

Dr. Sam Osmanagich

**UNEXPECTED ARCHEOLOGICAL
SITES OF ISRAEL AND PALESTINE**



Sarajevo, 2016

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INTRODUCTION

This book is the result of my visits to Israel and Palestine in January and April 2016.

I was thrilled by the unexpected prehistoric megalithic sites and by the spiritual energies of the region.

Zeev Ben Arie and Yaniv Kimchi have opened to me the door of an old, completely forgotten world.

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(Excerpt from the book review)

GODS, GRAVES AND SCHOLARS!

“...The western sun touches me mildly and then I sink into infinite space. The first glimpses bring a clear message. Humanity must progress spiritually. People must live together, in peace and understanding. Peaceful and war periods have existed in this region for thousands of years. But, it is time for human civilization to make a turn. It is time for understanding, respect and love.”

(Osmanagich’s meditation message from Israel)

I have in front of me the manuscript of the new book “The Unexpected Archeological Sites in Israel and Palestine” by Dr. Sam Osmanagich.

Since he discovered the Bosnian pyramids and presented the evidence that the history of human civilization is not evolutionary but cyclical, his name has caused various controversies in the world of contemporary historiography and archeology. However, from the initial challenging and denial, there has been a growing number of people in the world who accept him and consider his theory, research and archeological findings of historical import. Thanks to that, on May 24, 2013, The United States Congress presented him with the Charter and with recognition that “Osmanagich’s commitment to the community is worthy of respect and admiration of the US Congress”, and three years later, in May 2016, the participants of the first international scientific conference titled “Global Pyramid Conference”, held in Chicago (USA), for his outstanding contribution to the study and popularization of pyramids and tireless spreading of knowledge about the pyramids built around the world - in China, Bolivia, Peru, the Canary Islands, Mauritius, Indonesia, Egypt, the United States, Spain, Central America and other countries – he was awarded the newly established award, named after the famous Egyptologist Amelia B. Edwards (1831 - 1892), who distinguished herself by protection and affirmation of the pyramids in Egypt.

Exploring the pyramids, Dr. Sam Osmanagich has proven that the oldest pyramids are also the most grandiose, and that they were erected in the period of time older than 12,000 years – hence, before the end of the last Ice Age. But, he did not stay only on that. Dr. Osmanagich has made a step further and with his multidisciplinary scientific approach to the research of the Bosnian pyramids, especially the Bosnian Pyramid of the Sun, he proved something which additionally confused but also impressed the scientific world – not only that the pyramids were not used as tombs of rulers in the past, but they are – lo and behold – unique power amplifiers, which produce very specific measurable energy fields and frequencies.

The energy of pyramids, concluded Dr. Osmanagich, is used to improve the molecular structure of water and food, to increase immunity, to enhance the aura, to develop the spiritual senses, to transfer information, etc. Therefore, he has – like no other pyramidologist and researcher so far – approached addressing the phenomenon of pyramids from the point of view of four aspects: the archeological, energetic, spiritual and healing aspects of the structures.

As we can see, Dr. Sam Osmanagich is one of those rare contemporary researchers who, with his lucid understanding of research of cultural, historical and civilizational heritage, does not access unilaterally and follow the cabinet theories of archeologists and historiographers who repeat the old and long outdated mantras about the evolution of mankind. His scientific laboratory is the planet Earth, which he has walked upon for decades persistently searching for material and energy remains and messages of ancient ingenious builders and civilizations. This time, such an approach to research of our ancient past led him to Palestine and Israel, which is the theme of his new book entitled “Unexpected Archeological Sites of Israel and Palestine”.

Like the stories from C.W. Ceram’s novel about archeology “Gods, Graves and Scholars”, Dr. Sam Osmanagich, with the skill of an experienced travel writer who knows well what he tells, narrates to readers his views, thoughts and impressions (even meditative insights that came over him when visiting certain archeological sites!) about what he saw and experienced on his interesting travels, visiting the oldest architectural structures and remains in the fields of Old Testament and Biblical areas, upon which ancient missionaries, patriarchs and prophets had walked at the dawn of our civilization cycle.

If, by a chance, these areas had not been devastated by natural disasters, such as a global flood, if they had not been destroyed by war storms and senseless conquests, today this whole area that we now call the Near East and Middle East – from the sacred mountain of Ararat to the Mount Sinai - would be a sort of museum under the open sky in which we could read and interpret the most important periods and architectural rises of our civilization cycle. But the sudden destructions have done their part, so what is left for Dr. Osmanagich is only to share with his readers his sincere amazement and quiet anticipation of the storms of the past that, at times, ravaged these holy places. Unfortunately, many pieces of evidence that we need to perceive the past more accurately have forever gone with time!

Dr. Sam Osmanagich divided this book into eleven interesting introductory travelogue stories, which make readers active participants of the author's reflections on the age and purpose of some megalithic sites and mysterious architectural forms. In doing so, he does not avoid formal theories and explanations of archeologists, but he also offers the readers different views as well as his own thoughts.

In addition to vivid travelogue telling, in this book the author also published a supplement consisting of four interesting chapters that focus on four sacred places built by ancient builders – not by accident - respecting the sacred geometry - Caesarea, Stella Maris, Bethlehem and Jerusalem. It appears to me that these chapters are very important and inseparable from the essential theme of this wise book, not only because we can clearly see the events and turmoil that has determined dramatic and painful destiny for these places, but also because of the unique energies that they still radiate and that, to a great extent, have determined not only the fate of the Near and Middle East, but also the fate of the entire world.

The book is illustrated with original photographs taken by the author during his interesting research travels throughout Palestine and Israel.

Ahmed Bosnic

(Excerpt from the review)

SPECTACULAR RECORDS OF THE HOLY LAND

The book about the Holy Land written by the world researcher and eternal traveller, Dr. Sam Osmanagich, is precious and gorgeous.

Only at first glance it may appear “easy” to write about this mundane corner which has been written about in so many ancient texts and scrolls, books and contemporary stories and recorded in countless TV and film documentaries, unlike any other part of the world. But it is not so. Because right here, where antiquity is measured by millennia, which blend like cascades into an eternal historical melody, it looks as if human curiosity had been endless, all in order to perpetuate every stone of history and the sacred place of birth of civilization, as well as the place of meeting of the Levant and Asian expanses, but also the holy sites of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

This is the reason why every new but original vision also represents a gift, as this one given to us by Sam Osmanagich.

The author's descriptions, which take us through ancient history, are beautiful and fairytale-like. But not only through Jericho, the oldest city in the world, or the spiritual capital of the world by the name of Jerusalem, or the place of Jesus' birth called Bethlehem, but also much further, introducing us to many other archeological jewels between the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea. And all of this is accompanied by beautiful photographs, which confirm the authenticity of descriptions of the biblical landscapes, thus creating in the readers a floating sensation as if we ourselves travelled the areas once travelled by ancient Jewish tribes of Israelites and the Judeans, then the Philistines (Philistians), Persians, Arameans, Greeks, Nabateans, Romans... all the way to the valley where there was a battle between David and Goliath a long time ago, and the Ark of the Covenant was traveling one of the roads.

To make travel more interesting, the author takes us to Midras, the first pyramid in Israel, then to Mamshit, the ancient Nabatean city in the Negev desert, which used to offer a respite to caravans on their way from Gaza to wondrous Petra, a scenery carved in stone and sprouted in the biblical wasteland; then to the artificial hill of Gezer, at the foot of the Mountains of Judah, where travellers are welcomed by seven upright megaliths.

But this instructive and beautiful promenade does not stop here. The author leads us further to the Caves of Maresha, and then to the Nimrod Fortress, near the Syrian border, and to the mysterious stone circles, in fact magnificent rings, which seem to have been prepared for engagement with heaven!

• • •

Sam concludes the first part of the book with a wonderful message, received just before sunset in the Negev desert, in the Ovdet oasis. Like during the visit to Jericho, he also surrenders

to meditation in this “landscape of the stone desert, mottled by oasis greenery”, where “the western sun mildly touches him and he sinks into infinite space”, while messages enlighten him. And they are the most exalted ones that every peace-loving man would wish for, “[t]hat humanity must progress spiritually, and people must live together in peace and understanding...” Indeed, this message is welcome everywhere in the world, especially in the Holy Land where peaceful and war periods have alternated for thousands of years, like the tides. Unfortunately, there were many more of those restless ones and, as one chronicler wrote, more restlessness than water used to flow down the sacred Jordan River. But, let us turn back to the book...

Sam’s final chord of the first part of the book is fascinating. With the description of the sunset and the sounds of two Israeli airplanes that tear through the sky, he calls for the peaceful and serene planet: “Imagine a world without military machines, in which people would live on their farms on land and from land, listening to the messages that come from Mother Earth. Because the Earth is our Mother.”

Could a researcher and travel writer give a more beautiful message...?

. . .

In the supplement to the book, the author enriches us again with interesting stories. First, with the description of the “forgotten” Levant city of Caesarea, to which the fate of many Bosniaks was once linked, when they, as refugees, found a temporary shelter there, after Austria-Hungary annexed Bosnia in 1878. Then follows the story of Haifa and the Old Testament prophet Elijah, and the hill of Mt. Carmel, which one of the most influential Catholic orders – the Carmelites – was named after. Understandably, the author was particularly impressed by a small pyramid in the church courtyard.

Finally, this is followed by the descriptions of two cities, undetectable by size, but measurable by their importance: Bethlehem and Jerusalem. In the first one, the first Jewish King David was born and crowned, and Jesus Christ saw the light of day, though in a cave. Today, on this site is located the Basilica of the Nativity and the town is also decorated with places of worship of all Christian orientations.

However, in the second holy city, Christ lived and was crucified alive, and finally resurrected. In quarters of Jerusalem, travellers are even today welcomed by Via Dolorosa, or Jesus' last path, which he walked to Calvary, then the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the unavoidable sites of the holy city are the Wailing Wall and the Golden Dome under which the sacred stone lies, as well as numerous synagogues, churches and mosques.

All of this is complemented by the feeling of presence of the “soft energy of love, connectivity, forgiveness and light”, and described by the versatile researcher and benevolent traveller Sam Osmanagich in this unforgettable book, leaving at the same time a message that it would be great if it was Jerusalem, as the place of so much suffering and violence, that would become a beacon of light of universal human harmony and God’s peace...

Slobodan Stajic

MIDRAS – THE FIRST PYRAMID IN ISRAEL

A pyramid in Israel?

Halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv is the city of Beit Shemesh. A long time ago, David and Goliath fought each other, the members of the tribe of Judah lived, the golden Ark of the Covenant travelled this way and numerous known and unknown people lived in these valleys. Beit Shemesh means “House of the Sun” or “Temple of the Sun” and comes from the Canaanites, and they probably took over that significant name.

“Midras ruins” is a mount full of caves, but our goal is the very top of the hill. The sign in Hebrew and English has already prepared me: I am going toward the only pyramid in Israel.

At the top of the hill are the remains of a relatively small pyramid. This is a command position. A magnificent view extends to the Mediterranean coast. In front of me there is a compact structure. Four rows of the stepped pyramid are well preserved. The upper three rows are devastated. Beautifully dressed rectangular blocks, that were parts of the carefully built pyramid, lie all around.

The dimensions of the pyramid’s foundations, in my preliminary measurement, are 10 x 8 meters. Its height, according to the data on the sign next to the pyramid originally reached about five meters. My assessment is that it has a height of between six and seven meters.

The walls of the pyramid are accurately placed in a line, there is no deviation.

I checked the orientation of the sides. They are oriented toward the cardinal points, without twisting from cosmic north.

At the site, archeologists admit that they do not know the purpose of the pyramid and that this is the only such building in Israel. However, they further argue that a cemetery was here and that the pyramid possibly was a tomb (“nefesh”), and served as a synagogue in the fourth century.

Of course, after this, all visitors take this assumption for granted and begin to talk about the pyramid as a tomb.

Have archeologists ever found a tomb, a skeleton, any evidence that this was the place of burial of some important people?

The answer is simple: no.

However, the deception of the public has already begun; every archeologist in Israel, who knows about this building, will argue that the pyramid is a tomb.

Jews have never used pyramids as tombs. Neither any known traditional culture that ever lived here has. There are no radiocarbon analyses to help us determine the age of this building.

Could they pull it through scientific criteria for the pyramid that I have developed?

Let us see:

1. Geometry – the structure must have the form of a pyramid, which is the case here,
2. Artificial building material – affirmative, here we talk about dressed blocks,
3. Orientation toward the cosmic north – affirmative,
4. Internal passageways – the building is too small for this criterion,
5. Underground passageways – under the pyramid there is a natural cave, and beneath it there are a number of other natural and artificial caves,
6. Rivers and underground watercourses – under the pyramid there are underground watercourses,
7. Astronomical elements – I did not have enough time to determine them,
8. Volcanic lines – I will have to ask my friend Mika from Finland to investigate whether and how many volcanic lines lead to the pyramid in Midras. For example, 26 volcanic lines lead to the pyramids in Bosnia and Kukulcan's pyramid in the Maya city of Chitzen Itza,
9. Energy potent points – the site must have been interesting for the energetic characteristics of the terrain and material (quartz),
10. The pyramid as an energy machine – for this I need to come again and make additional measurements.

So, the first results are promising. Although small in size, this pyramid probably was an energy amplifier and has nothing to do with the traditionally known cultures that lived there.

Therefore, we go deeper into the past.

A pyramid in Israel!

What a pleasant surprise for me.





2. THE PYRAMID

This stepped, pyramid-shaped structure, built of dressed stone, is the only one of its kind in Israel.

The base is about 10 meters long, and it is at present about 3.5 meters high. Apparently, the top three rows of stone, which would have brought its original height to about five meters, are missing.

The pyramid is located in the cemetery of the ancient settlement at Midras Ruins, and was probably a monument to individuals buried in the cave below it. This type of monument is known in Hebrew as a nefesh (soul).

2. "הפירמידה" 2. الهرم

זהו מבנה מדרגות בצורת פירמידה, בנוי אבני גזית. זהו מבנה יחיד במינו בישראל.

אורך צלעות הבסיס של הפירמידה כ־10 מטרים, ונוכחה הנוכחי הוא כ־3.5 מטרים. בפירמידה חסרים כנראה שלושה נדבכים. שהביאו את גובהה המקורי לכ־5 מטרים.

הפירמידה שוכנת בבית הקברות של היישוב הקדום ששכן בחורבת מדרס, ונבנתה כנראה כמצבה לזכרם של אנשים שנקברו כמערה שמתחתיה. מצבה מסוג זה מכונה במקורותינו "נפש".

وهي مبنى مدرج على شكل هرم، مبني من حجر الجرانيت. هذا المبنى فريد من نوعه في إسرائيل. طول أضلاع قاعدة الهرم تبلغ حوالي

10 أمتار، وطولها الحالي هو 3.5 متر، ويبدو أن الهرم ينقصه ثلاثة صفوف من الحجر (مدممات) غُعل من ارتفاعها الأصلي يبلغ حوالي 5 أمتار.

يقع الهرم في مقبرة القرية القديمة التي كانت تقع في حربة ممراس، وبُنيت على ما يبدو كتombstone لتخليد ذكرى الأشخاص الذين دفنوا في المغارة التي تقع أسفلها. هذا النوع من التombstones يُعرف باسم "نفس" (نفس).













JERICHO – THE OLDEST CITY IN THE WORLD

What is the oldest city in the world?

How things have changed in only the last few decades. The British century-old claims about the Sumerians as the first advanced agrarian society which transformed from a nomadic way of life five thousand years ago, today have long been discarded. Though, many textbooks still stick to this story. The timeline has long been changed and, for the Sumerians, has shifted by two thousand years.

Egyptians have had their line of pharaonic dynasties for 5,100 years into the past since the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Of course, there are the remains of megalithic temples which are said to have been built in the pre-dynastic period, which results in an additional couple of hundred years.

However, official archeology cannot deny the fact that, after a global catastrophe 12,000 years ago, the first town developed on the territory of modern Palestine. Jericho (Yariho). The time of its creation is 11,500 years into the past.

Zeev is not surprised when he asks where I want to go and I reply that I want to see Jericho. We start early in the morning, from northern Israel near the border with Jordan. On our left we are accompanied by the small river Jordan and a green oasis with cultivated land. Just a little further, on the Jordanian and Israeli side, a stony, inhospitable desert will soon begin.

The lack of water was one of the reasons of the second Israeli-Arab war in 1956. The Jordan River is actually a very narrow rivulet but precious nonetheless. Israelis turned its riverbed toward their territory, using most of it for irrigation. The loss of water is felt downstream. In fact, once the Jordan River flowed into the Dead Sea, maintaining its level. After several decades of smaller inflow of water, the diameter of the Dead Sea dropped from 76 km to 50 km in 2016.

The high concentration of minerals and salts cause the lifelessness of the Dead Sea. When I took a bath in the Dead Sea on the Jordanian side a few years ago, my body was actually floating on the surface. After the bath you need to take a shower to rinse off the layers of strong salts.

The Dead Sea is the deepest depression in the world: 400 meters below sea level.

From the Israeli territory we enter the occupied territory. The stone desert. In some places I can see an Israeli military patrol and small fortresses with flags.

Finally we arrive at the entrance to Palestine. In front of the checkpoint, there is a large board with a message intended for the people of Israel in three languages (English, Hebrew and Arabic). It is a clear warning that the Israelis are not allowed to enter the territory of the Palestinian Authority, under threat of prosecution.

Now I am beginning to understand the astonishment and warnings that Zeev received from his friends when he told them that he was taking me to Jericho. He used to come here often in the 1990s, but after the Second Intifada in 2000 (Palestinian uprising), the movement of Israelis toward Palestine and Egypt's Sinai has almost completely stopped.

On the Palestinian checkpoint, Zeev tells the soldiers that Ahmed will receive us in Jericho. They were expecting us and they let us pass without a search.

Jericho is at the deepest site in the world, as much as 250 meters below sea level. Thus, it is the lowest city in the world.

Our destination is Tel Jericho or Tel es-Sultan. “Tel” means an artificial elevation and is a synonym for towns and villages buried by soil deposits.

Jericho is only 36 km north-east of Jerusalem and the direct road cannot be used, but only the way that we travelled, around, with a few hours' drive.

Several tourist signs bring us to the entrance to the ruins. I see a hotel with a large restaurant, a parking lot for busses, a booth for card payments – undeniable signs that we are in the right place. First we enter the hotel, where Ahmed welcomes us. He is the owner of the tourist complex that is poorly visited. However, during our visit, a bus with European tourists arrives a little later. He sends us a guide, a nice Arab with a hat, who speaks about the brotherhood of all people regardless of religion.

The Tel is 21 meters high. The British archeologist Kathleen Kenyon left the deepest mark of all archeologists in the period between 1952 and 1958. Her systematic excavations of 23 cultural layers brought her to the bottom and to the first cultural layer, and a sensational discovery. She found a stone tower, nine meters high, on a clay surface. It is the oldest stone tower, older than 10,000 years.

The oldest stone staircase in the world, with a total of twenty steps, was found in the tower.

The purpose of the tower is unknown. But it rightfully holds the title of the first and oldest city of mankind. I would also add that it is the oldest one in this last cycle of civilization which we currently live in.

Around the tower there were, probably, built other, smaller towers, and small houses for living. Thousands of years, later a wall was built of mud bricks, 2.5 meters high and wide. It was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt, the last time in the Neolithic period, when it was 6.5 meters high and 25 meters long. And this all happened before the first Egyptian pharaohs.

Jericho holds many other records. It had the first domesticated animals, the first agricultural cultures, the first production of ceramics, the first plaster floors. This is the city with the oldest continuous life. Tel Jericho is located two kilometers from the center of today's Palestinian city of Jericho, which has 27,000 residents. Of course, Jericho is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

MEDITATION

I stop in front of the excavations dominated by the stone tower. I sit down by the fence. No one beside me; perfect for meditation.

As soon as I close my eyes, in front of me there is a dark atmosphere, grey clouds in the sky, the plain. Water covers the entire area. Images of towers and other dwellings of stone come to me. The stone from the houses was used later to build the walls and that is why there is no more evidence of dwellings from the same period when the tower was built.

I ask a question, why the shape of the tower? Answer – energetically pleasant, without sharp edges.

I get back to reality. I ask the guide whether there are underground waters at this site. He answers that there is a large underground river with 700 cubic meters of water per hour.

I visited two tourist destinations in the territory of the Palestinian Authority in the last three months: Bethlehem, the birthplace of the son of God, and Jericho, the birthplace of our civilization.

It would be nice to feel in the air the pleasure, brightness, friendship and love, to see the smiles of people of all colours. Let us hope that time will come.











Site M was opened by Kathleen M. Kenyon on the western side of the site, just to the north of Trench I. Here, the earliest occupational levels of the Jerichoan settlement was explored down to the bedrock, from the Early Bronze Age (3000-2350 BC) line of fortifications (still visible in the western section) up to the lowest Proto-Neolithic (10,000-8500 BC) deposits, reaching a depth of 15 m (fig. 1).

- 1) **Proto-Neolithic Period (10,000-8500 BC):** the most ancient layers date from the Proto-Neolithic Period (10,000-8500 BC), and were represented by huts made of clay and very primitive brick of balls of mud.
- 2) **Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (8500-7500 BC):** the definitive settle-

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SITE M - THE NEOLITHIC AND EARLY BRONZE LAYERS (10,000-2350 BC)

SAPIENZA
UNIVERSITY OF ROME



Fig. 1. General view of Square M at time of Kenyon's excavations: in the foreground, the ascending into the Proto-Neolithic levels up to the bedrock.



Fig. 2. Square M: Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (7500-6500 BC) enclosure.



Fig. 3. Square M: Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (7500-6500 BC) house with stone walls.



Fig. 4. Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (7500-6500 BC) decorated pottery from Square M.



Fig. 5. 1994 (7500-6500 BC) burial under the floor of the house.

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- 1) **Proto-Neolithic Period (10,000-8500 BC):** the most ancient layers date from the Proto-Neolithic Period (10,000-8500 BC), and were represented by huts made of clay and very primitive brick of balls of mud.
- 2) **Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (8500-7500 BC):** the definitive settlement of a developed early farming community is represented by long-lived houses with solid brick walls.
- 3) The following period (**Pre-Pottery Neolithic B**, c. 7500-6500 BC) is illustrated by enclosures, houses made of elongated bricks with plastered floors (figs. 2-4), basins in the fill beneath the floors (fig. 5), and by a well-proportioned enormous orthostat slab (basin wall) still visible along the east side of the excavated area. Some human crania, grouped and buried beneath the houses, testifying to an ancestor's cult, were found in layers of this period (fig. 6).
- 4) The **Pottery Neolithic Period (PNA-B, 6000-4000 BC)** consists of unimpressive but long-lasting occupation layers with pits and scattered stone walls.
- 5) Shortly after the beginning of the **Early Bronze Age**, the first city-walls testify to the birth of a real city (EB I-II, 3500-2350 BC): three successive mud-brick defensive lines over stone foundations have been identified (the last one built in a trench; figs. 7-8); their superimposition is clearly visible in the western section of the square (fig. 9).
- 6) Erosion deleted all traces of any following occupation in this area. The final evidence was a large Byzantine pit, testifying to the use of this sector of the mound as a quarry.

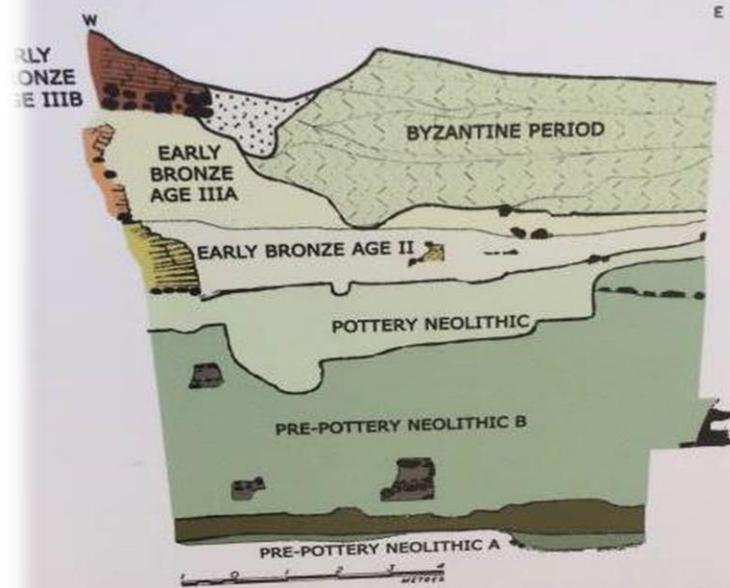


Fig. 8. The north section of Square MI with illustrated the main phases of occupation identified in the square, from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A (8500-7500 BC) to the Byzantine Period (IV-VII century AD).





TEL ARAD – THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION FAILS AGAIN

The east of the Israeli stone desert Negev. The year is 1962. Ruth Amiran and Yohanan Abaroni start archeological excavations north of the city of Arad. The artificial elevation Tel Arad becomes the center for research which will bring six cultural layers to the surface in the next few decades.

Rare rainy days five thousand years ago did not find the residents of Arad unprepared. Cobbled streets, canals and cuttings channelled the water to the natural bay at the bottom of the city where a megalithic reservoir was placed to collect water. Large blocks formed a perfect circle, 16 meters deep. Rainwater from the entire elevation was systematically channelled to the stone reservoir.

Perfectly integrated blocks, side by side, without space between their edges, and beautifully dressed face of blocks, were a guarantee that the drinking water would be preserved there for all the needs of the city.

And it is exactly this extraordinary construction work, five thousand years ago, that was the reason why the city was continuously inhabited for thousands of years. Powerful city walls protected the city, temples, palaces and residential areas. Ten hectares of land were irrigated from the water reservoir.

When the king of Arad, nearly four thousand years ago, heard that the Israelites were coming to the “promised land”, he got in their way and fought to prevent them from passing, says the Old Testament. The kings of Arad are mentioned on the lists of the records from the time of Canaanites. Later, the descendants of Moses' father in law, the Kenite tribe, lived in Arad. A thousand kilometers away, in the Egyptian Karnak, an inscription was discovered from the time of the pharaoh Shishak (925 B.C.), which says that Arad was part of the pharaonic kingdom. They were followed by the Judean tribes, and Persians, Jews, Arameans, Greeks, Nabateans, Romans and, in the end, Arabs. After the eighth century, Arad was destroyed and covered by desert sand until the 1960s.

The water reservoir, or “water citadel”, as archeologists call it, has always been a synonym for this city. The large construction work, impressive stone walls of unknown builders, served as a reason for many people later, at a lower level of civilization, to remain in this city.











THE NABATEAN MONOPOLY AND WEAKNESS OF ROMAN WOMEN

The Nabateans were sovereign rulers of the desert, between the Red, Persian, Dead and Mediterranean Seas. Their caravans travelled from Egypt, Oman and Yemen to Persia and Syria, Arabia and Philistia. Most often they ended up in the port of Gaza and from there their products were sent by ships to choosy customers in Greece and Rome.

More than two thousand years later, the Israelis finally allow the Palestinians to start to rebuild the port on the coast of Gaza in 2016.

The Nabateans were true desert Bedouins, restless nomads, who merged with the harsh conditions of the stone and sand deserts of Arabia and Sinai. They knew how to obtain water and keep it away from the eyes of opponents. They knew where to plant rare plants and how to provide food. They appreciated their articles that they transported by caravans, in lines reaching as many as 300 camels. And their products were rare and exotic: spices from the hinterlands of the Indian sea, unusual fabrics and fragrant perfumes unknown to the countries under Hellenistic influence.

The Punic Wars at the turn of the third to the second century B.C. brought exhausting conflicts to the Mediterranean area, between Rome and Carthage, and many smaller countries. The battles for Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Spain, rebellions of Philip in Greece and Italic tribes in Italy, kept the region in a war atmosphere for several decades.

During the three Punic Wars, the Roman Senate inaugurated its role and legitimacy. In addition to command, it issued a series of laws that accompanied the rationing of resources. Among other things, they brought a law prohibiting Roman women from buying.

The war ended, Rome razed Carthage and showered it with salt, and took over the role of the sovereign ruler of the Mediterranean territory. But even after the war the Senate did not abolish the prohibiting law on shopping for beautiful and eager for fashion Roman women. Therefore, the women of Rome went out to the streets, surrounded the Senate and requested the abolition of the law that prohibits them from going shopping. Pressed by an ultimatum of angry women, the Senate repealed the old law.

Women took control of household budgets again.

Their desire for perfumes and mysterious scents, beautiful dresses and eastern spices, started the scramble for these products coming from the east Mediterranean. Suddenly, the trade whose chain was controlled by the Nabateans became branched and very profitable. More and more caravans were seen in the Arab deserts. The Nabateans got rich rapidly, having monopoly on the products that were demanded by the residents of the largest world metropolis – Rome.

The cities on the desert borders flourished.

The traditional archeology claims that the desert Bedouins became homeowners and landowners. They built great temples, shopping centers, unusual architecture throughout the Near and Middle East.

I have visited quite a number of their cities in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, Palestine... I have to admit that it is hard for me to find a common denominator for several architectural styles.

Certainly the most famous city that is attributed to the Nabateans is Petra, a temple complex in the gorges of Jordan. I cannot imagine Bedouins on scaffolding sculpting beautiful decorative stone pillars. But I can imagine that a vivid daily commercial traffic took place in front of those temples. Also, I have no doubt that many artificial caves were used for housing and as tombs.

In the northwest of Saudi Arabia, the twin city of Petra is Mada'in Saleh. However, unlike the Jordanian beauty, there are no tourists there, and no archeological excavations. In fact, I was fortunate to be a guest of the Government of Saudi Arabia and visit that "forbidden city", which is forbidden for visits by a fatwa because it belongs to pagan builders.

Dahab, on the Egyptian side of the Sinai, on the shores of the Red Sea, is one of the strategic locations of the Bedouins. Their dwellings are gone and only an occasional camel can be seen near this tourist town today.

In April 2016, I visited Mamshit, an ancient city of Nabateans in Israeli Negev Desert. The city was at the crossroads of ancient roads and caravans, which travelled between Petra and Gaza, the Dead Sea and the mountains of Hebron.

At the turn of two millennia, from the time of calculation before and after Christ, the Nabateans got so rich that the Romans had to do something. And of course, in accordance with tradition, they decided to do what they knew best: conquest. The Nabatean kingdom became a Roman province ("Petra province"). Rich Bedouins began to copy the Romans, established their cities with tanks, inns, markets, palaces, stone residential houses.

Mamshit is an excellent example of the middle and late period of the Nabateans who lived under the Roman rule. Unexpectedly, in the middle of the stone desert, a stone city emerged, with excellent construction. The largest building covers more than 2,000 square meters; it obviously belonged to a rich man. Great frescos and three-dimensional sculptures on the walls are still visible.

Zeev has invited me for a Saturday lunch at his sister's in Tel Aviv. He has already announced that his family will be there, headed by his mother and father. His father Yehushua Ben Arie is the founder and long-time rector of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. His mother is a leading archeologist in Israel. At lunch there are fifteen people and our agreement is that this time we will not talk about the Bosnian pyramids. However, the first question I receive comes from my host's daughter in law, who says that she has just read in a magazine a story about the Bosnian pyramids and then the question of whether they are real follows...

It was the Hebrew University of Jerusalem that began the first systematic archeological excavations in Mamshit in 1956. Five decades later, they resulted in the declaration of Mamshit and the entire route of spices and aroma a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which stretches the length of 2400 km.

MAMSHIT NATIONAL PARK WORLD HERITAGE SITE

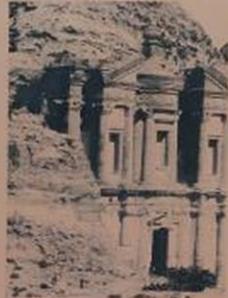
THE INCENSE ROUTE – DESERT CITIES IN THE NEGEV

The Incense Route and the Desert Cities in the Negev were inscribed in 2005 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as World Heritage Sites with outstanding universal value. The 2,400-kilometer-long Incense Route begins in Oman and Yemen, crosses Saudi Arabia and Jordan, reaches the Negev, and ends at the port of Gaza. The UNESCO inscription includes the most impressive segment of the Incense Route, the 65-kilometer-long stretch from Moadim to Avdat. Along the way are forts, caravansaries, springs, cisterns and milestones, as well as the ancient cities of Mamshit, Avdat, Haluza and Shivta. Camel caravans bearing frankincense and myrrh, spices and other merchandise made use of the route for some 700 years. The Incense Route and the Desert Cities are rare testimony of global value to an ancient culture, which encompassed architecture, desert agriculture, and the economically, socially and culturally significant incense trade in the Hellenistic-Roman world.





WHO WERE THE NABATEANS?

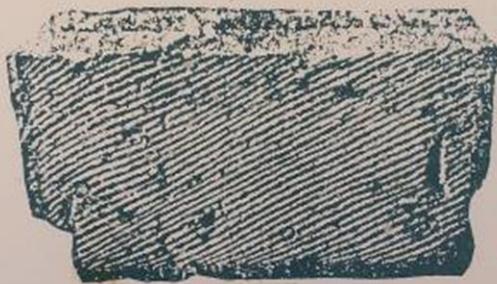


TOMBS CARVED IN THE ROCK IN PETRA, THE NABATEAN CAPITAL.

THE NABATEANS WERE A NOMADIC PEOPLE OF ARAB ORIGIN. THEIR CARAVANS TRANSPORTED PRECIOUS PERFUMS AND SPICES FROM NORTHERN ARABIA TO THE SHORES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN, VIA TRANSJORDAN AND THE NEGEV. THE GOODS WERE THEN SHIPPED TO LANDS ACROSS THE SEA. THE WAY STATIONS THE NABATEANS BUILT ON THE TRADE ROUTE EVENTUALLY BECAME FLOURISHING CITIES. WHEN THE ROMANS DEVELOPED NEW TRADE ROUTES IN THE FIRST CENTURY CE, THE NABATEANS CHANGED OVER TO A SETTLED LIFESTYLE. AFTER THE NABATEAN KINGDOM

WAS ANNEXED TO THE ROMAN EMPIRE (106 CE), THE NABATEAN-ARAMAIC LANGUAGE GRADUALLY GAVE WAY TO GREEK AND THE NABATEAN GODS TOOK ON ROMAN CHARACTERISTICS. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE NABATEANS ADOPTED CHRISTIANITY AND BLENDED INTO THE LOCAL POPULATION.

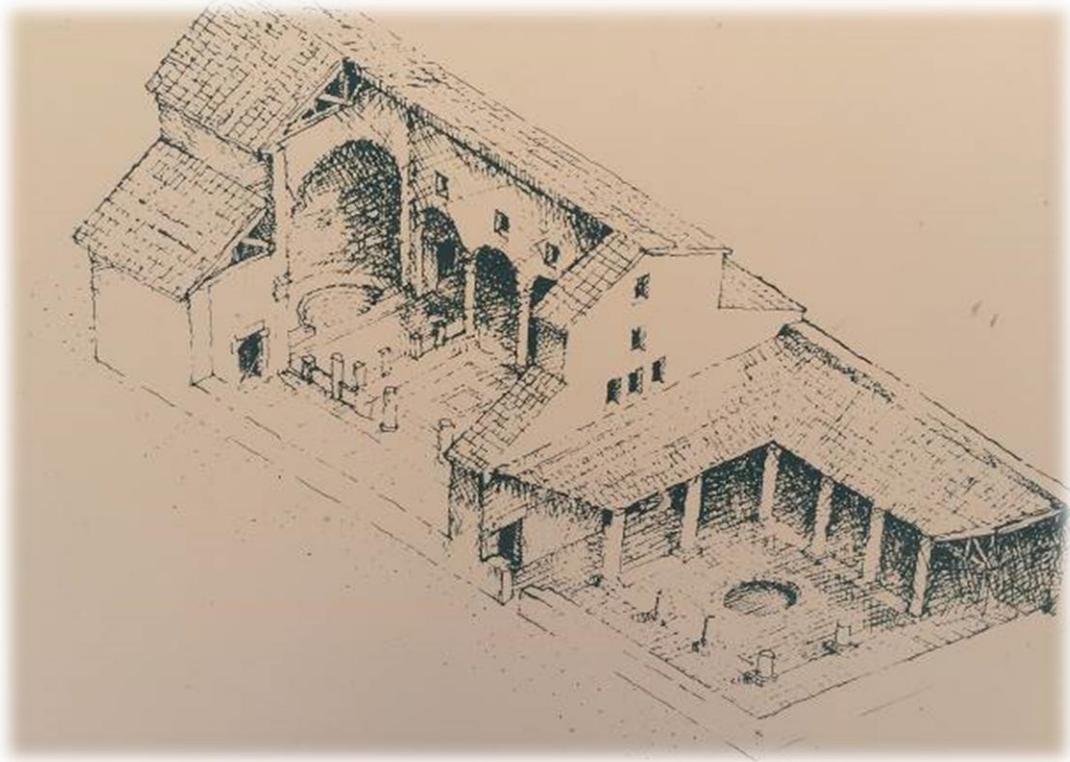
THE NABATEANS WERE TALENTED ARTISTS AND THEIR SKILL AS BUILDERS IS REFLECTED IN THE UNIQUE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE THEY DEVELOPED IN THE NEGEV. MANY EXAMPLES CAN BE SEEN IN MAMSHIT.



אבן משותפת בקוים אלכסוניים בשיטה האופיינית לשיקטורה הנבטית.
STONE CHISELED WITH DIAGONAL LINES, TYPICAL OF NABATEAN ARCHITECTURE









TEL GEZER MONOLITHS

My face brightens every time I get in front of a megalithic site, a new pyramid or a stone ball. Another confirmation of some bygone times when people thought differently and knew nature better than we do today.

On the other hand, to conventional, orthodox, uncreative archeologists, the ancient megaliths represent a new problem. Who to attribute them to? When were they built? What was their function? Then they resort to a tried methodology: to make up some builders and attribute them to primitive rituals.

Tel Gezer (“artificial hill Gezer”) is halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, at the foot of the mountains of Judah. Today the Israeli National Park, once it was home to a range of communities and Old Testament events, led by Joshua and Solomon. Officially, the area was inhabited more than 5,000 years ago with people who lived in caves carved in the nearby rocks. It was followed by the life on the mount, without protective walls, which caused the undefended place to be conquered and burned down. After a break of a few hundred years, Gezer became an important center 4,000 years ago and the city was surrounded by impressive five-meter-high city walls. Their remains are visible even today.

The reason of my coming to Tel Gezer is the upright megaliths, made by unknown creators. Today, there are seven upright megaliths; three were destroyed, but their foundations are visible. Around the megaliths there was a flat stone platform. The blocks are of different sizes. The highest ones reach three meters above the ground. They weigh between two and nine tons. The most massive is, in my opinion, four tons heavier than in the official data.

I measured the orientation of the blocks: they are all placed in the north-south direction.

Archeologists call these blocks “maseba” and attribute them to “Canaanite culture”, and talk about “Canaanite megaliths”.

Many will be satisfied with these claims, but in fact, they mean nothing.

For Israelis today, “Canaanites” are all non-Jewish people who lived in the “promised land”. Hence, they were their enemies. In general, here they lump the Phoenicians and Philistines, and all those who lived from the south of present-day Lebanon, through Israel, the west coast of Jordan to the Sinai. Other historians expand this concept to the territory that included the whole of Asia Minor. They are attributed to the periods between 7,500 years up to 3,500 years ago. Some even consider the Israelites Canaanites. Interpreters of the Bible consider Canaanites the descendants of Noah’s grandson. Therefore, this is a generalized and very vague description.

What interests us is: which megalithic culture is this?

These blocks used to be dressed, transported and mounted on the hill. Previously, the location was levelled; the set boards delineated the section with megaliths. They oriented the line of blocks in the north-south direction.

It is difficult to say what the role of these massive blocks is without taking measurements regarding certain energy phenomena.

Much later, a rectangular stone block with a hollowed out reservoir was placed in the middle of this megalithic site. And it became the place of ceremonies and rituals for generations of inhabitants of Gezer. Who set the original megaliths, no one knew.

This block with the reservoir has become an ideal foothold for researchers of Biblical archeology to attribute to the site the character that it really does not deserve. Next to the megaliths, a board is set up to suggest that Moses, after he received the Ten Commandments, came to the foot of the hill where the megaliths were a symbol for the twelve tribes of Israel, then sprinkled part of the blood on the basin and part of it on the altar.

In any case, this site in its tranquillity and isolation is ideal for relaxation and meditation.











High Place - Monolith Temple

A shrine area including one stone basin and 10 monoliths each different from the other in size and shape



צלמית אלת הפוריות
A figurine of a fertility goddess

Scholars believe the temple served as a venue where alliances between tribes or city-states were forged or renewed. The 10 monoliths may have symbolized the city of Gezer and nine allied cities in its vicinity. The basin may have served as a container for a blood libation poured during an alliance ceremony. A ritual of this type is described in the Bible after Moses brought the Ten Commandments down Mount Sinai:

"Moses then wrote down all the commands of the Lord. Early in the morning he set up an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel [...] Moses took one part of the blood and put it in the basins, and the other part of the blood he dashed against the altar" (Exodus 24:4-6).

מקדש המצבות

מתחם פולחני הכולל אגן אבן אחד ועשר מצבות אבן השונות אחת מן השנייה בגודלן ובצורתן

משערים שהמקדש שימש למרתת בריתות בין שבטים או בין עווי מדינה וכו' לחידוש בריתות כאלה. ייתכן שעשר המצבות שיצלו את העיר גור ומשע ערים נוספות שהיו בעלות ברית איתה. האגן שימש אולי לנוסוד דם במהלך הטקס. ברית מו חסוג הוא מופיעה גם בתנ"ך לאחר מעמד הר סיני.

ויכתב משה את כל דברי ה' וישכם בבקר ויבן מזבח תחת ההר וישנים עשרה מצבה לשנים עשר שבטי ישראל [...] ויקח משה חצי הדם וישם באגנות והצי הדם זרח על המצבות

(שמות כד 4-6)



מכלה למתקני עיניים
Tubs for eye cosmetics



A bull-sacrifice





צלמית אלת הפריין
A figurine of a
fertility goddess

may have symbolized the city of Gezer and nine allied cities in its vicinity. The basin may have served as a container for a blood libation poured during an alliance ceremony. A ritual of this type is described in the Bible after Moses brought the Ten Commandments down Mount Sinai:

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TEL GEZER NATIONAL PARK

Handwritten notes in Hebrew on a piece of paper attached to the sign.

Welcome!

Tel Gezer is one of the most important biblical sites in Israel. It contains impressive remains, among them the city walls, a huge tower, and a monolith temple, all from the Canaanite period. "Solomon's Gate" was also discovered, as well as the Gezer Calendar (the most ancient Hebrew inscription ever found), dated to the Israelite period.

Please observe the following rules:

- Do not harm the antiquities, flora, and fauna!
- Entrance to vehicles is prohibited!
- Danger - open pits! Use only marked paths!
- The lighting of fires is prohibited!
- Do not remain in the reserve after dark.
- Keep the area clean.

אבות
מאנו

Enjoy your visit!
Israel Nature and Parks Authority



TEL BE'ER SHEVA – THE STRUGGLE FOR WATER SINCE THE TIME OF ABRAHAM

Water. It all starts with water.

The first cry of a baby, domestic animals in the yard, plants in the garden, they all need water. It is rare in the desert. Rains fall once or twice a year. The art of living is reduced to the question of how to capture and store rainwater to last for the whole year.

The desert cities had another problem. How to endure several months of siege without going outside the city walls? How to have a sufficient supply of water?

In the last five decades, more than a hundred artificial elevations (“tels”) were investigated archeologically in Israel. These are the villages and towns thousands of years old. Among them is Tel Be'er Sheva, located between the mountains of Judah on one side and the desert Negev and Sinai on the other side. Thanks to the mountains on one side, groundwaters were formed in the valleys. Thus, in the past, a larger number of water wells were located here.

In 2005, three Tels were admitted under the auspices of UNESCO as World Heritage: Tel Be'er Sheva, Tel Meggido and Tel Hazor. They are testimonies of the extinct “Canaanite civilization”, whose origins stretch from the Bronze Age to the biblical cities of the Iron Age.

The central building in the partially reconstructed city of Tel Be'er Sheva is a huge water reservoir with a capacity of 700 cubic meters. It is a megalithic complex that was partially used as a protective wall for the city of a few hundred inhabitants. From the tower, a seventeen-meter-deep megalithic well goes down, through which water poured. Stone stairs led toward the bottom of the well. Behind the well, the reservoir continues in five sections, lined with a thick layer of plaster so that water cannot leak. And the third part of the water complex is the channel leading to the mountains of Judah, from where it brought water directly.

Thus, they obtained water in three ways: (1) they collected the rainwater that fell on the city directly into the reservoir; (2) they brought additional water from the nearby mountains by underground channels. And, finally, (3) next to the reservoir, they had a dug well, through which they supplied ground water directly from the Hebron Valley.

Add to this the thickness of the protective city walls of four meters and the residents of Be'er Sheva could sleep peacefully, at least with regard to short-term sieges.

Water.

The beginning of life.



TEL BEER SHEBA NATIONAL PARK WORLD HERITAGE SITE THE BIBLICAL TELS – BEER SHEBA, HAZOR, MEGIDDO

The biblical tels of Beer Sheba, Hazor and Megiddo were inscribed in 2005 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as World Heritage Sites with outstanding universal value. They are fitting representatives of the 200 biblical tels in Israel, which were flourishing cities in the past. These cities were established alongside ancient commercial roads and near prosperous agricultural areas, and were ruled by a central government. They made their mark on the history of the land of Israel and the people of Israel. Archaeological finds uncovered in these tels attest to urban planning, including gates, walls, temples, palaces, storerooms, stables, and water systems. The finds also represent an encounter between the local culture and the cultures of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and the lands of the Aegean Sea. These cities existed during the Canaanite and Israelite periods, from the third to the first millennia BCE.

Four-Horned Altar

Dressed stones found in a storehouse wall originally belonged to a large, four-horned altar (1.60 x 1.60 m).

It is believed that a temple stood in the city that was dismantled during the cultic reform of King Hezekiah:

"He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, cut down the wooden image..." (2 Kings 18:4).



The four-horned altar has been reconstructed. The original altar is in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

זבח קרנות

מידות בית המזבח
 וזבחים מסופות, שהיו
 חלק ממזבח קרנות גדול
 (1.60 x 1.60 מ').
 זה הוא כי בעיד הזה מקדש
 נרקב בזמן הרפורמה
 עת של המלך חזקיהו:
 "הסיר את המזבחות ושבר
 מעבדות זכרת את האשרה..."
 (2 מלכים 18:4)

Tel Be'er Sheva

"Then he went up from there to Beersheba. And the Lord appeared to him the same night and said, 'I am the God of your father Abraham; do not fear, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your descendants for my servant Abraham's sake.' So he built an altar there and called on the name of the Lord, and he pitched his tent there; and there Isaac's servants dug a well." (Gen 26:23-25).

The 15 strata of the mound have revealed finds from the Chalcolithic period; settlements and administrative cities from the Israelite period (the Iron Age); a fortress from the Persian period; a temple from the Hellenistic period; a fortress from the Herodian (Early Roman) period and from the Early Muslim period. The main stratum to be seen on the mound is Stratum 2, a city dating from the Israelite period (the Iron Age), which was built during the reign of one of the kings of Judah, apparently Hezekiah, and had approximately 300 inhabitants.

The city's layout followed the topography, and was unique in terms of its internal planning: It included peripheral streets parallel to the line of the city wall and streets perpendicular to them. All the streets intersected at the city gate square, which served for defense and as the seat of the city's judges and merchants. Planning also included drainage channels beneath the streets to conduct rainwater flowing from the roofs and courtyards to a main channel that passed beneath the gate and exited the city.



Reconstruction of stratum 2

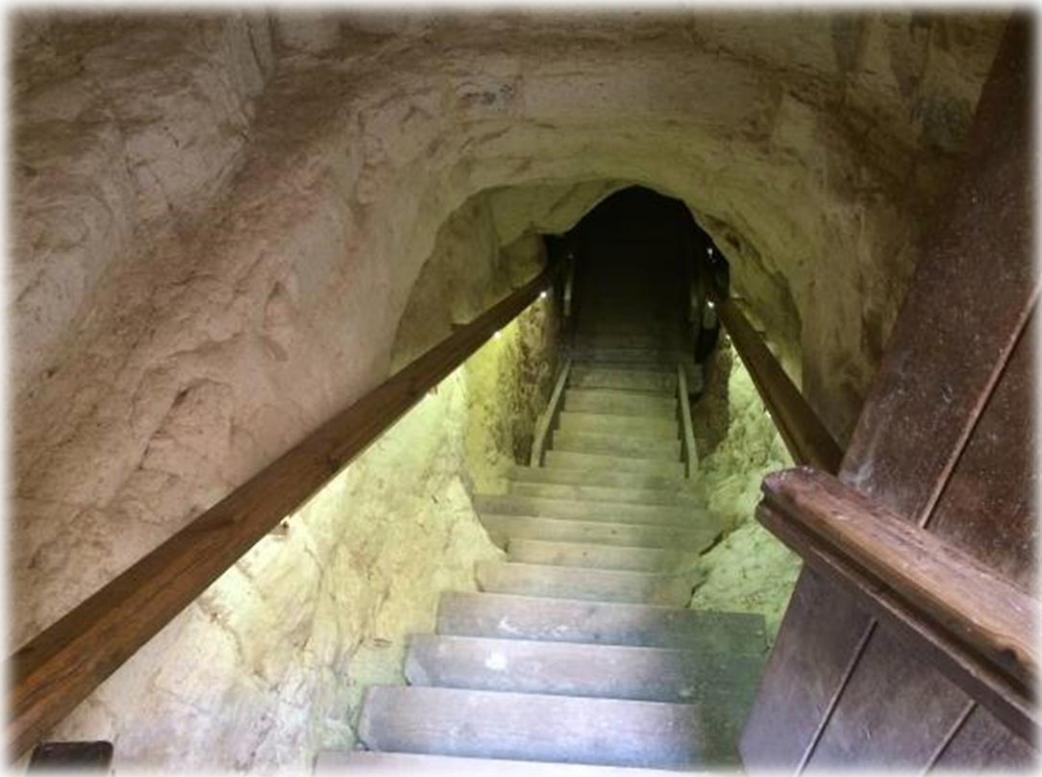
The large water system planned within the city strengthened it during times of war. The city featured 75 dwellings, as well as a number of public buildings including storehouses, basements, structures for its commanders, a governor's palace and a temple.

The Stratum 2 city was destroyed in a conflagration, probably during the campaign of Sennacherib in Judah in 701 BCE.

"Now in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and took them" (2 Kings 18:17).

Bevelite Iron 1,200 - 800	Persian 539-332	Hellenistic 332-63	Roman 63 BCE - 324 CE	Byzantine 324-638	Early Islamic 638-1099
B.C.E.		C.E.			





מי השיטפונות מנחל חברון אל מפעל המים העתיק.

استخدمت القناة الموجودة أمامكم في
الماضي لتحويل مياه الفيضانات من وادي
الخليل إلى منشأة المياه الأثرية.

The aqueduct you see here channeled
flood water from Wadi Hebron to the
ancient water system.

CAVES OF MARESHA

Zeev's father, Yehushua Ben Arie, a famous Israeli archeologist, researched the Beit Guvrin caves in central Israel a few decades ago. At that time, there were already several theories explaining their origin. Today, Yehushua's hypothesis on how they emerged is mostly accepted.

Specifically, he argues that local residents first started forming a quarry, digging the ground and then pulling the stone from underneath it. They used hard stone for mortar and plaster, that is, as building material. They would expand the section with soft stone until they reached the hard stone. To get a stable quarry underground, they would begin excavations with a narrow channel, and then spread in the shape of a bell.

Beit Guvrin has more than 800 registered locations with caves. Some mention thousands of such caves. Today, their origin is attributed to the Byzantines, sometimes to the late period of Roman rule in the region. The story says that over the time people linked those artificial, bell caves by underground passageways, especially in times when they needed to hide from enemies.

Then the entire complex was submitted for the protection of UNESCO, and the explanation that their age is not even 1,500 years has been generally accepted.

However, my visit has given me an entirely different picture. It is true that the most famous and largest caves are the ones which perhaps were made and used as underground quarries. Today, concerts of classical music are organized there because of its excellent acoustics. I have attended such a concert. But, some other underground complexes, for example caves of Maresha in the same part of Israel, have a completely different history.

I visited several of them. The dimensions differ from bell caves that are tens of meters high. Here, I have the same feeling as in Cappadocia, the underground complexes in central Turkey. Several levels below ground, with narrow tunnels among them, low arches, and lovely shaped circular staircases. The Caves of Maresha have nothing to do with quarries.

What is especially impressive here are the air chimneys, vents, that are identical in diameter and architectural style in Israel and in Turkey, and that connect all underground levels.

In Turkey, people shyly mention the "Canaanite origin" of the underground cities in Anatolia which go several thousand years back. But not more than 5,000 years. In Israel it is the same construction and purpose, regardless of the fact that we do not know the reasons of construction.

Instead of generalization, the caves should be investigated separately and independently. In particular, different energetic measurements should be taken.

I do not have lunch in Tel Aviv and instead use the time to meet with Yehushua Ben Ariem to exchange opinions on the subject of the Caves of Maresha. Zeev nicely warns me before the meeting: "My father is a conventional archeologist, with very conservative views."

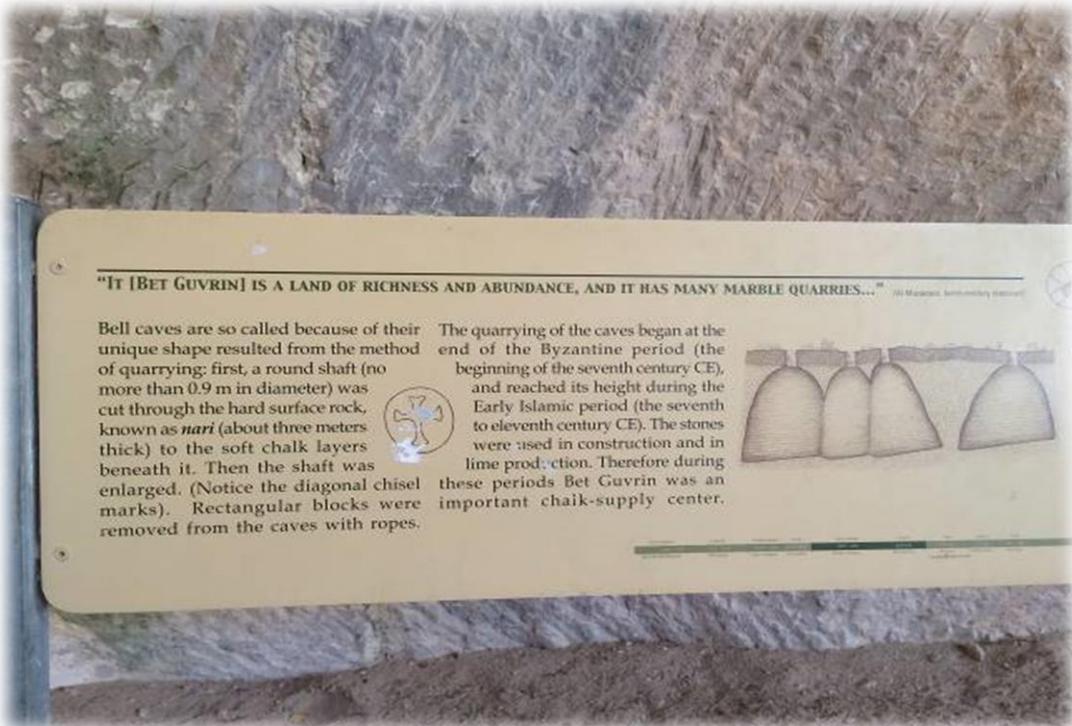
But, as our meeting will show, he is also a very kind and warm man.

How nice it would be if the original builders appeared in the prehistoric underground tunnels in Israel, Turkey and Malta, and showed us hundreds of kilometers of underground tunnels and explained the reasons for their construction.









THE NIMROD FORTRESS

The mighty hunter Nimrod, Noah's great-grandson, had his own kingdom before the “God began to rule the Earth again.” Nimrod is associated with the Tower of Babel, the kingdoms of Shinar, Akkad and Uruk; he is a symbol of strength and superhuman power. Not surprisingly, he is attributed many unexplained megalithic cities in the Near and Middle East.

Peaks and valleys, known as the Golan Heights, along its northern border with Syria, were occupied by Israel in 1967. From one of the hills, the view extends to a deserted Syrian town where daily fighting lasts between Syrian opposition forces, namely ISIS and the government forces. Black smoke rises from half-demolished buildings only two kilometers away from me. This is, physically, the closest I ever was to the war in Syria. At the observation post of UN soldiers. They count the number of shells fired daily and what the situation is on the ground. I take a photo with them; one is from the Netherlands and the other from Canada; they have nine months more to serve here.

We drive to the far north, which is nowadays controlled by Israel: over the hill is Lebanon, Syria is to the right. My destination is the Nimrod Fortress.

That day, I had a magnificent experience in northern Israel. Far from the eyes and interest of the outside world, the great fortress was there just for me.

As if Nimrod himself carved, carried and mounted the megalithic blocks. He fitted them perfectly together, as befits a superior construction style and knowledge. Some of the blocks, with eight corners, perfectly fit into the neighbouring ones. I count the weight of two major blocks: 12 and 16 tons. They are all different in size. They endured many earthquakes, other than barbaric ones.

Beautifully dressed blocks on all six sides, with concave edges, multi-tone angular blocks with several inclinations, the top of engineering skills, all around me.

I recall the identical examples of construction in Peru, Easter Island, Mexico, Croatia, Egypt, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro.

The length of the Nimrod fortress reaches 420 meters, with 120 meters in width. The original construction is superior, from the ground up.

Not a word about the original builders can be found on the Internet.

I suppose that, several thousand years ago, the fortress controlled the roads from the Mediterranean Tyre and Galilee to Syrian Damascus.

The references on the Internet and the signs at the site are very superficial and try to describe only the medieval period. Rare and unthorough archeological excavations lead us only to the eighth century.

The official sources take as the date of construction of the fortress the period between 1227 and 1230, when Saladin's nephew Al-Aziz Uthman built the fortress (he probably only strengthened the existing city walls), in order to prevent invasion of the Crusaders, led by Kaiser Frederick II, toward Damascus. The Kaiser conquered Jerusalem, but this fortress stopped his further conquest of the Middle East.

After that, the protective towers were erected and the Nimrod fortress definitely got the appearance of a fortress.

Indeed, with its height reaching 800 meters above sea level, steep cliffs, megalithic walls and its own sources of drinking water, it is no wonder that it was almost impregnable.

However, several decades later, the fortress changed its owners: first the Mongols took it over, then the Mamelukes. In the sixteenth century, it became a luxury Ottoman prison for Istanbul rebels expelled to Palestine.

The fortress was almost destroyed by an earthquake in the eighteenth century. Only the prehistoric megalithic blocks remained in place.

After that, it was abandoned forever and left to shepherds and their flocks.

NIMROD FORTRESS

KNOWN IN ARABIC AS QAL'AT ES-SUBEIBA, THE NIMROD FORTRESS IS NAMED AFTER THE BRAVE BIBLICAL HUNTER - NIMROD, WHO, ACCORDING TO TRADITION, COULD SIT ON THE SUMMIT AND REACH OUT HIS HAND TO TAKE WATER FROM THE BANIAS STREAM...

THE FORTRESS IS SITUATED AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT HERMON, AT AN ALTITUDE OF 815 METERS ABOVE SEA LEVEL. IT WAS BUILT ON A LONG, NARROW RIDGE, SURROUNDED BY THE DEEP WADIS OF GUVTA IN THE NORTH AND SA'AR IN THE SOUTH, THE LATTER FORMING THE BORDER BETWEEN THE BASALT ROCKS OF THE GOLAN AND THE LIMESTONE OF THE HERMON.

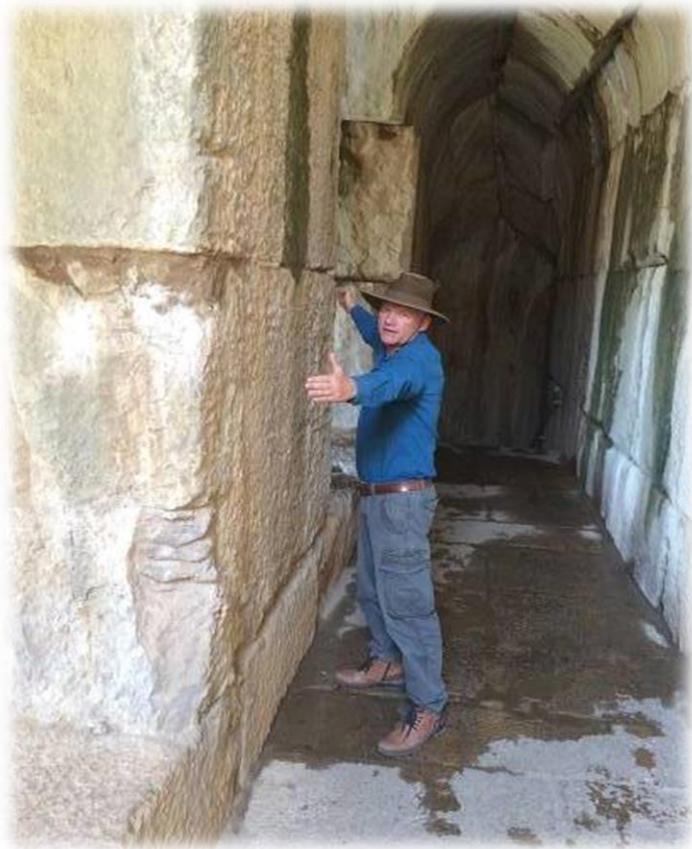
ITS LOCATION WAS OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE, COMMANDING A VIEW OF THE CITY OF BANIAS AND CONTROLLING THE IMPORTANT ROAD TO DAMASCUS. THE FORTRESS, REACHING 420 METERS IN LENGTH AND 150 METERS IN WIDTH, IS THE LARGEST IN THE COUNTRY.

UNTIL SEVERAL YEARS AGO, IT WAS GENERALLY ACCEPTED THAT THE FORTRESS WAS BUILT BY THE DAMASCUS RULERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 12th CENTURY, AND THAT IT PASSED HANDS BACK AND FORTH FROM THE CRUSADERS TO THE MUSLIMS, HAVING BEEN SETTLED AT SOME STAGE BY AN EXTREMIST SHI'ITE SECT CALLED THE 'HASSISIANS'. RECENT STUDIES, HOWEVER, HAVE INDICATED THAT THE FORTRESS WAS BUILT BY THE MUSLIM RULER, EL-MALIK EL-AZIZ UTHMAN, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 13th CENTURY. IT WAS ENLARGED AND RENOVATED BY THE MAMELUKE SULTAN, BAYBARS, DURING THE SECOND HALF OF THAT CENTURY, FOLLOWING ITS CONQUEST BY THE MONGOLIAN FORCES, WHO PENETRATED THE REGION IN 1260. IN THE 15th CENTURY, THE FORTRESS SERVED AS A PRISON FOR REBELS, AND WAS LATER DESERTED.

THE FORTRESS HAS NOT BEEN FULLY EXCAVATED. THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES HAS MADE SURFACE INVESTIGATIONS, AND THE NATIONAL PARKS AUTHORITY HAS RENOVATED THE SITE, PREPARING IT FOR PUBLIC VISITS.



















הירידה אליו במערכת מדרגות. במפלסיה הנמוכה
ניתן להבחין בשני שלבי בנייה עיקריים. הראשון מיוחס
לראשית המאה ה-13 לספירה והשני לסופה.

THE SOUTH-WESTERN TOWER

THIS WAS A FORTIFIED TOWER WHICH OVERLOOKED
THE ROAD FROM BANIAS TO DAMASCUS. FROM ITS UPPER
SECTIONS ONE CAN SEE THE GALILEE AND THE HULA VALLEY.
A STAIRCASE LEADS TO ITS LOWER LEVELS, WHERE
TWO STAGES OF CONSTRUCTION ARE DISCERNIBLE.

THE FIRST DATES TO THE BEGINNING OF THE
13th CENTURY CE, AND THE SECOND - TO THE END
OF THAT CENTURY.







RUJM EL-HIRI – MAGNIFICENT STONE RINGS

I never thought that for me Israel would become a country of pyramids, menhirs, dolmens and stone circles. All of these are megalithic prehistoric phenomena that are usually tied to England, Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mexico, France, Egypt, Russia or Croatia.

We set off for the Golan Heights. We turn our SUV to a macadam road, then to a narrow stone path. Yaniv rides slowly over bumps. One part of the road we go on foot, crossing a stream.

Today's goal is Rujm el-Hiri, the mysterious stone circles. In the middle of the plain, located 515 meters above sea level, we can see piles of black, basalt stones. As we get closer, we can see a regular, circular layout.

I am surprised by the amount of stones. In total 42,000 tons of basalt stone were collected, and then arranged properly in concentric circles. There are five or even nine of them, depending on how you count. In the midst is a large pile, which reminds me of the Dalmatian piles.

The wall height of these circles ranges from one to 2.5 meters, and their width is 3.2 meters. Their east-west diameter is 145 m, and the north-south diameter is 155 m.

In the middle there is a large pile with a diameter of 25 meters, about five meters high, and in its center there is a smaller circular room.

I carefully walk by the stone walls, climb on them, touch neatly arranged stones. They are witnesses of some ancient past times, when people lived differently and communicated with nature. I climb on the central pile and walk down to the covered room. I get into the protected section, not higher than 1.20 m. The noise and the pressure of the outside world automatically stop. It calls for meditation.

MEDITATION

I settle myself in a comfortable position. I cross my arms and legs. I close my eyes. I focus on the messages from the time when these stone rings emerged. I see greenery, plain, plenty of water. The stone circles are under the celestial sphere. I receive messages about the healing properties, energy fields beneficial to man.

Archeologists have not managed to find any organic material which would help them to determine the period of construction. They assume that the age of the stone circles is about five thousand years, and that the central room was built 1,500 years later and served as a tomb then. Very few artifacts were found. The age of five thousand years was estimated on the basis of the rings found close to the walls which culturally belong to that period. Of course, this does not confirm the real time of construction but it determines the minimum age of the structure.

Some circuits are connected by walls; in some places it is evident that there were rooms even smaller than these walls. Certainly, this came much later than the original building.

Archeologists are hesitant to determine the possible purpose of this structure. Their explanations are moving in the direction of a religious and ceremonial center. The Old Testament speaks of a race of giants and some people associate this place with Biblical legends, the king Og and his kingdom of Bashan. In Hebrew, “Gilgal Rephaim”, from which the name for this location was derived, means “wheel of giants”.

However, Yonathan Mizrahi and Anthony Aveni, who studied this structure in the 1980s, were more specific and more realistic, concluding that it served as a celestial observatory. I respect Aveni’s work and his analysis of the Mayan pyramids, when he ingeniously observed that the pyramids, and even whole Maya cities, produce very specific frequencies and sounds, and are arranged according to the star constellations.

Aveni concluded that the entrance to the center of the Stone Circle marks the line of sunrise during the summer solstice. Other entrances match the vernal and autumnal equinox. Calculation of the position of star constellations and layout of circuits, entrances, and rooms, took Avenue and Mizrahi to the time of 5,000 years ago (3,000 B.C. +/- 250 years). This projection matches with the dating of the stone rings.

The geobiologist Richard Benishai systematically researched the site, thereby including unconventional methods. One of his spiritual friends channelled the information from the energy field of Akasha, concluding:

“This site exists for 5,200 years. It brings positive energy to the people and was used for treatment. During the ceremony, they would offer flowers, fruits and crystals. Stone Circles symbolize earthly gods and fertility. Each circle represents one season of the year. The knowledge to make this site comes from the time of Babylon. The water is very good for drinking and bathing, because it is rich in minerals. Even today, people should connect spiritually at this site with the existing entities and create positive energy of the circle. At one time, the site was run by Nogia Nogia, whose name translated means “the one who touches God and brings blessings of the ancient gods”.

Richard describes in detail that the circles stand in the ratio of 1:1.618; or golden section formula. It certainly gives them the power of an energy booster. The next element is the very geometry of the circle which causes the creation of positive energy. Concentric circles reinforce this action. In the center of the circle there is a “chimney” (room). Below the megalithic circle is an underground watercourse at a depth of 33 meters, 2.10 meters wide, with a water flow rate of five cubic meters.

Before entering the stone circle, the energy level is as expected at 4,000 Bovis. Within the circle, it increases ten-fold!

Another testimony, with spontaneous channelling of information, came from a geobiologist from Israel, who has the ability to see what is invisible to the naked eye:

“It is a highly energetic place. It was used for curing illnesses. Prior to its creation, living areas were established at the northern section of the circle. Thereby, they noted that there were numerous illnesses among their people and even among the domestic animals. The shamans understood through spiritual connections why it was happening. Using the knowledge gained from spiritual beings, they erected these circular walls, around the central point, which can be considered as a chakra of the Earth for this area. After that, exceptional results were obtained. The illnesses ceased. Offerings were continuously presented to various spirits. Many years later, the invaders came to this area. They banned the use of this site. At the same time, they never knew the true meaning and essence of these perfect stone circles. If you want to use this site, it cannot be for monetary gain; it must be open only for esoteric teachings, for the sacred science and also for people suffering from respiratory illnesses. This site must not be repaired or restored; leave it as is.”



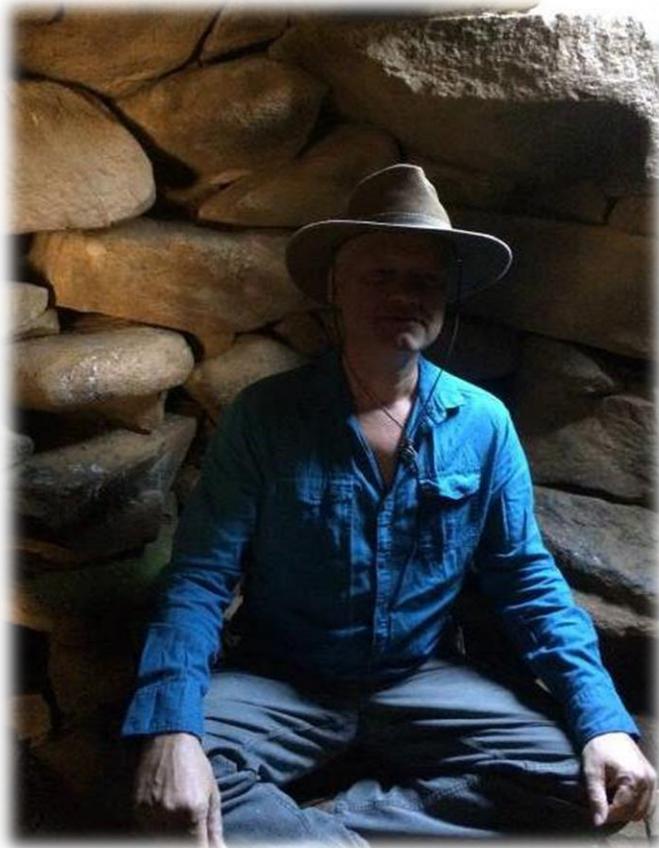












GAMLA DOLMENS

North of Israel, there are almost no cars, just the occasional police or military patrols. We are near the Syrian border and the war zone. Driving on the territory occupied in 1967 brings us to the prairie landscape.

Two thousand years ago, the ancient Roman soldiers clashed here with the local population. Ever since, carefully formed dolmens have been destroyed. Hundreds of them have been destroyed, as evidenced by scattered stone blocks that were left to lie on the ground.

A dolmen is a megalithic creation in which the blocks are uprighted to serve as carriers for horizontal blocks. The simplest is a combination of two vertical blocks and one horizontal block. They were just typical for this area, which is now simply called “Gamla”. The combination of blocks would form a protected space, but one charged with energy, ideal to enhance the spiritual meditative states. Dolmens are placed above underground energetic focal points.

The phenomenon of prehistoric dolmens was common from the coasts of Western Europe to Eastern Siberia, thousands of years before the written history of Europe and Asia. From Britain to Russia, but also on the eastern coasts of today's United States, dolmens were the homes of shamans.

Here, I can see them now on Asian soil, in Israel.

There is no doubt that shamans used them for their rituals and communication with the forces of nature. There they received answers from the spiritual dimension. The world used to be simpler, but the questions were the same: how to be healthy, how to get food and the most suitable locations for housing, social aspects of life... In short, how to live a happy life.

MEDITATION

The relatively small “Gamla dolmen”, the only one that was preserved from ancient and modern barbarians, calls me. I sit down, relax, close my eyes. I see the pictures of invaders systematically destroying dolmens. And not only that. They also broke the stones that had formed the dolmens, trying to ensure that the “pagans” would not make them again. The pictures then lead me to an even deeper past. A more peaceful one, more favorable to a kind of meditation.

Today, the “Gamla dolmens” are neglected, left to oblivion, with almost no visitors or guides. They are waiting for the time when we will cease to be a hundred percent materialistically oriented.

And when we will seek again the balance between the physical and the spiritual part within us.







THE MESSAGE RECEIVED JUST BEFORE SUNSET IN THE NEGEV DESERT

My last stop on the tour of Israel is in the southwest of the country, in the Negev Desert. We drive a SUV to the oasis called Ovdet. Here, the landscape of rocky desert is mottled by greenery. In a small bay, the owners properly grow grape vine, olive trees, some seasonal fruits and vegetables.

We come to the central area, with a house, a yard and a workshop. Zeev talks with the owners. We have lodging for the night. At this ranch, there are four cottages for rent. Not many. If there were twenty of them, it would be clear that they have a commercial character. But here the owner does not aim at the quantity, but instead at the quality of the offer.

Land and grape vine are treated in the old-fashioned way, as it was done a long time ago. Irrigation is done from wells and collected rainwater. Solar panels provide the power. The grape vine, exposed to sunlight, but protected from the desert winds in the bay, gives excellent wine. From the poor desert the owner has produced a spectacular green and floral oasis, and all that with the work of his own hands.

In the courtyard, there are three dogs, on three sides. They idly greet us in the afternoon sun. Zeev and I take things into the house. Instead of a concrete or wooden floor, there are stones, pebbles. Modest wooden furniture. No TV, no Internet. Outside, there is barbecue, a swing, a sofa. The weather is dry, with no moisture in the air. The furniture is not put in the house.

We go to the top of the hill. There are very old drawn petroglyphs. Their origin is not known, and their meaning is a subject of speculation.

Zeev and I split up. On the top there is a small circular pile, with two flat stones with a small backrest in the middle.

MEDITATION

I close my eyes, the physical sensations stop, my mind's eye opens. I repress it. I focus on the third eye, the energetic one. A flash of energy. An old man sits at this same spot. He used to come regularly to watch the sunset. His son would help him to arrange these stones and make them suitable for prolonged sitting. There he met his end.

I keep walking on the top of the hill. In two places there are modern petroglyphs and recently made piles for sitting.

In the distance, the sun is approaching the western firmament.

MEDITATION

I just have to sit down again and close my eyes. I cross my legs and arms. What messages do I take away from Israel? The western sun touches me mildly and then I sink into infinite space. The first glimpses bring clear messages. Humanity must progress spiritually. People must live together in peace and understanding. Peaceful and war periods have existed in this region for thousands of years. But it is time for human civilization to make a turn. It is time for understanding, respect and love.

The sun has set. I am under the impression of the mild and profound message sent to me by the Negev Desert. I am going down to the cottage. When I hear a muffled sound, I raise my head and there are two Israeli military aircraft above me. I reach the house, the sky is torn by the sound of three helicopters this time. And they all fly in the same direction.

Imagine a world without military machines in which people would live on their farms on land and from land, listening to the messages that come from Mother Earth.

Because the Earth is our Mother.









CAESAREA: THE ENERGY OF THE FORGOTTEN IMPORTANT CITY

Caesarea (lat. Caesarēa, Arab. Qisarya) is one of those cities that were important for their time and from where the fate of civilizations, empires and religions was determined. Today it is covered with a veil of oblivion.

It took us almost an hour's drive from Haifa to Caesarea. Now we are close to Tel Aviv (half an hour's drive) and Jerusalem (a drive of one and a half hours).

At the entrance to Caesarea we are welcomed by medieval walls, the remains of the fortress built by French King Louis IX in 1252. An identical picture was found by a group of Bosniaks, Bosnian Muslims, who fled from Bosnia to the farthest part of the Ottoman Empire 140 years ago. Namely, after the Austro-Hungarian Empire annexed Bosnia in 1878, in the next few years a part of the refugees sought refuge on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, today's Israel, the former province of Palestine.

Near the ruins of Caesarea, Bosniaks built their village and engaged in agriculture and fishing. The homogeneous community remained here until 1948, when they left their new home in the turmoil caused by the formation of the state of Israel on Palestinian territory.

Two thousand years ago and back in the time of the Jewish King Herod the Great, who built the harbor (25 - 13 B.C.) at the site of the former Sidonian rulers. They got back this territory from the Persians two and a half thousand years ago, in gratitude for the help to their fleet as they conquered the Greek cities.

The arrival of ancient Romans to the territory of the former Philistia/Palestine at the turn of the millennia, showed Herod's humility in front of the new rulers. He named the new modern harbor in honor of the then Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus. Since there were several cities erected in his honor, this one was known as Caesarea Maritima.

This harbor was not made under the cover of a bay or peninsula. By engineering ingenuity, Herod constructed two big breakwaters, concreted them and protected them with large rocks. It was the first time that a harbor was made directly in the open sea with the entrance wider than 70 meters. It was also one of the greatest technological wonders of the ancient world.

The city quickly developed around the harbor, which became an unavoidable point for traders, travellers and soldiers who had travelled from Tyre to Egypt, Damascus, Anatolia, Greece or Rome. The harbour was also the safest one, immediately following the one in Alexandria.

Archeological excavations have been under way since the 1960s and in the last decade they discovered that the harbor also had had the docks for ships, sections for repairs and pulling ships ashore, handling and loading.

Soon, the city began to expand. Herod made a Roman temple, theatre and hippodrome for 20,000 visitors. An impressive replica of the theatre has been recently built by the Israelis. In the center of the city there was a very beautiful fountain with statues, located at the crossroads of two avenues. Although the statues are forbidden in Judaism, Herod ignored that, in honor of his new principals. And the issue of water is even more interesting. Meaning, in the surrounding area there are no natural water sources, rivers or lakes. Herod constructed two long aqueducts which channelled water from the nearby mountains. Aqueducts were in operation for the next thousand years. Caesarea soon became the administrative center of the province of Judea in the Roman Empire.

The tour of archeological sites leads us to the tablet (also a replica, the original one is in a museum in Jerusalem) with the Latin text and with visible name of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea. This finding was a multiple confirmation: first, that Caesarea was the administrative center of the Roman Empire, second, that Pilate really existed, and third, that his rule took place during the period that he is attributed in the Bible. On one of his trips from Caesarea to Jerusalem, Pontius Pilate decided on the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Important historical figures left their mark on the town, such as St. Peter, who baptized Roman Cornelius here, announcing Christianity as the future ruling religion, and St. Paul, who was here in jail before going to Rome to ask Caesar for his freedom. Pamphilius founded the library in which he collected all available ancient texts. At that time, Caesarea had a collection which was second only to the one of Alexandria in size and richness.

With the fall of Rome, Caesarea became the capital of Byzantine Palestine. Before the onslaught of the Arabs, Caesarea fell last and the Arabs became the majority in the city's population. And so it remained until the arrival of the Crusaders, who took away the city in the early twelfth century. The legendary Saladin returned the city back to Muslim rule and then the English King Richard the Lionheart took it away and expelled all Muslims. The French King Louis IX built strong fortification walls, but 13 years later (1265) the Egyptian sultan Baybar conquered Caesarea, burned and destroyed it. The city was abandoned for the next 600 years, aqueducts were no longer in operation, agricultural land became desert.

Bosniaks came at the end of the nineteenth century and after seven decades they left, too. After they abandoned the city, the Jews formed a small fishing village, and the Bosnian mosque became a bar.

However, after the beginning of archeological research in 1960, the site becomes a tourist center. In the last ten years there have been systematic and extensive excavations and shining examples of Roman and Byzantine architecture were found at depths of four to seven meters. I was impressed by the thorough work of Israeli archeologists and the promotion of the site for tourism purposes.

Hotels and resorts were built and tourists came.

The tour of the hippodrome brings to life the ancient races that lived by the sea, the mosaics at the bottom of rooms, the luxury of palaces, and elegant statues, amphitheatres and temples – all from a bygone time.

Today, Caesarea belongs to a new country and a new religion. Its character remained only historical but it seems that only the stone remembers the days when the fate of the people back then was decided here.



1107, the Crusaders captured the town. Eighty six years later, Saladin conquered it and destroyed its walls. The present fortifications were built in 1251 by the French king Louis IX.

Following the Mameluke conquest in 1265, the city was abandoned. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman authorities settled a group of Bosnian Moslem refugees there.

The remains of ancient Caesarea attest to the city's illustrious past.





יותר לראות מנמל מפואר זה.

מסד המקדש
The temple podium

מחסנים
Ware houses

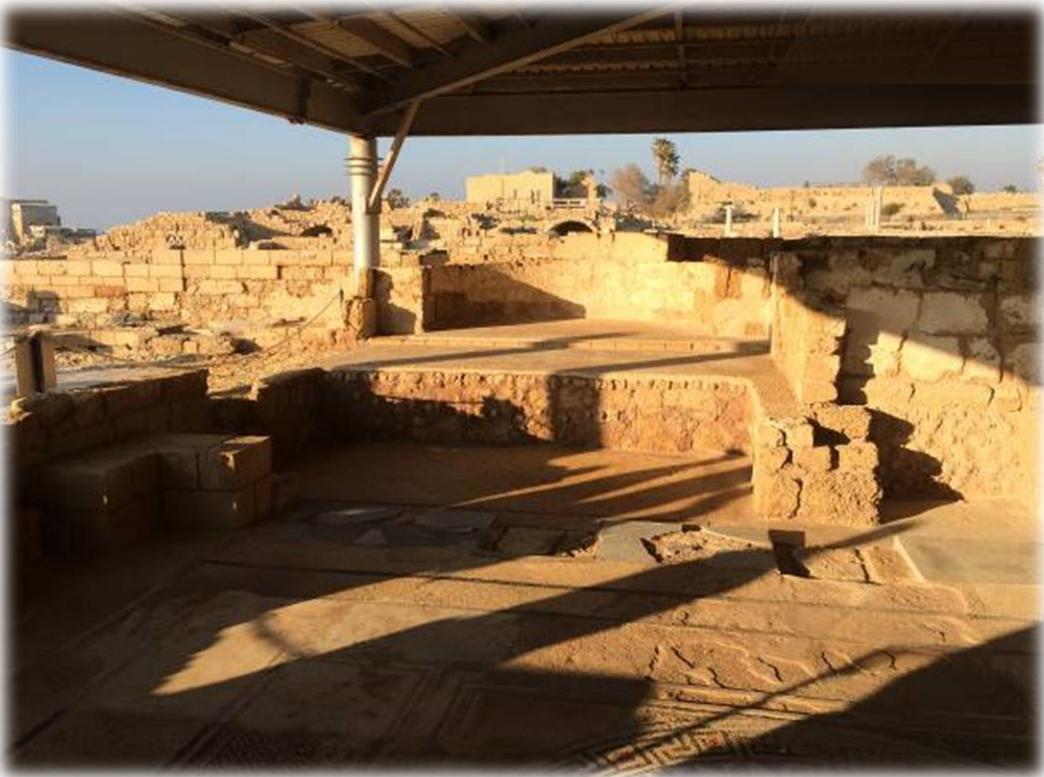


eastern wharf of the inner harbor

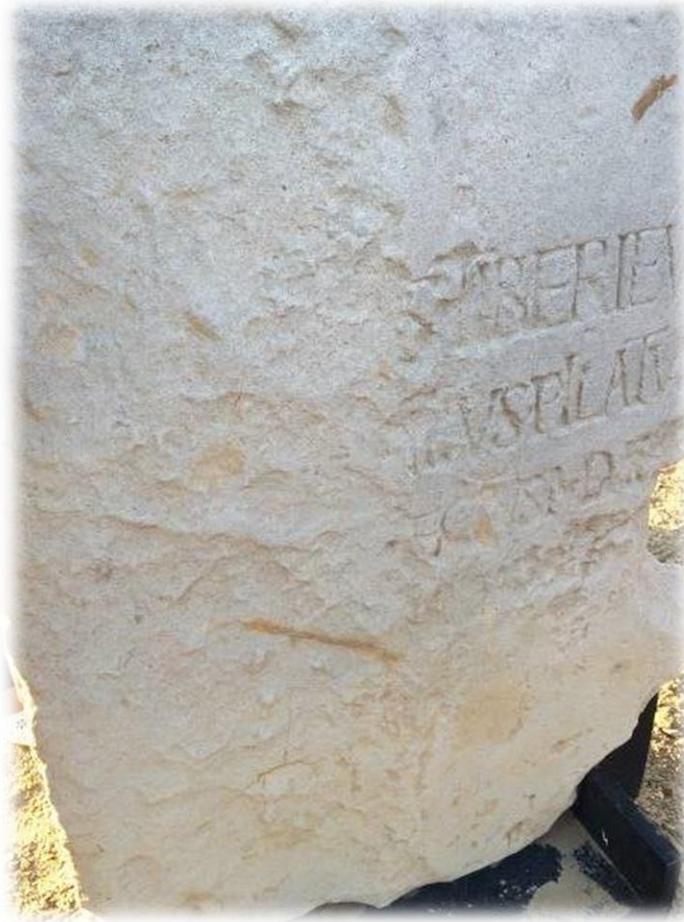
המזרח המזרחי של הנמל הפנימי







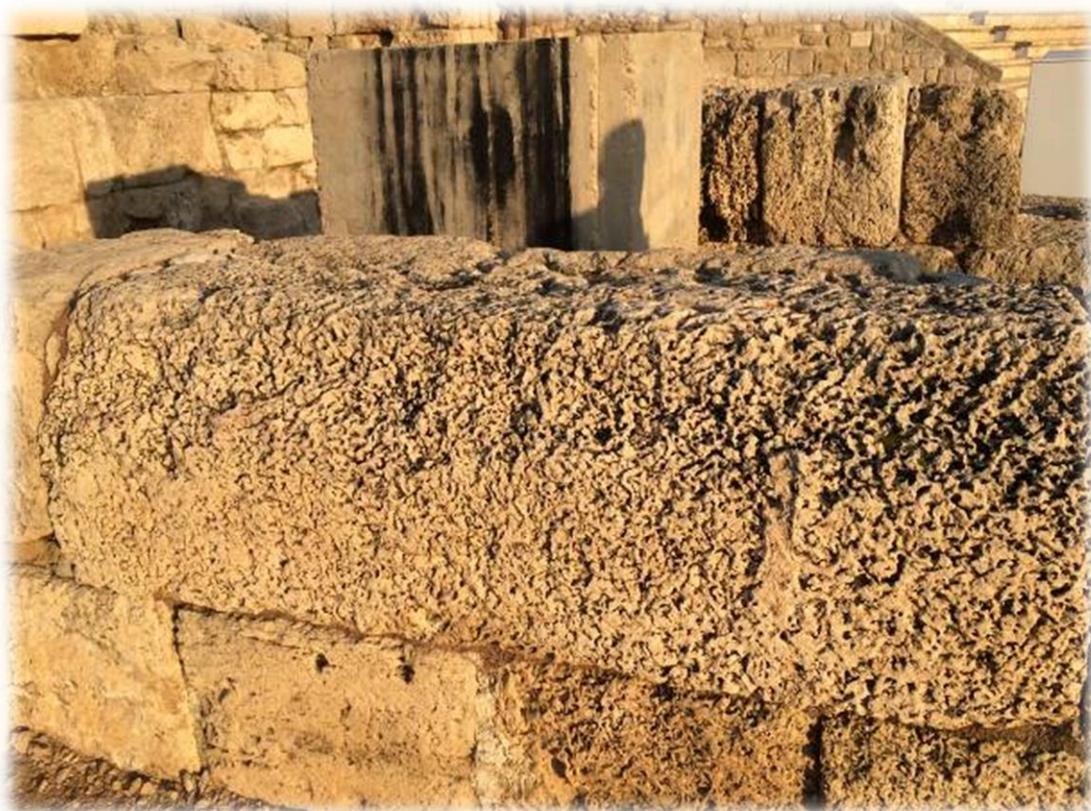
Pontius Pilatus was the Roman prefect who presided over the trial of Jesus of Nazareth (Matt. 27:11-26). The content of the inscription and the use of the Latin language hint at the level of Romanization throughout the province, and in Caesarea, at the beginning of the 1st c. A.D.

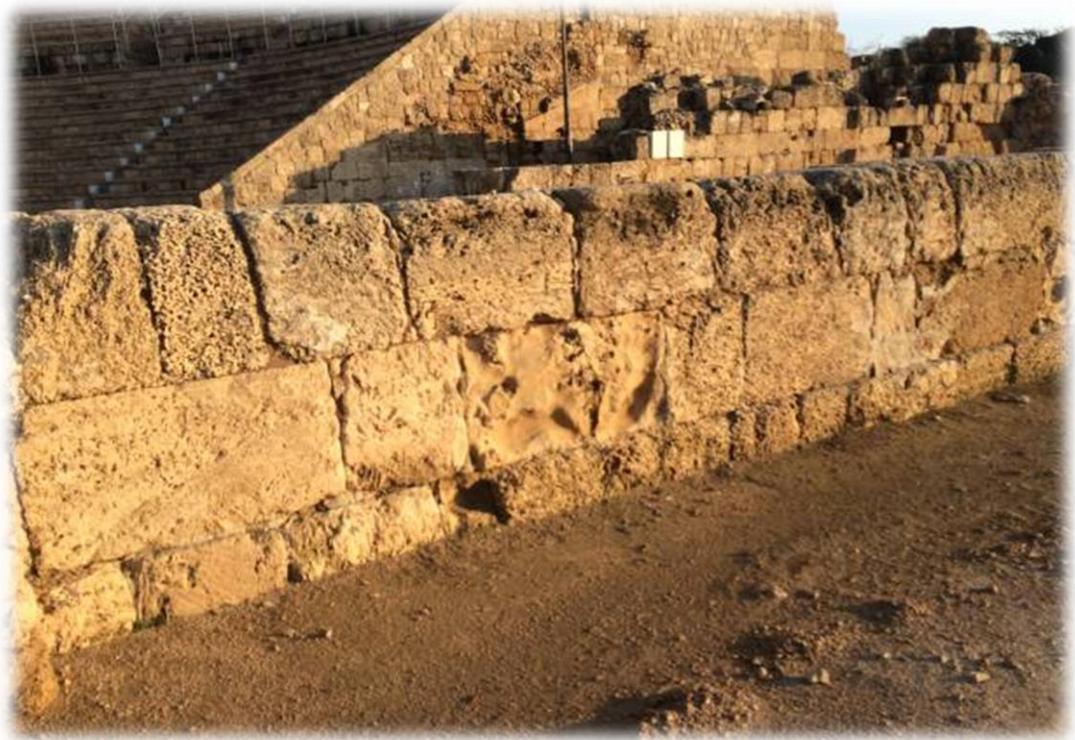


(פו)נטיוס פילטוס, נציב יודיאה, (הקים)
את (המבנה המקודש) ל(קיסר) טיבריוס".

העתק. הכתובת המקורית נחשפה במהלך החפירות בתיאטרון, כשהיתה
בשימוש משני.
האבן המקורית מוצגת במוזיאון ישראל, ירושלים.

“(Po)ntius Pilatus, the prefect of
Judaea, (erected) a (building dedicated)
to (the emperor) Tiberius”.





STELLA MARIS, HAIFA: THE ENERGY OF THE CARMELITES AND THE PYRAMID IN THE COURTYARD

The hill Mt. Carmel rises above Haifa. According to a legend, the Old Testament prophet Elijah lived in one of its caves 2,900 years ago. He outsmarted 400 priests, followers of the god Baal, of “Caanite culture”. He brought the long-awaited rain, was able to summon lightning from the sky, return the dead to life, and then he himself went up to heaven (?). His followers bloodily reckoned with members of other religions.

All three monotheistic religions revere him as a saint: the Jews know him as the Elijah (“my God is Yahweh”), Christians follow Elias as a prophet, and Muslims, through the Qur'an, talk about him as wise and great Ilijas.

Two thousand years after his death, many of the participants of the Crusades followed his example and went to the caves of Mt. Carmel to live an ascetic life. Thus they formed one of the most influential orders in Catholicism – the Carmelites. Those in Israel underwent numerous tortures, while in Europe they live more protected.

The Carmelites started building a church into Elijah’s cave which they moved only a thousand years after the start of its construction.

What attracted me to visit this location is a small pyramid in the courtyard of their church. The entire church complex is now known as “Stella Maris”. How convenient. The stars and the lighthouse opposite the church used to illuminate the way down the hill toward the sea.

Haifa is the third largest city in Israel, with a population of 250,000. It is considered the most open and cosmopolitan city there. This place is crawling with historical events, one of which is the construction of the Carmelite Church.

Religious Catholics, who came to liberate the “holy land” and “Jerusalem” in the twelfth century stayed to live in this region. Some of them learned from the examples of the Old and New Testaments. The founders of the Carmelite order began the construction of the monastery, which was stopped by the onslaught of the Mamelukes in the thirteenth century. They returned 500 years later. However, they did not settle in the monastery because Napoleon prevented them from doing so. In fact, he led the battles to conquer Palestine.

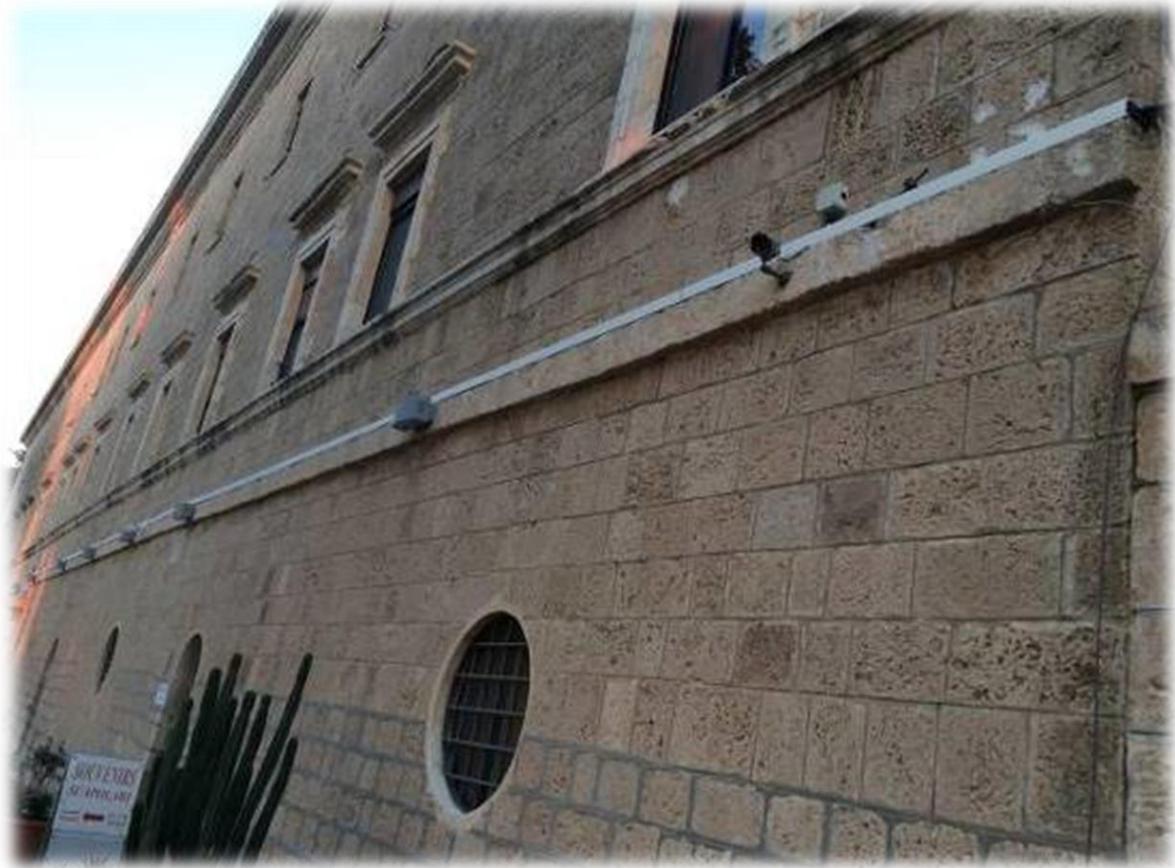
He lost the battle for Akko (near present-day Haifa) and converted the monastery into a hospital in 1799. He left 200 wounded and infected soldiers there.

Before certain new defeats, Napoleon decided to return to Europe with his troops. Unprotected soldiers remained in the hospital.

The Ottoman Turks came to the hospital and massacred all the wounded and sick. They dug a big pit in front of the building and made a mass grave. They burned the monastery down. Twenty years later, the Ottoman commander of the city used the stone to build himself a summer palace across from this location. It was not until 1836 that the Carmelites received permission to build the church on the same site, which they expanded several times.

Much later, they erected a granite monument in the shape of a pyramid above the mass grave. At the pyramid there is the inscription: “How the mighty have fallen in the battle”. The pyramid remained as an eternal memory of Napoleon's failed attempt of conquest which started from Egypt, the country of pyramids, and reached toward the east.

The Carmelites now have headquarters in the Vatican and are known for their humble brown robes and “Biblical” sandals. Stella Maris is a tourist attraction which attracts many visitors on religious tours. The granite pyramid is the witness of a terrible negative human energy and senseless warfare.







BETLEHEM, PALESTINE: THE ENERGY OF CHRIST

I drive along the west bank of the river Jordan. East of me is the state of Jordan, the road belongs to Israel, and to the West is a modern ghetto known as the West Bank, which is controlled by the Palestinian Authority.

Hundreds of kilometers of concrete and wire fence have separated the Palestinians from the Israelis. Every day, at the exit points, the Israelis decide whether on that day they would let the Palestinians enter Israel and enable them to work or not. On two Palestinian territories, completely surrounded by Israeli territory, there is no industry.

However, one point is almost constantly open – the one toward Bethlehem. By the Oslo Agreement in 1995, Israel gave the rule of the city of Bethlehem to the Palestinians which they took away from Jordan in 1967. These had got the rule over it in 1948 when Palestine was divided into Arab and Jewish parts. Previously, the city was ruled by the British and before that by the Ottoman Empire; and the Crusaders, Mamelukes, Arabs, Byzantines and Romans took turns in the Middle Ages.

The multi-millennial desire to rule the city, which now has about fifty thousand inhabitants, is no wonder. In fact, this was an important place for “Canaanite culture”. After that, the first Jewish King David was born and crowned here, as written in the Old Testament. According to the New Testament, Bethlehem is the birthplace of Jesus Christ.

And, precisely because of that, the eyes of the whole world are on Bethlehem, especially during Christmas. Tourists come to the city, all thirty hotels are full and 300 workshops produce souvenirs. The Christmas season is unusually long here: first comes Catholic Christmas on December 25, then Armenian Christmas on January 6, followed by Greek-Orthodox Christmas on January 7. This is the only Palestinian city that has its own income from the tourism.

The main church in the city accommodates the Catholic and Greek-Orthodox and Armenian churches under one roof. During my visit in January 2016, the restoration of the interior of the church was under way, but still, there were queues of tourists visiting.

Of course, the reason is not only a tour of a church. According to tradition, it was erected at the place where the cave was where Mary gave birth to Jesus, whose teachings formed the basis for the emergence of Christianity.

The level below the main hall of the church has a staircase leading to a smaller enclosed area. There is a hole in the floor surrounded by a metal fourteen-point star. And it is argued that just below the hole there is the cave where the most famous nativity scene in the world once took place.

Many believers are in front of me. You can feel a certain energy in the air: the anticipation, the encounter with the place where the “Son of God” was born. Some of the visitors fall down on their knees, kissing the star, extending arms to the hole to feel the air flow. For many, this is a

moment they will never forget, because they have long coveted it. Of course, there are flashes; cameras are not turned off here.

Millions of visitors have made the energy of this place special. It seems as if you can feel the presence of the mild energy of Jesus; an energy of love, connectivity, forgiveness and light.

Three meters from the hole is the second covered area which is said to have been used by Joseph and Mary for housing. It is especially well decorated.

The caves are not visible, only the granite slabs and different properites of the church are. A new queue of people is coming, we are leaving.

This city was very important throughout history: Bethlehem in Judea. In this place, during the era of Canaan, the first “Temple of Nativity” was built, almost five thousand years ago. The Egyptians and Jews followed. In the fourth century A.D., the Empress Helena, mother of Constantine the Great who established Christianity as the official state religion, built the “Church of the Nativity” at the site of the old temple.

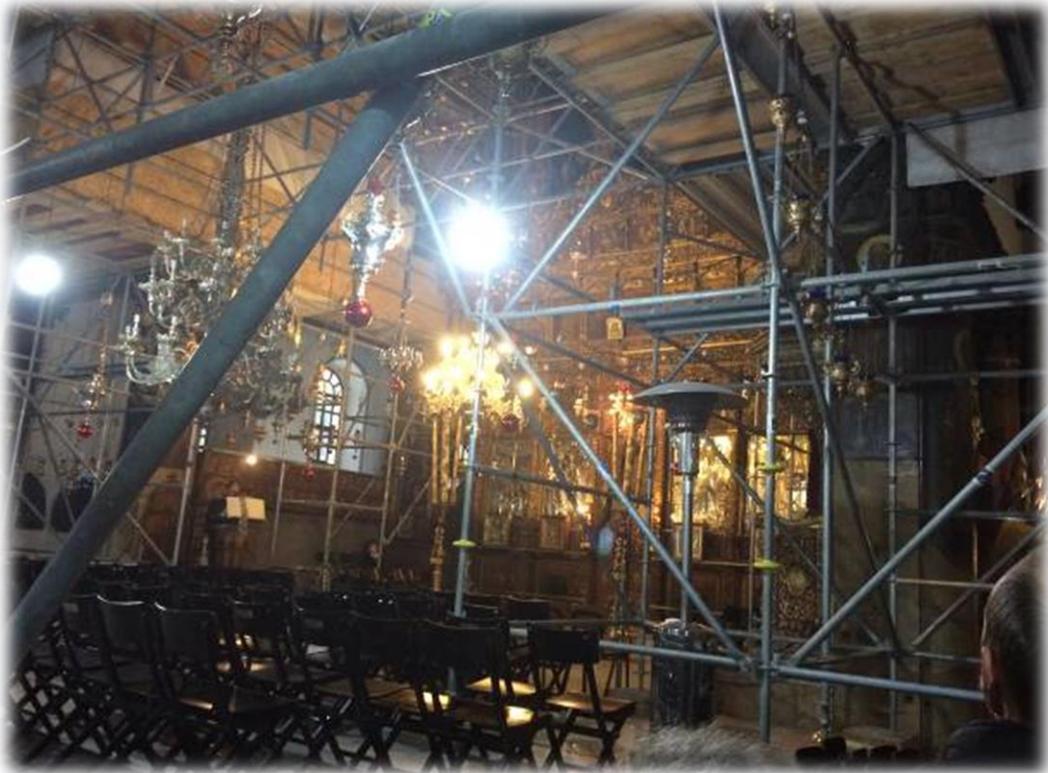
Thus the city of Jesus was officially marked.

Notwithstanding the claims of some historians that Jesus was actually born in another place, less significant than Bethlehem, in the Galilee, about fifty kilometers from here.



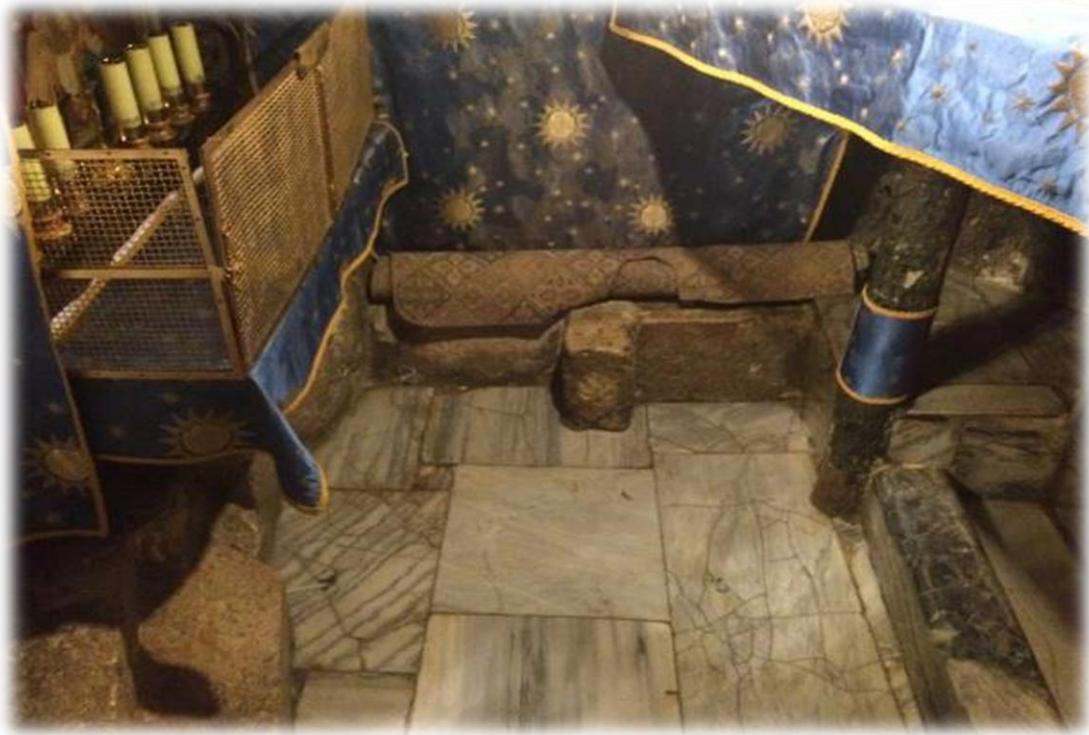












JERUSALEM: THE ENERGY OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION

There is only one city on the planet that is sacred to the three monotheistic religions: Jerusalem. Descendants of Abraham – Jews, Christians and Muslims – have fought for centuries for dominance over one square kilometer of the territory in the heart of Judea.

For Jews, Jerusalem is the beginning and the future. In today's Muslim neighbourhood there is the Dome of the Rock below which is the sacred stone. According to the Jewish tradition, this stone, in the middle of the hill, represents the foundations and the beginning of mankind. Adam was created here. Abraham served God from there. The sacred First Temple and the Second Temple were built here. “The Ark of the Covenant”, with the two stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments, was placed in the Temple of Solomon. In short, Jerusalem is the place that God has chosen for His Residence.

Whirlwinds of history moved the Jews away from this stone and the closest they can approach it today are the western walls of the city. From there, in their thoughts they turn to the sacred stone, pray, stand in silence, send wishes, hoping they will be fulfilled. At the same time, everyone is awaiting the fulfilment of the prophecy that the time will come when the Third Temple will be built in their holy place.

The Dome of the Rock is now part of the mosque complex with Al Aqsa. It was originally designed to protect the faithful from the cold, and it was made of gold. Over time, the material was replaced with copper, then with aluminum, and finally, with a donation from the King Hussein of Jordan, golden plates were woven in its surface again. According to Islamic tradition, from this place Mohammed, the Messenger of God, went on a journey through the heavens, accompanied by the angel Jibril (Gabriel). On the way he met Musa (Moses), Ibrahim (Abraham) and Isa (Jesus). He returned on the winged horse and today a hair of his beard is kept in this place.

The old city of Jerusalem has an area of less than one square kilometer within the walls raised in 1538 by Suleiman the Magnificent. In this fort there is not just one but two domes of identical dimensions.

My Israeli friend Zeev from Jerusalem wrote to me in January 2016:

“My father is the best expert connoisseur of the history of Jerusalem. He was the rector of the Hebrew University. My mother is one of the leading archeologists in the city. The main energy line in Jerusalem is the one that links the Holy Sepulchre to the Dome of the Rock and the Mount of Olives, that is, the place of the resurrection. This course has an ideal east-west orientation. Two domes intentionally have the same dimensions. Jerusalem is the only site in this mountain wreath which takes the form of a bowl, a chalice, and therefore was chosen as the location of the city. If we add the correct orientation according to the cardinal points, we come to the architectural principle of sacred geometry”.

We need a three-hour bus ride from the Mediterranean coast of Israel to Jerusalem, inland city. The cities on the coast undoubtedly have a western spirit. In the interior part of the country you can feel a combination of the turbulent, often violent past and modern technological development.

It is no surprise to me. Jerusalem was completely destroyed twice in the past; almost not one stone was left on top of another. It was under a long siege 23 times, attacked 52 times, conquered, and then 44 times shifted from the hands of one army to the hands of another.

Officially, there have been settlements at this site for at least five thousand years. The governor from pharaonic Egypt spoke about the city which was run in the province. According to biblical tradition, the Jewish King David conquered the city and proclaimed it the major center of the United Kingdom of Israel. His son, King Solomon, built the First Temple three thousand years ago. And although the only source of these claims is the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) and has no basis in archeological research, the story of the First Temple lives in the imagination of every Jew.

The pictures of the greatest rulers of the old world alternate. During the time of pharaoh Ramses II, Jerusalem experienced a boom; the kings of Judea built Cyclopean walls here; it was conquered by the Assyrians and later destroyed by the Babylonians (586 B.C.). During the reign of the Persian Emperor Darius the Great, the Second Temple was built. Alexander the Great became the transient ruler of Jerusalem, to be replaced by the pharaonic dynasty of Ptolemy. King Herod the Great ruled here two thousand years ago. The Roman emperor Hadrian completely destroyed Jerusalem after a revolt of the Jews to the point that “nothing was left above ground to indicate the existence of the city”.

On the way to Jerusalem, I can see a large part of the border between Israel and West Bank, where the Palestinian population lives. Tens of kilometers of concrete and wire walls in combination divide the two cultures, two religions, two worlds.

In 1948, Palestinians lost western Jerusalem which was annexed by the Israelis over time with no intention of ever making it part of the Palestinian state. Jordan won the eastern part to lose it from Israel in the war in 1967. Therefore, Israel controls the entire city today. The old city has been divided into four parts: the Armenian, Christian, Jewish and Muslim quarters.

Today, Jerusalem is a city with a population of a million out of which two-thirds are Jewish. You can see the characteristic hats, robes, and beards in the street. The city panorama is dominated by Mount Olive, temples and churches built by different cultures and then the walls accommodating the four quarters. I start the tour with the western, Jewish quarter. A massive wall, reconstructed several times, is crawling with tourists but also Jews for whom this is a special day. The place of worship is a 57-meter-long section of the wall, although, formally, the western wall is almost 500 meters long.

It is a beautiful day, Thursday. There are hundreds of people in front of the wall. You can hear commotion, applause, congratulations. There is a fence on the plateau that separates women from men, and in front of me there is a solemnly dressed 13-year-old boy accompanied by his parents and friends. This is a special day for them. At age 13, they have a chance to make their first

public reading of the Torah (Old Testament) and they become morally responsible for themselves. This event is also known under the name of Bar Mitzvah. After months of preparation for this opportunity, with congratulations, they move toward the Western Wall, followed by another procession and another one.

In front of the wall many stand silently, with their heads to the stone blocks. In a deep trance, meditation, they talk to their ancestors. Between stone blocks, there are numerous messages. Some of them from the Jews dispersed throughout the world. Actually the colloquial term for this wall, the “Wailing Wall”, has come from them. However, this is not a place to wail but a place toward which many emigrants have turned their heads during prayers and thereby shed some tears of nostalgia.

Four great civilizations have symbolically left their mark on Jerusalem. The Jews oriented their first temple to the east. Then the Romans turned their own temple by 90 degrees and oriented it to the north. The Christians became the ruling religion in the Roman Empire and built structures with a view to the west – to the Vatican – on the foundations of pagan temples. When Islam took the lead in this city, the axis was moved by new 90 degrees, this time to the south and the holy city of Mecca. In this way the big wheel has been closed with the orientation of the buildings directed at the four cardinal points. And the building sites exactly matched the most powerful underground energy line which Zeev wrote about to me.

Passing through the “Western Tunnel” takes me out of the Jewish part to the Muslim, Christian and then at the end to the Armenian part. If Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus here, I wonder whether the route along which he carried his cross is close to the truth, as told by guides in numerous languages of the world. The place where he first stumbled under the weight of the wooden cross. The place where he almost fell and reached out and placed his hand on the wall for support (of course, a tourist attraction for many foreigners who take photographs next to the imprint in the stone). The second fall, wiping the sweat and blood off the face, the place where the three crosses were erected, where he was laid down, pierced by the spear (his fifth wound), temporarily buried and finally resurrected...

At every step of his path churches of different religions were erected: Orthodox, Catholic, Coptic and Armenian. There are so many intertwined influences and interests. Nothing today can be changed, built or reconstructed because there is always someone else who is against it.

It is a true miracle how the new mosaic in the church, showing the stages of Jesus' resurrection, was made in 2000 during the Pope's visit.

I again assure myself that the question of credibility of historical events fades before the energy of the place. Hundreds of years of belief, millions of people, their images and hopes, have made these churches sacred and the possible footsteps of Jesus and locations sublime. In fact, the presence of the guide takes us back to the present time and to the reality of the tourism industry. But, each of us being present, has wandered for a moment to the era of two millennia ago.

How good and convenient it would be if this place of suffering and violence, different cultures and rulers, became the core of a future, more humane, non-violent, peaceful and harmonious example of human civilization.







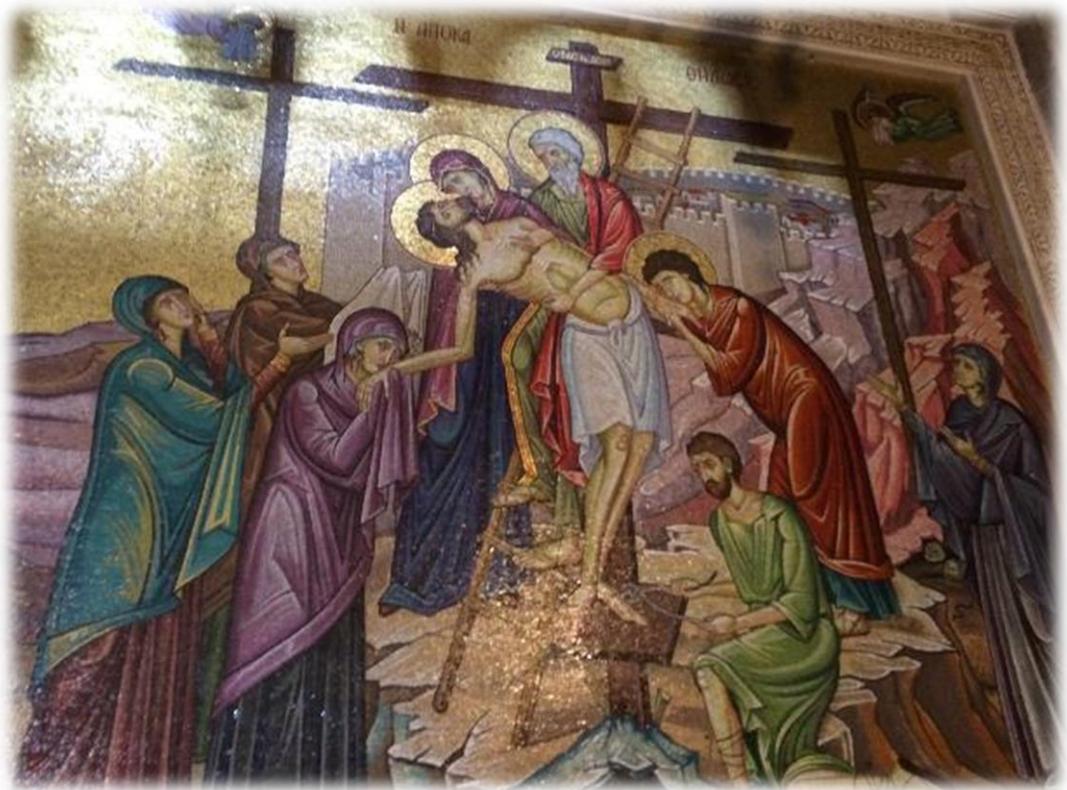






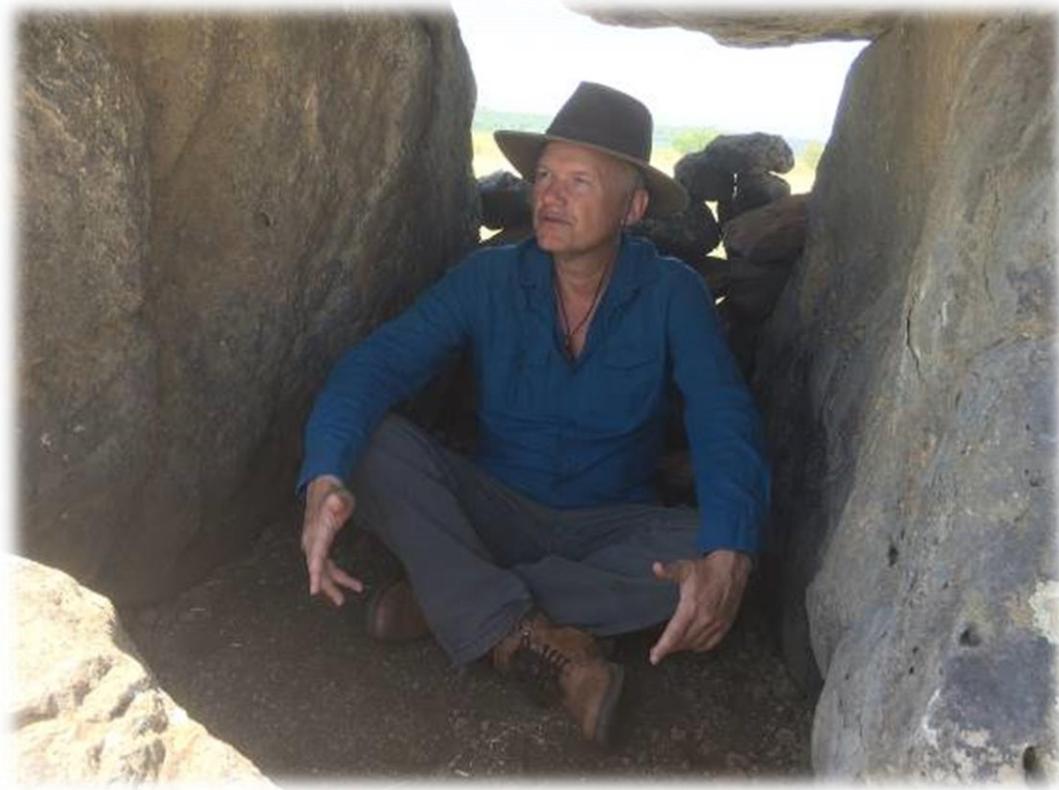








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„Dr. Sam Osmanagich, with the skill of an experienced travel writer who knows well what he tells, narrates to readers his views, thoughts and impressions (even meditative contents that filled him when visiting certain archeological sites!) about what he saw and experienced on his interesting travels, visiting the oldest architectural structures and remains in the fields of the Old Testament and Biblical areas, upon which ancient missionaries, patriarchs and prophets had walked at the dawn of our civilization cycle.“ (From the review by Ahmed Bosnic)

“The author's descriptions, which take us through ancient history, are beautiful and fairytale-like. But not only through the oldest city in the world, Jericho, or the spiritual capital of the world, Jerusalem, or the place of Jesus' birth, Bethlehem, but also much further, introducing us to many other archeological jewels between the shores of the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea... To make travel more interesting, the author takes us to Midras, the first pyramid in Israel, then to Mamshit, an ancient Nabatean city in the Negev desert, which used to offer a respite to caravans on their way from Gaza to wondrous Petra, sceneries carved in stone and sprouted in the biblical wasteland; then to the artificial hill Gezer, at the foot of the Mountains of Judah, where travellers are welcomed by seven upright megaliths. But this instructive and beautiful promenade does not stop here. The author leads us further to Caves of Maresha, then to the Nimrod Fortress, near the Syrian border, and to the mysterious stone circles, in fact magnificent rings, which seem to have been prepared for engagement with heaven!” (From the review by Slobodan Stajic)