
Introduction

Scope of this Guide

The most useful guidebook caters to a specific interest. This guide focuses on the historical sites of the Holy Land and is designed to help the visitor find and appreciate the visible remains.

The history of the Holy Land is so long and so much archaeological work has been done that to attempt complete coverage would be self-defeating. A guidebook is not intended to be an encyclopedia; it is a practical aid. A selection has to be made and three criteria have determined which sites (of many thousands) should be included: antiquity, accessibility, and intelligibility.

'Antiquity' covers everything from the beginning of human history in the Holy Land to AD 1700. The only justification for this limit is a legal definition: nothing created after 1700 is classified as an antiquity.

'Accessibility' normally means that one can drive to the entrance. Places at some distance from a tarmac road have been included if the site has a unique feature and if the walk to it is in itself interesting. To acquire the 'feel' of the Holy Land one should walk as much as possible. Some sites that would otherwise merit inclusion have been omitted because physical or political obstacles make access unusually difficult if not impossible.

'Intelligibility' is perhaps the most difficult criterion. In the context of this guide it means the presence of a coherent complex of remains; there must be something significant to *see*, and 'significant' is interpreted with the average seriously interested visitor in mind. Certain sites which have made very important contributions to our understanding of the history of the area have been omitted, either because they have been eroded to nothing or because they are such complicated mixtures of apparently unrelated elements that only a professional archaeologist could draw profit from visiting them.

How to use the Guide

The guide is divided into two parts, the City of Jerusalem and the Land, each being organized on different principles.

The City of Jerusalem

In this part the sites are grouped in areas (see the table of Contents) because Jerusalem and its vicinity will most naturally be explored in this way. Each section is accompanied by a detailed sketch-map showing the

precise location of each site described. Where appropriate, the visit to particular sites is preceded by a general historical survey of the area in which they are found.

Two maps published by the Survey of Israel (www.omnimap.com/catalog/int/Israel.htm) will be found useful. 'Jerusalem' (1: 14,000) covers the entire urban area, and the larger scale 'Jerusalem: The Old City' (1: 2,500) shows every street in the walled city. They are available at virtually all bookshops and bookstands in addition to the offices of the Survey of Israel (1 Heshin St., Jerusalem; 1 Lincoln St., Tel Aviv; 28 Yafo Road, Haifa; Merkaz HaNegev Building 22, Beer Sheva). The map on p. 8 shows in outline that part of Jerusalem covered by the guide, marking only the main areas (as listed in the Contents) and a few other focal points to help visitors get their bearings.

The Land

In this part sites scattered throughout the Holy Land are listed alphabetically, to obviate the need for frequent reference to an index. A letter and a number appear in round brackets after the name of each site. These refer to the grid on pp. 537–538, which is taken from the two-sheet 'Israel Touring Map' (1: 250,000). Published by the Survey of Israel and updated every two years, this map is extremely accurate and clear, and conveys an extraordinary amount of historical information; with it one can find the way to any site.

The spelling of place-names follows that of the 'Israel Touring Map'; this will sometimes differ from the version found on signposts or in other publications; e.g. *c* instead of *k*, *z* instead of *s*, *v* instead of *b*, or vice versa. As a general rule, if the names *sound* the same when read aloud, presume identity. The reason for such differences is that the English version is always a transliteration from Hebrew, Arabic, or Greek, and even the various official bodies do not all follow the same principles of transcription.

A more convenient map for drivers is *Israel. The New Road Atlas* (MAPA Publishers, POB 56024, Tel Aviv 61560; info@mapa.co.il), which comes as a book in large and small formats. It shows the 1967 border between Israel and Jordan, and permanent Israeli army check-points. Regrettably, in addition to its unusual transcription of names, it uses a different letter and number grid from its sources in the Survey of Israel. The two, however, can be reconciled. Neither uses the letter 'I', and in addition the *Atlas* does not use the letters 'O' or 'Q'. Thus to convert from the 'Israel Touring Map' grid (used in this guidebook) to that of the *Road Atlas* add two letters ('A' becomes 'C') and one digit ('2' becomes '3'). Thus 'Abu Ghosh (J17)' should be sought in the *Road Atlas* at L18, and 'Timna (G40)' at J41.

Types of Entries

There are four categories of entries in the second part:

- (1) *Entries on General Areas*. A general presentation of certain areas (e.g. Jericho, Golan, Sea of Galilee, Negev) has the double advantage of directing attention to interesting sites which might be ignored and of showing them as representative of different stages in the historical development of the area.
- (2) *Entries on Individual Sites*. In each case a summary of the history of the site is followed by information for a detailed visit.
- (3) *Entries on Specific Subjects*. Such entries (e.g. Crusades, Desert Monasteries) provide the general information on a particular social phenomenon and direct the visitor to sites where it has left traces.
- (4) *Entries on Social Groups*. These provide a survey of the history of particular groups (e.g. Essenes, Nabataeans, Philistines, Samaritans) which appear frequently in the presentation of a number of sites.

Starred sites

Exceptionally important and interesting sites have been awarded star points. Those sites with two stars should not be missed, and those with one star are highly recommended.

Cross-References

Names in small capitals in the text indicate that more information is given under that entry or that it refers to a comparable feature.

Bibliography

Works on the history and the archaeology of the Holy Land are legion. The following selection is limited to primary sources which have an immediacy and impact that commentaries lack.

Archaeological Sites

Over a hundred years' work on 367 sites has been conveniently summarized in E. Stern (ed.), *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* (4 vols., Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society/New York: Simon & Schuster, 1993). Most of the articles are written by the archaeologists who dug the respective sites, and good photographs, plans, and bibliographies are included. This authoritative work is the source for the dates given in this guide.

Old Testament Period

The basic text is, of course the Bible whose religious message is set in a well-defined historical and geographical context. Frequent references to the OT have been provided because, when read on the site, they often provide the human dimension which brings the ruins to life.

Extra-biblical texts are equally illuminating. Rulers of the great states adjoining Palestine, whose armies marched through the country century after century, left detailed records of their battles and conquests. Petty kings of city-states wrote to their overlords. Merchants noted their dealings. Schoolboys copied exercises. These documents have been published in *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* edited by J. B. Pritchard (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958; reissued in two paperback volumes 1975). Excellent indices make it easy to find the texts and pictures relevant to a particular site.

Josephus

Detailed information on places and people of the New Testament period is provided by the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus (AD 37–100). Born Joseph ben Matthias, he was made governor of Galilee at the beginning of the First Revolt (AD 66) but as soon as possible turned traitor and sided with the Romans. As an imperial pensioner he wrote four books: his autobiography, an attack on anti-Semitism, and two historical works, *The Antiquities of the Jews* and *The Jewish War*. The former is dull and long-drawn-out because it covers the whole period from Creation to the outbreak of hostilities against Rome in AD 66. *The Jewish War*, though sometimes inaccurate and written with a clear pro-Roman bias, is always interesting because it concentrates on a much more limited period, 170 BC to AD 75. I have given references to it wherever possible. Available in a Penguin Classics translation, it is an excellent guide to any Herodian monument and the best to certain sites (e.g. Masada); a detailed index ensures that it can be used for this purpose.

References to Josephus are given to book and paragraph. Thus *War* 5: 24 means paragraph 24 in Book 5 of *The Jewish War*. In the Penguin edition this system of reference appears in the inner top corner of each page.

Byzantine Pilgrims

The adoption of Christianity as the official religion of the Empire in the early C4 AD brought about the first tourist boom in the history of the Holy Land. Pilgrims came in increasing numbers until the Arab Conquest in the C7 created obstacles which eventually deterred all but the most persistent. Many of these visitors wrote accounts of their tour of the country and described the buildings they visited. These narratives

have been presented by J. Wilkinson in two books which do not overlap, *Egeria's Travels to the Holy Land* (3rd edn., Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1999) and *Jerusalem Pilgrims before the Crusades* (2nd edn., Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2002); the translations of Byzantine authors in this guide are taken from these two volumes. The translator has made the narratives intelligible by providing numerous maps and plans, and the Gazetteer appended to *Jerusalem Pilgrims* condenses (and critically evaluates) all the Byzantine information regarding each site under its name.

Islamic Period

From the publication of Ibn Khurdadbih's *Book of Roads and Kingdoms* in AD 864, Arab authors wrote voluminously on the geography and history of the Holy Land, and often with great insight. Muqaddasi (C10), for example, described Jerusalem as 'a golden basin full of scorpions'. Twenty-four of these texts have been collected by Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems. A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500 translated from the Works of the Mediaeval Arab Geographers* (London: Watt for the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1890; repr. Meisenheim am Glan: Institut für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften, 1993). Basically the same ground is covered by A.-S. Marmardji, OP, who, however, cast his net a little more widely; his *Textes Géographiques Arabes sur la Palestine* (Paris: Gabalda, 1951) contains the accounts of 31 authors ranging from the C9 to the C18, which are arranged according to sites.

Medieval Period

In the Middle Ages the Holy Land again became a magnet for pilgrims, and was seen by eyes as diverse as those of abbots from Iceland and Russia, a king from Norway, and a Muslim from Sicily commissioned by a Norman. Their impressions have been collected and translated by J. Wilkinson with J. Hill and W. F. Ryan in *Jerusalem Pilgrimage 1099-1185* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988). None of these accounts, however, are as detailed or as personal as the narratives of two other visitors, one a Spanish Jew, the other a German Dominican friar. Both ostensibly came on pilgrimage but they were men with a sharp eye for the unusual and possessed the ingenuity to satisfy their curiosity.

Benjamin of Tudela passed through the Holy Land in the course of a long journey throughout the Middle East between 1166 and 1171. His account has been translated by M. N. Adler, *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (London: Oxford University Press, 1907). Friar Felix Fabri made two pilgrimages to the Holy Land, the first in 1480, the second three years later when he also managed to get to Mount Sinai. He wrote more than

1,500 pages about his experiences because he was in truth nine parts observant tourist to one part pious pilgrim. This mass of material has been condensed with grace and wit by H. F. M. Prescott in two books, *Jerusalem Journey* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1954), which appeared in the USA as *Friar Felix at Large* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), and *Once to Sinai* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957; New York: Macmillan, 1958).

Selections from the above-mentioned works, and from many others, are collected in a wonderful anthology by F. E. Peters, *Jerusalem: The Holy City in the Eyes of Chroniclers, Visitors, Pilgrims, and Prophets from the Days of Abraham to the Beginnings of Modern Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985).

Those interested in Crusader remains will draw immense profit from J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land 1098-1187* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) and D. Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. A Corpus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, i–v, 1993–). The Mamluks (1250–1517) did more to beautify Jerusalem than everyone except Herod the Great. Their achievement is documented by M. Burgoyne with D. Richards, *Mamluk Jerusalem. An Architectural Survey* (London: World Festival of Islam Trust and The British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem, 1987).

Modern Period

From the beginning of the C18 a new spirit begins to permeate writings about the Holy Land; the natural curiosity of the traveller gives way to critical enquiry, and scientific publications proliferate. For Jerusalem some order and control has been introduced by J. D. Purvis, *Jerusalem. The Holy City. A Bibliography* (Metuchen: American Theological Library Association/London: Scarecrow Press, i, 1988; ii, 1991).

The classic F.-M. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* (Paris: Gabalda, 1933 and 1938) is still valuable for its physical description of the country and the identification of ancient sites. More recent work is incorporated in Y. Karmon, *Israel. A Regional Geography* (London, 1971), and Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible. A Historical Geography* (rev. edn, London: Burns & Oates/Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979). The latter collaborated with M. Avi-Yonah to produce *The Macmillan Bible Atlas* (rev. edn, London/New York, 1972) which illustrates the topography of all major biblical events. Accurate mapping, however, is to be found only in the *Student Map Manual. Historical Geography of the Bible Lands* (Jerusalem, 1979), and in the *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (ed. R. Talbert; Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000). There are good reconstruction drawings in D. Bahat, *The Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

Practical Advice

Travel and Lodging

Most countries have Israel Government Tourist Offices, normally located in the capital city or financial centre, and all major towns in Israel have Tourist Information Offices. These will supply up-to-date information regarding all modes of travel to and within the country as well as the location and prices of hotels, youth hostels, and camping sites. Check the following websites: www.goisrael.com/Tourism_Eng/Tourist+Information, www.tourism.gov.il, www.infotour.co.il

For details on religious services, institutes, pilgrimage, and general news related to various **Christian** communities in the Holy Land, see the Christian Information Center in Jerusalem (02-627-2692) located inside Jaffa Gate facing the east entrance of the CITADEL; open: 8.30 a.m.–1 p.m.; closed Sunday; www.cicts.org

Opening Hours

Opening hours have been given for each site wherever possible, but these should be used with caution because local conditions may impose unforeseeable modifications. Religious feasts may mean that the site closes early or is not open at all. Sites under Jewish control close one hour earlier on Fridays and two hours earlier on the eve of major feasts and do not open at all on Yom Kippur. Admission to Christian sites is normally restricted on Sunday mornings and to Muslim sites on Fridays and at the times of prayer on other days. In general where no times are given the site may be visited at any hour.

National Parks and Nature Reserves

Thirty-four of the 114 archaeological sites explained in Part 2 of this book are in National Parks or Nature Reserves. They are marked by an asterisk (*). The main practical difference is that pets are not permitted in Nature Reserves. The entrance fee includes an illustrated explanatory leaflet, many of exceptional quality. Clean toilets are always available. For those who intend to visit a number of sites it is cheaper to buy a card which permits unlimited entry for two weeks or one year. They can be obtained from the principal sites or from the main office of Israel Nature and National Parks Protection Authority (02-500-5444). A 24-hour information service is available on 1-800-54-6666 and on the website: www.parks.org.il

Dress

Once pavement is left behind the ground is rough and stony; rubber soles (the thicker the better) are strongly recommended. Climatic conditions

can vary considerably within a relatively small area; one can freeze in Jerusalem (750 m above sea-level) and swelter in Jericho (400 m below sea-level) only thirty minutes later. It is advisable to dress in layers that can be shed and replaced at will. Winter (December–March) in the hill country is usually cold and wet; a warm windcheater is essential.

Modest clothing (interpreted rather strictly) is essential for admission to churches, mosques, or synagogues, and is strongly recommended for transit through conservative Muslim or religious Jewish areas.

Hiking Trips

Israel is a wonderful country for hikers of all levels. Trails throughout the country and in the Judean desert are prepared and marked (a primary colour between two white bars) by the Society for the Protection of Nature (4 Hashfela St., Tel Aviv; tel.: 03-638-8688; fax: 03-687-7695; www.aspni.org), which issues 'Israel Hiking and Touring Maps' (1: 50,000; www.omnimap.com/catalog/int/Israel.htm). At the time of going to press they are only in Hebrew with the exception of the Eilat sheet which has an English version. Improvements are being made continuously. So when buying a sheet, check the publication date on the title page and enquire if there is a more recent edition.

When visiting sites in desert areas basic safety precautions should be observed. Always take plenty of water; in very hot weather estimate a litre per hour. Always tell someone where you are going and at what time you expect to return. Never go alone; always take an experienced companion. The Society for the Protection of Nature also organizes desert hiking and driving trips; a brochure is available on request.

Export of Antiquities

No artefact dated before 1700 can be taken out of Israel unless a written export permit has been obtained from the Israel Antiquities Authority which is located in the Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem: telephone 02-628-2251 for an appointment (www.antiquities.org.il). Fakes greatly outnumber genuine articles in the antique shops and it is risky to buy without expert independent advice.

Acknowledgements in the First Edition

All that I know of the Holy Land rests on what I learned from two of my professors who later became colleagues and friends: Fr. Pierre Benoit, OP, introduced me to the City and the late François Lemoine, OP, to the Land. It is a pleasure to be able to acknowledge publicly all that I learned from them. I must also thank Fr. Benoit for his ready response to innumerable questions during the writing of this guide.

One's knowledge of history and archaeology tends to remain vague and ill-defined without the opportunity to communicate it. Hence, I am also conscious of a debt to three groups whose eager questions over a period of ten years have stimulated research and discovery: the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization, the students of the École Biblique et Archéologique Française, and the members of the Sunday Group. All deserve my gratitude but none more than the Sunday Group to whose members I dedicate this guide. They are friends of many different nationalities whose duties have now taken them to other parts of the world, but when they lived in the Holy Land their energy and enthusiasm for out-of-the-way places brought me to sites that I probably would never have explored otherwise.

Other friends have also made essential contributions and to them I express my deep gratitude: to John Wilkinson for suggesting my name when Oxford University Press recognized the need for a guide such as this; to Peter Janson-Smith my editor at OUP, to Alice Sancey who expended such care and patience on the drawings, to Étienne Nodet for his translations from modern Hebrew, to Rachel Lepeer for many photocopies, to Dominic Baldwin for classifying all my drafts; to Jim Poston, Michael Stark, and Michael Burgoyne for their advice and assistance; and finally to my brethren at the École Biblique who freed me from other duties so that the guide might be finished in a reasonable time.

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, OP

*Jerusalem,
March 1980*

