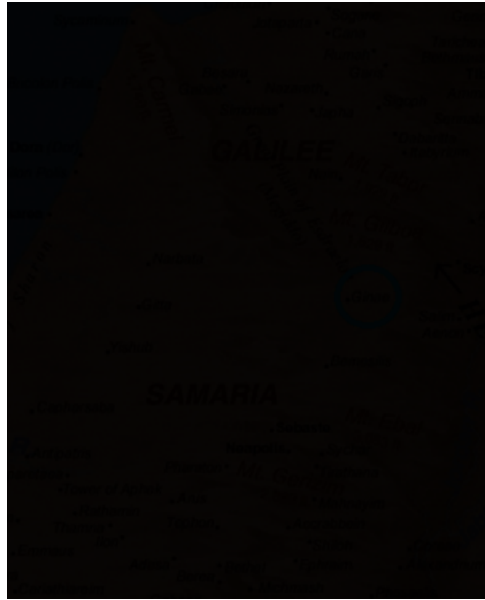


Fig. 15: Location of Gema (titled with its alternative name 'Ginae') <sup>397</sup> [Copyright image removed]

Hill Country's cultural geography during the 1st century CE.

These observations pose a series of questions, which can be condensed into two historical problems. The first is a problem of *ethnogenesis*. How did these communities coalesce into two mutually hostile groups? Why were (presumably peaceful) Jewish pilgrims, diplomats, and religious preachers in serious physical danger from Samaritans, and why did the Jews decide to collectively punish the Samaritans for a single murder? The second is a problem of *territorialisation*. How and when did the border between Samaria and surrounding regions crystallise? What was so provocative about Jews passing through Samaria in the 1st century CE?

These problems cannot be resolved easily. Ancient texts do not speak in terms of 'ethnogenesis' and 'identity', so scholars interested in these subjects are compelled to extract and synthesise fragments of relevant information from the surviving literature, a process with real risks of anachronism (see below). Furthermore, we have only the most meagre crumbs of written Samaritan evidence to draw upon: the Samaritan Pentateuch itself, which is largely the same as the Jewish Pentateuch, some medieval Arabic chronicles, and a few hundred (mostly highly fragmentary) inscriptions from Mount Gerizim and Delos. Most of our information about the ancient Samaritans has to be gleaned from scattered passages in Jewish religious literature and the works of Flavius Josephus, which offer us a picture of Jewish-Samaritan history which is both *Judeocentric* and *Judeacentric*. Josephus, our most important source for the Second Temple period, has the potential to be particularly misleading since,

<sup>397</sup> Sourced from *Bible History Online*: <https://www.bible-history.com/geography/ancient-israel/israel-first-century.html> [accessed 13/02/2021]

as a 1st century CE writer, he often retrojects the contemporary Samaritan-Jewish conflict into previous periods.

Despite these challenges, I will argue that we can begin to address the problems of ethnogenesis and territorialisation by examining their interrelationships with administrative history. I will suggest that imperial policy, in particular the redrawing of administrative boundaries and fluctuating levels of state involvement in local cult sites, shaped the process of Jewish and Samaritan self-definition during this period, ultimately producing two well-defined, generally hostile regional entities. I will argue that these historical developments did not progress in a linear fashion towards the condition of the 1st century CE, with gradually mounting hostility sparked by a particular event. Rather, I will posit that administrative changes sometimes caused these processes to falter, speed up, jump forwards, and even move backwards. I will also suggest that ethnogenesis and territorialisation were never completely realised: indeed, I will show that a consistent feature of Judean-Samaritan relations was cooperation and interaction among elites, even in periods where feelings of solidarity and ethnic unity appear to have been decaying. While I have no illusions that this approach will completely resolve the two problems I have identified, I believe that it begins to make a large, diverse, and difficult body of evidence historically legible.

## **Ways of belonging**

### *Ethnicity & ethnogenesis*

Although the word ‘ethnic’—derived from the Greek ἔθνικός (*ethnikos*; “national”)—has existed in English since the late Middle Ages, it only began to take on its present range of meanings in the 19th century.<sup>398</sup> While the word and its cognates have an ill-defined set of connotations in everyday speech, since the 1980s social scientists have attempted to develop a precise definition of ‘ethnic group’/‘ethnicity’ which repurposes the terms as a helpful categories for the study of past and present human societies, and distinguishes them from the related term ‘race’.<sup>399</sup> The entry for ‘ethnic group’ in the 2013 *Oxford Dictionary of Human Geography* represents a mainstream academic definition: “a social classification of people based upon their shared cultural characteristics and heritage”.<sup>400</sup> These

---

<sup>398</sup> Williams (1983) 119–120.

<sup>399</sup> There are, I should acknowledge, ongoing debates about whether or not ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ ought to be used interchangeably, with some, such as Bartlett, arguing drawing a distinction between the two legitimises the idea that ‘race’ is a biological category, while others believe that race “is a term best left to the racists”, and that conflating the two would lead to unnecessary confusion in the United States in particular where the two have more distinct connotations in common parlance. In this paper, I shall prefer the term ‘ethnicity’. Beattie (2011), Bartlett (2001).

<sup>400</sup> Castree *et. al.* (2013).

characteristics are often held to include an idea of a homeland (see below), and a feeling of difference from other groups. As such, “ethnic group formation always entails both inclusionary and exclusionary behaviour”: it is about who *we are*, but also about whom *we are not*.<sup>401</sup>

The emergence of ethnic groups is often called *ethnogenesis*. This term was first used in early 20th century Russian ethnography (in the form этногенез, *etnogenes*), before being adopted by Anglo-American anthropologists in the 1960s and 70s. As cultural geographers Jordan and Jordan-Bychkov argued, the word “describes a process rather than an event”: as such, historians should not expect to identify a particular moment when an ethnic group came into existence, nor even a moment when it is fully formed.<sup>402</sup> The dynamic quality of ethnicity and ethnogenesis is often stressed in contemporary social scientific research: today, most scholars believe that ethnicity is not predominantly a consequence of biological differences between groups, but that it has its roots in cultural, religious, historical, and social factors which create a feeling of ‘belonging’. Consequently, ethnic groups are usually characterised not as static features of cultural systems, but as unstable constructs which are constantly being renegotiated. Sometimes, existing groups might be dissolved into others, fracture into multiple new subgroups, or combine. Others can retain their distinctiveness, while at the same time coalescing into new meta-groups called ‘panethnicities’ (the classic example of this phenomenon is the ‘Asian-American’ identity in the United States).<sup>403</sup>

The variety of ethnic groups and ethnogenetic processes should make us suspicious of attempts to develop hard and fast rules for the causes of ethnogenesis. That said, it does appear that the crystallisation or reconfiguration of ethnic boundaries is often prompted by threats (real or perceived) to a group’s independence, cohesion, territorial integrity, or perceived ‘racial’ purity. In such circumstances, identities are frequently constructed in opposition to groups lying just outside these boundaries—in other words, more similar groups—rather than those further away.<sup>404</sup> Such groups can often enter a symbiotic relationship, in which two or more rival ethnicities primarily define themselves in opposition to one another.

Transferring ethnicity theory to the ancient world is potentially problematic. While many argue that ethnic groups appear in all (or almost all) human societies, others insist that ethnicity is a product of early modern European colonial interests and cannot, implicitly, be traced back to the ancient

---

<sup>401</sup> Hiebert (2009)

<sup>402</sup> Jordan & Jordan-Bychkov (2003) 5–6.

<sup>403</sup> For a recent assessment of trends in panethnicity studies, see Okamoto & Mora (2014). Much of the research on panethnicity has concerned immigrant groups in the United States: see Lopez & Espiritu (1990), Espiritu (1992), Itzigsohn (2004).

<sup>404</sup> See Southwood (2012) Ch. 2 for a useful synthesis of much modern anthropological and sociological scholarship on these issues.

world.<sup>405</sup> Theoretically-minded ancient historians (as well as medievalists and other pre-modern historians), however, have long found that that ethnicity theory provides them with a useful analytical tool to understand historical communities.<sup>406</sup> Studies of Greek ethnicity, for instance, have had a significant impact on the cultural historiography of classical antiquity.<sup>407</sup> Historians of the Second Temple Hill Country, partly influenced by these studies, have also used ethnicity theory to address the problem of when, and why, a distinct Samaritan identity emerged during this period.<sup>408</sup>

While I broadly share these scholars' optimism about the potential value of ethnicity theory, I will suggest in this chapter that they have tended to be a little overly-schematic, condensing a vast body of sociological and anthropological theory into a set of ready-made 'rules', which are used to transform a tiny body of evidence into a detailed story of ethnogenesis. The historian should, I believe, instead use such theories to indicate *possibilities*, and not to relieve us of our analytical responsibilities by prescribing what *must have happened*. Ancient historians should be prepared to identify similarities with the modern world, but should also be alive to the equally interesting possibility that the object of their study is, in fact, quite different. 'Ethnic' boundaries, which are founded on ideas of kinship and descent, are just one way that historical peoples might have understood themselves and others.

### *Homelands*

One feature of an ethnic group is an attachment to a particular territory which it believes to be naturally and rightfully its own. In other words, ethnic groups often have a "homeland" (which could equally well be termed an 'ethnic landscape discourse' to demonstrate its place in the theoretical framework of this thesis).

In 1992, the American cultural and historical geographer Richard L. Nostrand proposed that a "homeland" had three necessary features: "a people, a place, and identity with place". To put it another way, a homeland is a *place* with which a *people* emotionally *identify*. In a series of subsequent essays co-written with ethnic geographer Lawrence E. Estraville, "homeland" was instead defined by five factors: "a people, place, bonding with place, control of, and time". In this formulation, a homeland is a *place* with which a *people* had *bonded* because they have had some *control* over it (as owners, or farmers, or citizens) for a significant period of *time*.<sup>409</sup> While this is open to various objections, it seems a good general definition, and for the purposes of this chapter we need not refine

---

<sup>405</sup> Pre-modern and modern phenomenon: Jenkins (1997), Smith (1995); Only modern phenomenon: Anderson (1983), Hobsbawm (1990).

<sup>406</sup> Ethnicity is just one such tool: others include 'religious group', 'culture', 'ethnoreligious group'.

<sup>407</sup> E.g. Hall (2002).

<sup>408</sup> E.g. Becking (2012), Kartveit (2014a).

<sup>409</sup> Nostrand (1992) 214, Nostrand & Estraville (2002) xvii-xxi.

the idea much further: the important point is that the development of a sense of “homeland” is *itself* a historical process, distinct from (though often related to) processes of ethnogenesis.

The intuition that one’s homeland is “at the centre” of the world and even the cosmos recurs across human populations. The French traditionalist philosopher René Guénon argued in 1926 that the idea of ‘centrality’ has a virtually universal symbolic importance as the point of departure and return for all journeys (spiritual, intellectual, or physical): “est à la fois le principe et la fin de toutes choses”.<sup>410</sup> Hence, as the geographer Yi-Fu Tuan argued, the idea of a territorial centre is often tied up with a notion of a “temporal origin”.<sup>411</sup> Tuan also observed that a great many historical and modern cultures have the impression not only that their territory is in the centre of the world, but also that it is physically elevated above other countries (he cites Mongol nomads, Rabbinic Judaism, Islam, and 19th century Britain).<sup>412</sup> In short, the idea that one’s homeland is central, ancient, and elevated is shared by a range of human populations. When placed in this broader human context, the Jewish claims that Jerusalem is “in the middle of the nations, with countries all around it”, and that Mount Zion is the “highest mountain” and the point from which the Torah will spread out and to which people will congregate (*Micah* 4:1–2), are clearly unexceptional. We might expect, therefore, that when a group identifies a threat to the (ideological, economic, cultural, religious) centrality of its homeland, it might perceive this also as a threat to its own identity: such threats, as we have seen, can catalyse a process of hardening ethnic boundaries.

## **The Achaemenid Period**

### *Background*

The first schism between northern and southern Palestine occurred in the 10th century BCE, with the collapse of the united Davidic Kingdom of Israel into two successor states: the Kingdom of Israel (based in the north), and the Kingdom of Judah (based in the south). Israel appears to have been militarily and economically dominant for much of the following two centuries, before its conquest by the Neo-Assyrian Empire in the mid-8th century BCE and ultimate demotion to the status of an imperial province. Judah, meanwhile, limped on as an Assyrian vassal state, before succumbing to the Neo-Babylonian Empire in the 6th century BCE and suffering the mass-deportation of its population to Mesopotamia.<sup>413</sup> While the northern and southern Hill Country were divided during much of this period, there are no clear indications that the two regions spawned distinct ethnic groups, or even

---

<sup>410</sup> Guénon (1926).

<sup>411</sup> Tuan (1977) 126.

<sup>412</sup> Tuan (1977) 38–40, 149–150.

<sup>413</sup> Lemeche (2015) 131–136.

concepts of territorial ‘homelands’. Biblical histories of this period, often compiled much later, are typically vague and tainted by anti-northern bias, and are difficult to extract useful information from (especially in the absence of external documents). No Hebrew text from this period, to my knowledge, speaks in terms of ‘Judeans’, ‘Samaritans’, or ‘Samaritans’. While we cannot definitively prove that the ethnogenesis did *not* begin in this period, it is not a phenomenon which we are able to subject to rigorous academic scrutiny. Unless further corroborating evidence emerges, Magnar Kartveit is probably accurate in his suggestion that “the search for the origin of the Samaritans cannot profitably move very far behind the construction of the [Samaritan] temple” during the Achaemenid period.<sup>414</sup>

#### *Administration, demography, economy*

The evidence for the administration of Achaemenid Palestine is slim, and the sources we do have are all difficult to date and interpret. For instance, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, perhaps our most important literary source, was cobbled together from a series of texts each of which was produced in a different historical context.<sup>415</sup> This period has traditionally been under-studied, partly because it was of little interest to Christian theologians, though this has changed in recent decades with a flurry of interesting and perceptive new studies which have uncovered the region’s basic administrative structure.<sup>416</sup>

From at least the early 5th century, it appears that the Hill Country was administered as part of the vast Trans-Euphrates Satrapy. This was itself subdivided into a number of smaller provinces, including Samaria and Judea.<sup>417</sup> Scholars are divided as to whether Judea was an independent administrative unit from the beginning of the Persian period, or only from the arrival of Nehemiah in the mid-5th century (before which it would have been part of Samaria). The idea that Persian Judea (Yehud) was initially administered from Samaria was first seriously advanced by Albrecht Alt in 1934. Alt argued that the term *pehah* (פִּהָה), applied to early Persian officials in Judea in various passages of the Hebrew Bible, did not always mean ‘governor’, as it is usually translated, but instead referred to special commissioners appointed for specific purposes. This explanation allows us to interpret Samaritan objections to the construction of a wall around the city of Jerusalem, as described in *Ezra-Nehemiah*, as a reaction against a new Judean autonomy.<sup>418</sup> This theory has been influential, but has also been vigorously challenged in recent decades, not least by HGM Williamson. Critics object to the proposal that *pehah* is best understood as referring to ‘special commissioners’, pointing

---

<sup>414</sup> Kartveit (2009b) 351–352.

<sup>415</sup> Williamson (1985). Other relevant biblical texts include Haggai, Esther, and passages from Zechariah and the Books of Chronicles.

<sup>416</sup> Lipschits & Oeming (2006) ix–x.

<sup>417</sup> Lipschits (2006) 24–25, Hoglund (1992).

<sup>418</sup> Alt (1934), supported by McEvenue (1981) and Stern (1982) among others. For a summary of the debate, see Grabbe (2004) 140–142.

to its uses in *Esther* (3:12, 8:9, 9:3) where it unambiguously means ‘governor’. Furthermore, Persian-era seal impressions appear to indicate the presence of a territory called ‘Yehud’ from the beginning of the period, though the dates remain somewhat insecure.<sup>419</sup> Ultimately, the balance of probability and scholarly opinion now favours an early date for the establishment of Persian Judea, and it would be unwise to use the idea of a traumatic administrative split as evidence for (or an explanation of) intercommunal conflict.

Judea and Samaria were allowed considerable local autonomy, and each minted their own coinage. The majority of elites in both provinces appear to have been Yahwists, and Yahwist temples were constructed in both Jerusalem and Mt Gerizim during this period, apparently with the approval and support of the Achaemenid authorities. There is, it should be noted, no evidence for widespread paganism or a syncretic pagan-Yahwism in Samaria, in contrast to traditional (Josephan) interpretations of the account in *2 Kings* 17.<sup>420</sup> Some have argued that the emergence of the Pentateuch during this period may be a consequence of a central imperial interest in legitimising local law codes (as proposed by Frei), but this theory has been met with growing resistance in recent years and most scholars prefer explanations which stress local initiative in requesting imperial authorisation.<sup>421</sup> Nevertheless, it does appear that the Achaemenids positively engaged native elites, integrating both local people and local institutions to its imperial system: the governors of Samaria, for instance, were a sequence of local dynasts named ‘Sanballat’. Alliances with priestly elites were cemented through the granting of privileges: the Jerusalem priesthood were afforded exemption from taxes, for instance, a benefaction apparently also granted to the sanctuary of Apollo of Aulai near Magnesia on the Maeandar.<sup>422</sup>

While coastal Palestine became increasingly urbanised during the Achaemenid period, large urban centres in the Hill Country (particularly in Judea) declined. Archaeological evidence indicates that rural Samaria flourished under the Achaemenids. The results of the Manasseh Hill Country Survey show a rapid proliferation of new small rural settlements, expansion of old ones, and an apparent intensification of agricultural activity which is largely unseen in Judea.<sup>423</sup> The main urban centre in the Hill Country, the city of Samaria, was also in the north, and seems to have been a walled provincial capital during the Persian period. Survey reports have also revealed a dense cluster of Persian-era forts around the city, with others scattered around the region. Reference to an “army of

<sup>419</sup> Williamson (1988), see also Hoglund (1992) 69–86, Grabbe (2004) 140–142, Hensel (2016) 221–226.

<sup>420</sup> On the Achaemenid date of the Samaritan Temple see Magen *et al.* (2004) and Magen (2008). On the Yahwist population of Samaria, see Knoppers (2006), Stern (2006). For more on *2 Kings* 17 see below.

<sup>421</sup> Frei (1984), for an in-depth study advocating for the ‘local initiative’ explanation see Lee (2011).

<sup>422</sup> Briant (2001) 491–493.

<sup>423</sup> Zertal (2004) 59–60, Zertal & Mirkam (2016) 42–46, particularly in the Shechem syncline and between Nahal ‘Iron (Wadi Ara) and Nahal Shechem (Wadi She’ir). See Chapter 1 for further discussion.

Samaria” (הִיל שְׁמֶרֶן) at *Nehemiah* 4:2 also implies the existence of a garrison based in the territory or the city.<sup>424</sup> Judea, by contrast, appears to have been far less vibrant: Finkelstein has used seal-impressions and scattered textual evidence to conclude that the province was a scrap of territory which included “mainly the area of Jerusalem, between Ramat Rahel and the City of David”, with an administration based in “a small Temple village”, Jerusalem, which appears to have been underpopulated and poor throughout the period.<sup>425</sup> The demographic and economic centre of the Hill Country during this period, in short, was decidedly in Samaria, not Judea.

### *Emerging identities*

If our understanding of the administration of Achaemenid Judea is poor, our understanding of group identities is even poorer. The construction of two Yahwist sanctuaries has traditionally been presented as the opening act of a centuries-long ethno-religious conflict between Jews and Samaritans, which culminated in the destruction of the Samaritan Temple by John Hyrcanus in the 120s BCE (see below).<sup>426</sup> In recent years there has been a sharp move against this, with scholars arguing for a harmonious relationship between the two Yahwistic communities that was not shattered until Hellenistic period.<sup>427</sup> Others, struck by the number of different directions the evidence seems to pull us, have argued for a multiplicity of voices during this period.<sup>428</sup> In a thought-provoking essay, Jon Berquist even argued that identity-formation in this period was such a complex process that we should turn to chaos theory to explain it.<sup>429</sup>

I will begin with two straightforward observations. Firstly, for the first time during the Persian period there were two different Yahwist temples in the Hill Country: one at Jerusalem, and one at Gerizim. Secondly, again for the first time, Biblical evidence suggests it was possible to speak (and therefore think) in terms of ‘Judeans’ and ‘Samaritans’, names which are explicitly linked to the two regions.<sup>430</sup> Admittedly, this does not tell us much about what significance these words had in Persian Palestine (or beyond). The words ‘British’, ‘Scottish’, ‘Londoner’, ‘New Yorker’, and ‘Manhattanite’ all connect a people with a place, but describe quite different types of identity not all of which could

<sup>424</sup> For the a Persian wall in Samaria see Kenyon (1971) 133; for a summary of the debate see Fitzpatrick-McKinley (2015) 130. See the results of the Manasseh Hill Country Survey for several examples of Persian forts in Samaria: Zertal (2004), (2008), Zertal & Mirkam (2016), Zertal & Bar (2017).

<sup>425</sup> Finkelstein (2010); for a summary of some alternative views see Carter (1999) 79–80. In the cited article Finkelstein also persuasively argues against attempts to use Neh. 3 as a source for a detailed Persian administrative history, on account of its seemingly non-Persian date.

<sup>426</sup> Zangenberg (2012).

<sup>427</sup> Hensel (2018).

<sup>428</sup> E.g. Weingart (2017).

<sup>429</sup> Berquist (2006).

<sup>430</sup> The word ‘Judean’ (יְהוּדִי, *yehudi*) appears in the book of *Esther*, for instance, while the word ‘Samaritans’ appears in the postexilic 2 *Kings* 17:29 (הַשְּׁמֶרֶנִּים, *hašomronim*); the latter, it must be admitted, is a *hapax legomenon* in the Hebrew Bible. For the Elephantine papyri, see below.

reasonably be considered ‘ethnic’ (the force of these terms, naturally, varies greatly depending on context and individual attitudes). The question remains: what did it mean to be ‘Judean’ or ‘Samaritan’ in the Persian Empire, and what was the relationship between these two identities?

I should acknowledge at once that this question cannot be decisively answered. Our sources reflect the interests of a particular group of literate elites, who did not necessarily speak for their entire communities. Furthermore, in a period for which so much is unclear, we should be wary of reading too much into silences. I am strongly disinclined, for instance, to follow Hensel’s argument that the *absence* of any mention of the Jerusalem Temple in Persian-era dedicatory inscriptions from Gerizim indicates a condition of friendly coexistence (dedicatory inscriptions are not, for one thing, a medium in which hostility of this kind would be expressed).<sup>431</sup> Nevertheless, the evidence does allow us to posit cautious conclusions which can provide some faint illumination.

I begin with the papyrological evidence from Elephantine, a minor settlement of Upper Egypt. During the Persian period, Elephantine was home to a small community of diaspora Yahwists. This group built its own temple, which was ultimately destroyed in the final decade of the 5th century. Following the destruction, the local community sent letters to “our lord” (usually believed to be Bagavahya, the Persian governor of Yehud) and the priestly authorities in Jerusalem to request permission to rebuild. When no reply was forthcoming, the community instead sent a letter (A4.7 & A4.8) jointly addressed to both Bagavahya and Delaiah and Shelemiah (the successors of Sanballat, a Samaritan official in Samaria). This was met with a joint verbal response (written down and preserved on a scrap of papyrus) from Bagavahya and Delaiah approving the reconstruction of the Temple (A4.9). On the basis of this evidence, Granerød has argued that that “there was an amicable relationship between Judah and Samaria in the last decade of the 5th century BCE”. The ‘diaspora’ community, he posits, believed both regions had a responsibility for them, which demonstrates a feeling of ethnic unity between the two. Furthermore, the administrations of Judea and Samaria were apparently willing to cooperate with one another when responding to the request, further indicating friendly relations.<sup>432</sup>

Such conclusions are perhaps overly optimistic. Firstly, cooperation between imperial administrative officials does not necessarily indicate a sense of solidarity between the members of the two communities. The Yahwists at Elephantine appear to have never received a response from the priestly authorities in Jerusalem but were only given a brief verbal answer delivered on behalf of two imperial officials: I see no reason why we should read these answers as representative of the Judean or Samaritan communities as a whole, or even of elites within those communities. Secondly, it appears

---

<sup>431</sup> Hensel (2016) 9.

<sup>432</sup> Granerød (2016) 41–42, see also Römer (2018) 81.

that the Yahwists in Elephantine primarily considered themselves Judeans rather than Samaritans: indeed, they refer to themselves explicitly as ‘Judeans’, and attempted to contact Jerusalem authorities (both imperial and local priestly) first, only bringing in the Samaritans once that had failed. This suggests that the diaspora community in Elephantine felt that there was a distinction between Judeans and Samaritans, and identified themselves more with the former. All that said, that the Judeans of Elephantine thought they should petition both Judea and Samaria (even if just to improve their chances of getting a response) is indeed an indication that, at least from their vantage point, Samaria still had some responsibility for them: it was not just another Persian province. Furthermore, there is no indication that this was viewed as inappropriate by the regional administrations, who were happy to deliver a joint (if seemingly uninterested) reply. This provides a counterbalance to the impression of elite conflict found in Nehemiah, where the administration of Samaria, led by a local Samaritan named Sanballat, attempted to obstruct the construction of walls around Jerusalem.<sup>433</sup>

A different, less congenial strain of Jewish opinion can be identified in certain literary texts. A difficult but important passage is 2 *Kings* 17, where it is claimed both that the Israelite inhabitants of Samaria were deported following the Assyrian invasion and replaced with syncretic Mesopotamian settlers (23–34) and, conversely, that the inhabitants of Samaria are Israelites (since they are bound by covenant with Yahweh) who have wandered from the true religion (34–40). The passage is open to various interpretations, and it is possible that the various sections date from different periods. On the basis of language and the placenames used, Kartveit recently made a persuasive case that the entire passage should be dated to the Persian period, arguing that it represents multiple strains of thought within Judean society.<sup>434</sup> The syncretic immigrant community in verses 23–34 should not necessarily be identified with the worshippers at Gerizim, but the passage does demonstrate that some Judeans believed that significant parts of the population of Samaria were not their kin. A similar Persian-era view may appear in *Zechariah* 11:14, in which the prophet smashes a staff called “Binds” (הַחֲבָלִים) so that he might “destroy the brotherhood between Judea and Israel [Samaria]” (לְהַפֵּךְ, אֶת-הָאֶחָדָה, בֵּין יְהוּדָה, (וּבֵין יִשְׂרָאֵל)). Here, it seems, the Samaritans are not considered kin with the Judeans, but are symbolically severed from a bloodline which they were previously considered part of. That said, the date of *Zechariah* 9–14 is controversial, with many scholars ascribing it to the Hellenistic period instead. Since no decisive arguments have been offered on either side, this text should be used with caution.<sup>435</sup>

---

<sup>433</sup> *Neh.* 4:7, *Neh.* 6.

<sup>434</sup> Kartveit (2014a), see also Knoppers (2007).

<sup>435</sup> See discussion in Tienmeyer (2011) 272–276.

Another view appears in *Joshua* 24, which some scholars have argued dates from the 6th or 5th century BCE.<sup>436</sup> In the passage, Joshua addresses the Israelites at Shechem, urging them to forsake other gods and dedicate themselves to Yahweh (1–15). The people promise to serve Yahweh (16–24), and Joshua erects a large stone as a reminder of the renewed covenant (25–27). In the final verses, Joshua orders the people to return to their respective homes, dies at Timnath Serah in the “hill-country of Ephraim” (in Samaria), and is buried at Shechem (28–33).

Konrad Schmid has argued that this passage provides further evidence for a feeling of solidarity between Samaritans and Judeans. He suggests that the setting of this scene, Shechem, indicates that “in both the narrative world and the world of the narrator, the North is the specific addressee”. This is further corroborated, he suggests, by the similarity between Joshua’s plea that his audience should abandon “the gods which your fathers served beyond the river [Euphrates]” (14) and the claim in 2 *Kings* 17 that the inhabitants of northern Israel began worshipping foreign gods. The significance of this, Schmid argues, is that Joshua is inviting the Samaritans to rejoin the monotheistic Israelite family, and presenting a vision of Israel which is both united and not (yet) centred on Jerusalem. As such, he concludes, this text is evidence that there was hope of a *rapprochement* between the two communities during the Persian period.<sup>437</sup> Other scholars have gone further: Thomas Römer, for instance, has argued that the use of Shechem as the setting indicates that *Joshua* 24 was “probably a co-production of Samaritans and Judeans, if not a pure Samaritan version”.<sup>438</sup>

There are, I think, problems with this assessment. Firstly, the dating of *Joshua* 24 is highly dubious. In 2009, Rofé convincingly argued that the passage dates from the 8th century BCE before the fall of the Kingdom of Israel in the 720s.<sup>439</sup> Even should we accept the later date, there is reason to doubt the claim that the inhabitants of Samaria are intended as the audience for Joshua’s speech. In the narrative world of the passage, Joshua is said to assemble “all the tribes of Israel” to Shechem, a group which must include Judeans as much as Samaritans. Furthermore, as Schmid himself notes, there are many other reasons why Shechem might have been chosen as the location for Joshua’s speech: it is, for instance, the first place where Yahweh instructs Abraham to build an altar in *Genesis* 12:6, making it a symbolically suitable spot to renew the Israelites’ commitment to Yahweh. This undermines the case that the Samaritans are the expected audience in the “world of the narrator”. Indeed, if Persian-era inhabitants of the region *are* the target audience, Shechem is a strange choice: as Schmid also acknowledges, Shechem was a minor settlement during the Persian period, apparently more-or-less abandoned between the early 5th and mid to late 4th centuries.<sup>440</sup> It is far from clear, then, that

---

<sup>436</sup> Schmid (2018).

<sup>437</sup> Schmid (2018).

<sup>438</sup> Römer (2018).

<sup>439</sup> Rofé (2009) 57–58.

<sup>440</sup> Schmid (2018) 28 n. 47, Jaroš (1976), Lapp (1985), Lapp (2008).

mention of Shechem would have immediately conjured up associations with contemporary Samaria (this point also complicates Römer's theory of Samaritan authorship). Even if *Joshua* 24 is addressed to Samaritans, as Schmid suggests, it is not clear that this indicates cordial relations. On the contrary, the repetition of the spurious claim in *2 Kings* 17 that Samaria is filled with polytheists might be read in the opposite way: as evidence of the importance of claims of apostasy in anti-Samaritan rhetoric. At best, this indicates that the author of *Joshua* believed that the Samaritans were heretical Israelites who could legitimately be absorbed into the 'true' Yahweh cult.

Ultimately, I propose that the Persian period is characterised by three features: the emergence of 'Judean' and 'Samaritan' as separate terms in contemporary Hebrew, ambiguity as to the ethnic status of Samaritans (which left open the possibility of reunification), and sporadic elite cooperation and conflict. These can all be explicitly linked to Persian administrative policy. The formation of separate provinces of 'Judea and Samaria' and associated provincial administrations both encouraged the development of localised interests, and created formal channels through which elites in the two regions could interact. Furthermore, imperial legitimisation of and engagement with separate local cults facilitated religious schism, prompting both hopes of reunion and emergent discourses of ethnic separation.

### **The Early Hellenistic Period**

In the 330s and 320s BCE, the Achaemenid Empire was overthrown by Alexander the Great. In the course of these conquests, the Hill Country was absorbed into the vast new Macedonian Empire: a relatively unimportant prize when compared with the Phoenician port-cities of the coast, which Alexander had just conquered after months of bitter campaigning, or Egypt, where he was heading next. Josephus claims that the governor of Samaria, another Sanballat, had sent troops to support Alexander during the siege of Tyre, while the Jews, by contrast, had remained loyal to Darius. This, he adds, resulted in rewards for the former (including, Josephus anachronistically suggests, permission to build a temple at Gerizim) and intended punishments for the latter. Alexander's mind was changed, however, by a prophetic dream which convinced him to specially honour the Jerusalem Yahweh cult and grant special privileges to the Jews. The Samaritans subsequently attempted to gain these privileges for themselves, but were coldly rebuffed.<sup>441</sup> In *Against Apion*, quoting Pseudo-Hecataeus, Josephus adds (implausibly) that among the gifts Alexander gave the Jews was the region of Samaria as an untaxed territory.<sup>442</sup>

---

<sup>441</sup> J. *AJ* 11.317–345.

<sup>442</sup> J. *Ap.* 2.4.

This account is unlikely for various reasons, not least the convenient divine intervention, anachronisms (Alexander reads the *Book of Daniel* despite it not having been finished yet), the absence of Alexander's visit in other historical accounts, and Josephus' naked anti-Samaritan bias. Nevertheless, it does appear that the story reveals a basic truth: Alexander's conquest began a process of rapid decline in Samaria which saw the Hill Country's demographic, economic and administrative centre of gravity move south.

Another story, this time from Q. Curtius Rufus' *Histories of Alexander the Great* (1st c CE), provides further illumination. Curtius claims that in 331 BCE disturbing news reached Alexander from Syria: the inhabitants of the city of Samaria had lynched the newly appointed satrap, Andromachus, and burned him alive.<sup>443</sup> It is unclear why the Samaritans would undertake this seemingly suicidal action, and the circumstances surrounding Andromachus' gruesome fate are shrouded in mystery.<sup>444</sup> In any case Alexander, already distraught at the recent death of a friend<sup>445</sup>, responded forcefully, hunting down and executing the ringleaders. Findings from caves around the Wadi ed-Daliyeh (located between Samaria and Jericho) appear to show that a group of Samaritans fled into the mountains in the 330s BCE, before being murdered by fire: scholars typically connect this with Alexander's revenge.<sup>446</sup>

Later writers add that Alexander also expelled the remaining inhabitants of the city, turning it into a Greco-Macedonian colony.<sup>447</sup> Modern excavations at Samaria have revealed that this part of the story, at least, is basically true: the city was completely overhauled and heavily fortified in the early Hellenistic period, and there is evidence that a cult to Sarapis Isis was founded in the city during the Ptolemaic period, indicating that the local Yahwists were no longer in control of the city.<sup>448</sup> It may be that these writers are confusing the Alexander episode with the later actions of Ptolemy I Soter, who according to Diodorus Siculus destroyed the city (along with several others in the southern Levant) in 312 BCE, or even Demetrius, whom Eusebius claims did the same, though given Samaria's status as a fortress-city it is entirely possible that it was simply destroyed several times.<sup>449</sup> The results of archaeological surveys have added more texture to this picture, indicating that the rural population of

---

<sup>443</sup> Curt. 4.8.9–11

<sup>444</sup> The account in the medieval Samaritan Book of Joshua, a seemingly deliberate reversal of Josephus' narrative, may have preserved some truth when it claims that the Samaritans remained loyal to Darius, but this is far from certain: *Samaritan Joshua* 46.

<sup>445</sup> Hector, son of Parmenion.

<sup>446</sup> Cross (1974).

<sup>447</sup> Euseb. *Chron.* 2.114.

<sup>448</sup> Magness (2001).

<sup>449</sup> Diod. Sic. 19.93.7.

Samaria sharply declined during the early Hellenistic period particularly around the city of Samaria.<sup>450</sup>

When Alexander died suddenly in 323 BCE, his empire broke into a number of smaller successor states. The Levant sat on the fault line between two of these, the Ptolemaic Kingdom and the Seleukid Empire, and was the object of a series of wars between them (known as the ‘Syrian Wars’).<sup>451</sup>

Until 200 BCE, the Ptolemaic Kingdom, based in Egypt, exercised control over the region. Ptolemaic Syria and Phoenicia, including the Hill Country, was subdivided into a number of hyparchies, each with its own financial official, which were directly subordinate to Alexandria. It seems likely that Judea and Samaria may have each been a hyparchy, though by and large our literary sources for Ptolemaic Syria, including the generally enormously useful Zenon papyri, are silent on the Hill Country.<sup>452</sup> One small piece of evidence indicates that Judea was granted privileges which Samaria was not: Judea continued to mint coins during the early Ptolemaic period, while this ceased immediately in Samaria.<sup>453</sup>

The story of the Tobiads (set in the late Ptolemaic period) in Josephus’ *Jewish Antiquities* 12 is perhaps our most useful source for the Ptolemaic administration of the region.<sup>454</sup> Josephus relates that Joseph son of Tobias, a Jew with familial connections to the High Priests, took over the tax-farming contract for Syria and Palestine from his uncle in the 220s BCE. Joseph is presented as successfully navigating both Jerusalem high society and the Hellenistic royal court in Alexandria, where he supposedly travelled as a self-appointed envoy of the Jews.<sup>455</sup> Joseph’s direct appeal to the royal court is also revealing. It may suggest that there was no intervening official (equivalent to the Achaemenid satrap) to whom it would be sensible to appeal first, or at the very least that local elites could develop connections with the royal court which could be informally exploited for the political advantage of their communities. It appears, generally speaking, that the Ptolemaic administration co-opted local elites but not local institutions into its centralising systems of government and taxation, replacing the Achaemenid policy of engagement with and legitimisation of regional institutions.<sup>456</sup> There is, indeed, no evidence that the Ptolemies significantly interfered in or supported the Jewish or Samaritan

---

<sup>450</sup> Zertal (2004), (2008), Zertal & Mirkam (2016), Zertal & Bar (2017). For further discussion of this evidence, see Chapter 1.

<sup>451</sup> Heinen (1984), Grainger (2010).

<sup>452</sup> Durand (1997).

<sup>453</sup> Rappaport (1984) 30.

<sup>454</sup> J. *AJ* 12.154–236. Josephus places the story in the context of the early Seleukid period, but the details of the story strongly indicate a late Ptolemaic date.

<sup>455</sup> Schwartz (2001) 27–28.

<sup>456</sup> Tcherikover (1937), Bagnall (1976), Schwartz (1994).

temples and no indication of a supposed attempt to insert the dynasty into local priestly hierarchies as it did in Egypt.<sup>457</sup>

To summarise, I would suggest that the administrative and social history of the Hill Country during this period was defined by two processes: the decline of Samaria relative to Judea, and the centralisation of administration. Hensel has recently argued that the second process in particular may have catalysed a souring in Jewish-Samaritan relations, since the Temples were no longer officially sanctioned by the state and embedded within their own territories, but were left to compete against one another for adherents and resources.<sup>458</sup> This supposed break is not reflected in our sources. I would like to suggest, on the contrary, that these processes actually may have eased some of the early tension visible in the Persian period. The first process inverted the demographic and economic power balance which had persisted in the Hill Country during the preceding centuries, lessening the need for the Judeans to define themselves against their neighbours (we have no Samaritan evidence to indicate if they themselves developed bitterness, however-). Centralisation and the relative decline in the importance of temple power structures, furthermore, diminished the formal significance of the Jewish/Samaritan divide.

There are, indeed, some meagre indications of good relations in this period. Returning to the story of the Tobiads, Josephus writes that Joseph borrowed money from his “friends in Samaria” (φίλους εἰς Σαμάρειαν) (*AJ* 12.168) to finance his journey to Egypt. This curious detail does not necessarily indicate continuing feelings of ethnic solidarity between Judeans and Samaritans, but it does suggest that elite interaction and cooperation, such as we saw in the Elephantine Papyri, persisted during this period.

Nihan and Gonzalez recently argued for the existence of a positive strain of Jewish feeling towards Samaria during this period, exemplified by *2 Chronicles* 7:12 (a passage which appears to date from the early Hellenistic period). Here, Yahweh reasserts the primacy of the Jerusalem temple, confirming that Jerusalem is the location mentioned by the author of *Deuteronomy* 12 as the sole legitimate cult centre of Israel. With reference to other passages in *2 Chronicles*, they suggest that this indicates that the northern tribes of Israel could be re-integrated with the Jews by a process of “cultic annexation” (a narrative which may, to the Samaritans, have seemed as sinister as narratives of ethnic and religious separation).<sup>459</sup>

---

<sup>457</sup> *Contra* Grabbe (2008) 169–170. For the Ptolemaic relationship with local priests, see Thompson (1988) 106 ff., Manning (2011) 4–5.

<sup>458</sup> Hensel (2016) 14–15.

<sup>459</sup> Nihan & Gonzalez (2018).

Moreover, the issue of the Samaritans' supposedly dubious ethnic origins largely seems to disappear from Jewish reflections on the region. Samaria most often features in literary evidence in re-tellings of on *Genesis* 34, which tells the story of the rape of Dinah by Shechem son of Hamor, and the subsequent murder of all the men of Shechem's city by her avenging relatives. The city of Shechem (modern Nablus) is located in Samaria in the narrow valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, and was a major local population centre during the Hellenistic period. Slight changes are made to the story in the Septuagint, but these tell us little about Judean-Samaritan relations and identity. The Jewish chronicler Demetrius also shows an interest in the story, but omits any strong anti-Samari(t)an polemic (though he was possibly based in Alexandria, and his views do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Palestinian Judeans).<sup>460</sup> This contrasts with later interpretations of the story, which more overtly connect contemporary Samaria with Shechem's crimes (see below).

## **The Seleukid Period and the Maccabean Revolt**

### *Administration*

When the Seleukid Empire gained control of the region following the Fifth Syrian War in 200 BCE, substantial administrative changes were imposed on Palestine. Assimilating Palestine to the Seleukid system was a major undertaking. The Seleukid state was complex and hierarchical, with layers of intervening bureaucracy between local civic institutions and the central court.<sup>461</sup> Earlier Seleukid kings were also prolific city-founders who engaged with local elites and encouraged non-Greek settlements to adopt the institutions and political language of Greek *poleis*.<sup>462</sup> The Ptolemaic state, I have suggested, was comparatively highly centralised and less involved in local power structures. The federal/unitary dichotomy, while anachronistic, is not an entirely unhelpful way of conceptualising the differences between the Seleukid and Ptolemaic states.

This, I would suggest, seriously complicated the process of integrating Palestine into the Seleukid Empire. For one thing, there was the inevitable disruption caused by transitioning from one style of governance to another. More difficult still, there was the problem of disentangling the region from Ptolemaic control. Centralised states are less brittle than decentralised ones: it is difficult to break parts off and keep them for oneself. The threads between local systems of government and tax-collection in Ptolemaic Egypt led directly to the royal court in Alexandria, which had developed long-

---

<sup>460</sup> See discussion of these texts in Kartveit (2009b) 117–122. Demetrius uses Ptolemaic dating in Chapter VI, which could indicate either an Alexandrian or Ptolemaic-era Palestinian origin.

<sup>461</sup> Ma (2000) 138–147.

<sup>462</sup> Kosmin (2014) 183–251.

standing working relationships with local elites. To sever these threads would cause the various components of the apparatus of imperial control and economic exploitation to fall away.

These problems are illustrated by an extraordinary arrangement reached between Antiochus III and Ptolemy V Epiphanes in the wake of the Fifth Syrian War. According to Josephus and several other sources, Antiochus married off his daughter, Cleopatra, to Ptolemy, providing as a dowry the tax revenues of Coele-Syria, Samaria, Judea, and Phoenicia.<sup>463</sup> While there has been some debate as to whether or not this is a Josephan fabrication, in 1927 Édouard Cuq made a strong argument in favour of its basic historicity which has been followed by several recent scholars. As Cuq points out, given that taxes were (as we have seen) collected by private tax farmers rather than state officials (though the two in practice often worked together), it is plausible that the systems of state control and taxation could be separated in this way.<sup>464</sup> Cuq's case is broadly supported by numismatic evidence, which point to enduring connections between the Ptolemaic state and Palestine during this period.<sup>465</sup> This arrangement seems to have survived the reign of Antiochus III, before decaying from the 180s onwards (it must, surely have been abolished by the time of the Sixth Syrian War in 170). In his generally excellent discussion of the agreement, Dušek imagines that it was intended to secure Antiochus' southern flank in anticipation of conflict with Rome.<sup>466</sup> I would suggest an additional advantage: that it established a mutually beneficial transitional period, which provided continuing revenues to Egypt as the Seleukid state institutions began to assemble themselves in the first decades of the 2nd century BCE. This, I believe, may illustrate the difference between the Ptolemaic and Seleukid administrative systems, since both kingdoms instituted a special agreement to ameliorate potential disruption in Palestine as the former replaced the latter. Further evidence of a desire to maintain continuity was the retention of the Ptolemaic official Ptolemy son of Thraseas as 'Archiereus [sometimes translated 'High Priest'] and Strategos' (ἀρχιερεὺς καὶ στρατηγός) of Coele Syria: this combination of roles is unknown in the Seleukid administrative system.<sup>467</sup>

All that said, the Seleukids were by no means content to leave Palestine unchanged. On the contrary, there is evidence for rapid and immediate attempts to restructure the region's administration. Josephus writes that Antiochus III instructed his administrators to restore the city of Jerusalem and finish its temple, decreeing that the Jews were to enjoy religious freedom and that their traditions were to be respected. This was not, as Josephus claims, a sign of Antiochus' 'special relationship' with the Jews. Cotton-Paltiel, Ecker and Gera argued that the famous so-called Heliodorus stele indicates that these

---

<sup>463</sup> J. *AJ* 12.154–155. Polybius (28.20.9) claims that 'Coele-Syria' itself (as opposed to just its revenues) was the dowry.

<sup>464</sup> Cuq (1927), Schwartz (1998), Dušek (2012) 123–132.

<sup>465</sup> See a summary of the relevant studies in Dušek (2012) 128–129.

<sup>466</sup> Dušek (2012) 131.

<sup>467</sup> Eckhardt (2016) 59–60.

privileges were, in fact, granted to all the sanctuaries of the province of Syria and Phoenicia. They point, for instance, to an inscription which indicates that similar favours were given to the Sidonians of Iamnia, modern Yavne, located in the southern coastal plain of Palestine.<sup>468</sup> The authors do not mention the Samaritan evidence, though it is a powerful illustration of their point. Excavation reports from Mt Gerizim have shown that a massive renovation project took place at the sanctuary in the very late 3rd or early 2nd century BCE: the old 5th century sacred precinct more than doubled in size, and was embellished with monumental staircases and courtyards.<sup>469</sup> The ‘privileges’ supposedly granted to the Jews by Antiochus III were, it seems, granted to several other communities in the region including the Samaritans. This was not a special favouring of a particular group: this was an attempt to integrate the cult sites of Palestine into the Seleukid administrative system. This is affirmed by the Heliodorus stele, which describes the appointment of a certain Olympiodorus as the High Priest of Coile-Syria and Phoenicia (the new satrapy containing Palestine). The Seleukid period is also marked by increasing Seleukid engagement with and management of the Jewish High Priesthood, particularly during the reign of Antiochus IV.<sup>470</sup>

The Seleukids appear to have reorganised Coile Syria and Phoenicia into four administrative subdivisions: Galaaditis, Idumaea, Paralia and Samaritis.<sup>471</sup> The latter seems to have included not only Samaria, but also Galilee (as suggested by 1 *Macc* 10:30) and, according to several scholars including Avi-Yonah and Bickerman, Judea. These scholars point to the fact that the first commander sent to address the Maccabean revolt came from Samaria (1 *Macc* 3:10, cf. J. *AJ* 12.287), and Josephus’ mention of Samaria but not Judea when discussing the Seleukid administration of region.<sup>472</sup> The prioritising of Samaria here may reflect the importance of the local Graeco-Macedonian military colony as an administrative centre. In this reconstruction, Judea only became administratively independent of Samaria in the late 160s BCE in the wake of the Maccabean revolt.

To summarise: the Seleukid period is marked by decentralisation, integration of local temples with the state (including the Jerusalem temple and presumably its equivalent in Gerizim), and, possibly, the expansion of Samaria to include Judea. I believe that these changes decisively influenced the relationship between the populations of Judea and Samaria. Firstly, I believe that official engagement with local sanctuaries increased the hostility between the Jerusalem and Gerizim Temples, and accelerated the process of Jewish and Samaritan ethnogenesis. Generally speaking, devolution of power often encourages the formation of regional identities by legitimating and formalising territorial claims and empowering local elites. Writing of communist Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, Batt

---

<sup>468</sup> Cotton-Paltiel et al. (2017).

<sup>469</sup> Magen (2008).

<sup>470</sup> Eckhardt (2016).

<sup>471</sup> See Dušek (2012) 68–72 for an account of the region’s administrative status during this period

<sup>472</sup> Avi-Yonah (1966) 48, Bickerman (1980) 133. Cf. J. *AJ* 12.175, 224, 287.

observed that federal political structures “served to consolidate rather than mitigate national feeling by attaching it to state structures”: I believe a similar process unfolded in the 2nd century Hill Country.<sup>473</sup> Secondly, the Seleukids reorganised the region’s administrative boundaries: a new greater Samaria, presumably based in the fortified Greco-Macedonian city of Samaria, overshadowed and possibly even subsumed Judea. The Judeans then, paradoxically, had also been administratively and politically *de-centred*. We should not underestimate the extent to which this might have had a psychological impact on Jews: as we have already seen, the feeling of being central, and the related equation of centrality and importance, are impulses which shape ethnic self-definition in humans generally, and the ancient Jews in particular. The Jewish sense of being swallowed up by Samaria in the early Seleukid period is reflected by Josephus at *AJ* 12.156, where he writes: “at this time the Samaritans [Σαμαρεῖς] were flourishing, and mistreated the Jews a great deal, cutting off parts of their land and enslaving them”.

### *Jewish Views*

Jewish literature from the early and mid 2nd century BCE shows signs of renewed hostility to the inhabitants of Samaria. A recurring theme is increased emphasis on the cultic centrality of Jerusalem, and the emergence of extreme polemics against the Gerizim temple cult. For instance, the author of *Jubilees*, a Jewish Hebrew religious text largely surviving in Ge’ez, strongly stresses the centrality of Jerusalem in the work’s opening chapter, writing “the sanctuary of the Lord shall be made in Jerusalem on Mount Zion” (1:27–28).<sup>474</sup> In a particularly sinister passage from the so-called *4Q Narrative and Poetic Composition* from Qumran, a Hebrew text probably written during the early Seleukid period, a “foreign nation” (“גוי נאכר”) from northern Israel is condemned for supposedly having attacked the Jewish Temple at Jerusalem and for having themselves built a *bamah* (a heretical rural cult site) on a mountain. The author also looks forward to the time when this nation will be exterminated “from the entire world”.<sup>475</sup> Another important text is *Sirach*, an early 2nd c BCE Jewish ethical work. The author writes at 50:25–26: “I loath two nations [גוים] to my core, a third isn’t even a people [עם]: he inhabitants of Seir [Edom], the Philistines, and the foolish nation [גוי] which lives in Shechem.” This nation of Shechem can, surely, only be referring to the Samaritans. What it means for a group to be a nation, Hebrew *goy* (גוי), but not a people, Hebrew *am* (עם), is somewhat obscure. *Am* is more often used in connection with God (i.e. “the people of the Lord”), and perhaps implies more of a sense of common purpose, kinship and identity than *goy*, which is more of a general description of a large, organised group of people. Hence, it could be that the author is suggesting that the

<sup>473</sup> Batt (2002) 8. See also Bradbury & Andrews (2010) for a discussion of the effects of political devolution on Welsh national consciousness.

<sup>474</sup> The importance of cult centrality is also a recurring theme of 1 Macc (e.g. 1:47, 2:23–25).

<sup>475</sup> See discussion in Kartveit (2009a) 160–171.

Samaritans are in some sense politically organised, but are not perceived as a truly distinct ethnic group: a repetition of older, Persian-era claims that the Samaritans are a mongrel non-ethnicity of foreign interlopers.

The story of *Genesis* 34, which we encountered in Ptolemaic-era texts, is prominent in the highly fragmentary *Aramaic Levi Document*, which likely dates from the second century BCE, and which was almost certainly the base for the later Christian *Testament of Levi*.<sup>476</sup> The Aramaic original clearly contains a retelling of the story of *Genesis* 34, and the translator/author of the later Christian Testament refers to Shechem as a “city of fools” who remain cursed by God for their crime. A yet more revealing retelling of the story can be found at *Jubilees* 30. The author repeats the common allegation that Shechem is cursed but adds that “all the cities which are around [it]” should also be seen as culpable (30:26). The region, and by extension its inhabitants, were *collectively* judged and cursed. These texts indicate that the process of *territorialisation* was accelerating: Jews were coming to view Samaria as having one *people* with a single character. They also point to growing hostility from Jewish religious elites towards the existence of the Gerizim Temple.

The best evidence for growing territorialisation, however, can be seen in the negotiations surrounding the Maccabean Revolt. Hasmonean Judea was immediately expansionist: it is recorded in 1 *Macc.* 11:34 that the Seleukid King Demetrius transferred the nomes of Ephraim, Lydda, and Arimathea, all in the more populated southern part of Samaria, to the new Judea.<sup>477</sup> This is particularly astonishing if we accept the suggestion that there was no administrative distinction between ‘Samaria’ and ‘Judea’ during this period, as it implies that there was nevertheless an understood ‘border’ between the two. Some scholars have suggested that there was an attempt by the new Hasmonean state to colonise parts of Western Samaria, referring to a much later Talmudic source which claims that Jewish settlers made use of field structures in the region. Hundreds of field towers built during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE have, in fact, been discovered in Western Samaria, and it has been speculated that these are the structures to which the Talmud is referring.<sup>478</sup> This latter point, however, should be treated with caution: there is no archaeological indication that these were suddenly occupied by Jewish colonists at this time.

To summarise the finds from this period, then, in this time of Samaritan growth, the Samaritans and the Gerizim temple are cast as a serious danger. There is also, not coincidentally in my view, an increased urgency to assert the centrality of Jerusalem in the eyes of God. Religion is now conceived

---

<sup>476</sup> The date of the Aramaic Levi Document is controversial: it is my opinion that the assessment of Kugel (2007), who dates the text to the mid-late 2nd c BCE on the basis of paleography and the text’s political content and similarities to *Jubilees*, is basically correct. For an argument in favour of an earlier date, see Stone (2002).

<sup>477</sup> 1 *Mac.* 11.30–36

<sup>478</sup> Dar (1986) 88–125, Applebaum (1976) 258, Dušek (2012) 73–74.

of in localised terms, and notions that Samaria is a ‘territory’ with its own ‘people’ are beginning to harden: these developments might be seen as a stepping stone on the way to the sorts of identities we might term ‘ethnic’. This point should not be overstated: references to the Samaria, Samaritans, or indeed Samaritans are rare in literature from this period (as in previous periods), and relations between the two regions and communities were not a predominant concern of Jewish religious thinkers.

### *Samari(t)an Views*

Epigraphic evidence provides our best indication of the Samaritan response to these developments. In particular, the 386 Aramaic and Hebrew dedicatory inscriptions found during the excavations of the Hellenistic Samaritan temple at Mt Gerizim are a fascinating and under-appreciated resource for historians of Hellenistic Palestine, even if the majority are highly fragmentary.<sup>479</sup> The editors argued that the bulk of the inscriptions followed one of two (Aramaic) formulae: inscriptions 1–146 formula (a) “That X son of Y (from Z) offered for himself, his wife and his sons”, and inscriptions 147–198 formula (b). “That X son of Y (from Z) offered for himself, his wife, and his sons for good remembrance before God in this place”.<sup>480</sup> It is my contention that these two formulae represent an earlier and a later phase of production. All of the wholly preserved inscriptions in formula (a) are in a “monumental” style of script (which the editors call the “lapidary style”), and all of those wholly preserved inscriptions in formula (b) are in a “cursive” style of script (which they call the “Proto-Jewish script”). Dušek notes that the palaeography of the inscriptions in the monumental script seems to be somewhat more conservative than that of the cursive script. In particular, he observes that the monumental script does not have baselines in the letters *mem*, *nun*, *samech* and *pe*. He ultimately argues, however, that this is likely due to a combination of the natural conservatism of the script and ageing craftsmen.<sup>481</sup> Generally speaking, the style of the monumental script is thoroughly in keeping with what we usually see in other Persian and early Hellenistic Semitic epigraphy, while the cursive script is most closely paralleled by those we see in early 2nd century Jewish documents.<sup>482</sup> The spelling in formula (a) also appears to be somewhat more conservative: the spelling of the word *ʾ* remains constant in formula (a), for instance, while it sometimes changes to *ʾ*, a contemporary form reflecting a new pronunciation, in formula (b). This led the editors to suggest that “the inscriptions in the lapidary [monumental] style are perhaps a bit earlier than those written in the Proto-Jewish [cursive] script”.<sup>483</sup>

There are some other differences between the two groups which I would like to highlight. Firstly, evidence

<sup>479</sup> These were published and commented on in Magen *et al* (2004), see also the study in Dušek (2012).

<sup>480</sup> Magen, Misgav and Tsfania (2004) 16–19.

<sup>481</sup> Dušek (2012) 36, 59.

<sup>482</sup> Magen, Misgav and Tsfania (2004) 37–40.

<sup>483</sup> Magen, Misgav and Tsfania (2004) 41.

for red paint has been found on the lettering of four inscriptions: all are in the cursive script or a mix between cursive and Paleo-Hebrew.<sup>484</sup> This may reflect influence from Hellenistic Greek epigraphy, where painted lettering was sometimes used for prominent public inscriptions.<sup>485</sup> Secondly, of the 13 inscriptions which contain Greek personal names, all are in the cursive script. Finally, of the ten inscriptions with place names, only one (No. 3) is in the monumental script, with all the rest in the cursive script.<sup>486</sup> Together, I believe that this evidence, along with the palaeographical and linguistic arguments made by previous scholars, points to two groups of inscriptions: one from an earlier phase at the site (Persian and early Hellenistic), and one later (2nd century BCE). The later inscriptions appear to demonstrate both a more advanced state of Hellenisation (in style and names), and a far greater emphasis on “place”.

To this evidence, we might add two mid-2nd c BCE inscriptions from Delos one erected by “the Israelites on Delos who make contribution to the sanctuary Argarizein” and other by “the Israelites who make contribution to the holy sanctuary Argarizein”.<sup>487</sup> These groups are undoubtedly Samaritans: “ΑΓΓΑΡΙΖΕΙΝ” is a Greek transliteration of the Hebrew *har gerizim* (הַר גֵּרִיזִים), Mount Gerizim. Here, again, the connection between the community and its specific cult site is made explicit: indeed, they define themselves by reference to Gerizim.

Scholarship to date has argued that this stressing of place in the inscriptions reflects a heightened sense of ethnic identity during this period, in particular, a desire to send a provocative message to the Jews about the Samaritan community’s faith in the primacy of its cult site. In a 2012 study Becking drew on Hutchinson and Smith’s influential *Ethnicity*, in which it is argued that an ethnos shares, among other things, a “link with a homeland” and a “sense of solidarity among at least some of its members”. In line with these theories, he ultimately concluded that the “element of space” in the Gerizim inscriptions should be seen as an expression of an independent Samaritan ethnic identity.<sup>488</sup> Since Becking did not treat the inscriptions as consisting of two groups originating from different periods of the sanctuary’s history, he did not date this development specifically to the 2nd century.

In his 2014 discussion of the inscriptions Kartveit, under the influence of social anthropologist Frederik Barth, argued that the definition of ethnicity used by Becking should be “accompanied by relational aspects: an ethnos receives identity also through identification of its friends and enemies”.

---

<sup>484</sup> No. 161, 233, 291, 389.

<sup>485</sup> McLean (2002) 13.

<sup>486</sup> These (and the place names they contain) are: No. 3 (Kfar), 7 (Yoqeme'am), 8 ('Avarta), 11 (Ṭura Ṭaba), 12 (Shechem), 14 (Samaria), 15 (Samaria), 36 (Shechem), 39 (Shechem), 76 (Mabartha).

<sup>487</sup> The inscriptions were initially published in Bruneau & Bordreuil (1982). Bruneau dated them separately, placing the one beginning “ΟΙ ΕΝ ΔΗΛΩ...” (Inscription 1) between 150 and 50 BCE, and the one beginning “ΙΣΡΑΗΛΙΤΑΙ ΟΙ ΑΠΑΡΧΟΜΕΝΟΙ...” (Inscription 2) between 250 and 175 BCE. However Kartveit (2009b) 218-220, working with Charles V. Crowther, suggested that the two both dated from the first half of the 2nd century BCE. He adopts this dating in Kartveit (2014a).

<sup>488</sup> Becking (2012), cf. Hutchinson & Smith (1996) 6.

Kartveit argued that the Gerizim and Delos inscriptions together provide evidence that “the [Samaritan] community had an identity centering on Mount Gerizim”. Furthermore, he suggested that the emphasis on Gerizim, expressed directly in the Delos inscriptions and more indirectly in the Gerizim inscriptions with the phrase “in this place”, shows how “Samaritan self-consciousness took shape by distancing itself from the Jewish position [regarding the primacy of the Jerusalem temple]”. He views the Delos inscriptions as particularly strong example of ‘relational’ self-definition, as they are placed 100 m north of what some have identified as a Jewish synagogue.<sup>489</sup>

Some elements of Kartveit’s reconstruction are problematic. In particular, Kartveit’s argument about the Delos inscription falls apart when we take into account persuasive recent scholarship, in particular an article by Lidia Matassa, which has shown that the supposed synagogue is, in fact, much more likely to be a centre for the worship of Zeus Hypsistos.<sup>490</sup> There is no reason, then, to necessarily assume that the Samaritans felt a need to define themselves against neighbouring Jews, and to discount the possibility that Samaritans simply referred to themselves in these terms. Furthermore, I am also not convinced that the name “the Israelites who make contribution to holy Argarizein” in the Delos inscription is necessarily a reflection of a distinct Samaritan ethnic identity. It could very well be that the key ethnic marker here is ‘Israelite’, which could have had the opposite effect: the term potentially was inclusive of Jews (‘Israel’ used numerous times by the author of 1 *Maccabees* to refer to the Jewish community) and may equally have been a way of indicating *kinship* with the other Israelites (the Jews). Furthermore, the specification of Gerizim as their chosen cult site may have been influenced by the presence of several self-identified religious clubs in Delos. Roughly contemporary inscriptions, for instance, were erected by the “koinon of Berytian Poseidon-worshippers”, a group of Hellenized Phoenicians from Berytus, modern Beirut. It is hard to see why one of these groups should be described as an “ethnic group” and the other simply a “community”.<sup>491</sup> More generally speaking, we should perhaps be wary of treating self-expression in Delos, which was unusually cosmopolitan, as evidence for self-expression elsewhere.

Returning to the Gerizim inscriptions, I think the relevant context for the sense of place in the later inscriptions must be the administrative changes which took place in the aftermath of the Maccabean Revolt. While I suspect the transfer of a few nomes from one district to another seemed like a small issue to King Demetrius, it had enormous meaning in the local context of the long struggle for centrality in the hill country of Palestine. The creation of a separate Judean polity, and the loss of territory to it, I would suggest, increasingly made an administrative subdivision feel like a “homeland”, which could be stressed with the inclusion of geographical places of origin and the

---

<sup>489</sup> Kartveit (2014a), cf. Barth (1969).

<sup>490</sup> Matassa (2007).

<sup>491</sup> *IDelos* 1520.

phrase “in this place” in the Gerizim inscriptions. It is in this that we can see, for the first time, rapid *territorialisation*, and signs of a nascent Samaritan *ethnogenesis*.

### The Hasmonean Period

While the early Hasmonean realm was probably little more than a large city-state, it embarked on a series of conquests in the 2nd c BCE which brought Samaria under its control. According to Josephus, Shechem and the Samaritan temple at Gerizim was destroyed by Hasmonean John Hyrcanus during his conquest of the region in the late 2nd century BCE.<sup>492</sup> This account is borne out by the excavation reports, which suggest that the temple and the surrounding settlement were both destroyed by fire during this period.<sup>493</sup> Shortly afterwards, Hyrcanus also captured and destroyed the city of Samaria after a prolonged siege, which Josephus alleges was in punishment for Samaritan collaboration with Antiochus.<sup>494</sup> These episodes are part of a wider historical story: the expansion of the Hasmonean state to encompass the majority of Palestine, including Galilee, Idumea, and the coastal plains. Josephus claims that these conquests were often followed by demands that the local population should be circumcised and converted to Judaism, as in the case of the Idumeans and Itureans.<sup>495</sup> In practice, it appears that the Hasmonean conquest often left local elites, and to some extent even local religious practices<sup>496</sup>, in place, with the royal court engaging with pre-existing dynasts (conceivably including Samaritans) and co-opting them to its government.<sup>497</sup>

There are few sources which mention Samaria during the Hasmonean period, and Schwartz has pointed out that there is in fact strikingly little evidence for hostility in Hasmonean evidence. He further argued that some of the evidence can, in fact, be interpreted in the opposite way. Eusebius quotes a certain Eupolemus, believed by some to be the same Eupolemus who was an ambassador of Judas Maccabee,<sup>498</sup> as saying that the Samaritans assisted in the construction of the First Temple of Jerusalem.<sup>499</sup> Furthermore, 2 *Macc* 6.1–3 places the Hellenisation of the Jerusalem and the Gerizim temple side-by-side, suggesting that the act was blasphemous in both places. While the desecration of the Gerizim temple is blamed here on those “inhabiting” (οικοῦντες) it, this could refer to a Hellenising priestly elite who controlled the temple rather than the Samaritan community at large. In this interpretation, the top-down Hellenisation at Gerizim would parallel the author's earlier account of the introduction of Greek customs at Jerusalem by the High Priest Jason in 2 *Macc* 4.7–20. The author also writes that Hellenisation led to “a harsh and unbearable

---

<sup>492</sup> J. *AJ* 13.255–256.

<sup>493</sup> Magen (2008).

<sup>494</sup> J. *AJ* 13.275–282.

<sup>495</sup> e.g. J. *AJ* 13.257–258, 319.

<sup>496</sup> See the interesting case of Costobar, J. *AJ* 15.253–258.

<sup>497</sup> See above, Chapter 2.

<sup>498</sup> Schwartz (1993) 12–13, Holladay (1983) 99 notes 5 and 6.

<sup>499</sup> Eusebius *Praeparatio Evangelica* 9.33.1.

oppression”, seemingly referring to members of both communities.

On the basis of the evidence in 2 *Maccabees*, Schwartz argues that Hyrcanus’ attack on the Gerizim Temple was not an act of hostility, but an attempt to rescue the Gerizim cult from its Hellenising elite, to the benefit of “conservative” Samaritans.<sup>500</sup> Similarly, Bourgel has suggested that the destruction of the temple was ultimately intended to bring about the *integration* of the Samaritan community to the Hasmonean Jewish state. In this interpretation, Hyrcanus’ attack would be the ultimate realisation of the ambition of ‘cultic annexation’, held by some since the Persian period. Furthermore, since there is no demand that the Samaritans should be circumcised or become Jewish, Bourgel believes that this indicates a feeling of ethnic solidarity: the Samaritans do not need to be circumcised, because they are already “genuine Israelites”.<sup>501</sup> This last point is weak: more likely, the Samaritans did not need to be circumcised because they were already circumcised. Generally, however, this interpretation of the destruction of Gerizim is quite plausible (and probably the best explanation of the conflict between our conciliatory contemporary sources and the actions of Hyrcanus). His case is strengthened by what we find in the *Judith*: a 1st century BCE Jewish religious text describing a fictional conflict between the Assyrians and the Israelites. Here, the territorial division between Judea and Samaria is entirely dissolved: the Jezreel Valley, on the border between Galilee and Samaria, is described as being opposite the “great ridge of Judea” at 3:9, territory which traditionally would have been considered the northern extremity of Samaria. Samaria is, indeed, later presented by the author as a sub-region of Judea (4:4).

The ‘integrative’ explanation, while helpful, needs to be further nuanced. The conciliatory tone adopted in 2 *Maccabees*, I propose, is pitched at local elites, with whom the Maccabeans are likely to have cooperated (in line with their policy in other regions): in short, it is another manifestation of the collaboration between secular (that is, non-Temple) elites which we have seen in other periods. On the other hand, while the destruction of the Gerizim temple may well have been an effort at ‘integration’, this could only be achieved through an act of cultural destruction which we should not attempt to explain away. This was, I posit, at least in part a reflection of a hostile strain of 2nd century Jewish religious literature, which emphasised cult centrality, viewed the Samaritan interpretation of Yahwism as a threat, and presented the region as perennially cursed. Hasmonean rulers were both ‘secular’ rulers and High Priests: in their role as rulers the Hasmoneans were willing to engage with Samaritan elites, in their role as High Priests they attempted to destroy the Samaritan Yahweh cult.

---

<sup>500</sup> Schwartz (1993).

<sup>501</sup> Bourgel (2016).

## Herodian and Roman Period

### *Pilgrimage, Imperialism*

In the mid-60s BCE, Pompey the Great swept through Syria. In 63 BCE he intervened in a Hasmonean dynastic conflict between two sons of Alexander Jannaeus, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, expelling Aristobulus and installing Hyrcanus as High Priest in Jerusalem. Large swathes of territory were removed from Hasmonean control, and several cities were refounded and afforded renewed autonomy, including the city of Samaria (along with a string of Greek *poleis*).<sup>502</sup> The following decades would be characterised by continuous civil war in Judea, culminating in the invasion of the Parthians in 40 BCE, who installed Antigonus, son of Aristobulus, as king in Jerusalem. Herod, son of the younger Antipater, travelled to Rome and successfully appealed for help. Upon his return, Herod's mixed army of Romans and Jews reconquered the region, finally seizing Jerusalem in 37 BCE.

Herod, now the king of a large Roman client state, embarked on a string of major reforms and building projects. The Jewish Temple in Jerusalem was lavishly renovated, and its High Priesthood was controlled by the new king who, though he could not (as a non-priest) appoint himself to the role, wrested it from the Hasmonean dynasty and handed it to a series of relatively obscure members of the priestly class. Pilgrimage to the Jerusalem Temple appears to have increased dramatically during this period, particularly from Galilee, Idumea, and the Transjordan, but also from further afield, partly fostered by Herod's infrastructure projects and positive engagement with the Jewish diaspora.<sup>503</sup>

Herod appears to have dedicated considerable resources and attention to strengthening Samaria and building up a power base there. He fortified the city of Samaria, recognising (as past rulers had) its strategic importance, using the site as another node in the system of fortresses and military colonies he used to control his kingdom (J. *AJ* 15.292). Josephus adds that he resettled the local population in the surrounding countryside, distributing land to them. One of his several wives was a Samaritan, Malthace, who gave birth to his sons Antipas and Archelaus (J. *BJ* 1.562). This suggests the existence of a local Samaritan elite with whom it was deemed profitable to establish long-term connections.

Following Herod's death in 4 BCE, Rome began assuming more direct control over Judea. Herod's kingdom was split into various rump states, with his son by Malthace, Archelaus, being named "ethnarch" (but not king) of Judea, Samaria, and Idumea. Archelaus appears to have been an unpopular and unsuccessful ruler, and was deposed by Augustus in 6 CE following a (remarkable)

---

<sup>502</sup> J. *AJ* 14.75.

<sup>503</sup> Goodman (1999).

joint embassy of “leading men in Judea and Samaria” (“οἱ πρῶτοι τῶν ἀνδρῶν ἐν τε Ἰουδαίῳ καὶ Σαμαρείτῃ”) who complained to Rome about his alleged tyranny. His territories were subsequently annexed to the Roman province of Judea, ruled by an imperial administration which was willing to assert its control of local cult sites (especially the Jerusalem Temple) and predisposed to interact with locals through small groups of native elites.<sup>504</sup> The Roman state, evidently, was willing to play the various communities against each other: following the disruptions after the death of Herod, Augustus rewarded Samaria with reduced taxation since it had not (unlike Idumea and Judea) participated in the unrest (J. *AJ* 17.319). The tendency of Rome to treat Judea and Samaria as separate territories is underlined by the fact that Tacitus appears to have believed (erroneously) that there was a formally separate administrative unit called ‘Samarita’ (*Annals* 12.54).

It is in this period that the conflict between Jews and Samaritans reaches its bloody apex: the world of extreme hostility and harsh borders described at the beginning of this chapter. I believe that two factors are responsible for this. The first we have seen repeatedly in earlier periods: the imperial tendency to divide and rule, and in particular the Roman habit of using local elites as intermediaries, nurtured the idea of community interests, and created mechanisms through which those interests could be formally contested. The second is something new to this period: the emergence of large-scale pilgrimage in the Herodian period, a direct consequence of Herod’s building programmes and foreign policy, saw large numbers of Jews travel to Judea from other parts of Palestine. This effectively rendered Samaria a transitional region through which Galileans (and those east of the Upper Jordan) might move on their journey to Jerusalem. Samaria was, therefore, reduced to a connecting line between the nodes of the region’s most important economic networks. This, I suggest, was a radical, highly visible, and humiliating challenge to Samaritans’ feeling of territorial centrality, intensifying *ethnogenesis* and the rapid hardening of territorial borders which had been established during the Persian and Hellenistic periods.

### *Attitudes*

This assessment, I believe, is supported by evidence from the writings of Josephus and the gospels. As we saw in the three examples given in the introduction of this chapter, the movement of Jews through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem was a frequent source of conflict. To use Samaria as a route to Jerusalem does seem to have been a significant cause of offence, offence which was matched by corresponding Jewish indignation. The story of the murder of the Galilean pilgrim in the 50s CE also demonstrates that the two communities were able to produce their own representatives, whom Roman state pitted against one another before arriving at their decision.

---

<sup>504</sup> Goodman (1987) 33–34.

These conflicts accelerated the process of *ethnogenesis*. This is well-developed in the writings of Josephus, who uses the story of 2 *Kings* 17 to characterise the Samaritans as a race of foreign interlopers. The word Josephus often uses for Samaritans, indeed, is ‘Cutheans’, a term derived from the city of Cuthah in Mesopotamia (which is mentioned by the author of 2 *Kings* 17 as a point of origin of foreign settlers in Samaria).<sup>505</sup> We see similar views in *Matthew*, probably written in the late 1st century CE. At 10:5–6, Jesus instructs his twelve disciples to spread his message and performs miracles, instructing them to avoid the Gentiles and to not enter “a town of the Samaritans” (“πόλιν Σαμαριτῶν”), but to rather focus on “the lost flock of the House of Israel” (“τὰ πρόβατα τὰ ἀπολωλότα οἴκου Ἰσραήλ”). Here, again, the Samaritans are not ‘Israelites’, but are associated with the Gentiles. Similarly, when the author of the *Gospel of Mark* (written in the 60s CE) describes those who came to see Jesus, he mentions travellers from “Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon” but not, interestingly, from Samaria (3:8).

All that said, our sources show signs that not all friendly relations were severed. Even Josephus, who shows extreme hostility to the Samaritans, claims to have had “friends” in Samaria whom he contacted to ensure the safe passage of the Galilean embassy to Jerusalem.<sup>506</sup> Other elites appear to have had close connections with Samaritans, too: Herod Agrippa, for instance, is said to have borrowed a million drachma from a Samaritan freedman of Tiberius (J. *AJ* 18.167). As we might expect, some from Samaria appear to have settled in Judea: we find an ossuary from the 1st century CE in the greater Jerusalem area with the name ‘Theorus the Samaritan’ inscribed in Greek and Aramaic.<sup>507</sup> We even see collaboration between representatives of the two communities, as in the story of the ousting of Archelaus (see above).

In some of the gospels, furthermore, we see a strikingly conciliatory tone. When Jesus is confronted by hostility in a Samaritan town in *Luke* (late 1st c CE), he rebukes his disciples for reacting angrily. Later in the *Luke*, while Jesus is travelling along the border between Samaria and Galilee, he is described as miraculously healing ten lepers. The only one who returns later to praise him is a Samaritan: Jesus remarks that it is extraordinary that only a “foreigner” (“ἀλλογενής”) has come back, and blesses him (17:11–19). It is also in *Luke* that we find the famous story of the ‘Good Samaritan’, where an injured Jew is ignored by a priest and a Levite, but assisted by a Samaritan (10:25–37). Here, then, although the Samaritans are still characterised as “foreigners”, the desirability of defusing hostility towards them (and the ability of Jesus to do so) is stressed. This proves the existence both of

---

<sup>505</sup> J. *AJ* 9.278f., 288–291, 11.302f., 306–12. The term ‘Cutheans’ would later become the standard term for the Samaritans in Rabbinic literature.

<sup>506</sup> J. *Vita* 52.

<sup>507</sup> *CII/P* 1.484.

widespread anti-Samaritan feeling amongst Jews (which the author of Luke is reacting against), and of a more conciliatory strain of thought (which he is exemplifying). We see a similar attitude in *Acts*, probably written by the same author as *Luke*, where Samaria is presented as receptive to the message of Jesus.<sup>508</sup> As in previous periods, then, we see signs of attempted reconciliation, even amidst a general climate of deteriorating relations. What is different here, perhaps, is that even in the *Gospel of Luke*, our most pro-Samaritan source, the Samaritans are presented as foreigners: friendly interaction is presented as demonstrating the potential for as an inter-ethnic, not intra-ethnic, harmony.

## Conclusions

I have argued in this chapter that the stories of *ethnogenesis* and *territorialisation* in the Second Temple Hill Country were deeply intertwined both with each other, and with its administrative history. I believe that it is necessary to examine these problems over several centuries in order to identify both the erratic nature of their development, and recurring patterns of communal interaction.

I have argued that *territorialisation* was caused and shaped by imperial powers, who not only established distinct provinces of ‘Judea’ and ‘Samaria’ with their own borders, but also engaged with local elites, who acted as representatives of their own communities and their interests. Sometimes these interests aligned, prompting collaboration, and sometimes (perhaps more often) they conflicted, resulting in conflict. This encouraged elites, and perhaps the communities as a whole, to think in terms of local interests rather than ‘Israel’-wide interests. Matters were exacerbated when these imperial powers used local institutions, as well as local people, in the administration of their empires, since this increased the importance of the divide between the Yahwist temples at Gerizim and Jerusalem.

*Territorialisation* is deeply connected to *ethnogenesis*. Indeed, as we have seen, one of the primary features of an ethnic group (as defined by sociologists and anthropologists) is the presence of a shared idea of a ‘homeland’. Shifting imperial boundaries, as well as the development of the Jewish pilgrimage in the 1st centuries BCE and CE, moved the economic and political centre of the region back and forth between Judea and Samaria. These changes, I have proposed, were at different times perceived by the two communities as a threat to their homeland’s integrity, creating the conditions for the development of identities which we might term ‘ethnic’. As in previous chapters, then, I have sought to expose the relationship between landscape discourses and other long-term historical developments.

---

<sup>508</sup> *Acts* 8:5–6, 9–25. This is also a feature of the *Gospel of John*, 4:1–26, 39–42.

As I indicated in the introduction, these processes did not occur at a consistent speed. Indeed, there were periods when ethnic identity and strong territorial attachments appear to have diminished. However, by the end of our period the cycle of retrenchment and renewal had produced a firm cultural boundary in the Hill Country, underpinned by extreme ethnic tension and mutual mistrust.

## Chapter 5: The Sacred Landscape

### Introduction

The work of geographers and historians of religion ought to intersect at a number of points. Religious beliefs shape attitudes about the physical world, affecting how people behave towards and interpret the surrounding landscape and ecology. Various aspects of religion—the distribution of adherents, the locations of sacred places, etc.—can also usefully be ‘mapped’, particularly with the aid of modern polling data and GIS applications.<sup>509</sup> The ‘spatial’ dimension of religion should, in short, very much be the province of cultural geographers, who have produced an enormous body of research on the topic of ‘space and place’ over several decades.<sup>510</sup>

It is perhaps surprising, then, that for much of the 20th century the geography of religion was a marginal subdiscipline, of interest to only a small minority of scholars. The outpouring of research on sacred geography in the late 19th and early 20th century was followed by a long period of silence, occasionally punctuated by pioneering voices.<sup>511</sup> It is only since the 1990s that the subject has once again moved into the academic mainstream, in the wake of both intellectual and political changes which have reshaped Western scholarship and society. Recent research has often focused on urgent

---

<sup>509</sup> Park (1999) 2–6.

<sup>510</sup> In sociology and geography: e.g. Lefebvre (1974), Tuan (1974), Sack (1974), Sack (1980), Jacob (2007), Soja (2011), Agnew (2011). In anthropology: e.g. Setha & Lawrence-Zúñiga (2003), Coleman & Collins (2006).

<sup>511</sup> The ‘historical geographies’ mentioned in the Preface of this study are among the best examples of 19th & early 20th century geographies of religion. For a discussion of mid-20th century trends, see Kong (1990).

political problems such as the position of religious minorities and migrant communities in the modern West, and has synthesised with sociologies and anthropologies of religion to produce new theoretical frameworks and open up fertile new areas of inquiry.<sup>512</sup>

How much notice should ancient historians take of these new geographies of religion? On the one hand, it must be acknowledged that applying modern theories to the ancient world might be unproductive and even highly misleading. Students of modern religion are armed with vast quantities of data and potentially have access to billions of living believers, while ancient historians are more often working with a few written sources and a handful of scattered and half-ruined material artefacts. This difference alone means that some avenues of research—such as religious demography—are in practice shut off to ancient historians. Furthermore, the quality of ‘sanctity’ is highly unstable, insofar as it is imparted by human beings who are liable to change their minds or quickly enter new emotional states. It is, as such, impermanent and situational, and a site might rapidly become more or less sacred to a population or a person. Sacred landscapes are, therefore, dynamic and in constant motion: we might think of it like the surface of a sea, undulating with smaller and bigger peaks of sacredness which can shrink away or swell as the minutes, hours, and years go by. They exist, ultimately, within the minds of individual believers, though many different people might share broadly similar sacred landscapes, especially if they are connected by certain religious beliefs. Historians of the ancient Mediterranean have access to few texts which describe the ‘experiential’ dimension of religion in detail and can only capture a fraction of this complexity.<sup>513</sup>

Furthermore, ancient and modern religion are commonly characterised by scholars as fundamentally different, since the former was, to quote an ancient historian, “embedded in all aspects of ancient life”.<sup>514</sup> In their influential 1998 study of Roman religion, Beard, North, and Price argued that “we do not find special institutions and activities, set aside from everyday life and designed to pursue religious objectives... in fact, all important areas of life, public or private, had some religious correlates”. This, they argue, contrasts sharply with the modern world where religion is conducted in designated places by specified groups and institutions.<sup>515</sup> If these scholars are correct, and ancient and modern religion are dramatically different phenomena, then the prospects for useful collaboration between modern geographers and ancient historians seems slim.

---

<sup>512</sup> For an assessment of recent developments see Stump (2008), Kong (2010), Brace *et al.* (2011).

<sup>513</sup> A notable exception might be Aelius Aristides *Sacred Tales*.

<sup>514</sup> Price (1999) 89. The word ‘embedded’ is borrowed from economist Karl Polanyi (see Polanyi (1944)); by contrast Nongbri (2008), followed by Barton & Boyarin (2016), argued that the concept of ‘embedded religion’ is unhelpful, as it serves to obscure the fundamental unsuitability of ‘religion’ as an analytical tool in describing ancient societies

<sup>515</sup> Beard, North and Price (1998) 42–43.

Recent research challenges the validity of these claims. The ‘embedded’ model of ancient religion is no doubt useful, and helps us to identify important truths about Graeco-Roman antiquity. The corresponding characterisation of modern religion as ‘unembedded’, however, is no longer sustainable in light of recent scholarship. Modern sociologists and anthropologists have argued that the distinction between the “sacred” and “secular” in the modern world is, in fact, far less clear than we have previously supposed, and that religion is inextricably connected to wider cultural, social and economic processes.<sup>516</sup> In turn, the new geographers of religion have argued that describing religion in terms of a handful of “officially” religious sites (such as churches, mosques, and synagogues) is unhelpful, and have suggested that there are also “unofficially” religious spaces in which religion is practiced and experienced, and in which religious identities are constructed, reinforced and challenged. These include not only minor cult sites such as sacred groves, but also less obvious places such as museums, schools and the human body. Kong argued in a 2005 article, for instance, that an exhibition at the Singapore History Museum entitled ‘Settling in: Jewish Life and History in Singapore’ reaffirmed the place of Singaporean Jews within a multicultural society, repurposed everyday or ritual objects as representations of religious identity, and stimulated conversations within the Jewish community about its own history and internal divisions. As such, the museum became, at least temporarily, an ‘unofficially sacred place’, insofar as it was a theatre for the construction and analysis of a contemporary religious identity.<sup>517</sup>

Ancient and modern religion appear, then, not to be fundamentally different phenomena, with both ‘embedded’ in the surrounding world. Perhaps the most significant contrast is that modern languages and thought systems have a well-developed concept of ‘religion’, allowing speakers to discuss, study, and think about the sacred as a discrete area of life, while ancient languages (including Latin and Biblical Hebrew, but perhaps not Greek), often did not have a word which served a similar purpose.<sup>518</sup> This does not in itself, however, prove that modern religion is in practice less “embedded” than ancient religion was: merely that it is *described* differently: a lexical absence is not proof of an ontological absence.

All of which is to say that the prospects for interdisciplinary collaboration between ancient historians and modern geographers of religion are much more promising than they might first appear. The new redefinition of ‘sacred place’ adopted by geographers of religion is at once more clearly defined and broader even than the models ancient historians have used in the past, and has the potential to refresh and renew our understanding of the spatial dimension of ancient religion. Recent studies of pre-

---

<sup>516</sup> This trend is related to a growing interest in so-called postsecularism (the idea that secularism has failed to remove religion from the public sphere): McLennan (2007), Beaumont (2008), Kong (2010) 763–765.

<sup>517</sup> Sacred groves: Campbell (2005); schools: Kong (2005b); museums: Kong (2005a); the body: Bailey, Harvey, and Brace (2007), Gökarıksel (2009); general overview: Kong (2010) 756–757.

<sup>518</sup> For Greek see Scullion (2006) 113–114.

modern sacred landscapes have shown how this new hyper-embedded model might be scaled up to be applied to landscapes. Rather than mapping ancient religion through a set of ‘religious places’ (temples, shrines, groves, etc.) which act as oases of sanctity in an otherwise profane landscape, scholars have begun to speak of vast systems of man-made sites, natural phenomena, and pathways, held together through symbolic networks and mythical narratives (particularly of movement and migration). As one scholar phrased it, “a sacred landscape is a temporal and spatial fabric spread over a geographic region, unifying all the rituals conducted at the various sacred places within a narrative framework”.<sup>519</sup>

These insights are particularly provocative when applied to the Hill Country. Jewish religious literature from our period repeatedly proclaims the importance of Mount Zion as the region’s single sacred centre. Our main witness for the period, Josephus, was a priest of the Temple and had a particular institutional loyalty towards it. It appears that at least some Samaritans viewed Mount Gerizim in a similar way: the tenth commandment of the Samaritan Torah reads “you shall raise up these stones which I have commanded you to today on Mount Gerizim” (תְּקִימוּ אֶת הָאֲבָנִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר (אֲנִי מְצַוֶּה אֲתֶכֶם הַיּוֹם בְּהָר גִּרְזִימַי),<sup>520</sup> and the Samaritans of Delos defined themselves as “the Israelites who make offerings on Holy Argarizein [Mount Gerizim]” in two 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE inscriptions.<sup>521</sup> The apparently intense focus on particular religious sites might lead us to believe, curiously, that the Yahwist cultures of the Hill Country had a remarkably un-embedded sacred landscape, with clearly defined religious spaces.

I believe that the new geographies of religion provide a basis for us to reassess this picture, and to critically re-examine the claims of our sources. I believe that the basic insight that sanctity is fluid and contextual can be profitably applied to the study of ancient sacred geographies. They allow us, in particular, to question the ideals presented in our historical sources, and read between the lines to uncover the more complex, dispersed sacred landscapes which might exist under the surface. My purpose in this chapter is, indeed, not to think like a 1st century CE priest from the Jerusalem Temple, but like a modern geographer of religion, attempting to pick out strands of thought which might have lain under the surface of the hegemonic narrative presented to us by our sources. This is, to refer back to my Introduction, a challenge of an elite, institutional ‘landscape discourse’, and an attempt to (re)discover an alternative.

In the first half of this chapter, I will take up the idea of “unofficial” sacred places, asking where else (other than Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim) religion might have been practiced and experienced in

---

<sup>519</sup> Reese-Taylor (2012) 752.

<sup>520</sup> *Ex. (SP)* 20:17.

<sup>521</sup> Bruneau & Bordeuil (1982) 469–474.

the Hill Country. In the second half I will address other, related questions using a series of case studies. Why was the sacred landscape of the Hill Country organised the way it was? Did it organically evolve from a primordial soup of economic, social, and cultural conditions, or was it the product of planning by elites seeking to establish or entrench their power and wealth? We should not expect that the answer will be found exclusively at either of these explanatory poles: as Horden and Purcell argued, we can only begin to understand the formation of sacred landscapes by acknowledging that “the ties of causality run in several directions”.<sup>522</sup>

### **The Sacred Landscape in the First Century CE**

I will now attempt to sketch out a new picture of the sacred landscape of the Hill Country. I will begin by identifying various types of ‘sacred place’, both official and unofficial, and placing them in a handful of broad groups (some of which, inevitably, overlap).

I have decided to focus on the 1st century CE, partly because our most revealing sources are from this period, but also because analysing this period allows us to assess the cumulative impact of centuries of historical and spiritual interventions in the sacred landscape before the system was reconfigured by the consequences of the First Jewish Revolt. My primary literary sources, unsurprisingly, will be the writings of Josephus, which provide the richest picture of the Hill Country’s sacred landscape. I will also make use of the so-called ‘Copper Scroll’ (3Q15) from Qumran. The scroll was written in Hebrew and has been dated on palaeographic grounds to the 1st c CE, though it is unclear whether it was produced before or after the destruction of the Second Temple. The text is a list of 64 locations where treasure might be found, mostly in Jerusalem and the surrounding area, with others near Jericho and a scattering in other places. The ‘authenticity’ of the list has been debated for decades, with some arguing that it referred to real treasures, and others suggesting that it is a work of imaginative fiction.<sup>523</sup> I will also make extensive use of biblical literature and material evidence, particularly from buildings with religious significance.

#### *Temples and Synagogues*

---

<sup>522</sup> Horden & Purcell (2000) 407.

<sup>523</sup> For general overview of the text see Høgenhaven (2009) 85-88. Those in favour of the ‘fiction’ side include Mowinkel (1957), Milik (1962), and Morawiecki (1994); for an alternative perspective see Wolters (1990).

I will begin with those sites which could uncontroversially be described as ‘sacred places’: temples and other places of worship. The two most important were the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, and the Samaritan sacred complex at Mount Gerizim.

The Jewish Second Temple sat on the Temple Mount, known historically as Mount Zion, a hill located in Jerusalem. The so-called ‘First Temple’, also known as ‘Solomon’s Temple’, existed on the site for several centuries until its destruction by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar II. According to the narrative in Ezra-Nehemiah, the Second Temple was built on the decree of Cyrus the Great following the return of the Jews to Judea from the Babylonian captivity in 539 BCE (*Ezra* 1:1–4). The author of 1 Maccabees reports that, following the Maccabean conquest of the city in the 160s BCE, the altar was rebuilt (following its supposed corruption by Antiochus IV), and the hill was fortified with “high walls and strong towers” (“τείχη ὑψηλὰ καὶ πύργους ὀχυρούς”) so that “the Gentiles would never come and trample it as they did before” (“μήποτε παραγενηθέντα τὰ ἔθνη καταπατήσωσιν αὐτὰ ὡς ἐποίησαν τὸ πρότερον”).<sup>524</sup> During the late 1st century BCE, Herod the Great initiated a massive renovation project, “enlarging its bounds and raising it to an impressive height” (“μείζω τε τὸν περίβολον καὶ πρὸς ὕψος ἀξιοπρεπέστερον ἐγείρειν”).<sup>525</sup> The inner courts of the Temple were forbidden to non-Jews, as is forcefully illustrated by a Greek inscription, mentioned by Josephus and discovered by archaeologists, which promised death to any foreigner (ἄλλογενῇ) who attempted to enter.<sup>526</sup> It was destroyed by the Romans during the First Jewish Revolt in 70 CE.

Mount Gerizim is located in the modern West Bank near the Palestinian city of Nablus (Biblical Shechem, Roman Flavia Neapolis). It is the second highest mountain in Samaria, rising 886 m above sea level. It has three peaks: Jebet al-Tur, Tell er-Ras and an unnamed hill to the west. Since at least the mid-5th century BCE, it has been considered the holiest site by followers of the Samaritan religion. Excavations have revealed a sacred complex built in two phase, first in the 5th century BCE, and later in the 2nd century BCE. The 5th century sacred precinct was roughly square-shaped, measuring 98x96 m. The temple itself was likely in the western half of the precinct, facing east. The sacred precinct was the first structure on Mount Gerizim, with a city gradually appearing around it. It has been dated to the 5th century on the basis of Persian-era coins and pottery. This is at odds with Josephus, who claims that the Samaritan temple was founded by a Jewish priest, Manasseh, who was forced from Jerusalem after arranging an exogamous marriage with the daughter of Sanballat, a Persian satrap under Darius III (4th century BCE).<sup>527</sup> In the excavation report it was argued that Josephus had (perhaps deliberately) confused the later Sanballat and Sanballat the Horonite, an antagonist from

---

<sup>524</sup> 1 *Macc.* 4:44–47, 4:60.

<sup>525</sup> J. *AJ.* 380. For a succinct scholarly summary of the reconstruction, see Roller (1998) 176–178.

<sup>526</sup> CII/P 2; cf. J.*BJ* 5.193–194, 6.124–126; J. *AJ* 15.417–418.

<sup>527</sup> J. *AJ* 11.360f., 310–12.

Samaria in the Book of Nehemiah.<sup>528</sup> On the basis of Sanballat the Horonite's career they suggested a *terminus post quem* for the sacred precinct of 444 BCE. The earliest coin at the site, however, is a Cypriot drachma from 480 BCE, so an even earlier date is conceivable.<sup>529</sup> The sacred precinct was renovated in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. It was expanded to the south and the east, growing to 212x136 m. Monumental staircases, courtyards and extra buildings were added.<sup>530</sup> According to Josephus, the temple was razed by John Hyrcanus I in 128 BCE. This is roughly borne out by the excavation reports, which suggest that the city and the temple were both destroyed during this period.<sup>531</sup>

Synagogues were other sacred places where the Jewish religion was practiced, and Jewish identity was reaffirmed. According to Josephus, one of the distinguishing features of Jewish culture was that Moses “ordered that each week, men should forget all their work and gather to listen to the law and learn about it accurately” (“ἐκάστης ἐβδομάδος τῶν ἄλλων ἔργων ἀφεμένους ἐπὶ τὴν ἀκρόασιν ἐκέλευσε τοῦ νόμου συλλέγεσθαι καὶ τοῦτον ἀκριβῶς ἐκμανθάνειν”). There is archaeological, literary, and epigraphic evidence that such gatherings took place in buildings usually known as *synagogai* (συναγωγαί), “places of assembly”, in Palestine, and *proseuchai* (προσευχαί), “places of prayer”, in the diaspora. The archaeological evidence for such buildings in the Hill Country is sparse, partly because they are often difficult to differentiate from rooms. Synagogues have been identified, not uncontroversially, at Masada, Herodium, and Kiryat Sefer, and the 1st century CE (pre-destruction) Theodotus Inscription has indicated that such sites existed in Jerusalem itself.<sup>532</sup> There has been considerable scholarly debate over whether synagogues were ‘sacred places’ during the Second Temple. Binder has suggested that synagogues were indeed sacred places which, together with the Jerusalem Temple, formed part of a single Jewish “cultic system”. Synagogues, for Binder, acted as proxy Temples which allowed Jews to participate in a common set of ritual practices. Levine, on the other hand, has pointed out that hard literary evidence for the sanctity of synagogues, particularly Palestinian synagogues, is desperately thin, and that the Temple was dramatically different in function (particularly as a centre of sacrifice), organizational structure, and perception in our literary sources.<sup>533</sup> These debates are important and interesting, but are ultimately taking place within a framework which is distinct from this study, which is operating under a much broader understanding of what a ‘sacred place’ is. For our purpose synagogues, as centres of Jewish cultural life and scriptural study, may unambiguously be considered ‘sacred places’.

<sup>528</sup> Magen, Misgav & Tsfania (2004) 10, *Neh.* 2:1–10.

<sup>529</sup> Magen (2008) 169.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.* 143.

<sup>531</sup> J. *AJ.* 13.254–257, *BJ* 1:62, Magen, Misgav & Tsfania (2004) 12–13.

<sup>532</sup> Masada and Herodium synagogues: Foerster (1983), Atkinson (1997); Kiryat Sefer: Magen, Zionit & Sirkis (2004). Theodotus inscription: CIJ 2.1404, see Kloppenborg (2000) for a strong argument in favour of a pre-70 CE date. For general discussion see Levine (1996).

<sup>533</sup> Binder (1999), Levine (2000), Levine (2003).

It also appears that there were pagan sites of worship in the Hill Country. While we know the least about these, there are indications in both literary and archaeological evidence that pagan shrines and temples existed at various times. There appears to have been a temple to Kore in the city of Samaria from the Hellenistic period onwards, as well as shrines to Isis and Serapis.<sup>534</sup> *1 Maccabees* also claims that various pagan shrines and temples were established at the instigation of Antiochus IV in the mid-2nd century BCE (though it is unclear how accurate the author's portrayal of Seleukid religious policy was).<sup>535</sup>

### *Sites of Religious-Historical Significance*

In addition to these “officially” sacred places, I would like to add a number of “unofficially” sacred sites which were known for their connection to biblical miracles, prophetic figures, and sacred history. This group includes not only major settlements such as Jerusalem, Jericho, Samaria (the city), and Shechem, but other minor sites which we know of from the Hebrew Bible and other religious literature. These sites bridged the gap between mythic and historical time, reinforcing ethnocultural memory and supporting feelings of affinity to and ownership of the land. Our most compelling evidence for such sites is, indeed, from ancient Jewish authors who invoked them as evidence for the veracity of Biblical history. The following quote from Andrea Berlin, originally a comment on the significance of the location of the palace of Herodium (see below), makes the general point extremely effectively:

“...geography acted as an accessory to history, forming a conceptual link that was never far from the minds of Judaeans who had grown up reading and listening to multiple narratives of conquest, stories of settlement amongst strangers, and repeated assurances of territory made theirs by divine authority.”<sup>536</sup>

I do not believe it requires any imaginative reshaping of our evidence to say that these sites certainly were, to return to the definition of ‘sacred place’ I adopted earlier, spaces “in which religious identities are constructed, reinforced and challenged”. These sites were more than a sequence of isolated points of interest in the landscape. Together, they told the story of the Israelite people, and demonstrated the importance of Yahweh’s historical role. Their power and significance are illustrated by a quote from *Mishnah Berakhot*:

הַרְוָאָה מְקוֹם שֶׁנִּנְעָשׂוּ בוֹ נִסִּים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אָמַר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבְרָהָם בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה. מְקוֹם שֶׁנִּעְקְרָה מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבוּדַת זָרָה, אָמַר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָקַר עֲבוּדַת זָרָה מֵאֶרֶצְנוּ.

<sup>534</sup> Magness (2001).

<sup>535</sup> *1 Macc.* 1:47.

<sup>536</sup> Berlin (2015) 900.

When someone sees a place in which miracles have been done for Israel, he should say, “Blessed is he who performed miracles for our forefathers in this place”. When someone sees a place from which idolatry has been purged, he should say, “Blessed is he who removed idolatry from our land.”

Here, the author describes the process of reading the landscape through the lens of Biblical history and implies that he knew of numerous places where “miracles have been done for Israel”.<sup>537</sup>

We occasionally have unambiguous evidence that late Second Temple Jews believed they knew the locations of some of the many notable places described in the Hebrew Bible. Sometimes Josephus claims to have personally seen such a site: he recalls, for instance, visiting the pillar of salt into which Lot’s wife was turned at *Genesis* 19:26 (located adjacent to the southern Dead Sea).<sup>538</sup> At other places, Josephus adds details to the biblical text which may lead us to believe he has associated a Biblical site with a precise place. He describes the twelve stones set up by Joshua at Gilgal in *Joshua* 4 as a “raised altar” (βωμός)<sup>539</sup> located 10 stades from Jericho (ἀπὸ δέκα σταδίων τῆς Ἰεριχοῦντος): the distance is absent from the Hebrew text and indicates that Josephus (or his source) knew where the place was supposed to be located.<sup>540</sup>

Sometimes, sites are connected to religious history without reference to the Hebrew Bible. At *AJ* 1.70-71, for instance, Josephus writes that Seth and his children preserved their astronomical knowledge on two pillars (“στήλας δύο”), one of brick and one of stone (“ποιησάμενοι τὴν μὲν ἐκ πλίνθου τὴν ἑτέραν δὲ ἐκ λίθων”), which still existed in the region of ‘Seiris’ (“μένει δ’ ἄχρι δεῦρο κατὰ γῆν τὴν Σερίδα”). It may be that the pillars were the “carved images” (חֲפְצֵי־לִמּוּד, *hapsilim*) near ‘Gilgal’ which Ehud passed during his escape to Seirah (יִמְלֵט הַשְׁעָרִים, *yimalet has ’iratah*) in *Judges* 3:26, though Josephus’ association of the site with Seth is absent here. The same site may also be briefly mentioned at *Jubilees* 8:3, where Kainam son of Arpachsad finds “an inscription which the ancients had incised in a rock” containing “the Watchers’ teaching by which they used to observe the omens of the sun, moon, and stars and every heavenly sign”.<sup>541</sup> If the ‘Seirah’ of *Judges* is indeed the ‘Seiris’ of Josephus (as seems probable), it seems that pillars were located somewhere in the Hill Country, since in the following verse Ehud is described as blowing the *shofar* “in the Hill Country of Ephraim” (בְּהַר אֶפְרַיִם, *bhar efrayim*), a region roughly corresponding to southern Samaria.<sup>542</sup>

Imaginative narrative etymologies often helped to connect places in the Hill Country to religious history. Etymologies appear throughout ancient Hebrew religious literature, from the Pentateuch to

---

<sup>537</sup> *m.Berakhot* 9.1.

<sup>538</sup> *J. AJ* 1.203–4.

<sup>539</sup> Occasionally the Septuagint translation for the Hebrew *bamah*, see below.

<sup>540</sup> *J. AJ* 5.20.

<sup>541</sup> Trans. VanderKam (1989).

<sup>542</sup> *Judg.* 3:27.

Second Temple compositions.<sup>543</sup> The early books of *Jewish Antiquities* are to a large extent based on the Hebrew Bible, and Josephus often repeats biblical etymologies, noting that the biblical name has survived until his day and usually including an explanation for Greek readers. *Genesis* 19:22, for instance, notes that the small place to which Lot flees following the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was called ‘Tsoar’ (צֹר, often transliterated ‘Zoar’), meaning “small”. Josephus repeats the story with a few alterations, but adds: “...it is still called Zoor now, for this is how the Hebrews say ‘small’” (“Ζωὸρ ἔτι καὶ νῦν λέγεται· καλοῦσι γὰρ οὕτως Ἑβραῖοι τὸ ὀλίγον”) (*AJ* 1.204). Josephus likewise repeats the *Genesis*’ etymology for the name ‘Beersheba’ (“well of the oath”), adding an explanation in Greek followed by “...it is still named as this today by the locals” (“οὕτω δ’ ἔτι καὶ νῦν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπιχωρίων ὠνόμαστα”).<sup>544</sup> There are numerous similar examples through *Jewish Antiquities*.<sup>545</sup> By presenting the etymologies in this way, Josephus is not just rephrasing biblical material, but is actively reaffirming the connection between contemporary places and mythical history which is established by the original version.

Sometimes, Josephus alters a Biblical etymology. At *AJ*. 5.34, for instance, he writes of Gilgal (located east of Jericho, in the Hill Country):

Ἐκλήθη δὲ ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ στρατόπεδον ἐβάλετο Ἰησοῦς Γάλγαλα· σημαίνει δὲ τοῦτο ἐλευθέριον ὄνομα· διαβάντες γὰρ τὸν ποταμὸν ἐλευθέρους ἑαυτοὺς ἤδη ἀπὸ τε τῶν Αἰγυπτίων καὶ τῆς ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τλαιπωρίας ἐγίνωσκον.

The place in which Joshua placed his camp was called ‘Galgala’. The name indicates “freedom” since, crossing the river, they saw that they were free from the Egyptians and their hardships in the desert.

This conflicts with the explanation at *Joshua* 5:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, אֶל-יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, הַיּוֹם גִּלּוֹתִי אֶת-קֶרְפַּת מִצְרַיִם, מֵעַל יָכְם; וַיִּקְרָא שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא, גִּלְגָּל, עַד, הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.

The Lord said to Joshua: “Today I have rolled the taunt of Egypt away from you”. Thus the name of that place is ‘Gilgal’ [from the Hebrew verb גָּלַל, “to roll”] to this day”

Josephus’ interpretation is difficult to justify in Hebrew. We might imagine that he was simplifying the rather contrived version in *Joshua*: if this is indeed the explanation, it would serve to illustrate the (perhaps obvious) point that it was the connection to the mythic past, and not the linguistic origin of the name, which Josephus deems to be the most important aspect of an etymology.

The importance of etymologies of toponyms is further illustrated by the attempted creation of new etymologies during our period. A well-known example from the 1st century CE is the story of the ‘Field of Blood’, located in the Hinnom Valley, in the Books of *Matthew* and *Acts*. At *Matthew* 27:7–8, for instance, after a guilty Judas returns the money he was awarded for betraying Jesus to the

<sup>543</sup>E.g. *Gen.* 28:19; *Num.* 13:24; *Josh.* 7:25–26, 8:28–20; *Judg.* 2:4, 15:19, 18:28–29; *Jub.* 10:34.

<sup>544</sup>*Gen.* 21:31; *J. AJ* 1.212.

<sup>545</sup>*J. AJ* 1.337 (cf. *Gen.* 33:17), 3.299 (cf. *Num.* 11:34, “Kibroth-hattaavah”), 5.303 (cf. *Judg.* 15:17, “Ramat Lehi”; see below in this chapter for more on this site), 7.82 (cf. 2 *Sam.* 6:8, “Perez-Uzzah”).

Temple, the Temple authorities purchase a field as a burial place for foreigners which was thereafter known as the “Field of Blood” (“Ἀγρὸς αἵματος”). A similar, though slightly different etymology for the site is offered at *Acts* 1:18-19:

οὗτος μὲν οὖν ἐκτήσατο χωρίον ἐκ μισθοῦ τῆς ἀδικίας, καὶ πρηνὴς γενόμενος ἐλάκησεν, καὶ ἐξεχύθη πάντα τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ καὶ γνωστὸν ἐγένετο πᾶσι τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν Ἱερουσαλήμ, ὥστε κληθῆναι τὸ χωρίον ἐκεῖνο τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν Ἀκελδαμά, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν Χωρίον αἵματος.

He [Judas] acquired a property from his ill-gotten wages, but falling over head-first [there] his stomach burst open, and all of his intestines spilled out. All the inhabitants of Jerusalem found out about this, and so they called this place ‘Akeldama’ in their own language, which means the ‘Field of Blood’.

The discrepancy between these two accounts does not matter much from our perspective. The point of interest is that both authors felt it was valuable to record their story of the placenames. The attempted creation of new sacred etymologies underscores their importance in reaffirming different versions of mythology and history and strategically restructuring the sacred landscape.

### *Tombs and funerary monuments*

The practice of ancestor-worship and excessive interest in the dead is often discouraged in Jewish religious literature from our period. To offer sacrifices to the dead is considered a gentile practice by the author of *Jubilees*,<sup>546</sup> and prolonged periods of mourning are discouraged at *Sirach* 38:16-23.

While there is some evidence that the Jews believed pious dead people might be able to intercede on behalf of the living, this seems to have only been in extreme circumstances, and it does not appear that it was necessary to travel to a tomb to make an appeal.<sup>547</sup> An exception to this general view can be found in the Hellenistic *Tobit*, wherein Tobit instructs his son to leave bread “on the graves of the righteous” (4:17). Hachlili has shown, using evidence from various necropoleis, that Second Temple Jews were often buried in simple wooden coffins or, from the late 1st c BCE onwards, ossuaries, though some wealthy and important individuals or families built large tombs or funerary monuments for themselves.<sup>548</sup> Tombs were almost invariably located outside the bounds of cities, presumably because they were considered ritually impure, and many loculi tombs were built in hillsides.

All that said, there does appear to have been some ritual interest in the tombs of significant religious or historical figures. The authors of the Hebrew Bible often note the places where prophets, kings, and other important men and women were buried. It is unclear how many of these tombs still existed in the Second Temple Period. We can be certain that the Tomb of David and Solomon in Jerusalem had survived, since Josephus claims that both John Hyrcanus and Herod the Great attempted to rob it of its

---

<sup>546</sup> *Jub.* 22:16–17.

<sup>547</sup> 2 *Macc.* 15:12–16; *Rev.* 6:9–10; 1 *Enoch* 22:5–7. For general discussion see Kerkeslager (1998) 123–145.

<sup>548</sup> Hachlili (2004).

treasures when short of funds. Josephus adds that Herod was scared away by a “flame” (φλογὸς) which met him as he entered, and subsequently built a monumental marble entrance for the complex.<sup>549</sup>

There are indications in the works of Josephus that other tombs and funerary monuments still existed in the 1st c CE. At *Antiquities* 11.158, he claims that Ezra, the Jewish priest and scribe who supposedly led the Jews back to Palestine from their exile in Mesopotamia, was buried lavishly (“μετὰ πολλῆς φιλοτιμίας”) in Jerusalem: his burial is not mentioned in the Bible or later sources (which believed Ezra had died in Mesopotamia) so this may indicate that a tomb or monument had become associated with him by Josephus’ time.<sup>550</sup> Similarly, it seems that Josephus knew of the Monument of Absalom,<sup>551</sup> mentioned in 2 *Samuel* 18:18, since he writes that it was “made of marble” (λίθου μαρμαρινου) and was “two stades from Jerusalem” (δύο σταδίου ἀπέχουσιν Ἱεροσολύμων), details which are not in *Samuel*. The Monument of Absalom (“יד אבשלום”), also appears in the Copper Scroll at X 12-14 as a place where treasure might be uncovered. Archaeologists have uncovered a 1st century CE tomb which is associated with the site, built in a mixture of Graeco-Roman and Egyptian decorative styles.<sup>552</sup> The author of the Copper Scroll also mentions a ‘Tomb of Zadok’ (קבר צדוק, *qbr tsdq*), along with a ‘Garden of Zadok’ (גנת צדוק, *gnt tsdq*), in Column XI, apparently located near the Monument of Absalom.

The extent to which these tombs were “officially” sacred is unclear. At the very least they were (along with sites in the previous category) places which played a role in the mythical and religious-historical interpretation of the landscape. Furthermore, despite the literary warnings against interest in the dead (see above), the design of certain Second Temple monumental tombs would appear to facilitate visitors. The Tomb of Helena of Adiabene and several other contemporary tombs from the Jerusalem area were built with courtyards which contained benches. Hachlili has argued that were “probably used for mourning and memorial services”, while others have suggested, on the basis of ashes and the remains of cooking pots, that tombs may also have been the sites of “commemorative meals”.<sup>553</sup> The presence of ritual bathing pools in some Second Temple tombs (see below) also indicate that they were visited during this period.<sup>554</sup> The purpose of such visits is unclear: it may have been for short-term grieving or remembrance (as in modern graves), or it may have been designed to facilitate a

---

<sup>549</sup> J. *AJ* 16.179–184.

<sup>550</sup> A ‘Tomb of Ezra’ has existed in Iraq on the shore of the Tigris since the Middle Ages, where it was a popular centre of pilgrimage. The site was famously visited by the Andalusian Jewish poet Yehuda al-Haziri: see Meri (1999) 53–55.

<sup>551</sup> Following the Septuagint, Josephus calls the site ‘The Hand of Absalom’, a literal translation of the Hebrew name used in *Samuel*, יד אבשלום (*yad abshalom*).

<sup>552</sup> Hachlili (2004) 32.

<sup>553</sup> A courtyard with benches was also found in the so-called Goliath Tomb in Jericho. For general discussion, including of the evidence for communal meals, see Hachlili (2004) 448–450.

<sup>554</sup> Hachlili (2004) 450.

longer term connection to the dead over several generations (as in, for instances, Roman elite family tombs).

Some particularly prominent Second Temple tombs appear to have been designed to attract a wide constituency of potential visitors. The Cave of Machpelah ('Machpelah' meaning 'double tombs'), located in the city of Hebron, is the supposed burial place of Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob, and Leah (the patriarchs and matriarchs of the Israelites, minus Rachel). According to the account in *Genesis* 23, the site was originally bought from the Hittites by Abraham as a burial site for his wife Sarah. The site was well known during the Second Temple Period, and was rebuilt by Herod the Great, who erected a wall, built with high-quality masonry, around the site, presumably with the intention that it would be seen by visitors.<sup>555</sup> Josephus knew of the site, and comments on the exceptional quality of the marble tombs during a broader discussion of holy sites at Hebron.<sup>556</sup> The author of *Jubilees* also appears to have a precise knowledge of the tomb, claiming that Leah was buried to the left of Sarah.<sup>557</sup> Visitors to the tomb obviously did not have an immediate familial connection to the deceased, but instead must have journeyed for reasons which might reasonably be characterised as religious. We might speculate that the Samaritans also believed this site to be holy: the *Samaritan Pentateuch's* version of *Genesis* 23 is essentially the same as the Masoretic Text, and the tomb is later mentioned in the medieval Samaritan biblical commentary known as *The Asatir* (which, interestingly, suggests that Adam was also buried there).<sup>558</sup> It is quite plausible, then, that the Cave of Machpelah was a site of worship, or at the least of reverence, for both Jews and Samaritans during our period.

One of the most striking examples of this is the Tomb of the Maccabees. While archaeologists have not yet definitively identified the site, it is described in some detail at 1 *Maccabees* 13:27-30 :

καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν Σίμων ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ καὶ ὕψωσεν αὐτὸν τῇ ὀράσει λίθῳ ξεστῷ ἐκ τῶν ὀπισθεν καὶ ἔμπροσθεν καὶ ἔστησεν ἑπτὰ πυραμίδας μίαν κατέναντι τῆς μιᾶς τῷ πατρὶ καὶ τῇ μητρὶ καὶ τοῖς τέσσαρσιν ἀδελφοῖς καὶ ταύταις ἐποίησεν μηχανήματα περιθεῖς στύλους μεγάλους καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐπὶ τοῖς στύλοις πανοπλίας εἰς ὄνομα αἰώνιον καὶ παρὰ ταῖς πανοπλίαις πλοῖα ἐγγεγλυμμένα εἰς τὸ θεωρεῖσθαι ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν πλεόντων τὴν θάλασσαν οὗτος ὁ τάφος ὃν ἐποίησεν ἐν Μωδεῖν ἕως τῆς ἡμέρας ταύτης

Simon built a monument on the tomb of his father and his brothers, which he placed high up so that it could be seen, made of polished stone on the front and the back. He also set up seven pyramids next to each other for his father, mother, and his four brothers: for these he made a structure with great pillars on which were carved ceremonial armour for their eternal memory and, beside that, ships, *so that they*

---

<sup>555</sup> Magen (2003).

<sup>556</sup> J. *BJ* 4.532; cf. *AJ* 1.237.

<sup>557</sup> *Jub.* 33:21.

<sup>558</sup> *The Asatir* 3.7; Gaster (1927) 212.

*might be seen by all who sail on the sea.* This tomb which he built in Modein [Modi'in, around 30km west of Jerusalem] is still there today.

The phrase “εἰς τὸ θεωρεῖσθαι ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν πλεόντων τὴν θάλασσαν”, which I have translated rather literally here as “so that they might be seen by all who sail on the sea”, might perhaps be rendered, as in the *Good News Translation*, “which travellers from overseas could visit”. If this is the intended meaning, it would indicate that the site attracted visitors from outside Palestine.

### *Mountains and Natural Features*

So far, I have mainly focused on man-made ‘sacred places’. Now, I will change my focus to natural sites. The hills and mountains of the region, for instance, had been considered sacred long before our period. The most prominent examples were Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim, the central locations of the Jewish and Samaritan religions respectively. Various hills also appear to have been connected with biblical history or religious figures. Josephus mentions, for instance, that the 10th Legion camped by a village named “Gabath Saul” (Γαβὰθ Σαούλ), which (as he explains) means “Hill of Saul”, located thirty stades from Jerusalem.<sup>559</sup> This site appears several times in the Hebrew Bible, as the house of Saul at 1 *Samuel* 15:3, and as a location at *Isaiah* 10:29. The tendency to sacralise mountains is by no means unique to the ancient Israelites, but appears in virtually every culture: the Maya, for instance, use the same word (*witz*) for “mountain” and “temple”, while in Chinese the word for pilgrimage (朝山进香, *chaoshan jinxiang*) means “offering incense on a mountain”.<sup>560</sup>

Despite the extreme hostility towards sacred trees and the associated worship of the goddess Asherah in the Hebrew Bible (see below), it appears that at least one tree continued to hold a special significance for Second Temple Jews. Josephus relates that a terebinth tree, which had supposedly survived since the beginning of creation, was “on display” (δείκνυται) near the city of Hebron.<sup>561</sup> This, presumably, was identified with the ‘terebinth of Mamre’ beside which Abraham built an altar at *Genesis* 13:18. The site had a long subsequent history, and was a major Jewish, Christian, and pagan cult site in late antiquity.<sup>562</sup>

Even ‘the wilderness’, which might by definition seem to be a barren and uninspiring type of landscape, could be alive with religious meanings. In a 2006 article, Hindy Najman persuasively argued that the concept of ‘the wilderness’ (Hebrew: מִדְבָּר, *midbar*) was developed in Second Temple Jewish literature as a location not only of suffering, but also of spiritual purification and revelation.

---

<sup>559</sup> J. BJ 5.51–52.

<sup>560</sup> Lucero & Kinkella (2014), Bruntz (2017).

<sup>561</sup> J. BJ 4:533.

<sup>562</sup> Sozomen 2.4.1–8.

Predictably, these associations are particularly strong in texts produced by the Qumran sectarians, who left more comfortable climes to join an ascetic community on a bleak, dusty plateau by the Dead Sea.<sup>563</sup> The association between the wilderness and pious asceticism also appears at *Matthew* 3:1, where John the Baptist preaches “in the wilderness of Judea” (“ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰουδαίας”), dressed in clothing made from camel’s hair and eating “locusts and wild honey” (“ἀκρίδες καὶ μέλι ἄγριον”).<sup>564</sup> According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus of Nazareth also fasted in the desert (where he was tempted by the devil), and often retreated to the wilderness for prayer or silent contemplation.<sup>565</sup> The bareness of the wilderness, removed from the complications and supposed corruption of the wider world, appears to have made it an ideal location for those seeking a simple, unworldly lifestyle, or an inward spiritual experience.

### *Hydric Sites*

The Hebrew Bible characterises Palestine as rich in water, with “brooks of water, springs, and deep water, pouring out into the valleys and the mountains”.<sup>566</sup> In reality, the water supply was highly unreliable in most regions, with local communities dependent on intermittent karstic springs, the output of which was irregular and sensitive to levels of rainfall.<sup>567</sup> Anxiety about water supply appears in several books of the Hebrew Bible, with Yahweh punishing the Jews by withholding rain,<sup>568</sup> or rewarding them by providing it.<sup>569</sup> The presence (or otherwise) of hydric resources, then, was characterised as reflective of the quality of the Jewish community’s relationship with its god.

A handful of specific springs and streams in the Levant appear to have been associated with Judaism and Jewish religious history (as well as, obviously, the River Jordan). Josephus describes a river (“ποταμός”), located “between Arkea and Raphanea” (in Syria), which only ran once every seven days, and was therefore called ‘Sabbatical’ (Σαββατικόν). Pliny the Elder mentions a similar river during a discussion of intermittent springs, though he locates it in Iudaea and claims, conversely, that it was only *dry* on the Sabbath.<sup>570</sup> We might imagine that the ‘Sabbatical’ river was inspired by an ephemeral stream or intermittent spring. Josephus also mentions a spring in the southern Hill Country known as ‘Jawbone’ (Σιαγόνα) in his day, apparently named by Samson (though the account in *Judges* names the spring ‘En Hakkore’, ‘Spring of the Caller’, and the nearby hill ‘Ramat-lehi’, ‘Hill

---

<sup>563</sup> Najman (2006).

<sup>564</sup> cf. *Mk.* 1:4–6.

<sup>565</sup> Fasting and testing: *Mt.* 4:1–3; *Mk.* 12–13; *Lk.* 4:1–2. Praying: *Mt.* 14:13; *Mk.* 1:35, 6:32; *Lk.* 4:42–44.

<sup>566</sup> *Deut.* 8:7.

<sup>567</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>568</sup> *Jer.* 3:2–3, 14:2–4.

<sup>569</sup> *Isa.* 47:17–18, 49:10; *Joel* 2:23; cf. *J. AJ.* 14.390.

<sup>570</sup> *J. BJ.* 7.97–99; Pliny *NH.* 31.24. This legend persisted in rabbinic literature, Medieval pilgrim accounts, and modern local folklore: see Kokein (2013).

of the Jawbone’).<sup>571</sup> Also of interest the so-called ‘Ford of the High Priest’, the ‘Pool of Solomon’, both mentioned by the author of the Copper Scroll<sup>572</sup>. This former has no clear biblical parallel, though some have associated the spot with the crossing of the Jordan in *Joshua* 3,<sup>573</sup> and the latter is likewise unattested elsewhere. Generally speaking, a large number of the sites mentioned in the Copper Scroll are related to water, with rivers, fords, cisterns, reservoirs, and springs.<sup>574</sup>

The majority of research on Palestinian Jewish attitudes to water has focused on *mikva’ot*, ritual bathing pools which were used to return to a state of ritual purity after becoming impure. Some 700 ancient *mikva’ot* have been identified Palestine so far, most of which are believed to have been built the Second Temple period, appearing not only near prayer houses, but in houses, burial grounds, and agricultural contexts.<sup>575</sup> This partly reflects a heightened interest in purity during the Second Temple Period, and the presence of agricultural *mikva’ot* in particular suggests a heightened demand for ritually pure goods.<sup>576</sup> There is no clear evidence that Second Temple Jews believed one type of water was more appropriate than another: seawater, river water, and rainwater all appear to have been used for purification. This conflicts with the rabbinic view as expressed in *Misnah Mikva’ot* 1.1-8, which discusses the suitability of different types of water for ritual bathing.

There is also evidence that water played an important role in Jewish ritual practice in the diaspora. Both Josephus and the author of the *Letter of Aristeas* describe diaspora Jews as washing their hands in the sea to purify themselves.<sup>577</sup> Furthermore, a decree of Halicarnassus, recorded by Josephus states that Jews would typically build prayer houses by the sea.<sup>578</sup> Rivers seem to have served a similar purpose: in *Acts* 16.13, for instance, Paul and the apostles assume that there will be a synagogue by the river while travelling in Macedonia. The tendency of Jews to use more water than other communities is perhaps also reflected in *CPJ* 2.432, an Egyptian papyrus from 113 CE, which indicates that the Jews of Arsinoe paid for their water use (indeed, according to a 2nd c BCE papyrus the Jewish *proseuche* of Arsinoe, along with the local sarapeion, was located next to the Argaitis canal).<sup>579</sup>

The attitude of Jews in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt towards water are explored in some detail in a recent dissertation (which is to be published as a book) by Nathalie LaCoste. Mainly using Exodus

---

<sup>571</sup> J. *AJ* 5.303; Judg. 15:17–19

<sup>572</sup> VI 14–VII 1 (Ford of the High Priest), V (Pool of Solomon).

<sup>573</sup> Høgenhaven (2009) 100–101.

<sup>574</sup> E.g. the ‘Pool of Manos’ (Column I), cisterns (Column I, II, IV), a dried-up riverbed (Column V), an aqueduct (Column VIII).

<sup>575</sup> Reich (1990), Adler (2008).

<sup>576</sup> Adler (2008); see also Introduction and Chapter 2.

<sup>577</sup> J. *AJ* 12, *Let. Arist.* 305–306.

<sup>578</sup> J. *AJ* 14.258.

<sup>579</sup> *CPJ* 1.134, see discussion in LaCoste (2018).

narratives, but also drawing on a much wider body of literary and material evidence, LaCoste has argued that the hydric environment of Egypt (which markedly differs from Palestine), coupled with Greek and Egyptian intellectual influences, caused Egyptian Jews to develop an attitude towards bodies of water (especially the Nile) which was distinct from Palestinian Jews and local populations. This serves to underline the point that there was no definitive ‘Jewish’ approach to water across the ancient world.<sup>580</sup>

### *People, bodies*

Human beings themselves could attract pilgrims and become mobile features of the sacred landscape. Many radical religious leaders attracted followers in the Second Temple Hill Country, the most well-known and well-attested of which is, of course, Jesus of Nazareth, who originated in Galilee (to the north of our region) but travelled extensively through Judea and Samaria before his execution in Jerusalem. According to *Matthew*, John the Baptist also attracted travellers from across the region while he was preaching in the wilderness:

Τότε ἐξεπορεύετο πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἱεροσόλυμα καὶ πᾶσα ἡ Ἰουδαία καὶ πᾶσα ἡ περίχωρος τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ ποταμῷ ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ ἐξομολογούμενοι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

Jerusalem, all of Judea, and the whole land of the Jordan went out to him and were baptised by him in the river Jordan as they confessed their sins.<sup>581</sup>

The human body is also a place where religious ideologies and identities were expressed and contested. We might think of the Nazirites, a Jewish and possibly Samaritan group who swore a temporary vow to adopt an ascetic lifestyle and not cut their hair.<sup>582</sup> Their physical appearance thus became an outward symbol of their devotion to God, reflecting the period of intense spiritual reflection they were undergoing.

### *Sites of Agricultural Production*

An opposition is sometimes drawn between “landscape” and “land”. Emerson wrote that “you cannot freely admire a landscape if laborers are digging in the field hard by”.<sup>583</sup> This is because, in his view, the poet’s romantic reflection on the beauty of nature feels “ridiculous” to him if he is being watched by hard-working farmers. While at first glance Emerson seems simply to express bourgeois embarrassment at engaging in such a seemingly effete activity as the rural working classes break their backs working in the dirt, the point is perhaps quite interesting. The brutal facts of agricultural life lift

---

<sup>580</sup> LaCoste (2018).

<sup>581</sup> *Mt.* 3:5–6.

<sup>582</sup> For an account of Nazirites in the Second Temple period see Chepey (2005).

<sup>583</sup> Emerson (1836).

the romantic veil and reveal the land for what it is, a place of awkwardness, work, stress, poverty, business, and pain: a far cry from the idyllic landscape of the poet or the artist.

History, however, problematises this distinction. Agricultural labour was not always framed as profane drudgery by human cultures. On the contrary, the Hebrew Bible and other Jewish religious texts establish a complex set of rules which served to organise, ritualise and sanctify agriculture and animal husbandry. The concept of ritual purity is particularly pervasive in the Hebrew Bible, and in theory ought to have affected many aspects of Jewish life.<sup>584</sup> In the Hellenistic and early-Roman periods in particular the influence of these purity laws dramatically expanded, and they became an issue of concern in domestic life and productive activity across Palestine, including in Samaritan contexts. This change, termed the “purity wave” by Jensen<sup>585</sup>, is richly attested in the literary record, from the documents at Qumran to other Jewish religious texts and the writings of Josephus.<sup>586</sup> We also see the emergence of *mikvaot* near sites of food production around the turn of the 1st century BCE, the vast majority of which were built in Judea with a particularly heavy concentration in Jerusalem itself.<sup>587</sup> As I have already discussed this trend in some detail in Chapter 1, I will not go over it again in detail here: suffice to say, the sacred dimension of agriculture rendered these farms, at least according to the theoretical framework of modern geographies of religion, sacred places. Land was, in other words, transformed into *landscape* through ritual.

### *Conclusions*

The diverse types of sacred places outlined above formed a continuum of sites, sustained by an ongoing interplay of ritual, literature, and cultural memory. While some of these sites (such as the Jerusalem Temple) held special ideological importance, in practice the Hill Country was suffused with religious meanings scattered across thousands of tombs, farms, natural features, and sites of historical significance. This does not necessarily diminish the significance or historical importance of the great cultic sites: on the contrary, rather than lone bastions of the sacred in a profane world, they are placed in the vibrant and dynamic sacred ecosystem which, I believe, was their true cultural context.

This sacred landscape evolved symbiotically with other landscapes I have explored: the crystallisation of distinct Jewish and Samaritan territories, for instance, was clearly accelerated by a clash between two competing cult centres (Jerusalem and Gerizim). This picture conforms both with the broader

---

<sup>584</sup> The most important passages are *Lev* 11–15 and *Num.* 19.

<sup>585</sup> Jensen (2013) 8.

<sup>586</sup> Qumran: Regev (2003), Werrett (2007); New Testament & Josephus: Jensen (2013) 27–28, see also Chapter 2.

<sup>587</sup> Adler (2014) 68.

concept of landscape discourses which has unfolded gradually throughout this thesis, and with the notion of ‘embeddedness’ which, I have argued, best characterises the relationship between religion and other spheres of cultural and economic life.

### **Controlling the Landscape**

I will now move on to the question of authorship: who shaped the sacred landscape of the ancient Hill Country, and why? A crucial underlying assumption in this question is that sanctity is, as I have argued, something malleable and unstable. During our period, different forces attempted to tame these fluctuations by “encoding” values into the landscape of the Hill Country. For the purposes of this chapter I am going to consider basic two types of force, each of which worked at a different speed to reshape the sacred landscape. The first is local communities which, often over centuries or even millennia, imbued the landscape with meaning, spurred on by the accumulation of traditions, myths, and events. In practice, of course, there was not just one “popular” tradition of landscape, but competing traditions produced by different ethnic or religious groups. The second category is states and other dominant authorities, which often sought to remould a sacred landscape to serve their own material or ideological purposes, sometimes imposing meaning remotely from a distant power centre. The priorities of states tended to be much more short term, and as such their attempts to change landscapes could be vigorous and swift, working over decades or even a few years. These two categories of actors are sometimes in tension with one another, becoming opposing forces in a struggle for control of meaning in the landscape. They are also, however, in dialogue with each other and, not infrequently, can cooperate. Sometimes, particularly in modern nation-states, popular and state understandings of landscape can be knitted together very closely, usually as a consequence of a period of conflict with a rival culture, religion, or state.

This interplay between popular and state discourses of landscape is visible in our earliest literary evidence from the Hill Country. This evidence should be understood within a wider context of local and regional beliefs and practices. Material and literary evidence, particularly texts from Ugarit, a port-city in northern Syria which flourished during the Late Bronze Age, have shown that the authors of the Hebrew Bible were drawing on (and contributing to) a wider Semitic and Near Eastern mythology of gods, monsters, and natural forces.<sup>588</sup>

One feature of surrounding religious systems was a tendency to assign gods to their own sacred places, particularly mountains. Ugaritic texts suggest that Baal, for instance, had a palace on Mount Sapan, modern Jebel Aqra in northern Syria, mirroring Yahweh’s sacred mountain at Zion or

---

<sup>588</sup> Smith (2001).

Gerizim.<sup>589</sup> Forests and trees also appear to have been associated with the divine in the Kingdom of Ugarit, where tamarisk trees in particular played an important role in magical rituals.<sup>590</sup>

Archaeologists have argued that various temple complexes were built around trees in Chalcolithic and Iron Age sites, though evidence is naturally sparse and all such claims remain highly speculative.<sup>591</sup>

Trees may have been particularly associated with the Semitic mother goddess Asherah, who is frequently mentioned in connection with them in the Hebrew Bible (see below). Springs were similarly integrated into the sacred landscape: it is claimed in Ugaritic texts that the God El, for instance, resides at *mbk nhrm* ‘the springs of the two rivers’.<sup>592</sup> Man-made sites, as well as natural phenomena, were also imbued with religious significance. This included not only temples and shrines, but sites which might be described by modern geographers as “unofficial” sacred places. The Ugaritic ‘Baal Cycle’, for instance, holds that the entrance to the realm of Mot (death), is between two *tlm*: that is, tells, artificial mounds formed from ruins and other human refuse.<sup>593</sup> This suggests a landscape filled with sacred or otherwise mythologically significant sites, focused around elevated areas.

In the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, Palestine appears to have been similarly well-populated with sacred places. The literature of this period is consumed with concern that inhabitants of Judea were worshipping at *במות* (*bamot*), singular *במה* (*bamah*) rather than Jerusalem. *Bamah* is usually translated as “high place” in English, a tradition dating back to the Septuagint, which usually rendered it *ὕψηλόν*, “the high place”<sup>594</sup>, and continued in the Latin Vulgate, which translated it *excelsus*, “the high place”. This translation, combined with an understanding of Judea and Samaria as ‘hilly’, might give the impression of hill- and mountain-top shrines: distant, small, localised and rural. Semitic philologists have long argued, however, largely on the basis of Akkadian and Ugaritic cognates, that *bamah* is, in fact, more likely to refer to the slopes or foothills, rather than the peaks of mountains. This interpretation would make sense of *Hosea* 10:8, where the author predicts that the “*bamot* of wickedness” will ask the mountains to “cover” them and the hills to “fall on them”: it is difficult to imagine how a hill could fall on a hilltop shrine, but easier if we imagine it is lower on the slope. While it does appear that the *bamot* were in some sense ‘elevated’, as people are described as “descending” from them<sup>595</sup>, we should not assume that they were necessarily mountaintop shrines. That said, there are some unambiguous indications in the Biblical text that hilltops were the site of cult worship: at *Hosea* 4:13, for instance, it is written that “עַל-רָאשֵׁי הַהָרִים יִזְבְּחוּ”, “they sacrifice on

---

<sup>589</sup> Smith (2001) 28–29. Religious activity at Jebel Aqra had ancient roots: it was associated with the gods at least early as the Hurrian period.

<sup>590</sup> Vidal (2004) 144.

<sup>591</sup> Mazar (2000), Na’aman & Lisovsky (2008).

<sup>592</sup> Vidal (2004) 149.

<sup>593</sup> Suriano (2012).

<sup>594</sup> Occasionally it was translated as “βωμός”, meaning a raised altar or platform, or simply transliterated as “βαμα”; see discussion in Fried (2002) 438–439.

<sup>595</sup> *Isa.* 15.2.

mountain-tops”. *Kings* and *Chronicles* often note whether or not Israelite kings removed the *bamot*,<sup>596</sup> and the possibility that some were repurposed by Yahwists is noted at 2 *Chronicles* 33:17. As we have already seen, the tendency to associate mountains with particular gods is also present in pre-Persian Palestine: we might think not only of Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim, but of others such as Mount Sinai (also known as Mount Horeb), which is referred to as “the Mountain of Elohim” and “the Mountain of Yahweh” at various points in the Hebrew Bible,<sup>597</sup> or Mount Pe’or, which was apparently the locus of a cult of Baal (who was referred to as ‘Baal Pe’or’ when worshipped here).<sup>598</sup>

As in Ugarit, worship and veneration of trees also appears to have been a feature of the sacred landscape of Palestine during the pre-Persian period. Tree-shrines to the goddess Asherah, who appears in Ugaritic texts and art (see above), appear to have been of almost as much concern to Biblical authors as the *bamot*. Hebrew religious literature of the 7th and 6th centuries BCE is filled with anxiety about so-called ‘Asherah poles’, and regularly encourages rulers to cut them down.<sup>599</sup> Worship of trees also appears without reference to Asherah, mostly through the recurring criticism of those who worship “on the hilltops and under every spreading tree”, though this phrase is also used when referring to Asherah poles (as at Jer. 17:1-3), and it is possible that Asherah-worship is what authors have in mind when they use it.<sup>600</sup> Here, then we see a fairly straightforward conflict between a seemingly ancient local network of hill and tree shrines, and a Temple state with a reformist religious ideology seeking to centralise cult over a large area.

The Jerusalem elite’s ongoing drive towards cultic centrality, and the tensions this provoked, were the cause of persistent tensions throughout our period. One recurring related dispute, for instance, was the theological schism between the Jews and Samaritans, who believed that Yahweh should be worshipped at Jerusalem and Mt. Gerizim respectively. I have already explored this conflict in depth in Chapter 4, so I will not recount it in detail here. To say the least, the final destruction of the Samaritan Temple by John Hyrcanus in the late 2nd century BCE must be read as partly a response to competing claims of cultic centrality.

Another example of conflict over centralising ideologies can be seen in the circumstances surrounding the so-called ‘Maccabean Revolt’. One of the most egregious crimes of Antiochus IV in 1 *Maccabees* is that he compelled the towns of Judea to “build altars, sacred precincts, and idols, and to sacrifice

<sup>596</sup> E.g. 1 *Kgs.* 3:2–4, 22:43; 2 *Kgs.* 14:4, 15:3, 14:34, 16:3–4, 18:4, 21:2–5; 2 *Chr.* 14:2–5, 15:17, 20:33, 28:2–4, 33:3–6.

<sup>597</sup> “Mountain of Elohim”: e.g. *Ex.* 3:1, 4:27; 1 *Kgs.* 19:8. “Mountain of Yahweh”: Num. 10:33.

<sup>598</sup> Num. 25:1–15, Deut. 4:3.

<sup>599</sup> Deut. 7:5, 12:3; Judg. 6:25–6; 1 *Kgs.* 14:15, 14:23–24, 16:32–33; 2 *Kgs.* 17:16, 18:4, 21:3, 24:4–7, 24:14, 24:14–15; Jer. 17:1–3; 2 *Chr.* 14:2–5, 15:16–18, 17:6, 19:3, 24:18, 31:1, 33:3, 33:19, 34:3–7. For more on Asherah, see Hadley (2000).

<sup>600</sup> Isa. 57:5; 2 *Chr.* 28:4

pigs and other unclean animals” (“οικοδομῆσαι βωμους και τεμένη και εἰδώλια και θύειν ὕεια και κτήνη κοινή”).<sup>601</sup> According to the author, the people began to build altars in the towns surrounding Jerusalem, and burned incense in their own homes.<sup>602</sup> The revolt itself was started, the author adds, when Mattathias murdered a Jew who was about to offer a sacrifice at an altar which had been erected in his home town of Modi’in.<sup>603</sup> That the (supposed) foundational moment of the Hasmonean dynasty was resistance to cultic decentralisation is a powerful illustration of the potency of an iconoclastic, centralising attitude to the sacred landscape. Indeed, our sources indicate that destruction of foreign religious shrines was a hallmark of early Hasmonean practice upon the conquest of a new territory, from Mattathias’ destruction of the altars of Judea at 1 *Maccabees* 2:45, to Judas’ burning of the idols of the Philistines at 1 *Maccabees* 5:68, to the aforementioned destruction of the Samaritan Temple at Gerizim by John Hyrcanus.<sup>604</sup> These actions can partly be explained as an attempt by the Hasmoneans to present themselves as traditional Israelite kings, on the model of exempla in the books of *Kings* and *Chronicles*.

The most dramatic example of a state attempt to re-orient the sacred landscape was under the reign of Herod the Great, who was the greatest builder in the history of the Hill Country during our period.<sup>605</sup> Despite his well-known reconstruction of the Jerusalem Temple, the evidence quite unambiguously shows that Herod was not a centralising ideologue in the manner of the early Hasmoneans. On the contrary, he is known to have patronised and constructed non-Jewish as well as Jewish sacred places (including the Temple of Kore in the city of Samaria).<sup>606</sup>

This might partly be explained as a simple attempt to win favour from his realm’s various religious communities. I believe that he was also, however, engaged in a more subtle program of reshaping and restructuring the sacred landscape in order to serve his own political purposes. Herod’s projects in the Hebron area provide a particularly illustrative example of this trend. Herod is known to have initiated two major construction projects in the Hebron area. First, he constructed a large rectangular structure around the Great Terebinth of Mamre (see above) encompassing an area almost  $\frac{1}{3}$  of a hectare, built of large stone ashlar and decorated with vegetal motifs. Secondly, he rebuilt the Tomb of the Patriarchs (see above) erecting a wall built with high-quality masonry around the site.<sup>607</sup>

---

<sup>601</sup> 1 *Macc* 1:47.

<sup>602</sup> 1 *Macc* 1:54–55.

<sup>603</sup> 1 *Macc* 2:23–25.

<sup>604</sup> It seems likely that the early Hasmoneans, at least, did pursue a policy of altar destruction and ‘purification’ of the land: see Schwartz (1993) 308 n.20.

<sup>605</sup> For a general account of Herod’s building projects, see Roller (1998).

<sup>606</sup> Magness (2001).

<sup>607</sup> Magen (2003).

Herod's beautification of these sites may be seen simply in the context of his ambitious building projects across Palestine. It seems likely that the changes he made were well-received by the local community: Josephus relates how, in his own time, the inhabitants of Hebron proudly claimed that their city was the oldest in the world and was the primary residence of Abraham and his descendants.<sup>608</sup> At the very least, then, Herod was embellishing sites which were a source of local pride, thus demonstrating how state and popular traditions could work in harmony, even symbiosis, with each other.

Herod's projects in Hebron also, however, constituted a re-ordering of the sacred landscape of the Hill Country. These walls served to emphasise Hebron's religious importance, and to strengthen its connections with other nodes in the network of sacred Jewish sites in Palestine. These connections are further stressed in the style of construction of both the Cave of Machpelah and the compound surrounding the Great Terebinth of Mamre, which mirrors that of Herod's greatest building project: the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>609</sup> Herod had a particular incentive to encourage Jews to think of Hebron as part of the 'Jewish world', since he belonged to a family of recent Jewish converts from the surrounding region, Idumea. This reorientation and decentralising of the sacred landscape by the state, therefore served dynastic political, as well as religious, purposes.

I believe that another of Herod's building projects, his palace/fortress/tomb at Herodium, was an attempt to reshape the sacred landscape.<sup>610</sup> Josephus claims that Herod chose the site for a palace because it was the location of a battle in which he had triumphed over Antigonus II.<sup>611</sup> The location was also, however, extremely convenient for its prominence and religious symbolism: not only did the palace dominate the entire surrounding landscape, but it was also both visible from Jerusalem and overlooked Bethlehem, the supposed birthplace of David and the site where, according to *Micah* 5:2, the Messiah would be born. As Jodi Magness argued in a recent article, then, it is likely that "Herod chose to commemorate this battle because of its location", not the other way around.<sup>612</sup>

In the same article, Magness argues that the proximity of Herodium (and hence Herod's tomb) to Bethlehem was part of an attempt by Herod to indicate that he himself was the messiah.<sup>613</sup> While this is a tempting theory, I do not believe that there is currently sufficiently unambiguous literary or material evidence to confirm such a radical claim. I would like to offer a more cautious interpretation:

---

<sup>608</sup> J. *BJ* 4.530–533.

<sup>609</sup> Magen (2003).

<sup>610</sup> The extraordinary archaeological discoveries at Herodium, led by the late Ehud Netzer, have shed considerable light on this spectacular site: see Port, Chachy, & Kalman (2015).

<sup>611</sup> J. *BJ* 1.265.

<sup>612</sup> Magness (2019) 273.

<sup>613</sup> Magness (2019).

that by constructing his palace and tomb at the site of Herodium, Herod was inserting himself into the future, as well as the past, of the Hill Country's sacred landscape. By constructing his monument so close to Bethlehem, Herod would symbolically overlook the most anticipated future event in Jewish history, the coming of the messiah. This, I believe, illustrates the enormous symbolic complexity of sacred landscapes, which can concurrently reflect and reify beliefs about the past, present, and future.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I have argued that the sacred landscape of the Hill Country was more diffused and decentralised than our Jerusalem-centric sources suggest. By critically re-examining the evidence, I have attempted to give a sense of the enormous diversity of sacred spaces in the Hill Country, with a focus on evidence from the 1st century CE. Drawing on modern geographies of religion, I have argued that the sacred was imbued into the entire geography of the region: not only in dedicated sacred spaces such as Temples, but in sites of historical significance, hills, bodies of water, farms, and even the wilderness itself. I have also argued that state actors attempted to intervene in the process of sacred landscape formation in the region, infusing it with their own religious and political messages. This particularly complements the understanding of the military landscape outlined in Chapter 3, in which I argued that military installations were used by states to ideologically dominate territories of cultural importance.

## Chapter 6: Reassessing the Jerusalem Pilgrimage

### **Pilgrimage in Antiquity**

A chapter focusing on the Jerusalem pilgrimage might seem strange in the context of this thesis. In Chapter 5 I argued that the sacred landscape of the Hill Country may have been more complex than has often been supposed. Drawing on modern geographies of religion, I suggested that it might be fruitful to expand our definition of “sacred” and develop a new typology of sacred places in the region. I argued that the Hill Country’s sacred landscape may not have been exclusively dominated by Mount Zion and Mount Gerizim, and stressed that the region was a multi-ethnic, multi-religious area inhabited by Samaritans and pagans as well as Jews. To direct my focus more intensely to the Jerusalem Temple and its pilgrimage may seem to go against this direction of travel.

It would, however, be impossible to understand the cultural, economic, or social history of the Hill Country or its place in wider networks of exchange without acknowledging the special importance of the Jerusalem pilgrimage. Furthermore, while it is true that there were other pilgrimages in this region (such as the pilgrimage to Mount Gerizim), in practice the Jerusalem pilgrimage was by far the largest and is the only one about which we have sufficient evidence to conduct a detailed study (see below).

I will consider a series of interconnected questions in this chapter. How many people made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem? Where did they come from? What routes might they have used to undertake their journey? How reliable are our literary sources? In order to answer these questions, I believe that it is crucial to understand the difficulties of travelling through the mountainous terrain of the Hill Country, as well as the expense and time it would take to reach a city which was far from the sea in the West and bordered by deserts in the east. This will feed into wider discussions of mobility and geography in this thesis (particularly from Chapter 2). Ultimately, I shall propose a revised model of the pilgrimage on the basis of a new interpretation of our literary and archaeological evidence.

### *Pre-Christian Pilgrimage*

The most immediate methodological problem when discussing ancient Jewish pilgrimage is whether, as some scholars have argued, it is in fact inappropriate to apply the word to pre-Christian religious journeys. This issue has been most thoughtfully and energetically addressed by ancient historians and classical archaeologists, and a range of views have been advanced on both sides of the debate. Scholars on one side have pointed to a number of ‘sacred journeys’ from the classical world which might be considered ‘pilgrimage’. One common example is the Classical and Hellenistic Greek *theoria*, a delegation made up of *theoroi* (delegates) who were sent from their polis to visit a sanctuary and/or attend a festival elsewhere.<sup>614</sup> Specific ancient travel-writers have also been described as ‘pilgrims’, such as Pausanias and Aelius Aristides.<sup>615</sup> On the other side, Scott Scullion has suggested that using the term pilgrimage to describe Greek religious travel is inappropriate, and argues that the *theoria* in particular was a secular rather than a sacred institution. He points out that *theoroi* (unlike modern pilgrims) did not have a status as ‘sacred travellers’ while journeying to their destination, and argues that once they had arrived they were little more than “*polis*-delegates sent to festivals to show the flag and enjoy the show”. Scullion adds that we should not assume that “all those attending a panhellenic festival considered themselves pilgrims on a sacred mission”, and that many attended to pursue personal gain (as “jetsetters, jocks, schmoozing politicians, purveyors of sausage or of victory odes, bookies, hookers, hooligans”). He also makes the broader point that there does not appear to have been a Greek ideal of a ‘pilgrim’ as a specifically religious traveller, or even a Greek word which precisely translates as ‘pilgrimage’.<sup>616</sup>

For the purposes of this study, I need not get tangled up in complex debates about the *theoria*. That said, it is worth briefly considering the point that ancient Greek festivals and related religious journeys were often intertwined with secular interests, and that they should not, therefore, be

---

<sup>614</sup> Elsner & Rutherford (2006).

<sup>615</sup> Elsner (1992), Hutton (2006), Petsalis-Diomidis (2006).

<sup>616</sup> Scullion (2006).

considered pilgrimages. Modern Christian, Islamic and Jewish pilgrimage might often sincerely be characterised as a personal sacred journey, undertaken to foster a deeper connection between the pilgrim and God. It would be naive to imagine, however, that even this type of pilgrimage does not play a role in establishing and sustaining other economic, political and cultural networks and institutions (as Scullion himself acknowledges).<sup>617</sup> This point is starkly illustrated by the fact that just outside the Western Wall, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and Church of the Holy Sepulchre in modern Jerusalem, all of which are pilgrim destinations by any standard, is a tourist market complete with espresso bars, falafel restaurants, and souvenir stands. Pilgrimage has always had a necessary connection with the outside world the secular world and has often stimulated commercial activity.

This debate exposes an ambiguity about what exactly the word ‘pilgrimage’ means. On the one hand, I share Scullion’s concern that overly broad definition could rob the term of its analytical usefulness.<sup>618</sup> On the other, to define pilgrimage (consciously or unconsciously) in specifically Christian terms, and then argue that it could not apply to the pre-Christian world, is circular logic. Furthermore, to use the absence of a concept of ‘pilgrimage’ in, say, Greek religion to argue that there was no Greek pilgrimage seems less reasonable when we consider the case of pre-Christian Jews, who lacked a language and ideology of ‘the pilgrim’, but whose journeys to their Temple (sometimes from far-away lands) are not easily described without using the word ‘pilgrimage’. Ultimately, as Elsner and Rutherford argued, whether or not our definition of pilgrimage includes pre-Christian travel is a “pragmatic and strategic matter” which “should not turn on issues of truth or an excess of refinement in matters of definition, but on whether it is *useful* and for what purpose”.<sup>619</sup> For the purposes of this study, then, a definition of pilgrimage as ‘special sacred travel’ seems to be a good starting point, with ‘sacred’ here interpreted quite broadly in line with modern geographies of religion and landscape archaeology (see Chapter 5).

### **Experiential Dimensions of Pilgrimage**

With that in mind, we can begin to consider other questions. Unfortunately, the poverty of our evidence means that some of the issues which anthropologists and historians of pilgrimage are often interested in are impossible to address in any detail. It is difficult, for instance, to get any sense of what ‘the pilgrimage experience’ was like for individuals in the Second Temple period. The geographer Robert D. Sack observed that “as we move along the earth we pass from one place to another. But if we move quickly the places blur; we lose track of their qualities, and they may

---

<sup>617</sup> Scullion (2006) 125–126.

<sup>618</sup> Scullion (2006) 121–122.

<sup>619</sup> Elsner & Rutherford (2006) 9.

coalesce into the sense that we are moving through space”.<sup>620</sup> It is tantalising to wonder to what extent the landscape of Judea and Samaria would have “blurred” to Jew or Samaritans on their way to their temples. Would pilgrims have marvelled at the hills, mountains, tombs, etc. which were adjacent to their route, or would their attention have remained firmly trained on their destination? We might also consider the related question of what shape pilgrim routes might have taken. Studies of pilgrimage in other contexts have found some that are linear, focused on reaching a particular site, and others which are more circular, moving around a series of sites before returning to the point of origin.<sup>621</sup>

Unfortunately, in the absence of detailed personal pilgrimage accounts it is extremely hard to address these issues. Later Christian pilgrim accounts provide an insight into how the landscape might (though need not have been) interpreted by Second Temple Jews. Our earliest such account, that of the ‘Bordeaux Pilgrim’, dates to the 330s CE. The majority of the text simply consists of a long list of place names and distances tracking the Pilgrim’s journey from Bordeaux to Jerusalem, and back west to Milan. A notable exception to this occurs in the middle of the text, when the Pilgrim is in Palestine: in these passages, the text bursts into life, and brief descriptions are attached to a string of sacred places explaining their religious significance. While the most detail is reserved for Jerusalem, a number of other sites are described, including Mount Gerizim, Shechem, Jericho, Bethlehem, and Hebron. While the author tells us precisely nothing about their thoughts and feelings on the journey, it is at least clear from their account that the pilgrimage was not a straightforward visit to Jerusalem, and that they were also interested in seeing other sites of religious significance. A richer and livelier source is *Egeria’s Travels*, a letter written by a Christian woman describing her pilgrimage to the ‘Holy Land’ in the 380s CE. The purpose of her pilgrimage was, evidently, not simply to visit Jerusalem (though she spent several years there<sup>622</sup>), but to tour a range of Christian holy sites across Egypt and the Levant. Egeria is an enthusiastic and curious witness to the landscape of the late 4th century CE, and she delights in connecting the places she visits to biblical stories and characters (often aided by local clergymen and monks).<sup>623</sup> Her decisions about where to travel were often taken “at God’s command” (“iubente Deo”), indicating that she was willing and able to modify her plans if she felt suitably moved.<sup>624</sup>

It is tantalising to imagine that Second Temple Jews might have experienced Palestine in the same way: as a vast network of sacred spaces in which one could feel closer to the stories of the Hebrew Bible. On the one hand, we ought to be cautious about making such a comparison. These 4th century Christian pilgrims were obviously operating a very different chronological and ideological context to

---

<sup>620</sup> Sack (1997) 16.

<sup>621</sup> Frankfurter (1998) 15–16.

<sup>622</sup> Eg. 17.1.

<sup>623</sup> See the translation and commentary by Wilkinson (1999).

<sup>624</sup> Eg. 10.1, 17.1, 17.3.

Second Temple Jews. The pilgrimages also appear to have been private journeys, undertaken at the travellers' own discretion. Jewish pilgrimage in the late Second Temple period in particular, by contrast, was a regular, structured, organised mass-movement of people travelling to a particular place to participate in defined rituals. Furthermore, while both the Bordeaux Pilgrim and Egeria travelled to Palestine from the Western provinces, the great majority of Jewish pilgrims were (as I shall suggest) likely to have been from other parts of Palestine and may consequently have been less struck by the novelty of travelling to the "terra sancta". As such, there is perhaps more reason to expect that Jewish pilgrims would, in general, have been more tightly focused on their journey to Jerusalem.

On the other hand, as I have suggested (*Chapter 5*), there is strong evidence that certain elite Second Temple Jews at least (especially Josephus and the author of the Copper Scroll) understood the landscape of Palestine as populated by a number of sacred places, each connected to specific biblical events. It is worth repeating *Mishnah Berakhot* 9:1, which I briefly considered in *Chapter 5*:

הָרוֹאֶה מְקוֹם שֶׁנֶּעֱשׂוּ בוֹ נִסִּים לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָשָׂה נִסִּים לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ בְּמָקוֹם הַזֶּה. מְקוֹם שֶׁנֶּעֱקְרָה מִמֶּנּוּ עֲבוֹדַת יִזְרָה, אוֹמֵר בְּרוּךְ שֶׁעָקַר עֲבוֹדַת יִזְרָה מֵאַרְצֵנוּ.

When someone sees a place in which miracles have been done for Israel, he should say, "Blessed is he who performed miracles for our forefathers in this place". When someone sees a place from which idolatry has been purged, he should say, "Blessed is he who removed idolatry from our land."

This suggests that learned Jews might have experienced the landscape as filled with multiple sacred places, in a way not dissimilar to Egeria and the Bordeaux Pilgrim.

A crucial Second Temple source on the experiential dimension of pilgrimage is Philo of Alexandria. While we know that Philo made the journey from Egypt to Jerusalem at least once, he does not directly discuss his thoughts and feelings.<sup>625</sup> We might get a sense of his experience indirectly, however, through his discussion of the value of pilgrimage:

ὁ γὰρ μὴ μέλλων θύειν εὐαγῶς οὐκ ἂν ὑπομείναι ποτὲ πατρίδα καὶ φίλους καὶ συγγενεῖς ἀπολιπὼν  
 ξενιτεύειν, ἀλλ' ἔοικεν ὑπὸ δυνατωτέρας ὀλκῆς ἀγόμενος τῆς πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ὑπομένειν τῶν  
 συνηθεστάτων καὶ φιλτάτων ὥσπερ τινῶν ἠγνωμένων μερῶν ἀπαρτᾶσθαι. καὶ τοῦδε σαφεστάτη πίστις  
 τὰ γινόμενα· μυριοὶ γὰρ ἀπὸ μυρίων ὄσων πόλεων, οἱ μὲν διὰ γῆς, οἱ δὲ διὰ θαλάττης, ἐξ ἀνατολῆς καὶ  
 δύσεως καὶ ἄρκτου καὶ μεσημβρίας καθ' ἑκάστην ἑορτὴν εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν καταίρουσιν οἷά τινα κοινὸν  
 ὑπόδρομον καὶ καταγωγὴν ἀσφαλῆ πολυπράγμονος καὶ ταραχωδεστάτου βίου, ζητοῦντες εὐδία  
 εὐρεῖν καὶ φροντίδων ἀνεθέντες, αἷς ἐκ πρώτης ἡλικίας καταζεύγνυνται καὶ πιέζονται, βραχύν τινα  
 διαπνεύσαντες χρόνον ἐν ἱλαραῖς διάγειν εὐθυμίας· ἐλπίδων τε χρηστῶν γεμισθέντες σχολάζουσι τὴν  
 ἀναγκαιοτάτην σχολὴν ὁσιότητι καὶ τιμῇ θεοῦ, φιλίαν καὶ πρὸς τοὺς τέως ἀγνοουμένους συντιθέμενοι  
 καὶ κρᾶσιν ἡθῶν ἐπὶ θυσιῶν καὶ σπονδῶν εἰς βεβαιοτάτην πίστιν ὁμονοίας ποιοῦμενοι

For someone who is not intending to make sacrifices purely would not undertake to travel abroad [to Jerusalem], abandoning his country, friends, and relatives, but motivated by a more powerful emotion

<sup>625</sup> Ph. *Prov.* 2.64.

than piety he would remain with his closest friends, to whom he is attached as if they were pieces of himself. The clearest proof of this is the events that actually happened, for countless people from countless cities came by land and by sea, from east, west, north, and south, to the Temple for each festival, as if to a common anchorage or a secure landing spot away from this hectic and troubling life, seeking calm and relief from the worries which had constrained them and weighed them down from their youth, taking a short breath in joyful celebrations. So filled with happy hopes they use their leisure time, as is their duty, for piety and honour for God. Friendships are formed between strangers, with the sacrifices and libations creating a unification of feeling which is the most trustworthy evidence of a common purpose

This fascinating passage presents the pilgrimage as serving three interrelated purposes. Firstly, it acts as a vacation, allowing people to break out of their routine and escape their worries. Secondly, however, it also has a religious purpose and is designed to honour God: Philo notes the significance of people choosing (in accordance with their duty) to dedicate their leisure time for religious purposes. Thirdly, and for our purposes perhaps most interestingly, it is presented as a social experience, bringing together diverse people who, united by religion, are afforded the opportunity form new friendships with one another. The precise nature of these new relationships is unclear: while they likely involved elements of networking and exchange, Philo's language suggests that it was also a pleasurable social experience.

Exceptional passages such as this aside, our Jewish and non-Jewish literary sources are primarily interested in the pilgrimage as a cultural, religious, and historical phenomenon. While this limits our capacity to understand the 'pilgrim experience', it does allow us to address many of the questions I raised at the beginning of this chapter: how many people made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where did they come from, what routes might they have used to undertake their journey?

Finally, before we answer these questions it is important to acknowledge that the author of our most important written sources, the historian Josephus, was born and raised in Jerusalem, was a member of a distinguished Jerusalemite family and, crucially, was a member of the priestly class which administered and maintained the Jerusalem Temple and associated religious rites. We must, therefore, understand Josephus' perspective as primarily *Jerusalemite* and *Temple-oriented*. While it is enormously useful to have such detailed accounts of the Temple from an inside source, we should also be cautious about taking Josephus' descriptions of the pilgrimage at face-value given his personal loyalty to the institution.

### **Pilgrim numbers**

The Torah indicates that pious men should, ideally, travel to an appointed place during the three main pilgrim festivals: Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Pentecost), and Sukkot (Tabernacles). At *Exodus* 34:23, Yahweh commands that “Three times a year all of your men will appear before the Lord Yahweh, God of Israel” (שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים, בַּשָּׁנָה--יֵרָאֶה, כָּל-זָכוֹרָה, אֶת-פְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים יְהוָה, אֲלֵהִי יִשְׂרָאֵל).<sup>626</sup> The Jews believed that this place was Jerusalem, and the Samaritans that it was Mount Gerizim.

The festival of Passover, held in the Spring on the 15th of Nisan, was to be celebrated with the sacrifice of a lamb or a kid at the Temple (*Ex.* 12:5). In practice, it seems that many people would share a single sacrificial animal, which would be slaughtered by a designated leader amongst them.<sup>627</sup> To participate in Passover, pilgrims were expected to ritually purify themselves during the previous week.<sup>628</sup> The next festival, Shavuot, was held on the 6th of Sivan in the early Summer, and celebrated the wheat harvest. Offerings of first fruits were common, though according to the Mishnah they were expected to come from the ‘Seven Species’ of Israel (wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates).<sup>629</sup> The final festival, Sukkot, was held on the 15th of Tishrei in the early Autumn. Sukkot celebrates the end of the harvest period, and lasts 7 days. It was associated with a number of ritual practices, including living in purpose-built booth (*sukkah*), sacrificing animals, and the procession of the ‘Four Species’ (palm fronds, willow, myrtle, etrog).

In theory, all Jewish men had a religious and moral obligation to visit Jerusalem three times a year to worship and provide offerings. The health of the pilgrimage became associated with the piety of the Jewish people in the Hebrew Bible. At *Jeremiah* 17:26, God promises that should the Jews observe the Sabbath:

וּבָאוּ מֵעֵרֵי-יְהוּדָה וּמִסְבִּיבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם וּמֵאֶרֶץ בְּנִימִן, וּמִן-הַשְּׂפֵלָה וּמִן-הַהָר וּמִן-הַנֶּגֶב, מִבָּאִים עֹלָה וְזֶבַח, וּמִנְחָה  
וּלְבֹנָה וּמִבְּאֵי תוֹדָה, בֵּית יְהוָה  
They shall come from the cities of Judah, from the places surrounding Jerusalem, from the land of Benjamin, from the lowlands, from the Hill Country, and from the Negev bringing burnt-offerings, sacrifices, gifts, and frankincense, and bringing thanks for the house of the Lord.

In practice, we must suppose that most Jewish men did not follow this commandment, particularly if they were living far from the city. How many people, then, should we imagine made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem? The numbers provided by ancient Jewish sources are extraordinarily high. The 2nd century BCE author of the *Letter of Aristeas* states that “many tens of thousands” (πολλὰ... μυριάδες)

<sup>626</sup> See also *Deut.* 16:16.

<sup>627</sup> *J. B.J.* 6.423

<sup>628</sup> *J. B.J.* 6.290

<sup>629</sup> *Mishnah Bikkurim* 1.2. It is difficult to determine how accurate the Mishnah’s representation of pilgrim holidays is, and whether it is reflecting Second Temple sources or later reimaginings of what religious life was like in Jerusalem during this period. For Seven Species see *Deut.* 8:8.

of animals were sacrificed in Jerusalem during the festival of Pesach (Passover), implying that there were hundreds of thousands of worshippers.<sup>630</sup> Josephus claims that during the 60s CE the Roman governor Cestius instructed the priests to count up the population of the city during Pesach in order to convince Nero of Jerusalem's importance: he writes that the total figure, which he arrived at by counting the number of sacrificial animals and multiplying it by 10, was 2,700,000.<sup>631</sup> Elsewhere, he states that during one Pesach in the 60s CE there were three million people in Jerusalem.<sup>632</sup> The *Tosefta* offers an even more extravagant figure, claiming that Agrippa conducted a census during Pesach which calculated that there were 600,000 pairs of lamb kidneys, which would total 6 million people (*Tos. Pes. 64b*).

Scholars have long recognised the complete implausibility of Josephus' (and the *Tosefta*'s) figures,<sup>633</sup> which would render Jerusalem during the festivals the largest city in the ancient world by a wide margin—Rome at its peak is usually estimated to have been around a million people—and, in fact, the largest city in world history before mid-19th century London.<sup>634</sup> For comparison, the modern Hajj attracts some 2 million pilgrims annually (out of almost 1.2 billion Muslims), supported by a dedicated Saudi government ministry which uses the latest technology and complex supply routes to provide for their needs. That said, most modern estimates for pilgrim numbers remain large. The authors of one entry in an academic dictionary make the extraordinary claim that “hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from within Eretz Israel, as well as from the Diaspora, streamed to the Temple at each of the three [pilgrim] festivals”. This view is elaborated on further in Safrai's study of pilgrimage in the Second Temple Period, which remains the standard work on the subject.<sup>635</sup> Jeremias argues for 125,000 pilgrims based on the claim in *Mishnah Pesachim* 5.5–7 that the Court of the Israelites was filled three times during pilgrim festivals. E.P. Sanders instead estimates as many as 500,000. He arrives at this number by treating 600,000, Tacitus' figure for the number besieged in Jerusalem during the First Jewish Revolt, as an approximately accurate ‘maximum’ which the city could hold (without justification). He assumes (again without justification) that around half of all Palestinian Jews would have attended Passover, bolstered by tens of thousands from the diaspora. This leads him to a final figure of 250,000 to 500,000 people.<sup>636</sup> Even Catherine Hezser, who does not offer alternative figures but adopts a far more cautious approach when assessing the size of the

<sup>630</sup> *Letter of Aristeeas* 88, cf. Sanders (1992) 209.

<sup>631</sup> J. *BJ.* 6.442–446.

<sup>632</sup> J. *BJ.* 2.280.

<sup>633</sup> Even those proposing the highest estimates for the population of Jerusalem have confidently rejected it: see Byatt (1973) 342.

<sup>634</sup> Rome: Wilson (2011); for a lower estimate of around 430,000 see Storey (1997).

<sup>635</sup> Safrai, Glikson & Hyman (2007), Safrai (1965).

<sup>636</sup> Jeremias (1969) 77–84, Sanders (1992) 125–128.

pilgrimage, agrees in principle that “mass international pilgrimage” did indeed occur during the Herodian period.<sup>637</sup>

It is worth pausing on the subject of the regular population of Jerusalem, as this will help us to assess the likelihood of the various options. According to Josephus, Hecataeus of Abdera (writing in the 4th c BCE) believed that the population of Jerusalem was 120,000 (*J. Ap.* 1.22). Modern estimates for the regular population of late Second Temple Jerusalem have varied from as high as 250,000 to less than 20,000, with most advocating for a figure less than 100,000, meaning that Josephus’ figure would represent either a tenfold or a hundredfold increase in the population during the pilgrim festivals.<sup>638</sup> That the lower and the upper range differ by an order of magnitude reflects fundamental differences in methodology. While it is impossible, of course, to reach any kind of precise figure, I believe that we should be able to determine whether the city was closer to a quarter of a million or a fiftieth of a million.

Most studies, particularly in recent years, calculate the population by determining the area of the city or its residential quarters, and then multiplying this by a population density coefficient. Notable exceptions include Wilkinson, who attempted to estimate the population on the basis of its water supply in a 1974 article: this method has since been discarded by most archaeologists and historians working on ancient urban demography, not least because of difficulties determining how much water was used for subsistence, and how much for other purposes (fountains, etc.).<sup>639</sup> Wilkinson’s article contains a learned and useful history of ancient efforts to expand Jerusalem’s water supply, but his attempts at population estimates starkly illustrate these limitations, undermined as they are by a string of doubtful assumptions. Perhaps the most egregious of these are his suggestion that half of all rainwater which fell in Jerusalem would have been collected in cisterns, or his guess that the amount of water used for public purposes in Second Temple Jerusalem would have been about the same as Frontinus’ estimates for Rome. His population estimate of around 70,000, then, is decidedly unreliable.

Studies based on density coefficients have also encountered problems. The density coefficient is usually expressed in people per dunam, a unit of measurement common in former Ottoman territories which is equivalent to 0.1 hectares. Scholars have proposed an enormous range of coefficients, from

---

<sup>637</sup> Hezser (2011) 378.

<sup>638</sup> Geva (2014) p. 148 estimates “20,000 or less”; Wilson (2011) p. 190 estimates 22,000; Wilkinson (1974) estimates 50,000–70,000; Levine (2002) p. 343 estimates 80–90,000; Reinhardt (1995) estimates 100,000–120,000; Byatt (1973) estimates 220,000.

<sup>639</sup> Wilkinson (1974), Duncan-Jones (1974) 261–262, Duncan-Jones (1977–8), cf. Wilson (2011) 170.

60 per dunam to as low as 25 per dunam.<sup>640</sup> The difficulty of arriving at a coherent figure is compounded by the fact that Jerusalem changed enormously during the Second Temple Period, and encompassed a number of districts which are likely to have had a significantly different population densities. A more recent alternative approach to the problem was recently suggested by Hilel Geva, who uses literary and archaeological data to estimate the population of various neighbourhoods of the city individually, which he adds together to arrive at a final total. This approach is designed to take into account the unusually large portion of Jerusalem's territory which was given over to royal and religious building projects (as opposed to residential areas), which are not always accounted for in density coefficient-based estimates of the city's population. His estimates for the early Roman period are largely based on Josephus' descriptions of the neighbourhoods of the city, combined with archaeological data. This leads him to an estimate of "20,000 or even less" in the 1st c CE.<sup>641</sup>

This figure seems to me to be far more likely than estimates in the hundreds of thousands, given the modest size of the Old City of Jerusalem. One indication that a small figure is likely to be correct is that population estimates for later (though still pre-modern) periods, for which we have more evidence, tend to be lower than 40,000. Cohen and Lewis' population estimates for 16th century Jerusalem, calculated with reference to Ottoman *defterler* (tax registers), range from less than 6,000 to 16,000.<sup>642</sup> By the 1870s, its population probably remained between 14,000 and 22,000. In the following decades the city benefitted major infrastructure projects, including the construction of a railway to the port city of Jaffa, a regional highway system, a sewage system, and a hospital, and the establishment of a fire service, police force, and regular waste collection. These changes, combined with intensifying Jewish settlement in the latter half of the 19th century, saw the city's population swell to perhaps 53,410 by 1917.<sup>643</sup> While this is a rough indication as the inhabitants of the city obviously organised their living arrangements and managed their resources in different ways in different periods, I consider it unlikely that the population of 1st century CE Jerusalem would have been significantly larger than 1917 Jerusalem given the enormous technological and infrastructural advantages which the 20th century population enjoyed. I suggest, then, that the population of Jerusalem during the Second Temple Period did not exceed the low tens of thousands.

It is worth keeping these figures in mind as we consider the scope for 'mass' international pilgrimage in the late Second Temple period. If the numbers of pilgrims did indeed reach hundreds of thousands by the 1st century CE, a regular population of below 50,000 poses serious logistical questions. If the population ballooned to 5 to 20 times its ordinary size during the pilgrim festivals, then we must

---

<sup>640</sup> 50–60: Garstang (1931) 121; 25: Broshi & Gophna (1986) 74, Lipschits (2003) 269–271. For a more complete list of modern estimates, see Geva (2014) 132.

<sup>641</sup> Geva (2014).

<sup>642</sup> Cohen & Lewis (1978) 14–15.

<sup>643</sup> Davis (2002) 11–12, 17.

account for where pilgrims might have stayed, what they ate, and what water they drank. We must, in short, attempt to understand how a moderately large city could habitually become one of the most populous settlements in the Roman Empire (and, indeed, the world).

### **Mass International Pilgrimage: Factors to Consider**

It is indisputable that some diaspora Jews travelled to the Temple for pilgrimages. As several scholars have noted, claims that the Jerusalem pilgrimage was ‘international’ first appear in the 1st c CE: no texts make this suggestion during the Hellenistic period or earlier.<sup>644</sup> It has been argued on the basis of a handful of passages in Jewish literature that the city drew many tens of thousands of pilgrims from across the Mediterranean and Near East. According to *Acts* 2:5–11, during Pentecost “Jews, devout men from every country under heaven” were in Jerusalem, including “Parthians, Medes, Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the part of Libya which belongs to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs”. Later, in *Acts* 8:27, Philip meets an Ethiopian eunuch on his way home from worshipping at the Temple.<sup>645</sup> Philo, meanwhile, writes that “countless people from countless cities” came to the Temple “from east, west, north, and south for every feast”.<sup>646</sup>

The claim that the city during the pilgrimage was, in fact, extremely diverse, has also been widely accepted. This is despite the curious absence of almost any material evidence for large-scale regular travel to Jerusalem from outside Palestine. Coins minted outside the Levant, indeed, are virtually absent in late Second Temple finds. It is significant, furthermore, that the highly cosmopolitan pilgrimage the sources above describe is more-or-less absent from the writings of Josephus. As others have noticed, at *Antiquities* 4.203 Josephus writes that only those from the lands which the Jews had conquered (“οἱ ἐκ τῶν περάτων τῆς γῆς, ἧς ἂν Ἑβραῖοι κρατῶσιν”) were obliged to visit the Temple, a clarification not present in the Hebrew Bible and perhaps indicative of a more localised model of pilgrimage.<sup>647</sup> Josephus elsewhere gives the impression that Judea (and hence Jerusalem) is isolated and distant from other lands:

Ἡμεῖς τοίνυν οὔτε χώραν οἰκοῦμεν παράλιον οὔτ’ ἐμπορίας χαίρομεν οὐδὲ ταῖς πρὸς ἄλλους διὰ τούτων ἐπιμιξίαις

We do not live in a coastal country, and neither trade nor the mixture with others which results from it pleases us.<sup>648</sup>

---

<sup>644</sup> Goodman (1999) 62, Safrai (1965) Ch. 6.

<sup>645</sup> Byatt (1973) 57

<sup>646</sup> Philo *The Special Laws* 1.69.

<sup>647</sup> Goodman (1999) 63.

<sup>648</sup> J. Ap. 1.60

The regional—rather than international—character of the pilgrimage is further underlined at *Jewish Antiquities* 17.254–255 in which Josephus describes the visitors to Jerusalem during Pentecost (Shavuot) as “Galileans and Idumeans, a crowd from Jericho, those who lived across the Jordan, as well as a crowd of Judeans who joined them all” (“Γαλιλαίων τε καὶ Ἰδουμαίων, Ἰεριχουντίων τε ἦν πληθὺς καὶ ὅποσοι περάσαντες Ἰορδάνην ποταμὸν οἰκοῦσιν, αὐτῶν τε Ἰουδαίων πλῆθος ἦν οἱ πρὸς πάντα συνειλέχατο”).

There are two passages of Josephus’ writings which might contradict this impression. The first is *Antiquities* 17.214:

κάτεισι δὲ πληθὺς ἀναρίθμητος ἐκ τῆς χώρας ἤδη δὲ καὶ ἐκ τῆς ὑπερορίας ἐπὶ θρησκείᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ  
An immeasurable crowd of people come down from the countryside and even from abroad to worship God.

This passage does not clearly indicate that vast throngs of foreign pilgrims made the journey from abroad: merely that there were at least some amongst the big crowds. I consider the second, *Antiquities* 18.311–312, in detail below.

Before I begin a more focused study of pilgrimage to Jerusalem from different directions, I will briefly introduce some further issues which it will be helpful to keep in mind.

### *The Position of Jerusalem*

Firstly, Jerusalem is difficult to reach.<sup>649</sup> It is located some 52 km east of the Mediterranean sea. The closest strip of coastline was lacking in major ports for much of the Second Temple Period until the construction of Caesarea Maritima (which is located around 90 km away from Jerusalem) by Herod the Great. To the east is arid scrubland which soon gives way to the Syrian desert, an inhospitable territory which was populated by aggressive nomadic tribes in antiquity. To the north was Samaria, inhabited by a hostile population, and to the south were ultimately more deserts.

It is, furthermore, located deep in the middle of a mountain range. This presents serious difficulties for mass movements of people. We cannot imagine, for instance, that pilgrims arranged themselves in a huge camel caravan such as traversed the deserts of Syria in Silk Road trade: the geography of the Judean Hill Country renders this impossible or at least very difficult. In a 1996 article, Kloner argued that the mountainous terrain of Palestine made caravans with several thousand camels impossible, and suggested that groups of ten or twenty were much more likely, not least because the risk of stumbling on the region’s stepped roads would require cameleers to maintain a significant distance between

---

<sup>649</sup> See *Chapter 2*.

animals.<sup>650</sup> It is difficult to see how, given these constraints, Jerusalem could have meaningfully ‘plugged in’ to desert trade networks to facilitate and supply mass-pilgrimage.

There is also the question of resources. As explored in *Chapter 1*, Jerusalem is located in a relatively resource-poor part of the Mediterranean basin, with terrain which is difficult to cultivate and an irregular water supply. Furthermore, Jerusalem was also not located on any major trade routes: indeed, as we shall see, it was in an awkward position relative to the main direction of travel for people and goods in the Near East. As such, for the theory of mass international pilgrimage to be viable we must see evidence for major, targeted infrastructural support designed to ameliorate these problems.

### *Facilitating Pilgrimage: A Comparative Study with the Ottoman Hajj*

In any part of the pre-modern world, annual movements of tens of thousands of people to a single location would have presented significant logistical problems. These problems were most readily resolved by supportive states with the resources and inclination to facilitate such movements. For comparison, let us consider the case of the Hajj to Mecca in the 16th and 17th centuries. During this period, the Ottoman state intervened to support the pilgrimage. Military forces were provided to protect pilgrim caravans from attacks, traders were contracted to bring food and water to specified stopping points along major trade routes, and the poorest pilgrims were supported by the state as well as various private funds. Special officials, the so-called *Amir al-Hajj*, were appointed in Cairo and Damascus and tasked with funding, supplying, and protecting the Hajj. These roles were important and prestigious, and the *Amir al-Hajj* were often prominent figures in the provincial administration. The Ottomans also provided considerable support to the populations of Mecca and Medina, and funded the transport of grain from Egypt to the Hejaz. In short, as one historian put it, “supplying the caravans and Mecca and Medina constituted a critical preoccupation for the Ottoman Sultan... guaranteeing the pilgrimage was part of the duties of the leader of the Muslim world”. Estimates vary for the total number of pilgrims during this period, but most range between 20,000 and 60,000.<sup>651</sup>

No Jewish leader during the Second Temple period had the capacity to provide similar support. The Ottoman sultans ruled over a vast trans-continental empire and had massive financial and manpower resources at their disposal. The most powerful and wealthy ruler of a Jewish kingdom during the late Second Temple Period, Herod the Great, controlled a modest slice of the southern Levant as a client king of a pagan empire. He was, as Martin Goodman has argued, able to engage in a number of

---

<sup>650</sup> Kloner (1996).

<sup>651</sup> Singer (2002) 140–143.

building projects to support a nascent “pilgrimage economy”.<sup>652</sup> There was absolutely no prospect, however, of him sending large contingents of soldiers to Anatolia or Egypt to accompany trains of pilgrims, nor of him redirecting international trade routes to supply Jerusalem with sufficient grain to support an influx of tens of thousands of people.

Occasionally, the logistical problems associated with the pilgrimage appear in our sources. Sometimes there was not enough space in the city to accommodate the number who came. Josephus claims that during the Pentecost of 4 BCE when a particularly large crowd assembled from across Palestine to protest the actions of Sabinus, visitors established three camps around the city.<sup>653</sup> According to *Mark*, Jesus actually stayed in the nearby village of Bethany during his tumultuous visit to Jerusalem.<sup>654</sup> Curiously, in the *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan*, probably compiled some time during the 8th–10th centuries CE but likely containing much earlier material, it is claimed that nobody ever failed to find somewhere satisfactory to sleep in Jerusalem, since residents would open up their homes to pilgrims free of charge. Hezser, however, has plausibly suggested that this was probably not an accurate representation of Second Temple Jerusalem during the pilgrim festivals, but was instead included to encourage post-70 CE Jews to allow rabbis and rabbinical students into their homes.<sup>655</sup>

Furthermore, as might be expected, the water supply was likely to have been another major issue for pilgrims. Droughts were not uncommon in Jerusalem, and could quickly result in famine.<sup>656</sup> The water supply of Jerusalem was gradually improved during the Second Temple Period and particularly in the 1st centuries BCE and CE through the construction of aqueducts and cisterns.<sup>657</sup> This partly reflects the growth of the regular population of Jerusalem, but it is likely that these projects were also undertaken with pilgrims in mind. A story is relayed in the *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* in which Naqdimon ben Gurion, a wealthy Jerusalemite also known by his Greek name ‘Nicodemus’, made an arrangement with the Roman authorities to supply extra water to pilgrims during a shortage.<sup>658</sup> Security concerns were also an issue, not only for pilgrims themselves but for the family and property they left behind. In her study of Jewish pilgrimage in antiquity, Hezser discusses the danger that the houses of pilgrims would be robbed after they left for Jerusalem: she points in particular to the story at *y. Peah*. 3:8, 17d in which the home of two Jewish brothers from Ashkelon is robbed by their

---

<sup>652</sup> Goodman (1999).

<sup>653</sup> *J. BJ.* 2.44.

<sup>654</sup> *Mk.* 14:3.

<sup>655</sup> *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* 35.1–2; Hezser (2011) 380.

<sup>656</sup> The devastating drought of 25–24 BCE is described in *J. AJ.* 15.299–304.

<sup>657</sup> Wilkinson (1974).

<sup>658</sup> *Avot de-Rabbi Nathan* 6.9.

Gentile neighbours after they set out on a pilgrimage.<sup>659</sup> Regardless of the truth of these stories, they highlight problems which may have prevented some Jews from undertaking the journey.

*Gerizim: A Useful Point of Comparison?*

While we are considering possible points of comparison, it might seem strange to ignore the Jerusalem pilgrimage's closest cousin, the Samaritan pilgrimage to Mount Gerizim. The obligation to travel to Yahweh's Temple during the Three Pilgrimage Festivals (Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot), indeed, applied equally to Samaritans as to Jews, though obviously they disagreed about where this temple should stand. Unfortunately, we know little about who regularly visited Gerizim during the Second Temple Period. We might suppose that those living in Samaria would sometimes visit Gerizim at the pilgrim festivals, and we know that large crowds sometimes gathered there<sup>660</sup>, but it is impossible to determine whether significant numbers of diaspora Samaritans travelled to the site each year.

We have already seen that there was a Samaritan diaspora based in Delos.<sup>661</sup> These defined themselves in inscriptions as "the Israelites who make contribution to holy Argarizein", but this does not necessarily prove that they would make regular trips to Samaria. To this we might add the Samaritans of Egypt: Josephus describes a dispute between Jews and Samaritans in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometer (180-45 BCE), and papyri refer to a village near Krokodilopolis named 'Samareia' which some scholars have plausibly suggested was a Samaritan settlement.<sup>662</sup> There is no indication in this evidence whether or not these Samaritans would travel to Mount Gerizim.

The Samaritan inscriptions from Mount Gerizim provide little further help. When the place of origin of a dedicator is specified, it is either too fragmentary to reconstruct, or a location which can unambiguously be placed in Samaria: Shechem, for instance, appears three times (inscriptions 12, 36, 39), and the city of Samaria appears twice (inscriptions 14 and 15).<sup>663</sup> There is more diversity in the personal names: 55 names were identified by the editors of the *editio princeps* as Hebrew, 13 as Greek, 4 as Arab (though this should be reduced to 3 following persuasive arguments by Kartveit), 1 as Palmyrene, 1 as Persian, and 2 as uncertain.<sup>664</sup> It would be wholly wrong, however, to suggest that

---

<sup>659</sup> Hezser (2011) 381. Jerusalem Talmud was likely compiled in the 4th century CE, and it is unclear how accurate this anecdote about the Second Temple Period is.

<sup>660</sup> Such as during the First Jewish Revolt: see J. *AJ* 18.85–89.

<sup>661</sup> See 'Ethnogenesis and Administration'.

<sup>662</sup> In Alexandria: J. *Ant.* 13.74–79. Samareia: Pummer (1998).

<sup>663</sup> Magen, Misgav & Tsfania (2004) 28–30.

<sup>664</sup> Magen, Misgav & Tsfania (2004) 25–27. Kartveit shows that the name Zabdi, identified by the editors as Arabic, is in fact present in the Hebrew Bible in *Josh.* 7:1 and 1 *Chr.* 27:27 and was popular in Palmyra: see Kartveit (2009a) 212.

those with non-Hebrew names must have been diaspora Samaritans: indeed, the spread of names approximately reflects what we would expect from the local community. There is, then, no evidence for an international pilgrimage to Mount Gerizim. Ultimately, then, the body of evidence for the Gerizim cult is so small that I do not believe it can provide us with many insights into the Jerusalem pilgrimage.

I will now consider the evidence for pilgrimage to Jerusalem from particular directions in more detail, beginning with pilgrimage from the east.

### **Pilgrimage from the East**

In *Ant.* 18.311–312, Josephus states that large numbers of pilgrims travelled to Jerusalem from Babylonia:

Ἰουδαῖοι τῇ φύσει τῶν χωρίων πεπιστευκότες τό τε δίδραχμον, ὃ τῷ θεῷ καταβάλλειν ἐκάστοις πατριον, ταύτη κατετίθεντο καὶ ὅποσα δὲ ἄλλα ἀναθήματα, ἐχρῶντό τε ὥσπερ ταμείῳ ταῖς πόλεσιν. ἐντεῦθεν δὲ ἐπὶ Ἱεροσολύμων ἀνεπέμπετο ἢ καιρός, πολλαὶ τε ἀνθρώπων μυριάδες τὴν κομιδὴν τῶν χρημάτων παρελάμβανον δεδιότες τὰς Παρθυαίων ἀρπαγὰς ὑποτελούσης ἐκείνοις τῆς Βαβυλωνίας.

The Jews, therefore, trusting to the natural strength of these places [Neardea and Nisibis in Babylonia], used to deposit there the two-drachm coins which it is the national custom for all to contribute to the cause of God, as well as any other dedicatory offerings. Thus these cities were their bank of deposit. From there these offerings were sent to Jerusalem at the appropriate time. Countless numbers [alternatively: many tens of thousands] of people shared in the convoy of these monies because they feared the robberies of the Parthians, to whom Babylonia was subject.

Those accompanying the money are sometimes imagined by scholars to be a train of pilgrims, and the passage often features prominently in modern arguments for mass international pilgrimage. What the passage more likely refers to, I would suggest, is a large cohort of armed guards escorting treasure.

This matter is clarified, I think, when the passage is juxtaposed with Philo's *On the Embassy to Gaius* 216, where the author describes the "sacred conveyors" (ἱεροπομποὶ) who would accompany "a great amount of gold and silver" (χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον πλεῖστον) along the "untraversable, pathless, never-ending roads" (δυσβάτους καὶ ἀτριβεῖς καὶ ἀνιήνους ὁδοὺς) between Babylonia and Jerusalem.

*Ἱεροπομποὶ* is an unusual word, but it does not give the impression of a thousands-strong band of pilgrims, but instead an escort. The sending of money, unlike the mass-movement of diaspora pilgrims, is well attested in non-Jewish Roman texts and in various decrees relayed by Josephus. In the *Pro Flacco*, for instance, Cicero writes that large quantities of gold were sent "from every province" to Jerusalem.<sup>665</sup> Sending money from Babylonia specifically is also attested in *Baruch*

---

<sup>665</sup> Cic. *Pro Flacco* 67. See also J. *AJ* 16.160–178.

1:10–14, where the Babylonian Jews ask that the inhabitants of Jerusalem use their donations to pay for offerings at the Temple.

Another insight which can be gleaned from Philo's passage is that the route between Babylonia and Jerusalem was dangerous, underdeveloped and lengthy. This begs another obvious question: what route would pilgrims from the east have taken? While there was certainly trade and exchange between the Parthian and Roman Empires, the primary route does not appear to have gone to the southern Levant. *The Parthian Stations*, a 1st c CE account of the route between Syria and India by Isidore of Charax—a Greek living in the Parthian Empire, about whom we know virtually nothing—indicates that the main route from Syrian Antioch (his westernmost point) to Babylonia, began by travelling north to Zeugma (in Commagene), and then travelling southwest in a more-or-less straight path along the Euphrates which led to Seleucia and Babylon (*Fig. 16*). The primary route between Babylonia and the Roman Empire, it seems, went nowhere near Jerusalem. The importance of this route is reflected in the fact that, while a number of Parthian coins have been found in Southern Turkey, virtually none have, to my knowledge, been found in the southern Levant, with the exception of a single tetradrachm of Phraates IV found at Akkar in modern Lebanon.<sup>666</sup> The movement of armies between the two empires in the 1st centuries BCE and CE invariably appears to have followed this route: Crassus, for instance, crossed the Euphrates at Zeugma during his disastrous attempt to invade Parthia in the 50s BCE, while the 40 BCE Parthian invasion of the east led by Pacorus and Labienus also began with a drive towards Cilicia in south-eastern Anatolia, before the two commanders split up, with Labienus turning off and pushing south to Syria.<sup>667</sup>

If pilgrims had travelled along this route, and then moved south from Antioch to Jerusalem, it would have been an enormous journey: some 1,500 km. Nevertheless, there are indications that this is the route that some Jews coming from Babylonia used. At *Jewish Antiquities* 17.23–26, for instance,

---

<sup>666</sup> 'Hoard 37' in Seyrig (1973).

<sup>667</sup> Crassus: Plut. *Crass.* 19.3; Labienus & Pacorus: Dio 48.25–26.



Fig. 16: The Route of The Parthian Stations of Isidore of Charax<sup>668</sup> [Copyright Image Removed]

Josephus narrates the story of a group of 500 Babylonian Jewish cavalymen who had crossed the Euphrates and migrated to the Roman Empire. The place they initially decided to settle in was Syrian Antioch, the endpoint of the Euphrates' route I have been describing. It may even be that these warriors were among the *hieropompoi* guarding donations from the East, though this is pure speculation.

There were, to be sure, other established routes which split from the main Euphrates path. Perhaps the most obvious alternative was the King's Highway, which had been in use since the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BCE. This travelled south-west from Resafa through the Syrian desert, moving past a cluster of major trading settlements including Palmyra (which was already establishing itself as a centre of Roman-Parthian trade in the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE).<sup>669</sup> It then turned south, following eastern edge of the Jordan river and then continuing on to the Red Sea. It seems that Herod himself attempted to secure the King's Highway route for pilgrims. When he heard about the 500 Jewish migrants from Babylonia (see above), he invited them to settle in Batanea.<sup>670</sup> Josephus says that this was partly designed to secure Herod's hitherto tenuous grasp on his territories east of the Upper Jordan. Nearby Trachonitis, indeed, had recently rebelled against him, and after he had squashed the revolt he settled 3,000 Idumeans in that region. Josephus also claims, however, that the colony was designed to protect Babylonian pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.

<sup>668</sup> Sourced from *L'antiquité Grecque Et Latine Du Moyen Âge*:  
<http://remacle.org/bloodwolf/erudits/charax/etapes.htm> [accessed 15/02/2021]

<sup>669</sup> For a recent account of the evidence for Palmyrene trade, see Seland (2016) 27–61. For an account of Palmyra as a “ville de pèlerinage” in its own right see Bounni (2000).

<sup>670</sup> J. *AJ.* 17.23–26.

It is not necessarily clear, however, that a route via central Syria would be substantially easier than a route via Antioch and Zeugma. Palmyra, for instance, is still some 500 km away from Jerusalem. The journey between Palmyra and Jerusalem (one way) would take more than 2 weeks and cost hundreds of denarii, not including the cost of sacrificial animals and donations.<sup>671</sup> Furthermore, despite Herod's efforts, the King's Highway remained an underdeveloped route during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE: one indication of this is that the Emperor Trajan expended considerable resources in attempting to make it fit for purpose during the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century.<sup>672</sup> In short, it seems that no matter which route Babylonian Jews took, it would be a prohibitively expensive, months-long journey.

There were, to be sure, connections between the Jews of Babylonia and the Jews of Palestine during the Second Temple Period which managed to survive these challenges. We know of several high-profile individuals who moved across the border (often several times), including late Hasmonean Kings, Herodian High Priests, a general during the First Jewish Revolt, and the author of the 1st century BCE Abba Inscription.<sup>673</sup> That said, we must question how many Parthian Jews would have had the time, money, and inclination to make such a journey. Rather than tens of thousands of pilgrims each year, I would suggest instead that we should be thinking of two groups: a small, armed caravan of perhaps a few hundred guards designed to bring donations to the Jerusalem Temple, and a handful of wealthy Babylonian Jews who had the money and the time to reach the city. Paying money to the Temple from the East may well have been a pursuit of mass interest, but actual pilgrimage, I suggest, was the province of a very small, moneyed elite (a kind of ancient Jewish Grand Tour).

### **Pilgrimage from the West and the South**

Let us turn now to the evidence for pilgrimage from the Mediterranean basin (and other parts of the Roman Empire) and Africa. *Acts* 2.9–11 boasts of the pilgrims from “Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the part of Libya which belongs to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs”. In the works of Josephus, however, there is even less evidence for mass-pilgrimage from the west than there is from the East. Indeed, in all of his many surviving works, there is not a single explicit reference to pilgrims from other Roman provinces. This is striking from a writer who is keen to stress the vitality of Jewish culture and the possibility of Jewish participation in the Greco-Roman world. Similarly, with the exception of passages of *Acts* and

---

<sup>671</sup> Based on Stanford University's 'Orbis' map, which calculates the approximate time and cost of a journey in the Roman Empire.

<sup>672</sup> Roll (2005) 108–109.

<sup>673</sup> Antigonos II secured Parthian support in his attempt to secure the throne, while Hyrcanus II was exiled to Babylonia: *J. AJ.* 14.365–366, 15.14. Josephus claims that Herod's first appointment as High Priest, Ananel, was Babylonian: *J. AJ.* 15.22. Finally, a general called 'Silas' is described as serving in the First Jewish Revolt: *J. BJ.* 3.12.

the case of Philo, there is not a single reference in any ancient Jewish text to pilgrims travelling in this direction.

We know, again, that some people did make the pilgrimage, but the examples we have are unusual and from a specific social class. Philo, who is only known for certain to have embarked on the pilgrimage once, was evidently from an extremely rich and well-connected family: his brother Alexander, indeed, was a successful businessman who served as alabarch of Alexandria, with enough money to loan five talents to Agrippa I and make substantial donations to the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>674</sup> The fact that he made a single pilgrimage to Jerusalem, I suggest, does not prove that mass-pilgrimage from Egypt was common: on the contrary, that Philo, who possessed the means and time to travel to Jerusalem whenever he wanted, only refers to making the journey *once* strongly suggests the opposite. Similarly, the Ethiopian pilgrim whom Philip meets on the road between Jerusalem and Gaza in *Acts* 8:27 was evidently extremely wealthy as he is described in the text as “a powerful eunuch of Kandake (the Queen of the Ethiopians) who was in charge of her whole treasury”.

There is some epigraphic evidence for visitors and settlers from the west. An ossuary dating from the 1st century BCE or CE with both Greek and Hebrew/Aramaic inscriptions appears to be for Nicanor of Alexandria, who famously donated a large bronze gate to Jerusalem.<sup>675</sup> We also have a dedicatory inscription dated 18/17 BCE which, though fragmentary, seems to have been commissioned by a Rhodian named “Paris son of Akeson” who apparently donated a sum towards a section of pavement.<sup>676</sup> These, clearly, were both wealthy, high-status individuals. Another ossuary bears an inscription for “Diogenes the proselyte, son of Zenas”: the name Zenas is most commonly found in Asia Minor and it may be that Diogenes was originally from there.<sup>677</sup> We also have ossuary inscriptions from a “Gaius, son of Artemon” from Berenike, “Philo of Cyrene”, “Ioudan the proselyte of Tyre”, “Maria the proselyte from Delos”, and “Ioustos the Chalcidean”.<sup>678</sup> These inscriptions are, for the most part, on standard late Second Temple Judean ossuaries, and do not indicate exceptional wealth. Funerary inscriptions cannot, however, straightforwardly be used as evidence for pilgrimage: they may indicate that the individual in question migrated to Judea or, less probably, that their bones were sent there after death. It is easier for a person of moderate means to move to a new country than to embark on a months-long trip there, suspending all productive activity until his/her return. We might

---

<sup>674</sup> Philo’s pilgrimage: Philo *Prov.* 2.64. Alexander the Alabarch: *J. AJ.* 18.159–160, *J. BJ.* 5.205. For more see Schwartz (2009).

<sup>675</sup> *CII/P* 1.1.98.; for more on Nicanor and his gate see *mMidd.* 1.4, 2.3, 6, *tYoma* 2.3–4, *bYoma* 38a, *J. BJ.* 5.201.

<sup>676</sup> *CII/P* 1.1.3.

<sup>677</sup> *CII/P* 1.1.181.

<sup>678</sup> Gaius, son of Artemon from Berenike (it is unclear if Gaius or his father was from Berenike): *CII/P* 1.1.20. Philo of Cyrene: *CII/P* 1.1.170; Ioudan the proselyte of Tyre: *CII/P* 1.1.174; Maria the proselyte from Delos: *CII/P* 1.1.238; Ioustos the Chalcidean (not known which Chalcis he was from): *CII/P* 1.1.427.

think of the millions of poor Southeast Asians who live as labourers in Saudi Arabia, but would have been unlikely to travel from their home countries to Mecca on Hajj without financial support (such as the Hajj subsidy which was formerly provided by the Indian state).

We have quite a large corpus of documents from across the Roman Empire describing the rights of the Jews in various cities, many of which are provided by Josephus. While the right of Jews to practice their religion freely and send tribute to the Temple is frequently reaffirmed, there is not a single mention of pilgrimage. One commonly cited exception is the letter of the proconsul Julius Antonius to the Ephesians, dating from 4 BCE and preserved in *AJ* 16.172–173:

Ἐφεσίων ἄρχουσιν βουλῇ δῆμῳ χαίρειν. οἱ ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι εἰδοῖς Φεβρουαρίοις δικαιοδοτοῦντί μοι ἐν Ἐφέσῳ ὑπέδειξαν Καίσαρα τὸν Σεβαστὸν καὶ Ἀγρίππαν συγκεχωρηκέναι αὐτοῖς χρῆσθαι τοῖς ἰδίῳ νόμοις καὶ ἔθουσιν, ἀπαρχάς τε, ἃς ἕκαστος αὐτῶν ἐκ τῆς ἰδίας προαιρέσεως εὐσεβείας ἕνεκα τῆς πρὸς τὸ θεῖον . . . ἀνακομιδῆς συμπορευομένους ποιεῖν ἀνεμποδίστως

To the magistrates, the Council, and the people of the Ephesians, greetings. As I was administering justice on the Ides of February, the Jews residing in Asia indicated to me that Caesar, Augustus, and Agrippa had given them permission to follow their own laws and customs, and to make the offerings which each of them gives from his own free will and on account of his piety towards their God . . . coming together unhindered.

It is generally assumed that some reference to Jerusalem was made in the lacuna after “θεῖον”, and translations almost invariably render the subsequent phrase as “travelling together to Jerusalem unhindered” (or a close equivalent). This has, in turn, found its way into numerous academic papers, whose authors are either unaware or unperturbed by the crucial lacuna.<sup>679</sup> I believe that we should be cautious about hanging too much on a passage like this. Indeed, if we were to assume that the travel described is to Jerusalem it would be a unique and baffling passage, implying that Jews needed special permission to undertake their pilgrimage or that the Ephesians might have systematically hindered them from doing so. While this obviously does not make such an interpretation impossible, it would require additional explanation before it is quoted to support mass-pilgrimage from Asia Minor.

I would suggest two alternative explanations that make better sense of this passage. The first, is to simply translate the verb “συμπορεύομαι” as “assemble”, as it clearly means in other contexts.<sup>680</sup> This would match the Roman intervention Josephus quotes just before the above passage, Gaius Norbanus Flaccus’ message to the Sardians, in which the Jews are granted the right to “assemble” (“συναγαγόντας”).<sup>681</sup> Alternatively, “συμπορεύομαι” could indeed mean “travel”, but referring to the right of a small number of Jews to accompany donations to Jerusalem. This would, again, match numerous previous examples in *Antiquities* 16 of Roman officials affirming the right of the Jews to

<sup>679</sup> Verseput (1994) 110, and even Ben Zeev (1998) 285 ff.

<sup>680</sup> See, for instance, *Plb.* 6.16.4.

<sup>681</sup> *J. JA* 16.171.

send money to the Temple.<sup>682</sup> Admittedly this latter interpretation would represent a break from the usual phrasing these passages: in all the cases Josephus cites confirming the right of the Jews to donate money to Jerusalem, they are described as “sending” (usually using the verb ἀναπέμπω) rather than accompany the offering.<sup>683</sup> Interestingly, this phrasing, I would suggest, also indicates that the vast majority of Jews were not involved in pilgrimage, but were instead sending money which was carried by a smaller escort.

It is rather easier to predict the route that pilgrims might have taken from major Mediterranean cities than from the east. Travel by sea was by far the easiest and cheapest route for visitors from most cities, and was facilitated by the timing of the festivals, which allowed travellers to avoid the worst of winter. It is possible that pilgrims would have been forced to undertake a long and complex journey, hopping from port to port before arriving in Palestine. An example of this way of travelling is provided in *Acts* 21:1–8, which recounts Paul’s journey from Ephesus to Caesarea (on his way to Jerusalem):

Ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο ἀναχθῆναι ἡμᾶς ἀποσπασθέντας ἀπ’ αὐτῶν, εὐθυδρομήσαντες ἤλθομεν εἰς τὴν Κῶ, τῇ δὲ ἐξῆς εἰς τὴν Ῥόδον, κακεῖθεν εἰς Πάταρα · καὶ εὐρόντες πλοῖον διαπερὼν εἰς Φοινίκην ἐπιβάντες ἀνήχθημεν. ἀναφάναντες δὲ τὴν Κύπρον καὶ καταλιπόντες αὐτὴν εὐώνυμον ἐπλέομεν εἰς Συρίαν, καὶ κατήλθομεν εἰς Τύρον, ἐκεῖσε γὰρ τὸ πλοῖον ἦν ἀποφορτιζόμενον τὸν γόμον. ἀνευρόντες δὲ τοὺς μαθητὰς ἐπεμείναμεν αὐτοῦ ἡμέρας ἑπτὰ... Ἡμεῖς δὲ τὸν πλοῦν διανύσαντες ἀπὸ Τύρου κατηντήσαμεν εἰς Πτολεμαῖδα, καὶ ἀσπασάμενοι τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς ἐμείναμεν ἡμέραν μίαν παρ’ αὐτοῖς. τῇ δὲ ἐπαύριον ἐξελθόντες ἤλθομεν εἰς Καισάρειαν, καὶ εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκον Φιλίππου τοῦ εὐαγγελιστοῦ ὄντος ἐκ τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐμείναμεν παρ’ αὐτῷ.

So, after we left them we set out to sea, making a straight course to Kos. On the next day we went to Rhodes, and from there to Patara. Then, finding a ship heading to Phoenicia, we boarded it and set sail. We saw Cyprus and passed by it on the left, we sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre where the ship was supposed to unload its cargo. Finding disciples, we stayed there for seven days... We finished our journey from Tyre and arrived at Ptolemais, and meeting our brethren we stayed with them for a day. Leaving on the next day, we went to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven, and stayed with him.

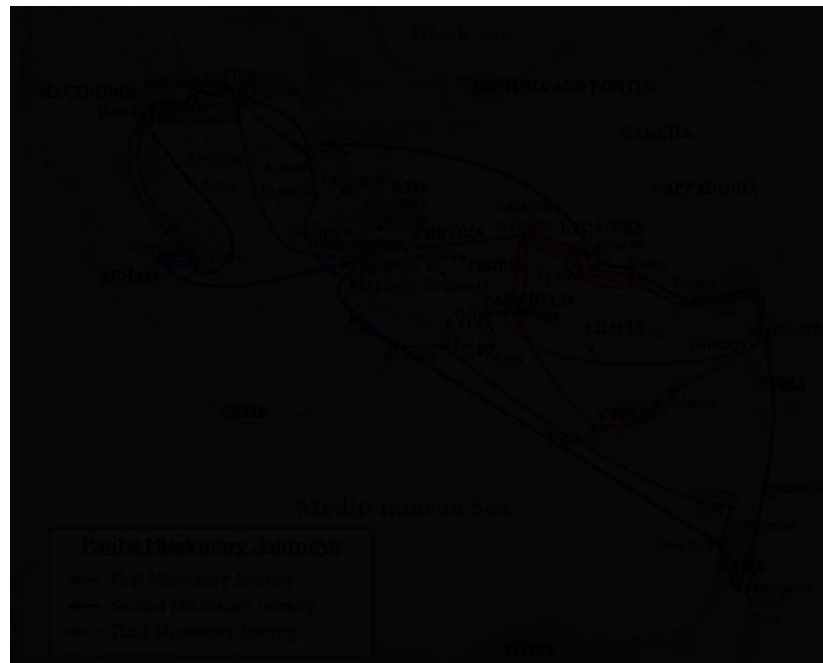
They then make their way by land to Jerusalem, staying in the house of a Cypriot Christian, Mnason, who had settled in Palestine. This passage can teach us a great deal about the process of pilgrimage from the west. Firstly, as we have already indicated, it reveals how complex the journey to Jerusalem could be. In the absence of ships making a direct journey to Palestine, Paul and his associates were compelled to travel on a long and complex journey around the Eastern Mediterranean. As such, the journey is likely to have taken more time and cost more money than we might initially expect. The passage also underscores the importance of religious networks in facilitating the movement of Jews to

---

<sup>682</sup> J. JA 16.160 ff.

<sup>683</sup> J. JA 16.163, 166, 170, 171.

Palestine. Paul stays with various early converts to Christianity during his journey, and we might imagine that those Jews who did make the journey to Jerusalem would find some support from Jewish communities along the way. The informal support that these contacts would have provided may have helped to resolve some of the logistical problems which were left in the absence of a powerful, supportive state.



*Fig. 17: The Journeys of Paul<sup>684</sup> [Copyright image removed]*

I believe that the design of the city of Caesarea Maritima casts further doubt on mass-pilgrimage from the Mediterranean. As is well known, a large temple of the imperial cult was built in Caesarea Maritima. It was deliberately placed (in a way that disrupted the city's otherwise orderly grid plan) facing out to sea, so that it would be the first thing that visitors coming by sea would see (*Fig. 18*). It is difficult to think of a more offensive sight for Jewish pilgrims as they first approached what they considered to be their ancestral and sacred homeland. This alone, surely, indicates that the primary purpose of Caesarea Maritima was *not* to provide a convenient port for pilgrims, but was instead intended to improve connections between Herod's kingdom and Mediterranean trade networks, and to honour Augustus (as both the temple and the city's name suggest). Indeed, Herod did not need a 'special' reason to build Caesarea Maritima: the lack of good harbours on the coastline of his kingdom had obvious economic and strategic disadvantages. In his extended description of the construction of Caesarea in *Jewish War* 1.408–415, Josephus does not mention pilgrimage at all, but instead describes its construction as assisting ships travelling from Phoenicia to Egypt.

<sup>684</sup> Kamara, *et al.* (2016) 185.

Like travel from the Parthian Empire, then, travel from the eastern Mediterranean is likely to have been limited to a small number of elites with the means, time, and inclination to perform the journey. There is no strong evidence that large numbers of ordinary western Jews made the journey to Jerusalem each year, even during the supposed high point of international pilgrimage in the 1st century CE.

### **Cosmopolitan Narratives**

What, given all this, should we make of the claims of Philo and the author of Acts that Jerusalem during the festivals was filled with multicultural groups of Jews from across the known world? I would like to offer three interlinked explanations.

Firstly, there is a kernel of truth: I believe some diaspora Jews did indeed attempt the giant undertaking of the Jerusalem pilgrimage. In the context of the 1st century CE, even this would have been quite remarkable: there were few (if any) places where people would regularly gather from such a wide area. These smaller numbers could well appear larger than they were to observers, another example of the well-known tendency of populations to vastly overestimate the number of foreigners in their midst.<sup>685</sup>

Secondly, I think it is significant that the context of those passages which describe the pilgrimage as large and cosmopolitan is often some attempt at negotiation with the Roman authorities. Philo's description of the *hieropompoi* (*On the Embassy to Gaius* 216), for instance, is followed by a claim that the governor Petronius was consequently afraid of the Jewish forces in the Parthian Empire, and was therefore reluctant to irritate the Jews in Palestine. Similarly, Cestius' count of the city's population during Passover, as described by Josephus in *Jewish War* 6.442–446, was conducted by the provincial government in order to convince the Emperor Nero of Jerusalem's importance. The passage of *Acts* describing a cosmopolitan Pentecost crowd (2:5–11), meanwhile, needs to be placed in the context of the work as a whole, which was partly written to improve the reputation of the Christian movement in the Roman Empire.<sup>686</sup> Passages which indicate the opposite, of course, also have a context: when Josephus claims that Judea is isolated and isolationist (*Against Apion* 1.60), this is to explain the absence of the region in early Greek histories. This, however, simply confirms the broader point that we should trust in our literary sources less and shift our focus more to the practicalities of making such a complex and difficult journey.

---

<sup>685</sup> A 2014 survey by Ipsos MORI, for instance, found that Americans believe that 32% of the population are immigrants (real figure 13%), Italians thought 30% (real figure 7%), Belgians 29% (real figure 10%), Britons 24% (real figure 13%): see Ipsos MORI (2014).

<sup>686</sup> Bruce (1988) 8. The scene also represents an inversion of the curse of Babel: see Bruce (1988) 59.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, our sources are alluding to the well-established Graeco-Roman language of ‘the *cosmopolis*’, the world city, to aggrandize Jerusalem and place it on a level with great Mediterranean hubs like Rome and Alexandria. Cosmopolitanism must, surely, have been particularly impressive in the ancient world, representing the power of a city or a state to drag (willingly or unwillingly) diverse peoples into its orbit despite the considerable expense of long-distance travel. An early example of this trend can be seen in Achaemenid imperial iconography, such as the Apadana reliefs. In the opening chapter of *Rome the Cosmopolis*, Catherine Edwards and Greg Woolf explore the ways that the vastness and diversity of the Roman Empire was condensed into the city of Rome itself. From the different ethnic groups forced to fight each other in the arena to the looted monuments and treasures from across the known world on display in public places, the inhabitants of Rome were constantly reminded that they were at the heart of a global empire.<sup>687</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> century poet Ovid, wrote that “the city and the world of Rome occupy the same space”, and Josephus himself wrote that in Vespasian’s Temple of Peace one could see artworks from across the world, saving art-lovers the trouble of travelling to their countries of origin.<sup>688</sup>

The concept of cosmopolitanism also had deep philosophical roots in both the Hellenistic tradition in general, and Hellenised Judaism in particular. Plutarch wrote that the *Republic* of Zeno of Citium, the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy, could be summarised in the following statement:

ἵνα μὴ κατὰ πόλεις μηδὲ κατὰ δήμους οἰκῶμεν ἰδίῳις ἕκαστοι διωρισμένοι δικαίῳις, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀνθρώπους ἡγώμεθα δημότας καὶ πολίτας, εἷς δὲ βίος ἢ καὶ κόσμος

That we should not live each divided up by our own sense of justice into cities or peoples, we should consider all men one people and one polity, and we should have a single way of life and order<sup>689</sup>

Similar ideas were expressed by later philosophers, including the 1st century CE Roman philosopher Seneca.<sup>690</sup> Most interestingly for our purposes, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo, who was

---

<sup>687</sup> Edwards & Woolf (2003) 1–20.

<sup>688</sup> Ovid *Fasti* 2.684; J. BJ 7.160.

<sup>689</sup> Plut. *De Alex. Fort.* 329b.

<sup>690</sup> Sen. *De Otio* 4.1. For more on the development of cosmopolitanism in Graeco-Roman philosophy, see Long (2008).



Fig. 18: City plan of Caesarea Maritima, with the Temple of Augustus labelled “Temple”<sup>691</sup>  
 [Copyright image removed]

heavily influenced by Stoicism, was evidently sympathetic to the cosmopolitan ideal. He was, indeed, the earliest extant author to use the word *kosmopolites*, once to refer to Adam, and twice to refer to Moses.<sup>692</sup> The following passage, from the opening of his treatise *On the Creation*, is particularly instructive:

<sup>691</sup> Map by Anna Iamim, via University of Arizona: <https://bibleinterp.arizona.edu/articles/pat358031> [accessed 15/02/2021]

<sup>692</sup> Ph. *Life of Moses* 1.157, *On the Creation* 3, 142; cf. Long (2008) 51.

..ὥς καὶ τοῦ κόσμου τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τοῦ νόμου τῷ κόσμῳ συνάδοντος, καὶ τοῦ νομίμου ἀνδρὸς εὐθὺς ὄντος κοσμοπολίτου, πρὸς τὸ βούλημα τῆς φύσεως τὰς πράξεις ἀπευθύνοντος, καθ' ἣν καὶ ὁ σύμπας κόσμος διοικεῖται.

...[Moses' teachings suggest] that the world is synonymous with the Law, and the Law is synonymous with the world, so that the law-abiding man is also a world-citizen (*kosmopolites*), controlling his actions to conform to the will of nature in accordance with which the whole world is governed

Adopting a cosmopolitan outlook is considered a hallmark of virtue and adherence to the natural law of the universe (as opposed to manmade customs).<sup>693</sup> Philo's description of diverse peoples coming together to perform common rituals and develop friendships at *Prov.* 2.64., which I considered in more detail above, is surely influenced by this idea.

Unfortunately for Philo and other would-be Jewish *kosmopolites*, Jerusalem itself was poorly placed to become a genuine *cosmopolis*. It was, as I have already explored in this and previous chapters, connected to the dense web of pathways which linked the major cities of the Roman world by only a few long, thin threads, and largely devoid of the economic and political opportunities to be found at Rome and even second-tier cities in the Empire.<sup>694</sup> The Jewish pilgrimage, while not as large or multicultural as our sources claimed, likely did attract a yearly trickle of visitors from a diverse range of origins: I would suggest that its literary champions over-emphasised their number in order to allude to an imperial trope and philosophical ideal.

### **Pilgrims from Palestine**

The evidence for pilgrimage from Palestine is far clearer and more persuasive. As I have already argued, Josephus gives the impression that pilgrimage was largely undertaken by Palestinian Jews (see above). There are a handful of indications in other literature that some Palestinian Jews would regularly make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In *Tobit*, the title character claims that he would often travel from northern Palestine to Jerusalem for the pilgrim festivals as a young man, though it is made clear that this marks him out as unusually pious.<sup>695</sup> According to *Luke*, Jesus' parents would travel from Galilee to Jerusalem every year for Pesach, though this may likewise be designed to signal their special devotion to the Law.<sup>696</sup>

Rabbinic evidence indicates that the pilgrimage in Palestine may have been well organised. A particularly instructive passage from *Mishnah Bikkurim* suggests that each *ma'amad* (a subdivision of the Jewish people) would gather together in one city, before heading to Jerusalem together:

---

<sup>693</sup> Ph. *On the Creation* 3.

<sup>694</sup> See especially Chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>695</sup> *Tob.* 1:6.

<sup>696</sup> *Lk.* 2:41.

כיצד מעלין את הבכורים. כל העירות שבמעמד מתכנסות לעיר של מעמד, ולגין ברחובות של עיר, ולא היו נכנסין לבתים.  
ולמושבים, היה המנה אומר (ירמיה לא), קומו ונעלה ציון אל בית ה' אלהינו:

How were the first-fruits taken up [to Jerusalem]? All the cities of the ma'amad would come together in the city of the ma'amad, and they would sleep in the streets and not enter the houses. In the morning, the appointed [official] said "Let's get up and go up to Zion, to the House of the Lord our God" (Jeremiah 31:5).<sup>697</sup>

While evidence from the *Mishnah* is sometimes unreliable (see discussion in *Chapter 1*), it is plausible that some formal and semi-formal systems of organisation were indeed used to manage large movements of pilgrims.

Various attempts have been made to identify Second Temple Pilgrimage routes in Palestine. I discuss the local system of roads in more detail in *Chapter 2*, but it is worth making a few general comments here. While the journey from Jerusalem's hinterland was relatively straightforward (difficult terrain aside), those travelling from further afield faced considerable challenges. Pilgrims from Galilee, for instance, may have chosen to avoid the fastest route through Samaria, since the Samaritan population often reacted to Jewish pilgrims with hostility or even violence.<sup>698</sup> Alternative routes seem to have included a detour east, before travelling south down the Jordan Rift Valley and turning west again to reach Jerusalem. Certain coastal cities were also connected to Jerusalem. Har-El claims that there were 8 roads between Jaffa and Jerusalem, though only two of these are likely to have been used by pilgrims (the 60 km road through Beit Horon, or the 66 km southern road via Lydda).<sup>699</sup>

A recent study by Yigal and Yotam Tepper identified several 'pilgrimage roads' in the Hill Country and in surrounding regions using archaeological evidence. The authors began from the assumption that ancient public roads which are neither agricultural roads, nor Roman, Byzantine, Crusader or other imperial roads, were most likely conduits for pilgrims. On this basis, using a combination of archaeological and literary evidence (in particular the writings of Josephus) the authors identify several 'pilgrimage roads' in the Jerusalem Hills and the Galilee. These roads tended to be around 2m broad, and often included steps in mountainous terrain.<sup>700</sup> As I have already indicated, such roads would not have facilitated camel caravans, which would have further inhibited the possibility of 'mass' international pilgrimage.

## Conclusion

<sup>697</sup> *Mishnah Bikkurim* 3:2.

<sup>698</sup> J. B.J. 2.232–249. For a full discussion of this passage, see 'Ethnogenesis and Administration'.

<sup>699</sup> Har-El (1981) 14. For some more discussion of potential pilgrim routes, see also Haber (2011) 52.

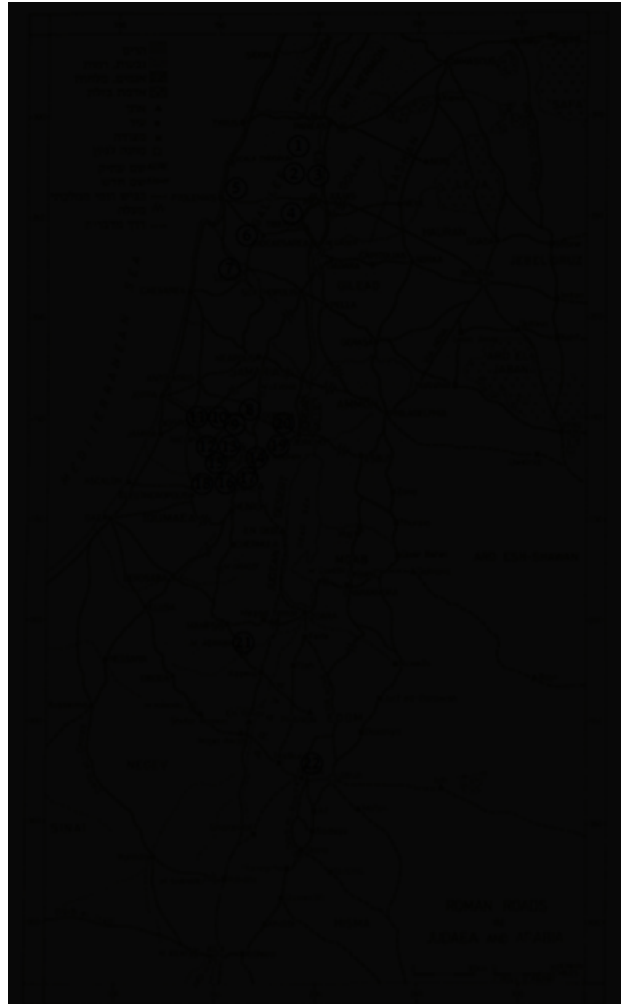
<sup>700</sup> Tepper & Tepper (2011).

I believe that the dominant model for Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem, that it was an international pilgrimage of hundreds of thousands of people, cannot hold.

I have considered some of the numbers scholars have suggested for the pilgrimage, and compared these with estimates for the regular population of the city. I have also explored some of the logistical challenges of a mass-pilgrimage, partly through comparison with the Ottoman Hajj. This has caused me to doubt that numbers during the pilgrim festivals could have been in the hundreds of thousands.

I have also examined the evidence for pilgrimage from the diaspora. I have rejected mass international pilgrimage on two grounds. Firstly, there is almost no strong evidence for it in our literary sources or the archaeological record. The few mentions of pilgrims in written sources are either exceptionally wealthy individuals such as Philo, or seem to describe escorts for treasure. Secondly, the financial and practical difficulties of travelling to Jerusalem, particularly from the Parthian Empire, would have been immense: enough, I believe, to exclude all but the wealthiest Jews. This complements the picture of exchange outlined in Chapter 2, where I argued that interaction with other regions was likely to have been somewhat limited by the Hill Country's terrain. Ultimately, I believe that scholars have been seduced by the grandiose claims of some of our sources, which attempt to cast Jerusalem as a cosmopolitan city in the mould of Rome or Alexandria.

Instead, I suggest that the number of pilgrims to each pilgrim festival in the 1st century CE is likely to have been (at most) in the low tens of thousands. I believe that the vast majority of these came from Palestine, and that a much smaller number, would have originated in the Parthian east or the Roman west. In proposing this revised model for the Jerusalem pilgrimage, I am not seeking to minimise its



*Fig. 19: Numbers representing stepped roads (as per Tepper & Tepper) superimposed on a map of roads in Roman Palestine (as per Roll) <sup>701</sup>*

importance. By virtually any historical standard, a regular movement of tens of thousands of people to a single city is extraordinary, and would have had a colossal effect on the regional economy and culture. My aim, rather, is to bring the Jerusalem pilgrimage back into the realm of the plausible, so that we might better appreciate its real historical significance as a major cultural, economic, and political movement.

---

<sup>701</sup> Map from Tepper & Tepper (2011) 274.

# Conclusion

## *Three Geographies*

This thesis has been a study of the Hill Country of Judea and Samaria between 539 BCE and 70 CE. Over six chapters, I have addressed a diverse range of questions about the region's economic, cultural, and religious history.

In the Introduction, I wrote that one of my core aims was to encourage the rejuvenation of the tradition of historical geography in the study of ancient Palestine. As such I will structure my concluding thoughts around the different geographical approaches which have informed my understanding of this region's history, in order both to draw together some of the different strands which run through this thesis and, I hope, to demonstrate how these approaches might enrich future studies of the region.

In his *Historical Geography of the New Testament* (1708), Edward Wells wrote that history has two “eyes”: geography and chronology.<sup>702</sup> This image reflects the co-evolution of early modern geography and history, and the emerging understanding that historical events, texts, and individuals could only be understood by locating them in a specific space and time. This constitutes an approach which might be termed *geography as context*: using our knowledge of physical geography to inform our study of history.

Despite the 300-year long tradition of Anglophone and Hebrew historical geographies of ancient Palestine, I have argued that *geography as context* remains a valuable approach which can still yield new insights. I have suggested that the study of certain important historical phenomena could be further refined by giving more attention to their geographical context. For example, the Jerusalem pilgrimage, which is most often studied for its enormous religious, cultural, and economic significance, looks quite different when we consider the logistical challenges of travelling to the Hill Country from the diaspora (Chapter 6). Similarly, I built upon work by geographers, historians, and landscape archaeologists to ground my study of agricultural production in the pedological, climatic, and topographical realities of the Hill Country (Chapter 1).

---

<sup>702</sup> This metaphor was not coined by Wells, but was in fact a common mantra of renaissance historians which can be traced at least as far back as Abraham Ortelius' *Parergon*. See Mayhew (2010), Matei-Chesnoiu (2012) Ch. 1. *Parergon* (1592).

Another central contention of this thesis is that the ‘Hill Country’ is a useful concept for ancient historians. I have repeatedly argued for the distinctiveness of the Hill Country as a historical unit, both in terms of its topography and, more importantly for our purposes, its material culture (Chapter 2). I have also suggested that the Hill Country was a term with significance in the ancient world, not only as a geographical descriptor (Introduction), but as a source of ethnic identity (Chapter 3). As such, I have also used *geography as a perspective*: in other words, I have suggested that centring study on this geographical region can generate illuminating new insights. In this thesis my focus on the Hill Country has, for instance, encouraged comparisons with evidence from other historical hill countries. In Chapter 3, for example, I used evidence about mountain warfare in other regions (such as Roman Spain and Mughal Maharashtra) to inform my study of the military landscape of the Hill Country. Perhaps somewhat counterintuitively, then, I believe that focusing on a small geographical area in this thesis has helped me to seek out a more diverse set of historical comparanda.

That said, I have also argued against the imposition of a narrow geographical determinism. My vision of the Hill Country is not analogous to Braudel’s Mediterranean: an economically and socially coherent historical space in which the rhythms of daily life were pre-determined by unchanging geographical conditions. Indeed, one advantage of the comparative possibilities which arise from adopting *geography as a perspective* is that they expose the staggering diversity of human societies which have arisen in topographically or climatically similar areas. In Chapter 1, for instance, I drew upon evidence from a range of mountainous regions (from the Mediterranean, Africa, and even Papua New Guinea) to suggest that terraced farming was not necessarily the only adaptive strategy available to an agrarian society inhabiting a hill country.

Furthermore, adopting *geography as a perspective* also brings cultural and economic fault lines into sharper focus, and recontextualises processes of fragmentation and conflict. As one scholar recently observed, a key advantage of area studies is that it encourages us to explore the “heterogeneity, diversity and interconnectedness of multiple interests, identities, cultures and references in a given historic space”, which underlines the “need for a strong pluralism of meanings, as well as for the exploration of divergences and conflicts”.<sup>703</sup> In Chapter 4, for instance, I used modern sociological and historical theories of ethnicity and ‘homeland’ to explore the development of the cultural geographical barriers which crystallised in the Hill Country during my period.

Furthermore, as I hope this thesis has illustrated, I do not believe that the term ‘historical geography’ should simply means taking topography, climate, geology, and other geographical features into account when writing history, but that it also entails engagement with modern geographical

---

<sup>703</sup> Schafer (2017) 68.

scholarship: in other words, using *geography as a theoretical framework*. In Chapter 5, for instance, I synthesised theoretical insights drawn from the emerging sub-discipline of geography of religion with models developed by landscape archaeologists to construct an alternative understanding of the sacred landscape of the Hill Country as fragmented and complex.

Ultimately, I hope that my use of these three approaches has demonstrated the value and analytical power of a historical geographical approach to the study of the ancient world in general, and of the Hill Country in particular.

### *The Package-Land*

I would like to conclude with some brief thoughts on the motivations behind this study. The first Anglophone historical geographies of ancient Palestine, including Wells and his contemporaries, were imbued with a tremendous sense of purpose. These scholars hoped to use geography to illuminate Biblical history, which they believed sacred revelation. As one American author wrote in his 1850 *An Historical Geography of the Bible*, his aim was to support young scholars to understand scripture so that “they may, through grace, learn by blest experience the divine power of this Holy Book in enlightening the eyes, rejoicing the heart, and converting the soul”.<sup>704</sup> More recently, Yohanan Aharoni wrote in the preface to his *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography* that “the historical geography of the Holy Land is a reflection of the mutual relation between God and Israel as understood and interpreted by Israel’s national faith”, and that considering history in its geographical context “inevitably deepens our understanding of the ancients and of the Scriptures”.<sup>705</sup> Aharoni was also motivated and informed by a strong personal connection to, and love for, the land and its history. Indeed, he writes his *Historical Geography* was first imagined “during many excursions as a schoolboy, rambling into the most remote corners of the country, and then suddenly standing breathless and fascinated before the huge stone walls of a long-deserted city”.<sup>706</sup> The tradition of historical geography in this region has, in short, always been animated by a deeply felt sense of purpose and connection to the territory.

For better or worse, I was not motivated to write this thesis by a religious or political mission. One of my purposes, as I have already discussed, was to rejuvenate a dormant historiographical tradition which, I believe, has the potential to make significant contributions to our study of the region. A further, more fundamental motivation was my deep interest in the relationship between this landscape and its inhabitants, and in particular the diverse range of meanings which ancient people saw in the

---

<sup>704</sup> Lyman (1850) x.

<sup>705</sup> Aharoni (1967) ix.

<sup>706</sup> Aharoni (1967) xii.

land and expressed in almost all their many surviving literary products. This phenomenon is beautifully reflected in a description of modern Israel by Yehuda Amichai, perhaps the most accomplished Modern Hebrew poet:

... The land is a package-land,  
Well-tied and containing everything inside it,  
With strings which sometimes hurt.

The land is very small,  
and I can contain it within me...  
I can feel it all  
in the blink of an eye: sea, valley, mountain.  
I can remember everything that happened to it  
at once, like a man who remembers  
His entire life at the moment of death”<sup>707</sup>

In this extract, Amichai presents Israel as brimming with meaning, a “package-land” filled with historical memory, hope, and sorrow. He also describes his own intense feeling of fused consciousness with the land, and strange sensation of oneness with its history. The stanza instantly recalls the passage of Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *Nature* which I quoted in the Introduction:

The charming landscape which I saw this morning, is indubitably made up of some twenty or thirty farms. Miller owns this field, Locke that, and Manning the woodland beyond. But none of them owns the landscape. There is a property in the horizon which no man has but he whose eye can integrate all the parts, that is, the poet. This is the best part of all these men's farms, yet to this their land-deeds give them no title.<sup>708</sup>

This thesis is, clearly, not an attempt to knit together the disparate features of the Hill Country into a single poetic perspective. It did, however, arise from a fascination for the millions of ancient people who, like Amichai, *did* see diverse meanings—and indeed poetry—in the landscape

As such, throughout this thesis, I have centred human agency and perspectives, particularly through my focus on “landscape discourses”: ancient readings of the region through religious, economic, cultural, or other lenses. I have also sought to show that these discourses are closely related with one another, exposing the ways that different conceptions of a historical region intertwine and co-evolve. My continuing interest in the evolving psychological connection between people and landscape in this region is, in short, perhaps the most fundamental underlying motivation for this thesis.

---

<sup>707</sup> Yehudah Amichai, *Love of the Land*. Translated from Hebrew.

<sup>708</sup> Emerson (1836).

It occurs to me that these discussions have, ironically, produced a sort of landscape *meta-discourse* which sees economic, political, and economic fluctuation as a product of social instability, cultural and ideological revolution and, fundamentally, millions of ever-changing human minds who saw meaning, identity, and the sacred in this small, mountainous area. I can only hope, in closing, that in this lengthy exploration of my own perspectives on this landscape I have made some contribution, however small, to our understanding of this extraordinary historical region.

# Bibliography

- Acabado, S. (2010). *The archaeology of the Ifugao agricultural terraces: Antiquity and social organization*. PhD Dissertation, University of Hawaii.
- Adams, S.L. (2014). *Social and Economic Life in Second Temple Judea*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Adler, Y. (2008). Second Temple Period Ritual Baths Adjacent to Agricultural Installations: The Archaeological Evidence in Light of the Halakhic Sources. *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 59.1, pp. 62–72.
- Adler, Y. (2010). The Impurity of Stone Vessels in 11QT<sup>a</sup> and CD in Light of the Chalk Vessel Finds at Kh. Qumran. *Dead Sea Discoveries*, 27, pp. 1–31.
- Adler, Y. (2014). Tosefta Shabbat 1:14 – ‘Come and See the Extent to Which Purity Had Spread’: An Archaeological Perspective on the Historical Background to a Late Tannaitic Passage. In: S. Fine and A. Koller, eds. *Talmuda de-Eretz Israel: Archaeology and the Rabbis in Late Antique Palestine*. Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, pp. 63–82.
- Agnew, J. (2011). Space and Place. In: J. Agnew and D. Livingstone, eds. *Handbook of Geographical Knowledge*. London: Sage.
- Aharoni, Y. (1967). *The Land of the Bible: A Historical Geography*. London: Burns & Oates.
- Alon, G. (1980). *The Jews in Their Land in the Talmudic Age*. Vol 1. Jerusalem: Magnes Press.
- Alt, A. (1934). Die Rolle Samarias bei der Entstehung des Judentums. *Festschrift Otto Procksch zum 60. Geburtstag*. Leipzig: A. Deichert and J. C. Hinrichs, pp. 5–28.
- Amit, D. (2007). Remains of Jewish Settlements from the Second Temple Period near Teddy Stadium, Jerusalem. *Eretz Israel*, 28, pp. 152–58. [Hebrew]
- Amit, D. and Zilberbod, I. (1998). Mazor, 1994–1995. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, 18, 82.
- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.
- Anschuetz, K.F., Wilshusen, R.H., and Scheick, C.L. (2001). An Archaeology of Landscapes: Perspectives and Directions. *Journal of Archaeological Research*, 9.2, pp. 157–211.
- Antoun, R. (2008). *Understanding Fundamentalism: Christian, Islamic and Jewish Movements*. Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Appelbaum, S. (1986). The Settlement Pattern of Western Samaria from Hellenistic to Byzantine Times: A Historical Commentary. In S. Dar, ed. *Landscape and Pattern: An Archaeological Survey of Samaria B.C.E.– C.E with a Historical Commentary by Shimon Appelbaum*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, pp. 255–269.
- Applebaum, S. (1976). Economic Life in Palestine. In: S. Safrai and M. Stern, eds. *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*. Assen: Van Gorcum, pp. 631–700.

Arnáez, J., Lana-Renault, N., Lasanta, T., Ruiz-Flaño, P., and Castroviej, F. (2015). Effects of farming terraces on hydrological and geomorphological processes. A review. *Catena*, 128, pp. 122–134.

Atkinson, K. (1997). On Further Defining the First-Century CE Synagogue: Fact or Fiction? a Rejoinder to HC Kee. *New Testament Studies*, 43.4, pp. 491–502.

Avissar, M. and Shabo, E. (2000). Qula. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, 20, p. 51\*

Avi-Yonah, Y. (1966). *The Holy Land from the Persian to the Arab Conquest (536 B.C. to A.D. 640): A Historical Geography*. Grand Rapids/Michigan: Baker Book House.

Aviam, M. (2015). The Transformation from *Galil Ha-Goyim* to Jewish Galilee: The Archaeological Testimony of an Ethnic Change. In: D. Fiensy and J.R. Strange, eds. *Galilee in the Late Second Temple and Mishnaic Periods, Volume 2: The Archaeological Record from Cities, Towns, and Villages*. Minneapolis, MN.: Fortress Press, pp. 9–21.

Avner-Levy, R. and Torge, H. (1999). Rosh Ha-‘Ayin. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, 19, p. 40\*.

Ayalon, E. (1982). Bareqet (Modi'im). *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, 1, p. 6

Bagnall, R.S. (1976). *The Administration of the Ptolemaic Possessions Outside Egypt*. Leiden: Brill.

Bailey, A.R., Harvey, D.C., and Brace, C. (2007). Disciplining youthful Methodist bodies in nineteenth-century Cornwall. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97, pp. 142–57.

Balatti, S. (2017). *Mountain Peoples in the Ancient Near East: The Case of the Zagros in the First Millennium BCE*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.

Bar, D. (2004a). Population, Settlement and Economy in Late Roman and Byzantine Palestine (70–641 AD). *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 67.3, pp. 307–320.

Bar, D. (2004b). Geographical implications of population and settlement growth in Late Antique Palestine. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 30.1, pp. 1–10.

Bar-Nathan, R. (1988). *The Pottery from Hasmonaeon and Herodian Jericho*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University.

Bar-Oz, G., Bouchnik, R., Weiss, E., Weissbrod, L., Bar-Yosef Mayer, D. and Reich, R. (2007). “Holy Garbage”: A Quantitative Study of the City-Dump of Early Roman Jerusalem. *Levant*, 39(1), pp. 1–12.

Barclay, J. (1996). *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora from Alexander to Trajan*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.

Barkay, R. (2003). *The Coinage of Nysa-Scythopolis*. Jerusalem: Publications of the Israel Numismatic Society.

Barth, F., 1969. *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*. Bergen: Universitetsforlaget.

Bartlett, R. (2001). Medieval and Modern Concepts of Race and Ethnicity. *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 31, pp. 39–56.

- Barton, C. and Boyarin, D. (2016). *Imagine No Religion: How Modern Abstractions Hide Ancient Realities*. New York, NY: Fordham University Press
- Baruch, Y. (2005). H. Susiya—The Chronology of the Site in Light of Recent Excavations. *Judaea and Samaria Research Studies*, 14, pp. 157–67. [Hebrew]
- Barukh, E. (1998). The Economic Hinterland of Jerusalem in the Herodian Period. *Cathedra*, 89, pp. 41–63.
- Barukh, Y. (2009). Rujm al-Ḥamir: A Fortified Site from the Second Temple Period from the Southern Hebron Mountains. In: T. Peleg, ed. *The Frontier Desert of Eretz-Israel*. Susya: Merkaz siyyur ve-limmud Susya.
- Batt, J. (2002). Introduction: Regions, State and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe. *Regional & Federal Studies*, 12.2, pp. 1–14.
- Beard, M., North, J., and Price, S. (1998). *Religions of Rome. Volume 1: A History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beattie, C. (2011). Introduction: Gender, Power, and Difference. In: C. Beattie and K.A. Fenton, eds. *Intersections of gender, religion and ethnicity in the Middle Ages*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–11.
- Beaufoy, G. (2001). European policies for olive farming unsustainable on all counts. *WWF/Birdlife International* [online]. Available at: <http://assets.panda.org/downloads/olivefarming.pdf> [accessed 10.06.19].
- Beaumont, J. (2008). *Transcending the particular in postsecular cities*. Paper presented at Groningen.
- Becking, B. (2012). Is There a Samaritan Identity in the Earliest Documents? In: J. Frey, U. Schattner-Rieser and K. Schmidt, eds. *Die Samaritaner und die Bibel: Historische und literarische Wechselwirkungen zwischen biblischen und samaritanischen Traditionen*. Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 51–65.
- Ben-Ami, D. and Tchekhanovets, Y. (2015). The Gaps Close – The Late Hellenistic Period in the City of David. *Eretz-Israel*, 31, pp. 30–37. [Hebrew]
- Ben-Ami, D. and Tchekhanovets, Y. (2016). ‘Then They Built Up the City of David With a High, Strong Wall and Strong Towers, and It Became Their Citadel’ (I Maccabees 1:33). In: E. Meiron, ed. *City of David Studies of Ancient Jerusalem 11*. Jerusalem, pp. 19\*–29\*.
- Ben-Arieh, Y. (2007). *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century*. English edition. Jerusalem: Sefer Ve Sefel Publishing.
- Ben Zeev, M.P. (1998). *Jewish Rights in the Roman World*. Mohr Siebeck.
- Berlin, A. (1999). The Archaeology of Ritual: The Sanctuary of Pan at Banias/Caesarea Philippi. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 315, pp. 27–45.
- Berlin, A.M. (2002). Romanization and Anti-Romanization in Pre-Revolt Galilee. In: A.M. Berlin and J.A. Overman, eds. *The First Jewish Revolt: Archaeology, History, and Ideology*. London: Routledge, pp. 57–73
- Berlin, A.M. (2005). Jewish Life Before the Revolt: The Archaeological Evidence. *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 36.4, pp. 417–70.

- Berlin, A.M (2013). Manifest Identity: from Ioudaios to Jew. Household Judaism as anti-Hellenization in the late Hasmonean era. In: R. Albertz and J. Wöhrle, eds. *Between Cooperation and Hostility: Multiple Identities in Ancient Judaism and the Interaction with Foreign Powers*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, pp. 151–175.
- Berlin, A. (2015). A once and future king. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 28, pp. 895–901.
- Berquist, J.L. (2006). Constructions of Identity in Postcolonial Yehud. In: O. Lipschits and M. Oeming, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, pp. 53–67.
- Betlyon, J.W. (1986). The Provincial Government of Persian Period Judea and the Yehud Coins. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 105.4. pp. 633–642.
- Beuken, W.A.M. (2000). *Isaiah. Part 2. Volume II: Isaiah 28-39*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Bhardwaj, S.M., and Rinschede, G., eds., (1988). *Pilgrimage in World Religions*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.
- Bhardwaj, S.M., and Sievers, A., eds., (1994), *Pilgrimage in the Old and New Worlds*. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag.
- Bickerman, E.J. (1980). *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, Volume II*. Leiden: Brill.
- Bikai, P.M. (1985). Observations on Archaeological Evidence for the Trade between Israel and Tyre. *BASOR*, 258, pp. 71–72.
- Binder, D.D. (1999). *Into the Temple Courts. The Place of the Synagogue in the Second Temple Period*. Atlanta, GA.: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Blanchemanche, P. (1990). *Bâtisseurs de paysages: terrassement, épierrement et petite hydraulique agricole en Europe, XVIIe-XIXe siècles*. Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- Bloch, M., (1928). A Contribution Towards a Comparative History of European Societies. Repr. in: M. Bloch, (1967). *Land and Work in Medieval Europe*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 44–76.
- Borejsza, A., López, I.R., Frederick, C.D., and Bateman, M.D. (2008). Agricultural Slope Management and Soil Erosion at La Laguna, Tlaxcala, Mexico. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 35, pp. 1854–1866.
- Borowski, O. (1987). *Agriculture in Iron Age Israel*. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns.
- Bouchery, P. (2010). Terrace Cultivation and Mental Landscapes in Southern Yunnan. In: M. Lecomte-Tilouine, ed. *Nature, Culture and Religion at the Crossroads of Asia*. Delhi: Social Science Press, pp. 319–342.
- Bounni, A. (2000). Palmyre, ville de pèlerinage. *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, 52, pp. 196–197.
- Bourgel, J. (2016). The Destruction of the Samaritan Temple by John Hyrcanus: A Reconsideration. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 135.3, pp. 505–523.
- Bourke, M. and Harwood, T., eds. (2009). *Food and Agriculture in Papua New Guinea*. Canberra: ANU E Press.

- Brace, C., Bailey, A.R., Carter, S., Harvey, D.C., and Thomas, N. (2011). Emerging geographies of belief. In: D. Brace, ed., *Emerging Geographies of Belief*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 1–8.
- Bradbury, J. and Andrews, R. (2010). State Devolution and National Identity: Continuity and Change in the Politics of Welshness and Britishness in Wales. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 63.2, pp. 229–249.
- Brand, E. (1998). *Salvage Excavation on the Periphery of Tel Hadid*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press [Hebrew].
- Braudel, F. (1949). *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II*. Paris: Armand Colin.
- Braudel, F. (1972). *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Malakoff: Collins.
- Briant, P. (1982). *Etat et pasteurs au Moyen-Orient ancien*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Briant, P. (2001). *From Cyrus to Alexander: A History of the Persian Empire*. Eisenbrauns: University, PA.
- Broshi, M. and Gophna, R. (1984). The Settlement and Population of Palestine in the Early Bronze Age II–III. *BASOR*, 253, pp. 41–53.
- Broshi, M. and Gophna, R. (1986). Middle Bronze Age II Palestine: Settlement and Population. *BASOR*, 261, pp. 73–90.
- Broshi, M. and I. Finkelstein. (1992). The Population of Palestine in Iron Age II. *BASOR*, 287, pp. 47–60.
- Bruce, F.F. (1988). *The Book of the Acts*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company,
- Bruneau, P. and Bordreuil, P. (1982). Les Israélites de Délos et la juiverie délienne. *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 106.1, pp. 465–504.
- Bruntz, C. (2017). *Pilgrimage in China*. University of Oxford, accessed 09/10/2018 <<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0241.xml>>.
- Butlin, R. (1988). George Adam Smith and the historical geography of the Holy Land: contents, contexts and connections. *Journal of Historical Geography*, 14.4, pp. 381–404.
- Byatt, A. (1973). Josephus and Population Numbers in First Century Palestine. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 105.1, pp. 51–60.
- Campbell, M. (2005). Sacred groves for forest conservation in Ghana's coastal savannas: assessing ecological and social dimensions. *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography*, 26, pp. 151–169.
- Caponigro, M.S. (1992). Judith, Holding the Tale of Herodotus. In: J.C. VanderKam, ed. "No One Spoke Ill of Her:" *Essays on Judith*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, pp. 47–59.

- Carter, C.E. (1999). *The emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: a Social and Demographic Study*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Casson, L. (1974). *Travel in the Ancient World*. London: G. Allen.
- Castree, N., Kitchin, R. and Rodgers, A. (2013). *A Dictionary of Human Geography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chambers, H. E. (1980). Ancient Amphictionies. Sic et Non. In: C. D. Evans, W. W. Hallo, and J. B. White, eds., *Scripture in Context II. More Essays on Comparative Method*. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Eisenbrauns.
- Charles, R.H. (1913). *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Chepey, S. (2005). *Nazirites in Late Second Temple Judaism : A Survey of Ancient Jewish Writings, the New Testament, Archaeological Evidence, and Other Writings from Late Antiquity*. Leiden: Brill.
- Christian, W. (1989). *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Clayton, D. (2012). Militant tropicality: War, revolution and the reconfiguration of ‘the tropics’ c.1940–c.1975. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 18, pp. 180–192.
- Cochrane, G.W.G., Doelman, T., and Wadley, L. (2013). Another Dating Revolution for Prehistoric Archaeology? *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*, 20, pp. 42–60.
- Cohen, A. and Lewis, B. (1978). *Population and Revenue in the Towns of Palestine in the Sixteenth Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Coleman, S., and Collins, P. eds. (2006). *Locating the field: Space, place and context in anthropology*. Oxford: Berg.
- Coleman, S., and Elsner, J. (1991). Contesting Pilgrimage: Current Views and Future Directions. *Cambridge Anthropology*, 15, pp. 63–73.
- Corley, J. (2012). Imitation of Septuagintal Narrative and Greek Historiography in the Portrait of Holofernes. In: G.G. Xeravits, ed. *A Pious Seductress: Studies in the Book of Judith*. Berlin: De Gruyter, pp. 22–54.
- Cornelius, I. (2014). “East Meets West”: Trends in Terracotta Figurines. In: C. Frevel, K. Pyschny, and I. Cornelius, eds. *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, pp. 67–93.
- Cosgrove, D.E. and Della Dora, V.E. (2008). Introduction. In: D.E. Cosgrove and V.E. Della Dora, eds. *High Places: Cultural Geographies of Mountains and Ice*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 1–16.
- Cotton-Paltiel, H.M., Ecker, A., and Gera, D. (2017). Juxtaposing literary and documentary evidence: a new copy of the so-called Heliodoros Stele and the Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae (CIIP). *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*.
- Craven, T. (2001). The Book of Judith in the Context of Twentieth-Century Studies of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books. *Currents in Biblical Research*, 1.2, 187–229.

- Cross, F.M. (1974). The Papyri and Their Historical Implications. In: P.W. Lapp and N.L. Lapp, eds. *Discoveries in the Wādī ed-Dâliyah*. Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, pp. 17–29.
- Cuq, É. (1927). La condition juridique de la Coelé-Syrie au temps de Ptolémée V Épiphanes. *Syria*, 8, pp. 143–162.
- Dąbrowa, E. (2006). Religion and Politics under the Hasmoneans. In: R. Rollinger and B. Truschnegg, eds. *Altertum und Mittelmeerraum: Die antike Welt diesseits und jenseits der Levante. Festschrift für Peter W. Haider zum 60. Geburtstag*. Stuttgart: F. Steiner, pp. 113–120.
- Dąbrowa, E. (2010). *The Hasmoneans and Their State: A Study in History, Ideology, and the Institutions*. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press.
- Dahari, U. and ‘Ad, U. (2000). Shoam Bypass Road. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, 20, p. 56\*.
- Dan, Y., Raz, Z., Yaalon, H., and Koyumdjisky, H. (1975). *Soil Map of Israēl*. Available at: <https://esdac.jrc.ec.europa.eu/content/soil-map-isra%C3%ABl> [accessed 19.07.2021].
- Dar, S., Safrai, Z. and Tepper, Y. (1986). *Um Rihan: A Village of the Mishnah*. Tel Aviv: Hakibbutz Hameuchad Press. [Hebrew]
- Dar, S. (1982). Ancient Farmsteads in the Nahal Beit ‘Arif Area. *Nofim*, 16, pp. 47–60 [Hebrew]
- Dar, S. (1986). *Landscape and Pattern: An Archaeological Survey of Samaria B.C.E.– C.E with a Historical Commentary by Shimon Appelbaum*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Davidovich, U., Porat, N., Gadot, Y., Avni, Y. and Lipschits, O. (2012). Archaeological investigations and OSL dating of terraces at Ramat Rahel, Israel. *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 37.3, pp. 192–208.
- Davis, E.E. (2000). *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.
- Davis, R. (2002). Ottoman Jerusalem. In: S. Tamari, ed. *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighbourhoods and their Fate in the War*, 2nd ed. Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies, pp. 10–29.
- de Geus, C. H. J. (1975). The Importance of Archaeological Research into the Palestinian Agricultural Terraces, with an Excursus on the Hebrew Word gbī. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 107.1, pp. 65–74.
- Deines, R. (1993). *Jüdische Steingefäße und pharisäische Frömmigkeit: Ein archäologisch-historischer Beitrag zum Verständnis von Johannes 2,6 und der jüdischen Reinheitshalacha zur Zeit Jesu*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Delaney, C. (1988). Mortal Flow: Menstruation in Turkish Village Society. In: T. Buckley and A. Gottlieb, eds. *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*. (Berkeley) University of California Press, pp. 75–93
- Della Dora, V. (2011). Circulating sacred space: fin-de-siècle Russian cards of Mount Athos as travelling object-icons. In: D. Brace, ed., *Emerging Geographies of Belief*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 168–192.
- Dench, E. (1995). *From Barbarians to New Men: Greek, Roman, and Modern Perceptions of Peoples from the Central Apennines*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

- Dinur, Y. (1990). Taxes on External and Internal Trade in Palestine in the Mishnaic and Talmudic Periods. In: B.Z. Kedar, T. Dotan and S. Safrai, eds. *Commerce in Palestine Throughout the Ages*. Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, pp. 140–158. [Hebrew]
- van Dinter, M. (2013). The Roman Limes in the Netherlands: how a delta landscape determined the location of the military structures. *Netherlands Journal of Geoscience*, 92.1, pp. 11–32.
- Dobbs-Allsop, F. W. (2005). Late Linguistic Features in the Song of Songs. A. Hagedorn, ed. *Perspectives on the Song of Songs*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, pp. 27–77.
- Dorsey, D.A. (1991). *The Roads and Highways of Ancient Israel*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Douglas, M. (1996). *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. New York: Routledge.
- Douglas, M. and Isherwood, B. (1979). *The World of Goods*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Dozeman, T.B. (2017). The Book of Joshua in Recent Research. *Currents in Biblical Research*, 15.3, pp. 270–288.
- Duncan-Jones, R. (1977–8). Aqueduct capacity and city populations. *Libyan Studies*, 9, p. 51.
- Durand, X. (1997). *Des Grecs en Palestine au III<sup>e</sup> siècle avant Jésus-Christ. Le dossier syrien des archives de Zénon de Caunos (261-252)*. Paris: Gabalda.
- Dušek, J. (2012). *Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim and Samaria Between Antiochus III and Antiochus IV Epiphanes*. Leiden: Brill.
- Dušek, J. (2020). The Importance of the Wadi Daliyeh Manuscripts for the History of Samaria and the Samaritans. *Religions*, 11.2, pp. 1–13.
- Ebeling, J.R. and Homan, M.M. (2008). Baking and Brewing Beer in the Israelite Household: A Study of Women's Cooking Technology. In: B.A. Nakhai, ed. *The World of Women in the Ancient and Classical Near East*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, pp. 45–62.
- Eckhardt, B. (2009). Reclaiming Tradition: The Book of Judith and Hasmonean Politics. *Journal for the study of the Pseudepigrapha*, 18.4, pp. 243–263.
- Eckhardt, B. (2016). The Seleucid Administration of Judea, the High Priesthood and the Rise of the Hasmoneans. *Journal of Ancient History*, 4.1, pp. 57–87.
- Edelman, D. (2006). Tyrian Trade in Yehud under Artaxerxes I: Real or Fictional? Independent or Crown Endorsed? In: O. Lipschits and M. Oeming, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, pp. 207–246.
- Edelstein, G. and Kislev, M. (1981). Mevasseret Yerushalayim: The Ancient Settlement and its Agricultural Terraces. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 44, pp. 53–56.
- Edwards, C., and Woolf, G., eds., (2003). *Rome the Cosmopolis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Efron, J. (1987). *Studies on the Hasmonean Period*. Leiden: Brill.

- Efthimiades-Keith, H. (2004). *The Enemy is Within A Jungian Psychoanalytic Approach to the Book of Judith*. Leiden: Brill.
- Efthimiades-Keith, H. (2010). Judith, Feminist Ethics and Feminist Biblical/Old Testament Interpretation. *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*, 138, pp. 91–111.
- Eitam, D. (1992). Khirbet Khaddash: A Royal Industry Village in Ancient Israel. In: Z. H. Ehrlich and Y. Eshel, eds. *Judea and Samaria Research Studies: Proceedings of the First Annual Meeting*. Jerusalem: Eretz, 1992, p. 177 [Hebrew].
- Elitzur, Y., and Nir-Zevi, D. (2003). A Rock-Hewn Altar Near Shiloh. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 135.1, pp. 30–36.
- Elsner, J., and Rutherford, I., eds., (2006). *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Elsner, J., and Rutherford, I. (2006). Introduction. In: J. Elsner and I. Rutherford, eds., *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–38.
- Elsner, J. (1992). Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World. *Past and Present*, 135, pp. 3–29.
- Emerson, R.W. (1836). *Nature*. Boston: James Munroe and Company.
- Emerton, J.A. (1997). The Biblical High Place in the Light of Recent Study. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 129, pp. 116–32.
- Ergin, G. (2008). Geography-Human Relationships in Ancient Sources: Some Remarks on Geopolitics and Environmental Determinism. In: İ. Delemen, S. Çokay-Kepçe, A. Özdzibay, and Ö. Turak, eds. *EUERGETES Festschrift für Prof. Dr. Haluk Abbasoğlu zum 65. Geburtstag, Vol I*. Antalya: AKMED, pp. 449–462.
- Eriksen, T.H. (1993). *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.
- Espiritu, Y.L. (1992). *Asian American Panethnicity: Bridging Institutions and Identities*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Faust, A. (2006). Farmsteads in the Foothills of Western Samaria: A Reexamination. In: A. Maeir and A. Mazar, eds. *"I will speak the riddles of ancient times": Archaeological and Historical Studies in Honor of Amihai Mazar on the Occasion of his Sixtieth Birthday*. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, pp. 477–504.
- Feliks, J. (1963). Rice in Rabbinic Literature. *Bar-Ilan*, 1, pp. 177–189. [Hebrew]
- Feliks, J. (1982). The Jewish Agriculture. In: Z. Baras, ed. *Eretz Israel from the Destruction of the Second Temple to the Muslim Conquest*. Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, pp. 410–441. [Hebrew]
- Feliks, J. (1990). *Agriculture in Eretz-Israel in the Period of the Bible and Talmud*. Jerusalem: Rubin Mass. [Hebrew]
- Feliks, J. (1994). *Fruit Trees*. Jerusalem: Rubin Mass. [Hebrew]
- Feliks, J. (1997). *Trees: Aromatic, Ornamental, and of the Forest*. Jerusalem: Rubin Mass. [Hebrew]

- Fiensey, D.A. (1991). *The Social History of Palestine in the Herodian Period: The Land is Mine*. Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen.
- Finkelstein, I. (1981). Israelite and Hellenistic Farms in the Foothills and in the Yarkon Basin. *ErIsr*, 15, pp. 331–48 [Hebrew].
- Finkelstein, I. (1988). *The Archaeology of the Israelite Settlement*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
- Finkelstein, I. (2003). The Rise of Jerusalem and Judah: The Missing Link. In: A.G. Vaughn and A.E. Killebrew, eds. *Jerusalem in Bible and Archaeology: The First Temple Period*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 81–101.
- Finkelstein, I. (2010). The Territorial Extent and Demography of Yehud/Judea in the Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods. *Revue Biblique*, 117.1, pp. 39–54.
- Finkelstein, I. and Lederman, Z. (1997). *Highlands of Many Cultures: The Southern Samaria Survey-the Sites: Vol I & II*. Tel Aviv: Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University.
- Finkelstein, I. and Silberman, N.A. (2001). *The Bible Unearthed, Archaeology's New Vision of Ancient Israel*. New York: The Free Press.
- Finley, M. I. (1973). *The Ancient Economy*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Fischer, M., Isaac, B. and Roll, I. (1996). *Roman Roads in Judaea II: The Jaffa-Jerusalem Road*. Oxford: Tempus Reparatum.
- Fischer, M. (1998). *Marble Studies: Roman Palestine and the Marble Trade*. Konstanz: Universitätsverlag Konstanz.
- Fitzpatrick-McKinley, A. (2015). *Empire, Power and Indigenous Elites: A Case Study of the Nehemiah Memoir*. Leiden: Brill.
- Foerster G. (1983). The Synagogues at Masada and Herodium. *Eretz-Israel*, 11, pp. 224–228. [Hebrew]
- Foxhall, L. (1996). Feeling the earth move: cultivation techniques on steep slopes in classical antiquity. In: J Salmon and G. Shipley, eds. *Human Landscapes in Classical Antiquity: Environment and Culture*. London: Routledge, pp. 44–67.
- Frankfurter, D. (1998). Introduction: Approaches to Coptic Pilgrimage. In: D. Frankfurter, ed., *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 3–48.
- Frederick, CD., and Krahtopoulou, N. (2000). Deconstructing Agricultural Terraces: Examining the Influence of Construction Method on Stratigraphy, Dating and Archaeological Visibility. In: P. Halstead and C.Frederick, eds. *Landscape and Land Use in Postglacial Greece*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, pp. 79–94.
- Frei, P. (1984). Zentralgewalt und Lokalaautonomie im Achämenidenreich. In: P. Frei and K. Koch, eds. *Reichsidee und Reichsorganisation im Perserreich*. Fribourg: Univesritätsverlag.
- Freidel, D. A. and Sabloff, J. A. (1984). *Cozumel: Late Maya settlement patterns*. New York, NY : Academic Press.

Freppaz, M., Agnelli, A., Drusi, B., Stanchi, S., Galliani, C., Revel Chion, V., and Zanini, E. (2008). Soil quality and fertility: studies in the Valle d'Aosta. In: E. Fontanari and D. Patassini, eds. *Terraced Landscapes of the Alps*. Marsilio: Venice, pp. 37–39.

Frevel, C., and Pyschny, K. (2016). A Religious Revolution Devours Its Children: The Iconography of the Persian-Period Cuboid Incense Burners. In: D. Edelman, A. Fitzpatrick-McKinley, and P. Guillaume, eds. *Religion in the Achaemenid Persian Empire: Emerging Judaisms and Trends*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, pp. 91–133.

Fried, L.S. (2002). The High Places (Bāmôt) and the Reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah: An Archaeological Investigation. *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 122.3, pp. 437–465.

Fuks, D., Ackermann, O., Ayalon, A., Bar-Matthews, M., Bar-Oz, G., Levi, Y., Maeir, A., Weiss, E., Zilberman, T., and Safrai, Z. (2017). Dust clouds, climate change and coins: consiliences of palaeoclimate and economy in the Late Antique southern Levant. *Levant*, 49.1, pp. 1–19.

Fuks, G. (1983). *Scythopolis — A Greek City in Eretz Israel*. Jerusalem: Yad Yitshak Ben-Tsvi. [Hebrew]

Gadot, Y., Davidovich, U., Avni, Y., Avni, G. and Porat, N. (2016a). The Formation of Terraced Landscapes in the Judean Highlands in Israel, and its Implications for Biblical Agricultural History. *Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel*, 5.4, pp. 437–455.

Gadot, Y., Davidovich, U., Avni, G., Avni, Y., Piasetzky, M., Faershtein, G., Golan, D. and Porat, N. (2016b). The formation of a Mediterranean terraced landscape: Mount Eitan, Judean Highlands, Israel. *Journal of Archaeological Science: Reports*, 6, pp. 397–417.

Garstang, J. (1931). *Joshua, Judges*. London: Constable.

Gaster, M. (1927). *The Asatir: The Samaritan Book of the “Secrets of Moses”*. London: Royal Asiatic Society.

Gauvain, R. (2013). *Salafi Ritual Purity: In the Presence of God*. London: Routledge.

Gerstenberger, E. (2011). *Israel in the Persian period: the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature. [English translation by S. Schatzmann].

Geva, H. (2014). Jerusalem’s Population in Antiquity: A Minimalist View. *Tel Aviv*, 41, pp. 131–160.

Gibson, S., Feliks, J., Rabinowitz, L.I., Goldberg, J., Tapuach, S., and Brandes, J. (2007). Agriculture. In: M. Barenbaum and F. Skolnik, eds. *Encyclopaedia Judaica Vol I*. 2nd ed. Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, pp. 486–502.

Gibson, S., Ibbs, B., and Kloner, A. (1991). The Sataf Project of Landscape Archaeology in the Judaeen Hills: A Preliminary Report on Four Seasons of Survey and Excavation (1987–89). *Levant*, 23, pp. 29–54.

Gibson, S. (2001). Agricultural Terraces and Settlement Expansion in the Highlands of Early Iron Age Palestine: Is There Any Correlation Between the Two? In: A. Mazar, ed. *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, pp. 113–146.

Gibson, S. (2015). The archaeology of agricultural terraces in the Mediterranean zone of the southern Levant and the use of the optically stimulated luminescence (OSL) dating method. In: B. Lucke, R. Bäumler, and M. Schmidt, eds. *Soils and Sediments as Archives of Environmental Change. Geoarchaeology and Landscape Change in the Subtropics and Tropics*. Erlangen: Fränkische Geographische Gesellschaft, pp. 295–314.

Gibson, S. and Lewis, R.Y. (2017). The Origins of Terracing in the Southern Levant and Patch Cultivation/Box Fields. *Journal of Landscape Ecology*, 10.3, pp. 256–265.

Gökarıksel, B. (2009). Beyond the officially sacred: religion, secularism, and the body in the production of subjectivity. *Social & Cultural Geography*, 10:6, pp. 657–674.

Goodblatt, D. (1987). Josephus on Parthian Babylonia (Antiquities XVIII, 310-379). *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 107.4, pp. 605–622.

Goodchild, H. (2013). GIS Models of Roman Agricultural Production. In: A. Bowman and A. Wilson *The Roman Agricultural Economy: Organisation, Investment, and Production*. OUP: Oxford, pp. 55–84.

Goodman, M. (1987). *The Ruling Class of Judaea: the Origins of the Jewish Revolt Against Rome A.D. 66–70*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goodman, M. (1990). Kosher Olive Oil in Antiquity. In: Davies, P.R. and White, R.T., eds. *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, pp. 227–45.

Goodman, M. (1999). The pilgrimage economy of Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period. In: L. I. Levine, ed., *Jerusalem: its sanctity and centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. New York: Continuum, pp. 69–76.

Goodspeed, G. S. (1896). Review: The Historical Geography of the Holy Land by George Adam Smith. *The Biblical World*, 7.1, pp. 75–77.

Goor, A. (1967). The History of the Date through the Ages in the Holy Land. *Economic Botany*, 21.4, pp. 320–340.

Gophna, R. and Porat, Y. (1972). The Land of Ephraim and Menasseh. In: Kochavi, M. *Judea, Samaria and Golan: Archaeological Survey 1967–1968*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, pp. 196–241.

Gordon, S. (1993). *The Marathas 1600-1818*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Grabbe, L.L. (2004). *History of the Jews and Judaism In the Second Temple Period: Yehud - a History of the Persian Province of Judah*. London: T&T Clark.

Grabbe, L.L. (2008). *History of the Jews and Judaism in the Second Temple Period: The Coming of the Greeks - The Early Hellenistic Period (335-175 BCE)*. London: T&T Clark.

Graham, S. and Marvin, S. (2001). *Splintering Urbanism: Networked Infrastructures, Technological Mobilities and the Urban Condition*. London and New York: Routledge.

Grainger, J.D. (2010). *The Syrian Wars*. Leiden: Brill.

Granerød, G. (2016). *Dimensions of Yahwism in the Persian Period: Studies in the Religion and Society of the Judean Community at Elephantine*. Berlin: de Gruyter.

- Grant, F.C. (1926). *The Economic Background of the Gospels*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Groenewald, A. (2009). Some notes on writing a commentary: Isaiah 1–12. *Verbum Eccles* 30.1, pp. 65–90.
- Gropp, D. M., Bernstein, J.M., Brady, M. L. W., Charlesworth, J.H., Flint, P.W., Pfann, S.J., Schuller, E., Tigchelaar, E.J.C., and Vanderkam, J.C. (2001). *Wadi Daliyeh II: The Samaria Papyri from Wadi Daliyeh and Qumran Cave 4. XXVIII. Miscellanea, Part 2*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Grove, A.T. and Rackham, O. (2003). *The Nature of Mediterranean Europe: An Ecological History*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Grove, A. T. and Sutton, J.E.G. (1989). Agricultural Terracing South of the Sahara. *Azania: Archaeological Research in Africa*, 24(1), pp. 113–122.
- Gudeman, S. and Hann, C. (2015). Introduction: Ritual, Economy, and the Institutions of the Base. In: S. Gudeman and C. Hann, eds. *Economy and Ritual: Studies of Postsocialist Transformations*. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, pp. 1–30.
- Guénon, R. (1926). L'Idée du Centre dans les Traditions antiques. *Regnabit*, 12. [p. Numbers unknown]
- Gurwin, S., Goren, Y., and Lipschits, O. (2015). Structural, Technical and Petrographic Analysis of Bullae from the Samaria Papyri. *Tel Aviv*, 42, 89–102.
- Haber, S. (2011). Going Up to Jerusalem: Pilgrimage, Purity, and the Historical Jesus. In: P. Harland, ed. *Travel and Religion in Antiquity*. Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, pp. 49–67.
- Hachlili, R. (1988). *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology in the Land of Israel*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.
- Hachlili, R. (2004). *Jewish Funerary Customs, Practices and Rites in the Second Temple Period*. Leiden: Brill.
- Hachlili, R. and Killebrew, A. (1983). Jewish Funerary Customs During the Second Temple Period, in the Light of the Excavations at the Jericho Necropolis. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 115.2, pp. 109–139.
- Hadley, J. (2000). *The Cult of Asherah in Ancient Israel and Judah*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haldar, S.K. (2013). *Introduction to Mineralogy and Petrology*. Amsterdam: Elsevier.
- Hall, J. (2002). *Hellenicity: Between Ethnicity and Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hannam K., Sheller, M., and Urry, J. (2006) Mobilities, immobilities, and moorings. *Mobilities* 1., pp. 1–22
- Har-El, M. (1981). Jerusalem & Judea: Roads and Fortifications. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 44.1, pp. 8–19.
- Harland, P. (2002). The Economy of First-Century Palestine: State of the Scholarly Discussion. In: A. Blasi, P. Turcotte and J. Duhaime, eds., *Handbook of Early Christianity: Social Science Approaches*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, pp. 511–527.

Harris, W.V. (2017). The Indispensable Commodity: Notes on the Economy of Wood in the Roman Mediterranean. In: A. Wilson and A. Bowman, eds. *Trade, Commerce, and the State in the Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 211–236.

Harrison, S. and Passmore, D.G. (2008). The Ardennes campaigns of 1944: Some theoretical considerations on the role of topography. In: C.P. Nathanail, R.J. Abrahart, and R.P. Bradshaw, eds. *Military Geology and Geography: History and Technology*. Nottingham: Land Quality Press, pp. 199–206.

Hartmann, G., Bar-Oz, G., Bouchnick, R., and Reich, R. (2013). The pilgrimage economy of Early Roman Jerusalem (1st century BCE–70 CE) reconstructed from the  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  and  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values of goat and sheep remains. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 40.12, pp. 4369–4376.

Haverfield, F. (1905–6). The Romanization of Roman Britain. *ProcBritAc*, 1905-6, pp. 185–217.

Hayden, J.A. and Matar, N.I. (2014). Introduction: Pilgrims and Travellers in Search of the ‘Holy’ in Holy Land. In: J.A. Hayden and N.I. Matar, eds., *Through the Eyes of the Beholder: The Holy Land, 1517-1713*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 165–184.

Heinen, H. (1984). The Syrian-Egyptian Wars and the New Kingdoms of Asia Minor. In: F. W. Walbank, ed., *The Cambridge Ancient History Volume 7, Part 1: The Hellenistic World, 2nd edition*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp. 412–445.

Hensel, B. (2016). *Juda und Samaria Zum Verhältnis zweier nach-exilischer Jahwismen*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Hensel, B. (2019). On the Relationship of Judah and Samaria in Post-Exilic Times: A Farewell to the Conflict Paradigm. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 44.1, pp. 19–42.

Herman, G. (2012). The Jews of Parthian Babylonia. In: P. Wick and Markus Zehnder, eds., *Das Partherreich und seine Religionen: Studien zu Dynamiken religiöser Pluralität*. Mörlenbach: Computus Druck Satz & Verlag, pp. 141–150.

Hestrin, R. and Yeivin, Z. (1977). Oil from the Presses of Tirat Yehuda. *BA*, 40, pp. 29–31.

Hezser, C. (2010). *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hezser, C. (2011). *Jewish Travel in Antiquity*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Hiebert, D. (2009). Ethnicity. In: D. Gregory, R. Johnston, G. Pratt, M. Watts, and S. Whatmore, eds. *The Dictionary of Human Geography*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, pp. 214–217.

Hirsch, E.G. and Benzinger, I. (2007). Ophir. In: M. Berenbaum and F. Skolnik, eds. *Encyclopedia Judaica*. Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA.

Hobsbawm, E. J. (1990). *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hoglund, K.G. (1992). *Achaemenid Imperial Administration in Syria-Palestine*. Atlanta, GA: Scholars’ Press.

Holladay, C.R., (1983). *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors, Volume 1: Historians*. Chico, CA: Scholars’ Press.

- Horden, P. and Purcell, N. (2000). *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Horden, P. and N. Purcell, (2006). The Mediterranean and “the New Thalassology”. *The American Historical Review*, 111.3, pp. 722–740.
- Horowitz, L.K. (2011). Partners in Purity: Second Temple Olive Presses and Scapulae Scoops. *Near Eastern Archaeology*, 74.4, pp. 241–246.
- Hutchinson, J. and Smith, A.D. (1996). *Ethnicity*. Oxford: OUP.
- Hutton, W. (2006). The Construction of Religious Space in Pausanias. In: J. Elsner and I. Rutherford, eds., (2006). *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 291–317.
- Høgenhaven, J. (2009). Geography and Ideology in the Copper Scroll (3Q15) from Qumran. In: A. K. Petersen, T. Elgvin, C. Wassen, H. von Weissenberg, and M. Winnige, eds., *Northern Lights on the Dead Sea Scrolls : Proceedings of the Nordic Qumran Network 2003-2006*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 83-106. Illustrated.
- Ipsos MORI. (2014). *Perils of Perception Survey*. Available at: <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/migrations/en-uk/files/Assets/Docs/Polls/ipsos-mori-perils-of-perception-2014-tables.pdf> [accessed 19.07.2019]
- Isaac, B. (1992). *The Limits of Empire: The Roman Army in the East*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Isaac, B. (2010). Infrastructure. In: C. Hezser, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 145–164.
- Isaac, B. and Roll, I. (1976). A Roman Milestone of A.D. 69 from Judaea: The Elder Trajan and Vespasian’. *Journal of Roman Studies*, 66, pp. 15–19.
- Itzigsohn, J. (2004). The formation of Latino and Latina panethnic identities. In: N. Foner and G.M. Frederickson, eds. *Not Just Black and White: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Immigration, Race, and Ethnicity in the United States*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, pp. 197–216.
- Jacob, C. (2007). *Les lieux de savoir. Tome I: Espaces et communautés*. Paris: Albin Michel.
- Jaroš, K. (1976). *Sichem: Eine archäologische und religionsgeschichtliche Studie mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Jos 24*. Fribourg: Universitätsverlag.
- Jenkins, R. (1997). *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations*. London: Sage.
- Jensen, M.H. (2013). Purity and Politics in Herod Antipas’s Galilee: The Case for Religious Motivation. *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, 11.1, pp. 3–34.
- Jeremias, J. (1969). *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus: An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period*. London: SCM.
- Jones, A. H. M. (1974). *The Roman Economy: Studies in Ancient Economic and Administrative History*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Jordan, B.B. and Jordan-Bychkov, T.G. (2003). Ethnogenesis and Cultural Geography. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 21.1, pp. 3–17.

Kamara, A., Tzedopoulos, Y., Lampada, D., and Ferla, C. (2016). Greek Case Study: Religious and Thermal Cultural Routes "on the Footsteps of St. Paul". In: L. Siguencia, M. Gómez-Ullate, and A. Kamara, eds. *Cultural Management and Tourism in European Cultural Routes: from theory to practice*. Czestochowa: Publishing House of the Research and Innovation in Education Institute, pp. 182–197.

Kanael, B. (1962). Ancient Jewish Coins and their Historical Importance. In: *Biblical Archaeologist*, 26, pp. 38–62.

Kartveit, M. (2009a). *The Origin of the Samaritans*. Leiden: Brill.

Kartveit, M. (2009b). Who Are The “Fools” In 4Q Narrative And Poetic Composition A-C?. In: A.K.Petersen, T. Elgvin, , C. Wassen, , H. von Weissenberg, and M. Winnige, eds. *Northern Lights on the Dead Sea Scrolls: Proceedings of the Nordic Qumran Network 2003-2006*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 119–134.

Kartveit, M. (2014a). Samaritan Self-Consciousness in the First Half of the Second Century B.C.E. in Light of the Inscriptions from Mount Gerizim and Delos. In: *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 45, pp. 449–470.

Kartveit (2014b). The Date of II Reg 17,24–41. *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 126.1, pp. 31–44.

Kartveit, M. (2018). Anti-Samaritan Polemics in the Hebrew Bible? The Case of 2 Kings 17:24–41. In: J. Dušek, ed. *The Samaritans in historical, cultural, and linguistic perspectives*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Kasher, A. (1990). *Jews and Hellenistic Cities in Eretz-Israel: Relations of the Jews in Eretz-Israel with the Hellenistic Cities during the Second Temple Period (332 BCE–70 CE)*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Keay, S. and Terrenato, N., eds. (2001). *Italy and the West: Comparative issues in Romanization*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

Keller, T. (2009). The Mountains Roar: the Alps during the Great War. *Environmental History*, 14, pp. 253–274.

Kenyon, K.M. (1971). *Royal Cities of the Old Testament*. Schocken: New York.

Kerkeslager, A. (1998). Jewish Pilgrimage and Jewish Identity in Hellenistic and Early Roman Egypt. In: D. Frankfurter, ed., *Pilgrimage and Holy Space in Late Antique Egypt*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 99–225.

Killebrew, A.E. (2010). Village and Countryside. In: C. Hezser, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 189–209.

Kloner, A. (1996). Stepped Roads in Roman Palestine. *ARAM*, 6, pp. 111–137.

Kloner, A. (2000). Columbaria in Jerusalem. In: J. Schwartz, Z. Amar, and I. Ziffer, eds. *Jerusalem and Eretz Israel: Arie Kindler Volume*. Ramat Gan and Tel Aviv: Bar Ilan University and Eretz Israel Museum, pp. 61\*–66\*.

- Kloner, A. (2011). The Identity of the Idumeans Based on the Archaeological Evidence from Maresha. In: O. Lipschits, G. Knoppers, and M. Oeming, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, pp. 563–574.
- Kloppenborg, J.S. (2000). Dating Theodotos (CIJ II 1404). *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 51.2, pp. 243–280.
- Knoppers, G.N. (2004). In Search of Post-Exilic Israel: Samaria after the Fall of the Northern Kingdom. In: J. Day, ed. *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel: Proceedings of the Oxford Old Testament Seminar*. London: T&T Clark, pp. 150–180.
- Knoppers, G. N. (2006). Revisiting the Samaritan Question in the Persian Period. In: O. Lipschits and M. Oeming, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, pp. 265–291.
- Knoppers, G.N. (2007). Cutheans or Children of Jacob? The Issue of Samaritan Origins in 2 Kings 17. In: R. Rezetko, T. H. Lim, and W. B. Aucker, eds. *Reflection and Refraction: Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 223–39.
- Kochavi, M., Gophna, R. and Beit-Arieh, I. (1973). The Sharon Survey. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot*, 47, pp. 26–28. [Hebrew]
- Kokein, D.S. (2013). Toward the Source of the Sambatyon: Shabbat Discourse and the Origins of the Sabbatical River Legend. *AJS Review*, 37.1, pp. 1–28.
- Kong, L. (1990). Geography and Religion: Trends and Prospects. *Progress in Human Geography*, 14:3, pp. 355–371.
- Kong, L. (2001). Mapping 'New' Geographies of Religion: Politics and Poetics in Modernity. *Progress in Human Geography*, 25:2, pp. 211–233.
- Kong, L. (2005a). Re-presenting the religious: nation, community and identity in museums. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6:4, pp. 495–513.
- Kong, L. (2005b). Religious Schools: For Spirit, (f)or Nation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 23, pp.615–631.
- Kong, L. (2010). Global shifts, theoretical shifts: Changing geographies of religion. *Progress in Human Geography*, 34:6, pp. 755–776.
- Kosmin, P. (2014). *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Kreissig, H. (1970). *Die sozialen Zusammenhänge des jüdischen Krieges*. Berlin: Akademi Verlag.
- Kugel, J. (2007). How Old Is the "Aramaic Levi Document"? *Dead Sea Discoveries*, 14.3, pp. 291–312.
- LaCoste, N. (2018). *Jewish Experiences with Water in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt*. Leiden: Brill.
- Landau, Y.H. (1966). A Greek Inscription Found Near Hefzibah. *Israel Exploration Journal*, 16.1, pp. 54–70.

- Lanfranchi, G.B. (2003). The Assyrian expansion in the Zagros and the local ruling elites. In: G.B. Lanfranchi, M. Roaf, and R. Rollinger, eds. *Continuity of Empire (?): Assyria, Media, Persia*. Padova: S.a.r.g.o.n. Editrice e Libreria, pp. 79–118.
- Lapin, H. (2001). *Economy, Geography, and Provincial History in Later Roman Palestine*. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck.
- Lapin, H. (2017). Temple, Cult and Consumption in Second Temple Jerusalem. In: O. Tal and Z. Weiss, eds. *Expressions of Cult in the Southern Levant in the Greco-Roman period: Manifestations in Text and Material Culture*. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, pp. 241–253.
- Lapin, H. (2017). Temple, Cult and Consumption in Second Temple Jerusalem. In: O. Tal and Z. Weiss, eds. *Expressions of Cult in the Southern Levant in the Greco-Roman period: Manifestations in Text and Material Culture*. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, pp. 241–253.
- Lapp, N. (1985). The Statum V Pottery from Balatah (Shechem). *BASOR*, 257, pp. 19–43.
- Lapp, N. (2008). *Shechem IV: The Persian-Hellenistic Pottery of Shechem/Tell Balâṭah*. Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research.
- Lee, K.-J. (2011). *The Authority and Authorization of Torah in the Persian Period*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Lefebvre, H. (1974). *La production de l'espace*. Paris: Éditions Anthropos.
- Lemaire, A. (2006). Administration in Fourth-Century B.C.E. Judah in Light of Epigraphy and Numismatics. In: O. Lipschitz, G. Knoppers, and R. Albertz, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 53–74.
- Lernau, H. and Lernau, O. (1992). Fish Remains. In: A. De Groot and D. T. Ariel, eds. *Excavations at the City of David 1978-1985 Directed by Yigal Shiloh (Volume III): Stratigraphical, Environmental, and Other Reports*. Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, pp. 131–148.
- Le Roux, P. (2004). La romanisation en question. *Annales, histoire, sciences sociales*, 59.2, pp. 287–331.
- Lemeche, N.P. (2015). *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israel*. London: Bloomsbury TT & Clark.
- Levine, L.I. (1996). The Nature and Origin of the Palestinian Synagogue Reconsidered. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 115.3, pp. 425–448.
- Levine, L.I. (2000). *The Ancient Synagogue, The First Thousand Years*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Levine, L.I. (2002). *Jerusalem : Portrait of the City in the Second Temple Period, 538 B.C.E.-70 C.E.* Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, PA.
- Levine, L.I. (2003). The First Century CE Synagogues in Historical Perspective. In: B. Olsson and M. Zetterholm, eds. *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins until 200 CE. Papers Presented at an International Conference at Lund University, October 14–17, 2001*. Lund: Lund University Publications, pp. 1–24.
- Lipschitz, O. (2003). Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and Fifth Centuries B.C.E. In: Lipschitz, O. and Blenkinsopp, J., eds. *Judah and Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*. University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, pp. 323–376.

- Lipschits, O. (2006). Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E. In: O. Lipschits and M. Oeming, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, pp. 19–52.
- Lipschits, O. and Oeming, M. (2006). Introduction. In: O. Lipschits and M. Oeming, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, IN.: Eisenbrauns, pp. ix–xvii.
- Lipschits, O. and Vanderhooft, D. (2006). Yehud Stamp Impressions in the Fourth Century B.C.E.: A Time of Administrative Consolidation? In: O. Lipschitz, G. Knoppers, and R. Albertz, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, pp. 75–94.
- Long, A.A. (2008). The concept of the cosmopolitan in Greek & Roman thought. *Daedalus*, 137.3, pp. 50–58.
- Lopez, D. and Espiritu, Y.L. (1990). Panethnicity in the United States: a Theoretical Framework. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 13, pp. 198–224.
- Lucero, L.J., and Kinkella, A. (2014). A Place for Pilgrimage: The Ancient Maya Sacred Landscape of Cara Blanca, Belize. In: Harmanşah, Ö. *Of Rocks and Water: Towards an Archaeology of Place*. Oxford: Oxbow Books, pp. 13–39.
- Lyman, C. (1850). *An Historical Geography of the Bible*. Philadelphia, PA: E.H. Butler & co.
- Ma, J. (2000). *Antiochos III and the Cities of Western Asia Minor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ma, J. (2013). Re-Examining Hanukkah. In: *The Marginalia Review of Books*, [online] 09/07. Available at: [<http://marginalia.lareviewofbooks.org/re-examining-hanukkah>] [Accessed 22/11/19].
- Mabie, J. (2016). Mark Twain's The Innocents Abroad, transatlantic travel writing, and the desolation of the Holy Lan. In: K. Hutchings and J. Miller, eds. *Transatlantic Literary Ecologies: Nature and Culture in the Nineteenth-Century Anglophone Atlantic World*. London: Routledge [accessed online]
- Maeir, A., Dar, S. and Safrai, Z. (2003). *The Rural Landscape of Ancient Israel*. Oxford, England: Archaeopress.
- Magen, Y. (2003). Mamre: A Cultic Site from the Reign of Herod. In: G.C. Bottini, L. Di Segni, L. D. Chrupcala, eds., *One Land, Many Cultures: Archaeological Studies in Honour of Stanislaw Loffreda OFM*. Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, pp. 245–257.
- Magen, Y. (2004a). The Land of Benjamin in the Second Temple Period. In: Y. Magen, T. D. Ariel, G. Bijovsky, Y. Zionit, and O. Sirkis, eds. *The Land of Benjamin*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, pp. 1–28.
- Magen, Y. (2004b). Qalandiya. In: Y. Magen, T. D. Ariel, G. Bijovsky, Y. Zionit, and O. Sirkis, eds. *The Land of Benjamin*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, pp. 29–144.
- Magen, Y. (2008). *Mount Gerizim Excavations Volume II: A Temple City*. Jerusalem: JSP.
- Magen, Y., and Finkelstein, I. (1993). *Archaeological Survey of the Hill Country of Benjamin*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority; Civil Administration in Judah and Samaria; Staff Officer of Archaeology.

- Magen, Y., Misgav, H., and Tsfania, L. (2004). *Mount Gerizim Excavations Volume I: The Aramaic, Hebrew and Samaritan Inscriptions*. Jerusalem: JSP2.
- Magen, Y., Zionit, Y. and Sirkis, O. (2004). Kiryat Sefer—A Jewish Village and Synagogue of the Second Temple Period. In: Y. Magen, T. D. Ariel, G. Bijovsky, Y. Zionit, and O. Sirkis, eds. *The Land of Benjamin*. Jerusalem: Israel Antiquities Authority, pp. 179–242.
- Magness, J. (2001). The Cults of Isis and Kore at Samaria-Sebaste in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods. *The Harvard Theological Review*, 94.2, pp. 157–177.
- Magness, J. (2002). In the footsteps of the Tenth Roman Legion. In: A.M. Berlin and J. A. Overman, eds.. *The First Jewish Revolt: archaeology, history and ideology*. London: Routledge, pp. 189–212.
- Magness, J. (2019). Herod the Great's Self-Representation Through His Tomb at Herodium. *Journal of Ancient Judaism*, 10.3, pp. 258–287.
- Manning, J.G. (2011). The Capture of the Thebaid. In: P.F. Dorfman and B.B. Bryan, eds. *Perspectives on Ptolemaic Thebes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, pp. 1–15.
- Marcus, J. (1984). Islam, Women, and Pollution in Turkey. *Journal of the Anthropological Association of Oxford*, 15.3, pp. 204–218.
- Marshak, A.K. (2011). Rise of the Idumeans: Ethnicity and Politics in Herod's Judea. In: B. Eckhardt, ed. *Jewish Identity and Politics between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 117–129.
- Masson, E. and Harden, J. (2009). Drumossie Moor: Memorialisation, development and restoration in an evolving historic landscape. In Pollard, T., ed. *Culloden: The History and Archaeology of the Last Clan Battle*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword, pp. 203–217.
- Matar, N.I. (2014). The Sufi and the Chaplain: 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī and Henry Maundrell. In: J.A. Hayden and N.I. Matar, eds., *Through the Eyes of the Beholder: The Holy Land, 1517-1713*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 165–184.
- Matassa, L. (2007). Unravelling the myth of the Synagogue on Delos. In: *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israeli Archaeological Society*, 25, pp. 81–115.
- Matei-Chesnoiu, M. (2012). *Re-imagining Western European Geography in English Renaissance Drama*. London: Palgrave-Macmillan.
- Mathis, A. and Mathis, D. (2015). Démilitarisation et reconversion de l'héritage militaire. *Projets de paysage*, 11, pp. 1–18.
- Mathis, D., Chiffre, E., and Weimerskirch, G. (2017). Les hydrosystèmes défensifs: des paysages militaires atypiques de la Ligne Maginot. *Revue de Géographie historique*, 10–11.
- Mattingly, D. J. (2004). Being Roman: Expressing identity in a provincial setting. *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 17, pp. 5–25.
- Mayhew, R.J. (2010). Geography as the eye of enlightenment historiography. *Modern Intellectual History*, 7.3, pp. 611–627.

- Mazar, A. (2000). A Sacred Tree in the Chalcolithic Shrine at En Gedi: A Suggestion. *Bulletin of the Anglo-Israel Archaeological Society*, 18, pp. 31–36
- McAnany, P.A. and Wells, E. eds. (2008). *Dimensions of Ritual Economy*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing.
- McEvenue, S.E. (1981). The Political Structure of Judah from Cyrus to Nehemiah. *CBQ*, 43, pp. 353–64.
- McLaren, J.S. (2011). Going to War against Rome: The Motivation of the Jewish Rebels. In: M. Popović, ed. *Jewish Revolt Against Rome: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 129–154.
- McLean, B.H. (2002). *An Introduction to Greek Epigraphy of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods from Alexander the Great Down to the Reign of Constantine (323 B.C.-A.D. 337)*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- McLennan, G. (2007). Towards Postsecular Sociology? *Sociology*, 41.5, pp. 857–870.
- Meinig, D. W. (1979). The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene. In: D. W. Meinig and J.B. Jackson, eds. *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 33–48.
- Meri, J.W. (1999). Aspects of Baraka (Blessings) and Ritual Devotion Among Medieval Muslims and Jews. *Medieval Encounters*, 5, pp. 46–60.
- Meshorer, Y., (2001). *A Treasury of Jewish Coins: from the Persian period to Bar Kokhba*. Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi.
- Meyers, C.L. (2007). From Field Crops to Food: Attributing Gender and Meaning to Bread Production in Iron Age Israel. In: D.R. Edwards and C.T. McCollough, eds. *The Archaeology of Difference: Gender, Ethnicity, Class, and the 'Other' in Antiquity; Studies in Honor of Eric M. Meyers*. Boston, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, pp. 67– 84.
- Mientjes, A. (2012). Connecting lowlands and uplands: An ethno-archaeological approach to transhumant pastoralism in Sardinia (Italy). In: S. Kluiving and E. Guttman-Bond, ed., *Landscape Archaeology: Between Art and Science*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, pp. 249–264.
- Milik, J.T. (1962). Le rouleau de cuivre provenant de la grotte 3Q (3Q15). In: M. Baillet, J.T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, eds., *Les 'petites grottes' de Qumrân*. Oxford: Clarendon press, pp. 199–317.
- Millar, F.G.B. (2006). Caravan Cities: The Roman Near East and Long-Distance Trade. In: F.G.B. Millar, ed. *The Greek World, the Jews, and the East, Studies in the History of Greece and Rome*, vol. 3. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. pp. 275–299.
- Millett, M. (1990). *The Romanization of Britain: an essay in archaeological interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Milne, P.J. (1993). What Shall We Do With Judith? A Feminist Reassessment of A Biblical 'Heroine'. *Semeia*, 62, pp. 37–58.
- Mitchell, W.J.T. (2000). Holy Landscape: Israel, Palestine, and the American Wilderness. *Critical Inquiry*, 26.2, pp. 193–223.

- Mitchell, W.J.T. (2002). Imperial Landscape. In: W.J.T. Mitchell, ed. *Landscape and Power*, 2nd Edition. Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, pp. 5–34.
- Mobley, G. (1997). The Wild Man in the Bible and the Ancient Near East. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 116.2, pp. 217–233.
- Morawiecki, L. (1994). The Copper Scroll Treasure: A Fantasy or Stock Inventory? *QC*, 3.4, pp. 169–174.
- Morinis, E.A., eds., (1992). *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Mowinckel, S. (1957). The Copper Scroll—An Apocryphon? *JBL*, 76, pp. 261–265.
- Mullen, A. (2013). *Southern Gaul and the Mediterranean*. Cambridge: P.
- Najman, H. (2006). Towards a Study of the Uses of the Concept of Wilderness in Ancient Judaism. *Dead Sea Discoveries*, 13, pp. 99–113.
- Naveh, J. and Greenfield, J.C. (1984). Hebrew and Aramaic in the Persian Period. In: W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, eds. *The Cambridge History of Judaism, I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 115–129.
- Na’aman, N. and Lissovsky, N. (2008). Kuntillet ‘Ajrud, Sacred Trees and the Asherah. *Tel Aviv*, 35, pp. 186–208.
- Netzer, E. (1987). *Herodium: An Archaeological Guide*. Israel: The Herodium Expedition.
- Neusner, J. (1969). *A History of the Jews in Babylonia. I. The Parthian Period*. Leiden: Brill.
- Neusner, J. (1990). *The Economics of the Mishnah*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Newman, L.E. (1983). *The Sanctity of the Seventh Year: A Study of Mishnah Tractate Shebiit*. Providence, RI: Brown Judaic Studies.
- Nickelsburg, G.W.E. and VanderKam, J.C. (2012). *1 Enoch: the Hermeneia translation*. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.
- Nihan, C. and Gonzalez, H. (2018). Competing Attitudes toward Samaria in Chronicles and Second Zechariah. In: M. Kartveit, ed. *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans*. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 93–114.
- Nongbri, B. (2008). Dislodging “Embedded” Religion: A Brief Note on a Scholarly Trope. *Numen*, 55, pp. 440–460.
- Noonan, B.J. (2011). Did Nehemiah Own Tyrian Goods? Trade between Judea and Phoenicia during the Achaemenid Period. *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 130.2, pp. 281–298.
- Nostrand, R.L. (1992). *The Hispano Homeland*. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Nostrand, R.L. and Estraville, L.E. (2002). *Homelands: A Geography of Culture and Place Across America*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Noth, M. (1966). *The Old Testament*. Translated by V.I. Gruhn. Philadelphia, PA: Fortress.

- Nunn, A. (2014). Attic Pottery Imports and Their Impact on 'Identity Discourses'. In: C. Frevel, K. Pyschny, and I. Cornelius, eds. *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, pp. 391–428. Officer of Archaeology.
- Okamoto, D. and Mora, C.G. (2014). Panethnicity. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 40, pp. 219–239.
- Park, C. (1999). *Sacred Worlds*. London: Routledge.
- Pastor, J. (2010). In: C. Hezser, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 297–307.
- Peach, C. (2002). Social geography: new religions and ethnoburbs - contrasts with cultural geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 26.2, pp. 252–260
- Peleg, N., Morin, E., Gvirtzman, H., and Enzel, Y. (2012). Rainfall, spring discharge and past human occupancy in the Eastern Mediterranean. *Climatic Change*, 112.3–4, pp. 769–789.
- Peterson, B. and Stripling, S. (2017). Kh. el-Maqatir: A Fortified Settlement of the Late Second Temple Period on the "Benjamin Plateau". *Journal for the Study of Archaeology and History of the Highland Region*, 7, pp. 61\*–91\*.
- Petsalis-Diomidis, A. (2006). The Body in Space: Visual Dynamics in Graeco-Roman Healing Pilgrimage. In: J. Elsner and I. Rutherford, eds., *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 183–218.
- Pitts, M. and Versluys, M.J., eds. (2014). *Globalisation and the Roman World: World History, Connectivity and Material Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Polanyi, K. (1944). *The Great Transformation*. New York: Reinhart & Company, Inc.
- Pollard, T. (2009). Capturing the moment: the archaeology of Culloden battlefield. In: T. Pollard, ed. *Culloden: The History and Archaeology of the Last Clan Battle*. Barnsley: Pen and Sword, pp. 130–162.
- Porat, R., Chachy, R., and Kalman, Y., eds. (2015). *Herodium. Final reports of the 1972-2010 excavations directed by Ehud Netzer, vol. I. Herod's tomb precinct*. Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
- Porat, N., Davidovich, U., Avni, Y., Avni, G., and Gadot, Y. (2017). Using OSL Measurements to Decipher Soil History in Archaeological Terraces, Judean Highlands, Israel. *Land Degradation and Development*, 29.3, pp. 643–650.
- Price, S. (1999). *Religions of the Ancient Greeks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Price, S. and Nixon, L. (2005). Ancient Greek Agricultural Terraces: Evidence from Texts and Archaeological Survey. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 109.4, pp. 665–694.
- Pummer, R., (1998). The Samaritans in Egypt. In: C.-B. Amphoux, A. Frey and U. Schattner-Rieser, eds. *Études sémitiques et samaritaines offertes à Jean Margain*. Lausanne: Zèbre, pp. 213–232.
- Rainey, A. F. (1976). In Memoriam: Yohanan Aharoni. *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 39.2, pp. 53–4.

- Rappaport, U. (1969). Les Iduméens en Egypte. *Revue de Philologie*, 43, pp. 71–82.
- Rappaport, U. (1984). Numismatics. In: W.D. Davies and L. Finkelstein, eds. *The Cambridge History of Judaism, Volume 1. Introduction: The Persian Period*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 25–59.
- Rappaport, U. (1990). The Samaritan Sect in the Hellenistic Period. *Zion*, 55, pp. 373–396. [Hebrew]
- Raviv, D. (2016). Kh. el-Maqatir: A Fortified Settlement of the Late Second Temple Period on the “Benjamin Plateau”. *Journal for the Study of Archaeology and History of the Highland Region*, 6, pp. 51\*–66\*.
- Reese-Taylor, K. (2012). Sacred Places and Sacred Landscapes. In: D. Nichols, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Mesoamerican Archaeology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 752–763.
- Regev, E. (2003). Abominated Temple and a Holy Community: The Formation of the Notions of Purity and Impurity in Qumran. *Dead Sea Discoveries*, 10.2, pp. 243–278.
- Regev, E. (2004). Family Burial, Family Structure, and The Urbanization of Herodian Jerusalem. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 136.2, pp. 109–131.
- Reich, R. (1990). *Miqwa’ot (Jewish Ritual Immersion Bath) in Eretz-Israel in the Second Temple and the Mishnah and Talmud Periods*. Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem. [Hebrew; unpublished]
- Reinhardt, W. (1995). The Population Size of Jerusalem and the Numerical Growth of the Jerusalem Church. In: R. Bauckham, ed., *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, pp. 237–265.
- Richmond, I. A. (1962). The Roman Siege-Works of Masada, Israel. *Journal of*
- Riklin, S. (1995). ‘Ofarim. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, 13, pp. 53–55.
- Riklin, S. (1997). *Bet Arye*. c, 32, pp. 7–20 [Hebrew].
- Rocca, S. (2010). *The fortifications of ancient Israel and Judah 1200-586 BC*. London: Osprey.
- Rocca, S. (2013). *The forts of Judaea 168 BC-AD 73: from the Maccabees to the fall of Masada*. London: Osprey.
- Rofé, A. (2009). *Introduction to the Literature of the Hebrew Bible*. Simor: Jerusalem.
- Roitman, A.D. (1992). Achior in the book of Judith: His role and significance. In: J.C. VanderKam, ed. *No One Spoke Ill of Her: Essays on Judith*. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature Press, pp. 31–46.
- Roll, I. (2005). Imperial Roads Across and Trade Routes Beyond the Roman Provinces of Judaea-Palaestina and Arabia: The State of Research. *Tel Aviv*, 32.1, pp. 107–118.
- Roll, I. and Tal, O. (2008). The Route Network of Persian Period Palestine. In: H. Kühne, R.M. Czichon, and F.J. Kreppner, eds. *Proceedings of the 4th International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, Volume 1*. Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz Verlag, pp. 219–228.
- Roller, D. (1998). *The Building Program of Herod the Great*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

- Römer, T. (2018). Cult Centralization and the Publication of the Torah Between Jerusalem and Samaria. In: M. Kartveit, ed. *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans*. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 80–92.
- Ron, Z. (1966). Agricultural terraces in the Judean mountains. *IEJ*, 16, pp. 111–122.
- Ron, Z. (1985). Development and Management of Irrigation Systems in Mountain Regions of the Holy Land. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 10.2, pp. 149–169.
- Rosen, B. (1986). Subsistence Economy of Stratum II. In: Finkelstein, I. (ed.). *Izbet Šarta*. Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.
- Rosenberg, S.G. (2006). *Airag al-Amir: The Architecture of the Tobiads*. Oxford: John and Erica Hedges.
- Rosenblum, J.D. (2009). Kosher Olive Oil in Antiquity Reconsidered. *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 40.3, pp. 356–365.
- Rosenfeld, B. and Menirav, J. (2005). *Markets and Marketing in Roman Palestine*. Leiden: Brill.
- Rozenson, Y., Zoref, H., and Bashan, G. (1994). *A Tour Following the Sources in Sataf and its Vicinity*. Unpublished guide for the Jewish National Fund. [Hebrew]
- Rudaz, G. (2008). Stewards of the Mountains: The Poetics and Politics of Local Knowledge in the Valais Alps. In: D. E. Cosgrove and V. D. Dora, eds., *High Places: Cultural Geographies of Mountains and Ice*. London: I.B. Tauris, pp. 147–61.
- Rutherford, I. (2006). Island of the Extremity: Space, Language and Power in the Pilgrimage Traditions of the Philae. In: J. Elsner and I. Rutherford, eds., *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 229–256.
- Sabloff, J. (2008). Considerations of Ritual Economy. In: P.A. McAnany and E. Wells, eds. *Dimensions of Ritual Economy*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing, pp. 269–277.
- Sack, R.D. (1974) The spatial separatist theme in geography. *Economic Geography*, 50, 1–19.
- Sack, R.D. (1980). *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought: A Geographic Perspective*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Sack, R.D. (1997). *Homo Geographicus: A Framework for Action, Awareness, and Moral Concern*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Safrai, S., Glikson, Y., and Hyman, S.C. (2007). Pilgrimage. In: M. Berenbaum and F. Skolnik, eds. *Encyclopedia Judaica*. Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Safrai, S., Stern, M., Flusser, D., and van Unnik, W.C. (1988). *The Jewish People in the First Century, Volume 2*. Leiden: Brill.
- Safrai, S. (1965). *Pilgrimage at the Time of the Second Temple*. Tel Aviv: Am Hassefer Publishers.
- Safrai, Z. (1994). *The Economy of Roman Palestine*. London: Routledge.
- Safrai, Z. (1997). The Village in Judea. In: S. Dar and Z. Safrai, eds. *The Village in Ancient Israel*. Tel Aviv: Eretz, pp. 11–73. [Hebrew].

- Safrai, Z. (2000). The Gentile Cities of Judea: Between the Hasmonean Occupation and the Roman Liberation. In: G. Galil and M. Weinfeld, eds. *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography: Presented to Zechariah Kallai*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 63–90.
- Safrai, Z. (2003). The Agrarian Structure in Palestine in the Time of the Second Temple, Mishnah and Talmud. In: A. Maeir, S. Dar, and Z. Safrai, eds., *The Rural Landscape of Ancient Israel*. Oxford, England: Archaeopress, pp. 105–125.
- Safrai, Z. (2010). Agriculture and Farming. In: C. Hezser, ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 246–263.
- Sanders, E.P. (1992). *Judaism: Practice and Belief, 63 BCE–66CE*. Philadelphia, PA: Trinity.
- Sawyer, D. (2001). Dressing Up/Dressing Down: Power, Performance and Identity in the Book of Judith. *Theology and Sexuality*, 15, pp. 23–31.
- Schafer, I. (2017). A Matrix for Mediterranean (Area) Studies – Towards an Interdisciplinary Approach in the Post-“Arab Spring” Context. *Mediterranean Review*, 7.1, pp. 57–89.
- Scheftelowitz, N. and Oren, R. (1996). *Trial Excavations in the Kh. el-Bira Region*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press.
- Scheftelowitz, N. and Oren, R. (1999). Kh. el-Bira. *Excavations and Surveys in Israel*, 19, pp. 42\*–43\*
- Scheidel, W., ed. (2009). *Rome and China: Comparative Perspectives on Ancient World Empires*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schmid, K. (2018). Overcoming the Sub-Deuteronism and Sub-Chronicism of Historiography. In: M. Kartveit, ed. *The Bible, Qumran, and the Samaritans*. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 17–29.
- Schmitt, R. (2014). Continuity and Change in Post-Exilic Votive Practices. In: C. Frevel, K. Pyschny, and I. Cornelius, eds. *A "Religious Revolution" in Yehûd? The Material Culture of the Persian Period as a Test Case*. Fribourg: Academic Press Fribourg, pp. 95–109.
- Schniedewind, W. (2006). Aramaic, the Death of Written Hebrew, and Language Shift in the Persian Period. In: S.L. Sanders, ed. *Margins of Writing, Origins of Culture*. Chicago, IL: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, pp. 137–147.
- Schwartz, D.R. (1998). Josephus's Tobiads: Back to the Second Century?. In: M. Goodman, ed. *Jews in a Graeco-Roman World*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 47–61.
- Schwartz, D.R. (2009). Philo, His Family, and His Times. In: A. Kamesar, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 9–31.
- Schwartz, S., (1993). John Hyrcanus I's Destruction of the Gerizim Temple and Judaeon-Samaritan Relations. *Jewish History*, 7.1, pp. 9–25.
- Schwartz, S. (1994). On the Autonomy of Judaea in the Fourth and Third Centuries B.C.E. *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 45.2, pp. 157–168.
- Schwartz, S. (2000). Herod, friend of the Jews. In: J. Schwartz, Z. Amar, and I. Ziffer, eds., *Jerusalem and Eretz Israel: Arie Kindler Volume*. Tel Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum, pp. 67–76.
- Schwartz, S. (2001). *Imperialism and Jewish Society*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Schwartz, S. (2006). Political, Social, and Economic Life in the Land of Israel, 66–c. 235. In: S. Katz, ed. *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, vol. 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 23–52.
- Schwartz, S. (2010). *Were the Jews a Mediterranean Society? Reciprocity and Solidarity in Ancient Judaism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Scott, R. (2008). *Degrees of Freedom: Louisiana and Cuba after Slavery*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Scullion, S. (2006) 'Pilgrimage' and Greek Religion: Sacred and Secular in the Pagan Polis. In: J. Elsner and I. Rutherford, eds., *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 111–130.
- Segal, M.H. (1962). The Song of Songs. *Vetus Testamentum*, 12.1, pp. 470–490.
- Seland, E. (2015). Writ in water, lines in sand: Ancient trade routes, models and comparative evidence. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 2, pp. 1–11.
- Seland, E.H. (2016). *Ships of the Desert and Ships of the Sea: Palmyra in the World Trade of the First Three Centuries CE*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag.
- Seligman, J. (1999). Agricultural Complexes at Ras Abu Ma'aruf (Pisgat Ze'ev East A) North of Jerusalem. *'Atiqot* 38, pp. 137–70.
- Setha, L. and Lawrence-Zúñiga, D., eds. (2003). *The anthropology of space and place*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Seyrig, H. (1973). *Trésors du Levant anciens et nouveaux*. Paris: Librairie Orientaliste P. Geuthner.
- Sheller, M. (2014). The new mobilities paradigm for a live sociology. *Current Sociology*, 62.6, pp. 789–811.
- Sheller, M., and Urry, J. (2006). The new mobilities paradigm. *Environment and Planning A*, 38, pp. 207–226.
- Shiloh, Y. (1979). New excavations in the City of David. *Qadmoniot*, 45, p. 12–9. [Hebrew]
- Shrank, C. (2004). *Writing the Nation in Reformation England, 1530–1580*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Singer, A. (2002). *Constructing Ottoman Beneficence : An Imperial Soup Kitchen in Jerusalem*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Singh, R. L., and Singh, R. P. B., eds., (1987). *Trends in the Geography of Pilgrimages: Homage to David E. Sopher*. Varanasi: National Geographical Society of India.
- Smith, A. (1995). *Nations and Nationalism in a Global Era*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Smith, G.A. (1894). *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Smith, M.S. (2001). *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Soja, E., (2011). *Postmodern Geographies*. London: Verso.

- Southwood, K. (2012). *Ethnicity and the Mixed Marriage Crisis in Ezra 9-10: An Anthropological Approach*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sperber, D. (1976). Objects of Trade between Palestine and Egypt in Roman Times. *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 19.2, pp. 113–147.
- Stager, L.E. (1985). The Archaeology of the Family in Ancient Israel. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, 260, pp. 1–35.
- Stanley, A.P. (1856). *Sinai and Palestine in Connexion with Their History*. New ed. London: John Murray.
- Stern, E. (1982). *Material Culture of the Land of the Bible in the Persian period, 538–332 B.C.* Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society.
- Stern, E. (2006). The Religious Revolution in Persian-Period Judah. In: O. Lipschits and M. Oeming, eds. *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period*. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, pp. 197–205.
- Stoddard, R., and Morinis, A., eds., (1997). *Sacred Places, Sacred Spaces: The Geography of Pilgrimage*. Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press.
- Stone, M. (2002). Aramaic Levi in Its Contexts. *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 9, pp. 307–326.
- Storey, G. R. (1997). The population of ancient Rome. *Antiquity*, 71.274, pp. 966–78.
- Stump, R.W. (2008). *The Geography of Religion: Faith, Place, and Space*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Suleimani, G. and Weiss, D. (1994). Mount Eitan Survey. *Hadashot Arkheologiyot*, 101–102, pp. 90–91.
- Suriano, M.J. (2012). Ruin Hills at the Threshold of the Netherworld: The Tell in the Conceptual Landscape of the Ba'al Cycle and Ancient Near Eastern Mythology. *Die Welt des Orients*, 42.2, pp. 210–230.
- Sweeney, M. (1996). *Isaiah 1–39, with an introduction to prophetic literature*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Tcherikover, V. (1937). Palestine under the Ptolemies. *Mizraim*, 4/5, pp. 9–90.
- Tcherikover, V. (1960). *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society. (trans. S. Applebaum).
- Tepper, Y., and Tepper, Y. (2011). The Road that Bears the People – Pilgrimage Roads to Jerusalem in the Second Temple Period. In: S. Safrai and Z. Safrai, eds., *Mishnat Eretz Israel, Tractates Orla and Bikkurim*. Jerusalem: Mikhlelet Lifshits : ha-Kibuts ha-me'uhad, pp. 273–292. [Hebrew]
- Thompson, D. (1988). *Memphis under the Ptolemies*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Thonemann, P. (2011). *The Maeander Valley: A Historical Geography from Antiquity to Byzantium*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tienmeyer, L. (2011). Will the prophetic texts from the Hellenistic period stand up, please! In: L. Grabbe and O. Lipschits, eds. *Judah Between East and West: The Transition from Persian to Greek Rule (ca. 400-200 BCE)*. London: T&T Clark, pp. 256–279,

- Tomasino, A.J. (2008). Oracles of Insurrection: The Prophetic Catalyst of the Great Revolt. *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 59.1, pp. 86–111.
- Tuan, Y. (1974). *Topophilia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Turner, S., Bolòs, J., and Kinnaird, T. (2018). Changes and continuities in a Mediterranean landscape: a new interdisciplinary approach to understanding historic character in western Catalonia. *Landscape Research*, 7, pp. 922–938.
- VanderKam, J.C. (1989). *The Book of Jubilees. A Translation*. Leuven: Peeters.
- Vaughan, P.H. (1974). *The Meaning of 'Bamah' in the Old Testament: A Study of the Etymological, Textual and Archaeological Evidence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Venter, P.M. (2011). The function of the Ammonite Achior in the book of Judith. *HTS Theological Studies*, 67.3, pp. 1–9.
- Verseput, D.J. (1994). Jesus' Pilgrimage to Jerusalem and Encounter in the Temple: A Geographical Motif in Matthew's Gospel. *Novum Testamentum*, 36.2, pp. 105–121.
- Vidal, J. (2004). The Sacred Landscape of the Kingdom Of Ugarit. *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*, 4.1, pp. 143–154.
- Votrubá, G.F. (2007). Imported Building Materials of Sebastos Harbour, Israel. *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology*, 36.2, pp. 325–335.
- Wagstaff, M. (1992). Agricultural Terraces: The Vasilikos Valley, Cyprus. In: M. Bell and J. Boardman, eds. *Past and Present Soil Erosion: Archaeological and Geographical Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxbow, pp. 155–161.
- Wallace-Hadrill, A. (2008). *Rome's Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Webster, J. (2001). Creolizing the Roman provinces. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 105.2, pp. 209–225.
- Webster, J. (2001). Creolizing the Roman provinces. *American Journal of Archaeology*, 105.2, pp. 209–225.
- Weinberg, J. (1992). *The Citizen-Temple Community*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Weingart, K. (2017). What makes an Israelite an Israelite? Judean perspectives on the Samaritans in the Persian period. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 42.2, pp. 155–175.
- Weksler-Bdolach, S., Onn, A. and Rapuano, Y. (2003). Identifying the Hasmonean Village of Modi'in. *Cathedra*, 109, pp. 69–86. [Hebrew]
- Wells, E. (1708a). *An Historical Geography of the Old Testament*. London.
- Wells, E. (1708b). *An Historical Geography of the New Testament*. London.
- Wells, E.C. and Davis-Salazar, K.L. (2007). *Mesoamerican Ritual Economy: Archaeological and Ethnological Perspectives*. Boulder, CO: University Press of Colorado.

- Werrett, I.C. (2007). *Ritual Purity and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Leiden: Brill.
- Wesker-Bdolah, S. (1998). Installations and Rock Cuttings at Giloh, Jerusalem. *ʿAtiqot* 34, pp. 179–191. [Hebrew; English Summary p. 11\*].
- Wilkinson, J. (1974). Ancient Jerusalem: its Water Supply and Population. *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 106.1, pp. 33–51.
- Wilkinson, J. (1999). *Egeria's Travels*. 3rd ed. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
- Williams, R. (1983). *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Williamson, H.G.M. (1985). *Ezra/Nehemiah*. Waco, TX: Word Books.
- Williamson, H.G.M. (1988). The Governors of Judah under the Persians. *Tyndale Bulletin*, 39, pp. 59–82.
- Wilson, A., and Bowman, A. (2017). Introduction. In: A. Wilson and A. Bowman, eds. *Trade, Commerce, and the State in the Roman World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–24.
- Wilson, A. (2011). City Sizes and Urbanization in the Roman Empire. In: A. Wilson and A. Bowman, eds., *Settlement, Urbanization, Population*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 161–195.
- Wodak, R. (2016). “We have the character of an island nation”: a discourse-historical analysis of David Cameron’s “Bloomberg Speech” on the European Union. *EUI Working Paper RSCAS*, 36, pp. 1–25.
- Wolters, A. (1990). Apocalyptic and the Copper Scroll. *JNES*, 49, pp. 145–154.
- Woodward, R. (2013). Military landscapes: Agendas and approaches for future research. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38.1, pp. 40–61.
- Yadin, Y. (1966). *Masada, Herod's Fortress and the Zealots' Last Stand*. London: Phoenix
- Yeivin, Z. and Edelstein, G. (1970). Excavations at Tirat Yehuda. *ʿAtiqot*, 6, 56–67 [Hebrew].
- Younger, K.L. (1990). *Ancient Conquest Accounts*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press.
- Zangenberg, J.K. (2012). The Sanctuary on Mount Gerizim: Observations on the Results of 20 Years of Excavation. In: J. Kamlah, ed., *Temple Building and Temple Cult: Architecture and Cultic Paraphernalia of Temples in the Levant (2.-1. Mill. B.C.E.)*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, pp. 399–420.
- Zertal, A., and Bar, S. (2017). *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey. Volume 2: The Eastern Valleys and the Fringes of the Desert*. Leiden: Brill.
- Zertal, A., and Mirkam, N. (2016). *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey. Volume 3: From Nahal ʿIron to Nahal Shechem*. Leiden: Brill.
- Zertal, A. (2004). *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey. Volume 1: The Shechem Syncline*. Leiden: Brill.

Zertal, A. (2008). *The Manasseh Hill Country Survey. Volume 2: The Eastern Valleys and the Fringes of the Desert*. Leiden: Brill.

Zilberstein, A. (Forthcoming). Hellenistic Military Architecture from the Giv'ati Parking Lot Excavations, Jerusalem. In: A. Berlin and P. Kosmin, eds. *The Period of the Middle Maccabees: from the death of Judas through the reign of John Hyrcanus (ca. 160–104 BCE)*.

Zissu, B. (2001). *Rural Settlement in the Judaeian Hills and Foothills from the Late Second Temple Period to the Bar Kokhba Revolt*. Dissertation. Jerusalem: Institute for Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem/

Zissu, B. and Ganor, A. (2009). Horvat 'Ethri—A Jewish Village from the Second Temple Period to the Bar Kokhba Revolt in the Judean Foothills. *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 60.1, pp. 90–136.

Zoccatelli, D., Marra, F., Armon, M., Rinat, Y., Morin, E., and Smith, J. (2018). Contrasting rainfall-runoff characteristics of floods in Desert and Mediterranean basins. *Hydrology and Earth System Sciences Discussions*, pp. 1–18.