

Mid-East e-News

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Welcome

Recently the articles have been a bit lengthy. This issue I have chosen to increase the number of items, restricting their length where necessary. I hope the variety is an improvement.

I would be interested in your responses to the clippings below. Is this attitude endemic, or is the religion being *used* by the radicals? And, do we see a warning about our attitude in the reaction (#11) of some in Holland?

Email your responses to pkclark@pmbx.net, & check the web for back issues.

Islamic Interface – A Religious War

I was looking back over newspaper cuttings (Houston Chronicle, New York Times) taken over the last month, when we began this discussion. From Mosul and Fallujah to Holland and the US I have found references to religion in the conflict. I know I am taking this out of order, but (sometimes we need starting blocks to give us impetus and direction!) these will perhaps address our *third* question: **What is the evidence?**

1
A handwritten document in Arabic apparently used as inspiration by the Sept. 11 hijackers assures them about a dozen times that they would go to paradise as Islamic martyrs. (HC,10/19/04)

2
Al-Masri, 46, sat in court to face 10 charges of soliciting or encouraging the murder of others, "namely a person or persons who did not believe in the Islamic faith...in particular Jewish people." (HC,10/20/04)

3
...an Indonesian cleric is accused of leading an al-Qaida-linked group... "You have used you charisma as a religious leader, encouraging your followers to attack American interests" (HC,10/29/04)

4
[The would-be suicide bomber] first studied at an ad hoc academy for Jihad. The classes, under clerical tutelage, gave some of the many men an understanding of the religious basis for expelling infidel invaders from Muslim lands. (NYT,11/2/04)

5
A five-page letter pinned to the body of a Dutch film-maker brutally killed after making a movie critical of Islam called for Muslims to rise up against the "infidel enemies" in the West. (HC,11/7/04)

6
Amid the blasts and roar of the battle, loudspeakers at [Fallujah] mosques throughout the city were blaring, "Prepare for jihad!" and "God is great!" US commanders appeared to avoid striking the mosques. (HC,11/9/04)

7
A federal prosecutor yesterday forced [lawyer] Lynne Stewart to acknowledge that she was fully aware of the history of ...violence by the Egyptian followers of a fundamentalist Muslim client whom she is accused of aiding illegally. (NYT, 11/9/04)

8
A group of Saudi clerics issued a statement calling on all Arabs to support jihad against the American occupation... (HC,11/11/04)

9
In the early hours of Friday, mosque loudspeakers in a fundamentalist neighborhood [of Mosul] blared a simple message: "Don't go outside tomorrow because it will be a big day." (NYT,11/12/04)

10
Van Gogh was ritually slaughtered on an Amsterdam street, apparently for criticizing Islam. [His] killer ... had a will in his pocket saying he was prepared to die for Islamic Jihad... Al-Issar [is] a "leading figure" who preached at fundamentalist gatherings at Bouyeri's home. (HC,11/14/04)

And finally, to remind us that terror is not always a one-way street...

11
A bomb damaged a Muslim elementary school [in Eindhoven] on Monday, in what authorities believe was intended as an act of revenge for the killing of a Dutch filmmaker last week. (NYT, 11/9/04)

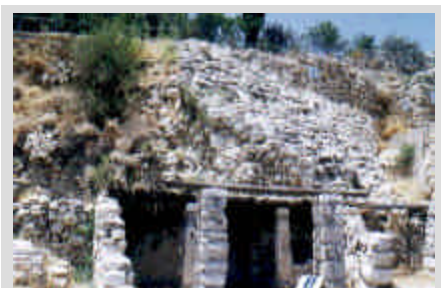
Jerusalem, King Solomon

King David, after he was firmly in control of the kingdom, had plans to build a temple. At that time the tabernacle was still being used, and was probably located on the upper slopes of the City of David (see e-News 27). He was told by God, however, through Nathan the prophet, that it would be his son who would build the temple. (2 Sam. 7).

Solomon began this task early in his reign, recorded in 1 Kings 4-6. He also built himself a magnificent palace. In adjacent verses the author of the book of Kings records that while the temple took seven years to build, the palace took thirteen (1 Kings 7:1). In cubits the temple was 60 x 20 x 30 cubits high, and the palace was 100 x 50 x 30 high.

Early in Solomon's reign he had taken one of the daughters of Pharaoh to be his wife. She continued to live in the security (and luxury?) of the City of David until the palace was completed.

Today, the Damascus Gate (Arabic *Bab Al Amoud*) is located in the relatively recent northern wall of the current Old City. Between it and Herod's gate is the entrance to a limestone cave. This continues underground, under the Old City, for perhaps 700 feet. It is suggested that the stones for Solomon's Temple were quarried from here, perhaps explaining why it was stated that "no hammer, chisel or another iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built." (1 Ki 6:7)



A section of wall dating from the time of David & Solomon. In the Ophel, it would have been within Solomon's walls.

Today, in Jerusalem, one has to be observant to identify the original topography in the midst of all the modern buildings. The hillsides are quite steep in places, and particularly so around the lower City of David. Once Solomon had his Egyptian bride installed in the new palace (1 Ki.9:24) he was then able to pay attention to these walls, known as the

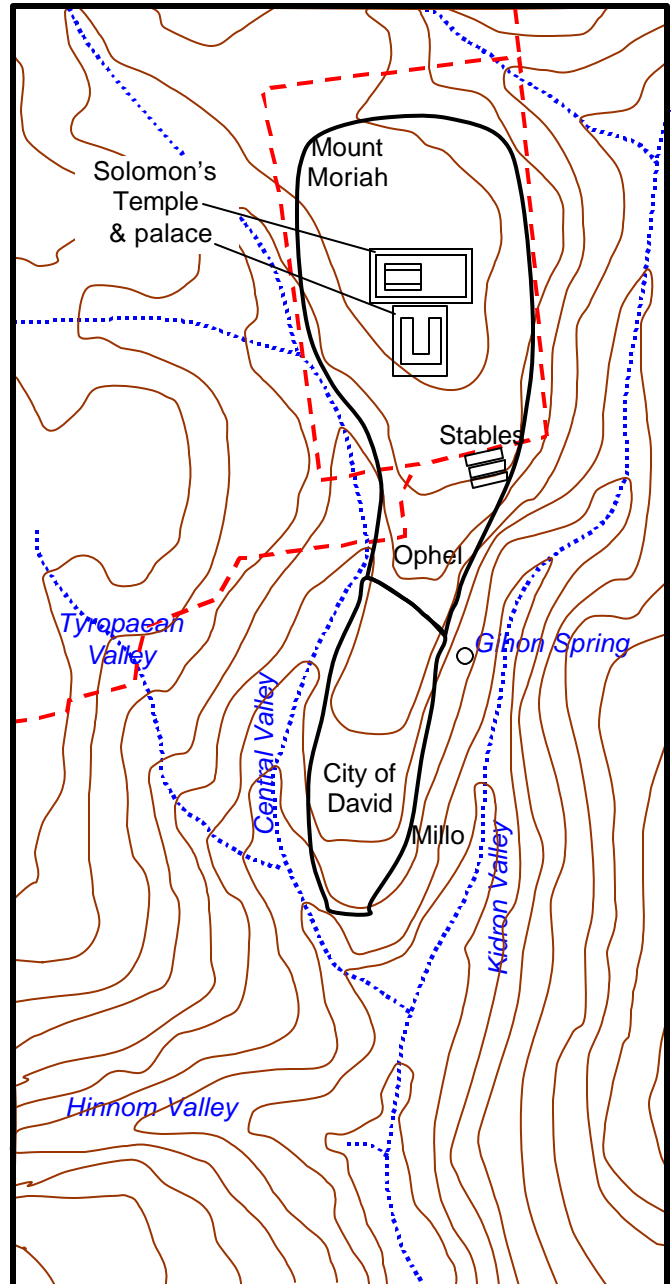
Millo, or (as in 9:15, 24) as *supporting terraces*.

2 Chronicles also records Solomon's numerous horses, some of which were kept in Jerusalem itself (9:25).

(Herod's later temple would be larger in size than that of Solomon, and its surrounding walls correspond more or less to those of the 'Temple Mount' today).



A Crusader church ruins in modern Antioch (Antakya)



The Crusades (3) -Opposition

At the time of the Crusades the Muslim world, as we have said, was divided. In the Middle East the greatly-weakened *Abbasids* still controlled the eastern empire from their Baghdad capital. In Egypt the *Fatimids* – a Shiite dynasty – controlled part of North Africa from Cairo. One of the effects of the First Crusade was to reunify the *Seljuk* Muslims who then controlled the area between Baghdad and Cairo, known as Greater Syria. The Crusaders also came into conflict with the *Byzantine Empire*, which had initially appealed to the West to assist them in fighting to retrieve the Holy Land. Very few of the numerous alliances, treaties and vows that the Crusaders made with the emperors of the eastern Roman Empire were ever adhered to.

(Continued from e-News 26)

(Continued on next page)

Israel – People Groups (Aliyah continued)

When the state of Israel was established in 1948 it was the only Jewish state. Within two years a law was established that became fundamental to the nascent republic. This law was the Law of Return. From 1950 this provided for every Jew around the world the right to immigrate to Israel. In 1951,

From Nov. 1949 to Sept. 1950 **Operation Magic Carpet** flew 40,000 Yemeni Jews into Israel, using aircraft provided by Alaska Airlines.

however, the government devised a method of selecting immigrants that favored the ‘young and employable’ over older, ill or unskilled. This reduced the numbers from 175,000 (in 1951) to 24,000 (in 1952).

Already, and even before 1948, numerous Mizrahi Jews had begun to arrive in Israel. Some of the impetus of this influx was the persecution they were receiving from Arab countries opposed to Israel’s independence.

Between 1948 and 1952 about 300,000 Mizrahis arrived in the new country. They did not easily fit in the Kibbutz system, but were welcome by the Labor party and the *Histadrut*, Labor union. Their countries of origin included Iraq (123,371), Egypt (10,000), Turkey and Yemen (55,000 each) and Iran (40,000). Additional groups, in their thousands, came from Afghanistan, the Caucasus, and

Beginning in May 1950 **Operations Ezra & Nehemiah** flew 123,371 Kurdish Iraqi Jews into Israel. These may well have been descendants of Jews in the Babylonian captivity.

Operation Cyrus began in Jan. 1952 to bring 40,000 Jews from Iran to Israel.

Cochin, India (all Muslim regions). A major concern for the country, with this influx, was that these peoples were primarily uneducated and poor, having been oppressed and de-legitimized by their homelands. The Iraqi and Egyptian Jews were an exception, being relatively highly educated and reasonably well off – not entirely due to the historic ties that these countries had to Britain, the Mandate authority for pre-independence Israel.

During the rest of the 1950s the Mizrahi continued to flow into the country, from the countries already mentioned, and from every country along the North African coast. Some of this influx was stimulated by the antagonism towards Israel that arose from the abortive Suez Crisis of 1956. Morocco, the furthest from Israel, actually had the largest population to immigrate. Over a short period leading up to 1963 about 300,000 Mizrahis entered Israel from Morocco.

Immigrant towns, *Ma’abarot*, were established by the state to settle the newcomers, and programs designed to accelerate their assimilation into the country. In total, over the first 12 years of Israel’s independence, about 1.2 million immigrants arrived in Israel, at least 70% of them Mizrahi.

After the 1960s the cultural makeup of the immigrants changed. We shall look further at this in the next issue of e-News.

I am indebted to the following resources:
Naor, Mordecai, 1996, *The Twentieth Century in Eretz Israel*, Konemann. (\$3 from Half-Price Books!)
Rosenthal, Donna, 2003, *The Israelis*, Free Press. (\$3.99)

The Crusades (3) – Opposition (continued from p.2)

Almost as soon as the First Crusade had occupied Antioch, the strategic city was assaulted by the Muslim ruler of Mosul, Kerbogha. The Crusaders had previously promised the city to the Byzantine emperor, Alexius (who had originally been the one to suggest a campaign against the Muslims to Pope Urban). Alexius did not give up his claim to Antioch, and the Crusaders contested the Byzantines for it for a decade or more (remember, they knew themselves as *Romans*, “Byzantine” is a more recent descriptive term), losing eventually to Alexius in 1108. The peace treaty then required that Antioch would return to Alexius’ rule when Bohemond died, but when Tancred succeeded Bohemond (in 1111) he refused to do this. Later, in 1138, Alexius’ successor, John Comnenius was successful in his claim to Antioch, but his actual authority continued to be disputed.

In 1113 the first major Seljuk attack was defeated by Tancred’s nephew, Roger, but in 1119 the Atabeg of Aleppo, Il Ghazi renewed the assault. Roger had camped in the pass of Almada, in the east of the principality, waiting with an army of 3,000 knights and 700 foot-soldiers for reinforcements from Baldwin of Jerusalem. Il Ghazi surrounded the Crusader camp overnight on June 27th, and in the morning of the 28th the entire army was wiped out by the Muslim force. Only two knights survived, Roger himself being killed. This is known as the Battle of *Ager Sanguinis* (the *Field of Blood*).

Next issue: The Loss of Edessa.

